

A LETTER TO MY GRANDSONS

Dear Elias Snow Rodd Jacobowitz
and Saul Abraham Rodd Jacobowitz:

Your Grandpa Norman will be 72 years old next August 6th. My substitute coronary veins, after eight years, are showing signs of clogging, just like the original/ arteries they replaced. I think it's time I told you about your heritage -- from my viewpoint, of course. It may help tide you over the rough spots you will encounter.

What rough spots? You are Jewish on your father's side and Christian on your mother's. Since there first was a Christian -- Jesus Christ -- about 2,000 years ago, we Jews and Christians have been at each others' throats. Senseless. Should Jewish Grandpa Norman and Christian Grandpa Ted hate the part of you two that happens to be born in a different religion from ours? Senseless. Yet some Christian may one day call you a dirty Jew, and some Jew may one day call you a goyishe kopf. You are neither. You are what you make of yourself. Make it good. If you know and like what you are, you are free. I want to tell you now about some of the things you've inherited through your father. I think they will help make you free.

Grandpa Ted Rodd is an ordained Methodist minister. My Grandpa Wulfe Jacobowitz was a rebbe, a teacher, when he arrived in this country in 1888. Now a rebbe isn't quite the equivalent of an ordained minister; he's more the village sage and advisor to whom the villagers look for help and advice in settling family and religious problems. So Grandpa Wulfe was a rebbe in Austria-Hungary

where he was born, and in New York, where he settled. Grandpa Wulfe had unquestioning faith in his God. Popop - my father, Elias, after whom you're named, Eli-- tells this story about Grandpa Wulfe's faith:

It was late Friday afternoon. At sundown the Sabbath would begin. The table was covered with a snowy white cloth, but there was no food in the house nor any money with which to buy it. My Grandma complained to Wulfe. He looked up from his book and said, "Gott vet helfen," which is Yiddish for "God will help." Grandma flounced out, annoyed. Came a knock on the door - a young couple seeking advice. Grandpa heard them out, made his decision. They thanked him, and left.

Grandma, who had been listening outside the door, upbraided Grandpa. "A fine one you are for advising others. Meanwhile your family starves!" And she snatched the cloth from the table. A dollar bill - a small fortune in those days - floated to the floor. The couple had slipped it under the tablecloth. "You see?" said Grandpa Wulfe, smiling, "God will help."

Recently I heard another story about faith. Three clergymen, a rabbi, a minister and an Imam, were walking along a country road beside a pleasant stream after attending an ecumenical seminar. Suddenly a great storm arose. Rain pelted down. The river began rising. A truck came along. "Hop in," called the driver, "this road gets flooded when the river overflows." "Have no fear," replied the three, "God is watching over us." They continued walking.

The rain increased; the river overflowed; the three found themselves in water up to their knees. Along came a boatman. "Climb aboard!"

he called out, "and I'll carry you to safety." "Thank you," they said, "but God will keep us safe."

Soon the water had risen to their chests. A helicopter flew over, dangling a ladder. "Quick!" called the pilot, "grab the ladder or you'll drown!" But the three clergymen waved him away, saying, "God will help us."

And so they drowned.

God was waiting for them when they arrived in Heaven. "How could you abandon us, your true servants on earth?" they asked. "Indeed," said God, "did I not send a truck, a boat and a helicopter? What more do you want?"

This tale intrigues me. Was their faith in God too great? Or too weak to recognize that a miracle might be a truck or a boat or a helicopter, the work of humankind? Or is it that perhaps what we call God is really you and me and all of us? And that it is in us that we should place our faith?

In Jerusalem lives a Christian preacher from Oklahoma, Pastor Bob Lindsay, who preaches the Gospel to all who will listen. He observes that there are three sets of Jews: Jewish Jews, still awaiting the Messiah; Christian Jews, accepting Christ as the Messiah; and Mohammedan Jews who, while accepting such prophets as Abraham and Jesus, claim Mohammed as the last and greatest of the prophets.

All three great religions accept the single God of the Jews, yet each clings stubbornly, foolishly and fatally to its claims of superiority over all the others. Out of unity they have brought disunity. Why? Particularly when the Universe began in unity?

THE BEGINNING

The Beginning? First let's go to the end: Take a piece of cake. You're eating a piece of cake and you're thinking what went into it: flour, water, leavening, shortening, sugar, salt, a few other things, and some kneading and heat. You can do the same with the Universe if you know what it looks like now. Let's try.

You're looking at the current state of the Universe through your 200 inch Mt. Palomar telescope and your 250 foot radio telescope at Jodrell Bank, and you see stars and galaxies flying away from you in all directions. The ones farthest away - about 15 billion light years away, and a light year is the distance that light will travel at 186,000 miles, or 300,000 kilometers, a second in a year - are moving away the fastest. From this you can figure out that they all must have started out from the same place at the same time some 18 or 20 billion years ago, and that what happened was probably a huge explosion - a **BIG BANG**.

Getting to know that took a bit of doing. It wasn't until about 70 years ago - less than the Bible's three score and ten - that we really began to know. But we had a few hints and some good guesses before then.

In 1616 Isaac Newton, a mathematician, was lying under an apple tree in a sunny English meadow, when an apple from the tree dropped on his head. This set him to thinking about why apples fall and why the moon doesn't. From these speculations he developed a mechanical theory about the force of GRAVITY. Newton answered most of the questions we then had about the structure of our Universe, but he left many unanswered. And the more we learned the

more unanswered questions we had.

Exactly 300 years later, in 1916, Albert Einstein answered all those questions with his GENERAL THEORY OF RELATIVITY. It explained gravity in geometric terms; it is the foundation stone on which modern physics and cosmology are based.

One of its most-often-proved laws is that MASS (weight) of a moving body increases with speed, up to a point. At the SPEED OF LIGHT, however, comes an impossibility: the moving body will have infinite mass and thus infinite (no limit) resistance to being moved. It cannot be budged. Therefore it can never reach the speed of light. That's the limit to the speed of matter in our Universe, at least so far as we now know.

From this mass-speed relationship Einstein reasoned as follows: if mass increases with speed, then the increased weight must come from the speed. Speed is (kinetic) ENERGY. Therefore Energy can convert to Mass; they are different forms of the same thing! And he worked out a simple-appearing formula: $M = E/c^2$. Mass equals Energy divided by ^{the} Constant, Speed of Light, c , squared. One of the first things you'll learn when you study algebra is that the formula can just as easily be written $E = Mc^2$ - Energy equals Mass times the square of the Speed of Light. This works out to an enormous figure: 1 kilogram of matter, when fully converted to energy, will yield about 15 billion kilowatts of electricity, about what all the power plants in the United States generate in two months!

On July 16, 1945, at Alamogordo, New Mexico, $E=Mc^2$ was proven correct - the world's first atomic explosion. Unfortunately, on my 33rd birthday, August 6, 1945, we put this awful power to work by

almost wiping out the city of Hiroshima in Japan and about 100,000 of its inhabitants with a single atom bomb. That ended World War II a few days later. Would that we can end all wars without ever again resorting to that force, or any force. Maybe your generation will get a little closer to that hope.

But back to how the Beginning began.

QUANTUM MECHANICS(1926) describes particles of matter interacting with each other in four different ways. These four fundamental forces are called MAGNETISM, GRAVITY, and the STRONG and WEAK nuclear forces. They differ vastly in strength and range: strength by as much as 10 to the 39th power and distance from the length of a proton — maybe a billionth the size of this dot \odot — to the size of the Universe. Can it be shown that all four forces are manifestations of the same UNIFIED force? Like Mass and Energy, perhaps?

Let's see. If we could arrange subnuclear particles into a pattern in which a few basic particles would combine to form all others, and if we could develop a single unified mathematical structure that can describe how the four interact, then we would probably be close to proving to ourselves that the symmetry and order we see in the Universe really exist, and that our concept of the Beginning is correct.

For the last 30 years of his life Einstein tried to unify just two of the forces, gravity and electromagnetism, but failed. But by the 1970's many GRAND UNIFIED THEORIES (GUTs) had been worked out. We're getting closer. In 1969 Steven Weinberg, at Harvard, and a year later Abdus Salam, in London and Trieste, independently developed a theory unifying Electromagnetism with the Weak force. They

evolved a concept called symmetry breaking.

According to many GUTs all four forces are equal and indistinguishable from one another at extremely high temperature and energy levels such as existed in the Beginning. But at the lower temperatures and comparative calm of the Universe at present, symmetry breaking says the forces can be as wildly different as they are now without changing the fundamental relationships that held true at the Beginning. There is, then, no contradiction between then and now.

In 1979, Alan Guth, at Stanford, described mathematically an Inflation theory that explained what happened shortly after the Beginning immediately before the Big Bang. As of the time I write this (February, 1984), here is the state of my knowledge about the state of our knowledge of the Universe and how it began:

In the Beginning was a void, very hot, very dense, about a thousandth the size of a proton, containing all the energy of the universe. As this infinitesimal bit of a dot began to cool, it expanded, the way water does when it turns to ice. I remember our milk used to pop its top when the milkman left it on our doorstep in winter, when the milk froze. But I bet you've never seen a milkman with his horse and wagon. You go down to the corner supermarket and pick your milk in cartons out of the dairy case.

But that's the way the dot expanded. When, after a time so short that it's a decimal point followed by 33 zeros and a 1 part of a second, the dot had cooled to a billion billion billion degrees, it inflated, like a bubble, and all the energies of the four forces contained in it converted into a storm of elementary particles. Within the next fragment of an instant came the explosion, the Big Bang,

that flung the stars and galaxies -- or, rather, the particles that later formed the stars, the galaxies, our world, and us -- out into the void. That was 18 or 20 billion years ago.

To give you some idea of how long ago that was, think of Great Grandma Dudu, my mother, who lived to be 98 years old. (Eli, we have pictures of you with Dudu. If you don't have copies I'll send you some.) If you had about 20 million Dudus each living for 98 years (and incidentally sending you along some of the genes you've inherited from all your ancestors) one after the other, that's how far back the Beginning was.

And it was from that little bit of dot that everything -- everything -- in the Universe has come: Jews, Christians, Mohammedans, blacks, whites, yellows, reds, browns, communists, atheists, Democrats, Republicans, Nazis, Fascists, the good guys and the bad guys, the rocks, the flowers, the rats, the bugs, the birds and the animals. Everything.

But we humans came rather late on the scene. The way the Bible puts it, Elohim didn't create living creatures until the sixth, and last, day of Creation. After which, on the seventh day, Elohim rested. Could it be because we were so cantankerous? (You may notice that I avoid any pronoun when referring to Elohim or God. I see no reason why Elohim couldn't be, for instance, a black female.)

Now listen to how beautifully and simply the Old Testament tells the same story:

"B'rashith barah Elohim eth hashamayim v'eth ha'aretz." In the Beginning Elohim created the Heavens and the Earth; and the Earth was unformed and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of Elohim hovered over the waters; and Elohim said, "let there be light," and there was light.

Well, which version shall we believe?

We don't have to believe either one. We can say, "What we can prove we can ascribe to Science; what we cannot, to God." Or we can take the Bible or the Big Bang on faith. But once we do we are forever barred from questioning it on the evidence, for then we no longer have faith. I ^{therefore} /refuse to accept dogma, whether religious, scientific, or mixed. I keep seeking answers that satisfy me; I do not accept the answers of revealed religion, revealed science, revealed communism. Nor do I attribute to a god what I cannot understand or know, for that is like saying God is ignorance. Just remember that no one can be sure of what happened, and that the "proof" we have comes through machines of our own invention and is filtered through our limited senses of seeing, hearing, feeling and thinking. We may never really know. So be it.

AND LIFE BEGINS

The Bible says that on the fifth day of Creation Elohim created the living creatures of the sea and the birds of the air; and on the sixth day the living land creatures, including male and female human-kind. The Bible has the correct sequence: life did begin in the sea, when a bolt of lightning struck a tidal pool teeming with inert chemicals, causing several of them to combine into the forerunner of a nucleic acid that became, eventually, a single living cell. That happened, we think, some 4.5 billions of years ago.

It has taken most of those few billions of years for human beings to emerge from that first single cell, and it's a good thing we didn't have anything to do with it. For we would have no doubt appointed a committee to study this new phenomenon, which would have led to a government bureau which would have made it important for the bureaucrats to keep that cell exactly as it was, else they would be out of jobs. Luckily, the cell was allowed to make all the mistakes possible, and in this way it evolved, finally, into us. For evolution is mistakes, and out of such mistakes comes progress; and we like to think that we represent progress. We might even be right - if we can keep from annihilating ourselves with our marvelous inventions.

If that first living cell occurred on the fifth day, our first probable direct ancestor, the ramapiths, didn't come along until very late on the sixth day - a mere 14 million years ago. And we, Homo Sapiens, not until the last few seconds of that last day, just half a million years ago. But once we did arrive we moved fast.

That first living cell contained a substance called DNA, deoxyribo-nucleic acid, which instructed the cell how to develop. All things living have DNA - trees, birds, cows, whales and people - with different messages for each individual, of course. You'd look pretty silly with leaves for hair, wouldn't you?

Not that such mistakes didn't happen. It's just that babies with leaves for hair (or two heads or three feet) didn't survive. That's what evolution is about: survival.

So, just as we share a common ancestry with all things living, we cannot survive without the rest of our family. Without animals for meat, without plants for food, without the sun for heat and light - in other words, without all our relatives in the Universe - there could be no us.

This extends even to the games we play. Grandma Laura and I play a lot of bridge, a card game involving four people in a battle of brains and skill. Grandma and I try to outbid and outplay the other pair, and they us, often to the frustration of one or the other pair. But we keep coming back, frustration or not, because without three other players a single bridge player is an impossibility. Like the sound of one hand clapping. We need one another, even in our games.

Some of the ancient rebbes recognized this unity of humankind. There's the story of a heathen who once thought to taunt two great teachers of the Jews. He went to the first one, Shammai, and said, "I will become a Jew if you can teach me the meaning of Judaism while I stand on one foot." Outraged, Shammai chased him from the house. The infidel next approached Hillel, the second great rebbe,

with the same proposal. Hillel smiled. "Love thy neighbor as thyself," he said. "The rest is but commentary."

All ethical religions purport to teach that; few follow it. History is full of massacres by the million, all done in the name of religion by horrible, hideous religious zealots. Sometimes I wonder about the us I believe in. Perhaps, by my writing this letter to you, you will be inspired to do something about it.

But back to bridge. One day I hope we can play it together. Your Uncle Jay did, with Dudu, and a memorable occasion it was. Dudu was 86 years old when she visited us out here in California, and Jay was 14, and a budding bridge player. One afternoon they played in a local tournament as a pair, and did well. In announcing the results the game director said, "And in third place, 100 years of bridge players, Grandma Leah Jacobowitz and her grandson Jonathan!" They had communicated beautifully together.

And that's another thing about us I want to talk about, communicating. In bridge you're allowed but 15 words with which to describe your cards. In language we have hundreds of thousands. But before language we had facial expressions, bodily movements, gestures. If you point at something, I know to look where you're pointing - you're conveying a message. So did early humans. Then came sounds: "Gu," said one hominid, holding his belly. "Gu," replied the other, holding his belly, and off they went looking for food. Thus "gu" came to mean "I'm hungry, let's eat." Or some such; I made that up. But no doubt that's the way language happened.

Not all humans speak the same language, although it would be better for all of us if we did. You remember the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel, how God is supposed to have scrambled the single language of the builders because of jealousy over their erecting so mighty a structure. I find that unworthy of a god, but unfortunately typical of humans to blame our own shortcomings on someone else.

But from time to time one language has dominated. Currently it is English/American, not because it is most flexible and adaptable (it is!), but because England and America have dominated the world scene for the past few hundred years. (I shudder to contemplate a Russian takeover - such a horrendous language, for one thing.)

English borrows words freely from other tongues: knackwurst from German; chutzpah, Yiddish; kapok, Malay; leviathan, Hebrew; bouillon, French; physics, Greek; kayak, Eskimo; pizza, Italian; pug, Hindi; fakir, Arabic; wigwam, Abnaki Indian. Oops! I shouldn't say Indian. The current accepted appellation is native American. But they are no more native Americans than you and I. They walked across the land bridge that existed twice in the past few thousand years from Asia to Alaska, just as our ancestors sailed across the seas from all parts of the world. So we're all Americans, and we have Columbus to blame for calling them Indians - Columbus and the Spanish Inquisition, one of history's grossest religious massacres.

In 1492 Columbus sailed West from Spain to India, for he was sure that the Earth was round and that he could reach India more easily than by sailing East around Africa. His navigators were Jews, eager to escape the slaughter and banishment of all Jews from Spain, decreed for that year. Columbus himself may have been Jewish,

but that has neither been proven nor disproven, at least to my satisfaction. But the Jews who were still alive were banished from Spain and Columbus did reach the New World, and called the natives he found there Indians, and we've stolen from them and borrowed language from them and treated them as inferior beings even to this day. With some exceptions that I'll tell you about later.

But other languages don't borrow as easily as English. The French Academie Francaise is a group of savants charged with keeping their language "pure", to guard it against foreign invaders. (It probably is no accident that chauvinism - excessive, blind loyalty to your own - is named after a Frenchman, Chauvin.) This blind loyalty to their own language gives ^{the} French a devil of a time concocting all-French substitutes, usually of many words, for the one succinct foreign word that does the job so much better.

When the State of Israel was re-established in 1948, after two thousand years, some Jewish religious zealots objected to the use of the "sacred" language of the Bible to order a hot dog and orange drink at the corner stand. Luckily common sense prevailed, and Hebrew matriculated into the 20th Century. The zealots went back to pitching rocks at cars they claimed violated the Sabbath by driving through the streets of Jerusalem on Saturday.

But with all its flexibility, English has some strange quirks. For instance, to make a plural out of a singular noun we add an s, as boy, boys. Then how come one boy eats, and two boys eat? But we have no American Academy to tell us we can't do that, for the minute you impose "necessary" restrictions you begin eating away your liberties. As the French might say, c'est la vie.

But some linguistic aberrations I don't take so lightly, one of them, the sloppy misuse of a precise word. I learned in law school that a judge must be disinterested in order to function fairly - that is, he must have no stake in the outcome of the case he is deciding. But he had better not be uninterested in that case else he won't know what it is he's deciding on. Disinterested has now come to mean uninterested through sloppy writers and a process the rabbes call torah biktuvah, "truth because in writing." We tend to accept the validity of what's in print, particularly when that print cites a supposed authority. For example, my Webster's New Collegiate dictionary defines disinterested as the equivalent of not caring a hoot (in other words, uninterested) and cites C.L. Sulzberger, of the New York Times, for its authority: "...is supremely disinterested in all efforts to find a peaceful solution." Meaning he couldn't care less.

Which is another of my pet peeves. People reverse its meaning. They say "I could care less" when they really mean "I care so little that I couldn't possibly care any less than I do."

There are so many others: quite, which means complete, means only somewhat in "Oh, he's quite a good pianist." Literally means actually, in fact, except when it's used, as it was in this morning's Los Angeles Times, in "There has been literally a litigation explosion in the last decade." Now, I remember that when I was a law clerk back in the early '30s I had to take the junior partner's sister's girdle to New York about once a month because that's about how often it literally exploded from trying to contain her vast bottom. But never did I have to pick the pieces of various law suits off

the walls of a courtroom after they had literally exploded. The writers meant figuratively, not for real, just a figure of speech. But all the ignoramuses are using it that way now, because they see it in print and hear it on TV - torah biktuvah!

All this is not just petulance over sloppiness in language. It goes deeper. If we play monkey sees monkey does; if we blindly repeat what we see in print even when we have our doubts about it; if, without thinking it out for ourselves, we accept as truth everything our leaders tell us is truth, then we have given up our right to be an individual, to make our own decisions in freedom and responsibility, to be happy with ourselves, and thus to stand tall and free.

What then shall you believe about the Beginning, about religion, about science? Not what I tell you, only what you can honestly be satisfied with in your own mind and heart.

CHAPTER TWO

I was the second son and fourth child of Elias (your namesake, Kreinik Eli) and Leah/Jacobowitz. We have three lovely "L"s in our lives: Greatgrandma Leah, Grandma Laura, and Ma Linda. We're lucky.

In 1912 our family home was in Jersey City, N.J., but on August 6th Dudu was on vacation at the seashore, so I was born in Monmouth Memorial Hospital in Long Branch, N.J. Long Branch in those days was "restricted", meaning no Jews allowed, but that didn't stop Popop. He was ever one to stick up for his rights. So we vacationed in Long Branch. But came the eighth day of my life and we had a problem. We didn't have ten adult Jewish males (a minyan) to witness my circumcision (brith).

Let me tell you about the brith. The first Jew was Abraham. He and God made a covenant: all Abraham's male descendants would be circumcised on the eight day of their lives as a sign that they recognized the one God as their god, and for which God would give them all the land of Canaan and be their god for evermore. At least that's what the Bible says. (Modern Israel is part of that ancient land of Canaan - which accounts for the almost fanatic attachment many Jews have for it. Another and stronger reason may be that they have so long been rejected by the rest of the nations that they feel Israel is the only place wherein they can live out their lives, and consciences, as Jews. It is their last place of refuge. As Jews.) (Saul Abraham is named after Jew #1 and Laura's father, Abraham Danziger.)

So to carry out the Covenant with God I was to be circumcised in the presence of ten adult male Jews. (There was no lack of male chauvinism in Biblical times, about 6,000 years before Chauvin was

even born. Until only recent times, only Jewish boys were accorded the rite of passage known as bar mitzvah [son of the commandment] at the age of 13, making them officially adults, and thus responsible for their own sins and relieving that burden from their fathers. Nowadays even some orthodox congregations allow bat mitzvahs [daughter of the commandment] according females the same privileges and responsibilities.)

That was a long parenthesis, but I'm back to August 6, 1912, and Popop searching the streets of Long Branch for Jews. Some ^{men} he asked threatened him with mayhem. A few glared at him and stalked away without answering. Finally he found one Jew, who agreed to gather several more and join Popop as soon as possible. Alas, after an hour, they were still one short, and Popop was still searching. Along came a tall man wearing cowboy boots and a ten-gallon hat - a most unlikely prospect. Popop approached him. "Pardon me," he said, "but are you a Jew?" "And what if I am?" said the man menacingly. "If you are," replied Popop, "we need you for a minyan. My new son's brith."

"Well why didn't you say so!" roared the man, clapping Popop so hard on the back that he almost fell over. "Here I am all the way from Texas just in time for a brith! Mazeltov!"

So I had a proper minyan and a proper brith.

Now Popop was famous for his embellished stories, but Dudu assured me, when I was old enough to be told the story, that Popop indeed had searched the wilderness for Jews. And I believe it, for it was typically Popop. He knew what he was, he had pride in himself, he was a truly religious man even while he observed the trappings and rituals that have so obscured the real meaning of religion.

And you have some of his genes.

You also have his last name, Jacobowitz. The owitz part means son of, as McCarthy means son of Carthy. In a land full of short pronounceable names (like Rodd) I was often tempted to shorten mine. As with Shakespeare's rose, I smell the same with or without my witz. But I never did, because of pride in what Popop and Dudu had made the name stand for in our town. Which is not a valid reason: credit by association is as unreasonable as guilt by association. Not all Italians are geniuses because Galileo was, nor are all Germans fiends because Hitler was.

When Dudu and Popop married, in 1906, they settled in Jersey City, where Popop and his brothers had established a wholesale and retail tobacco business. There was no synagogue in the Bergen section where they lived. Popop set about correcting that: he became chairman of the building committee. When their babies began arriving, and no Hebrew school for them to attend, Dudu became president of the ladies auxiliary. Her belly big with my brother Bud, and pushing Ruth and Miriam in a baby carriage, Dudu went from Jewish door to Jewish door gathering pledges and money. The synagogue was built, and a few years later, the school. Ruth and Miriam were among its first pupils, and Bud (Eugene) and I in its first graduating class. We took our Hebrew education five afternoons a week, after public school, and we were still pretty good streetball players along with our neighbor kids.

Bud and I, and a cousin also named Norman Jacobowitz (after the same ancestor) took turns reading the weekly portion from the Torah - the five Books of Moses - in the original, at our young peoples'

Saturday morning services. These hand-lettered sheepskin scrolls were replicas of the ancient scrolls, with no vowels, no punctuation and no sentence division, and no musical markings to guide us in our chanting. 'Tweren't easy. But it paid off when Bud and I were bar-mitzvahed - two years apart. Each of us read the full weekly portion aloud before the whole congregation, and the weekly portion from the Prophets. Only the Shamus - beadle - the rabbi and a few of the elders knew the original by heart, or could read it, yet you should have heard the rapping from all over the congregation when Bud and I inevitably made a mistake. Those old boys were following us in their completely printed texts, and they weren't going to let us get away with anything. I think this says something about Jews, and about Americans, too: If you hold yourself out as superior, the world will hold you strictly to your own estimate. Jews made the mistake of claiming to be God's chosen people. All the unchosen people have, ever since, never let us make the human errors they do. They vote to eject Israel from the UN for retaliating against Arab terrorism, they condemn the United States for fighting an evil war in Vietnam, yet the French walked away from Indo-China and the Russians invaded Afghanistan with almost no ripples of any consequence.

Many years later, when Bud and I had children of our own, we had the joy of again "honoring our father and mother" when we took turns, again, reading from the scroll at Temple in Englewood, where we all had become members. The Saturday before Popop died, I had the honor. Appropriately, the older son had it on the Saturday of Popop's death. I remember taking his warm hand in mine, and he

said, "Thank you, thank you, you and Bud, for having given me so much pleasure."

In Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, Antonius speaks over the body of the slain Caesar: "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones; so let it be with Caesar."

In ^{George and Ira} Gershwin's Porgy and Bess, Porgy sings, "It ain't necessarily so." With Popop and Dudu the good lives on, in their example of truth and right, in the work of their hands and minds. ¶ They left unknown "bank accounts" of love. Your uncle Jay recently discovered one in the strangest of places.

No ¶ He was on a sales trip in New Jersey. In Jersey City he was talking to the owner of a chain of stores when suddenly the man stopped him. "What did you say your name was?" he asked. "Jacobowitz. Jonathan Jacobowitz." "Any relation to Leah Jacobowitz?" "My grandmother," said Jay. "I knew her well," said the man. "A great lady. She and my mother helped start the Home for Orphans and Aged here." The good we do does live on. (Oh, yes, Jay got the order.)

I'm having a great deal of fun writing these things to you, and a flood of memories. One of them is about arbess - chick peas, garbanzo beans - that the Shamus used to serve along with the schnapps at the Saturday afternoon study sessions. I would occasionally attend one, more for the arbess and the drop of schnapps that Popop placed on my tongue than for the intricate arguments of the old men.

About a year ago I spotted some 15-year-old bourbon whiskey in

a supermarket that was about to close its doors, and next to the bourbon some 16-year-old rye whiskey. I bought a bottle of each and sampled them both when I got home. The bourbon had Jack Daniels beat all hollow. But before rushing back to buy more, I sipped the rye. The strangest feeling came over me. I knew this whiskey from somewhere, but I hadn't had a drink of rye in 45 years! And then my memory brought back the dusty smell of old books, and old men in long grey beards, and the taste of arbes! That was it! The schnapps I had tasted as a small boy was, I now remembered, Old Overholt, a rye. I remember we called it Old Overcoat, and it's still being made, and tastes as good as my memory says it did. But it doesn't quite compare to my lovely 16-year-old. I bought up every bottle I could find, of which, sadly, there were not many. I got the story from the bottler: his father had bought a few barrels of the whiskey in the course of business and had forgotten about it. Recently they had bottled it and sold it to two outlets. But that was it - no more, not ever. Ah. If I haven't finished it all by the time you're old enough to taste it - no, that's unlikely. Maybe I'd better leave you one bottle in my will.

But my parents' good works weren't exclusively for Jewish causes. The IRS once examined Popop's books because his deductions for charity seemed abnormally high. Since I had helped prepare the return, I sat in at the examination. The IRS man turned page after page of Popop's check stubs: Yeshivah, Good Will, Zionist Organization of America, Catholic Charities, Lubovitcher Rebbe, Salvation Army.... The examiner slowly shook his head and softly closed the checkbook.

"Hell," he said, "you didn't take off enough!" They never again questioned Popop's returns.

Nor did his good works extend just to charity. In a city dominated by the corrupt political machine of Mayor Frank Hague, Popop had ample opportunity to express his fierce love of American democracy. With his flair for words, he wrote constantly to the local Jersey Journal decrying the corruption in the city, the graft and the lack of progress. (I think some member of the family has a scrapbook with some of these letters and news reports. I must ask about them.)

Then came a more serious, a more fundamental problem. Hague barred certain persons from speaking in the city, among them Presidential candidate Norman Thomas, Socialist; Dorothy Thompson, writer; Jeff Burkitt, Southern political activist. When informed that this was against the law, Hague made his infamous "In Jersey City, I am the law!" statement.

Lawsuits were filed, but lawsuits take time. Popop took a direct approach. He announced that the hall of his office building was open to all speakers. And they came, and they spoke, and others were inspired to follow Popop's lead. The ban was overturned, but Popop paid a price. Suddenly his building seemed to violate every health and safety code on the books. But this didn't decrease its value. No. Suddenly its assessment rose outrageously, and Popop's taxes skyrocketed. I had been admitted to the Bar by then and we appealed the case to the Tax Board. There I brought out the whole story of the threats and intimidations, the job offers in return for silence, the disparity in assessments between our building and comparable buildings. We won a partial reduction of the increase.

Had we followed a perfectionist's script we would have fought on for a complete reversal, but living in a non-perfect world we took our part victory and went home. Fanatics, perfectionists, zealots, take heed. Even in partial good there is good. Just as the essence of evolutionary progress is mistakes, so the essence of democracy is compromise. But sensible, honest compromise.

Being a Jacobowitz in Jersey City had other advantages. One evening toward the end of dinner I was sent out to the corner store for ice cream. My younger brother Billy (Wilfred, same as your Dad's middle name, after great-great-grandpa Wulfe. He died in 1930 from diphtheria, at the age of 12, something children don't succumb to any more) came along with me. When I returned home with the ice cream there was no Billy! Depositing the carton on the front stair landing, and without a word to the waiting family, I dashed out in search of my little brother. The first thing the family knew anything was wrong was when they discovered the melted ice cream running all over the landing. Then the phone rang.

"Jacobowitz?" Popop said yes. "You have a redhead named Billy?" "Yes, yes!" "Well, this is the Ocean Avenue Police Station. Come and get him before we run out of ice cream cones!"

Popop found Billy perched high on the Sergeant's counter, his grin almost obscured by ice cream. "However did you figure out to call us?" said Popop. The sergeant grinned. "A bright redhead like that, his Pop's name is Elias, we figured it could only be Elias Jacobowitz!"

So how could I change my name after that?

Thinking about it now I realize my real reason must have been that I didn't want to insult my father. And then, after he was no longer alive to feel insulted, I liked myself and what I was as a human and not just as a Jew, and to hell with the ignoramuses. But for you two it may not be that clear cut.

For thousands of years the world has been fed lies about Jews: They killed Christ; they have horns; they use the blood of Christian babies in Passover sacrifices; they are money grubbers, they lie, they cheat and swindle.... The list is almost endless, and people who have been brought up on such lies can't escape an automatic conditioned reflex on hearing a Jewish name: "Oh, oh, Jew. Bad."

You should not have to go through that merely because of a name. If you do cheat, and lie, and all the rest, then be condemned for what you do, not for having a Jew for a parent. So you have my complete agreement if you choose to do as your mother did when she kept her maiden name. The name Rodd is not a handicap, and after all, a Jacobowitz gene by any other name (hey, chauvinist!).

THE VIEW FROM DANZIG

Until about 1800 most Jews had no surnames. They were usually known by their first name, "son of" their father's first name, as to this day, in Synagogue, I am known as Nachman ben Elijah, Norman the son of Elias. But around 1800 most European countries demanded that Jews take surnames. Never ones to miss a chance to make a buck, the authorities sold pleasant-sounding surnames, and if you couldn't pay they assigned something like Eselkopf (donkey head), or whatever. I guess that our family head at that time was known as, say, Joseph ben Jacob, Joseph the son of Jacob. Son of in the East European tongue of the country, was owitz, and that's how Jacobowitz was born.

But many surnames were taken from the places where people dwelt: Berliner, from Berlin; Danziger from Danzig, in Poland. Which is no doubt how Grandma Laura's family name came into being: Danziger. (Incidentally, my younger sister, Toddy, is married to George Rosenstein [rose stone, in German] for which one of his ancestors must have paid a pretty price.)

Grandma Laura's parents, Abraham and Ella Danziger, had five small children in the winter of 1913, in Radom, Poland, when a band of drunken Polish peasants swept through the Jewish ghetto, smashing, looting and burning. The mob came upon the little building-supply store owned by the Danzigers. Grandpa Abe was a living ^{stereotype of a Jew:} refutation of the official Polish / a craftsman and builder, not a money lender; a lean and tall blue-eyed blond, not a cringing, shuffling subhuman; a fighter, not a meek student. The mob must

have taken particular delight in destroying what he and Grandma Ella had built.

The noise of their destruction woke Grandpa Abe. Grabbing a club, he dashed for the door to the store. Frantically, Grandma Ella clung to him. "They'll kill you!" she cried, "stay, stay." Finally he subsided, and sat wearily in a chair. He ignored the tea Grandma Ella offered him. "We are getting out of this Hell!" he said. "We are going to America!"

They left Poland just in time to escape World War I. They arrived Russelton, in a little mining town outside Pittsburgh, PA, where Grandpa Abe got work mining coal deep in the earth. Along with lots of other Polish-speaking immigrants. At least they could understand the language.

Grandma Ella began a buying service. That sounds fancy, but her's wasn't. What she did was take the orders and measurements of the coal miners' illiterate wives, trudge into Pittsburgh, buy what they had ordered, and trudge back under heavy load. Occasionally she'd get a ride from a passing horse and wagon. For this service she added a surcharge /^{for} each of her customers, and in this way she helped support her large - and growing - family. For in the Summer of 1915, along came their sixth child, Grandma Laura.

I said "Summer of 1915" because there's a story that goes with that birthday: Laura and my sister, Toddy, were one day disputing as to who was the older - that's older, not younger. Laura claimed a birth date of September 29, 1914, but had no proof to back her claim. Toddy had her birth certificate showing April 10, 1915. To resolve any doubt, and without telling anyone, Toddy wrote to Pennsylvania

for a copy of Laura's birth certificate. When it arrived there was quiet pandemonium, for not only was the year not 1914, but 1915; not only was the day not September 29, but August 30; and not only was the baby's name not Laura, but LUCY! It was thus that we were able to stage the only true surprise birthday party in existence.

On August 30, 1940, I took Laura out to dinner. Meanwhile Toddy and George had had a huge blowup made of the real birth certificate, which they hung on the wall of our apartment. The whole family, and the certificate, were waiting in the dark when I opened our door and turned on the lights.

SURPRISE!!!

After the tumult had died down Laura told us all what she remembered about her strange birthday. When the family moved to Cleveland, Ohio, Laura was ready for enrollment in school, but the school needed to know her age. Grandma Ella had to think about that.

"Let's see. We arrived in America just before the war. The war was in 1914. So, 1914."

"But Ma, what day in 1914?"

More thinking. "Hm. First is Passover, then Succoth, then seven weeks later is Shavuoth. You were born seventeen days after Shavuoth, which makes it...."

But the Hebrew calendar is a lunar calendar and doesn't coincide with the standard calendar from year to year. When Grandma Ella couldn't figure out what date 17 days after Shavuoth had been in 1914, Laura decided to pick her own date. This is how she did it:

School starts early in September. It takes time to make friends. If I make it too soon after school starts I won't have enough friends

to come to my birthday party. But by September 29th.... So she picked September 29th.

The Lucy part was equally as casual and happy. Along about the time of her birth, Laura's elder sisters, Frances, Ethel and Helen had been reading a lovely book whose heroine was named Lucy. When their parents decided to name the new baby Leah (the same as my mother, and spelled the same in both Hebrew and English), the girls assured the doctor that Lucy was the correct English translation. So Lucy it was on the birth certificate. Then the girls read another book.... (It wasn't until after that memorable birthday party that Laura learned about Lucy/Leah.)

From Cleveland the Danzigers moved to Brooklyn, NY. In the American culture of my generation Brooklyn is an automatic laugh line. Its inhabitants are either zany or uncouth, or both.

On December 31, 1938, Laura left Brooklyn to come to a New Year's Eve party in - for the first time in her life - Jersey City. There we met. I took one look at this tall, slender, dark-haired, well-shaped girl dancing there in that living room, and something hit me. I said aloud, in admiration, "Some coefficient of muliebrity," a phrase I had read just that afternoon. She turned to me. "Muliebrile, indeed!" said she, giving me what-for in my own words. (feminine, femininity)

"Where are you from?" I said. "Brooklyn," said she. "Brooklyn!?" said I, "she comes from Brooklyn and speaks English?!"

A week later we were engaged. Two weeks later I introduced her to my parents, having picked her up at Bear Mountain Inn where she had been winter vacationing. As we walked into my parents' house,

Laura was wearing jodhpurs and smoking a cigarette in a long holder. Remember, this is January, 1939. My father took one look at the cigarette, one look at the pants, swallowed and said, "Welcome. Any friend of my son is a friend of mine." First impressions, you see, aren't always right.

On our first date I took her, along with several other couples, to a posh restaurant in the Oranges famous for its lobster - one of her favorite foods, I had found out. (Having been raised kosher I had never tasted lobster.) The meal was a success, particularly the huge lobster, listed on the menu at \$2. It was so big Laura shared it with some of the others. Then came the check. I hadn't noticed that after the \$2, was the tiny word "up", and Laura's up was \$7. My sure cash earnings from my practice at that time were \$15. a week. With the rest of what we had eaten, that blew my whole week's earnings. I've been trying to get it back ever since. I expect I have.

We were married at the new home of Laura's brother, Moe, in Flushing, NY, on December 26, 1939. That was the first day of Laura's winter vacation, hence the most sensible day we could pick. Our wedding march was a phonograph record ^{ing} /of Bruno Walter leading the NY Philharmonic in the Second Movement of Beethoven's Fifth.

Our 3-room apartment cost \$35. a month, our twice-a-week cleaning lady \$1. per half day, and tennis at the County park was free. With my certain \$15. per week, and Laura's \$40. a week as a buyer at Abraham & Strauss in Brooklyn, we were rich!

* * *

That first year, 1940, Bud and I, along with all the other eligible young men, registered for America's first peacetime draft. Bud drew

a very low number, I a very high one. Bud usually got the dirty end of the stick as compared to me. It was our job to keep the coal-fired furnace going in our big Harrison Avenue house. I kept "forgetting", and Bud, being older and stronger - and impatient with my malingering - usually cleaned out the mess I had left and kindled a new fire. So it was with the draft, although this time not my fault. He, unmarried at the time, and with a low number, was in the Army Signal Corps by early 1941. My number wasn't even reached for classification until late in '42. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, he was on his way to the Pacific with a mobile radar unit, and I was trying to find something more useful to do than practicing law in Jersey City.

The American Women's Volunteer Service had a radio operators' course open to all those who would take jobs in essential industry after completing the course. Our instructor was an old ship's operator named Al Burnham. When our class graduated he urged me to take the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) examination for a first class telephone license, which would qualify me to run any transmitter in the country and be helping essential industry. I applied to the FCC, and on the appointed day sat for the first of the five exams. One after the other I completed them successfully. At 4 PM the examiner and I were the only ones left in the room. "Well," he said, with a twinkle in his eye, "one more to go. You up to it?" I nodded.

At the five o'clock deadline I put the last resistor and condenser symbols on my schematic of a complete broadcast transmitter, and handed him my paper. He looked long and hard at it. "I've never seen one quite like it," he said, "but by golly, it'll work!"

I had my license, and on the strength of it I soon had a job at New York's classical music station, WQXR, but at the 57th and 5th studios, not the transmitters. On Wednesdays through Sundays I spent the 4 to midnight shift playing classical records and getting paid for it! Mondays, Tuesday, and mornings from 10 to 2, I took care of my law practice.

But I began to have feelings of guilt. My older brother was somewhere in the Pacific; a madman with the avowed purpose of wiping out all Jews in the world was killing Jews and non-Jews by the millions, and I was playing records in perfect safety. I inquired about an overseas spot with the OWI (Office of War Information), but they told me I was doing just as much for the war effort staying right where I was, minding my records and my family. So I stayed.

Your father arrived on June 13th (Dudu's birthday, too) 1942. In 1943 we were able to buy our first house, in Englewood, NJ, across the George Washington Bridge from upper Manhattan. I now made the circuit: Englewood - bus to Jersey City - Tubes and subway to the studio - subway and bus to Englewood, arriving about 1 AM. I came down with a series of allergies, and one day, in Jersey City, stopped in to talk to my doctor friend, Sid Arbeit. After checking me over he said, "Try getting some sleep, Norm." No more allergy. Sid is the one who told me, after I complained of a heavy cold, "I can give you medicine, in which case it will take a week to cure. Or you can let Nature take its course, in which case it will take seven days." We've been following Sid's advice ever since.
* * *

Grandma Ella, despite the rough times she had gone through, never lost her belief in the goodness of humans. When I was courting Laura, the Danzigers had a candy store on Ralph Avenue in Brooklyn,

around the corner from their Eastern Parkway apartment. One day she was alone in the store when a stranger came in to use the public pay phone. She couldn't help overhearing him: he was pleading for money, he was in desperate trouble. But the answer must have been "no", for he hung up and began walking out. Grandma Ella said, "How much do you need?" He told her. She took the money out of her apron pocket and handed it to him. His mouth fell open. "But you don't even know me!" he said. "I know you're in trouble," she said, "that's enough. You'll pay me back." He did. "And he wasn't even a Jew," said Grandma Ella.

This open-heartedness must be part of Laura's heritage, for her home has ever been a place of refuge for those in need. It began in Englewood, shortly after we moved in. Down the street from us lived the Bronks, descendants of the family that once owned most of New York's Bronx - the ks eventually became x. Their daughter, Minette, was married to Ken Struve, who was overseas at war. Minette and her little boy had had to move in with her folks. But she and her mother didn't get along. Minette and the baby moved in with us. After all, we had a spare bedroom. They stayed for many months, and I don't remember any problems arising.

Similarly, my aunt, Tiana (auntie Anna) found a haven in our home after she'd separated from her husband. And my aunt Nettie came to us in Tiburon, California after her husband died. And in just a week from now we're acquiring a 19 year old college student whose parents, because of a job change, are moving to Thousand Oaks, a couple of hundred miles away. Our young lady will stay until the end of the semester. And we met her parents across a

bridge table a mere few months ago. (Some of our best friends are bridge players.)

But our prize guest was Grandma Ella herself. When Grandpa Abraham died, Grandma moved in with us, to our huge ex-carriage-house in Tenafly, NJ. We had a live-in housekeeper, Carrie Mills, three growing sons, at least one Alfa Romeo plus other more mundane automobiles, and too many cooks.

B.E. (before Ella) Laura did most of the cooking, with Carrie occasionally doing some mild soul food. Sometimes Laura and I would be away at a weekend bridge tournament. On Friday evening Carrie would cover her head with a white shawl, light the Sabbath candles, and say a blessing over them, to keep the Sabbath spirit for our boys. Another great lady, Carrie. But when Grandma Ella arrived, the kitchen became too small.

One morning Laura came downstairs very early to make herself a cup of coffee. Grandma Ella was showing Carrie how to make gefülte fish (Yiddish for stuffed fish). She gently began edging Laura, with her hip, toward the breakfast room, saying, "Whatever you want, Carrie and I can get it. You're the lady of the house, sit down." (Understand, Grandma Ella was fluent in Yiddish and Polish, but spoke English with a pronounced accent and sometimes remarkable syntax. My favorite of her expressions was "What do I didn't done for that man!")

Laura gave in good naturedly, and from then on stayed out of the kitchen. But bridge and visiting weren't enough; she decided to go back to work. Your Dad was already in college and Ira and Jay were being amply taken care of by Grandma and Carrie. So off she went.

She took a job with an audiologist - one who tests hearing and fits and sells hearing aids. She did the books, the secretarial work, and an occasional hearing test, and enjoyed being back at work. One thing disturbed her: the business was factoring its accounts receivable, with its own accountant, at an unconscionable rate.

Businesses factor accounts when they can't wait for the customer to pay; they need the money now to pay bills and buy more merchandise to sell. For this they pay the legal rate of interest - 6% a year in those days - plus a factoring fee whose amount depended on how badly they needed the money. Laura's boss needed it desperately; he was paying through the nose.

In the early days of our first record pressing plant I had factored our accounts, and it had saved the life of our young, growing, but cash-starved business. So when Laura suggested we factor her boss's accounts at a straight 6% per year, I agreed. Our savings were then earning 4%; factoring would increase that by half.

So Laura became the only employee I ever heard of who factored her employer's accounts receivable.

If you get the impression that ours is a family of saints, it ain't necessarily so.

A partnership with a junior partner is no partnership. A marriage with a dominant partner is no marriage, it is a master-servant relationship. A husband and wife owe each other absolute loyalty and trust. To question in silence each other's motives can destroy that trust. Knowingly to ignore such faults diminishes the partnership, yet to confront and accuse each other can destroy the partners. Is

there then no way to improve a marriage without impairing it?

Your father once accused us of giving him a false impression of married life. "You never quarreled," he told Laura, "and married couples do quarrel."

We did on occasion, David - usually my fault - but never in front of you children. And truly rarely, for I have always, without being conscious of it, accepted Laura completely. If she did it, it had to be right. That was the Laura I married. Not until the first time I said to myself, "Now why did she say that?" did there come a crack in my unquestioning loyalty.

Of course, from there it grew. When I first asked an out-loud "why?" I found that Laura had, from almost the beginning, suppressed her resentments of the things I did that irked her. Over the last several years, as we've both gotten older and more irascible, we have yet been able to be "normal", and shout and scream at each other - but without destroying each other. You know what helped? A double solitaire game we play called "Spite and Malice". Each plays so as to get his own "money cards" out before the other while at the same time to prevent the other from getting rid of his/her money cards. We use all the foul language on each other that we would never dream of using on our worst enemies. It acts as a safety valve for us, a kind of human catalytic converter to keep our atmosphere pollution free. We find we still like each other.

Writing this letter to you has helped me, too. In researching what we humans have been doing to our own relatives - and that includes every living thing in the universe - in the name of religion, I have come across such monstrous evil that anything

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I might have done to Laura, or she to me, is utterly insignificant. Yet to congratulate myself on being so much less evil than the rest of my universal family is to come to terms with evil, and that we can never do with impunity.

CHAPTER THREE

With four bright, active youngsters filling the house, Dudu and Popop found a marvelously democratic way to help them maintain discipline - a Family Court. Once a week*the three of us not on trial became judge, prosecutor or defense counsel - we each took turns. One major offense defeated the system, however, for all four of us were the culprits.

In our living room sat a sad sofa with sagging springs. One of us had the brilliant idea of propping up the worst spring with Popop's black silk high hat. It didn't work, and we were all up on charges at that week's Court. Nor did our defense of ignorance of the weakness of the hat get us off. Said Prosecutor Dudu, "You are all too smart not to know the hat would be crushed," and Judge Popop agreed with her. We were all duly punished.

I don't remember my first trial as defense attorney, but I suspect ^{what} it was/convincing my folks I'd end up as a lawyer. I must have been all of 5 or 6 years old. The current malfeator on trial was my sister Miriam. I*offered no rebuttal of the facts nor any brilliant statement of the law. All I said was, "Miriam's a redhead, and redheads have quick tempers, so she didn't realize what she was doing." Acquittal. I had just invented the defense of diminished capacity that Dan White's lawyers would use some sixty years later in getting him a ridiculously short jail sentence for the deliberate murders of San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk. Maybe I shouldn't have invented it?

I did end up as a lawyer, but I sure took a roundabout way of *Dudu's memoirs differ. Each was judge for a week. Ruth was defense counsel, not I. Again, "eye witness testimony."

getting there.

I graduated grammar school in June, 1924, just before my twelfth birthday. I got a job for the summer delivering finished garments for Koobie the tailor, for 25¢ per day. I was not a very good delivery boy. I lasted one week.

I graduated high school in June, 1928, just before my sixteenth birthday. I had no idea what I wanted to be. I got a job with James E. Sweetman & Co., resident buyers, in New York's garment district, running from manufacturer to manufacturer to make sure our customers' orders were being expeditiously processed. Once a week, on salesmen's mornings, I was the keeper of the gate, seeing that the salesmen were admitted to our buyers in the proper order of their arrival.

That Summer our streetball club ran a raffle to raise money for equipment. One salesmen's morning I had a book of raffle tickets with me. Amazingly, I sold out within minutes. Every salesman bought. At the end of the week I was fired. It wasn't until years later that it dawned on me why: the salesmen and my boss thought I was collecting graft in return for favors at the gate. How naive can a sixteen-year-old be?

Bud, after graduating high school, had gone on to Cooper Union Institute of Technology in New York City. Admission was by competitive exam to the tuition-free College. I, too, passed the exam, taking a course in electrical engineering.

I completed the first year. There was a rumor that, of the six graduates (out of fifty who had entered as freshmen) that year, five got jobs. The sixth one was rumored to be a Jew. I didn't wait

around to find out if the rumor was true. I knew the reputations for discrimination of the only few companies hiring engineers in that Great Depression. I decided that this was no place for a nice Jewish boy named Jacobowitz. I borrowed the tuition from Tiana and enrolled in the John Marshall College of Law, on the second floor of an office building on Journal Square in Jersey City.

I got a job with Bob Brenner, of Ziegener & Brenner, lawyers, at 75 Montgomery Street in Jersey City. Bob was the older brother of Lou Brenner, also a lawyer, who is married to my sister Ruth. August Ziegener, distinguished looking, grey-haired, with piercing grey eyes, was that rarity in Frank Hague's all-Democrat bailiwick, a Republican with a job as Judge. My salary was \$5. a week. Cash. (It grew to \$15. a week soon after - the highest-paid law clerk in the County.)

By day I researched law, worked on briefs, and expedited girdle repairs. By night I shone in class, because I often had only recently been researching the very points our professors were trying to drum into our skulls. And I had to be right, for I was doing it for real.

One early triumph I'll never forget: In a class on wills and estates, the case under discussion involved a promise by the deceased testator. The testimony by the claimant was strong and involved a number of transactions he had had with the dead man. The law in the case was duly expounded by the Judge, and after we had finished discussing that, the Prof asked, "Can anyone tell me what's wrong with this case?"

Up popped my hand. "Section Four of the Evidence Act!" I shouted. "Right!" said the Prof. "Tell us why, Jacobowitz." So I did: Unless the estate had previously opened the door by testimony as to what

had transpired between decedent and this claimant, the claimant was barred from testifying about the conversations. In the absence of the dead man, it was hearsay.

Hearsay also arises when someone testifies as to what he was told (by one of the participants in a conversation or happening) occurred at that conversation or happening. His story is second hand. "Were you there?" "No." Hearsay. Inadmissible.

We all know how a story changes, gets embellished, when it is passed from mouth to ear. It never, repeat, never, comes out the same at the end. Even those with the best intentions make alterations. This danger to truth was graphically impressed on us in our first session in Evidence. It's probably a standard procedure in every Evidence class in the country.

The Prof is lecturing. Suddenly the door bangs open. A man enters, rushes over to one of the students, gestures at him, shouts some words at him, commotion ensues, and the man runs out. After the class has quieted down, the Prof starts questioning each one of us in turn: what happened?

There was one man; there were two men. He had a gun; he flashed a knife. He threatened the student; he hit the student. He was short and slender; he was tall and slender - (slender he probably was.) And so on. There were almost as many versions as there were students.

And then the Prof explained. The invading student (Pat Kiley, it was) came in and took his seat. We all looked sheepish. "Let that be a profound lesson to you," said the Prof. "If eyewitness testimony is this unreliable, think how completely untrustworthy hearsay evidence must be."

I was admitted to the New Jersey Bar at the April, 1936 term, not quite 24 years of age. The morning after I returned from the swearing in ceremonies in Trenton, the State Capitol, Bob Brenner said, "Congratulations. You remember old Tom, my father's coal truck driver?" I did. "Well, his case comes up tomorrow morning. You're defending him." "On what?" "Car theft." "Oh," I said.

I spent the afternoon with Tom in Counsel's room at the County jail where he was being held in lieu of bail. "Counsellor" - what a thrill that first time I was so addressed.

Tom's defense was simple. After Max Brenner died Tom had worked as an auto mechanic for various repair shops. The last one he had worked for turned out to be a car stealing ring, and Tom was swept up with the gang. The story made sense to me. This hulking black man, slow of speech, and probably of mind, was no sophisticated car thief. I told him I'd see him in court in the morning.

The gang's case was first on the list, but something had happened. They had made a deal with the Prosecutor, copping a plea to a lesser offense, and Tom was now the only one left to be tried. I asked that the gang leader be brought to court, and we began trial.

The Prosecutor put in his case. The car named in the charges was a 1932 grey Ford sedan. The arresting officers told of raiding the gang's garage and arresting everyone in it, including Tom, surrounded by stolen cars.

I didn't bother to cross-examine, for the Prosecutor had made a fatal error: nowhere in any of the proof or testimony had there been mention of the grey '32 Ford. When the prosecution rested I moved that the case be taken from the jury. "Not one word," I said, "has

been offered concerning the grey '32 Ford named in the charges. So far as we know it was never even stolen."

The judge looked at me long and steadily, then glanced toward the Prosecutor, who stood open-mouthed. Was that a smile I saw the judge trying to conceal? Finally he said, "I think I will allow the jury to decide that as a question of fact. Motion denied."

My first witness was the gang leader, who had voiced nothing but contempt for the cops for arresting Tom as part of the gang. "Nah," he said, "Tom wasn't no part of the operation, he just worked on whatever needed fixing." "Nah, not on salary. I paid him by the job."

"Oh? About how much did you pay him for a valve job?"

"He couldn't do no valve job," said this white leader of a gang of thieves. I let it rest there.

I put Tom on the stand. He denied knowing that the cars he had worked on had been stolen. He was just a mechanic, had never stolen a car in his life. His answers were slow, he appeared honest but not very bright. "Your witness," I said to the Prosecutor.

Came the bombshell: a signed confession. He had worked on the cars "after they were stolen." And at the bottom was this sentence in awkwardly formed, but admittedly his, handwriting: "This is a true and voluntary confession." And he had signed it.

Well! If I didn't knock this out my man was a goner, evidence or no evidence about a grey '32 Ford.

So on re-direct I did a little leading. "Tom," I said, "when the detectives were asking you all these questions, did they ask you just to tell them what had happened or did they say something like, 'Did

you help hot wire the cars or did you work on them only after they were stolen?' Something like that?"

"Somethin' like that. I said 'after' they were stolen."

"But did you know they were stolen cars?"

"Naw. I never knew, till the cops came."

"And that sentence at the bottom. Did they spell out for you what to write when you put down, 'This is a true and voluntary confession?'"

"Yessuh."

"Tom, spell 'voluntary.'"

Tom just shook his head.

There was no re-cross. The defense rested. We summed up.

I pointed out to the jury that Tom had been a simple mechanic who happened to be working, not for the Packard people, but for what turned out to be a gang of thieves. But a part of that gang? No way!

By then it was after four o'clock, but I didn't have to wait long: within an hour came the verdict: Not Guilty.

Afterwards I stopped by at the jail to talk to Tom - he wasn't to be released until morning. Paper shuffling. "Tom," I said, "why didn't you tell me about that confession?"

"I forgot." He grinned at me.

"Tom, spell 'voluntary.'" This time he laughed. "Counsellor, I went as far as tenth grade in high school."

In 1936 that was an adequate answer: by tenth grade you had damn ^{better} well/be able to spell simple words like voluntary. Today? I shudder at what teachers, let alone professionals and college grads think is the proper way to spell.

I knew I had deliberately worked on the prejudices of that all-

white jury. They wanted to believe that this ignorant black man was too stupid to be part of a sophisticated ring of thieves, this black moron who couldn't even spell 'voluntary.' But knowing now that I, too, had been conned by Tom - I began to have pangs of conscience. What was my duty as an officer of the Court? It bothered me all night, but in the morning I knew that I would say nothing. Justice had been done in the end. Even if that justice was based on the injustice of blind prejudice. Tom was no car thief.

There's an ego-satisfying sequel. A few days later I was in the same courtroom before the same judge. He motioned me toward the bench, leaned over, and said, "Congratulations, young man. I came within an Ace of granting your motion the other day, but I figured you could handle it on your own. Glad you did. Did you more good that way." "Thank you, Judge," I said.

It isn't until just now, recalling that trial, that several thoughts come to mind. One, did the Judge deny my motion because he didn't want to embarrass an experienced Prosecutor in favor of a wet-behind-the-ears tyro? Two, Bob Brenner took quite a chance with a man's freedom, springing the case on me with such short notice. And three, I never received one penny for my efforts. But no matter about that last. Every lawyer is under obligation to give a portion of his time and resources in the service of the public. I just began doing my share a bit earlier than most, through no decision of my own.

PIONEERS

In Denver, Colorado, around the turn of the Century, lived and practiced a medical doctor, John H. Tilden, with the strange (for those times) idea that you are what you eat. He advocated a balanced diet of essential foods, moderation, plenty of fresh air and exercise. He was reputed to be able to cure tuberculosis with his methods.

In New York City, at the same time, your great-grandma Dudu, my mother, was an early example of an emancipated woman. Just out of her teens, she had studied shorthand and typing, and was an accomplished secretary, able to support herself, she felt, free of parental strictures.

Her father, Joseph Kreinik, was a benevolent looking, immaculately dressed, grey bearded Old Testament scholar, a superb custom tailor, and, to hear tell, a man of violent temper and domineering ways. He and Dudu did not see eye-to-eye.

In 1900, at/ ^{age 19,} Dudu crossed the country to seek out Dr. Tilden. There are two versions why: 1) to be cured of a lung ailment; 2) to be out from under her father's domination. There is truth in both versions. She returned East a few years later, in full health and very much her own person. Back in New York, she met and fell in love with your namesake, Eli, and that was the beginning of my immediate branch of the family. It's perhaps typical that they met at a young peoples' discussion group where they argued, with much heat and vehemence, the major issues of the day. Did history repeat itself when the first contact between Laura and me was an intellectual one? Never occurred to me before now. I'm maybe learning as much, or more, from this as you two will. Good! (You must read Dudu's version of the story. It's in her memoirs.)

But if my Grandpa Kreinik had a violent temper, I never experienced it; and my Grandma Frieda (it means "joy") was just like her name: a rosy-cheeked, bubbly, smiling, warm-hearted grandma, whose first concern when we came visiting was "Kinder hingrich?" - "Are the children hungry?" Invariably we were - for grandma's kind of goodies. For Dudu, believing in the balanced eating habits that had helped her so much in Denver, fed us a "Tildenite" diet: fresh vegetables, low on fats and sugar, no soda-pop with meals, chew your food well - everything today's health food believers have only recently discovered. And this was eighty years ago. So we all shouted "Yes!" to Grandma's kinder hingrich, and piled into her assortment of goodies that were so good, and so bad for us. But even an occasional lapse from grace was part of Dr. Tilden's philosophy - a good binge won't hurt a good Tildenite. And that holds true for almost everything we do - food, work, play, study, religion.... Get out of the rut, in moderation, of course.

Grandpa Kreinik made me a suit for my bar mitzvah - jacket, vest, short trousers - a work of art. I wore it proudly that day and for many years afterwards. I outgrew it but couldn't outwear it. Alas, by the time I was ready to hand it down short trousers were no longer in style. The suit went to the Salvation Army.

In the summer of 1927 Bud, at 17, got his driver's license. Popop had a 1926 Studebaker Big 6, a seven passenger hardtop with roll-down isinglass windows - the last of the fully open cars but not quite the glass, rollup-window-sedan. Grandpa wanted to visit his only son, Irving, in Massachusetts. Popop was only too happy to let Bud drive Grandpa there, and I went along. For the ten hours or so it took to drive up the Boston Post Road (no super highways then), Grandpa sat

erect and alone in that huge back seat, saying nary a word. But I had the feeling he was enjoying this trip to his only son, driven by his oldest grandson. I hope I live long enough for one of you to do the same for me.

Which reminds me of a story Dudu once told us: A mama bird was tending her babies in a nest high in a tree surrounded by rapidly rising flood waters. Finally, she decided that the only way to save her family was to carry them, one at a time, to dry land and safety. So, racing against time, and rapidly losing strength, she made trip after trip, until she arrived back at the nest for the last time in a state of near collapse. Her last baby said, "Mama, you look so tired, why didn't you stay in safety? Now neither one of us may make it." "Because," said the Mama bird, "I hope that you would do the same for your babies."

But back to our visit with Grandpa to Uncle Irving's house. They had a summer place with the mouth filling address of 15 Wittawaumet Road, Wessagusset Beach, North Weymouth, Massachusetts, and their lifestyle was just as multi-syllabic: three daughters, two sons, all about the age range of our family, all as noisy or noisier than we were, and with one advantage Bud and I were envious of: Aunt Lily made the best tasting root beer ever, and in scores and scores of bottles that we could drink whenever the fancy struck us - even with our meals. But, alas, tragedy struck. For some reason - probably because of too much yeast in the mix - a whole batch of eagerly awaited brew blew up one night, popping its corks like firecrackers and waking everyone in the house. Tragic as that was for all of us (except possibly Grandpa), the house rocked with laughter the rest of the night.

The next morning, it being the Fourth of July, we kids went traipsing across the countryside toward the many celebrations going on, careful not to trample on the crops growing in the fields, and joined by hundreds of others, including the farmers, doing the same thing. I still remember the marvelous feeling it gave me - all those people celebrating a common joy, walking along together and forgetting their differences, even if only for a brief day.

The memory of that New England Independence Day brings to mind another day of celebration that turned out differently. Each year the management of our local bridge club gives a Christmas party. It is a time of peace on Earth, good will to all; one day out of 365. Usually, management supplies the meat courses, and the members all pitch in with hors d'oeuvres, the desserts and the fixings. There is a marvelous mix of dishes of all ethnicities, and all of us eat too much and some of us drink too much. This past year, management decided to provide a huge ham as the meat course. When some of the (non-Jewish) members pointed out that our Jewish members might not be able to eat ham, the reply was - or is reported to have been - "Well, it's my party and I'm providing ham."

Now, by birth and upbringing I am a Jew. By reason and logic I am a non-believer. I particularly abhor zealots of all persuasions. I eat ham, and shell fish and any other non-kosher foods that strike my fancy, for I do not believe in a set of ancient tribal health rules that saved many an ancient Hebrew, in his hot, unrefrigerated environment, from killing himself with putrefied food. Fine. But to make a religion of it?

But that does not excuse our host's insensitivity. And on Christmas, of all days, and from a bridge player, of all people. For any bridge player should know that he or she cannot exist without other bridge players.

In his book, "The Medusa and the Snail," biologist Lewis Thomas describes a unique symbiosis (from the Greek sym, together, and bios, life) between a jellyfish, the medusa, and a snail. In the Bay of Naples the medusa traps tiny snail larvae in its tentacles and enfolds them in its umbrella-like body. The snails, alive and hungry, begin to devour their host's body. As the medusa is eaten the snail grows, until the jellyfish is reduced to a small round parasitic growth near the mouth of the full grown snail. But even in that state the jellyfish can reproduce, and it sends forth its tiny young to grow and begin the cycle all over again. Neither can exist without the other. Just so, one bridge player is an impossibility, two an unworkable improbability, three an unsatisfactory annoyance. There must be four players to give bridge life. Does it make sense, then, for bridge players - and human beings - to destroy what gives them life?

CHAPTER FOUR

Popop may have been an accomplished speaker, a writer of fiery letters and a superb democrat, but he didn't know beans from automobiles. In 1919, after World War I, he bought his first car, a 1914 Model T Ford - the original Tin Lizzie. Our family doctor, who sold it to him, assured him, "Elias, you won't spend a cent on her. She's in great shape." In retelling the tale, Popop would say, "You know, he was right? Every penny I put into that car wasn't spent, it was wasted!"

Of course Popop couldn't drive, so while his handy man from the store was teaching him, he also acted as our chauffeur. We used to drive to the amusement park at Bergen Point, at the southern tip of Bayonne, on a Saturday night. We spent more time playing in the woods alongside the road while Tom (the handy man) fixed the recalcitrant T than we did at the amusement park.

Finally, after many frustrating months, Popop finally persuaded Tom to let him take the driver's license test. When, after an hour, Popop reappeared, driving and grinning, Tom threw up his hands. "They passed you?! Lord have mercy on the people!" and he took the trolley home rather than ride as a passenger with his erstwhile pupil at the wheel.

Now we began making trips to Brighton Beach of a Sunday to visit Grandma and Grandpa Kreinik. On one of these trips, early in his driving career, Popop was stopped for speeding. The cop, after examining Popop's license, counted the six kids and one wife bulging the sides of the old T. Sadly he shook his head at Popop. "Do me a favor," he said, "if you're going to drive that fast leave the family home? Them

we can't afford to lose." "I never speeded again," Popop would say, in telling the story. And I believe he didn't.

In 1920 he swapped the old Lizzie for a brand new one, but he never learned how to retard the spark and keep his thumb on the same side of the crank handle as his other fingers, so she was always kicking back on him and spraining his thumb. That led him to buy his first car with a self starter, a 1922 Studebaker phaeton, four doors, five passengers, with enough room in the cavernous rear to hide two small kids under a blanket when taking the ferry across the Hudson, thus saving a nickel each, or twenty cents each round trip. We all were sure the toll taker knew we were there, but Popop was oblivious. I'm kind of glad to remember that he wasn't perfect. It helps me forgive some of my own small peccadillos.

There was one more incident with the '22 T. One favorite trip was to the world's best ice cream parlor for cones on Sundays. It involved a beautiful drive along the top of the Palisades and then a swoop down the Seven Sisters hills into Englewood. One Sunday, in addition to our $6 + 2 = 8$, we had Aunt Ruth, Dudu's 200 lb. youngest sister. Everything went fine until we had to head back up those seven hills. Lizzie quit. No go. Finally someone suggested we all get out and push, which we did - all except Dudu and Popop. As we struggled with our load a car pulled up alongside us. The driver got out. "Maybe I can help," said he. He checked the gas in the tank - it was a simple gravity feed perched just above the back of the engine. The man nodded his head. "Just as I thought. Not enough gas in the tank to flow down into the engine on this steep hill." Whereupon he turned Lizzie around, motioned us all back in, and backed the car up the hill.

I wonder if he realized what a kind thing he did for Aunt Ruth when he made us all get into the car, and showed us that it was not her extra weight that had intimidated Lizzie. She would never have heard the end of it, particularly as the tale would grow in the retelling. I like to think now that anyone with the kindness to stop and help his fellows in distress would also be aware of a fat lady's psychological burdens, too.

Popop never wore a car out. Like the man who traded every time the ash tray got filled, Popop swapped for less than major reasons. Of course, the first T was the exception. But the second T went because it kept biting back at him. The first Studebaker met its reward when, on a visit to Brighton Beach it got caught in a rainstorm and wet its wires sufficiently to conk out. On the way back home to Jersey City, we stopped at Studebaker in New York City and swapped it in for a huge seven passenger with roll-down curtains - the last of the phaetons, but with a hardtop, but not yet a fully glassed-in sedan. That was in 1926.

Come to think of it, with that seven passenger we nevermore hid kids under a blanket when taking the ferry. With that big a car we attained respectability. But we had another incident with that car and that ferry, the Jersey Central. There were two slips on the New York side, each with signs that lit up to say "This Slip" or "Other Slip." One Sunday we arrived just in time to be first at "This Slip," congratulating ourselves as the line behind us grew longer and longer. Suddenly, disaster - the sign changed, and every car behind us went scrambling to the other slip, while we had to wait impotently until we

were clear to back away. Just as Popop finally did get backed away the sign changed again! Picture the scene: the cars from the other line now racing back to ours, Popop frantically trying to manouver into some space - any space - but losing out to more expert drivers, and everybody in the car (everybody, that is, except me, who was sitting next to Popop and had wisely kept my mouth shut) shouting conflicting advice. Finally Popop stopped trying, took his hands off the wheel, and aimed a slap at the closest thing handy - me. Well!

Physical chastisement was so rare in our house - I can remember less than a dozen instances of either parent hitting or spanking us - that this came as a double insult, for it was the first time that I didn't deserve what I got. Of course my father apologized to me later, after he had cooled down.

I remember but one other "injustice" - this one not so clearly in: I had been teasing and chasing my younger sister, Toddy, around the upstairs at 89 Oak (our Jersey City home) until she began to scream. As was my habit, I took a flying leap and slid down the banister. Except that this time I missed, and landed bang! on my nose in the downstairs hall. Dudu, standing over me and seeing I was not gravely injured, said, "Good! Serves you right!"

It took me many years to forgive her, even though I understood that I was not blameless. The years have helped me understand her reaction. She must have had many a heartache over it.

It is quite remarkable to me that for all the years I lived with my parents there are only two slight "injustices" - both of them understandable, forgiveable, and very human. I had beautiful parents.

OF VALIANT WOMEN.

In the annals of the Jews there are few "Ashet Khayil" - women of valor - possibly because, as with all history, it's a man's world, written mostly by men. In Biblical times there was Queen Esther, who saved her people from Haman and whose story is told on Purim, the day she made possible. And the Prophet and Judge in Israel, Deborah, who planned the strategy for, and inspired Barak's great victory at Megiddo over the Canaanites. There was Ruth, Naomi's widowed daughter in law, who returned to Bethlehem with Naomi saying, "Whither thou goest I go...." Ruth, like your mother, was not a Jew, but she became one with those words, and became a direct ancestor of King David, through a later remarriage. There was Donna Gracia Mendes, a Maronite Jew (forcibly converted but adhering secretly to their religion) who fled Spain about the time of Columbus and paid dearly for her valor. And in modern times, Emma Lazarus, whose words grace our Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor,/ Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,/ The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,/ Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,/ I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" And Golda Meir, Israel's first woman Prime Minister, a woman of great valor.

In her own small way, my mother was a woman of valor, and so is your Grandma Laura.

We tend to be a long-lived family. Dudu lived to 98; Popop to 83; Grandma Ella to 93, and Grandpa Abraham to 86. He was the only one to die of cancer. Laura was strongly opposed to the doctors' decision to operate in what she felt was a lost cause. It was; he didn't survive the operation. Ever since she has warned me: "If I get cancer let me die in peace." In September of last year (1983) she developed cancer, at age 68.