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ONE afternoon in an early November, I am sitting in Chesty Charles' little Sharkskin Grill on Biscayne Boulevard in the city of Miami, Florida, chatting of this and that with a guy by the name of High-C Homer, who is called by this name because he loves to sing songs in a real high voice.

In fact, Homer tells me that when he is much younger he wishes to become a singer by trade and tries out one amateur night at the old Colonial Theater in New York but he says professional jealousy is very strong at the time and somebody in the audience pegs a turnip at him while he is singing Sweet Alice, Ben Bolt and hits him on the Adam's apple and affects his vocal cords so his voice is never again good enough for the stage, but all right for back rooms.

Anyway, when he sees there is no hope for him in a musical career, Homer has to find something else to do and what he does is the best he can, which is one thing and another, and he is explaining to me in the Sharkskin Grill that even doing the best he can, he is not doing so good, when in comes a fuzz by the name of Finnegan, a fuzz being a way of saying a plain-clothes copper, who steps up to Homer and speaks to him as follows:

"Homer, the chief of police will consider it a favor if you will kindly bid us farewell."

"Why?" Homer says. "What is his idea?"

"Does the chief have to have one?" Finnegan asks.

"No," Homer says, "by no means and not at all. I am just wondering."

"Well," Finnegan says, "when he first mentions your name he requests me to bring you in because it seems a large touch comes off in West Palm Tuesday night and right away the chief thinks of you. But," Finnegan says, "I remember seeing you in the police station all night Tuesday night trying to square that traffic violation, so you cannot also be in West Palm and when I speak of this to the chief he says all right but to suggest your departure anyway. You may thank me if you wish."

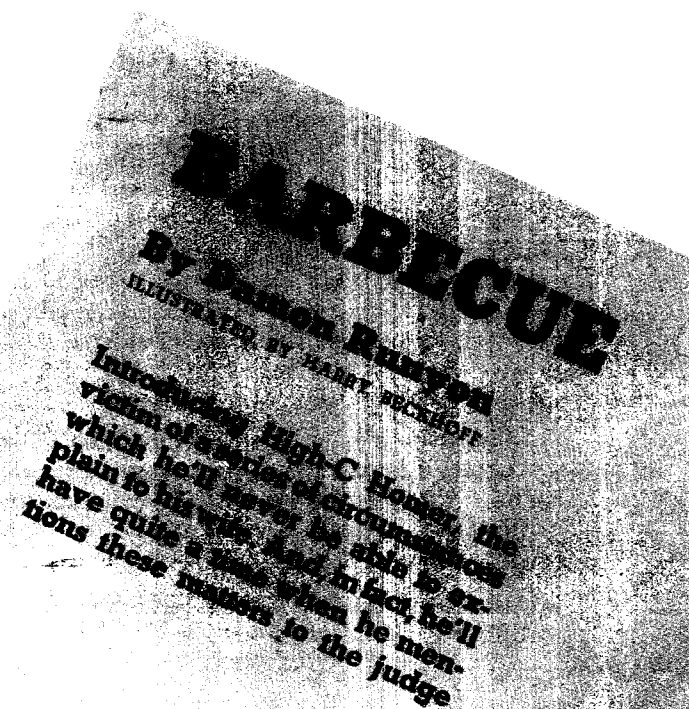
"Thanks," Homer says. "Do you mind telling me the details of the touch to which you refer?"

"Oh," Finnegan says, "it is a pay-off swindle. They beat an old simkin from Iowa for fifty thousand tears of blood."

"A fifty-er?" Homer says. "My goodness, this is important moo. But, Finnegan," he says, "I am not in the pay-off world and I do not see how anybody can associate me with such incidents. I am an operator on the race courses and quite upright and legitimate."

"Well," Finnegan says, "if you call skinning marks on those phony tip sheets you peddle legitimate, maybe you are legit, but perhaps

Presently they go out the front door again, this Juliano dragging the bull-fiddle case after him





the chief looks through the files on you. I seem to be able to remember some things myself."

"Never mind," Homer says. "Tell the cheese of police goodby for me, Finnegan, and the same to you."

Then Homer thinks a while and finally he says he guesses he will go over to Tampa and he invites me to accompany him and as it is quite a while before the races start in Miami and I have nothing on my mind at the moment and the fuzz also gives me some severe looks, I accept the invitation.

So Homer goes to a parking lot not far away where he keeps an old bucket parked and presently we are rolling along the Tamiami Trail headed west, and as we journey along Homer sings several songs to me that sound very soothing but all the time he seems to be in deep thought and finally he sighs and says to me like this:

"WELL," Homer says, "fifty thou is undoubtedly a splendid tally but I am glad I am not in on it. Honesty is the best policy, to be sure. There are no

handholds on a wrong dollar. The way of the transgressor is hard. But," he says, "if it is the guys I think it is, they at least owe me the courtesy of a refusal to participate because of past favors rendered. I never hear a word from them."

Then Homer begins singing again and I get to thinking that it is really most remarkable that there are still marks in this world for the pay-off, as the pay-off is really a very old-fashioned dodge in which the marks are convinced that they are being let in on crooked horse races

and are permitted to win a while in an astonishing manner, but when they commence asking about being paid off they are told they must first prove they will be able to settle if they happen to lose.

So the marks generally send to their banks and get the cash money to prove this, as the pay-off guy never picks marks who do not have cash money in banks, and the next thing anybody knows the money disappears and so do the pay-off guys. Furthermore, the marks seldom squawk, as the pay-off guys are cute enough to pick marks who cannot afford to let it become noised about that they are trying to make a few dishonest dubs, though it is well known to one and all that when such a mark does squawk it is the loudest squawk ever heard on land or sea.

There is no doubt that the pay-off requires great perseverance and much preparation and expense, but personally I do not approve of this method of making a living, as it calls for much deceit.

Now the Tamiami Trail is a road that runs from Miami toward Tampa and vice versa through the Everglades, and the Everglades is a big stretch of flat country that makes you feel very lonesome indeed after the sun goes down. And soon after dusk it comes on to blow and after a while it is quite a high breeze and, in fact, the wind is picking up our old can in one place and setting it down in another yards away and this makes riding in it a trifle bumpy.

Furthermore, it begins raining more than somewhat and it is darker than a yard down a bear's throat except when it lightnings and I tell Homer it may be a good idea to pull up and wait until the storm blows over. Homer says he quite agrees with me and that in fact he is looking for a gaff he knows of which ought to be somewhere along about where we are at the moment, and I tell him he better find it very shortly as it does not look as if the old rattle-and-jar can hold the road much longer.

**F**INALLY we notice some streaks of light through the dark and the rain off to one side of the road and Homer says this must be the spot and he turns the car in that direction and we come on a long, low frame building which I can see seems to be some kind of a jook, which is a sort of a roadhouse where refreshments are sold and dancing goes on and I do not know what all else.

Homer runs his old pail as close as possible to the side of the building where the other cars are parked and we get out and he locates a door that figures to open outward and we pull on it together with the wind pushing against us for several minutes before we can pull it wide enough to ease inside. And there we are in a long, narrow room with a number of tables scattered around in it and a small bar and an old piano on one side and with big gas lamps swinging back and forth from the ceiling as the wind shakes the building.

There are maybe half a dozen guys in the joint sitting at the tables and behind the bar is a short, stocky-built female party of maybe half past thirty-eight, to give her a few hours the best of it. She is by no means fashionably dressed and, in fact, she has on a short-sleeved ragged sweater and her brown hair with streaks of gray in it is flying every which way about her head and she is far from beautiful. In fact, she is strictly a blouwzola, but when Homer sees her he seems greatly pleased and he walks

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The roof caves in over the spot where the piano is, and Homer pulls Barbecue off the stool and out of the way just in time



Dr. Charles H. Best is head of the Department of Medical Research of the University of Toronto. In the same laboratory where, with the immortal Banting, he discovered insulin in 1921, he continues his studies of diabetes



Dr. Reginald Haist, right, who with Dr. Best is engaged in promising research experiments with the hope of learning how to prevent diabetes. He is shown here removing the pancreas of an experimental mouse with the aid of a laboratory assistant

# Let Them Eat Cream

By J. D. Ratcliff

That's part of a prescription that may result in the prevention of diabetes. It's the contribution of the man who with Dr. Banting discovered insulin twenty years ago—thereby saving some hundreds of thousands of lives

THE laboratory has no Hollywood touches, no glistening gadgets, no mystifying machines. Quite the reverse. Everything is on the grubby side. The worktables are scarred with age and eaten with acids. There is an ancient fume cupboard to carry away lung-biting gases; and the usual disorderly mass of technical glassware. Nothing, you agree, to suggest that you are standing on some of the holiest ground

in the world of medical research. A modest bronze plaque, hung high enough on the wall to escape notice, explains:

"... In May 1921 Frederick Grant Banting and Charles Herbert Best, both graduates of the University of Toronto, conducted in this room the experiments which culminated with the discovery of insulin."

That was epoch-making work. The lives of nearly half a million United States diabetics rest on it. Two million more people now living may develop diabetes before they die—and will need this colorless fluid magic. It has bestowed on human beings the richest of all gifts—life itself. Diabetic children have won an additional thirty years; and life expectancy of middle-aged groups has been extended.

Reflect on these things and wonder why, in heaven's name, this lab hasn't been placed in honorary retirement, protected perhaps by a velvet rope. Yet it is just as well that it didn't win these dubious honors. Work just completed in this shabby, cluttered little hole in the wall holds enormous promise for millions not yet born. The original dissections not yet born. The original discovery of insulin gave life and hope to people facing certain doom. This new work presents experimental evidence that diabetes can be prevented.

Presently, we'll see the exciting details of the work that led to this conclusion. Meanwhile, let's understand the mechanics of diabetes. Man's pancreas, shaped like a polliwog, lies just back of the stomach. It serves a dual function. It secretes a daily pint and a half of digestive fluid which it pours

into the small intestine. More vital, the gland secretes minute quantities of another substance which it empties directly into the blood stream. This is the hormone insulin.

Insulin is manufactured by tiny "island" cells, each independent of the other. The average pancreas, small or large though it is, contains from 750,000 to a million and a quarter of these islet cells. The insulin they secrete governs the body's utilization of sugar. When adequate insulin is present, sugar is burned rapidly into energy. When it isn't, the body wastes away and the sufferer lives constantly with an unquenchable thirst, an unappeasable hunger. Poisonous matter resulting from the incomplete utilization of fats accumulates in the blood. So does unburned sugar. If the condition goes unattended—if insulin isn't given by hypodermic—coma and death follow.

## The Miracle of Insulin

Insulin, the hormone which allows diabetics to live more or less comfortably, was discovered by a two-man team: Charles H. Best, a medical student whose education was interrupted by war service in the British tank corps; and Frederick G. Banting, a surgeon who dropped a rural practice to follow a brilliant research hunch. Banting died tragically a few months ago in the crash of a Britain-bound bomber.

Banting and Best found how to extract insulin from beef pancreas (sweetbread); and discovered that this animal organ supplied enough insulin to keep the average diabetic going for twenty

days. Scheduled shots—as many as four a day—gave years of useful life to such people as the late King George V of England, George Eastman, H. G. Wells, Hugh Walpole and hundreds of thousands of other less-famed diabetics. It was discovered barely in time to give Dr. George R. Minot the new lease on life he needed to go on and discover the liver treatment for an equally fatal disease—pernicious anemia.

But the finding of insulin wasn't the end. From the research man's point of view it was the bare beginning. No one knew why the island cells, discovered by and named for the German pathologist Paul Langerhans, ceased to function normally. In other words, no one knew what caused diabetes. Insulin, of course, wouldn't cure the disease. And there was no means of prevention. So there were quantities of work to be done with this sickness which converted active, robust people into wretched bags of bones.

Unnoticed and unpublicized, work continued throughout the world. Enormous strides were taken during depression years. Like clues in a mystery, fragments began to fit together to make a significant picture.

Herbert McLean Evans, great University of California biologist, stumbled on a startling fact. He was studying the growth-promoting factors in the pituitary, the body's master gland. Repeatedly he shot dogs with extracts taken from the anterior portion of this gland. By chance, he happened to note that the animals became diabetic! Why this senseless fact? No one knew.

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