

Feb. 16, '48.

2 draft

1. call Judge Williams and continue a drunk driving case I'd forgotten about. In the time of a D.A. that will never try a drunk driver when I have a hangover.

Valentine Party

First I had to ~~wrap~~ ^{get} myself into my dinner clothes and then tug and hunch Maida into her girdle and then run to the hotel to keep the orchestra from passing out before the dance. The band had arrived in town from Milwaukee that morning and I had the ^{Les, hotel} bartender give me bulletins all ^{call me at the office and during the} afternoon on the course of things. ^{Later called me at 3:00 P.M. to inform me that the} band had switched from Martinis to straight gin on the third round, ^{and on,} after the eighth round of gin, I had asked Leo to shut them off. He had done so, but had ^{excitedly} called phoned back in ten minutes and told me that the boys had moved ^{on} across the street to the Main Drift, a miners' saloon across the street.

When I got to the hotel three members of the band were in bed and the fourth, ^{the leader,} was ^{down} in the bar trying to put the make on Elsa, the blonde barmaid. Not that I frowned on his taste, the Lord knows, but this scarcely seemed the thing ^{for him} to do with the rest of his band ^{upstairs placidly} passed out ^{upstairs} in bed.

"Hello, Elsa," I said. "Seen any members of the band?" Someone in a booth pressed the buzzer and Elsa ^{glided} ^{back} ^{to her room.} "Yes, ^{Mr.} ~~Master~~ ^{Mr.} Biegler," Elsa ^{smilingly} said, stressing the mister as she always did when anyone she was around. "Mr. Pingori, the leader here, is telling me he thinks I'd make a wonderful songstress with his band. He wants to give me an audition tonight after work."

^{He was a tall boy, in his late twenties, I guessed, and his hair glistened with bear grease.} Pingori ~~had~~ slid off the bar stool and snapped to attention. "Mr. Paul Biegler, I presume," he ^{gravely} said, ^{glavely} extending his hand and trying not to sway.

"Ah, Mr. Pingori," I said. "I caught your quartet over the radio last month. Permit to say that I think you have ~~at~~ your piano has all ^{of} the drive and technical brilliance of Art Tatum without his annoying frills."

Pingori was my man after that and wanted to buy me a drink. ^{I shook my head, no.} He was a tall ^{big} guy, in his late twenties, I guessed, and his dark hair was all ^{glittering} with ^{grease}. He was still wearing ^{his} discharge button, and I figured ~~he was~~ noticed him looking for mine. He might have known I wouldn't have worn one ^{of the things} on a tuxedo, even if I had one, but I guess he was too tight to notice. Ah, here it was coming...

"What outfit were you in, Mr. Biegler?" ^{he asked.}

"~~Outfit?~~" I said, ~~surprised.~~

~~"I fought."~~

"Outfit?" I said, pretending surprise. "What do you mean, 'outfit'?"

"I mean in the war? What branch of the service were you in?" he said.

"Oh, that," I said, laughing. "I wasn't in any outfit. The only ^{war} battle I fought ⁱⁿ was right here in the battle of Chippewa, Michigan. I'm too young for the first ~~world~~ war -- too old for the last, I guess..."

"Oh," he said, fumbling for a cigarette.

~~That~~

then it's a funny thing, that's what they all say. Just "Oh," and ^{they get that wary look and a frown} ~~that~~ ^{curiously} ~~sort of~~ ^{alone and} ~~of~~ ^{walled out of some} ~~film~~ ^{sort of} ~~secret~~ ^{fraternity.} The whole thing is preposterous, ^{I know,} but there it is. Take Alex Bongsto, for instance. ^{Alex and} I had gone through all the grades and ^{together.} high school ^{with Alex.} ~~together.~~ ^{I had} ~~we had~~ ^{substitute forward} even played ~~on~~ ^{on the} same basketball team ^{on which he starred.} When I'd gone on to college, Alex had stayed home and become the typical small-town star athlete ^{mentally} ~~who~~ ^{that} ~~refuse~~ ^{refuse} ever to hang up ^{his} ~~his~~ ^{their} jock-strap, who still ^{hears} ~~hears~~ ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{distant} roar of the crowd... ^{the time of} ~~It~~ ^{that} ~~time~~ ^{of} Pearl Harbor Alex was nothing

but a ^{big, amiable} drunken bum, driving a cab for Bruno Solari. Then he'd gone to war and ~~was~~ had flown ~~over~~ ^{some} sixty missions over Germany ^{as a bombardier}. Now he was back home again, ~~drunk~~ a common drunk again, ^{bumming quarters again,} still wearing the faded C on his ragged high school ^{the very same} ~~shirt~~ ^{shirt}, still driving cab for Bruno Solari... puckered,

Yet Alex had given me the same treatment as Pingori, the ^{Ojibwa} piano man. "Oh," they had both said when they ~~had~~ learned I hadn't been to war.

"Will you have a drink?" Pingori repeated.

"Not now, thanks," I said. "Maybe later. If everything goes well ^{during} the first few numbers, you'll find a little oasis set up behind the piano. What intermissions are you taking?"

"Twenty minutes at eleven and another twenty at one... You sure you won't leave a drink?" ^{"I'll see you during the first intermission. In the meantime,} ^{Supposing, Mr. Pingori," I said, laughing.}

"Supposing you go upstairs and shake your playmates awake and herd them into a shower, get them dressed, get some food into them, and be ready for the kick-off at ten o'clock?" ^{It's nearly eight now.} "I'll see you during the first intermission. What do you say?"

"Okay, okay," Pingori said, slightly miffed. ^{We've} "I've never missed ^{an} ^{playing} ^{engagement} yet. Anyway, will we have our drink later?" The thing had become a minor obsession with the man.

"Sure, sure," I said. "Prompt at eleven. It's a deal. Let's shake. Say, by the way, what outfit were ~~you~~ ^{you} in ^{during} the war?"

There was the quick, wary look again. Then: "Oh, that... Why I was in the Navy. Stationed at Great Lakes." He saw the question in my eyes. "No, I never left the place ^{during the entire} ~~for~~ ^{three} years. Played in the band."



Elsa came up when she saw me alone. The place was pretty quiet so I ~~bit~~ put a nickel in the bar ^{station to cover our talk.} jukebox and lit her a cigarette. ~~They had~~

"Any bulletins?" I said, lighting her cigarette.

"Not yet," he said.

"How late are you?"

"Five days over."

"You've been that before?"

"No," she said.

"Yes -- you remember during the war you went damn near two weeks?"

"That's different. I was worried about ^{Alex} and everything."

"Now ^{that you're single again I suppose} there's nothing to worry about?"

"Don't be mean, Polly... I -- I mean, I shouldn't be late this time... Oh, I don't know what I mean."

"Steady, Elsa," I said.

Don't ^{always} say that. I hate it when you ^{but} say that, Polly."

"Has Alex bothered you lately?"

"Not since he served that thirty days -- ^{after} the night he came here ^{last fall around Christmas} and demanded to know who I was stepping out with during the war."

"Hm... Do you suppose he ^{really} knows?"

"No. If he did you'd know ^{about} it. Damn fast."

"I suppose... Hm..."

"Are you going to see me tonight?"

"I'll try. You know how it is."

"You mean about her?"

"Yes, of course. I think she's beginning to wonder."

"How will I know?"

"How will you know what?"

"If you can make it tonight?"

"I'll call you from the upstairs pay-phone."

"The records almost done. Want a drink?"

"Yes, ^{for God's sake. Make it a} double ~~scotch~~ scotch. I've got to hurry."

It's late now. ^{Hudson} upstairs to that damn dinner party, of the
Then I've got to herd them ^{all} out and ^{the} play fidgeter while
they make a dance floor out of the dining room.

"How do you suffer?"

"~~Skool~~, Mrs. Bongsto," I said, ~~lifting my~~
~~glass.~~ "Ain't it the truth?"

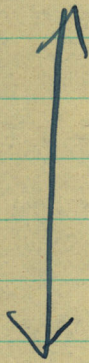
"You're a hard man, Paul Biegler."

"I wouldn't harm a fly, Elea," ^{I said.} "You see --
I don't like flies."

"You're a hard man," she repeated.

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Space.



Feb. 16, '48.

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Let me tell you now that any man that accepts the chairmanship of the program committee of one of these social clubs ought to ^{run gaily and} surrender to the nearest psychiatrist. During the War when my father-in-law, Walter Holdbrook, first got me the job, I thought it was the civilian equivalent of winning the Purple Heart. I now plainly see that being program chairman for the Chippewa Club is just a polite and thrifty way of getting the services of a musical impresario, a janitor, and a shepherd of drunks of both sexes, all for nothing.

First you have to line up the goddam band. It's no trick at all to get a dozen local bands with their loud and wailing saxophones, always a half key above or below the rest of the outfit. I'd much rather ^{stay away or} ^{or stay away entirely} punch than listen to the ponderous death ^{chants} of these local bands. Personally I've always preferred a good small band on the order of Benny Goodman's trio or quartet or King Cole's trio or Joe Mooney's quartet to the biggest name band in the ^{business} country. Of course the Chippewa Club wouldn't spend that kind of money ^{even} if it had it, but ^{if you keep your eyes open} you can always find a ^{reasonably priced} good small band in Chicago or Milwaukee or Green Bay that will be glad to come up to Chippewa ^{and get to play for our dances} ^{for a one night stand.} Especially when they know that good old Polly Biegley ^{always} plants a nice little nest of gin and all the fixings on a bridge table behind a screen just behind the grand piano.

VALENTINE PARTY

Dancing parties by the Chippewa Club meant a hang-over and
 first I had to call Judge Williams and continue a drunk driving case I'd
 forgotten about. *I take a measure of low pride in being*
 the kind of a D. A. that will never try a drunk driver
 when I have a hangover... Then I had to shave and get myself into my dinner
 clothes and then tug and lurch Maida into her girdle and then run to the
 hotel to keep the orchestra from passing out before the ~~mix~~ dance. *"Thanks, Chuck," she said --*
 The band
 had arrived in town from Milwaukee that morning and I had Leo, the hotel
 bartender, call me at the office and give me ^{progress} bulletins ~~all~~ during the after-
 noon. Leo called me at 3:00 P. M. to inform me that the band had switched
 from Martinis to straight gin on the third round. Later on, after the
 eighth round of gin, I had asked Leo to shut them off. He had done so, but
 had excitedly 'phoned back in ten minutes and told me that the boys had
 moved on to the Main Drift, a miners' saloon across the street.

When I got to the hotel three members of the band were in bed and the
 fourth, the leader, was back down in the bar trying to put the make on Elsa,
 the blonde barmaid. Not that I frowned on his taste, the Lord knows, but
 this scarcely seemed the thing for him to do with the rest of his band up-
 stairs placidly passed out in bed.

"Hello, Elsa," I said. "Seen any members of the band?"

"Yes, Mr. Biegler," Elsa said smiling, stressing the mister as she
 always did when anyone else was around. "Mr. Pingori, the leader here, is
 telling me he thinks I'd make a wonderful songstress with his band. He wants
 to give me an audition tonight after work. *It must be intuition, because he hasn't heard me sing yet.*
That's a new name for it..." Someone in a booth pressed the
 buzzer and Elsa glided away *with her tray.*

Pingori slid off the bar stool and snapped to attention. He was a tall boy,
 in his late twenties, I guessed, and his hair glistened with bear grease.

a hang-over meant no work the next day. So

"Mr. Paul Biegler, I presume," he said gravely, extending his hand and trying not to sway.

"Ah, Mr. Pingori," I said. "I caught your quartet over the radio last month. Permit me to say that I think your piano has all of the drive and technical brilliance of Art Tatum without his annoying frills."

Pingori was my man after that and wanted to buy me a drink. I shook my head, no. He was still wearing his discharge button, and I noticed him looking for mine. He might have known I wouldn't have worn one of the things on a tuxedo, even if I had one, but I guess he was too tight to notice. Ah, here it was coming...

"What outfit were you in, Mr. Biegler?" he politely asked.

"Outfit?" I said, pretending surprise. "What do you mean, 'outfit'?"

"I mean in the War? What branch of the service were you in?" he said.

"Oh, that," I said, laughing. "I wasn't in any outfit. The only war I fought in was right here in the battle of Chippewa, Michigan. Too young for the first War--too old for the last, I guess..."

"Oh," he said, fumbling for a cigarette.

It's a funny thing, that's what they all say; Just "oh," and they get that wary look and a kind of film comes over their eyes--it's hard to explain--and you feel curiously alone and walled out of some sort of secret fraternity. The whole thing is preposterous, I know, but there it is. Take Alex Bongsto, for instance. Alex and I had gone through all the grades and highschool together. I had even played substitute forward on the same basketball team on which he starred. When I'd gone on to college ^{and law school} at Ann Arbor Alex had stayed home and became the typical small town star athlete, the kind that mentally refuse ever to hang up their jock-straps, who still keep ^{hearkening to} ~~hearing~~ the distant roar of the crowd...

^{By} ~~At~~ the time of Pearl Harbor Alex ^{had become} ~~was~~ nothing ^{more than} ~~but~~ a big, amiable drunken bum, driving a cab for Bruno Solari. Then he'd gone to war and had flown some sixty missions over Germany as a bombardier. Now he was back home again, a common drunk again, bumming quarters again, still wearing the faded ^{Chippewa High School} "C" on his ragged ~~high school~~ sweater, still driving the very same cab for Bruno Solari... Yet Alex had given me the same treatment as Pingori, the Milwaukee piano man. "Oh," they had both said when they learned I hadn't been to war.

"Will you have a drink?" Pingori repeated.

"Not now, thanks," I said. "Maybe later. If everything goes well during the first few numbers, you'll find a little oasis set up behind the piano. What intermissions are you taking?"

"Twenty minutes at eleven and another twenty at one... You sure you won't have a drink?"

"I'll see you during the first intermission. In the meantime, supposing, Mr. Pingori," I said, laughing, "supposing you go upstairs and shake your playmates awake and ^{show} ~~lead~~ them into a ^{cold} shower, get them dressed, get some food into them, and be ready for the kick-off at ten o'clock? It's ^{after seven-thirty} ~~nearly eight~~ now. What do you say?"

"Okay, okay," Pingori said, slightly miffed. "We've never missed a playing engagement yet. Anyway, will we have our drink later?" The thing had become a minor obsession with the man.

"Sure, sure," I said. "Prompt at eleven. It's a deal. ~~Let's ~~uh~~ shake.~~ Say, by the way, what outfit were you in during the war?"

There was the quick, wary look again. Then: "Oh, that... Why I was in the Navy. Stationed at Great Lakes." He saw the question in my eyes. "No, I never left the place during the entire three years. Played in the band."

"Oh," I said, ^{reaching for a cigarette}

* * *

Elsa came up when she saw me alone. *There were just a few couples and the* place was pretty quiet, so I put a nickel in the bar jukebox station to cover our talk...

"Any bulletins?" I said, lighting her cigarette.

"Not yet," she said.

"How late are you?"

"Five days over."

"You've been that before?"

"No," she said.

"Yes--you remember during the war you went damn near two weeks?"

"That's different. Then I was worried about Alex and everything."

"Now that you're single again I suppose there's nothing to worry about?"

"Don't be mean, Polly... I--I mean, I shouldn't be late this time...

Oh, I don't know what I mean."

"Steady, Elsa," I said.

"Don't always say that. I hate it when you keep saying that, Polly."

"Has Alex bothered you lately?"

"Not since he served that thirty days--after the night he came here ~~and~~ around Christmas and demanded to know who I was stepping out with during the war."

"Hm... Do you suppose he really knows?"

"No. If he did you'd know about it. Damn fast."

"I suppose... Hm..."

"Are you going to see me tonight?"

"I'll try. You know how it is."

"You mean about her?"

"Yes, of course. I think she's beginning to wonder."

"How will I know?"

"How will you know what?"

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"I'll call you from the upstairs pay-phone."

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"Yes, for @od's sake. Make it a double scotch. I've got to hurry up-
stairs to that damn ^{Petit} ~~Hudson~~ dinner party. I'm late now. Then I've got to
herd them all out and play janitor while they make a dance floor out of the
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"How you suffer."

"Ain't it the truth?"

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"You've been that before?"

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"Yes--you remember during the war you went damn near two weeks?"

"That's different. Then I was worried about Alex and everything."

"Now that you're single again I suppose there's nothing to worry about?"

"Don't be mean, Polly... I--I mean, I shouldn't be late this time..."

Oh, I don't know what I mean."

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"Don't always say that. I hate it when you keep saying that, Polly."

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"Not since he served that thirty days--after the night he came here ~~xxxx~~ around Christmas and demanded to know who I was stepping out with during the war."

"Hm... Do you suppose he really knows?"

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"I'll try. You know how it is."

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"Yes, of course. I think she's beginning to wonder."

"How will I know?"

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"How you suffer."

"Ain't it the truth?"

"You're a hard man, Paul Biegler."

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