

Tuesday, 14 July 1959

If this diary is to be a true picture of what goes on in District Court in Washoe County, during this period of time, I must make some mention of the uncontested divorce cases. We have them every morning from 9:30 to 10:00 or later - depending on how many we have. Then again in the afternoon, uncontested divorce cases are heard from 1:30 to 2:00 or later. Many - many, in fact most of them, are the same old grind. About 90%, or more, are based on the ground of "Cruelty" - because that is the easiest ground to prove and make stick - when the ground of 3 years separation does not apply to the particular case. Sometimes, when something unusual comes along - I write a note on a slip of paper and put it in my pocket - so I can later mention it in this diary. There are just too many of them to keep any clearly in mind without a note. In looking over my notes now, I find some fairly good ones from these last few days. Two of them have to do with "Jealousy" - that weakness of which God gave more to women than men. There came to Reno to seek a divorce one Mary Ellen Dougherty. Her husband did not contest. He was probably very glad to get rid of her - but the story told from her lips paints him a gay "Don Juan." Husband and wife had a joint account in a department store, as a matter of fact, it was her account, but he paid the bills. One day, as she looked over the bill, she discovered someone had charged a pair of black silk pajamas. She had not charged them. He had not given them to her. The only possible conclusion in her simple jealous mind was that her husband must have bought them for some "baby doll." Since the case was uncontested, no one asked her any questions about the surrounding facts - but I could write a piece of fiction, in which there would

be many possible answers. Did he buy the pajamas for a daughter by a former marriage? Did he buy them for the wife and hadn't given them to her yet? Why would any man be such a fool as to buy "black silk baby doll pajamas for some chick he was having an affair with - and charge them on an account the bills of which were always mailed to his wife? As I listened to this woman's "proof" - that her husband had been untrue, I thought of the woman who found a fur coat in her closet - "all done up pretty." She packed her things ready to leave and divorce him. When he came home, she found he had bought the coat as a birthday present for her!

While on this subject of jealousy - we had a man in Dept. 3 recently - a Mr. Hendrickson, case 180471. Where he came from I cannot recall - but I wrote a note about the facts in his case and stuck it in my pocket. Of course, he could have been exaggerating. Most people do. Men as well as women - but this fellow gave quite a clear picture of an extremely jealous wife. Every night when he came home for dinner, she hounded him. Where have you been today? What did you do? Who did you see? Where did you have lunch - who with? I saw you on the street - talking with a woman. Who was she! Now don't tell me, etc. and etc. This couple had no children. He had a dog when he married this fool. He had to get rid of it, because his wife was so jealous of the dog. If they went to a party, she would hound him for days, if he danced twice with the same woman. If he spoke to anyone on the street - even a couple - man and woman, his wife had many questions - all insinuating something sinister and bad. The climax of it all was her jealousy of his dead parents. He

did not dare mention them, eventhough they had been dead when he met this fool. Someway or other, this woman got the idea her husband thought more of his dead parents than he did of her. So - she destroyed all the pictures he had of his dead mother and father, and even burned the family Bible, because it had their handwriting in it. Now this case would make quite a story - but many people would not believe the basic facts of his story, because while I practiced law I ran into some about as extreme. People are very interesting, primarily because so many of them are so different.