



Bill and Harriet Stern read bedtime story to daughter Patty.

completely. The insistent summons of the telephone finally forced me awake, and I dressed with fumbling wooden fingers.

My trip to the stadium was a nightmare in bright sunshine. Billy Whitehouse, ABC sports editor, and Ray Scott, who was to work the game with me, waved in relief as I entered. It was only a matter of moments before I was on the air.

"Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is Bill Stern speaking from the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans where this afternoon we bring you the Sugar Bowl classic between..."

Between whom? My mind struggled to mesh into gear.

"...Pittsburgh and Georgia Tech. The captains are going out on the field, and here are the starting lineups."

"At left tackle..."

Slowly fighting to pull myself together, I started again.

"At left tackle, ah, Bob, ah..."

Bob who? Now where was his name? Wait, this was a note. Maybe they wanted me to read this. What did it say?

The words swam before my eyes, and I stared at the scrawl which Billy Whitehouse was holding for me to read. I couldn't believe what it said. I read it again, but the words didn't change. They still contained that short terse order: "Give it to Scott."

Woodenly I sat there through the kickoff, indignation mounting inside of me, succeeded quickly by rage. What right did they have to take me, Bill Stern, off the air? Then I realized the dreadful consequences which could follow.

Dejected and sick, I walked slowly from the stadium with Whitehouse, contemplating what I had done to my career. The silence between us was broken only once as we headed back to the hotel.

"I'm not sure what you've been doing, Bill," he said hesitantly, "but whatever it is, you'd better get hold of yourself."

WITHIN A WEEK after the catastrophe at New Orleans, I was taken to LeRoy Hospital, a private institution in New York City.

Three weeks later, they had done as much for me as they possibly could and I was released.

I was frightfully weak and run down, but I was off drugs.

The rocks on which I was to founder, even yet, however, were the sleeping tablets. I was taking as many as 16 a night.

Through three more nerve-shattering weeks, I waged an ever-losing battle to stay away from drugs. After six gruesome weeks, I surreptitiously visited a doctor for "just one" shot. It was my first step back into the same devilish pit.

Harriet knew almost from the first. The haunted look

(Continued)



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