

[illegible]

I work on a New York newspaper—one of the largest, if not the largest in America—

I make "art."

That is, my business is in the "art" department, and deals with pictures and photographs of things, people and events—sometimes as they are,—but generally as they are not—

The principal thing about "art" work, on a newspaper is the ability to supply what is not there, and to efface that which is—to comply with the feeling of decorum, and innate sensitiveness of the public—(so I imagine).

For example—there are standard rules and regulations that must be observed at all times in regard to pictures—:

In pictures or photographs of prizefighters, stripped for action, for some unaccountable reason, the nipples on the breasts have to be scrupulously "deleted" by the skilled artist—with painstaking efficiency and loyalty all traces of breasts either male or female must instantly be removed.

(Failure to do this, entails losing one's job.)

To do this, there are appliances called "airbrushes" which spray a delicate tint of color over the surface of the pictures, photographic in its gradation and imperceptibility—

There are many other artists besides myself, similarly equipped with these weapons of purification and sterilization of the public morals.

Day and night they toil valiantly effacing breasts, wrinkles, natural characteristics, and natural blemishes, of the individuals portrayed—till like a perfect shoe shine, in standard, and polish, the pictures altered but "improved" beyond recogni-

tion are "passed" by the censor called the "art" manager in charge and are duly sent from the art department to be engraved and run through the presses—as "the Picture Page"—whence they emerge sometime later, generally as indistinguishable grey blobs.

Another important feature of the artist's work, is that all pictures of women, must show them smiling—with luscious lips pressed back in a cupid's bow against their pearl like teeth, the corners of the mouth correctly dimpled and shaded—all eyelashes must be of the ravishing beauty parlor perfection in type character—. Society women,—or starving mothers, movie actresses, or murderesses, dope fiends and duchesses—they must all be made to smile—in the approved manner of the "Mona Lisa."

Beautify it, "sweeten her up," snap it up is the slogan—this is indeed "art" for the public's sake—

We are not like ordinary artists, at any moment we are called upon to produce with marvelous accuracy, graphic details of accidents, smash ups, fires, collisions, explosions, every conceivable or inconceivable occurrence that has or hasn't happened—and are so skilled technically as to draw from mere hearsay a picture of the ingrown toenail of the Duke of York—or a diagrammatic dotted line "movie" of the latest hold up—

All this is done, with one eye on the clock so as to be able to sprint for the dead line to catch the edition—

It takes a little while to get accustomed to this way of seeing things, as at art school, one is not taught this method of prophylaxis—and when I yet went to art school, the models there, still had breasts, and other hu-

man organs and attributes.

Pictures of murders—require great skill and "sympathetic" handling—

For instance, an actual photograph, taken on the spot, showing a woman shot down in her kitchen, blood spattered on the walls—nauseating—and disgustingly real, truthful, vivid and dramatic in its horrible aspect—both as news, and as photography—has to be "sweetened" by this process of sugar coating—all trace of the realism and actual details being obliterated, "by the artist" so that the woman, while still in the same position, crumpled up on the floor—appears to have an expression of seraphic calm and contentment on her face and looks as if she had deliberately lain down among the pots and pans and confusion in order to await with ineffable composure, the moment, when some kind hearted soul, would brutally usher her from this vale of tears—

Then again, there are "lay-outs," "movie strips," "society" and dramatic "features"—sporting items, etc.—Heads of "celebrities," or notorious persons,—heads grafted on to bodies foreign to them.

Heads—arms—legs—hands and feet, hurried, frantically into position, via the Razor Blade, and Paste Pot—(to supply deficiencies) smoothed and coaxed into a composite unit, by the unerring precision of the artists, aided by the infallible air brush—Again, there is the morbid irresistibility of exactness! which must be emphasized—(for the public benefit and education) viz.—the exact point of the exact hammer which exactly slew the victim, and the exact spot, and the exact time, in

which all this is supposed to take place—is rendered with heart-breaking fidelity and a thoro'-ness of craftsmanship—which would make Michelangelo look like 30 cents

Then too there are "human interest pictures" to arouse the compassion of the public, at certain times—"to raise funds" or other sentiments as desired—"for the poor." Photographers are assigned to visit the tenements and round up the destitute "to make pictures of their misery"—for use as "lachrymal matter" (sob stuff)—a little adroit posing by the photographer of his subjects—makes the misery more miserable—and the squalor of filth more revolting and heart breaking—in which he has the support and co-operation of the "artist"—to "retouch" the actual print, and intensify the emaciation, broken window panes, pinched faces, haunted looks—and all the trickery and fake, which can be loaded on

The size of pictures, depends not on their value as pictures, but on their sensation value at the moment—so that a perfectly uninteresting and commonplace smear—faintly resembling a face—will be enthusiastically "rushed" in—by an editor who has just received news of a salacious scandal—or other choice bit of dirt and it will be thrown up "and enlarged from a mere speck"—to 8 columns—while—really beautiful pictures with traces of real beauty of feeling, are cast out or else just beautified sufficiently to ruin them.

Speaking of Pictures I will sketch a picture of the conversation, of an Art Department, a mere snatch will suffice—as follows—:

"A little overtone right in there

a little High light there."

"Hey! get out of there you bum."

"Shoot it."

"Gee! that's Bully!"

"Cut that out you cheese!"

"Jesus Christ!"

"O George let's have that 6 pica"

"Let her ride."

"Hurry up."

"Give me some white will you?"

"All right, all right."

"That lip's too heavy—"

"Go right ahead with it."

"What about the original?"

"Yeah! we had a big one."

"Yes. Mount it."

"What's the guy's name?"

"A little more snap in the background."

"Column and a half each—eh?"

"They go side by side—with the caption on both, Yeah!"

"You're sure of that? Yeah!"

"What the hell's the matter with you?"

"Get it good and wet."

"Have we any number 7 brushes?"

and so on—

Perhaps some one will sing a song—or spit on the floor—but art goes marching on.

A word about the personnel might be of interest, but they have not much to do with the art, as the standard and character, is already "achieved" in quality and appearance—such as the slogans of the car card advertisements, or Gobel's Frankfurters—

The manager of art, is a person of supreme importance—and is held in awe—and every one cowers and trembles when he majestically walks past—a cigar between his teeth—always a cigar, between his teeth, except when he removes it, in order to spit on the floor with a resounding smack

He gives "orders"—commands, in a voice tinged with alcoholic indistinctness, suggestive of "nips" on the sly in some dark corner—when the strain and rush of being manager and cajoling the female telephone operators becomes too great—

His is the word that hires and fires—you—a mere whim, or fancy—or touch of indigestion, on the part of this august person—and you "take the air"—

The department itself is very up to date—the finest appliances being used, both in machines and materials, cameras, dark rooms and etc., enlarging machines—no expense is spared in obtaining pictures, even if aeroplanes have to be hired to obtain them—so as to be able to out-compete the competitors—

because you see—art is not, as is erroneously supposed—a matter of feeling—but a "business"—a battle as it were—for life and death—Even as I write this—hundreds of applicants are crowding the door—"with samples" under their arms—eager, desperate as it were to replace me—the instant I forget in a moment of relaxation, that in public, men and women have to have no breasts, and are always smiling, and perpetually ecstatic—so that the reward of truthfulness is to be "canned" without ceremony or notice—

That, ladies and gentlemen, is but a brief inside story of the "artistic" life, at an American Daily—no doubt were I an editor, I should have to "air brush" "the news"—so that it would be unfit to print,—and then publish it—

Once I worked in a factory trying to earn an honest living, but that is another story—

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