

# THE EDUCATION OF A JOURNALIST

BY W. A. S. DOUGLAS

SCUMALONG, N. J.  
Sept. 4th, 1926

Mr. Fred Mallory,  
City Editor,  
*The New York Morning Star.*

DEAR BOSS: When you hired me to protect your star reporter Mr. Marshall Davis from the photo boys and reporters of the tab papers I welcome the opportunity. You also held out a future to me as a star reporter because I did not want my mother and sister Jessie to be ashamed on account I was a prizefighter and bootlegger. You told me to write you every night what I done through the day because it would be an education in the work of star reporter.

I am glad you let Mr. Marshall Davis no I was only going with him as his leg-man, which you said was preliminary to writing big stuff like him. You said it would hurt his feelings if he knew I was also there to protect him from the ruff stuff of the tab men so I respect your confidants. He will never learn the truth from me.

When we got to the victims home from where the tragedy started we find more than twenty tab reporters and photo boys ahead of us. They had surrounded the house of the dead girls folks and two of them was fistfighting in front of a old man. They would fight and cuss and then they would stop and one would drag the old man one way and then the other would hit the fellow who was dragging the old man and they would start to fight again. The old man was crying and the photo boys was all making pictures of him. When he would stop one of the photo boys would yell out cry a bit more mister and he would start again. Thats

the dead girls poppa Mr. Davis told me.

Then the posse come along to look for the grave where this bird that beat it buried the girl after he knocked her off. Nobody come out of the house which was all closed up tight but the old man come along with the tab photo boys. Every minute one would stop and make a picture of the old geezer crying all over. He was sure obliging.

I notice all the tabs have photos of the old man crying. He lost his temper once and the daily sketch had a beat on that. Its that one where the heading says Vengeance Is Mine and shows the old bird shaking his fist and crying. Thats where one of the reporters booted him to make him cry up for the photo boys and the old bird got mad.

Mr Davis says he sent you 2000 words tonight but where he got them you can search me. He didnt ask no questions and made no motions to get no pictures. He just nosy round and what he got must have been hop. He neednt be scared of those tab babies now hes got me along but you wont let me tell him that. I asked him if he didnt want some swell pictures like the tab boys and he said hed be damned if he did. I dont think hes as good as you think. All he said was for me to catch onto a little picture of the girl before she got bumped off that was all he wanted.

I dont want to drop none of my customers while Im working up to star reporter so if you want any of the Scotch I been getting from my buddies over at Montauk just call my sister Jessie at the old number and shell bring it in in the coopy. Try to make the order two bottles because I got to

tip her two bucks and it aint worth it for less than a brace. One of them bums on your copy desk aught to be good for a quart of that swell liker. Jessie ties a bottle under each arm and then puts on her big fur coat. Safe as Mrs Mcferson.

I will close now thanking you for the opertunity. I am glad for mother and Jessies sake you are giving me a opertunity to get away from prizefiting and bootleging.

*Your friend and pupil*

JOSEPH (CANNONBALL) McCLUSKEY

## II

SCUMALONG, N. J.  
*Sept. 5th.*

*Mr. Fred Mallory,  
City Editor,*

*The New York Morning Star.*

DEAR BOSS: Well, as you will have noticed in the evening tab papers we found the girl today. If this bimbo Davis that you sent down with me had not been ded from the neck up and had had a photografer with him we would have cleaned up. He just dont seem to give a dam about his work. I was in luck from the start but he was running on one sillinder. We was spred all over the country the possey and we reporters when a bird to the left of me fell over the girls feet sticking up out of the ground. He lets out a yell and evrybody come arunning but none of the pickure paper photografers was in the back but there come six tab reporters.

Some bimbo had a shovel and started to ease the girl up a bit. She was only buryd in about a foot of ground and come up nice and easy. Still there was no photo boys, but the six reporters was all surcling round the body and looking dirty. I saw Mr. Davis come along and I figgered how I would get him a good start on something if he was man enuff to finish it. So I says to the tab reporters you bozos get away from here and I jumps in and stands over the body like a refuree giving a fowl when the mans out.

One of these bozos says who the hell are

you you big ruffneck. I just socked him quick to the chin. You seen that walup of mine at the Harlem club. He goes down cold over the girls feet and the others back off a bit. Mr. Davis comes running and I says now if you get a photografer you can clean up for I will see that no other baby gets a pickure of this dead jane. Get away from here you fool he says and being as you told me to mind him I backs off.

Then the photo boys come running and they and the reporters for the pickure papers put on as prety a battle royall as you ever glimed at the old Saint Nikolas before the cops made them quit. They gathered up four blue eyes among them and two busted cameras but they got the girl photo-grafd as you will note from the tab papers.

This bozo Davis doesnt no it all.

*Your friend and pupil,*

JOSEPH (CANNONBALL) McCLUSKEY.

P.S. I hope you will notice that you got bimbo Davis story ahead of the World. The credit comes to me. Mr. Davis told me to fone the telegraf office before we started in, that he would put on his story at seven pm but when we get in we find this bird Hammond of the world using the wire.

I says to the operator we called you up and said we wanted the wire. The guy says he nows about that but this Hammond told him he was the guy foned. He said we was out of luck becaus he had only one wire. While Mr. Davis argus with this Hammond who is giving him a horse laff I got the thinkbox thinking. I walk round the corner to where I seen a guy bedding down a couple horses. I seen the stable had a good lock.

For five dollars the guy said it was jake. I asked him about the hollerin and he said the holy rolers was praying just a block away and any shouting would be considered as coming from them. So I run in the telegraf office and yells they got the bird that killed the girl.

Hammond and Mr. Davis jump up fast and come running and I shout follow me. I run in the stable and Hammond rite behind me. When I got well inside I turns

and hands him a kick that lands him among the horses. I pushes Mr. Davis out the door and locks the door. Then I says to Mr. Davis whos just a bimbo get your story on the wire and when your threw Ill let him out. You could hear Hammond holler in Hoboken. My God says Mr. Davis there is a brain in your head at that. A dirty crack but you told me not to cross him being tempramental. I let Hammond out after an hour and he tried to take a poke at me but I just openhanded him.

Yours,  
Mac.

### III

SCUMALONG, N. J.  
Sept. 6th.

Mr. Fred Mallory,  
City Editor,

*The New York Morning Star.*

DEAR BOSS: First off that copyreader that took the quart off Jessie along with you didnt pay her. He said for her to get it pay-day. See he kicks across. I got to give the Montauk boys cash on the bare head.

Well the pickure paper boys shure handed it to me today when they herd about me locking up Hammond while Mr. Davis got the story into you. One of the photografers a swell guy by the name of Mike Finch comes up to me and says Your wasting your time working on a paper that dont be all pickures a tuff baby like you.

Then he says you been looking for a sweet pickure of this little jane before she got the aks aint you and I says yes. Well he pull's out a little pickure of her with all her curls and high school graduater dress on her. There he says is the kind of a pickure the Star wants but it aint a bit of good to us no acshun. Ill give it you if youll work out a little deal with me. The bozo with me is a louse. I like to work with a guy has guts like you.

I took the pickure over to bimbo Davis and he said fine he could use it. So we rushed it to you and I guess youll use it. Alrite I says to Finch lead me to it. And he tells me what he wants done. You no

the old lady and the two kid sisters of the dead girl hadnt left the house not since the killing and nobody had got in. Mike was going to get after them folks.

Well boss he found a way alrite. He takes me to the barn and we sits in the hay. Pretty soon the old man him that did all the crying comes out and starts to town and all the reporters and pickure men traes after him. I notise one of the shades in the windows wagling and Mike makes sines. After a while the kitchin door opens up and the two kid sisters of the dead girl comes sneeking out. They look all round and then make a run for the barn. They are shure pretty babys.

They was kind of shy at first but after a bit they warmed up speshally after Mike said big boy pull out that gin. How did you no I had any gin I says. Because you forgot to bring clofs he says dont be a hog.

Well boss we past round the bottle a couple times and the two kids started gigling. Mike he took a shot of them with their arms round each other looking as near sad as they could with the gin. Then he took some shots of them sitting cross leged showing their pantys.

After the youngest one Minerva had another swig of the gin she told Mike she had a batheing suit and Mike says for her to go get it and he would make some pickures. Shure enuff she slips out and comes back stagering a bit and dressed up in a red one peace. Thats the one you saw in Mikes tab that says On The Beech. Snaped Just One Week Before The Brutel Deed. It pertends that the pickure is of the girl that was bumpd off. It isnt its her sister Minerva. I car prove it by that pimpul youll notise on her left hip.

I wanted to ask the kids about how the sister got in her jam but Mike says dont be a fool and spoil a good thing. Mike told the oldest jane to meet him at nine tonite for a little peting. Id have took the other but she got kind of silly with the gin.

Your foolish boss not to go in more for pickures. Thats the stuff gets the publick.

JOSEPH (CANNONBALL) McCLUSKEY.

## IV

SCUMALONG, N. J.  
Sept. 7th, 1926

Mr. Fred Mallory,  
City Editor,  
*The New York Morning Star.*

DEAR BOSS: Well boss your getting licked all over the place but you cant say its my fault. Those pickures of Mikes were shure darbs. I offered to do anything Mr. Davis wanted me today but he said I should get as far away from him as I could. Thats grattitude after me locking up Hammond.

This Mike calms me to one side and says am I game for another helpout. He says there was a tenspot in it for me so you see Im telling you. If Davis turns down my time I guess I can use it other ways.

Mike had perswaded the little girl hed been peting last nite to leave the seller door open. So we sneaks in with all Mikes camerer stuff. Mike node something I didnt for when wed nosyd into the parlor there was the dead girl in her coffin. Theyd slipped her in after all us boys had gone to the hay last nite.

The old mother was neeling besides the coffin and we was so quiet she couldnt hear a sound. All of a sudden off goes Mikes flash and we got that peeche of a pickure you saw in the late paper tonite. Well the old lady skweels blue murder and starts to run. Mike hollers to me to hold her till he gets his flash off again. So I trips her and down she goes yelling blue murder. Before you could snap your finger Mike lets off a couple flashes while the old lady lays on the floor yelling and ringing her hands and me rastling her legs. Those are the shots you saw in Mikes paper where it says My Poor Little You Lam and I Can Never Forgave John Barrett. Barretts the guy is supposed to have bumped off the kid.

Youll notise they blocked me out of the pickure and made a good job of it. I guess it wouldnt have looked so good for me to be rastling with the old lady in Mikes paper when I was working for you. Mike and me beat it like hell after that.

Mike said if the old man found us there it would mean another murder.

God boss what your paper is missing by sticking to stuff like bimbos like Davis turns out.

Your friend,  
JOSEPH (CANNONBALL) McCLUSKEY.

## V

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT,  
THE DAILY SKETCH  
Sept. 8th, 1926

Mr. Fred Mallory,  
City Editor,  
*The New York Morning Star.*

SIR: You didnt fire me I quit. While your sarcastickal letter was on the way to New Jersey I was here in New York talking busness to Mr. Hurt, Mikes boss. He shakes my hand and says hello burglar.

Inside of five minutes I was hired at twice the gelt you been paying me to learn things which Mr. Hurt says is of no use in journalism as it is practized today. Thats what he says and said I hadnt another thing to learn as far as he was concerned. I dont have to rite any stories nor even to learn how to rite stories. When Im on big stuff like murders I get a by line on the stories I fone in just like I had rote them myself. Ill be a specialty corespondense.

I dont want to be ruff about anything but Ill have to cut you off the list for that scotch Jessie has been bringing in. These boys on the Sketch can use all I can get, and it is to my intrest to be sitting pretty down here. With the money I am getting now I can cut out all bootleging and prize-fiting for my mother and my sister sake. Jessie can deliver to the sketch boys now and keep the profits for herself and make a nice living better than that filling job at the corthouse she has now.

Yours truly no animosity,  
JOSEPH C. McCLUSKEY  
*Specialty corespondense The New York Daily Sketch.*

P.S. Thats the way my name will show on the big stories I rite from now on.

# A SHORT VIEW OF ST. LOUIS

BY ARTHUR STRAWN

FIFTY years ago, when steamboating was in its prime and St. Louis was Queen of the River, there arose in the city's midst one Logan Uriah Reavis, a gentleman whom fate had endowed with prophetic vision and a soul which expressed itself in lofty utterance. Convinced that the St. Louis in which he dwelt was the Chosen City of the Earth, Reavis appointed himself prophet of its coming glory and fervently voiced his faith in a series of pamphlets which made him famous.

His volumes were slender. But they contained between their covers a statistical alchemy which makes the legerdemain of the present Chamber of Commerce magicians seem clumsy. With rather dazzling calculations and demonstrations Reavis established the inevitability of the city's supremacy. It was to be not only the metropolis of the United States, but, as the title of one of his volumes had it, "The Future Great City of the World." Reavis exhorted the nation at large to share in its approaching magnificence by making it the National Capital forthwith, vice Washington, abandoned.

Alas, for the vanity of human hopes! A half-century has passed, and still the prophecy remains unfulfilled. It is true that the city has grown and grown until today, with its suburbs, it houses approximately a million human souls. Nor with its increase in such live stock has it failed to grow also in wealth, as witness its 3500 belching factories devoted to 211 separate and distinct varieties of production, which means diversification of industry, stability in times of panic, and no labor unrest; in short, a sweet absence of all those things

for which insurance companies are maintained. And even the most skeptical can hardly fail to observe the implications of culture to be found in the city's zoölogical garden, which boasts bear-pits costing a quarter of a million dollars and a magnificent monkey-house. All these things St. Louis has. Yet all of them somehow fall short of making it the *Kaiserstadt* of Reavis's prophecy.

But let us do justice to the memory of that enraptured man. If we look back on the St. Louis upon which he based his vision, we make a surprising discovery: it was really something to boast about. We all assume today that only the up-to-date is of any excellence. To yearn for the good old days is to admit one's senescence, to stand self-accused of being the deluded victim simultaneously of hardening of the arteries and softening of the brain. Yet at the risk of these indictments, yea, with the certain knowledge that the salaried defenders of St. Louis's virtues will accuse me of being bought up by Cleveland or even Kansas City, I confess that I find myself suffering from a mild nostalgia for the St. Louis of fifty years ago. Not that I love the St. Louis of today less. But I simply think the city of 1875 was a better town to live in, a town, for all its devotion to commerce, able to make the desirable distinction between living and merely making a living.

It is the custom of St. Louisans today to attribute all the local ills to the presence of a large population of German origin. If this is true, the city merely accuses itself of having dulled these people by subjecting them to the enervating processes of Ameri-