

EDITORIAL

The Martyrdom Of Earl Francis

Above all else, Earl L. Francis cherished freedom; and to Earl Francis freedom meant working for himself, his own man on his own property. He found that freedom far from the madding crowd, high in the Catalina Mountains of Arizona; "A man can be free in the mountains," Francis used to say, "He doesn't have to punch a clock or take orders from a boss." He staked and worked a scanty gold-mining claim in those mountains, but he was able to make enough money digging the gold to build a comfortable home on the claim, a home constructed out of the granite in the mine shaft, and to spend much of his time painting canvases of his beloved mountain sunsets.

Earl Francis staked his claim in 1964 at the age of 33; but no sooner had he completed his home than the government of the United States zeroed in. He had built his home on government land, and while gold miners are allowed to build homesteads on such land, they can only do so if the gold mine is adjudged to be profitable by the standards of the U. S. government. Francis protested that the mine was profitable enough for him; "There's a few dollars' worth I can scratch out. But I like it better that way than if there was enough to make me rich. At least I don't owe nobody and nobody owes me." But such argument made no imprint on the humanitarian bureaucracy of our all-loving Welfare State. After a year and a half of gruelling litigation, Earl Francis' claim was declared null and void, and the government ordered him to leave the mine and to tear down his lovingly constructed home. Last August, Francis obeyed those

orders; he blew up his home and his mine and his studio with a keg of dynamite--and he blew himself up along with them.

Technically, Earl Francis' death must be marked as a suicide. But in actuality, he must be marked another lonely martyr of individualism at the hands of the burgeoning State. In effect, Earl Francis was murdered by the government of the United States of America, and it is at the very least incumbent upon every American who loves liberty to see to it that he does not go to his fiery grave unwept, unhonored, and unsung.