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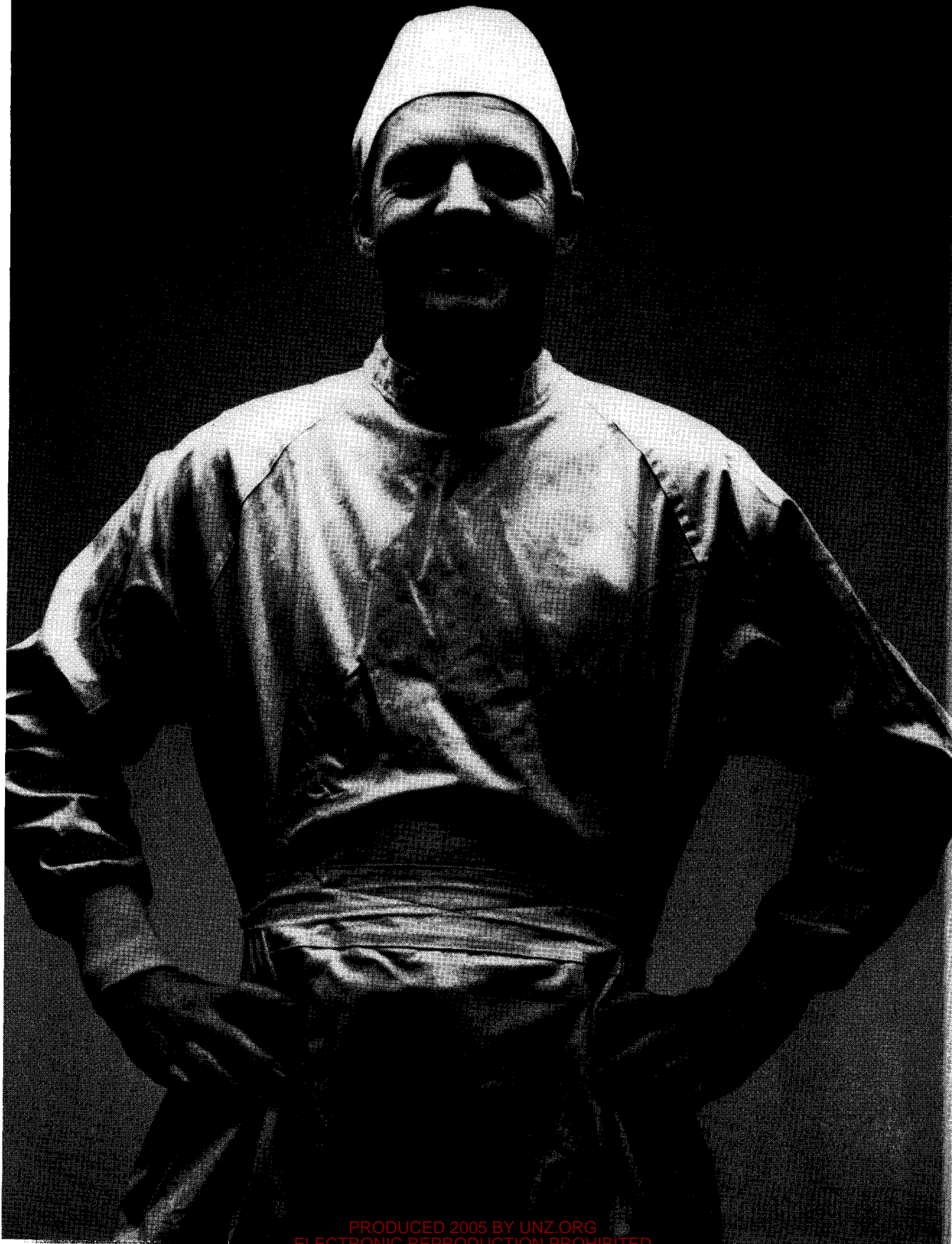
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Top of My Head

Goodman Ace

Be My Guest

IF YOU'RE WONDERING why your favorite TV programs are to disappear from your sets next season, you can blame it on the two eye-counting outfits that make these reports: the Audience Research Bureau and the A. C. Nielsen Company.

How they accomplish this arithmetical feat has been a trade secret all these years. Fortunately for you, I've unearthed it. The latest ARB count reveals there is a "widespread, unaccountable, and unbelievable decline" in TV viewers. The Nielsen people say there is a decline, but it's only minor and isolated.

What it amounts to is ARB counts each eye glued to the set and multiplies by two. Nielsen multiplies by four. In any case, there is a decline. And high time.

One reason for viewers' disenchantment is the monotonous repetition of celebrity guests who appear on the programs of celebrity hosts. This is

especially true regarding TV specials.

Most often these celebrities who are guests don't appear for money. It's what is called an exchange. "You guest on my show, and I'll guest on yours." One ham washes the other.

For instance, when you see the celebrated Bob Hope show up on a celebrated *Bing Crosby Special*, you can safely bet two cans of Minute Maid to one that Crosby will show up on the next *Bob Hope Special*.

Similarly, Hope was recently a guest on the *Perry Como Special*. And who do you think showed up as a celebrity guest on the next *Bob Hope Special*? Not Phil Brito!

Carol Burnett does it, Jim Nabors does it, Lucille Ball does it, Tom Jones does it, even the Lennon Sisters, and the birds do it. All fall in line. This overexposure may make celebrities household words. But not household pets. For heaven's sake, even Vice President Agnew has cut down on his TV appearances.

Oh, I see a lady has raised her hand.

Yes, Madame, what is it? A very good question: "What is a TV celebrity?"

Well, celebrities come in two categories—the "Now" celebrity and the "Then" celebrity. Follow closely:

A Now celebrity is a young man, wearing a guitar, who has just come from Nashville, where the action is, with his recordings of folk, rock, and country songs.

A Then celebrity is an older man, wearing a money belt over his girdle, who has just come from the bank with a recording of the money he made in the early days of TV, where the action once was.

The name of the game is a high ARB or Nielsen TV rating. A Then celebrity can usually be depended on to get a big rating, but to play it safe he hires a Now celebrity, hoping to attract the young viewers.

A celebrity ceases to be a celebrity when his rating drops. Jackie Gleason, for instance. The Great One has always rated high doing *The Honey-mooners*. When he decided to change to variety programs, down went his rating. The network said he could stay on if he would go back to his original format. But no, it was too much work, now that he'd gotten rich and thin.

Perry Como, once a weekly giant in the ratings, could have stayed on, but, when the network started talking ratings and change of format, he retired to a golf course. Now he does one special a year. He still sings like an angel. Obviously, he's decided to save it till he gets up there.

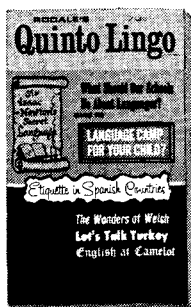
Oh, before I forget, there is another kind of celebrity guest—the Instant Celebrity, who overnight makes the front pages. Instant Celebrities don't last long. They are immediately grabbed off, usually by the alert Ed Sullivan.

I'm thinking of that poor rich lad who recently came of age and inherited millions. What made him a celebrity was his announcements in the papers and on TV that he was giving it all to the needy, on a first come, first served basis.

After Mr. Sullivan gave the boy his usual obscurely eloquent introduction, we were treated to the pathetic sight of a young man who mumbled a poem by Bob Dylan to what could loosely be called his own accompaniment on his guitar. Mr. Sullivan gave him his special "let's hear it" treatment, the boy bowed and departed, saying he was giving away trillions of dollars.

I don't know how high the Instant Celebrity raised the Sullivan rating that night. But it couldn't have been as high as the papers suggested the kid had been when he announced his giveaway. And so another Instant Celebrity had gone to pot.

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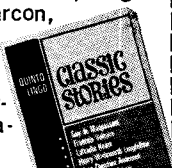
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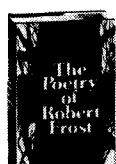
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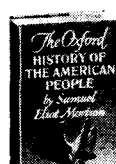
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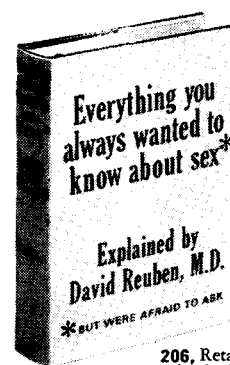
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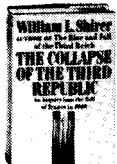
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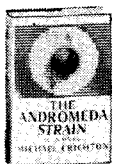
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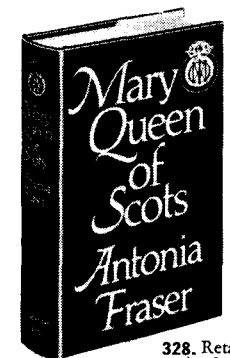
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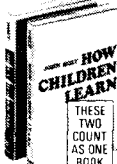
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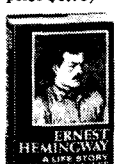
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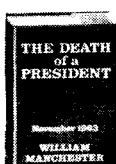
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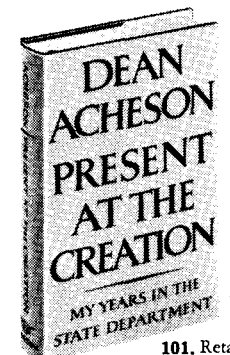
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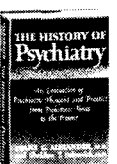
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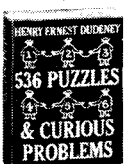
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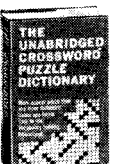
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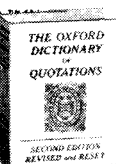
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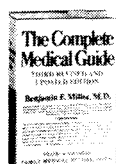
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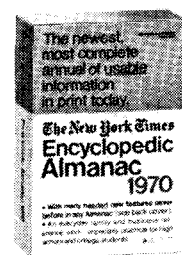
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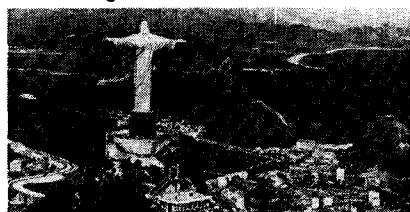
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How swiftly fashions change,
From miniskirts to maxis;
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The theologues have ceased
To seek God in the test'ments,
And nuns are turning priest ...
Suppose they'll wear transvest-
ments?

—FRED SAIDY.

Tense Days in the Animal Kingdom

UNCLE ELK looked up from the shadow of the trees. "Here's Willie," he announced. "Seems to be in a hurry about something."

Willie Elk trotted into the clearing, obviously out of breath. "Brace yourselves," he gasped. "I've got bad news."

Papa Elk spat out a mouthful of half-chewed bark. "What is it, Son? Where you been?"

Willie paused for a few moments. He was panting heavily and needed to get his breath back. His sister and Mama Elk moved closer.

"I've just been talking to some of the boys down at the south lake," Willie reported at last. "What d'you think they heard?"

"What?" asked Mama Elk anxiously. "Tell us, Son. What's the poop?"

"That Podgorny's here."

"Podgorny?"

"Yeah. He's in Helsinki on a state visit."

An expression of relief swept across Papa Elk's face. "That ain't no cause for alarm, Son. From what I hear, that Podgorny's a lousy shot."

"They said Kosygin was a lousy shot," recalled Minnie Elk. "But he got himself a bag of pheasants in Scotland, didn't he?"

"They weren't pheasants," corrected her father. "They were grouse. And I never knew anyone had taken a count. It's like those Presidential golf scores in America—they don't release the figures." He nudged his daughter's hide affectionately. "If you ask me, Kosygin wouldn't know a cartridge from a trigger. Besides, we're not grouse."

"No," agreed Mama Elk, "but we of-

fer a better target. Especially with a figure like yours. I told you already you've been getting too fat."

Papa Elk sniffed. "I still say that Podgorny couldn't hit the Kremlin with a tennis ball."

"He's no Tito," conceded Willie. "But someone's gonna get hurt. Besides, Kekkonen's coming with him. It'd be *lèse-majesté* if he didn't. And you don't think Kekkonen's gonna let him go back with an empty bag, do you?"

Uncle Elk moved away from the trees and joined the group. "Let's not bicker about it," he urged. He turned to Willie. "How do we know they'll come this way?"

"That's what the boars said in Poland, when they found out Khrushchev was coming. They learned soon enough, didn't they?"

"Boars!" Papa Elk snorted. "When did they know enough to wipe their own snouts? I know them boars. If they could think like they can grunt, Khrushchev would be running yet."

Uncle Elk reflected. "Any chance of wrecking the lodge? It's a long time since we mounted a stampede."

Willie shook his head. "Naw. It's too well protected."

"Why the hell," exploded his father, "can't they go fishing for once? Don't the Commies know *how* to fish?" He kicked up a small heap of snow with his right hoof.

Minnie Elk sighed. "Maybe we're lucky we don't live in Kenya. Especially with Tito going to Nairobi next month. That's going to be something else. Those rhinos and buffalo down there—I heard they're half crazy with anxiety." She pawed the snow thoughtfully. "They've been saying it's so dangerous nowadays the inner jungle's becoming an absolute city."

—FRANK LITTLER.

Whatever Became of the Nehru Jacket?

I WAS HAPPY to note the other day that *The New York Times* is beginning to show some interest in its general news columns in what men are wearing. This is an encouraging sign in a newspaper that employs a large staff of women reporters who spend a good deal of their time writing about men's clothes, a job that properly ought to be done by a male reporter in the Culture Division.

Until now, I've always turned to the