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the chase

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COVER—ROBERT B. KAISER 3—WALTER DARAN 4—A.P. 20, 21—ROBERT B. KAISER 22, 23—It. ALVIN TOKUNOW (3); rt. ROBERT SHULTZ for the LOS ANGELES HERALD-EXAMINER exc. bot. rt. RALPH CRANE 24, 25—RALPH CRANE 26—NASA 27—RALPH MORSE 29, 31—NASA 32—cartoon by LURIE 37, 38—LEONARD McCOMBE 65, 66, 68—ENRICO SARSINI 70, 71, 72, 73—DAVID LEES 75—floor plan by ART ROSSER 76, 77—GEORGE SILK 78—JEREMIAH BRAGSTAD

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In any week there are stories clamoring to be told, some of them unpleasant ones forced on us by their own importance. There are others we pursue with delight, particularly when they lead us off into the pleasant eddies of the troubled world's mainstream. Take this week's picture essay on mustangs roaming the western ranges. The idea for it came from Staff Writer Donald Jackson, a Californian who sometimes gets a faraway look in his eye as he sits in Rockefeller Center. He and Photographer Bill Eppridge spent two months chasing his wild horses, and here Don tells how his old friend girded for the hunt:

"There was a moment, back when Bill Eppridge and I began work on the mustang story, when Bill confronted a vacuum. To be precise, he confronted the empty camper attachment to a four-wheel-drive pickup truck we had acquired for mobility in mustang country. Bill has no tolerance for vacuums; he is an amasser. And so, dark eyes bright with anticipation, he set out to fill the camper. We



EPBRIDGE AND JACKSON

needed camping equipment, so we spent a few beautiful hours (or 15, or 17) in sporting-goods stores collecting back packs, tents, air mattresses, Coleman stoves, canteens, guns, knives, flashlights and about 30 other things like that. I can report that we were ready. We were prepared, if it became necessary, to build a city in the desert.

"The truck, of course, also needed supplies. Spare five-gallon gas cans. Five-gallon water cans. Tools. I remember pointing out how well the three water cans and two gas cans fit under a ledge at the back of the camper. Bill liked it too. We bought four more that afternoon, so they fit all the way across the camper.

"Memory fails. There were the hand-tooled leather holsters he had made for his cameras, the better to shoot from the saddle. Contour maps. More tools to replace those he gave away to a rancher in Nevada whose truck broke down. Wire. Wire clippers. Powdered mashed potatoes. Kool-Aid. When we finally finished the story, the inside of the camper looked like the caretaker's cottage at San Simeon.

"For all his packrat instincts, however, there is only one kind of equipment that Eppridge really counts on—his own superb reflexes, his eye, his spirit. He'll take anything, physically, to get a picture. Once we were riding single file along a horse trail in southern Nevada and we came to a low branch. The rider in front of Bill bent low and cleared it. When Bill's turn came he tried to bend, but the cameras hanging around his neck stopped him. For a moment his unpadded frame resembled the letter C. But, reflexes swift as ever, he reached up, grabbed the branch with both hands and treed himself, while his horse plodded on down the trail, oblivious to its jettisoned cargo.

"On our last day out in the sagebrush, we were getting ready to stow the gear and drive off when a mustanger ambled over to me. He shrugged one shoulder in Bill's direction, spat cleanly into the dust and said, 'You know, that little bugger's tough.' Bill, who weighs in at about 125, denied the charge. 'Wal, okay,' the cowboy allowed, 'maybe you're not tough. But pardner, you're shore as hell game.' "

George P. Hunt
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Managing Editor

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