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Chill Wills, whose long acting career embraces more than 50 movies and quite a number of television appearances, once told us this story and swore it was the absolute truth.

At the time we were 40 miles out in the Gulf Stream, fishing with a notable lack of success in the Blue Marlin Tournament. Four other members of the party were seasick and had taken refuge in the yacht's cabin. We were seated on the stern of the craft, swapping yarns.

"Jim Arness (Matt Dillon) is the most appreciative man I've ever seen," drawled Chill. "You can give him a stick of chewing gum, and he'll chomp down on it and say it's the best stick of gum he's ever tasted."

So, when Wills discovered a dressed duck of forgotten vintage while exploring the refrigerator, he naturally thought of Arness. "Honestly," Chill admitted, "I didn't remember putting the thing in my ice box, but it had to have been there a mighty long time."

Chester wasn't around to take the indefinitely deceased fowl to Mr. Dillon, so Chill made the delivery himself. He didn't hear from the gift until a week later, and then only through Jim's agent.

"I tasted your duck Monday night," the agent ruefully informed Wills. Then added, "and I was still tasting it Thursday night." Considering the duck's unquestioned antiquity, Chill was willing to accept the agent's declaration as a statement of fact.

The fishing jaunt we happened to be on, as an invited member of the press, also included Beaufort's menhaden multimillionaire Harvey Smith, one of Chill's most admired friends. To look at Harvey, you'd think he didn't have a dime to his name.

Putting out to sea was old stuff to Smith, so before we reached the Gulf Stream, he dozed off. There he sat, across from the two of us, and we both took note of the fact that one of his shoes had a broken string that had been knotted for further use. He even snored like a guy without money, although of course this editor doesn't really know how a millionaire is supposed to snore.

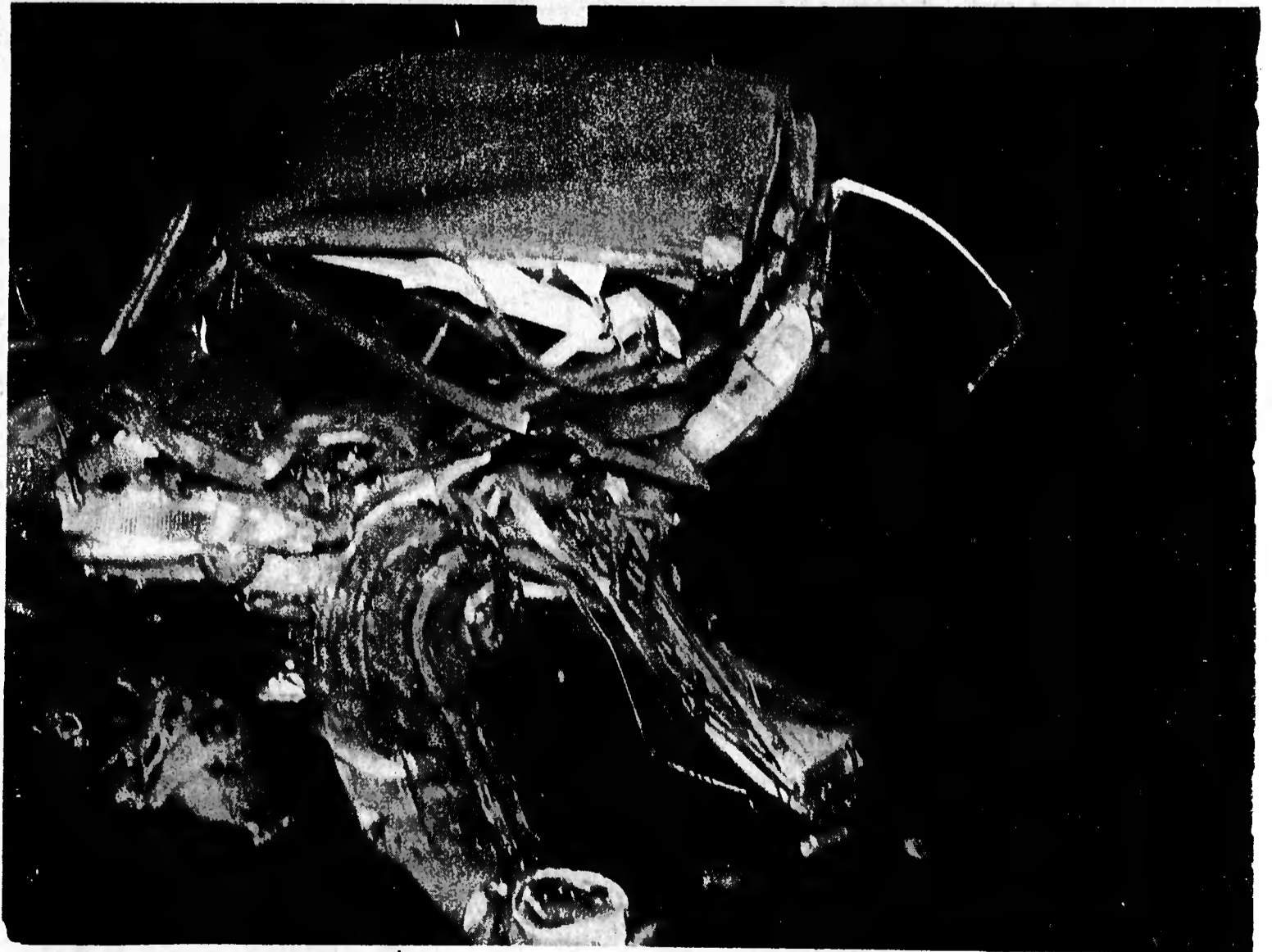
"Look at him," said Chill with limitless affection. "Ain't that something. You know, he goes up north to make a deal with them smart Yankees, and they poke fun at him behind his back. They think they've fleeced him, but after he's halfway back home they realize who really got took."

Wills and Smith first met at a Masonic gathering. Where it was we don't recall, possibly in Texas. Anyhow, it was inevitable that they would become instant friends. Harvey always had loved western movies, and Chill was one of his favorite performers.

Maybe it was at this first Masonic affair, or a later one attended by the pair from coast to coast, that the Beaufort millionaire did what a lot of you have probably yearned to do. And maybe if you did it, after dinner speakers might strive to be more entertaining.

According to Wills, they were at a banquet that ran

(Continued on page 8)



SUDDEN STOP — What happens when an automobile traveling at high speed leaves the road and crashes into a sturdy, unyielding pine tree? These photos, snapped by Trooper R. B. Miller at a fatal

crash near Vanceboro early on a recent morning tell the story. The driver was killed, five other teenagers injured, and the car completely cut into two pieces of mangled metal.