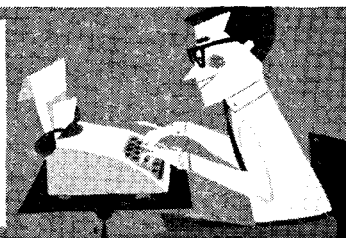


# Top of My Head



## A Matter of Interpretation

**I**N THESE protest times when two's company and three's a picket line it scares the hell out of me when I'm one in a crowd of 10,000 or 20,000 whose voices are raised in rhythmic unison shouting: "Let's get him! Let's get him! Let's get him!" Actually, if the cry were reduced to one single voice you would hear only the sound of a baseball fanatic crying out: "Let's go Mets!"

So brainwashed have we become by the sight and sound of chanting mobs snake-dancing across our television screens, in Tokyo, Vietnam, and the Dominican Republic, that this cadence of cheers becomes a terrifying ululation. This does not enhance the image of our country in the eyes and ears of the Undecided Nations. Especially if U.N. representatives from newly born countries are seated around their TV sets, the cry of "Kill that bum!" may easily sound to the uninitiated like "Drop the bomb!" Go explain to them that it's only a term

of affection against an umpire in a ball game, our national pastime, when they have been indoctrinated as to what our National Pastime really is.

Neither is the image meliorated by the sight of 50,000 Americans rising to their feet as one, brandishing their fists at umpires, and raising placards that could be interpreted to read: "Imperialists of the world arise! You have nothing to lose but your money." When in truth they say: "We love Yogi Berra." In these troubled years the sights and sounds of war and peace are so akin.

It is against this background that I have quietly begun a crusade to soften this fervor of fanaticism. It's a lonely and unpopular crusade and takes more courage than I can usually muster. But dedication to better communication among nations stands me in good stead.

It occurred to me one night at Yankee Stadium when the crowd began to shout "Kill that bum!" It was directed at the

hapless umpire who had called an enemy batter safe at first base when it was plain for all to see that the runner was out by the usual country mile. When the noise had abated I arose and cried out: "There is none so blind as they that will not see!" and quickly sat. The man next to me looked at me quizzically and asked "What was that, Bud?" I repeated it to him. "There is none so blind as they that will not see." And added the footnote that this was the Mathew Henry version, which I preferred to Jonathan Swift who phrased it: "There is none so blind as they that won't see." He moved away. As indicated, this is a lonely crusade.

During the game several opportunities presented themselves to further my campaign for the soft protest. Thomas Wolfe came in handy when an opposition player tried to score from third base and was thrown out at the plate. That started a rhubarb. I arose quietly and called out: "You can't go home again." This also started a rhubarb. But I stood my ground. And when the Yankees finally managed by several deft errors to lose another game I arose and calmly screamed: "Sic transit gloria!"

I realize the cry of the American sports fan is so ingrained that many years will pass before my crusade takes root and flourishes. Meanwhile our image around the world is at the mercy of foreign interpreters. The propaganda that can be garnered from a TV clip of fist-shaking fans at a baseball game, replayed in Russia, for instance, can be translated into a display of the American goal for world conquest.

And come to think of it, are we so certain our TV correspondents are not paraphrasing what they see in the demonstrations abroad? How are we to know for sure that the young Japanese we see snake-dancing across our TV sets are shouting the anti-American slogans that the announcers tell us they are? Couldn't it be they are celebrating another record-breaking sales quota of the little Sony TV sets? For which they give thanks in dance to the rich American workers who buy them. Or maybe they are just doing the Watusi.

The United Nations notwithstanding, communication lines between countries have been down for years. Some time ago a gentleman from Russia pounded a U.N. table with his shoe in his hand and shouted, according to the interpreters, that he would bury us. Who knows for certain that he wasn't demonstrating that our two countries should get together in a marriage of ideas? And we should throw rice and old shoes?

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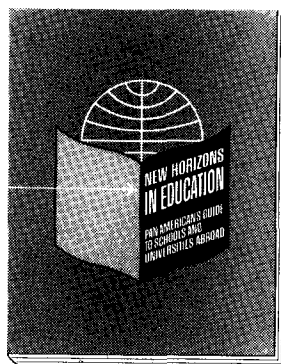
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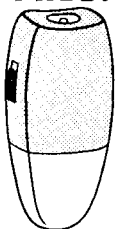
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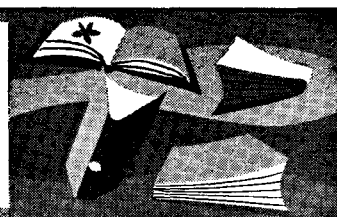
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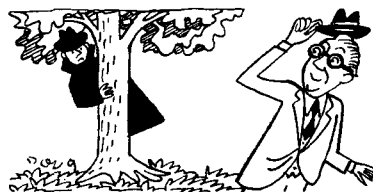
## Trade Winds



It has been published only a few days and already Marvin Kitman's new book is the Number 1 best seller. That's its title, *The Number-One Best Seller*. It's a collection of humorous stories of his that have appeared in magazines, such as the one about running for President in 1964. He lost, as you may recall, by 538 votes. (Electoral.) The book has attracted some favorable pre-publication comments. One critic said, "He is a better writer than Harold Stassen."

Kitman, who lives in Leonia, New Jersey, and apparently makes a legitimate living as an editor of *Monocle* magazine, recounts his adventures in trying to volunteer as an informer for the CIA. He found the Central Intelligence Agency in the New York phone book, but no address. He called and asked for it. They refused to tell him.

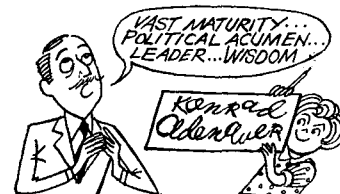
Kitman went to Washington. Cab drivers had never heard of the CIA. Travelers Aid and the Convention Bureau wouldn't talk. So he went to the Russian Embassy, where an attaché pointed out the CIA's Virginia location on a road map. Then the Russian looked in his address book and told Kitman of a secret Washington CIA office where he could get a limousine to headquarters.



**Analysis of a person's character** from his handwriting is fun, but it shouldn't be taken too seriously. That is the lesson to be learned from a new book on the subject, *Pen In Hand*, by Florry Nadall, graphologist. The author looks at a signature of Jacqueline Kennedy and says the lady is creative, versatile, reserved, and self-controlled. That may be true, but unfortunately for the science of graphology, the autograph Miss Nadall studies wasn't signed by Mrs. Kennedy but for her.

In *The Science of Handwriting Analysis*, published last year, Billie Rosen pulls the same boo-boo, coming to some conclusions about Mrs. Kennedy's personality after analyzing a non-Kennedy signature. Autograph specialist Charles Hamilton also points out that in *The Science of Handwriting Analysis* the author tells all about Lyndon B. John-

son's character from a signature that is not the President's. The example of Johnson's signature reproduced in the book is actually a proxy written by a secretary. Unknowing, grapho-scientist Rosen sees the LBJ writing as denoting



"a quick mind," "a shrewd diplomatic personality," and other remarkable characteristics.

Hamilton says, "Maybe the President should swap places with his secretary."

**I first heard** this strange story from a neighbor a couple of years ago, and then forgot it, but recent headlines bring it to mind. The lady told me that she had had a telephone call from the dealer who had sold her a station wagon in Norwalk, Connecticut.

"We have received word from the manufacturer," he said, "that there is a defect in the car. We will make an adjustment without any charge if you will bring it to our downtown service department at your convenience."

"Well," she replied, "let's see, I have the car pool this week and we're driving to the game Saturday. I guess I can make it some time next week. By the way, what's wrong?"

"Something to do with the steering."

**Someone sent me** a photograph of Ben Lucien Burman in the New Guinea jungle. In addition to the American writer, there are two soldiers and seven natives in the picture. All are looking at the camera except one, who is staring intently at the back of Ben Burman's head. Now, if a bare New Guinea native, with a bone through his nose and shells around his neck, were staring thoughtfully at my head, I would be very nervous. But Burman seems pleased.

The latest thing to come out of the inside of that head is *The Sign of the Praying Tiger*, another one of those satirical Burman yarns in which he mixes incongruous elements and comes up with a funny story. Here he has a Kentucky mountaineer running a success school in Southeast Asia, teaching the