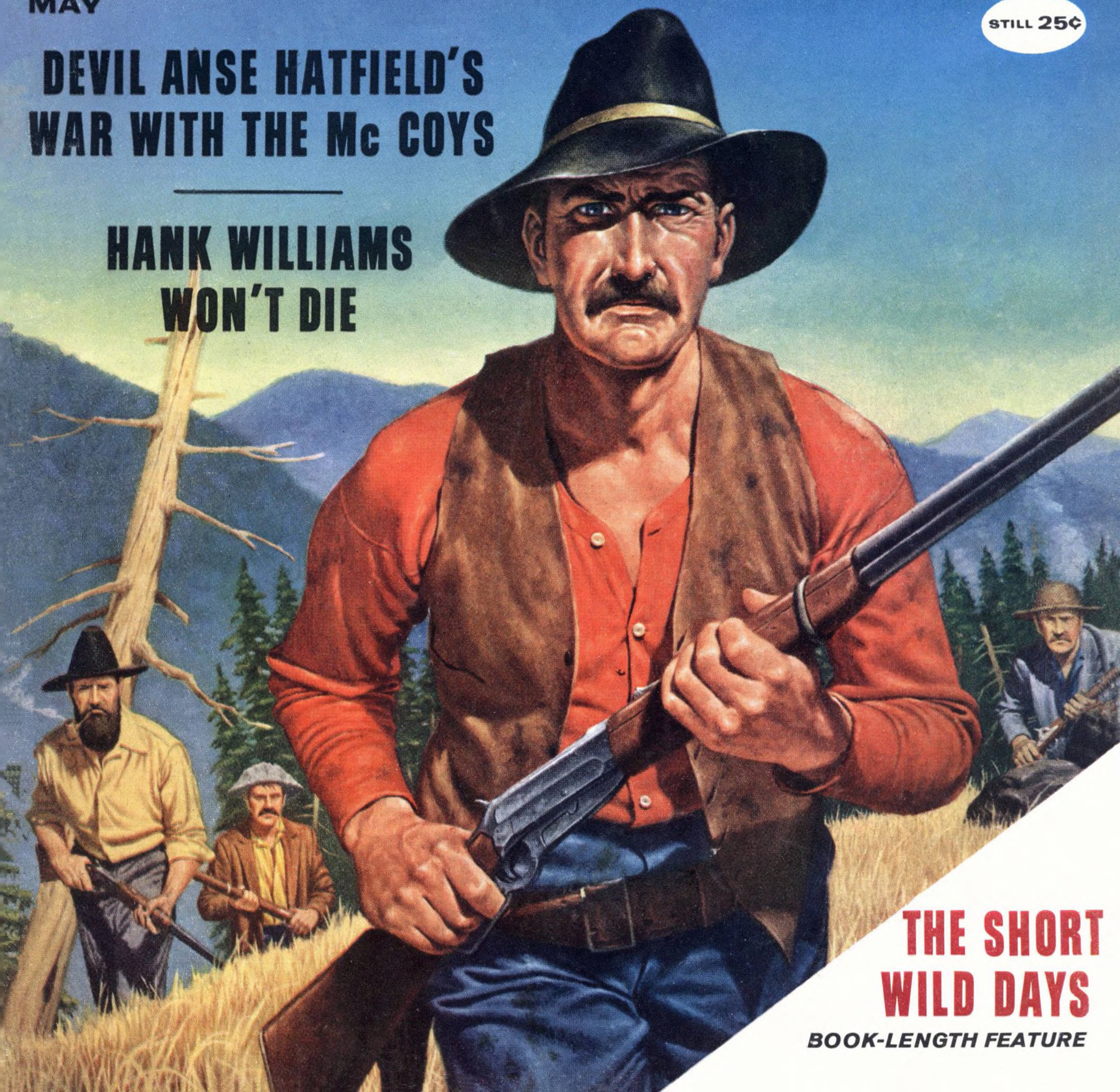
CLIMAX

EXCITING STORIES FOR MEN

AMAZING SUCCESS STORY OF MICKEY SPILLANE

HAREM IS WHERE THE HEART IS



Just Imagine! MY STORY IN THIS MAGAZINE...

Who'd have thought when I wrote to the folks at Vitasafe that they would actually print my letter in their ads! Yes, they told me that my story was so typical of the many letters they received, they wanted to publish it. My husband and I agreed — so here it is.

He Didn't Even Kiss Me Goodnight!

Posed by professional models.

NIGHT after night my husband came home from work all tired out. He was nervous, irritable — and barely touched supper. Most of the time he'd just sit around for a while — then drop into bed, asleep as soon as his head hit the pillow. Often he didn't even kiss me goodnight . . . and yet I knew I had a good man — one who really loved me.

I know a man's tired after a day's work — but my husband was simply "dead on his feet"! You'd think he'd forgotten all about me!

Then one day we saw a Vitasafe ad in a magazine. It told about other men like my husband who had once felt tired and run-down, who had lost their pep and energy. It said that this condition may be caused by an easily corrected vitamin-mineral deficiency, and that thousands of people had experienced a feeling of increased vitality and strength through the famous Vitasafe Plan. It offered to send a trial 30-day supply of powerful Vitasafe High-Potency Capsules so we could discover for ourselves whether my husband could be helped.

We had nothing to lose, so we sent the coupon. And believe me, it was the smartest thing we ever did. Now my husband's like a new man. He feels stronger and peppier than he has for a long time!

If you want to help someone you love get rid of that tired, run-down feeling, due to a vitamin-mineral deficiency, send for a 30-day trial supply of Vitasafe capsules as we did. Just mail the no-risk coupon today.

EACH DAILY VITASAFE CAPSULE FOR MEN CONTAINS

Choline Bitartrate	31.4 mg.	Niacin Amide	40 mg.
Inositol	15 mg.	Calcium Pantothenate	4 mg.
dl-Methionine	10 mg.	Vitamin E	2 I.U.
Glutamic Acid	50 mg.	Folic Acid	0.5 mg.
Lemon Bioflavonoid Complex	5 mg.	Calcium	75 mg.
Vitamin A	12,500 USP Units	Phosphorus	58 mg.
Vitamin D	1,000 USP Units	Iron	30 mg.
Vitamin C	75 mg.	Cobalt	0.04 mg.
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Vitamin B_{12}	2 mcg.	Iodine	0.075 mg.
		Potassium	2 mg.
		Zinc	0.5 mg.
		Magnesium	3 mg.

We invite you to compare the richness of this formula with any other vitamin and mineral preparation.

SPECIAL PLAN FOR WOMEN ALSO AVAILABLE. CHECK COUPON IF DESIRED

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Yes, I accept your generous no-risk offer under the Vitasafe Plan as advertised in Climax.

Send me my FREE 30-day supply of high-potency Vitasafe Capsules as checked below:

☐ Men's Plan ☐ Women's Plan

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25¢ just to help cover shipping expenses of this

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To prove to you the remarkable advantages of the Vitasafe Plan . . . we will send you, without charge, a 30-day free supply of high-potency VITASAFE C.F. CAPSULES so you can discover for yourself how much stronger, happier and peppier you may feel after a few days' trial! Just one of these capsules each day supplies your body with over *twice* the minimum adult daily requirements of Vitamins A, C, and D . . . *five times* the minimum adult daily requirement of Vitamin B-1 and the *full concentration* recommended by the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council for the other four important vitamins! Each capsule contains the amazing Vitamin B-12 — one of the most remarkable nutrients science has yet discovered—a vitamin that actually helps strengthen your blood and nourish your body organs. Glutamic Acid, an important protein derived from natural wheat gluten, is also included in Vitasafe Capsules. And to top off this exclusive formula, each capsule now brings you an important dosage of Citrus Bioflavonoid. This formula is so complete it is available nowhere else at this price!

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There is no mystery to vitamin potency. As you probably know, the U.S. Government strictly controls each vitamin manufacturer and requires the exact quantity of each vitamin and mineral to be clearly stated on the label. This means that the purity of each ingredient, and the sanitary conditions of manufacture are carefully controlled for your protection! When you use VITASAFE C.F. CAPSULES you can be sure you're getting exactly what the label states . . . *pure* ingredients whose beneficial effects have been proven time and again!

WHY WE WANT YOU TO TRY A 30-DAY SUPPLY — FREE!

We offer you this 30-day free trial of valuable VITASAFE C.F. CAPSULES for just one reason. So many persons have already tried them with such astounding results . . . so many people have written in telling us how much better they felt after only a short trial . . . that we are absolutely convinced that you, too, may experience the same feeling of improved well-being after a similar trial. In fact, we're so convinced that we're willing to back up our convictions with our own money. You don't spend a penny for the vitamins! A month's supply of similar vitamin capsules, if it were available at retail, would ordinarily cost $5.00.

AMAZING PLAN SLASHES VITAMIN PRICES ALMOST IN HALF

With your free 30-day supply of Vitasafe High-Potency Capsules you will also receive complete details regarding the benefits of an amazing new Plan that provides you regularly with all the factory-fresh vitamins and minerals you will need. *You are under no obligation to buy anything!* If after taking your free capsules for two weeks you are not entirely satisfied, simply return the handy card that comes with your free supply and that will end the matter. Otherwise it's up to us — you don't have to do a thing — and we will see that you get your monthly supplies of capsules automatically and *on time* for as long as you wish, at the low, money-saving price of only $2.78 per month (plus a few cents shipping) — *a saving of 45%*. Mail coupon now!

SPECIAL PLAN FOR WOMEN

Women may also suffer from lack of pep, energy and vitality due to nutritional deficiency. If there is such a lady in your house, you will do her a favor by bringing this announcement to her attention. Just have her check the "Women's Plan" box in the coupon.

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IN CANADA: 394 Symington Ave., Toronto 9, Ontario

This story actually happened. The man's name has been changed and this is not his photograph, but the facts are true.

"Your name is on the list"

Doug Mott was not surprised. The recession was on and the assembly line where he worked was almost at a standstill.

And then, strangely, the boss began to smile. "You know how the Engineering Department sends us blueprints and then we have to send them back for revision because they just aren't practical to produce?" Doug nodded . . . wondering. "That's waste . . . and we can't allow it to continue. That's why we thought that if we had a man who knew assembly and production — and drafting, too — he could act as liaison man between engineering and production. You know production, Doug . . . and you're studying drafting with I. C. S. You've got a *new* job. Congratulations!"

Doug Mott now heads a drafting room. But he will never forget the day his name was on the list to be laid off.

Good times or bad, I. C. S. training sets a man off from his fellows, puts him on the road to promotion. You can start on that road by filling out the coupon *now!*

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CLIMAX

NEXT ISSUE

Brigitte, "la belle" Bardot—or, the French "sex kitten," as she has been aptly tabbed—has had an amazing coverage of her uninhibited uncovering. But nothing so far has been as thorough as this new article in which BB unabashedly expounds her opinions on men, sex, fame and stardom. Her mental views are matched with a set of provocative photos of the bountifully endowed frame which zoomed her to fame. Read "Intimate Report on Brigitte Bardot" in CLIMAX next month.

• • •

The man who shocked two decades with his peccadillos, who beat a rape charge and who recently "fought" with Fidel Castro in Cuba, has led a more swashbuckling life than any movie role he ever played, a life most men only dream of. Possessed of an amazingly enduring vitality, Errol Flynn has snapped back from a slump in his career and is now being touted by the critics for his new-found acting ability. Read his amazing story, "Errol Flynn—Last of the Red Hot Heroes" in the June CLIMAX.

• • •

A famous matador, Nini's brilliant career was cut short when he was cruelly gored by one of the bulls. His bitterness turned to hatred as his young protege became the new idol of the crowd. On the wall of his cafe he began his great painting of the moment of truth—that instant every matador must face in every epic fight. But Nini couldn't quite capture the mood because he wouldn't face the truth he should have learned the day he was gored. Read this tense and gripping story, "Moment of Truth," in the June issue of CLIMAX.

• • •

At your newsstands
April 28th

CLIMAX

EXCITING STORIES FOR MEN

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THE MAILBOX

BY SPECIAL PERMISSION

In your January issue I noticed something upsetting. On page 41, Miss Lynn Gilbert has a Sigma Alpha Epsilon pendant around her neck. As a Sigma Alpha Epsilon interested reader, I would like to know what right she has to wear this emblem. I will not tolerate desecration of the high principles for which Sigma Alpha Epsilon stands. But I have no objection if she was given permission to wear it by an SAE man.
Sonny Vaughan
Mississippi State University

She didn't get it from a member of the Steamfitters' Union.

THE ANSWER TO HANGOVERS

Now about that article of Richard Gehman's in a recent issue of CLIMAX. I was fascinated by his description of a Compari cocktail and determined to try it. I couldn't find a bar in Chicago that had the Compari ingredient, but finally tracked down a bottle of the stuff through a liquor salesman friend of mine. So I whipped up a batch. It tasted so good I whipped up another, and then still another. That's all I remember. The hangover I'll never forget . . . the worst I EVER had. Why not an article on the best ways to cure a hangover?
Charles McDonald
Chicago, Ill.

In the immortal words of the late, great Robert Benchley, ". . . the only cure for a hangover is death. . . ."

THAT'S ALL SHE WROTE

I loved the story "The Last Laugh," in your March issue. It sure hit home with me because I had a very similar experience. I didn't get mad enough to want to kill anybody, but three months ago while I was on a business trip to the Coast, where I used to live, I stopped in to see a girl I was madly in love with during the war. I had bought her a $500 engagement ring but while I was at Guadalcanal with the 1st Marines, she sent me the usual "Dear John" letter. She had married a dreamy feather merchant "with a great future," but she never sent back the ring. I wanted to stop in and tell her off and maybe punch the guy in the teeth. I changed my mind when I saw him—the saddest sack you ever saw. She still looked good, but he was henpecked and I felt sorry for the guy.
Sam Smolliner
Lansing, Michigan

It serves him right. But what about that $500 ring, man?

SOMETIMES WE'RE RIGHT

In regard to Robert A. Cutter's story in the February issue of CLIMAX, "The Battleship with Nine Lives," I would like to point out that the *Yamoto* did not weigh 60,000 tons, but 72,809 tons, according to the 1958 World Almanac.
C. J. Roller BT2
U.S.S. Gearing

You'll have to admit we were right about it sinking, though.

THE EYES OF TEXAS

Linda Wehle, your "Sight for Tired Eyes" in the February CLIMAX, is a real cute chick. I did notice, however, that in the picture of her leaning back against the tree, her mole had slipped over to the other side of her face. Was this an accident or were you testing us to see if we bothered to look at your gals' *faces?*
Cecil E. Perkins, Jr.
Pharr, Texas

We LIKE your spirit, Perkins!

WATCH THOSE FILTER TRAPS!

"They're Trying Billy the Kid" in your February issue was extremely interesting and set me thinking. History proves what a deadly killer this fellow was, but I can't help wondering exactly what would happen to a ruthless youngster like Billy the Kid if he were alive today. What do you think?
Frank McMichaels
Ogden, Utah

He'd get deathly ill trying to decide which filter cigarette to endorse.

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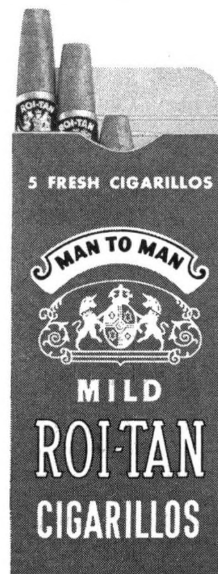

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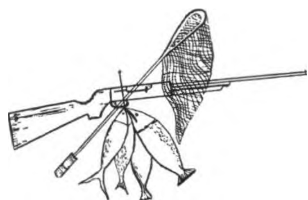


THE OUTDOORSMAN

A Fisherman Named Williams

By Stan Smith

THE small skiff with its lone occupant, a tall, angular, deeply bronzed figure, passed from behind a grassy island into glistening flatwater. It was a January morning on the Florida Keys—very early in the morning when the sky is unbelievably cloudless, the sea tranquil and transparent.

Between the dock and the skiff, a distance of possibly 300 yards, there were several stretches where it was not uncommon to find lurking bonefish —the highly sought, elusive king of the shallow water reaches. Here is where the man in the skiff slowed his paddling.

His eyes searched the grasses, continuing in a line to the shallower flats where the "bones" occasionally expose a dorsal. Now he spotted one. Down came the paddle, up came a great fly-rod and the man waited for the moment when his coasting skiff would carry him within casting range.

When he cast finally, it was in a big, sweeping, effortless motion. And it was a long, long cast. Then he began taking line, recouping in a motion that was spasmodic so as to make the streamer appear wounded and lifelike. But this ended abruptly when the fish struck.

The great rod in his hands was held high and the rod tip dipped deeply as the fish made its initial run. For several long seconds the run continued, the man holding the rod higher, higher over his head and then, when he sensed a slowing of his quarry, the rod came down and the man speedily regained line. Suddenly he had his fish and was reaching down to release it. The battle was finished. He looked toward shore, waved happily, picked up his paddle again and came in.

"Hello," he said warmly, jumping ashore. "I'm Ted Williams—be with you in a second after I secure the skiff."

This was several years ago, shortly after surgery had removed some im-

pairing chips from the bronzed right elbow. He noted the observer checking his arm and grinned boyishly. "It's as good as new," he said confidently. "I know. My casting's real hot these days. Caught nine of those cusses this morning. Not a bad appetizer, huh?"

That was my first encounter with the inimitable Ted Williams. Baseballwise, there's no point in recapping his brilliant career. Everybody knows something about the Williams' legend in one form or another. The story now is not Williams the ballplayer. Rather it's Williams the fisherman—the sportsman —and something of his possible future in one of the world's most lucrative industries—fishing tackle.

As a competitor, certainly the world of sport knows that Williams, whose retirement has been talked about for several seasons, is ever a formidable challenge. The fishing world learned something about him in this connection a few winters ago when the International Light Tackle Sailfish Tournament convened at Palm Beach, Florida.

The tall, good-looking slugger had just been released from the Marines after a singular career as jet instructor, and, incidentally, hero in a couple of air battles over Korea. Someone, possibly Joe Brooks who introduced Ted to bonefishing, possibly Lee Cuddy with whom Ted is associated in the fishing industry, talked Williams into riding a boat for three days during the sailfishing hassle.

Williams fished. For three days he fished with light tackle in thoroughly strange surroundings—that is, aboard a huge cruiser. He fished and virtually single-handed, copped the International with five Atlantic sails against his closest competitor's two. All this, please note, in a field of 300 experienced boat fishermen, men who had taken and released any number of the spectacular aerial fighters while Williams had never previously even trolled a line.

The first time we went bonefishing left a lasting impression of a big, sharp,

generous guy who is unusual in every sense of the word. Aboard the 23-footer were Williams, Vic Barothy, our guide, Joe Brooks, an important figure in both the development of Williams the fisherman and bone-fishing per se, and the writer. At the time, I was rod and gun columnist of the New York *Daily News*. I had wired ahead about three days of filler columns about the Florida Keys, and could afford to loaf with Williams, doing nothing but chase the bones by day, and eat Barothy's fried chicken by night. We departed, towing two skiffs.

We made Rabbit Key by noon, devoured a quick lunch, and then paired off—Brooks and Williams, Barothy and the writer. And that, until long after dark, was all we saw of Williams. He and Brooks disappeared at top speed around one end of the island, with Ted screaming for Brooks to take the lead out of the outboard's pants.

Barothy grinned. "That guy," he said. "He's got the same drive in his bonefishing as he has with a bat. I know. I've guided him lots. And he's darned good. Wait till you fish together tomorrow."

Vic and I cruised the flats and after two hours of spotting nothing, dropped anchor and began casting for redfish. Then we heard a loud inhuman whoop from the far side of the island.

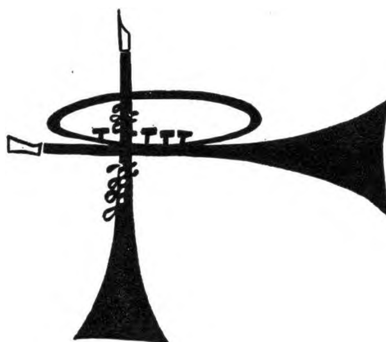
"Ted's giving Joe a hard time," Barothy said. "He's either goaded Joe into dropping a fish, or he's caught about five to Joe's none. Wait and see."

When we returned to the cruiser, Brooks and Williams were already aboard, chowing down. Ted looked completely self-satisfied. Joe appeared completely worn. "He's a madman," Brooks sighed. "I don't know why I fish with this guy. He's a madman. He'll kill any normal man!"

Calmly, Williams explained. Nothing really had gone wrong. They had toured the other side of the Key, spotted several finning bonefish and begun casting. He had taken three fish before Joe "caught" his first. But Joe had not exactly "caught" a bone; he had spotted this fish and was making his cast when Williams got his streamer in there first. That was the gist of it. "He did it all day. Not just once, mind you. You'd think by now the guy would learn something about etiquette. Etiquette? Williams? Never. Every time I'd spot a fish, wham! In he'd go with that damned streamer of his and I'd be chasing my tail!"

"I'm just a big, strong, enthusiastic boy," Ted said mildly. "I love to compete. 'Nite, gents."

Barothy broke us out at six the following morning. A wonderful day—cool, clear and the tide ebbing. It had to be a good bonefish day. Barothy dished out some scrumptious ham and eggs, coffee, (*Continued on page* 72)



The New Records

By AL GOVONI

Frank Sinatra: *Come Dance with Me* for Capitol is a top-drawer successor to Frankie's sensational *Come Fly with Me*, the best-selling album of 1958. Backed by Billy May's sparkling arrangements, Sinatra was never better.

Selections by Agustin Lara: A fine Seeco special waxed in Spain by the orchestra of F. Moreno Torroba as a salute to the Irving Berlin-Cole Porter-Jerome Kern of Spanish music. Lara's best known hits in this country include "You Belong to My Heart," "Madrid," and "Be Mine Tonight." Torroba's interpretation is tuneful and smooth; his style reminds you of Percy Faith at his best.

Julie London: What can you say about the breathless, whispering songs of Julie except that they're great? Her *London by Night* for Liberty is tops. Listen to it while you're alone, when the wife is at the movies.

Serenades for Sex Kittens: Dante and his orchestra on Carlton with soft and subtle tempos designed for cooing and wooing. Most effective when you keep the volume way down low.

Gian Carlo Menotti: RCA Victor's recording of Menotti's latest opera, *Maria Golovin*, was waxed in Italy with Franca Duval, Richard Cross, Patricia Neway, Genia Las and Lorenzo Muti in the leading roles. A lyric drama you'll find exciting, dramatic and melodic.

Railroad Sounds: For choo-choo buffs, Rondo's *The Railroad in Stereo* is a must, a startlingly realistic waxing of passing trains, yard noises, whistles, clackety-clack of flat wheels — the works. You can almost smell the smoke and feel cinders in your eye.

Chevalier Sings Broadway: The Yankee Parisian gives still another shot in the arm to his resurgent popularity with this M-G-M release. Maurice manages to delight the customers with that foghorn voice doing standbys like "Some Enchanted Evening," "I Love Paris" and "It's All Right with Me."

Louie Writes Again: Lou Carter has another collection of wacky titles for an encore to his highly successful *Louie's Love Songs*. On his newest Golden Crest album Lou pours his heart out with such Carter classics as, "Her Toot'-brush Was Gone," "The Pig wit' the Apple in His Mout'" and "Split Your Sangwich wit' a Stranger." Delightfully surprising is the beautiful straight orchestration of all this nonsense; lovely, dreamy music sure to cause double-takes when listeners cock an ear and catch the zany lyrics.

Joni James: The sleeper album of the year could well be *Joni James Sings Songs of Hank Williams* on M-G-M. Joni displays a fine feeling for some of Hank's best-remembered laments, like "Your Cheatin' Heart" and "Half as Much," then comes through with a solid rhythm performance on "Jambalaya" and "Hey, Good Lookin'." For more on the late Hank Williams, see this month's article on page 8.

Around the Stereo World: An excellent, bargain-priced rendition of international dance favorites by the full Berlin Concert Orchestra on Rondo-Lette label, and if you haven't yet invested in stereo equipment, it's also available in monaural.

Roger Williams: Near You. The growing army of Williams fans should be happy with his latest Kapp release. The piano wiz has something for all pop tastes here, from the title tune to "St. Louis Blues" and "Volare."

Teresa Brewer *and the Dixieland Band* blend like ham hocks and black-eyed peas on Coral's serving of blues and jump stuff. Teresa is really with it and the instrumental work is exceptional, featuring trumpet man Yank Lawson and Bill Stegmeyer on clarinet.

Hank Williams Won't Die

The singer of sad songs is gone, but he may well become America's first immortal troubadour... His fans refuse to believe he is dead

By JOHN STEPHEN DOHERTY

"IT'S CRAZY, but you just can't make those people believe Hank Williams is dead. They sit around those backwoods slug joints and listen to his records, and if you try to tell them he died seven years ago, they look at you like *you're* the one who's nuts."

The speaker was a juke box service man whose territory embraces dozens of tiny settlements deep in the bayou country of Louisiana. But this bizarre immortality of the man a *Downbeat Magazine* poll voted the "most popular country and western singer of all time" *a year after his death*, is by no means limited to outlanders. In varying degrees, it is found all over America, in West Virginia, Colorado, the Carolinas and New Mexico—and points north, east, south and west. The stubborn loyalty of his fans amazes and delights M-G-M Record Company executives.

Radio stations which feature country music report the eerie phenomenon of calls and letters from irate listeners denouncing other singers with the charge that "Hank Williams will sing that feller right off the stage any day of the week!" They may know Williams is dead, but they speak of him as if he were still living.

The entertainment world has had other immortals, of course, stars who will be remembered as long as theaters have stage doors. But nowhere in the annals of show business can one find anyone remotely comparable to Hank Williams, the star whose brilliance remains undiminished seven years after his death, whose record sales continue unabated, whose appeal seems to expand instead of fade.

Any search for explanations turns up as many reasons as the number of people you talk to, and ends in baffling frustration. Only one fact is consistent enough to emerge with any clarity: Hank Williams crammed into his short life span more mistakes and heartbreak and tragedy than would normally occur to dozens of men; and in the hot fires of his unhappiness was forged the plaintive, melancholy music in which his listeners find the comfort of a kindred spirit. In those heart-weary laments can be heard a message for any man or any woman ever bruised or disillusioned by the hard lines of life.

There is abundant proof that Hank Williams entertained no illusions—about life, or about himself. "I'm

ILLUSTRATED BY NORMAN SAUNDERS

HW
HANK

Spellbound by his talent whenever he sang, Hank's fans loved the sad and moody songs he wrote himself.

nothing but a drunkard," he once cried out to a respected old friend. "Why do people expect me to be anything else?" And then he laughed his dry, bitter laugh and said, "You think *I'm* a drunkard? Hell, you shoulda seen my old man!"

Like many another figure high in the rarified air of success, happiness lay within his reach. But Hank's inability to grasp it was the key to his personal tragedy. When he could bear to think about it, he laid the blame on his unhappy childhood, recalling all too vividly the day he stood in front of a movie house in Montgomery, Ala., a skinny kid in blue jeans, shoe shine box slung over his shoulder, and not even a thin dime in his pockets to see the show. He never forgot that and he never got over being bitter about it.

Years later, when Hank was the unchallenged king of country music with an annual income of over $250,000, he never went back to his home town of Montgomery without making it the victorious return of a Roman Caesar. He would roar in with two chariots, both Cadillacs. These flamboyant gestures puzzled his friend, Ernest Tubb, himself a gifted hillbilly singer. One day when they were sharing a hotel room on a show date he asked Hank why he had to make such a splash.

"You hear that feller I was just talkin' to?" Hank asked.

"Yeah, an' I wondered why you turned him down. Your voice got cold as ice."

"Yeah, well, he's a local banker. Feller I've known for years. But when I was starvin' in this town that sonofabitch wouldn't give me the time of day. *Now*, nothin's too good for me. What's the deal? Ain't I the same guy I always was?"

Ernest tried to tell Hank the world didn't transform itself into the paradise of boyhood dreams just because you became a success. He explained that in some ways it got even tougher for people on top: Success made them a target for any phony in the crowd below. "Hank," he said, "you gotta learn to take the world the way it comes—and the people in it for what they are: good, bad and worse. They ain't perfect, they're like you and me."

But Hank Williams could not banish the memories of his lean and hungry beginning. Most of us, returning to scenes of childhood, are shocked to find the golden world of youth has shrunk to paltry size. But Hank never could reconcile the fact that no matter how he tried, he could not capture his dreams. It seemed to give him a contempt for the present.

When he was already a leading recording star with M-G-M Records, he was signed to a movie contract without the customary ordeal of a screen test. Hank journeyed to Hollwood to discuss details with Dore Shary, then the all-powerful production chief of M-G-M Pictures. No one expected Hank to swoon over Schary, but his behavior made no sense at all, least of all to himself.

He strode into Schary's sumptuous offices, flopped in

Hank Williams was a guest star on the Perry Como show and other top television and radio programs.

When Randall Hank Jr. was born Hank was so delighted that he bought Audrey a new Cadillac.

a chair, stretched out his legs and drooped his white ten-gallon hat over his eyes—so that he could barely see Schary. The meeting was a fiasco. Hank spoke only in monosyllables, if at all, apparently disinterested in the whole thing. When the meeting reached its awkward end, and he sauntered out, his whole attitude seemed to say, "Just because he's a big shot out here, that don't mean I have to suck up to him."

When Hank reached the studio gate a boy was standing outside with a shoeshine box slung over his shoulder. Hank stopped abruptly and gave the boy a five-dollar bill. Then he went out and got roaring drunk. For the remainder of his stay in Hollywood he was "not in" to all further efforts by M-G-M to contact him. To no one's surprise, his movie career was as silent and short as his visit with Dore Schary.

In addition to his boyhood, another force that influenced him greatly was his first wife, Audrey. Happily, she had the power to direct his talents and energies into channels which gave Hank's abbreviated life most of its happier moments. The vindictiveness of his subsequent break with Audrey only proved her deep importance to Hank. It is often said that the reverse side of the coin of love is hate. When Hank's one great love was flipped in the air and he lost the toss, he had to hurt her. Hank was never neutral about Audrey: if he could not possess her, he had to try to destroy her for anyone else. And perhaps, in her deepest femininity, Audrey could accept this despite the torment, for at least she never suffered a woman's cruelest fate—to be ignored.

In the romantic tradition of the wandering troubadour courting his lady love, Hank dedicated most of his songs to Audrey. The titles of those tunes might well serve as a contents page for the history of the seven stormy years of their marriage: "I Can't Get You Off My Mind," "I'm A Long Gone Daddy," "Please Don't Let Me Love You," "They'll Never Take Her Love From Me," "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry," "There'll Be No Teardrops Tonight," "Your Cheatin' Heart," "You're Gonna Change," "Weary Blues From Waitin'," "Someday You'll Call My Name (and I won't answer)," "I Won't Be Home No More," and finally, "I Can't Escape From You."

So it ran with Hank and Audrey, from "Baby, We're Really In Love" to "Alone And Forsaken."

On one occasion, when Audrey was in the hospital during a temporary split-up with Hank, he went to visit her, bringing along Lycretia, her child by a previous marriage. Audrey, physically ill and sick at heart over her crumbling marriage, turned her face to the wall and refused to talk to him. Crushed by this, Hank had to strike back. At the time he said, "She's got the coldest heart I've ever known."

The result, not long after, was his heart-rending smash hit, "Cold, Cold Heart," which carried in it a deep measure of Hank's wounded pride over the rebuff.

When Audrey finally left Hank for good it was more out of fear than lost affection. Following a late New Year's Eve party he had burst into the house in a wild tantrum of mixed-up rage and drunkenness and shot at her four times.

The incident was like the starting gun of a race with death, for Hank's life ended (*Continued on page* 83)

DEVIL ANSE HATFIELD'S

A simple dispute over a yearling hog sparked it; gunplay, sex and an unwed beauty fanned it into an inferno of bloodshed and violence which raged for sixteen years

By GEORGE O'NEAL

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES WATERHOUSE

WAR WITH THE McCOYS

THE TRIAL that triggered America's bloodiest feud began at high noon, so both clans had plenty of time to gather. Parson Anse Hatfield, who had agreed to be the judge, sat in a rush-bottomed chair in the doorway of his log cabin at Racoon Hollow. In his lap was his family Bible, ready for the witnesses to take the holy oath. Lying on the ground at his feet was a trussed-up razorback hog.

On his left were the Hatfields and their following, most of whom had trooped across the Tug Fork of the Big Sandy that morning from West Virginia. They were grouped around their leader, towering, black-bearded Devil Anse Hatfield, a cousin of Parson Anse. Standing at the parson's right were the McCoys and their connections, mostly from right there in Kentucky. Each contingent numbered around 40 men.

Glaring at each other from opposite sides, were clan leader Randall McCoy, the plaintiff, and his brother-in-law, Floyd Hatfield, the defendant.

"Before we get goin'," the parson said, "I want everybody's gun stacked outside." When that was done, with a good deal of growling, Parson Anse picked six Hatfields and six McCoys to form a jury and told them to line up beside the hog. Being the injured party, or thinking himself so, Randall had the first say, as he would in a regular court of law, though these mountaineers knew little of such things; they didn't have much "book learning." Clad in blue jeans and butternut homespun,

they were a rough-looking lot—but they were sticklers for what they felt was proper procedure.

"This past spring," Randall testified, "before I turned out my shoats to forage, I cut my mark on this one's ear, like we always do." Hunkering down, butt on heels, he fingered the yearling's ear. "Take a look. There it is, plain as day: a slash with a twist." After the jury inspected the slash, he straightened up. "But what did I find, passin' the time of day with Floyd Hatfield—my shoat in his pen! And him wedded to my wife's sister!"

Dwelling at some length on the insulting remarks Floyd had heaped upon him, Randall finally hooked his thumbs under his galluses and stepped back, ready for cross-examination.

"I'm asking you just one question," Floyd drawled, bored with the controversy. "Anybody see you slash that there shoat?"

TAKEN by surprise, Randall blurted out: "Naw, I done it before daylight. Everybody else was still asleepin'."

"You sure nobody saw you?"

Randall scowled. "I just tole you! I done it by lantern light, all by myself."

"That's all I need to know," Floyd said, his voice suddenly brisk and sharp.

The Hatfields exchanged smug glances, as if to say, "The fat's in the fire!" Among the McCoys, there was an uneasy scuffling of rawhide boots on the hardpan yard.

Randall's face clouded. He realized he had slipped up, but did his best to remedy the damage by calling seven stalwart witnesses, every one a McCoy or a close relative. The first one said: "A slash with a twist is Randall's mark, and that's a fact, so this here pig must be his'n." The others backed that up, but they were unable to add anything more convincing.

When Floyd's turn came, he squared his shoulders and gazed at the jury. "I aim to be neighborly," he said. "Every fall, when I'm tracking down razorbacks, I study both ears before I drive any of 'em to my pigpen. That there slash Randall's carrying on about, it ain't nothing but a hawthorn scratch, twist or no twist."

Beckoning the jury closer, he crouched and pointed to his mark on the other ear. "See that? A deep slit with two nicks across it. No hawthorn never done that! But I'm not asking you to take my word for it. I got a witness here that seen me make my mark." Rising to his full height, he boomed: "Come around here, Bill Staton!"

That startled the McCoys. Bill Staton was married to a sister of Devil Anse Hatfield, but Staton had a reputation for telling the truth, come hell or high water. He wouldn't tell a lie to curry favor with anybody—and everybody knew it.

Striding around from a thicket behind the house, where Floyd had kept him hidden, Bill Staton took the oath and got right down to business. "Last spring, I come across the Tug and spent the night with Floyd," he said. "The next morning I went out to the pigpen where he was marking his shoats. I seen him put his mark on this one. A slash and two cross-hatches."

"How you know it was this one?" Floyd asked.

"Hell fire, Floyd, what's come over you? You know how I know."

"It ain't what *I* know that counts, it's what *you* know. Go on, tell 'em."

"Well, the big boar give this here shoat a jab with his tusk, to drive it off from the trough, an' gouged it in the jowl. Look there." He pointed. "You can see the scar."

This conclusive evidence elated all the Hatfields except Parson Anse. From the grim expression on the faces of the McCoys, he could see that he was in a tight spot, and he didn't like it.

Ever since the Civil War, in which the Hatfields had fought for the Confederacy and the McCoys for the Union, trouble had been brewing between the clans. Devil Anse started out a lieutenant and came back a captain, but Randall McCoy, 20 years older, didn't even win a corporal's stripes. After the surrender, they met each other on the way home. The sight of Captain Hatfield's silver bars and his haughty manner infuriated the buck private. "Who won the war?" Randall jeered. "Don't you try to act high and mighty with me. The McCoys don't lick nobody's boots." Bad feeling flared up again several years later when Randall's brother, Harmon McCoy, outslickered Devil Anse in a horse trade. To get even, Devil Anse shot Harmon in the shoulder and Harmon swore he'd kill Devil Anse next time they met. Soon afterward, Harmon's riddled body was found in a cave, but the crime was never pinned on Devil Anse.

Time after time, Parson Anse had tried to be the peacemaker, but here he was now, in the fall of 1873, caught in the middle. Gripping his Bible with both hands, he shut his eyes a few moments and then said: "Don't let me see nobody sneaking around to fetch their guns. We'll settle this thing fair and square. I'll poll this jury right out here in the open and we'll abide by their verdict, whatever it is."

"What if they're deadlocked, six against six, the way you picked 'em?" Devil Anse growled.

"Then I'll break the tie myself," the parson said.

As he called the names, first a Hatfield then a McCoy, the jurors voted strictly along family lines, until the only one left was Selkirk McCoy. Even though he lived on the West Virginia side of the Tug in a region dominated by the Hatfields and was married to one of their distant relatives, Selkirk had always strung along with his own clan.

Instead of calling his name, Parson Anse looked him straight in the eye, as if pleading with him to put aside family feeling and do the right thing.

"Don't look at me like that, Parson," Selkirk said. "You know the fix I'm in."

THE parson sighed. "All right. You want me to take you off the hook, by handing down a decision myself, without you having your say?"

"No, by God, I ain't that lily-livered." Selkirk stared with contempt at his five kinsmen who had voted in Randall's favor. "I reckon the time comes when every man has to take his stand, or knuckle under." He turned his face back to Parson Anse. "Aint no doubt about it. That there hog belongs to Floyd Hatfield."

While the crowd was still milling around, Hatfields gloating and McCoys muttering, Bill Staton made the foolish mistake of walking over to Selkirk and shaking his hand. Floyd McCoy, Randall's son, grabbed his brother Calvin by the arm and nodded toward Staton.

A few weeks later, Staton and his brother John were poling a flatboat up the Tug when they came around a bend and saw Calvin and Floyd McCoy in another scow headed downstream. Swerving their boats to opposite banks, the Statons and McCoys started firing rifles at each other and kept it up without drawing blood until night closed in. The following month, the same two

Jonse Hatfield was smitten the very first time he saw Rosanna; it didn't matter to him that she was a McCoy.

McCoys waylaid Bill Staton and gave him a vicious beating with hickory sticks. As soon as he was able to get around again, Staton spread the word that he aimed to kill the next McCoy he ran into, whoever it was. That, too, was a sad error. One day Bill went rabbit hunting and never came back. Buzzards circling over a ridge on the Kentucky side of the Tug led a search party to his body. The top of his head had been blown off with a shotgun.

Ellison Hatfield, married to Bill Staton's sister, learned that two of Randall's nephews, Paris and Sam McCoy, were hiding out in the woods. Swearing out warrants for them, Ellison tracked them down and brought them to trial. Both brothers admitted having a scrap with Staton, but each claimed the other fired the fatal shot. It didn't make any difference. The obliging Kentucky jury wasted no time acquitting both on grounds of self-defense.

Though it failed, Ellison's bold attempt at revenge through legal process started a trend that kept the Tug Valley feud simmering for several years. McCoys went over into Logan County and annoyed Hatfields by filing trivial charges, such as selling moonshine to minors, or using profane language. Hatfields retaliated by accusing McCoys of equally inconsequential offenses, like carrying concealed weapons or committing disorderly conduct. But few of these cases ever came to trial. Soon, no Hatfield could be convicted in West Virginia and no McCoy in Kentucky when the complaining witness was a member of the other tribe.

Unable to get satisfaction out of prosecutors in office, each clique began to take a new interest in elections in the other's domain. Lonely mountaineers had always been attracted to nearby elections as occasions for sociability and hell-raising. Now, spurred by the incentive of electioneering for candidates who might favor their cause, delegations trooped to the polls in unfriendly territory with a jug of white lightning hooked over every saddle horn.

Two memorable gatherings took place on Blackberry Creek, one in April, 1880, the other in August, 1882. At the first outing, rambunctious Jonse Hatfield, Devil Anse's oldest son, got agreeably acquainted with vivacious Rosanna, one of Randall McCoy's pretty daughters; at the second, Ellison Hatfield ran afoul of three of Randall's trouble-making sons.

Eighteen-year-old Jonse was taking a drink when he first caught sight of vivacious Rosanna riding into the clearing behind her brother Tolbert, astride his brindle nag, with her arms around his waist. Jonse almost dropped the jug. He could sense that this lively filly was pleasure bound, and dressed for it. The lavender sunbonnet had flopped back from her golden curls and her sky-blue eyes were sparkling. Her yellow skirt was hiked up so her bare legs could grip the horse's flanks, and she was wearing pointed store-bought shoes tied with black ribbons. As she slid down and fluffed out her skirt, giving Jonse a sideways glance, he stuck the corncob stopper into the jug and said to his brother Cap: "Come sundown, don't you hang around looking for me. I'm aiming to attend to some urgent business."

"You already got more gals than you can take care of, Bubber," Cap said. "You better steer clear of her. You know who she is, don't you?"

"Don't care." Jonse punched Cap playfully in the ribs. "When the fruit's ripe, that's the time to pick it. But you keep your big trap shut."

Swinging the jug and whistling, Jonse sauntered into a dense thicket of mountain laurel. He was sitting with his back to a buckeye tree, when he heard someone coming cautiously down the rocky path, softly whistling the same jaunty tune.

"I do declare, Rosanna McCoy," he said, imitating a querulous mother, "you astonish me! Traipsing down in the woods like that, after a man, and him a son of Devil Anse Hatfield. Ain't you got no shame?"

Rosanna stopped, teetered slightly and tossed her blonde curls. "If you was half the man they claim you are, you'd help me along this stony trail."

"Who claims what?" Jonse bounded up and faced her.

She raised her chin. "You know *who*, and you know what. Way I hear it, must of (*Continued on page* 74)

THE MAN WHO

From a shoestring beginning eleven

By JOSEPH STOCKER

THE BIG suburban shopping center on the outskirts of Phoenix, Ariz., looked like a real goner in the crackling flames.

The fire had broken out in a shoe store near the middle of the low-slung, block-long development. It flashed through the tiers of cardboard shoe boxes with breathtaking speed. Quickly it blasted through the thin walls, spreading into adjacent stores. Streaky columns of black-and-gray smoke churned into the sky.

What complicated the situation was the fact that the city fire department was powerless. The shopping center lay 75 feet beyond the city limits—just outside the limits of municipal fire protection. It was a setup for a small miracle, and the miracle happened.

Up thundered three fire trucks, sirens yowling. Two more came and then another two. All bore the insignia of the Rural Fire Protection Company. Firemen, trailing hoses, swarmed in toward the blaze. They laid down a bombardment of water. The rolling avalanche of flame suddenly faltered, then fell back and began to subside. Before very long it was out. The shoe store was destroyed, but the other seven businesses in the $150,000 shopping center—and the livelihoods of the people working there—had been saved.

As firefighting goes, there was nothing very remarkable about that feat. What was remarkable was the fire department itself. For the Rural Fire Protection Company represents the successful defiance of two basic principles of firefighting. (*Continued on page* 70)

Witzeman's firefighting service was a godsend to homeowners outside the limits of municipal fire protection.

BOUGHT A FIRE DEPARTMENT

years ago, Lou Witzeman has built a red-hot idea into a quarter-million-dollar business

THE AMAZING SUCCESS STORY OF MICKEY SPILLANE

"Boy meets girl, boy is seduced by girl, boy kills girl . . ." With this twist on fiction's oldest formula, a brash young kid from Brooklyn wrote his way into a million dollars

By HENRY ADAMS

IT WAS sweltering hot that afternoon when Mickey Spillane flung back the screen door and bounded in, lugging a load of cold beer. "Knock off, you stiffs," he shouted. "Here's Santa Claus in July!"

The other guys who participated in the free-lance comic-book factory operating in a Brooklyn store turned from their beat-up typewriters and grinned. Pretty soon, with everybody guzzling the brew right out of the can, Mickey flexed the bulging muscles revealed by his T-shirt and sounded off. Unfolding a tabloid on his battered desk, he pounded the double-spread with his fist. "Murder Incorporated's latest victim," he snarled. "A nobody. A plain Joe Citizen. A poor little shoemaker with a wife and three kids, who wasn't bright enough to keep his trap shut about something he just happened to see. This is a hell of a city. It stinks! I wish I was a dick. You know what I'd do?"

"Sure," somebody quipped, "you'd shake 'em down for a grand. You go for the long green, same as everybody else."

"Nuts!" Mickey exploded. "This whole town needs its nose wiped—bad." Nudging a cigarette from his deck of Luckies, he drew it out with his lips, hiked his knee and scratched a kitchen match on his butt-tight jeans. "I wouldn't fool around. I'd tail the torpedo that pulled this till I had him cornered. Then I'd let him have a slug in the belly and kick his teeth in while he was lying there, bleeding to death."

"Cripes!" somebody said. "What's eating you?"

Mickey's eyes burned with fury. The size of a bantam-rooster, with dark, wiry hair, a long sharp nose, pointed chin and bony cheeks, he was one of the lean and hungry Black Irish who always had something eating at them.

"Don't get so excited, chum," somebody else said. "This ain't your fight."

Mickey tossed an empty into the corrugated carton that served as a waste basket and opened another can. "It's everybody's fight, but we're all goofing off. That's the trouble. It's the system. That's where we're licked. Mugs like us working our tails off while potbellied big-shots lap up the gravy: ten-percenters, black market thugs, rent gougers. You know something? Me and Baby got to move out of the dump we're in because they've hiked the ante again. You can't make the grade in this lousy town unless you've got pull. Well, I've had my fill."

All of a sudden his manner changed. His eyes took on a wistful glimmer. His voice dropped, and its tone was eager. "I've found the spot where I figure to spend

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES WATERHOUSE

Mickey's secret: "Start with a smash ending, then write a socko beginning, fill in the middle and tie 'em together."

the rest of my life, up the river."

"Yeah, a view of the Hudson from a barred window in Sing Sing."

"Nuts! It's an old hayfield on the river, eight miles from Newburgh, where the air is sweet and clean. I left George Wilson up there to clear it."

"Don't tell us you're gonna be a squatter!"

"Hell, no! I bought it."

"Bought it! Holy mackerel, somebody get a doctor. He's off his rocker."

"Well, I made a down payment, anyway." Now he was like a kid talking about fixing up a clubroom, bubbling over with excitement. "I'm gonna build a house myself, from start to finish."

"What do you know about building a house?"

"Whatta you have to know? It's easy. The Portland Cement people, they put out a pamphlet, tells you all you need to know. You use cinder blocks and cement."

"Where you gonna get the dough for materials? They'll nick you at least a thousand bucks. You'll never make that kind of money free-lancing comic books."

"You could be right." They were making Mickey sore. Bending over, he pecked on the space bar of his crummy typewriter, thinking fast as he watched the carriage jitter by. "I'll write a novel," he said abruptly, "and get a thousand-dollar advance!"

They hooted. They gave him the horse laugh. Somebody jeered: "Meet the poor man's Ernest Hemingway!" Somebody else groaned: "Get a doctor! This kid's really sick." Another one shook his head sadly. "You couldn't even start the first chapter."

"That's how much you know about it," Mickey retorted. "You don't *start* with the first chapter. You start with a smash ending. After that, you write a socko beginning. Then you fill in the middle and tie 'em together. Don't think I'm dumb about what you put in a novel. I've read a few of 'em, like *The Prisoner of Zenda*. That's my favorite. I must have read it a dozen times." He was very earnest now. "Look," he said, "it's like constructing a joke. You dope out the pay-off first, see? Then you go back and concoct a build-up. It's easy."

The guys were impressed, but not convinced.

"What are you gonna write about?"

"I don't know yet, for sure. But, it's kind of coming to me, from what we were talking about—this lousy city."

"What *you* were talking about."

"Yeah. But I'll tell you this much, it'll be for tomorrow's market. I'll take 'em where they want to go, not where they've already been."

"What you gonna call it?"

Mickey stared at his scuffed-up loafers, his face momentarily expressionless. Long ago, he had formed the habit of shutting out every distraction to concentrate on a single problem till he solved it. Finding a solution, he rarely changed his mind. After a few moments, his chin snapped up. *"I, The Jury,"* he said. "How's that for a title?"

"Not worth a damn," somebody replied. But he must have been wrong. That title has sold more than 5,000,000 copies.

After a good night's sleep, Mickey wrote the smash ending for *I, The Jury*. On the last page, Mike Hammer, his private-eye "hero," faces the gorgeous lady psychiatrist he now knows has murdered his best friend. Mike has previously enjoyed her torrid favors and she is trying to save herself with a repeat performance. With lightning speed Mickey typed his supercharged payoff scene, suffering not even a twinge of labor pains as he gave birth to the purple prose which was to become his trade mark. In exactly 122 titillating words, he accomplished the following:

Had Mike Hammer proclaim himself jury and judge and sentence Charlotte to death;

Described how Charlotte hooked her fingers in her silk panties and delicately removed same, licked her lips with her tongue to make them glisten passionately, sighed to make her bosom quiver, then leaned to kiss Hammer as her arms began an encircling movement;

Shook the room with the boom of Mike Hammer's .45;

Made Charlotte stagger backwards with musical incredulity as she glanced at the bullet hole in her naked tummy;

Had Charlotte ask Mike how could he;

Had Mike tell her it was easy.

There it was. Mickey had his smash ending; all he had to do now was write his "socko beginning, fill in the middle and tie 'em together."

For the next 19 days during that hot summer of 1946, Mickey banged away at his typewriter, with just enough lay-off for snatches of sleep and hasty meals. Typing in single space, he frequently completed a dozen pages without x-ing out a word. When he was through, after pounding out 75,000 words, he slept around the clock. On waking up, he had a foot-and-a-half "hero" sandwich for breakfast, washing it down with three cans of beer. Like his father, James J. Spillane, who was a bartender, Mickey has always shied away from the hard sauce. But he has a healthy yen for beer.

An only child, Mickey first filled his sturdy lungs with city air on March 9, 1918, in Brooklyn. As soon as his devout mother could get him to a priest he was baptized Frank Morrison Spillane, which is by no means as nifty a byline as Mickey Spillane. But by the time

he was a toddler his Irish mug tagged him as a "Mickey" and sent his given name into oblivion.

When he was two years old, his father was tossed out of a job by the advent of Prohibition. James J. moved his little family to Elizabeth, N. J., but they had a hard time there, too, all during Mickey's boyhood.

As the old saying goes, "money was conspicuous by its absence." Even so, Mrs. Spillane had her heart set on an important future for her son. Teaching him manners was next to impossible, but dressing him "right" seemed an attainable goal. A great one with a sewing machine, a set-tub and a wash rag, she turned him out so neat and clean that some of his guttersnipe schoolmates took him for a sissy. They were wrong—and the necessity of proving it made him quick with his dukes.

Mickey wasn't really a scrapper, though. He has always preferred talking to slugging. While still in grammar school, he hit on a good way to prevent sidewalk combat. Any time he faced a tough egg spoiling for a fight, he would clear the atmosphere by telling an exciting ghost story. Before long, even the rowdiest members of the gang would rather listen to his bloodcurdling yarns than punch him in the nose. Thus, at an early age, he developed the storyteller's trick of arousing and holding interest with graphic, fast-moving narrative, stimulated frequently by surprise twists. Later he perfected and used this talent to make himself America's outstanding writer of best sellers. No doubt about it, his accomplishment is stupendous.

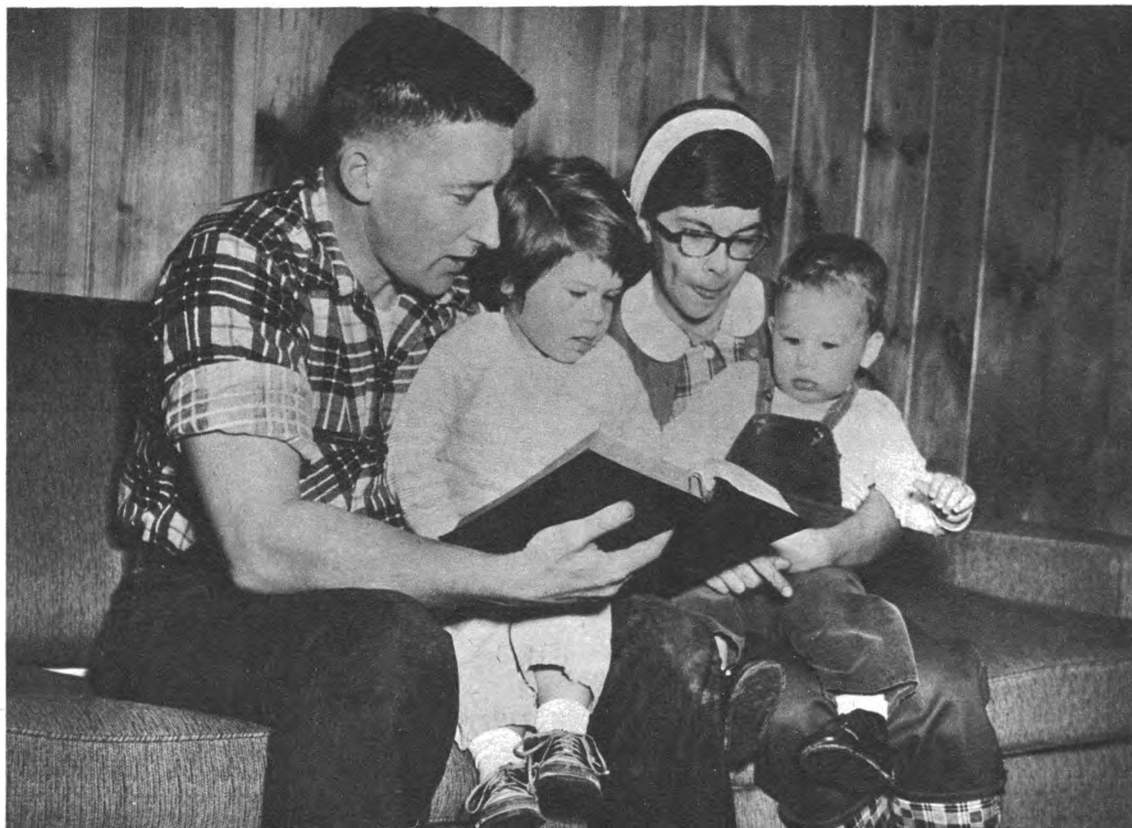
As listed in 1955 by Alice Payne Hackett in *Sixty Years of Best Sellers*, all seven books Mickey Spillane wrote between 1946 and 1952 are included in the 15 all-time top leaders. The record of his seven books at the time of her listing was: *I, The Jury*, 4,441,837 copies sold; *The Big Kill*, 4,158,840; *My Gun Is Quick*, 3,912,419; *The Long Wait* 3,774,374; *Kiss Me Deadly*, 3,773,045; *One Lonely Night*, 3,737,882; and *Vengeance Is Mine*, 3,649,500.

That's a lot of books. In fact, it totals 27,447,897, without including translations published in a dozen foreign countries, or the numerous new editions put out in this country. It's been six years since he has published a book, but his original seven are still selling at the rate of a million a year. Altogether, some 50,000,000 copies have been sold throughout the world and Mickey's royalties from all sources, including movies and TV, total at least a million dollars.

Even if the menace of those rowdy schoolmates hadn't made him sharpen his inventive faculty, Mickey might have done all right as a writer. Born with a vivid imagination, he was brought up on the eerie Irish lore of the "ould" country. But that's true of a lot of other people who have not profited from it. To make the grade in his spectacular manner, you usually have to have a pinch of necessity to go with a nagging inner drive.

While still in knee-pants, Mickey was always chasing a fast buck—to eke out the slim grocery supply. Just before the stock market crash, somebody opened up a miniature golf course across the street. Immediately, he laid out a moppet course in the front yard and raked in coins from kids of men playing the regular course. Another time, a truck spilled 500 blueberry baskets nearby. Growing petunias in them, he peddled them door to door during Holy Week and brought home so much cash his father thought he had robbed the church poor box. *(Continued on page 62)*

Spillane met and married his wife Mary Ann while he was in the Army during World War II. They have two children.



KIDNAPPER FOR

Der Fuhrer himself ordered the suicide mission "to save the Fatherland." With

IN JULY, 1944, the Allied armies were closing in on Germany from both sides. Russian tanks were smashing westward, almost to the borders of the Reich, while in France, American and British troops were preparing themselves for the final breakout that was to take them to the Rhine.

But between those two fronts, in Hitler's secret headquarters (the "wolf lair," as he called it) a strange scene was enacted in the wee hours of a humid summer night. Six officers stood at rigid attention, facing *Der Fuhrer* himself. All six had been summoned suddenly, without explanation, from their posts and now stood in a single line, with Hitler looking directly into their eyes as each in turn briefly outlined his career. Hitler stepped back and asked a question. "Which of you knows Italy, and what do you think of the Italians?" One by one, five of the officers offered hopeful replies; the Italians were their gallant allies, Rome was Germany's partner, and so on. Only the last officer did not answer. Hitler waited, his eyes glued to the face of this six-and-a-half-foot giant. Then the answer came. "*Fuhrer*, I am an Austrian." Hitler's lips began to twitch, then broke into a gleeful grin. Austrians and Italians had been fighting each other for 500 years and cordially hated each other's guts. "Captain Skorzeny, you will stay behind. The rest may go," Hitler said.

When they were alone, Hitler said, "I have a mission for you, Captain Skorzeny, of the highest importance." But what the mission was he did not immediately reveal. Instead, he launched into a long tirade. In tones of rising anger, Hitler said his partner Mussolini had just been betrayed by his own government and arrested. Italy lay wide open to an invasion by the Allies—who already had overrun Sicily. The King of Italy had plotted this treason with Marshal Badoglio; now they meant to go over to the Allies and take Mussolini with them as a prisoner—a sacrificial offering to the Allies.

"I cannot and will not let them do it," Hitler screamed. "You, Skorzeny, are going to save my friend."

Skorzeny listened intently as Hitler warned him of the need for the utmost secrecy. Only five or six other men would know of his decision that

HITLER

By HANS ASHBOURNE ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK LILJEGREN

only 20 men, the swashbuckling captain had to snatch Mussolini from a stronghold

Mussolini must be rescued—no matter whose feelings might be hurt. One of those already informed was General Student, chief of airborne troops, under whose command Skorzeny would act. Neither the General Staff in Italy nor the embassy in Rome must be told anything about it; they couldn't be trusted to keep quiet. Furthermore, no one knew where Mussolini had been taken; Skorzeny would not only have to rescue him, he would first have to find him.

Fixed by the *Fuhrer's* hypnotic stare, Skorzeny was not asked for an opinion. "You will avoid no risk," Hitler concluded. "You will succeed—and your success will have a tremendous effect on the course of the war. This is a mission for which you will be answerable to me personally!" Once outside the *Fuhrer's* door, Skorzeny lighted a badly needed cigarette. There was nothing in Otto Skorzeny's background that would seem to have prepared him for the greatest "snatch job" in history. A Viennese Austrian by birth, Skorzeny had been a prosperous building contractor before the war with the typical Viennese love for "the good things in life"—definitely a man of peace. But once the war broke out, this "man of peace" became a lion. On the Russian front he fought with such skill and daring that soon he found himself a captain and was transferred to "Special Service," Germany's equivalent of the British Commandos. It was there, while training himself and his men in Commando tactics, that he got the call from Hitler's headquarters.

AN aide-de-camp approached him now and requested that he come to General Student's office. Skorzeny found his new chief, jovial and potbellied, drinking beer. "Come in, my child," he said as soon as he saw Skorzeny's huge bulk in the doorway. "Come in and have your last beer on this earth."

General Student then briefed Skorzeny on the current situation in Rome. "Historically, Italy, is the whore of Europe," Student concluded, "and right now she is thinking of changing lovers. I tell you, I have just come from Rome and I've never seen anything like it. Everyone is betraying everyone else: the Germans, Mussolini, the King and the Allies. Where are they keeping our fat friend? If I knew I wouldn't be here now. But one thing is certain. If you and I don't find him, we can share a cell in one of Himmler's 'rest camps.'"

As soon as the interview with the beer-drinking general was over, Skorzeny telephoned his second-in-command back at Special Service Training Center. Lieutenant Radl's excited voice came over the long distance phone: "Can you tell me about it on the phone?" Skorzeny told him he couldn't; all he would say was that Radl should round up 50 of their best men, including those who spoke Italian, and fly them to Rome where Skorzeny would meet them. "Equipment? Bring everything," he said. "I'll send you a teleprinted list of extras when I have a moment." Midnight found Skorzeny sending long lists of special equipment to Radl: portable radios, grenades, tracer bullets, Italian money, priests' robes for use as disguises, black hair dye and false papers . . .

The next morning Skorzeny and General Student flew to Rome, where six hours later Radl and his men joined them. Everything in Rome was exactly as Student had described it. Machiavelli would have felt perfectly at home. The King, with Mussolini safely tucked away somewhere, was negotiating with the Allies for a change of partners, while outwardly pretending to the *Wehrmacht* that he intended to continue fighting beside them.

Skorzeny saw that in this game of bluff and counterbluff the Italian dictator was the vital piece. But where was he?

The major industry of Italy was rumors, and Rome was full of them. All kinds of wild reports were making the rounds, each one supposedly from a "reliable source"—a general, an ambassador, a Vatican statesman. Mussolini was in an insane asylum; he had been flown to Portugal; he was still hidden away in Rome; he and his mistress had jumped off a mountain top together. And so it went for three weeks while Skorzeny and Student traced down one hopeless rumor after another. The cell they would share if they failed in this mission began to loom uncomfortably real.

Then came a break. German *Abwehr* (counterintelligence) intercepted a letter from a hotel chambermaid to her lover, complaining that the "nice hotel" in which she worked had suddenly filled up with a lot of "nasty soldiers" guarding some terribly important "big shot," and concluding by asking him to come and tell all those nasty, rough soldiers to "stop trying to do things to her." The postmark on the letter read Gran Sasso.

Simultaneously, Skorzeny got a report that trade unionists were complaining about the injustice of expelling a hotel's civilian staff at a moment's notice, "simply to accommodate that Fascist, Mussolini." It wasn't hard to put the two reports together, and an old travel folder completed the picture. Mussolini was being held in the Hotel Campo Imperatore perched on the top of Gran Sasso Mountain.

Skorzeny ordered a plane and flew over Gran Sasso, 300 miles to the north. There were no roads leading up to it and no landing field. The only access to this "bird's nest" was a cable railroad, both ends of which, Student told Skorzeny, were guarded by a regiment of Alpinis—mountain troops loyal only to the King of Italy. It would take a division to storm such an objective.

Aerial photographs, intelligence reports and old travel folders were in agreement: *nothing* could land up there. The more Skorzeny looked at pictures of the hotel, famed for its precarious perch on the soaring mountain, the more he was convinced there had to be *some* way to get up there, if only he had time to think.

THEN, quite suddenly, Skorzeny found the answer. Nothing could land, quite true. But something could "crash"—something like a glider without wheels. He raced for the phone, and once again the bewildered Radl received a list of improbable supplies, including, among other things, a glider and a double-bitted axe!

General Student, when he heard Skorzeny's plan, could only gulp, sputter and finally say, "Otto, this is the most hare-brained scheme I've ever heard, and believe me, my dear child, I've heard quite a few." But Skorzeny had expected such a response and wasn't disturbed by it. He pointed to a photograph of the hotel and showed Student a small flat piece of ground at the right of the building; it might have been a tennis court but now showed no signs of use. That, plus the small front lawn, was enough to crash-land a glider on, and that was exactly what Skorzeny intended to do. The general begged him to reconsider, to allow him to plan an airborne attack, tactical landings, reconnaissance flights...

Skorzeny smiled. "Even if all this were possible, General, you and I—not to mention *Il Duce*—would have died from old age by then." Finally, after another hour of argument, Skorzeny offered to drop the plan if he, Student, forbade it. Student had no intention of sticking out his neck so far; the Gran Sasso raid was on.

That night Skorzeny assembled his men and told them he was going to lead them on a dangerous and difficult operation, ordered personally by Hitler. "Candidly," he said, "I don't give much for our chances of bringing it off. Therefore, anyone who prefers to think twice about the mission, or who has a family to worry about, can drop out now. He will have nothing to fear. His refusal won't be known outside our ranks, nor will it be put into his service record; and we shall respect him no less."

Skorzeny could have spared himself the trouble. When the call for volunteers came, every man stepped forward and he had trouble convincing them that only 20 could be picked. The remaining hours of the night sped by as they planned a thousand details: direction of approach, position in landing, distance, altitude, equipment, weapons and timetable. Since this might be their last night on earth, Skorzeny and Radl skipped sleep and drank a couple of bottles of excellent champagne instead, both agreeing that life was damned good and it was a shame to leave it.

The next morning, September 12, 1944, was bright and windless. The small knot of German commandos gathered early at the airfield. General Student arrived to wish them luck and offer himself as a "volunteer," much to the amusement of Skorzeny's men. The tension was eased with this laugh over the idea of the ponderous general in the glider.

Last to arrive was Skorzeny himself, accompanied by General Student's personal pilot, Captain Gerlach. Skorzeny had asked Student if he could borrow Gerlach for the special job. The general had said, "Certainly, if he is crazy enough to listen to you." Gerlach reacted like the others. He was eager to go. A hurried, last minute conversation took place between Skorzeny and Student. Then they were off.

With a powerful roar, the tow plane raced down the runway and rose into the sky, the glider swaying along behind it. As the two circled the field, General Student and his staff watched in horrified disbelief as first one and then the other glider wheel was chopped off and hurtled to the ground. That was the reason for the two-bladed axe, which was then dropped to save weight.

The Italian guard sitting on the front lawn of the Hotel Campo Imperatore could not believe his eyes. A few moments before he had been dozing in the afternoon sun; now he was frozen with shock. One minute there had been nothing before him but the unending range of the Italian Alps, and in the next second a huge glider was plowing straight toward him across the well-kept lawn.

The glider burst open and a giant of a man leaped out, Luger in hand. He raced up to the entrance of the hotel, jumping over the petrified guard as though he were a tree stump. Skorzeny plunged into the first doorway; inside was a signalman tapping at a transmitter. A kick sent the chair from under him; a shove of Skorzeny's huge shoulder sent the transmitter unit crashing to the floor. But the room led nowhere. He back-tracked and went full-tilt around a corner, his men pounding along behind him. (*Continued on page* 81)

In no time flat the Regent's son was rolled up in the Persian rug and smuggled out of the palace, destined for captivity in the Third Reich.

DEFINITION OF YELLOW

Tom faced the three tough young punks in the dim light and tasted the fear rising in his throat. But which is the real cowardice, he asked himself, the fear for one's own skin, or the fear of looking like a coward?

By JOHN KEASLER

ILLUSTRATED BY BUD PARKE

TOM HAGER hadn't realized he was staring at the tall boy; his eyes had been unseeing, sightless in far off thought. Awareness returned abruptly, as it does, like clicking on a light switch. Tom was astonished by the venom in the boy's pale eyes as he leaned against the sign of the all-night hamburger joint, staring back at Tom, appraisingly, like an animal. The other two were staring, too.

Tom, instinctively feeling challenged, kept his own gaze locked into the stranger's because dropping his eyes, the ancient law said, would indicate fear.

My God, Hager, he thought then, bitterly, this is the end of a perfect day . . . playing stare-down with three punks at three o'clock in the morning. So he purposely dropped his eyes: The Civilized Man.

But they kept staring at him—the tall youth in the too-sharp sport coat; the squat lad in the leather jacket, the third one with a face like a weasel, carefully cleaning his nails with a pocketknife. Lovely children, Hager thought; waiting, doubtless, for the pusher to bring their four o'clock feeding.

The hamburger stand, The Blue Palace, was alongside the filling station where Tom's car battery was being charged. The blue neon light mixed biliously with the

blatant orange glow from the bulb over the gas pumps. The lights in the empty night made patterns in the oil slick on the dirty concrete ramp of the station. A sallow thin moon lay on its back in the still summer sky. Low thunder rumbled in the distance.

They were still staring, hard. He felt it in his stomach, the slight chill. This kind needs no reason, he thought. This is the kind that has no logic, has merely the rage waiting to jell. *An unprovoked and brutal assault by three young hoodlums last night resulted in . . .* What the hell causes it?

Casually, pointedly looking at his car hitched patiently to the charger, Tom lit a cigarette, checked his watch, straightened his tie, looked at the sullen sky; he did the things a man does to show that all he wants of life is to be able to mind his own business.

They kept staring; he heard a murmur, then a low laugh. He turned completely away, pushing his hat back on his thick graying black hair, forcing himself to put out of his mind the pointless, unmotivated menace behind him. What the hell makes them like that? He looked at his watch again. Another ten minutes or so, he thought, and the battery will be up.

He tightened his lips in annoyance at the destiny which gave him a five-year-old sedan with a weak battery; at the rut he had fallen into; at the pallid householder's worries always stirring slightly in his mind; at the newspaper business; at the years which brought no salvation on schedule, only grayness and the start of flab at his waistline; at his acceptance of it all; at his own ineffectual resolutions. Specifically, he thought, he was annoyed at the over-age adolescence in himself which had kept him from going straight home instead of sitting in the city room stud game after the last edition was in. At all the dullness in his life.

He had lost $55 which he could ill afford to lose, although he had been heavy winner until two o'clock. He had wanted to quit, then, out of pure boredom. The beer had tasted flat, the cigarettes tasted like solder flux, the 50-cent-limit game palled on him and he had thought: "Here I sit, bored and paunchy, in a nice, safe, low-limit life."

"Deal me out," he had said, at two-fifteen.

"Running home to Mommy with the proceeds?" Ricks, the assistant city editor, asked acidly.

Tom snapped, "Not necessarily. You want to take the limit off?"

"I eat rewrite men for breakfast."

"Table stakes, then," Riley, the slot man, a bachelor, said happily. "You get caught bluffing, you lose."

Six hands later Tom was tapped out, losing on three eights. Leaving the newspaper office the elevator man paid him an elderly $5 debt. Walking through the humid, cheerless air toward the parking lot Tom had fingered the single, rumpled bill in his pocket. At least, he had thought, I didn't start writing checks to get even as I would have done a few years ago. But is that good?" he asked himself, starting the long drive home. Or is it that you've merely become a four-bit player at heart?

That fifty-five bucks, he thought, driving along the too-familiar, 30 mph street, would have bought an awful lot of cough syrup, made a washing machine payment or even—God help me!—grass seed!

He eased the Pontiac up to 45, checking frequently in the rear-view mirror. I could drive this heap right on through the safe-and-sane zone of my life, he thought. Somewhere up ahead there were hot Mexican roads where the dust gave you an excuse to stop for a tequila with lemon and salt. There were cool blacktop roads in the pine woods of the Northwest where you might suddenly emerge into an orchard laden with ripe, bursting Oregon cherries. There were winding roads where the cold Pacific was in view for miles and the frothy foam made your mouth water for a beer. I could go to any of these places, he thought. *Sure!* But he liked the idea. Good Old Pontiac, he thought, will your wheels retract? Can you take right off and get me out of it all? Will either of us aging models ever again soar a little, from the pure joy of living?

"Is that you, Tom?" his wife asked sleepily. "It's me," he said. "Who were you expecting, Tab Hunter?"

Irritably he pushed the accelerator down. The engine spluttered, out of gas. He managed to coast into the station. He bought five gallons of regular and wondered what he would have done without the five bucks. Then he ran the battery down trying to get the engine started. Story of my life, Tom Hager thought . . . stalled.

Turning, the trio forgotten momentarily, he flicked his cigarette away impatiently and strode toward his car. The cigarette butt bounced once and landed between the feet of the tallest one. Tom saw it out of the corner of his eye, was disturbed at the sudden fright he felt and only with an effort resisted the impulse to blurt out, "Sorry!" Instead, he kept walking toward his car. He stood there staring, with great concentration, at the mysterious dials on the charger—hoping he hadn't triggered the three.

But he sensed the boy coming even before he heard the footsteps; he felt his nerves tighten.

"Hey, man."

Tom looked around. It wasn't the tall boy. It was the one who cleaned his fingernails with a knife, the one

with the weasel face. Tom said coolly, "Yes?"

"I want to take you to my leader."

"What?"

"You deef, man? I say, I want to take you to my fuhrer. He yonder would speak with you. You read me?"

The unsmiling weasel face hardened as the silence dragged out. "You no come, hey?"

Looking into the little eyes, Tom quit thinking "boy." At least 20, he thought, with very old snake eyes.

"So you do not talk," Weasel said musingly. "You do not come and you do not talk. I will take those tidings, man."

Through the queasy orange-blue light the weasel walked away, his hips swaying, not effeminately; writhingly reptillian. Comes now trouble, Tom thought uneasily; just what I need tonight, trouble.

THE bearer of tidings said loudly to the tall one, "No message from citizensville."

The tall one said nothing, letting the cigarette hang on his lower lip. The squat one in the jacket said, "No diplomatic note?"

"A enigma," Weasel said. "Silent as a library lion."

The tall one pushed his lip out and let the cigarette drop from his mouth to the pavement, looked up suddenly and directly at Tom. Tom looked back quickly at the charger.

"Fearsville," the squat one said loudly, across the ramp.

"Funksville," said Weasel.

The tall one began to move across the ramp, slumping, thumbs in his belt. Tom recalled a front-page story of two days ago:

The new one-man patrol car system inaugurated last month has resulted already in a sharp decrease in juvenile hooliganism, Police Chief Austin Mithers told the Board of Aldermen today.

The tall one, wide shoulders sagging theatrically, jaw purposely slack, eyes expressionless, the felt hat with the turned-up brim low over his eyes, stood very close to Tom, his chest almost touching Tom's shoulder.

"Merchant," he said in a monotone, "you throw fire at me—right *at* me. Then you get impolite to my friend. I do not like these things very much, you know? You desire to say you are sorry, man?"

The other two strolled up. They know and love the game, Tom thought. These are the ones who maim—except now they are not statistics from a reporter calling in a story, now they are right here. What the hell makes them do this?

Weasel kept doing his nails. Parings curled and dropped to the oil slick. They were waiting.

The rising rate of teen-age violence in America can be traced in part to a lack of supervised recreation, R. B. Marvin, president of Youth International, said here yesterday in urging the formation of more youth clubs, based on what he called "pal-ship and spiritual togetherness."

The knife blade moved like a mirror in the light, delicately paring the weasel's claws. The squat one had senseless eyes. They kept waiting, on eye level with his own. These are the faces of badly flawed men, Tom thought, whatever the reasons for the flaws. These are the predators who can smell fear, the wolverines who are made for unreasoning violence. . . . *to the city hospital where his condition was termed "fair."*

"Citizen!" the tall one said suddenly then. "Now, about this query I put to you? Your answer, it is what?"

"Oh!" Tom said, as if he had just understood. "Oh, I see what you mean. That cigarette I flicked? Purely absentminded of me, no offense. I'm sorry about it, forget it." He made himself smile an apologetic smile.

The three still stared. No, that would not be enough. The squat one curled his lip in thought. Weasel spat on the fender of Tom's car. The tall one hung another cigarette on his loose lip. "Light it, merchant, eh?" he commanded.

Too much, Tom thought, it is getting too much.

"Light me," the tall one repeated.

"He is deef," the weasel said. "Seemingly he is."

All I have to do is light the cigarette, Tom thought.

The attendant ambled out of the station then, a gray-faced man, his sagging blue cotton uniform a despairing parody of corporation-minded smartness. Tom saw the quickest flicker cross the attendant's face. He gets the pitch, Tom thought, and immediately deals himself out. Here is the great universal non-witness, the ubiquitous unidentified bystander, the inevitable minder-of-his-own-business.

"Buck-fifty, Jack," the attendant said, looking at nobody, swiftly disengaging the battery cables, slamming down the hood, making change, walking rapidly away from things which didn't concern him. There it is, Tom thought, and oddly, a poem came to mind: "A primrose by the river's brim, a yellow primrose was to him and it was nothing more." That's me, Tom thought, a patsy, ripe for plucking. Yes, that attendant is a realist indeed. Then Tom stood there in the night to face his decision under the thin white moon.

For the first time he noticed the convertible parked in the Blue Palace parking area, saw the silent faces staring with interest—three young couples, after a date. They must have just pulled in, Tom thought, hearing a squeak of female laughter cut off in the middle. Hager's Law, he thought: The number of witnesses decreases in direct proportion to the need. They were just going to sit there and see how it all came out, before leaving.

"All right!" grated the tall one, his monotone gone hoarse. "You going to light me or get big trouble. Which?"

Tom looked down at his right hand and the cigarette lighter which, without his even knowing it, was already in his fingers. I am a family man, he thought; I am not as young as I used to be; I am old enough to use my head; surely nobody would blame me; what is wrong with lighting the cigarette? But it would not work and he knew it wouldn't and he dropped the lighter back into his pocket.

THE decision was made. *The wrong one, the wrong one!* his mind screamed into his ear. So he loosened his shoulders and he let his knees flex a little and he said with the cold anger distilled from his fear, "Get lost, punk."

He bored his gaze into the tall one's pale eyes which widened in surprise and sudden wariness and confusion. The squat one was also right in front of Tom, so he paid no attention to him. To the weasel poised at his left, Tom said, still without moving his eyes, "You make a move with that toy of yours and I'll send you to jail with a broken arm."

This hasn't been a good day at all, Tom thought.

"Now you, you rotten little hood," Tom said to the tall one still impaled on his stare, (*Continued on page* 80)

"My Favorite Girl" Photo Contest

Sweetheart, wife, or the girl next door . . . Who's the gal who brings a gleam to your eye? Here's your chance to show her off and win some cash at the same time. Just send us a simple black-and-white-snapshot of your favorite girl. All you have to do is mail it to CLIMAX Magazine, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, New York, accompanied by the girl's written permission to publish the picture. If your picture wins 1st Prize, CLIMAX will send you a check for $25. For every other photo we use each month, we will pay $10. On the back of your entry, please print your name and address and explain in a single sentence what the lady of your choice means to you. Do not enclose return postage. None of the photos submitted will be returned. Color pictures will not be eligible, and please do not send irreplaceable photos.

1st Prize. J. Frank Toms of Lafayette, Indiana, guessed right when he said, "I think Yvonne is a prize-winner in anyone's book."

Texans aren't shy about their girls, so C. E. Crawford of Longview says, "She is to me what peaches are to cream."

"With the prettiest smile around, Ellie stands poised at the door of fame," says Neil Glasscock of Cullman, Ala.

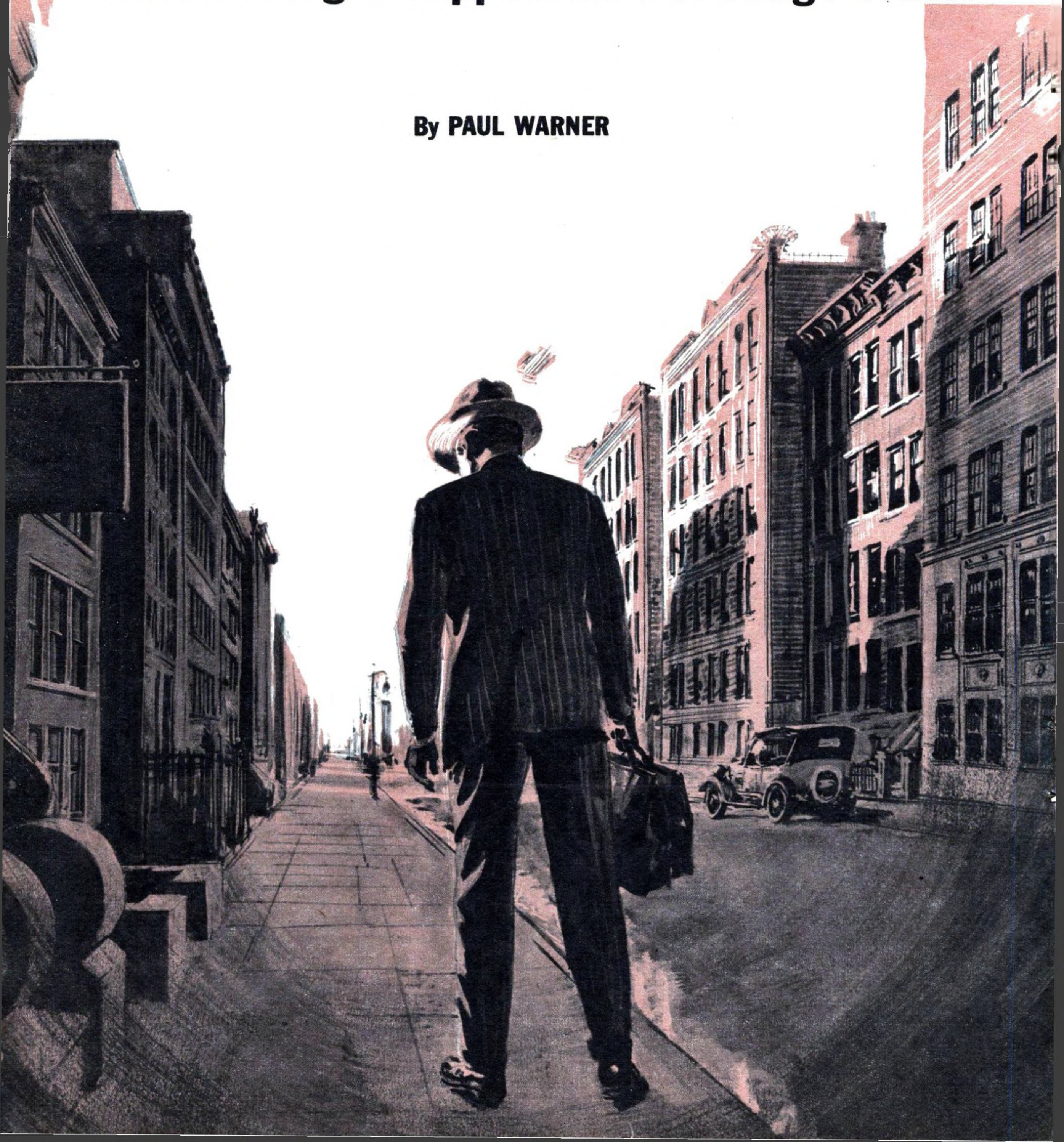
"She's a girl with many charms and a heart full of love," says George Gaylor of Dayton, Ohio, about his dark-haired Anne.

"This lively lass has a smile as big as the world," says Ken Potter of Columbus, Ohio. "I call her my beauty in a business suit."

MISSING FOR 29 YEARS

The Puzzling Disappearance of Judge Crater

By PAUL WARNER



Almost three decades have passed, but federal and state police are still running down leads on Case No. 13595, trying to find the most famous missing person of all time

ON THE porch of his summer cottage at Belgrade Lakes, Me., Judge Joseph Force Crater was smoking a panatela and reading the New York *Times*. With the Depression tightening its grip on the whole country, there wasn't much in the paper to be cheerful about that Sunday, August 3, 1930. But Judge Crater couldn't complain. At 41, he was sitting pretty.

In April, Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt had appointed him a justice of the New York Supreme Court to finish the unexpired term of a retired judge. For three months, Judge Crater had worked hard to create a good impression. Now, with strong backing in high places, his nomination and election in the fall to a full 14-year term, with a salary of $22,500 a year, was practically in the bag.

Or was it? A frown crossed Crater's distinguished square-cut face. On Friday, when he dropped into the offices of Senator Robert F. Wagner, who was going abroad, his old benefactor had seemed glad to see him and thanked him for the *bon voyage* gift. But somehow, the conversation kept drifting and the the judge left without receiving any assurance that the senator would support him publicly.

Walking down the corridor sunk in thought, perhaps scowling, as he often did, Judge Crater noticed that several lawyer acquaintances were gazing at him speculatively. Squaring his shoulders, he gave them a jovial greeting and passed on.

Looking back on it later, he wondered. Did those grinning imps know something? Had any ugly rumors reached the senator? Impossible! He was imagining things. Sure, there were soreheads who begrudged him his success—envious because for several years Tammany judges had been tossing him fat fees to serve as receiver for big bankrupt companies. So what? Somebody had to do it and political plums like that always went to an organization man like him. They might be envious, too, because he was a lady-killer, with a reputation around Times Square for being a slick operator with showgirls. A vigorous man who worked hard had to relax occasionally—but nobody would ever pin anything on him in that department, either. His tracks were neatly covered. Besides, Mayor Jimmy Walker was his pal.

With a disdainful gesture, he flicked the ash from his 50-cent cigar. Just let them try to smear him! He'd fix their little red wagons.

Thumbing through the financial section, he ran his eye over the stock quotations and grunted with satisfaction. Another nose-dive in prices since he unloaded the previous June, when he had needed some ready money. Then the phone rang, a rare event at this quiet retreat in the woods. The abrupt jangling made him jump. Hell's bells! At this stage of the game, he couldn't afford to get jittery.

A moment later, Stella was standing in the living room doorway, smiling pleasantly. In the 13 years since their marriage, seven days after getting her divorce from her first husband, Stella had put on some weight. But she was still good-looking and she could cook—even the savory rich food he craved but usually only got at his favorite restaurants.

"It's for you, Joe," she said. "Long distance, from New York."

Dropping his paper, he said: "How far do you have to get away before they leave you alone? What do they want? I mean, who is it?"

Stella blinked, a little puzzled by this unaccustomed bruskness. Joe never told her anything about his business and she was glad he didn't. A homebody, she preferred to remain in the background. "The operator didn't say and I didn't ask her. I didn't think you wanted me to."

Unlimbering his long legs, Joe Crater crossed the porch in his short, choppy gait which always struck strangers as odd in a rugged man six feet tall and weighing 185 pounds. At the doorway, he patted Stella's sunburned cheek and gave her his most reassuring smile, which was sure to win voters by the thousand when he started campaigning. Stella smiled back at him. It was going to be wonderful for her to have her man all to herself for three whole weeks, before court reconvened on August 25. They had no children—just each other.

"Whatever it is," the judge said, scowling at the phone, "I can handle it."

As a popular lecturer to law classes at Fordham and New York University, Crater had cultivated the habit of speaking slowly and distinctly. He did so now, over the phone, but in the adjacent kitchen, getting dinner

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Forty-one years old when he dropped out of sight, dapper Judge Crater was known to have a weakness for showgirls.

ready, Stella didn't pay the slightest attention to what he was saying. Later, when questioned by detectives, she couldn't recall a word he uttered—not even a name that might have been dropped inadvertently. As for tracing the phone call, that came to a dead end in a drugstore phone booth. But his wife did remember what he had said when he appeared in the kitchen with a railroad timetable in his hand.

"I've got to take the night train back to New York," he announced, his voice dull and restrained.

"Oh, Joe!" she cried. "Can't you put it off? We were going to have so much fun."

"No," he replied, then mumbled in a way that was unlike him, as if the words had a bitter taste: "I've got to straighten those fellows out."

She didn't ask him what fellows and he made no further reference to them. Stepping outdoors, he went over to the cabin occupied by their chauffeur, Fred Kahler, and instructed him to be ready to drive him to Augusta right after dinner.

Before kissing Stella goodbye, he told her he would be back the following Saturday. Then he got into their big sedan and waved to her as it drove away. That was the last time she saw him.

Monday morning around nine o'clock, Almeda Christian, the Craters' maid, unlocked the door of their five-room apartment at 42 Fifth Avenue and was surprised to find the judge in his bedroom, unpacking his suitcase. She had come to give the apartment a midsummer cleaning, but the judge evidently wanted her to leave so he could use the phone in privacy. He said: "Never mind doing any housework today, Almeda. You run along and enjoy yourself. Come back Thursday and give the place a good going over. Then you needn't show up again till August 25, when Mrs. Crater and I will be returning from Maine."

At one o'clock he had lunch alone in a restaurant near the County Courthouse at Foley Square in downtown New York. But no one remembered seeing him in the courthouse that day. At 4:30 P.M. he kept an appointment with his physician, Dr. August Raggi, who was also a personal friend. His only physical complaint was a slight digestive upset, possibly brought on by anxiety. The confidential relationship between doctor and patient restrained Dr. Raggi from later disclosing to the public anything the judge told him about what was preying on his mind. However, perhaps to keep the judge under observation, the doctor invited him to dinner the next night.

Tuesday morning, Judge Crater went to the courthouse and paused several times on the way to his chambers to chat with acquaintances. His secretary, Frederick A. Johnson, and his court attendant, Joseph L. Mara, were surprised to see him back in town. But they knew better than to ask for an explanation—and he didn't volunteer any. Joe Crater stuck by the old saw that what you don't say seldom hurts you. But there was nothing unduly secretive about his behavior on that occasion. The crisis that soon overtook him evidently had not yet closed in. Apparently, his only purpose in going to the courthouse Tuesday was to ask Judge Alfred Frankenthaler to have lunch with him. What they talked about at lunch was never revealed.

After eating dinner with the Raggis in their apartment that evening he played bridge with them and a family friend. As usual, his game was tops. No significant remarks made by him that evening were preserved for posterity. He said good-night at 12:30 and set out on foot for his apartment, less than two blocks away. But there is no evidence that he ever arrived there.

Soon after nine o'clock the next morning, August 6, 1930, he arrived at his chambers in an entirely different mood from the one he was in the previous day. Then he was listless; now he was brisk. He seemed to have reached some momentous decision. Unlocking his private filing cabinet, he piled folders on his desk beside a leather briefcase. Seated at the desk, he began sorting documents, records and letters. But abruptly he rose and shut the door to the outer office where Johnson and Mara were killing time.

A little later he opened the door and borrowed another briefcase from his secretary. Standing in the doorway, he glanced at his cluttered desk and then turned to Mara. "Joe," he said, "I'll need some cardboard portfolios, too. Get me half a dozen."

Just before 11 o'clock he appeared in the outer office with two personal checks, made payable to cash. One was for $3,000, drawn on his account at the Chase National Bank, and the other for $2,150, on his account at the Empire Trust Company. Handing the checks to Mara, he said: "Take a cab, Joe, and get these cashed right away. I want bills of large denomination."

Joe Crater wasn't a tightwad, but he always added up the tab in a restaurant before signing, and never failed to count his change from taxi drivers. Yet when Mara handed him two envelopes containing $5,150, Crater did a curious thing. He stuck them into his inside coat pocket without bothering to check the money.

His desk was orderly now. The file folders had been returned to the cabinet. Five bulging portfolios were

stacked beside the two filled briefcases.

"Get some heavy twine, Joe," he said, "and make a bundle out of these portfolios. Then I want you to come along with me in a cab and take them to my apartment."

In the cab, the judge tried to relax. Making conversation, he mentioned Babe Ruth's swatting his 41st home run of the season. "It's too bad," he said, "we haven't got more men like him in this country—men you can depend on in a clutch."

After the bundle and briefcases had been dumped onto overstuffed chairs in the apartment, the judge said: "Thank you, Joe. I won't be needing you any more today. I'm planning to drive out to Westchester this afternoon with some friends, for a swim. I'll be in my chambers tomorrow."

But Mara never saw him again.

The horde of detectives who subsequently delved into the tantalizing mystery of Judge Crater never discovered how he spent that sweltering Wednesday afternoon. When he appeared in public again—and for the last time—he was wearing an expensive Panama hat, a high, starched collar, a double-breasted brown tropical worsted suit and shoes that were extremely pointed. A month later, when the Missing Persons Bureau was finally let in on the closely guarded secret of his disappearance and then sent out a first printing of 10,000 circulars bearing his photograph and description, these additional details were included: for a six-footer weighing 185 pounds, he had an exceptionally small head and wore a 6⅝ hat; his eyes were brown and so was his hair, with a sprinkling of gray; he wore a Masonic ring and the tip of his right index finger had recently been smashed in a car door.

At 7:30 that Wednesday evening the judge stepped into the Arrow theater ticket agency on Broadway and asked his friend, proprietor Joseph Grainsky, if he had a good single seat for the musical comedy *Dancing Partners*, which had opened the previous night at the Belasco Theater. Grainsky didn't have one but said he was sure he could get a ticket; he'd have it left at the box office in the judge's name. Crater often went to the theater alone and he was also in the habit of reserving tickets for acquaintances, to return favors. A little later, Grainsky did get a ticket—fourth row on the aisle—and sent it to the theater, where it was picked up and used by *someone*. But it seems highly unlikely that Judge Crater went to the Belasco that night. If he had sat in that conspicuous spot someone surely would have remembered seeing him. Besides, at nine o'clock, 20 minutes after curtain time, he was just finishing dinner.

From the Arrow agency, the judge walked to Billy Haas's restaurant at 332 West 45th Street, just west of Eighth Avenue. As he entered (*Continued on page 66*)

Crater's wife, now Mrs. Stella Kunz, displays the judge's farewell message.

Harem is Where the Heart Is

East is east and west is west . . . but a Joe from Iowa made it the hard way when he fixed it so the twain did meet . . .

BY PATTI STONE

ABU AL Fida, the Shah of Mansour, leaned forward on the arm of his throne and looked down at me, plain Joe Yates, as I reclined on a pile of silk cushions as soft as a woman's sigh.

"Forget these thoughts of digging up ancient cities, Joe Yates," the Shah said. "Make your diggings here with me." A flicker of a smile showed from the depths of his beard, and he continued, with his slight hint of an Oxonian accent, "Although at one time I had seven sons, the throne of Mansour is now without an heir." He glanced at the unborn-cheetah hide with which the throne was upholstered. "It is not fitting that Mansour should have an heirless throne."

And right then he sprang this idea of wanting to adopt me.

Archaeologist or not, I didn't dig it. "Me? You want to adopt me, a thirty-two year old gravedigger from Iowa?"

"It is my devout wish," he said gravely. "Your origin, your age, and your occupation do not interest me. I have known you for one week now. As we talked of many things these seven afternoons, I have grown fond of you. I have decided you will make an excellent Shah for Mansour at such time as Allah calls me to Paradise."

Perhaps he caught a look that crossed my face, because he hastened to add: "Do not be alarmed, Joe

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Yates. You will find the pleasures and rewards of this arrangement far beyond your wildest dreams. . ."

"But I didn't—" I started to say.

"But, you *should*, Joe Yates. For if a man does not sample the delights the world can offer, what is the sense of being in it? As Allah is my witness the most desirable maidens of the land will be yours."

This was an interesting turn of events, considering the mission which had brought me to Mansour. I had come to the palace at Kalifa to obtain permission from Abu al Fida to conduct some excavations in the Grand Mansourian Desert south of Kalifa. I had hoped to uncover the graves of several ancient Medean kings. But thus far I hadn't been able to persuade Abu to give me a permit.

"It is not personal," he said, "and I do not doubt you might find many antiquities. But the moment you did, Mansour would be overrun by more diggers, tourists and sightseers. This I do not want. Eventually they would decide that under this very floor there lies the roof of an older palace, and they would want to start digging here, too." He lifted his hands in horror. "No, it is bad enough that Mansour must put up with the other diggers to the north, where oil has been discovered. Mansourian economy demands that I let them dig for oil. But as the Shah of Mansour, I also demand that the desert be left alone, lest it be filled with paved highways, billboards, hot-dog stands and juke joints." And with that he spoke no more of the permit I sought.

"What happened to your seven sons?" I asked.

"Ah yes," Abu said, "those." There was a touch of grimness on his lips despite the melancholy of his dark eyes. "Two of them died at birth. Another, young Nehoc, was thrown from his horse and killed." He lifted his glass and drank.

Betsy shook off the guard and ran to the Shah's throne.

"But, what happened to the others?" I asked him.

"One by one," the Shah said sadly, "I found it necessary to execute the other four. Perhaps I was harsh, but I felt sure that each execution would teach the rest a lesson." He shook his head. "But they were not quick to learn. As each one became heir to the throne, he was overcome with a distressing urge to do away with me."

Abu looked at his empty glass and struck the golden gong hanging beside the throne. A servant trotted in with a fresh pitcher of martinis. Abu continued, "My last son, Senoj, who was a hashish addict in his leisure hours, became obsessed with the do-it-yourself craze and sought to gain the throne by killing me in my bed. Needless to say, when I ordered his head removed, it hurt me more than it did him. After all, he had but one life to lose while I was losing my last and seventh son." The Shah looked at me keenly. There was a great kindness in his voice. "But fear not, my boy. Understand that I could *never* let myself lose another."

"I understand," I told him, "and I fear not." I didn't, either. Thinking about it as I stared into my glass, I saw a tear fall onto the rapidly drying olive in my drink.

"Brave words, spoken well," he said, gazing down at me with the keen eyes of a desert chieftain. "As an ancient Mansourian poet has said: 'Tears are the jeweled words that well up when the heart speaks'." Then he chided me gently, "Still, it is hardly the way to refill one's glass." He motioned for the servant in charge of martinis.

I drank deeply. "Plainly, you had bad luck with your sons. Perhaps the next one will be okay."

"Precisely," he said, "but for a different reason than you think. If you agree, my next son will be yourself." He drank. "I bow to the wish of Allah. When Senoj, the seventh son of a seventh son, turned bad, it was clear that I must seek a true prince, one who would be guided by the welfare of Mansour."

I took another sip of my drink and thought about being the Prince of Mansour. It was easy to think about. "Tell me," I said, "now that you believe I'll make a good shah, what actual benefits I'll gain by this adoption. Incidentally, I have a real father back there in Iowa. He's got a little farm with wheat and hogs and cattle."

"I daresay he is a fine father, too," Abu said. "But you are far from him now, and you will be no farther away, spiritually or geographically, when you become the Prince." He took a deep drag on his cigarette. "Let me tell you what it will mean for you to be the Prince of Mansour." He patted the arm of the throne. "Some day you will sit here, the complete ruler of ten million subjects. Meanwhile, you will have three Cadillacs, two Jaguars and the use of a half-dozen other cars. You will possess a stable of the finest Arabian steeds in the world. You will receive an allowance of ten thousand accems a month. An accem is worth three dollars and sixteen cents American, you know." He went on to tell me of all the other things I could have at my disposal, all I could do. "And," he said, "according to the law here it is compulsory for male members of the royal family to take thirty wives."

"Thirty!" I almost sat up straight.

He nodded. "And you must keep them in the harem till they are twenty-five years old, at which time they can be set free—a term we use here in place of 'divorce.'" I looked at him questioningly and he went on, "It's not as bad as it may sound. The law says you may divorce them at twenty-five but it does not state at

what age you must marry them. I always married ten twenty-four-year-olds, ten twenty-three-year-olds, and so on. That way one may replenish his harem each year with ten new brides of any age. In this way we avoid monotony, and insure variety, and sustain quality."

"Can I keep them longer if I want?"

He shrugged. "Of course. But on the other hand there is no other reason—or cause—for divorce. Oh, yes, the sons born of your unions become your responsibility."

"How about daughters?"

"They are the responsibility of the mothers. You understand, no doubt, that the price of young females on the open market doesn't warrant the expense of their upkeep. I've been keeping a finger on the market for years." He smiled in his beard. "However, my police tell me that some mothers are running young daughters across the border into Ruosnam where there is currently a shortage of females. We do not try to stop them. It would be silly. At any rate, according to the Supreme Court of Mansour, the father is not responsible for female offspring."

THERE was a slight commotion behind me. A tall, bearded guardsman entered. The Shah beckoned him to approach. He did so, and a girl followed him into the room. She was short, thin and blonde, wearing jodhpurs that made her legs look even skinner. She slipped from the guardsman's grasp and hurried past me to the foot of the throne. Looking up into the bearded face of Abu with something approaching adoration, she said, "My name is Betsy Bluhme. I was visiting in Ruosnam when I heard you needed a secretary. I hurried over to offer my services. You see," she dropped her glance shyly, "I saw you in the newsreels and I want to work for you."

The guardsman put a heavy hand on her shoulder, ready to drag her away, but the Shah lifted a royal hand and nodded. "Yes," Abu said, "we knew you were coming. The border patrol informed me that an unescorted female had crossed the border illegally, disguised as a camel driver." He shook his head chidingly. "The laws of Mansour are strict about such things."

"But surely," Betsy said, "Your Highness would rather have the services of a good secretary than another mouth to feed in the royal jail. After all, I came all the way from southern Illinois to—uh—work for you."

I watched her closely, and when she mentioned her home state I thought, well, what do you know—a neighbor. I wanted to interrupt but feared it would violate protocol. Betsy probably didn't weigh 100 pounds after a good meal, but she was cute. She reminded me of a little girl I used to date back home.

"Oh," the Shah said, "we have no jails in Mansour. Lawbreakers are either put to death or put to work. Of course, your crime doesn't warrant a death sentence, yet you cannot trifle with the laws of our country. Therefore, I hereby sentence you to thirty days at hard labor."

"Surely," she gasped, "you don't mean—"

Abu shook his head. "I have only male secretaries and you do not meet the standards for the harem. Besides, as I was just telling Joe here, I no longer have a harem."

She gave him an indignant look then turned to me. "Where are you from?" she asked.

"Iowa, but the Shah is going to adopt me and make me a Prince of Mansour." I had decided.

The Shah smiled. "You are wise," he said softly.

Betsy looked from me to him and back. "You don't look like a—uh—Prince." She blushed. "Is there something about you that doesn't meet the eye?"

Out of the corner of my eye I saw the Shah's grim look of consternation. He was about to speak when I said quietly, "No, Betsy, nothing is missing but my princely raiment. The royal tailor hasn't measured me yet."

"Later this evening," Abu said. "Meanwhile, Miss Betsy Bluhme," he said with a nod to the guardsman, "you will be taken to the palace kitchens where you will serve your thirty days as a scullery maid."

Despite her look and words of shocked protest, she was hustled out.

Shah Abu looked at me and laughed. "She probably slipped into the country with the ego-ridden idea that I would want to marry her or take her as a concubine. But since concubinage is illegal and I long ago dismissed the last of my wives, well . . ." He lifted his hand meaningfully. "Besides, as I told her, she does not have what it takes."

I thought of the 30 wives I'd have, each better looking than Betsy.

Abu continued, "It isn't that I am egocentric about women, but I know what it means to be an ex-wife of the Shah. I give each of them an annuity, naturally, and many find other ways to use their royal status. They do well."

"How's that?" I said.

"They write their memoirs," he said. The populace is always eager for juicy gossip from behind the palace walls. It keeps the minds of the people occupied, they are less prone to probe deeply into other matters . . . of state. Also, many of the ex-wives marry well-to-do merchants." He smiled. "There are always men who wish to follow their Shah."

Abu continued: "Tomorrow I will arrange with the Supreme Court to act immediately on your adoption. In former years such things were done simply by royal decree. Now it takes both." He laughed. "Not that the Five Old Men would dare oppose my wishes. They know . . . they know. Meanwhile, after dinner, I will radio to the far corners of the country for my procurers to find the thirty loveliest virgins in Mansour. They will be flown to Kalifa at once. By the time the Court acts, your future wives will have been given their medical examinations and the necessary lessons in harem etiquette. You have to designate which will be wife number one, two, three, and so on."

I FINISHED my drink. "How long will it take for the Court to act, Your Highness?"

"A day or two." He rose and descended the seven symbolic steps from the throne, and as I rose, he put his arm about my shoulders. "Come," he said, "we shall dine."

The Shah was a tall man, perhaps four inches more than my own six feet, and he was lean and spare. It was difficult to judge his age, but I guessed he was past 50. As we walked across the room, he said, "We will dine tonight in the Escoffier Room. I have ordered pheasant to begin the meal. You do not object?"

"That sounds interesting," I told him.

"It is a great pleasure for me to have you as my son. Yes, we shall have great sport propounding subtle riddles and improbable philosophies during the tedium of the day." *(Continued on page 60)*

IS THERE A RABBIT IN THE BALL?

Says Casey Stengel: "Everybody's hitting more home runs, right? So they're hitting them because the ball is livelier or they're hitting the ball harder." Here's the lowdown . . .

By FRANK GRAHAM, Jr.

IT'S THAT rhubarb time of the year again. Every day some big strong guy steps up to the plate, tees off on a fast ball and hits one into the next county. Immediately the chorus begins: "Lookit *that* one go! You can't tell *me* the ball isn't livelier than it used to be!" And the ruckus starts all over again.

In case you haven't been let in on the lively ball issue —and if you haven't, you must have been cast away on a desert island just before somebody told Babe Ruth he ought to be a ballplayer—here's what it's all about: The fans, the sportswriters, and a few kibitzers who just like arguments, claim that the game's operators have souped up the baseball in order to: (1) create artificial excitement with high-scoring games, and (2) lure into the ball parks more paying customers who like such horsehide fireworks.

Baseball officials bridle at this accusation; they assume their best why-we-wouldn't-do-a-thing-like-that look, and righteously deny everything. The ball, they stoutly maintain, is practically the same old blob of string and glue that Abner Doubleday was holding when he explained that three strikes were "out!"

Well, aside from the merits of players, it seems reasonable that the liveliest baseball arguments should center about the little round object itself. And, like any issue that has become such an integral part of the whole business, it is appropriate that the roots of the dispute should reach back into the foggy past to prove there's nothing new under the sun, including the game called baseball.

Just the other day we were asking a hoary baseball writer about his early experiences traveling with one of the big-league clubs, and he said something which applies to our present subject. "This was about 1929," he said, "and I was covering the Giants. We went into Philadelphia for a five-game series, and by the time we escaped, everybody was punch drunk. I think the score of the first game was 15-12, and things just kept getting worse. For a while we tried to explain all the runs by the size of old Baker Bowl, which, as you may have heard, was the original baseball bandbox. But the batters were stepping up and hitting balls that would have been home runs in *any* park, even, as Tom Meany once said, in Yellowstone.

"Good pitchers and bad ones, it made no difference. A batter who didn't hit at least a double every time up wasn't trying. I've never seen a ball as lively as the ones they used in that series. Everybody was disgusted and I was ready to quit writing about baseball. It had become a farce. We went into a couple of other towns after that and the ball was pretty lively, too. Then, all of a sudden, they seemed to run out of that lively batch. Everything was normal again."

It has long been suspected that the theory of the lively ball was conceived by a clique of third-rate pitchers who couldn't fool anybody with their phantom curves and were on the brink of having to go out and work for a

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN GALLAGHER

living. Certainly the pitching fraternity has done nothing to discourage the debate over the "rabbit ball." A couple of years ago when a writer asked American League pitcher Dizzy Trout how he held his curve ball, Trout had a ready answer. "By the ears," he said matter-of-factly.

Walt Masterson, another pitcher who managed to keep his sense of humor while under steady bombardment, contributed his own morsel of propaganda to the eternal cold war between the pitchers and hitters. "I get kind of a warm glow when I pick up these here American League balls," Walt once said. "I can feel their little hearts just beatin' away."

Even such an imposing leader of the opposition party as Stan "The Man" Musial has heaped coals on the fire. "It seems to me," Stan says, "that the ball is livelier since the war. Of course, I could be getting stronger, but I doubt it." It could also be that Musial's heart has been touched by the plight of his former brethren. Stan was a minor-league pitcher before his arm went dead. The pitchers claim that, after all the misery he has caused them, it's only Stan's conscience that has been touched.

Those who insist that the ball is getting livelier every year have some powerful statistics to back up their opinion. Two seasons ago, for instance, Mickey Mantle, Joe Adcock, Duke Snider, Willie Mays and others were hitting balls farther than anyone could remember. Mickey almost hit one out of Yankee Stadium, the closest anyone has come to doing that. During one short series in St. Louis, Snider twice dented a clock halfway up a light tower atop the right field pavilion, 60 feet above the field and over 370 feet from home plate. No one had reached that clock even *once*—until the Duke flexed his muscles. Not only were Babe Ruth's record for 60 homers and a lot of other individual marks threatened, but club home run marks were in danger, too. The 221 home runs the Redlegs clouted in 1956 tied the all-time major-league record set by the Giants in 1947, while the Yankees shattered their own American League record of 190 homers. A note that didn't receive much attention but perhaps was just as significant as the slugging of the Yanks and Reds, was the feat of the 1956 Tigers. Although they finished a mediocre fifth and were not heralded as a bunch of window-breakers, they tied their own club mark of 150 homers, set by the 1937 Tigers. This is an eye-opener for veteran baseball fans who remember that the '37 team included two of the greatest power men in Detroit history, Hank Greenberg and Rudy York.

A fan doesn't have to be bent with age to recall the time when it was considered a special feat for a team to hit over 100 home runs in a season. But last year every single club in each league bashed 100 or more, with even the notoriously light-hitting Chicago White Sox making the grade with 101. Going back to 1956 again, that season Dale Long of the Pirates set a record by hitting home runs in eight straight games. And on one afternoon that same season, Memorial Day, a staggering total of 50 balls were walloped over the fences in both leagues. Of course, that's a big doubleheader day, but even so!

Such wholesale production, many fans and baseball writers complain, is cheapening what should be the climactic moment of any game—the moment when the big hitter steps up to the plate, takes his wicked cut, and poles one into the seats. The home run which Ruth made

famous is now easy for even the scrawniest hitter in the lineup. So long as he can lift a bat, he stands a chance to drop one into the stands. Before the ball was souped up, oldtimers insist, it took a big man to wallop a home run. Even a renowned hitter like Zack Wheat failed to hit even one round-tripper in 1918, the same year he led the National League in batting.

Fans afflicted with the lively ball obsession also point to similar changes in other big-time sports. We live in an offense-minded age. In football, the pros have popularized the high-scoring game, improving the "T" formation and the forward pass, often to the neglect of defensive skills. The introduction of the seven-foot "goon," plus a bewildering variety of new rules, has made 100-point scoring routine in basketball. Even in boxing, "the manly art of self-defense," the oldtime skills have been generally disregarded in favor of a flashy windmill attack that leads fans to assume that the modern fighter gets mad when the other man misses him. Of course, this trend in boxing is probably an indication of incompetence rather than a conscious attempt to ignore defense in favor of exciting offense.

Well, it takes two to make an argument, and the lively baseball issue is by no means one-sided. The opposition is led by officials and ball manufacturers, and they have many hearty supporters. Their claim is that, while the ball may be just the tiniest bit livelier than it was at the turn of the century, the causes of today's home run output lie much deeper than any changes in the ball itself. Naturally, the baseball people have a vested interest here, and since they're always trying to boost their gate receipts, they would prefer that the public believe the increase in scoring is a result of improved players or changing baseball philosophy, rather than artificial stimulation of the ball. Whatever their reasons, they have some interesting arguments; but, because the panicky cries of "lively ball!" and "cheap homer!" generally drown them out, they haven't received much attention.

One faction of the defenders has resorted to the time-honored maneuver of shifting the blame. They maintain that the bat, not the ball, is the real culprit; in other words, the bat is livelier. The (*Continued on page* 91)

PHOTOS BY ED LETTAU

A SIGHT FOR TIRED EYES

In her hometown of Hicksville, L. I., sultry Arlene Rogers was once known as the neighborhood tomboy, though you'd never guess it to look at her now. She's right proud of her record as the star pitcher on a boy's softball team, and though she hasn't pitched in years, even a casual look will prove she still has a fine assortment of curves. For you statistics-minded fellows, the tape data is 34½-22-34 at the usual checkpoints and all this is located very nicely on a 5'1½" frame that tips the scales at 110 pounds. Arlene never wears slacks, prefers frilly feminine clothes. "I love sheer, sexy nighties," she confides, "but when the mercury goes below 30, I switch to flannel. I have to be cuddled and warm all the time." Hmmm . . . Any questions?

✱ BOOK - LENGTH FEATURE

THE SHORT WILD DAYS

The hell-raising trail riders were always ready for anything, a stampede or a brawl or the dance hall girls on River Street—but never for backing down

By VAN CORT

IN SUMMER dust, in winter mud, and always when the trail town of Comanche had one of its rare moments of quiet, memories of the past slipped out of their haunts like ghosts and hovered over the town. Ghosts of boxed and bawling cattle long ago shipped east, ghosts of wild men roaring drunk after cattle drives, ghosts of gunfight victims—all returned and hovered over the ugly, unpainted houses, the crooked boardwalks and the wheel-rutted track that carried the name of Main Street.

There was little here for a man to pride his soul on.

To Carl Sutton, who had just spent two days and nights in his hill cabin, with his brother Bert and Jim Tremaine, sleeping off the past week's celebration, Comanche certainly wasn't much to look at or to view with any pride.

He recalled the spectacle of his men, a wildly cheering, shooting cavalcade as they first spied the town from the distant plain. And then followed the worst week in Comanche's history, a blemish on the annals of the West, leaving a bad taste in a man's mouth when he thought about it.

Money and whiskey had flowed like water. Youth and beauty—so wrote the historians later—virile manhood and flowering womanhood, had been wantonly squandered while the camp-followers of the cattle business, the deadbeats, pickpockets, card-sharpers and prostitutes had a field day.

The riders who had not yet started drifting back toward Texas

ILLUSTRATED BY DIRK FREDERICKS

were sleeping off their monumental benders in the disreputable boardinghouses behind River Street or in stable haylofts.

Carl and Bert Sutton and Jim Tremaine finally got themselves started out of town. An ominous quiet greeted the three horsemen as they clattered their mounts across the tracks by the loading pens and the ramshackle depot. There was no noise from River Street, no horses at the rails flicking flies with their tails, no traffic on the sidewalks. The respectable end of town, centering on Front Street, was equally quiet, though a few horses and teams were scattered along the store rails.

Jim Tremaine reined up. "What happened here?" He sniffed the air curiously.

"What's that?" Bert Sutton pointed at a square white placard nailed to the front of Comanche's only decent hotel, the Alderson. The sign was two feet square, the print large and black.

Bert eased his horse forward but Carl abruptly stopped him. "Wait." Gooseflesh sheathed him. "Smallpox," he said. "Pest. Something like that."

Tremaine rubbed his chin. "Somethin' sudden."

"Hell, no," Bert said. "This ain't no goddam smallpox." He rolled from the saddle and strolled brazenly up on the gallery. His gloved hand yanked the placard from the wall and held it out at arm's length. When he had finished, his blunt, sun-darkened face was even blacker, with rage. He held up the card. Jim Tremaine crowded his horse close to read with Carl:

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, MEMBERS OF BRACKEN COUNTY RANCHERS ASSOCIATION, OFFICERS AND CITIZENS OF BRACKEN COUNTY, MOST RESPECTFULLY INFORM ALL OUT OF STATE CATTLE DRIVERS WHO HAVE CONTEMPLATED DRIVING CATTLE TO COMANCHE THIS COMING SEASON, THAT THEY MUST SEEK SOME OTHER POINT FOR SHIPMENT, AS THE RESPECTABLE INHABITANTS OF COMANCHE AND BRACKEN WILL NO LONGER TOLERATE THE EVILS ATTENDANT UPON THE TRAIL-DRIVING CATTLE TRADE.

A LIST of signatures followed. Tremaine spat. "They don't mince words, do they?" And then, wincing, "Do I see Stuart Granville's name on that thing?"

Carl choked. "You do." Granville, gray and dignified, was the somewhat stand-offish Virginian with whom he had ridden stirrup. Queer how a man could hurt you, merely by having his name on a piece of paper. "Bracken County Ranchers Association it says, but you can read: 'Sombrero Land and Cattle Company.' Granville bought into that. It's the old squeeze: 'Boys, you broke the trail from Texas and brought the railroad. You boosted the cattle business. So we'll take over from here on in, and to hell with you.'"

"Who's this Daniel Breitenstein signing himself sheriff?" Bert demanded. "What happened to Ed Balder?" Tense and angry, he tore the placard to shreds, dropping them carelessly on the gallery planks.

Tremaine said, in an unbelieving tone, "Why, it might even look like somebody's trying to give the town a high moral tone . . . a thing, gentlemen, that just can't be done. I've seen everything now. 'The evils attendant upon the trail-driving cattle trade.' Hell!"

"The trail built this town," Bert said angrily. "The trail keeps it alive. Why, look, what would happen to River Street . . . ?"

Carl Sutton looked sharply at his 22-year-old brother. On Monday Bert had fought with Calvin Hazzlett, a gambler in Frank Ackerman's Emporium, over the affections of Jennie Britten, and had shot and killed Hazzlett. By Wednesday Bert and Jennie had been through with each other. Jennie had gone back to her saloon singing and Bert had concentrated on poker and drinking until he rode with the others to the cabin.

There was the pistol which had killed Cal; there were the lips that had kissed Jennie and then cursed her out afterward. Carl saw a lean, deep-chested kid, loyal and amiable when he chose to be, dangerous as a leopard when crossed, always touchy about having his own way. Was there any softness in Bert? Why was he always wondering about that? Would Bert ever grow up? So the land and cattle company and the local ranchers were closing the trail. They'll kill the town, he thought. It will never be what it was.

A MAN drove up in Stuart Granville's buckboard and hitched it at the hotel rail. Carl recognized the horses. As the man tramped up onto the gallery, Granville suddenly appeared in the doorway, paid the man, and then stood for a moment, uncomfortably aware of the trio and the scattered fragments of the placard. His shock that the three men had not left for Texas was clearly apparent.

Carl's tone laid his words acidly on the air. "Well, well, the reformer himself."

The big man took a fierce hold on his dignity. "Carl." He nodded a careful greeting.

There was a vast chasm between them: "The drinks in Chipping House getting too strong for you?" Carl asked.

"The Alderson suits me fine," Granville said.

"Stuart, I like a man who can say his goodbye and 'enough' to a feller's face, not on a goddam piece of printed paper," Carl said. "You helped to build this town the way it is."

"That doesn't mean I'm particularly proud of it, Carl. Six dead men in one week is not a pretty record for a town . . ." In the oppressive silence they were all awkwardly conscious that Bert had killed one of those men.

Carl broke it, "So that makes the state cattlemen's association pure lily white. I suppose that goes for the Sombrero Land and Cattle Company, too. Stuart, you kill the trail and you'll kill this town."

"There's more to it than that, Carl. As for the trail, we voted it closed." Granville spread his hands, "Gentlemen, after all, the country is big. This isn't the only railroad . . ."

Bert moved suddenly toward him, "Ah, the man is telling us to move. I like that. I like that." He had the same deceptively easy tone as when he had started the argument with Calvin Hazzlett.

Elinor Granville stepped out the hotel door. "We have just one more stop, Dad, then I won't keep you any longer. Oh . . . I'm sorry." Elinor's apology for interrupting was pure pretense. She stood in the doorway, poised and assertive. She made a good show of not taking too much notice of Carl, and none whatever of his brother.

Carl dropped out of the saddle and mounted the steps. "I didn't know you were home from St. Louis," he said. This was something else he would have missed. "You're looking well."

Elinor studied him surreptitiously, "And I didn't know you were up from Texas . . ."

That was plain ridiculous. Everybody knew when the Suttons drove a herd to Comanche. Carl had not seen Elinor since last year, and then only briefly. He wished suddenly that he wasn't so close to her now. The unspoken understandings which had always passed between them when they met, half joking, half serious, the meaningful silences, made her father resentful and uncomfortable . . . as now. Stuart Granville's huge ranch house was territory where the Suttons did not belong. That was what it was really all about, wasn't it?

Granville's discomfort pleased Carl and he rose gladly to the challenge. He said deliberately, "You know my brother Bert, Elinor, and Jim Tremaine." She nodded to Bert with the startled and vivid apprehension of one beholding a real live killer. Bert studied her rudely. Tremaine's hat-off and 'howdy' did not represent him truly. Granville scowled with impatience and glanced at his team.

"Now, if I'd known you were home, Ellie," Carl taunted Granville, "I'd have come out."

"But you were too busy," she said.

Tremaine cleared his throat and Carl was thankful long years ago he had lost the ability to blush.

"Never too busy," Carl said. "Especially since it appears your father and his friends are out to get rid of us. The men who broke the trail and built these towns are a bad, bad, bunch, honey." Granville showed his impatience to put an end to the interview. But Carl was relentless: "Home for good now?"

She looked at her father and wet her lips. "Yes, home for good."

"Then maybe I'll see you . . ." Carl said.

She gave him a curious, uncomfortable smile. "Who knows?" she said, and turned to go down the steps. Her father immediately moved to the buckboard and picked up the reins. Elinor Granville nodded at Bert and Jim Tremaine, "Gentlemen . . ."

Carl handed her up while Granville made ready to start the team. "I'll see you, then," Carl said. Her glance briefly brushed his with a fleeting look of deep questioning, then she smiled and nodded noncommittally.

"So long, fence-jumper," Bert flung after Granville. The team pulled away and Carl stood staring after the buckboard as it wound its way toward Dave Tolson's huge warehouse. Seeing Elinor like this again, so unexpectedly, had brought a whirlwind of realization to him. It was like gulping down a strong drink, all at once; it both warmed and choked you.

Tremaine said softly, too appreciatively, "Ah, that red, red, hair."

"The sonofabitch!" Bert's words cracked after Granville like a blacksnake whip.

Did he care too, Carl wondered, about a gate being closed in his face, about being told that he wasn't good enough for respectable people? The trail was closed and they could go back where they came from.

"Has Chip seen that damned poster? Do they think they can put this over on old Chip?!" Bert moved off the gallery, toward his horse. Following him, they all headed for Chipping House. Huge, ornate and three-storied, Chipping House towered over the junction of Front and River Streets, stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the Drovers Bank. From here on, River Street got wilder, tawdrier, dirtier and deadlier by the yard. Oliver Chipping, grizzled, potbellied and impressive, held court in his hotel's dining room, nursing a mint julep. A few idle gamblers sat with him, including a sober-faced, mustached Ed Balder, the deposed marshal, dressed, unnaturally, in a stiff gray business suit.

"You heard what they're doing to my town, boys?" Chipping grumbled, gesturing to his black floorman to serve more drinks. "My God, we're sitting here at Ed's wake. You know, he's leaving."

"Who's this Breitenstein?" demanded Bert.

Ed Balder stirred in further discomfort. Tremaine said bluntly, "What you quit for, Ed? Getting old? What the hell happened?"

"The city fathers," Chipping snarled, with acid pomposity, "of which I am suppoesd to be one, decided today to dispense with the services of our law officer." He banged the table in sudden, apoplectic rage. "I was outwitted, outmaneuvered and outvoted in the neatest piece of chicanery ever called a town council meeting!" His restraint left him. "But if the dirty sidewinders think they can get away with it, they're reckoning without Oliver Chipping!"

Ed Balder said glumly: "You boys all tore up the town, and I let you. Next time, if you do bring your herds this way, there'll be ten miles of double barbed wire, twenty-five miles south of here, smack across the trail. Granville, Sombrero, and all the small fellers are fencing in. They're even encouraging a few farmers." He sucked his teeth sharply. "Comanche is finished as a trail

His sun-darkened face grew even darker with rage as he read the "Respectable Inhabitants' " ultimatum to trail riders.

town and a shipping point for drivers." His job had paid $75 a week and graft. His famous brace of Colt Peacemakers were packed in his duffel right now, waiting at the stage station.

"You quit too damn easy," Bert said, taking his drink from Jesbo's tray. "Why, hell, we'll tear their damn fence down. You just stick around!"

Balder half rose out of his seat and sent the younger man a violent glance. Old Chipping said quickly, "Do you know I offered to close River Street?—move it out of town, like the Devil's Addition in Abilene! But would that please them? Oh, no! They want clean rid of it." He put a hoarse, suffering cry in his voice, "The way Stuart and his friends and those Sombrero Land Company boys sneaked a march on us! It ain't believable. No more River Street. No more hurrahing the town, no more Saturday fireworks and horse races. No more Nellie Sandersons walking stark naked down the middle of Front Street on a bet, at five in the morning . . ."

"Mighty pretty sight," Tremaine drawled thoughtfully. Chip went right on talking.

". . . no more fancy ladies dressed finer than the proper womenfolk, no more *nothing!* But Oliver Chipping isn't through, not by a damn sight!"

Tremaine was picking over the long, thin cigars in the heavy silver box. "Stop worryin', Colonel. The town can't feed on respectability. We're still here. We're the money."

"You could be wrong," Balder said. "They might swing it. Sombrero, Granville and the rest, using feeding lots and shipping their own. They want churches and schools. No, you trail boys will be shipping from Apache Springs or some such place, next year."

"Shut up, Ed," Chipping said wildly. Balder rose solemnly and drained his glass. Carl was surprised by Ed Balder's formality.

"Your health, gentlemen," Ed said. Then he shook hands all around.

"Ah, Ed," Tremaine cajoled, "never heard you play a funeral tune like this. Never saw you without your guns. either. You don't look like yourself. What did you do, kill your last enemy?"

Balder's tone was quiet. "Guns have to be checked at the office now. I was asked to set the example. The town went to hell with guns . . . now it's supposed to go to glory without . . ." He added pensively, "Who knows, things might have been different if I had enforced something like that."

"You never would have lived to see it," Bert said.

Balder gave Bert another look, then turned and left, leaving a disheartening feeling of defeat behind him.

They turned from Chipping's beautiful painting as a voice said: "Guns will be left at the sheriff's office. I'll take yours."

"Damn it," Chipping grumbled, "This is *my* town. This was the first building of any size here. Who brought the railroad? Then came Lian with the Buffalo Head; later Sam with his hell-on-wheels. That was twenty years ago . . . why, when I think of the herds that have gone through here! This is a trail town, first, last and always. No psalm-singing, reforming, teetotalers are going to take over Oliver Chipping's town! Why, that L.L. Murphy of the cattle and land company don't even believe in his cowboys taking a drink, not to mention anything else!"

BERT WAS up and walking the floor with springy steps. Nursing his anger he periodically wrenched his shoulders violently, punching the air with his fists, doing a dancing shuffle. Carl had seen these signs too often. Bert loved to have a chip on his shoulder. "This town ordinance, now; who put that through?" he said.

"Breitenstein," Chipping said. "Damn him. You must have seen him once or twice, tall, preacher-faced fellow. One of L.L. Murphy's foremen. Don't carry guns. Says his fists will do the job just as well. A lot of faith in human nature, I'd say."

Tremaine's head rocked in a pensive chuckle. "What about that! Comanche is going to the dogs."

Carl was thinking . . . Granville's ranch house amidst a sea of fence-divided ranges . . . a section of wheat here and there . . . the place quiet, remote and unapproachable, and Elinor there . . . Carl wished fervently that he hadn't seen her. "Can't get over Stuart Granville," he said.

"Been coming a long time, Carl," Chipping said. "Murphy and the others from Front Street have been nudgin' him. You should have known him when he started fencing in his range. On the quiet he backed Murphy and talked up Breitenstein all along. All you fellows thought about was helling around, and you got caught short when you were sleeping off your drunks."

"Damn fools," Tremaine said. "They can't do without the big turnover the herds bring. We don't feed only River Street, we bring business to the merchants too. They'll starve to death."

"We'll all pay," Chipping said, "unless we stop it."

But Carl had no illusions about Chipping 'stopping it.' Suppose they did fence in this grassland? Well, let them. A strange indifference possessed him. He would ship farther east, or south, where there was a rumor about the Topeka Southwestern shooting a spur toward Apache Springs. Bert, still tigerishly angry, seemed a wasted symbol now. Carl had spent years on the youngster, teaching him the cattle business, living in sod huts or in the open, trailing steers and cows north from Texas and piling up money in the bank, risking their lives and taking their pleasures on all the River Streets along the way. The trail had been their home: Drive cattle, make money, come back for more cattle, till one day somebody tacks a placard on the wall, reminding these wild nomads that some men settled down, raised families and went to church.

Bert had had his first drink of whiskey at 15, his first woman the year after. He was an apt pupil of the trail; a grown and tough man since then. At the end of the trail men stood in rows in their grimy clothes, their feet on the polished bar rails, drinking with a vengeance as if that were the end and the purpose of life.

But Chipping was fighting for his life: "What about all the people who make their living here on River Street? The horsemen, the girls, the singers, the entertainers, the boardinghouse people? Are they just gonna be left high and dry? What are they doing but supplying something we all want? They have a right to live, same as everybody else!"

"And the chippies, the cheats and the tinhorns," Carl said, "Don't forget them."

Oliver Chipping looked at him in surprise. "Ah, now, *you* should talk . . ."

A voice spoke behind them: "Guns are to be left at the sheriff's office. I'll be pleased to take yours now." Carl turned. It was Breitenstein, who moved after a moment's hesitation toward Bert. Tall, wide and beefy-shouldered, self-assured, head cocked slightly in speech, eyes a self-righteous blue. Chipping was right about the preacher look.

Bert was regarding him with dangerous amusement, his eyes bright. Chipping said, "This is my house, my hotel. It's my pleasure, sir, whether men are armed here or not."

"It's a public place," Breitenstein said.

Jim Tremaine smiled with his teeth, "Going out of your way a little, ain't you?" All these men were dangerous, but Breitenstein kept his air of innocent confidence as he stood among them, tall and easily 30 pounds heavier than any of them. Carl felt an automatic hatred for the man. Let the damn fool try to lay a hand. "Kind of left your manners at home, didn't you?" he asked grimly.

"Manners?" Breitenstein said. "Manners? Six people killed in one week; others cheated, robbed, beaten; drunkenness and low behavior all out of bounds. We're putting an end to that now and for always."

"So ambitious, and so polite," Carl said to the others, laying contempt in his tone. His glance went past Breitenstein to the bar across the lobby, with its fancy glass shelves and mirrors, crystal chandeliers and the famous back-bar paintings above the mirrors. Men had been known to ride 100 miles merely to have a drink beneath those voluptuous nudes. Carl saw again Nellie Sanderson walk the center of Front Street at five in the morning, the sun's orange edging her womanflesh, a gun in each hand . . . on a bet and the pretense that she would shoot any man who dared peek. The heartless, endless plains, the killing trails, the dreary years . . . and the short, wild days . . . the bitter taste in his mouth. But this Breitenstein . . . ?

"I'll take those guns now, gentlemen." The hand was actually outstretched, reaching . . .

IT WAS Bert who snapped the tension: "You're using woman's weapon. Go back and fetch your gun." Breitenstein seemed actually ready to act when a distant explosion hammered at the tension again. A stir outside, a second, weaker shot answered the first. Breitenstein wheeled, strode to the door and was gone.

Chipping made a face and sagged back in the chair. "You saw that! The man is mad, crazy!"

"Wonder what that shot was," Carl said.

Tremaine, breathing thoughtfully, as if sniffing a scent, said one word, tentatively. "Balder . . ."

When they got there, Ed Balder's new bowler hat lay in the dust outside Gunderson's lumberyard fence, while a rider in great haste, pounded a horse across the rails far out beyond the stock pens and got swallowed up by the prairie. There was pink blood-foam on Balder's square lower lip and his face showed the ashen agony

of the dying. The little derringer in his right hand had burned a hole in the jacket cloth as he had pulled it out of his pocket. His eyes went around the ring of faces above him and fastened on Carl. "Don't let a man die in the gutter, Carl . . ."

Breitenstein was kneeling. "Who was it, Balder? Who was it?"

"A hell of a way for a man to cash his chips, Carl . . ."

Breitenstein had him by the lapels now. "Who was it?" but Balder simply turned his face aside with a look of futility and contempt. His mouth slackened and he became still. Breitenstein stood up then, looking very big and sheepish. Carl thought about how Balder had walked *his* rounds in Comanche, guns on hips, his life in his hands, keeping a certain balance between tolerably bad and much worse, playing his politics and saving his money.

Breitenstein recovered himself, called quietly for a couple of men in the crowd to carry the body to the town office, and, when Balder's swinging legs were a block away, turned to make inquiries of the crowd. "Who saw it? Anybody recognize the horse? Where did the man come from?"

Bert's voice stopped him sharply: "Whoever did it thought he was unarmed, thanks to you! Why in hell don't you go back where you came from before you do more damage!"

Breitenstein measured Bert with sudden growing hatred. "You! I'll take that gun now!"

Bert was incredulous. "Only a gun takes this gun!"

Breitenstein twisted his head from side to side. "No," he said at last. "The truth is that without guns you fellows aren't men. You don't have the stomach to take them off."

Jim Tremaine, watching Bert, said, "Bert. Don't get suckered into anything." But the younger Sutton had already unbuckled his gunbelt in a terrible white calm. He draped it on the end of Caltranes' bakery rail, then, without waiting at all, stepped up to Breitenstein and with measured timing hit the big man on the mouth and jaw with a wicked one-two, sending him rocking off balance.

Breitenstein grunted with surprise, wheezed to get his wind back, and took a stance with his feet and fists wide apart, looking almost pathetic in his stolid ignorance. Bert feinted elegantly, sidestepped, hit smackingly twice more and was out of reach. No one understood how Breitenstein was still standing. Bert danced completely to the other side of him, hitting tellingly once more as the heavy man turned slowly, punished and baffled. A huge coughing sigh came from the crowd, resentful, thunderstruck; from the edge came sharply, "Get him, cowboy. He's still standing!"

BERT went in and hit the new sheriff again, terribly, and the man in disbelief at last sat down on the edge of the boardwalk, blood welling from his nose and mouth. Bert said, "Had enough?"

Breitenstein rose with a lurch, rolled forward in a crouch, reaching to grapple, and again Bert hit him, splattering flesh against cheekbone. But Breitenstein kept moving forward, slowly, seeking, one eye closed, his blood dripping in the tan dust at his feet. A terrible, oxlike tenacity ruled him, and even in this moment he didn't lose his look of righteousness and determination.

Jim Tremaine's tone was thin. "This is no good, Carl. Let's stop it; I don't like it . . ." but Bert was a tiger now, impatient at not having downed the big man for good.

Then Carl saw the Granvilles in their buckboard on the other side of the street, Elinor standing up to see, her red hair flashing in the sun, one hand staying her father's efforts to turn the snorting team about.

BERT was winded now. He danced in nimbly and launched another one-two. Breitenstein's head went down as in defeat, but in a last fumbling grasping try he caught one of Bert's arms. In the next moment he had him by the waist, crushed him fiercely, and then, whipping Bert's feet from the ground, he threw him like a rag doll. Now, each time Bert rose, the bigger man, as powerful and as sure as a bear, came on him, lifted him, and crashed him to the ground again. And again.

Bert, on his feet, was limp, groggy, his expression refusing to admit the fight was no longer his. Then Breitenstein was on him again, lifting him, smacking him down, this time against the edge of the boardwalk. Someone called in high pitch, "What kind of a fight is this? Let the man get up. Stand to it!" Men began shoving, elbowing, grunting, mauling. Bert breathed laboriously under the bakery rail, his color gone; Breitenstein, a short distance away, was heaving blood like a bellows.

Elinor's voice cut across to them, "Somebody stop it!"

Breitenstein coughed out the words, "All . . . all right . . . *you* had enough . . . ?"

Bert bent forward, ready to get up . . then his gun was in his hand, snatched from his holster on the rail.

"Give me the gun, Bert." Carl spoke quickly but easily.

Bert Sutton blinked at Carl. His whisper was terrible. "You crazy? Get out of the way." He cocked the gun. "We got to finish these rats some time."

"No, Bert." Carl's hand came out gently.

"Seems everybody's reachin' for my gun today. Move, or *you'll* get it."

Breitenstein, behind them, swayed and sniffed the air like a wounded grizzly, blood now flowing steadily. Carl, shielding Breitenstein, moved close to him, taking the big man's arm and with a controlled violence turning him and pushing him across the street. "Go on, move, while you're still able, or *I'll* finish this!"

Breitenstein choked on blood. "Not over . . . not through yet . . . nothing settled . . ." Friends moved in from either side and led him away down the street.

Tremaine had Bert's gunbelt, and Bert, walking like a man asleep, was being led by a crowd of trail riders toward Chipping House. Granville's buckboard moved past Sutton toward the Breitenstein group. "A fine exhibition, Carl," Granville snapped. 'Did you have to stir this up? Haven't you fellows had your fill this past week?"

"Us stir it up?" Carl flung back. "That's one for the book. Well, I'll tell you one thing: I'll be damned if I know why I stopped it!"

But he did know as he looked around at the crowd, split on two sides of the street. On one side were the River Street people and the few trail herders still lingering in town; on the other side were the Granville riders, tradespeople from Front Street, a sprinkling of land and cattle company cowboys—steady, quiet men

working for wages, some of them married. Who wanted to be the one to toss a match into the powderkeg? Elinor, shaken and puzzled, stared down at him. With a shrug he turned his back on her and walked away.

In the Chipping House bar, Bert, in pain, pushed away those who would support him. "Whiskey . . . whiskey . . . Arrh . . . The damn sonofabitch . . ." A full glass hastened toward him. His hand never reached it. "Broke my goddamned rib or something . . ." He turned slightly and collapsed against the foot rail. They carried him to a room upstairs and put him to bed.

Howard Sanders, a gambler with some knowledge of medicine from somewhere in his past, followed. He leaned over Bert, cigar clamped in his teeth, his long, supple fingers searching for injuries. Comanche had no other doctor. "A rib? *Three* is more like it. Lucky thing his lung ain't punctured." He straightened up and told one of the girls to put a cold cloth under Bert's neck. His hand reached into a hip pocket and brought forth an elegant leatherbound flask which spoke of more genteel surroundings. He tipped the flask ceilingward for a few soft gurgles. Bert opened his eyes and groaned. Chipping once more proffered the drink Bert had missed downstairs. Sanders pushed it away. "No liquor, no solid food. Somebody run to Tolsons and get wheat paste and muslin. Maybe I can strap his ribs with that. How you feeling?"

Bert made a terrible grimace. "Fine and dandy. Gimme a drink."

Carl hit her across the face, rocking her back on her heels.

"Nothing doing," Sanders said. He leaned over the bed, removed the cigar and listened to Bert's breathing. "You got to lie still, man, real still. Rest plenty. All you other people better move on out of here."

Bert said with an effort, "I'm all right. Can't a man have a drink?"

Later, Carl stood at the foot of the bed. "That was a fool play, Bert. Never fight another man's way."

"That preacher-faced bastard. Never could stand a holy Joe."

Carl still saw the terrible battle. "It was a senseless thing. You both got hurt bad, and for what?"

"I'll kill him yet. What about Ed? He got Ed Balder killed, didn't he?"

"Who knows?" Carl said pensively. "Who can say? A man makes his own life." As he stood there, his brother became a stranger. There were many things he wanted to say. They had money in the bank; suppose they did have to ship from somewhere else the next time . . . who cared? Money was money and to hell with Comanche and River Street. Let them reform it and build schools and churches if they wanted.

But he was through with Granville, of course . . . and Elinor. He said, "Sure, sure, we'll get even with them. But right now, take it easy like that Sanders feller says! They tell me he was a sawbones in Lee's army. You hear me?"

Bert did not hear him. "I had him . . . I had him; damn it . . . if only I hadn't hit that boardwalk . . ." He bared his teeth in a painful grimace.

"I know, I know," Carl said. "But rest now. Anything you need, I'll have it sent up."

"A drink, for God's sake . . . and tell Chip to send up his best lookin' girl. I'm liable to be lonesome . . ." Carl, face in darkness beyond the open door, remembered Bert and Jennie Britten. His steps were heavy as he went downstairs.

The crowd in the dining room and lobby had grown. Ackerman and Liam O'Sullivan were still there; the news had already run out along the trail. Carl saw Hardy Brandon of Broken Spur, with two of his men and three of his own riders. Had the reformers of Comanche jumped the gun? Brandon, a large, brash man with a big upper lip and a wild temper, hailed him. "Too damned bad I missed the fight, Carl. So they think they'll close the trail! I'm sending Jake after the rest of the boys!"

In the general shout of approval, Chipping said to someone, "By God, it looks like this was just what we needed." Then, suddenly aware of Carl's presence, he said, "Carl, I'm having the tenderest steak in Chipping House broiled for Bert." Carl nodded.

"Appointing sheriffs, tacking up gun ordinances and whatnot without so much as a by your leave," Brandon was shouting above the rising hubbub of voices. "Taking over the ranges! We'll wrap their barbed wire around their necks. Imagine a man . . ."

Someone near Carl was going on about Breitenstein, and he suddenly craved air. He downed his drink and moved toward the door. Brandon is a fool, he thought, a complete fool. In the lobby, Anabel Carteris came up to him. "Carl," she said and took his arm.

"What?" he said brusquely, remembering Elinor too vividly, and thinking about himself and Anabel and other short-time girls stretching back through the years.

"What's all this about closing River Street?" Anabel said. "You're not going to let them, are you?" She kept

worrying his hand. "It would seem so strange. I don't know . . . what would become of us . . .? "There's *got* to be a River Street. We couldn't live without it, could we?" Carl wondered why it was up to *him*? He didn't care one way or the other about Comanche. He would marry someday maybe, but never a woman he had helled around with, no matter how ladylike. Some cattlemen married dancehall girls, but not him. He went out as Anabel was saying, "I wouldn't spit on River Street!"

Behind Milliken's billiard parlor was a small carpenter shop where Tom Milliken also made coffins. There, Ed Balder was laid out on an old door resting on two saw-horses while Tom sawed and measured and hammered. Tom's gentle, battered face looked up and blinked at Carl. "Come to see him, eh? You're the only one so far. I guess they forgot all about Ed when the fight started. I got kind of a problem, Carl. That suit looks neat enough, but what would Ed rather be buried in, boots or shoes? It would be a hell of a job gettin' his boots on."

"The shoes will look all right, Tom . . ."

"Funny about Ed," Milliken said. "Didn't have no relatives. Nobody to send his money to. Ed was a saver. Goes to show you." Carl thought about Ed, now lying there so still.

Ed Balder had spent little, had no attachments. Why had he been willing, this lonely man, to make his living by his guns? And the almost pathetic last plea: "Don't let a man die in the gutter, Carl." He had himself dropped more than one man dead in the gutter. Milliken started to talk again.

"I know this seems funny, Carl, but what about his guns? Some people say he was really one of the big gunmen. Do you think he'd want to be buried with them on?"

"His guns? They won't do him any good where he's going, Tom," Carl said, and went out. He ran into Jim Tremaine outside.

"The town is stirring. A lot of the boys are coming in from the trail. I'm telling you there's blood on the moon."

"We've got to keep an eye on Bert, Jim. I think he's hurt worse than we know. We got to keep him in that bed."

"You know, that was a dirty fight," Tremaine said. "He never should have tangled with him. Only a fool uses his fists." He changed the subject, "You know something else? I was just over at the Emporium. I asked Jennie if she was comin' over to see Bert. You know what? She said she didn't give a damn if his back was broke. By God, I gave her the back of my hand. Women! They're only good for one thing!"

Carl didn't answer. He walked off into the dark. River Street, which was supposed to be dying a natural death, was getting livelier by the hour.

He passed the jail office where the two new deputies eyed him nervously. He walked out onto the prairie so he could think.

After bringing his second herd up from Texas, Stuart Granville had begun building his ranch house southeast of town, five miles away. To celebrate he had given a barbecue there for the trail crews and the respectable merchants of the town. It hadn't come off too well. The wild bunch had turned it into a drunken brawl.

Elinor had been there that night, dancing with every-one before the party got out of hand. He had danced

Carl's second shot knocked Tremaine sprawling into the dust. He went over and knelt by the fallen man.

her out among the trees in the dark, away from the fiddles and lanterns. She was only 18 then, and he had held her gently in his arms, kissing her. He remembered now how her mouth had tasted, young and eager and inexperienced. After that they would banter and laugh and had a happy, spontaneous friendship without knowing each other really. But whenever he visited the ranch house, Stuart met him with a chill reserve. A loneliness came out of the vast plain and settled upon him.

In the morning Bert Sutton was no better. He lay on his back, staring up at the ceiling, mumbling curses. Never sick in his life, his sunbrowned face didn't belong on the pillow. "I'll be up soon," he said. "And I'll kill that——just wait till we run them out of the country. There won't be a rope or a piece of wire left to tie their plunder with."

"Bert, you just take it easy."

Sanders came over from the Emporium, "I don't know, I don't know. He'll just have to lie still . . . nothing but liquids. Pardon me, gentlemen, a hair of the dog that bit me . . ." He lifted his flask.

"Gimme a slug of that," Bert said.

"No, siree bob. Might kill you."

"Damn it, a man has to lay here and he can't even have a drink."

Sanders put Carl out into the corridor. "Nearest doctor's in Kansas City. He'll just have to take it easy, that's all. I'll look in on him again." When he's up, Carl thought, we'll get the hell out of here. We'll ship our cattle from Apache Springs. We'll settle down, maybe, or maybe try California. He went down the street, and on a sudden impulse got his horse and rode out to the Granville place.

Elinor saw him from the kitchen window. Rather than ask him in, she suggested they walk down to the peach orchard. He saw how far from the house they went.

"You mean no red carpet rolled out for me any more," Carl said.

"I'm sorry . . . I didn't mean . . ."

He shook his head. "That was a bad thing, yesterday. Things have changed, I guess. I didn't realize how much, till I saw your father's name on that thing."

"Things *had* to change, sometime, don't you think? Dad is through with the trail-driving part of the cattle business, seeing what it did to Comanche. He wants to see it civilized. Mostly for my sake, I guess. You ever think of that?"

He said bluntly, "No, I guess I didn't." Stubbornness made him say, "I know, though, that he made his money with the rest of us, and even River Street was good enough for him then."

"Is that important now? And should you be telling me that?"

"I only know a man can't have two faces."

"You mean he can't have a River Street face, and a face to wear among . . . decent people?"

THERE was a pain in his chest. "What do you know about River Street?"

"Enough to hate it. Enough to know it has to go."

"Don't hate what you don't know. People aren't angels. Life takes some tolerance. There wouldn't be River Streets if there wasn't something in people that craved them."

She said, through tight lips, "I've thought about you often, Carl. What do you want from life? Ah, you're just wild men! Wild, and no sense!"

The emptiness was growing in him. "I didn't come out here to fight with you, Ellie . . ." Here she was, something he should have known better and valued and not have missed. She was a full cup, brimming with life, whose edge he had once fleetingly touched with his lips.

"Why *did* you come out here?" she demanded.

"Seeing you yesterday, I got to thinking about you."

"Perhaps some things are better left alone," she said.

They walked along silently and he felt very serious. When she looked up at him there was a little devil in her glance. She had that way of facing you with the unexpected. "Ah, who knows," Carl said. "Maybe I just came to take my leave and drink a cup of goodbye, since the wild men are no longer welcome."

She was abruptly in his arms, half forced, half willing, but surely expecting it. The kiss grew between them, increasing to a frenzy. He remembered the Elinor he had kissed five years ago, and he wondered about the years between. They stopped for breath, studying each other. "Carl, I don't know . . ."

"What is it the song says: Don't drink too deep or you'll never leave."

She put up her hands in protest. "Never mind now . . ." But he kissed her again. Gradually her kiss grew with fervor till he could feel all the pent-up passion of her full womanhood pulsing and seeking his embrace. She wrenched her mouth from his and stood free. "This is crazy, Carl. What are we getting into? This mustn't happen . . ."

Now she was Stuart's daughter. She avoided his eyes and the chill of the Granville house fell between them. "I sure do hate a woman who changes her mind in the middle of a kiss," Carl said.

"I'm not one of your River Street girls!"

Unpredictable fury again! She started toward the house and he followed. Watching her, a rush of desire and regret flooded him.

There was another mount at the house rail now, and Carl saw Breitenstein and Stuart Granville talking on the gallery. Granville turned darkly to Carl. "This is a surprise."

"Not as big a surprise as you handed us yesterday, Stuart. You sure flung that saddle of yours way across the fence."

"I put it there slowly, deliberately. You just missed the signs." He indicated Breitenstein. "No sense introducing you two."

"You looked some better when I first saw you," Carl said to Breitenstein. The sheriff made a horrible effort at a smile; he spoke through puffed lips, "Same man, though. Haven't changed any. How's your brother?"

The query, Carl had to admit, was sincere. Breitenstein's face was a ghastly map of blue and purple areas, but the stubborn dignity remained. Carl answered, "He'll make out, I guess."

Elinor had laid a hand on the sheriff's arm and her words rang a sudden alarm bell somewhere in Carl: "How are you feeling, Dan? Are you all right? Lord! Are you sure you're taking care of yourself?"

He patted her hand. "I'll be as good as new in a couple of days, Ellie. Stop worrying."

Granville said with pointed casualness, "I guess you didn't hear, Carl, that Dan and Elinor are engaged to be married . . ."

Carl wished he had let Bert kill this man. Elinor's glance was on him, oddly pleading. "Lucky man," he managed hollowly. "Too damned lucky, I guess."

"I haven't forgotten I'm beholden for some luck to you," Breitenstein said. "I guess I'd be dead now if you hadn't stopped your brother."

"And Bert," Granville interjected, "would have hung." Then he tried desperately to make up. "But come in and let us have a drink . . ."

"You talk about hanging my brother and in the same breath you offer me a drink! Stuart, that plumb kills a man's thirst!" Carl turned to leave.

Elinor came forward, "Please, Carl. Wait—he didn't . . ."

But Carl was at the rail, freeing the horse and mounting. There was a vast distance between them now. He rode off without looking back, yet aware that Elinor had run down the steps and was standing in front of the house.

HE RODE into Comanche, stabled his horse and mounted the steps to Chipping House, burdened by gloom. The eagerly talking groups of friends suddenly turned silent as he entered. Never before had he been so aware that they smelled of leather and sweat and whiskey. Habit took him into the bar where he asked for his bottle. Someone came up and stood next him, breathing uncomfortably. He knew the perfume, the smell of the hair: Anabel. Breitenstein, he thought wildly. My God, what did Elinor see in *him*?

"Carl, Carl, listen . . ." The tone wrenched him around, and he saw the others looking furtively at him from beyond. An alarm bell began clanging wildly in his head. "Carl, come here, I have to talk to you." Anabel's face was drawn, white.

He tore out of the room then, past Chipping's gaping face and up the stairs, hurrying along the corridors that smelled of years of people and sin. Jim Tremaine rose

slowly from a chair. There was a sheet over Bert's face.

"How, Jim? What happened? What was it?" Tremaine pulled the sheet down. Bert's square young face was turned to the side on the pillow, frozen in wincing agony.

"One of the girls found him. He couldn't keep food on his stomach. Sanders thinks he hurt his liver or something when Breitenstein threw him against the boardwalk. Bert just didn't let on, Carl."

Tremaine very gently folded Bert's hands across his chest and then took two gold pieces from his vest pocket and placed one over each eyelid. His voice was thin and hollow as he reached for Bert's gun, lifting it from the holster on the chair. "I think this should be my job, Carl. He was my pardner."

A sound from the corridor roused Carl. Tremaine was walking toward the lobby stairs. In his mind Carl imagined he saw the Texan throw a gun to Breitenstein and then kill him with Bert's. He came out of it with a jolt and his voice reached out and halted Jim Tremaine with that lariat quality all his men knew so well. "Jim!" Tremaine stopped, and Carl Sutton held out his hand. "I'll just take that gun, Jim."

"Seems like everybody's reachin' for Bert's gun these days." The gun felt lead-heavy in Carl's hand; the three notches were rough against his thumb.

He stuck the pistol in his waistband and went down with Tremaine. The gloom of Chipping House was turning into a buzzing, murmured planning. Riders came and went in the street; the bar, gallery and lobby were crowded.

Anabel brought Carl a drink, which he didn't want. Jesbo came in carefully carrying a smoking steak, "You bettah eat sup'in, Mistah Carl . . ."

Carl sat alone, mechanically cutting up his steak and eating it; it tasted like leather. Chipping had said, "We'll give Bert the biggest funeral Comanche ever saw . . ."

TWO men entered: Thornton Bennett, the mayor, and Dave Tolson, the wealthiest merchant, both of the anti-trail faction. Their faces ironed out into expressions of condolence. "You can't know how shocked I am, Carl," Tolson began, as if he were making a political speech. "Deeply shocked. Bert was my friend."

"That's the way I feel," Bennett said. "We all feel the same. Believe me, this wasn't our intention." He sucked in his breath. "I'll tell you something else. We're demanding Dan Breitenstein's resignation. Engaging in fisticuffs in the street!"

Jim Tremaine spoke to the room, "We'll show them our kind of law when murder is committed! Who's with me?" he shouted. He strode outside, raising a new babel of voices in the gallery. They were going out to get Breitenstein and bring him in for trial. They'd give him a trial, all right. Men were mounting up out there, shouting threats and promises, but Carl kept sitting.

The cavalcade racketed down the street and faded into the distance. Tremaine was gone, with Brandon, Swenson and the Sutton riders. Night had fallen again upon River Street; the sound of busyness had gained a subtle impetus. Men lifted their voices in recognition here and there. Ed Balder and Bert Sutton were the martyrs of the reform movement. Revenge and vindication were in the air.

In the morning Carl was having his coffee in the dining room when word came that the land and cattle company cowboys were arming and riding on the town, that Breitenstein had been caught, riding home from the Granville place, by a group led by Tremaine The sheriff had been roped and forced to walk seven miles to town. In the fight two men had been hurt.

Brandon came in, gulped a cup of hot coffee. "I'll tell you—Breitenstein don't feel so damned cocky right this minute. We'll try him—and hang him—this afternoon. We've got Judge Syverson all lined up."

"You have?" Carl said flatly. Eli Syverson was a disreputable nonentity who had once been a justice of the peace and surrogate judge. "We'll try and hang him . . ." Carl could almost hear Syverson saying it.

Carl noticed Jim Tremaine standing in the lobby arch, swirling bourbon in a tumbler. His eyes were heavy and directly on Carl. "If anybody objects to the trial," he said, "we'll give Breitenstein a pistol and send him out into the street. He wasn't man enough to meet Bert on Bert's terms. Gun or rope, he can have his choice."

Chipping, standing behind Jim, said, "An eye for an eye, Carl. A tooth for a tooth. The Bible says so."

Hardy Brandon said gruffly, "Dammit, I've known you for a long time, Oliver. Never heard you quote the Bible before."

LAUGHTER rolled around the room till several men became aware of Carl. He stood up slowly and said, "He probably wouldn't take up the challenge. I'd hate to shoot a man down like a dog."

"They turned the town upside down without consulting us," Chipping said.

"You going down, Carl?" Tremaine was looking at him steadily. He had not forgotten being called back with Bert's gun. Carl walked outside and saw a crowd of trail hands sitting their horses, waiting for him, rifles laid across their saddles. He walked off the gallery and started down the street with Chipping, Brandon and Tremaine following him. The horsemen deployed out behind him, walking their mounts, like a guard troop. A silent group of townsmen, Granville riders and L. L. Murphy's Sombrero men, plus a few ranchers, were gathered in a crowd at the south end of the square.

Carl swung into the jail, trailed by Chipping and Tremaine, as Stuart Granville and his group approached the building from the opposite side. Breitenstein got up from the wall bunk in his cell and came to the bars. Despite his badly beaten appearance his face was calm. There were rope burns around his neck and his clothes were in dusty tatters, showing that he had fallen many times. The seven-mile trek had been hard on him, yet his face showed no fear or defeat. Carl said, "Didn't you have sense enough to leave the country?"

Breitenstein laid his heavy hands on the bars. 'You had to drag me by a rope? I would have come by myself." He swallowed, "I had no intent to kill your brother."

"You did, though." This odd man was going to have Elinor, Carl thought.

A rider flared up, "You sonofabitch, you could say you was sorry, couldn't you!"

Breitenstein ignored him, kept looking at Carl. When the rider opened his mouth to speak again, Carl said curtly, "Shut up!" But his mind was saying, this man killed Bert—he has to pay. Why should he be alive when Bert is dead?

"There's no point in keeping me here," Breitenstein

said. "I'll stay for any hearing, but this is against the law."

"And I'm against it!" Stuart Granville surged into the corridor, followed by Tolson and Bennett. "Carl, this is crazy. You take a prisoner on your own and mistreat him. No good can come of it. I'm sorry about Bert, but it was an accident. Dan was doing his duty, upholding a town ordinance."

"Lookie here, Stuart," Chipping said, "a town ordinance could be unconstitutional. A man has a right to bear arms. Even so, Bert had taken off his gun when he was killed. Stuart, this is one time you can go to hell!" No one ever had told Stuart to go to hell. He swallowed his breath with effort.

Quietly Carl said, "Talk is cheap, Stuart, and Bert is dead. Yesterday you said something about hanging Bert if anything had happened to Breitenstein. Now, the tables are turned!"

Granville said hoarsely, "All we want is justice, Carl, justice. My God, hasn't there been enough bloodshed and death in this town? This has all gone too far and I regret it. Let this man out. I'll vouch for him personally."

Tremaine's voice was wind-soft and acid, "You want him out? We'll let him out if he wants, with a hogleg in his hand! He'd be dead by now but for Carl. So he's Carl's meat now."

Granville pushed close to Carl, "Is that what you want? Is that the way you do things?"

Driven by the contempt in the voice, Carl addressed Breitenstein stiffly: "You know how to use a pistol?"

"It's not what happens to me personally that matters," Breitenstein said.

"Carl, you called me a fence-jumper," Granville blazed. "Well, all I can say is, I sure prefer my side of it today. One thing you forget, though. *I* know how to use a gun!"

Carl faced him at last and realized finally that he had always hated him: "Stuart, if you want to take up for him, I'll oblige you."

"Wait," Breitenstein said. "I—"

"Let *him* answer," Tremaine snapped, pointing to Granville.

Granville was caught in it then. He said in a stony voice, "All right, Carl, I'll let you know." He turned and went out.

The whirlwind of trouble was growing into a tornado.

On the shallow rise south of town still another grave had been dug on Boot Hill; the ground was hard with dry grass and a few scattered scrub oaks and pines.

In Chipping's private office, Carl, Tremaine and Old Oliver sat around the table waiting for burial time. Chipping's constant echo was taking on a hollow sound; groping for reassurance: "We'll keep this a trail town, see if we don't. Everyone is behind us, from the owners on down to the lowest swamper, all River Street, and ready to fight!"

Carl let his glance ride over the room, the bearskins, the battered desk, the round mahogany table in the center. It was their country. Move west? How far could a man move? Why *should* a man move? And here was Jim, and the others. They would never back down. The wild men on horseback, ready for work or brawl or stampede, but never for backing down.

There was a knock and Anabel stood in the doorway. "Carl . . . somebody to see you . . ." She turned away. It was Elinor.

Elinor had actually walked through that barroom, with all those voluptuous nudes staring down at her and the men gaping at her and enjoying it. She was wearing a riding skirt and a man's hat. Carl flung the door wide and got her in out of that damned room, and she stood there under his shoulder, looking at the others.

It took Chipping a long while to get his bulk out of the chair, but he did. "I know you're up to no good, Ellie; but you might as well talk here. For heaven's sake don't go out the way you came in." He had known her off and on since she was a young girl.

She looked at him gravely. "Thanks, Uncle Chip." He went out with Brandon.

Tremaine lingered. "Don't listen to her, Carl. She's more beautiful and full of hell than is good for any man."

Elinor pretended not to hear Jim and Carl said to her in annoyance, "You don't bother picking your time or place, do you?"

"Is there any other? I have to see you."

"It can't be that important."

She was waiting for Jim to move, but he took his time pouring a drink. Tremaine's had been a wild life; he looked at her resentfully. "He's not good enough for you Granvilles, but you can come begging off him, though." With a shrug he went out.

Carl said, "What is it you think I can do for you?"

"I hear talk about you and Dad going gunning for each other. I don't believe it."

He tried not to remember that he had ever kissed her. His glance was steady. "If that's what has brought you . . . I promise not to kill him."

Elinor trembled visibly. "He could kill *you*."

"He might."

She looked away and spoke after a moment, in discomfort. "What about Dan Breitenstein? Can't you let him go? You're holding a lynch court."

"For a girl you do a lot of name-calling. When a man

kills another he generally stands trial."

"How many trials did you hold last week?"

"Ah," he said, "those were River Street killings. Something you wouldn't understand. It's when meddlers, reformers come in, that things get bad."

"You call that law and order?"

They stood there arguing, tearing at each other in rising anger. She had come in to reason with him and was being lost in a turmoil of hot words. "You Granvilles jump the fence and turn reformers. You're suddenly ashamed of the way you made your money. River Street will die, all right, but let it die a natural death." Carl was shouting.

"It couldn't die soon enough for me!" Elinor shouted back.

"But soon enough was all right for my brother, though."

Silence fell and she murmured, "I *am* sorry, Carl." She went round the table toward him, but he moved, putting a chair between them, and she stopped. "Carl, I never thought a thing like this would happen. Carl, we were always friends. What happened?"

"Friends?" he said tonelessly and shrugged. "A lot of things happened, or didn't happen. Two ways of life . . ."

"River Street. Oh, your precious River Street! Is that your way of life?"

"Maybe it's all I know. We built this place rough and a black panther doesn't turn lily white overnight. Who knows, maybe never."

"You don't understand anything," she said. "But this thing between you and Dad, over Daniel." With the whole town going blood crazy, you're the only one who can stop it."

"Bert had a lot of friends," he said slowly.

"Suppose, Carl, suppose—well, that *I* . . . went with the bargain? Couldn't you settle this thing then . . . ? Couldn't we do something . . ."

He couldn't believe his ears. No, she hadn't said it. She couldn't have. He was never before so keenly aware of her: the lustrous hair, the slim but handsomely curved figure, the full lips and the whole agonizing promise, so near. To have and to possess, to live and laugh with. This one who wiped away the memories of all others. And now a bargain! There was nothing these damn Granvilles wouldn't do! He slapped her across the face, rocking her onto her heels. "Get out!" he said. "This never was a place for you." And he stood, dying inside, staring at the flaming marks on her cheek.

SHE WAS white with the shock of it. "I tried, Carl. I tried. Remember that." Then, in the next moment she was gone, leaving by the alley door.

Jim Tremaine opened the bar door gingerly to find Carl, decanter in one hand, glass in the other, tossing down a straight drink. "Carl," he said softly, uneasily. "We're ready."

"Ready?"

"To start the burial, Carl . . ."

Carl put the whiskey down. He had almost forgotten about Bert.

And now they stood by the open grave, their hats off, watching the box being lowered, a motley collection of rough, leathery men with the sullen expectation of further violence hovering about their expressions.

The old captain's rusty delivery was nervous. He had been in doubt whether to read the service before or after the coffin was lowered, deciding finally on the former, as at sea. He finally reached, ". . . whosoever believeth in me shall not die . . . but have life everlasting."

Carl doubted it. Only the land and the sky is everlasting. When you're dead, you're dead, he thought. That's the end.

". . . and the body shall be cast into the sea . . ."

A few lifted puzzled faces; earth slid down and hit the pine boards in hasty shovelfuls. Hats came on; the River Street women clustered in little groups, depressed by the intrusion of a funeral into their lives. Several were sniffing loudly, but not Jenny Britten, who was with Anabel. Men looked uncertainly to Carl, who stood a tall marker of thoughtfulness, at the foot of the grave.

Chipping carefully put his hat back on. "Well, Carl, Bert was a good man . . . a good man . . ." He all but rubbed his hands together. "Now . . ." He glanced down at the town.

Back in the empty courtroom, Eli Syverson, with a bottle of whiskey from Chipping House, sweated on the judge's bench, not very sure of his position. There was madness in the air and he regretted his involvement in this. If the trailmen's cause was lost, his face would be forever no good in this town, that was certain. He quickly took another drink.

IN the Chipping House bar, Carl awaited word from Granville. Granville and his faction were in conference at Alderson Hotel. Chipping House swarmed with trailmen, but talk ran low, mostly confined to a tense undertone. At the center of the bar, Carl was tipping the bottle with no effect.

Chipping cautioned him once. "Don't ruin your gunhand, Carl." Carl took his next drink from the bottle. Glasses were filled all around. Chipping rapped for silence. "To Bert." They drank up, the only one not drinking being Carl. "Carl," Chipping said. "Carl . . . for Bert!"

Carl looked at him briefly. "I've drunk to him," he said. He could go out in the street and maim Stuart and kill Breitenstein, and no one would ever really blame him. He hated Granville more at this moment than he did Breitenstein. Well, why not? What had Granville ever done for him? And Elinor—irreparably lost. Afterward, what then? He glanced around the roomful of men, of wild, loose, trouble-loving characters, the River Street crowd. They all looked to him, Carl Sutton, and he felt suddenly the burden of it.

Tremaine came in. "No word yet. We'll give them another half hour, then we'll hold the trial and hang him." He spoke to Carl, "Looks like your friend Stuart turned chicken-liver. Ah, I always knew it." He pulled his gun and spun it.

Carl said quietly, "Just calm down, Bert; hold your horses . . ." No one noticed the slip. Somehow Carl saw Bert standing there, same stature, older perhaps, but same reckless look and manner; the same grin even.

Brandon made his way through the lobby. "Breitenstein asked for a pistol," he said. "But Granville sends word that we shouldn't let him out. He says not to let him out. What do I do?"

"Let him out," Jim said. "Let him out."

Carl's first shot would kill the big man. Brandon was in charge of the jail; the job had done something to him. "Is this regular, Carl? Is this the way it should be done?"

"Of course," Chipping said.

But Brandon kept looking to Carl, questioningly.

"Well?" Tremaine demanded. Carl didn't answer. Tremaine said again, "Let him out. Stuart's gone yellow. What are we waiting for?"

"Tell Stuart Granville," Carl said at last, "that I'm waiting on *him* . . . now." Tremaine swung out of the room. Excitement rose like a wave. What would happen if he went down? He shook his head as if to free himself of the agony of his thoughts. His thinking wasn't very clear any more . . . Elinor lost . . . Bert dead . . .

There was a hand on Carl's arm, a soft body and a voice close to him. "Carl, Carl," said Anabel. "Don't go out there and get killed. Not for River Street; not for Oliver or anybody. Do you hear me, Carl? Please! Please! We were never worth it."

He looked down at her through a fog, saw the tense pale face, the tears. He patted her hand and moved away through the crowd. There was some trouble outside, a rising and falling of voices. It struck Carl that Bert was out there getting into some kind of trouble, shouting challenges. He lifted his gun and broke it as he went, and replaced it in the holster. Men moved aside and he swung out into the street.

The opposing groups faced each other from either end of the square; and there was Bert, Carl thought, standing before the courthouse, yelling at Brandon's men to let Breitenstein out. "Let him out or I'll come in and get him!"

The jail door was open. The town held its breath. At the townsman end of the square someone cocked a rifle.

Stuart Granville came striding down the middle of Front Street from the opposite side. The man in front of the courthouse saw him and turned.

"Bert!" Carl called. "Bert!! BERT!" They were all looking at Carl now. "Give me that gun," Carl said. "There's been enough trouble."

"You gone crazy, Carl? What's the matter?"

It was Bert's figure and face, but it had Jim's voice.

"Give me that gun. It's all over with," Carl said.

"You gone clean out of your mind? Ah, I might have known! You've sold your saddle! I knew it! You sold your saddle to that redhead! And your own brother not yet cold in his grave!"

Jim's hand flashed to his gun. It jumped from the holster as Carl fired, then spun to the ground. Carl's second shot knocked Tremaine into the dust, where he lay clutching his shoulder.

Carl went over and knelt by him. The blood leaked slowly between Jim's fingers. "Are you all right, *Bert?* I had to stop you!"

There were tears in Tremaine's eyes. "The world has gone to hell," he murmured.

Carl looked around and saw the tension had left all the faces. Chipping was almost blubbering. Carl said, "Comanche was a great trail town, Oliver."

"*Was,* Carl, *was?* You don't know what you're saying."

Granville said steadily, "Yes, he does, Oliver. Six men dead last week; two more this week. Let this be the last of the bloodshed. Give me a hand with Jim . . ."

The street was emptying of riders. Along River Street the drinks were again on the house, but it was wake-drinking. Chipping, tears streaming from his eyes, yelled: "Come on, come on! Let her blow! Drink her up! It's all on the house!" But only a few came now.

Carl pulled up his horse and sat waiting. Elinor rode up alongside, dusty and tear-stained. "Can't you hear a hail?" But he stared in silence, and it was she who had to speak again, tremblingly, "You . . . you wouldn't want to claim your bargain then?"

He swung his horse's head around. "I made no bargain," he said bitterly.

"Wait! Carl, please."

But he rode on, and she came after him in desperation.

He said over his shoulder, "We had no bargain. Can you trade or buy and sell people? Do you think I could sell my own saddle down the river? Bert had his faults, sure. Maybe he was a good man. Maybe he was no damned good at all. But River Street wasn't worth fighting and dying over. That's the only reason I did what I did."

Again the only sound was the squeak of leather. When Elinor spoke again her voice filled with soaring hope. "Yes, and I know I love you, Carl. Or are you deaf to that too? It was always you; but we never saw each other long enough." She paused, then said, "We have loved each other since long ago. Don't deny it! Dan was too solemn, too righteous and full of purpose. Oh, Carl, it had nothing to do with a bargain . . ."

He pulled up his horse, wheeled it about and faced her. "Good Lord!" he said. "I've got nothing to offer you, Ellie, but come on . . ."

Beyond the horizon they could no longer see Comanche. They could not know, standing there together, that before another year the houses would be empty, the streets bare save for the creeping prairie grass bending to the wind; the wind that swirled the dust around the corners, writing the epitaph of the place that never truly was a town. The wild trail built it and reform and respectability killed it, in nature's strange irony.

So pass the long, slow years; the sun beats down, the moon arches across the sky and the stars wink silently. The hot spirits of men cool as life's long winter approaches.

So ended the short wild days. ★ THE END

"I just picked a winner. He had 400 bucks in his hip pocket."

Harem Is Where The Heart Is continued from page 39

I thought of my 30 high-standard wives with considerable anticipation. It had been quite some time now. Perhaps I would want to rest during the untedious part of the day.

That night after the Shah retired to his quarters for meditation, I strolled in the shadow of the palace wall, where I heard an urgent sound come out of the darkness.

It was Betsy. She grabbed my arm, so I couldn't escape, even if I had wanted to, which I didn't.

"Look," she said, "can you use your influence to get me a better job—preferably one where I come into contact with the Shah more frequently?"

"It would be useless for me even to try," I told her. "He isn't interested in you." I slipped an arm around her waist. She was a slim little thing. "But *I'm* interested."

She was touched. "Why, Joe—"

"Prince," I corrected her.

"Prince," she continued sweetly, "I had no idea." She moved close against me. "I am lonely, it's true. But are you sure the Shah wouldn't like me?"

"Real sure," I said. "His Highness has given up sex—for the present at least." It was much darker down in the corner of the garden. "Let's go down there, meanwhile," I suggested, "and explore the possibilities."

"What corn," she said with a snicker. "Just the same you may have a point there."

Before the night was over I was convinced that being a prince had archeology beat all hollow.

I didn't get to see Betsy the following night, but I spoke to the Shah about taking her into my harem.

"Never!" The Shah was vehement. "Think of the talk it would cause. For me it wouldn't matter, but for the new Prince to take a girl with such a lack of beauty into his harem would make him a laughing stock. I beg you, for your own sake, abandon this idea."

Well, if I couldn't take Betsy into the harem, I'd just have to take her down by the garden wall, palace politics being what they were.

The next day the Shah and I went to court. The double ceremony—adoption and marriage—was held there in the Hall of Justice. The Shah spoke briefly. Then the Chief Justice rose after a quick conference with his fellow justices, and proclaimed that the Court had found unanimously that the royal plea was in good order. "Furthermore," he said, "the former Joe Yates will henceforth be known as Prince Sabu al Setay, according to the annotated statutes, and he will thereby become next in line for the Throne of Mansour. Consequently, the aforesaid Prince Sabu doth take unto himself—as written in the law—thirty wives," he reached down and took a paper from the court bailiff, "—in name as follows . . ." He then read off the names of my 30 wives.

Of course, my 30 wives—whom I hadn't seen yet—were not at the ceremony, since Royal wives are *never* seen in public. I wasn't even sure if they would be ready for me that night.

But they were ready. The Shah broke the news at dinner. "You will wish to retire early tonight. Your harem is all prepared."

"Ah, yes," I said eagerly.

"Excellent! I have arranged for them to be brought to your quarters one at a time, so you make your evening's choice and inspect the others as well. I would like to be with you, to see the joy light your face as they enter, but I feel a great need for meditation as I consider the evening which lies ahead of you."

I knew that Betsy would be waiting by the garden wall, but what man can resist 30-to-1 odds?

The first of my wives, ushered in by the chief eunuch, was announced as Atisor. Well, let's face it, Atisor had about a 48 bust and, I'm sure, 55-inch hips. She paddled over and knelt before me in submission. I permitted her to kiss my hand and she retired to a corner of the room. The next one was even larger. Her name was Ellimac. Like Atisor, she had beautiful eyes and hennaed hair. At least, I thought, she has nice ankles.

Number three was cut from the same tub of lard. Now, I am not the kind of guy who turns up his nose at a bountifully rounded bust and a pertly protuberant posterior. I like them. But these wives of mine were just too much. All 30 of them—submissive, anxious to please, eager for my princely favors—were about as cuddly as a telephone booth full of elephants. Yet . . . I thought . . . yet . . . I had a duty to perform. I told myself, I'll just let them fuss over me a little. Possibly they may know some quaint Mansourian customs with which I am unacquainted. After all, I had hardly been anywhere but Iowa and southern Illinois.

My wives couldn't give me an argument about anything I wanted to do, and—as it turned out—they delighted in thinking up various Mansourian refinements in the art of lovemaking. A few of them even proved to be innovators in this respect.

Meanwhile, I continued to meet Betsy whenever possible. Oddly enough she seemed to be jealous of my wives, and continually urged me to run away with her.

"Give up all this?" I said. "Don't be comic."

"Don't you worry about losing me?" she demanded. "Pretty soon my thirty days will be up and I'll have to leave the country."

To be truthful, it did worry me. I had grown fond of Betsy. She was a clever little thing, and she was intent on making me dissatisfied with married life. Although an old Mansourian adage says, "Monotony is an abundancy of abundancy," still, an abundancy of something is better than an abundancy of nothing. I thought of an amorous delight my 12th wife, Airam, had shown me last night. Still . . . still . . . Betsy was not without inventiveness herself.

My problems were solved for me by the arrival of the "letter edged in black." Actually it was a cablegram. I was looking through a magazine from home, noting with interest the poses of the various girls therein, when the Shah sent for me.

He handed me the cablegram and watched me open it. I read it aloud: "Dear Son, the doctors give me but a week to live. Hurry home." It was signed by my father.

The Shah bowed his head. "I have but one son to give." He rang the gong beside the throne. "Fly to him at once. Stay however long you find necessary." His eyes were sadly questioning. "But you will return?"

"I shall return."

"Good! Your word is my word." A guardsman entered and the Shah told him to alert the royal plane. "Send Shiek Abou al Klim to me at once." He explained, "Shiek Klim will fly you to Paris, where you can catch a plane to the States." He paused. "You will need company. Since the skinny Betsy is about to be released, take her with you. I wish you would get your fill of her." He waved a protesting hand. "Oh, I know you've been seeing her. I realize she has an interesting face and blonde hair, but I cannot understand how you tolerate her anemic body. I hope that by the time you reach your father's side, you will tire of her and long for the abundancies of Mansour." He thought for a moment, then confessed: "It's a shame that her liking for me is offset by her frailty and boniness. Especially since I am becoming bored with meditation."

Betsy was delighted when I told her we were leaving. In Paris she mentioned that the Shah had set no special time for my return. In New York she said, "I think I'll go West with you, young man." By the time we got to Iowa, she was still with me, and we decided to settle down on the farm I inherited from my father.

"But," I said, "we can't get married! I already have a score and a half wives back east."

"Very well," she said primly, "I'll be your housekeeper."

Surprisingly enough, Betsy was a terrific cook. But more important, she liked her own cooking. I did, too, but it didn't show on me the way it did on her. Of course, being around her constantly, I didn't really notice what was happening to her until the day the man

her life is in her hands...and yours

This wonderful little girl, named Colleen, is a victim of Myasthenia Gravis, commonly called MG. Without the medication she holds in her hands her affliction could be fatal. With it, she is normal.

Most frequent symptoms are extreme fatigue, drooping eyelids, double vision, difficulty in swallowing, weakness of arms or legs. *See your doctor at once!* Most patients, adults or children, are restored to happy and nearly normal lives.

Will you support the work to find the cause and cure of MG? The big difference of life itself may be in your hands, too.

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showed up.

He was tall and thin with brown skin and a beard. When I went to the door, he bared his left wrist. On the inner side of it was tattooed the royal emblem of Mansour—two minarets with a muezzin rampant. "Kram al Sucram, Royal Courier of Mansour," he introduced himself. "My master and thy father, The Shah, seeks word of you. In short, Joe, he wishes to know when you will return."

"Come in," I said. "It's coffee time."

We went into the kitchen where Betsy was baking. As she leaned over the oven to bring forth a calorie-rich, homemade cake, I heard the royal courier suck in his breath appreciatively, his eyes lingering on her well fleshed legs. In fact, I suddenly realized I could hardly see the oven with Betsy in front of it. Truly, she had acquired a rotund beauty that would challenge any Mansourian maid. It was time, I saw, for me to return to Mansour. There I had variety *and* volume.

Betsy went into the pantry, and I told the courier, "Tell His Highness the Shah that I shall return within the week."

Kram nodded. "It is well. Your father will be pleased."

And now, in the six months since my return to Mansour, changes have taken place, but only in the harems. To replace the ten wives who I set free, I have a tall, silvery-eyed blonde goddess named Marsha, formerly of the Latin Quarter; Jinx, a little brunette who used to dance at the Mayfair in London; Sandy, a curvy redhead from New Orleans; and Sugar, a dark-eyed peach from Georgia. Then there is Paula, who won a big beauty contest and started for Hollywood but came east when she heard the Prince of Mansour was looking for wives. The last five are equally luscious. Eunice is a good example. She measures 38-23-36. The others may give or take an inch here and there, but no more. I'm adamant about *that*.

Next spring I plan a trip through Europe to look over the beauty crop there, since another ten of my original wives must be set free and I will want to replace them with slimmer, curvier models.

Perhaps you wonder how all this came about. Actually, it was simple. Upon my return to Mansour I gave my father, the Shah, a gift that made his eyes pop and his palms sweat even before he knew the gift was his. Oh, I hesitated, hemmed, hawed and did a lot of bargaining before I gave it to him. But once I did, his gratitude knew no bounds.

"Go ahead," he told me, "you have your kind of a harem and I'll have mine."

Which reminds me. The head eunuch informed me today that Paula now weighs 122. Tomorrow she goes on a diet.

Betsy? Oh, she's living like a queen. She weighs 190 and for a five-footer, that's quite a package. But she's happy. She's right where she wanted to be from the begining—in the harem. Only it isn't my harem. It's the harem of the Shah. That's right—she's the gift I gave Abu on my return.

So everybody is happy all the way around, and like I say, in Betsy's case, that's a long way. The palace grapevine tells me she's going to have a baby before long, but I should worry. I'm the first son. The Supreme Court and the Shah's word have so ordained it. Allah be praised. ★ THE END

You Can Influence Others With Your Thinking!

TRY it some time. Concentrate intently upon another person seated in a room with you, without his noticing it. Observe him gradually become restless and finally turn and look in your direction. Simple—yet it is a *positive demonstration* that thought generates a mental energy which can be projected from your mind to the consciousness of another. Do you realize how much of your success and happiness in life depend upon your influencing others? Is it not important to you to have others understand your point of view—to be receptive to your proposals?

Demonstrable Facts

How many times have you wished there were some way you could impress another favorably—*get across to him or her your ideas?* That thoughts can be transmitted, received, and understood by others is now scientifically demonstrable. The tales of miraculous accomplishments of mind by the ancients are now known to be fact—not fable. The method whereby these things can be *intentionally*, not accidentally, accomplished has been a secret long cherished by the Rosicrucians—one of the schools of ancient wisdom existing throughout the world. To thousands everywhere, for centuries, the Rosicrucians have privately taught this nearly-lost art of the practical use of mind power.

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Name..

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....

The Amazing Success Story Of Mickey Spillane continued from page 21

After Repeal, with the country still in the grip of the Depression, the family moved back to Brooklyn, where Mickey went to Erasmus High School. During his senior year he started selling fantastic tales to pulp magazines. But that was too much of a hit-or-miss proposition. For several years after graduation he grabbed any kind of job he could land during the winter and spent summers as a lifeguard on Long Island. Saving up a stake, he rounded out his education with a short interlude at Fort Hays State College in Kansas, where a persuasive instructor got him all steamed up over the theory of evolution.

The idea that the world was still pretty much of a jungle and that you had to be tough to survive made sense to him—but he didn't like it. That left the decent little guys out in the cold, and there are so many of them. Something had to be done about that, he felt.

It's obvious now from the tenor of what he's written that this line of thinking must have made him wonder how one might dish out a private brand of justice if he were strong enough, but still a square shooter. Bit by bit the fabulous character of the unbeatable Mike Hammer took shape in his vivid imagination.

Mickey's first real break came during the Christmas season of 1940, when he was selling marked-down haberdashery in Gimbel's basement. There he met Joe Gill, another seasonal clerk, who had a similar fondness for beer and shooting the breeze. Joe took him to meet his brother, Ray Gill, an editor at Funnies Inc., and Ray took Mickey on the staff. His first assignment was to turn out eight-page comic-book sequences about a violent adventurer named "Bull's Eye Bill, the Human Torch." This was just Mickey's cup of vitriol. He flourished on it. The trick he had mastered in his youth of contriving a plot on the spur of the moment put money in his pocket now. Everybody in the shop was astounded by his speed. Other writers labored five days over an installment, but Spillane batted out one a day, and his slap-bang episodes were so fierce he made theirs seem wishy-washy.

Mickey was going great guns with Funnies Inc. when the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. To him, that was a personal challenge. Here at last was his opportunity to unload all the violent indignation inside him—at a deserving target. The next day he joined the Air Force. From the beginning, it looked as if the Air Force was made for him and he for it. He learned to fly so quickly and so well that before too long he was a captain.

But to his everlasting frustration, Mickey never got a chance to fight the enemy. Joe Gill joined the Coast Guard and was in the thick of it at Saipan and in the Philippines. But Mickey fought the war in Florida, teaching young punks how to fly. To this day, he looks up to Joe for his combat record, just as Joe looks up to him for beating the writing game.

Mickey did his damndest to get transferred to active duty, but he couldn't swing it. He was such a good instructor they just wouldn't release him. It was something he could be proud of—but it wasn't much comfort when other men by the millions were getting a chance to discover if they were tough enough to measure up to the demands of war. He began thinking of evolution more and more, and religion in its many varied forms. The more he thought, the more he felt behind the eight ball. He kept asking himself why the cock-eyed world was so rotten. Sadly in need of something to cling to, he fell in love with Mary Ann, a sweet-looking, soft-spoken, wholesome Baptist girl from Greenwood, Miss. Mickey was baptized again, this time by "deep immersion," and they were married in her church.

When the war was over and he was discharged they returned to Brooklyn, where Mickey and some old buddies set up the comic-book writing factory.

After reading the manuscript of *I, The Jury*, the guys didn't know what to say. They were wary of going out on a limb. It certainly held interest and you couldn't put it down. But there wasn't anything to compare it to. It seemed to be in a class all by itself. It might go, though, if Mickey could just find the right publisher. But who?

"You know what?" Mickey said, scrunched down in his chair, gazing at a crack in the ceiling. "I'm gonna give it to Jack McKenna and get him to take it to Dutton's."

Jack McKenna was a printing salesman they knew who did business with E. P. Dutton & Company, a reputable firm with a long record of publishing distinguished authors.

"Why Dutton's?" somebody asked.

CLIMAX

June Issue on sale April 28th

"Don't you think they're a little high-toned for this kind of book?"

"Hell, I don't know." Mickey yawned. "Offhand, I'd be hard put to name anybody that writes for them. But I've heard of 'em, that's enough. Anybody want to bet they turn it down?" When he got no takers, he said: "Main reason I'm trying Jack McKenna is because he's got a contact there. Only way to get anywhere in this dog-eat-dog town is to know somebody who knows somebody, see?"

But Jack was lukewarm. He wasn't familiar with that side of publishing and didn't like to stick his neck out. When Mickey applied pressure, Jack said he would get his wife to read it. She did more than that. She sat up half the night, devouring it, thereby becoming the first of millions of women who couldn't put it down. She urged Jack to read it. He was goggle-eyed when he finished it. "Maybe it's junk," he said, "but some junk-dealers drive Cadillacs."

The manuscript readers and editorial board at Dutton's were also jolted by *I, The Jury*. You couldn't exactly say it was up their alley, but there might be money in it. Publishers were keenly aware that the war had violently altered the nation's reading habits. An appetite for tougher fare had been whetted and multitudes who had never bought a book were now avid readers. Without much argument, Mickey got that thousand-dollar advance.

Assisted by George Wilson, he built his cinder-block house in the old hayfield near Newburgh. But the hard-cover edition of his brain-child was a slow starter. In fact, it was almost left at the post. Conservative book reviewers didn't pay much attention to it. A vast, ready-made public remained sublimely unaware of its existence.

So Mickey said to hell with writing books. He and "Baby," which is his pet name for Mary Ann, had to eat. First he approached the city editor of a Newburgh newspaper. He didn't look like a reporter, though, or talk like one, and he got the brush-off. But the advertising manager of one of the town's department stores went for his breezy method of expression. For nearly two years he made a living grinding out advertising copy. He might still be doing it if the miracle hadn't happened.

The miracle that lifted Mickey Spillane from obscurity and flung him to the peak of fame was the explosive expansion of the "paper-back" industry. Two-bit soft cover books had narrow appeal before the Second World War. Then they caught on as something to read on the train back to camp and light weight reading in overseas packages to the boys far from home. When the war was over and millions of GIs returned with a newly acquired reading habit developed largely by boredom, paper-back sales zoomed. There was a mad scramble for intriguing material and alluring titles. Through an arrangement with Dutton's, the New American Library of World Literature rushed out a paper-back edition of *I, The Jury* in December, 1948. The first printing sold like hot-dogs at Coney Island. One dealer unloaded 25,000 in a single day. Since then, N.A.L. has issued 43 additional printings.

The figure on Mickey's first paper-back royalty check was so large it made him dizzy. At first, he thought it was a mistake—but it wasn't. The checks kept coming in even larger amounts. Although the critics still fried him, the reading public went crazy over Spillane.

His publishers began to urge him to drill more gushers. In rapid succession, therefore, he put Mike Hammer through a couple of gory sequels; *My Gun Is Quick* and *One Lonely Night*, were brought out in February and October of 1950. To keep the pot boiling, the publishers fed Mickey's flame by shoveling him crime reports and clippings. But there was more.

Girls at Radcliffe College organized a Mickey Spillane Club. A member of the WAFS, speaking on behalf of her outfit in Stillwater, Okla., wrote: "More! More! More! Mickey Spillane is the best novelist of all time!" In Korea, an Air Force sergeant hitched a plane ride to Tokyo to get a copy of *Vengeance Is Mine*. The high command in Germany balked at revealing how many Mickey Spillane novels were being sold in PXs, afraid the figures might reflect on the Army's reading taste. On the other hand, Arthur Krock, distinguished Washington correspondent of the New York *Times*, came out and proclaimed himself a Spillane buff. So did seven college professors. Finally, five colleges disclosed that students majoring in creative writing were required to read Mickey's books and contrast them with the work of more conventional authors.

Meanwhile, an event took place destined to alter Mickey's entire outlook on life. At the time it seemed unimportant. One afternoon in the fall of 1950, the Spillane doorbell rang. Mary Ann was out marketing with their year-old daughter Kathy. When Mickey answered, there stood Mrs. Florence Gobel, a motherly, good-natured neighbor who was a member of Jehovah's Witnesses. She had some pamphlets in her hand. "Hello," she said, "I won't take up much of your time, because I can see you're busy."

She was right. In the midst of his most productive period, he had never been busier. While putting the finishing touches on *One Lonely Night,* he was writing the smash ending of *The Big Kill* and doping out an idea for *The Long Wait.* All were published the following year, in March, July and November.

Just to be polite, he pretended to listen, but his mind was on the final scene of *The Big Kill,* where Mike Hammer is about to be murdered by one of his voluptuous playmates but is providentially saved when a two-year-old child playfully fires a .45 at her, causing her seductive face to become a moist mask bearing no resemblance to a face.

"Maybe you don't know it," Mrs. Gobel said, "but all us Witnesses are pledged to do missionary work, not way off in the jungle somewhere, but right around us where there's a lot of unhappy people, maybe like you, who actually want help but don't know it yet."

All Mickey wanted right then was to rush back to the typewriter and get his last scene on paper while it was still fresh in his mind. So he simply nodded and murmured: "Some other time."

"Anyway," Mrs. Gobel said, "let me leave these booklets with you. Try to get around to reading them. If you do, I'm sure you'll want to talk with me."

When Mrs. Gobel left, Mickey was about to toss the religious tracts into the basket when something stopped him. It was just a feeling that it wouldn't be quite fair to his neighbor to get rid of them while she was still trudging down the driveway. So he put them in an old oak cabinet which had been his toy chest and was now a catch-all. There they remained through most of the following year.

And it was a big year for Mickey. First of all, *One Lonely Night* went over with such a bang that the New American Library set an all-time record with a 2,500,000 first printing of *The Big Kill,* at the same time releasing another million copies of each of his four previous books. Then his son Ward was born.

With two fine children and Mary Ann, with more money than he knew what to do with, there didn't seem to be anything else Spillane really wanted. At 33, he had it made; his rare gun collection was one of the best in the country; he had a gleaming white Jaguar, a souped-up Ford convertible and six stock cars for hot-rod racing; he had five dogs and seven cats. His four-acre retreat, named "Little Bohemia," was the gathering place for a bunch of guys, including Joe Gill, George Wilson and Charlie Wells, who felt as he did about not wearing ties and liked to drink beer and pop off. Yet, something seemed to be missing.

As 1951 advanced, Mickey fretted. Finally he put his finger on what was wrong. He wasn't progressing; he was in a rut. His books were all too much alike, and that was Mike Hammer's

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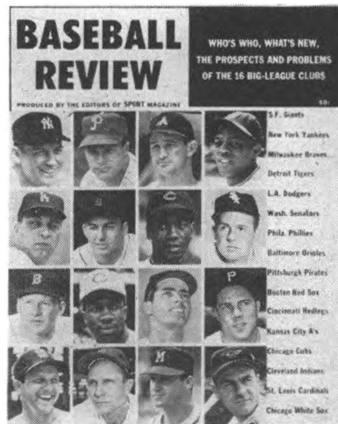

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fault. Every time Mickey sat down at the typewriter, Mike took over and ran the show to suit himself. What was needed at this stage of the game was another robust, entirely different character who would strike out in a new direction. So when Mickey settled down to write *The Long Wait*, he shelved Mike Hammer in favor of a newcomer called Johnny McBride. Johnny didn't look a bit like Mike. But that turned out to be the only noticeable difference. He talked the same and behaved the same. When the book was finished, however, it was too late to do anything about it. The publishers had it in their fall schedules and were clamoring for it.

After mailing out the manuscript, Mickey was bushed and edgy. He began to suffer from insomnia. It was the damndest thing. No matter how much cold beer he drank before supper, or after, he couldn't sleep until almost daylight. He would wake up around two A.M. and his thoughts were dismal. Early one morning he got up and started fooling around with his gun collection. Looking for a rare-gun dealer's catalogue, he lifted the lid of his old toy chest and ran across the booklets motherly Mrs. Gobel had left with him. For the rest of the day he sat quietly, reading.

Mickey didn't change all at once. For awhile he felt like two different persons—one, a quiet member of Mrs. Gobel's group of Jehovah's Witnesses and the other, Mike Hammer's Siamese twin. Dissatisfied with Johnny McBride, Mickey returned to Mike when he got around to writing *Kiss Me Deadly*, the last book he has published, which now appears to be Mike's swan song.

Mickey finally joined Jehovah's Witnesses in the winter of 1951 and was baptized for a third time, this time in a pool at Norwalk, Conn. Soon afterward, apparently unimpressed by his conversion, the critics got around to Mickey Spillane and unlimbered the big guns.

The barrage was opened by *The New Republic*, in February, 1952, with an article by Malcolm Crowley called "Sex Murder Incorporated." Armed with statistics, Crowley contended that since Mike Hammer, "a dangerous parnoiac, sadist and masochist," had bedazzled the reading public, "burglaries had been decreasing, but rapes, mutilations and violent robberies had been increasing," Mr. Crowley left it to *his* readers to draw their own conclusions.

In May, sedate *Harper's Magazine* printed an editorial headed "Dames and Death," in which it said: "It is quite apparent that an author whose books sell by the millions is more than a little in tune with the temper of the times." Alarmed by that, it felt justified in examining Mickey Spillane's story formula, which they found to be: "Boy meets girl, boy is seduced by girl, boy kills girl." The boy, in each instance, is the reluctant Mike Hammer and the girl one of Mickey Spillane's sexy lady villians. Of all of Mickey's spine-tingling scenes, the one that appalled *Harper's* most was the occasion when Mike's secretary, Velda, is captured by his enemies, stripped nude, strung up by her wrists and lashed with a knotted rope, while her tormentors "drooled." Mike's revenge, the editorial pointed out, was to machine-gun a roomful of people, with Spillane taking "three paragraphs to describe the physical consequences in some detail."

Mickey's handling of this situation also made a lasting impression on Ben Ray Redman, who fired another salvo at him in the *Saturday Review*, May 31, 1952. Redman was disturbed by Mickey's graphic description of one of Mike's pistol-whipped victims, whose face became a scarlet mask begging him to stop.

Then, on June 23 of the same year, *Life* did Mickey the rare honor of running a full-length profile about him, instead of just a topical picture story. Written by Richard W. Johnston, it was entitled "Death's Fair-haired Boy." As examples of Mickey's rough-and-tumble writing Johnston cited the situation in *My Gun Is Quick* where Mike wounds the villian in a blazing house to keep him quiet till he is burned to death, and the scene in *The Long Wait* where the hero and the mystery woman face each other with guns, both stark naked. The latter book, Johnston remarked with awe, sold out in less than three weeks.

In a box score of the sirens who enticed Mike into making love to them, Johnston itemized their inducements and fate in this manner: Mary, body like a hot flame, abandoned; Anne, undulating shadows across the room, drowned in a bathtub; Lola, eyes leaping, dancing coals of passion, knifed to death; Connie, standing on a white cloud stark naked, back broken; Ethel, the warmth that seemed to come from the flames was a radiation that flowed from the sleek length of her legs, whipped and shot; Linda, grabbed Mike like a devil was inside her and bit him on the neck, abandoned; Marsha, her hands slid up Mike's back and tightened, shot; Ellen, she stretched back slowly and reached out her arms, and the entire front of her robe came open, abandoned. Score: four dead, one seriously wounded, three abandoned

All of that evidently struck *Life's* contributor as pretty dreadful, but what really depressed him was the fact that in Mickey's first five books Mike Hammer kills 48 persons, 34 of whom were entirely innocent of the crime that got the story rolling.

Following that issue of *Life*, Walter Winchell reported in his column that the profile's roughing up of Mickey made the latter so sore he had dropped completely out of sight. Perhaps, but he didn't remain hidden very long. Soon he was living it up in Hollywood, where United Artists was sweating a movie out of *I, The Jury*, presumably with Mickey's able assistance.

Mickey showed up in Hollywood with his pal, Jack Stang, a rugged Newburgh cop, whom he regards as a dead ringer for Mike Hammer. But he didn't have any luck trying to fast-talk the producers into casting Stang as Mike. In a later interview, Stang sized up Mickey this way: "There's violence there, but it's half a day's work to bring it out. If you push him into a corner and hit him first, then he'll go berserk. But I've never seen him go hunting for trouble."

Hollywood baffled Mickey—and vice versa. His habit of popping off on the slightest provocation had everybody blinking. Nobody remotely resembling him had hit Phoneyville since Marlon Brando's uninhibited manners started them all gasping. But what soured Mickey was the high-handed way scenario mechanics altered Mike Hammer, mutilating him till his own creator didn't recognize him. Mickey was so disgusted and, as he put it, "humiliated," that he walked out on the preview. But one joyful memory was having so many stars and luscious starlets tell him they just loved to caress any man named Mike. Half the time they called him Mike instead of Mickey, which wasn't strange, because half the time Spillane had felt more like Mike than himself.

How he actually regards himself now that he is a member of Jehovah's Witnesses is a question confusing both to him and to his old buddies. A good deal of that bewilderment is due to the continuous pounding Mickey has been taking ever since his name became overwhelmingly identified with the idea of "reader interest at any cost."

Not satisfied with the fairly mild piece they published about him in 1952, the *Saturday Review* let him have it again on November 6, 1954, in a blast written by Christopher La Farge titled "Mickey Spillane and His Bloody Hammer." La Farge invented the term "Hammerism," which he placed on a par with "McCarthyism." As he saw it, both Mike Hammer and the late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy were hell-bent on taking the law into their own hands and ruthlessly dealing out their own brand of justice. He thought the way Mickey dramatized his impatience with "the tedious process of the law" was exceedingly dangerous and he chided Spillane's publishers for bringing out such books. The violence in those novels, La Farge felt, might be a compensation for Mickey's failure to get into combat during the war. He suggested that one way to whittle Mickey down to size might be through parody. Walt Kelly tried this in his Uncle Pogo stories, where Mickey was ridiculed in a sequence called "The Bloody Drip," by Muckey Spleen, telling about Meat Hamburg, private eye, ear, nose, throat and leg man, in another Big Game of Corpse and Robber.

Mickey was still smarting from that lambasting when *Redbook*, with one eye seeking a fresh crop of readers, wooed the millions of working girls and young housewives who are Spillane fans. Adroitly entitled "The Secret Life of Mickey Spillane" and written by Marion Hargrove, *Redbook's* article in June 1955, was a split-personality piece. An entertaining story, it probably served its purpose—but it just about made long-suffering Mickey froth at the mouth.

Then the housewives' bible, *Good Housekeeping*, caught wise to the bonanza and also took a profitable whack at him in February 1958—and it was a rough one. The acid-thrower they

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picked to burn his hide was Philip Wylie—no slouch himself at popping off—whose *Generation of Vipers* started a little tornado of its own a few years ago. Wylie's blistering bill-of-particulars was labeled "The Crime of Mickey Spillane." Superficially, in the misdemeanor department, Mickey's disorderly conduct consisted of disturbing Wylie's peace, with sentences that didn't parse, and "an amateurish effort to make dirty words sound important." Wylie's felony count had the depth of a third-degree burn. Mickey Spillane's real crime, he pontificated, was that "he stands in contempt of humanity." Woowie! Did Wylie realize that he was talking about a fellow who had been worrying himself sick for years about the plight of the little guys who couldn't buck the system? And what about the 50,000,000 people who have plunked down their dough for Mickey's dramatic expression of his "contempt for humanity?" Wylie took care of them. "Maybe," he says, "it's just the public that buys his books that should be blamed."

But Mickey didn't take all this abuse lying down. His invective may not be as polished as that if his detractors, but it's pungent. "They're a bunch of literary eunuchs," he says. As for newspaper book reviewers, they are "lousy little $30-a-week clerks." All the egghead palaver about the import or meaning of his writing gripes the pants off him. He regards his novels as king-size comic books. "Maybe they do lack quality," he says. "Henry Ford made a mistake, too. He turned out a Model-T instead of a Cadillac. And Liberace has the perfect answer: 'I cried all the way to the bank!' " In reply to moralists who get worked up because he makes women his villians, he says: "So what? Half the people in the world are women. How many sexes have you got to choose from?"

When somebody asked him what he thought of the way Mike Hammer had been portrayed on television, he snorted: "Don't blame it on me! I got my money and ran home." He insists he is not an author, but a writer. He's not trying to educate people, but entertain them. The only place he likes to see his name, he says, is on a check. "I only write for moolah."

But today Mickey Spillane isn't doing much writing. For the past five years he has been fooling around with another novel for Dutton and N.A.L. called *The Deep*. He finally got far enough along with it to send in a rough draft. After that, the project bogged down.

"He's goofing off," one of his friends said.

Restless and bored, he seems to be dawdling with anything that will keep him from writing. He fools around with his gun collection, tinkers with his hot rods and races at stock car tracks. He bought a trampolin and has become an expert tumbler, even playing a minor role in a circus movie. He took up fencing and assembled an elaborate Hi-Fi rig.

Once in a while he makes a stab at writing again. Last year he tried out a new tough character who was really a nice kind of guy, called Mitch Valler, in a 20,000-word magazine story called "Stand Up and Die." But nobody went wild over it. Mitch was no Mike Hammer.

Some of Mickey's old buddies say he's caught tight in a squeeze between the principles of Jehovah's Witness—which he is now determined to uphold—and the only kind of writing that comes natural to him.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the end of the world is not far off; when it comes, those who have lived right will move on to another world, where everyone will be good and not hurt each other—just the kind of world Mickey has always longed to live in.

Jehovah's Witnesses pay taxes, but they refuse to go to war, salute the flag or do jury duty. They believe that no one should pass judgment on his fellow men—and that, of course, is what Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer is constantly doing. Mike Hammer is a one-man judge, jury and executioner.

Sometimes Mickey talks as if he is ashamed of his novels and wishes he had never written them. Then again, he seems proud of having set records with his all-time best sellers.

He doesn't pop off as much as he used to, and when occasionally he does get going, he stops suddenly and says: "That's the way I used to feel. Nothing bothers me any more."

He shies away from interviewers and spends most of his time in a rented house at Myrtle Beach, S. C., where he now has his Hi-Fi equipment. He lets his mail pile up until there's enough to throw away. Then he sorts out envelopes containing checks and burns the rest without reading them. He refuses to answer the phone. Once he even took a shot at it.

For hours on end he listens with rapt fascination to Wagnerian music. Apparently, there's something about that Twilight-of-the-Gods stuff that sends him.

★ THE END

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the restaurant, he was hailed by William Klein, a theatrical lawyer who was sitting near the door with Sally Lou Ritz, a sprightly showgirl. Invited to join them, the judge readily accepted.

Up to that moment, there seems little doubt that Judge Crater was deeply involved in some kind of hazardous situation, and, even more important, that he was deeply concerned about it. He must have known that the comfortable future he had worked so hard to insure was now at stake; he may even have feared that his life was in danger. According to one theory, he had a pistol in his pocket. But he prided himself on being a self-controlled man of the world, capable of playing the game whatever turned up, right to the bitter end. So he put up a bland front. He laughed heartily at Sally Lou's witticisms and came up with a few nifties of his own. He ate with his customary gusto and seemed to be enjoying himself.

He was lively and talkative—but when questioned later by detectives, neither Sally Lou nor Klein could recall anything significant Crater said, except that he was planning to return to Maine in a few days and remain there with his wife until court reconvened.

About 9:15 the trio left the restaurant and stood outside talking. The judge didn't appear to be in any hurry. Then a tan taxi drew up. Both Sally Lou and Klein were certain of the color, but they didn't get a good look at the driver.

They talked a moment longer. Finally, Sally Lou and Klein walked away. As Crater opened the taxi door, Sally Lou said: "Toodle-de-do!" and waved to him. He waved back, his foot on the running board, his eyes lingering a moment more on lovely Sally Lou.

Though they cannot be sure, some police officials feel quite certain in their own minds of what happened after Klein and the showgirl left the judge and headed east toward Eighth Avenue. In their reconstruction of the scene, they believe that immediately after the departure of his friends Judge Crater spotted a sinister figure lurking in the doorway next to Billy Haas's. There was sufficient light from a nearby lamp post so that he may even have recognized the menacing figure. Even if the judge then changed his mind and tried to dart back into the restaurant instead of speeding away in the tan taxicab which had eased up to Billy Haas's so opportunely, the waiting man prevented this by sticking a gun in his back, forcing him into a cab and driving off with Crater.

The light was red when Sally Lou and her escort reached nearby Eighth Avenue. Still glowing from the pleasure of getting acquainted with that fascinating Judge Crater, the showgirl glanced back as they waited for the light to change. Her impulsive movement caused Klein to turn, too, and they both saw the taxi swerve away from the curb with a quick pickup and streak westward toward Ninth Avenue. In front of the restaurant, not a soul was in sight.

"He's nice," Sally Lou observed. "I sure would like to see him again."

Klein replied: "Maybe it could be arranged."

But that was impossible now. The showgirl and the theatrical lawyer were the last two people to see Judge Crater, or, more accurately, the last people willing to come forward and say so.

Thursday, when the judge failed to show up at his chambers as he said he would, Joe Mara and Frank Johnson thought nothing of it. He had no appointments requiring him to be there, so they figured he had probably decided to stay on in Westchester to avoid the sweltering city heat.

Four days went by without anyone wondering what had become of Crater. When he didn't arrive at the Maine cottage on Saturday, Stella was disappointed, but not worried. Joe always had a lot of things to attend to and he was so generous with his time. But when she didn't hear a word from him all day Sunday, she became concerned. That wasn't like her Joe. If he got tied up, he always phoned or wired. She put in a long distance call and kept nagging the operator. The aggravating report was repeatedly the same: "No answer, shall I keep trying?" Unable to get in touch with him Monday or Tuesday, on Wednesday she called Simon H. Rifkind, one of his lawyer friends, and unburdened herself. Rifkind tried to calm her down. He didn't see any serious reason for alarm. The judge was probably just wrapped up in some of his various business propositions, or organizing his election campaign. She was bound to hear from him soon. But he'd be glad to look into it and let her know.

Mrs. Crater spent four more miserable days, haunting the phone and grabbing the mail the minute it arrived. When the weekend passed with no communication from Rifkind, she was so alarmed that she told Fred Kahler to drive down to New York and see what he could find out—warning him to be cautious. She didn't want to stir up any rumors. That would make the judge furious.

Kahler found the apartment in apple-pie order—nothing suspicious there. He talked with Mara and Johnson, but they had nothing to tell him. Then he called on several of the judge's political cronies. Their attitude was suave and unruffled. Undoubtedly they were upset by Crater's disappearance, but they didn't betray it to his chauffeur. With a big election only three months away, they already had a peck of trouble. Their main interest at the moment was to avoid another scandal. Mr. Thomas C. T. Crain, the district attorney of New York County, was getting too nosy to suit them.

On August 6, the same day Joe Crater dropped out of sight, Tom Crain had the nerve to subpoena witnesses for a grand jury investigation of charges that Magistrate George F. Ewald had paid $10,000 to Martin J. Healy, Tammany Hall leader of the 19th Assembly District, to get himself appointed to the bench. (After three juries failed to reach a decision the charges against Healy were dropped.) It was well known that Marty and Joe were chummy. How could they help but be, with Judge Crater president of Tammany Hall's Cayuga Club in the 19th District? Crater's political pals were understandably concerned.

So the judge's cronies told Fred Kahler to take it easy. His boss was probably just kicking up his heels, relaxing before court opened and the hard campaign ahead. Sure as shooting, he'd turn up in a day or so. It made sense to Fred. Many times—as he later told the grand jury—he had driven his boss to a specified street intersection and let him out there instead of at a particular address, then picked him up later at that same intersection or some other designated spot. The chauffeur had no illusions about the extent and variety of the vigorous judge's secret love life.

The smart thing to do was sit tight and avoid rocking the boat. Following instructions, he wrote Mrs. Crater a soothing letter on August 20, telling her the judge's good friends didn't think there was anything for her to worry about. She'd surely be hearing from her husband as soon as he had his campaign shaped up. Of his own volition, the chauffeur added that the apartment looked spick-and-span after Almeda's midsummer cleaning. A couple of days later he drove back to Belgrade Lakes.

On August 27, two days after Judge Crater was scheduled to preside over Part I of the Special Term, Supreme Court Justice Louis A. Valente called Mrs. Crater on long distance and asked her if she knew what had become of her husband. Panic-stricken, Stella immediately set out for New York in her sedan. Fred drove all night. When she checked the apartment, she found nothing missing but the judge. His clothing, including 29 suits, was all there—everything except what he was wearing. So were his traveling bags. That indicated that he probably hadn't gone very far, at least intentionally. When she phoned his friends, they shocked her by laying it on the line: they told her not to call the police; this thing mustn't get into the newspapers; if it did, the judge was liable to lose the election. They pleaded with her to go right back to Maine and let them handle it. On the verge of collapse, she agreed.

Then they sent for Leo Lowenthal, a smart city detective who always guarded Wagner when the senator was in town, and put it up to him. Could he conduct a private investigation for them without letting his superiors or any newspaper men catch on to what he was up to? It was clearly irregular, but Leo couldn't say no to this bunch of political big shots.

From Mara, Leo learned about the briefcases and portfolios, but when he made a thorough search of the apartment he could find no trace of them, or any of the documents and papers they contained. This vital evidence never has been located. The only interesting things Lowenthal turned up in the apartment were the judge's monogrammed pocket watch, card case and fountain pen, items he normally carried with him. These were in a drawer of the bedside table. Leo questioned Almeda, who said that when she cleaned up the apartment on Thursday, August 7, they were on the table and she put them in the drawer. At first, Leo took this to mean that the judge didn't want anything in his possession that would identify him and had therefore probably committed suicide. But Almeda weakened this theory when she pointed out that the judge had left his vest—in which he usually carried these things—on the back of a chair, evidently having removed it because of the hot weather. Almeda also found the judge's bed mussed up, but that didn't prove

he had slept in it Wednesday night. He might have slept there for the last time Tuesday night, which seems more likely. After making a complete check of hospitals and morgues, Lowenthal reached a dead end with his secret investigation.

All this secrecy, however, was useless. It was also stupid. With another judge presiding over Part I, newspaper men soon discovered that Crater was missing. Police officials, tipped off by underworld connections, already knew it. But reluctant to tangle with the judge's influential political connections, they sat back and waited almost a month before taking action.

The New York *World* broke the story on September 3. The next day, smoked out at last, the judge's friends asked the Missing Persons Bureau to hunt for him. What turned out to be one of the most baffling disappearances of all time was then officially tabbed Case No. 13595. The world-wide manhunt was to cost the taxpayers $300,000. One of the first steps taken, of course, was a microscopic examination of Judge Crater's court records and official papers. It proved to be a blind alley; everything was in perfect order.

The newspapers pulled out all stops and played the sensational story for all it was worth. No scrap of information was too trivial. Raised in Easton, Pa., Crater had been graduated from Lafayette College and then took his law degree at Columbia University. As a "brilliant young newcomer to the New York law field," he attracted the attention of Robert F. Wagner, then a justice of the New York Supreme Court. "Struck by his fine mind and engaging personality," Judge Wagner made Crater his secretary. When Wagner was elected to the U.S. Senate, he opened a downtown office which he shared with Crater, who entered private practice, delivered distinguished legal lectures at Fordham and New York University as a side-line and was soon "held in high esteem by everyone who knew him."

But the tabloids were now shooting the works, as if hell-bent on making that high esteem evaporate. Judge Crater was their current prize package, along with Vivian Gordon, the notorious bawdy house madam whose strangled body was found six months later in Van Cortlandt Park and whose violent murder is still unsolved. At the outset, Crater's name was linked with hers. He was reported to have been a frequent visitor to her luxurious $150-a-month apartment on East 37th Street, not only to enjoy her company, but also to receive the favors of each new girl she took into her establishment.

On September 4, the day after the story broke, Senator Wagner returned from Europe and was promptly hemmed in by a swarm of waspish reporters. Already informed of Crater's "dejected manner" when he emerged from Wagner's office on August 1, they popped stinging questions at the unhappy senator.

Was it true that the senator had persuaded Governor Roosevelt to appoint his former secretary to Judge Proskauer's unexpired term? "No," the senator replied. "I did not intercede on his behalf, but I was pleased with the appointment. Crater was well qualified for the job."

Did he think Crater had committed suicide? The senator scoffed at that theory.

What about the judge's "depressed appearance" after their last conversa-

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tion? Had the senator told him that "because of impropriety in private or public life he was no longer acceptable to the party for nomination to the Supreme Court?" The senator shook his head. "Our little chat," he purred, "was good-humored and informal. Politics were not mentioned."

Day after day, the sizzling Crater story was splashed all over front pages. Editors were never at a loss for new leads and banner lines. The city offered a reward of $5,000 and the New York *World* $2,500 for information leading to the discovery of Judge Crater, dead or alive. This reward, long since withdrawn, pulled in thousands of fantastic tips and reports from all over the world, none of them of any value whatsoever.

Two separate investigations were soon under way, one carried on by the police, another by District Attorney Crain; neither displayed any eagerness to cooperate with the other. On different occasions, police detectives and the district attorney's men made painstaking searches throughout the Crater apartment without finding a single clue. They even examined the hems of all the clothing, the bed linen and the draperies.

Although there was no proof that a crime had been committed, either by Crater himself or someone else trying to get rid of him, Crain impaneled a special grand jury to examine witnesses. At 45 sessions, covering a period of four months, the jurymen interviewed 300 persons and read thousands of letters, telegrams and depositions, keeping minutes of its meetings that filled 2,000 typed pages. Several times Crain tried to persuade Mrs. Crater to come down from Maine and testify before the grand jury, but she begged off on the grounds that the shock of her husband's disappearance had undermined her health.

One phase of the district attorney's investigation was concerned with the numerous receiverships handled by Crater. The largest of these was Libby's Hotel and Turkish Bath, an imposing structure on the lower East Side that served as a rendezvous for tired business men. During the boom days before the Stock Market crash, for reasons never made clear, this luxury establishment went into bankruptcy, at a huge loss to disillusioned stockholders. Crater was appointed receiver on February 2, 1929. On June 22, 1929, as required by law, the property was sold for $75,000 to the highest bidder, the American Mortgage Company, a subsidiary of American Bond & Mortgage Company. However, since the sale was contingent upon the purchaser paying off accumulated taxes, water rates and other liens, the mortgage company had to plunk down only $416.90 when the deed was handed over. Two months later, the property was sold for $2,850,000 to the City of New York, which apparently had been planning for some time to condemn it for a housing project.

Although Crater had no part in the appraisal of the property or its sale to the city, when the D.A. released this information a lot of people were convinced that the judge was somehow mixed up in the skulduggery and had taken a run-out powder to escape prosecution. It also raised such a howl of wrath that the city welshed on its agreement and dropped the project.

When Crater's accounts were audited, however, nothing was found to prove he got anything out of the dubious transaction except his legitimate five per cent fee of $10,286.

Already in the midst of his futile attempt to convict Magistrate Martin Healy on a charge of paying $10,000 for his seat on the bench, District Attorney Crain sought out evidence that Crater, too, may have paid some Tammany bagman to get him the nomination to the Supreme Court bench. The closest Crain came to it was the discovery that on May 27, 1930, at the time when Crater was actively seeking the nomination, he withdrew $7,500 from one of his bank accounts; on that same day he received $15,779 from his broker for the sale of securities. Crater had specified that both of these sums be paid to him mainly in $1,000 bills. The total was suspiciously close to the $22,500 annual salary he would receive if elected. It was generally understood that the customary payoff in such cases was one year's salary. On court order, Crater's safe deposit box was opened. It was empty. What became of that $23,279 was never established.

While Crain's search for a solution to the Crater mystery was concerned mainly with the possibility of graft, the police concentrated on sex, that equally durable old stand-by. Liquor, it seemed, was certainly not the judge's weakness. But according to what the police uncovered and fed to the press, he had an abiding zest for pretty showgirls. Furthermore, according to the police, for seven years he had been regularly visiting the apartment of an attractive brunette, a saleswoman in a 57th Street dress shop, and had been contributing $90 a month toward her support. When questioned by detectives, the saleswoman said she hadn't seen Judge Crater since July 24, two weeks before he vanished. Another brunette, an ex-Follies girl, who was a great favorite of Crater's, the police told the reporters, had mysteriously left town the same night the judge had dropped out of sight.

Not to be outdone, the district attorney reported following up an anonymous tip that a mysterious woman had approached Attorney Samuel Buchter in regard to filing a $5,000 breach of promise suit against Crater shortly before he disappeared. The lawyer said that was correct, except for the amount; she wanted $100,000. On August 5, the day before the judge vamoosed, a stunning, expensively dressed young woman had sailed into his office and asked him to take her case. She said her name was "Lorraine Fay," claimed she had some torrid letters that would make a jury swoon and promised to return with them the next day. But she never did.

Right after the *World* published the first story about the Crater case, William Klein and Sally Lou Ritz came forward and told everything they knew. But the driver of the tan taxi was never located, which is odd. Ordinarily, any New York hackie involved in such an incident high-tails it to some friendly cop and tells all he knows. The fact that the cab driver in this instance didn't clear himself and that a diligent search for him never got anywhere lends credence to the theory that the man in the driver's seat of the tan taxi was a hoodlum playing an active part in the kidnapping of Judge Crater. This is the prevailing belief of a number of people who have made a close study of the case. They are convinced the judge was murdered, possibly the same night he disappeared, certainly within a few days.

After getting nowhere at all with its long inquiry, the special grand jury gave up on November 7 and reported: "The evidence is insufficient to warrant any expression of opinion as to whether Crater is alive or dead, or as to whether he has absented himself voluntarily, or is a sufferer from disease in the nature of amnesia, or the victim of a crime."

On January 21, 1931, however, the Crater story erupted again on the front pages with the most baffling twist it had taken up to that time. Mrs. Crater finally came down to New York from Maine for the first time since her one brief visit on August 28. In a drawer in her bureau, on top of some clothing, she found a brown manilla envelope which police detectives and the district attorney's men failed to find when they turned the place upside down. After taking one look at its contents she called the D.A. and he burned the wind getting to her Fifth Avenue apartment.

The manilla envelope contained: $6,690 in $1,000, $500, 50 and $10 bills; the judge's five-year-old will leaving his entire estate to his wife; his two insurance policies, one for $15,000 and the other for $5,000; a penciled note unquestionably in the judge's own handwriting, marked "Confidential" and addressed to Mrs. Crater; and three checks for $500, $12 and $9 made out to Joseph Force Crater and endorsed by him—one dated *August 30, 1930, 24 days after he vanished!*

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The judge must have been in a fearful state of mind when he wrote that note to his wife. It was scrawled on three sheets of paper and the writing got progressively worse as it went on. The margins became more and more irregular, the proper names increasingly difficult to make out, and there were many abbreviations. The note listed 21 persons who were supposed to owe him money. It said that "there will be a very large sum due me for services when the city pays the 2¾ million condemnation. Martin Lippman (attorney for the American Mortgage Loan Company) will attend to it—keep in touch with him." When Lippman heard about it, he said he knew of no such indebtedness, as did all the other persons Crater listed as owing him money.

The note ended: "Am very weary. Love, Joe."

How did that manila envelope get there? This remains a mystery to this day, but there is one man who believes he has a reasonable explanation. He is Emil K. Ellis, distinguished New New York City lawyer, who represented Mrs. Crater in 1937, when she sued the Mutual Life Insurance Company and the Fidelity Mutual Life Insurance Company to collect on the judge's life insurance policies. At that time, Stella had already married Carl Kunz.

In Mrs. Crater's suit against the insurance companies, asking for double indemnity, Attorney Ellis indicated that he had evidence that the judge died the night he was kidnapped as a result of injuries received in the taxicab. According to Ellis' informant, Crater had been intimate with a former showgirl, whose hoodlum friends tried to blackmail him. When he offered to pay her $5,000 if she would leave town, the hoods decided to squeeze more money out of him, Ellis' informant said. Learning from Vivian Gordon that the judge had mentioned going to the theater that night, they tailed him from the Arrow agency, where he always bought his tickets, to Billy Haas's and then forced him into a borrowed taxi. When the punk on the back seat of the cab started to rough him up in an effort to make Crater agree to fork over more money, the source said, he fought back and was pistol-whipped. Panic-stricken when they discovered how seriously injured he was, they took the judge to the showgirl's apartment. The old flame, once very fond of him, was overcome with remorse at the sight of Crater obviously nearing the end and insisted that he be allowed to write the note to his wife and send her the items found in the manila envelope, which he had been carrying in his inside coat pocket.

The man who broke into the Crater apartment and left the envelope in the bureau drawer, according to Ellis' informant, was a policeman who had worked on the case and was well acquainted with the showgirl and her hoodlum associates. After Crater died, this version continues, the underworld characters with him at the time got hold of a contact in the medical examiner's office and induced him to make out a fake death certificate, using a phony name. The body was then taken to New Jersey and there, through other underworld connections, arrangements were made to cremate it.

The suit against the insurance companies never came to trial. When they offered to settle at once for the face value of the policies, plus accrued dividends and interest instead of double indemnity, Ellis persuaded his client to accept it, since it would obviously be difficult in court to substantiate the story told to him by an informant who didn't dare take the stand and give testimony that might cost him his life.

With the passage of the years, the file in the Missing Persons Bureau on Case No. 13595 has kept right on expanding. It is now the most extensive of the 225 "open" cases on record. The missing judge has been reported seen, at one time or another, in virtually every state in the union, as well as in numerous foreign countries, including Canada, Australia, Italy, Spain, Chile and Turkey. He has been "located" in innumerable hospitals, mental institutions, morgues and even monasteries. He has been "identified" as a race track tout in Mexico, a steward on a transatlantic liner, a croupier in Monte Carlo, a prospector in Arizona and a sheepherder in Oregon.

New theories as to why he vanished and "authentic" accounts of what happened to him keep cropping up. One of the latest and most detailed was released to the public in 1956 by Camilo Weston Leyra, who was three times sentenced to death but finally cleared of charges of killing his parents.

Leyra said he got the story in the death house at Sing Sing from Harry Stein the night before he was electrocuted for the murder of a *Reader's Digest* payroll messenger. This same Harry Stein was tried and acquitted in June, 1931, on a charge of murdering Vivian Gordon. According to Stein, he had served as a go-between and passed $6,000 to Crater to get a certain Joe Lesser cleared of charges of forging $190,000 worth of fraudulent real estate mortgages. Crater is alleged to have accepted the money but failed to prevent Lesser from being tried and sentenced to seven years. Because he had engineered the deal, Stein himself was on the spot. He enlisted two hoodlums in Philadelphia and set it up for them to kidnap Judge Crater that night in front of Billy Haas's, then take him to Philadelphia and hold him there for $25,000 ransom. The judge just laughed at the the hoodlums when they tried to make him write a ransom letter. When the story of his disappearance was published, Stein and his confederates became panicky. Stein told them to take Crater to an abandoned paper mill near Clifton, N. J. and get rid of him. He was shot twice in the back of the head, according to this version, the body was put into a discarded bathtub, covered first with acid and then with concrete, after which the tub was dumped into Passaic River.

Taking everything into account, this was a plausible story, except for one important detail. If that was the way Crater spent his last days on this earth, how did that manila envelope containing his last communication to his wife get into the bureau drawer in the Crater apartment?

The former Mrs. Crater's answer to that is as good as any advanced so far by anyone else. She says the judge himself must have put it there before leaving the apartment on August 6th and that it was there all the time, during all the various searches, but was somehow overlooked in the mad scramble for clues.

She could be right. And the judge could be still alive, too, spending his declining years in some faraway place with the former Follies girl who is supposed to have adored him and left town the same day he vanished. ★ THE END

HE'LL BE A CINCH TO RING THAT BELL!
HE'S QUITE A MAN MORE WAYS AS WELL—
SMELLS GRAND! PACKS RIGHT! SMOKES SWEET! CAN'T BITE!
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The Man Who Bought A Fire Department

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One of these principles is that firefighting is no proper activity for a private business venture. Theoretically, it's too costly, and there's too much risk involved. And taxes are needed to support a fire department—or so the theory goes. But Rural Fire Protection gets not a penny of taxes. It's as much a free enterprise as a hamburger stand.

The other principle is that a man should know something about firefighting before he runs a fire department. In fact he should be an expert.

Lou Witzeman didn't know beans when he started Rural. Or, to put it more appropriately, he didn't know a pumper from an extinguisher when he launched his private fire department in 1948 on a hunch, a hope and a few hundred dollars.

From his shoestring beginning, Witzeman built the Rural Fire Protection Company into a quarter-million-dollar business. Starting with one truck, in seven years he had expanded his company to four fire stations, ten trucks and 35 firemen. Over 10,000 property owners subscribe to Rural's service, and it's a safe assumption that they pay their fire-protection bills cheerfully. For without Witzeman's fire department they would be sitting ducks for a vagrant blaze breaking out in their homes or businesses.

That's because, as mentioned earlier, their area lies outside the city limits of Phoenix. Arizona's capital city, along with so many Western cities, has grown like a rabbit farm since World War II, primarily in suburban areas. Residential neighborhoods and widely separated shopping centers have sprouted by the dozens, and the city limits haven't kept up with them. Thus, thousands of people live and work beyond the reach of vital fire protection.

How well Lou Witzeman has filled this vacuum is evidenced by his performance record. In its first seven years Rural saved 91½ per cent of the property threatened by fire in its bailiwick, for a total value of $3½ million. It rescued more than a score of people from death by fire, drowning, asphyxiation and miscellaneous other causes. And it successfully coped with an uncounted number of lesser crises—cats retrieved from trees, dogs from culverts and children from locked bathrooms.

Lou Witzeman himself, like his fire department, is a contradiction in terms. He's not the burly, barrel-chested firefighter of the popular stereotype. He's rather short, slight of build and looks about as athletic as a librarian. His blond hair is already thinning, his manner is subdued, verging on shyness. But this conceals a prodigious tenacity of purpose. Certainly it took tenacity for Witzeman to make good at a venture so unusual in the field of private enterprise.

Nor was it the kind of venture one might have thought suitable for a young man who, only a few years earlier, was on crutches, almost crippled with arthritis.

The Ohio-born son of a doctor, Witzeman was stricken with the painful affliction while attending Dartmouth College. He dropped out of school and headed for Arizona, hoping that the desert sun and dry air might help. Regaining his health sufficiently to finish his schooling at the University of Arizona, he graduated in journalism, then went to work as a newspaper reporter in Tucson. Later he moved to a similar job in Phoenix.

There, the fire bug bit him. Witzeman was newly married and searching for some way to supplement his newspaper salary. He and his wife had just bought a small home in a new suburb of northwestern Phoenix. It lay a mile or so outside the city limits—and had no fire protection, of course. Witzeman worried about that. What if his house caught fire? He knew the answer. It would just burn to the ground, as all too many homes and businesses were doing, unattended, throughout Phoenix' unprotected suburbia.

Then the idea of organizing a fire department occurred to him. Maybe he could accomplish both objectives at once: protect his home *and* make a little extra money. He talked the scheme over with his attractive, dark-haired wife, Alva Gene. "First it was a joke," she says. "Then it began to sound pretty good. Finally we got serious about it."

Happily for their peace of mind, they knew little about the risks—financial or physical—of running a fire department. They didn't even know that the idea was regarded as unsound. People liv-

ing in unprotected areas around the country usually provided fire protection for themselves on a volunteer basis.

Witzeman polled a few of his neighbors. If he organized a fire department, would they be willing to pay a reasonable sum per year for protection? Most of them said yes. That left the problem of money. The Witzemans had $1,600; Lou figured the rock-bottom cost of going into the firefighting business would be $10,0000.

But it shouldn't be too tough to raise the money, he thought. He would just go out and sell subscriptions to his firefighting service. As soon as he had $10,000 worth of subscriptions, he would outfit his fire department and be in business. Then, almost as quickly, he discovered that his plan was no good. People were loath to pay for a firefighting service which existed only in his dreams.

He tried the local banks. Two of them turned him down flat; they thought the idea was preposterous. A third bank wasn't sufficiently impressed to back him, but was willing to set up a special escrow arrangement. It would work this way: Witzeman would sell his subscriptions. The money he collected would go into an escrow fund at the bank. The bank would give him an official letter of endorsement to show to prospective customers, and hold the escrow fund for 90 days. If the $10,000 was all in by then, it would be handed over to Witzeman to buy his equipment. If not, every penny would go back to the customers.

The next requirement was personnel. Witzeman needed an assistant, for he still had to hold down his newspaper job in order to eat. Having no money to pay an assistant, he offered 30 per cent of the business and acquired a junior partner, an ex-forest ranger named Llewel Adams. Adams worked nearly a year—and exhausted his savings—before he drew a single dollar in return. "Not a person I knew said it would go," he recalls. "Everybody told me I'd lose everything I had. And toward the end of the first year I thought I would, too." But he held on loyally.

Witzeman likewise had to have salesmen to sell subscriptions. He had hoarded his $1,600 for that purpose. By way of bait, he ran a newspaper ad: "Are you willing to gamble four weeks' work for $1,000 or nothing?" He found several gamblers. They agreed to accept half their commissions on subscriptions sold and take a chance on collecting the other half when and if the escrow money was released.

Public skepticism gave Witzeman and his sales crew a hard time. Property owners shied from buying a pig-in-the-poke, escrow or no escrow. One suburbanite announced angrily that he came from Chicago and he knew a protection racket when he saw one. Another ex-Chicagoan thought it was a protection racket, too. "But," says Witzeman drily, "he knew he needed the service. He paid up."

Even one of Witzeman's own salesmen resigned. "I can't take money at the expense of poor homeowners," he explained. "I'm an honest man." When the 90-day escrow period was nearly up, Witzeman still lacked $1,700 of the $10,000 he needed. He borrowed it from a relative. Then came the necessity of making a final irrevocable decision: Should he plunge on ahead and take a chance on failure and bankruptcy? Or should he pull back while there was yet time? All he had to do was return the money.

He decided to go ahead and the escrow fund was released to him. He bought the fire truck and parked it in the front yard of his home while he contracted for a station house and hired firemen.

On February 2, 1948, the Rural Fire Protection Company "opened for business." All it needed was a fire. Witzeman worried lest the first one be a holocaust, far too big for his tiny crew and limited equipment to handle.

The days passed. There were no calls; the suspense tightened.

Then, two weeks later, the first alarm came in, and almost simultaneously, two more followed. One was a truckload of furniture burning in the street. The second was a shack. The third was a grass fire. Rural's firemen put them out in quick order.

After that the alarms came more frequently. Every extinguished fire was an advertisement for the Rural Fire Protection Company. As soon as the firemen doused a blaze, Witzeman moved a salesman into the area. Property owners, previously disinterested, signed up swiftly.

Even so, some skepticism remained. An arson investigator for the local underwriters went to the station house and warned the firemen against setting their own fires, just for the chance to put them out. For a week or two, a sheriff's squad car parked near the sta-

tion and tailed the firefighters every time they rolled to a conflagration. Meanwhile, a reporter for a local newspaper, a rival of the one Witzeman worked for, launched his own investigation. It lasted until the day a fire started in a car driven by the reporter's father. Rural extinguished the blaze, the reporter dropped his investigation and signed up for fire protection from Witzeman.

All this suspicious gumshoe work at least gave Lou Witzeman the satisfaction of knowing that his fire department was getting public attention. Another incident confirmed the fact. An alarm came in one evening from a neighborhood bar a couple of miles away. Rural's truck whisked up to find—not a fire—but three drunks standing with watches. They had bet on how long it would take the firemen to answer their call. Witzeman ruefully wrote off the expense of the run to advertising and good will.

Business picked up. Witzeman bought more trucks and built new station houses in strategic parts of his territory. He quit his newspaper job to give full time to his fire business. Up to that point, he had been working eight hours a day at the newspaper and at least eight more at the main fire station, often sleeping there. He hated to miss a single fire. Most of the time he rolled out ahead of his trucks, running interference in his family car, which he had equipped with a siren and red light. He fought fires alongside his men and went home from many a blaze with face scorched, lungs rasped and eyebrows singed off.

By the end of Rural's first year of operation, fire losses in its territory had registered a whopping 80.4 per cent decrease. Witzeman and his firemen saved $685,000 worth of property. In one sector there had been a heavy incidence of "insurance fires" because of the absence of a firefighting service. Almost from the day that Rural offered its service, fires in that area dropped from an average of one a day to one a week.

Witzeman's toughest technical problem, from the outset, was a water supply—or rather the lack of it, for there were no hydrants in his territory. He partially solved the problem by working out an arrangement with a large irrigation system, to allow him to tap its canals and ditches whenever necessary. But that wasn't enough. Witzeman's firemen still had to carry a substantial emergency supply of water to every fire. And so their trucks were equipped with tanks as well as hoses and ladders. Then, to make maximum use of the water, Witzeman geared his entire operation to a new technique which used a water "fog" to put out fires.

"Fog" is water subjected to 600 pounds of pressure at the nozzle and atomized into billions of particles. A gallon of water converted into "fog" does ten times the work of the same gallon used in a solid stream. Instead of just quenching the fire, as does a stream, "fog" cools, smothers and blasts it, all at once. The smothering action takes place when the heat of the fire comes in contact with the fog and turns it to steam, displacing oxygen and smothering the blaze. The blasting power of a "fog gun" is such that it can dig a hole into asphalt, cut through a panel of plaster board or even crush a human being.

"Fog" was developed during World War II when it was used by mobile firefighters at Air Force bases, since airplanes, when they crash, are almost never conveniently close to fire hydrants. After the war, civilian fire departments were slow to adopt the new "fog" technique. It wasn't essential to them, since they had fire hydrants. But Witzeman was not so endowed. For him, "fog" literally meant the difference between success and failure.

"Fog" gives him other advantages. For one thing, he and his firefighters can get into action faster. It takes conventional firemen three or four minutes to hook up to their hydrants and start laying down their cannonade of solid water. A "fog" fireman can get into action in 20 seconds. All he has to do is unroll his hose and start blasting, since the water is in the truck.

Still another advantage is the protection a "fog gun" gives the firefighter, enabling him to bore in close to the blaze. The "fog" emerges in a bulbous cloud—a "fog blossom," the firemen call it—which serves as a shield. Additional protection is afforded by a "face spray," which can be turned on separately, from a tiny orifice atop the "fog gun."

Thus "fog" can be adapted to a kind of firefighting which resembles infantry street-fighting. While one "fog" man works his way into a blaze, another stands close behind and "covers" him with a protective envelopment of mist. And the number 2 man may be protected in turn my somebody covering him from behind.

"I've been right in the middle of lots of good fires," says Witzeman. "But as long as the building is still sound, you can walk right in with fog, be completely surrounded by fire, and still be safe."

"Fog," however, has its disadvantages, as Witzeman quickly learned. Unless there's a good draft of air to float the mist onto the fire, it is only effective at fairly close range—75 feet or less. Some of Rural's firemen didn't relish that kind of in-fighting. They had been trained with conventional hoses and they preferred to lob water into the flames from a distance. Sometimes Witzeman had no choice but to let them go and train men in the new technique.

But if he ever had doubts that "fog" was his fire department's best friend, they were thoroughly dispelled in the big shopping center fire which started in the shoe store and threatened to raze the whole $150,000 business block. The cause of the fire was never definitely established, but by the time Rural's trucks roared in, the shoe store was a holocaust. The walls were breached and the fire was licking hungrily into a restaurant, a laundry and an appliance store. The whole block was in danger of destruction.

Firemen on the first truck threw a "fog" line into the center of the fire, and Witzeman himself hauled another line to the roof to keep the blaze from spreading. Then, as other trucks came in, six "fog guns" were massed, artillery-fashion, at the front of the shoe store.

The fire was out in 45 minutes. The restaurant, laundry and appliance store sustained some small damage, but the total loss was only $20,000. So grateful was the restaurant proprietor, who also owned the shopping center itself, that he served a free banquet to Rural's entire force of firefighters. They ate in shifts, and the restaurateur made a little speech. "This," he said, with emotion in his voice, "is our little way of

The Outdoorsman

continued from page 7

and biscuits; then it was decided that Ted's next victim would be the rod and gun editor, namely me.

We dropped our bowline, wished the others good hunting and roared down the channel at 25 knots. Ted was at the outboard's stick, driving like a madman for the far side of Rabbit where he'd struck the previous day's bonanza.

Twenty minutes later, we had checked several stretches of flats and decided finally on a long, somewhat breezy strip.

I poled the skiff for Ted during the first hour, but nothing remotely resembling a game fish appeared on the flats. Then Ted swapped places and did the poling. There were four eyes searching the shadowy grasses, eyes accustomed to the vague outlines of the narrow, almost imperceptible bonefish. Even so, we almost missed the school of five as they crossed our bow and moved toward port.

"There!" Williams hissed.

We both grabbed rods. I whipped mine past the nose of the lead fish, let the streamer settle, twitched, sensed a rushing, pricked the fish and felt him take off. Ted hooked up at the same instant.

My bonefish did his 100-yard dash in four or five seconds, wheeled and casually scraped the gossamer leader against a convenient coral sea fan. One gone. Ted's lasted but a few seconds longer, yet ultimately the fish's affinity for coral prevailed and we were both detached. Williams grumbled. "I hate to start a day this way. Let's get out of here."

We revved up, made for a likely sandbar, then silenced the motor. But it was no improvement. Clouds drifted into the vicinity almost immediately—and with the fresh tide, the beginning of a strong southwester. Ultimately, I conceded the loss of the morning.

"Too much wind for me, Ted. You try it. I'll pole."

Williams agreed. Standing in the bow, he peered into the wavelets, trying to wish his way into a fish's path . . . And it happened. I had poled the skiff to a corner of the flooding sandbar and was trying desperately to hold her there. Ted spotted a moving shadow.

Into the eye of this wind which certainly was now puffing gusts to 25 miles per hour, he reared back the big torpedo head line on the ten-foot bass rod, made one false cast (the equivalent of practice swings before a batter actually swings for the ball) and shot his line into the wind.

The line poured through Ted's guides straight and true for at least 90 feet. His face was drawn into a tense mask, the lips thin, eyes searching water that seethed like surf. In tight, rapid jerking motions, he set the streamer in action, dragging it full across the face of the bonefish. One slight tug and Williams struck.

Ten minutes after the fireworks began, the silver-gray body that had made his reel wince was on its side, waiting to be netted. "Release it," Ted said quietly. "Maybe we'll meet up again some other time."

Ted and I have met on several occasions since that trip to Rabbit Key. Several times we sat and killed a lime pie between us and contemplated a really comprehensive bone fishing expedition. "Vic Barothy bought a site on Isle of Pines," he told me one night. "Vic says it's the greatest place in the world for bones. The mostest and the bestest. I'm going—want to join me?"

We had been sitting in a small Miami restaurant near Williams' fishing equipment plant. It was midwinter and Ted was working hard at his eminently successful tackle business. After lunch, we joined Lee Cuddy and Joe Brooks.

"Here's a rod to use on those bones," Ted said, flashing the famous grin. "This will positively murder the bones and still leave the user in one piece. I designed this one myself."

The tour went on for a brief few minutes. Then came the buyers and the tackle trade and Williams was all tied up. As a businessman, his future in the hectic fishing tackle business seems assured. He knows his tackle. His firm is prosperous, having grown in a few short years from hardly anything into the million dollar category. And finally, as in baseball, the Williams legend in fishing is firmly established.

If there was any doubt about it, that trip to the Isle of Pines with Vic Barothy settled the matter once and for all. He and Vic had put out early in the morning. They didn't bother about food, just fished. Fished and caught 22 bonefish in a single session!

All of which makes it easy to understand why the man least worried about Ted Williams' retirement from baseball is Ted Williams himself. The way it looks from here, he might even be looking forward to it. Can you blame him?

★ THE END

expressing appreciation to you for saving us from going out of business."

A lot of other suburbanites have been grateful to Lou Witzeman. He and his firemen have saved scores of homes, numerous businesses, a motel, a winter resort and a big public school. They have plucked nocturnal cigarette-smokers out of flaming beds. And at a big church and parochial school, they forestalled disaster at least three different times. Twice it was fire. The third time it was a chlorine explosion near the swimming pool. Some 20 children overcome by chlorine gas were resuscitated.

And Rural's men risked their lives to drag the burst, leaking chlorine tanks into an open field. One of the firemen had to have oxygen treatments for a month afterwards.

Lou Witzeman himself once had to call his own fire department for help when fire broke out on the roof of his home. Embarrassed, he phoned his main station. "Keep the siren and the red light off, fellows," he said. And then, in the *double-entendre* of the week, he added, "this one's on the house."

Like any fire department, Rural has discovered that fire is not the only emergency it has to contend with; a fireman must be a jack-of-all-troubles: cats stuck in car frames, small boys fallen into cesspools, parrots loose and perched in tree tops. Whatever the emergency, it's Rural to the rescue.

Ladies in distress keep Witzeman and his men particularly busy, though the distress is often pretty minor. Once it was a nervous lady who found a spider in her living room and called Rural to kill it. Another time a woman heard a scary noise in her home, which turned out to be a beetle in a light fixture. Once, in the middle of the night, a mother called the fire department and asked the boys to bring her some aspirin; she had a headache but couldn't leave her baby alone. The aspirin was duly delivered.

Witzeman has saved his subscribers a considerable amount of fire insurance money. He did it by obtaining a blanket reduction in premiums. Actually, this was one of his most difficult hurdles. When he proposed the premium cut on the strength of the improved fire protection, insurance underwriters shrugged him off. They could grant a reduction for a tax-supported fire department, but there was no precedent for granting a cut to a private one. What if they did lower the rates, they asked. What guarantee would they have that Rural wouldn't go out of business, leaving the area unprotected and them holding the sack?

Witzeman puzzled over it for quite awhile. Then he came up with a scheme. How would it be, he suggested, if he signed an agreement whereby, in effect, he placed his fire department in hock to the state corporation commission? Then if he decided to quit business, the commission would take over Rural and operate it for three years, selling a truck at a time to meet expenses. Meanwhile, the commission could look for a buyer to keep the service going. Or, if the Rural had to be closed, the insurance companies would have time to boost their rates high enough to compensate for the lack of a firefighting service. The underwriters' lawyers carefully studied the proposal. It was unusual, but there was no law against it. And it was an abundant measure of Witzeman's good faith.

The insurance cut was granted, and

the result has been a small bonanza for Witzeman's subscribers. The average homeowner, paying $12 a year for fire protection, gets premium reductions sufficient to pay his firefighting bill every third year. Larger property owners, who pay more for Rural's service, get proportionately larger benefits. The operator of a big drug store, for example, is able to buy both fire protection and insurance for $1 a year less than his insurance alone previously cost him.

Witzeman thus gained a potent selling point, and new subscriptions roll in as quickly as new suburban developments spring up on the fast-spreading fringes of Phoenix.

But Witzeman, along with his flare for business, has a need for altruism. So he has laid down a policy which he calls a "compromise between brute business and public duty." He gives free protection to churches, schools and public properties, and makes no charge for fighting a fire in which human life is endangered. His firemen never refuse a call for help: they roll on every alarm, even when it comes from a nonsubscriber. They take their chances on collecting for services rendered. "I don't think a man has the right to ignore a fire," says Witzeman. "It's kind of like butting into God's province."

This humanitarian approach to business has made it possible for Lou Witzeman to derive a sense of personal fulfillment as well as a livelihood from his new-found career. "It's the ideal combination," he says, "of making a good living, plus excitement, plus performing a public duty. If we save your house or pull your kid from a ditch, we're doing you some good, and we feel that we've done a little more than just earn a day's pay."

A great many people in Phoenix suburbs agree that Witzeman and his smoke-eaters have more than earned their pay. And many have expressed this feeling, including the sisters of the parochial school and church where Rural put out two fires and saved the children felled by chlorine gas. "Were it not for you men who risk your lives in helping others," wrote the sisters, "our city and county would be in far greater danger. May God bless you in the great work you are doing."

Witzeman prizes that fervent accolade. He prizes another equally. It came from the veteran chief of the largest fire department in Arizona—that of the city of Phoenix. A few days before, Rural had roared out in force to help the city's firemen whip a particularly tough blaze. The chief was grateful for the help, and said as much. Then, upon the young man who once had been regarded as an outrageously unorthodox upstart in tradition-bound firefighting, the chief bestowed his own benediction. This was professional praise, and a fireman's finest tribute to an amateur who made himself a professional.

"Your boys," said the chief, "showed the spirit that is born with every true firefighter." ★ THE END

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Devil Anse Hatfield's War With The McCoys

continued from page 15

been half a dozen, already. And you still a boy not old enough to vote."

He leaned so close his mouth was almost touching hers. "You like to find out for yourself if I'm still a boy?"

She shut her eyes and caught her breath, her red lips parted. "I think it's disgraceful!"

"You ain't much over a year older'n me. But you don't know nothing about it, first hand. Do you?"

Her eyes opened, and they were blazing. "No!" she gasped.

"Then how can you say it's disgraceful?"

"Oh, Jonse," she said plaintively, pressing her firm body close against him. "How can I find out, without disgracing myself?"

"I'll take care of that," he said.

When he kissed her, she responded enthusiastically. Clinging to him, she ran her hands over his shoulder muscles and whispered: "How soon?"

"Right away."

"Not here! Somebody might see us."

"Fat chance! They'll all be blind drunk in another half hour. Besides, I know the safest place in all creation. Not more'n two whoops and a holler from here. Ferns shoulder high, around a mossy bank."

Jonse took another long pull from his jug and cached it behind a pokeberry bush, then they went down the trail. Unseen, 15-year-old Cap Hatfield parted a clump of mountain laurel, glanced up the path to make sure nobody was coming, and then followed them at a safe distance. He kept telling himself he wasn't a Peeping Tom. All he aimed to do was protect his big brother from the McCoys. When the sun faded, Cap rode home alone.

As darkness settled, the lovers heard a mournful whippoorwill. Rosanna snuggled close to Jonse again. After a while, she said: "I ain't ashamed, but I'm afeard. When I get home, pappy'll take a stick to me and make me tell. Then he'll shoot you and I'll have to jump off Lovers' Leap."

"You're comin' home with me," Jonse said, "for good. My folks will take you in. They got to, now."

"You willing to marry me?"

"Sure enough." Lying there on the mossy bank, with his arms around her, Jonse felt man enough to swing anything. "Nobody can stop us. We'll get hitched before the sun goes down again. That'll put an end to the feudin', once and for all."

But it didn't work out that way. It was close to midnight when the uneasy young couple rode up to the Hatfield cabin on Peter Creek. The big log house had two rooms, one for sleeping and one for eating, with a dogtrot, or breezeway, between them. Rosanna waited behind a cluster of lilacs while Jonse called his mother out into the yard.

"I got something to tell you," he said.

Levicy Hatfield nodded grimly. "Cap done already told me, everything. And I told your pa. He's got a right to know, before trouble starts. You takin' her back where she belongs?"

"She belongs here now," Jonse replied, trying to sound fully grown up. "Till us builds ourselves a cabin of our own."

"Who says she belongs here?" Devil Anse's voice boomed out from the dogtrot. Standing barefoot in his long flannel nighshirt, his dark beard dangling to his waist, he resembled Moses. "It's me who has the say-so here. Where is she?"

Jonse turned toward the lilacs. "Show yourself, Rosanna," he said, and led her to the dogtrot step.

Her voice quavering, Rosanna looked up at the awesome figure and said: "It's our wish to be married."

"That's a pity," the stern patriarch replied. "It'll just have to remain a wish, 'cause no son of mine will ever wed a daughter of Randall McCoy. But don't think I'm lacking in hospitality. You're welcome here. Come in and bed yourself down with my gals. Tomorrow, you and Jonse can fix up a bed tick in the eating room and live together as much as you please."

When Randall McCoy heard of this back-handed treatment, he bellowed: "Josephine, Allifair, Adelaide, hie yourself over to that sink-hole of iniquity and tell your Godforesaken sister she's no longer any daughter of mine. If she ever shows up here again, I'll thrash her within an inch of her life!" After delivering this scathing message, the frightened sisters arranged to meet Rosanna every week at Turkeyfoot Springs. Every time she came there they pleaded her to give up Jonse so that they might be able to persuade their pappy to take her back.

"Everybody knows he's a tomcat," Josephine argued. "It ain't in Jonse to be true to one woman." In the beginning Rosanna brushed aside such talk, Jonse was different now. Bedded down with her in the Hatfield eating room, he filled her nights with ecstasy—for a few months. Then he began to come home late. After a while, he took to staying away all night. Hugging her goose-down pillow, Rosanna would cry herself to sleep.

"You poor child," Levicy said, trying to comfort her. "My boy can't help it. What he hankers after is the chase, not just the kill. Now, if you was somewhere else, and he had to come huntin' fer you, you'd have him hot on your trail again."

"Where could I go?" Rosanna sat up and wiped her eyes on a corner of Levicy's apron.

"What about your Aunt Betty McCoy's? She's got a trickle of Hatfield blood in her, from way back."

Aunt Betty was captivated by the romantic intrigue. Before long, her drab life was brightened by having the young lovers hold their trysts down behind her spring house—and Jonse became more ardent than ever. Word of these meetings spread, however, and one night five of Randall McCoy's sons surrounded Aunt Betty's, and captured Jonse the instant he dismounted. Tolbert and Dick tied his hands, and in lifting him into his saddle, unintentionally knocked off his hat. After Jonse was taken away, young Randy McCoy picked up the hat and hung it on his saddle horn.

Through a window Rosanna watched with mounting terror. The trail led up to a clearing, where two mounted men waited, silhouetted against the moonlit sky. Squinting, Rosanna told Aunt Betty she was sure the figures were her father and her Uncle James McCoy.

"Poor boy!" Aunt Betty said. "I hate to think what those mad dogs are gonna do to him."

"Will they kill him?"

"That would be letting him off easy. Haven't you heard of making the punishment fit the crime? They got hunting knives, ain't they?"

"Crime? Hunting knives?" At first, Rosanna missed the connection. When she got it, her eyes went wild with horror, but she kept herself from screaming. She had to think clearly. She had to act.

"Where can I find a horse?" she said, as calmly as if asking for a thimble.

"Tom Stafford's, next farm down the stream."

She wouldn't wait for Tom to fetch a saddle. She rode bareback, spurring the horse with her heels, her head down over his neck, her skirt fluttering in the wind. Devil Anse heard her shouting even before he caught the sound of pounding hoofs. He was on the edge of the dogtrot, stuffing his nightshirt into his britches and pulling up his galluses, when she came galloping into the yard.

He asked only one question: "Which way were they headed?" The instant she told him, his plan took form. Dispatching his sons in various directions, he swiftly rounded up 20 henchmen, followed the McCoys and waylaid them in a mountain pass. After making them dismount and stack their guns, he ordered Tolbert to untie Jonse and then said: "Where's his hat?" When Randy came forward with it, Devil Anse barked: "Dust it off with your handkerchief!"

That gave Devil Anse a wild idea. Turning to Randall, he asked: "What was you aiming to do to my son?" When Randall stared at him in stony silence, he nodded: "Your daughter done named it to me, but I see you ain't man enough to admit it. All right. I seem to recollect a remark you once made about me being so high and mighty. Dammit to hell, that's what I am right now!" He trained his double-barreled shotgun on Randall's midriff. "Just the same, I'm a kindhearted man. I ain't gonna make you actually lick my son's boots. But you get yourself over here and polish 'em with your shirttail. Make haste, or I'll send a load of buckshot through your belly!"

Lowering his eyes, Randall ground his teeth—but he polished a Hatfield's boots, right there in front of his dismayed sons.

After that, Rosanna's plight was both pathetic and peculiar. None of the McCoys ever discussed what Randall had meant to do to Jonse, but it was genarally allowed that Rosanna had saved her handsome, brawny paramour from a fate that certainly would have been worse than death, for him. But in doing it, she had brought humiliation upon her father. All through Tug Valley there was agitated speculation over what would become of her now.

For a couple of months, she remained at Aunt Betty's, but Jonse didn't go there any more. Instead, he and Rosanna signaled each other with bird calls, so they could carry on their idyllic love-making in various woodland dells.

In public, Devil Anse spoke highly of Rosanna. "Yes-siree-bob, she's as bright as a button, and spunky, too!" Jonse even told folks he was figuring on getting hold of some nice bottom land and putting up a cabin, but that notion never got beyond the talking stage. Devil Anse seemed to feel that nothing was too good for Rosanna except marriage to his son. But he delighted Rosanna by giving her yards of calico and trinkets picked from a peddler's pack—

a Spanish comb and a coral necklace with earrings to match.

Moping because he had failed to "fix" Jonse, and depressed because Devil Anse had humbled him, Randall McCoy threw a fit about the way the Hatfields were fussing over his wayward daughter—yet denying her those precious marriage vows. Treating her like a strumpet, that's what they were doing, just to humiliate him!

To prevent her from giving aid and comfort to the enemy, Randall had Tolbert and Dick bring her home. Meek and obedient, she put up with her father's tirades, biding her time. When the old man's fury eventually fizzled out, Rosanna perked up and began visiting sympathetic relatives, who could be depended on to keep silent about bird calls and long nocturnal absences. Before Randall's suspicion was aroused, word circulated that Jonse was sparking several girls.

That pleased Randall, but upset Rosanna. When she tearfully asked Jonse if it was true, he hugged her and said, "I'm just using those giddy gals as stalking horses, honey, so's we kin spend more happy hours together." But it was a bald-faced lie. Shortly after, Rosanna became pregnant, and a few months later she received a sickening shock.

Jonse had at last started building a cabin for himself and a wife—but the wife was Rosanna's cousin, Nancy, the headstrong daughter of the murdered Harmon McCoy. Disconsolate, Rosanna pined away, contracted measles during the final months of her pregnancy, and died a few weeks before the child was due. Laying her out for burial, her sorrowing sisters put on her coral necklace and earrings given her by the vindictive Devil Anse, who should have been her father-in-law.

Meanwhile, the vendetta broke out again, more violently than ever.

A hot contest between candidates in the McCoy bailiwick was being settled at the polls on August 7, 1882. To throw their weight around, a dozen or more Hatfields crossed the Tug to the voting place on Blackberry Creek. Among them was Ellison Hatfield, who had done his damndest to send Sam and Paris McCoy to prison for killing Bill Staton. When everybody was pretty well liquored up, Tolbert, Dick and Randy McCoy were swaggering around, hunting for trouble, when they spotted Ellison on the edge of the crowd.

"Look at that mangy son of a bitch, shooting off his mouth," Tolbert growled. "It ain't none of his damn business who we elect."

"Let's beat hell out of him," Dick suggested. "That'll learn him to stay away from here."

"All right," Tolbert agreed. "But I'm taking him on first. After I've had my fun, you fellows are welcome to what's left of him. Stay back here, though, till your turn comes, so it won't look like we're ganging up on him. Here, Randy, hold my rifle."

Now 15, Randy had an old gun of his own, but it wasn't a deadeye Sharps like his big brother's.

Striding up to Ellison, Tolbert squared off and crowed: "I'm hell on earth! I'm a rip-snorting black bear with harrow spikes for teeth and I gobbles down a dozen Logan County clod-hoppers for my breakfast!"

"I'm sure glad you took the trouble to tell me," Ellison replied. "Otherwise, I'd of never knowed it. You look like a pussy cat to me, raised on goat milk."

"I'll show you," Tolbert shouted,

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My proved formula for success in making money is simpler than you might think—just buying good imports at next-to-nothing "below wholesale" foreign prices and selling them in the U.S. by mail order. Also take orders from stores or friends. Others I have shared this plan with have reported big profits. You can make your home your office—your kitchen table your desk. You can use your spare time to help build a fascinating and profitable business!

To most people, importing smacks of mystery, romance and costly things for collectors. Actually, any capable man or woman can use past experience and training to great advantage in the Home-Import Business. To my knowledge, this is the *only* business in which previous experience in almost *any* other field can be used profitably. When you turn to this field of big profit opportunity, you do *not* throw away the valuable experience you've gained through your jobs, hobbies or interests. Rather, *combine* that experience with export-import methods I have proved by taking in millions of dollars. This combination then goes to work *for you* and can easily pay off far more profitably than everyday salary of a "worker."

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cocking his right arm as a feint and suddenly ramming his bent knee into Ellison's groin.

Ellison staggered back, gasping with pain. Then he lunged forward, swinging his massive arm clear around Tolbert's shoulder in a crushing grip. With his huge right hand, he grabbed Tolbert jaw, bending his head back until his neck almost snapped. Writhing and straining, Tolbert managed to jerk out his sheath knife and slash Ellison above the right kidney. His grip weakening, Ellison kicked one of Tolbert's feet out from under him, threw him backward to the ground and flopped over on top of him, striving desperately to get hold of the slashing knife.

At this point, Dick darted in, knife in hand. He stabbed Ellison in the back, and then rolled him over so Tolbert could scramble free. On their knees, with heads close together, the two McCoys went to work on the helpless Ellison, plunging their knives into him a dozen times apiece. Determined to do his share, Randy tossed aside his own gun, raised his brother's rifle and fired a bullet through Ellison's cheek.

The crack of the rifle caused Tolbert and Dick to spring back. Staring at the horrified crowd they turned and fled, with Randy close behind, down the same Rocky trail taken two years earlier by Jonse and Rosanna. But they were soon overtaken, brought back and placed in the custody of a justice of the peace and two constables, all related to both families. Still conscious, Ellison was carried back across the Tug on a hastily improvised litter. Ahead of the stretcher bearers, a rider took the dreadful news to Devil Anse, who surged across the stream with a big party in time to prevent the authorities from taking their prisoners to Pikesville.

"I'm taking charge now," he said. "I'll hold 'em till I hear how Ellison makes out. If he dies, God help 'em."

Returning to West Virginia with the prisoners, Anse took them up Mate Creek to an abandoned schoolhouse.

Ellison had tremendous vitality. For two days, reports reached Devil Anse every few hours: Ellison was fighting for his life, he was getting weaker, he was showing a little improvement, he had taken a turn for the worse.

The Hatfields had the schoolhouse surrounded. But down the road a hundred yards, a bunch of McCoys set up a camp, confident that Randall McCoy must be rounding up reinforcements for a raid to liberate the prisoners.

Twice, Devil Anse let Aunt Sally, Randall's wife, go inside to see her sons. She was in there the second time when news finally came that Ellison was dead. Two men went in to bring her out. From the look on their faces she sensed the news.

"Is he gone?" she gasped. When they nodded, she started screaming.

"Ma," Tolbert shouted, "don't carry on like that. Don't give 'em that satisfaction."

"You're right, son," she said. Then she kissed her three boys goodbye, lingering the longest with Randy. She came out holding her apron over her face.

Outnumbered three to one, the McCoys down the road gave up their idea of trying to interfere. Randall, it turned out, had ridden to Pikesville in a vain attempt to get the sheriff to organize a rescue party.

Darkness had fallen when the Hatfields rode away from the schoolhouse with their prisoners and re-crossed the Tug. A little later, several people living near the mouth of Mate Creek heard a fusillade of shots on the Kentucky shore and saw rifle flashes. Next morning, the riddled bodies of Tolbert, Dick and Randy were found on the edge of a sink-hole, bound and sagging from pawpaw bushes.

The verdict of the coroner's jury was "killed by persons unknown," which was true enough, since nobody was able, or willing, to say who had fired the shots. But a special grand jury convened in Pikesville, with neither Hatfields nor McCoys on it, spent two weeks examining witnesses, and returned first-degree murder indictments against two dozen men, including Devil Anse, Jonse, and Cap Hatfield, and Selkirk McCoy, the turncoat who gave the pig to a Hatfield. Warrants were issued, but nobody tried to serve them.

Many people, sick of the feuding, looked on the marriage of Jonse and Nancy McCoy as a good omen. It was recalled that when the bride was a toddler, Devil Anse had been blamed for shooting her father Harmon, and hiding his body in a cave. So the marriage was taken to mean that everything had been forgiven, or forgotten—and that the bad feeling had died out.

Owning 9,000 acres of timberland, as well as a long stretch of creek bottom, Devil Anse was about as well fixed as anybody in Logan County—and that made his son, the good-looking, vigorous Jonse a prime catch. Right from the start, though, Nancy was on guard against winding up just another doxy, like Rosanna. When Jonse set out to make time with Nancy, she was visiting her sister Mary, who lived right across the Tug from the Devil Anse homeplace on Peter Creek. After a corn shucking, Jonse went strolling with Nancy through a cane brake. Generous with preliminary favors, she let him think she was easy pickings. But when he reached the customary clincher and spoke of leading her to "the safest place in all creation," she rocked him back on his heels. "You must mean the courthouse," she purred, and that's where she made him take her before extending any further privileges.

When Jonse brought Nancy home and sheepishly broke the news, Devil Anse broke out laughing. "I'd give a double-dyed pretty to see old Randall's face when he hears about it," he roared, and then he deeded some choice acreage to Jonse.

On the other hand, when Randall McCoy heard his niece had achieved the distinction which had eluded his daughter, he spent a whole day cleaning his guns. But that was just to clear his head. He didn't intend to do anything hasty, or foolish. The next day he went to Pikesville and had a conference with his nephew by marriage, Perry Cline, a lawyer, politician and deputy sheriff. Together, they concocted a scheme that subsequently almost started a war between the States of West Virginia and Kentucky, and finally lifted the Hatfield-McCoy feud right up to the Supreme Court of the United States.

If the Hatfields thought Nancy would be an advantage they were soon disillusioned. Actually, she was a thorn in their side, and a sharp one. First of all, she henpecked Jonse till he was a sorry-looking rooster. He got so he didn't want to do anything but just loll around the cabin, day and night. His younger brother, Cap, had to take over the rank of second-in-command, to keep the clan from falling apart. But that was only the beginning. Nancy's brother, Jeff, made the mistake of killing a tax assessor in Pikesville and had to leave Kentucky in a hurry. Nancy took him in; that was fitting, he was kin. But when she gave him the "pulling bone" whenever they had fried chicken, that meant trouble.

On top of that, sister Mary and her daughter got into the habit of visiting from their farm every day or so. Mary and Sally were great talkers, but they could listen when something worth hearing was being said. At Jonse's cabin, liquor flowed freely (Jonse, Cap and Devil Anse operated a still in a nearby swale), and members of the tribe were continually coming and going, so plenty was worth repeating—on the other side of the Tug. At any rate, after three elaborately planned Hatfield ambushes were foiled, Cap decided he knew whose ears had been hearing too much and made up his mind to plug them.

One night Cap and Tom Wallace, who worked on Cap's farm, went over to the Daniels' house while Bill was away and took turns giving Mary and Sally a thorough thrashing with a brand-new cowtail whip.

Naturally Jeff McCoy took exception to his sister and niece being treated thus. Even so, being a refugee in West Virginia, in a Hatfield home, Jeff should have been bright enough to sit tight. But the McCoys were just naturally impulsive. Accompanied by an old crony named Josiah Hurley, Jeff barged up to Cap's house one evening when Cap was away. Cap's wife was sick in bed and wouldn't open the door. Frustrated, Jeff vented his spleen by shooting holes through the door and windows. When Cap got home, he paused only long enough to hear the details before he hit the trail with Tom Wallace. Cap didn't need any bloodhounds. He had become so good at tracking down McCoys he was gaining the reputation of having a sense of smell as keen as a hound dog. He and Tom Wallace captured Jeff and Josiah, tied their hands behind them, put them in their saddles and set out for the Logan County courthouse on a road that skirted the Tug. This was the long way around, but Cap had picked it deliberately, just as he deliberately tied Jeff's hands with a granny-knot. At a friend's house along the way, he left Jeff and Josiah sitting in their saddles and went inside with Tom, for the sole purpose, he said, of getting a glass of buttermilk. But he was watching at a window when Jeff got his hands loose, jumped off his horse and headed for the river. As Jeff swam toward the Kentucky shore, Cap urged him on by spattering bullets into the water first on one side of him, then the other. Finally, as Jeff was clambering up the far bank, Cap fired a final shot—and sent a bullet through Jeff's brain.

Next to Devil Anse, Cap was probably the best marksman in a region famous for marksmen. Virgil Carrington Jones, author of the best book ever written about the Hatfields and the McCoys, says that in 1893 Devil Anse strode into a tent show in eastern Kentucky and challenged Buffalo Bill Cody to a shooting match with pistols. As the venerable mountaineer departed, the celebrated marksman gazed after him with awe and said: "I sure would hate to fight a pistol duel with him!"

A lot of people felt the same way

about Cap, but his sneaky method of getting rid of Jeff didn't set too well in Pike County. In fact, it created a crisis. Jeff's brother, Bud McCoy, was being touted as "the most dangerous man in Kentucky." He was so disgusted with Randall's apparent lack of resentment over Jeff's death that he set out to seize control of the McCoy clan. To forestall him, Randall called on Perry Cline to get going right away with their legal scheme, hatched long before.

Cline had stuffed ballot boxes to help Simon Bolivar Bruckner become governor of Kentucky, which was the basis of their plan. Needled to pay off a campaign promise, the new governor posted $500 reward for Devil Anse and a total of $2,200 for other Hatfields. New warrants were issued and turned over to Deputy Sheriff Frank Phillips, a cocky, good-looking, 26-year-old skirt-chaser. Then Governor Bruckner contacted Governor E. Willis (Windy) Wilson of West Virginia in an attempt to extradite the men charged with murdering the McCoy brothers.

But Devil Anse was a political finagler, too. Pressure was applied to Governor Wilson, who told Governor Bruckner he would like to oblige but could not without supporting affidavits. When these arrived, there was further stalling over legal technicalities. Then it developed that Perry Cline had shaken down some of the Hatfields for $225 by promising to dismiss the indictments against them. In polite, but unmistakable terms, the Governor of West Virginia promptly told the Governor of Kentucky to go to hell.

All this letter-writing annoyed Deputy Frank Phillips. With those hot warrants in his possession, he could see no reason for wasting time. In addition to the reward money, there was something else he craved—on the other side of the Tug. That was Nancy, Jonse's wife. She had given him the glad eye one night at a hoe-down and he could not put her out of his mind.

On December 11, 1887, bent on doing what he now considered his duty, and combining pleasure with it, Phillips crossed the river with a picked band of McCoy adherents. From a spy, he had learned that Jonse, Cap and Devil were going to the courthouse that night to organize a home-guard outfit called the Logan County Regulators. Sure enough, when he reached Jonse's house, the only person there was Nancy. Standing in the doorway, she took a good long look at him, and her eyes brightened considerably.

"Oh, I remember you," she said. "Come right in!"

Before closing the door, he turned to his posse and called out: "Keep a close watch, while I take time to see what this kind lady has to offer."

It took him close on to an hour. When he came out, the members of the posse gave him sly grins, but kept their mouths shut.

"Ain't no man on our list nearby," he said, "except Selkirk McCoy. But that's all right. He's the one who started all the trouble by giving the hog to Floyd Hatfield. So we'll nab him first. That'll knock 'em for a loop. It'll show 'em we aim to clean 'em out, lock, stock and barrel."

Before the posse was out of sight, Nancy was packing a carpetbag.

Frank was right. The news that Selkirk had been kidnapped and locked up in the Pike county jail flabbergasted the Hatfields. It took them three weeks to pull themselves together, but when they did they were rampaging for revenge. The main object of their wrath was old Randall McCoy. He was to blame for bringing Phillips into it.

The Hatfield raid was set for the night of January 1, 1888. But on that New Year's Day, Devil Anse had a hangover, so Cap was in command. He had trouble rounding up recruits because the bold kidnapping of Selkirk had put faint hearts into some of the clan. For instance, Ellison Mounts, called "Cotton Top" because he was tow-headed, insisted he had to finish fixing a leak in his mama's shack, where he lived. Cotton Top was weak-minded, but he was a muscular giant weighing close to 200 pounds and mighty useful in a scrap. He had been in the execution squad that took Randall McCoy's three sons on their last mile to the sink-hole. When Cotton Top said he was too busy to tag along on this foray, Cap gave him the business.

"You got a $500 price on your head," Cap pointed out. "You're the only one of us worth that much to 'em, except my pappy. Don't you forget that. I'm telling you, Frank Phillips ain't forgetting it. He's hot on the trail of that $500. Randall ain't forgetting it, either. He'll never let up on you, not after what you done at that sink-hole. You'll swing sure as God made little green apples unless you help us get shed of Randall."

That did it. But what really sealed Cotton Top's doom was a warning issued by Devil Anse's Uncle Jim Vance. "All of us got to watch out for trickery," Jim Vance said. "Randall and his son Calvin is liable to try to get away dressed in women's clothes. If they do, we got to be ready to blast 'em down."

There were nine Hatfield men in the group—Cotton Top, Tom Chambers, Doc Ellis, Charlie Gillespie, Bob and young Ellison Hatfield, sons of the late lamented Ellison, Jim Vance, Cap and Jonse.

Everybody was mighty glad to see Jonse back in the saddle with a rifle over his arm, now that Nancy had taken up with Frank Phillips, but they felt kind of sorry for him. With his reputation of tumbling gals in the hay it must have been a blow to his manly pride to have Nancy walk out on him.

The moon was up when the cavalcade forded the river and moved in on Randall's establishment half-way up a ridge, with a cedar thicket curving around three sides of it. After tethering their horses so neither hoof beats nor snuffing would betray them, old Jim Vance gave them their orders.

"Don't start no shooting," Vance said, "till I give the word. I'm aiming to make Randall figure it's just me, ready to come to terms."

He placed the men so they covered all sides of the cabin, and himself took a position where he could see up and down the slope.

Randall's house was also a double cabin dwelling, connected by a roofed-over dogtrot with a half-story loft above the sleeping room. In addition to the windows facing front and back, there were two doors to watch.

When everybody was in position, Uncle Jim shouted, "Hello!"

Getting no response, Jim bellowed again: "Hello, hello!"

This time sounds came from the sleeping room—bare feet slapping rapidly across the puncheon floor, the rasp of a rifle barrel scraped against the fieldstone fireplace as it was hurriedly snatched down, and then the sharp click of the bolt.

Jittery from hitting the jug the night

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before, Jonse lost control of himself. "God Almighty, let's give it to 'em!" he screamed and fired a bullet through the door. Surprise was lost.

Through a chink in the logs, Randall McCoy raked the front area with rapid rifle fire. Behind the cabin, Cap and his squad got in a few shots, shattering window panes, before Calvin McCoy opened up from the loft and drove them back to the cedars.

Rampaging at his grandnephew, Uncle Jim yelled: "You goddamn liquor-swilling nitwit hog! You ain't fitten to keep company with sure-nuff men. We should have left you home with the women, tied to their apron strings."

There wasn't much chance, though, of putting bullets into Randall or Calvin, well protected by the thick logs. With Aunt Sally and her daughters Josephine, Adelaide, and Allifair to keep them supplied with loaded guns, they could hold out for hours. The only thing to do now was set fire to the house.

Head down, Uncle Jim darted past the window toward the woodpile. Allifair saw him.

"Pappy!" she screamed. "Yonder goes somebody, headed for the woodpile!"

But before Randall McCoy could draw a bead on him, Uncle Jim was crouched behind the well-housing and windlass gear. He found what he wanted—a stack of pine knots.

His next move was to climb up on the eating shack, cross over the dogtrot roof and plant blazing pine knots on the main cabin—a heavy undertaking for a man his age. But hate makes heroes, as readily as love. Putting aside his rifle, he ripped off one of his galluses, bound up a bundle of pine cones and tossed it high into a corner beside the cooking chimney. As he climbed toward the roof, Tom Chambers said, "Sweet Jupiter, that old codger's a humdinger!" Spurred to action, Tom wriggled across the open and scrambled up the side of the eating shack. He took the pine knots across to the other cabin, stuck them under the eaves and lit them. By the time he and Uncle Jim were back behind the woodpile, the fire was eating down into the sleeping quarters. The women were soon splashing gourdfuls of water on the blaze. Then Josephine shrieked: "It's all gone! The bucket's empty!"

"Use the milk in the churn," Aunt Sally shouted, but that too, was soon gone—and the flames began licking higher.

A few moments later the door swung open. Thirty yards away, his rifle braced on a wheelbarrow, Cotton Top Mounts felt a surge of elation. Old Randall, he felt, was fixing to make a run for it. Sure enough, the figure that dashed through the doorway was wearing a woman's long nightgown, just as Uncle Jim had predicted, and carrying some thing that looked in the moonlight like a six-shooter. Leading his target as he would a fleeing buck, Cotton Top held his breath and squeezed the trigger. The figure fell. Shot through the heart, Allifair McCoy was hurled sideways by the impact, still clinging to the gourd she had hoped to fill to douse the fire.

"I got him!" Cotton Top whooped. "Old Randall's done for!"

The ring of conviction in his voice convinced the others. All firing stopped. Then a second figure in a woman's nightgown, and wearing a ruffled bedcap, bounded through the doorway. Believing this to be Calvin, Uncle Jim dashed forward with his pistol, snapping the trigger. The magazine was empty. Reversing the gun, he whacked the butt down on the ruffled bed-cap. The figure crumpled, then started crawling toward the other victim, whimpering: "Allifair, honey, I'm a-coming. It's me. It's your ma."

Horrified, Uncle Jim jumped out of range around the corner of the eating shack. "God have mercy," he moaned, "what have I done?"

The flames were shooting up so high now no one could remain inside much longer. Inside, Calvin McCoy shouted, "You got to get away from here alive, Pa. Ain't nobody else can make sure they get what's due 'em. I'm going out the door. I'll zigzag toward the trail. That'll draw their fire from both sides. You jump out the back window and scoot to the cedars."

"No, by God," Randall replied. "I'll make a run through the door and you go through the window. You're the one who's got to take charge from now on."

"Me agin Bud McCoy? I ain't equal to it, Pa, but I'll do my best, long as I can. Goodbye, Pappy."

With that, Calvin leaped out on the dogtrot, rifle waist high, pivoted from left to right, raking the rear and then the front with withering fire. Meanwhile, Josephine and Adeliade lifted their father through the window. As Randall whirled to the left and streaked toward the cedars, all the Hatfields were so intent on cutting down Calvin, no one caught sight of the old man until just before he vanished in the thicket. Dodging back and forth, Calvin was within 20 feet of the trail when he went down with a dozen slugs in him.

"Come on!" Uncle Jim bellowed. "Let's get away from here. God knows, we done enough for one day."

The McCoy clan was stunned by that New Year raid—but not Frank Phillips. Two days later he crossed the Tug with a posse and ran into Cap and Jim Vance on a lonely trail. Outnumbered ten to one, Cap and Jim had a fair chance of driving them off until the old codger took a bullet in the belly.

"I'm done for, Cap," he said, "but you clear out. The Hatfields can't get along without you." After Cap slithered away through the pawpaw bushes, Phillips and his men crept closer and found Vance stretched out with his eyes shut, one finger weakly tugging at his rifle trigger. Instead of taking him prisoner, Phillips walked around behind him and put a bullet into his brain.

Each day, for the next four days, Phillips crossed the stream, and kidnapped eight more Hatfield adherents —L. S. McCoy (Selkirk's son), Wall Hatfield, Tom Chambers, Moses Christian, Andrew Verney and the three Mahon brothers, Sam, Plyant and Deede. Then Charlie Gillespie was nabbed in Virginia. Soon after that, the reward money was boosted with an additional $7,500 and a swarm of detectives descended upon the region, capturing Alex Messner and Cotton Top Mounds.

On January 19, a posse of 13 men led by Constable J. R. Thompson, set out to serve warrants on the killers of Uncle Jim Vance. But before they reached the Tug they ran into Phillips and 18 men at the mouth of Grapevine Creek. Both sides quickly deployed in battle formation. For an hour the fighting was brisk. Cap put a bullet into Bud McCoy's shoulder and Bill Dempsey, one of Thompson's posse, was so frightfully wounded he had to be left

on the field when the Hatfields withdrew. With three other men, Phillips reached Dempsey, who was crying for water, and killed him with a pistol.

Reports got out that Devil Anse was planning to storm the Pikesville jail, so a special guard surrounded it day and night. On January 24, a crowd of McCoy men went to Catlettsburg, and bought a big supply of rifles. The following day, a Hatfield raiding party crossed into Kentucky and took on a load of ammunition. Both Governors called out the National Guard and ordered crack units to be ready to move in on the Tug. Zones five-miles deep on each side of the river were cleared of people.

Devil Anse hurriedly sold 5,000 acres of property worth $15,000, for $7,000, and built himself a massive log fort back in the wilderness. It had dozens of rifle ports and was stocked with a six-months' supply of food and three wagon-loads of ammunition. The only approach was over a drawbridge spanning the ravine and rigged with wrought-iron chains. Nobody ever did get to it, either, unless Devil Anse was willing.

In Pikesville, new indictments were handed down against some of the Hatfield contingent under arrest there, charging them with murdering Allifair and Calvin, as well as Tolbert, Dick and Randy McCoy.

With feeling running so high on both sides, it now appeared as if the men kidnapped by Phillips and the private detectives stood no chance of getting a fair trial in Kentucky. Devil Anse's go-betweens kept harping on that point until Governor Wilson did something that astonished the whole country. He filed a suit against the state of Kentucky in the U.S. District Court in Louisville, requesting a writ of *habeas corpus*, asking the Federal Government to make Governor Bruckner turn the Hatfield prisoners over to him. Appearing in court himself, Wilson put up a stiff argument, hammering home the fact that the West Virginia Hatfields had been illegally seized, forcibly taken into Kentucky, and were being held without legal basis. The attorney for Kentucky admitted that Phillips had been hasty in not waiting for the West Virginia governor to honor extradition papers, but contended that it didn't really matter how the men were apprehended and jailed since they *had* been properly indicted and served with warrants beforehand.

Baffled, the Federal judge could not find precedent for the case. Since the dispute was between two States, the judge neatly side-stepped the issue by handing it over to the U.S. Supreme Court. After hearing all the evidence, the learned justices of the Supreme Court were stumped, too. There wasn't a word in the Constitution or in any law passed by Congress setting up a legal procedure for forcing the return of citizens of one state unlawfully abducted by officers of another. So they could do nothing but allow Kentucky to dispense justice as it saw fit to the West Virginia prisoners.

After sifting the evidence, the Pike County prosecutor concluded he had sure-fire cases against only seven men.

The trials were held in August, 1889. Two of the accused took sick and their cases were postponed. One of these, Charlie Gillespie, broke out of jail and was never recaptured. The other, Sam Mahon, died of tuberculosis. The remaining five were found guilty. Wall Hatfield (Devil Anse's brother), Alex Messer, and Plyant and Deede Mahob, were sent to prison for life. Weak-minded Cotton Top Mounts, who wanted to finish fixing a leak in the roof that fatal New Year's Day, was sentenced to be hanged.

When he lost his appeal, the hanging was set for February 18, 1890. The gallows were erected near a graveyard. To comply with a law forbidding public executions, a board fence was built around it, but high hills nearby accommodated the huge crowd of spectators that trooped into town. One of these was Frank Phillips, who had recently lost his job as deputy sheriff and turned the tables on Nancy by walking out on her. The grabbing and hustling of Cotton Top across the state line hadn't been one of Frank's achievements—private detectives had collected the reward for that feat. Frank was there, he said, because he had a tip that Devil Anse planned to swoop down from his fortress with 200 men to save Cotton Top's neck at the last minute. That explanation created considerable excitement and increased the general enjoyment of the occasion. Governor Bruckner had also heard this, and had crack militia units patrolling the town with fixed bayonets.

When Cotton Top's time came, he was smoking a cigar. Waiting to handcuff him, the turnkey told him to enjoy a few more puffs. "Much obliged," the condemned man replied. "That sure is a good cigar." He rode out to the gallows in a wagon, sitting on his coffin, a macabre touch of bravado that made a big hit with the crowd. It didn't make any difference whether the spectators thought it was awful or appropriate, they got a wallop out of it. Cotton Top had never seen a gallows before. When he heard that this one was being erected for his benefit, he asked permission to watch the carpenters.

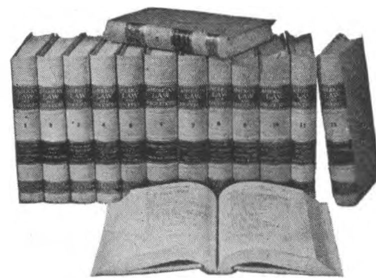
Now, as the wagon entered the enclosure, Cotton Top gave the 10,000 spectators on the surrounding hillsides another unforgettable thrill. He stood up and peered at the gibbet, inspecting it critically with professional as well as personal interest—since he was something of a carpenter himself. Then he grinned at the nervous sheriff and nodded his approval. The grin vanished, though, when he saw his open grave nearby, with a mound of dirt beside it. From his expression, he seemed to be thinking it just wasn't possible he would soon be lying in that coffin with gravediggers piling dirt on it. Just before putting the black cap over his head, the sheriff asked him if he had anything to say and he replied:

"Not much. Only this. The Hatfields made me do it!"

A moment later he was dangling. From the surrounding hills rose a shrieking and screaming, and several people fainted, men as well as women.

With Cotton Top in his grave, there was much talk that the feud was over, at long last. Then people got wrought up again by the news that the body of Bud McCoy had been found with 16 bullets in it near Peter Creek. That looked like more Hatfield handiwork. But the excitement quieted down when it developed that Bud had been perforated by his cousin, Ples McCoy, and a buddy, Bill Dyer, after an argument.

When a full year passed without further violence, Cap Hatfield took his pen in hand and wrote to a newspaper, saying he supposed that, like himself, folks were tired of hearing about the Hatfields and McCoys. But he wanted folks to know that the war spirit had



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subsided within him and the he sincerely rejoiced in the prospect of peace. As he saw it, the feud was now a thing of the past. For the next five years, it looked as though Cap was right.

Devil Anse had gone into the lumbering business. So had Jonse. Some of the younger Hatfields had even gone to college and were doing well as merchants, doctors and surgeons. One who studied medicine, Devil Anse's nephew, Henry Drury Hatfield, later became governor of West Virginia and was elected to the U.S. Senate. Others became railroad detectives, deputy marshals, sheriffs and jailers. Cap himself ran a prosperous farm on Mate Creek and kept out of trouble—until the first Tuesday in November, 1896.

The old urge to have some fun on election day got the best of Cap and he came down to Matewan, in the newly organized Mingo County, accompanied by his 14-year-old stepson, Joe Glenn, both carrying rifles over their arms. For a couple of years the mayor's son, Jack Rutherford, who was related by marriage to the McCoys, had been hankering to take a shot at Cap. This he did, after getting properly oiled, with the result that three people were killed, including himself. The others were Jack's nephew and brother-in-law. Little Joe Glenn was sent to reform school and Cap got a year in prison, but he only served a few weeks of it—more an honored guest than a prisoner. He was permitted to fling a party in his cell and quietly walked out while his keepers were dead drunk. After staying out of sight for a year, he returned home—and nobody ever took another shot at him.

Cap Hatfield, who at 15 had hidden in the mountain laurel to stand guard over his brother while Jonse and Rosanna McCoy made love, an incident which certainly fanned the feud into a blazing inferno, survived the bloody feud and most of its participants. He studied law, was admitted to the bar, practised for a number of years, became a deputy sheriff and finally died in Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1929 of a brain tumor.

Before ultimately drinking himself to death, Jonse also ran afoul of the old bad feeling. In 1898, he had an argument with Humphrey Ellis, a McCoy connection, and made some rash threats. Ellis promptly kidnapped him, took him to Pikesville and succeeded in having him tried on one of the old indictments. Although found guilty and sentenced to life, Jonse was pardoned a few years later.

Old Randall McCoy, who outlived all his sons by many years and spent the latter part of his life running a ferry at Pikesville, died in 1918 at the age of 90 as a result of burns suffered when he fell into an open fire.

Devil Anse lingered on until 1921, when he died of pneumonia at the age of 86. Nobody in Logan County was ever honored with a bigger or finer funeral—or a more impressive monument. Above his grave, his descendants erected a life-sized marble statue of Devil Anse Hatfield. It cost $3,000 and was carved by a sculptor in Carrara, Italy.

★ THE END

Definition Of Yellow continued from page 29

"what I am going to do is this. I am going to get in my car now. Then I am going to drive away. Touch me, or touch my car, or even act like you want to, and I will stomp you into this concrete and take what's left in for an assault rap. Now dwell on that."

He stood there, arms hanging loose.

For the first time in quite a while he felt entirely in command of his life and fate. His palms were no longer sweating, his hands felt strong and ready, he knew once more where the enemy was. He knew where all the switches were, he knew again the old awareness of power and perception and control, he knew how to swing the car door into the short one's belly, knew how and where to kick if the tall one moved, knew how many steps it was—two long, one short—to the tire tool by the water faucet, knew precisely where to use it to break the weasel's arm.

Tom knew then it was over and, moving easily, he opened the door of his car and slipped unhurriedly under the wheel.

None of them had moved.

Deliberately, he reached for a cigarette. The pack was empty. He crumpled it and shoved it in his pocket. He climbed back out of his car and walked through them, into the station, not looking over his shoulder, not glancing at the puerile convertible with the fox tail on the aerial.

"Give me change for a half-dollar, you," he said to the attendant, who was so surprised at the hardness in the voice that he dropped his mask and looked ashamed.

"Yes, sir," the attendant said.

Outside, by the door, Tom lit a cigarette before he even glanced toward his automobile. They were gone. He had known they would be. He drove on home and went into the house.

The shaking finally hit him, at the top of his stairway, which needed new carpeting. Until then he had maintained a blankness in his mind but when the recriminations came, they came in waves. He stood there holding the banister at the top of the stairs, literally trembling; cursing himself, listening to his children breathing deeply in their sleep, thinking of all he had risked—hearing all the fearful words tumble in his mind: cheap bravado, ham, adolescent, yellow, stupid, irresponsible. Yellow!

But was it, he wondered. He went back downstairs and poured a drink to stop the trembling. Which was the real cowardice he asked himself, the fear for one's family or the fear of seeming afraid? He tossed back his drink.

He probably would never know, he decided. The whole thing was simply that as a male goes from boy to youth to young man to man, then old man, there are periods when values overlap. And in those little wrinkles in time, he thought, a man just can't win for losing, no matter what the hell he does.

But at least, he thought, I know now —for sure—that I'm in the big no-limit game.

"Is that you, Tom?" his wife asked sleepily when he walked into the bedroom.

Well, he thought, it's the latest version of me.

"It's me," he said. "Who were you expecting, Tab Hunter?"

Then he stood staring out the bedroom window into the dark, a long time, thinking.

★ THE END

Kidnapper For Hitler

continued from page 25

A ten-foot terrace loomed up and they hoisted him onto it. From there he spotted an unmistakable round bald head at an upstairs window. "Get back!" he yelled to Mussolini. "Get back from the window!"

Skorzeny dashed off around the terrace with the others following, raced into the lobby, up the stairs and down a long corridor to a suite with two guards standing in front. All 260 pounds of Skorzeny smashed straight through the door without opening it. The guards could not believe their eyes; like their compatriot on the front lawn, they simply stood there, too amazed to make a move.

Entering the room in the best "Superman" tradition, with bits of wood and plaster clinging to his uniform, Skorzeny faced the Italian dictator. *Il Duce*, like his guards was speechless, possibly for the first time in his life. Skorzeny's heels came together and he threw the dictator a snappy salute. "Captain Skorzeny, at your service, Excellency."

The Italian, wearing an old blue suit that was too large for him, threw his arms around Skorzeny's neck and kissed him on both cheeks. "I knew it," he cried, "I knew my friend would save me. I embrace my liberator!"

But there was still work to be done, and Skorzeny apologized for hurrying. Going over to the window he called out in bad Italian: "I want the commander. He must come at once." After some bewildered shouting, an Italian colonel appeared below the window.

"I demand your immediate surrender," Skorzeny snapped.

"Mussolini is already in our hands. We hold the building. If you wish to avoid senseless bloodshed you have no other choice."

The colonel disappeared for a moment, then returned, carrying a goblet brimming with red wine. "To a gallant victor," he said, and bowed. Skorzeny thanked him and drained the glass with thirsty gusto. Cheers rose from Italians and Germans as a white sheet was run out on the flagpole above the hotel entrance.

Outside, the drone of a light plane could be heard, and through the window Skorzeny saw General Student's little spotter plane circling the area. Asking Mussolini to accompany him outside, Skorzeny joined his men in pushing the remnants of the glider over the side of the mountain. A minute later Captain Gerlach landed his Stork on the debris-littered front lawn of the hotel. It had been said that air ace Gerlach could perform miracles in the air, so Skorzeny asked him for one now. "Captain," Skorzeny said, "I want you to fly the three of us to that airfield in the valley." Gerlach recoiled. Weigh down his frail craft with Mussolini and Skorzeny, each huge, plus himself? Impossible! "Captain Skorzeny," he said, "I refuse even to consider it. It is madness!"

Skorzeny took him aside. He explained how the entire mission lay in his, Gerlach's hands; how back in Rome he, Gerlach, had promised he would do whatever he could to help.

"But not three!" Gerlach kept repeating. "Not three!"

"Yes, three!" Skorzeny insisted.

At last Gerlach gave in: "Have it your own way. If we must break our necks then let us get on with it." They squeezed into the plane: Mussolini behind the pilot, Skorzeny behind Mussolini. With the engine roaring, 12 men held back the Stork, digging their heels into the lawn. Gerlach held up his hand until the engine's pitch rose in a crescendo; as he dropped his hand the men let go and the plane catapulted across the lawn and went hurtling over the edge of the ravine. The heavily overloaded plane dropped 1,000 feet before leveling off and gaining altitude, by which time *Il Duce* had fainted.

A few hours later, after changing planes, Mussolini and Skorzeny landed in Vienna. Even in wartime the Imperial Hotel did not welcome with open arms visitors who arrived unshaven, unkempt and without luggage in the middle of the night. Mussolini went straight upstairs. "I don't need anything at all," he said. "Not even pajamas. I am going to sleep."

But there was to be no sleep for his kidnapper. Skorzeny had just reached his room when the first call came, from Berlin. It was Himmler, anxious to confirm the news. Minutes later, while frantically trying to clear the line to call his wife, Skorzeny was reached by Hitler. "Major," the *Fuhrer* burst out—thus announcing Skorzeny's new rank—"Major, you are a man after my own heart. You have gained the day and crowned our mission with success. Your *Fuhrer* thanks you."

"Thank you, sir," Skorzeny said. "It is an honor to serve." Twenty minutes later he was still trying to call his wife.

Mussolini's kidnapping from his Alpine prison will be discussed long after far greater events in the war have been forgotten. The setting was theatrical, the daring that carried it off was unbelievable, and the sheer improbability of the event thrilled the imagination and made people on both sides of the front wonder if it were really true. Just as the Italian dictator was about to be delivered to the Allies, he was snatched up into the sky. At one moment his captors had him safely caged; the next, he was gone.

The world was deafened by a storm of triumph. From Berlin, Vienna, Rome and Tokyo the rescue was spoken of as if it were a major victory in the field, with bulletins trumpeting Skorzeny's name to all parts of the world. Otto Skorzeny! It was a brief shot of hope for a dying cause.

On the wings of this first, incredible success, Skorzeny soared over the heads of his senior officers into Hitler's approval. Invitations poured in: lunch with Martin Bormann, Hitler's deputy; tea with Foreign Minister Von Ribbentrop; dinner with Goebbels, and then, at midnight Skorzeny joined the intimate circle of those to whom Hitler opened his heart at each day's end.

Even in the Allied camp, his daring did not go unapplauded. In England, Winston Churchill rose in the House of Commons to say: "The stroke was one of great daring and conducted with a masterly hand. It certainly shows that there are many possibilities of this kind open in modern war."

Nor was Hitler slow in realizing this. Later that year, in the fall of 1944, Hungary's Regent Horthy decided to surrender his country to the Russians. Once again Skorzeny was called by the *Fuhrer*, and once again, before being told what he was supposed to do, Hitler delivered a curtain speech: "The Third Reich has one last ally, Hungary! If Hungary falls, Germany will fall. There are no two ways about it.

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Hungary is now almost our only source of oil, of grain, of bauxite for our jet-plane program." He paused. "But I did not call you here, Major, to lecture you on economics. The collapse of Hungary will cut off seventy of our divisions from the main battle front. The Red Army would be in Austria within a week." Another meaningful pause, while he allowed this danger to their Austria to dwell in Skorzeny's mind. "We are being betrayed by Admiral Horthy, the Regent," the *Fuhrer* said, his voice rising to a scream. "You, Skorzeny, will find this Regent and bring him back here to me! Is that clear?"

"Yes, *Fuhrer*," Skorzeny said, and the interview was over.

An echo of the Mussolini mission. How could Horthy be reached? The Regent lived like some feudal monarch in a huge fortress-palace on a hill, attended by ministers and guards, zealously protected by his personal troops. Furthermore, Admiral Horthy had, since the Gran Sasso affair, taken extra precautions against being kidnapped. No half measures would do, Skorzeny thought. The palace would have to be taken by storm.

One day later, tall, blond "Dr. Wolf" from Cologne arrived in Budapest and with guide book in hand, toured the old city and gawked like any other tourist at the palace. One look was enough to show "Dr. Wolf" that it could not be taken by storm. Guns, tanks, barbed wire—even mine-fields—covered every inch of the palace grounds. Only one narrow road led up the hill to the palace itself, and this was covered every few feet by a series of machine-gun emplacements.

"Dr. Wolf" returned to Army headquarters and became once again Major Otto Skorzeny. Despite the formidable job, seemingly impossible, he had a glint in his eye. That night he confided to the ever-reliable Radl: "Radl, my boy, tomorrow night we are going to lead a torchlight parade up the palace hill" Radl's face dropped. Enjoying the effect his statement had on his faithful lieutenant, Skorzeny continued, "No garrison will fire on peaceable troops, peaceably marching, troops whose credentials are vouched for by their very lack of precaution."

Radl said, "Uh . . . Yes . . ." and secretly wished he were back on top of Gran Sasso.

Twenty-four hours later, 500 men in full dress uniform, complete with dress swords, marched in perfect parade order up the road leading to the palace hill. Skorzeny, standing upright in the lead car, held a rigid military salute; he was the very epitome of military politeness although his knees, he later admitted, were shaking in time to the marching cadence. The sentries at the first gate came to attention as Skorzeny's command car drove past. True, they were a little bewildered by this night spectacle, but obviously men with dress swords, a band and torches were not hostile troops. Someone must have forgotten to tell them about it.

And so it went. Skorzeny had been correct in his estimation of a soldier's mind. Gate after gate was opened to them, and salutes were exchanged as the German column wound its way up the hill to the very gates of the palace.

Then, on a prearranged signal, all hell broke loose. Racing up the marble staircase in the main hall, Skorzeny bumped into the captain of the guard and six of his men. "Quick," shouted Skorzeny. "Follow me. I must reach the Regent at once."

Without a murmur, all seven turned and raced along behind him. Another minute and Skorzeny was in Horthy's apartment. The Regent had fled, but his 30-year-old son, successor presumptive to the Regency, stood there flailing the air and shouting vengeance. Skorzeny had noticed a Persian rug lying across the hall; a curtain rope hung near by, and in no time flat Horthy's son was rolled up, trussed and rolling down the palace hill in the back of a car. An hour later he was on a plane for Berlin as a "guest of the Reich."

Meanwhile on the palace hill, the fighting was over as quickly as it had begun. With the Germans in command of the palace, the Hungarian gun positions on the hill were outflanked; continued fighting would only have meant useless bloodshed. Twenty minutes later, the Hungarian commandant and Skorzeny were drinking each other's health and exchanging compliments like two old war comrades.

The Regent, in the meantime, had fled. But, hearing that his son was a hostage, he surrendered himself to General Pfeffer-Wildenbruch, a relative of the ex-Kaiser, and quickly joined his heir as a "guest of the Reich" for the remainder of the war.

For Skorzeny, the raid earned an Oak Leaf Cluster on his Knight's Cross. Another barrage of pleased telephone calls from the "wolf lair" followed, which Skorzeny received while lying in the Hungarian Imperial bathtub, drinking iced champagne out of the Regent's crystal goblets.

Next to kidnapping Mussolini and the Hungarian Regent episode, Otto Skorzeny is most famous for training the Wehrmacht's "American Brigade" and sending them behind American lines during the Battle of the Bulge. From Allied headquarters the warning went out: "Otto Skorzeny, specialist in the art of kidnapping and assassinating high personages," was on his way to Supreme Headquarters with some 200 armed men in American uniform, all sworn to *get* General Eisenhower. Soon, half of the American army was looking suspiciously at the other half, and it was worth your life not to know who was third baseman for the Brooklyn Dodgers. As for the Supreme Commander himself, he was virtually a prisoner in his own headquarters for more than a week. Then he gave the order to his security chief to "forget all about this damned business of kidnapping and get back to the war!"

Discussing this phase of his career years later, Skorzeny pointed out that no "hand-picked assassins, led by a giant kidnapper"—as one paper reported—had ever been sent to murder Eisenhower. Instead, less than 100 soldiers had successfully penetrated Allied lines in disguise, not to murder or kidnap, but to "confuse, delay, and in general to make a nuisance of themselves." Of this group, only 28 returned to report to Skorzeny concerning their activities. It was because of this alleged attempt to kidnap Eisenhower that Skorzeny became, after Hitler, "the most wanted man in Europe," and at the same time, a legend. Reports of his height grew in each account of his exploits. Instead of six and a half, he became nine feet tall! From a reputed 260 pounds, he was described by some as weighing in the neighborhood of 350 pounds. After a while, there was nothing he had not done, nothing he could not do. His only comment to all this was: "If I had been ordered to kidnap Eisenhower, don't think I wouldn't have got him!"

The end of the war brought headlines: "SKORZENY CAPTURED." Photographs of the arrest showed Skorzeny in heavy chains, guarded day and night by men with drawn guns. The ironical truth was that Skorzeny had tried several times to surrender but no one seemed to have the authority to "accept" him. Finally, a sergeant told him to drive to GHQ and see if he could "rustle up a big shot" to surrender himself to—"and, oh, yes, be sure to take your gun, there are a lot of trigger-happy jerks around!"

After three days of this sort of thing, Skorzeny finally found someone to whom he could surrender, and the "most dangerous man in Europe" was put in chains.

When the Nuremberg Trials began, Skorzeny wasn't there. He was to have a trial all to himself; a year later, nine colonels covened in an old school house, and the trial of Otto Skorzeny began. But, for what crime?

Colonel Robert Durst, a retired American cavalry officer, was appointed Skorzeny's defense counsel. From the very beginning of the trial he made it quite clear to the court that in his opinion there were no grounds for a trial at all. Skorzeny had violated no "laws of warfare," had killed no prisoners, had, in Durst's words, "fought honorably and courageously."

The court wasn't satisfied. What about the "American Brigade?" What about fighting in a uniform other than his own? Colonel Durst answered that charge by showing a written order from Skorzeny to his men, warning them that under no circumstances were they actually to fight while disguised as Americans. Their disguises were to be discarded before a shot was fired. Durst proved this to have been the case. International Law permits disguises. It only forbids actual combat while out of your uniform, or with another uniform over it. At the end of three days, Skorzeny was acquitted, but the prisoner was still detained as "being too dangerous" to set free. The prisoner decided otherwise and new headlines sounded the new alarm: "SKORZENY ESCAPES."

A French newspaper identified the fugitive on a Channel boat. At the same time he was reported to be in Argentina, training Peron's army. Another paper had him in the Austrian Alps searching for Hitler's "hidden millions," while still another, an American magazine, had him conducting a spy ring for the Russians.

Finally there came a real "scoop." The front page of a French newspaper printed a full-length photograph of Skorzeny walking down the Champs Elysée in Paris. There was an immediate uproar in the French Chamber of Deputies. Mobs poured down the boulevards carrying signs that accused the government of harboring "Nazi Murderers." Riot police were called out and a full-fledged street fight took place. When order was restored, Otto Skorzeny had vanished again.

But the Skorzeny legend refuses to die. Now, 14 years after the end of the war, Skorzeny is still the "mystery man of Europe." Only recently a German Air Force officer swore that he saw Hitler on an airfield with Skorzeny, preparing for a getaway. Skorzeny, now living quietly in a villa near Madrid, Spain, smiles when he hears this, but says nothing.

Asked if it is true that two years ago the Arab League offered him $5 million to "snatch" the Sultan of Morocco from French imprisonment on an island in the Indian Ocean, Skorzeny refuses to say yes or no. "I am a retired kidnapper," he says, then adds, almost sadly, "and shall probably remain so."

But it was Lord Louis Mountbatten, a renowned Commando in his own right, who came closest to summing up the career of this "mystery man." "Skorzeny fought the last war," Lord Louis said, "by the methods we shall have to use in the next—if we wake up in time."

★ THE END

Hank Williams Won't Die continued from page 11

exactly one year later—to the very day. And though he didn't know it, each frantic step—the drinking bouts, the killing hours composing his songs, the strength-sapping shows, the murderous traveling between cities—all these were taking their toll faster than a man can afford to pay, especially a man with a rough start in life.

Hank Williams was born in a log cabin in the rugged scrub pine country nine miles from Georgiana, Ala. When he was only five, his family was left without a man to hold it together, for his father was sent to a Veteran's Hospital—a shell shock victim of World War I. Hank's mother took him and his sister Irene into Georgiana and made a new home for them, close to a WPA cannery, where she got a job. And then, in the curious way of fate, they were struck another cruel blow. Their house burned to the ground, consuming all their meagre possessions. They moved on to Montgomery.

Hank's first guitar was a present from his mother on his seventh birthday. It cost only $3.50, but it is entirely fitting to say that on that day a star was born. He began to follow an old Negro street singer known as "Tee-Tot," imitating his chords, memorizing the tunes he played. In later years when experts tried to trace the source of Hank Williams' melancholy laments, they offered the theory that it derived from the early influence of "Tee-Tot" and the legendary sadness of Negro songs. But a man who closely followed Hank's career disagrees. "That idea can be pushed too far," he said. "The musical lament of the Negro resulted from economic and racial woes. But the back-country white people, no matter how poor they were, felt differently. They believed that the chance to succeed was there, if only they could grab it. So when they went down to defeat they took it personally, not as a group. The sadness in Hank's songs tells of *one* lonesome man. That's why it reaches anyone who has known the loneliness of personal defeat.

"Furthermore," he says, "Hank reacted to this with bitterness, alcohol and by sneering at morals as if they were only for suckers. He could get away with that because of his success. Yet his upbringing emphasized moral living and the conflict between these childhood teachings and his adult carousing just tore him apart. As if that wasn't bad enough, he constantly met all kinds of brilliant and successful people, yet he himself was almost illiterate. That bit into him deeply and

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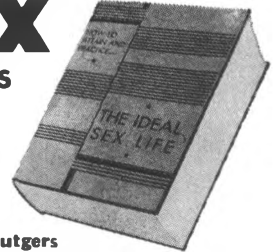

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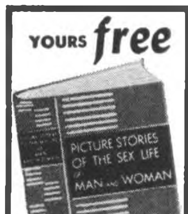

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gave him an enormous sense of inferiority. It shouldn't have bothered him, of course. In his own field he was a genius. Education probably would have spoiled the pure, earthy simplicity of his melodies and lyrics. He could express his deepest feelings only in song. But those big crowds out front knew what he was saying. He reached them where they lived and they loved him for saying what they couldn't say themselves."

That growing contradiction inside him was something Hank could never accept, though it was his greatest strength and worst weakness at the same time. The innermost feelings which found a voice in his songs also tortured his memories, and the emotions which one moment created his music, in the next only reminded him how unlike a song his life was. When it became too much Hank reached for a jug, source of the only solace he had known as far back as he could remember. But where another man might feel purged by debauchery, Hank felt only the stabs of conscience. For when he was sober he was a modest and considerate friend, an easygoing pal. Drunk, the bitterness turned him alternately mean or moody, at times even into a raving egomaniac.

Hank was 12 when he broke into show business, via an amateur night contest at the Empire Theater in Montgomery. He took home the first prize of $15 for singing "The WPA Blues" and later said no money he ever made meant as much to him as that first recognition of his budding talent. It must have been one of his better moments to discover at that young age that *there was a way out*, after all. And for Hank, the way out lay in the West, in the traditional American pattern.

Hank had never even ridden a horse but at 17 he ran off to Texas. Typically, he was too impatient to spend years learning the skills of the cowboy, so he joined a rodeo and set out to ride a bronco. He took a few healthy belts of red whiskey, straddled the bronc and waved the gate open. Every time the horse threw him, he took another slug and climbed back on. Sometime later he was thrown so viciously that he severely hurt his back and had to give it up. For the rest of his life the back injury added physical torment to his mental unrest.

When he hobbled back into Montgomery after his Western experience, he was wearing the cowboy clothes he loved and which remained his hallmark to the end. He began playing local club dates, perfecting his playing technique, teaching himself the brand of lyric phrasing and song styling which made him famous. Working theaters, private clubs, park outings and smoky honky-tonks, he sometimes did a single, sometimes worked with "The Drifting Cowboys." But later, when he could pick and choose his engagements, he refused to play the tough joints at any price. "They don't come to listen to music," he said. "They come to likker up and fight. That's their idea of a good time Saturday night, after a tough week."

Hank remembered too well that when those fights started some hardhead always charged straight for the bandstand. Too often girls in the audience were sighing over Hank and the boyfriend suddenly saw a beautiful chance to get even. Hank broke his hands a couple of times in these brawls and one night he came home with his guitar in splinters. "Honey," he said to his wife, "good guitars ain't cheap, but I just can't afford to break my hands no more."

Hank's courting technique to win Audrey's hand was characteristic: direct. simple and no wasted time. Their first meeting proves this. Audrey and her mother stopped at a "medicine" show, the kind which made millions for Hadacol, just outside Banks, Ala., where Hank was the musician shill who drew the crowds. After Hank's singing had drawn the crowd, the pitchman went into his spiel, then sent Hank out to turn listeners into customers. Circulating through the crowd, Hank spotted Audrey. She was a tall, striking blonde, and from that instant his only pitch was for himself. He talked her into a date, and Audrey agreed to pick him up at his trailer later in the day.

When Audrey drove up she found Hank sitting in the door of the trailer, drunk. Shirttail out, barefoot, unshaven and hair tousled, he had a bottle of booze in his fist. Audrey saw there would be no date that afternoon but she didn't get angry and if she was disgusted, she hid it. She just said, "Why don't you get some sleep before tonight's show. I'll come back later." Driving off she might have figured it was just one of those things, but later she learned that when Hank was faced with a new and challenging situation, he headed for whiskey the way a hound heads for the door when the shotgun comes off the wall. At this time, however, he was in the early stages of the habit and his "nipping" was more of a cane than a crutch. But Hank never recognized that passing instant when he was more "on the stuff" than off.

After the show that night Audrey said, nicely but firmly, "I'm not against drinking, Hank. You can have liquor *and* me in your life if you want, but not both at the same time."

The next day Hank was sober. And the *next* day he asked Audrey to marry him. "You're crazy, honey," she said, but she was smiling.

Audrey was good for him, especially in the beginning, because he shunned the hard stuff for a couple of weeks while he was still in the medicine show. But on one of their regular afternoon dates as they drove through a small town, Hank stopped the car. "Audrey," he said, "get me a bottle."

"You know what I told you," she said. That time he was able to drive on without it.

The next afternoon Hank was stoned when Audrey arrived at the trailer camp. The pressure had got too great for Hank's meagre resistance and that was the pattern of it, off and on, right to the end. If Hank had two consecutive "dry" weeks, Audrey felt like she had been on a vacation.

At this point Hank hit one of those muddy spots on the road to fame which bogged him down completely. All at once he could find no singing jobs at all, so he simply spent several months perfecting his serious drinking. Then Audrey took over, as she was forced to do increasingly after this. She rounded up the maverick group, scoured the countryside for new bookings, and put Hank back on the trail again. Their intimates agree that Audrey had the drive to match Hank's talent. And as is often the case, the great talent required some outside force to direct it.

With things picking up, Hank reached his "middle period" about this time. Having shed his given name of Hiram, which he had always hated, he changed

it legally to "Hank" and experienced that feeling of being "an all-new person" that a change of hair color gives a woman. He and the Drifting Cowboys were now a smoothly knit singing group. They had a regular schedule of bookings and Hank had settled comfortably into the cowboy motif he had chosen for himself. Despite a few rough spots, life began picking up speed. It was only natural, now that he had known Audrey over a year, that Hank should propose to her again. This time she accepted and they were married, although the decision was so hasty and unplanned that the band had to chip in to pay the preacher.

Before much longer, there was no doubt about Hank's zooming popularity in the Montgomery area. He could have had bookings anywhere at all—but for one thing. Club and cabaret owners began to learn that Hank might not show up. Once, on a bill with Ernest Tubb, Hank visibly impressed Ernest with his delivery of "Me And My Broken Heart." Tubb said to his manager, "That boy was the best thing on the show tonight, including me. If we were smart, we'd sign him up for the rest of the tour."

"No sir, not a chance!" Tubb's manager said; he had heard about Hank's sometime habit of missing the opening curtain.

Nevertheless, Ernest remembered Hank and when he returned to Nashville, home of the "Grand Ole Opry," he gave warm praise to the Williams voice and style. The Grand Ole Opry, let it be said right here, is to country singing what Milan's La Scala is to international opera; furthermore, top hillbilly performers at the Opry receive salaries which compare favorably with La Scala's best. Finally, the day arrived when Hank was invited to Nashville to audition. He didn't make it, and it was a bitter blow.

Either his voice just didn't impress the Opry's manager, Jim Denny, or Hank's reputation in other areas had preceded him. In any case, the best he could do at the time was to sign with the "Louisiana Hayride," in Shreveport —in itself not a tough break at all. To follow the comparison above, it was like being turned down by La Scala but invited the very next day to sing for the Metropolitan Opera.

During this next period Hank worked hard at his song writing, but without scoring the big hit which always seemed to dangle just out of reach. Finally he decided that only boldness would win the day, so he headed for Nashville with a folder full of songs under his arm. He was determined to crack the firm of Acuff-Rose, the leading publishing house of country music.

Fred Rose and his son Wes had just emerged from the recreation room at Station WMS, they recalled later, when a pretty blonde girl rushed up to them and asked breathlessly, "Do you have just a few minutes to listen to a wonderful singer?"

"Who is he?" Wes asked.

"My husband, Hank Williams," the blonde said. Of course, it was Audrey, once again leading Hank's assault on the heights of success.

"In the audition room," Wes recalls, "we saw a tall, scrawny, sharp-featured kid wearing skin-tight cowboy pants and lookin' awful scared."

Wes's father, Fred, was then looking—by a rare stroke of luck for Hank —for some new numbers for Mollie O'Day, a top performer in the Acuff-Rose stable. He liked Hank's songs well enough to have Hank record half a dozen of them on acetate demonstration discs. Mollie heard them and eventually recorded two, "Six More Miles" and "When God Comes To Gather His Jewels." A half year passed and one day Fred Rose was called from New York by Sterling Records. They were looking for a Western swing combo and a country group. Fred had the first but no hillbilly. He told them he would call back. Thinking quickly, Wes Rose said, "How about the skinny kid who wrote the songs for Mollie O'Day? He was a pretty good singer."

Fred Rose pulled the acetates out of the record library and listened carefully. He decided to recommend Hank to the Sterling people, and Hank Williams was on his way—straight up to fame with no more stops along the way.

Not too long after this, Hank's recording of "Move It On Over" enabled Fred Rose to get him a contract with M-G-M Records, and Jim Denny liked it so well that Hank finally made his entrance into the Grand Ole Opry.

The night was June 11, 1949. If Grand Ole Opry fans had been told before the show that Hank Williams was going to sing "Lovesick Blues," they might have said, "So what?" But they wouldn't have said it after the show at the Opry. Hank was called back for six encores of "Lovesick Blues" that night, and Red Foley finally had to come out and plead with the audience to let the show go on.

It was the happiest period of Hank's life. He had not quite reached the pinnacle, but it was in plain sight now and he knew he would make it. He even stopped drinking. Riding the water wagon for six months in Nashville before he suffered one brief lapse, he went "dry" again for another 11 months. More important, for his health and contentment, he stayed out of hospitals and sanitariums for two years, a record he would never match again.

The last few laps in Hank's race to the top were covered in a rush when he finally cut a record of "Lovesick Blues." Helped by Fred Rose, who polished his lyrics and selected the songs to be recorded, Hank was on his way. Ironically enough, Rose was against "Lovesick Blues," but allowed Hank to record the tune at the end of a session, after he himself had left the studio. It was done fast, but it was good enough to win the *Cashbox* gold statuette as the top country record of 1950. Hank repeated that feat by taking the top honors with "Cold, Cold Heart" in 1951 and "Half As Much" in 1952. The latter, written by Curly Williams, was a reverse situation of "Lovesick Blues." This time, it was Hank who didn't like "Half As Much," and Fred Rose who forced him to record it, then released it despite Hank's anguish on hearing the playback. As for "Cold, Cold Heart" it made musical history by being a double-barreled hit in the country music and pop music categories; Hank did it again with "There'll Be No Teardrops Tonight," and "Jambalaya," which was the Number One record across the nation when he died.

"Lovesick Blues" catapulted Hank into a money bracket beyond his wildest dreams. Audrey and Hank built a $50,000 home in the Melrose section of Nashville, not far from the Acuff-Rose offices. A grillwork ran around the house and welded into the rail were the notes of another Williams hit, "Lonesome Blues." Hank looked vainly for the fulfillment of that old boyhood dream. But the heavens still rained, the sky could still darken and Hank

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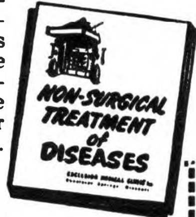

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Williams could still slide way down into the dumps. One day he drew 5,000 one-dollar bills from the bank and sat on his living room floor throwing them up in the air and letting them cover him like falling leaves. Later he said, "That was really something I dreamed of doing all my life."

When Audrey gave birth to a boy, Randall Hank Jr., he was so happy he went out and bought her a Cadillac convertible. By the time he died Hank had five Cadillacs.

But throwing money in the air for laughs and tossing it to car dealers for new Cadillacs was all on the outside. The magic that Hank was expecting inside himself failed to materialize. No golden flood of happiness filled him—no matter where he looked—until finally he got back to the amber liquid of the bottle. There he found an acceptable substitute for happiness. But sober, he now was simply rich and bitter where previously he had been poor and bitter.

The other quality which began to emerge at this time was his growing assurance on stage. He was developing the ability to judge the mood of that "big black giant," as Rodgers and Hammerstein have called the audience. To many a performer that great pulsing mass of humanity, dimly seen but vibrantly felt beyond the glaring footlights, is the source of all pain or joy. To win their acclaim the artist must know how to play them like a trout, to rest them like a hard-ridden horse, and to deliver the socko ending like a fighter unleashing a beautiful combination of punches. Hank was learning to gauge these moods. Now he knew how to rock them with a strong beat when they were slow to warm up. He was a professional in every sense.

In Richmond, Va., a feature writer of the fair sex wrote a piece for her paper in which she roasted Hank for his behavior on stage. Richmond jammed the theatre the next night, hoping for a repeat performance of his antics. Hank stepped out on the apron of the stage and quietly said: "I'm dedicating my first number to a gracious lady writer." Then he rolled them in the aisles by playing his own song, "Mind Your Own Business." The "big black giant" got his message and howled.

Other nights, mean-drunk and singing the same hit, he would stop, face a heckler and say, "I've made $24,000 out of this song so far. You tell me what song you've made $24,000 out of and I'll stop singing this one." Or, in the same mellow condition, he might suddenly walk off stage with the attitude of one refusing to cater to an undeserving, noisy audience.

But in fairness to Hank, such incidents were the exceptions, and occurred only when he was drinking. He seldom acted up more than once in fifty performances. And even drunk, he was just as capable of having great fun on stage and sharing it with his audience.

For instance, at the time of Hank's big hit, "My Bucket's Got A Hole In It," the Grand Ole Opry had a rule against mentioning drinking onstage. Now, the bucket in this song is losing beer through the hole, but Hank promised to revise the lyric for his next appearance at the Opry. They expected a complete change, since every other line in it rhymed with "beer." Instead, each time he reached the offending word he merely shouted out "milk." The lopsided rhyme left no doubt in the tickled audience's mind as they gave the horselaugh to the Opry.

Thus, more than his top-hit songwriting, above the perfect delivery of his own songs, and beyond his polished, stage-wise performances, his fans found in him a star who did more than entertain. Across the yawning space the spark of stardom must leap if an artist is to "make it," they felt he was someone who would join them in a joke on the rest of the world or the management of the theater. Hank was not above them, but *with* them—and they felt it. He knew the hard lives many of them led when he bade them goodnight by saying, "An' I'll be seein' you again, if the good Lord's willin'—and the creek don't rise." Or he might end on another, more characteristic note, saying, "Well, I'll be seein' you, and don't worry about anything, 'cause it ain't gonna be all right, nohow."

Those faintly prophetic lines, ". . . I'll be seein' you—if the good Lord's willin' and the creek don't rise," give birth to thoughts about the most haunting part of the Williams legend. The cheering audiences out front, so spellbound by his talent, so moved by their feeling of "oneness" with him, must have thought that Hank's glory, and their share in it, would never end. To this day, it has not died.

If there is such a thing as immortality, it must lie in the way a person lives in the minds of his contemporaries, after he has passed on. For if a human being simply will not be forgotten by the people who loved him in life, he is perpetuated as long as people can pass on their memories. This is Hank Williams' true immortality. But there is an even stranger side to Hank's presence in our lives today. That is the belief, however unfounded, that he is still actually alive.

A staggering amount of mail is received each year by M-G-M Records in New York, directly addressed to "Hank Williams." Much of this, of course, can be attributed to the fact that some people, through remoteness, simply do not know that Hank died. But a surprising amount of that mail is from people who refuse to admit that he did die. Two random samples of these letters show how he lives in memory and how he lives in the heart of someone who feels the magic of his presence too strongly to admit he is gone.

A young grade school boy from Fort Smith, Ark., wrote: "I know that Hank Williams died, but I think he is still the best singer in the world. I am writing a composition in school. I have chosen the life of Hank Williams for my subject. Would you please send me all you can about him so I can write the best one in my class? I think that is only right for the greatest singer there was."

That tribute could only be topped by the significance of another, more deeply personal letter, from a 19-year-old girl in Ashland, Ky: "They say that you are gone, but I know it isn't so. Sometimes, when I lie in bed at night, listening to you sing your songs, the whole thing is so real to me I don't think I can stand it. Then I get up and walk around my bed until I can listen again. When you sing about the sadness of love and the hurt that someone can feel in their heart, I know what you mean 'cause I feel it myself. But then your songs tell me that if someone else has had the same lonesome feelings that I have, it must be all right. If just one other person in the world feels like I do, I think I will have to go on. I just wish someone here could say it the way you do, the hurt and the happiness at the same time. But anyway, as long as I have the records I guess I'll be all right."

Hank's kindness when he was alive stands in direct contrast to the well-publicized mistakes he made. It is a side of Hank too little known.

Don Helms, the electric guitarist who wrote "Little Miss Blue Eyes" and who started with the Drifting Cowboys, has said, "There's been a lot of rotten stuff written about Hank since he died. Some of it's true, but a lot of it isn't. And even some of the true stuff wasn't as bad as the way it's written. Sure he drank. But you could tell about a night he got loaded and, just stickin' to the facts, make him look either like a lousy lush, or just a guy with a big burden to carry. It depends how you feel about him, how it comes out. And most of us who knew him close, knew him as a kind and generous guy—even to people who didn't deserve it."

Ernest Tubb evokes an identical picture of Hank from completely different examples of Hank's generosity and concern for people's feelings. Any friend of Hank's who had a death in the family would, if Hank heard the news, almost certainly receive a visit and an offer of financial help. The real importance of these gestures was that Hank took the burden of the world from the bereaved person and left him a moment of peace in the midst of his sorrow, at the exact moment when the person could not handle the world.

These kindnesses were probably Hank's unconsicous attempt to eradicate the unhappiness and suffering which plagued him in his own quiet moments. That he felt these inequities of life were worst when they fell upon children, is seen in another of his generous gestures.

It was discovered after Hank's death that he had been contributing $400 a month to a Catholic orphanage in Montgomery, although he himself was not a Catholic. His offhand attitude toward money could take such useful directions as that, or could result in his giving a $100 tip to a clerk in a liquor store, for no apparent reason other than impulse, with the words, "Forget it, you need it more than I do."

But "acting crazy" with money didn't erase the old poverty. He grew to resent his wealth, sometimes asking, "Why couldn't I have had it when I really wanted it—and needed it?"

Another part of the Williams legend which has been distorted by the passing years is his treatment of friends. Despite remarks to the contrary, he was fiercely loyal. When Fred Rose tried to get Hank a hook-up with a leading record company in New York, he was turned down. The next day the head of the same company called Hank in Nashville, with an offer. Hank said, "Why Fred Rose is up there now, tryin' to do just that. I'll have him get in touch with you."

"Forget Fred Rose," the man said. "I saw him. He can't do anything for you. I can."

Hank said, "You can't do *anything* for me, Mister!" and hung up.

His other business dealings were also scrupulously fair. Hank had only a standard contract with M-G-M records, which was not completely binding. But despite many bonus deals offered by other record companies, he stuck with M-G-M.

Possibly some of this loyalty to old friends and associates who had helped him grew out of an acquired contempt for big names. As Hank moved upward he must have felt that the growing fame for which he had hungered in the lean days was hollow after all, because it didn't bring him the fulfillment he yearned for. There is a graphic example of this in his association with the Hadacol show.

When Hadacol was the rage through the South and Dudley LeBlanc, who spawned it, was pouring his profits into advertising to make even more profits, he had a high-class, traveling "medicine" show that cost a king's ransom in talent salaries. On the road, the show ended with a Bob Hope routine, with Hank appearing just before Hope. Trouble developed because the average Hadacol fan was more in tune with Williams' singing than with Hope's humor. When Hank ended on "Lovesick Blues," Hope had to buck five minutes of cheering before he could go into his act.

Hope suggested that LeBlanc let Hank finish the show. LeBlanc relayed this to Hank, who said, "I'll be damned if I will. Hope's closing." LeBlanc explained that Hope wouldn't be offended, that he had suggested the idea, to which Hank replied. "I'm not worried about his feelings. He's getting $15,000 for 15 minutes. Pay me a thousand dollars a minute and I'll close your show for you."

When Hope quit he was replaced by Milton Berle, then at the height of his fame. "Uncle Miltie" promptly began trying to get into everyone's act, as was his custom. Within hearing distance of Berle's manager, Hank called out to one of the Drifting Cowboys: "If that sonofabitch sets foot on the stage while we're out there I'm gonna break this guitar over his head." Hank didn't mention anyone by name, you will note, but there were no interruptions in that—or succeeding performances.

Hank is still remembered for his help to kids on their way up. He heard Ray Price singing in Dallas and liked the kid's style. Hank took Price up to Nashville to appear on his radio show, and in the car Price casually asked, "How about writing a lonesome blues for me?"

Hank ripped out "Weary Blues" in three hours, not too extraordinary because Hank wrote quickly when inspiration hit him. (He was in the habit of writing in the back of the car when someone was driving. At night, en route to the next booking he would lie on the back seat with a small lamp plugged into the cigarette lighter fixture. Humming in the dark, then silent, he would periodically light the lamp to jot down a line or two of lyrics.) It took Ray Price longer to learn "Weary Blues" than it had taken Hank to write it, but Hank showed generous patience in a long rehearsal that afternoon, and Ray sang the hit for the first time that night. Hank kept telling them at the Opry that Ray would be the Number One singer some day. Ray was finally signed and, in July, 1956, Ray hit the top, per the Williams prediction. Hank would have enjoyed knowing Ray made it.

Hank's spirited irreverence for big names, his unconventional kindness to newcomers and his contempt of authority found expression in another way. He had artistic courage. Once, when Fred Rose refused to let him record Jimmy Rule's "Backstreet Affair," Hank went to Webb Pierce, then a promising new talent, and told him that the recording company with the courage to wax the controversial song would have a runaway hit in its pocket. Pierce instantly contacted Decca in New York. They let him cut the record and Pierce had his first hit.

As for the subject matter of "Backstreet Affair," its [illegible]ning was probably

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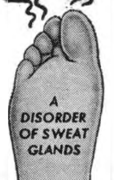

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stronger for Hank than for the average man—even showman. In fact, the song was brought to Hank's attention by a belle whose romantic persuasions were as strong as her morality was weak. It's probable however, that her star had faded from Hank's gaze even before the song faded from popularity. For in Hank's wandering world more beauties of the first magnitude arched across his personal sky than the average man sees in a lifetime. Hank loved them all, seeking perhaps, the one who would shine only for him.

More specifically, Hank was besieged by girls of every type, some cruising through life seeking a port of emotional refuge, some searching for romantic *casbahs,* a few the earthy fleshpots of forgetfulness, others the first throb of young love. Hank was each of these things in their place, or all of them at once when he was up on that stage, tearing a number right out of his heart and handing it like a precious gift to his listeners. Plagued by insomnia as he was, he had time for many of them. But when he wasn't out hellcattin'—and this was more than half the time—he was backstage working on new songs.

One time you could be sure Hank was rock sober was when he had a song idea in his head. He couldn't write and drink, so when he had a song to write he just didn't drink. One of his closest friends says, "Funny about that night watch Hank kept. I don't know if he wrote because he couldn't sleep, or vice versa. But it was like he thought something bad would happen to him if he didn't stick with the song till he had it done. Then, early in the morning he'd call me or Ray Helms or Webb Pierce. One of us would have to go and listen to the song and drink with him."

Another old show business friend of Hank's had this to say about Hank's nocturnal habits: "There's no sense of anyone kidding himself about his drinking, especially someone performing every night. You get so beat with the grind you've got to have a hooker just to force yourself out on stage. On top of that, you do a show and then travel all night to do another show in another city the next night. Trouble with Hank was, one drink and he was off and flyin'."

Maybe Hank's blood was always close to 100 proof, or perhaps he had a low resistance to alcohol, but in either case he could set all-time speed records for getting smashed. Fellow performers tell of seeing him cold sober 15 minutes before curtain time, then arriving in the wings blotto as the orchestra went into the overture.

At times he was even capable of real "Lost Weekend" cunning to keep himself supplied. In Baltimore, a theater manager had two bodyguards keep him locked in his hotel room. When the manager arrived to take Hank to the theater he was drunk. Bewildered, the manager was beginning to think Hank could breathe it out of the air, until he found Hank's cowboy boots stuffed with those miniature bottles served in planes and trains. He could keep as many as six in each boot and whenever one of his guards looked away for more than ten seconds, Hank knocked off one of the two-ounce bottles and dropped the dead soldier back in his boot.

Hank could even get booze in a sanitarium for alcoholics. Once, when visited by his family they found him drinking nothing but fruit juice, but getting drunker by the minute. They discovered a fact many another family has learned, that a true alcoholic is capable of incredible inventiveness to get liquor, because he must have it. In this case, Hank had simply bribed the guard to spike his fruit juice. With money, a drink is never very far away.

Lest this whole subject seem pathetically humorous, it must be realized that in the medical sense Hank was a true alcoholic. Even if he took only *one drink*, he became gripped by a compulsion to continue drinking till he passed out.

Because of Grand Ole Opry's attitude toward drinking, Hank was careful for a long time never to appear there drunk. This lasted for three years, but after his permanent breakup with Audrey he seemed to disintegrate. He reacted to this by throwing a series of parties that set new lows, even for Hank Williams. During this period he fulfilled his singing engagements only if he could remember when and where he was supposed to be, and was physically capable of reaching the theater.

The Opry's Jim Denny now felt that he was the only one who might be able to get Hank off this latest wingding. Jim was fitted for the task because he had sprung from the same kind of boyhood and understood Hank's bitterness. Jim says, "I never knew anybody I liked better, even though I never got really close to him. I guess nobody ever really did. Hank always felt everybody always had some angle on him. He never could shake that idea. I guess that's why so many people misunderstood Hank—and got to dislike him. They only could judge from the outside, but the people in the business who really knew Hank, knew him as kind and generous."

But at last Hank reached a point where, despite his own feelings, Jim Denny had to do something drastic. Hank had to be shown he was not above the discipline governing everyone else on the Opry show. Jim held back the axe as long as he could, but it had to fall.

Jim had Hank scheduled for the program "Friday Night Frolics," and went to Hank's house on Tuesday to warn him he would be suspended from all WMS shows, including the Opry, if he didn't appear. Hank was throwing one of his parties and the house was in an uproar, but Hank promised Jim he'd be there. Hank was conspicuously absent when Jim arrived at the station Friday night. Saturday morning, Hank called. They chatted about nothing in particular for several minutes, then Hank said, "You know, I didn't make the show last night."

"I know," Jim said, and paused. "Remember our talk on Tuesday?" He paused again. "I'll have to stick by it. I'm sorry Hank." Remembering that call Jim says now, "It was the toughest thing I ever had to do, but I just had to go through with it. I was hoping maybe it would shock him, jolt him out of it." Jim remembered something else. "You know, that call went on for another 45 minutes. Hank kept trying to tell me he was gettin' straightened out. But I knew I couldn't go back on my word. In the end, I think both of us was crying over it. I know I felt that bad about it."

The firing stuck and Hank went back down to the "Louisiana Hayride," changing places with his old buddy, Webb Pierce. Hank's reputation in the "provinces" was still bright as a penny. And one of the regulars at the Opry says, "Hank was one performer who didn't need the Opry. It needed him."

On this second stint with the Hayride

Hank used to say, "The Opry, who needs it?" But it was hard to believe he meant it. He seemed to be sneering too hard, as though trying to make himself believe it. It was doubly hard to believe when you consider that for the next four months he called Jim Denny almost every night, either to tell Jim how well he was doing or to sing the blues about the firing. Although every account of this period has Hank staging the marathon binge of his life, Jim Denny is puzzled by such reports. He remembers that Hank always sounded sober in the long string of phone calls. His voice must have been somehow deceptive because his associates during the 142 days after he was fired from the Opry say he never drew a sober breath. Considering the way he spent them, 142 days was a long time—the rest of his life. But he had some hard living to pack into them first.

Hank started skidding spectacularly, like John Barrymore toward the end of his career. Onstage he looked terrible, offstage he looked even worse. He wasn't sleeping at all now at night, but was likely to fall sound asleep in the daytime any time he sat down. Sedatives were no help at all, no good for sleep and barely adequate for the increasing pains in his back.

His marriage broken, his career crumbling, barely eating, hardly ever sleeping, drinking constantly and leaning heavily on drugs, he was disintegrating before the eyes of all who saw him. And yet his artistry was the last thing to leave him. So strong was the world of make believe in which he created a magic moment of pleasure for the audience, that he came alive like a rekindled fire each time he stepped out on the stage. But there were the raucous moments, more and more frequently.

Once he fell off a stage, staggered back up and told the laughing, cheering crowd. "Don't give me any of that—. I'm going to finish this song." If he heard the mockery in the cheers that night, he seemed unaware. Increasingly, he took all vocal response as approval. And, of course, he still loved being up there. He would look out into the audience and his face would split into a wide grin. Then he would lift one booted foot and start the beat with a stiff-legged one, two, three. After a number, in the approved country style, he'd shout in a high-pitched twang: "Ahhh-Hah! Yew liked that, did you? Well, all right, I'll jus' sing you another one of them!"

One of the more serious incidents growing out of this alcoholic hayride occurred in New York. Ironically enough, it only drove him deeper into drink, trying to forget the scare and the self-disgust.

He went to New York to see Frank Walker at M-G-M about his records. Frank, who was 60 and, if anything, had boyhood memories even more harrowing than Hank's, understood the gnawing inner sickness that was robbing Hank of any joy—and tried to help. Together they created a character called "Luke The Drifter." Luke, the character in the bit, portrayed by Hank, narrated his material against a musical background, a technique that permitted a far more pungent commentary—and funnier—than would have been possible within the rhyme scheme of a song. The first "Luke The Drifter" record was called "The Funeral," too painfully coincidental at this late date to be funny.

One day Frank met Hank in his hotel room only to find Hank falling-down drunk, but about to tap another bottle. When Frank tried to take it away from him, Hank shoved, Frank fell, and his head hit the sharp edge of a radiator.

Without the slightest recollection of what had happened Hank woke up the following morning to find two male nurses leaning over his bed. They gave him no information but led him to a nearby hospital where they took him up to a room. Frank Walker lay in bed, swathed in bandages, miraculously having suffered only a minor hemorrhage. Hank went white. "That's right," one of the male nurses said, "you did it."

Hank got drunk again that night—to forget.

Another event in the frantic downward spiral of his last few months was his second marriage. In October, two months after he had left Nashville, Hank remarried. His bride was Billie Jones, a singer he met shortly after his divorce. Their nuptials provided the backbone of a show at the New Orleans Auditorium. Twice they took the vows, once for the afternoon and once for the evening performance.

As for Hank, he approached his wedding day with the same unthinking gusto which had characterized the previous couple of months. It was too late to do anything but keep his life in a spinning dance and not question how long the pace could be maintained. There was a tub of iced champagne on stage and the groom got to it long before the time to toast his bride. When Billie came down the aisle, Hank lifted her veil, kissed her and then waved happily to the crowd.

The marriage, conceived in haste, went awry almost at once. The question quickly arose whether Billie was legally free to marry, based on the uncertain date of the divorce decree of her first marriage. After Hank's death, she settled all claims with his estate for $30,000.

When the event was history, Fred Rose got Hank off by himself and asked why he did it.

"To spite Audrey, that's why!" Hank said.

"That's the silliest reason I ever heard," Rose said.

"No, it ain't," Hank answered. "There's nothin' I wouldn't do to spite her."

This feeling of Hank's can be traced to an incident which occurred a week prior to the ceremony. Hank had called Audrey from Montgomery, telling her he wanted to see her. He told her he had sent a chartered plane to the airport in Nashville to bring her and Hank Jr. to Montgomery. After an exhausting wrangle over the phone Audrey agreed to come. When she got there Hank showed her a clipping announcing the forthcoming marriage. "If you don't marry me again," he said, "I swear to God I'll go through with it."

Audrey flew home immediately.

Hank couldn't—perhaps didn't want to—escape this powerful inner hold of his first love—Audrey. Even at that 11th hour he tried to blackmail her into coming back to him, hoping some spark of concern for him would make her do anything to prevent this new alliance. A few of Hank's friends knew the intensity of his feeling for Audrey.

"I guess that was one of the great, all-time romantic love affairs," Ray Price said. "Hank was crazy about her until the day he died."

On the police records, Hank died of a heart attack. But there were contributing causes beyond those of his inner unhappiness. Strong rumors have

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persisted, for instance, that he died from an overdose of drugs; he was known to use sedatives to ease his back pains. After his death, in fact, his wife received a bill for $736.39 from a "Dr. Toby Marshall," who turned out to be not a physician, but a paroled forger, and admitted that he had violated federal narcotics regulations by issuing Hank a prescription for 24 grains of chloral hydrate, a sedative usually prescribed for alcoholics. It is also a heart depressant.

Hank may well have had a heart condition, an assumption not based solely on the last two years of riotous living. About two weeks prior to his death, while preparing for a tour of southern Louisiana, he clutched his chest in considerable pain and said, "My chest is ready to bust. I can hardly breathe!"

Red Sovine, the singer who wrote "Little Rosa," told Hank: "You're crazy not to call it off. Nothin' is worth it if you're feelin' that bad." But Hank shrugged it off in a what-the-hell attitude that was typical.

The tour went all right until the middle of the week when a disc jockey in the troupe cracked open a pint. Despite the protests of the others, Hank started. But he didn't get drunk, he only got sick. At the theater that night the crowd made the usual insistent demands to hear "Lovesick Blues," but Hank wouldn't pull his coy routine, and wouldn't sing it for them. They vented their anger after the show by trying to tip over Hank's car. Local police arrived just in time to bail him out of it.

But Hank had drawn too heavily on the reserve of good will that life deposits for us in the hearts of our contemporaries. He had enjoyed large withdrawals against his account; his balance had been huge from the affection and admiration his public held for him. But he could not go on taking forever, especially when he was putting nothing in. His failures to appear, his slipshod performances and, most important, his lack of respect for himself, began to disappoint and anger his fans. Near the end, and it is a blessing he didn't know it, he was probably losing old fans quicker than he was winning new ones.

After the car-rocking incident with the angry crowd, the manager in the next town wired the troupe that unless Hank arrived sober he had better keep going. When Hank returned to Shreveport he told Horace Logan, the manager of "Louisiana Hayride," that he wanted to take a vacation.

"Good idea, Hank," Logan said, "that's just what you need. Take two or three weeks, get away someplace, and it will set you up."

Hank returned to Montgomery but did not rest. He went right out on another round of personal appearances.

On December 31, 1952, he had a job in Charleston, W. Va. The Drifting Cowboys were supposed to meet him, but their plane was grounded. Hank, chauffered by a family friend, Charles Carr, 18, started to drive north in one of his Cadillacs. The next night, they were supposed to appear in Canton, Ohio. Again, all planes were grounded. Hank got into the back of his car again. At Knoxville, he stopped to make his daily phone call to Jim Denny, who was putting on a New Year's Eve show in Washington, D. C. Denny, ironically, told him he'd put him back on "Grand Ole Opry," on a trial basis, during the first week of February.

While he was there in Knoxville, Hank either took or was given two shots of chloral hydrate, so that he could get some sleep during the long ride ahead.

A Tennessee Highway Patrol Officer stopped Charles Carr outside the city limits for speeding. When the officer looked in the back of the Cadillac, he said, "Hey, that guy looks dead." Carr told him who Hank was and explained about the sedative. The officer was satisfied and young Carr drove on. But he began to worry as they rolled along, about Hank's unnatural stillness. In Oak Hill, W. Va., he stopped, reached back and touched Hank's hand. It was cold. Badly shaken, he drove Hank to the Oak Hill Hospital. It was too late.

Hank Williams was dead after 29 years of life.

The funeral, held in Montgomery three days later was, like many of Hank's earlier triumphal returns, fit for a Roman Caesar. Of the huge crowd which gathered outside the auditorium where Hank's body lay, less than 3,000 were permitted inside to move in slow and subdued procession past his silver casket. Thin and worn, Hank Williams had found a measure of repose at last. But the ceremony attendant upon his passing kept spinning frantically like a top still whirling after the little boy has walked away from it. A loudspeaker broadcast the obsequies to over 20,000 people milling outside. Four women fainted in the crush; one woman fell over as she knelt at the bier and had to be carried, weeping hysterically, out of the building.

The service was begun by Ernest Tubb who sang "Beyond The Sunset." Later, Red Foley sang "Peace In The Valley," and Roy Acuff sang Hank's song, "I Saw The Light." A two-ton truck was required to bring floral pieces from Nashville to the funeral.

And then a strange thing happened or, if not strange, something to which Hank might have reacted bitterly. All over the country Hank Williams had a great resurgence of popularity starting, ironically, with fantastic sales of a re-issue of his "I'll Never Get Out Of This World Alive," which had gone nowhere at its release.

In fact, 1953, the year of Hank's death, became his greatest year, though all the laurels were received posthumously. He won almost every important award in the field of country music including, as mentioned earlier, the all-time most popular country and western singer, in the *Downbeat* poll. This burst of acclaim after his death partly explains his immortality. But there was another odd twist of luck. Since Hank could not actually "write" music his songs had been recorded on acetate demonstration discs and kept in a vault. After his death, M-G-M Records began releasing them, a few at a time. Since there were some 80 songs preserved in the vault, new Hank Williams records kept appearing, sustaining the illusion that he was still alive. People were hard put to remember he was gone when every month saw new records appear. Only a few weeks ago Saul Handwerger at M-G-M Records had this to say:

"We never cease to be amazed at the number of people in this country who, despite all that's been written, refuse to believe Hank Williams is dead. Some of them even attended Hank's funeral and still won't believe he's gone. We get thousands of letters a month—hundreds of which are actually addressed to Hank Williams. They write to him like he was still alive. Others think he's sing-

ing—and recording—from the grave. Some even believe he's singing from a 'Songwriter's Paradise.' His records pull fan mail from as far away as Africa, Australia and India. I've never seen anything like it."

The greatest recognition of his human worth which Hank had so long sought came, with the usual Williams irony, after his death. A granite memorial was erected on the first anniversary of his death, inscribed with carved facsimiles of his biggest hits. Over 60,000 of Hank's hometown Montgomery people filled the streets to watch the parade which preceded the unveiling. Also present were four governors, a senator and the biggest names in the world of country music. If Hank had not always had the notion that too many people had an "angle," he could have acquired it at this ceremony. The souvenir program printed by the organization sponsoring the event was sold for 50 cents. With a passing nod to the sentiment of the moment and his eye firmly on basic matters, someone printed in the program: "You are invited to read your souvenir program carefully so you may know the business firms of Montgomery who have made this book possible."

Equally fast on their commercial feet was the firm which took the double page spread in the center of the program and expressed their heart-felt emotion for the departed Hank with the words, "We are proud to add Hank Williams to those notables whose names are carved upon Georgia Marble."

Here and there in the crowd you could hear short exchanges of talk between the people who had known Hank, either intimately or merely from across the footlights. One persistent subject of speculation was the sensation that Hank's presence was felt at the unveiling. As the two-day ceremony was nearing its end, one of Hank's closest friends, who understood why his life had been that way and loved him as a friend in spite of it, had this to say: "Yeah, sure, I can feel Hank around here, too. I can just see him up there, looking down at this whole shindig an' sayin', 'Where were all you bastards when I needed you?' " ★ THE END

Is There A Rabbit In The Ball?

continued from page 43

sluggers of yesteryear, they point out, used much heavier bats. Babe Ruth used a club that weighed 42 or 43 ounces, while today's sluggers swing bats almost ten ounces lighter. The old bats were really war clubs—stout chunks of wood that could only be handled by authentic musclemen. The modern hitter uses a bat with a slender handle and derives his power from a whiplash swing. The theory is that the new bat, moving faster, propels the ball farther than could the bludgeons with which the old heroes tried to overpower it.

One of the more popular arguments today is that the players are bigger and stronger. This is not merely the prejudice of the new generation, but an argument solidly based on facts. A comparison of the roster of any current big-league team with one in the dead-ball era reveals an amazing difference in the heights and weights of players. Sportswriter Whitney Martin checked official records for the 1919 season and found that only 20 of the 131 players listed, excluding pitchers, were six feet or over. A similar check of players a few seasons ago disclosed that 169 out of 259 were six-footers and that one club, the Milwaukee Braves, had 22 six-footers.

Tables compiled during World War II demonstrated that the modern soldier was, on the average, taller and heavier than his father in World War I. National League president Warren Giles claims that today's ball clubs further emphasize this difference in stature by seeking out the bigger players. "It's an outgrowth of the change in scouting techniques," Giles points out. "Every scout is looking for the power hitter now, and has been for some years. Where the scout used to look for the speedy kid who could hit behind the runner and bunt, the big question now is how far can he hit the ball. Then, when the kid is signed and brought to camp, he is coached in making the most of his power—taught how to pull the ball and how to get his body behind his swing."

The National League publicity bureau even went so far as to send out a story comparing the sizes of first basemen of today with those of 1936. The modern crop proved to be three inches taller and 24 pounds heavier than the earlier group, but the story failed to note that the comparison was limited to National League first basemen. If the 1936 figures had included American Leaguers—then the power league—even such current giants as Joe Adcock, Ted Kluszewski, Gil Hodges and Dale Long might have been dwarfed by the likes of Hank Greenberg, Lou Gehrig, Jimmy Foxx and Hal Trosky. Still, they were the exceptions. Today's players have the edge in stature.

The Los Angeles Dodgers vice-president Fresco Thompson has his own special scapegoat in the rabbit ball rhubarb. He lays the blame for the current rash of home runs right at the feet of Ralph Kiner. "Ralph is a nice young man," Fresco will tell you, "but he was one of the worst ballplayers I have ever seen. He couldn't run, throw or field, and his lifetime batting average was below .280. Yet for a while there he was the highest paid player in the National League. He was pulling down about $75,000 a year. Why? Because he held the bat down at the end, swung from his heels and hit a flock of home runs. Pretty soon every young kid you saw was swinging from the heels. You'd try to correct them and they'd say, 'the hell with those singles. I'm not going to choke up on the bat. The money's in the big end of the bat.' And they'd go right on gripping the bat as far down as they could and swinging for the fences. They hit some home runs, sure, but they struck out a helluva lot more often, too."

There have been other changes in the mechanics of the game that have contributed to the swelling homer totals. One is the change in umpiring technique. Most ballplayers—especially the pitchers—will tell you that the strike zone has been steadily shrinking for years. The rule book defines the strike zone as "that place over home plate which is between the batter's armpits and his knees when he assumes his natural stance." Through the years the umpires have gradually narrowed it so

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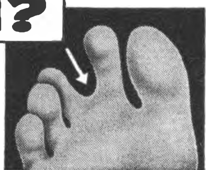

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that now they will not call a pitch a strike unless it is below the letters on a batter's chest or several inches above the knee. Pitchers have enough control trouble as it is without having things made tougher for them. Now, of course, they are more likely to fall behind on a batter, and then, when they have to come in with a good pitch, they usually make it too good and—*boom!* Another tape measure home run.

Charley Dressen has pointed out another effect of the shrinking strike zone. "A lot of the sluggers who come to the big leagues, not only today, but in the old days, too, were partly musclebound. Those guys have a big weakness, and it's usually a fast ball, high and tight. They just can't get around on the pitch. In the old days you could pitch to them there and get strikes past them. Those guys would be run out of the big leagues. Today the umpires won't call those pitches strikes, so the pitcher falls behind and has to come in with a fat one." And, as we were saying before —*boom!*

Another change is the frequency with which new balls are put into play. Years ago, they would use a ball for several innings, keeping it in use until it was discolored and, sometimes, slightly cut up. Red Corriden, who has been around the big leagues as a player, coach and manager since 1910, was talking about the ball recently and he laughed when he recalled how times have changed. "I remember when they used a ball so long," Red said, "that you didn't have to wear a glove. The ball got so soft you could catch it barehanded."

Now a ball is thrown out as soon as a scuff appears on its surface. This, of course, is a tremendous disadvantage to the pitcher. A fresh ball that hasn't been banged around is likely to soar much farther when it is hit. Being white and shiny, it's easier for the hitter to follow on its flight to the plate. And a pitcher has trouble making a shiny new ball do what he wants, where he can handle a battered ball with much more confidence.

A secondary complaint of those who think the modern ball is too lively is that the parks are getting smaller all the time. This just is not true. There were ball parks, notably the Polo Grounds in New York, where the "Chinese homer" was a regular occurrence, but the Polo Grounds had those short foul lines ever since it was rebuilt in 1912. No other club in the National League has shortened its fences permanently in recent years except Cincinnati, and when the Reds had their big year they were hitting them out of every park in the league. Both Pittsburgh and St. Louis temporarily dabbled in the artificial homer, but they have now restored the sanctity of the original fences.

Whether the lively ball complaints are based on fact or on the morbid imaginations of maltreated pitchers, the constant hue and cry has got under the skin of big-league officials and baseball manufacturers alike. Reason having failed to convince the skeptics, the baseball people have turned to the ultimate source of truth in our modern world—science. Just as the police resort to the lie detector to clinch a case which circumstantial evidence and the third degree cannot, so baseball bigwigs have pulled out a variety of gadgets to establish the integrity of their little white spheroids. A. G. Spalding and Brothers, which manufactures baseballs for both leagues, now has a machine which tests the resiliency of baseballs. The machine can detect resiliency differences, or "jackrabbititis," from year to year. Since the gadget was only put into use in 1957, however, there is no way to test pre-1956 balls. Baseballs age so rapidly that even the 1955 ball is now deader than Dizzy Dean's arm.

"The machines are just to prove something we already know," says George Dawson, vice-president at Spalding's. "The ball we make today is made exactly like those we've been putting out for years and years. The materials, the process and the machines we make them on are the same we've had for a long time. But," Dawson went on, wearily running his hand through his hair, "we go through this every spring. A check of our files recently turned up a letter that had been written to us in 1917 by John Heydler, the president of the National League. He wrote to complain that he had heard the ball was getting livelier. The letter sounded just like the ones we get today. Our answer is still the same: We haven't changed the specifications. Why should we? The leagues tell us what they want and we give it to them."

Since everybody else has a theory about the deluge of home runs which makes life miserable for the pitchers every year, the manufacturers are entitled to theirs. One Spalding employe had this to say: "Most of the homers come in the spring. Take 1956, for instance. Dale Long went on his famous spree; 50 homers were hit on Memorial Day; most of the tape-measure homers were hit before June 15; every guy with an extra set of muscles, in both leagues, was ahead of Babe Ruth's record; every team seemed like it was on the way to new home-run records. What's the answer? It's so damn cold that the pitchers can't get loose. Their fast balls aren't fast enough to get past the hitters, but they *are* fast enough to go a mile if they're hit solidly. You'll notice that as soon as the weather warms up, all these modern-day Babe Ruths disappear into the woodwork. The records that looked a cinch to be busted in May or June aren't even in danger by the time September rolls around. By then the pitchers are in the driver's seat. Look what old Maglie did that September. He even pitched a no-hitter. And what became of the lively ball in the last five games of the 1956 World Series? Don't tell me Larsen was pitching with an 1890 model!"

In order to trace the rabbit ball back to its native habitat, this reporter ventured to Chicopee, a small industrial city in southwestern Massachusetts. There A. G. Spalding has the plant which breeds the controversial baseball, an item it has been manufacturing for the big leagues (only the National was in existence then) for over 80 years. The employes, knowing in advance that a spy was on the way, were as well prepared for our arrival as if they were nuclear physicists at Oak Ridge expecting Nikita Khrushchev. My escort and I were met in the spacious, airy lobby of the factory by a couple of executives who tossed self-conscious jokes in our direction. "You going to take him back and show him the rabbit hutches, Paul?" This brought a nervous laugh from everybody.

Did you ever wonder what mysterious ingredients lurk inside the horsehide cover of a baseball? Well, first we were taken to a big room where the centers of the balls are kept. The core is a round cork, containing a small amount of rubber. The cork is encased in two black rubber shells, with a thin cushion of red rubber separating the edges of the two shells. This is then enclosed in a thin red rubber wrapping, and the entire pill, perfectly molded to a circumference of 4⅛ inches, is then sent to another room where the winding is done.

In the winding room, girls sit at machines that have been tested for tension control. "We've been using the same machines for years," our guide informed us, "and as the tension on the machines remains the same, we can guarantee that the resiliency hasn't changed." There are three different windings of wool put on the pill, and one of cotton. The cotton winding is then coated with rubber cement to prevent unraveling. At this stage the ball measures about 8⅞ inches in circumference and resembles the baseballs we used to play with when we were kids—the covers knocked off and the string beginning to unwind. I half expected somebody to pick up the balls and start to wrap them in bicycle tape. Instead, we followed a batch of unfinished balls to a huge room where they were to receive their covers. Made from horsehide leather, the covers are about .050 of an inch thick and are cut on a machine into the pattern of a swollen figure "8." Each piece forms one-half of a cover, and has 108 stitching holes punched into its borders. The leather is dampened to make it pliable, two halves are wrapped in position around each ball of string, and the whole package goes to the stitchers.

This is the most interesting part of the process. The stitching is done by girls who work in shifts, over 100 of them in the room at a time. They sit in front of their work benches, each thrusting two long needles with five-ply red cotton thread through the little holes in the horsehide. Your first impression is of a room full of industrious bees, all flapping their wings almost in unison. Working at high speed—the girls are paid by piecework, 25 cents for each ball—they jam their needles into the holes, draw the thread all the way through until it is taut, then swing their arms wide to straighten out the thread, and begin the process all over. The girls with the greatest dexterity and speed can stitch about six balls an hour.

Next, the balls are rolled under pressure to prevent the covers from pinching or creasing; their seams are pressed flat so that the pitchers will not have the advantage of a "handle." And finally, they go to the stamping machines. One machine applies the American League stamp, the other the National, but the balls are taken from the same baskets and are identical. During the busy season, the factory produces about 500 baseballs a day, each of regulation size—9¼ inches in circumference and 5¼ ounces in weight.

What was the result of this expedition? Well, I can testify that I did not see a jack rabbit anywhere within the city limits of Chicopee.

Since I can shed no further light on the lively ball issue, I will turn the speaker's chair over to a distinguished student of the game and all its accessories, Mr. Casey Stengel: "Everybody's hitting more home runs, right? So they're hitting them because the ball is livelier or because they're hitting the ball harder. So how can you tell and what difference does it make? Personally, I think everybody is swinging harder, so the ball goes farther. That makes sense."

It makes about as much sense as any other comment we have heard, so we'll let it go at that. ★ THE END

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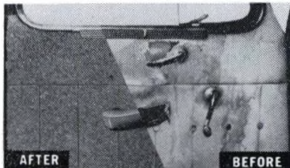

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