

A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Henry Luce

AS the Howard Hughes-Clifford Irving investigation continued to twist like a whodunit written on a helix, the editors realized that a cover story on Irving was in the offing. Which artist should paint the portrait? The ideally ironic choice seemed to be Elmyr de Hory, Irving's neighbor on the Balearic isle of Ibiza and the subject of *Fake!*, Irving's book about a master art forger.

On Feb. 5, word went to Correspondent Roger Beardwood in Brussels to commission the painting. "There were only two problems," recalls Beardwood. "I didn't know where De Hory was, and the portrait had to be in New York as soon as possible."

De Hory had fled Ibiza and the invading newsmen for a quieter locale, so Beardwood began calling mutual acquaintances throughout Europe. An hour later, he learned that the artist was staying at the home of friends in London. A call there disclosed that De Hory was out playing baccarat. Reached the next morning, he agreed to do the cover. Because it was Sunday, art-supply shops were closed, and he could not begin until the next day.

"Working from his recollections of Irving and from photographs," says Beardwood, "Elmyr sat in a bathroom in his friends' house with the canvas propped unsteadily on a chair. He chose acrylic paints, which he had never used before, because they are quick-drying." Working at an extraordinary pace, De Hory finished in time for the picture to be flown to New York by the middle of last week. Of the style he employed, De Hory says: "There's just a touch of Modigliani there. The mood is somber, and the eyes are cold—the eyes of that calculating side to his nature that Cliff tries to hide."

The fact that Irving had less and less to hide as the days passed assured De Hory's work its place on this week's cover. The man who chipped away at the writer's secrets was Frank McCulloch, New York Bureau chief. Previously, McCulloch had been the first to learn (along with one other reporter) that Edith Irving was

"Helga Hughes." The next discovery was that Nina van Pallandt would debunk part of Irving's story. Last week it was McCulloch alone who uncovered the sources for the core of Irving's manuscript. One friend of Irving's compared McCulloch to "Ahab, going after the white whale, holding on, holding on, like it's his last great moment." McCulloch's latest findings went to Associate Editor Lance Morrow, who has chronicled the Hughes saga from our cover story of Jan. 24 through this week's article. It would be unfair to poach on Morrow's terrain by telling more here. After all, the tale, as Morrow says, "is a detective yarn that has everything."



DAVID LOGGIE
FRANK McCULLOCH

ROGER BEARDWOOD



DE HORY WITH HIS IRVING PORTRAIT

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