

Resistance

TPF: DRIVING THE SNAKES OUT OF BOSTON

by Craig Unger

The Freedom Trail bypasses Dorchester. It takes in the site of the Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party. It includes such landmarks as Faneuil Hall, the Old North Church, and Paul Revere's home. But it never leaves Old Boston, and the tourists never see South Boston or Dorchester wherein reside most of the Irish Americans who make up better than half of the city's population.

They are, in fact, different cities—the one made famous by Paul Revere, the Adamses, James Otis, and the Minutemen, the other by Louise Day Hicks, James Michael Curley, and John McCormick. Indeed, if you were to ask the citizens of Dorchester about the history of their community, they are more likely to point out an ancient Howard Johnson's—said to be the first in the world with the familiar orange roof. The more sophisticated (and less racist) might show you Bluehill Ave., Malcolm X's stomping grounds as a youth and the site of widespread welfare riots in the '60s.

Dorchester: Irish-Italian, working class. Drab three-decker houses line its streets. Bars like the Blarney Stone Lounge are filled at night—and much of the day—with jobless Vietnam veterans. Groups of teenagers—the remnants of a dying tradition of baseball-bat- and bicycle-chain-wielding street gangs—hang out in places like Field's Corner, drinking beer, getting busted, and going to jail. The area is changing now as blacks move in from neighboring Roxbury. Indeed, Dorchester has achieved some national notoriety in the past decade for its conflicts over school integration.

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This was the cause with which Louise Day Hicks flailed her way to political prominence, and in white Dorchester, every little breeze seems to whisper her name. Still, until quite recently, the most powerful figure in the community was an obscure and venal politician named Jerome P. Troy, presiding judge of the Dorchester District Court. A political hack who reportedly bought his seat for \$25,000, Troy used his post to reward his friends, punish his enemies, and instill the fear of Blind Justice in the

beach was ruined.

In the past two years, Judge Troy has come on hard times, and he now faces disbarment proceedings before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. His rapid demise has been engineered by an organization of improper Bostonians calling themselves TPF—or The People First. With dogged determination, these young people of Dorchester have passed around petitions, held press conferences, brought lawsuits, called rallies and demonstrations—all with the aim of creating a



Judge Troy and friends

PHOTO: MICHAEL DOBO

poor people of the community. For every friendly gangster who passed easily and unconvicted through his courtroom, scores of welfare mothers were stunned with exorbitantly high bail and a demand that they charge their ex-husbands with non-support. For each slumlord friend of Troy whose housing violations were overlooked, hundreds of young people received inordinately long jail terms.

In the course of his wheeling and dealing, Troy managed to amass a considerable personal fortune. He is known to jet off to places like Majorca and Florida to speculate in condominiums. Nearer home, he developed an elaborate but abortive scheme to convert a public beach into a luxury restaurant-hotel-marina complex. The plan fell through, but not before the

public scandal about the conditions in the Dorchester District Court. In the process, they have provided Dorchester residents with new hopes for challenging the local ruling elite and for overcoming the pervasive sense of political impotence.

TPF has built a movement in white working-class Dorchester, based on 15 full-time organizers and over 200 others who consider themselves actively affiliated with the group. It has fashioned the movement out of an odd variety of elements: youth culture, the student movement, alienation, and the Catholic Left. Its strength lies in its ability to draw out Dorchester's impulse towards community control—in the past, always identified by the liberal press as conservative—and apply it towards issues that are tearing Dor-

How Sissy and The Dirty Thirty took on the Texas political machine.

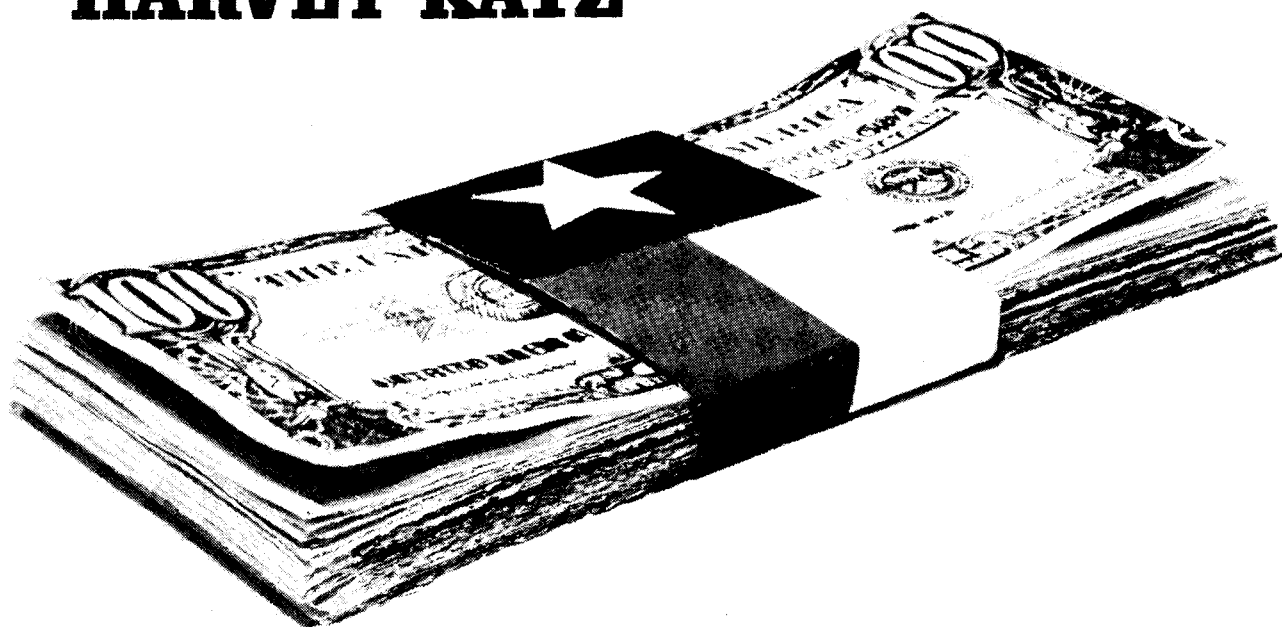
The Dirty Thirty vs. the Mutschermen. It could be a Western set in Oz. But it's a true story of corruption set in another never-never land: Texas politics. At the 62nd session of the Texas state legislature, a handful of representatives, including the only woman in the House, Sissy Farenthold, dramatically challenged Speaker Gus F. Mutscher, Jr., and the awesome Johnson-Connally-Barnes machine.

Using the session as background, investigative journalist Harvey Katz follows the trail of bribery, stock manipulation, and easy money which the "Dirty Thirty" helped uncover. It leads from the legislature itself to the banks and business offices of the most prominent Texans. It involves the complicity of lobbyists and the press. If the story were fiction, it would be the political thriller of the year. But it's true — and the SHADOW ON THE ALAMO extends far beyond the borders of the state, darkening our entire political system.

SHADOW ON THE ALAMO

New Heroes Fight Old Corruption in Texas Politics

HARVEY KATZ



DOUBLEDAY

chester apart.

TPF is made up of people like Red Preziosi, 23. He describes it as "a gang with politics. If it weren't for TPF, we would probably still be out on the streets today. But TPF has also allowed us to put our thoughts and feelings about Dorchester into some kind of political perspective. That's important to us . . . After all, Dorchester is all we have."

Preziosi lives with his wife Charlene and three other TPFers in a three-story house on Bloomfield Street. All are in their mid-20s and all have spent most of their lives in Dorchester. Politically, they have no particular line, and not all embrace "New Left" ideology. "Most of us think of ourselves as radicals and some as socialists," Donna Finn may say, "but that is about as close as you can get to defining us."

Then, for example, take Jim Canny. He is not a member of TPF. A white collar worker at the Honeywell Corporation, Canny is fortyish and a former president of one of Dorchester's more respectable civic associations. As a veteran of community politics, he is more politically sophisticated than most Dorchester residents. Why does someone like him, basically conservative, work with a bunch of young leftists? "I know a lot of people call TPF radical and communist," Canny said. "But as far as I can see they are facing Dorchester's real problems and are doing it in a way that these civic associations have been afraid to do. Judge Troy, housing, day care centers: these are real issues in Dorchester. And if that's communism, maybe I'm further to the left than I thought I was."

Therein lies TPF's success. Unlike the student movement, TPF has been able to generate programs which directly affect people's lives. Its fight against the Boston Gas Company ("You pay through the nose or freeze through the winter.") saved a number of Dorchester residents from agonizing heating cut-offs in the middle of the winter and resulted in a number of reforms in the company's practices. TPF's food co-op has been successful and the women's group will open a day care center early this year. In housing, TPF is mounting a campaign to halt an increase of 25,000 students

at the University of Massachusetts, because the increased enrollment would mean thousands of students seeking living quarters in Dorchester and result in skyrocketing rents.

More remarkable, in a way, has been TPF's success in building opposition to the war in Vietnam. In some sense, the war is a community issue in Dorchester, which has felt its effects quite directly. Nearly half of its draft age men have been in the Armed Forces. Many return to find no jobs. Many don't return at all.

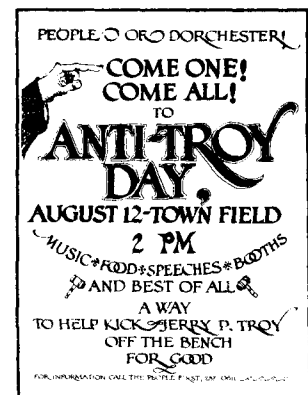
For some Dorchester soldiers, the army has proven to be a radicalizing experience. Dusty Maguire, a member of TPF's Bloomfield Street collective, is a case in point. "The army and the whole Vietnam war has had a disastrous impact on Dorchester," Dusty says. "A lot of people go there because they see it as a great adventure, as a way out of the dreary lives they've had in Dorchester. And some go, believe it or not, because they really are patriotic. But whether they live through the war and come back as either radicals or reactionaries, it still has a big effect on them. . . You see the colonels fucking around while the Vietnamese are out sweating in the fields. You see captains and generals black marketing, whoring it up. And when you come back you realize that this is exactly what has been going on in Dorchester the whole time. The structure is exactly the same. You may have a foreman overseeing your job or a Judge Troy at the bench, but they perform exactly the same roles."

Be that as it may, TPF has carried on educational work about the war and has led contingents from Dorchester to major peace marches in Boston and Washington. More significantly, it sponsored a local anti-war rally last year, with about 500 people in attendance. For most, it was their first demonstration.

TPF also made an early, self-conscious attempt to recruit women, without much success. In Dorchester, women tend to marry early and have children. As the marriages fall apart, the women are left with young children and, often, a job. They have no time for politics. Donna Finn of TPF explained the syndrome: "Growing up in Dorchester, you learn about sexism very fast. You live with it, you see

marriages falling apart and you see welfare mothers getting screwed in Troy's courtroom. TPF at first didn't teach us anything new about sexism. It just gave us a name for it and let us put it in a political perspective."

Gradually, Donna Finn and other women came to play an active role inside TPF. They began to raise issues that play a crucial part in determining the quality of life in Dorchester. As Donna Miller—mother of two and a welfare recipient—explains it: "You wonder why kids in Dorchester get into so much trouble, why they are always in the streets and eventually wind up in jail.



"Young kids have a lot of energy. And if your marriage is falling apart, if you are on welfare, if you have a job, you just don't have the time or energy to do everything for them. So you see all these kids out in the streets. . . I don't know what the answer to this vicious cycle is. But you've got to stop it somewhere and a day care center seems to be the first step." Hence, TPF plans to start such a center in the near future.

It is tempting to overdramatize TPF's accomplishments, and to underestimate the difficulties it faces. The successes to date, while real and concrete, are almost mundane. More important, it has been unable to come to grips with the most explosive issue in the community: busing. TPF itself is divided on the question and its internal division reflects the common dilemma of white working-class radicals. Angry as the people of Dorchester may be toward the slumlords, politicians, businessmen, and judges who run their lives, their anger is often matched by their fear and hatred of the blacks who seem to threaten their meager *status quo*. Question: how

**How two civilized people getting
a divorce can be two civilized people.**



Uncoupling

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by Norman Sheresky and Marya Mannes

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Norman Sheresky is a Fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, a Member of its New York Chapter's Legislation and Ethics Committee, and a well-known New York attorney whose practice is devoted to family law.

Marya Mannes is a distinguished writer noted for the humanity of her views.

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does an organizer organize a white working-class movement which is truly radical and populist without confronting and overcoming this sometimes latent, sometimes overt racism? It is a question which TPF has not answered.

Even so, the group has created a stir in Dorchester. They have been successful enough to draw fire from right-wingers. Red Preziosi, for instance, has had his criminal record raked across the pages of the now defunct *Herald-Traveler*. And Judge Troy's supporters—like Jerry Gill of the Dorchester Community Improvement Program—claim that TPF is led by former SDSers and communists. "Michael Ansara is head of TPF," Gill said recently, "and he was head of SDS at Harvard. What does he know about Dorchester? What does he know about our community needs?"

Unwittingly, perhaps, Gill has stumbled across an issue that is a burning one inside TPF. The organization was, in fact, launched by "outside agitators" and refugees from the radical student movement, notably Michael Ansara, his wife Amy, and Ira Arlook.

Ansara has been accurately described as the *éminence grise* of the Boston anti-war movement. His file in the morgue of the *Boston Globe* is unlike any other. On it alone is a pink slip with special instructions to reporters, which reads: "In future stories on Michael Ansara please refrain from using the phrase 'his name is anathema to police and college officials alike.' That phrase was first used by Frank Mahoney in a story about Ansara and his role in the 1969 Harvard strike. It has since been used several times. Each time, Ansara's mother calls up and complains."

Within TPF and Dorchester, Ansara and the other radicals from Boston's once-massive student movement are conspicuous. Most of their co-workers never got through high school and had no political experience before TPF. By contrast, Ansara—a Harvard graduate—has played key roles in the 1969 Harvard strike (though he was not, as Jerry Gill claims, president of SDS), the New Leftist November Action Coalition, and the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice. Committed as he is to Dorchester, his roots lie elsewhere.

The Ansaras and Arlook moved to Dorchester from Cambridge in the fall of 1970. It was a time when many ex-students were realizing their isolation from Middle America and leaving the college towns for digs in more industrial areas. In Cambridge, they dubbed it "the year of the collective." The Ansara-Arlook group was virtually alone in establishing a firm foothold and generating a significant political force.

They moved into Dorchester on invitation from young people who had sought them out to help do leaflets against the brutality of Dorchester's Tactical Police Force. From then on, their skills tended to define their roles. All had experience in community organizing. All knew liberal academics who could help fund TPF. They had contacts in the press, knew how to put out a press release and set up a press conference. Michael and Amy Ansara had worked on the *Old Mole*, the Cambridge underground newspaper, and brought this skill to TPF, the Dorchester community paper they helped to found.

Perhaps inevitably, they did most of the work and made most of the decisions in the early stages of organizing. At first, the exhilaration of the birth of the movement carried the work forward, but before long tension developed between the natives and the outside agitators.

The rift came to a head last spring, with the upshot that the Ansaras and Arlook yielded most of their responsibilities to local people. They have remained in Dorchester and continue to work for TPF. But now, says Donna Finn, "they are workers in TPF just like anyone else."

Following the transition of power, the organization entered a rather quiet period of consolidation. Even so, it has carried forward the campaign against Judge Troy with a vengeance. Recently, it achieved a significant victory as the Boston Bar Association issued a report sharply critical of Troy's courtroom practices and charged him with falsifying his court records. Shortly thereafter, the Supreme Judicial Court—which has the power to disbar and remove Troy—decided to take up the question. It is believed that the Supreme Judicial Court would not

have agreed to hear the case if it did not intend strong action against Troy.

To be sure, other judges have been removed from the bench for graft and corruption. Evidence abounds of Troy's dirty linen—some of it having surfaced in such establishment organs as the *Boston Globe* and *Time* magazine. The anti-establishment newspaper *Boston After Dark* has printed stories about the Judge's Mafia connections and his \$25,000 pay-off for his seat on the bench. But TPF has based its legal case against Troy on other grounds—namely his discrimination against the poor—and this is the case which will be heard by the Supreme Judicial Court. If TPF wins, it will set a legal precedent with repercussions throughout Massachusetts and, very likely, throughout the country.

It would be no small or easy victory. Troy is an experienced politician, once a real power in the Democratic Party, and he has friends throughout the state government. But his network of political alliances has crumbled over the past two years as the word has gone out that it is no longer politically viable to be a friend of Jerome Troy. This phenomenon is attributable, above all, to TPF's unrelenting pressure—its petition campaign (through which 10,000 Dorchester residents called for Troy's ouster), its demonstrations, its "Troy Day" rally, its lobbying and letter writing. If Troy goes down, TPF—and its thousands of supporters—can claim a clear-cut victory.

But win or lose, the members of TPF have grown through the Troy campaign. In the beginning, they set out to remove a single judge, a symbol of corrupt power in their community. They found that he maintained—and was maintained by—a whole system of power extending beyond Dorchester. As Red Preziosi says, "We've begun to realize that there is more to this than one wretched human being who happens to be a judge. Through TPF we've started to put our thoughts into some kind of political perspective. That's how we became radicals. And that is why the Troy campaign is so important to Dorchester." It was not said as a warning, but it should be taken as one—to judges and power elites everywhere. ■

THE SELLING OUT OF THE CANDIDATE 1972

by Tom Oliphant

Sam Brown, the old-young McCarthy and Moratorium man, sat the big one out last year. He stayed home in comfy Colorado, helping to keep the Winter Olympics out of the state in 1976 and to elect local candidates. A wise decision? Probably so, for disillusionment with McGovern is in vogue these days, and for damned good reasons.

Here, for example, we have George McGovern allowing a statement in his name to be handed out aboard his campaign plane during a flight from New York to Cleveland on October 5, in which he says, "I am concerned with news reports indicating that I am not fully supporting the candidacy of Rep. Louise Day Hicks of Massachusetts. I want to stress again my support of Mrs. Hicks and the other Democratic nominees for Congress in my capacity as standard bearer of the party. I regard it as of utmost importance that Democrats stand united in this crucial election year."

Louise Day Hicks—the folk heroine of Northern know-nothings and racists, opposed by a machine Democratic liberal running as an independent, and McGovern wants her to know she is so dearly loved that he puts out the only formal, written endorsement of a congressional candidate of his campaign. The background is interesting—and revealing. The "news reports" he professed to be concerned about stemmed from his own statement in Boston the day

before that while he felt obligated to be for all Democrats, period, he thought her opponent was a fine person. That shocking statement produced a telephoned expression of displeasure from Hicks. McGovern Headquarters in Washington then reached travelling Press Secretary Dick Dougherty, who called Hicks. After absorbing her less than intense ire, he wrote the statement, gave it to McGovern, who approved it, and then had it distributed to an enormously amused press corps, which quickly produced its own version of the old ballad:

*Every little breeze seems to whisper Louise.
I'd like to squeeze Louise by the knees.*

That, in tragi-comic form, is the mentality that produced the famous visit (or was it pilgrimage?) to the Pedernales on August 22. In both cases, the result was the same—nothing. Hicks lost anyway, and LBJ doesn't count any more. Still, Gary Hart, and Mankiewicz, and Fred Dutton, and all the rest, including their nominal boss, had decided that while "Come Home America" was to be the theme (it never really was), "Come Home Democrats" (any Democrats) was to be the tactic. That, of course, is fine as far as it goes, but it ignores the difference between the traditional handout to those whose asses you have just kicked across the country before the convention, and groveling before those for whom you have no ideological or personal affection, as if they had beaten you.

But then consider the same George McGovern exactly a week after the Hicks episode. Again, he's on his plane after

Tom Oliphant, a member of the Boston Globe's Washington Bureau, covered McGovern's post-convention campaign.