

My grandfather bent over Uncle Leon. "Get up!" he said. "Mind your own business," Uncle Leon said weakly

By CHARLES EINSTEIN

THERE are three words we never mention in my father's presence. These three words are Fall River, Massachusetts. I might add that the ban dates back more than a quarter of a century to the night when my Uncle Leon fought a draw—he won one and lost one.

If I add, too, that Uncle Leon fought with a pillowcase over his head, you will see that the episode was not only memorable but complicated—too complicated for my father, which was why he got sore.

Those were depression times, and my father was sore anyway—sore at Uncle Leon, who spent three dollars a week working out at a gym off Beacon Street in Boston, where we lived. Actually, it cost five dollars a week at the gym, but Uncle Leon was going with a girl whose family had a grocery store, and he used to give the man at the gym part payment in the form of fruit and vegetables.

"He must think oranges grow on trees," my father complained bitterly to my grandfather, but my grandfather was inclined to be indulgent about it. They weren't *his* oranges, and besides, he liked the idea of a son of his working out at a gym.

"You should build yourself up like your brother Leon," he said to my father.

"What am I going to pay the man at the gym with?" my father said. "Free slides at the Fun House?" My father's advertising agency had Revere Beach, the amusement park, as a client in those days; or at any rate, his agency had the Fun House at Revere Beach, if not the total beach.

How the idea crystallized, I don't remember; it may have been my father's tie-in with the amusement park or it may have been the argument he had with my grandfather about Uncle Leon's physical condition.

"He's a regular Dempsey," my grandfather said. "Isn't that right, Leon? Tell your brother what you do at that gym."

"Shoot baskets," Uncle Leon said.

"Baskets," my father said. "Baskets. Bas— wait a minute!" It was unholy the way his eyes lighted up. "Leon, you think I could beat you? Boxing? In the ring?"

"Not a chance," my grandfather said.

"You keep out of this," my father said to him. "Don't you see? What is it people nowadays want more than anything else? Food! A basket of groceries. We'll offer a basket of groceries as a prize to anybody who can knock Leon out."

"Wait a minute," Uncle Leon said.

"One-night stands," my father said. "The summer season's starting. Fairs and carnivals. We could—"

"—lose a whole lot of groceries," my grandfather interrupted.

My father looked at him. "I thought you said Leon was a great boxer."

"For a basket of groceries, I'd knock him out," my grandfather said. "My own son."

"No," my father said. "Be practical." He started gesturing as he explained his plan. "We'll charge admission, see, and advertise that the first man to knock Leon out—any man, chosen at random from the audience—inside of, say, three rounds wins the big basket of food. Then I'll be in the audience. I'll be the stooge. You"—he pointed to my grandfather—"pick me for the first contestant each time. I'll go up, belt him out, and we get to keep the admission money and the food too."

My grandfather shook his head. "People would get suspicious after a while."

"While schmile," my father said. "I already told you. One-night stands. We'll be leaving town every night. Who'll catch up with us?"

My Uncle Leon said, "Wait a minute."

"Aha," my grandfather said to my father. "How you going to fix the other thing? You're brothers."

"I won't hit him hard," my father said.

"But you look alike," my grandfather said. "People would know."

Thus they decided to put the pillowcase over Uncle Leon's head, with holes for the eyes. It added to the promotional value of the whole business, anyway, because my Uncle Leon became known as the Hooded Marvel.

"Wait a minute," Uncle Leon said, for the last time, but nobody listened to him. Instead, my father went out to line up bookings and Uncle Leon was assigned to lift a basket of groceries off Eunice, his girl friend.

I MUST SAY, the project went fine. It only took three or four hours of everybody's time, evenings, because fortunately the city of Boston has more suburbs than any other place in the world, and the Hooded Marvel showed up at a different one each night, got a cluster of willing comers inside the tent at fifteen cents a head, mixed it up a little, while everybody was cheering my father, and then took the bye-bye shot on the chin and dropped for the count. Grandfather was the referee.

For the final couple of weeks of the campaign, the tour branched out a little. The boys had worked Greater Boston over pretty well by now, and there was always the Taunton-Attleboro-New Bedford circuit, so off they went and wound up for the grand finale in Fall River.

Everything went as everything always went, with one minor exception in format: Uncle Leon's friend Eunice decided she wanted to see him fight. She didn't tell anybody, but she took me along with her—mainly, I think, as a ready excuse for being there, since she hadn't been invited. She and I sat together in the audience, and it wasn't till my father bellowed out his answer to the challenge and mounted to the ring that Uncle Leon saw us. I gather he saw us—you couldn't see his face, but his head was turned our way and all of a sudden the pillowcase seemed to come to attention.

The next thing you knew, he was out there battling away like he'd never fought before. My father couldn't figure it out. He delivered two of his standard knockout punches in a row, but Leon just kept swinging away. It was one hell of a fight, especially with my grandfather in there refereeing and shouting, "How do I know? How do I know?" at my father, in between blows.

The only thing that saved my father from a knockout was the bell ending the third round. He came weaving down the steps from the ring, with a glazed look in his eyes, and then he saw Eunice and he understood.

He came over to where we were. "Who," he said, breathing horribly, "told you where we were going to be tonight?"

"Your father," Eunice said to him. "He thought—"

"Uh-huh," my father said, and kept on going, out into the night. You can see why he was sore. He didn't say two words to my grandfather for a month or more.

Of course, he missed the best part, stalking off like that. He hadn't knocked Uncle Leon out, so somebody else was entitled to a chance, and the biggest guy you ever saw got into that ring and started chasing Uncle Leon. You never saw a pillowcase go around a squared circle so fast in your life. Uncle Leon kept yelling, "Take the groceries! Take the groceries!" The big guy did take the groceries, but only after catching Uncle Leon an awful right-hand swat to the chops, sending the Hooded Marvel to the canvas.

My grandfather bent over Uncle Leon and said, "Get up."

"Mind your own business," Leon said weakly.

"Eunice is here," my grandfather said.

"I know," Leon said.

He didn't talk to my grandfather for a month or more, either. And Eunice didn't show up the way she used to. It was a real quiet place for a while.

But it was a lesson in thrift, too. Uncle Leon didn't go spend three dollars a week at the gym any more.

THE END

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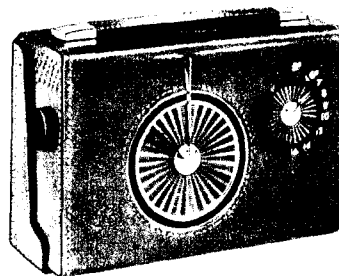
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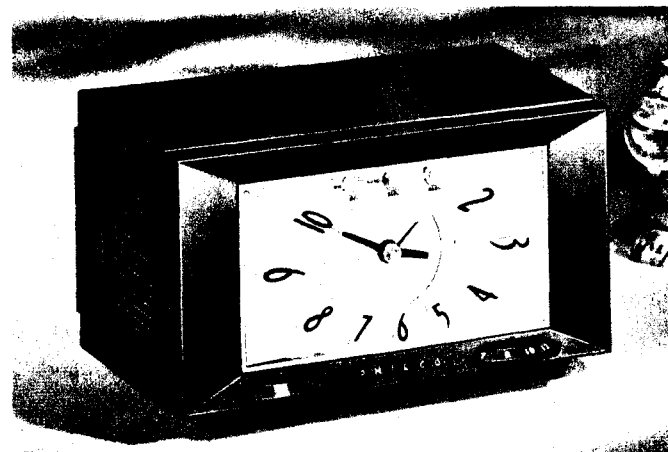
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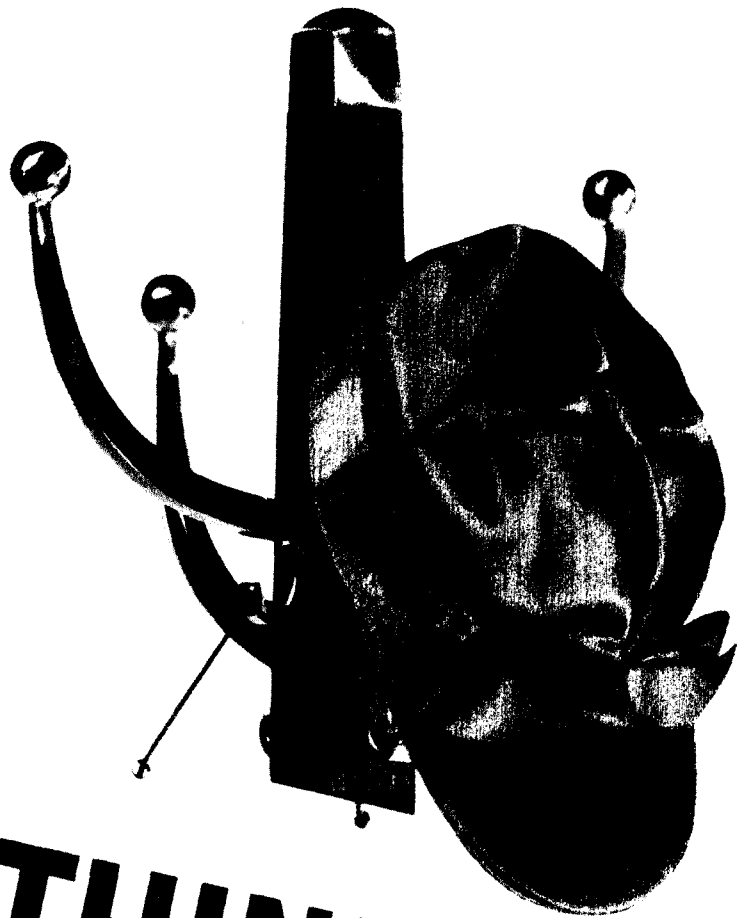
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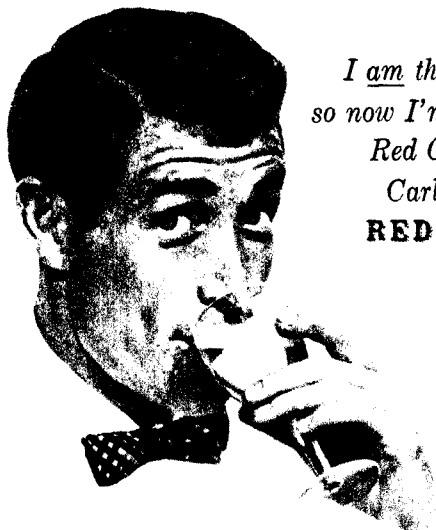
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Photographer Duncan with the Sudanese cameleer, Sgt. Suliman Saleh Ahmed, in Gaza Strip, a tough soldier also pictured on our cover

COLLIER'S CREDITS

ONE SUMMER 20 years ago, a young college student on vacation in Acapulco took a snapshot of a Mexican fisherman throwing his net, sent it to the Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester, New York, and won second prize in a national contest for amateurs.

In 1950, the same fellow was invited to come to Rochester and accept the U.S. Camera Award for the outstanding photography of the year, for his Korean war photographs.

In between those two prizes David Douglas Duncan had become one of the outstanding photographers of the world scene. Right now, at the height of his career, he has joined the staff of Collier's as Special Photo Correspondent, roving the world to cover the significant stories of our time.

Duncan was born in Kansas City, Missouri. "I was the one who wandered," he says of his family. He studied archaeology at the University of Arizona for two years and switched to the University of Miami, where he was graduated in 1938 after majoring in marine zoology and Spanish. He spent the years before the war on the land and waters of Latin America, taking pictures and writing stories—about turtle-hunting in the Caribbean Sea, jungle expeditions in Brazil, the life of a Nicaraguan dictator—and selling them to American magazines and newspapers.

In 1942, Duncan joined the Marines, earned his commission, and was sent out to the Pacific as a photographic officer. He covered action as it took place, starting with Guadalcanal and ending with him seated on a gun turret of the battleship named for his home state, shooting pictures of the Japanese surrender.

Duncan went on inactive duty in 1946, and began working for Life magazine. He literally traveled the world, from Bangkok to the Dardanelles to Tokyo, and in between. While in the Japanese capital, in fact, the Korean war broke out and Duncan was the first photographer to reach the scene of action. When the Chinese entered the conflict he managed to fly north to where the First Marine Division was

cut off and photograph the march out and evacuation by sea. "I was the last guy out," he recalls. "Five men mined the beach; I took their picture and then jumped in the boat after them."

Duncan's Korean photographs were collected in a highly successful book, *This Is War*. (All the royalties went to a Marine Corps fund for widows and children of the dead.) Then he returned to peacetime reporting of matters such as the iron curtain or Ava Gardner.

Duncan's first story for Collier's is in this issue, and is the result of his having been the first American photographer the Egyptians have permitted to enter the dangerous Gaza Strip.

★ ★ ★

IN A BIZARRE CIVIL WAR episode, a group of Union soldiers in civilian clothes stole a train in Georgia and raced north through enemy territory, intent on burning and wrecking all communications in their wake, while the abandoned conductor of the train steamed in hot pursuit behind them.

Right now you can see all this in CinemaScope and Technicolor in Walt Disney's motion picture, *The Great Locomotive Chase*. There have been all sorts of versions over the years, but for a thoroughly documented account see Robert Minton's story on page 22.

One of Minton's main sources of material was Wilbur F. Kurtz, Sr., an Atlanta citizen who has spent more than 50 years gathering material on the subject.

"Kurtz's interest in the raid is a passion," Minton tells us. "He has half a dozen notebooks filled with letters and interviews of participants and witnesses, and with sketches and paintings of key objects and locations involved. He started all this when he was a youngster in Indiana. Eventually he met six survivors of the raid, and traveled to Atlanta to interview William Fuller, the intrepid conductor who foiled the Union plot."

That was in 1903. Kurtz settled there, married Fuller's daughter and inherited his ticket punch!

—JEROME BEATTY, JR.

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