



By David Pitt

THE HATCHES REMAINED BATTENED down on both sides last week in New York's six-week-old newspaper strike. From the picket lines to the publishers' executive suites, it was still hang-tough city.

"You won't see the end of this one for at least three or four more weeks," said Danny Murphy, a paperhandler walking the picket line at the West 43rd Street offices of the *New York Times*. "If it isn't settled by then, we may not be back to work until January or February."

The prospect doesn't faze Murphy, 51, who has a wife, three kids and a mortgage. Like most members of the four unions currently on strike against the *Times*, the *Daily News* and *New York Post*, Murphy figures he can get by indefinitely on his union checks and unemployment benefits. Unemployment will soon be available for most of the 10,000 workers idled by the shutdown.

Or as Al Carnacchio, a pressman for 26 years at the *Times*, put it in a phrase that has become a familiar battle cry on the picket lines, "I can stay out forever."

Talks resume.

Even the resumption on September 11, of contract talks between the publishers and the 1,550-member pressmen's union, whose Aug. 9 walkout at all three dailies triggered the shutdown, has failed to set many hearts aflutter among the strikers.

The talks, which resumed after the two sides had stalked off Aug. 31, following what federal mediator Kenneth Moffett called a "fruitless" effort, included a new face: Theodore W. Kheel, the veteran labor negotiator credited with expediting the end of New York's last big newspaper strike, the 114-day affair of 1962-63.

But even Kheel himself, who entered the talks as an "impartial observer" retained by the Allied Printing Trades Council, which represents the 10 unions affected by the strike, saw little hope of any early breakthrough. Few of the striking workers have any doubt that they are in a high-stakes struggle.

"This kind of thing has been happening all over the country," said Carnacchio, who at 54 is at the age average for most tenured pressmen in New York. "The publishers are trying to break us. And if they nail us here, unions everywhere are through. They'll go right up the line—they'll hit the mailers, the paperhandlers, the stereotypers—everybody."

The publishers have offered the pressmen a three-year package totaling up to \$68 a week in wage increases. But wages are not the issue with the pressmen. The problem is staffing. The publishers say they can't compete with the non-union suburban dailies without major reduc-

LABOR

New York papers down, striking pressmen still out

The New York Times

229 WEST 43 STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036

TO THE STAFF:

With the long weekend celebrating the glories of organized labor upon us, it seems a fitting moment to tip my hat to you wonderful men and women who are keeping the *New York Times* going.

Some of you have experienced before the dreadful loneliness of a prolonged strike. To others, this is a new and devastating experience. Picket lines never are any fun. But to be taunted and insulted by fellow employees adds a special personal dimension to an already unhappy situation.

Without a doubt, all of you are just great. Your good humor and camaraderie have made what might be an intolerable situation liveable. The way each of you has willingly chipped in to perform any task is something that I shall always remember.

Before too long, we will be out of this dreadful mess. In the meanwhile, I should like to tell you how much I admire and respect you, who indeed are the *New York Times*.

Punch

A.O.S.

Arthur "Punch" Ochs Sulzberger, president and publisher of the *TIMES*, sent this letter to non-striking employees.

tions in the workforce. The pressmen say the proposed cuts of up to 50 percent are too big—but unofficially, some concede that smaller cutbacks are inevitable.

"They can keep the salary," said Carnacchio, who makes up to \$360 a week, not including overtime. "We can't work safely with that few men on the presses."

"We're going to lose 15 to 20 percent of our men before we can go back to work," said Leon Long, 55, father of five, for 31 years a *Times* pressman, now a foreman. "And we'll have additional losses through attrition." He said an average of 55 to 60 pressmen in the union die each year. Retirements swell the total

further.

Apart from the argument that reducing the crews on the presses will lead to on-the-job accidents, Long has another objection: that the newspapers coming off the presses will look lousy.

"I think they're going to sacrifice the quality of the product for the sake of production savings," he said.

Most pressmen make no secret of their pride in turning out quality work. The possibility that they will be asked to produce shoddy goods troubles them.

Out to break the unions.

K. Rupert Murdoch, the *Post* publisher and head of the Publisher's Association,

owns 84 other newspapers, most in Great Britain and his native Australia, and is widely regarded on the picket lines as a prime purveyor of shoddy goods. One of his London papers, the *News of the World*, typifies what has become known as the "tits and bums" approach to journalism—sare headlines and cheese-cake. He is also seen as the chief architect of the publishers hard line—although the less visible *Daily News* executives, acting at the behest of the paper's Chicago-based parent company, are reported to be toeing an equally tough position.

Murdoch's heavy financial backing of one of the four interim strike papers, the *Daily Metro*—originally thought to be the product of an independent entrepreneur—has served to deepen the belief that his methods are as dirty as his motives. A persistent rumor, not without some circumstantial evidence, has it that Murdoch intends to fold the *Post*, and replace it with a non-unionized *Metro*. He denies it.

The strike situation is more complex at the *Post* than at the other two dailies. There, the pressmen have been joined not only by the paperhandlers and the machinists, but by the Newspaper Guild, which represents about 300 editorial, clerical and advertising personnel at the paper.

The Guild's situation seems particularly precarious at the *Post*, since Murdoch using offers of severance and acts of harassment, has already succeeded in reducing the union's membership to its present level by about 150. The job has proved so easy that there are now fears that by simply offering a retrogression-loaded contract to a union almost willing to sign anything, Murdoch will have succeeded in so weakening the Guild that he can forego going to the trouble of formally breaking it.

Will it turn nasty?

The pressmen and their compatriots on the picket lines—who include the delivery-truck mechanics at the *News*—aren't worried about their ability to stand up to the publishers. Their fear is the possibility that the fickle drivers' union, under pressure from union members not subject to the same generous strike benefits, may crack and agree to deliver papers produced by the publishers without the unions—a feat made possible by new automated equipment.

If that happens, the chances of the strike turning violent will become very plausible. Most pressmen on the lines last week said they seriously doubted that the drivers union would be foolhardy enough to make a separate pact with the publishers, rumors to the contrary notwithstanding. But they are worried.

Long sees violence as just what the publishers need to divide the unions and eventually break the strike.

"Every union has a few hotheads, the kind of people who damaged presses during the pressmen's strike at the *Washington Post*," Long said. "Murdoch is trying to provoke them here."

He said he was hopeful violence could be avoided, but fears the possibility that the New York pressmen's union could be broken in the same fashion as was the Washington union in 1975. That occurred when other unions, including the Newspaper Guild, cited the vandalism as their reason for refusing to honor the pressmen's picket lines.

It remains to be seen whether the present round of talks between the publishers and pressmen will get anywhere soon. Kheel indicated that his biggest task will be simply to define the issues for both sides. The business of hard bargaining is still some distance down the pike.

Moreover, once the pressmen have reached some accommodation with the publishers, contracts still must be concluded with the other striking unions, no simple task.

The publishers have failed to sign a single new contract with the Guild or any of the other unions. All the old pacts expired last March and little or no groundwork has been laid towards new ones.

"My God," said one picketing machinist, "we're not anywhere close to a new contract. They don't even want to talk with us."

David Pitt is currently freelancing in New York. He ordinarily works at the *Metro-politan* desk at the *New York Times*.

ASSASSINATIONS

Assassination probe is full of holes

By Harvey Yazijian

WASHINGTON

THE FIRST WEEK OF THE ASSASSINATION Committee's long awaited public inquiry into the murder of John Kennedy was predictably disappointing. Disappointing because the Committee clearly favors a lone gunman, Lee Oswald. Predictable because this scenario will allow the Committee to contain any plots or foul play it chooses to discover within Oswald's murky past.

The hearing's first five days addressed the actual gunplay in Dealey Plaza. Medical, ballistics, acoustical and other criminological evidence was presented. The Committee's biases were made quickly apparent by its selective choice and treatment of witnesses. Witnesses unsupportive of the lone assassin theory, such as Dr. Cyril Wecht, were critically (though properly) questioned. Those whose testimony favored this thesis were seldom asked about conflicting and contradictory evidence and testimony.

Conflicting evidence.

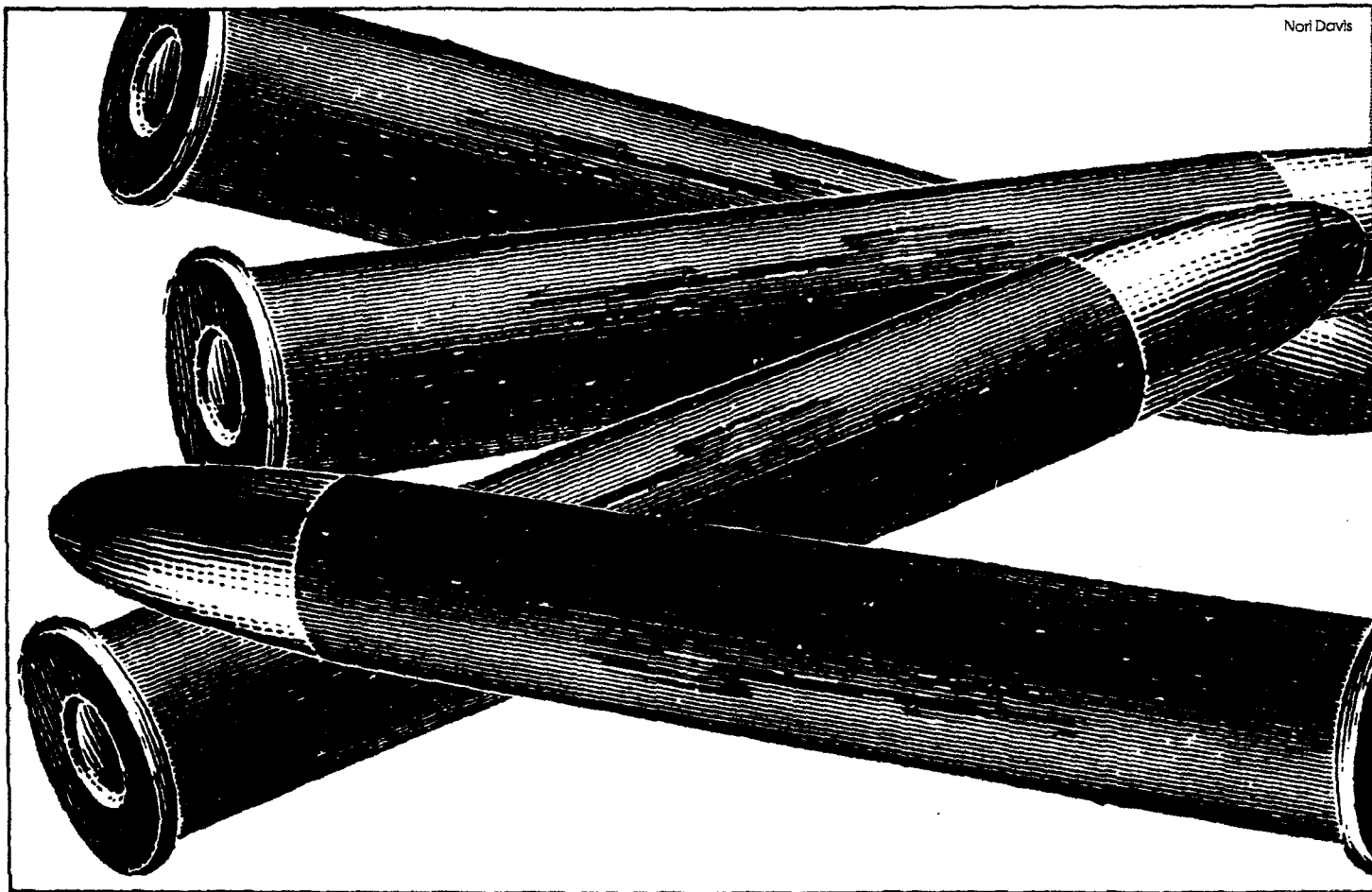
•Neither James J. Humes, who performed the autopsy on Kennedy, nor the Committee's medical panel were asked about the FBI report that states Humes probed the President's back wound with his finger and it only penetrated several inches at a sharp downward angle.

Instead, the Committee allowed its medical panel to conclude that a bullet transversed the President's body, exited his neck, and went on to strike Gov. Connally, who reacted a second and a half later.

Although G. Robert Blakey, the Committee's chief counsel, claimed the egregious decision not fully to inspect the President's wounds was Humes', Humes was never asked about the testimony of his co-autopsist, Pierre Finck. Finck stated under oath in New Orleans that a military officer present in the autopsy room ordered the doctors to forego a thorough examination of the body.

Finally, Humes told the Committee that he destroyed his original autopsy notes because they were bloodstained. He was not asked to square this statement with his testimony to the Warren Commission in 1964, when he said that he burned a draft of the autopsy report, prepared at his home on Sunday morning, Nov. 24, two days after the autopsy.

•The Committee presented a ballistics expert, admittedly untrained in the pathological sciences, who asserted that the infamous backwards motion of the President's body upon impact of the fatal bullet (as seen in the Zapruder film) was a neuro-muscular reaction. This explanation, which was first offered by the Rockefeller Commission in 1975 and rejected by CBS in 1976, was not received critically.



•Without any follow-up questioning, the ballistics experts were allowed to claim that Oswald's hypothetical first shot was "easy." This statement is misleading. Easy for an expert or layman? What of all the shots.

This opinion contradicts the conclusions of another witness who testified several days later that the first shot missed and the second passed through Kennedy and Connally. How did Oswald miss the "easy" shot? And what became of that bullet?

•The Committee's efforts to debunk the acoustical studies of a Dallas Police recording that was inadvertently made of the assassination bordered on desperation. This study indicates that *four* shots were fired, with the third originating from the grassy knoll to the front of the limousine. First, the Committee attacked the idea of the existence of the third shot, ignoring in the process that the tests suggested it came from the one other place in Dealey Plaza where photographic evidence and eye and ear witnesses place a gunman.

Second, Blakey announced that initial tests indicate the alleged murder weapon, a 6.5 MM. Mannlicher-Carcano, could be accurately fired within 1.6 seconds, the time between the first and second shots according to the tape. This claim is ludicrous. Nobody has been able accurately to fire two shots within 1.6 seconds. If this were possible, the Warren Commission would never have had to put forward the single-bullet theory to account for the second and a half difference in

Connally's and Kennedy's reactions to being shot.

Less than even-handed.

The Committee has been less than even-handed in its selection and treatment of evidence. One expert testified that the rifle scope was not mounted for a left-handed shooter, contrary to some critics' claims (Oswald was right-handed). Yet, the Committee failed to reconcile this statement with the report from the Aberdeen Testing Grounds, which examined the rifle for the Warren Commission, and asserted the scope was mounted for a left-handed person.

Another unchallenged distortion of evidence was the claim by one expert that there were no witnesses on the railroad overpass next to the grassy knoll who said a shot came from the knoll. On the contrary, at least five witnesses on the overpass believed a shot originated from the knoll; three claimed to have seen smoke there.

One of the most contrived explanations was Blakey's suggestion that Robert Kennedy may have ordered his brother's brain (which was removed from the body but never examined) destroyed so it would never reach the public's gaze. Blakey failed to mention that key microscopic slides from the President's skull were missing *with* the brain. Did R.F.K. destroy these also (they would be meaningful only to a pathologist) and why wouldn't he have destroyed the really gruesome materials such as the color photos of the President's blown-apart head?

Oswald's background.

Now that the Committee has demonstrated to its satisfaction that Oswald killed Kennedy, it is exploring Oswald's background. The first witness is Marina, his wife, who will probably emerge from the hearings relatively unscathed, although Warren Commission attorneys pondered pressing perjury charges against her. Other witnesses could be William Colby and Richard Helms, past directors of the CIA, Stansfield Turner, the current director of the CIA, James Angleton, the mysterious former head of CIA counter-intelligence, and the "umbrella man," who has apparently been located. (He was the strange character who, on a cloudless 68-degree day, held an open umbrella over his head in front of the Kennedy limousine during the assassination.)

Two possible witnesses who won't be testifying are Regis Kennedy, an FBI agent in New Orleans when Oswald was there, and Thomas Karamessines, the former director of operations for the CIA. (Victor Marchetti has claimed Karamessines was one of the CIA officials ordered by Helms to help New Orleans businessman Clay Shaw in his prosecution by District Attorney Jim Garrison for conspiring to kill President Kennedy.) Both men recently died of natural causes; Regis Kennedy died one day before Committee investigators tried to reach him. ■

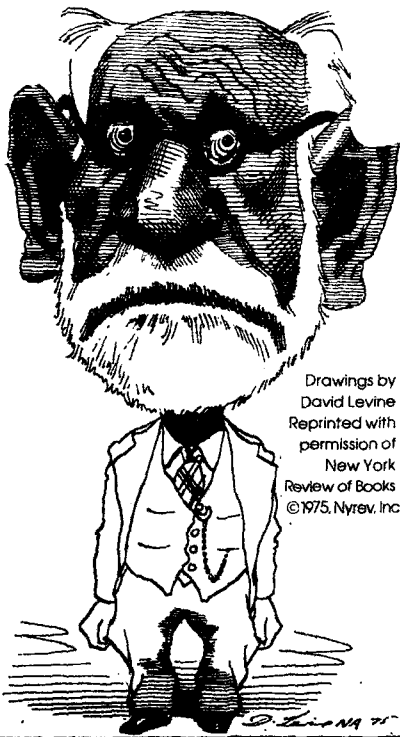
Harvy Yazijian is one of the directors of the Assassination Information Bureau in Washington, D.C.

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