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JIMMIE POPE BECOMES MANAGING EDITOR OF THE COURIER

Z Neil Dalton was managing editor of the Courier Journal when Mark came to Louisville. but soon Mark began to have doubts about Dalton's news judgement. And ^{one May (in 1944)} ~~one~~ morning when the Courier appeared with an eight-column head over a story about ^a ~~the~~ police raid of slot machines, he felt his fears ~~were~~ were ~~unmistakeably~~ correct. Mark told Barry he had to have a new managing editor for the Courier. He ~~was~~ explained.

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that, if a big story broke, Dalton wouldn't know what to do with it; he would most likely bury it. Barry agreed; he said he would make ~~him~~ his assistant. Then he ~~Barry~~ asked whether Mark had ~~any~~ somebody in mind.

Mark said, "Yes, Jimmie Pope."

Some weeks before ~~this~~ ^{that}, Jimmie had called Mark and asked for a job. He had been managing editor of the Atlanta Journal, ^{owned by} ~~under~~ Governor Cox of Ohio and he said that the Governor called him every few hours to tell him what to do and he was tired of it: he couldn't take it any longer and had resigned. Mark told him he didn't have any executive job for him, but, if he was willing to come as a reporter at a reporter's salary, he'd be glad to have him. Jimmie said he would be happy to come, and so he was put on a general beat.

"Instinctively, the moment I had to replace Dalton, I knew Jimmie was the man I needed," Mark liked to boast. "He had every quality that makes a good managing editor: ^utenacity, guts, and character. I've never known a man who had more character than Jimmie. He also had the know-how for getting along with a staff. The staff, from the news editor to the rawest reporter, respected him; they knew he knew his job. I never had a complaint about him from a member of his staff.

"And best of all, he knew news. If he thought he had a good story, he ran it for all it was worth. He didn't ask what I thought. If I didn't agree with his judgment, which was very, very rare, he defended his viewpoint vigorously. There was nothing timid about him.

"Of course, I wasn't 100 percent sure about all his fine qualities when I recommended him to Barry, but I strongly suspected he had them. I had been watching his performance for a goodly number of years, just as I had been keeping an eye on the performance of a good many other newspapermen."

~~Mark transferred Dalton to the promotion department and Jimmie went to work in his place. He proved to be, according to Mark, "the best managing editor who ever lived."~~ Later, Mark made him executive editor of both papers. He also was at one time president of ~~the prestigious organization,~~ The American Society of Newspaper Editors, and for three critical years, beginning in 1951, chairman of the Freedom of Information Committee. He was the catalyst who brought about the repeal of the laws that up to then were being used to ~~secret~~ ^{hide} news, and eventually pushed through the Freedom of Information Act that is now being used by publicaf tions, authors, and others to illuminate all the

dark places in government."

Though ^{Jimmie} he once remarked, "getting out a respectable newspaper everyday is the only way to live" he admitted in the next breath that his "first-act role" in the ^{Freedom of Information} FOI movement "and the dumfounding revolution it has brought in access to news of government has to be the pinnacle of my life."

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~~When Jimmie once wrote me a long letter about his and Mark's close relationship that went far beyond the office, he poured out four highly flattering pages that I'm going to quote a great deal of because they not only reveal a lot about Mark, but also a good bit about Jimmie.~~ He said:

Handwritten notes:
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"...I could fill a book with memories, which I would like to read ~~and maybe Mark would~~ but most of them have a way of staying clean away from the office....

"I'm sure you have a bale of paper^{clippings}, magazines, and letters^{that} that would create a picture of a publisher with depth and detail. In a way I was at the heart of his operation on the Courier. (I won't attempt to include the Times. When my

feeling for the Courier obsessed me, I became a hopeless journalistic monogamist.) But actually we understood each other so well I did not have to take up too much of his time with my problems, and he certainly never took up mine with his. We both knew the news columns were his major concern at heart, and he both guided and supported me so superbly, I was uplifted. But he did have a cosmic range of responsibilities, institutionally, getting the papers' economic headache brought back to sound health, and the calm magic with which he attained this goal was mysterious to me, both because I was up to ^{my}ears all the time trying to get confidence and production from a rattled staff, and because I was bereft of any rudimentary capability about the business of funding the sort of paper we all wanted. I was his news partner, but he had many others, and their operations daunted me.

"...They were in the thick of the stern life of controlling that burgeoning newspaper property and pulling it up by the bootstraps in a way I do not think has ever been matched in press history.

"A few examples of the momentous work Mark accomplished about which I knew little: The first that impressed me as an act of daring genius was

scrapping the old roto section and creating the means of producing magazines in color. I'd as soon take on the job of re-creating the Great Pyramid, because the production of a paper was a mystery beyond my ken. I know the new Sunday magazine created a new image for the Courier and gave us all in the news department a pride that fueled all our performances.... Cary Robertson was, I am sure, the best Sunday Editor in the country for a paper situated like the Courier. He had a knowledge of and a feel for our circulation area that was superb, and he knew how to handle the egotistic children who had the capability of producing what he wanted...

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~~And I'm sure he had to check carefully all the things a publisher of two newspapers had to do: and it was all the more miraculous because I came across Mark frequently at spots remote from the office, and with time and thought for other occupations I could share fully.~~

"But Mark Ethridge never managed to be thought of primarily as a publisher by the newspaper fraternity; and that, I think, was his overriding achievement. Everybody knew he was a great publisher; you can prove that with figures; but what mattered is that he was recognized as a great newspaperman, and to make this quality show through the ANPA [American

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"And the new building...."

(Jimmie only mentioned the new building, but Lewellyn ~~Wite~~ wrote in his article on the Courier-Journal and Time in the Reporter had this to say:

"Physically, the two papers and WHAS... have been houses in the city's most impressive, air-conditioned, soundproof building, ... Into this ~~existing~~ handsome structure have gone not only the giant retrogravure ~~presses~~ black-and-white presses... but also the Ethridge improved gravure presses that print the CJ distinctive four-color magazine supplement and (at a tidy profit) those of a dozen other metropolitan U.S. papers."

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The dozen other metropolitan papers grew in time to twenty-two or more different Sunday supplements and weekly and montly magazines.)

To return to Jimmie ^{letter:} "I'm sure he [Mark] had to check carefully all the things a publisher of two newspapers had to do; and it was all the more miraculous because I came across Mark frequently at spots remote from the office and with time and thought for other occupations I could share fully.

"But Mark Ethridge never managed to be thought of primarily as a publisher by the newspaper fraternity, and that, I think, was his overriding achievement; everybody knew he was a great publisher, you can prove that with figures; but what mattered is that he was recognized as a great newspaperman, and to make this quality show through the ANPA [American Newspaper Publishers Association]

Newspaper Publishers Association] and with such dominance has not been done before in our profession."

Jimmie and Mark slowly put together a staff of reporters and editors they were proud of. They hired good people from all over the country, though the majority of them came from the South, especially from Georgia, for Jimmie and Mark were more familiar with the talent in that state than in others.

One of those Georgians, according to Mr. White's article, paid Mark an endearing compliment. He said, "I wouldn't work for anyone but Mark Ethridge; man, he's God down yonder." Mr. White also said the paper "had gathered a staff that is the envy of a hundred publishers....The policy has paid off in a quality of writing, particularly on the editorial pages, not to be matched by any newspaper today [1950]. It is reminiscent of the old New York Evening Post and World, the London-News Chronicle, and the Paris Intransigent in their best days....

"It [the hiring policy] has also given the Louisville papers," Mr. White concluded, "the most representative, full-range voice of the new South to be found anywhere."

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