

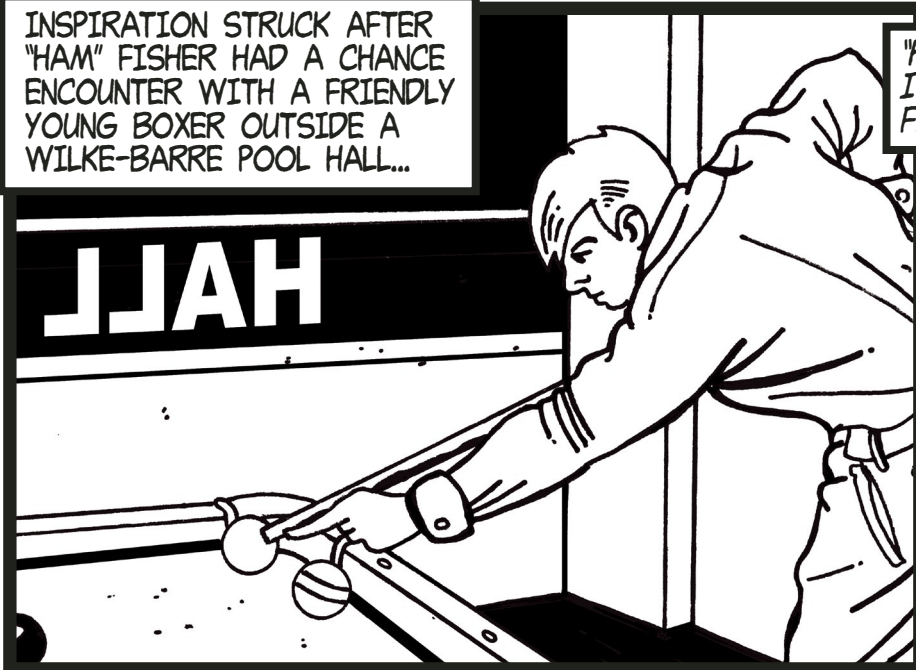
IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE 20TH CENTURY, CARTOONISTS WERE MORE FAMOUS THAN MOVIE STARS....

# THE INCREDIBLY STRANGE STORY OF... **HAM FISHER**

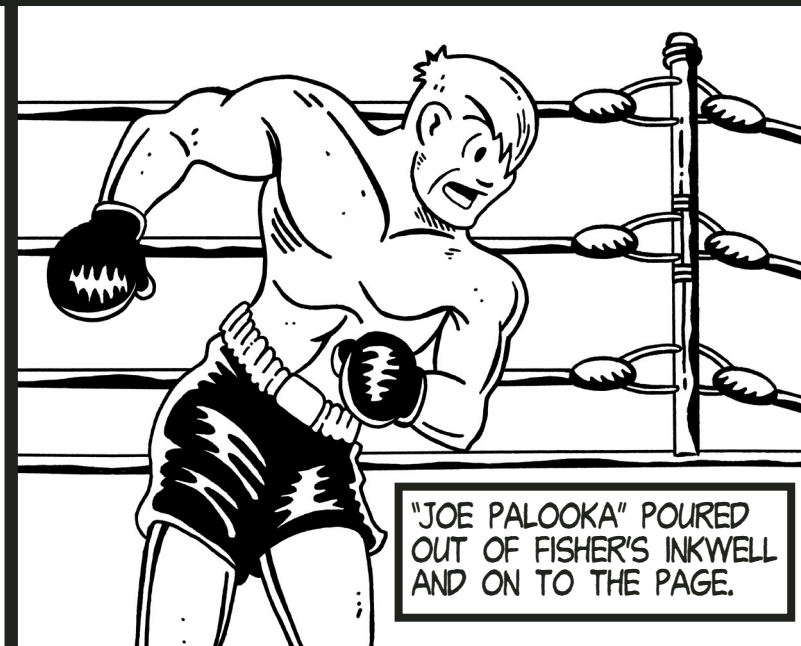
EDWARD HAMMOND FISHER SET HIS SIGHTS MUCH HIGHER THAN THE LIFE OF AN EDITORIAL CARTOONIST IN WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA.



INSPIRATION STRUCK AFTER "HAM" FISHER HAD A CHANCE ENCOUNTER WITH A FRIENDLY YOUNG BOXER OUTSIDE A WILKE-BARRE POOL HALL...



"HERE, MADE TO ORDER, WAS THE COMIC STRIP CHARACTER I HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR -- A BIG, GOOD-NATURED PRIZE FIGHTER WHO DIDN'T LIKE TO FIGHT; A GENTLE KNIGHT"



"JOE PALOOKA" POURED OUT OF FISHER'S INKWELL AND ON TO THE PAGE.

BUT FISHER'S EDITORS WANTED NO PART OF IT...



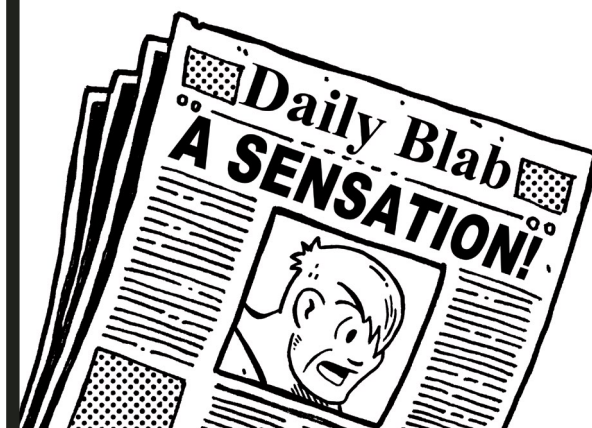
...THE SORDID WORLD OF BOXING HAD NO PLACE ON THE FUNNY PAGES!

UNDAUNTED, FISHER HEADED FOR NEW YORK AND GOT A JOB WORKING FOR A SYNDICATE...



AFTER EIGHT YEARS, HE WAS THE SYNDICATE'S TOP SALESMAN. BUT HAM KNEW HIS TRUE DESTINY. HE DECIDED TO GIVE HIS BOXING STRIP ONE LAST SHOT-

-AND MANAGED TO SELL "JOE PALOOKA" TO MORE THAN TWENTY PAPERS IN THREE WEEKS!



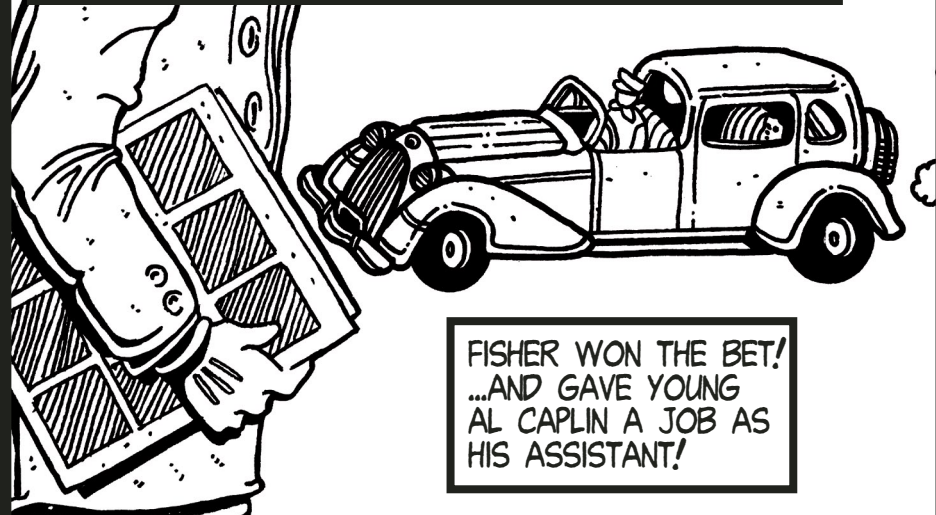


"JOE PALOOKA" WAS AN INSTANT PHENOMENON! MILLIONS OF PEOPLE FOLLOWED HIS ADVENTURES & HAM FISHER BECAME THE TOAST OF THE TOWN!



THE KING OF THE COMIC STRIP!!!

ONE DAY, FISHER SPOTTED A ONE-LEGGED YOUNG MAN WALKING DOWN THE STREET, CARRYING A PORTFOLIO. HE BET HIS CHAUFFEUR FIVE BUCKS THAT THE KID WAS A STRUGGLING CARTOONIST...



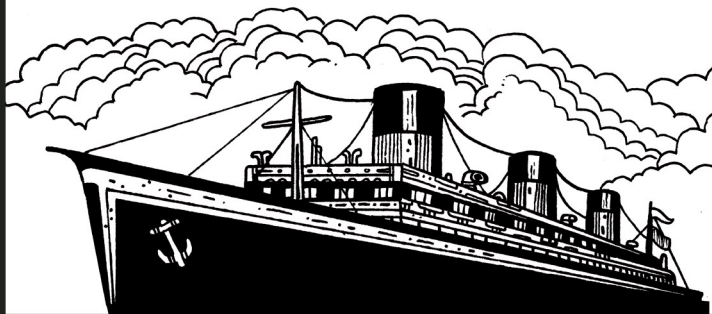
FISHER WON THE BET! ...AND GAVE YOUNG AL CAPLIN A JOB AS HIS ASSISTANT!

FISHER'S LAVISH LIFESTYLE BEGAN TO OCCUPY MORE & MORE OF HIS TIME.



EVENTUALLY, CAPLIN DREW MOST OF THE STRIP HIMSELF AND FISHER WOULD FINISH OFF THE FACES.

CAPLIN WAS MAKING \$22.50 A WEEK WHILE FISHER WAS BECOMING A MILLIONAIRE!



WHEN FISHER LEFT FOR A TRIP TO EUROPE, CAPLIN DECIDED TO MAKE A BREAK FOR IT...

...HE CHANGED HIS NAME TO AL CAPP AND CREATED "LI'L ABNER"



"LI'L ABNER" WAS AN INCREDIBLE SUCCESS...

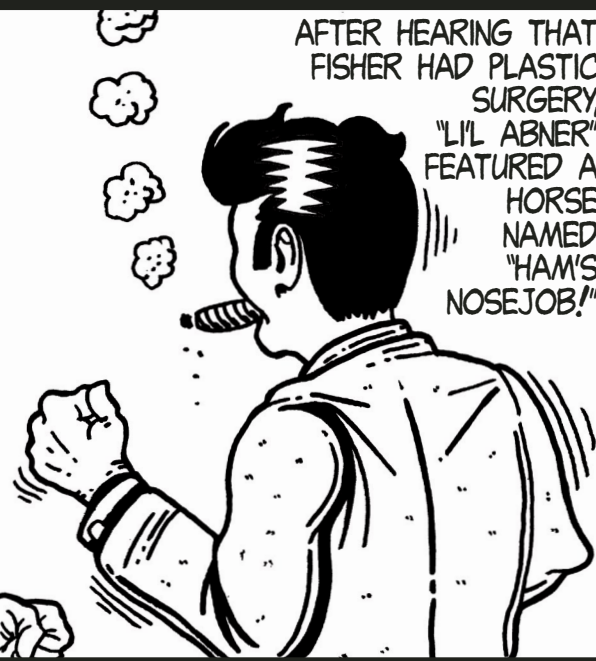
FISHER WAS FURIOUS. HE ACCUSED CAPP OF PLAGIARIZING CHARACTERS FROM "JOE PALOOKA"...



THE FEUD WENT ON FOR YEARS... FISHER STOLE CAPP'S ASSISTANT!



AFTER HEARING THAT FISHER HAD PLASTIC SURGERY, "LI'L ABNER" FEATURED A HORSE NAMED "HAM'S NOSEJOB!"



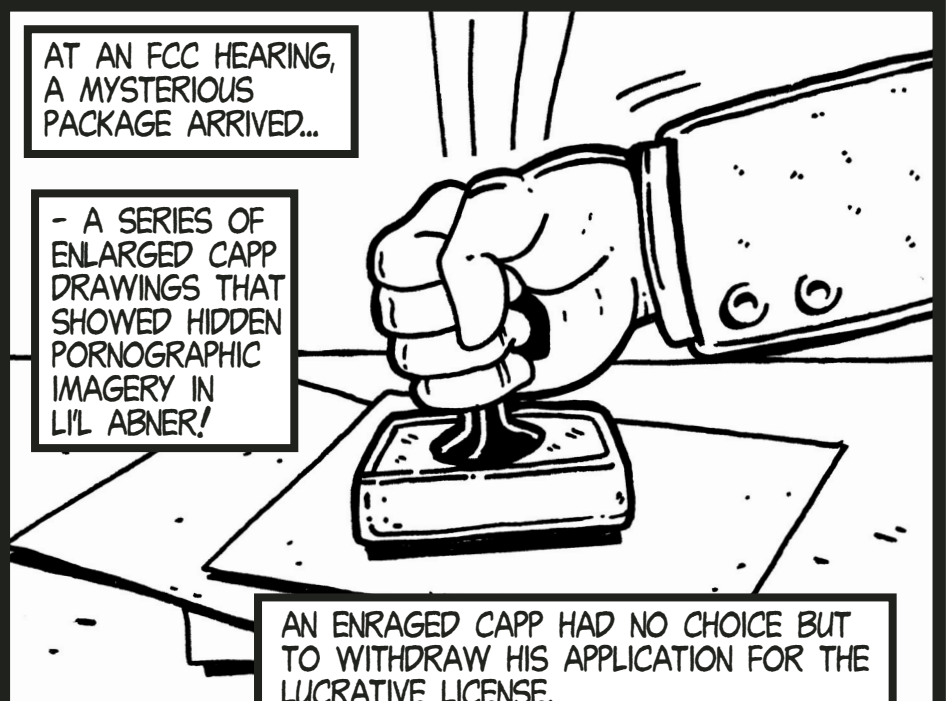


FLUSH WITH CASH, CAPP INVESTED IN A COMPANY COMPETING FOR A TELEVISION BROADCAST LICENSE...



AT AN FCC HEARING, A MYSTERIOUS PACKAGE ARRIVED...

- A SERIES OF ENLARGED CAPP DRAWINGS THAT SHOWED HIDDEN PORNOGRAPHIC IMAGERY IN LIL' ABNER!



AN ENRAGED CAPP HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO WITHDRAW HIS APPLICATION FOR THE LUCRATIVE LICENSE.

BUT HE KNEW EXACTLY WHERE THE PHONY DRAWINGS CAME FROM...



WHEN WORD GOT OUT, FISHER'S REPUTATION WAS SHATTERED...



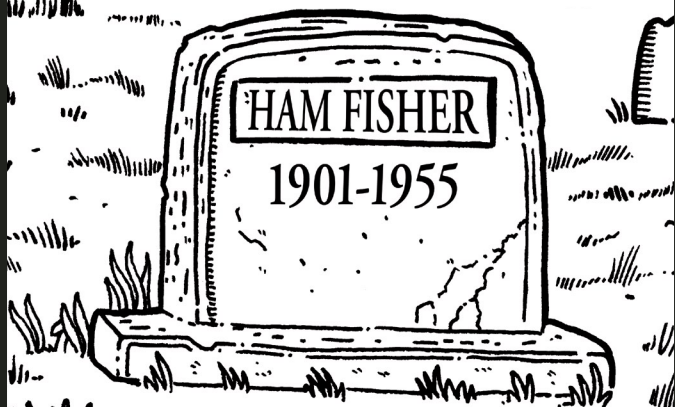
...HE WAS OUSTED FROM THE PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL CARTOONISTS SOCIETY!

JOE PALOOKA HAD SERVED IN WWII, HIS 1949 MARRIAGE MADE HEADLINES...BUT BY 1955 THE STRIP WAS A RELIC OF A BY-GONE ERA.

EVENTUALLY, FISHER'S ASSISTANT, MO LEFF TOOK OVER MOST OF THE WORK ON THE STRIP...

AL CAPP BECAME A MAJOR CELEBRITY AND WAS A FREQUENT GUEST ON TALK SHOWS...

FISHER COMMITTED SUICIDE IN 1955...



AL CAPP LAUGHED WHEN HE HEARD THE NEWS. HE TOLD FRIENDS: "IT IS A NOBLE THING HE DID."

JUST SOUTH OF WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA LIES "JOE PALOOKA MOUNTAIN"...



...MOST PEOPLE DON'T EVEN NOTICE.