

Bank Refuses To Cash Jockey's First Check for TV Quiz Prize

Editor's note: This is the last in a three-part series on the incredible life of Billy Pearson, the 36-year-old jockey who won \$26,000 on television quiz shows less than six months ago and now is broke.

By HAL WOOD
United Press Correspondent
San Mateo, Cal.—(U.P.)—The complex personality of Billy Pearson can be divided into four parts. He is an adventurer, a gambler, an art expert and a race track jockey.

Each part has taken him around the world and they have combined to bring him riches and poverty. Right now he is broke. He admits that money means nothing to him.

"They couldn't believe it when I went in to cash the check for \$64,000 that I won on the quiz program," he recalls now. "Burl Ives, the singer who is a good friend, and I had been on an all-night party after my victory. I was afraid I would lose the check, so I stuck it in a refrigerator with the ice cube trays. It got wet and froze and we had to dry it out over a radiator. Half of it got burned. They wouldn't cash the check—because the check, Ives and I weren't in too good a condition. "I got the show sponsors to

give me a new check and went in to cash it. The vice president wanted me to invest the money in good, solid stocks. He couldn't believe his ears when I told him I wanted it in cash—all in \$100 bills.

"When they went to get the cash, they found they didn't have that many \$100 bills—so we took a lot of tens and twenties. We stuffed the money in a shopping

bag that Burl was carrying and started down the street.

Shopping Spree
"At Saks Fifth Avenue store we saw some Viennese hats in the window we liked, so we went in to buy them. We started buying hats for everyone that came in and in 15 minutes we spent \$4,000—paying out of the shopping bag. About this time, men from CBS caught up with us and

got us out of there before we shot the works."

Little Billy is broke right now as far as cash is concerned. But he stands to make another fortune in short order. He figures he is on the stepping stones to riches.

"I'm owned by CBS now," he says, "and they have plans to make an actor out of me. I've never acted in my life. But it sounds interesting, could be a lot of fun—mainly because there is a lot of loot in it."

While appearing on the \$64,000 Question quiz show, Billy's fan mail reached an all-time high of 22,000 letters in one week.

"Of those 22,000, about 21,000 advised me to stop after winning \$32,000," he says. "The other 1,000 wanted to sell me something or wish me good luck." He says the only thing he ever bought from all the letters was a phoney painting for \$500.

Touch of Kindness
"A fellow from Florida wrote me he had a true Fra Angelico," says Billy. "He was an old man and had high hopes of getting \$200,000 or something like that for it. But as soon as I saw it I knew it was a phoney. But the

guy needed money for an operation and I gave him \$500. The picture is hidden in my garage now."

Pearson may still go back on quiz shows. He's now eligible to return to the \$64,000 question—where he could make as high as a quarter of a million dollars. And he still is eligible on the \$64,000 Challenge.

"But I've signed for a new series on CBS, playing the role of a detective in an Earle Stanley Gardner series that would run 39 weeks," he points out.

Some Roles Rejected
He looks like a miniature Jack Webb and the CBS executives besiege him daily with various roles—some of which he already has rejected.

How can he reject jobs while claiming he is broke? For him, it's easy.

In fact, right now he is planning the purchase of a \$35,000 motor-auxiliary schooner.

"Gene Kelly, the actor, and I are going to buy the yacht and ship it to Greece," he says. "Then

we would board it there and leisurely cruise through the Suez, around India and come back through the Pacific islands with stops at such places as Singapore, Bangkok, Bali and Honolulu."

In the meantime, Billy plans to ride at Bay Meadows, collecting \$35 for each mount he rides—but doing the job he loves best.

Books on parliamentary practice and the art of running a club meeting smoothly are available at the Medford Public Library.

Wardens Assume Duties in District

Six forest wardens have assumed spring duties in the southern Oregon section of the state forest service, according to the state forestry department.

They include Paul Matteson, McLeod warden; Gerald Patterson, Lincoln warden; Frank Simmons, Butte Falls warden.

Wardens returning to work April 16 are John Black, Forest creek; Hubert Stephens, Rogue river; William Massey, Mathews cabin; Bud Rigel, Salt creek; and Lee Canady, Ashland, according to department officials.

District lookouts may be placed at stations by June 1, following the district fire school, officials said. Crew members will resume work in the middle of June.

The department also announced that four operator meetings will be held this spring to legislation. The first meeting acquaint loggers with new forest will be held at 7:30 p.m. April 30 at Medford headquarters. Meetings also will be held May 1 in Grants Pass and May 2 in Cave Junction.

The Southern Oregon Conservation and Tree Farm association will hold an operator's meeting at 7:30 p.m. May 24 in Medford.

WOULD LYNCH DOCTORS

Palermo, Sicily—(U.P.)—Angry relatives of a woman who died during childbirth stormed the Palermo hospital Tuesday trying to lynch the doctors. The two physicians escaped through a window.



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