

A Letter from the Publisher

No matter how many "combat" assignments a journalist gets. Each new one brings its own special dangers, as Tehran Bureau Chief Bruce van Voorst discovered while reporting for this week's cover story. A veteran correspondent who joined TIME only last month, van Voorst, 46, has covered conflicts in the Dominican Republic, Jordan, Chile and Lebanon, plus the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. But he judges Iran to be his most dangerous territory yet.

"Even in Beirut," van Voorst reports, "where there was a lot of shooting, there was at least a modicum of discipline in the Phalangists and P.L.O. Here you can't even tell the opposing forces apart. They wear the same mixed bag of military and civilian clothes, and it's commonplace to be stopped by some kid of 13 who pokes a submachine gun into your stomach." The language problem makes matters worse. "Only one correspondent in the international press corps here speaks Farsi," says van Voorst. "In a crunch you don't know whether a gunman is ordering you to lie down or stand up."

Three TIME photographers—Kaveh Golestan, David Burnett and Cathy Leroy—faced equal hazards. They managed to work themselves into the embattled U.S. embassy under heavy fire. Golestan, holding a burning piece of paper under his nose to ward off the effects of tear gas, also reported on the attack for the cover story.



TIME Staffers Golestan, Leroy, van Voorst, Burnett, Jackson

Correspondent David Jackson, 28, had never before been on overseas assignment, let alone witnessed a revolution. "But the acrid taste of tear gas is familiar from my college days at Berkeley," says Jackson, who graduated in 1972 and served briefly in the Chicago bureau before arriving in Iran for temporary duty earlier this year. At one point he was threatened by knife-wielding youths but was helped by an Iranian woman. "An hour later," recalls Jackson, "I was sipping tea and peeling a tangerine, the guest of a gracious Iranian family who wanted to tell me

their hopes for the future of their country." Such a sequence of events is illogical, but logic cannot be expected when you are covering a revolution.

John A. Meyers

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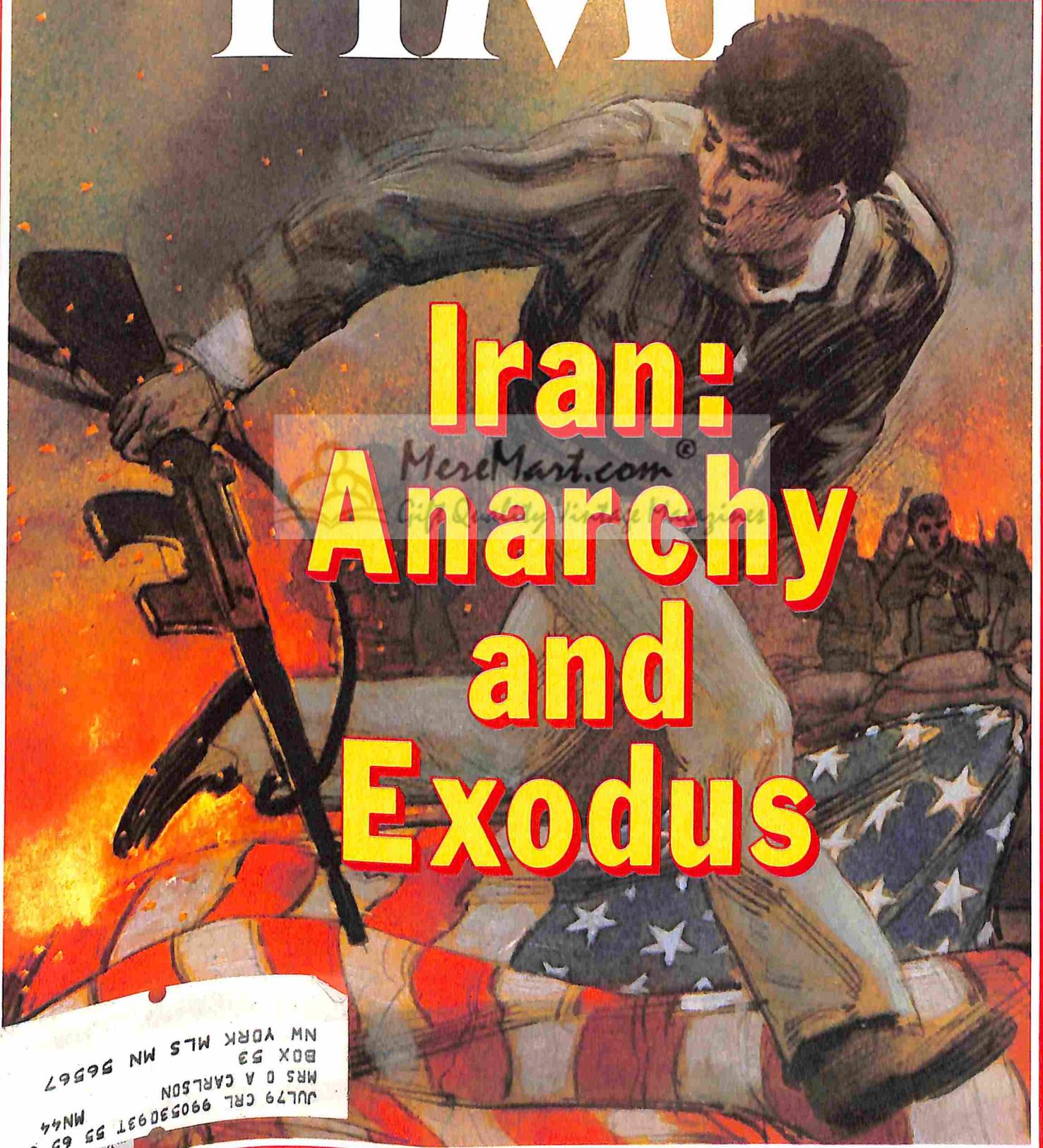
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