

#16

WTR. '57

BIRDSMITH IS A PUBLICATION OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF
ROBERT BLOCH, EDITED BY VERNON L. MCCAIN, MIMEOGRAPHY BY TED WHITE.

WHO WAS IT WHO FIRST SAID "UNBEARABLE ELVIS PRESLEY INFINITELY PRO-
LONGED"?

NOTE TO ANYONE WHO INDEXES THEIR FAPA MAILINGS. I REALIZE IT MUST
HAVE BEEN A TRIFLE CONFUSING THAT BOTH THE 'BIRDSMITH'S IN THE LAST
MAILING WERE LISTED AS #14. THE SECOND ONE (THE ONE WITH THE
TITLE WHICH SPOelled OUT MY INITIALS) SHOULD HAVE BEEN #15.

"VERNON MCCAIN - INFALLIBLE PROPHET"

TWO YEARS AGO THIS MAILING I ANNOUNCED THAT I WAS STARTING A SERIES
OF ARTICLES DEALING WITH MOVING PICTURES AND MOVING PICTURE PERSON-
ALITIES, TO APPEAR ON NO SET SCHEDULE. WELL IT WAS CERTAINLY A
HIGHLY INDEFINITE SCHEDULE. SINCE THAT FIRST ONE THERE HAVE BEEN
NO OTHERS UNTIL THIS ISSUE WHEN WE'RE FOLLOWING UP WITH TWO. HOW-
EVER THAT FIRST ARTICLE "BRANDO REVISITED" DEALT PRIMARILY WITH
YOUNG ACTORS, COMPARING PARTICULARLY MARLON BRANDO AND WILLIAM
HOLDEN. AT THE TIME I EXPRESSED MY GLEE THAT HOLDEN, OF WHOM I
FIRMLY APPROVED, HAD SUCCEEDED IN PLACING SEVENTH IN THE 1954 MOTION
PICTURE POLL OF STARS POPULARITY AT THE BOXOFFICE WHILE BRANDO, WHOM
I DISAPPROVE OF, MADE ONLY TENTH. I WENT ON TO EXPLAIN WHY, FOR
REASONS I SHAN'T BOTHER REPEATING, I FELT SURE IT WAS A TEMPORARY
PHENOMENON AND THAT THE NEXT YEAR HOLDEN WOULD BE OFF THE LIST WHILE
BRANDO REMAINED A PERMANENT FIXTURE ON THE TOP TEN LIST. WELL,
DESPITE HOLDEN'S PLETHORA OF OUTSTANDING PICTURES IN 1954 HE NOT
ONLY STAYED ON THE TOP TEN IN 1955 BUT ELEVATED HIS RATING TO #4,
WHILE BRANDO CREPT UP ON HIM TO THE EXTENT OF LANDING IN #6 SPOT,
BUT STILL DID NOT OVERTAKE HIM. HOLDEN WAS PROVING TO HAVE MORE
STAYING POWER THAN I'D CREDITED HIM WITH AND ALSO PROVING MY UNRE-
LIABILITY AS A PROPHET. BUT I'M HAPPY TO SAY THE 1956 RESULTS MADE
ME LOOK REALLY FOOLISH. THIS YEAR HOLDEN LEAPFROGGED OVER SUCH
PREVIOUS #1 WINNERS AS LAST YEAR'S JAMES STEWART AND JOHN WAYNE
WHO HAS FREQUENTLY ONE. NEW #1 BOX-OFFICE DRAW, WILLIAM HOLDEN.
OH YES, OUR BOY BRANDO? HE SLIPPED OFF THE TOP TEN LIST ENTIRELY!
LIKE THEY SAY, MOVIES ARE BETTER THAN EVER.

NOW TO THE CINEMATIC ARTICLES. I ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED THE SERIES
AS PRIMARILY A DISCUSSION OF ACTING, DIRECTORIAL, WRITING STYLES,
ETC. INSTEAD THIS TIME I AM INDULGING PRIMARILY IN A DISCUSSION
OF PERSONALITIES. NO APOLOGIES, SINCE IT JUST HAPPENS THAT'S WHAT
I FEEL LIKE WRITING THIS TIME. AS I PREVIOUSLY SPECIFIED, ANYONE
WHO FEELS IT BENEATH THEIR DIGNITY TO READ ABOUT ANYTHING SO VULGAR
AS MRS. ARTHUR MILLER NEEDN'T. JUST SKIP OVER TO BILL MORSE'S
COLUMN.

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GILT.

THURBER?

"MARILYN MONROE - WORLD'S #1 PRIZE IDIOT?"

WE LIVE IN A PROGRESSIVE AGE, AND THERE ARE THOSE AMONG US WHO PRIDE THEMSELVES ON THEIR OPEN-MINDED ATTITUDES. OCCASIONALLY, ATTEMPTS ARE MADE TO ELIMINATE CLICHES OF THOUGHT FROM THE PUBLIC MIND. THE PUBLIC MEDIA HAS SPENT THE LAST TWENTY YEARS ACQUAINTING EVERYONE WITH THE FACT THAT IT IS ONLY THE SHAKING MOTION OF THE RED CLOTH WHICH ENRAGES THE BULL; THAT THE IDEA THAT IT IS THE RED COLOR WHICH MADDENS HIM IS ONLY SUPERSTITION, SINCE ALL BOVINES ARE COLOR-BLIND AND SEE EVERYTHING ONLY IN SHADES OF GRAY. ONLY NOW IT TURNS OUT THAT COWS (AND BULLS) ARE ABLE TO DISCERN DIFFERENT COLORS AFTER ALL, SO MAYBE IT JUST IS THE RED SHADE BULLS DIS-LIKE. BUT WE ARE MORE INTELLIGENT THAN OUR PREDECESSORS, OR AT LEAST BETTER INFORMED. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT ALL SCHOOLTEACHERS ARE NOT OLD-MAIDS WITH GLASSES AND VINEGARY DISPOSITIONS; THAT PEOPLE WHO WEAR GLASSES ARE NOT NECESSARILY UNATTRACTIVE ("CALL US TOMORROW FOR A FITTING"); THAT THE EXTRA-INTELLIGENT CHILD IS NOT A PUNY NEAR-SIGHTED WEAKLING BUT TENDS TO BE LARGER AND HEALTHIER THAN THE AVERAGE; THAT THE MAN WITH A STRONG BACK DOES NOT NECESSARILY HAVE A WEAK MIND; AND THAT WOMEN ARE ACTUALLY THE STRONGER SEX IN EVERY RESPECT EXCEPT MUSCLE DEVELOPEMENT.

BUT OF CERTAIN LONG-ESTABLISHED TRUTHS EVERYONE IS AWARE. AND ONE OF THESE IS THAT ALL BLONDES ARE DUMB. ESPECIALLY PRETTY BLONDES. AND ESPECIALLY PRETTY BLONDES IN THE MOVIES. WHY THE MOVIES DON'T EVER TAKE A GOOD-LOOKING INTELLIGENT BRUNETTE AND BLEACH HER HAIR I DON'T KNOW. THE QUESTION NEVER CAME UP.

YOU CAN ASK JUST ABOUT ANYONE ANYWHERE TODAY AND THEY CAN EASILY AND QUICKLY TELL YOU THAT THE #1 DUMB BLONDE IN THE WORLD TODAY IS A SEXY (WOMEN DISAGREE ABOUT THAT LAST ADJECTIVE) BLONDE MOVIE STAR KNOWN AS MARILYN MONROE. ALSO, JUST ABOUT EVERY ONE OF THEM WILL ASSURE YOU THAT THIS DUMB BLONDE IS A VERY DUMB BLONDE, INDEED. SHE'S NOT ONLY DUMB SHE CAN'T ACT, EITHER, AND SHE PROVIDED A GOOD DEAL OF UNINTENTIONAL HUMOR A WHILE BACK WHEN SHE EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION WITH THE ROLES SHE'D BEEN PLAYING AND DEMANDED BETTER ONES.

NOW FAR BE IT FROM ME TO ATTEMPT TO CONTRADICT A SELF-OBVIOUS TRUTH, BUT I DO HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS. THERE ARE OVER 160 MILLION PEOPLE IN THE U.S. TODAY, OVER HALF OF THEM WOMEN. POSSIBLY ONE OUT OF FIVE OF THESE WOMEN FALLS IN THE 17-37 AGE BRACKET, PROBABLY MORE THAN THAT, BUT LET'S SAY ONE OUT OF FIVE. AT A CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE THEN WE HAVE 16,000,000 YOUNG WOMEN TO CHOOSE MOVIE STARS FROM, AND I BELIEVE ONE OUT OF FIVE WOMEN ARE BLONDES, LEAVING OVER THREE MILLION YOUNG NATURAL BLONDES IN THIS COUNTRY ALONE. PROBABLY HALF OF THESE HAVE GOOD FIGURES (AND BEAUTY PARLORS CAN USUALLY DO WHATEVER MAY BE NECESSARY FOR THE FACE). SO, ASSUMING ALL BLONDES ARE DUMB WE HAVE ONE AND A HALF MILLION DUMB BLONDES WITH THE NECESSARY PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT TO BE MOVIE STARS. BEING DUMB AND UNTALENTED (ALL BLONDE MOVIE STARS ARE) ONE SHOULD DO JUST ABOUT AS WELL AS ANOTHER. HOW, THEN, DID IT JUST HAPPEN THAT ONE NAMED MARILYN MONROE BECAME A FANTASTICALLY SUCCESSFUL SCREEN PERSONALITY?

THE ANSWER MOST OF THE EXPERTS WILL GIVE YOU IS THAT SHE DID IT BY WAY OF THE CASTING COUCH. NOW, WITHOUT ATTEMPTING TO OVERRATE THE SCRUBS EITHER OF HOLLYWOOD BIG-SHOTS OR OF YOUNG GIRLS, EAGER FOR

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ACHIEVE FAME AND SUCCESS, I THINK IT GERMANE TO POINT OUT THAT THERE ARE YOUNG WOMEN WHO DEVOTE THEIR FULL-TIME EFFORTS TO SUPPLYING THIS PARTICULAR DEMAND, AND THE VERY CREAM OF THIS CROP CAN BE PLUCKED FOR THE MODERATE SUM OF \$100 A NIGHT, AN AMOUNT SURELY NOT DIFFICULT TO PART WITH FOR MEN SUFFICIENTLY SUCCESSFUL TO HAVE INFLUENCE ON WHO IS CAST IN WHAT PICTURE. THEREFORE, WHY WOULD IT BE THAT THESE MEN WOULD JEAPORDIZE AN INVESTMENT OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS (FREQUENTLY MILLIONS) OF DOLLARS BY CASTING IN SOME PICTURE AS INGENUE A YOUNG LADY COMPLETELY WITHOUT TALENT, WHOSE SOLE QUALIFICATION WAS THAT SHE WAS WILLING TO ASSUME THE HORIZONTAL POSITION WHEN REQUESTED? POSSIBLY ACQUIESCENCE HAS PROVIDED THAT EXTRA LAST LITTLE SHOVE TO ENABLE SOME QUITE TALENTED GIRL TO GET HER BIG CHANCE BUT I DOUBT THAT IT HAS CONSTITUTED THE SOLE (OR EVEN MAJOR) QUALIFICATION FOR STARDOM FOR ANYBODY SINCE TALKIES CAME IN.

SO WHAT HAS MARILYN MONROE GOT? I THINK EVEN THE LADIES WHO CHEW THEIR SOUR GRAPES WRYLY MUST GRANT THAT HER ACHIEVEMENTS REQUIRED SOMETHING MORE THAN BLONDENESS, A GOOD FIGUPE, AND A HARD-WORKING PRESS AGENT. CERTAINLY THE RAFT OF UNSUCCESSFUL IMITATORS WHO'VE SPRUNG UP PROVE THAT.

YET YOU WILL FIND COMPARATIVELY FEW WHO ARE WILLING TO GRANT HER EITHER INTELLIGENCE OR ABILITY, MUCH LESS BOTH. AND THIS MOST CERTAINLY EXTENDS INTO THE RANKS OF FAPA. AROUND 18 MONTHS AGO ONE OF FAPA'S MOST RESPECTED MEMBERS, WHILE DISCUSSING HER, SUGGESTED THAT ANY ABOVE-AVERAGE QUALITY IN HER MOVIES MUST CERTAINLY BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE FACT THAT IN FILMS A SCENE CAN BE SHOT OVER AND OVER UNTIL EVEN THE MOST UNTALENTED PERSON, SHEERLY BY ACCIDENT, PRODUCES THE EFFECT THE DIRECTOR IS STRIVING FOR. ANOTHER FAPAN, WHILE PROFESSING HIMSELF GREATLY AMUSED BY HER MOST RECENT MOVIE "BUS STOP", WHILE PRAISING OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CAST, REFUSED TO CONCEDE THAT SHE HAD PROVEN ANYTHING MORE THAN MILDLY AMUSING, HERSELF.

IN A RECENT FAPAZINE, G.M. CARR CHORTLED HAPPILY THAT MONROE HAD BEEN SEDUCED INTO MARRIAGE BY PLAYWRIGHT ARTHUR MILLER BY THE ANCIENT TRICK OF TELLING HER HE ADMIRER HER FOR HER BRAINS, NOT HER BEAUTY. APPARENTLY MRS. CARR IS QUITE WILLING TO BELIEVE THAT MILLER NOT ONLY WAS QUITE WILLING TO WIN HIS BRIDE UNDER FALSE PRETENSES, BUT THAT THIS EXTREMELY INTELLIGENT AND SENSITIVE MAN (READ "DEATH OF A SALESMAN" IF YOU QUESTION THOSE ADJECTIVES) WOULD BE WILLING TO TIE HIMSELF TO A BEAUTIFUL AND HIGHLY PUBLICIZED BODY WHICH WAS TOTALLY DEVOID OF INTELLIGENCE.

PERSONALLY, I JUST DON'T BUY IT.

THAT MARILYN MONROE IS AN ECCENTRIC, WE MUST GRANT. BUT HOW MANY OF US COULD ESCAPE SUCH A DESCRIPTION IF AS SEARCHING AN EXAMINATION OF OUR PRIVATE LIVES WAS MADE AS HAS BEEN OF THIS HIGHLY PUBLICIZED NEW INSTITUTION OF OURS? REMEMBER, ALSO, THAT SUCCESS AND WEALTH ALLOW INDIVIDUALS TO INDULGE THEIR ECCENTRICITIES FAR MORE FREELY THAN CAN THOSE WITH LESS SECURITY. AND IN AS PUBLICITY-INFLUENCED A BUSINESS AS MOTION PICTURES, ECCENTRICITY CAN BE AN ASSET RATHER THAN A LIABILITY.

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THE MONROE HISTORY HAS BEEN PUBLICIZED TILL EVERYONE MUST BE BORED WITH IT. THE FANTASTIC, ALMOST RIBALD, CHILDHOOD OF INSECURITY.... THE FIRST MARRIAGE WHICH ALMOST AMOUNTED TO SELLING A CHILD BRIDE... THE GAWKY UNATTRACTIVE CHILD WHO OVERNIGHT MATURED INTO LUSHNESS.... THEN THE BURNING, OVERPOWERING AMBITION WHICH DROVE EVERYTHING BEFORE IT UNTIL IT WAS SATIATED. I THINK IT IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE MONROE CAREER FAITHFULLY FOLLOWED THAT OF THE TYPICAL SUCCESS-HUNGRY CUTIE UNTIL AFTER THE INITIAL GOAL WAS ACHIEVED. IT WAS THEN THAT THE ODD TASTES AND PECULIAR DEMANDS STARTED APPEARING.

ROBERT BLOCH HAS A THEORY REGARDING PERFORMERS. HE HYPOTHEZIZES THAT EVERYONE WISHES ATTENTION BUT SOME CRAVE IT MUCH MORE STRONGLY THAN OTHERS. THESE TEND TO GRAVITATE TO THE FOOTLIGHTS. THOSE WITH NATURAL PHYSICAL BEAUTY ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BE GAZED AT AND ACHIEVE THEIR SUCCESS WITHOUT MUCH WORK. THEY NEVER GO BEYOND THIS, NEVER DEVELOP, NEVER BECOME ARTISTS. BUT THOSE WITHOUT THIS NATURAL PHYSICAL ALLURE FIND THEY HAVE TO WORK FOR THEIR ATTENTION. THEY CAN GET IT, BUT ONLY BE FIGURATIVELY JUMPING UP AND DOWN, ROLLING THEIR EYES, PUTTING THEIR THUMBS IN THEIR EARS AND WAGGING THEIR HANDS BACK AND FORTH AND SHOUTING TO THE AUDIENCE "LOOK AT ME!" ONLY THIS WILL DIVERT THE GAZE FROM THOSE MORE BLESSED BY NATURE AND IT REQUIRES A CONTINUING VARIETY OF TRICKS IF THEY ARE GOING TO RETAIN THE GAZE, ONCE CAPTURED. THUS DEVELOP OUR FINE ACTORS, THE VERSATILE AND ALWAYS RELIABLE ONES.

I THINK THERE IS CONSIDERABLE TRUTH IN THE THEORY. IT AGREES WITH OBSERVATIONS MADE BY PSYCHOLOGISTS OF ORDINARY NON-PERFORMING HUMANS. THE BEAUTIFUL, HANDSOME CHILD DRAWS ATTENTION AND PRAISE WITHOUT EVER HAVING TO WORK FOR IT AND SO THEY DON'T WORK FOR IT. THUS THEY TEND TO GROW UP INTO NON-TALENTED INDIVIDUALS AND ONCE THE BEAUTY FADES THEY ARE SUDDENLY LEFT EMPTY AND WITHOUT THE MEANS TO ATTRACT INTEREST OR FRIENDSHIP, WHICH WAS ONCE SHOWERED AT THEM WITHOUT EVEN BEING REQUESTED. BUT THE FASCINATING ADULTS, THOSE WHO WEAR WELL, ARE THE ONES WHO STARTED LIFE WITH SOME DEFECT OR OTHER....UNDERWEIGHT, OVERWEIGHT, SALLOW COMPLEXION OR MASSES OF PIMPLES, CROSS-EYED, OR BANDY-LEGGED....THEY WERE THE CHILDREN WHO HAD TO EARN THE ATTENTION THEY RECEIVED....ESPECIALLY IF THERE WAS AN UNUSUALLY ATTRACTIVE CHILD IN THE SAME FAMILY.

AGE AND MATURATION HAS A WAY OF IRONING OUT AND EVEN CURING CHILDISH DEFECTS AND OCCASIONALLY THE UGLY DUCKLING MATURES INTO A LOVELY SWAN. WHEN THIS HAPPENS YOU HAVE THAT RARE COMBINATION....THE SCINTILLATING, ENGROSSING MIND CONTAINED IN THE ATTRACTIVE BODY. IT HARDLY SEEMS CO-INCIDENCE THAT MOST OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL COURTESANS AND FAMOUS TEMPTRESSES OF HISTORY SEEM TO HAVE STARTED LIFE AS GRIMY TOMBOYS.

AND (NO COINCIDENCE, I THINK) WE FIND THIS IS PRECISELY THE HISTORY OF MARILYN MONROE. SHE RELATES BEING CALLED, IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, "NORMA JEAN, THE HUMAN STRINGBEAN". A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF CHILDREN CAN MATCH HER RECORD FOR AFFECTIONLESS CHILDHOODS BUT VERY FEW HAVE A RECORD OF HAVING THEIR WORLD TURNED TOPSY-TURVY AS FREQUENTLY. NO BETTER TRAINING-GROUND FOR FORCING AN INDIVIDUAL TO LEARN TO RELY ON THEIR OWN INNER RESOURCES FOR ANYTHING THEY

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GET OUT OF LIFE, OR EARN FROM OTHERS. TO SUCH AN INDIVIDUAL, AN UNEXPECTED FLOWERING INTO PHYSICAL ALLURE COULD ONLY BE REGARDED AS A DELIGHTFUL BONUS. TO A PERSON LONG TRAINED TO STRUGGLE TO THE UTMOST FOR ANYTHING DESIRED, IT IS HIGHLY UNDERSTANDABLE THAT THE DECISION SHOULD BE MADE THAT THE PROPER USE FOR THIS SURPRISE GIFT IS TO ATTAIN THE MOST GLITTERING PRIZE AVAILABLE IN OUR SOCIETY, MOVIE STARDOM. AND IT IS NOT IN THE LEAST SURPRISING, ONCE THE DECISION WAS MADE, THAT THE ONE TO ACTUALLY PERSIST UNTIL THE PRIZE WAS CAPTURED WAS THE GIRL WITH THE INCREDIBLY GRIM AND BARREN BACKGROUND, NOT SOMEONE TO WHOM LIFE HAD BEEN KINDER AND WHO HAD NEVER FELT THE NEED TO STRIVE SO TERRIFICALLY.

BUT PUBLIC OPINION SEEMS TO BE SOLIDLY LINED UP FOR THE VIEW THAT ONCE THE INITIAL SUCCESS IS ACHIEVED AND A PERSON IS A (RESPECTFUL PAUSE) M-O-V-I-E S-T-A-R, THE EXPECTED THING IS THAT OUR AMBITIOUS YOUNG HEROINE RELAX AND ENJOY HER SUCCESS. CERTAINLY THERE IS PLENTIFUL PRECEDENT. THE TYPICAL HOLLYWOOD GLAMOR GIRL HAS NO AMBITIONS TO COMPETE WITH BETTE DAVIS OR HELEN HAYES. AS LONG AS SHE HAS HER SWIMMING POOL, HER WARDROBE OF 120 PAIRS OF SHOES, HER WEEKLY FOUR-FIGURE SALARY, HER PICTURE IN THE PAPER FREQUENTLY, AND HER BI-ANNUAL CHANGE OF HUSBANDS, SHE IS SATISFIED. WHY WORRY ABOUT WHAT ROLES SHE PLAYS. BOTH SHE AND HER PUBLIC REALIZE THAT THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THEY GET TO SEE HER.... WHAT SHE IS DOING WHILE THEY WATCH ISN'T TOO IMPORTANT, AS LONG AS IT DOES NOT SPOIL THE ILLUSION.

BUT MARILYN MONROE WAS NOT WILLING TO RELAX INTO THIS HEDONISTIC EXISTENCE. CAME STARDOM AND SHE WAS SEEN PACKING THICK BOOKS AROUND THE LOT. AND IT TURNED OUT THAT THEY WEREN'T CONVENTIONAL GLAMOR-GIRL READING.... THEY WERE PSYCHIATRY TEXTBOOKS AND RECOGNIZED WORKS OF LITERATURE. AT FIRST ANOTHER PUBLICITY GAG WAS SUSPECTED BUT THE BOOKS WERE NOT A TEMPORARY ADDITION.

MEANWHILE, I THINK IT INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT PRACTICALLY NO MARILYN MONROE PICTURE HAS BEEN COMPLETELY CONSIGNABLE TO THE ROUTINE CLASSIFICATION. ALTHOUGH, UNTIL RECENTLY, MARILYN MONROE WAS NOT HERSELF THE PRIME ATTRACTION, I HAVE SEEN ALMOST EVERY ONE OF HER PICTURES. THERE ARE ONLY THREE OR FOUR EXCEPTIONS. IN EACH CASE THERE WAS SOMETHING THAT SET THE PICTURE SUFFICIENTLY OUT OF THE ORDINARY RUN-OF-THE-MILL HOLLYWOOD EFFORT THAT I WANTED TO SEE IT.

HER VERY EARLY FILMS CAN BE IGNORED. THE TWO BIT ROLES THAT STARTED HER FIRMLY ON THE ROAD TO FAME APPEARED IN TWO OF 1950'S BEST PICTURES, "THE ASPHALT JUNGLE" AND "ALL ABOUT EVE". IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THESE WERE THE HANDIWORK OF WHAT WERE THEN PROBABLY HOLLYWOOD'S TWO MOST SUCCESSFUL DIRECTORS (QUALITATIVELY, THAT IS.... LET'S NOT DRAG DEMILLE INTO THIS), JOHN HUSTON AND JOSEPH MANKIEWICZ. IT APPEARS THAT THIS WAS A LESSON NOT LOST ON THE BUDDING STARLET.

A VARIETY OF SUPPORTING ROLES FOLLOWED, INCREDIBLY, INASMUCH AS DURING THIS PERIOD MARILYN MONROE WAS GARNERING AS MUCH NEWSPAPER PUBLICITY AS ANY FOUR OTHER ACTRESSES COMBINED..... AND MOST OF IT WAS PRIOR TO THE CALENDAR SENSATION. ANITA EKBERG PARLAYED MUCH

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LESS PUBLICITY INTO STAR BILLING IN PRACTICALLY NO TIME AT ALL. THEN CAME THE FIRST STARRING ROLES....."KNOCK ON ANY DOOR", POSSIBLY THE POOREST MONROE MOVIE OF ALL TIME, ALTHOUGH TAKEN FROM A SPLENDID NOVEL AND THEN "NIAGARA". THIS ONE IS USUALLY TRIUMPHANTLY HAULED OUT IN ANY DISCUSSION TO PROVE MONROE IS TALENTLESS. IT IS TRUE BOTH THAT IT WAS NOT AN UNQUALIFIED CRITICAL SUCCESS AND THAT MONROE DID NOT SHOW UP AT HER BEST IN IT. HOWEVER, THE PICTURE VERY DEFINITELY HAD ITS GOOD POINTS (MOST OF THEM SUPPLIED BY THE OTHER FEMALE STAR, JEAN PETERS) AND IN MARILYN'S DEFENSE IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT DESPITE THE FACT THIS WAS THE FIRST PICTURE IN WHICH SHE EVER DREW TOP BILLING HER ROLE WAS ALMOST A SUPPORTING ONE.... MUCH LESS IMPORTANT THAN THAT OF THE OTHER THREE PRINCIPLES. IT OFFERED LITTLE POSSIBILITIES FOR THE PERFORMER EXCEPT TO SIT AROUND LOOKING SEXY. WITH COMPARATIVELY LITTLE EXPERIENCE AT THE TIME, THIS WAS ALL SHE DID. I SUSPECT THE MARILYN MONROE OF TODAY COULD TURN IT INTO A PERSONAL TRIUMPH, HOWEVER.

THEN CAME THE FIRST BIG, REALLY BIG, SUCCESS, "GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES". ALTHOUGH MONROE GOT MOST OF THE PUBLICITY ON THIS ONE, HER CO-STAR JANE RUSSELL TOOK BOTH TOP BILLING AND THE PICTURE AWAY FROM HER, A PIECE OF LARCENY NEVER REALLY EXPLAINED SINCE JANE RUSSELL HAS NEVER BEFORE OR SINCE APPEARED IN A REMOTELY WORTHWHILE PRODUCTION AND APPEARS NORMALLY TO BE ABOUT AS DEVOID OF ABILITY AS LASSIE. SHE RECEIVED A GREAT DEAL OF AID FROM THE SCRIPT, AND EVIDENTLY SOME VERY CLEVER DIRECTING, SINCE SHE'S NEVER BEEN ABLE TO REPEAT THE TRIUMPH. THEN CAME THE SECOND BIG MULTI-GLAMOR-GIRL SUCCESS, "HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE" FOLLOWED BY THE TWO PICTURES MARILYN MONROE FELT MADE HER LOOK RIDICULOUS, "RIVER OF NO RETURN" AND "THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS".

IN ONE OF THE CLEVEREST DOUBLE-PLAYS EVER WITNESSED IN HOLLYWOOD SHE HAD WALKED OUT ON A PICTURE, GONE ON A HONEYMOON, AND RETURNED ONLY WHEN HER STUDIO SIGNIFIED ITS WILLINGNESS TO DESTROY HER OLD CONTRACT, GIVING HER A NEWER AND FAR MORE GENEROUS ONE. BUT SHE VERY CAREFULLY FAILED TO EVER GET AROUND TO SIGNING THE SECOND ONE. SHE MADE ONE PICTURE UNDER THE UNSIGNED CONTRACT AND THEN WALKED OFF TO NEW YORK, ANNOUNCING THAT SHE WAS A FREE AGENT AND WITHOUT A CONTRACT. SHE SPENT A YEAR IN NEW YORK, ATTENDING OPENINGS, STUDYING ACTING, CULTIVATING THE INTELLECTUALS OF THE NEW YORK THEATRE, INCLUDING ARTHUR MILLER. SHE DIDN'T HAVE A LEG TO STAND ON, BUT SHE DID HAVE TWO VERY SOLID AND SHAPELY LEGS OF HER OWN UNDERNEATH HER AND, AT THE MOMENT, THEY WERE PROBABLY THE TWO MOST VALUABLE LEGS IN THE WORLD. HER STUDIO WAS ONLY TOO AWARE OF THIS (THREE YEARS EARLIER OR THREE YEARS LATER SHE'D HAVE BEEN IN NOWHERE NEARLY SO GOOD A BARGAINING POSITION) AND THEY FINALLY CAPITULATED, GIVING IN TO ALMOST ALL HER DEMANDS AND SALVAGING ONLY TOKEN ADVANTAGES. SHE NOT ONLY ACHIEVED ABOUT 67% INDEPENDENCE FOR HER FUTURE ACTIONS BUT ACHIEVED THE ALL-IMPORTANT SCRIPT AND DIRECTOR-APPROVAL RIGHTS SHE'D BEEN DEMANDING. AND IT APPEARS GENERALLY AGREED THAT NO ONE ELSE MASTERMINDED THE DEAL FOR HER; CERTAINLY THE TACTICS ARE SUFFICIENTLY UNORTHODOX ONE HAS DIFFICULTY VISUALIZING ANY LAWYER OR AGENT ADVISING THEM. BUT THEY WORKED. IF THIS REPRESENTS THE POTENTIAL OF AN EMPTY HEADED BLONDE I THINK WE ALL COULD USE AN INJECTION OF VACUUM IN OUR SKULLS.

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WHEN SHE RETURNED TO THE SCREEN IT WAS IN PERHAPS AS OFFBEAT A PIECE OF TYPE-CASTING AS HOLLYWOOD EVER INDULGED IN. THE PART SHE PLAYED (A FLOOZIE WHOSE SOLE DESIRE IN LIFE IS TO ATTAIN THE SAME SORT OF SUCCESS THAT MARILYN MONROE ACHIEVED IN REAL LIFE) WAS A GLAMOR CHICHE....YET THE SCREEN'S #1 GLAMOR GIRL CHOSE TO PORTRAY THE ROLE REALISTICALLY, WITH THE CHARACTER STRIPPED OF EVERY VESTIGE OF GLAMOR. THE RESULT WAS ONE OF THE MOST ARTFULLY STYLIZED CHUNKS OF REALITY EVER TO GRACE THE CINEMASCOPE SCREEN. THE SATURDAY REVIEW FILM DEPARTMENT COMMENTED THAT WHILE ALL THE OTHER PERFORMERS IN THE FILM (INCLUDING SUCH SKILLED VETERANS AS ARTHUR O'CONNELL AND BETTY FIELD) WALKED THROUGH THEIR LINES WITH PROFESSIONAL SKILL, THEY APPEARED TWO-DIMENSIONAL WHEN COMPARED WITH THE EMOTIONAL DEPTH AND HARSH REALITY CREATED BY MISS MONROE. IT WAS A JUDGMENT I FOUND THOROUGHLY CONFIRMED WHEN I SAW THE FILM, AND I WAS WCN OVER WHOLE-HEARTEDLY INTO THE TINY "MONROE IS AN ACTRESS" CAMP FROM THEN ON. CERTAINLY SHE WON THE RIGHT TO AN ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATION THEN (AND I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY OTHER ACTRESS GIVE A PERFORMANCE WHICH ENTERS A SUPERIOR CLAIM TO THE AWARD ITSELF) BUT I DOUBT IF SHE GETS EVEN THE NOMINATION. HOLLYWOOD STILL REGARDS MONROE AS SOMETHING OF A JOKE. THEY CAN'T FORGET HER "HAD THE RADIO ON" "CHANEL #5" AND "BLONDE ALL OVER" PUBLICITY CRACKS. TO THEM, SHE REMAINS A HILARIOUS JOKE, A DUMB BLONDE WHO WANTS TO BE AN ACTRESS. AND THIS MYOPIA IS NOT RESTRICTED TO HER PROFESSIONAL COHORTS. I'VE READ A GREAT MANY REVIEWS OF "BUS STOP" AND NOT ANOTHER ONE ECHOED THE VERDICT OF THE SATURDAY REVIEW, EVEN FAINTLY. THEY ALL SHRUGGED IT OFF WITH MILD PRAISE FOR HER DEVELOPEMENT INTO A SKILLFUL COMEDIENNE, WHICH ISN'T MUCH MORE GENEROUS THAN THEIR COMMENTS ON "THE SEVEN-YEAR ITCH", A MOVIE IN WHICH SHE MERELY PLAYED STRAIGHT MAN (OR PERHAPS I SHOULD SAY CURVED WOMAN) FOR TOM EWELL.

I REALIZE THAT MARILYN MONROE HAS STEPPED OUT OF CHARACTER. THE CLOWN WHO WANTS TO PLAY HAMLET IS ALL TOO FAMILIAR BUT VERY FEW GLAMOUR QUEENS EXPRESS A DESIRE TO PORTRAY MEDEA. IN FACT, ONE HAS TO REACH ALL THE WAY BACK TO DIETRICH TO FIND ANOTHER 24-KARAT GLAMOR CREATION WHO EXHIBITED EITHER THE DESIRE OR THE ABILITY TO ACT AND MOST OF THE TIME DIETRICH HAS BEEN FAR TOO BUSY PORTRAYING HER FAVORITE ROLE, THAT OF MARLENE DIETRICH, TO BOTHER WITH ANY OTHER ROLES ("GOLDEN EARRINGS" WAS A MEMORABLE EXCEPTION). OF COURSE, IT APPEARS THAT DIETRICH HERSELF THOUGHT UP THE ROLE OF MARLENE DIETRICH, WHICH EXPLAINS HER SATISFACTION WITH IT. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE PUBLIC FIGURE, MARILYN MONROE, IS FAR MORE THE BRAINCHILD OF A BEHIND-THE-SCENES BRAIN TRUST THAN IT WAS OF THE YOUNG LOS ANGELES WAIF NAMED NORMA JEAN. THIS MAY EXPLAIN MONROE'S GREATER ENTHUSIASM FOR EXCAPING FROM HER MOST FREQUENT CHARACTERIZATION. BUT IT IS UNUSUAL. ONE DOESN'T HEAR JANE RUSSELL LAMENTING FOR PARTS IN CHEKHOV PLAYS, LANA TURNER GOING ON STRIKE BECAUSE SHE'S CAST IN SHODDY PICTURES, OR RITA HAYWORTH DEMANDING APPROVAL OF DIRECTORS ON HER PICTURES. IN FACT, THE ABILITY OF LANA TURNER TO COME TO LIFE IN JUST ONE SCENE OF A PICTURE ("THE BAD AND THE BEAUTIFUL") MADE FIVE YEARS AGO, GIVING EVIDENCE THAT THERE ACTUALLY WAS SOME POTENTIAL BELOW THAT OVER-FAMILIAR EXTERIOR. AFTER ALL, CAUSED SHOCK WAVES AMONG CRITICS THAT HAVE YET TO SUBSIDE. YET THIS WAS A FLEETING, HALF-FORMED THING, LESS SKILLED THAN THE

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PERFORMANCES MARILYN MONROE WAS GIVING AS XY LONG AGO AS "ALL ABOUT EVE". AND AVA GARDNER ONCE GOT AN ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATION, SIMPLY ON THE BASIS OF SHOWING ABOUT ONE-FIFTH AS MUCH DEVELOPEMENT AS A COMEDIENNE AS MARILYN MONROE HAS EXHIBITED IN HER LAST TWO PICTURES.

IT MAY BE UNUSUAL, BUT IS THERE ANY REASON TO RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A FAMOUS PIN-UP GIRL HAVENG BRAINS AND ABILITY, AS WELL AS LOOKS?

CERTAINLY THE MARILYN MONROE OF TODAY APPEARS TO BE A VERY CANNY CHARACTER. THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN THE MAKING OF GOOD MOVIES ARE A GOOD SCRIPT AND A GOOD DIRECTOR. AND THESE ARE THE TWO THINGS OUR HOPELESSLY STUPID BLONDE NOW HAS CLUTCHED FIRMLY IN HER OWN TWO SHAPELY HANDS. WHILE NOTHING CAN BE CONCLUSIVELY DEMONSTRATED AS YET, SCRIPT-WISE, MAY I RESPECTFULLY CITE THE DIRECTORS ON HER LAST THREE FILMS? BILLY WILDER DIRECTED "THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH", THE FABULOUS JOSH LOGAN DIRECTED "BUS STOP", AND THE JUST FINISHED "SLEEPING PRINCE" WAS DIRECTED BY CO-STAR LAURENCE OLIVIER. WHETHER HE HAS THE SAME SKILL WITH COMEDY THAT HE DEMONSTRATED WHEN HE PROVED HIMSELF THE MOST SKILLFUL TRANSLATOR OF SHAKE-SPEARE TO THE SCREEN REMAINS TO BE SEEN, OF COURSE.

AS FOR THE FUTURE, I AM ANXIOUS TO SEE WHETHER THE MONROE SKILLS APPLY AS APTLY TO HEAVY DRAMA AS TO FLUFFY COMEDY. IT IS REPORTED THAT MGM IS PREPARING A VERSION OF "THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV" FOR THE SCREEN AT THAT MONROE WILL BE GRUSHENKA IF HER DEMANDS ARE NOT TOO UNREASONABLE (HER HOME STUDIO, FOX, FLATLY REFUSED TO FILM IT AT ALL, MUCH LESS CAST HER IN IT, A DECISION THEY MIGHT LIVE TO REGRET). AND I FIND IT NOT AT ALL INCONGRUOUS THAT SHE HOPES SOMEDAY TO PLAY LADY MACBETH. I THINK THAT SHE IS WISE TO POSTPONE IT UNTIL THE INDEFINITE FUTURE, BUT THE INTENSITY MONROE BROUGHT TO "BUS STOP" COULD BE CHANNELLED INTO A VERY CHILLING LADY MACBETH, I FEEL.

THEREFORE, PROFESSIONALLY I THINK THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT FOR OUR DUMB BLONDE. HER EARLY EXPERIENCES WITH HUSTON AND MANKIEWICZ LEFT THERE MARK AND, HAVING WORKED WITH WILDER, LOGAN, AND OLIVIER I SUSPECT IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL SHE WORKS WITH GEORGE STEVENS, ALFRED HITCHCOCK, AND POSSIBLY EVEN PRESTON STURGES. (HITCHCOCK MIGHT DEMUR SINCE HE MAKES A SPECIALTY OF DISCOVERING UNSUSPECTED DEPTHS IN SEXLESS APPEARING ACTRESSES SUCH AS JOAN FONTAINE, INGRID BERGMAN, XXX GRACE KELLY, AND HIS MOST RECENT FIND VERA MILES.)

HER PERSONAL LIFE IS SOMETHING ELSE AGAIN. NEITHER CLEVERNESS NOR TALENT ARE INSURORS OF HAPPINESS AND IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE WORLD'S MOST TOASTED BEAUTY QUEEN IS NOT A HAPPY WOMAN. THE CHRONIC HYPOCHONDRIA AND CHRONIC LATENESS ARE ENOUGH TO EVIDENCE THAT, EVEN WITHOUT THE OTHER LESS OBVIOUS SYMPTOMS OF WHICH HER DETERMINED LUSTING AFTER EVER GREATER HEIGHTS IN AN ALREADY SUCCESSFUL CAREER IS PERHAPS NOT THE LEAST IMPORTANT. CERTAINLY HER FAMILY HISTORY DOES NOT BODE WELL FOR A "HAPPILY EVER AFTER" CONCLUSION. BUT IN THE MEANTIME WE ONLOOKERS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO WATCH A VERY BRIGHT FLAME OF TALENT AS IT BURNS IT'S HIGHEST. I HOPE THE MEMORY OF A CELEBRATED CALENDAR DOES NOT CONTINUE TO BLIND TOO MANY EYES TO WHAT IS BEFORE THEM UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE AND THE CANDLE FLAME HAS BURNED OUT.

THIS IS PAGE NINE

"THE KELLY LEGEND"

GRACE KELLY IS RATHER YOUNG TO BE REGARDED AS A LEGENDARY CHARACTER, AND YET A WHOLE CROP OF LEGENDS HAVE ALREADY APPEARED AND I SUSPECT THAT TWENTY YEARS FROM NOW, WHEN MEN IN THEIR FORTIES AND FIFTIES LOOK BACK NOSTALGICALLY ON THIS ERA THE NAME AND HISTORY OF GRACE KELLY WILL SERVE AS A MOTIF FOR THE ERA, MORE FREQUENTLY THAN ANY OTHER. LEGEND HAS TOUCHED HER FROM THE START.

THE FIRST LEGEND WAS THAT OF HER FAMILY. THIS HAS BEEN PUBLICIZED OVER AND OVER.....THE MULTI-MILLIONAIRE FATHER WHO STARTED LIFE AS A BRICKLAYER, WAS A SCULLING CHAMPION WHO WON THE OLYMPICS AND THEN TRAINED HIS SON TO GO ON AND DUPLICATE HIS SUCCESS PLUS WINNING ONE CONTEST IN WHICH HE WAS NEVER PERMITTED TO ENTER; THE UNCLE WHO WAS A SUCCESSFUL PLAYWRIGHT, AND THE OTHER UNCLE WHO WAS ONE OF THE LESS IMPORTANT VAUDEVILLE HEADLINERS OF THE TWENTIES. LAST AND MOST GLITTERING, THE KELLY WHO WENT TO HOLLYWOOD AND BECAME A MOVIE STAR. IT WAS A CHARMED FAMILY.

(ACTUALLY, THE KELLY TRIBE WAS NOT QUITE SO DISTINGUISHED AS JOURNALISTS, ANXIOUS FOR A GOOD STORY, LED THE PUBLIC TO BELIEVE. NEITHER OF THE UNCLES WERE EVER NONPAREILS IN THEIR PROFESSION AND THERE ARE A GOOD MANY UNDISTINGUISHED RELATIVES. PROBABLY THE BEST CLAIM OF ANY CONTEMPORARY FIGURE TO BEING THE CENTER OF A DISTINGUISHED FAMILY GOES TO ANNE MORROW. HER FATHER WAS A FAMOUS SENATOR ((AND HER FATHER-IN-LAW A MUCH LESS FAMOUS CONGRESSMAN)), HER MOTHER A DISTINGUISHED PIONEER EDUCATOR, HER HUSBAND THE MOST FAMOUS NAME EVER TO EMERGE FROM THE FIELD OF AVIATION AND PROBABLY THE SINGLE MOST POPULAR INDIVIDUAL TO ACHIEVE FAME DURING THE TWENTIES; SHE HERSELF IS REGARDED BY CRITICS AS ONE OF THE MOST PERCEPTIVE AND SKILLFUL WOMEN WRITERS CURRENTLY ACTIVE. EVEN HER ELDEST SON ACHIEVED DUBIOUS AND HEARTBREAKING INTERNATIONAL NOTORIETY AS THE MOST FAMOUS KIDNAP VICTIM OF ALL TIME.)

THE SECOND KELLY LEGEND WAS AN UNSAVORY, EVEN SALACIOUS, ONE. FOR A PERIOD SHE WAS BELOVED OF THE TABLOIDS AND SCANDAL MAGAZINES. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF PORFIPIO RUBIOSA, PROBABLY NO INDIVIDUAL RECEIVED MORE COMPREHENSIVE COVERAGE AT THEIR HANDS THAN SHE. A PICTURE WAS BUILT UP OF A COLDLY CALCULATING, UTTERLY IRRESISTIBLE, FEMALE, THE GREATEST TEMPTRESS PERHAPS SINCE CLEOPATRA. ACCORDING TO THE LEGEND SHE WAS ALL ICE AND ALOOFNESS OUTSIDE BUT THE FIRES INSIDE FLAMED SO HIGH THAT NO HOLLYWOOD HEARTH WAS SAFE FROM HER THREATENING PRESENCE, NO HOLLYWOOD STAR, NO MATTER HOW DISTINGUISHED OR RESPECTED, OR OF WHAT GENERATION, SAFE FROM HER FATAL ALLURE. TO ADD AN EXTRA FILLIP TO THE LEGEND, THE WRITERS SOUGHT TO PROVE THAT EACH AND EVERY MALE WHO HAD EVER PLAYED OPPOSITE HER HAD WRECKED HIS MARRIED LIFE FOR HER SAKE.

THIS LED TO SOME PRETTY RIDICULOUS STORIES. IT WAS ALLEGED THAT THE GARY COOPER MARRIAGE HAD BEEN FORCED INTO TWO SEPARATE HOUSEHOLDS WHEN SHE PLAYED OPPOSITE HIM IN "HIGH NOON", ALTHOUGH THE COOPER SEPARATION HAD BEEN HIGHLY PUBLICIZED NEWS LONG BEFORE SHE CAME TO HOLLYWOOD, TWO YEARS PRIOR TO "HIGH NOON". AND IT WAS NO SECRET

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THAT THE CAUSE WAS QUITE ANOTHER BLONDE ACTRESS, WHO HAD ALSO BEEN COOPER'S LEADING LADY, ONE PATRICIA NEAL. THEN THERE WAS ONE ARTICLE ALLEGING A FIERY INVOLVEMENT WITH ANOTHER ACTOR WITH WHOM SHE CO-STARRED IN TWO PICTURES, WILLIAM HOLDEN. UPON ITS APPEARANCE HOLDEN PROCEEDED TO TURN THE SCREWS OF THREATENED COURT ACTION AND RECEIVED A VERY HUMBLE APOLOGY, INDEED, IN THE NEXT ISSUE. ONE MAGAZINE WENT SO FAR AS TO EVEN 'PREDICT' HER FUTURE ROMANCES BY LISTING THE ACTORS SHE WAS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED TO WORK WITH IN FUTURE PICTURES.

ACTUALLY, WHAT WAS THE SOURCE OF THIS PARTICULAR LEGEND? IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN BASED SOLELY ON ONE GENUINE, THOUGH MINOR, SCANDAL AND A FEW CASUAL DATES HAD BY MISS KELLY WITH TWO OF HER CO-STARS WHO HAPPENED TO BE THE TWO MOST SUCCESSFUL MALE STARS EVER CREATED BY HOLLYWOOD, CLARK GABLE AND BING CROSBY. THE SCANDAL OCCURRED WHEN ONE OF HER EARLIER LEADING MEN, RAY MILLAND, LEFT HIS WIFE (WHOM HE HAD MARRIED THE YEAR GRACE KELLY WAS BORN) APPARENTLY WITH THE INTENTION OF MARRYING HIS CO-STAR. THERE ARE DIFFERENT VERSIONS AS TO HOW MUCH ENCOURAGEMENT HE MAY HAVE HAD FROM THE OBJECT OF HIS ROVING EYE, BUT WHEN THE SCANDAL APPEARED TO BE LOOMING AS A FRONT PAGE ITEM, BOTH APPEARED TO HAVE DECIDED THEY WEREN'T THAT INTERESTED. MILLAND SCURRIED BACK TO HIS WIFE WHILE MISS KELLY TREATED THE ENTIRE MATTER AS A DREADFUL MISUNDERSTANDING.

THE LEGEND WAS COMPOSED ALMOST COMPLETELY OF JOURNALISTIC IMAGINATION. OF THE TWO MEN SHE DID FREQUENTLY DATE, ONE (OLEG CASSINI) WAS NOT AN ACTOR AND THE OTHER, JEAN PIERRE AUMONT, NEVER APPEARED IN ANY KELLY FILMS.

THE MOST RECENT, AND STILL CURRENT, LEGEND OF COURSE IS THAT OF THE CINDERELLA FROM PHILADELPHIA WHO MARRIED A STORYBOOK PRINCE AND LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER. THIS SO DWARFS THE OTHER LEGENDS THAT #2 IS NOW COMPLETELY DEAD AND #1 AND #3 (STILL TO BE DISCUSSED) ARE REGARDED AS MERELY ADDED FACETS TO SET OFF THE BRILLIANCE OF THE MAIN STONE.

BUT JUST PRIOR TO THE FAMOUS ENGAGEMENT THERE WAS ANOTHER KELLY LEGEND GETTING SOLIDLY ESTABLISHED. THIS WAS THE LEGEND OF GRACE KELLY, THE GREAT ACTRESS, HOLLYWOOD'S MOST VERSATILE LEADING LADY. LIKE THE FIRST TWO LEGENDS THIS ONE, I FEEL, HAS REMARKABLY LITTLE ACTUAL BASIS (AND TIME MAY PROVE THAT #4 IS SIMILARLY FLIMSY).

GRACE KELLY MADE COMPARATIVELY FEW MOVIES DURING HER CAREER. BETWEEN 1951 AND 1956 SHE APPEARED IN ONLY ELEVEN. THE FIRST OF THESE, "FOURTEEN HOURS" WAS ONLY A BIT ROLE. IN ALL BUT ONE OF THE REMAINING TEN, SHE PORTRAYED THE HEROINE.

HER SECOND PICTURE WAS THE FABULOUSLY SUCCESSFUL "HIGH NOON". IT WON GARY COOPER AN ACADEMY AWARD, FRANKIE LAINE A HIT RECORD, AND PRODUCER STANLEY KRAMER A GREAT MANY DOLLARS. IT CANNOT BE SAID TO HAVE DONE MUCH FOR THE KELLY CAREER, HOWEVER. THOSE WHO WERE IN FAPA THAT LONG AGO MAY RECALL THAT IN THE VERY FIRST BIRDSMITH (SPRING '53) I DISCUSSED COOPER AND CITED (ANONYMOUSLY...I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HER NAME AT THE TIME) GRACE KELLY AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE

THIS IS PAGE ELEVEN

WASHED-OUT, UNATTRACTIVE, SAFELY SEXLESS WOMAN THAT PRODUCERS HABITUALLY CAST AS COOPER'S FIANCEE OR WIFE WHENEVER HE APPEARED IN A PICTURE WITH A DANGEROUSLY ATTRACTIVE WOMAN WHO MIGHT BE LOGICALLY EXPECTED TO LURE HIM INTO ACTING LIKE A NORMAL HUMAN MALE. (THE OTHER WOMAN IN THE PICTURE WAS ALSO A NEWCOMER, KATY BURADO, A MEXICAN ACTRESS WHOSE ACTING ABILITIES LIVE UP TO THE PRAISE HEAPED ON GRACE KELLY....ALMOST, AT LEAST.) GRACE KELLY HERSELF ADMITS THAT IN "HIGH NOON" HER PERFORMANCE ADDED UP TO NOTHING.

THEN, A YEAR AND A HALF LATER, CAME AN MGM CONTRACT. IN HER FIRST MOVIE SHE WAS CAST AS THE SECOND FEMININE LEAD OPPOSITE CLARK GABLE IN "MOGAMBO" (ONE OF THE MOST OVERRATED MOVIES HOLLYWOOD HAS RELEASED IN QUITE A WHILE.) IT WAS A VERY ROUTINE TRAVELOGUE THROUGH DARKEST AFRICA, A LA HOLLYWOOD (THERE WERE CAMERAMEN LURKING BEHIND EVERY AFRICAN TREE, ABOUT THAT TIME) BUT IT ENJOYED A GREAT DEAL OF CRITICAL SUCCESS. POSSIBLY IT WAS BECAUSE THE ONCE-GREAT JOHN FORD DIRECTED IT; MORE PROBABLY IT WAS NOSTALGIA SINCE IT HAD CLARK GABLE RE-ENACTING ONE OF THE MORE SUCCESSFUL ROLES OF HIS YOUTH. GRACE KELLY PLAYED A U-TYPE BRITISH MATRON WHOSE CHARMS GABLE FOUND IRRESISTIBLE. WHY WAS NEVER REALLY EXPLAINABLE. CERTAINLY SHE WASN'T THAT ATTRACTIVE....NOT WITH THE INVISIBLE MAKEUP AND UNATTRACTIVE HAIRDO THEY LOADED HER DOWN WITH. AND JUST WHY GABLE OR ANY MAN SHOULD TURN AWAY FROM AVA GARDNER TO THAT WAS NEVER CONVINCINGLY EXPLAINED. DESPITE THE RAVES FOR THE PICTURE, GRACE KELLY WAS PRETTY WELL IGNORED. THE KUDOS WENT TO AVA GARDNER FOR A SURPRISINGLY SUCCESSFUL PORTRAYAL (THIS IS THE PICTURE WHICH WON HER THE ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATION MENTIONED IN THE MONROE ARTICLE).

BUT FOR HER FOURTH PICTURE GRACE KELLY WAS BORROWED BY ALFRED HITCHCOCK FOR A FINE LITTLE PICTURE, "DIAL M FOR MURDER". HITCHCOCK HAD PREVIOUSLY WORKED A WEIRD, BUT HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL, ALCHEMY WITH JOAN FONTAINE AND INGRID BERGMAN AND HE WAS SCHEDULED TO REPEAT HIS SVEN-GALI TACTICS. BUT NOT IN "DIAL M FOR MURDER". "DIAL M" IS A ONE-ACTOR ROLE AND THAT ACTOR WAS RAY MILLAND. HE RIVETED THE AUDIENCE'S ATTENTION ON HIM THROUGHOUT AND ALL GRACE KELLY HAD TO DO WAS LOOK ATTRACTIVE AND HELPLESS AS THE WIFE WHOM HE WAS VICTIMIZING.

FINALLY, IN HER FIFTH PICTURE, "REAR WINDOW" GRACE KELLY FINALLY DID SOMETHING TO JUSTIFY BEING CAST OPPOSITE ALL HOLLYWOOD'S TOP STARS. THIS WAS ANOTHER HITCHCOCK PICTURE AND IT WAS A SUSPENSE-COMEDY IN WHICH GRACE KELLY EMERGED AS ONE OF THE MOST SUBTLY SEDUCTIVE HEROINES EVER TO APPEAR ON THE SCREEN. AFTER SEEING THAT PICTURE IT WASN'T DIFFICULT TO SEE WHERE THE JOURNALISTS DREAMED UP THEIR FICTIONAL COPY ON KELLY, THE VAMPIRE. "REAR WINDOW" WON NO AWARDS, BUT IT WAS EASILY THE MOST ENTERTAINING PICTURE OF 1954 AND GRACE KELLY WAS PERHAPS THE MOST ENTERTAINING PERFORMER IN IT (AND SHE HAD SOME ROUGH COMPETITION. CO-STAR JAMES STEWART IS LONG PAST HIS PRIME BUT WENDELL COREY AND THELMA RITTER ARE AMONG THE TEN OR TWELVE MOST ACCOMPLISHED SCENE-STEALING ACTORS IN AMERICA TODAY). FOR THIS ROLE YOU DO HAVE TO SALUTE GRACE KELLY... BUT A GOOD PART OF THAT SALUTE MUST BE AIMED AT ALFRED HITCHCOCK.

THIS IS PAGE TWELVE

THEN, AS ACADEMY AWARD SEASON DREW NEAR, THREE KELLY PICTURES APPEARED ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY. THE FIRST, "GREEN FIRE" WAS A POTBOILER, EASILY THE LEAST IMPORTANT PICTURE OF THE KELLY CAREER. A ROUTINE ADVENTURE PICTURE, MADE ONLY TO SATISFY AN OBLIGATION INCURRED BY MISS KELLY WHEN SHE INSISTED ON MAKING "COUNTRY GIRL" ON LOANOUT.

"COUNTRY GIRL" THEN APPEARED, A WEAK NEW YORK PLAY WHICH GAINED A GOOD DEAL OF STRENGTH IN ITS TRANSFER TO THE SCREEN. IT SUFFERED FROM A CONTRAST OF STYLES. BING CROSBY, AS THE CENTRAL FIGURE, PLAYED HIS ALCOHOLIC ROLE IN A GUTTY, SUPER-INTENSE FASHION THAT WAS QUITE CONVINCING WHEN HE WAS ALONE ON THE SCREEN BUT FELL APART WHENEVER HE WAS ON-SCREEN WITH EITHER OF HIS TWO CO-STARS, GRACE KELLY OR WILLIAM HOLDEN. BUT WHEN THEY WERE ALLOWED TO WORK TOGETHER WITH CROSBY ~~PRESENT~~ ABSENT, A SORT OF MIRACLE OCCURRED. THEY USED A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT ACTING STYLE, A SORT OF SUPER-SLICK HIGHLY-SOPHISTICATED STYLE WHICH DEMONSTRATED THESE WERE PROS WHO COULD AFFORD TO UNDERACT. THERE WAS A SORT OF RHYTHM TO ALL THEIR SCENES, WHICH I'VE ALWAYS FELT WOULD PROBABLY APPEAR IN THE LUNT-FONTANNE PLAYS, THE LATTER BEING THE FRUIT OF MANY YEAR'S ASSOCIATION.

GRACE KELLY DID A FINE JOB FOR SUCH A YOUNG ACTRESS IN THAT PART AND WON AN ACADEMY AWARD, DESERVEDLY, I FELT.

THIS WAS RAPIDLY FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER PICTURE WITH HOLDEN, A WAR STORY "THE BRIDGES AT TOKO-RI". I NEVER SAW THIS BUT UNDERSTAND IT WAS STRICTLY A MAN'S STORY WITH HOLDEN AND FREDRIC MARCH HAVING THE ONLY STRONG SCENES, GRACE KELLY BEING RESTRICTED TO THE ROLE OF DECORATIVE WIFE WHICH SHE PLAYED IN "DIAL M FOR MURDER".

THEN, AFTER A LAPSE, CAME THE THIRD AND LAST ALFRED HITCHCOCK PICTURE "TO CATCH A THIEF". THIS WAS ONE OF HITCHCOCK'S POOREST FILMS AND GRACE KELLY MANAGED TO LOOK BOTH UNATTRACTIVE AND UNINTERESTING THROUGHOUT.

THEN, IN 1956, AFTER THE BIG NEWS OF HER ENGAGEMENT, CAME THE RELEASE OF HER LAST TWO FILMS. IN THE FIRST "THE SWAN" SHE PORTRAYED A PRINCESS WOODED BY THE PRINCE OF A TINY COUNTRY. IT WAS A COMEDY OF MANNERS, SPLENDIDLY ACTED BY ALEC GUINNESS AND A FINE SUPPORTING CAST. BUT, AS THE REVIEWERS SAID, GRACE KELLY MERELY MANAGED TO LOOK BEAUTIFUL AND PLAY HERSELF.

THE NEXT (AND FINAL) PICTURE, "HIGH SOCIETY" COULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN MORE DIFFERENT. A BIG NOISY MUSICAL ADAPTATION OF "THE PHILADELPHIA STORY" (TRANSPLANTED TO NEWPORT), THE PRINCESS-TO-BE WAS CAST AS THE DAUGHTER OF A WEALTHY FAMILY, ABOUT TO BE THE CENTRAL CHARACTER IN A LARGE SOCIETY WEDDING. SHE HAD BING CROSBY AND FRANK SINATRA AS CO-STARS WITH A SUPPORTING CAST MADE UP OF PEOPLE WHO NORMALLY ARE STARS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT. THE PICTURE FAILED DISMALLY TO LIVE UP TO EXPECTATIONS. ALTHOUGH EVERY TALENT WHICH WENT INTO IT WAS ABSOLUTELY TOP-NOTCH EVERY ONE OF THEM FUNCTION AT NEAR-MINIMAL EFFICIENCY. THIS MOST DEFINITELY INCLUDED MISS KELLY; THE AVERAGE VIEWER COULD NOT RELY ON WHAT HE WAS SEEING TO EXPLAIN WHY EVERYONE

THIS IS PAGE THIRTEEN

SHOULD MAKE SUCH A FUSS OVER SUCH A DULL, SPOILED GIRL. HE HAD TO RECALL THE MONACO HEADLINES TO ASSURE HIMSELF THAT SHE ACTUALLY WAS A SUFFICIENTLY INTERESTING PERSONALITY TO WARRANT ALL THE EXCITEMENT.

SO THERE THEY ARE.....THE THIRTEEN FILMS APPEARED IN BY GRACE KELLY. THERE ARE QUITE A FEW GOOD MOVIES AMONG THEM BUT THE STARTLING FACT IS THAT THIS PARAGON OF ACTRESSES MANAGED TO GIVE A GOOD PERFORMANCE IN ONLY TWO OF THEM!

YOU CAN SEE WHY I REFER TO HER ACTING CAREER AS THE THIRD OF THE KELLY LEGENDS.

I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THE FOURTH KELLY LEGEND WILL CONTINUE ITS GILDED PATH OR BURST BUT IF THE LATTER DOES HAPPEN I THINK MISS KELLY WOULD BE WISE TO RETURN TO PHILADELPHIS DOMESTICITY AND NOT ATTEMPT TO RESUME HER HOLLYWOOD CAREER.

CERTAINLY "REAR WINDOW" AND "COUNTRY GIRL" LEAVE NO DOUBT THAT SHE DOES HAVE TALENT, BUT MOST CERTAINLY HER TALENT IS NOWHERE NEAR AS LARGE OR VARIED AS THE BULK OF HER PUBLIC HAVE DELUDED THEMSELVES INTO BELIEVING.

SHE HAS PLAYED IN FANTASTIC LUCK, SO FAR, IN HAVING HER CAREER CONSTANTLY APPEAR IN THE MOST FAVORABLE LIGHT AND I FEAR SHE HAS PUSHED IT AS FAR AS IT CAN BE PUSHED. SHOULD SHE RETURN IT IS ALMOST INEVITABLE THAT SHE WILL APPEAR IN SOME PICTURE WHERE THERE IS NO RAY MILLAND, FREDRIC MARCH, OR ALEC GUINNESS TO DIVERT THE AUDIENCE AND SEND THEM HAPPILY HOME, SATISFIED WITH THE LATEST 'GRACE KELLY' PICTURE. GIVEN ONE OR TWO REALLY NASTY FLOPS AND THE LEGENDARY QUALITY COULD CURL UP AND TURN BROWN AT THE EDGES AS RAPIDLY AS DID LAUREN BACALL'S WHEN SHE MADE THE MISTAKE OF APPEARING IN HER SECOND PICTURE, AFTER A YEAR AS HOLLYWOOD'S MOST EXCITING NEW STAR, BACK IN 1945.

AND I REALLY WOULDN'T LIKE TO SEE THAT HAPPEN TO GRACE KELLY. THE LEGEND IS JUST TOO PERFECT. ALL THE LEGENDS MAY BE FALSE, BUT COMBINED THEY ADD UP TO A BIGGER-THAN-LIFE FIGURE WE AREN'T APT TO SEE REPEATED IN THIS CENTURY AND COME 1975 I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO THOSE NOSTALGIC BOOKS AND MOVIES ABOUT THE FABULOUS FIFTIES WHEN THE STILL-LIVING LEGEND GRACE KELLY WAS IN HER PRIME.....THE WOMAN WHO WAS TO THE FIFTIES WHAT BRENDA FRAZIER, WALLACE WINDSOR, BETTE DAVIS, AND MARY ASTOR WERE TO THE THIRTIES.

COMBINED

XXXX SURE THE LEGEND IS A HIGHLY COLORED FAKE BUT AIN'T IT A GRAND ONE?

1929 WAS A LONG TIME AGO

HORIZONS--I WOULD HATE TO THINK THAT YOU EXAMINED BIRDSMITH AS CLOSELY AS YOU DID FAPA FACTS FOR GRAMMATICAL AND SPELLING ERRORS. AFTER READING YOUR COMMENTS ON FAPA FACTS I SKIMMED THROUGH BIRDSMITH AND WHAT I SAW MADE ME CRINGE. PLEASE, HARRY, DON'T TELL ME THAT ALL THESE YEARS YOU'VE BEEN OF THE OPINION I TALK LIKE THAT! I MAKE NO CLAIMS TO ABSOLUTE PURITY OF GRAMMAR (IN FACT I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT SUCH A GOAL A BIT RIDICULOUS) BUT, IN GENERAL, I AM AWARE OF ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT RULES OF LANGUAGE AND OBSERVE THEM. HOWEVER, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MY CONTRIBUTIONS TO "WASTEBASKET", EVERY ITEM I HAVE EVER PRODUCED FOR ANY FANZINE OF MY OWN WAS COMPOSED ON STENCIL, WHICH LEAVES LITTLE OPPORTUNITY FOR LATER CORRECTION. I'D LIKE TO QUOTE SOME OF THE BLOOPERS I FOUND, BUT UNFORTUNATELY I LEFT MY OWN ZINES IN MY APARTMENT TONIGHT WHEN I DRAGGED THE FAPA MAILING DOWN TO THE OFFICE FOR REVIEW DURING THIS LONG, DULL, SNOWBOUND NIGHT. THE POINT I AM TRYING TO MAKE IS THAT I NOT ONLY KNOW BETTER THAN TO INDULGE IN THE INCORRECT USAGE; I DON'T NORMALLY DO IT. BUT I ALWAYS MAKE THE SAME SORT OF ERRORS IN ANY SORT OF FIRST DRAFT WRITING....LETTERS, ARTICLES FOR OTHER FANZINES, OR TYPING UP MY OWN. I CAN'T SPEAK FOR OTHERS BUT I HAVE A TENDENCY TO GET INVOLVED IN MY OWN THOUGHT PROCESSES WHILE TYPING; MY MEMORY IS FAULTY AS TO WHAT I HAVE ALREADY SAID. THUS, I MAY BECOME CONFUSED, IN MID-SENTENCE, WHILE HUNTING FOR THE PROPER WORD AND, ONCE I FIND IT, CONTINUE THE SENTENCE UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT I STARTED IT DIFFERENTLY THAN IS ACTUALLY THE CASE. THUS I END IT IN THE WRONG TENSE, REPEAT A WHOLE PHRASES, ETC. MY SPELLING ERRORS ARE LESS COMMON, BUT THEY ALSO OCCUR....USUALLY I OMIT A LETTER OR TWO, WITHOUT NOTICING, OR ELSE I UNINTENTIONALLY PUN. JUST LAST NIGHT I TYPED 'WON' FOR ONE; I'VE USED 'WANTS' FOR 'ONCE', 'THEIRS' FOR 'THERE'S', AND, ALL TOO FREQUENTLY, 'TO' FOR 'TOO'. I SUSPECT THAT I AM FAR FROM THE ONLY VICTIM OF SUCH CONFUSION, AND SEE NO REASON WHY IT SHOULDN'T AFFLICT AN ENGLISH TEACHER AS MUCH AS ANYONE ELSE, SO I DON'T REALLY THINK IT FAIR TO TAKE ANYTHING, WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN COMPOSED ON STENCIL, AS A RELIABLE GUIDE TO THE WRITER'S LITERACY.///ONE SUCH ERROR I COULD HAVE EASILY CORRECTED WITH CORRECTION FLUID APPEARS ABOVE BUT I SHALL LEAVE IT ALONE AS A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF WHAT I WAS REFERRING TO; WHERE I SAY THAT I SOMETIMES "REPEAT A WHOLE PHRASES". THIS WAS AN INSTANCE WHERE I BECAME CONFUSED AS TO WHAT I'D SAID. I ACTUALLY HAD IT TYPED CORRECTLY, WITH THE WORD 'PHRASE' SINGULAR BUT I PAUSED TO CONSIDER WHAT TO PUT NEXT AND GLANCING BACK AT IT FAILED TO NOTICE THE 'A' SO ADDED AN 'S' ONTO 'PHRASEX'. (MY HUMBLEST APOLOGIES TO THE PUBLISHER ((RYAN?)) OF FAPA FACTS. THE WARNER COMMENTS I WAS REPLYING TO WERE IN REFERENCE TO FAPA SNOOZE, NOT FAPA FACTS.///INCIDENTALLY, WHAT IS INCORRECT IN "WE RAISE OUR HANDS IN HOLY HORROR AT THE ENEMIES OUTSIDE OF OUR BORDERS."?///THERE MAY BE OCCASIONAL EXCEPTIONS, BUT I HAVE REPEATEDLY READ THAT THE TELEPHONE LINES CARRYING NETWORK BROADCASTS CANNOT TRANSMIT ANY SIGNIFICANT PERCENTAGE OF FREQUENCIES ABOVE THOSE CUSTOMARILY BROADCAST BY AM STATIONS. IN FACT, I BELIEVE THEY FALL SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW AM CAPABILITIES. I KNOW THAT IT IS CUSTOMARY FOR MANY FM STATIONS TO HAVE TAPES MAILED TO THEM OF PROGRAMS THEY WANT TO TRANSMIT WITH MAXIMUM SOUND QUALITY, AND I HAVE HEARD IT SUGGESTED THAT THIS WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR AM STATIONS, ALSO, SINCE A NOTICABLE IMPROVEMENT WOULD RESULT.///MOST OF WHAT I AM INTERESTED IN RECORDING COMES FROM AM BROADCASTS OR (USUALLY OLD) RECORDINGS SO I'M NOT TOO

THIS IS PAGE FIFTEEN

VITALLY CONCERNED WITH THE FREQUENCIES OVER 6000 CPS MOST OF THE TIME. HOWEVER, I HAD SOMETHING OF A SHOCK LAST SUNDAY. I WAS WATCHING "OMNIBUS" AND, NEAR THE END OF THE SHOW, LEONARD BERNSTEIN LEFT OFF LECTURING AND, WITH A SYMPHONIC GROUP, PERFORMED THE LAST MOVEMENT FROM ONE OF THE RAVEL PIANO CONCERTOS (NOT THE LEFT-HANDED ONE; THE OTHER ONE). I DON'T RECALL MY EXACT MOTIVATION....POSSIBLY IT WAS ONLY THAT I WAS ALREADY USING THE TAPE RECORDER AMPLIFIER TO RUN SPEAKERS FOR THE TV, AND SINCE THE SOUND APPEARED PRETTY GOOD QUALITY AND I LIKE RAVEL, I DECIDED TO RECORD IT. AT ANY RATE, FOR SOME REASON I SWITCHED THE MACHINE ONTO RECORD AND STARTED THE REELS TURNING. THE RESULT WHICH I PLAYED BACK WAS STARTLING. I JUST DON'T ORDINARILY GET THAT QUALITY OF SOUND ON MY EQUIPMENT. AT ANY RATE, IT WAS NICE TO KNOW THAT, GIVEN A GOOD SOUND SOURCE, I CAN MAKE RECORDINGS WITH CONSIDERABLE SONIC BRILLIANCE. BUT THERE IS NO FM IN THIS AREA, TV SELDOM HAS ANYTHING WORTH RECORDING (AND THE SOUND QUALITY IS NOT ALWAYS THAT GOOD,....FREQUENTLY IT IS POORER THAN THE HUMBLEST AM 500 WATTER), WHICH LEAVES ONLY STATIC-Y AM.///"IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT" APPEARED IN 1934 WHEN, OUTSIDE THE FEW CITIES FEATURING LEGITIMATE THEATRES, YOU WENT TO THE MOVIES FOR VISUAL ENTERTAINMENT, OR WENT WITHOUT. IN THOSE DAYS A SMALL, INEXPENSIVE MOVIE IF WELL-MADE AND ENTERTAINING COULD BECOME A SMASH HIT BUT SUCH SUCCESSES DID NOT "PROVE IT FOR ALL TIME". A LITTLE DEVICE KNOWN AS TELEVISION HAS COME ALONG SINCE AND TV SPECIALIZES IN THE SMALL, UNPRETENTIOUS, INEXPENSIVE, AND INTIMATE. I DON'T AGREE WITH MANY OF THE MOVIE PRODUCER'S CURRENT CONCLUSIONS BUT I THINK THEY ARE ON SOLID GROUND IN THEIR JUDGMENT THAT THE AVERAGE PERSON WILL NOT GO OUT OF HIS HOME AND PAY \$1.00 A SEAT TO SEE JUST THE SAME THING HE CAN SEE IN THE COMFORT OF HIS OWN LIVING ROOM, FOR NOTHING, ONLY SLIGHTLY BETTER DONE IN THE MOTION PICTURE VERSION. EVEN THE FABULOUSLY SUCCESSFUL "MARTY", TAKEN FROM TV, AND MERITING ALL THE ADJECTIVES ABOVE IS CONSIDERED FABULOUSLY SUCCESSFUL ONLY BECAUSE OF THE CLEAN SWEEP IT MADE OF AWARDS AND BECAUSE, PERCENTAGEWISE, IT MADE A VERY NICE PROFIT. THE PERCENTAGES APPEAR HEFTY ONLY BECAUSE THE PICTURE WAS MADE ON AN EXTREMELY LOW BUDGET. ITS TOTAL GROSS REVENUE WAS VERY UNIMPRESSIVE COMPARED WITH THE REAL SUCCESSES OF THE SAME YEAR SUCH AS "BLACKBOARD JUNGLE" AND "MR ROBERTS".///YOU COMPLETELY FAIL TO MENTION THE FIRST C.S. LEWIS BOOK I ENCOUNTERED,; ONE WHICH I CONSIDER FAR SUPERIOR TO ANY OF THOSE YOU DISCUSS. THIS IS THE UTTERLY DELIGHTFUL "SCREWTAPE LETTERS". THIS, OF COURSE, ISN'T SCIENCE-FICTION BUT IT IS OF THE MOST AUTHENTIC FANTASY. THE ENTIRE BOOK IS COMPOSED OF LETTERS FROM AN APPRENTICE-DEMON TO HIS MENTOR (WHO IS THE SCREWTAPE OF THE TITLE, IF MY MEMORY IS ACCURATE) REGARDING HIS FIRST ASSIGNMENT, THE CAPTURE OF THE SOUL OF A YOUNG ENGLISHMAN DURING THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN. IN THE END THE IMP FAILS AND THE HUMAN DIES IN A STATE OF GRACE, WHICH MEANS THE CLUMSY DEMON MUST TAKE HIS PLACE. AFTER THIS I WAS ANXIOUS FOR MORE LEWIS WORKS AND POUNCED ON HIS INTERPLANETARY NOVELS WITH DELIGHT, BUT FOUND THEM VERY PLODDING AND FORCED, BY COMPARISON.

ISOMER--HAH! SIR, I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THAT AN EXPERT WHOSE JUDGMENT I TRUST IMPLICITLY (ME, IF YOU MUST KNOW) CONSIDERS TEAGARDEN THE ONLY REALLY FINE MALE VOCALIST IN THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF JAZZ (AND THERE ARE ONLY SIX OR SEVEN WOMEN WHO MEASURE UP TO THAT LEVEL).

THIS IS PAGE SIXTEEN

LAPK--ACCORDING TO BOTH TIME AND NEWSWEEK, EXACTLY FORT-NINE TUCKER CARS WERE BUILT, SO YOUR ESTIMATE ("HUNDREDS") AND PAVLAT'S (X) ("SIX OR EIGHT") ARE ALMOST EQUALLY INACCURATE. I HAD READ THE FIGURE BEFORE BUT MY MEMORY WASN'T TOO RELIABLE EITHER. I THOUGHT THERE WERE ABOUT TWENTY.

PAMPFREY--SINCE READING THIS ISSUE I HAVE FINALLY, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, DISCOVERED HOW TO FRY EGGS WITHOUT BREAKING THE YOLKS. THE TRICK IS TO GET THE FRYING PAN QUITE HOT BEFORE YOU PUT THE EGG IN, THEN TURN THE HEAT DOWN TO MEDIUM OR LOWER AND LET IT COOL OFF AGAIN. THE ONLY TROUBLE IS THAT WHEN I DO THIS I DON'T GET THE WHITE AS WELL DONE AS I LIKE SO I'VE GONE BACK TO BROKEN YOLKS AGAIN. WELL, HELL, I LIKE BROKEN YOLKS.///MY BROTHER ONCE FOUND A CAT'S CLAW IN A HOT DOG HE'D BEEN EATING. MUST HAVE BEEN A DIFFERENT MANUFACTURER THAN YOURS.///ACTUALLY, I DON'T MIND COOKING TOO MUCH MOST OF THE TIME....RATHER ENJOY IT PART OF THE TIME. IT IS THE HOUSECLEANING THAT DRIVES ME TO DESPAIR. I DETEST LIVING IN A MESSY APARTMENT BUT SOMEHOW I ALWAYS SEEM TO. EVERY COUPLE OF WEEKS I GO ON A CLEANING SPREE AND GET EVERYTHING LOOKING CIVILIZED AND BASK IN IT FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS AND THEN, SUDDENLY, I'M BACK WHERE I STARTED AND CAN'T FIND TIME TO REMEDY THE SITUATION. MY COOKING HAS ITS PECULIAR SIDE, THOUGH. I CONSIDER THAT I'M A MUCH BETTER COOK THAN THAT FOUND IN THE AVERAGE RESTAURANT, BUT SADLY ACKNOWLEDGE I'M A GOOD DEAL POORER, OVER THE LONG STRETCH, THAN MOST OF MY FEMALE RELATIVES. LOTS OF THINGS I DON'T KNOW HOW TO MAKE AT ALL; OF COURSE, THEY ARE CHIEFLY THINGS I DON'T CARE MUCH FOR. YOUR TROUBLE, ED, WONDERING WHAT YOU'D EAT WITH THE SAUSAGES NEVER BOTHERS ME. SOMETIMES I HAVE A SAUSAGE SANDWICH BUT NORMALLY IF I COOK SAUSAGES I EAT ONLY SAUSAGES, WITH MAYBE MILK TO DRINK. WHEN I COOK FOR ONLY MYSELF, I FIX ONLY ONE THING PER MEAL AND EVEN THEN I USUALLY HAVE TOO MUCH. THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS TO THAT NOT FIXING THINGS ONLY WHEN I DON'T CARE FOR THEM. IT'S BEEN AROUND FIVE YEARS SINCE I LAST MADE A MEAT LOAF, ALTHOUGH I'VE ALWAYS BEEN QUITE FOND OF (GOOD) MEAT LOAF. CATCH WAS THAT I WASN'T FAMILIAR ENOUGH WITH HOW TO DO IT TO DO SO WITHOUT A RECIPE AND I RARELY BOTHER WITH RECIPES. BUT SOMETIMES I TAKE A NOTION TO FOOL WITH RECIPES FOR A WHILE, IN ORDER TO VARY MY DIET, WHEN IT APPEARS MONOTONOUS. JUST THIS WEEK I'VE GONE ON A MEAT LOAF SPREE. FROM TWO DIFFERENT SOURCES I SUDDENLY AM SWAMPED WITH MEAT LOAF RECIPES AND SO I'M TRYING THEM ALL OUT, AT VERY RAPID INTERVALS. LAST SUNDAY I FIXED A MUSHROOM MEAT LOAF. TUESDAY I TRIED A BARBECUED MEAT LOAF, YESTERDAY AN HERB MEAT LOAF, TOMORROW MORNING (SUNDAY) I'M TRYING A BANANA MEAT LOAF, AND STILL TO BE TRIED ARE A VEGETABLE MEAT LOAF AND AN ECONOMY MEAT LOAF, WHATEVER THAT TURNS OUT TO BE. SO FAR I'M FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH THE MUSHROOM MEAT LOAF AND THE SAUCE FOR THE BARBECUED MEAT LOAF WHICH TURNED OUT TO BE ABSOLUTELY DELICIOUS (THIS WAS NOT EXACTLY SUSPECTED SINCE I DON'T FOLLOW RECIPES TOO RELIGIOUSLY. IN THIS INSTANCE I SUBSTITUTED HALF A CAN OF LEFT-OVER TOMATO SOUP FOR THE RIPE TOMATO (LARGE) CALLED FOR IN THE RECIPE AND SUBSTITUTED LEFT-OVER MUSHROOMS FOR THE ONIONS PRESCRIBED (I DON'T CARE FOR ONIONS) WHICH I HEAVILY DOUSED WITH ONION SALT. BELIEVE I MADE ONE OR TWO OTHER SUBSTITUTIONS ALSO.// YES, PEANUTS CREEPS UP ON YOU. I DIDN'T LIKE IT AT FIRST EITHER. BUT I HAD THE SAME EXPERIENCE WITH "DENNIS, THE MENACE".

THIS IS PAGE SEVENTEEN

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST--IN VIEW OF MY VIOLENTLY ANTI-"DRACULA" (A LA LUGOSI) WRITTEN YEARS LATER, I FOUND HARRY'S ACCOUNT OF HIS VIEWING OF THE FILM INTERESTING. A MONTH OR SO AGO THERE WAS A TELE-VERSION OF THE STORY PRESENTED ON "MATINEE THEATRE" WITH JOHN CAR-RADINE PLAYING THE TITLE ROLE BUT I ONLY STAYED TUNED IN FOR ABOUT FIVE MINUTES. THE BOOK OCCUPIES A UNIQUE NICHE IN MY MEMORIES AS PERHAPS THE MOST HORROR-EVOKING THING I HAVE EVER READ (AND I DON'T THINK I SHALL EVER RE-READ IT, FOR FEAR OF DISSIPATING THE EFFECT THE STORY HAD ON ME AT THE AGE OF 12....I WAS RATHER NERVOUS AT THAT AGE AND HAVE FOUND SOME OTHER NOVELS WHICH HAD SIMILAR, THOUGH LESSER, EFFECT ON ME THAT YEAR ARE VERY PROSAIC WHEN RE-READ. ELLERY QUEEN'S "EGYPTIAN CROSS MYSTERY" WHICH DEALS WITH THE SYSTEMATIC BEHEADING AND CRUCIFIXION OF A VARIETY OF VICTIMS IS ONE EXAMPLE. I WONDER WHAT EFFECT MCINTOSH'S GRUESOME "THE FITTEST" WOULD HAVE HAD ON ME AT THAT AGE.) BUT I FIND VISUAL DRAMATIZATIONS OF IT PRETTY PEURILE AND OBVIOUS.

TARGET: FAPA--I CAN ONLY TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT, NATURALLY, THAT YOU ACTUALLY KNEW TWO MEN INTIMATELY AND WERE UNABLE TO TELL THEM APART, EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE NOT IDENTICAL TWINS. BUT I MUST SAY I FIND IT HARD TO SWALLOW. SO MANY HUNDREDS, POSSIBLY EVEN THOUSANDS, OF DIFFERENT FACTORS GO TO MAKE UP THE SUM TOTAL WE CALL A 'FACE', ALONE, THAT IT SEEMS THE LAW OF AVERAGES ALONE WOULD MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO PRODUCE AN EXACT REPLICA, BY CHANCE. HAVING NEVER SEEN THE TWO MEN I CAN'T VERIFY YOUR OBSERVATIONS (THOUGH I CAN'T SUPPRESS A SNEAKING FEELING THAT IF ONLY * I HAD BEEN THERE.....). MY STATEMENT WAS BASED ON VARIOUS OBSERVATIONS, PERSONALLY, FROM THE PRINTED PAGE, AND FROM MOTION PICTURES. I HAVE BEEN AROUND TWINS, ABSOLUTELY INDISTINGUISHABLE WHEN YOU FIRST MET THEM, BUT AFTER A FEW WEEKS ACQUAINTANCE, COMPLETELY DISSIMILAR. I CAN EVEN DUPLICATE YOUR EXPERIENCE OF MIXING UP YOUR EMPLOYER. WHEN I FIRST CAME TO WENATCH-EE, I WORKED HERE NINE DAYS, THEN HOPPED OFF TO GRANT'S PASS FOR SEVEN WEEKS. THE DAY I RETURNED WAS THE MANAGER'S * LAST DAY ON THE JOB BEFORE HIS VACATION. FOR FOUR WEEKS I SAW HIM NOT AT ALL. THEN JUST ABOUT TIME FOR HIM TO RETURN A MAN WALKED INTO THE OFFICE WHO I ASSUMED TO BE HIM, AND GREETED HIM THAT WAY (LUCKILY IN SUCH A WAY THAT MY ERROR DID NOT BECOME EVIDENT). HE MERELY GRUNTED AND STARTED WRITING A TELEGRAM. WHEN I TOOK IT I REALIZED MY ERROR, BUT THE SAME THING HAPPENED AGAIN ABOUT TEN DAYS LATER. HOWEVER, AT THAT TIME I DID NOT REALLY KNOW THE MANAGER HERE, MR. STRAND, AT ALL WELL. THERE IS A TREMENDOUS FACIAL RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE MEN WHICH I STILL NOTE BUT THE IMPOSTER IS SEVERAL INCHES SHORTER, MORE WEATHER-BEATEN, SLIGHTLY MORE SQUINCHED UP AROUND THE EYES.....AND SO ON THROUGH MANY OTHER DETAILS TOO SUBTLE TO DESCRIBE. SIMILARLY I'VE NOTED, OCCASIONALLY, IN MOVIES A COUPLE OF ACTORS OR ACTRESSES SO SIMILAR I WAS UNABLE TO DISTINGUISH THEM, BUT IF EITHER OR BOTH BECOME WELL-KNOWN, AFTER TWO OR THREE PICTURES I HAVE NO DIFFICULTIES TELLING ONE FROM THE OTHER, EVEN IN STILLS. USUALLY THEY TURN OUT TO HAVE SUFFICIENT RESEMBLANCE TO PASS EASILY FOR SIBLINGS BUT NOT FOR TWINS. I THINK THE BEST EXAMPLE IS THAT OF THE VERY YOUTHFUL TOP STAR OF WORLD WAR II, JOAN LESLIE (NOW PRETTY WELL FORGOTTEN) AND ANOTHER ACTRESS OF ABOUT THE SAME AGE, JANET LEIGH, WHO STARTED HER UPWARD CLIMB ABOUT THE TIME JOAN LESLIE HIT THE SKIDS. ALL THROUGH THE FIRST LEIGH PICTURE I SAW, "WORDS AND MUSIC" I WORRIED ABOUT WHO WAS PLAYING RICHARD RODGERS WIFE. I COULD HAVE SWORN IT WAS JOAN LESLIE, BUT KNEW IT WASN'T SINCE THE MAJOR STUDIOS HAD HER BLACKLISTED AT THE TIME. HOWEVER, NOW I'D HAVE NO DIFFICULTY. JANET

THIS IS PAGE EIGHTEEN

LEIGH DOES LOOK VERY MUCH LIKE JOAN LESLIE BUT I'VE SINCE SEEN HER FREQUENTLY ENOUGH TO REALIZE SHE'S SLIMMER, BLONDER, MORE ANIMATED, ETC. ROD CAMERON AND ROBERT RYAN ARE ALMOST INDISTINGUISHABLE IN STILL SHOTS BUT THEY MOVE AND TALK COMPLETELY DIFFERENTLY SO THERE IS NO CONFUSION WHEN THEY ARE ACTUALLY ACTING. THE EVIDENCE I WAS RELYING MOST HEAVILY ON IN THAT STATEMENT THOUGH WAS THE ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN SOME RUBBER OR SPARK PLUG COMPANY PUT ON ABOUT EIGHT YEARS AGO. THEY HUNTED DOWN DOUBLES OF ALL SORTS OF FAMOUS PERSONALITIES, AND THEN PHOTOGRAPHED THEM AT THE MOST FAVORABLE ANGLE TO ENHANCE THE RESEMBLANCE, ALSO USING MAKEUP FOR THAT PURPOSE. THEN THEY PRINTED THE PICTURES (AS CLOSE TO IDENTICAL AS POSSIBLE) SIDE BY SIDE AND DEMANDED YOU IDENTIFY THE FAMOUS FACE FROM THE UNKNOWN ONE. I NEVER HAD THE SLIGHTEST DIFFICULTY WITH ANY OF THEM. THEY DID LOOK ALIKE BUT THE IMITATOR ALWAYS HAD A PHONEY, IMITATION LOOK ABOUT HIM, STRAINING TO MAKE THE MOST OF AN INSUFFICIENT SIMILARITY, WHILE THE REAL CHARACTER COULD RELAX AND BE HIMSELF. ACTUALLY, ONLY ONCE HAVE I EVER BEEN UNABLE TO DISTINGUISH WHICH WAS WHICH IN SUCH A COMPARISON (IT IS FAIRLY COMMON TO SEE NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPHS OF DOUBLES OF PRESIDENTS, PRIME MINISTERS, ETC. ALSO, BUT WITHOUT THE SPECIAL LIGHTING AND MAKEUP THERE IS SELDOM THE SLIGHTEST RESEMBLANCE... I SUSPECT THE RESEMBLANCE WITH SUCH PEOPLE IS CHIEFLY MANNERISMS). AND THE ONE INSTANCE I WAS STUMPED INVOLVED NOT AN UNKNOWN IMITATING A FAMOUS PERSONALITY BUT TWO WOMEN, EACH FAMOUS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT. AND THIS RESEMBLANCE HAS RATHER RIBALD IMPLICATIONS. IT INVOLVES MOVIE STARS JOAN BENNETT AND HEDY LAMARR. THOSE OF YOU OLD ENOUGH TO HAVE BEEN THEATRE-GOERS DURING THE THIRTIES, OR WHO WATCH TELEVISION CLOSELY TODAY, MAY RECALL THE YOUNGEST OF THE THREE BENNETT SISTERS AS A SORT OF VISUAL CLICHE; SHE WAS THE TYPICAL YOUNG, BLONDE, HELPLESS INGENUE OF ALL THE EMPTY-HEADED MOVIES HOLLYWOOD DOTTED ON PRODUCING AT THE TIME. ACTUALLY HER HAIR WAS NORMALLY DARK BUT SISTER CONSTANCE WAS THE REIGNING HOLLYWOOD STAR IN THE EARLY THIRTIES AND HER INFLUENCE SPREAD FAR. SUCH DIVERSE STARS AS BETTE DAVIS AND ALICE FAYE WERE FORCED TO HAVE THEIR HAIR DYED AND THEIR FACES MADE UP TO MAKE THEM RESEMBLE CONSTANCE AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE. NATURALLY BABY SISTER, WHO ALREADY HAD A RESEMBLANCE, ALSO WAS SWEEPED ALONG AND SO SHE REMAINED A BLONDE THROUGHOUT THE THIRTIES WHILE HER CAREER LIMPED ALONG. DURING MOST OF THIS PERIOD SHE WAS MARRIED TO A MOVIE PRODUCER, GENE MARKEY. IN THE LATE THIRTIES THEY WERE DIVORCED AND AROUND THE SAME TIME A DARK SEDUCTIVE VIENNESE BEAUTY CAME TO HOLLYWOOD, WAS RE-CHRISTENED HEDY LAMARR AND BECAME AN OVERNIGHT SUCCESS AND THE HOLLYWOOD GLAMOUR GIRL. THE RECENTLY DIVORCED MARKEY DISCOVERED HER AND, AFTER A WHIRLWIND COURTSHIP, SWEEPED HER OFF HER FEET AND INTO A MEXICAN ELOPEMENT. MEANWHILE, JOAN BENNETT HAD MADE A PICTURE "TRADE WINDS" IN WHICH IT WAS NECESSARY FOR HER TO EXCHANGE BLONDE HAIR FOR DYED BLACK EARLY IN THE PICTURE AND KEEP IT THAT WAY TILL THE END. I BELIEVE SHE ACTUALLY WORE A WIG BUT SHE WAS SO IMPRESSED WITH HER APPEARANCE THAT SHE DYED IT BACK TO ITS NATURAL SHADE, WHERE IT HAS STAYED EVER SINCE, AND HER CAREER IMMEDIATELY STARTED ZOOMING UPWARD AS SHE QUIT PLAYING SHY FARM GIRLS AND MOVED OVER INTO THE SIREN CATEGORY. WHAT STARTED EVERYONE WHO HAD KNOWN HER FOR YEARS, THOUGH, WAS THAT, FACIALLY, WITH HER NEW DARK HAIR SHE WAS AN EXACT DOUBLE FOR THE NEW REIGNING FAVORITE, HEDY LAMARR, THOUGH JOAN HAD BEEN AROUND AND IGNORED FOR YEARS. THERE IS A STORY, PROBABLY APOCRYPHAL, THAT MARKEY AND HIS SECOND WIFE RETURNED FROM THEIR

MEXICAN HONEYMOON UNEXPECTEDLY AND DROPPED IN ON A PARTY WHERE HIS EX-WIFE WAS PRESENT AND THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME HE HAD EVER SEEN HER WITH DARK HAIR. ALSO PROBABLY APOCRYPHAL IS THE STORY THAT WHEN SOMEONE ASKED JOAN BENNETT WHY SHE HAD WASTED HERSELF WITH BLONDE HAIR ALL THOSE YEARS SHE REPLIED THAT IT WAS BECAUSE "GENE PREFERRED HER HAIR BLONDE AND WOULDN'T LET HER DYE IT." BUT THE BENNETT-LAMARR RESEMBLANCE WAS CERTAINLY NOT APOCRYPHAL (ALTHOUGH ADVANCING AGE HAS ERASED A GOOD DEAL OF IT). IN THIS CASE, HOWEVER, IT WAS TOTALLY FACIAL. EVERY MOVEMENT, MANNER OF SPEAKING, EVERY PERSONALITY HABIT DIFFERED SO MUCH BETWEEN THE TWO THAT THERE WAS NEVER THE SLIGHTEST POSSIBILITY OF MISTAKING THE TWO ON THE SCREEN. ONLY IN STILL PICTURES DID IT REALLY SHOW UP AND HERE IT WAS UNCANNY. HEDY LAMARR WAS ALWAYS PRETTY MUCH A DEADPAN AND FOR THAT REASON THE STILLS ALWAYS TENDED TO MAKE THE VIEWER THINK JOAN BENNETT LOOKED LIKE HER, RATHER THAN VICE VERSA. ALSO THEIR SMILES WERE QUITE DIFFERENT SO THE FACES HAD TO BE IN REPOSE. BUT GIVEN THESE PPE-REQUIREMENTS IT WAS QUITE EASY TO MAKE A MISTAKE. THE ARTICLE WHICH I READ AND FROM WHICH MOST OF THE ABOVE WAS QUOTED FEATURED PICTURES OF EACH SIDE BY SIDE AND WHILE I THOUGHT I KNEW EACH BY SIGHT I FOUND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL FOR SURE WHICH WAS WHICH. BOTH OF THE PICTURES LOOKED EXACTLY LIKE HEDY LAMARR BUT, WHEN I EXAMINED THE CAPTION UNDERNEATH, I FOUND THAT THE ONE WHO LOOKED MOST STRONGLY LIKE HER WAS ACTUALLY JOAN BENNETT. (GENE MARKEY LATER MARRIED MYRNA LOY, WHO DOESN'T LOOK LIKE EITHER, BY THE WAY) BUT I STILL THINK THAT THE DOUBLE WHO REPLACES A FAMOUS MAN FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME IS A THING FOR HEINLEIN-STYLE FICTION, NOT SOMETHING THAT COULD HAPPEN IN REAL LIFE.

BIRDSMITH--YOU MAY RECALL IN THE LAST MAILING I ATTACKED THE ACTION BY THE FORMER SEC.-TREAS. ABETTED BY THE PRESIDENT, OF REQUIRING A LETTER AFTER EACH MAILING FROM WAITINGLISTERS IN ORDER TO RETAIN THEIR LIST AS NOT ONLY UNCONSTITUTIONAL, BUT ALSO WISE, AND USED BILL MORSE, THE ONLY WAITING-LISTER I HAVE FAIRLY CLOSE CONTACT WITH AS AN EXAMPLE. HOWEVER, I FIND THAT PORTION OF MY ARGUMENT HAS RATHER EVAPORATED. BELOW IS A QUOTATION FROM A MORSE COLUMN WHICH WAS SENT ME, AND WHICH HE ISSUED A KILL ORDER ON, BEFORE I COULD USE IT. SINCE HE FAILED TO REPEAT THIS PORTION AND IT DEALS SO DIRECTLY WITH WHAT I SAID BEFORE I AM PRINTING IT, SEPARATELY. X AS I TYPE THESE WORDS, MORSE IS STILL UNAWARE OF THE POSITION I TOOK ON THE MATTER AND THE USE OF HIS NAME, BY THE WAY, THOUGH HE WILL BE RECEIVING THAT MAILING, SHORTLY.

"IT MAY BE A BIT LATE, BUT I'D LIKE TO ADD MY OWN OPINION ON THIS NEW REGULATION OF WAITING-LISTERS BEING EXPECTED TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF F.A. I SEE NO DAMNED REASON WHY THE THING HAS NOT BEEN LAW FOR A MUCH LONGER TIME. AFTER ALL, WE OBVIOUSLY THINK THAT TO BE IN FAPA IS AN HONOUR AMONG FEN, OR WE'D NOT WAIT SO PATIENTLY FOR THE RIGHT TO PUBLISH IN ITS CIRCLE. IT THEREFORE FOLLOWS THAT WE SHOULD AT LEAST ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE REMAIN IN THAT WAITING LIST. THE CALL ONLY COMES EVERY THREE MONTHS, WHICH IS NO GREAT STRAIN ON ONE'S TIME."

WELL, THAT'S MORSE'S VIEWS, SO MY COMPLAINTS OF HARDSHIP TO HIM ARE GROUNDLESS. I'M STILL NOT TOTALLY CONVINCED OF THE WISDOM OF THE PROVISION, HOWEVER, AND VERY DEFINITELY STILL CONSIDER THE ACTION UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND SOMETHING TO BE DECIDED BY VOTE.

WELL, MORSE NO LONGER LIVES IN LONDON.....

SO HE CAN'T VERY WELL WRITE A "LETTER
FROM LONDON"

THEREFORE.....

THIS ISSUE

MORSE

MERELY

MEANDERS

WELL NOW, A LOT OF THINGS HAVE HAPPENED SINCE WE MET LAST, TO ME, TO YOU, AND TO SEVERAL MILLIONS OF INNOCENT EUROPEANS WHO HAVE DONE NOTHING BUT DESIRE FREEDOM.

IN THE WORDS OF LEWIS CARROLL - AND NOT WALT KELLY - LET US BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING, GO ON TO THE END, AND THEN STOP.

TOWARD THE END OF AUGUST, I BEGAN PREPARATIONS FOR QUITTING THE RAF AND GOING OUT INTO THE CRUEL HARD WORLD. IT BEGAN WITH AN INTERVIEW WITH THE C.O., WHO LOOKED A LITTLE HALF-HEARTED AS HE ASKED IF I HAD CONSIDERED THE THOUGHT OF SIGNING ON FOR THE FULL TERM (UP TO AGE 55, WITH 300 POUNDS BONUS FOR DOING IT, AND MINIMUM WAGE FOR ME AT THE RANK OF SERGEANT OF 16 POUNDS PER WEEK). HE DIDN'T SEEM REALLY SURPRISED AT MY GENTLE REFUSAL. HE DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO ASK WHY, SINCE THE FEELINGS OF THE MAJORITY OF SNCOS ARE FAIRLY WELL KNOWN TO THE OFFICERS. SO I LEFT HIM WITH THE BEST WISHES FOR SUCCESS, ETC, AND TROTTED GAILY OFF BACK TO THE OFFICE, TO WAIT FOR THE VISIT TO THE DISCHARGED SERVICEMEN'S CLOTHING CENTRE, ON THE FOLLOWING MORNING.

THIS WAS A PANIC. FREE TRAVEL WARRANT TO THE TOWN OF WOKING, AND WALK OFF THE STATION WITH A COUPLE OF OTHERS, TO ENQUIRE AFTER TRANSPORT. THE PORTER INDICATED A CAB RANK, AND WE BARGAINED WITH THE FIRST DRIVER FOR THE FARE, THEN PILED IN AND DROVE OFF HAPPILY ENOUGH. IT WAS A SADDENING EXPERIENCE, AS WE SETTLED WITH HIM ON OUR ARRIVAL AT THE GATES OF THE CENTRE, TO SEE A BUS COME ALL THE WAY PAST LABELLED "WOKING STATION" AND TO REALISE THAT THE PORTER PROBABLY GOT A CUT OUT OF THIS RACKET TOO. BUT WE LEFT IT AT THAT AND WENT ON INTO THE CENTER, PRODUCING COUNTLESS DOCUMENTS TO PROVE THAT WE WERE OURSELVES, HANDING THESE OVER, AND RECEIVING YET ANOTHER SET ENTITLING US TO MOVE DOWN TO THE NEXT WINDOW, WHERE THE SAME CLERK CAME DOWN AND TORE OFF THE LOWER HALF OF EACH OF THEM. USUAL CIVIL SERVICE METHODS, OF COURSE. WE GRINNED AT EACH OTHER AND WENT INTO THE ISSUES BUILDING TO BE GREETED BY THE MOST OBVIOUS OF BRITISH INSTITUTIONS - "TEA...6D PER CUP". ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF ENTERPRISE, NO DOUBT, BECAUSE WE PROMPTLY DEVELOPED ENOUGH OF A THIRST TO STOP THERE FOR THE USUAL, BEFORE GOING IN TO THE MAIN BODY OF THE BUILDING. IT DID AT LEAST GIVE US MORE STRENGTH TO FACE WHAT LAY BEFORE US.

DID YOU EVER SEE A DEMOB SUIT? OBVIOUSLY YOU HAVEN'T, BEING ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE ATLANTIC. WE GET A CHOICE, ON COMPLETION OF ENGAGEMENT, OF A FULL RIGOUT OR A CASH DONATION OF 8 POUNDS. ON THE WHOLE, IT IS BETTER TO TAKE THE CLOTHING, BECAUSE THE MONEY WOULD BARELY BUY A SHIRT AND A PAIR OF SHOES. BUT YOU HAVE TO SWALLOW A LITTLE BEFORE YOU CAN LOOK AT THE ISSUE WITHOUT BLENCHING. YOU START WITH THE SUIT AND THERE ARE PLENTY OF SIZE DIVISIONS. NOW, I STAND 73 INCHES, WITH A 42 CHEST, SO MY CHOICE WAS LIMITED, AS

AS THEY DO NOT EXPECT MANY CUSTOMERS SO LARGE, THEREFORE DO NOT CATER FOR THEM MUCH. I COULD HAVE A FLASHY BLUE D.B. SUIT, OR A LESS PAINFUL DARKER BLUE S.B., WHICH I TOOK. THEN I SPENT NEARLY FIFTEEN MINUTES TRYING TO MAKE REALLY SURE THAT THERE WAS NOTHING BETTER, AND FIGURING OUT WHAT WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE TO IT TO MAKE IT FIT, AND HOW MUCH IT WOULD COST, AND SO ON. BUT FINALLY I HAD TO QUIT AND MOVE ON TO RAINCOATS.

TWO CHOICES - TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT. I TOOK IT.

HATS. I TAKE A $7\frac{1}{2}$ HAT, AND HAD DECIDED THAT ONE OF THE NEW STYLE BERET-CAPS WOULD DO ME FINE. NOT THAT I WAS GOING TO WEAR IT OFTEN, EXCEPT FOR CYCLING IN VERY WET WEATHER, BUT ONE MUST CHOOSE SOMETHING. SO THAT WAS WHAT I ASKED FOR, AND GOT A BLUNT REFUSAL FROM THE STORE-HAND (EX-ARMY TYPE, AND WELL ACCUSTOMED TO REFUSING, FROM HIS MANNER.) THEY DIDN'T MAKE THEM THAT SIZE, HE SAID. WHY NOT, I WANTED TO KNOW. WELL, ALL HE COULD SAY WAS THAT THEY DIDN'T MAKE THEM THAT SIZE, THAT WAS ALL HE KNEW AND IF I WANTED TO KNOW ANY MORE I'D HAVE TO ASK THE SUPERVISOR.

SO I DID. HERE WAS ANOTHER OBVIOUS EX-ARMY TYPE, A DEAD CERT FOR A CLOTHING STORE CLERK AT AN ARMY BASE. ALL HE KNEW WAS THAT THERE WAS NO CONTRACT OUT FOR BERET-CAPS ABOVE SIZE $7\frac{1}{4}$. ANYWAY, WHAT WAS WRONG WITH THE OLD FEDORA?....AND HE SORTED THROUGH THE PILE AND FINALLY FOUND JUST ONE $7\frac{1}{2}$. A BLACK ONE, OF THE TYPE WORN BY MINOR CLERGY ALL OVER THE WORLD. IT'S A LOVELY HAT, HE SAID, AND I SWEAR THE MAN LOOKED AS IF HE REALLY BELIEVED IT WITH ALL THE SINCERITY OF WHICH AN EX-ARMY CLOTHING STOREMAN IS CAPABLE. A LOVELY HAT, PROBABLY THE BEST HAT IN THE PLACE.

BUT, SAID I, I WANT A BLUE ONE, WITH A SNAP BRIM. (I DIDN'T, ACTUALLY, BUT BY NOW I WAS DETERMINED TO GET SOMETHING FROM THESE PEOPLE THAT THEY DIDN'T WANT TO GIVE ME). A BLUE ONE, THE SAME AS ALL THE OTHER PEOPLE WERE ABLE TO GET FROM THE PILES OF HATS AVAILABLE IN THEIR SIZES.

AND, IN THE END, HE SIGHED AND SENT OFF ONE OF HIS STAFF TO THE REAR HALF OF THE STORE TO COLLECT AN ARMFUL OF HATS SIZED $7\frac{1}{2}$, AND OFF I WENT ON MY WAY, REJOICING, TO THE SHIRT STAND.

SIZE 17, NECK, $17\frac{1}{2}$ COLLAR. THEY HAD ONE SINGLE SHIRT OF THAT SIZE, AND PROUDLY OFFERED IT TO ME. IT WOULD HAVE MADE A STRONGER MAN WINCE - IT MADE ME SHUDDER. IT WAS A LOVELY BRIGHT BLUE, THE BLUE OF THE PACIFIC AT SANTA MONICA AT HIGH SUMMER. IT HAD A BLACK STRIPE, A QUARTER INCH WIDE, AND AT THREE INCH SPACING, SO THAT IT STRONGLY RESEMBLED THE MORE LURID TYPE OF PYJAMA (PAJAMA TO YOU) SOLD IN THE CHEAPER TYPE OF CHAIN DEPARTMENT STORES. MOREOVER IT WAS BADLY SHOPSOILED. I DIDN'T WANT IT, AND DREW A BIG BREATH AND OPENED MY MOUTH READY TO COMPLAIN ABOUT IT, BUT THERE STOOD THE SUPERVISOR, WITHOUT WARNING. ONCE AGAIN - WHAT WAS WRONG WITH IT? IT WAS A LOVELY SHIRT - WHY WOULDN'T I TAKE IT? SO I TOLD HIM. I TOLD HIM THAT AS FAR AS I COULD SEE, EVERYONE ELSE HAD CHOICES OF COLOUR AND THREE CHOICES OF PATTERN IN EACH COLOUR. IF THEY HAD SIX CHOICES, THEN IT WAS ONLY REASONABLE THAT I SHOULD TOO. BESIDES - THE PAYOFF ANSWER - IT WAS DIRTY.

I'LL SWEAR HE HAD THOUGHTS ABOUT SUGGESTING THAT I SHOULD TAKE IT AND GET IT WASHED, BUT HE RESTRAINED HIS LOWER IMPULSES AND ONCE AGAIN SIGNED TO A MINION TO GET AN ARMFUL OF SHIRTS FROM BEHIND THE MYSTERIOUS BACKWALL OF SACKING. I CHOSE THE ONE NEXT TO THE BOTTOM, JUST TO SHOW I WASN'T GOING TO TAKE THE FIRST I WAS OFFERED. MY WIFE HAS MADE IT INTO A CURTAIN TO COVER UP THE LARGE GAP UNDER THE SINK,

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AND HIDE THE NAKED PLUMBING. IF ANYTHING, IT STRONGLY RESEMBLED THE STANDARD ISSUE MATTRESS TICKING OF THE RAF. BUT I TOOK IT, PUT IT ON TOP OF MY LITTLE PILE, AND AMBLED ACROSS TO THE SHOES AND ASKED FOR A PAIR SIZED ELEVEN, WIDE.

THEY WERE PLEASED AS PUNCH. THEY PRODUCED THREE DIFFERENT PAIRS OF BLACK SHOES - AFTER ALL, HAD I NOT TAKEN A BLUE SUIT, BLUE HAT, BLUE SHIRT? BUT IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT I ALREADY HAVE FIVE PAIRS OF BLACK SHOES, AND ONLY TWO PAIRS OF BROWN, SO I VERY NATURALLY ASKED FOR BROWN HERE. IT WAS ALMOST A SINFUL THING TO DO, REALLY, BECAUSE THE HAPPY SMILES ON THEIR FACES TURNED TO DISMAY, THEN TO DISGUST, AS THEY DECIDED THAT ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS MAKE MYSELF A NUISANCE, WHEN IN REALITY, ALL I WANTED WAS TO GET AS NEAR AS POSSIBLE A FEW ODDS AND ENDS TO MAKE OUT A FAIRLY COMPLETE RANGE OF CLOTHING. ANYHOW, THIS TIME THE SUPERVISOR DID NOT EVEN BOTHER TO COME UP AND ARGUE, BUT MERELY NODDED A TIRED NOD AT HIS STAFF, AND ONE OF THEM CAME UP WITH HALF A DOZEN PAIRS OF THE REQUIRED SHOES. THEY FIT QUITE WELL, AND DO NOT LEAK, THOUGH THEY SEEM TO BECOME DAMP ALL THROUGH VERY EASILY. ANYHOW, I TOOK A PAIR, TRIED THEM ON AND PRONOUNCED MYSELF SATISFIED.

AT THE TIE COUNTER WAS THE ONE REALLY SELF-CONFIDENT MAN OF THE LOT. HE HAD TWO DOZEN OR SO CHOICES, AND I SELECTED AN UNOBTRUSIVE TARTAN (WITH BROWN PREDOMINATING), WAS PLEASED TO ACCEPT THE STUDS AND CUFF-LINKS, AND TURNED TOWARD THE EXIT, ONLY TO FIND THE SUPERVISOR AT MY ELBOW, ENQUIRING WHETHER I HAD EVERYTHING TO MY SATISFACTION. I MANAGED TO RESTRAIN MYSELF, AND GAVE HIM HIS ONE SMALL PLEASURE OF MY VISIT, WHEN I ALLOWED AS TO HOW EVERYTHING SEEMED TO BE IN ORDER.

THE REST WAS ANTICLIMAX - MERELY THE PACKING OF THE BOX IN A CARTON BY AN OBVIOUS EXPERT, SNEERING AT THE CABBIE AS WE WALKED TO THE BUSSTOP, AND A RAPID JOURNEY BY SOUTHERN ELECTRIC BACK TO LONDON (WATERLOO). FEELING FULL OF HIGH ENDEAVOUR, I TOOK MY NEW SUIT TO THE OFFICE TO SHOW THE CONSCRIPT MAJORITY WHAT EXTRA BENEFITS THEY WOULD DERIVE IF THEY WERE TO ENLIST FOR A TERM OF REGULAR SERVICE. ONE BY ONE THEY LOOKED AT IT, FELT THE CLOTH, INSPECTED THE SHIRT AND RAINCOAT, THEN LOOKED AT ME AND TURNED AWAY. IT WAS A FITTING COMMENT, REALLY.

A DAY OR SO LATER, I MADE THE FINAL MOVES, BY CLEARING FROM HQ IN THE APPROVED MANNER OF TAKING A LARGE SHEET OF PAPER AROUND TO VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS AND GETTING SOMEONE TO SIGN HIS NAME ON A DOTTED LINE TO SAY THAT I OWED THAT DEPARTMENT NOTHING. IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG, ALTHOUGH THE P.T.I. WHO SHOULD HAVE BEEN ON DUTY APPARENTLY HAD GONE OFF FOR HIS MORNING CUP OF TEA. I WAS WONDERING WHAT TO DO ABOUT THIS WHEN ANOTHER NCO CLEARING CAME UP, NOTED THE ABSENCE, AND CALMLY SIGNED THAT PARTICULAR LINE WITH THE NAME OF THE ABSENT P.T.I. WELL, NOW, I ASK YOU - WHAT ELSE COULD I DO?

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TO GET INTO THE RAF TOOK VARIOUS INTERVIEWS, AN INORDINATE LENGTH OF TIME, SEVERAL DOCTORS TO SEE WHETHER I WAS WARM AND BREATHING, TEST MY PULSE, INSPECT MY ANUS, TRY MY WATER FOR DENSITY, AND ALL THE REST OF IT. IT EVEN TOOK A COUPLE OF MEDIUM-HIGH RANKING OFFICERS TO SWEAR ME IN. ON THE WAY OUT THERE HAD BEEN THE CO, ONE DOCTOR, AND ONE YOUNG SERGEANT. HE HANDED ME A PILE OF PAPERS TO PROVE THAT HER MAJESTY HAD NO FURTHER CALLS UPON ME OTHER THAN THOSE IMPLICIT IN THE FACT THAT I STILL HAD TWO YEARS IN THE RESERVE TO DO, AND THAT AFTER THAT I SHOULD BE A FREE AND HONEST CITIZEN OF THE REALM.

I'M NOT SURE WHO WAS THE OFFICER WHO GAVE ME MY OFFICIAL CHARACTER REFERENCE - COULDN'T READ HIS SIGNATURE, AND WE HAD NEVER MET. BUT IT WAS NOT BAD AS THOSE REFERENCES GO.

SO I PICKED UP MY KITBAG AND MY LITTLE CARTON WITH MY NEW SUITING, SHOOK HANDS WITH THE YOUNG SERGEANT, AND WALKED QUIETLY OUT OF THE RAF.

BE DAMNED IF I FELT ANY SENSE OF REGRET. NOR ANY PARTICULAR ELATION, EITHER, AND THAT IS ONE OF THE THINGS WHICH HAS BEEN PUZZLING ME FOR SOME TIME. REGULARLY I WOULD SAY TO MYSELF: "WILLIE, ME BOY, THIS IS THE LAST TIME YOU'LL EVER DO THIS...OF WALK DOWN HERE...ETC.ETC.ETC" AND I SIMPLY NEVER FELT ANY TWINGE OF JOY OR PAIN ABOUT IT. MAYBE I TRIED TOO HARD AT IT, I DO NOT KNOW, BUT THERE WAS NOT THE FAINTEST TRACE OF THE NOSTALGIC ACHES WE ARE SUPPOSED TO FEEL ON LEAVING SOMETHING WHICH HAS TAKEN UP THE LAST SIXTEEN AND A HALF YEARS OF OUR LIVES.

ON THE WHOLE, IT HAD NOT BEEN AT ALL BAD. THERE WERE SOME ROUGH MOMENTS DURING THE SHOOTING WAR, IN MY INFANTRY DAYS AND LATER. THERE WERE PENNILESS DAYS IN THE EARLY STAGES BOTH IN THE ARMY AND THE RAF. BUT I DO NOT FEEL ANY REGRET FOR THOSE DAYS, NOR ANY SPECIAL FONDNESS FOR THE LATER DAYS WHEN THE ARMY WAS A SAFER LIFE, NOR WHEN THE RAF WAS A BETTER PAID AND MORE PRIVILEGED LIFE FOR ME, AS A SERGEANT. IT HAS ENABLED ME TO SEE A GREAT PART OF WESTERN EUROPE, AND MUCH OF CANADA AND THE US, AT MUCH REDUCED PRICES, WHICH HAS TO GO ON THE CREDIT SIDE OF THE LEDGER. THERE IS NOT MUCH TO WEIGH AGAINST THAT APART FROM THE AWFUL FEELINGS OF FRUSTRATION WHICH ARE GENERATED BY THE OVERLONG PERIODS OF WAITING WHILE SOME THICKHEAD ABOVE MAKES UP HIS MIND OVER SOME FIDDLING LITTLE DECISION WITH ALL THE DELIBERATION OF ONE OF THE LESS ABLE CIVIL SERVANTS.

DIGRESSING A LITTLE, I PARTICULARLY REMEMBER, DURING WW2, THE TROUBLE CAUSED WHEN A BRIGHT YOUNG SOLDIER SUGGESTED THAT, SINCE WE WERE ONLY ISSUED WITH THREE BLANKETS, IT WAS RATHER DIFFICULT TO COMPLY EASILY WITH THE OFFICIAL RULING THAT ON THE MARCH ALL BLANKETS MUST BE "ROLLED IN SECTION BUNDLES OF TEN". WHAT HE SUGGESTED WAS THAT THE ORDER SHOULD BE AMENDED TO BUNDLES OF NINE. HE MADE THE RATHER FOOLISH ERROR OF TRYING TO GET THIS DONE AS AN OFFICIAL MODIFICATION TO THE NORMAL MARCH ORDER, RATHER THAN AS A PRIVATE AND UNOFFICIAL VARIATION WHICH NO OFFICER WOULD KNOW ABOUT. THAT LAD HAD MORE TROUBLE THAN HE DREAMED AS A RESULT OF HIS BRAINWAVE. THE OFFICER, DEFINITELY J.G., THOUGHT IT OVER AND DECIDED THAT IT MIGHT GET HIM A PROMOTION OR SOMETHING, AND RATHER FANCIED THE IDEA OF BEING THE RECIPIENT OF BLESSINGS FROM THE NEXT TEN GENERATIONS OF SOLDIERS, SO HE TOOK IT TO THE ADJUTANT. IT GRADUALLY WENT UP UNTIL IT REACHED THE RSM - A FEARSOME PERSON IN ANY MAN'S LANGUAGE, EQUIATING WITH A COMBINATION OF TOPKICK AND WARRANT OFFICER STATESIDE - WHO JUMPED ON IT WITH BOTH HIS BEETLECRUSHING SIZE TWELVES.

"DIDN'T THEY KNOW", HE SUGGESTED WITH A BELLOW, THAT THOSE ORDERS HAD BEEN UNVARIED FOR THE LAST FIFTY FIVE YEARS, AND WERE A NECESSARY PART OF ALL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE REGIMENT ON THE MARCH? WERE THEY TRYING TO SUGGEST THAT WHAT HAD BEEN GOOD ENOUGH FOR ALL THOSE SOLDIERS AND THEIR OFFICERS FOR ALL THOSE YEARS WAS NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE PRESENT BREED OF ASTERISKS? THERE WAS A DOT MORE OF IT, OF COURSE, AND THE POOR LITTLE BRIGHT EYED SOLDIER NEVER LIVED IT DOWN, BECAUSE AS LONG AS I STAYED WITH THAT MOB, HIS NAME ALWAYS CAME FIRST ON ANY LIST OF FATIGUES OR WEEKEND GUARDS WHICH THE RSM

WAS CALLED UPON TO SUPPLY, AND THE ORDER REMAINED AS IT HAD BEEN ALL ALONG - "BLANKETS WILL BE ROLLED IN SECTION BUNDLES OF TEN". WHAT HAPPENED WAS THAT, AFTER THE HOOHAH HAD ALL DIED DOWN, WE WENT ON ROLLING THEM IN BUNDLES OF NINE AS WE ALWAYS HAD, AS HAD OUR FATHERS BEFORE US; AND AS OUR SONS WILL IN THE YEARS TO COME. (THERE ARE THREE PROFESSIONS WHICH WILL ALWAYS BE WITH US - BREWING, BOMBING, BURYING). BUT EVEN NOW THE OFFICIAL ORDER REMAINS, AS IT WILL ALWAYS REMAIN, AS LONG AS THERE ARE LARDHEADED RSMS IN THE ARMY - AND THE ARMY WOULD FALL APART IF THERE WERE NO MORE.

ON THE WHOLE, I THINK THAT THE OLD RSM WAS AT LEAST AN IMPROVE-MEN ON THE AIR MINISTRY CIVIL SEPVANT WHO WOULD SPEND MUCH TIME CON-CONTING LITTLE NOTES WHICH HE WOULD SEND OFF IN THE USUAL MANNER, THEN REACH FOR A TELEPHONE AND CALL THE ADDRESSEE AND BEGIN, "I SAY, KESTY HERE - I'M SENDING YOU A LOOSE MINUTE. IT SAYS" AND TELL THE LUCKLESS CHARACTER ALL ABOUT IT, GET AN ANSWER, AND THEN ASK FOR IT IN THE FORM OF YET ANOTHER LOOSE MINUTE. NO WONDER THE WOODPULP OUT-PUT OF CANADA INCREASES IN VOLUME EVERY YEAR THAT PASSES. I WAS NOT AT ALL SORRY TO LEAVE THE MINISTRY PART OF THE RAF, DESPITE MY NEUTRAL FEELINGS ON QUITTING THE SERVICE ITSELF.

WHAT COMES NEXT? WELL, I'M EARNING A LIVING OF SORTS AT A JOB WHICH CONCERNS THINGS COVERED BY THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT, SO I'M NOT TALKING. I HAD A VERY PLEASANT LITTLE LETTER FROM THE FIRM, SAYING THAT THEY HAD HEARD THAT I WAS LEAVING THE RAF SHORTLY AND THEY THOUGHT THEIR TYPE OF WORK AND MY TYPE OF SPECIALISED KNOWLEDGE MIGHT GO WELL TOGETHER AND WOULD I LIKE TO GO UP TO THEIR MAIN OFFICES AND TALK X ABOUT IT? WHEN I CAME AWAY I HAD THE JOB. IT HAS ACTUALLY MEANT A CUT OF 25% IN MY PAY, AND THERE HAS BEEN THE USUAL PAINFUL LOSS OF SERVICEMAN'S PERKS - CHEAP TRAVEL, CUT PRICES FOR CLOTHING, FREE HOUSING, MEALS, MEDICAL CARE AND DENTAL TREATMENT AND SO ON. ALL THE SAME, I DO NOT THINK I WOULD BE WILLING TO RETURN TO THAT WAY OF LIFE. I SPENT TOO MANY EVENINGS IN THE SERGEANTS MESS LOOKING AT THE SENIOR MEMBERS AS THEY PERFORMED THEIR NIGHTLY IMITATIONS OF SPONGES AND DRANK TILL CLOSING TIME. NOT FOR WILLIE, THANK YOU. LET ME HAVE A HO'IE AND A WIFE AND A REASONABLE SUM IN MY HAND AFTER PAYMENT OF EACH WEEKS EXPENSES, AND I'LL FEEL A LOT BETTER.

SO HERE I AM, A MARRIED MAN WITH A WIFE TO SUPPORT AND THRIVING ON IT. AT PRESENT I RIDE A PEDAL CYCLE TO WORK EACH DAY $5\frac{1}{2}$ MILES EACH WAY, FIVE DAYS A WEEK. IT IS A GRAND WAY TO TRAVEL AS LONG AS THE WEATHER IS FINE, BUT I LIVE IN ENGLAND..... I HAVE A MOTORCYCLE, OF COURSE, BUT - AS YOU MAY HAVE HEARD - WE ARE RATIONED FOR THAT STUFF THESE DAYS, AND MY ALLOCATION WOULD NOT BE SUFFICIENT FOR RIDING TO WORK EVERY DAY. THAT IS BEING KEPT FOR OUR OWN LITTLE PLEASURE OUT-INGS OF A WEEKEND, WHEN WE CAN GET AWAY FROM THE AREA OF WORK AND LOOK ON THE BEAUTIES OF THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE. IF I LOOK TO HARD, MY WIFE DIGS ME IN THE RIBS AND SUGGESTS THAT I TAKE MY EYES OFF AND LOOK AT THE VIEW, OF COURSE.

OH, YES, LET ME INTRODUCE MY WIFE. MARIA BY NAME, AUSTRIAN BY BIRTH, AND 24 YEARS OLD. SHE IS A POGO FAN ALREADY, AND PREFERENCES THE TYPE OF STF WHICH HAS SOME SORT OF APPEARANCE OF ACTUALITY, LIKE TUCKER'S WILD TALENT, AND WYNDHAM'S DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS. WHEN MY NAME REACHES THE ACTIVE LIST IN FAPA I TRUST SHE WILL BE CONTRIBUTING A PAGE OF HER OWN AS A PART OF THE PUBLICATION.

BLOND, GREY EYED, 5 FT 8 INCHES, AND COOKS LIKE AN ANGEL - AN AUSTRIAN ANGE.

AND I LOVE HER.

WE HAD A QUIETISH WEDDING, TO WHICH THE GROOM TRAVELLED ON THE BACK OF THE BEST MAN'S MOTORCYCLE, HAVING MISSED THE TRAIN AND BUS AND NOT HAVING ENOUGH TO PAY FOR AN EXTRA TAXI. WE TRAVELLED AT A SEDATE 30 MPH, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, APART FROM THE FACT THAT THE BM HAD LET HIS LICENSE ELAPSE ANMHOW, AND IF WE HAD BEEN PICKED UP EN ROUTE WE'D BOTH HAVE BEEN WAY UP THE WELL-KNOWN CREEK.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT OF THE ENGLISH CLIMATE, BUT WE WENT ON OUR HONEYMOON ON THE 6TH OF OCTOBER AND HAD BRILLIANT SUNSHINE EVERY DAY - HOT SUNSHINE.

NO, I'M NOT TAKING YOU ON THE HONEYMOON WITH ME - THAT IS MY AFFAIR, AND MARIA'S.

AND THAT BRINGS US MORE OR LESS UP TO DATE.

AS YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED, THE FEELTHY BREETFESH HAVE BEEN MORE THAN EVER IN THE NEWS LATELY. HERE AND THERE WE HAVE ASKED FOR IT, BUT I DO WISH THAT OTHER NATIONALS WOULD NOT ASSUME THAT THE ENTIRE COUNTRY IS BEHIND EVERY MOVE THE GOVERNMENT MAKES. QUITE APART FROM THE FACT THAT WE DO NOT HAVE THE SYSTEM OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION (WILLIS EXPLAINED IT ONCE A FEW YEARS BACK) AND SO THE ELECTED MAJORITY OF MEMBERS DO NOT ACTUALLY HAVE THE MAJORITY OF VOTES, THERE IS THE POINT THAT MODERN MPS NO LONGER REPRESENT THE PEOPLE WHO ELECT THEM, AS WAS EMPHASISED BY A TORY MP A MONTH OR SO BACK.

"YOU DON'T FLECT US TO DO WHAT YOU WANT, AFTER ALL" HE SAID. "WE ARE ELECTED TO GO TO PARLIAMENT AND VOTE THE WAY WE THINK WE SHOULD VOTE, NOT THE WAY YOU THINK WE SHOULD VOTE". THAT SEEMS TO BE CLEAR ENOUGH. EVEN ALLOWING FOR WHAT MPS HAVE THE NERVE TO CALL THEIR CONSCIENCES, ALL IT BOILS DOWN TO IS THAT IF YOU ELECT A MAN ON HIS PROMISE TO VOTE FOR THIS OR THAT, HE DOES NOT HAVE TO DO ANYTHING OF THE SORT, BUT CAN VOTE EXACTLY THE WAY HIS PARTY PLEASES TO ORDER HIM TO VOTE. NOW YOU SEE WHY WE HAVE SUCH LARGE SWINGS TO ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. YOU PUT THE TORIES IN AND GET DISSATISFIED WITH THEIR RECORD SO YOU PUT THEM OUT AND GET EQUALLY DISSATISFIED WITH THE SOCIALISTS SO YOU PUT THE TORIES BACK IN AND THEN THE SOCIALISTS AND ON AND ON AND ON UNTIL YOU GET SICK OF THE WHOLE DAMN THING AND CATCH A BOAT ACROSS THE ATLANTIC AND FIND ALMOST THE SAME THING GOING ON OVER THERE.

WHAT TO DO? CAN YOU AFFORD TO BUY A PRIVATE ISLAND IN THE PACIFIC? NO? WELL THEN, ALL YOU CAN DO IS TRY TO ELECT THE LEAST DAMAGING MEMBERS AND, ONCE THEY STRAY FROM THE PATH THEY HAVE PROMISED TO FOLLOW, YOU BEGIN A CAMPAIGN BY VOICE, PEN, OR BROKEN BOTTLE UNTIL THEY GET THE GIST OF YOUR INTENTIONS, RETRACE THEIR STEPS AND GO OFF FOR AN OFFICIAL RECESS IN THE HOPE THAT YOU WILL HAVE FORGOTTEN BY THE TIME THEY GET BACK. WHY DO YOU THINK SO MANY OF THEM SPEND THEIR VACATIONS ABROAD? IT CAN ONLY BE TO AVOID THE AWKWARD QUESTIONS WHICH WOULD BE PUT TO THEM IF THEY WERE WITHIN REACH OF THEIR ELECTORATE. OFFICIALLY THEY GO ON FACT-FINDING TOURS OF VARIOUS COUNTRIES IN EUROPE AND THE EAST. UNLIKE YOUR PEOPLE, THEY GO ENTIRELY AT THEIR OWN EXPENSE - THOUGH THEY PROBABLY GET REDUCED RATES FOR THE PUBLICITY OF THE THING. IT HELPS THEM TO FORGET THAT THEY ARE HARDWORKED AND UNDERPAID TO THE POINT OF BANKRUPTCY, I SUPPOSE. WITH THE FLAT ANNUAL RATE OF PAY ABOVE THAT OF THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION, PLUS AN ATTENDANCE BONUS (AT SO MUCH PER DAY) THEY FEEL THEY ARE THE POOREST PAID MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION, WHICH IS SOMETHING AFTER THE MANNER OF LADY NORAH DOCKER CLAIMING THAT SHE HASN'T A THING TO WEAR FOR THE WEEKEND.

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AND THEN THEY HAVE THE ALMIGHTY GALL TO COME AROUND AT ELECTION TIME AND PRATE ABOUT THEIR HONESTY.

LET'S CHANGE THE SUBJECT TO ONE A BIT MORE PABATABLE.

MARIA AND I HAVE DEVELOPED AN INCREASING FONDNESS FOR THE CARTOON FILM (THE SHORT ONE, THAT IS) AND OFTEN ENOUGH, GIVEN THE CHOICE, WE HAVE GONE TO A ONE-HOUR CAPTOON SHOW IN PREFERENCE TO A FULL-LENGTH STANDARD FILM. WITH ALL THOSE TOM AND JERRY, SYLVESTER, CLAUDE CAT, BUGS BUNNY OFFERINGS, WE DOUBT IF THE SUPPLY WILL RUN OUT FOR AS LONG AS WE BOTH SHALL LIVE. BESIDES MOST OF THEM BEAR SEEING AGAIN AND AGAIN, WHICH IS MORE THAN CAN BE SAID FOR THE MAJORITY OF NORMAL MOVIES. THERE HAS ALSO BEEN THE APPEARANCE OF THE UPA CARTOONS, AND THESE WE WELCOMED JOYOUSLY.

HAVE YOU SEEN ANY OF THEM? THERE ARE, FOR SPECIAL PREFERENCE, THREE LITTLE MASTERPIECES CALLED "ROOTY TOOT TOOT", "THE UNICORN IN THE GARDEN", AND "WILLIE THE KID".

THE FIRST ONE IS THE STORY OF FRANKIE AND JOHNNY, FROM A SLIGHTLY NEW ANGLE. A NOEL LANGLEY ANGLE, TO BE EXACT.

THE SECOND IS A FAITHFUL COPY OF THE THURBER STORY. IF YOU LIKE THURBER YOU WILL ENJOY IT. IF YOU DO NOT, OR HAVE NO SPECIAL ~~XXXXXX~~ FEELINGS EITHER WAY, IT WOULD STILL BE WELL WORTH THE SEEING FOR THE FUN OF THE THING.

THE LAST IS A REAL GEM. I HAVE LOST COUNT OF HOW MANY TIMES I HAVE SEEN IT SINCE IT FIRST REACHED THIS COUNTRY SOME THREE YEARS AGO, AND BEGAN THE ROUNDS OF THE CAPTOON THEATRES. IT IS ALL ABOUT WILLIE, WHO IS ABOUT FOUR YEARS OLD AND BELIEVES PASSIONATELY IN THE GAMES HE IS PLAYING. SO PASSIONATELY THAT WHEN ~~XX~~ HE IS COWPUNCHING IN THE BACKYARD, IT BECOMES A DESOLATE MESA WITH A CACTUS APPEARING IN PLACE OF THE GATEPOST AND SO ON. BUT WHEN HE GETS A RANSOM NOTE HE HAS TO RECALL TRUE LIFE FOR A WHILE SO HIS ~~XXX~~ MOM CAN READ THE WORDS TO HIM. SHE APPEARS IN WHAT MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS A HYPERSPACIAL WINDOW, I SUPPOSE, READS OUT THE MESSAGE AND IS GONE AGAIN, LEAVING WILLIE WITH HIS FAITHFUL OLD PAINT (SPOT, THE OVERGROWN MUTT) TO GO CHASING AFTER THE VILLAIN WITH SIX-SHOOTERS A-BLAZING. THERE HAS BEEN SO MUCH CAREFUL OBSERVATION OF KIDS AND THEIR FUN BEFORE THAT FILM WAS MADE THAT I'D GIVE THE SCRIPTWRITER AND SCENARIST A SPECIAL OSCAR OF THEIR OWN, IF I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY.

IT SEEMS AS IF TOM AND JERRY HAVE A PRIORITY ON THE CARTOON OSCARS, THOUGH. NOT THAT THEY DO NOT DESERVE SOME RECOGNITION, AFTER ALL. MOSTLY THEY PROVIDE A CHEERFUL INTERLUDE FOR THE WATCHER, WITH TOM TRYING SO VAINLY TO CATCH AND KILL JERRY, AND JERRY MAKING QUITE SURE THAT TOM SHALL DO NOTHING OF THE SORT. THE WHOLE POINT ABOUT THESE TWO IS THAT THEY SEEM TO BEAR NO ACTUAL MALICE TOWARD EACH OTHER, BUT GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS BECAUSE IT IS IN THEIR CONTRACT TO DO SO. THE OSCAR WINNERS HAVE USUALLY AVOIDED THE MORE OBVIOUS AND CRUDE METHODS OF GOING THROUGH THESE FUN AND GAMES RITUALS, AND GO FOR AN OFF-BEAT TYPE OF BLOOD AND THUNDER STORY - MOST OFTEN SET IN THE DAYS OF THE THREE MOUSEKETEERS.

SYLVESTER IS A CAT WHO LIVES ON MALICE. HE IS A CAT WITH A SINGLE PURPOSE IN LIFE - TO CATCH AND DEVOUR A REVOLTINGLY CLEVER CANARY. RIGHT FROM THE START IT IS OBVIOUS THAT HE'LL NEVER MAKE IT, BUT I ALMOST ALWAYS WATCH THE PROGRESS OF ONE OF THIS SERIES WITH THE HOPE AT THE BACK OF MY MIND THAT PERHAPS THIS TIME THE OLD SLOB WILL WIN AND GET HIMSELF ANOTHER TARGET. IT WOULDN'T DO, OF COURSE. IF TWEETIE WAS TO GO THEN HALF THE FUN OF WATCHING SYLVESTER WOULD GO

TOO, BUT ALL THE SAME, I THINK THAT HERE IS THE CAT TO END ALL CATS... A RUFFIAN GONE TO SEED, LOW-CLASS, NO-'COUNT ALLEYCAT. DEFINITELY NON-U, CHAPS. I'VE NEVER SEEN A MORE RAFFISHLY APPEALING CAT IN MY LIFE, AND WHEN HE STARTS TO CURL UP WITH DELIGHT AT THE THOUGHT OF HIS OWN CUNNING, I SETTLE BACK TO ENJOY MYSELF. HIS EFFORTS, FOR INSTANCE, TO REACH TWEETIE PIE WHEN THE BIRD WAS LIVING OVER A DOG-POUND WILL GIVE ME A REMINISCENT CHUCKLE TODAY, AS I WRITE THIS AND - STILL LATER - AS YOU READ IT, YET I LAST SAW THAT ONE IN MAY OF 1955. REGULARLY, HE DREAMS UP NEW METHODS OF GETTING CLOSE TO TWEETIE, AND JUST AS REGULARLY THOSE DREAMS HAVE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT EVERY POSSIBLE ARISING. ALL BUT ONE. POOR OLD SYLVESTER - THERE HE GOES, TIGHT-WIRING HIS WAY ALONG THE OVERHEAD TELEPHONE WIRES, AND BALANCING WITH A SUNSHADE, ONLY TO FIND THAT SOME SEVEN AND SEVENTY BULLDOGS BELOW ARE COMBINING THEIR BREATHS TO ELEVATE THE SUNSHADE AND SO CAUSE HIM TO MISS HIS FOOTING AND PARASOL DOWN AMONG THEM.

CLAUDE CAT HAS HAD ONE WINNER, SO FAR, ENTITLED "TWO'S A CROWD". IT SENT MARIA INTO NEAR HYSTERICIS WHEN SHE FIRST SAW IT - MY EIGHTH VIEWING, I THINK.

AND FINALLY THE ALL-AMERICAN BOY OF FICTION - BUGS BUNNY. I THANK MY LUCKY STARS THAT HIS HUMAN COUNTERPART CAN ONLY EXIST IN FICTION (I HOPE) BECAUSE AS A REAL PERSON HE WOULD BE UNBEARABLE. BRASH, BRAGGING, BELLIGERENT, AND AT THE SAME TIME AS FUNNY AS ANY CARTOON CHARACTER OTHER THAN SYLVESTER THAT I CAN CALL TO MIND. WE KNOW FOR SURE, WHEN WE SEE HIS CHEERFULLY BLAND FEATURES APPEAR, THAT WE ARE GOING TO BE SHAKEN OUT OF THE USUAL TORPOR OF THE CINEMA-GOER BY SOME OUTRAGEOUS ANTICS BASED ON POSSIBILITY BUT TAKEN TO THE ILLOGICAL EXTREME. BUGS HAS THE DISTINCTION OF BEING THE FIRST CARTOON CHARACTER TO HAVE APPEARED ON 3-D, WHEN HE MET PAUL BUNYAN'S DOG IN PAUL'S VEGETABLE GARDEN. HE HAS GIVEN ME MORE ROARS OF LAUGHTER THAN ANYONE OTHER THAN OL' SYL', PURELY BY THE BRAZEN ACTS HE PERFORMS TO GET OUT OF TIGHT PLACES. GIVE HIM HIS DUE, HE ADMITS IT WHEN HE IS SCARED, BUT HE STILL KEEPS ON GOING, AND PLANNING SOME SORT OF REVENGE. AND WHEN BUGS BUNNY EXACTS HIS REVENGE, IT IS WAY BEYOND ANYTHING WHICH EVER HAPPENED TO DONALD DUCK AT HIS MOST UNLUCKY. ALL THE SAME, HE COMES A FAIR DISTANCE BEHIND SYLVESTER DUE TO THE APPARENT INABILITY OF HIS SCRIPT-WRITERS TO THINK UP A WAY OF BRINGING THE STORY TO A CLOSE. EVERYTHING WHICH EVER HAPPENS TO SYLVESTER HAS AN AWFUL MAD ILLOGIC ABOUT IT, RIGHT DOWN TO THE DOOM AT THE FINISH. BUGS GETS SOME CONCLUSIONS WHICH ARE QUITE CLEARLY STUCK IN JUST BECAUSE THE SCRIPT WRITERS HAVE RUN OUT OF IDEAS AND HAVE TO END UP THEIR TIME SOMEHOW. HE GETS THEM LAUGHTING, BUT DOESN'T ALWAYS LEAVE THEM LAUGHING.

WE HAD A CAT AT THE SERGEANTS' MESS IN WITTERING WHO WAS JUST AS RAFFISH AND OUTRAGEOUS AS SYLVESTER. HIS NAME WAS STEAMBOAT, FOR VARIOUS REASONS, AND HE WAS PROBABLY THE MOST POPULAR OF THE THREE MESS CATS SIMPLY BECAUSE HE WAS OBVIOUSLY A CHARACTER RIGHT FROM THE WORD GO. HE BECAME NOTED FIRST FOR HIS HABITS OF CHASING THE STEAM BUGS IN THE COOKHOUSE (THAT WAS THE CHIEF DERIVATION OF THE NAME) THEN FOR THE FACT THAT SOMEHOW, AFTER HE HAD BEEN AROUND FOR ABOUT SIX MONTHS, HE WAS THE ONLY TOMCAT ON THE AIRFIELD. NOW THAT WAS REALLY SOMETHING. HE GOT CONSIDERABLY BATTERED IN THE PROCESS, AND HE HAD TO SPEND MUCH TIME ATTENDING TO HIS SCARS, BUT HE MADE IT IN THE END, AND RULED THE

THIS IS PAGE TWENTY-EIGHT

LADIES OF HIS HAREM WITH A FAIRLY GENTLE HAND. HE'D SLEEP ANYWHERE, WHETHER IT WOULD BE THE TOP OF A BLISTERING HOT STEAM RADIATOR OR OUTSIDE ON THE FROZEN STEPS IN THE WINTER.

STRANGELY ENOUGH, AFTER THAT NAME WE SORT OF RAN OUT OF ORIGINALITY, AND CALLED THE OTHER TWO MESS CATS CAT AND KITTEN RESPECTIVELY. KITTEN NEVER SEEMED TO GET ANY BIGGER, SO THE DIFFERENTIATION WAS EASY, FORTUNATELY. THEY BOTH, OF COURSE, BOWED SUBMISSIVELY TO THE OLD MAN, AND ALL THREE OF THEM CHOSE WHICHEVER ROOM SEEMED NEAREST FOR A BEDROOM WHEN THEY FELT THE NIGHT COMING ON. STEAMBOAT SLEPT OFTEN ON MY BED, EITHER COMING BY WAY OF THE DOOR AND A NOT VERY DISCREET MIADUING AND SCRATCHING, OR COMING IN THROUGH THE WINDOW AND LANDING ON MY STOMACH WITH A FAR FROM DISCREET BUMP. THEY ALL THREE CAME IN ONE NIGHT TOGETHER, AND I GOT READY TO THROW THEM OUT IF THEY DISTURBED MY REST WITH THEIR AMOURS, BUT THEY WERE MOST POLITE ABOUT THE WHOLE THING AND MERELY SETTLED DOWN TO SLEEP QUIETLY IN THE REGION OF THE HOT PIPES IN THE FAR CORNER.

I COULD WISH THAT HUMAN BEINGS WOULD RESPECT PRIVACY AND DELICACY OF FEELINGS SO CAREFULLY.

YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED A JERKINESS HERE AND THERE IN THIS LONDON LETTER (SIC), AND THAT IT IS NOT REALLY AS ALLEMBRACING AS USUAL. THE REASON FOR THAT IS THAT IF I GOT DOWN TO IT PROPERLY I SHOULD INEVITABLY GET INTO DETAILS ON POLITICAL CHICANERY AND LOSE ALL SENSE OF PROPORTION ABOUT IT. NOT CONTENT WITH KEEPING US THE WORLD'S MOST HEAVILY TAXED NATION, WE NOW HAVE TO PAY FOR THE SUEZ FIASCO. THE DIRECT EFFECT - NOT COUNTING THE RISE IN COSTS OF ALL COMMODITIES, IS A FURTHER 15 CENTS PER GALLON ON GASOLINE, SO THAT THE COST TO ME IS NOW ROUGHLY 90 CENTS FOR A SINGLE GALLON. I AM FORTUNATE THAT MY MATCHESSESS GIVES ME FROM 65 TO 80 MPG, DEPENDING ON THE SPEED I USE. BEYOND THAT, I AM MAKING NO COMMENT. PROBABLY BY THE NEXT ISSUE, I SHALL HAVE SIMMERED DOWN A BIT.

I SURE AS HELL HOPE SO.

THIS IS BEING TYPED IN THE FIRST WEEK OF DECEMBER. I WISH YOU ALL THE VERY BEST FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR. YOU WILL NO DOUBT BE READING IT IN FEBRUARY, SO I'LL ALSO WISH YOU ALL A HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY.

SEE YOU IN FAPA SOON, I HOPE. --

BILL MORSE

IF THERE HAD NOT BEEN A BLOCH, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN NECESSARY TO INVENT HIM.

Addendum: On page two where I referred to women as the strongest 'sense' I should have said 'sex'. Sex, man, sex. Also, on page six where I refer to the picture "Knock on any Door," I meant "Don't Bother to Knock".

And, referring to inadvertent puns, there is an excellent won (one, that is, on page won, this issue.

QUERTYUOPress