

# A letter from the PUBLISHER

Henry Luce

GAMAL ABDEL NASSER was no stranger to TIME's correspondents, nor were they strangers to him. Indeed, such was the Egyptian leader's charm that few journalists found their dealings with him impersonal, and in the 18 years he was in power he formed relationships with a number of TIME staffers.

Jim Bell, now Rome bureau chief, was the first TIME correspondent to meet Nasser. Scarcely two months after the 1952 coup that ousted King Farouk, Bell was introduced to a relatively unknown member of the new ruling junta named Gamal Abdel Nasser. The young lieutenant, colonel, Bell learned, was to clear the questions he proposed to ask the junta's strongman, General Mohammed Naguib. Soon Bell began to suspect that *El Bekbashi* (the Lieut. Colonel) was clearing the answers as well. As a result of Bell's investigations, TIME, on May 4, 1953, became the first major publication to state flatly that Nasser, not Naguib, was the real power in Egypt.

Another newsmen who had close personal ties with Nasser was Wilton Wynn. Now a TIME correspondent in Rome, Wynn went to Cairo in 1945 to teach at the American University, married a Cairo-born Lebanese and became a foreign correspondent. He met Nasser informally in 1955 and soon learned that the colonel took a lively interest in the workings of the foreign press. Wynn grew used to Nasser's critiques of the coverage he received, but was puzzled when he began to criticize stories not yet published. Wynn asked Nasser how it was done. "The last thing I do at night," Nasser replied, "is read copies of your press cables."

Mediterranean Correspondent Lee Griggs was the last TIME reporter to interview Nasser—on May 2, 1969—and like the others, he was impressed. "Nasser," said Griggs, "absolutely charms the socks off you." Modestly, maintained Griggs, was his method. Not only did Nasser admit his own mistakes, but he frequently pressed his interviewers for their advice. "Forget about me for a minute," he told Griggs. "Tell me what's new in Lebanon."

For this week's cover story, Bell in Rome, Wynn in Cairo and Griggs in Beirut added their impressions of the impact of Nasser's death to their recollections of his life. The reporting was coordinated by Beirut Bureau Chief Gavin Scott. Also contributing: Marlin Levin and John Shaw in Jerusalem, Lansing Lamont in London and Herman Nickel and William Mader in Washington. The finished story and accompanying boxes were written by Spencer Davidson and William Doerner, assisted by Researchers Ursula Nadasy and Betty Suyker. The article was edited by Ronald Kriss.

The Cover: Graphic design by Dennis Wheeler, from photographs by Lawrence Lowry, Priya Ramrakha, Said Abuhamdeh and James Whitmore.

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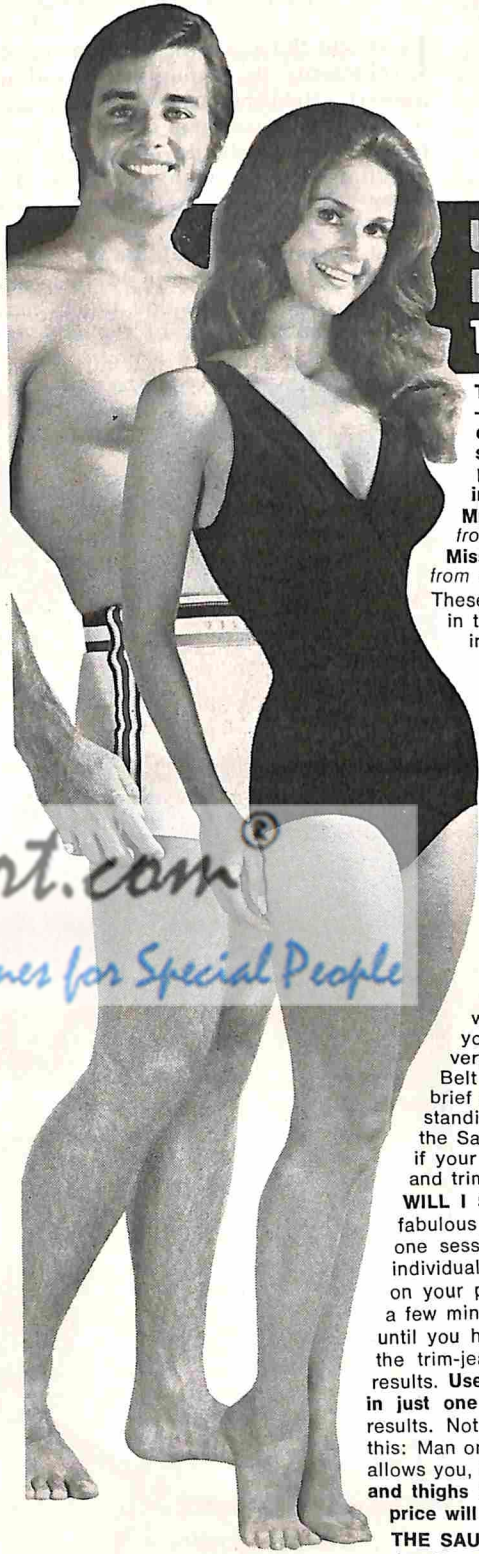
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