

SEPTEMBER 4, 1986

At the last stockholders banquet of the Production Credit Assn. in San Angelo, the featured speaker posed as an English journalist visiting Texas. Before the meeting, he'd mingled with the guests, dressed in tailored British-cut suit and a neat bow tie. When it came time for him to speak, the executive secretary fell in and gave a convincing introduction. The board of directors and their wives supported his act by honoring him as we do foreign dignitaries.

Out in the audience, we didn't know that he was an entertainer from Austin, Texas. We were completely fooled. I'd brought along my mother. My step-dad and she helped found the San Angelo office. I don't know how many meetings we'd been to. But I do know that she's always advised us to wear a dark tie, act nice and mix with the crowd, and not spend the evening telling stories.

The old boy on the stage was plenty good at playing an Englishman. Once I caught on that he was pulling our leg, I began to notice what good actors the bank officers and directors were that were sitting behind him on the raised platform. I don't guess it matters in what capacity a man is associated with a bank or loan company, he learns to hide his feelings. I know those guys were in on the act, because they are the ones who do the hiring. But they were sitting up there just as deadpan as a row of models for some carvings like those put on mountainsides.

Looking at that panel made me shudder to think of all the big ones I'd told jugkeepers in my times. It sure made me thankful that we don't have to pay for all that hocus pocus while we are on this earth. I'd like to draw 99 years extra to cover the omissions and additions that it's taken to cover for my operations.

And not all those misrepresentations were out of reach of the statues on limitations. Twenty minutes before this meeting opened, I'd looked the very chairman of the board right in the eye and run the score up on 10 black heifers that I had allegedly seen sell higher at the last special sale in San Angelo than cattle were selling for in the windfall year of 1973. To make it worse, I didn't learn until the meeting had opened that the chairman was going to resign to go run a big fat jug he was opening less than 40 miles from the ranch.

Had I been partially honest and fully upright, I could have dashed over to that new bank of his and made my creativity pay off while the outfit was still in its innocent stage.

The impersonation was a big success. Looks like I'm going to have to polish up my work. You can't depend on anything these days.

Who'd ever thought he was opening a new bank that close to the ranch?