Gene Lees
Jazzletter

P.O. Box 240
Ojai, Calif.
93023

February 1988 Vol. 7 No. 2

The Last Days of Junior's
Part II

Gerry Mulligan was a complicated man in those days, much more so than he is now. He had experimented with a career as an actor, playing a priest in the movie based on Jack Kerouack's novel *The Subterraneans*, and doing a comedy turn as an out-of-town square who dates Judy Holliday in *Bells Are Ringing*. It struck people on the periphery of jazz—not within the profession so much as along its edges—as strange, just as Artie Shaw's writing had done. It was by no means without precedent, and others would experiment with careers in both. Even then, Conrad Janis, who frequented Jim and Andy's and Junior's and Charlie's and Joe Harbor's, had careers as a working trombonist and as an actor. Med Flory has worked successfully as both an actor and musician. And long before, Bud Freeman had almost become an actor. Musicians were forever being turned into comedians, Jerry Colonna, Sid Caesar, Mel Brooks, and Milt Kamen—a French horn player—among them. Later on, Jack Sheldon would have his own TV series, *Run Buddy Run*. Nobody has combined the two as successfully as John Rubenstein, who has balanced careers as a film actor and film composer. And Dudley Moore is a composer and pianist whose degree is not in drama but in music.

Gerry said that winter that he'd got a lot out of his experience of acting. The whiff of mockery that had come his way because of it annoyed him. "It seems in this country," he said quite accurately, "you're expected to be a specialist. People get used to you in a certain role in life, and they don't like you to step out of it. In other countries, particularly the Latin countries, it doesn't surprise anyone when a man is an attorney and a jazz musician, or a playwright and a painter. People in this country seem to find it hard to understand that a man can have a deep and abiding interest in one art and a lesser, but still real, interest in another."

"Who knows what I'll eventually be able to do because of this broadening of experience? When, for example, we're doing something with the quartet on television, it helps to understand the production problems and the nature of the work of the people you're dealing with."

At that time he was working on a Broadway musical with lyrics by Judy Holliday, based on the Anita Loos play *Happy Birthday*, and set in a New York Irish bar. Someone told them it would never go on the boards, because the primary patrons of theater in New York were Jews. "Jews," they were told, "go to theater. The Irish go to bars." Whatever the reason, the musical, which has an excellent score and some brilliant lyrics by Judy, has never been produced.

One night when we were hanging out in some bar or another, I asked Gerry—knowing he was what they in that religion call a lapsed or fallen-away Catholic—if he felt Catholic. He said, "What do you mean?"

"Just what I said."

He mused for a minute. Then he said, "No, I don't feel Catholic. But I *do* feel Irish."

And it was at this point that we discovered we had arrived separately at a theory, two theories actually, about music in general and jazz in particular. One is that language has a powerful effect on the rhythmic character of a people's music; the other is that jazz players are strongly affected in style by their ethnic origins—the Italians reflecting that Puccini-like lyricism, the Irish sounding Irish, the Jews sounding Jewish, and so forth. There were, we noted, very few jazz players of truly English origin, as there was virtually no English influence on European classical music, and as indeed there were almost no Broadway composers of stature of English origin; and among Hollywood film composers, the only one from England was Lyn Murray. For that matter, most of the best jazz players of England on examination turned out to be Jewish, like Victor Feldman, or Scottish. I would tell Mulligan that his solos reminded me of *I Met Her in the Garden Where the Praties Grow*, and Gerry said that Judy Holliday would say of Zoot Sims, another Irishman, "There he goes, playing that Barry Fitzgerald tenor again," and she would imitate the ah-ha-ha-ha lilting fall of Fitzgerald's laughter, which, you will notice, in some of his old movies, is curiously like Zoot's joyous playing. There is no more melodic vocal tradition in all Europe than that of Ireland, in which is combined yearning lyricism and wry laughter. Listen to the music of Dave McKenna. Or Bill Finegan. Or Zoot. Or, come to that, Mulligan.

We talked about Hindemith that winter of '62. "When I was writing for Gene Krupa and other big bands," Gerry said, "I became involved with the naming of chords I was writing.

"And then I came across the Hindemith technical books, not all of which I had the equipment to understand.

"He was criticizing the formal theories of harmony. They make up rules of harmony that are so loaded with exceptions that the rules don't mean anything. Traditional harmony says that a fourth isn't a chord. And that's ridiculous. It is. Hindemith showed that going up the overtone series you cover everything. I was delighted to see this. I voiced chords in fourths—chords for which there was no name, but which implied the sound of some chord for which there was a name.

"A-D-G-C sounds like a C-chord, but it's not. A C-chord is E-G-C. Through that period, when I was reading the Hindemith books, I learned the lack of importance of naming chords."

Maybe that was an element in the appeal of the Brazilian music to both of us, the nature of the voicings. The guitar is tuned in fourths, and fourth-voicings are natural to it. There is an openness to its chords, an airy transparency. Certainly we both loved the harmonic character, and of course the sinuous melodic character, of the Jobim tunes. Jobim would write on the guitar. He was staying in that Brazilian hotel. Sometimes he would come over to my little basement apartment on West End Avenue and play my guitar, a smaller than normal one that I had bought from the man who made it in a narrow sloping cobbled street in La Paz, Bolivia. The steam heat of New York was slowly destroying it, drying it out; all the Brazilians used to

worry about their guitars in New York. Jobim described mine as "a nice friendly little guitar," which it was. Eventually it came apart completely, but we wrote some songs on it. He would play the instrument and sing a line, sometimes saying, "Does this sound like something else to you?" We wrote *Dreamer* (*Vivo Sohando*) that way, and that winter also produced *Someone to Light Up My Life*. He liked to work in what he called "the deep way"—that is, face to face. And I detested it. The search for a lyric is so painful to me that I like to take the music away somewhere and work on it alone, always doubting that I will ever find anything adequate.

The conventional wisdom held that Jobim was strongly influenced by jazz and the French impressionists. I noticed that he was strongly influenced by the natural lay of chords on the guitar. He was influenced indeed by all sorts of things, and Gerry noticed, as I did, that the harmonic sequence in the early measures of Jobim's *O Insensatez* bore a distinct resemblance to the Chopin E-minor prelude. So Gerry, with Puckish humor, recorded the E-minor prelude as a samba.

I was enamored not only of the music of the Brazilian songs but by their lyrics as well. There was a quality of gentle melancholy about them, a sort of lyrical fatalism, that led me to a conclusion. I speculated that this was due to the long Moorish occupation of the Iberian Peninsula, and the gradual absorption by the population of the Islamic doctrine of kismet—fate—and the requisite submission to the will of Allah. The traditional song of Portugal was known as *fado*, meaning fate, and it seemed to me that this resignation had been transported intact to Brazil to find its way into the samba song.

Jobim had sent some of the lyrics I had written in Rio up to New York to those publishers who had links to his Brazilian publisher. He had no idea that they were even less interested in art than their Brazilian counterparts. *Corcovado* went to Leeds Music.

The lyric to the song in Portuguese has an interesting relationship to the chords. The melody starts and ends on what Jobim calls a D 7 over an A bass, though most people are content to call it an A minor sixth. The difference, however, is important, since the D 7 is a secondary dominant that demands a resolution. It propels that tune. And so to end the melody there creates a suspended feeling that forces the song to start over again. The song is thus an endless circle. And Jobim—who wrote the Portuguese lyric—rhymes it throughout, then breaks rhyme in the last lines. The effect is impeccably appropriate to the music, and I retained it in English, breaking rhyme exactly as Jobim had done. And I retained that sense of resignation, the sweet despair of the original, so typical of the Brazilian song. Leeds apparently concluded I didn't know about rhyming. They got Buddy Kaye to rewrite the last half. He inserted a rhyme Jobim and I loathed ("my world was dull each minute until I found you in it") and the rhymed happy ending that American commercial "art" required. Jobim demanded that they change it, but Jobim was nobody of importance, and neither was I, and Buddy Kaye after all had converted a Rachmaninoff theme into *Full Moon and Empty Arms*, an authorship that was mentioned on his business card.

Jobim and I decided to make a demo of the song, to show how it should go. We did it on our own. The singer was me, the guitarist was Jobim, and the pianist was Bill Evans. I lost the tape of that session some years later in a fire. And not until Jobim recorded with Frank Sinatra did we succeed in more or less replacing that altered version of the lyric with its pure original, though the altered version turns up even today, the world that's dull each minute sounding to Jobim and me like a mustache on the Mona Lisa.

The year turned over into 1963. As late as May, Jobim—and as far as I know most of the other Brazilian musicians—had not been paid for the Carnegie Hall concert of November, though they were presented with shiny plaques honoring their participation in the "First Annual Bossa Nova Festival". He decided to go home, but he had to wait for the money from a Verve recording with Stan Getz to buy plane tickets for himself and his wife. One of the last things he said to me before going was, "In Brazil I met the sorcerer's apprentices. In New York I met the sorcerer."

In September I wrote an article in *Stereo Review* called *The Bossa Nova Bust*, making note that Sidney Frey still had not paid the Brazilians for Carnegie Hall. Frey sued me and the magazine for libel. I challenged him to show canceled checks proving he'd paid the musicians. He couldn't. I asked the officers of local 802 of the American Federation of Musicians to show me the records on the concert. They were curiously dilatory. Finally *Stereo Review* said it wasn't worth the legal fees it would take to fight Frey, though their lawyers assured them we would win easily. They sopped him off with some free advertising and the suit was dropped without jeopardy. The record business was full of Sidney Freys. It hasn't changed.

And Judy was there through it all. She was Gerry's lady, and Ed Sherman wasn't the only one to wonder why they didn't marry. But she was a friend to so many of us—Bob Brookmeyer, Alec Wilder, Willis Conover, myself. Everyone had heard the story: how, when Jean Arthur had purportedly fallen ill just before the out-of- town opening of Garson Kanin's *Born Yesterday*, the young Judy Holliday had memorized the script overnight and gone on and done the part flawlessly without rehearsal. It was the stuff of mythology.

Willis Conover offered me a deck of cards one day. "Shuffle them," he said. I did. He said, "Cut them." I did. "Now," he said, "leaving the deck face down, touch the backs of the cards and by feel separate them into the red and black suits." I did it—and separated them perfectly. I was astounded. Was this some sort of example of ESP, or a trick? It was a trick, Willis assured me, one he had learned from an inebriated professional magician in the army. The magician, sobering up later, made Willis pledge never to reveal its technique, and Willis had never done so. "Do you want to know how smart Judy is?" Willis said. "When I tried it on her, she'd gone only about ten cards down

NOTICE

The *Jazzletter* is published 12 times a year at Ojai, California, 93023 and distributed by first class mail to the United States and Canada and by air mail to other countries. Subscriptions are $40 U.S. per year for the United States and Canada, $50 U.S. to other countries. Subscribers can purchase gift subscriptions for $30 U.S. for Canada and the U.S., $40 to other countries. Subscriptions are on a year-to-year January-to-December basis, in order that all subscriptions fall due at year's end.

into the deck when she said, 'Oh, I see how it's done.'"

One thing that gives New York its edge is its intellectual density. Photos taken from Bedloe's Island or (my favorite view) the State Island ferry, show that astonishing crowd of great edifices seemingly standing on the water itself, defying nature. Why don't they sink? They do not sink of course because they are footed in bedrock. When you live in that city, you know that within blocks of you there are dozens, maybe scores or more, of people who do the same work you do, have as much talent as you do, and are probably awake working while you are wasting time in sleep or conversation or making love. You are not actually wasting time, to be sure. The very people you are talking to are teaching you. I by now lived on West 86th Street near Central Park West. Five blocks down at the corner of CPW and West 81st, in a building called the Beresford that overlooked both Central Park and the Museum of Natural History, lived Sheldon Harnick; in the same building were Steve Lawrence and Edie Gorme, and Lee Falk, who wrote the comic strip *The Phantom,* one of those I'd grown up on. Farther down CPW, Harold Arlen lived.

A group of us, all friends, lived within walking distance of each other, among them Willis Conover at the corner of West 83rd and CPW, Mulligan on West 71st near CPW, and on West 72nd at CPW, in the building called the Dakota, Judy Holliday. Boris Karloff also lived there. It is a strange and gorgeous old monstrosity, styled after a French chateau, though no chateau was ever built in such exaggerated proportions, so American in their excess. Jack Finney used it as the setting of his fantasy novel *Time and Again*, and *Rosemary's Baby* was filmed in it.

Willis was in Washington half the time, playing his records on his *Music USA* program for the Voice of America, sending the music of Duke Ellington and Woody Herman and Gerry Mulligan and Oscar Peterson and Art Blakey and Dizzy Gillespie to peoples far beyond the waters, and almost single-handedly turning jazz into a world language. Most of the great jazz players from other countries, particularly those in the Soviet orbit, will tell you that they were inspired to learn this music by Willis Conover. When Willis would arrive in Warsaw, cheering mobs would surround him, but we could walk down CPW to Judy's apartment or Gerry's and nobody knew him, because his program was not heard in America—just in Sri Lanka and the USSR and Algeria and, for all I know, Tibet.

Mulligan too was away much of the time, with his quartet or the Gerry Mulligan Concert Band with Zoot and Brookmeyer and Clark Terry and Don Rader and Mel Lewis and Bill Crow. I stayed home and wrote. Judy stayed home, too, and alas did not do much in those years, although such was her musicality that she was learning to play flute.

I have no memory of meeting her for the first time, although it was almost certainly in one of those four musicians' bars, and probably Jim and Andy's. But I remember the last time I saw her vividly. It was in Birdland, at the bottom of the stairs, in front of the cloak room.

I think every man who knew her loved her in some suspended and unadmitted way. I think this was true of Willis Conover and Bob Brookmeyer, and I know it was true of Alec Wilder.

Long before I knew her, I had read of her purported brilliance and dismissed it as the invention of press agents. For once they were not exaggerating. Her mind was incredibly quick, and relished puns, as Paul Desmond's did. The huge living room of her apartment in the Dakota overlooked West 72nd. In it there were masses of ferns, of which she said one day "With fronds like these, who needs anemones?" To be in the company of Judy and Mulligan and Desmond (who loved Tom Swifties and may have invented them) was, Gary McFarland said, "like being caught in the middle of an acrostic."

She was, Alec Wilder said simply, "a healer." Alas she could heal everyone but herself. There was such a goodness about her. Once I called her apartment, looking for Mulligan. She said he was on the road for a couple of weeks, and then she said, "What's wrong?"

"Nothing," I said.

"Yes there is."

"Just down, just a little depressed."

With that little soft chuckle you know if you have seen her movies, she said, "You sound like you need a little body warmth. Why don't you come on over?" I spent the evening there and had dinner with her. I think that was the night she told me the story of going to Columbia Pictures.

It was after the success of *Born Yesterday* on Broadway. For once the girl in the play got the part in the movie. She was signed to Columbia and went out to Hollywood. She went on to do *Adam's Rib, Full of Life, The Solid Gold Cadillac, Pfft, Bells Are Ringing* with Dean Martin (and Mulligan in that minor role) and more, each characterization a perfect etching.

She was a pretty woman. She was rather sturdy of build, small- busted and a little thick-waisted; and she worried about her weight. She had those remarkable dimples in her cheeks when she smiled and, as you can see in her films, she could light up a theater or a living room. She had a closed, tight-jawed way of speaking, and like many New York City natives she was almost unable to say the letter r: it came out halfway to being w. It was a distinctive voice, and although I dislike the word (and she would have loathed it), it can only be described as cute.

I also dislike the word "vulnerable" as it is used to describe actors or characters in stories, and in any case, though it fits her, it is inadequate. She was the oddest mixture of sophisticated intelligence and wide-eyed naivete. She had a talent for melancholy, there was a darkness in her, she was a hurt person, for, as she once said to Willis Conover, "I spent my childhood pulling my mother's head out of a gas oven." Her ancestry was Russian Jewish, and her true surname was Tuvim, from which she derived Holliday.

She was very musical, and she sang well in an ingenuous and unaffected way, as you can hear from her few albums, including the stage and film versions of *Bells Are Ringing*. In April of 1961, Mulligan took her into the recording studio with what was essentially his Concert Band and recorded her, using charts by himself, Ralph Burns, Bill Finegan, and Brookmeyer, and recorded her for MGM Records. Four of the songs were pieces she'd written with Gerry, showing her considerable ability as a lyricist. But MGM never released the album.

She was a sort of distaff Jack Lemmon. She was a brilliant actress who had established her reputation in comedy. But she had not yet made the transition to the character roles for which she was, like Lemmon, so well equipped, and The System wanted to keep her in the kind of part that had established her, the likeable dizzy blonde.

Her last Broadway show was a musical called *Hot Spot*. It was a piece of trash, and it achieved an early and just demise. I hated it, and so did she.

Script after script kept coming to her, and the character she was requested to portray was almost always a variant on Billie Dawn, her role in *Born Yesterday*. She turned them down, one after another. She was restless, not working, and after a year or so I said, "Why don't you take something, just to be busy?"

"I did that," she said. "It was called *Hot Spot* – remember?"

I offered no further career advice.

But the lack of good parts kept grinding on her. And time was passing. She was forty-one now, no longer the ingenue, yet she had not yet gone through that professional metamorphosis into the great character roles she deserved and would have ennobled. One night I was in Jim and Andy's with her. I don't know where Gerry was; possibly he was working a gig and had asked me to pick her up and bring her there. Or possibly he'd left for one and asked me to take her home. Whatever the reason, he wasn't there. We were sitting at the bar, talking quietly, when a girl in her twenties who obviously was not a regular of the place – none of the habitues would have done this, and they all knew her anyway – said, gushingly, "Aren't you Judy Holliday?"

"Yes I am," she said, a little apprehensively.

"Wow!" the girl said. "Oh wow! You know, you're my mother's favorite actress!"

"Oh God," Judy said, "that's all I needed," and put her head down on her crossed arms on the bar. I couldn't tell if she was crying, but I put my arm across her shoulder. She was wearing a mink coat. I still remember the feel of the mink under my hand.

Her medical problem returned. She went in for tests. I got a call one evening from Mulligan. He was on the road somewhere – Chicago, Pittsburgh, I don't remember. He said that Judy was home alone and waiting for the results of the tests. He couldn't be there. Would I go over and keep her company for the evening? I called her, then went over to the Dakota. We watched television. She was sitting in bed, wearing a pink bed jacket, quilted as I recall. We talked about the tests, and after that said little. There was little to say. She just needed some body warmth. She'd given it to me one dark night. I went home around midnight.

It must have been a week or two later that I ran into her and Gerry at the bottom of the stairs at Birdland. They were leaving as I was arriving. I gave her a hug; she was wearing that mink coat. "How're you feeling, m'darlin'?" I said.

"Rotten," she said with that unforgettable chuckle, "but at least I know I'm not going to die!"

I had to go to Paris on a job. When I got back to New York, it was in the midst of one of its taxi strikes, and I had no way to get my luggage home from the East Side terminal. I stored the bags in a locker and took a subway to Jim and Andy's where, I figured, I'd find one of the guys with a car. I came up out of the subway on Sixth Avenue and looked down at a pile of New York *Posts*. The headline read: Judy Holliday Dies.

I called Gerry immediately. He sounded like death on the phone. I was asked to come to the funeral. I sat up all night and listened to records, watched the hour of the service approach and then pass. Bob Brookmeyer told me later he had done the same thing. Her death just shattered us.

Willis Conover told me he was worried about Gerry, who had been under almost unendurable strain in these last weeks. Willis arranged that in secret compact either he or I or Joseph Heller, the novelist, be with Gerry almost around the clock. Willis was with Gerry in Charlie's, talking to Gene Williams, when the juke box played her recording of *The Party's Over*.

Gerry put his head on his arms on the bar, as Judy had done that night in Jim and Andy's with me.

Dear Judy. Her death left a great emptiness in our lives, though no one's of course as much as Gerry's. He was drained, wasted, depleted afterwards. Perhaps her sudden absence was the reason we spent so much time together in that period. We went to the theater a number of times. One of the shows we saw, I remember, was Stephen Sondheim's *Company*, whose score we enormously admired. I went back and saw it several more times.

Gerry proposed that we write a musical. I agreed immediately. We began to search for a subject, and one of us came up with Diamond Jim Brady. I thought he would make a marvelous subject, given his flamboyance and the New York period setting. And given that Irish whimsy Mulligan could so easily summon up in his music, he seemed to me the perfect composer for it. We began to research Brady's life, running around to libraries and digging out old magazines and books that contained references to the man and his circle of acquaintances. We spent a lot of time in that inestimable national treasure, the New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue at 42nd Street. It was great fun. We learned that Brady had lived in a big house on West 86th Street, almost directly across from the brownstone in which I had an apartment. Brady's house had long since been replaced by an apartment building.

There is a scene in Judy's movie *Full of Life* in which Aldo Ray, as her husband, has a dream of a new kind of roller skate, with ball-bearings in place of wheels permitting one to slide in any direction. Eagerly he sets about developing his invention only to see his very idea portrayed in a photo on the cover of *Life* magazine: someone has beaten him to it. Something similar happened to Gerry and me.

We had assembled a lot of material on Brady and his world and begun to sketch our script – I loved working with Gerry, who I discovered had, aside from the literacy with which I was already familiar, a strong sense of story and drama. That he was one of the most distinctive composers of our time hardly needs saying. Gerry arranged a meeting with Hal Prince, who had produced the show we both liked so much, *Company*, to find out if he would be interested. Prince told us that Jackie Gleason and Lucille Ball already had an option on a script about Brady, which Gleason in the title role and Ball as Lillian Russell – excellent, indeed unsurpassable casting.

We abandoned the project there and then. The years passed, and Gleason and Ball never made that musical, and the work Gerry and I did has long since disappeared. I think we'd have done a good show.

A show we saw at that time was *A Thousand Clowns*. I vividly remember running west on West 48th Street to get there by curtain time: one of us had been late getting to Jim and Andy's. The show starred Jason Robards and Sandy Dennis. Gerry would spend the next several years of his life with Sandy, this gifted actress and delightful lady.

He was off on the road again, and then I went to Europe for a while. I returned and that very night got a phone call from Mulligan. His voice was against a background of laughter and conversation that told me he was in a bar somewhere. "G.L.," he said. "There's someone here who wants to talk to you.""

"Gene Lees!" said this warm and enthusiastic voice. "I am back." The Brazilians pronounce the a very flat and they put an audible tilde over it when it follows a consonant, so that the word came out almost beeack. The sound of the letter l has almost dropped out of their language, as it has in part in French and in some English words such as palm and salmon. I would tease them that they were always going beeack to Brazeo. I knew that voice instantly. It was Jobim's. "Gerry and I are in Junior's, and you must come immediately and join us."

"I can't, Tom, I'm exhausted," I said. "I just got off a plane and I haven't had any sleep. Let's get together tomorrow."

"No, no, now!" he insisted. "It will not be the same if you're not here, you must come now!" Jobim can be very persuasive, and I found myself saying, "Okay, but just for two drinks. No more. Then I must get some sleep."

And I found myself in Junior's with the two of them. Jobim was laughing, he threw his arms around me – the Brazilians call it *um abraco*, and the action is as common as the handshake – and kissed me on the cheek, as the French and other Latin peoples are wont to do, and I could not but respond in kind. So I hugged him back, and he said to Gerry, "Here he is, the man who can make English sound like Portuguese," an exquisite example of Brazilian chauvinism. And the three of us laughed at things and I ordered a Scotch. Jobim and I were still drinking Scotch together. Gerry was drinking Courvoisier.

I finished that drink and Jobim ordered another. As little as I had consumed, I could feel my weariness rising within me. I finished the drink and said, "Guys, I gotta go. I'm tired out."

"No, no, one more!" Jobim said. "Just one more."

"Jobim," I said, "if I have one more drink I'm gonna have a heart attack."

"No you're not," he said, and held up three fingers to the bartender, who made us drinks again.

And so I started on a third drink. Jobim was telling Gerry how the publishers had altered my English lyrics for *Desafinado* and *Corcovado* but how at last they were being restored to their original form. By now Jobim had several successful albums of his own in the United States, and he had the muscle to get his way.

There were two rooms in Junior's. One was the bar, and, through a square arch, the restaurant. There was a piano in the restaurant. "Let's show him," Jobim said, and we went into the restaurant, which was deserted at that hour, and Jobim sat down at the piano with a big grin and an affectation of concert-pianist grandeur and flourished his hands in the air, and made Gerry and me laugh. Then he began to play and I sang my lyrics to *Quiet Nights* and *Desafinado*, and Gerry noticed that I had rhymed "stars" with "guitar", a plural with a singular. I called him a picky son of a bitch and said if that kind of rhyme was good enough for Shakespeare it was good enough for me, and we were laughing when Henry Solomon, the owner of Junior's, came in to us with alarm and said, "Gene, you've got to help me! There are two cops out there and they're going to close me down for serving a drunk."

"Who?" I said.

"You."

"What? Where are they?"

I went back to the bar with Gerry and Jobim close behind me. Henry pointed out two plain-clothes cops seated at the bar near the door. I went up to them immediately, furious. "Are you guys cops?" I said.

"Yes," one of them said. He seemed a little sheepish, and I could feel immediately that something was amiss.

"Let me see your credentials," I said, and they both pulled out badges.

"And you say I'm drunk?"

"Yes sir," the cop said.

"Well I've got witnesses here to testify that I'm not. And you, at this very moment, know goddamn well that I'm not. Now here are *my* credentials," and I showed him the contents of my wallet. "I'm a journalist," I said, "and I make one hell of a credible witness. You picked the wrong guy. If you are trying to shake this place down, you better have your shit together when we get to court, fella, because I'm gonna take you apart."

I assured Henry that I would testify for him and urged him to get the names of the other people in the place to serve as witnesses, if need be. I left Jobim and Gerry and went immediately home and sat down at the typewriter and wrote out precisely what had happened, including the dialogue. I lost those notes in the same fire that took the tape of Bill Evans and Jobim and me, but the fact of writing them fixed the details in memory.

I went back to see Henry the next day. He told me that I had guessed right about the shakedown. Restaurant, bar, and nightclub owners were constantly subject to shakedown by a corrupt police department. He said he'd got fed up with it. Recently some of the precinct boys had been around with their hands out and he had refused them. That's what this was all about.

In Jim and Andy's I talked to Jim Koulouvaris about it. "The damn fool," Jimmy said. "He should have paid them."

"Do you?" I said.

"Sure," he said matter-of-factly. "They've got you coming and going. There are so many regulations that they can walk into your john and scatter some cigarette butts on the floor and charge you with running an unclean establishment and close you down. The cops are part of your operating expenses."

Henry Solomon was charged with permitting a drunk to be served a drink, a misdemeanor. Jobim and Gerry were by now not in New York. I went to court with Henry and his lawyer. Only one of the two detectives testified.

He said that two of the men were embracing and kissing, implying that they were homosexual. He said he heard one of them – he pointed to me – say that if he had another drink he'd have a heart attack. And, the ultimate proof of drunkenness, the men were singing!

I asked Henry Solomon's lawyer to ask the judge's permission to let me question the detective. The judge gave it.

I said, "Officer, can you tell me the nationality of the man who was embracing me and kissing me on the cheek?"

"No sir," he said.

"Your honor," I said, "the man is Brazilian. Embracing and kissing on the cheek are common Brazilian custom. Now,

officer, do you know who the two men were who were with me?"

"No sir," he said.

"One of them was Gerry Mulligan," I said, and I think I caught a flicker of recognition of the name in the judge's face, "one of America's great musicians. The other was Antonio Carlos Jobim, the great Brazilian composer. And the songs we were singing are quite famous, and Jobim and I wrote them, and we were showing them to our friend Mr. Mulligan. Your honor, that's a musician's bar, and music in there is commonplace. Everybody who goes in there is a musician."

The judge threw the case out.

But Henry Solomon's troubles were not over. Despite the proscription against double jeopardy in Anglo-American jurisprudence, a bar owner in New York does not enjoy its protection. Henry now had to face a second hearing before the state liquor licensing board to retain his license. The cops know perfectly well what it costs to defend oneself against even as false an accusation as the one those detectives had laid, which is why their extortion tactics are so effective. Henry told me that he couldn't afford to fight on to retain his license, and he closed Junior's down. That's what killed Junior's: some faceless precinct captain and a couple of plainclothesmen on the take.

After that Jim Koulouvaris died, and Joe Harbor. Charlie had died some time before. All four of those unforgettable jazz musicians' hangouts were gone. Even if they hadn't been, there was no Ed Sherman to chronicle their humor. He died of a stomach ailment. He was thirty-seven.

As the 1960s ended, I left New York, spending the next four years in Toronto, where for the most part I was writing and performing in television. Once Gerry and Sandy came up to be guests on one of my shows. The band was led by Rob McConnell, so I had the pleasure of hearing Gerry and Rob play together.

Then my wife and I moved to California, and I would see Jobim when occasionally he came to Los Angeles. Jobim and I wrote a few of our songs in California. By now he was an international celebrity, touring the world in concert, living still in Rio, though no longer in that little house at Ipanema.

It is interesting to ruminate on what Brazilian music would be like today if Skinnay Ennis hadn't hired Claude Thornhill and Gil Evans at the same time to work in his band on the Bob Hope radio show. The flow of inspiration from Evans to Mulligan to Jobim would never have occurred. Tinker to Evers to Chance.

Gerry and Sandy parted. I don't know why, and would not ask. Gerry married a tall and aristocratic Italian photojournalist named Franca Rota, whom he'd met when he was recording an album in Milan. She was working on an article for *Harper's Bazaar* at the time. He and Franca divide their time between a house in Connecticut and a refined large apartment in Milan in whose living room Gerry's piano overlooks a charming treed square. I visited them there once.

I would see him and Franca when they came west, usually for a concert. One of these was in Hollywood Bowl with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, including a piece called *K-4 Pacific*, which had originally been recorded in his *Age of Steam* album, and a large composition called *Entente for Baritone Saxophone and Orchestra*. I inadvertently insulted Gerry after that concert, but in my own defense I must cite one of our conversations over dinner in a restaurant on West 70th Street, just in behind the Museum of Natural History, to which we were particularly partial. I asked him why he had never written for symphony orchestra, and he said with utter candor: "Because I'm afraid of the larger forms."

I remembered it as I listened to this lovely symphonic writing in Hollywood Bowl. I also remembered something Andre Previn once said: a symphony string section is not to be treated as if it were nothing more than the world's largest sax section.

And thus after the concert that night I said to Gerry, "Who orchestrated?"

He drew himself up, I cannot say whether with pride or indignation. Possibly both. He said, "*I did.*"

And so Gerry is writing, richly and well. *K-4 Pacific* is included in a new CD album that Gerry made with Erich Kunzel conducting the Houston Symphony on the PAR label. *Entente for Baritone Sax and Orchestra* is also included. Gerry describes it in the notes as "the symphony piece I thought I'd never write."

Gerald Joseph Mulligan, native New Yorker, though he went to high school in Reading, Pennsylvania, turned sixty on April 6, 1987. Once the young Turk, he has become an elder statesman. The strawberry blond eyelashes and eyebrows have turned white, as has the handsome mass of straight hair. For several years now he has had a white beard, and since the map of Ireland is all over his face, this has the effect of making him look like a very tall leprechaun. He has never been a heavy eater, and he remains as slim as a boy, and watching him on a stage, slinging that sixteen-pound saxophone around, he still looks like one.

I asked him, during a recent phone conversation, some detail or another about our days in Jim and Andy's and Junior's and Charlie's and Joe Harbor's. He chuckled and said, "The only way I could remember some of that is to get juiced, and I don't do that any more."

We talked about Gene Williams, and wondered what had happened to him. Gerry had a couple of leads, which I followed up. We found Gene in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, alive and well and happy and still tending bar.

I think of those days sometimes, the 1960s in New York, and the friends Gerry and I had there who are gone now. Judy, Gary McFarland, Bill Evans, Nick Travis, Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins, Sonny Stitt, Budd Johnson, Richie Kamuca, Buddy Rich, Hank d'Amico, Zoot Sims, Willie Dennis, Willie Rodriguez, Philly Joe Jones, Jo Jones (the two Joes died the same week), Oliver Nelson, so many more, including Jim Koulouvaris himself. Even Sidney Frey is dead.

Generations are always passing.

In 1980, Gerry mixed and released on the DRG label the album he made with Judy in 1960. He sent me a copy. Hearing that sweet naive voice again, with its half-missing r's, and a sadness hidden in a smile, gave me the same strange amalgam of gentle affection and pain that her movies do when they turn up on television.

Sometimes you get the feeling that you're running between the raindrops.