**Biographical Studies of Suicide, 1992, Volume 3**

# RANDALL JARRELL

**David Lester**

Not everyone believes that Randall Jarrell committed suicide. He was killed by a car on a dark highway in Chapel Hill (North Carolina) on October 14, 1965, and the coroner ruled his death an accident, but suicide has always been suspected. The following essay on Jarrell is based on a biography by Pritchard (1990).

## Early Days

Randall was born on May 6, 1914, when his father was twenty-four and his mother twenty. His father was working class with rural origins, his mother from a well-to-do Nashville business family. Soon after his birth, the family moved to California where his father set up a photography business and where a younger brother was born. His parents soon began to have marital problems, and his mother moved back to Nashville with the children and divorced her husband. She took a job teaching English at a secretarial school.

Randall did well at school and came to love reading in the Carnegie library when school was over. In the summer of 1926, Randall went to California to visit his father and his father's family, and he stayed there for a whole school year, not returning to Nashville until June 1927. Randall missed his grandparents in California greatly and vented his anger at having to leave by never writing to them again.

Back in Nashville, he took up tennis and became a fierce competitor. He did well in high school and got involved in both journalism and dramatics there. Even back then Randall wrote literary criticism for the high school newspaper. After high school, Randall first went to a commercial school in Nashville as preparation for entering the family candy business, but he became seriously ill with pleurisy and borderline pneumonia and had to withdraw. He then persuaded his uncle to send him to Vanderbilt University in 1932, while living at home with his mother and her new husband.

## College Days

Randall was noticed by his professors in his freshman year, and his class mates were terrorized by his domineering and condescending comments on literature. He ended up majoring in psychology, with a minor in philosophy and graduated in three years (taking summer courses to speed up the process). As an undergraduate, Randall edited the university humor magazine and had poems published in *The American Review*. He started work on a Masters degree in psychology but quickly changed to English.

He became friendly with several families, especially the Breyers whose son Bernard was a close friend and with whose daughter, Amy, Randall seemed to be in love though Randall

broke up with her in 1938. He continued to write poems with facility and confidence and had no qualms about publishing them as soon as he wrote them. Before entering graduate school he was invited to submit a critical review of ten novels for *The Southern Review*, and this magazine also published his poems. Pritchard commented on Randall's precocious ability in having poems published in a national magazine as an undergraduate and writing criticism prior to graduate school.

After two years at Vanderbilt, Randall's mentor John Ransom moved to Kenyon College, and Randall moved with him to be a part-time instructor. Robert Lowell, also a student of Ransom's went along, and Randall and Lowell lived together at first in an attic of Ransom's house. Randall continued to write and publish poems and criticism, but he showed no desire to complete a doctorate. He finished his Master's thesis and obtained a job teaching at the University of Texas in 1939 where he stayed for three years.

## The War And After

At the University of Texas, Randall fell in love with Mackie Langham, a colleague in the English department, and they married at the end of his first year there, in June 1940. In November 1940, Randall was of the invited contributors to *Five Young American Poets*. Later, *The New Republic* asked him for an article on poetry criticism, and *The Nation* solicited regular book reviews.

Toward the end of his three-year stay at the University of Texas, Randall completed work on his first book of poems, *Blood For A Stranger*, and was feeling at a dead end in his poetry. He also began to fall ill periodically.

Randall enlisted in the army in 1942. He was cut from a pre-flight program and sent to Sheppard Field in Texas where he was assigned to the mail room. In April 1943, he was sent to a Link trainer school and in November 1943 became an instructor-trainer for navigators for the duration of the war at Davis-Monthan Field in Tucson where his wife joined him.

Military life restored his creativity, and he published almost fifty poems dealing with the war and military life. His work was included in a 1945 volume *The War Poets*.

Randall's second volume of poetry was published in 1945, and after leaving the army he was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship and offered a position as literary editor of *The Nation* for a year. His year there provided further evidence that Randall was a terror as a reviewer as he demolished poor work with piercing wit. After his year at the magazine, Randall was offered a position at the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina where he happily taught for the rest of his life except for leaves of absence.

In the summer of 1948, Randall went to teach at the Salzburg Seminar in American Civilization in Austria where he fell in love with Elisabeth Eisler, a talented Viennese ceramist. They did not become lovers but vowed to remain friends for life.

The 1950s saw more volumes of poems and some of the best literary criticism he had written. In the summer of 1951 Randall went off to a writer's conference in Colorado where he met and fell in love with a student in his class, Mary von Schrader, a divorced woman with two young daughters, whom Randall married in the November of 1952. Mackie's interests had grown beyond caring for a somewhat selfish and independent husband. She returned to the University of Texas to work on her doctorate.

**The End**

Mary Jarrell later wrote that to be married to Randall involved being with him all the time. She went to his classes; he went with her on her errands. She watched him play tennis; he picked out her clothes. He did not want children of his own, but he was affectionate to his step-daughters. He remained totally dedicated to art - poetry especially, but also dance and painting.

In 1956, Randall was invited to be the Poetry Consultant to the Library of Congress, and he took a leave from the Woman's College. In 1957, he complained to friends of depression and some illnesses, including a painful sacroiliac injury. He moved back to the Woman's College in 1958 and continued his work. He was awarded a National Book Award in 1961 for a book of poems, *The Woman At The Washington Zoo*. He wrote some brilliant children's stories, delivered a lecture on American poetry at the National Poetry Festival in Washington in 1962, translated Faust and Chekhov, wrote more poetry and criticism, and continued to teach his students at the Woman's College with diligence and skill.

But the 1960s witnessed Randall's deterioration. He was hospitalized with hepatitis in 1962 and began to suffer from manic and depressive episodes. In 1963, Randall and Mary embarked on a five-month trip to Europe, but after their return in November, Randall's biographer notes that Randall had changed. He focused on his physical and psychological condition. He grieved over Kennedy's assassination and often felt fatigued. He turned fifty in May 1964, and a physician diagnosed his condition as a mid-life crisis and prescribed an antidepressant. However, manic phases began to appear. He could not stop talking in his classes which overran their allotted time. He slept only a few hours a night. He tipped a waitress $1500 on a visit to Nashville and in 1965 went on a flying binge using his American Express card. After one trip, his wife and his deparetment chairman arranged for the chancellor of the university and a campus policeman to meet Randall at the airport and hospitalize him. He described himself as both exhausted and elated. He and Mary considered separation.

Randall was switched to thorazine, but this made him feel depressed and was discontinued. His depression worsened, and he slashed his left wrist while at home on leave (perhaps triggered by a brutal review of his latest book of poems). He was released in July after four months in the hospital, and he spent the summer at home recuperating. He resumed teaching in the fall, and he agreed to be a writer-in-residence at Smith College the following year (1966-1967).

He arranged to enter a clinic for physical therapy for his injured wrist. A colleague drove him to the hospital, and he called on Monday evening, October 11, to ask Mary to bring him a

jacket and gloves so that he could take walks in the early evening. Three evening later, headed back to the hospital, he was struck and killed by a car.

## Comment

Randall's life seems remarkably free from pathology until his last few years. He hardly drank, and he suffered from only minor ailments and depressions until his last year. However, in his last year, Randall seems to have developed a bipolar affective disorder for which adequate medications were not available at the time. His work had been criticized, and his marriage was perhaps failing. But despite these traumata, his early history does not seem to presage a suicidal death, and though Meyers (1982) has argued that it was a suicide, Pritchard felt that Randall's death was an accident.

## References

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Pritchard, W. H. (1990). *Randall Jarrell*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

# OTTO WEININGER

**David Lester**

Otto's father, Leopold, was born into a Jewish merchant family, received no formal education, and developed into a skilled goldsmith. He married a Jewish woman from Vienna in 1878 and became an Austrian citizen in 1889. There were seven children, and Otto was the second and first son. He was born April 3, 1880, in Vienna, and his Hebrew name was Schlomoh. The information in this essay comes from Abrahamsen (1946).

Leopold Weininger became world famous as a goldsmith. He loved music and had a great talent for languages. He was a withdrawn person, keeping his thoughts and feelings to himself. With his family he was exceedingly strict, and he was both loved and feared by his children. His marriage was probably not a happy one. Abrahamsen noted that there was no evidence of insanity in the family.

## Otto's Childhood

Abrahamsen could find out little about Otto's childhood. Very little is known about Otto's relationship with his mother. Otto never mentioned her in his letters. She was an ordinary woman, a housewife and mother, who was beautiful and also had a talent for languages.

The dominant figure in the household was Otto's father. Otto's mother spoiled her children and they confided in her. But their father was the supreme judge. Eventually, Otto seems to have identified strongly with his father and developed hostility toward his mother. Abrahamsen felt that Otto's rejection of his mother was due to identification with his father's views, but to my mind Abrahamsen misses the obvious inference that Otto was strongly attracted to his mother, and his later attitudes were a rejection against these incestuous desires. Otto seems to have developed into a latent homosexual, latent perhaps because of the attitudes of his culture toward homosexuality and because of a lack of homosexual opportunities.

Otto showed promise early, speaking quite distinctly by the age of fourteen months. He graduated from secondary school in 1898, more learned than his peers. He knew Latin and Greek, spoke German, French, English, Italian, Spanish and Norwegian, and had read extensively in philosophy and literature. He was rather independent of his teachers, even critical of them, and very self-confident, so self-confident that Abrahamsen saw Otto as narcissistic and grandiose in his self-admiration. Abrahamsen reported that he once challenged a man to a duel over a trivial incident even though he did know how to use a sword (and then wounded his opponent).

His views toward women and Jews eventually became very hostile. In his book *Sex and Character*, published in 1903, Otto described women as the lowest possible level of existence, so that even the best woman is grossly inferior to the worst man. He justified this with a pseudo-biological and psychological rationale, which was rejected even by Freud when he read an early version of the manuscript.

Otto's parents had never kept a Jewish home or participated in Jewish ceremonies. In fact his father was anti-semitic. Two of his sisters became Christians, and Otto too rejected the Jewish religion and converted to Christianity in 1902. In his book *Sex and Character*, Otto described Judaism as an inferior religion to Christianity, equating the religion with the femininity he so despised. It is relevant to note in this context that anti-semitism was rife in Vienna during Otto's childhood and adolescent years. By 1895, two-thirds of the city council was clearly anti-semitic and talking of excluding the Jews from commerce.

Otto's father had encouraged his study of languages and introduced him to music, first taking him to concerts when Otto was six. His father wanted him to continue the study of languages with a view to entering the diplomatic service, but Otto entered the University of Vienna instead. He attended lectures in several departments, but he focussed on philosophy and psychology. In 1900 at the age of twenty, he attended a psychology congress in Paris, and his contributions to the discussions (in which he argued for the importance of introspection in the study of psychology) were noted in the formal congress proceedings. Abrahamsen noted that there was no book, concert or theatrical performance about which Otto did not have an opinion. He firmly believed that he was destined to become a genius.

He worked feverishly on his doctoral thesis, consuming books voraciously but neglecting his food and his health. Though he was awarded a doctorate in 1902, Otto overestimated the value and the importance of his contribution. He tried to find a publisher for his thesis, unsuccessfully at first. He showed the thesis to Freud, who thought it quite poor. His thesis was entitled *Sex and Character*, and on the same day he received his doctorate, Otto joined the Protestant faith.

Otto then moved out from home so that he could pursue his studies more intensively, for example, working at night, a practice which had disturbed his father. He supported himself by working as a private tutor. He worked to revise and extend the ideas in his thesis, eventually completing the manuscript for his book of the same title.

From his university years on, signs of a psychiatric illness began to appear. His joining the Protestant faith, perhaps meant as tactic to give his life meaning, seems not to have made him any happier. His continual introspection seems to have contributed to his self-absorption and his growing depression. As his reading began to extend to morality, he began to see himself more and more as wicked and sinful. Gradually he grew to hate himself. His sexual desires seem to have especially distressed him.

In his book, *Sex and Character*, he divides women into "mothers" and "prostitutes," a not uncommon view, but a view which makes nice women unavailable sexually. Abrahamsen could find no eivdence of loves or lovers in Otto's life but suggests that Otto did visit prostitutes for sexual satisfaction. In April, 1903, Otto decided to remain sexually abstinent.

In 1902, after receiving his doctorate, he accepted some money from his father to travel throughout Europe, returning to Vienna in September 1902. This trip seems not to have helped

his growing depression at all. His friends noted the growing distress in the course of their intellectual discussions with him. On the night of November 20, 1902, he talked to a friend (Arthur Gerber) about killing himself, and Gerber stayed up the whole night in order to prevent Otto from doing so.

Abrahamsen is of the opinion that Otto was beginning to suffer from schizophrenia. He may have had hallucinations (hearing dogs barking), and he withdrew more and more from others. From Abrahamsen's descriptions of Otto his disorder also has elements of manic-depressive disorder, a disorder which is not without occasional hallucinations and delusional thinking.

Otto worked constantly on his book, writing by day and, using candles, by night. It was accepted by a small publishing house in March 1903, and the first copies appeared at the end of May.

Most people ignored the book. Several praised it, especially those to whom its anti-semitism appealed, and several criticized it severely. Otto's psychological state grew worse after the book appeared. His feelings of sinfulness grew, and his depression was worsened by the indifferent or unfriendly reception given to his book. He was even accused of stealing the ideas in it. In the summer he travelled to Italy where he remained depressed and suicidal. He returned to Vienna in September 1903 and, after staying for five days with his parents, rented a room in the house in which Beethoven had lived. He moved there on October 3rd. The next morning letters arrived at his brother's and father's homes announcing his suicide. His brother rushed over to Otto's apartment, had the locked picked by a locksmith and found Otto dying from a bullet wound in the chest. He was rushed to a hospital but died there that morning.

## Discussion

Abrahamsen viewed Otto as schizophrenic with a strong need to become famous as a genius. However, Otto's first and only book, though published, was bizarre. Abrahamsen judged the ideas to be erroneous, beyond correction and, in fact, a system of delusions.

It is possible, therefore, simply to dismiss Otto's suicide as that of a depressed schizophrenic. However, his suicide occurred soon after the publication and rejection of the book which he hoped would bring him recognition. He had also failed to build a mature personal and interpersonal existence. Burdened by a deep sense of sin and continual depression, alienated from others because of both his schizoid tendencies and the conflict between his conscious and unconscious sexual desires, Otto seemed destined to lead an unhappy life alone. Perhaps the failure of his book in this context led him to decide to kill himself?

## Reference

Abrahamsen, S. (1946). *The mind and death of a genius*. New York: Columbia University Press.

# ANNE SEXTON

**David Lester**

Anne Sexton was born as Anne Harvey on November 9, 1928, in Newton, Massachusetts. She was the third of three daughters. Her father, Ralph, born in 1900, worked in the wool business and eventually established his own firm, and his father was a banker who suffered a psychiatric breakdown under the stress of his business. Anne's father had a younger sister who attempted suicide in her twenties and eventually shot herself to death in 1975 (Middlebrook, 1991).

Anne's mother, Mary Gray, born in 1901, was the only child of the editor and publisher of the *Lewiston Evening Journal*. After her junior year at Wellesley College, she met Ralph Harvey and quit college to marry him.

Of the three children, the eldest, Jane, became Daddy's girl, and she committed suicide in 1983 with sleeping pills. Blanche was seen as the clever child, while Anne was the baby of the family. A nurse helped with the family, and she stayed until Ralph Harvey's death, becoming like an aunt to the three girls. The parents were very close, and the children used to think up ways to gain their parents' attention such as writing them notes or leaving drawings on their parents' pillows.

Anne's father drank heavily, and when drunk he was often irascible. In particular, he used to insult Anne, saying for example that her acne disgusted him and that he could not eat his food with her at the table. Later, in therapy, Anne said that her father sexually molested her. However, her therapist (Martin Orne) noted that her account varied each time she recalled it, and he concluded that it probably had not happened. Orne suggested that the incident was a metaphor for Anne's experience of her father during this period. Anne's mother also drank, but regarded herself as a drunk rather than an alcoholic like her husband. Ralph Harvey finally sought treatment and gave up drinking in 1950.

When Anne was eleven, she was hospitalized for constipation, and her mother showed great anxiety over Anne's bowel movements, threatening her with a colostomy if she was not regular. Her father's aunt, Nana, moved in at this time, and Anne spent almost all of her spare time with Nana. However, after a couple of years, Nana suddenly lost her hearing and became quite child-like in her behavior. After some episodes of violence, Nana was given electroconvulsive therapy at a psychiatric hospital and eventually placed in a clinic. Around this time too, Anne's paternal grandfather had his second breakdown and was hospitalized. Later Anne came to think that maybe she had caused Nana's breakdown and that, one day, she would break down too.

In junior high school, Anne had many friends and began to take an interest in her appearance. Anne had a steady boy friend, Jack, from eighth grade into high school, and even at sixteen Anne and her friends went to bars and dances. Their favorite drink was Singapore slings. To calm Anne down, her parents sent her to girl's boarding school. Nevertheless, Anne got

engaged to Jack, but he broke off the engagement soon afterwards, leaving Anne heartbroken. Anne's time at high school was full of activities - swimming, basketball, cheerleading, theater and poetry. Her father liked her poems but always told Anne that she was not as brilliant as her mother. Anne's mother was jealous of her daughter, and her attitude led Anne to stop writing for ten years.

After the private high school, Anne went to the Garland School in Boston. She quickly became engaged again, but in the summer she met Alfred Sexton, known as Kayo, fell in love with him, slept with him, broke her engagement, and, thinking that she was pregnant and with the consent of her mother, eloped to get married in North Carolina in August, 1948. Kayo went back to Colgate where he was an undergraduate, but he dropped out at Thanksgiving, and the Sextons moved in with Kayo's parents. Kayo got a job in the wool business, while Anne did some modelling. They found an apartment in Cochituate (Massachusetts), and soon Anne fell in love with husband of a couple with whom they were friendly. Nothing developed from this, but Anne did consider divorce at the time and took an overdose of sleeping pills while others were around who could save her. Her mother suggested she seek counseling with Dr. Martha Brunner-Orne, the psychiatrist who had treated Anne's father for alcoholism.

At the start of the Korean War in 1950, Kayo joined the naval reserve and was shipped overseas. Anne soon began dating other men, but her mother found out and persuaded Anne to join Kayo in San Francisco. Once there, she became pregnant and came back to Massachusetts to give birth. Linda was born July 21, 1953. Kayo returned three days later to take up civilian life again. He joined Ralph Harvey's business as a road salesman. A second daughter, Joy, was born August 4, 1955.

Anne felt very constrained by the geographic closeness of her parents and her in-laws and by having Kayo work for her father. Anne was sensitive to the criticism from both sets of parents, and she and Kayo dreamed of leaving the area but never did.

## Psychiatric Problems

Soon after the birth of Joy, Anne had what appears to be a post-partum depression. She consulted with Dr. Brunner-Orne who gave her medications and counseling. A few months later, Anne began to fear that she might harm the children. She suffered anxiety attacks, especially when Kayo was away on business, and was physically abusive to her daughters.

Eventually, Dr. Brunner-Orne recommended hospitalization at a private clinic. Anne was released in August, 1956, after a stay of three weeks. It was decided that Anne would see Dr. Brunner-Orne's son for psychotherapy, and Anne saw Dr. Martin Orne for the next eight years. Linda, now three, went to stay with Anne's sister, Blanche, for five months. Joy went to stay with Anne's mother-in-law, Billie, for the next three years.

Anne did not improve quickly. In November, she overdosed with barbiturates during Kayo's absence but called Billie to rescue her. Orne put her in a psychiatric hospital for five weeks, and Anne called this a psychotic breakdown and thought that she was possibly insane.

Orne, then and later, did not consider Anne psychotic. He eventually diagnosed her as hysterical neurotic. One problem in therapy was that Anne forgot much of what transpired in each session, and she seemed to have a tendency to fall into "trances" easily. Eventually Orne had her make notes after sessions and listen to tapes of the sessions.

Early in treatment, Orne suggested that Anne write about her experiences in treatment, and Anne began to write poetry again. After another suicide attempt in May 1957 (following her mother's mastectomy for cancer which her mother blamed on the stress created by Anne), Orne strongly urged that her poems might help others who had similar problems, and Anne began to seriously consider poetry as a vocation. In 1957, she brought over sixty poems to Orne for him to read. She decided then to enrol in a poetry workshop held at the Boston Center for Adult Education taught by John Holmes, a professor at Tufts University (whose first wife had committed suicide). Anne, timid at first, soon felt at home there and stayed two years. Her first poem was published in a local magazine in April, 1958. Thereafter, with surprising persistence, Anne submitted her poems for publication, recording the rejections, but never giving up.

Anne requested a third meeting each week with Orne, and he agreed provided that she paid for it (instead of her father-in-law). Anne did so by getting a job selling cosmetics door-to-door. Billie was now even more involved with Anne's life, taking care of Anne's family whenever Anne was too upset to do so.

Anne met a fellow writer, Maxine Kumin, at the poetry workshop, and they soon became close friends, calling each other every day to discuss their writing. They went to poetry readings together and socialized with their families. Anne also soon found a lover among her classmates.

By mid-1958, Anne had sixty poems in circulation, seeking publication, and the *Christian Science Monitor* accepted two for their July issues. Soon she had acceptances from the *Antioch Review*, *Harper's*, and *The New Yorker*. Anne was now taking antidepressants, and Joy came home for longer and longer periods. But at the same time, Kayo became increasingly upset by Anne's devotion to her poetry and her accompanying neglect of her family. The arguments often turned into physical fights, followed by remorse on Kayo's part. Anne eventually came to see that she wanted the physical attacks in part as punishment for her poor behavior. (In 1960 at Anne's insistence, Kayo began therapy for almost two years and got his anger under better control for a while.) Later that year (1958), Anne's father had a stroke, and her mother's cancer metastasized. In November, Anne went to her therapist's clinic for several days.

Anne went off to Ohio for a one-week poetry conference where she met W. D. Snodgrass with whom Anne corresponded for a year. In September, 1958, Anne joined Robert Lowell's poetry class at Boston University. At the end of 1958, the *Hudson Review* accepted a 240-line poem, and Anne began planning her first book. Anne showed great professionalism as a poet. She worked hard on redrafting poems, courting the editors of journals, and publishing poems serially in journals before they appeared in book form, in short, actively promoting herself. She also began to develop a public image which led to her becoming one of the most memorable performers on the poetry circuit.

## The Mature Poet

Anne's life pattern now crystalized into several themes. First, she continued to write productively and receive acclaim for her work. Poems and books appeared regularly, and prizes and honors were awarded to her, including a fellowship at the Radcliffe Institute, the Levinson prize from *Poetry* in 1962, a traveling fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1963 (for which she went to Europe with a female companion in 1963 and with Kayo in 1964), a travel grant from the International Congress of Cultural Freedom in 1964 (for which she took Kayo on a safari to Kenya), fellowship in the Royal Society of Literature in 1964, the Shelley Memorial Prize from the Poetry Society of America and a Pulitzer Prize in 1967, a Guggenheim Foundation grant in 1969, an honorary doctorate from Tufts University in 1970, and a visiting professorship at Colgate University in 1972. Her poetry readings increased in popularity until she was demanding $1000 for each reading.

Not all was successful. Anne tried to publish short stories and a novel, but failed in this. She tried several plays, but only one was performed, *Mercy Street* in 1968 (though she was more successful with a musical ensemble which set her poetry readings to music). In addition, the British reception for her poetry and her readings was not anywhere near as positive as the American response.

Anne became poet in residence at a public high school in 1967 and the next year led a writing workshop at McLean's Hospital. In 1970, she began teaching part-time at Boston University and did so for the remainder of her life. Though she read at a few anti-Vietnam War rallies, Anne stayed out of involvement in the social and political issues of the day.

Writing continued to dominate her life, and she neglected chores, so that Kayo and her daughters, as well as her mother-in-law, all helped keep the household running while Anne wrote, traveled or stayed in psychiatric clinics. Eventually Anne's self-centeredness led her to parentalize her daughters so that they had to take care of her, and she used them for her comfort even to the point of sexually molesting them. She slept with and masturbated while lying in bed with Linda when Linda was eleven, and she kissed and masturbated by rubbing against Linda when Linda was fifteen, after which Linda began psychotherapy too.

Anne continued to take lovers to the point that her behavior seems promiscuous since none of them developed into an alternative relationship for that with Kayo. In 1960, she had an abortion because she was not certain that the child was Kayo's. She also had a brief homosexual encounter with a friend in 1965.

By 1966, Joy was in psychotherapy, and Anne was thinking of divorcing Kayo. Anne realized that she was dependent upon Kayo for her stable home life, but she also resented his lack of support for her career as a poet. By 1969, Kayo was becoming violent again. His wife was brazen about her affairs, talking to lovers on the telephone when Kayo was home, and they were drunk by dinner-time most evenings. She moved out in January, 1973, but, after a court hearing in March, Kayo moved out of their house, leaving it to Anne. Anne found a live-in couple to help with the household, but they fled from her after a few months. Her daughters were

growing up and away from her, and Anne found fewer available men for lovers.

Although Anne developed a public persona, witty and extraverted, she was tremendously insecure about meeting others and suffered great anxiety before public talks and parties. Eventually, she took to drinking alcohol to calm herself before public appearances. However, soon after her breakdown in the early 1950s, Anne had panicked whenever she had to leave the house, and so her development as a poet certainly eased the level of her anxiety. Anne always needed someone with her when she went to sleep, Kayo or some lover, even after she started taking sleeping pills regularly which knocked her out in minutes. One lover described her taking an indiscriminate mix of major and minor tranquilizers, antidepressants and barbiturates before bedtime. By the 1970s, Anne was clearly abusing both alcohol and medications.

Anne always needed, and was lucky to have, a series of colleagues or mentors, other poets, with whom she would correspond voluminously about work, as well as close-neighbors like Maxine Kumin and, later, Lois Ames with whom to share ideas and trips. After she fell and broke her hip in 1966, a neighbor, Joan Smith, helped nurse Anne and continued to help Anne for the rest of her life.

She continued to attempt suicide, seek frequent stays at clinics (which she also used as writing retreats), and to remain in psychotherapy. In 1974, after seven years of working with Anne, Orne moved to Philadelphia, and he was replaced by a therapist who committed professional misconduct by becoming Anne's lover. (He rejected Anne as a lover later when his wife found out about the affair.) When this therapeutic relationship ended in 1969, Anne transferred to a third therapist, this time a women, who demanded that Anne break off her occasional sessions with Orne whenever he returned to Boston. However, in late 1973, this third therapist, angered at Anne, ended the relationship. Anne began to visit a social worker until a replacement therapist could be found, but in October 1974 she committed suicide.

In 1964, after a severe breakdown, Anne stayed in Massachusetts General Hospital, where she was given an antidepressaant (imipramine) but switched to a phenothiazine (Thorazine). She took this for the rest of her life, but she felt that it destroyed her creativity (and prevented her from sunbathing), and so she often went for periods without taking it so that she could write. However, during those periods she would then become quite manic.

Suicide continued to fascinate Anne. She attempted suicide many times herself and for many years carried barbiturates in her purse with everywhere in case the mood to die came on her suddenly. She talked to Sylvia Plath in the late Fifties about their earlier suicide attempts, and she was moved by Plath's suicide in 1963. A friend, Ruth Soter, possibly killed herself in 1964.

Anne suffered several losses in adulthood. Her mother died in March, 1959, and her father in June, 1959. Her father-in-law was killed in a car crash in 1960. Her sister-in-law was killed in a car accident on her honeymoon in 1969. But most important of all, in 1970, she met a man who claimed to be her real father and persuaded Anne that his affair with her mother had indeed resulted in Anne's conception. Anne's psychological state deteriorated after this disclosure

- the first suicide attempt since 1966 and the first clinic stay since 1964.

## The End

By the end of 1973, Anne was divorced but regretting it. She was living alone, abusing alcohol and drugs, having difficulty writing, and deserted by her friends who were bored by her problems and who disliked her drunken behavior. She took to phoning friends at all hours. In late 1973, her therapist refused to continue in therapy with her, and she began seeing a social worker for counseling. In December 1973, Philip Rahv, an old friend, committed suicide. Anne made two suicide attempts with medications in September, 1973, and two more over the Winter, but she told a friend that car exhaust was the way to die. Sexually lonely, she put personal ads in the local newspaper. She also took religious instruction and contemplated being baptized as an Episcopalian. Nothing seemed to work or to help her. On October 4th, she went into her garage, turned the radio on and started the car. She was soon dead.

## Comments

For Anne Sexton, suicide was almost a way of life. A rough listing of her attempts (all with medications) is 1949, November 1956, May 1957, November 1961, July 1966, August 1970, September 1973 (two), Winter 1973-1974 (two), February 1974, and Spring 1974. Interestingly, she switched methods for her final successful suicidal act.

Anne remained in psychotherapy from 1956 until her death in 1974, and she was hospitalized on many occasions (at least seven times between 1956 and 1964 and at least four more times between 1971 and 1974). She took antidepressants and Thorazine (and suffered from some of the side effects, including tardive dyskinesia), but never received electroconvulsive therapy.

Anne fits well with her first therapist's diagnosis of hysteric. She was critically dependent upon attention, help and love from others. Alone, she panicked and fell into depressions. Like some of R. D. Laing's case examples Anne seemed only to exist when there were others to notice her. Her promiscuity fits well into this pattern. Her decision to divorce Kayo, coming as it did with her daughters growing independence and her mother-in-law's remarriage, was perhaps a mistake. Although her final decline began some time before the divorce, it increased afterwards.

Anne was in psychotherapy from 1956 to 1974, and it is remarkable that it failed to save her or even modify her behavior much at all. Anne was depressed, a substance abuser, promiscuous and prone to trances right to the end. The therapist misconduct is also striking. One therapist used her for sexual intercourse; another demanded that she break with her first therapist (Orne) and then eventually abandoned her.

Her first therapist, Orne, seems to have hit upon the right vocation for Anne in encouraging her to write poetry, much of which was based on her experiences as a psychiatric patient. Anne, along with Robert Lowell and Sylvia Plath, encouraged poets to deal with subject matter long avoided, such as madness and the everyday concerns of normal people, including

pregnancy and menstruation. It has been argued that writing poetry enabled Anne to survive longer than she might otherwise have done.

However, Anne remained developmentally immature, perhaps hampered by her parents ignoring her, except for harsh criticism, and her father's drunkenness and abuse. She never grew into a mature person, capable of taking care of herself or others, preferring the role of a dependent child. Finally, having rejected some and having been abandoned by others, she killed herself. Without the attention of others, Anne did not feel as if she really existed. Left alone, death could hardly be worse.

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# ALAN LADD

## David Lester

Ina Ladd, a reserved Englishwoman, gave birth to her only child, Alan Ladd, September 3, 1913, in Hot Springs, Arkansas. She was born in 1888 in West Chester, England, had emigrated to the USA in 1907 and had married in 1912. Her husband, Alan Ladd Sr, was American-born of Scottish ancestry and traveled around as a freelance accountant. He died of a heart attack in front of his family in 1917.

Alan and a friend were playing with matches on July 3, 1918, and accidentally burned down the apartment making it easier for Ina to move away. She took Alan first to Oklahoma City where Alan, then seven, was tormented at school and made very few friends. Ina met and married a house painter, James Beaver, there, and they moved to California. It took them three months to drive to Los Angeles in a 1914 Model T Ford, often stopping to work on the way to earn enough money for the trip. In Flagstaff they helped with the harvest, with Alan fetching water and digging tubers. They arrived at a transient auto camp in Pasadena, and Jim Beaver worked as a laborer until he could buy some paint brushes, and he eventually got a job as a painter at a movie studio. They moved first to a tent village, then to a shared house and finally to a garage on a small lot which he and Alan built. They ate simply, often potatoes and cheap mutton, and Alan could never eat lamb again for the rest of his life.

Alan got sick with a stomach ailment when he was twelve, perhaps from the years of struggle and malnutrition, and the family moved to small house in the San Fernando Valley for his health. Alan had fallen behind in his learning so that he was the oldest boy in his classes, and he remained small. His classmates nicknamed him Tiny, a name which stuck with him for the rest of his life.

He started work when he was fourteen for the Piggly Wiggly market chain and enrolled in North Hollywood High School when he was sixteen. He did well at athletics and was so good at swimming that there was talk of trying for the 1932 Olympics. He performed in the high school drama productions and, for the first time, but not the last, a movie company saw him and signed him briefly before letting him go. They told him that he was too short (only five foot four).

## Struggling

After graduating from high school in 1934, Alan worked for a local newspaper until he had enough money to open a small hamburger and malt shop. His mother, now middle-aged and drinking too much, helped him with it, but they had to close it after six months. Alan then went to work for Warner Brothers studio as a grip but quit after eight months. Meanwhile, Alan had met a local girl, Midge Harrold, and they secretly married in October, 1936, just after his step-father had died of a heart attack. Midge got pregnant, and so they had to tell her parents. Midge moved into Alan's apartment, and the baby was born on October 20, 1937, Alan Ladd Jr, the future president of Twentieth Century Fox.

Alan was now working for a local radio station as an actor, and his mother, back from a jaunt to San Francisco, moved in with Alan and Midge. She was depressed and drinking heavily, and on November 29, 1937, she poisoned herself with arsenic (in ant paste) and died.

Alan began to gain a reputation as a good radio actor with an extraordinary voice. He performed on the Texaco Star Theater and the Lux Radio Theater and was signed up by an agent, Sue Carol. Sue had been born in 1903, worked as an actress, and married three times, with one daughter. Sue worked hard on Alan's account and soon had him playing small parts in movies, and from 1939 to 1941 Alan had many, mainly unimpressive, roles. She became friendly with Midge and often had the couple over for parties at her house.

The roles kept coming, and Sue persuaded Alan to take all of them. It kept him visible and provided lots of film clips to show directors and producers. Eventually Alan and Sue fell in love, and Alan left Midge in the Spring of 1941. Midge let him go without a struggle and, though she missed him, never impeded him in his career. Sue had got his salary up from $150 a week to $750 a week when Paramount was casting for *This Gun For Hire*. He got the part and a long-term contract.

## Fame

Alan came down with pneumonia in the middle of the production. Linet notes that this was but one in a long series of illnesses and accidents that afflicted Alan during his life (which seemed to increase in frequency after he left Paramount for Warner Brothers in 1951), so long a series that Linet felt that they were motivated by a self-destructive impulse.

Sue got a divorce in Nevada in March, 1942, and she and Alan were married soon afterwards in Tijuana, Mexico. Alan was twenty-nine and Sue thirty-nine. Once *This Gun For Hire* was released, it became a huge success, and Alan Ladd became a major star. Although somewhat overwhelmed by his fame, Alan, coached by Sue, established good relations with the press so that the movie magazines (which were very important in those days for a star's career) ran lots of stories on the Ladds (sometimes one a month), all favorable. Alan and Sue were also considerate to the fans, replying to letters and signing autographs. Both Louella Parsons and Hedda Hopper loved the Ladds and focussed on positive news about them.

The press ignored the previous marriages of the two and their children. But Sue's daughter lived with the Ladds, and Laddie (Alan's son with Midge) was a frequent visitor, eventually moving in.

Alan was drafted in January, 1943, and, after a send-off party from Paramount, went to Fort McArthur in California where he worked making propaganda and training films. His daughter Alana was born in April, 1943, and, after getting ill several times, received a medical discharge in November. (Alan and Sue also had a son, David, in February 1947.)

## Routine

Alan's life settled into a routine. He made movie and after movie, and on the whole they got worse and worse over time, finally ending up as second features at movie houses. His inability to land good roles in good movies stemmed at first from Paramount's policies which demanded that their stars make the kind of movies they thought that the public wanted and which minimized risk-taking. At Paramount, Alan had no control over scripts or directors, even after he went on strike and refused to work for them for four months, after which they gave in and raised his salary. However, after Alan left Paramount to join Warner Brothers (where he had story approval and freedom to start his own production company), Alan continued to make poor movies. This suggests that either Alan had no sound judgment as far as drama was concerned or that he was so anxious about money that he suspended his judgment and took any role that was offered to him. On the rare occasions in which he found a role he wanted, such as the lead in what was to become *Lawrence of Arabia*, he was passed over for it. But he also turned down potentially good roles such as one offered him in *Giant*. Almost every film he was in was severely criticized by *The New York Times* movie critics (with the exception of *Shane* in 1953). Despite the criticism, however, for many years the public loved him. From 1948 to 1950, he was first in the *Modern Screen* poll.

He accepted contracts to make movies abroad though practically every experience abroad was unpleasant. He would get injured, miss America, and typically end up in third-rate movies.

Despite the gradual decline in his acting reputation, Alan made a great deal of money, and everything he invested in also made money. He bought a ranch in Hidden Valley south of Santa Barbara which appreciated in value. He built a grand house in Hollywood on North Mapleton Drive. He bought a house in Palm Springs, a second ranch, an office building in Hollywood, and a hardware store, invested in modern art, and hit oil on the Hidden Valley ranch, all of which made money for him.

But there was always a feeling of insecurity. Alan never thought that he was a good actor. His biographer felt that this insecurity was greater after he left the protective care of Paramount. His height also bothered him, especially since it bothered the movie studios. Whereas other short actors had no problems with their height (such as James Cagney), Alan Ladd was always cast as the hero/lover, often opposite women who were as tall or taller than him. Thus, "Tiny" had to stand on platforms or the women in ditches when filming. Sometimes others made disparaging remarks about his height. For example, Robert Mitchum was quoted in the press as describing Alan as shrunken up like a dishwasher's hand...so small they could hardly see him.

His personal life with Sue seemed good except for a romantic fling with June Allyson in 1955. There was a row between Sue and June Allyson, and Alan left their home to be by himself for a few days. The Ladds patched things up, and there were never any extramarital affairs again.

Alan started drinking heavily, but he never seemed to have arrived on the set drunk. His family later said that his tolerance for alcohol was so low that he could get drunk on very little alcohol. He had trouble sleeping and used sleeping pills washed down by a strong drink. His

appearance changed, and he often was overweight and his face bloated. The death of his first wife, Midge, in 1957, depressed him. His fellow actors and actresses in the 1950s described him as melancholy.

By the 1960s, he had fewer fans. His movies did not sell, and they were sometimes reduced to second billing. He failed to adapt to the changing tastes of movie goers, and his ventures into productions for television failed. His insomnia and depressions grew worse, though he was still financially secure. Working on the next movie (no matter how bad it might be) seemed to alleviate his depression briefly.

In 1962, a friend, Van Heflin, advised Alan to try psychotherapy, but the idea was too terrifying, though he talked to Heflin about the loss of his good looks, his lack of self-esteem and his fears of diminishing sexual potency. In November of 1962, Alan drove out to the Hidden Valley ranch alone and was found in the morning unconscious from a bullet in the chest. This incident was called an accident, and Alan said he had tripped over his dogs while carrying the gun.

His biographer saw the deaths of Hollywood friends, acquaintances and co-stars (such as Gail Russell, Marilyn Monroe, and Dick Powell) as increasing his melancholy.

His death occurred while he was staying alone at his Palm Springs house. He was sleeping poorly, drinking, watching television and talking to friends on the telephone. He was found at 3.30 in the afternoon on January 29, 1964, by his butler dead from an overdose of sleeping pills and alcohol. The coroner ruled the death an accident.

## Discussion

Alan Ladd's career was moving downhill fast, and this fed into his insecurities about himself as an actor. Public failure meant artistic failure. There is a suggestion that his marriage, which once had helped him to success, was no longer a source of satisfaction for him. His childhood experience of poverty led him to do almost anything to make money, despite the money he had accumulated, and he seemed driven in this. Alan was devoted to his children and proud of them, but the balance seemed strongly tilted toward a lack of fulfilment in his life.

His death may have been an accident, but the timing and the circumstances fit a suicide. He isolated himself in Palm Springs so that no one could intervene to save him. His depression was getting worse, and yet he was unwilling to seek professional help. The public adoration was no longer there to bolster his self-esteem. And he had, of course, the memory of his mother taking arsenic in mid-life when her problems seemed no longer bearable. Thus, his death was probably suicidal rather than accidental.

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# CHARLES BOYER

**David Lester**[1]

Charles Boyer was born in Figeac, in the pastoral southwest of France on August 28, 1899. His father was Maurice Boyer, who had moved to Figeac on the death of his first wife and opened a bicycle shop, where he met and married a thirty year-old spinster, Louise Durand. Maurice Boyer eventually sold farming equipment and moved into coal and grain sales. Charles was their only child.

Charles was a precocious boy in his studies, reading Shakespeare while his fellow pupils learned their alphabet. He was introverted and showed little interest in boyish games or athletics. Charles's father had consumption, but his death in 1909 still came as shock to the family. Louise sold off the businesses and focussed her energies on her only child. She paid for violin lessons for him and foresaw a career in medicine or the law. But Charles was smitten as child by the cinema and by the theater, and he resolved to be an actor, playwright and director. As a teenager, he devised a version of *Macbeth* for himself and his friends to act in. A class essay on Molière won a provincial prize.

In his teenage years, he developed into a handsome young man. When the First World War broke out, he worked as a volunteer orderly in a local hospital. He entered the Collège Campollion, near Figeac, but neglected his studies. He devoted much time instead to entertaining the hospitalized troops. Devising these entertainments made him realize that he did not like writing but that he did like acting. In 1918, he was recruited to play a small part in a film being made nearby, and the director persuaded Charles's mother that her son should go to Paris to become an actor. His mother allowed him to go on condition he enroll for studies at the Sorbonne.

Charles neglected his studies there in favor of making contacts in the theater world. After many rejections, his roommate recommended Charles for a major part in play in which the leading actor had fallen ill twelve hours before the opening performance. He learned the part in one day and became an overnight celebrity. The leading actor took over when he recovered, but Charles used his success to persuade the producer to get him admittance into the prestigious Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Déclamation de Paris.

He studied diligently there (and graduated), while accepting roles in plays and films. Although he loved acting on the stage, he saw that there was more money to be earned in films, and so he willingly took film parts. In a short time he was familiar to Parisian playgoers and, through his films, throughout France. He was soon the highest paid actor on the French legitimate stage and had performed in nine countries.

## Charles In Hollywood

[1] This essay is based on Swindell (1983).

Though he could speak French, German, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, his English was poor. Nevertheless, he was persuaded to go to Hollywood for the first time in 1929 to make a French version of a film recently filmed in English using American actors. [2] On Charles's next trip to Hollywood, Irving Thalberg took charge of him, providing him with an English tutor so that Charles could act in the English versions of films. However, there was lots of idle time, and Charles took up smoking, becoming a four-packs-a-day chain smoker. In 1931, he worked in his first American film, *The Magnificent Lie*. It was a flop. Charles returned to France feeling that he had failed twice in Hollywood. Back in France, he returned to the stage and films, falling in love with a Anglo-French actress, Alice Fields, who rejected his proposal of marriage.

M-G-M asked Charles to return to Hollywood for *Red-Headed Woman* which also starred Jean Harlow. The film helped propel Charles into the public eye, but Irving Thalberg had a nervous breakdown and went off to Europe and M-G-M cut back on productions. So in 1932, for the third time, Charles returned to France in gloom. Back in France though he was again a star.

By the 1933 the German artists who were being persecuted by the Nazis were coming to France on their way to America. Paris was their first stop, and Charles met many of them and worked with them. One of them, Erich Charell, planned to go to Hollywood to make *Caravan* and persuaded Charles to be in it.

This time, Charles's life in Hollywood was happier. In January 1934, he met a British actress there, Pat Paterson, born in 1920 in Bradford, England. Twenty-two days after they met, they drove to Yuma, Arizona, and got married. Charles was thirty-four, Pat twenty-three.

Pat was trying to build a film career, but her films were not successes and the studios gradually lost interest in her. Though very disappointed, this removed a source of friction in the marriage, for it was proving difficult to advance both careers and stay happily married. Charles hated to be away from Pat, and she was an important source of support for him after unsuccessful films. He also held rather traditional ideas about what a wife's role should be. Pat had a contract with Fox Studios but, after they folded in 1935, other studios did not offer her work, and so the conflict between the two careers was resolved.[3]

Charles continued to make films on both sides of the Atlantic. He refused to sign up with any studio, remaining indpendent, and managed in most years to acquire a very good income, roughly $100,000 a film by 1935. Perhaps 1937 was a peak year for his career. He received an Oscar nomination for his role in *Conquest*, in which he starred with Greta Garbo, and a European film *Mayerling* was a success in America that year too. [4]

In 1936, the Boyers bought a house in Beverly Hills and settled down. They were very sociable and, beside their American friends, took care to befriend any English and French film people who came to Hollywood. Yet they also kept private. Their home was off-limits to the

[2] It was the custom then to make several versions of a film in different languages using the same sets.
[3] Pat was offered a role in a film in 1936, but she found herself quite nervous and no longer enjoyed making films. She enjoyed a small role in a 1938 film, but she was never offered another part.
[4] He was nominated for four Oscars but never won one.

press, and Charles appeared infrequently in the fan magazines. Surprisingly for a Hollywood couple, Charles remained happily in love with Pat for the rest of their lives. Despite starring in films with almost every leading lady of the era, and despite his reputation in films as lover, he never had an affair. He invested his money wisely and soon was quite wealthy. They applied for US citizenship (they become citizens in 1942) and, since they seemed to have difficulty conceiving a child, inquired about adoption.

They arrived in France on September 1939, the day Hitler attacked Poland. Charles joined the French army and sent Pat to England. He was assigned to the 37th Artillery to perform switchboard duties at one of the Maginot Line's fortifications. However, the French authorities decided that Charles would be better as an emissary for them in America, and he was mustered out and urged to return to America.

Back in Hollywood, he made efforts to get friends to safety after the fall of France, frequently flying to Lisbon to make arrangements. He made radio broadcasts for *Voice of America*. He founded a French Research Foundation to document French contributions to culture but, during the war, he focussed its efforts on documenting the French involvement in the war.[5] By 1941, he was smoking six packs a day and exhausted. He had heart palpitations at his Thanksgiving meal, and his doctor ordered him to cut down his smoking and slow down. Thereafter, he made only one, or at most two, films a year. Then Pat got pregnant, and Michael was born on December 9, 1943.

## After The War

Charles returned to France for a while after the war and put much effort into saving from execution and imprisonment those actors and directors accused of collaborating with the Nazis.

Back in America, Charles returned to the stage in New York City, appearing in Sartre's *Red Gloves* (*Les Mains Sales*), and helping to put on and act in several other plays. He also appeared in some thirty films made in America and in Europe. His changing interests led him to sell the house in California and move into a suite in the hotel Pierre in New York City. As well as his changing interests, Charles was upset by the persecution of Ingrid Bergman for having an illegitimate child and by the cooperation of the film industry with the Committee on Un-American Activities. He and Pat bought an apartment in Paris, a house in London, and a home on the island of Ischia in the Mediterranean (where the family gathered every summer to paint).

Michael decided as a teenager that he wanted to work in television as a producer. Charles had seen the potential of this new medium and had formed a successful production company with some friends which produced *Four Star Playhouse* and *The Rogues* among others. Michael was the producer for *The Rogues* and, after it was cancelled in 1964, it was expected he would soon find other projects. But Michael had little talent and even less training. New projects did not appear. He fell in love but, when his lover told him that she wanted to break their

[5] Over the years, Charles contributed $2 million to the Foundation. He was awarded a special Oscar in 1942 for this work.

relationship off, he went into his den and shot himself - September 23, 1965.

## Death

The Boyers never recovered from Michael's suicide. They sold their houses and retired to Geneva. Charles did make a few more films. Probably the activity helped him survive. His health grew worse, and in 1977 Charles and Pat flew to New York for medical check-ups. Charles was told he needed a prostatectomy, but Pat was discovered to have advanced cancer of the colon and liver. Charles decided not to tell Pat, but he moved them to Scottsdale, Arizona, since the climate was better there for her. She died there on August 24, 1978. Charles did not go to her funeral in California. He got their house in order and killed himself with an overdose of barbiturates on August 26, 1978, two days before his seventy-ninth birthday.

## Comment

Charles Boyer seems to have been a psychiatrically stable person despite the loss of his father when he was ten. His suicide seems to have motivated by his declining health and by the death of his wife without whom he did not care to exist.

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## GIG YOUNG

### David Lester[6]

Byron Barr was born in St. Cloud, Minnesota, on November 4, 1913, the third of three children and an unplanned baby. His father, stern and distant, ran a pickling and preserving company, his mother was repressed and neurasthenic, and his older brother domineering. Byron was close only to his sister Genevieve and remained so all of his life. In his early years, his mother often took to her room sick, and her step-sister, Jessie, came to live with the Barrs to help with the children. Byron grew close to Jessie, but eventually he realized that Jessie liked his older brother, Don, better than she liked him. Thus, both female caretakers had rejected him.

Byron developed a number of psychosomatic complaints, including convulsions and a stiff neck, and at elementary school he soon fell behind and was placed with the group of slow learners. His second grade teacher sadistically beat him but, when his mother found out about this, she placed him in a school associated with the local university. Byron had to repeat second-grade.

Byron rarely expressed his pain or resentment. He learned to hide behind a smiling countenance, revealing his true feelings only to his sister. His older brother had worked in his father's company successfully, and Byron too was forced to work there after school. There he failed too. The foreman fired him, not realizing he was the boss's son, and his father rehired him but at reduced pay. As a teenager, Byron was attracted by the movies, and he got a job as an usher at the local theater so that he could go often. He day-dreamt about being an actor.

At the Technical High School, Byron was a good-looking young man, and he was popular, even getting elected class president. Since his father's business was profitable, Byron had lots of nice clothes and use of the family car, and he developed more confidence.

In 1931, the Depression brought hard times, and the company folded. Byron's father took a job as a food broker in Washington, DC, while Byron stayed in St. Cloud to take of his ailing mother. As he finished his junior year of high school, his father summoned them to Washington, and so in April, 1932, Byron drove his sick and depressed mother down to join his father.

Since his father lived far from the high school there, Byron persuaded his parents to let him board near his school. His landlady, Mrs. Harry Kaines, liked him and became his surrogate mother. She was thrilled by his athletic success, and one her tenants got him a job at the local drug store. When his parents moved to North Carolina, Byron persuaded them them to let him stay with Mrs. Kaines. Mrs. Kaines helped get him a job as a ballroom dancing instructor and encouraged him to join the local semi-professional theater group. At this time too, he had the gap in his front teeth closed and a testicular inflammation forced him to have a vasectomy. Finally in 1939, he set out for California, hitching his way across America.

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[6] This essay is based on Eells (1991).

## Hollywood

Arriving in California, Byron got work, starting at a gas station, and managed to study and work building scenery at an acting school. He auditioned successfully at the Pasadena Playhouse, and participated in many plays for them. There he met a fellow actress, Sheila Stapler, with whom he fell in love. Sheila was very nurturing and was happy to defer to Byron. They slipped off to Las Vegas in August, 1940, to marry.

In 1941, Byron was asked to take a screen test for Warner Brothers (his father sent him funds so that he could join the Screen Actors Guild), and he was signed up at $75 a week. He worked diligently there, but also remained a family man, spending time with Sheila and working on his house.

When America entered the war in 1941, the movie studios lost many male actors, and Warners persuaded Byron not to enlist. They upgraded the roles given to Byron, and he took as his name the role he played in *The Gay sisters*, Gig Young. His next film was *Old Acquaintance* with Bette Davis, and Gig and Bette had an affair, a portent that Gig was most likely not going to be a stable husband.

Gig finally had to enlist, joining the Coast Guard in 1943, but Sheila moved with him until he was shipped off to sea as a pharmacist's mate in late 1944, just after his mother died. He got malaria soon afterwards, and was released on July 4, 1945. Warners threw a welcome back party for him and several other returning actors, and Gig hoped that his fortunes would improve. However, Warners gave him second-string and unflattering roles in many of their run-of-the-mill movies, and the momentum of his career run down.

He grew closer to Sophie Rosenstein, a drama coach for the studio (the two couples socialized a lot together), and Gig and Sophie fell in love. Sophie worked hard to encourage Gig and to help him land better roles. She urged him to act on the stage in order to expand his horizons, but in the summer of 1947 while he was appearing in *Biography* with the La Jolla Playhouse, Warners dropped his option. Although he had always resented his brother, Don died in September 1949 of tubercular meningitis, and Gig was depressed by this loss. His marriage to Sheila deteriorated, and, as his drinking increased, Gig took to breaking the furniture during their rows. They separated after Christmas 1948 and divorced in 1949. Gig persuaded Sophie to divorce her husband, and they married on January 1, 1951.

Working as an independent, Gig let his agent sign him up for mediocre roles and, after getting and breaking a contract with Columbia, hardly worked in 1949 and 1950. He freelanced a few roles in 1951, but then signed with the Louis Shurr Agency. He obtained a good part and turned in a good performance in *Come Fill The Cup* for which he was nominated as best supporting actor in 1952. But then he signed with M-G-M who put him in mediocre films, and his career fizzled again.

He failed to insist on better roles, and Sophie could not help him since she was diagnosed with cervical cancer just three months after their marriage. Gig held the knowledge from Sophie

and spent most of his energy taking care of her. By October 1952, she spent most of her time in bed, and Gig stayed with her, reading to her and holding her hand. She had to be hospitalised in October 1952, and she died on November 10. Gig was devastated and seriously depressed. He drank heavily and took Miltown to help him sleep. When his contract with M-G-M expired, Gig decided to go to New York to act on the stage. He got his first part in *Oh Men! Oh Women!* in 1953 and received great reviews. He also began to recover from his bereavement, and had two affairs. First there was Sherry Britton, a big-time stripper, to whom Gig proposed marriage. She refused. (She reported that Gig was unable to have an orgasm for months at a time.) Elaine Stritch was acting in a show in a neighboring theater and met Gig at a party she gave. He stayed overnight to help her wash dishes and slept in a separate bed. The virgin Elaine was impressed, and they began dating. Soon she fell in love with him, and Gig tried to have his first marriage annulled and planned to convert to Roman Catholicism in order to marry her. After they went back to Hollywood where Gig had a role in a movie, the church found out that he had been baptized as a Methodist and that annulment was impossible. Their relationship broke up soon after.

## The Mid-Life Career

For a while, Gig shuttled back and forth between New York and Hollywood, but he found few good roles and took any that were offered. He met Elizabeth Montgomery, and they married in December 1956. Gig had the vasectomy reversed so they could have children, and Gig finally had a good role in *Teacher's Pet* which got him a second Oscar nomination. This led to lots of offers, and Gig and Liz moved to the West Coast. Gig was still drinking heavily, but Liz seemed to be able match him in this.

Returning to the East Coast for *Under The Yum Yum Tree*, Gig began to show signs of what later became a severe trouble, his inability to master the lines for a play. As his marriage with Liz grew worse, Gig found a new mother-figure, Doris Rich, a character actress in her mid-sixties, whose closeness to Gig threatened Liz. Gig had a liaison with Sophia Loren during the filming of *Five Miles To Midnight* in 1962, but then became paranoid about Liz having affairs. Eventually, Liz obtained a Mexican divorce in March 1963.

Gig drowned his sorrows in alcohol, but he soon met Elaine Whitman who was, at the time, selling real estate. Soon after their affair began, Elaine discovered she was pregnant, and Gig, overjoyed, married her, though friends thought it was a terrible match. Elaine was twenty-eight, Gig forty-nine. Elaine and Gig had a daughter, Jennifer, in April, 1964. Elaine turned to domesticity, Gig tried AA, dieted and acquired toupees for his receding hairline. His failing career soon brought financial worries. He starred in a television series for a year, *The Rogues*, but it was cancelled. He was in a successfully touring company of *The Music Man*, but they still had to sell their luxurious house and move into a smaller place.

Gig's paranoia now focussed on Elaine, and he tapped his own telephone line so as to record her conversations. Gig persuaded Elaine to go into counseling with him, but he chose a charlatan therapist who practiced orgone therapy. Elaine refused to continue, and then Gig went to Vancouver for a course of LSD therapy. Their arguments about Gig's drinking continued, and

Elaine divorced Gig in July, 1967.

Gig was getting almost no offers for films, and appeared only in touring companies and occasionally in New York City. An affair there with a young actress (Skye Aubrey) was ruined by his drinking and his impotence and, though she would have married him, she says, Gig refused to consider it. At this nadir in his life, he was recommended for the role of Rockie Gravo in *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* and he won an Oscar for best supporting actor in 1970 for it.

And then his career plummeted again! Elaine sued him in court for more alimony and child support, and Gig tried to deny paternity for Jennifer. He lost in court after five years of legal battles which created great animosity between them. (In fact, Gig never saw Jennifer again.) In addition, public opinion turned against him. Then in his touring company for *Harvey*, there was great conflict between Gig and other actors and, though the production was a success, Gig acquired a reputation for being difficult. The stress of this experience led to a severe neurodermatitis on his face.

Next, Gig was hired for a film, *Blazing Saddles*, but he had problems learning the lines and his anxiety led to several collapses on the set. He was fired. His reputation for being unreliable grew. Luckily though, he found another supporter, Harriette Vine Douglas, a woman in her fifties, who became his friend, confidante and lover. She protected him in every way she could, and he often hid out with her for months.

He finally tried plastic surgery for his aging face, but the surgeon botched the operation and Gig required remedial surgery. His teeth bothered him so that, on tour with *On A Clear Day You Can See Forever*, he could hardly eat. After his weight dropped from 185 to 145, he had all of his teeth recapped. In 1972, he developed numbness in his feet and was treated for circulatory problems and had his gallbladder removed. After this, he stayed with Harriette for almost a year.

In 1974 and 1975, he appeared in five movies. He went on the wagon, relying more heavily on Valium and Placidyl, and made a television movie which became a series. He had problems learning the lines and hired a good psychologist who helped him. But after the series, when the psychologist tried to get Gig to deal with his underlying and chronic problems (his alcoholism, sexual impotence and paranoia), Gig quit therapy. Gig had his teeth redone and had plastic surgery on his chin and eyelids.

Back in New York, he was fired from Arthur Miller's *The Archbishop's Ceiling* because he could not remember his lines, despite help from his voice-coach there, Bert Knapp, who had managed to become Gig's therapist though unqualified to fill that role. In 1977, Gig went to Hong Kong to make a kung fu film (his last film) and met Kim Schmidt.

## Death

Kim was the thirty year-old script-girl for the film, and they soon became involved. Their relationship was volatile, with Kim desperately trying to get Gig to stop drinking. Gig returned to New York, but the relationship improved by telephone, and Kim joined him in New York in

October 1977.

He signed up to perform in a college production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* at the University of Memphis, where his memorization problems led to the first performance ending forty-five minutes early as Gig forget large chunks of his lines. Back in New York, Gig and Kim quarrelled, made up, split and got back together again. Gig proposed marriage, but Kim resisted. In May, Gig appeared drunk to introduce a friend's concert performance, and his voice-coach broke his relationship with Gig.[7] In June, 1978, Gig and Kim went to Edmonton where Gig was to perform in *Nobody Loves An Albatross*. Gig had fantasies of taking the show on tour, but friends who came to advise him on it thought the production was terrible.

Back in New York, Gig and Kim bought an apartment and, on September 27, 1978, finally married. Finances were poor because of their heavy spending and the expense of fixing up the apartment. Nobody, of course, is sure what the arguments between them were about. After the deaths, no barbiturates or alcohol was found in Gig's system. The apartment had two bottles of wine, seven tablets of Oxazepam and several bottles of vitamins.

Perhaps it was the fears of aging and sickness, perhaps his sexual impotence or arguments over money, perhaps it was a fight over the will (with Kim wanting all the inheritance and Gig wanting to split it between Kim and his sister), or perhaps his withdrawal from alcohol and drugs led to an acute psychosis? He did telephone Harriette on October 18 to beg her to come to New York and take him back to Hollywood. She refused.

On October 19, 1978, Gig shot Kim in the back of the head and then shot himself in the head.

## Discussion

Gig Young was a man whose life disintegrated slowly, interspersed with occasional successes and critical turning points. From a difficult childhood, filled with rejection, he built a career but lacked the skills to manage it well. As he progressed from relationship to relationship and from performance to performance, his alcohol abuse worsened, his distrust of others and paranoia worsened, and his violent behavior escalated. The eventual end of his life was hardly predictable. Murder-suicide is rare. But a decline was inevitable, perhaps into bankrupt alcoholism.

But there were also critical turning points. What if Sophie, his second wife, had not died of cancer? He loved her, and she was good for him and his career. What if he had not quit the first decent psychotherapist he had found but stayed to work through his problems? What if?

## Reference

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[7] which illustrates the danger of an unqualified person trying to be a psychotherapist.

# EUGENE O'NEILL, Jr

## David Lester

Eugene O'Neill, the American playwright, was born October 16, 1888, and died November 27, 1953. He had won three Pulitzer prizes and the Nobel Prize for literature. As a young man, O'Neill had dropped out of Princeton University in his first year and moved to New York City where he fell in love with Kathleen Jenkins. Both sets of parents disapproved of their marrying, but they went across to New Jersey in 1909 and married anyway. O'Neill was packed off to Honduras on a gold-mining expedition after a couple of months, but Kathleen bore him a son on May 5, 1910, named Eugene O'Neill Jr. O'Neill returned to New York soon afterwards but never went to see Kathleen. He seems to have gone to see his son while Kathleen was out and then taken an overdose of Veronal. Friends found him and took him to the emergency department at Bellvue Hospital. Kathleen divorced O'Neill in June, 1912. O'Neill provided no child support, and Kathleen did not ask for alimony.

In 1915, Kathleen married George Pitt-Smith, an accountant, and moved to Douglaston on Long Island. Her son Eugene was raised as if George was his father, called Richard Pitt-Smith, and he grew to be devoted to his step-brother, George's child by a previous marriage.

Eugene had been enrolled in a military school from which he had run away twice. Kathleen's lawyer felt that it was time that O'Neill, whose plays were now quite successful, contributed to his son's education. O'Neill was agreeable to meeting his son and paying for his education. At the age of eleven, Kathleen took Richard/Eugene to his father's apartment building, told him that he was not really George's son and left him to go upstairs to meet his real father. Eugene seemed delighted by his new father, and O'Neill and his wife Agnes liked Eugene. On his return Eugene told his mother that he was lucky to have two fathers.

O'Neill paid for Eugene to go to the Horace Mann School, a preparatory school in the Bronx, and his work there was excellent, though his masters described him as insecure and highly sensitive. He acted as if he was unwanted and illegitimate.

Eugene continued to visit O'Neill regularly and seemed to deify him. He got on well with O'Neill's two later children (Shane and Oona) during the visits. Eugene had a serious accident on his bike when he was fourteen which left him unconscious, but he recovered well. Eugene was soon writing poetry, and his father was rather proud of him. Eugene went to Yale University, was on the freshman rowing crew and did well in his studies. He published poetry in the student literary magazine, but he was rejected by the fraternities.

Meanwhile, his step-father had become an invalid, unable to work, and so his mother had taken a job on a newspaper on Long Island. His younger brother had fallen or had jumped from a doctor's office in Manhattan, and he took his death very hard. In the summer of 1930, O'Neill paid for Eugene to visit him in France and encouraged him to study the classics.

As a junior, Eugene won the Winthrop Prize for his knowledge of Greek and Latin poetry

and was accepted into Skull and Bones, the exclusive club for seniors. He also got permission from the university to marry, Elizabeth Green. As a senior Eugene won the Noyes Cutter Prize for translating the Greek New Testament into English as well as several other prizes. He decided to study for his doctorate at Yale and teach there. In 1932, he visited O'Neill in Georgia with his wife before going off to the University of Freiburg for a while. Eugene was very articulate and could discuss the classics with his father as an equal.

By age 33, Eugene had his doctorate in Greek, was an authority on Homer, and was teaching at Yale University. Random House had brought out two volumes of Greek plays translated by him. However, he had also been married and divorced three times.

In 1944, Eugene was living in Greenwich Village. The Navy rejected him because of his allergies and the Army because of the injuries from his childhood bicycle accident. He took a leave from Yale to work at a cable factory in New Haven and began to drink heavily.

At the end of the war, not wanting to return to Yale, he got a job as a radio announcer at WTIC in Hartford. He then moved back to Greenwich Village where he lived with Shane O'Neill, his half-brother.

Eugene did not get on well with O'Neill's third wife, Carlotta, and eventually decided to leave the city. He moved to Woodstock (New York) where he bought a piece of land with help from his father. Eugene's step-father died in February 1947 and his grandmother a year later, and these deaths seemed to upset him greatly. He worried about how his mother would support herself if he died (she still worked for the Long Island newspaper), and he took out a life insurance policy for $25,000 payable to her.

He stayed busy teaching, working in radio and television (he was a panel member on CBS's "Invitation to Learning" among other activities), but he was generally broke. In March 1947, he arrived slightly drunk, dressed in a frayed shirt and ill with the flu for a television broadcast. That ended his television career. He failed to arrive for lectures at Princeton University during his second term there and, when he did, he was unwashed, unshaven, drunk or with a hang-over. He was not asked to return.

For the next two years, living in Woodstock with a female friend (Ruth Lander), he tried to write regularly, made money from teaching and lecturing at small colleges (Fairleigh Dickinson College in New Jersey and the New School for Social Research in Manhattan). His drinking worsened, and he began to be violent to Ruth who decided to leave him. In 1950, he began to see other women and talked of marrying one (Flora Schriber, who thought he was looking for mother and father figures). He felt isolated from his father because of Carlotta's hostility toward him. The note for his house was coming due, and he feared losing the house.

That summer, though, he did act in the amateur theatricals in Woodstock. On Monday, September 18, 1950, he arranged to meet Flora the following Monday. However, he then called Ruth and tried to get her to marry him. That weekend, he drank a lot and looked somewhat crazed. On Monday morning, a neighbor saw his jeep in the yard. Surprised but scared, for he

should have been driving to New York for his class at the New School, she waited until the afternoon before entering the house accompanied by friends. They found Eugene inside the door, his hand stretched out as if for the doorknob, dead from cuts on his wrists and ankles. He had cut himself in the bathroom, stepped into the bath, gone to the telephone which had been cut off and then to the front door. A suicide note found under an empty whiskey bottle said: Never let it be said of an O'Neill that he failed to empty a bottle. *Ave Atque Vale*.

## Discussion

Bowen (1959) is writing a biography of O'Neill rather than his children, and so the information on Eugene is sparse. The discovery of his real father at the age of eleven must have been a great shock to Eugene, and his school masters noted the effect on him. He felt illegitimate, they said.

Bowen also skips over the period during which he began teaching at Yale University, went through three marriages and quit Yale. A great deal must have happened during this period which might throw light on his suicide.

His alcohol abuse seems similar to that of his father, but less extreme than the substance abuse of his half-brother, Shane. Eugene also seemed to adjust better to having a famous father than did Shane. However, Eugene was in crisis in 1950 with home, lover and work stress, and at the age of forty he was unable to cope. He injured himself lethally, and then appears to have sought help unsuccessfully. What would have happened to him had he been able to call for help or had that neighbor found him earlier in the day alive?

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# ULRIKE MEINHOF

**David Lester**

Ulrike Meinhof was one of the leading terrorists in Germany in the 1970s in West Germany who committed numerous bank robberies, assassinations and bomb attacks. She was eventually captured, but she committed suicide in prison before sentencing (Demaris, 1977).

## Early Years

Meinhof was born October 7, 1934, in Oldenburg. She lived, of course, through the violence of the Second World War. Her father, a museum director, died of cancer during the war when she was six years old. Her mother was an art teacher, and she attended a Roman Catholic parochial school. Her mother soon died too, and Meinhof was reared by a foster parent, Professor Renate Riemeck, who encouraged her academic studies and guided her toward a liberal political viewpoint.

Meinhof was a good student, and went to the University of Munich. While there, she got involved with the ban-the-bomb movement, one of the leaders of which was her foster-father. She also met Klaus Roehl who was the publisher of the magazine *Konkret* in Hamburg which had become the voice of the left-wing student movement. She started to write for the magazine, became its editor-in-chief and married Roehl. A year later she gave birth to twins. She became a celebrity as the outstanding and left-wing glamorous writer and television polemicist of the 1960s. Meinhof and Roehl had also travelled to East Germany and secured Communist funds to support the magazine, but the Communist Party gave them free rein over the contents of the magazine. Demaris describes the magazine as more *Playboy* than *Pravda*. In 1965, Meinhof developed a brain tumor, and a clamp had to be inserted into her brain to ease the pressure.

## Conversion

Meinhof began to tire of the words of protest, but she was still opposed to violence. Her young brother-in-law once pulled out a revolver in the woods and shot it, producing a hysterical fit in Meinhof and a mild nervous breakdown. She did not talk to her brother-in-law for a year. As her disgust with her way of life grew, she divorced Roehl and moved from Hamburg to West Berlin with her daughters. There, she joined the Ausser Parlamentarische Opposition (Extraparliamentary Opposition or APO), led by Rdui Dutschke (Red Rudy). The APO was anti-American, anti-Vietnam War, anti-imperialist, and anti-establishment. When members of the group firebombed two warehouses in April 1968 as a protest against the Vietnam War, Meinhof visited them in prison and was impressed by them, in particular, Andreas Baader, born in May 1943. Baader was a happy-go-lucky type with a criminal history, but he was able to move the group from theory into action. Together with Meinhof, they gradually assumed the leadership of the group which was named after them, the Baader-Meinhof Gang. Of the original twenty-two members, ten were women, and eight of the next twenty members were women. Baader was sentenced to three years for the fire-bombings but was released after serving nine months, pending final sentencing. He failed to return to the courts and began an underground existence.

Meinhoff continued to write and lecture, and her first "violent" act was to take some members of the gang and vandalize her ex-husband's house. The destroyed the furnishings, defaced the walls and urinated on the bed.

Baader was captured on April, 1970, but Meinhof and gang members attacked the guards who were transporting him one day with tear-gas and gunfire and freed him. Two guards and a librarian were injured, but lived. Two weeks later, Meinhof, Baader and a few other members went to Jordan to train at an al-Fatah Palestinian training camp. Returning to Germany, the wave of terror began in earnest -- eighty bombings and arson assaults in West Berlin alone in 1970, including three simultaneous bank robberies on September 29, 1970. A week later, all three banks were bombed. The radical left, including the Baader-Meinhof Gang, was responsible for 555 acts of terrorism in 1971. In one week in May, 1972, fifteen bombs exploded in West Germany, damaging the headquarters of the U.S. Fifth Army, the Augsburg Police Headquarters and the Munich Criminal Investigation Office. Demaris calls the Gang the most successful terrorists in Europe after the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland.

## Capture And Death

Baader was captured on June 1st, and Meinhof on June 15th after a "friend" gave her away to the authorities. Meinhof was kept in solitary confinement, with the lights permanently on, despite protests by her lawyers that this was cruel and inhuman treatment. She led three hunger strikes, for a month beginning January 1973, for seven weeks beginning May and for five months beginning September 1974 during which one of the prisoners died despite forced feeding. The major trial began in June 1975, despite protests over the fact the defense attorneys had been barred from the court and the new attorneys had no time to prepare. When the trial began, the prisoners refused to participate and were tried in absentia. The imprisonment and hunger strikes had weakened all of them. Meinhof was forgetful and had trouble articulating, concentrating and even perceiving clearly. She felt weak and had headaches, and she had lost twenty-eight pounds. Finally, on May 8, 1976, while the other members of the Gang were exercising, she hung herself with a white prison towel from the bars of her cell. The guards found her on Sunday.

## Comments

The critical life events from Meinhof's early life are the death of her father when she was six, and the death of her mother soon after. She also lived through the Second World War, with the persecution of millions of Germans by the Nazis in the years leading up to the war and the destruction wrought by the allied attacks. During the war Meinhof was five to eleven years old. Her life settled down until she suffered brain damage from a tumor at the age of thirty-one. This combination of early loss and possible brain damage is seen by most commentators as the critical factor in Meinhof's terrorist career.

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# CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN[8]

**David Lester**

Charlotte Gilman was a leading feminist of the late 19th and early 20th Century who comitted suicide in old age when dying of cancer. She was born Charlotte Perkins on July 3, 1860, in Hartford, Connecticut. Her father, Frederick Perkins, was a Beecher, probably the most famous family in America, with the first Beecher landing in Boston in 1637. He was not as successful as the typical Beecher, failing to graduate from Yale University and working as a librarian in addition to writing. He married a distant cousin, Mary Westcott, also with English roots, and they had three children, Thomas who died after a month, Thomas and finally Charlotte. After Charlotte's birth, his wife was told that she might die if she had another child, whereupon Frederick left the home. Mary had a fourth child in 1866 (after a visit from Frederick) who died after eight months. From 1863 to 1873, Mary and her two children stayed with assorted relatives or in rented rooms, mostly in New England. Mary divorced Frederick in 1873, whereupon the Beechers turned against her.

Frederick did not abandon his family. He visited and provided some financial support, but he was a distant figure for Charlotte. She missed him and was angry at him, but rarely permitted that anger to appear. Matters were made worse by the decision of her mother to withhold affection from her children so that they would suffer less from rejection later in life! Charlotte's older brother was rather mean to her, though they did become dependent on each other and had some good times together. Thomas tried various jobs in his life, failing at most, and his family was supported in part by Charlotte in his later life.

Charlotte first made a collection of her literary pieces when she was ten, but her mother disliked Charlotte engaging in fantasy and discouraged her from reading and from having friends. Luckily, after a couple of years, Charlotte disobeyed her mother. She did decide, however, to live with her mother and follow most of her rules until she was twenty-one. From age sixteen to twenty-one, Charlotte laid out a program for self-improvement for herself, including exercise. She had only four years of schooling, and none after the age of fifteen. She took care of her ailing mother and was often depressed and weary. Still, she did have friends with whom she played games almost every evening, and she visited relatives. She painted (and sold a little of her work), gave private lessons and taught art classes. She studied at the Rhode Island School of Design (against her mother's wishes) and took correspondence courses at home on a variety of academic subjects. She developed a close friendship with Martha Luther whom she met when she was seventeen which lasted until Martha married four years later, a loss which affected Charlotte deeply.

## A Disastrous First Marriage

Charlotte met Walter Stetson, a young artist born in March 1858, in January 1882. By the time Charlotte met him, he was well-respected, had some works accepted at exhibitions, and had

[8] This essay is based on Lane (1990).

attracted a few patrons. He proposed marriage after three weeks, but Charlotte hesitated for two years. Walter wanted a pure and loving traditional wife and, with much foreboding and anxiety, Charlotte finally married him in May 1884. A daughter, Katharine, was born in March 1885.

Charlotte lived a split life with Walter. At home she was deeply depressed and could barely function as wife or mother. At the same time, she managed to function much better away from home. She took a break way from her family with friends in Pasadena in the Winter of 1885 where she painted and wrote a play with her friend, Grace Channing, whom she had met in her teens in Providence. Back home in February 1887, her depression returned. Yet, she visited the gym and wrote a suffrage column for a local weekly newspaper in Providence. She also published several poems in the *Woman's Journal*.

In April 1887, she went into treatment in Philadelphia with Dr. Silas Mitchell who tried to give women a time-out from their stressful lives, but who wanted them to return to and enjoy their traditional role. Charlotte returned to Walter and felt even worse than before. She felt that she almost went insane. She and Walter decided to part and, after a year, Charlotte left (in September 1988) with her child for Pasadena.

In her two years in Pasadena, Charlotte earned money by giving art lessons, tutoring, lecturing and selling her writing. In the first year, she wrote 33 articles and 23 poems. She joined a theater group as actor and interior designer. She also began to be known as a social critic.

Walter visited in late 1889, and a relationship developed between him and Grace. Grace left to be with Walter on the East Coast in the fall of 1890, and she eventually married him in 1894. Charlotte missed Grace tremendously, and she sent her daughter to live with Grace and Walter in May 1894.

In 1891, Charlotte moved to Oakland, remaining in the area until 1895. During this period, her reputation as a writer and lecturer grew. She was known as a socialist and a feminist. Most of her lectures became journal articles and provided material for her books, and by the end of her life she had lectured on more than two hundred topics. While in Oakland, she briefly ran a journal Impress, published her first books of poems, and became active in a number of organizations. In her personal life she met (in May 1891) and perhaps became lovers with a woman, Adeline Knapp, a relationship which ended acrimoniously in early 1893. In 1891, her ailing mother came to live with Charlotte and soon developed cancer, and Charlotte was often exhausted with the demands made on her by personal and professional commitments. Charlotte filed for divorce in 1892 and was granted it in 1894, an event which made headline news. Her mother died in March 1893, but Charlotte's father had visited several times during her stay in Oakland and now kept in touch with his daughter, sometimes helping her out with money, and eventually marrying again more conventionally.

## The Mature Life

In 1895, at the age of thirty-five, Charlotte was now truly alone and independent. For the next five years, until her marriage in 1900, she traveled across America and abroad, lecturing

and writing. Her activity was interrupted by frequent depressive spells, but she learned to endure these periods knowing that her spirits would eventually revive.

Her first book on society's problems, *Women and Economics*, was published in 1898 to great acclaim. She followed this with a series of volumes: *Concerning Children*, *The Home*, *Human Work*, *The Man-Made World*, and *His Religion and Hers*. Although by modern standards, there are problems with her writing (for example, she was rather racist), her works were innovative and provocative, and her radical views received widespread attention. Her biographer, Lane (1990), claims that Gilman began a theory of gender and gendering, and she was also an ardent socialist. For seven years, from 1909 to 1916, she wrote and published a monthly magazine *Forerunner*, each issue of 32 pages and the total run equivalent to 28 books. Over her lifetime, she also wrote at least 186 pieces of fiction and 490 poems. Her fiction consisted both of realistic stories of women's lives and utopian visions.

In 1897, she visited a first-cousin, Houghton Gilman, born in 1867, whom she had known since childhood, a moderately successful lawyer in New York City, and they slowly fell in love and decided to marry. The decisive act did not take place until June 1900, and their relationship was stable and happy. Houghton appreciated the needs of his wife and her desire for a career and did all he could to facilitate it. They decided to not have children for fear of possible defects in their offspring due to their close genetic relationship.

As her life progressed, her depressions came less often, but her standing declined. After the First World War, her ideas were rather dated. Her books sold less well, and her lectures were less in demand. Charlotte became somewhat bitter in her final years about the relative indifference with which her ideas were met. Although she earned a reasonable income, she never was finanically comfortable, and Houghton earned too little from his legal work to make much difference.

Her relationship with her daughter grew closer, though they never discussed their feelings about the separation and Katharine remained angry at her mother's action, and Katharine spent time with both of her parents. After Katharine married, Charlotte and Houghton often helped out financially (as they did for Charlotte's brother too).

Charlotte and Houghton lived in New York City from 1900 to 1922, and then they moved to a home they inherited which they shared with Houghton's brother and his wife despite much friction between the two couples.

## Death

In 1932, Charlotte found out that she had inoperable and terminal breast cancer. Though she worried about how Houghton would live after her death, he died unexpectedly of a cerebral hemorrhage on May 4, 1934. She sold her share of the house to her brother-in-law and moved to Pasadena to be near her daughter. She rented a room and continued to busy herself with her causes and enjoyed being a grandmother. She gave lectures and, since she could persuade no one to write her biography, worked on her autobiography. She tried x-ray treatments for the cancer in

1934, but thereafter decided to let it take its course. She reluctantly took morphine for the pain in 1935 and finally informed Katharine about the illness in March 1935. Katharine insisted that her mother come and live with her, and Grace managed to find enough money to visit Charlotte for her final weeks.

By August 1935, Charlotte had revised her autobiography and finished the proofreading. Many years earlier, in the *Forerunner,* Charlotte had expressed her disapproval of suicide except when people are "beyond usefulness." Just prior to her death she was asked to contribute an article on euthanasia (which was published posthumously), in which she developed these ideas.

In August 1935, Charlotte told her family of her plans, and on August 17 1935 she killed herself by inhaling chloroform, a methods she had described in the *Forerunner* article in 1912 as in "good taste."

## Comment

Charlotte Gilman survived a nervous breakdown during her first marriage and periodic depressions throughout her life, but she seems to have not been seriously suicidal until her progressve cancer in old age. Having nursed her mother through a death from cancer, she decided, probably rationally, that a premature death was a sensible choice.

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# GEORG FRIEDRICH LIST

**David Lester**

Friedrich List was born in Reutlingen in Würtemberg, on August 6, 1789. His father was a prosperous tanner and held public office, first in the old free city and later under the Würtemberg regime. Georg Friedrich List was the second son and youngest child of the large family. At the age of 14, he went to work in the tannery under his older brother, but he hated the work. At the age of 17, his father allowed him to leave the tannery to enter the Würtemberg government bureacracy where he worked his way up the ranks. At 23 he was posted to Tübingen and, while there, he attended university lectures.

Success in examinations gave List a position in the Chancery. He soon became Secretary to the Minister in Local Government, Chief Examiner of Accounts and a member of the Court of Audit.

His father died in 1813, his mother in 1815 after being publicly insulted by a government official, and his brother in an accident in the same year. In 1816, List was appointed Secretary for a Commission to look into proposals for reforming the bureaucracy, and he annoyed the members by inserting his own ideas.

## His Early Ideas

His reformist zeal led to his first article, on local government. There was a movement to instruct civil servants in the theoretical principles of government, and List was made the holder of the first Chair of Administration and Politics at the University of Tübingen. Though ill-trained as a Professor, List worked hard preparing lectures which were full of propaganda, supporting the reforms of his Minister Wangenheim. He published these ideas and, with some friends, founded a paper, *Volksfreund aus Schwaben*, which was suppressed after the fall of Wangenheim who supported List. While teaching at Tübingen, List married a young widow, the daughter of a fellow Professor. Caroline Neidhart had one son by her first husband and four children with List.

List began to develop his ideas at this time. He realized that Germany would prosper if the state tariffs which restricted trade between the different regions were abolished. He urged the formation of a national customs and commercial union, imposing tariffs only against foreign products. Visiting Frankfurt, he met with merchants and manufacturers who were thinking along the same lines, and he helped them form a Union of German Merchants of which he was made Organizer or "Konsulent".

The Würtemberg government disapproved of this activity in a "foreign" state and, after hearing List's defense, dismissed him, leaving him free to pursue the union of Germany.

The Union of Merchants failed at first to move any of the state governments. List founded a new magazine, *The German Industrial and Commercial Magazine*, advocating such ideas as a postal system and patent law for the whole of Germany, ideas which were not put into

action until twenty years after List's death. List travelled widely to spread his ideas, including a visit to Austria. However, the members of the Union of Merchants found List to be too caught up in his far-reaching plans for Germany and not enough concerned with their own immediate concerns. At the Commercial Congress in Darmstadt in 1820, his union chose someone else to represent them, and List withdrew from work with the union. Nonetheless, some alliances began to form between the states, until by 1834, most of the states were members of a German Zollverein or commercial union.

List meanwhile had re-involved himself with the politics of Würtemberg. He was elected as a deputy to the assembly by the town of Reutlingen, and he joined the opposition. He proposed several reforms which led the government to charge him with sedition. In 1822, he was fined and sentenced to ten months in prison. To avoid the sentence, he and his family left the state. He travelled to Paris, where he met Lafayette who urged List to go to America with him, to England and to Switzerland. In Basle, he got into arguments with the town authorities and was put in prison for twenty-four hours. Hoping that he had been forgiven by Würtemberg, he returned, but he was arrested and forced to serve his sentence. He was then expelled (in April, 1825), and he decided to take his family to America. They arrived in New York in June and went immediately to Philadelphia.

List bought some property near Harrisburg, but his zeal could not make up for his lack of expertise in farming, and he soon abandoned the property. He moved to Reading and began a German-American newspaper, *Der Adler*. The debate about tariffs was raging in America at the time, and a Convention was planned at Harrisburg in July, 1827. List was encouraged to write papers in favor of protectionism. His twelve pieces appeared first in the *Philadelphia National Journal* and were reprinted in other newspapers and later collected together in book form under the tile *Outlines of a New System of Political Economy*.

List received great acclaim for this work, and the Pennsylvania Society employed him to work on their political agenda. List's plans for a major book on the American Economy never materialized. However, he discovered a coal mine in the Little Schuylkill valley which he bought and which provided him with income for several years. To help move the coal, he and his business partners built a small railroad (which opened in 1831). Soon List was convinced that railways were critical to the future industrial success of nations, and he spent most of the rest of his life trying to persuade governments to build railroads.

## Railroads And Germany

List wrote immediately to Germans about his new ideas and published articles on railroads. He had tried and failed to get an academic post in America, but he persuaded President Jackson to give him a diplomatic post for America in Europe, where he also hoped to create a market for American anthracite. List arrived back in Europe in November 1830. Although the US Senate refused to ratify his diplomatic post in Hamburg, he was given a post in Leipzig in 1831, and his family joined him there.

His time was spent writing articles for a new *Staaats-Lexicon* on political and economic

issues and arguing for railroads. His ideas were seen as wild and visionary, but despite these doubts, his proposal for a railroad between Leipzig and Dresden was accepted, and work begun in 1835. The first part of the line opened in 1837.

Soon, one of his magazines (*The Railroad Journal*) was suppressed in Austria, and revenues fell from his coal mine in America. Difficulties arose over his diplomatic post, and the Leipzig-Dresden railroad company failed to pay him the remuneration he thought he deserved. Both Metternich and the Austrians tried to thwart List's progress and, though he was received back in Würtemberg warmly, he was refused citizenship.

In 1837, List left for France and Belgium to persuade the Belgians to build a railroad. He wrote a book on his ideas for a prize in France, writing throughout the nights with little sleep, but failed to win the prize. His family joined him in Paris in 1938, and he continued to write prolifically. His only son joined the French army, but died in 1840 of malaria. List was heart-broken. Refusing government employment in France, he returned to Leipzig.

He was given an honorary doctorate from the University of Jena and a gift of money from the Thuringian Railway Company, and he continued to work on the *Staats-Lexicon*. He travelled widely, including England, Austria and Hungary where he was received warmly. Tributes now poured in.

But at this point, his physical problems grew worse, he was constantly attacked by opponents of his ideas, and his depressions were growing more severe. He tried rest cures, though still writing, but friends noted that his irritability had left him. He now complained of pains in his head and insomnia.

In November, 1846, he left his family for a rest in the Tyrol, at Kufstein. He booked into the cheapest room he could find, ate little, and spent much time in bed. He left the inn on November 30th and shot himself outside of the town. In his suicide note he complained of pains in his body and head and talked of his anxiety over his low income. He said that he was on the brink of despair.

## Discussion

Hirst's biography of List is not lengthy, and much information that we would like to know is omitted. However, List may have suffered from a bipolar affective disorder or perhaps a cyclothymic personality disorder. He showed both tremendous bursts of energy, in which he accomplished a great deal, and depressions.

He was also a genius, foreseeing future national goals but failing to persuade governments to implements his plans to achieve these goals. Eventually, after Lists' death, Germany was united commercially and politically. Railroads were indeed tremendously important to commerce. Ironically, the eventual German railroad system was almost identical to that proposed by List years earlier. But, ahead of his time, List was persecuted politically by the governments of his own country.

Interestingly, Americans saw his value, as did the French. A true cosmopolitan, List settled in several nations and could have stayed in all of them. Yet, his manic phases were accompanied by irritability at others who failed to agree with his ideas and implement them, and his abrasiveness and visionary ideas alienated others.

The loss of his son was traumatic for List, but his wife and daughters remained important, and his concerns for their future welfare caused him additional stress. Just as his reputation increased and rewards were beginning to arrive, his depression worsened, and he lost the energy to continue. He killed himself while away from his family, perhaps to spare them pain, but alone, whereas their company might have helped him continue.

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# ABBIE HOFFMAN

## David Lester

Abbie's ancestors were Russian Jews, named Shapoznikoff, from an area near Kiev ("The Pale"). Abbie's father arrived in 1906 at the age of one, getting the name Hoffman from an uncle who had obtained papers in that name. John Hoffman worked in his uncle's drugstore, studied at night for a degree in pharmacy and started a wholesale distributorship of medical supplies. Abbie's mother was born in Clinton, Massachusetts, near Worcester; her father was a wrecker, and her mother worked in a sweatshop. She worked as a secretary, met John at a bowling alley and married him in 1935.

Abbie was born on November 30, 1936; a younger brother was born in 1939 and sister in 1941. Abbie liked to be the center of attention (and had asthma attacks when not), and was healthy, active and mischievous. (At the age of thirteen, the police accused him of changing around the license plates of neighborhood cars.) Jews were a tiny minority in Worcester, and Abbie's parents were not strict. They did not participate in the larger Jewish community of America, and Abbie grew up feeling "American" and was never defensive about his Jewish identity. John Hoffman was a civic booster for Worcester, and had high standing the in Worcester community. He died in 1974, shortly after Abbie went undergound, feeling that his son had let him down.

Abbie liked sports, both playing and watching, and he and his father supported the Boston Red Sox and Holy Cross College teams. He excelled at tennis and was a champion at yo-yo tricks. Abbie showed no interest in politics or social issues. In his teenage years, perhaps in rebellion, Abbie hung out with the local Irish and Italian youths, playing pool and poker and dating gentile girls. He became a "hood". Nevertheless, he got good grades at school (Seaver Prep, a public junior high school for the gifted, and then Classical High) and read voraciously the books he borrowed from the public library. He also helped his father out in his business and was a good salesman. In June, 1953, a tornado hit the Worcester area, and Abbie worked through the night ordering medical supplies and distributing them to the Red Cross and local authorities.

As a sophomore, he wrote a paper defending atheism, had an argument with the teacher about it, and hit the teacher when he called Abbie a communist bastard. He was suspended, but enrolled at the Worcester Academy, a private boarding school. He graduated in June 1995, and went to Brandeis University.

## College And Marriage

In 1955, Brandeis was a university seven years old, founded by Jews. It had attracted many left-wing professors who had escaped Joseph McCarthy's witch hunts, partly because McCarthy did not want to appear to be anti-semitic. Abbie initially planned to become a physician, but a course from Abraham Maslow, a leading humanistic psychologist, led Abbie to major in psychology. Maslow became an idol for Abbie.

At Brandeis, Abbie identified with the bohemian crowd, but did not abandon his love of sports and gambling. He also earned eighty dollars a week selling subs to the other students at night in the dormitories. Abbie graduated in June 1959, and while there he had heard visiting lectures from Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day and Saul Alinsky. But Maslow remained Abbie's hero, and Abbie set out to become self-actualized. Only later did he focus on the political implications of Maslow's ideas (as Betty Friedan did for feminism).

Abbie first studied psychology for a year at the University of California at Berkely, and he continued his undergraduate life-style -- studying, shooting pool, and operating a travel club. However, Abbie's year there did get him involved in political issues (a fight over ROTC on campus, protests against the execution of Caryl Chessman, and a local hearing by the House Committee on Un-American Activities [HUAC]), and these involvements interested him in activism.

Abbie's girlfriend, Sheila Karklin, visited him at Berkeley and got pregnant. They married in the summer of 1960, eventually having two children together. He got a job as a staff psychologist at Worcester State Hospital (though he did not have a master's degree). He quickly began to get involved in activism. The local ACLU chapter hired him to travel around Massachusetts with a film about the HUAC defending the anti-HUAC position. After trying to run a movie theater for "good movies", Abbie got a job in sales for a pharmaceutical company, and helped in H. Stuart Hughes's campaign for the US Senate.

Abbie became friendly with a local priest, Father Bernard Gilgun, and Abbie and Sheila were caught up by his activism. Abbie established regular Friday meetings where speakers led discussions on social issues attended by hundreds. Abbie and Sheila involved themselves in local civil rights activity (they energized the local NAACP chapter). Sheila organized the first peace demonstrations, and Abbie started a newsletters, *The Drum*. Abbie was a whirlwind in the community, involving himself in everything, but he never stayed with any project. Abbie did not want power; he wanted action.

Abbie and Sheila supported the work of black activists in the South, raising money for them, and trying (unsuccessfully) to get the alternative delegation from Mississippi admitted to the Democratic convention in Atlantic City in 1964. In 1965, Abbie and Sheila went to the South to work with the freedom fighters. When he came back north, Abbie helped the southern blacks market and sell their locally-made products in retail outlets in the North. In 1966, he was fired from his job, and his marriage broke up. Abbie decided to move to New York City.

## The Yippies

In New York, Abbie devoted himself to social causes, also writing about them which added to his growing reputation. Abbie quickly met and fell in love with a young woman, a graduate of Goucher College, with a master's degree in psychology, and they moved in together (and were married in 1967). Abbie also got involved in the hippie culture. He smoked marijuana and took acid, and he lived in the East Village with the hippies. Abbie then decided that he could turn the rebellion of the hippies in a political direction.

He began by developing a support network for the hippies -- raising seed money for projects, running a newsletter, providing bail and legal aid, free food, free clothes, etc. Abbie also decided to develop the idea formulated by others of using theater in protests. To protest the traffic on St. Marks Place, Abbie and others transformed the place into a dance stage and pedestrian mall one evening. The next week they "planted" a tree in the road and danced. Abbie took free old clothes to Macy's and "gave them away" and, in one of his most famous exploits, in 1967 threw one dollar bills into the trading floor at the New York Stock Exchange from the visitors' balcony, with the result that the traders on the floor fought over the money.

Starting in 1967, Abbie became more involved in the effort to stop the war in Vietnam. Working with hippies, Abbie devised guerrilla theater. He led a group in a Loyalty Parade, with flowers and "LOVE" signs, and was attacked by the groups supporting the Johnson administration. His group received as much media attention as the "loyal" groups. In late 1967, as part of the protest in Washington, DC, against the war, Abbie led an "exorcism" of the Pentagon and tried to levitate it.

These exploits led up to the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968. Abbie and others organized themselves as "Yippies", nominated a pig for President, and planned a series of protests. However, the authoritarian mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley, refused to issue permits for convocations and parades or for the protesters to sleep in the parks. He also called out the National Guard and had them and the Chicago police officers attack and beat the protesters. Many, including Abbie, were arrested. Although, of course, many Americans approved of the acts of the authorities in Chicago, others were outraged. The brutality of the authorities, which the Democratic candidate for President, Hubert Humphrey, supported, contributed to Humphrey's defeat in the election. Abbie, having exposed the brutality of the authorities, considered the events a great victory for the movement.

It was here, in the midst of confrontations with other protesters and the authorities, that his biographer, Jezer (1992) notes that Abbie was, for the first time, occasionally out-of-control and in a manic phase. It was also now that the police, including the FBI, began their continuous surveillance of Abbie. They interrogated him a number of times, tapped his telephone calls and broke into his offices.

Back in New York, Abbie found it hard to keep the movement going. Some of his associates dropped out to start rural communes; others turned to environmental issues. Abbie's book, *Revolution For The Hell Of It*," published in 1968 kept Abbie in the spotlight. MGM bought the movie rights (though the movie was never made), and Abbie gave the money ($25,000) to the Black Panther bail fund.

One of Abbie's achievements was to end the public hearings of the HUAC. The committee ordered Abbie to Washington, DC, for questioning. Abbie dressed himself in a shirt made out of the American flag. The police tried to arrest him on the Capitol steps but tore the shirt, all of which was captured by television. The committee suspended hearings, tried to resume them a month later, but never again organized a public hearing.

At Woodstock, Abbie failed to organize any Yippie events, but he saw that the volunteer effort needed organizing and took over. For example, he helped organize a medical station and printed survival bulletins. On his return to New York, he wrote *Woodstock Nation*.

On March 20, 1969, Abbie along with seven others, were indicted in a Chicago federal court for their "crimes" during the Democratic convention. Abbie took the lead in creating the public image for the group, though the judge, Julius Hoffman, was so inept that he made it easy for the defendants. For example, when the Black Panther, Bobbie Seale, insisted on defending himself, the judge ordered Seale bound and gagged in court, until finally separating his trial from that of the others. However, Abbie and the rest of the Chicago Seven, also heckled and pulled pranks on the judge, goading him until he lost control. The trial began in late September, 1969, and the jury began its deliberations on February 14, 1970. After four days they were deadlocked, but the judge forced some decisions from them. The judge sentenced the defendants to five years in prison and five thousand dollar fines. They spent two weeks in jail before their appeals led to their release. In 1972, the court of appeals threw out most of the contempt-of-court citations, and later overturned all of the convictions. In 1973, a reduced number of contempt charges were upheld and the defendants sentenced to the time already served.

Abbie was now in demand for public talks at a thousand dollars a time, a celebrity, a symbol of the polarized society, loathed by many and extolled by others. The FBI followed him everywhere, planted hostile stories in the press and tried to prevent his speaking engagements. The capitalists tried to take him over -- to hire him as a youth consultant for their marketing departments or to make Abbie Hoffman dolls. He refused.

However, it proved to be difficult for Abbie to find a focus, and in early 1970 he and Anita were demoralized and talked of going into exile to Cuba. Nixon's invasion of Cambodia in April and the murder of Kent State University students by the National Guard galvanized them. After the New York City police raided a gay bar in Greenwich Village in June 1969 which led to violent protests by the gay community, gay causes were a growing concern, and the feminist movement was also growing.[9] Abbie wrote a book entitled *Steal This Book*, which contained advice on how to get things for free, both legally and illegally. No publisher would accept it, and he was forced to publish it himself. 100,000 copies were sold in the first four months! Nevertheless Abbie began to feel unappreciated and put upon. He lacked a good support network, and he had organized no business. He had no staff, no press agent and little money. He loved fame, while despising himself for loving it. He was good at public theater, but had no desire to go into the legitimate theater. Working in advertising or consultancy would have violated his principles, and public office held no charm. Anita, tired of her identity as Abbie's wife, left him for Long Island, though Abbie visited and stayed with her and their child often. It was on Long Island that Abbie began using cocaine, and that gave him the idea to make some money with a cocaine deal.

[9] Incidentally, Abbie was supportive to both movements, after seeming both homophobic and sexist in past talks and writing.

Abbie made no secret about his plans, and the arrangements were amateurish. He was arrested during the deal. As his friends and lawyers tried to work on his behalf, raising funds and trying to control the damage to Abbie's reputation, Abbie decided to jump bail and go underground. In February, 1974, after a speech in Atlanta, he disappeared. His support network helped him, and the danger was not that the police would find him, but rather that Abbie himself might be so reckless that he would give away his identity.

In the summer of 1974, he went to Mexico and fell in love with Johanna Lawrenson. He considered going to Israel, gave an interview to Top Value Television (shown on Public Television in May, 1975), and was interviewed for the *Playboy* issue of May, 1976. As the date for this issue grew closer, Abbie had his second manic episode since going underground.[10] He thought that his friends had betrayed him, and he fled to Montreal where he ran up huge bills at the hotel by calling people in America. (A friend had to go up there to pay his hotel bill.) He developed grandiose plans, was very paranoid, and walked around carrying a hunting knife. A friend in Montreal introduced him to a psychiatrist who, unfortunately, was opposed to medication. Eventually, Johanna got him back to America and settled down on one of the Thousand Islands in the St. Lawrence Seaway.

## Life As Barry Freed And Death

Abbie passed himself off as Barry Freed, a free-lance writer, and at first he finished his autobiography for publication. He and Johanna travelled to Europe, Mexico and Los Angeles, and Abbie threw a party for himself at the Felt Forum at Madison Square Garden. In 1980, he was examined by a psychiatrist in Los Angeles who diagnosed Abbie as having a bipolar affective disorder and prescribed lithium. Thereafter, Abbie was much more stable psychologically, as long as he took the medication. However, since it upset his stomach, he often refused to take it which brought back his manic and depressive moods.

He quickly became involved in a community effort to prevent the St. Lawrence Seaway from being kept open all year. Starting in 1978, Abbie helped organize the groups, and this time he attended to all of the tasks that need to be done to accomplish such a goal. He got people involved, set up a sound financial basis, co-opted all kinds of groups even though they might disagree on other issues, lobbied the right people, etc, and he did this behind the scenes since it was still dangerous for Abbie/Barry to become the center of media attention.

Toward the end of 1980, Abbie began to consider surrendering to the police and, once the decision was made, he turned it into a media event. Barbara Walters was given the story, and she announced it on ABC's national news on September 3, 1980. He pleaded guilty to a lesser charge and was scheduled for sentencing in April 1981. He was sentenced to three years in prison -- he served two months in maximum security and ten months in a New York City drug rehabilitation program.

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[10] The first was a year earlier when the police found his car in Boston, after which he fled to Las Vegas, where he "freaked out."

He was quite active in prison (for example, teaching English to the Spanish-speaking prisoners) and at the center (where he worked as a counselor). After parole, however, Abbie again had difficulty finding a cause on which to focus his energies. A project to combine the myriad community groups to protect the Great Lakes failed, but in December, 1982, Abbie was given the opportunity to help prevent a pumping station being built to siphon off water from the Delaware River to cool a nuclear power plant. In a few days, he devised a strategy to halt the impending construction, and again he organized the local groups to defeat the project -- which they did in a referendum in May, 1983.[11] Abbie stopped taking his lithium during this period of activity, and his mania soon returned. He became paranoid and violent, and his friends could not calm him down. He resigned from the local group (and the St. Lawrence Seaway group too), returned to New York, where his mania crested in April, to be followed by a severe depression. He attempted suicide with 75 Restorils, but survived after being taken to Bellevue Hospital.

This experience motivated him to work on bipolar affective disorder. He attended psychiatric conferences and started self-help groups for people like himself. He continued to take his lithium for two years, but in 1985 he switched to self-medication, using valium to neutralize his mania and antidepressants for the depressions. However, on this regimen, he still suffered from mood swings, though they were not as severe as before.

Abbie spent 1984 to 1989 doing what he had tried to do earlier in his life, foment a youth rebellion, giving some sixty speeches a year. He tried to start a National Student Organization. Abbie himself was unacceptable to many of the students involved, and he worked for this goal through a group of students who respected him at Rutgers University. However, the resulting organization did not achieve much -- there were no galvanizing issues to motivate the students.

He got involved with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, making five trips there. He was arrested with Amy Carter (President Carter's daughter) at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst protesting CIA recruiters on campus. At this trial, Abbie worked with the system and defended his group successfully -- the jury acquitted them.

In 1987, he returned to Pennsylvania to fight the pumping station project again, but this time his group lost. He decided to stay in the area. On June 16, 1988, he was driving to Newark airport to hand-deliver an article to *Playboy* on the possibility that President Reagan had struck an arms-for-hostages deal with Iran, when his careless driving led to a severe crash in which he lost consciousness. He refused treatment, made his flight to Chicago in order to deliver his article only to find out that *Playboy* objected to some of it. They planned to print only the part that had adequate documentation. He collapsed after returning to New York and was treated for a broken leg, broken rib, punctured kidney and two broken fingers!

The injuries healed slowly, and the pain was quite bad. He also fell into the severest depression since his suicide attempt six years earlier. Although he was planning more college speeches and was exploring the possibility of an academic teaching position, the depression worsened. By February, 1989, he felt he was losing control. He tried Prozac, but it did not seem

[11] The pumping station was, however, approved in 1987.

to help. On April 12, Johanna and other friends telephoned his apartment but could get no answer. They called his landlord who found Abbie dead. He had taken about 150 phenobarbitals and washed them down with alcohol. His first attempt failed because he forgot the alcohol. This time, he remembered.

Abbie Hoffman, who had spent his adult life using the media to promote his causes, died a very private death.

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# MARINA TSVETAEVA

**David Lester**

Marina's father, Ivan Tsvetaev, was a scholar and academic, and worked much of his life establishing the museum now known as the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, which opened in 1912. He had two children, Valeria and Andrey, by his first wife who died young and then married Maria Aleksandrovna Meyn, and had two daughters, Marina and Anastasia (Asya).

Marina was born on September 26 (old style[12]), 1892, and Asya two years later. Her mother was reserved and unaffectionate and subjected the family to a Spartan existence, but she was devoted to her daughters whom she hoped would realize the dreams she had not been able to. They were given governesses, books, and toys. They learned three languages, were given music lessons and were taken to the theater. However, they rarely visited other families and hardly ever played with other children. Summers were spent in the country, at Tarusa, a semi-rural town in Kaluga Province.

Marina grew up proud but shy, stubborn and headstrong, and possessive. Early in life, she came to love literature, and she read every book she could find. Although her mother wanted Marina to become a pianist, Marina soon was drawn to verse, which her mother saw as an "infantile illness."

In 1902, Marina's mother became ill with tuberculosis. The family moved to Italy for her health, and Valeria took over the task of running the family. Marina, free for the first time, played with other children and behaved more like a typical child. Marina and Asya were sent for a year to a boarding school in Lausanne, where Marina was captivated by Catholicism. The next summer was spent in Germany with their mother, followed by a year in a German boarding school. The family then moved back to Russia, to Yalta on the Black Sea, where Marina's mother died in July, 1906. Marina was thirteen. Two months later her father had a stroke, though he lived until 1913.

Back in Moscow, the family survived with a succession of housekeepers. Marina was expelled from school after a year because of her "revolutionary" ideas, and she "retired" from school after the seventh grade. She came to know Lev Lvovich Kobylinky (Ellis), a young poet who introduced her to contemporary poetry (and proposed to her when she was seventeen) and to Moscow literary circles. She brought out her first book of poems privately in 1910 with his encouragement, which proved to be a great success and which was reviewed warmly, and she was included in an anthology of Russian poets in 1911. At seventeen, she started smoking and drinking, hiding this from her father.

Toward the end of 1910, Marina may have tried to commit suicide. The memoirs of her sister Asya imply that Marina was lonely and had just been hurt from a romance with Vladimir Nilender, a poet. She seems to have written a suicide note and perhaps thought of shooting

[12] which was 12 days behind the Gregorian calendar at the time.

herself during a performance of *L'Aiglon*, starring Sarah Bernhardt in Moscow, a play which Marina had translated into Russian.

## Marriage And The Civil War

In 1911, while staying at Koktebel, a village in the Crimea which many artists visited, Marina met Seryozha (Sergey) Efron, a year younger than herself. Although she came from a conservative and loyalist family and he from a revolutionary family[13], they fell in love. He was a writer too (a book of stories by Sergey was published in 1912) and suffered intermittently from tuberculosis. They married in January, 1912.

That same year, Marina won a prize in the Pushkin competition of the Society for Free Aesthetics, and she published her second collection of poems. Her father's museum opened that year with the Emperor Nicholas II in attendance, and Marina had a daughter, Ariadna (Alya) in September.

The Efrons were living in a house in Moscow bought with money given to them as wedding gift. Marina liked it because it resembled the Tsvetaev house she had lived in up until that time. Marina brought her daughter Alya up in much the same way as her own mother had raised her, and Alya was writing poetry by the age of seven and exchanging letters with adult friends. Like Marina, Alya had no children as friends.

The first three years after their marriage were serene. Sergey studied further as external student and worked with local theaters. He had a brief spell of sickness, and then the First World War began. At first, the war did not affect the Efrons (Sergey was still studying at the university). The crisis in their life came from Marina's affair with a poet, Sofia Parnok who was a lesbian, which lasted eighteen months. This affair seems to have taught Marina that nothing was forbidden, that she was a sinner who would sin again. For the rest of her life she had numerous affairs with men, all of which fueled her poetry, and some of which threatened her marriage with Sergey, though they never broke up. Sergey had been working in a hospital for part of the time of Marin'a lesbian affair, and in 1917 he was called up despite his poor health. Marina gave birth to her second daughter. Irina, in April, 1917, and soon Efron was fighting to defend the Kremlin against the Bolsheviks. Defeated, the Efrons fled to the Crimea, but Marina returned to Moscow in November, 1917, while Sergey went to fight for the White army.

Back in Moscow, life was hard. Marina gradually sold her possessions in order to buy the necessities of life, and the family grew poorer by the day. She managed to write, she got involved with the theater, writing a number of plays, and she had affairs. But gradually the difficulty of day-to-day existence grew enormously. By the end of 1919, Marina had sold everything she could, and the struggle to find food consumed her every moment. She worked for six months in the "Information Department of the Commissariat for Affairs of the Nationalities," which paid a small wage and provided her with a ration card, but she could not stand the job.

[13] His mother was arrested in 1880 and 1906, escaped abroad with her son, Kostya, who was two years younger than Sergey. Kostya hung himself in Paris in 1910, and, in despair, his mother hung herself the same night.

Marina's upbringing had not prepared her for compromise. (Indeed, even her writings and conversations clearly showed her support for the Whites. Such an uncompromizing attitude was rare.) She quit, telling her sister that she would rather hang herself than work at the mind-numbing senseless work of the department.[14] In desperation, she placed both daughters in an orphanage.

Irina had always been a sickly child, and the deprivations after the civil war had not helped. She could hardly walk and barely talk. Marina was indifferent to her, in contrast to her crushing love of Alya (and later her son Mur). When she and Alya went out, Marina tied Irina to a chair so that she would not fall. The orphanage was supplied with food from the American Relief Administration, and so it seemed a good idea to place both her daughters there. After a month, Marina found Alya severely ill, and she took her away to recover. She left Irina there, and she died in February, 1920. Although, Sergey's sisters had offered to take Irina home, Marina eventually displaced the blame for Irina's death from herself to them. Shocked by events, some of Marina's friends with connections obtained a ration card for her, and Alya slowly recovered.

In 1921, after their defeat, much of the White army was evacuated to Turkey. Marina had received no news of Sergey until late in 1920 when she heard rumors that he was alive. Still fearing that he had died, Marina told friends that she had no desire to continue living if he was dead, but then, in July, 1921, she received a letter from him. Sergey was in Constantinople. She began to seek permission to leave Russia to go Prague where Sergey had relocated. After many delays and frustrations, Marina and Alya left Russia in May, 1922, arriving in Berlin on May 17th.

## Life As An Emigré

Marina lived in Berlin for only two and a half months, but she was immediately part of the emigré literary scene and had a passionate affair with Boris Bugaev (Andrey Bely), a poet, so that, when Sergey came from Prague to see his wife, he had to deal with her extramarital passion. Typically, the affair lasted only six weeks, and then Marina left for Prague where Sergey had obtained a grant to study at Charles University. Marina arrived in August, and the Efrons moved to a small village outside of Prague. Czechoslovakia gave Russian scholars a monthly grant, and the Efrons survived for the most part on this during their stay in Czechoslovakia.

The life of the Efrons in Czechoslovakia 1922 to 1925 and France from 1925 to 1937 was taken up with literary activity, with Marina writing, translating and editing, and with Efron editing and managing emigré literary magazines and journals. They were always short of money, and their marriage was always troubled by Marina's affairs. Their marriage survived, however, though an affair in 1923 with Konstantin Rodzevich seriously threatened it. Marina was tempted to leave Sergey, and he was tempted to leave her. However, Rodzevich seems to have been overwhelmed by the intensity of Marina's passion and ended the relationship. Marina and Efron

[14] The work involved summarizing newspaper articles, summaries that no-one ever read.

seem to have decided that they were bound together, that each could not live (or survive) without the other.

A third child, the son Marina longed for, was born in February, 1925. Georgy (Mur) was spoiled by his mother and, though she adored him, most of her friends considered him a "monster." He grew to be handsome, intelligent and well-educated. Despite the fact that his mother idolized him (or because of this), Mur grew much closer to his father in his adolescence.

The Efron's life in Paris eventually became unpleasant and then impossible. Marina was not an easy person to get along with, and the number of her enemies grew yearly. Her poetry was criticized and, though most of her work was published, she published only one book during her fourteen years in France (in 1928 with the help of a rich patron). She turned to writing essays, and the ideas expressed in them increased the number of her critics. Money was always a problem, and Marina tried translations as a way of supplementing the family's income and running literary evenings at which she read her works. Sergey was never a major source of income. The family survived mainly by monthly grants from a rich patron (Saloneya Andronikova) who sent Marina 300 francs a month of her own money and tried to raise more from her friends. The Efrons moved to cheaper and cheaper apartments, and Marina economized on everything except her children's education.

Alya eventually came to resent the domination of her mother over her life, and family arguments grew more frequent. Furthermore, Sergey and both children became more supportive of the Soviet government, and in the 1930s, the family began to discuss the possibility of moving back to the Soviet Union. Sergey first applied for a Soviet passport in 1932 but was refused. He then began working for the Soviet government as an agent. Alya was able to leave for the Soviet Union in 1937. Soon after this, Sergey was implicated in the murder of Ignaty Reyss, a Soviet agent in Switzerland. After interrogation by the French police, Sergey managed to escape to the Soviet Union.

Marina was now alone with Mur in France. She still hated the communist government in the Soviet Union and had no strong desire to return. But her daughter and husband were now there. Marina's romantic affairs were becoming rare, for men were no longer attracted to her as before, even for brief affairs. And now that her husband had been exposed as a Soviet agent, she was an outcast in the emigré community. Former friends shunned her, and she could get nothing published. The growing preparations for the Second World War also made life in free Europe less attractive. She returned to the Soviet Union on June 18, 1939, after seventeen years abroad.

## Home And Death

Marina returned with no celebration -- she was merely the wife of a Soviet agent who had been exposed. Some friends from the old days were too afraid to have anything to do with her. She had no formal papers and no work. At first, Marina, Sergey, Alya and Mur lived in a dacha provided by the government.

Nine weeks after Marina returned, Alya was arrested, and Marina joined the women who spent hours in lines waiting to hand parcels to loved ones in prison. Six weeks later Sergey was arrested. Marina never saw them again.[15] Marina and Mur were ordered to leave the dacha and, with the help of Boris Pasternak, Marina was assigned to a village with a writers' colony. She was permitted food, but had to pay for rooms. Mur was able to go to school.

Marina quickly found that hardly anyone liked her poetry. Her style was not in line with the current trends, and her former work was too often anti-Soviet. However, for five months she earned some money doing translations and editing. Again with Pasternak's help, she was given a permit and a room in Moscow. She continued to work on translations, and her parcels for Alya and Sergey were accepted -- which meant they were still alive. She tried to publish a book, but it was rejected for being of poor quality and anti-Soviet.

She wrote almost nothing new during her final years in the Soviet Union. Her biographer sees this as a stage in her eventual suicide, for she had told a friend in France that, if she could not write in the Soviet Union, she would kill herself. Then, in 1941, the war began to encroach upon her life. The German army was invading the Soviet Union, and Marina became desperate to be evacuated. They managed to find places in Elabuga, but Marina tried to get a permit to go on to Christopol.

Even though her permit for Christopol was granted, and she was offered a job as a washer-up in the writer's canteen there, there was little for Marina to live for. She did not want to wash dishes for a living. Her relationship with Mur was deteriorating, and she felt that he would be beter off in the Soviet Union on his own. On August 31, 1941, fourteen days after arriving in Elabuga, Marina hung herself in the home of her landlords.

## Reference

Schweitzer, V. (1993). *Tsvetaeva*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

[15] Though Sergey was executed in 1941, Alya survived. In the 1960s after seventeen years in Stalin's prisons, Alya went home to her mother's manuscripts and devoted the rest of her life to her mother's cause. Mur returned to Moscow and entered the literary institute there. He was drafted into the army, and there are no records of him after 1944.

# CLEOPATRA

**David Lester**

Hughes-Hallett (1990) has pointed out that most of our presumed knowledge of the facts of Cleopatra's life are distortions introduced by those who wrote about her. Hughes-Hallett has distilled the facts of her life from several sources.

Cleopatra VII was born in 69 BC in Egypt, the third child of Ptolemy XII, nicknamed Auletes, the flute player. The dynasty was founded by a Macedonian general who became the ruler of Egypt after the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC. Since the Egyptian royal family favored incestuous marriage, Cleopatra was mainly of Greek descent.

The Egyptian empire had shrunk over the years so that it now consisted of only Egypt itself. The Romans had taken over many of Egypt's former territories, and the threat of annexation by Rome was real. Ptolemy offered Rome his help in exchange for protection from his enemies. In 59 BC Julius Caesar and Pompey (who together ruled Rome with Crassus) declared publicly that Ptolemy had the right to his throne and charged him 6,000 talents for this (about the size of the Egypt's annual revenue). Two years later, his subjects led protests against him, and he fled to Rome, possibly taking his twelve year-old daughter, Cleopatra, with him.

While he was in Rome, his first-born, a daughter, Cleopatra VI Tryphaena, usurped his throne. Ptolemy borrowed another 10,000 talents to pay for Roman soldiers but, by the time they returned to Egypt, Cleopatra VI had been killed by Ptolemy's supporters and his second-born, also a daughter, Berenice, had seized the throne. The Romans, including a young officer, Mark Antony, defeated her forces and restored Ptolemy, who quickly had Berenice executed. Ptolemy died in 51 BC, whereupon Cleopatra, aged eighteen, and her younger brother, Ptolemy aged ten, were declared joint heirs.

Cleopatra was not particularly beautiful, but she had a nice voice and "force of character." The first two years of her reign did not go well. The floods failed (leading to a poor harvest), and there was more civil unrest, especially because her people did not approve of her allegiance to Rome. She agreed to send troops to help the Romans in Syria, but her troops refused to go. The young Ptolemy had a regent, a eunuch named Pothinus, who was hostile to Cleopatra, and soon Pothinus issued edicts in Ptolemy's name alone, as if Cleopatra had been deposed.

When Caesar and Pompey began their Roman civil war, Pompey's son obtained Pothinus's help, but when, after Pompey's defeat, Pompey went to Egypt, he was killed by the Egyptians as he tried to land. Four days later, Caesar reached Egypt. Caesar was angry that the Egyptians had killed a Roman and demanded the 6,000 talents (plus interest) that Rome was owed. The Egyptians rioted, and Caesar was forced to remain in the royal palace with Ptolemy and Pothinus. Cleopatra made her way into the place, despite Pothinus's attempts to keep her out, and became Caesar's lover. Caesar took her side in the power struggle, and arranged a marriage between Cleopatra and Ptolemy and decreed that they should rule jointly.

Cleopatra's younger sister, Arsinoe, left the palace and joined the rebel Egyptian forces, declaring herself Queen. Caesar had Pothinus executed on suspicion of being in league with Arsinoe and, when his reinforcements arrived, defeated the Egyptian forces. Afterwards Ptolemy was found drowned in the Nile, dragged down by the weight of his armor. It is unlikely that Ptolemy and Cleopatra ever consummated their marriage.

Caesar then married Cleopatra, still his lover, to another younger brother, Ptolemy XIV, then about twelve years old, and proclaimed them joint rulers of Egypt. Ptolemy had no powerful allies, and so Cleopatra now was the real ruler. Caesar left Egypt soon after this and, after more military triumphs, returned to Rome in 46 BC with Arsinoe as his prisoner.

Cleopatra was in Rome for Caesar's return, but she was kept well away from Caesar's wife. She had Caesar's son with her, Ptolemy Caesar (commonly called Caesarion), and she stayed in Rome until Caesar's assassination in 44 BC. She returned to Egypt in July, and Ptolemy died in September -- his death remains a mystery. Cleopatra then named her son, Ptolemy XV Caesar, as her co-ruler.

Cleopatra was now in her mid-twenties, and for the next three years she devoted herself to governing Egypt. She did this very well, despite more flood failures which resulted in poor harvests.

Back in Rome, a civil war had broken out between Mark Antony and Octavius, and both appealed to Cleopatra for help. Cleopatra, like her predecessors, hedged her bets until she could be sure who would win. In 42 BC, Antony and Octavius split the Roman Empire between them, giving Mark Antony the eastern part. Antony, now forty and married for the third time, wanted to attack the Parthian empire and summoned Cleopatra to Tarsus in order to persuade her to help him in his campaign. They became lovers, and Cleopatra agreed to help him in return for his protection against her enemies, including the execution of Arsinoe. After a stay with Cleopatra in Alexandria, Mark Antony left for his territories. His wife died, and he married Octavius's sister, Octavia. Meanwhile, Cleopatra gave birth to twins by Antony, whom she named Alexander and Cleopatra Selene.

For the next three years, she returned to the task of governing Egypt and restoring its economy. She kept Egypt in peace, learnt Egyptian, and observed the rites of Egyptian religion. By the end of the reign she had paid off the debts incurred by her father and by the demands of Caesar and Mark Antony. She appears to have made money from oil in territory near the Dead Sea and by leasing land around Jericho to King Herod of Judea.

In 37 BC, Mark Antony returned to his Parthian campaign and asked Cleopatra to help him. She bargained for land in what are now Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and southern Turkey. In return, Cleopatra built him a fleet. Resuming their political alliance, they also became lovers again. In May, 36 BC, Mark Antony departed for war, leaving Cleopatra pregnant (with Ptolemy Philadelphus). The war went badly, and he summoned Cleopatra again. She arrived in January, 35 BC, with money to pay his soldiers and winter clothing for the troops.

At this point Mark Antony made a momentous decision. He cast off Octavia (who had given him only daughters) and allied himself with Cleopatra (who had given him two sons), and he made Alexandria the center of his empire. Over the next six years until his death, Octavius, later the Emperor Augustus, was able to cast Mark Antony as a traitor who had thrown in his lot with foreigners.

Mark Antony next had to deal with an uprising led by Sextus Pompey, a son of Pompey, who had seized towns in Asia Minor. After this triumph, he granted the territories of his empire (and some yet to be conquered) to his three children. Thus, he was annexing these lands, not to Rome, but to the Egyptian empire. He made Caesarion, now thirteen, King of Kings and declared him the legitimate heir to Julius Caesar, a direct threat to Octavius. Mark Antony's plan was, therefore, to leave the Eastern Empire to the Ptolemy's and take the Western Empire for himself.

From 33 BC on, preparations were made for the war. The battles in Greece went badly for Antony, and Cleopatra wanted to keep her hold over Antony by making her fleet indispensible. So Mark Antony chose to fight on sea rather than on land, and he lost. He and Cleopatra escaped to Alexandria with their ships which held the treasure which would allow them to fight on, while Octavius defeated the remaining resistance.

Cleopatra tried to escape with Caesarion to India, but Arabs attacked her ships in the Red Sea. In 30 BC Octavius returned to the east to deal with Mark Antony. Cleopatra offered to step down in favor of her children, but Octavius ignored her request. In August, 30 BC, Octavius had Alexandria besieged. Cleopatra locked herself in her monument with three attendants. Antony, believing that she had committed suicide, stabbed himself. Dying, he was hoisted into her monument where he died in her presence.

When Octavius's representative forced his way into Cleopatra's monument, she tried to kill herself, but was overpowered and taken prisoner. Octavius let it be known that he planned to take Cleopatra to Rome as his prisoner, possibly to encourage her to commit suicide. She got rid of the guard by giving him a letter to take to Octavius (which asked Octavius to bury her next to Mark Antony), and killed herself. It is not certain how she died -- the only marks on her body were two tiny scratches on her arm. Perhaps she had some poison which she swallowed or perhaps she pricked herself with a poisoned pin?

Octavius had Caesarion executed, but he spared Mark Antony's three children. Little Cleopatra was married to Prince Juba of Numidia, and her two brothers led a quiet life with her there. Octavius then annexed Egypt.

Hughes-Hallett concluded that Cleopatra probably had only two lovers in her life -- she had four children with them. She was a good ruler and a shrewd politician. She died because she chose the wrong side in the Roman civil war.

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# REINALDO ARENAS

**David Lester**

Arenas was born on July 16, 1943, in Holguín, Cuba. His mother, expecting to marry a young man, had slept with him and got pregnant, whereupon the man ran off, leaving her to bear her son.[16] After living for a year with her prospective in-laws, she moved in with her parents, along with her many other single and abandoned sisters. As a fallen women, his mother would have had difficulty finding a husband, but, though depressed and sometimes suicidal, she decided not to try, and she remained chaste for the rest of her life.

Arenas's grandfather was an alcoholic and physically abused his wife, but his grandmother was a strong woman who ran her large household efficiently. The grandfather farmed about a hundred acres (mostly for corn) and, though poor, the grandmother fed everyone and kept them healthy.

When he was five, Arenas caught meningitis but survived. He fell out of a tree and off a horse and into a well, but he also survived all of these childhood accidents.

Homsexuality played a prominent role in Arenas's life, and his first homosexual memory was from the age of six when he saw a large group of men bathing naked in a river. The following day, he says, he discovered masturbation. Like his friends, most of his childhood sexual activity was with animals -- hens, dogs, goats, pigs and horses. He even carved holes in soft-stemmed trees and fruits for sexual stimulation. His first heterosexual experience was with a cousin, but his first consummated act was with a male cousin when he was eight, and later an uncle use to sit Arenas on his penis when they rode into town on horseback.

He went to school, to which he had to travel on horseback. Although there were few books to read, Arenas's grandmother told him stories and made sure he went to school, and his mother taught him to write.

As economic conditions worsened, Arenas's grandfather sold the farm and moved the family into the town of Holguín. Once in town, Arenas, now thirteen, worked at a guava paste factory for twelve hours a day. On his day off, he went to the movies and decided to write novels, which he did in the evenings and at night and which, he recollects, were dreadful. He went part-time to a junior high school where he dated girls, but his friends knew that he was gay, even though he had not accepted this yet.

When he was fourteen, Arenas decided to join the rebels. He traveled to where they were hiding, and they refused to let him join because they had enough men. However, when he arrived back home, his family had spread the news of his defection in the town, and Arenas had to flee back to the guerrillas for safety. They let him stay. He never saw any fighting, and he was still

[16] This essaay is based on Arenas's autobiography (Arenas, 1993).

with the guerrillas when Batista fled from Cuba on December 31, 1958, and Fidel Castro took over. Arenas was now fifteen.

## Life Under Castro

Arenas was given a scholarship to a new polytechnic institute where youths were trained to be agricultural accountants. The youths, and others like them, became the "vanguard of the revolution," the first Cubans indoctrinated into Castro's system. Arenas still had girl friends, and he continued to write. He graduated in 1961 and was assigned to a farm near Manzanillo.

He used to go home to Holguín on weekends, and there he began an affair with a young man whom he met on the bus and discovered the homosexual subculture. Dissatisfied with the work on the farm, Arenas applied for and was accepted into a planning course at the University of Havana. Arenas still refused to accept that he was a homosexual, but a friend took him to the National Library where he met many homosexuals, and soon Arenas was cruising in Havana for lovers and pick-ups. He also switched from being the active sexual partner to the passive, a role he came to prefer.

In 1963, he entered a story in a competition at the National Library which so impressed the judges that they hired him. There he had much more time to write, and also to read the books there. His book, *Singing From The Well*, won an award and was published, as did his second novel. When the head of the library changed, and the regime became more oppressive, Arenas resigned his position at the library.

He associated with the other writers in Havana, and they would meet to read one another's works and discuss literature. Arenas also began to enter the homosexual subculture in earnest, even though the regime become more intolerant of homosexuality. By 1968, Arenas estimated, he had already had sex with some five thousand men. Arenas notes that the sex was always free - there was no prostitution - and he notes that he liked strict roles in the sexual act, in which he was happiest being the passive partner. He was robbed and blackmailed in the course of his homosexual odyssey, but he remained undeterred.

He began working for the writers' union for which he had to check galley proofs, but at this time the harassment by the State Security increased. In 1967, he had met two visitors to Cuba, Jorge and Margarita Camacho, who kept in touch with Arenas after they left. He smuggled manuscripts out of the country with them which they helped publish abroad, and this met with further disapproval from the authorities.

In 1968, Castro sided with the Russians over their invasion of Czechoslovakia, confirming the repressive nature of his regime and destroying any faith Arenas and his friends had in the regime. Castro started ordering people to work in agriculture whenever they were needed. Arenas had to participate in the sugar cane harvest in 1970 when Castro had set an unreachable goal for the nation's harvest. The repression escalated. Writers were imprisoned and tortured until they recanted their opposition to the regime.

Arenas still visited his family in Holguín, but even his aunt had turned into a supporter of and agent for the regime, and she reported Arenas for his homosexuality and seditious writing. Although he continued to receive income from the writers' union, he was not allowed to write for them. In order to buy time, Arenas married a woman who wanted cover for her heterosexual affairs. They married, but in 1973, Arenas and a lover had their possessions stolen by two young men with whom they had just had sex. They reported the theft, but the young men accused Arenas and his friend of being homosexuals. Areans was charged with being a homosexual and a counterrevolutionary. Although he was arrested, the security at the police station was lax, and Arenas walked out that night. He made several attempts to escape, first by swimming to America[17] and then, more reasonably, by trying to get to the American base at Guantanamo. The Cuban security was too tight, and Arenas had to return to Havana.

Arenas obtained a false identification and managed to escape capture for several months. Eventually he was captured and sent to the prison at Morro Castle. He tried to kill himself with an overdose of psychodelic drugs but, again, he survived. He was placed in the cells for dangerous criminals, rather than those for homosexuals. He refused to have sex with anyone because sex under forced conditions could not be enjoyable for Arenas, but his decision also helped keep him alive since he stayed out of the continual fights centered around sex. When they were seeking Arenas, the police had spread the rumor that he was a rapist and murderer. His reputation also helped him since the other prisoners were somewhat afraid of him.

After more than six months, Arenas was transferred to the State Security system where he was encouraged to confess his counterrevolutionary crimes and recant. After four months of isolation, Arenas confessed. He was then charged with corrupting minors and sentenced to two years in prison. He served this sentence at a open jail where the men were used to construct houses.

Just prior to his arrest, Arenas had caught syphilis. He had some treatment with penicillin, and after his release in 1976, he completed the treatment. He managed to pay a friend for an apartment by getting his aunt to give him the money for not ever coming back to the family house.[18] He obtained money by a variety of means. A group of his friends found a furnished convent which had been boarded up. They stripped the convent, sold most of the contents and used the rest for their own apartments. He also sold clothes that his friends sent from abroad or which he purchased on the black market.

He continued to write, and he continued his homosexual life despite the dangers involved in both activities. In 1980, after Cubans stormed the Peruvian embassy in an effort to escape from Cuba, Castro decided to let some Cubans emigrate. He refused to let any important Cubans leave, but, in desperation, Arenas went to the local police station and presented himself as a common criminal who had been sentenced for a public disturbance. They gave him a permit for the Mariel exodus, and he left the port only hours before the authorities realized their mistake.[19]

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[17] After failing, he tried to kill himself by slashing his wrists.

[18] A friend who had influence in the communist party also put pressure on the aunt.

[19] He purposely misspelt his name so that the police would not discover that he was the lists of those forbidden to escape.

The boat he was on broke down and drifted. Instead of a trip of seven hours, they spent four days at sea before being rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard. Finally, Arenas had reached freedom.

## America And Suicide

Life in America was not easy for Arenas. He did not like the Cubans in Florida. Also, when he began to write and speak out against Castro, his publishers refused to publish his works anymore. They also failed to pay him the royalties his books had earned.

In August 1980, he was invited to give a talk at Columbia University in New York, and, once there, he found that he loved New York. He found an apartment which he shared with a Cuban friend who had psychiatric problems and who had also escaped in the Mariel exodus. He was writing again[20], and he resumed his homosexual adventures. He worked against Castro, starting a magazine briefly and appearing in several anti-Castro films. By 1983, he had obtained a visa which enabled him to travel abroad. He went to Europe and met the Camachos who had helped him since 1967. His mother visited him, and he gave talks at some forty universities.

## Illness And Death

By the winter of 1987, Arenas was very sick and a doctor diagnosed him as having aids. By then, he had corrected most of the manuscripts he had smuggled out of Cuba, and he had written and published a number of other works. But he had not yet finished his series of five novels. His friend Lázaro took him, unconscious, to New York Hospital, and he survived. While there he helped with the French translation of *The Doorman* and wrote words to songs written by one of the doctors in the Hospital who then sang them in the intensive care unit to the dying patients.

Arenas was released after three and a half months and, when he returned to his apartment he found that someone had left him some rat poison, suggesting that he commit suicide. Arenas started dictating his autobiography into a tape recorder, since he was too weak to write. The French translation of *The Doorman* received a prize, and Arenas flew to Paris to receive it. But he soon came down with pneumonia and then cancer (Kaposi's sarcoma). But he survived again and began writing the fourth novel in his *pentagoniá* while revising the fifth, He came down with pneumonia again, and went to Spain to recover, where he helped write an open letter to Castro asking for free elections which was signed by thousands of people and published.

Suicide had always been a theme in Arenas's life. A great-uncle hung himself at home and, throughout, his autobiography, he notes which friends, colleagues, notables and fellow prisoners committed suicide in Cuba. Indeed it seems from Arenas's autobiography that suicide was extremely common in Cuba. Arenas himself had made two previous attempts at suicide, when he was trying to escape from Cuba and when he was sent to prison in 1973.

[20] He wrote or re-wrote six of his books.

As the illness worsened, his health deteriorated further, and his depression deepened. When he was no longer able to write, he decided to kill himself. He died of an overdose of drugs and alcohol on December 17, 1990, in Manhattan.

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# VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

## David Lester

Mayakovsky was born on July 7 (old style, July 19 new style), 1893, in Bagdadi (later called Mayakovsky) in Western Georgia. His father was a forest ranger who died from an infected cut on his finger when Mayakovsky was thirteen. Interestingly, Mayakovsky became a hypochondriac, afraid of infection from knives and forks, drinking glasses and other people's hands, and he compulsively washed his own hands.[21] Mayakovsky had two older sisters.[22] His sisters studied in Moscow and brought back revolutionary ideas to their younger brother.

The family had never been well-off, but after the father's death the family moved to Moscow where they were quite poor. They let rooms to students to get by. Mayakovsky did not do well at school, but he read Marxist literature and associated with the radical students. He joined the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Social Democratic Party in 1908 and was elected at the age of fourteen to its Moscow Committee. He was soon arrested for carrying illegal proclamations, but he was released into the care of his mother.

He was arrested again in 1909 and released after a month. Five months later he was arrested again and imprisoned for six months, five of it in solitary confinement, on suspicion of being involved in a jailbreak of revolutionaries. In prison, he continued to agitate and succeeded in improving the conditions for the prisoners, particularly their food.

## The Birth Of The Poet

This last imprisonment led him to break with the party. In prison, he had begun to read, and he realized how uneducated he was. So he threw himself into studying and continued after his release. He was excused from a sentence of three years in exile because of his youth and his mother's connections. He had begun writing poetry while in prison, but he thought so little of it that he took up painting. After a year's preparation, he applied to and was accepted in 1911 into the Moscow Institute for the Study of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture.

He quickly got involved with a group of anti-traditional painters and writers who called themselves the "Futurists." The group so outraged the faculty at the Institute that some, including Mayakovsky, were expelled in 1914. Thus set free, they toured the provinces, reciting their poetry and showing their paintings. They aroused curiosity, amusement and anger, and so, much to their satisfaction, they attracted attention. Mayakovsky produced mainly cubist artworks, and he wrote essays explaining the aims of the movement and poetry.

Mayakovsky also tried writing plays. His first production was entitled *Vladimir Mayakovsky: A tragedy*, and he was the author, producer, director and central character. This

[21] He was also a compulsive gambler, betting on everything including license plates and how many peanuts would drop from a vending machine.
[22] An older brother died at an early age.

play includes suicide as a motif, perhaps occasioned by the suicide of one of the students who had rented a room from the family. At this time, Mayakovsky seems to have been in crisis, either because of a homosexual experience or a case of gonorrhea.

Mayakovsky was caught up in the patriotic and anti-German feelings in Russia when the First World War broke out. He made drawings and wrote patriotic jingles for propaganda posters in 1914. By 1915, his poetry was being published in "New Satirikon," a liberal journal of satire, and he worked on four major poems. A lucky win at gambling enabled him to visit Finland in 1915, and during that summer he may have attempted suicide.

He seems to have fallen in love with a Maria Aleksandra Denisova who quickly married a man who later became a general of the Red Army, but others have claimed that Mayakovsky was in love with a different person. Soon after this crisis, Mayakovsky met Lily and Osip Brik accidentally in the course of dating Lily's sister. The Briks were patrons of young literary men, and Mayakovsky fell in love with Lily. Osip published a major poem by Mayakovsky in September 1915 at his own expense ("A Cloud"). Lily worked on Mayakovsky's appearance, turning him into a respectable bourgeois. In November, 1915, Mayakovsky moved in with the Briks establishing a family that lasted until Mayakovsky's suicide. It is clear that all three liked one another very much and that Mayakovsky loved Lily, but it is not clear whether Lily loved Mayakovsky or became his lover. Possibly not. At this time, the ménage à trois helped Mayakovsky out of his suicidal depression. But he continued to display either manic elation or weeping despair, signs of at least a mild manic-depressive disorder.

Initially in 1914, Mayakovsky tried to enlist so as to fight the Germans, but he was rejected because of his subversive record. He was called up in October 1915, however, and with Maxim Gorky's help, avoided the fighting. He was sent to Petrograd as a draftsman.

**The Bolshevik Revolution**

Mayakovksy was still in Petrograd at the time of the revolution of February, 1917. He soon involved himself in protecting the interests of artists and was named to the board of a newly formed Provisional Committee for the Union of Art Workers. There was a brief alliance between the Futurists and the Bolsheviks, and Mayakovksy worked furiously, writing poems and scenarios for films, writing and producing plays, and editing magazines.

However, Mayakovsky (and others, including Brik and Marc Chagall) soon found that they were at odds with the proletariat, and even Lenin regarded Mayakovsky's work with distaste. Myaykosky's "Mystery Bouffe" was coolly received in 1918, and his work was increasingly attacked in literary magazines. His poem *150,000,000*, published in 1919, was criticized by Lenin and many others. In short, much of Mayakovsky's writing as a propagandist for the new regime in Russia failed. He started a group called *Lef* -- the Left Front of Art, to institutionalize the alliance between the former futurists and the proletarian state. However, the conservative forces in the Communist Party now turned their fire on *Lef*. The group involved in *Lef* found themselves at odds with the powerful Russian Association of Proletarian Writers, and their magazine folded in 1928. Then Mayakovsky formed a new organization called the

Revolutionary Front of Art. He wrote scenarios for thirteen films, only five of which were produced, and he wrote articles on the problems with and prospects for film. He also wrote two plays, both of which were failures.

From 1919 to 1921, Mayakovsky worked on propaganda for the Russian Telegraph Agency. His poems appeared on posters, which he also helped to design, that were placed in the empty store windows in towns. He next wrote jingles for the Moscow Food Stores and other retail trading agencies. He began, therefore, to adjust to an environment hostile to avant-garde artists.

Mayakovsky made several trips abroad on behalf of the Russian government: Berlin and Paris in 1922, Berlin in 1923 and Berlin and Paris again in 1924. In 1925, he visited Mexico and the USA, then towns within Russia in 1926 and 1927, Prague, Berlin and Paris in 1927, and Paris again in 1928 and 1929. The Russian government willingly gave him visas, and his publishers gave him advances to finance his trips. On most of these trips, he suffered from boredom and loneliness, though there is the possibility that he had a love affair while in America and may have fathered a child. He did not like sight-seeing, and he missed Russia.

For the last years of his life, Mayakovsky devoted much of his energy to producing poetry on topical matters for the Soviet press. He subordinated his poetic gift to social purposes, and this alienated other writers, including Gorky and Pasternak. Furthermore, despite his efforts for the regime, other poets, such as Sergei Yesenin, were more admired by the public, whereas Mayakovsky was often not understood or regarded as a buffoon. Nevertheless, though other writers scorned Mayakovsky, he earned a good salary and lived in comparative luxury compared to those writers who refused to write for the regime.

## The End

In 1928, Mayakovsky appears to have fallen in love with a Russian emigrée whom he met on one of his trips to Paris, Tatiana Alekseevna Yakovleva. However, she refused to go back to Russia with him. In 1929, back in Russia, Mayakovsky bombarded Tatiana with letters and telegrams. Tatiana eventually married the Vicomte du Plessix when she realized that Mayakovsky would not leave Russia for her.[23] Mayakovsky was depressed for several months afterwards, despite an affair with an actress, Veronika Polonskaya, who reminded him of Tatiana.

Despite his commitment to writing for the regime, Mayakovsky was frequently in trouble with the proletarian audiences for which he wrote. He was, therefore, not only isolated from his peers, but also the "workers." At recitals, the audiences would shout protests at his coarse language and express puzzlement about the meaning of his poems.

In the Spring of 1930, Mayakovsky was sick with "the grippe." Two months before his suicide, he abandoned the last of his literary colleagues and joined the Russian Association of

[23] It has been suggested that the government refused to issue a visa for Mayakovsky in 1929.

Proletarian Writers, with whom he had been at odds for most of his life. But *Pravda* had recently given the government's stamp of approval to this association, and Mayakovsky wanted to support the government, even though the members of the association were not thrilled at having their old enemy join them.

In April, 1930, Mayakovsky was still involved with Veronika, and she visited his office on the morning of his death. Veronika noted that Mayakovsky was irritable that morning and demanded that she stay with him rather than going to rehearsal.[24] She walked out and heard the shot.

Mayakovsky shot himself through the heart in his office on April 14, 1930. Though some considered his death an accident while playing Russian roulette, he left a suicide note which he had written two days earlier in which he said that no one was to blame for his death. He asked his family and friends to forgive him but, "there's no other way out."

Osip and Lily Brik wrote a statement supporting Mayakovsky and complaining of the neglect of his work, and they delivered this personally to Stalin. Stalin accepted this and added that indifference to Mayakovsky's work was a crime. *Pravda* printed this, and immediately editions of his work were published and books and articles on his life and work appeared. Squares and streets were named after him, and statues appeared in parks. As Pasternak scornfully said, he was "propagated compulsorily, like potatoes in the reign of Catherine the Great."

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[24] Mayakovsky wanted her to give up her career.

# ROBERT CLIVE

## David Lester

Richard Clive was a barrister and owned a country estate in Shropshire. He was a tyrant to his family and paid attention to his children only in order to punish them. To protect her first-born son, Robert, born September 29, 1725, from him, Rebecca Clive sent Robert to live with an uncle and aunt in Manchester when he was two years old. They had no children of their own and so welcomed the frail but difficult boy. Robert grew up to be aggressive and independent, with a fiery temper, and he was expelled from several schools. He led his gang in raids against shop-keepers who refused to pay them "protection money." The only time that he was well-behaved was during a long and severe illness with a fever and convulsions.

Eventually, Robert's father decided that Robert, whom he called "that idiot," should be sent out of the country to India. Robert left England alone, without anyone seeing him off at the dock, to begin work as a clerk for the East India Company in Madras. He arrived there after fifteen months at sea on May 31, 1744.

## Early Years In India

At this time, the East India Company worked simply as a group of traders. The British government had no interest in making India a colony. When Clive arrived, there was great rivalry between the English and the French, with the Dutch playing a minor role.

At first Clive was discouraged and miserable in India. He hated the work of a clerk, but he did not dare to return home. Most of the Europeans in India kept themselves apart from the Indians, except for the prostitutes, but Clive departed from this norm. He got involved with the Indians and learned their language.

Soon after his arrival, Clive underwent a medical inspection and was found to have phimosis, a condition in which the foreskin constricts the penis. Against his will, Clive was circumcised. The later consequence of this was that Clive was more acceptable in Muslim high circles in India since all Muslim males were circumcised.

Clive worked as a clerk, joined his fellow Englishmen in the brothels of Madras, took opium pills to drug his consciousness and was desperately unhappy. One night, at the age of nineteen, alone in his room, he held his pistol to his head and pulled the trigger twice. The gun failed to fire. His friend, Edmund Maskelyne, came by, and Clive asked him to fire the gun out of the window. The gun discharged. Clive decided that he was meant to live and thereafter changed his life style. He spent his free time in the library of the Governor of Madras, reading the books there, and he learned Hindustani and Persian.

India was at that time ruled by the Grand Mughal, a descendent of the Mongol conquerors of India, but the country had split up into smaller regions, each ruled by a local

dictator. This gave the British and the French an opportunity for conquest, for the Hindus preferred the Europeans as rulers rather than the Muslim usurpers.

The major French region on the west coast of India was at Pondicherry, governed by Joseph-Francois Dupleix. When the War of the Austrian Succession broke out, England and France went to war, and Dupleix was ordered to capture Madras. The French attacked on September 14, 1746. The English soon surrendered, but Clive and some friends slipped out of the town disguised as Muslim mercantile agents. It took them eight days to reach Pondicherry, where they found the Governor of Madras chained, stripped naked and paraded through the streets.

Twenty miles south of Pondicherry lay the English fort St. David. Clive and his friends went there, and helped defend it during a three-month siege by Dupleix. Clive loved the fighting, and eventually the French were repulsed. Clive fought so well that he was appointed as an ensign, or sub-lieutenant, of the Second Company of European Volunteer Foot Soldiers of Fort David.

After reinforcements arrived from England, the English under Major Stringer Lawrence, attacked Pondicherry, but failed to take it. In 1748, the war ended in Europe, and so the warring factions in India had to call a halt to their fighting.

In 1749, Lawrence decided to attack the port-fort of Devikota south of Fort St. David in order to restore the deposed Rajah to the throne. Lieutenant Clive was Lawrence's personal aide, and they attacked. Clive led the charge, with 35 Europeans and seven hundred natives. Only four of the Europeans survived, but Clive was one of them, and Devikota surrendered.

It is important to note that Clive always led his men into battle, and, though soldiers standing at his side were often killed, he was rarely wounded. His seeming "immortality" combined with his phenomenal success in battles led the Muslims and Hindus of India to regard him with awe.[25] After this, Clive decided not to return to work as a clerk, but stayed with the army. He was promoted to Captian, and his friend Maskelyne was appointed as an ensign and Clive's aide. Clive came down with malaria and dengue fever in 1750 but recovered on opium and quinine.

## The War With The French

Dupleix immediately began allying himself with some local rulers in order to defeat others, trying to build up a greater region of influence for the French. The English followed suit, but Dupleix soon controlled most of southern India. Meanwhile, Clive rose in rank, becoming the commisariat chief, and he was made a junior merchant, allowing him to trade privately. He soon had a fortune of forty thousands pounds.

[25] His mastery of the native languages aided this.

The first English expeditions failed, as Clive foresaw. Given more freedom, Clive first reinforced Trichinopoly, then led an expedition against Arcot. Outnumbered two to one, Clive arrived at the town, and the defenders fled. Clive took the town without a shot being fired, and he forbad looting and brutalizing the inhabitants, which won him support from the residents of the town. The French along with Chanda Sahib, the Governor of Trichinopoly, sent 7000 Hindustani soldiers and 150 Frenchmen to attack Arcot. They took the town, but could not take the fort, manned by only eighty Europeans and 120 Indians. Clive was ill with malaria and out of opium, and he had only laudanum and quinine to take. Despite his illness, when the Indians attacked, Clive decimated them with his battery and the determined fighting of his men. The horde fled, leaving the English with four killed and two wounded. Clive followed this success with a defeat of 400 French and 4500 Indians with his own army of 380 English and 1300 Indians. It was now clear to the native leaders that the English would be better partners than the French. Clive himself was recognized as Kampeni Jehan Behadur, The Greatly Daring In War. After these battles, Indian and many Europeans refused to serve under any captain but Clive.

Lawrence arrived back in India in 1752, and he was wise enough to make Clive his second in command despite Clive's low rank. Lawrence told his disgruntled officers that Clive was a military genius. Lawrence and Clive then relieved the English under siege at Trichinopoly -- again 1,500 soldiers defeated an enemey army of 23,000.

After this, Clive was again ill with fever and fatigue and the effects of wounds received in the battles. His friend, Maskelyne, had sent for his sixteen year-old sister to come to India. When Peggy arrived, she and Clive fell in love at once. They were married on February 18, 1753. It should be mentioned here that Clive appears to have been hypersexual for most of his life. He masturbated constantly, and he engaged in oral and anal sex with both men and women. Part of this was a consequence of the mores of the time in India, when indiscriminate sexual behavior was the norm for everyone, European or Indian. However, even allowing for the general promiscuous sexual behavior, Clive seems to have been especially active. Despite this, he appears to have loved his wife dearly, and she was continually pregnant, though some of the pregnancies ended in miscarriages. Clive did not abstain from his sexual activities upon marrying Peggy, but he did give up drugs.

Soon after the wedding, Clive was ill with epileptoid convulsions, and he was given a leave so that he could return to England. Back in London, he was the social lion of the season. The press hailed his victories, the titled sought him as a guest for their parties, and the politicians sought his advice. They lived in Queen's Square off St. James's Place. However, they were obviously "nouveau riche."

Clive decided to stand for parliament and, though he apparently won, was unseated in a new election because of the enmity of the Prime Minister. Saddened by this defeat, Clive asked to return to India, and he came back as Lieutenant-Colonel of Foot in India.

Clive was soon involved in the petty wars again, but he then met the major challenge of his career, the battle that won India for the English. A young ruler, Sirajuddawleh, in Bengal was especially savage and desirous of power. As a child he tortured his pets and sodomized his

playmates. As an adolescent, he was a paranoiac sadist. He decided to conquer the rival forces in Bengal, and he led an army of 40,000 against Fort William, adjacent to Calcutta, and defeated the English there. He then put 146 European captives into a dungeon, eighteen feet by fifteen feet -- the "Black Hole of Calcutta." The next day only 23 were still alive. The 21 men who survived were circumcized and set free after several weeks of rape by Sirajuddawleh's soldiers.

The English knew that Clive was needed. So on October 1756, Clive set sail from Madras to Calcutta. Meanwhile, the English and French were again at war, this time in North America, ending the truce in India. On January 3, 1757, Colonel Clive (on behalf of the East India Company) and Admiral Watson on behalf of the Crown declared war on Sirajuddawleh. In the first battle, Clive, with 800 Europeans and 1500 Indians, defeated the enemy forces of 15,000 foot soldiers and 18,000 horsemen. Although Sirajuddawleh signed a treaty with the English after this, he continued to plot against them.

Clive defeated the French at Chandernagore in March, and soon after had to face Sirajuddawleh again. Despite Clive's efforts to avert a battle by negotiating with other possible Indian allies, the two opposing armies met up at Plassey. Clive had 1000 Europeans, 100 Eurasians, and 2100 Indians. Sirajuddawleh had some 100,000 men entrenched at Plassey. Clive was outnumbered thirty to one.

Clive's anxiety before the battle drove him to sexual excess. His servants observed him masturbating, were ordered to perform fellatio on him, and procured a camp whore for him. His biographer attributes Clive's hypersexuality to the phimosis of his adolescent years, aggravated by the anxiety aroused by his circumcision and by his manic-depressive disposition.

The battle took place on June 23, 1757. Clive's negotiations for allies appeared to have failed. None of the other leaders in Bengal had given any sign that they would leave Sirajuddawleh's army and support Clive. Clive had to attack alone. By 5 pm the battle was over. Clive lost 24 killed and 48 wounded. The enemy lost 600 men, and the rest fled. Not only did this battle secure India for the English, it brought Bengali gold pouring into England, which stimulated English industry and made London the capitalist leader of the world, and thereby facilitated the industrial revolution.

But what was Clive to do with his reluctant allies. He made the chief of them, Mir Ja'fer, Viceroy of Bengal, but Clive made it clear that Mir Ja'fer was simply a puppet. Sirajuddawleh tried to flee but was captured and put to death by Mir Ja'fer's son. Robert Clive, aged thirty-one, was master of Bengal. All over India he was now Bare Jangi-Lat Sahib Behadur -- the Great and Bold Warlord Sahib.

Again, Clive did not plunder the land, nor brutalize the Indians. He even returned gifts from the local leaders. In this way, he won their trust and devotion as well as their fear and respect. Although there were plots on his life, he had supporters who thwarted these plots. Of course, Clive was a good businessman, and he did not go poor. He gave gifts to his five sisters, his parents and more distant relatives, his in-laws, and even Colonel Lawrence who had given Clive the chance to show what a fine soldier he was.

Clive wanted to return to England as soon as possible, but the commander-in-chief of the English forces, Admiral Charles Watson, died in August. Although the East India Company named four co-governors of Bengal, all four resigned in favor of Clive. Thus, despite his continuing malarial fever, eased only a little by quinine and opium, and his temperament (an inherent melancholia interspersed with fits of anxiety and overwork), Clive stayed on from 1758 to 1760 to govern, taking care to increase his wealth. Clive reorganized the administration of the territories, and at the same time obtained a gift of land (twenty-four fertile districts adjoining Calcutta) from the Viceroy of Bengal which would provide him with an untaxed annual income of one million rupees. The English eliminated the remaining French interests in India, and followed this up by eliminating the Dutch. Meanwhile, enmity toward Clive grew among the London directors of the East India Company, particularly Laurence Sulivan, the Chairman.

Clive and his family sailed for England on February 21, 1760. His second homecoming outshone his first. He was hailed as a conquering hero and a great statesman, and he was also the richest person in Great Britain. King George, now growing madder by the year, awarded Clive the Order of the Bath, but not an English title, and so Clive purchased an Irish estate which made him Baron of Plassey in the Kingdom of Ireland. His efforts to get into the House of Commons still aroused a great deal of opposition, but he won a seat in April 1761.

Meanwhile, his enemy, Sulivan, had won back control of the East India Company. Then in 1764 word reached England that the new Viceroy of Bengal had executed about two hundred Europeans in Patna and had the three leaders decapitated and castrated. The East India Company requested Clive to return to India to restore order, but he declined. After a brief battle of wills, Sulivan had to admit defeat. Sulivan was replaced by Charles Rouse, a supporter of Clive, and Clive agreed to return to India.

Clive left England on June 4, 1764, landed in India on April 10, 1976, and began to clean up the mess. He negotiated to annex all of Bengal into official Company control. He also allowed the Indians to collect the taxes, leaving the English to dispose of them, thereby allowing each group to share in the administration of government. But Clive's physical and mental disorders continued to plague him. He suffered from fevers and fits of melancholia to such an extent that his aides had to tie him to the bed to prevent him from doing harm to himself. He left India for the last time in January 1767.

## England And Suicide

Clive returned home to his palatial home in Berkeley Square and to further honors, even being acclaimed in Paris despite the fact that he had defeated the French. According to reports at the time, Clive seduced (or was seduced by) large numbers of women while touring Europe.

Returning to London in 1768, Clive found growing opposition to him both in Parliament and the Company. Pamphlets were written attacking Clive, while his supporters published defenses. Eventually, in April 1772, the House of Commons appointed a committee to look into the affairs of the East India Company in India, but which quickly turned into a trial of Clive.

Finally, a motion was presented to censure Clive. Clive's supporters managed to get the most condemnatory passages deleted, and they added amendments asserting that Clive had rendered "great and meritorious services to his country." Thus, the motion, as passed in May 1773, absolved Clive of all guilt.

Despite the victory, Clive fell into great despondency. He shut himself off from his family and friends for days at a time. The months of anguish and anxiety had taken its toll. His mental condition was exacerbated by an attack of gallstones which was excruciatingly painful. Drugs (primarily laudanum) helped the pain a little, but failed to relieve his depression. His conditioned worsened, until on November 22, 1774, he took all of the opium at his disposal and died.

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# AGNES HAMMER

**David Lester**

Signe Hammer's mother committed suicide, and she has written a memoir about her mother which gives us some information about her mother's life and death (Hammer, 1991).

Agnes grew up in an arts-and-crafts studio. Her father was a woodcarver, printmaker, painter, sculptor and commercial artist. Her mother was a potter, and Agnes learned that craft as a child. Both parents had emigrated from Norway, meeting for the first time on the boat to America. They built the house they lived in piece by piece, and they decorated each room with care. Agnes was the first child and Olaf the last, eight years younger.

Shy and nervous, unsure of herself, Agnes went off to Barnard College, studying literature, art and history, but dropped out after a year. Relatives thought that Agnes quit after one year because times were hard during the Great Depression, and she needed to work so that the family could survive. But perhaps the anxiety of the competition at college was too much for her? She worked as a legal secretary for five years, living at home and giving her parents most of her salary, until she met John, a meeting arranged by his mother's friend and a neighbor of Agnes's parents.

John studied civil engineering under his own father at Gettysburg College, obtained a job with the Louisville & Nashville Railroad until he could switch to the Pennsylvania Railroad. Soon after his marriage, he was managing a freight branch on Delaware's Eastern Shore. John and Agnes married in June, 1930; he was 26, she was 24.

Agnes must have thought that John was a good fit. While they were courting, he wrote sensitive letters to her and bought her expensive art books. But John was, in reality, contemptuous of Agnes's esthetic and socialist ideals. He was a businessman, driven to acquire money and rather chintzy. John came from a family where emotions were not discussed, and both he and his brother chose wives who were (or seemed) prepared to be conventional and whom they could dominate. John went to church on Sundays, did not drink much, and saved for the future. He represented security. Signe reckons that her parents were highly sexed but uneasy about it. They were probably virgins, and both were prudish.

John was a civil engineer and, after landing the job with the Pennsylvania Railroad, moved his family around as the railroad moved him from job to job. During the Second World War, John went off to Persia to manage railroads there, leaving Agnes and the children in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Agnes was miserable there, but after the war the family moved to the Philadelphia area where it was assumed they would settle. John worked at the headquarters in Philadelphia and stayed in the Army Reserve. His goals were to become a Vice-President of the Railroad and a General in the reserve. Now forty years old, Agnes made the new house an expression of herself, for example, working hard in the yard to landscape it.

Agnes and John had four children, three boys and then a daughter, and the youngest son, Erik, four years older than Signe (who was born in 1940), resented Signe's arrival and continually fought with her.

While living alone with the children during the war, Agnes was deeply depressed. She roused herself for neighbors and for her sons. But with Signe, she no longer kept up a front. Her rages were terrifying, coming without warning like a thunderstorm. She tried to control her children, and Signe in particular, to restrain all impulses that might cause a disturbance. Agnes was a perfectionist. She never allowed anyone to kiss her on the mouth -- she regarded that as unsanitary.

In Pennsylvania, Agnes bought a piano for Signe to practice on and paid for French lessons for her. She joined the League of Women Voters, and John remodelled the house to improve it. They had a cleaning lady and someone to do the ironing, and the family appeared on the surface to function well. The boys played sports and joined the scouts, and the family went together to the games and ceremonies. But there was still tension. The emphasis was on control and assigning blame for any mistakes. Signe describes the atmosphere in the house as "barely contained rage."

Even though depressed in Indiana during the war, Agnes had grown independent. Now, in Pennsylvania, John tried to assume control again. Agnes liked Wallace for President, while John became strongly anti-communist and forced Agnes to quit the League of Women Voters which he considered too left wing! He forbad French lessons for Signe, saw the piano lessons as a waste of money, and generally used Signe to get at Agnes. Her father's misogyny gradually wore Agnes down. She talked less and less and retreated further into her old refuge, perfectionism as a housewife. Her anxiety grew, and her mood was grim.

When Agnes was forty-four, John was transferred to run Penn Station in New York City, and so he decided to move the family. Agnes told him that she would never leave the house in Pennsylvania. The stage was set for the final battle. But John acted as if he had won. He found a house in northern New Jersey and bought it. Agnes fell into a deep depression. She could not speak to John, she could not divorce him, and she could no longer live with him. She stopped eating and lost weight.

One night in the Spring of 1950, while her husband was away for the week in New York at work and her children were in bed, Agnes set up the ironing board in front of the open oven and turned on the gas. At some point, perhaps after her death, a spark from the refrigerator exploded the gas, and the kitchen caught fire. One brother ran into the street shouting fire. The other went into the kitchen to see what happened and to see if his mother was still alive. She died on the anniversary of the date she promised to marry her husband.[26]

The night before, Agnes had sat in the living room, her eyes full of tears. Her children had been fighting at the dinner table, and she had said that if they did not stop quarreling, she

[26] Signe was now nine.

would kill herself. Later, a cousin told Signe that her mother had kept a scrap-book with clippings of successful suicides. An uncle told Signe that her mother had visited her mother-in-law to talk about her marital problems, but her mother-in-law told her that, in their family, people did not divorce. In the 1940s, few people divorced, and there were no support groups for divorced women. Furthermore, she had not worked for twenty years. How could she support her family?

She had also asked a friend whether she ever felt that she could not take it any more. One rumor in the family was that her husband had taken a lover during the war; her daughter wondered whether menopause contributed to the decision. Of her four children, one became manic-depressive and the other three chronically depressed.

Agnes's suicide ruined her husband's career. Her suicide made it clear that she preferred death to living with him. Furthermore, because his wife had committed suicide, he was never appointed as a vice-president of the railroad. The railroad insisted he quit the Army Reserve since his involvement was thought to be affecting his job performance, and so he achieved neither of his two life goals.

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# EDWIN HOWARD ARMSTRONG

**David Lester**

Edwin Howard Armstrong was an inventor who held the patents for two of the major advances in this century which led to the development of radio. He was born on December 18, 1890, in the Chelsea district of Manhattan. His father, John, worked for the Oxford University Press, and his mother, Emily, came from a prominent business family in the city. She was a graduate of Hunter College and taught in the public schools for ten years before marrying John. The family moved several times, eventually ending up in Yonkers.

Armstrong, the first-born, went to the public schools where he was a good student. When he was nine, he came down with St. Vitus' Dance which causes involuntary twitchings and movements. Armstrong was kept home for two years, nursed by his mother and tutored by a great-aunt. He recovered with only a slight tic noticeable for the rest of his life -- hitching his shoulder forward and twisting his neck.

After this illness, Armstrong became even more thoughtful and withdrawn. He had always been interested in mechanical toys, and his social introversion led him to spend even more time with this hobby. In 1904, his father brought him back from England *The Boys' Book Of Inventions*, and Armstrong decided to become an inventor. As soon as he entered high school, his interests focused on wireless, and he was particularly enamored of Michael Faraday who had discovered electrical induction (the principle of the dynamo) and Guglielmo Marconi who was the first to transmit radio signals. Armstrong commandeered the attic and filled it with his equipment. The family nicknamed him Buzz, and he soon found others in the neighborhood fascinated by the new inventions, including a retired engineer from the old American Telegraph Company. In 1910, Armstrong built his own permanent antenna 125 feet high in the backyard, helped by his younger sister. Despite (or maybe because of) his hobby, he was judged to be only a fair student at high school. He took up tennis as a sport and became captain of the high school team. He graduated in 1909 and entered the department of engineering at Columbia University.

## Student Days

Armstrong did graduate from Columbia, but his path was unorthodox. He puttered in the laboratory at all hours and tended to focus on his own interests rather than course assignments. Several faculty complained about him, but he had won the support of several influential faculty members who protected him. He spent most of his time in his attic or in the laboratory at Columbia and, in his junior year, he solved the problem of regenerative receiver circuits. He wanted to file for a patent, but his father refused to loan him the money ($150) until he graduated. He was unable to raise the money himself, and so he recorded his invention on paper and had it notarized -- on January 31, 1913.

Armstrong graduated in June 1913, and he was offered an appointment as an assistant in the department for one year for $600 a year. His father loaned him the money for the patent which was filed on October 29, 1913, with an addition on December 18. (The patent was issued

on October 6, 1914.) Radio engineers were impressed by the demonstrations of his circuits (sending and receiving radio signals over long distances), and one of those who came to see them was David Sarnoff, later to become head of RCA and one of Armstrong's bitter enemies. Another engineer who came to see the invention was Lee de Forest who later challenged the primacy of Armstrong's patent (and won in the US Supreme Court). Armstrong published a report of his work in *Electrical World* in December, 1914.

In 1914, three rivals filed patents on the invention, including de Forest, Armstrong's father died of a stroke in 1915, and now Armstrong was the sole provider for the family (his mother and two sisters). Licences for his invention were bringing in only $100 a month, and efforts to sell the rights to his invention came to nought as the major companies involved tried to see if they could develop alternatives in their laboratories to circumvent the patents. AT&T bought up rival patents, including de Forest's interfering patents. However, the amateur community recognized Armstrong's importance, even if industry refused to, by electing him President of the Radio Club of America in 1916.

By 1916, however, Armstrong's situation eased. The American Marconi Company realized the utility of Armstrong's patent and bought a licence, thereafter paying him about $500 a month in royalties. Then in 1917, America entered the Great War.

## The War And After

The First World War halted Armstrong's efforts to some extent. He joined the army as a captain, posted to Europe (headquartered in Paris) and given the task of organizing the communication systems for the military. He made several good friends who later worked with him back in America, and he had time to work on more inventions, in particular the superheterodyne circuit. After the armistice was signed, he filed for a patent (February 8, 1919) which was issued on June 8, 1920, another historic milestone in radio.

In 1919, he was promoted to Major, and he received the *Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur* from the French. He had also been awarded the first Medal of Honor from the Institute of Radio Engineers in America. He arrived back home in September 1919, recovering from a severe anthrax infection.

Back in America, Armstrong returned to work at Columbia University, fought the rival patent suit from de Forest and worked on the development of the superheterodyne. Again rival patents were filed and suits brought.[27]

In the twenties, Armstrong sold two inventions for a large sum, won an initial victory over de Forest in federal court, came up with a third invention which he sold for an even larger sum, and fell in love. The money came to Armstrong from Westinghouse which had been left out

[27] At this time, General Electric purchased the American Marconi Company (in 1919), formed the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), in which AT&T made a large investment. These three corporations then sought to dominate the field.

by General Electric and AT&T and now wanted to get into the game. Although Armstrong had to pay large sum to the lawyers acting on his behalf in the patent suits, he still had a healthy income. At the same time, amateur radio began to boom, and Armstrong's lawyers advised him to license his inventions for amateur use (in crystal-detector sets), and royalties poured in from this source too. In 1922, his monthly income rose to $10,000.

Now that radio stations were opening in cities across America, the amateur inventors moved to short-wave signals. With Armstrong helping, a group managed to send short-wave messages across the Atlantic in 1921. Although Sarnoff and his aides from RCA came to watch, the industry did not see the value of this invention until 1927. Again, the amateurs were in the forefront of developments, not industry.

Meanwhile, Armstrong had discovered the super-regenerative circuit, a patent for which was issued in July, 1922. RCA finally came to terms with Armstrong and bought his super-regenerative circuit for $200,000 cash and 60,000 shares of RCA stock, making him the largest individual stockholder. Later patents that year netted him 20,000 more shares, and made him a millionaire. Furthermore, he invested well and avoided losses in the stock market crash later.

In his dealings with RCA, Armstrong had met Sarnoff's secretary, and in 1922 he asked her out. Marion MacInnis was twenty-two, of Scottish descent, and from New England. After a quick romance, they married on December 1st, 1922.

Armstrong was appointed as an Assistant Professor at Columbia, but he refused to accept the salary, taught no classes, and gave only occasional lectures.

## The Fight With De Forest

De Forest, backed by AT&T, had not given up after his first loss in federal court, and the ensuing court battles lasted from 1920 to 1924 costing close to a million dollars in legal fees. De Forest tried to establish priority to the invention, and Armstrong fought, not because of the royalties involved, for he was already a millionaire, but because of the principle. He had invented the regenerative receiver circuit, radio engineers knew it, but the courts were not sure. At the initial victory in 1922 by Armstrong, he should have accepted or waived damages so that the case could be closed, but Armstrong would not allow Westinghouse (his supporter in the court battles) to waive damages, and he would not allow de Forest a compromise in which de Forest would purchase a company already licensed by Westinghouse. Given this breathing space, and a sign of Armstrong's intransigence, de Forest pressed on in his suits and began to win. By 1927, all of the court verdicts were in de Forest's favor, and in 1928 the US Supreme Court upheld the judgments in favor of de Forest. Armstrong did not give up, but came to the support of a small company sued by RCA and backed its fight up to the Supreme Court again, where in 1934, the court again supported de Forest. AT&T benefited from this since Armstrong's patents ran out in 1931, after which no royalties would be due, whereas de Forest's patents filed much later ran through 1941. Thus Armstrong and de Forest were pawns in a much larger fight between rival corporations, but the suits were made more complicated by the personality of both Armstrong and de Forest who wanted legal confirmation of their inventions. Armstrong was,

however, the major inventor, and only his vanity prevented an early and compromise settlement back in 1922.

In 1934, Armstrong attended the annual convention of the Institute of Radio Engineers. He had informed the Institute that he would return the medal awarded him in 1918 for the invention which the US Supreme Court now said was de Forest's. He was not given the opportunity. The Institute's president addressed him from the chair and affirmed the earlier award and his precedence as inventor of the regenerative circuit. The meeting gave him a standing ovation, and the board which had unanimously agreed to this had many members employed by AT&T and RCA which had fought Armstrong and won in court! Despite this, industry representatives and publications continued for many years to downplay the role of Armstrong and to promote the name of de Forest as the inventor of the regenerative circuit.

## FM Radio

During these legal battles, Armstrong continued to invent and to have some fun. He played tennis, vacationed with his wife, and spent summers at the Long Island beaches. He also continued to work on the problems of radio, and he now made an even more important discovery. In late 1933, he was issued patents for a new radio signalling system, later developed as FM radio, which solved the problem of atmospheric disturbances (static) which plagued AM radio. Although the laboratories of the major corporations had dabbled in this area, it had been concluded that FM signalling was impossible, and Armstrong's invention led to the revision of a "law" in the field, called Hartley's Law (named after an AT&T scientist).

The professor of the department at Columbia University (Michael Pupin), long a supporter of Armstrong, died in 1935. Armstrong was appointed as head of the Marcellus Hartley Research Laboratory in his place, at a nominal salary of $1 a year. Armstrong supplied the equipment, paid the assistants, and paid the overhead expenses.

Armstrong demonstrated his FM system publicly in late 1935 and, though the quality of sound was impressive, the radio industry (now organized into NBC, CBS, ABC, and the Mutual Broadcasting System) was reluctant to adopt it. They had invested a great deal of money and effort in AM radio, and they did not see the sense in setting up a rival system. Thus, in public and before congress and regulatory agencies (the FCC had been established in 1927 and reorganized in 1934), the industry continued to attack FM signalling and to hinder its development. At the same time, RCA began to set its own engineers to work up their own patents and to engage in interference proceedings in the Patent Office against Armstrong's patents. Undaunted, of course, Armstrong decided to invest his own money in setting up FM radio stations.

He obtained a license to operate in the small range of frequencies allotted by the FCC (2.7 megacycles versus the 120 megacycles allotted for experimental television), and he set out to build a 50-kilowatt station at Alpine, New Jersey, high on the Palisades overlooking the Hudson River. Armstrong's mother died in 1938, as the station was being built, but by now others were building FM stations elsewhere in America (Worcester and Hartford were the first).

The station opened in 1939, having cost Armstrong $300,000, and the quality of its broadcasts was outstanding.

By 1939, the dam began to break, and General Electric came out for FM. RCA at first fought the FM industry at the FCC, trying to limit FM's place in the spectrum of frequencies, but in 1940 it lost. RCA then decided to support FM, and Sarnoff tried to purchase the rights to Armstrong's patent for a lump sum. Armstrong again behaved stubbornly. He refused, demanding the royalties other companies paid. RCA refused Armstrong's terms.

The Armstrongs lived in a nice apartment in Manhattan, and they now bought a house at Rye Beach in New Hampshire. The Second World War meant an end to the expansion of FM radio, and a large decrease in the royalty payments to Armstrong. However, Armstrong let the military use his inventions without charge. Armstrong had already been advising the Signal Corps, and soon all of the military was using FM for communications. Armstrong also worked on a novel form of radar, and at the end of the war was awarded the US Medal for Merit.

## The Post-War Era And Crisis

Once the war ended, FM radio took off again, and the battle resumed between the industry and the FM radio operators. The nascent television industry needed wavelengths assigned in the FM region, and so the FCC sided with industry and moved the FM radio stations from the 50 megacycle band to a new band between 88 and 108 megacycles for which they did not have the equipment. FM stations were also restricted by the FCC in power so that each station could serve only one small region. Despite this, the FM stations prospered, after a period of adjustment, and Armstrong's royalties poured in, even though companies like RCA refused to pay him royalties even they were using his inventions. Armstrong, himself, refused to reduce his fees although by doing so, companies like RCA might have paid them. Furthermore, Armstrong had spent close to $1 million on his Alpine station, and he supported several other groups and organizations. Thus, his money was spent as quickly as it arrived.

Eventually RCA decided to challenge Armstrong's patents in court. By doing so, they not only challenged Armstrong's pride as the inventor, they also tied him up in costly litigation. In 1948, the patents for FM had only two more years to run (after which the royalties would dry up), and the court battle began in earnest. He filed suit against RCA on July 22, 1948, seeking to get triple damages for the equipment made illegally by RCA during the term of his patents.

The battle lasted five years and ended with Armstrong's suicide. Most of the five years was taken up with depositions, but Armstrong also wrote scores of articles and letters to newspapers and magazines correcting the history of the development of radio which often ignored or minimized his own role. There were several attempts at a settlement, but Armstrong wanted vindication, which for him meant victory in court.

Inevitably, his marriage suffered. Marion had learned to live with his passion for radio. She had made a life for herself, without children, but often lonely. Now the court case consumed more and more of Armstrong's time, their money was being used up rapidly, and Armstrong

himself looked close to having a breakdown. The crisis came in November 1953, at Thanksgiving when, after a row, Marion left to stay with her widowed sister. Armstrong's financial state was now in precarious. RCA made one last effort at a settlement, amounting to $2 million, but Armstrong rejected this. Armstrong's despondency grew. On the night of January 31, 1954, Armstrong wrote a letter to his wife, dressed warmly in his overcoat, hat, scarf and gloves, and jumped from the thirteenth floor of his apartment building to his death.

David Sarnoff, head of RCA, attended the funeral, and RCA paid Armstrong's estate one million dollars to settle the suit.

## Reference

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