

## **From: The Mask of Sanity**

**By Hervey M. Cleckley**

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### **19. Stanley**

During the summer of 1972 a small item of news appeared in many of our daily newspapers over the country. It was an item that immediately engaged my attention. Over the two short columns was printed this arresting headline:

#### **YOUNG MAN INDUCES FIVE TEEN-AGE GIRLS TO SHAVE THEIR HEADS**

The report, as I remember it, did not go into much detail about this unusual event or give an adequate account of the young man's methods of persuasion, of his motives, or of just what impulses might have prompted the five girls to take such an unusual and, one might even say, such an unnatural step. Among my first thoughts on this accomplishment was that Stanley must surely have been the man who brought it about. Who in the entire world but Stanley would have thought up such an exploit? Who else would have had the inclination to carry it out? Though the news report did not actually identify Stanley as the man involved, it brought back many memories of him over the immediately preceding period of several years when I was trying to deal with him and some of the complicated and unusual problems his behavior kept creating for those concerned with him, and for himself.

Like a number of other patients presented in this book, he repeatedly showed evidence of superior abilities and demonstrated over and over that he could succeed in Studies, in business, in impressing and attracting other people, and in virtually anything he might choose to undertake. And, similarly, he lost, or seemed to throw away, with no sign of adequate motivation, everything he gained, and especially the things that he claimed meant most of all to him. Unlike some of the other patients discussed, Stanley had not yet, when I last had news of him, served long terms in prison for felonies. Aside from his more spectacular illegal activities, he would probably have spent a considerable time in confinement because of his persistence in writing bad checks had it not been for the intervention and the heavy financial sacrifices of his parents. He did not hesitate to write a check, whether or not there were funds to cover it, whenever he felt he would like to have additional money to squander on some caprice. Even when he was active at work and making far more than enough

money for his needs, he blithely continued in this practice. It had been necessary also for his family to shield him from the usual consequences of many and various other types of illegal and irresponsible behavior that would otherwise have led to imprisonment. These statements appear in a letter from his mother:

We don't have the money to pay these bills off. And we don't have the money to keep paying big hospital bills, but something has got to be done with him... So, I don't know what we're going to do... We are willing to go *the last mile* to do what we can for him financially and with your help... If he would just *stop charging* he would not have to worry about finances... He is arrogant and mean to me, his mother ... hateful to his little sister, and fussy to everyone with whom he comes in contact... Please help us... Get him straightened out... We do love him with all our hearts and we both cry and don't sleep over his problems. We will do whatever you advise ... We *love this boy* with all our hearts and it is just killing us ... All the things he does.

Typical of his behavior in high school is an incident that occurred while he was making excellent grades and holding positions of leadership. With no notice or indirect indication of restlessness, Stanley suddenly vanished from the scene. He failed one day to appear at classes and did not show up at home that night. After he had been gone for over two weeks, a period of great anxiety for his parents who had no way of knowing whether he was living or dead, the police finally discovered him working successfully in a large department store in Knoxville, Tennessee, approximately a hundred and fifty miles away. He seemed quite unconcerned with the ordeal to which he had subjected his parents. At college, and also during recent years, he has often run up long-distance telephone bills, sometimes charging calls amounting to hundreds of dollars to his parents. He has also run up similar bills charging to various other telephones, some listed in the names of friends of the family, others in the names of strangers who were truly astonished to find themselves heavily billed for numerous calls to distant cities.

During his first year at the university he was accused by a girl he had recently met of getting her pregnant after solemn promises of matrimony.

Before this trouble was settled by his family, at considerable expense, a similar accusation was made by another girl in a different state. Later that year, during the summer vacation he took a sudden notion to return for a brief visit to the university. To set out without delay on the trip of approximately a hundred miles he casually stole a truck that happened to be at hand. It was heavily loaded with dairy products. State police pursued him, and in the chase he turned over the truck wrecking it and injuring a companion he had

persuaded to go along with him. The damages, including hospital bills, cost his family several thousand dollars.

Despite his many antisocial and irresponsible acts in the past Stanley seemed at times to settle down. On a number of these occasions his parents thought that he had at last attained maturity and decided finally to use his abilities consistently in a constructive pattern of living. In his mother's record we find this item:

Was for many months in high school active and well behaved in boy scouts.  
... For a while during last trimester of second year at college took major role in organizing and leading group to promote Christian Life on the Campus.... Planned big programs, made fine speeches, led in all the various activities.

While still in college, he showed his excellent persuasive abilities during one summer vacation selling Bibles down in the Cajun country near the Gulf of Mexico. During this time he was living with his first wife who eventually had to leave him because of his tyrannical demands and his predilection for beating her up severely at the slightest provocation. It is difficult to imagine conduct of this sort in one who ordinarily gives the impression of a well-bred and considerate gentleman. The evidence is strong, however, to support his first wife's claims. There is also evidence that indicates he would lock the doors and force her to stay when she sought to escape violence by returning to the protection of her parents. Sometimes officers of the law had to be called by neighbors to obtain her release from his extreme abuse.

In discussing the first wife's accusations of such conduct as this, Stanley usually brushed them aside as a typically feminine and somewhat ridiculous exaggeration of some minor disagreement. When confronted with undeniable evidence to the contrary, he admitted having taken mild physical measures to influence her, saying that he "just couldn't stand her screaming and bawling." This habit of hers, he said, made him lose his temper. When it was emphasized to him that her weeping and outcries did not precede the beatings but occurred only after the beatings began, he showed very little response. Apparently he felt that this crucial point was not sufficiently important to argue about and seemed to dismiss it without further thought as something virtually irrelevant, or at most a trifle.

Chiefly because of this physical maltreatment, the first wife left him on many occasions. When with her and when separated, he easily obtained employment, usually as a salesman. While he worked, his income was ample for any ordinary needs. During one period of prosperity he was very successful selling small computers for household use. He later added as a sideline the enthusiastic promotion and sale of waterbeds, shortly after these were

introduced and hailed as a stimulating erotic innovation. His profits from these enterprises were for a while spectacular until he lost both jobs through a combination of neglect and irresponsible conduct. On many other occasions he worked with what seemed to be real enthusiasm for periods of varying lengths. Then, without any particular reason, he would give up an excellent job at which he was distinguishing himself. On other occasions he would have to leave the valuable position to flee from prosecution for some legal offense.

Even while his first wife was living with him and his income ample, he usually ran up heavy debts. When his mistreatment would force his wife to leave him or when he would capriciously stop work, he often celebrated the occasion by a special splurge of unnecessary expenditures. Sometimes he would go out merrily and buy on credit several expensive suits and ample supplies of new shoes, shirts, and neckties. On one such occasion he impulsively bought a motorcycle which he never got around to using. Despite the fact that his parents have been faithful and active in succoring him and have often been hard pressed in making restitution in his behalf, it remains difficult to see how he has been able to continue for so long on so heedless and hazardous a course. Notes made by his mother concerning one such episode follow:

- Charged clothes for \$650 one store in Atlanta.
- Charged clothes for \$400 one store in Greenville.
- Charged clothes for \$350 one store in Charlotte.
- Charged clothes for \$135 one store in Spartanburg.
- Charged a ring in a jewelry store for \$110.
- Charged more clothes.
- Charged two waterbeds for \$225.
- Gave about twenty-five bad checks, some of which his father made good.
- The others are here and there and the law has some of them.

Stanley has proved himself a master over the years at misrepresentation in situations where the truth would cause him difficulty or put him in a bad light. He has also been scarcely less active and ingenious in the fabrication of elaborate lies that seem to have had little or no chance of helping him gain any material objective. Though his mother is living and has been active in trying to deliver Stanley from the various troubles into which he plunges, he convinced his first wife that she had died during his second year in high school. He often discussed with his wife during the first years of their marriage his emotional reactions to this alleged loss and sometimes dwelt at length on complex but purely imaginary problems that it brought into his life. He succeeded in making her believe also that his father's present wife (his actual mother) was not only his stepmother, but also the identical twin sister of the mother who

gave him birth. On at least one occasion he told a psychiatrist that when he was about 10 years old his mother frequently had adulterous relations in his presence with various men. When the plausibility of this claim was questioned, Stanley explained, or seemed to feel that he explained, by saying, "It was because she knew she could trust me with anything."

While separated from his wife for a period of several months, he went for a short time with a divorcee not long out of her teens, who will here be designated as Marilyn. During this brief courtship he convinced her that though he had once been married, his wife and also his 2-year-old son had died. Actually they were at the time living in another state with the wife's parents. Though not working at the time and in very heavy debt, he picked out and ordered for Marilyn a diamond engagement ring. His mother in her notes makes this comment:

He went to a jewelry store and had the man order a \$6,000 ring, a diamond for a girl - he is still married to Margaret - this was for a Marilyn. His father and I had never heard of her. It just happened that I went into the jewelry store to return something for him and I was told about the diamond. I cancelled it, of course.

At their first encounter, or soon after, he convinced Marilyn that he was deeply in love with her and had every intention of marrying her. She had no way of knowing that these intentions, if they ever existed, had greatly changed (or that Stanley's wife was still living) until he came to her with what must have been one of the strangest, most surprising and most inappropriate proposals ever made by man to woman.

He requested and persistently urged Marilyn to write a letter to his wife and in it explain to her that Stanley's love for her (the wife) was strong and genuine and to implore her to accept and welcome him back without further delay. I have inexpressible respect for this young man's powers of persuasion and have often marveled at his accomplishments in getting people, sometimes the most unlikely people, enlisted in working with him to bring about his various and sometimes incompatible or absurd aims.

Despite these extraordinary powers, Marilyn could not be induced to take the role that he tried to press upon her. Though extremely shrewd in many ways, Stanley, in discussing this matter, seemed to show some peculiar limitation of awareness, some defect in sensibility, of a nature I cannot describe or clearly imagine. This often led him into gross errors of judgment that even very stupid people would readily see and easily avoid.

The reactions Marilyn must have had to the unusual role he proposed and urged upon her invite many questions. Putting further speculation about these reactions aside for the moment, I asked Stanley if he did not think it

might have seriously damaged the cause he sought to further if Marilyn had written the letter to intercede for him. Surely, I thought, it would occur to Stanley that such a letter from the other woman would point out and emphasize his sexual infidelity during the separation.

"Oh, no," said Stanley, in tones of strong and almost indignant conviction. "My wife knows I'd never be unfaithful to her."

He then went into some detail about her unassailable confidence in his sexual loyalty. "Why," he said as if in real pride, "I promised her that if I *ever* did that with another woman, I'd let *her* know about it right away."

I then brought up the point that he had given me plainly to understand that he and Marilyn had been indulging in sexual relations freely and regularly up to the time when he made his request for her intercession. Stanley seemed in no way dismayed. "But my wife," he said confidently, "She doesn't know about *that*."

In this discussion, I thought at moments I sensed some points about Stanley's inner being that I could never formulate adequately, even to myself. I did not, of course, find it remarkable that such a man as he would be unfaithful to his wife, or that he made and broke promises of the sort just mentioned. Something in his attitude seemed to give fleeting and very imperfect hints of a difference far within that distinguished him in a very special way from the usual or ordinary human being who is unscrupulous and unconcerned about veracity or honor. When Stanley said, "My wife *knows* I'd never be unfaithful," there was in his tone what seemed to be the *very essence of truth and sincerity*. There was pride in his voice that seemed rooted in this essence. Could it be that for the moment he lost awareness that he was lying? Perhaps even awareness of what truth is? If so, I think this oversight might have occurred because to him it mattered so little. Whether his sworn fidelity was real or not was apparently no more than an academic question empty of substance. The only tangible issue was whether or not it contributed toward gaining his ends. Whether the fidelity existed or his oath had been honored was, for Stanley, a matter that could interest only a sophist who concerned himself not with actualities, but with mere verbalistic capers. With Stanley's attention focused on the real and important issue, this bit of irrelevant sophistry may not have edged its way clearly into his awareness.

Though Stanley's parents sought treatment and help for him from psychiatrists and other doctors and from counselors of various sorts, he himself seemed to feel no need of this and only responded by brief simulations of cooperation in order to escape some unpleasant consequence or to gain some egocentric end. On two or three occasions he voluntarily entered psychiatric hospitals, apparently to impress his wife by making her think he had at last realized he needed help and meant to change some of his ways. These

visits were brief and fruitless and seemed plainly designed to manipulate domestic situations or to elicit new financial aid from his parents.

It is interesting to note that excessive drinking has not been a discernible factor in this young man's career. Nor is there evidence to indicate that his behavior has been significantly influenced by marijuana, amphetamines, LSD, heroin, or the other drugs that have been so popular among those of his age group. His many notable and sometimes puzzling exploits were apparently decided upon and carried off on his own, without extraneous stimulation or chemical aid. In high school, and in college during the late 1960's, he was often thrown with and sometimes almost surrounded by groups of young people who went about in ragged blue jeans, with unkempt beards and long dirty hair that seemed to offer a standing invitation to lice. With many of these young men it was considered stylish and desirable to leave out their shirttails and, on formal occasions, sometimes to come barefooted. Among these could be found many who thought of themselves as radical activists defying the "establishment" and its laws, moral codes, and conventions. In contrast, Stanley wore traditional clothes, remained clean-shaven with neatly trimmed auburn hair. He seemed to have no special interest in changing or challenging society, or in promoting rebellion. Verbally he expressed allegiance to law and order and regularly identified himself with traditional virtues.

Let us note briefly a few examples of Stanley's typical power to convince and to persuade. A year or two before his second wife had to leave him he had no difficulty in getting a young woman to turn over to him all her savings, which she had accumulated by steady work over years and which she had been carefully guarding to give her two young children some measure of security. She had clear knowledge of Stanley's repeatedly demonstrated financial irresponsibility and, one would think, almost certain knowledge of what would happen to her savings. More recently he succeeded in arranging for admission to the hospital of a young woman with whom he had been living for a few weeks. She was legally married to another man but had left his bed and board. Stanley was able somehow to convince the ordinarily strict and uncompromising authorities in charge of admission to this hospital that insurance his employer carried on him would cover this lady in the same way as if she were indeed his wife. She did not claim his name as her own or attempt to falsify otherwise her name and status. When she was dismissed, the hospital was left with a large unpaid account that is almost certain to withstand even the most heroic efforts at collection.

On another occasion, Stanley escaped the consequences of a felony charge by serenely posing as an undercover agent working with the authorities against organized pushers in the hard drug traffic. This ruse apparently worked well enough for him to avoid arrest and to leave the state and eventually to take

further intricate steps to escape the legal consequences that would almost surely have been disastrous to the ordinary man.

His unusual ability to make conviction spring to life and continue to flourish against adversity, and even obvious contradiction, emerges again in a somewhat different area. An attractive and sensitive young woman whose early years had been extremely unhappy and, perhaps, had given her a far greater than ordinary need for genuine and unstinted love, seemed to find at last in Stanley what she had sought above all else in life. She was separated from her husband and for a long time had been loved dearly by another man who apparently offered her everything in his life without qualification or demand for ordinary reciprocation. Stanley grossly mistreated this appealing sexual partner who continued to live with him despite gross and flaunted infidelity, severe and repeated beatings, and other unprovoked outrages. In attempting to explain why she continued with him despite real fear that he might kill her, she said that somehow he made her feel genuinely loved for the first time in her entire life.

This statement seemed at first to suggest that Stanley might possess remarkable physical prowess and skill at sexual relations. It also might suggest that his partner was masochistic and actually found some perverse satisfaction from being mistreated. Continuing study of her reactions and her attitude gave increasing, and finally convincing, evidence that in neither of these possibilities lay a likely explanation of her loyalty. The more she discussed their physical activities in sexual relations, the more Stanley's performance seemed unimaginative and his abilities at best ordinary. What she thought he offered her was not primarily physical. It was, I believe, precisely what he was almost infinitely incapable of offering, even in a small degree, but what he apparently simulated with complete success, casually and without effort. It was, she repeatedly said, the way he made her feel personally valued and cherished, deeply and truly loved, rather than a remarkable sensuously erotic experience that bound her to him. One can but marvel that Stanley, and only Stanley, of all the men she had known, could give her this invincible impression of sincerity in personal love and make it convincing time after time despite the repeated and trenchantly disillusioning contradictions demonstrated so vividly and so painfully, and sometimes brutally, by his conduct.

During another period of marital separation, this time from his second wife, Stanley carried out an exploit worthy of our attention. After a brief sexual adventure with another attractive young woman, Yvette, he apparently tired of her and turned his attentions to Sally, one of her friends from a nearby town. She, too, was responsive and everything seemed to indicate a serious and progressive love affair. This new relationship, however, was abruptly

terminated by a sudden trip to Europe that Stanley decided to make for reasons that he never made convincing to me, or even quite clear.

Though varying somewhat from time to time in his account of this venture, Stanley has nearly always included most of these items. He claims to have learned from Sally that Yvette was about to leave the country, that she was planning to spend some time in Brussels, and later in other parts of Europe. On hearing this, Stanley says that he called Yvette's home and was told that Yvette was not there. He, nevertheless, persisted in seeking all sorts of information about her trip, apparently making a nuisance of himself and pressing her father repeatedly for information on points he felt were not properly a matter of Stanley's concern. The father finally hung up, and afterward neither parent would talk with Stanley on the telephone. They had apparently been unhappy about Yvette's former association with him and did not want it to be renewed.

Stanley sought out Sally again. According to his story, Sally now told him that Yvette had a chronic infirmity that required medication regularly and that she had left for Brussels with the wrong drug. Stanley insisted that Sally also informed him that Yvette would die if she kept taking this other medicine instead of that which was prescribed and appropriate. She did not, he maintains, know Yvette's address beyond the fact that she was thought to be somewhere in Brussels. This, briefly, is Stanley's usual explanation for his impromptu and, in some respects, astonishing flight by jet plane to Europe.

When asked why he did not get word to Yvette by some simpler means, such as having Sally notify her family, he does not give a really adequate explanation. He repeatedly emphasizes his sense of mission, the urgency of his task, and his determination to fulfill it. He also fills in details of action and adventure on the way to Brussels and while there in such a way as to conceal, or at least almost magically blur, the deficiencies that leave the account of his maneuvers so far from convincing. His relations with Yvette had, on his part, never been serious. Even these relatively casual relations had for a considerable time been broken off. He was no longer regarded as a suitor and probably not even regarded now as a friend, so it seemed pertinent to wonder and to ask why he should so emphatically seize his role as the appointed one to plunge into such an extravagant undertaking on her behalf. "Why," Stanley answered promptly, and in his best tones of knight-errantry, "I'd have done that for anybody."

It is beyond my power to describe the glibness or convey what I believe to be the lack of substance and reality, the emptiness of real human feeling, in these fine words that came to him so readily.

It has not been possible for me to obtain any evidence to support Stanley's claim that he was convinced that Yvette was in danger, or that she had

actually gone to Brussels, or that any mistake had been made about any medication she might be taking. Few things seem to me much more implausible than that Stanley ever cared deeply for Yvette even during the time he was seeing her. Nothing suggests that he maintained a serious interest in her welfare after he had lost touch with her and at the time he departed for Europe.

His parents had no warning of his intentions. From notes about Stanley by his mother, I quote:

We knew he still owed \$4900 on the trailer his wife and child were living in ... plus \$700 for just junk we didn't know about... He'd changed jobs five times that year.. And his wife had left him nine times... But he gave a lot more bad checks... He then wrote one for \$859 and flew to Brussels, Belgium. He just wrote the check and took off.

Stanley talks freely about his apparently unanticipated and suddenly contrived trip to Europe. He maintains that within approximately twenty-four hours he packed luggage, made financial arrangements, flew to New York, obtained a passport, got emergency clearance on matters such as vaccination and other medical technicalities, communicated with the State Department in Washington to explain his mission and enlist aid, found a seat on the first jet to Europe that would get him to Paris (and so in close reach of Brussels), and was well on his way across the Atlantic. To various questions about how he moved so fast and expedited so many matters that ordinarily make for delay, he has ready and enthusiastic, though not always convincing, answers.

His parents confirm the story that he moved with marvelous dispatch. They also report a flood of bad checks that throw light on how he took care of the heavy initial expenses of the flight. Most energetic, ingenious, and experienced travelers, even if in urgent haste, would, I dare say, have needed at least a week to complete such arrangements. And they would have needed actual money—and a good deal of it! One gets the impression that Stanley sliced through the ordinarily paralyzing masses of bureaucratic technicalities and red tape with ease and celerity suggestive of Alexander the Great when confronted by the Gordian knot.

In expediting transactions and in manipulating people for this exploit, Stanley must have been at his best. The implausible story about Yvette having carried with her the wrong medicine and its alleged threat of danger to her life must have taken on lyrical notes in his telling. His success in carrying out such a trip indicates that at times he must have made his presentation irresistibly convincing. It seems not unlikely, however, that at other times, Stanley may have used other ruses and employed additional schemes to gain his ends. I

have often wondered whether Sally or anyone else told Stanley that Yvette had gone off unwittingly with improper medication and that she was in any sort of danger, or whether he thought up this story entirely on his own and used it to account for a sudden, dramatic and irresponsible jet flight to Europe prompted by impulses having nothing whatsoever to do with Yvette.

According to his parents, Stanley had been in very serious and unusually pressing trouble several times during the months before his unfor ..... .. r to Europe. He had more than once suddenly left one state and fled to another, giving no information to family or friends of his new address. Perhaps he was again seeking to escape prosecution for some criminal deed or evade the threat of dangerous measures by some person or group whom lie had given reason to seek retaliation.

On the other hand it must be remembered that Stanley has often carried out various extremely injudicious projects, suddenly and with no apparent regard for the consequences, and without any discernible goal that could, in terms of ordinary human motivation, account for his conduct. After such behavior he has on a number of previous occasions invented implausible pretexts for his conduct similar in some respects to the story of Yvette.

Among Stanley's most striking features has been the tendency to spring heedlessly into action at the behest of what often seems little more than idle whims. Neither the threat of danger nor the likelihood of other serious consequences has seemed to check him. Penniless and faced with legal action for deeds that would ordinarily lead to years of confinement in prison, he has been known to celebrate by buying a half-dozen expensive and superfluous suits, two new automobiles, and then, to complete the job, by forging some additional checks to pay for a vacation trip to some plush resort in another section of the country. his parents first learned that Stanley was abroad through a telephone call from the American embassy in Belgium. In his mother's notes appears this item:

When they told my husband Stanley was in Brussels, Belgium, he keeled over with a heart attack and I had to call an ambulance and send him to a hospital in Charlotte. He was nearly dead on arrival.

A few days later his mother wrote:

Now today, we have had fourteen long-distance telephone calls from North Carolina, South Carolina, and from government agencies in Washington requesting his whereabouts. I am about to go crazy from people calling up about him.

Stanley himself gives a vivid account of much excitement and of spectacular adventures in Brussels. He tells of riding all around the city in cars with newspaper men and with police agents. He dwells on the publicity he obtained, saying that his picture and also that of Yvette appeared on the front pages of newspapers in Brussels. He says that he had taken an old picture of her with him and that the press cooperated in his efforts to find her by printing it along with reports of his gallant efforts to find her and save her. He also reports that, through people at the American embassy, radio broadcasts gave an account of his mission and called on the public for aid in his endeavor. There is little doubt that Stanley gives a romanticized and at times perhaps a fantastic account of the stir he made in Europe. He speaks not only of headlines on the front pages of the Brussels' newspapers but claims also that articles appeared in English in a Paris edition of a New York paper.

He becomes enthusiastic in discussing his arrival in Brussels, his appeals to the press, his work with members of the American embassy and various diplomatic and civic agencies which he claims cooperated with him in his alleged romantic mission of mercy. If he obtained even a fraction of the notoriety he reports this might have contributed to his being able to cash bad checks and to obtain other financial aid from various agencies abroad. There seems little doubt that he grossly exaggerates and indulges in fantastic lies as he recounts his adventures, but there is reason to believe he attracted enough attention with the publicity he gained to persuade first class hotels and restaurants to honor his checks and enable him to live for a while in high style while he pursued his course as a dedicated man on a desperate mission of mercy.

There is every reason to believe that he stayed at the finest hotels, entertained at very expensive restaurants, and attracted much favorable attention. Apparently the public attention he attracted played a part in enabling him to establish credit and cash checks in ways not possible to most travelers. He boasted that he met and made friends with "at least a hundred Americans" while in Brussels. Apparently he succeeded for a while in endowing his proclaimed role not only with plausibility but with heroic and romantic aspects.

His relations with newspapermen and with diplomatic agencies abroad led to many transatlantic calls to his parents and, for a while, to the parents of Yvette. The confusion and emotional stress of these calls and the ever accumulating bad checks written before Stanley left kept his parents under extreme anxiety. The heart attack sustained by his father mentioned in his mother's note quoted above proved to be temporarily disabling but not so serious as it first appeared.

Stanley admitted that he never found Yvette. From the best information available to me now it seems probable that she was not in Brussels at the time,

perhaps not in Belgium. If Stanley learned of this even before he left the United States I hardly think it would have stopped him once he had worked up momentum to launch himself in the impulsive exploit. Here he seemed to find a role that highly elated him in some peculiarly egoistic fashion. In it he seemed to find a satisfaction somewhat similar to but greater than the satisfaction apparently given him by some of his other less elaborate lies and posings and his sprees of squandering money that he did not possess. The more I learned of Stanley the more I thought it likely that he perhaps lost track of Yvette as a real person and clung to her name as something on which to focus and use as an expedient to further his self-centered and irresponsible transatlantic prank. Some idle or uninformed remark might well have served as a spark to set off his fancy and his impulse to play a truly spectacular role. No serious consideration of the consequences would be likely to check the acceleration as Stanley let himself go.

Though several years after the event Stanley can still give a remarkable account of his sudden jet flight to Europe and his adventures in Brussels, there is a great deal that in retrospect makes it difficult to see how even he could have convinced so many people of so many implausible things. The newspaper accounts and pictures (some of which his parents still retain) establish the fact beyond question that Stanley got to Brussels and that he must have attracted a great deal of attention. Telephone calls from newspapermen and from people connected with the American embassy, his parents report, confirm this and indicate that Stanley must have created a remarkable stir and a great deal of confusion. His own report, which can hardly be counted upon as accurate or trustworthy, pictures him as being hailed and feted in Brussels in a style and on a scale almost comparable to the welcome Charles Lindbergh received in New York after his historic solo first airplane flight across the Atlantic ocean.

This account of Stanley began with headlines from a newspaper. It seems to me appropriate to close the report with another small item of news that appeared in 1975 in a local paper.

"PREACHER" BLESSES AUGUSTAN'S WALLET, COLLECTS \$175  
FEE

An agreeable young man who identified himself as a "preacher" blessed an Augusta man's wallet Tuesday and collected a \$175 fee. Augusta Police said.

The preacher, dressed in a black suit and hat, with black-string tie, showed up at the door of John Doe, 1436 Maple Street, early Tuesday afternoon, police said.

According to reports Doe and the helpfully concerned cleric prayed together. The preacher then asked if he could bless Doe's wallet.

Doe told police he found \$175 missing from the wallet after the preacher left.

Neither this item nor the first identifies Stanley as the protagonist. Both, however, reflect something of his all but inimitable qualities and skills and convey to anyone who has known him a vivid sense of his presence.