

The Glenn Miller Years VI

George Simon wrote: "As the band's first regularly employed arranger, Finegan represented a new challenge to the competitive Miller. Heretofore Glenn had written almost all the arrangements himself, and so he had maintained complete control over everything the band played. But Bill began writing 'some wild things. I was experimenting and discovering.' Glenn obviously wasn't pleased. He wanted more conformity. So he began to try to exercise a great deal of control over the young Finegan. 'I used to complain about his continual editing of my arrangements. It was OK at first, when he had to cut down to fit the tune onto one side of a record. But for a while Glenn would start editing just about everything, and soon it became a battle of wits between us. I would try to anticipate what he was going to do by black-penciling my own arrangements before he could. Finally he told me, 'You keep writing. I'll handle the black pencil.' Today, when people ask me what I think was the best arrangement I ever wrote for the band, I really don't know, because everything I wrote went through a meet grinder."

"Finegan's plight later received sympathy from some fellow-bandsmen, like arranger-trumpet Billy May, who told me, 'My heart used to bleed for Billy Finegan because Glenn's ideas were really not that good. And to make it worse, Chummy MacGregor was always adding some crap, like three clinks."

Billy May told me: "Miller was cruel to Bill Finegan, he really was. He messed with everybody's charts, but especially Bill's. 'That introduction, take that out. Start down here.' Merciless. The intro would be *beautiful*. 'Take that out.'"

Finegan throughout his career, George Simon said, was plagued by self doubt, a not unknown ailment in truly gifted artists. Maurice Purtill told Simon: "Sometimes Finegan would hole up for a few weeks and just write and never show up. Then he'd return with his arrangements and Glenn would be very sarcastic."

Finegan told Simon, "I reacted to his ice-cold personality

in a cocky sort of way. He always had the barb out and he would bring it out in me.

"Tommy Dorsey played loud, so Glenn felt he had to play loud also. Sometimes he'd play so loud that I'd have to find ways for him not to demolish the brass section. He wasn't a great trombonist, but he was better than his records show him to be. He felt secure within the brass section, rather than as a soloist. There he would belt out his parts so much that the section would be out of balance. So I began writing bass trombone parts for him because I loved to hear them belted out the way he could. 'What are you doing, Finegan?' he'd ask me, and I'd tell him he was the only one who played so loud that I could hear those parts. I don't know whether Glenn appreciated not playing lead trombone. But I know I did. It was a pleasure, really, hearing him play 'way down low."

Finegan, like everyone else who worked with him, saw Glenn as essentially an executive, and of course it was in his nature to be attracted to the Schillinger mathematical approach to music.

"I felt math should not be the instigator of music," Finegan said. "But this organized method suited him perfectly. It was a practical rather than an idealistic approach to music, which is exactly what that band was all about."

Simon points out that the one subject in which Glenn achieved top high school marks was algebra.

Finegan told Simon:

"And still there were times when he could be very emotional. On more than one occasion I moved him to tears. He'd break down, but he wouldn't want anyone to see he was affected, so he'd go over in a corner. I remember he did that when he first heard my arrangement of *A Handful of Stars*

"Glenn loved Delius and Ravel, especially Delius' *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* and Ravel's *Introduction and Allegro* and *String Quartet in F*. Once, when we were at Meadowbrook and I was down in the dumps, he and Helen brought me back to their hotel room in Paterson and he played Ravel for me

"All in all, Glenn was very patient with me. He'd explain to me that I was not the only one who could get stuck writing under pressure and he admitted that he'd be sometimes gotten

stuck too and that he had called Claude Thornhill to bail him out. And there were times when I would even call Glenn in the middle of the night and say, 'Hey, I'm stuck on an ending.' And he would talk with me and get me off the hook — even if I'd woken him up at four in the morning. He was very good to me that way.

"You know, as I look back at it all now, I realize that there was probably one thing that Glenn wanted more than anything else. It may be hard to believe it, but I think what Glenn wanted most of all was to be needed."

If the members of the band were not drunks, they were about to get a good one, and one of the most brilliant writers jazz ever had, and one of the worst procrastinators. Paul Weston used to say that Billy May would be writing the third chart for a record date while the first one was being recorded.

"That's kind of an exaggeration," Billy said, and laughed. There was a bubble of laughter in almost everything he said. "No. I would time it so that if the date started at four o'clock in the afternoon, I would finish about five minutes to four on the last tune and give it to the copyist."

Billy once got so drunk on a record date that he lay down on the studio floor and conducted the orchestra from that position. Further legend has it that he wrote his arrangement of Ray Noble's *Cherokee* right on the Charlie Barnet record date that made it famous. Is *that* story true?

"More or less," he said. "I wrote most of it at home and part of it on the way down to the date. I finished it up on the date. Then after that I wrote *Pompton Turnpike* and a bunch of stuff like that for Charlie."

Billy was born on November 10, 1916 in Pittsburgh, whose steel millionaires, such as Carnegie, Mellon, and Frick, gave huge endowments to its schools, leaving it culturally rich: its natives included Ahmad Jamal, Kenny Clarke, Mary Lou Williams, Erroll Garner, the Turrentine brothers, Henry Mancini (technically, from the suburb of West Aliquippa, but trained in Pittsburgh), Earl Hines, Ray Brown, Paul Chambers, George Benson, Joe Pass, Sonny Clarke, Dodo Marmarosa, Jerry Fielding, Ron Anthony, Paul Humphreys — and even Oscar Levant. Gertrude Stein was born in Pittsburgh. So was Gene Kelly.

"Some of the money must have trickled down," Billy said. "I first learned music in public school. They taught me solfeggio when I was in the second or third grade. I learned to sight-read. And I had some piano lessons, but I didn't practice. Then when I got into high school, I had a study period and I learned the intermediate band was rehearsing. So I went around. The teacher said, 'Do you want to try something? Come after school.' One of the kids showed me a tuba. By the

next semester I was good enough to play in the intermediate band. I just went on from there.

"My father's father was from the Ruhr Valley and worked in steel mills," he said. "My grandmother was a farm girl from eastern Germany. My mother's people were English and Scotch-Irish. Of all the people in the world, they were all good but the Catholics. That was her attitude.

"In high school I fooled around and watched the other guys and I got interested in why they did what they did. I figured out that the valves worked the same, whether it was a tuba or a trumpet. Then I had a pal who was a clarinet player, and I looked at that. Then I took bassoon one year and I ended up playing second bassoon in the high school orchestra, and that was good training. And I had a couple of semesters on bass.

"One of the kidshipped me up to the Casa Loma orchestra, and Billy Rausch used to hit a high every night. It impressed the hell out of me. Still does! They had wonderful arrangements. Gene Gifford wrote most of them. By the time I got out of high school in 1935, I was writing arrangements, trying to copy Casa Loma. But it was a very stiff band, reminded me of Glenn's band." He sang the kind of stiff phrasing one heard in Miller's up-tempo work. "*Maniac's Ball* and all that. They were too labored. Tonight we're going to be hot! New Year's Eve hot, kind of shit.

"But swing music should be *relaxed*."

By the time he was graduated from high school, Billy had played something from almost the entire family of instruments. "By then I was writing for little bands. In 1935, like now they have rock groups, they had little dance bands. Some of the mothers wanted their sons to become another Rudy Vallee. There were always bands around. The Depression was on, and I was working three or four nights a week, making three bucks a night. Pittsburgh was where Blue Barron got started. Lawrence Welk too, and Sammy Kaye.

"I got a job with Baron Elliott, Pittsburgh's answer to Guy Lombardo. It was a good-paying job. I bought myself a new Chevrolet, \$900, that was 1937. But it was a shitty job. I was playing trombone, and I had it down so while the guy was singing the vocal, I could write the next arrangement. We tried to do some of the hot things. Benny Goodman was making records then, so we had to do things like that. The two trumpet players were great playing Lebert Lombardo . . ." He imitated the ricky-tick phrasing. "But they couldn't play shit for chords. 'Gimme a G chord!' So I started doubling trumpet. And that's how come I became a trumpet player, 'cause I could belt it for them. When you're young, you've got good chops. So I slowly diminished my trombone playing and increased the trumpet playing.

"And then Barnet came through Pittsburgh. I heard them

on the radio, and I thought, 'Oh boy, what a great band.' He had six brass, four saxes, the rhythm section, and himself. So I went out and asked him one night if I could write an arrangement for him. He said, 'Yeah, we're gonna rehearse tomorrow, if you can get it ready.' So I stayed up all night and made it and took it to him and he liked it and bought it and hired me for six or seven more. So I wrote them and sent them in, but he got married then and broke up the band.

"That was in June or July of '38. Then he put the band back together, and I heard him on the air from the Famous Door in New York just before New Year's Eve. I wrote him a letter and asked for my money. He called me and offered me a job to come to New York and write four arrangements a week for \$70. So I took it.

"I checked into the Park Central Hotel with him. I was there for about three weeks. I brought my horns. He said to me one day, 'Do you think you can help me out? One of the trumpet players is sick. Can you work the show?' So I went down to the Paramount theater and played first trumpet for the shows that day, and that cemented my job with him forever. I knew the book. I was able to sit in and play it. I went back to just writing.

"But then Charlie always had it in mind that he wanted four trumpets. Basie came in to New York and played the Famous Door, and he had four trumpets. Barnet told me, 'We're going to have four trumpets. Get a coat. Get down to the tailor and have one made like the guys.' We made a new deal for the money, and I said, 'What am I going to do for a book? The book's written for three trumpets.' He said, 'Well you wrote the son of a bitch, you can make up a part.' And I did, I just made it up as we went along.

"That was about August. We were playing the Playland Ballroom in Rye, and that's where we did *Cherokee* and all those things. Right after that we went into the Meadowbrook, and that's where I broke in on fourth trumpet. After that we did one-nighters all the way out to the Palomar in Los Angeles. We went into the Palomar.

"The war had started in Europe on September first of 1939. A couple of nights, Phil Stevens, the bass player, ran over to the curtains with a pitcher of water: the curtain had caught fire from the heat of the lights. The management never did anything about it. The night of October first, a Sunday night, we were doing a remote broadcast. When we were off the bandstand, the fire started and there was no one to throw the water on the curtains, and the whole friggin' ballroom burned down. So it was a good thing I didn't write too many fourth parts, because I had to write the whole library again. Skipppy Martin was in the band, playing saxophone. He and I rewrote the whole goddamn library."

"Barnet took the fire philosophically, saying, 'Hell, it's better than being in Poland with bombs dropping on your head.' He recorded a tune called *All Burnt Up*.

"After the fire, it took us about six weeks to get the band back together. Everybody lost their horns. We got back on the road and did one-nighters all the way back from California. We played in Boston. That was in November, 1939. That was the first time we went in the Apollo theater. I think we were the first white band to play the Apollo. We played *Cherokee* and they loved us. We did a bunch of Duke's things. We played the Lincoln Hotel, and did one-nighters."

Barnet was famous among musicians for his wild behavior. Nor did he discourage it in his musicians. That was, by all accounts, the craziest band in the business, and one of the best, and so different from Miller's. Once, in some city or another, one of his musicians (I'm sorrow to say I can't remember who) bought a bow and arrow. He was practicing with it in his hotel room, shooting arrows at the door. When the band came to check out, a bellboy noticed the damage and informed the manager, who told the musician he would have to pay for it. The musician gave him the money, then got another member of the band to help him take the door off its hinges and carry it downstairs to the band bus. The manager stopped him, and the musician said, "What's the problem? I bought it. It's my door." Barnet told him, "He's right, it's his door." When the manager asked him what band this was, Barnet said, "Les Brown."

Barnet's sexual escapades were legend, and a lot of them unprintable. "He liked the dames," Billy May said. "We played some one-nighters somewhere around Youngstown, then a one-nighter in Erie, Pennsylvania. The Italian promoter, he came up and said, 'Now we're gonna have a jitterbug dance.' The contest was going to be between Mrs. So-and-so, the wife of the promoter, and Mrs. Charlie Barnet. We thought, 'Who the hell is Mrs. Charlie Barnet?' And up comes this goddamn sleek-looking chick, some broad he got out of a house of ill repute in Youngstown the night before. So she's sitting up there on the stand. She was with the band four or five days. We were working all around those coal fields in Pennsylvania, Middleport, Johnstown, and we ended up in Buffalo, New York. We played a battle of music with Andy Kirk.

"So we get off the stand, and we're standing around and Andy Kirk's band's playing. I notice there's a whole bunch of guys in overcoats standing around us, they've got us surrounded. And one of them says, 'Which one is Bahnet?' So we said, 'There, right there.' So they surrounded Barnet. That was the last we saw of the lady. She was a whore, she was a good money-maker for them. That's one of his adventures.

"With Charlie it was New Year's Eve every night."

Billy said, "From what I was told, Glenn got wondering about who was doing the writing for Charlie." By then Barnet had hits on *Cherokee*, *Pompton Turnpike*, and a number more.

"Barnet worked Atlantic City. We were back in New York, then we went to Boston. Miles Rinker, who was an associate of the Shribman brothers, came to me and said, 'When you get to New York, go into Hurley's bar on Sunday night. Glenn Miller wants to talk to you. Don't talk to anyone about it.'"

Hurley's was (and still is) at the northeast corner of Sixth Avenue and 49th Street. "So I went into Hurley's," Billy said, "and I met Helen and Glenn, and he offered me a job. I tried to work it out, saying, 'Well I'll let you know.' I was going to go to Charlie and ask him if he would match the offer. But Glenn said, 'No, you gotta let me know right now.' I gave Charlie my two weeks and joined Miller the night Roosevelt was elected in 1940, for the second term.

"Actually, there are two versions of the story. One version is that he wanted Bernie Privin, who was in Charlie's band at the time. Or he wanted me. And he wanted me to screw up his arrangements. So he hired me. Ray Anthony and I joined the band at the same time — November, 1940.

"John O'Leary made sure we were on the train and all that. He was Glenn's road manager, and a good one too.

"John was a good Catholic. He was an old man. We'd be riding on the bus, doing the one-nighters up in New England, and Sunday you'd wake up at six o'clock, seven o'clock in the morning, and the bus would be stopped. A nice bright sunny day in New England. Outside a Catholic church. And the bus driver, with his hat down over his face, said, 'John O'Leary just went in for Mass. We'll be going in a minute.'

"Miller was a number one fixer. You'd get at the rehearsal, and the tunes were running too long, or somebody's key didn't fit. He was a demon at fixing things like that. He wouldn't transpose it, but he'd be able to patch it together so that it was presentable for a program. I learned an awful lot from him when we did those fifteen-minute Chesterfield radio shows. 'Cause he was always adjusting them, or cutting them down, or putting them in medleys — you know, he had a lot of hit records — and he'd make them fit the program, and he'd get as many tunes in as he could. And the song pluggers were busy in those days; I'm talking 1940 or '41 now. He'd get all the plugs in he could for the guys, and things like that. He cut here, put in a bell note there, and then maybe he'd write a little thing for the saxes — dictate it to them — and it would be ready. He really knew how to run a rehearsal.

"But with Glenn, everything was always the same. You'd come to work, if you didn't wear the red socks, Jesus Christ, there'd be a big scene. I learned to live with the routine; I was

newly married. We were making good money — 1940, '41, I was making \$150 a week guaranteed, but some weeks we'd make four or five hundred, because we were doing the Chesterfield show, and working in New York doing the Paramount Theater, and stuff like that. I bought my first house out here with that. Then I made the two pictures with Glenn, *Sun Valley Serenade* and *Orchestra Wives*."

The two films often run on television. If you look closely, you can see a young — he was twenty-four — and chubby Billy May back in the trumpet section. The actor pretending to be the bass player in *Orchestra Wives* is Jackie Gleason.

"After the second picture," Billy said, "we were supposed to have some time off. Instead, all of a sudden, we take the train back to Chicago. And that was a surprise. We were going back to work. We were working out of the College Inn at the Sherman Hotel. And every weekend, we'd go out somewhere, working an army or navy base somewhere. And it soon became apparent that Glenn was scouting around for something. Meanwhile, I had some friends who were publishers. I let it be known that I didn't want to play that much any more, I'd rather be writing. And I got a deal with Alvino Rey and the King Sisters.

"The Miller band had a couple of weeks off. I went down to Philadelphia, did two or three charts for Alvino, and I got a good deal with them. They gave me 150 bucks a week to write two charts. I went back with Miller. We were playing in Youngstown, Ohio. I went in and told him, I said, 'I've got a chance to stay in New York writing and I won't have to travel any more, so I'd like to leave the band.' He said, 'It's no surprise. I'm going into the service, that's why we've been working all these places. I'm expecting a commission to come through any time. I'd like you to stick it out just until the end. Because I don't want people to think the rats are leaving the ship.' That's the term he used.

"So I said, 'Okay,' because he'd been pretty good to me over all. He was a pain in the ass to work for, but the deal was okay. He said, 'I'm going to come out of this war as some kind of a fuckin' hero, you wait and see.' It came out a little different than he planned.

"Chummy MacGregor was the first guy that told me about DTs. He'd wake up in the morning and there was nothing there to drink, so he'd have to get down to Plunkett's speak-easy. That was the only place you could get it. He'd run down and get a cab. And when he tried to get in, the back seat would be full of lions and tigers, and he would have to run down on the street. Chummy had been dry for six or seven years when Glenn started the band.

"And I know a couple of times Glenn was drunk when we were working a theater somewhere. And he was staggering,

emceeding a show, and Chummy didn't let him up. Every time he'd come near Chummy, Chummy would say, 'Whatsa matter, someone hit you with the bar rag, for Chris's sake?'

"'Dry drunk' is an expression in A.A. — when a person stays sober but hates it. He wants to let all that stuff out, but he doesn't know how to do it unless he gets drunk.

"He was a *terrible* drunk. But when he'd go on the wagon, he'd be one of those stiff people. He never learned to be a decent sober man. He needed a couple of good A.A. meetings.

"I know other people with the same personality. And I've been around A.A. myself. And I knew when I drank before and I'd stop, I'd grit my teeth, and say, 'I'll stay sober, god damn it!' And then when you'd let go, you went crazy. And A.A. showed me the way to get over that."

"The rest of the time Glenn was kind of mad at the world. He was bitter about everything. Kind of a down kind of guy. Putting things down all the time." Billy affected a grouching snarl: "'Ah for Chris's sake, Dorsey did that.'"

"He used to like some of the stuff I wrote. But then he'd get around to Duke: 'Bunch of sloppy bastards.' True, but it was also good.

"When he got the power of being a leader, and got his own publishing company, he got to be a power maniac there.

"I was in the band about two weeks when I got to know Willie Schwartz, who was playing clarinet. He used to say about Glenn, 'Fuck him.'

"The one guy who had Miller buffaloed was Moe Purtill. As a drummer, his playing wasn't that good, but we liked him as a guy. He was a good guy, and he didn't take any shit from Miller."

Miller's struggle to launch the second band was fully as parlous as the effort that went into the first, and it might have failed but for one college student, who would prove important in the life and career of Glenn Miller, born in Mount Vernon, New York, April 25, 1916. His father, William J. Shiels, a surrogate court judge for Westchester County, in time became a New York State Supreme Court judge. Tom was graduated with a degree in business administration from Notre Dame.

Tom told me:

"In 1938, the kids who were at my old high asked me that year if I could help getting a band for their senior prom, which was always at Christmas time. That Christmas at Iona Prep, I was trying to give these kids help. I went down on Broadway and knocked on doors of different agents. I got one named Charles Shribman. He was from Boston, but he had a New York office. Bob Bundy, a little pudgy guy with a real Boston accent, worked for him. I told him I was looking for a band for my high school. He said, 'How much have you got to

spend?'

"I said, 'The max is \$500,' which in those days was a lot of money for those kids.

"He said, 'Look out across the street. See that marquee there?' I looked out the window and it was the Paradise restaurant. It was headlining: Freddie Schnickelfritz and his orchestra." It was a comedic band, of a kind common at that period.

"It said in lower type: also Glenn Miller Orchestra, Marion Hutton, Ray Eberly.

"He said, 'What night is your prom?'

"I told him it was a Monday night.

"He said, 'That's their night off at the Paradise. They'll be available. I'll see if I can get them for you for five hundred.' He said he got ten percent of that. He said he'd give me half, which was twenty-five dollars. So they booked the band, and Miller netted \$450.

"Midway during the evening, they took about a half hour intermission. This school, Iona Prep in New Rochelle, was all boys. These Irish Christian Brothers invited us over for coffee and donuts. Marion and Ray and Tex and Miller.

"Miller walked over to me and said, 'I'm Glenn Miller. I want to introduce myself.'

"I said, 'You don't have to. I know who you are.'

"He said, I just wanted to thank you. The guys tell me you're responsible for us getting this job.' And these were his words: 'Without this job tonight, I couldn't have made the payroll this week.'

"That's \$450 for sixteen musicians, the band boy — Bullets Durgom was the band boy — and the truck and all. And he was thanking me profusely. [Ed. Note Bullets Durgom later became a prominent manager.]

"I had been hanging out at Glen Island every summer. I was just a band nut. I just loved music. The Glen Gray band was there. And Ozzie Nelson and Harriet Hilliard. I got to know the management there. Lockwood Conkling ran Glen Island. They called themselves The Cradle of the Big Bands. So I kept bugging them. I said, 'You ought to go to the Paradise restaurant and hear this Glenn Miller band. If you're looking for a band that's on the way up, that's going to be super-popular, grab'em.

"So they went down to see Tom Rockwell. At that time it was Rockwell-O'Keefe, the booking agency. Cork O'Keefe was a neat guy. Rockwell was a very big help to me in the early days. He was kind of my role model. I wanted to be something like him in the management end of music.

"Rockwell or Cork O'Keefe took Conkling over to hear the Miller band. They bought the band, and that's when it all happened."

Rockwell-O'Keefe booked the band into Frank Dailey's Meadowbrook. They opened on March 7, 1939 with a four-week contract, which was extended to seven after their first week. They opened on Wednesday, May 17, at the Glen Island Casino. Both ballrooms had a radio wire. The radio networks did *not* pay the costs of these connections. On the contrary, a ballroom paid a hundred dollars a week for a wire. The band members got three dollars each per broadcast on top of their regular pay. The network powers knew perfectly well the value of the exposure thus generated. And they were right, extortionist though their policy was: by the mid-summer of 1939, Glenn Miller had a national following, and by the time it left Glen Island to begin broadcasting for Chesterfield cigarettes, it was the most popular band of the whole swing era.

The Miller band did not play out its contract at the Glen Island. Glenn asked the management permission to leave a week early to take advantage of its startling popularity by going on a road tour. The management booked the Woody Herman band to replace him. It was, as Woody put it, like "following the World War to follow Glenn." One night the place was packed, with fans standing outside in lines. When Woody opened, it was all but deserted. "It was pretty heart-breaking," Woody said. But he did not begrudge his friend his sudden success. And Woody would soon find his own popularity.

Tom Shiels said:

"Some book I read said that opening night at Glen Island was packed. But that's not true. There were maybe forty-eight people there, and twelve of them were waiters. But *closing* night, it was wall-to-wall! They opened maybe the 17th of May and closed around the 15th of August. When they left the Glen Island Casino, they went to Lake Compounce in upper Connecticut or Massachusetts. It was one of the Shribmans' ballroom. The place was just mobbed. I remember sitting next to Helen Miller in the stands there. She said, 'Pinch me.'

"I said, 'What for?'

"She said, 'I can't believe what I'm seeing.'

"Gene Krupa came in that night to see the band. He was doing a one-nighter close by. Then the Miller band went to, I think, Schenectady, and then to Washington. The theater where the big bands played. They went through the roof.

"I remember seeing the difference between when they opened at Glen Island and what had happened during that summer with *In the Mood* and other things. *Stairway to the Stars*. They had so much air time. They'd come in the afternoon, with no people there, and broadcast.

"I got friendly with the musicians. My parents had a big home in New Rochelle. They'd take a home up in Carmel,

New York for the summer. I begged out because I had hay fever. I pleaded with them to let me stay there in New Rochelle. I stayed there in an empty house. After the guys had finished their job at night, I'd invite them all over and get a case of beer and play records and sometimes they'd jam a little. I got friendly with Hal McIntyre mostly. And with Chummy. Chummy didn't hang out with the guys; he was Glenn's close friend. And so was McIntyre. But McIntyre was quite a bit younger, about my age. And he interceded with Glenn to give me a job. Chummy and McIntyre. And later George Evans, who was his press agent. I was in his office when Frank Sinatra came in to give him his biography, the first day he signed them. Sinatra gave him the names of the presidents of his fan clubs. He contacted them. I remember him making the deal to give them a dollar if they'd show up at the Paramount with their friends and go crazy when Frank came out on the stage.

"My dad couldn't stand me hanging around the house, playing the drums in the living room, with Benny Goodman's *Sing Sing Sing* record. He said, 'You're never going to amount to anything playing the damn drums.' Then I worked for the *Journal-American*.

"Finally Glenn told McIntyre, 'All right, send him up. I'll talk to him during the Chesterfield rehearsal.' So I went up to the CBS Playhouse on Broadway. And Glenn said, 'We're finished rehearsing now. I'm going to get a haircut before the first broadcast.' He'd do two broadcasts, the first for the east coast, and the west coast second, because they were three hours behind. So he went over to the Victoria Barber Shop. I was sitting next to him, talking. He offered me fifty dollars a week. At that point at the paper, my salary had gone up to thirty-five dollars a week. I was selling classified advertising. They gave me the toughest assignment — furnished rooms in Harlem. I'd call up some woman in Harlem who had to go up maybe five flights of stairs to take care of her rooms. They were like six dollars a week. And the pay phone would ring in the lobby. I could just picture the poor woman coming all the way down the steps thinking, 'Finally I've got somebody to rent a room.' And I was just trying to get her advertising, because I had seen her advertising in one of the other papers. That was difficult. But it was good training to sell.

"That's what I was doing when Miller hired me and bumped me up to fifty. I was king of the hill then. Fat City! Fifty dollars a week!"

To be Continued

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