

It's Been A Hard Year's Work

Fat, wet snowflakes, the last remnant of a slushy New England winter, careened down one early April day on the knot of figures emerging from New Haven County Superior Court. Trying to maintain his dignity while handcuffed, Kau stood erect (as best as he could in his leg irons) while the federal marshals impassively led him to the waiting paddy wagon. Placard-waving protesters accosted him with taunts and catcalls: "Rot in jail! Burn in hell! Give me back my pants!" Ignoring the death threats, hurled stones, and this last inexplicable jeer (for, among all his manifold crimes, of pants-larceny he was innocent), Kau started stonily ahead, and thought how things had come to this pass.

One year ago, newly appointed to editorship of the *Good Ship Record*, life seemed grand. Now, not only had he lost the helm of the *SS Record*, but in a horrible concatenation of every major maritime disaster, she had been swamped by a nor'easter, caught on fire, struck an iceberg, and been torpedoed and dive-bombed by multiple Axis powers, before rapidly heading to Davy Jones' Locker with all hands lost. Other than holding staff meetings on a surplus WW-II troop transport moored in Long Island Sound, where had he gone wrong? He thought back to his first days on the job...

Pouring two neat whiskeys into crystal old-fashioned glasses, the old editor sat Kau down in the well-appointed *Record* office and imparted his editorial wisdom. "As *Spi-dermans I and II* taught us," he began, "with great power comes great responsibility, and perhaps Kirsten Dunst. But for our purposes, mostly great responsibility. The grand tradition of the magazine dictates we use this power for good, not evil, as we strive to restore *The Record* to the caustically witty, strikingly highbrow, nationally renowned publication of days of yore."

"But," he admitted after a long swig of whisky, "I've been bleeding her like a hemophilic gunshot victim."

"Chim M__stien-W__itz!" Kau exclaimed. "I assumed the understated elegance of your Ferragamo shoes, Hermès ties, and diamond-encrusted Gucci yarmulke were merely the perks of your frugal scrimplings working nights at the ADL and summers in the Catskills."

"Nope," he confessed. "They're actually the fruit of a systematic policy of embezzlement based on phony bookkeeping, off-shore accounts, dummy companies, and one comically large sombrero." And he patiently explained how all the money collected by *Record* staffers from ad sales at Ivy Noodle and Rimage Hair Salon, after being laundered through Gourmet Heaven 2, ended up in his pocket. At first Kau was appalled, but the former editor soon soothed his fears. "All the cool kids are doing it," he argued. "Join me, and you'll be living the life of Riley."

Well, Kau didn't know who this mysterious Irishman was, but after a few months, identity theft was the least of his crimes. Kau started small: at first he just used UOFC money to pay contractors to make improvements on the *Record* bungalow in Litchfield. Soon, in exchange for satirizing their competitors, he was accepting goods and services from local businesses—complementary rounds of tequila shots at Viva's, free passes to butter-churning workshops at the New Haven Colony Historical Society—and his impunity escalated. To attend a humor writing conference in Sarasota Springs, Kau hitched a ride on the *Record* DC-9; over Spring Break, he chartered a 65-foot yacht to disrupt the filming of MTV "Spring Break." For his 21st birthday, Kau and his 235 closest friends were flown to a private island off the coast of Spain, where ice sculpture recreations of Michel-

angelo's *Pietà* flowed Veuve Cliquot from their breasts.

But the heady times could not last. Tipped off by a freshman whistle-blower embittered that his pet mailbag hadn't made the cut, federal investigators raided Kau's dorm room, hung with Impressionist masterpieces and Led Zeppelin posters, and took the cringing editor from his den of opulence to a den of decided not-opulence (i.e. a jail cell). The Ward 1 Alderman, who had somehow gained jurisdiction over the case, threw the book at Kau to deter a culture of loose ethical standards at student organizations. Convicted of securities and mail fraud, income and sales tax evasion, and, under a little-used 1877 Connecticut blue law, "slander and obloquy of ungentlemanly nature," Kau got three consecutive life-sentences.

As Kau silently endured the jeers of the crowd, he had to wonder, was this really a case of massive ethical failing and personal malfeasance—or did he embody the tragic dilemma of America? Kau believed in the green light, the orgasmic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—to-morrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And one fine morning—

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

KAU

