

Scene of the Crime

Dave Kingman is back in Shea Stadium this weekend, the first of the victims of M. Donald Grant's Wednesday Night Massacre to return to the scene of the crime. The Mets' press guide still describes Kingman as the "biggest bargain purchase in Met history" but the bargain lost its charm in Grant's eyes when Dave

Sports of The Times

asked to be paid like the biggest home run hitter in Met history. Scandalized by such avarice, the chair-

man of the board ordered Kingman banished to the salt mines of San Diego and before the night was out Tom Seaver had been packed off to Cincinnati. That was June 15, a date that will live in infamy, and now six weeks later, here was Kingman in the brown vestments of the Padres.

"I'm not excited by any means over returning to Shea," he said. "Even coming to my own home in Connecticut is entirely different. It does not seem like home anymore."

As for San Diego: "It's a beautiful town and I enjoy California. It's where I had hoped to make my home in future years, but what next year has to offer I have absolutely no idea. I wish I knew for my own sake."

He has no contract with the Padres and does not sound optimistic about reaching agreement with Buzzie Bavasi, the club president.

"I'm giving them every opportunity to sign me," he said. "Right now I don't know exactly what they're thinking. We're negotiating, and what will happen I cannot predict."

It has been reported that Kingman asked for \$250,000 this year and the Padres refused to top the Mets' offer of \$200,000 but he said firmly: "No money has been discussed yet, so it's all scuttlebutt."

Life With Buzzie

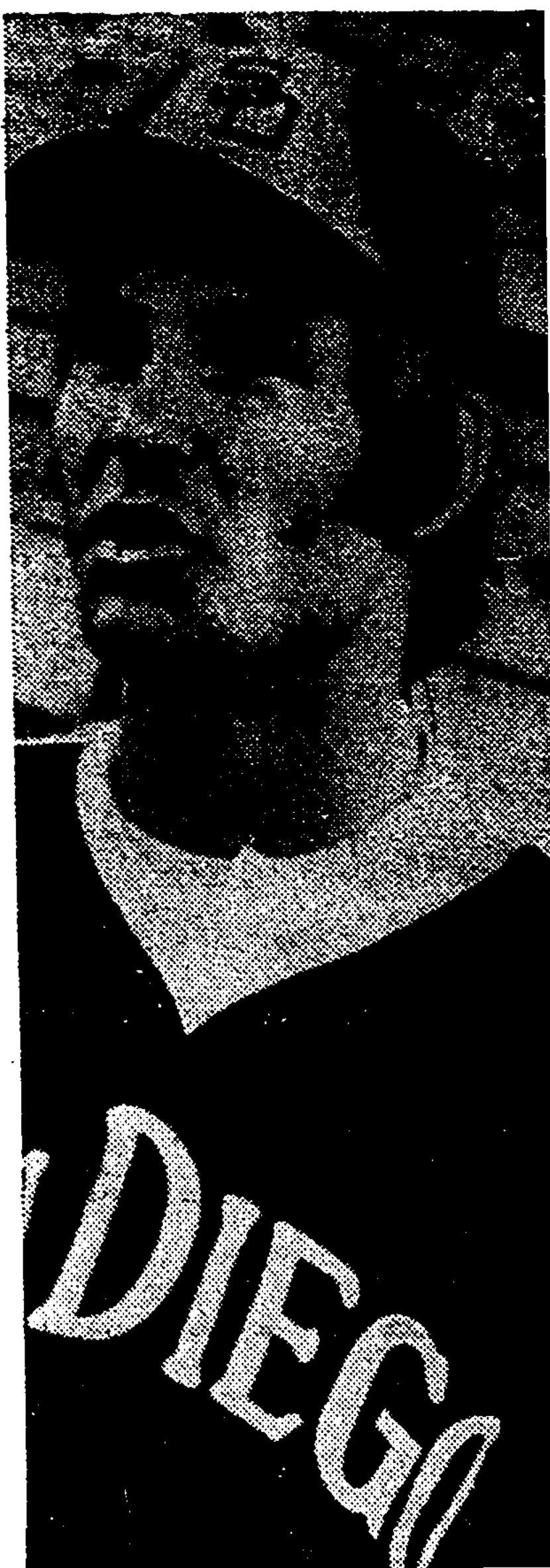
"I really don't understand Buzzie Bavasi," he said. "He has promised to set up a meeting with Ray Kroc [the Padres' owner] which he has not come through with as yet. I'm just very confused about the whole situation."

A shade more than a year ago, Kingman was leading the National League with 32 home runs and had a chance at the league record of 56 owned for 47 years by Hack Wilson of the Cubs. Next to Tom Seaver, he was the Mets' prime gate attraction until a torn ligament in his thumb took him out of the lineup for 33 games. His season total of 37 home runs broke the club record that he had established but left him one behind Philadelphia's Mike Schmidt.

This has been a frustrating season so far. With the Mets Dave batted .209, hit nine home runs and struck out 66 times. When he arrived Friday he had appeared in 34 games with the Padres, was batting .225 with five home runs and 29 strikeouts. He had a total of 48 runs batted in.

Outside of the futures market in free agents, baseball players traditionally are paid on performance, that is, rewarded for good work in the next year's contract. Kingman did well last season, but not for San Diego.

"Buzzie seems to feel that he wants to pay me for what I have done for the Padres," he said. "It's hard to negotiate on those terms because I'm only being platooned right at the moment. He refuses to consider what I've done for New York in the past. He automatically puts me in a hole



Associated Press

Padres' Dave Kingman before game Friday night against Mets, his first in New York since being traded to the San Diego Padres.

by taking that position, so I really don't know any part of what to expect.

That Jones Boy

"Everything is still up in the air. I'd definitely like to know. Before I came to New York on this trip I asked Buzzie to have something in mind, I specifically asked for some sort of directive. He didn't get back to me on that, so I'm totally confused."

Also confused is a companion on the Padres named Randall Leo Jones, but for an altogether different reason. Winner of the Cy Young Award as the league's best pitcher last year, Jones has been unable to work since June 17 but he expects to be in the bull pen Tuesday when the team opens a series in Philadelphia.

The left-hander has had the miseries from time to time ever since last September when he took himself out of a game after something popped in his arm.

He had surgery to repair damage to the motor nerve controlling the biceps but the arm gave him trouble early this season and doctors decided the muscle had atrophied. Randy has been working with weights and Dr. Paul Bauer, the club physician, is confident the arm will be serviceable by next year.

Jones can't wait, though. Fishing and drawing his salary is not his bag. He asked to be restored to the active list. This one is a ballplayer.