MY NEW OFFICE was only a two-block walk from the Supreme Court, but a continent apart in process of decision and action. Reasoned interpretation, reliance on precedent were submerged by the clash of political aims and ambitions. Law was to be forged, not by application of judicial principles, but from the shifting inclinations of the public and pressures from the powerful. The principles of judicial restraint had no place here. We could do what we wanted, within wide and poorly defined limits we were free to pursue "the right," to enforce the needs and interests of the people. Or so — at first — it seemed.

That same summer a New York grand jury, looking into possible consumer fraud, had completed a nine-month investigation of accusations that the television quiz shows — which had engaged the eagerly watchful interest of the population for several years, whose contestants had become national heroes, living exemplars of American genius — had been a fraud; that questions and answers had been given to the winners in advance. A few weeks after beginning work with the committee, I saw a report in the New York Times that the presiding judge had impounded the results of the grand jury sessions (known as a "presentment"). There were to be no indictments, no charges of wrongdoing, and no public disclosure of the evidence. Excited, I went to Lishman.

"There must be something here," I said. "If there was nothing wrong, then why keep it secret?" "It's worth looking into," he replied. "We have jurisdiction over the FCC [Federal Communications Commission], and that's television. And we're not re-
stricted to investigating violations of law if the public interest is involved. Why don’t you go to New York and see if you can get that presentment.”

Returning to my desk, I called for an appointment with the New York district attorney, Frank Hogan. The next day I was on a plane, bringing, in my person, the power of the American Congress to the labyrinthine, parochial, suspect corridors of Manhattan. My departure went unremarked, except by my wife and the slightly inconvenienced hosts of a dinner party I was to attend. But within a few months the consequences of that trip would explode into headlines across the country, give me a succulent but also disquieting taste of public recognition, and unfold a moral tale that, to this day, engages the energies of aspiring authors.

The quiz shows were the most extraordinary phenomenon in the history of television. Neither before nor since has any contrivance of the tube so absorbed the fascinated contemplation of the public.

The first great triumph was called “The $64,000 Question,” the creation of Lou Cowan, who, years earlier, had devised and produced “The Quiz Kids.” Presumably he took the concept of a long-expired radio show, called “The 64 Dollar Question,” and multiplied by a thousand. This simple act of arithmetic imagination was to sweep the airwaves. In the mid-1950s, sixty-four thousand dollars was a great deal of money; the reward for knowledge was not simply admiration, but wealth. Viewers were invited to watch the American dream come true before their eyes, not in the chance fortune of a lottery, but through the lightho se sealed brilliance of fellow citizens.

Each contestant on “The $64,000 Question” selected a particular area of expertise — opera or American history or boxing — and was asked a succession of increasingly difficult questions: “Who sang the lead role in the 1940 La Scala production of Rigoletto?” or “What nineteenth-century middleweight champion lost his title in the second round?” It was a kind of genius version of Trivial Pursuit. With each correct answer the stakes were doubled until a reward of sixty-four thousand dollars was offered for the final answer. And because the contest was prolonged, viewers developed a familiarity with the contestants, regarded them with friendly, almost personal, admiration. Only contestants likely to arouse empathetic fondness were selected. But this took time. Unknown individuals were not transformed into lovable and/or admirable characters overnight. It was, therefore, important that the more promising contestants reappear on the show for several weeks. That was possible only if they gave the right answers. And so, conceived in the necessities of entertainment, the cheating began.

At one point, British producers started a London counterpart of the quiz shows. After a few weeks they called New York. “How,” they wanted to know, “do you find all those brilliant Americans? Our contestants keep missing questions. We can’t keep them on the show.” The New York producer mumbled something about “testing procedures” and swiftly terminated the call.

“The $64,000 Question” was an unprecedented smash. On Tuesday night America slowed down to watch the CBS show. It was almost impossible to find a cab in Manhattan because the drivers were at home or in a bar. Theater owners lamented the disastrous decline in Tuesday attendance. And the personalities of contestants, their prospects of victory, were the frequent topic of dinner-table conversations during the six-day interlude between performances.

Faced with the triumph of a competing network, NBC developed a show of its own. They would meet the challenge by increasing both the stakes and the difficulty of the game. On “Twenty-One,” there were no categories. Questions were drawn seemingly at random from every field of human knowledge. The amount to be won was theoretically unlimited. (Although, in reality, carefully controlled. The shows had budgets.) As long as a contestant kept answering correctly, his earnings would mount.

“Twenty-One” matched its rival, becoming one of the most-watched programs on television. The big winners on “Twenty-One” were transformed into instant celebrities. The titanic Charles Van Doren, young scion of a famous literary family, won $129,000 and became a national hero. He graced the cover of Time magazine. And after his appearance was completed, he was designated a consultant to NBC at a yearly fee of $50,000, and given his own spot on a popular morning show. Students at Columbia, where Van Doren taught English, put up signs directing visitors to “the smartest man in the world.” He was our answer, a symbol of our answer, to the shocking launch of the Soviet Sputnik and its implied message that American technological and intellectual superiority had fallen into “the dust-bin of history.” Although intellec-
the woman's face (which is a popular practice in many cultures). The woman's face is often depicted in art and literature as a symbol of beauty and fertility. In many cultures, the face is associated with fertility and is often used in fertility rituals.

On a more personal level, the woman's face can represent the challenges and struggles that are part of everyday life. The woman's face often appears in dreams and is associated with the subconscious mind. The woman's face can also represent the complexity of relationships and the challenges of communication.

In conclusion, the woman's face is a symbol of beauty, fertility, and the challenges of relationships. It is an important symbol in many cultures and is often depicted in art and literature. The woman's face can also represent the complexity of the human experience and the challenges of communication.
tionaries of New York, I was the Congress. It was a heady feeling, the onset of an addiction from which only years of experience, and harsh recurrent trauma, would free me. And even now, it still lingers, its resurgence a constant threat to the more quiescent labors of my present life.

I found the grand jury records crammed with contradictions. But there was enough to convince me, as it had persuaded Joe Stone, that the quiz shows had been fraudulent. The evidence did not yet meet the rigorous standards of legal proof. But I knew. Now we must make the case.

Armed with the credentials of a special investigator, I spent most of the next few months in New York — with an occasional foray to Hollywood — talking to contestants and producers, gradually moving up to advertising agencies, sponsors, and the networks themselves.

I first met Charles Van Doren at breakfast in the NBC cafeteria following his daily appearance on Dave Garroway’s popular morning show. Van Doren’s function was to add a few minutes of cultural seasoning to the hourlong concoction of gossip, news, and humor. He might read a brief poem, comment on some painting being exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum. Not much, just enough to add a touch of class. Absolutely calm, with friendly but never overeager amiability, he answered my questions about the quiz shows. A century of breeding had prepared him for this encounter. He could not, of course, speak for other contestants, he told me, but his own appearance had been exactly what it seemed.

Gifted with an extraordinarily retentive memory, widely read, he had been able to answer questions whose content was never revealed until the show was under way. Yes, it was possible that other contestants had been given answers. How could he know? But the producers were such decent, honest men. He couldn’t believe they would do something like that. “And look at the result,” he said. “Not the money, although it certainly came in handy. At least I could buy my own house. But I’m the only person who can reach millions. All because of the quiz shows.”

Sincerity, honesty, integrity — pick your term — infused his manner. Courtesy without submission, exposition without resentment. I liked the man; began to doubt my own conviction that he was lying. I had accumulated a great deal of evidence that contradicted him. Not conclusively. Not beyond doubt. But very substantial. Yet, dammit, I wanted to believe Van Doren. He was so forcefully sincere. He seemed to believe, must believe, what he was saying. And perhaps he did. The depths of the human mind have hidden places for the most contradictory recollections and beliefs; defenses whose powerful surge can overpower conscious knowledge and awareness.

After the meeting I was shaken. Maybe we were wrong. Maybe those who had implicated him were mistaken, or lying for their own purposes. Then I went to interview Herbie Stempel, and under the assault of his vengeful brilliance, Charles Van Doren’s life began to unravel.

Of moderate height, his features bearing a dark, Semitic stamp, illuminated by eyes of flickering intensity, ceaselessly loquacious, Herb Stempel seemed to have been designed as Van Doren’s antipode. He had come from a working-class background, a family in the anonymous lower reaches of the social structure, whose otherwise unremarked history had contained some dormant code of DNA gifting Stempel with a remarkably spacious memory, which he had furnished with an extraordinary collection of information.

A chance encounter at one of the Greenwich Village cocktail parties from which the ever-alert television producers recruited so many of their contestants brought him an invitation to take the examination administered to aspiring quiz show guests. The test consisted of questions designed to uncover knowledge of miscellaneous obscurities — e.g., Name the man who led the American forces at the battle of Lexington (John Parker). Stempel’s score was astonishing, the best — he proudly told me — ever attained by any quiz show contestant, including Van Doren.

The purpose of the test was not to ensure a good performance. The producers would take care of that. But exposure on national television would inevitably attract press attention to these new-made heroes of intellect. Undoubtedly, some skeptical reporter would try to test a contestant and find out if he was for real. Therefore, it was important that the subject of inquiry be credible, able to display, on demand, remarkable retentive powers. The test scores were the producers’ guarantee against accidental exposure of ignorance.

The coincidence of a cocktail party discussion and his surprising test performance changed Herb Stempel’s life. He was selected to be the first big-money winner on “Twenty-One,” with
prize earnings of just under a hundred thousand dollars. Throughout the week preceding each show, prime-time "promos" would exhort listeners to watch the newly discovered genius, Herb Stempel, as he rose from poverty to wealth. Could he keep it up? Would he? Each week millions of viewers tuned in to watch the drama unfold. This unknown, unappreciated, unprivileged young man became an instant celebrity. He was stopped by strangers on the street, saw his name in the papers and his face on the tube. "Producers told Herb.

transcended mere celebrity to become a national folk hero, his triumphs, as measured in dollars and publicity, far surpassing fevered imagination, had everything stripped Herb of his only public distinction. It was unfair. Why, he was smarter than Van Doren. Much smarter.

Unable to contain his mounting anger/envy/frustration, Stempel was determined to tell his story, to expose this overprivileged fraud even at the cost of admitting his own. Two years after his appearance, well after the shows had been dropped from the networks, Stempel — his resentments unabated — went to the newspapers. But they wouldn't touch the story, refusing to risk multimillion-dollar lawsuits based on the unsupported tale of this disgruntled, disreputable, unstable individual. Next Stempel went to the district attorney's office. As Joe Stone explained to me: "I get a dozen nuts a week with crazy stories. He had no evidence. I did not dismiss his story, but it was only after we received additional, unrelated information that we even began a grand jury investigation. And that didn't go anywhere." Stone's reaction was justified. Stempel was a "nut," so obviously in the grip of an obsession that any reasonable man would doubt him. Stone would come to believe his story, at least most of it. But it wasn't proof, just the allegations of a man who could not be expected to fare well on a witness stand. Then I came along. A congressional investigator, unfettered by rules of evidence or the necessity to meet judicial standards of proof.

I called Stempel. Did he want to see me? He could hardly wait. Here was his chance. For what? Vindication or vengeance? It hardly mattered, not to me.

At our first meeting we talked for hours, and, in the weeks to come, he would call me on the telephone, arrange meetings, turn up unexpectedly at my Washington home. Long after I had learned, and verified, everything he had to tell, he continued his pursuit, fearful that through negligence or the intervention of mysterious higher powers, his despised adversary might escape. And he was right to be apprehensive. Van Doren almost got away. I wanted him to. And his downfall, when it came, was not Stempel's doing, but the consequence of Van Doren's own self-destructive stupidity.

During a series of conversations, useful information embedded in long rambling digressions, Stempel's account gradually coalesced into a narrative, paraphrased thus:

"After they picked me, the producer, Dan Enright, took me in hand. He told me that we would go over the questions and answers before each show. He would be my coach. He told me not to worry. I wasn't doing anything wrong. It was just entertainment, show business, and everyone knew that was make-believe. But don't tell anyone, or you'll get into a lot of trouble.

"They made sure I always worked with the same man. It was the same with all the other contestants. They thought if something went wrong, if someone complained or said he had been fixed, it would just be one person's word against another's. Nothing could be proved. They didn't realize, or didn't care, that as the show went on, a producer would have to fix several contestants. They thought they were protecting themselves. But even that was make-believe.

"My producer didn't just give me the answers, but told me how I should behave. If the question had four parts, for example, I was to hesitate on part three, pretend to be puzzled, ask if we could return to it after I had given the answer to the fourth part. Jack Barry [the on-air quizmaster] would agree and, after my correct response, would say, 'Now, Herbie, let's try that third one again.' I was supposed to pause, appear as if I was straining, laboring to recall, and then look up toward the camera with the right answer.

"It was all done to increase suspense. The contestants were put into an isolation booth, supposedly to prevent coaching from the producers or the audience. Sometimes they shut off the air condi-
tioning in the booth so that I would sweat while pretending to concentrate. We all had a role to play. I was the poor boy from Brooklyn.” (Stempel wasn’t poor, and he was from Queens.) “I had to call him Mr. Barry. Everyone else called him Jack. I was supposed to wear the same old suit every week, and a shirt with a frayed collar. Once I wore a new suit. Producer Dan Enright got mad. ‘You’re not doing your homework, Herbie,’ he complained.

“The contests were usually close. Each question was worth a certain number of points, and the first contestant to reach twenty-one was the winner. The prize money was scaled according to the point spread between you and your opponent. So they wanted to keep the difference small. But as long as you kept winning you stayed on the show.

“After several weeks, they told me I was going to lose. They had picked someone else to be the next big winner. I was very upset. I had done a great job. The ratings were up. Everyone was so eager, partly naive disclosure of events that exposed unflattering, petty, self-seeking aspects of his own character added to the credibility of his tale. Listening to him, I knew — however abject his motives — he was telling the truth. I had only to prove it. The key to proof would be the testimony of Albert Freedman, an associate producer in the Barry-Enright organization, and Van Doren’s personal coach.

“When Frank Hogan announced his grand jury investigation, Freedman had met with Van Doren at Longchamps restaurant at 59th and Madison. ‘You have nothing to fear,’ he reassured the agitated Columbia instructor, ‘I’m not going to tell. Not even torture could make me reveal the truth.’

“It was one among dozens of similar conversations in which frantic producers coaxed and coerced contestants to commit perjury. Having seduced them into fraud, they now persuaded them to crime. After being indicted for perjury, Freedman fled to Mexico City. The committee had the U.S. embassy in Mexico inform Freedman that his only alternative to permanent exile was to testify before the Congress. This timid, gentle man, suddenly deluged by powers and dangers beyond his fantasies, hastened to betray.

“On the night before the grand jury hearing, Freedman met with Van Doren at the office of Van Doren’s personal coach, Barry. Freedman told the grand jury (as he had told us, saying all their kids wanted to know as much as he did. But finally he insisted. Probably all the attention was scaring him. It was so much bigger than anyone had imagined. So we had him lose.” (It was like finding yourself in the middle of a
huge arena, Van Doren later told me. Everyone was cheering you.
Your own family was right in front. There was no way to escape.)

I took the transcript of Freedman’s testimony to Van Doren’s Greenwich Village house. We sat in his living room, not alone this time, but in the presence of a lawyer. I read Freedman’s testimony aloud. Cautioned by his attorney, Van Doren did not respond. As I began to depart, he insisted on accompanying me down the narrow staircase to the street. Shaking my hand, he said, “Someday I’ll be able to tell you why they’re lying to you.”

Although the evidence was conclusive, I was troubled. Compelling Van Doren to testify at a congressional hearing would destroy his reputation, severely damage his life. Only a few months before I participated in the Supreme Court’s deliberations on the Uphaus and Barenblatt cases, we had struggled with these same issues. Although the Court’s decision had been divided, all the justices and clerks — the horrifying excesses of McCarthyism still fresh in memory — had agreed that a legislative committee had no power to expose for the sake of exposure, destroy reputations and careers for publicity and political gain. There had to be a genuine legislative purpose. The issue that had split the Court was whether it should override the decisions of Congress and the New Hampshire legislature that such a legitimate purpose existed.

I had no such constitutional doctrine to comfort my own decision. Since most of the contestants, confronted with our accumulating evidence, had admitted complicity, we had plenty of witnesses willing to testify. Their evidence would expose the fraud and provide an ample basis for legislative and judicial action. We didn’t need Van Doren. So there was no reason to call him, no necessity of legislation or complete disclosure. And he was only a quiz show contestant, whose paltry earnings were insignificant compared to the profit of networks and sponsors, who still continued their righteous, improbable denials of knowledge. Should we destroy the pilot fish, while the leviathan was left unmolested? Of course, it was not up to me. The committee, not some novice investigator, would decide. With the complete support of Chief Counsel Lishman, I presented my arguments, and, to my relief, the congressmen, acting on principle, voted to omit Van Doren from the list of witnesses.

The week before the hearings were to begin, I asked Van Doren to visit my home in Georgetown. Since our small rented house had no enclave secluded from family and houseguests, we talked while touring Georgetown in Van Doren’s rented car. “The committee’s not going to subpoena you,” I informed him. He betrayed no sign of relief, maintaining the same sober, thoughtful expression that had enthralled a nation. “I know you’re lying, Charlie,” I said, “we can prove it.”

“I’m sorry you feel that way, Dick,” he responded.

“Never mind,” I continued. “But after the hearings begin, you must make no statements. Don’t say anything. Go hide in the country if you have to. Because if you defend yourself publicly, you’ll force the committee to call you.”

The following week the House hearing room was jammed to hear our prize witness. Herbie Stempel. In the days preceding his appearance, Stempel had called me constantly. “When are you going to call Van Doren?” he asked, “You are going to call Van Doren, aren’t you?” and finally, as the import of my continual evasions aroused his direct suspicions: “You’ve got to call Van Doren.”

A few weeks earlier I had asked Stempel: “Herbie, why do you hate Van Doren?” “I don’t hate him,” he objected. “Come on, Herbie,” I replied, “you’ve been after him from the beginning.”

“I did get mad about one thing,” he explained. “Van Doren didn’t call me.”

“I’m sorry you feel that way, Dick,” he responded.

“Never mind,” he continued. “But after the hearings begin, you must make no statements. Don’t say anything. Go hide in the country if you have to. Because if you defend yourself publicly, you’ll force the committee to call you.”

The story was an illuminating metaphor. Whatever Van Doren’s flaws, he was not a snob. He was too well bred to spurn a handshake. He had seen Stempel, and Stempel had interpreted that momentary inattention as confirmation of his most painful misconceptions. Even if the incident never happened at all — and perhaps it didn’t — the telling reveals a most relentless motivation.

Stempel’s testimony was a well-staged sensation, headlined across the country. After he described being coached, we showed tapes (kinescopes) of his appearances. At his pretended labors of concentration, the jubilant excitement of Jack Barry at each successful prodigy of recall, the committee members and the audience burst into laughter. Yesterday’s high drama had been transformed into today’s hilarious farce. Stempel concluded with the story of his defeat, adding, gratuitously, with carefully rehearsed assertion, that Van Doren must have been fixed; that it was a logical cer-
The next day, Van Donner wrote me a letter.

The day was over. The world was empty of sound. The light was dim. I was alone with my thoughts. I was thinking of you. I was thinking of you... I was thinking of you.

And then, in the quiet of the night, I heard a voice. It was your voice. It was you. You were calling to me. You were calling me home.

I turned around. You were there. I could see you. You were smiling. You were happy.

I went to you. I hugged you. I knew that I was home. I knew that I was safe.

That night, I had a dream. In my dream, I saw you. You were in my arms. You were happy. You were free.

I woke up, but I knew it was real. I knew that you were real. I knew that you were my love.
any way, feel any regret for your part in this. Perhaps it is nonsense to say that, but I thought it might be just possible that you would.

Charlie

And I always have. A little. Although it was the right thing to do.

The other big-money quiz shows were not as meticulously scripted, but none was honest, just slightly more indirect. Producers of "The $64,000 Question," for example, would spend hours with prospective contestants probing their particular area of expertise—music or sports or American history. From these sessions they were able to frame questions they were certain the contestant could answer. If they were subtle enough, and the contestant sufficiently naive, it was possible that an individual might win without even knowing the show had been fixed. But this was rare. Most understood and tacitly accepted the fraud, more easily because, after all, they did know the answers. Such refined indifference, it was thought, made exposure less likely. It also resulted in an occasional mishap.

After flying Randolph Churchill to New York, the slightly overawed producers of "The $64,000 Question" took him to dinner before the show. His category was to be the English language—an infallibly intriguing juxtaposition of man and matter. For his first appearance, they had prepared one simple question, something he was sure to know. There would be plenty of time for a detailed exploration of his knowledge in the weeks to come as he marched through successively more difficult questions toward the planned sixty-four-thousand-dollar triumph. After all, one didn't fix an unsuspecting English aristocrat the minute he got off the plane. Unfortunately, the genial Churchill, as was his custom, downed three or four martinis before going to the studio, and stood wordlessly, swaying slightly before the camera, as he was asked the origin of the word "boycott" (from the despised Irish landlord, Captain Boycott). The expectant silence continued, all eyes fixed on the silently smiling Churchill, until the master of ceremonies, his disappointment obvious, was forced to give the answer. The next day Churchill's return ticket to London—first class—was waiting at his hotel desk.

A young, impoverished, poorly briefed Greenwich Village poet realized, in the middle of his appearance, that he was being asked the identical questions put to him during an earlier private session with a producer. On air, watched by millions of people, he felt compelled to answer, but immediately afterward he accused the production team of fraud and angrily refused to return for his next appearance. He wanted no part of their phony quiz show. The producers were stunned. And they had a right to be. For in my entire investigation, I found no other individual who refused to participate. A man of principle, or a fool, he alone sailed against the wind. I don't even remember his name, but I owe him a debt of gratitude, living proof that at least one man could cling to moral principle amid the wonderland of fantasy and greed.

On "The $64,000 Question," as on the others, the criteria of showmanship and popular appeal governed the choice of contestants. An obscure cobbler was showcased as America's leading authority on opera. But since he had an Italian name, nearly all the questions were confined to Italian opera. A jockey shined as an expert on art. When the psychologist Joyce Brothers came for an interview, she requested, naturally enough, that her category be psychology. It wouldn't do. "A psychologist on psychology? Too boring. Obvious." However, she was an attractive lady with a sympathetic personality and an almost photographic memory. "Why not try something else," they suggested, "like boxing?" A young woman professional on boxing would be a natural. Taking the producers' casual suggestion seriously, Brothers began a systematic study of Nat Fleisher's Ring Book. (Fleisher was a friend of her father's.) Not long afterward, Joyce Brothers astonished the nation with her command of boxing history and statistics—all contained in Fleisher's encyclopedic work—won sixty-four thousand dollars and a position of national prominence, which was to yield her a public career as soothsayer to the troubled multitudes which she still enjoys.

Sitting at her small kitchen table, I interviewed Ms Brothers in the presence of her friendly, protective husband. As I inquired into the details of her performance, she began to cry, envisioning public humiliation, the crumbling of reputation and career. How could this happen? She had done nothing wrong. She had memorized the book, absorbed the complete and definitive record of boxing lore. She had never been given any questions in advance, had answered from her own, newly acquired knowledge. I believed her. We never had any contradicting evidence. She was never called to testify.
However, the testimony of those who had produced the show was essential to our case. And they had to talk. The accumulating admissions of contestants meant that denial by the producers would, almost certainly, precipitate indictments for perjury. Bewildered by their unexpected predicament, never understanding why others might question the morality of their act, oblivious to the fact that the public—which they had so handsomely entertained—might feel itself the offended, even indignant, victim of fraud, they reluctantly revealed the details of their spectacular contrivances. However, even in their hour of distress, their shows canceled, their careers bleak, the producers refused to implicate the networks or sponsoring corporations in their fraud. "Look, Dick," one of them explained to me, "if I even hinted that the networks ever, even in their hour of distress, their shows canceled, their networks would harbor the guilty, they reluc-
tantly persisted in the pretense that we had no evidence of his involvement. It made no difference, he had originated "The Black Sox scandal had there was no evidence of his involvement. It made no differ-
ence. He had originated "The Great American Public Service" television series. Its purpose was to inform the public about the importance of ethical behavior in business.

"But you're already through," I objected in my naiveté, "they'll never take you back. They can't afford to. Why should you take the whole guilt on yourself, when they're the ones who made the big money."

"Maybe you're right," he replied, "but maybe not. Public memories are short, but corporations never forget, or forgive. Hell, television is my whole life; if there's any chance of getting back, I don't want to throw it away now." He paused for a long moment, avoided my gaze. "Anyway, they didn't know a thing. Under-
stand, we did it on our own."

"You're making a big mistake," I responded futilely.

But the mistake was mine. After a suitable period of exile, many of the producers did return and prospered, their renaissance perhaps not wholly unrelated to their loyal insistence on the principle that we had no evidence of his involvement. It made no difference, he had originated "The Great American Public Service" television series. Its purpose was to inform the public about the importance of ethical behavior in business.

Initially, the networks and sponsors ignored the committee inves-
tigation. Then the hearings began, and exposure of the quiz show fraud took on monstrous proportions. One national publication asserted that "not since the Black Sox scandal had there been such a betrayal of public trust." Another solemnly editori-
alized about "public concern over a deepening mess that had ex-
posed a nation's sagging moral standards." The unanticipated storm changed everything.

The networks, with considerable justice, had no fear of politicians, but the awakened disapproval of the great American public stripped strong men of their sleep, made corporate corridors shake, the skyscrapers themselves to tremble. The executives of Revlon and Geritol, of NBC and CBS hastened to condemnation of those who, they asserted, had deceived them as well as the public. They had bought the shows and left their conduct to the producers. They were merely interested spectators, like everyone else in the television audience, with the single, irrelevant exception that they had many millions of dollars at stake.

One by one, voluntarily, with seeming eagerness, the television and corporate executives came to testify before the committee. Frank Stanton, president of NBC, testified that they had no knowledge of the fix, but stalwartly and without evasion admitted that in principle networks should have a moral responsibility for their shows. (Although, as it happened, in this particular case, they had none.) Charles Revson, the meticulously attired tryant of a flourishing cosmetic empire, admitted that since the quiz programs had such an enormous impact on his sales, his company had made occasional suggestions, but he "never, never imagined that the producers would tamper with the honesty of the shows."

With the big executives present, the atmosphere in the commit-
tee room changed. Not for them the finger-wagging, inquisitorial manner reserved for contestants, producers, and other culprits whose notoriety exceeded their power and wealth. They were greeted with deference, made their statements, answered a few mild questions. Their records and memos were not subpoenaed, nor were we in-
structed to investigate the precise extent of their involvement more rigorously. Some stones were better left unturned.

Frantically concerned to protect themselves from the gathering storm, to dispel mounting public distrust, the networks fired any-
one—innocent or guilty—whose name was publicly associated with the quiz shows. (On learning their intent to discharge the head of CBS television, Lou Cowan, who was lying in a hospital bed with a life-threatening embolism, I informed the CBS presi-
dent that we had no evidence of his involvement. It made no dif-
ference. He had originated "The $16,000 Question," was associ-
ted with the show—not in reality, but in the "public mind." And so he had to go.)

It was my amazed first glimpse of the cowardice at the core of this electronic prodigy endowed with the capacity to influence an entire nation. After our hearings had ended, the country's most distinguished television critic, John Crosby, wrote that "the moral squalor of the quiz show mess reaches through the whole industry.

Investigating the Quiz Shows

But it was not so. The public outrage, was testi-
dark enough to survive an innocence that was to ate rebellions of the sixties. For innocence is a
to believe which nourishes

assault on television deception, the foundation of compla-
ate faced its hold on society, far to the south small meeting secretly to voice white only bun Counter there the other side of the was sketching out a theme an intuitive belief that his y expected more from their led to "Get America Mov-
it in that fall of 1959, "he was going to be part of it, and dazzling an experience even read his name in a c.

I received a call from Ted assistant. "How would you "chick?" he asked, "I would," never drafted a speech for speeches had three severa-
s the Democratic party, t. The second was a "sub-
enue issue of the day—farm o on. And the third section
was an invocation of American greatness, the dazzling prospects of our nation, its responsibility to sustain the torch of freedom. The three parts were interchangeable, different beginning and ending sections would be attached to a particular substantive discussion, making it possible for the senator to give different speeches on the same subject (or discuss different subjects in the same speech).

Sorensen suggested a topic and I worked on a draft during a lengthy, pre-jet flight to California for an interview with Leonard Bernstein's sister, a former associate producer of a major quiz show. I had, unaware, been entered in an undisclosed essay contest. The mounting demand of Kennedy's still-unannounced candidacy for "issue" material — speeches, articles, pamphlets — had become too burdensome for even the astonishingly productive and hard-working Sorensen. The systematically assembled card file of prospects had been culled for potential assistants. I was one, among many, who were being tested; the purpose, even the existence, of competition undisclosed. Soon after submitting my first draft I was asked to try another, then one more, and the quiz show investigation still under way — I was invited to join the staff in Kennedy's Washington office. My job, I was told, would be working with Ted Sorensen on "issues," meaning Kennedy's presidential campaign, which, unofficially pursued for three years, was soon to be formally proclaimed. "Will you accept?" Sorensen asked. "Wow!" Of course. What a thrill!"

I was to begin working for Kennedy as soon as the quiz show investigation was completed. But my political career almost ended before it had begun. Life magazine asked me to write an article describing the conduct of the quiz shows. It appeared on November 16, 1959, under the headline "Committee Investigator Reveals How Fixers Seduced Innocents." A few days later I awoke to read a Washington Post editorial condemning me for profiting from public service.

I was devastated. It was my first taste of public criticism. Although only a gentle hint of what future years would bring, it then seemed the end of the world. Painful shock yielded to almost disabling depression. I did not go to work that day; could not. Late in the morning, I received a call from the intuitively prescient Frankfurter. "Some pains," the justice reassured me, "are like stomach infections, which stay for months. Others are like toothaches, which you can't ever remember after you leave the dentist. This kind of thing is like the toothache." He was right. Although his wisdom did not dispel my fierce morning ache, it did help dispel my senseless fear that the whole world would now turn against me.

It seemed so unfair, I thought. The article had been approved in advance by Robert Lishman, my immediate superior, and by Oren Harris, chairman of the committee. It contained no insider information, nothing unavailable to a diligent student of the public record. Other committee investigators had written of their exploits without public censure. Yet these excruciating facts were irrelevant. Some anonymous hand had reached out and, moved by a sudden attack of moral indignation, a dinner party comment, a difficulty in meeting his daily quota of comment, or even indignation, had struck a casual, indifferent, but very painful blow.

After my initial shock at the Post editorial had dissipated, I remained apprehensive that my involvement in this mini-controversy might jeopardize my job with Kennedy. It was never mentioned. My desk was waiting for me. Yet my Life magazine adventure had not gone unnoticed. Years later, Robert Kennedy told me: "I was a little worried about hiring you. I thought you might write about us. And you're the only one who never did."

True enough, Bobby. I never did. Not until now.

Once reassured that my job was secure, I walked from the House Office Building, across First Street, into the familiar pillared sanctuary of the Supreme Court. Since the Court was in session, I took a courtroom section reserved for law clerks and, by custom, available to former clerks. I asked a court messenger to deliver a note to Frankfurter at the bench. "Mr. Justice, I am going to start working for Senator Kennedy next week." The justice took the note, looked toward me, scribbled something on a notepad, and summoned a messenger, who made his way past the dozing lawyers, whose tedious formality seemed suddenly to have grown so distant from my own tumultuous, thrill-promising prospects, and handed me the paper. "I wish you a great deal of success and happiness in your own career," he had written, "but not in the main thing," meaning, of course, Kennedy's run for the presidency.

No half-truths or politic omission for the justice. Consistent to the last, his note was a token of my now-completed transition from one world to another; from the quiet, protected arena of reflection to the thronged, turbulent arena of action. I was a politician now, and my purpose was victory.