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IMPOSSIBLE? BUT IT'S TRUE!

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**How To Tell If A Used
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Foods That Cause Divorce



CREATIVE PSYCHOLOGIST

Lee R. Steiner is the author of *Romantic Marriage: The Twentieth Century Illusion*. A certified psychologist in New York City, she has for many years produced and moderated "Psychologically Speaking," a weekly radio program on WEVD. She also writes a monthly column for *True Love* magazine. She is founder and president of the Academy of Psychologists in Marital Counseling and a member of the American Psychological Association.

seven, teaches at a Milwaukee beauty and charm school and is president of the Cedarburg Junior Women's Club.

Putting creativity into the home was carried to the fullest by Mrs. Georgia, Elaine Whitehurst, of Macon. She and her husband literally built their house in their spare time over a period of two years, without working on Sundays. (She is a Sunday school teacher.)

A housewife's chief responsibility—and this one transcends all others—is to create a home atmosphere in which members of the family can love and enjoy one another. Imparting one's own enthusiasms to the rest of the family can not only fulfill that responsibility, it can make some household chores seem less like work.

One contestant said she had made an interesting discovery the summer before. The family took a summer cottage at the seashore for two weeks, and she found housekeeping chores were taking up almost all of her time. In order to get her two children, aged 5 and 7, to help with the housework without spoiling their fun, she turned the meals into picnics and the home into a "ship." She soon had them scrubbing down the "deck," cleaning up the "galley," and even "battening down the

hatches" at night. The idea carried over when they returned home.

Thousands of American girls have hoped to escape from the responsibilities and burdens of life by marrying, then have wanted to flee from marriage because of the dreariness of household tasks. I asked the Mrs. America contestants how they were rearing their daughters to avert this kind of disaster.

Most of them replied that they are teaching their daughters at an early age to keep house. They are teaching them to accept the disagreeable tasks and to do them quickly and efficiently so that they will have time for the more interesting activities.

The contestants are also teaching their sons how to keep house, because many wives work for a salary, and men need to know how to pitch in with the housework to make it a cooperative venture.

Observing and talking to the Mrs. America contestants for a week validated what I had long ago concluded from counseling: All jobs have disagreeable aspects. Any job can be dreary. There are no interesting jobs, only interesting people who inject excitement into their work.

The high divorce rate among young people should worry us more than it does because in most cases the fault is ours: We have not given these youngsters adequate training for marriage.

There is something wrong with our regard for housework when so many married women in America choose to work outside the home, if only for a few hours a day, in order to maintain their notion of self-esteem. There has been a tendency lately to substitute the term "homemaker" for "housewife." None of the Mrs. America contestants hesitated to call themselves housewives. They were all proud of their status. This pride in being a housewife is a basic need in marriage today. ■■

THE JUNKIE PRIEST Father Daniel Egan S.A. by John D. Harris



Condensed from the \$4.50 Best Seller

The true story of Father Egan, the priest who did what few others have dared to do: He followed the junkies and prostitutes into their own hellish underworld, and taught them salvation can exist on earth as well as in heaven

FATHER DANIEL EGAN walked into the House of Detention for Women in New York City one day and began to do whatever he could for many unfortunate persons detained there. To say that this kind of help is needed is an understatement; it is invaluable. And we know of few who have given themselves so selflessly and so completely in this direction as this remarkable priest.

His astonishing activities among women drug addicts, prostitutes, and thieves are an ideal framework on which to illustrate some of the often overwhelming problems faced by this great city. One of these is the tragic revolving door in which so many women and girls become hopelessly trapped. Statistics show that most drug addicts become dependent on narcotics at an early age, often in their teens. They are forced to steal or become prostitutes to maintain their habits and are frequently arrested and jailed. On being released, most have nowhere to go but back to the environment that created their addiction. And so it goes on: addiction, theft and prostitution, jail—in an interminable cycle.

More than 85 per cent of the city's women prisoners are repeaters; that is, they have served time before.

Many have done so incredibly often. Vagrancy and prostitution account for the largest number of our women prisoners, with theft and drug offenses also figuring highly. In a single year more than 14,000 prisoners are admitted to the House of Detention for Women, and the average cost of keeping one prisoner for one day exceeds nine dollars.

For years Father Egan has been in the forefront of those who have argued, almost desperately, against this pathetically useless system. He has urged constantly that an answer lies in establishment of "halfway houses," or institutions where ex-prisoners can go directly after leaving jail to prepare themselves for return to normal society.

His principal activities have been concerned with easing the plight of that most tragic figure—the woman drug addict. In doing so, he has penetrated a level of society known to few but habitués of the underworld and the most experienced police officers.

With this book a revealing light is cast into a dark corner.

ANNA M. KROSS
Commissioner
Department of Correction
City of New York

encompassing a firm mouth and a level gaze. The girl smiled at him. He grinned back.

They talked, their speech dropping into underworld argot.

"So you got busted again," he said.

"I was on Forty-seventh Street and—"

"And the trick you hustled was a cop."

"Yeah. How did you know?"

The Challenge

A GIRL stepped out of the prison, her heels clicking on the stone steps. She wore a freshly pressed black suit and a neat hairdo.

A man stood on the sidewalk, waiting for her. His features were lean,

"The rollers called me the night they got you."

She shrugged. "With an oil-burner like mine, what's a girl gonna do?"

He eyed her thoughtfully. Ruby, a 19-year-old drug addict. A heart-shaped, dark-skinned face, hard little eyes, and a \$40-a-day heroin habit, a real oil-burner. A nice kid, even though he occasionally felt like hitting her with a chair.

"Where are your works?" he demanded.

"Stashed where no cop can find them."

Soon, he figured, she would gently remove them from her hiding place. The hypodermic needle and eyedropper would come to life in her hands.

"Junk?"

"Feds cleaned out my connection before I was busted. But if I have to score, I'll find a way."

She turned for a moment and looked at the House of Detention at the busy intersection of Sixth Avenue and Eighth Street in lower Manhattan's Greenwich Village. It looked somber in the bright morning sun; he shivered.

"I just did ninety days in that joint," she said. "Can we talk someplace else?"

They crossed the street and entered a restaurant on Sixth Avenue. He ordered coffee.

"Ruby," he said quietly, "how long a run have you had?"

She shrugged again. "I was turned or when I was fourteen. Stick of pot first. A fix a month later. Crazy."

"Busted how many times?"

"Four by city narcos. Once by feds."

"And now you're clean."

"Haven't had a fix in ninety days."

They both grinned at that.

"Want to stay clean?"

"Sure."

He swallowed his coffee. It was getting late; there were others to

FROM REPORTER TO AUTHOR

John D. Harris, an editorial writer with the Hearst Headline Service in New York, has covered stories throughout the United States, Europe, and the Middle East. His articles about Father Egan in the *New York Journal-American* brought the *Junkie Priest* to national attention and led to the writing of this book.

meet. He wrote the address of a small downtown hotel on a sheet of paper, wrapped it in a five-dollar bill, and slapped it in Ruby's hand.

"There's your room," he said. "Call me at one o'clock sharp. We'll try to get you a job and take it from there."

Ruby nodded, looking down at the table. "Thanks," she said. "Thanks, Father."

She stared after him as he walked from the restaurant, a slight, almost jaunty figure in black suit and hat.

"That cat," she whispered, "is just too much."

THE MAN she had been talking to is called the Junkie Priest. Anyone, of almost any religion, might have been astonished if he had overheard their conversation. To some an inevitable conflict would seem to exist between their exchange, spoken in the jargon of the narcotics underworld, and the rolling, majestic Latin phrases of the mass this priest had offered less than an hour before.

But to Father Daniel Egan, whose mind was preoccupied with objectives that more often than not seemed unattainable, there is no contradiction between the methods he employs to ameliorate the suffering of the addict and his life as a man of the cloth.

He does not look like a man who prowls New York's most dangerous tenements, alleys, and basements. At



Father Egan listens to an addict in the first Halfway House that he established

48, gray hair tops a clear, unlined forehead; his face is pale and oddly serene. He seems too gentle, too fragile to be a central figure in the weird and terrible world of the drug addict. His serenity is, in fact, due to just this. He has long become exposed to every sin of which the human animal is capable.

He was born in Greenwich Village. His parents were Irish immigrants who raised seven sons and a daughter. His mother ran a firm but not rigorously religious home. His father was first a laborer on the New York subways and eventually a lieutenant of the New York police who was honored by a newspaper as the city's "most popular" policeman.

Father Egan does not remember when the idea of becoming a priest first entered his mind. It might have occurred one night on a rocking, crowded subway car. He was 19, working in the circulation department of a Bronx newspaper, and had

taken the same journey many times. But on this particular night the boredom, even hopelessness, he saw on the unsmiling faces around him impelled him to vow that his own life would be different.

He joined a clerical students' club on West 16th Street as the first step to a far-off goal. One morning the club toured the monastery of the Graymoor Friars, a rambling structure perched on an 800-foot-high hill at Garrison, New York, in the Hudson River valley. He spent the day among friars in cowled habits and sandals, conscious of an atmosphere of sparseness and simplicity. His emotions were stirred by the home maintained there for vagrant men, some recently released from nearby Sing Sing Prison.

The Graymoor Friars is a unique order. A red Star of David, symbol of the Jewish faith, is worn beneath the crucifix on each friar's habit; the star symbolizes the intimate rela-

tionship of the Old and New Testaments and emphasizes that Judaism was the seed that gave birth to Christianity. The order was founded by a former Protestant minister, Father Paul James Francis, a convert to Catholicism. Father Paul was a lifelong adherent to the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi, traditionally a fighter for human rights and a champion of victims of social injustice. In its inception the order acquired a solid philosophical base for widespread activities on behalf of the destitute and humble, ranging from Texas to Japan.

On the bus journey back to the city Dan Egan made another decision: to become a Graymoor friar.

Ordination came on a snowy January day in 1945, a decade after he entered the Graymoor seminary at the monastery. In St. Patrick's Cathedral on New York's Fifth Avenue, he became Father Daniel Egan, Society of the Atonement, a Graymoor friar.

On his first assignment he lived for a year among dirt-poor Negroes in North Carolina, in the tobacco country. He immersed himself in their lives, learning tobacco farming and auctioneering. It was a violent wrench when he was ordered to return to Garrison and the monastery.

Another talent had been spotted in him. He was a dynamic and eloquent public speaker. He was assigned to a group of priests with special preaching ability who traveled from parish to parish.

In 1954 his home base was transferred from the monastery to New York. He was assigned a room on the top floor of a five-story walk-up building at 138 Waverly Place, in Greenwich Village. Curiously, it was two blocks from where he was born.

And it was while preaching at a New York parish, a short cross-town ride from his new home, that he collided head-on with the fearsome dilemma of narcotic addiction.

'I'm a Drug Addict'

THE DIM INTERIOR of the church seemed empty. But a woman sat alone beside one of the white stone pillars that rose, culminating in graceful arcs, to the high ceiling.

Father Egan had been preaching a Lenten mission there for several days and had heard confessions throughout the evening. It was after 11 P.M., and he decided to say a few prayers and go to the rectory and sleep. He was close to the woman before he saw her.

She was young and attractive, with slim, well-kept hands. She wore no rings, and her head was closely wrapped in a black silk scarf. She looked up at him for an instant, then burst into tears and buried her face in her hands. He was not alarmed; it happened often. He sat down and spoke consolingly urging her to be calm and to stop crying. When her sobs died, she stared at him. Behind the tears he saw a neatly shaped face with wide gray eyes. She seemed to hesitate before she spoke, then blurted out her words.

"Father," she said, "I'm a drug addict."

He smiled reassuringly. Maybe he could still help her, he said.

The girl dabbed at her eyes, and her tearful expression dissolved into a tight, bitter smile. She looked at him almost pityingly.

"Can you get me off drugs?" she asked. "I'm a nurse—I was a nurse—and I know what's wrong with me."

The tears returned, and she began to cry quietly. Father Egan sighed. He asked her if she needed emergency treatment and was further puzzled when she told him she needed months of treatment. She added that the only place where that

was available was at the federal hospital at Lexington, Kentucky. Yet she knew people who had been at Lexington four and five times and were still addicts. It was hopeless, she said.

In spite of his sympathy Father Egan felt skeptical. Anyway, it was late, and there was nothing he could do now. He told her to return in the morning at ten, when he would try to give her problem some attention. The girl shrugged and promised to come back. He watched her leave, a trimly dressed figure with her hands thrust deeply into her raincoat pockets.

IN THE MORNING there was a mission sermon to be preached at six o'clock, and he rose early. He heard some confessions before mass, gave the instruction after it, then heard more confessions. Another mission mass was said at nine. Following the last confession, he went back to the rectory for coffee.

When he returned, she was sitting by the pillar in the same seat she had occupied the night before. She wore last night's raincoat and scarf, but he could see her face had higher color. She was gazing curiously about the church.

He greeted her.

He sat down. The girl was cheerful, even if her buoyancy seemed vaguely fragile, but after a moment her mood became serious, and she looked down at her lap.

"Do you realize," she asked, "that I'm spending fifty dollars a day on heroin?"

"Fifty dollars a day," he repeated. "Where do you get that kind of money?"

"I'm a prostitute."

"Oh."

He rubbed his chin to give himself time to think. Not that what she said disturbed him. It was mild compared to some behavior he'd encountered.

"How did you get into this jam?" he asked.

She sighed. "I was a nurse, and I was dating this guy, a musician. He was very nice. How should I know he was an addict when I met him? But then he made me steal drugs from the hospital. After a while I experimented myself and became addicted, too."

She hesitated and bit her lip. "I used to take drugs out of the patients' medications and inject them with sterile water instead. I guess it was lucky for someone the head nurse found out in time. I was fired, and I lost my license. She could have had me arrested, but she just told me to get out."

Father Egan listened without expression as the girl's dry and unemotional voice told him how she had tried to get a job and had failed; employers wanted references. Her musician had left her. She had become depressed, and her craving for drugs intensified. She had sold everything she owned to raise money—her clothes, her television set, furniture—and spent it on drugs. One day she had tried to steal clothing from a department store in the hope of selling it and had been caught. The judge had released her on probation. A week later she had stood before him again. This time he hadn't even looked at her as he sentenced her to 60 days.

"Since then," she said dully, "I've been in jail four other times. When I get out, I pick up the first guy I can. Sometimes I get fifty, sometimes ten. I've been a prostitute for two years now. Sometimes I've hustled just for drugs. I can't think about anything but drugs, Father. I've got to stop, but I can't. I've thought about getting treatment, but nobody cares about a junkie, especially a junkie prostitute. I've—"

Father Egan had been listening in fascination, but at these words he

interrupted. What did she mean—nobody cared? If she was sick, she was sick, and that was all there was to it. He was surprised by the vehemence of her reply.

"That's not so, Father," she whispered fiercely. "You don't know anything about this. Addicts can't get medical treatment unless they're in jail."

He eyed her thoughtfully. She couldn't possibly be telling the truth, not in New York in 1952. And even if she was, there had to be an explanation. But he was intrigued, and he had an idea. He stood up.

"We're going for a ride," he said. "I know a place that treats anybody for anything."

"Where?"

"Bellevue."

She shook her head, but he grasped her arm firmly and strode with her out of the church. On 14th Street he flagged a taxi. During the ride he asked her name.

"Helen."

"When did you take drugs last, Helen?"

"An hour ago. That's why I feel so good."

The taxi headed east and north and finally halted at the huge hospital's main entrance. Perhaps he was being naive, Father Egan thought. But his curiosity was aroused, and he had to find out if Helen was telling the truth.

To his astonishment, a doctor in the hospital's admissions office convinced him she was. Addicts were not admitted merely for detoxification, to cure them physically of addiction. If they became ill, however, due to use of drugs or for other reasons, they could, of course, be admitted to the hospital. Many prisoners in the city's jails were sent to Bellevue's prison wards under those conditions. Some jailed addicts were, in addition, admitted to the hospital's psychiatric wards.

THEY THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE

The year 1900 marked a particularly important event in humanity's long relationship with narcotic drugs. German chemists developed a new drug that they called diacetylmorphine. They presented it for sale as a safe substitute for its parent—morphine—and even as a cure for morphine addiction. The drug was a crystalline powder, variously snowy white, gray, or brown. It was marketed under a shorter name: heroin.

The new drug was welcomed by doctors until another and alarming discovery was made. Heroin was viciously addictive itself, five times more so than morphine.

Drug users, though, especially opium and morphine addicts, were generally enthusiastic about heroin. The mere sniffing of a few grains produced faster, stronger effects than repeated pipes of opium or injections of morphine. Heroin produced unprecedented, intense, and unbearably pleasurable reactions of exhilaration and drowsy content, so much so that it swiftly became the drug addict's overwhelming narcotic choice. The underworld, too, welcomed the advent of heroin—the drug's extreme potency meant that immensely valuable quantities could be concealed and transported in small packages.

The resultant social problem was shattering. In New York City, where half the nation's estimated 60,000 drug addicts are concentrated, heroin users obtain almost \$700,000 each day through theft, prostitution, forgery, and other crimes. Individual addicts sometimes spend \$100 a day on the drug, creating a never-ending avalanche of crime.

"It's not my doing, Father," the doctor said. "It's the procedure of the hospital."

Father Egan led Helen to the hospital's main lobby. He told her to sit

down and went to a coin telephone. He dialed three other New York hospitals and received the same answer each time. If she needed emergency treatment, she should be brought in at once. If she was experiencing severe withdrawal symptoms — he noted the term — she should be brought in and they would see. Was she in convulsions? Was she in a coma? No, they were sorry, but they did not admit drug addicts for simple detoxification.

When he rejoined Helen, he saw the color had mysteriously vanished from her face. Her eyes had become deep, luminous pools, giving her an oddly transparent, defenseless appearance. She sneezed.

"Don't worry, Father," she said in a tone so resigned that he winced. "I knew this would happen, but you just couldn't believe me. Anyway, I've got to go now. I'll call you."

Before he could stop her, she rose and walked quickly through the hospital doorway.

III

'Nobody Helps Junkies'

IN THE FOLLOWING WEEKS the memory of Helen and the peculiar visit to the hospital rarely left Father Egan's mind. Drug addiction could only be some kind of illness. Why was it apparently shunned in hospitals? Helen was a prostitute, and, of course, addiction was mixed up with crime and the police and so on. But that was no excuse for ignoring her condition. And how many others were in a similar plight?

Almost by chance he was given the opportunity to find out. He was assigned to preach at a women's prison in New England. He delivered his sermon to the rows of silent inmates and was asked to come again. Invitations from similar jails followed, and

Father Egan became a familiar figure among drably dressed women behind bars.

He made a startling discovery, one that instantly returned the image of Helen to his mind. A huge proportion of the women in each institution was made up of drug addicts, regardless of the crime for which they were imprisoned. In some jails the ratio was as high as 80 per cent. The addiction question nagged constantly at his mind. To learn more about it, he questioned women in each jail he visited.

If you become ill on the outside, he asked, due to lack of drugs, what do you do?

Nothing, Father. Nobody helps junkies.

Can you get jobs if you want to live square?

Pretty tough. Lots of places require medical examinations. Like restaurants, if you want to be a waitress. But the veins in our arms, where we've been sticking needles for years, are a giveaway. They make us self-conscious. We're scared of being turned down.

What happens then?

We go back to drugs.

How do you get the money?

We steal. We hustle.

Then?

We get busted, arrested.

And?

We come back here.

Father Egan was convinced the only way to break this circle was to aid prison inmates after they were released. Sociologists and criminologists had been saying the same thing for years. But he was not conditioned by failure, and he had too little experience to be disillusioned about his chances.

It was at this time that Father Egan met Lois. He first saw her, a dark-haired, tight-lipped girl, during a prison visit. She told him she had been an aspiring actress and had

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modeled for fashion magazines in New York. She said she had won second place in a beauty contest. She had graduated from one of California's best women's colleges and could quote at length from Shakespeare and Shelley. She added that she was nearing the end of a three-year sentence for prostitution.

His face framed the question: *Why?*

She explained that nothing had come of her dogged attempts at professional acting. She had run out of money and turned to prostitution. In a final gesture of hopelessness she had succumbed to heroin.

Father Egan made Lois promise she would keep in touch with him after her release.

HE WAS SURPRISED to receive a letter from her a few weeks later while he was preaching in Toronto. The envelope showed the letter had been sent to him at his New York address, then forwarded. The girl had written him:

Dear Father:

I don't know if this will reach you in time, but please try to help me. I cannot stand it much longer. I may not be at the above address when you return to New York, but please try to find me wherever I am. I have reached the end of my rope. I have to be out all night, and it is bitterly cold. My heroin habit is now costing me \$50 a day. I do not know where to turn.

*Respectfully,
Lois*

He hastily replied:

Dear Lois:

Even if you are at the end of your rope, please hang on for dear life, hang on until I get back. When I do, I'll try to find you. I deeply regret being unable to tell

you where to wait until then, but you and I both know the situation only too well. I wish indeed that there were somewhere in the city where you could go and feel safe and protected. Someday, though, we will have a halfway house. In the meantime, Lois, remember you can never wander so far away from God that you can't come back at the last minute. Remember your hands can never be so dirty with sin that God won't wash them clean, even at the last moment.

*Always your priest friend,
Father Egan*

Forty-eight hours later Father Egan was back in New York, Lois uppermost in his mind. Immediately on leaving the airline terminal, he boarded a subway train and 20 minutes later was knocking on Lois' door, in a seamy West Nineties building off Amsterdam Avenue. There was no answer. He questioned the building superintendent. The man shrugged. Yes, he knew Lois. She came and went. But he had not seen her for several days. No, he had no idea where she was. He shrugged again and closed his door. Father Egan questioned neighbors and two patrolmen in a parked prowl car with the same result.

It was late when he reached the Graymoor house in Greenwich Village. On the bulletin board was a message. He read it, and dread rose within him.

Fr. Daniel—a detective from Missing Persons called. Will you please go to Bellevue morgue to identify a body.

He borrowed a car and drove to the vast hospital on the East River. In the Missing Persons office, near the door that led down to the morgue, a plainclothesman handed him a small sheet of notepaper.



From the first Halfway House, an addict stares at the House of Detention

"We got this out of a dead girl's bra, Father," he said. "It's a letter from you. We found her in a basement off Amsterdam, uptown. Looks like a drug overdose. Maybe you can identify her."

Father Egan looked at the letter he had written to Lois. He nodded slowly. Yes, he said, he believed he could identify her.

After silently viewing Lois' body on the morgue slab for a few moments, Father Egan turned to go. He was stopped by a touch on his arm.

"You know, Father," the detective said, "I've been around this morgue a long time, and I don't remember anything hitting me just like this. I read that letter, and I can't help feeling that if there had been something in town like that halfway house you wrote about, maybe that girl would be alive today. I hope you get it."

Father Egan stared at the detective for a moment. He thanked him and walked out. The words echoed in his ears: *Maybe that girl would be alive today.*

IV

The Prison

THE STREETS of Greenwich Village are colorful and informal, lined with art stores, secondhand bookshops, and sidewalk restaurants. But in the neighborhood's center, at the busy intersection of Sixth Avenue and Eighth Street, the House of Detention for Women looms up for 12 gloomy stories of reddish-brown stone. The building is bleak and fortresslike, with rows of identical barred windows studding its formidable walls.

Leisurely strollers crowd the Village streets on warm evenings. Sometimes, when near the prison, they

hear loud and occasionally obscene exchanges between youths on the sidewalks and women locked in the cells above.

The House is the only women's institution of the New York City Department of Correction, operating a system of jails and prison wards housing almost 10,000 persons. For many years the department has been urging that the House be closed and its inmates transferred to quarters less crowded, providing more light and air.

The prison's boxlike cells, measuring five feet by eight feet, were designed for one prisoner each. They are frequently occupied by two, with cots placed little more than inches apart. The institution was designed to house 461 inmates but is sometimes occupied by 200 more. The overcrowding frequently raises prison tensions to hysteria level, and one sobbing woman can provoke screams and tears in hundreds more. When this occurs, the din echoes eerily through 12 floors of steel and stone, often unnerving the most hardened prison guards.

On a spring night in 1958 the House virtually exploded when two teen-age prisoners attacked their guards, sending scores of other inmates into rioting pandemonium. A crowd of more than 1000 gathered on sidewalks outside and listened in uneasy fascination to animal-like howls as crockery and burning bed-sheets were hurled from the cell windows.

But life in the House mostly passes in uneventful, dreary monotony. Guards switch on the lights at 6:30 A.M., and the day begins with hundreds of women and girls yawning, singing, and squabbling. For those whose cells face Greenwich Avenue, the scent of freshly cooked doughnuts rises, with unbearable sweetness, from a bakery opposite the prison.

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In the confined quarters—each cell contains sink, table, and clothes locker in addition to the two cots—they dress and comb their hair, then troop to breakfast: usually hot or cold cereal, powdered milk, bread, jelly, and dried fruit. Following breakfast, they are locked in their cells while guards change shifts. By 8 A.M. each inmate is expected to be at work or in a classroom.

In this routine their days, months, and even years are spent in a hazy confusion of kitchen duties, laundry and linen room details, in sewing class, knitting class, typing class, cooking class.

In the prison's beauty parlor girls fuss over inmates due for release the following day. When a girl is leaving, she is followed down the elevator by cries of "Good luck, honey! Don't look back! You'll make it okay!" On reaching the sidewalk outside, she sometimes turns and waves for a moment at the rows of windows above her, at the girls still waving good-bye.

As a concession to femininity, some bars inside the jail are painted in pleasing pastel shades of pink, blue, and peach. Scattered among the inmates are determined Lesbians, and the House often provides a damaging experience for teenagers jailed for the first time.

Problems associated with imprisonment of very young women have on occasion aroused special concern. On August 10, 1961, the New York Times commented:

The approach in New York City and State to the problem of wayward adolescent girls aged 16 to 21 years, who are in deep trouble with the law, is a disgrace.

Other newspapers in the city have referred to the House as an "island of misery," a "school where daily lessons are given in crime, drug addiction, and sexual abnormality."

and a "woman trap." A Canadian prison chaplain visited the House. His verdict: "It should be bombed."

Correction Commissioner Anna M. Kross, a former city magistrate, has referred to the House as "barbaric," "degrading," "indecent," and a "hell hole." One newspaper quoted her, as early as 1955: "Why they ever built this Alcatraz I'll never know." From the date of her appointment as commissioner in 1954, Mrs. Kross has tried to institute reforms. But, as a departmental report tersely noted, "Inadequacies of appropriated funds and existing facilities have kept the city's prison system from doing more."

The House is everything it has ever been called. But for some women it is also the only home they have ever known. It is a club to which they return repeatedly to meet old friends. No physical ill-treatment, no beatings, occur there. The institution itself batters its inmates. But in further paradox, for many inmates the House is the one place they know in their lives where they eat adequately and regularly and where they are provided with shelter and medical care.

"As far as jail depression goes," a House employee observed, "most of the so-called anxiety symptoms begin to show a few days before they're due for release. In fact, it's interesting to note that our psychiatrist will often begin to prescribe tranquilizers for inmates just before they leave, not when they arrive. And the reason is simple.

"When a girl goes out of here, she's entitled to twenty-five cents and a baloney sandwich. I don't remember in seven or eight years anyone taking that sandwich. It's horrible. Sometimes a girl will get a few dollars extra from volunteer groups who work here. Mostly, though, she just gets the twenty-five cents.

"Now this is the crucial moment.

When the average girl walks out of here, she doesn't know whether to turn left, turn right, or walk across the street. Now I'm talking about the first ten or twenty seconds after she's released. She's got no plans, no family, nobody. No one will hire her. We can't do anything for her. And after she's had the security—and I really mean security—that this place offers, this can be a very disturbing experience. As a result, she's often back in a few days or weeks, depending on how quickly she's caught either shoplifting or prostituting."

V

'Father, Where Can I Go?'

IT WAS INTO THIS world that Father Egan came when he first sought to give aid to drug addicts. He discovered that working among convict women came naturally to him. He felt at home among steel bars and prison corridors. He quickly found there was much to be done and was soon trying to find jobs, clothing, and occasionally lawyers for girls when they were released.

In return the girls confided in him, guardedly at first, then openly, holding nothing back.

"I was a hundred-dollar call girl once, Father," a woman related wistfully. "I had a poodle on a leash, a high-class apartment, and a high-class clientele. I used to walk on Central Park South and stop traffic. I looked so good. I had nothin' but class, an' look at me now."

He looked and saw an aging, ravaged addict.

There were girls who could not find or hold jobs and thus became prostitutes; they took drugs to become insensitive to shame; they became addicted and were forced to prostitution to get money.

HOW IT GOT HERE

The narcotics racket is vast. Heroin reaches New York and the rest of the nation through a maze of international smuggling and intrigue. Its journey frequently begins in Middle East and Balkan poppy fields. There the bulb of the poppy flower is milked, exuding crude opium in black, gumlike form. Illicit chemists convert this into morphine and ship it to clandestine laboratories in western Europe for further processing into heroin. From there it is smuggled into New York.

Between the poppy fields and the piers and airline ramps of New York the value of each consignment jumps sharply. In New York one kilo, or 35½ ounces, priced at \$3000, can be sold for from \$9000 to \$10,000, depending on current market values. At this stage it is uncut, or usually about 87 per cent pure. Before reaching the addict on the streets, however, it is drastically diluted with milk sugar and quinine. Eventually the original \$3000 kilo attains a retail value of \$300,000 or more.

About 5000 pounds of heroin are consumed annually in the United States, requiring for their production 12 metric tons of opium. This constitutes seven-tenths of one per cent of the world's legal opium production and an unknown percentage of the vast illicit production. Consequently the volume of heroin reaching the United States is a tiny trickle from an immense supply.

Customs officers and others seeking to stem this flow face a staggering task. Heroin has been found embedded in canned food, in engines of airliners, jammed behind the steel plates of ships' hulls, in automobile headlights, in the possession of diplomats, in the false bottoms of immigrants' baggage—without the immigrants' knowledge—in women's underclothing, and within the body itself. Once, when a waterfront strike forced many incoming vessels to lie at anchor instead of berthing at New York piers, the supply of heroin in the city noticeably dwindled within a few days.

Shortly after Father Egan began to visit the jail, a woman pounded late one night on the street door from outside, begging to be allowed in. Once inside, she crumpled to her knees, then rolled across the floor like a rag doll. She was in an extreme, dangerous stage of heroin withdrawal, in agony from her scalp to the soles of her feet. She pleaded hoarsely for relief, insisting that she did not know of anywhere else to ask for help. Prison guards tried desperately by telephone to get a hospital ambulance to come for her. Finally they called Father Egan. He arrived ten minutes later.

He glanced at the woman, then furiously dialed a city hospital. "Now listen," he said. "We've got a sick

woman here. She's a drug addict. But she's also an emergency case. Somebody had better pick her up."

He was adamant about the severity of the woman's condition, and finally an ambulance was dispatched. It marked the first time he had obtained a hospital admission for an addict. Now, he felt, if he were to be as insistent in the future as he had been in this case, he would secure the admission of many more.

Soon he began to receive letters, a flow of pencil-scrawled messages on cheap lined notepaper that was to become a continuous flood over the years. The letters were sent down from the cells in such numbers that the prison administration finally provided him with his own mailbox.

Father Egan,

Would you please see me at your convenience. I am pregnant and I have problems I must discuss.

Thank you ever so much.

C. Lynn

11th fl. dorm.

Father Egan,

May I please see you today. I was sentenced to 2 yrs. for theft. I am very bitter because I feel I was sentenced wrong. Without a lawyer, aid or anything. I just left from doing four months and I was out four weeks. Why did I go back to drugs and prost? Because when I left here I had no money nor anything. And these people put me in the streets like an animal. So with nowhere to go and no one to turn to I had to go back to my old friends and what have you. I am about to have a baby any day and I want to be able to take care of my son or daughter. This might be a good thing for me. Please help me.

Ethel Cooley

11th floor dorm.

Father Egan,

I was hoping when you came today you might be able to see me. I'm going home next Tuesday or rather I should say I'm going into the street. For I have no place to live. My mother always used to help me when I got out but she is finished with me this time. I would like to prove to myself I can make it without junk or hustling. But how can I without a roof over my head? Father, where can I go? If you can help me or have any suggestions, please call me today. Thanking you in advance.

Sincerely,

Grace Owen

5th floor.

He read them, offered a prayer, and tried to think of a way to solve each girl's problem.

But if there was sadness inside the House, outside there was pure horror.

VI

The Jungle

IN THE narcotics underworld of New York Father Egan found a nightmare. He entered a grotesque, terrifying, illogical society where the half-starved and homeless spent \$100 a day on drugs, where prostitution, forgery, and theft were normal pursuits, and where sickness was a crime.

He was swiftly accepted into this weird and suspicious fellowship, however. Girls released from the prison told of a priest who, far from being repelled by their activities, was striving to understand them, who would extend any possible aid, and who could be implicitly trusted. These were impressive credentials, and the news spread rapidly wherever addicts gathered.

Now Father Egan began to receive strange calls at odd hours, providing him with whispered information or asking for immediate help. Many of the pleas came from women who had sought his help in the House. Through them the curtain was ripped aside on the utter wretchedness of the addict's condition.

He stepped from the prison one day with a rigidly tense woman. Her eyes, deep in her shallow, high-cheekboned face, blinked nervously in the morning sunlight. They were eyes that reflected 15 years of addiction and jail.

"Father," she said suddenly, "I'm through, and that's a promise. I'm

tired. I'm thirty-three years old, and I've had it. I can't do any more time. It'll kill me if I have to come back here. I'm goin' home to Mother, and I'll never use drugs again."

He listened thoughtfully. She spoke with an air of quiet finality.

"Good, Hilda," he said cautiously. "I've been waiting to hear you say that."

He found her a job in a laundry. The job paid \$60 a week, which he knew was less than Hilda could earn in one night. But she was grateful and clasped his hand. Her mother wept and thanked him.

On the third day Hilda failed to show up for work.

Her mother called him, fearful. She had not seen her daughter for 24 hours. He tried to reassure her, but a sense of impending tragedy was evident in his voice. Three days later Hilda called him. Her voice sounded like a phonograph record playing at too slow a speed.

"Father, I'm a problem," she croaked laboriously. "I'm a mess. I slipped again. But I'm tryin' to kick, honest I am. You got to believe me. Mama's been locking me in the room, an' I'm doin' it cold turkey. Please come an' see me. . . ."

"Sure, Hilda. Stay right there. Don't leave the room."

Hilda lay on her bed, crumpled under a heap of soiled blankets. Her mother, face sagging with despair, sat by her side. As he approached the bed, Hilda screamed, then screamed again. She rolled off the bed and hit the floor heavily, hands clutching her stomach, eyes rolling wildly.

"Out," she whispered hoarsely. "I'm goin' out. I'm not gonna do any more of this. It ain't worth it. I can't stand it."

Father Egan threw his coat on a chair.

"Don't go out—the narco cops are on the street," he lied to her. "You've got to stay in here. Everyone in the

IT'S LEGAL TO BE AN ADDICT

On July 25, 1962, the Supreme Court struck down a California statute making it an offense to be a drug addict. The Court ruled, in effect, that addiction was a sickness and not a crime. By a vote of six to two the Court declared the statute violated the "cruel and unusual punishment" provisions of the Constitution.

The case had involved a Los Angeles arrest. Police stopped a man one night and discovered needle marks on his arm. He was sentenced to 90 days in jail.

"To be sure," Justice Potter Stewart's majority opinion stated, "imprisonment for ninety days is not, in the abstract, a punishment which is either cruel or unusual. But the question cannot be considered in the abstract. Even one day in prison would be cruel and unusual punishment for the 'crime' of having a common cold."

neighborhood's lying low. No one's going to score around here today."

With her mother's help Father Egan tried to lift the shuddering woman back onto the bed. But she groaned like a wounded animal and squirmed away, retching, her body twitching beneath her robe. She rolled under the bed and thudded her head against the wall. Together they pulled her out and forced her back on the bed.

Hilda was in her third day of withdrawal, and gradually, as dusk filled the room, her misery dwindled to shivering perspiration. She had been fighting for 70 hours and was totally exhausted. Panting, she gazed at Father Egan.

When the room was dark, he picked up his coat and told Hilda's mother he would return the following day. "Call me any time," he added. "Day or night."

The call came three hours later. The mother's voice was sad.

"Hilda busted out of here an hour after you left, Father," she said quietly. "She came back like a lamb in fifteen minutes. She got a shot before she hit the end of the block."

And after all that, he sighed. After all that. But he was never discouraged by failure. It merely drove him to greater determination.

VII

\$80 A Day

AT FIRST Father Egan's reasons for devoting himself to female addicts instead of addicts in general were uncomplicated and practical. The first addict he had met had been a woman, and mission work had taken him into women's prisons. Both had carved indelible impressions on his mind. And when so many of the girls he had known in those prisons came to New York, again to prison, he felt there was enough for him to do without seeking similar problems in the men's prisons in the New York area.

The deeper his involvement in female addiction became, the more he was convinced that a special need existed for coping with this particular aspect of the overall addiction problem. For whatever difficulties the male addict faced in his terrible dilemma, they were minor in comparison to those faced by women. Female addicts were shunned by society as hopeless, as its untouchables, as the scrapings of its barrel. Any addict was branded with the stigma of the underworld, but the factor of prostitution further outraged society. The prostitute-addict was too squalid for society's awareness, let alone its sympathy. And if she was a Negro, society's recoil

often teamed with racial prejudice to cast her completely aside into the darkness.

They were the easiest prey for the sadist, the sex criminal, and the brutal pimp. They were, in fact, defenseless before the savagery of their own lives. And each time Father Egan found a woman who had been beaten, each time he saw a woman weep through blackened eyes, each time he found a woman unconscious in a hallway, his devotion to all of them grew.

More ramifications of the problem became evident. Addicts, like welfare recipients, were easy to crusade against: There was little fear of anyone of influence or stature responding on their behalf. Their leper status frequently made them targets of unnecessarily harsh police action and often resulted in hurried, superficial courtroom procedures. A sick, ragged junkie presents an objectionable sight in a courtroom.

One of the immediate tasks Father Egan faced was an attack on the popular image of the addict as a "dope fiend," as a slaving maniac freed from fear and inhibition by drugs and seeking to plunge himself and his victims into an orgy of murder, rape, robbery, perversion, and sadism. The truth is that opiates, since their earliest use, have been instruments of self-induced torpor.

Heroin in particular depresses the libido and inhibits sexual desire. Many homosexuals use the drug for this reason; it diminishes their sexual drive and helps lessen their conflict with society. Sated with heroin, an addict becomes passive and dreamy. He can be desperate and dangerous in efforts to obtain the drug, but once under its influence becomes indolent. Heroin renders him, in the argot of addiction, "on the nod."

Father Egan became conscious that he moved in close proximity to

One of the addicts mentioned in *The Junkie Priest* takes her first food in three days as Father Egan considers her future



one of the biggest, most efficiently organized and sinister criminal conspiracies in history. His awareness of the vast, invisible traffic in drugs came to him through his girls. A very expensively dressed prostitute arrived in the House and admitted she had an \$80-a-day heroin habit. She bragged she had no difficulty in finding the money.

"I can make five hundred in one day if I want to take the chance. I don't *have* to hustle," she told him.

"Five hundred doing what?" he asked skeptically.

"Listen, all I got to do is pick up a package of heroin here and take it there."

"Where is 'here' and where is 'there'?"

"Sorry, Father. I can't even tell you that. I'll just say I can knock on a door in one of the best apartment houses in town, on Park Avenue, and make five hundred in an hour. Just making a delivery across town. I could go to the door right now, if they'd let me, and bring back enough junk to keep everyone in this joint high for a month."

Father Egan asked the girl to cooperate with police in preparing a trap at the apartment. She looked at him in astonishment.

"Nothing doing, Father. You don't know these people. If I squealed, I'd be dead twenty-four hours after I left this jail."

From an informant Father Egan once received the astonishing information that heroin was being smuggled into the city from Europe inside the bodies of corpses being returned to their families.

"Some funeral parlor in Brooklyn is in it, Father," his caller told him. "I don't know which one, but I'll try to find out. I hear the dead guys are full of the stuff."

Father Egan thanked him and immediately dialed the Federal Bureau of Narcotics.

"The stiffs are loaded with junk," he said, "and that's all I know about it now. As soon as I hear more, you'll know about it. I'll give you another call."

But he heard no more. As often happened in the world in which he moved, his informant vanished without a trace.

VIII

'Can't You Do Something?'

THE TELEPHONE blasted him awake. He felt as if he had slept 30 seconds. But he was out of bed before his eyes had opened. The street outside was still, and morning was a long way off; he had no wish to awaken the other sleeping priests in the house. There was little doubt, anyway, that the call was for him. His particular flock began its day at midnight.

Sleepily, he picked up the telephone in the hallway and heard a woman's voice, Spanish-accented and urgent.

"Father Egan?"

"Yes."

He did not ask the caller's name. He never asked.

"Jackie pretty sick. She call for you. You better get to Bellevue in a hurry. They pick her up unconscious on Broadway."

He knew only one Jackie, a barbiturate addict.

"Pills?" he asked uselessly.

"Overdose."

"Okay, I'll be right there."

The phone clicked dead. It was 2 A.M. Outside, the neon of the Mexican restaurant and the liquor store opposite the friars' residence had long been switched off. Street lamps cast lonely pools of light as he drove uptown. At 23rd Street he ran through the red light and looked for

a stray patrol car. But only a few taxis sped toward midtown as he turned east on 26th Street and headed for the river.

For Jackie to have taken an overdose, he thought, she must have swallowed an entire wholesale carton of pills. She had been using barbiturates for so long she should have built up the tolerance of a horse. As he drove, junkie talk for barbiturates floated through his mind: *goofballs, nembies, yellow jackets, redbirds, blue heavens, jelly beans.*

And Jackie? A beat-up, washed-out, skinny blonde of 24 with bad teeth and a dishwater complexion. She looked as if she had been bounced off the wall of every jailhouse and precinct station from Perth Amboy to Bridgeport, and probably had. Her past was a wilderness, years of prostitution, drugs, and hunger; her future was the same, if she had a future. In fact, there was nothing certain about Jackie except that the state of her soul was not ready for her to meet her Maker.

He braked to a jolting halt at First Avenue, then eased the car across the street into Bellevue's emergency entrance. The guard at the gate recognized him and waved him on.

At the lower end of the emergency ward an intern and a nurse stood beside a childlike figure that stirred beneath the sheets. Father Egan moved closer and saw it was Jackie. The girl lay face up, her colorless hair spread across the pillow. Her face was gray, and deep shadows curved beneath her closed eyes. She looked old and fragile. Saliva dribbled, and her breathing was faint. As he watched, she shuddered in a violent convulsion.

Stepping beside the young doctor, Father Egan spoke softly. "I know this girl, doctor. She's a friend of mine. This is Jackie, a well-known goofball addict."

The intern nodded. "Oh, I see."

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"If you don't mind my giving a little advice," Father Egan continued casually, "I'd suggest we tip her up a bit. If we keep her head down, it'll keep her mouth dry, and she won't be swallowing all that saliva. We could elevate the foot of the bed and keep the nasopharynx clear of secretion. I can keep her awake with some light slapping and pinching while you give her a shot of about fifteen milligrams of Benzedrine. That'll calm her. Some nikethamide should help, too. And the nurse can administer oxygen."

The doctor was staring at him inquiringly. Father Egan felt he was about to become embroiled in another argument with a doctor—this occurred occasionally—when an older physician, who had come in silently, touched him. The doctor peered at Jackie, then surprised the intern by instructing him to follow Father Egan's advice.

"He knows as much about this as some of us," he confided.

The intern and nurse went to work, and Father Egan watched as the hypodermic needle sank into Jackie's flaccid arm. She relaxed visibly and turned her head to the pillow, her face in sudden repose. After a while the intern nodded.

"She's okay for now," he said. "At least she's out of danger."

Without asking anyone Father Egan opened Jackie's purse on the chair beside her bed. He rummaged through the comb, lipstick, Kleenex package, and crumpled letters inside, searching for barbiturates. But Jackie evidently had used her supply. After a quick search of her coat pockets he left the ward.

The streets remained quiet. It was not yet 3 A.M. He drove slowly to the Village. When he got to bed, the sight of Jackie, convulsing beneath the sheet, the skin on her face stretched tightly over her bones, remained with him a long time.

Not all encounters with doctors had been so congenial. One brusque and efficient physician once curtly informed him that addicts did not belong in any hospital, that they should be made to "kick it in the streets, where they belonged." And there had been the memorable night when he had exploded.

He had arrived at the hospital to find a girl, a heroin addict, deep in the throes of withdrawal. She was curled in her bed, knees under her chin, vomiting helplessly. Each wrench of her body was accompanied by a dry, scraping croak that seemed to rise from the depths of her body. At the foot of the bed sat a young intern, studying her intently. Father Egan stood beside the bed for a few seconds, waiting for the doctor to act. Finally he had become angry.

"Doctor," he said, trying to control himself, "can't you do something for this girl instead of watching her as if she were an experiment in a glass cage?"

The doctor had cocked an eye at him.

"And just who," he asked coldly, "are you?"

"Never mind who I am," Father Egan shot back. "I'm just wondering who you are. Maybe you ought to be driving a truck. Look at you—you're supposed to be a doctor, and you're sitting here as if this girl were an exhibit. Haven't you ever seen a junkie before? She's not a criminal—she's sick!"

The doctor was outraged. He rose to his feet.

"And what are you?" he grated. "A junkie priest?"

It was the first time Father Egan had heard the term. But he was too exasperated, too concerned for the sweating girl on the bed, for the words to register on him. Another doctor and some nurses placated him and whispered to the flushed in-

tern. Others immediately attended to the addict. Within minutes she was sleeping comfortably.

As he strode from the ward, a young nurse stopped him. He knew her well and often marveled at her seeming imperviousness to the horrors of the emergency room.

"Father," she said quietly, "that was the nicest thing anyone could have said about you."

"What was?"

"The doctor calling you a junkie priest."

He laughed and thanked her. Her words and the doctor's were forgotten until a few days later when a call came from an addict seeking help in finding a job. The caller asked to speak to the "Junkie Priest."

He decided at first it was a coincidence or perhaps a joke. But when succeeding callers and girls he met in prison and on the streets used the same term, he realized he had acquired a name uniquely his own. How, he was never sure. Perhaps the nurse had told others about the incident with the intern. Or had the junkie been listening? Addicts often remained strangely and acutely aware of their surroundings even in deepest misery.

However it had been done, he was not displeased.

IX

The Breakthrough

THE INCIDENT with the doctor who had called him a "junkie priest" prompted Father Egan to look deeper into the problem of hospital care for addicts. He went down to Lexington, Kentucky, and visited the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital for Narcotics Treatment.

The treatment was simple. A new patient was given methadone, a mild

LEGISLATION CAN'T ABOLISH ADDICTION

Says Judge John J. Murtagh, administrative judge of the Criminal Court of New York City:

"Experience plainly shows that the attempt to legislate addiction out of existence is generally futile. Besides, the enforcement program has done much to sustain organized crime and creates occasions for the corruption of enforcement officers. Our present policy, therefore, is of questionable value.

"Perhaps nowhere is the cruelty of the policy more evident than in the Criminal Court of New York City. As many as fourscore addicts confront a judge on a single day. In his heart, the judge knows there is little or no hope for any of them. Yet he must go through the motions of supporting an enforcement program which, he is convinced, is creating more serious problems than it solves.

"Addiction is a condition of human degradation. It cries out for humane tolerance and Christlike charity. But these, unfortunately, are not the qualities that we now bring to the problem of addiction. The time has come to reassess our approach to the problem."

narcotic, to help taper off dependence on heroin. Gradually the doses were decreased until the body no longer needed them. The acute desire for drugs usually vanished after about two weeks. A two-week period of convalescence ensued.

Complete recovery from physical dependence on narcotics differs from patient to patient, depending on the size of the patient's habit and his physical condition. It can take as long as four months.

When that stage is reached at Lexington, a patient is transferred from the withdrawal ward to the orientation ward where vocational,

correctional, social, and psychiatric specialists conduct a series of tests and interviews. These are then evaluated by a physician assigned to the patient's case. He then plans a program designed to return the patient to society free of dependence on drugs. This may include training in a vocation, often requiring six months or more.

Back in New York, Father Egan stiffened his resolve to break down the barriers to public hospital care for addicts. By alternating indignant outbursts with dogged persistence, he gradually got the hospitals' policy softened to the point where he could always find a hospital bed for an addict who asked for it. But he deplored the fact that the addicts were still segregated in separate wards, a practice that emphasized their feelings of isolation, of being less than human.

Then in 1961 Dr. Ray Albert Trussell became New York City's commissioner of hospitals, and he immediately asked superintendents of general hospitals to admit a few women addicts to the open wards for detoxification. Nine of the superintendents agreed to do so.

The results were astounding. Within a year Father Egan was having more success in keeping addicts from returning to drugs after being held in the public wards of hospitals than if they had made six or seven trips to Lexington.

Since his earliest association with addiction Father Egan had become convinced that time was running out for him and that before he died he had to set in motion some mechanism of rehabilitation, some means of saving for society women who continually revolved in and out of jails.

It seemed inconceivable to him that no organization, no public body, no individual of influence had stirred society's conscience to the ex-

tent of establishing a halfway house, an after-jail institution for women in New York. All he wanted, as a beginning, was a sparsely furnished old house where women could live for a few days, even weeks, when they left jail. It would be a home where they could rest in an atmosphere of kindness and dignity, where they could cook a meal, comb their hair, and restore their courage.

When a girl came to him late at night and told him she had not eaten that day, that she had no place to live, there was considerable happiness to be found in providing her with a week's rent, even if he knew she was heading back to prostitution the next day. If he could keep her out of sin for a single night, let alone a week, he was achieving a great deal.

X

The Haven

IT WAS to be almost eight years from the time he was assigned to the Greenwich Village parish before Father Egan's dream was to come true. And when it did, it came so suddenly he could hardly believe it.

First there was a call from this newspaper reporter who had heard about his work. The interview was published in the *New York Journal-American* and, subsequently, in the *Catholic Digest*. As a result Father Egan began to receive small cash gifts from all over the world.

These first donations, totaling \$37, created a problem. Father Egan explained to his superior that the money was sent to him specifically to help women addicts. He was quickly granted permission to put the money aside and use it as he saw fit.

One bright fall morning in 1962

Father Egan went to the West Side Savings Bank, not far from the House of Detention, and opened an account. The bank officer he dealt with recognized him from the newspaper and magazine articles, and when Father Egan had left, he discussed the matter with the president of the bank, Edgar T. Hussey.

The next time Father Egan went to the bank, he was introduced to Hussey. A few days later the two men had lunch together. From their conversation came Father Egan's long-dreamed-of halfway house. The bank held a mortgage on a three-story building on Sixth Avenue across from the House of Detention. A bar occupied the ground floor, but the two upper floors were vacant. A week after the two men had met Hussey had obtained the owner's permission for Father Egan to convert it into a halfway house for detoxified dope addicts released from the House of Detention. Overnight occupancy could not be allowed because of the state's liquor licensing laws and the ground-floor bar, but for daytime use as late as 11 P.M. Father Egan at last had what he wanted.

Renovating of the building and furnishings came almost as easily as the building itself. Within a few days Father Egan was invited to address the Greenwich Village Kiwanis Club. As soon as he had finished his talk, offers of assistance poured in. One man offered a refrigerator, a washer, and a dryer. Another agreed to send all the tables, chairs, and lamps needed. Another walked forward and handed Father Egan a check for \$500. A restaurant owner told Father Egan to send 12 girls to his restaurant each week for free meals. Another restaurant proprietor said he would serve girls as many free meals as they wanted. A dentist offered free dental care.



The agony of withdrawal as experienced by one of Father Egan's "wards"

Edgerly, the sole remaining member of an old and influential family in Greenwich Village, turned on her television set one morning to watch a favorite cooking program. When the recipes had all been given, she decided to see if the guest who was to follow would prove interesting.

The guest was Father Egan. He talked about the Haven and told of his burning desire for a house where the girls could stay overnight.

When the program was over, Miss Edgerly switched off her television set and sat there for a few moments. Then she went to the telephone and dialed the number Father Egan had asked viewers to call.

When the priest answered, she said: "Father, would ten thousand dollars be enough to enable you to start your house?"

Father Egan gasped. When he found his voice, he assured her that it would be just about right.

There followed urgent meetings of the board of the Village Haven. A vacant four-story apartment house not too far from the Haven, at 228 West 15th Street, was found suitable and purchased. The residence would be known as Edgerly House in honor of the Edgerly family.

The house was completely renovated. When it was finished, it provided 36 private bedrooms, a large living room, a dining room, a kitchen, a laundry, a sewing room, a clinic, an arts and crafts room, and classrooms where the girls are taught business skills. Today it has a staff of eight persons, including professional counselors and two full-time housemothers.

Edgerly House is almost always filled with girls. Some of them come in only to get out of the cold, to take a bath, find some clothes, or perhaps just sit and relax and talk to someone who likes and understands them. Others stay for weeks or months until they can learn a

trade and feel strong enough to stand on their own feet.

Now that one man's dedication has grown into a community-wide project, Father Egan has proved what he has always known in his heart to be true: The plight of the female addict is not hopeless. Many girls want help and can be rehabilitated. What they need is people who care, who will back them up.

One girl put it in words that Hussey will never forget. She has been "clean" now for seven months after having been addicted for over ten years. But she still drops into Edgerly House almost every night after work for a chat before going to her own one-room-and-kitchenette apartment. One night she said:

"Without Edgerly House I am nothing and would sink to the bottom. But as long as I know it is here, I can fight." ■■

EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT: As is customary in his monastic order, Father Egan eventually was transferred to another assignment. In August 1964 the Graymoor Friars sent him to the Our Lady of the Atonement Retreat House in Gardiner Mines, Nova Scotia, where he is now.

Talk to a female drug addict in New York City these days and in all probability she will tell you that "our Father Egan ain't around anymore." They don't exactly know where it is, but they know he is now in Gardiner Mines. They miss him in a way only "junkies" can understand. They can't see why he was transferred. "His girls" and girls who seldom pray are praying "he comes back to us. God! How we need him. . . ."

A large picture of Father Egan hangs in the Halfway House he finally opened for them—just before he was transferred. According to one girl, just "looking at his picture" encourages many to say no to "that first fix. . . ."

The Last Word

■ Robert, a medical student, spent his summers working in various ways to help finance his education. One particular summer he assisted a butcher in a meat market by day and at night worked as a hospital orderly. Both jobs required the wearing of white uniforms. One night he was called upon to push a patient, reclining on a stretcher, into surgery. As he was rolling her along, the apprehensive woman glanced at him, then did a double take and screamed, "My God! It's my butcher!"

■ A London cabbie was getting pretty fed up with his fare, rather a bragging type of fellow. As they passed the Albert Memorial, he asked how long it took to build. On being told, he said smugly, "Back home in the States we put up shacks like that in a week." Soon they passed Nelson's Column. The Yank said, "That's really something. What is it?" "I don't know," replied the cabbie. "It wasn't there when I passed this morning."

■ A friend once asked Abraham Lincoln, "Why do you try so hard to make friends of your enemies? You are in a position to destroy them." "Am I not destroying my enemies," Lincoln asked gently, "when I make them my friends?"

■ Two old maids moved to the country and decided to take up farming in a fairly serious way. They wanted to raise pigs and started with a sow. The farmer up the road had a boar. They loaded the sow into the wheelbarrow and took her to the farmer. Later they brought her back but didn't see any signs of the sow having pigs. A few weeks later they loaded the sow into the wheelbarrow for another trip to the boar. Still no sign of her having any pigs. So one day they decided to cart her back again. When they went outside to catch her, there she was, already sitting in the wheelbarrow.

■ After finishing a lecture in a mid-western city, Alexander Woollcott, the late author and wit, was approached in a hotel lobby by a grandmotherly, white-haired woman who told him how much she enjoyed his lecture. "I was encouraged to speak to you," she explained, "because you said you loved old ladies." "I do," Woollcott answered, "but I also like them your age."

■ Comedian Jack Benny claims that some people are real hypochondriacs and overdo the business of getting an annual physical checkup. Back when he was a mere boy, he went to be thoroughly checked over at the Mayo Clinic and came through with flying colors. Some 18 years later he returned for another checkup. The doctors took one look at him and said, "What, you back here again?" ■■

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