

TIME

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A letter from the PUBLISHER

James R. Shepley

THE number that identifies Russian Novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn on this week's cover is the same number that identified him all through his long years in a forced-labor camp. The serial style of the portrait, with its four panels showing Solzhenitsyn emerging from the faceless anonymity of the political prisoner, is an equally precise identification of the artist: Texas-born James Gill, 33.

Multiple images, reflecting different aspects of his subjects, have been

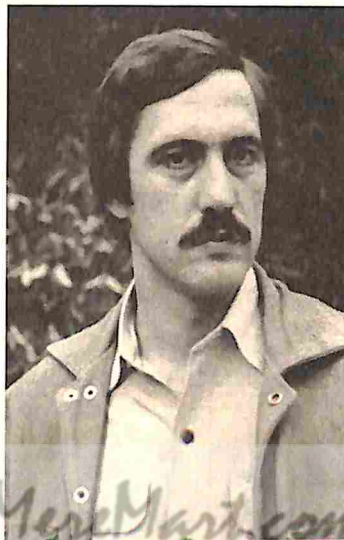
San Angelo, Texas, where he was brought up. A hitch in the Marines and five years spent on architectural work in Texas taught him, he says, just how stifling his boyhood had been. Then one day he decided that he ought to change his whole life. "I was too fat," he remembers; so he went on a diet. "I also told myself I should stop drinking and smoking. Along with that, I decided I should do what I really wanted to do—paint." He has stuck to painting ever since.

While working on this week's Essay, *That New Black Magic*, a study of changing styles in superstition, Reporter George Taber canvassed his colleagues on TIME's editorial staff. By and large, he discovered, they were remarkably hesitant about admitting any belief in the occult. Not so the people who were involved with the Essay itself.

Researcher Nancy Williams used to think herself above all superstition. But all week long she noticed the numbers 7, 2 and 1 recurring in reports from correspondents. She now plans to get out to the track as soon as she can to make what she figures will be some shrewd wagers on the daily double.

Associate Editor Bob Jones, who wrote the Essay, says that he always spits on the bait when he goes fishing, and he insists the stunt pays off. As for Senior Editor Bob Shnayerson, for years he kept a tattered grey sweater in his office and wore it whenever he worked on major stories. This week the sweater disappeared and Bob worried all the while he edited the Essay. "Lost," he kept muttering. "All lost."

Taber decided that even to work on such an Essay was begging for trouble. Sure enough, while he was reporting, he tried to interview a fortuneteller and she stood him up. When he invested a penny in a drug-store scale, he got back a card on which was printed his weight and the warning: "Watch your step!"



COVER ARTIST GILL

a Gill hallmark ever since his first artistic success, a triptych commemorating the tragic suicide of Marilyn Monroe in 1962. That painting started the artist on a prolific career that has already put his paintings in Manhattan's Whitney Museum, the Museum of Modern Art and the Art Institute of Chicago.

Gill felt particularly qualified for his first TIME commission because lately he has been concentrating on politics, on a group of pictures to illustrate his theory that "all people are political prisoners in the sense that they are prisoners of the system into which they are born." As for himself, Gill figures he escaped from personal imprisonment when he left

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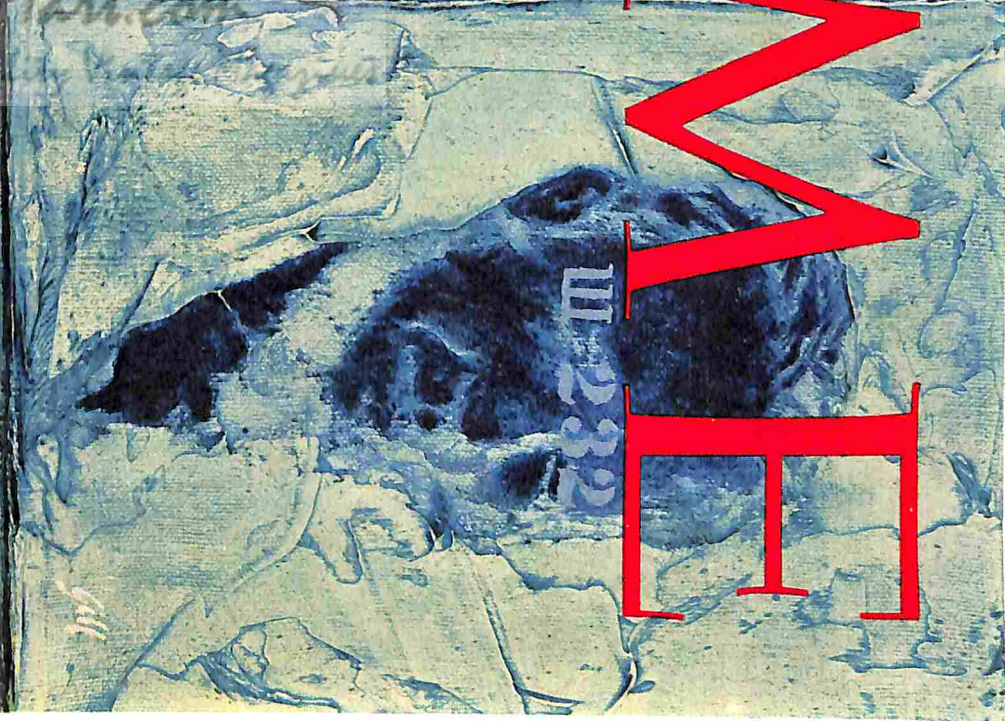
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