BOGA: Basque Studies Consortium Journal

Volume 3 | Issue 1 Article 1

October 2015

The Sun Also Sets

William A. Douglass
Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada, Reno

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.boisestate.edu/boga

 Part of the Basque Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
Douglass, William A. (2015) "The Sun Also Sets," *BOGA: Basque Studies Consortium Journal*: Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 1.
Available at: http://scholarworks.boisestate.edu/boga/vol3/iss1/1

The Sun Also Sets[1]

William A. Douglass, PhD
Professor Emeritus
Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada, Reno

I

Ernest[2] Hemingway (1899-1961) began his writing career as a journalist, accepting a job right out of high school as a reporter for the *Kansas City Star*. In 1918 he volunteered for service in World War One with the Red Cross and ended up being wounded seriously by an artillery shell when driving an ambulance on the Italian front. While recuperating for some months in a Milan hospital he became infatuated with a nurse who was eight years his elder. In 1920 he worked briefly for the *Toronto Daily Star* before accepting employment in Chicago as a writer for the agricultural journal *Cooperative Commonwealth*. It was there that he met his first wife, Hadley Richardson, also eight years older than he, and in December of 1921 the couple embarked for Europe where Ernest was to cover European affairs from Paris for the *Toronto Star Weekly*--as a feature writer rather than foreign

[1] There is seemingly nothing "new" to be said about Ernest Hemingway—whether the man or the writer. Nevertheless, the academic industry that he has become thrives on the rearranging and reinterpreting what we know about him--and the present work certainly falls within that vein. It seeks to tease out Hemingway's involvement with the Basques, beginning in their European homeland but then developed further in Cuba and Idaho. In writing this article I wish to acknowledge both the critical guidance and encouragement of Hemingway scholar Edorta Jiménez.

[2] Ernest Hemingway despised his given name. He believed that his mother (whom he resented) gave it to him out of her admiration for the naïve and foolish hero of Oscar Wilde's major play. Jeffrey Meyers, *Hemingway. A Biography* (New York, Da Capo Press, 1985), 8 [*Hemingway*]. As a studiously self-styled macho man, Hemingway certainly abominated the effete play write and distanced himself from him by both fabricating and/or embracing nicknames for himself (the most famous being "Papa").

correspondent. One of his first decisions in France was to travel to the eastern Mediterranean for a story on the post-war Greco-Turkish conflict.

During his early Paris years his real interests evolved from journalism to writing poetry and fiction (first as a short story specialist before embracing the novel). He became a fixture within the city's vibrant, ex-patriot, Anglo-American literary circle that Gertrude Stein would label "The Lost Generation." In 1923 Ezra Pound found Ernest a small publisher for his first book and a part-time editorial position with the new magazine *Transatlantic Review* (which also published some of Hemingway's stories). In 1925 F. Scott Fitzgerald recommended Ernest's work to his editor, Maxwell Perkins, at the notable New York publishing house of Charles Scribner's Sons. Throughout the remainder of his career it would publish most of Hemingway's essays, stories and poetry, and all of his novels (including posthumous ones).[3]

So, by his and the century's mid-twenties, Ernest was an established, if somewhat secondary, literary figure on the rise.[4] He enjoyed a modest income from his writing and Hadley had a small trust fund. They led a frugal existence in Paris but had money left over for travel. They both learned to ski in Switzerland and Austria during the winters, and for Ernest there was the trout fishing in both the Alps and the Pyrenees.

After attending Pamplona's San Fermín festival of 1925, Ernest wrote his first novel—*The Sun Also Rises*.[5] That winter Hadley's attractive friend and editor at *Vogue* magazine, Pauline Pfeiffer, joined the Hemingways in Austria for skiing. It was there that she and Ernest began the affair that led to his divorce from Hadley the following year. That same year of 1927 he married the devoutly Catholic Pauline.[6]

---

[3] Terry Mort, *The Hemingway Patrols. Ernest Hemingway and His Hunt for U-boats* (New York: Scribner, 2009), 2-6 [*The Hemingway Patrols*]. Scribner's Sons would also publish several Hemingway biographies as well as literary criticism of his work.

[4] Indeed, subsequently Ernest Hemingway became arguably the first author to be transformed into a "celebrity" by both his publisher and an ascendant Hollywood film industry. See Leonard J. Leff, *Hemingway and His Conspirators. Hollywood, Scribners, and the Making of American Celebrity Culture* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.).

[5] Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 2014--first published in 1926). [*The Sun Also Rises*].

[6] There is no doubt that her religion conflicted with her heart. There was the question of whether Ernest's marriage could be annulled and whether he would convert to her faith. He had been baptized a Protestant, but was no practitioner. He was quoted as saying, "If I am anything I am a Catholic. Had extreme unction administered to me as such in July 1918 and recovered. So guess I'm a super-Catholic." Quoted in Ruth A. Hawkins, *Unbelievable Happiness and Final Sorrow. The Hemingway-Pfeiffer Marriage* (Fayetteville: The

Pauline was from a wealthy family, the favorite niece of a rich bachelor Uncle Gus, and Ernest's book was selling well. In 1928 Hemingway was enjoying enough success to write to his father offering to help him out of his serious financial difficulty. The letter arrived minutes after Clarence Hemingway had taken his life with a revolver. A shaken Ernest was reminded of Hadley's anguish over her own father's suicide, and remarked "I'll probably go the same way." From then on he often spoke and sometimes wrote of suicide.[7]

The famed future author of *The Old Man and the Sea*[8] was a keen fisherman--with one foot in the trout fisheries of North America and Europe and the other in the saltwater angling of the Caribbean. He would become the most prolific sport-fishing scribe in the western literary canon.[9] A consummate ex-patriot, throughout his adult years his choices of long-term (if never quite permanent) residences were dictated by angling and hunting opportunities. He first visited Havana in 1928 and became a frequent visitor (and even sojourner) there in subsequent years. As early as 1930 he visited the Cayo Romano along Cuba's north coast with his mistress, Jane Mason, and Joe Russell, owner of Sloppy Joe's bar in Key West, Hemingway's favorite watering hole in the Florida town. In 1934 Ernest spent no fewer than four months with Jane in the saltwater labyrinth around Cayo Romano.[10]

By 1931 Ernest and wife Pauline had purchased a home in Key West. It was all about the saltwater angling for the behemoths that had supplanted his earlier passion for trout fishing. These were generally years of immense literary success for Hemingway. *The Sun Also Rises* was followed by *A Farewell to Arms*[11] in 1929, a novel based upon his experiences in Italy as an ambulance driver during the First World War, and then, in 1932, the non-fiction tome *Death in the Afternoon* that established its author as the English-language

---

University of Arkansas Press, 2012), 70. It seems that Ernest and Pauline were married in the Catholic Church after a civil wedding, but under questionable circumstances, since, "Having sworn to baptism in Italy during the war and a first marriage outside the church, he [Ernest] received dispensation from the Archbishop of Paris on April 25." *Ibid*, 74. There is no evidence, however, that Hemingway was ever baptized a Catholic.

[7] Meyers, *Hemingway*, 210. Hemingway kept the 32-caliber revolver that his father had used. His younger brother Leicester shot himself in the head in 1982 and both sister Ursula (1966) and granddaughter, famed actress Margaux, née Margot (1996) committed suicide with drug overdoses.

[8] Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952).

[9] There is even an anthology of his writings on the topic. Nick Lyon, ed., H*emingway on Fishing* (New York: Scribner, 2000).

[10] Enrique Cirules, *Hemingway en la cayería de Romano* (La Habana: Editorial José Martí, 1999), 17-18; 30; 34 [*Hemingway*].

[11] Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929).

authority on the subject of bullfighting. He began his series of African safaris, in part paid for by Pauline's Uncle Gus, and, in 1935, published the book *Green Hills of Africa*.[12]

It was in 1935 that Ernest resolved to branch out from Key West further into the Caribbean. He had heard about the fabulous fishing off Bimini and it was now that he commissioned in a Brooklyn shipyard construction of a 38-foot fishing boat that he named the *Pilar* after the famed virgin of Zaragoza. Bimini would become Hemingway's frequent port of call and preferred sojourn over successive years.[13] He also became a periodic visitor to Cuba. When there, and not staying aboard the *Pilar*, he used a particular room in the Ambos Mundos Hotel in Old Havana as his writing cubicle. He also became a regular in Havana's Floridita bar.

Pauline bore Ernest two sons, Patrick and Gregory. But then, in 1935, Ernest met Martha Gellhorn, short story and magazine feature writer (for *Collier's*), in Sloppy Joe's bar. This, too, eventually resulted in an affair (while Martha was nine years younger than Ernest, she would be easily the most independent and assertive of his four wives).[14]

By early 1937 Ernest was on his way to Madrid to cover the Spanish Civil War as a correspondent for NANA (the North American News Alliance) and Martha negotiated an assignment from *Collier's* to report on the conflict. He arrived in Madrid in mid-March and she joined him there by month's end. Hemingway collaborated with the communist propagandist, Joris Ivens, writing the screenplay and then serving as narrator for the film *The Spanish Earth*. By autumn Ernest and Martha were back in the United States promoting the pro-Republican documentary.[15] That same year he also published his latest novel *To Have and Have Not*.[16]

---

[12] Ernest Hemingway, *Green Hills of Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935).
[13] Carlos Baker, *Ernest Hemingway, A Life Story* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 259; 276 [*Ernest Hemingway*].
[14] While a great admirer of his work, she also feared being coopted by his celebrity and even his writing style. She refused to take his name.
[15] She even managed to arrange for a private showing in the White House for the Roosevelts (Caroline Moorehead, *Gellhorn. A Twentieth-Century Life* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003), 131-32 [*Gellhorn*].
[16] Ernest Hemingway, *To Have and Have Not* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937).

They would make two more trips to Madrid during 1937 and 1938. Those experiences would inform Hemingway's sole (unsuccessful) attempt at playwriting--*The Fifth Column*[17]--and his monumental novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.[18] Both reflected Ernest's fascination with intrigue. Martha and Ernest then travelled the U.S. seeking abolition of the country's non-intervention policy and to raise funds for ambulances for Republican Spain. Ernest was the major contributor for one and the sole donor of another.[19] Then, in late 1938, Martha accepted an assignment from *Collier's* to travel to Czechoslovakia to document that country's capitulation to Germany. She barely escaped Prague before the Nazi forces occupied the city.

By the spring of 1939 Ernest was estranged from Pauline and spending time in Havana with Martha, who was on her first visit to Cuba. He was about half way through the writing of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and Gellhorn decided that he needed more conducive surroundings. She found a house for rent in the nearby village of San Francisco de Paula. Hemingway was initially reluctant, regarding its rent excessive, the building a shambles and the location too far from his beloved Havana. Nevertheless, she prevailed and oversaw renovation of the Finca Vigía into the residence that Hemingway would come to regard as his home base for the next twenty-two years.

In the autumn of that same year they visited Sun Valley, Idaho, as guests of the Union Pacific Railway. It sought the inevitable publicity of celebrity visits to its recently opened destination resort that featured stellar hunting, fishing, skiing, accommodations, entertainment and fine dining—including meals prepared by Basque cooks.[20] While no participant in the renowned skiing, and largely indifferent to the fine trout fishing and big

[17] Ernest Hemingway, *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938) [*The Fifth Column*]. The phrase came out of the Spanish Civil War and is attributed to General Mola, who noted that Madrid would fall to the rebel forces not by virtue of the assaults upon it by his four armed columns, but rather by the uprising within the city itself of his sympathizers—the "fifth column."
[18] Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940).
[19] Thomas Fensch, *Behind* Islands in the Stream*. Hemingway, Cuba, the FBI and the Crook Factory* (New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2009), 40; 42.
[20]Michael Reynolds, *Hemingway. The Final Years* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 31 [*Hemingway*].

game hunting (elk, antelope and deer), Ernest became instantly enamored with the area's world-class bird shooting.[21]

That autumn Martha accepted an assignment from *Collier's* to report on Finland's resistance to Russian attacks. Hemingway missed her desperately. In January she arrived back at the Finca Vigía and wrote to the editor of *Collier's*, "It is perhaps wrong to be so happy in this present world, but my God how I love this place and how happy I am."[22]

On October 21, 1940, Scribner's published *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, complete with the dedication to Martha Gellhorn. Two weeks later, on November 4, Pauline divorced Ernest. He and Martha were in Wyoming at the time and within three weeks they were married there. In late December he purchased the Finca Vigía as a Christmas gift for Martha (and himself), although her days there would be numbered.[23] By February of 1941 she was on assignment in Asia to cover the budding conflict between Japan and China for *Collier's*—a reluctant Hemingway went along.[24] There is some recent evidence from KGB archives that Hemingway and Gellhorn offered to spy in Asia for that Soviet agency. It is unclear whether they ever provided it with sensitive information, but he was given the code name "Argo" by the KGB.[25]

By June they were back in Cuba and then in the autumn left for Sun Valley. By now Martha was restless and clearly bored with life at both the Finca Vigía and Sun Valley. In a

---

[21] Tillie Arnold, a close family friend throughout the Hemingways' Idaho years (including stays by both Martha and subsequent fourth wife Mary), recounts in her memoir that Ernest never fished nearby Silver Creek's famed trout waters nor did he ever once put on a pair of skis while in Sun Valley. Tillie Arnold (with William L. Smallwood), *The Idaho Hemingway* (Buhl: Beacon Books, 1999), 32, 130 [*The Idaho Hemingway*]. Nevertheless, he scheduled his visits around the bird hunting seasons (initially duck and pheasant; then later chukar partridge) and anticipated opening day "like a little kid waiting for Christmas." *Ibid*, 144. Ernest would return to Idaho periodically (the autumns of 1940, 1941, 1946 and 1947) before purchasing a home in nearby Ketchum in 1958. It would be his primary residence during the last two years of his life.

[22] Caroline Moorehead, *The Selected Letters of Martha Gellhorn* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006), 82 [*Selected Letters*].

[23] Norberto Fuentes, *Hemingway in Cuba* (Seacaucus: Lyle Stuart Inc., 1984), 21; 25-26 [*Hemingway in Cuba*].

[24] In the first chapter of her autobiographical book—Martha Gellhorn, *Travels with Myself and Another* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam edition, 200l)--first published in London, Allen Lane, 1978)--that regards this experience she never mentions "Ernest Hemingway" once. Rather, she refers to the "another" as her UC ("Unwilling Companion"). *Ibid*, 10. Throughout his literary career it was Ernest's penchant to incorporate experiences from his foreign travels into his fiction. Asia would prove to be the exception.

[25] John Earl Haynes, Harvey Klehr, and Alexander Vassiliev, *Spies. The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 152-54. By the late 1940s the Soviets had decided that Hemingway had limited value to them. Indeed, an American member of the Communist Party reported to Moscow in 1949 that, "It is said he allegedly supports the Trotskyites and that he has attacked the Sov. Union in his articles and pamphlets." Quoted in *Ibid*, 155.

letter dated September 22, 1941, she noted that she was about to leave the former to join Ernest in the latter, "A place that I hate like holy hell. It is the west in an ornamental sanitary package."[26] To please him she took up shooting--pigeons in Cuba and birds and deer in Idaho.[27] He had a habit of "mentoring" his offspring, spouses and friends alike, while actually drawing them into the spheres of his own interests—an obvious form of control.

In early 1942 Ernest organized a spy ring that he called the "Crook Factory" in Cuba, consisting of his Basque and other Spanish Loyalist individuals, designed to provide intelligence on the activities of Spanish Francoists and German Nazis on the Island to Havana's American ambassador, Spruile Braden. According to Braden the Crook Factory operatives included "some down-at-heel pelota players" and "two Basque priests."[28] Almost simultaneously Ernest launched "Operation Friendless," named after one of the Hemingways' favorite cats.

The latter entailed arming his fishing boat, the *Pilar*, to patrol the north coast of Cuba in search of German U-boats. At first this included covering the hull with iron plating, but this crippled the vessel's seaworthiness so it was quickly removed. The idea was to appear to be a scientific expedition, complete with markings and credentials from the American Museum of Natural History (for whom Hemingway had previously conducted research on billfish).[29] The U-boats were known for surfacing when sighting insignificant vessels that were not worth a torpedo. They would then commandeer any supplies aboard before sinking the ship with standard gunfire. Hemingway's idea was to lure a submarine to the surface and then attack it with hidden submachine guns and his secret weapon—grenades lobbed by his Basque pelotaris into the sub's conning tower and down the open hatch. Once disabled the submarine could no longer submerge and would be an easy target for Allied

[26] Moorehead, *The Selected Letters,* 117.
[27] Tillie Arnold, *The Idaho Hemingway* (Buhl: Beacon Books, 1999). 55 [*The Idaho Hemingway*].
[28] Quoted in Reynolds, *Hemingway*, 60.
[29] We are told that,

> Their scientific classification amused the crew of the *Pilar* and was the subject of many jokes. They classified everything on board—even their hats—as "scientific." The hat, wide-brimmed native *sombreros*, were used as protection from the sun, since there was very little cover on the Pilar's decks. Fuentes, *Hemingway in Cuba*, 201.

aircraft and destroyers.[30] In the words of Greg Hemingway,

> The idea was to maneuver the *Pilar* next to a sub—how, exactly, wasn't quite clear—whereupon a pair of over-the-hill jai alai players with more guts than brains would heave The Bomb into the open hatch of the conning tower. And then the Bomb would presumably blow the submarine to kingdom come.[31]

Mort was certainly of the opinion that the Hemingway strategy was a real stretch, since it would be unlikely, if not impossible, to entice any shrewd U-boat captain within the *Pilar*'s necessarily tight range. Furthermore, any attack upon a German submarine would likely prove suicidal given the U-boat's vastly superior firepower.[32]

According to Hemingway biographer, Carlos Baker,

> He managed to get it going about the middle of May [1942], drawing heavily on the membership of the Basque Club of Havana, for whom he had long been a special kind of hero. But his recruits covered a wide social spectrum, ranging from his friends among the jai alai players to Don Andrés Untzain, a Catholic priest who had served as machine gunner for the Loyalists.[33]

Jiménez believes that all of Hemingway's Basques were involved in his Cuban espionage at some time—including Untzain and Cuban national Paco Garay.[34] Greg Hemingway reports in his memoir that he and his brother Patrick were taken on one sub-hunting trip and ended up without provisions for a week while awaiting a tardy Cuban supply ship. Everyone was unhappy and impatient, "And Patche [sic] and Ermua, the jai alai players, were mumbling darkly of mutiny, of seizing the helm and heading north by northeast for the nearest bar."[35]

The cast of characters would vary on any one voyage, but a stalwart was "Wolfie," or Winston Guest, who was a great admirer (and friend) of Hemingway. Born of an American mother and English father, he was Winston Churchill's godson. While independently wealthy, Guest sought challenges. He graduated in law from Columbia University and was a

[30] Mort, *The Hemingway Patrols*, 72-81. Jiménez, *San Fermingway*, 168.
[31] Gregory H. Hemingway, *Papa. A Personal Memoir* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976), 70 [*Papa*].
[32] Mort, *The Hemingway Patrols*, 81-83; 164-65; 176.
[33] Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 372.
[34] Jiménez, *San Fermingway*, 168.
[35] Gregory Hemingway, *Papa,* 79.

physically powerful champion polo player. He met Hemingway on safari in Africa and was then between business initiatives when he visited Ernest in Cuba in the summer of 1942. He enlisted immediately in Operation Friendless and, according to Hemingway, was the "ideal subaltern" who would carry out any order.[36]

Gellhorn was disdainful of both the Crook Factory and Operation Friendless as amateurish.[37] According to Hemingway biographer Carlos Baker, for Martha, "the *Pilar*'s Q-boat patrols were only an excuse to get rationed gasoline so that he and Winston Guest could go fishing while the rest of the civilized world fought, suffered , and died."[38]

She was irritated by the comings and goings at odd hours in Finca Vigía of the Crook Factory operatives—including its several Basques. In the summer of 1942 she was again restless and accepted a new assignment from *Collier's* to cover U-boat warfare throughout the Caribbean and Surinam.

Nevertheless, Hemingway clearly had the confidence of U.S. ambassador to Cuba, Spruille Braden, and received through him some federal support for the Crook Factory and Operation Friendless—although both were a considerable drain on Ernest's own assets.[39] Furthermore, the two initiatives brought him under F.B.I. scrutiny. The latter's files on Hemingway are filled with resentment regarding his special relationship with the embassy, which nevertheless made the agency leery of taking him on overtly. Director Hoover himself advised caution, while commenting that the famous writer's excessive drinking alone made his intelligence suspect.[40]

FBI agent Leddy wrote a lengthy report on Hemingway, dated June 13, 1943, that notes,

> Hemingway knows Cuba well and has lived on the island for various periods during the past 12 years. He is well known as a sportsman engaging in deep sea fishing from his own fishing boat and maintaining a pigeon shooting range on his own property. He is a well known figure at jai alai matches and a back-slapping friend of the Basque jai-alai players. In Havana he frequents the Floridita and Basque Bar, two famous spots where prominent Cubans and Americans gather at noon and in the evening.[41]

[36] Mort, *The Hemingway Patrols*, 160-61.
[37] Moorehead, *Gellhorn*, 188; 199; Mort, *The Hemingway Patrols*, 101; 103.
[38] Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 381.
[39] Mort, *The Hemingway Patrols,* 200.
[40] Fensch, *Behind* Islands in the Stream, 27.
[41] *Ibid*, 49. Leddy underscored Hemingway's antagonism toward the agency:

There was ample documentation in the file of Hemingway's cooperation with known communists and their organizations during his advocacy of the Loyalist cause in the Spanish Civil War. He was one of many celebrity signers of a petition that denounced the F.B.I.'s repression of a public protest in Detroit against the U. S. Government's Spanish Non-Intervention policy. Nor had F.B.I. agent Leddy ever forgotten that Ernest once introduced him to others at a Havana jai alai match as a member of the "American Gestapo."[42] At the same time, it seems clear that he was too much of an individualist to become a card-carrying member.[43] Indeed, in two of its key publications the Communist Party denounced Hemingway's treatment of the Spanish Civil War in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.[44]

The F.B.I. was pleased when Hemingway turned over to the embassy an unopened package left for him in Havana's Basque Bar, convinced that it was critical intelligence. It

---

> In personal relations Hemingway has maintained a surface show of friendship and interest with representatives of the FBI. Through statements he has made to reliable contacts of the Legal Attaché, however, it is known that Hemingway and his assistant Gustavo Duran, have a low esteem for the work of the FBI which they consider to be methodical, unimaginative and performed by persons of comparative youth without experience in foreign countries and knowledge of international intrigue and politics. Both Hemingway and Duran, it is also known, have personal hostility to the FBI on an ideological basis, especially Hemingway, as he considers the FBI anti-Liberal, pro-Fascist and dangerous as developing into an American Gestapo. *Ibid*, 55.

[42] Reynolds, *Hemingway*, 70.

[43] Cooper discusses Ernest's Midwestern political formation as follows,

> …Hemingway hated big government, believed in individual initiative, and was always willing to serve his country loyally in wartime. Yet it was a strange kind of "conservative Republicanism" that would ally with the Communists at times, that preferred living outside the United States, and that disliked the commercial and business world. The mix of strongly held attitudes that Hemingway acquired from his upbringing were not consistent with the usual liberal/conservative dichotomy. For example, his opposition to Fascism and censorship were liberal, whereas his dislike of the New Deal and increasingly centralized government authority was conservative. Thus, he was condemned as both a reactionary and a Stalinist at different times in his career. A more accurate label for Hemingway (although no label is completely satisfactory) would be libertarian. Stephen Cooper, *The Politics of Ernest Hemingway* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1987), 134.

[44] Mort, *The Hemingway Patrols*, 121-22. In his short story "Night Before Battle," published in *Esquire* magazine in 1939, a member of the Communist Party refers to the leader of the Spanish Communist Party, Largo Caballero, as a presumptuous and ill-informed "S. O. B." for launching the ill-fated frontal counterattack by Madrid defenders upon the city's encircling fascist forces. During their bar banter two "comrades" who are drinking in the Chicote bar with "Henry" the narrator (and one of Hemingway's alter egos) admit they are members in the Communist Party and one remarks to the other, "I know Comrade Henry here is not." Hemingway, *The Fifth Column*, 113-14.

presumably contained nothing more than a volume on *The Life of Saint Teresa*. For the F.B.I.'s agents the whole affair demonstrated the ingenuous (yet potentially dangerous) foray by Hemingway into the world of espionage. On April 1, 1943, the American Embassy in Havana ceased supporting the Crook Factory and the following July 24 the *Pilar* returned to port to never again be assigned a mission.[45]

Meanwhile, Martha was completing a novel, *Liana*,[46] based upon her experiences in the Caribbean. She was again restless and for all practical purposes her marriage with Ernest was over. Accordingly,

> Martha was convinced after five years' association with him, that his egotism often carried him far beyond the call of genius. Her travels of the summer and fall had been undertaken in part to resist his evident determination to own her completely. He was full of self-dramatization, much given to lying to her about his adventures, and almost neurotic in his conviction that life was stale without manufactured glamour.[47]

Both Hemingways would receive war-correspondent assignments late in World War II from *Collier's* (ironically and mean-spiritedly, Ernest used his greater fame to lobby successfully for precedence over her despite, or to spite, Martha's longstanding relationship with the magazine). Whiting notes that Hemingway arrived in London with a copy of a letter from Ambassador Braden commending his service in the search for U-boats. By the time the couple was reunited in London, he was embroiled in an affair with Mary Welsh, herself a journalist covering the war. Mary, like Ernest, was married (to an Australian war correspondent currently on assignment in the Middle East) and also embroiled in an affair with the writer Irwin Shaw. Ernest proposed marriage a scant three weeks after meeting her.[48]

In a retrospective letter to a London friend and intimate, Gellhorn would later characterize in the grimmest of terms her life with Hemingway,

> You're wrong about Ernest's presence being a help. He wasn't present except in the flesh. He needed me to run his house and to copulate on (I use

[45] Mort, *The Hemingway Patrols*, 216.
[46] Martha Gellhorn, *Liana* (New York, Popular Library, 1953).
[47] Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 380.
[48] Charles Whiting, *Papa Goes to War* (Marlborough, The Crowood Press, 1990), 16-20 [*Papa Goes to War*].

> the adverb advisedly, not with but on) and to provide exercise in the way of a daily tennis game. There wasn't any fun or communication, none. When I thought I'd go mad from the loneliness and boredom, I slipped off to war: four times. To live at all, I had to write. I had to stay there for months at a time, and after I'd get over the usual agonies of house-running, I wrote. He enforced discipline because he was himself totally immersed in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*; so I had to make stories for myself.[49]

Martha and Ernest were divorced on December 21, 1945, after he accused her of desertion. Nevertheless, she had turned the tables on him since, "All his life he forced his wives to ask for a divorce, which was his way of getting what he wanted without taking responsibility for it…It all made him look foolish in his own eyes, and he never forgave himself or her for that embarrassment."[50] In a letter to her mother Martha stated categorically that she never wanted to hear Ernest's name again and would do all that she could to blot out her memories of their life together. She concluded, "A man must be a very great genius to make up for being such a loathesome human being."[51]

Ernest and Mary were married on March 14, 1946. So Finca Vigía had a new mistress, the Hemingway boys a new stepmother and both his Cuban Basques and Ketchum intimates a new companion. The following spring there was evidence that Hemingway might have been involved in an abortive plot to organize a coup against dictator Trujillo in the Dominican Republic; and he clearly came under a degree of Cuban governmental surveillance and harassment. Ernest even left the island for a while out of fear of being detained, although the matter blew over rather quickly and he was soon back at Finca Vigía.[52]

In 1948 *Cosmopolitan* magazine assigned a young (mid-twenties) staffer, A. E. Hotchner, to travel to Havana for the purpose of interviewing Ernest on "the future of literature." Hotchner was a great admirer of the master and it took him several days in Cuba to even screw up his courage to send an apologetic letter to Hemingway describing what he (Hotchner) regarded to be a stupid project, anticipating Hemingway's certain refusal to be

---

[49] Moorehead, *Selected Letters*, 412-13. These were, however, far from the words of an angel. There is ample evidence that Gellhorn had her own lovers during the considerable time the Hemingways spent apart while still married. When she finally broke with Ernest, she was embroiled in a serious affair with a highly ranked officer in the U. S. military--James Gavin. Moorehead, *Gellhorn*, 231-34.
[50] Reynolds, *Hemingway*, 208.
[51] Quoted in Moorehead*, Gellhorn,* 230.
[52] Reynolds, *Hemingway*, 159-60.

interviewed for it. Instead, Ernest invited Hotchner to the Floridita Bar and agreed to come up with something-- they forged a close relationship that would last for the remainder of Hemingway's life.[53]

Hotchner begins his memoir of his thirteen years with Hemingway with a description of their first encounter in 1948 in Havana's Floridita bar. At one point,

> The bartender handed Hemingway a letter; he looked at the return address, folded it and put it into his pocket. "Basque friend of mine is a prolific letter writer and each letter ends the same way: Send money."[54]

It would not take long for Ernest to undermine his relationship with Mary through the combination of his roving eye for younger women and both neglect and disrespect—a familiar pattern. By 1949, while she was in Chicago caring for her ill father and Ernest was leading a "wild life" with a young whore at the Finca Vigía, she wrote him threatening divorce. He sent back an apology and bought her a mink coat—the stars were back in their firmament.[55] All was not well, however. Under Fulgencio Batista crime and social discontent were on the rise in Cuba and it became increasingly difficult to protect the Finca Vigía. There were some break-ins and minor theft, so it became necessary to hire full-time security, particularly while the Hemingways were abroad.[56]

In 1952 Ernest (after nearly a decade of silence) published the critically-acclaimed novel entitled *The Old Man and the Sea* and received both a Pulitzer (1953) and Nobel (1954) prize for literature. Interspersed among these triumphs, however, were the two life-threatening plane crashes that the Hemingways experienced while on safari in East Africa during the winter of 1953-1954. There was even a premature report that Hemingway was dead. Ernest's injuries were greater than he would let on, and the concussion produced damage to his brain that would linger for the rest of his life.[57]

The rebellion against Fulgencio Batista in the late 1950s was another cause of great

---

[53] Aaron Edward Hotchner, *Papa Hemingway. A Personal Memoir by A. E. Hotchner* (New York, Random House, 1966), 7 [*Papa Hemingway*]. Hotchner authored other books about Ernest and wrote screenplays for Hemingway works. There is also a volume of the considerable correspondence between the two men—Albert J. DeFazio, III (ed.), *Dear Papa, Dear Hotch: the Correspondence of Ernest Hemingway and A.E. Hotchner (*Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2005). [*Dear Papa*].
[54] *Ibid*, 7.
[55] Reynolds, *Hemingway*, 259-61.
[56] *Ibid*, 208-209.
[57] *Ibid*, 272-76.

concern to the Hemingways. As the rebellion began in the spring of 1958 he took a large cache of arms to sea in the *Pilar* and threw them overboard, fearful that they might be discovered by the regime. However, he also believed that any rebel government would itself become untrustworthy when it came to foreigners, including himself. [58] He left Cuba that fall for Ketchum and by his return in early 1959 the Castro revolution was triumphant.

Ernest was initially supportive of Fidel Castro and the need for change, and at one point met with him privately and even coached key Castro staffers on how to deal with the testy American press during their upcoming visit to the United States (the key feature of which was to be Fidel's address to the United Nations). Hemingway also advised them to steer clear of Communism and all would eventually be fine between the two countries. Then, during an interview on the *This is Your Life* television show while in the United States, Fidel, when asked to explain the executions in Cuba, noted: "Let me tell you what Hemingway thinks about that: 'The executions in Cuba are a necessary phenomena. The military criminals who were executed by the revolutionary government received what they deserved."[59]

In 1959 the Hemingways bought an unusual[60] residence in Ketchum, although Ernest retained the Finca Vigía that he still regarded to be his home. Mary urged him to remove his valuable possessions from it, but to no avail.[61] Life in Idaho proved to be more of an ending than a new beginning. Ernest was experiencing deep depression, having lost both his

[58] *Ibid*, 310-13; 320.

[59] *Ibid*, 323. It might be noted that Hemingway had written in a letter to a Polish friend on April 12, 1959, "This is a very pure and beautiful revolution so far—Naturally I do not know how it will come out. But I hope for the best—So far it is what we hoped for, in intent, when they made the Republic in Spain (and which never arrived). I hope things will go well—The people who are being shot deserve it." Quoted in Meyers, *Hemingway*, 518-19.

[60] His son Greg saw it for the first time when attending his father's funeral,

> Mary received us at papa's home—Fort Hemingway, as I immediately christened it. It had been purchased early in his illness, but seemed to presage it. Set well back from the road, it was an almost bunkerlike blockhouse, built of poured concrete to last two hundred years, an ideal buttress against the world, and as safe a refuge as could be found for a paranoid. It lacked only catwalks and an electrified fence to be as secure as Trotsky's redoubt in Mexico. Gregory Hemingway, *Papa*, 116.

[61] After declaring Cuba "socialist' in 1962, the Cuban government expropriated considerable foreign property there, particularly that of American citizens. The *Finca Vigía* was turned into a Hemingway museum and remains so to this day.

memory and his muse through a combination of a lifetime of high living and heavy drinking. He was also convinced that he was targeted by the IRS and was under constant surveillance by the FBI.[62]

In the spring of 1959 the Hemingways left for Europe to follow the epic *mano a mano* between bullfighters Antonio Ordoñez and Luis Dominguín that would be the basis of Hemingway's eventual book *The Dangerous Summer*. Mary broke a toe in Pamplona during the San Fermín festival and then (in late November) she shattered her left elbow in a fall while duck-hunting in Idaho. Ernest was singularly indifferent to her pain, not to mention her person.

Hemingway was becoming weirder by the day and her resentment of him was festering.[63] Mary had all but given up on their marriage and began to fear for her own sanity. By the summer of 1960 she had put Ernest on notice that she would host some of his friends at the Finca Vigía and open the Ketchum house that autumn (including to Antonio Ordoñez and his wife), but she then planned to move to her own apartment in New York City to attempt to restart her journalism career. Hemingway went to Spain without her to follow up on details of the bullfighting book. But then she dashed to join him when there was a (false) report that he was gravely ill in Málaga. They returned to Ketchum in late October. By now Ernest's behavior was truly bizarre and she ended up working with George Saviers, his Idaho doctor, to have Ernest committed on November 30 to the Mayo Clinic. It was there that he was subjected to electro-shock therapy.[64]

Ernest was released from the clinic on January 22, 1961--by now his memory totally impaired, the shock treatments having exacerbated the detrimental effects of the multiple concussions that he had experienced throughout his life. On April 15 Ernest learned of the Bay of Pigs fiasco and realized that he would never be able to return to Cuba again.[65] He felt that the manuscripts of his uncompleted works (including "Islands in the Stream") that he had left there in a safety deposit box were lost forever. In late April he made two abortive

[62] In point of fact, the FBI had monitored Hemingway for many years, but had pretty much closed the file on him by 1955, or prior to his last move to Idaho. Mort, *The Hemingway Patrols*, 115.
[63] Reynolds, *Hemingway*, 328-37.
[64] *Ibid*, 349.
[65] *Ibid*, 354.

suicide attempts and was again sequestered by his Idaho circle and flown to Minnesota for readmission to the Mayo. Mary visited him in late May and reported that,

> My first day there [May 23], Papa showed only intense hostility to me—I'd railroaded him there, making them destroy his memory, would be happy keeping him as a fixture in a madhouse, would steal his money, etc. . . . The second day was calm and harmonious. . . . The third day—7 hours—he made plans for getting out of there, grew angry because I demurred at the idea of going to the fiesta in Pamplona.[66]

In June Hotchner visited Rochester and took Ernest out of the hospital for a drive. He tried to speak of their future, but Hemingway would have none of it. Finally,

> …I said it very gently: "Papa, why do you want to kill yourself?"
> He hesitated only a moment; then he spoke in his old, deliberate way. "What do you think happens to a man going on sixty-two when he realizes that he can never write the books and stories he promised himself? Or do any of the other things he promised himself in the good days?"
> "But how can you say that? You have written a beautiful book about Paris, as beautiful as anyone can hope to write. How can you overlook that?"
> "The best of that I wrote before. And now I can't finish it."
> "But perhaps it is finished and it is just reluctance…"
> "Hotch, if I can't exist on my own terms, then existence is impossible. Do you understand? That is how I have lived, and that is how I must live—or not live."[67]

At the end of June Hemingway was discharged from Mayo; a few days later, on July 2, 1961, he killed himself with a shotgun in his Ketchum home.

II

Ernest Hemingway was a bascophile. During his years in Paris (1922-1928) he made several trips to Hendaye and San Sebastián, and became a regular at the San Fermín festival in Pamplona. Throughout his life Hemingway frequently wore a Basque beret and "Basque shoes" or *alpargartas*.[68] The Basque Country figures prominently in the two non-fiction

[66] *Ibid*, 357.
[67] Hotchner, *Papa Hemingway*, 297.
[68] Jiménez, *San Fermingway*, 43. The Navarrese writer José María Iribarren befriended Hemingway and wrote a book about his many visits to Pamplona for the San Fermín festivities. Iribarren tells us that Hemingway's

works *Death in the Afternoon*[69] and *The Dangerous Summer*,[70] and is the setting of Hemingway's first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*. While all three books focus primarily upon bullfighting, the popularity of *The Sun Also Rises*, including the screen version (1956) starring Tyrone Power, Ava Gardner and Errol Flynn, converted Pamplona's famed San Fermín festival (with its running of the bulls) from a local event into an international happening.[71] In 1923, and at the suggestion of his friend Gertrude Stein, Ernest visited Pamplona (accompanied by Hadley) to attend his first San Fermín.[72] The Hemingways left for Toronto immediately afterwards to prepare for the birth (October 10, 1923) of their son, Jack. Stein and her companion, Alice B. Toklas, would be Jack's godmothers.

Ernest returned to Pamplona during the San Fermín festival every year thereafter (excepting 1928 and 1930) until 1931. He would not revisit the celebration again until 1953[73] (and then again in 1959). It was during that final visit that he attended a lunch

---

favorite restaurant there was the Casa Marceliano owned by Matías Anoz. Ernest became a great admirer of Basque cooking and Anoz gave him the recipe in 1926 for *Bacalao de Pamplona* (Codfish Pamplona-style). In 1943 during an interview in Cuba he praised the dish that he was still preparing for his guests ("What a marvelous plate!"). José María Iribarren, *Hemingway y los Sanfermines* (Pamplona: Editorial Gómez-Edyvel, 1984), 98. Iribarren also noted that after attending the 1956 festival Hemingway purchased two shotguns in Eibar (the Basque town famed for its world-class firearms). *Ibid*, 143.

[69] Ernest Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932).

[70] Ernest Hemingway, *The Dangerous Summer* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985).

[71] On July 18, 1924, Ernest wrote his mother a letter from Burguete where he was trout fishing after attending that year's San Fermín festival, and promising to send her photos of it, "It is a purely Spanish festa high up in the capital of Navarre and there are practically no foreigners altho people come from all over Spain for it." Sandra Spanier, Albert J. DeFazio III, and Robert W. Trogdon (editors), *The Letters of Ernest Hemingway. Volume 2. 1923-1925* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 133.

[72] Jiménez, *San Fermingway*, 23.

[73] Hemingway thought that he would never be allowed back into Spain as long as Franco was in power. However, in 1953, the Eisenhower administration concluded that Franco would be a reliable Cold War ally and negotiated an agreement for American military bases in Spain in exchange for conferring upon its regime international respectability. Ernest was invited to visit their country by the Spanish authorities and he did so eagerly. He tells us in the opening passage of his posthumous book *The Dangerous Summer*,

> It was strange going back to Spain again. I had never expected to be allowed to return to the country that I loved more than any other except my own and I would not return so long as any of my friends there were in jail. But in the spring of 1953 in Cuba I talked with good friends who had fought on opposing sides in the Spanish Civil War about stopping in Spain on our way to Africa and they agreed that I might honorably return to Spain if I did not recant anything that I had written and kept my mouth shut on politics. There was no question of applying for a visa. They were no longer required for American tourists. Hemingway, *The Dangerous Summer*, 43.

organized in his honor by the mayor of Pamplona. There is now a statue of Ernest near the city's bullring that is decorated every July with the obligatory San Fermín red kerchief.[74]

Ernest's fiction was quite autobiographical, as evidenced from the outset in the many Michigan trout fishing adventures of his alter ego Nick Adams. In *The Sun Also Rises* there is extensive text describing Jake Barnes's (Hemingway's) angling getaway on Navarra's Irati River. It gives us our first inklings of what would become Ernest's life-long affinity for the Basques. While travelling by car from Bayonne to Pamplona with two companions, Jake tells us,

> We passed lots of Basques with oxen, or cattle, hauling carts along the road, and nice farmhouses, low roofs, and all white-plastered. In the Basque Country the land all looks very rich and green and the houses and villages look well-off and clean. Every village had a pelota court and on some of them kids were playing in the hot sun. There were signs on the walls of the churches saying it was forbidden to play pelota against them….[75]

On the bus ride from Pamplona to Burguete for the trout fishing, Jake tells us about his Basque fellow passengers. There is considerable sharing of wine--first from the fishermen's bottles and then a Basque *bota* that is passed around convivially. Jake's companion, Bill, notes that "These Basques are swell people,"[76] even though he is quickly the source of hilarity over his ineptness at drinking from the wineskin bag. An elderly man asks if they are Americans? Since they were, their interlocutor declares that he had been in California forty years earlier. He had also seen Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, Denver, Los Angeles and Salt Lake City. He never discloses either the total length of his sojourn or his occupation(s) during it.[77] One surmises that he might have herded sheep at least part of the time, although Hemingway at this point seems oblivious to that Basque-American legacy.

What is interesting is that these earliest and briefest references anticipate Hemingway's

---

[74] Miriam B. Mandel, *Hemingway's Death in the Afternoon. The Complete Annotations* (Latham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2002), 331. Edorta Jiménez, in a chapter tellingly entitled "Una seducción," argues that the regime of dictator Francisco Franco actually manipulated the somewhat naïve American, and particularly his relationship with the San Fermín festival, for its own purposes (both international respectability and tourism) (Jiménez, *San Fermingway*, 19-28). One of the key figures in this exercise was the Spanish journalist and professor José Luis Castillo-Puche whom we will meet again in these pages.
[75] Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, 74.
[76] *Ibid*, 84.
[77] *Ibid*, 84-86.

subsequent consuming passion for things Basque. There was the *pelota*, or ball games, particularly jai alai and its professional players. Some of his most enduring friendships would be with Basque *pelotariak*, or players, in Havana and focused upon their lavish dining, drinking and whoring together. Finally, there is the serendipitous anticipation of Hemingway's later awareness of Idaho's Basque sheepherder diaspora.

Martha Gellhorn would become an intimate partner in Hemingway's ongoing fascination with the Basques. In June of 1937 Martha wrote to her good friend in Washington, D.C., none other than Eleanor Roosevelt, urging that the United States receive some of the 500 refugee children that the Basque Government was dispatching around the world. Gellhorn referred to the children as "those tragic little dark ones I know so well."[78] In the event, she was told to calm down by Eleanor (who was experiencing opprobrium for her open support of the Spanish Republicans in a country that was increasingly pro-Franco).

Gellhorn and Hemingway returned to Spain that September and, in late April of 1938, she wrote a letter from Barcelona to her friend Eleanor in which she stated,

> You must read a book by a man named Steer; it is called *The Tree of Gernika*. It is about the fight of the Basques -- he's the London Times man -- and no better book has come out of the war and he says well all the things I have tried to say to you the times I saw you, after Spain. It is beautifully written and true, and few books are like that, and fewer still that deal with war. Please get it.[79]

Gellhorn provided regular updates on the Spanish Civil War to Mrs. Roosevelt, pronouncing Hitler and Mussolini to be dangerous criminals while denouncing the non-intervention policy of Great Britain and France to be a huge mistake. Both she and Ernest believed that the Spanish Republicans were too strong and dedicated to be defeated by the fascists, particularly if the non-intervention policy were revoked so they, too, could receive arms from abroad. In the event, the Hemingways were wrong about the Republic's survival. Ernest made a particularly ill-timed contribution to the debate. On June 4, 1937, he gave

[78] Moorehead, *Selected Letters*, 52.
[79] *Ibid*, 60. Reference is to the book George L. Steer, *The Tree of Gernika: A Field Study in Modern War* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1938).

one of his rare public speeches[80] to the League of American Authors Congress in which he expressed the view that the Basques were far too stubborn and tough to lose Bilbao--scarcely a prescient prediction since he made it about two weeks before the fall of the city and the flight of President Aguirre and his Basque Government into exile.[81]

Paris was the first refuge of the Basque Government and, after the German invasion of France, in mid-1939 Aguirre simply disappeared. He would not resurface again until his arrival with his family in Brazil on August 27 of 1941.[82] Interestingly, a year earlier, or on August 20, 1940, Manuel de la Sota, the Basque Government-in-exile's U.S. delegate, wrote from New York to Manuel de Irujo, ex-minister of justice in the Spanish Republic and now exiled in London. Both were anxious to learn about their president's whereabouts and Sota communicated the reassuring news that the Aguirre was well. It seems that,

> Mrs. Hemingway (the wife of the writer) wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt looking into his [Aguirre's] circumstances at the urging of Cuba's Basques. Mrs. Roosevelt replied that the President was well, but that she did not wish to say where he was at present. As you can see, even in the White House they are concerned about our man, which should facilitate his easy entry into this country when the occasion presents itself.[83]

It was in the Finca Vigía that Ernest and Martha cultivated a circle of Basque intimates. Ernest was a huge fan of jai alai and Havana was one of its most developed venues in the world. He frequented the city's frontons and established close ties with several professional Basque pelotaris. Felix Areitio, nicknamed "Ermua" (for his natal town) or "Canguro" (for his leaping ability), and the brothers Francisco ("Patxi") and Julián Ibarlucea "Tarzan" (for his tendency to scale the fronton's wall after high shots) were all regulars at Finca Vigía. The other three frequent Basque visitors were Paco Garay, a Cuban-Basque government official, a merchant ships' captain, Juan Duñabeitia, called "Sinbad the Sailor" or "Sinsky" by Hemingway, and Father Andrés Untzain, labelled "Don Black" by Ernest and

[80] Tillie Arnold reports that he had a small speech impediment to which she attributed his discomfort with public speaking. T. Arnold, *The Idaho Hemingway*, 20-21.
[81] Matthew J. Bruccoli, *Conversations with Ernest Hemingway* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1986), 194.
[82] The odyssey is detailed in his book: José Antonio de Aguirre, *Escape via Berlin: Eluding Franco in Hitler's Europe* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991).
[83] Jiménez, *San Fermingway*, 113.

considered by him to be his spiritual adviser.[84]

Garay, while born in Cuba, spent his childhood in Vitoria/Gasteiz and would eventually return there to die. He was a serious amateur junior pelota player and an adult devotee of jai alai. Both Duñabeitia and Untzain were refugees from the Spanish Civil War. Duñabeitia had been a ship's captain and marine professor at Bilbao's Nautical School before the conflict, as well as a civilian advisor to the Basque navy during it. It was he who commanded the freighter *Abril* that transported a cargo of gold to Cuba for the beleaguered Spanish Republic. At that time he formed a close friendship with Paco Garay who was then serving as a customs officer in the port of Havana. Duñabeitia became the exile that captained merchant vessels between Cuba and the United States. Father Untzain was a Basque nationalist who served as a chaplain in the Basque army's Saseta machine-gunnery battalion. After the fall of Bilbao and his own narrow escape to France, he made his way to a sister in Cuba where over time he was parish priest of two different lower-class towns not far from Havana.[85]

After the Hemingways became established at Finca Vigía it became customary for their many Basque friends to join them on Wednesdays, including Untzain (without his cassock).

---

[84] Ernest was given to giving out nicknames to everything around him—cats, wives, offspring, friends—and these latter two nicknames are very hemingwayesque. In point of fact Father Untzain's nickname was "Red Priest," (which better befitted his leftist sentiments in both Spain and Cuba). Edorta Jiménez, Entrevista a Jeanette Hohberger, *Hemingway y Urdaibai* (Mundaka: Urdaibai Txatxi, 2000, 9. One can imagine Hemingway rebranding Untzain out of amusement over a "Red Priest" running around in a black cassock! Ernest seemed fond of the color black and called his favorite dog "Black Dog" or "Blackie." The nicknaming for the Basque pelotaris comes out of the game's tradition as well as, in the case of "Ermua," the common Basque practice of identifying persons with their birthplace (house or town name).

[85] Hotchner described Untzain's background in florid, if somewhat inaccurate, terms when detailing the Finca Vigía regulars,

> [There was] Father Don Andres, called Black Priest, a Basque who had been in the Bilbao Cathedral when the Civil War broke out. Don Andres had climbed into the pulpit and exhorted all the parishioners to go get their guns and fill the streets and shoot what they could and the hell with spending their time in church. After that, he enrolled as a machine-gunner in the republican army. Of course, when the war ended he was kicked out of Spain. He sought refuge in Cuba, but the Church there took a dim view of his past behavior and assigned him the poorest parish in the worst section. Thus, the name Black Priest. Ernest had befriended him as he befriended scores of Franco refugees, and Black Priest, wearing a brightly colored sport shirt, would come to the Hemingway *finca* on his days away from his parish and devote himself to eating, drinking, swimming in the pool, and exchanging reminiscences with Ernest…. Hotchner, *Papa Hemingway*, 19.

There was the tennis and swimming, followed by much eating and drinking, not to mention the singing of Basque songs. Hemingway tried to pick up a smattering of Basque by learning their lyrics .[86]

Then there were the jai alai matches, particular when Ermua was playing, where all (including Don Black) would observe the action with a cigar in one hand and a highball in the other. There was much betting, including by the priest. Hemingway always bet on Ermua to win.[87] Finca Vigía was the bachelor Duñabeitia's shore side residence. While sober at sea, on land he was a heavy drinker.[88] He and Ernest shared a bathroom.

Havana's vibrant nightlife was its own beacon and the Finca Vigía circle was given to frequenting its nightclubs, and that might lead to whoring. When Ernest was absent Martha was capable of going out on the town as well. She wrote a friend on September 22, 1941,

> I go out only with the Basque pelotaris, who combine – to me – those beauties of the body which the Greeks (I understand) wrote about, with a simple direct and comic mentality that keeps me absolutely shaken with mirth. They have no shame, which is the first sign of honest people, and their language is at once so clear and so brutal anything you say in it gives you an electric shock.[89]

Then, on May 20, 1943, she noted,

> The social life here is limited but odd. The only people I have met of consequence are the pelota players. Pelota is the best ball game I ever saw and the pelota players are all Loyalists and mostly Basques, a fine folk anyhow.[90]

Martha and Felix Areitio were at the very least flirtatious and, in 1941, she published a collection of short stories, *The Heart of Another*,[91] which included one entitled "Night before Easter."[92] It describes a night of bar crawling in Havana during which the American

---

[86] Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 346.
[87] *Ibid*, 384.
[88] Cecilia Arrozarena, *El roble y la ceiba. Historia de los vascos en Cuba* (Tafalla, Txalaparta, 2003), 336-43. DeFazio, *Dear Papa,*167.
[89] Moorehead, *Selected Letters*, 115.
[90] *Ibid*, 141.
[91] Martha Gellhorn, *The Heart of Another* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941) [*The Heart of Another*].
[92] It would be hard to imagine that her choice of title was unrelated to Hemingway's short story "Night Before Battle." It, too, basically describes a night of drinking (in Hemingway's case in Madrid during the Spanish Civil

female protagonist dances with a Basque pelotari, a thinly veiled "Ermua." Gellhorn writes,

> Félix dances as if he were afraid of what he would do if he really danced. It is all there but checked, so that he holds you loosely and you know how it would be if he held you close against him. The motion is kept in his body and you feel it thinly with his arm slack across your back. But it is a motion that you can guess at and one of the things I want to see is Félix, drunk and free, dancing with a woman he is not careful of. Félix is not married and he only deals with women, as is the custom, quickly at night for money or not for money according to necessity and not remembering it afterwards either gratefully or angrily, just not remembering it at all. If he marries there will be the special thing for his wife: but they have not been brought up to have a need or use for women, except the one who is the wife and the others for bed. They come to my house to play tennis on the days they are not going to play pelota and we have the war in Spain between us, the memory and understanding of the war, and that makes me their friend. It is a unique position and they regard me as a phenomenon in their lives, for whom there are different rules.[93]

This is scarcely "seamy" stuff and is the most intimate moment that the narrator (clearly Gellhorn herself) describes in the story. Nevertheless, it is sometimes cited as evidence that she had an affair with Félix Areitio. There is strongly divided opinion regarding their relationship in the many personal memoirs and biographies that discuss Hemingway's life.[94] To this day, there is the legend among Havana Basques that Martha and "Ermua" did have an affair.[95] She denied it, but Ernest seemed skeptical—referring to Ermua as "my rival."[96] Fuentes (without providing any source for the information) states that Ermua boasted of his romantic interlude with her and after moving to Mexico claimed he was going to marry Gellhorn.[97]

It might be noted that the friendship between Hemingway and Ermua was more durable than was Ernest's marriage with Martha. The November 15, 1945, issue of the *Cancha* magazine[98] has an interview of the American writer conducted by the Basque pelotari.[99]

War). His play *The Fifth Column*, written about the same time, features the frequent pleas by the main female protagonist, Dorothy Bridges (Gellhorn) to Philip Rawlins (Hemingway) to stay with her rather than going out yet again with the boys for a night of drinking in the Chicote bar.

[93] *Ibid*, 43-44.

[94] Meyers, *Hemingway*, 354-56.

[95] Arrozarena, *El roble*, 342.

[96] Quoted in Meyers, *Hemingway*, 354.

[97] Fuentes, *Hemingway in Cuba*, 199.

[98] Hemingway was a subscriber to the Mexican-based pelota publication. Hotchner, *Papa Hemingway,* 137.

[99] Jiménez, *San Fermingway*, 216.

Hemingway declares,

> Basque pelota is the most rapid and violent sport that I know. It moves me tremendously. I have known it for a long time, nevertheless, I like it more and more.[100]

He further noted, "among the players I count my most numerous and best friends," before dwelling upon his shock at witnessing during a Havana match the shot to the head that almost cost "Tarzan" Ibarlucea his life.[101]

Interestingly, Hemingway reported that his problems with Martha began over the behavior of the Basque pelota players at the Finca Vigía,

> Martha was the most ambitious woman who ever lived, was always off to cover a tax-free war for *Collier's*. She liked everything sanitary. Her father was a doctor, so she made our house look as much like a hospital as possible. No animal heads, no matter how beautiful, because they were unsanitary. Her *Time* [magazine] friends all came down to the *finca*, dressed in pressed flannels, to play impeccable, pitty-pat tennis. My pelota pals also played, but they played rough. They would jump into the pool all sweated and without showering because they said only fairies took showers. They would often show up with a wagon full of ice blocks and dump them into the pool and then play water polo. They began the friction between Miss Martha and me—my pelota pals dirtying up her *Time* pals.[102]

We also have the insight provided by Hemingway himself regarding his relations at Finca Vigía with his Basque friends. In 1947 his two younger sons were in a serious automobile accident with their mother and when Patrick visited his father in Cuba that April he came down with meningitis that seemed related to his head injuries. We are told that,

> The meningitis induced a delirium in Patrick that made hell out of everyone's life at the *finca*, but with the help of Sinsky Dunabeitia [sic], Roberto Herrera, Taylor Williams [an Idaho fishing guide], who was staying at the Little House, and Ermua, the great pelota player, Ernest had pulled Patrick through the crisis and nursed him back to good health. Ernest said there was one stretch when Ermua had to sleep with his arms wrapped around Patrick

[100] *Ibid*, 226.
[101] *Ibid*, 227.
[102] Hotchner, *Papa Hemingway*, 133-34.

to keep him from harming himself.[103]

In 1949 the Hemingways traveled to Europe accompanied by Father Untzain. He was their sole companion on a side trip to Venice.[104] Hotchner reports being with the Hemingways the following year in Paris during the culminating week of the steeplechase-race season. Ernest organized a major betting pool after receiving an insider tip on a particular long-shot horse. Don Black happened to turn up on his way to invest his life's savings in a somewhat dubious ceramics' venture in northern France. He immediately insisted that Hemingway put all of his money down on the horse instead. Ernest only agreed to bet half of it. They won![105]

Four years later, in 1954, Hotchner and Hemingway were again in France and traveled together to Biarritz. It was where the bartender in Ernest's favorite hangout handed him a letter that he had been holding for three years. The two travelers then went to Saint Jean de Luz where Hemingway made a beeline to his favorite watering spot—the Bar Basque.[106]

In 1956 the Hemingways travelled to Spain in late summer, supposedly on their way to Africa to gather more material for his current book that was proving elusive. It had not been a good year for them. Mary was in poor health and Ernest was noticeably drinking way too much. His writing ability was now slowed and strained, and he had experienced considerable frustration in trying unsuccessfully to catch a large marlin off Peru for the filming of The Old Man and the Sea. Pamplona and San Fermín were not on the agenda, although traipsing around after the bullfighter Antonio Ordóñez was. While in Madrid they called upon their friend and trusted physician Dr. Madinaveitia for his diagnosis of Mary's

[103] *Ibid*, 125-26. Patrick was deathly afraid of Don Black. "When Patrick saw him he had hysterical attacks, saying that Don Andrés was the devil on earth." Fuentes, *Hemingway in Cuba*, 84.
[104] Reynolds, *Hemingway*, 214.
[105] Hotchner, *Papa Hemingway*, 61-62.
[106] *Ibid*, 128. Noel Monks commented on the Basque Bar during his Spanish Civil War days as well,

> Our rendezvous most evenings was the Bar Basque in prosperous St. Jean de Luz, where the young Swiss barman, Otto, was credited not only for spying for both sides in Spain, and for Germany and Italy, but for every journalist frequenting the place. To the Bar Basque also came well-to-do Spaniards and their lovely ladies who had nipped smartly into France at the first signs of trouble and who were now engaged in gargantuan, costly meals. Here they sat in comfort and safety, while their country bled to death. Noel Monks, *Eyewitness. The Journal of a World Correspondent* (Stratford-on-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1956), 69.

health, and in the process he examined Hemingway as well. Ernest's blood pressure and cholesterol were both dangerously high. He was placed on a strict diet that also cut way back on his alcohol intake. For good measure he was to abstain from sexual intercourse as well. The good doctor vetoed the Africa trip out of hand. The trip would disintegrate into a protracted and pointless stay in Paris before a mid-winter return to America.

It was during this journey that Hemingway had an encounter that can only be characterized as bizarre. The famous Basque novelist Pio Baroja was on his death bed in his Madrid apartment, cared for by his nephew the famed social historian Julio Caro Baroja. According to the latter, Hemingway requested a meeting with Don Pio and his emissary was told that the patient was in no condition to receive visitors. Nevertheless, Hemingway insisted and turned up on October 9 with Spanish journalist/academic Castillo-Puche and a photographer in tow. This was a further aggravation since, as Caro Baroja noted in his memoirs, Castillo-Puche had previously irritated both himself and his brother with criticisms.[107] There is even some question whether the whole thing was orchestrated by the future author of *Hemingway in Spain* for his own purposes.[108] The always informal Ernest, wearing an unaccustomed coat and tie, left gifts of a cashmere sweater and pair of socks, an autographed copy of *The Sun Also Rises* and a bottle of scotch in the sick room of the near comatose writer. The photographer snapped a classic picture of the two authors.[109]

Hemingway owned seven of the Basque's books and he proceeded to tell Baroja,

> Don Pio, I've been wanting to come to see you for a long time, because I feel I owe you a great debt of gratitude. I've never forgotten how much I owe you, how much all of us who have read your books owe you….To us younger

107 Julio Caro Baroja, *Los Baroja* (Madrid: Taurus, 1972), 545 [*Los Baroja*].
[108] José Luis Castillo-Puche, *Hemingway in Spain*: *A Personal Reminiscence of Hemingway's Years in Spain by His Friend* (New York: Doubleday, 1974). Castillo-Puche claimed that he was Ernest's best Spanish friend (rather that Ordóñez!). The book was the English edition of his earlier work *Hemingway entre la vida y la muerte*. The anonymous Spanish censor of that work commented that, while pretending to be a definitive biography, Castillo-Puche was incapable of producing one since, "C.P. writes incorrectly, as always, but, as always as well, with literary verve that makes it a passionate account." The censor added that the book was based on hear-say and secondary sources, yet "To believe Castillo Puche, no one has understood Spain like Hemingway, not even the Spaniards…" Douglas Edward Laprade, *Censura y recepción de Hemingway en España* (Valencia: Biblioteca Javier Coy d'estudis nord-americans, Universitat de València, 2005), 88 [*Censura*].
[109] Meyer, *Hemingway*, 512.

> writers, you were our master, and we learned so much from your works and from the personal example you set us…
>
> I'm convinced that you deserve the Nobel Prize, much more than many writers who won it—myself first of all, for I am more or less just another of your disciples.[110]

Pio Baroja died on October 30 and Hemingway not only attended the funeral but wrote an elegiac description of it. When asked to be one of the pallbearers he refused, saying that the honor pertained to Spaniards.[111] Caro Baroja mentions none of this and concludes that much of the meeting between the two writers was subsequently mythologized by others into a genuine exchange of views. According to Julio, his uncle said nothing (and Caro Baroja little) during the encounter and was too far gone to even remember Hemingway or the gifts.[112]

Then, in 1959, on what would be his last trip to Spain, Ernest visited the town of Mundaka (Bizkaia), accompanied by his latest young secretary (and "companion"), Valerie Danby-Smith,[113] to pay his respects in the local cemetery at the tomb of Don Black. They were likely accompanied by Duñabeitia.[114] The Basque painter and Mundaka native Juan León Cruzalegui claimed that the protagonist of *The Old Man and the Sea*, Santiago, might be based upon Indalecio Tribisarrospe--a consummate loner commercial fisherman in Mundaka whose portrait Cruzalegui happened to paint. He speculates that Untzain might have told Hemingway about the Basque fisherman. He also repeats the rumor that Hemingway visited Indalecio's tomb, as well as Untzain's.[115] In the event, according to Jiménez, Ernest certainly never based Santiago on Indalecio and, if he had ever even heard of the Basque fisherman, he ignored that nearby grave while paying his respects to

---

[110] Quoted in *Ibid*.
[111] Laprade, *Censura*, 57.
[112] Caro Baroja, *Los Baroja*, 545-46.
[113] Ironically, while attending Ernest's funeral in Ketchum two years later, she met his youngest son, Greg, and they subsequently married—making Valerie mother of some of Ernest's grandchildren. Gregory Hemingway, *Papa*, 118. Edorta Jiménez published an article on the Hemingway visit to the Mundaka cemetery in which he states that Mary was Ernest's companion that day. Edorta Jiménez (unsigned), Hemingway en Mundaka, in *Hemingway y Urdaibai* (Mundaka, Urdaibai Txatxi, 2000), 35-36. [Hemingway]. However, Jiménez subsequently changed his opinion and now believes that it was Valerie. He also added the probability that Duñabeitia was along as well (personal communication from Edorta Jiménez to William A. Douglass, 2015).
[114] Jiménez further describes the portrait of Hemingway and Duñabeitia that hangs today in Bilbao's Museum of Fine Arts. It was painted about 1951 (probably from a photograph) by the Basque artist José María Ucelay.
[115] Juan León Cruzalegui, Un cura, un pescador, un escritor, *Laurak Bat*, No. 34 (Agosto, 1967), 2.

Untzain.[116]

Then, too, there is the painting of Ernest Hemingway and Juan Duñabeitia. The Bizkaian artist José María de Ucelay Uriarte did individual portraits of both men and then painted them together in a work regarded by some as Ucelay's best. It was shown in several exhibitions and currently forms part of the permanent collection of Bilbao's Museo de Bellas Artes. Some believe that the two subjects sat for their portrait somewhere along the Bizkaian coast. That, however, is impossible since it was completed by 1951 and neither man could have entered Spain at that time. The portrait was likely painted from a photograph.[117] So if Ernest created numerous legends about himself; in the cases of the stories surrounding the Cruzalegui and Ucelay paintings we have excellent examples of the reverse—how others have created legends about Hemingway.

Neither Martha Gellhorn nor Ernest Hemingway ever really related to Basque nationalism per se. While it is true that their Basque friends were "Loyalists," it was clear that their first loyalties were to an independent Euskadi (witness their request for information regarding President Aguirre's whereabouts) rather than to the Spanish Republic that so appealed to the Hemingways. In her "Night Before Easter" story Gellhorn refers to everyone singing Basque Spanish Civil War songs followed by a moving Basque one. She tells us,

> Then we sang the Basque hymn which is great music and when you sing it, or hear it sung, you wear a respectful face no matter how drunk you might be. It is a straight-rising, solid, brave and tragic song and they always sing it with pride and in mourning. To hear it makes you want to cry and it makes shivers go up and down your back and you can easily see how people who invented a song like that and sing it so beautifully would love their land.[118]

Jiménez notes that we shall never know which song she meant, but believes that it was probably either "Agur Jaunak" or "Gernikako Arbola."[119] The latter seems more likely given that it has served as the Basque national anthem since it was written in the nineteenth century, and Gellhorn makes clear reference to love of country. It might also be noted that

[116] Jiménez, Hemingway, 36-37.
[117] *Ibid*, 49-50.
[118] Gellhorn, *The Heart of Another*, 36.
[119] Jiménez, *San Fermingway*, 123.

Basque popular songs of the epoch were often quite political and the singing of them an act of political defiance against Franco's regime.

It seems unthinkable that Duñabeitia and Untzain, two men who were exiled in Cuba more for their Basque nationalism than Spanish republicanism, failed to try to convert (or at least inform) the Hemingways during their many intimate days and evenings at Finca Vigía. If so, they clearly failed. Indeed, more than thirty years later, or in a letter sent to her brother Alfred from London and written on November 11, 1975, Gellhorn noted,

> Last evening 3 young Basques were here. They reminded me of the bravery, passion and total illogic of Spaniards though, as they insist, they are not Spaniards; a different race. The brother of one is in jail under death sentence being the leader of ETA, *nom de guerre* Wilson.[120]

Ernest regularly referred to San Sebastían and Bilbao (not to mention Pamplona) as Spanish cities.

Hemingway biographers are largely silent on the subject of Hemingway's understanding of Basque nationalism or, at times, simply got it wrong through erroneous deduction. An egregious example of the latter is the comment by Jeffrey Meyers regarding the move to Idaho. After noting that Ernest spent part of the fall and winter in the Sun Valley area between 1939 and 1941, and again in 1946 and 1947, before buying a house in Ketchum in 1958, Meyers notes,

> A number of Basques—who had a reputation for being tough and anarchic, and had opposed Franco during and after the war—farmed the land around Sun Valley and provided another attraction.[121]

The reality is that, for the most part, the Ketchum-Sun Valley Basque Americans were American-born descendants of former sheepherders rather than immigrants (by this time most Spanish-Basque immigration into the United States had been interdicted for two decades by restrictive American immigration quotas). Idaho's Basque Americans were both careful and conservative regarding the Spanish Civil War, particularly given the support of Franco's "crusade" by the American Catholic Church. Indeed, there is little evidence of

[120] Moorehead, *Selected Letters*, 419.
[121] Meyers, *Hemingway*, 343.

Hemingway relating that much to farmers in the Basque Country either. His intimate relations with Basques were mainly Cuba-grounded and entailed the educated ex-patriots (like himself) Duñabeitia and Untzain, on the one hand, and several extremely well travelled and cosmopolitan pelotaris, on the other.[122]

III

In 1970 Mary Welsh Hemingway (Ernest's fourth wife and widow) published the posthumous "novel"[123] *Islands in the Stream*.[124] Much of the writing was completed by 1950 and the work was meant to be one part of a pretentious trilogy, a Hemingway *opus magnus* (*a la* Tolstoy or Proust). In the event, most of the trilogy would remain unwritten as Hemingway became distracted along the way with projects like *The Garden of Eden*, *A Moveable Feast* and *The Dangerous Summer* (all of which were published posthumously as well).

There was the increased notoriety after winning both the Pulitzer and Nobel prizes that made it increasingly difficult for Ernest to protect his writing space from the social demands of his celebrity image. Then, too, he became more embroiled (largely through formation with Hotchner of a formal business partnership) with film and television projects, as well as in abortive anthologizing of parts of his previous work.

For the last decade of his life Ernest moved among all of his major writing and business projects, changing from one to another periodically but without ever effecting closure. As his health and capacity to concentrate evaporated such multi-tasking would eventually deteriorate into writer's block.[125] Hotchner recounts how he first came to read a preliminary draft of part three of *Islands in the Stream* in 1960,

[122] Ironically, it was the "normalization" of relations, effected by the Eisenhower administration, that created the possibility for Untzain and Duñabeitia to return to their homeland. They did so, probably in 1954. By then both men were seriously ill with heart problems and neither would survive for long.
[123] In reality it is three novellas set in Bimini and Cuba, but without much of a common thread other than the presence of the protagonist Thomas Hudson (another of Hemingway's alter egos) in all of them.

[124] Ernest Hemingway, *Islands in the Stream* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970) [*Islands in the Stream*].
[125] Reynolds, *Hemingway*, 292-302, *passim*.

> Ernest and I drove into Havana and had one daiquiri each at the Floridita and then Ernest went to the bank to get a manuscript out of the vault. It was a short novel called *The Sea Chase*, which Mary thought could be made into a good motion picture, and Ernest wanted to know what I thought. Across the top of the first page, and above the title, he had written in longhand, "The Sea (Main Book Three)," which indicated that this was the sea section of what he had always referred to as his "big book," or "blockbuster," a work that was to have had three parts to it: the land, the sea and the air.[126]

Hotchner loved it, agreed with Mary, and then,

> When I told Ernest my reaction, he said he guessed he had better reread the manuscript. After Honor [his secretary] had read it to him, he said, uncertainly, "Some things I ought to do to it. Maybe after the Paris book, if I can still see enough to write."[127]

Islands in the Stream is imbued with Basque (and Idaho) influences. In the initial novella, "Bimini," we meet Thomas Hudson (Hemingway) who is a semi-reclusive painter. He is dressing in his bedroom after toweling-off from a shower. Then, "He put on a clean pair of shorts and an old Basque shirt and moccasins…"[128]

Hudson is about to play angling host for both his close friend, writer Roger Davis, and his own three sons from previous marriages. In a conversation with another visitor, because of his near solitude on the island, Hudson is accused of having possibly become "A victim of sheepherder's madness."[129] We readers are then regaled with descriptions of a fistfight, several baseball metaphors (Hemingway was a major fan of both boxing and baseball), target practicing and the dispatch with a rifle of an enormous hammerhead shark, detailed descriptions of angling encounters and the almost endless drinking scenes (all the action seems to begin or end with cocktails).

We are told that Hudson owns a ranch in Montana. Both the painter and writer have agents in New York and reminisce over being a part of the Paris scene in the 1920s (shades of *A Moveable Feast*). Then there is Big Harry–the suicide gentleman that intended to form a mutual self-destruction club in the Bahamas. Thomas recounts, "We all called him Suicides

[126] Hotchner, *Papa Hemingway*, 244.
[127] *Ibid*.
[128] Hemingway, *Islands in the Stream*, 12.
[129] *Ibid*, 24.

by then so I said to him, 'Suicides, you better lay off or you'll never live to reach oblivion.'"[130]

"Bimini" ends with Thomas receiving the tragic news that his two now-departed youngest sons had just been killed along with their mother in an auto accident near Biarritz.[131] On his way to the memorial service crossing the Atlantic in a passenger ship he immerses himself in reading and drinking whiskey. At one point he questions, "What the hell do you suppose she was doing at Biarritz? ...At least she could have gone to St. Jean de Luz."[132]

"Cuba" opens with Thomas in a bedroom engaged in reading correspondence and a more than two-page monologue directed at his cat "Boise." One letter is from a woman and Hudson muses, "She's a bitch, Boise," and then adds, "They'll scratch the hell out of you, Boise… Womens don't like them [men]. It's a shame you don't drink, Boy. You do damned near everything else."[133] The cat is a major protagonist in the whole first section of the novella, and its fragile well-being is both Thomas's prime concern and the metaphor for dark times to come.[134] This novella regards the preparations in the run up to the Operation Friendless U-boat patrols and Thomas addresses "Boy" when he wants to impart technical information (that would otherwise be too esoteric for his human interlocutors in this story). It is Boise who misses him when Hudson leaves the finca, prompting everyone to feel sorry for the cat ("Poor Boise").[135]

Thomas has recently received news that his eldest and only remaining son Tom had been killed while serving in Great Britain's Royal Air Force. This comes out during barroom banter with an acquaintance who then asks Hudson what he plans to do for the rest of the day? "I'm going to eat over at the Basque Bar with a couple of characters and then we're all

[130] *Ibid*, 157.
[131] *Ibid*, 195.
[132] *Ibid*, 198.
[133] *Ibid*, 203.
[134] *Ibid*, 203-18.
[135] *Ibid*, 24-43. It might be noted that in 1951 Hemingway had a cat at the Finca Vigía that he called "Sun Valley" and in 1955 another named "Boise." The latter would appear to be the feline protagonist in *Islands in the Stream*. Hotchner, *Papa Hemingway*, 71; 158. Mary Hemingway rejoiced in 1953 over Boise's recovery from a heart attack and called him "one of the world's most sophisticated cats in his food preferences—no mere carnivore." Mary Welsh Hemingway, *How It Was* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), 311. [*How It Was*].

going to get laid." "Where are you going to have lunch tomorrow?" "At the Basque Bar."[136]

A man named Henry enters with a prostitute, Honest Lil, on his arm. He is infatuated with another small girl that he sees regularly at a local fronton, but he is enormous and so she fears becoming involved with him.[137] There then arrives a woman dressed in military uniform and on a one-day leave. She is a chanteuse and now an officer in the USO on her way to the European front. She was Thomas's lover (and one true life-long love) in Paris years earlier and is Tom's mother. The mystery lady remains nameless.[138] She and Hudson end up at his finca outside Havana where they have sex before he then informs her of Tom's death. There ensues considerable pointed conversation about their failed relationship (in this exchange Thomas's interlocutress seems most reminiscent of Martha Gellhorn). He tells her to take whatever she wants from the house, including a portrait of her that he had painted years earlier in Paris.

"Cuba" ends with Thomas leaving on an impromptu patrol mission. While being driven to his boat, he muses that he should make out a will leaving his Cuba house to the mystery lady. Hudson then tells himself,

> "Get it straight. Your boy you lose. Love you lose. Honor has been gone for a long time. Duty you do."[139]

We last see her languishing on Thomas's bed with Boise asking the cat what is to become of her, and her relationship with Hudson as well, once the full reality of Tom's death sinks in? The novella ends with her words,

> "Both of them," she said. "Boise, tell me. What are we going to do about it?"
> The cat purred imperceptibly.
> "You don't know either," she said. "And neither does anyone else." [140]

Part III of *Islands in the Stream* in entitled "At Sea." It begins with Hudson commanding his submarine hunters to go ashore to check out a settlement on a remote key near Cayo

[136] *Ibid*, 265.
[137] *Ibid*, 266.
[138] Meyers believes that she is inspired by Marlene Dietrich, a woman that Hemingway knew and admired. Meyers, *Hemingway*, p. 484. Thomas Hudson is actually married to a woman that is far away in the South Pacific covering the war as a journalist. He does not miss her.
[139] Hemingway, *Islands in the Stream*, 326.
[140] *Ibid*, 327.

Romano well east of Havana. Parenthetically, there is a factual Hemingway story that is related to the current one.

In the early 1930s he was a frequent visitor to the Cayo Romano region and had even explored and hunted on the vast key itself, guided by its legendary recluse—a man named Caciano. By 1933 Ernest's sojourns were common knowledge in the region. At the time that Cirules was collecting information for his book (late 1990s) there was an eighty-five-year old man, Naftalí Pernas, who claimed to have a map of a lost treasure buried somewhere in the area in the nineteenth century by pirates fleeing a Spanish patrol ship. It supposedly came from a Mallorcan who was one of the pirates.

After escaping their pursuers by sailing inshore into the keys the pirates were shipwrecked and buried their treasure. All then fled except for the Mallorcan. He became a life-long hermit in the Cayo Romano area and would sometimes speak of the treasure. He was a character that most of the region's residents failed to take seriously--the exception being the Bizkayan José Munilla. The Mallorcan, shortly before his death, permitted Munilla to make hand copies of the treasure documents.

The Bizkayan had a daughter, Rosina, who in 1933 was Naftalí's mistress (Munilla would later become his father-in-law). She was studying at the University of Havana at the time and Naftalí urged her to contact Hemingway to offer to sell him the documents. She found Ernest in the Floridita and at first he expressed some interest, but then declined. Part of her proposal was that members of her family be employed on the *Pilar* during the search, an idea that Ernest rejected politely. Ernest then suggested that they go together to another bar for a drink and then lunch together. She declined his proposition politely.[141]

"At Sea" begins with Hudson telling three Basques in the crew to wear their large sombreros as part of the ruse that they are scientists. There is the following exchange,

> "Someone has stolen my scientific hat," a heavy-shouldered Basque with thick eyebrows that came over his nose said. "Give me a bag of frags for science's sake."
>
> "Take my scientific hat," another Basque said. "It's twice as scientific as yours."
>
> ""What a scientific hat," the widest of the Basques said. "I feel like Einstein in this one, Thomas, can we take specimens?"

[141] Cirules, *Hemingway*, 30-32.

> "No," the man said. "Antonio knows what I want him to do. You keep your damn scientific eyes open."[142]

In the event, they discover the bodies of nine men and women in the shacks. They have been dead for at least a week. Hudson goes ashore to search the entire key's two shorelines for clues. Henry (Winston Guest), who we met in the bar with Honest Lil in "Cuba," is to walk one beach while the Basque Ara[143] is to do the same on the other. When Henry and Ara return they report finding a dead young German who had been executed. While they were unsure as to why, their find confirmed that the settlement had likely been exterminated by a U-boat crew that had somehow lost its submarine and commandeered a turtle-fishing boat. The object then becomes to find the German survivors and capture at least one of them for interrogation by the American authorities.

Hudson puts out to sea again and is frustrated when Peters, his radio operator, is unable to contact the Americans stationed at Guantánamo for backup. Hudson is at the helm and Ara offers him a drink of wine from a wineskin. He declines and asks instead for a bottle of cold tea. Ara goes in search of one, and "…Thomas Hudson was alone with the night and the sea and he still rode it like a horse going downhill too fast across broken country."[144]

At one point Hudson, Ara and Willie (a fictive trained American jungle fighter) leave their mother ship (battened down to ride out an impending storm) in a dinghy to search for an elusive channel that they have to negotiate in order to check out a possible hiding place

---

[142] Hemingway, *Islands in the Stream*, 332.

[143] Ara has been identified as pelotari Francisco ("Patxi") Ibarlucea. Fuentes, *Hemingway in Cuba*, 208. He plays a prominent part in "At Sea." It might be noted that right after meeting Mary Welsh in London in 1944 Ernest wrote "First Poem to Mary in London." In it he states (probably much to her confusion), "Then I am homesick for Paxtchi [sic] who took the armour from his cockpit so she would trim better in the sea and never dropped the drums of gas he sat on when we closed." Nicholas Gerogiannis, *Ernest Hemingway. 88 Poems* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/ Bruccoli Clark, 1979), 104. The "real-life" identities of the other Basques in *Islands in the Stream* are less evident. Both Ermua and Don Black were sometime participants in The Crook Factory and Operation Friendless, although neither appears explicitly in "At Sea." Jiménez, *San Fermingway*, p. 168. There is considerable congruence between this novella and Greg Hemingway's account of his and Patrick's participation in a real mission with their father. On that occasion they explored a cave in search of a German supply cache—but without success. They had no encounters with Germans, unlike Thomas Hudson and his crew. Patxi Ibarlucea and Ermua were both on Greg's trip and while the grenade-throwing Gil seems considerably younger than Felix Areitio, he may well be based on Ermua. Gregory Hemingway, *Papa*, 68-89.

[144] Hemingway, *Islands in the Stream*, 346.

on Antón Key--situated between Cayo Cruz and Cayo Romano,[145]

> In their dinghy the three of them had their raincoats wrapped around the *niños*. These were the Thompson machine guns in the full-length sheep-wool cases. The cases were cut and sewn by Ara, who was not a tailor, and Thomas Hudson had impregnated the clipped wool on the inside with a protective oil which had a faintly catholic smell. It was because the guns nestled in their sheep-lined cradles, and because the cradles swung when they were strapped open inside the branch of the flying bridge, that the Basques had nicknamed them "little children."[146]

In the course of their explorations they come upon a temporary camp where locals had dried cod for sale to Chinese merchants. The Germans had seized their catch, and it was likely that had forced one of the fishermen to serve as their guide,

> "Krauts eat 'em plenty codfish now on in," Willie said.
> "What language is that in?" [Thomas asked]
> "My own," Willie said. "Everybody has a private language around here. Like Basque or something. You got an objection if I speak mine?"[147]

The Germans seem bent upon reaching Havana where they could find help in escaping the island from Cuba's fascist fifth column. There ensues a cat and mouse game in which Hudson checks out several keys around Puerto Coco and Cayo Guillermo. At one point they find another dead German who has been abandoned by his companions and then ultimately discover the turtle boat at Cayo Contrabando camouflaged with mangrove foliage.

Hudson boards it with Willie and Peters (who knows German). They suspect that part of the submarine crew might be below deck--although some were clearly ashore, given that the dinghy is missing. After Peters orders the Germans to surrender and grenades are lobbed through the deck hatch, a lone German sentry, hidden in the foliage on the bow,

---

[145] Hemingway's constant quest for marlin in blue water is well-known. However, it is evident that he also engaged in inshore flats fishing (likely for species like tarpon and bonefish). Cirules praises Hemingway's attention to geographic detail and notes,

> "…above all, one can navigate throughout the Romano keys as if the novel were a veritable nautical chart…and penetrate the labyrinth of shallows, channels, shoals, mangrove swamps, lagoons, and confusing islets…" Cirules, *Hemingway*, 96.

I have fished on two occasions (for a total of several days) between Cayo Romano and Cayo Cruz and can testify personally that Hemingway had thorough knowledge of the area.

[146] Hemingway, *Islands in the Stream*, 374-75.

[147] *Ibid*, 380-81.

opens fire and kills Peters before being killed himself. They scuttle the boat and then decide to enter a tight channel that they must investigate in order to explore the shoreline. It is then that they end up in a brutal shootout after being fired upon by the Germans. But they have superior firepower and the Basque Gil distinguishes himself with long and accurate throws of grenades.[148]

The Germans are all killed, including one who came forward with his hands up. Ara had shot him compulsively in the heat of battle. So they had lost their prisoner and the mission was pretty much a failure. Hudson had been shot three times during the exchange and was now dying.[149]

As the boat heads for a nearby port in search of medical assistance for Thomas, it is clear that he will never make it. Willie is shouting at him, "I love you, you son of a bitch, and don't die." Thomas replies, "Try and understand if it isn't too hard." Willie's final words, and the last ones in *Island in the Steam*, are directed at Hudson—"You never understand anybody that loves you."[150]

IV

Coda

On the Importance of Being Ernest

("I never travel without my diary. One should always have
something sensational to read in the train." Oscar

---

[148] *Ibid*, 462-63.
[149] *Ibid*, 440-466, *passim*.
[150] *Ibid*, 466. Mary Hemingway claims in the opening "Note" of the book that she and Charles Scribner, Jr., worked together in editing the manuscript for publication and, whereas they made some cuts, "The book is all Ernest's. We have added nothing." One can't help but wonder, however, if Mary didn't write its last line! Meyers sums up the critical reception of the work as follows,

> The critics of this deeply flawed and at times preposterous book were essentially sympathetic and slightly uneasy, as if they regretted their inability to praise the final work of an acknowledged master. There was no concurrence about which part of the novel was best or worst, but they agreed that the main faults were the same ones that had plagued Hemingway since 1940: a self-indulgent rather than disciplined attitude to art, an excessive display of vanity and self-pity, a weak structure (the islands remained separate rather than attached to the mainland of the novel), a lack of aesthetic distance between author and protagonist, an inability to create a reflective character, a tendency to try to act out his fantasies instead of portraying them in his novels. Meyers, *Hemingway*, 484.

Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Act II)

According to most of his biographers, Hemingway was a difficult and self-centered man. He burned with alacrity through personal friendships, and particularly relationships with women.[151] For some he was a mendacious poseur. Charles Whiting, who was easily one of Ernest's most acerbic critics, notes that, whether in the First World War, the Spanish Civil War, or World War II, Hemingway was usually a latecomer to the fray, making infrequent and perfunctory visits to the front line, while later portraying himself as having been in the vortex of the action. Indeed, whether in Madrid's Florida hotel or London's Dorchester, the famed American writer expended much energy garnering a liquor and tobacco supply, while becoming a fixture of the local celebrity social circuit. He also exaggerated his war wounds and the injuries from his near endless succession of accidents, and was easily obsessed with his latest health issue.[152] Indeed, Whiting scarcely minced words when he labeled Ernest a "Hypochondriac and almost pathological liar."[153]

Hemingway was clearly given to blurring the distinction between his fictional alter egos and his own actions—even becoming the Brian Williams of his time.[154] Unlike Williams, however, who was relieved of his duties after being exposed, Hemingway's fabrications of his World War II exploits actually gained him a Bronze Star in 1947 for meritorious service as a war correspondent.

Michael Reynolds tells us that,

> When he [Hemingway] drank too much, which was more and more often, he was liable to say almost anything to anyone, and the less he respected someone, the more outrageous his mouth became. How many Germans did you kill, Papa? The number increased in direct ratio to his drinking. When the figure went past one hundred, most listeners stopped believing the stories.[155]

Then, too,

> More and more in his letters, Hemingway was rehearsing his biography, modifying here, exaggerating there, leaving a confusing trail of truths, half-

[151] Hemingway's four wives displayed considerable mutual respect as "survivors" of marriage with him.
[152] Whiting, *Papa Goes to War*, *passim*.
[153] *Ibid*, 4.
[154] Reference is to the NBC newsman who invented stories about his personal exploits while covering combat zones.
[155] Reynolds, *Hemingway*, 154.

> truths, and outright fantasies… Sometimes these stories were meant to be humorous, but they also had a manic edge to them.[156]

For the last two decades of his life it was no longer possible to be certain where to draw the line between Ernest's biography and his fiction,

> The question about these claims is not whether they are true or not, but why Hemingway felt compelled to invent and exaggerate them….maybe he could no longer tell the difference between what he imagined and previous reality. Or, more disturbingly, he was, perhaps, *becoming* his fiction.
>
> All of his writing life he was said to create male characters in his own image. While every author is present to some degree in his fictions, Hemingway was more open to this analysis than most because more was known about his active life. However, when one looked closely at his earlier fictions, there were always dissimilarities between himself and Jake Barnes, Frederic Henry, or Robert Jordan. Now, at fifty, no longer able to drink with the metabolism of his middle years, and intensely aware that his erratic blood pressure could, at any moment, blow a hole through a major artery, Hemingway was existential to the bone, breakfasting with death as a tablemate.[157]

Hemingway himself provides some insight on the quandary,

> A big lie is more plausible than truth. People who write fiction, if they had not taken it up, might have become very successful liars. As they get further and further away from a war they have taken part in, all men have a tendency to make it more as they wish it had been rather than how it was.[158]

In sum, despite his frequent claim that he wrote fiction *for* himself much of it was *about* Hemingway.

****

Lloyd and Tillie Arnold, his closest Idaho friends, each wrote their memoir of life with Ernest. They depicted him as a moderate drinker and both were at a loss to square the considerate and humble man that they knew and adored with the overbearing and problematic Hemingway that appears in most of the biographies and memoirs of others.

Shortly after his arrival in Ketchum, in 1958, Hemingway was approached by the pastor

---

[156] *Ibid*, 172-74.
[157] *Ibid*, 206.
[158] Aaron Edward Hotchner (editor), *The Good Life According to Ernest Hemingway* (New York, Harper Collins, 2008), 6 [*The Good Life*].

of the Catholic church in nearby Hailey and personally donated a new roof to the building. The persuasive priest then approached him with what Hotchner called,

> …an infinitely bigger donation: would Ernest come to the parish house and talk to the forty high school teen-agers who met there every other week. Ernest was stunned, in fact horrified, and tried to resist, but Father O'Connor finally induced him to come on the basis of no speech, only answer questions.
>
> Ernest fumed about it every day. "Why does a man who gives a roof have to make a speech?"
>
> "You don't have to make a speech, lamb," Mary would remind him, "just answer questions."[159]

Hotchner drove a distraught Hemingway to Hailey that day. Ernest refused the offer to stop at a bar for a fortifier, resolving instead to go in "cold turkey." In the event Hemingway and the kids got along fabulously. Hotchner recorded the questions and answers. When asked "All these stories you write about Africa—why do you like Africa so much?" Hemingway replied,

> Some countries you love, some you can't stand. I love that one [sic]. There are some places here in Idaho that are like Africa and Spain. That's why so many Basques came here.[160]

Indeed, Lloyd Arnold recalls that on his first trip with Hemingway down the Snake River Valley and across the Arco Desert "the gaunt mountains to the north of the plain reminded him of Spain."[161] Conversely, Mary Welsh Hemingway would recall her first exposure to the Basque Country with Ernest on his return to Spain in 1953,

---

[159] Hotchner, *Papa Hemingway*, 106.
[160] *Ibid*, 200.
[161] L. Arnold, *Hemingway*, 4. They were traveling with Gene Van Guilder, the publicity agent of the Sun Valley Resort. Arnold recalls,

> A blind man could see that Ernest was impressed with Gene. He obviously knew he was in sheep country, which meant there were lots of Basque people—the original imported herdsmen—so the two got into both Spanish and the difficult Basque tongue. Obviously most of it was unprintable. Listening to the guffaws, my impression was: This guy may be the great author Hemingway, but I like the big kid I see—a shrewd one, examining you subtly and carefully. *Ibid*, 6.

> …we pushed up obliquely to the Punto [sic] de Velate pass, 947 meters high, through the same forests of beech trees that Papa wrote about in The Sun Also Rises. On the bare brown slopes above the timber line Basque shepherds were tending their flocks. As in Idaho. From the top of the pass we saw a new range of mountains, blue, brown and barren, and Papa said happily, "Now there. That's Spain."[162]

Whoever Hemingway *was* (and everyone's complete biography is more nuanced than any one of its portrayals), it seems clear that Ernest was a loveable human being in his dealings with his Idaho friends. One suspects that his Cuban Basque intimates viewed him in similar fashion.[163] Indeed, there was crossover between the two circles in that Ernest invited Idaho fishing guide "Colonel" Taylor Williams[164] to fish annually in Key West and Cuba; while Juan Duñabeitia was Hemingway's guest on one occasion in Idaho. In 1953 there was a regular parade of Ketchum folk through the Finca Vigía.[165] Again, when Ernest

---

It is highly unlikely that either man knew more than a few Basque words, if any at all. Hemingway was, however, aware that Basques spoke unusual Spanish. In the novel *Islands in the Stream*, Hudson comments upon the interaction between the American Willie and the Basque Ara,

> They're a wonderful team. Willie learned that awful Spanish of his in the Philippines but they understood each other perfectly. Some of that is because Ara is a Basque and speaks bad Spanish, too. Hemingway, *Islands in the Stream*, 447.

A short time after their meeting, Van Guilder was killed by a shotgun blast in a tragic duck hunting accident. Hemingway wrote a beautiful eulogy that (in very uncharacteristic fashion) he delivered at the funeral. L. Arnold, *Hemingway*, 29-31.

[162] Mary Welsh Hemingway, *How It Was*, 326. While Mary was a gracious hostess to Ernest's Basque circle, her understanding of it was quite inferior to Gellhorn's. This is a little surprising since she was married to Australian journalist Noel Monks before marrying Ernest. Monks was the first of four foreign journalists (including Steer) in the town of Gernika after it was bombed. He even spent time in a ditch near there while being strafed by Heinkel 52 fighter planes. Monks, *Eyewitness*, 95-96. [*Eyewitness*]. He entitled a lengthy chapter in his book "Guernica and After" (89-117). It seems inconceivable that he did not bring up that subject (and the Basques) with his wife on multiple occasions. Greg Hemingway reports that his new stepmother, Mary, took control of Finca Vigía and "also learned Spanish quickly and well." Gregory Hemingway, *Papa*, 95. So she could communicate easily with Sinsky, Don Black and Ermua and again it is inconceivable that they did not attempt to win her over to the Basque cause. Nevertheless, in her memoir Mary reports an evening songfest while on safari in East Africa ten years after meeting Hemingway, "My contributions to the festivities were a few a cappella songs in Italian, Spanish and the only one I knew in Basque." *Ibid*, 356.

[163] Unlike the Arnolds, Hemingway's Cuban Basque friends penned no memoirs.

[164] Tillie Arnold reports that Williams was a simple and totally independent man who would never be anyone's sycophant, least of all that of a "celebrity." T. Arnold, *The Idaho Hemingway*, 42.

[165] Reynolds, *Hemingway*, 251.

and Mary travelled in Spain in 1959 it was with his Ketchum medical doctor and wife, Dr. George and Pat Saviers.[166]

Nor was the crossover limited to the human realm. We have noted the naming of Finca Vigía cats "Sun Valley" and "Boise." The latter was easily Ernest's favorite among the more than twenty Hemingway Cuban felines.[167] And then there was "Black Dog." According to Ernest,

> Black Dog is mostly a springer spaniel who wandered into our Sun Valley ski cabin one afternoon, cold, starved, fear ridden and sub-dog in complex—a hunting dog who was scared stiff of gunfire. I brought him back to Cuba and patiently and lovingly built up his weight, confidence, and affection to the point that Black Dog believed he was an accomplished author himself.[168]

There is no doubt that Boise and Black Dog shared the pinnacle within the pet hierarchy of the Hemingway household.[169] In a book review published in the *New York Herald Tribune* Ernest wrote, "I do not know what I will do if anything happens to Black Dog or Boise, just go on writing I suppose."[170]

There are several inklings of Hemingway's dealings with Idaho Basques. The Club Rio in downtown Ketchum was one of Ernest's preferred (if not *the* favorite) eating and drinking spots. Its proprietor, Gloria Batis, noted that Hemingway first greeted her in 1939 when she

---

[166] L. Arnold, *Hemingway*, 130-31.

[167] Mary Welsh Hemingway, *How It Was*, 170-71; 242; 267. Over time there were actually no fewer than 57 cats and twelve dogs at Finca Vigía. Carlene Fredericka Brennan, *Hemingway's Cats*, (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, Inc., 2006), xi [*Hemingway's Cats*]. It is sometimes stated that the cat "Boise" was named for the American naval cruiser *Boise*. *Ibid*, 165. However, there are problems with this view. In his military interests Hemingway was not particularly oriented toward the navy. Then, too, Baker lists the cat in his index under "Boise, Idaho." Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 384; 675.

[168] Hotchner, *The Good Life*, 22. Mary reported that Black Dog was larger than any of their Cuban ones so they did not challenge the "stranger" when he entered their realm. Black Dog's accustomed resting place for the next twelve years would be "at Papa's feet." Mary Welsh Hemingway, *How It Was*, 216.

[169] At least this was true during Mary's reign (*Ibid*, 51; 55; 115; 127-28; 135) Gellhorn was said to have abhorred his "ghastly collection of in-bred cats" that "roamed the Finca's interior at will and left their filth in odd corners." (Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 380). Brennan observes,

> It is clear from Hemingway's work in his novel *Islands in the Stream* that his cats represented loyalty and devotion to him. So, it is not surprising that three of his four wives [Pauline, not Martha, was excepted] were fondly referred to either as Kat, Kath, Cat, Feather Kitty, Katherine Cat, Kitten, or Kittner. (Brennan, *Hemingway's Cats*, 39).

[170] Quoted in *Ibid*, 135.

was shoveling snow with her sister outside her Ketchum restaurant and bar. He recognized that she was Basque and he was soon a regular diner. Gloria notes,

> He loved Basque food. He came to eat in the Idaho Club and after we bought the Rio Club in 1941, he came there…We used to cook his ducks for him. He liked pressed duck—he did the pressing—and he liked it served almost raw… We had botas out on the table and people had a lot of fun trying to drink out of them. Gary Cooper didn't know how to drink out of one and he would get it all over his shirt. Mr. Hemingway was good—I remember him one time drinking out of a bota and singing at the same time.[171]

The Rio was not Hemingway's only Ketchum Basque establishment. There was also the Tram Club owned by two Basques--Leon Bilbao and Paul Sugasa. Sugasa first came to America to herd sheep but ended up in Shoshone, Idaho, dealing cards for a Chinaman. In a personal card game with George Weinbrenner, owner of the Christiania Supper Club in Ketchum, he won enough money to enter into partnership with Leon Bilbao and they opened a bar/casino called the Tram Club. Sugasa referred to Hemingway as "my angel," and noted that Ernest came frequently to gamble, often bringing his celebrity friends. He and Paul once had a monumental drinking contest after Hemingway stated that "Bascos just thought they could drink a lot." There were many bets placed that were held by the bartender, Tony Mueller,

> It was straight shots and Paul thought it was vodka, but could not remember for sure. Paul said that he woke up at home the next morning and discovered that he had passed out around midnight. Tony told him the next day that Hemingway sat on his stool and continued drinking for another hour or two—and then walked away without showing any signs of being drunk.[172]

In 1959, when a hung-over Ernest was travelling south through Nevada on the first leg of his road trip to Key West after celebrating his birthday with friends in Ketchum, he was the overnight guest of Leon Bilbao's brother. Dan Bilbao was a former co-owner of the Boise Club in the Idaho capitol and was now a partner and gaming manager of Elko's major casino-hotel--The Stockmen's Inn. Ernest later wrote "Dan Bilbao and his wife gave us a

[171] T. Arnold, *The Idaho Hemingway*, 137.
[172] *Ibid*, 151.

fine time and a fine dinner and I was too tired to appreciate."[173]

Suzie Sproule, a waitress in the Tram, reported moving to Ketchum in 1947. Leon intimidated her and she didn't expect to last. But she did and became a great fan of Hemingway,

> I soon became acquainted with Ernest Hemingway because he liked to come in for a drink and to visit with Paul Sugasa or Leon. Usually he'd just throw his jacket on a chair and one night when he was leaving and talking to Leon, he said to me, "Does that son of a bitch get part of your tips? If so, I'm not going to tip." He was joking and we became good friends. He always tipped a quarter, which was very good in those days. Ten years later, and after I got married and had six kids, I'm starting to cross Main Street by the Ketchum Drug. I see this car stopping right in the middle of the road and a big man with a beard gets out and comes toward me with his arms out. It's Hemingway and I said, flustered, "I'm Suzie," and he said, "I know who you are. How are you?" I told him about the kids while his car blocked the road. But isn't that something? After ten years he recognizes me. He was one of the most thoughtful and kind men I have ever known.[174]

Tillie's book ends with the interview by researcher William Smallwood ("Conversations with George Saviers") regarding the disparity between the affection and respect of Ernest's Idaho friends and the arrogant stranger who appears in so many of the other published accounts about Hemingway. Saviers concludes that the latter must have stemmed from the many pressures of maintaining the demanding public image of a celebrity life and the excessive alcohol consumption that provided relief from them.[175]

---

[173] L. Arnold, *Hemingway*, 129.

[174] T. Arnold, *The Idaho Hemingway*, 151. Mary Hemingway reports that their last dinner was at the Christiania and that they were served by "Suzie" (likely Suzie Sproule given that she was "the long-ago object of Sinsky Duñabeitia's infatuation"). Mary Welsh Hemingway, *How It Was*, 502. There is a conflicting version by June Mallea who claims to have been their waitress that evening. While only twenty at the time, she was of Anglo descent and married to a Basque-American born in Twin Falls. According to June,

> I didn't care for Mary that much. It seemed like all she did was sit there and drink one martini after another. My image of her is trying to hit her glass with the little martini bleakers. Often she would only take two or three bites of her food while she got plastered on martinis. T. Arnold, *The Idaho Hemingway*, 228.

Mary would survive Ernest for a quarter of a century during which time she alternated between an apartment in New York City and the house in Ketchum where she continued to entertain her Idaho friends. She describes her decision to return to Idaho shortly after his suicide as follows, "I was grateful to be in Ketchum where I had more friends per square mile than anywhere else, people with no need for reaffirming their dismays and sympathies." Mary Welsh Hemingway, *How It Was*, 511.

[175] *Ibid*, 232-38, *passim*.

****

In his memoir *My Brother, Ernest Hemingway*, Leicester recounts the burial held on July 6 in the Ketchum cemetery. All of the pallbearers were locals and only about half of the dozen honorary ones were able to attend. But then, "Many other friends from far away had flown in to honor the man who had spent a lifetime writing about what he had learned of life, writing so simply and well that all men could understand some of what he had to say and be moved by it."[176] To occupy a graveside place even family members required a formal invitation, and beyond the fence there was a veritable media circus reporting the proceedings to the world. The concluding paragraph of Leicester's account reads,

> It would have been difficult for anyone present, knowing Ernest had seen the valley from that vantage countless times, to look around without thinking, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills." At the foot of Ernest's grave there is a simple marker. Beneath it rests the body of a Basque sheepherder.[177]

[176] Leicester Hemingway, *My Brother, Ernest Hemingway* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1962), 16.

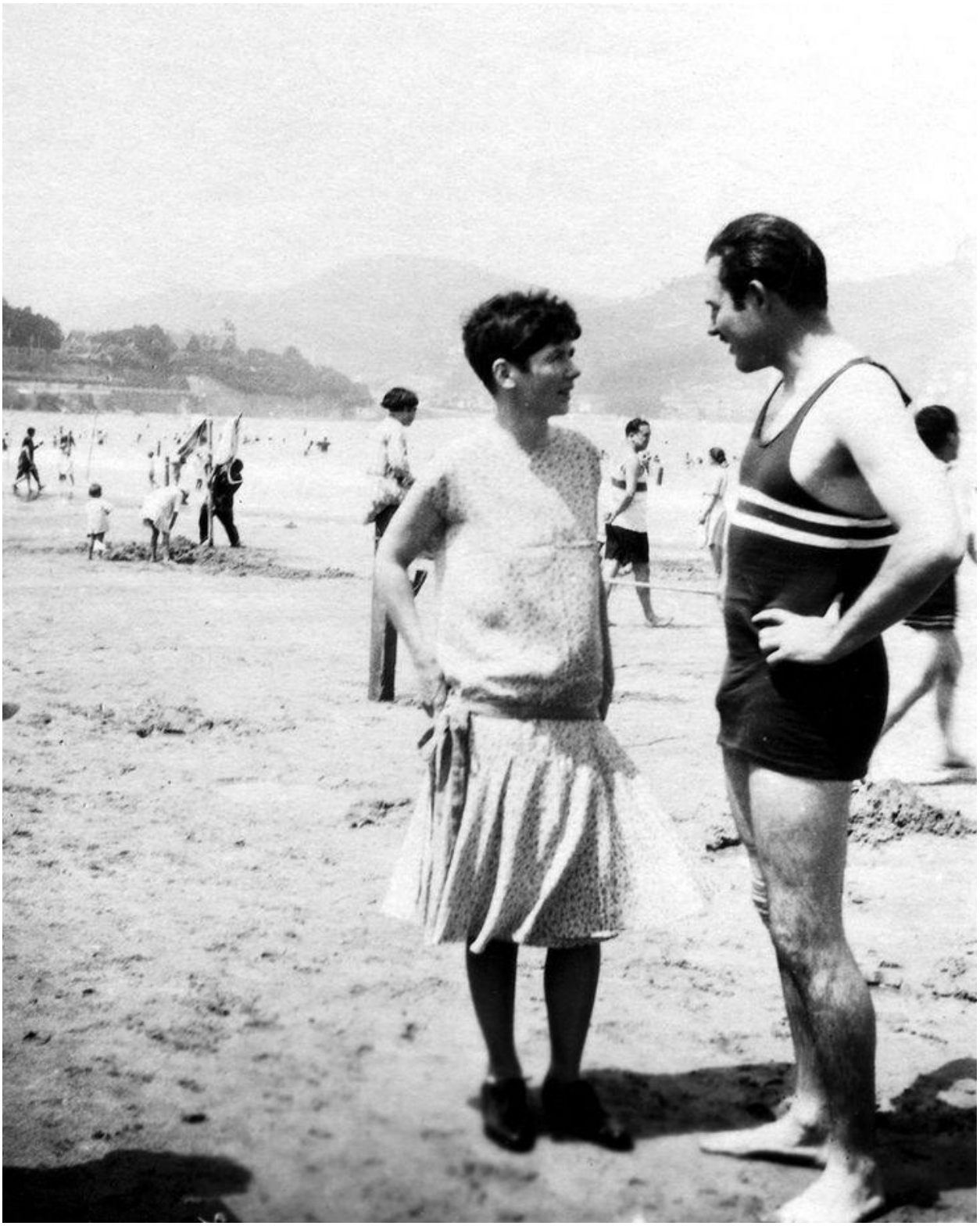
[177] *Ibid*, 18. If this were true it is no longer the case. However, the grave site now has mature pines that were not present at the time of the funeral and there is interruption in the file of graves at Ernest's feet. So the Basque herder's grave may simply have disappeared. What is of considerable interest, however, is the revelatory (and at times incongruous) clustering of graves around Ernest's. His last wife Mary (d. 1986) is buried next to him. Slightly below and to the right is the grave of son Jack (d. 2000). Above Jack there is the marker of his second wife, Angela Holvey Hemingway (who is still alive) awaiting her burial. Some forty or fifty feet from Mary's grave are those of Jack's first wife, Byra Louise Hemingway (d. 1988) and their daughter Margot Louise Hemingway--the film star that committed suicide in 1996 ("Free Spirit Freed"). Below Ernest's feet is the grave of his two intimate friends and Idaho biographers, Lloyd (d. 1970) and Tillie (d. 2005) Arnold. To their right is that of Dr. George Bates Saviers, M.D. (d. 1994), Hemingway's physician and friend, flanked by the graves of three other Saviers family members. Finally, below the Saviers's interments is buried Dr. Gregory Hancock Hemingway (d. 2001). In short, today Ernest Hemingway is surrounded by his last wife, two of his three sons (including hypercritical Gregory), both of his eldest son's wives, his tragic granddaughter by one of them and his closest Idaho friends and admirers. All survived Ernest and therefore somewhere along the way made the decision, or had it made for them, to share their own eternal rest with one of the planet's most famous authors.

Ernest and Mary Hemingway at Finca Vigía holding a kitten and puppy in jai alai wickers

Ernest Hemingway and "Don Black" (Father Andrés Untzain) in Havana explaining the game of jai alai to American troops. [Source: author]

Juan Duñabeitia, Suzie Sproule and Ernest Hemingway in Sun Valley.

Conversation Piece, Just Leisure (Hemingway and Duñabeitia)



Ernest and second wife Pauline on the famed La Concha beach in San Sebastián/Donostia
[Source: author]

Hemingway at an Idaho ranch, c. 1940s [Source: http://www.jfklibrary.org/~/media/assets/Audiovisual/Still%20Photographs/Ernest%20Hemingway%20Photograph%20Collection/EH04074P.jpg]

Hemingway house in Ketchum, Idaho
[SOURCE: http://mw2.google.com/mw-panoramio/photos/medium/17993708.jpg]

Bob Hoover, Post-Gazette
The front door of Ernest Hemingway's Finca Vigia, where dozens of writers, movie stars and longtime friends first had their first look at the writer's modest yet comfortable Cuban home. It was built in 1887.

[Source: http://3quarksdaily.blogs.com/3quarksdaily/images/2007/03/25/screenhunter_09_mar_25_1622.gif]

Hemingway statue in Pamplona[Source: https://c2.staticflickr.com/8/7102/7242570098_9b67b3a901_b.jpg]