



The Ingram M-10, with silencer: the world's most dangerous handgun.

A Significant Little Gun

by Andrew St. George

At twenty rounds per second, how can you go wrong?

You have seen it, of course: but did you know it was real? We have all seen the thing, this grey machined *Militärobjekt*, steel kaleidoscope of Thanatos; we beheld it at the vortex of white-hot action, more fiercely fought over than the most beautiful woman: Robert Redford hurls himself headfirst—*hair first!*—across the room to reach it; William Conrad crashes his bulk on top of it and grins in saurian lust—forget the corset, he *got it*; Charles Bronson grips it and lifts it against the dark sky for a moment as he leads NBC's commandos on the raid against Entebbe Airport—it's his baton of retribution, torch of rescue, his talisman of safe return to Tel Aviv.

But what is it?

It's the Ingram M-10 LISP—Lightweight Individual Special Purpose—selective-fire multi-mission firearm, designed, in the words of the user's manual, for "offensive-defensive covert missions requiring positive kill engagement of point-fire targets." Not a stage prop or a set designer's acrylic bibelot, then, but the world's most sophisticated and dangerous hand-held gun.

The Ingram, as we shall see, may be the Nürburg-Porsche of automatic weapons: a sleekly, sarcastically miniaturized product of superior minds, made to outperform its bulkier competitors in sibilant contempt. John Wayne, having staked his life and sacred honor on the M-10 in *McQ* (he plays an ex-cop whose only faithful partner is his machine pistol) chose a black-and-white profile photo of the Ingram, instead of his



Mitchell WerBell III, father of the M-10, demonstrates how he promoted his brainchild: by pulverizing phone books in the offices of Manhattan investment-banking firms.

own charismatic likeness, to promote the film nationally. The Ingram M-10 and its smaller, quieter, deadlier sibling, the M-11, are great performers in the only true contemporary sense, the *media* sense, of the word. They're alive with the menace of mega-destruction inherent in all our machines, with the ultimate revelation we all intuit but are afraid to confront—that the heart of technology is murder.

The Ingram is a star. It can be acquired but not—as some of Manhattan's sharpest money-men discovered to their chagrin—porcinely exploited. It stands in relation to the clumsy, ham-shanked, parsnip-snouted 1928 A-1 Thompson forty-five caliber—which the feds fire off to rub out Little Caesar ("Mother of Mercy. . .!")—as Wallace Beery stands to Telly Savalas. Let the best-selling rent-a-seers from Brzezinski to

Toffler tout the triumphs of their technetronic age: our Ingram says that the final fate of *l'homme technique* is to be killer or victim. We know it speaks the truth. Were the Academy Awards amended to honor its special contribution, the M-10 would emerge, by unanimous vote, as the best supporting machine gun of all time.

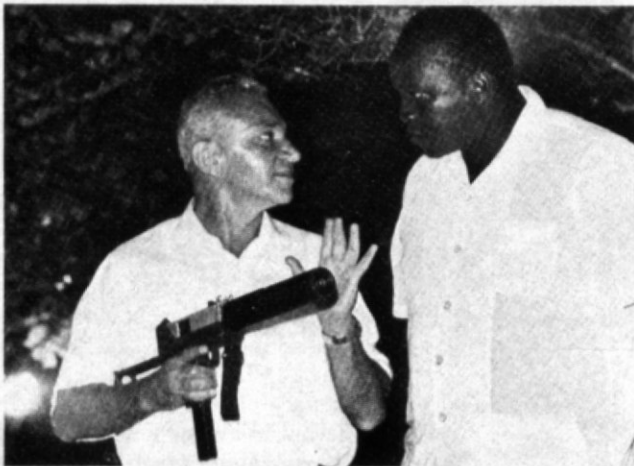
The little spitfire comes by its stardom honestly, even dynastically. It is the brainchild of Gordon Ingram, the shy and taciturn engineer who designed the firing mechanism, and Mitchell Livingston WerBell III, the legendary wizard of "whispering death," inventor of the best procurable muzzle silencer, which forms the barrel of the fully assembled Ingram gun. Notwithstanding the name, it is the eccentric, raucous, boozy Mitch WerBell, production genius and master

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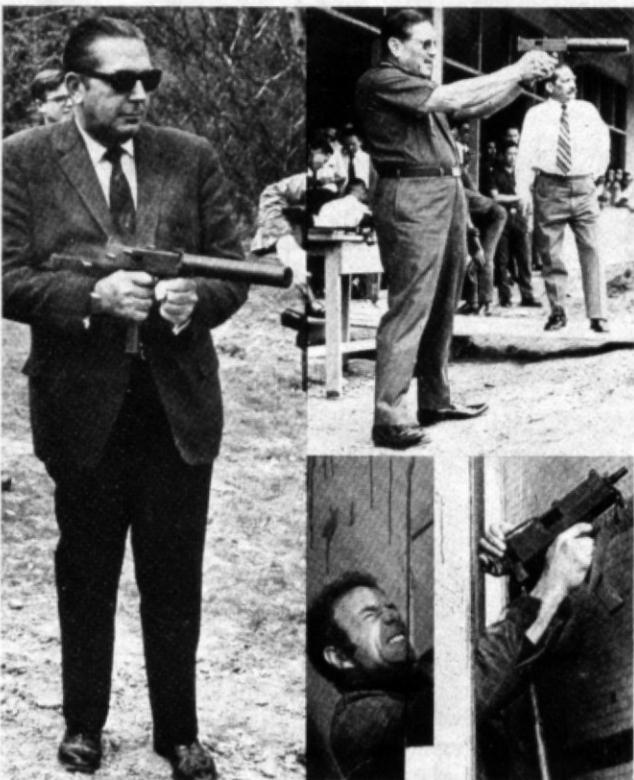
The M-10: Star of Field and Screen



John Wayne, left, wielded an M-10 as an ex-cop in *McQ*; Mariclare Costello, right, kept her hostages at bay with the weapon in NBC's *Raid on Entebbe*.



In 1971, Ugandan president Idi Amin listened as Israeli lieutenant general Haim Bar-Lev described the virtues of the M-10 at a garden party. "I like it!" said Amin.



Rosser Reeves III, left, investment banker and chief M-10 backer. Above right: Aide-de-camp to the king of Thailand. Lower right: James Caan in *The Killer Elite*.

promoter, who is regarded as the progenitor of the Ingram line and other revolutionary weapons that spring, fully armed, so to speak, from the electronically guarded installations of the vast WerBell barony at Powder Springs, Georgia. And to meet Mitch in the years when the Ingram looked to be the hottest piece of property between Wall Street and Beverly Hills—say in the late winter of 1969, when I went to Washington to interview him for the *Sunday Telegraph* of London—was to meet a star.

Summoned to have lunch with Mitch, I wait in the lobby of the Georgetown Inn. Though the appointed hour has come and gone, WerBell has not quite arrived yet, but his forward satellites are beginning to fill the small, stiffly elegant lobby: a chauffeur leading on a chain a huge wolfhound named Fritz; a groom pushing a cart loaded with four pieces of saddle-hide luggage custom-made by Mädlers of Offenbach; a bell-boy hand-carrying a silver-topped sword cane, an attaché case bearing the gold monogram M.L.W. III and an elephant-skin gun case; a slim, petite, cool-eyed blond named R., flashing Marlene Dietrich legs. And now enters WerBell, erect, ruddy, Guardsman-moustached, carrying only an antique silver bottle caddy containing two quarts of his private-stock single-malt Scotch from the Isle of Islay.

He greets me with a cordial whoop, but although our appointment has been carefully arranged by means of a half dozen long-distance calls, lunch is now impossible. Mitch has a busy schedule—"Frantic, not busy, it's a demented day"—with calls to make at the Philippine Embassy, where the assistant secretary of defense is visiting this week, at the Pentagon, at a mysterious production plant called Aspheronics Inc., which is said to make some of the world's keenest night-vision devices for some of the world's most brutal police governments (I have heard it is one of WerBell's own subsidiaries, but then again perhaps not—this man inhabits an elegant but opaque world), and there are other engagements of unpostponable urgency. Mitch is already way behind schedule; he tells the chauffeur not to park the limo but to keep it at the porte cochere with engine running, and he's off, having barely arrived. But I know him and am not really upset. I know that to get Mitch alone for an hour, I'll have to go through several drinking and dining appointments and eventually, on the second or third day, just when I am ready to give up, the great man will—somewhat like Fidel Castro—grant me the tête-à-tête I came for.

When he does, he is illuminating. "Why has no nation ever developed a really efficient silencer or good, rugged, light automatic guns? Because, you see, no general staff ever wanted them. The idea was, for three hundred years: bang away at the goddamn enemy, the louder the better, make 'em keep their heads down, make 'em cower in their trenches, so the infantry can roll forward and stomp on them. Light weapons were wasted on the beefy Mecklenburgians of Frederick the Great—remember when the skirmish line was slow to advance, he'd shout, '*Schweinehund*, do you want to live forever?' There was a man I'd have liked on my board of directors—and automatic weapons in the hands of

line infantrymen just meant a terrific waste of ammo in plains warfare. What every high command wanted was the large, loud rifle that made a good heavy club if the men ran out of ammunition."

In the Fifties, however, the world began to fight different campaigns and WerBell's gun designs reflected the new geopolitik. "What we got is: one, tropical jungle wars, that is, close-range fighting where full auto sure comes in handy. Two, wars fought by little, skinny, five-foot riflemen who need smaller hardware and, hell, a lot less recoil. Three, we got guerrilla wars, irregular wars, hidden wars, where you need completely new tactics. Instead of banging away at your enemy, you gotta lure him out into the open as quietly as possible. Four, you got political wars, and that means—let's not kid

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around—sniping, terrorism, some assassination on both sides, and for that you need sound-suppressed, accurized, special rifles, with ranging scopes and night vision, so you can split a guy's head at a thousand yards. In the old days, they used to call the line troops grenadiers or musketry or dragoons or whatever, just so they sounded scary. You know what we call the fire teams we train and equip with our gear? We call 'em melon thumpers. Dick Stillwell—did you ever meet General Stillwell? He was head of O.P.C., of all covert-action paramilitary stuff? In Vietnam? Good, then you know Dick, very good—anyhow, Dick made up that word, because when we equip a Thai Ranger company, they go out and kill a hundred guerrillas, and it sounds just like an old Chinese housewife thumping melons to see if they're ripe: a bit of a pop and a little bit of squish and it's over. Melon thumpers. Ten years from now, they'll be the only elite units in any army."

It is an unusual amount of didacticizing for Mitch. He neats exhausted, pours us each a crystal tumbler of neat Scotch and sips his slowly, slumped back in his armchair. He is not a man given to theorizing. To explain the potential and panache and sheer brilliance of the Ingram, he prefers the simple empirical demonstration: shoot it. This is no problem at his range back in Powder Springs, but in a suite in the Georgetown Inn, there is the matter of discretion.

To set up the act, all WerBell needs is a single sucker among the roomful of his hard-drinking guests: Far Eastern police generals in ill-fitting civilian suits; an occasional tweedy C.I.A. case officer, who always claims to be from the "technical side" of the office, whatever that means in these surroundings; perhaps one Cuban exile, who may or may not have been a big wheel back home, may or may not be in the smoke and coke trade now, but certainly spent some time with the C.I.A. in between; two or three vaguely wealthy, vaguely Southern men in club blazers; roughly the same number of very beautiful girls, who arrive separately and don't count here (only R., the blond, does). Sooner or later one of the men or one of the girls, perhaps after the third or fourth cup, will wander over to one of the several Ingrams lying

around on the chairs in half-open cases and furnish Mitch his cue: "God almighty! This thing is light. But look at those *bullets!* You mean to say this thing makes no noise?"

"Ohoho, you want to know if it's silent?" WerBell is in his element now. He picks up the room phone, orders up a bottle of Laphroig Scotch. "No ice, no set-ups, please. Yes. This is for Mr. WerBell . . . as quickly as you can. Yes. Thank you."

Deliberately, dramatically, as a hush falls over the room, WerBell takes the M-11 from its case—it is really no larger than the familiar forty-five service automatic—digs around in one of the briefcases for the special subsonic .380 ammo, loads a clip, leans back and, with a single pull, cocks the bolt.

Whoever gave Mitch the first cue is now usually the *Tongeber* for the growing tension in the room. "Mitch, do you think it's safe to do this in here. . . ?"

Holding the loaded gun upright in the crook of his left arm, the barrel pointing to the ceiling in classic

marksman's pose, WerBell pulls a gilt chair under the window, props every phone book in the suite on it, then steps back five paces.

Even those of us who have seen him do it before are watching WerBell a little . . . tensely now. A minute ticks by, then another, then there's a knock on the door. Testimonial to WerBell's extraordinary tipping habits, room service is here.

Brrrt-phffft! Brrrt! Phhhhhft! WerBell has fired three short bursts into the mound of phone books, popping deep gashes in them. He drops the M-11 on a chair, pushes a newspaper casually over it and opens the door.

"Come in. Come in! Ah, the whiskey. That was quick. Thank you. Sorry to have kept you waiting out there, but when you knocked I started and pushed over this little table here. Had to pick it up—you must've heard the clatter?"

The waiter is a Ghanaian student with a beatific smile. "No, sah, didn't hear anything. Do you need help?"

"No. No, no, no, we're all set, thanks. The five bucks extra I signed on is for you. Thank you." As the waiter leaves, WerBell turns to face his guests—the room now glowing with relief and admiration—wearing a new face, his Dr. Ehrlich's-almost-magic-bullet face, a face that says: *We have seen the goal, but man is finite.* "Well, now you know it. It is *not* silent. No gun is. It cannot be. It's what we call suppressed. This thing here," and he half lifts the M-11 by its short, fat barrel, "is not a silencer, no matter what you call it. It's a suppressor. Now, for *that*, it's one hell of a gadget."

Is it? Professor J. David Truby, the military historian who is an authority on these matters, has written that "Mitchell WerBell is easily the most prolific silencer designer in the world today . . . and probably in history . . . [he] is . . . a creative genius." We shall not try to follow Professor (*Continued on page 108*)

A Significant Little Gun

(Continued from page 72) Truby into the dark, baffled recesses of silencer history (like most writers on the subject, he uses the terms "silencer" and "suppressor" interchangeably in civilian prose, although in formal military usage the latter is the correct designation), for it has been a long road littered with discouraging locutions—"gas bleed," "inverted baffles," "area of confusion," "first-round flash"—since Hiram P. Maxim patented the first commercially viable silencer in March, 1908.

Before WerBell came along, silencers behaved mostly like early organ transplants. They were scientific, they filled a need, they looked great in place, but the receiving organism—the gun itself—almost invariably rejected them. Silencers caused barrel vibration, tremendous fouling, dangerous heating, breech troubles, backblast, loss of energy. As they dissipated the gases that burst forth after every shot from the gun muzzle—for therein lies the silencer's essential function—they also dissipated the weapon's virtues, causing rounds to go wild, to fall short, to misfire or otherwise malfunction in unbalistic and disagreeable ways.

At the U.S. Army's Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, whenever an inventor bearing a new suppressor assembly appeared, as they did with increasing frequency during the Fifties, the shout would go up: "Fetch out the coffin!" It was a plain pine box in which fifty quarter-inch plywood sheets were spaced at three-quarter-inch intervals—the standard lab test for gun power, in fact. For if a round fired through a silencer penetrated significantly fewer plywood barriers than the same round normally did, then the silencer cost the gun too much penetration, too much muzzle energy, and the inventor had, without quite realizing it, attended the funeral of his beloved brainchild.

"In the end," says a former Army rifle expert, "all we could do for them was make sure they didn't let the taxi go when they arrived from Baltimore—we warned them it would be over quickly."

Then WerBell appeared. He came not in a taxi but in a Lockheed Lodestar, bearing a suppressor assembly then known as Sionics P-10 (P for prototype, of course, that was Mr. Ingram's cautious touch), and all things changed forever in the silencer business. The new design used titanium alloy, a practically indestructible substance; it had a fixed gas-release valve whose revolutionary role we shall not attempt to examine here; and when the bored attendants fetched out the inevitable coffin, every round of Remington commercial ammo fired through the silencer was found to have penetrated, for the first time in the history of such tests, more plywood sheets than in un-suppressed firing.

Moreover, the new silencer acted as if it were an organic extension of the gun to which it was affixed. Instead of generating barrel vibration and with it the erratic target pattern characteristic of

such muzzle dampers, the Sionics silencer improved its gun's accuracy. And it was, if not silent, quiet enough to make the Army test engineers grimace in disbelief.

How silent was it? An electric office typewriter? A fast Ping-Pong game? A pan of well-behaved popcorn? No matter, it was the stirring of a little technological revolution all its own, somewhat like the first successful heart transplant, except, of course, with its basic teleological thrust in the contrary direction.

Was the Pentagon abuzz with appreciation? Not really; the Joint Chiefs live under the sign of the N.I.H. factor, which mandates that independently developed concepts that were demonstrably "not invented here" are more safely ignored than recognized.

WerBell did not care. He found enough research, development and production capital within three hundred miles of his own domain in exurban Atlanta to pump life into his corporate setup named Sionics (an acronym for Studies in the Operational Negation of Insurgency and Countersubversion, but we shan't go into that here), endow it with a new heraldic beast (the cobray, a mythical merger of the cobra and the moray eel) and bring together under its sign some of America's most brilliant anti-establishmentarian firearm designers, most notably Gordon Ingram and Maxwell G. Atchisson.

To sell his modest output of suppressed submachine guns and accurized sniper rifles, WerBell made a detour around Washington and went directly to the lesser nations that had acute guerrilla troubles. In Israel, the legendary Colonel Uzi Gal, designer of a competing weapon, examined the M-11, nodded, muttered, "A significant little gun," and so the Israelis bought some. In Thailand, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, a jazz fan and gun hobbyist, tested WerBell's device, said, "Incredible, quite incredible," and the Royal Thai Supreme Command bought a good many. In Uganda, Idi Amin Dada, who had heard about the M-10 from the Israelis, fired it, said, "I like it!" and bought several hundred.

Guatemala bought some and so did the Philippines. The M-10 came into vogue. And, of course, the younger American officers with acute interest in anti-guerrilla operations—Colonel Drexel B. "Barney" Cochran, the legendary father of the Air Commandos, and General Dick Stillwell and Colonel Bob Bayard, who ran the Army's new sniper command—all the younger nation builders and counterinsurgents began wanting the new gun, and in the Sixties, which was very much their moment in history, these multinational military activists sooner or later got what they wanted.

Late in 1969, Colonel John S. Wood, chief of the weapons division of the Research, Development and Engineering Directorate of the U.S. Army Materiel Command, published a sober paper entitled "Future Infantry Weapons" that diffidently suggested that in

the area of lightweight individual weapons, the Pentagon might well scratch its forty-five-caliber pistol and replace it with a "light submachine gun or machine pistol."

Not many people paid attention to Colonel Wood's little literary excursion, but then neither did the early essays of Lord Keynes or Albert Einstein attract much attention. It made no difference: the men who mattered *knew*. If the U.S. Army seriously contemplated abandoning its old faithful side arm, the classic M1911A1 forty-five-caliber pistol, of which it owned several million, then those who could accurately anticipate its replacement 'todd to make many, many millions of dollars.

And deep behind the scenes, in hot whispers, a small coterie of insiders were already telling each other that they had it. Colonel Jack Wood, the obscure officer in whose hands the decision lay, had met privately with Mitch WerBell in late 1969 to suggest planning for the Ingram's adoption as the new standard side arm of America's Army.

For once, the rumors were not merely true but understated. Big, bluff, shrewd, skeptical Jack Wood, the Army's savvy small-weapons maven, had fallen for the glamour of the Ingram. He had not just decided that the U.S. arsenal system should buy it; he planned to make the sale himself.

Without hesitation, Colonel Wood linked arms with Mitch WerBell and a group of others who appeared at his side, and in the spring of 1970, the little band took off at brisk military tempo.

Their plan was simple. The Ingram was a good gun. The M-11, which was meant to replace the old forty-five automatic, weighed only three and a half pounds—less than some issues of the *Sunday Times*. It was barely nine inches long. Baked in a 135°F oven or frozen in a -65°F cold box for two hours, it came out throwing bullets at better than a thousand rounds per minute. The effective range lay between one hundred fifty and one hundred ninety yards. All in all, the M-11 outclassed the ancient forty-five the way a Thunderbolt fighter outperforms the Sopwith Camel, which was, come to think of it, the aeronautic contemporary of the forty-five. It was time for a change.

To effect this momentous metamorphosis, there emerged on the thirty-fifth floor of a Madison Avenue office tower, the Newsweek Building, a small but powerful corporation named Quantum. Young, dynamic investment managers, tax-shelter specialists, equity promoters, stock salesmen and trust advisers made its offices and telephones hum. Presiding over this epicenter of busy finance, the company's youthful chief executive, Scott Reeves, son of the adman Rosser Reeves, explained Quantum's quest in forthright basic terms.

Quantum, having acquired all patent and production rights to the Ingram, would develop the supergun's full potential, eventually go public and ac-

comply great things for all participants, making them, in the process, as rich as early Xerox shareholders.

Why not? By every token of the times, the new company possessed all the requisites of success in ideal proportion. "The whole sales pitch was: Here's a fantastic weapon, number one, okay, that's our product," recalls a young Manhattan investment manager who assisted at Quantum's birth and served as one of its early officers, "and we have the know-how to make it; and the other section is marketing—who's going to buy it? We have the direct input through the back door, the secret channel—nobody has ever done this before—we can get this into the U.S. arsenal system in a period of eighteen months. We're going to sell this to the United States Army, who's going to use it to replace the forty-five pistol. Now, everyone knows how many forty-five pistols there are. Millions and millions. Unbelievable numbers. And so people thought immediately, the sales projections on this thing . . . the Ingram was just going to sell."

To reinforce that view and sweeten the investment climate, Colonel Wood made several personal appearances at early meetings of potential investors to reassure them of the military market. "He was still active at that point," says an executive who attended these conferences, "and he'd say, with kind of a wink, 'I can't do anything now, but when I get out, I'm going to take an active part in having this gun placed in the U.S. arsenal system. I have already instructed my successor to push this thing through. Once we have the destructive testing and all that, the normal procedures, we shouldn't have any problem.' And everybody thought, 'My God, if this replaces the forty-five pistol, there's no limit to how much money it's going to make. Unbelievable weapon.' That was a very emotional meeting."

And beyond Colonel Jack Wood, pillar of the ordnance establishment, three demon promoters—Scott Reeves, Bennett Bintliff and Mitch WerBell himself—moved in on Manhattan, pressing Quantum's stock on the best prospects in sight.

Rosser Scott Reeves III—born 1936 into one of America's great advertising dynasties; Westminster, Yale, the University of Virginia; an investment banker associated with Lazard Freres before he was thirty; his own seat on the N.Y. Stock Exchange a year after that; senior managing partner in the investment firm of Bacon, Stevenson and Reeves by 1968—Scott Reeves seemed destined for great things. Born twenty years earlier, he might have gone into politics; ten years earlier and he might have joined the emerging C.I.A. with Frank Wisner or Tracy Barnes. But by the Fifties the action was in the market, and by 1969, Reeves was firmly established on its inside track, not yet a big winner, but as every hunter knows, the supreme kill must await the right moment. When the Ingram appeared on the horizon, Scott Reeves *knew*: This was it.

Bennett B. Bintliff, scion of a southwestern oil clan whose assets were reckoned in the hundreds of millions, felt the same way, and WerBell—hell, the little gun was *his* baby. Together, the three musketeers mobilized Manhattan with their machine-gun salesmanship, leaving incandescent anecdotes in their wake: Mitch demonstrating the Ingram by pulverizing a mound of telephone books in the Dickensian offices of the staid Brown Brothers, Harriman investment firm; Mitch seducing Stewart Mott, the largest individual contributor to Senator George McGovern's Presidential campaign, a director of the Fund for Peace, a heavy donor and leading member of the Congress for Peace Through Law, trustee of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions—in sum, perhaps America's leading liberal angel—to become one of Quantum's founding investors by shooting up a stack of foundation reports; Mitch mesmerizing busloads of multimillionaire Manhattan moneymen by flying them down to Powder Springs and trusting them to shoot the Ingram with their own hands.

"The investment prospectus talked about fail-safe superprofits," says WerBell's oldest son, Mitch the fourth, who was a vice-president of Quantum's manufacturing subsidiary. "But, you

know, that gun touched something in all these smooth rich guys that was . . . deep down. *Elemental*. Men respond to guns; guns are magic. And the Ingram was the most magic gun any of them had ever held in his hand. Once they'd fired it down at the automatic test range, they came back up to the house and started calling their brokers: 'Can we dump some of the I.B.M.? I wanna switch into this new outfit down here in Georgia.' All the selling the Quantum hotshots did up in New York, it was all unnecessary; the gun sold itself."

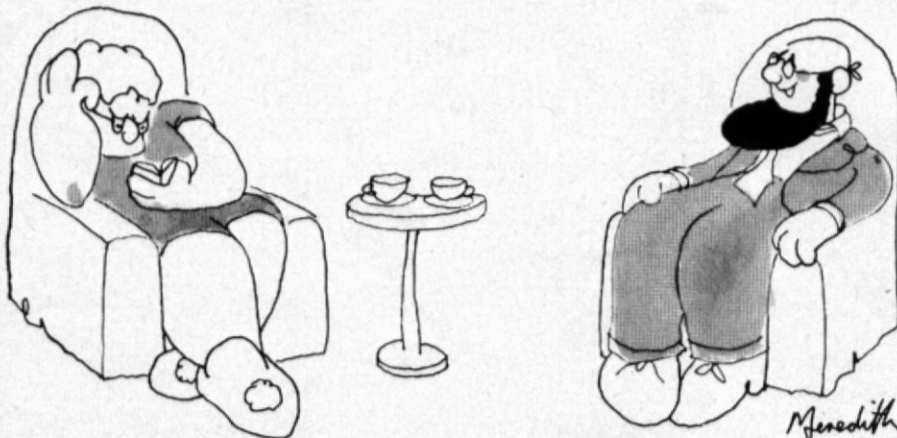
The project took off and began gathering speed as smoothly and dependably as a Japanese electric train. Colonel Jack Wood went through with his retirement from the Army Matériel Command, just as he'd privately told all those prospective investors he would, and took on the presidency of a fully owned Quantum subsidiary set up to manufacture the Ingrams according to vastly expanded production blueprints: Environmental Industries Inc.

The name was a somewhat grisly private jeu d'esprit shared by WerBell, Bintliff and Reeves—the joke being that "a bullet is the best population-control pill"—but Colonel Wood had no time to mull over semantic conceits, for the moment he emerged from his Pentagon foxhole, he found himself under fire, both front and rear.

The successor who took over the key post vacated by Colonel Wood's retirement in Army Matériel Command, a longtime subordinate and golfing companion, turned out, as Mitch WerBell later put it, to "hate Jack Wood's guts." Not only did this officer refuse to "push" the Ingram's adoption as replacement for the forty-five, as all concerned thought he was pledged to do, he denounced Colonel Wood's alliance with Quantum in the projected selling to the Pentagon. The Joint Chiefs decided to drop any plans for acquiring millions of Ingram M-11's and to keep the trusty, and predictably scandal-free, forty-five service side arm for another decade.

And although Quantum weathered these first shock waves from Washington, Environmental Industries atrophied into an empty shell. A new Georgia company, the Military Armaments Corporation, took charge of production under the control of Mitch WerBell, Bennett Bintliff and a newly installed efficiency expert, George A. Salesky. The shaken Colonel Wood, all dreams of grandeur spent, finished up managing a small shell named S.A.T.A., a service subsidiary of Quantum meant to offer police departments that purchased the Ingram or other special weapons for their S.W.A.T. teams some training in the use of their new high-powered equipment.

With the prospect of mammoth military sales fading, Quantum began to concentrate on selling the Ingram to police departments around the country. It was a timely notion: the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration was pouring out billions in federal grants to "modernize," "technify" and "upgrade" America's forces of law and order. "If not the Army, why not the



"Aren't you going to ask about the beard?"

police?" became a hotly pursued alternative for Quantum after Jack Wood's decline and near fall in 1972. But police sales proved . . . a problem. Provisionally, a broad-shouldered, dapper, smiling new investor appeared in Quantum's boardroom at about the same time: Kenneth F. Burnstine, owner of a very profitable consortium of Florida air-taxi companies.

"Ohoho, that Kenny was a swinger," says WerBell, in whose own flamboyant uttering the term takes on special éclat. "He said he'd put up some cash to get the police-sales franchise for our weapons. We already had a subsidiary for that, Cromwell, but it was not doing anything spectacular, and so we made a deal with Kenny. Bintliff asked him why he wanted to buy our franchise, and Burnstine said, 'Oh, you know, I have my share of troubles with the feds; I'd just as soon keep them out of my hair, do something for them,' and we all laughed, thinking he had the same federal troubles the rest of us did—tax troubles. Turned out he was the biggest dope smuggler on the East Coast."

In fact, Kenny Burnstine was convicted for just that offense in 1975, drawing a seven-year federal prison term.

Burnstine was bad news, but what did Quantum care? Its real troubles went deeper than a drug smuggler's dadaist scenario to invest the cops with military firepower. The real problems had to do with production and sales. Both faltered; more accurately, neither took off. The sanguine marketing projections became a mockery. In 1972, internecine corporate struggles led to a parting of the ways between Scott Reeves and the Quantum biggies on the one hand and the disgruntled Mitch WerBell on the other. It was like trying to upgrade Donald Duck by ditching Disney.

Bennett Bintliff went with WerBell. The stock of fourteen thousand finished but unsold Ingrams was divided between the two breakaway factions, and Quantum found itself competing for worldwide sales with its own former executives. In short, the company was unraveling.

In the cruel paradox life so often offers us in lieu of a happy ending, it was during this era of discord that the Ingram rose to show-business stardom. The gun's deathly glamour began to affect producers and directors of TV serials and full-length motion pictures. In the hands of a C.I.A. contract killer disguised as a mailman, the M-10—the model most successfully converted to firing blanks—nearly terminated Robert Redford and Faye Dunaway on the second of the *Three Days of the Condor*. It also starred in *Cannon*, *Mission Impossible*, *Hawaii Five-O*, *The F.B.I.*, *Mannix*; in *Loups de Nuit*, it helped Jean-Paul Belmondo resolve some existential arguments; in *Die Verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*, it turned up, *stramm und Kampfbereit*, as the favorite piece of West German S.W.A.T. teams; in *Executive Action*,

it was an extension of Burt Lancaster's good right arm.

But while the muses feasted, what of the poor philistines? What of *la grande illusion* of Quantum's rapturous investors? There is no question that, in the coarse parlance of the market, they took a bath. But how much did they drop? Impossible to tell. For one thing, the basic stockholders' roster proves, on closer examination, merely a sort of glorified address list; equity funding accounted, all in all, for less than two million dollars of Quantum's original capitalization. Investors who sank really large amounts into the Ingram—Rick Ohrstrom, a wealthy Virginia financier, an estimated two million; Francis J. Smithers, a Long Island banking tycoon, a million and a half; John P. McGuire, of the New York factoring family, a similar amount; and others too elusive to mention—did so in privately consummated transactions involving bonds, secured loans (which did not always prove secure enough) and other debentures; confidential deals whose net result is difficult to assess.

Lena Horne Is 60

(Continued from page 68) all those who were actively or passively trying to deprive her of her contractual right to appear on the Ed Sullivan program? Would she wrinkle that fine nose in distaste if I mentioned *Counterattack*, the anti-Communist gossip sheet that accused her of associating with "subversive causes"? And would she acknowledge that it was her refusal to end her friendship with Paul Robeson and her interest in the Council for African Affairs that caused her star to wane in the Fifties with the spread of McCarthyism?

We could end our review with the last six years. She has seen her family decimated. Between 1970 and 1971, she lost her son, her husband and her father. The first from kidney disease, the second from heart failure and the third from a respiratory ailment. She had known that her son was going to die and she had prepared for his death, but when her husband, Lennie, "a dear, loving, giving man," died in May, 1971, she felt "desolate."

Her father had been a hustler, a numbers man and a gambler, and all through his life he was a bird of passage in hers. But it was only when she was in her thirties that she realized his reputation as a bad-assed dude had protected her when she was shimmying away in Harlem. And in her forties, she was moved to tell him that she loved him. It never dawned on him that his wanderings could have ruined all that. Last November, her mother—beloved, madcap, stagestruck Edna—died, and "there now [was] practically no one left to be strong for." She has buried her dead. The years of insults are memories. Only the consciousness of the Sixties holds her now. When America changed, she too changed forever.

"When I struck that man in the Luau, I was flooded with calls, tele-

By mid-1975, the Military Armament Corporation, the wholly owned Marietta manufacturing subsidiary, slid into Chapter Eleven receivership, a mild form of bankruptcy that theoretically enables a company to resume operations if things pick up again. At a forced sale of assets last winter, M-10's and M-11's, which cost between sixty-four and a hundred-odd dollars to produce (depending on how costs were computed) and sold, on governmental price lists, at around \$180 per unit, were proffered to a callous crowd of Class Three dealers at around twenty dollars each.

But in the spirit of the unsinkable Mitch WerBell, it is reported by the tenacious Scotty Reeves that Quantum itself is very much alive under his chairmanship and that the Ingram gun is being manufactured again at some secret overseas production site, where conditions are more clement and less regulated than back home. The output may be limited but it's increasing, and the mercurial, magical gun may live up to its promise after all. #

grams and letters from black people. They were saying, 'Right on! I did not know they cared.' This comes out slowly, deliberately. "I thought that through the years I had moved so far from them, economically, socially, whatever, that they would question my commitment and my blackness. Then I began to look again, and I began to ask to be involved. I did some work for the National Council of Negro Women. I met Martin. I went to Mississippi, and in a little Baptist church I began to understand real, unvarnished, nonfamilial love. It was the kind of homecoming that everyone should have."

Someone who had been in the Masonic Hall in Jackson, Mississippi, during the summer of 1963, when Lena Horne came there to sing, told me how the huge crowd had grown silent every time she sang. They were in no mood to be entertained since they had buried Medgar Evers only a few weeks earlier, and their sorrow hung heavily in the muggy night. She stood on the darkened stage, a thin figure in white, and for her finale she chose *We Shall Overcome*, the black *Marseillaise*. When she finished, the tears were flowing and Lena had come home.

Her eyes are liquid as she recalls this, and as she pauses in her reverie, I begin to sense why she makes so much of this Southern apogee. And, finally, I understand why she reached her mountaintop not among the celebrities and the lights of Hollywood but among the lowly, largely illiterate country people, who, in astonishment, could hardly believe that the glamour lady had come to listen to them. Lena Horne had come south looking for acceptance and the Mississippi yeomanry had offered her love.

When she saw how easily she could run into the embrace of these blacks, she recoiled from the hypocrisies and