

## ["Bill" Knox]

W15033

1 Conn 1938-9

"Bill" Knox, former knifemaker:

"Hi, kiddo, what're ya sayin' today? Muggy, hain't it? I was in the house washin' out a few clothes and it got so damn warm I says to myself I says I got enough of this fer a while, I's goin' out on the front porch and set down and I don't give a damn whether school keeps or not. The kid, she's down to my nephew's down to the Bridge visitin' this afternoon. She says to me before she went, she says, Gramp, don't bother about them clothes, she says, I'll do 'em when I git back. But hell, she does enough around here. She just got out of school for the summer, and I says to myself I says, might's well give the kid a break as long as I hain't got to go to work today. She does enough around here. All the other kids her age are out enjoyin' themselves somewhere and she's workin' like an old woman. 'taint right kiddo.

"I'll finish 'em before she gits back, I sure will. I wanna git 'em done and git supper over with, because I's goin' to the softball game down to the Seth Thomas field tonight. You ever watch 'em play softball, kiddo? Well, it just goes to show you how hard up I am for somethin' to do when I go to see one-a them things. I just go for the laughs, kiddo, honest. See them big boobs runnin' around chasin' that undersize sofa pilla. Call it a ball! Why, kiddo, even the kids wouldn't play ball with a thing like that when I was a youngster. We used to have a team down to the Bridge—all Knoxes—all members of the family. I mean a baseball team, sure. I played on it when I was over forty years old, and I could show some-a them young fellas how to step around a diamond too.

"Why they had some-a the best ball players down to the Bridge was ever seen around this section, kiddo, let me tell you. And if they didn't have enough down in the village they sent

## Library of Congress

outa town and got 'em and paid 'em good money. The Bridge crowd was a sportin' crowd when the knife shop was runnin' and everybody had plenty 2 of money. Last good team they had was about fifteen-eighteen years ago. Had Johnny Moore from Waterville, and Grease Ears Barrett and some-a them lads. Us fellas down to the Bridge used to foller them all over to the games and bet on 'em. Make up-a pool and bet sometimes a coupla hundred dollars.

“They played the Legion team from Thomaston two games outa three and pretty close to a thousand dollars changed hands. Last game nearly ended in a riot. Legion fellas claimed the umpire was fixed. Hell, kiddo, he wasn't fixed. The Bridge had too gooda team fer 'em, that's all there was to it.

“Now, by God, they're playin' softball too, the Bridge I mean. I's glad I hain't livin' down there no more. This Eagles Athaletic club, or whatever they call it, they got a softball team. They take it so damn' serious, kiddo, it'd make you laugh, honest. I go just for the laughs. They argue and raise hell with the umpire, just like they was playin' baseball. Hain't no science to the game. Shut yer eyes and swing at that ole sofa pilla and pray, and yer just as liable to git a home run as not. Why, kiddo, old as I am I could git out there and belt it outa the lot.

“You mark my words it's goin' to ruin baseball. Out west they git bigger crowds to see the softball games then they do baseball today. That's a bad sign, kiddo. They got these girls' softball teams. And what does the crowd turn out fer? They don't want to see an athaletic contest, they just want to see the girls wearin' shorts, that's all. But its hurtin' baseball. Around here they turn out because every damn little factory's got a team, and they git all their friends and relatives to see the games.

“Where the big leagues gonna git their material from? All the kids [er?] playin, softball. They hain't no more sandlot baseball. It just goes to show you, kiddo, that the country hain't what it used to be. It's gittin' soft, you can see that, because softball is a game fer

## Library of Congress

soft people. Hain't no chance-a stoppin' 3 a fast inshoot with yer head, or gittin' beaned by a steamy grounder with a bad hop. That's why they like it, they hain't got the guts fer baseball.

“That there town team. Them fellas is all playin' softball on the side, and kiddo, they certainly show it when they git in a baseball game. Ruins 'em for baseball. Well, I's goin' to see the game tonight anyway. Plume and Atwood plays the clock shop. And wait'll you see the crowd that turns out. If Lynch could get halfa them to come to the baseball games Sunday, he'd be makin' money. I think mosta them are like me, at that. Just go fer the laughs.”