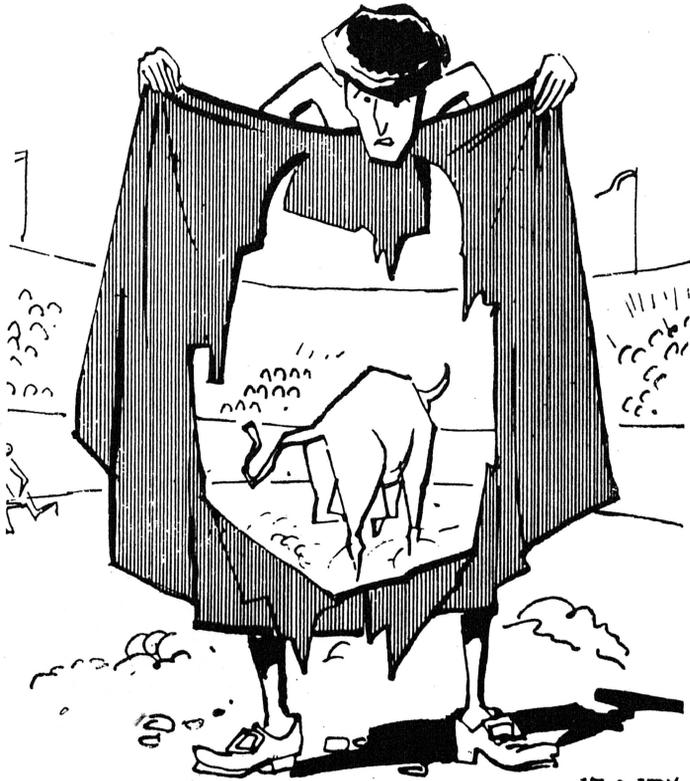




# Showme

## Supplement



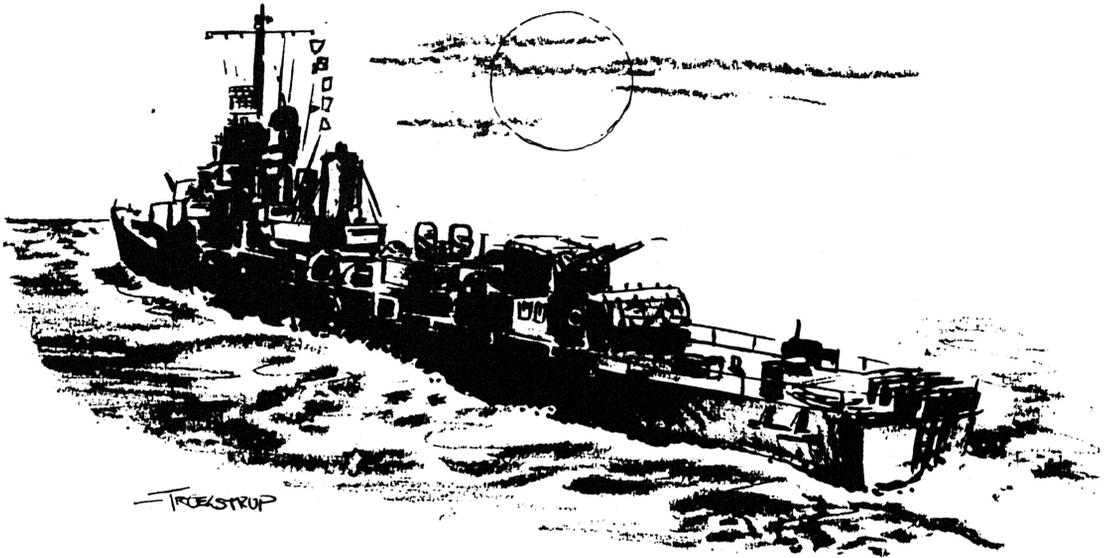
JF & IMK

—TIGER

**Number One**

**To Encourage Student Writing**

# Joe's Theory



By DICK PORTERFIELD

It was a cool evening in November when Joey Grazani walked in the door of the enlisted men's club. It had been another long, hard, hectic day and nothing appealed to him more than a few cool beers, and some friendly talk with one of his many friends he was sure to find in the club.

As he walked toward the tables with his pitcher of beer and paper he saw his friend Tony Angelo.

"Hiya Tony, How's it goin' boy?"

"Hi Joey, siddown and takealood off yer feet. Watch ben dune?"

"Nothin much, been bustin my rear every day on that bucket of rust, but that's normal. I oney got sisty-two days left and I can do that standin on my head, so it don matter none." said Joey, taking a large gulp of beer.

"Heard from Jane lately? I bet you two end up gettin married before you got three years in."

"Ah I dunno, her letters ain't been comin so reglar like they usto. Course they're just as nice, you know . . . but not as often. I hope to hell she aint goin out with that bum from Queens she wrote me about." Tony answered, looking somewhat glum. "If she knew all the stuff I passed up in the Med to be true to her . . . especially that little doll in Naples."

Don't worry about it Tony. I got a letter from my sister yesterday and she said she seen Janie the other nite and she aint doin nothin but waitin fer you."

"Yeah, I guess so."

A few minutes passed with neither man saying anything. The club around them was almost filled with sailors drinking, talking, swearing, smoking, eating . . .

Suddenly Tony's eyes brightened. He leaned forward in his chair and exclaimed.

"Say what's this I hear bout some Bosuns Mate getting knocked off ofer on your ship?! You dint have a hand in it did you?"

"Yeah that's right . . . Burns!", he blurted out. "I hope he's burnin in hell!"

"I hear the guy they think what done it is over the hill too."

"Well that may be so. I aint so sure, I got a theory all my own but, you see this kid Jefferson is over the hill, and he left the same nite Burns got it and . . . "

"Man a guy's gotta have gees to kill a first class boats!" interrupted Tony. "I thought bout it lots of times when that damn Philer started chewin me out, but I ain't never done nothin except tell him where to go and that got me a bust back to deuce and thirty days restriction."

"I kind think maybe Jeff did it, but I aint sure. They's lots a guys wood-liked tadunit . . . You see I know that guy bettern anybody else on the ship. We was pretty good friends . . . We usta go on liberty together sometimes, and we usually worked alongside each other.

"I remember the first day he come aboard. He was scared just like everybody else is at first. Real quiet, too. Never said a word to nobody. Why, he lived outa a seabag for two months before anybody found out he hadn't been assigned a locker.

"Funny thing, Burns never did like him. In fact right off he started actin mean-like to him. Always yellin at him . . . always yelled at everybody for that matter . . . man! he usta yell at me. But anyhow, he yelled more'n ever at Jeff. He gaveim all the dirtjest jobs too. You know . . . head cleaner, over the side all the time, lots of chippin and he bothered him all the time wile he was workin . . . ! Remember one time . . . We'd just got back in from all day of anti-submarine warfare. Jeff and me was frappin lashing canvas over the mooring lines, now if that ain't a filthy job, I never seen one. Well, there he was halfway between the ship and the dock on number five line holdin on with one hand and wrappin with the other.

## JOE'S THEORY (Continued)

And this damned Burns comes up and starts jumpin up and down on the lines. The dirty rat! Now you know yourself that it's no picnic stayin on those damned lines . . . even usin two hands! But when a guy start jumpin up and down on 'em!! Well, the poor kid almost fell off. He was real scared, too. I could tell that. Course he could swim, but still he dint want to fall lu . . . well, Burns almost laughed his head off. Then the mother yelled at im to hurry up and finish!

"Now if it'd ben me, I'd of got off those lines and proceeded to stomp hell outta the slob, first class or no. But Jeff dint say a word or nothin. He jist sat there holdin on and waited for im to quit jumpin and then finished the job. He was plenty mad, but he dint do nothin about it. He was funny like that. You know, never complainin, did what he was told with no back talk no matter what he had to do."

"Man, why dint you say something? I think I woulda stomped hell outa the guy even if I dint like the guy who was on the lines! Man, what a dirty trick to pull! I'll bet he dint dare go out on deck on a dark nite over in the Med, did he?" Tony said. He looked very angry. His face was reddened and he waved his arms wildly as he spoke. Part of this was due to the beer he had consumed as Joey had been speaking, and part of it was because of injustice he thought had been done.

"Why don't you go get some more beer, Tony? I'll tell you what happened a couple of weeks after that."

"Okay, you like Millers, don't you?"

"Yeah, that's right. Make it two pitchers."

"Okay."



" — Naw, don't bother me much — —I used to raise hogs before I took this up."

Tony got up from the table and worked his way through the numerous other tables in his way to the bar. The club was filled by now and most of the tables had at least four sailors sitting around them. The juke box was blaring out a hill-billy tune. This and the clamor of the many voices in the room made the enlisted men's club a very noisy place.

"Here's your beer Joey. I almost spilled it over that drunk up there who's got his feet stickin out in the aisle."

"Thanks Tony."

"Well, what happened after Burns jumped up and down on the lines?"

"After that Jeff and I both got the passageway next to the after head for a cleanin station. Burns usto come through there every day and tell us how filthy it was and finally made us stay aboard one nite and work on it a couple of hours after knock off ship's work. He let us stay inside for almost two weeks then we went back out on the deck.

We was paintin over the side and Jeff was on the stage one day when the time came to move the stage a little further aft. Well, you know it's kinda hard to stay on that damn thing too. Anyhow, Jeff hadn't even got a good hold on the line when Burns comes up and swung the damn thing real fast. Somehow or another he stayed on, but God only knows how. Burns got a real big kick outa that. too."

"The filthy bum," said Tony.

"I kinda think the thing what got on Burns most was that he never got a chance to put Jeff on report, or give im extra duty. He like to put people on report. Made him feel like a wheel. But, Jeff never done nothin outta line . . . never got drunk, dint play cards, dint smoke, never even talked back to nobody . . . speakin of smokin. One time Burns wanted a cigarette that guy never had any of his own, always bummin . . . I bet he bummed ten cartons from me. Anyhow, he asked Jeff for one. Well Jeff said, "Sorry boats, never used them." Well, I don't know . . . maybe it was the way he said it, but Burns got real mad. Chewed im out but good . . . Called im a chicken for not smokin and ended up by saying, "Next time I ask you for a smoke, you better have some!" Afterwards the dumb cluck was braggin about how big a fool he'd made Jeff look like. But, if you ask me, he made a fool outta hisself. Course he dint haf to do nothing to do that . . . what a stupid idiot.

"Another thing. He always called Jefferson 'Rat'. You see . . . whenever Jeff was off watch and off working hours. if he wasn't eatin', he was either out on deck getting some fresh air on his rack. He usto lay on his back and look up at the rack above him for hours. Burns started out by callin him 'sackrat' then he changed it to just plain 'rat'! I dunno how Jeff took it away bein called rat, but he never said a word about it,

"I think the thing that got Jeff the maddest was the time he count get any leave. He came aboard about January and in March or April he wanted to go home. He's from some hick town in Arkansaw and his old man's a farmer. Way he told it, his old man needed him for the Spring plowin and he wanted to go and help im. Well, naturally Burns made a

## JOE'S THEORY (Continued)

big joke outta this and Jeff dint get no leave. His old man was kinda sick, I guess, anyhow, the plowin musta been too much for im cause in the last part of Spring or early that Summer, he got sick and died. When Jeff heard this from the radio people, he just came down, packed his bag, and got in his whites and left. I guess he ran an emergency leave permit through, but if he did, Burns never seen it. Boy, was he mad! When Jeff got back about ten or fifteen days later he chewed him out real good for not tellin him he was leavin! So what's Jeff say, but 'Okay Boats, next time my daddy dies, I'll ask you if I can go home.' That's all he said, but man, the sarcasm he had in his voice!!"

"I'd of punched the bum in the mouth if he ever said anything to me!" remarked Tony.

"Well things went along pretty quiet until that Fall when Jeff wanted to go home again. It seems his old man had got everything planted okay, but there wasn't nobody to pick it up now that it was ripe. Burns acted real hurt . . . you know . . . and he said he dint see why Jeff wanted to leave him all alone again so soon after he'd just got back. He said something about who's gointa run the ship if you go?"

"Well Jeff dint get to go home. He was pretty hurt about it too . . . I could tell. To bring the story up todate a few nites ago I was sittin in here with Benny Rocca havin a few beers and Burns was sittin over there." He said waving his arm in the general direction of the far wall. "Well, I could see he was pretty well on his way and I dint even wanta have nothin to do with im, so I dint even go get the beer. Benny did. Not too long after I got here Burns got up and staggered out and it looked like he was headed back to the ship.

"The next mornin when we all got up to wash down the after deck, there was Burns with his head all bashed in. He was half way in the water, and half way on the pilin. He looked like hell, cause during the nite some of the fish had got to im!"

"Now here's where my theory comes in . . . Jefferson was a fresh air fiend . . . He usta stand out on deck for hours just breathin deep. He usta complain about no fresh air in the compartment and hated to have anybody blow smoke in his face. Well, when I got back to the ship it was pretty hot in there, so I figure Jeff had gone out on deck to get some fresh air. Burns probly came back and started makin cracks again, like he always done, and finally got to Jeff. . . Now he was pretty strong guy. Kinda small, but he usta have all the heaviest jobs, too. So he was no weaklin. I figure he took a poke at Burns and Burns bein drunk fell down or maybe over the side where we found im. Jeff did go on liberty that nite kinda late, and he aint showed up since."

"Geez," said Tony, "Sure sounds to me like that's the oney way it could of happened! The poor guy, I don't blame im though. I thought Philer was a rat, but he's an angel compared to that guy. Burns. Man, he woun't of lived long on my ship. I'd of stuck a shiv in his ribs the first time he pulled any of that stuff."

"I don't blame Jeff at all if he did it, or anybody else who might have done it. I might of done it myself, cause I hated the guy almost as bad as I hate this damned outfit." said Joey.

"What did the guy who investigated it say about it? I mean there's usually some shore patrol officer who acts like a cop in affairs like this. I remember when that guy on the . . . oh . . . Williamson, or something like that got in a fight and got all fouled up while he was on the beach and then woun't tell anyone how it happened. They had a big investigation and some officer from shore patrol headquarters was the big wheel." Tony remarked, loking wise inthese sort of matters.

"Well, tha's just about the same way they figure it, except they don't know all the rotten things that Burns did. Of course the Division Officer, Mr. Halvert, knows that Burns was that way, but he liked it. In fact, he usta say that if Burns kept the guys in line the way he did that he would have the best division on the ship. Actually it was about the most fouled up thing you ever seen." Joey answered.

"Geez, the poor guy." Tony said sadly, "I wonder if they'll be able to find him down in Arkansaw. You know it's still pretty rough country down there, and a guy could hide out in the Ozark Mountains."



Collins

## JOE'S THEORY (Continued)

"Yeah! tha's right. Look Tony, it's gettin pretty late and I gotta get up a little early tomorrow. I have the eight to twelve watch on the quarter deck, so I think that I had better go get some sack time. Thanks for buying all the beer. I'll see you in a couple of days. If I don't, I'll see you in New York this week end. You are goin home, ain't you?"

"Okay Joey, take it easy, Yeah I'm goin up there. Take it easy kid. See ya."

Joey walked back to his ship smoking a cigarette and watching the stars overhead that shone so brightly on this clear, cool nite. It was very quiet. It was still fairly early in the evening and most of the sailors were still on liberty. ,

He ground out his cigarette butt carefully in the gravel that bordered the road that ran in front of all the piers. He squared his hat, threw his shoulders back, out of habit, and walked down the pier toward the ship.

An Ensign and a pretty young girl came walking toward him. The Ensign looked at him out of the corner of his eye as if to say, "You'd better salute me fella, or you're in for a hell of an eating out."

Joey threw the Ensign an indifferent salute and walked on by not aware of the Ensign's thoughts. It was just another silly rule to him.

The Ensign returned the salute very snappily, much to the satisfaction of the girl next to him. She gave him a very wide smile to show that she was pleased with his half of the performance.

Joey saluted the Lieutenant J.G., who was the officer of the deck, and placed his liberty card in the box.

"Where ya been, Grazani?" asked the seaman who had the messenger watch.

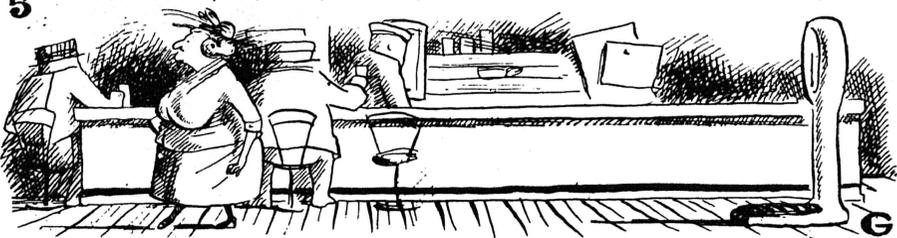
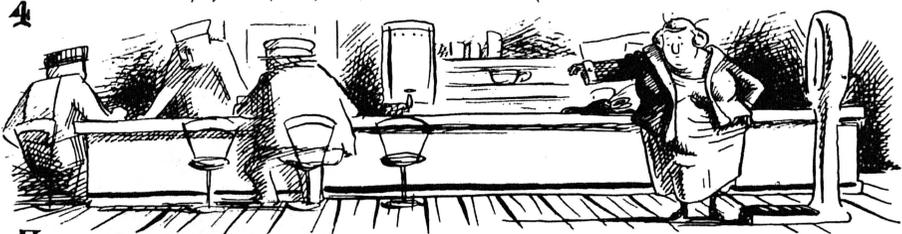
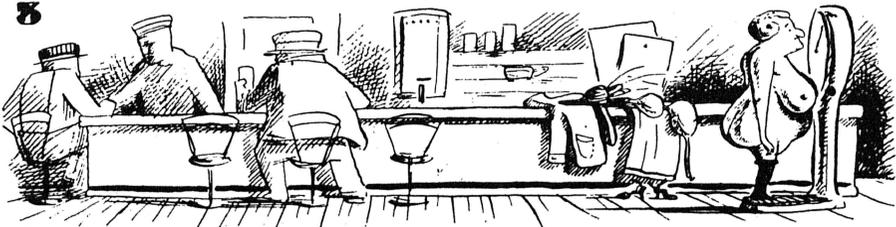
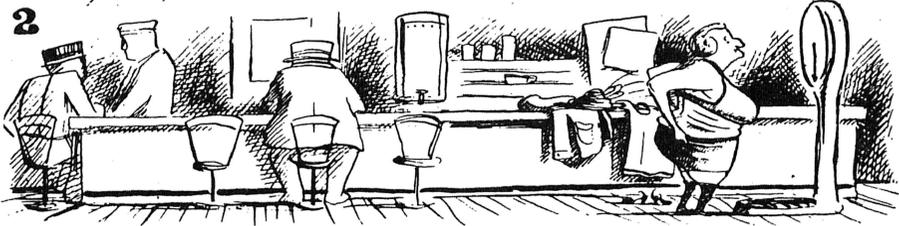
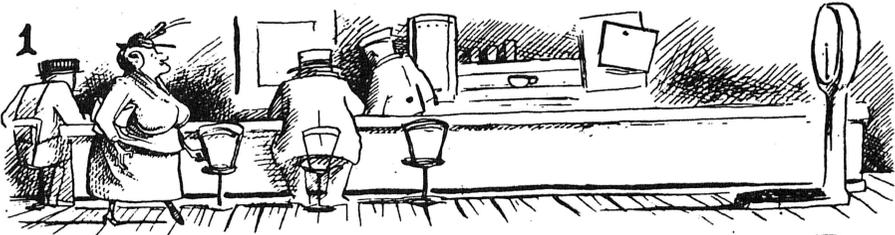
"Over havin a few beers," answered Joey laconically.

Turning, he walked down the Port Side of the ship to the after deck. It was an exceptionally clear nite. He could see the lights of Newport News across the bay more than a mile away. He breathed deeply of the clean crisp air. No one was on deck. Most of the crew was in the mess hall watching the movie.

Looking about quickly, Joey walked to the depth charge rack. Next to it was a box containing fuses for the charges. Unscrewing the butterfly nuts that held the cover closed, he reached inside and pulled out an object wrapped in a rag. He pulled the rag off and looked at the bloody pipe in his hand. Turning quickly, he faced the bay. Then without any more hesitation, he threw it in the water. It made a very small splash, and then was gone.

He knelt and busied himself with re-tightening the butterfly nuts. This done, he quietly stretched, and calmly walked to the hatch leading to his compartment. Then, he went down to his bunk, undressed and went to bed.

THE END



# The Last Mile

By Jim White

Slowly he shuffled down the dimly-lit corridor. His body trembled with convulsions of fear. The other offered his arm to steady him. His face was drawn in tight lines, reflecting mixed emotions of grimness, indignation, resignation and stark horror.

His faltering legs made each step an agony. Every 10 or 12 feet he would stop, hesitating as though to turn and flee. But always the other gave a gentle tug at his elbow and the mournful trek would resume.

As they struggled along, the whole vast panorama of his youth flashed before his eyes with amazing clarity — his early childhood, the neighborhood playmates, the gangling kid at Perry Grammar School, three letters on Central High's sports teams. Oh, his father had had great hopes for him. College, varsity football, perhaps—like himself — all-American . . . who knows?

But, instead, it had come to this. Now there would be no Monday morning barber shop boasting of his son's Saturday afternoon gridiron feats.





**"Damn Dog Drank It!"**

Why? Why was he here? Why had the son of a former all-time great half-back and now successful businessman failed to live up to the dreams and expectations of his father?

Yes, it was a girl — a very pretty girl whom he had met at a high school dance six months before. He recalled that she, unlike the others, was unimpressed with his athletic prowess. She seemed to want something which he was unable to give her. Merely muscles and braggadocio apparently had counted little with this esthetic-minded Miss.

But although this had a demoralizing effect on his ego, he eagerly accepted the challenge her indifference to him presented. Who did she think she was, anyway. Wasn't he the most popular boy at Central? He could have any girl he wanted, he had told himself in consolation. Anyone, that is, except her.

Still, overcome with passion for her, he had sought her favor for many weeks thereafter. Finally, one night . . . But why relate it? It's too late now. The die was cast and his hour was ticking close.

And now his father, heartbroken, had refused to come and be

with him. God, he needed a father's comforting hand now.

Rounding a corner, he saw the door looming up ahead, ominously, threateningly. He knew what was on the other side of that door. Often as a boy he had read such accounts with a morbid avidity, never dreaming he might one day find himself playing the part of one of the characters of those lurid pulp stories.

As he passed through the doorway, he thought he heard a faint murmur of suppressed voices. Once he would have sworn he heard his mother calling to him. But, no, she died seven years ago. He was alone — all alone in an abstract world of shadows and colorless, inanimate forms.

Suddenly, a priest appeared. Emotionless, Bible in hand, he stood before them in flowing black robe.

Everything had been made in readiness to the most minute detail. Why were humans so damned methodical? Who were these people gathered to witness his final degradation?

And then all was quiet as the priest began:

"We are gathered here today to join in holy matrimony . . ."

The End

**Swami welcomes contributions to Showme's supplement.  
Mail or bring them in person to 302 Read Hall.**