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There came a time when I stopped writing the column. I stopped because I was arrested, for doing something I never should have done. Frank was working in Sydney at the time and had been living in town, apart from us, for several months. He was making a lot of money and enjoying himself. He came and asked me for a divorce because he was involved with a woman in town • a non-Native woman. I was really angry. Ann was still less than a year old. I went after that woman and went into her home and pushed her up against a wall. I said, "I've got a baby and a house full of children, and you would take my husband?" I shouldn't have done what I did; I knew better and I've always known better. I was arrested for assault and taken into custody. I was also charged with breaking in, because I had walked right into the woman's home; in a non-Native community that's a break-in. It was the first time I had ever been arrested and I wasn't sure what to do. "I think I'm allowed one call," I said. I called up the Union of Nova Scotia Indians; I thought they might have a lawyer who could help me out. My friend Sarah Denny happened to be at the union office that day. Later she told me about the reaction of the people who were there. It was four o'clock in the afternoon when the call came; nobody in higher authority was still in the office. The four women who did happen to be there all looked at each other; they couldn't believe what they had heard. "Who did you say was in jail?" they asked the woman who answered the phone in the office. "You know," she answered. "Rita Joe: Here and There." Soon, the woman who was the Indian Agent was called in, and she took charge. Three of the women from the office went down to the police station where I was being held. I could see them go up to the police officer, but they couldn't see me because I was behind a partition. I just sat quietly; I could hear them talking about me. "There is no bail," the police officer said, and I thought to myself, "Why is there no bail? I did not commit murder. Are they trying to make me into an example?" After a little while, my friends left. I didn't show that I had seen or heard them. I had done, and I felt like I was alone, with no one in the world to turn to. It was just misery. In a little while, I was removed from the first cell and taken to another room where I stayed the night I could not stop crying. A psychologist • a woman • came, and talked to me, but I kept crying and crying. I felt so awful. My husband did not know that I was in jail, and my children didn't know either. I kept thinking of my children. Ann was just a little baby. I told the psychologist that nothing like this had happened to me before; I explained everything to her. She called my doctor, and a little while later she came back with a pill that relaxed me and helped me to sleep. The next morning, I got up and got dressed and waited to be taken to my arraignment. That's when I saw Frank. Word that I was in jail had spread from the Union of Nova Scotia Indians to all the reserves in Cape Breton. Frank found out about it somehow and came to be with me at the hearing. Because this was my first offense, I was fined twenty-five dollars. We paid the fine and rode home in the car. I remember Frank turned to me and said, "You must love me an awful lot to do that. It's the first time in your life that you've ever been arrested for doing something." "Well," I said, "I was fighting



for my family." For several months, we had been having a hard time. I told him the family just couldn't take it anymore. After that, he came home. Cape Breton Auto Radiator co RADIATOR HOSES • REPAIRING • CLEANING • RECORDING T'o/- COMPLETE CYLINDER HEAD SERVICE _ ' 518 Grand auto * truck * industrial Sydney Lake Road Complete Line of Gas Tanks 564-6362 • NOW DOING AUTOMOBILE AIR CONDITIONING • The Department of Natural Resources offers many titles that will stir your interest in forests, minerals, energy, wildlife, parks or outdoor recreation. From the historical to the informative, to the ever popular children's stories • we offer something for everyone's taste. We also publish a wide variety of technical reports, maps, and periodicals which provide the results of the Departments studies and programs. For more information on these publications or to receive a free catalogue contact: Library, Department of Natural Resources RO. Box 698, Halifax, N.S. B3J 2T3 (902) 424-8633 or Nova Scotia Government Bookstore RO. Box 637 One Government Place 1700 Granville St., Halifax, N.S. B3J 2T3 (902) 424-7580 or 1-800-526-6575 (toll free in N.S.) 13