

2 TRUE GANG STORIES *with* PICTURES

SEPT

GANG WORLD



20¢
25¢ IN CANADA

"TWO-BIT PUNK"

By T. T. FLYNN

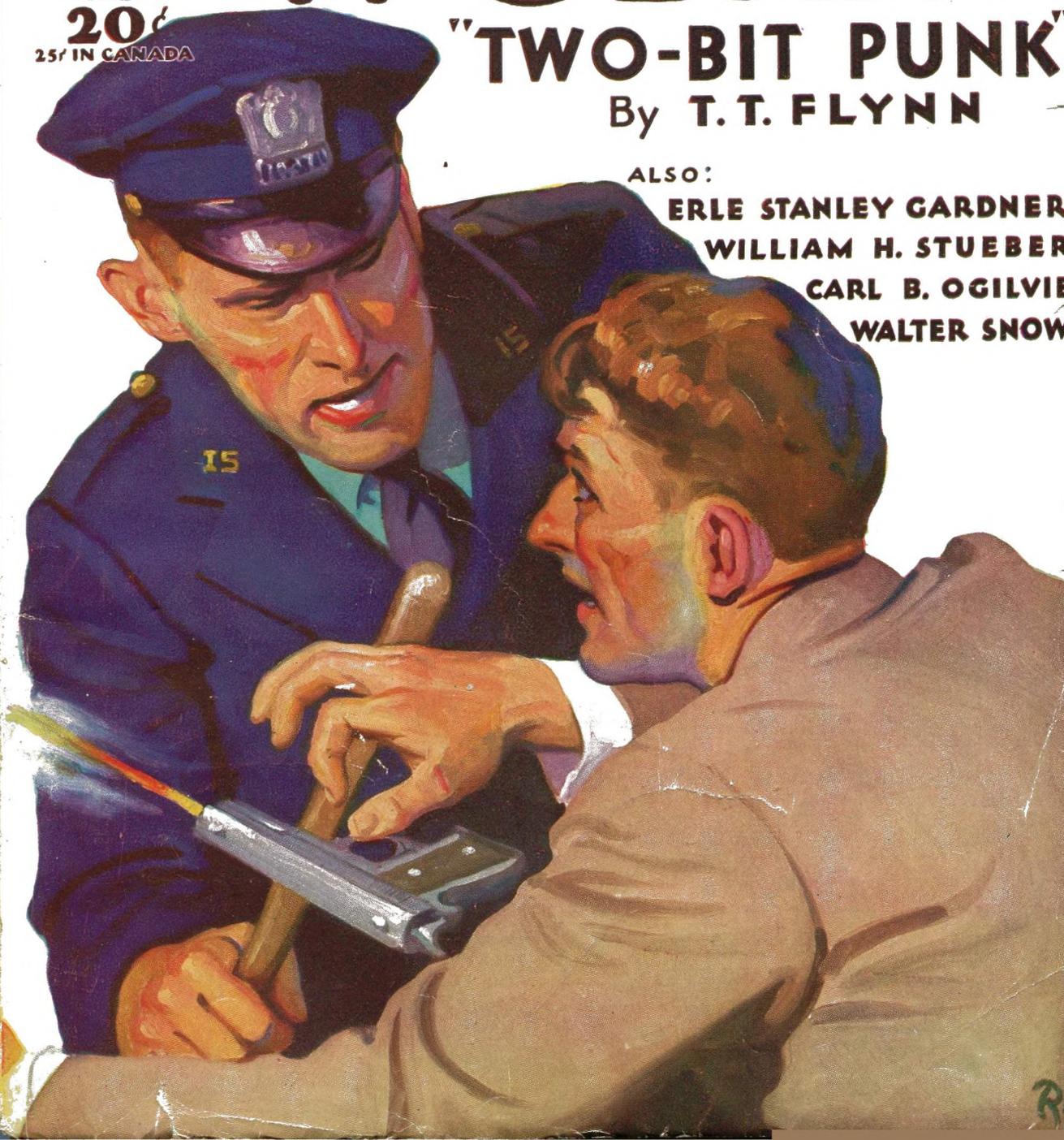
ALSO:

ERLE STANLEY GARDNER

WILLIAM H. STUEBER

CARL B. OGILVIE

WALTER SNOW



SEPT

GANG WORLD

20¢



JOAN BLONDELL

stage and screen star now being featured in Warner Bros. pictures says she is delighted with our new hand lotion and container.

Profitable Fun for Everyone

Can you think of any more profitable or thrilling fun than helping us choose a name for our new hand lotion and winning this Big Prize? This hand lotion gives the hands and face a soft, smooth, satin-like loveliness. In choosing a name you may submit the name of a flower, bird, tree, person, or, in fact, any name that comes to your mind. Coined words are accepted. Such names as Velvo, Lovelo, or Satin Skin, Hollywood Beauty Lotion, etc. There is no restriction on the name you submit. Make this your lucky day. Send your suggestion at once, be in time for the promptness prize, for the very name you send may win.

An Easy Way to Win....

\$1000.

in Cash



Tell us... WHAT Shall We NAME this NEW HAND LOTION

Free Roadster or \$500 Cash for Promptness



In order to get quick action we're giving this beautiful new Ford Roadster, latest model, absolutely FREE. Or, if you prefer, you may have your choice of the Roadster, a Coupe, or Sedan, or \$500.00 Cash. This is your opportunity. Send a name at once, be the winner, surprise your friends and neighbors by having the car and \$1000.00 delivered at your door or \$1500.00 all cash if you prefer. Don't think you can't win, for your opportunity is just as good as anyone's, if you will send a name at once. It costs you nothing to try.

Send In a Name Win This Big Prize

We are inviting everyone, no matter who they are, to participate in this interesting prize contest. It's a prize well worth going after; \$1000 in cash, and \$500.00 extra, if you are prompt, or \$1500 in all if you want cash. This amount can be yours just for naming our delightful new hand lotion. Nothing else to do. No purchase necessary, nothing to buy or sell, and no slogan or story to write to win this splendid prize. All we want is a name, and if you send in your suggestion it may be just the one we want. Who knows, every one has a lucky day and this may be yours. It costs you nothing to try, so why not send a name and be in line for the prize? Think of the thrill you can get winning a prize like this.

Make Sure of the Promptness Prize

A gift of \$500.00 extra or a latest new Ford Roadster will be given the winner of the \$1000.00 prize if the name is mailed within three days after this announcement is read. This extra prize is certainly worth going after quick. Bear in mind only one name must be submitted by each contestant and notice of the approximate time of the prize award will be sent you as soon as your suggestion is received. The prize or prizes will be awarded to the person or persons sending the name we choose from among those submitted and duplicate prizes will be given to all who send the winning name. This means you can't lose even if others send the winning name first.

© H.M.P.Co. 1931

HOLLYWOOD MARVEL PRODUCTS CO., 1023 N. Sycamore Avenue Dept. 205 Hollywood, Calif.

MAIL THIS COUPON NOW!

HOLLYWOOD MARVEL PRODUCTS CO. Dept. 205, 1023 N. Sycamore Ave. Hollywood, Calif.

I am sending the following name for your hand lotion.

.....

Date this announcement was read

My name is

Address

NOTE—Being prompt qualifies you for the promptness prize outlined herein.



Former plasterer now earning

\$12,000 a year

"When I enrolled with the International Correspondence Schools, I was a plasterer and I didn't know a thing about blueprints. Today I have my own contracting business and I am able to figure the most difficult jobs and execute them to the satisfaction of everyone concerned. My income is between \$12,000 and \$15,000 a year. It certainly was a lucky day for me when I sent in that I. C. S. coupon."

That's a true story of what just one student of the International Correspondence Schools has done. Every mail brings letters from other ambitious men and women telling of promotions and increases in salary due directly to spare-time study.

One hour a day spent with the I. C. S., in the quiet of your own home, will prepare you for success in the work you like best. *Mail Coupon for Free Booklet.*

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS, Box 5790, Scranton, Penna., "The Universal University"

Without cost or obligation on my part, please send me a copy of your 48-page booklet, "Who Wins and Why," and tell me how I can qualify for the position, or in the subject, before which I have marked an X:

BUSINESS TRAINING COURSES

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Cost Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Correspondence | <input type="checkbox"/> Railway Mail Clerk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Show Card and Sign | <input type="checkbox"/> Mail Carrier |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Secretarial Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Lettering | <input type="checkbox"/> Common School Subjects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> French | <input type="checkbox"/> Stenography and Typing | <input type="checkbox"/> High School Subjects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting and C. F. A. Coaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship | <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Illustrating <input type="checkbox"/> Cartooning |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Lumber Dealer |

TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL COURSES

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architect | <input type="checkbox"/> Telegraph Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Airplane Engines | <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Draftsman | <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Plumber and Steam Fitter | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining Engineer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Foreman | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing Inspector | <input type="checkbox"/> Navigation <input type="checkbox"/> Assayer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Builder | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Draftsman | <input type="checkbox"/> Foreman Plumber | <input type="checkbox"/> Iron and Steel Worker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor and Builder | <input type="checkbox"/> Machine Shop Practice | <input type="checkbox"/> Heating and Ventilation | <input type="checkbox"/> Textile Overseer or Supt. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Draftsman | <input type="checkbox"/> Toolmaker | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet-Metal Worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton Manufacturing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Patternmaker | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Woolen Manufacturing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Contractor | <input type="checkbox"/> Surveying and Mapping | <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigeration Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit Growing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Wiring | <input type="checkbox"/> Bridge Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> R. R. Positions | <input type="checkbox"/> Poultry Farming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Lighting | <input type="checkbox"/> Gas Engine Operating | <input type="checkbox"/> Highway Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Car Running | <input type="checkbox"/> Automobile Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio |

Name..... Street Address.....

City..... State..... Occupation.....

If you reside in Canada, send this coupon to the International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Limited, Montreal, Canada

GANG WORLD

"All stories complete, all stories new"

Vol. 3

CONTENTS for SEPTEMBER, 1931

No. 4

PAGE

Three Smashing Gangster Novelettes

- SNOWBIRD.....*William H. Stueber* 8
Unseen he gnawed at human hearts, then scurried from the law. But a yellow man watched with Oriental patience . . . waited the right moment to spring his trap.
- THE HOTSY-TOTSY MOLL.....*Carl Bernard Ogilvie* 56
Her joint was a pip, it covered her racket too. But Dolly hated those blood spots on her twenty-grand rug.
- MUSCLE MAN.....*Erle Stanley Gardner* 88
Those two muscling artists were but monkey meat to the famous gang buster, Paul Pry.

Two Amazing True-Fact Articles With Photographs

- "BIG BILL" DWYER, RUM RUNNER AND RACE HORSE KING.....*Joseph Appelgate* 80
Sensational facts in the life of "Big Bill" Dwyer, gentleman buccaneer, who wound the coast guards around his thumb to control rum running in the East.
- THE GUN-MOLL MOB.....*Mary Phelps* 105
It was search for thrills that joined pretty Amelia Bascom up with a gang of stick-up men. Now she pays the price.

Three Gripping Short Stories

- KNIFE THRUST.....*J. Lane Linklater* 44
Katie thought Whitey had gone crazy—muttering strange things to himself. She didn't know that her "old fool" had become another Sherlock Holmes.
- TWO-BIT PUNK.....*T. T. Flynn* 29
The Punk had cased a hot proposition—started out to be big-time stuff. Then a lousy frail gummed the works.
- MURDER EXTRA!.....*Walter Snow* 110
"City editor slain—Star-Herald reporters targets of gangsters' bullets—Police comb city for missing big shot—"

Three Short Features

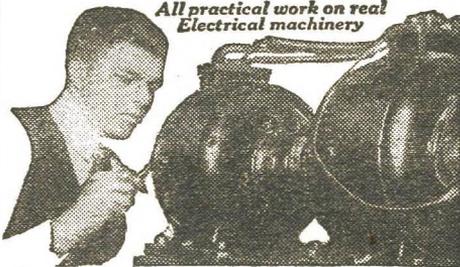
- THE SILENCER—A Short Short Story.....*James K. Matter* 86
- THE SHAKE-DOWN RACKET..... 87
- THE PERFECT CRIME..... 55
- LISTEN YOU 120
Here's where the editor gets a poke in the jaw and the reader does the talking.
- COVER.....*William Reusswig*

Be sure to get the October Issue

On the Newsstands August 25th

Published every month by Popular Publications, Inc., 2256 Grove Street, Chicago, Illinois. Editorial and executive offices 205 East Forty-second Street, New York City. Harry Sleeper, President and Secretary, Harold S. Goldsmith, Vice President and Treasurer. Entered as second class matter Aug. 6th, 1930, at the Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Title registration pending at U. S. Patent Office. Copyrighted 1931 by Popular Publications, Inc. Single copy price 20c, in Canada 25c. Yearly subscriptions in U. S. A. \$2.00, in Canada \$2.50. For advertising rates address H. D. Cushing, 87 West 44th Street, New York, N. Y. When submitting manuscripts, kindly enclose sufficient postage for their return if found unavailable. The publishers cannot accept responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts, although all care will be exercised in handling them.

Get Into One Of These BIG PAY FIELDS



All practical work on real
Electrical machinery

Amazingly Easy Way to Get Into ELECTRICITY

Dissatisfied with your job? Not making enough money? Then let me show you an amazingly easy way to get into **ELECTRICITY**, where thousands of Trained Men are drawing down Big Pay envelopes every week. Coyne has been training men for the Electrical Industry since 1899. Let Coyne help you to a place in this money making field!

PRACTICAL WORK IN THE GREAT COYNE SHOPS

Come to Coyne in Chicago and learn one of these two great Trades the **QUICK and PRACTICAL way—BY ACTUAL WORK ON ACTUAL EQUIPMENT.** In the Electrical School you are trained on huge motors, generators, switchboards, auto and airplane engines, etc. No useless theory! The average time to complete the

FREE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE TO STUDENTS

When you complete the course, we'll do all we can to help you find the job you want. We employ three men on a full time basis whose sole job is to help secure positions for our students. And if you are a little short on funds, we'll try and help you secure part-time work while at school. Some of our



Student working on Television
transmitter in
Coyne Radio Shops

Learn **RADIO** **TELEVISION** **TALKING PICTURES**

Prepare for jobs in Service Work, Broadcasting, Talking Pictures, Wireless Operating, etc. Get in on the ground-floor of Television! Radio has grown in a few years from a mere experiment to a **BILLION DOLLAR** industry. Scores of jobs are open to the Trained Man. Prepare for them now by actual work at Coyne!

Course is only 12 weeks. In the Radio School the average time is 10 weeks. Here we have complete Radio, Broadcasting, Television and Sound Reproduction equipment. Everything that is necessary to make your training as nearly complete, practical and resultful as possible! And, you need no advanced education or previous experience.

students pay a large part of their living expenses that way. But get all the facts! Select the field you like best and mail one of the two coupons below. Let me send you either my Big Free Electrical Book or my Big Free Radio and Television Book. Mail only one coupon, but be sure to mail it at once!

**MAIL ONLY THIS COUPON
FOR FREE ELECTRICAL BOOK**

H. C. LEWIS, President
COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL, Dept. 61-41
500 S. Paulina Street, Chicago, Illinois
Gentlemen: Please send me your big Free Electrical Book, with 161 illustrations. This does not obligate me in any way.

Name.....
Address.....
City..... State.....

**MAIL ONLY THIS COUPON
FOR FREE RADIO BOOK**

H. C. LEWIS, President
RADIO DIVISION, COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL
500 S. Paulina St., Dept. 61-5 E Chicago, Ill.
Gentlemen: Send me your Big Free Radio, Television and Talking Picture Book. This does not obligate me in any way.

Name.....
Address.....
City..... State.....



Give
Free Merchandise
and
Get Cash Profits
on
First Calls!
SHIRTS · TIES · UNDERWEAR
· HOSIERY!

**Money in Your Hand
Here's Your Opportunity**

Accept this free golden invitation to represent Carlton Mills — nationally known Men's Wear manufacturers — and a leader in the direct-to-wearer field. Schooling or training unnecessary. Doesn't cost you a penny so cash in on our series of free merchandise offerings. Note the panels to the right and you'll understand why they're irresistible.

**Lowest Prices in Years
Unbeatable Values
Orders Come Easy**

First calls give big cash profits. Greatest line in America. Finest Dress Shirt selections. Stunning Neckwear. Smartest Hosiery. Complete Underwear and Heavy Outerwear Department. All handsomely sampled.

**NEW BIG KIT FREE
Coupon below Starts You**

Send for New Fall Outfit. Also details of extra \$25.00 Cash Bonus and 40% Profit Sharing plans. All are easy for Carlton Representatives. Rush coupon today!

CARLTON MILLS, Inc.
79 Fifth Ave., New York



**MOLDING A
MIGHTY ARM**



**Get a 17 Inch Bicep
Complete Course on Arm Building
ONLY 25c**

Get an arm of might with the power and grip to obey your physical desires. Within 30 days you can now build your arm from a scrawny piece of skin and bone to one of huge muscular size. I don't mean just a 17-inch bicep but a 15-inch forearm and an 8-inch wrist. This specially prepared course will build every muscle in the arm because it has been scientifically worked out for that purpose. You can develop a pair of triceps shaped like a horseshoe and just as strong, and a pair of biceps that will show their double head formation. The sinewy cables between the biceps and elbow will be deep and thick with wire cable ligaments. In that arm of yours, the forearm will belly with bulk, and the great supinator lifting muscle you can make into a column of power, while your wrist will grow alive and writhe with cordy sinew. All this you can get for 25 cents—send for this course today and within 30 days' time you can have a he-man's arm built to be as beautiful, brawny and magnificent as the village blacksmith's.

You can't make a mistake. The guarantee of the strongest armed man in the world stands behind this course. I give you all the secrets of strength illustrated and explained as you like it. 30 days will give you an unbreakable grip of steel and a Herculean arm. Mail your order now while you can still get this course at my introductory price of only 25c.

RUSH THE COUPON TODAY

To each purchaser will be given a FREE COPY of *THE THRILL OF BEING STRONG*. It is a priceless book to the strength fan and muscle builder. Full of pictures of marvelous bodied men who tell you decisively how you can build symmetry and strength the equal of theirs.

REACH OUT—GRASP THIS SPECIAL OFFER

JOWETT INSTITUTE of PHYSICAL CULTURE
422 Poplar Street, Dept. 45-Wa Scranton, Penna.

Dear Mr. Jowett: I am enclosing 25c. Please send me the course "MOLDING A MIGHTY ARM" and a free copy of "THE THRILL OF BEING STRONG."

Name _____
Address _____

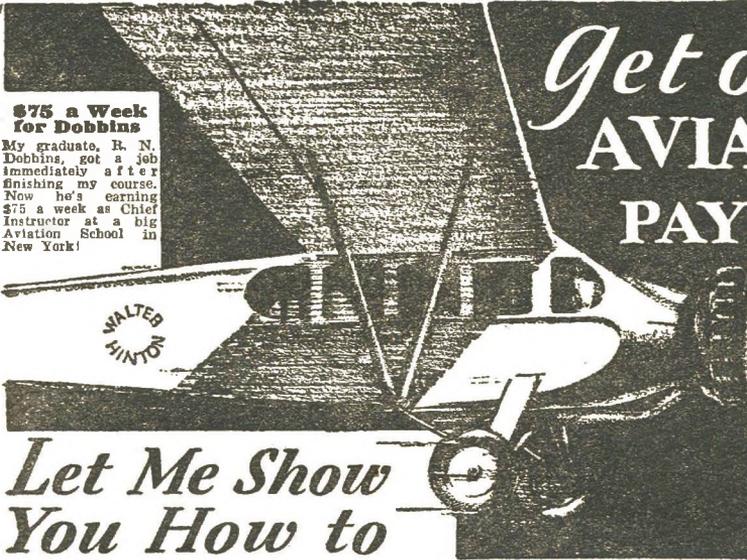
MAIL this COUPON

Mr. Mandel, President, Dept. 512-P
Carlton Mills, Inc., 79 Fifth Ave., New York
Dear Mr. Mandel: I know I can give away Free Shirts, Ties, Underwear and Hosiery. Send sample outfit free. I'm ready for big pay . . . and cash profits on first calls.

Name
Address
City State

\$75 a Week for Dobbins

My graduate, R. N. Dobbins, got a job immediately after finishing my course. Now he's earning \$75 a week as Chief Instructor at a big Aviation School in New York!



Get on
AVIATION'S PAYROLL!

Let Me Show You How to

EARN \$60 to \$100 a Week and UP in AVIATION!

My up-to-date home study Course gives you the ground work you need to *get and keep a real job* in this fascinating, fast growing industry. Scores of my graduates, who didn't know a thing about Aviation a few months ago, are holding down fine jobs right now—in the air and on the ground. *Over forty different types of jobs to choose from*, once you have this necessary training. Get the facts about my practical training, free Employment Service, and Money-Back Agreement NOW!

**I Teach You QUICKLY—
at Home in Your Spare Time**

You don't need to give up your present job—don't need to leave home, to get your training in Aviation. I've made it easy for you. I've put my own fifteen years of experience—backed by over 400,000 miles of flying—five years of instructing in the Navy—all into my thorough, quickly mastered home study Course.

No Previous Experience Needed

You don't even need a high school education—don't have to know anything about planes or engines to learn the ground work of Aviation with my Course. Everything is clearly explained—illustrated by hundreds of pictures, drawings and charts—made as simple and easy as possible. You get all the information you need to pass the Government's written examinations for Mechanic's or Pilot's Licenses, in a few short months. If you want to learn to fly, I can save you many times the cost of my Course on your flying time at good airports all over the country.

FREE Air-Plane Ride!

Right now I'm making an offer of a free airplane ride to all of my students. Write me at once and I'll send you complete information. Act now—to get in on this fine offer—while it is still open!

**There's No Time To Lose—
Get My FREE Book NOW!**

Aviation is growing by leaps and bounds—while many other industries are slumping. Don't wait and let the other fellows get ahead of you. Think about your own future. Let me prepare you for a job paying \$60 to \$100 a week or more—in Aviation. Get the **FACTS**. Mail the handy coupon on the right today—right now—while you're thinking about it. I'll send you my big new **FREE Book**—packed with interesting facts about your opportunities in Aviation by return mail! Do it NOW.

**WALTER HINTON, President
Aviation Institute of U.S.A., Inc.
1115 Connecticut Ave. Washington, D.C.**

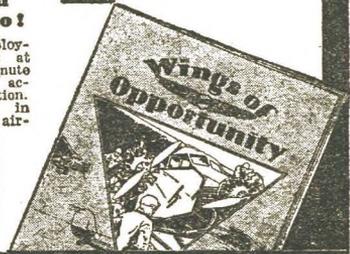


Walter Hinton

First to fly the Atlantic; first to fly to South America; first to explore the upper regions of the Amazon by plane. Flying Instructor in Navy for five years. Now giving ambitious men practical ground work training in Aviation at home. If you are 16 or over, mail the coupon below for your copy of his big new **FREE Book** today.

**I'll Help You
Get a JOB, Too!**

My nation-wide Employment Department is at your service—the minute you are qualified to accept a job in Aviation. We are constantly in touch with scores of airports, plane factories, etc., that want trained men. Free Book tells all about how I helped my graduates get the kind of jobs they want! Mail the coupon now.



Mail for my big **FREE BOOK on AVIATION NOW!**

Walter Hinton, President, 675C
Aviation Institute of U. S. A., Inc.
1115 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D. C.

Please send me a Free copy of your book, "Wings of Opportunity," telling all about my opportunities in Aviation, how you will train me at home and help me get a job.

Name
(Print clearly)

Address Age
(Must be 16 or over)

City State

Win a Buick Sedan or \$2,900.00 in Cash

SOMEONE who answers this ad will receive, absolutely free, a latest model 8 cylinder Buick Sedan or its full value in cash (\$2,900.00). In addition to the Buick Sedan we are also giving away six Ford Sedans, an Eastman Home Moving Picture Outfit, a Shetland Pony, a Radio, Gold Watches, Silverware and many other valuable gifts—besides Hundreds of Dollars in Cash. Already we have given away more than \$200,000.00 in cash and valuable merchandise to advertise our business.



Miss Jewel Casey received \$3,730.00; Miss Anna Linka received \$2,330.00; Mrs. Robert Ellington received \$1,750.00; and Mr. E. N. Garrett received \$2,320.00. This offer is open to anyone living in the United States, outside of Chicago, and is guaranteed by an old reliable company of many years standing.

Find the Twins Qualify for This Opportunity

There are eight babies in the picture to the left. Each one is numbered. Two and only two are alike. These two are the twins. See if you can find them. The rest are different either in their clothes or in their eyes. When you find the twins, write their numbers on a sheet of paper or post card together with your name and address written plainly and send it to me right away.

\$900.00 Extra for Promptness

If you act quickly and win the Buick Sedan I will give you \$900.00 in cash just for being prompt—making a total of \$2,900.00 you may win. The rest are different either in their clothes or in their eyes. When you find the twins, write their numbers on a sheet of paper or post card together with your name and address written plainly and send it to me right away.

Altogether there are a total of \$7,500.00 worth of prizes to be given and the money to pay the prizes is now on deposit at one of Chicago's largest banks ready to be paid to the prize winners. In case of ties duplicate prizes will be paid each one trying, and any winner may have cash instead of the prize won. If so preferred. Get busy right away. Solve the puzzle, and send me your answer just as soon as possible to qualify for an opportunity to share in the \$7,500.00 worth of prizes. **EVERYBODY PROFITS.** Who knows but that you may be the Lucky First Prize Winner? It pays to act promptly.

ROBERT HARRISON, Mgr.

Dist. 8-639

314 South Peoria Street, Chicago, Ill.

EARN MONEY AT HOME

YOU can make \$15 to \$50 weekly in spare or full time at home coloring photographs. No experience needed. No canvassing. We instruct you by our new simple Photo-Color process and supply you with work. Write for particulars and Free Book to-day.

The IRVING-VANCE COMPANY Ltd.
362 Hart Building, Toronto, Can.

FREE SONG WRITERS

SENDING DICTIONARY AND TALKIE SECRETS

Send poems or music for songs for free examination and advice. We revise, compose, arrange any instruments. Copyrights secured. Publication contracts negotiated.

Mahoney Associates 244 E. 23rd St., N. Y.

Are You Bashful?

NERVOUS?
EMBARRASSED?
SHY?



NO WONDER YOU ARE A
"STAY-AT-HOME"

DO YOU ever feel embarrassed in the presence of strangers?
Are you always bashful and confused when you meet people for the first time or when you are in company of the opposite sex?

You Are Self-Conscious!

Shame on you! There is no need to be nervous and embarrassed. Stop being shy. You can learn how to conquer the terrible fear of your superiors.

Every individual now suffering from Bashfulness (Self-Consciousness) will welcome this good news. Remarkable discovery used with great success—whereby you can quickly and easily overcome your faults. Be cheerful and confident of your future! If you're Bashful—don't wait another day—Send 25c for my fascinating amazing book. Tells how to master and overcome Self-Consciousness. Write today!

Richard Blackstone

B-528 FLATIRON BLDG.
NEW YORK, N. Y.

RICHARD BLACKSTONE,
B-528, Flatiron Bldg., New York City
Please send me a copy of your book on Nervousness and Bashfulness. I am enclosing 25 cents in coin or stamps.

Name
Address
City State

Please mention MAN STORY MAGAZINES (POPULAR PUBLICATION GROUP) when answering advertisements.

No More Shaving! No Razor! No Bother!



1—The Beard!

One—

Two—

2—Snow Applied!

Three

and the beard is off without a razor!

Sensational Discovery

3—The Result!

Now Makes Shaving Unnecessary!

Think of it—the quickest and slickest, closest and smoothest “shave” you ever had—without using a razor! A face so smooth you never knew you had such soft skin! Instead of shaving every day use this delightful discovery once or twice a week. It “breaks” the whiskers off slightly below the skin while a razor cuts them off above the surface. You just cannot believe it till you try it for yourself. And why not—when you can do so without risking a penny?

S N O W

The FACIAL Depilatory

The only hair remover applied swiftly and easily with a brush. Just follow the simple instructions. \$1.00 package lasts from one to two months.

MILLIONS Sold Abroad

Not a harsh chemical that eats off the hair, but a gentle compound that makes the beard so brittle it “breaks” off. Thousands of men are now actually enjoying their facial glorification (which, by the way, may now be performed at night, because the beard barely grows overnight). In contrast with razor-shaving, SNOW tends to retard the growth of the beard and to make it much lighter, thinner and softer. Endorsed by European authorities as perfectly harmless. Silver Medal Winner at Strasbourg, France.

ESPECIALLY GOOD FOR TOUGH BEARDS!

No Rash—No Itch—No Pimples



- WOMEN -

Women delight in this new and gentle depilatory which may be used on face or limbs with great speed and freedom from pain or undue stench. A \$1.00 package is four times larger than most others.

FOR SALE AT ALL DRUG AND DEPARTMENT STORES (OR ORDER DIRECT)

Rasofix Corp. of America,
299 Broadway, New York, N. Y., Dept. 402

Please send a large box of “SNOW” and a special fibre brush. I enclose \$1 (or will pay \$1.15 on delivery). You are to refund the full cost if for any reason I am not delighted with the results.

Name

Address

Inquiries invited from Druggists and Beauticians



SNOWBIRD

by

William H. Stueber

Author of "The Eleventh Hour," etc.

Like a rat he lived in stench and filth. Unseen he gnawed at human hearts, then scurried from the law. But a yellow man watched with Oriental patience—waiting the right moment to spring his trap.



Birdy toppled backward
and went down like a
poled ox.

CHAPTER ONE

Hell's Tortures

IT'S a wise man who quits a business wherein he meets stiff competition and enters a more promising field. "Monk" Waxley had grown that wise a

year ago and the million dollars wrung from blackmail and ransom victims testified to his good judgment.

Monk was a crooked-brained human animal without a single redeeming feature—cowardly as a jackal, ruthless as a mad lion and as ugly as a vulture. There were a dozen men and women in the Big

Burg who would tell you that Monk would live until God could send him to a place worse than hell. They were wrong! Hell was bad enough even for Monk, and he had started on the short road to it the moment he entered Fong Loo's luxurious rooms. As he stood there fondling the two tiny bottles and looking at the smirking Chinaman squatted on the red cushion, Monk's deep-set black eyes blazed with hell's essence.

"You're sure the stuff in these bottles will work, huh?" he rasped, his ugly face red and hot.

Fong Loo's yellow face grew stern.

"May my honorable ancestors be eternally damned if either bottle fails," he said reverently. "The green bottle is the slow poison. You will find that it mixes perfectly with water, coffee or milk. The man who drinks it will most certainly die—after a week of hell's tortures."

Monk's rat eyes narrowed and he laughed like a hyena.

"An' this one," he said softly, holding the red bottle aloft in a massive hand whose back was thickly covered with black hair, "I give him this one in case I decide I don't want him to croak?"

Fong Loo slid his bony, long-nailed fingers into flowing sleeves and grinned.

"Until the noon hour of the sixth day the antidote will save the victim. But if you delay longer than noon, the victim will most assuredly die in one last, terrible spasm of agony."

Again Monk's hideous laugh rang in the spacious and luxurious room. Thrusting the two dangerous bottles into the pockets of his worn brown vest, Monk looked the crafty heathen straight in the almond eyes.

"Just the ticket. I knew you could help me, Loo."

"Will my friend enlighten me further?" Loo parried, his head cocked to one side and his eyes narrowed to inquisitive slits.

"Who are you going to use the drugs on?"

"Ever hear o' Gerald Hastings?"

"The actor?"

"Yeah! Lousy with dough. I'm gonna relieve him of fifty grand."

"My friend is clever," Loo drawled and his face lighted with mock admiration.

Monk's chest swelled. He thoroughly agreed with Loo.

"The million bucks I've got salted away proves that," he boasted. "Let the other crackpots do the rum runnin' an' dope smugglin'. My racket's safe, see? Handle these cases right an' the sucker never squeals. Remember Marion Burke the opera singer? I took her into camp for seventy-five grand. When I turned her loose I warned her—one chirp to the cops an' they'll be fishin' you out the Hudson River. That was a year ago. She ain't chirped yet, an' never will."

"A million dollars is a lot of money," Loo drawled.

"It ain't what you make, Loo. It's what you hang on to that counts. Look at me. When I was in the booze racket I'd make a grand an' by the time I finished splittin' with the mob an' greasin' the snoopers, I wouldn't have two hundred left for myself. When I make a buck in this new racket, the buck belongs to me."

Loo grinned and slowly opened the bottom drawer of a chest beside him. He was looking straight at the gloating Monk as his long fingers dipped into the drawer.

"There are not many expenses in this new business?"

"Expenses hell!" Monk chuckled, "I got two snowbirds to do all the dangerous an' dirty work. I keep 'em in rags, grub an' snow. That's all they want or get. That makes the racket pretty near all clear profit."

Loo's hand came out of the drawer. A long piece of yellow paper came with it. He looked at Monk and smiled blandly.

"I am glad you mentioned those assist-

ants of yours, my friend. It recalled this bill for cocaine. Perhaps you will pay now?"

Monk's swarthy face clouded and his flabby lips smacked. Expenses! He hated the very word. If he had a god, that god was gold. He thought fast as he forced a sickly, greedy laugh.

"I keep fergettin' that bill an' every damn time you mention it I ain't got the dough with me. Tell you what. Just as soon as I find out how good the stuff in these bottles is, I'll come and pay up."

Loo left his cushion with a disgusted grunt. He patted close to the uneasy Monk.

"Some of the items on this bill are of long standing, my friend. But I will not press you. I am content to wait—for a week shall we say? By next Thursday evening you will have used one or both bottles on Mr. Gerald Hastings. I will expect you here by midnight Thursday with the nine hundred dollars you owe me. It is agreeable?"

"Sure!" Monk snapped, "I'll be here."

"Thursday. Not later than midnight, my friend."

They looked squarely into each other's eyes. In Monk's blazed a dangerous light, a light of understanding. Fong Loo had an ace up his sleeve. He meant to collect that nine hundred, collect it peacefully or by force. And by force meant wising up the cops to Monk's racket! But Monk wasn't easily frightened. Thursday at midnight he might pay and—No! A bullet was much cheaper than nine hundred dollars.

In Fong Loo's eyes there was also a dangerous light, but a light of Oriental cleverness. Loo had never yet stooped to murder. He wouldn't do so now. Nor would he turn informer. There was a way to get the best of the greedy, cheating Monk, a safe way and one of absolute certainty. All Loo knew at the moment

was that Monk Waxley was terribly greedy, twice as dull-witted, and that Monk had no intentions of paying the sum due. Loo forced a smile and his sandaled feet patted to the door.

"You will excuse me, my friend?" he purred, his parchmentlike face creased with a faint smile. "It is my hour of prayer."

Monk only grunted and shot his hand for the doorknob.

"I'll be seein' you, Loo," he snarled.

"At midnight Thursday with nine hundred dollars," Loo replied amiably as he bowed low.

The minute the door closed behind Monk, Loo trudged back to the idol beneath the silk and gold canopy. He lighted two tapers and sank to his knees on the cushion before the small altar. For fifteen minutes he prayed solemnly, earnestly, as befits a man who generally gets what he prays for—in this instance a heaping ladle of misfortune for the ruthless Monk.

THE miserly Monk walked a mile and a half to save a nickel carfare. He walked quickly, with his hairy right hand pressed tight to his vest pocket and the phials of death and life. It was shortly after midnight when he reached Ninth Street. A stone's throw away from the foul-smelling canal stood a three-story tenement. Every window facing the dark deserted street was tightly boarded. Monk scurried down the rubbish-littered basement steps like a rat.

He lunged against a stout door, then walked far into a clammy cellar, guided by instinct rather than eyes. Without hesitation he found a flight of wooden stairs, climbed them with every nerve in his body tingling.

On the first floor he pushed open another door. The room lit by a single flickering gas jet was just such a room

as a beast like Monk would admire. Filth and stench ran neck and neck; the filth the accumulation of many years and the stench coming from pigeon cages lined against the wall. The pigeons were important cogs in Monk's money-squeezing plans. But for the moment he ignored them and centered his rat eyes on the two twitching men stretched at ease on filthy cots.

"Well?" Monk blasted excitedly. "Did you get him?"

"Birdy" Clawson's lips drew back and revealed jagged brown teeth that made his smile doubly hideous.

"Yeah. He's in the next room an'— You got any—anything for me, boss?"

Monk scaled his cap across the room, whirled toward the door. Like a famished lion going for meat, he kicked open the door. Standing there on the threshold, he rubbed his massive hands together and feasted his eyes on the calm-faced man tightly bound to an ancient chair. He darted forward and ripped the gag from the captive's mouth.

"Greetin's, Hastings. I've been wantin' to see you for a long, long time. I—"

"What's the meaning of this?" Hastings demanded hotly.

"The meanin'?" That you're my guest until somebody hands over fifty grand. In plain English, you help me collect the dough, or you go out o' here—feet first. How about it?"

The captive's brown eyes flashed fire.

"In other words you're holding me for fifty thousand dollars ransom and you expect me to help you collect?" Hastings snapped, and his every word dripped defiance such as he had never displayed on any stage though his ability was known throughout the world. "You expect me to help you collect!"

Monk's mouth twisted and he grabbed a handful of the actor's silky brown hair.

Jerking back the classical head, he leaned close.

"You'll help me all right—before I get through with you."

"You'll have to kill me first and then it will be too late to—"

Monk's filthy hand jammed the words back into Hastings' throat.

"Shut up, damn you!" he roared like a madman. "Shut up an' listen. I'm leavin' you a hunk o' paper an' a pencil. You're gonna write an' tell that wife o' yours to get fifty grand out the bank an' wait for orders."

Hastings smiled, a smile that enraged Monk.

"Funny, ain't it? I guess you'll change your mind when I tell you that you get nothin' to eat an' nothin' to drink until you *do* write."

He slapped the helpless man across the mouth and spun to the door. In the same split second Hastings made his decision. He knew his wife had more than ordinary intelligence. If he wrote the letter Monk demanded, she'd get the ransom money ready—and when Monk's men called for it, she'd have police ready. It was all so simple, Hastings tried hard to avoid another smile.

"Wait a minute," he called. "As long as you're so determined on this business, I might as well surrender now. Bring me the paper and pencil."

Monk whirled with narrowed eyes. He chuckled and pushed a rickety table to Hastings' side, dug a notebook from his pocket and ripped out a blank page.

"A guy that changes his mind that quick must be bankin' on a phony move," he snarled and whipped an automatic from his pocket. "I'm gonna free your hands. You make one crooked break an' Broadway loses its pet hero."

Hastings was eager to write. He snatched up the pencil and turned to the leering Monk.

"Shall I tell her why the money is necessary?" he inquired smoothly.

"You just tell her to get the dough ready. I'll do all the explainin'."

It was rather a curt note that Hastings scribbled. Monk howled for the pair in the other room. They came quickly and again roped the captive securely to the chair. Monk laboriously added a postscript to the letter.

"Get the dough ready and wait for orders.

Do exactly what you're told to do, and when you're told. Talk to the cops about this and your husband comes home in a box."

Monk studied his handwork and grinned. He nodded toward the door and his assistants staggered out. Monk stepped over the threshold with a satisfied grunt, then banged the door behind him and whirled on the twitching Birdy.

"Chase around to Tony's grocery store. Tell him to charge a pint bottle o' milk an' a loaf o' bread. Make it snappy."

But Birdy had other things on his mind.

"We had a tough time gettin' that guy here, Monk," he mumbled. "Ain't you got any snow for—"

With a maniacal snarl, Monk sent a water glass whizzing at the beggar's head. Birdy ducked and fled. "Rags" Allen cowered in a corner and whimpered like a whipped dog.

"Get Judy outter the cage," Monk commanded and began to shake the filth out of a pasteboard box.

The caged homing pigeons created quite an uproar before the fleet-winged Judy was captured. Half a minute and Monk had her in the box with the lid clamped tight. He jerked a drawer from beneath the crusted table top, swooped upon a yellow envelope. Rags cackled like a fool.

"The same stunt we pulled on that opera singer?"

"Yeah. Get into your Western Union uniform. You deliver this telegram to

Hastings' wife at the Richmond Arms Hotel. Don't wait for an answer."

By the time Rags was togged out in his official-looking uniform, Birdy was back with the pint of milk and loaf of bread. Monk emptied the green phial into the milk, replaced the cap and shook the bottle vigorously. Birdy and Rags didn't miss a single move. This was education!

"Get goin' with that telegram," Monk rasped.

The instant Rags leaped to the door Monk turned toward the captive's room. He went in with that hideous leer on his pasty face.

"Your supper, king," he snapped sarcastically, the bread and milk in his hairy hands. "I'm even gonna feed you."

The very sight of the sloppy milk bottle turned Hastings' stomach.

"No thanks. I'd rather—"

"You're emptying this bottle if I have to give it to you with an eye dropper."

Again Hastings surrendered. The milk tasted no worse than any other milk. And because he hated all milk he was delighted when the last drop was down.

Monk backed away from the blissfully ignorant captive, backed away with his ugly mouth open and his tongue sliding back and forth across his flabby lips.

"Good, wasn't it?" he snarled and darted from the room.

In the next room, Birdy Clawson was tormenting the caged pigeons. One glance at the drug-crazed fiend and Monk lost his last atom of control. He leaped across the room with a chilling yell of rage.

"How many times did I tell you not to—"

His teeth gnashed. His fist shot for Birdy's bony chin with the speed and force of a bullet. Birdy's head snapped up and back. His feet left the floor. He toppled backward and went down like a poled ox. The sharp crack of his skull on the window-sill rang out. Monk

waddled closer and looked down at the wide-open, glassy eyes. No need for a second look. Birdy was dead.

Dead! Monk's face twisted with self-rebuke. Birdy didn't represent a human being. He was just so much free help. Men who would do dangerous and dirty work in exchange for rags, scraps of food and dope were hard to find. For the first time in his life, Monk sincerely regretted his viciousness. He'd have to find someone to work with Rags Allen. It wouldn't be easy. But a man with his brains would find just such a man.

Brains. Monk spent a good fifteen minutes complimenting himself. A million dollars to the good. Proof of brains. Proof of—

From that next room came a long drawn groan. Monk stiffened and slowly turned toward the closed door. Again that signal of agony, louder and more horrible now. Monk was as hard as nails, as heartless as any animal and yet this long drawn groan sent chills racing up and down his spine. Half afraid, he crossed the room and opened the door.

Just as he looked in the captive's chin sagged and his head dropped. Monk stood petrified. Chinamen could certainly compound terrible stuff! Fong Loo had said the man would last a week. Monk looked at the figure straining against the ropes. He had his doubts. Perhaps a husky like himself could stand up under the drug for a week. But this slim product of a life of ease and luxury?

Monk walked closer, just two steps closer. Again that hideous groan. Monk turned like a frightened rabbit, darted into the next room and banged the door.

He was still breathing fast when Rags Allen bounded into the dingy room. Rags' glassy eyes popped wide when he saw his pal sprawled on the bare floor by the window.

"W-what—"

"Shut up!" Monk exploded. "Grab his feet. We'll dump him in the canal."

But Rags stood there with his knees knocking and his eyes wild. Brains! Monk laughed and dug into his vest pocket. He tossed the tiniest of white packages at Rags.

Half a minute and a reborn man stooped and picked up Birdy's limp feet.

"Come on, Monk. Pick him up. He won't bite," Rags said bravely, the courageous light of the snow in his eyes.

THE splash of a corpse striking the oily waters of the canal was a pleasant sound to Monk Waxley. He nudged Rags in the elbow.

"Let's get out here before—"

"I ain't afraid o' nobody," Rags barked belligerently. "I ain't—"

"Go back in the joint an' get that box an' Judy. An' handle her careful, see? I'll meet you at the corner."

Rags disappeared in the darkness. Monk watched him out of sight. Cheap help and good, when he was loaded with dope. He swaggered down to the corner. Wonder how Hastings was getting along? It didn't make much difference. This job was good for fifty grand. He'd collect even if he did deliver a corpse instead of a live man. He was still thinking of that fifty grand when Rags waddled through the murk. Monk took charge of the boxed pigeon, and turned the corner with Rags at his heels like a faithful puppy.

A twenty minute walk brought them to an exclusive neighborhood.

"You see that sign down there? Richmond Arms Hotel?"

"Yeah."

"On this end is the servants entrance. You duck down there. You walk straight back. There's a service elevator. Don't use it. Go up the stairs you'll see a little bit to the left. Walk up five flights. Put

this box at the door o' Five C. An' then beat it as fast as your feet will take you. Got it?"

"Sure. I ain't afraid o' nobody or—"

"Go ahead. I'll wait here."

Rags took the box without hesitation. He turned away. Monk grabbed him by the elbow.

"What're you gonna say if there's a slip up?"

Rags laughed hollowly. He'd been coached in that so many times, he sometimes said it in his sleep.

"I say a man slipped me half a buck to deliver the box. It was supposed to be a big surprise for the lady. I never saw the man before in my life."

Monk slapped him on the back.

"O. K. Beat it," he mumbled. The minute Rags' back was turned Monk moved further away from the place.

Safety first! What Monk didn't know was that he was starting something that would lead him to the grave. Already a wireless operator was tapping out a message that meant death, absolute death for him!

Ten minutes passed. Like all men who are certain they are extremely brainy, Monk wasn't at all impatient, until a figure came streaking out of the Richmond Arms Hotel service entrance. Rags! No doubt about it! Monk drew back in the shadows of the old-fashioned brownstone house.

Rags was pounding closer. A second figure came hurtling from the service entrance. A harness bull!

"Halt!"

The command ripped the quiet of the high-hat neighborhood. It came again. Then the crack of a gun and the sliver of cherry flame. Rags plunged on. The gun cracked again. Rags was zigzagging now. Poor drug-soaked fool. He didn't know that both those shots were aimed

over his head, didn't know that he still had time to surrender.

"Monk! Monk!" he bellowed frantically. "Monk Save—"

Two eyewink flashes of light, two ear-splitting reports. Rags halted in the middle of a stride. His legs caved in. He picked himself up and tried again. Useless. Down he went on his way to a reunion with his pal Birdy Clawson.

Monk grinned. Like a rat, he clung to the shadows, gradually working his way to the corner. Once around it, he walked briskly cursing a blue streak. Minus two helpers! What of it? He'd find other recruits who'd be glad to work for next to nothing.

He walked faster once he had turned south. Had Rags delivered the pigeon? That was all that worried Monk. And when he saw a telephone booth in an all-night restaurant, he entered the place with nervous steps.

He thumbed the pages of his notebook, dropped a nickel into the slot. He had the Richmond Arms Hotel and almost instantly the Hastings apartment.

"Who's this?" he demanded as a gruff voice responded.

"Officer Daly. Of the Twenty-first Precinct."

Monk laughed.

"Listen, you. I got a hunch you'll try and trace this call so I'll get outer here in a hurry. Was a pigeon delivered to Mrs. Hastings?"

"Yes! And the man who delivered it is dead."

"No kiddin'! Get this. Mrs. Hastings ties fifty grand in small bills to the legs o' that bird or her darlin' gets the works—in fact, the works are started. She gets the bird and the dough ready. When I call her again she turns the bird loose. It's a homin' pigeon, see? They always go back home. You got all that?"

A sarcastic laugh poured from the re-

ceiver. Monk understood. The officer had doubtlessly decided that catching Monk was a very simple piece of business. Monk mocked that laugh and sobered suddenly.

"You figger the police air force will trail the pigeon, huh?" he snarled with his face close to the hot mouthpiece of the instrument, "Well I ain't as dumb as that, see? Go up in your damned airplanes. If Mrs. Hastings turns that bird loose one minute before I tell her to, you'll trail the pigeon—an' find her husband with his throat cut. I've worked this racket before. An' worked it good. It's the dough, or a box o' cold meat. She can have her pick."

Bang went the receiver. Monk hurried out of the restaurant. He turned five consecutive corners before he struck out on a direct route for his dismal quarters.

Brains! How could he help but win? It would take an extremely clever man to beat him. What Monk didn't know was that the very man was in the captain's quarters of the steamship St. Nazare, a sinister radiogram in his thin hands and his eyes heavy with fears.

CHAPTER TWO

A Death Warrant

CAPTAIN LARRENZ of the St. Nazare regretfully looked at the younger haggard face. His weak blue eyes dropped to the radiogram.

"I'd do anything in the world to help you, Larry, anything. But I can't make a ship like this fly. It will be late Thursday evening before we sight the Statue of Liberty."

"Thursday evening!" Larry repeated bitterly. "God knows what will have happened to Jerry by that time."

Then every nerve in his lean body snapped to attention and his nimble brain

clicked at a furious pace. Captain Larrenz had said something about flying. Larry reached the captain's table with three quick steps.

"Fly! That's it! Fly!" he said excitedly. "I could charter a seaplane to meet us—say two or three hundred miles from shore."

The bald head of the sea veteran wagged morosely.

"A mighty costly proposition. And what would you gain? Ten or fifteen hours at the most."

But Larry was fully determined. He hunched over the massive red table.

"If I save even a few minutes I might save Jerry. I'm going to do it!" he exploded and turned toward the door.

Captain Larrenz leaped from his chair.

"Wait a minute, Larry. It's not a sure-fire way. Suppose the sea is rough and it's impossible—"

"I'm chartering a seaplane, captain. I'll get aboard it, if I have to climb a rope ladder. Jerry is my brother. He taught me all I know. I won't stand idly by and see him— Good Lord, captain, don't you see? These dogs might even kill him."

"And you might die trying to save him."

The haggard face lighted with a grin.

"The game's worth the candle!" he shouted and wrenched open the door.

Up the deserted deck he sprinted. Unceremoniously he burst into the wireless room. The operator became contaminated with his excitement. Together they delved into directories. In less than five minutes the operator was clicking out a message, a message that on the surface was merely a chartering of a seaplane. But Monk Waxley would soon realize that that message was his death warrant!

STILL cock-sure of victory Monk reached his miserable quarters. Face twisted with a conceited leer, he went

down the cellar stairs. He closed and locked the door behind then started back into the cellar. A half dozen steps and he froze to the dirt floor. From upstairs came one long agonized groan. It sent chills up and down Monk's spine, made his heart thump against his ribs. He used up five minutes rallying the courage to move back to the stairs leading to the floor above.

Pushing open the door like a man dreadfully afraid of something and knowing not what, Monk entered the room. Again that paralyzing groan. Monk's first impulse was to dash out of the place. He lacked even the courage to do that. Tip-toeing toward the door of the adjoining room, his nervous hand reached for the heavy bolt. A fraction of an inch at a time he drew it back—and almost prayed that the unnerving noise from the helpless victim would not come again.

He opened the door an inch. His blood turned to ice water. Hastings had evidently upset the chair in a spasm of agony. The rope had snapped. Monk whipped the rod from his pocket and cautiously entered the room. Brains! Even though Hastings was sprawled on the floor, Monk kept a stiff finger on the trigger. Perhaps Hastings was only acting dead?

Monk circled around that body like the double-dyed coward he was. If this was acting, Hastings merited his fame! He lay there, a grotesque twisted hulk, as if every bone in his body had been twice broken. Monk reached for the gas-jet cock with a hand visibly trembling. He turned the gas on full and never removed his eyes from Hastings' face. Monk groaned and backed up a pace.

That face! Those glassy eyes looking straight up at him, those thin lips distorted by pain. Monk had looked at dozens of dead men, dozens of faces advertizing violent death—but never so terrible a face as this. He ran fat fingers around the dirty

collar of his shirt. Sucking in his breath he circled the corpse, reached the door and kicked it closed behind him.

What a death! Chinamen could certainly mix dreadful stuff! Monk walked to the window facing the pitch-black yard. He flung up the sash. From his vest pocket he snatched the tiny bottle of antidote. Hastings was dead; it was useless now. Monk hurled the bottle out of the window. He heard it smash and he laughed—a hollow laugh like that of a man who suspects that something bad is going to happen to him and laughs to rally his courage.

"I'll collect that fifty grand anyhow," he grumbled aloud as he slowly turned from the window. "I'll—"

Unintentionally his eyes drooped. He found himself standing on a dark red stain, the aftermath of Birdy Clawson's death. And just beside that dark stain was a vision that sapped Monk's last ounce of nerve. The face of Gerald Hastings! As distinct as it would be if Hastings was lying there instead of in the next room.

Monk blinked hard and swallowed his heart. He slammed a ponderous foot down on that vision. It moved ahead. Monk tore his eyes away. He looked at the filthy wall. The distorted face of Gerald Hastings was on the wall; it was everywhere Monk looked.

"Goin' nuts!" Monk howled like a genuine maniac. "I'm goin'—"

He bolted for the door, wrenched it open and pounded down the dark stairs to the cellar. Wheezing for breath, perspiration on his torrid brow, he reached the deserted street. To stay in that house with the remains of his victim would most certainly drive him mad.

Conscience? Monk frankly admitted he had no such thing in his makeup. There was something else behind this vision business, something that Monk could

not understand. He laughed to chase the premonition of evil, laughed and hurried down the street.

"No guy's mug is gonna make me quit this juicy racket," he growled as he turned the first corner. "What I need is sleep."

And he knew where to get it cheap. Sleep and forgetfulness. That was what he needed. Tomorrow that hideous face wouldn't bother him.

There were twenty beds lined along the south wall of the long room in the flop house, twenty beds occupied by twenty assorted derelicts. Monk's was last in the long line of despair. Over his head was a window. The sun of another day was waging a losing battle to pierce the crust of filth on the six small window panes.

Like the other patrons of the reeking place, Monk was stretched flat on his back, fully clothed. He hadn't slept well. Fifteen cents for a bed—because a face had driven him out of his den. He lay there, staring blankly at the fly-specked ceiling until the drone of a plane's powerful motor reached his ears. He leaped from the bed with a vile oath. He flung up the window with a viciousness that cracked one of the panes. Blinking like a rat unaccustomed to sunlight, Monk looked up at the cloudless sky.

He had guessed right! Police department planes! Four of them, and flying so low he could make out the P.D. on the wings. His blood boiled as he raced down the long room. Three steps at a clip, he mounted two flights of stairs and dashed out on the graveled roof.

Was Mrs. Hastings going to obey his orders or the orders of the police department? Was she going to release that pigeon now, in order that the planes might attempt to trail it to its owner? Monk waited as impatiently as though his own life was in the balance.

Both planes flew passed the tower of

the Richmond Arms Hotel. Monk grinned. Nothing to worry about. Ever since the department had added planes to the force, some patrolling was a daily occurrence. Monk watched them until they were tiny specks in the sky.

"They'll hafta go some to trail Judy," he mused as he thumped down the stairs to the street. "I'll give the order to turn her loose at night. If those planes can trail a pigeon at night, they're good."

Monk reached the street in high spirits, but ten yards from the door of the flop house, his heart almost exploded. Unless there is absolutely nothing to alight on, pigeons will not fly at night. Monk's face grew purple and puffed with rage. He had worked the pigeon racket a number of times. This was the first time one of his victims had dared go to the police for help. And now he had those damnable planes to contend with.

He turned into a cheap lunchroom and slid to the top of one of the stools lined before the greasy counter.

"I ain't licked yet," he assured himself. "I'll get that dough if I have to—"

"What'll you have?" the pot-bellied man behind the counter barked.

Monk was inclined toward bacon and eggs but a doughnut was cheaper.

"That big one on top," he snarled. "An' a cup o' java."

He tore the doughnut to pieces and dropped it into the coffee. He ate like a dog, coffee dribbled from the corners of his mouth and he mopped it away with the sleeve of his coat.

And every time he hoisted a spoonful of the sloppy mess he thought of something different—Fifty grand *almost* his; two helpers whom he could no longer command; Judy, that fleet winged homing pigeon who could fly with the speed of a bullet And last of all Monk thought of Fong Loo.

Fong Loo! He *might* pay Loo if he

collected the fifty grand. But then again, nine hundred was a lot of money. No! The best thing to do was shut Loo's mouth with a bullet or two.

Monk left the lunchroom after begrudgingly throwing a dime at the counter man. He had thought of many things. But not of a grim-faced man on the steamship St. Nazare.

CAPTAIN LARRENZ and Larry were on the bridge of the liner, binoculars trained on the cloudless sky. The captain's glasses sagged. He stole a morose glance at the hopeful Larry, then glanced at his wrist watch.

"An hour an a half late and a storm on the—"

Larry's free hand grabbed the captain's elbow. That speck out there where a placid sea met a pale blue sky! Reality or just a vision in a troubled mind? The captain's glasses went back to his eyes. For a few minutes they stood there scarcely daring to breathe.

Larry was first to snap out of the statuesque pose and he whooped like an Indian. The plane's three motors could be heard distinctly now, and the naked eye could make out the full details of the craft. Larry was a little too excited to realize the folly of his wild waving of arms and wilder yelling. Captain Larrenz could still think. In half a minute the steamer's whistle was going full blast.

Like a graceful bird the plane circled the ship and settled down to the glass-smooth green waters. A perfect landing if ever there had been one. Larry raced for the boat ready to be lowered. Captain Larrenz was hot after him.

"Good luck, Larry."

There was a dangerous light in Larry's black eyes as he wrung the captain's hand.

"Better wish those rats good luck, if

they've touched a hair on Jerry's head," he said desperately.

A sharp command and pulleys squeaked. To the impatient Larry it seemed a mile or more before the boat touched the placid water. Powerful arms seized long oars. The swish and dripping waters were pleasant music to Larry. Less than ten minutes and he was in the seaplane's cabin.

Three motors roared. The plane skimmed the water with ever increasing speed and rose effortless as a gull. The relief pilot touched Larry's arm.

"Mrs. Hastings said I was to tell you that everything will work out all right."

"Police been notified?"

"Yes. Two planes are ready to leave the East River on signal the minute she gets the orders to turn that pigeon loose. The thing that has everybody up a tree is how to trail the pigeon—if it can be done—without these cutthroats being aware of the fact."

Larry understood. The wireless had brought him all the details, especially the threat to kill Hastings if the pigeon was trailed. He looked out of the window and down at the fast-fading steamer, trying to think.

"We wouldn't have much need for police if I could get my hands on these rats!" he said venomously.

"It isn't only catching them," the pilot said sharply. "A lot of men get arrested and accused. Convicting them is something else again. You know that, don't you?"

No answer. But Larry was thinking hard. The pilot was right, partly. Conviction and jail! The just desserts of rats. And seldom attained. Then a determined smile creased Larry's smooth face. In a case like this, one should fight fire with fire. No sense to trying to fight rats according to law. One way to handle them—their way! Anything would go.

Larry looked at the pilot and forced a grim laugh.

"I have a hunch that bullets will convict these dogs," he said huskily. "There's a law and language they'll understand. Bullets!"

Then his mouth snapped closed and he gazed moodily out of the window. If only he had known that Gerald Hastings was already beyond help. What wouldn't happen when he made the discovery? Could he match wits with the conceited, greedy Monk and even hope to win? Time would tell.

CHAPTER THREE

Haunted

BY DUSK Thursday evening Monk Waxley was a bundle of twitching nerves. He dared not enter that dismal building near the foul-smelling canal. Hastings was still on the floor and Monk realized that one more glance at that terrible face would drive him stark mad. Thursday! He thought of Fong Loo, heard again the yellow man's veiled threat. Midnight was the deadline. On the tick of midnight Loo would do something. And Monk knew that his only chance was to do something before Loo went into action. In his present state, Monk could not think very rationally. And yet he grabbed the bull by the horns. With fifty grand at stake anything was better than standing idly by and seeing the money slip through his fingers.

He looked at the sun slowly but surely sinking below the western horizon. Inspiration! If that pigeon were released just a few minutes before dark, she'd come home posthaste. Suppose police planes were waiting to trail her? In fast-fading light their chances of success were mighty slight. Monk stood at the door of the dingy drug store. He ought to go

back to his dive and open the window. Judy could enter immediately. The police would have to search every house in the miserable neighborhood, and by the time they found the right house—if ever—Monk could have the money and be far from harm's reach.

But enter that house again? Bring Hastings' hideous face back into his mind? Monk used up ten minutes with serious thinking. With a weak growl he surrendered. No other way out. He turned toward home with slow-measured steps.

Just around the corner from his hide-away was a combined speakeasy-stationery store. Monk was in the telephone booth in a minute. He rasped the number of the Richmond Arms Hotel. Mrs. Hastings answered the phone. Monk knew a bluff would help.

"You got that bird an' the dough ready?"

"Y-yes."

"I'm watchin' your front window. I wanna see that bird fly away in less than half a minute. There's a stiletto at your husband's throat right this minute. I see that bird fly, or that stiletto gets to work.

"I'll turn the bird out if you promise me—"

"You got half a minute!" Monk exploded and banged the receiver on the hook.

He raced out of the store. Legs working like the driving rods on a speeding train, he pounded around the corner, dived down the cellar of his hangout. Greed drove fear of the dead man's face from his mind. He thumped up the wooden stairs, burst into the room with the pigeon cages. Flinging up the window, opening Judy's cage was the work of half a minute. Monk darted to the hall and went flying to the roof.

Perfectly timed. Grim shadows of night were falling fast. He couldn't see

very far. Was Judy on the way with her precious burden? He tried to pierce the fast-gathering gloom with his rat eyes. Useless.

A stream of scalding oaths poured from Monk's filthy mouth. Four planes came up over the building tops. Monk understood. They'd probably been riding in the East River awaiting a signal. Too bad he couldn't keep that promise to slit Hastings' throat. Too bad— He yelled like a mad man and dived for the door leading below. Judy! She came out of the semi-darkness like a bullet. And she swooped for the open window below without hesitation.

"Police planes!" Monk snarled happily as he galloped down the creaking stairs. "I knew damned well Judy would leave 'em a mile behind."

Gasping for breath Monk entered the room. Good old Judy! She was in her cage. For the first time in his life Monk withstood the temptation to finger money at the first possible second. He went over to the window and banged it shut. He could hear the drone of plane motors—music to his ears, food for the fires of conceit blazing within him.

Twisting out the gas light, he darted to the cage and seized the weary bird. He fished a pearl-handled knife from his pocket and cut the threads around Judy's thin legs. Carefully unwrapping the bills, he put the frightened bird back in the cage and struck a match. No trick! The bills were genuine although Mrs. Hastings had not obeyed orders to the letter. He had said small bills. She had sent ten brand new five thousand dollar bills. Proving she had more brains than Monk! Small bills, fifty thousand dollars worth, could hardly be wrapped about a pigeon's legs. Monk grew big-hearted. He readily forgave Mrs. Hastings and swelled with pride, purring with content, Monk left the gruesome room.

A complete success. All he had to do now was settle with Fong Loo. As Monk went down the cellar stairs, his hand inched toward his bulging hip pocket. Settling with Loo was going to be both easy and cheap. He'd shut that yellow man's mouth once and for all! His face was like a wolf's as he opened the door leading to the steps that in turn led to the street—and then Monk pulled back into the clammy darkness. Voices! Up there on the street!

"They lost sight of the pigeon just about two blocks from here," a squeaky voice rang out. "But she was headed north and I'll be damned if I didn't see something like a pigeon come down some place around here."

Monk squinted through the iron railing on the street level. Harness bulls. Two of them. His lips twisted at their corners. Common pavement pounders. No brains. He listened again.

"I called up the precinct. Every man on reserve will be here soon. Lieutenant Reilly said we'll make a house to house search and—"

Silent as a ghost, Monk went back into the cellar and closed and locked the door. Roundly cursing the police in general and these two in particular, he went up to the roof again. Dangerous leaving the place now, especially since he'd heard the clang of two patrol wagon bells. No one in the neighborhood had ever seen him come or go. To all appearances this dismal house was empty, had been so for years.

Monk looked cautiously over the edge of the roof. At least twenty-five harness bulls were in the street. Lieutenant Reilly was splitting them into small squads. Monk laughed and drew back behind a crumbling chimney. No hurry. He could wait. Plenty of time to settle with Fong Loo.

But would Fong Loo await his convenience?

IT WAS precisely a quarter past one o'clock when the gloating Monk tip-toed passed a slant-eyed doorman and went up soft-carpeted stairs. At a door on the first landing, Monk paused and listened. Damn the luck! Fong Loo had company. Monk did some quick thinking. He could go in and wait for the company to depart. He rapped the panel sharply, rapped it again when he grew tired of waiting.

The door opened. Loo glance at him, smiled queerly and bowed as he flung the door wide. Monk entered the room with his rat eyes sweeping every inch of the luxurious place. Company? Monk couldn't see anyone. He whirled on the Chinaman closing the door.

"Who was you talkin' to?"

Loo smiled and nodded toward the idol and the small altar.

"It is my hour of prayer, my friend," he drawled.

"Yeah? I thought I heard English."

"You did! When I ask Buddha for an especial favor, I ask in English and—I am a worldly man unworthy of Buddha's favors, my friend. I interrupt even prayer when a friend comes to pay a bill. Yes, even when he comes an hour and fifteen minutes late."

Monk grinned like a jackal. Loo looked him straight in the eye.

"You came to pay the nine hundred dollars, my friend?"

"I came to give you everything that's due," Monk rasped, but smiled. "That green bottle wasn't so hot. Hastings croaked the same night I gave him the stuff."

"A weak man," Loo drawled and shrugged his shoulders. "My friend is not annoyed? Surely you have killed others and—"

"You said somethin'," Monk exploded, "Everybody that stands in my way gets

a ticket for hell. Everybody, Loo, includin' you."

Swift as a cobra strikes the rod came from Monk's pocket. He was animal enough to keep that trigger finger still. It would be funny to see Loo cringe and hear him beg mercy. But Loo only grinned. Chinamen knew how to die, when they were ready. And Loo wasn't ready!

Monk didn't see that that dagger came from Loo's flowing sleeve. It came too fast. It flew at Monk's face with the whine of a bullet. Loo had always been an expert in knife throwing. But lady luck walked out on him this time. Monk ducked and screamed. He felt the breeze of the dagger as it skimmed past his face, struck the silk and gold screen behind him and clanged to the blue Chinese rug.

Crack! The rod in Monk's hand roared and spit fire. A case of bad nerves. The missile of death whizzed over the defenseless Loo's shoulders. Loo stood there with his almond eyes riveted on the jade Buddha. He knew Monk wouldn't miss a second time—and Monk didn't!

Twice that rod flamed and roared and spit death. Crimson stained Loo's silken robes. He sagged to the floor without a whimper. Monk squeezed his trigger again. Once more ought to be enough to—

Patter of sandaled feet in the hall. The yellow, frantic face of a Chinese servant in the doorway. More pattering of feet on the floor above. The rod barked again as a dagger came into the yellow hand at the door. Monk leaped forward as that servant crashed to the floor. A second servant barred his way. The rod roared again. Monk flew down the stairs. Safe—if one did not consider what one had left behind.

Larry stepped from behind a heavy curtain of Oriental splendor. He dropped to his knees beside the crimson stained Fong Loo.

"Are you—"

Loo smiled and waved him aside.

"Go, my friend. The police will come and—"

"But I can't leave you to die, alone. Is there a phone?"

"Death is the last great adventure," Loo managed to squeeze out, fighting for the necessary breath. "I have told you who he is and what he has done. I have confessed my part. It is well that I die this way. It is better than the American way. And I am glad. I can face my honorable ancestors. I have kept my promise. I have arranged to make him pay, both you and I. You will do as I said. You will collect. The world will be a better place. I am glad. I am— Go, my friend. The police are at the door downstairs. They—"

Loo lost the battle for the next breath. Larry watched him slump back with a self-satisfied smile on his yellow face. And even in death Loo's long-nailed fingers pointed toward the window behind a heavy red silk curtain. Racing feet on the stairs. The babble of voices. Larry raced for the window. He went down a rusty fire-escape at a breakneck pace.

As long as he lived he'd never forget the mysterious telephone message that reached him as the clock in Mrs. Hastings' apartment struck midnight: "You will come to Fong Loo immediately. Fong Loo will tell you many things, important things!"

When he reached the street, Larry was glad he had obeyed that command. He could hear Loo's voice again; he could hear the words of the relief pilot of that seaplane: "It isn't only catching them. A lot of men get arrested and accused. Convicting them—"

Larry hailed a passing yellow cab. He snapped an order and dropped heavily upon the brown leather seat. Conviction! He knew only one thing, he'd make the

rap stick on this human animal. Things had simmered down to a grim game of wits versus wits. Larry or Monk Waxley would win, and live to tell about it. The loser would die. Time would nominate one for the grave.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Rat Trap

AS FAR as he was concerned, Monk considered the game finished. He was the victor. All that remained to be done was dump the remains of Gerald Hastings in the canal and add the fifty thousand to his million dollar horde. And even as he thought of that last gruesome job, Monk's stomach rolled.

If only he had Birdy Clawson or Rags Allen to carry the corpse to the water's edge! He might be able to accomplish the task alone, but that face! One more look at that face and he'd go mad. Leave it where it was? Impossible! He'd never have the guts to enter the place again—and that meant paying fifteen cents a night for a bed. Fifteen cents for a bed! Monk walked to the door of the flop house. Greed assailed him as his foot touched the first steps.

"I'll be damned if I do!" he snarled and turned back to the street.

He fought to get a grip on himself. If he stayed out of that room where Hastings lay in twisted death? That was the thing to do! He walked back home with quick, defiant steps not knowing that every step carried him just that much closer to hell.

He went down the cellar steps with a lump in his throat, the key of the lock in his quivering hand. Instinct rather than sight carried him toward the door. His hand struck its rough panel and his foot struck something yielding that froze the very marrow in his bones. With a gasp

he backed up. Going mad again? He fished a match from the pocket of his vest. A man was propped against the door. Monk dropped the match, whipped the rod from his pocket and cursed.

"What're you doin' down—"

"I—I'm only resting, mister. Honest. I'm only resting."

The plaintive voice got under Monk's skin. But he kept a tight grip on the rod and backed up the stairs. Something fishy here!

"Come up outer there," he bellowed. "I wanna get a look at you. Careful now. I'll croak you sure as hell if you try anything screwy."

The unknown came whimpering up the stairs. Monk never shifted his suspicious eyes from the fellow's face. Once that face was in the dimly lighted street, Monk laughed as if his last atom of sanity had fled. What a break. A snowbird! He knew the symptoms. Furtive, glassy eyes, pinched nose and twitching face, quivering hands. A snowbird. Just the man to take the place of Birdy and Rags. Free help! This poor dope-crazed fool would work for rags, scraps of food and snow.

Monk took another sharp look at that twitching face. He blinked hard and fast. Looked something like the face of Gerald Hastings. Before Fong Loo's poison had done its work. No! Must be mistaken. Monk cleared his mind of such thoughts. This fellow was just so much free help. Nothing more!

The stranger winced under Monk's appraising glare.

"I—I gotta be going," he mumbled and turned away.

But Monk grabbed him by the arm.

"Wait a minute, kid. I ain't gonna bite you. I ain't. How'd you like to go to work for me?"

The stranger pulled his thin arm away and shuddered. He held his eyes on Monk's shoes.

"No. I—I don't wanna work for anybody."

"Not even for this," Monk fired quickly, thrusting a tiny white package beneath the pinched nose.

The stranger's thin lips parted. His eyes blazed with lust and an inhuman noise rattled in his throat. He reached for the package greedily, checked himself and backed away.

"No. Not even for that."

"It's snow, kid. Snow!"

"I—I know it. But I got plenty. An' when that's all gone, I got what it takes to get plenty more. An' without workin' for anybody."

"You got what it takes—"

"I only worked once in my life. That was more than a year ago. I'm still living on the profits."

Monk looked the stranger over again. The fellow evidently meant he had money salted away. And he looked it! His clothes were first class. In fact, better than Monk's. Monk thought fast and hard, not good, or he might have reasoned that a man with plenty of cash would not be resting in filthy cellars. But Monk could only think that this fellow looked like ready money. Greed! It had Monk fast in its grip in half a second. That money would soon belong to Monk Waxley. He knew just how to get it. He laughed and slapped the stranger on the back.

"O. K., kid. Beat it. If you ever change your mind about workin' for me, just be where I found you tonight. Remember that, huh?"

Like a drug-soaked fool the stranger laughed and turned away. Monk watched him shamle to the corner, and then darted after him. What Monk didn't know was that the stranger knew he was being trailed, and was praying that the blissfully ignorant Monk would continue to trail him.

The stranger walked faster now. Keeping a safe distance, Monk followed. The stranger boarded a Staten Island ferry. Monk dogged him, electing the woman's side of the boat. Screech of a whistle and the ferry moved out on the dark river. In fifteen minutes came the crunch of ferry sliding along the stout walls of the slip. Monk was crouched at the door of the woman's side. He saw the stranger hurry to the street and he followed with the stealthy step of a lion stalking prey.

THE grim game continued down a dozen murky streets. Monk pressed closer now. The snowbird hadn't brains enough to be cautious. And Monk had no desire to lose sight of him in the darkness. They were within half a block of the river front when the pursued suddenly left the street.

Monk darted to the opposite side. He saw the stranger approaching a rambling shack set far back from the street. Quickly a light flared up. Monk raced across the street like a ghost, brazenly approached one window, a greedy smirk on his hot face.

He could see that there were two rooms, that they were absolutely bare of furnishings. The rear room was dark. The man within entered that dark room. Monk hurried down along the side of the house. Daggers of disappointment stabbed him. All the windows of that rear room were tightly boarded. A man could not get out of it unless he could pass through the front room. And the stranger was in this cell-like room! Monk raced back to the front door, whipped the rod from his pocket and burst in. In the same split second a light flared in the rear room. He darted to the threshold.

The stranger heard a board creak and whirled with a convulsive start. His chin and knees sagged when he saw the rod in Monk's steady hand.

"W-what are you doing here?" the stranger moaned, his eyes wild and his face a pasty white.

"You got dough cached here. I want it. An' I want it quick!"

Furtive eyes sweeping the room, the stranger flattened himself against the far wall. No escape! One way out—through the door where Monk was standing.

"I—I ain't got any dough, mister. Honest. I ain't—"

"You told me you had what it takes to buy plenty o' snow an' snow costs heavy dough. Come on. Out with it. Where's it at?"

Trembling like a sapling in a gale, the stranger stood there, a plea in his darting eyes, his tongue running over his thin lips.

"I ain't got—"

"I'll give you about one minute," Monk roared, trigger finger stiffening.

Anything was better than death. The stranger cleared his throat and gulped.

"If—if I give you half what I've got will you—"

"I'll let you go an' I won't ever bother you again," Monk interrupted excitedly.

He wouldn't ever bother the stranger again? No! Because he couldn't bother a dead man. Monk had his plans mapped. Get a line on the cache, take all of it and leave a corpse behind him. Perfectly safe!

"You—you'll give me your word o' honor on that?" the stranger asked meekly. "I'll give you half. You go away and you won't bother me again?"

"Right. Come on. Produce. I gotta be gettin' back."

"You're sure—"

"Produce, damn you! I ain't gonna stand here chinnin' all night!"

The stranger looked at the rod and winced. Every nerve in his thin body twitched as he faced the wall. His thin hands reached for a spike over his head.

He tugged at it and a portion of the plasterboard wall came out like the door of a closet. Turning toward the popeyed Monk with a sickly smile on his pinched face, the stranger struck a proud pose.

Monk could hardly believe his greedy eyes. Packed tight as sardines, were red packages with Chinese inscriptions on the labels. He knew the contents—opium! He had seen similar packages in Fong Loo's den, and he knew a comfortable fortune was at his finger tips.

"The Oriental Steamship Line docks just down the street," the stranger volunteered as if Monk were now a life-long friend instead of a deadly enemy. "I'm down there one night. I see some Chinamen tryin' to get a couple o' heavy suitcases off the dock. Somebody must've tipped the cops off. The Chinks ran like hell with the cops after 'em. The suitcases were left behind. I went to work an' I worked fast. This was the place nearest to cache the stuff. Whenever I need dough or—or—er—well whenever I need anything, I just peddle one o' these packages."

Monk wasn't listening. He was counting the packages. Each one representing five hundred dollars in his gold-crazed brain.

"I read about the whole business in the next day's papers," the stranger rambled on. "I see where the cops picked up a guy named Fong Loo and said he was the big shot of the opium ring. But the rap didn't stick because—"

Monk laughed raucously. He stepped closer to the stranger, with the rod still leveled and the trigger finger stiff.

"I hear that somebody pinned a rap on Fong Loo tonight. An' what I mean, that rap will stick."

"No!"

"Yes! An' that same guy will make another rap stick before he calls it a night's work. You get me?"

The stranger's eyes drooped to the rod, came up again to Monk's bloodthirsty face.

"Let's—let's have a drink to—to kinda seal our bargain, huh?" the stranger mouthed uneasily. "I got some dandy gin."

A free drink. Monk's god, Greed, was calling him again. He looked at the drug-soaked fool and laughed sarcastically. Why not drink with him? He could stay with this fool a week and still find time and opportunity to kill him.

"A drink will hit the spot, kid. Get it."

The stranger stepped into the next room. Monk couldn't resist the temptation to count those alluring packages again. Suppose the kid ran away? Small loss! Ten red packages in that first row, twelve in the second; ten in the third and twelve—

"Here. It's dandy gin, too," the stranger said proudly as he thrust a brimful glass toward Monk. "I got it right from one o' the English steamers a couple blocks down the line."

Monk threw back his head to be sure he drained the last drop from the glass.

"It is dandy, kid. It's the best—"

His rod was hanging at his side. The rod in the stranger's hand was leveled with Monk's heart.

"Drop that gun!"

MONK'S head swam with rage and yet he obeyed. The stranger sent the gun spinning into a far corner with one vicious kick. Monk was on the verge of exploding. Tricked! By a lousy snowbird who— Monk blinked and looked at the stranger sharply. He looked again, and the longer he looked the greater his conviction that his eyes were playing him false. Only a minute ago this fellow displayed all the earmarks of a confirmed snowbird, now he was absolutely clear of eye, firm of nerve and perfectly normal.

"What the hell—"

"I'm Gerald Hastings' brother," Larry announced frigidly.

Monk's heart dropped into his shoes.

"Gerald—"

"At one minute after midnight Fong Loo telephoned me at my brother's apartment. He said that if I called on him he'd tell me plenty about you. I heard about everything you've done to Jerry, I heard you say he was dead. Fong Loo instructed me in every detail of a plan to put you where you belong—and here you are!"

Sparring for an opening, praying that Larry's vigilance would relax, Monk laughed hollowly.

"You're a great actor, kid."

"I ought to be! Jerry taught me all the tricks of the trade. You might be interested in knowing that during the three year run of that Broadway success called, 'Poppy Land,' I played the part of the cocaine fiend, and I didn't miss a single performance during the entire run of the play."

But not a sign of going off his guard! Monk tried another way.

"I'll give you back the fifty grand an' —"

"You'll pay, you skunk, but not with money."

"You got nothin' on me," Monk yelled, rage blazing in his eyes. "You can't convict me o' murderin' your brother. In any court it will be just your word against mine and—"

"Court," Larry repeated bitterly, "the only court you'll ever see is right here in this room. There's one way out. Through that door, and when I leave, I'll snap all four locks on the other side. Your court is here, and Fong Loo will be your executioner."

"Fong Loo? Are you cracked? Fong Loo is—"

"Dead! You killed him, and heaven knows how many others. But Fong made

the arrangements for your finish just five minutes before you visited him tonight. You heard him talking to someone? Me! I just had time to duck out of sight before you came in, and I ducked with two tiny bottles."

Monk couldn't breath. Two bottles, Fong Loo's bottles. He looked at the empty gin glass, turned his horror stricken eyes on Larry.

"A green bottle and a red one," Larry said inertly. "You guessed right. I emptied the green bottle into the gin you drank. The green bottle, do you hear? Fong claims that if a strong man drinks it, he dies, after six days of hell's tortures!"

Paralyzed with fright, Monk stood there with his heart galloping and his teeth chattering. In the next split second he saw the face of Gerald Hastings swimming before his eyes. Every detail of the terrible agony the victim had endured was there. Chinamen could mix some frightful stuff. Six days of hell on earth and then, only then, merciful death. If he could only get out of this house of disaster, he might buy the help of a Chinaman as clever, and insidious, as Fong Loo. He steeled himself for a desperate leap at Larry and the threatening gun. He leaped with a maniacal yell, but too late.

Quick as lightning Larry was out of the room. The door banged. Locks clicked. Those four clicks spelled death to Monk and he went stark mad. He went flying against the door with every ounce of weight and strength behind him. Useless. A battering ram would be hard-pressed to shatter that stout door. He beat the rough oak boards with both fists.

"Lemme out, kid. Give me the red bottle. I'll trade you. I'll give you a million bucks in cold cash for the—"

"I emptied the red bottle in the first sewer I came to after leaving Fong Loo's

den," Larry said coldly. "On the sixth day you'll be free, and it won't cost you a penny."

Six days! He could hear Gerald Hastings' screams of agony as distinctly as though Hastings' lips were within an inch of his ears. How long before he'd be experiencing that agony? Monk screamed and prayed and cursed all in the same breath. A million dollars hoarded away, and doomed to die like a rat in a trap. It wasn't fair! All his life he'd had good breaks and—

He ceased thinking as his eyes fell on the gun in a far corner. Whimpering like a beaten dog, he staggered toward it and snapped out the clip. One bullet! Six days of hideous agony. He weighed them, weighed them frantically as his head throbbled until he thought it would burst.

Pains around the heart. Bad sign! Poison. The green bottle. He snapped the clip into the automatic. He was afraid of death, but more afraid of pain. He raised the gun and pressed the cold steel to his temple. A coward all his life, he couldn't stiffen the trigger finger. The gun dropped away. He hammered the door with the butt.

"Lemme out, kid. There's time yet. I

can get another red bottle. I'll give you a million bucks in cold cash. A million bucks, kid."

No answer! Was he alone with death? Crocodile tears flowed from Monk's eyes. He clenched his teeth to stop the chattering. The gun went back to his temple and as that torturous tugging around his heart came again, Monk jerked the trigger.

Larry drew away from the other side of the door the instant that muffled shot rang out. He went out into the dark street. He was glad his first and last visit to Fong Loo's base of opium smuggling operations was over. He had no love for Fong Loo in spite of the assistance freely rendered. The world would be a better place without Loo and Monk. Already the air smelled cleaner.

At the first corner Larry paused over the grating of a sewer. He took two tiny bottles from his coat pocket—a green one and a red one. There was a slight splash as they struck the solid steel. Both of them had been full. He walked back toward the ferry, walked morosely and finding little consolation in the fact that Gerald Hastings' death had been avenged. After all, a brother is a brother.

COMING NEXT MONTH—

ANOTHER SMASHING GANGSTER NOVELETTE

By William H. Stueber

Over the radio came the news: "Eddie Brindel found murdered in rooming house!" The words knocked the breath out of "Curly" Parker's lungs, made his head swim and his face twist. . . . Then a snap decision.

"I wanta borrow a couple o' guns . . . rats waiting for me—I'm in a big hurry!"

Read how Curly met those rats, how he went through hell to snare and bait them with a dead man's shoes. For excitement, thrills and red-hot action this story can't be beat. Buy—

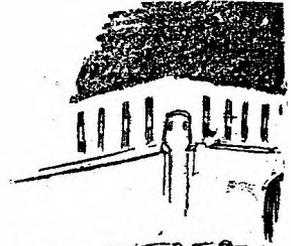
OCTOBER GANG WORLD

ON SALE AUGUST 25th

Two-Bit Punk

by

T. T. Flynn



"Halt! Stop, you two!"



The Punk had cased a hot proposition—started out to be big-time stuff. Everything was jake until it came to a showdown—then a lousy frail gummed the works.

THE afternoon sun was hot in the prison farm field. Long rows of tomato vines ran straight and green, spotted with little red blobs of the ripe fruit. And stooping, arms moving methodically, the trusties, picking, picking—

At one side stood the two guards, repeating shotguns cradled in their arms, eyes wandering leisurely over their charges. Buckshot in those guns. It could tear a man up badly if it hit right.

"Pink the Punk" jerked a large tomato off its stem with a savage twist, tossed it in his basket, and looked at the guards out of the corner of his eye. Bill Trout and "Sandy" Adams—a couple of hard-boiled old screws if ever there were any. Two years ago Bill Trout had blown the back out of a man who thought he could make a break right in front of him. It looked easy when a man was working near the woods.

Pink the Punk grabbed two more tomatoes and let his eyes wander past the nearby edge of the field to the trees just beyond. He knew all about those trees by now, and the country beyond. Knew from little scraps of information that he had picked up bit by bit through the past two years. Half a mile of woodland, then fields, the river, and second growth slash pine covering the hills clear to the big swamp.

On the other side of the swamp was the highway leading to the city. And once in the city there were half a dozen highways and three railroads leading out of the state.

A road led through the swamp to the prison farm. One road. No man had ever gotten through that. A posse was always there first. But if a man could get through the swamp he had a chance. Back the other way he only went deeper into the country. Any of the farmers through there would take a week off to hunt him down and collect the fifty dollars reward

put on any man escaped from the farm.

Old Adams filled his pipe, borrowed a match from Trout. Neither let go his gun. Pink scowled as he noted that. They made you a trusty, put you out here in the open to help work the farm—and then kept a gun over you all the time. Well, let 'em!

Pink spoke out of the corner of his mouth to Zack Moseby, the lanky country boy who had moonshined in this section, and was now expiating his offense on the very ground over which he had once roamed freely. "Say, feller, sure you got that swamp path located right?"

Zack's busy fingers did not hesitate, his head did not turn as he answered cautiously: "Sho'. It's jest north of that knobby hill with the flat, tablelike rock on top. There's a big lightning-struck cypress right at the edge of the swamp. The path is jest to the north of it."

"You better try the break with me."

"Nope," said Zack Moseby firmly. "I ain't gonna do nuthin' like that. They made a trusty outa me; put me out here where there's sun an' plenty o' clean air. I wouldn't go back on 'em by bustin' out. Co'se it's all right if you want to; that's your business."

Pink the Punk's sharp, wizened face twisted in a sneer. The simple hayseed! Chance to get away and everything. Knew the county like a book, and he'd rather stay here on the farm and grub in the dirt. He was cracked on this trusty idea. A wise guy knew how to handle that.

Pink had been working on it from the first day he started doing time. Meek, mild, willing, obedient, smiling outside the hate in his heart, he made a fine record. A record that won him a chance to go out on the farm.

He hadn't made a sucker play even then. Like a wise guy he had laid low, learned the ropes, disarmed any suspicion that the keepers might have had about

him. All the time, little by little, he had been making plans. That was how a wise guy did it. That was how Pink the Punk was doing it. He'd be pounding the pavements in Chi once more, living on the fat of the land while these saps were still grubbing dirt and vegetables.

The sun sank lower in the sky. Tomatoes dropped in the baskets with monotonous regularity. The gray-clad figures of the trusty convicts moved down the long rows foot by foot. Bill Trout and Sandy Adams strolled along after them, conversing indolently.

Lower sank the sun. Pink the Punk finished the last vine in his row, turned around and called: "Startin' a fresh row."

Bill Trout spat tobacco juice. "Start it," he said. "Over there toward the edge of the field."

Pink the Punk's pulse began to beat faster. With difficulty he suppressed a sneering smile as he walked over to the new row. Everything was going just as he had planned. For long weeks, while picking time was drawing near, he had waited. The new row put him a hundred feet nearer the edge of the field, nearer the trees. It was now—or never. He lifted an empty basket from the end of the row, bent over, began the monotonous stripping of ripe tomatoes. Jerk, twist—in the basket; jerk, twist—in the basket. Head down, body stolid, mind racing.

It was getting close to quitting time now. Pink moved up alongside "Shorty" White. A good kid, Shorty. Young, easy-going, easily influenced.

"Say kid," said Pink out of the corner of his mouth, "howdja like to try a break?"

"Who? Me?"

"Yeah."

"When?"

"Now—in a few minutes."

"Oh, I dunno," said the kid uneasily

without stopping his picking. "Guess I'll stay on."

"Yellah?"

The kid flushed. He was sensitive about things like that. "Nah!" he denied indignantly.

"Then come along."

"Aw—I guess not."

"Sure—come along. I'm gonna blow in a few minutes. You'll be out of all this. I'll take you to Chi with me, show you how to live like a man. I got connections there."

Shorty wavered, stole a glance at the guard, another at the nearby trees. "They're liable to get us with those guns," he protested feebly.

Pink the Punk gave a low sneering laugh. "With those guns? Not a chance!"

"Sure. They done it before."

"Listen, kid, you're talkin' with a wise guy now. D'you think I'd try a break if I didn't know all about those guns? They're fixed, see? Those two old fools think they're loaded, but they're not. The shot's all out of the shells."

"Aw—say, how do you know?"

"I fixed it. I'm a wise guy, I tell you. I got this all planned. All we got to do is start runnin' an' keep going."

"How about the dogs? They'll put 'em after us in a few minutes."

"I got that all fixed too. Got a paper full of pepper in my pocket. One sniff of that an' those dogs'll curl up their tails an' run for home. There ain't a chance to lose. Are you with me?"

The kid wavered, then said weakly: "All right, I'll go with you."

"Fine. Don't pay no attention to me. But when I give you the high sign, follow me. See? Keep right at my heels. As close to me as you can get."

"All right."

"You got that? As close to me as you can step! By keepin' together that way we won't run no chance of gettin' lost."

"I got yuh," agreed the kid nervously.

Pink the Punk started watching Bill Trout and Sandy Adams out of the corner of his eye. So intent was he that time and again his fingers missed the ripe tomatoes he was fumbling for. No one noticed his preoccupation. Everything was quiet, orderly, as usual. A moment came when Sandy Adams said something to Bill Trout. Both of them looked the other way.

"Come on, kid!"

Pink the Punk began to run silently toward the nearby trees and the kid followed.

For precious seconds they were undisturbed, racing through the tomato vines, clearing row after row with long strides. Pink heard the kid's steps behind him. A swift glance showed the kid a few feet behind, a little over to the side. Pink altered his course so the kid was between him and the two guards.

Just as they reached the end of the field a shout of alarm burst out from Bill Trout.

"Halt! Stop, you two!"

Pink the Punk only ran faster.

"Stop!" Bill Trout yelled. "I'll fire!"

An instant later the bellow of the shotgun disturbed the quiet of the large field. Then a second shot as Sandy Adams opened up. Buckshot spattered all about them.

The kid uttered a strangled cry. "I'm hit! They've got me, Pink!"

The rapid pounding of his steps wavered, then ceased as the kid pitched forward, moaning: "The shells was loaded. You lied to me, Pink!"

That was the last of the kid. Pink dodged behind a bush, plunged into the first of the trees as the two shotguns spoke again. Buckshot smacked into the tree trunks around him, laced through the bush leaves in a tearing volley.

Pink swore as one shot got him in the

arm. And then he was out of sight in the thick slash growth, zigzagging, plunging ahead—alone. The kid was back there on the ground somewhere.

Pink the Punk's lips drew back over his uneven teeth at the thought. What a sap the kid had been, believing that yarn about the shells not being loaded. He should have had sense enough to know that couldn't be worked. A smart man would have realized that Pink only wanted him to follow close behind and be a screen for any buckshot that came their way.

The kid wasn't smart. He lay back there on the ground, bleeding his life out from the shot that would otherwise have stopped Pink. It was a hot trick, all right.

Pink the Punk was vastly satisfied with himself as he presently slowed down to a jogtrot, gasping for breath. Old Trout and Adams hadn't followed him into the trees. They couldn't leave the rest of their charges. Some time would elapse before they could get help and start the dogs. Meanwhile, at a trot, Pink the Punk steadily put ground behind him.

HE came to the edge of the trees and plunged into a cornfield. Running down the rows of corn he came to a lane, crossed that, disappeared into another cornfield.

The long drawn out howls of the dog pack on his trail were in his ears when he finally reached the river bank, sobbing for breath. The muddy, slow-moving current of the river was several hundred feet wide. Pink waded out until the water came to his shoulders, then struck out awkwardly for the opposite shore.

The baying of the dogs was close behind when he staggered up through the brush of the opposite bank and slogged on. The river would hold dogs and men for a while. Hold them long enough, Pink hoped, for him to get to the edge of the swamp.

Shoes squashing, wet clothes rasping, dripping, he ran through the hilly belt of second growth timber. The sound of the dogs had silenced behind him.

The sun set and it was twilight when he sighted the knobby hill with the flat rock on top. It was half a mile or so to the south. He veered that way. Beyond it, at the foot of a long slope, plain, stark, was the large lightning-blasted cypress that had been his goal. A small tongue of firm land led into the swamp at that point.

Twilight deepened. A rasping, booming chorus of frogs throbbled on every side. The swamp was an eerie, forbidding place. Strange splashes sounded now and then. Gigantic frogs leaped out of his way into green, scum-covered pools. Swishing wings swept through the cypress branches.

The tongue of firm land dwindled out, only a faint narrow belt of soggy soil extended on into the swamp. Old footmarks in the mud, broken branches, indicated that men occasionally passed this way.

Darkness came down. A white moon gleamed through the tangled branches overhead. Stumbling, splashing, occasionally going to a knee as he missed the trail, Pink the Punk kept on. Once he thought he heard a faint, long drawn howl far, far behind. It did not come again. Two hours of that—and he came out of the swamp as abruptly as he had entered it. The cypress trees gave way to cut-over pine. He suddenly stumbled out of a tangle of branches on to the hard surface of the highway.

Pink the Punk dropped to the ground, panting, dizzy. His coarse gray suit was damp, his shoes were wet, covered with mud. His throat was parched, raw from heavy breathing, his body weary.

The sound of a racing automobile became audible beyond the next turn. The brilliant sheen of headlights appeared. Pink the Punk shrank back out of sight.

The car passed, running fast. No use to try to stop a machine like that. They'd spot him, turn him in. What he wanted was a truck.

Ten minutes later his luck held. The heavy rumble of an approaching truck motor came through the moonlight. Pink waited tensely. It proved to be a large truck loaded with wood, running slow.

Pink dashed out, caught the tailgate, dragged himself up. He hung there for a few moments, then cautiously climbed up on top of the load.

Some five miles farther on waving lights in the road brought the truck to a stop. Lying flat, fearful, Pink saw several lanterns come to the side of the truck, heard a gruff voice demand of the driver:

"Seen anything of an escaped convict down the road?"

"Not a sign of one," the driver answered. "One get away?"

"Yeah. Short skinny feller. Made it into the swamp. Don't know whether he got through or not."

"Well, I didn't see him. Hope you catch him. Is he dangerous?"

"A bad one. City crook from up north. He was so quiet an' meek they made him a trusty. And as soon as he got a chance he ran. Guess they never change. The better you treat 'em the worse they get. Two of 'em broke. The guards shot one."

"Hurt him bad?"

"Killed him. Well, sorry to stop you. Guess there's no chance of him hiding down inside your load."

A lantern was lifted to throw the light back on the load.

The driver chuckled. "He wouldn't be in there. I chained it on myself. A rabbit couldn't get down inside."

Pink the Punk, pressing his face into the top wood, shivered. If they looked up—

But if the men on foot did look up,

they didn't notice him. The truck started forward with a jerk. The lanterns dropped behind, disappeared.

Pink the Punk found himself trembling, breathing through tightly clenched teeth. But that passed in a few minutes. His teeth met the wind in a grin of triumph. It took a smart man to put over an escape like this. A smart man—Pink the Punk.

He was still in that frame of mind when the first lights of the city appeared, and a train whistled over to the right. He saw the gleam of its headlight stabbing into the North. The North where he wanted to go—

Pink watched his chance, swung down off the load, skulked away from the road and headed for the nearest houses. The good fortune that had been with him so far continued. The houses were mean, squalid. On a clothesline in the back yard of one, part of a wash swung in the evening breeze. Out of the wash Pink got a shirt, a suit of overalls and a jumper. They were damp but no worse than the clothes he had on.

Over beside the railroad tracks he hurriedly shifted, left his convict suit in a clump of weeds. Two hours later he was in a jolting boxcar, heading north.

THREE days later Pink the Punk left a freight train at Gary, Indiana, bummed a ride on a steel truck, and entered Chicago. He was gaunt and hungry, but there was a look of intense satisfaction on his wizened face. He had made it.

Two miles of walking after he left the truck brought Pink into the section of town west of the Loop that had been his goal from the moment he made the break. It was after dark; he hadn't wanted to get in earlier. But a street light nullified that. A dark figure that stepped out of a doorway laid a hand on his arm. Pink cringed, his heart hammered wildly.

"H-hello, McGrath," he stammered.

"I thought my eyes was wrong," McGrath chuckled. "It's Pink the Punk, ain't it? What's the idea of that getup? Working on a fast one?"

"No," Pink gulped.

His heart was still hammering. Had the Chicago cops been notified, in spite of the fact that he had been convicted under an alias and had kept his mouth shut about Chicago?

McGrath surveyed him for a moment with narrowing eyes. Then, abruptly, he grabbed Pink's right hand and looked at the palm.

"I never would have believed it if I didn't see them callouses with my own eyes!" he breathed. "You've been working, Pink! Honest to God work!"

"Yeah," Pink gulped.

"Where?"

"Out—out on a farm in Indiana."

"What for?"

"I—I got tired of the main drag."

McGrath stared at him for a moment. "Pink," he said with a shake of his head, "I believe you're lying. You never did any work in your life up till the last time I saw you. Over a year ago, wasn't it? A punk like you never went to work of his own accord. It just ain't on the cards."

Punk's heart was beating slower now. He could talk with some degree of steadiness. McGrath evidently wasn't looking for him. He was only curious.

"You see my hands," Pink stated, showing them again for good measure. "I got wise to myself, that's all, McGrath. There's nothin' in the old racket. So I blew town an' got me a real job. I'm through for good. Hell, I—I'm goin' to get married next month. Sweet little country kid. Never been to the city. She don't know about—about me. I'm straight for the rest of my life, see?"

"If my own brother told me that about you, I'd call him a liar," McGrath said

thoughtfully. "But damned if you don't seem to be telling the truth, Pink. You never got them callouses without a lot of hard work. And I ain't seen you around for a long time. Maybe miracles do happen, after all."

"Sure," Pink insisted eagerly. "It's the real McCoy I'm givin' you. The straight stuff."

"Then what are you doin' around here?" McGrath shot at him. "You never came back here to do any honest work."

Pink the Punk licked his dry lips and thought fast. His eyes darted about in case he had to make a run for it.

"Couple of fellows owed me some jack I lent 'em," he explained. "I—I need it, gettin' married an' all. Farm work don't pay much. The little girl wants to go to Indianapolis on our honeymoon. I didn't have the jack. But I thought I might collect some of those old loans an' make it. See? It—it was for the kid. She's mighty sweet, McGrath. I'd do anything for her."

McGrath's gruff voice softened as he stared at Pink. His hand slipped into his pocket, came out with a bill.

"I still think I'm dreaming," he said. "But it's a dream I like. Here's a little something for a wedding present. Get your jack from the boys and beat it back to the farm, Pink. Don't ever show up around here again. It's bad medicine for you. Some of the boys might talk you into doing something rash. You've done a mighty fine thing in making the break. Damn fine. Keep it up. There's nothing like an honest job, a wife, a home and a few kids. Money can't stack up alongside it. And I'd hate to have to take you in and send you up, with a fine sweet girl breaking her heart at home for you."

Pink slid the bill nimbly into his pocket. His voice was husky when he spoke. Husky from hunger and fear.

"You're right, McGrath. I'm going to do just what you say. Not a chance of you ever gettin' me for anything. Forget about me. I—we'll name the first kid after you. So long."

Pink's back muscles crawled as he walked away, feeling McGrath's stare on him. Every moment he expected to find the big man's hand clamped on his shoulder and a growled summons in his ear to come along to the station.

But he turned the next corner in safety. And suddenly Pink began to chuckle in his throat. He pulled the bill from his pocket, kissed it lightly. A fiver from a cop. That was the richest thing that had been pulled in the city for a long time. Pink the Punk talking a fiver out of one of the hardest dicks on the force.

A taxi came along the street. He hailed it, jumped in, gave an address. No walking for Pink the Punk when he had coin.

Coin! What a splash he'd make when he got a roll again.

"Fat Ed" Kelly himself answered the cautiously rapped signal on the rear door of the speakeasy. Pink the Punk slipped in quickly, grinning.

Fat Kelly's eyes widened at sight of the skinny form.

"Pink the Punk, or I'll be damned!" he swore. "Where'd you blow in from, Punk? I heard you got knocked over somewheres down south."

Pink the Punk showed his yellow teeth in a snarling grin.

"I did. But you don't think I'd stay in one of them hick places, do you? Me, I'm big-time stuff. I waited till I got ready, an' then crashed out like the place was made o' cheese."

Fat Kelly was a huge barrel-shaped man with an enormous paunch, a bullet-shaped head, cold eyes, and a wide, thick mouth. He could laugh while killing a man; had laughed in fact. One could never tell what was on his mind when he was laugh-

ing. But now as his paunch shook and great wheezy chuckles burst from him, it seemed that he was genuinely amused.

"You big-time stuff?" he gasped. "Say that's hot talk comin' from a punk like you always been. Crashed out, did you? I'll bet the walls fell down or they got sick of you an' kicked you out. Now, ain't that the truth?"

Pink scowled with resentment, managed a sickly smile.

"You got me wrong, Fat," he protested. "I'm here, ain't I?"

"Yeah, you're here. What's on your mind? Goin' to get a job? You look like you've been digging ditches. Wait till the boys get a load of those overalls. They'll swear it ain't you."

"Listen, I want a stake. I gotta shuck this outfit an' get some real duds. Then I'll be ready for business."

"What kind of business?"

"You know—real stuff. I'm a hustler, ain't I? Always came through, didn't I?"

"You always was a punk, an' you'll always be one," Fat Kelly said shortly. "I don't know whether the boys want you around any more. Put it up to them. I'll stake you to twenty. That's all. And if you don't connect up quick, don't start hanging around here. Get me?"

"Sure, sure. Now don't get on your ear. I'm regular, ain't I?"

It was with difficulty that Pink kept a whine out of his voice. The old whine that had always been there, no matter how flashy the clothes on his back. But he wouldn't whine now. He was big-time stuff.

THERE were not many customers in the speakeasy this early in the evening. Half a dozen of them. "Lefty" Hagan, "Bottle" Brucco, the "Duke," Hymie Hirschfield, a couple he didn't know.

Bottle Brucco, swart, well dressed,

thin-lipped, stared at him for a moment, then laughed shrilly.

"Look what blew in!" he called to the others. "Get a load of that! Do you make it?"

Hymie Hirschfield blinked at the unshaven, roughly dressed figure of Pink, then went into a gale of laughter. "He looks like he fell out of a street sweeper's can! Is it the Punk, or not? I ask you, is it?"

Pink the Punk suppressed a desire to glower, grinned weakly at them.

"It's me," he admitted. "Have a drink on me, fellows. I been out on a job, an' ain't had time to wash up and change my clothes." He slapped Fat Kelly's twenty dollar bill down with a breezy air. "Where's 'Canary' Brooks?" he questioned.

Fat Kelly set a bottle on the bar with a thump, scowled as he picked up his bill and changed it.

"Canary ain't in yet," he stated.

"What do you want with Canary?" the Duke asked, pouring himself a drink.

He was a tall, slim young man with high cheek bones, faultless manners, and a way of handling a gun that made him respected. He was one of Canary's right hand men.

Pink tossed off his drink, poured another. The harsh liquor bit his throat, sent a fiery glow through his inside. His shoulders came back out of their customary slouch.

"That's between the Canary an' me," he said knowingly.

Those who knew him looked at him curiously. He was somewhat different from the old Punk. But in these circles one didn't ask too many questions.

Other customers drifted in and out, Pink sat over in a corner waiting. It was three quarters of an hour before the Canary showed up, with a companion.

Canary Brooks was a hard-faced young

man in his late twenties. A product of the gutters, who had shot and muscled himself into a position of power and authority over a limited circle. He was in the booze racket in a small way, and had a hand in other things as they presented themselves. He and Pink the Punk had been reared in the same neighborhood. They knew each other of old.

Pink went forward with outstretched hand, and suppressed an inclination to quail as Canary Brooks gave him a cold stare, then grinned.

"Well, you little punk!" Canary grunted. "So you drifted back again? What are you, a bum now?"

"Not me," Punk denied hastily. "I been out of town on some business. Ain't had time to get fixed up yet. I been waitin' to see you, Canary. Want to talk to you."

"O. K. Be with you in a minute, 'Butch'." Canary didn't offer to introduce his companion. It was plain he was too contemptuous of Pink to do so.

Over the corner table Pink gulped another drink, said under his breath: "I crashed out of stir down south, Canary. Just got in. I'm lookin' for a hot proposition. Something that'll give me a roll. Got anything?"

"A hot proposition for *you*?"

"Sure. I've been traveling in fast company since I seen you last. I can handle big-time stuff. Don't make no mistake on that."

Canary Brooks started to laugh, then narrowed his eyes. "That's big talk from a punk like you," he said quietly.

"Say, don't call me a punk no more. Give me a break an' I'll show you who's a punk. Just a break, Canary—for old times' sake. I rate that much, don't I?"

"I can get you a job in a brewery I got an interest in."

Pink made a gesture of scorn.

"Nothin' like that. I want something

hot. I need a roll, and I want it damn quick. Get me?"

"You mean that?"

"Sure."

"O. K. I'll give you a break for old times' sake. I ain't got nothin' for you. But that guy who come in with me, Butch Kaufman, is lookin' for a good man to work on a job he's got cased. It's a fur job. Twenty to forty grand worth of furs. He wants a rodman. How does that sound?"

Pink moistened his lips. "Fine," he said huskily.

"O. K. Butch, come here a minute."

Canary introduced them.

"Pink just got in from a blow-up down south," he explained. "He's lookin' for a hot play quick. If you can use him, here he is. He used to do some work for me."

Butch Kaufman inspected Pink from cold eyes. He was a broad-shouldered man in his early thirties, jowls blue-black from a heavy beard, a pugnacious jaw, and heavy black eyebrows.

"You don't look like much," he said bluntly. "If a mug like you walked into the joint I've got cased, they'd yell for the cops."

"Wait till I get some rags on. I'm a classy dresser, ain't I, Canary?"

Canary nodded. "You used to be."

"Handle a rod?"

"Sure," Pink boasted. "I'm there with anything you need."

"Know your way around?"

"Ask Canary."

Canary nodded again. "He was raised right near me."

Butch Kaufman poured himself a drink, tossed it off, wiped his mouth with the back of his hairy hand.

"I'm in a jam," he growled. "Got this place all cased and need another gun to help snatch it. I'll take a chance with you—if you look all right when you're

dressed up. This is a daylight play. Furs. They lock 'em in the vault after five. We go in about four-thirty, throw heats on the store, grab the skins and pass 'em out the side door where the car'll be waitin'. The copper ain't around at that time. We'll have time to blow. You like it?"

The fiery bootleg was driving the blood through Pink's body. He felt heady, important, brave. This was the biggest thing he had ever been counted in on. Something fitting for a big-time shot such as he had become.

"Sure I like it," he snapped quickly. "I'll get myself an outfit first thing in the morning an' be ready by noon. Where'll I meet you?"

"Down at the corner. Got a rod?"

"Haven't had a chance to pick one up. Just got in town," Pink said carelessly.

"All right. I'll have one for you, with the numbers filed off. See you tomorrow." Kaufman got up.

As Canary Brooks started to leave, Pink caught his sleeve.

"How about a hundred until we cash in on this?" he asked under his breath. "I'm short."

Canary peeled a bill off the outside of a big roll and tossed it on the table.

"Sure, Punk," he said.

Pink scowled as he picked it up. After tomorrow they'd see how much of a punk he was. He felt very important as he stalked out of the place staggering slightly.

PINK THE PUNK was waiting on the sidewalk at twelve o'clock sharp when the long blue sedan rolled up to the curb. Butch Kaufman, sitting beside the driver, looked at him with approval.

"You don't look like the same guy," he said as Pink climbed in the back.

Pink the Punk had done some fast shopping that morning. A readymade gray suit fitted him like a glove. Silk socks showed beneath the trouser cuffs.

Narrow pointed shoes, shined to a mirror finish, were on his feet. His shirt was silk. His scarf was striking in pattern. And over his sharp wizened face a pearl gray hat brim canted at a sporty angle.

As the car rolled on, Butch Kaufman twisted around in the seat, palmed a flat, blue-black automatic. Pink the Punk's fingers closed around the cool metal. Of old the very feel of a gun had sent a cold chill through him. Guys who handled rods sometimes burned in the hot seat for it. That had been enough for him then. But he had had a few drinks already this morning. No big-time shot shrank from the feel of a gun. He slipped it in his pocket jauntily.

"O. K.," he said briskly. "Now what's the lay?"

"We're gonna look it over. This is Wally Lewis, driving. He'll be at the wheel when we make the cop."

Wally Lewis was short, saturnine, silent. He nodded, gave Pink a look over his shoulder, paid no more attention to him thereafter. After that they drove to the southern edge of the Loop district, pulled in to the curb across from a row of smart shops. Fifty yards or so behind them was an alley. Across the street next to that alley was a large plate glass window with a single fur coat in it. Over the doorway the sign said, "Horowitz, Furrier."

"That's the joint we got cased," Butch Kaufman grunted. "Come on, we'll walk by it an' I'll give you the lay."

Side by side, strolling slowly, carelessly, they walked down the sidewalk, paused for a moment to glance in the window at the fur coat. In that moment Pink's eyes photographed the inside.

"The vault's in the back," Butch Kaufman said. "There's a side door in the alley. Wally parks the car by the door; we walk in; you throw the heat on the front an' take care of that. Wally'n I'll

clean the vault. It'll only take a couple of minutes. We oughta have another guy, but the three of us can handle it. The split'll be bigger. Get it?"

"Yeah," Pink said as they walked on.

And when they had returned to the car and driven on, Butch Kaufman said: "We'll get together at a quarter of four at the same place. You want out down here in the Loop?"

"Yeah, I guess so," Pink assented. "I'll get something to eat."

At twenty minutes to four Pink stepped out of Fat Kelly's speakeasy and waited for the car to show up. He'd had a few more drinks. Funny how shaky he felt inside. Even the feel of the gun in his pocket didn't comfort him. He swore at himself for a fool. In a few hours he'd have a big roll and everything'd be jake. That was the way big-time shots did their stuff.

His thoughts were interrupted by a shadow that appeared on the walk. And a big, broad-shouldered figure that stopped before him.

"Well, well," said the gruff voice of McGrath, shaded with lilting sarcasm. "So it's the Punk, isn't it? All dolled up fit to kill, just like his old self! What the hell are you doing in town today? I thought you were going to collect some dough that was due you, an' get out to the farm an' that little girl waitin' for you."

Pink looked up with a sickly smile.

"Sure, sure," he agreed quickly. "That's what I am gonna do, McGrath. I couldn't get all the dough last night. An' I didn't have no decent clothes to get married in. So I took some of what I collected an' got these rags this morning. They didn't set me back much. I'm waitin' here now to catch one of the guys that owes me. I'll pull outa town tonight or tomorrow morning."

McGrath scrutinized him for long moments.

"It's twice as hard to believe you, now that you look like the old Punk," he said. "But maybe you're tellin' the truth at that. See that you do get out of town, because, sure as the Lord if you stick around here you're gonna get into trouble. I know you, Punk. You ain't got any more backbone than a yard of tripe."

McGrath strolled on with that parting shot. But he stopped at the next corner to light a cigarette. Looking around, he saw a long blue car roll up to the front of Fat Kelly's speakeasy. Pink the Punk hurried across the walk and entered it.

McGrath watched the car depart with a scowl. It was too far away to get the license number. But as he snapped his match away he said viciously: "That guy was lying to me! I know it now! I'll just keep an eye on him!"

It was twenty-five minutes past four when Butch Kaufman and Pink left the big blue car. Butch Kaufman looked at his watch.

"Wally'll be around at the alley in four minutes. We'll walk in the door as he drives up. Got everything straight now?"

Pink moistened his dry lips. "Sure," he said huskily. "I'm all set."

Four minutes later they walked into the shop of Horowitz, the furrier.

FIVE people were inside. Three ladies, evidently customers, a young saleswoman dressed in smart black, and a gray-bearded, slightly stooped man who peered inquiringly at them through a pair of rimless glasses as he came forward.

"You wish something?" he asked pleasantly, with a slight trace of accent.

"Yeah, we want something," Butch Kaufman growled. "Are you Horowitz?"

"Yes."

Butch's hand slid out of his pocket,

showing an automatic into the proprietor's stomach.

"Stick 'em up!" he rasped. "An' the first one of you birds who makes a crack gets it plenty! Get me? Shut that door."

As Pink whirled to the door, Horowitz lifted his hands and demanded unsteadily: "Vat is the meaning off dis?"

"Never mind! Get back there by the end of the case! You ladies bunch up an' keep quiet! You won't get hurt if you do that!"

One of the customers, an elderly woman, stifled a scream and closed her eyes as if about to faint.

Pink shut the door at that moment, and as he hurried back, pulling a handkerchief up over his face for a mask, Butch Kaufman snarled to the elderly woman: "None o' that! Don't you faint!"

Her eyes opened again. Wordless, she retreated to the end of the counter where the others already were.

"Take 'em."

The automatic was in Pink's hand now. It wavered a little. Down inside he felt hot, cold, shaky. He started to answer, knew his voice would crack. He nodded instead, took up a position in front of the silent, terrified little group.

Butch stepped into the rear, threw the catch off the alley door, opened it a foot or so.

"Come on, Wally," he husked. "Everything's jake."

Horowitz licked his lips, looked at Pink the Punk.

"Vat are you going to do?" he croaked.

Pink snarled. "Take your furs, you old fool! Shut up!"

Horowitz's hands clenched, unclenched. There was real anguish in his voice as he burst out: "Nein! Nod that! I will be ruined!"

"Shut up!" Pink snarled again. "Who gives a damn?"

Out of the corner of his eyes he caught

sight of two forms in the back moving quickly from vault to alley door, arms draped with furs.

People walked past the front, cast glances into the window. Cold sweat came out of Pink's face as he wondered what would happen if someone opened the door, came in, saw him standing there with the rod out. A scream, a cry—and there would be hell to pay. Cops—court—prison—

The gun in his hand shook at the very thought.

Suppose Horowitz made a move at him? He'd have to shoot. Drop him where he stood. Big shots did that. Get in their way and they let go with their heats.

"Listen, mister," Horowitz pleaded frantically. "Take my money! I giff you all I haff! But don' take my furs! They are nod all mine! I vill haff to pay! My insurance iss nod much! Please. I am an old man."

"Shut up!" Pink barked, making a threatening gesture with the gun.

"Don't waste your breath talking to him, father," the smart young woman urged bitingly. "He hasn't any heart. Can't you see that?"

Pink cast a scowl at her. Slender, pretty, with vivid red lips and a haughty lift to her head, her eyes rested on him scornfully.

And then the very thing that Pink had feared, happened. The front door opened. A woman stepped in.

Pink dodged back, rattled.

"Put your hands up!" he shrilled at her. "Come back here or I'll shoot you!"

The newcomer cast one look at his masked face, and ran back out of the door, screaming: "Police! Police!"

In one awful moment Pink realized that he had bungled things. He should have waited until the woman got near them before making a move.

Horowitz, too wrapped up in the disaster that had overtaken him to pay attention to anything else, lowered his hands in an instinctive gesture as he wailed pleadingly: "Mister—I am an old man! Please—"

The words died in his throat as Pink shot him.

Pink almost swooned as the crash of the weapon filled the small room. He didn't know he was going to shoot. The old man had made a move with his hands—the gun had gone off.

Horowitz was down on the floor, writhing feebly. Red blood was already visible. Two of the women had fainted beside him.

A terrible oath came from the back of the room.

The black clad girl screamed something. She had not fainted. Instead, all fear seemed to have left her. She was behind the counter, reaching for something as Butch Kaufman lunged into the room.

"What the hell?" Butch yelled, casting a look at the body on the floor. "Whaja shoot him for, you damn fool?"

Wally Lewis appeared behind him, gun in hand.

The girl straightened, a revolver flashing in her hand.

"Watch that!" Butch shouted, trying to dodge back out of the way. He collided with Wally Lewis. They both stumbled. And loud reports thundered through the room as the gun leaped and leaped in the girl's hand.

Five—six shots poured out in a stream. She was too close to miss. Butch reeled, slumped to his knees. Wally staggered before he knew that the girl had a gun and was shooting at them. Her last shot caught him in the back as he turned to run. He pitched forward on his face.

Pink the Punk stood frozen while that happened. For the moment his mind was blank, his body in the grip of stark terror.

The girl's revolver swinging on him broke the spell.

"Don't do that!" he screamed, plunging toward the back.

He trampled unheedingly over the bodies of Butch and his companion. Struck the open door of the vault and careened toward the alley door, standing ajar. He clawed it open, rushed out. Behind him the revolver of the sobbing girl clicked again and again as the hammer fell on empty shells.

The big car was standing there, rear door open, engine purring softly. Pink slammed the door, leaped in behind the wheel, sent the car roaring down the alley.

He almost ran down a man who was hurrying across the alley entrance. And as the pedestrian leaped back, face blanching, Pink swung the car skidding into the street and streaked away. He rocked around the next corner and was gone. Behind him a crowd gathered in front of the shop of Horowitz, Furrier.

Pink drove toward the south, slackening the car's mad pace as he came out of the grip of blind terror and realized a speed cop might spot him. He looked into the back. Furs were piled carelessly on the floor. A lap robe lay on the seat ready to cover them. Pink dragged it in place. His automatic was on the seat beside him in plain sight, where it had fallen from his nerveless fingers. He thrust it into his pocket with a shudder.

He had killed a man. The cops were looking for him now. The hot seat was waiting. Sheer fear was forcing dry sobs from his bloodless lips. He drove on and on, turning corners heedlessly. It was hard to think. He had to do something. What?

Twilight was closing in when he found himself far out on the southern edge of the city. He stopped beside a vacant lot, lighted a cigarette with trembling fingers, tried to think.

He had a car—probably stolen—a load of furs, and not more than ten dollars in his pocket. He had spent all the rest. He had to leave town, get away. Out West was best. But that ten wouldn't get him anywhere.

The back of the car was full of furs, worth thousands at any good fence's. He knew several. If he could get rid of them, grab the money, get out of town under cover of darkness, everything would be jake.

Pink started the engine, turned the car, drove back through the gathering darkness into the city.

NIGHT was around him when he stopped in a dark, dimly lighted street. A shop window across the sidewalk bore the legend, "Ike Westheimer, Old Clothes."

Pink walked into the dimly lighted interior and summoned a smile for the unshaven man who came forward to meet him.

"Hello, Ike," he said. "You remember me? Pink?"

Westheimer peered at him suspiciously, then relaxed.

"Sure, I remember you," he grinned. "Where you been all this time?"

"Oh, around."

"What you want?"

Pink looked around the store warily.

"Want to handle something nice?"

Westheimer lifted his eyebrows, smiled knowingly. "You working with Canary Brooks' gang again?"

"Yeah, in a way."

"Well, I always handle the right stuff. What you got?"

"Furs."

"Eh?"

"Furs," Pink told him nervously.

The suspicion returned to Westheimer's face. "Where'd you get them?" he demanded.

"Never mind. Shall I drive around back with them?"

Westheimer shook his head violently and waved his hands.

"No, no! I want no furs today! I heard there was a shop cleaned out this afternoon and a man shot! Furs I will not touch right now! It is too dangerous!"

"Say, these are all right!"

"No! If you have furs, take them some place else! I don't ask where you got them—but take them away."

Pink slunk out of the place, conscious of Westheimer's suspicious look following him. He felt branded with the stigma of murder. He was marked, and so were the furs. But he had to get rid of them. There were other fences. He drove on hurriedly to a second floor apartment house just north of the Loop.

A short, paunchy man with hanging jowls answered his knock.

"Come in," he said, gesturing with the paper he held in his hand. "What's on your mind? I have not seen you for a long time."

Pink slid into the room, looked nervously about. "Been out of town," he explained. "Say, do you want to make a good deal on some nice furs, Beekman?"

"Furs?" Beekman's glance went to the paper he had evidently just been reading.

Pink caught a glimpse of black headlines. "Big Fur Robbery."

"Furs? You bring me furs when the cops is lookin' all over the city for a hot lot?" Beekman exclaimed loudly, slapping the paper with his other hand.

"Now lissen," Pink tried to argue.

"No. I ain't buying. Get out before some copper sees you around here and thinks I had something to do with it."

Beekman caught his shoulder, pushed him toward the door. It slammed behind Pink. And as he slipped behind the steering wheel of the car, there was a sharp

report down the street. Pink grabbed for the gun in his pocket, leaped out. Under the street light of the next corner an automobile swerved in to the curb with a flat tire. Pink cursed nervously as he got back in.

He tried two more fences. At each place he got the same reception. A man trying to peddle furs this evening was regarded as if he brought the smallpox. And after each encounter the terror drew closer about Pink the Punk.

He thought of Canary Brooks finally. Canary had helped him once; he might do it again. He could hide the furs and peddle them himself when this blew over.

Canary always dropped in at Fat Kelly's about this time in the evening.

The street was quiet as he drove up to Fat Kelly's place, parked the car and walked in. Eight or ten men were in there. Cigarette smoke was thick; there was laughter. Fat Kelly was just setting a bottle in front of a customer when he caught sight of Pink coming in the room. His big face drew into a scowl; he hurried around the end of the bar.

"Where's Canary?" Pink asked him.

Fat Kelly caught him by the arm, hurried him out into the entrance passage.

"What the hell are you doin' around here?" he demanded roughly. "Ain't you got any sense? Keep away from here."

"Wh-what's the matter? Are the cops lookin' for me?" Pink stammered.

"No. But they're lookin' for the guy who got away from that fur job. I'm wise. You better blow town before you give yourself away. A punk like you ain't got any business bein' mixed up with a rap like that. Beat it."

"I gotta see Canary."

"See him somewhere else. I don't want you around my place."

A final shove sent Pink toward the door. He opened it, stumbled out on the

sidewalk. And a moment later a hand fell on his shoulder. The irate voice of Detective McGrath addressed him.

"So here you are. I've been looking all over for you! I want to talk to you!"

McGrath was wise! McGrath had him!

"Leggo!" Pink sobbed. With a wrench he twisted free and dashed for the car, dragging the automatic out of his pocket.

"Here! Stop, damn you! Put that gun away!"

Pink leaped into the car, twisted toward McGrath with his gun.

McGrath's service revolver gleamed in his hand as he saw Pink's purpose. It barked once, twice, as Pink shot once—and then fell back in the seat.

McGrath, swearing from an injured shoulder, tore the automatic out of Pink's limp fingers. Fat Kelly looked cautiously out of his door.

"What's the matter?" he demanded.

"He drew a rod on me. I had to let him have it. What was the matter with him? Was he crazy?"

"I dunno," Fat Kelly muttered.

"Where'd he get this car? What's in the back? Booze?"

McGrath produced a flashlight, looked in the back under the laprobe. He whistled sharply at what he saw. "Furs! Say, I'll bet these came from that Horowitz job this afternoon!"

"I dunno anything about it," Fat Kelly denied.

McGrath laughed harshly.

"What a break for me. And I wouldn't have got wise if he hadn't tried to run and flashed his gat. I wanted to ask him why he didn't clear out of town like he told me he was going to."

Fat Kelly spat. "He was just a punk," he commented. "Guess his nerve gave way."

McGrath shook his head.

"Just a punk," he agreed. "I mighta known it."

KNIFE THRUST

by

J. Lane Linklater

Author of "Blond Baby in Black," etc.



With trembling hands Whitey brought the camera around the corner of the barrel, pointed it toward the center of the room.

Old Katie thought Whitey had gone crazy—muttering strange things to himself. But Katie couldn't understand those words—she didn't know that her "old fool" had become another Sherlock Holmes.

MOXEY was a fast worker. That's what the cops thought when they arrested him for busting into Wittowsky's Jewelry Store window.

The cops may have been mistaken about

that, at least "Whitey" thought so. In fact Whitey was heart-broken when they pinched Moxey.

But anyhow Moxey was a fast worker. It was Monday noon when Moxey

wandered into the city on foot. He was, in plain and simple terms, on the bum. But by two in the afternoon he had acquired a job as porter—a porter being, for the benefit of those born too high in the social scale to understand, one who massages windows and manicures floorboards.

The job, incidentally, was at the Alley Coffee House. To look at it one would never have imagined that the Alley Coffee House had any use for a porter. Most of the items on the bill of fare were marked five cents, and usually whenever there was a murder in the city the dicks first of all looked over the patrons of this Alley Coffee House.

By four of the same afternoon Moxey had won the undying friendship of Whitey, who was dishwasher in the same institution. Whitey was a little old punk whose hands shook and whose eyes stared unhappily. The reason Whitey fell so hard for the hard-mugged Moxey was that Moxey treated him like he was a regular guy. Which hardly anybody else ever did.

At five o'clock Tuesday morning, when it was still dark, Moxey arrived at the Alley Coffee House. He let himself in with a key the boss had given him the night before and started to mop the floor.

At about five-thirty Moxey, still mopping, heard a crash out on the street somewhere, something like glass smashing. But he was busy trying to get everything cleaned up before opening time at six o'clock and paid no attention to it.

At five minutes to six, "Carvet" Rodas, who worked behind the counter, walked in the front door. He came back to the kitchen where Moxey was now soaping the dish-up table.

"I see," said Rodas, "where some guy busted Wittowsky's window and glommed a mittful of ice, or somep'n."

"Yeah?" said Moxey. "Where is it?"

"Why," said Rodas, "that's just two doors south of here. A jew'lry store."

"Yeah?" said Moxey, and grinned. Moxey had a hard mug, all right, but his grin seemed to make it all right. It was a wide grin that showed a lot of teeth.

Rodas grinned, too. He had a different kind of a grin. Rodas' grin made a bad job worse, and it didn't show any teeth at all.

"Yeah," said Rodas, taking off his coat and putting on his apron, "some guy heaved a brick through the window and grabbed the stuff."

"Geez," said Moxey, "that musta been the crash I heard awhile ago."

Rodas, interested, asked him about the crash, and Moxey told him.

Well, at six o'clock some of the other boys working there showed up and business started. Whitey was on hand, as usual, his old rheumy eyes following Moxey around as if he was the greatest guy in the world.

AT SIX-THIRTY two men strolled in the front door. They were talking to each other, calling each other Ben and George. They were both big men and they were both smoking big cigars. They had both been in the Alley Coffee House before, several times, but they were not customers.

Rodas happened to be up front at that time, and they asked him if there was a guy named Moxey working there. Rodas pointed back to the kitchen and so they walked back to the kitchen and tackled Moxey, who was mixing some more hot-cake batter for the cook.

"Hello, Moxey," said the one called Ben, just as if he had known Moxey for years.

"Hello, yourself," said Moxey who could see something was wrong right away.

Ben flipped back his coat and showed a star.

Old man Whitey came over from the sink to listen in, his eyes as wide as saucers.

"Moxey," said Ben very friendly, "did you hear anything unusual this morning?"

Moxey stared at him as if he didn't understand at first. Then he tumbled.

"Why, sure," he said. "I heard a crash. Guess it was that window smashing, but I didn't pay no attention to it at the time."

"Uh-huh." For a little while Ben didn't say anything. Neither did the other dick, George. They just stood and looked at Moxey, sort of wise.

"Been in town long, Moxey?" asked Ben presently.

"Since yesterday," said Moxey.

"Uh-huh. Where from?"

"Aw, up the line," said Moxey.

"Just up the line, huh?" said Ben, and laughed. George laughed, too.

"Well," said Moxey, just a little bitter, "I ain't got no home. Never had one."

Then George put in a word.

"Ever been pinched, Moxey?"

"Hell," said Moxey, "a guy that bums around like me is always getting pinched. It's all right when you ain't got a job. But I gotta job now."

For a little while the two dicks were quiet; just stood and grinned at Moxey. Then Ben started again.

"What did you do with the loot, Moxey?"

"The hell with you," said Moxey. "I ain't got no loot."

"Yeah?" Ben wasn't grinning any more. Neither was George. "Well we know you done it. We know that, see? But maybe it would go easier with you if you turned back the loot right away, see?"

"Why," said Moxey. "I think I'll bust your mug in for you."

Ben glared at him. So did George. Then, suddenly, Ben grinned again. And so did George.

"O. K., Moxey," said Ben. "We ain't gonna get rough with you, see, so long as you're good. Are we, George?"

"Naw," said George. "We wouldn't get tough with you. Not if we didn't have to."

"That's right," said Ben. "Say, just as a favor, Moxey, let's look at your hands, huh?"

Moxey stuck out his hands. Ben looked them over.

"Uh-huh," he said. "Got a cut on your right hand, ain't you?"

At once, Moxey knew what they were looking for. They figured that the window buster may have cut his hand on the broken glass when he stuck it in to get the jewelry.

"Sure," said Moxey. "Cut it this morning on an empty tomato can."

Ben laughed. So did George.

Whitey was standing close to them, leaning on the dish-up table. His old hands were shaking violently.

"Sure," he piped up. "A guy is always cutting his hands around a dump like this."

Ben looked at him, frowning.

"You," he said, "shut up!"

"Yes, sir," said Whitey.

"Yeah. A fresh cut on that hand, huh?" Ben said to Moxey.

"I got it on a tomato can," persisted Moxey stubbornly.

While Ben was talking to Moxey, George was edging toward him.

"Sure," said Ben, grinning. "Them tomato cans are bad—"

"You lay offa me!" yelled Moxey.

But it was too late. George had slipped steel bracelets on Moxey.

WHITEY was whimpering as they led Moxey away. "He's a swell guy!"

he wept. "A swell guy! It's a lousy frame-up!"

There was nobody near Whitey at the time except the counter man. Carver Rodas. And Rodas heard him.

"Swell guy nothing!" sneered Rodas. "A bum, that's all. They'll put him away for cracking the jewelry dump!"

"You're a liar!" shrieked the old man.

But he knew that Rodas was probably right. Moxey was a bum, all right, even if he was a great guy. The dicks had to put somebody away for the job, and Moxey happened to be handy. The dicks would take what little evidence they had—like the cut on the hand—and cook up enough more to make it stick. That would be smart work.

"I didn't like that guy, nohow," Rodas went on.

"Yeah?" said Whitey, still weeping. "A cellar cockroach like you wouldn't."

"Listen!" Rodas scowled at him. "Listen, you old grease cutter, you talk civil to me or I'll cut your head open."

Whitey stumbled back over the sink. There was so much salt water in his eyes he could hardly see. He was mad and scared at the same time. The first thing he did was to break three plates.

He was frankly afraid of Rodas, Whitey was. Mostly because he was afraid of knives. Rodas always carried one. Whitey had often seen it when Rodas changed his clothes to go to work.

For a long time Whitey worked hard, washing dishes, scouring pots and pans. He didn't have a word to say to anyone. That was not unusual. He never said much to anyone, since no one said much to him.

There was one exception to that, old Katie. She was an old woman—well, not so old, maybe fifty—who cleaned the rooms in the flop house next door, where Whitey stayed. Katie was a funny little

woman with narrow shoulders, a pot belly, glittering little eyes and a nose like a ship's anchor. And a sharp tongue, too. She had a high, screaming voice that carried for blocks. And she used it on everyone, except Whitey. She treated Whitey kindly and spoke to him gently, as if he was an old sweetheart come back to her.

And along about ten o'clock Katie came into the kitchen for a cup of coffee. At once she knew that something was wrong. She put a hand on Whitey's bent back and asked him what was the matter.

"It's Moxey," said Whitey, and he told her what had happened.

Katie had seen Moxey only once, but she agreed with Whitey.

"That's tough," she said. "Sure, the lad's good. But don't you worry, Whitey. You can't do him no good nohow."

"But I gotta help him!" insisted Whitey desperately.

"Well," sighed Katie, "it sure is hell. But don't you worry. Me and you'll take in a ten-cent show tonight. At seven o'clock you comb your old white hair and—"

"Say," said Whitey, abruptly, "that's somep'n!"

"What?" asked Katie, startled.

But Whitey, instead of answering, walked over to Rodas, who had just come into the kitchen after a bowl of mush.

"Say, you," Whitey said to him, most of the quiver gone from his voice, "what time did you get up this morning?"

Rodas stared at him.

"What is it to you?" he said, almost without making space between his lips for the words to come out.

"Oh," said Whitey, "you usually get up at ten to six, don't you?"

"Sure," said Rodas.

"Well, you musta got up earlier this morning."

Rodas fixed him with a cold stare.

"Yeah?" he said presently.

"Sure. You usually have to rush right in here, and you wash your face and comb your hair when you take your coat off and put on your apron. But this morning you was all fixed up, face washed and hair combed before you got here."

"Yeah?" said Rodas, and there was a glitter in his eye.

"Sure. What about it?"

Rodas didn't reply. He turned quickly and picked up the bowl of mush and disappeared into the dining room with it. But he was soon back, and he walked directly to Whitey, stood very close to him.

"Old man," he hissed, "you ain't got long to live."

"I know it," said Whitey.

"That's right. But you might as well make it as long as you can, see?"

Whitey gazed at him out of eyes that were bolder than they had been for many years.

"Meaning what?" he demanded.

"Meaning," said Rodas, "that it ain't none of your business what time I get up in the morning."

"You're a dirty crook," said Whitey in a loud voice, or at least as loud as he could make it.

Rodas shot a hasty glance over toward the stove and observed that the cook was busy pouring beans into a can. Then he shot a stream of profanity into Whitey's face. Whitey shrank from it, retreated. Retreated until he backed into Katie, who had come up behind him.

Katie's nose quivered, and her wicked little eyes glinted.

"Shut up!" she said to Rodas. "You louse!"

Rodas turned and went into the dining room. Whitey returned to his post at the sink. Katie followed him.

"Listen, you old fool," said Katie af-

fectionately. "Don't monkey with that guy Rodas. He's poison, he is."

"I don't care," said Whitey stubbornly. "Moxey's a swell guy, and he never—"

"I ain't saying he ain't," Katie agreed. "But you can't do nothing."

"I'm gonna do somep'n," Whitey retorted savagely.

"What, f'rinstance?" mocked Katie.

"I dunno," said Whitey, paddling his hand idly in the soap suds.

"Boy," said Katie, "you better go easy—and talk easy, too."

"Well, that's somep'n, too," murmured Whitey absent-mindedly.

"What's somep'n?"

"Why, talk easy," said Whitey. "Or, maybe, speakeasy."

"You're as crazy as a cockeyed bed-bug," said the old woman sharply.

And she may have been right. Anyhow Whitey looked crazy, and acted crazy. He wouldn't tell her any more, and presently she had to go back to the flop-house.

FOR the rest of the day Whitey avoided Rodas. He didn't seem to be conscious of the quick, venomous glances which Rodas shot his way from time to time.

Whitey had an easy job, outside of working hard for twelve hours. But being old he usually got quite tired. He was off shift at six in the evening, and the first thing he did was to pull on his hat and drag his weary feet down to the next corner, where stood the Shank Hotel.

But before he left the Alley Coffee Shop, Whitey had committed a small crime. He had quietly removed a cheap, small camera from the dressing room in the basement. The camera belonged to the boss but the boss wasn't there at the time.

And the camera was now in Whitey's pocket.

Now the Shank Hotel was the residence of the counter man, Carver Rodas. It was a real hotel, with electric lights and a washbowl in every room. It also had a lobby, a small one. And in the lobby was a clerk's desk, also small.

And Whitey knew the night clerk there, a dusty little man known as "Granny."

Whitey entered the lobby with his hat in his hand and went over to the desk. Granny looked up.

"Hello, Whitey," said Granny.

"Thanks," said the old man, smiling.

When anyone as high up as Granny said "hello" to him Whitey always thought it necessary to thank him. And Granny was much better than most people about that. He almost always said "hello" to him when he saw him. One of the very best people, Granny was.

There was no one else in the lobby just then, which was not unusual. There were only three chairs in the lobby and guests didn't hang around much.

Whitey leaned over the desk as far as he could, in his most confidential manner. Granny, open-mouthed, stared at him curiously.

"Say," said Whitey, in a low voice, "you know Rodas, don't you?"

Granny nodded slowly. Of course he knew Carver Rodas.

"You give him a call mornings, don't you?"

Granny nodded again.

"What time?" asked Whitey.

"Quarter to six," said Granny. "What's the idea?"

Whitey disregarded the question.

"Did you call him this morning, same as usual?"

"Sure," said Granny.

Whitey leaned still farther across the desk and his voice dropped even lower.

"Was he there?" he whispered.

"No," said Granny slowly. "He—he didn't answer, when I knocked on his door.

I was coming back down here anyway, then I thinks maybe I ought to see if there was anything the matter with him. I had the master key with me and I slipped into his room. But he was gone already."

Whitey rubbed his cracked hands together gleefully.

"He can get out of here without you seeing him, huh?"

"Sure," said Granny. "Easy. He could come down the back stairs from the second floor and go out the alley door."

"Thanks," said Whitey, and turned to go.

"Come here, Whitey," Granny halted him.

Whitey turned back.

"Listen," Granny said very seriously, "don't forget Rodas is pretty bad with a knife."

But Whitey seemed scarcely to hear him. He nodded absently, turned and walked through the little lobby, past the foot of the stairs and out into the alley back of the hotel.

IT was getting dark now. Just across the alley a small light globe twinkled behind a window down which a blind had been drawn. Near the window was a door. Whitey went straight to the door and rapped, a peculiar series of raps.

The door opened, just a little at first, then wider.

"O. K., Whitey," said a voice, and Whitey entered. He was now in Bill July's speakeasy, where he was well enough known. Indeed, Whitey visited Bill's place every Saturday night, and spent practically all of his eight dollar weekly pay check there.

Bill July's speakeasy didn't have any bar. Bill served the liquor in the drab, ill-smelling dining room. Bill would probably have kept his stock in the bathroom, only there wasn't any bathroom, so he kept it in the kitchen.

It wasn't Bill himself who had let Whitey in, however. It was a young guy in striped pants and a cheap silk shirt named Tokey. Tokey had quick, fitful eyes and a chin that went backward like the Gulf of Mexico.

Whitey sank into a chair at the table. "Gimme a shot," Whitey pleaded.

"Why, sure," said Tokey, but he stood and looked down at Whitey speculatively. It was unusual for Whitey to come in on Tuesday, since it was only on Saturday that he ever had any money to spend. "Sure," he added, with a grin, "but where did you get the dough?"

"Dough?" said Whitey. "I ain't got none."

"Yeah," said Tokey. "Well, no dough, no shot."

"Cripes!" implored Whitey. "I need one bad." And he held up his hand, which was really shaking badly.

"Well," said Tokey indifferently, "I'll ask Bill."

"Thanks," smiled Whitey.

Tokey opened the kitchen door, went in and closed the door behind him. Whitey chuckled, and got to his feet. Over near the kitchen door was a little alcove, in which were piled some empty cases.

Whitey quickly wriggled behind the cases, and waited.

Presently Tokey opened the door again. He stopped on the threshold and stared at the table where Whitey had been seated.

"The old guy musta beat it," Tokey called back to Bill. "He ain't here no more."

Whitey could hear Bill grunting a response. He waited. So eager, so intent that he didn't even notice the ache in his old bones. Fifteen minutes slipped by. Then Bill July himself emerged from the kitchen.

Bill had his hat on. Whitey knew that Bill would have his hat on, because he knew Bill always went down the street for

dinner at seven o'clock. That gave Bill time enough to get back by eight, which was when business started dribbling in.

Bill was a big guy. And for a minute he stood there, within a few feet of Whitey, his hands in his pockets, his cigar jutting out jauntily, and his hat cocked over his left eye.

"Say," he said to Tokey, "if Rodas comes in, tell him I'll be back, see? Tell him to wait, see?"

"Sure," said Tokey.

Whitey, huddled behind the cases, could have yelled for joy. He had had it doped out right after all. Bill July, he knew, was something of a fence as well as being the proprietor of a speakeasy.

Bill went out. Tokey sat down at the table and lit a cigarette. Through the cracks in the cases Whitey could watch the young guy easy.

In about fifteen minutes the phone bell rang.

THE tinkling of that phone bell nearly queered Whitey, because it made him chuckle again. Tokey, just getting up from his chair, heard the chuckle. But it was a low chuckle, and Tokey made a noise pushing the chair back so he didn't recognize it.

Whitey had expected that phone call too. He knew who it was from. Katie, now through with her work, would call around for Whitey at the Alley Coffee Shop. And when she found that he was gone, she would check up on him by phoning Bill July's speakeasy.

Tokey went out to answer the phone. And the phone was in a little place off the front hall.

Very quietly, Whitey squeezed himself out from behind the cases. In a moment he had opened the kitchen door, let himself in and closed the door again.

In the kitchen was a sink, a small gas stove, a table and three chairs, some more

cases and a big barrel. The bottles in the cases were full of liquor but Whitey didn't even notice that, although there had been times when he would have devoted his entire attention to them had he been shut up in the same room with them alone.

Instead he just found a place behind the barrel. There were a couple of cases on top of the barrel which was in the corner, so it made a pretty good hiding place.

He had now about an hour's wait. This time, in spite of his excitement, his blood seemed to stop running, his feet froze and his body was wracked with strain. Twice in that time, Tokey came in the kitchen, rattled a bottle or two, and went out again.

CARVER Rodas arrived first. Tokey let him into the kitchen, and Rodas sat down at the table with a bottle and a glass. Whitey couldn't see him but he could hear him touch the bottle to the glass occasionally and the gurgle of the stuff down his throat.

Then, at last, Bill July got back.

"Hello, Bill," said Rodas.

"Hello, Rodas," rumbled Bill. "Got the stuff?"

"Sure," said Rodas and laughed.

Still Whitey couldn't see them, but he knew that Rodas had reached into a pocket and was displaying gems to Bill.

"They ain't worth a hell of a lot," grumbled Bill.

"They ain't so bad," countered Rodas.

Grunting, Bill was apparently running through the loot. In a way, Whitey knew, Bill was right. They were not very valuable gems or they would not have been in the store window at that time of day. But the proceeds would seem like plenty to a cheap crook like Rodas.

And even if they weren't worth a dime, they were important enough to put Moxey away for a long time. And Moxey was a good guy. Maybe the best guy in the world.

"They ain't worth more than a sawbuck," said Bill.

"Double that," protested Rodas.

"Not a dime more than a sawbuck," laughed Bill derisively.

"A sawbuck and a half," whined Rodas.

"Well, as a personal favor, I'll split the difference," said Bill.

"It's robbery," said Rodas, "but I gotta take it."

Whitey, listening intently, caught his breath. Now was the moment. With trembling hands he brought the camera around the corner of the barrel, pointed it toward the center of the room, from where the voices came. The money and the gems were probably both on the table now, and Rodas and Bill July were standing by.

His groping finger found the catch. He pressed it down, with a click.

"What was that click I heard?" he heard Rodas say.

"Click?" repeated Bill, and laughed. "You never heard nothing. You got the jimmys, that's all."

"Yeah?" said Rodas.

Quickly Whitey brought the camera back behind the barrel. Unfortunately, his hand caught a splinter in the side of the barrel. In a second the camera dropped from his hand on to the floor. It made a crash, which is much noisier than a click.

Swearing violently, Bill July rushed to the barrel. He had a lot of strength, Bill had, and he swung the barrel about, sending the cases on top of it crashing to the floor. And, almost simultaneously, he brought his gat out.

There crouched against the wall, was Whitey, distress and disappointment pictured in his weary old face.

Bill stared at him blankly for a little while. Then he roared a great laugh.

"Look who's here!" he invited Rodas.

Rodas was looking. But Rodas was not laughing. The tiny bright point of light

in Carver Rodas' eye would have chilled Whitey to the marrow under ordinary circumstances.

"Yeah," said Rodas bitterly. "And look at the picture machine! The old guy was gonna turn me in!"

"Sure I was," admitted Whitey defiantly, tears in his eyes.

"Well," said Bill, easily, "he can't do it now. Anyhow, that picture wouldn't hurt us none."

"Sure it would," Whitey crackled.

"Naw, it wouldn't," denied Bill. "Why, that picture wouldn't show the gems clear, see?"

Whitey's mouth opened. He hadn't thought of that; hadn't known of it, for that matter. He had taken it for granted that if he took a picture showing Bill and Rodas with the jewels, it would be clear proof of their guilt—Rodas' guilt, particularly.

"Anyhow," snarled Rodas, "I oughta croak the old louse. He might shoot the gab too much."

Bill considered this idea carefully. Bill had no objection to croaking people, in fact, rather liked that method of cleaning things up. But he was a little more careful than Rodas.

"Well," said Bill judicially, "I dunno. We might fill him full of booze and then drop him out of a window on his head. They would figure he was soused and fell out hisself. But it ain't necessary, maybe. I dunno."

"I'd like to slash his throat," said Rodas. "But maybe you're idea would be better."

"Hell," said Bill, "he don't know nothing that he can prove. No use bumping a guy off if he can't—"

An unearthly yell interrupted him. It came from the adjoining room. Instinctively, Rodas reached for the gems on the table. But before he could secure them the door was flung open.

And standing in the doorway was old Katie. Her lips were screwed into a knot, and the light of battle was in her eye.

The others stared at her.

"Now," muttered Rodas, "we sure gotta croak the old guy. And her, too."

Bill July nodded slowly.

KATIE swept into the room. As she did so, Bill circled about her, closed the door and locked it.

But it was to Whitey that Katie addressed her attention.

"What you mean," she screeched, "by going off on a drunk when you was gonna take me to the show?"

"Please, Katie," protested Whitey. "I—I ain't on no drunk." He hesitated a moment, then turned suddenly and pointed an accusing finger at the table. "See them gems? They're from Wittowsky's store. Rodas took 'em, the dirty crook. And they nabbed Moxey for it! I come here to get—"

"Shut up!" shouted Rodas, and strode toward him.

At once Katie ran across the room, stood in front of Whitey.

"You touch Whitey," she threatened Rodas, "and I'll tear your eyes out!"

And she curled her fingers up like claws, flung herself at him, scratched and mauled him. With a curse, Rodas caught her by the throat and flung her away.

"Never mind me, Katie," whimpered Whitey. "You—you go away. I ain't worth nothing anyway."

"Hell," said Katie, "I know that. But you and me is pals, and—you're all I got, you damn fool."

For a minute she looked as if she were going to weep herself. But only for a minute. She swung around to Bill July.

"You let Whitey alone—" she began, and then stopped.

Bill was leveling his automatic at her. She stared at it scornfully.

"What's that for?" she sneered. "Think I'm ascaired of that thing?"

Bill laughed but kept the weapon directed at her.

"Aw, bump the old witch off," put in Rodas.

"You can bump me off," said Katie, quite calmly, "if you let Whitey go."

"No!" shrieked the old man. "No! Don't—"

"Aw, we don't wanna bump you guys off," said Bill craftily, winking at Rodas so that the others couldn't see it. "We're gonna let you both go, see?"

Katie's sharp eyes glinted.

"O. K.," she said quickly. "Come on, Whitey."

"Wait a minute," urged Bill, easily. "We're gonna let you both go, see? But not together."

"Is that so?" said Katie. "Well, let Whitey go first."

"No," Whitey pleaded. "You go first, Katie."

"Katie is right," Bill decided. "Whitey goes first."

In an instant, Katie turned suspicious.

"How do I know," she demanded, "that you won't croak him in the alley?"

"We'll fix that," Bill assured her goodheartedly. "Easy. I was just gonna suggest that, see? You can go upstairs, Katie. You can look out of the window there and watch Whitey walk out of the alley."

In the back corner of the kitchen a door opened on a stairway. Without a word, Katie turned toward it. Then, hesitating a little, she trotted back to Whitey, planted a loud and hearty kiss on his forehead.

Whitey's pale face flushed. Bill July roared. Even Rodas snickered.

In a moment Katie had disappeared through the door and could be heard tramping up the stairs.

As soon as she was gone Whitey glared at Rodas.

"Listen, you raf!" he squeaked, angrily. "It it wasn't for Katie, I wouldn't go! I—I'd smash you one! It's a dirty shame, Moxey taking the rap for a louse like you!"

"You wouldn't go, wouldn't you?" put in Bill, grinning.

"Naw. I wouldn't—"

"Well," Bill told him, "don't worry. You ain't gonna go nohow."

"The best way," said Rodas, moodily, "is to slash his dirty throat."

"And get nabbed for it?" said Bill. "Naw. There's an easier way, and we'll be in the clear."

Whitey was staring at them out of vacant eyes. But except for the gat which Bill was pointing at him, they were apparently paying no particular attention to him.

"Katie's upstairs," Bill went on. "We'll take Whitey up, too. Then we'll push 'em both outer the window and they'll bust their necks on the alley cement."

"O. K.," agreed Rodas, "but I'd like to slash their dirty throats."

"It's a cinch, pushing 'em outa the window," Bill proceeded. "We can fix up a nice out, see? We can say that Whitey busted in here soused, and Katie come after him. Then Whitey goes upstairs and Katie goes after him. Then the first thing we knows they have a scrap and they both fall outer the window."

Whitey began to cry.

"Please let Katie—"

"Shut up!" growled Bill, his grin disappearing. "And get upstairs there."

THE muzzle of the gat pressed close against him, Whitey started stumbling upstairs, Rodas and Bill behind him. At the head of the stairs they turned at once into an empty room, dimly lighted.

Katie swung sharply from the window as they entered.

"You rotten double-crossers!" she accused them, her voice as strident as a knife against a stone.

"Stay right where you are, Katie," ordered Bill.

"Like hell I will!" snapped Katie. "You rotten—"

"If you don't," threatened Bill, "I'll plug Whitey. Right now."

Bill knew his stuff. All he had to do was threaten Whitey. Katie stayed by the window.

"Get over with Katie," Bill said to Whitey.

"I ain't gonna do it!" Whitey screamed defiance at him.

"If you don't," said Bill calmly, "I'll plug Katie, right now."

Whitey tottered across the room to Katie.

"Now, Whitey," Bill grinned, "grab the old lady in your arms like you was gonna make love to her."

Even in the feeble light, the tender smile that crept over Katie's battered face was discernible. Whitey, knowing what was coming next, was reluctant. But Katie, not knowing, was eager. Indeed she would probably have been just as eager if she had known.

In any case there was nothing left for Whitey to do. He stretched out his arms and Katie came into them.

"I wish," muttered Rodas, "I could slash their dirty throats."

Katie was babbling softly into Whitey's ear.

Bill July looked the situation over. He looked pleased. Whitey and Katie were together there, by the window. And the window was wide open.

"You turn the trick," he said to Rodas, "while I keep 'em covered."

Whitey was crying like a child. Katie stroked his cheek.

Carver Rodas, still muttering his disappointment that he couldn't use his knife, approached them. The window-sill was low, and all Rodas had to do was give the old couple a push. Quite an easy push would do it.

"There ain't much chance," said Bill, "of anyone seeing us from outside. But to make sure I'll turn this light out. Are you set?"

"Sure," said Rodas.

Bill reached up and turned off the light.

There was a quick commotion near the window. Katie swore violently. Whitey screamed hysterically.

Rodas did not swear. Neither did he scream. He groaned.

No one seemed to be going through the window. But someone did drop to the floor.

"Get busy!" shouted Bill impatiently to Rodas.

"I can't," gasped Rodas. "They—they got me! The old guy got me!"

It was Rodas who was on the floor.

Bill, standing in the darkness in the middle of the floor, seemed stunned, undecided.

"My—my own knife!" Rodas went on weakly. "The old witch musta snatched it outer my pocket downstairs and passed it on to Whitey. "He—he—"

Moaning, Rodas subsided.

Quickly Bill switched on the light. He was no longer undecided. His face was distorted with rage. For a moment he stood there, glaring at them.

Katie was clinging to Whitey. And Whitey was clinging to Katie. Whitey's palsied hand was clasping a blood-stained knife.

Apparently, Bill was going to plug Katie first.

Ten feet separated Whitey from Bill July. Whitey pushed Katie away, sprang

at Bill, forgetting his age, forgetting his wobbly legs, forgetting his fear.

He reached Bill just as a flash of light stabbed at him.

But in front of him he held the knife, rigid. When all his own strength had gone, the impetus carried him forward. The knife went home in Bill's middle.

Bill stood, stared, swore, dropped on his knees, then keeled over on his side.

Whitey, hot lead searing his side, dropped, too, with a low moan.

In an instant Katie was by his side.

"Whitey!" she sobbed. "Whitey! Whitey!"

"I—I'm all right," Whitey assured her weakly. "I—I—all I need is a l'il shot of Bill's booze. Where's the knife?"

"The knife," giggled Katie, hysterically, "is in Bill."

"Leave it there," said Whitey. "I never did like knives nohow. Now, we—we can get Moxey out the coop! He's a great guy, Katie. Greatest guy in the world!"

"He ain't," snapped Katie, fondling him. "You're the greatest guy in the world, you—you—you damned old fool!"

OOO

THE PERFECT CRIME

Years ago the experts in crime solemnly warned the beginners that success in a tussle with the ever alert law depended on outwitting the harness bulls and the flatties. Today's professor will tell you that you must go further. You must know what the minions of the law are going to think when they get wind of your handicraft, and you must plan your job accordingly.

At one time there was considerable excitement about illegal voting in Long Beach, New York. Al Medrischer, so it is alleged, voted for some people who were dead and buried and for some who weren't born yet. He was hauled high and dry in the police net, and to save himself from a vacation where all plural voters go, he turned State's evidence and implicated a number of other "vote racketeers." He was turned loose under \$20,000 bail.

A few weeks later Al was found dead in the rear of a downtown building. Now one Myer Feinman figured that the cops would think Al had fallen from the roof, and Feinman also figured that the six-story fall would sort of wreck Al's likable features—and also hide the fact that he had been shot square between the eyes. According to Feinman's way of figuring, this was the perfect crime. But the coppers fooled Feinman. They thought differently when an autopsy uncovered a .25 caliber slug in Al's battered head. Detectives went to work. They caught two young men with a .25 caliber automatic. Said young men readily claimed they had rented the gun to Feinman, whose 225 pounds began to tingle with fear. His denials were hot and profuse, but at length he came clean.

He lured Al to the roof under pretense of splitting hold-up swag with him, shot him once. But Al very inconsiderately refused to die, and the rod very inconveniently jammed. Feinman looked down into the yard and without any hymns or other ceremony, dumped Al over the edge of the roof.

"I figured you cops would think he fell while trying to get into one of the loft windows," he explained.

Oh yeah? We'll bet that he'll figure it's only a joke when somebody tells him that the net proceeds of murder is a short stay in the chair.



Cub picked up a wooden stool, flung it with full force.

The Hotsy-Totsy Moll

by

Carl Bernard Ogilvie

Author of "The Licensed Killer," etc.

Her joint was a pip, hotsy-totsy and ritzy, it covered her clever racket too. But Dolly hated those bullet holes in her prized silken hangings and the spots of blood on her twenty-grand rug.

CHAPTER ONE

Lead Poison

THE restless murmur of Chicago's swift boulevard traffic was suddenly stabbed with the sharp, vicious crack of an automatic pistol. To those within earshot, the report aroused no appreciable interest. Backfire. But to a lone passenger in a slowing taxicab, in the center of

Michigan Avenue, it was charged with meaning.

"Cub" Buckley, living under the relentless, menacing shadow of gangland threats, recognized the familiar threatening bark. Another gangster gun had spoken its message—"Death." And he had every reason to believe the message was sent to him.

The bullet, boring its path through the murky heat waves, bit at the taxicab's

window. It gnawed the pane to jagged shapes and razor-sharp splinters; belched them venomously at the young reporter. As Buckley flung himself sidewise on the seat seeking meager protection, he felt the quick sucking of air between his chin and Adam's apple. By a split fraction of an inch the murderous missile had missed him.

Two more shots snapped their brittle notes of menace.

Buckley held his breath, nerves atingle. No bullets came zipping through the cab this time. Neither was there any sound of denting metal, announcing the taxi had been struck.

"Missed!" Cub Buckley grinned, half aloud.

But that bullet, which had clipped its way under his chin, had come entirely too close to permit harboring comforting thoughts of a prolonged safety. Buckley had been put on the spot before. He knew there was a neat price on his head. The mug with crust enough to rub him out would be due for a twenty grand donation from a certain group of Chicago's gangster-politicians.

"Step on it!" snapped the reporter.

Panic seized the driver. He turned questioning, bulging eyes upon his fare. He saw the telltale jagged holes the bullet made in two of his windows before it spent its fury against the stone curbing, to become harmless litter of the gutter.

"Gang war—murder!" blubbered the chauffeur.

Epileptic with fright he stomped on the accelerator. The motor raced, gears groaned, clashed. The cab lunged forward in one grotesque frog hop. With an asthmatic wheezing cough its motor stalled.

The moaning of the starter drowned out Cub's urging. Cold sweat dampened the brow of the cabman. His efforts were fruitless. The car remained motionless. Buckley sensed that the cab, with its bul-

let-shattered windows, was decidedly too conspicuous for comfort or safety. Flicking a gold back to the apathetic driver, to cover fare and the cost of replacing the glass, Cub leaped from the stalled taxi. At the curb he hailed another.

As he flung himself into the cab he gazed intently out its rear window, scrutinizing the general location from which he judged the shots had been fired. A brief, amazing sight met his gaze.

In a split fraction of a second it was gone.

Cub caught a fleeting glance—a glimpse so transitory as to cause him to question if his imagination were playing him false. But he was positive that with all his excitement he had caught and registered an astonishing and most important detail of the shooting. He caught the sheen of nude-colored hosiery as a woman fairly leaped into a green and orange checkered taxi. She was too far into the cab for him to catch a glimpse of her face. But he noticed particularly that she entered the cab from the street side and not the curb. More important, he took particular notice of her right hand tugging nervously at the edge of the door to close it behind her. He noticed it particularly because in it shimmered the blued steel of an automatic pistol.

"Quick, swing around! After that checkered cab!" shouted Buckley. "That green and orange checkered one! See it?—Step on it. Don't let it out of your sight."

The driver responded promptly.

Cub glanced at his watch. Ten to three. He had an appointment with "Babe" at the Dolly Dimple Beauty Parlor at three sharp. The pistol blast had cut loose just as his cab had slowed down opposite the beauty parlor with which he had helped Dolly McGurd to get her start in a lush racket. If his date had been with anyone else besides Babe, he would have been

positive about the blast—that the cold-cream and lipstick dump was the spot.

A bullet right between the chin and the Adam's apple was enough to discourage growing a double chin, but not sufficient to keep Buckley from plunging into new dangers. Essentially a news hound, trained by inexorable Mack Herzog, city editor of *The Inquirer*, Cub Buckley was on the scent of news—news that might never be printed. Who the dame was that had made this attempt upon his life, in broad daylight, he didn't know. But it wasn't hard to guess who was behind the deal.

Cub Buckley knew a certain mob of hoodlums had sworn to put the screws to him. Attempts to get him occurred relentlessly. He still carried a peculiar sort of lucky piece, or challenge to Fate, a slug from a 45 in his left leg. It had been presented to him by a member of Tony Darillo's mob during Cub's last brush with them. Buckley figured Tony Darillo would never forgive or forget the beating he had given him at *The Bat* after he had taken Cub's young bride to that notorious hangout. He knew Tony would avenge the beating Cub had given him. Avenge with silent blade or soft-nosed bullets.

By the time Buckley's cab came opposite the Dolly Dimple Beauty Parlor, a morbid, horrified crowd had collected about a Rolls-Royce roadster parked at the curb. Cub gave it a careful once-over as his driver skirted the mob. Slumped behind the roadster's steering wheel was a flashily-dressed man. His head was strained back, as if in great agony, on the luxurious leather upholstery. Blood swelled from an ugly hole in his forehead. Claret bubbles formed gruesomely about his bullet-torn mouth. In that fleeting glance Buckley recognized the dying man—"Whiny" Grecco.

So the Greek had got his! Whiny had gotten the message the other two shots

sent. Whiny had eaten lead the way Dolly McGurd, proprietress of the beauty parlor, had threatened Cub more than once to "give it through the teeth." Whiny's rub-out meant plenty of trouble was loose amongst the Darillo gangsters. This ambitious Greek could wield a stiletto more expertly than Tony Darillo. Now Tony's star executioner, with the silent blade, was plugged for a lavish funeral.

Lightning thoughts crashed through Cub's brain. The gun moll in the checkered cab ahead hadn't been rodding for him. It was Grecco who had been on the spot. The bullet that had crashed through the cab window—the first shot—must have been a wild plug. But it had clipped close enough to be mighty real and threatening. It was portentous of what Cub could expect any minute of the day or night. Darillo had his finger on him. And to gangland that meant positive death. But who was the gun-toting dame in the cab?

THE checkered cab, two blocks ahead, turned off the boulevard, shrank into the tangled traffic of Chicago's congested Loop district.

"Keep on its tail!" shouted Cub. "Force it to a standstill and I'll give you a fifty."

The driver skimmed, wormed through traffic, beat traffic lights by flickering fractions of seconds, kept the fleeing cab in sight. At Clark Street the Checker was held up by a red light. Buckley's cab came racing from the other end of the long block after it. Then the taxi ahead, as if it sensed it was followed, turned into Clark Street and headed north.

"Get it," Cub urged.

But the checkered cab was lost in traffic. Buckley sat bolt upright during a two block struggle through congested, slow-moving traffic. He sighed with relief as he spotted the cab slithering up the ap-

proach to the North Clark Street bridge, go racing across.

"Keep after it!" he clicked, impatient to overtake it, find out who the jane was.

A bell began ringing. Lights flashed red warnings. The bridge gates suddenly descended. The cab driver ground his car to a violent stop to prevent crashing into them. The bridge was closed to traffic. A tug boat's deep rumbling whistle announced its drudging approach with a Great Lakes' freighter in tow. The big Clark Street bridge began swinging open slowly. And the checkered cab was safely on the other side of the Chicago River.

"Get out of this jam!" yelled Buckley, boiling with chagrin. "Beat it to the next bridge."

A policeman's whistle warned the cabbie to stay in the traffic line. But visions of winning an extra fifty was more important than a shrill whistle. The chauffeur cut out, backed, went churning down the car tracks to the nearest bridge. The yellow cab sped across the opaque water. The driver swung back to Clark Street at the first street intersection and took up the interrupted pursuit.

But the checkered cab was nowhere in sight. It had vanished completely.

Buckley played a hunch and kept the cab headed up the North Side. His brain was hard at work deducting the whys of Whiny Grecco's rub-out. A tremor crept up his spinal column as he reviewed the happenings since he chased Tony and his mob for a ducking in the Chicago River. In the background of Grecco's murder, Cub Buckley saw himself.

Dolly McGurd had done Cub a good turn when she helped him out of the river hell hole where Darillo's hoods had left him to drown. That same night she had told him of her beauty parlor brainstorm. Darillo, after promising to finance the racket, had cut her cold, and she was sore. Buckley had influence, and Dolly knew

it. Because she saved his life, he had gotten financial backing for her shop.

Her joint was Ritzie. It put on a bold front to cover its unsavory back. Women from the Gold Coast and fashionable South Side patronized the beauty parlor. They didn't know it was just a blind for Dolly's racket. Lost jewels and blackmail were her specialties. Dolly was a fast worker. Her ears were large. She never missed a trick. She heard plenty of gossip. Swanky dames who as much as hinted of their moments of indiscretion lived to repent—repent with thousands of dollars to keep Dolly McGurd from telling what she knew. Dolly had her victims welching for life. She always won. Dolly had grown rich, an important spoke in gangland's wheel of easy pickings. No one dared touch her. She had the protection of the big shot, who was an unidentified alderman.

Cub figured that Darillo, driven by uncontrollable envy of Dolly's big takings, had put his finger on her. Whiny Grecco was the man selected to do the job. A blade in the back—silent, safe, sure. But the blonde must have had reliable advance info. When Grecco drove up, she had sent a couple of bullets spinning through his head, and one under Cub's chin.

Buckley had never doped Dolly out wrong once. He knew she had nerve and a heart made of ice encased in granite. Dolly was the type who would pull off her own killings.

"Dolly's a murderess," mused Cub.

There was no doubt of whose nude-colored silk stockings he had seen getting into the green and orange checkered cab. He decided to play his hunch, wild and unpromising as it seemed, to the limit. He made up his mind to continue north to Dolly's pent-house apartment. He'd take a look in—for news, and perhaps luck.

He retraced, in his mind, the course of

the checkered cab. It had beat it from Dolly's cold cream plastering emporium to the North Side. Yeah, it was a cinch. The cab was beating it from Dolly's place of business to her apartment.

The dame with the gat wanted to get away from the scene of the murder, yet was dumb enough to cart the cannon along with her. Probably she'd pack a bag and catch a rattler out of town before the cops wised up to her identity. Cub was not an expert mathematician, but by multiplying facts and adding circumstantial evidence he arrived at the answer. He could see Dolly McGurd playing herself for a rap. She was pulling a boner to run directly home—the dicks would be waiting for her sure. Not that they had any dope on her, but she'd make a good material witness. Buckley reflected that her well-rounded legs always looked swell in the papers. Dolly knew how to pose for the camera.

AT Center Street Cub spotted a checkered cab ahead. He didn't dare hope that it was the one he had chased to the bridge.

"There's the hack ahead," pointed the driver.

"Are you sure?"

"Sure," responded the taximan with an air of complete boredom. "I spotted its numbers. It ain't gonna get away this time."

"Run it down," demanded Cub, his pulse quickening.

"O. K., but you pay the damages."

Up North Clark Street the two cabs raced, weaving a hectic trail between slow moving street cars and parked automobiles. For a time Cub was apprehensive the Checker would again make its getaway.

Block after block the two cabs churned, unmindful of the lights glaring against them. Near Belmont Avenue the Yellow

gained, clung tenaciously to the Checker.

Cub drew his automatic. He knew Dolly, in a wild fury at being overtaken, would do something desperate, especially with Buckley tagging her for the electric chair.

The Yellow skimmed alongside the Checker.

Cub, with his pearl-handled automatic in his hand, swung out onto the running board. His driver cut in sharply. The Checker was forced to the curbing. Buckley thumbed the safety catch of his weapon. With a quick leap he sprang to the running board of the Checker. The two cabs came to a sudden halt, their front bumpers locked, fenders crushed.

Cub yanked the door open. With extended gat he lunged into the cab, covering its female occupant. Then complete astonishment crashed down upon him. He was wholly unprepared for the sight that met his questioning gaze. Dumbfounded he stared, closed his eyes, stared long and hard. For a few crazy minutes he suffered the illusion he was seeing a weird and terrible hallucination. It was unbelievable. He swore his vision was playing unmercifully cruel tricks with him. The blood in his veins ran cold. His world seemed to suddenly shatter about him. He felt alone in a stupefying wilderness.

The girl was there. She sat crouching on the far side of the seat. Her right hand trembled in uncontrollable agitation. In it she still clutched the murderous automatic pistol. On her face rode a rift of fear.

But she wasn't the one he had expected to overtake. She wasn't Dolly, whom he had good reasons to expect to be in the cab. The girl wasn't a blonde at all—she was a brunette. In a daze from shock, he heard himself muttering.

"You—and I thought—Dolly McGurd! Give me that gat!"

Vaguely he realized he tore the blued-

steel automatic from the silent, wide-eyed young woman's grasp. Indecision racked his soul. His mind seemed to be an arid desert from which no fertile thoughts sprouted.

As if from a great distance he heard himself whisper.

"I've got to get you out of this, kid. Listen to me— No, don't talk. Beat it home. Take your clothes and beat it out of town, any place—to your mother's. Stay there until you hear from me."

Through a dizzy haze he stumbled from the checkered cab and got back into the Yellow.

He heard the girl crying in anguish.

"Cub, listen to me—"

But he refused to listen. Precious minutes were being wasted. He had a big job ahead of him. He had to get to the bulls, throw them off the trail of the Checker. He'd manufacture false evidence, that's what he'd do. He had to do it—do it for her.

Without another glance at the occupant in the checkered taxi, he spoke to the driver, in a voice husky and strange.

"Michigan Boulevard. Where we came from. Don't let grass grow under your balloons."

The yellow cab swung away from the checkered one, and sped southward. It headed for the Dolly Dimple Beauty Parlor.

CHAPTER TWO

The Racket Queen

BY the time Cub Buckley got back to the scene of Chicago's latest gang murder, the crowd of morbid, curious on-lookers had grown to a mob. He got out of the taxi, and handed the driver the promised fifty dollars in addition to the meter total. As he crossed the boulevard he inserted his press card in the hat band

of his turned-down Panama. Apparently he was once more a reporter on the job of getting the latest news.

Police reserves held the mob back in an irregular circle from the Rolls-Royce roadster, now a blood-stained death car. Buckley spotted the coroner making his official investigation. A police photographer was busy with camera and plates.

Cub edged around the throng, passed the scrutinizing inspection of two plain-clothesmen standing at the black marble entrance of the Dolly Dimple Beauty Parlor. At the top of a deeply carpeted stairway, he entered the luxurious establishment. He knew his way about the dump.

Buckley was relieved to find the salon deserted. His eyes moved swiftly to a door in the opposite wall. It lead to the many booths where clients were plastered with cold cream and threats. A narrow door to the rear, hung with brilliant draperies, led to the private office of Dolly McGurd, proprietress of Chicago's most exclusive beauty racket emporium.

Cub stepped into a nearby phone booth, called The Inquirer and got his chief, City Editor Herzog, on the wire.

"Cub speaking," he announced in a low cautious voice.

"Where the 'ell you been?" roared Herzog. "I've been burnin' the wires to get in touch with you. There's been a murder—"

"Yeah, I know. Was there when it happened," Cub replied in a listless monotone voice.

The tone of the city editor altered immediately. "Great stuff! Know who it was? Who did it? Have you got their story? What's the motive or alibi?" he demanded all in a quick gasp of interest.

"Whiny Grecco of Tony Darillo's mob died a natural death," mumbled the reporter. "Lead poison. Plugged in front

of the Dolly Dimple joint at ten minutes to three. The stiff was sitting in his joy car at the curb, waiting for something. He got it—but not what he was parked for. Now he'll be parked six feet under with a lily in his mitt and two slugs in his dome."

"Hell man, I know all that," bellowed Herzog. "Who gave him the works?"

Cub hesitated. Mack had asked it—asked who did it! All the way down from the North Side this one damning, inevitable question had tortured him. Herzog had asked the question; the Chicago police would demand—and find out. They'd sweat plenty people to get the right answer. They could sweat him too, but he'd never tell.

"For the moment," said Cub slowly, evasively, "if anybody wants to know, just tell them that a representative of The Inquirer is on a hot lead. Important developments expected shortly. The old bunk, you know. That's all. G'bye."

Buckley stepped out of the phone booth. A woman's high-pitched, excited voice halted him. Her voice came from behind the curtained doorway leading to Dolly's office. Dolly's voice! She was mad. Defiance choked her as she exclaimed with a taut note of finality.

"I didn't see nothin'. Didn't hear anything'. If somebody's popped off, it ain't my funeral."

A mumble of threatening masculine voices came to Cub's ears. He stepped back into the darkened seclusion of the phone booth, and waited. A few moments later the chief of police, accompanied by the district attorney and several other high-ranking police officials came through the arched doorway into the salon and disappeared downstairs.

Buckley rushed across the luxurious carpet. He passed through the arched doorway, lost himself behind its curtains. He hurried along a short narrow corridor.

Without the perfunctory etiquette of knocking he opened a solid walnut door. He was in Dolly McGurd's private office. He closed the door softly behind him. He was alone with the dame who had once threatened to get him.

Dolly, a strikingly beautiful blonde, blue of eyes and wide of ruby lips, looked around questioningly. She stood before an exquisitely hand-carved cabinet, pouring a generous drink. Her large eyes drew to slits.

"Peddle your papers some place else, reporter!" she demanded irritably.

"I'm not peddling papers, Dolly," retorted Cub. "Even if I have got a bit of news."

"It's a waste of breath to ask if you'll have a snort."

"Yep."

He strode to the cabinet beside the serious-faced beauty, and selected a whiskey pony. Dolly tried to pour him a drink. Her hand trembled as if stricken with ague. She cast a swift helpless glance at Cub, passed the bottle to him.

"Fill your own," she mumbled.

He filled the glass and lifted it. "Here's luck to you, Dolly."

A reproving scowl was her only answer.

"Well?" he questioned. "Aren't you going to wish me luck?"

"What for?"

"Because I'm going to need it."

"Oh sure," said Dolly. "If you need it—well, here's luck to you."

They tossed off their glasses together.

BUCKLEY took a shot from a syphon for a chaser. Dolly crossed the office, sank down on an exquisite crimson chaise-louge. She looked questioningly, almost defiantly at the newspaperman.

Buckley strode to an open window leading out onto a fire-escape. He lost himself in grim thought.

"Well, spill it!" snapped Dolly after a pause. "But don't try to pump me. I'm not givin' interviews an' I can't guess who put the heat on the Greek."

"Relax, Dolly," suggested Cub. "I'm not here on regular newspaper work. I want to warn you. Darillo and his hoods will be on your trail. The blast boiled in front of your place. No matter what happens, you've got to keep your mouth shut. Get that?"

Cub thought the seductive Dolly grew pale under her elaborate make-up, but her eyes did not waver.

"Tony come here?" questioned the girl with a sneer. "What will he do?"

"Plenty. That's why I'm tipping you off to lay low, play dumb."

"Me an' Whiny were friends," murmured Dolly with an effort.

"Balogney!"

"Honest," emphasized Dolly. "He called me on the phone and dated me up for a ride through the park this afternoon. He said if I knew what was good for me I'd trot along. He was goin' to whisper me an earful of important news. I had a hunch Tony wanted to make up to me, cut in on my grift."

"The only way Tony Darillo would make up to you would be to put a lily in your hand, and you know it. Lay low—that's my tip. Now I'm going to put bees in your bonnet. I set off the fireworks!"

Dolly's jeweled hands clutched at her mouth. A startled, smothered gasp escaped her lips. She sank back limply on the lounge, staring at him with incredulous eyes.

"Are you nerts?" she managed to say when she recovered from her astonishment.

"I'm giving it to you straight."

"You talk like a movie hero."

"Believe it or not, kid, that's the dope. Police headquarters is my next stop. I'm going to give myself up."

"What for?" demanded Dolly, a flush of excitement stealing over her pale features.

"For the murder of Whiny Grecco."

The blond dame got to her feet slowly. With hands resting on her swaying hips, she strolled to where Cub stood.

"Do you know what I think of you, Cub Buckley?" she said, her lips twisting into a sardonic grin.

"It doesn't matter much," he rejoined with a careless laugh.

"You're a liar! You didn't kill Whiny Grecco an' you know it. Quit your stall-in'. What's your game? You're here to get somethin' on me."

Cub smiled faintly. From his coat pocket he drew a blued-steel automatic.

"Here's the furnace," he announced, holding it in the open palm of his hand. "Smell its muzzle—burnt powder."

Dolly's big blue eyes dilated. She shrank from the pistol as if the murderous weapon threatened her life.

"Where—where did you get that?" she gulped. A tremor took possession of her body.

"I always carry it. You know Darillo and his mob are after me. Well, last night Babe told me Whiny Grecco was with Ronny that time when he clipped me in the leg on the Wilson Avenue elevated station. The answer's simple. I got him before he got me."

"I don't know what the hell you're talkin' about," puzzled Dolly, tossing off a stiff drink to steady her nerves.

"Well, stay dumb and you're O. K."

"That's a big relief," admitted Dolly, and for the first time since the reporter came into the room, she managed to smile faintly. "So you did the job!" she giggled. "Thanks for the favor, Cub, old kid. If you hadn't, I probably would have—some day."

She sank into a chair giggling uncontrollably.

BUCKLEY felt a cold tremor go racing up his spine. Sidewise he caught a glimpse of three crouched forms slinking quickly up the fire-escape to the landing on a level with the open window. He wheeled around as the men bolted into Dolly's office.

Tony Darillo and two of his most notorious killers, "Gat" Barnelli and "Nosey" Reechi, stood scowling grimly. Silent, ominous, sinister they stood. Grim men out to do a killing. Catching sight of Cub Buckley holding a blued-steel automatic, their hands made threatening movements toward shoulder holsters.

Cub slipped the pistol into his pocket without an explanation.

For a moment the gangsters exchanged significant glances. The strained tension relaxed.

"What's the meanin' of coming in here like a bunch of sneak thieves, Tony?" demanded Dolly, backing away catlike from the black-haired Italian.

"This is business," replied Tony with his usual suave courtesy. His tone was cold, crisp, almost brittle. "Dicks are shadowin' your dump out front. We hada come up the back way."

"What do you want?" asked Dolly, her voice suddenly failing her.

"You'll find out, sister. Don't waste your breath. We're gonna do the talkin'. Sit down," ordered Darillo. "Beat it, Buckley."

Cub disregarded the command and strode to a heavy armchair. He placed his elbows over its back, leaned forward, waiting. With unwavering eyes he scrutinized the features of Tony Darillo, ward heeler and leader of his mob.

"What we've got to say ain't for the newspapers," announced Darillo glaring an unmistakable hint towards the office door. "Scram, Buckley!"

"I'll stick around," retorted Buckley, giving Darillo a challenging look.

Gat and Nosey advanced threateningly toward the reporter.

"Cub stays," announced Dolly. "This is my place and you yaps haven't any say here. If anybody's goin' out, it's you bums. Speak your piece and beat it!"

The gunmen glanced at the blonde fiercely. Darillo spoke, his tone cold as ice.

"We tried to be friends with you, Dolly, but you wouldn't lissen. Youse kind of dames wanta be all hog or none. You gotta swell racket here, make a lotta money, guess you think you are queen or somethin'. But queens can get bumped off for murder same as anybody else. You went too far today, Dolly McGurd. You're through!"

Thumbing her nose with an astonishing nonchalant air, Dolly giggled.

"The talkies are cryin' for you. You've such a sweet voice."

"You yellow-haired twist," glowered Tony, struggling to restrain his venomous feelings. "I'd like to sink my fingers into your throat."

"Lay off the dame," spoke up Cub. "You can't put your finger on Dolly for Whiny's blow-off."

"Can't I?" sneered the Italian gang leader. "An' why not?"

"I gave Grecco the lead poisoning," announced Buckley with an effort.

"You!" gasped Tony in wide-eyed stupefaction.

"Sure. Did you think Dolly really intended going out for a drive with that cutthroat?" the reporter continued. "Be yourself. This place was the spot. I stood across the street; when he drove up in his joy chariot I let him have it."

Threatening looks darkened the faces of the three gangsters. They advanced stealthily toward Buckley. Tony whipped out his gat.

"Roddin' is too good for you," he

cursed. "But I'm gonna let you have it—right now!"

"Don't!" shrieked Dolly alarmed. "My carpet cost a grand. Do you think I want blood stains all over it? Don't—not here!"

The gang leader turned to his mobmen.

"Take him away from this dame. We'll make him talk. Get busy with your stiletto, Nosey, in one of the small rooms outside."

Dolly remonstrated.

"I don't want any stiff found in my place. The cops would burn the whole bunch of us."

Nosey stood by silently. Between his fingers he toyed with the edge of a long-bladed knife.

Tony was not to be dissuaded.

"That reporter is the biggest pain in the neck I ever had. Take him out, boys."

Gat and Nosey caught Cub by his arms and with a cruel vicious hold, yanked him toward the door. Dolly waved her hand ironically at Cub.

"A pleasant journey, Cub, old dear," she giggled.

THE gangsters pushed Cub out into the hallway. They came to a sudden full stop. A slender and beautiful dark-haired girl came tripping down the corridor toward them. "Oh, Cub dear," she exclaimed, "I've been looking for you everywhere."

"Babe!" exclaimed Buckley in annoyance.

Tony whispered sharply to his men.

"Let go of him," he said. "Don't let her get wise. If he makes a break, let him have it."

"Cub, tell me," pleaded Babe. "What has happened?"

Tony Darillo stepped forward.

"I'll tell you what's happened, Mrs. Buckley. Cub just spilled the beans that

he blasted my pal, Whiny Grecco and—your old man is leavin' town."

"Cub, what—wha—?" Babe's words were lost in her bewilderment. Stark terror shone in her round brown eyes.

"That's the story, girlie," admitted Buckley. "It had to be one of us. I got him."

"Cub, you don't know what you're saying," Babe said indignantly. "Why—why did you say—? I don't understand."

With a quick movement Tony Darillo caught Babe's hands, jerked them behind her back. With adhesive tape, which he drew from his pocket, he bound her wrists securely together.

She screamed. "Cub, you don't know —"

A slap of tape across her pretty mouth sealed her lips, drowned out her words. Only an unintelligible moaning came from them now.

"I know what I'm saying all right, kid," mused Cub grimly.

The door to Dolly's office opened. She appeared, holding a quart bottle of liquor. Her face blackened in a furious scowl, her eyes fixed upon Babe and hardened like tempered steel.

"Take her along, too," Dolly mumbled. "That dame knows too damned much."

Nosey eyed the bottle of liquor covetously.

"Have a drink," giggled Dolly. "Great courage builder."

Nosey clutched the proffered bottle to his thick lips and gulped thirstily. Gat tore the bottle from him and took a long swig, his eyes bulging as the whiskey burned his throat.

"Cut that, you bums!" spat Darillo.

He snatched the bottle from Gat's huge mitt of a hand. He hesitated, eyed the liquor quizzically, then tilted it to his own mouth, drank long and hurriedly.

Swift as lightning Buckley's right shot out, knocked the bottle against Tony's

forehead. It was a short hard blow. Darillo's grasp loosened and Cub tore the bottle from his hand. Before the surprised Wop could sidestep, Buckley brought the partly-filled bottle down on Tony's head with a blow that smashed the bottle. Darillo slumped down limply, his head lolling on his shoulders like that of a twisted rag doll. He fell to the floor, blood pouring from a bad gash the broken glass had chipped in his skull.

Before Gat Barnelli and Nosey Reece could renew their hold on Cub, he whirled. Tossing the jagged bottle aside, his left snapped up in a stiff uppercut. It caught Barnelli under the chin, sent him sprawling backwards down the hallway. Buckley ducked a smashing haymaker aimed at him by Nosey, sent a right into the thug's bulbous nose. Nosey crashed against the wall.

Tony, dazed and bleeding, roused himself. Crouched on the floor, he flicked a venomous stiletto from his garter holster. With a long swift sweep that had its beginning at the floor, the Italian rose, flung himself full force at Cub Buckley's back.

"Not here, Tony—not here!" shouted Dolly in a panic.

Cub swung just in time to see the flash of murderous steel. His foot raised suddenly, caught Tony on the wrist. The stiletto spun from Darillo's grasp, clattered to the floor. Buckley found himself upon his murderous adversary. Filled with the joy of feeling his knotted fist smash into Darillo's flesh, he beat him to his knees. A powerful right hook sent Tony's head snapping backward. He slithered to the floor, dazed, helpless.

In fear of Buckley's fury, Dolly slammed her door shut, locked herself in her office.

Nosey and Gat, punch drunk and bleeding, made no effort to continue the battle.

Quickly taking Babe by the arm, Cub guided her along the hallway, through the arched doorway. He paused long enough to pull the curtains together over the opening and throw chairs against the curtains as a barrier. Together Babe and Cub made a mad dash across the long salon.

Buckley knew if they could once reach the stairway they'd be safe. Darillo's pursuit would halt there. Tony had no desire to meet up with the detectives he knew to be loitering about in front of Dolly's place.

A fusillade of shots roared from the opposite side of the curtains. Bullets ripped, tore through the expensive hangings. Heavy feet hurried along the hallway toward the salon. Barnelli, smoking automatic in hand, bolted through the curtains. His huge form stumbled over the chairs, crashed to the floor. A few patrons and operators, huddled in unseen booths, cried out in alarm. Nosey came behind Gat, tripped, grabbed at the curtains to save himself from a headlong plunge. The curtains gave way and Nosey tumbled over the chairs on top of the cursing Gat. Tony Darillo, lower jaw sagging, head thrust forward, loomed savagely in the doorway like an infuriated gorilla. His pistol blazed waveringly at Buckley.

Meanwhile, Cub and Babe reached the door leading to the entrance stairway. Buckley flung the door open, sighed with genuine relief as he thrust Babe into the hall and slammed the door behind him.

PANTING from excitement and exertion Cub's eager fingers tore the adhesive tape from Babe's mouth and wrists. Together they ran down the stairs. Halfway down Cub suddenly paused; he had noticed the gum of the tape still clung to Babe's face. He pulled the saturated wick from his cigarette lighter and was

happy to see the benzine quickly dissolve all traces of the gummed adhesive.

"Come on, kid," he smiled. "We're going to blow."

"Oh Cub, I'm so bewildered," she moaned tearfully.

Grecco's body, as well as his car, had been removed from the scene. The crowd had more or less dispersed. But Cub was quick to notice that plainclothesmen still loitered about the scene.

He walked over to one of the detectives.

"Hello, Thompson," he said. "Where's Rogers, your partner?"

"Down the street a little way."

"Let's walk down to him."

"Right enough."

When the trio came abreast of Rogers, Cub spoke to him.

"Hello, old man. Remember that gambling house tip-off on the South Side I gave you?"

"I sure do," responded Rogers, smiling broadly, "I got a first-class rating from that raid. Anything I can do for you?"

"Yeah. This young lady is my wife," said the reporter. "I want you to see that she gets home safely, *now*."

Rogers hesitated. When he caught the significant jerk of Buckley's head he nodded consent.

"But Cub," remonstrated Babe.

"Never mind, Babe. I know what I'm doing. You better take a trip to visit your folks. This is a big case and I won't get home for a few days."

"Why not, Cub? What are you going to do?" she questioned apprehensively. "Listen, Cub, I've got something to tell you—"

But fearful that Babe would say too much in the presence of the detectives, Cub lead Thompson away.

"Let's beat it to the police station," he said quietly. From his coat pocket he drew a blued steel automatic, handed it to the

questioning detective. "This is the gat that gave Whiny Grecco the works."

Thompson took the weapon eagerly, scrutinized it carefully.

"Great stuff! Whose furnace?" he asked, hopeful of a sudden break in the case.

"Mine," said Cub.

"Yours?" Disbelief blanketed the detective's countenance.

"Sure. Get wise to yourself, Thompson. You're taking me in for the Grecco job. This is your pinch."

CHAPTER THREE

Behind Bars

IN the gloomy bowels of the Chicago Avenue Police Station, Cub Buckley paced to and fro. With a shrug he attempted to cast off the dank oppression of the musty cell block. But the dismal, sordid surroundings were too alive with crawling vermin, the ribald blasphemy of other prisoners, the stench of many sweat-soaked bodies.

In a rat-ridden coop, Buckley paced the stone flagging alone. Less fortunate prisoners were crowded and packed in cells about him. In the next coop a grizzly-faced anarchist muttered into his shaggy beard. Locked up with him a huge black man, his shirt torn half off his back, shouted spirituals in savage exuberance. In a cell to the other side of Buckley a pallid-faced fellow sat on the edge of his narrow bench staring blankly. His eyes, bloodshot, glittered in a pasty yellow face. He stared, saw nothing. A Chinaman huddled in the far corner of the cell. Immobile of features and body, he was too frightened to move or utter a single word.

Across the gloomy hot corridor, among many prisoners, was an evil-looking brute of a man. Big, powerful, filthy with the grime of river docks, he shouted,

screamed for his freedom, tore at the steel bars of his cell until his fingernails ran blood. Dropping to his bunk from sheer fatigue, he wiped the grimy sweat from low receding brow. His manner changed to pretended indifference. He gave lusty voice to lewd stevedore ditties. All about Cub prisoners cursed and swore, laughed and mocked one another for their sad, uncomfortable plight.

Unmindful of the incessant chorus of voices, Buckley continued his slow treading of the cell floor. He had plenty to think about and was lost in deep, serious, desperate meditation.

He knew that when the evening papers reached the newsstands of the Loop late that afternoon, he had been branded in the eyes of the world as a gangster associate and murderer. He attempted to instill himself with the thought that he had done the only possible thing under the circumstances. Innocent men before him had paid the supreme penalty for capital crimes.

He felt it his moral obligation, his duty to assume responsibility for Whiny Grecco's murder. He was a man, more capable of enduring the ordeal of a murder trial than a woman. He had forced himself into a rash position of self-sacrifice. But what he had done he regarded as a matter of duty, protecting a weaker person—a woman.

He had pursued and overtaken the girl in the green and orange checkered taxicab for the purpose of getting news—to find out the identity of Whiny Grecco's murderess. Now he promised himself that she should never stand trial for the murder. Circumstantial evidence against her was damning. But only Cub was in possession of the true facts. For the first time in his career he was suppressing news.

A gaunt, stooped-shouldered, empty-faced attendant came up to his cell door.

"A young lady here to see you, sir," he announced.

With an attempt at lightness, Buckley assumed a humorous, superior tone of voice.

"James, tell all social visitors that your master is not to home."

The gaunt man leered. "She's pretty."

"I'll see no one. Tomorrow morning when I am arraigned in court the whole world can come and take a look at me. But I'll see no one now."

"Just as you say," mumbled the pale-faced one, turning away.

"Wait a minute," said Cub, on second thought. "What does she look like?"

The guard studied him knowingly. "I thought you'd change your mind when it soaked into your nut she's pretty. Slender, good figure, pretty lips, plenty of IT—"

"What's the color of her hair?"

"Well, I didn't notice particularly, but I'd say it ran from brown to black, sort of."

Cub frowned. "Send her away. Tell her you think I've been taken down to the Criminal Court building, but don't be definite. Here—take this to ease your conscience." He handed the guard a crisp new bill.

The corner of the man's lip pulled back in an attempt to smile his thanks. He disappeared through the door leading into the front part of the station house.

Buckley sank down onto the hard wooden bed, sighed with exasperation. Babe—he was sure of it. She had come here to see him! Why in the world hadn't she done as he told her to? Women are darn dangerous things to have mixed up in the shooting. Sooner or later they'd blab something. So far he had the cops believing his story. It was thoroughly logical, plausible and convincing. Cub not only told how he had bumped Whiny Grecco off, but furnished a motive as well.

He didn't intend taking any chances of being tripped up. Not with Babe available to be questioned by the police. He prayed that she hadn't said anything to Detective Rogers, as he took her away from Dolly's place upon Cub's request.

HALF an hour later the pot-bellied figure of Mack Herzog, Cub's chief on The Inquirer, stood in front of the barred cell glowering furiously.

"A hell of a mess this is," he exploded for the twentieth time. "You claim you were on the scene of the murder. Instead of gettin' through a beat on the other rags, you ups an' confesses to the job and let the bulls drag you into this hole. Haven't you any respect for your paper? Are you utterly devoid of a sense of duty? Moral obligations—"

"That's just why I'm here, Herzog. I realize too keenly my duty in this affair."

"A good newspaperman has only one moral obligation—his paper comes first. You damned idiot. The rub-off had to happen in the middle of the afternoon. The evenin' papers swamped us by hours. Next time—"

"There won't be any next time," answered the reporter.

"Quit your kiddin'," mocked Herzog.

"I can't beat this rap," explained Buckley. "The cops know of the enmity between me and the Darillo mob. They know that Whiny Grecco helped Ronny gun me up at Wilson Avenue. It's a case that can't be broken. They've got me right."

"I'm not so sure," snapped Herzog. "Maybe the cops have fallen for your cock-an'-bull story. But don't forget I'm a city editor. I've had smarter eggs than you try to put fast stories over on me."

Cub studied his chief for a moment with leveled eyes.

"My story holds water, Mack."

"The hell it does, Cub. You're just a

plain damned fool. You're makin' a grandstand play, puttin' on the heroics. But heroes don't work for newspapers. Newspapers write about them. Gettin' news is your job. Not playin' the self-sacrifice stunt."

"What do you mean?" demanded Buckley.

"Well, I'll tell you a bit of news," scowled Herzog. "Babe came to see me, right after she left the station tonight. Said you wouldn't see her. Well I did, an' I listened to her."

"Babe!" gasped Buckley. "Did she—?"

"Sure. She told me all about havin' a date to meet you at Dolly's beauty parlor. She told me about watchin' Grecco drive up in his Rolls-Royce. Told me how she got the automatic an' everythin'. Now what you got to say for yourself, smart story teller?"

"I—I," stammered Cub, sinking down on a wooden stool in the corner of the cell nearest to Mack.

Suddenly the jail became a freakish, mocking shell. His cell seemed to roll and reel crazily, dizzily now. The spirituals of the negro prisoner sounded louder, more barbaric. The crazy Pole, the drunken riverfront rat, the whole pack of them seemed to be yelling, laughing, jeering at him. Were they mocking him in his desperate, yet futile attempt to cover up Babe's guilt? What were they saying anyhow? Well, it didn't matter—now.

He forced back a lump in his throat, fairly leaped to the bars, clutching Mack by his coat lapels.

"Listen, Mack, Babe didn't come to you. She didn't tell you a word. In fact, you haven't seen her. You breathe a word of this to the cops and I'll—"

"Listen, Cub, you know me," snapped Herzog firmly. "I'm a newspaperman. It's the only game I know. It's a tough racket an' it's my job to print the news while it's news. Even if the news would bring

disgrace to my own family—I'd print it. That's what I'm hired to do. I've got the biggest beat the Chicago newspapers ever had. You were dumb enough to flop it. But out of your stupidity I'm goin' to build up the greatest human interest story of any murder that's ever been pulled off in this town. Boy, it'll read like a thriller. Romance, devotion, self-sacrifice. Heroic reporter lyin' himself down on the path to the electric chair to save his wife. I'll splurge how he pursued her from the scene of the murder, found her in a taxicab with the automatic in her hand—"

CUB sank helplessly back to the stool. He knew Mack. Not only would he print every word of Babe's story, but he'd have it elaborated. Special writers would write up different phases of the latest gang killing. Sob sisters would be called in to review the crime from the feminine point of view. Babe would be interviewed, quoted, photographed. What's more, she'd be indicted for murder. Sent to the electric chair! Her slight young body would sizzle, burn, writhe in horrible convulsions. The current would go tearing through her body, burn her life out.

"Mack, you've got to listen to me. You can't print it, you can't!"

"Don't be a fool, Cub, it's my job."

"Mack, listen," wailed Buckley. "Don't have a heart of stone. Give the kid a break."

"I'm giving her a break," exclaimed Herzog. "The biggest break of her life. Why she's the central character of this whole thing. I've got her name set in big heads already. Three column photograph, an' I'm runnin' the openin' paragraph of the story in twenty-four point."

"And you call that giving her a break?" spat Cub vehemently. "Give her a break by sending her to the electric chair."

"Send who to the electric chair?"

"Babe."

"Say, Cub, are you off your nut?"

"No. I was there like I told you. I heard the shooting, saw Babe jump in a taxicab and race away. When I overtook her I found her with the automatic. She killed Whiny Grecco because he had made one attempt upon my life and—"

"Balogny! So that's why all this heroics," exploded Herzog. "Get down to business an' become a reporter again. Here's the story an' get it straight this time. Babe told me she went to the beauty parlor to meet you. As she reached the front entrance, somebody, hidden in the stairway, fired three shots at a Rolls that had just pulled up to the curb. The crowd collected an' Babe hurried into Dolly's place. She met Dolly halfway up the stairs holdin' a smokin' gat. Dolly told Babe that you had laid in wait for Grecco an' potted him. The blonde explained that you had beat it and if Babe wanted to save you from goin' to jail for murder, she'd have to help by hidin' the pistol. Then Dolly, big-hearted, thrust the automatic into Babe's hand an' gave her a key to her apartment. Told her to beat it up there an' hide the gun for you. An' Babe, frightened, startled out of her wits, fell for the line, took the gat and hopped a cab. Not until she was way up on the North Side did she begin to realize—"

Cub stared at Herzog in wide-eyed amazement.

"You mean then that Dolly—"

"I don't know. Neither does Babe. We have no proof that Dolly slugged Grecco."

"Well, I'll be—" Buckley smiled sheepishly. "Mack, I am a sap. For the first time in my life I jumped at conclusions. You understand, old man, don't you?"

"Sure I do, Cub," answered Herzog abruptly. "I'm goin' out in front an' see about arrangin' bail for you. Then you're goin' to work on this case an' have some

real clues in to my desk in time for the first edition."

"Hey Mack, come back here," shouted Cub. "Where's Babe?"

"I sent her over to Dolly's place."

"What for?"

"For fun."

"Do you want to get her bumped off in that place?"

"No, I've got Hinkley to watch the place from the outside. He's to report to me by telephone every half hour. It's time now. I'll give my desk a ring. See you in a minute."

Cub paced his cell with the impatience of a tiger. He kicked himself for being ten kinds of a sap. He realized he had signed a confession for having murdered Grecco. There would be trouble—a release would not be so easy to get. Hours would be required, and in the meantime Babe was in Dolly's establishment. She was in danger. He remembered Dolly standing in the doorway saying, "Take her along. That dame knows too damned much."

He realized he had an infinite amount of work to do before The Inquirer went to press. First, he had to locate Babe, be sure that she was safe from harm. Second, he would have to run down clues, get the facts of the case—tangible facts, not brainstorm.

The cops considered the case closed. They had laid off the job when he walked into the police station and made his confession. The aspects of the situation pleased him greatly, for without interference from the police, he could put the screws on the gangsters. Somebody was going to fry.

MACK waddled back into the cell block. "I've got a message from my office," he muttered gloomily. "Hinkley reported two dames came out of the beauty parlor at nine-thirty. He followed them north

to the park an' lost them up on Sheridan Road, the other side of Belmont."

"Geeze, Mack, I've got to get out of here," gasped Buckley. "Dolly will stop at nothing if Babe tells her she's been to see you and spilled her story. Dolly never liked me none too well. She hates Babe. Babe's life isn't worth a nickel. Get me out of here. How about bail?"

"That's just the hard luck," admitted Herzog. "An emergency call came in for every available man—riot somewhere. The lieutenant cleared the house of cops and went on the call. The desk sergeant won't do anythin' without the lieutenant's say so."

The door leading from the front of the station house opened silently. Cub and Herzog stared in utter bewilderment as they saw the desk sergeant backing into the room, his hands held above his head. Following him quickly, and closing the door behind them, came a lone man. He was a tall, dark, swarthy Italian. Cub recognized him as Rocco Stefano, attorney for Tony Darillo and his gang. Stefano held his right hand deep in his coat pocket, suggesting his weapon was ready for immediate action.

"Hello, Herzog," said Stefano in a cold unfriendly tone. "Heard your reporter was in a jam. I've come to help him out. The bail's all set. He's to be turned loose now."

"Not a chance," replied Herzog. "You'll have to wait for the lieutenant. He's out on a call."

"Yeah, I know," laughed Stefano craftily. "I sent in the riot call to get the cops out of this place. Buckley's goin' out of here, now." Turning to the sergeant he demanded: "Who's got the keys? Open up the cell."

The attendant, unnoticed in a darkened corner, tiptoed toward the gangsters' attorney. In his hand he held a long hickory stick. He raised it above his head and

at that moment Rocco Stefano, sensing his danger, stepped aside, barely avoiding a venomous blow.

The shyster lawyer raised his left foot, gave the jailor a brutal kick.

With a scream of pain the old fellow crumbled to the floor, writhing in torturous agony. Stefano stooped over him, searched him, got the keys. He quickly went to Cub's cell and unlocked it.

The other prisoners set up a riotous hollering and screeching, demanding that he unlock their cells also. The place was in a turmoil. It sounded not unlike a portion of a zoo where many animals had suddenly become infuriated and gave vent to their fury in wild, unrestrained screeches and yells.

Stefano threw Buckley's cell door open and shouted for him to come out.

But Buckley's mind had been working fast. He knew there was no reason in the world why a representative of Tony Darillo should go to the trouble to arrange bail to get him out of jail. Particularly after he had confessed to having murdered one of Tony's henchmen. Then suddenly the whole diabolical scheme became clear as glass to Cub. Tony Darillo wanted him out of jail for one reason, and for one reason only. To put him on the spot.

Kept constantly under the menace of Stefano's gat, Herzog and the sergeant, powerless to do anything, remained motionless. They started toward the injured old guard and were warned to "stay put or get hurt!"

"Come out, I say," again ordered Stefano.

Cub backed into his cell and knotted his squared fist.

"Come and get me," he said determinedly.

For a moment the Italian lawyer hesitated. But he was a man of tremendous pride. He couldn't stand being bluffed

before the eyes of others. He advanced slowly, menacingly. His right hand protruded from deep within the right hand pocket of his coat. It raised and pointed menacingly at Cub. At the door of the cell Stefano halted.

"Are you coming out, or do I have to come and get you?" he exploded.

For an answer, Cub picked up the wooden stool, flung it full force at him. It caught Rocco square in the chest. He staggered backwards, lost his balance and sat down on the floor heavily. Cub leaped over the breathless lawyer, out into the room.

The pale-faced jailer pulled himself to a sitting position, yanked out his service pistol, covered Stefano. The desk sergeant made for the lawyer.

The jail became a madhouse. The uproar of screaming, yelling, pounding and cursing prisoners grew to chaotic bedlam.

Buckley panted to Mack Herzog: "Let's beat it while we've got a chance."

Then as the sergeant busied assisting the guard to lock Stefano into a cell, the newspapermen, unnoticed, slipped through the door, hurried out of the station to the street.

Halfway down the block, Cub noticed the rear of a familiar maroon Lincoln sedan—Tony Darillo's car. He turned his attention to a police precinct car which was just drawing to a halt at the curb. A lone policeman was at the wheel.

"I know him," said Herzog. "It's officer O'Malley. He'll listen to reason."

Jumping into the car beside the officer as Herzog, standing at the curb, closed the door, Buckley talked rapidly to O'Malley.

"If you want to save an innocent person from being murdered, beat it quick, up on the North Side. You've got six miles to go. Step on it!"

O'Malley looked at Cub questioningly.

"I don't know you. What's the rush?"

"It's O. K.," assured the city editor. "It's for the police, not the newspaper. But if you get him up there, O'Malley, I'll see that you get the police hero reward of one hundred bucks, this month. Is it a bargain?"

"Well," reflected the officer, "a hundred bucks is a hundred bucks, and six miles ain't so far!"

O'Malley ground the gears into a spinning fury, stepped on the accelerator, spun the wheel around. The car roared down Chicago Avenue, its siren whining for a clear right of way into the night.

CHAPTER FOUR

Death Car

OFFICER O'MALLEY proved himself an extraordinarily fine driver—daring, reckless, efficient. Keeping the siren at high pitch, he wormed through traffic. Flashing across crowded street intersections he never once slackened speed. Time and again Cub caught his breath, closed his eyes, waited for an inevitable crash. But the expertness of O'Malley pulled them through more than one tight squeeze, if it were but by the slimmest of a hairbreadth.

O'Malley found Racine Avenue to his liking. He kept the siren going, held his heavy service shoe down on the accelerator.

As they proceeded, Cub laid his plans. He would go first to Dolly's apartment. He tried to think, but an ominous foreboding stole over him. He tried to throw the sinister feeling off, but couldn't. Vainly he struggled with himself to discount his apprehension as fear for Babe's safety. Yet he was unable to stifle the feeling that some great danger lurked close at hand. Without knowing why, he turned, searched back along the straight ribbon of pavement over which they raced.

Buckley's heart skipped an extra beat. There in the next block behind them, coming at terrific speed, was a maroon Lincoln sedan—Darillo's car. The one he had seen parked near the station house. Tony Darillo was still after him.

"We're being followed," Buckley announced to the stern O'Malley.

For answer the policeman stomped the accelerator all the way down. He eyed the numerals of the speedometer and sang out with elation:

"Didn't know this old boat had it in her."

But as clever a driver as O'Malley was, Cub saw the big maroon car was easily overtaking them.

On and on raced the police car. O'Malley taut, bent over the wheel, took desperate chances at crossings, kept the car going under the urge of a full open motor. But his best efforts were not good enough. The more powerful sedan overtook him, came alongside.

A gangster, with hat drawn down over his eyes and holding a sub-caliber machine gun in his hands, leaned out of the open rear window.

"Pull over to the curb or I'll drill you," he yelled menacingly.

"Like hell," O'Malley responded.

Cub's eyes searched the car. In it were three men. In the darkness he was unable to recognize them. He wasn't sure, but he felt, more than saw, that they were the same three who had given him the bum's rush at Dolly's place that afternoon.

Suddenly the Lincoln made a wild reckless plunge directly toward the precinct car.

O'Malley spun his wheel, hit the curb. The police car bounced, shot across the grass parkway, careening to right and left along the sidewalk. O'Malley tried to regain the street. The car swerved

sharply. A lamp post loomed directly ahead.

Cub leaped, was thrown violently across the walk, over a hedge to the ground.

The car crashed head on into the lamp post. O'Malley's form hurtled through the shattered windshield, went headlong against the post. The police car snapped up on its nose as though it were at the end of a cracked whip. It rebounded and turned over on its side, a crumpled mass of wreckage.

Shaken and dazed, Buckley lay in the shadow of the hedge. He raised himself and was horrified to see the wreckage suddenly burst into flames. Gasoline from a broken feed line had found the red hot exhaust manifold. The policeman lay crumpled against the lamp post, a still, lifeless form. O'Malley had died in harness.

From out of the darkness loomed the rear of the maroon sedan. It was backing ominously down the street toward the wreck. Its reverse gear moaned, groaned, awesome as sudden death.

Cub Buckley saw his enemy, Tony Darillo, leaning out of the window. The muzzle of a Tommy gun, resting in the crutch of his arm, began belching fangs of flame as the sedan came slowly alongside the burning car. Above the roar of the bullets snapped the splashing, denting and tearing of lead slugs into the overturned precinct car. Cub knew that Tony's lead was searching for his body. He threw himself flat in the sheltering shadows of the protecting hedge. A burst of bullets clipped close beside him, barely a foot away.

The sedan came to a stop. Its three occupants got out, walked hurriedly toward the wreckage.

"There's the copper," said Gat Barnelli as he got out from behind the wheel, leaving the motor running.

"Where's Buckley?" demanded Tony Darillo.

"Maybe he's in the wreck. Take a look," said the third gangster, whom Cub spotted as Nosey Reechi.

The three walked around the upturned car, searching its blazing interior. The burning precinct car was between them and their sedan. Their backs were toward the hedge where Cub lay.

The neighborhood was awakened by the sound of the crash, the rapid firing of the Thompson. Cub knew the mobmen wouldn't stay long.

Realizing this Buckley, seized by a sudden desperate impulse, leaped up from his place of concealment, hopped the hedge, ran to the maroon car. Jumping in behind the wheel, and without waiting to close the doors, he shifted into second. Fairly leaping on the accelerator, he went roaring up the street, away from the gangsters seeking him.

AT a certain cross street in the Wilson Avenue district, Cub Buckley swung to the left, nosed into an alley which ran behind a large pretentious residential hotel. He brought the car to a halt near the service entrance. As he got out of the car he made a quick inspection of its interior. The only thing unusual about its fittings was the sub-caliber Thompson machine gun he had seen Darillo use to batter the police car with. He searched the car for pistols; none were to be found. Holding the Tommy gun as best he could under his coat, he leaped down the stairs into the basement and was elated to find that no one was about. Hurrying into the automatic service elevator, he closed the door and with a feverish push on the R button sent it upward to the roof.

As Buckley stepped out of the elevator onto the roof, he saw that a stout iron picket fence barred his way around behind the pent-house.

He hurried to the service, or back door. He listened alertly, pressing his ear close to the metal-covered fireproof door. For a long moment there came no sound to his tingling eardrums. All was deathly silent. A silence that rang ominously in his ears. Then came a plaintive note to pierce his ears like a dagger thrust. The convulsive sobs of a woman. A piteous, helpless sort of a sob. A sob that with all its hysteria rang with a note of defiance and resolution. He listened. His nerves taut to the breaking point.

Came to him a series of sharp lashing, slapping sounds. Each one was followed by a woman's scream. "I won't. I won't."

The slashing sound was that of an object coming in vicious contact with a human body. Suddenly Cub grew rigid. He heard another woman's voice speaking.

"Babe Buckley, you'll sign it, or you'll never leave here alive."

Dolly McGurd! She was torturing Babe. That explained the slapping sound. It explained the series of shrieks and moans that came from Babe's tortured lips. It was Babe screaming, defiantly, "I won't!" She was being beaten to force her to sign something. Sign what? Buckley had no way of knowing. Sign something that Dolly McGurd was particularly anxious to have her signature to. What was it?

Cub's eager fingers tested the lock of the service door. Tested his shoulder against the door. It was sturdy, obstinate, unyielding. Putting his shoulder against it, he pushed determinedly, brought more pressure to bear on the door. There was no possible chance of forcing the lock or breaking the door from its hinges. Desperate, he jammed the muzzle of the Thompson against the lock. A short burst of muffled reports and it crumbled away. The door swung open and Cub Buckley bolted into Dolly's apartment.

His pulse skipped a beat as the lashing and screaming ceased abruptly. He found himself in the kitchenette. It was dark. A soft footstep tauted him for a sudden spring. Cub lunged full force against a door. The force of his lunge sent it flying open. He went stumbling, sprawling into a spacious living room. The machine gun clattered from his grasp, rolled on the carpet.

A venomous snarl escaped Dolly McGurd's lips. She leaped with the quickness of a jungle cat, caught up the deadly weapon. Cub leaped to his feet, panting heavily from the force of his fall.

"Take it easy, Cub," Dolly warned, "or else—"

But Buckley paid no heed. He stared with terror in his eyes as he looked past Dolly.

There, tied securely to a chair, was Babe. Blood beaded from merciless red welts on her bare arms and shoulders. Her pretty light dress was slashed and torn, revealing to his horrified gaze flesh swollen and raw from fiendish beating.

Involuntarily Buckley took a step forward and was stopped at the end of a console table by Dolly's command to "stay put or eat lead." He raised his hands slightly above the level of his shoulders. His eyes fell upon a man's stout leather belt with a huge brass buckle. The leather was splotted with dark red stains. The buckle was covered with blood. Cub experienced a sickening feeling in the pit of his stomach. What sort of fiend was this Dolly to beat Babe with a leather thong like that?

"Let me put her on the settee," pleaded Cub, indicating Babe with a nod of his touseled head.

"Not on my settee!" spat Dolly. "Say, you dumb reporter, that cost me eight hundred bucks. Do you think I want blood—?"

"You drew the blood," snapped Buckley.

"An' I'll draw more, Cub Buckley," retorted the blonde, "if I don't get a break an' get it now."

Buckley cast hurried glances about the living room. Chairs and furniture knocked about gave him some suggestion of the struggle that had taken place between Babe and Dolly. But Babe was no match for the pulchritudeous blonde. Dolly enraged, was seven kinds of a wild cat. Her tactics were as effective as they were ruthless. Babe had been subjected to untold torture. A sheet of writing paper on the table caught his eye. He glanced at it casually. Recognizing Dolly's hand writing, he read:

"I confess I shot and killed Whiny Grecco this afternoon. I also state that I had no accomplice. I alone am guilty of his murder."

"So that's your game," challenged Cub. "Framing an innocent girl for your—"

He felt the menacing muzzle of the sub-gun press against his belt buckle. Their eyes met in spleenful conflict.

"Now get this, Buckley," Dolly hissed. "You've butted in on my affairs once too often. Sure, I know what you're thinkin'. I've done you a good turn an' you've done me one. Well accounts are squared. Now it's quits. I'm not expectin' any more favors from you an' you can expect none from me. Stay where you are. I'll make you eat lead sure as hell. I'll let you have it right in the teeth."

As she talked she moved slowly across the living room, backed toward the foyer of her apartment whose front door led out onto the roof.

The only lamp burning in the room was a large console vase on the table behind the settee. A distance of about eight feet separated them now.

Dolly, misjudging her direction, backed

into the wall, looked around for the entrance door. In that instant Cub's hands swept out. Picking up the table lamp, he dashed it to the floor plunging the room into darkness.

CHAPTER FIVE

Vengeance Blood

A STARTLED scream escaped Dolly's lips. The Tommy gun spoke a short burst.

Expecting a long volley of bullets, Buckley leaped far to the left. The stabs of flame belching from the machine gun revealed Dolly's exact position. Cub hurled himself upon her. In a frenzy of fury, Dolly struggled, displaying amazing strength. Back and forth they staggered about the room, fighting for possession of the weapon. Cub caught Dolly by the wrist, twisted it. A cry of pain escaped her lips. She dropped the heavy gun to the carpet. Cub kicked it under the settee.

He released Dolly, found the push button switch in the wall and turned on the overhead chandelier bulbs.

He hurried to Babe, released her bonds. Too weak to move she sank deeper into the chair. She whispered, "Oh, Cub, I'm so glad you came."

"Smart guy," snarled Dolly.

Cub walked quickly to the table. He picked up the sheet of writing paper bearing the confession Dolly had written in the hopes of forcing Babe to sign.

"Now listen to what I've got to say, Dolly. I had a date with Babe at your dump at three o'clock this afternoon. Whiny Grecco pulled up there to take you for a ride through the park. Is that right?"

"What of it?"

"Somebody shot Grecco and Babe ran into the hallway, found you on the stairs with an automatic in your hand. You

slipped her the gat, told her I had done the job. That's how you got her into a taxi headed for your apartment to hide it. Who were you trying to cover up?"

"Wouldn't you like to know?" challenged the blonde sarcastically.

"I think I do," said Cub. "Tony Darillo has put his finger on you. He was making a play for a corner in your racket. Whiny Grecco came for the showdown. Either you'd agree to cut Tony in, or Grecco would have thrown your body to the fishes in Lake Michigan."

Cub was reasonably sure of his deductions. But whether Dolly had actually put the heat on Grecco, or had a paid professional gunman to do the job, he did not know. He was stalling, playing hunches in the hopes of stumbling on something that would break the case.

"You're talkin' through your hat," cried Dolly. "You can't pin the rap on me. You confessed to the bulls that you—"

Heavy blows thudded against the door leading into the pent-house from the roof. Dolly jumped, a new fright showing in her eyes. Cub spun around just as the door gave way and three ominous figures slunk through the foyer and into the living room. Each one held an automatic in his hand.

"Tony Darillo!" gasped Dolly in a spasm of fear, sucking in her breath.

The lavishly-dressed gang leader stood gazing first at Dolly, then at Cub. He took a quick glance at Babe.

"Look her over," he said to his hoodlums.

Gat Barnelli stalked over to Babe. Frightened, she rose unsteadily to her feet, staggered and toppled into an armchair near a window. She had fainted.

"She's not dangerous," muttered Gat. With Nosey he stood silent guard.

Tony never took his gaze off Cub and Dolly. "Now we're gonna get to the bot-

tom of Grecco's killin'," he growled, fingering the safety catch on his gat.

"Fine guy you are, Cub Buckley. I send Stefano to bail you out an' you beat it up to this twist's joint. Come along, Cub, we want you."

"Yeah, an' how about our car you snitched?" asked Nosey.

Angered, Tony swung on him.

"You keep your dirty trap shut. I'm boss of this gang."

"I'm here now to find out who really put the lead into your henchman, Grecco, same as you," said Cub.

"Yeah?" snarled Tony. "You gave the cops the tip you did it. When you disappeared from that precinct lizzie, I figured your apartment would be your first stop. We went up there an' found nobody home. Knowin' you got Dolly started in her beauty parlor, I figured she had a finger in the murder. An' I figured right. Partners in business an' pals in blood, eh? All ready to beat it together when Babe busted in here an' caught you red-handed."

Cub sat down on the edge of the settee. He calculated his chances on getting the Tommy gun into his hands.

Turning to Barnelli, Tony snapped, "Take him out, Gat."

"How about givin' it to him here?" the gangster argued, clicking his teeth with evident relish of avenging Grecco's death.

"Geeze, not here, fellows," remonstrated Dolly, "I don't want blood on that settee, it cost—"

"Shut up. We'll take him for a ride," decided Tony.

Gat advanced, with drawn weapon, to where Cub sat. A long narrow rug lay in front of the settee.

Buckley stooped down suddenly, clutched up the end of the rug, gave it a violent jerk. The sudden movement of the rug pulled Gat's feet out from under him, and sent him sprawling heavily to

the floor. Quick as a flash Cub's hands found the Tommy gun. Leaping to his feet he leveled it on Tony Darillo and the two mobmen. Buckley thumbed its safety catch, made ready to blaze away. One man he wanted to wing—Gat Barnelli, the driver who had been the cause of Policeman O'Malley's death.

"Drop your gats!" he commanded.

Reluctantly the men complied.

BUCKLEY advanced, kicked their weapons into the far corner of the room. Gat whipped out another rod, aimed it pointblank. Buckley pulled the trigger. A burst of two shots and the gangster clutched at his right arm, cursing in pain.

"Geeze," gasped Nosey in amazement, "that's our Tommy."

"Yes, and the shot is for Officer O'Malley," said Cub. "Now, you bums are going to listen to me. I didn't rod Whiny Grecco. I confessed to the police for reasons of my own. But now I'm quite sure that the one who did the rodding is here in the room with us. And you can depend upon me to find out. Darillo, you and Nosey carry Gat into the bedroom."

Holding the gun on the gangsters, he followed them as they roughly lifted the cursing Gat Barnelli and carried him into the room Buckley indicated.

As soon as they passed the door, he swung it shut and locked it. For a long moment he stood surveying the pallid features of Dolly. She came toward him like a whipped dog.

"Cub, listen, give me a break. Grecco had it comin' to him. He'd give it to me if I hadn't—" Her voice trailed away in a sob of despair.

"I thought so," replied Buckley happily. "Now you're going to sign that piece of paper."

"The hell I will," cried Dolly, backing away, her eyes wide with fear.

"It's ink or lead," he snapped. "I've got an out. The cops would trail the Tommy to Darillo's gang. Play fair with me, sign the confession. I'll give you a break."

"Honest?" asked Dolly, new hope showing in her face.

"While I phone the police, you can beat it. Canada isn't far away. If they catch up to you—well, that's your hard luck. My job isn't to turn you in. It's to get the news."

Dolly realized she had no alternative. She was licked. But she still had a chance to get away from Tony Darillo. She picked up the pen; her hand trembled. A sob escaped her as she scratched her name to the confession.

Cub snatched it up before the ink was dry. With the Tommy gun held in the crotch of his elbow, he strode to the telephone. He gave the operator the number of the Police Central Bureau.

Sidewise, he caught the shadow of Dolly as she ran to the far corner of the room. She stooped down, picked up one of the gangsters' pistols Cub had kicked there. Dolly rose, flung herself behind a big armchair, using it to shield her.

Buckley saw the muzzle of the automatic come over the back of the chair. The weapon blazed a steady stream of fire—one, two, three, four times it roared.

Bullets splashed all about him, slapping into the plastered wall, tugged at his coat sleeve.

Buckley dropped the telephone, swung around quickly with the Tommy gun in position.

"Cut it, Dolly!" he snapped, "or I'll drill you."

For a moment Dolly crouched behind the chair, staring at him with wide-eyed terror. The smoking automatic trembled in her hand. She came slowly from behind the chair and halted beside the settee.

"Damn your luck, Cub Buckley," she swore.

With a sudden insane sob of despair, she raised the pistol quickly to her lips. There was a gruesome muffled report as a bullet sped into her mouth. She toppled to the settee.

Quickly Buckley picked up the phone.

"Hello! Police? Dolly McGurd committed suicide . . . And get this. She confessed . . . never mind what she confessed . . . You'll find out when you get here . . . And listen, you'll find the mug here that caused Policeman O'Malley's death in an auto smash-up on Racine Avenue. For more dope, read *The Inquirer* . . . What's my name? . . . Santa Claus."

Giving the address, he slammed up the phone. He heard the clatter of shattering window-glass, listened to the heavy thud of feet racing across the roof away from the pent-house. He knew the bedroom was empty of Tony Darillo and Nosey Reechi.

As soon as he phoned the news to Mack Herzog he could take Babe home.

Unlocking the bedroom door he found Gat Barnelli. With the bonds that had held Babe in the chair he tied the wounded thug's ankles and wrists.

"The cops have a nice hospital cot waiting for you," Buckley said, as Gat cursed him vilely.

Returning to the living room he roused Babe to consciousness and led her slowly toward the door. At the settee he picked up the Tommy gun, put it under his coat. For a moment he stood gazing down at the limp, still form of Dolly McGurd.

"I never thought she would give herself a dose of lead poison," he said. "And through the teeth."

Dolly's lips ran with blood. The crimson stream trickled down to her throat, grew in a pool on the cushion of the settee.

"It cost eight hundred bucks," Cub mused. "And she didn't want it stained with blood!"

In the Underworld Men Boasted—

No money would convict him

No damn flatfoot could hang crepe on his door

And gangdom drank its toast to the big shot, to—

"Freedom for Ferenzi"

In headquarters a grim-faced chief swore he'd get him—the insolent, smiling Leopold Ferenzi. He'd never beat the murder rap again. In his elegant mansion the fiery Judge Anthony Wynn vowed vengeance for his murdered friend. He too would rid the city of the leader of all crime. But it was Billy Borden, crack undercover man of the Troy City police, who followed the trail of the elusive killer, dared untold dangers in the underworld to bring the ruthless Ferenzi to justice and brand him for all time. This is EARL and MARION SCOTT'S greatest Billy Borden story. It will hold you, grip you as never before. Don't miss it in—

October GANG WORLD

On Newsstands August 25th



"Big Bill" Dwyer

"Big Bill" Dwyer, Rum Runner and Race Horse King

by Joseph Appelgate

Author of "'Little Augie' Pisano,
Beer Baron of Brooklyn," etc.

Gentleman buccaneer, polite and efficient law breaker, "Big Bill" Dwyer wound the coast guard around his thumb to control rum running in the East. But the feds stuck him in stir. Now he is out again and John Law waits his next move.

IT WAS toward the middle of August three years ago that William V. Dwyer, headlined as "Big Bill," and photographed with a grin and horn-rimmed spectacles, sat in an easy chair on the porch of his home at Rockaway, Long Island, with his wife and five children, and said he was feeling much, much better. For one thing he was greatly relieved to be home again. He had just returned from a thirteen-months' stay in the federal penitentiary at Atlanta to which he had been sentenced for two years for boot-legging.

Perhaps it was the familiar sanctity of home atmosphere that caused him to say it. At any rate, Big Bill announced that he was through with the racket that had put him on easy street before it landed him behind bars.

Through with the racket? How the

ones in the know snickered when they read that line. They knew, and right they were.

Big Bill today is one of the biggest of the big shots in all of New York. If you buy beer in the Broadway district you're probably drinking Dwyer's beer, and if you buy harder stuff you can also lay ten to one it's been furnished by the genial Bill.

He has his office, in fact, on Broadway, though he's ostensibly in a game no worse than horse racing, which is bad enough, take it any way you choose.

Big Bill had been sentenced to Atlanta in the summer of 1927 after one of the most sensational trials since prohibition. Big Bill took the rap, and though he doesn't talk about it nowadays there are men still alive who remember, and remember gratefully, that Bill was no rat.

The racing game is another matter, and of that he'll talk. He has his own stable, a string of beauties. And in the "Paddock" at 41st Street and Broadway, outside the Bank of America Building where Big Bill has an office, you'll frequently hear the names of his nags on the tongues of the gentry of the sporting world who gather there

But his biggest prize is the hockey team known as the New York Americans which every hockey fan knows if he has ever gone to Madison Square Garden.

Outwardly, you see, Big Bill is the soul of respectability. He associates with the millionaires who attend Garden sporting events. He is pleasant, quiet, and no one ever accuses him of the dirty work invariably laid at the door-sill of the other big shots who engage in rackets.

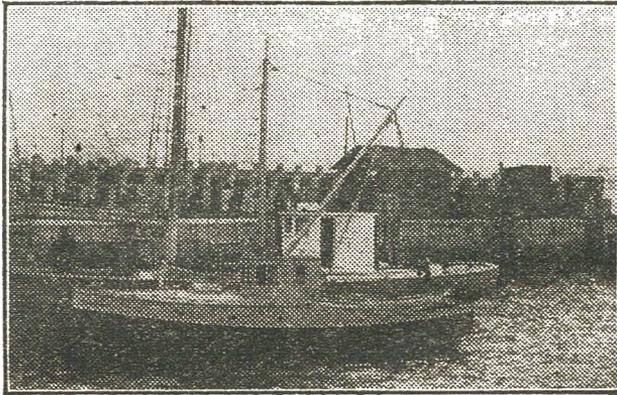
If all the bootlegging in the United States were controlled and directed by Big Bill Dwyer, I'd lay a case of Johnny Walker against a pint of medicinal alcohol that there just wouldn't be any more gore mixed up with it. For Big Bill is exactly the kind of a bootlegger the comic strip artists picture. He's a gentleman buccaneer, a polite but efficient law-breaker, a man who has reduced the task of supplying thirsty New Yorkers with wet goods to a fine art.

Now I trust that readers of GANG WORLD do not believe that Big Bill is a bootlegger. Of course he isn't. He was! Yes, Big Bill served his term in Atlanta and now he is attending strictly to the

bangtails. Go ahead! Laugh all you want!

Those stories that he is still bootlegging are just a pack of slanders. He's too busy preparing his ponies for a killing at the various tracks throughout the United States to concern his head with bootlegging. Moreover, if I said he is why then maybe a government agent would lug me before a grand jury to tell

what I know about it. Or, they might pay him a visit, which would be just too bad. And then he'd be sore at me and I wouldn't blame him for it would really be pretty low for me to be telling tales out of school

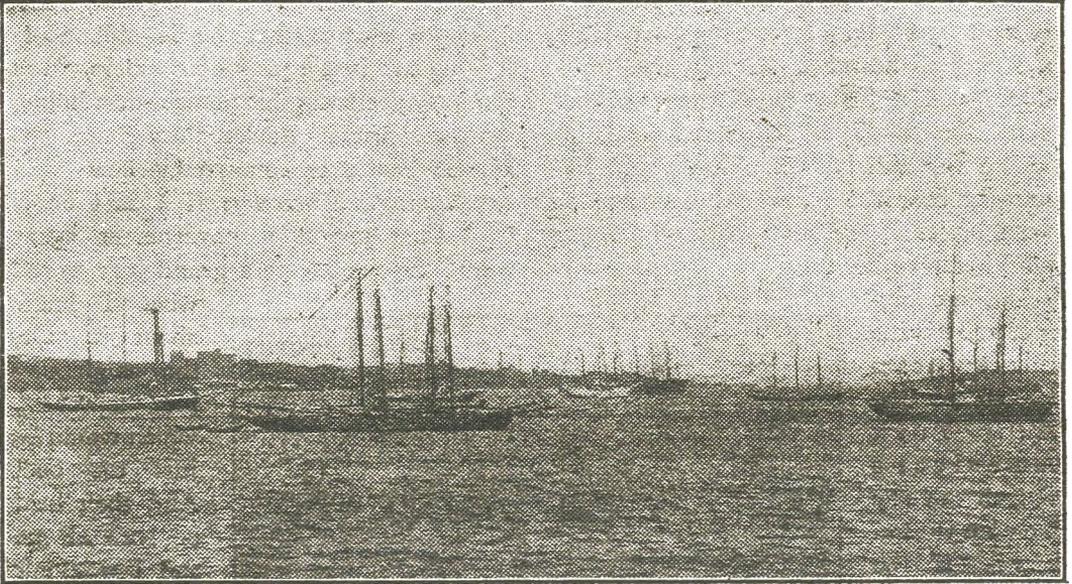


Rum boat, The Roamer, at barge office pier.

against the gentlemanly Irishman who was willing to go to all sorts of sacrifices to keep his fellow New Yorkers from dying of thirst.

If it hadn't been for an unlucky break, Big Bill today would be in charge of all the rum-running in the country. He was going great guns when they nailed him. He had a band of gentlemanly pirates working under him who had things down to such a fine point that the cards were stacked against the government agents who were not on Big Bill's payroll every time anything like a move against him was attempted. The United States Coast Guard ate at his private table. If officers of one of the "watch" got too snoopy or spoke out of turn, Big Bill called up a certain official in Washington and had the annoying officer cashiered.

As for the cops—bless your heart, it is said that when Big Bill's men unloaded their stuff at the Bellevue Hospital Pier



"Big Bill" Dwyer's rum running fleet.

or that at the "Burnt Pier" in Weehawken, N. J., police officers of the cities of New York and Weehawken personally supervised the loading of the trucks. No doubt they were imbued with the idea that it was their sworn duty to prevent the citizenry from getting too snooty lest they get thirsty and drink of the contraband goods.

But Big Bill had a bad break.

In 1924, off the Rhode Island Coast, the tug William Maloney went down with a loss of eleven lives. The rum runners aboard were likable chaps with wives and children. Even though they were engaged in an outlawed occupation they were working with the procurement, connivance and consent of Miss New York who wanted her father, Pa Knickerbocker, to divorce her from John Law. Miss New York was tolerable thirsty.

Now, as the courts years later decided, the men who died aboard that tug, engaged as they were in an unlawful occupation, did not leave even the evidence of a good civil suit to their widows and children.

They had taken a chance and lost.

But Big Bill was no piker.

He summoned the wives of the drowned men before him.

"I don't want you women to think I'm heroic," he said. "I'm no gallery player. Under the law you haven't got a leg to stand on in any action you may take against me. But your husbands were right guys, if you know what I mean, and by socking the people who drink this stuff a slight extra charge I can get enough of the do-re-me to keep you fed, anyway. I'm going to put each of you on the payroll at ninety dollars a month!"

FOR two years Big Bill Dwyer paid that money. Then, for reasons best known to him and which were variously reported as arising from the fact that one of the women remarried without telling him or that business was bad, he suddenly cut them all off.

And it was from these women that the squawk went up that brought the agents of Bruce Bielaski upon the trail of Big Bill.



On the S. S. City of Augusta. Chief Inspector Elting looking over a cargo of rum.

Bielaski is a real detective. Before the World War he had performed meritorious acts of sleuthing. During the War he held a mighty important post in the secret work of the United States government. But never in his life did Bielaski come across such a complete set-up of criminality as that which the trail of Big Bill Dwyer disclosed.

It stretched from the extreme east end of Long Island, at Montauk Point, to Rum Row, the imaginary spot twenty miles southeast of Ambrose Light where fifteen to twenty schooners ride at anchor every day waiting to sell their wet goods to the rum runners who come to buy in speed boats.

Big Bill had some flotilla. He could have done yeoman work in the English Channel during the War mopping up U-boats. His fleet included The Dorothy, The Dick, The Rosemary, The Mary, The Toxaway, The Tina, The Albertina, The Vee, The Roamer, The Helen, The War Bug, The Nannetta and the Robert C.

Clowry, all of which could stow 300 to 750 cases.

The trail of the agents revealed that Big Bill's boats landed their wares at the Burnt Pier, Weehawken; at the Bellevue Hospital Dock, at Pier 32, North River; Pier 33, East River; a public pier under the Manhattan Bridge and a pier at Edgewater, N. J.

They, of course, were the big arrangements necessary for the efficiency of the rum service. But the details were handled in just as thorough a manner. The coast guard were well paid and, under an alleged agreement, fired their shots, when pursuing a Dwyer rum boat, beyond the craft!

A dory astern one of the rum runners was the signal by which the corrupted coast guardsmen knew it was a boat that meant graft to them.

Every week Dwyer went to Washington and hobnobbed with the officials who enforced laws which they were careful did not affect their own private lives in any way!

These were only a few of the things that the agents of Bielaski discovered. As a result Bielaski had the coast guard shaken up, some honest men installed in office and, with his new crew, waited a chance to clean out the Dwyer gang.

In March, 1920, two of the coast guardsmen—John Hubbard Reeder, a warrant officer—and Robert Sanderson, chief petty officer, came upon The Robert C. Clowry, a 500-ton twin screw steamer, the largest used by Big Bill as a contact boat. They boarded the vessel while it was moving, went into the captain's cabin and announced their identity. They found 5,000 cases of champagne aboard.

The two men were alone. The tiny speed boat from which they had come had gone away into the shadows.

They might just as well have been knocked on the head and thrown over-

board. But they were not dealing with a Capone outfit.

Money was flung into their faces, stacks of it. Fifty thousand dollars in bills, a brick house on Long Island, a diamond ring and jobs at \$150 a week were offered the two men.

In order to spar for time, the two appeared to be weakening.

In the meantime the vessel was approaching Quarantine, where the coast guardsmen knew there were men on watch for secret signals.

They asked leave to consider the proposition a few minutes and went up on deck.

It was midnight. The water was inky black. The lights of the buildings at Quarantine twinkled in the distance. Out of the pocket of Reeder came a flashlight and across the distance went his signals, his secret code.

The coast guardsmen at the station got the message and in a few minutes reinforcements came, the boat was officially seized and the crew locked up.

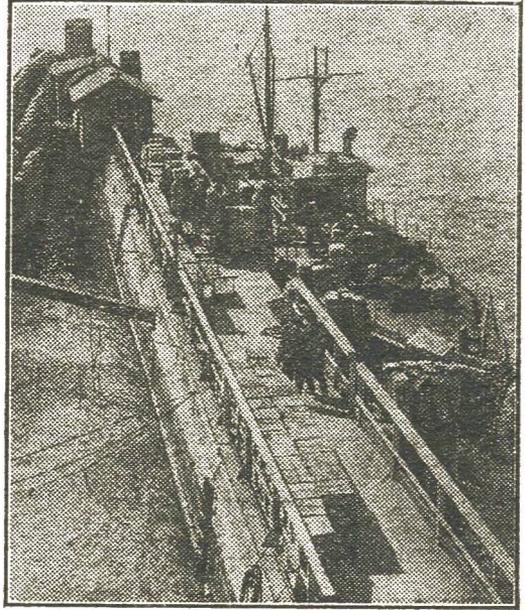
That broke the biggest rum case the country had yet seen.

The figures at the trial before Federal Judge Julian W. Mack, as brought out by the United States Attorney Enroy R. Buckner, were almost incredible. They showed that millions of dollars were involved in the conspiracy and that even banks had financed the venture in the beginning, apparently with knowledge of what they were doing.

Dwyer and E. C. Cohron, the "pay-off" man, and a whole batch of underlings working in the Ring, were indicted and tried. Of the numerous defendants only Dwyer and Cohron were convicted. Each served his sentence.

And that's that!

It was Big Bill's \$100,000 cargo of liquor that really cost Captain William



Rum boat, The Annetta, seized by coast guard sixty miles off Nantucket, had 1,200 cases of booze on board.

Cluett, Canadian skipper of the rum runner, The Josephine K., his life this past winter, when the craft tried to outdistance a coast guard cutter.

Cluett was killed by a shot fired by Carl, "Quick Trigger", Schmidt. But if Schmidt had trained his one-pounder on a speed boat that vanished in the darkness that night he might have got Dwyer himself, and sent the king of bootleggers to the bottom of New York harbor.

The dry navy men had actually got word that Big Bill was on the job himself that night in late January. Unusual though it may seem the Broadway bootlegger de luxe was on board a speedy craft out near the twelve mile limit.

The coast guardsmen still have an eye on Bill, but they probably won't catch him napping. He's a bit too sharp for the gobs who do patrol duty along the Atlantic coastline.

And he's sharp enough for the New York cops, too. Now his cargoes land

usually on Long Island. There's precious little fuss made about getting the stuff into New York.

If you've ever been on Broadway you're familiar with those big sight-seeing buses which park in Times Square. Toward nine o'clock of an evening it's not unusual to see one of these drawing away, loaded not with out-of-towners, but carrying strong men, laughing and joking and otherwise giving every indication of going on an outing somewhere.

There's certainly nothing sinister in the appearance of these fellows, and you and I would never guess that they are headed for Montauk Point or one of the other lonely sections of Long Island to unload, of all things, a liquor cargo.

The men work fast and are paid well for the job. Their actual danger is small. On the way down they are well protected. It is even said that a deputy sheriff rides on the truck and flashes his badge when necessary, though that may be mere boasting.

At any rate, down to Long Island they

go and it is these fellows that bring in Big Bill's cargoes.

If you hang around 41st Street and Broadway long enough you'll see a certain un-Broadwaylike type entering Big Bill's office building.

Crushers they call these fellows. Really they are truck drivers, beer trucks to be exact. Their's is a fairly easy job. In New York little hijacking occurs, for the protection comes plenty high, and the man on the beat knows whom he serves.

And though the picture in the abstract is a fearful one, full of hazards, of men being put on the spot and taken for a ride, of cold, sudden death and swift revenge, the thought of which makes a man's flesh creep, the name of Big Bill Dwyer never obtrudes.

In the racket they call him a clean liver and an honest man. They know he loves his wife and children. They know he exercises a strong arm, but they also know he never goes out of his way to bother those small fry whom the other racketeers occasionally find so annoying they must needs bump them off.

AMAZING! STARTLING! TRUE!

THE INSIDE STORY OF—

OWNEY MADDEN, KING OF NEW YORK RACKETEERS

Boss of "Legs" Diamond, partner of "Big Bill" Dwyer, Owney Madden is now the most spectacular outlaw in Manhattan. A product of Hell's Kitchen, he has always been a tough guy. He has been arrested forty-six times, has killed two men and gotten away with only a short term at Sing Sing. Yet Owney Madden chooses as his pet diversion the tame sport of flying pigeons. Big shot and ruler in gangdom, his influence is so great that when one of his gang was beaten up by the business end of a policeman's nightstick, he caused the mayor of New York to take nightsticks away from the cops. A modern-day gangster, Owney Madden's name has been blazed in front page headlines. Now, Joseph Appelgate will give a complete account of his colorful career in—

October GANG WORLD

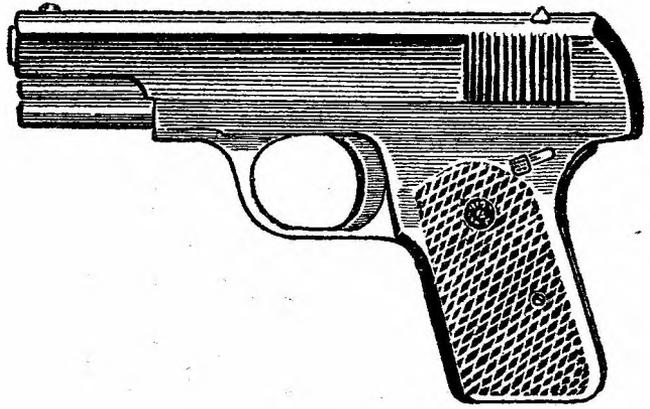
On Newsstands August 25th

The Silencer

A Short Short Story

by

James K. Matter



“DID you get it finished?”
“Yep, here it is—and a damn fine job, too!” The voice of the “Runt” vibrated with professional pride.

“Slim” Janotti took the automatic pistol with its curious shining appendage. He caressed it lovingly with experienced fingers.

“Pretty long, ain’t it, Runt? I thought you’d make it a little smaller.”

“Nope. If I made it any shorter, it wouldn’t kill the noise right. You asked for a silencer to work on a small automatic, didn’t you?”

“Yeah—that’s right!”

“Well that’s what you got—Maxim, 1909 patent—the best one. Now you notice the rod is a Savage 32 automatic?”

“Yeah.”

“You see you gotta fasten the silencer on some way. Clamps is no good. You gotta use threads, and the barrels of automatics is too thin to turn threads on. You gotta put your threads on the slide.”

“Yeah?”

“Well, the slide on a Colt isn’t round, and you can’t thread it, but the Savage slide is round at the muzzle. That’s why I used a Savage, see?”

“I get you, Runt.”

“Now unscrew the silencer, and I’ll show you a couple things.”

Slim broke the threads with a single effort of his powerful hands. He rapidly unscrewed the silencer. It was a polished,

bright steel cylinder eight inches long and one and one-eighth inches in diameter. He handed it over.

“You notice, Slim, that I had to take the sight off the rod to put the threads on. It’s no good, anyway, you won’t need it. Now, if you look through the silencer, you’ll see the edges of a bunch of discs. They’re copper, and there’s fifty of them. Them’s what does the trick.”

“Oh, yeah?”

“Yep. I had to make a set of dies to stamp ’em out. That’s what makes it cost so much.”

“How much?”

“Oh, a couple centuries for the rod and the silencer.”

Slim carelessly stripped two one-hundred-dollar bills off a large roll. He tossed them across the table.

“Anything else, Runt?”

“Yeah, a couple points. A good silencer is too big to carry on the rod all the time. You carry it in your inside coat pocket till you’re ready to use it; then you just screw it on.”

“Like this, eh?” Janotti pressed the knurled catch that released the magazine. From his pocket he took a handful of cartridges. He loaded the magazine and replaced it in the gun. Then he screwed the silencer back on the slide.

“Yeah. Now notice: the silencer is fastened on the slide of the rod, and not on the barrel. Remember that!”

“Why?”

"'Cause if you forget and jam the silencer in some bird's ribs and then try to shoot—you can't. Pushing against the silencer shoves the slide back. When the slide comes back it ejects the cartridge from the chamber. So you gotta keep the silencer from pressing against anything when you wanta shoot."

"Like this?" Janotti pulled back the slide and let it go forward carrying a cartridge into the chamber. He pointed the gun at the Runt's head, keeping the muzzle of the silencer a foot away.

"Yeah, but turn that damn thing another way, Slim. It's loaded and cocked now!"

"Yeah, and it's going off, too!" The tone of Janotti's voice was venomous.

"Aw, Slim, that's no way to joke."

"I'm not joking, you rat. You're the guy that made that silencer 'Red' McGarrity used on me over on Fourteenth Street, aren't you? And if Red hadn't a been in such a stew, he'd of got me, too."

"Aw—Slim, I didn't know he wanted it for you."

"The hell you didn't. He told all the gang what a joke it was—you doin' all my work, and then fixin' a rod so's he could bump me off in a crowd. A fine double-crosser you are!"

"Honest, Slim—"

"Time's up!" Janotti's eyes narrowed

to slits. His face had the strained look of the cold-blooded killer.

"Ain't you gonna try it out first?"

"Sure, I'll give you a sample, if that's what you want." Janotti shifted the muzzle to the Runt's right leg and deliberately pulled the trigger.

A soft "phsst" was the only noise, but the expression on the Runt's face showed that he was hit—hard.

"How do you like it? . . . Oh, you would, would you?" The Runt had reached for his own shoulder holster. Janotti swung the muzzle of the silencer to cover the Runt's heart, and pulled the trigger repeatedly. The Runt kept after his own gun, got it, and shot once. Janotti swayed a moment, and fell—a puzzled expression on his face.

"You got me!" he gasped. "What's the matter?"

"It's the silencer, Slim." The Runt's voice was almost apologetic. "You see the weight of it is so great that after the rod is fired once the recoil isn't strong enough to pull back the jacket. You gotta pull it back by hand to eject the empty shell, and load in a fresh one—see?"

"Yeah."

"Yep! I was going to tell you about it. You gotta be careful of them things."

But Slim Janotti was past caring about anything.



THE SHAKE-DOWN RACKET

There's more than whoopee in Moscow! That old American custom—the shake-down—has been imported and put into effect. Ivan Alexashin is the bright young man to try the shake-down racket first. It seems that Ivan promised a hospital patient extra good care, if said patient came across with a bottle of Vodka. The patient might have come across with a couple of thousand rubles, but a bottle of Vodka? Never! He informed the proper authorities and Ivan was called on the carpet. Does he go to jail? Not in Russia! Ivan was sentenced to compulsory labor, something that ought to go big in America. It means that you continue at your old job, but half your wages go to the State. What a mess if Ivan had been a safe cracker. He'd have to go right on cracking safes and giving half the swag to the State.

MUSCLE MAN

by

Erle Stanley Gardner

Author of "Car Fare to Chi," etc.

"You'll have a tombstone on your chest, roses growin' all around it, too, if you tie into that pair," Mugs Magoo had warned Paul Pry. But the famous gang buster only laughed as he planned his next baffling deal—muscling artists were monkey meat to him.

CHAPTER ONE

Mugs Magoo's Warning

IT WAS not often that Paul Pry gave himself the luxury of dining with "Mugs" Magoo, the one-armed pessimist whom he had raised from the gutter.

For much of Paul Pry's efficiency depended upon keeping the underworld in the dark as to the source of his information. Mugs Magoo had earned his nickname because of his uncanny ability to remember faces and connections. At one time he had been camera-eye man for the metropolitan police. A political shake-up put him out, accident robbed him of an arm, and whiskey had done the rest.

Paul Pry, genial opportunist, who made his living from his wits, and a very good living at that, had recognized the value of Magoo's camera eyes and had taken him in. Tonight was one of the rare occasions when they dined together.

But they were not seen.

A private dining room in a restaurant and cabaret which catered to privacy gave them an opportunity to see and hear, but not to be seen or heard. Through the latticed side of their private booth, Mugs

Magoo let his glassy eyes wander over the lower floor. From time to time he disclosed choice bits of underworld gossip. The cabaret was one where gangsters came to forget the constant strain of their existence by strutting before admiring satellites. Which was, of course, the main reason Paul Pry had picked the place for his surreptitious dinner party.

It had been three weeks since Paul Pry had turned one of those baffling swift deals by which he preyed upon the underworld. And Paul Pry craved action.

They made a strange pair. Paul Pry debonaire, alert, attired in faultless evening clothes. Mugs Magoo in an unkempt business suit, the right sleeve dangling, empty, his glassy eyes flickering through the interstices of the lattice work, sizing up the diners, commenting upon the dancers.

"Who is the woman, Mugs?"

"What woman?"

"The one you were just looking at."

"You mean the jane with the mole on her left shoulder, the black hair, and the dress that begins where the table-cloth leaves off?"

"That's the one. Who is she?"

Mugs Magoo filled his whiskey glass

from a pocket flask, tossed off the liquor, smacked his lips, and grinned.

"It ain't the jane that's so important. It's the guy that's with her. You'd oughta know him, both of 'em. They're workin' the same racket that you are."

Paul Pry pressed his eyes close to the openings and looked down upon the table. The gleaming shoulders of the woman, the glossy black of her tresses, the sweep of her bare back, the lines of her shapely arms, all spoke of beauty and talent.



"Sign your name four times," Paul Pry ordered. "Don't turn your head or a slung-shot will tap your bean."

Paul Pry's eyes gleamed with swift attention.

"How do you mean, Mugs?"

"There ain't one guy in a thousand that knows it, but it's the God's truth. They're shakin' down the rackets. But they're doin' it so slick they never get caught. That is, they always have somebody that gets caught. But it ain't them."

The man was conventionally garbed in evening clothes. His eyes were furtive but strangely alert. He was slender, wiry, and, when he moved, his motions were made with a nervous quickness which was almost feline.

Paul Pry's eyes squinted in thought.

"So they always have a fall guy, eh?"

"And how! The fall guy takes the rap,

or gets rubbed out, and 'Slick Sarah' and 'Four Flush' Finney go merrily on their way."

"And the gangs don't tumble?"

"They haven't—yet. The couple are s'posed to be workin' a badger game of some sort. Sarah used to have an apartment and a telephone. Four Flush Finney used to be the guy that copped the take. Now they've graduated."

Paul Pry pursed his lips.

"She's looking at her watch, Mugs, saying something to the man. He's leaving the table, going over there to the corner. Looks as though she might be expecting somebody."

"Uh-huh. Sometimes they fill in with a badger. Maybe she's got a fall guy coming."

Paul Pry continued to watch the girl, watched while a deft waiter set a service for two, watched while the girl looked impatiently at her watch from time to time.

Fifteen minutes passed and a broad-shouldered man lumbered awkwardly to the table where the girl sat.

"Take a look, Mugs. See if you know this chap."

Mugs blinked his glassy gaze in swift appraisal.

"Never saw him in my life. He's a hick. Must be grooming him for a badger game. Maybe he's a fall guy at that, though. Looks kinda goofy."

Paul Pry grunted, ceased to eat while he watched the drama which unfolded at the table below. The heavy, stolid man was obviously ill at ease; he stared at the girl with his heart in his eyes. The girl, bearing the badge of her calling evident enough to the sophisticated eye, lowered her long lashes demurely as she made the motions of mock modesty, deferring to the judgment of the shambling awkward youth who had "country" stamped all over him.

Paul Pry reached a sudden decision.

"Mugs," he said, "I'm going to be a fall guy."

Mugs paused with a fork halfway to his mouth.

"You're gonna be a what?"

"A fall guy."

Mugs Magoo sighed.

"Listen, guy, you've done some dangerous things in your time, and I ain't sayin' but what you've got away with 'em by the Grace of God and a fool's luck. But you tie into that combination of Slick Sarah and Four Flush Finney, and you have a tombstone parked on your chest and roses growing all around the edges."

Paul Pry chuckled. He got up from the table and walked swiftly to the telephone. He called a well-known private detective agency which sometimes did work for him, and had an operative rushed to the private dining room.

Despite the remonstrances of Mugs Magoo, Paul Pry went ahead with his plans.

"I want to find out everything there is to know concerning the man who is sitting there at the table," Paul Pry said pointing out the dining couple. "Never mind the woman. I want to plant someone who can get the confidence of the man. It shouldn't be hard to do."

The private detective peered through the lattice work, watched the motions of the broad-shouldered man for a few minutes, then chuckled.

"You're sure right about that," he said. "It won't be hard to do."

THE report of the detective showed that Louie Cramm was very typical of a certain class. He had been born and raised in Sommerville, had saved some two thousand dollars and had come to the city "to make his fortune."

The family were respected, middle-class

citizens of the country town. Louie was the oldest boy. He had one brother and one sister. The father had died. The mother was taking in housework until Louie's earnings should place the family upon an easier financial footing.

There was a cousin, Charles LeMare, who was reputed to have amassed some little money. He resided in Chicago and had drifted out of touch with the family.

The boy talked rapidly to the detective, who had managed to secure a room at the boarding house where Louie Cramm resided. The detective made a complete report, replete with details. Paul Pry studied that report, and chuckled. He went to a clothing house and purchased a cheap ready-made suit. He donned this, took a taxicab, a suitcase and an umbrella, and was driven to the boarding house where Louie Cramm lived.

Louie Cramm came to him in the parlor.

"You the man that wanted to see me?" he asked.

Paul Pry extended a cordial hand.

"You're Louie Cramm?"

"Yes."

"Put her there! I'm Sid Fowler, from Chicago. Your cousin, Charley LeMare, told me to look you up."

A slow flush came over the face of the country youth.

"I didn't know Cousin Charley knew where I was. He don't never write."

Paul Pry's explanation was glib.

"He ain't much of a letter writer for a fact, but he keeps track of you. The last thing he says to me when I left was: 'Sid, my boy, when you get on to the city, stop off and hunt up Louie Cramm. He's a cousin of mine, and I think he's got the makin's of a great business man. If you find we can use him, put him on.'"

"Those are Charley's exact words. A mighty nice chap your cousin is, Cramm."

Louise Cramm was doubtful.

"Yeah. I guess so. He ain't never done anything to keep ma from takin' in washing, though."

Paul Pry clapped a cordial hand down upon one of the broad shoulders.

"There, there, Cramm, don't feel that way. Cousin Charley was just waiting until you got into the city and learned something about business. Then he was going to give you a break. He intended to all along. He told me so."

The boy's face lit up.

"Gee, that's great. I'm glad to hear that about Cousin Charley. I was a little mite afraid that the money had gone to his head. You can get a room here, if you're goin' to stop over. I'll introduce you to the landlady."

Paul Pry allowed himself to be introduced, paid a month's rent in advance, and was accepted as one of the boarding house family.

The second night after his arrival, Louie Cramm broached the subject of a date.

"I gotta date with a swell wren," he said. "I told her you was along and asked her did she have a friend. She said to bring you along and she'd see what she could do."

Paul Pry registered visible appreciation. "Gee, Louie, that's great."

"We go uptown in a street car," said Louie, speaking with the canny sophistication of one who has but recently been initiated into the ways of a big city. "Then we get a taxicab for the last half mile. Makes it look like we drove up in style. She's that sort of a girl. She appreciates those little touches."

Paul Pry took a deep breath.

"She's your girl," he said, "so I'll pay for the cab."

Louie Cramm beamed.

They had supper at the boarding house, finished with a dish of stewed prunes and

watery cream, left the table as the booming tones of the "Colonel" began a lecture upon the economic aspects of prohibition.

They arrived at the cheap restaurant which Slick Sarah had rented as a trap for the occasion, and Paul Pry found himself bowing with synthetic awkwardness over the mumbled introduction of Louie Cramm.

"Miss Slade, I wanta present Mr. Sid Fowler, who works with my Cousin Charley in Chicago. He's on here to help build up some branch businesses, and he's goin' to give me a chance. He's the one I was tellin' you about over the telephone."

The girl extended a bare arm which terminated in cool fingers that gripped Paul Pry's hand in swift appraisal.

"Pleasedt'meetcha," said Paul Pry all in one breath.

"How do you dew, Mr. Fowler," said the girl in tones that were artificially accented. "Won't you have a chair?"

They sat down. After a while, Paul Pry proposed a picture show. Sarah Slade bemoaned the fact that her girl friend who was to come had had a heavy date arrive from out of town and was tied up for the evening.

Paul Pry, apparently just a shade more sophisticated than Louie Cramm, acted his part perfectly. After the picture show, they went to an ice cream parlor. Paul Pry saw a well-dressed man eyeing the trio with calculating appraisal. The man was Four Flush Finney.

Paul Pry used the fact that the girl's friend hadn't shown up as an excuse for "not wantin' to butt in" and broke away early, despite the pleadings of Slick Sarah and Louie Cramm.

He returned to his room in the boarding house, and was gratified to note that Louie Cramm returned home within an hour. He knocked on Paul Pry's door, but Paul Pry answered with a gentle snore.

The next morning Paul Pry sent himself a telegram under the name of Sid Fowler. The telegram purported to be signed by Charley LeMare at Chicago, and instructed him to employ Cousin Louie and send him to New Orleans to secure a report on certain business matters.

Paul Pry showed the telegram to Louie, whose simple soul filled with enthusiasm. Paul Pry gave him seven hundred and fifty dollars as an advance on salary and expenses, and waited for him at the afternoon train while Louie said good-by to Miss Sarah Slade.

Then Paul Pry shook hands, gave the new employee a bunch of instructions which would keep him out of mischief for a few days, and returned to his boarding house.

There was a message there for him to call Miss Slade at Prospect 6-7840. The telephone conveyed to him the synthetically sweet accents of Louie's girl friend.

"Louie said you'd take me around a little while he was gone, big boy."

"Aw, gee, I hate to butt in!"

"You ain't buttin' in. You're just bein' a friend. Come on out tonight."

And Paul Pry promised.

CHAPTER TWO

A Slick Dame

SLICK SARAH was dressed with more dash and sophistication than she had been on the previous evening. Her remarks were more swiftly friendly, less conventional. Paul Pry took every conversational lead which was offered. By ten o'clock she was giving him gin fizzes and talking frankly about the absent boy friend.

"Gee, he's a nice kid, but he gets shocked so easy," said Slick Sarah, eyeing Paul Pry through narrowed lids. "I took

him to a cabaret one night. I had on a low dress, and it shocked him to death. I like him, but I don't like men that get shocked too easy.

"And when the girl came out and did a barefoot dance! Say, you'd oughta seen him! He nearly looped the loop! His cheeks was red like fire!"

Paul Pry nodded with alcoholic sophistication.

"He ain't never been around none," he said.

"You don't get shocked easy?" asked the girl.

Paul Pry laughed, the laugh of a man who wishes to convey the extent of his manly sophistication.

"Say," he proclaimed, "I've been around."

Sarah Slick nodded.

"Gawd, I didn't dare to tell Louie, but I used to work in one of them joints. I used to come out and do a barefoot kick. He'd have died if he'd known."

Paul Pry nodded.

"You're sure built for it, baby!"

"Think so?" she asked and smiled alluringly.

Paul Pry sighed and stared at the girl, gulped down the last of his gin fizz and stared again.

"I'll say! Sell me a ticket for the front row!"

She laughed, got up and took his empty glass.

"Gee, I'm glad I met you," she said. "I'll mix up a little more giggle water."

She started for the kitchen. On the way she raised and then lowered the window shade.

Paul Pry lit a cigarette.

There was a knock on the door of the apartment. Slick Sarah dried her hands on a towel. Her face wore a puzzled frown as she went to the door and flung it open.

The man who stood on the threshold was the man Mugs Magoo had pointed out as Four Flush Finney.

"My Gawd!" she yelled, "it's my brother!"

And she staggered back, hand to her throat, eyes wide. She gulped twice, tried to talk, failed, motioned with her hands.

The man in the doorway glided into the room with a motion as swiftly furtive as a wet eel slipping through a crack in a fishing creel. He held his finger to his lips for silence, whirled, locked the door, bent, listened with his ear to the keyhole.

Finally he straightened, ignored Paul Pry who sat staring with open mouth and wide eyes, and went at once to the girl.

"Sarah," he said, "I'm in trouble, a lot of trouble. You've got to help me!"

The girl patted his shoulder.

"You poor, poor dear, what's the matter? Tell me all about it— Oh, I beg your pardon, Mr. Fowler. I wanta introduce my brother, Finney Slade. Finney, this is a boy friend."

The man regarded Paul Pry with wide eyes, made no acknowledgment of the introduction whatever.

Paul Pry was on his feet, gawking about him awkwardly, uncertainly.

"Can you trust him?" asked Four Flush Finney.

The girl left the man's side, glided over to Paul Pry and placed a soothing hand on his arm.

"Can I trust him? I'll say! I ain't known him but a little time, but him and me are regular pals already—ain't we, honey?"

Paul Pry gripped the hand that held his arm.

"I'll say!" he said. "Maybe I'd better go."

She shook her head.

"No, no. I get so frightened whenever there's trouble. You stay. Mr. Fowler's

a big business man from some place in Indiana, just outside of Chicago, Finney. Maybe he can help us."

Finney nodded, sank into a chair, put his head in his hands.

"They're fram'in' me, sis," he said.

"Who's fram'in' you, Finney?"

"One of the big gangsters, sis. A guy they call 'Big Front' Gilvray. He's head of a big gang here, and he's been pulling a lot of rough stuff. I've been workin' for him, and never knew it."

The girl's eyes were narrow again.

"What d'yuh mean you've been workin' for him, an' never knew it? I thought you was chauffeur for a big business man here in the city!"

He laughed, and the laugh was bitter.

"That's what I thought. Know who that big business man was? Well, it was Tommy Drake, and Tommy Drake's Gilvray's right-hand man, collector and all that. I thought he was in some sort of legitimate business. He ain't. He's a racketeer, booze runner and regular gangster."

THE girl sank down on the floor, one hand on Paul Pry's knee. "Gee!" she said. "Ain't that a sock in the eye!"

Her brother nodded, signifying that it was, indeed, a sock in the eye.

"You don't know the half of it," he groaned.

"What's the other half?" asked the girl.

"Gilvray needed a fall guy, and he picked on me."

"A fall guy? What's a fall guy, Finney?"

"Somebody to take the rap."

"What d'yuh mean, take the rap? Talk sense!"

And she flashed a significant glance toward Paul Pry, then frowned at her brother.

He nodded.

"I see," he said, significantly, then launched into a story of hard luck.

"You see, sis, it was this way. When I got the job of running the big limousine for Tommy Drake, I sure thought it was on the up and up. We just went places all over the city, and Tommy had conferences, and sure made a bunch of jack. He dragged down the long green every time he had one of those conferences. I should have smelled a rat, but I didn't.

"Then, a couple of nights ago, Tommy told me that he'd loaned the car to some friends, and I'd take them for a little ride around the city. He was going to be tied up on business, see?"

"Well, the friends showed up all right, and they looked just like what they claimed to be, some out of town customers, that were in for a lark. Tommy told me to take them out and drive them where they wanted to go.

"Well, they went to a couple of speaks first off the bat, and then one of 'em said he wanted to get some money, and he thought he could get a check cashed at the All Night & Day Bank, and would I drive 'em over.

"I drove 'em over, all right, and they told me to park right in front of the fire plug that's by the door of the bank. They all went in. I thought at the time they went in sorta businesslike, but I didn't pay so awful much attention to that then.

"One of 'em said he had a date, and he wanted to be sure and get there on time and he only had a few minutes, so he told me to keep the motor running and be all ready for a snappy getaway when they came out of the bank.

"Well, I never thought nothing. I just sat there with the motor running. They came out of the bank and piled in, and one of 'em said 'A hundred bucks, buddy, if you get to that date in five minutes.'

"Well it was a good break for me, and I made the car do its stuff. They were

counting out a wad of money, and I was so green I asked 'em if they'd had any trouble getting the check cashed. They laughed and said they'd had a little trouble, but after they'd identified themselves with the head cashier there hadn't been any more trouble.

"I found out afterward it was a stick-up, and that the way they'd identified themselves with the head cashier was by slamming him over the bean with a black-jack.

"Of course I read about it in the papers, and I went to Tommy Drake, and then was when Tommy told me that he was the collection man for Big Front Gilvray and that I was in too deep to back out. He raised my pay fifty a week, and gave me a thousand bonus for sitting in on the bank job, and I didn't have no choice in the matter. None whatever!"

The girl interrupted.

"That was wrong, Finney. You should have come to me right then and there. That wasn't the way us Slades were brought up. You should have gone to the police right then. I'm ashamed of you, taking gangster money!"

He gulped and looked embarrassed.

"I guess you're right, sis. I was a fool. But the way Tommy Drake put it up to me it didn't seem like there was any other way out of it. He said I was in already, that he'd stand back of me if I played the game, and that I'd get on the spot if I didn't.

"That's why I didn't get in touch with you for a while. I was ashamed, and I didn't want to drag you into the thing."

She nodded.

Paul Pry interrupted.

"But I read about that case in the paper. The cashier died, didn't he?"

The man who posed as the brother of Slick Sarah regarded Paul Pry grimly.

"The man died," he said.

There was silence in the room for the space of seconds.

Then Four Flush Finney again took up his narrative.

"When the man died, Big Front Gilvray wanted a fall guy to turn up if anything happened. Two nights later one of the men who was on the bank job held up a restaurant and the cops took after the car.

"There was some shooting. The gangsters got to safety all right, but the bullets had found a mark. One of the men was dying. He knew he was kicking off. Big Front knew he was cashing in. And he had the man sign a dying confession. In that confession the man took all responsibility for croaking the cashier. He claimed there was only one other man on the job with him, and that man was me!

"See what he done? He left himself an out. If it ever came to a showdown he could spring the confession and maybe clear the other men. But it would put me on the hot seat.

"That's the kind of a double cross they gave me. And Big Front's going to use that confession to make me do his dirty work. That's the way he plays the game.

"He's got another job planned for me now, sis, and he says if I don't go through with it he'll mail the confession to the bulls. That's why I came here. You've got to keep me for a while until we decide what to do."

The girl got up from her place beside Paul Pry and crossed to him. "That's all right, Finney, dear. We'll just stand together. They can't pin a dirty frame-up like that on you. They simply can't!"

He grunted. "Shows all you know about it. Those that are on the inside will tell you that two out of three who get the chair are railroaded to it as fall guys by higher ups who throw out victims to the crooked police."

He put his head on her shoulder. She stroked his hair.

"Why don't you go to the police and tell them the whole story?" asked Paul Pry.

The man laughed, and his laugh was metallic, harsh.

"Shows how little you know about gang stuff. If I went to the bulls and told them the story they'd throw me in. They want to turn up some one for the cashier's murder, and they'd rather it'd be me than anyone else because I'd be easy. A real gangster would have a slush fund and a mouthpiece, and they'd have a hell of a time pinning it on him.

"No, there's no way out through the police. They'd either fry me, or else they'd believe my story, take me before the grand jury, and then the gangs would put me on the spot."

"How do you mean, 'on the spot'?" asked Paul Pry.

"Stick me in the path of a machine gun!" snapped the man.

"I see," said Paul.

The girl was sobbing quietly.

"Isn't there any way out, Finney?" she asked.

"Yes," he said, shortly, curtly, and stopped.

She put her hands on his shoulders, pushed herself back at arm's length until she could gaze into his eyes.

"Well," she said, "what is it?"

"It's almost as bad as the other," he said.

"Well, anyhow, you can tell us."

He took a deep breath.

"We could muscle Tommy Drake and make Big Front kick through with the confession."

She frowned, puzzled.

"Talk English, Finney."

HE EXPLAINED it to her patiently: "You see, sweet, these big gangsters have to be on the job every minute of the day. If they was to get laid up for any length of time the whole pack of cards would come tumbling down. Their time is worth untold money to them, every day.

"There's rivalry in the gang stuff, and if a man was to lose touch with his trade it'd mean that some rival would come in and scoop the business.

"Every once in a while some fast worker will muscle one of the big gangsters. That 'is, he'll strong-arm him and put him some place where he can't get out. Then the man has to kick through with whatever the captors want in order to get out. And if he's part of an organization, he has to be on the job for the organization. So the organization kicks through.

"Now, of course Tommy Drake, would deny it if it was put up to him, but he told me in confidence that he's going to do some heavy collecting for Big Front on Friday night. He's going to take in certified checks, payable to Tommy Drake. It's for some big booze shipments, and the gangs won't take anything except certified checks or money. Money ain't so hot right now with some of the gangs hijacking each other, so Tommy Drake does his stuff with certified checks.

"Now if I was to muscle Tommy out for a while, and make him give me those certified checks, endorsed to bearer, and then tell Gilvray I was going to cash those checks and beat it unless he kicked through with the confession and gave me a clean bill of health, he'd do it.

"Tommy, himself, was the one that suggested it. He thinks I got a raw deal from Big Front. But, of course, Tommy has got to protect himself in the thing, and I'd have to put it on in style. That'd be to protect Tommy afterward."

Kinney stopped, looked steadily at his sister.

She returned the glance, steadily, as though it were a signal, or an attempt to exchange thought without the use of words.

"But why can't you do it, Finney?"

"I need a muscle man."

"Why?"

"It'd have to be someone that would make the thing look O. K. Otherwise it'd just get Tommy put on the spot, as well as me. But if someone that nobody knew was to do the muscle stunt then we'd all be in the clear."

The girl's voice was rapid.

"But wouldn't it be dangerous?"

"Naw. Where'd there be any danger? Tommy'd be willing, and so would I. A man would just have to go through the motions. Then Tommy would surrender the checks, and that'd be all there was to it."

"Would Gilvray come through?"

"Would he! Listen, sis, there'll be at least two checks. One of 'em will be drawn on the Farmers & Merchants National for twenty thousand dollars, signed by Arthur Manser, and certified. The other will be for ten grand, on the Seaboard Union National, signed by Carl Chadwick, certified. Both of 'em payable to Tommy Drake! Use your noodle, kid, and see what that'd mean! Why Gilvray would come through so quick there'd be nothing to it!"

"But," protested the girl, after a moment of silence, "wouldn't it be a crime?"

"Of course not. We'd give up the checks. All we want is to kill some false confessions. We'd really be on the side of the law, doing it a favor."

There was a long silence. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, the eyes of the man and the woman turned to Paul Pry.

That individual gulped twice.

"I'm a stranger in the city. Nobody knows me. If I could help—"

Finney shot from his chair, hand outstretched.

"Put her there!" he said. "A regular guy!"

The girl flung her arms around his neck, kissed him, at first impersonally, then, with a startled gasp, more affectionately. She clung to him, hot breath coming through parted lips, eyes starry.

"My hero!" she said.

Finney didn't give the situation an opportunity to develop any further.

"You and this friend of ours would have to get a bungalow out on the outskirts and pretend you were newly wedded and had just moved in. That'd take care of the neighbors. Then, on Friday, when Tommy gets done with his collecting, I'd leave the car at a certain place while Tommy and me went in for a drink. The car'd be locked, but Sid Fowler here would have a duplicate key.

"There'd be a robe in back. He'd get in and crawl under the robe. Then Tommy would get in front with me. All Sid here would have to do would be to stand up and stick a gun in our necks, and tell us to drive where he said and look pleasant about it. It'd be that simple!"

The girl rubbed her cheek against Paul Pry's.

"How delightfully simple!" she said.

And there was a subtle double meaning which was meant for the ears of the man who posed as her brother.

CHAPTER THREE

Flirting With Death

PAUL PRY, safely ensconced in his secret hideout, tapped rhythmically upon a Hopi ceremonial drum. It was made of deerskin rawhide fastened over the hollowed trunk of a cottonwood, the trunk

burnt out until it had just the proper thickness, just the proper resonance.

The weird booming at regular intervals mingled with the blood, pulsed in the ears as a steady throbbing that stirred half forgotten memories.

Mugs Magoo, moodily drinking whiskey, stared at Paul Pry.

"Gosh, I wish you'd quit that damned drumming."

Paul Pry smiled, musingly.

"I'm stirring primitive cells in my brain, Mugs, awakening old racial memories. Think of it, Mugs! Up to a thousand or so years ago, our ancestors prepared for battle with the drum, killed and were killed to the twang of a bowstring! Is it any wonder the throb of a drum makes us want to revert to savagery? I feel capable of knocking a woman over the head, dragging her off by her hair, putting a tomahawk through the skull of an enemy and scalping him."

Mugs Magoo shook his head.

"Maybe it does that to you. It just churns my insides up. What are you gettin' ready to do now?"

But Paul Pry, putting down his drum, answered the question by asking another.

"Mugs, what's the muscle game?"

Mugs Magoo refilled the whiskey glass.

"It's quite a racket. It means lots of things, like musclin' in on another man's territory. Mostly, though, it means taking a prominent gangster and holding him where he can't communicate with his gang until he kicks through.

"Those babies have time that's worth lots to 'em. And they're sitting on the rim of a volcano all the time. They don't dare to get out of touch with things."

Paul Pry nodded.

"I take it that it's a dangerous game?"

"Dangerous! I'll say. A man only does that when he's flirting with the undertaker. They last about once. There ain't

any case of a man who's done a successful muscle act twice."

Paul Pry nodded, thoughtfully.

"Why?" asked Mugs Magoo.

Paul Pry looked at his watch.

"Because in precisely forty-five minutes I am going to muscle Tommy Drake, the big shot of the Big Front Gilvray gang, and—"

He broke off as the whiskey glass slipped from Mugs Magoo's nerveless fingers and crashed to the floor.

"You're what!?"

"Just what I said, Mugs."

Mugs Magoo sighed.

"Well, I've given you up for lost so long now that when I actually file past the coffin for a last glance at what the machine-gun bullets have left of your face, I'll feel like it's a habit, but that's the first time you've ever done anything so damned hare-brained as to make me spill good drinkin' whiskey."

Paul Pry adjusted his tie, reached for his overcoat.

"You shaved?" asked Mugs Magoo, ruefully inspecting the pool of whiskey on the carpet.

"Yes, why?"

"Oh, nothin', but undertakers have a hell of a time shavin' 'em after they get cold. It's always considerate to give 'em a break."

Paul Pry smiled.

"Good night, Mugs."

The reply was unmistakable.

"Good-by! I'm goin' to miss you."

And Paul Pry, with that farewell knelling in his ears, closed the door, adjusted his hat, and went to keep his appointment.

THINGS clicked as by clockwork. The big limousine drew up to the appointed corner within twenty seconds of the time which had been agreed upon. The door opened. Tommy Drake, well-clothed,

fleshy, important, ferreted the shadows with restless eyes. His well-manicured hand was concealed under his coat.

Finney, the chauffeur, kept his right hand thrust into the side pocket of an overcoat as he locked the car with a key held in his left hand.

They went into a certain speakeasy. It was within forty feet of where they had parked the car. They went in the businesslike manner of those who are about to make a collection or know why.

Paul Pry glided from the shadows. His duplicate key shot back the lock of the car door. He entered, slipped under the robe which was on the floor in the rear of the machine.

One minute and forty seconds later, Finney scraped the key against the lock of the car door and pretended to unlock it. He flung back the door.

"Sittin' up front, Tommy?"

"Sure."

The car lurched as the bodies swung up from the running board. Then a door slammed, and the motor purred into rhythmic power. A gear meshed smoothly, and the car glided out into traffic.

"Business pickin' up any?" asked Finney.

"So, so," said Tommy. "These big places are under regular contract. They take so much whether business is good or bad. It sometimes leaves 'em with a little carry-over stock, but they've got a soft graft, at that."

"Uh-huh," said Finney.

The car continued to purr smoothly and uneventfully through traffic.

Finney's voice sounded, nervous, dry. "Well, we're within two blocks of your house, Tommy."

"Uh-huh," said Tommy Drake.

Paul Pry slipped back the heavy robe. Such noise as he made was covered by the sound of the whining tires as they snarled at high speed along the pavement.

He slipped a gun in either hand. Promptly at the same moment, he pressed the cold muzzles of those guns against the necks of the men in front of him.

"Don't look around, don't make any squawk," he said. "You, driver, take the first turn to the left and step on it. Remember one thing, I'm desperate. If you so much as make a move, or if you try to signal, I'll blow your spines out through your neckties."

Finney gave an audible gasp, a synthetic start, for the purpose of impressing Tommy Drake.

Tommy Drake froze into rigid immobility. After a second or two, he spoke, calmly, without turning his head.

"What is it, a shakedown or a croaking?"

"Just a shakedown," reassured Paul Pry. "You won't have any trouble if you act reasonable."

Tommy Drake sighed.

"O. K. I thought maybe I was goin' for a ride. If I had been, I'd as soon have taken it here as later."

Paul Pry chuckled.

"Just be reasonable, and you'll be on your way by ten o'clock tomorrow morning—sure."

Tommy Drake grunted.

"After the banks open, eh?"

"After the banks open," agreed Paul Pry. "Driver, you keep both hands on the wheel and your eyes straight ahead. Tommy, you stick your hands up. I'm going to put a little bandage over your eyes."

The gangster elevated his hands.

"No funny stuff," warned Paul Pry.

The gangster said nothing.

Paul Pry whipped a handkerchief about Tommy Drake's eyes, then dove swiftly for the shoulder holsters and took away twin automatics.

"Now, driver, I'm doing the same by you as far as frisking is concerned. Keep your hands on the wheel."

"O. K. by me," said Finney. "I ain't got a date with a tailor for a wooden nightie. It's under the left armpit. Be careful, because the safety's off."

Paul Pry deftly extracted the gun.

"Keep moving," he said. "Ready to turn to the right at the next street, and drive carefully, I'm nervous."

And the cold steel rings again pressed into the necks of the men in front.

Guiding them to the turns, making a sufficient number of side excursions to be certain no one was following them Paul Pry directed the automobile to the bungalow where the girl with the starry eyes had established herself as a bride of a few days.

Finney swung the car to a stop in the driveway.

"Out and in," said Paul Pry. "Driver, you can pilot Tommy Drake. Keep his blindfold on."

They clumped up the three steps to the wooden floor of the porch. Slick Sarah flung the door open. Her eyes gleamed with delight.

"My hero!" she said, and flung herself with a little glad cry of abandon into the arms of the muscle man.

They piloted Tommy Drake to a bed-chamber, handcuffed his wrists and ankles to the side rungs at the head and foot of the bed, left him like a sprawled calf ready for branding.

Then they held a celebration.

During that celebration much giggle water was consumed. Finney and the girl lavished praise upon Paul Pry. Finney showed his gratitude by frequent back slappings and handshakings. The girl accomplished the same result in a more feminine manner.

Some time after midnight it was suggested that Paul Pry had better make certain that Tommy would come to terms.

Pry nodded, arose to unsteady feet and vanished into the bedroom. Finney re-

mained behind, since he insisted upon making it appear that the abduction was on the up and up and that Tommy should be told that the chauffeur was also held a prisoner in another room.

Paul Pry unlocked the handcuffs.

"Keep on the blindfold," he said.

Tommy Drake sat up on the bed, his arms stiff and numb.

"Listen, guy, I'm going to be reasonable. There's no use of you and me misunderstanding each other. You've got me where you want me, now. Personally, I don't think you can get away with it, but that's something that's between you and Big Front Gilvray.

"In the meantime, there's no use rubbing it in. I know when I'm licked, and I'm getting damned tired of these handcuffs."

Paul Pry remained obdurate.

"You're all right, Tommy, only you're too slick. I've got to keep you where you won't be able to out-slick me. Where are the checks?"

"In the wallet. You'll find it in my inside coat pocket."

Paul Pry took out the wallet.

Tommy Drake made a swift motion with his thumb, lifting the bandage slightly from his eyes.

Paul Pry snapped home a left hook to the jaw, not a hard hook, but a jarring blow that was a promise of what might follow.

"Naughty, naughty! Mamma spank!" he said.

Tommy Drake's head snapped back. His right hand abruptly dropped.

"My mistake, guy," he said.

PAUL PRY fished out the checks. There were some small ones, but there were two large ones, one for twenty thousand, one for ten thousand, made out just as Finney had said they would be, bearing the stamp of certification.

Paul Pry took out his fountain pen, arranged a board, put the board on the lap of Tommy Drake, then stepped behind him.

"All right, Tommy. Listen to this and get it straight. I'm taking off the blindfold long enough for you to sign your name four times. Write on the back of each check, 'Pay to the order of bearer,' and then sign your name. The bank will know your signature all right, but I'll have to keep you here until the checks are cashed, to make certain that there isn't any hitch.

"But don't try to turn your head and look around when I take off the blindfold. Because, if you do, there's going to be a slung-shot tap your bean, and when you wake up you'll have a hell of a headache."

Tommy Drake sighed.

"Geez, buddy, let's get it over with. But you'd better have an airplane all ready for a getaway, because Big Front will remember this."

"Yeah, I know," drawled Paul Pry, casually.

He put the tinted oblongs of paper on the board, stepped back of the captive, and slipped up the blindfold.

Tommy Drake sighed, took the fountain pen, and started to write. Midway, he paused, puzzled.

"There are four checks here. But only two of the checks in the wallet had any size to 'em. You aren't so damned picay-unish you're going to monkey with the small stuff are you?"

Paul Pry tapped lightly upon the top of the captive's head.

"Naughty, naughty, mamma have to spank again!"

"Oh, all right," said Tommy, and went ahead with the business of signing.

Paul Pry slipped the bandage down over his eyes.

"I'll give you a break some day if you'll leave off those damned handcuffs," said Tommy Drake, "and I'll promise I won't try to make a getaway."

Paul Pry snickered.

"Don't be silly, Tommy. Stick your wrists out. But I have got a nice dose of sleepy-by medicine that'll take effect pretty soon. When it does, I'll come in and take off the handcuffs. You'll sleep until tomorrow afternoon, but your friends will come for you before then.

"Nighty-by. Here, take this."

Tommy Drake swallowed obediently.

"That," he proclaimed, "marks you for a gentleman, even if you are a damned hijacker."

Paul Pry took the endorsed checks, thrust them into his pocket, turned the light low.

"I'll take off the handcuffs," he promised, and went into the outer room.

The seductive hands of the girl pawed at him. The eager eyes of Finney looked unasked questions.

Paul Pry took a wallet from his inside pocket. He took out some bills, a neat assortment of them.

"Seems to me we should have getaway money, just in case anything should happen," he said.

"Nothin' ain't goin' to happen," Finney grunted. "But we'll split it three ways, anyhow. How about the checks?"

Paul Pry pulled out twin oblongs of tinted paper, one on a pink paper, one on a light green. Both were deckled against forgeries by alteration. One was a check on the Farmers & Merchants National Bank, payable to the order of Thomas Drake, signed by Arthur Manser, bearing a rubber stamp of certification, and duly endorsed on the back, "Pay to the order of bearer, Thomas Drake."

The other was similar, except that it was signed by Carl Chadwick, was drawn

on the Seaboard Union National and was for ten thousand dollars.

Finney clamped an eager hand upon the papers.

"Slick! Thirty thousand smacks. Guess that didn't come easy!"

It was the girl who nudged his ribs.

"But you're not going to cash them, Finney, dear. You're just going to use them as a lever to make Gilvray give you the confessions."

"Of course, of course, of course!" said Finney, speaking rapidly. "When I said it had come easy, I meant that it was a cinch to get the confessions, thanks to the work of your splendid friend here."

"How can I ever thank him!" said the girl, and her eyes gleamed with an affection which was far too ardent to be real.

Paul Pry thrust out his chest.

"Glad to be of service," he said. "You can go right out with those checks. You won't need to wait until the bank opens. Then, when you get the confessions, you can turn Tommy loose."

Finney exchanged swift glances with Slick Sarah.

"No-o-o-o-o, that wouldn't hardly do. Gilvray might make a squawk. I'd better let him know I can cash the checks at once if he should refuse. I'd better wait until after the bank opens."

Paul Pry nodded vacantly.

"Just as you say," he said. "Funny thing, Tommy never even mentioned he knew this was a frame-up. He acted just like it wasn't."

"Good old Tommy," said Finney. "He's playing the game all right. He wanted me to promise I wouldn't even tell you it was a plant. He's so afraid the gang might think he was in on it."

Paul Pry nodded.

"There's one thing I'm wondering about—" he began, and the girl swayed to his arms.

"Forget the details, dear. You've done your share. Let Finney worry about them."

"But—" began Paul Pry.

She drew his head down to hers, smothered the words. When she released him, Paul Pry was grinning sheepishly, and the red stain of lipstick was smeared over his lips.

Thereafter they drank giggle water until the dawn.

At eight-thirty Paul Pry got restless.

"Gee, I sort of hate to be sticking around here!"

Finney shrugged.

"Go get some sleep if you want."

"I've done everything I can?"

"Sure, sure."

"You can telephone Gilvray and tell him where to come for Tommy when you've got the confessions?"

"Sure, we don't need you at all. Sis can go with you, as far as that's concerned."

Slick Sarah's eyes ceased to be starry. They settled upon Finney with a hard gleam.

"No, Finney dear, I'll stay with you. Sid is pretty well tired out. He should go and get sleep, and we haven't the right to ask him to go into any further danger on our account. But my place is with you. And I'm going to stay with you!"

Finney nodded sullenly.

"O. K. by me," he said.

Paul Pry tiptoed to the door of the bedroom.

"I'll look in on Tommy and make certain he's sleeping," he said.

He opened the door, slipped into the room.

He was gone for several seconds. Then he returned, grinning vacuously.

"Just like a child," he said.

They patted him on the back.

"Sid, you're a wonder."

"Where'll I see you again?" he asked of the girl.

"At my apartment tonight, dear. Until then—"

And Paul Pry got another application of lipstick. This time he noticed that the flavor of raspberry was very, very strong.

CHAPTER FOUR

"Some Sap!"

WHEN Paul Pry had gone, Finney grinned at Slick Sarah. "Just like taking candy from a baby," he said.

She nodded.

"Fifteen grand apiece. Gosh, Finney, it was worth it. And I sure got a sap! Wasn't he a dream! I hate to let anything that's as green as that get away. We should keep in touch with him. We could find lots of use for him."

Finney laughed shortly, sarcastically.

"Bah. We couldn't use him for anything except ballast on a boat. By this time tomorrow he'll have so much lead in him he won't fit into a coffin.

"Now listen, sis, we gotta play this right. I go get the checks cashed, then I come back and you handcuff me to the other bed. Then you telephone Gilvray we're both here, see?"

"That'll give me a good alibi, and Gilvray can find out all about this guy from where he rented the house. He left the name and address of his rooming house and gave the landlady for reference, the poor sap!"

The woman's forehead furrowed.

"Any chance he'll squeal?"

"He won't get a chance. I'll tip him to make a run for it, and then I'll tip Gilvray that I've spotted the train he's on. The poor sap won't ever have a chance to squeal. He won't even say nighty-by."

The girl grinned.

"I hate to lose him. He was priceless."

They grinned again, and the grin became a rasping, mutual chuckle.

"Well," said Finney, "let's go."

They went.

Finney presented the check at the window of the Farmers & Merchants National.

"Cash," he said.

The teller looked at him suspiciously.

"That's a large sum."

Finney yawned.

"Sure it is. It's a big deal. You know Tommy Drake's signature. The check's certified. It's payable to bearer. I'm the bearer. You can ring up Arthur Manser if you want to. He'll verify that the check's O. K. and that it's to be cashed. But your own certification is on it. You can't question that, and bearer means bearer don't it?"

The teller nodded.

"I guess so. Just a minute."

He stepped back in his cage, started counting out piles of money, but his right foot surreptitiously reached out and pressed a concealed button in the floor.

Finney heard the sound of the buzzer, frowned perplexedly.

Then he saw two uniformed figures, bank police, on special duty, bearing down upon him. Startled, he flipped a hand beneath his coat, only to remember that his fall-guy muscle-man hadn't returned the automatic he had taken.

He felt his elbows grasped in an iron grip.

"Try anything and you'll get your head smashed," said one of the men. "Take it quietly. What is it, Fred?"

The teller slipped the check through the bars.

"Forgery," he said, "and a clumsy one. The signature of Tommy Drake looks O. K., but the rest of it is awful. It's a rank forgery, certification stamp and all."

Finney heaved a great sigh, and managed a laugh.

"Hell, is that all you're squawking about? I thought you really had me for a pinch! Just ring up Manser, and he'll tell you he signed this check and had it certified himself."

The teller shook his head.

"That's true all right. But the genuine check was cashed ten minutes before you came here. It was passed through to the account of Paul Pry, a gentleman we happen to know."

Finney's mouth sagged. He gasped for air. Twice he tried to speak and each time words failed him. The third time he managed to get out sound, but the voice was strained, husky.

"Paul Pry— Good God! Did sis pick on that bird as a fall guy! Paul Pry—"

And Finney, known in the profession as Four Flusher Finney, slipped to the floor in a faint.

Outside of the bank, a very well-formed figure of a young woman, dressed in a mode that was calculated to disclose the lines of rounded beauty, had been staring through the window.

When Finney slumped to the floor in a faint she turned gloomily away and entered a taxicab. She moved with graceful haste.

The cab driver turned to regard her, and saw that she had raised the hem of her skirt, disclosing a long expanse of rounded limb, that she had taken a roll of large bills from the top of her stocking and was counting it carefully.

"Where to, ma'am?" he asked, his eyes flitting between the attraction of the green currency and the soft flesh of the rounded symmetry which was exposed between pink silk and black chiffon.

She spoke sadly.

"To the Union Depot. I've got nine hundred and fifty dollars here, and I've got a sucker in New Orleans that had ought to be good for a thousand more."

She raised her eyes, encountered the gaze of the taxi driver, and unhurriedly returned the roll to the top of her stocking.

"Lovely morning, ain't it!" she said.

BIG FRONT GILVRAY raced in person to the bungalow, the address of which had been given to him in the mysterious telephone call which terminated a night of frenzied activity.

When Tommy Drake had failed to report, Gilvray had had attorneys search the records of the precinct stations to see if Tommy had been picked up and buried for questioning. He had cruising cars making a grim round of places where rival gangs held headquarters, searching for some trace of the missing man.

With the coming of the telephone call, Gilvray knew that the worst had happened. A week's pickings gone glimmering. He skidded the car to a stop, rushed up the steps. The door of the bungalow was open.

A table was littered with empty bottles, sticky glasses and cigarette stubs. In the bedroom he found Tommy Drake, sleeping peacefully. To his chest was pinned a brief note, scribbled upon the back of a tinted oblong of paper, one of the blank checks of the Farmers & Merchants National.

Big Front Gilvray stooped to stare at the paper which read—

"Dear Goosie, thanks for laying another golden egg. To the police you're a tough gangster. To me you're just a nice little goosie, laying golden eggs."

The note was signed, simply, "Paul Pry, Muscle Man."

Big Front Gilvray hopped about from one foot to the other. The air of the bedroom was sulphurous with profanity. Tommy Drake slumbered peacefully in drugged unconsciousness.



The Gun-Moll Mob

by
Mary Phelps

Author of "The Kansas Gun Girl," etc.

It was search for thrills that joined pretty little Amelia Bascom up with a gang of stick-up men. To escape a humdrum life she left her husband and baby for tinseled night clubs and big-time whoopee. Now she stares at blank prison walls and wonders—five long years are the price New York's most reckless gun girl pays.

ON JANUARY 10, 1930, a slender young woman of nineteen years walked into the Arch Preserver Shoe Shop at 2593 Broadway, New York City. Her shapely form was snugly sheltered from the winter's chill by a luxurious fox-trimmed wrap of chinchilla.

She flashed a most engaging smile at the dapper young man who accompanied her, as she asked the clerk, who was alone in the store at the time, to show her a pair of expensive shoes. The clerk reached up on the shelf. As he turned to try the slippers on the trim silk-stockinged foot, he shuddered to feel the cold steel of a gun muzzle in his ribs.

"Put 'em up! Now, get back there!" The calm nonchalance of the young woman's male companion suddenly changed. He snarled the command and pressed the gun persuasively into the clerk's side, motioning him to the rear of the shop.

Two other youths, who had been waiting casually outside, then strolled in.

Leaping with lightning rapidity into action, they trussed up the astonished victim and shoved a gag into his mouth. In the meantime, the first fellow had seated himself on the clerk's stool and appeared to be trying the slippers on the pretty blonde. In a jiffy the cash register was rifled of \$402, while nimble fingers snatched \$13 from the pocket of the helpless victim and helped themselves to his wrist watch to boot.

Then, with a last reassuring look at the ropes that bound their victim, the quartet strode quietly out of the store. At the curb, a fourth young man sat at the wheel of a large automobile with the motor humming. The doors banged shut, gears were shifted with alacrity, and "the gun-moll mob," which had been the *bête noir* of the New York police for four months, laughed merrily.

"Well, we put it over again!" one can imagine them saying as they sat comfortably and confidently back, and sped out of sight.

No hold-up gang operating in Manhattan exclusively is said to have ever given the hardy bluecoats so much trouble and anxiety as this youthful quintet. Day and night the bandits had been sought as they proceeded blithely about their nefarious escapades of store stick-ups.

"Put it over?" Yes, for four months they continued this daring pillaging, and always made a safe getaway. That is, until that winter's day last year.

"Pretty blonde, good figure, engaging smile, well-dressed, and wearing a fine chinchilla coat," featured the general alarm which had gone out from headquarters four weeks earlier.

"Get her and you'll get the gun-moll mob!" said Chief Inspector Edward P. Mulrooney.

Amelia Bascom laughed once too often up the copious sleeve of her chinchilla wrap!

For the very love of finery and good times, which seems to have hurled her into banditry, stopped short the gun career of the pretty girl mother and popped her into Auburn prison to pay the fiddler, John Law, from five to ten years of the butterfly life which was so exciting to her.

She wanted thrills, thrills, thrills!

And sallied forth in her quest from the dull, workaday life of Springfield, Massachusetts, wrenched away heartlessly from the loving arms of her husband and the chubby, clutching little fingers of her ten-month-old baby.

To the city, to New York, for thrills!

Her gay laughter rang out above the babble and blatant jazz of the night clubs. Life, glorious, fancy-free life!

She laughed and laughed. But, John Law got the last laugh.

Amelia Bascom apparently had no heritage of crime in her young veins to excuse what she did. As a matter of fact, she had much more of a break in life than many girls. When she emerged from the seclusion of her home town, Chicopee, Massachusetts, about four years ago to cast off her maiden name of Stanwick and become the bride of Edward S. Bascom, a hard-working paper-mill hand of Springfield, she had marriage, a home and a loving husband. Then, she had her baby.

But "Dolly," as she was called from childhood—was possessed by a peculiar restlessness which made her seek the strange and new. Dolly should have been satisfied with the blessings normally cherished in feminine hearts. But she wanted more.

"This is not life," she counselled herself. "I want excitement!"

Well, she got it! But, she got more than she bargained for.

To New York—the Mecca of the restless, and the Waterloo!

"I simply couldn't stand the humdrum

life in Springfield any longer. I wanted to see life. I met these boys at a party here soon after I struck town, and we've been going around together ever since. We've had a good time and lots of fun. It's been great! The boys have been real nice to me all the way. It was too dreary up there!"

A rather lame excuse for the kind of excitement she sought—holding up clerks in chain shoe and hat stores, haberdasheries and women's wear shops, at the point of a gun! But she apparently refused to look ahead, quite heedless or, perhaps, unconscious of the serious consequences which must necessarily follow digressions from the paths of law and order.

DOLLY BASCOM found her way to New York and its bright lights one autumn day in 1929. A young woman, whose acquaintance she made, introduced her to seventeen-year-old Jacob Solomon and his older brother, Samuel, who was twenty-four. They liked the pretty kid from up Massachusetts way, and in turn, introduced her to their two other pals, Joseph Hayes and Marcus Con.

Thus the gun-moll mob had its inception. The mob which led the police of New York City a merry chase. The mob which held up more than forty stores in upper Manhattan within four months. The mob which snatched between \$5,000 and \$6,000 in cash in its daring escapades, and spent it all to deck out its pretty blond girl bandit in fine raiment and to make whoopee in the tinselled night clubs.

The boys were real nice to Dolly, all right. Too nice, in the one item—the chinchilla coat. For that luxuriant wrap was her undoing and theirs.

And, while Dolly was finding her excitement, the long arm of the law was reaching out, slowly and surely, to pluck her from it.

The climax of her adventures came

when Detective Charles M. Huber of the West 47th Street station interrupted one of the gang's pillaging forays in the Thom McAn shoe store at 837 Eighth Avenue. While the fur-wrapped girl looked on and laughed, the boys jumped the detective, beat him with a toy pistol, took his gun and escaped. Huber was later demoted for this by Commissioner Grover A. Whalen.

Somehow, the police were unable to catch the thieves red-handed. But the chinchilla wrap had been a giveaway, and the police had a description of its wearer. So, failing to capture the mob at work, detectives resorted to the stool-pigeon system for information. After weeks of investigation they received a tip which led them to the vicinity of Fourth Avenue and 112th Street early the next morning.

Detectives Harold Moore, William Harris, James Walsh and Howard Cleary trained their eagle eyes on the apartment house at 50 West 112th Street. With them in the shadows was a hold-up victim. Out of the building walked Jacob Solomon, Joseph Hayes and Amelia Bascom. The man who kept the vigil with the officers whispered that one of the trio, a tall youth, had been in the stick-up gang, but was unable to identify the woman at a glance as she did not wear the chinchilla coat.

However, they trailed the unsuspecting trio to a restaurant and there the hold-up victim was able to make his identification at close range. The detectives stepped forward. Solomon reached for a pistol in his belt, but Walsh was too quick for him. His hard fist felled the seventeen-year-old bandit, and the jig was up.

The prisoners were taken to the police station for questioning, and readily confessed. They gave additional information which led detectives to a house at Lexington Avenue and East 86th Street where they arrested Solomon's brother,

Samuel, said to be the leader of the gang, and Marcus Con.

The confession also directed the officers to Mrs. Bascom's furnished room at 15 West 96th Street, where she lived alone except when occasionally visited by some of the four boys. Under a pillow on the bed they found two pistols. One of them bore the serial number of the service gun taken from Huber. And there, too, was the chinchilla coat!

Charged with robbery, the young bandits were arraigned before Magistrate Flood in West Side Court and held without bail for hearing the following Monday. Additional charges of assault and violation of the Sullivan law were lodged against Jacob Solomon, who told police that he had been robbed of \$350 while drunk and had gone the next morning to a novelty store where he purchased the toy pistol to use in recouping his loss.

Even then Dolly laughed and joked. She put on her prettiest and most engaging smile for newspaper photographers, but her four companions in crime hid their faces from the cameras. Brazenly, boastfully, Dolly admitted to the police that she became a girl bandit and joined the gang "for the fun and the excitement of it." It seemed to be something of a huge joke to the handsome blond mother of nineteen that her decision to taste the lure of life in the great metropolis had landed her in the prisoner's dock, charged with robbery. She laughed at every attempt to identify her by more than a score of persons.

WHEN news of his wife's arrest reached Edward Bascom in Springfield, he was astonished. True enough, she had always been looking for excitement and was of a restless disposition. But he loved her and he forgave her for the heartbreak she had caused him when she fled from him and the innocent babe she

had brought into the world. The baby had been turned over to the state. Yes, the sturdy millhand hastened to New York to help the wife who had deserted him.

It was too late. The love, sympathy and assurance which she had chosen to forswear could do nothing for Dolly now.

She went to trial in General Sessions before Judge Bertini with the Solomon brothers. And she kept right on laughing, flashing her white teeth in ridiculing defiance. Life was still a thrill!

"On whose suggestion did you perpetrate those robberies?" asked Judge Bertini, on her admission that she participated in more than thirty robberies.

"The boys here," she replied, pointing to Samuel and Jacob.

Even then she might have found the court lenient, had she not boastfully offered further information that she had found the badger game a profitable sideline to her robberies, in enticing more than fifty men to apartments and making them pay well for their indiscretions.

"I was going to give you a chance, and send you to Bedford Reformatory for Women," said the judge. "But, I am afraid you have gone too far!" And he sentenced her to Auburn for from five to ten years.

The Solomon brothers, who had pleaded guilty to the specific hold-up in the Arch Preserver store, each received a sentence of from seven to fifteen years in Sing Sing, with an additional sentence of from five to ten years for the use of pistols. Con pleaded guilty to another robbery charge and was remanded to the Tombs for sentence.

Three days later, Dolly Bascom went up to Auburn on her long, long trip. By this time the laugh had turned into a whimsical smile.

"Five to ten years?" thought she, as she contemplated from the window of the speeding train the serene waters of the

mighty Hudson River flowing ever to the sea. "That's a long time!"

It wouldn't have been such a long time, if her attempt to escape had been successful. She apparently began to realize the seriousness of her predicament, and became desperate. She had been in prison only three days when she tried to make a break for the liberty which she had forfeited.

Dolly went into a huddle with a fellow prisoner, Sally Joyce Richards, Buffalo's "twenty-year-old blond bandit" and working pal of Stanley Tizybye, the "millionaire kid." Sally was up for twenty years, accused of swinging a gun alongside of Tizybye at a \$300,000 dinner party in Buffalo. She had much more reason to be irked than Dolly, but Dolly didn't fancy at all the consequences of her adventures into banditry.

Together they pried apart their cell bars, slugged and gagged the night matron, Mrs. Mamie Benjamin, sneaked down two flights of stairs and clambered out a basement window. Ever so cau-

tiously they tiptoed around the great stone building, keeping closely to the shadows. And bumped right smack into the night watchman, Thomas Woods! That was that, and Dolly didn't laugh, for once. Woods collared them both, and marched them back. It was "solitary" then for the two girl desperadoes.

Now, perhaps, as she does her chores in the women's prison at Auburn, or climbs each night into her little white iron cot to stare at the black stone walls and relentless bars that cage her, Amelia Bascom figures that five years or more are well worth the excitement of being a gun girl. But I hardly think so.

If she didn't stop to think before, it is a certainty that the long, dreary months she is necessarily spending to pay off her debt to the State of New York are giving her plenty of opportunity to retrace her recklessness.

She wanted her fling, and she had it! But the dragging hours of her incarceration are sure to wipe from her thin lips that engaging smile.

NEXT MONTH---

Another Startling Exposé

by

Mary Phelps

Peggy Mahon, pretty colleen, waitress and taxi dancer, wanted to be a bandit queen. Life was drab, and the movies painted glowing pictures of adventure, wealth and power. She wanted to live one of those thrilling scenarios so she packed a gun and organized

The Dress-Suit Gang

that brought terror to Detroit. She dealt high-handed, vamped her followers and called them "yellow" when they hesitated to join her gang. She perpetrated more than 100 hold-ups. Peggy Mahon lived her scenario—a life of adventure, thrills and excitement. And it was only when she was found guilty of armed robbery that her bravado faded, her distorted visions of wealth and adventure collapsed. There's tense drama, gripping realism and stark tragedy in the story of this reckless gun girl. Read it in—

October GANG WORLD

On Newsstands August 25th

With a quick swing he crashed
the steel bar down on Trigger
Jake's skull.



MURDER EXTRA!

by

Walter Snow

Author of "Blackmailer," etc.

CITY EDITOR SLAIN

STAR-HERALD REPORTERS TARGETS
OF GANGSTERS' BULLETS

Police Comb City for Missing Big Shot

COLLINS shook the fat, swarthy-faced man, who was sprawled over the shabby couch, his right leg dangling on the floor. The faded coverlet and the prone man's tailor-made

Scotch tweed suit reeked of rotgut whiskey.

"Snap out of it, Moe!" pleaded "Cub" Collins. "Want some coffee for a bracer? We gotta be goin'."

The younger man stepped to a nearby table, which was strewn with abandoned playing cards and poker chips, and picked up a circular cardboard container brimful of steaming black beverage. He was a tall, lanky individual with an innocent boyish face and large horn-rimmed glasses. Water dripped down from his battered felt hat. His coat and slightly baggy trousers likewise were drenched.

Raising the fat man's head he held the aromatic coffee to a pair of thick lips. Moe Spector's left foot slid to the floor. He sat up groggily and guzzled.

"What's up now?" growled Spector, draining the container. He squashed the wet receptacle in a big hairy hand, hurled it across the room at an empty whiskey flask lying in front of three telephone booths and looked around. The place was scantily furnished with a half dozen old chairs, a table and couch. Scattered over the floor were a score of newspapers. Plastered on the walls were autographed photographs of chorus girls in tights, boxers in fighting togs, old press clippings. The one framed picture was a long banquet scene with the caption: "Governor Dines With Press Club."

"Where are all the boys?" demanded the fat man, adjusting the sizable diamond stickpin, sparkling in his silk cravat.

"They're steppin' damned lively right now!" explained Cub Collins hurriedly. "Cripes, Moe! There'll be a dozen extras on the streets before dawn."

"Aw, hell! The big story's in, ain't it?" growled Spector, rubbing his chin. "What more can they want? S'pose that fool Benson's gotta lot of crazy ideas, huh? Is he sore at me? Didn't the boys cover me?"

"Sure. They tried to," said Collins, glancing nervously at a cheap gun-metal watch. "Denby of The News phoned in the flash for you and then called later with the details. Benson suspected some-

thin' was wrong and demanded to speak to you personally. Denby said you were tryin' to interview the commissioner. Old Benson called him a cockeyed liar and swore up and down that you were soused again. Said that unless you phoned in some hot stuff for the Murder Extra you'd get the sack! You've got just an hour before the last deadline!"

Moe Spector carefully flicked with his handkerchief at imaginary dust specks on the tips of his patent leather shoes.

"S'pose Benson thinks he's big stuff now," snorted the stocky reporter, his thick lips curling in a sneer. "The new managin' editor, huh? He'd never landed the job if Harry Adams hadn't been put on the spot tonight! If Benson gets big ideas he's liable to get rubbed out himself! Where'd you blow in from, Cub?"

"Just shot out from the city room," said Collins, fingering his watch nervously. "Was goin' to mosey around to 'Duke' Perrelli's Shore Drive Palace. This shack was on my way. I dropped in to see if you were here."

"Listen, Moe!" continued the lanky youth. "You can't afford to get fired from The Star-Herald! Can't you see that? The police commissioner is sore at you over that dance hall rumpus. You'd be pinched if it wasn't for the paper!"

Moe Spector bit the tip off a fat Corona-Corona and lighted it.

"Guess you're right, Cub," he grunted slowly. "A guy sure can get into a bunch of jams. Did the whole gang go out to the Shore Drive joint?"

"Nope! Went to the West Side. Adams' home. We're covered there. But I got a confidential tip that the Duke is at the roadhouse. Slipped a fiver to that stoolie, 'Hoppy' Rosen. He chirped!"

"Huh!" snorted Spector, rising slowly. "For a kid reporter you ain't so dumb! C'mon, then. We'll dig up some hokum to satisfy old Benson. But remember this!

Go easy! Maybe some of Duke Perelli's gorillas did put our crusading editor, Harry Adams, on the spot. But the Duke's no man to fool around with. You gotta act polite and be dumb."

Cub Collins looked at the older reporter with a puzzled expression. Up to now he had listened eagerly to the advice of veteran newspapermen. He was anxious to learn the ropes and rated Moe Spector his best teacher and friend.

The fat man hiccoughed and staggered back toward the whiskey-soaked couch but Collins caught his arm and guided him down a dimly lighted hallway to the front door of the tenement basement. A steady rain beat a vicious tattoo on the sidewalk. A few yards away blinked the twin green lights of the Bayside Avenue precinct stationhouse.

SIDEWALK and street seemed deserted. There were no lights in the old brownstone-fronted tenement buildings lining the avenue. At that eerie hour of 3 A. M. most of the inhabitants of the great city were asleep. Collins virtually dragged Spector to the Star-Herald flivver parked at the curb. He turned the key, snapped on the lights, jerked the choke and the cold motor sputtered and coughed. A gust of wind swept through the open car and hurtled Collins' battered felt hat to the wet sidewalk.

Flinging open the door, he jumped to the curb. Suddenly a second engine roared into life. Collins spun around, seized Spector's coat sleeve and savagely yanked the drowsy reporter from the seat to the narrow floorboard of the car. The fat man's head struck the running board and Cub Collins flopped flat on the wet concrete.

Raca-tac-tac-atac!

The droning burst of a Thompson sub-machine gun slashed through the old flivver. Hot slugs tore into the leather up-

holstery and shattered the windshield into a hundred fragments. Then the high-powered execution car was just a red tail-light disappearing down the storm-swept avenue. Moe Spector was on his feet now and in the street. In one hand a heavy blued steel automatic blazed two answering shots.

Cub Collins scrambled behind the steering wheel and stepped on the gas.

"C'mon!" he snapped.

Behind the twin green lights, in the doorway of the precinct house, a half dozen uniformed men appeared. Spector saw them and leaped to the running board as the Star-Herald flivver bounded away from the curb. Cub Collins jammed the accelerator to the floorboard and the bullet-scarred machine shot down the avenue. It nosed into a side street, turned again and then drew up in front of an all-night drug store.

"Hurt?" gasped Collins, gazing at his companion. The swarthy face of Moe Spector was blanched white. His eyes blinked nervously and his broad nostrils twitched.

"Got winged in the shoulder," said the older man in a dry, cracked voice. "Just a scratch. Say, that was good work gettin' away from the cops. Those dumb Micks won't know what the shootin' was about!"

"You're right," assented Collins with a weak forced laugh. "The other sheets won't, either. What a scoop for that Murder Extra!

TWO MORE STAR-HERALD MEN TARGETS OF GANGSTERS

Narrowly Miss Death After City Editor
Is Slain

You better phone the story in, Moe! That'll make up for muffin' the Adams yarn."

"Nope! You give the desk a ring!" growled Spector, clutching his automatic firmly. "I'll watch outside."

Cub Collins slid out of the seat, started for the drug store and stopped. At the far end of the street appeared a cruising yellow taxicab.

"Look out, Moe!" he called softly. "Here comes a cab. Maybe it's O. K."

Collins ducked in the store, got connected with Benson and gave the story to a rewrite man. A few minutes later he peered cautiously out of the door and saw that the street was deserted. He hurried up to the bullet-riddled flivver and stared around in amazement. Moe Spector no longer was in the car! The machine seemed exactly as Collins had left it—motor purring, the lights dimmed. But there was no trace of the fat reporter.

Spector's sudden display of the gat had been somewhat of a surprise to Collins. At first he hadn't had time to give the rod a second thought. Now he wondered if many reporters carried guns. Slowly he walked around the car and peered into dark hallways along the street. He called softly: "Oh, Moe!" and then raised his voice. There was no answer.

Did the cruising cab explain the disappearance of Moe Spector? Had the veteran reporter been kidnapped? Or had he hailed the vehicle because of a sudden desire to take it on the lam? He might have sought medical attention for his wounded shoulder. Why hadn't Spector waited?

Collins glanced longingly at the lighted pharmacy. He wanted to turn back and have a hot drink. He was drenched to the skin and cold. Lacking now even a shielding hat brim, the rain spattered the lenses of his horn-rimmed glasses.

The silent street had the same ominous eerie stillness as the neighborhood of the Bayside Avenue precinct house. A cold shiver shot up his spine. He leaped behind the steering wheel, threw in the clutch, released the brake and shifted to low. Stepping on the gas, he drove east-

ward toward the bay and Duke Perrelli's Shore Drive Palace.

AS he sped through the suburban district of individual houses with lawns and backyards, Cub Collins racked his mind for clues to the deadly occurrences of the night. Harry Adams' death could be accounted for easily.

Months ago that crusading editor set out to break the stranglehold gangdom held on the great city. He campaigned against harbor pirates who preyed on the shipping. He forced the board of aldermen to equip the marine police with fast speedboats in place of slow clumsy launches and sent three racketeer officials of the Longshoremen's Local to jail. He freed the laundry industry of gangster domination and lately had exposed the sinister practices of Duke Perrelli's powerful Milk Dealers' Protective Association.

But why should Duke Perrelli direct gangster guns against Cub Collins? The lanky young reporter was under no delusions as to his importance. He had worked for The Star-Herald only a few months and was still the cubbiest of cubs. He handled obituaries, covered dog shows, wrote paragraphs about Rotary Club luncheons. Only of late had he been given thirty bucks a week and utilized as a sub on various police beats.

Moe Spector was not a star man, either. After working twenty years for The Star-Herald he was just dragging down forty-five bucks as the East Side district man. He'd probably never receive any more money. A good legman, he didn't have enough education to write up stories in scarehead fashion.

The veteran Spector, however, made a good thing out of sideline jobs. He sported an expensive limousine and only that winter had spent a month's vacation at Miami Beach. There were rumors that he owned part interest in a speakeasy and

also split damage-suit fees with ambulance-chasing lawyers to whom he gave hot tips about big accidents.

Collins always discredited this gossip as well as the tale that Moe Spector was chummy with Duke Perrelli, the big shot. The youth was not yet wise in the ways of a great city. He had not worked long enough on a newspaper to lose his many boyish illusions. He was much of a hero-worshipper and Moe Spector was his idol. True, he did not admire the older man's proneness to drink nor his slovenly physique.

A five-alarm fire in Rollins Street resulted in Moe Spector being rated the ideal reporter, a man to be always looked up to and admired. Collins, with his green police pass stuck in his hat band, ventured foolishly into a smouldering building. The roof caved in. Moe Spector lifted a heavy beam from the cub's chest and dragged him to safety.

For that reason Collins tonight had tried to save Spector from getting canned. But as the cub drove silently through dark, rainy streets, he realized grimly that the Tommy-gun burst undoubtedly had been meant for the older man.

Normally the Shore Drive Palace, being the great city's rowdiest roadhouse, was the scene of riotous drinking and profligate tumult until dawn. But darkness now shrouded the vast dance hall.

Collins advanced cautiously toward a long pier that jutted into the bay several hundred yards south of the roadhouse. He had driven his flivver up with only buglights showing and parked it further down on the sandy beach. In his right hand he gripped a steel jack handle from his flivver toolbox. It was not a very formidable weapon but it could serve in an emergency as a blackjack.

The dark, brooding waterfront, silent except for the incessant pounding of the waves against the shore, sent a creepy

feeling up the young reporter's spine. The rain changed to a fine drizzle. From behind a dark cloud peaked a sickly moon. At the beginning of the pier stood a small dockhouse. Out on the black water several boats bumped against the dock piles.

As the reporter neared the little building he saw the gleam of a shaded light through an open window and caught the faint murmur of slurred voices. One man at least was deep in his liquor.

Crouching low, Cub Collins tiptoed up to the window and peered over the sill. Stretched prone on a bench against the far wall lay a diminutive gangster whom the reporter recognized as Hoppy Rosen, dope fiend, stool pigeon and toady to all and sundry. The same Hoppy who earlier that evening had tipped off Collins that Duke Perrelli, supposed by police to be out of town, actually was lying low at his Shore Drive joint.

Collins shifted his position a bit and caught a glimpse of the other man. "Trigger" Jake Katz, chopper of the Perrelli mob, was hunched over a rough plank table guzzling liquor. Beside his elbow stood a square Gordon's Dry bottle, a carbide lamp and a blued steel Tommy gun with its underslung drum attached and ready for use. Trigger Jake's back was against the window.

"Hell's sure poppin' loose tonight!" grunted the machine gunner in a thick, drink-blurred voice. "We go choppin' 'em down and Gary Hayden's mob guns for our boys. But old Trigger Jake gets the big game. Puts the big shot editor on the spot! They found seventeen slugs in that stiff. How's that for an artistic job?"

"Aw, I heard you before," yawned Hoppy Rosen, stretching his arms. "The Duke says to keep your trap muzzled."

"Yeah?" sneered Trigger Jake. "Well, Duke Perrelli ain't gonna get too high-hat with me. Some day this mob's liable to have another boss!"

"Sure! It's liable to have another chopper, too," yawned Hoppy. "You might get in a real jam if it wasn't for the Duke's brains. That's smart work of his, sendin' you out to the rum fleet supply ships until the storm blows over. Understand that the police commish will run in about two hundred guys. Vagrancy charges! He's waitin' until mornin' so he can get a good play in the afternoon papers."

Hoppy stretched again and turned over toward the wall. Cub Collins stood upright and raised his jack handle. With a quick swing he crashed the steel bar down on Trigger Jake's skull. Although the weapon was light, the blow was well timed. The gangster pitched limply over the table, knocking the gin bottle clattering to the floor. The reporter thrust his right hand into a wet coat pocket and leaped for the door.

PRODDING the coat forward significantly, Collins turned menacingly on the pasty-faced snowbird whose shaking fingers reached for the Tommy gun.

"Stick 'em up, Hoppy!"

"Aw, Cub, don't gimme the clouds," pleaded the little stoolie, chattering. "I didn't give your boss the works. That was a good steer I gave you a coupla hours ago."

"Don't get funny then!" snapped Collins. "Grab that hawser in the corner!"

As Hoppy Rosen turned to obey the order, Collins whipped out his right hand and seized the Tommy gun. Trigger Jake, raising his head dazedly, found himself staring into the quick-firing muzzle.

"Not a peep, Jake!" snarled Collins. "Tie his wrists behind him, Hoppy. Do a good job or I'll make you look like a sieve!"

Collins kept away from the window and watched the door carefully while Hoppy Rosen securely bound Trigger

Jake's arms and legs and stuffed a gag of old rags in his mouth. The reporter tested the work and was satisfied. Then he commanded Hoppy to face the wall and, laying down the Tommy gun, bound and gagged the snowbird.

Hardly had he finished the job when the crunching of footsteps on the sand warned of a man's approach. Collins ducked to one side of the door and clutched the Tommy gun firmly. The newcomer was striding down from the Shore Drive Palace. From his present position Collins saw that the rear basement below the dance hall was brightly illuminated now.

As the man approached nearer, the young reporter broke into a smile and lowered the Tommy gun.

"Hello, Moe!" he called softly. "It's me! Look what I've got here for a scoop!"

Moe Spector, puffing a fat black Corona-Corona, strode into the dockhouse and stared around uneasily.

"What's this, Cub?"

"It's a scoop that's gonna win us two the Pulitzer prize for journalism!" explained Collins proudly. "I need your help. If we can drag these guys away, the Adams' kill is solved! A little third degree will make Hoppy Rosen chirp. I'm a witness that Trigger Jake admitted the job. How's that? Won't Duke Perrelli burn in the hot squat?"

"Sh—sh! Not so loud, Cub!" whispered Spector nervously. "The Duke's at the Palace. Geez, we two certainly will go on the spot for good if we make a misstep. Listen, we oughta get a patrol of cops out here right away. We can't cart these gorillas off alone. Might bump into some of the Duke's rods. Cripes, this will be some hot yarn, Cub! Smashin' the big shot of a million dollar racket!"

Spector suddenly turned, stuck his

swarthy head outside the door and stared up and down the beach.

"Listen, Cub," he grunted. "There's a phone in that garage in back of the Palace. Wanta try to slip up there and get headquarters on the wire? Or shall I go and phone?"

Collins stared at Spector but the fat man lowered his eyes. Instinctively the young reporter felt uneasy.

"You better phone," he stated quietly.

Spector blew out a circle of smoke and a grin spread over his dark features.

"Oh, boy! I gotta hand it to you!" he exclaimed enthusiastically. "You're no longer a cub! Got real gray matter above those specs of yours! Saved my life on Bayside Avenue this evenin' and now this double-barrelled scoop!"

Collins smiled. This was the friendly reporter he had known before. The old-timer always ready to help out a cub!

"Hurry up, Moe," he said. "I'll stand guard until you come back!"

MINUTES like hours dragged by and once more Collins grew worried. He wondered if there was a false note to Moe Spector's seemingly cordial voice. Surely he wouldn't—The man was grateful because the cub had saved his life. If he hadn't yanked Moe to the floor of the flivver the veteran reporter would be resting on a cold slab in the morgue.

But every time a wave slapped noisily against the shore, Cub Collins shivered. He stepped to the door and stared up at the Shore Drive Palace. Suddenly the basement lights flicked out. He cupped a hand to one ear in hopes of catching the purring sound of an automobile motor.

The dim moon slunk behind a cloud and the shore was now pitch dark. The reporter knelt beside the wriggling body of Trigger Jake and frisked him of a nine-shot automatic. Pocketing the pistol, he extinguished the carbide lamp. Then,

holding the machine gun under his right arm, Collins gripped with his left hand the neck of Trigger Jake's coat and pulled the gangster out of the boathouse.

Slowly and laboriously he dragged the chopper to the end of the pier. A fast little cabin speedboat was tied up at the piling. Collins dumped his prisoner on a foc'sle bunk and, still clutching the machine gun, started back toward the dockhouse. Inky blackness and a clammy fog mantled the pier.

The reporter cursed the lack of a flash. The rain made the old rotted boards slippery and suddenly Collins' feet shot out from under him. The Tommy gun spun into the air and dropped with a resounding splash into the black waters of the bay.

Collins' fingers clutched frantically for a grip. He seized the stringpiece on the edge of the pier but the rotted wood splintered. The reporter's feet shot into the water. He locked his arms around a wooden pile and tried to shinny up to the pier. But slimy green sea weed covered the wood and he could not keep his grip. Into the cold water he sank. It was over his head.

Treading water furiously, the cub bobbed up again and found he had lost his glasses. He started to shed his coat, then remembered the pocket contained an automatic, his only weapon. He struck out blindly for shore and in a few seconds reached shallow water and crawled up on the bank. In the dark he had not been able to judge his direction and now found himself some distance below the dockhouse.

Suddenly three searchlights hurled beams of yellow glaring light on the little building.

Rac-a-taca-tac-tac-ataca!

Hot slugs whined through the air and riddled the structure from the floor to the roof. Around the dark shed crouched a

score of armed thugs, pumping guns furiously. Collins staggered to his feet and hurried down the fog-blanketed beach. He did not stop to ponder what had happened. Maybe Duke Perrelli caught Moe Spector telephoning. Maybe not! The big thing was distance and the further those droning Tommy guns were behind the better for the health of a certain reporter.

As he raced down the sand, water sloshing around noisily in his shoes, a scheme formed in the nimble mind of Cub Collins and the idea added speed to his jaded legs.

When he reached the bullet-riddled Star-Herald flivver, he dived for a roll of tire tape and started twisting the durable sticky fibre around the steering wheel. He passed the tape several times around the steel rods supporting the car top on each side and in this way braced the wheel so that it would steer straight ahead as if a man were driving it.

Eventually the tape would break or become loosened, Collins realized, and the car would start spinning around in circles until it wrecked itself or plunged into the bay. But the young reporter didn't worry about that. He only wanted a few minutes to accomplish a little important business.

Caressing the starter and choking the carburetor gently, Collins soon had the motor pounding and knocking like a coast artillery battery. A couple of more twists of tape tied the throttle down to feed the cylinders a good flow of gas.

Crawling under the tape arms, the reporter released the hand brake and leaped from the running board. Chugging noisily, the old flivver started down the beach away from the battle scene. The Tommy guns were still. But now a dozen lusty shouts rang through the early morning air, announcing the supposed flight of Cub Collins.

As the reporter headed back for the pier a half dozen cars started in pursuit of the fugitive machine. Collins kept close to the water, ready to dive under if necessary, but he found the old dockhouse was deserted. All available gangsters, apparently, were tearing hell-bent after the Star-Herald flivver. Collins was thankful he was not attempting a getaway in that vehicle. It had rattles galore and only four cylinders. Duke Perrelli owned cars with real speed.

Across the threshold of the bullet-riddled dockhouse lay the bound body of Hoppy Rosen, peppered with 45 Tommy slugs. Evidently he had been killed before the gangsters tried to find out who was in the hut. Did that mean Moe Spector played rat on his newspaper pal? Or had gunmen forced the portly reporter to talk?

The cub made his way cautiously to the end of the pier. He had no desire to chance another slip and plunge into the cold black waters. Vaguely he saw the outline of the speedboat. Anxiously he paused a moment, cupping a hand to one ear. The only sounds were the slapping of the waves and the noise of a bound prisoner grunting and kicking around in the little forward cabin.

SHIFTING his wet automatic to his left hand, Collins drew out a pocket knife and slashed the rope tying the speedboat to the pier. Then he leaped into the low sternpit of the craft. Suddenly the cabin was flooded with light. A pistol shot rang out. Collins' jump, however, caused the boat to list heavily to starboard and the slug went wild.

The bright illumination revealed two familiar men. A little hatchet-faced individual, who had fired at the reporter and now aimed again, was Duke Perrelli himself. The other man, who had switched on the cabin lights, was Moe

Spector. He also clutched an automatic. On his swarthy face was a savage leer.

Collins moved his left index finger. A second time he squeezed the trigger frantically and once again. Only dull clicks came from the water-soaked weapon. Duke Perrelli's gun spat red flame and stinging lead. A hot slug tore into the biceps muscle of Collins' left arm. He ducked another shot and dove forward. The long-bladed jackknife in his right hand shot up viciously.

The reporter slashed into the Italian's stomach and at the same time warded off the gangster's gat with his own water-soaked weapon. Collins ripped the knife out and jabbed again. The blade stuck between two ribs and snapped off. With a weird groan, Duke Perrelli doubled up in agony. He staggered to and fro a moment and then plunged headlong against the stern, fingers still clutching his automatic.

Moe Spector charged forward savagely.

"You damned smart alec!" snarled the traitor-reporter. "Think you're born lucky, huh? You wasn't, Cub! Killin' Duke Perrelli was just a good break for me! It means I'll be leader of the mob. Boss of a racket with millions behind me! That's why Gary Hayden's choppers tried to rub me out earlier this evenin'. That typewriter work wasn't the same tune that smoked out Harry Adams! Look, Cub! My gorillas are comin' back to watch me bump you off!"

Collins didn't turn. The roaring of motors told of the approach of a whole fleet of cars. The gangsters had learned they were tricked and were coming back for vengeance!

The reporter's head reeled. He felt weak from loss of blood. All the weapons he possessed were a useless automatic and a jackknife with the blade broken off. With a quick snap of the wrist, he hurled the heavy gun at Spector's swarthy face

and ducked to the starboard gunwale. Crack! Crack! Two cartridges whizzed over his head.

Like a madman he leaped at Spector's huge body. A bullet exploded. He felt a dull, aching pain in his ribs. Onward he plunged. Out shot his right arm and seized the fat man's pistol wrist. Wrenching the muzzle to one side, he rammed a stiff knee into Spector's bulging stomach.

Spector caught the cub's upraised leg, yanked him off balance and the two men crashed in a tangled heap on the deck. Kicking, wrestling and gouging, the fighters thrashed about the little sternpit, struggling to gain possession of the gun.

Off on shore shots rang through the darkness. Sirens of police cars blared their eerie warnings. The commissioner was making his wholesale morning raids to impress a credulous public. The afternoon papers would grant him applauding scareheads. Large point Bodoni streamers that would humble all other news such as— Would a stick of type relate the obituary of a cub reporter?

Moe Spector, with his superior strength and weight, lifted Collins up a foot and banged his head against the deck. The fat man twisted his right arm. Bit into the flesh. The young reporter felt sick in the stomach. His strength ebbed. But he continued to clutch Spector's pistol wrist firmly. Was this the end? Had all his daring and ingenuity gone for naught?

Rallying his waning energy he made a desperate lunge and scrambled on top of his opponent. With a sudden jerk he tore the pistol from Spector's chubby fingers. The fat man seized Collins' gun wrist but the grip was now weak. Down against the swarthy forehead of the gang henchman shoved the blued steel muzzle.

"You saved my life once," gasped Cub Collins, panting heavily as if choking. "You, yes, you were my ideal of a re-

porter! I looked up to you! Didn't believe rumors— Thought a dirty double-crossin' gangster was a great guy! Now Moe I'm gonna pay you back! I'm gonna save you!"

Deliberately he squeezed the trigger. A slug whirled through the short barrel and a potential leader of Duke Perrelli's mob was no longer a menace to society.

The lanky reporter jumped to his feet and spun the flywheel of the speedboat engine. Already policemen with searchlights were striding down to the pier. In the east, across the bay, the dawn was breaking.

The engine coughed and spat, then burst into life and roared with power. Collins staggered to the steering wheel, switched off the cabin lights and headed out into the foggy bay. A few stray shots whizzed over the launch but the young reporter soon was beyond the range of police guns. The cabin prisoner, Trigger Jake Katz, was dead. Duke Perrelli and Moe Spector, apparently, decided that the chopper who mowed down Editor Adams knew too much to live.

Into the heavy fog Collins headed the

speedboat. He anchored finally in a little hidden cove of an island far out in the bay and there the boat remained secreted until the sun set once more. Like a true morning paper reporter, Collins was no friend of the day. That was the reign of the afternoon sheets.

Darkness found Cub Collins' little speedboat tied up at the marine police pier where a solitary photographer, a Star-Herald man, was on hand to take pictures of a rearranged fight scene. In less than an hour the giant Hoe press of The Star-Herald was rumbling out thousands of copies of the latest Murder Extra, a scoop on the entire town.

And in a short time throughout all the streets and homes of the great city men and women read the story of how a second Star-Herald man died fighting to rid the metropolis of gangdom's stranglehold. But Morris Spector, known to thousands as a humble police reporter nicknamed "Moe," did not perish in vain. He went to his death happy in the knowledge that he had solved the murder of his crusading editor, Harry Adams, and had meted grim justice to the killer!

They Were a Slick Pair—

Abe Gottlieb, the fence, and Laura Roberts, the prettiest moll in gangdom. Yet somebody played them for suckers, somebody copped all the hot stuff they'd swindled, sent them into hiding while two gangs looked for them. Tommy guns blazed in the streets, gangsters went on one-way rides. The underworld was

Loaded With Dynamite

Yet Paul Pry sat in his bullet-proof hideout and laughed. Again he'd double-crossed gangdom, again he'd collected a toll. Clever and baffling was the stunt he pulled, crammed full of smoke-rod action too. It's

ERLE STANLEY GARDNER'S

Most Exciting Paul Pry Story

DON'T FAIL TO READ IT IN OCTOBER GANG WORLD!

LISTEN YOU—



GREETINGS, Gang! Believe it or not, the battle started by Freddie A. Haddell of Bristol, Penn., still rages. Is Freddie gettin' dragged over the coals by the growing army of Gang World's readers? I should hope to swear he is! Even the ladies, blondes included, are taking pokes at poor little Freddie. Get a load of this—

Gang World:

Just started reading your wonderful magazine. I liked every story in the June issue except the true stories. And that letter you received from that flossy by the name of Freddie A. Haddell surely tickled me. Freddie reminds me of a boy in this town. His mother still washes his face and combs his hair. There ought to be a law against "Men" like Freddie. You tell him I said so and by all means continue to publish the same type of stories in Gang World. I rate your magazine the best on the stands and wouldn't think of missing an issue. Best of wishes,

Sincerely yours,
Elizabeth Schreck,
Birmingham, Ala.

I was just gonna lay off Freddie for a while when the mailman comes in with another load o' sweet remarks for the poor guy. Here's a hot tip from Albany—concerning that red necktie gent.

Gang World:

I've been reading Gang World since the first month it hit the stands. This is my first letter to you and it comes because I've read a letter from a fellow named Freddie Haddell. If this magazine doesn't suit him, why doesn't he read Beatrice Fairfax? The more I thought about that letter, the more I thought about the time I met the same kind of a fellow in France. He was the kind of a guy that's only kidding and makes you think he means it. I have a hunch Freddie is just taking you editors "for a ride." Any how you just keep Gang World as good as it's always been and Freddie and I will continue to read it. You might cut out that coupon. So far I haven't read a bad story in any issue. They all rate first place.

Yours truly
Mr. X.
Vicksburg, Mich.

Nice signature, hey gang? Mr. X. Take 'em off, George, we know you! Cell number 4253 on the B row, wasn't it? If I remember right you got ten days in solitary for drawing a picture o' Venus on the cell wall. An' what I mean, you deserved it! Imagine Freddie gettin' put in that cell an' seein' Venus—without even one veil? The warden should've handed you life, an' then some. An' how come I know all about you? Well brother, it was this way. Believe it or not, I was in

that jail just because it was rainin' outside an' I had on my Sunday hat.

Now just to prove that there is such a place as Portland, Maine, I'll introduce Mr. Kenneth Cole, providing you mugs stow the rods away and lay off the wise-cracks.

Gang World:

For an evening of real thrills give me Gang World! Your May issue was my first but you can bet it won't be my last. I'll be at the news stands when the June issue arrives and I hope you'll have it full of stories like "Smoke Street" "The Fifty Grand Fool" "One Way Out" and "Dead Men's Shoes To Fill." Do you want a dandy slogan for your magazine? Here it is— Bigger and better gang stories are being written and Gang World is where you'll find them.

Yours very truly,
Kenneth Cole
Portland, Maine.

O. K., old man. But what this country needs is less slogans an' bigger an' better jails.

NOW here's something that's absolute Greek to me, and after straining my brain—sure, I've got a brain, you fat-head— I've decided to pass it on to you mugs as is. If any o' you wiseguys can translate it into honest to God United States, I'd appreciate it. Is Hastings handing out bouquets or is he heavin' bricks? I've met some fancy words while I was playin' hookey from school, but these sure take the prize cookie. Hold on to your ears while I spill this—

Gang World:

While perusing the current volume of Gang World, it was my misfortune to chance upon a missive originating in Bristol, Penn. If Mr. Freddie A. Haddell, the author of the aforementioned missive had a brain in keeping with his vocabulary, he would not have made so colossal a fool of himself. Your publication is entirely to my

taste. I emphatically rate it the best of its type. Eradicate the things Haddell objects to and you lose the esteem—and twenty cents—of

William Hastings,
Moline, Ill.

I have spoken!

You have spoken? Brother, an' how! This is the first time in my life that I itched to be educated, an' I don't mean in the crib-bustin' line! Sometime when you're in this burg, please stop in an' see us. We wanna see how your jaws act when you're throwing the dictionary around in chunks as big as this. But don't get us wrong, Willie. We like you, see?

An' now I've got space enough to slip you heels the low-down on the next issue o' Gang World! May I have my arms folded on my chest an' a lily in my mitt this very night if it ain't the best magazine you ever stayed up half the night with. There's a collection o' yarns between those covers that'll take you right into the hangout o' the toughest mugs that ever wore O'Sullivan's; a collection o' yarns that'll make you freeze to your chair till the last shot's fired an' the last badman is stretched on his back countin' the stars. Get our next number. Read it. If I said it was any better than you find it, you can write in an' call me four dirty names. Four, I said. Not five, remember! So long. Willie the Sock.

Gang World Magazine, 205 East 42nd Street, New York, N. Y.	September
Give me more stories like:	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
Comments:	
Name.....	
Address.....	
City and State.....	

THREE SURE-FIRE MAGS THAT DON'T MISS A PUNCH!

Detective Action Stories

Mystery, thrills, excitement in—

THE CLUBHOUSE MURDER

By Edward Parrish Ware

"On a bed in the corner, clothed in pajamas and slippers, lay a blond girl. While he watched from the hole in the ceiling, she rose and he saw that she was under the influence of numbing drugs. Carefully setting to work with his clasp knife, Darrah enlarged the opening. Before he had finished the woman was looking up. He called to her softly.

"Don't be afraid. I'm here to help you. Are you Mary Morgan?"

"The girl nodded.

"Darrah turned to get a better station on the rafter and his glance ranged backward to where he had cut the hole in the ceiling of his own room. A smothered oath escaped him. When he left, the room had been in darkness. Now a square of light illuminated it. His escape was known!"

Alone, surrounded by enemies, the position of Jim Darrah, chief of the Arkansas Swamp Rangers, was a dangerous one. But he meant to meet it with ready fists—and blazing guns. This is a different kind of mystery story that will thrill as well as baffle you. Be sure not to miss it. You will find it in September **DETECTIVE ACTION**. On sale August 5.

Battle Aces

Adventure, breath-taking suspense, danger in—

THE JAILBIRD FLIGHT

By Donald E. Keyhoe

Below the Rio Grande he had once been known as "The Killer." Now he flew through hell skies, leader of the strongest, most desperate squadron of doomed men that ever dared face death from flaming Spandaus. Outcasts, all of them—branded with the convict's mark—shunned by their fellow countrymen.

"I have a desperate mission," the colonel said slowly. "And I need desperate men. Those who form this squadron will not live through the war. They will be used for what we call the suicide flights. If they die before the work is finished, others will replace them and carry on. . . ."

Don't miss this great gripping story about the greatest flyer of them all and his grim-faced, reckless brood. In September **BATTLE ACES**. For sale at all newsstands July 30.

Western Rangers

Hard-riding, fast-shooting and scrambled hell in—

THE DEVIL'S TWIN

By Ralph Cummins

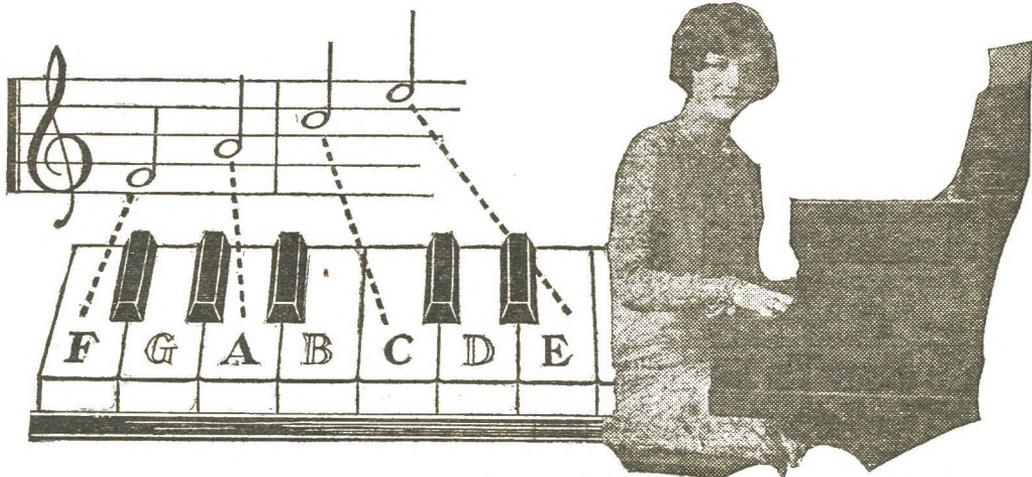
"The man was given one glimpse of blazing eyes and two black curls like devil's horns, and he let out a squawk of terror." Two shrewd badmen looked on and smiled. This was the first step in their clever plan. They knew Lon Hayden charged first and thought later, and they were baiting him to frame himself. But they did not know that hidden away by a dead man's hand was a strange and most amazing testimonial to the character of this young wildcat heller.

What was that mysterious document? Why did those hardened criminals quail at the sight of it? Lon himself knew nothing of it. Why did honest Sheriff Patterson keep it secret? Read the answer in the most thrilling novelette ever written.

Buy September **WESTERN RANGERS**.

On the stands August 10.

To those who think Learning Music is hard-



PERHAPS you think that taking music lessons is like taking a dose of medicine. It isn't any longer!

As far as you're concerned, the old days of long practice hours with their horrid scales, hard-work exercises, and expensive personal teacher fees are over and done with.

You have no excuses—no alibis whatsoever for not making your start toward musical good times now!

For, through a method that removes the boredom and extravagance from music lessons, you can now learn to play your favorite instrument entirely at home—without a private teacher—in half the usual time—at a fraction of the usual cost.

Just imagine . . . a method that has made the reading of music so downright simple that you don't have to know one note from another to begin.

Do you wonder that this remarkable way of learning music has already been vouched for by over 600,000 people in all parts of the world.

Easy As Can Be

The lessons come to you by mail from the famous U. S. School of Music. They consist of complete printed instructions, diagrams and all the music you need. You study with a smile. One week you

are learning a dreamy waltz—the next you are mastering a stirring march. As the lessons continue they prove easier and easier. For instead of just scales you are always learning to play by *actual notes* the classic favorites and the latest syncopation that formerly you only listened to.

And you're never in hot water. First you are *told* how a thing is done. Then a picture *shows* you how, then you do it yourself and hear it. No private teacher could make it clearer or easier.

Soon when your friends say "please play something," you can surprise and entertain them with pleasing melodies on your favorite instrument. You'll find yourself in the spotlight—popular everywhere. Life at last will have its silver lining and lonely hours will vanish as you play the "blues" away

Don't be afraid to begin your lessons at once. Over 600,000 people learned to play this modern way—and found it easy as A-B-C. Forget that old-fashioned idea that you need special "talent." Just read the list of instruments in the panel, decide which one you want to play, and the U. S. School will do the rest. And bear in mind no matter which instrument you choose, the cost in each case will average the same—just a few cents a day. No matter whether you are a mere beginner or already a good performer, you will be interested in learning about this new and wonderful method.

Send for Our Free Book and Demonstration Lesson

Our wonderful illustrated Free Book and our Free Demonstration Lesson explain all about this remarkable method. They prove just how anyone can learn to play his favorite instrument by note in almost no time and for just a fraction of what old slow methods cost. The booklet will also tell you about the amazing new *Automatic Finger Control*.

Read the list of instruments to the left, decide which you want to play, and the U. S. School of Music will do the rest. Act NOW. Clip and mail this coupon today, and the fascinating Free Book and Free Demonstration Lesson will be sent to you at once. No obligation. Instruments supplied when needed, cash or credit. U. S. School of Music, 1128 Brunswick Bldg., New York City.

U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC

1128 Brunswick Bldg., New York City
Please send me your free book, "Music Lessons in Your Own Home," with introduction by Dr. Frank Crane, Free Demonstration Lesson and particulars of your easy payment plan. I am interested in the following course:

Have You
Inst?

Name

Address

City..... State.....

Pick Your Instrument

Piano Organ Ukulele Cornet Trombone Piccolo Guitar Hawaiian Steel Guitar Sight Singing Piano Accordion Voice Speech Culture Harmony and Composition Drums and Traps Automatic Finger Control Basso (Plectrum, 5-String or Tenor) Italian and German Accordion Juniors' Piano Course	Violin Clarinet Flute Saxophone Harp Mandolin Cello
--	---

New Friends— Better Times

If you're tired of doing the heavy looking-on at parties--if always listening to others play has almost spoiled the pleasure of music for you—if you've been envious because they could entertain their friends and family—if learning music has always been one of those never-to-come-true dreams, let the time-proven and tested home-study method of the U. S. School of Music come to your rescue.



LAW

-for Larger Success in BUSINESS-



To the man who would rise to a commanding position in business, a sound and practical knowledge of Law is exceedingly valuable. Among the larger business enterprises, the law-trained man is often preferred for the higher executive positions. Many great corporations—the C. & N. W. Ry., for example, the International Paper Co., the Packard Motor Co., the Mutual Life Insurance Co., the Standard Oil Co. of N. J., the Anaconda Copper Mining Co., the Consolidated Gas Co. of N. Y.—are headed by men of legal training. In the smaller corporations or in one's own business, a knowledge of law spells larger success.

For the whole intricate structure of business is based on LAW. "In looking over the field," writes a prominent Eastern manufacturer, "I find that nearly all the positions commanding a salary of \$10,000 or more are filled by men who have studied law." Fit yourself at home, in your spare time, for larger success in business. Full law course leading to degree of LL.B., or shorter Business Law course. LaSalle will guide you step by step. We furnish all text material, including 14-volume Law Library. Low cost, easy terms. Get our valuable 64-page "Law Guide," and "Evidence" books free. Send for them now.

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY, Dept. 9340-L, CHICAGO
The World's Largest Business Training Institution

\$5,000 WILL BE PAID TO ANYONE WHO PROVES THAT THIS

is not the actual photo of myself showing my superb physique and how the Ross system has increased my own height to 6 ft. 8 1/2 inches

Hundreds of Testimonials. Clients up to 45 years old gain from 1 to 6 inches in a few weeks.

FIRST IN 1907 FIRST TO-DAY

No Appliances—No Drugs—No Dieting
ROSS SYSTEM NEVER FAILS. Fee Ten Dollars Complete
Convincing Testimony and Full Plans Complete.
"Allow time for return mails across the Atlantic."
G. MARCOLM ROSS, Height Specialist
Scarborough, England, (P. O. Box 18)

SONG WRITERS

Don't fail to read "Song Requirements of Talking Pictures, Radio and Records" an explanatory, instructive book SENT FREE on request. New writers may mail song-poems for free examination. We revise, compose and arrange music, and secure copyrights, guarantee approval.

M. B. Newcomer Associates, 1674 Broadway, New York

FREE How To Secure A Government Position

Tells About These and Other Positions

RAILWAY POSTAL CLERK \$1850 to \$2700 a Year

POSTMASTER \$1200 to \$2500 a Year

CUSTOMS HOUSE CLERK \$1140 to \$2700 a Year

INTERNAL REVENUE MEN \$1140 to \$2700 a Year

R. F. D. MAIL CARRIER \$1800 to \$2000 a Year

FREE BOOK Tells how I can help you get a Government Job. For 2 years I was Civil Service Examiner—have helped thousands. If citizen 18 to 60 you can qualify. Get ready NOW for the next Railway Postal Clerk Examination! Send for free book. Valid at all coupon TODAY.

A. R. PATTERSON, Civil Service Expert, 526 Warner Bldg., Rochester, N.Y. Please send me your free book "How to Secure a Government Position."

Name

Address

Outdoor Jobs

Wanted: Names of men desiring outdoor jobs; \$140-\$200 month; vacation. Patrol National and State Parks; Protect Game. Details Free. Write

DELMAR INSTITUTE
Dept. A38 Denver, Colo.

MAKE \$100.00 A WEEK FOR ONLY 2 SALES DAILY

Take orders for my wonder value all-wool suits, tailored-to-measure. Finely made. New low prices. Bigger commissions than ever, paid daily. Generous bonus to producers. Style creations to please critical men. A big selling, big profit line. No experience needed. Write now for FREE outfit of large swatch samples. You are under no obligation.

W. Z. GIBSON, Inc., Dept. J-454, 500 Throop St., Chicago, Ill.

SAVE 12 MONTHS SERVICE GUARANTEED

LOOK! TIRES NEW LOW PRICES Why Pay More?

GOODRICH·GOOD·YEAR·U.S. Firestone and OTHER TIRES

Lowest Prices on Earth! Thousands of satisfied tire users all over the U. S. A. Our 16 years of business speaks for itself. This big responsible company will supply you with reconstructed standard make tires at lowest prices in history—Guaranteed to give 12 months' service

Don't Delay—Order Today

CORD TIRES	BALLOON TIRES
Size Tires Tubes	
80x3, \$2.20 \$1.00	29x4.40 \$2.30 \$1.10
80x3 1/2, 2.25 1.00	29x4.60 2.40 1.10
82x3 1/2, 2.70 1.10	31x5.50 3.45 1.20
81x4, 2.95 1.15	28x4.75 2.45 1.20
82x4, 2.95 1.15	30x4.75 2.50 1.20
84x4, 3.50 1.15	29x5.25 2.95 1.35
86x4 1/2, 3.50 1.45	31x5.25 2.95 1.35
88x4 1/2, 3.20 1.45	29x5.25 2.95 1.35
84x4 1/2, 3.45 1.45	30x5.25 2.95 1.35
86x4 1/2, 3.45 1.75	31x5.25 3.10 1.35
88x4 1/2, 3.60 1.75	30x5.75 3.20 1.40
86x5, 3.60 1.75	30x5.75 3.20 1.40
88x5, 3.60 1.75	31x5.75 3.20 1.40
86x6, 3.45 1.75	32x5.75 3.20 1.45
All Other Sizes	\$25.00 3.50 1.55

DEALERS WANTED

Send only \$1.00 deposit with each tire ordered. We ship balance C. O. D. Deduct 5 percent. If cash in full accompanies order.

Tires falling to give 12 months service will be replaced at half price.

YORK TIRE & RUBBER CO., Dept. 724
3855-59 Cottage Grove Ave. Chicago, Ill.

BE A RAILWAY TRAFFIC INSPECTOR

RAILWAY and BUS. Earn Up to \$250 Per Month

Active men—19 to 55—needed at once in Railway and Bus Passenger Traffic Inspection. Steady, profitable work pays up to \$250 per month plus expenses. Interesting outdoor work. Travel or remain near home. We'll train you for this uncrowded profession and on completion of a few weeks' home instruction immediately place you in a position paying from \$120 to \$150 per month plus expenses to start, or refund your tuition. Free Booklet tells about this assured opportunity in the Field of Transportation. Write Today. **STANDARD BUSINESS TRAINING INSTITUTE, Div. 3109, Buffalo, N.Y.**

\$-----ALWAYS HAVE LUCK-----\$

Unlucky in Money, Games, Love or Business? You should carry a pair of genuine MYSTIC BRAHMA RED LIVE HIGHLY MAGNETIC LODESTONES. Rare, Amazing, Compelling, Attractive, these LIVE LODESTONES are carried by Occult Oriental people as a POWERFUL LUCKY CHARM, one to prevent Bad Luck, Evil and Misfortune, and the other to attract much Good Luck, Love, Happiness and Prosperity. Special, only \$1.97 for the two. With free full instructions. Pay postage \$1.97 and 15c postage on delivery. Satisfaction or money refunded. You can be LUCKY! Order yours TODAY!

Dept. D-93 P. S. BUREAU, General P. O. Box 72, Brooklyn, N. Y.

NOTICE! We absolutely GUARANTEE these genuine Mystic Brahma Lodestones are ALIVE! Just what you want, for they are the Real Thing—POWERFUL, HIGHLY MAGNETIC!

A Year's Protection Against
SICKNESS

Less than 3c a Day!

A Year's Protection Against
ACCIDENT

CASH or sympathy?

Which do you want?

Suppose you met with an accident or sickness tonight—salary stopped—which would you prefer

\$25 Weekly . . . or Sympathy?

Which would you Pay? !

Would you rather pay bills and household expenses out of a slim savings account or a . . .

Which will your family want?

In case of your accidental death, which would you rather give your family . . .

\$10,000 Cash . . . or Sympathy?

\$10 Bill

For a Whole Year's Protection Against

SICKNESS and ACCIDENT

NO MEDICAL EXAMINATION

\$10 a Year Entire Costs.

No Dues. No Assessments.

MEN AND WOMEN

16 to 70 Years Accepted.

\$10,000

Principal Sum.

\$10,000

Loss of hands, feet or eyesight.

\$25 Weekly Benefits

for stated Accidents or Sicknesses.

Doctor's Bills, Hospital Benefit, Emergency Benefit and other liberal features to help in time of need—all clearly shown in policy.

This is a simple and understandable policy—without complicated or misleading clauses. You know exactly what every word means—and every word means exactly what it says.

NORTH AMERICAN ACCIDENT INSURANCE CO. [Chicago]

139 WALLACH BUILDING, NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

Largest and Oldest Exclusive Health and Accident Insurance Company in America

Under Supervision of 48 State Insurance Departments

ESTABLISHED OVER 44 YEARS

Agents Wanted For New Territory.

Get Cash instead of Sympathy. If you met with an accident in your home, on the street, or road, in the field, or on your job—will your income continue? Remember, few escape without accident—and none of us can tell what tomorrow holds for us. While you are reading this warning, somewhere some ghastly tragedy is taking its toll of human life or limb, some flood or fire, some automobile or train disaster. Protect yourself now.]

Get Cash instead of Sympathy.

If you suddenly became ill—would your income stop? What if you contracted lobar pneumonia, appendicitis operation, or any of the many common ills which are covered in this strong policy, wouldn't you rest easier and convalesce more quickly if you knew that this old line company stood ready to help lift from your shoulders, distressing financial burdens in case of a personal tragedy? Protect yourself now.

Get Cash instead of Sympathy.

Don't Wait for Misfortune to Overtake You

Mail the Coupon today!

Mail the Coupon before it's too late to protect yourself against the chances of fate picking you out as its next victim.

North American Accident Insurance Co.,
139 Wallach Building, Newark, New Jersey.

Gentlemen: At no cost to me send copy of your booklet "Cash or Sympathy."

Name.....

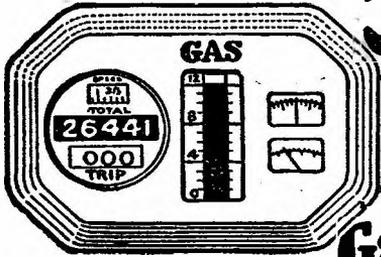
Address.....

City.....State.....

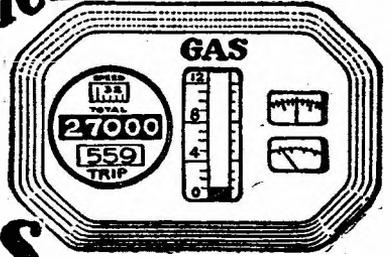
Please mention MAN STORY MAGAZINES (POPULAR PUBLICATION GROUP) when answering advertisements.

Over the Mountains from Los Angeles

559 Miles



on 11



Gallons of GAS

Think of it! FIVE HUNDRED FIFTY-NINE MILES over rough mountainous country burning only ELEVEN GALLONS OF GASOLINE. Imagine more than FIFTY MILES to the GALLON. That is what the WHIRLWIND CARBURETING DEVICE does for D. R. Gilbert, enough of a saving on just one trip to more than pay the cost of the Whirlwind.

THE WHIRLWIND SAVES MOTORISTS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS YEARLY

Whirlwind users, reporting the results of their tests, are amazed at the results they are getting. Letters keep streaming into the office telling of mileages all the way from 22 to 59 miles on a gallon, resulting in a saving of from 25% to 50% in gas bills alone.

Mark H. Estes writes: "I was making 17 miles to the gallon on my Pontiac Coupe. Today, with the Whirlwind, I am making 35 5/10 miles to the gallon. Am I glad I put it on? I'll say so!"

P. P. Goerzen writes: "I made an actual test both with and without a Whirlwind, getting 13 1/2 miles without and 34 6/10 miles with the Whirlwind, or a gain of 21 miles to the gallon. The longer the Whirlwind is in use on the machine the better the engine runs, has more pep and quicker starting. It makes a new engine out of an old one, and starts at the touch of the starter button."

R. J. Tulp: "The Whirlwind increased the mileage on our Ford truck from 12 to 26 miles to gallon and 25% in speed. We placed another on a Willys-Knight and increased from 12 to 17 miles per gallon."

Arthur Grant: "I have an Oakland touring car that has been giving me 15 miles to the gallon average, but I can see a great difference with the Whirlwind, as it climbs the big hills on high and gives me better than 23 miles to the gallon of gas, which is better than 50% saving in gas."

W. A. Scott: "I had my Whirlwind for three years. Winter and summer it gives the same perfect service, instant starting, smoother running, and what I have saved in gasoline these last few years has brought other luxuries which I could not have afforded previously."

Car owners all over the world are saving money every day with the Whirlwind, besides having better operating motors. Think what this means on your own car. Figure up your savings—enough for a radio—a bank account—added pleasures. Why let the Oil Companies profit by your waste? Find out about this amazing little device that will pay for itself every few weeks in gas saving alone.

GUARANTEE

No matter what kind of a car you have—no matter how big a gas saver it is—the Whirlwind will save you money. We absolutely guarantee that the Whirlwind will more than save its cost in gasoline alone within thirty days, or the trial will cost you nothing. We invite you to test it at our risk and expense. You are to be the sole judge.

FREE OFFER COUPON

WHIRLWIND MANUFACTURING CO.,
Dept. 550-A, Station C, Milwaukee, Wis.

Gentlemen: You may send me full particulars of your Whirlwind Carbureting device and tell me how I can get one free. This does not obligate me in any way whatever.

Name

Address

City

County State

Check here if you are interested in full or part time salesmen position.

FITS ALL CARS

In just a few minutes the Whirlwind can be installed on any make of car, truck or tractor. It's actually less work than changing your oil or putting water in the battery. No drilling, tapping or changes of any kind necessary. It is guaranteed to work perfectly on any make of car, truck or tractor, large or small, new model or old model. The more you drive the more you will save.

SALESMEN AND DISTRIBUTORS WANTED

To make up to \$100.00 a week and more.

Whirlwind men are making big profits supplying this fast-selling device that car owners cannot afford to be without. Good territory is still open. Free sample offer to workers. Full particulars sent on request. Just check the coupon.

WHIRLWIND MANUFACTURING CO.

Dept. 550-A, Station C Milwaukee, Wis.

16 the first night for playing!

MOST of the world works for a living—works hard, too. But that doesn't mean you have to. Why not play for a living? Do something you like to do, and make it pay you big money. Plenty of men and women who had a hard time to get along six months ago—are now making from \$50 to \$100 a week—playing their Hawaiian Guitars. And they didn't know how to read a single note of music when they came to me.

America's Most Popular Music

The haunting, soft, melodious strumming of the Hawaiian Guitar is America's most popular music. Everywhere orchestras are looking for men and women who can play the Hawaiian Guitar. Everywhere those who have mastered the Hawaiian Guitar are getting paid more and more money. Roy Reikane writes in, "I have made \$200 extra money in 6 weeks playing my Hawaiian Guitar." Carlton E. Scarbro recently wrote me, "I have made \$1,000 since I took your course." Granville Smith writes, "I make \$8 a night and play only 4 hours."



One of the Dozens of Photo helps sent with each Course

Hundreds of such letters have come in. But let me tell you about my short-cut to good times and big pay—my simplified method of learning to play the Hawaiian Guitar at home in a few weeks. A new method—so easy to understand—so much fun to learn—that even a child can pick it up. (We have successfully taught children only 8 years of age.)

Pictures Instead of Words, Teach You

I don't care if you have never read a note in your life, or even know what a Hawaiian Guitar looks like. All I ask is that you like music. My methods are so clear and easy to understand that you will actually play a real melody after the very first lesson. Sounds uncanny; doesn't it? Here's how I do it.

With your lessons I send dozens of photographs showing just how to place your fingers, how to strum the strings. My Know-All and Master charts teach you to read notes almost automatically. It's as simple as learning your A B C's over again. Some of our students become finished musicians the first month; others take a little longer, but they all learn with surprising speed.

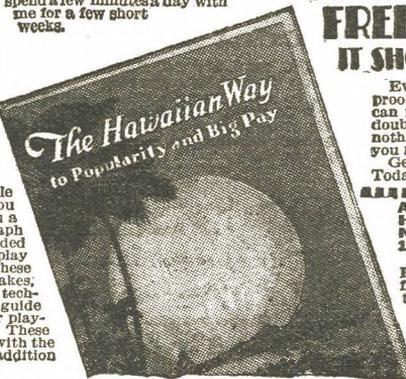
Lonesome? It's a Sure Cure!

Once you have mastered the Hawaiian Guitar, the world lies waiting at your feet. You can travel anywhere, meet the best people, live in real style and comfort, and gain a host of friends. All this is yours, waiting for you; if you are willing to spend a few minutes a day with me for a few short weeks.



We Send You Regular Phonograph Records of Every Piece in the Course

And we don't miss a single bet. To make sure that you can't go wrong, we send you a whole set of regular phonograph records, on which is recorded every melody you learn to play while taking the course. These aid you to correct minor mistakes, and assure you of perfect technique. With these records to guide you—the tiniest error in your playing is quickly corrected. These records come absolutely free with the course and are an excellent addition to your home music as well.



This is what Prutzman Did

"A friend asked me if I could play the Hawaiian Guitar. I told him I'd only been playing for a few weeks, but he said, 'Come along anyway, and play at the dance.' I made out very well, and was paid \$16 for my first night's work. And I see more opportunities ahead." —RALPH PRUTZMAN, Lehigh-ton, Pa.



We Give You this Genuine HAWAIIAN GUITAR WORTH \$20

Send for FREE BOOK IT SHOWS YOU HOW

Everything is explained. Every last bit of proof is given you. It shows you just how you can master the Hawaiian Guitar at home in double-quick time. How you risk absolutely nothing to learn. How I send everything you need.

Get on the road to Big Pay and Pleasure Today. Write Now!

A. F. Bloch, President.
Hawaiian Studios, 218-091 of
New York Academy of Music,
100 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Without obligation, send me FREE Book "The Hawaiian Way to Popularity and Big Pay," with facts on how I can make BIG MONEY, spare-time or full-time.

Name.....Age.....

Address.....

City.....State.....

Please mention MAN STORY MAGAZINES (POPULAR PUBLICATION GROUP) when answering advertisements.

"Take me away from him!"

"Lock me up so I cannot escape—beat me if you like—and I will tell you all I know. But while HE is my master I will not betray HIM!"

Terrified, trembling, she crouched there—an exotic vision from the Orient—pleading with the stern-faced detective to save her from the fiend she called "Master!"

Who was this girl—whose rare loveliness stood out so richly against its setting of murder and deviltry?

Who was this Yellow Monster who plucked men from life and left no clue behind?

What were the strange bonds that made her his slave?

If you would join London's greatest detectives in unwinding this and many other equally baffling Oriental Mysteries—if you would match your wits against the most diabolical Oriental cunning ever conceived—then by all means send at once for Your Free Examination Set of



If you would enjoy exciting and unbelievable adventures as you plunge from the bright world of the West into the dubious underworld of the East—send for your free examination set while this offer is still open!

MASTERPIECES of ORIENTAL MYSTERY 11 Volumes of Matchless Thrills by SAX ROHMER

NO ORDINARY mystery stories are these, but the hidden secrets, mysteries and intrigues of the Orient itself!

Before your very eyes spreads a swiftly moving panorama that takes you breathless from the high places of society—from homes of refinement

to sinister underworlds of London and the Far East— from Piccadilly and Broadway to incredible scenes behind idol

temples in far off China—to the jungles of Malay; along strange paths to the very seat of Hindu sorcery.

PACKED WITH THRILLS FROM COVER TO COVER

Be the first in your community to own these, the most wonderful Oriental mystery stories ever published—books that have sold by the hundred thousand at much higher prices—books you will enjoy reading over and over again. Handsomely bound in substantial cloth covers, a proud adornment for your table or shelf.

These are the sort of stories that famous statesmen; financiers and other great men read to help them relax—to forget their burdens. To read these absorbing tales of the mysterious East is to cast your worries into oblivion—to increase your efficiency.



IF YOU ACT NOW!

A fortunate circumstance enables us to offer you free, as a premium for promptness, this beautiful 16-inch Karamaneh necklace of fine imported simulated light green JADE and small moonstones.

JADE is the semi-precious stone celebrated by poets and the delight of Chinese emperors.

The retail value of this lovely necklace is \$3.00—but you get it free if you accept our offer now!

Priced for Quick Sale

Cutting royalties to the bone and printing these volumes by the hundred thousand when paper was cheap, makes this low price possible. But the number is limited; so mail coupon today!

Complete Sets Free on Approval

You needn't send a cent. Simply mail the coupon and this amazing set will go to you immediately. all charges prepaid. If it fails to delight you, return it in ten days at our expense, and you owe us nothing.

MAIL COUPON NOW, YOU RISK NOTHING

Dept. 130-9-31
McKINLAY,
STONE &
MACKENZIE
114 E. 16 St., N.Y.

Send me for free examination, charges prepaid, your set of Masterpieces of Oriental Mystery, in 11 hand-

some cloth volumes. If after 10 days, I am delighted, I will send you \$1.00 promptly and \$1.00 a month for only 14 months; when you receive my first payment you are to send me the Karamaneh necklace without extra cost. Otherwise, I will return the set in 10 days at your expense, the examination to cost me nothing.



Name.....
Street.....
City..... State.....
Occupation.....

McKinlay, Stone & Mackenzie, Dept. 130, 114 E. 16 St., New York City, N.Y.

Are you 21 or over?..... 5% off for cash.

Bills! Bills! Bills!

Here's the money to Pay them.

I'll give you

A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE

\$72⁰⁰
a week



Would \$72 a week take away your worry about bills? Would \$10, \$12, \$15 a day smooth the way for you? Then listen to me, my friend. I have something of importance to say to you. I know of hundreds of men and women who were once in the same position you may be in today—men out of a job—widows with children to support—honest, conscientious people who needed more money to keep things going. Did they give up? Not on your life! I'll tell you what they did. They accepted a wonderful opportunity to make money—more money than they ever made in their lives before—the very same offer I'm ready to make to *you* right now.

Bills All Paid—And Money in the Bank

H. T. Lester, of Massachusetts, is one of them. And this is what he writes me: "My bank book shows that in 25 days I deposited \$100.35—that is, *over and above my living expenses.*" Think of it! *Bills all paid and over \$100 clear cash in the bank in less than a month.* Mrs. Edgar Crouthamel, of Pennsylvania, is another. She got \$89.72 for one week's work. And then there is G. W. Tubbs, of California. He was out of a job for three months. But he accepted my offer and now often makes as much as \$20 in one day. Are these people worrying about bills? And I could mention hundreds of others just like them to show you the amazing possibilities of my proposition.

You Don't Need Capital or Experience

Is there any reason why *you* can't do as well? Let me tell you why I think you can. I do business in every sec-

tion of the country. I need people everywhere to help me. And I have a place for *you* right now in your very locality. You don't have to invest any capital. You don't need any special training or experience. Mrs. Frank Young, Minnesota, was formerly an office worker, making \$50 a month. Now, she is a widow with two children. Yet, with my proposition she often makes as much as \$25 in a single day. Henry W. Yeager, of Minnesota, didn't have any experience either. But he had bills to pay and needed money. With the opportunity I gave him he made a profit of \$17 one Saturday afternoon.

Korenblit Makes \$110 a Week

I'll tell you, as I told them, the few simple things you need to do. I'll furnish everything you need to have. And you'll be your own boss—work when you please. You couldn't imagine finer, more delightful work that pays such big money for the time you devote.

Maybe a few extra dollars a week would help you. I'll be surprised if you don't make \$25 to \$35 a week in spare time. L. R. Solomon,

Pennsylvania, cleared \$29 in four hours. Or, maybe you'd like steady, year-round work, with a chance to have an income of \$72 a week. Sol Korenblit, New York, does better than that. He says he averages \$110 a week regularly. Whatever you want, here's your opportunity to get it.

Send No Money—Just Mail Coupon

Let's stop worrying about bills. Let's get them paid—*quick.* Then, let's get money ahead; have the things you need and want; enjoy life. I'm ready to give you the chance. I'm ready to make you the very same offer that has brought \$15 and more in a day to literally thousands of people. You don't need to wait for anything. You can start making money right away. I don't care who you are or where you live, it's worth your while to find out about this amazing offer. Mail the coupon and I'll give you facts that will open your eyes. And you don't obligate yourself or risk one penny. You have everything to gain. So don't wait. Mail the coupon—NOW.

ALBERT MILLS, President
7712 Monmouth Ave., Cincinnati, O

ALBERT MILLS, President,
7712 Monmouth Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio

Yes, I'd like to know all about your plan that offers me a chance to pay my bills and make \$72 a week—starting at once. This does not obligate me in any way.

Name.....

Address.....

© A. P. Co.

(Print or Write Plainly)

Now in ONE Volume!

The World's 101 Best
**DETECTIVE
 STORIES**

Only

98¢

**A Few of the
 101 Masterpieces
 of Mystery**

- Law Beaters
Richard Connell
- In Various Roles
Maupassant
- Stolen White
Elephant . . . Twain
- Three Rings
Boccaccio
- Murder in the
 Mayor's Parlor
Fletcher
- Tragedy in the Greek
 Room
Sax Rohmer
- An Adventure of
 Raffles . . .
Hornung
- Gray Seal . . .
Puckard
- Talking Bird
Dickson
- A Capillary Crime
Millet
- Night of Gems
Sabatini
- Lady with the Hatchet
Leblanc
- Extradition
Arthur Train
- The Four Just Men
Edgar Wallace
- Hubert the Spy
Hugo
- Missing: Page 13
Anna K. Green
- A Purloined Letter
Poe
- Zadig
Voltaire
- Lodging for the Night
Stevenson
- 12 Green-Russian
 Garnets
Hardy
- Dick Turpin
Prison Records
- Iron Shroud . . .
Mudford
- Love and Police
Gaboriau
- The Silent Bullet
Arthur B. Reeve
- Pen, Pencil and Poison
Wilde
- Miss Youghal's Sais
Kipling

Detective
 Stories

One
 Volume
 Edition

ARE you a lover of detective stories? Then we have been working more than a year for you—whether you know it or not! And now at last, after a thorough sifting of the world's literature, the 101 World's Greatest Detective Stories of all time have been published in ONE amazing volume!

Their authors—of such varied nationalities and times as Boccaccio, Voltaire, Oppenheim, and Tolstoi!

Their scope—every phase of crime. Black-mail, Banditry, Murder, Forgery, Treason!

Not one of this series is the ordinary "thriller" that can be "seen through" at once. Read the titles, and you'll see why hundreds of hours of real thrills await you! From the literature of France, England, Spain, Russia, Italy, Arabia, Portugal, and America—the finest stories have been gleaned. Now they are ready to be sent to you—bound in one slender, beautiful volume—for ONLY \$.98. Less than 1¢ per story!

How Can It Be Done?

Many of these superb mystery tales have been, until now, hidden in the collected works of the famous authors. Few people dreamed that writers like *Chekhov* and *Maupassant*, for instance, were capable of such exciting suspense, such breath-taking surprises.

The volume itself must be seen to be appreciated fully. Fine quality thin paper makes it possible. Printed in large, readable type, beautiful grained cover, this latest development in book-making will amaze and delight you.

Send No Money

Just clip and mail the coupon. When the book comes pay the postman 98¢ plus a few cents postage. You have a week to read and enjoy it before you decide whether you want to own it. If you do not decide that this is a treasure-chest of thrilling and fascinating stories, return the book and your money will be gladly refunded. You risk nothing. So mail the coupon today.

**Walter J. Black, Inc. (Dept. 1159)
 171 Madison Avenue, New York**

THE CUNEO PRESS, INC., CHICAGO

WALTER J. BLACK, Inc. (Dept. 1159)
 171 Madison Avenue
 New York

AND MANY OTHERS

Gentlemen: Please send me your new one-volume edition of the World's 101 Best Detective Stories—printed in large, clear type on opaque thin paper, bound in morocco-grained cloth. I will pay the postman on arrival 98¢ plus a few cents postage. After one week, if I am not satisfied, I will return it and you will refund the money.

Name

Address

City

State