

my friendship with Maurice McCrackin, tax-refusing minister, who had just completed a six months sentence for the same offense. Mac had not been at all clerical—they'd had to carry him into court each time. And Wally they knew about too—his 33 months in prison after walking out of Civilian Public Service camp during World War II, the 108-day fast (with force-feeding by tube) which had preceded his release.

At any rate, they seemed not inclined to philosophize. After a few appeals to my common sense, the sterner of the two marshals said mildly, "Well, if you won't come with us we'll have to carry you in." He left to summon a red car.

I realized that I was actually going to jail. And, at that point, I became acutely conscious of the robe. Should I quietly excuse myself, get dressed, then return to take up my recalcitrant position? It would have been simpler, of course, if they had left and made their entrance again, with me fully aware that they meant business. Debating the question, I went to the bathroom, brushed my teeth, ran a comb through my hair. These simple acts of grooming brought me back to reality sufficiently to realize that I might be spirited away. Wally was off on a sales trip, and I had no way of reaching him. I put the cap back on the toothpaste and went to the telephone, which is on a wall between the dining room and the kitchen, a considerable distance down a long, high-ceilinged hallway from the living room where I'd left the deputy. I was still on the phone when I heard the click of the door announcing reinforcements. There was a tentative, "Mrs. Nelson," as though there was some fear I might be in too delicate a position to be barged in on. As I raced to get information to a friend, the deputies and two policemen converged on me. Other policemen

trooped in. I remember saying as I hung up, "I'm surrounded."

"Look," said one, "you're gonna go anyway. You might as well come peaceful."

There they stood, ready and able to take me at any moment. But no move was made. The reason was obvious.

"Why don't you put your clothes on, Mrs. Nelson?" This was a soft spoken plea from the more benign deputy. "You're not hurting anybody but yourself." His pained expression belied the assertion.

One policeman snorted when I attempted to say that they needn't take me at all.

The benign deputy made a last try. "Do you believe in God, Mrs. Nelson?" Irrationally, stalling for time, I asked, "Are you asking me as an individual or as an official?"

The marshal answered as if the question were not at all out of the ordinary, at least no more than the whole situation.

"I'm asking you as an individual."

"No," I said.

Taken aback, he did not go on to explain the connection he had evidently been going to establish between God and dressing for arrest.

When the affairs of men have reached a stalemate, there seems always some man of action to come forward. There was such a one among the seven. He was not a member of a debating society. These questions had nothing to do with him. I cannot describe his physical appearance, for he was not a face or a personality; he was a no-nonsense voice and a pair of strong arms.

"Listen, we don't have to beg her to do anything. We'll just take her the way she is, if that's the way she wants it." He snapped a pair of handcuffs around my wrists and, with another pair of brawny arms, half carried, half