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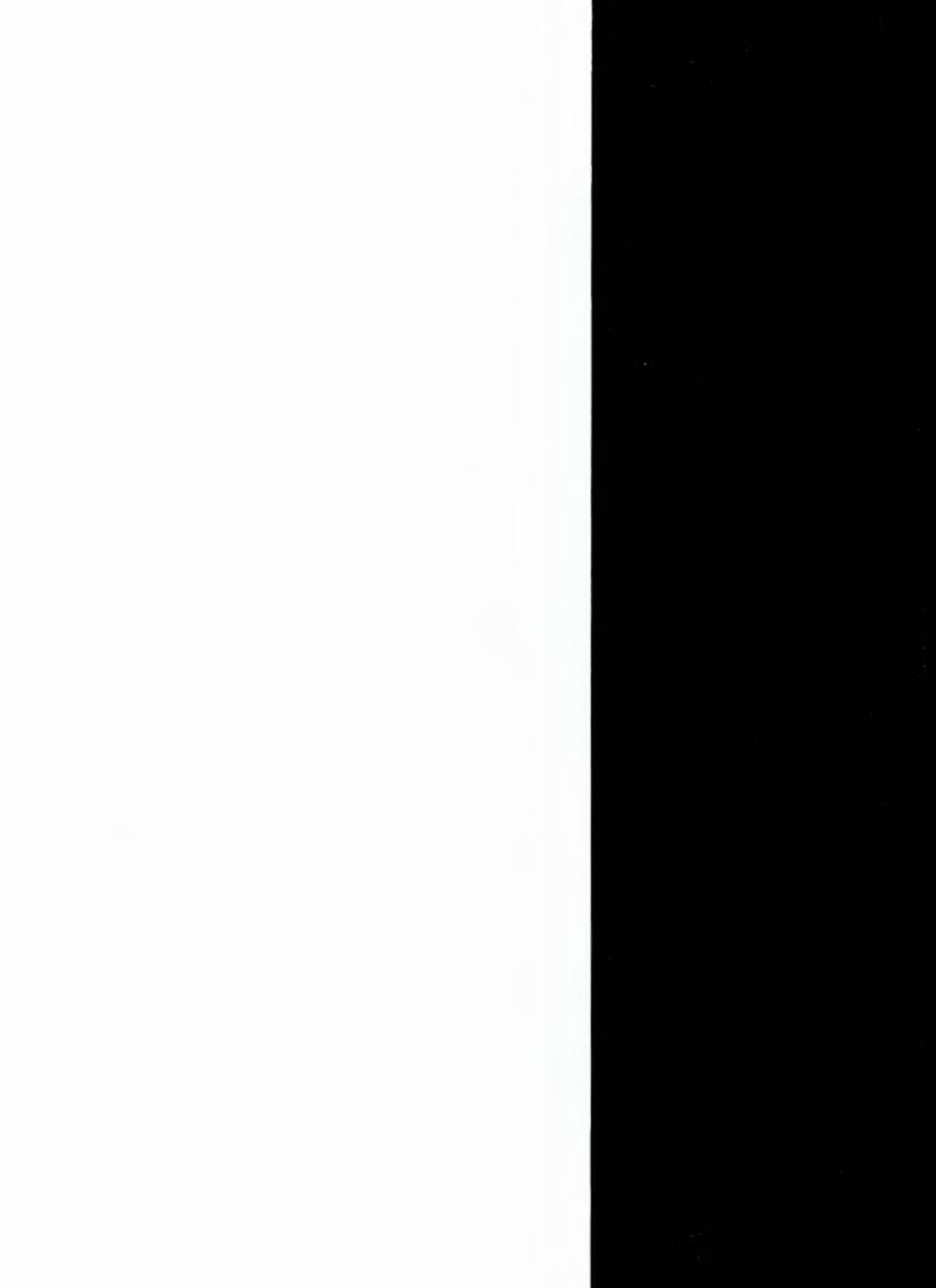
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'Drown,' a new story by **Junot Díaz**



Plus: **James Wolcott** on movies
Anthony Lane on Cyril Connolly

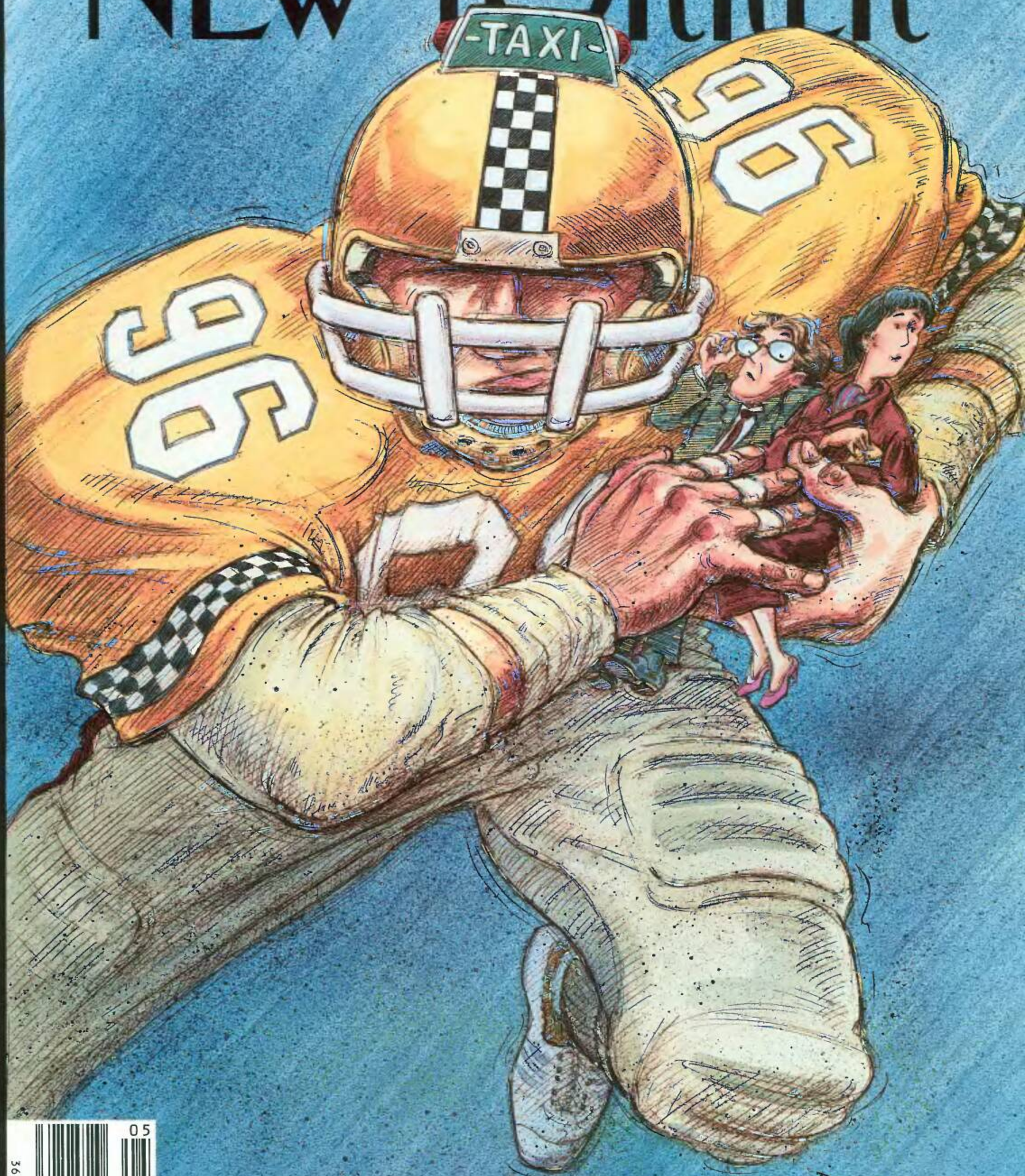


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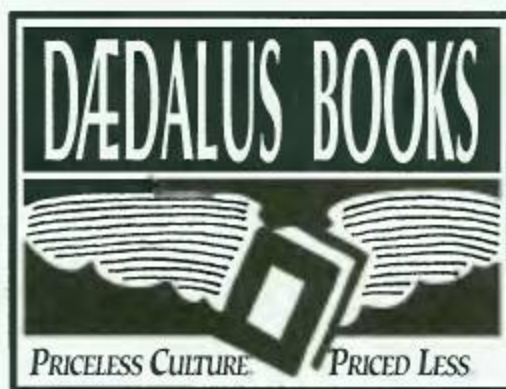






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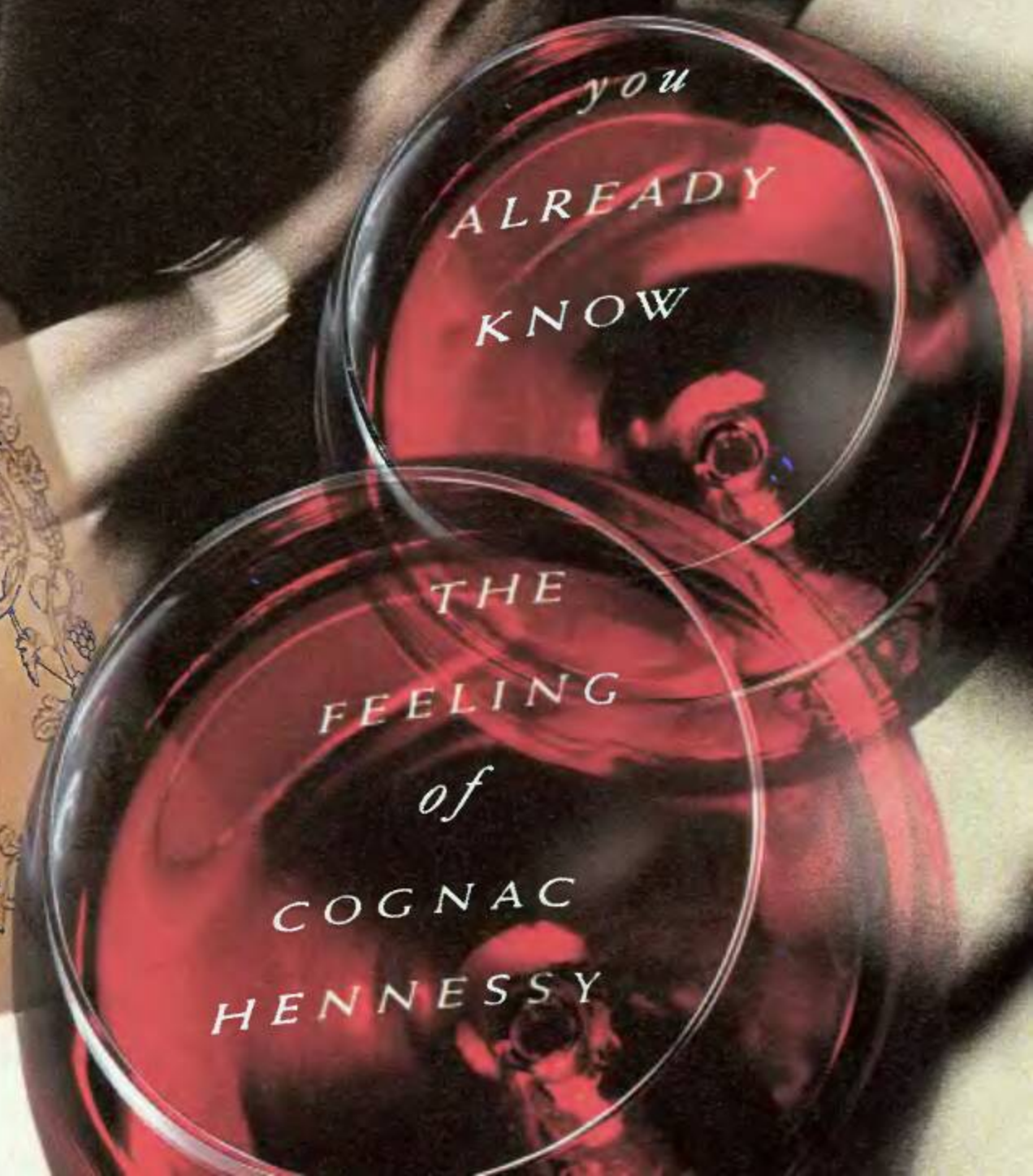
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WHEN MANDATES COLLIDE

In our political system, compromise is the essential lubricant.

A FEW days into the new year, as the Republican leadership was about to concede that its train-wreck strategy had failed and that the federal government must be allowed to resume operations, Representative Frank Riggs, a freshman Republican from California, stood up in a meeting with the leadership and said, "I am vehemently and steadfastly opposed to this defeatist strategy, which is going to blur the differences between the parties." Riggs was echoing a sentiment that many House Republicans—in particular, the self-styled revolutionaries who populate the freshman class—had been expressing for months: there is no room for compromise in the holy war to balance the budget and dismantle the liberal state. "People inside the Beltway still don't get it," Representative Van Hilleary, Republican of Tennessee, said in November. "This is as big as when the New Deal started, so splitting the difference is no good."

Of all the dismaying ideas that have emerged from the Hundred and Fourth Congress, the idea that compromise is the same as betrayal is one of the worst. In a parliamentary system, where the executive power is essentially an arm of a unitary legislature, a party might rea-

sonably expect to pass its program more or less intact, but in our system, with its three separately elected, autonomous "governments"—House, Senate, President—nothing can happen without compromise. The New Deal, which Mr. Hilleary portrays as an unsullied triumph of principle, was a series of compromises from first to last. So were almost all the other important legislative achievements of this century. Blurring the difference between the two parties, splitting the difference: these may not always be the best campaign strategies, but when it comes to actual governing they are precisely the things that make it possible for our cumbersome political apparatus to operate—especially when the government is divided, as it is today and has been for twenty-one of the last twenty-seven years.

The Republican Party line of the moment is that President Clinton is "not serious"—that he has shown no flexibility and is stubbornly frustrating the express will of the people. (This complaint comes from many of the same politicians who spent three years deriding the President for "waffling.") In the budget battle so far, though, the only side to show any significant flexibility has been the White House. The Presi-

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dent first agreed to make balancing the budget the nation's first fiscal priority, as opposed to his earlier—and effective—effort simply to reduce the deficit. He next agreed to reach balance in seven years, instead of the ten he had originally proposed. Then he agreed to accept the Congressional Budget Office's economic forecasts instead of those of the White House's budget planners. He has now agreed to accept more substantial cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, and other forms of public assistance than he had ever previously contemplated accepting. He has agreed to a larger tax cut than the one he originally proposed, in early 1995. He has, as the Republican leadership demanded, submitted a plan—certified by the Congressional Budget Office—for balancing the budget in seven years, and it is at least as credible as the Republican proposal. The Republicans now accuse the President of “backloading”—putting off the biggest cuts “into the next century” (i.e., until the last two of the seven years the budget deal would cover). But their plan, too, would postpone the worst cuts to 2001 and 2002. The goal for Republicans, it seems clear, is no longer just balancing the budget in

seven years. Both sides (to the dismay of many Democrats) are now committed to that. The Republicans' goal now is to use a balanced budget as cover for destroying government programs that conservatives dislike.

The White House has done its share of posturing, to be sure. It can, and undoubtedly will, compromise some more. But who would have imagined even a year ago that a Democratic President would be supporting the most draconian budget proposal in more than sixty years—a proposal that, even if left unchanged by Congress, would represent a headlong retreat from commitments that have been the bedrock of Democratic politics for generations? This has been, to say the least, one of the most extraordinary compromises in recent political history. Even so, it is not enough for the Republican firebrands in Congress. For them, nothing short of surrender will do. This is not, they believe, a normal political negotiation but, rather, a crusade. And its justification, they claim, is the stunning mandate that the 1994 election gave them.

But how stunning was that mandate? The Republican victory was clearly a striking repudiation of the

Congressional Democrats, but it would be hard to argue that it was much more than that. Republican candidates won fifty-one per cent of the popular vote in a year in which thirty-nine per cent of the eligible electorate went to the polls; their “mandate” thus comes from slightly less than twenty per cent of the eligible voters. (President Clinton's mandate in 1992, however frail, was arguably larger. He received only forty-three per cent of the vote, but because the turnout was much higher—fifty-five per cent—he won the support of about twenty-four per cent of the electorate.) Polls on the eve of the 1994 election showed that few voters knew anything about the Contract with America. Polls in more recent months show a striking lack of enthusiasm for most of the issues the Congressional Republicans are so relentlessly and self-righteously flogging. In fact, the Republican Congress is facing the same predicament that President Clinton faced when he entered office in 1993: how to forge a program in response to a questionable mandate to do nothing in particular. The President paid a heavy price for overinterpreting his own 1992 mandate. The Republicans may pay an equally heavy price for making the same mistake.

In his State of the Union address this week, Mr. Clinton will undoubtedly try to explain the broad principles that he claims separate his proposals from those of the opposition. But he might also consider offering a simple lesson in civics to the zealots who seem to be driving the Republican agenda. The American political system does not reward absolutism. It demands compromise, and always has. We might wish that things were otherwise—that our government were capable of acting quickly, efficiently, coherently, and decisively. But it has never been capable of that, and, barring radical changes in the Constitution, it never will be. “We've given in on some things already,” Mr. Hilleary said late last year (without specifying what those things were). “That's all we're giving.” This emphatic rejection of compromise is a political message that, if left unanswered, threatens to do a lot more damage to our public life than the corrosive battle over the budget. —ALAN BRINKLEY

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PAYING THE BILLS

I was dismayed to note that the Mertens ("Ain't No Middle Class," by Susan Sheehan, December 11th), who "were married in a traditional ceremony at a Catholic church," seek solace and "a sense of self-worth" by buying things they cannot afford. Whoever said God is dead perhaps just has trouble recognizing Him in His new form: a credit card.

CYNTHIA A. BRANIGAN
New Hope, Pa.

Susan Sheehan must have carefully selected the family who were the subjects of "Ain't No Middle Class." Kenny and Bonita Merten are neither alcoholics nor drug addicts. They work hard. Although their employability may be limited, they take care of each other, their sons, and even their extended family. On the other hand, Sheehan makes it clear that Kenny procrastinates, overspends, is too ready with excuses. Bonita buys wall sconces and other items that many readers of *The New Yorker* no doubt consider junk. The Mertens, in short, seem to be different sorts of people from you and me.

Perhaps Sheehan is reaching for objectivity, since her article implicitly asks: Whose fault is the decline of the middle class? But it's as if she thought that picking a family that was too upstanding would have stacked the deck against the companies that left Des Moines, and against the company that fired Kenny for inefficiency, and against the Reagan-Bush transfer of wealth upward. An article designed to show, up close and personal, what is happening to the "average American family" could surely have been written with more fellow-feeling.

JO ANN HEYDRON
Palo Alto, Calif.

My husband and I live in Manhattan, where everything costs far more than in

Des Moines, on ten thousand dollars a year less than the Mertens. We pay off our credit cards each month. We have expenses we can't ignore (college costs, rent, utilities, food, and therapy bills), so we cut back on luxuries and buy in bulk during sales. We find our entertainment at home with what we can afford: TV, radio, computer or board games. We want to be able to leave Manhattan and return to the Midwest one day and raise a family. We know that doing so requires sacrifice and self-control—things the Mertens appear to be lacking.

TAMMY JO ECKHART
New York City

The recommendations made to the Mertens by the consumer counsellor consulted by Ms. Sheehan struck me as offensive. What the counsellor was saying was that people with debts and limited incomes should not be allowed the luxury of McDonald's, two-per-cent milk, or potato chips. Have we reached a point in our society where we can criticize a family of four for not being better money managers while living on a net income of \$25,797 a year?

ROBERT A. METVIER
Chandler, Ariz.

I was struck by the placement of "Ain't No Middle Class," with its strong image of a decent family dealing with their gathering financial darkness, directly after John Seabrook's "Gates at the Temple." As Bill Gates enthusiastically invites us to join him in a cruise on the "highway," the real challenge will be to make sure that everyone has the cab fare.

PAUL S. MEYER
Santa Ana, Calif.

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail," *The New Yorker*, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.

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OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

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BED AND SOFA—A new musical based on the Soviet director Abram Room's 1926 silent film, about the Moscow housing shortage. Music by Polly Pen. Libretto by Laurence Klavan. Andre Ernotte directed. In previews. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

BLUE WINDOW—Craig Lucas's 1984 play centers on a party given by a nervous hostess and attended by six other young New Yorkers. Directed by Joe Mantello. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

THE HAIRY APE—A limited-run production of Eugene O'Neill's 1921 drama, presented by the Wooster Group. Willem Dafoe, Peyton Smith, and Kate Valk are in the cast. Opens Jan. 24 at 8 and continues through Feb. 18. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651.)

KING LEAR—F. Murray Abraham has the title role in this production of Shakespeare's tragedy, which also stars Jared Harris as Edmund and Jeffrey Wright as the Fool. Preview on Jan. 24. Opens Jan. 25 at 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

MATA HARI—A revised version of Martin Charnin, Ed Thomas, and Jerome Coopersmith's 1967 musical, about the exotic dancer who was executed on charges of espionage and her love affair with the French secret-service agent who entrapped her. Presented by the York Theatre Company. Directed by Mr. Charnin. Preview on Jan. 24. Opens Jan. 25 at 8. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

RENT—Puccini's "La Bohème" is the inspiration for Jonathan Larson's new musical, about a group of young East Villagers. Previews begin Jan. 25. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

VIRGINS AND OTHER MYTHS—The gay playwright Colin Martin gives the lowdown on his sexual history, in his solo show. Opens Jan. 24 at 8. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

WHIPLASH—In her latest one-woman show, drag king Shelly Mars gives an account of her childhood in rural Ohio and the events that led to her escape to New York. Opens Jan. 25 at 8 and continues through Feb. 4. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793.)

OPENED RECENTLY

BRING IN 'DA NOISE/BRING IN 'DA FUNK—In attempting not only to return tap to black culture but to give black culture back to tap, director George C. Wolfe and dancer-choreographer Savion Glover have made a drama that charts, with heroic energy, the evolution of the African-American beat from its rural Southern beginnings to its Northern urbanization and on to its present hip-hop incarnation in the choreography of Glover and his homeboy hoofers. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/4/95.) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Jan. 28.)

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

CHICAGO CITY LIMITS—The improv company presents "What You Said," a revue featuring its ever-popular five-minute musical. (Chicago City Limits Theatre, First Ave. at 61st St. 888-5233.)

DARK RIDE—Len Jenkin's 1981 comic metaplay simulates a fairground ride (the audience is situated in the midst of a set that suggests a roller coaster) that passes through B-movie territory, both American and Mexican. An occult oculist, an unctuous gem trader, and a chef who travels with the putative mummy of John Wilkes Booth are among the characters whose stories are linked, whimsically if self-consciously, by the aggressively anti-linear principle of coincidence. The mischievous script needs whipping into shape, but a generally undisciplined cast and director (Julian Webber) have spared the rod. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. 334-0962. Closes Feb. 3.)

DICK GREGORY LIVE—The master returns in a hilarious two-hour riff skewering our fond-

est end-of-millennium hypocrisies and delusions. Gregory, who is equally well known today as a civil- and human-rights activist and as the first mainstream black stand-up comedian, comments on present-day folly with an astringent yet avuncular air. His bite, although it has mellowed with time, is still sharp as he ruminates on everything from Bosnia to O.J. to airplane travel. A production of the Negro Ensemble Company. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

AN EPIDOG—In the final segment of Mabou Mines and the Gertrude Stein Repertory Theatre's multimedia trilogy, "Animations," the Bunraku puppet heroine, Rose—a feminist canine—is laid to impermanent rest. Since director Lee Breuer's theatrical cosmology borrows ideas (as well as costumes, props, and music) from Hindu and Buddhist sources, Rose's earthly demise is transitory, part of the cycle of birth and rebirth. Company regulars Frederick Neumann and Ruth Maleczek perform expertly as narrating deities; outfitted regally, they seem to float through Breuer's uninhibited staging. If only the howling, pop-mystical script came up to their level. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-9684. Closes Feb. 4.)

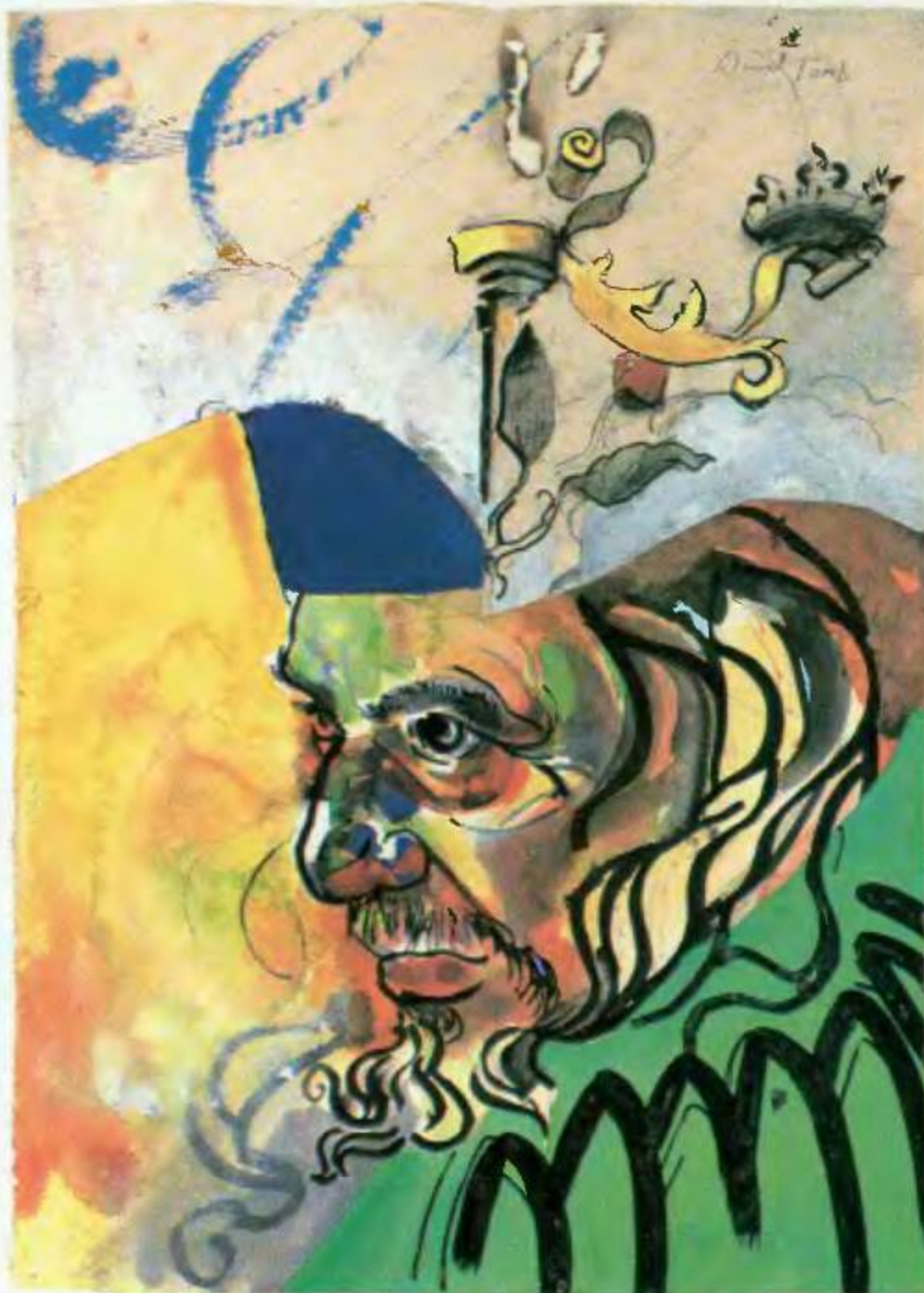
THE FATHER—A new adaptation, by Richard Nelson, of Strindberg's 1887 tragedy, starring Frank Langella and Gail Strickland. Directed by Clifford Williams. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

THE FOOD CHAIN—The situations in Nicky Silver's new play are familiar and sitcom-ish, but the writing is tangy and memorably funny, and the actors—especially Phyllis Newman, as a long-suffering Jewish matron whose idea of listening is to talk—give smart, wonderfully fresh performances. Robert Falls directed. (9/11/95) (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

THE GREY ZONE—Tim Blake Nelson's true story of the *Sonderkommandos*, the Jews who worked in the gas chambers and crematoriums of the death camps. David Van Tieghem's eerie, evocative sound design (the first thing we hear is the firing up of the ovens) is one of the finest components of Douglas Hughes's nearly flawless production (which also makes provocative use of silence, as when a man waits for the gas to do its work so he can do his). Nelson's strength is monologues, not narrative; the script begins disjointedly, and at first it seems no more than another reminder that the Nazis were evil. But the plot gels, the central characters struggle with the question of whether they are killers themselves, and the play—greatly helped by Gus Rogerson's blistering performance as one of the organizers of a rebellion—acquires shocking power. (MCC, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765. Closes Feb. 10.)

HELLO, DOLLY!—There is much to like about Carol Channing—the comic timing, the speaking voice, the star quality—but the evening is one long curtain call, and a bit of a strain on the nerves, as she attempts to prove over and over that she can do it all as well in her seventies as she could in her forties. Lee Roy Reams directed. (11/27/95) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. Closes Jan. 28.)

THE HOPE ZONE—Olympia Dukakis stars in Kevin Heelan's new drama



F. Murray Abraham, in "King Lear."



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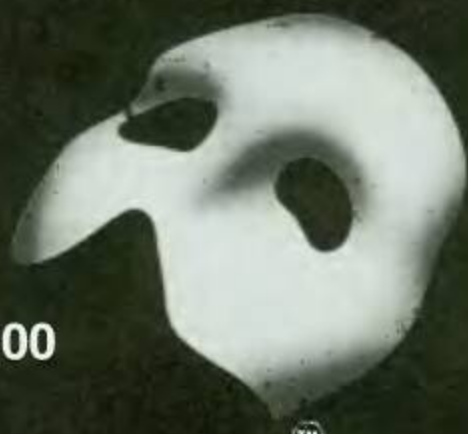
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PREFERRED
HOTELS & RESORTS

as a recovered drunk who has dedicated her life and her seaside resort to the comfort of alcoholic strangers. She's at peace reciting twelve-step cant to a visiting senator's wife, but she practically ignores her fiancé (Craig Bockhorn), and when her destitute, alcoholic daughter (Anne Scurria) shows up for help, she attacks her. Heelan seems to be examining the hollowness of blind faith in systems, whether A.A. or organized religion, but he pushes the drama over the top with explicit analogies, using blood, faith healing, and a preposterous Crucifixion tableau. By the end, Dukakis has had to go over the top herself just to hold her own, and all you want is a nice cocktail. (Circle Repertory Company, 159 Bleecker St. 239-6200.)

THE IMPOSTOR—A provocative drama about success, power, and rape in New York's dog-eat-dog publishing world. The dialogue is witty and terse, though some of the insider jokes may be lost on those who are sane enough to have stayed out of the media business. The entire cast is impressive, and Callista Flockhart and Austin Pendleton are riveting in their interpretations of insecure, self-hating characters. (Workhouse, 41 White St., between Broadway and Church St. 967-0400.)

JAM ON THE GROOVE—Ten loose-limbed numbers—including a slapstick shadow dance, a martial-arts fantasia, a dance-noir detective story, and a shirtless six-man undulation that could serve as a master class on abdominal development—show off the impressive range of hip-hop choreography. All the dancers get the chance to flaunt their patented wiggles and spins, and the house rocks with a sort of call-and-response encouragement from the audience. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

JEAN COCTEAU REPERTORY—Presenting "Major Barbara," George Bernard Shaw's 1905 play, in rotating repertory with Ibsen's 1888 drama, "The Lady from the Sea." (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

MASTER CLASS—In Terrence McNally's latest play, Zoe Caldwell portrays Maria Callas with steely, divaesque conviction, but the role is merely the sum of all the clichés that have been in circulation for years; the Callas who was a consummate professional and an inspired teacher—and a human being—is missing. Leonard Foglia directed. (11/27/95) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

MEASURE FOR MEASURE—Theatre for a New Audience presents Shakespeare's play, under the direction of Barry Kyle. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

MRS. KLEIN—Two London psychoanalysts—the famous Melanie Klein (Uta Hagen) and her less renowned daughter, Melitta (Laila Robins)—face off in a murderous argument and proceed to browbeat each other with theory. Nicholas Wright's smart though schematic drama dissects Klein's tempestuous relationship with her high-strung daughter and shrewdly explores the autobiographical parallels to Klein's seminal thesis on the effects of parental neglect. Robins is excellent; Hagen is brilliant. (11/20/95) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

MOLLY SWEENEY—Brian Friel's newest drama, about a woman whose vision is restored after a lifetime of blindness, stars Catherine Byrne, Jason Robards, and Alfred Molina. Friel is the director. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

MOON OVER BUFFALO—Ken Ludwig's backstage farce is as forgettable as Carol Burnett is not: our reigning red-headed queen of comedy is delightful to behold. Tom Moore directed. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

PICASSO AT THE LAPIN AGILE—Steve Martin's comedy, set in a Paris bar in 1904, is not so much a play of ideas as a play of notions, about art, science, the twentieth century (oh,



Frederick Neumann, Rose, and Ruth Maleczek, in "An Epidog."

that old thing); it features Einstein and Picasso, sittin' around talkin' about how they're going to change the world, and contains a satisfying amount of Martin's coolly absurdist humor—but there's a certain sourness to the proceedings which may put you off. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

THE PRESERVATION SOCIETY—A former débutante returns to North Carolina to tell her conservative family about her plans to marry her girlfriend, in this comedy by Wm. S. Leavengood. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes Feb. 11.)

THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY—In Cyril Tourneur's 1607 drama, which is guided by the dictate "When the bad bleed is the tragedy good," Vindice (Brian Frailey), a much abused gentleman, takes his revenge on a depraved, corrupt court. The Independent Theatre Company's feverish production seems to borrow elements from a Halloween spook house: torn velvet curtains, makeshift set, streams of blood, and shrill screams. In piling on the gore, it gives new meaning to the phrase "bad blood." Paul Todaro directed. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088. Closes Jan. 27.)

SHEBA—A new musical, about King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Book and lyrics by Sharleen Cooper Cohen. Music by Gary William Friedman. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

SHUT UP I TELL YOU—The latest work by the performance group Elevator Repair Service combines—among other elements—slapstick, horror tales, and a fascination with outdated technology. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Closes Jan. 28.)

THE UNIVERSE—In Richard Foreman's latest mind-wrenching vaudeville, three cheerfully desperate oddballs (James Urbaniak, Tony Torn, and Mary McBride) attempt to discover universal truths, behave normally, and find love in a thoroughly unknowable, abnormal, and inhospitable world. Though it's a woefully dizzying enterprise, their doomed efforts do not go unrewarded: there are generous doses of warm milk on hand. As usual, Foreman encumbers his actors with a funhouse set and delightfully unwieldy props. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

VICTOR/VICTORIA—Julie Andrews, Tony Roberts, and Michael Nouri star in a theatrical version of the 1982 movie. The score (by Henry Mancini) is generic, and the book (by Blake Edwards, who also directed) is patchwork. The leggy Rachel York, as a blond bimbo,

at least enjoys herself—and the audience enjoys her, too. (11/20/95) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

WHEN LADIES BATTLE—A spirited production of Eugène Scribe and Ernest Legouvé's 1851 comedy, about political and amorous intrigue. Michael Feingold's new translation is clear and funny; John Rando's precise, witty direction makes each absurd plot twist a greater delight than the one before and matches the verbal humor with charming bits of physical comedy. The cast is also first-rate, particularly Arnie Burton, as a character who is "brave and timid at the same time" and somehow makes his face convey both traits at once, to hilarious effect. (Pearl, 80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes Jan. 27.)

WONDERFUL TIME—In Jonathan Marc Sherman's new play, a confused young man (Josh Hamilton) is dumped by his girlfriend on the eve of his best friend's wedding but picks up another young woman (Marin Hinkle) to be his date. Their weekend together, though fresh and funny in parts, can't transcend the tired theme of twentysomething love; the malaise of Generation X has become an all-too-travelled road. But the acting is lively, and the use of black-and-white film footage to indicate time and place is a lovely touch. Directed by Tim Vasen. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523. Closes Jan. 31.)

WORKING CLASS—A return engagement of Richard Hoehler's one-man, eight-character play, which takes a look at American laborers. (Mint, 311 W. 43rd St. 315-9434.)

THE YIDDISH TROJAN WOMEN—Three Jewish sisters and their Polish refugee grandmother deal with personal and political predicaments in this play by Carol Braverman, set in Brooklyn in the eighties. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

LONG RUNS

AFTER-PLAY: Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **DEATH DEFYING ACTS:** Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PARTY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **SYLVIA:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. (Closes Jan. 28.) . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—Jan. 24 at 8: "Watermill," "Glazunov Pas de Deux," and "Stars and Stripes." . . . Jan. 25 at 8: "Watermill" and "Glass Pieces." . . . Jan. 26 at 8: "Square Dance," "La Sonnambula," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3." . . . Jan. 27 at 2: "Who Cares?," "Western Symphony," and "Stars and Stripes." . . . Jan. 27 at 8: "Allegro Brillante," "Tarantella," "Firebird," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3." . . . Jan. 28 at 3: "Ancient Airs and Dances," "Sinfonia," "Huoah," and "Western Sym-

phony." . . . Jan. 30 at 8: "Square Dance," "La Sonnambula," and "Stars and Stripes." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

WASHINGTON BALLET—The troupe that makes its home at the Kennedy Center comes north, with a program that includes choreography from Choo-San Goh ("Fives"), Nils Christie ("Danses Concertantes"), Ntsikelo Cekwana ("Brother, Brother"), and the company's resident choreographer, Graham Lustig ("Evening"). (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Jan. 24-27 at 8 and Jan. 28 at 2 and 7:30.)

"BACK"—The choreographer Victoria Marks, who dissolved her New York-based company in 1993, returns with works made in Los Angeles ("Performance") and London ("Dancing to Music") and several premières, including the title piece, her homage to the spine. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Jan. 24-27 at 8 and Jan. 28 at 3.)

"DANCE & FILM"—The husband-and-wife team of Alain Le Razer and Lorn MacDougal (he makes films to project behind her choreography) presents six works, including the

premières of "Load," "Munching Ground," and "When Birds Are Singing at 3 A.M." (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 274-9477. Jan. 25-27 at 8 and Jan. 28 at 3.)

CONJUNTO AFRO-CUBANO—The company of fourteen dancers and musicians re-creates the religious songs and dances of the Congo and the ritual chants, drumming, and movements of Santería, as well as performing their conga-driven secular offshoot, the rumba. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Jan. 27 at 8.)

"UNDER EXPOSED"—The Dixon Place series on emerging choreographers, curated by Ilaan Egeland, continues with new work from Katharine Livingston, Kristin Stuart, James Taylor, and Catherine Tharin. (258 Bowery, near Houston St. Jan. 26 at 7:30. Tickets at the door.)

"AILEY ON AILEY"—Matthew Rushing, Lisa Johnson, Guillermo Asca, and other members of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre première works they have choreographed for Ailey dancers. (Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, 211 W. 61st St., third floor. 642-9111. Jan. 27 at 6.)

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NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

BILLY TAYLOR AND STANLEY TURRENTINE—Taylor's piano work mirrors his persona, which is sturdy, erudite, and resolutely mainstream. The epiphanies may be few, but quality is a given. You judge a tenor player like Turrentine not by his virtuosity or his ideas but by his sound: a gritty, soulful calling card. He recently gave up his pop-funk noodling and pledged new allegiance to his jazz roots. Now he's making quite a show of himself. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Jan. 25 at 7.)

JON FADDIS AND ROY HARGROVE—Any bill that brings together the brash young trumpeter Hargrove and the still brasher middle-aged trumpeter Faddis will not lack bravura. Hargrove's work has become more concise and pointed, while Faddis is now trading his dog calls for lyrical invention. Together they'll be saluting the music of Dizzy Gillespie. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 598-0400. Jan. 25 at 7.)

TONY BENNETT—With his latest recording, "Here's to the Ladies," the kid from Astoria has outdone himself. Looking like a medieval courtier (he is a longtime upholder of the principles of courtly love in his ballad singing), he bends his knee to Doris Day, Lena Horne, Rosemary Clooney, Sarah Vaughn, and thirteen other noble women of song who have thrilled and inspired him over the years. In other, less gentlemanly, hands, this could have been schmalz, but Bennett has never had to fake his sincerity. Besides, as the only great tenor in a field of baritones (Sinatra, Joe Williams, et al.), he's no doubt simpatico with singers in the higher ranges. He will be appearing with his faithful squire, Ralph Sharon, and his trio. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Jan. 26 at 8.)

AMIR ALI VAHABZADEGAN ENSEMBLE—Playing the spiritual music of Turkey and Persia. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. 545-7536. Jan. 26 at 8.)

JEAN REDPATH—The Scottish folksinger. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Jan. 27 at 8.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Guitarist and vocalist **JOHN PIZZARELLI** (Bucky's son) is currently in the midst of an extended run. He's got loads of offhand charm and a terrific trio. Dining.

ARTHUR'S TAVERN, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy and Johnny Parker, Fridays and Saturdays to the Freddy Francis trio, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Jan. 26-27: Terra Mars. Dining.

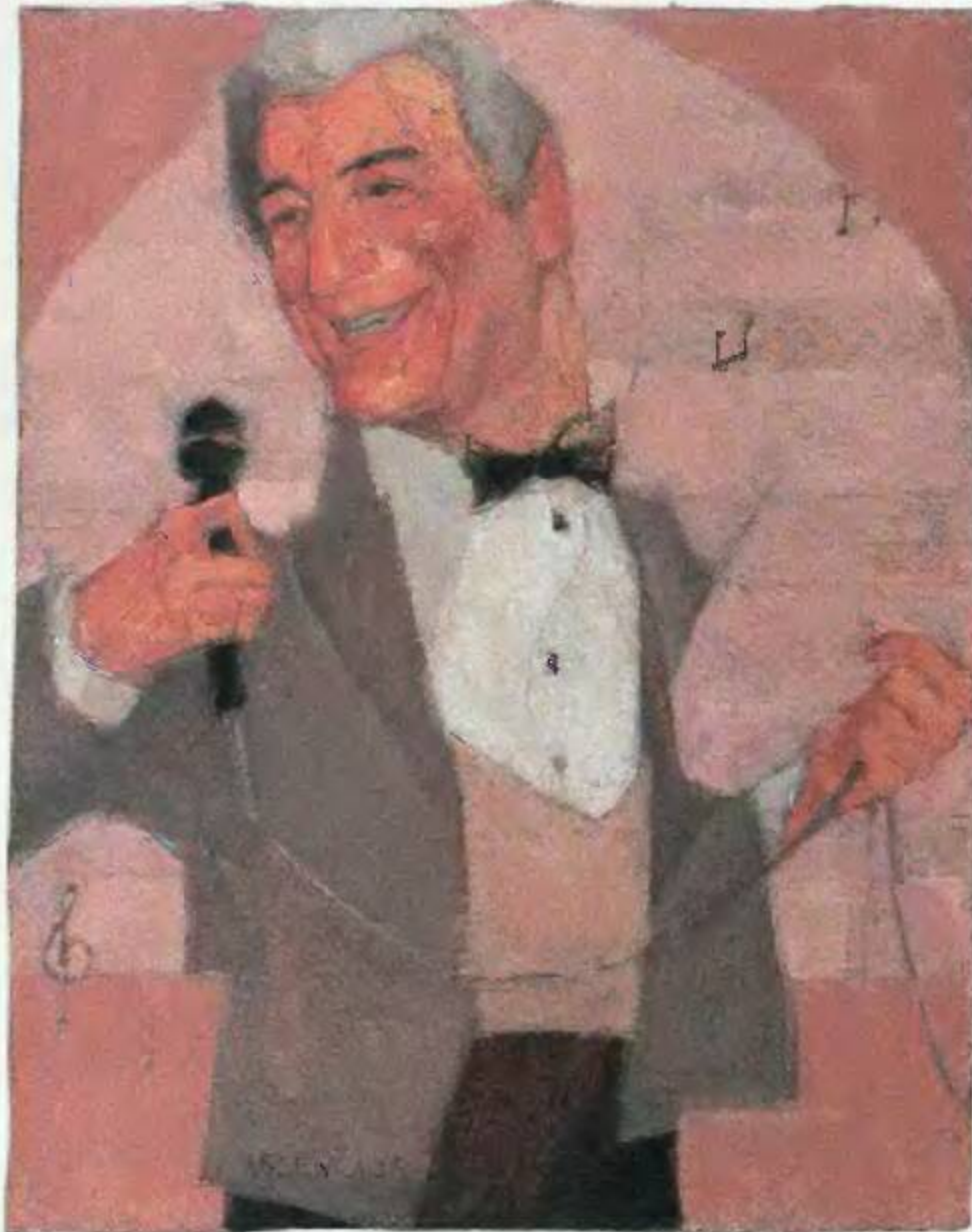
BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is an institution and knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? Railing against the watery pop-jazz of **SPYRO GYRA** (Jan. 23-28) is sort of like attacking tofu: you can't hate something that's hardly there. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A duskily lit neighborhood bar, where pianists, bassists, and, occasionally, drummers compete for your ear. Truth and

beauty usually prevail. Through Jan. 27: smart saxophonist Steve Wilson meets up with pianist Jonny King, drummer Billy Drummond, and Larry Grenadier, who has blossomed into a first-rate bassist. Dining.

CAJUN, 129 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (691-6174)—A New Orleans-style restaurant specializing in Dixieland and swing. On Fridays, catch the Canal Street Dixieland Jazz and Blues band. Saturdays belong to the New Atlantic Jazz band.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through February, the legend-



Tony Bennett, at Radio City Music Hall.

ary **EARTHA KITT**. She is still a fierce and funny performer with a feral grip on her audience. At the end of a song she'll throw back her head and laugh, like some kind of carnivore after the kill; she chooses her victims from the front row, and when the show is over there's blood on the tables. . . .

¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, pianist **PETER MINTUN** is in attendance.

FIFTY SEVEN FIFTY SEVEN, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A sleek piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel. Dining.

FIVE SPOT, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—Jan. 26-27: The Ray Alexander trio. Dining.

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Across the street from Lincoln Center, this restaurant and club features a handsome bar upstairs and a surreal performance space downstairs. Through Jan. 28: the **HARRY (SWEETS) EDISON** quintet. Edison, the great Basie veteran, is as concise as his old boss was, playing one piquant note to any other trumpeter's ten. His nonchalant minimalism, nudging tonal inflections, and behind-the-beat feel are so singular that they border on the radical. Starting Jan. 30: a double bill featuring the **WALLACE RONEY** quintet and the **BRAD MEHLDAU** trio. Roney is a young trumpeter who will really have to pull out the stops if he's ever to dispel the Miles-clone charges that have followed him around like a self-inflicted curse. Call it an understandably severe case of hero worship. Pianist Mehldau, an alumnus of Joshua Redman's band, is fleet and fulsome, with a predi-

lection for shifting time signatures; he also has a genuine fondness for Bill Evans. The great **LES PAUL** holds court on Mondays. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass figurine lamps. Jan. 24-27: Piano and bass with Ray Gallon and Peter Washington.

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Through Jan. 26: the **BALANESCU QUARTET**, England's answer to the Kronos Quartet, performs the music of Gavin Bryars. **HENRY THREADGILL** begins a six-night run on Jan. 30. Second-guessing the direction that this composer, bandleader, and saxophonist is leaning toward these days is a fool's errand. Wherever he turns, you can bet the music will be infused with a blend of exacting structure and joyous anarchy.

MATCH, 160 Mercer St. (343-0020)—This hip SoHo *boite* is the place to be every Monday night, thanks to the **SHORTY JACKSON LEGACY BLUES BAND**. Dining.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—On Mondays, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA**, a Dixieland-jazz ensemble. Closed Sundays.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—This plush night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab, is generally the home of torch singers and cabaret divas, but through early February, the joint has been given over to the three-headed team of **MERRY CLAYTON**, **MARIANNE FAITHFULL**, and **DARLENE LOVE**. Clayton is best remembered as the scary soprano on the Stones' "Gimme Shelter." Faithfull (who also had a thing or two to do with the Stones) still has a voice that's a knowing mix of honey, steel, and gravel. Sixties chanteuse Love (her credits include work with everyone from Phil Spector to Frank Sinatra) is fresh from "Portrait of a Singer," her long-running revue at the Bottom Line. Together, they promise to bring a little sixties spirit to the sixty-fifth floor. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room

Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Thursdays belong to Stan Rubin's big band, Fridays to Sam Ulano and the Bourbon Street Swingers, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

SMALLS, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—This aptly named club features up-and-coming players jamming late into the night.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club where the musicians are always top-shelf. Through Jan. 28: the **LARRY GOLDINGS** trio. No one is going to confuse Goldings with Jimmy Smith, or even Baby Face Willette, for that matter, but he has enough funk in his fingers to convince you that the electric organ is still a relevant instrument. The **BILLY HARPER** quintet takes over on Jan. 30. The seventies had plenty of Coltrane-inspired tenor-sax players with imperious tones and volcanic energy, but something—poetry, perhaps—set Harper apart. Judging from his recent guest work on Randy Weston's "Saga," he's still in touch with the muse. Dining.

TAVERN ON THE GREEN, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—**LIONEL HAMPTON** and his orchestra are currently in the midst of a two-week run. Hampton's humming vibraphone began accelerating in the mid-thirties and has slowed down only in the last several years. His vibes still have their old lightsome swing—the easy chords, the legato glances at the

beat, and the oval, mushrooming sound. He rocks church, as they used to say. Dining. **VILLAGE VANGUARD**, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Jan. 28: the **KENNY BARRON** trio. Barron may have succeeded too well as the pianist of choice—ubiquity goes hand in hand with being taken for granted. Whatever the drawbacks of popularity and consistency, though, he turns every set into a lesson in unmannered, eloquent improvisation. He may be the most sympathetic accompanist around, but under the spotlight he's a star. Jan. 30: The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** begins a weeklong thirtieth-anniversary party.

VISIONES, 125 Macdougall St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—Jan. 24-27: The talented transplanted Canadian guitarist **PETER LEITCH** has loosened up lately. His rhythmic edge is now in league with his prodigious technique. Jan. 29: The **MARIA SCHNEIDER** orchestra. Now in its second year of Monday nights at Visions, the composer and arranger's big band has settled nicely into institutional status. **BRUCE BARTH** (Jan. 30) is an acclaimed young pianist who speaks in sixties dialect.

ZINC BAR, 90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—An invasion of underrated pop-era guitarists continues on Jan. 24 with the dexterous **SAL SALVADOR** and on Jan. 25 with **JOE PUMA**, still fondly remembered for his telepathic seventies duets with Chuck Wayne. Sundays feature Brazilian jazz.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. Through Jan. 27: **JOANNE BRACKEEN** and **CECIL MC BEE**. Like an old married couple, this piano-and-bass duo seem to read each other's minds and complete each other's musical sentences.

ROCK, ETC.

BAR D'O, 29 Bedford St. (627-1580)—Low sofas, moderne ottomans, and venetian blinds make this mirrored living room the perfect spot for late-night love. Most nights, the music is up-to-the-minute seventies, but Tuesdays and Sundays, gender channeller **JOEY ARIAS** sets the ceiling fans awhirl.

BLARNEY STAR, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Home to fine Irish music every Friday night.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Jan. 25: Clear-voiced and clear-eyed singer-songwriter **DAR WILLIAMS**, another stunner from a growing list of smart, gifted women who are redefining folk music in the nineties. She's followed up last year's fine debut, "The Honesty Room," with the just released—and just as fine—"Mortal City." Jan. 27: The fourteenth annual **FAST FOLK MUSIC REVUE**, brought to you by the people responsible for *Fast Folk* magazine (who now have a club of their own: the Fast Folk Café, in Tribeca). The lineup features a dozen of the best unknown folksingers in the country, including Wendy Beckerman, Richard Meyer, Louise Taylor, and the man behind it all, Jack Hardy.

BROWNIES, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Jan. 26: Clowns for Progress. Jan. 27: Faith.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—A narrow, graffiti-strewn cave packed every evening with new and used bands. Jan. 26: Scrub. . . ¶ Next door, you can hear folk combos at the neat and comfortable testament to gentrification called CB's Gallery.

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Jan. 26-27: **ROOMFUL OF BLUES**.

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, punks, poseurs, N.Y.U. students, the occasional skinhead—a typical East Village bar. Live music nightly.

THE COOLER, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—A lavender and stainless-steel vault deep in the heart of the meat district. Jan. 27: **SCREAMING HEADLESS TORSOS**. Jan. 29: **GUY'NER**, a Lower East Side trio who wield their instruments the way a four-year-old wields a box of crayons. Their childlike charm and extreme dyspepsia separate them from other sonically minded youths.

DON HILL'S, 511 Greenwich St. (219-2850)—A tidy little SoHo bar with an above-average

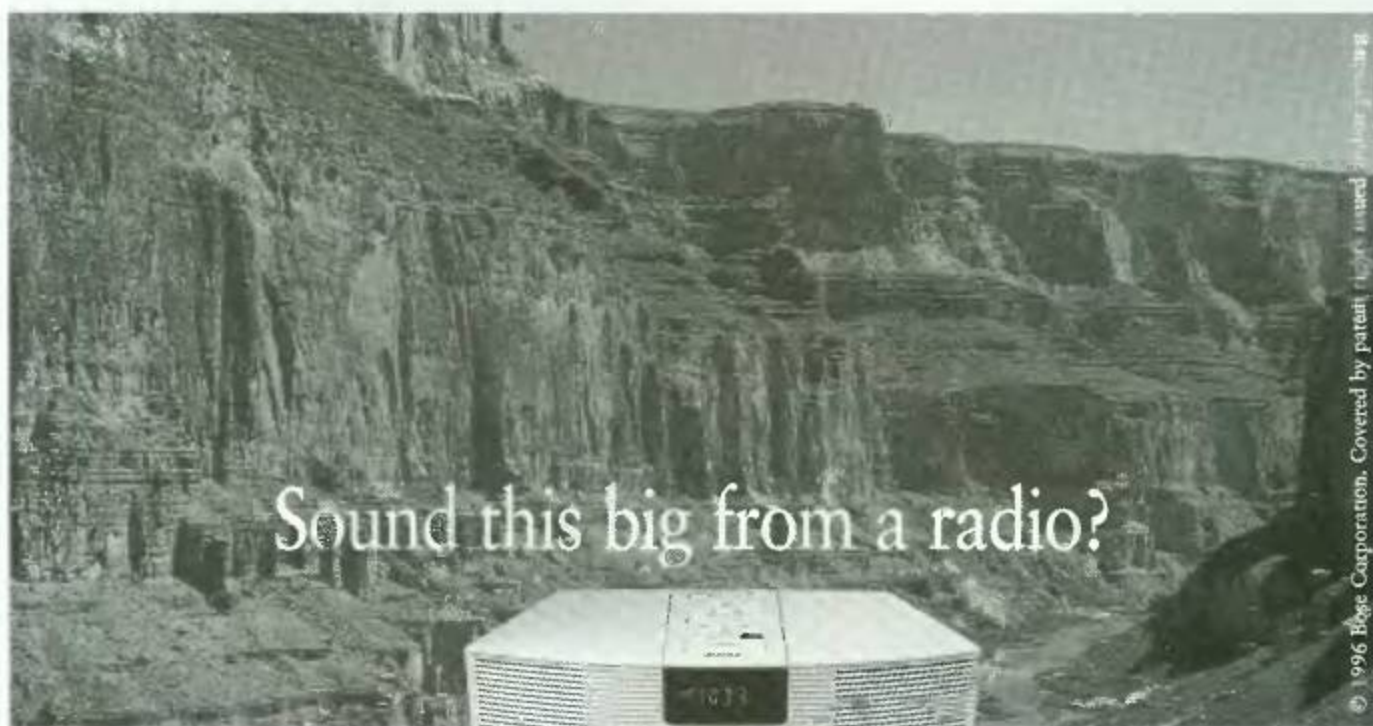
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MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—“Pergamon: The Telephos Frieze from the Great Altar.” Events in the life of Telephos, a son of Hercules, were recorded in a narrative relief on the Great Altar in the ancient city of Pergamon, in what is now northwest

Turkey. Twelve restored sections of the frieze are on view, along with a model of the altar, Hellenistic coins from the city, and architectural fragments. Through April 14. . . ¶ “River of Gold: Precolumbian Treasures from Sitio Conte, Panama,” a large trove of gold objects, from massive breastplates to delicate nose ornaments. Through Feb. 4. . . ¶ “Textiles of Late Antiquity” features Egyptian tunics, scarves, brightly colored hats, shoes, and other garments, together with domestic decorations, from the fourth through the seventh centuries. Through April 7. . . ¶ Six early-sixteenth-century Flemish tapestries depicting Christian themes are on view. Through March 31. . . ¶ “Haute Couture.” Detail and tailoring are the focus in the Costume Institute’s examination of high fashion since 1870, from Worth to Lacroix. Through March 24. . . ¶ “Howard Hodgkin: Paintings 1975-1995.” Through Jan. 28. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.) **MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**, 11 W. 53rd St.—“Piet Mondrian: 1872-1944,” a hundred and sixty paintings and drawings and a re-creation of the artist’s last studio. Through Jan. 30. . . ¶ A special installation of twenty-five Brancusi masterworks is on display; fourteen are from the Georges Pompidou Center, in Paris, the rest from MOMA’s collection. Through April 23. . . ¶ “Michael Schmidt: U-NI-TY,” a hundred black-and-white photographs by the Berlin native. The theme—reunification—is clear, but the presentation is oblique. Half of the pictures are Schmidt’s; the other half are images rephotographed from newspapers, magazines, and propaganda literature. Through March 26. . . ¶ The “Projects” series presents knitted and embroidered works by Oliver Herring and Leonilson. Herring knits nonwearable clothes and sculptures from transparent tape, Mylar, and paper; the works here are part of a series titled “A Flower for Ethyl Eichelberger,” referring to the performance artist who committed suicide in 1990, while in the advanced stages of AIDS. Leonilson (1957-93) embroidered small cloth panels with personal imagery and words, after AIDS forced him to give up painting. Through March 12. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30. . . **SPECIAL HOURS:** To accommodate viewers of the Mondrian and Brancusi shows, the museum will be open Jan. 26-27 from 10 A.M. to 10 P.M., with a pay-what-you-wish admission after 5:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Selections from the permanent collection are on view. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8; closed Jan. 26.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SoHo, 575 Broadway—“The Material Imagination” features eighteen sculptures and conceptual works by such artists as Martin Puryear, Louise Bourgeois, Richard Long, Lawrence Weiner, and Kiki Smith. Through Jan. 27. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—“Joseph Cornell: Cosmic Travels.” Box constructions and collages from the fifties and sixties by America’s home-grown Surrealist; the imagery refers to ancient and modern conceptions of the heav-

P.A. system and topnotch local bands on the docket. Friday night is Squeeze Box, a vinyl-and-velvet gay glamfest, hosted by Mistress Formika.

DUPLEX, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. (255-5438)—Everyone is a star here—the pianist, the bartender, the waiters, and the audience. The fabulous **DRESSING ROOM DIVAS** entertain every Saturday night.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Jan. 27: **JUICY**. Jan. 30: **KÉ**, the remarkably cheek-boned model-turned-performer. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

FLANNERY’S, 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—A well-scrubbed, amiable Irish pub with many of the classic features (pints of Guinness, non-stop TV sports) and a few of the near-classics (a CD jukebox, a portrait of Elvis).

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. Jan. 26: **EDWIN MC CAIN** and **JEWEL**. Jan. 27: The Jono Manson band, featuring members of Blues Traveler. . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday. The dancers share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. The **ROY GERSON** band provides the music on Jan. 28. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Jan. 27: Alternative rockers **HELIUM** fill the air with the sound of ripping metal.

LIMELIGHT, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—The rock-and-roll church. Wednesday night is Disco 2000, a fin-de-siècle blowout.

LUDLOW STREET CAFÉ, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—A modest belowstairs room that looks like a spruced-up tenement apartment. Mondays belong to **BEAT RODEO**, a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

MANNY’S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side blues. Jan. 27: Little Buster and the Soul Brothers.

MAXWELL’S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—Heavy-duty rockers Hank are your hosts on Jan. 27.

MERCURY LOUNGE, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Jan. 25: **PROFESSOR AND MARYANNE**. This impossibly precocious Staten Island duo has chosen its name with surprising acuity. Like their “Gilligan’s Island” namesakes, they balance the cerebral (courtesy of guitarist-songwriter Ken Rockwell) with dark good looks (from helium-throated singer Danielle Brancaccio). Their new record, “Lead Us Not Into Penn Station,” includes a few tracks that depart from their standard guitar-and-voice format (and feature a few members of Joe Jackson’s band) and one song, “Just One Night,” that could actually make them famous. Jan. 27: The **GEFKENS**.

NELL’S, 246 W. 14th St. (675-1567)—A Victorian-style club, home to an eclectic crowd of downtown youngsters dancing to funk, techno-pop, and, sometimes, jazz. Monday night is Funky Buddha, with live bands and assorted d.j.s “on the wheels.”

PADDY REILLY’S MUSIC BAR, 519 Second Ave., at 29th St. (686-1210)—**BLACK 47** usually plays on Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights.

LES POULETS, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and the occasional cha-cha. Dining.

RODEO BAR, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—The walls simulate a log cabin, smoke blows through the nostrils of a buffalo head, a horse trailer has been converted into a

bar, and you get peanuts for eating and, sometimes, throwing.

S.O.B.’s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. . . ¶ Soul Kitchen, the original seventies dance party, surfaces here every Tuesday. Dining.

TRAMPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Jan. 27: Reggae greets **THIRD WORLD**. Jan. 30: **JOHN**

TABLES FOR TWO

Dining around town



AUNT SONIA’S, 1123 Eighth Ave., at 12th St., Brooklyn (1-718 965-9526)—A few months ago, Aunt Sonia’s menu described the yellowfin tuna in simple terms: “World’s Greatest Tuna (we’re serious).” They were and it just may have been. So on a recent visit, when the waitress announced that there was only one order left, the tension at the table was a little like the entrée itself: thick, seared on the outside, nearly raw within, and tartly garnished roundabout.

Michael Schreiber, the chef and owner, cooks with a colloquial experimentalism (lime Caesar, pumpkin flan) that suits his Park Slope clientele, the sort of relaxed-fit former bohemians who can still squeeze an occasional Chianti-braised wild boar into their cocooning. “I’d be a lot crazier if I had my druthers,” says Schreiber, an erstwhile social worker who paid for his graduate education by catering. “But I want it to be a neighborhood restaurant. So I hold back.” His communitarian good will has rubbed off on the staff. “I take care of them,” he explains. “I’m a good listener. And I feed them well.”

Schreiber’s whimsical preparations (tuna served, variously, with plum and tomatillo salsa, on hominy and topped with caviar, on pasta with a pistachio-mint pesto, and so on) are not for the fainthearted (you may find yourself following crisp crab wontons with chestnut gnocchi). But the staff is reassuring, moving through the restaurant’s simple décor as attentively as native guides. Ignore their advice at your peril: if they smile when you ask about the mocha-buttercream-and-hazelnut dacquoise, trust them. (Open weekdays for dinner, weekends for brunch and dinner. Entrées \$13-\$19.)

ENTWISTLE. The new album by The Who’s famously stoic bass player—his first solo release since 1981—is titled “The Rock,” appropriately: after all, somebody had to anchor the band’s music, and it wasn’t going to be the flailing Keith Moon or the windmilling Pete Townshend or the preening Roger Daltrey. Entwistle still has the cracked wit that keeps songs like “Boris the Spider” alive in the darkest recesses of every Who fan’s heart.

WEBSTER HALL, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Jan. 26: Knockout Drops. Jan. 27: Stash, a band that actually devotes itself to the music of Phish.

only bodies and their mysterious movements. The overused adjectives "lyrical" and "poetic" are hard to avoid in explaining the simple yet profound pleasure these works evoke. Through March 10. (Another show of Cornell's work is at C & M, 45 E. 78th St., through March 2.) . . . ¶ "Moving Out," a survey of photographer Robert Frank's career. Through Feb. 11. . . . ¶ "Beat Culture and the New America: 1950-1965." Through Feb. 4. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Aerial photographs of pre-Columbian ruins and other sites in Peru, by Marilyn Bridges. Through Feb. 1. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

FRICK COLLECTION, 1 E. 70th St.—"The Butterfly and the Bat." James McNeill Whistler's exquisite portrait of the aristocratic ne'er-do-well Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac is one of the Frick's most famous holdings. This exhibition, devoted to their friendship, turns up a trunkload of treasures: some very amusing caricatures by Max Beerbohm and others; a brilliantly colored abstraction by Gustave Moreau (loaned by the Musée Gustave Moreau, in Paris) that predates Kandinsky's first abstract paintings by at least four years; an indecipherable sketch of Montesquiou by Marcel Proust, which has never been exhibited before. Through Jan. 28. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E 36th St.—"The Art of the Brontës: Drawings and Manuscripts," an exhibit culled from the library's collection and from the Brontë Parsonage Museum, in Haworth, England, presents drawings, letters, manuscripts, and first editions by all four siblings: Charlotte, Emily, Anne, and Branwell. Through April 14. . . . ¶ Renaissance and Baroque drawings, including work by Leonardo, Raphael, Van Dyck, Rubens, and Rembrandt, from the private collection of the dukes of Devonshire, at the English country house Chatsworth. Through April 21. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"The Talk of the Town: Rea Irvin of The New Yorker." Irvin (1881-1972) was Harold Ross's first hire, and what a move that was. He created Eustace Tilley, logos and fonts for the headings, the wavy rule, and the misperception that the magazine was a solid venture that had been around for years. Eighty-three covers, drawings, and cartoons are on view, most of them from the artist's personal collection, which he gave the museum in 1967. Starts Jan. 24. . . .

¶ "Uncommon Threads: Three Hundred Years of New York Style," a display of seventy-five complete ensembles. Through Feb. 11. . . .

¶ "Growing Up in New York: The Photography of Arthur Leipzig." Black-and-white pictures, from the forties through the sixties, of children's games, East River diving, sit-ins, opening night at the opera, and more. Through March 31. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

THE NEW MUSEUM, 583 Broadway—"A Labor of Love" includes works by contemporary artists who use folk- or craft-oriented processes. Among the pieces on view are miniature chairs carved out of soap, by Michael Harms; sewn banana-peel slippers, by Nöle Guilini; cartoonish dolls, by Faith Ringgold; and Liza Lou's full-sized kitchen, entirely covered with small colored beads. Through April 14. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W.—"Murders That Changed New York," an investigation—through newspapers, broadsides, books, and prints—into six homicides that shocked even Gothamites, from the murder of the prostitute Ellen Jewett, in 1836, to the killing of Kitty Genovese, in 1964. Starts Jan. 24. . . . ¶ Jugs, jars, bottles, crocks, churns, bowls, inkwells, and flowerpots turn up in "New York Stoneware." Through April 7. (Open Wednesdays



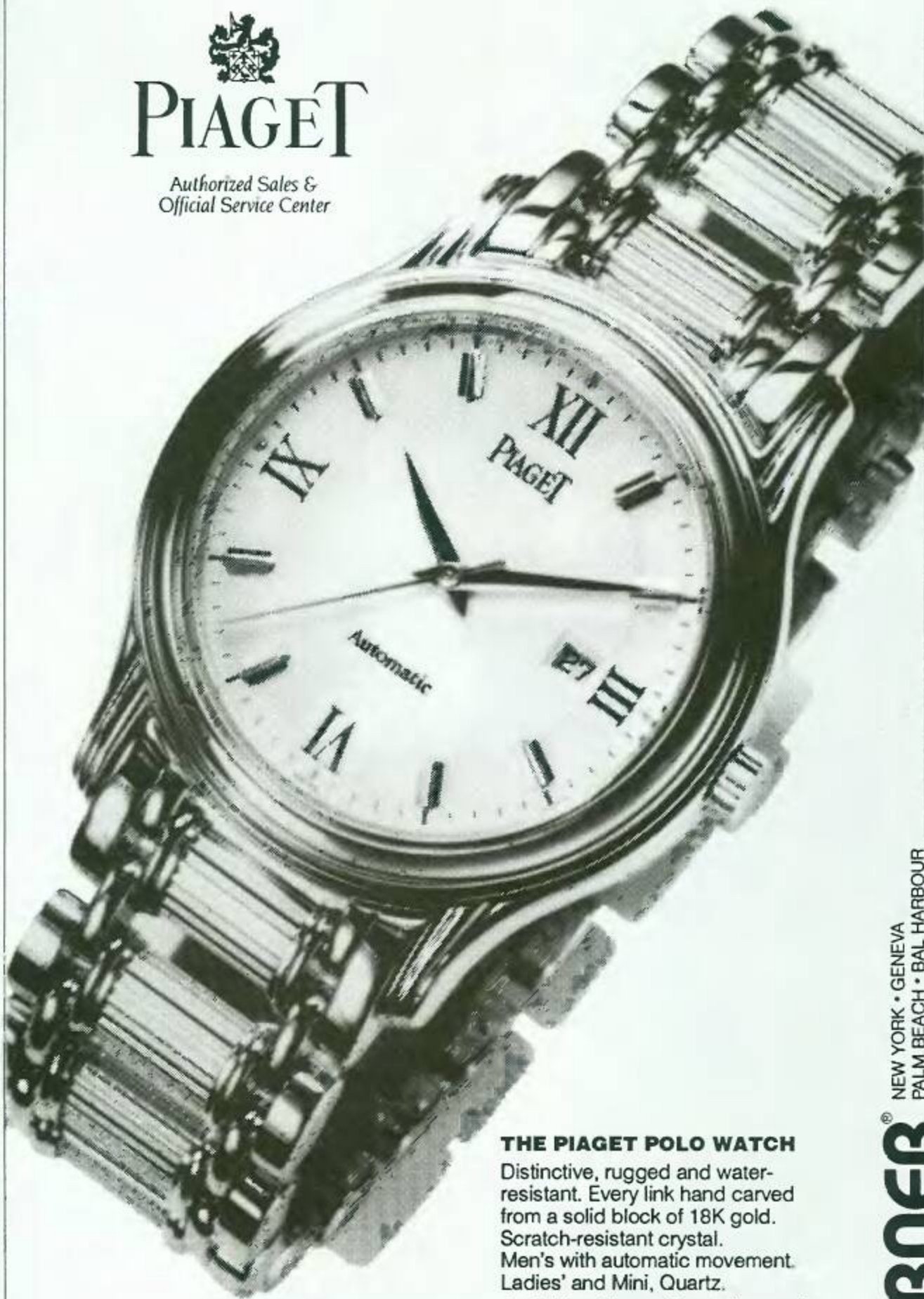
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through Sundays, noon to 5, and Wednesday evenings until 8.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

ANDRÉ MASSON (1896-1987)—The most tasteful of the Surrealists spent the years 1941-45 as a war exile in New Preston, Connecticut; this small exhibition offers a tantalizing glimpse of the work he produced there. A chimera squaring off with a serpent, wrought in a calligraphic style, has the gravity of literary mythology rather than the visceral impact of a dream. A touching portrait of the artist's son Luis is executed in tempera and sand, with the subject's name scrawled in a great, prideful loop across the image. Through March 2. (Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St.)

ALICE NEEL (1900-84)—Portraits of pregnant women, spanning more than forty years of the artist's long career, that pulse with the power and pain of childbearing. Ugly blue veins snake across swollen breasts, aching backs curve pitifully, and figures lie isolated on the canvases (except for the odd puddles of pigment that anchor them). The candor of these paintings is unrelenting—almost medical—and pitiless. Neel turns pregnancy into a metaphor for the human condition, forcefully demonstrating that the flesh is not only disappointing but humiliating. Through Feb. 3. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

ARNALDO POMODORO / MANOLO VALDES—Massive iron shields surmounted with gleaming bronze neo-Constructivist emblems; cracked globes with toothy, menacing guts which suggest exploded evil stars; masterpieces of metal-casting, certainly, but nonetheless so much ballast. / Fussy prints and drawings making allusion to Spanish art history. Through Feb. 10. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

CAROLE ROBB—Canvases inspired by the Scottish artist's recent sojourn in Rome: fantastical street scenes and sleeping nudes in radiant tenement interiors. A painting of a man bathing in a public fountain beneath a full moon borders on the romanticism of de Chirico. In other works, quotations from classical sculpture mingle mysteriously with the lost souls of the modern city. Through Feb. 3. (Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

"ANIMA MUNDI"—Depictions of animals in contemporary art, by such artists as Joe Andoe, Elizabeth Butterworth, Hunt Slonem, Duncan Hannah, and Barbara Ess. Through March 2. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

"THE HOUSE TRANSFORMED"—Conceptual, clinical, impressionistic, and fantastic treatments, including works by Bernd and Hilla Becher, Gordon Matta-Clark, Joel Shapiro, Siah Armajani, and H. C. Westermann. Through March 2. (Mathes, 41 E. 57th St.)

"BAZIOTES, KAMROWSKI, AND POLLOCK"—Surrealist works from the forties, including a collaborative painting done one evening in Gerome Kamrowski's studio. Through Feb. 24. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.)

"EXPLORING THE UNKNOWN"—The title of this well-chosen survey of American Surrealism refers as much to the artists as to their murky Freudian subject matter. Some big names are deployed—there are manifestly Miró-inspired watercolors by Rothko and Pollock as well as a marvellous Cornell box—but the real interest is in the competent hacks who put an American spin on a European idiom. "Eclipse," by Charles Rain (1911-85), is delightfully dated: classical statues and a spooky iron gate tilt in a swirling mist, looking like a Hollywood dream sequence. A small room is devoted to the Tanguyesque visions of Boris Margo (1902-95). Through Jan. 27. (Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St.)

SHORT LIST—**JOSEF ALBERS**, Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. Through Feb. 17. . . . **STANLEY BOXER**, Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Open Mondays; through Feb. 3. . . . **JOSEPH CORNELL**, C & M, 45 E. 78th St. Through March 2. . . . **LINDEN FREDERICK**, Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. Through Jan. 27. . . . **LEE KRASNER**, McCoy,

41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays; through Jan. 27. . . . **LOREN MADSEN**, McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through Feb. 10. . . . **RICHARD POUSETTE-DART**, Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. Through Feb. 3. . . . **NINA ROOS**, Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St. Through March 2. . . . **CHRISTOPHER WILMARTH**, Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. Through Feb. 10.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

JANE DICKSON—"Who Do You Think You Are?" large new paintings, of outstretched and folded arms, on very long swaths of nubby, textured carpet. The artist's sfumato technique and disquieting subject matter appear to good effect in an installation atmosphere. Through Feb. 3. (Black+Herron, 79 Grand St.)

HANS-PETER FELDMANN—Something of a cult figure in German art circles, Feldmann continues to play fast and loose with increasingly hoary postmodernist themes—appropriation, commodification, and so on—but he does so with such a light and keenly intelligent hand that he earns considerably more than the benefit of the doubt. For an art-historical riff, he has put together a wall of Old Master images derived from postcards; using color photocopies rather than the actual cards, he creates pictures that are flimsier yet somehow more enticing than the "original" reproductions. His sculptures are composed of things he buys at department stores (batteries, eyeglasses, retractable knives, etc.) arranged in arbitrary yet pleasing configurations. Weird, funny, pretty, and provocatively insubstantial, this show is easily one of the best in town. Through Feb. 3. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

TOM FRIEDMAN—Twelve new works from the obsessive-compulsive Conceptualist, in a follow-up to his wry "Projects" show last spring at MOMA. There are, among other oddities, a couple of creepy actual-size flies, made of plastic, hair, fuzz, Play-Doh, wire, and paint; an egg-shaped "endless" loop of two-inch pencil sections; and a thread of bubble gum that stretches from floor to ceiling. Through Feb. 17. (Feature, 76 Greene St.)

ELLEN GALLAGHER—Subdued, rather sombre abstractions à la Agnes Martin—or at least that's the initial impression one gets from these works by a young painter who was one of the few genuine surprises at last year's Whitney Biennial. Closer inspection reveals something stranger going on: waves of smiling, thick-lipped mouths, cascades of eyeballs, even the occasional schematic rendering of a woman's head or a forlorn elephant complicate the paintings' sensuous, fussed-over surfaces. Through Feb. 24. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

MANNY FARBER—Colorfully painted pastiches of scattered objects—flowers, leaves, fruit, photographs—that have a pleasing kinetic energy. Through Feb. 17. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

TAM OCHIAI—An agglomeration of audio and video tapes, a roach trap, a propane tank, photocopies, shopping bags, paintings, and a color photograph of François Truffaut's grave. It's all meant to form an homage to Truffaut and Godard's New Wave, with bows to Chabrol and Resnais, but there are also riffs on Holly Golightly, 007, Agnès B., and Paul Smith. In the middle of the show you can lounge on the artist's own couch and watch a video montage of more than a hundred and sixty cinematic deaths. Through Feb. 3. (Freire, 580 Broadway.)

ELYN ZIMMERMAN—Two large granite sculptures in their own specially made rooms. Through Feb. 17. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

"SAMPLER 2"—Recent videos by Southern California artists who have taken the look, structure, and techniques of commercial television as their inspiration. Among the artists are Tony Oursler, Gabrielle Jennings, Mike Kelley and Paul McCarthy, Raymond Pettibon, and Susan Lutz. Through Feb. 3. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St.)

"WALL DRAWINGS '96"—Two large murals, by Barry McGee and Mark Dean Vaca, employ variations on graffiti art and cartoons; Tania

Mouraud elongates and expands the phrase "What you see is what you get." Through Feb. 10. (Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

"WITHDRAWING"—A broad survey of drawings in many mediums, from the early seventies to the present, including pieces by Joseph Beuys, Hannah Wilke, Andy Warhol, Ida Applebroog, Allan Wexler, Yayoi Kusama, and Leon Golub. Through Feb. 17. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

SHORT LIST—ALICE AYCOCK, Weber, 142 Greene St. Through Feb. 3. . . . ROBERT BECK, Inglett, 100 Wooster St. Through Feb. 17. . . . PETER DAYTON and ROBERT ADAMS, Morris Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6; through Feb. 18. . . . LUCIO FONTANA, Gladstone, 99 Greene St. Through Feb. 3. . . . JOHANNES GIRARDONI, Haller, 560 Broadway. Through Jan. 30. . . . STEPHEN GREENE, Beitzel, 102 Prince St. Through Feb. 10. . . . LARRY JOHNSON and ALLEN RUPPERSBERG, Gorney, 100 Greene St. Through Feb. 17. . . . MICAH LEXIER, Shainman, 560 Broadway. Through Feb. 3. . . . JAMES NARES, Kasmin, 74 Grand St. Through

about ancillary events being presented by the South Street Seaport Museum, call 777-5218.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

LOLA ALVAREZ BRAVO (1907-93)—Two exhibitions of the pioneering Mexican modernist's work. (Americas Society, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St. Open daily, except Mondays, noon to 6. Through Feb. 25. . . . ¶ Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. Through March 9.)

SALLY APFELBAUM—Floral closeups in varying scales and focusses, taken in turn-of-the-century gardens in Normandy. Through Feb. 10. (Saul, 560 Broadway.)

RUDY BURCKHARDT—A small retrospective of New York City shots by the eighty-one-year-old photographer and painter. Through Jan. 27. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Fazal Sheikh: A Sense of Common Ground," portraits of Sudanese, Ethiopian, Somalian, Rwandan, and Mozam-



"River of Gold," at the Metropolitan Museum.

Feb. 3. . . . ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG, Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. Through Feb. 17.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

CHRISTIE'S—Americana week features a sale of historical documents and memorabilia, notably a Louisiana Purchase proclamation signed by President Thomas Jefferson and his Secretary of State, James Madison (Jan. 26), and an auction of American art works which includes the renowned Lansdell Christie furniture collection, with its exceptional early Chipendale mahogany table desk, with scalloped shell kneehole, from Newport (Jan. 27). (Christie's, Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1119.)

DOYLE'S—Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English and Continental furniture, paintings, and decorative arts. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. Jan. 24 at 10. A.M.)

SWANN'S—An auction of nearly three hundred golden-age posters, including many travel- and movie-related specimens. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. Jan. 25 at 2:30.)

WINTER ANTIQUES SHOW—The forty-second annual installment of this high-end show brings together sixty-nine international dealers. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Jan. 24-28. For information, call 1-718 292-7392.)

OUTSIDE IN—Outsider art (by self-taught or otherwise unorthodox artists) is riding a wave of popularity among curators and collectors. Sanford Smith's fourth annual Outsider Art Fair brings together thirty-five American and European dealers of such work, including paintings, sculptures, and photography. (Puck Building, 295 Lafayette St., at Houston St. Jan. 26-28. For information about the show, and

bican refugees. Through March 31. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Eve Arnold: In Retrospect," black-and-white and color images from the photojournalist's forty-year career: politicians, diplomats, movie stars, religious leaders, artists, and musicians. Through Feb. 11. (Another show of Arnold's work is at Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St., through Feb. 10.) (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

SHORT LIST—TOM BARIL and ROCKY SCHENCK, Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. Through Feb. 24. . . . PETER CAMPUS, Cooper, 155 Wooster St. Through Feb. 17. . . . HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON and TOSHIO SHIBATA, Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Through Feb. 24. . . . LARRY CLARK, Lühring Augustine, 130 Prince St. Through Feb. 24. . . . JIM GOLDBERG and KIKI SMITH, Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. Through Feb. 14. . . . MICHIKO KON, Mann, 42 E. 76th St. Through March 2. . . . ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE, Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through Feb. 3. . . . SEAN MC DEVITT, Arstark, 568 Broadway. Through Feb. 24. . . . DAVID MOSCONI, Richardson, 560 Broadway. Through Feb. 10. . . . GILLES PERESS, Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. Through Feb. 10. . . . NEIL WINOKUR, Borden, 560 Broadway. Through Feb. 11.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the American Museum of Natural History, and the Museum of the City of New York.)

From
the horse's
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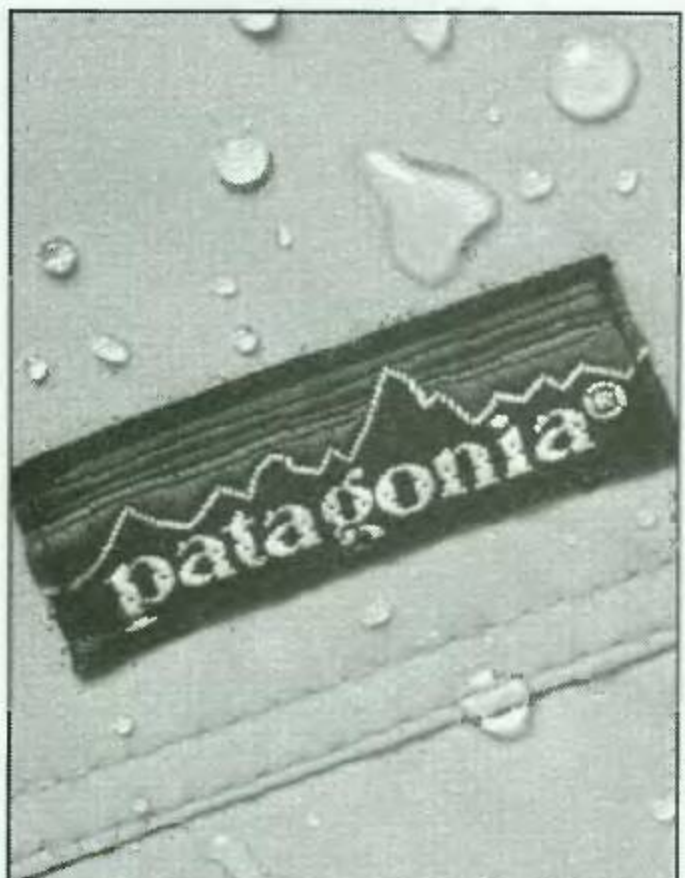
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CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**THE MAKROPULOS CASE**, by Janáček, with Jessye Norman, Graham Clark, Håkan Hagegård, and Donald McIntyre; conducted by David Robertson. In English. (Jan. 24 at 8.) . . . With Mary Jane Johnson, Mr. Clark, Richard Stilwell, and Mr. McIntyre; Mr. Robertson. (Jan. 27 at 8.) . . . **TURANDOT**, with Ghena Dimitrova, Veronica Villarroel, Michael Sylvester, and Dimitri Kavrakos; Nello Santi. (Jan. 25 and Jan. 29 at 8.) . . . **FALSTAFF**, with Barbara Daniels, Barbara Bonney, Marilyn Horne, Paul Groves, Paul Plishka, and Gino Quilico; James Levine. (Jan. 30 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 merits its reputation as his finest work for piano and orchestra, but that doesn't mean his others—two further concertos and a Concert Fantasy—deserve their current neglect. In this concert, Elisabeth Leonskaja offers the composer's two-movement Concert Fantasy in G Major (Op. 56, written in 1884), an enjoyable work full of virtuosic effects, as well as his one-movement Piano Concerto No. 3 in E-Flat Major (Op. 75, from 1893), a late-in-life reworking of an aborted symphony. Kurt Masur conducts the program, which also includes Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Jan. 25 and Jan. 27 at 8; Jan. 26 at 2; and Jan. 30 at 7:30.)

SAINT LOUIS SYMPHONY—At Carnegie Hall. After twenty-seven years with the Saint Louis Symphony, the last seventeen of them as music director, Leonard Slatkin arrives on his final East Coast tour before moving on to his new post as music director of the National Symphony, in Washington, D.C. Aficionados of his work will find plenty of rewarding material in a recently issued six-disk set, "The Slatkin Years," produced to benefit the orchestra's endowment fund. (It's not available in stores, but music lovers can acquire it for a hundred well-spent dollars by calling 1-314 534-1700.) The twenty-one works in the set, drawn from radio broadcasts between 1980 and 1995, document the ensemble's emergence as one of the country's finest orchestras, and cover Mr. Slatkin's wide-ranging musical interests; of special note are pieces by John Adams, Claude Baker, Donald Erb, Karel Husa, Joseph Schwantner, and Joan Tower, reflecting the conductor's high-profile support for contemporary American symphonic composers. Jan. 24 at 8: Peter Mennin's "Concertato for Orchestra 'Moby Dick,'" Berio's Concerto for Two Pianos (with Katia and Marielle Labèque), and Elgar's Symphony No. 1. . . . Jan. 25 at 8: Haydn's Symphony No. 70, Claude Baker's "Whispers and Echoes," and Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2.

LITTLE ORCHESTRA SOCIETY—Nine virtuosos are featured in works for multiple soloists by Martinů (spotlighting violinist Susan Orn-

stein, cellist Clay Ruede, and pianist Thomas Schmidt), Howard Hanson (flutist Paula Robison and harpist Susan Jolles), Bruch (clarinetist David Shifrin and violist Paul Neubauer), and Poulenc (the duo-piano team of Lisitsa and Kuznetsov). (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 25 at 7.)

AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—In a program that explores the relationship of Jewish composers to the European musical mainstream, Leon Botstein conducts Schoenberg's "Kol Nidre," Berthold Goldschmidt's 1953 Cello Concerto (with Yo-Yo Ma), and Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 2 (the "Lobgesang"). Goldschmidt achieved great success as a composer and conductor in his native Germany before fleeing to England, in 1935. Although he continued to compose after the war, his work fell out of public sight as new styles superseded his sometimes Weill-like Expressionism. He had slipped into relative oblivion until he was "rediscovered," about a decade ago, by a public amazed to find that a leading figure of Germany's pre-war musical scene was still among us. In fact, this remarkable composer is more than just among us: he's still composing at his home in London, where he celebrated his ninety-third birthday earlier this month. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Jan. 26 at 8.)

DISCANTUS—Despite the passage of more than four centuries, Thomas Tallis's motet "Spem in Alium" remains an astonishing creation: a ten-minute expanse of interwoven counterpoint for forty solo voices, distributed among eight choirs of five singers each. Why Tallis wrote such an extravagant work remains a mystery; one theory is that it formed the centerpiece of a pageant performed for Queen Elizabeth's fortieth birthday, in 1573. More likely, it was composed to uphold England's honor against the challenge of another forty-part motet written several years earlier by the Italian Alessandro Striggio. It would prove to be Tallis's last major choral composition, the extraordinary conclusion of one of the most distinguished musical careers in Renaissance England. The logistics of performance preclude the piece's being sung often, and the spatial component



Music by Berthold Goldschmidt,
performed by the American
Symphony Orchestra.

so central to its conception cannot be adequately captured in recordings. New Yorkers will have the opportunity to hear "Spem in Alium" come together a piece at a time when the ten-member Discantus ensemble, plus thirty of its friends, presents an open rehearsal and performance of the work (plus multiple-choir pieces by Giovanni Gabrieli and Robert Pearsall), directed by E. Wayne Abercrombie. (St. Ignatius Episcopal Church, West End Ave. at 87th St. Jan. 28 at 3. Admission by contribution.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA—Charles Dutoit conducts John Adams's "The Chairman Dances," Poulenc's Two-Piano Concerto (with Jean-Philippe Collard and Pascal Rogé), and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 1. (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 29 at 8.)

RECITALS

"Focus! 1996"—Concluding concerts of this year's festival, in which Juilliard students explore the contemporary music of Pacific Rim countries. Jan. 24 at 8: Premieres of compositions by Zhou Long, Byron Yasui, and John Luther Adams, among other works. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St.) . . . Jan. 25 at 7: "Music for Five Pianos," by the Philippine composer José Ma-

ceda. (Juilliard Theatre.) . . . ¶ Jan. 25 at 8: Pieces by nine composers from Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, Korea, and the United States. (Juilliard Theatre.) . . . ¶ Jan. 26 at 8: The Juilliard Symphony plays Toshio Mayuzumi's "Mandala Symphony" and Ge Gan-Ru's "Chinese Rhapsody," among other works. (Alice Tully Hall. For information about free tickets, which are required for all festival events, call 769-7406.)

BARGEMUSIC—A program of woodwind-oriented chamber music ranges through works by Vivaldi, Donizetti, and Hindemith, among others. Flutist Eugenia Zukerman, bassoonist David Carroll, and pianist Anne-Marie McDermott are the performers. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Jan. 25 at 7:30 and Jan. 28 at 4.)

PALLADIAN ENSEMBLE—This quartet of young early-music players—recorder, violin, viola da gamba, and lute—had already won several prestigious emerging-ensemble awards before their debut recording, "An Excess of Pleasure," hit the British classical charts in 1993. It was released by Linn CD, a tiny British audiophile label that has recently become available in this country through an American distributor. If you do find it (or the group's follow-up release, "The Winged Lion"), grab it: the ambient sound is rich, clean, and natural, and the performances combine musical vivacity with consummate technical élan. In this concert, the ensemble offers music from seventeenth-century England (by Purcell and Nicola Matteis) and Italy (Marco Uccellini and Francesco Turini), as well as later Baroque works by Vivaldi, Marais, Bach, and Telemann. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Jan. 25 at 8.)

NEW YORK PHILOMUSICA—In a program that includes Mozart's Quintet for Piano and Winds and Brahms's Horn Trio. (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 25 at 8.)

"WARMER BY THE STOVE"—Final performances of the avant-garde improvisation festival. Jan. 26 at 8: Cutting-edge flamenco, with guitarist Pedro Cortes and an ensemble. . . . ¶ Jan. 27 at 8: An improvised event by pianist Yuko Fujiyama, baritone Thomas Buckner, and others. (Lotus Fine Arts Center, 109 W. 27th St. 627-1076.)

LORRAINE HUNT—Mezzo-soprano, with pianist Steven Blier, in songs by Brahms, Debussy, and others. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Jan. 27 at 8.)

VLADIMIR CHERNOV—Baritone, performing songs by Schubert, Mahler, and five Russians; with pianist James Levine. (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 28 at 3.)

EDITH WIENS—The Canadian soprano, more of a star in Europe than on her native continent, offers songs by Schubert, Schumann ("Frauenliebe und -leben"), Mussorgsky, and Strauss; with pianist Warren Jones. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Jan. 28 at 5.)

FELDMAN AND FRIENDS—Distinguished colleagues join pianist Jonathan Feldman in a program that includes Brahms's A-Major Piano Quartet and Bartók's Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Jan. 29 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

RICHARD GOODE—The pianist performs Bach's Partita No. 5, Mozart's A-Minor Sonata (K. 310), and numerous shorter works by Brahms and Chopin. (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 30 at 8.)

BRENTANO STRING QUARTET—The foursome offers quartets by Vitezslav Novak, Charles Wuorinen, Webern, and Beethoven (his Fourth, in C Minor). (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 30 at 8.)

ALSO OF INTEREST

BARROS CLASSICAL CONSORT: A period-instrument ensemble, in chamber music by Clementi, Mozart, Boccherini, Schubert, and Beethoven. (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 24 at 8.) . . . **KAROL BENNETT**: Soprano, in her New York debut

recital. (Weill Recital Hall. Jan. 24 at 8.) . . . **MUSIC BY SOMEI SATOH**: Orchestral and chamber works by the Japanese composer, including the premiere of his Clarinet Concerto "Glimmering Darkness" (with Charles Neidich). (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015. Jan. 25 at 8.) . . . **MEXICO CITY STRING QUARTET**: With pianist Max Lifchitz, in piano quintets by Schumann, Chávez, and Mr. Lifchitz. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Jan. 28 at 3. No tickets necessary.) . . . **MANNES ORCHESTRA**: Kurt Masur conducts symphonies by Beethoven (his Seventh) and Shostakovich (his First). (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. Jan. 29 at 8. No tickets necessary.) . . . **EUGENIA ZUKERMAN AND ANTHONY NEWMAN**: In early-Romantic works for flute and forte-piano. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. Jan. 30 at 6. For information, call 930-0571.) . . . **FIDELIO TRIO**: A viola, cello, and piano ensemble performs music by Bruch, Zemlinsky, and several modern composers. (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 30 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

FLUXUS REDUX—Until his death in 1993, the photographer Peter Moore chronicled experimental art movements, from Fluxus happenings to the minimalist concerts of the Judson Dance Theatre to the multimedia performance art of Robert Wilson and Meredith Monk. This Thursday, his wife, the art historian Barbara Moore, shows slides of his relatively rare color photos (in an archive that includes more than three hundred thousand black-and-white negatives, only a few hundred color rolls exist) and reminisces about his thirty years of attentiveness to the avant-garde. (Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. Jan. 25 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.)

READINGS—Jan. 25 at 6:30: Bob Holman reads from his book of poems, "Collect Call of the Wild." (Biblio's, 317 Church St. 334-6990.) . . . ¶ Jan. 25 at 7: Sotheby's auctioneer Robert Woolley reads from his memoir, "Going Once." (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Jan. 28 at 7: In a reading co-sponsored by the Greek American and Italian American Writers Associations, Rosette Capotorto, Penelope Karageorge, Dean Kostos, Barbara Lekastas, Vittoria Repetto, and Robert Viscusi read from their work. (Cornelia Street Café, 29 Cornelia St. 989-9319.) . . . ¶ Jan. 29 at 8: Novelist and poet Julia Alvarez ("How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents") and Mexican poet Homero Aridjis ("The Other Side") read from their work. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

TALKS—Jan. 27 at 4: Turkophile Ingrid Caruso Gersin talks about the rituals of imperial dining in the Ottoman Empire and offers such harem-era pastries as "lips of the beauty," "wife's fingers," and "woman's navel." (Dahesh Museum, Fifth Ave. at 49th St. For reservations, call 627-4424.) . . . ¶ Jan. 30 at 6: Producers of the cop sagas "Law & Order" and "Homicide" screen back-to-back episodes, in which characters from both shows join forces to solve an unprecedented multi-time-slot crime. (Museum of Television & Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. For more information, call 621-6600.) . . . ¶ Jan. 30 at 7:30: Bill Bradley, the senior senator from New Jersey, and political analyst Jeff Greenfield handicap the upcoming Presidential race. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

WALK—Jan. 27 at 1: Howard Goldberg, of Adventure on a Shoestring, takes strollers past the midtown trysting sites of sundry non-shoestring adventurers: Tiffany's (where Diamond Jim Brady bought Lillian Russell a solid-gold chamber pot with an inset eyeball), the Park Lane Hotel (where Leona met Harry), and Trump Tower (you don't want to know). For more information, call 265-2663.



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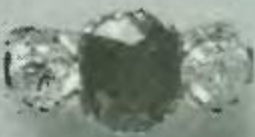
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THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

ANGELA—Two young sisters (Miranda Stuart Rhyne and Charlotte Blythe) look on as their father (John Ventimiglia) struggles with their manic-depressive mother (Anna Thomson), in a drama written and directed by Rebecca Miller. Opening January 26. (Quad Cinema.)

ANGELS & INSECTS—An adaptation of a 1993 novella by A. S. Byatt, directed by Philip Haas. (Reviewed this week in *The Current Cinema*.) Opening January 26. (Village East Cinemas and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

BED OF ROSES—Mary Stuart Masterson and Christian Slater star in a romantic comedy about a New York City investment banker and her secret admirer. Written and directed by Michael Goldenberg. Opening January 26. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

BIG BULLY—A successful novelist (Rick Moranis) who returns to his home town with his son to teach a high-school writing class discovers that the shop teacher (Tom Arnold) is his childhood nemesis. With Don Knotts. Directed by Steve Miner. Written by Mark Steven Johnson. Opening January 26. (Village Theatre VII, Gemini, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

SCREAMERS—A science-fiction thriller, starring Peter Weller and Jennifer Rubin, about an invincible killing machine on a war-torn planet in the twenty-first century. Directed by Christian Duguay. Written by Dan O'Bannon and Miguel Tejada-Flores, from Philip K. Dick's 1952 short story "Second Variety." Opening January 26. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

THE SEXUAL LIFE OF THE BELGIANS—An autobiographical comedy by Jan Bucquoy, covering twenty-eight years of changing mores. In French. Opening January 26. (Quad Cinema.)

THE WHITE BALLOON—Jafar Panahi's drama follows the adventures of a seven-year-old girl (Aida Mohammadkhani) at the market in Tehran. In Persian. Opening January 24. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in *The Current Cinema*, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 26.)

BIO-DOME—Not since the mystifying string of Jim Varney's "Ernest" movies has a comic been as consistently overemployed as Pauly Shore. He has the body of a porn actor but lacks the stamina; he mistimes his gags and still mugs like a newcomer. Here he's teamed

with Stephen Baldwin, and together they wreak havoc inside an artificially controlled experimental environment (they think it's a mall). Jim Carrey and Jeff Daniels have already set their stamp on the dumb-and-dumber routine, and this attempt fails at every level to improve on theirs. The sheer ineptitude of the movie is supposed to be funny, but there's no lunacy behind it; Shore and his writers are like comedians on Prozac, smiling through the fart jokes without a hint of desperation.—B.D. (Village Theatre VII, Manhattan Twin, 62nd & Broadway, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN—Marc Caro and Jean-Pierre Jeunet's nightmarish adult fantasy deserves a place beside such phantasmagorical film wonders as "Metropolis" and "Batman," but (like "Metropolis") it's a cold piece of work. The succession of dazzling images grows tiresome as the plot—about a man who steals the dreams of children—wanders aimlessly. The enterprise has a strongly Dickensian feel, complete with orphans on cobblestone streets, but it's as though the filmmakers had mined "Oliver Twist" for the set design and forgotten to tell the story.—B.D. (Angelika Film Center and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

DEAD MAN WALKING—Tim Robbins's blunt, powerful movie tells the story of a murderer (Sean Penn) awaiting execution and a nun (Susan Sarandon) trying to save his soul—and, if possible, his skin. The filmmaker clearly hopes that familiarity with the grisly realities of capital punishment will finally breed contempt for the idea of premeditated, state-sponsored killing. And although the picture sometimes turns clunky and flat, as if it were sagging under the weight of its good intentions, it winds up being devastatingly effective. Penn has to reveal, within a reckless and apparently despicable character, a salvageable soul, and he makes the erratic rhythm of the condemned man's spiritual progress seem effortless and natural: he captures the languid, insinuating tempo of grace invading a locked-up spirit.—T.R. (1/8/96) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

DON'T BE A MENACE TO SOUTH CENTRAL WHILE DRINKING YOUR JUICE IN THE HOOD—The two youngest Wayans brothers, Shawn and Marlon, appear in a spoof that they co-wrote with Phil Beaman. Paris Barclay directed. (Village East Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, 84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 3, and Embassy 4.)

EYE FOR AN EYE—Sally Field stars as a mother seeking justice after her daughter's murderer (Kiefer Sutherland) is set free on a technicality, in a drama directed by John Schlesinger. Written by Amanda Silver and Rick Jaffa, from the 1993 novel by Erika Holzer. (19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

FRENCH TWIST—A sunlit French farce written and directed by Josiane Balasko, who also enjoys herself no end in the role of Marijo, a chunky, cheerful lesbian who wanders into the marriage of Loli (Victoria Abril) and Laurent (Alain Chabat) and churns it into a froth. The movie gets going with terrific speed: within fifteen minutes we know who is cheating on whom and who wants to start cheating as soon as possible. At the core of the impending chaos is Abril, who wears comically few clothes, and whose trademark laugh pretty well sums up the picture's gusto. The fun doesn't last, of course. The story settles down, the characters call an uneasy truce, and Balasko even starts to moralize on the folly of love gone wrong. But there's no need to believe her—at its best, this lightweight, salivating movie proves beyond all doubt that love is *meant* to go wrong; any other outcome is a drag. In French.—A.L. (1/15/96) (Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

FROM DUSK TILL DAWN—An action film written by Quentin Tarantino, in which he and George Clooney play a pair of thieves who find themselves in a Mexican saloon full of vampires. With Harvey Keitel and Juliette

Lewis. Directed by Robert Rodriguez. (Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 1, and Embassy 2.)

HALFMOON—Three episodes based on short stories by Paul Bowles, who acts as narrator. Written and directed by Frieder Schlaich and Irene von Alberti. In English and Arabic. (Film Forum; through Jan. 30.)

HEAT—Michael Mann, the moving spirit behind "Miami Vice," turns his attention to Los Angeles, where an anguished cop (Al Pacino) goes head to head with a troubled villain (Robert De Niro). The film, which runs on and on for nearly three hours, yearns to be much more than a thriller—it wants to diagnose the sickness of men's souls and convey the nobility of their pain. The taciturn De Niro and the braying Pacino share a flawless scene over a cup of coffee, but the real honors go to Val Kilmer and Ashley Judd as a warring, loving couple.—A.L. (12/25/95-1/1/96) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

JUMANJI—The title refers to an ancient board game with groovy powers; Robin Williams plays Alan, who was sucked into the Jumanji board as a boy and emerges twenty-six years later when a couple of kids (Kirsten Dunst and Bradley Pierce) open up the game and roll the dice. Cue all manner of special effects: spiders the size of hubcaps, elephants in the hallway. There's a touch of Spielberg in the way the director, Joe Johnston, makes these images work dramatically. The movie takes time to warm up, it weakens into soporificity at the end, and the game itself, if you think it through, makes very little sense. Most of the time, however, you don't have to think at all.—A.L. (12/25/95-1/1/96) (Village Theatre VII, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center. . . ♠ Gemini; through Jan. 25.)

LAMERICA—A drama by Gianni Amelio, about an Italian con man in post-Communist Albania. In Italian. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

LAST SUMMER IN THE HAMPTONS—A comedy in which Victoria Foyt plays a movie star who visits a Long Island theatrical family that is in the midst of producing a play. Directed by Henry Jaglom, who co-wrote the screenplay with Foyt. (Cinema Village, Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Angelika 57.)

LAWNMOWER MAN II: BEYOND CYBERSPACE—Some of the alumni of the groundbreaking "Max Headroom" TV series got together on the 1992 hit "The Lawnmower Man" and reassembled for this sequel, but lightning didn't strike twice. The new film, about a blue-hued L.A. future in which people can jack in to a virtual-reality state, lacks the punch and cyber-knowingness of the earlier work; and, although it's fun to see Matt Frewer's talking head back on the screen, his dialogue doesn't measure up to the winking hipness of his delivery. The movie—essentially a dreary adventure yarn—sinks beneath second-rate computer imagery and tiresome chases.—B.D. (Murray Hill Cinemas. . . ♠ Criterion Center; through Jan. 25.)

LEAVING LAS VEGAS—In Mike Figgis's startlingly beautiful new movie, Nicolas Cage gives a great performance as a failed writer who is

consciously drinking himself to death. Figgis tells the story as a series of vivid, intense moments; the sole trace of conventional drama is the hero's affair with a kindhearted young hooker (superbly played by Elisabeth Shue). But the possibility that love will rescue him from his fate vanishes quickly, like a mirage. Although the movie is terribly, crushingly sad, its honesty is invigorating: it names its poison and downs it, neat.—T.R. (11/6/95) (Village East Cinemas, 34th Street Showplace, Plaza, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

MR. HOLLAND'S OPUS—Richard Dreyfuss stars as a music teacher in Stephen Herek's drama. (Reviewed this week in *The Current Cinema*.) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, and Lincoln Square.)

NICO ICON—German director Susanne Ofteringer's sombre, hypnotic film documents the life of the Velvet Underground's chanteuse, Nico, from her beginnings as a model (she had the icy beauty of a Diana Rigg) to her death, in 1988, as a pallid junkie. Throughout the movie, Nico's music plays practically non-stop: enigmatic dirges of longing and bitter-

ness torn from a soul drugged to numbness by her successive environments (postwar Germany, Warhol's Factory, life on the road). With extraordinary technique, Ofteringer paints a moody, melancholy picture of a legend who decayed into the ghost of herself.—B.D. (Film Forum.)

NIXON—Oliver Stone's three-hours-plus biography of Tricky Dick (Anthony Hopkins) is, like its subject, awkward, sweaty, tenacious, and highly impeachable. As usual, the filmmaker has big ideas about the forces that have shaped recent American history: this Nixon is the helpless, sporadically conscience-stricken pawn of a sinister right-wing cabal that was responsible for Vietnam and, of course, the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Where does Stone find this stuff—in pumpkin patches? You could shell out seven or eight bucks at the multiplex and accept Stone's frivolous speculations as solemn truth. But it would be wrong.—T.R. (Village East Cinemas, Cinema II, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Lincoln Square.)

OTHELLO—Oliver Parker's version of Shakespeare's tragedy—the first filmed "Othello" in which the Moor of Venice is played by a black actor (Laurence Fishburne)—follows the familiar-quotations principle of Shakespearean adaptation. By sacrificing the volcanic flow of language that conveys Othello's pride, confusion, and anguish, the movie leaves Fishburne stranded: his performance is mysteriously uncharismatic. Kenneth Branagh, who plays Iago, has a surer grasp of Shakespearean technique, and his bold, confident interpretation manages to cut through the muddle that Parker has made of the play. Who steals this picture, though, steals trash. With Irene Jacob as Desdemona.—T.R. (12/18/95) (Paris.)

RESTORATION—Michael Hoffman's film follows a young doctor named Merivel (Robert Downey, Jr.) through his epicurean excesses at the court of Charles II, his purgative sojourn among the Quakers, his selfless struggle against the plague, and his own restoration to royal favor. The sets and costumes are a dream, but the performers



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(Sam Neill, Meg Ryan, Hugh Grant) are given no room to breathe; only David Thewlis, playing Merivel's Quaker colleague, delivers any real pathos.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center and 68th St. Playhouse.)

RICHARD III—This fancy production—directed by Richard Loncraine, from a stage version by Richard Eyre—transports the scheming nobles of fifteenth-century England to the nineteen-thirties and dresses the villainous protagonist (Ian McKellen) in a Fascist's black shirt. The notion that Richard is a vicious thug isn't exactly a fresh insight, and the obtrusive ingenuity of the theatrical concept gives the whole spectacle a preening, self-infatuated quality—an inexpressive veneer of chic. McKellen's banality-of-evil portrayal of Richard is disappointing. The play is basically a rip-roaring melodrama with a magnetic, appallingly vital bad guy; what Loncraine and McKellen give us—a thin conceit about a dull, efficient, affectless sort of monster—is a poor substitute.—T.R. (1/22/96) (Village East Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Chelsea Cinemas.)

12 MONKEYS—Terry Gilliam's elaborate time-travel thriller is based on Chris Marker's elegant twenty-nine-minute short, "La Jetée" (1964). Turning that perfect, rigorously constructed fable about memory and mortality into a big-budget futuristic action picture starring Bruce Willis is an inherently quixotic project, but the screenwriters, David and Janet Peoples, do a surprisingly skillful job: the complicated plot they've worked out has its own logic and integrity, and it even preserves, like insects fossilized in amber, a few poignant traces of Marker's metaphysical lyricism. Unfortunately, Gilliam's hyperkinetic direction keeps subverting the story's meaning. Instead of respecting the reflective nature of the material, he bombards us with bizarre sensation; in this picture, memory has the false immediacy of an acid flashback. Willis and his co-star, Madeleine Stowe, give alert, thoughtful performances. But finally the film is no more than a flamboyant curiosity, replacing the spooky obsessive-ness of "La Jetée" with a much tamer kind of weirdness. Also with Brad Pitt, in a showy role as a voluble lunatic; he's dreadful.—T.R. (1/22/96) (34th St. East, Beekman, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

WAITING TO EXHALE—The film version of Terry McMillan's best-selling novel is a pile of the purest tripe. The central quartet of female friends, played by Whitney Houston, Angela Bassett, Loretta Devine, and Lela Rochon, spend their lives in bonding and mutual counselling; their approach to men swivels between sharklike aggression and Bambi-eyed yearning. The director, Forest Whitaker, appears to be at the mercy of this confusion, switching tones in the middle of scenes and drawing cartoon reactions from his performers. Only Houston emerges with any credit: she gets to swing her stuff on the soundtrack, which is everything the picture isn't—sultry, creamy, and quick about its business.—A.L. (1/15/96) (Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Regency, Olympia, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Gotham Cinema; through Jan. 25.)

ALSO PLAYING

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT (reviewed in our issue of 11/20/95): 34th Street Showplace, Baronet, and Tower East. . . . **BABE** (9/4/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **CASINO** (12/4/95): First & 62nd Cinemas and National Twin. . . . **THE CROSSING GUARD**: Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **DUNSTON CHECKS IN**: Village East Cinemas, 34th Street Showplace, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Lincoln Square. . . . **EDEN VALLEY**: Quad Cinema. . . . **FOUR ROOMS**: Angelika Film Center and Gemini. . . . **GEORGIA** (12/11/95): Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **GET SHORTY** (10/23/95): 59th Street East Cinema. . . . **GRUMPIER OLD MEN**: First & 62nd Cinemas. . . . **KICKING AND SCREAMING**: Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **LIVING IN OBLIVION**: Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **MIGHTY APHRODITE** (10/30/95):

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **PERSUASION** (9/25/95): Quad Cinema and Cinema 3. . . . **THE POSTMAN**: Eastside Playhouse, Quad Cinema, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas. . . . **SABRINA** (12/25/95-1/1/96): Village Theatre VII, East 85th Street, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Lincoln Square. . . . **SENSE AND SENSIBILITY** (12/18/95): Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Coronet, and Lincoln Square. . . . **SHANGHAI TRIAD**: Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **TO DIE FOR**: Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **TO WONG FOO, THANKS FOR EVERYTHING, JULIE NEWMAR** (9/11/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **TOY STORY**: Village Theatre VII, Sutton, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, and Lincoln Square. . . . **TWO IF BY SEA**: Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center. . . . **THE USUAL SUSPECTS** (8/14/95): Worldwide Cinemas.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

EAST SIDE

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St.
VILLAGE THEATRE VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th St.
VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, Second Ave. at 12th St.
19TH STREET EAST 6, Broadway at 19th St.
MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th St.
34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th St.
34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th St.
EASTSIDE PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 55th St.
SUTTON 1 AND 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
GOTHAM CINEMA, Third Ave. at 58th St.
PLAZA, 42 E. 58th St.
MANHATTAN TWIN, Third Ave. at 59th St.
59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th St.
BARONET AND CORONET, Third Ave. at 59th St.
CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, Third Ave. at 60th St.
FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd St.
GEMINI 1 AND 2, Second Ave. at 64th St.
BECKMAN, Second Ave. at 66th St.
NEW YORK TWIN, Second Ave. at 67th St.
68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 68th St.
TOWER EAST, Third Ave. at 71st St.
EAST 85TH STREET, First Ave. at 85th St.
PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th St.
ORPHEUM VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
86TH STREET EAST TWIN, Third Ave. at 86th St.

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
WAVERLY 1 AND 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th St.
CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd St.
23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd St.
GUILD, 33 W. 50th St.
WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th St.
CARNEGIE HALL CINEMAS, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
ANGELIKA 57, 225 W. 57th St.
PARIS, 4 W. 58th St.
CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th St.
62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd St.
LINCOLN PLAZA CINEMAS, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
REGENCY, Broadway at 67th St.
LINCOLN SQUARE, Broadway at 68th St.
84TH STREET SIXPLEX, Broadway at 84th St.
METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, Broadway at 99th St.
OLYMPIA I AND II, Broadway at 107th St.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

CRITERION CENTER, Broadway at 44th St.
EMBASSY 1, Broadway at 46th St.
EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at Broadway.
NATIONAL TWIN, Broadway at 44th St.

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

CHILDREN OF PARADISE (1945)—This lushly romantic creation, directed by Marcel Carné and written by Jacques Prévert, is a one-of-a-kind film, a sumptuous epic about the relations between theatre and life. At first, it may seem a romance set in the Paris of Balzac; it turns into a comparison of dramatic modes—it includes at least five kinds of theatrical performance. And, encompassing these, it is a film poem on the nature and varieties of love—sacred and profane, selfless and possessive. It was made during the Occupation, and it is said that the starving extras made away with some of the banquettes before they could be photographed. With Jean-Louis Barrault as the soulful mime Deburau (the Pierrot—Barrault sucks in his cheeks so much that he sometimes suggests Dietrich), the incomparable Arletty as Garance, and Pierre Brasseur as the Shakespearean actor Lemaître (the Harlequin). In French.—P.K. (Symphony Space; Jan. 30.)

ried to well-meaning Estelle Parsons, gets tragically involved with a young girl (Tuesday Weld), the daughter of a moonshiner (Ralph Meeker). The dirt-poor people look at each other expressionlessly, hopelessly, and talk in hillbilly dialect, with a pause after every line so you'll know their lives are arid.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 30.)

KNIFE IN THE WATER (1961)—Roman Polanski made this film when he was twenty-eight, but it has the low-key wryness and technical assurance you expect from directors twice as old. The sinister, unpredictable fusion of psychological drama and unromantic comedy unfolds mostly during a daylong sailboat journey. When a well-off husband and wife (Leon Niemczyk and Jolanta Umecka) take on a student (Zygmunt Malanowicz) as a deckhand, sexual tension and masculine rivalry add fire to built-in class jealousies. Using all his worldliness and expertise, the husband, a successful sports reporter, bullies both his young wife and the woefully unseaworthy young man. Polanski maintains an ultra-modern cool tone; no one leaves the water unscathed. The script is by the director and Jerzy Skolimowski. In Polish.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; Jan. 26.)

be "reborn" via plastic surgery. There are some good ideas tucked away inside the scrambled unpleasantness; the best of them concerns a banker (John Randolph) who is vaguely dissatisfied with his life and arranges a Faustian bargain for a second chance (he comes back as Rock Hudson) but doesn't have any conception of a new life. Unfortunately, Hudson seems dull to us as well as to himself.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 25 and Jan. 28.)

THE TRAIN (1965)—John Frankenheimer's elegant, agitating thriller about a Nazi colonel (Paul Scofield) determined to transport French art treasures to Germany. Led by a railroad inspector named Labiche (Burt Lancaster, in his acrobatic prime), Resistance workers do their best to stall a train filled with "the glory of France" until the Allies can overtake it. Their efforts enrage the Germans, who consider it de rigueur for the railroad to run on time; when the French execute a ten-minute delay to accommodate an Allied air raid, it's both a daring act of sabotage and a deadpan joke.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 25 and Jan. 29.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

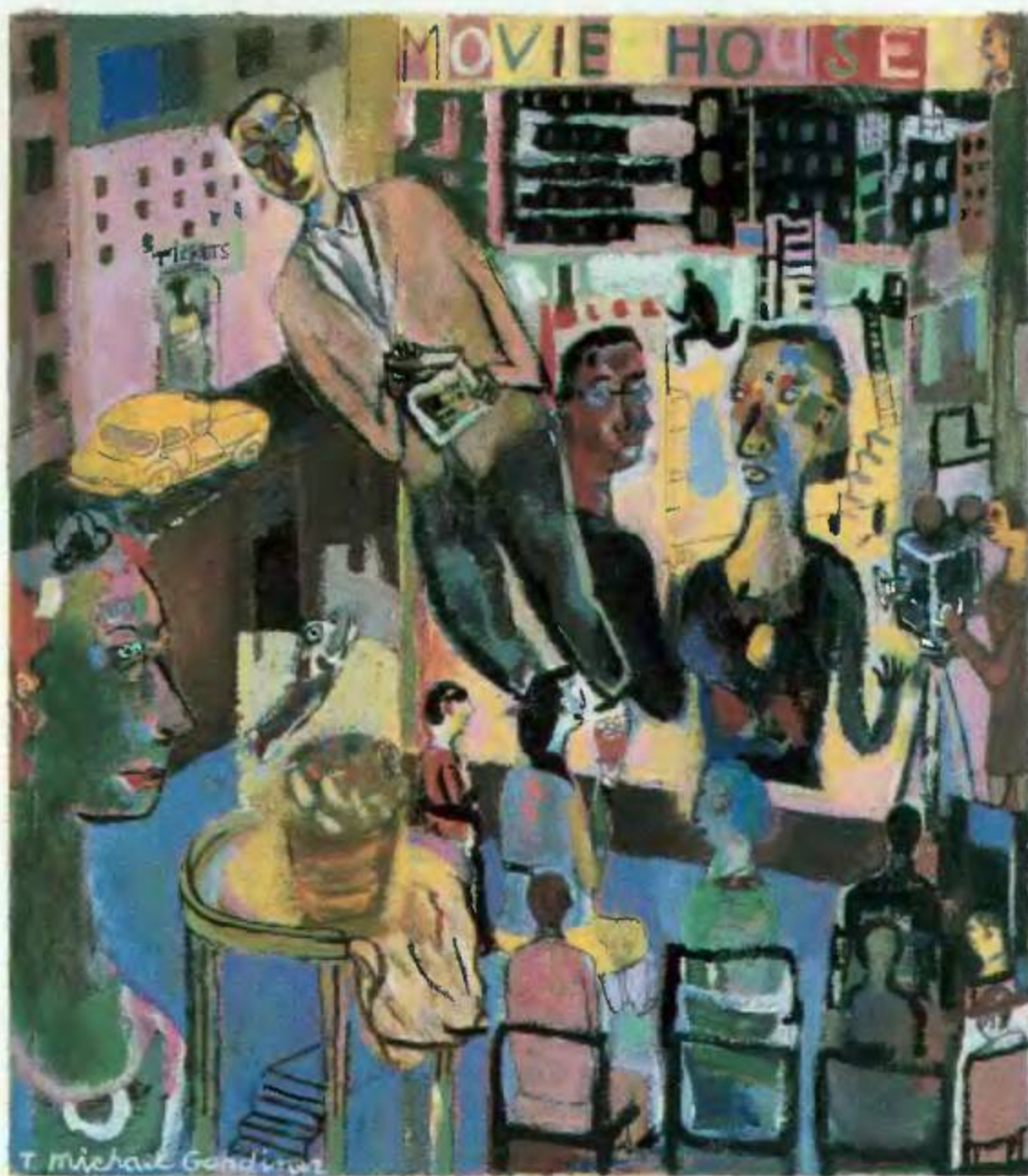
FILM FORUM 2 AND 3, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through Jan. 25: "Forty Deuce" (1982, Paul Morrissey). . . . ¶ Films starring Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., all silent. Jan. 26-27: "The Mark of Zorro" (1920, Fred Niblo) and "When the Clouds Roll By" (1919, Victor Fleming). . . . Jan. 28-29: "Robin Hood" (†) and "His Majesty, the American" (1919, Joseph Henabery). . . . Jan. 30: "The Nut" (1921, Ted Reed) and "American Aristocracy" (1916, Lloyd Ingraham).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Films directed by John Frankenheimer. Jan. 25 at 2:30 and Jan. 27 at 2: "The Manchurian Candidate" (†). . . . Jan. 25 at 6 and Jan. 28 at 5: "Seconds" (†). . . . Jan. 25 at 8:15 and Jan. 29 at 6: "The Train" (†). . . . Jan. 26 at 2:30 and Jan. 28 at 2: "The Fixer" (†). . . . Jan. 26 at 6:30 and Jan. 29 at 2:30: "Grand Prix" (1966). . . . Jan. 27 at 5: "Seven Days in May" (1964). . . . Jan. 30 at 2:30: "The Gypsy Moths" (1969). . . . Jan. 30 at 6: "I Walk the Line" (†). . . . ¶ Jan. 25 at 3 and 6: "Ringl and Pit" (1995, Juan Mandelbaum) and "Caetano in Bahia" (1994, Mandelbaum). . . . ¶ Starting Jan. 26: Silent films starring Asta Nielsen. With non-English intertitles and live English voice-overs.

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—Through Jan. 25: The Fifth Annual New York Jewish Film Festival. . . . ¶ Polish cinema, from 1930 to the present; all films in Polish, with English subtitles. Jan. 26 at 2 and Jan. 28 at 6:15: "Johnny the Musician" (1930, Ryszard Ordynski). . . . Jan. 26 at 4:15: "Border Street" (1948, Aleksander Ford). . . . Jan. 26 at 6:45 and Jan. 27 at 6:15: "The Easter Week" (1995, Andrzej Wajda). . . . Jan. 26 at 9: "Knife in the Water" (†). . . . Jan. 27 at 4: "Decalogue, Part 1" (1993, Krzysztof Kieslowski) and "From the Point of View of the Night Watchman" (1977, Kieslowski). . . . Jan. 27 at 8:30: "Camouflage" (1976, Krzysztof Zanussi). . . . Jan. 28 at 4 and 8:30: "General Pankratov's Daughter" (1934, Mieczyslaw Znamierowski). . . . Jan. 29 at 2 and 6:15: "The Girls from Nowolipki" (1937, Josef Lejtes). . . . Jan. 29 at 4 and 8:15: "The Ghosts" (1938, Eugeniusz Cekalski and Karol Szolowski). . . . Jan. 30 at 2: "Kanal" (1957, Wajda). . . . Jan. 30 at 4: "Ashes and Diamonds" (1958, Wajda). . . . ¶ Weekend showings for children. Jan. 27 at 2: "The Naked Jungle" (1954, Byron Haskin).

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—Jan. 27-28 at 2 and 4:30: Four different programs of shorts from the Prelinger Archives of educational, industrial, advertising, and amateur films.

SYMPHONY SPACE, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—Jan. 30 at 7:45: "Children of Paradise" (†).



THE FIXER (1968)—Borrowed grandeur can make a movie look fairly seedy, and in the Bernard Malamud book the grandeur was maybe already a little tattered. The story is about a Jew (Alan Bates) falsely accused of a crime in prerevolutionary Russia, and his refusal to confess. John Frankenheimer's version crawls along on its exalted intentions, and the Dalton Trumbo script, out of the dignity-and-indomitable-spirit-of-man school of screenwriting, is as flat as unleavened bread. If the script and the direction had given Alan Bates some help, he might almost have carried the picture by sheer intelligence and determination. The cast includes Dirk Bogarde, Ian Holm, David Warner, Jack Gilford, Georgia Brown, and Hugh Griffith. Shot in Hungary.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 26 and Jan. 28.)

WALK THE LINE (1970)—This John Frankenheimer picture has gone so far in deglamorizing everything that it forgets to give you a reason for watching it. Gregory Peck, a weather-beaten, gaunt-faced Tennessee sheriff, mar-

THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE (1962)—A daring, funny, and far-out thriller about political extremists. George Axelrod adapted the Richard Condon novel, and John Frankenheimer came to life as a director. This picture plays some wonderful, crazy games about the right and the left; although it's a thriller, it may be the most sophisticated political satire ever made in Hollywood. With Angela Lansbury, Frank Sinatra, Laurence Harvey, Janet Leigh, John McGiver, and Henry Silva.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 25 and Jan. 27.)

ROBIN HOOD (1922)—The big, handsome Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., version, directed by Allan Dwan, and featuring extraordinarily expensive sets and Fairbanks' beautiful athletic prowess. With Wallace Beery as Richard the Lion-Hearted, Enid Bennett as Marian, and Alan Hale as Little John (the same role he played sixteen years later in the Errol Flynn version). Silent.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Jan. 28-29.)

SECONDS (1966)—John Frankenheimer's macabre sci-fi thriller about a diabolical conspiratorial organization that arranges for people to

THE WATERS OF PEACE

I
n
the
Middle
East and
elsewhere
controversies
often center on
the control of scarce
supplies of water. That's
why the work of scientists
engaged in water-related research
may hold the key to prospective
agreements seeking peace and prosperity in
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of water knows no national boundaries. Wherever it occurs, it
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

A DOUBLE-EDGED CAPITALIST TOOL

ONE morning last summer, as Pierre (Pete) du Pont bounced along uncomfortably in a journalist's open-topped Jeep, he remarked that he had warned his friend Malcolm (Steve) Forbes about the perils of a plutocratic Presidential candidacy. "Steve doesn't know what he's getting into," said du Pont, whose own campaign for the Republican nomination in 1988 provided an object lesson in the relative power of nicknames and surnames where images of privilege are concerned. "People think it's only the Democrats who practice class warfare, but they're wrong."

Du Pont's words must have been ringing in Forbes's ears at the Republican debate in Iowa the other day, and not just because of the way his rivals attacked the core of his campaign—the flat tax—as being a sop to, well, to people like Forbes. In fact, the debate was also the first time another Republican candidate had confronted him with a topic that promises, in the days ahead, to cause Forbes at least as much trouble as tax reform: his tax returns.

The issues are connected, of course, as Lamar Alexander made clear when he called on Forbes to release his income-tax records. Alexander, who described the flat tax as "a truly nutty idea in the Jerry Brown tradition," argued that voters have a right to know how Forbes's plan to scrap the tax code and impose a single rate of seventeen per cent would benefit him personally. The answer, like the size of the Forbes fortune, has recently been the subject of considerable speculation and

even, in the finest Washington tradition, of a little study. Using figures from Forbes's financial disclosure to the Federal Election Commission (such figures are always quite sketchy), the left-leaning think tank Citizens for Tax Justice reckons that under a Forbesian flat tax, Forbes's tax bill would be cut by a hundred and seventy-four thousand dollars—roughly in half.

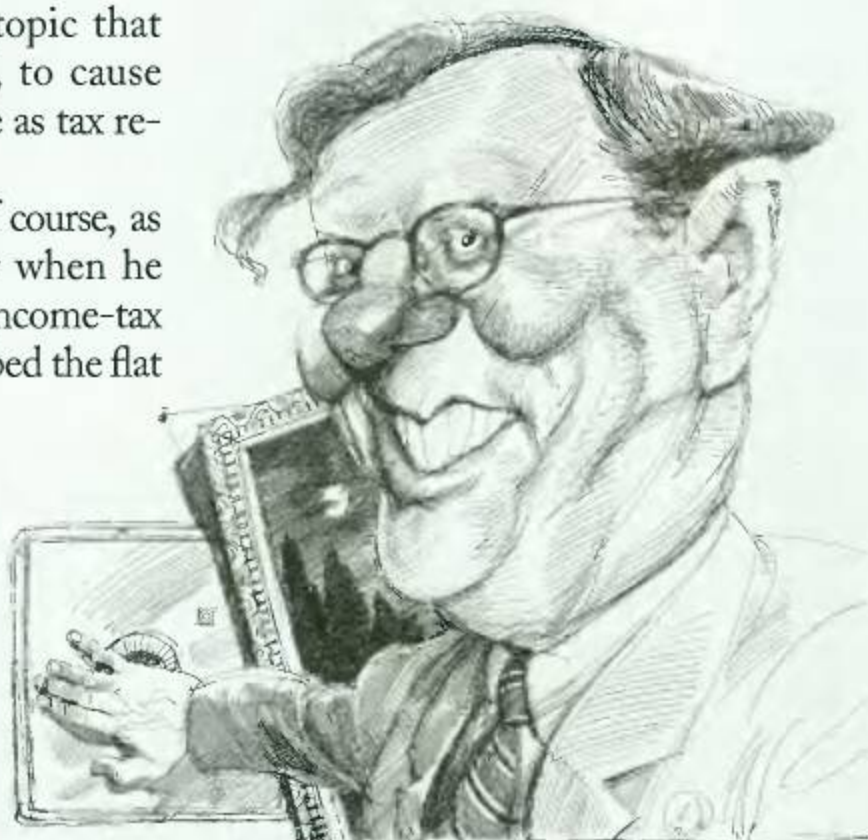
Rather than dispute such calculations, Forbes points out that a few hundred thousand dollars seems a pretty pathetic return on the millions he is pouring into his campaign. "My grandfather and father would shoot me for a lousy investment," he has said—a plausible assertion, given the character of Forbes's forebears, but one that makes the issue all the more enticing to his competitors.

"It's a morass, a beautiful morass," a senior official in the Dole campaign says. "If the problem's not that he'd make out like a bandit, what is it? What's he hiding? That he makes a lot of money and doesn't pay a lot of taxes? Pretty soon everyone's

going to be asking. As the pressure builds, his next reaction will be to put out a misleading summary of his returns—that's what they all do. But then people will start smoking over that. When did you make this trade and when did you make that trade? Why didn't you pay this tax or that tax? I'm not saying he's done anything illegal, but there's bound to be things the average guy would look at and think, That doesn't seem right. I mean, he's got *how* many houses? This is a guy who owns a helicopter—you know he's got some funny stuff going on."

HORRIFYING as that scenario sounds, Forbes's supporters acknowledge that, if his star continues to rise, he will probably feel compelled to turn over his tax records. Not long ago, perhaps, owning a helicopter was what the Republican dream was all about; now Bob Dole speaks of his father going to work in overalls, Phil Gramm calls himself "a blue-collar Republican," and Pat Buchanan puts forward an economic agenda marginally more proletarian than that of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. In this milieu—the milieu of a post-Reagan Republican Party laboring to build a new governing majority, for which working-class votes are essential—Forbes cannot afford to be seen as some secretive tycoon with a crazed eye on the White House. Recent history is replete with cases of candidates with less money than Forbes (Michael Huffington is one example) whose campaigns were damaged by their unwillingness to make their tax returns public.

For now, though, Forbes remains insistent. Following the Iowa debate, after a rally of his supporters in downtown Des Moines, he stood with that weirdly constant, slightly cockeyed grin of his and said, "Class envy has limited appeal in



Steve Forbes

American politics. Voters are less interested in the size of your bank account or the balance sheet of your parents than they are in whether you can do the job. . . . This emphasis on my finances is a diversion from the true issues." Unfortunately for Forbes, the issue of America's tax burden may be inseparable from the issue of his own tax burden (or lack thereof). All of which suggests a small irony: after months of being sold as a way to simplify voters' lives, the flat tax is likely to have precisely the opposite effect on Forbes's.

HARLEM ON EVERYONE'S MIND



Charles Rangel

ON a cold and wet morning not long before the recent snowstorm, the burned-out remains of Freddy's, the white-owned clothing store on 125th Street that has become a symbol of racial resentment, had been turned into

a shrine: candles and flowers sat in front of sodden bits of cardboard and dangling wires. Across the street and a block and a half to the east was a parking lot surrounded by a chain-link fence. There were no offerings, and no mourners, though here, too, something irretrievable had been lost. Three days before an outraged protester gutted Freddy's, killing seven people, the Pataki administration, in a little-noticed move, pulled the plug on the eighty-three-million-dollar Harlem International Trade Center, which would have occupied the plot at 125th and Malcolm X Boulevard. Congressman Charles Rangel, of Harlem, called the decision "the roughest, rawest politics I've seen in my adult life." But what actually doomed the project was a delusion almost as damaging as the one that fuelled the crowd at Freddy's.

The Harlem I.T.C., which Rangel dreamed up in 1978, was to be the colossus of 125th Street: a forty-four-story structure encompassing a luxury hotel, an international trade mart, a mall with restaurants and shops, a four-story garage, and an office complex to house government agencies and the trading offices of Third World countries. Puffy clouds can be seen floating in the skyscraper's glass panes in architectural drawings made in

the late eighties, when the vision was at its giddiest. In those palmy days, when the I.T.C. was slated to cost as much as two hundred million dollars, African heads of state regularly visited Harlem to issue ringing endorsements of the project and of its vision of "economic cooperation between African nations and black America."

There was only one problem: the federal government didn't want to move any agencies up there; neither did the city, even under the black mayor David Dinkins; nor, despite the splendid oratory, did the African nations. Eugene Webb, an old-line Harlem real-estate broker, said that he couldn't close a single deal with the trading offices, which seemed more interested in location than in racial solidarity. Yet the project, which was subsidized by a fifty-million-dollar grant from the Port Authority, could not be shut down. Over the years, more than four million dollars was spent on travel expenses, salaries, and fees for architects and consultants. Webb says that he's sorry the state finally revoked the funds, but when he's asked if the I.T.C. might ultimately have got off the ground, he smiles and says, "Not in my lifetime."

THE sponsors of the trade center operated under the faith that Harlem's unique historical and symbolic status made it different from other poor communities and thus exempt from the ordinary workings of the marketplace. The neighboring and even more impoverished South Bronx, by contrast, has no luxury hotels or snazzy malls, but it does have the Hub—a far more vital shopping area than 125th Street. Last week, Harlem and parts of the South Bronx were officially designated as sites for a federal empowerment zone. It remains to be seen whether the three hundred million dollars that should come with the program will be used to fund castles in the air or the kind of commercial and industrial development that rebuilds poor communities.

The blithe neglect of the laws of supply and demand is, of course, very different from the bitter certainty shared by the protesters at Freddy's—that the market is rigged to keep white people on top and blacks on the bottom. But both keep Harlem mired in symbolism rather than grounded in reality. The area suffers from too much politics and not enough economics. The Pataki administration wants to encourage the development of a retail

complex, with a focus on black-owned businesses, in the plot on Malcolm X Boulevard. That might be the best possible start toward a new 125th Street.

THE TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR WORKOUT

ON a dark weekday morning at 3:15, Crunch is virtually empty. A two-person maintenance crew pushes vacuum cleaners around the weight machines in the mod, high-ceilinged gym on Lafayette Street—one of several fitness clubs that now cater to insomniacs by staying open all night. "This is the roughest stretch of the night," says Bob, who until recently worked the desk at Crunch weekdays from 11:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M. "I sleep from five-thirty in the evening till ten or so." He stares vacantly at the tiny black-and-white TV set he carries to work in an athletic bag and says, "I used to be a coffee maniac, but if you drink enough of it, it stops affecting you."

At 3:40 A.M., Monty, a tall and sinewy man—one of the early-morning regulars—arrives. Bob punches his I.D. number into the computer, and an image of Monty's face unfurls across the monitor. "I used to be a modelling agent," Monty says, beelining to a treadmill, programming it for sixty minutes, and starting his run. "I'm kind of copycatting Grace Jones. After she had her baby, she would take care of it in the early evening, go to sleep, then wake up around two and go out. I'm on the same kind of New York schedule." Each word is punctuated by a sharp intake of breath. "I don't give up sleep. I don't give up anything. On Mondays I go to bed after 'The Nanny,' the rest of the week after 'Roseanne,' and I'm up at three for my MET-RX shake. I'm very Ben Franklin about my life: 'Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.' And all three of those I'm looking for."

It is now 4:00 A.M. Three people have walked in since Monty started his run. One of them—a man in his late twenties with pale, curly hair like a cherub's—abandons the front lateral press he's been flexing against. He walks over to a counter and agitatedly flips through an issue of *Harper's Bazaar*. "I have insomnia," he says, turning the pages before actually looking at them. "I've read everything in my house. My best friend just told me

he's getting married, and I feel like I'm behind the marriage curve. So, I said, 'Just get up. Go exercise.' He slaps his hands down on the magazine, then turns and makes his way toward the modular-tricep-extension machine.

At 4:30 A.M., a lawyer named John speed-walks in and rattles his I.D. number off to Bob. "I'm late," he jokes. John considers his predawn workout the most fulfilling part of his day. "At work, I have so many people demanding things from me. This levels me out. And, look, I'm not an exercise bulimic. If I'm tired, I take a day off. I'm not a nut."

At 5:00 A.M., the credits for the late movie begin to roll on Bob's TV, but the screen is so small it's impossible to read them. Slowly, the morning crowd drags in. They wear rumpled sweatshirts, and the wrinkles of bedsheets crease some of their cheeks. But their computerized I.D. photos—which flash images of horn-rimmed glasses and Ann Taylor lapels—suggest a more ironed professionalism. They are New Yorkers for whom the morning workout is more a scheduling necessity than a choice, and they seem to scowl at Monty, who brushes past them on his way home. "I think I'll go relax," he says, exiting into the dark. "I think I'll watch the sunrise."

SLICE OF LIFE

ALL those years of standing over the butcher block, and Tony Pellegrino finally got tired. His customers saw a hint of this last winter, when he went off to the Caribbean and returned handsomely tanned, his silver hair suddenly, shockingly blond, and resumed tying roasts and folding the tails of veal chops into place with an air of regret. Then, last month, the mail brought the announcement that Pellegrino, at sixty-four, had decided to retire. He had cut meat for thirty-five years, thirty-four of those at the tiny Florence Meat Market on Jones Street, in the West Village, where Italian butcher shops and bakeries that go back two generations attract shoppers citywide. He bought the shop in 1976 from Jack Ubaldi, who started it in 1936, and he maintained it as an oasis of the butcher's art. The new owner, the announcement said, is Benny Pizzuco, "a very talented butcher."

Talent is generally thought of in connection with activities other than cutting meat. But the Florence Meat Market is something of a throwback, even in New

York. "There are not too many left like us," Pellegrino said amid a stream of patrons who came in to lament his pending departure and leave gifts. "We go to the market every day and pick a piece of meat that is nice for the customer. Veal Parisienne, veal Pellegrino, the Newport steak, we invented here. We wrap nice. We present nice."

Pellegrino served a faithful coterie of customers that included Ed Koch, the late Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and Martha Stewart. Koch likes the marbled, tasty, and inexpensive Newport steaks. Onassis's chef came for the veal. The cramped, narrow shop is the antithesis of a bustling supermarket. Opera music plays softly. Sawdust covers the floor, and pictures of customers decorate one wall. Veronica, the calico cat, lounges on a bench where customers can sit. Every order is prepared individually and wrapped

Tony
Pellegrino



in white butcher paper, never shrink-wrapped. Roasts are offered herbed and spiced. Customers unsure about cooking instructions will receive them.

Lately, Pellegrino had been trying to groom a successor. He thought he had one in Pino Cinquemani, but Cinquemani grew impatient and opened his own shop in SoHo a few years ago. Eventually Pellegrino settled on Benny Pizzuco, who is thirty-nine and owned a meat market in Baldwin, Long Island, for ten years. He is from the Bronx, but his parents, like Pellegrino, were Sicilian.

Recently, Pellegrino invited his customers to come in and say goodbye. "I'm going to miss it. I'm going to cry," he said. "I'll come back on weekends and give a hand to Benny for a while, because it's like fam-

ily, this place, and he doesn't know everybody yet. But then he'll be better than me."

LOST IN THE STARS

THE operators of the Hubble Space Telescope announced last week that by taking photographs in deep space they have discovered the existence of forty billion galaxies (though one scientist allowed that this figure might be "somewhat imprecise"). This discovery, in turn, has led the nation's leading launderers to speculate that they have solved the still more ancient riddle of where all the socks go when they disappear from the dryer.

Dr. Robert E. Williams, director of the Space Telescope Science Institute, in Baltimore, seemed to confirm this conclusion, however cryptically, when he was quoted in the *Times* as saying that of the myriad galaxies now visible "there are large ones and small ones, red ones and blue ones." Launderers speculate that the telescope could soon pull into view an Argyle galaxy and, quite possibly, with greater focus, some sheer knee-highs.

Across the nation, formerly flummoxed consumers of hose stopped searching under beds and hampers. Indeed, experts allowed as how the new discovery could revolutionize a field in which they have invested countless hours. Linda Haddock, the manager of Immaculate Hand Laundry & Dry Cleaning, on West Seventy-second Street, declared herself amazed. "Our theory before was that the socks were stuck inside people's pants and they got lost in the dry-cleaning process," she said. "But maybe this is right. This could be the answer."

Surely the discovery of forty billion galaxies will make Alvy Singer (late of "Annie Hall" and Coney Island) the front-runner for next year's Nobel Prize for Physics (or whatever). It was Singer who, decades back, told his mother that the source of his anomie was rooted in his firm knowledge (the profound insight!) that the universe was expanding—rendering homework near to meaningless. Singer's mother was heard to respond, "What is that your business?!"

Now we know. ♦

"A Double-Edged Capitalist Tool," John Heilemann; "Harlem on Everyone's Mind," James Traub; "The Twenty-Four-Hour Workout," Lauren MacIntyre; "Slice of Life," Nick Taylor; "Lost in the Stars," David Remnick.



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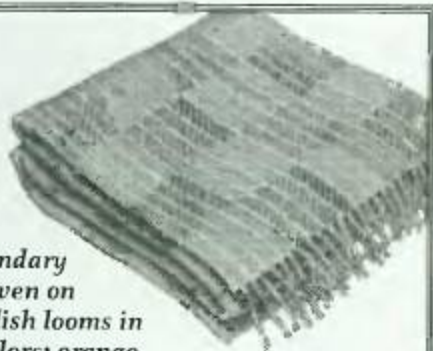
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BRAVE NEW WORLD DEPT.

HACKWORK

*While a Times scribe helps create an on-line hero, the fugitive answers
back. But who's dealing with the real dangers of cyberspace?*

BY ROBERT WRIGHT

THE *Times* has been very good to Tsutomu Shimomura. Shimomura is the computer-security expert who gained renown last year by helping the F.B.I. capture the notorious computer criminal Kevin Mitnick. And

Review" section, Shimomura became a "master at manipulating computers," a man of such intellectual range as to be "almost impossible to classify," a man with "an uncanny ability to solve complex technical problems in the manner of Star Trek's Vulcan Mr. Spock." Shimomura also had "a deeply felt sense of right and wrong"—in contrast to his nemesis, Kevin Mitnick, a "chameleon-like grifter," a "darkside" hacker. Given the moral polarity between the two men, "when their worlds collided" in cyberspace "it was obvious which one of them had to win."

Meanwhile, back in the physical world, Markoff's literary agent was a busy man. Four days after this story appeared, he struck a deal for a book that Markoff would ghostwrite for Shimomura, tentatively entitled "Catching Kevin." The book is reported to have fetched a seven-hundred-and-fifty-thousand-dollar advance, and, with foreign rights, movie rights, and interactive-game rights, the



*Does not compute: Jonathan Littman (left) accuses
John Markoff of aiding Big Brother.*

no one did more to create the renown than the *Times*'s Silicon Valley correspondent, John Markoff. Weeks before the arrest, Markoff was building interest in the drama, well ahead of the journalistic pack. As the arrest approached, his descriptions of Shimomura gained in intensity. Shimomura went from being "a well-known computer security expert" to being "one of the country's most skilled computer security experts" and then to being (on the day of the arrest) a "brilliant cybersleuth." And that was just the beginning. Four days later, in a piece on the front page of the Sunday "Week in

total came to well over a million dollars. Markoff and Shimomura, both ski buffs, retreated to a cabin near Lake Tahoe to churn out the book, which Hyperion has just published under the title "Takedown." Nice work if you can get it.

Markoff has taken a lot of grief for this conflict of interest: his ample financial incentive to inflate Shimomura's reputation in the pages of the *Times*, and to paint the whole contest with Mitnick in Manichaean tones. Much of the criticism has come from on-line discussion groups, and some of it evinces little fa-

miliarity with workaday journalism. To be sure, writing soberly is hard if melodrama will raise your income. But then writing soberly is hard anyway, given the joy that comes from seeing your byline on the front page. The average big-name journalist's sheer ambition provides enough fuel for hype so that a hundred thousand dollars here or there is a drop in the bucket. Add to this heartfelt incentive the image-polishing that newspaper reporters routinely do for valued sources (such as Shimomura), and you have—well, you have phrases like “in the manner of Star Trek’s Vulcan Mr. Spock.”

Still, there is an issue here. Whatever Markoff’s reasons were for playing the story as he did, his articles had consequence. Many TV producers and magazine editors trust the news judgment of the *Times* more than their own. When the *Times* put the Mitnick arrest at the top of page 1, with the phrase “a most-wanted cyberthief” in the headline, an orgy of coverage was insured.

The *Times* may have shaped the coverage in other ways, too. Complementing Markoff’s sketch of Mitnick as the hacker from Hell was an article he wrote on the on-line world’s vulnerability to eavesdroppers, thieves, and assorted wreckers of havoc. This helped give the story a high-anxiety spin. Might there be a Kevin Mitnick looking over your shoulder when you log onto America Online, CompuServe, or some Internet service provider? How would you feel if your E-mail got publicly posted? How many computers are your credit-card numbers in? And, finally, if things are as bad as Markoff said, shouldn’t the government step in and do something—even if that something were to include, say, expanded wiretapping powers? This line of questioning has earned Markoff the wrath of some cyberspace-privacy activists: hyping the Mitnick story could give aid and comfort to Big Brother.

As the information age continues to heighten and complicate the traditional tension between liberty and security, Kevin Mitnick becomes an icon. How dangerous was he, and how representative of cyberdangers in general? What should be done about the likes of him?

As “Takedown” makes clear, Tsutomu Shimomura is a man who shares Markoff’s high opinion of him.

He describes himself as having been “essentially precocious,” and proceeds to show how many people in the world—F.B.I. agents, criminals, on-line service executives—are less technically proficient than he. But don’t get the idea that he is just some nerd. He skis, he skates, he drives a car down a mountain at eighty miles an hour in snow chains, he gets naked with a lady. Indeed, the beginning of the great cyberchase can be conveniently dated from the moment on Christmas Eve, 1994, when he took off his clothes and climbed into a hot tub with Julia Menapace, a “tall, graceful woman” who programs computers, teaches yoga, and treks in the Himalayas, from which she had just returned.

It sounds like an idyllic Christmas, but in fact complications abound. To begin with, the hot tub is situated in the San Francisco residence of Julia’s boyfriend, John, who is a friend—or former friend—of Shimomura’s. “John was arriving home,” Shimomura recalls, “and there were clearly matters that he and Julia needed to talk about.” Clearly. A second problem: within hours of the hot-tub scene, a computer right there in John’s house will be used by some distant hacker as a base from which to launch an attack on Shimomura’s computers, down in Southern California. (To this day, Shimomura doesn’t know what to make of this apparent coincidence.) The intruder takes copies of files ranging from private E-mail to sensitive software that could help someone eavesdrop on cellular-phone calls.

These two problems are soluble. Shimomura will track down the usual suspect (Mitnick), and in the process his stature will rise so high that Julia, having wavered for chapter after chapter between him and John, will be locked into his orbit. But no easy solution can be found for a third problem, which from the reader’s standpoint is the gravest of all: Shimomura really *is* kind of like “Star Trek’s Vulcan Mr. Spock.” His voice, even when it’s channelled through a professional writer, can drain the passion right out of a hot tub:

We soaked for a while, both of us lost in thought. Finally I changed the subject.

“I want to tell you something I’ve been thinking about,” I said. “I’ve thought about a lot of things while you were away. I’d really like to try having a committed relationship with you, if you’re willing to.”

Julia smiled. She didn’t say anything, but

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she reached over and held me closely.

It seemed like we would now be able to share a lot of time together.

Umm, O.K. But could you please not share any more of it with the rest of us? Of course, if this is indeed what happened in the hot tub Shimomura is entitled to describe it. Still, readers are entitled to expect a bit more vibrance from a detective story.

Fortunately, there is another just published account of the Kevin Mitnick saga—"The Fugitive Game" (Little, Brown), by the journalist Jonathan Littman. Littman seems more comfortable than Shimomura with the detective genre and its tenor. Of a cybercriminal known as Eric Heinz, whom the F.B.I. used in a vain attempt to trap Mitnick, Littman writes, "Agent Steal's his handle, the information superhighway his gravy train."

So it isn't quite Raymond Chandler. Still, Littman does adopt Chandler's moral slant, painting a seamy yet in some ways sympathetic picture of the underworld. These cybercriminals are just ordinary human beings, victims of ordinary human weaknesses. ("That's why Eric had to wiretap her, because he loved her.") Besides, the guys wearing the white hats aren't saints, either. Whereas Shimomura's book adopts the moral framework of Jack Webb's "Dragnet"—Shimomura good, Mitnick bad—Littman's Chanderlesque thesis is more like: Mitnick not so bad, Shimomura not so good.

Markoff not so good, either. Littman is among those who believe that Markoff hyped the Mitnick story in the *Times*. He cites the description of Mitnick in an ad for the Shimomura/Markoff book—"He Could Have Crippled the World"—and tries to set the record straight: Mitnick may be a punk, but he's not a monster.

Helping Littman make that case is the fugitive Mitnick himself. Months before the arrest, he started phoning Littman, perhaps trying to cultivate a sympathetic journalist, and certainly wondering aloud why there seemed to be so many unsympathetic ones. He admits to Littman that he has made mistakes—hence four previous convictions—but maintains that his crimes have been exaggerated in the press. He denies reports that as a teen-ager, in the early nineteen-eighties, he broke into the North American Aerospace Defense

Command by computer, thus inspiring Matthew Broderick's role in "WarGames." And he gripes about melodramatic judges who have withheld phone privileges because a dial tone supposedly renders him a menace to society with or without a laptop computer. "This guy can start World War Three," he says, in parody. "He could whistle the launch codes."

Littman is plainly won over by Mitnick. He might have been less so had Shimomura's book been available to him as he wrote his own book. Shimomura shows Mitnick to be a man of petty but intense malice, nursing deep grudges against those who would frustrate his ambitions. In one Internet chat session with a criminal colleague, he refers to Shimomura as "japboy." Unbeknownst to him, Shimomura is monitoring the conversation on the screen. Oops.

STILL, give Mitnick credit for self-awareness. He may be a creep, but he has a theory explaining why. His parents divorced when he was three, and, by his account, he never got on track socially. "If I could go back in a time machine, I'd be the kid in school who did good in sports, had a good social life, played baseball, football, and didn't know anything about computers," he says. "I was fat." Perhaps his earliest criminal pastime was riding buses alone all day, all over town: he had figured out how to punch out discarded transfers so he could ride free. A friendly bus driver turned him on to ham radio, and the next stop was computers, to which he became addicted. Officially addicted: one judge sentenced him to a twelve-step rehabilitation program and prohibited him from using a computer after his release.

A central element in Mitnick's self-defense is that, though he broke some laws, he did it for fun, not profit. As a kid, he'd go on-line, enter the phone company's computers, and arrange for people he disliked, upon picking up their home phones, to hear things like "You



must first deposit twenty-five cents." Or, instead, he might inflate their phone bills by thirty thousand dollars. Not nice, maybe, but clearly distinguishable from, say, the famed hacker Kevin Poulsen, who is now doing time for, among other things, winning thousands of dollars and two Porsches from radio stations by electronically insuring that he'd be Lucky Caller No. 9, or 19, or whatever.

After being convicted of illegally downloading phone-company technical manuals, Mitnick moved on to harder stuff. Still, by his account, he retained his amateur standing. If he stole time from cellular-phone accounts, it wasn't so he could resell it but because a hacker using lots of different cellular-phone accounts is hard to catch. If he stole software that would give him wiretapping powers, it was because eavesdropping was a hobby—especially eavesdropping on the F.B.I. agents who were trying to find him. (They were not amused.)

There's no evidence that Mitnick ever planned to sell any software he took, and he raises questions about the way the dollar value of such "thefts" is often equated—in court and in Shimomura's book—with the cost of developing the software. He asks Littman, "If I went into Ralph's Supermarket and took a forty-nine-cent Bic pen, would they say I stole something they spent four million to develop and three million to market, and therefore the penalty will be seven million?"

Similarly, when Mitnick enters computers at the Digital Equipment Corporation, and D.E.C., thus alerted, spends some two hundred thousand dollars fixing a preexisting security hole, can we really call this two hundred thousand dollars' worth of "damage," as D.E.C. did? And, as for the twenty thousand stolen credit-card numbers that figured prominently in Markoff's *Times* coverage—well, even Markoff noted, lower in the story, that Mitnick never tried to use the numbers or to sell them.

The most important revisionist claim in "The Fugitive Game" is that Mitnick may well not be the one who broke into Shimomura's computer and right after the break-in left taunting messages on Shimomura's answering machine. A likelier culprit, Littman suggests, is an Israeli friend of Mitnick's who sometimes swapped illicit data with him. And it's true, come

to think of it, that in "Takedown" Shimomura never ties Mitnick directly to the break-in—only to the subsequent possession of stolen files.

In an epilogue to "Takedown" Shimomura notes that twenty-two of the twenty-three counts Mitnick faced in North Carolina, where he was arrested, were dropped in a plea bargain. He faces other, meatier charges in California, but so far he's looking at a mere eight months in jail. Shimomura offers no explanation for the lightness of the sentence, and the silence is a bit awkward, since we'd assumed all along that we were chasing a world-class criminal. But, of course, to highlight the possibility that the man Shimomura captured isn't the man who was snooping around his computer hours after the hot-tub scene would rather weaken the cinematic story line.

O.K., so Mitnick isn't quite the monster he's made out to be. He may not even be guilty of the crime that attracted a huge advance for a book about him. And, O.K., neither Markoff nor Shimomura is without sin. (Littman argues plausibly that Shimomura may have broken the law by developing software that facilitates eavesdropping on cellular-phone calls—an endeavor that Shimomura's book describes as "exploring cellular telephone technology.") Still, one thing these two accounts have in common is that they aren't conducive to feelings of security. If you use E-mail, if you've got credit-card numbers in computers on the Internet—for that matter, if you even talk on the phone—the story of Kevin Mitnick is creepy.

FOR example, Littman has an E-mail account on the WELL, a small Northern California on-line service. Right after *Playboy* E-mails him asking him to write a piece about Mitnick, he gets a call from Mitnick—who, having read the E-mail, wants to discuss the piece. Mitnick, it seems, has "gotten root" on the WELL, which means that, unbeknownst to the people who run the WELL, he can do roughly anything they can do. He can search anyone's E-mail file for any sequence of letters, including the name Mitnick. He can snatch or vaporize various bodies of data.

Mitnick had also gotten root on Netcom, a larger Internet-access provider. (It was twenty thousand Netcom cus-

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tomers whose credit-card numbers were stolen.) But what about CompuServe and America Online, Littman asks Mitnick. Aren't the really big on-line services secure? No, Mitnick says. This answer is especially alarming in the light of Shimomura's insistence that Mitnick shows no extraordinary technical competence.

Fortunately, Mitnick never took advantage of the opportunity to inflict large-scale damage on the on-line services he infiltrated. Littman successfully deflates Markoff's report in the *Times* that "hours before his arrest" Mitnick "delivered a last electronic blow that nearly destroyed the Well and the electronic community it served." Still, the alarming tone of Markoff's article on Internet security was not off key. Mitnick, explaining why the Feds are "scared of me," says it's "not because of what I've done, but because I have the capability to wreak havoc."

The very structure of the Internet turns out to be alarming. All computers plugged directly into it—an estimated seven million "nodes"—are conduits for its traffic. As the traffic passes by, they are supposed to snatch only the data addressed to them and forward the rest. But the operator of any of these computers can engage in "packet sniffing"—read passing messages without leaving signs of intrusion. For that matter, a hacker who penetrates any of these computers can do the same. As even the avowedly anti-

hype Littman observes, "the Internet is swiss cheese."

What to do? There are at least three options.

(1) Police. Pass new wiretapping laws and other measures that make it easier for officials to monitor cyberspace. Unfortunately, this approach tends to replace one source of paranoia with another. Whether you'd worry more about having your E-mail read by some indiscreet hacker or by the Feds depends on your taste and your E-mail. But there is certainly some similarity in the kinds of anxiety the two prospects induce. Note the difference between this and traditional civil-liberties dilemmas. Typically, wiretaps have been a way to catch mobsters, drug dealers, and spies. Thus the trade-off inherent in wiretapping laws was between your privacy and your physical security. But when Kevin Mitnicks are the criminals the "privacy-security" trade-off is essentially between one kind of threat to privacy and another kind. The solution in some ways defeats its purpose.

(2) Privatize. Let the on-line services, banks, and other computerized institutions get shamed by Mitnick and his ilk into doing a better job of policing their own turf. This solution won't necessarily escape the trade-off between one threat to privacy and another threat. Though the on-line services can do a lot of ship-tightening just by plugging technical

holes and building better "fire walls," some may choose to monitor cybertraffic more closely—for example, by keeping better records of where you travel on-line and when. At least, though, these measures won't be imposed on you. You can choose your preferred degree of oversight by choosing your on-line service. Already, America Online seems to be seeking a high-security profile in its unabashed cooperation with federal child-porn investigations and the like. In contrast, the management of the WELL, mindful of its sizable libertarian constituency, was ambivalent about cooperating with the Shimomura investigation.

(3) Encrypt. When E-mail and credit-card numbers are in secret code, snatching them doesn't do Kevin Mitnicks any good. The beauty of this solution is that it escapes the trade-off between one kind of paranoia and another, by making it hard for *anyone* to read your E-mail—Mitnick, the Feds, or the people who run your on-line service.

As it happens, strong sentiments about the relative merits of these three options have lately been coursing through the computer near the hot tub—the same Internet node that on Christmas in 1994 was, like the hot tub itself, softly humming with illicit activity. For Julia's then boyfriend John is John Gilmore, a well-known cyberspace-privacy activist. He is a leading member of the "cypherpunks,"

an amorphous group that gets its name from its militant devotion to the widespread use of encryption. Gilmore's computer is the home of the Internet cypherpunk discussion group.

Since "Takedown" was published, various denunciations of Shimomura and of the book he wrote with Markoff have bubbled up from that discussion group. And the reason is not, as you might imagine, that Gilmore harbors rampant hostility toward Shimomura (though in a recent denunciation of Shimomura—for allegedly developing an "evil" software tool, intrinsically prone to



"It's a good location. Two blocks north of Kissinger and across the street from Cuomo."

destructive use—Gilmore did affix to his signature this apparently jokey tip: “Don’t introduce that Tsutomu to your girlfriend”). Rather, the cypherpunks have a long history of disliking sensationalized accounts of cybercrime. After all, one source of their devotion to encryption is an intense aversion to Big Brother and any snooping he might do. And, while they believe “encrypt” to be the logical answer to the Kevin Mitnick problem, “police” is the answer they fear. When monsters are said to be loose, people have a way of mindlessly turning to the government for help. So the cypherpunks would like to keep this Mitnick thing in perspective.



They find the “police” prescription especially disturbing because of a natural tension between it and the “encrypt” prescription. Advances in encryption technology have given ordinary citizens the option of encoding their E-mails and phone calls in ways that make decoding practically impossible. So if the government wants to expand its power to eavesdrop on Kevin Mitnicks—or even wants to preserve its traditional power to do any eavesdropping the courts authorize—it will need to constrain that technology somehow.

God knows it’s trying. Hence the Clinton Administration’s controversial Clipper Chip proposal. It would establish a standard encryption system; “keys” to the code would be held securely in escrow, and when the Feds were authorized by a judge to eavesdrop they could use them. And then there’s the government’s restriction on exporting sophisticated encryption systems, which are classified as “munitions.” This restriction, cypherpunks note, weakens the incentive for American companies to create strong and user-friendly encryption software.

On the whole, these government efforts to contain encryption aren’t faring well. The original Clipper Chip proposal failed ignominiously, and a revised version (Clipper II) shows only faint signs of life. The trouble with the whole Clipper concept is that even if you solved Problem No. 1—persuading the great bulk of the cybercitizenry to use a code that can be broken with keys kept in dark rooms somewhere, rather than use freely available unbreakable codes—you would

face Problem No. 2: persuading criminals to do the same.

The restriction on exporting encryption software is starting to look similarly hopeless. Consider Phil Zimmermann, who developed the P.G.P. encryption system—Pretty Good Privacy—and then announced that anyone could have it for nothing. Someone posted the software on the Internet, which means foreigners can download it. Does this make Zimmermann an illegal exporter of munitions? The absurdity of this idea seems to have sunk in; earlier this month the government finally abandoned its investigation of him.

Parts of the Kevin Mitnick story could be appropriated by either side of the encryption debate. The F.B.I. might note that Mitnick did have a partner in crime abroad, and, when swapping computer-cracking tools over the Internet, they did use encryption—P.G.P., in fact. Cypherpunks might note that these tools wouldn’t have done Mitnick much good if we lived in their dream world, a world of widespread and strong encryption. The software he took, the E-mail he read, the phone conversations he listened to—all would have been gibberish. He would have had to find another hobby.

Of course, one can imagine crimes larger than Mitnick’s, less easily frustrated by encryption, or more dependent on covert communication over the Internet. There’s the prospect of cyberterrorism, or cyberwarfare, on a massive scale: using computers to black out power grids along the Eastern Seaboard, say, or to trigger a Wall Street meltdown. And cyberspace can be used to orchestrate epic crimes in physical space. A far-flung group of terrorists could use encrypted E-mail or encrypted phone conversations to plot and execute a biological-weapons attack.

Given that federal officials who would constrain encryption seem to be swimming against the nearly inexorable tide of technological history, these are the kinds of monster scenarios they have to conjure up to justify their efforts. And these scenarios aren’t entirely implausible. As cyberspace expands, we may see reasons to try to give the government the sort of power it seeks there. But those reasons won’t look much like Kevin Mitnick. ♦

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SCOOP

These days, when it comes to the media everyone's a critic.

BY DAVID REMNICK

EVERY good journalist is at least vaguely aware that his trade may one day go the way of phrenology—and, what's more, the population will hardly protest the extinction. The newspaper business is in a slump; networks have shut down bureaus. Many of the papers that do survive are selling themselves out, desperately whacking away at "fat" (i.e., reporters, editors), and aping the fluff of tabloid TV. A. J. Liebling wrote, in his time, of the movement toward one-newspaper cities. The question now is: Which city will be the first without any newspaper at all?

The journalism reviews, naturally, are fairly trembling with concern; the American Society of Newspaper Editors holds grave seminars on the spectre of nonexistence. The public, however, is unmoved. In popular culture, the reporter has long since ceased to be a figure of civic virtue, much less of heroism or cool. Farewell, Woodward; farewell, Bernstein. In movies and on television, the reporter character is usually a stock villain: a vulture (if female) or a ferret (if not); a confidence man; a whinnying reprise of Arthur Kennedy as the corner-cutting hack in "Lawrence of Arabia."

To get a sense of how degraded the image has become, one need only devour the latest treasure of the Library of America series (our home-grown Pléiade): the two-volume anthology "Reporting World War II." The project begins with William L. Shirer, the great chronicler of Nazi Germany, recording for his diary his anguished reaction to the appeasement he witnessed at Munich. "It's all over," Shirer wrote on September 30, 1938, after filing his daily radio report. "At twelve thirty this morning—thirty minutes after midnight—Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain, and Daladier signed a pact turning over Sudetenland to Germany. The German occupation begins tomorrow, Saturday, October 1, and will be completed by October 10. Thus the two 'democracies' even assent

to letting Hitler get by with his Sportpalast boast that he would get his Sudetenland by October 1. He gets everything he wanted, except that he has to wait a few days longer for all of it." The entry coolly anticipates the nightmare to come.

Eighteen hundred pages—and eight years—later, the second volume ends with Martha Gellhorn reporting on liberated Dachau ("The skeletons sat in the sun and searched themselves for lice"); with Philip Hamburger amid the rubble on V-E Day worrying with the Italians over the fate of Leonardo's "The Last Supper"; with Homer Bigart watching the surrender of the Japanese aboard the U.S.S. Missouri ("If the memories of the bestialities of the Japanese prison camps were not so fresh in mind, one might have felt sorry for Shigemitsu as he hobbled on his wooden leg toward the green baize covered table where the papers lay waiting"); and, of course, with John Hersey surveying the ruins and the survivors of Hiroshima.

The image of the American journalist which emerges from these books is one of real heroic effort: in the aggregate, the reporters are fearless, unpretentious, professional, vivid, and smart. It says a great deal that Ernest Hemingway's entry—"How We Came to Paris," which appeared in *Collier's* in October, 1944—does not stand out much from the pack; in fact, one of the pleasures of the anthology is to play a game of comparison and guess how much the style of the Ernie Pyle dispatch was influenced by Hemingway's short stories, and vice versa.

IT'S been a long slide, as we learn from the latest in a string of doomsday books on the contemporary media: James Fallows's new essay, "Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy" (Pantheon). Fallows is relentless in depicting the contemporary media as a gaggle of greed-soaked hustlers who do not give a damn for the paying customers, much less for truth



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and beauty. Leading an early chorus of praise, *Time's* new managing editor, Walter Isaacson, has lauded the book's "devastatingly reasonable" argument, and Frank Rich, in the *Times*, said that the "disturbing" book may be faulted only insofar as it "understates the case." While Fallows's arguments can be found elsewhere, his stature as a commentator on public radio insures that "Breaking the News" will be a subject of debate for a while, at least in the usual Zip Codes. I sense the imminent convening of a Maoist self-criticism session.

Fallows, who is the Washington editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, belongs to the distinguished tribe that includes Michael Kinsley, Gregg Easterbrook, Mickey Kaus, and Nicholas Lemann: journalists in their forties who (to generalize broadly) sprang from the upper middle class, studied at Harvard, skipped the city room, and apprenticed instead under Charlie Peters at *The Washington Monthly*, learning there the various virtues of neo-liberalism. Where the previous Harvard generation, of David Halberstam and Anthony Lukas, was grounded in street reporting and storytelling, they became analysts; if they had scoops, the scoops were mainly conceptual. In an early book, "National Defense," Fallows smartly dissected the orthodoxies of defense policy and provided a kind of handbook of reform to the likes of Gary Hart.

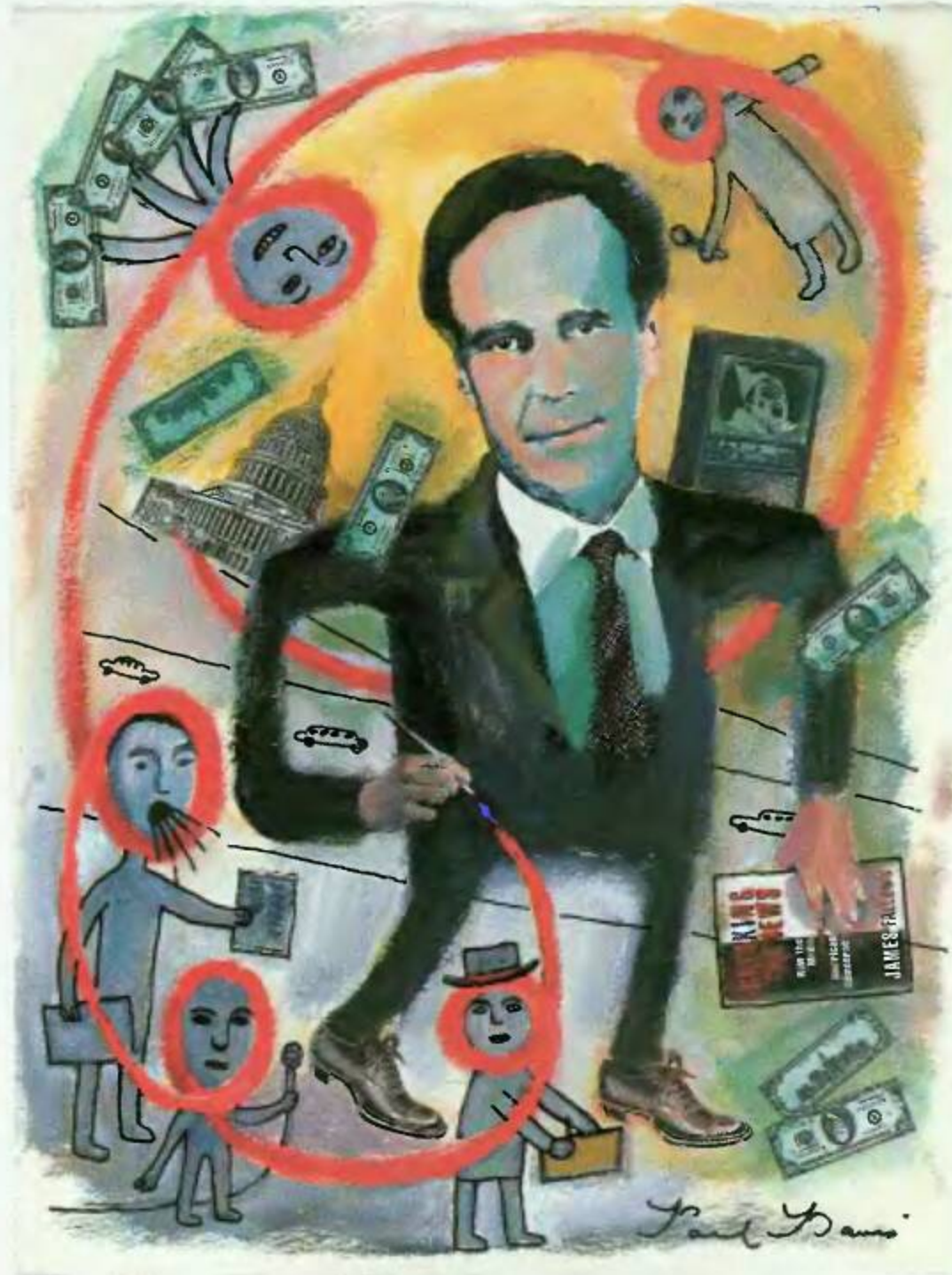
As a press critic, Fallows knows that no set of American institutions combines more power and less intelligent self-examination than the major media. There is plenty of self-flagellation and media gossip around (what is Mark Shields *really* like?), but sheer abundance cannot disguise the paucity of intelligent reflection. Howard Kurtz, at the *Washington Post* (who has written the definitive book on the talk-show explosion, the forthcoming "Hot Air"), and David Shaw, at the *Los Angeles Times*,

are among the best reporters on the press beat, but they're lonely. The best of the journalism reviews, *MORE*, lasted only seven years, in the seventies, and by comparison the *Columbia* and *American Journalism Reviews* are tepid affairs. Nor does the "opinion" press fill the gap very well. When Ruth Shalit, of *The New Republic*, tried to mount an attack on affirmative-action policies at the *Washington Post*,

son for what actually appears in newspapers and on television screens has to do with the people who produce the words and images—with the wild range of talent among reporters and editors, with their folkways and habits. (There is a lot of sentimental bilge on this subject. The only really astute assessment of the sociology of the newsroom I've ever read is by an American historian of French culture: Robert Darnton's essay in his collection "The Kiss of Lamourette.")

The classic newsroom is a peculiar place—a place where, for example, expertise at too high a level is often regarded with suspicion, as a violation of the editor's notion that you should not know too much more than the reader, for fear of alienating him. Then, there is the question of education and laws. Young reporters absorb notions of ethics, of what satisfies the narrative requirements of a "good story," of language and the audience, of how to work and behave, in the most formless and ad-hoc way. Every newspaper reporter knows in his soul that the notions he has parroted about "fairness" and "objectivity" are highly debatable and extremely vague. Certain reporters, because of their rank in a newsroom pecking order, are allowed to take liberties with language and judgment in the news columns; for others, it's out of

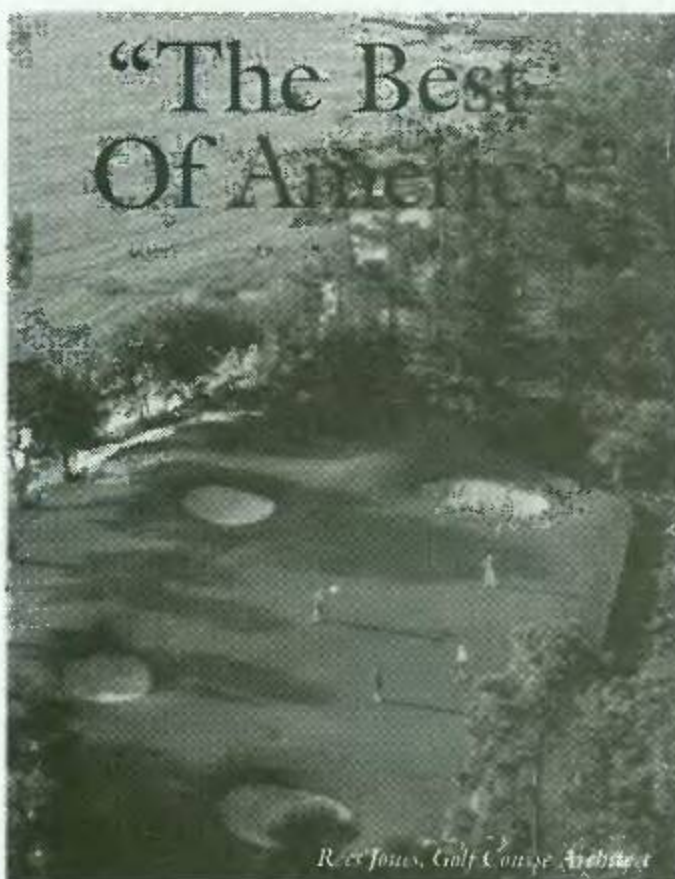
bounds. And though editors pretend there is no political bias in the news, it does not take a wizard to sense a liberal in Peter Jennings or Tom Brokaw and a conservative in the ABC White House correspondent Brit Hume or the *Times* columnist John Tierney. (There are parameters, to be sure. I doubt whether the *Times* will invite Christopher Hitchens to cover Congress for it any time soon. Too radical. Too funny.) Newsrooms are places of great camaraderie and eternal jealousy, of swaggering and insecurity, of tremendous energy and hilarious sloth. The truth is that laziness—the failure to make the extra phone call—accounts for



James Fallows at times seems like Carry Nation sent out to review a tavern: he disapproves.

she attempted an Olympian tone but made so many errors of fact that she undermined her own project—thus allowing the *Post's* publisher, Donald Graham (not exactly Henny Youngman), to dismiss the entire enterprise with the crack that *The New Republic* itself might consider a new logo: "Looking for a qualified black since 1914."

In fact, most press criticism is wondrously off base. Ideologues, from Noam Chomsky to Hilton Kramer, see conspiracies at work; industry critics tend to deal mainly with the minutiae of, say, sourcing material. What most press critics ignore is that much of the rea-



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as many media screwups as anything imagined by Chomsky or Kramer. Newsrooms are interesting, unexplored, and vital to the way the news reaches us, in words and images. They are centers of enormous power, and the public, I think, knows very little about them. Where are you now, Evelyn Waugh?

Liebling, of course, was the supreme press critic, and is inimitable. Fallows does not pretend to be his spawn. As an outsider, he shows none of Liebling's affection for newspapers. His tone is often priggish, his



gaze censorious. At times, he seems like Carry Nation sent out to review a tavern: he disapproves. And yet he has assembled much that is damning and true. While he promises a comprehensive study of the post-Watergate media, the book concentrates nearly all its energies on the Washington press corps—especially that thin top layer of well-fed souls who, in their quest to radiate insiderness to viewers from Bangor to Butte, invariably refer to the capital as "this town." The élite of the Washington press corps are by no means the best of the media. The best suggests something more in line with the authors of "Reporting World War II" or, today, Roger Cohen's coverage of Bosnia for the *Times*. But the fact is that much of America's revulsion against the media is related to the behavior of the Washington press, and, indeed, you can hardly blame America for its response.

What it boils down to is that we simply cannot imagine Homer Bigart playing the ass on "The McLaughlin Group." ("Biggo, is Hitler the winner of the week? Five seconds!") A number of factors in recent years have conspired to make coverage of Washington progressively more cynical and less deep. High-priced journalists who spend much of their time exchanging inanities on television and then hitting the lecture circuit invariably become less engaged in the real work of investigating and explaining and more engaged in playing the role of journalist—largely for the sake of padding their bank accounts. In this regard, Fallows seems to have a special animus against Cokie Roberts but also manages to frag her husband, Steven Roberts, not to mention George Will, Robert Novak, and Sam Donaldson. Reporters, it turns out, can be just as weak and

money-hungry as the politicians they cover; the difference is that the journalists don't feel much compelled to answer to anyone. When any of the usual suspects are asked whether it is really proper to make a paid appearance at, say, the Philip Morris executive "golf tournament and conference" in Palm Beach—something that Steve Roberts did last year—they either go mum or say that it couldn't

possibly affect their coverage of the corporation in question. But how could it not? Why not play a benefit for some senator and then

pretend you can cover him thereafter?

Fallows goes on to say that two of the most prevalent diseases of contemporary journalism are a reflexive cynicism—a sneering tone that implies that all politicians are crooked, nearly crooked, or, at best, interested in nothing more virtuous than reflection—and the attendant inability to cover major national issues as anything other than narratives of conflict. He seems unhappy with Maureen Dowd's coverage of the Bush White House as a house of mirth and the Clinton White House as a hall of mirrors; and he is even more disturbed by the clumsy condescension of Dowd's imitators. Fallows and some of his admiring reviewers, like Walter Isaacson, and Richard Harwood in the *Washington Post*, want to know why their brethren are not more concerned with dissecting issues than with dissecting personalities: with principles and positions than with political jousting matches.

Sorry, but I have no idea what my colleagues are talking about. The top papers are packed to the gunwales with earnest freight: process pieces, policy pieces, news analyses. Am I the only person torturing himself over breakfast reading the *Wall Street Journal* on the budget crisis? Is there a corner of Bosnia or Chechnya as yet uncovered in the *Times*?

Even more baffling is the tendency in "Breaking the News" to credit politicians and "the people" with certain innate virtues that it will not ascribe to many journalists. Fallows is inclined to regard politicians as if they were, at heart, eager policy wonks and devoted public servants—idealized versions of Pat Moynihan. They are, in the main, not. Consider the two leading politicians of the moment. One can say much in praise of Bill Clinton's intelligence or Bob

Dole's personal courage, but to overlook the capacity of both men to slither and dodge in the face of political pressure is itself to commit a journalistic blunder. "Part of the problem," Walter Isaacson worries, "is that it is easier for journalists to analyze the politics of an issue than the issue itself." But does anyone really suppose that the craven political interests of the personalities involved are beneath serious concern? In fact, isn't it at least as hard to analyze a public personality as a public issue? In any event, personality matters. In Russia, for example, it goes without question that the animal hatred between two men—Gorbachev and Yeltsin—accelerated the collapse of the old regime and, indeed, of the Soviet Union. Isaacson himself has shown quite brilliantly in his biography of Henry Kissinger how a statesman's personal ambitions and history helped shape the endgame of the Vietnam War and the course of his diplomacy. Real politics is not merely a conflict of policy papers.

In a central set piece of "Breaking the News," last year's health-care debate is described as the media's Vietnam—the issue on which the press showed itself to be chronically dysfunctional. But it is simply not true that the best newspapers, for all their faults, downplayed the substance of the Clinton health-care bill or distorted the essence of the plan in favor of the raw politics. (Fallows rightly points out that Elizabeth McCaughey's notorious and, alas, influential piece in *The New Republic* carving up the plan was filled with seemingly willful inaccuracies.) There was, and continues to be, an endless stream of long reports on the original bill, its implications, its variations, and, now, the proposed cuts in Medicare and Medicaid and *their* implications. The leading newspapers have covered this with numbing thoroughness: check the clips. The sad truth is, however, that the Clinton Administration could not claim mastery over the legislative process, and its failure to guide the debate—and then to counter the opposition's use of attack ads and propaganda to seize the initiative—was an unignorable part of the story. To have given short shrift to the Beltway politics—"the football game," as Fallows puts it—would have been malpractice.

Truth to tell, a growing number of editors, publishers, and critics (Fallows among them) display an excessive faith in

what the people *say* they want out of their journalism, as opposed to what they actually want. During the 1992 Presidential campaign, there was much wind about how the people want to hear only about issues, how they are not interested in the *Sturm und Schmutz* of political battle. Would that it were so! It is all well and good to castigate the networks for cutting down the time devoted to news documentaries and for cheapening the magazine shows, but what is one to say when a Peter Jennings documentary on Bosnia gets a lower rating than "Living Single"? For that matter, why does *People* have a bigger circulation than *Congressional Quarterly*? Is it because *C.Q.* isn't serious enough?

IN the years following the Nixon Administration's battle to the death with what Nixon saw as the elite liberal media, conservatives not only complained bitterly about lacking their "own" press but went out and established one. (Never mind that most medium-sized and smaller American papers—to say nothing of the urban tabloids—were plenty conservative already.) There is an alternative press now, a kind of loop that takes in not only the *Washington Times*, the *Wall Street Journal's* editorial page, *The American Spectator*, and *The Weekly Standard* but also a raft of newsletters, talk-radio shows (led by Rush Limbaugh's), and Internet chat. A controversy like Whitewater gets much of its momentum not through the sort of straightforward digging that characterized the work of Woodward and Bernstein during the Watergate scandal but, rather, through scattershot reporting, which then gets hyped up by Limbaugh, the British press, the *Journal*, and a band of other jolly warriors. If Nixon was the focus of the first kind of journalism, Clinton is the whipping boy of the second.

As a sobersided liberal, Fallows is certainly troubled by trends like these, but, instead of exposing them, doing battle with them, and calling it a day, he goes further. Requiring earnest alternatives, he ends with a tentative endorsement of a movement in the media—especially popular among ink-free journalism professors—called public journalism. The idea, inspired by John Dewey, is "to produce coverage that would make people feel reconnected to the public life of their

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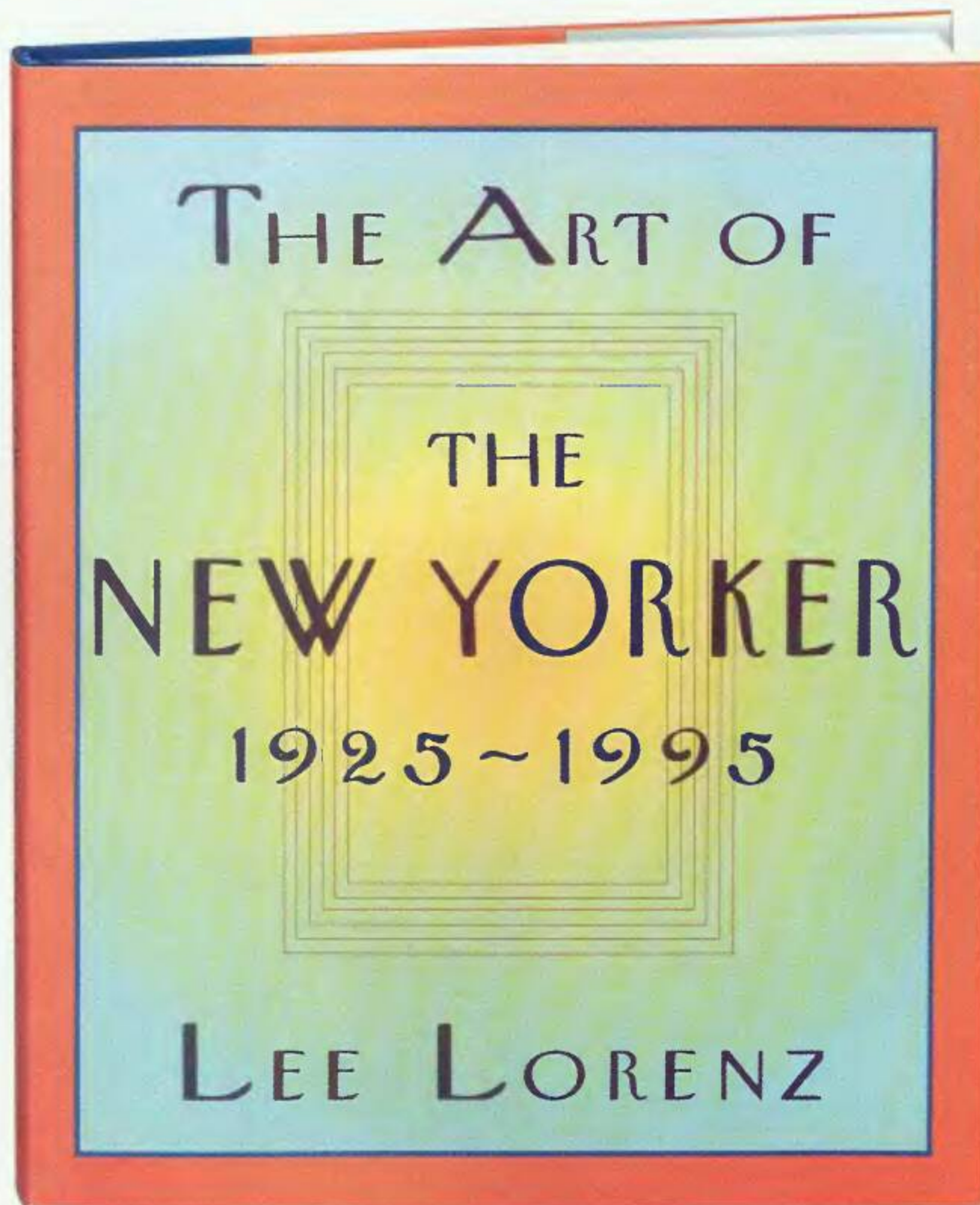
"I'll have two thousand calories in any form the chef creates."

community." Led by Jay Rosen, of New York University, and some editors of modest-sized papers, the movement argues that the media ought to cut out all the nonsense and act like part of the society they live in. The "mission statement" of the Norfolk *Virginian-Pilot's* "public-life team," for example, says, "We will revitalize a democracy that has grown sick with disenchantment. We will lead the community to discover itself and act on what it has learned."

Excuse me while I run screaming from the room. By all means, let's have journalists clean up their act: stop prancing like Lipizzaners for dubious audiences; stop sneering and start digging. If a few papers want to hold forums with their readers, bully. But why abandon the entire enterprise of informed, aggressive skepticism—even in its current state—in the hope of pleasing an imagined public? When journalists begin acting like waiters and taking orders from the public and pollsters, the results are not pretty. Not long ago, in a misguided attempt to preserve its financial body, the Miami *Herald* showed every sign of selling its editorial soul. With the help of its parent company, it polled its audience and decided that it would concentrate its newsroom resources on nine key subject

areas. Not ten. Nine. Sports is one area; foreign affairs (excepting Latin America) is not. Not long afterward, the executive editor, Doug Clifton, issued an E-mail memorandum on the newsroom computer system. "If anyone has an idea on what to do with the Bosnia story, I welcome it," Clifton wrote. "I'm embarrassed to say I long ago stopped reading this story of enormous human tragedy and significant global consequence." Clifton went on to say that the journalists covering the story may have failed to answer the readers' plaintive cry "What does this mean to me?" He concluded, "If we can't make that clear in type and visuals, the story becomes one of faraway strangers killing other strangers in cities with unpronounceable names."

Public journalism may sound like a neat idea at N.Y.U., but the changes at places like the *Herald* are the real-life result. Once an editor starts responding to every cry of "What about my needs?" the front page will read like a community shopper, and the news from Sarajevo will come in the form of A.P. briefs back near the want ads. Like it or not, part of the job of a great editor is to listen to public desires—and then, if necessary, act against them. The alternative is to scare oneself out of existence and accelerate the race to a no-newspaper town. ♦



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THE GRAVEL PAGE

The most frightening crimes have no witnesses except the ground on which they were committed. And from that alone forensic geologists illuminate cases in a way that would impress Sherlock Holmes, the science's first practitioner.

BY JOHN MCPHEE

"You have come up from the south-west, I see."

"Yes, from Horsham."

"That clay and chalk mixture which I see on your toe-caps is quite distinctive."

"I have come for advice."

"That is easily got."

"And help."

"That is not always so easy."

"I have heard of you, Mr. Holmes."

FOR sixteen years, I have had on my desk petri dishes full of Platte River pebbles. They call to mind, among other things, kidnappings and murders—call to mind Sueyoshi Ku-

saba, Adolph Coors, the late Enrique Camarena. They call to mind Sherlock Holmes (as in the lines above, from "The Five Orange Pips"). They call to mind Karen Kleinspehn, Cecily Garnsey, Ronald Rawalt, James Swinehart. They call to mind Jimmy Doolittle, Joseph Corbett, Ken Lohman, Clarence Ross. And they call to mind always—as year follows year—the fact that I have not yet written this piece. The pebbles work these varied effects especially when they are wet. Worn, pitted, stream-rounded, they are without lustre when

they are dry, but if you pour a little water on them, as I do from time to time to keep them alive, their colors brighten and shine. I took them from a gravel bar in Nebraska, near the river's right bank, not far from the hundredth meridian. From thirty-six thousand feet, as one passes over, the Platte there resembles a braid of cable. Its channels among the gravel bars are so numerous that the river is two miles wide. Choked with rock, the Platte cannot transport its load in any but an awkward way, so it subdivides and loops and braids, and hunts

for passage through its own bed. From an altitude of thirty-six centimetres—we were lying prone, elbows down, chins in hand—the assembled gravel, like a New Hampshire boulder field, could be seen for what it was: unique sculpture from distinct terrane in widely separated distant worlds.

I was traversing the continent with Kleinspehn, a sedimentologist who was then a graduate student at Princeton University and is now a professor at the University of Minnesota. Choosing stones from the gravel bar, she was trying to guess where they might once have been bedrock. She picked up a stone of graphic granite—so called because its interlocking crystals develop in a manner that suggests writing. She said, “This is a real diagnostic pebble. If there’s no graphic granite in the Laramie Range, it did not come from there.” The Laramie Range, of the Wyoming Rockies, was only the most direct and obvious source of pebbles in a region of possibility at least the size of Italy, for the streams of the modern watershed were not the sole carriers; from numerous directions, there were ancient vanished rivers to be considered. In the core of the Laramie Range are the large slow-cooled crystals of a bright-pink granite called Sherman. Many of the pebbles beneath our eyes seemed surely to be Sherman granite, more than three hundred miles from where they had started. There were banded cherts and burgundy cherts. (“I have no idea where they came from; there are Mississippian cherts around the Black Hills.”) There were gneisses, schists, and hard shales. There were foliated metamorphics, quartzites, quartz crystals (“from vein quartz in any rock—for example, from the Medicine Bow Mountains”). There were pebbles of red-bed sandstone. In the nineteen-thirties, a Nebraska man was indicted for stealing sheep from a ranch on Red Mountain, which is about twenty miles southwest of Laramie. Pleading not guilty, the defendant said that he had bought the sheep in Nebraska. In the sheep’s wool were grains of red sandstone—Triassic red sand of the Chugwater formation, the rock of Red Mountain. Samuel H. Knight, of the Geology Department of the University of Wyoming, testified

at the trial. There is Chugwater under Nebraska, yes, but it’s hundreds of feet down.

I had read Raymond Murray and John Tedrow’s textbook of forensic geology. Looking up contemplatively from the fast-moving Platte across a floodplain that ran off the curve of the earth, I realized that the concatenated pebbles Kleinspehn was describing not only were of varied provenance but also were, in macrocosm, directly analogous to the mineral assemblages that might be found, as dirt, on the skin or clothing of a hastily buried corpse. Detective work is what geologists do. In the long series of geological writings that I had undertaken, if I were to get into forensic geology this bar on the Platte River would be a place to begin.

I collected a sack of gravel and shipped it home. Over time, those prompting pebbles on my desk would send me off to unexpected places—to the Dakota Hogback in Jefferson County, Colorado, for example, and to the Pikes Peak granite, farther south, and to the archives of the National Air and Space Museum, in Washington, and to the Materials Analysis Unit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, also in Washington. The pebbles would draw me back to Nebraska—to the state geological survey, in Lincoln—and, by odd coincidence, to the river they came from, beside which lives a special agent who is an F.B.I. geologist.

At the state survey, I learned from the stratigrapher James Swinehart that Kleinspehn, despite the fact that she was only passing through, had been right at least nine times out of ten. In a sense, these pebbles were Swinehart’s specialty. His expertise is in the Cenozoic paleogeography of western Nebraska. As I spilled before him what had been the contents of the dishes on my desk, he picked up the stones one by one, turned them in his hand, and occasionally looked closely at them under magnification. As he sorted them, he remarked that the line of maximum glacial advance lay east of my gravel bar, so there would be no agates from Minnesota, or greenstones, or the like—no evidence gathered from that direction. The sources would lie west and southwest, simplifying the situation by narrowing

the field to a hundred thousand square miles. Taking two dark pebbles in the palm of his hand, he said they were acidic volcanics out of calderas in or beyond Rocky Mountain National Park—probably from the Rabbit Ears Pass area, near Steamboat Springs. To be geographically more specific, if you needed to be, you would have to analyze individual crystals under the microprobe, identifying major elements and trace elements.

Those Colorado calderas are four hundred airline miles from the river bar where I found the pebbles. How could he feel confident that that was where they came from? He had seen them before, he said—seen them uncounted times. “I started out as an art-history major,” he continued. “I learned the language. Someone asks you, ‘How do you know that’s a Vermeer?’ It’s like your grandmother walking down the street.”

When Swinehart had finished sorting my collection, he was not surprised to see that the pink-feldspar Sherman granites were by far the largest group. In any attempt to pinpoint distant geographies, they would be less useful than, say, the Rabbit Ears volcanics. Sherman granite is the core not only of the Laramie Range but also of mountains in Colorado. Sources of granite, generally, are in “larger bodies and are therefore not as diagnostic.”

Holding up a handful of sugary-textured fine-grained stones, some with green chlorite, Swinehart said, “These quartzites are almost surely from the Medicine Bow Mountains. They’re very distinctive gravels, weathered out of a quartz-pebble conglomerate, in which the pebbles flattened. The matrix has recrystallized, and so have the edges of the pebbles. The Medicine Bow quartzites are so unusual in this geological situation that you can say just where they came from.”

While a garden-variety granite might be hard to pin down geographically, if something in an assemblage is unusual the assemblage as a whole becomes useful. A banded ironstone from the Seminole Range had travelled well over four hundred miles. It was two thousand million years old and it looked like petrified mahogany, a piece off the leg of a Steinway. “There’s not a lot of it,”

he said. "But when it shows up it's a bull's-eye."

He did not know the name or home address of everything. He set aside a little pile that he referred to softly as "others."

"Others?"

"Ferrocryptomungite."

He had learned the term from an aeolian-sand expert in Denver, he said, and it meant, "It's ugly. You don't know what it is. And you hope it will go away." If you very much needed to know, you would make a thin section—a bit of rock ground to a thinness of three-hundredths of a millimetre and placed between microscope slides, from which its components, translucent, transparent, would flash their signature colors. If you were still unsure, you would do chemical analysis—"digest it and look at major ions." You could use an X-ray fluorescence spectrometer to measure the chemical composition, and a microprobe to see the composition of each mineral. To see a single crystal's chemistry, which might tie it to a source area, you would use ion-laser probes or induction-coupled probes. "You'd want to see at least a thin section before you'd publish it or take it to court," he went on. "Keep in mind—what questions are you really going to ask of these rocks?"

It may be comparatively simple to deal with a boulder, a cobble, a pebble, a granule, but when you fine down through grades of sand and reach the level of clay and silt, the degree of difficulty rises. "When you get below medium sand, you're off into chemistry-land. You'd better have a good reason for asking that question, because it's going to cost plenty to answer it. With separate feldspars, for example, you would need to look at the isotopic composition. That isn't cheap."

In choosing one pebble at a time and ascribing to it its place of origin, he was reversing a procedure more commonly applied to rock assemblages as a whole. I mean, if I had committed some unthinkable crime and run off to Florida and those pebbles had been found strewn about in my van Jim Swinehart or someone like him could have determined the provenance of each pebble in the group—and the distance of transport, and the presence and absence and percentages of rock types—and told

anyone who needed to know that I had perpetrated whatever it was on a gravel bar in the main stem of the Platte River west of the line of glacial advance and east of the hundredth meridian. What works macroscopically works microscopically as well. Mineral grains and microfossils can narrate a story. A police officer fails to report for work in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. His private automobile is found in Virginia, its trunk full of blood. The officer remains missing. Harrisburg police search the region for several days and come up with nothing. They turn for help to the F.B.I., which collects the officer's car and turns it over to Special Agent Ronald Rawalt, a geologist. With his petrographic microscope, not to mention his common sense, Rawalt studies the car. He sees a heavy buildup of soil in one wheel well and inside a bumper, and notes that the soil was wet-deposited. He sees also that the car was driven over pavement with water on it between the deposition time and the time the car was recovered. The soil is of one consistency, not the mottled layering from different locations that would usually be found under a fender. Someone stepped on the accelerator and spun the tire in mud. Like Rawalt, the Harrisburg police have assumed from the beginning that the soil in the wheel well is from a place where the body might be found. They just wonder where to look.

Going through the washed minerals, Rawalt finds microscopic fragments of glass beads and of yellow reflective paint and white reflective paint. The beads could be from any stretch of road, but the presence of both white and yellow paint suggests a hill or a curve. He finds microscopic asphalt. He finds black slag. He knows that Pennsylvania historically has bought slag from its iron smelters and coal-fired furnaces, crushing it for use as an anti-skid on highway curves. He also finds an assemblage of microfossils. He looks them up in a textbook of micropaleontology. The book includes maps. So unusual are these fossils that the pyritic limestone they come from outcrops only in two highly confined localities, one of them in Appalachian Pennsylvania. The limestone in Pennsylvania is just a narrow stringer that comes down off a mountain and crosses a

country road south of Harrisburg. Rawalt calls the Harrisburg police. He mentions the road and tells them to stop at a rising curve where both yellow and white paint are present and there's not enough room for a whole car to get off the pavement. Since the missing man is heavy, look a short distance downslope. Next day, the police call Rawalt: "We got him. He was there, under a pile of brush."

"A sort of volcanic pit, was it not?"

"Exactly," said I.

"Did you notice the soil?"

"Rocks."

"But round the water—where the reeds were?"

"It was a bluish soil. It looked like clay."

"Exactly. A volcanic tube full of blue clay."

"What of that?" I asked.

"Oh, nothing, nothing," said he, and strolled back to where the voices of the contending men of science rose in a prolonged duet.—*The Lost World.*

F.B.I. geologists look first at color, and then at texture. Next they wash the soil and do the mineralogy. They collect "alibi samples," "alibi soils." If you have said that the mud on your skirt came from your back yard, they will collect soil from your yard to prove that it did or did not. About half the work of the Materials Analysis Unit has to do with geology. The rest has to do with things like glass and paint. Bruce Hall, the special agent who is the unit's chief in Washington, points out that forensic geology is broader than the name implies, because it includes chemistry and physics as well. It also includes, in growing numbers, people who testify about environmental impacts and the causal aspects of landslides. For my purposes here, the topic remains concentrated in military puzzles and egregious crimes.

Hall once spent a couple of days on Staten Island collecting alibi samples after a "soldier" in the Bonanno crime family put five dismembered bodies in several graves with a shovel. The shovel was found with bits of soil on its kick plate. Hall collected alibi samples from every place on Staten Island to which an alibi had been—or might be—ascribed. He matched the mineralogy from the bits of soil on the shovel to the mineralogy of the gravesites. With equal care, he unmatched everything else. "You've got to be right every time," he



The crime scene at the wooden bridge over Turkey Creek, where Adolph Coors disappeared.

says. "There's no being wrong once in a while."

During the Cold War, the British traitor Kim Philby used a trowel to bury a hot camera in woods beside the Potomac River in Great Falls, Virginia. Years later, he evoked the scene in his autobiography, mentioning his fear of F.B.I. surveillance. After leaving the woods buttoning his fly, he went home and "fiddled around in the garden with the trowel." Apparently, he understood the potentialities of forensic geology, for he continued, "As far as inanimate objects were concerned, I was clean as a whistle."

Some years ago, I asked Chris Fiedler, an F.B.I. geologist, if he could think of a case in which the relevant rock had come in a size class larger than mud, silt, or sand. He remembered a time when the F.B.I. was investigating a group of potential terrorists thought to be moving explosives from safe house to safe house in Eastern states. After a suspect vehicle passed through southern New Jersey, a large rock was observed near an intersection of roads. The F.B.I. wondered if the rock was a marker. They reasoned that the potential terrorists would assume that they were being followed and would use a lead car that was free of incriminating cargo. The lead car would set large rocks in predetermined places to inform a following

car that things were so far so safe. Large rocks are about as common in South Jersey as bent grass on the swells of the ocean. South Jersey, above bedrock, is fifteen thousand vertical feet of unconsolidated marine sand. This rock was out of place, erratic, alien. The F.B.I. took it to Washington. It was a garnet schist, and in the schist was the mineral staurolite in a form sufficiently unusual to eliminate a lot of territory. A metamorphic petrologist at the Smithsonian Institution thin-sectioned the rock and determined that it came from a definable area in the highlands of western Connecticut. F.B.I. agents went there and began asking questions under the outcrops of garnet schist. They found the hideaway they were looking for. In it was evidence that ultimately led them to a safe house in Pennsylvania, full of explosives. The road had been circuitous, and that was the end of the line.

"It is evidently a case of extraordinary interest, and one which presented immense opportunities to the scientific expert. That gravel page upon which I might have read so much has been long ere this smudged by the rain and defaced by the clogs of curious peasants."—*"The Hound of the Baskervilles."*

IN Denver, years ago, Walter Osborne (an alias) bought a canary-yellow four-door Mercury sedan that had be-

longed to a couple whose name appears only as a black rectangle in F.B.I. files released under the law of freedom of information. The car was exceptionally clean. The old owners had washed it often, and they washed not just the paint and chrome surfaces, where dirt would show, but also the undercarriage, hosing everything from springs to wheel wells. Osborne was fastidious himself. He was an alkyd cooker at a Benjamin Moore paint factory, a job he did with highly commended care. He was on the night crew with one other person, had access to the factory offices, and—before he left—was able to remove every paper trace of his background.

Osborne had come to Denver to enrich himself through a single bold endeavor. Always thorough, he was not hurried. For several years, he made plans. Bank robbery had been his earlier choice, but after studying the field he came to the conclusion that there was not enough money in it. (He was close-mouthed in general, but he did confide that much to a fellow-worker.) He decided instead that he could realize the kind of wealth he had in mind if he were to kidnap the chairman of a brewing company. His attention focussed on the patterns of custom at a modestly large house on Steele Street, in south Denver. He had all day, every day, to watch it. Adolph Coors III was the person he meant to abduct.

Osborne was who knows how close to choosing his moment when large vans appeared on Steele Street and the Coors family providentially moved. Privacy and insulation from any form of celebrity were what Ad Coors and his wife, Mary, wanted most for their four children—all teens or under. And so they had decided to try living on a fairly secluded ranch near Morrison, closer to the Rocky Mountain front, where they could go off on horseback when they wished to, on long anonymous rides. The change of milieu probably added about a year and a half to Ad Coors' life, but, inevitably, Osborne followed them.

The ranch was tucked into the morning shadow of the Dakota Hogback, a narrow, sinuous, phenomenal freestanding ridge that protrudes from the plains and



"He's the alpha gopher—the other guys are just gofers."

parallels the mountain front for hundreds of miles. With its platy peaks, the ridge mimics the great mountains it borders. Cretaceous in age, it suggests not so much a modern razorback as the protruding spine of an unending stegosaurus. Dakota sandstone forms the high sharp parts, and these are underlain by gray, green, and maroon clay stones, shales, more sandstones, and limestone. A dirt road traversed the rising ground between the ranch and the ridge, and then crossed the ridge through a stream-cut gap. If you drove on that road—as Ad Coors did routinely on his way to work, as Osborne did in his yellow car—you were driving on the eroded, pulverized components of the Dakota Hogback.

Cecily Coors, at sixteen, often rode alone on the hogback, and often with her father. He was a tall man in his mid-forties with a wide grin and a quizzical near-sighted look behind his flesh-colored glasses. He was, in fact, so nearsighted that he would be—according to his ophthalmologist—lost without his glasses. In Cecily's irrepressible athleticism, her love of outdoor sport, she was much like him, and she raced him flat out down trails in Aspen, flew with him in the company plane, went to Bears games with him in Denver. (One day, a good deal later than these scenes, she would be ranked third among downhill skiers in the United States.) There was a right-angle bend in the dirt road close to the hogback, and a wide flat space where a car could pull off. She passed by there on her way through the scattered junipers and up the sage-covered slopes. The yellow car was there, and there again. She would stop her horse and ask the driver if he wanted something. He thanked her, no. "He was always very friendly," she said recently, standing at the bend in the road. "We saw him a lot—up on our property. He had a very distinct face. He had, to me, a small face—with sunglasses. He always had a rifle with him."

They would have been prescription sunglasses, for Osborne was extremely nearsighted and could not have seen much of anything without them. She took him to be a hunter, a deer poacher,



"Let me tell you what it's like to be seven in this city."

as her mother did on the several occasions when she, too, noticed the yellow car. Deer poachers scouting deer from automobiles were common in that country, never mind that it happened to be a game preserve. At least once when Cecily was riding with her father, they met Osborne at the bend.

Two miles from the ranch, on the east side of the hogback, was a wooden one-lane bridge over Turkey Creek. Almost every workday, Ad Coors crossed that bridge soon after eight in the morning—as Osborne had come to know. After Osborne decided that his planning was complete, he arrived at the bridge before eight one winter day, turned the yellow car around, backed up, and blocked the bridge on what would be, to the arriving Coors, the opposite side. Coors, listening to the radio in his International Travelall, left his ranch, went through the gap in the hogback, and turned north. Dressed, as he was, in a billed cap and a nylon windbreaker, not a suit, he would not have been taken for the chairman of a significant corporation on his way to his office. His tie, though, was secured by a clasp in the shape of a ski, and the ski was monogrammed "A C III." In his right rear pocket was a white handkerchief with maroon stitching: "A C III." On

his key chain was a small silver pen-knife engraved "A C III." A label in his trousers said that Hickey-Freeman had "customized" them "expressly for Mr. A. Coors, III." His wristwatch was a Patek Philippe, Genève. He wore white deerskin gloves from Gokey. The tie—dark blue, with small white rings and red dots—was from the Aspen Country Store. The windbreaker was from Abercrombie & Fitch. He approached the bridge, got his two front wheels on it, and stopped in puzzlement, blocked by the yellow car. He seems to have rolled down his window and shouted something. He got out, closed the door, and faced Osborne—a heavy-shouldered man, with myopic eyes under a brown fedora. Neither man ever told this story, but evidence would carry the narrative. A woman whose house was several hundred yards away heard loud voices. If they were coming from the bridge, Ad Coors was resisting, reacting to whatever Osborne might have said. The clash became physical. Both men's hats fell past the bridge railing and landed at the edge of the stream. Coors' eyeglasses came off his head and ended up in the water, a lens broken. Gun muzzle in Coors' back, Osborne seems to have tried to march him across the bridge toward the yellow car. Coors probably

made a sudden move that electrified Osborne's nerves. The woman who had heard the shouting voices now heard gunfire. She would say it was the sound of lightning hitting a tree. Another woman—two and a half miles away, hanging laundry on an outdoor clothesline—heard it, too. Blood fell on the bridge railing and, in larger quantity, on the bridge. The yellow Mercury left the scene—digging out, leaving tracks, dirt flying.

Osborne's plans unravelled. In days that followed, he did not respond to responses to a typed ransom note that he sent to Mary Coors. His victim died. Burdened with a corpse, the yellow Mercury went south, outboard of the mountain front, and then, on an unpaved road in Douglas County, turned west and began to climb. There had been no snow in some time, and what there was had been scraped away. The road seemed to be made of muddied dust. Pink-feldspar dust. The dust was granite. If you were to collect such dust and do an analysis of it, it would look very much like granite. Compared with the source bedrock, the dust would be deficient in iron and magnesium, that's about all. The minerals break down at different rates. With altitude, the road became pebbly with granite, the hue brighter. It was old rock, ten times as old as the rock in the Dakota Hogback, but, as Colorado granites go, it was singularly and anomalously young. It was Pikes Peak granite—a geology that stands alone, and can write its name in dust. This was ponderosa country, its colors green and pink. At seven thousand two hundred feet, the yellow car turned in at a dump used by the Shamballah Ashrama, Brotherhood of the White Temple. Well beyond the mounded trash, the body was left in the forest. It would not be discovered—the fate of Ad Coors would not be learned—for seven months.

Returning to essentially clean pavement, Osborne now went east. Apparently, the next unpaved surface he drove on consisted of black slags and drifted sands on New Jersey's best-known barrier island. He all but hid the yellow car in some tall spartina grass near a large municipal dump. There, on the eighth day after the confrontation at the wooden bridge, he soaked the interior

with gasoline and tossed in a lighted match. The fire was hot enough to melt some of the window glass. From the dump, it is only a fifteen- or twenty-minute walk to Mediterranean and Baltic, Park Place and the Boardwalk, and the rest of Atlantic City.

The F.B.I. gave a breathtaking performance in figuring out who Osborne was—assembling his story in dozens of ways, of which geological insight was just one. Something like thirty special agents worked on the case in Colorado, and a great many around the country. They learned that he was thirty-one—



blue eyes, brown hair, a hundred and seventy pounds, six one, Caucasian. They learned that he had bought a .32 by mail order from Dakin Sporting Goods, in Bangor, Maine. They learned that he had practiced with his guns on targets at the Coors rifle range, near Golden. They learned that as a light and occasional drinker he preferred Coors. (They seem not to have learned that Ad Coors was allergic to beer.) They learned from their lab in Washington that the ransom note was probably written on a Royalite portable typewriter. A miner in the hogback, annoyed by frequent vandalism, said he tended to notice lingering cars, remembered a yellow Mercury, and was pretty sure that its license began with an AT and a 62. They attempted to do surveillance on each Mercury in Denver in the State of Colorado's 6200 series (colors were not listed), and they failed to locate only one. It was registered in the name of Walter Osborne, of 1435 Pearl Street, Denver. It had been bought from Hack Sells on the Little Lot, a dealer in Denver. A salesman confirmed the transaction and said the car was canary yellow. They learned that Osborne had worked at the paint factory. Although records were missing there, people remembered a number of things about him, including the fact that some five years back he had worked in Los Angeles for an ice company. The F.B.I. found the ice company, where Osborne had joined a union. Asked by the union to name a beneficiary for a life-insurance policy, Osborne had declined, saying that his parents were dead. Asked, then, to name a friend, he named Joseph Corbett, Sr., and gave an address in Seattle. Meanwhile, the lab in Washington matched

a fingerprint on Osborne's first Colorado application for a driver's license to a fingerprint filed under fugitives from justice. It belonged to Joseph Corbett, Jr.

An F.B.I. agent in New Jersey, reading a description of Osborne's car, remembered the blistered hulk near the Atlantic City dump. He checked its motor number. The F.B.I. in Colorado learned that Osborne could be an incautious driver. Two weeks before he ended the life of Ad Coors, he had been stopped by an officer of the Colorado State Patrol for crossing a yellow line and passing a truck at the crest of a hill. This was a few miles from the bridge that became the crime scene. When the policeman asked him what he thought he was doing, he answered flatly, "I got tired of waiting." After the F.B.I. learned that alias Osborne had paid his fine with a money order, they went to the National Check Cashing Company, which operated only in greater Denver, and went through four hundred thousand money orders. Of interest to them were five. They learned that he had ordered several sets of Monte Carlo handcuffs from Big Three Enterprises, on Sixth Avenue, in New York. Also cashed in New York was a money order that he had mailed to Kline's, on East Forty-second Street, a subsidiary of Prince Enterprises that handled only one product: leg irons.

The F.B.I. went to May D & F, a Denver department store, whose label was in "The Cruiser"—the suspect's brown fedora. May D & F also sold Royalite portables, and, because typewriters have serial numbers, the store routinely recorded purchasers' names and addresses. Remarkably, a sales clerk remembered a cash sale that occurred four months before the crime. He looked through his files. The buyer was William Chiffins, of 1735 Pennsylvania Street, Denver. At the conclusion of the interview, the investigating agent showed the sales clerk five pictures. Did one of them resemble the buyer? That one, said the sales clerk, touching the likeness of Joseph Corbett, Jr.

Corbett had served in San Quentin and had later escaped from Chino. Second-degree murder. The F.B.I. knew that already. Reviewing the roster at San Quentin, they noticed that when Corbett was there Arthur John Cheffins was

a prisoner, too. They learned from Cheffins that it had been his job to give I.Q. tests to fellow-prisoners. He remembered that Corbett had scored 148. It had also been Cheffins' job to give social-fitness tests. Corbett told Cheffins that he admired the intellect of Friedrich Nietzsche—especially the sentiment "Might makes right." If he said things like that, Cheffins advised Corbett, he could not give him much of a grade in social fitness. Corbett replied, "Look at Nagasaki. The only thing that was important was the result of the bomb."

Alias Osborne was seen at his apartment at five-thirty the morning after the scene at the bridge. In a locker in the basement he left a gasoline can, a two-burner Coleman gas stove, a nest of aluminum pots. In his apartment were two tent poles and a twelve-piece picnic set. All these things came from Sears. Figures had been added up on the carton that held the picnic set. A clerk at Sears remembered jotting down the figures, and remembered the buyer. He had come in after Christmas. He had inquired about a discount because the goods were out of season. The clerk asked why he wanted such equipment at that time of year. Corbett said, "I like to camp in winter. I'm going to camp this winter in the mountains."

Corbett was at large more than eight months. Meanwhile, the F.B.I. removed layers of material from under the fenders of the burned yellow Mercury and established the sequence of deposition. They collected four hundred and twenty-one "knowns"—Colorado earths of as many provenances—with which to compare "the questioned stuff." The analysis was assigned to Richard Flach, who, with a colleague nearly two decades earlier, had established forensic geology as a function of the F.B.I. Seven months after the crime, a pizza-truck driver who went target-shooting at the Shamballah Ashrama dump discovered the Hickey-Freeman trousers labelled "expressly for Mr. A. Coors, III." The engraved penknife was still in a pocket, and so was the maroon-monogrammed white handkerchief. The tie clasp and knotted tie and the Abercrombie & Fitch windbreaker—bullet holes in the back—were some distance away. Coors' wristwatch and gloves were separately found the next day. A few weeks later, the F.B.I. at last found Corbett: they

pulled him out of a hotel in Vancouver, British Columbia, and walked him through the legal wickets that returned him to Colorado. When asked about the Coors kidnapping, he would fold his hands, lower his head, and resolutely say nothing about it. He was tried in Golden. He denied the presented story and never confessed. In the completed mosaic of evidence were enough solid items to condemn him many times over; the role of the geology was to tie him to the country.

While careful at all times to cover his tracks, he had been writing his itinerary on the bottom of his car. There were four depositional strata. The fourth and outermost contained the sands, silts, paper fibres, cinders, glass wools, and black slags that surround the Atlantic City dump. The sands of this fourth stratum were rounded and marine. All sand grains of the three inner layers were sharp and fresh. They contained the pink feldspars of the Pikes Peak gran-

ite, the pink feldspars of other Front Range granites, the light-gray quartzose sands of the hogback's Dakota Group, the varicolored sandstones, limes, and clays of the Morrison Formation. Richard Flach, now retired in Florida, refers to the oldest and innermost layer as "the odd man out, except that it could be related generally to the Rocky Mountain Front because of the pink feldspar." He goes on to say, "The second layer related to the country around Coors' ranch. It placed Corbett within a couple of miles of the crime scene. That is, it was consistent with the minerals of that locality, consistent with his being there. The third soil was from near where the body was found."

It was Flach's case—the testimony his to present. Flach was a geology-and-botany major from Northwestern University. The chief defense attorney was a graduate of the Colorado School of Mines. He attempted to discredit Flach, to impugn his competence. This led to



"We don't use the Congressional Budget Office. We have our own figures."

a moment when an assistant defense attorney said, "I don't think he's qualified."

The judge said, "Sit down. He's qualified."

Corbett was sentenced to life imprisonment. The F.B.I. sent out a press release citing the "major importance" of the geologic evidence. Flach agrees softly: "It carried a little weight."

Corbett now lives free. Coors' daughter Cecily Garnsey lives with her husband in a community of town houses arranged for privacy but very close together,

where small patches of lawn are decorated with little blue signs mentioning to intruders the prevailing security system. She accompanied me along the mountain front and up to the high ground of Shamballah Ashrama, where she had never been. Under the ponderosas there, the big crystals of the Pikes Peak granite were crumbling like pink sugar. The air was warm, dry, at seventy-two hundred feet. She wore tennis shoes, tan shorts, a blue sleeveless canvas blouse, and pearl earrings. She was as trim as she had been

on downhill skis. Shell casings of every calibre were all over the dump. Shoulder to shoulder, a score of special agents had walked here for days collecting her father's remains. She asked, almost of herself, "Didn't he bury him?" The dump was an ugly moment in beautiful terrain. After taking it in slowly, she described one of her sons, recently graduated from college, who had worked summers for the Arapahoe County police. "He's such a Sherlock Holmes person," she said. "He is waiting to get into the F.B.I."

BALLOONS OF WAR

What value did the War Department place on the Geological Survey's studies of world terrain?

A lot, especially when balloon-borne bombs started exploding in America.

For a long time he remained there, turning over the leaves and dried sticks, gathering up what seemed to me to be dust into an envelope, and examining with his lens not only the ground, but even the bark of the tree.—*The Boscombe Valley Mystery.*

JAPAN in 1944.

After a free-balloon flight test near the end of September, Technical Major Teiji Takada, of the Ninth Army Technical Research Laboratory, took a walk on the Ninety-nine League Beach, at Ichinomiya. Satisfied with the test, of which he was in charge, he simultaneously rejoiced in the temporary relief from pressures applied by his military superiors and began to concentrate on another question. "The only thing left for further study was the planning of how to meet the requirement of huge amount of sand on the beach," he later wrote. (The translation, done six years after the war, is by Ken Suda, of the Central Meteorological Observatory, in Tokyo.) "After the balloon has disappeared in the blue sky, I walked about on the sand beach, picked up a handful of sand at several places to wrap it in a piece of paper and putting it in my pocket, went down the sand dune in the evening dark feeling the chill of autumn wind."

It had been a long two and a half years since B-25s from the American carrier Hornet, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle, bombed Kobe, Nagoya, Yokosuka, Yokohama, and Tokyo, agitating the Japanese populace, embarrassing the military, and set-

ting in motion the free-balloon project that was now about ready. It was intended specifically as retaliation for the Doolittle raid. The unmanned balloons were meant to carry fire bombs and high-explosive bombs to the homeland of the United States and drop them there to kill people, destroy structures, and start forest fires. The preparation had consumed so much time because the technological problems were acute. This was not a simple matter of loading up some bottled germs and floating them over Russians in Manchuria, as the Japanese had once done. These balloons had to travel more than five thousand miles. In sunlight they would rise and in darkness fall. With excessive rising and falling, they would fail their mission. They would also fail their mission if they leaked too much hydrogen. They should not drop their bombs until they reached North America. Bombs away, the balloons should then destroy themselves.

In addressing and fulfilling each requirement, Technical Major Takada and his numerous colleagues at the research laboratory and their boss—Major General Sueyoshi Kusaba—were creating an intended instrument of terror, the world's first intercontinental ballistic missile, a Japanese V-1 with twenty times the range, if not the accuracy, of the German rocket. The jet stream was not yet called by that name, but the great strong current of the winter air—in its sinuosity and remarkable velocity—had been the recent discovery of the Japanese, and the jet

stream, they calculated, could drive a large balloon to North America in three days. You could find the high wind at and above thirty thousand feet. With an altimeter and a battery, you could cause gunpowder to ignite and jettison ballast when a balloon, cruising, descended to thirty thousand feet. They tested that successfully. With an altimeter and a valve, you could get rid of hydrogen if the sun were to expand it to a critical extent. You could program the valve to release hydrogen at thirty-eight thousand feet. That, also, they tested successfully. Within these designated altitudes, in the jet stream, a balloon would go through x cycles in y hours, expending z pounds of ballast. Now the balloon is over the United States. The ballast is gone. The next discharge of gunpowder releases the bombs and lights a sixty-four-foot fuse that dangles like a shroud line from the balloon's equator. For eighty-two minutes, the fuse shortens, and then it ignites a flash bomb that blows up the envelope. Mission accomplished, missile destroyed. To carry all that gear, the balloon would need a lifting capacity, at sea level, of one thousand pounds. You could do that with a diameter of ten metres.

At first, the balloons were made of conventional rubberized silk, but there was a way to make an envelope that would leak even less. An order went in for ten thousand balloons made of *washi*. Produced in rectangular units not much larger than a road map, *washi* was paper, derived from a mulberry that was much



Who was launching the balloons? It was inconceivable that they could have travelled five thousand miles.



"And one for the old prostate."

like American sumac. Practically impermeable and very tough, it represented a step backward to a higher technology, like a bark canoe. In three or four laminations, the paper was glued with devil's-tongue flour. Devil's-tongue is a Japanese potato. Workers stole the paste and ate it. Many workers were high-school girls, whose fingers were nimbler than the fingers of any other class of people. They were told to wear gloves, to keep their fingernails short, and not to use hairpins. They assembled the paper in many parts of Japan. They had no idea of the purpose of their work. When scuttlebutt suggested the truth to them—that they were making *fusen bakudan* that would fly all the way to America and ignite fires—they laughed. Large indoor spaces were required for the envelope assembly—sumo halls, soundstages, theatres—but somehow secrecy was preserved.

Before preparations were complete, B-29s attacked the home islands, and the balloon project that had begun as an act of revenge became an act of desperation. At last, the balloons were ready. The jet stream was ready. The order came down to release at 0500 on November 3rd. Ichinomiya, on the Chiba Peninsula, east-southeast of Tokyo, was one of three launch-

ing sites. Major Takada watched as the products of ten years' research and two years' labor were let go, one by one. In his words, "The figure of the balloon was visible only for several minutes following its release until it faded away as a spot in the blue sky like a daytime star."

The Military Geology Unit of the United States Geological Survey was established in June of 1942, six months after the Japanese attack on Hawaii and virtually at the same time that work was beginning in Japan on the intercontinental balloons. The Geological Survey people had imagined that geological knowledge could help the military effort, so they made up a sample folio of information useful to an invading army, randomly choosing Sierra Leone as a model. They located water supplies, strategic minerals, and places where road-building materials could be obtained. They described the terrain. According to Kenneth Lohman, who was one of the original geologists in the section, "The War Department bought it hook, line, and sinker," but the utility of such folios would be greatly reduced by a distinct and unexpected problem: "The military, we found out, couldn't read a topographic map." Presented with contours, depressions, noses,

and reentrants on a flat sheet of paper, the military people tended not to see terrain in three dimensions. Therefore, as the geologists began making folders on strategic settings all over the world, they developed terrain diagrams—pen-and-ink sketches of landscape as if from a low-flying plane.

Ken Lohman is ninety-eight years old. I met him when he was ninety, and interviewed him in, among other places, a hospital room in Virginia, before I had to suppress my interest in forensic geology in order to spend a number of years on the geology of California. When I next telephoned Lohman, to inquire about renewing our talks, he was ninety-seven. He said—a little more than firmly, and with emphasis on the first

and third words—"Where have you been?"

I went to see him at his home, in Fairfax Station, Virginia, near Washington. A few years ago, he stopped going regularly to his office at the Survey. I found him, as before, engaging, direct, humorous, and amiable. He speaks in a strong low-register voice. He is tall and large-framed, and his hair is now for the most part fringe, superthin on top. He is out of the habit of a bourbon-and-water every night before dinner, a Martini at the Cosmos Club before lunch on Fridays. He has thick eyeglasses. He peers at you from behind the glass like a teller from a cage.

"We worked eighteen hours a day," he reminded me, speaking of the war years. "We practically slept on the job. We helped the military pick landing beaches. We were looking for places with shallow water near shore, not a shelving beach or a cliffy shore. No quicksand." They worked in the Interior Building, only two physical blocks but two thousand political miles from the White House, for the Geological Survey at that time had a long way to go to please, if not placate, the sitting President. As geologists of the day would tell you, Roosevelt didn't like the Survey. First, Her-

bert Hoover was a geologist, a mining engineer. Second, Roosevelt had a special interest in the properties of the water at Warm Springs, Georgia, which he had found therapeutic for the polio that had stricken him in 1921, and as early as 1927 he had written a request to the Survey for a study of the Warm Springs water, seeking an analysis of its obviously distinguished chemistry. The Survey replied that you could find similar water in the pipes of an average city. In a consequent exchange of letters, Roosevelt expressed considerable annoyance. When he became President, his request for a thorough study acquired mass. Foster Hewett, of the United States Geological Survey, was named leader of a team that went to Georgia. There—to Hewett's surprise—he encountered a German consultant. This was Doktor Paul Haertl, managing director of Bad Kissingen, consultant also to Saratoga Springs. Even while Hewett was making the scene, Roosevelt was seeking a second opinion.

The American and the German conferred. At one point, Doktor Haertl asked Hewett, "Are you studying the gas that comes from the water?"

Hewett answered, "We are."

Haertl said, "Have you examined the shape of the bubbles?"

Hewett's pupils doubled in size. He said, "No, we haven't."

Haertl said, "Oh, you must examine the bubbles. Some bubbles are round, but others are square."

Hewett (all this would appear in U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 1589) said, "Do I understand that you know places in Germany where the bubbles issuing from water are square?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Hewett," Haertl said. "The bubbles of gas at Bad Kissingen are square. You see, Mr. Hewett, when you put your arm in water that contains gas, bubbles appear on the flesh. Now, if these bubbles are round they produce no effect, but if they are square they have the effect of stimulating the nerves of the skin. It is extremely important that you determine whether these bubbles are round or square."

Hewett spent two and a half years studying Warm Springs, and concluded that the magic fluids were "ordinary rain water without exceptional physical or chemical properties." It fell on Pine Mountain, followed a bed of quartzite

to a depth sufficient to heat it, and came up along a fault. After this information was printed in his report, a bound copy was sent to the White House. It was not acknowledged.

Ken Lohman commented, "There was a period of about six years in the thirties when no one was hired by the Survey. Roosevelt wanted to believe the German, who said the bubbles came up in the water and the corners scratched your skin. That was just bullshit."

When the Survey's Military Geology Unit began its work, it consisted of Lohman and five others in a very small corner of the Interior Building's fifth floor. "In no time, it was two hundred, and we had the whole floor," Lohman said. These geologists all had broader backgrounds in the science than geologists would tend to have in later years—a fact that fit the spread of war. By year-end 1944, they had contributed several hundred major studies across the whole spectrum from invasions to defenses, constituting, at the White House, the Survey's lost prestige. Their principal link with the military was Colonel Sidman Poole, G-2—"a fine man," as Lohman remembers him, "a bit on the pompous side, as colonels usually were." One day early in the New Year, "Poole came in with a couple of little bags of sand. Very much hush-hush. People who weren't classified couldn't even get into the place. Poole wanted to know where the damned sand came from."

Balloons had been sighted, explosions heard, from California to Alaska. Something that appeared to witnesses to be like a parachute descended near Thermopolis, Wyoming; a fragmentation bomb exploded in bright-red flame; shrapnel was found around the crater. Actually, the paper balloons were shaped much like our hot-air balloons that float in the morning and evening sky, and were about three-quarters as large. As is detailed in Robert C. Mikesh's "Japan's World War II Balloon Bomb Attacks on North America," a P-38 Lockheed Lightning brought down a paper balloon near Santa Rosa, California, another was seen over



Santa Monica, and bits of *washi* paper were found in the streets of Los Angeles. Two paper balloons were recovered in a single day in Modoc National Forest, east of Mt. Shasta. Near Medford, Oregon, a balloon bomb exploded in thirty-foot flames. The Navy found balloons in the ocean. A P-47 Thunderbolt brought one down in the Aleutians. Balloon envelopes and other apparatus were found near Kalispell, Montana; Lame Deer, Montana; Nogales, Arizona; Estacada, Oregon; Stony Rapids, Saskatchewan. Balloons came down at Fort Simpson, on the Mackenzie River, in the Northwest Territories; and at Marshall and Holy Cross, Alaska, in the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta—failing, like so many others, to destroy themselves.

Under the headline "BALLOON MYSTERY," *Newsweek* of January 1, 1945, told a story about two woodchoppers who found the balloon at Kalispell. On January 2nd, an item appeared in the *Times* under the headline

BALLOON IN OREGON
Like That Found in Montana
It Is Laid to Enemy Origin

The Office of Censorship sent out an all-points memorandum to newspapers and radio stations asking them to make no mention of balloons and balloon-bomb incidents, lest the enemy be encouraged to release even more.

Where conventional balloons would have a hanging basket, the *fusen bakudan* had a cast-aluminum four-spoke wheel festooned with sandbags, like bulbs pendant from a chandelier. The sand device developed by Technical Major Takada was an automated hopper. For the most part, though, the sand was precisely weighed in amounts of as little as three and as much as seven pounds, and wrapped in paper identical to the paper of the envelope, snugly secured with twine. These ballast units were programmed in pairs for sequential release by the battery-and-altimeter gunpowder method, always getting rid of two bags at once, on opposite sides of the ring, so as not to tilt the envelope and risk losing gas. Most of the ballast was gone by the time a balloon crashed in North America, but a few sandbags were found. And the War Department asked Colonel Poole if his geologists could tell where the sand came from.

Remember, it was inconceivable that the balloons had travelled five thousand

miles from Japan. American Military Intelligence was no more prepared to believe that than were the high-school girls who were gluing the paper in numerous parts of Honshu. It was thought that the balloons must be coming from North American beaches, launched by landing parties from submarines. It was thought that the balloons might also, or alternatively, be coming from the submarines themselves. It was thought that the balloons might be coming from German prisoner-of-war camps, or from Japanese-American relocation centers. They might even be coming from small Pacific islands. Possibly their purpose was to transport enemy agents. Poole handed over to the geologists several cupfuls of sand.

One close look and they eliminated North America. Everything was wrong. It was not our sand. Chemically, petrologically, it was not the sand of the mid-Pacific, either. The geologists, with their polarizing microscopes, their dark-field stereoscopic microscopes, their X-ray diffraction cameras, settled in for a tighter view. Ken Lohman was more or less in charge. He is a micropaleontologist and a specialist in diatoms, a class of microscopic algae. He was not discouraged by the palmful of sand that was given to him. "It was enough to work on, anyway. I stewed up the stuff, and I got more than a hundred species of diatoms." The sand had obviously come from a beach. It contained a mixture of recent diatoms and fossil diatoms, and that, to Lohman, meant beach sand. The geologists read the papers of Hisashi Kuno on orthopyroxenes from volcanic rocks, which dated only to 1937 but had quickly established him as one of the world's most gifted petrologists. His paper on Hakone Volcano was the most detailed study ever made of that kind of rock. Reading Kuno in the light of the mineral percentages they were seeing in the sand, they eliminated chunks of country.

Julia Gardner was a paleontologist whose most concentrated experience was in small mollusks. She put the ballast under her microscope and looked at pieces of small mollusks. She looked as well for coral. You can identify coral even if it is smaller than a sugar grain. There was no coral—not a hint of coral. Coral doesn't

grow in cold water. Along the coasts of Japan, the northern boundary of coral comes near the latitude of Tokyo. It approximates the thirty-fifth parallel. Gardner was eliminating the southern third of Japan.

Clarence Ross—mineralogist, petrologist—found nothing granitic in the mineral assembly. His son Mac Ross, himself a Survey mineralogist, recently remarked to me, "If the sand had derived from a garden-variety granite, it would have been difficult to trace, or impossible, but it contained an unusual suite of minerals." His father and the others looked at geologic maps of Japan, and eliminated all beaches north of the thirty-fifth parallel where streams reached inland to granite bedrock. That done, the search became more subtle. The assemblage included hypersthene, augite, hornblende, garnet, high-titanium magnetite, high-temperature quartz. Most remarkably, the hypersthene was fifty-two per cent of the total. Even allowing for wave concentration of this heavy mineral, so large a percentage was quite unusual. The hypersthene and the augite would be of volcanic origin. Augite is typical in volcanic rocks, hypersthene a good deal less so. The hornblende and the garnet were metamorphic, so you'd have to see both volcanic



and metamorphic rocks upstream from the beach. The high-titanium magnetite was igneous in origin. In Mac Ross's words, "The assemblage does look a bit strange. The high-temperature quartz suggests melts that you would expect from lava flows. You wouldn't find that in Hawaiian basalts. Shards of glass in the sands also speak of lavas. There's no mica. As euhedral crystals, hypersthene grows in a melt. The crystals are then erupted. They are frozen into a volcanic glass. What follows is the weathering out of the glass. How it got to be fifty per cent is strange. There's so much hypersthene that you'd have to have a local igneous rock that was not all that common."

Patiently, exhaustively, Clarence Ross searched the literature, studied the maps, and related the rock types to his own petrologic descriptions. He was a large, imposing man with a mane of gray

hair. His son says of him, "He had a professorial manner. There was no trivia. Small talk was beyond him. He was forty-nine when I was born, so in some ways he was like a grandfather. When he came home, he always smelled of immersion oils." Mac's wife, Daphne, remembers her father-in-law as "a forthright person with a dominant personality, a perfectionist, who didn't take fools lightly." Ken Lohman describes him as "an oddball guy, not sociable, a damned good man on rocks, without much interest in anything else," and says, "His stuff was definitive."

Kathryn Lohman, who had been a specialist in foraminifera for Texaco, looked through the ballast sands for these single-celled microscopic creatures with calcareous shells. Forams are highly varied, fairly ubiquitous, almost wholly marine, and have been around more than five hundred million years. Kathryn found quite a few of them that had been described north of Tokyo and on the east coast of Japan. On this planet, they occurred nowhere else. "She went to the Smithsonian and got papers from Japan," Ken Lohman told me. "Her forams were just as definitive as the diatoms were." When I asked him to describe her, he said, "Anything I say would be colored by the fact that I was very much in love with her. She was very good-looking. She played the piano beautifully. I played the violin. We never had a harsh word in fifty years. It was easy to like her. She was friendly."

Kathryn was born in Canada, grew up in Winnipeg. I had asked the question in their living room, she gone now thirteen years, he aged ninety-seven. As I looked around the room, I saw fresh newspapers, copies of *Physics Today*, copies of *Science News*. A headline on a geological publication said, "Gulf's Mahogany Find Excites Explorers." There was a church-model Hammond organ and eleven speakers—five for the Hammond, six for the stereo. Spread out on a table were his Beethoven sonatas, his Beethoven concertos, his Haydn symphonies, his copy of Jules Verne's "A Journey to the Center of the Earth." Outside were his hundreds of azaleas. He remarked out of nowhere that he was expecting momentarily a load of mulch.

I concentrate here on Ken Lohman because he is an eminent, arresting sci-

entist, and because he is alive. "In 1993, I developed an irregular heartbeat," he said, evidently reading my mind. "It was very scary. You could die from it. But I'll never go to another nursing home. God Almighty."

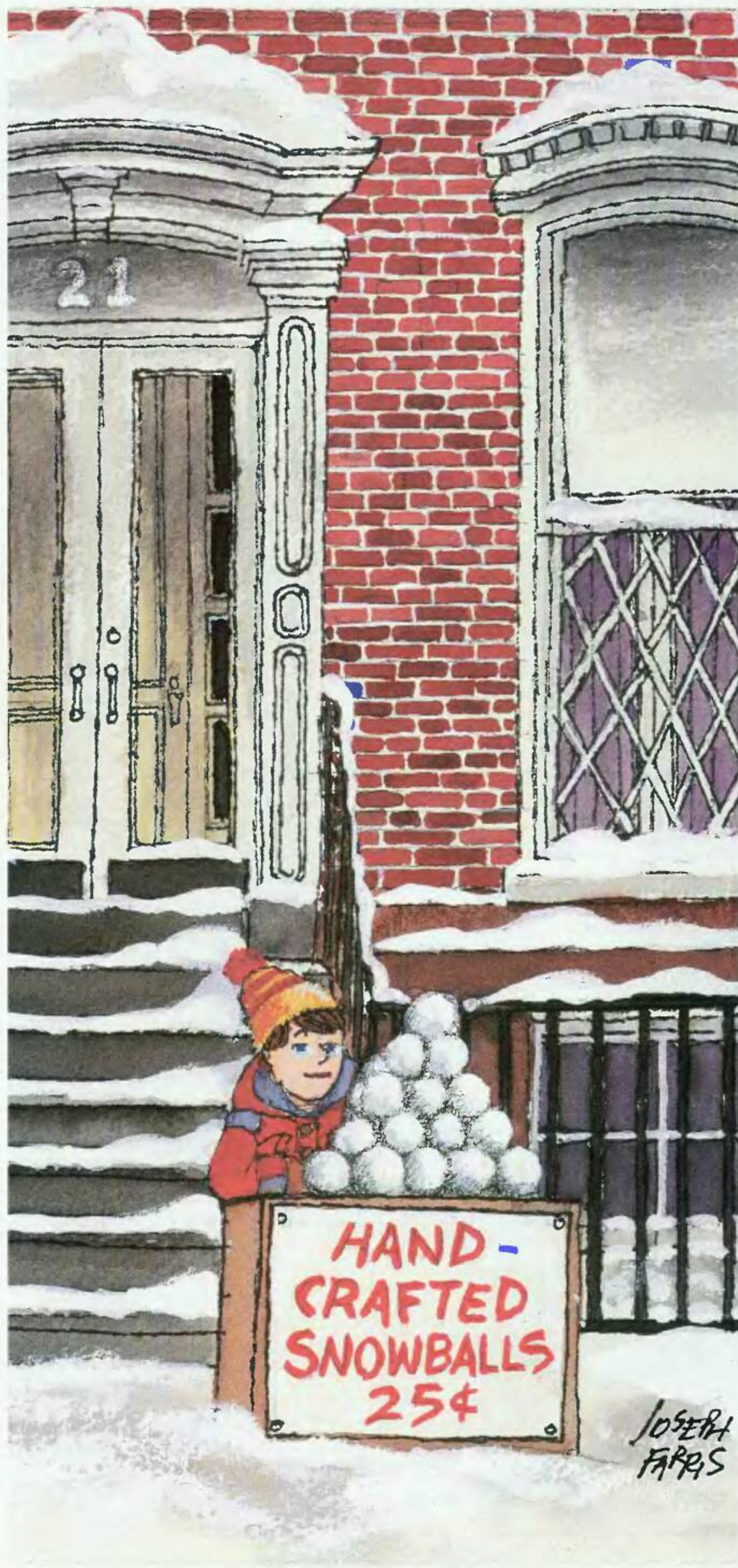
Here and there on the walls were pictures in rich color—a third of a metre wide—of intricately patterned circular objects that came close to resembling Buddha's gongs. They were diatoms, magnified seven thousand three hundred times. In my notes somewhere was the first description he gave me of these creatures on which he had centered his life's work: "They're just damned interesting things to look at. They're beautiful. They're useful fossils, Cretaceous to Recent. Hydrosilica, $\text{SiO}_2 \cdot n\text{H}_2\text{O}$ —the same composition as opal. There are no opals before the Cretaceous, and no diatoms before the Cretaceous. There's no connection, but it's interesting. The average size of a diatom is forty to sixty microns. A big diatom is two hundred microns."

A micron is a thousandth of a millimetre. I remarked that a Princeton professor of geology had told me that all the diatom experts in the history of the world have yet to look through their first teaspoonful of diatoms.

Lohman said, "That is wrong. It's more like a tablespoonful."

There are three hundred genera of diatoms and twenty-five thousand species. "I've had seventy-five years of looking at these buggers. You get to recognize them. You know two or three thousand species just like that. You can take a look at a slide and say, 'That's Middle Miocene.' Lake-surface diatoms are totally different from bottom ones. Diatoms live on ice floes. They live in hot springs. There are twenty-one million diatoms per cubic inch of diatomite. In one litre of seawater are a hundred thousand to one million diatoms. The water is clear—it doesn't even look cloudy, they're so small."

Lohman dropped out of Caltech after his freshman year. He learned photography. Johns Manville hired him to photograph diatoms for advertising purposes. Johns Manville mined diatoms. ("All the sugar you have ever eaten has been filtered through diatoms.") He also found a job as a chemist. His chemistry was from Hollywood



JOSEPH
FARRIS

High School and the freshman year at Caltech.

One day, his boss said to him, "Do you have a Ph.D. from Harvard?"

Lohman said, "I don't have a Ph.D. from anywhere. I don't have an undergraduate degree."

The boss looked oddly pleased.

Lohman asked him why he had said "a Ph.D. from Harvard."

The boss said, "Your predecessor had a Ph.D. from Harvard and he wasn't worth a fart in a high wind."

Lohman eventually went back to Caltech—a freshman in 1916, a sophomore in 1926. He completed his undergraduate degree and did graduate work there to the master's level. When he was working in the Military Geology Unit during the war, he did not yet have a Ph.D. In the nineteen-fifties, on leave from the Geological Survey, he would return to Caltech to complete it.

As the research went forward on the fifth floor of the Interior Building, balloons continued to arrive in North America. Near Klamath Falls, Oregon, a snowplow plowed into one. Balloons came down in or dropped their bombs on Bigelow, Kansas; Holstein, Iowa (incendiary explosion); Nelson House, Manitoba; Oxford House, Manitoba; Waterhen Lake, Manitoba; Fort Chipewyan, Alberta (in all, four balloons landed around Lake Athabasca); Hay River, Northwest Territories (bits of envelope, two unexploded incendiaries, seven sandbags beside the Great Slave Lake); the Brooks Range (two); Echo, Oregon (now in the National Air and Space Museum); Walla Walla, Washington; American Falls, Idaho (bomb burst in air, fragments were found); Kadoka, South Dakota; Pyramid Lake, Nevada; Delta, Colorado (explosion, shrapnel); Desdemona, Texas; Laguna Salada, Mexico; Grand Rapids, Michigan; and—the longest known flight, ending in a shower of incendiary fragments—Farmington, Michigan, ten miles from the center of Detroit.

"I should have got a Purple Heart," Ken Lohman told me. "I was working so hard I got hemorrhoids. They'd find another balloon. Poole would come in with another handful of sand."

The fossil diatoms—their number and variety notwithstanding—were all Pliocene in age, and that removed from consideration a great deal of parent rock. In an 1889 paper by the French paleon-

RADIATORS

Not theirs the stove's inflammatory drama,
or the refrigerator's frosty glamour,
or the trim, glazed hauteur of window frames,
but the warmth of the first, the erectness of the last.
Standing by a window, we feel on our knuckles a kiss
of heat like a dog's nudge, and remember that
the room lulls our blood not by accident but
by basement-based thermodynamic plan.

With their thick fins and many spines these cast-
iron soldiers stand at attention in the least
obtrusive corners, like museum guards,
sleepy and dull, in rooms of glowing treasure—
ourselves. Their weeping, whistling valves declare
a love of us that makes them throb and simmer;
they call out for our praise for their fidelity,
but we scorn them like monarchs born of the sun.

—JOHN UPDIKE

tologists Jacques Brun and Joannes Tempere, Lohman found descriptions of diatoms identical to the ones in the ballast sands. The research area of the Brun and Tempere paper was around Sendai, on the Honshu coast northeast of Tokyo. He also read papers by "Japanese diatomaniacs," who described the same fossils on the same coastline. Brun and Tempere covered forams, too, and they were the forams that Kathryn Lohman was finding in the ballast sand. Taking these things together with the discoveries of Clarence Ross and Julia Gardner, the Military Geology Unit, which had already narrowed its focus to the northerly thousand miles of Japan's eastern coasts, now narrowed that by eighty per cent. More scientific literature, more sand, more study of geologic maps, and they were ready to be specific. They told Colonel Poole that the sands seemed to have come from one or both of two locations, roughly two hundred miles from each other. Only because of the coral line, the geologists slightly favored the more northerly site—the great beach of Shiogama, close to Sendai. To the other site the minerals were even more closely matched, but the coral line was so near that if it was the launching place of the sand under their microscopes they would expect to see a trace amount of drift coral, and none was there. The southerly site was the Ninety-nine League Beach at Ichinomiya.

Joseph Conrad's Charlie Marlow, sailing down the coast of Africa on his way to the heart of darkness, passed a French man-of-war anchored near "the edge of a colossal jungle so dark-green as to be almost black, fringed with white surf." The French ship was firing its guns. "There wasn't even a shed there, and she was shelling the bush. . . . In the empty immensity of earth, sky, and water, there she was, incomprehensible, firing into a continent." Only in the postwar's lengthening hindsight did Japan's balloon campaign reach the metaphorical status of that French warship. General Kusaba launched more than nine thousand bomb-laden paper balloons. It was his hope and expectation that ten per cent would complete the flight to North America. Physical evidence of some three hundred of them was found on the North American mainland. A reasonable estimate is that a thousand made the crossing. Only two landed in Japan—one on northern Honshu, one on Hokkaido. No damage. In the end, the balloons represented the enemy's fourth and last and most sustained attack on the United States mainland in three years and eight months of war. In February of 1942, Japanese Submarine I-17 shelled an oil field up the beach from Santa Barbara, and damaged a pump house. In June, Submarine I-25 shelled a coastal fort in Oregon, damaging a baseball backstop.

In September of 1942, the I-25's crew assembled and launched a Yokosuka E-14Y-1—a small float plane—that attacked Oregon. Its incendiary bombs ignited small fires on a ridge of Mt. Emily. The balloon campaign killed six Americans, all in an instant. Five of them were Sunday-school children. A minister and his wife took them on a fishing trip in southern Oregon, east of the Cascades. The minister was some distance away when his wife and the children came upon a balloon bomb. They called to him in excitement, and a moment later were dead.

All through that fall and winter, airplanes scrambled in pursuit of the balloons, but the airplanes were singularly unsuccessful. Lightnings, Hellcats, Thunderbolts, Corsairs, they literally were not up to it, and they destroyed fewer than twenty, only two of them over the United States. In altitude and sometimes in speed, the paper balloons were beyond the reach of American interceptors. On the coast of Washington, the Fourth Air Force set up a balloon early-warning line—Cape Flattery to Queets to the mouth of the Columbia River. One result of a secret meeting of military planners on January 17, 1945, was this classified statement: "Should balloons approach in hours of darkness, visual observation will not be effective." Frequently, pilots reported balloon sightings and the balloons turned out to be Venus.

Japanese propaganda broadcasts mentioned great fires and an American populace in panic. One broadcast said that five hundred casualties had occurred. Another broadcast raised the figure to ten thousand. Several million airborne Japanese troops were said to be ready to follow the balloons. The woman and five children who died in Oregon were the only American mainland casualties of the Second World War.

Geologists would develop some hyperbole of their own, especially after the war, when stories about the accomplishments on the fifth floor of Interior enriched the scientific conversation. Of the three balloon-launching sites, Ichinomiya was nearest to Tokyo. The two others—Nakoso and Otsu—were scarcely ten miles apart and about a hundred miles up the coast from

Ichinomiya, in the direction of Shiogama, the survey's other suggested beach. So far so true. Not without encouragement from Colonel Poole, the geologists tended to make a memorable story even more memorable. After the Survey's sand analysis, according to Ken Lohman, "Jimmy Doolittle went over and bombed hell out of the place." He said Poole told them that in so many words. He said, "We had all kinds of classified information. It wasn't in the newspapers, don't worry. Doolittle came up from Okinawa and bombed hell out of the whole area. The Japanese general was crestfallen." From geologists over the years, I've heard many versions of the same remark: "Photoreconnaissance showed the plant. Jimmy Doolittle bombed the bejeezus out of it, and there weren't any more balloons."

B-29s destroyed two of the three hydrogen plants that supplied the balloon project. Jimmy Doolittle was there in spirit. General Kusaba was indeed disappointed—a sentiment he expressed in person to a visitor from the United States Geological Survey late in 1945. By April of that year, Kusaba had spent nine million yen on his balloon campaign. In the military structure were people higher than Kusaba who considered that a very great waste of yen. He was ordered to give up the launchings. "Many factories which were manufacturing various parts of balloons were de-

stroyed," he later told a reporter. "Moreover, we were not informed about the effect of this weapon throughout the wartime. Due to the mentioned hardships, we were compelled to cease operations." The American press, in its way, had been as effective as the B-29s, for what Kusaba needed in order to impress his superiors and keep his project going was proof that the people of the United States, in dread of the balloon missiles, were in psychological disarray. From the American press Kusaba had nothing to show. After the deaths of the children in Oregon, the War and Navy Departments in Washington at last broke the silence of censorship with press releases informing the public of the danger. Headlines quickly bloomed, some in full eight-column width: "JAP BALLOONS REACH COAST" (*San Francisco Chronicle*), "NIP BALLOONS HAVE LIT IN WEST, ARMY REVEALS" (*San Francisco Call-Bulletin*). Soon Smilin' Jack—comic-strip aviator, lantern-jawed Lindbergh—was encountering paper balloons. But they were just newspaper balloons. The real ones had stopped coming.

The coast around Otsu and Nakoso, backed with granite highlands, had been considered unlikely by the Survey as a site for launchings. To Lohman and his colleagues, being right on one site and missing the two others was a matter of zero



"We're looking for the kind of bad taste that will grab—but not appall."

discomfort. "We always got the same kind of sand," he told me. "The samples we had were all from the same beach."

In a magazine article in 1953 Lincoln LaPaz wrote, "Scientists studying the balloons in this country (I was one of them) believed that the next step on the Japanese war plan, scheduled for the fall of 1945, was to be a balloon-borne bacteriological attack." A university cosmologist, LaPaz during the war had

been technical director of the Second Air Force Operations Analysis Section. About the atomic bombs exploded over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he wrote, "Some people talked about how inhuman we Americans were. If they had only known what we avoided! I don't know how much influence the anticipated Japanese balloon offensive had on President Truman's decision to use the bomb, but it seems reasonable to

guess it was a factor in his consideration."

On March 10, 1945, a paper balloon that had crossed the Pacific Ocean, the Olympic Mountains, and the Cascade Range descended in the vicinity of the Manhattan Project's production site at Hanford, Washington. The balloon landed on an electric line that fed power to the building containing the reactor that was producing the Nagasaki plutonium, and shut the reactor down.

DEATH OF AN AGENT

How dangerous was it for an agent in the D.E.A. to be working with the Mexican police? A teaspoon of dirt taken from a dead man's body told the story.

"Well, Watson, I will not offend your intelligence by explaining what is obvious. The gravel upon the window sill was, of course, the starting-point of my research. It was unlike anything in the vicarage garden. Only when my attention had been drawn to Dr. Stern-dale and his cottage did I find its counterpart."—*"The Adventure of the Devil's Foot."*

WHEN the textbook "Forensic Geology," by Raymond C. Murray and John C. F. Tedrow, appeared, in 1975, its jacket copy lavished credit on Sherlock Holmes as the progenitor of this branch of the science. The text within was more restrained, and ascribed the credit to Conan Doyle. It quoted Dr. Watson on Holmes' knowledge of geology: "Practical, but limited. Tells at a glance different soils from each other. After walks has shown me splashes upon his trousers, and told me by their colour and consistence in what part of London he had received them." But the textbook's authors—professors of earth sciences at Rutgers University—were too serious to lean on the wisdom of the detective himself, and did not quote him. If they had, they might have increased—even more than they did—the number of geologists in the F.B.I., all of whom have the book. For the most part, they are F.B.I. geologists as a result of reading it. Chris Fiedler, for example, who started out doing clerical work for the Bureau, happened to have geological training. After he came upon Murray and Tedrow's textbook, he had himself transferred to the lab.

The Geological Survey and the Smithsonian stand ready to help. The F.B.I.

prefers the Smithsonian. Not only is it just across Connecticut Avenue but it is also generous in donating its time and effort, whereas the Geological Survey might present a stiff bill. Once a suite of minerals has been washed and sorted out, it can readily be presented to people like Daphne Ross for powder X-ray diffraction, Eugene Jarosewich for the electron microprobe, Sorena Sorensen for cathodoluminescence. A cathode-ray tube shoots electrons into a sample, and, in Sorensen's words, "images the presence of trace elements." She remarks on her astonishment at the role mineralogy can play: "You can fingerprint soil samples from a crime scene. You see how special two rocks a hundred metres apart can be."

For some F.B.I. geologists, Connecticut Avenue could not be called convenient. Ron Rawalt lives on the South Platte River, in North Platte, Nebraska, where he and his wife have three children and ten acres. "I like walking around out there. The gravel is definitely of granitic origin: a lot of tourmaline gravel, a lot of feldspar—the white and the pink feldspars, the cleaved crystals. It's just a pretty sand and a pretty gravel. With that are all your micas that are inherently associated with your granites. It's a sparkling bed through the water, all the flat faces reflecting the sun."

Rawalt is a large, competent, confident man of the sort you'd expect to encounter if you were a halfback running a football. He has full cheeks, green eyes, and curly brown hair down over his forehead, flecking gray. His shirts

button down. His suits are conservative, and rumpled from the road. He has a dark tie with Disney characters on it playing golf. Years ago, he testified in a Mississippi assault trial after police reluctantly mailed soil samples to the F.B.I. The police had accused a man of stalking a former girlfriend and shooting her through a window of her house, maiming her, after which, they surmised, he ran a mile to his car. The Mississippi police sent Rawalt a number of soil samples without saying which was which or where any of them were from, or telling him much of the story. They included samples from under the car. They included soil from the knee of the defendant's pants, which he had apparently smeared when he fell, running. Rawalt's report singled out the knee stain and matched it to the topography. It labelled the other samples and described the actions they implied. When he arrived in Mississippi to testify, a sheriff generously said to him, "You convinced us. You separated the soils and you told us which soil came from the wheel rut, and you also showed that a mud puddle was splashed on afterward. And out of all those soil samples you picked the one that showed where his knee slid on the side of the hill. You convinced us."

Rawalt said, "What did you think I was going to do—lie for you?"

His name is pronounced "Ray Walt." He was born near Chadron, Nebraska, southeast of the Black Hills. ("I grew up playing in the White River Oligocene north of town, digging fossils.") At

Chadron State College, in 1971, he wrote his senior thesis on the recataloging of fossils. While he was doing graduate work in geology at Colorado State University, he heard that the government was looking for geologists to do mineral studies in Vietnam. He applied, was accepted, and then found out that "government" meant "C.I.A." and that the relevant geology was in enemy territory. He applied instead to the F.B.I.

was kidnapped in Guadalajara. It had been a street abduction in noonday sun, and witnesses said that two vehicles seemed to be involved—a Volkswagen Atlantic and a Mercury Gran Marquis. A month went by while the White House, the State Department, and half the agencies in Washington put great pressure on the Mexican government and the Mexican Federal Judicial Police to find the agent and resolve the case. Fi-

story was repeated. In early morning, he went out to his mailbox for the newspaper, and stood there absorbing what it said. The footage from the scene had showed bodies lying on the ground and covered with sheets. To him it seemed obvious that someone had dumped them there, because they were not being excavated from a burial site. It was reported that the bodies had soil adhering to them and, with respect to the ground around



When the Mexican government displayed the bodies it found, a geologist watching TV noticed that something was wrong.

The Justice Department's Drug Enforcement Administration was established at about the same time. Over the years, the D.E.A. would make frequent requests of F.B.I. geologists. "An airplane is found abandoned someplace. They want to know if it took off from a sandbar in a river in central Colombia, based on the sands there. Sometimes we've been able to do that, from soil on the underside of the aircraft that got kicked up in the wheel-well sand." In 1985, Rawalt was working at the F.B.I. in Washington when a D.E.A. agent

nally came the day when the television news was full of revelation. The bodies of the American agent Enrique Camarena Salazar and Alfredo Zavala Avelar, a pilot who helped him do clandestine surveillance, had been found on a ranch in Michoacán. There had been a shootout between police and a family named Bravo—small-scale drug runners, who owned the ranch. Every person on the ranch was killed in the raid—husband, wife, three sons. An M.F.J.P. officer had been killed. Rawalt watched the television coverage, and watched again as the

them, the colors were not the same. The dirt on the bodies was dark, the soil of the ranchland light. "The authorities' side of the story was that the Federales, the M.F.J.P., had received a tip on where Camarena's buried body—that was the key word, 'buried' body—would be located. And they went there and found the bodies. Case solved and closed. This was a premier case. We wanted that body back. Alive or dead, we wanted Camarena back. The Mexicans had to come up with a way of returning the body in such a way that it would take the



"O.K. Will somebody please bring me up to date?"

pressure off of them and get our government off their back. The Mexican federal police 'solved the case' through the location of the bodies and the execution of witnesses who would have said, 'We don't know anything about it.'

Rawalt called F.B.I. headquarters and asked the switchboard to connect him to the United States Embassy in Mexico City. Eventually, he got through to a sleepy man—possibly an assistant to the Ambassador—and told him he felt that he could prove through the soil alone that Camarena had not been buried at the Bravo ranch. He believed that he could prove as well that the site of exhumation was nowhere near the Bravo ranch. He just needed the minerals—samples of the soils. He added, "I think it's an absolutely transparent ploy by the Mexican government to placate us. That's my goal—to show a coverup."

The Camarena story was extensively covered in every news medium, and it also served as the structural framework of an exhaustive study by Elaine Shannon called "Desperados: Latin Drug Lords, U.S. Lawmen, and the War America Can't Win" (Viking, 1988). A television movie was made from her book. Needless to say, I don't intend to encapsulate either the film or Shannon's

five hundred pages but merely to offer as a supplement the details of the forensic geology. Trials resulting from the Camarena case continued into the nineteen-nineties. The United States, doing all it could to bring accomplices before American juries, arrested people north of the border when opportunities arose. Eight were tried on charges that included murder. Forensic evidence of various kinds resulted in seven convictions. Until the trials were over, Rawalt and his geological colleagues refused all interviews about the subject.

"Next thing I know, it's Monday morning and I'm up in my assistant director's front office and he wants to know where I got this theory of a coverup. He has heard from the Department of State, and he is asking me to explain where I am getting this all-encompassing knowledge from that I am making these phone calls to Mexico. I admitted what I had done. He said, 'It would be nice if you would let us know before you make these wild calls. It's been discussed at the White House. But it seems like people agree that you've put your finger on what's going on, and if you think you can do something it's your case. You're going to be going to Mexico as soon as the soil samples get back here and you can do a

comparison. Pick your team—anybody you want. D.E.A. will cooperate. They'll get you in and out of the country.'"

The samples were collected in the Guadalajara morgue by an F.B.I. agent named Jack Dillon, posing as a D.E.A. agent. From Camarena's skin, and from his clothing nearby, Dillon took about a teaspoon of earth. Camarena's body had been found in a state of advanced decomposition. In arid ground, dehydrating, it had begun to undergo the process known as mummification. The skin resembled leather. In his skull was a double concave fracture, resembling broken glass. Because of his ability to cultivate informants, Camarena—young, beefy, garrulous—had been one of the D.E.A.'s most effective agents.

In Washington, Rawalt looked at the samples. As he

had read in the newspaper, the soil from Camarena's body was dark. It was actually wet. Adipose tissue had come through the skin and had caused the soil to stick together in small lumps. Moisture darkens soil, of course, and he needed to give the D.E.A. correct guidance on color, which he could not do without removing the fatty tissue from the minerals. Chemists at the F.B.I. had an oxygen plasma-reduction unit. In Rawalt's words, "It rusts body tissue. It causes carbon to rust. It replaces the oxygen radical for the carbon radical, burns the carbon radical off, and leaves a light-gray powder. It decomposes body material." A lump of the soil from Camarena's body spent eight hours in the plasma-reduction unit. "They've got oxygen set up with a pump, and they're evacuating the atmosphere, and doing all kinds of stuff, and—lo and behold—the thing came out ash gray. That was from the oxidation of the tissue. I used these little air pumps for dusting off optics. You could sit there and blow the gray away and see the soil underneath it. By systematically reducing the lump, a little bit at a time, and blowing the tissue away in the form of gray dust, I got down to the soil color. I'd never done that before, and to my knowledge it's

never been done again." Color contrast was what had caused him, in the first place, to telephone the Embassy in Mexico City. Now, oddly, the contrast turned out to be the reverse of what had been reported. The rock of the Bravo soil, cleaned for inspection, was a globular obsidian, very dark greenish gray. The soil off the body was a sharp tuffaceous vesicular glass, tan to white in color. "There was a world of difference between the two. You didn't have to look at them for their mineral composition to know that these things were not even remotely close."

Rawalt, of course, did look at them for their mineral composition. The intended contribution of the forensic geology was to help guide the investigation, and to provide trial evidence if there ever was a trial. His immediate goals were to disprove the statement by the Mexican government that the Bravo ranch was the place where Camarena died and to suggest, if possible, where the body might have been buried. To do all that, he'd need more than contrasting colors.

The Bravo soil of Michoacán was no less volcanic than the soil on the body, but the volcanoes were different. The Bravo minerals were much coarser, heavier-grained, sluglike, rounded, and dirty (from trace substances trapped in the glass). There was not nearly as much ash. The globularity of the grains spoke of slow deposition in a sedimentary basin, of water deposits interlayered with ash flows from intermittent volcanic events. The soil from Camarena spoke of mountains.

Roughly ninety-eight per cent was tuffaceous windblown rhyolite ash. Rawalt's attention would settle on less than one per cent. The ash was very clean, high in silica, angular, vesicular. It had come out of a volcanic explosion as a fluid and had cooled suddenly as it sailed through the air. It could also be described as airfall pumice. Among the minor components of the Camarena soil were a notable concentration of bixbyite, blacker than coal, and a pink glass of exceptional depth and richness of color. ("I'd never seen anything quite like it, except in candy. I had worked with pink garnet, pink zircons—they don't look the same.") Less in quantity—and therefore of greater forensic value—were two kinds of cristo-

balite: opalized and clear. You might wander all over central Mexico occasionally finding one or the other form of cristobalite. You'd be getting pretty warm if you found two. The cristobalite crystals were elongate and faceted—clear polygonal columns. Octahedrons. To Rawalt, they resembled branch coral. They had developed in the volcanic explosion when, as molten material, they were forced into the vesicles in the tuffaceous glass. "It's like filling a straw. And then it cools slowly, insulated by the glass, and it goes back into a crystalline state. The reason some is opalized is that there's a high percentage of water in it when it is crystallizing. A lot of the glass in Camarena's stuff actually had the cristobalite still inside it. Weathering mechanics can break the tuff, and then the cristobalite is freed. But a lot of the tuffaceous rhyolite glass had cristobalite still within it. You could see the vesicles full of cristobalite. For us, it was the big indicator."

Rawalt went to the library of the United States Geological Survey, in Reston, Virginia, and studied maps and scientific papers that related to the region of Guadalajara. He was looking for rhyolite sources in high ground, which for central Mexico was to some extent like looking for pavement in New York City. But you started with that, and then used the bixbyite, the cristobalite, the rose glass to narrow it down. His colleague Chris Fiedler once outlined the problem by saying, "Initially you have the whole country of Mexico in which to find where a teaspoon of soil came from." In the *Journal of Volcanology & Geothermal Research*, Rawalt found a thirty-one-page paper by Gail Mahood, then of Berkeley, now of Stanford, on the "Geological Evolution of a Pleistocene Rhyolitic Center—Sierra La Primavera, Jalisco, Mexico." With its maps, charts, and cross-sections, it widened his eyes from the abstract onward. It described the types of sedimentary soil he was looking for: the airfall pumice, the caldera-lake sediments that would contain the pinkish material.



He went to the Smithsonian to review with the mineralogists there the results of his mineral studies. He was referred to a young woman who had done volcanological field work in the Guadalajara area and was at the Smithsonian at the time. As Rawalt began to explain the mineralogy he was working with, and mentioned the unusual hue of the rose glass, she immediately said that she recognized what he was talking about and that the minerals were specific to a Jalisco state park called Bosques de la Primavera. "She said, 'This is Primavera-park soil. This red-pink-type glass that you're talking about is a result of a third-event caldera formation. It was not extensive. It was confined just to the park and its slopes—the mountain itself.' And then we take the map, and she highlights the outcrops of rhyolite that will be upslope and in general conjunction with the mineralogy I'm looking for."

Not long after Rawalt turned in his results, he was called to the assistant director's office and told that he and three forensic scientists in other disciplines were to go to Mexico as soon as possible. "That meant, 'Do not go home and pack. Go to the airport right now. D.E.A. is waiting. They have an aircraft in Dallas. They're going to take you in.' We picked up stores from the disaster squad—clothing and stuff—downstairs. I took a small microscope, sufficient chemicals, cleansing solutions, and instruments. In Dallas, we got on a D.E.A. aircraft. It was a twin-engine turboprop, but its ground speed was about five hundred miles an hour. We hit the border and that pilot put that plane right on the desert, and we flew down under the Mexican radar. We went into a canyon a lot bigger than the Grand Canyon. We flew below the rims of other canyons, too. We landed in Guadalajara. We did not have permission to come into the country. F.B.I. was not allowed in the country. D.E.A. was. We were not to admit our identity. The D.E.A. bribed the Mexican customs officials—paid them cash not to look in our bags and not to ask who we were and why we were there, paid them cash just openly, right there at the airport." The twin-engine turboprop had been seized in the United States. It had belonged to a Mexican drug trafficker of the first order, whose name was Rafael Caro Quintero.

Rawalt stayed at the Hyatt Regency, in downtown Guadalajara. On his first

night there, an officer of the Mexican Federal Judicial Police knocked on the door of his room. Rawalt opened the door. The M.F.J.P. man greeted him warmly and told him that he was in charge of making sure that Rawalt and the others were comfortable. "He wanted to know what I wanted. Did I need a little cocaine? Did I need a woman? Did I need a young boy? What did I want? He was to get it for me. I told him he had the wrong room and shut the door in his face."

A connotative beginning with Mexican authority. In the concentrated effort to solve the case of the American agent, the Drug Enforcement Administration's principal official colleagues were local, state, and federal Mexican police, not to mention government ministers and the Federal Security Directorate, or D.F.S. (D.F.S. = C.I.A.) As Elaine Shannon's "Desperados" documents thoroughly, especially with reference to Mexico, there was not a government agency, in law enforcement or otherwise, that did not in some way repose in the drug economy. In the war on drugs, it was impossible to tell from a uniform which side the wearer represented. With respect to who was and who was not being enriched by drug traffickers, the collective personnel in the list above were like shaken salt and sugar. A D.F.S. badge could quell inquiry anywhere in the country. The drug traffickers easily bought D.F.S. badges. "It's the top form of identification," Rawalt once said. "They paid millions and millions of dollars for their people to be issued these badges, so they could run through the country with impunity. They didn't have to worry about anybody stopping them." They could snatch an American agent off a street, hold him prisoner, torture him, crush his skull, and dispose of the body, even in the presence of "authorities." More than one M.F.J.P. officer was to tell Rawalt that Camarena had died of natural causes.

The intense American interest shown in Camarena's disappearance seems to have been baffling from the Mexican point of view. Others had vanished who were presumed American agents and much less fuss resulted. Americans had gone into Mexico never to be heard from again, and the news media did not seem to care. Scarcely a week before Camarena was kidnapped, a couple of Ameri-

cans named Alberto Radelat and John Walker happened into a traffickers' party in a Guadalajara restaurant. The traffickers took them for D.E.A. agents infiltrating the neighborhood and tortured them and killed them. This had not produced a similar hue and cry. Eight weeks earlier, four American missionaries going door to door in Guadalajara had lifted the wrong latch. Drug-enforcement agents in California had been known to pose as geologists, so who was it that these missionaries were working for? They disappeared and their bodies were not to be found. In all, six American presumed agents had been killed by the traffickers in recent weeks. So why were the White House, the State Department, and the American press creating so much pressure now? "When this firestorm hit, the Mexicans didn't understand what was going on," Rawalt says. "They had killed seven, and we were interested in just one." In Guadalajara, Rawalt was asked in English by a mid-level officer of the M.F.J.P. to explain to him what the problem was. "I explained to him that in our country when you kill a law-enforcement officer it incenses the American public and becomes an important case. When you kill a federal agent, it incenses the American public. And we don't stand for that. He said he could not understand what the big deal was, because, he told me, in the M.F.J.P. they lost about two hundred officers a year in drug shootouts and retaliation murders. To them, it was a way of life."

It was believed that Camarena's unauthorized flights over marijuana fields in Chihuahua had led to incendiary raids and the destruction of a crop worth three hundred million dollars. The two marijuana-and-cocaine traffickers who had lost the most were Rafael Caro Quintero (former owner of the airplane that carried Rawalt under the rimrocks into Mexico) and Ernesto Fonseca Carrillo. From Day One, they were seen as the principal perpetrators of Camarena's disappearance. On Day Three, Caro Quintero had left Mexico, seen off at the airport by Armando Pavón Reyes, *primer comandante* of the M.F.J.P., who, it turned out, received three hundred thousand dollars for letting him go. When the American firestorm was burning high and the White House was calling and the State Department was calling

and the American press was swarming, a hundred Mexican troops surrounded a house where Fonseca was staying in Puerto Vallarta. A deafening gunfight began. It went on and on. It did not stop until the traffickers ran out of ammunition. When the smoke cleared, no one on either side had been hit. Fonseca, thereby captured, was jailed but not charged. A SWAT team snatched Caro Quintero from a villa in Costa Rica. Fonseca, of raptor face, was said to be a billionaire. The boyish curly-haired Caro Quintero could not have been worth more than five hundred million. They were incarcerated together in Mexico City in large comfortable rooms, where they kept fighting roosters and an arsenal of guns, gave parties with visiting female friends, and had their own chefs. In Rawalt's words, "They were being maintained by the Mexican government away from access by the American government."

Rawalt showed the D.E.A. investigators his maps and charts and mineralogy, and told them about the cristobalites and the rose glass. "These guys are— They don't know what I'm talking about. But they were convinced enough." With his hand in motion over a Jalisco state map, he said, "Here's where the guy was buried, right around this park. This is where we look. We don't go there, because this is where he is going to be." The most immediate effect of the mineralogy was to enable the D.E.A. to confront the Mexican government with evidence that the body had been moved and that the M.F.J.P.'s story of Bravo ranch was a fiction. When, or if, the true burial site was found, it would be up to Rawalt to match exactly the minerals of the site to the teaspoon of earth taken from the body—to present the forensic evidence matching body to grave. The D.E.A. had hypnotized a witness who had seen Camarena being beaten in a car heading south beyond the Guadalajara *periférico* (beltway). Under hypnosis, he remembered a part of the license plate. The D.E.A. wanted Rawalt to go south. "But the geology didn't match. It was not the right kind of soil. I did not have these large rhyolitic extrusions influencing the soil factors. We spent minimal time down there." Mexican television and newspapers were full of the story, and people were calling in and writing in to say where Camarena had been held and where he had been buried, and even to



report seeing him alive. The tips on burial sites included Cancún, the Chihuahuan desert, and scattered stations along the primary cocaine-marijuana route through the west and north. The D.E.A. wanted Rawalt to check out these places. Rawalt resisted such coverage as often as he could. ("I'm convinced from the geology that we've got the area located. For me to convince myself to look somewhere else, I've got to duplicate what I already know is in their backyard. And killers are lazy. Why would they take a guy clear to northern Mexico to get rid of a body?")

He went first, of course, to the Bosques de la Primavera, a fire-swept country, arid six to nine months a year, where pine needles are exceptionally thin. Michael Malone, who had flown with him from Washington and was an expert in things like carpet fibres and hair, went along to assist him and to be with him if trouble should arise. The M.F.J.P. did not know that they were out there, let alone that they were F.B.I. "We were not to go anywhere without an M.F.J.P. escort. That was part of the rules of engagement, so to speak. We didn't trust them. We were well armed."

Malone and Rawalt had a pickup. In likely places, they put the tailgate down, and Rawalt set up a lab. "I could use a nonpolarized scope and immediately make a determination based on the cristobalite. If I'd been using some of the other indicating features, I would have had to have a pole scope to identify the minerals. I did have a small pole scope, but I was using ambient light. We had no power sources that we could hook up that scope to. The easy indicator was the cristobalite. We might pick thirty samples. We'd wash them up. We'd take a quick look at them under the microscope. For one reason or another, we'd eliminate them. What we tried to do was ballpark an area. We were looking for those key cristobalites and rose-colored-glass features. We started on the mountainside, up high. In soft soil, we started getting samples from the surface and a foot down and two feet down, looking for these things. I eliminated roughly four hundred soil samples. They just weren't the same. They were close. We had the type of glass. In some of them we had cristobalites—but not as much as we needed. Or we'd have rose glass with no cristobalite. Or we'd have the glass

CONGRESSIONALLY MANDATED THEMES FOR THE DAYTIME TALK SHOWS



"WIVES WHO MAKE ASPIC WHEN THEIR HUSBANDS ARE AWAY"



"IS MY BRIDGE PARTNER PSYCHIC?"



"I MARRIED A LOVABLE LUG WHO MAKES ME COFFEE"

carroll

but we wouldn't have the rhyolite. And we had to have them all. We did ditches, ravines, sides of roads. We went clear into the hot springs." In three days, they covered about twenty square miles. The Forest of Primavera was a few thousand square miles.

An informant told the D.E.A. that a Mercury Gran Marquis was sealed up behind a fresh wall of adobe across the front of a residential garage near the southern boundary of the park. Rawalt and four other F.B.I. agents went there and did a crime scene. There was blood in the car. Hair on a floor mat and on the back of the front seat matched hair that Jack Dillon had removed from Camarena in the morgue. The car derived from one of Caro Quintero's Mercury-Ford dealerships. Rawalt looked for the story that might be written on the undercarriage, but all he found were fine silts from numerous locations.

They went to Michoacán for a wider test of the Bravo ranchland. The ranch house was not a prototype of Mexican rural architecture. It had barred windows, gun slits, and walls half a metre thick. It was a fort. There were enough big bullet holes in the walls to house a flock of purple martins.

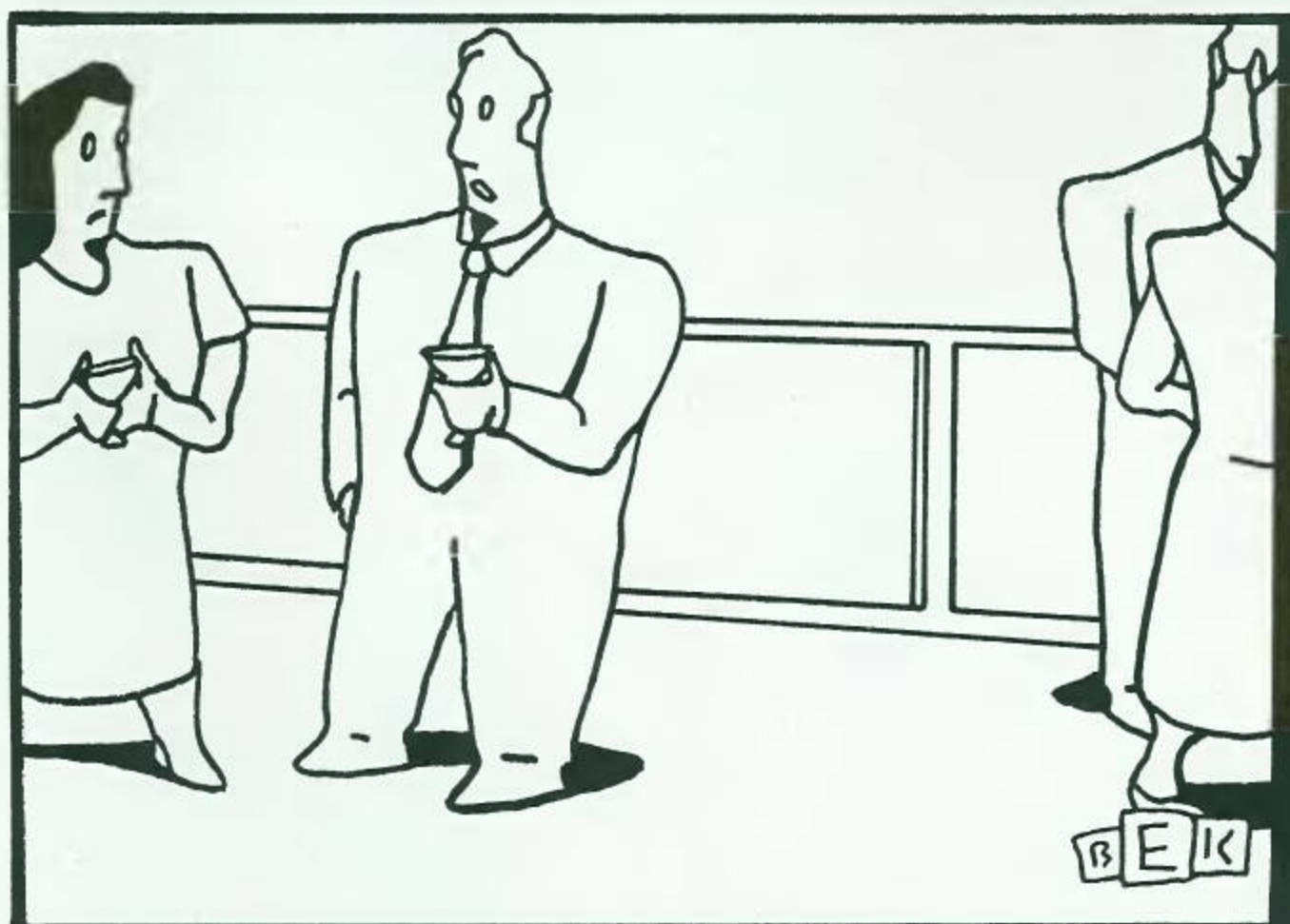
Malone and Rawalt were assigned, as "D.E.A. agents," to check out various addresses associated with Fonseca and Caro Quintero. On such missions, the M.F.J.P. was supposed to accompany

them. "By their actions, the M.F.J.P. told us how dangerous it was. When we'd go to a search, they'd disappear. They might escort you up there, but when it came to going into a house or going into a compound they disappeared. They were there for our protection, and to help us, yet they were absolutely working a hundred and eighty degrees from us at all times." Balking, the M.F.J.P. would point out the need for a search warrant. ("Don't even mention Mexico and a search warrant in the same breath.") The M.F.J.P. also warned that the houses and compounds could be full of *pistoleros*. Approaching a walled compound, Rawalt, Malone, and a couple of D.E.A. agents would knock, and when no one answered they'd open the place and gingerly go in. "We're talking about a fifteen-bedroom mansion with indoor pool, outdoor pool, and a twelve-foot-high wall—a compound with lights, and cameras on the corners, encompassing three to four acres, with big interior vegetable gardens, and servant quarters—like a small Alamo. We're armed to the teeth. I had a MAC 10—a little submachine gun—and a 9-mm. pistol. Mike had a handgun. When you're out, you're dressed with a machine gun and with a handgun. You were told that in essence you cannot trust anybody but the D.E.A. Your life is at danger. Do not go to dinner. Do not go for a job without going in groups. An easy way to

tell the good guys from the bad guys down there was by the armament they were carrying. M.F.J.P. officers are very open about to whom they owe their allegiance. If you're carrying an AK-47 rifle, that rifle comes up through Central America to the drug traffickers. That's where they get their weapons, and they pass the weapons on. One of the first things we looked for with the people who were supposedly guarding us and helping us was the type of weapons they were carrying. Here's an M.F.J.P. officer, and look what he's carrying—an AK-47. This is just flaunting the fact that he is there protecting the people in the drug trade—he's a traffickers' *pistolero*, he's also an M.F.J.P. officer. Time was danger down there. You hit a trafficker's house and the trafficker knew it—through the M.F.J.P. or through the peons who were working there who had taken off when we pulled up. Wasted time could mean a carload of *pistoleros* coming down the road for a gunfight."

In one compound, Malone was doing his fibre collecting and Rawalt his soil sampling when the M.F.J.P. appeared. Seeing that no one had been killed and no *pistoleros* were present, they entered the house. For three hours, while Malone and Rawalt went on collecting and sampling, the M.F.J.P. systematically rifled the place. They stole all the liquor, the food in the pantry, the television sets, and the parabolic dish off the top of the house. They took clothing, shoes, silverware. They pried a safe out of a wall. Rawalt and two D.E.A. agents were working in an upstairs room when a shot was fired. All three hit the floor, imagining forty *pistoleros*. Silence. Guns drawn, they got up warily and looked around. They looked out a window. The M.F.J.P. had shot a pig. They were putting it into the trunk of a car. A whole line of cars was there, bumper to bumper, trunks open, being loaded with household goods.

One day, the federal paradoxical police informed the D.E.A. that they had learned where Camarena had been held. The address was in central Guadalajara—881 Lope de Vega. Rawalt and Malone were asked to do the crime scene, as part of a D.E.A. team. When they arrived, NBC, ABC, and CBS were on the curb. There were trucks with dishes pointed at the sky. Rawalt recalls



"You look as if you don't expect fireworks, you act as if you don't expect fireworks, you say you don't expect fireworks. But something tells me you expect fireworks."

his reaction when he first glimpsed the house and compound: "It's a logical place to hold a person. Because what's it look like? It looks like a jail." The walls were eighteen-inch adobe. Every window was blocked by white-painted iron bars. The doors, inches thick, were reinforced with metal strapping. After the house, courtyard, guesthouse, arcade, and swimming pool came a tennis court bordered with jaguars. These were not motorcars. They were living black and spotted jaguars, in six cages. Also beside the tennis court was a Volkswagen Atlantic with no license plates.

Indoors, fresh paint was on most of the wall space, entombing fingerprints. Rooms had been swept spotless. The main power line had been cut. "They knew we processed with vacuum cleaners—they'd seen us doing it at other houses. We put on heavy gloves and spliced the ends—hooked those babies together and taped them up with evidence tape." Still no power. The fuses, which were of the screw-in type, had all been removed. This was late in the day, light fading. Rawalt put copper coins in the fuse sockets and rammed them in with the wooden handle of a mop. Every coin welded. The lights now worked. They turned on their vacuum cleaner.

The lawn had been completely raked, but a pile of leaves had been left there. Among the leaves was an order to the commandant of the M.F.J.P. to supply ammunition to the drug traffickers. The water in the pool was opaque. Rawalt explored the bottom with a broom handle. It was overrun with bottles and cans. Water would not erase fingerprints. Rawalt asked the M.F.J.P. for a pump from a firehouse. The M.F.J.P. said no. He found a pump in the pool house, rigged it up, and started it. An M.F.J.P. officer kicked the pump into the pool. Before anyone could return with another pump, the pool had been emptied and scrubbed.

The guesthouse was a cell within a fort, with its own barred windows and a half-inch boilerplate door. The vacuum cleaner picked up hair from the guesthouse carpet that would match Camarena's. In the bathroom, the lower six feet of tile was bright and clean. The tiles above were grimy. Among traffickers who sought information or confession from a captive, a routine method of torture was Tickle the Bone. Icepicks are

run into knee joints, elbows, vertebrae, and elsewhere and then scraped on the bone. There was the Pepsi Challenge. Rawalt's description: "Tie a person to a chair, shake up a bottle of Pepsi, and shove it up the nose. Shooting that into your lungs under high pressure gives you the sensation of drowning. You'll confess to anything. Yet there's no scars or marks. I asked one of the M.F.J.P. officers if they really used that treatment, and he says, 'Of course not. We don't use Pepsi or Coke. They stain your clothes. We use seltzer water.'" An informant eventually told the D.E.A. that a doctor had assisted in the interrogation of Camarena. The doctor had used painkillers, so the traffickers could stretch out the beating and questioning. After a dry-cleaning bag was used to suffocate Camarena and take him near death, the doctor would be there to revive him. Rawalt found a cleaning bag in a closet, and an acid bottle as well. Evidently, the prisoner had been burned with acid.

Rounding a stair landing in the main house, Rawalt suddenly felt an M16 in his stomach, prodding. He was prodded to admit that he was not a D.E.A. agent, that he was really from the F.B.I. He didn't admit.

On the day of Camarena's abduction, an M.F.J.P. officer had used the Volkswagen to pick up some dry cleaning. He was given a dated receipt. He slipped the receipt under the weather sealing of the VW's trunk, where Rawalt now found it. In the trunk was blood that matched Camarena's and two strands of his hair.

In a drain beside the tennis court, Rawalt noticed a license plate folded in half. He asked for a crowbar to lift the grating. Alarmed and hostile, an M.F.J.P. officer refused. A crowbar was improvised, and the grating was lifted. The M.F.J.P. radioed for backup. The Americans photographed the license plate. Federales came in force and demanded the plate. Rawalt refused. He describes the situation as "a classical Mexican standoff," and continues the story: "Their guns were off their shoulders. I was told by our legate, 'You have no choice, turn it over to them.'" Beyond the caged jaguars Rawalt noticed *pistoleros*, their guns trained on him. Mike

Malone, seeing the confrontation, had begun to worry about losing collected evidence. While the M.F.J.P. and Rawalt were squared off by the pool, Malone was loading evidence into a D.E.A. truck. An agent drove the truck to the American Consulate and locked the evidence in a vault.

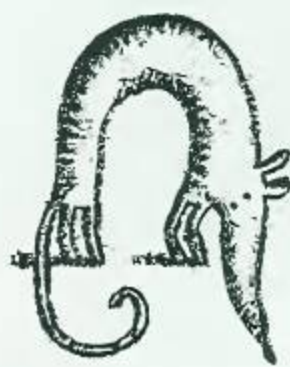
SOME months earlier, a representative of a California aerospace company had approached the F.B.I. in behalf of the company's French consultant, Loic Le Ribault. The representative said that Le Ribault was the head petrologist for the French national oil company, had his own aerospace group, and was very wealthy. He wanted to get into forensics, because he could do things to solve cases that other people could not do. Show him a few grains of sand and he could tell you where they were from. He had tried to interest the national crime laboratories of France and Great Britain but had failed. He felt sure that if the F.B.I. showed interest others would follow. He called his work exoscopy.

The F.B.I. said, "A few grains?"

Le Ribault's representative said, "Test him. Just test him. Give me three samples."

While the man waited, the F.B.I. geologists—Fiedler, Rawalt, and others—conferred. Into a pillbox they put some ash from Mt. St. Helens. Into another they put alluvium from a river delta in South Carolina that related to a recent murder. What to put into the third pillbox? Across the hall were some girders from the Marine Corps barracks that was bombed in Beirut. Rawalt remembered noticing that dirt had been blasted into the girders. He scraped some out and boxed it.

A few weeks later, a spiral binder arrived from La Teste de Buch, a town in the Médoc. The cover said "Exoscopic Study of 3 Samples of Sands, by Loic Le Ribault." It was vintage stuff, so good it was hard to swallow. The F.B.I. had collected samples of Mt. St. Helens ash from all over the West to record size and particle distribution and depositional cycles, because the ash would become a factor in soils at crime scenes. Le Ribault's study said that Sample 1 was Mt. St. Helens ash and had been deposited on an angle within a hundred miles of



the volcano. "He hit it within a couple of miles," Rawalt says. "We called the senior resident agent who collected the ash and said, 'Where'd you get it?' He says, 'It was on the hood of my car. I was parked out there on a slope.'" Sample 2, according to Le Ribault's report, came from a river basin in the American Southeast and with geologic maps of sufficient scale the location could be pointed out. The third sample was baffling, the report admitted, and what follows here is Rawalt's paraphrase of what Le Ribault wrote: "It's a pyroclastic event, a deposit under extreme force—an explosion. It can only be a short time since the deposition of this grain on a vertical surface. I have no idea where this one comes from, because the only place I can match this mineral grain to—any place in the world that I can find—is in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, and of course the F.B.I. does not do cases in Lebanon. So I have no idea where it comes from." After the F.B.I. geologists had finished reading the report, someone said, "We need to talk to this man."

Rawalt remembers Le Ribault as "a short little guy, early fifties, very jovial, with sharp features, who talked a mile a minute." Le Ribault brought an interpreter with him to the F.B.I.'s Forensic Science Research and Training Center, in Quantico, Virginia. In a scanning electron microscope, he looked at quartz from Camarena's body—ordinary quartz, out of the rhyolite. He blew it up ten thousand times and read the sign on its surfaces. Water dissolves quartz, slowly but certainly. Water leaching into soil dissolves some of the quartz in a mineral grain, and as the silica-rich solution dries off it recrystallizes. In supermagnification, you can see the subcrystallization, as the surface change is called, and as the subcrystallization varies it tells varying stories. If it is all over the grain, the grain was deposited in water. If it is on the top of the grain at such-and-such an angle, the mountainside was steep there. "He'll take a single grain and tell you the angle of deposition, how long it's been there, and where it comes from," Rawalt continues. "He also looks at the solubility of the quartz, and he looks at the surfaces to see how much they've been eroded by water. From his experience, he can tell you the nature of the exposure to environmental factors, and from his experi-

ence he makes a conclusion. The knowledge of how quartz dissolves and recrystallizes is the basis for his whole exoscopy science."

During the week that Le Ribault spent at Quantico, earth samples kept pouring in from the D.E.A. in Mexico—all negative. Standing before the scanning electron microscope—on its screen a quartz grain like a large map—Le Ribault said, "You have a rhyolite outcrop up a slope."

Rawalt said, "Yes, we've already figured that out."

Le Ribault had been given three of the samples that Rawalt had collected in the Forest of Primavera, as well as earth from Camarena's body. On a map Rawalt showed Le Ribault where he had collected the samples. Le Ribault said, "You're there, but not quite. You're at about the right elevation in the park, and at about the right angle of slope on which this quartz grain was deposited. The style of deposition and the depth are right. You're there, but you're not there. These are from an area washing north. The burial site was in an area washing south." Le Ribault continued, "This rhyolitic-base sand was deposited by water. It was deposited around four to five feet deep. The crystallography says that it came from a draw. The slope of the draw is less than ten degrees. Shade predominates there. When you go back, it may help to note that the outcrop this sand derives from is four thousand feet above the site where the body was buried."

Le Ribault made a large contribution to Rawalt's confidence and, with regard to the story that Camarena had been killed and buried at the Bravo ranch, he underscored the Mexican farce. At increased volume, the D.E.A. could repeat to the M.F.J.P. that their scenario was phony. The D.E.A., in need of continuing guidance from the forensic work of the F.B.I., pleaded with the Mexican government to let Malone and Rawalt return to the country as acknowledged

F.B.I. agents—Rawalt to continue working in the Bosques de la Primavera. No response was forthcoming. Then a D.E.A. agent in Mexico called Washington to say, "We have Radelat and Walker's pit, or are going to." The D.E.A. had a new informant, who said he could show them where the car had been parked when the bodies of the Americans had been carried into the forest. The assistant director of the F.B.I. Laboratory appealed directly to the Attorney General of Mexico to permit Rawalt and Malone to return. The Attorney General's reply was that Rawalt could come but Malone could not. Rawalt speculates that the Mexicans were made especially uneasy by Malone's carpet work—his vacuum cleaner, his hair-and-fibre work—but could not imagine being inconvenienced by anything a geologist might do.

The site was on a southerly slope in Primavera, up a thoroughfare that resembled a mule trail more than a road. A short distance into the forest was a draw, a wash, its gradient less than ten degrees. It was shaded by tall trees. To the immediate north, and four thousand feet above, were extensive rhyolite outcrops. The rainy season had arrived. The air was densely humid and hot. A stench of human and animal decay was high enough to jam the throat. A horse rotting there looked like a balloon. The M.F.J.P. were already on the scene, with backhoe. Its bucket had disassembled the bodies of Radelat and Walker as it scooped them out. The digging had reached about five and a half feet down when Rawalt arrived. Seeing the backhoe, he thought, Nice forensic tool. Some ribs, vertebrae, and tissue were still in the pit. Rawalt removed them by hand. The M.F.J.P., a dozen in number and dead drunk, were engaged in a competitive game that involved cutting down the fine-needle pines with machine guns. Ammunition was everywhere. So potent were the smells of lead, cordite, powder, and decay that Rawalt had instantly developed a headache.

He supposed that Camarena and the pilot, Zavala, had been buried on top of Radelat and Walker. To compare mineralogies, he took soil samples from ground level down to the bottom of the pit. He set up his microscope and looked. At five feet, there was only a slight difference from the mineral suite off Cama-



rena's body. "There was a little bit too much iron content in that pit. A small lens of iron-rich sediment ran through there from an old dry streambed."

When the D.E.A. had called Washington to report on their latest informant, they had said that he knew where people had left the road carrying Radelat's and Walker's bodies but did not know exactly where the bodies were buried. There might be a need for dogs. The F.B.I. does not have cadaver dogs. Rawalt called a training center and learned the whereabouts of America's five best teams of cadaver dogs. From Tuscaloosa, Alabama, a team was soon in the air. On the ground in Primavera, they were initially useless. "Cadaver dogs work hungry," Rawalt explains. "They locate a cadaver because they like the smell and they like the taste. Their reward is to eat part of the 'proud flesh'—the remains. So they work hungry. The dogs that first day were just listless as hell. It turned out someone had fed them. All the dogs were just gorged on dog food."

Cadaver dogs work singly as well as hungry. On the following day, the first dog released showed attention to a small depression some yards up the draw from Radelat and Walker's open grave. The animal dug a little. It did not give a clear signal, but a new pit was worth trying. The pervasive odors of dead bodies made it all but impossible for a dog to be unambiguous about a location so near. During the digging, Rawalt took samples at ground level and down through six or seven soil horizons. As the depth of the pit approached five feet, there was fresh high smell. If this was where Camarena had been buried, the opalescent and the clear cristobalite would be present in equal amounts. Under his microscope, as sample followed sample, that is what he saw. Given the two cristobalites, in balance, the next indicating feature would be the rose-colored quartz. It had the rhombohedral shape of a sugar crystal. He even wondered if, somehow, sugar was what he was looking at. He culled out some crystals and tried to dissolve them. They would not dissolve. What he was seeing in his microscope was not candy. "Almost pink-red, usually a negative crystal, it was just brilliant." The slight difference was no longer there. He was matching the soil that Jack Dillon had removed from Camarena's body in the morgue. ♦

SHOWGIRLS

ONE of the unwritten laws of Hollywood is "If you build it, we will come." In 1931, the Empire State Building was completed; in 1933, King Kong clambered up it. So it is with Las Vegas, which by the end of 1994 had transformed itself from Sin City to a kind of Slot Machine Disneyland. What the Mob had built, the corporations had rebuilt; where once crook-nosed goons had cavorted among the fleshpots, now kids played on thrill rides while their parents squandered the bank account at the roulette tables. The old Las Vegas was tawdry and crass, but there was nothing like it anywhere else. Now something extraordinary has become rather ordinary. And last year several movies, good and bad, contemplated the change: "Leaving Las Vegas," "Casino," and "Showgirls" were, in varying degrees, laments for a city's lost romance.

Yet tatters of that romance remain. There are still casinos that don't pretend to be amusement parks. And there are still showrooms where, every night, customers watch the sort of vulgar, eye-popping musical production numbers that Vegas used to be famous for—where the ordinary becomes extraordinary again. That is what the following portfolio of photographs by Annie Leibovitz is about. The women in these pictures are performers from the "Jubilee!" show at Bally's Hotel and the "Enter the Night" show at the Stardust. Except for the woman in the first pair of pictures, they are married; two of them have children; all of them work six days a week, two shows a night, for a salary ranging from around five hundred to eight hundred dollars a week.

They call themselves "showgirls," which means that, unlike "dancers," they perform topless. In exchange, they get flashier costumes, greater prominence in the show, and an extra fifty dollars a week. Their feathers alone can cost as much as five or six thousand dollars, and bearing them with the proper liquid hauteur around the stage's

runway, or *passerelle*, requires a particular skill. "We have a special showgirl walk," Narelle Brennan, the woman in the fourth pair of photographs, says. "You keep your whole body to the front, and your legs are crossing. You can't have any open legs." Susan McNamara, in the first pair of photographs, adds, "In these Vegas shows, they want that feeling that you're untouchable. It's 'Here I am, look at me, but I'm not for you.' It's fun, because it's not a side of me that I am in life."

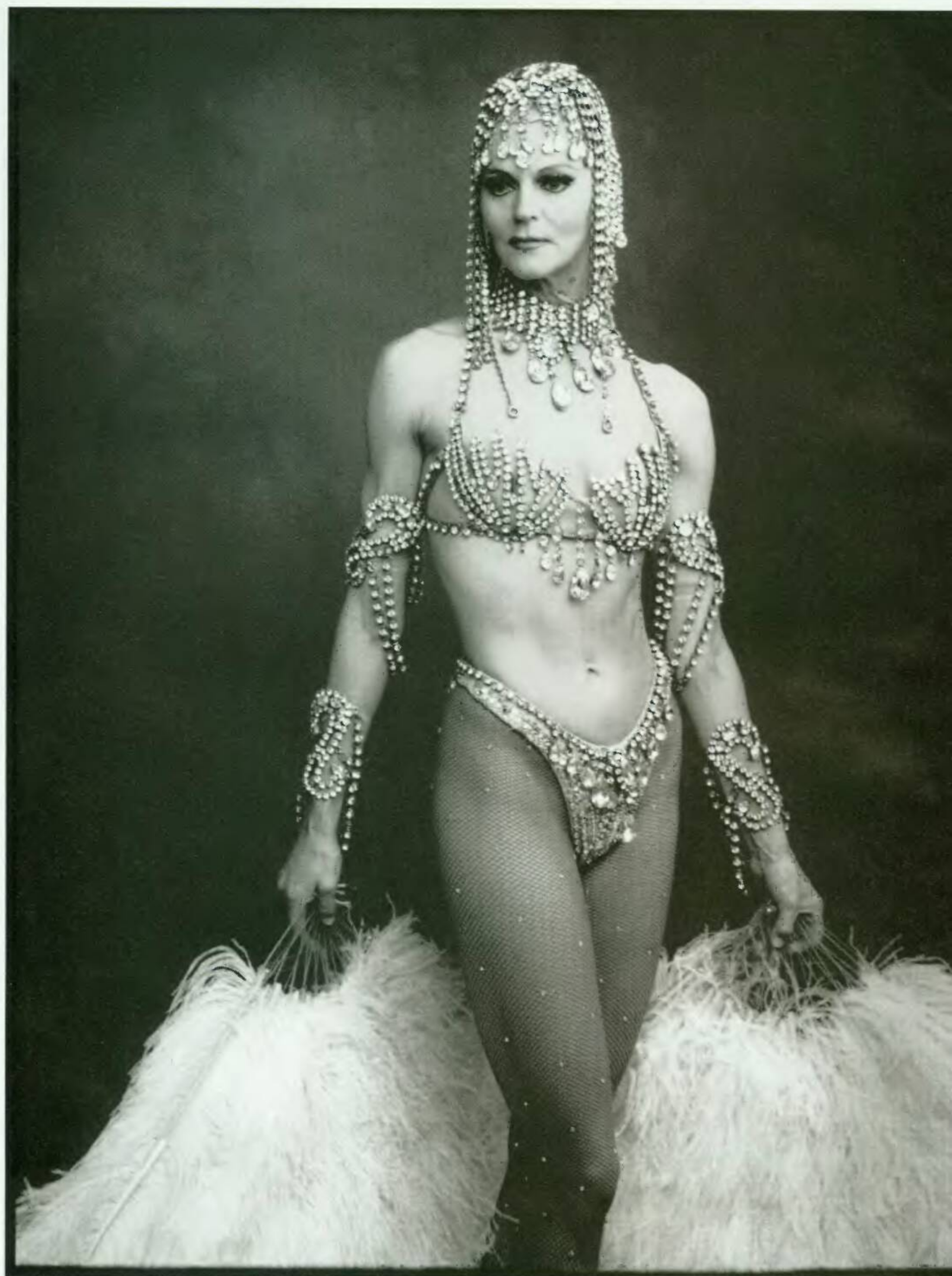
In life, she, like the other women here, is a trained dancer; she spent three years with Nevada Dance Theatre. The woman in the second pair of pictures, Linda Green, danced with the Harkness Ballet. She is the only member of the original cast of "Jubilee!" who is still in the show, and there are not many companies that would have allowed her to keep working as long as she has—she is now forty-two. Narelle Brennan, who is Australian, trained for ten years in ballet, tap, jazz, and Highland dancing. In fact, the only one who doesn't regard herself as a serious dancer is Akke Alma, the woman in the third pair of photographs.

Alma, who is Dutch, is familiar to Las Vegas habitués, because her likeness adorns the tail of one of Western Pacific's airplanes, and billboards all over town proclaim her "A Showgirl for the 21st Century." Alma speaks five languages, takes correspondence courses in Dutch law, and is married to a film professor at the University of Nevada; she starred in his most recent short film. "Onstage, it's not only about dancing," she says. "It's about personality"—by which she means what used to be called "sex appeal." The showgirls of the 20th Century view themselves somewhat differently. "I wear these big white feathers at the end," Linda Green says. "And I look at people and they're looking up at me, and I see tears in their eyes sometimes. The way it's lit and sparkly—they're looking at me like I'm this brilliant white angel."

—STEPHEN SCHIFF



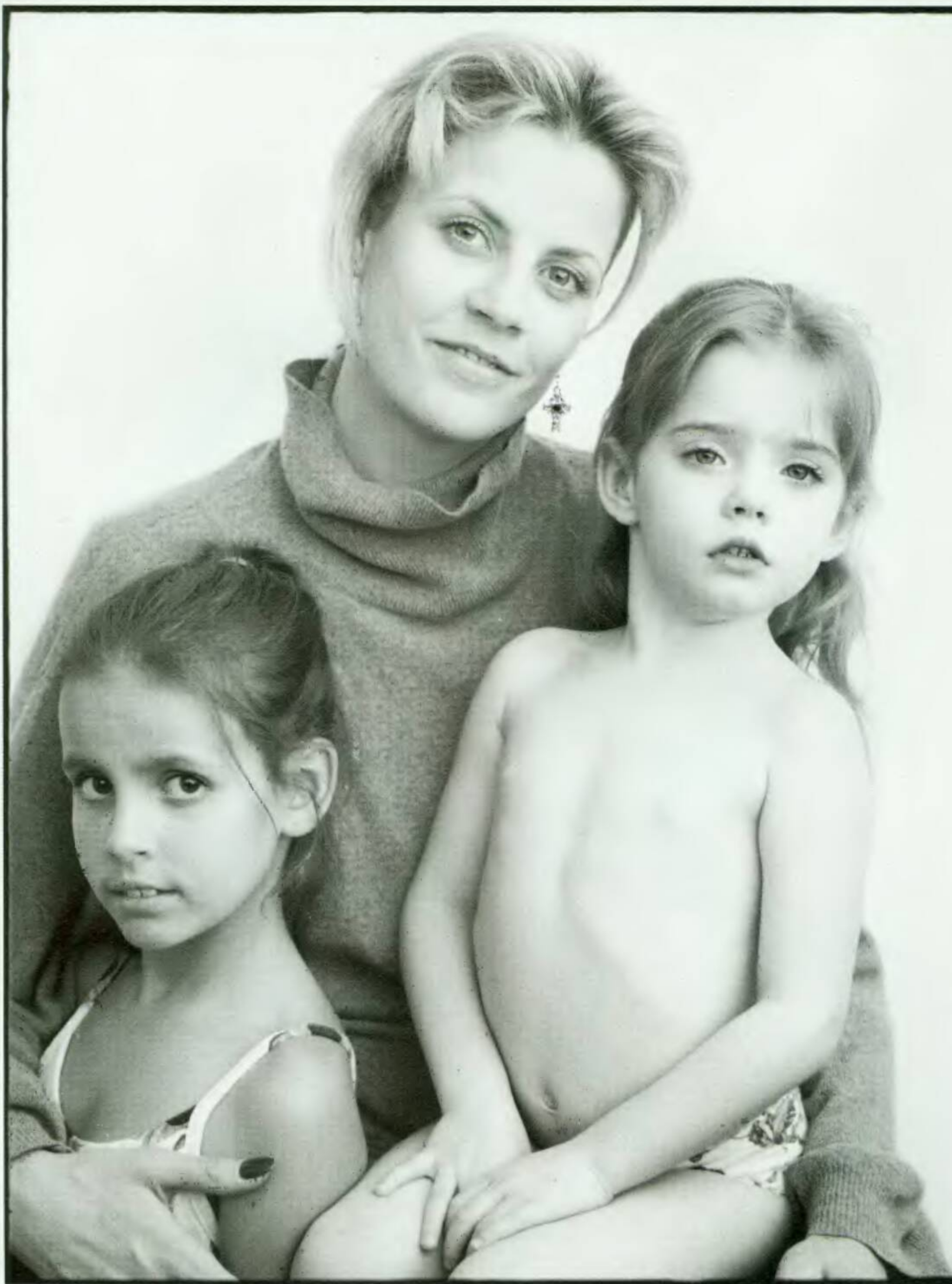














FICTION
DROWN

BY JUNOT DÍAZ



EO is home from school, my mother tells me, and waits for me to say something, but I keep watching the TV. Only when she goes to bed do I put on my jacket and swing through the neighborhood to see. Teo's a *pato* now, but two years ago we were friends. He used to walk into the apartment without knocking, his heavy voice rousing my mother from the Spanish of her room, drawing me up from the basement, a voice that crackled and made you think of uncles or grandfathers.

We were raging then, crazy the way we stole, broke windows, pissed on people's stairs and then challenged them to come out and stop us. Teo hated everything about our neighborhood: the break-apart buildings, the little strips of grass, the piles of garbage around the cans and the dump—especially the dump.

He was leaving for college at the end of the summer and was delirious from the thought of it. I don't know how you can do it, he said to me. You should find a job somewhere and go.

Yeah, I said. I wasn't like him. I had another year in high school, no promises elsewhere.

Days we spent in the mall or out in the parking lot playing stickball, but nights were what we waited for: the heat in the apartments; families arranged on their porches, the glow from their TVs washing blue against the brick; the smell of the pear trees that had been planted years ago, four to a court, probably to save us all from asphyxiation. Nothing moved fast, even daylight was slow to fade, but as soon as night settled Teo and I headed down to the community center and jumped the fence into the pool. We were never alone, every kid with legs was there. We lunged from the boards and swam

out to the deep end, wrestling and farting around. At midnight the *abuelas*, with their hair swirled around spiky rollers, shouted at us from their apartment windows: *Sinvergüenzas!* Go home!

I pass his apartment but the windows are dark; I put my ear to the busted-up door and hear only the familiar hum of the air-conditioner. I haven't yet decided if I'll talk to him. I can go back home to my dinner and two years will become three.

Even from four blocks off, I can hear the racket from the pool—radios, too—and wonder if we were ever that loud. Little has changed, not the stink of chlorine, not the bottles exploding against the lifeguard station. I hook my fingers through the plastic-coated hurricane fence. Something tells me that he will be here; I hop the fence, feeling stupid when I sprawl on the dandelions and the grass.

Nice one, somebody calls out.

Fuck me, I say. I'm not the oldest motherfucker in the place, but it's close. I take off my shirt and my shoes and then knife in the water. Many of the kids here are younger brothers of the people I used to go to school with. Two of them wade past, black and Latino, and they pause when they see me, recognizing the guy who deals them their shitty dope. The crackheads have their own man, Lucero, and some other guy who drives in from Paterson, the only full-time commuter in the area.

The water feels good. Starting at the deep end, I glide over the slick-tiled bottom without kicking up a spume or making a splash. Sometimes another swimmer churns past me, more a disturbance of water than a body. I can still go far without coming up. While everything above is loud and bright, everything below is whispers. And always the risk of coming up to find the cops stabbing their searchlights out across the water. And then everybody running, wet

feet slapping against the concrete, yelling, Fuck you, officers, you *putos sucios*, fuck you!

When I'm tired I wade through the shallow end, past some kid who's kissing his girlfriend, watching me as though I'm going to try to cut in, and I sit near the pool sign: "No Horseplay, No Running, No Defecating, No Urinating, No Expectorating." At the bottom someone has scrawled "No Whites, No Fat Chiks," and someone else has provided the missing "c" in "Chicks." I laugh. Teo hadn't known what expectorating meant, even though he was the one leaving for college. I told him, spitting a greener by the side of the pool.

Shit, he said. Where did you learn that?

I shrugged.

Tell me. He hated when I knew something he didn't. He put his hands on my shoulders and pushed me under. He was wearing a cross and cut-offs. He was stronger than me and held me down until water flooded my nose and throat. Even then I didn't tell him; he thought I didn't read, not even dictionaries.

WE live alone. My mother has enough for the rent and groceries and I cover the phone bill, sometimes the cable. She's so quiet that most of the time I'm startled to find her in the apartment. I'll enter a room and she'll stir, detaching herself from the cracking plaster walls, from the stained cabinets, and fright will pass through me like a wire. She's discovered the secret to silence: pouring *café* without a splash, walking between rooms on a cushion of felt, crying without a sound. You have travelled to the East and learned many secret things, I've told her. You're like a shadow warrior.

And you're like a crazy, she says. Like a big crazy.

When I come in she's still awake, her hands picking clots of lint from her

pants. I put a towel down on the sofa and we watch television together. We settle on the Spanish-language news: drama for her, violence for me. Today a child survived a seven-story fall, busting nothing but his diaper. The hysterical babysitter, all three hundred pounds of her, is head-butting the microphone.

It's a goddam miracle, she cries.

My mother asks me if I found Teo. I tell her that I didn't look.

That's too bad. He was telling me that he might be starting at a school for business.

So what?

She's never understood why we don't speak anymore. I've tried to explain, all wise-like, that everything changes, but she thinks that that sort of saying is only around so you can prove it wrong.

He asked me what you were doing.

What did you say?

I told him you were fine.

You should have told him I moved.

And what if he ran into you?

I'm not allowed to visit my mother?

She notices the tightening of my arms. You should be more like me and your father.

Can't you see I'm watching television? I ask her.

I was angry at him, wasn't I? But now we can talk to each other.

Am I watching television here or what?

SATURDAY she asks me to take her to the mall. As a son I feel I owe her that much, even though neither of us has a car and we have to walk two miles through redneck territory to catch the M15.

Before we head out, she drags me through the apartment to make sure the windows are locked. She can't reach the latches so she has me test them. With the air-conditioning on, we never open our windows, but I go through the routine anyway. Putting my hand on the latch is not enough—she wants to hear it rattle. This place just isn't safe, she tells me. Lorena got lazy and look what they did to her. They punched her and kept her locked up in her own house. Those *morenos* ate all her food and even made phone calls. Phone calls!

That's why we don't have long-distance, I tell her, but she shakes

her head. That's not funny, she says.

She doesn't go out much, so when she does it's a big deal. She dresses up, even puts on makeup. Which is why I don't give her lip about taking her to the mall even though I usually make a fortune on Saturdays, selling to those kids driving down to Belmar or out to Spruce Run.

I recognize about half the kids on the bus. I keep my head buried in my cap, praying that nobody tries to score. She watches the traffic, her hands somewhere inside her purse, doesn't say a word.

When we arrive at the mall, I give her fifty dollars. Buy something, I say, hating the image I have of her, picking through the sale bins, wrinkling everything. My father used to give her a hundred dollars at the end of each summer for my new clothes, and she would take nearly a week to spend it, buying a couple of T-shirts and two pairs of jeans. She folds the bills into a square. I'll see you at three, she says.

I wander through the stores, staying in sight of the cashiers so they won't have reason to follow me. The circuit I make has not changed since my looting days. Bookstore, record store, comic-book shop, Macy's. Teo and I used to steal like mad from these places, two, three hundred dollars of gear in a day. Our system was simple—we walked into a store with a shopping bag and came out loaded. Back then security wasn't tight. The only trick was in the exit. We stopped right at the entrance of the shop and checked out some worthless piece of junk to keep the store people from getting suspicious. What do you think? we asked each other. Would she like it? Both of us had seen bad shoplifters at work. All grab and run, nothing smooth about them. Not us. We idled out of the stores slow, like a fat seventies car. But Teo was the best. He even talked to mall security, asked them for directions, his bag all loaded up, and me, standing ten feet away, shitting my pants. When he finished he smiled, swinging his shopping bag up to hit me.

You got to stop that messing around, I told him. I'm not going to jail for bullshit like that.

You don't go to jail for shoplifting. They just turn you over to your old man.

I don't know about you, but my pops hits like a motherfucker.

He laughed. You know my dad. He flexed his fingers. The nigger's got arthritis.

My mother never suspected but my father wasn't that easy. He knew what things cost and knew that I didn't have a regular job.

You're going to get caught, he told me one day. Just you wait. When you do, I'll show them everything you've taken and then they'll throw your stupid ass away like a bad piece of meat.

He was a charmer, my pops, a real asshole, but he was right. Nobody can stay smooth forever, especially kids like us. One day at the bookstore, we didn't even hide the drops. Four issues of the same *Playboy* for kicks, enough audio books to start our own library. The lady who stepped in front of us didn't look old, even with her white hair. Her silk shirt was half unbuttoned and a silver horn necklace sat on the freckled top of her chest. I'm sorry, fellows, but I have to check your bag, she said. I kept moving and looked back all annoyed, like she was asking us for a quarter, or something. Teo got polite and stopped. No problem, he said, slamming the heavy bag into her face. She fell with a squawk, her hands slapping the tiles. There you go, Teo said.

Security found us across from the bus stop, under a Jeep Cherokee. A bus had come and gone, both of us too scared to take it. A rent-a-cop tapped his nightstick against the fender and said, You little shits better come out here real slow. I started to cry. Teo didn't say a word, his face stretched out and gray, his hand squeezing mine, the bones in our fingers pressing together.

NIGHTS I drink with Alex and Danny, and other friends who remain. The Malibou Bar is no good, just us washouts and the *sucias* we can con into joining us. We drink too much, roar at each other, and make the skinny bartender move closer to the phone. On the wall hangs a cork dartboard, and a Brunswick Gold Crown blocks the bathroom, its bumpers squashed, the felt pulled like old skin.

When the bar begins to shake back and forth like a rumba, I call it a night and go home, through the fields that

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surround the apartments. In the distance you can see the Raritan, as shiny as an earthworm, the same river my homeboy goes to school on. The dump has long since shut down, and grass has spread over it like a sickly fuzz, and from where I stand, my right hand directing a colorless stream of piss downward, the landfill might be the top of a blond head, square and old.

In the mornings I run. My mother is already up, dressed for her house-cleaning job. She says nothing to me, would rather point to the *mangu* she has prepared than speak.

I run three miles easily, could have pushed a fourth if I were in the mood. I keep an eye out for the recruiter who prowls around our neighborhood in his dark K-Car. We've spoken before. He was out of uniform and called me over, jovial, and I thought I was helping some white dude with directions. Would you mind if I asked you a question?

No.

Do you have a job?

Not right now.

Would you like one? A real career, more than you'll get around here?

I remember stepping back. Depends on what it is, I said.

Son, I know somebody who's hiring. It's the United States government.

Well. Sorry, but I ain't Army material.

That's exactly what I used to think, he said, his ten piggy fingers buried in his carpeted steering wheel. But now I have a house, a car, a gun, and a wife. Discipline. Loyalty. Can you say that you have those things? Even one?

He's a Southerner, red-haired, his drawl so out of place that the people around here laugh just hearing him. I take to the bushes when I see his car on the road. These days my guts feel loose and cold, and I want to be away from here. He won't have to show me his Desert Eagle or flash the photos of the skinny Filipina girls sucking dick. He'll only have to smile and name the places, and I'll listen.

When I reach the apartment, I lean against my door, waiting for my heart to slow, for the pain to lose its edge. I hear my mother's voice, a whisper from the kitchen. She sounds hurt or nervous, maybe both. At first I'm terri-

fied that Teo's in there with her but then I look and see the phone cord, swinging lazily. She's talking to my father, something she knows I disapprove of. He's in Florida now, a sad guy who calls her and begs her for money. He swears that if she moves down there he'll leave the woman he's living with. These are lies, I've told her, but she still calls to listen to him. His words coil inside her, wrecking her sleep for days. She opens the refrigerator door slightly so that the whirr of the compressor masks their conversation. I walk in and hang up the phone. That's enough, I say.

She's startled, her hand squeezing the loose folds of her neck. That was him, she says quietly.

ON school days Teo and I chilled at the stop together, but as soon as that bus came over the Parkridge hill I got to thinking about how I was failing gym and screwing up math and how I hated every single living teacher on the planet.

I'll see *you* in the P.M., I said.

He was already standing in line. I just stood back and grinned, hands in my pocket. With our bus drivers you didn't have to hide. Two of them didn't give a rat fuck and the third one, the Brazilian preacher, was too busy talking Bible to notice anything but the traffic in front of him.

Being truant without a car was no easy job, but I managed. I watched a lot of TV and when it got boring I went down to the mall or the Sayreville library, where you could watch old documentaries for free. I always came back to the neighborhood late, so that the buses wouldn't pass me on Ernston and nobody could yell, Asshole! out the windows. Teo would usually be home or down by the swings, but other times he wouldn't be around. Out visiting other neighborhoods. He knew a lot of folks I didn't—a messed-up black kid from Madison Park, two brothers who were into that New York club scene, who spent money on platform shoes and leather backpacks. I'd leave a message with his parents and then watch some more TV. The next day, he'd be out at the bus stop, too busy smoking a cigarette to say much about the day before. You need to learn

how to walk the world, he told me. There's a lot out there.

SOME nights me and the boys drive to New Brunswick. A nice city, the Raritan so low and silty that you don't have to be Jesus to walk over it. We hit the Melody and the Roxy, and stare at the college girls. We drink a lot and then spin out onto the dance floor. None of the *chicas* ever dance with us, but a glance or a touch can keep us talking shit for hours.

Once the clubs close, we go to the Franklin Diner, gorge ourselves on pancakes, and then, after we've smoked our pack, head home. Danny passes out in the back seat and Alex cranks the window down to keep the wind in his eyes. He's fallen asleep in the past, wrecked two cars before this one. The streets have been picked clean of students and townies and we blow through every light, red or green. At the Old Bridge Turnpike we pass the fag bar, which never seems to close. *Patos* all over the parking lot, drinking and talking.

Sometimes Alex stops by the side of the road and says, Excuse me. When somebody comes over from the bar he points his plastic pistol at them, just to see if they'll run or shit their pants.

TWICE. That's it. The first time was at the end of that summer. We had just come back from the pool and were watching a porn film at his parents' apartment. His father was a nut for these videos, ordering them from wholesalers in California and Grand Rapids. Teo used to describe how his pop would watch them in the middle of the day, not caring a lick about his moms, who spent the time in the kitchen, taking hours to cook a pot of *arroz con gandules*. Teo would sit down with his pop and neither of them would say a word, except to laugh when somebody caught it in the eye or the face.

We were an hour into the new movie, some *vaina* that looked like it had been filmed in the apartment next door, when he reached into my shorts. What the fuck are you doing? I asked, but he didn't stop. His hand was dry. I kept my eyes on the TV, too scared to watch. I came right away, smearing the plastic sofa covers. My legs started

shaking and suddenly I wanted out. He didn't say anything when I left, just sat there watching the screen.

The next day he called and when I heard his voice I was cool but I wouldn't go to the mall or anywhere else. My mother sensed that something was wrong and pestered me about it, but I told her to leave me the fuck alone, and my pops, who was home on a visit, stirred himself from the couch to slap me down. Mostly I stayed in the basement, terrified that I would end up abnormal, a fucking *pato*, but he was my best friend and back then that mattered to me more than anything. This alone got me out of the apartment and over to the pool that night. He was already there, his body pale and flabby under the water. Hey, he said. I was beginning to worry about you.

Nothing to worry about, I said.

We swam and didn't talk much and later we watched a Skytop crew pull a bikini top from a girl stupid enough to hang out alone. Give it, she said, covering herself, but these kids howled, holding it up over her head, the shiny laces flopping just out of reach. When they began to pluck at her arms, she walked away, leaving them to try the top on over their flat pecs.

He put his hand on my shoulder and my pulse was like a code under his palm. Let's go, he said. Unless you're not feeling good.

I'm fine.

Since his parents worked nights, we pretty much owned the place until six the next morning. We sat in front of the television, in our towels, his hands bracing against my abdomen and thighs. I'll stop if you want, he said, and I didn't respond. After I was done, he laid his head in my lap. I wasn't asleep or awake but was caught somewhere in between, rocked slowly back and forth the way surf holds junk against the shore, rolling it over and over. In three weeks he was leaving. Nobody can touch me, he kept saying. We'd visited the school, taken his father's car, and I'd seen how beautiful the campus was, with all the students drifting from dorm to class. I thought of how in high school our teachers loved to crowd us into their lounge every time a space shuttle took off from Florida. One teacher, whose family had

two grammar schools named after it, compared us to the shuttles. A few of you are going to make it. Those are the orbiters. But the majority of you are just going to burn out. Going nowhere. He dropped his hand onto his desk. I could already see myself losing altitude, fading, the earth spread out beneath me, hard and bright.

I had my eyes closed and the television was on, and when the hallway door crashed open he jumped up and I nearly cut my dick off struggling with my shorts. It's just the neighbor, he said, laughing. He was laughing, but I was saying, Fuck this, and getting my clothes on.

I BELIEVE I see him in his father's bottomed-out Cadillac, heading toward the turnpike, but I can't be sure. He's probably back in school already. I deal close to home, trooping up and down the same dead-end street where the kids drink and smoke. These punks joke with me, pat me down for taps, sometimes too hard. Now that strip malls line Route 9, a lot of folks have part-time jobs; kids stand around smoking in their aprons, nametags dangling heavily from pockets.

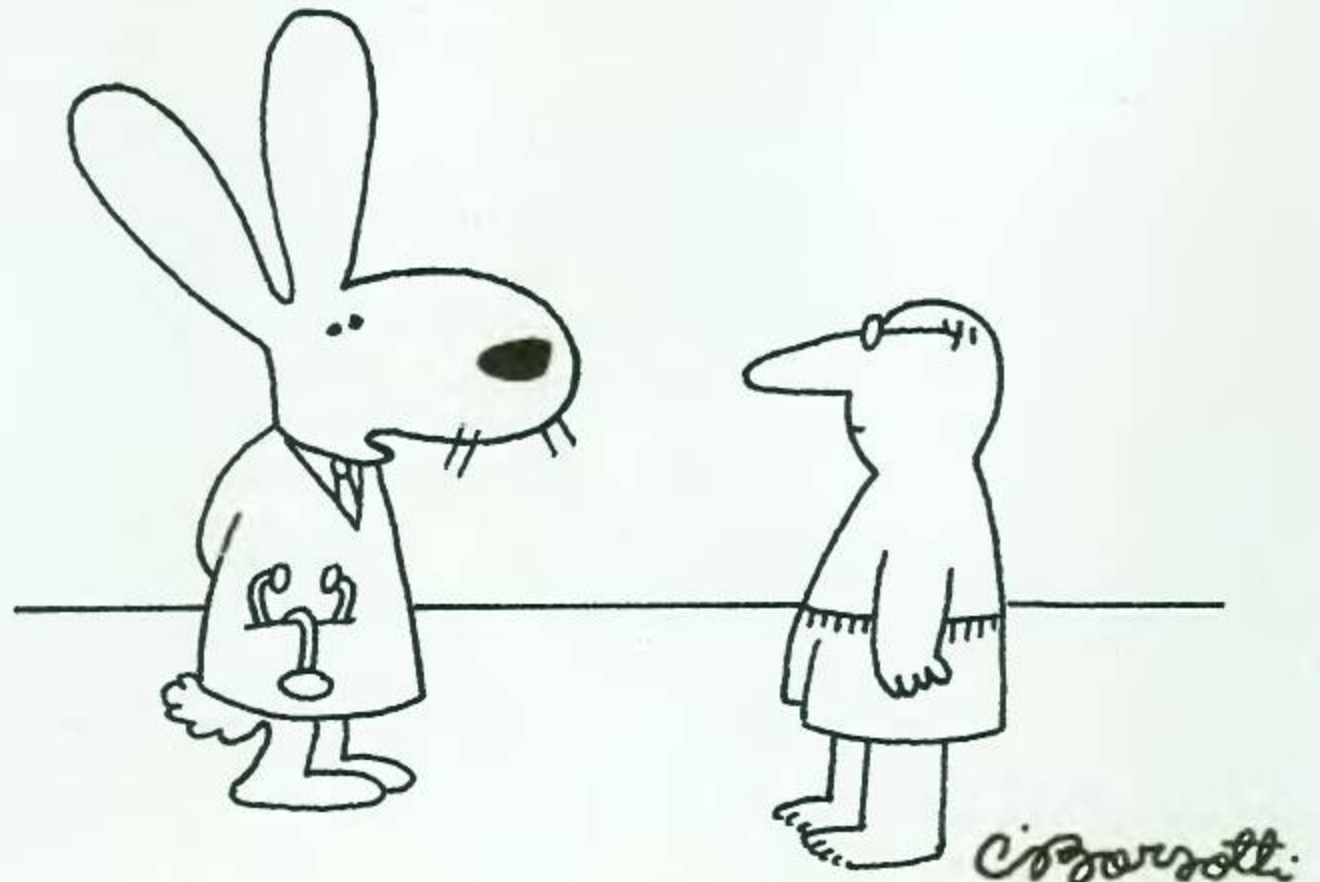
When I get home, my sneakers are filthy, so I take an old toothbrush to their soles, scraping the mud into the tub. My mother has thrown open the windows and propped open the door. It's cool enough, she explains. She has prepared dinner—rice and beans, fried cheese,

tostones. Look what I bought, she says, showing me two blue T-shirts. They were two for one so I got you one. Try it on.

It fits tight but I don't mind. She cranks up the television. A movie dubbed into Spanish, a classic, one that everyone knows. The actors throw themselves around, passionate, but their words are plain and deliberate. It's hard to imagine anyone going through life this way. I pull out a plug of bills from my pocket. She takes it from me, her fingers soothing the creases. A man who treats his *plata* like this doesn't deserve to spend it, she says.

We watch the movie and the two hours together makes us friendly. She puts her hand on mine. Near the end of the film, just as our heroes are about to fall apart under a hail of bullets, she takes off her glasses and kneads her temples, the light of the television flickering across her face. She watches another minute, and then her chin lists to her chest. Almost immediately her eyelashes begin to tremble. She is dreaming, dreaming of Boca Raton, of strolling under the jacarandas with my father. You can't be anywhere forever, was what Teo used to say, what he said to me the day I went to see him off. He handed me a gift, a book, and after he was gone I threw it away, didn't even bother to open it and read what he'd written.

I let her sleep until the end of the movie and when I wake her she shakes her head, grimacing. You better check those windows, she says. I promise her I will. ♦



"Eat lots of carrots."



A MOST UNTYPICAL MAN

The life of a grouchy critic and bookish hedonist.

BY ANTHONY LANE

WHO was Cyril Connolly? What was he? Not a poet, for all his dabblings ("The pernod at the violet hour"); not quite a novelist, despite "The Rock Pool," the brief, over-ripe slice of fiction that he published in 1936; and not precisely a journalist, since the book reviews that he wrote in England for *The New Statesman* and the *Sunday Times* remain much too ruddy and vital to lie down and die, as hackwork should. He was three times a husband, but whether that made him a good husband is open to question. He *was* a good critic, the sagest of his period, and nobody who saw him launch his culture-powered magazine *Horizon* in 1939 and stand firm at its helm for ten years would deny that he was a great editor. As for Connolly himself, he knew what he was: "No opinions, no ideas, no real knowledge of anything, no ideals, no inspiration; a fat, slothful, querulous, greedy, impotent carcass; a stump, a decaying belly washed up on the shore." Anything I can do to help?

Connolly was born in Coventry, in 1903, an only child par excellence. His father, Matthew, was a soldier with a consuming passion for snails; I like the sound of his masterwork, "A Monographic Survey of South-African Non-Marine Mollusca." Young Cyril, who could never decide whether or not to retreat into his shell, spent parts of his sensation-soaked childhood in South Africa and in Ireland. He went to preparatory school, from there to Eton, and from there, on a scholarship, to Balliol College, Oxford—the cloudless peak of his achievement, after which, he liked to maintain, it was downhill all the way. That sad estimation is upheld by Clive Fisher's "Cyril Connolly: The Life and Times of England's Most Controversial Literary Critic" (St. Martin's; \$27.95).

The less preposterous subtitle of the English edition, "A Nostalgic Life," chimed better with the rhapsodic tone of Connolly's own recollections in "Enemies of Promise" (1938), the volume of criticism and memoirs that made his name, yet we should be wary of treating him as a kind of English Alain-Fournier. Connolly was not a victim of nostalgia but its careful cultivator, and what really seduced his imagination was a nostalgia for what he had never known or for what had never been. "I regard the burning of the Alexandrian library as an inconsolable private grief," he wrote. The problem with long-distance yearners is that, more often than not, they have scant sympathy left over for troubles close to home.

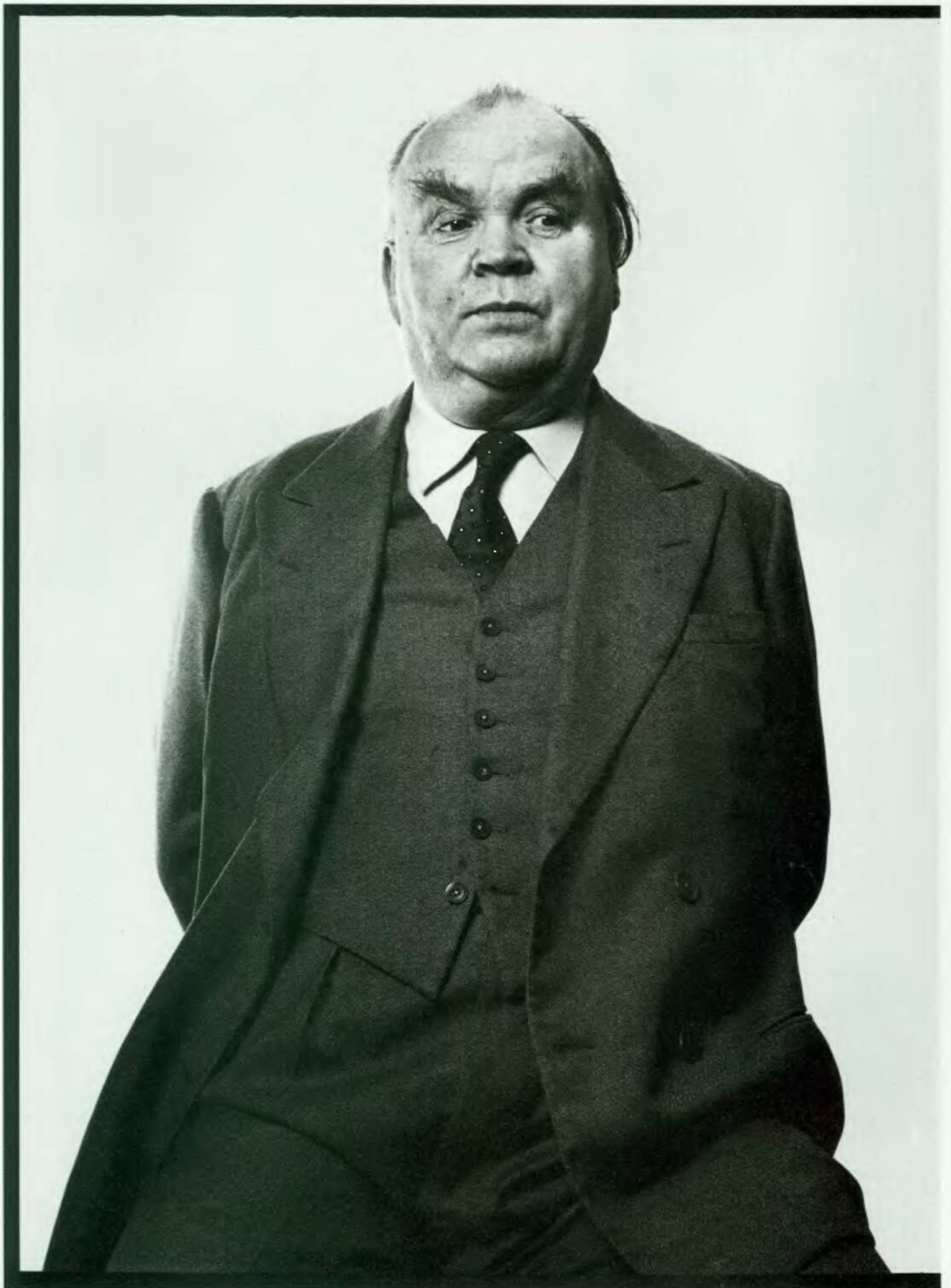
Fisher's book is the first full-length biography of Connolly, but it will not be the last: a competing account, by Jeremy Lewis, will be published in the next year or so. It is hard to fathom why interest in Connolly, which flared up after his death, in 1974, and again with the publication of David Pryce-Jones's "Cyril Connolly: Journal and Memoir," in 1983, should now begin to sputter and glow once more. Connolly is no longer widely read, and it is not the best efforts of biographers that restore an author to public favor but a slow, seismic heave of taste, which cannot be forced, and may not come to a head for generations. Perhaps Fisher and Lewis consider their man to be the deserving object of millennial scrutiny; after all, the appetite for gloom drew him more to the crepuscular end of things than to bright dawns, which invariably turned out to be false. (He would have thought it a vulgar disappointment if they hadn't.) Fisher quotes the last article that Connolly published in the *Sunday Times*. "As civilizations die they become incomprehensible; every language will one day be a dead

language and we ourselves wear out," he wrote. "For this reason the poetry of mortality has the edge on the poetry of love."

All this is pleasant to chew on, and is quite possibly true, but anyone who picks up Fisher's biography expecting the pages to be black-edged with despair will be surprised to find them brimming over with parties. For an expert in low spirits, Connolly seems to have had a high old time; but then what is more effective in the disgorgement of illusions than the blood-shot aftermath of fun?

CONNOLLY came from solid rather than smart Anglo-Irish gentry, and he lost no opportunity to gild himself as he went along. The refining of his prose style, in the twenties and early thirties, matched the curve of his effortless social climbing. What irks the reader of Connolly's writings, or of his biography, is not the outright snobbery, which is doughy and obvious—"The hotel is a favorite with people like ourselves and so old friends keep popping up," he wrote of a Roman trip—but the fact that the poppers-up are so damn *famous*. If one hunts in vain through Connolly's essays for a prevailing attitude toward ordinary people, that may be because he simply didn't meet any. Reading Fisher, you learn to breeze through the intellectual big shots as if they were small towns on a motoring trip; after a hundred pages or so, I barely noticed when I passed a line such as "They continued to Salzburg, where they encountered Isaiah Berlin, Stuart Hampshire, and Elizabeth Bowen, who was particularly pleased to see them." Dear Elizabeth. Such a doll.

Clive Fisher's previous work was a biography of Noël Coward, and he is happy to let the gregarious side of Connolly—the glint of his conversation and the drink in his hand—shine through the new book as well. Fisher introduces us to people with names like Racy and Ran and Lys, and to the terrifying Barbara Skelton, a bohemian glamour girl who married Connolly in 1950; he lists the literary notables to whom advance copies of "Enemies of Promise" were sent, and those who duly responded with admiring reviews; and he seems unbothered by the strange pseudo-poverty of the well-bred. A paragraph chronicling Connolly's ac-



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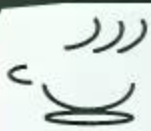
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THE RECOGNITIONS

Not the god, though it might have been,
savoring some notion of me
and exciting the cloud where he was hidden
with impetuous thunderstrokes of summoning
—it was merely you who recognized me,
speaking my name in such a tone
I knew you had been thinking it
a long, long time, and now revealed yourself
in this way. Because of this, suddenly
who I was was precious to me.

—IRVING FELDMAN

tivities in 1953, a rather glum year in which he collected some of his *Horizon* pieces in “Ideas and Places,” tells us of his growing overdraft, of his telephone's being cut off, and of his need to borrow twenty pounds from a friend; and yet we read in that same paragraph, “A more exciting invitation led to his accompanying George Weidenfeld on a cultural programme organized by UNESCO and revolving around the musical festivals at Salzburg and Bayreuth, and while the two men went from opera to opera Barbara stayed with Farouk, now living in Rome since his abdication the previous year.” Somebody, somewhere, could have paid the phone bill. The sharpest glance at this weird world comes not from Clive Fisher but from George Orwell, who had known Connolly since their schooldays. Commenting on “The Unquiet Grave” (1944), Connolly's feverish, quotation-stuffed musings on the loneliness of the long-suffering artist, Orwell wrote, “This book exhibits that queer product of capitalist democracy, an inferiority complex resulting from a private income.”

What matters about Connolly is that when you read “The Unquiet Grave” the friends depart and the hubbub dies away. But “Cyril Connolly” locks its subject into place among his peers and influences, because that is how biographies tend to function. It is the only way. No biographer can afford to admit the unpalatable truth that people are likely to be more expressive in what (and whom) they deny themselves than in their gratifications—that the plunge pool of like-minded society can sometimes be less inspiring than a solitary supper and a hot bath. Connol-

ly's talent unfurled despite his background, not because of it. Fisher's book produces the standard roll call of Oxford dandies and Chelsea exquisites, most of them spaced out on the deadening fug of belles-lettres: Harold Acton, Brian Howard, Francis (Sligger) Urquhart, Logan Pearsall Smith, Desmond MacCarthy, Maurice Bowra, and so on. Anyone concerned with the period will have stumbled across them a hundred times before; what needs to be made plain is that none of them really count, and that from the whole, seething cultural throng only two men—Cyril Connolly and Evelyn Waugh—stand out and compel our attention.

Connolly and Waugh circled each other cautiously for decades. They had much in common. For one thing, both were prey to an encroaching corpulence; each looked as if he were understudying the other for the leading role in “Toad of Toad Hall.” Connolly resembled the product of some perilous gene-splicing experiment involving human and pug. One of the photographs in the biography shows him in shades and loud shirt and casting his plump shadow along a beach; he may have found the location suitably haunting, but the image suggests Al Capone in Florida taking a breather between slayings. Like Waugh, Connolly found pleasure in creating a character, a minor myth, out of his own temperament and appearance, and both writers wielded a bluff satire that was half in love with what it mocked. “O the joy of lingering over port and brandy with men in red coats telling dirty stories while it snows outside,” Connolly wrote. His theory of underachievement—that Eton and Balliol

had spoiled him for anything else—does seem to be shored up by the example of Waugh, who went to a lesser school and a smaller college, and was therefore left with something to prove. Absurd, but that is how England (or a fraction of it) sometimes works. "Cyril is the most typical man of my generation," Waugh asserted. "He has the authentic lack of scholarship."

"The Unquiet Grave" is indeed unscholarly, but it is also bookish to a fault. Composed under the pseudonym Palinurus—the pilot of Aeneas' ship, who fell overboard, washed ashore, and was murdered by the locals—it now feels less like a chronicle of self-pity than like a perfectly pitched anthem of wartime, as true to its era as "Little Gidding." Connolly's prose reeks of the ration book and the air-raid shelter, of pages thumbed by candlelight; and his indecision—that perpetual sway between the eighteenth century and the severities of modernism, between the comforts of England and the lure of France—speaks of an embattled figure who has almost, but not quite, had enough. To anyone paralyzed by the thought of moral alternatives, Connolly proves that the hedonist and the ascetic need not be sworn rivals—that they can easily be blood brothers or a couple of swells and, in fact, are most usefully twinned within a single soul. If it is the case that, as Proust said, the only true paradises are those we have lost, why not push the irony a little harder and try to convince yourself that the only *point* of paradise is the losing of it—that the succulent moment is made sweet by the prospect of rot? Armed with this delightful logic, you can be sure of enjoying yourself even when—especially when—there is nothing to enjoy. Take the following passage from "The Condemned Playground," Connolly's 1945 collection of articles, reviews, and suspect journal entries:

Bad lunch on Dover boat and dreary crossing. Oh, the superb wretchedness of English food, how many foreigners has it daunted, and what a subtle glow of nationality one feels in ordering a dish that one knows will be bad and being able to eat it! The French do not understand cooking, only good cooking—this is where we score.

When I first read these words, some years ago, I knew instantly that Connolly was a Good Thing, but time spent with Fisher's biography has only fortified my

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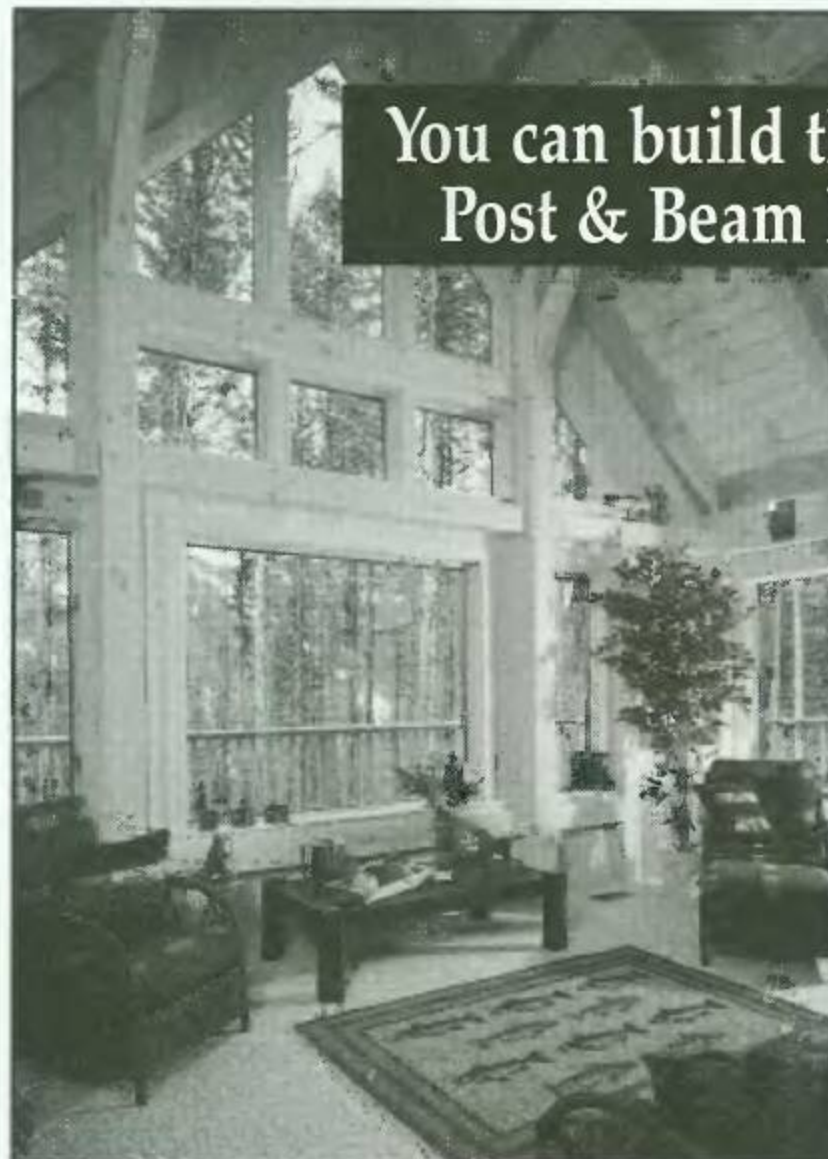
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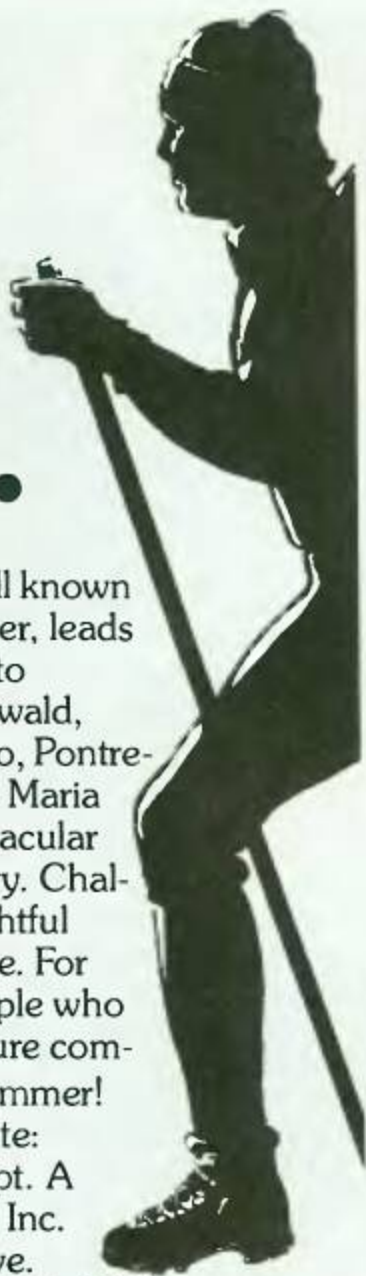
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suspicion that he could also be a Bad Man. His marriages, to Jean Bakewell, Barbara Skelton, and Deirdre Craven, seem mostly to have veered from tempest to doldrum without passing through contentment. Any accusations that you can level at Connolly—of inconstancy, say, or snobbery, or dilettantism—are worse than useless, for he long ago tortured himself with similar charges, and twisted the knife until the wound was well explored. The attempt to gauge precisely where his self-loathing backs into self-aggrandizement is likely to leave his readers in a unique state of itchiness. His closest kinsman in this respect is Henry Adams, another round-the-clock moocher, and you can't help noticing that both men were pressed by their perversities of spirit into fangling a new literary form: the "Education" tacks back and forth between the long historical vista and the lugubrious gaze into a mirror, while Connolly's three most important books—"Enemies of Promise," "The Unquiet Grave," and "The Condemned Playground"—are all Pyrrhic victories over the forces of fragmentation. Like a bored bright child, or an old man unable to sleep, Connolly slides restlessly from one topic to the next. Literary analysis jostles with autobiography, and the parody of current fads makes way for a daunting encomium to his idols. In "The Unquiet Grave" he writes:

What are masterpieces? Let us name a few. The Odes and Epistles of Horace, the Eclogues and Georgics of Virgil, the Testament of Villon, the Essays of Montaigne, the Fables of La Fontaine, the Maxims of La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère, the Fleurs du Mal and Intimate Journals of Baudelaire, the Poems of Pope and Leopardi, the Illuminations of Rimbaud, and Byron's Don Juan.

It is an impeccable catalogue of works that share what Connolly calls "the maximum of emotion compatible with a classical sense of form," but there is real cunning, too, in the social mixture: if he had thrown a dinner party for this little cluster of geniuses (which would have been his idea of Heaven), how would the wild boys have fared with the well-behaved? How could Villon not get up Virgil's nose? Connolly was tempted by both categories: more than once, he had to seek out a Maecenas who could support his literary ventures, but the desire to cut loose, sleep around, or simply sleep all day was equally acute. He allowed his eternally peck-

ish hormones to range free, like chickens, and indulged his dreamy Francophilia to the hilt. (English fondness for France is normally a sort of neutron love: take away the people and leave the buildings standing. Connolly got it right: he worshipped Pascal and Montaigne, and proceeded from there.) I have long looked up to him as the patron saint of sluggards, of gentlemen in England now abed; he was forever on the lookout for reasons not to get things done, and, despite his own psychological probing of this vice, we shouldn't lose sight of the more prosaic possibility that, however fine a writer, he was even more content to be a reader.

I WAS not sure before I opened Clive Fisher's book that Cyril Connolly merited a long biography. Couldn't his life be covered by his own chosen medium, the extended essay? But Fisher argues his case well and without pretension—it's a dry, judicious, nicely turned piece of work—and he tunes in fast to Connolly's quixotic tastes, even managing to keep track of the innumerable mammals that scampered about the critic's home. Ferrets, lemurs, a mongoose, and a coaimundi: did they stare up at Cyril's puffy features and spot a kindred spirit? The party trick of one particular lemur was to rush out into mixed company and bite a selected man on the penis; I consider it a matter of lasting regret that the creature failed to perform when Evelyn Waugh came to tea. Fisher takes Connolly's lyrical reveries on his menagerie at face value, as he takes much else; his book is slightly flattened, in fact, by its lack of humor. "You can't be too serious," Connolly once observed, with magnificent ambivalence. Did he mean "The need to be serious is unending" or "Lighten up"? Fisher's book presumes the former, but there is plenty to laugh at in Connolly's emotionally scrambled life, not least because the man himself took such relish in its conditions. His prescription for happily married life, for instance, is fraught with implied drama: "Whenever you can, read at meals." Similarly, to those making new acquaintances on the African plains: "If attacked by a lion thrust your arm down his throat. This takes some practice."

The string of travel pieces that Connolly produced in his later years—he was a chronic wanderer, shifting from town to country and then to the Continent, and

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now he broadened his range—betray a light-headed enthusiasm that seems a world away from the heavy heart of "The Unquiet Grave." Who would have thought that the grouchy skeptic would finally be tamed by wildlife? Or that the famously blocked writer would, in the end, leave behind a legacy of thirteen books? If Connolly was honestly straining after what he called "a supreme design for failure," then, as this biography demonstrates, he failed. *Horizon* was a weighty success by any standard: from the work of Auden, Betjeman, MacNeice, Spender, and Henry Moore that graced the first issue to the notorious soothsaying of the last ("It is closing time in the gardens of the West"), Connolly's brainchild managed to keep its brow high but its touch surprisingly light. The very manner in which Connolly describes the hangover of its end—"Contributions continued inexorably to be delivered, like a suicide's milk"—shows that the dying fall of a Connolly sentence will long hum in the ear of anyone foolish enough to be obsessed with English prose.

Not long before Connolly visited America in 1946, he was credited by Jacques Barzun, then Professor of History

at Columbia, with "a representative modern mind," which is a pretty mean thing to say about anybody. It's like calling someone a great lover or a snappy dresser: from then on, failure will set in like a frost. Connolly's mind, like his library or his diet, represented no more than a small chunk of England at a certain time. What makes him touching is a lifelong effort *not* to represent his class—to turn down invitations and resist the polite hint that literature lies somewhere between a hobby and an embarrassment. If you want Connolly without literature, try the memoirs of Barbara Skelton—they are gossip-ridden, impatient, and, in every sense, artless. But when we turn to her husband's meditations on Baudelaire, or rococo architecture, or "the stormy life of wine," we reach the safe haven of the balanced mind, as cool and well stocked as a cellar. Connolly would have seconded the opinion of his hero, Flaubert, who said, "Something read in a book moves me more than a real misfortune." To subscribe to such a view is in itself a misfortune—it will shrink and shrivel you—but it promises riches of its own, and Connolly is one of the last Englishmen who thought it worth the risk. ♦

DARK HORSE

A win for the anonymous Washington novelist.

BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

None of these events ever happened.—*Author's Note, "Primary Colors."*

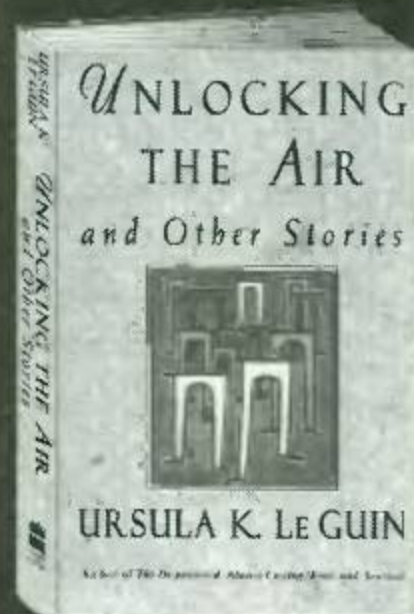
U H-HUH. The Democratic governor of a Southern state runs for President. He has never met a doughnut he has not inhaled, or a babe he has not bedded. He and his steely-cool, ambitious wife must decide whether to go on "60 Minutes" after the Super Bowl to tamp down a Vesuvian bimbo eruption. While the love lava's still bubbling about his ankles, someone else steps forward with paternity allegations. It also transpires that in his youth the governor was arrested at an Abbie Hoffman "Lock Up Your Daughters" antiwar rally



Eugene Michesco

and used political pull to get himself out of it, which he denies unconvincingly. His campaign director is a hillbilly who, as one colleague puts it, "looks like he was sired during the love scene from 'Deliverance.'" A close aide and family friend walks into the woods and commits suicide. The governor loses narrowly in New Hampshire but makes a comeback by going on the negative against his party's colorless, earnest front-runner, at which point things get really interesting, leaving you to wonder how much else of the delicious skullduggery, scandal, and betrayal in "Primary Colors" (Random House; \$24) didn't ever hap-

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pen during the Clinton campaign. No wonder the author is listed on the title page as Anonymous.

As a byline, Anonymous hasn't been used much since the days of Victorian erotica. It is titillating to find it here on this brilliant "Novel of Politics." Phones have been ringing inside the Washington Beltway and in New York with speculation as to who could have written it. No one seems to know, including, we're assured, Anonymous's publisher and editor; but this is the same publishing house that brought us the Colin Powell book campaign last fall, so the possibility that this is another marketing masterstroke should not be summarily dismissed.

Who could have written this? Certainly someone with a front-row seat at the Clinton campaign, though it is far too fine a piece of writing to have been written by a politico. (Confidential to Anonymous: If I'm mistaken, you're in the wrong business.) A journalist still covering the Clintons? Possibly, possibly. Someone even closer to the Clintons? The dedication tantalizes: "For my spouse, living proof that flamboyance and discretion are not mutually exclusive." Mrs. Webster Hubbell, valiantly working to pay the bills? Erik Tarloff, the Hollywood writer and the husband of Laura D'Andrea Tyson, who is the chairman of Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers? This is going to be the most discussed bit of Washington camouflaging since Woodward and Bernstein's garage attendant.

The real irony is that, since Anonymous is probably a Washington-oriented journalist or novelist, he (or, less likely, she) may find himself being asked to review his own book. In that case, he could tap this out on his keyboard without blushing or hitting "Delete": "An absolutely dazzling book, the best political novel in many years, one that manages to be simultaneously cynical and redemptive, funny and profound, reportorial, satirical, and thrilling. Perhaps its most remarkable accomplishment is that it takes familiar events and turns—all right, spins—them into a thriller with an ending like a fireworks display that just won't quit."

The narrator is young Henry Burton, deputy campaign manager to Governor Jack Stanton. Henry is barely thirty, a graduate of the ur-establishment Connecticut prep school, Hotchkiss, and

a grandson of an assassinated Martin Luther King-like figure. Henry's mother is white, and, though miscegenation has left him with café-con-leche good looks, he is, for all the world, black. Indeed, Henry's color is at the heart of the book's darkness as he wrestles with the trick of being an heir to the great civil-rights leader Reverend Harvey Burton and also chief handler of a very slick, if not downright amoral, willie. It's a mark of the author's skill that, for all Governor Stanton's sleaziness, he emerges as a man so complex as to be not entirely unsympathetic.

Henry is the man closest to the candidate, his Mr. Fixit. It eventually falls to him to perform a rather abhorrent bit of heavy lifting, which prompts him to wonder, you know, what it's all about. On the heels of this uneasy errand, Henry is confronted by the Reverend Luther Charles, a combination Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton character, who lances him deeply: "You gave up your heritage and your leverage to carry a white man's coat." George Stepinfetchitopoulos, as it were. Henry's conflicting roles haunt his toilette: "I looked in the mirror and saw—the butler. . . . The Burton blood . . . was too proud and angry to put up with walking half a step behind *any* candidate, perfect staff position, ready to serve: my most comfortable place in life. I laughed out loud. It was just too hilarious. I was a genius at servitude because I was half white."

The scene in which his girlfriend, Daisy (who does for the Stanton campaign what Mandy Grunwald did for Clinton's), takes him home to meet the original mom from Hell is the most excruciatingly funny honky business since Tom Wolfe's "Radical Chic." Mom, an old lefty dressed up like a gypsy in schmattes from the non-aligned nations, greets Henry at the door with a blast of Langston Hughes's poetry and protestations of horror at her own whiteness, and thereupon tells Daisy to go fix dinner while she gets down to some serious cocktail juju with the grandson of the great Harvey Burton.

PRI-MARY COLORS" is rewarding at every level: the language (the press are "scorps," a term bound to enter the lingo); the names (the bimbo is one Cashmere McLeod); the characters (such as the crippled, stuttering New Hampshire Dunkin' Donuts employee whom Governor Stanton embraces as his oracle/mascot); and the plot (so full of twists and

turns that you end up with your hand on the stick as you read, constantly shifting). Of course, any first-rate political novel should have all that. What separates "Primary Colors" from the boys is Henry's racial conundrum. It's this that makes the book a novel of race, and gives it its piquancy. About time, too, that we had a book about the subject this defusingly funny and unsolemn:

The thing I loved about Richard [the James Carville character] was, he was overtly race-conscious. I took it as a piece of performance art, a running commentary on the mortal prissiness of most white people. Most white people do this patronizing number: They never disagree with you, even when you are talking the worst sort of garbage. It is near impossible to have a decent, human conversation with them. They are all so busy trying *not* to say anything offensive—so busy trying to prove they aren't prejudiced—that they freeze up, get all constricted, formal. They never just talk.

Only a coonass Southerner like Richard could speak this way to a black man: "Y'all ain't but one-half black—and that's the best part of you. Enables you to intimidate the palefaces, 'specially lib-blabs, and work that voodoo sexual shit with white girls. I'm probably blacker'n you are. I got some slave in me, somewhere. I can feel it."

Try as I did to resist the author guessing game, I couldn't help myself. But that's a compliment to the book. "Primary Colors" is such a fresh piece of work that you really want to know. (The only black candidate to be put forward so far is Toni Morrison, but I can imagine Richard's response to that: "Y'all couldn't think of a black journalist coulda written it?") I thought I was onto something when I noticed on the dust jacket of "All's Fair," the Mary Matalin-James Carville memoir—co-published by Random House—written "with" Peter Knobler, that Knobler had also collaborated on an autobiography with Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Hmm. My pulse quickening, I called Mr. Knobler, who greeted me with "Are you calling about that book?" Exactly the response the real Anonymous would give. He convincingly disavowed authorship, but did allow that James Carville had recently told him that George Stephanopoulos also suspected it was he, leaving me with the consolation that on this, at least, the President's adviser and I were of like mind. At any rate, congratulations, Anonymous, whoever you are. In the months ahead, a lot of people will be denying they're you while wishing they were. ♦

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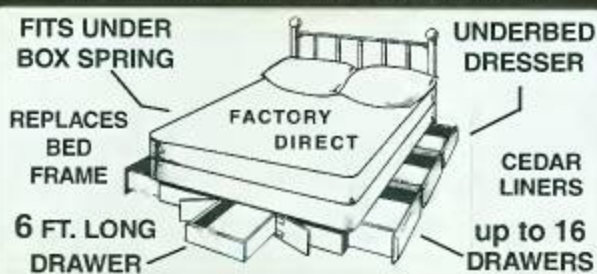
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THE CURRENT CINEMA

THE LOVE BUG

Amorous Victorians in "Angels & Insects," and a schmalzy "Mr. Holland's Opus."

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

FEW actresses have been introduced to the screen as rudely as Kristin Scott Thomas. She made her film debut in the 1986 rock musical "Under the Cherry Moon," playing the beard in a campy homoerotic fantasy, which found the artist then known as Prince (who directed it) and his sidekick Jerome Benton making haughty eyes at each other. Cast as a classy fashion object freshly popped from the pages of *Paris Vogue*, Scott Thomas was flattened on camera by His Purple Majesty's ego and flamenco foot stamps of petulance. "Under the Cherry Moon" was a laughable mess that would have buried most beginners, but Scott Thomas's talent has proved to be hardy and adaptable—tensile. (It is Prince's movie career that has never recovered.) She is best known for her role in "Four Weddings and a Funeral," where her decorum and her striking clothes sense (those hats!) disguised fine lines of distress. For me, she tipped the emotional balance in that film. In the contest for the goofy heart of Hugh Grant, the audience was cued to root for Andie MacDowell, so maternal she always seemed ready to give milk, but Scott Thomas's watchful ardor and thwarted hopes were more affecting. Her plight was almost *tragique*. Here was the one woman who might have inspired Hugh Grant to stop drivelling. In her latest film, "Angels & Insects," Scott Thomas mounts an even lonelier vigil. This time her wait is rewarded.


Based on A. S. Byatt's novella "Morpho Eugenia" (it was published with another novella, "The Conjugal Angel," in a volume entitled "Angels & Insects"), the film is directed by Philip Haas, from a screenplay by him and his wife, Belinda



Sense and sensuality: Kristin Scott Thomas, Mark Rylance, and Patsy Kensit in "Angels & Insects."

Haas. Like the bulk of Byatt's fiction—including her most famous novel, "Possession"—this is a costume drama located at the romantic intersection where Charles Darwin and bouncy décolletage collide. Darwin's theory of evolution, his discovery that man descended from the apes, has knocked the angels from their celestial roosts. The patriarchal God has been put out to pasture. Yet the Victorian mind can still pride itself that man has shed his loin-cloth as he has climbed the evolutionary ladder. Or can it? The opening credits for "Angels & Insects" depict a tribal dance in the tropics (it's shot and edited like the first anthropological rock video: a whole lotta *National Geographic* shakin' goin' on) which visually washes into a waltz on an English dance floor—an ironic segue

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from primitive rites to civilized amusements. In "Angels & Insects," civilization is barbarism with a better wardrobe.

Observing the whirling couples with a restrained expression is William Adamson (Mark Rylance), a naturalist and self-made man who labored for ten years in the Amazon and lost most of his specimens in a shipwreck. (He has been glimpsed earlier, in the native hoedown.) He is taken with Eugenia Alabaster (Patsy Kensit)—or, as the novella puts it, "His mind's eye was occupied by a picture of Eugenia Alabaster, her white bust rising from the lacy sea of her ballgown like Aphrodite from the foam." Eugenia's fiancé has recently perished, and she seems to suffer from the vapors, or a tight corset, for she is always looking faint and fleeing for air. William, hired by Eugenia's father, Sir Harald (Jeremy Kemp, weighty of brow), to inventory his scientific collection, charms Eugenia by stocking the solarium with butterflies. Though he has no prospects, he proposes marriage, and after he peels some moths off her she accepts. Eugenia's dissolute brother, Edgar (Douglas Henshall, looking like Eric Stoltz after a drunken fall), heaps scorn on his sister's alliance with this lower-class upstart, making lip-smacking innuendos about breeding and bloodlines. He's determined to keep the family name of Alabaster the whitest in the land. Kristin Scott Thomas's character is Matty Crompton, a poor relation who serves as a general helpmate in the household.

A makeout movie for English majors minoring in entomology, "Angels & Insects" requires a measure of patience. The dialogue in the early scenes is so stiff that you're not sure if it's meant to be a parody of polite Victorian chat or if you're simply stuck with a bunch of well-dressed ironing boards. Visually, too, the film often just sits there. Like many directors, Haas uses the period film as an opportunity to stage painterly tableaux—girls posed under summer parasols, etc.—interspersed with dollops of Dickensian caricature. (Eugenia's mother, played by Annette Bland, is a marshmallow Miss Piggy who keeps pumping sweets into her system.) But as a character study and a pictorial essay "Angels & Insects" picks up interest as it proceeds, and then bursts its pod.

Like the novella, the movie is intent on establishing correspondences between the social order at the country estate and that in the insect kingdom, and this effort soon

becomes both absurdly comic and ominous. Flying ants dive-bomb a family picnic; red ants loot black ants' eggs for future slaves; a servant climbs the staircase bearing a teeming bucket of bugs. There's nothing here as eeky as the recent cockroach-infestation episode of "The X-Files," but the insect motif keeps the film from being a Merchant-Ivory luxury package tour into the past. The sheer persistence of Byatt's literary conceit confers on it a distinctive nuttiness: it becomes hard to tell the men from the moths. But when Eugenia dons a bumblebee gown there's no question who is queen of the castle. The Alabaster hive is rich in honey.

With so much life force at work, no wonder "Angels & Insects" becomes highly sexed. The movie doesn't honor the usual restrictions of the costume genre. Given our implicit condescension to Victorian prudery, we expect fumbling and ignorance when William and Eugenia begin their honeymoon, but these two newlyweds have clearly read the manual. Eugenia, wearing flower handcuffs, waits for him in a petal-strewn canopy bed. The height at which she hikes her legs around her new husband's waist and locks her ankles suggests she is not a shy bunny. Onscreen, Patsy Kensit has always been a peppermint stick, a perpetual starlet, but here she does some animal panting, as befits the beast-within theme of the film. Under the veil of the canopied bed, Eugenia's nymph body gives off a golden avarice. This White Rock girl's gotta have it. Over the years, Eugenia bears him child after child while maintaining the flat stomach of a born Abdominizer. The movie eventually springs a Dark Secret on us (clue: think of an anagram for "insect"), and it is revealed that her fruited flesh bears the blight of corruption. Oh, well, there's always something.

As the gentlewoman educated in Latin and Greek and conversant with English literature, Scott Thomas's Matty represents sense as opposed to Eugenia's rampant sensuality. We see Matty chewing at dinner with mechanical jaws and a remote air, a dutiful cog in the household machinery. It is a beautiful act of concealment. Without giving any overt sign of usurpation, this cameo brooch of a woman becomes the hub of the action. Matty quietly consumes bits of William's attention through her own interest in nature; she builds an ant farm, studies the

ants' eating habits, and fills a sketchbook with vivid, detailed drawings. William sneaks glances at Matty's wrist as she sketches. Her skill and application have a harpsichord effect. Matty and William achieve affinity, collaborating on a book called "The Swarming City," and Matty writes one of her own, which marries insect lore to fairy tales.

Matty's quest for self-fulfillment could be corny, yet it's carried out with crisp dispatch. Scott Thomas is not beseeching the audience for a hug. Aside from Vanessa Redgrave and Helen Mirren, I can't think of any other actress who harnesses herself and withholds so intently until the moment to disclose is ripe. Scott Thomas portrays Matty as a woman tired of rationing herself and pretending to be content with her station in life, and when Matty declares her desire to travel with William back to the Amazon (where insects *rule*), she undoes her pleated hair and demands that he truly look at her as a woman. In a Hollywood movie, this would be the moment in which she would be transfigured. But here she looks worn, horsey, and older than her years, like a George Eliot heroine hitched to a long history of domestic obligations. And, like an Eliot heroine, she has a mental and moral animation that projects more beacon light than the simpering beauty of a Eugenia. The weight of her waxy eyelids and the width of her mouth come into full play as she talks about her plans. When she exposes her nerve endings, Kristin Scott Thomas becomes the Daniel Day-Lewis of actresses—a dark liberator. "Angels & Insects" has the wit to get out of her way.

In a recent cartoon in this magazine, an irritable dad with a child in tow asks a box-office cashier, "Is this one of those films you can take the whole damn family to?" If the film is "Mr. Holland's Opus," the answer is yes. Directed by Stephen Herek and written by Patrick Sheane Duncan, neither of whom knows shame, "Mr. Holland's Opus" is a pushy crowd pleaser where Junior and Grandma alike can be safely stranded for a couple of hours. A "Good-bye, Mr. Chips" that spans the baby-boom era, the movie honors the unsung, underpaid American schoolteacher who's still holding down the fort in the face of budgetary cutbacks and student body-piercing. The film opens in 1965. Glenn Holland, played by Richard Dreyfuss, is a musician who reluctantly accepts a teaching spot at

a suburban high school to make a living while pursuing his dream of becoming a serious composer. What begins as a stop-gap strategy becomes a lifelong vocation: thirty years later, Mr. Holland is a crusty institution in the Music Department, gruff and lovable. The key line in the movie, from the John Lennon song "Beautiful Boy," is about life being what happens while you're busy making other plans.

The early and most enjoyable portions of the film are Dreyfuss-driven: they show Holland entering the arena of the classroom and hiding his trepidation. Steering himself against the sleepy waves of apathy that lift his students, trying to keep his exasperation holstered, he's funny and tense. Among his students are Alicia Witt, who is dreadful as the snot daughter on TV's "Cybill" but here displays sweetness as an underachiever trying to get the awful squeaks out of her clarinet, and Jean Louisa Kelly, playing an auburn-curl cabaret hopeful who tempts Holland with her tremulous youth. (It's like watching a weeping willow woo a tree trunk.)

The normal human interchanges don't last. As tired newsreel footage of Vietnam choppers and Presidential addresses keeps tabs on the changing times, the movie begins manufacturing crisis situations for Holland (there's a "Bullitt"-like race to the hospital where his wife is giving birth), each of which permits Dreyfuss to indulge in his worst trait as an actor—becoming unstuck by his own emotion. At least three times in the movie, Dreyfuss does his signature "choke": gulping, beating back tears with rapid eyeblinks, then snapping a brave smile on his face. There's a slow-torture concert sequence where Mr. Holland sings and signs "Beautiful Boy" to his deaf son, whom he has heretofore shunned. This schmalz fest is topped by a climactic tribute to Mr. Holland on the occasion of his retirement: an orchestra consisting of his former students plays the premiere of the symphony he's been scratching away at forever. He takes up the baton, the orchestra cocks its instruments, and then—boom!—the soundtrack blares with brassy schlock that sounds like the Boston Pops storming the sands of Iwo Jima. This empty bombast (it was actually written by Michael Kamen) was his dream composition? He might as well be conducting with a lead pipe. ♦

EDITORS' NOTE: Anthony Lane is on a brief hiatus from the Current Cinema column.



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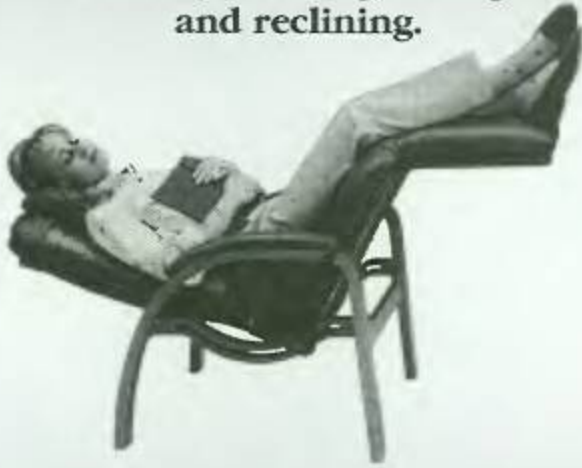


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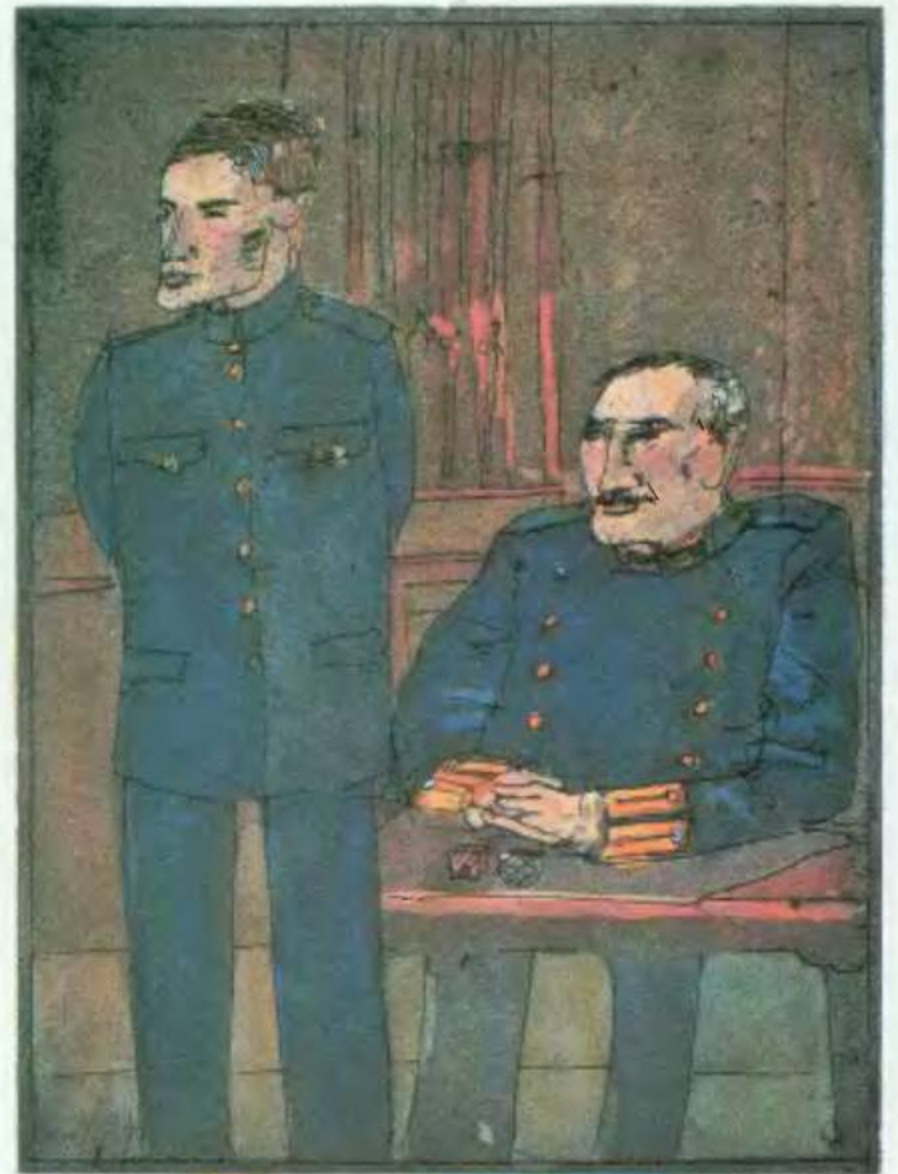
Two at the Roundabout: "The Father" and "Molly Sweeney."

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

IT'S a commonplace to say that Strindberg's 1887 play "The Father" is about "the war between the sexes"—an irritating, insidious phrase that I won't dignify by letting it out of quotation marks. As a concept, it's a dead end, used mainly to justify acceptance of a status quo that is inevitable and immutable. In overlooking the sources of power and the reality of cause and effect, the idea enables a person to believe that pressing his boot into someone else's neck is just part of nature's plan (another insidious phrase). Strindberg's rage against women did lead him to this kind of self-righteousness, but his play, which is now at the Roundabout, under the direction of Clifford Williams, calls up in an audience a primal sympathy for its indefensible protagonist, whose benighted world view makes him destroy himself before your eyes.

As the Swedish Army captain whose struggle with his wife over the future of their daughter ends in his own demise, Frank Langella is a revelation. In the nearly two decades since "Dracula," Langella has gone from Byronic to bionic, from feline to leonine. Tall and solidly built, with a head of close-cropped gray hair and a mustache, his Captain is an impressive picture of sturdy middle-aged manhood, which makes his descent into madness—inevitable though it is—all the more pathetic and terrifying. His plan is to send Bertha, his daughter, away from their house, in a remote province, so that she can become a teacher, but his wife, Laura, and the other women in the household, including his mother-in-law and his old

nurse—"a cage of tigers," he calls them—want to keep her at home and poison her with useless notions of religion and of becoming an artist. According to him, he's merely exercising his rights as a husband and father. His paternal pride, however, is



Monstrous manhood: Frank Langella and Garret Dillahunt in "The Father."

also his most vulnerable point, and it's where Laura goes in for the kill, by planting a seed of doubt in his mind about whether he really is Bertha's father. The seed grows and finally explodes, when the Captain tries to devour his own child. As Laura, Gail Strickland gives a performance that I found difficult to read, partly because I had trouble understanding her: she seemed to put an extra puff of breath into each syllable, and often the words became lost. She's no equal for Langella, but she does make it clear that this Laura has a will of iron and has fash-

ioned her powerlessness into a sharp, effective weapon.

The battle plays itself out on the field of sex—a rather pitted, sorry-looking field in this case—and in one scene the husband and wife stop their fighting and explain their feelings to each other, soap opera-style: she can love the little boy in him but not the man; he needs mothering but resents her hold on him. But the twain don't meet, and the Captain retreats upstairs to his bedroom. (When he leaves the sitting room, by a door covered with a wallpaper that matches the rest of the room, it is as if he'd ceased to exist.) The wind whistles loudly through the house—it is impossible not to think of Lear and his isolation at this point—and soon we hear desperate sawing from above: he's been locked in his room. It was a terrifying moment; I was actually afraid of what would happen if he got out and afraid of what would happen if he didn't. The next time we see him, he is in his long underwear and, stripped of his manly accoutrements, looks like a gigantic baby, both monstrous and defenseless. Langella roars through this scene like a crazed beast, until the moment when he allows his old nurse (Irene Dailey) to slip him into the straitjacket that will be his winding sheet.

"The Father" is tremendously unsubtle, and completely true to itself. (Richard Nelson's new adaptation reinforces Strindberg's blunt vision. A line from Elizabeth Sprigge's 1955 translation, "What becomes of love, the healthy love of the senses?" is now "Whatever happened to good old-fashioned fucking?") In its merciless depiction of the horrific myths we invent to make sense of our lives (even if those myths make our lives impossible), it prefigures all the uncomfortable ideas that Freud loosed on the world in the decades that followed. Dramatically, though, the play achieves its effect by doing the opposite of what Freud said psychoanalysis was supposed to do: it turns common, everyday unhappiness into hysterical misery. It's an irony that the Master himself would have appreciated.

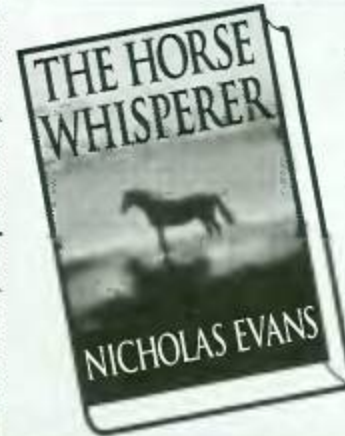
A FEW shakes of the leg across the Roundabout's gray carpeting takes you from nineteenth-century Sweden to present-day Ireland, and the theatre's other offering, Brian Friel's "Molly Sweeney." The production, directed by the author, comes to New York by way of Dublin's Gate Theatre—whose version was reviewed by John Lahr, in the issue

of October 17, 1994—and London's Almeida. A program note by the author, which also appears in the published version of the play, says that he is "particularly indebted to Oliver Sacks' case history 'To See and Not See,' and the long, strange tradition of such case histories." Sacks's fascinating piece, about a virtually blind man who underwent two operations that temporarily gave him sight but permanently disrupted his way of knowing the world, appears in his most recent collection, "An Anthropologist on Mars." It's no wonder that Friel was taken with the story; the wonder is that he did so little with it, beyond moving it from America to Ireland (to the fictional Donegal town of Ballybeg, where many of his plays have been set, including "Dancing at Lughnasa" and "Translations") and making the blind character a woman.

"Molly Sweeney" has three characters: Molly (Catherine Byrne), a forty-one-year-old woman who has been blind since she was ten months old; Frank (Alfred Molina), her husband, who has a blustery, childish enthusiasm for lost causes; and Paddy Rice (Jason Robards), a once famous ophthalmologist who hopes that the operation to restore Molly's eyesight will also restore his reputation. Sitting in chairs or standing on a stage that is bare except for some fallen leaves and a toppled sundial, against a dark background with blurry splashes of color, each of them in turn addresses the audience. There's nothing wrong with the writing—the play reads beautifully—and there's nothing wrong with the acting, but "Molly Sweeney" comes across as a staged reading of an essay, not as a theatrical work of the imagination. The doctor's and Frank's agendas are overexplicit, while the characterization of Molly seems oversimplified (which perhaps is appropriate, since she is the object—the victim, really—of others' ambitions). Having said that, I must also say that I wouldn't have wanted to miss the performance of Alfred Molina, who makes his New York stage debut with this part. Frank, for all his big ideas, sees less than Molly does: he's always in motion, always looking ahead to the next project, and his love for Molly ignores her inner life. Molina, with great energy and humor, gives this man a heart—a tremendous heart, if a flawed one—and watching him is a visceral pleasure. But the play runs out of steam before it's over; if it's drama you're looking for, stay home and read Oliver Sacks. ♦

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I WANNA BE YOUR MAN

BY ROBERT SULLIVAN

MY son recently passed a developmental milestone that is not mentioned in any parenting magazine I know of and yet is, I believe, one of the major choices he will make in the course of his life. He has chosen his favorite Beatle.

I'm speaking of the British pop foursome, of course—any bug is a good bug to a four-and-a-half-year-old—and my anxiousness over his Beatle choice peaked as the latest round of Beatlemania came and went, because the Beatle you pick can say as much about you as your DNA does. In fact, it wouldn't surprise me if geneticists one day discovered somewhere along the alphabet-soup-like tangle of the human genome the letters J, P, G, and R. Such a discovery could lead to a new kind of genetic fingerprinting—something that could be administered by the state during the marriage-license process, or entered as evidence in court cases. (“I submit to you, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, that a Ringo could never have masterminded such a sophisticated crime.”) I have a special interest in my son's Beatle decision because if I could go back in time and choose my favorite Beatle all over again I'd choose differently.

As it was, I chose Paul. In admitting this, I am presenting a picture of myself as someone with a smile on his face all the time—someone who thinks happy, hummable thoughts and dots his “i”s with little flowers. Unfortunately, this is not so far off: choosing Paul has made me what I am today, which is not as edgy as I'd like to be, a little low on irony, a little too, well . . . Paul. As a result, my inner soundtrack tends toward cloying love songs, and I spend most

weekends at home while perpetually wishing I could find the nerve to lie in a hotel bed naked with my wife in front of TV cameras where we might declare our love in a way that also protests war.

Naturally, the Beatle I wish I had chosen is John. As a John wannabe who considers himself a progressive parent, I found waiting for my son's decision particularly excruciating. I wanted



him to make up his own mind but feared I might force John on him in some way—or, worse, subliminally suggest Paul. Ringo never seemed to be a candidate. This is the case with my son's friends as well, most of whom are leaning toward John. One might expect Ringo to have made inroads in the favorite-Beatle category—given his role as the voice of Thomas the Tank Engine and his locomotive friends on “Shining Time Station,” the children's television show, for example—but children somehow know instinctively that Ringo is a non-choice, a wasted vote.

It was with great pride, then, that I learned my son had chosen George, a choice

that is so clearly his. And yet when I speak of this milestone with my friends they congratulate me hesitantly. Are they thinking my son voted for the sombre, cult-oriented man who lost a wife to Eric Clapton and sued his manager for allegedly bilking him out of millions of dollars? Or do they think he's sided with a level-headed individualist, a stylish and spiritual virtuoso, who is attuned to matters of social justice and rarely susceptible to temptation by peers? To me, my son's choice is perfect: in the very act of choosing George, he has proved his Georgeness.

Of course, four and a half is young, and at some point on the long and winding road of adolescence he may switch Beatles. (This could be problematic—I know a guy who grew up thinking of John's face when he heard Paul's voice, and in some ways he's still dealing with that.) And then, after any Beatle realignment, my son will face other popular-music life choices: the Beatles or the Stones, the Grateful Dead or the Sex Pistols, Björk or Hole. Someday, he may even feel that he, too, should have chosen John, but I wouldn't wish that upon him for the world.

I doubt that he will ever choose Paul. Last week, over cereal, I asked him about Paul, and he nearly spit out his Kix. “Paul sings all those lovin' songs,” he said disdainfully. He then broke into a very Georgesque rendition of “Roll Over Beethoven.” It hurt, but he was right. Now I can't help worrying over the next Beatles-related development issue: What does a guy who chose George do when he discovers he was raised by a guy who chose Paul? ♦



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if you know
what I mean.
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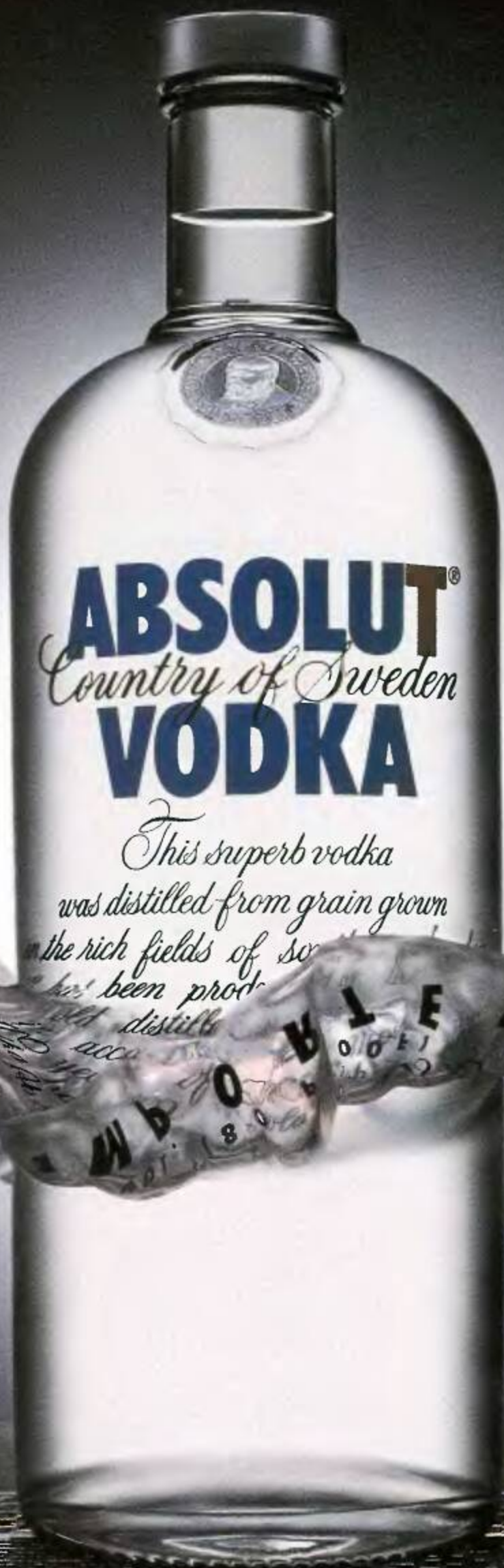
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