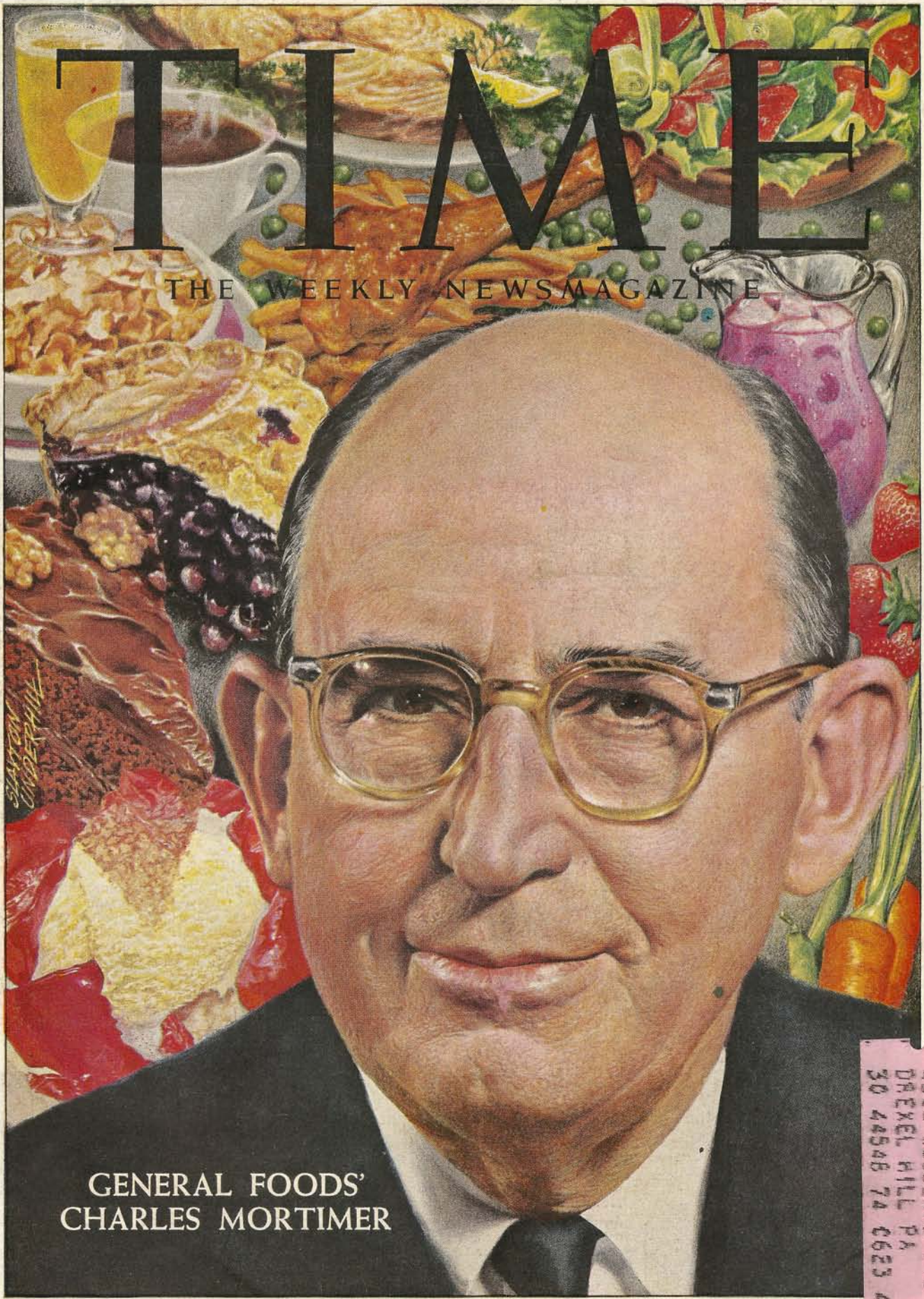


# TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



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## DISK JOCKEYS

### "Now Don't Cry"

With Congress bearing down and the F.T.C. getting ready to open hearings, the disk jockeys faced a lean future: no more cash off the record, no more palmy free vacations on the fly-now-payola-later plan, and for some, no more jobs.

In Manhattan, Superjock Alan Freed, already fired by WABC radio, lost his second job in two weeks, was sacked by WNEW-TV. Showing up for his final broadcast last week, Freed waded through crowds of sobbing teen-agers, comforted them ("Now don't cry"), accepted a bound scroll from a group of record distributors in thanks for his services. What services? Had he ever taken payola? No, said Freed, but to supplement his regular income of \$1,200 a week he had served as a "consultant" for "the major record companies." During his last hours on WNEW, Freed danced dolefully with two teen-aged girls at once, accepted a subpoena to face the New York County grand jury, declared: Payola "may stink, but it's here and I didn't start it." Once, he recalled nostalgically, "a man said to me, 'If somebody sent you a Cadillac, would you send it back?' I said, 'It depends on the color.'"

Apart from Freed's exit, the liveliest deejay purge occurred in Detroit, where President George B. Storer undertook a radical housecleaning of his Storer Broadcasting Co. (five TV and seven radio stations in nine cities). Three deejays at Detroit's WJBK bit the dust, as did one Joe Niagara in Philadelphia. Meanwhile, ABC's affiliate WXYZ chopped down still another in Detroit. Of the fallen, Detroit's Tom Clay was the first to tell his story in detail—and a fascinating, lurid story it was (see below).

### The Wages of Spin

A sometime window washer with a personality greatly appealing to himself ("I am such a sweet little guy"), Tom Clay first went to work as a record spinner at Detroit's WJBK two years ago. What happened to him thereafter until he was fired last week makes a typical case history of the deejay riding the payola trail.

For the first eleven months no "pusher" approached him. "The record-company guys," he told a TIME correspondent in Detroit last week, "went to the bigger men here. I didn't care because I knew when I was Number One they would come to me. First a guy would ask me to coffee, but I was sardonic and I would say, 'Wait until I get to the dinner stage, huh?' When I was finally asked out to dinner, I knew I was Number One. Payola comes to the top disk jockeys, so isn't this the greatest compliment?"

**Silver for Christmas.** Clay's view of payola ethics is intricate: "I have never demanded money from a record-company. When a deejay does that, he's dirty rotten. But it is all right for a man to put down \$200 and leave a record for a deejay.



Bob Wendlinger—New York Mirror  
EX-DEEJAY FREED & FANS

"Payola may stink, but it's here."

jay. If the deejay honestly thinks it is good, then he is justified in taking the \$200 because, after all, that money is an investment for the record company. If the deejay turns down the record, the \$200 is well spent. It saves the company money—they won't go ahead and make 10,000 records."

Not all companies were satisfied with Clay's code. When they paid him, they wanted to hear their records played. But Clay did not always oblige. Chicago's Chess and Checker record companies, Clay claims, got so mad at him one year that they did not even send him a Christmas card. "That really bugged me," he re-



Associated Press

EX-DEEJAY CLAY

"When they say 'baby,' watch out."

calls. "So the man says, 'Didn't you get the silver plate for Christmas?' I said no. When he gets back to Chicago, he phones me and says, 'Tommy, baby'—when they say 'baby,' look out, because they're dirty—I'm sending you the silverware."

Meanwhile, regular checks (marked "promotion") came in from other companies, and Clay listed them for the income tax men. "Can I send you something every month?" payolaters would ask. "That isn't necessary," was Clay's stock reply, "but go ahead if you want to." The wages of spin almost doubled his yearly salary of \$8,000.

**Nivins the Nightshade.** The payola game brought Disk Jockey Clay in contact with a string of Damon Runyon-like characters, including Nat ("The Rat") Tarnapol, artist-and-repertoire man for Roulette records, and Promoter Harry Balk, indicted earlier this year as a fixer of newspaper puzzle contests (TIME, March 9). But the most lizardous type Tom Clay ever encountered was Harry Nivins, a bald, cherubic nightshade who proved to be Tom's downfall.

Nivins was the manager of a rock 'n' roll singer named Melrose Baggy. Would Tom Clay take \$200 and play a Baggy song on the air? No, said Clay. Later, they went for a ride in Clay's new Lincoln, and Nivins propositioned him again, offering \$100. "I tell him, like, it was \$200 last time," says Clay. "I also tell him this is one record which isn't going to happen. I find out later he has a tape recorder in his clothing."

Some of Clay's enemy colleagues on WJBK, it turned out, had passed the hat to pay for the rental of a midget tape recorder so Nivins could sandbag Clay. Confronted with Nivins' charge, says Clay, Station Manager Harry Lipson shrugged it off with a minor reprimand. But Nivins the Nightshade kept after his man, wired the Miami headquarters of the Storer Broadcasting Co., helped touch off the inquisition that cost Clay his job. He was disillusioned: "None of the pushers have come around since I got fired. These guys pretend that they were friends. I wait at home for the phone to ring, and it doesn't. I even check to make sure it isn't off the hook. I will never mingle socially with any guys in records. I want friendship."

Like a man can be on the take, but nobody should forget friendship. It's a principle, like.

## TELEVISION

### A Question of Freedom

"Television spokesmen, particularly NBC's, are getting positively paranoid." So wrote the New York *Herald Tribune's* Critic John Crosby last week in his syndicated TV column. Crosby was dealing with the widely heard argument that "the quiz and payola mess is deliberately being overplayed by newspapers to embarrass a competing advertising medium." Said Crosby, summing up the feelings of most newsmen and editors: "This would be a serious charge if it weren't so naive."

Critic Crosby quoted Dave Garroway