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TIME, JULY 21, 1967

A letter from the PUBLISHER

James R. Shepley

RAY the Shark is a middle-aged tourist hypnotized by the lure of Las Vegas, and his fling at the gaming tables provides the atmospheric opening section of this week's Essay on gambling. Ray the Shark is better known as Ray Kennedy, associate editor of TIME. As the Essay's author, he could not resist the rare opportunity of writing himself into a story. The first thing that struck him during several days of research in Las Vegas was the lavishness of the accommodations. Checking into a motel with his wife Patsy, he was offered a room with a pool. "They actually meant a room with a pool in it," reports Kennedy. "I knew then that I was in some other way of life. This was not at all like Cincinnati. I told them that a shower would do."

Patsy tried her hand at blackjack, which she played so successfully, all the while violating every rule, that all the heavies gathered to watch her. One of them walked over to the dealer and asked whether the lady was straight. "Straight?" said the dealer. "She's crazy!" As for Kennedy, he won \$65 in two nights and bought a lucky shirt—green with white polka dots. On the last day he



PETER POLYMENAKOS

KENNEDY IN LUCKY SHIRT



PILOT HUGHES & PLANE

had the classic gambler's experience. On the way to the airport, he stopped in the lobby for a last turn at roulette, bet the birthdates of his six children, won, kept on winning. "I couldn't lose," he recalls, "and I had to leave." Finally he bet his own birthdate—and lost all.

IF Kennedy likes to think of himself as Ray the Shark, Senior Editor Edward Hughes has at times been referred to as Ed the Eagle. A licensed pilot, he is a dedicated weekend flyer. It was Hughes who inspired and helped report our recent story [July 7] on the fad of crossing the Atlantic in small aircraft. Flying as copilot with a professional who was ferrying a twin-engined Piper Aztec from Boston to Geneva, Hughes crossed in three days of which twenty hours were actual flying time. There were stops for fueling in Gander, a haircut in Reykjavik, and golf in Prestwick. Then, vacationing in Europe, Hughes escaped rain in Switzerland by flying to Spain. On that flight, his passenger was his 72-year-old mother. "Watch out for that mountain," she remarked as they went past Mont Blanc a good 30 miles away.

Later, someone suggested that it might be fun to take a trip to West Berlin through one of the air corridors in which the Russians have occasionally diverted themselves by buzzing Western planes. On the way Hughes encountered no Russians but created a minor sensation among ground personnel. "What are you?" cried the startled radar controller at the Berlin field. Hughes reluctantly returned from Europe by commercial airliner. Flying, he feels, is safer than gambling—and in the end cheaper.

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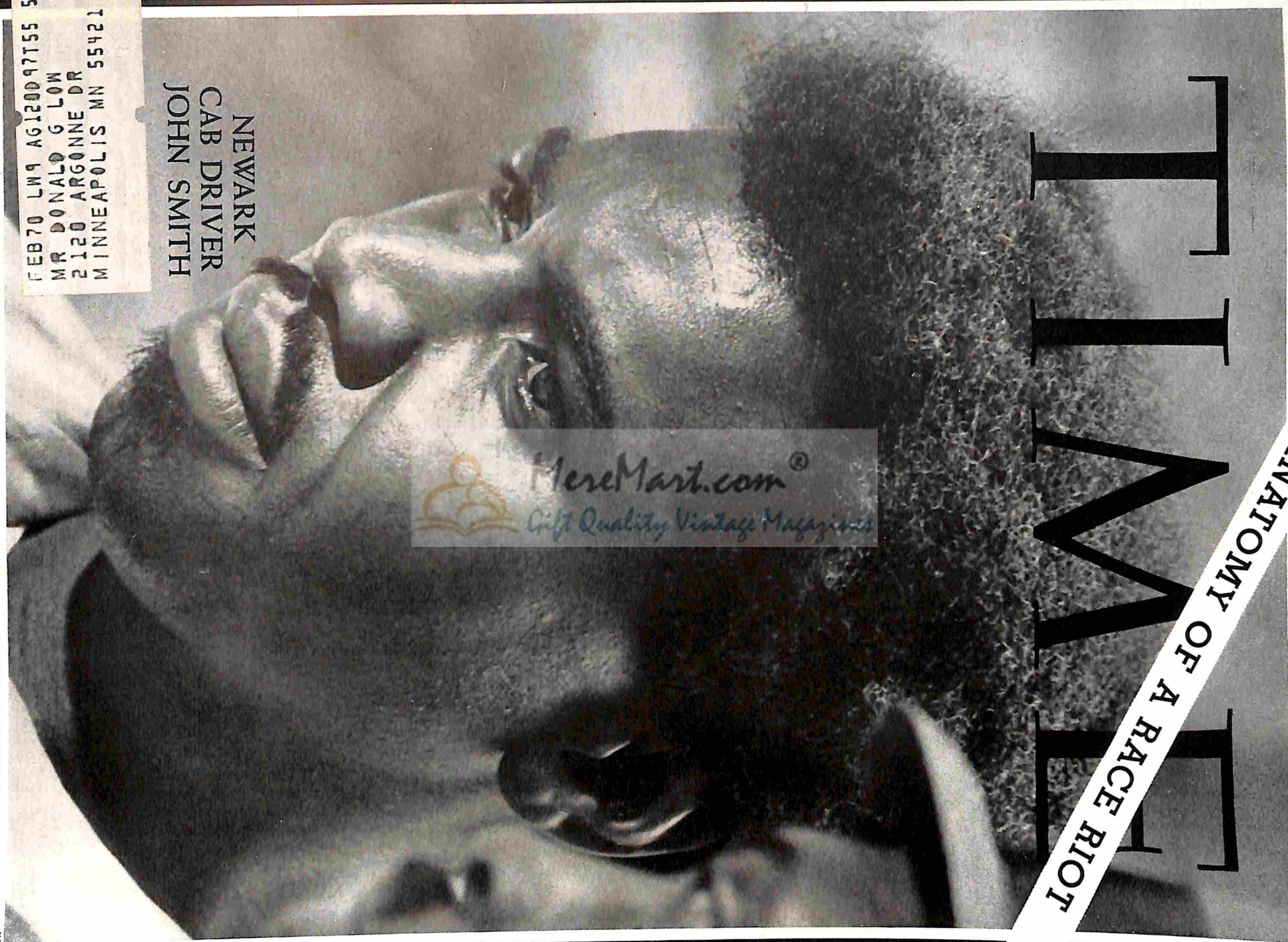
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