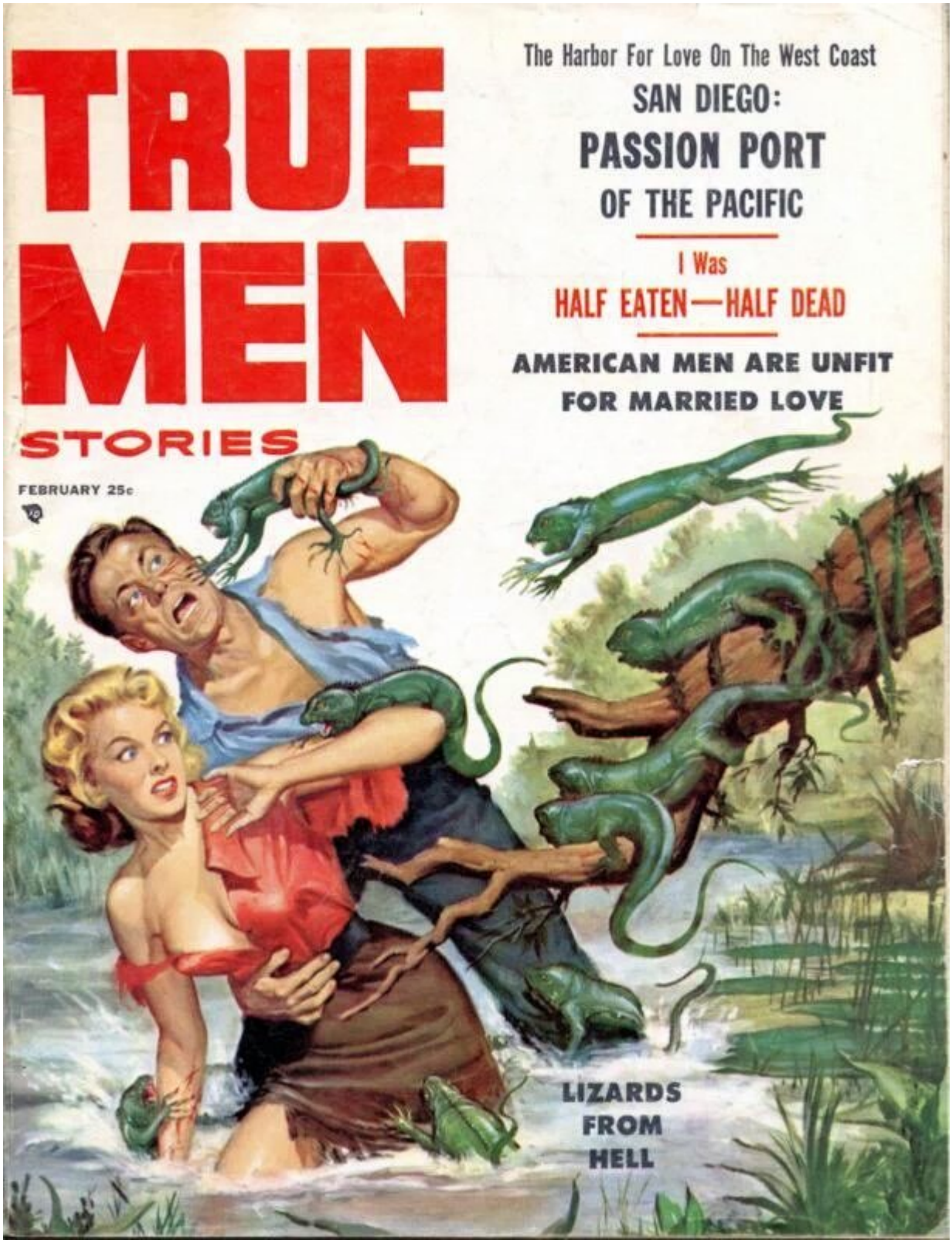
Twitter Thread by Pulp Librarian



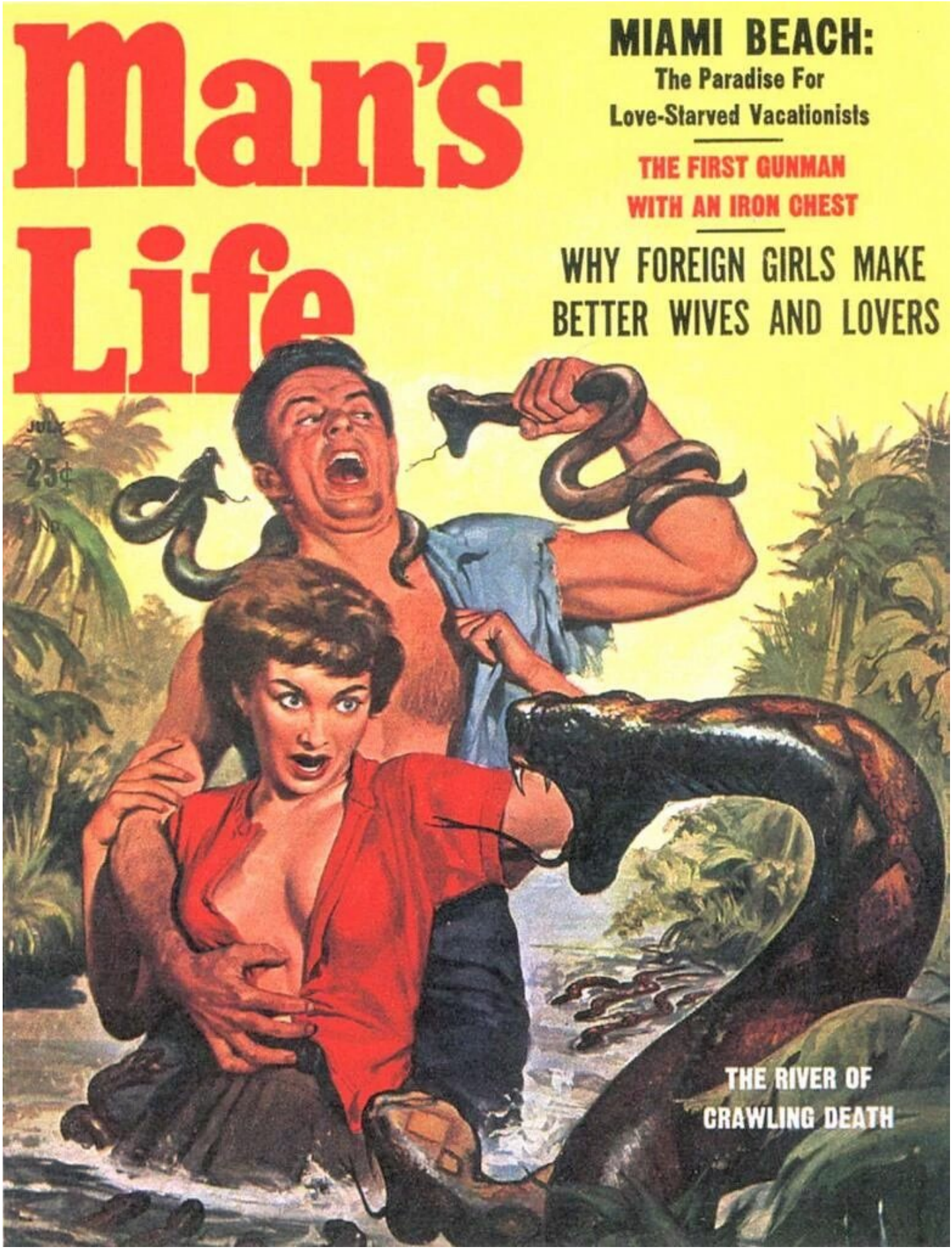
Pulp Librarian
@PulpLibrarian

Many readers have asked me "why do so many pulp covers feature women in ripped red blouses standing in swamps while a man fights off an unusual animal attack?"

The answer is artist Will Hulsey...



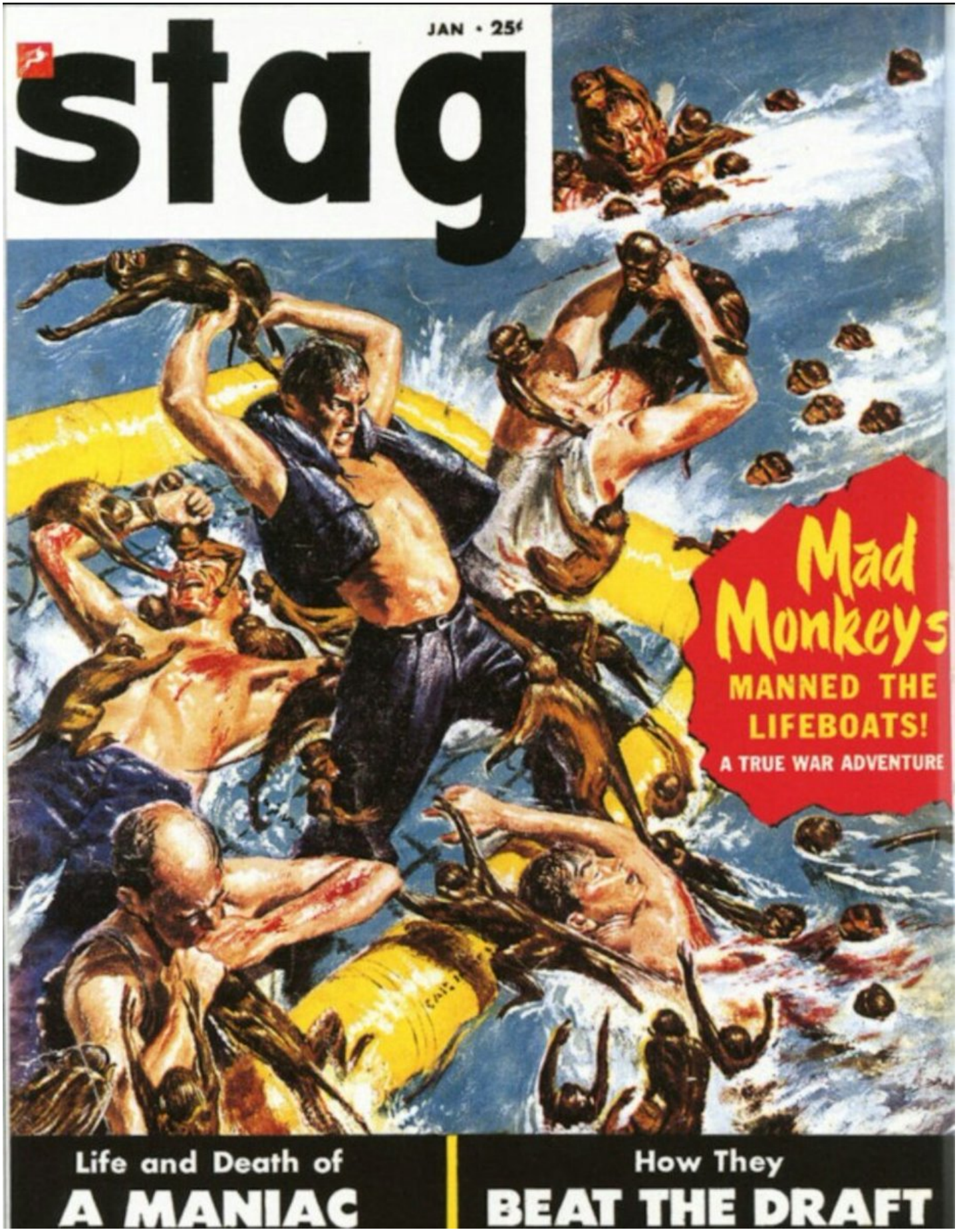
Will Hulsey was the undisputed king of the animal attack pulp cover. You name it, he'd paint it attacking you in a pool of stagnant water.



Very little is known about Will Hulsey, but he worked on a number of men's pulp magazines in the 1950s and early 1960s including Man's Life, True Men, Guilty, Trapped and Peril.



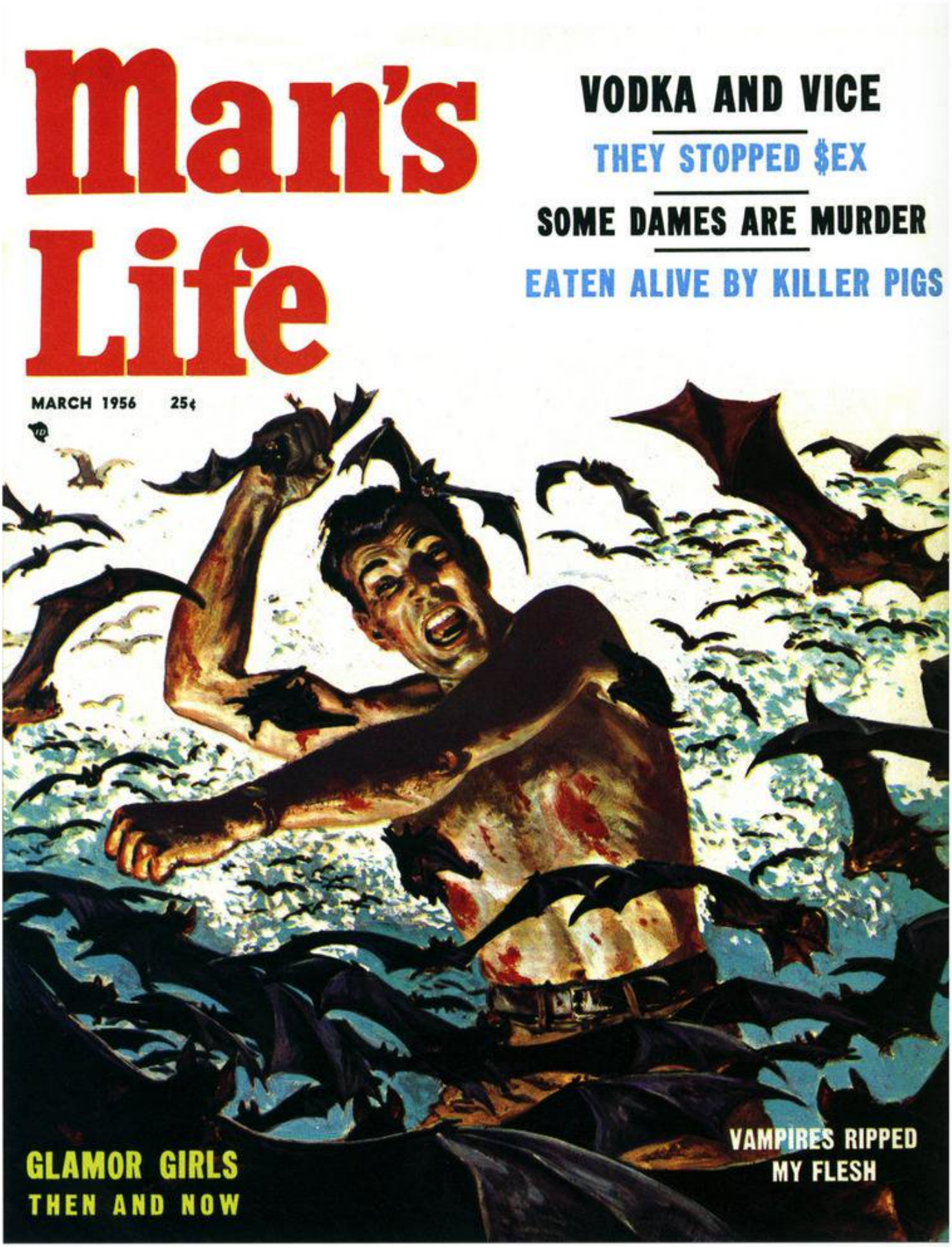
Their audience was ex-GIs: during WWII the US Council of Books in Wartime had given away over 122 million books to American servicemen to read; this led to a post-war surge in paperback and magazine sales amongst these newly enthusiastic readers.



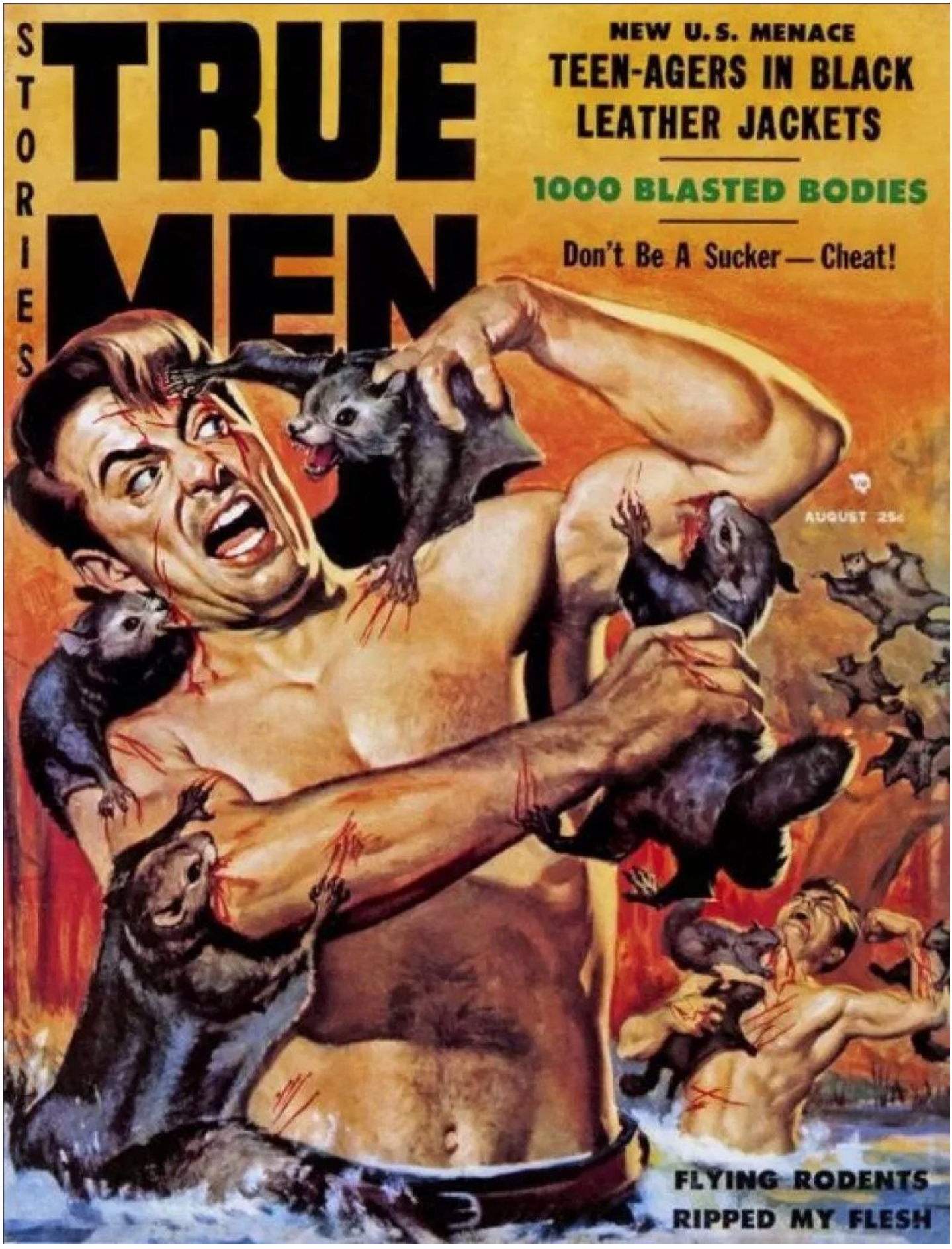
As a result the 1950s saw a raft of men's pulp magazines being published to tap into this market - almost 200 different titles!



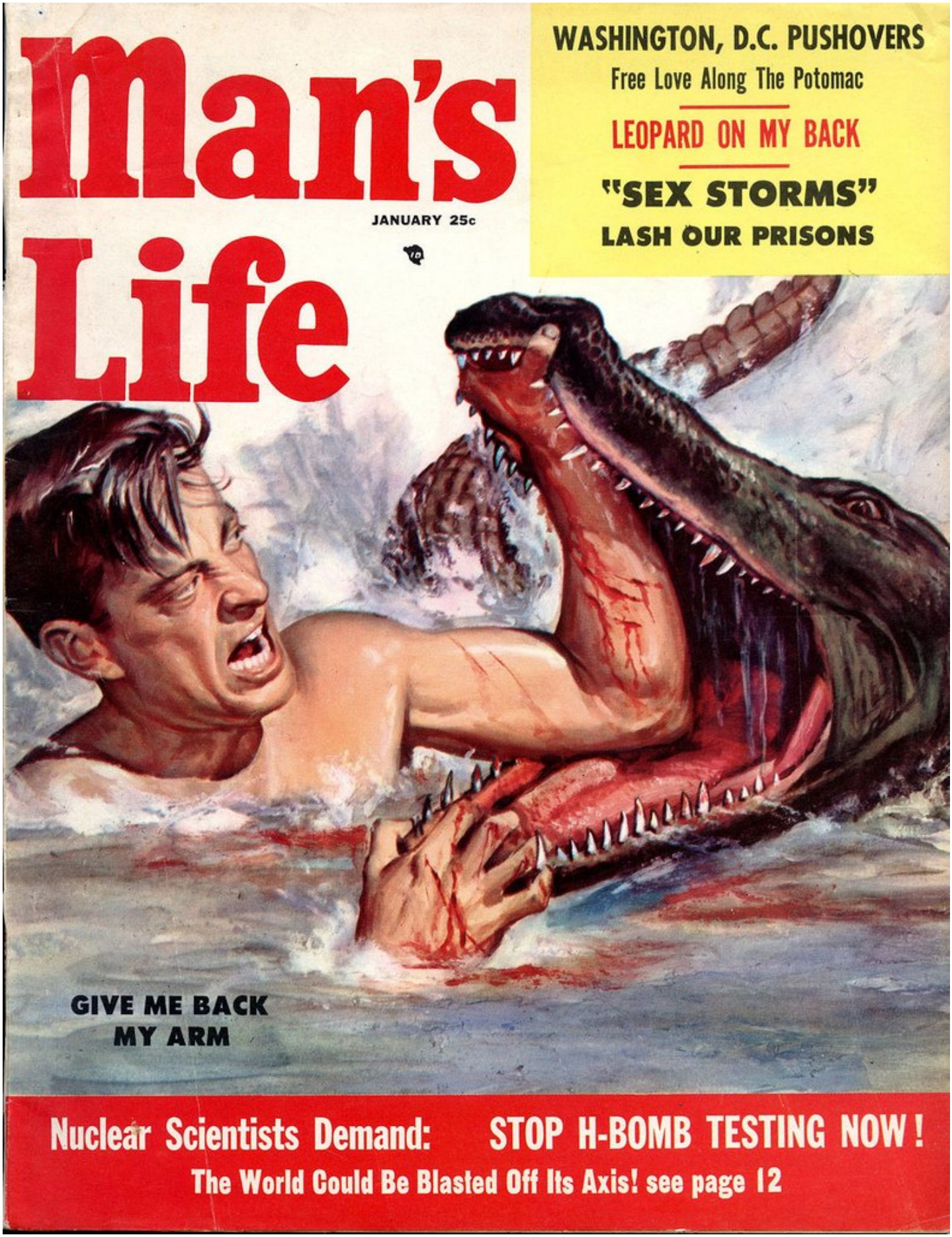
For some reason the most popular types of story in the late 1950s were tales of men surviving attacks by vicious animals - the more unusual the better. Many pulp artists did their best to paint them.



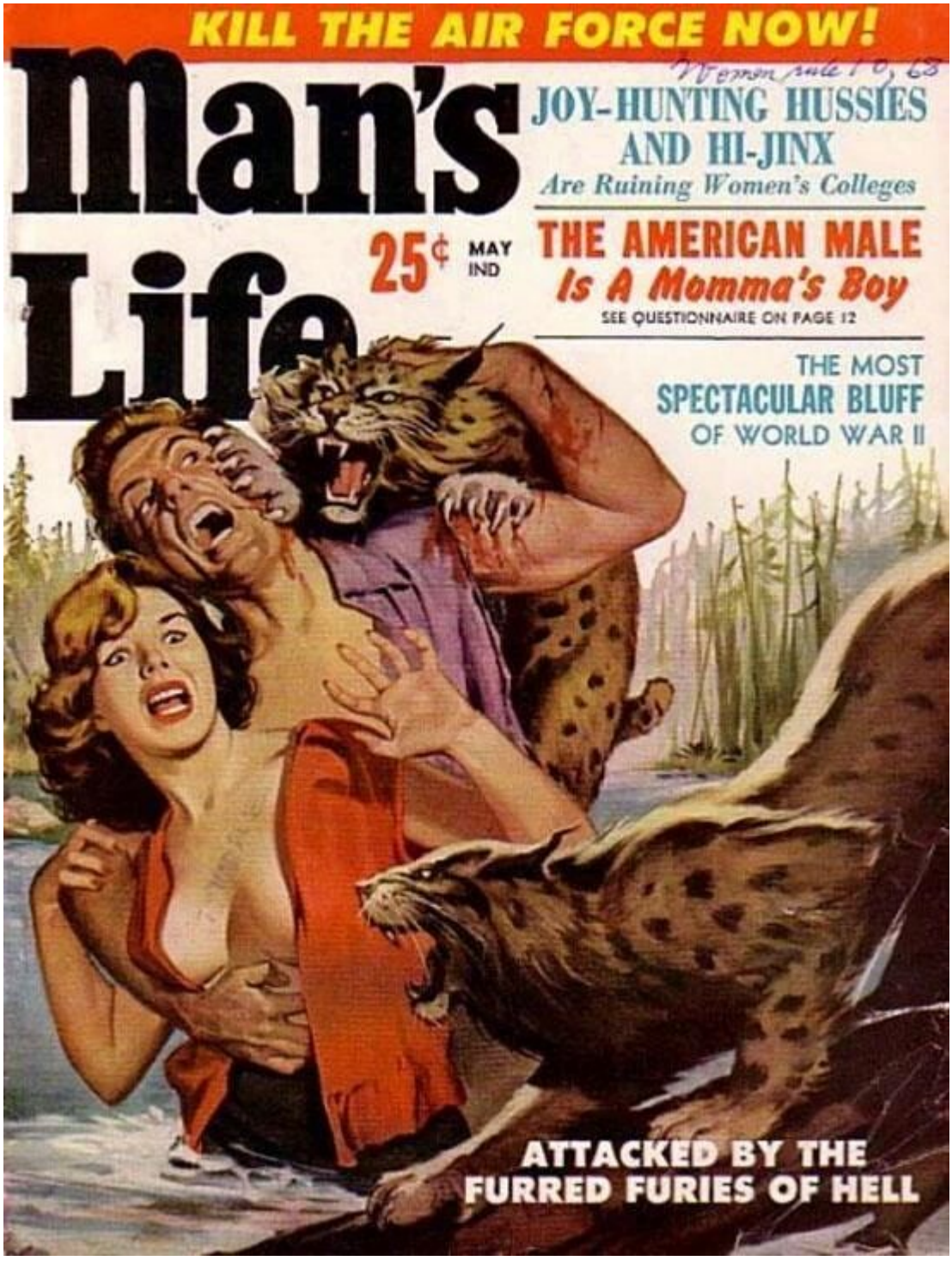
But painting magazine covers is hard work, especially at speed, so many artists worked to a formula - often set out by the publisher. Will Hulsey certainly perfected his.



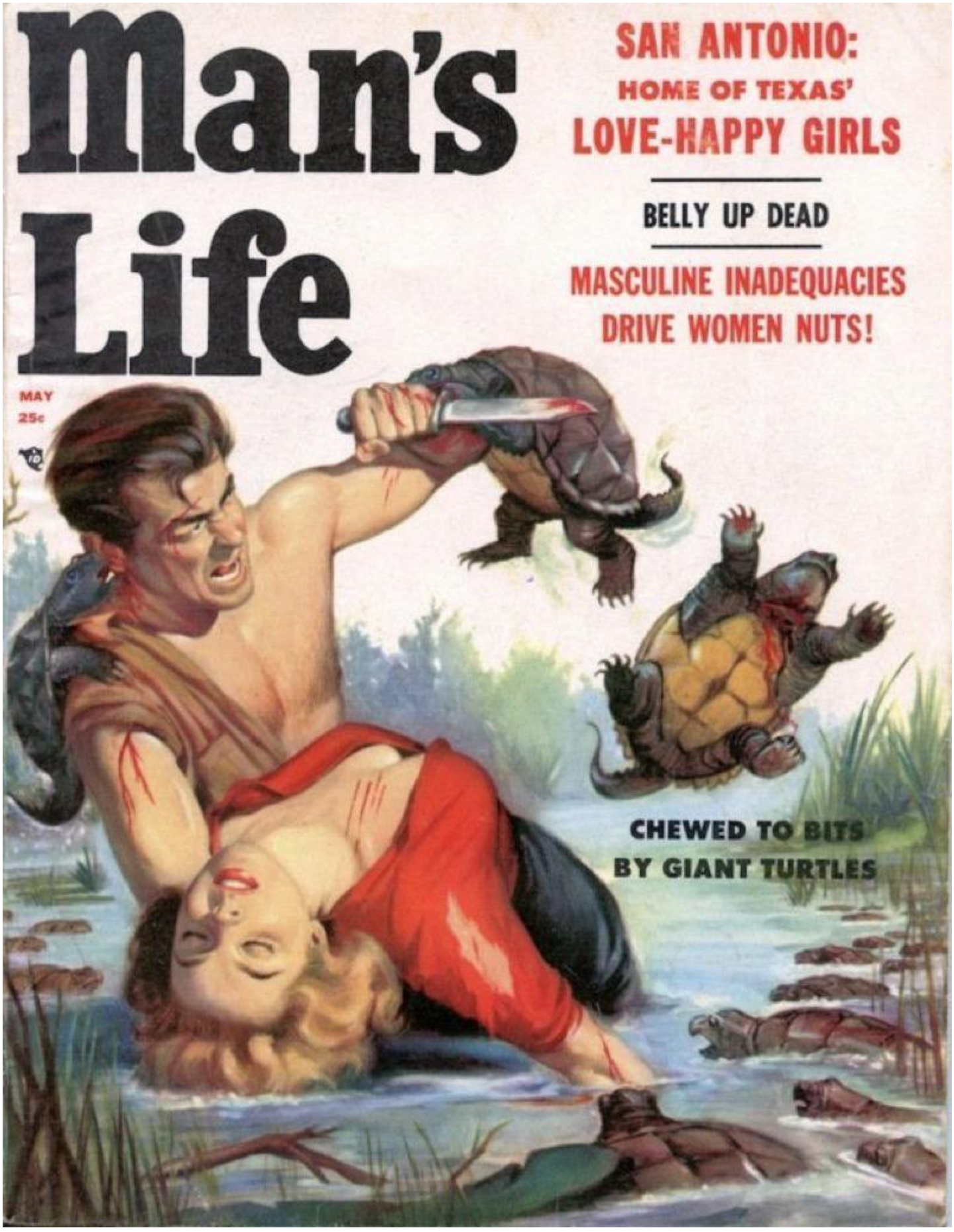
The main male character in a Hulsey cover generally looks a bit like David Bowie. Artists would often use photos of the same model for various covers and the 'Bowie' model clearly worked for Will.



Next there would be a woman in a button-popping ripped red blouse. Bright red, like bright yellow, is a stand-out colour which is eye-catching on a cover - especially if you're not sure how the blouse is staying on.



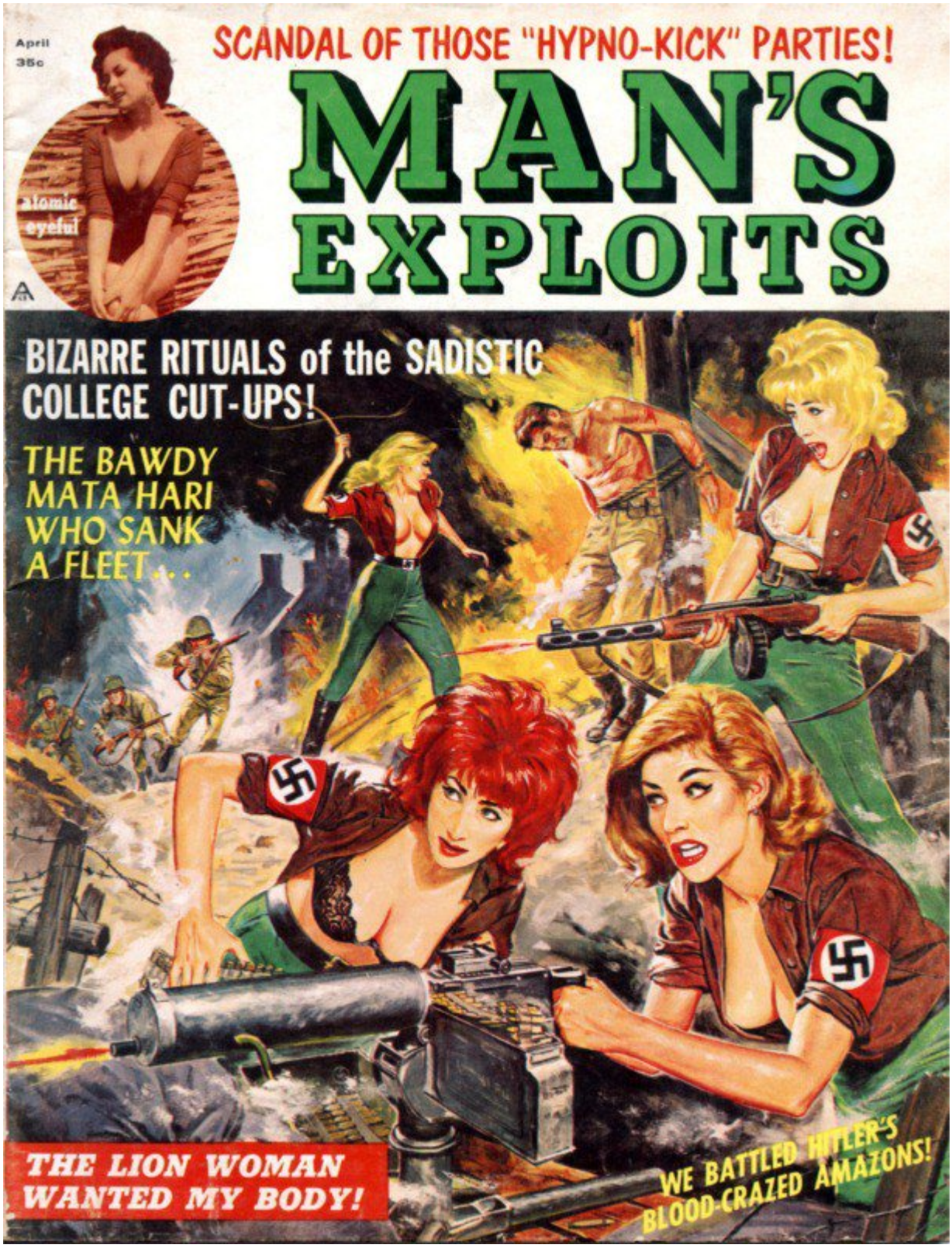
But why are they always in a swamp? Well, if you want the head and arms to be in the centre of the cover you have to lose the legs. Water, or long grass, is an easy way to do that, or you can paint people crouching.



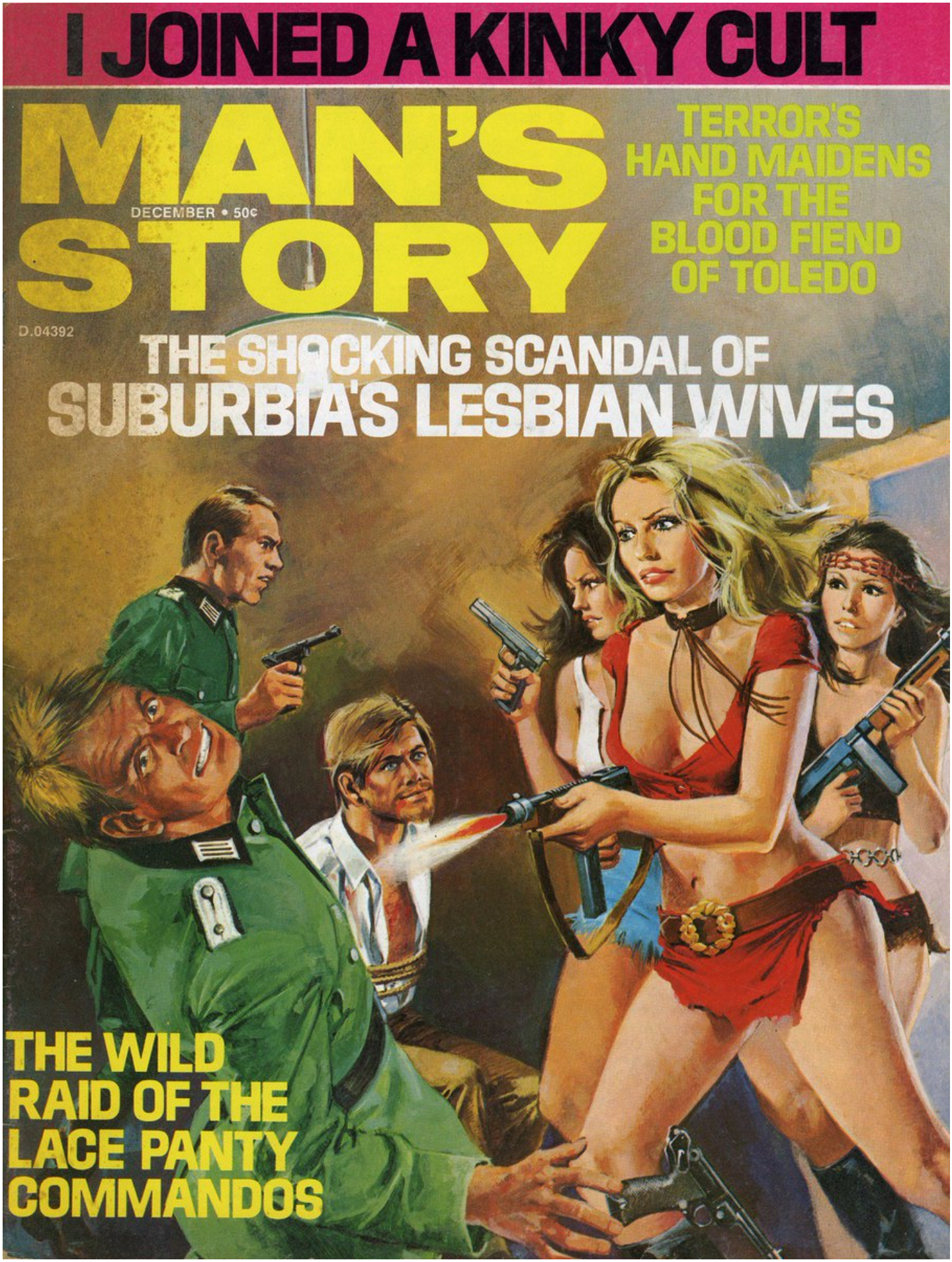
There is a huge amount of male masochism in 1950s and early 60s pulp covers: men are trapped or bound, being flogged or bitten. The message seems to be 'real men can take it - and live to tell the tale!'



But by the early 1960s pulp tastes had changed, and animal attack covers gave way to Nazis in torn red blouses. By the end of the 1960s they were replaced by bikers in leather jackets, then by radical students. It just wasn't Will's bag...

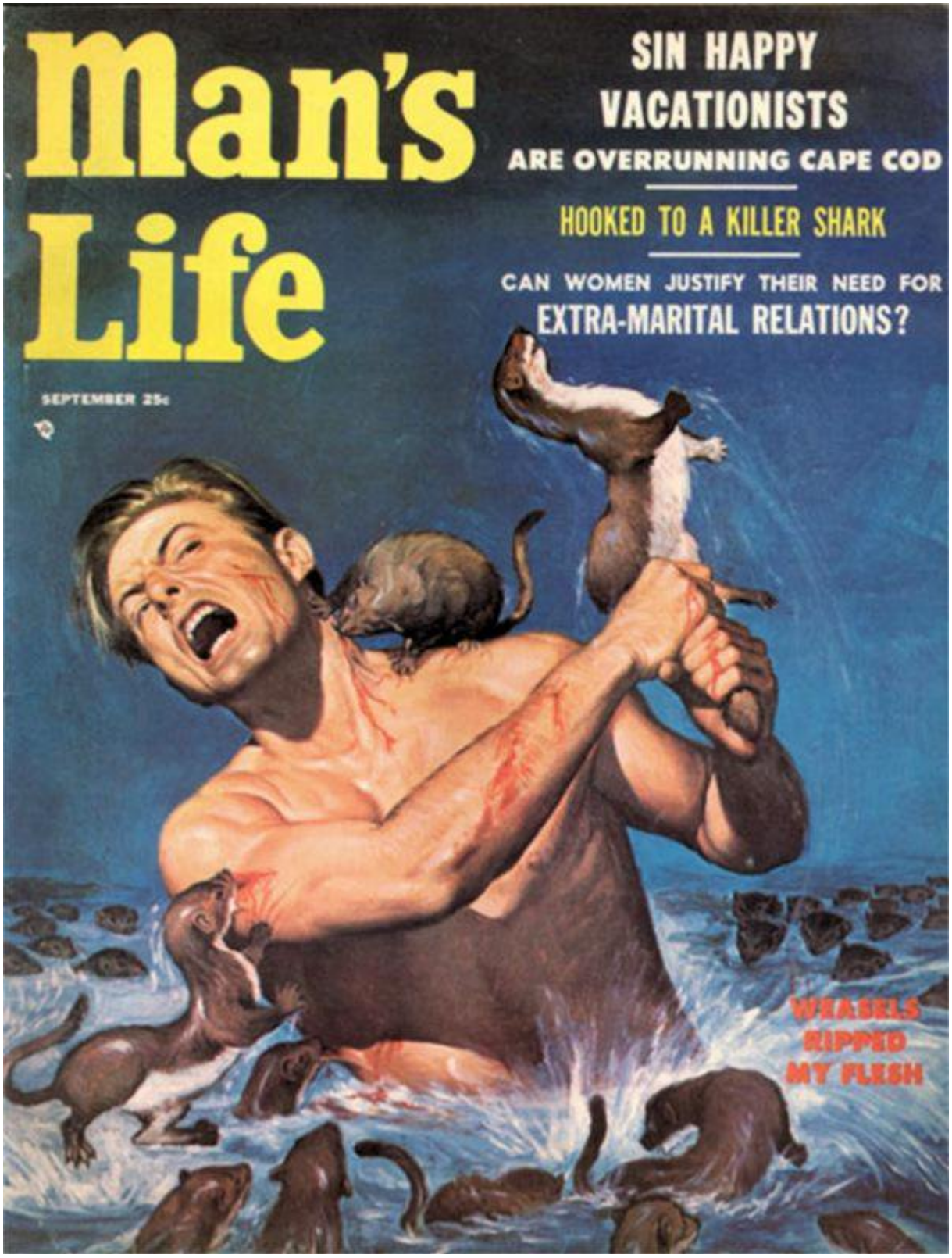


By 1973 the men's pulp magazine market was almost out of business: softcore sex and physical fitness magazines were selling far more copies, and the days of the painted pulp cover were over.



So let's hear it for pulp artist Will Hulsey. He could only draw one thing. But it was a great thing! And he drew it!!

Pulp salutes you Will...



(Full story and pix...)

WEASELS RIPPED MY FLESH



Many claws tore at my skin putting razor sharp teeth in easy reach of my flesh.—The furry animals came from all directions—chewing—gnawing—turning the water red with my blood

by MIKE KAMENS

I WAS sprawled on a mound of hay—shotgun cradled in my arms and my head drooping fiercely from want of sleep—when that first ripple of alarm surged through the duck house.

Instinctively my finger curled on the trigger as I slowly sat upright, blinking at the soft amber glow of the kerosene lamp suspended from the rafter. I heard nothing. Only the breeders shifting timorously in their pens and their quacking.

I had two loads of 4's in the shotgun and a spare double-dose in my pocket in case of trouble. Fox—skunk—bobcat trouble. I felt good then. I brought the gun up and lined it along the rafter, waiting and praying for a shot.

Then I saw movement silhouetted against the rafters, rapid and distorted, and I stared incredulously as two pinpoints of sheer fire suddenly loomed down at me. I squinted at the animal for a long moment and when, an instant later, another appeared directly behind it and I saw the undulating tail and streak of white running down the center of its breast, I knew the cause of my headaches—weasels. In two nights, ninety ducks lost to these murderers!

I was so mad, I didn't think to look at the droppboards and see more weasels scampering over a pitchfork toward me. At least a dozen of them, big ones, a foot long, and they hit me at the precise moment I squeezed the trigger.

Something tore into my right leg, clawing and biting me so that the shot deflected downward striking the kerosene lamp. Rivulets of flame coursed along the hay as I fell to the floor, screaming and smashing my fists against the hideous furred body. I saw flesh and blood rip loose as I pulled it off me and then the duckhouse became a pyre.

For as long as was humanly possible, I tried to smother the flames. I tried despite the fact that weasels were clinging to my clothes and crawling up my back. I could smell the sickening odor of burning fur and hear the piteous lament of the trapped ducks. But I couldn't get them out because I was rolling on the floor ripping weasels off my face. . . .

It was 1954, a day after Hurricane Carol, and we were still without electricity. That's the equivalent of a man in a gun battle with no gun. Incubators die, freshly killed ducks go bad, and all the vermin in the world have a field day in the dark night. Without electricity, the small company which I owned was speeding unalterably toward bankruptcy. I knew it, yet there wasn't a damned thing could be done but pray they'd restore power in sufficient time.

My farm was on the east shore of Connecticut, convenient to the hurricane but somehow, miraculously, it had been spared. Naturally, a few shingles got blown off and a hunk of roofing went flying, but on the main we were lucky. We—my wife, Mary, and I.

Actually, we were lucky in several respects. Because of the holiday weekend, Labor Day, I'd sold most of my freshly killed ducks. There was damned little left except some reserve stock and the ducklings-to-be still in incubation. Plus the live stock. We were lucky—until the weasels, I mean.

THE first night of the weasel trouble, we were so beat up from trying to keep the roof on the house, I slept right through the frantic quacking that meant sixty dead breeders. Mary broke the news gently the following dawn. "Mike, here's a cup of coffee. You'd better get up."

"Time is it?" I mumbled groggily.

"Six-thirty. Joe's back from the feed. He's downstairs in the kitchen, waiting—"

"For what?" I said, leaning up on one elbow and sipping the coffee. "More bad news?"

"You're psychic, Mike—"

"What? Tell me gently—"

"A lot of dead ducks. Something got into the breeder house last night.

(Continued on page 89)