

really moving fast you don't get on your knees, you just kind of squat and move along the rows."

As a result, Brown brought a special understanding to the occasion when he marched with Cesar Chavez in his campaign to organize the farm workers of the grape-growing Coachella Valley in 1969. His friendship with Chavez and his people has not endeared him to the big guns of the rival Teamsters, or to the big growers. He prefers it that way.

Although he eventually decided that his future lay elsewhere, Brown took well to the life of the novitiate. "It's disciplined, it's ordered. They had a little sign on the wall: five o'clock, rise . . . five-thirty, meditation . . . six-thirty, mass . . . seven-twenty, breakfast . . . eight o'clock, free time . . . eight-thirty, spiritual reading . . . nine o'clock, manual labor . . . ten-fifteen, Latin . . . and so on. And you don't talk. It is medieval. That's the idea."

Talk was a special privilege, permitted for twenty minutes after lunch, and for half an hour at night. "You talk in companies. Whom you talk with for that week will be on the board—like, Brother Brown, Brother Smith and Brother Finnegan. You make a thirty-day retreat the first year. You meditate for five hours a day, and you go eight days without talking at all. When I started observing silence I used to get a pain in my stomach. I liked to talk, and not talking was physically painful. But after a while you get used to it: you learn not to talk."

Perhaps because Brown learned when and how not to talk, good conversation remains one of his keenest pleasures. He has a \$70,000 canyon house in Los Angeles, modest enough by middle-class California standards. It is oriented inward to its own, semi-wild garden. Good wine, good dinners, good table talk are to be found there.

Brown, a bachelor, has made the gossip columns from time to time with show-biz dates like Natalie Wood (before her remarriage to Bob Wagner) and Norwegian star Liv Ullmann. He avoids political women, whom he finds excessively preoccupied with precinct lists, poll findings, ethnographic surveys, and so on. "I like women who are intelligent and sensitive and not taken up with all the technical distractions. The more you are able to cope with

your own reality, your own life, the more you're able to share with somebody else. Then love is more accessible and available."

At the novitiate, a long way in space and time from Hollywood, Brown had been immersed in silence, study, contemplation, and the hard physical labor of the Jesuit way. After two years he took the vows: poverty, chastity, obedience. He gave himself over to what the Jesuits call "spiritual formation according to the ideals of Saint Ignatius Loyola," the training which in fifteen years or so is expected to produce a Jesuit fit to go back into the world and convert it.

The inflexible rules of the order gave him full measure of the discipline he had been seeking. He quotes the Eleventh Rule: "Let him in all things seek his own greater abnegation and continual mortification." Not at all inconsistent with seeking high public office, provided you understand the Jesuit ideal as Brown sees it: "The Jesuit ideal is that you should prefer neither a long life nor a short life, neither riches nor poverty, neither health nor illness; it's all a matter of indifference. All you care about is the greater glory of God. You try to reach that state of mind. When you do, then you are ready for God to use you as his instrument."

"But you must take direct action. You can't just wait. The Jesuits say, 'You act as though everything depended on you, although you realize that everything depends on God.'"

"I don't think I have achieved this mental outlook, and I don't know that I ever will. But I haven't forgotten it. It's in the sense that your self has to diminish, that you try to transcend your own ego. That's the concept."

"Obviously in my structure of the world, when I deal with uncertainty, the unknown, I have certain habits of mind that I fall back on and rely upon. Are we here to manipulate objects or other people? I don't think so. That's not my driving force. I want to understand the world, fit into it, and make whatever splash and contribution I can."

A year and a half after taking the vows, Jerry's restlessness returned. Suddenly it seemed that withdrawal was no longer appropriate for him.

"I began to consider: I sit here in poverty, but it isn't real poverty. I don't buy anything, I don't own anything, but I don't have to worry about it, either. The mystical Three Degrees of Humility eluded me, too.

And chastity seemed like just another form of detachment and separation. I decided I wanted to get into the world."

Pat Brown, a practicing Catholic but not especially devout, greeted Jerry's decision with relief. He used to look around at the monastic surroundings and say fumblingly, "You know, this is all very nice, but, dammit, is it real?"

There was no pressure from the order to have Jerry stay. There was regret. The message was, "This is after all the highest calling. By giving it up you are rendering your own salvation in doubt."

To sever the link, Brown had to call in person on the provincial of the order, a formidable presence, in his office on Lyon Street in San Francisco, near the Presidio.

"It was one of those mornings when the fog was lifting, and the trees were dripping, and everything was fresh. I walked in and the provincial was sitting at his ornate desk. The only sound in the room was the slow ticktock of a big grandfather clock. Finally he said, 'When I hand you this piece of paper you are no longer a Jesuit. Are you sure this is what you want to do?' I was waiting for the heavens to open, and at that moment the big clock began tolling the hour. I took a deep breath, took the paper, and walked out."

"The book *Doctor Zhivago* had just come out, and Pasternak had those great scenes in there about the winter turning into spring, and the whole natural cycle. I could remember one of the lines, 'Man is born to live, not to prepare to live.' And I felt that kind of immediacy, of direct contact with life. 'Here I am, about to walk out on the street, I don't have to meditate, I don't have my cassock on, I don't have any vows, I'm ready, here I am!'"

It was 1960, the era of the beatnik in San Francisco, the time when those bohemian precursors of the flower children were doing their thing in North Beach. Brown walked there, savoring the world. He went into a bar. He had a beer. He listened to poetry being read to a background of jazz.

Soon Brown gravitated to Berkeley and the campus of the University of California there. He took courses in English literature, flirted awhile with psychology until he decided it wasn't worth the bother, and completed enough additional Latin and Greek courses to get his degree in classics.

He dated pretty girls. He lived at the Inter- (Continued on page 197)



**LOOK OUT! THIS
JERK'S HEADIN'
RIGHT FOR US!!**

Aw, relax, fella. While it does look like the oncoming '59 Chevy is going the wrong way down a San Francisco freeway, it really isn't. So keep your eyes on the road—a rational explanation follows.

The '59 Chevy, see, is actually going the right way. It's just that the car is built backward, a statement of self-expression by Phil Garner, conceiver and executor. It required 250 man-hours of planning and labor, the aim being a fully operational, drivable car. "It's a tribute to the American automobile," says Garner. "Also to the American public, whose demand for the unique makes such things possible."



Body-change operation: In these three pictures the chassis is turned around. Vacuum-operated wipers were installed on the rear window, which now, of course, becomes the windshield. Any questions so far?



In addition, a tail pipe was attached under the original front bumper; battery, radiator, and engine were relocated in what was the trunk; a Volkswagen gas tank went in under the hood, the front of the car.



Work in progress: This is Garner making headlights out of tail-lights. Clips hold the lenses up so the Chevy can drive at night.



Here, the new steering wheel and the old (left). Old passenger seat is occupied by the driver.



Road testing the Chevy: These pictures show the backward car completing a left turn. Garner drove, lived to tell about it, reported the steering a bit weird. In any event, heads turned, eyes rolled, everyone gaped a lot.



Fill 'er, er, up: The attendant thought Garner showed up in reverse. Informed, he dutifully serviced the tank under hood, cleaned rear window.



Assorted reactions: Garner sat in the driver's seat and wore a mask with a painted face on the back of his head. He overheard these comments: "You ought to drop a three-twenty-seven in it, man," said a kid from a local garage; "You see everything in Sausalito," said a cop; "An accomplishment," said an old woman.



End of the road: Even though the Chevy conformed to highway codes, it was stopped by police on numerous occasions. The car was legal, yes, but hard to handle. After these pictures were taken, Garner buried the car in a secret place, forever. And so it went.