

BAR FIGHT

By James Collins

Mrs. Kansas was a sturdy woman. 5 foot eight and in excess of 250 pounds, she was light on her feet and very quick. Fairly quiet, she doted on her gorgeous towheaded five-year-old daughter. Her husband, Tom, rarely spoke, appeared very meek and walked with his head down as if he were holding a yoke on his shoulders. Usually they were a very quiet family, but on a Friday or Saturday night, you could hear a lot of screaming, breaking of dishes and loud sounds as if a body was hitting the floor or hitting a wall. On Sundays, Tom often sported a bandage on his forehead and sometimes he might walk with a limp.

One summer Saturday was memorable in the neighborhood. At about two o'clock in the afternoon, Mrs. Kansas took her daughter to Walsh's bar, which contained four regulars and the bartender. She sat on the stool, ordered a beer and watched her daughter play with a doll in the booth off to the right. When she ordered her second beer, the bartender served it to her with a napkin. One of the regulars decided he wanted to chat up Mrs. Kansas. She told him to get lost. He thought this was a shy, come on and pulled up another stool and sat so close, he touched her shoulder-- big mistake. She hit him with her right fist just under the chin, and the impact lifted him off the stool and dumped him on the floor. Two of the regulars were his friends and they rushed to his aid. As they try to revive him and lift him off the floor, one of them called Mrs. Kansas a few unmentionable names. Before you could blink, he was on the floor unconscious. The bartender called the police.

Two uniformed officers entered the bar, looked at the men lying on the floor and asked the bartender what happened. He described the incident as he viewed it, and the police decided that Mrs. Kansas had to come down to the station house. She was now sitting in the booth, calming down her daughter, who was upset after the altercation. The police asked her to stand up and hold out her hands as they pulled out a pair of handcuffs.

Mrs. Kansas objected, saying, "I did nothing wrong. That man lying over there on the floor was accosting me. I cannot go with you, because I have my daughter to take care of, and I do not want to take her to the station house. I'm just going to leave now and go home."

With that, she started to rise and the police officer on her left, grabbed her shoulder - another big mistake. She hit him so hard she lifted him out of his shoes. His partner reached for a truncheon but the blow to his stomach doubled him over and the next blow drove him to the floor.

The bartender again called the local police precinct and described what had happened to their two officers. The riot squad arrived all dressed in black, and six officers entered Walsh's bar. The ensuing fight was epic and predictable. The score ended up three to one--three police officers unconscious and one sturdy woman unconscious. They needed the other three to help carry her out and put her in the Black Maria.

Everyone in the neighborhood talked about this fight for weeks. Bill Finnegan the longshoreman was the only regular in Walsh's bar not involved in the riot. His comment concisely described the events that occurred that afternoon. Finnegan said, "For 40 years, man and boy, I worked the docks of New York and never have I seen a better fight than that one between Mrs. Kansas and those police officers."

The only positive result from this event was that Tom Kansas, the wimp, now had the reputation as a very patient soul who had to live with a fierce woman who could, and had, cleaned his clock many times.

THE END