

Monday, 29 January 1962

All the hours of this long day I listened to a nasty contested divorce case, Morrisee v. Morrisee, two alcoholics who revel in calling each other names, and saying in court that the other one is a liar. This was really one of the nastiest cases I have heard. John Gabrielli represented the wife; Bill Hammersmith the husband. Each lawyer had heard only one side of the story, as no depositions had been taken. Each lawyer was very surprised at the evidence produced by the evening. This marriage was nothing short of a private war for fifteen years. They fought constantly and word battles often turned into physical combat.

She claims he beat her time and time again. He admits he beat her at times, but only after she had attacked him. She has no scars but the man has several to show. There is a scar about two inches long over his right ear, where he says she hit him with a fruit jar that broke and cut her hand because her fist was inside of it. He has a nick out of the left side of his lower jaw, about an inch behind the chin, taken out of him by a swipe of a butcher knife, when he ducked but not quite far enough.

Hammersmith had him take off his shirt to show his left arm and shoulder. I counted seven scars, about one-half to an inch long, which he said were made by her bashing at him with one of those hooked beer-bottle openers. Her story pictured him about as bad.

After lunch both of them had been drinking, so about 3:30 I took both parties into chambers with their lawyers and did a bit of head-bumping. She amended her pleadings to ask for a divorce so she can tell her friends, "He went to Reno to get a divorce but the judge gave me the decree." The man agreed to pay her \$100 a month until she has received \$5,000 or has died. He has no money but the price is cheap for freedom from such a woman as this.