

HEDDA HOPPER

Marilyn's Calendar —Now It Can Be Told

I'll bet 10,000 stories have been written about that now famous calendar portrait of Marilyn Monroe in the nude but I know its pulling power from firsthand experience. During the last Presidential campaign I was making some speeches and got mired down in the wilds of Iowa. In order to hitchhike a ride back to Des Moines, my starting place, I had to promise a guy I'd send him two Monroe calendars. On my recent trip abroad I was asked about it many times. Marilyn's fans



Marilyn Monroe

wanted to know how and when and where they could buy one and for how much. Of course, they all hoped I'd send them one. I read about it in French and German magazines. But I don't think you've ever had the true story. Not the way it really happened. It's about time we brought you the facts.

The incident that led up to the taking of the picture happened almost five years ago. Marilyn was unknown, just one of the many beautiful blondes roaming Hollywood trying to crack the movies. She was doing no better than any other girl. She was hungry much of the time and seldom had more money than it took to pay rent, buy food and keep a small jalopy in gas to get her to appointments.

OLD STORY

One of these dark days her car broke down—at least it stopped for want of fuel—on her way home. Marilyn got out, looked under the hood and kicked the tires, even as you and I, trying to figure out what the trouble was. She was afraid to look in the gas tank because she didn't have a penny.

While she was standing dejectedly, hoping the car would start by itself, a Cadillac hove into view and the driver, a man with an eye for beauty, halted behind her jalopy and got out to see if he could help.

The man was Tom Kelley, famous glamour photographer. He offered his help

and while Marilyn looked on helplessly he, too, kicked the tires and looked under the hood. It only took him a minute to get to the gas tank. Then he broke the sad news. "You're out of gas, miss. We can call the Auto Club and they'll bring you some," he said. He knew right away from the expression on Marilyn's face that it wasn't that simple. "If you don't have any money in your purse," he said, "let me give you some—and my card. You can pay it back whenever you're near my studio."

It was several months before Marilyn found herself in a position to pay the \$5 back. That is by no means an unusual situation in Hollywood. She drove out to Kelley's studio, knocked on the door, and when Tom opened it, Marilyn stood there holding out the money. And all she said was: "Remember me?"

ONLY NATURAL

Well, you can fool a landlord, a casting director, a wolf and lots of other people

in this town about your finances, but if you're a pretty young girl you can't fool a photographer who works with models. Tom knew the fiver was Marilyn's last. He asked her to step inside. He asked her if she'd done any modeling. She said she'd done a little. Tom tried to think of something he could use her for right then, but nothing came to mind. So he lied.

"Tell you what," he said. "A calendar company wants me to do some nudes. Are you interested?"

Marilyn said she was. So Tom hustled her into his studio, set up the lights and camera—and Marilyn reclined on that red velvet drape, which Mrs. Kelley arranged and the most famous photo of our town was snapped. Tom told Marilyn to keep the five, made out a check for \$45. To this day Marilyn doesn't know that Tom took the picture so he could pay her \$50—and had no assignment at all for calendars.

CAME THE DAY

More than a year passed and Tom got a request from Western Lithograph Co. for a nude. He dug Marilyn's prints out of the files and sent them downtown. The company bought two for \$200—a small fee for Kelley's work but better than nothing.

The calendars were printed and sold slowly. For almost two years they were shipped out with the other regulars and nobody thought much about it. Then one day an executive of the company came running into the office, looking as though he was about to have a stroke. "I went to the movies last night," he stuttered, "and I think that blond dame on one of our calendars is Marilyn Monroe."

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