

Blan

Bernard Diederich †

In memory of those who disappeared on April 26, 1963

A memoire

April 27, 1963

My head is bursting; sweat pours down my naked body and my hands fill with pain as I tighten the grip with all my force on the iron bars of my cell door. Will they come soon? They usually do. A beating, breaking of my bones, will be a relief. This mental torture of not knowing what is happening to my young wife and newborn son is driving me insane. The anguish is terrible. I keep visualizing those sadistic Tontons Macoutes¹, led by Lucien Chauvet, returning to my home and seizing them. My wife, I know, will resist and she will be beaten... or worse! They could join the legion of “disappeared.” Under Papa Doc one did not die, you simply vanished and your name was added to the legion of “disappeared.” No one was executed or died. They simply “disappeared.” Many of my friends have disappeared. For my family I have disappeared. No one knows where the Macoutes have taken me from my home in the early morning hour. When the Macoutes came, my wife had already left to learn from her sister on her nearby chicken farm the news of the night. Our baby was in his crib. As Haitians, my wife and our baby have no recourse. “Disappeared” could be a horrible death. As a Blan, foreigner, and journalist, my embassy will eventually take up my case



but I know both the U.S. and British embassies had warned their nationals that they could do very little if seized because this was a government that respected no laws.

My fear was not for myself. I know that they had seized me to prevent my filing reports on their day of bloody mayhem, the day Papa Doc unleashed his Macoutes. Like rabid mad dogs they rampaged killing innocent men and women and covering the streets with blood.

My whole being is filled with anguish and fear for my loved ones. I blame myself. Terror and remorse well up, it's a crippling physical pain. It saps my body. I feel weak. I move against the wall of my small bare cell for support. Long ago I had learned the ability to dominate my own fear. My generation went from age 16 or 18 to being shot or killed or mutilated in WWII. Under Papa Doc, it is worse. The absence of justice has gnawed away at my soul; yes, my soul is stolen by injustice. Detesting violence-hating, even boxing, I am faced only with the violence of a madman.

Every second, is eternity, in solitary confinement in Haiti's ancient National Penitentiary, cut off from my world, not knowing what is happening to them. And I have reason to fear for them. Damn it, my Kiwi heritage makes it impolite to be pretentious or show emotion.

My work has endangered the lives of the ones I loved most in the world. If they had not existed and I was single, I would have laughed at my jailers and taunted Papa Doc. I was not a CIA agent as one of the arresting Tontons Macoutes told his comrades. I am simply a newsman.



Ginette holding our son Jean-Bernard at his christening

They didn't want an eye-witness account appearing in The New York Times or the Associated Press world wire service.

Brutal and sadistic they are, and I remember how they beat to death poor Eric Brierre, my typewriter repair man accused of plotting against Papa Doc. His fathers had been arrested and listened to his son's death screams from a neighboring cell. The Army chief had vomited when he saw what was left of the young man; human pulp. For unbecoming weakness (vomiting), the general, Papa Doc said, needed a change of climate and sent him to Paris as ambassador. You must give up your claim to dignity and lie to survive.

I feel feverish. I am mentally exhausted. I lean my head against the cold iron bars of my cell and close my eyes. "Ginette," I whisper, my lips parched and dry. I can see her, her soft bronze skin, the gentle curve of her cheekbone, and her eyes, dark and beautiful and alive with youth.

Not for myself, but for them I appeal to my old God, Jesus Christ, but I realized I have forgotten the prayers of my childhood. Vodou Prayers are more familiar. I have repeatedly made appeals to Papa Legba, louv ri baryé pou mwen... and save them.

I read the names carved on the heavily whitewashed concrete walls of my cell, a list of unfortunate players in the lethal game of Haitian politics who sought to leave a trace as they were taken out of the cell and executed or moved to Fort Dimanche from where there is no return. There is a Gillette razor blade on a cross bar. Is it used to write names, shave or perhaps cut a vein? I cannot for the life of me retain one name on the wall. My brain is no longer functioning. It is messed up, saturated with nightmares.

As a cockroach I have crawled through six years of Papa Doc's tyranny wearing a mask. Papa Doc had shown us how to wear masks. I feel completely naked without my mask. What madness. Pretending, going around smiling and saying nice things to killers! No longer. My mood is suddenly changing. My fighting Irish ancestors laugh at me. They tell me to stand up like a man. I swear that if they so much as touch the hair of my wife and child's head, I will seek revenge. This must end one day and if I survive I will seek justice. The thought that these bastards will one day face justice brings relief, but only for a moment. I had succeeded, and now they know that I had filed reports for six years reporting their crimes in dispatches to the world.

My gut can't take it and I turn away trying not to think of anything; but my mind keeps turning back to that day, fifteen years ago, when Sir Philip made the announcement that would change my life forever and set me on the collision course with Haiti's brutal dictator François (Papa Doc) Duvalier.

I had seen some of the wasted survivors of the notorious Changi Japanese prison camp in Singapore, at war's end and it is worse in Papa Doc's Fort Dimanche...



The end of Ft. Dimanche, Papa Doc's killing machine

My mind wanders to when I served on two U.S. armed T2 oil tankers during the war under the U.S. Coast Guard, Semper Paratus (Always ready). I had witnessed enough in the "Pacific Theater." It was no theater for those who didn't return. It turned me into a pacifist. No more wars! Yet I hated boredom. The sea would now be dull and too confined. My real love was the Pamir, the large, four-masted barque at the bottom of the Atlantic having been sunk in 1957 during hurricane Carrie taking 90 young German cadets with it to a watery grave. We youngsters, a total crew of forty, sailed from New Zealand to San Francisco across the war torn Pacific weathering hurricanes and the fighting.

On the tanker, the Republic, the war had ended in August 1945, while we were in the Indian Ocean and we were ordered to liberate Singapore with our load of Persian oil, originally for the



war in the Pacific. In Singapore, I had a strange wish. Would it be possible to return and join the staff of the Strait Times? Newspapers fascinated me since I sold the Evening Post in the early evening on the streets of Wellington and we published a shipboard newspaper. I liked Singapore. It was not until 1946 that we returned and were demobilized in the U.S. and I flew from Houston, Texas, to New York where three of us motored across the U.S. to San Francisco. Then I

took a bus to Vancouver. En route I spent two weeks in Chico helping the father of a friend harvest his almond crop. We competed with a group of ex-Marines in row after row by knocking down the nuts through hitting the trunk of the trees with a heavy sledgehammer with part of an auto tire wrapped around its head to make sure the tree was not damaged. When I left, the farmer handed me pay for two weeks work and I gave it back to him asking that he deduct my board and lodging. He kept the whole check and said, "Have a good trip laddie!" He had not lost his Scottish brogue.

In Canada several of us veterans worked on the docks waiting to crew the first voyage of the M.V. Waitemata to return to New Zealand. I don't recall how many times we were fired from the Vancouver docks as suspected unionizers as at the time the Canadians had no unions. We did tell some harried workers that unions were indispensable to the progress of the working class... It was work and fun and we were threatened with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We finally sailed during the coldest winter on record and loaded paper for New Zealand at mills in Powell River and Ocean Falls. What a change our first port of call, Papeete, Tahiti was! We had returning Tahitian service men aboard who had been secretly taken off the Vichy Island by a New Zealand warship to serve in the Free French forces during the war. They taught us their Tahitian songs.

However, I did return to Tahiti with a cargo of live animals from New Zealand farms calling ourselves Noah. The Tahitians had eaten their animals during the war. The balsa raft, Kon Tiki, was a pile of wreckage on the beach and the man who made the trip across the Pacific, Thor

Heyerdahl, had a lovely Tahitian on his suntanned arm.

It was July 14, Bastille day, and I was fascinated by the U.S. Consul who said the State Department had overlooked his existence. He invited me to his house for bloody Mary's the day after the French Island celebrated. The raft that had been towed from the Tumotu Island of Raroia where after a three month trip from Peru it had ended up wrecked on a reef. The journey was to prove that the Polynesian on these islands could have come from South America such as today's Peru by raft.

Holidaying with my precious family in post-war New Zealand, I got itchy feet and sailed off to rationed starved England with a cargo of prime lamb, to further my education. I thought I might attend The London School of Economics, but quickly learned I did not meet the requirements since I had quit school at sixteen to go to sea on the 4-masted barque Pamir which was the best navigation school in the world. Still, I was not disappointed. The war had changed me. I knew I could not bring myself to return to my old life in New Zealand. It was a beautiful country, but it was socialist and dull. A man could chart his life from cradle to grave worrying only about the price of wool.

On a brisk spring morning in 1947, I arrived "home" as New Zealanders in the antipodes called England. From Liverpool I took a train to London and felt I was living my school poems. One that came to mind in the late afternoon, as I watched the ancient country churches fly by, is Grey's elegy ... the hedges and green pastureland excited me and I recited to myself;

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me..."

I took a room in London at The National Hotel on Russell Square, paid my dues at the National Seaman's Union near Tower Hill, and found work. The first job was to take an old minesweeper from its moorage at the bottom of the Thames around the coast to Bristol.

The trip began in a little village on the lower Thames. I lodged in an ancient Elizabethan Inn where Dick Turpin, the highway man, had surely drunk his full. I had to bend to enter my room with a low ceiling and wash in a colorful period hand basin.

In an effort to shorten our trip we cut corners and tried to round Land's End far too close to the rocky coast and when a storm caught us we had to fight like hell to reach the Irish Sea. In need of substance after our sea battle we decided to put into Cork for some un-rationed Irish fare and Guinness. Attending a dance in Cork (our Grandmother Margaret McCarthy was born not far from Blarney's Castle), the lass I walked home made the sign of the cross as we passed churches. We finally delivered our vessel to Cardiff and, as it was Sunday, I climbed a street and picked out the Catholic Church. It was when they passed around the wine I realized I was in the wrong Church and asked my pew neighbor the direction to my church. "You are welcome here," the lady said and told me the Catholic Church was further up the hill. Uncle Brian McCleary, a 1924 "All Black", on a world rugby tour told us how it also happened to him and when the wine reached him he said, "Father Tis empty." His fellow teammate fighting a hangover had swallowed the last drop of the altar wine. The Welsh I discovered were wonderful singers so I joined them on a bus singing through Wales and back to London.

The old Welsh Inns were warm and friendly and at meals we were all seated together at a long table. The singing on the bus changed my opinion of the Welsh. Evans a "Boy" with me on the Pamir was street smart and hearing that I had won the heavy weight boxing championship at St. Pat's College in 1942 picked a fight and he was a dirty street fighter. It was the only time I drew blood on the Pamir.

My next job was quartermaster (helmsman) on a Harwich ferry sailing back and forth to Antwerp, Belgium which opened a window on the continent for me. I purchased a heavy new BSA bicycle in Harwich, put it aboard the ferry, and toured the lowlands. Being in my religious period I visited Churches filled with painting by Paul Rubens and in Burgee I visited St John's Hospital to marvel at the work of Hans Memling. I met a fellow my age who was entering a Trappist monastery near Brussels and not far from Waterloo, sight of Napoleon's (Boney we called him) defeat by the British. Would I follow my eldest sister Stellamaris into the church? She prayed I would. But as a sailor I had picked up the vice of a girl in every port. However, I did question my faith.

I treated my job with the ferry as a paid vacation. I wanted to see more of the continent. In Antwerp I met a beautiful young dancer- singer at the KVL opera, and whenever I was in town we would rendezvous at a cafe near the old opera house. She helped me with my Flemish. In England we lived on ration cards and lacked just about everything. Belgium was rich with gold from their colony, the Congo. I remember riding my bicycle to Brussels and sitting in a restaurant ordering the cheapest item on the menu for lunch. Around me were fat, overfed, bourgeois families feasting on more food than they could eat themselves. It was disgusting and unfair. It made me think of how everyone in England could easily become Marxists.

Finally, I found a line of business that was not smuggling, the Flemish custom officer told me. In Harwich I purchased live lobsters put them in a barrel of sea water and sold them to shops in Antwerp for a handsome profit. My Flemish was improving and the day I sold my British bike I drove a hard bargain with the café owner who paid me and said, "ik zie je later." I did see him later. He introduced me to another tough looking fellow who said they had a profitable job for me. In the back room they pulled the tablecloth off the kitchen table. It was covered with small, stamped gold tablets. I was asked to deliver them to an address in London. So shaken by the smuggler's suggestion, I forgot how much they were to pay me. I was to pick up the gold the next day. I agreed. Wanting to get free from what was obviously a nest of gold smugglers, and spluttered, "vaarnel...welge- komen" and held my breath until I reached the ferry and sailed away. I decided it was best not to return to Belgium and upon arrival in Harwich I signed off and reported the smugglers to the His Majesty Customs who were still excited about snaring a major smuggler on my ferry who traveled with his automobile that had thousands of chronometer watches hidden in the upholstery. It worried me that the sale of my bike had made me appear hungry for money and led to a proposition with their bloody gold. And it was certainly not the road I wished to travel, even for all the gold in the Congo.

One foggy evening back in London I ducked into the Prince of Wales, a small pub on a dead end street in Soho and ordered a black and tan. I struck up a conversation with a couple of blokes and before I knew it, we had grown to a large group, arguing loudly about the war and the future of mankind. I became a regular at the pub. My new friends were interesting, friendly and enthusiastic about art and literature and life. There was at least one good looking Sheila among them. Post war England was bleak. People were unable to travel because of the government's tight fiscal controls. We lived on rations. At the Prince of Wales, we were all searching for meaning. During the summer months we moved our discussion group to the outdoors at the Spaniards on Hampstead Heath. Perhaps, I thought, I would get my education at the pub over beer and cider. After my regimented Catholic education at St. Patrick's College in New Zealand, our freeform discussions at the pub were refreshing. Someone loaned me The Critique of Pure Reason by Immanuel Kant, a philosopher very much in vogue with the group, and I spent endless hours trying to make sense of his writings.

It was a time and a place so distant and so different; it feels like a dream now. I can remember Sir Philip sitting at the head of the long table during that formal Christmas dinner at Bridehead in England and giving the startling news that would change my life...

There is a lot of power in nostalgia...

Bridehead Revisited

A few weeks later, I received a message at my hotel from Sir Philip Williams, a friend of my uncle Tad in New Zealand. I had heard the story several times. During the Great World War, on the first day of the landing at Gallipoli in an effort to seize the Dardanelles my Uncle, Tad Morpeth, made a valiant effort to save the life of his friend, private Nat Williams. Sadly, Nat Williams died in his arms as a Turkish sharpshooter's bullet struck Uncle Tad. Sent to England to recover from his wounds, Tad was sought out by the late Private Williams' father, Sir Robert Williams, a Member of Parliament. He wanted to hear the details of his eldest son's death from the soldier who tried to save him. Tad was invited to the family seat at Bridehead in Dorset before returning to the front in Turkey. However, he contracted Enteric fever on his return to Gallipoli and was sent back to England. During his second convalescence, prior to going to France where he was wounded again, Tad spent a lot of time at Bridehead and became particularly close to Nat's younger brother, Philip Williams, who inherited the baronet upon the death of Sir Robert.

Uncle Tad and Sir Philip had kept a close correspondence ever since, and when Sir Philip learned from my uncle that I was in London, he sought me out. I closed the circle.

For days I had been putting off calling Sir Philip. But one afternoon, after downing a few pints of Summerset Cider at the pub, I finally worked up the nerve to telephone him back. I found him at his Pall Mall club. I thanked him for his call and apologized for not having called him sooner myself. Sir Philip was very kind, telling me not to be concerned; and invited me to a ball at the Savoy, one of London's most exclusive hotels, to celebrate his daughters, Joy and Honor, being received at Buckingham Palace. I panicked. I begged off in my best British accent Americanized during the war, but happily accepted his invitation to visit his home at Bridehead over the Whitsun holidays. I preferred my Bohemian way of life and besides, I didn't even own a tuxedo. When I rejoined my friends at the pub, and they learned I had turned down an invitation to a ball at the Savoy, they moaned and lamented my decision. They could not believe I had thrown away such an opportunity. "But, I've never met them," I protested. "They're friends of my family." "Bloody fool," a professor cried. "We're all living on bloody rations and you throw away an opportunity like that. Feasting on caviar. What a waste!" They all volunteered to go in my place. I refused to say more. I ordered a round of cider and offered my cheese ration to whoever wanted it in order to change the subject. The issue of the Savoy was quickly dropped, and we were all back to Kant and the true meaning of knowledge. We sat, shoulder to shoulder in the crowded little pub, the smoke of Woodbine cigarettes rising above our voices. It was time for my barroom philosophy class. I loved it.

Indeed, I was very nervous about meeting Sir Philip. This was all new territory to me. In New Zealand my uncle Tad had often described Bridehead as high up on the society ladder, rich with extensive farmlands, a bank, a train line and a factory in Bristol. But a few days later, when I met Sir Philip at the train station in Salisbury, my apprehensions were put to rest. I recognized him right away: gray hair, a trimmed mustache and very dignified. He looked like a true English country gentleman, even for the tweed coat with worn elbows.

Sir Philip drove me to his club in Dorchester in his small, ancient Austin. We ordered gin and lime, and when I heard him fussing with the waitress about the price of the drink, I was sure my family had been putting me on about his wealth. After the drinks, he told me he had business to attend and instructed me to wait downstairs at the curb. He said the "ladies" would be picking me up to take me to Bridehead. I stood by the curb with my suitcase and ignored a black Daimler that drove up with two young ladies in white tennis outfits. I was expecting another small, unassuming car. Finally, Joy, one of Sir William's pretty daughters, became impatient and poked her head out the car window. "Well come on, Bernard," she commanded. "Jump in."

We drove out of Dorchester on a narrow country road that dated from Roman times and passed the small village of Winterbourne Abbas where most of the houses had ancient, thatched



roofs. As we crested a hill, we drove through a grove of large trees and suddenly below there was Bridehead; beautiful, manicured lawns and a lake - the spring from which flows the River Bride. The manor was just the way my uncle Tad had described it: two stories with large windows and castle-like towers, its origin lost in Norman times. Part of the estate was the ancient village of Littlebredy.

The butler took my suitcase and showed me what would become my room when I came to Bridehead during the next year and a half. They called it the blue room. It had a large, luxurious and comfortable four poster bed with a large feather mattress. There was a very strict order at Bridehead. Breakfast was always served buffet style in the dining room. Lunch was at midday, and there was always sherry before dinner.

The dining room had an air of formality all its own with a long oblong table that could seat a rugby team. The walls were covered with life size oil paintings of the Williams ancestors. Dinner, always a formal affair, and usually with guests, required a suit and tie. After dinner, the women retired to the sitting room while the men remained at the table drinking Portuguese port and smoking Jamaican cigars. To my amazement, whenever I was there, it never felt like there was any rationing in England. My first morning I discovered to my embarrassment my shoes, left outside the door for the butler to shine, were not there. Finally, I appeared at breakfast in my stocking feet to have Sir Philip jokingly say, "Bernard, you look shorter today." Thank heaven mother had taught us never to wear socks with holes. In fact, she made sure our table manners would be good enough to allow us to dine with the King. Years later I made my mother proud, lunching with Queen Elizabeth at President Luis Echevarria home in Mexico City.

I kept being reminded how strange it was that this friendship had had been forged on the battlefields of the First World War. The ghosts of the murderous blunder that was Gallipoli still haunted this corner of Britain in 1948. In the little stone church on the grounds there hung a framed dedication plaque:

"Private John Nathaniel (Nat) Williams of the 6th Hauraki Company of the Auckland Battalion of the New Zealand expeditionary force, killed in action at Gallipoli [Turkey] on April 25, 1915."

Tad wounded again in the Somme in France managed, incredibly enough, to return to the front for the fourth and last time. He was back on the Somme when on Nov. 10, 1918; the last shell of that terrible war was fired.

There was a dairy farm operated by Mark, a brother of Sir Philip, who lived with his family in a house apart. The neatness of the rolling land with old narrow roman roads were not spoiled by modern structures. There was a gig pulled by a docile pony that took up the back roads that were great to explore as one seldom met any motor traffic.



The 'Waltheuses' from Waltham

Pvt. J (Nat) Williams, Pte. Moore Morpeth, Lt/Cpl. Gerald (Tad) Morpeth, Lt RN (Nick) Morpeth at Epsom Camp Auckland September 1914 prior to embarkation a month later. All were casualties on the 25 April 1915 (First day landing at Gallipoli.) Nat and Moore were killed and Tad and Nick wounded.

Courtesy of Allen Morpeth

I quickly adopted the library, a dark room with books from floor to ceiling. I suspected many had been bought for their beautiful leather bindings. Sir Philip was a deeply religious man and a Tory, and the majority of the books reflected the family's conservative nature and politics. After a while, I found myself escaping to the large kitchen to borrow the popular newspapers from the staff.

Never in my life had I been surrounded by the real life of British aristocracy. The place was like a museum. There were even little bells in every room and the garden with which to summon the staff. It was truly a holiday from the National Hotel and my friends at the pub. I loved living these two very different lives.



I spent much of my time at the stables that were built like a petit medieval castle. Joy was a good horsewoman and we saddle up the horses and spend the whole morning riding all over Bridehead and down the Bride valley to Bridgeport. Happily she pointed out the large manor houses of the nouveau riche—18th century arrivals.

Afterward, Joy and Honor, neither of them drank at lunch, always suggested I fetch a jug of beer or cold cider from the cellar at lunch, for my refreshment. I came to enjoy Joy's company, there was a flirtation, but it quickly ended for reasons I didn't learn.

Maybe it was my liberal politics that intervened and after all I was a colonial boy without a vocation, rootless in



England, and certainly with no solid future. I often wondered how things were during Lady Williams' time. As the matriarch, she was the glue that kept hold of her large family and was strict to the point divorced persons were not welcome in their home and after her death, the year before my first visit, I was told that Sir Philip also had a pathological dislike of divorce. Lady Williams was an aristocrat from an old family and, I assumed, held tightly to Victorian values.

One Saturday morning, Honor had me join a traditional fox hunt. I saddled Joy's beautiful chestnut mare and met the hunting party outside a village pub. I was the only rider out of formal attire. I didn't even have riding boots. The other riders looked at me

with curiosity but said nothing. The master of the hunt made a brief speech about the wonderful tradition of fox hunting and the bugle signaled the start. The hounds began to bay and we were all off, galloping after them through the countryside. I was not in the first rank of riders, but I kept up nicely. Joy's mare was a graceful jumper. She could clear every fence and hedge grove in Dorset, or England for that matter. Personally, I was not concerned about the poor fox we were after, but the ride was exhilarating.

A few days later, Sir Philip said he had business in London and asked me if I could escort the ladies to a reception aboard the aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious at anchor off Weymouth. The minute we were piped aboard, I felt ill at ease. The reception was in honor of the ship's admiral who was being transferred to a desk job in London.

He was the only officer I saw wearing a monocle. The reception, which was set up on the flight deck of the carrier, was crowded with Dorset dignitaries, their wives and naval officers dressed in their whites. Clearly, this was an event for Sir Philip and not for me. I was embarrassed.

After brief, formal introductions, the ladies mingled with their friends and I receded into the background. I fetched myself a gin and lime, and admired the ship while the guests enjoyed their canapés and crowded around the admiral. Joy had chosen to remain at Bridehead. There was no way I could leave until the





ladies were ready to go. I walked to the side of the deck and looked out at the ocean when I was approached by one of the officers.

"I say old chap," he said in a condescending tone, "what did you do during the war?" "Well," I said quietly, "I began as a cabin boy on a four masted barque."

"You don't say?" he said surprised, "that sounds bloody interesting. What was the name of the ship?" "Barque," I corrected.

The Pamir

The barque Pamir under full sail en route to San Francisco, California.

"THE PAMIR."

"My jove!" he exclaimed. "We spoke that ship sailing the channel. What a magnificent vessel. Magnificent. It must be the last of those ships. There can't be anymore left." Then he placed his arm around my shoulder and turned me to face the group. "Hey chaps," he cried, "listen to this, this chap served aboard that beautiful ship we saw. You know that barque we saw sailing the channel." Many of the officers walked away from the ladies and crowded around me. "What was it like?" one of the officers asked. "What kind of crew did you have on board?"

"We were forty, mostly youths."

"You don't say. How many sails?"

"Thirty four only we used thirty-two"

"I don't believe it! Thirty four sails and only forty men? What kind of speed did you get out of her?"

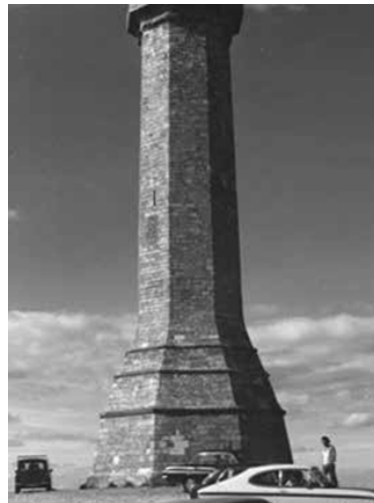
"We averaged between six to twelve knots, but once, on full sail, we managed seventy eight miles in four hours."

"Bloody good show!"

"I say, did you have any close shaves during the war?"

"How about weapons? Did you have any on board?"

"We had four rifles," I said, and explained I had been the one placed in charge of cleaning them since I belonged to the school cadets and the Home Guard.



"But they were only used by the officers. They used them to kill sharks."

"Well, go on then." "We ran cargo from Wellington to San Francisco," I said, "my first trip took eighty days."

"I say, it must have been grand."

"We were wondering what the devil the New Zealand flag was doing flying on that ship, remember?" one of the officers said to the group.

"Oh, it was a magnificent sight," the officer said, "magnificent."

"How about another drink?" someone asked and the reception became a little more animated for me, but I could tell it had gotten less so for the ladies who, I noticed, were becoming a little bored. I felt embarrassed, but it didn't last long. Soon, the event began to wind down and we returned home to Bridehead.

When I returned from a trip to continental Europe I was shocked to find Joy married to a banker. I rode to her new home to offer my congratulations. As I waited, still in the saddle, an unreceptive Joy appeared at the door and her anger made my horse bolt. I had mistakenly taken her horse from the Williams family stable. Joy's horse was a fine jumper and cleared nearly every hedgerow back to Bridehead before I finally reined her in. Joy appeared estranged from Bridehead and I didn't see her again. It could have been another romantic puzzle in a Thomas Hardy novel. After all this was beautiful Dorset, Hardy's beloved home and that of Tess of the d'Urbervilles.



Sir Philip and daughter Honor who took over Bridehead duties after Lady William passed away

My friendship with the rest of the family has lasted ever since. However, consistent with the British upper-class sense of propriety, what no one mentioned at the time was that Nat Williams had been sent to New Zealand as a "remittance man" by his father, Col. Sir Robert Williams, in order to curb his high living style at Oxford. When war broke out in 1914, Nat Williams joined the Army with his friends, Tad and his brothers.

It was at that stately old Dorset home that a decision was made which changed my life. How would I ever forget the Yuletide holidays with the Williams family at Bridehead? The fine old manor house, the family owned from 1735, sat in spacious grounds not far from Dorchester and the tall obelisk to Dorset's famous son the writer, Thomas Hardy².

I had luck at the National Seaman's shipping office and found the ship I wanted. It would be calling at every port around Spain, Portugal and North Africa and even Gibraltar. Since it would not sail for a few weeks, I decided to check out of the National and return to Bridgehead.

A few days later I joined Sir Philip in the sitting room for a glass of sherry. The butler prodded the fireplace with a poke so the flames cracked and intensified.

Sir Philip poured two glasses of sherry from a crystal decanter. "So, Bernard," he said and handed me a glass. "You'll be off to Spain, will you?"

"Yes, Sir Philip. My ship leaves in two days."

“It should be an interesting trip for you. You haven’t been to Spain, have you?” he asked and he raised his glass to his nose, but didn’t take a drink.

“No, but I’m looking forward to it,” I said. There was a long silence. “Sir Philip, may I ask for your advice on something?”

“Certainly, Bernard, what is it?” Sir Philip had become like a father figure to me. He had opened his home to me and treated me like one of the family. He knew of the trouble I was having trying to find direction in my life. I kept floating between jobs, Bridehead and my friends at the pub. Sir Philip was very tactful. He never interfered but was always willing to listen.

“Do you remember Alex, my shipmate from the Pamir? I believe I’ve mentioned he’s been looking for a ship.”

“Yes, of course,” Sir Philip said and he puckered his lips and took a taste of his sherry.

“Well, you see, I received a letter. It looks like he and his brother, Peter, have found the ship. They want me to join them and run cargo in the Pacific,” I said referring to a letter I got from Alex a few weeks earlier. It was postmarked from Fiji and he asked me to contact friends in New Zealand and the islands for cargo. He said Peter had found a ship in the Canadian port of Halifax and went on to describe it as a 128 foot ketch with a twenty-nine foot beam and a deep draft of thirteen feet. He said it was rigged with two suits of sail that were old and holed and a hundred horsepower Thorneycroft diesel engine that needed repair. He said it was built in Calcutta in 1913 of four inch Malabar teak. It was dirty and needed a lot of work to make it seaworthy. But he also explained that unlike the other ship deals that had fallen through, Peter promised this one looked solid. He warned me not to get too excited, but to stand by and be prepared to come over the Atlantic. Alex, born in Australia to an American sea Captain father went on to advise, “if you can get some cabbage [money] it will always come in handy and it may be a while before we start making anything.” He believed we three could initially sail the vessel and later pick up some help as needed. He was full of optimism and signed off, “So long old shipmate.”

[When I learned that the remote Tokelau Island—three atolls, Fakaofu, Nukunono and Atafu, which formed a New Zealand dependency in the South Pacific—were literally cut off from the world and seeking a shipping link with Samoa some 300 miles away I wrote to Alex that we had found our first potential cargo run.]

“I see,” Sir Philip said. He rubbed his chin and contemplated the fireplace for a long while.

“If I should stay at sea,” I explained, “I have the sea time and my time before the mast so it is only a matter of taking the time to sit my second mates’ exam.”

“Is that what you want, to stay at sea?”

“I really don’t know,” I said. “I’m not too sure it’s the right thing. It’s an extremely difficult choice.”

“I can see that,” Sir Philip said, and then he moved to the side of the room and took a seat on the armchair by the fire. “What about your schooling?”

“Well, that’s another matter. I still think I should give it a go, don’t you?”

Sir Philip was quiet for a long time. I took a drink of sherry and placed my glass on the table by the decanter.

“How old are you now, twenty four?” he said at last.

“Twenty-one.”

“You’re still very young,” he said.

“But shouldn’t I be doing something? Shouldn’t I be working towards a foundation for my future?”

“Listen, Bernard, you survived the war, you’ve had a great advantage. You’ve traveled, you’re well read. You know, some of us have not had the luxury of floundering. Our futures were laid out for us before we were even born.”

“I see.”

“I envy you Bernard.”

“How do you mean, Sir Philip?”

“I wish I were twenty-two with my whole life ahead of me, and an entire world calling for adventure. With the war finally over, we’re coming into a new age. The times are changing, and you’re in there in the center of it.” Then Sir Philip once again talked of the Labor Party’s decision to nationalize the railways. It was his pet beef as the family had their own rail line and the Labor Party, he felt strongly, would never be able to make the trains run on time.

After dinner, when everyone else had gone upstairs to their rooms, I poured myself a tall glass of wine and sat in the library and wrote Alex, telling him I was still unsure as to joining him and Peter, but to let me know as soon as they secured the ketch. Then I put my feet up and opened the book I was reading in preparation for my trip to Spain: *Homage to Catalonia* by George Orwell. Buried in the feather mattress, sleep was difficult. I realized I had no role model. My father, grandfather Jim McCleary and Uncle Brian all great rugby player and my early models and I made the First Fifteen at St. Pat’s. There was writer Jack London who was killed by booze and war correspondent Ernie Pyle by a Japanese bullet on Okinawa. Along with FDR, they were among people I admired, and of course the Pamir, my first love.

It was December 1948 Bridehead, evoking an earlier era, was aglow with all of the traditional Christmas trimmings down to the Yule log. All that was needed was for Queen Victoria to arrive in her horse-drawn carriage. She would have felt totally at home. For me the evening provided a glimpse of the genteel life which, in spite of war and deprivation, still obtained among England’s upper crust. Post-World War II rationing was still in effect in Great Britain but one would not have known so at Bridehead as the cellar was well stocked with pre-war Spanish wine, port and sherry, and there was no lack of game on the estate. Christmas dinner was festive indeed, and after the traditional dancing, Sir Philip, the head of the family, arose and gently tapped his wineglass. Unlike some of us at the table, Sir Philip was a moderate drinker. His familiar throat clearing “hmm” was needed to attract everyone else’s attention, so liberally were we enjoying Christmas cheer. Believing Sir Philip wished to offer a toast we turned our gazes to him, straightened our formal black ties, and happily prepared once again to raise our glass. I noticed he was looking directly at me. The spitting image of Sir Cedric Hardwick, the movie actor, Sir Philip was a wonderfully affable man with a warm sense of humor despite being a Tory and a stickler for tradition.

“Bernard,” he announced in solemn, formal tone, “will soon be off on the adventure of his life! Yes, he is going to sail off to sea again with two companions and may God bless them.” “Good show, Bernard!” my neighbor, who had served as a colonel in the Indian army, exclaimed a little too loudly as he slapped me on the back. The ladies clapped and the men chorused, “Here! Here!”

All present appreciated that my decision was no joke, for the Williams family was serious about adventure. They themselves had begun as pirates in the East Indies, a brother of Sir Philip had explained. The dining room walls were bedecked with life-size portraits of elegant family ancestors, none of course in pirate regalia. Turning away from the sea, the family forbearers had gone into London banking, railways and then industry.

In truth, Sir Philip made up my mind for me. However, I still had work ahead. I was happy to report aboard the M.V. Pinto, a shiny, white-painted freighter that stood out like a virgin at her berth in the old London docks surrounded by barrels of imported wine, sherry and port. It was a thrill to visit the old wharf and see the ancient warehouses where the wealth of the colonies had helped make Mother England so rich and lately visited by German bombers.

It had been over a decade since the end of the Spanish Civil War. As Catholics, our family followed church propaganda to back the Nationalists against the atheist Republicans. I usually backed the underdog, and in this case, it was the Republicans. I was curious to see what ten years of General Francisco Franco's fascist dictatorship had done to the country that had at one time been the richest and most powerful empire in the world.

Spain turned out to be a very powerful experience for me. It was my first insight into life under a dictatorship. The poverty shocked and angered me. I didn't believe it was possible, especially in a European country. In disbelief, we motored up the Guadalquivir river to Seville, the same river Christopher Columbus sailed up to meet the Spanish monarchs after discovering the Americas; and where great Spanish galleons had been built and launched. Now, there were large abandoned concrete drainpipes strewn on the side of the port with whole families living inside them. The locals referred to them as, "Franco's prefabricated houses."

In Tarragona I climbed above the town to view the statue Mussolini had sent Franco and found caves with people living inside. I was astonished. I raised my camera to take a photograph and scores of families emerged from the caves. I could not believe my eyes. I put my camera down and walked away. In Barcelona my black beard brought stares as if it was still a sign of an anarchist.

When I returned from Spain I skipped the Prince of Wales and the National hotel, instead, I took the train to Dorchester to spend the last days in England before going to Southampton to take passage to Halifax. It was sad to leave my English family.

How could I ever forget that Christmas? Yule log, wreaths a Christmas tree in the dining room and a nativity in the chapel. But my experience in Spain had transformed me. I kept thinking of the families living in the cement pipes and the caves, and the soiled children dressed in rags, begging for food. I couldn't stop thinking of the children in Spain. The little girl in Malaga by the fountain with her soiled face, barefoot and wearing only a torn wool sweater.

The telegram from Peter Bolton, confirming the deal for the Ketch in Halifax finally arrived and on August 3, 1949, I boarded the old four-funnel Aquitania [Sister Ship of the Titanic] in Southampton for Canada. A priority telegram was handed to me aboard ship and it read: "Diederich Aquitania, Southampton-- "Good luck. Bon voyage on all of them and many happy returns to Bridehead--Love Williamses, Weber's, Crawfords (head of Dartmouth Naval College) Luttrell's and Schmidt [Other extended family names and a friend]." Clearly Sir Philip had not forgotten the importance of the decision he had made for me. That night (almost every night) I drank to their health in the first-class section thanks to a romantic young Canadian lass who invited me up from steerage where I shared a cabin with young Irish immigrants. It would be my last romance for a long time. Our new ship needed all our love.

Finally, in August, 9, 1949, the Aquitania arrived at Pier 21 in Halifax concluding one of the last voyages of the legendary ship across the Atlantic. I was traveling light, having left a suitcase of clothes at Bridehead. It would be years before I returned to pick it up.

How vividly I remember Sir Philip vicariously enjoying what my future would hold for me. Could he possibly know where I am now? How did I get here? Where am I going? Where is my

beloved family? Is this the end for me?

Sleepless hours are no screams no torture victims, only silence. I hear the ominous sound of boots approaching my cell. They stop, recede. More silence.

My God. How many people have crossed my path? I recall someone saying that everyone you meet, everywhere you've been and every experience you've had ultimately lead you to where you are now.

How far away I am from Antwerp and the strains of a Puccini Opera fill my mind with memories. Where is she? Where is the girl whose voice I fell in love with, that Belgian beauty who seduced me with her music? Our erotic and passionate affair, did it really happen? Where is she now? In this small concrete box, it all seems surreal. How could that long ago experience be responsible for my being here?

I feel like I'm going mad with this incessant fear for my family. How far away is tomorrow? How long ago was yesterday? How can I die without knowing the fate of my wife and son?

It was a frosty, cloudy autumn day in 1949 when I first sighted our ship tied to a wharf in the Halifax shipyard. The tide was out and all I could make out were her bare masts popping



over the pier. But as I came closer, I could see the Culver sitting in the water, looking more like a pile of floating debris than a ship. It was truly an eyesore in the beautiful Halifax pier. It had none of the majesty of the Pamir or the comfort of the two U.S. wartime Kaiser-built T-2 tankers I had served aboard under the command of the U.S. Coast Guard. She was in a terrible, filthy state.

The ketch Culver at dock side in Halifax

"Ahoy there, I called. "Permission to come aboard!"

Alex climbed out from the cabin and spread his arms. "Took you long enough to get here. Come aboard then."

"Time hasn't been kind to you," I joked as we shook hands. I had not seen Alex in three years when we drove from New York to San Francisco in a shipmate's '42 Buick.

"It's good to see you again, Bernard," Alex said and tossed my bag in the cabin. "Come on. I'll show you around."

Alex described everything he and Peter had done to the ship and everything that still needed to be done. He said the ship had been used as a pilot boat on the Hooghly River in India, and later as an antisubmarine tender in Bermuda during the war. "It's only natural," he said, "that we turn her into a cargo ship, hey?"

"Where're you planning on putting the cargo?"

Alex looked at me and smiled, "You're standing in it."

It seemed a shame, but we had to tear out the Burmese mahogany interior. We stripped the entire salon and dining room and turned it into a cargo hold. We kept a small galley in the fo'c'sle

and kept two cabins at port and starboard. The Culver flew the British flag and was registered in Bridgeport, Bahamas.

A week later, we met Dave and Bob, a couple of sailors looking for work, adventure, anything. They gladly joined our effort and Dave, who had a good knowledge of machines, got to work on overhauling the old diesel engine. Alex and I tightened the standard rigging and repaired the thick red canvas sails.

We worked night and day. Every cent we had went into making the Culver seaworthy. We had little to eat, but the fishermen who harvested Cod in the Grand Banks shared with us their dried herring and “hard tack,” (a hard biscuit you need strong teeth to break and eat).

As a lady who visited us with her son asked, “Do you like apple pie? If you provide the apples I’ll bake the pies,” she promised”. As kids, we raided orchards. It was the rites of passage of youngsters in New Zealand and Aussie. One night four of us snuck into an orchard and filled burlap sacks with apples. The noise attracted the owner whose flashlight failed to detect four grown men swiping his apples. We delivered our bounty to the lady who lived near the docks and baked us delicious apple pies.

The Culver attracted odd sorts and the oddest was Ben Carling a gifted Aussie married to an American who visited us in their floating jeep, which they called, “Half Safe”. A wartime jeep was riding on a pontoon with the wheels underneath that allowed land travel too. On their first attempt to circumnavigate the globe they got as far across the Atlantic as in the vicinity of the Canary Islands when they had motor trouble and were hoisted aboard a tanker that dropped them in Halifax. Ben towed a small supply barge stocked with gasoline and when I asked where the toilet was he lifted the jeep’s passenger seat. What sparked my interest was the fact he had been interviewed by Life magazine and the reporter left an envelope with \$10,000 for an exclusive story if they made it. We shared dinner with them as the jeep was moored to the Culver. And they made it.

When Peter went aboard he explained his dream of building a trading business in the South Seas. As a captain, his Navy friends said prospects for Micronesia were good as the Navy was ending administration of the Trust Territories

We would never have made it without the help of those around us. The Scotsman in charge of the shipyards, who had run a submarine base during the war in Great Britain, forgave our debt at his machine shop, mainly to get rid of us. As we left he pointed to an anchor at the end of the dock. “You see that,” he said in his Scottish brogue, “I don’t know who owns the damn thing.” He knew we had our eye on it, and pretty soon it found its way onto the Culver.

There were several Canadian warships in the yard, and the shipyard managers would simply charge Culver’s supplies to each of them. The Canadian Naval authorities must have been mystified why destroyers needed so much manila rope and canvas.

Dry-docking is very expensive, but we finally managed to get some time for our ship to patch up a wartime hole in the teak hull below the waterline. We were lucky the people at the shipyard were sympathetic and intrigued that we were headed for the South Seas. They also placed bets that we wouldn’t make it to our first port of call: Boston.

Winter was approaching as we set sail for Boston. It was calm but soon storm clouds arrived from the arctic and the wind increased to gale force and from two knots the Culver reared its old head and galloped along at 12 knots. The ship loved heavy weather and rode the swells beautifully even exciting a school of killer whales that swam up diving under as if... eye to eye with us.

We made Boston in a storm and a welcome rest in the Italian section of the city. I took advantage of our stop and took the train down to Georgetown, Connecticut to visit Harold Connery and his family. I had met the Connery’s in early 1945 when I was in New York City to exchange tankers. The ANZAC Club, (an Australian and New Zealand social club in Manhattan) had arranged for me to stay with the Connery while I was there on leave. Harold Connery owned the local general store and lumber yard. We became good friends and I taught myself how to drive an automobile. He gave me the keys to his car and told me to take the kids to the movies. Their fathers were flying bombers over Germany. One thing I was not getting aboard the Culver was a good meal, and Mrs. Connery was a wonderful cook. On the train back from Connecticut I was reading the newspaper and noticed a drawing of a Russian policeman with a large snarling dog on a leash chasing what appeared to be an innocent civilian. I thought how only a few years earlier, during the war, it was the Nazis who were the real evil enemy. It made me wonder about what Sir Philip had said about the world coming into a new era.

After a few days we left Boston and sailed close to the shoreline all the way to New York City. The trip was uneventful, but as we chugged along the East River, our vintage diesel engine suddenly quit. The river current dragged us toward an outcrop of rocks. I called back to Peter who was standing at the helm.

“I know, I know,” he cried as he turned the wheel. “Dave, get that engine started.”

Alex joined me at the prow. We could see the outcropping of jagged rocks getting closer and closer. “Peter!” I yelled.

“Yes, I see them,” he cried back. But the current was too powerful and the boat was drifting sideways out of control.

“What about the sails?” I said.

“There’s not enough time.” Alex ran back to the helm to help Peter. I could hear Dave and Bob working on the engine. The starter turned but the engine wouldn’t spark.

I went back to the helm. “Turn her. We’re getting bloody close.”

“We can’t.” Peter said putting all his weight on the wheel.

“Dave!”

“Hold on,” Dave cried out from the engine room. “I can’t get it to spark.”

“Well you bloody well better do something,” I said and looked over the prow. We were moving quickly now toward the rocks. I could already see the people at the shipyard in Halifax collecting on their bets.

I heard the engine starter turning again, and then Dave called out for Peter to give it throttle and try again.

The starter turned but nothing happened. “Bloody hell,” Peter said and tried it one more time, but nothing happened.

“Try it now,” Dave called out.

Peter pressed the starter, but nothing happened.

“Again!” Dave yelled.

The starter turned. The engine sparked and coughed back to life. Peter gave it throttle and we made a quick turn to starboard just barely missing the rocks.

We came into Manhattan and tied up to the public pier on East 34th Street across from Bellevue Hospital. We hadn’t been docked five minutes when a large station wagon pulled up alongside the dock. A man stepped out and opened a bar he had set up in the back of his vehicle.

"I bet you fellas need a drink," he said. "I was watching you from my penthouse up there. You're lucky. If that engine hadn't turned back on, you'd be swimming right now."

"Believe me," Peter said, "We know." Then he patted Dave on the back.

We stepped off the ship and the man poured us gin tonics. "I have bourbon, too, if you prefer," he said.

We were the lone craft at the pier. I had let my beard grow again when we were in Halifax. Now it causes me to miss out on the free meals at Bellevue, across the street. My clean-shaven shipmates posed as male nurses and got free hospital food at the cafeteria.

I was still very much affected by the poverty I had witnessed in Spain. I didn't see how the enterprise of a cargo ship would benefit humanity. I kept seeing the same little girl begging for money by the fountain in Malaga. I wanted to do something useful with my life. I just didn't know what. I decided to visit St Patrick's Catholic cathedral. Perhaps sitting in an old, quiet church would allow me to sort things out.

While riding the bus to the cathedral, an elderly lady looked at me with my black beard and my long navy coat closed around my neck and said something I didn't understand.

I shrugged my shoulders and looked away. New York, the intensity of the big city, so loud and aggressive, was very intimidating. All I wanted was to get to St. Patrick's.

"He's not a Rabbi," a man across the aisle said, "He's probably with one of those Indian cults, you know the ones..."

Someone else said, "He's a Rabbi, just look at him. He has to be a Rabbi."

I said nothing.

"Look at his coat for Christ's sake," someone said. "He's a sailor."

"He ain't no sailor."

"I'm telling you, he's a Rabbi," the one across the aisle laughed.

"If he's a Rabbi, why won't he talk?"

"He only speaks Yiddish, that's why."

"He's a sailor."

"A sailor..." a man laughed. "A pirate is more like it."

I looked out the window and noticed we had passed my stop. I finally got off near East 57th street and had to walk half a dozen blocks back to the Cathedral.

That night, reading an old copy of Life magazine, I had an idea. Recalling how generous Life was with Ben, handing him ten thousand dollars for an exclusive story if he circled the globe. The next day I went to the Time-Life building and timidly made my way to the office of an editor, an adventure specialist, where I proposed a photo-essay on the old U.S. bases in the Pacific. It had been three years since they had been abandoned. In particular, I suggested Manus in the Admiralty Islands, and showed him copies of the Naval Base's The Admiral Tee, a daily press bulletin that I had saved from the war. Also, there were relics of the war to photograph at Guadalcanal, site of the war's most ferocious battles and so on. The Life editor, a heavy set man in his late forties, gave me some film for my Zeiss Icon camera and said he would be happy to look at my work when I returned and wished me good luck.

The evening before we set sail, an elderly couple strolling along the East 34th Street Pier paused alongside our ship. I was pacing back and forth on deck trying to keep warm.

"Hello, my friend," the old man called out, "Are you headed for Palestine?"

I paused and walked to the starboard side to get closer and told him we were headed to Panama and the South Seas.

"What?" the man cried, "Why do you want to go there?"

"We're a cargo ship," I explained.

The man, who looked well into his late fifties, seemed to consider this for a while, and then he asked if we had a radio.

"No," I said.

"And how about medical supplies?"

"Well," I said, "no, not really."

"How can you sail off without a first aid kit? What's the matter with you?"

I had not given it much thought, and then the woman asked if we had food.

I smiled and said we had some.

"Whadda ya mean some," the man cried. "What kind of food supplies do you have? You know this is not a holiday trip you're taking. You need plenty of food to get to Panama, and then to the South Seas. Oy!"

"We have some potatoes... and turnips," I said proudly.

"What... potatoes?" The man grunted in disbelief and the two of them walked away. A while later, a large object flew through the air and landed with a loud thud on our wooden deck. Then there was another one, and another.

"What's this?" I said picking one up.

The old Jewish man came forward from the darkness. "Salami," he said. "I own a delicatessen in Brooklyn."

"But we can't pay for this."

"Who said anything about paying?" he said, his right hand gesturing wildly in the air. "Listen, my wife says you can't sail to Panama without any food. If my wife says you can't, you can't. Do you understand? Now you have some food. Have a good trip my friend." And he disappeared into the night.

The winter storms were upon us as we sailed off from New York. As we came to the open sea we had to fight large waves, sometimes up to ten feet. Peter felt it was too much and turned us back to seek shelter at the dock on Brooklyn's Sheepshead Bay, but the seas were relentless. The hull of the Culver kept slamming against the pilings of the pier.

Every wave raised us up, and then we would go down for a few seconds until the next wave came and hammered us again like a battering ram. It was no good. The Culver was a strong ship, but the hull was made of wood. Eventually, the beating would prove too much and she would break up.

Peter ordered us to cast off. "We'll ride the storm out at sea."

But before we reached the open sea the waves became too much for our engine. Peter handed me the helm. "We need to raise the after sail."

I watched Peter and Alex move behind me. The waves raised the ship up and down, while the wind pounded freezing rain on us.

Dave and Bob were down in the engine room, keeping the old diesel from quitting. I looked back and saw Peter unleash the spar. It was too soon. It sprung and swung across, catching him on the side and knocking him overboard.

I had ridden out hurricane winds on the Pamir, but I had never seen a man go overboard. Until that point I thought we were doing well. A storm at sea is just a storm at sea and all you can do is your best to ride it out. The Culver was a sturdy vessel, and after the seas we experienced out of Canada, I was confident of what she could get away with. But the sight of Peter flying off into the open sea was frightening.

“Peter!” Alex yelled. Dave and Bob ran out and joined Alex on the starboard.

Alex, frantic, cursed up a storm, but he kept his head. “Bernard, idle the engine.” Bob and Dave threw lines out to Peter. All we could see of him was his red pompom beret bobbing in the swells like a Champagne cork.

The Culver was not a ship to maneuver in rough seas. We were running on sails and had to keep our head in the wind. If I turned her in the storm, we would flounder and lose control. The waves would slam us against the shore. I knew hypothermia would set in pretty soon if we didn’t get him out fast. Alex and Bob were cursing and towing in the lines and throwing them out again. Then we noticed a couple of pleasure crafts heading into port and we all called out to get their attention.

One of the boats spotted Peter and they turned and made a pass. I watched it wobble and bob in the high waves and almost swallow Peter with its propeller. Alex called to them to attempt a pass on the other side.

They came around again and got him. They motored alongside, but getting the vessels side by side became another challenge. The tall waves kept one boat up while the other was down. We ran the danger of smashing into each other.

Finally, Bob and Alex pulled in the ropes the other craft had tossed to our side and they pulled them in. With the boats close together, we rode the same waves making it easier for Peter to jump over. He was blue from the cold and we slapped his body to motivate his circulation. Alex and Dave took him below to warm up, while Bob and I steered the Culver out to the open sea. I could not believe we had almost lost Peter. I was still in shock that our adventure had almost ended in such an early tragedy. I looked at Bob, but he was staring ahead, braced against the movement of the Culver, both of us soaked with rain and sea.

For over a week it was constant winter storms, rough seas, cold rain and wind. The Culver rode out the mountainous waves of a storm off Cape Hatteras. We had little to eat. The entrance to our galley was under water much of the time as the Culver’s bow bucked through the huge waves. In reinforcing our new cargo hatch, we had closed off the galley from below deck, but food had lost its importance in the storm.

Finally, on the seventh day we reached the Gulf Stream. It had a rejuvenating effect on all of us. We could cook again, and I saw to it that it was a well spiced and hearty stew with potatoes, and beans, and of course, salami. Eight days later we could see the lights of Miami on the 16th day glowing on the horizon.

In order to avoid paying for a harbor pilot--as we were classified as a cargo-carrying vessel--we decided to sneak into a yacht anchorage during the night. Unfortunately, we were unaware of a sandbar at the entrance to Biscayne Bay and the Culver went aground.

To pull the Culver off the sandbar we decided to use the old method of kedging. We lowered our Nova Scotia dory into the water, and then carefully put in the anchor. It was simple. The idea was to “row” the anchor out a distance and drop it into the deeper water. With the anchor firmly caught on the sea bottom, we could return aboard, and all hands would heave in the anchor and free the Culver. But the anchor proved too heavy, and Alex and I sank a hundred yards from the Culver. We fought to untangle ourselves from the towrope. When we surfaced, we heard Peter howling at us. The incoming tide had freed the Culver. The long and difficult journey from New York ended in laughter and a midnight skinny dip in Biscayne Bay.

There were some slick yachts anchored at Dinner Key. One in particular, the Constellation, was a great deluxe affair, and I rowed our dory to take a closer look at it. I was surprised when I

was invited aboard for a closer inspection. They gave me an extensive tour of the yacht. Afterward we sat in the “living room” and I played the part of the sea dog, stroking my black beard and smoking a thick Cuban cigar while telling sea stories.

My beard and the sea stories of my time aboard the Pamir circulated around the yacht club and pretty soon I was getting dinner invitations every night. Unfortunately, the heat of the tropics was too much for me and I was forced to shave my beard. It’s strange about appearances. When I shaved off my beard, the dinner invitations ceased.

Our green-painted hull and red sails made us conspicuous among the clean white pleasure crafts moored on the Dinner Key yacht basin off Coconut Grove. Within days rumors began to circulate that we were smuggling Chinese into South Florida, the illegal aliens of the day. Peter, who was the captain, gave an interview to the Miami News explaining the purpose of our freelance voyage. In response to the article in the newspaper, we were offered our fist commission: \$400 to carry a cargo destined for a place called Haiti.

We moved the Culver to the Port of Miami docks. The cargo was marked: “Glass, Silvera, El Rancho.” We found the cases suspiciously heavy and requested they be opened to make sure they were not guns. They were glass window jalousies. A monsieur Albert Silvera needed them delivered in Port-au-Prince immediately as he was rushing to complete El Rancho, Haiti’s first luxury hotel.

As we sailed away from Miami with our cargo of glass jalousies, Haiti was to be only a stop en route to the Panama Canal. I was anxious to get to the Pacific.

A week later, just after dusk, the large mountains of the Haitian shoreline appeared like a sharp, black silhouette etched against a deep purple sky. I felt a peculiar excitement in my gut and I moved to starboard to get a better look. I could feel something in the air. I could see small flickering lights from the peasants’ cooking fires. They seemed to float like thousands of fireflies against the dark shoreline. The breeze carried the tangy perfume of gayak, a precious hardwood burned slowly into charcoal under mounds of fresh earth.

I also recall the rhythmic beat of drums, their magnetic percussion drifting out to sea. Those drums from the coastal darkness of the Caribbean republic proved mysteriously bewitching. (I mistakenly thought that, as in Africa, they were a medium of communication. I later learned that the drumbeats were dedicated to Voodoo.)

I had only recently read the historical novel Lydia Bailey by Kenneth Roberts. The story was set in the time of Henry Christophe, King of North Haiti, during the nation’s bloody birth from the only successful slave revolt in history. In a 13-year war Haiti’s slaves had wrested control of France’s richest colony by defeating Napoleon Bonaparte’s legions. For me, not only were the drums a magnet but so were the people whose ancestors had accomplished such a seemingly impossible feat.

Looking back to that night in December 1949, I like to think that the drums’ hypnotic beat was beckoning me to Haiti. I felt an instant kinship with the island, an island like no other I have ever visited.

Slowly, the sound of beating drums came and went with the breeze. At first it came low and distant, like a soft heartbeat, and then it grew louder as the magnetic percussion drifted toward us from deep in the darkness of the Caribbean Republic.

The tin roof of the penitentiary absorbs the midday sun, turning my cell into a sweltering cubicle and causing the stench of urine and feces to rise and permeate the humid, stale air. I sit on the bare floor and rest my head in my hands. The cells on either side are silent, a sign that

many of those I had seen arrested the day before having not been brought here but to Fort Dimanche. But there are too many to be imprisoned there. Meaning one thing: summarily executed.

I hear the rattle of keys and boot steps on the concrete floor. A chill runs up my spine when I hear the lock on the door of my cell. A soldier steps in with a plate of rice and kidney beans, while an officer watches from the small peep hole in the door. I refuse the food.

“Eat it, blan, it’s good food, you have to eat something,” the soldier whispers, and then walks away.

During the time my sister-in-law had been in prison for funding an anti-Duvalier bomb plot, I had gotten to know prison guards who supplemented their minuscule salaries by performing small favors for prisoners. When the soldier returned to pick up the untouched food, I asked if I can go to the latrine. Perhaps I will meet someone on the way with some news of what is going on outside.

The soldier says nothing and walks away. A short time later I heard a loud grating noise. It’s the arrival of the latrine, a 55-gallon drum cut in half. It is smothered with flies and the incredible stench of human waste.

There is no one I can ask for help. I call out for the guard to take the latrine away, but no one comes. I am left alone with the unbelievable stench of the latrine while thousands of flies buzz all around the cell and land on my naked body.

I find a rusted Gillette razor blade resting on the crossbar of my cell door. I carefully take it between my thumb and forefinger and consider etching my name on the wall, but it seems useless. What’s the point of any of it, I think.

I close my eyes and try to think. I run scenarios over and over in my head. I try to convince myself that by now my wife has learned of my arrest from the local peasants and has gone into hiding. “They must know,” I say to myself and wonder if they have gone to the residence of the British ambassador or somewhere else. But my son does not have a passport, only a Haitian certificate of birth. Perhaps, I think, they are hiding at her sister’s home. Perhaps... and my mind wanders in circles, trying to find hope. Then, a short burst of gunfire startles me back to the real danger of the situation.

I stand and make an effort to see out the cell, but the door of the cellblock is made of flat iron with only a peep hole from which I occasionally noticed the eye of the guard checking in on me.

I think of all the contradictions of Haiti, and how it seduced me with its beauty and charm of its people, despite the danger that lurked in the shadows like the bitter aftertaste that hides behind a shot of Dominican rum.

On the morning of December 21, 1949 we docked in Port-au-Prince. It took us most of the day to clear customs and begin unloading our cargo for the El Rancho Hotel. I couldn’t wait to go ashore and explore this strange, colorful land. Finally, in the early evening I stepped off the old wooden wharf and into a world of grace and poetry. Haiti, I would find, was like a work of art.

From the sparkling blue bay, the city stretched like a mosaic of color against the green hills to the tall, majestic mountains. From the wharf I could see the twin-towered, peach-colored cathedral and the glistening white National Palace standing out against old, heavy commercial buildings that lined the seaside road. Behind them, colorful houses and small wooden lean-to’s rose up the hill, half-hidden among almond and mango trees and palms and bougainvillea’s that covered the gardens so that at times all I could see was just lush greenery and the rust colored corrugated tin roofs of the houses.

The distant sound of music led me down the new great seaside boulevard where I was quickly surrounded by half a dozen youth gesticulating and bursting with enthusiasm, telling me I was standing on the hallowed ground of the United Nations plaza. They were all well dressed and groomed for an evening out in the town. They were high school students testing their English, all of them proud of their country and its beauty. My German name was too intractable to them, so I was referred to simply as Blan. “Blan, look at this. This is Le Pavillon d’ Italie,” one explained, “They have a bar with an express coffee machine.” And he invited me to have a coffee.

“Blan,” another young man asked, “What do you think of it?”

“It is good Haitian coffee, Blan,” another said.

“It’s wonderful,” I said and they all laughed and applauded.

“Mezanmi, Blan,” one of them cried out, “it is good to have you in Haiti.”

“How long are you planning on staying here?” One of them asked.

I sipped my espresso and told him I would be leaving within a few days.

They all expressed disappointment. “I don’t know why anyone would want to go anywhere else,” one of my new friends declared.

“You know what I think, Blan?” one said shrugging his shoulders and following me out to the street. “I think if you, or anyone else, came to Haiti and stayed for enough time, you would never leave. I know if I came to Haiti,” he said poking his chest with his finger, “I would never leave. I love my country.”

We walked together, following the sound of the music; and the deeper I went into this bizarre, colorful metropolis, the more I realized Haiti was not like any other place I had ever been in. It was not Tahiti or any one of the other Pacific islands I had visited, where the isolation kept them apart from the rest of the world. Those were only small islands after all. Haiti was an independent nation, and it felt that way. Just off the boat I could feel the pride and individuality of the people. The youth were not throwing stones like in Abadan, Persia; or picking our pocket as in Casablanca or Tangiers. Nor, despite the poverty, were people suffering in quiet humiliation like in Franco’s Spain.

We headed up the new boulevard, which my new friends explained had been named after U.S. President Harry S. Truman. Each clamored to be heard, speaking English and French, but always falling back on their own language, Kreyol, challenging each other’s description of the new buildings.

“This is a World’s Fair,” one of them said. “It is the biggest in the world, too. President Dumarsais Estime built it.”

Then another spelled out the name for me to make sure I understood: “E- S- T- I- M- E.”

“Blan,” one of them said, “you look at this place. President Estime has turned this into a beautiful place. Before, this was very, very ugly fetid, trash.”

“Blan,” another of the youths said and pulled away his friend so he could take his place beside me. “Tell us, what do you think of Port-au-Prince?”

“I think it’s fabulous,” I said and they all applauded enthusiastically.

“There is nothing like this in the world,” one young man said. Then we all paused and joined a large group of Haitians, young and old, transfixed by the colors and music of a synchronized luminous fountain. An elderly Haitian broke our trance and proudly announced the fountain was called, *Fontaine des Nymphes d’èbène*.

I left my young friends at the fairground where the Chicago Company Ross-Manning had set up a circus with a freak show and fair rides.

The excitement of the city was palpable. The smell of cooking, grillot, fried pork and rice, and something sweet like fruit and rum and sea salt, all blended with a pleasant ocean breeze.

Just down the road, I could see the place for me: a giant barrel of rum the size of a small house. I took a seat at the bar inside the barrel and drank the best rum I had ever tasted for only 5 cents a shot. Right away the young attendant made me feel at home and was soon refilling my glass for free. He explained this was the Barbancourt Rum contribution to the “Exposition.” He said work had started in July of the previous year and deeply regretted that I had missed the grand inauguration two weeks ago. “The Cité Dumarsais Estimé,” he said, “had a magnificent opening. It was blessed by a Roman Catholic Cardinal, and we had a large Military parade, even U.S. Marines joined in and the big military airplanes, (B29 bombers), flew overhead.” Then he extended his arms out to mimic the airplanes.

As I made my way back to the Culver, I crossed the tracks to Croix des Bossales, adjacent to La Saline, where there was a large open air market. It was full of life and color. The market women wearing white Pillsbury flour sack dresses kept calling me “chérie” and offering tropical fruit and vegetables they had arranged in neat pyramid shaped piles. I bought bananas, oranges and mangos, and told them in my halting French that I would come back soon. They all screamed with laughter.

It was nighttime when I made it back to the wharf. As I approached the Culver I could see Alex standing on the deck. As I came closer, I noticed the expression of deep concern on his face.

“Shit, Bernard, some fucking thieves managed to make off with some of your stuff,” He said, his lisp almost a whistle in the night. “I’m sorry, mate.”

I dropped my bag of fruit, jumped onto the deck and raced to my cabin. I immediately reached into the space next to my bunk where I kept my clothes and few valuables, all the while saying to myself, “please don’t let them swipe my camera, please let me find the camera...”

But it was gone, and so was the Longine watch I had purchased in Chicago after the war. I did not have much, but what little I had was gone. I didn’t ask who was on watch. I blamed myself and cursed my own stupidity. I knew seaports were home to water rats – thieves – it was my fault. I remembered the Gurka soldiers in Abadan guarding the Anglo-Persian oil refineries during World War II. They sliced the heads off thieves with their kukris knives.

I didn’t know why, but the thieves had only hit me. Alex kept apologizing for what happened. I told him it was all right. They had only taken my camera and watch. But later, I thought of the photographs I was going to take. I could see the rusting hulks of warships at the entrance to Eniwetok in the Marshall Islands, the carcasses of war all over the mighty U.S. bases: Manus in the Admiralty Island and Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. And maybe the Caroline Islands, and Marianas and even Iwo Jima. The public would want to know what happened to these bases. But the Life magazine photo- essay I had been dreaming of was not going to be, unless of course, I found my camera. For some reason, it didn’t occur to me that I could buy another camera, perhaps even a better one than that old Zeiss Icon.

That night I lay awake in my bunk, thinking of ways I might retrieve the camera. My head was full of plans. I didn’t care about the watch and the other small items the thieves had taken. I was lucky they hadn’t found my emergency cash and passport. I decided that as soon as I had the opportunity, I would go into Port-au-Prince and look for the camera.

The following day we finished unloading our cargo. Our harbor duties and wharfage fees were exorbitant and quickly swallowed up our profit from the \$400 cargo fee.

In the evening we moved the Culver away from the old rotting wharf and anchored on the bay directly across from Captain Ace’s seaside restaurant.

We kept the 26-foot Nova Scotia dory in the water and used it to go ashore.

The next day I went ashore to look for my camera. There didn’t appear to be a thieves’ market. The landmark Iron Market on the Grand Rue was a bustling bazaar that appeared to sell everything. I also learned that the Haitian word for all cameras was Kodak, so I spread the word as best as I could that a blan--foreigner-- wanted to buy old Kodaks. I was shown an interesting collection of ancient unworkable cameras, but my Zeiss Icon was not among them.

I was extremely demoralized. Things did not appear to be working out. Without the camera I had no story for Life Magazine. Once again, I felt restless. The scenes of poverty in Spain kept coming back, every time more vivid than the next. It seemed to me, that after the horrible devastation of the war, people would find a way to come together and make a better world. Perhaps I was naive or too idealistic. But I honestly felt that I needed to do something that would help make a difference.

Back on board the Culver, Peter was leaning over a large pot in the galley. “You boys are in for a real treat,” he said, “I bought this turtle from a fisherman outside Captain Ace’s”.

He placed the pot on the center of the table and filled our bowls with a foul green soup. “This turtle soup would cost a pretty penny at the best European restaurants,” he said.

“Oh yeah,” Dave said, “Welcome to Chez le Culver.”

“No luck with your camera?” Alex asked.

I shook my head and tried the soup. It tasted horrible, but I wasn’t hungry.

“Don’t worry mate,” Peter said, “we’ll wait for an out bound cargo and sail off again. In a few months you’ll be able to afford a better camera, you’ll see.”

I knew Peter had a wife at home and that he was concerned with the cargo carrying business. But now that I saw it as such, I felt discouraged. Perhaps it was my old fear of being tied down to a job, or perhaps it was the green, god-awful soup; or the loss of my camera. I did not want to continue on as a sailor. I was yearning for something more meaningful.

“I’m leaving you,” I said without looking up.

“What?” Alex cried, “What are you talking about, Bernard?”

“I’ve decided not to go on,” I said and cited the loss of my camera as a reason to stay, but I very well knew it was more than that.

I had made my decision. In the morning, with the furry taste of the horrible green soup still in my mouth, I bid goodbye to my friends and the Culver. I took a bumboat to the wharf where Haitian youngsters offered to carry my sea bag. It was light with only the few belongings I had left. It had been a great adventure, but I had decided to return to England and admit failure to Sir Philip. In the meantime, I thought I should remain in Haiti for a few days and learn more about this intriguing country.

I walked to the British Consulate where we had registered upon our arrival and waited almost until noon to plead my case.

“Shan’t be a problem, my dear chap,” the consul said, “You’ll need a Haitian visitor’s visa, of course. I can fix it for you.” But he had no suggestions as to where I should look for my stolen camera. “I don’t think you’ll find it, quite honestly. It’s probably been sold by now.”

Upon the recommendation of the Consul, I found lodging at the small Pension, Mon Rêve next to the Paramount Movie house on the Champ de Mars, not far from the National Palace. I wired my family in New Zealand for money only to learn that Haiti was a dollar country. My country, like Britain, was a sterling country and under strict monetary controls. No money would be forthcoming from home, and cabling friends in the U.S. entailed a long wait.

At least for the time being, I didn't have the money for a boat ticket to Europe. I was marooned in Haiti.

I soon learned that Haiti was experiencing a renaissance of sorts. Port-au-Prince was celebrating its bicentennial. The Haitian capital sparkled with the festivities of its World's Fair. There was magic in the air, not only because of the excellent rum, the country's distinctive culture permeated the entire city. There was a poet's corner's, bar with a stage. Ti Roro, a famous Haitian drummer, provided a background beat at the Theatre de Verdure, which featured the country's National Folkloric troupe, dancing and singing in traditional Haitian colors.

I relaxed and enjoyed five-cent shots of rum while listening to members of Haiti's bourgeoisie discussing why their country's president should be dumped. I quickly learned that politics was a major preoccupation of every literate person. Their very lives seemed to depend on politics, which was divided along class lines. The upper class, or aristocracy, referred to itself as the elite or bourgeoisie. The middle-class was simply La Classe. It was small and searching for its place in the Haitian social scene. And finally, there was the peasant class, as they were called, which made up the majority of the country's population, which at the time numbered around four million.

I found Haitians were universally friendly. People were always smiling, greeting me with, "bon jour blan." I walked everywhere, and the more I saw of Haiti and Haitians the more I became infatuated with the place. Despite the imbalance in their society, I did not detect any anger or envy as I had experienced in other poor countries like Persia, Aden and Spain. The passivity of the poor was offset by their dignity. Their capacity to laugh at adversity made them even more special. Such qualities among the peasant class made it easy for them to shrug off the arrogance of those at the top of the social ladder. In the countryside there was something deeply spiritual about the people. Their salutations, "honor, respect" were those of an equal in the divine scheme of things. I was to hear "Bon Dieu bon" - "God is good," so many times that I thought it was a daily prayer instead of a familiar excuse.

At night, Port-au-Prince was bewitching. Marchandes sat with their wares before little flickering oil lamps that gave off a wonderful mystic atmosphere. The Palmistes section of the World's Fair exploded with people. The setting was enchanting, with hundreds of tall royal palms and small fountain-like canals, lit by electric lights. There were very few automobiles, and it was safe to walk the streets at any time of day or night. Haiti was a place where I felt truly free.

The fact was that the country was seducing me. I soon gave up the search for my camera and settled into the laid back tropical atmosphere. The Mon Rêve was a lovely, 15 room gingerbread. It was what the Grand Hotel Oloffson later became a place full of happy- go-lucky American artists, bohemians, shady businessmen and lost souls. The pension was \$5 a day with meals and the rum was mostly free. Members of the U.S. Embassy - it was on the other side of the Champ de Mars - would habitually drop by after work for a rum punch in the little garden after work.

By the following week, I found it financially beneficial to move to L'Avenir, a much smaller, rickety gingerbread mansion squeezed between two larger houses at the bottom of Avenue John Brown. The price was a dollar a day with meals. My room was just the basics with a good bed and an outdoor shower in the back yard, but the corpulent owner, Kè Popoz, was a wonderful host.

And the food, not just at L'Avenir, but everywhere I ate, was a gastronomical delight. The crisp and crunchy grillot, turkey tassot, pumpkin soup, sweet fried plantains and donjon mushroom rice was an exotic journey into something African and French and entirely unique.

And there was always an overabundance of fresh fruits and vegetables. Even the food at the street market stands was an improvement over the bland food of London's Lyons Corner House Restaurant where steak was whale and "chip butties" was a French fries sandwich.

In the late afternoons the few tables on the verandah of L'Avenir filled up with professors from Lycée Alexandre Pétiou. I would sometimes sit and listen to these interesting characters discussing philosophy, politics, history, and Greek and Latin while Kè Popoz waved and identified the drivers of the few automobiles that drove past, most of them members of Haiti's bourgeoisie, making their way up the mountain to their homes in Pétiou-Ville.

From L'Avenir it was only a brief walk to the Mon Rêve where I made my headquarters, and where one evening the U.S. Embassy's commercial attaché invited a group of us to a Christmas party at his residence just off the road to Petion-Ville at a place called Bourdon.

Unlike the old gingerbread and French colonial architecture of Port-au-Prince, many of the houses above the city in Petion-Ville were modern structures built of concrete and a pink stone that was quarried in the mountains. They were designed with open balconies and large windows to allow the air to circulate.

The commercial Attaché's house was built onto the side of the hill, and cocktails were served in the large living room. Despite the casual atmosphere, servants in white jackets walked around with trays of canapés and drinks. I made my way out to the balcony and looked down at the city in the mystical Haitian twilight. The smoke from charcoal fires gave the place a peculiar haze that partially covered the twinkling of the few electric lights of the city. Again, I heard the rhythmic drumming in the distance and the faraway conversations and laughter of the Haitian peasants. Then a pair of little white poodles found my ankles and began barking and circling around me, breaking my trance and bringing me back to the party.

"They like you," the commercial attaché's wife said and picked up one of her poodles.

"I have a way with animals," I said.

"Yes, I'm sure," she laughed. "And they have a way of annoying our guests." She held the dog in her arms and fed it a small morsel of a canapé.

"They're not a bother," I said, "I like dogs."

"So do I," she said, "They were a gift from Eva Perón, you know."

"Really?"

"My husband was posted in Argentina before we came here," she said and put her dog down and now the two poodles licked each other's faces trying to eat the remaining crumbs of canapé.

"So how do you like our little tropical paradise?" she asked.

"It's charming," I said.

She gave me a strange look, like maybe I was not supposed to find Haiti that way. "You're staying at the Mon Rêve?"

"Well, no," I said. "I just moved down the road to L'Avenir. I'm trying to conserve my funds."

"My," she said and covered her mouth with her hand. "How exotic."

Just then her husband stepped up and joined our conversation. "Hello," he said and put his arm around her waist.

"Dear," she said, "you must do something to help Bernie. Do you know where he's staying?"

"Of course, at the Mon Rêve," he said.

"Oh, no, dear. He's moved down to L'Avenir. You must do something to help him."

"But I like it fine there," I said honestly.

A servant paused carrying a tray of martinis. We each took one and I took a long sip of the cool gin. The conversation was making me a little uncomfortable.

“Well,” he said and raised his glass. “Your luck’s about to change, Bernie. Meet me at the Mon Rêve tomorrow evening.”

Our glasses touched and his wife winked at me, “Isn’t Haiti wonderful?”

The following evening, I met the commercial attaché at the Mon Rêve and we drove out in his Studebaker to the new, part government owned, Casino National on the seashore and Harry S. Truman Blvd, across from the big yellow arch of the Rond Point of Liberté.

The casino had a sheltered entrance and a spacious gaming room. There was a nightclub area with a big open-air dance floor, a bandstand and plenty of seating. On Saturday nights it was the “in” place where the city’s well to do flock to dance the popular Méringues and Mambos under the stars.

I followed the attaché across the smoke-filled gaming room to a back table where two elderly men dressed in gray, pinstripe suits and sad, difficult faces were looking over papers between sips of scotch. Right away I recognized the men as characters from the Damon Runyan books I read during the war. Italian-American gamblers from Brooklyn and the Bronx. They spoke with heavy accents and low, raspy voices. On the table was a deck of cards, a pack of Pall Mall cigarettes and a pair of spectacles.

“Hello, Tony,” the attaché said and shook hands with one of the men. “This is the fellow I told you about. He’s a good sort.”

“Bernard Diederich,” I introduced myself and shook hands with both men.

They asked us to sit, and Tony motioned for a waiter. He stroked his chin and looked me over for a moment, then glanced at his partner. “Whatta ya think, Joe?”

Joe pulled out the short, fat cigar from his mouth, and in a heavy Italian American accent asked me if I spoke French.

“I get along all right,” I said without thinking that perhaps I was exaggerating.

“That’s good,” Tony said, “and I like that limey accent.”

“Sure, but what’s he gonna do?” Joe said and he replaced his cigar between his lips and moved it from one side of his mouth to the other.

A waiter served us rum punch. Tony opened his pack of Pall Malls and offered them across the table. He fished one out for himself, then paused and pointed at me with the unlit cigarette. “You got any skills; you know anything about gambling?” he asked.

“I’m sorry, I really don’t,” I said, but added that I was honest.

Joe glanced at Tony. “He could take care of the booze,” he said. Tony stared at me for a moment. “You like to drink?” he asked. I looked at the commercial attaché and back at Tony. “Yes, some.” “He’s honest,” Joe laughed and offered me his hand across the table. “You got yourself a job kid.” The commercial attaché patted me on the back and we all shook hands. Tony finally lit up his Pall Mall. “You start tomorrow at eight,” he said blowing a cloud of blue smoke across the table.

“Great. But what’s my job?” I asked.

“Never mind your job,” Joe said. “It’s a good job.”

“You got a suit?” Tony asked.

“Well, no,” I said. “It was stolen in Miami.”

“That’s all right kid,” Tony said. “Go over to Coles and get yourself an outfit. Tell them to bill the Casino. Now go walk around and get to know the place. You’re gonna be the casino’s maître d’ booze.”

The commercial attaché and I walked around the casino sipping our rum punch.

“Things are looking up, eh?” he said.

“Yes, thanks,” I said. “But what’s a maître d’booze?”

“Ah, Bernie, you just landed the best job in Port-au-Prince and you don’t even know it. You’re in charge of the casino’s booze.”

My friend was right. I had accidentally landed an almost perfect job. I worked at night, so I was free to explore the city during the day. And the night club attracted the capital’s beautiful people. It was impossible to ignore the lovely young women who arrived in parties for an evening of fun and dance. Whenever I took a break from the smoke-filled gaming room, I would stand and watch the dancing. The casino had its own full-size orchestra. Unfortunately, I couldn’t join the dancing because I was working.

Tony and Joe had their hands full training Haitian croupiers. They had brought in a group from Havana to help them, but Joe couldn’t seem to get away. He was always keeping a close watch over the games and his trainees.

Tony, who was older and well into his fifties, was more relaxed. He took time to show me who the new arrivals were. He pointed out the regulars who would sit at a table all night long, and the government people I needed to watch out for.

And I loved all of it. Port-au-Prince was like a small town. The casino allowed me to become acquainted with the community’s movers and shakers at the top of Haiti’s strange, color-coded social pyramid. I also learned that the upper class was not rich by American or British standards, and that most of the habitual gamblers were not Haitian, but resident Syrian textile importers.

My job offered me a lot of liberty. I cruised around the blackjack and roulette tables greeting the regulars and dispensing free alcoholic beverages to the high stakes rollers; big time gamblers who flew in from New York, Miami and Havana, and to my new friends. I wrote to Sir Philip Williams and my family back in England telling them the job had frightened me at first, but soon I realized its advantages.

I leaned that French was of limited use in Haiti so I enrolled in Creole classes at the American Institute where I befriended the American and Haitian teachers who became my guests on weekends at the Casino. With authority to dispense drinks to select customers free of charge, I soon had a lot of new friends who didn’t even gamble.

When the Casino closed in the early morning hours, Tony, Joe and the other owners, professional gamblers all, would take off their jackets and sit down to play poker.

After work I usually took a cab back to the L’Avenir. Haitian cabs were a communal thing, and always an adventure. You got in and told the driver your address. The driver, who already had two or three other people in the car, decided on the best route. Inevitably you had to trip around town and the suburbs while he dropped off the other fares before being dropped off at your own destination. All the taxi drivers had the habit of switching off their engines to save gasoline, and not only when they were going downhill, they often went uphill too. Still, the service was cheap, and if you were not in a hurry it could be a real learning experience. One night I decided to walk home. The sun had not come up yet and the city had a soft, predawn darkness. I walked up the Rue des Casernes. There was no one about. It was very quiet, even the drums were silent, only the occasional rooster crowing in the distance.

I walked past the ministry building and marveled at the ghostly image of the National Palace which seemed to glow in the darkness. Then I heard a loud voice call out behind me, “En nou we, Blan.”

“Let’s go Blan,” the voice ordered.

I was startled, but before I could turn, I felt something jab in the middle of my back. “En nou we!”

“Let’s go,” the voice called again and pushed me forward. I stepped ahead and turned to see it was a soldier pointing an M-1 Garand rifle at my back. Blood rushed to my head and shock quickly gave way to anger.

As the soldier prodded me on, I thought of turning on him. He was strong, but only half my size. I was sure I could knock him down with a good right. But as we crossed the street, I noticed another soldier standing behind a bush, his rifle raised and pointing in my direction. Then I saw two other soldiers looking at me from behind the green iron fence of the National Palace. I quickly gave up any thought of escaping and allowed the soldier to lead me to the police headquarters. The old wooden building had a large holding cell at the entrance where thieves were held behind iron bars. The place stank of shit and urine. Soldiers and police were busy rushing in and out and checking their weapons.

Lieut. Lanor Augustin, a lanky man who knew me from the casino, was the duty officer. When he saw me, he dismissed the soldier who brought me in, and patted me on the back.

“Ah, Blan,” he laughed, “what are you doing out here in the middle of the night?”

“I was just walking home from work. What’s going on?”

“Ah, well,” he interrupted, “you know Haiti. We have a report that opponents of Estimé are plotting some trouble. We’ve been put on alert.”

“Is it serious?” I asked. This was my first encounter with Haitian guns and politics. The easy-going place I had come to know had a quiet, unsettling current running under its surface.

“We don’t know,” Augustin said, “but we have to be prepared.” He walked me to the entrance and pointed in the direction opposite the National Palace. “Take some advice from me, Blan. Don’t walk near the palace at night, compran?”

I nodded and walked away having learned a valuable lesson.

The following night when I saw Lt. Augustin at the casino, I poured him a glass of the casino’s best Scotch.

“On the house,” I said.

“You know the threat was very serious,” Augustin said. “Really, what happened?”

“We found out that Trujillo, (the Dominican Republic’s dictator, Rafael Trujillo Molina), was helping a group of Haitian exiles. He gave them guns and passage through the border. They had plans to assassinate Estimé and all the top military officers. Even me, perhaps.”

“Did you get them?”

“Unfortunately, we did not. It’s over for now, but you know, that is the Haitian cycle,” he said and turned his index finger in the air.

Strangely, this incident did little to dissuade me about Haiti.

To the contrary, I was more intrigued with the little country. I knew I had a lot to learn, so I began to frequent La Caravelle, a bookshop on the Rue Bonne Foi, and read everything I could about Haiti, its history and its politics.

Unfortunately, just as things were beginning to feel right, my time ran out. Lt. Lucien Scott, the officer in charge of immigration, stopped me in the street one afternoon and warned me about my situation. “Blan,” he said, “your papers are not in order. Yesterday you had 24 hours to leave the country, but I could not find you. Now your time is up. You have to go.”

I had been in Haiti five weeks without a visa. The British Consul had done nothing for me.

I went to see Jean-Claude Léger, a young lawyer I had been introduced to a few weeks earlier and told him about my predicament. He said the easiest thing for me to do was to apply for a Haitian visa in Jamaica. My Casino bosses were sympathetic and paid me what they described as a travel bonus.

I took Jean-Claude’s advice and flew to Kingston on February 2, 1950. I checked into the small Melrose Hotel at the top of Duke Street. I was so infuriated about being kicked out of Haiti; I was determined to return.

The following morning, before heading out to the Haitian Consulate, I walked out on the small verandah of the Melrose and ordered a cup of tea. I sat on one of the rocking chairs beside a well-dressed, elderly man whom I greeted with a nod.

“Ah, good morning,” he said, “You’re not with customs, are you?”

“Sorry, I’m not. I’m a guest.”

“My apologies, I didn’t know there was anyone else staying here.”

“I arrived last night,” I said and stirred milk and sugar into my tea.

“I’ve got some boxes for my son. They’re tied up at the port. I’m waiting for them to clear customs,” he said. Then he looked at me again. “Did I detect an Australian accent perhaps?”

“No, but you’re close,” I said, “New Zealand.”

“You don’t say. I’m from Tasmania,” he said and stretched out his hand. “Theodore Flynn.”

I introduced myself and apologized for my gruff behavior. “I just got kicked out of Haiti,” I explained.

“Nothing criminal, I hope?”

“No, no. I overstayed my visa. Bloody British Consul never arranged it like he said he would.”

Mr. Flynn laughed. “They never do, do they? I’ve been waiting on the customs office for three days.”

“Not a bad place to wait,” I said.

“No, not at all,” he said, “but I wouldn’t mind getting on.”

“I know what you mean. I’ve dealt with customs people all over the world.”

“Really? What line of work are you in?”

“I’m a sailor,” I said and explained to Mr. Flynn about my leaving New Zealand on the Pamir, serving aboard a tanker during the war and my stint with Alex and Peter aboard the Culver. “But for some reason, I decided to stay in Haiti.”

“You sound like my son,” he said. “He was just as restless. He and some friends sailed around New Guinea for a while, and then he worked at a Tobacco farm and went prospecting for gold. Of course, that was all before he got into acting.”

“He’s an actor?” I said, and just as I said it I realized I was talking to Errol Flynn’s father.

“Yes, in Hollywood. You know Errol Flynn?” he said matter of fact.

“Yes, of course. I’ve seen his movies. Interesting. Are you in the movie business as well?”

“God no,” he laughed, “I’m a biologist. I just retired as chair of Zoology at Queen’s University in Ireland.”

“Are you retiring in Jamaica?”

“No, no. I’m visiting my son. He’s got a plantation east of Port Antonio.”

“I see,” I said. “Do you have plans to return to Australia?”

“No, I don’t get down that way anymore,” he said. “How about yourself?”

“Not really. It’s a long way down,” I said lightheartedly. “I’ve been kind of drifting after the war. It’s odd though, what I really want is to get back to Haiti.”

“You like it there, ey?”

“Yes. There’s something about the place,” I said, “And they have the best rum I’ve ever tasted.”

“Yes, indeed,” Mr. Flynn laughed, “you sound just like my son.”

We laughed and I finished my tea, then I glanced at my watch. “I better go. The consulate should be opening soon. It was a pleasure meeting you, sir.”

“Indeed, it was. Good luck to you, lad.”

I took a taxi to the Haitian consulate. They telegraphed my request for a visa and much to my surprise; it was approved within forty-eight hours. The following day I wired my family in New Zealand for some money before flying back to Port-au-Prince by Pan American Clipper. As the plane prepared to land at Bowen Field I could feel my heart racing. At that moment I knew I had fallen in love with Haiti.

It was all so long ago. How could this come to be my end? What would Sir Philip think if he knew of my plight? What if I had stayed aboard the ship with Peter and Alex?

How many hours, days, weeks, have I been here? This horrible terror I feel for my beloved Ginette and our little boy is wrenching my gut. My body is trembling with thirst. My mind drifts. Why the hell did I stay in Haiti? Why didn’t I return to England?

I am aware of only one breath at a time. How many are left in me? The interminable silence fills me with dread. The isolation is unbearable.

Thoughts race through my weary mind. At which time could my life have taken a different path? My beautiful New Zealand life, my family, my friends; how easy they lived. How far it all is from the political upheaval here.

And Papa Doc. I always knew there were two sides to him. My God, at what point does a leader become so obsessed with power? Are the Haitians right, is there really a spell cast on the presidential seat?

I spent so much time with Duvalier, talking about his beloved Haiti and all his idealistic goals for the people and the country. He was so mild mannered, so polite. He appeared at my bedside after my appendix operation. He summoned me to the Palace to brief him on Fidel Castro after I returned from Cuba in fifty-nine. At times he appears genuine, but he’s guilty of such incomprehensible evil.

Haiti was booming. Tourists from all over the world were experiencing the beauty of this tiny nation despite the political upheaval and the growing violence. I remember Marlon Brando trying to come here incognito with his underage girlfriend. Irving Berlin, Arthur Miller, Truman Capote, Noel Coward, Martine Carol and so many more.

And I’ll never forget Anne. She came to Haiti to take a break from her performance on the New York stage in “The Miracle Worker.” Of course, I knew none of this when I first saw this beautiful dark haired, dark eyed young woman on the patio of the Splendid Hotel. She was admiring the exotic flora in the garden. I greeted her as I walked up, and she asked me if I knew the names of the flowers. Anne Bancroft, she introduced herself and the days and weeks that followed were some of the most glorious and passionate times of our lives.

And here I am because I wanted to come back. I wanted something, I wanted Haiti.

As soon as I got back to Haiti, I stopped in at Jean-Claude Leger’s office to thank him for his help. Jean-Claude was sitting behind his desk, talking with a tall, well-built American whom he introduced as Allan Benson.

I took a seat next to Benson, and Jean-Claude told him my story.

Benson, a likable man in his late twenties, explained he had been medically unfit for service during the war, so he became a shoe salesman. Now he had plans to launch a newspaper in Haiti.

“I was thinking of an English-language newspaper,” he said and added that he had the funds to support the venture. “It’ll be simple. We can get news from the States from the wires and reprint it.” He had ten thousand dollars in cash which he deposited with Jean-Claude.

“I told Allan it was a very good idea. What do you think, Bernie?” Jean-Claude said. “Sounds great,” I said and turned to Benson. “There are plenty of Americans coming and going. And Haiti is a fascinating place. I don’t think you would lack for colorful stories.”

Jean-Claude laughed. “Bernie’s crazy for Haiti.”

“The Port-au-Prince Times,” Benson sang, “How about that?” “Look,” Jean-Claude said, “why don’t you and Bernie work on this together.” He turned to me and smiled. “Or are you going back to work at the casino?”

“Well, I don’t really know…” I said, intrigued by the idea of running a newspaper. It was certainly more to my liking than dispensing libations to the casino’s favorite patrons.

Benson clapped his hands and leaned forward on his chair, “How about it, Bernard. It won’t pay much, but I can offer you room and board in my house and the use of the jeep.”

So that afternoon I moved into the large, two story gingerbread house that Benson had rented in the Pacot neighborhood. Every morning I rose before dawn, traveled across town in the wartime Jeep to Le Matin where we job-printed the new Port-au-Prince Times. I loved the work and Benson loved to relax at the El Rancho hotel and date pretty tourists.

The newspaper business in Haiti was cluttered with dailies and weeklies that came and went depending on the politics of the moment. Compared with other countries I had visited, I found Haiti’s dailies a sad reflection of the country’s high illiteracy rate.

Despite their limited circulation, most newspapers had a considerable impact on Haitian politics. All the dailies were well read by the politicians and the business community, as well as local intellectuals. I soon found out that newspaper publishers didn’t become wealthy from their newspapers, but from Haitian politics. Government assistance, and often a government sinecure, supplemented their advertising revenue.

What the papers printed and didn’t print was important. They were essentially journals of opinion, or as the French say, “engagé.” Aspiring writers, poets and politicians begged and some even paid to have their opinions published in their pages.

Early one morning I was sitting at the print shop proofreading the day’s edition of the Port-au-Prince Times when I felt the rumbling of a human avalanche. I ran outside and saw a large mob, chanting and gesticulating down the Rue Americaine before Le Matin. It was my introduction to a Haitian mob in action.

I stood on the front step of the building with the linotypist, who told me this wasn’t the famous, organized rouleau compresseur, (steamroller) of loyal partisans of opposition politician Professor Daniel Fignolè.

This sea of prancing protesters was defenders of incumbent President Estimé. They sang the Creole song of the moment: “Kimbe- o-pa lague,” (hold on tight, don’t let go) followed by the chant, “God in heaven sent us this president.”

I hopped in the jeep and followed the mob to the stately gingerbread mansion that housed the Senate. The preceding April 18th, the Haitian Senate had rejected the Lower House’s motion to change the constitution and permit Estimé to succeed himself as president. Now, the political invective had moved to the streets.

As I maneuvered the jeep through the mob, I was mistakenly recognized as a diplomat. The protesters parted and courteously made way, allowing me to enter the once stately mansion. Looters carrying desks and chairs paused and looked at me, then went on about their business. But this was not considered looting. It was called *dechoukaj*, (uprooting) a tradition older than the Republic itself.

By the afternoon, President Estimé publicly congratulated his mob for its “eloquent attitude” and “political maturity.” Then he formally dissolved the now furniture-less Senate, which had refused to do his bidding.

Early the next morning, I drove Allan Benson to the offices of Franck Magloire, the proprietor of *Le Matin*.

“Wait here for me,” Benson said, “I’ll be right back.”

I leaned back on the seat and watched a couple of shirtless boys running barefoot down the street trying to fly a small paper kite. They were not having much success but were having a great time running up and down the street. Farther down, a group of peasant women riding donkeys loaded with produce rode in line on their way to the market. The sun had just cleared the mountains. It was getting hot.

About fifteen minutes later Benson appeared carrying a brown envelope.

“Let’s go,” he said. “Where to?”

“The Caserne Dessalines,” he said, and then he leaned his head down out of the wind and lit a cigarette.

“What’s up?” I said. I could tell something unusual was going on. Benson had been uncommonly quiet, and I wanted to know why I was driving him to the army barracks. This was not routine.

“Nothing, Bernie. We’re just running a newspaper, you know.”

It was only a few blocks to the Caserne Dessalines. I pulled up in a shady spot across the street and watched Benson walk right past the guards like he owned the place. Five minutes later he came out and walked back to the Jeep smiling. “Good,” he said and slapped me on the back. “Is it time for a rum punch yet?”

“What’s going on Alan,” I said, “what was in the envelope?”

“Relax, Bernie, relax.”

“Come on, Alan, don’t tell me to relax. What’s going on.”

Benson leaned back on the seat and crossed his arms over his chest. “It was just a copy of *Le Moniteur*,” he said.

Le Moniteur was the official government gazette which had published President Estimé’s damming decree in its entirety.

I became angry. I knew people associated me with Benson. Whatever he was doing, I would be automatically involved. I was beginning to distrust the former shoe salesman, if indeed that was what he was. It didn’t make sense for him to be running errands to the barracks at a time when the political situation appeared so fragile.

“Tell me what’s going on, Alan.”

“Jesus, Bernie, relax. I was just delivering the paper to Col. Magloire,” he said.

I knew Paul Magloire, no relation to the publisher of *Le Matin*, was the leader of the impatient military group. I didn’t know what Benson was up to, but it was no good.

“Why, what for?” I asked.

“For nothing,” Benson said. “I was just doing a friend a favor, okay?”

I looked at Alan. I knew he wouldn’t tell me more.

“Look,” he said after a while, “let’s just forget about it. It’s nothing. Maybe after you’re done delivering the paper we can meet at the El Rancho and have a drink, eh?”

I said nothing.

“Come on, how about it Bernie?”

Within days of our little delivery the army began to move against Estimé. The mob was back in the streets; but this time their chant had changed to “Abas Estimé!” (“Down with Estimé”) It was an important lesson in Haitian politics: Don’t believe everything you hear or see. Although, there was nothing spontaneous or menacing about this mob because they had been paid in advance to orchestrate the protest.

The only way any ordinary Haitian could rationalize his country’s politics was to place it, like most things, on a religious plane under the fatalistic philosophy: “What God gives, God takes.”

And on May 10, 1950, God took. Estimé was overthrown by the military and forced into exile. U.S. Marine trained army Col. Paul Eugene Magloire, a black member of the military junta, stepped in to replace the president. And for the moment, the Caribbean Black Republic of Haiti appeared aglow with promise. Hope for the country soared as Colonel Magloire vowed to continue Estimé’s important structural changes - bringing his fellow blacks into the bureaucracy and fostering the nascent tourist industry.

This question of color puzzled me. If this was the Black Republic, I thought, shouldn’t blacks of every hue - dark, mulatto, light - be considered equal?

A few days later, after printing and delivering the *Port-au-Prince Times* to the usual hotels and tourist centers, I stopped in at Emmanuel (Mano) Ambroise’s appliance store on Grand Rue to sell an advertisement and catch up on some gossip. Mano was a good friend, and as I walked in, I found him and our mutual friend, Roger Dorsinville, leaning over the sales counter talking animatedly about the recent changes in the government. Roger had been Estimé’s chief of cabinet and consul in New York. Like most Haitians he was consumed by politics.

When Mano saw me walk in, he interrupted Roger and raised his hand in greeting. “Bam nuvell ou, blan,” he said. “Are you here to interview me?”

I laughed and told him it was time to renew his advertisement in the *Port-au-Prince Times*.

“Wait a moment,” Roger said, “why should Mano advertise with that newspaper. You think the tourists who read that newsletter will come here and buy a sewing machine or a stove?” Roger loved to incite a good discussion.

“I have a special for the summer months,” I said.

We all laughed and Roger said he had read the last copy of the *Times* and did not find a single story of interest in its pages. “I want to know what is happening here, in my country,” he said.

“Come on, the *Times* is a good paper. All the tourists read it,” I said.

Mano laughed, “Even you don’t believe that, Bernie.”

Mano was right. I did not believe in my own product. It was just a newsletter with reprinted wire service stories from the States. I always thought the *Port-au-Prince Times* could be so much more.

“I think if someone went through all the trouble of starting a newspaper, they would at least put out a good product. Something interesting and stimulating.” Roger said.

“I know,” I said. “You know what I was thinking? Haiti could use a newspaper with a lot of illustrations and photographs so all the people who can’t read can still get the news.”

“It’s a good idea, Bernie, but it won’t work,” Mano laughed. “At least from a business standpoint. I mean how would you print all the illustrations?”

“Besides,” Roger said, “You’re a writer, no?”

“Well,” I said, “what Haiti could use is a newspaper that contributes to the community. It could do a lot of good. Imagine a newspaper that can bring the classes together, or at least help them communicate, understand each other. I don’t see why there should even be a question of differences in color and class.”

“Ah, Bernie. You’re too idealistic,” Roger said.

“You keep talking like that, my friend,” Mano laughed, “And people are going to think you’re a communist.”

We all laughed.

“It’s not communism,” I said and looked at Roger. “I’m only talking of being fair. Why can’t you have a free press and the kind of journalism that deals with issues that affect all Haitians, not just the upper class? This is a fascinating country, but all I ever read in the newspapers is politics and business.”

“Listen, Bernie, if you really feel that way, why don’t you start your own newspaper. You talk and talk. Why don’t you do something about it,” Mano said.

There was a long silence. Roger could see I was being challenged. And I knew Mano was right. This was not the first time I got on my soap box and went on about what the best newspaper for Haiti should be like. We talked about it every time we got together.

“You should do it, Bernie,” Roger said after a moment. “Or would you rather work for Benson and his little tourist newsletter?”

I walked out of Manos’ store without selling any ads, but my mind was full of ideas. If I truly believed in an honest English language newspaper that covered Haiti instead of just reprinting the wires, I should do something about it. And if I started my own paper, it could be whatever I wanted it to be.

It was only a matter of time before I became fed up with Benson and quit the Port-au-Prince Times. As soon as I quit I was offered a job by a retired American admiral who invited me to his experimental kanaf plantation in the Artibonite Valley. (The cultivation of kanaf, a plant that produces a fiber used for rope-making, collapsed when nylon came onto the market.)

I loved the Haitian countryside. I had traveled to a banana plantation in Jean-Rabel a few months earlier, to look over a job offer. Now, the admiral and I took a long, one-day drive in a jeep through the gravel and dirt roads where Haiti’s major river, the Artibonite, cut down from the mountains, across the large flat valley and out to sea in Gonaives. The valley was yellow and dry and covered with thorny Bayahonde trees. Scattered around the plain were lakou’s, (family compounds similar to the ones in Africa).

The lakou’s had about a dozen kay pay (straw and mud huts). Chickens scratched the parched earth, black pigs slept in the shade and goats chewed the leaves of bayahonde bushes. Along the river, topless women washed their clothes and tossed them over bushes to dry, while the men tended their small plots of petit mil or corn.

One evening I heard drumming in the distance. I walked out of the admiral’s plantation and followed the drumming to a lakou’s near the river where the peasants were involved in a Vodou ritual. I was quickly welcomed and passed a bottle of trempe, a raw rum spiced with herbs that tasted clean and strong, and burned my lips all the way down my throat and into my bloodstream so that I could feel it tickle the tip of my fingers.

Every bone in my body could feel the intense, raw power of the seven drummers, their hands wailing against the stretched goatskin. Everyone moved to the rhythm, sometimes just swaying back and forth, lifting their arms, waving, rocking, singing; sometimes they danced, gyrating their bodies, hopping and pouncing and howling and crying, “Ayibobo!”

As the night wore on and more trempe was consumed, the dancing became more frantic. It was beautiful and very natural for those who allowed themselves to be consumed by their own emotions, surrendering their bodies to a higher power. I knew little about the ritual, but nothing about it appeared evil. Indeed, it looked like a joyous occasion. I was able to discern that this was not an actual ceremony, but a family affair honoring a member of the lakou who had died. Vodou, I learned, was still as essential to the lakou as were the wooden pylon, and pestle used to crush corn and coffee.

Upon my return from the Artibonite, I became determined to start my newspaper. During lunch hour and in the evenings, I went to the Thorland Club, a chic small hotel four miles south of the capital, where I was joined by architect Albert Mangonès, who was working on renovations at the Thorland, and artist Roland Dorcély who was painting a large mural at the Club’s entrance.

We met at one of the bungalows and worked on making the Haiti Sun a reality. Dorcély designed the layout and masthead of the newspaper. We created a social column named The Beachcomber to entice the literate rich, announcing their birthdays, baptisms, receptions, and weddings. Their travels would be noted and scandals would be carefully hinted at to satisfy the community’s born gossips. A page would be devoted to book and art reviews and commentary, while Personality of the Week would be a column about people--common people and the well-known, their trades, their misfortunes and their glories. The Haiti Sun would interview them, let them speak in their own way, give them a voice, present their biographies and publish their photograph. The column “Down Every Rue,” would depict all 40 trades, and Vodou would be featured with tutorials from legitimate Oungans. I made a conscious decision not to include any editorials. As a foreigner, I didn’t wish to be so presumptuous as to tell Haitians how to run their lives and their country.

I was now a publisher. I moved into a small, two-room concrete house that clung to a hillside at the sparsely populated end of Fifth Avenue, in an old residential section of Port-au-Prince called Bolosse. My new abode was a cut above the neighboring kay pay (huts) of the local peasants. The rent was an affordable fifty gourdes (\$10.00) a month.

I placed my bed against the open window which gave me the feeling of floating above the city. At night I could hear the drums beating so close, it felt as if a vodou ceremony was being performed outside my window. My neighbors were deeply concerned with my well-being and repeatedly warned me to shut my window at night because the “move le ape antre” (the bad air will enter). When I didn’t take their advice they whispered that I was foolishly inviting the nocturnal lougawou (werewolf).

The crowing roosters and barking dogs woke me before sunrise. Mornings in Haiti were cool and fresh and full of the wonderful aromas of tropical plants and moist earth mixed with a hint of burning charcoal. Before the sun rose over the mountains, I was graced by the melodious singsong of a pretty pratik (street vendor) who came by my door every day selling fresh fruit: “Men bel chadek, zoranj, bannann, cheri,” she sang, then gracefully swung the basket off her head and smiled at me as I picked out my breakfast.

There was no electricity or gas, and like most of the other houses in the neighborhood I also lacked running water. I had a krich (clay water container) which I filled every day with fresh water from a spring in a nearby park.

In those early days I did most of my own reporting and searched for news every day. Every morning I would stop at the police headquarters Criminal Research Bureau. In a far corner of the old wooden two-story building was the suspect-holding room where I checked in to see who had been detained the previous night. The whip had been outlawed since independence, so interrogations were aided by the liberal use of a cocomaque, a monkey-wood baton. Most of the nights catch, accused of burglary and other petty crimes, were lined up and made to stand for hours facing the wall. If anyone raised or turned their head, the cocomaque came down swiftly on their skull.

From the police headquarters I would go to Bowen Field airport to check on the list of arriving and departing passengers. There was always someone coming or going; celebrities, businessmen, artists and intellectuals from all over the world. I also picked up whatever newspapers the cleaning crew had collected for me from the cabins of the arriving aircraft. The Centre d' Art was always a good place to find a story. And I covered special criminal court sessions. Occasionally, I would travel to Cul de Sac and Archaie and visit Oungans to learn about the rituals and traditions of Vodou. I spent many afternoons selling advertising while looking for interesting features. And Haiti had its good share of peculiar stories. Mostly, I wrote about the common people like the stone seller, the charcoal maker, the bottle merchant, the coconut vendor, and the 4 cent shower. I wanted to show the Haitian elite how poetic and indispensable the peasant class was to the identity of Haiti. I spent a lot of time seeking out artists, most of whom were poor peasants with great talent whose work was heavily influenced by Vodou.

At the end of the week I would buy newsprint at the grocery store as I prepared to print the week's edition of the Haiti Sun. If I ever had the opportunity to finish early, I would go to the Thorland Club for a game of tennis and a swim. Or go and talk with the rice marchande from Ti Rivière who arrived at the market on Saturday.

One evening I was visited at my home by Gary Davis who had declared himself a citizen of the world. He and his young wife were given my name by a friend and said they needed a place to stay. I welcomed them into my modest home, but after a few days the place felt a little crowded so I left it to Davis and moved into a bungalow at the Grand Hotel Oloffson.

The atmosphere at the Oloffson was pure Somerset Maugham. The rambling, white, two-story gingerbread was built onto the side of a hill near the center of Port-au-Prince. It had a large, elaborately ornate verandah and a pleasant long bar. There were a few bungalows around the lush gardens and a comfortable pool. The old place, which dated back to the 1880s, was in perpetual disrepair, and if there wasn't a breeze I could smell the sharp, overriding odor of termites feasting on the ancient wood. The place was populated by large hairy tarantulas, colorful lizards and occasional tourists that could not belong anywhere else but here.

On my first evening at the Oloffson, Maurice de Young, who ran the hotel and was Haiti's undisputed White Hunter, had just returned from Lake Saumatre, on the border with the Dominican Republic, with a group of tourist-hunters. They bagged a single caiman, so naturally, dinner that night was caiman soup.

"It tastes like chicken," an old waiter kept repeating to each of the few guests as he went around ladling out the mysterious concoction from a battered silver urn.

One morning I arrived at my office to find a small group of people looking at an object at my front door. It was an ouanga (Vodou spell). The red and white bags, chicken feathers and beads were obviously meant for me.

I knew the person casting this bad spell was a young man I fired for pocketing Haiti Sun subscription money. I had reported him to the police. They had administered the cocomaque and allowed him to go free.

An ouanga before any office was definitely not good for business. I took an old broom from the office, broke it in two, added it to the unsavory package and put it all in the back of my Jeep. I drove to the man's little house in the Bel Air neighborhood, and in full daylight and before an audience of curious onlookers that had gathered to watch the Blan, I deposited the oungan. I had no idea what kind of ceremony if any I should perform, so I just mumbled and circled around the package a few times. Then I slowly bowed to the three cardinal points, my Catholic religion's Trinity, took a deep, dramatic breath and walked away backwards. My audience remained quiet through the entire performance.

As I drove back to my office, I smiled thinking I had finally become a Haitian.

No hint of a breeze, the heat remains unbearable. The silence is damning. I wipe the sweat from my brow with the back of my hand, then lick my hand. I must be dehydrating. My throat is dry and swollen. My head aches. I squat on the floor, and then stand again. Why was it so quiet?

I rub my eyes and all the names carved on the wall come back into focus: Joseph, Jean, Ti Franck and Marcel. Someone had tried to carve something over a surname making it illegible. It didn't make any sense. Haiti didn't make any sense. I didn't make any sense either.

I had expected my venture with the Haiti Sun to last six months, perhaps less. Somewhere in the back of my head I imagined myself going back to Bridehead and sipping sherry with Sir Philip and his family. But time had passed. I had been in Haiti for six years and the newspaper, as well as myself, had become a part of Haiti. The Haiti Sun was well established. I had a good reputation as a reporter and had built up a decent client list stringing for the Associated Press, The New York Times, NBC News, and a few dailies in London. I had covered Cuba and the Dominican Republic as well.

I was addicted to my work, and I loved living in Haiti. I often thanked God for the decisions I'd made. And just like the peasants in the mountains who told me, "I am sorry for you working in Port-au-Prince," I felt sorry for editors working in New York City.

I had abandoned my Grand Hotel Oloffson bungalow to the termites and spiders and settled into an old house in Mont Joli which I shared with a good Haitian friend. Meanwhile, the good years (for some) of the Magloire presidency were coming to an end.

On the morning of September 5th, 1956 I was sitting at my desk, working on a story about Dr. Larimer Mellon who had just opened the Albert Schweitzer hospital in Deschapelles, when a man stepped into my office and announced that Dr. Duvalier was here to see me.

The presidential campaign was just getting started. I knew of Duvalier because the police had blamed a series of recent disorders and student protests on his followers. And I had heard a rumor that when president Estimé was going to be toppled by colonel Magloire, Duvalier went to Estimé and asked him to remove him as minister of Public Health and Labor and make him Interior Minister so he could crack down and fight the military. Estimé refused, saying he did not want to spill the blood of a black man. Duvalier had been in hiding for a couple of years and only last month had been given security guarantees by the government. Anti-Magloire sentiment was growing in Haiti and things were not looking good. There were accusations of corruption as well as uncertainty as to when Magloire's presidency was to officially come to an end. Things were heating up. There were occasional demonstrations, some of which turned violent while the candidates pointed fingers at each other and the government.

The man who announced Duvalier's visit at my office stepped out briefly and returned with a short man dressed in a thick black serge suit and bow tie, a black homburger hat, and thick, black rimmed glasses.

We shook hands and he took the seat across my desk. "Mr. Diederich," he said in halting English, his body very straight, his feet planted flat on the floor and his arms resting neatly on the sides of the chair. "I am Dr. Francois Duvalier."

I reached to the side of my desk for a pad to write on. I had quite a few questions for the little doctor. I wanted to know about his years in hiding, about his followers, whom some referred to as fanatical, and about his past; where he came from, his education and early career as a doctor.

But Duvalier raised his index finger. "No," he said calmly and smiled revealing a gold tooth. "I am not here to give you an interview, Mr. Diederich. I am only making a brief courtesy call to announce my candidacy for president of the republic."

His thick prism glasses made it difficult to read his eyes. I put my pad down and leaned forward, resting my arms on the desk.

"May I ask you, Mr. Diederich. What do the Americans think of me?"

I knew that by Americans, he meant the U.S. Embassy. I was a blan and therefore people assumed I was an American. I imagined Duvalier thought the Embassy could be an obstacle to his political ambitions.

"I don't know about the Embassy, but the people at USAID have spoken well of you and your work," I said referring to the Point IV's Inter-American Cooperative Public Health Service, (known by its French abbreviation initials, SCISP) where Duvalier had worked until he went into hiding.

I didn't mention that the U.S. Embassy looked kindly on the candidacy of Senator Louis Déjoie, but he probably already knew that. Déjoie had actively courted the U.S. embassy with his upper-class sophistication and charm, and it appeared his chic soirées had paid off. Personally, I did not understand why any of the candidates were campaigning in the first place since Clément Jumelle was the government's Dauphin. He was the chosen successor to the presidency and had full support of the Magloire government and the military.

Duvalier seemed to think about this for a moment. He glanced around my sparse, air-conditioned office, and at a small ivory statue of Mahatma Gandhi on a shelf behind me. He was silent. I waited. Then he stood and thanked me. "Tomorrow," he said, "my driver will deliver my political platform with a twelve-point program for my presidency."

We shook hands and I watched him walk out of the office. His driver held the door open for him as he got into the back seat of a gray shiny Buick. As they drove off, I leaned back on my chair and wondered about the little doctor. It was strange that he had not removed his hat. He had been uncommonly direct and to the point. I thought he lacked the charisma of Fignolé or the flamboyance of Déjoie. Yet I was struck by his confidence and quiet determination. He had been in my office for less than ten minutes and I had failed to get any information from him.

The struggle for the presidency intensified. National elections were set for January 13, 1957. When President Magloire returned from a trip to the United States for a medical checkup in mid-October, he was welcomed by a tremendous crowd. Inexplicably, he withdrew his support for Jumelle, and even accused him of being a mangeur de mulâtres (literally à mulatto eater, but colloquially a racist). Why had the onetime Bon Papa now opposed the capable Finance Minister? Jealously or maybe he had learned of Jumelle's promise to clean up corruption, including Magloire and his friends.

The peaceful, colorful country I had known for the last six years turned into a hotbed of political violence. There were persistent public disorders, and bombs exploded throughout Port-au-Prince. A favorite target was the old Iron Market where panicking market women would run wildly into the streets and merchants would bang shut their heavy, iron anti-revolution doors. Anti-Magloire pamphlets were distributed and stories were told to frighten peasants and prevent them from bringing produce into the city. They were told loupgeous (werewolves), were loose and that some of the marchandes had disappeared mysteriously while trying to enter the city.

It became too dangerous for candidates to go out to the provinces to tour. One November night Daniel Fignolé was almost ambushed on the road to Leogane. Police Chief Prosper accused Duvalier or his partisans of the attack on Fignolé and called it an attempt to eliminate an opponent while throwing suspicion on the government.

Yet, despite all the political mayhem, life in Haiti continued on at its usual surreal pace. The soccer season began with eight local teams participating in the Pradel Cup with evening matches at Magloire Stadium. For me, the games were the most uplifting events in the county. It was the one place where Haitians of all classes would join together and share the joy of the sport.

A Brazilian circus made a stop in Port-au-Prince with animal acts, an elephant, and a crazy monkey. A new seven story flour mill broke ground, and there were always embassy cocktail parties to attend-- an excellent source of gossip for the Haiti Sun's social column.

At the end of October the Haitian embassy in Havana, Cuba, was stormed by General Rafael Salas Canizares. The Cuban forces killed ten rebels who had been seeking asylum there. Students in Port-au-Prince demonstrated before the Cuban embassy which was conveniently situated across the street from the offices of the Haiti Sun. All I had to do was step out of my office to photograph and report on the Haitians protesting Cuba's violation of Haiti's sovereignty.

Between covering politics, social events, the courts, artistic performances, sports, and writing features on people like artist Jean Eguerrand Gourgues, who got rid of his nightmares by painting them, I had less and less time to go out to a nearly deserted stretch of beach I had leased with a friend. It was at Mer Frappée, past Carrefour south of the capital. Nothing could beat the heat like an afternoon swim there.

Meanwhile, the rainy season had arrived and it was costing the candidates a lot of money. Tropical downpours tore away their posters from walls, fences and coconut trees, and washed them away with the topsoil into the sea.

I tried to make a difference, to find a formula for helping, searching for ways to get people to read and envisioned Kreyol comics and a Kreyol illustrated weekly—however politics were far too powerful.

In late November, just as the hurricane season came to an end, British writer Graham Greene arrived in Haiti with Catherine Walston with whom he had ended his affair. She was the model for the lead character in Greene's book, *The End of the Affair*.

I had met him briefly on his first trip to Haiti in 1954. I became an avid Greene fan after reading "The Power and The Glory" back in England. I found his books easy to read, enjoyed his conflicts between good and evil, and how he brought religion's morality down to earth, giving them real humanity. And while reading "The Heart of the Matter" I felt I was there, in Freetown, Sierra Leone as a tropical downpour pounded on the tin roof of my house in Port-au-Prince.

So, when I came back to Haiti after a brief visit to Europe in August 1954, and heard that Peter Brook, Truman Capote and Graham Greene were staying at the luxurious El Rancho hotel, I immediately drove up the hill to try and interview the famous writer.

Brooks and Capote were preparing the stage production of Capote's House of Flowers which was set and named after a brothel in the south of Port-au-Prince, and Brooks had invited Greene to come along.

I found the author sitting alone at the hotel's circular mahogany bar. He was dressed in tropical tan slacks and an open neck shirt. He looked somewhat intimidating with his large frame leaning over the bar, his legs dangling over the high stool. His eyes were cold and blue.

I introduced myself and asked if he might give me a short interview. Greene shrugged and somewhat begrudgingly asked me what I wanted to know. I translated his aloof demeanor to starchy British snobbery. Still, I was determined to get something for the paper from one of the writers I most admired.

"What do you think of Haiti?" I asked.

"Well yes," he said, "I much prefer it to Jamaica. It reminds me of Indochina, but without the war, of course." And he explained that he had recently spent time reporting there.

Then he fell silent. He clearly disliked the press and I had the feeling he wanted to be alone. I asked him a few questions about his stay and he explained he had been to Cap Haitian with Brook's wife and had climbed up to the Citadel, visited the markets, and gone to a vodou ceremony where the oungan bit the head off a chicken. Then he fell back to that quiet, defensive posture. Then he drained the rest of his drink and walked away.

This time I found an entirely different person. Greene and Catherine were sitting by the side of the pool playing a game of scrabble. He appeared only slightly irritated by my interruption.

"Please sit down," she said. He did not introduce me to his lady friend, who I learned much later was Catherine Walston."

Greene leaned over the side of his chair to consult a small dictionary.

"I'm winning. Graham doesn't trust my spelling."

"Yes," Greene said. He looked at the word on the board and back at the dictionary, "which means I'm buying the drinks."

"Mr. Greene," I asked, "I wonder if I might take your photograph for my newspaper."

"Please," Catherine interrupted, "call him Graham."

Greene leaned back on his chair and looked at me. "I really don't like being photographed. I don't like publicity if it's just as well..."

"Oh, come on now, darling. Stand up like a man and be shot." Catherine laughed and waved at Greene.

Graham stood by the side of the pool. He was wearing a dark short sleeve shirt and linen slacks. As I looked down and focused my Rolleiflex [camera], he put his hands in his pockets and looked slightly away as I pressed the shutter.

I asked Graham about his visit. He thought about this for a moment and surprised me when he said he loved Haiti's public transportation: the ten-cent communal taxi called la ligne, which dropped passengers anywhere in the city for the same price; the taptap, a colorfully painted pickup truck written up with brazen sayings and biblical messages; and the camionette, an unadorned station wagon that plied the hill between the Port-au-Prince and Pétionville.

"I know that on your previous visit you had a chance to visit some of the regular tourist spots," I said. "If you like, I could take you to meet some of our new artists."

"That sounds wonderful," Catherine said, "how about it Graham? Let's do it."

"Sure," Graham said, "as long as we're not surrounded by all this," and he made a motion with his hand toward the pool area and the bar where loud sunburned tourists congregated.

"You know, if you're not into this scene, you should try the Oloffson," I said suggesting my favorite hotel. Since Roger Coster and his wife Laura had taken over the old gingerbread hotel, they had transformed it into an interesting bohemian hangout. Coster, a Frenchman who had been a photographer for Life, Paris-Match and Vogue, had succeeded in turning the Oloffson into the Greenwich Village of the Caribbean. But Graham said he felt obligated to stay at the El Rancho since they were Albert Silvera's guests. "I really don't want to insult him by moving to another hotel," he said.

The following morning, I picked them up and we drove out to a few art galleries and the Centre d' Art which was run by California artist Peter Dewitt. Dewitt told Graham and Catherine how he had quit painting so he could start the center and cultivate Haitian artists.

"They're naturals," Dewitt explained when Catherine asked why Haitians were so artistic. "I think it's the spirituality of vodou," he added and guided them through various paintings including some of my favorite works by the late Hector Hyppolite.

Dewitt said he had started the center over a decade before, but that the Haitian art scene was just getting momentum. "The Haitians who can afford to buy art still haven't come around. Most of our clients are tourists," he said, adding that the elite class in Haiti preferred traditional European art to the primitive styles and common scenes depicting Vodou and folklore in most of the current Haitian art.

One afternoon I took them to La Galerie Brochette an exhibition center for a new colony of artists in Carrefour. The artists there included Gérard Dorcély and Luckner Lazard who were modernists and Max Pinchinat. Catherine was very excited about the work.

"This is marvelous," she said, "have they had the opportunity to exhibit abroad?"

I said that they had not.

"Well, we must arrange it," she cried and looked at Graham and at me and at the smiling artists standing in the narrow gallery. "When I get back to London I'll see what I can do. We must show these to the rest of the world."

A couple of days after visiting the galleries, Graham suggested we visit one of the cafe-brothels that dotted the Carrefour road.

"Now, I'm not interested in the Dominicans," he said. The majority of Haitian brothels were staffed by lighter skinned Dominican women. "I only want to go to places with Haitians."

We stopped at the Paradise Bar, just opposite the Thorland Club. It had an open-air patio that was painted the bright red of the eyes of Erzulie Ge Rouge, Vodou's angry love goddess. Large bougainvillea's spilled over the walls and little colorful Christmas style lights surrounded the ceiling. The place was mostly empty, with a man sitting at a corner table eating grillot, fried pork and plantains; while a few of the young women, attired in tight colorful dresses, danced with each other to Perez Prado's Mambo Number Five blaring out of the jukebox.

The place reeked of fried food, cheap cologne and that distinguishable smell of popular bars that was stale beer and rum.

Catherine and Graham loved it. Graham in particular was smiling, leaning over his Barbancourt and soda, his eyes intently fixed on one of the girls.

"Just look at her," he cried and gestured. "She's an African princess. Simply exquisite. What a perfect profile. Look at that long, beautiful neck."

"Well," Catherine said feigning jealousy, "I suppose I'll leave you boys to your wiles. Can I get a taptap back to the hotel?"

Graham's eyes didn't stray from the girl on the dance floor. He waved at Catherine, "Yes,

fine,” he said and we all laughed. We bought another round of rum and soda and Catherine said to me she thought writers were particularly interested in brothels because they were attracted to the world’s oldest profession. “Of course, only as observers,” she said. “It allows them to see and sometimes feel humanity in the raw.”

Graham glanced at Catherine with a quizzical look.

“You know it’s the male oppressor’s workplace!” she laughed. And we went on like that, hopping from brothel to brothel, having drinks and laughing until two in the morning. The next day I finally convinced Graham and Catherine to come to the Oloffson. “You have to stop in,” I said, “even if it’s just for a rum punch.”

And the moment we walked up the stairs of the old gingerbread, Graham fell under the spell of the Oloffson’s magic. Aubelin Jolicoeur, Roger Coster and a tribe of bohemian expatriates and Haitians were loitering about the hotel’s wide verandah.

Graham and Catherine quickly changed hotels, even though it was only for the last two days of their stay. That same afternoon we sat out on the verandah, and César, the Oloffson’s diminutive bartender, mixed us round after round with his celebrated rum punches. Slowly, the afternoon took on a soft reddish glow as the sun dipped out behind La Gônave bay. The palms waved gently in the breeze. In the distance the faint sound of drumming and the subtle hint of charcoal came and went the way it always did in Haiti.

“This is truly a beautiful place,” Graham said and leaned toward me. These are the best I have tasted as another round of rum punch arrived. We were joined by Aubelin and Laura Coster and Graham continued to praise César’s punches “What a wonderful place. You’re very lucky.”

“Yes, I know.” I said quietly and glanced at him, his icy blue eyes looking out past all the glitz of Haiti’s tourism and staring right into the core of the country’s soul.

The editor I left in charge at the paper while I was in Europe didn’t do any reporting. He had announced Graham’s arrival the day he was leaving.

He had never seen the paper that had declared him winner of the Nobel Prize for literature. He had been denied the prize because he had a run in with the head of the jury

Less than a week after I dropped Graham and Catherine off at the airport, bombs exploded in various sections of the capital. A market woman was badly injured by a time bomb that shattered the concrete table at which she was seated in the Iron Market. A man carrying a shoeshine box was blown to bits when the box, which actually contained a bomb, exploded prematurely in the residential neighborhood of Bois Verna. Horrified spectators who had rushed to the scene stood staring at the man’s entrails hanging from an almond tree. Another explosion damaged the water reservoir at Bolosse.

The following day, Thursday December 6, Magloire did what he had promised he would never do. In a radio announcement he declared that he had accepted the opposition’s interpretation that his six-year term had ended that day. He said he was stepping down as president and was assuming the title of chief of the executive power and commander in chief of the army with special legal powers.

General Antoine Levelt, the army chief of staff, went on the radio and explained the fanciful scenario, “Both the vice-president of the supreme court and the elder member of the court have refused to take provisional power. Therefore, I have asked General Magloire to remain in power. He is sacrificing himself for the fatherland.”

The auto-coup would have been laughable if it had not been accompanied by a decree ordering the immediate arrest of political leaders. Louis Déjoie and Duval Duvalier, François

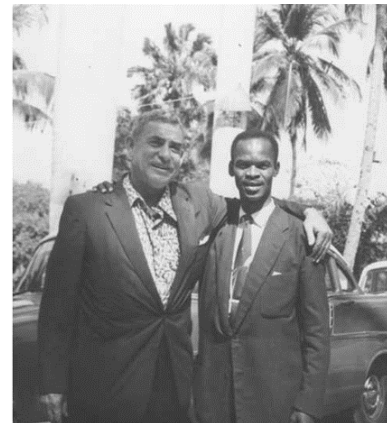
Duvalier’s father, and several opposition senators and deputies were imprisoned in the National Penitentiary. All were accused of subversive activities. The following day the government council composed of senators and deputies had been dissolved.

A spontaneous strike erupted and snowballed with amazing speed and totality. The capital became a ghost town as stores and businesses, many of whose owners were partisans of Déjoie, pulled shut their antiriot shutters. Typewritten flyers appeared in the form of chain letters requesting each recipient to type and distribute ten more, producing an endless supply of tracts. Students circulated a separate manifesto declaring they would not resume classes until Magloire renounced power.

I filed stories for the Associated Press and The New York Times. The coup became a major story in the U.S. and the rest of the world. Magloire’s naked bid to retain power caught the U.S. Embassy by surprise. Washington recalled Ambassador Roy Tasco Davis for consultation. Staff correspondents for the major U.S. media began to arrive, including my friend Paul Kennedy whom I met at the airport with a bottle of Barbancourt from my own stash since all the stores were closed because of the strike.

I drove Kennedy to the Oloffson and briefed him on the events of the past two days. I showed him a copy of La Phalange, the Catholic daily, which had appeared that morning with a declaration, signed by the Supreme Court justices clarifying their position. They had refused to accept the executive power from the Army because the Army demanded that they agree to unconstitutional extralegal powers.

Kennedy and I drove around town the following morning. The city was still deserted, but as we came closer to the center of town, we found hundreds of women, most of them from the elite class, and thus supporters of Louis Dejoie, marching on the national penitentiary where Dejoie was being held. The guards looked on at the unusual spectacle of women, praying and chanting; “Je vous salue Marie”.



Paul Kennedy of the New York Times with Joliceur

Back at the Oloffson, Kennedy hammered out his story on his battered typewriter. It was a fine report outlining Haiti’s political situation. We drove out to the RCA cable office and Kennedy handed his type written article to the attendant, happy to have made his Times deadline. Then an Army officer reached over and took Kennedy’s cable dispatch from the RCA man who explained the officer was a government censor. After slowly reading the story, the officer returned the copy to Kennedy. “What’s the matter?” Kennedy said firmly, “where’s the problem?”

“All of it,” the officer said lazily and turned his back.

“Oh, bullshit!” Kennedy cried and banged the counter with his fist. “It’s the truth, isn’t it? You object to the truth you...”

“Hold on,” I said and pulled Kennedy’s arm.

“No, Bernie. He can’t do that. I have to file my story!”

“Yes, he can,” I said and pulled Kennedy out of the RCA office before things turned for the worse. I knew the censor would not relent. Instead, I drove Kennedy to the international telephone office of the little West Indies Telephone Company. It was the only place where we could call overseas.

Kennedy squeezed his large frame into one of the three stifling telephone booths, but as soon as he got through to New York and began dictating his story to the New York Times foreign desk, the communication was cut off.

Kennedy demanded an explanation from the operator, and then a large man in a Navy uniform squeezed behind the counter and gave Kennedy the thumbs down. I will not repeat Paul’s reaction.

On Monday morning we drove around the city. Businesses were still shuttered and the streets deserted. We had not been able to file the story, so we drove out to Bowen Field airport and gave a copy to a passenger leaving Haiti.

As we made our way back to the city, I was flagged down by a police officer. “Is that Paul Kennedy?” he asked.

I nodded.

The officer leaned over and looked at Kennedy sitting beside me. “Mr. Kennedy, you have six hours to leave the country.” Then he looked at me and added, “You make sure he leaves.”

Kennedy leaned forward into the position of a boxer about to throw a killer punch and demanded, “On whose orders, why?”

But the officer ignored his question and walked away. “I can’t believe it,” Kennedy cried, “fucking bastards!”

We got back to the Oloffson and took at a table on the verandah. We ordered lunch and Kennedy leaned forward. “Why me?” he asked. “What do you think pissed them off so much?”

“Maybe he’s afraid of you,” I said and reminded him of a recent interview we both attended where Kennedy asked President Magloire whom he saw as his successor. Magloire made a sweeping gesture with his arms from a palace window and said every Haitian over forty aspired to his job. I later told Kennedy I thought that was one of the president’s more profound statements. I pointed out that Magloire was a rich man, and it was not because he banked his meager salary. Many Haitians likened the presidency to winning the lottery. The winner takes all.

There was also Kennedy’s story on the Peligre Dam which was to facilitate the irrigation of the Artibonite Valley. The original cost of the dam had been estimated at \$14 million, however the total outlay reached \$28 million, a one hundred percent overrun equal to the government’s budget. The opposition treated the issue like a domestic scandal, although the contractors were Brown and Root, based in Texas.

As we ate our lunch, two policemen arrived and walked up to our table. “Mr. Kennedy,” one of them said, “you are supposed to be at the airport. You have not made a plane reservation to leave.”

Kennedy motioned toward his suitcase and portable typewriter on the floor by the table. “I’m all packed up,” he said. “I don’t usually do that just to have lunch. I have my ticket. You’re welcome to make the reservation if you like.”

The men took a seat at an adjacent table and waited for us to finish our lunch. Kennedy took his time and ended his meal with a healthy shot of his favorite rum. I drove Kennedy to the airport. The police followed us and watched him board the plane for Jamaica where he filed a front-page story for the New York Times from the Western Union office in Kingston.

Tuesday evening, president Magloire summoned thirty-two of the leading merchants of Port-au-Prince’s 300 commercial and industrial enterprises to the National Palace. A communiqué stated that the businessmen had agreed to reopen their stores the following morning, but Wednesday came and the city was still shut down.

Magloire blamed foreign interests, claiming the Blans were behind the effort to oust him; however, by the afternoon the president announced in a radio speech that he was stepping down. Army chief of staff general Levelt declared that the army had accepted Magloire resignation and that in conformity with the constitution, chief justice of the supreme court, Joseph Nemours Pierre-Louis, would hold the executive power.

On Thursday December 13th, the capital was still strike bound. And once again, Pro-Déjoie women congregated at the Roman Catholic cathedral, circulating their mot d’ordre (continue to strike until Magloire leaves the country).

That afternoon I received a tip that Magloire was indeed leaving. Harvey Rosenhouse of Time Magazine and I raced out to Bowen Field airport and took positions at the control tower which provided the best view of the adjacent military airport. At 6:30PM we watched as General Magloire, his family and close aides climbed aboard the government’s C-47 bound for Kingston, Jamaica. The nonviolent general strike had succeeded. Kennedy was there to interview him.

When the fight to fill the presidency got hot, I was officially expelled by the Déjoie forces because of a Time Magazine article they felt was hostile to them. It was a happy two-week sojourn in New York in May 1957.

A few years before Magloire went into exile I had the pleasure of meeting Jean Desquiron, an intellectual from Jérémie who had set up a business with a friend and advertised “Haiti Trading Company” in the Haiti Sun. One day I went to Pétionville to interview Jean’s wife Ghislaine who had launched a chicken business. It was through Ghislaine I met her younger sister, Ginette, a schoolgirl at St Rose de Lima in Lalue. She looked pretty in her school uniform.

Ginette, it was Ēzili Rouge and Papa Legba³ combined, who in the millions of people in New York that night of all nights made our paths cross. I had just arrived in Manhattan... I am sorry my love... you had the right to ditch me...

One afternoon in early September 1958 I had gone to the Hotel Splendid to meet with former hotelier (Oloffson) Maurice de Young, who had returned to Haiti to microfilm copies of Haitian newspapers for the University of Florida. I carried several volumes of the Haiti Sun to be given to the University’s Gainesville library.

The Splendid had once been Port-au-Prince’s top Hotel but time had passed by and Madame Maria Frankel and her administrator Alberti had grown old along with their hotel.

She was standing there amidst the Splendid’s brilliant bougainvillea, sandals and gypsy-type flowing skirt and white blouse. As I passed her she smiled and asked me the names of the profusion of tropical plants. I loved the way she impishly screwed up her pretty face. Then I heard myself offering this young lady who had just checked into the Splendid, “would you like me to show you my Haiti?” She had arrived by Panama Line ship from New York.

In Vodou terms, credit goes to Papa Legba for having had my path cross with that of this interesting young lady from Manhattan. Then Ēzili took over. It could have only happened in Haiti. We fell under Ēzili’s spell.

Her name didn’t mean a thing to me. It was only as we began enjoying our time together that we began sharing our little histories. I learned she was a 27-year old actress, (I was 32) newly divorced and at a crossroads, similar to the one I faced in December 1949 when I arrived by

accident in Haiti. She was full of doubt about her career even though she said the two-character play she was appearing in on Broadway was a success. The more I got to know Anne, the more she talked wistfully of the things missing in her life because of her demanding career. She made me forget the past and even the present. We made the best of the week we had together. Each day ended with an enchanted evening.

One morning we drove out to the Cul-de-Sac to welcome Doc Reser back from two and a half years in Miami. My old friend, an initiated Oungan, Vodou priest, was happily ensconced in an attractive new wooden house to replace his old Kay Pay on the highway next to the Pont Beudet insane asylum, 20 miles from Port-au-Prince. (Gwo Roche and other Oungans of the region had celebrated his return with special Vodou services.)

Anne was a good sport and didn't mind sharing Page One of the Sun's on Sept 21, 1958 with Papa Doc who was celebrating his first year in power on the following day. The photograph showed Anne standing at the gate with Doc Reser before his new house. The caption read: "Attractive Anne Bancroft, top screen and stage actresses currently the star of the Broadway play Two for the Seesaw." Also in the picture was Doc's long-time friend sugar planter Rudolph Dontfraid, who had built the house for Doc, and Stanley Mills Haggard, a leading TV art director who had escorted Ms. Bancroft to Haiti.

The following Monday, message after message arrived at the office of the Haiti Sun. Wally and Dave Talamas who advertised their Canapé Vert tourist emporium in the Sun needed to speak



to me urgently. They revealed that they were star gazers, perhaps the only ones of their type in Haiti at the time and they were quick to spot the front-page photo of Anne Bancroft. They were ecstatic about meeting Anne and this led to the Sun featuring, the following week, photographs of Anne visiting their Grand Rue store.

"These two young enterprising businessmen have their ear to the ground and if a star should fall on Haiti even for a quite vacation they are quick to register their footsteps. Even when a star ...

hidden behind sunglasses and wearing lowly zapates." (Anne wore sunglasses and sandals.)

We had great fun at Future and Pierre d'Adesky's Kyona beach. I warned her time and again about Èzili, the Iwa of love that can stir hearts in magical Haiti. It proved more than just a romantic interlude in both our lives.

"...Wally and Dave who knew about the entire career of Anne Bancroft and laid a carved wooden head in tribute at the feet of the star." Unlike the Talamas boys I was completely ignorant of Broadway and who was playing. The following week French heart-throb Martine Carol glamorized the Sun's front page. The two actresses couldn't have been more different from each other. Ms. Bancroft preferred the old elegance of Hotel Splendid while Martine Carol was a guest at the ritzy El Rancho. To the delight of her Haitian fans Carol became the toast of Port-au-Prince, posing for photographers and public alike. Haiti's tourism's officially had Carol prove that the country was still on the tourist's map.

Anne was funny, a great adorable comedienne, and a born mimic. She was like a tidal wave washing Papa Doc out of our minds. I was impressed with her knowledge of French as well as Italian. Her real name, she said was Maria Anna Italiano. Anna talked of her Italian-American upbringing from singing on a neighborhood corner near her home in the Bronx. Then she sang for me and said she hoped with the aid of singing lessons to be able to play in a musical.

Bancroft was her stage name. Her heritage brought with it a downside in acting and a touch of bitterness would creep into her voice when she described how critics sought to type cast her. Anne was for me an education on the trials and tribulations and pit falls of a young actress. But as we got to know each other, I think, I took the place of her Freudian analyst, as I listened to her questioning her career as an actress. There was so much more to Anne but at times she appeared very frail and in search of a fuller family life, or so she believed. Bewitched by Haiti, she was truly a loving person still filled with self-doubt about her career. As I got to know her I did my best to reassure her that she could make it. She had acted in so many Hollywood films, few people had ever heard of them. What really riled her though was the insinuation by some, she said, that she was just playing herself, as Gittel Mosca a bohemian gal from Bronx, in Two for the Seesaw a two-character play. Her leading man was Henry Fonda and she had liked to play with him much better than Dana Andrew who had taken over the role after Fonda moved on. Fonda, she said, was always so stable and secure and gave the play great dignity and stature which Dana did not. But she agreed, thinking it over, that Dana did give warmth and tenderness to the part.

Our parting was unlike the film Casablanca – Anne didn't disappear into the night on a plane but took off on a ship agreeing to see each other again, soon. A tourist couple we had befriended at Kyona Beach sailed off with Anna aboard the Panama liner SS Cristobal for New York.

Hardly was she over the horizon that a telegram arrived: Sept 25 1958 at 8.02 p.m. Bernard Diederich Press Port-au-Prince Haiti.

"I knew you were somewhere near bye, love. Anne."

Shirley Gumbley of Life En Espanol and her husband Len Gumbley of CBS were company for Anne on her return to New York. Shirley wrote describing their trip.

"...How we loved Haiti... short as the visit was, and we really hated to have to wave to you as we sailed off into the sunset! And what a dramatic, romantic sunset it was! I imagine Anne has written to you about it — but may I repeat... it was quite an experience. Port-au-Prince looked like a white shimmering jewel at the foot of the mountains, the sunset was lovely with the light it cast, and the dark glowing clouds with the streaks of heat lightening only accented the drama."

On September 26 I received the first of a dozen letters. I no longer recall what I wrote but I found that the small bundle of Anne's letters tucked away amidst recovered Haiti Sun files. Addressed simple to "Haiti Sun Port-au-Prince" the post office proved it remained efficient in spite of censorship.

On Oct 23, 1958 I finally got to fly to New York. I had a busy schedule and longed to see Anne. I was there to arrange to purchase printing machinery for the Haiti Sun, meet with my brother, Brian, on a yearlong world trip, who was coming down from Canada to see me. I had a lot on my plate.

The night of my arrival I picked Anne up after her habitual hour at her analyst. We were walking gaily hand-in-hand window shopping on Lexington Avenue, when suddenly out of the early evening, my Haitian life suddenly caught up with me. Hurrying to the subway from her part time work at the United Nation's post office — she was paying her way through college, (New York University-NYU) — was my most precious young Haitian friend.

It was, for me, one of the most embarrassing encounters. Ginette was somebody special and from 12 years old, she had grown into a bright University student. For her family it was a particularly difficult time back in Haiti. Her eldest sister Ghislaine, pregnant, had been in prison, as was her husband Jean-Desquiron for providing funds and building a bomb to blow up Papa Doc.

As I overcame my surprise Ginette spoke up. “When did you arrive; how come you haven’t come to see us?” When I found my tongue I tried to explain in Kreyòl but Ginette cut me off with “I speak English so don’t embarrass your friend.” I mumbled that I had just arrived and was going to call. Papa Legba was at it again. He had made our path cross. That moment, Èzili quickly deserted me. I lost not one love, but two, and it took time to regain one.

As Ginette bid goodbye and hurried off to catch the subway Anne watched her disappear and then turned to me with an understanding smile and said, “What a beautiful young lady, is she your

girlfriend?” Anne was incredibly perceptive and noted the disappointment in Ginette’s voice. I blustered out that her family was my closest friends.

Ginette was later told by an American and his Haitian wife trying the sell life insurance that Anne and I were to be married. They wanted her address to sell her insurance. It became a truly miserable weekend. I saw the Seesaw and witnessed a great actress at work. I had too short a time

to talk with my brother, Brian, whom I had not seen since he served in the New Zealand Army in Japan and later ran several successful businesses in Australia. We had a Chinese lunch together and then I had to rush off and pick up Anne.

I had promised to drive her to the Berkshires in a borrowed auto— it had bald tires and on wet road it was a danger to us both. It was nerve-racking. We spent the weekend with Arthur Penn, the director of “Two for the Seesaw”. Anne and Dana Andrew put on the play locally as a campaign favor for a woman democratic congressional candidate, whose name I forget. She lost. Besides Penn, an interesting visitor was historian James McGregor Burns. Everyone was talking about Lolita – the book had just come out. If you were not a New Yorker and not caught up with the fads or books of the moment you knew you were an outsider and didn’t belong. Vladimir Nabokov’s novel Lolita about a pre-teen love made me wondered if Anne believed that the young Haitian girl was my Lolita. James Macgregor Burns I admired for his book, Roosevelt: The Lions and the Fox. It had won him the Pulitzer Prize two years earlier. He was then working on a profile of John F. Kennedy. At least I was among Democrats. I don’t even recall our return to Manhattan but I do recall Anne didn’t own a good winter coat.

It was the end of our romance. I had always shunned sentimentality with disgust until prison which made me grieve for those who were not as lucky as I on April 26, 1963.

Ed Morrow had a TV program and was going to visit Anne’s brownstone house in Manhattan at 117 W 12th street, so I sent her my best Gourgue painting of my collection. It was of a Vodou service celebrated outdoors in the tropical night. It was to help her decorate her home for Morrow’s visit.



It was the end of our affair. I always liked to think that perhaps I helped Anne a little at a crucial time in her life. I know I recognized her as a great actress.

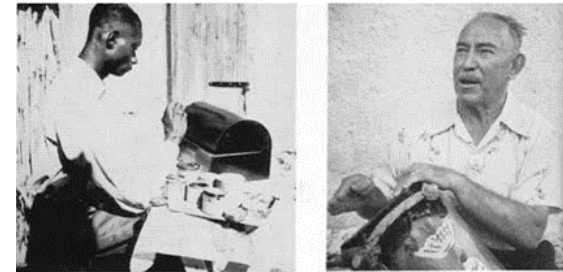
On Dec.21, 1959 Anne appeared on the cover of Time. The story was pegged to Anne’s tremendous success in the Broadway play, “The Miracle Worker” another of William Gibson’s productions. Anne was on her way.

In solitary confinement with a half drum of flies feasting on remains of the night’s toilet, the mind wanders. Whenever I faced danger, I recall the heroic sacrifice of Uncle Roy. It was perhaps because his father (my grandfather) was born in Germany that, on leave from his post as assistant Attorney General in the Fiji Islands, that he quietly enlisted in the New Zealand Army as a simple trooper, shunning officer rank. He fought in Italy and on the 14 of April, 1945 was killed in a German mortar attack. He died just before the Germans surrendered. Uncle Roy had coached the Fijians in rugby and they played in New Zealand. He was well equipped to teach rugby as at Victoria University in Wellington he had been an outstanding player and captain of the Varsity team.

Selden Rodman had written in his 1954 book, Haiti: The Black Republic, that “Doc Reser and I had contributed enough to the Republic, to be considered Haitians by adoption.” When

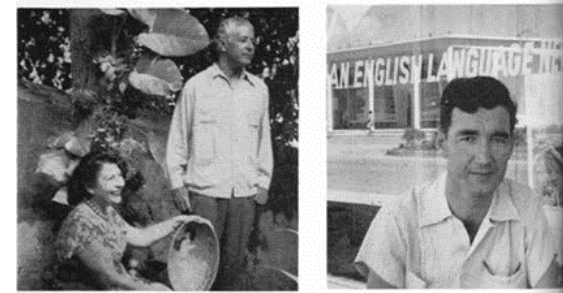
Rodman reprinted the book, I was no longer an adopted son, in fact, he had bowed to the dictatorship removing my name. It was an omen of sorts making me a non-person. (See copy of the 1954 photo that disappeared from Rodman’s book on-page 176).

Without my mask I examined my own survival techniques. Whenever I interviewed a dangerous person, a rank killer, I was careful not to show my distain or dislike, hate or contempt. It was why I had not become another victim of Rafael Trujillo, although I came close to being bumped off by his agents. (His assassination in 1961 was my scoop.) Whenever I interviewed Papa Doc, I did not allow emotion to overcome the interview. It was difficult not to hide one’s utter dislike for Macoutes, such as Roger Lafontant, Lucien Chauvet and the sadist Jean Tassy. They were abominable brutes who would betray and sacrifice their own



Representative Haitians

Fernand Pierre, painter of the ‘Visitation’ in the Cathedral, at work on a box. Milo and Odette Memesson-Rigaud, authorities on *vandou*, in their Pétion-Ville garden. Doc Reser of Pont Beudet and Bernard Diederich of the *Haiti Sun* have contributed enough to the Republic to be considered Haitians by adoption.



mothers. Ultimately their crimes would overwhelm them. During the 1961 student strike, I experienced Macoute’s savagery and witnessed their brutality in the National Palace while being

held there. When I had returned from Cuba in January 1959, I had angered Papa Doc by displaying my enthusiasm for Fidel Castro's revolution and he referred to me as a "vagabond". In 1962, Ginette was at the airport when I returned from another trip to Cuba and feared that there would be no wedding as she wrongly believed the police chief was waiting for the plane to arrest me.

At Saint Claire, Catholic Church at Frères standing before Father Monin, a French priest, I said, "I do" as did Ginette and me were married, Ězili saw to that. It was June 7, 1962.

The emptiness of the National Penitentiary with not a single audible cry of distress continued to send a bolt of fear through me. It is the knowledge that those not killed in the streets on April 26 must have been immediately executed. There was insufficient cell space in Fort Dimanche for the many that had been seized. I understood that Duvalier wanted to kill every retired Army officer, possibly in the hundreds. (Later the names of 65 killed that day were recorded.)

I draw to a corner transfixed like an idiot and watch the flies crawl over the latrine drum devouring the feces--kaka... The flies are alive. Death is everywhere, everywhere. I reflect bitterly that there will be no peace. What mockery dictatorship. People accept their misery living with false hope. Foreboding always of a violent death. Corpses everywhere. Even at high noon overcome by flies, and the stench is killing me. Disgusting! Dark demons are everywhere. Oh, for news from the outside of family and whether the mayhem set off by Papa Doc continues. Solitary confinement is hell and allows demons to take over the soul. Lies and evil are no longer covered up. Kill, kill, kill. How did Haiti reach this state...the oppression is total.

The keys rattled in the lock; a group of soldier stood there. One held my clothes and an officer ordered "get dressed". This sudden interruption disturbed the flies. I thought, I had not left my name on the wall...what if it's Fort Dimanche... In the prison office, Capt. Thomas,⁴ an old friend, with tired eyes from lack of sleep said softly... "You are leaving."

I understood exile. I tried to speak but I had, had nothing to drink, my mouth was parched... finally I told Thomas "I am not going without my family...I am not going..."

"They are alright, you are not. A plane is waiting...they have no problem. I have your passport...another officer nodded, "go, blan, go." He added, " If you don't go your family, all of you, will have serious problems, real trouble... go!"

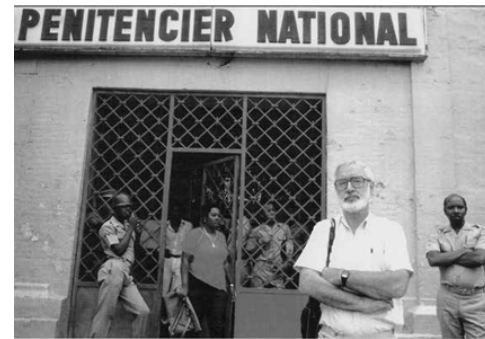
I trusted Thomas and followed his orders and went. Alive on the outside I can help.

Mounting the empty Delta flight, an airport worker whispered, "Blan, ou gin chans," Blan, you are lucky. I didn't think so. I had lost everything that I had worked for during 13 years with the people I had come to love.

For two weeks that wrenching separation produced powerful bloody nightmares. In New York waiting for my family to escape the claws of Duvalier, silently. My story of that bloody day in April, 1963 had to wait for five years to be published, finally it appeared in Papa Doc; the truth about Haiti today. (Papa Doc was published in New York, Paris, London, Barcelona, Rome, Iran. In Farsi, Penguin, Santo Domingo and finally in Port-au-Prince.)

It took 50 years for a memorial Mass to be held for the victims of the Duvalier dictatorship. We were among the sea of grey heads that filled St. Pierre church in Petionville on that sad day. But was there any closure for the wives and children of the "disappeared?" No!

(I was among those saddened by Anne's death in 2006 at age 73. She had married comedian Mel Brooks and was also survived by a son. She always wanted a family and I was happy for her that she had one. The movie world will always remember her as Mrs. Robinson in The Graduate.)



Return on a visit after the people rose up against the dictatorship.

ENDNOTES

1. The Tontons Macoutes are equal opportunity thugs who attack and spirit away anyone accused of being an enemy of Papa Doc, along with their families. The Macoutes, with their intimidating dark sunglasses are the dregs of the population. There is even a Macoute squad made up of medical students under the command of the vicious and ambitious Roger Lafontant.
2. Thomas Hardy, the admiral, is remembered by British school boys because of the famous phrase uttered by Lord Horacio Nelson who lay wounded aboard the Victory at the Battle of Trafalgar: "Kiss me Hardy for I am dying." The heart of the other Thomas Hardy, the writer (1840-1928), is said to be buried close by in the Stinsford graveyard in a biscuit tin. His body is buried in Westminster Abbey. Writer Hardy, according to legend, told his doctor that he wanted to leave his heart in his beloved Dorset. He ordered him on his death to be buried in Stinsford. The good doctor is said to have removed his heart and then called for the housekeeper to find a receptacle to put the heart in. Overcome with emotion, the housekeeper, after some delay, produced a biscuit tin into which the good doctor is said to have placed the heart and had it buried as his patient had requested. Others say that the housekeeper was in a state of shock and took so long to locate the tin that the cat ate the heart. Dorset, I found at Bridehead, was filled with wonderful tales, especially about members of the Williams family itself. I often wondered if Lady Williams who had some extraordinarily strict rules allowed Hardy's books in the house.
3. Papa Legba, the initiator, opens the gates and is the communicator with the divine. There are a number of Ězili spirits but the principal Ězili, whom I appreciated, was the goddess of love as she is known to set up erotic liaisons and doesn't believe in rationing love.
4. Capt. Thomas was later among 19 officers Papa Doc executed by firing squad. It was the beginning of our new life. Ginette, and I went on to have two more children, I became a foreign correspondent for Time-Life News Service, and from my base in Mexico City I covered Haiti from afar. Ginette studied medicine, specializing in psychiatry and is still devoted to the poor; our children made us proud.