

EXILE TO

by Jude Acers, US Senior Master

Mike Jagers owes Jude Acers a nickel... Newspapers, magazines, films, words, letters and a criminal trial did not tell the truth: what everyone in front of the stage saw clearly... Step back in time. Watch as Mick Jagger, the Rolling Stones, Santana, Grateful Dead, Flying Burrito Brothers, Jefferson Airplane, Attorney Melvin Belli, Jude Acers, Blue and only 400,000 other people go to see

HER HANDS AT ALTAMONT THE ROAD: PART X

Well, I woke up Sunday morning with no way to hold my head that didn't hurt. In the Graystone Hotel I had an alarm clock that rang to remind me that a US Chess Federation tournament game had to be played. I could still hear the screaming and there were her hands, raised very high. Mick Jagger was standing directly in front of me, and I reached out to touch his cape in curiosity to see if it was really that close. That was when I saw her hands.

I had postponed game three times already. The chess game must be played today. It was against some very nice middle-aged man who would not understand that less than six hours before I had been walking in thousands of car headlights away from the Altamont Speedway. He would not know that I had three hours sleep in two days. He would never believe that I had been so terrified, afraid to hitch a ride with anyone, and walking, walking to Livermore, California. There I had called *Supervolk* to come and get me. I just sat on the ground for one hour, silent, glad to live.

Supervolk would probably die for me. He is the type of insane Woody Allen dream character that gets everything done like a burglar. He has been with me for six years of hopping along desolate California highways to more than a hundred chess tournaments, simultaneous chess exhibitions, prison chess lectures and teaching sessions at hospitals and prisons everywhere. We are a ruthless team that gets results, while the United States Chess Federation, American Chess Foundation and Piatigorsky Chess Foundation only laugh at us, do not even answer our letters. He believes in Jude Acers with no qualification when Jude is in the dirt, spit upon. Together we are more powerful than a locomotive. We do not care about anything, anyone. We do what we have to do.

Supervolk types my handwritten manuscripts, buys me all the A&W Root Beer that I can handle and he is my only friend. I call on *Supervolk* only if the problem is too strong to die, a forty alarm fire. He forbids the use of his name, much as a Federal Narcotics Agent does not appreciate going public in the L.A. Free Press' know-your-local-friendly-neighborhood-narc-pictorial section. If *Supervolk* doesn't know about it... it isn't. He drives a VW bug, of course.

Supervolk is about five-feet four-inches tall, with thick spectacles. He is a crack Russian translator, chess teacher, classical music buff. He only knows about somebody called "the moving stones" or something like that because he was given a destination by telephone and heard, "Come and get me, *Supervolk*." I'm just sitting here. It was pretty bad, guess you heard. I can't move. Help me, *Supervolk*!

At first, the ladies don't notice *Supervolk* very much. He gets his licks in on achievement alone. He teaches invalids, mentally retarded people, hundreds of "mentally gifted minors" and old people how to play chess. He does it for free, has spent thousands of hours doing it.

He teaches a class on chess for college students that keeps getting bigger, bigger, bigger. In the past 15 years people have become mad-dog insane about *Supervolk*. City police and fire departments have let him use their offices, their equipment, their Xerox facilities for just about anything he pleases. The local library absolutely refuses to press his multi-dollar library fines because he helps so many people so much. ("We just send him a reminder postcard, if his books are more than a year overdue," the librarian tells me.) But *Supervolk* insists on paying up anyway, and so almost always is short of money. He is never too short to buy a chess player a hamburger at the Hippo restaura-



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rant, however.

Parents of California's most explosive ladies trust *Supervolk* to whisk their daughters to chess lessons and tournaments without question of time or place. The only stipulation is that that weird Louisiana chess master had better not be in the VW, or no go, Rebecca. That Louisiana boy is girl crazy.

Supervolk is such a good guy that Jude Acers avoids him as much as possible, so as not to contaminate him with Jude's latest body tripping ladies, the latest Bernard Zuckerman pornographic movie or sinful thoughts that are running wild in the streets of Paris-in-the-West.

He found Jude in the pitch-black, freezing service station. One look through the windshield and you knew it was a bad case. He had brought along apples and cookies to shove down the big, big Acers' mouth, but found Jude still too much in shock from his ordeal to eat anything.

"You couldn't even talk, which meant that something was seriously wrong," says *Supervolk* without a trace of a smile. He would only learn by typing these words what had happened. He stashed me safely at the Geary-Kearny Street intersection and whizzed away... Just who was that masked chess teacher? Why, that was the lonely *Supervolk*! *****

In the Graystone Hotel if there's a fire, you don't leave alive when you're in a cheap room high up. The elevator is 1913 vintage, and you drag the door open and shut, if it isn't stuck as usual.

I put on my cleanest dirty shirt and went out to face the bright, bright sunny day. Sun was pouring through the glass dome of the hotel as I stepped out of my \$36 a month hotel sewer room, which measured 12 feet by four feet and featured outstanding car fumes from six stories below on working days, which is to say five-sevenths of the time.

Five stories down the spiral staircase I could see the Indian family that ran the hotel on starvation, hope, prayer and smoke signals. They were cooking fried chicken by the lobby desk. They did not have much to live for, but they had each other. Their smallest child watched me fumble toward the elevator and punch the button, hoping it would arrive within five or six minutes. He waved.

"Hi, Mister Chess Champion!" he cried out with delight, jumping up and down.

As I looked down at the child, I wondered if I would ever cease this crazy life, this restlessness that calls for living a game, a lady, a song. I could not imagine in my wildest dreams being a daddy in a family. I have absolutely no idea how other people accomplish this miracle. God, I can't take care of the great me, much less someone else. Just how do those guys like Koltanowski, Burger, Suttles, Edmondson and Spassky do it? It must be that I haven't found the right person. Yes, that's it. There will be a magic lady someday at the end of my chess career. I felt so tired, uncaring, lost. At last the Graystone elevator rumbled to a stop opposite me.

Jude Acers walked unsteadily and very slowly down Kearny Street and to the right, to 57 Post, the Mechanics' Institute Chess Room, where the very nice middle-aged man was waiting like Godzilla, like Attila the Hun. He blew Jude Acers' brains out in 19 moves. Jude returned slowly to the Graystone and slept 20 hours. A pocket radio was humming in the open window above his head and more poison car fumes poured in as he awoke. He made decisions rapidly.

He decided to leave mickey-mouse US Chess Federation Swiss system tournament competition forever, to play only private match and training games, to leave San Francisco. He would avoid large crowds forever. He would answer only business mail, keep to himself, get a manager to book the personal appearances necessary to survive. He would quit seeing all but the most affectionate, dynamic ladies. All enthusiasm for the wind and Tom Sawyer had died with her hands.

It was over. I would play marbles for keeps from now on. No dough, no go. No more chess play without chess pay. No more chances on motorcycles. James Dean, Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin, Brian Jones, Jimmy Hendricks, Ralph and Susan Kellogg could take the chances, not me, Daddy-O-Poppa-Stoppa. I would protect my bod and do it now. I would meet all their friends after they were gone and say, "You-take-the-dope-dope." Wouldn't that be a gas?

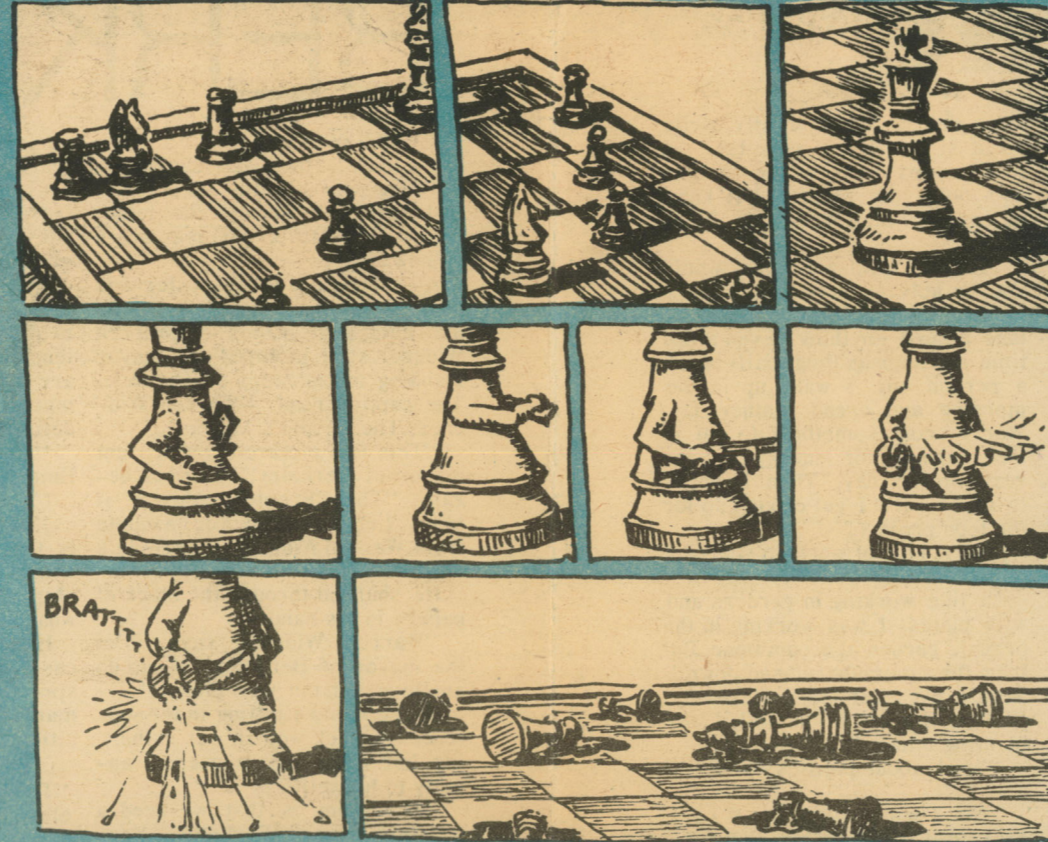
Maybe if the US Bureau of Narcotics ever gets itself straightened out, quits knocking down the doors of Indiana and Illinois farmers and making "honest mistakes" in searches for the evil weed... I could make a soft anti-drug commercial.

I could say, "Hello, my name is Jude Acers. Practically everybody I know has died of heroin overdose. I am looking for some new people to know who will volunteer to die of heroin overdose so that I can get a new set of people to know and die of heroin overdose. Think about it. I want you! ... to stay alive." You know, something that would make people sit up in their opium dens and say, "Jesus Christ, who in the hell was that masked chessplayer?"

"Let It Bleed" was the current album release by the Rolling Stones. It blasted out night and day from a poster shop opposite the Cafe Trieste in North Beach. Rumor held that the Stones were in town and would definitely do a free concert after grossing about three million dollars on paydirt tour in American cities. Nobody really believed a free concert was possible because of government and police opposition, monstrous crowds, excruciating logistical problems. The Rolling Stones are not famous for humanitarianism. "The Rolling Stones giving something away for nothing? Are you kidding?" asked Joanie, the waitress at the Coffee Gallery.

I believe it was true on Tuesday, four days before

PLAY TO WIN! BY FRANKLIN-1973



five men blew California apart. Keith Richards and Bill Wyman came up Grant Avenue. To pass the time, they played the world famous "help the Rolling Stones" game with local clothes and jewelry merchants.

The game goes like this: Keith Richards comes in Jeans West looking like a po-boy. Keith begins to look lonely, lost, hungry, blue. He fingers one pair of duds after another and a pile of 14 of them is built before your eyes. You are the store manager and you are watching everybody's hands and arms. Because you are paranoid about shoplifters, that only cost you \$6,000 last year. You look up at the head of the customer by the pile of jeans and stare into the eyes of the most successful rock-and-roll guitarist who ever lived.

You think to yourself, "Well, my goodness gracious! That's a real live Rolling Stone Superstar named Keith Richards. Well, fr smucking out!" At this moment his lordship gives a nod and a promo man from Atlantic Records walks up to you and says, "Hi. Would you like to do something for the Stones?"

You say, "Sure, man, take what you want!" And 14 cute little trousers go out the door before you can get an autograph on the wall or ask how Mick Jagger is doing these days.

One befuddled merchant, shocked that any member of the multi-millionaire Rolling Stones would have the unmitigated audacity to suggest that they get anything from his store absolutely free, really put it to the Stones a large selection of merchandise at cost! They looked pained, but payed with a check that bounced. "After all, they've made more than forty million dollars since 1960, according to Variety magazine and their managers," said the store owner, defending himself from his guilty conscience for not doing more for those po-boys.

Outside Jeans West, Keith realized that several jeans really weren't his size or style. So he pitched those into a trash can. When you're a superstar, you have to keep on moving along. In a week at their hotel, the Rolling Stones never once spoke to any hotel employee. Herb Caen told us in the Chronicle that the Rolling Stones never once tipped the four bellboys who wrestled more than a ton of luggage and the guitar cases in and out of their hotel. Obviously, here are nice guys and real heavweights.

I played the watch the Rolling Stones get watched by people game myself. I just sat in a corner and watched two cool, sophisticated ladies walk into the Camel Bar and sit down, ample cleavage and thigh view provided. They are unaware that in the darkness are four Rolling Stones behind the jukebox. Gradually, the ladies' eyeballs adjust to the dimly lit sin parlor. They can vaguely make out men in chairs over there.

It is now games and royal promenade time. Yes, the two lovelies are going to pretend that the menfolk are not even in the place and play something on the jukebox. The game is called "castration," and these babes play it every night. They walk over with everything hanging out. That is it. Give us a lookie-lookie at all those ample assets, the impossible dream. Play that box.

The dime goes in and they play "Honky Tonk Woman" and turn around to go past the inferior nothings. As they go toward their seats, the heavenly brunette suddenly realizes that the people who made the number one record in the world are sitting there cackling out, "Excellent selection!" "Quite nice, actually." "Well, hello, hello!" Charlie Watts, the Stones drummer, blows a stream of cigarette smoke at them with a naughty but authentic smile. It was the only time that I have ever seen Watts show human emotion. It is my opinion that he is probably a living human being. I swear, I saw the guy smile once.

The two women say "the Stones!" at the same time. They just stand there, stopped dead in their platform shoes. The games players, bombed, Bill Wyman signs the wall with my black felt tip pen. I refuse to surrender it to the ladies afterward. They offer me money. I keep jacking up the price as the Stones finish up the beer and dash into a taxi parked outside. The two ladies pale, "Ooohhhhhhh!" They are grieving as the impossible dream, the heavenly morsel has been dangling before them and is gone forever. Before they leave, they curse the barkeep and Jude Acers for not telling them about the Stones sooner. One kicks Jude Acers in the leg and is crying like a child. "Oh, you bastard! Oh, you S.O.B. You... you!" she screams. When you watch the Stones you have to be prepared to pay some dues.

The bruises on my leg lasted for a week, but were worth every moment of the pain. In four solid years the two lovely ladies have never once spoken to me again. This is difficult to understand. I pass them on the

street as often as is humanly possible for me to arrange. I always give my nicest, friendly smile. I always give my friendly "Hello, hello... Excellent selection... Quite nice, actually" type greeting.

At least the ladies notice me after the Rolling Stones visited the Camel Bar. Occasionally, I grasp my black felt tip pen and look critically at it as I pass the two darlings. It is so very satisfying....

This is the warm-up, y'all understand. Mighty Mick Jagger has not even arrived when Stones watching will become really heavyweight and even dangerous for a younging man. The Stones will attract a paltry several hundred thousand fans this Saturday.

On Wednesday Jo Bergman arrives. This destroys San Francisco disc jockeys, who know the whole entertainment business cold. Jo is the advance lady for the Stones. She does not mess around with your Osmand Brothers or the Archies or your typical high school group. She books the Stones, and her presence shocked everybody. It was really going to happen. A free concert by the Stones is something you don't see once in 50 years... You never will again.

As we learned with the 1972 world chess championship title match in Iceland, no self-respecting world class performance can possibly take place without major negotiations, cheating, dirty tricks and promotional heart seizures on at least three levels at one time. The ball got rolling, right away.

Mayor Joseph Alioto of San Francisco was the first player. He had to make a decision which only saved the entire city. Alioto is no dum-dum and answered the telephone himself.

Mr. Alioto: Mr. Monck, how many people do you expect to have at this event in our city park?

Mr. Monck: Uh... Well... Uhhmm... Perhaps several hundred thousand people. It will be short, one day only, however.

Mayor Alioto considered the prospect of 200,000 cars coming across the Golden Gate Bridge and leaving the same day. A traffic expert told Mr. Alioto not to panic into a hasty decision, that at worst traffic would be bumper-to-bumper for 25 miles, all city exits would be closed in both lanes, all emergency vehicles, such as ambulances, fire trucks and police cars, would go on vacation for a day or so. It would be a burglar's dream come true.

Mr. Alioto displayed the last known sanity in the Altamont story by firmly declining the death ride. An aide told reporters that the mayor had decided that "the city of San Francisco could not possibly give the Rolling Stones a permit to perform, even if God Himself requested it in writing." Alioto stood between the British colossus and San Francisco. It was close.

The radio was blasting, static infested by weak batteries, in the Graystone. The newscaster comes right on with "You're in for a treat, San Francisco! It's all set, and it's for real. The Rolling Stones free public concert will be at Sears Point Raceway. Exact time will be Thursday, probably. Final papers are being signed right now by Stones representatives. Highways are already jammed with people enroute to Sears Point, anticipating what may turn out to be the rock-and-roll Show-of-the-Century. The evening papers have a map showing how to find Sears Point, no matter where you are. Go see the Stones, gang!" Yeah.

There was never the slightest doubt as to my going. Mick Jagger owed me a nickel and I intended to collect. How this came about is one of the memories I have of the Rolling Stones so many years ago. It shows how they could affect people and happened when they were unknown, trying to tour before the Beatles broke the modern pop sound and British mania became a world plague.

It was Shreveport, Louisiana and the Stones! They had a minor cover hit of Bo Diddley's "Not Fade Away," but their tour was destined to bomb after four cities.

I had just blown apart a chess tournament in Natchez, Mississippi and rushed over to the city gymnasium to catch John Fred and His Playboy Band knocking them dead in the aisles. Coming from Hammond, Louisiana, John Fred waited 15 long years for his one and only hit, "Judy-in-Disguise." His million seller was still about eight years away. John Fred is a patient man.

John could do it to you, neighbor. There he stood in the bayou and swamp country in all his glory... his white office shirt, sleeves rolled up, undershirt showing at the neck and Ronald Reagan haircut. He turned out a vocal that left you wondering how one man could be a wall of sound. Versatile beyond belief, John Fred once poured out, note for note, the top 15 hits back-to-back at the Colonel's Frat-Rat Club in Baton Rouge. That left people wondering how to pick up their beer

ALTAMONT

bottles. You had to hear it to believe it.

John F. worked 300 days a year, managed his own music booking like a genius, believed that he was as good as any entertainer who ever lived. In his spare time he flew in his private plane, of course) to places that bands didn't visit often: Colorado, Utah. He was making a quick three grand on party gigs all over the country. He'd played "maybe fifteen hundred different gigs in ten years." John Fred, a legend in Louisiana time.

It is now time for the next John Fred monster mash, and we have to rush to Shreveport from Natchez, Mississippi. John Fred and his small group of 30 people will hop into a three-car convoy and get moving, flooring it all the way with no time out except for making a little whoopee in the back seat of John Fred's lead car, of course. It might be a little crowded, true, but you just had to get into the grabbing spirit of the thing, you understand.

I was the invaluable navigator of the John Fred and his Playboy Band convoy because I was the only sober individual in the convoy, which moved along at 80 mph on the curves. We traveled right down the center of the highway, of course.

I was only nervous twice on the whole trip. First, I noticed in the mirror that both cars behind us were ten feet over the little yellow line on the wrong side of the road. I solved the problem by not looking in the rear view mirror anymore. Second, a big Mac truck comes over the hill, dead-aimed at John Fred and his Playboy Band. It was a little tough for me to handle as John Fred barely whipped his car one inch away from the whole truck. Simultaneously, John Fred put his hand over the rear view mirror so that he would not have to witness the last moments on earth of the whole horn section, the drummer and six ladies of outstanding agility. Miraculously, they glided to the opposite side of the road into a ditch as two Jack Daniel bottles popped out of one of the cars, the impact of halting in Mississippi territory. They were all laughing non-stop, staggering out of the cars arm-in-arm and other parts. Fred couldn't believe they survived.

I guess that truck driver was not used to John Fred and his Playboy Band. All three cars had missed his truck by the space of a knifeblade. We could see the driver get out of his cab slowly about four blocks away. He went over to a fence and sat on it with his hands held together, as if in prayer. He waved "Hi, there!" down the road, but he just kept sitting there very quietly, thinking about it all. The show must go on in Shreveport, and we scrambled into the cars in the nice 90-degree heat and humidity and sped away.

"Sure was a big truck," John Fred had said. "Sure was. Ha, ha," I said as I crawled from beneath the dashboard, honestly believing that John Fred's shoe-laces was going to be my last living memory. We cut it close and floored it to Shreveport.

It was about 8 o'clock when we pulled into the Shreveport Coliseum, where the famous Louisiana Hayride Country Music Festival is held each year. They only booked Elvis Presley twice, long before anybody else even dreamed that the big E was going to cause earthquakes and heart tremors. I am trying to make you realize that this was a real biggie booking, neighbors.

Looking up at the parking lot billboard, we could see that John Fred was naturally first on the bill. I believe that "Johnny and the Hurricanes" or "the Surfaris" were second. I know for sure that some unknown name was spelled out in teenie-weenie letters as the third act... "the Rolling Stones." Honestly, nobody had ever heard of them, much less heard their songs on deep south radio.

Certainly, I didn't know that the entire Stones band was getting out of a black car as we pulled in. They were the first long haired men that I had ever seen, and I thought they were girls when I spotted them through the car window.

They did not talk to anyone in the dressing room. No woman came near them, and there were many ladies in the men's dressing room. In the hall, I could see Mick Jagger was trying to make a phone call by talking into the dead telephone receiver.

"Hello...hello... Is anybody there? Hello?" "Did you put a nickel in, sir?" Jude Acers asks. "Oh, do you put the money in at once?" Mick Jagger asks with surprise.

"Yes, sir. Here is a nickel. A nickel is all you need in Louisiana. If you're phoning long distance collect, you just dial the zero and tell the operator the city and person. She does the rest," says Jude.

"Well, thanks so much," says Mick with a smile. Then he phones someone named Phil Spector in Hollywood, and tells him that the Stones are having to live in their car because no hotel will let them that long-hairs in. "It is even dangerous to try to register. What shall we do, I wonder?" Mick adds. It is either see a barber or sleep in the car, guys....

It is a fact that I was the only member of the John Fred group to skip the backstage smooth party. I walked down the hall and pecked through the curtains to catch the opening act. It was only a side view and the sound was very poor. It was the first and only show by the Rolling Stones and lasted maybe 20 minutes. They were savagely booed and screamed at by an audience that was super beerwood-cracker, lily white, and largely drunk. The auditorium cooling system had zoned out and the heat was 95 degrees on a thermometer attached to the stage door.

The Stones courteously left the stage with no visible reaction to the crowd. It was weird. I had this funny feeling that I didn't understand what was happening. Certainly I did not know that I was watching the most successful touring band of all time. The Chuck Berry Redo Material and Rough Sounds were campy, theatrical but not syrup. We southern boys wanted them rhythmic, simon words and that sweet soul music, you un-

derstand.

I did notice three curious things that I mentioned to John F. backstage. First, there was absolutely no eye contact between the members of the group. The Stones did not need to look at each other to coordinate a show; about five rather intricate numbers. They knew what to do. Bill Wyman and Charlie Watts looked to the sides of the stage, totally bored with zero expression.

Another item was that the Stones did not talk at all after opening, but moved non-stop. They played wide open, very seriously. They had tuned up offstage.

But the most impressive aspect of the Rolling Stones was watching them before a bad audience. They were totally immobile, it seemed, it seemed, with the exception of Mick Jagger, who did try to get the crowd standing, at least. The Stones were very cold and calm, though they were jeered horribly. They were absolutely certain they were going to make it and soon. Brian Jones looked glassy eyed and stepped a foot or two forward or backward when numbers were changed. No other motion, save Jagger dancing like a marionette.

I had never seen a group so precise. Charlie Watts' drumming was simple, going quickly and easily into everything they did. He looked like he was having lunch or changing pages quietly while reading the morning paper. He was very, very fast and I tried to get two drummers I knew to come out and see it quickly with a dash down the hall. One wasn't there and the other drummer was holding a nice lady named Anna by her ankles, upside down, and tickling her. Zip. Back to the Stones.

I did not hear anything recognizable or wanted. I expected more, much more as they walked off. I had no idea about them but curiosity. A forty million dollar business by 1970? Really! Are you kidding?...

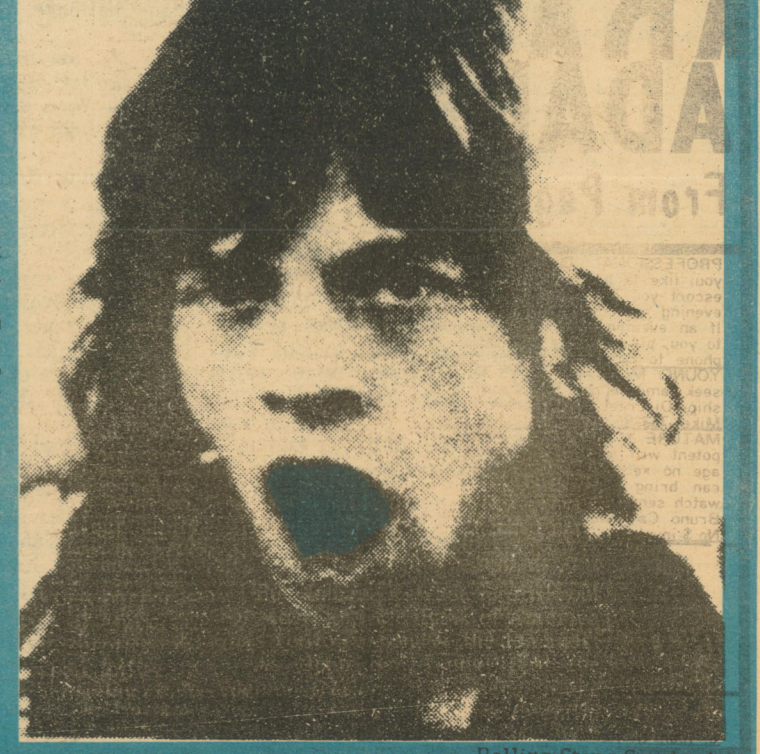
While John Fred and the Playboys went on stage, to much wino applause, I was watching the Rolling Stones packing up their car in the parking lot outside. They were all gone before the Playboys finished their first set. Mick Jagger said that people were let in free at Chicago and Minneapolis, where they bombed as well. The tour was then cancelled. No, not a good beginning for the Rolling Stones.

It had been almost ten years since I loaned Mick Jagger a nickel, since I had seen them. The D.J., on KFRC is telling us that "Honky Tonk Woman" had sold something like eight million copies worldwide. The news comes on and the ride begins, while I am trying to imagine if it is possible for a record to be made eight million times. What, I wonder, do eight million records, all line up in a row, look like? And they say that "The Carpenters" had an eleven million seller called "Close to You." And they say that Carole King sold twelve million albums of her recording, "Tapestry." Twelve million times five dollars is sixty million dollars of record business for one record.

If you win the US chess championship, you will not receive even \$2,000 for the lifetime of work it requires. A singing chess grandmaster like Vasily Smyslov or a concert pianist like Mark Taimanov is what rock-and-roll and chess really needs. I am thinking now. Wait, what is this, the Stones are cancelled from Sears Point Raceway....

With less than 48 hours to go, the management of Sears Point Raceway had finally realized that any movie of the Rolling Stones would make Sears the most profitable motor roter in history. They demanded the right to film and record the monster mash in addition to the film the Stones were dying to make of the concert. Just brilliant, guys. There was not one chance in a million that the Stones would agree to this and they were told to sign on the black line or move 30 tons of equipment already at Sears. Kathi McDonald, you're right, baby. It was "down to the wire!" Things start to heat up from here on in, so brace yourself.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK



Rolling Stone Songbook