SEVEN DAYS IN THE MADHOUSE

Freedom! Reporter Leaves Kankakee

Frank Smith today concludes the story of his experiences in the State Hospital for the Insane at Kankakee. Mr. Smith was committed as an alcoholic, spent a week in the hospital and has reported conditions at this state institution as he observed them.

By Frank Smith

The heart throbs of a new grad leaving the hallowed halls of his alma mater were strangely absent when I became an alumnus of Kankakee State Hospital for the insane.

Maybe my feelings of escape were not so strange after all, in view of the seven days I had spent in the bizarre, barred confines of fire-trap halls; drinking contaminated water from repugnant common drinking cups, bathing in unsterilized mud-wash from the turbid Kankakee river.

"Johnny Ford, there's a visitor to see you."

Attendant "Denby" Dennison's voice awoke me from my melancholy reverie. I hurried to the visitor's room and found Willis O'Rourke, DAILY TIMES reporter, my quadrumvirate, "Edward C. Ford," awaiting me in the doorway.

"Hello, Johnny," he greeted me. Then after we were alone, he looked at my wagging waistline and whistled. "What the hell are you doing, dieting?" (I lost eight pounds during my week in the madhouse.)

"Yes," I answered him. "I'm saving up for the juiciest steak I can order, chargeable to the expense account. How about getting me out of this joint?"

Plans Balked in Prison-Like Ward

I explained to him that it might be a month before I would be transferred to a ward, or allowed to come and go about the grounds at will. And there was no prospect of getting out. I was prepared to spend a couple of weeks, but looked up in the prison-like Ward A1, I was not advancing my plans to impact thoroughly the whole institution.

You may leave today if you will get out of my sight.

He inspected my clothing, hand, which had become infected during my 15-hour "negative" bath in the murky river water. He looked at the sores on my Arms and examined the black and bluish bruises below my shoulders, relics of my struggle with attendants when I entered the madhouse as a depressive alcoholic.

"These," I told him, "are only marks of attendant efficiency. I have no kick coming. I guess I deserved them. I had to be violent to get into the hydro-department."

We discussed the steps necessary for my release. I had entered the madhouse as a voluntary patient, in accordance with the provisions of the Illinois' lunacy laws, (chapter 50, section 57), adopted June 21, 1920, providing that any person in the early stages of insanity, desiring treatment, may enter a state hospital through the county court, and is eligible to leave on three days' notice.

Decide to Ask For Outside Work

The three-day notice clause was inserted to afford ample time in which to commit a patient through an attendant. I didn't have the slightest intention to leave, but the thought frightened me—maybe they'd decide I shouldn't be turned loose on an unsuspecting world.

We decided that as Willis left he should see Dr. Sullivan and ask him if I couldn't be put at some outside job where I'd have the benefit of fresh air and sunlight. If this request was refused I was to put in my notice, that evening.

As I was bidding my "brother Charlie" farewell, Mrs. Ray came up to look him up.

"Mrs. Ray," I interposed, "I have to go through much difficulty am I going to have putting in my notice to leave?"

She flashed me with a quizzical look, "What do you mean, Ford, you're thinking of leaving us so soon? You needn't worry about getting in a state," for a couple of

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FREE AT LAST!
REPORTER ENDS
ASYLUM STAY

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[The text continues, discussing the events leading to the report of the asylum and the story of the reporter's stay.]

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OUT OF THE MADHOUSE

Day of Deliverance Far Off For Some

The reporter's journey to the asylum and the day of deliverance is described, highlighting the conditions and the wait for release.

Wardmates Discount Chance of Release

The wardmates' perspectives on their chance of release are discussed, emphasizing the uncertainty and hopelessness.

Doctor Begins Mentality Quiz

A quiz is mentioned to assess the mental state of the patients, indicating a systematic approach to their recovery.

Strange Method of Washing Dishes

The methods used for washing dishes at the asylum are described, including the reasons behind their peculiarities.

Their day of deliverance was a long way off, if it ever arrived.

"Brother, you're not in a fit condition to leave now. You've got the boot out of you, and you think you're ready for another drink. You take your pleasures and stay here for a while."

The Doorknob reply confirmed my fears. "What, do you want to get out to work? I know these fellows. He's just about got the alcohol out of his system and he thinks he's well. The first thing you know he'll be putting up his three-day notice to leave. He hasn't been here long enough yet."

My next act was to put in my three-day notice.

I met him coming down the hallway. "Say Doc, may I have a word with you?" I asked.

"Male nurse," he said and I was gone, feeling fine and went to register the three-day notice as provided in the Illinois statute.

"You're not in a fit condition to leave now, you've got the boot out of you, and you think you're ready for another drink. You take your book out and stay here for a while."

DAMON SULLIVAN.

When I went into the dayroom, and asked Johnny: "Tell me about a three-day notice I filled out in the proper form, and gave it to an attendant with instructions to send it to Dr. Sullivan."

"I wasn't quite sure what action you were taking, but—I was determined that if I wasn't released by Thursday, I'd resort to violence, through my own hands."

Wardmates Discount Chance of Release

"My wardmates—naturally were interested in the outcome of my request. Those who had not already tried it, decided that the doctor had been informed by eyewitnesses..."

All of them wished me well, but they held out any encouragement. "We're never going to leave."

"You'd better stay here for a while."

"You'd better stay here for a while."

"I was circumspect at the prospect of anything happening to keep me longer than I had intended to stay. I went into the hall, the haymaker, to soothe my troubled mind with a drink. A glance at a fellow patient, a Polish blacksmith, was given a roar by Royce away."

"Oh, yes, I'm going to get plenty more. I got some more. Here's a glass of a fine Roos. You can have a Roos. And you see, I don't need very much."

I got too many patients willing to part with two flat building. Everybody here has had about the best that we can have."

That night, the philanthropic attitude of 1935 tried to grab Johnny N. in a bed. He took a liking to the bed, and probably would have traded in a string of flat buildings and a whole flock of Roos and Royce for it."

But Johnny wanted the bed himself, and the room, and the two-room bed. The smithy drew back his flat to deliver a haymaker.

"No, I've got, I've got enough, thank you."

He stepped into the haymanir, and drew a sharp right to the smithy's jaw, getting, with some skill to his tasks. The smithy picked up his flat, turned around, and went on down the hall, to the kitchen, down the stairs, and off to the hydro, for a rest of tubercular treatments..."