

JUNE  
1936

# Movie action MAGAZINE

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**BORIS KARLOFF**  
*in*  
**THE WALKING DEAD**  
*Full Length Story*



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Volume 1

June, 1936

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## THE CAST

BORIS KARLOFF.....	John Ellman
Ricardo Cortez.....	Nolan
Edmund Gwenn.....	Dr. Beaumont
Barton MacLane.....	Loder
Joseph Sawyer.....	"Trigger"

# The Walk

Strong men and killers though they were,  
they quailed before these all-knowing eyes!

SAM LODER butted his billiard cue against the floor, shifted the stub of his mangled cigar, probed in the pocket of his black waistcoat for matches, and said, nodding to Arthur Merritt's thin face:

"We're going to murder him, Merritt. Murder Judge Shaw!"

Merritt, lined of countenance and shifty of eye, wet his lips and drew in slow breath.

Sam Loder, still nodding gently and grimly, leaned carefully his cue stick against the pool table and held a match's flame to his cigar butt.

There was an instant of silence. Merritt broke it with a whisper.

"Murder?"

Loder suddenly smiled. It transformed his heavy, low-jowled visage

from that of an ordinary plug-ugly into the portrait of a type of political boss—ruthless, grasping, without a scruple. He said, smiling: "Murder. It's been done before, y' know."

Merritt gasped: "But—a judge!"

Loder's body silently laughed. " 'But a judge,' he says!"

It was a long room, a comfortable room, low-ceilinged, panelled in pine, bordered with deep masculine chairs in red leather. There were no lights over the billiard table, but there were two drop lights burning over the pool table. It was near one end of this that Loder and Merritt were standing, each holding cue sticks.

Balls on the green baize made a shining, challenging pattern. Three other

Screenplay by Peter Milne, Robert Andrews,  
Lillie Hayward, and Ewart Adamson.

Directed by Michael Curtiz.

A fictionization of the Warner  
Brothers picture of the same title.



# ing Dead

From the depths of hell comes a living  
corpse to avenge his death!

men were present—one tall and well-groomed and supercilious, in a dinner coat; one large and overdressed and somewhat pompous, also in a dinner coat; the third younger, slighter, cruder, in a gray lounge suit. The third man was sprawled languidly in one of the leather chairs. He did not seem intrigued by the conversation.

"But—a judge!" Merritt repeated, nodding. "And Judge Shaw! He's a popular hero right now."

Loder scissored thick fingers on his cigar, removed it, eyed it, and said judiciously: "Exactly. And that's just why he's going to be put away. He's a popular hero—at our expense."

Merritt backed off slowly, still harried, and sank into a chair near the young

man in the lounge suit. Loder dropped his cigar to the floor, murdered it with his shoe and turned his brown, slightly bulging eyes on the tall man with the supercilious manner.

"We've got it all figured, haven't we, Nolan?" he said slowly.

Nolan nodded. He was as calm and thoughtful as a prelate studying his breviary.

"All figured out," he agreed. "With the assistance of Trigger"—his gray eyes angled toward the lounging fellow in the gray suit—"we can expect an end very soon to His Honor's illustrious career. And," he added, "there should be no comeback on us. Am I right, Trigger?"

The young man said lazily: "Yeah, you're right, Nolan. Somebody gimme a match."

MERRITT turned slowly in his chair, bestowed a frightened and wondering scrutiny on "Trigger." Automatically, he produced a box of matches and gave it to him. Then he stood up.

"But how will there be no comeback?" he asked fearfully. "How can there help being a comeback after Marden's conviction this afternoon? Every one knows that you, Loder, and you, Nolan, and you, Blackstone, and me—we've all had as much to do with that three hundred and fifty thousand dollars that was taken from the city treasury, as Steve Marden did?"

He had spoken himself into hoarseness and a flushed countenance. "How no comeback?" he repeated. "They'll know it was us who had Shaw killed! We even threatened him during the trial, as late as this morning! The public won't stand for an unsolved murder at this stage. And that D. A., Werner, who got the goods on Marden, will be after us like a pack of hounds!"

Blackstone, the pompous one, was nodding a semi-bald head as Merritt finished. "I'm asking the same thing," he said.

Nolan was almost dreamy in his continued calmness.

Loder looked contemptuous. "You've always got the willies, haven't you? You men act like a couple of seminary girls. I'm asking you—we want Shaw murdered, don't we?"

Merritt did not answer.

"We want him put out of the way, don't we?" Loder repeated in a louder voice. "If we don't do it, he's going to bust our organization wide open, isn't he?"



"We're going to murder him,

Merritt swallowed his apple. "Perhaps he is. But how are you——"

"Give us credit for some intelligence, Merritt," cut in Nolan in his best bland jury manner. "We don't want to put our necks in a noose any more than you and Blackstone. And we don't intend to. Shaw will be murdered, by Trigger, in the best approved manner—but it won't be



Merritt . . . murder Judge Shaw!"

Trigger or us who is suspected of the crime!"

Merritt and Blackstone let this item drain slowly through their skulls. Blackstone asked: "A frame, you mean?"

"What else?" asked Nolan lightly.

"But who?" countered Merritt. "You mean you've picked some one out to plant it on?"

Nolan, about to answer, turned slowly, warily, as footfalls sounded without. The door at the end of the billiard room opened inward and a small Japanese, clad in a monkey suit, made noiseless entry. He came halfway to the group, looked on the face of Loder, his master.

"Unnamed individual wishes converse with you," he stated.

Nobody said anything for the space of thirty seconds. Merritt and Blackstone didn't understand. Trigger did, and was on his feet. Loder's eyes locked with Nolan's and he said softly, nodding to the lawyer: "It's him. The fall guy!"

THE drawing-room was brilliantly lighted.

It hurt John Ellman's eyes.

It had been a long time since he had been in a place of bright lights, for the State's prison did not expend needless money on illumination and John Ellman had just finished ten years of gloom.

Ellman blinked until his orbs had become accustomed to the glow, then allowed himself to look about curiously.

Loder's living room was furnished in accordance with the position of the city's most powerful overlord, who had taken a million or two out of crooked contracts.

There were handsome period chairs; a rug on the floor that would have made a comfortable bed; vases here and there; books in cases. In a near corner was a grand piano, and as John Ellman's eyes lighted on it, a sort of glow came into them.

With a glance toward the rear door, he moved in the direction of the piano, his hat in his hands.

He was a big man, broad, rugged, though illy-clad, and his face had the deep dark shadows of a woodcut. It was an arresting visage. Under ordinary conditions, one would have said that here was a strong man, but the eyes had a pleading look now, the mouth was drawn down.

Ellman sat down before the piano and idly, almost silently, began fingering chords.

He did not hear the door to the rear open. Sam Loder and Trigger Smith entered silently, stood eying the back of the visitor calculatingly.

Sam Loder knew exactly what he was going to do. Ellman had been sent to

him for help, for he was known as a "right guy" in the underworld. Ellman needed a job.

Well, he was going to get one—but not from Loder, not in this room! Loder would handle him curtly, send him packing—and it would be Trigger Smith, on the sidewalk, whom Ellman would run into quite as though by accident, who would take care of the business.

Trigger, for this evening, was "Mr. Tuthill Smith, private detective," who remembered Ellman's face.

Loder spoke abruptly. "I'm Loder. What do you want?"

Ellman jumped up and swung around, embarrassment and apology on his heavy face.

A LONG black limousine sped down Alamo Boulevard on the south side of the city, swung on two wheels into Park Road and made away swiftly. Behind the wheel was Trigger Smith, and beside Trigger was another man. In the tonneau was a third individual, only he was not, like the front pair, sitting upright.

The car traveled three blocks on Park Road, then banked another corner. Swinging around, it bore down suddenly upon a small coupé in which a young man and a young woman rode slowly. Only the gunman's quick jerk on the wheel saved a complete smash-up.

As it was, the limousine side-swiped the coupé, buckling a fender. The crash of metal died, merged with the whine of Trigger's motor as he righted the car and stepped on the gas.

They shot away, pursued by an angry yell from the young man, who leaned out and shook a fist. Chuckling, Trigger switched off his lights, turned into the Park at the next entrance.

It was a winding drive. Trees blotched the darkness. They whined along for a hundred yards or so, gradually slowing, until Trigger's companion raised a pointing hand, said, "There it is!"

The big car braked quietly. Both men scrambled out, looked back. Nothing was behind them, but a few yards ahead was a light sedan, parked there at the side of the serpentine road, also lightless.

"O. K.," said Trigger, and whipped open the tonneau door on his side. Together, they drew out the third passenger, who even the most casual observer would have seen was a dead man.

"Get the legs," said Trigger, hooking hands under the corpse's shoulders.

His helper complied, remarking, "He didn't bleed much."

They bore the body up to the small sedan. Trigger opened the door next the wheel, and they shoved their cargo inside.

Wiping his hands, looking back, the second man said, "We'd better blow fast.

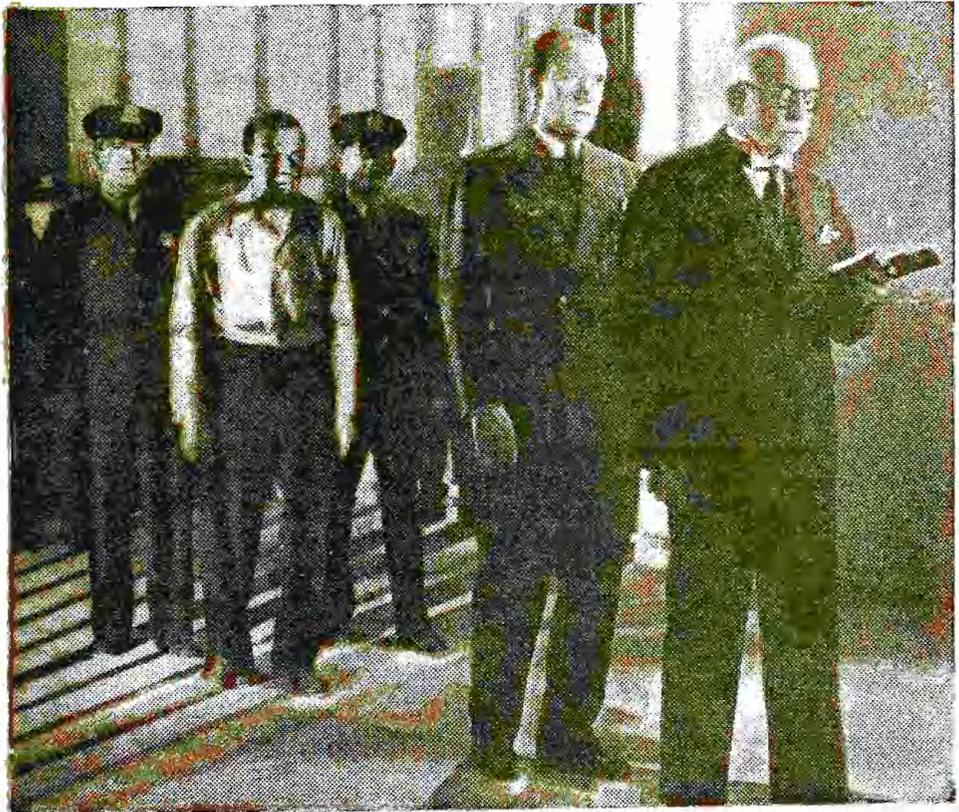
Ellman might knock off and come back any minute!"

Trigger slammed shut the sedan's door. Now he nodded. They jogged back to the limousine, leaped into it and started away just as headlights came to life along the road behind them.

HARDLY were they out of sight before the small coupé they had side-swiped pulled up to a screeching stop. A young man jumped out, staring first at the sedan just ahead, then off into the darkness where the limousine had disappeared.

"Dirty rats!" he exclaimed. "Hit and run! If they hadn't doused their lights I would've——"

"But what's that other car, Jimmy?" asked a girl's voice. A pretty face leaned



The party entered the door at the end—and Ellman saw the chair!

out of the coupé and stared wonderingly at the sedan. "They were doing something around that car. Do you think that——"

"That's what I'm wondering myself," the young fellow said, and strode forward.

He was overtaken by the girl before he reached it, and she clutched his arm. Together they looked over the door, at the empty driver's seat—and then down at the huddled body. Jimmy, with a puzzled ejaculation, pulled open the door.

The body of a man tumbled halfway out and sprawled across the door sill.

"Holy——" whispered Jimmy. "Murdered! And they left him here!"

The girl had clapped a hand to her mouth. "Oh, Jimmy, let's get out of here!"

The young man swung. Somewhere, hidden by the trees, footfalls were coming down the drive.

Jimmy's face hardened in decision. "You said it, Nancy! Come on! We'll see about this later."

He rushed her back to his car and inside, slammed the door and started away. They swung a curve. Headlights blazed full on the tired, drawn heavy face of a big man who was coming down the roadside, a notebook in his hand.

Curiously, the man stared at the couple in the coupé as they rushed past him. Then the car was gone.

John Ellman frowned, stopped, standing in darkness. His eyes probed toward his sedan in a puzzled way.

Into his coat pocket, he shoved the notebook in which he had written the day's last report on shadowing Judge Shaw, whom he had not seen since supper time.

That had been the job which sprang from Trigger's "kindness." Trigger had told him, the night before, that the jurist was suspected by his wife. Posing as a private detective hired by Mrs. Shaw, the gunman had hired Ellman to watch

Shaw's house and keep a record of the judge's comings and goings.

Ellman hurried forward to his rented sedan. A moment later, the complete horror of the situation burst upon him. He—an ex-convict, fresh from prison where Shaw had sent him for ten long years—*he* had to be the one to find Judge Shaw's murdered body in his car!

With a frenzied scream in his heart that never reached his lips, John Ellman whirled and fled into the night!

THAT happened on a Saturday. It was Friday, now, just one day short of three weeks later, when John Ellman's trial for the murder of Judge Shaw was drawing to a close.

The prosecutor, George Werner, was capable of excellent oratory on occasion, and he utilized his powers to the fullest as he shook his finger at Ellman.

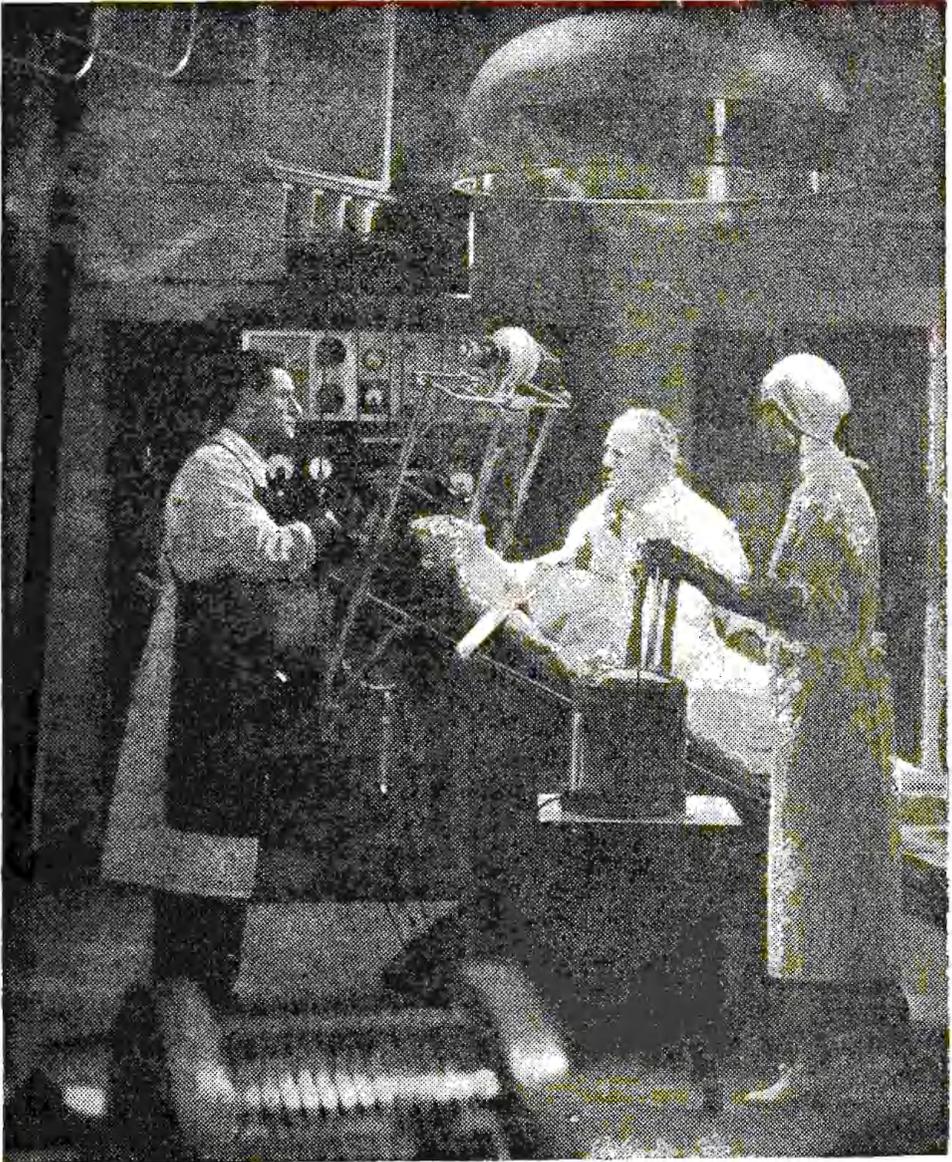
"This man claims that, somewhere, there is a young man and woman who could wave a magic wand and absolve him of all guilt!" Werner's sarcastic voice cut like a knife. "It is so plainly a collaboration of my learned legal opponent and Mister Grimm, of Grimm's Fairy Tales, that I shall not waste your valuable time refuting it!"

Ellman sank lower. The jury eyed him suspiciously.

"Can there be any doubt in your minds? Ten years ago Judge Roger Shaw did his duty as he saw it and sentenced this man to prison. To-day, this man takes vengeance into his own hands, and kills!"

John Ellman filled his lungs. It might have been said that the second-degree murder of a decade ago was the accidental killing of a scoundrel who had ruined Ellman's sweetheart; but the D. A. did not see fit to say so.

"Therefore, gentlemen of the jury," Werner was perorating, "the State demands that you find John Ellman guilty of murder in the first degree!" He



Science brought back the dead from the grave! John Ellman lived!

added quietly: "The State rests," and sat down.

There was a hum in the courtroom, then silence.

The tall, smooth Nolan who had planned the frame-up and was acting as Ellman's lawyer to see that all went well, rose slowly to his feet. Passing Ellman,

he patted him encouragingly on the shoulder, and then faced the jury. He was working hard for the small fee he had agreed to accept from the prisoner—but not in the way Ellman imagined!

"Gentlemen," he began, "the greatest fault my client possesses is a belief in his fellow men. He is believing even

now that the young couple who have it in their power to free him will step forward. We will admit the sedan, the fingerprints on the wheel, the prison record, the skulking in the vicinity of Judge Shaw's residence. In fact, we deny nothing but the charge!

"We only ask that you try, try very hard, to realize that an unjustly accused man sits in this court, sits waiting—and not in vain, I pray—for those two young people to come forward and say the words."

Nolan paused. He was suave, but pained. He gave the impression of knowing in advance that his client was guilty as charged, and doomed, but hoped to stave it off by begging.

Angling from the jury, he directed his gaze upon his victim's heavy huddled figure. The glow on John Ellman's face showed that Nolan's words, if they had affected no one else, had at least brought gratitude to his unsuspecting heart.

Nolan went on and on. When finally he sat down, a bailiff in the back turned world-weary eyes on a fellow worker and drew his mouth down grimly.

"I thought," he whispered, "that Nolan was supposed to be *defending* this guy!"

The judge rose to make the charge. The jury filed out.

What followed was predictable, even inevitable.

In three hours the jury came back with a verdict of guilty.

Headlines screamed it over the city, as Ellman, dazed and unbelieving, was taken back to his cell.

Loder, Merritt, Blackstone, Nolan—they had a little party that night, with Trigger Smith as an honor guest. They toasted the remains of Judge Roger Shaw, and the fine public zeal of Prosecutor George Werner. They toasted, too, the telephone calls, that had struck fear into the hearts of a certain young man and woman!

IN a white stone house on the north side of the city, a man unknown to most of the citizens pursued his secret and laborious path. Doctor Evan Beaumont was one of the best-known scientists of his day. Not every one realized it, though fellow-workers all over the world had watched for months his experiments in a certain field.

Three months had passed since the conviction of John Ellman of the murder of Judge Roger Shaw, and his sentence to the electric chair—three months in which his appeals had been denied, while the condemned man lived in the death house. Now it was a matter only of hours before he paid for Trigger Smith's murder, completing finally the frame of Sam Loder and his allies!

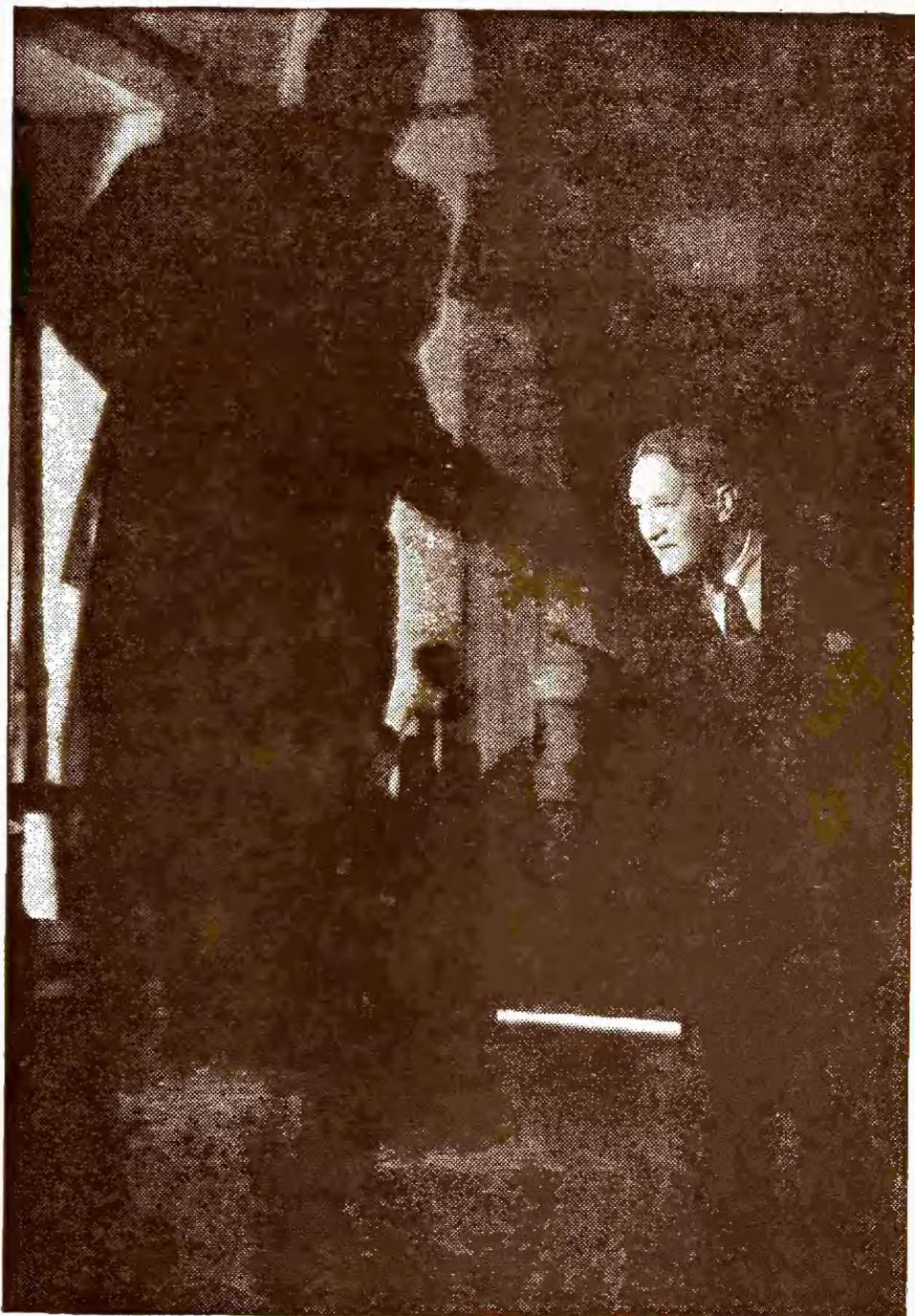
Doctor Beaumont was aware of this in but a vague way—as an item in the newspapers. His mind seldom left the track of his scientific investigations.

Legallois, a Frenchman, had given the motive for those experiments one hundred and twenty-three years before. Their purpose was to find a mechanical "heart" that could substitute for the human organ in all its phases, that could prolong life where the heart was failing—that might even *restore* life after the heart had already ceased!

An idle dream, most people would have said. But those men of science who had kept in touch with Beaumont's work in the past few years were not at all sure that miracles were not in the making in the laboratory behind his white stone house.

A baffling and mysterious chamber was that laboratory, where Doctor Beaumont poised over a microscope this summer night. It was large, circular, and so completely equipped as to be a mere glitter of complexities to the layman's eye.

There were jars and tubes in profusion, racked on shelves, containing various animal organs in an animated state. There were hundreds of scientific



And then Trigger heard—and swung about!

comes on the smallest phases of his work. There was a large electrical apparatus, impossible to detail, that could only be described as a "resuscitator." And, here and there, were a number of "glass hearts."

The scientist was an oldish man, whose lined and bearded face had the tolerant impassivity born of vast knowledge. He wore a white surgical robe, a mask over his face.

Ending his study of the microscope, he removed the mask, made a few notes on a pad beside him, then walked across the laboratory to where three doors gave on regions beyond. One was to his private quarters; another to the reception office; that in the middle led to the drug room, and before this third door he stopped and gazed gravely through an oval glass inset.

TWO young people—his assistants—were busy at a table, their backs to him.



Doctor Beaumont smiled as he heard their conversation.

"Jimmy, how many more payments do we have before this ring is ours?"

"Thirty-six more. Why?"

"Do you suppose we can get married then?"

"I dunno. Doctor Beaumont doesn't like the idea of his staff assistants getting married until they have a reputation."

Beaumont smiled faintly to himself. He reflected that he would have to tell that young man a thing or two. But something else was troubling him vaguely: for three months he had noticed that both Jimmy and Nancy seemed weighted down by some secret, and it was not the problem of getting married. The doctor hoped that, by innocent eavesdropping, he might solve their problem for them.

"Jimmy." It was the girl again, but her voice was altered.

"What?"

She turned to face him. Her oval face, above the surgical robe, was pale, wide-eyed. "I can't go on like this! There are only two hours left before he's executed!"

The young man put his arms about her, spoke through his teeth. "Don't! You can't! *We* can't! I love you, and they won't stop with threats, whoever they are. They'll kill!"

"I can't stand it, Jimmy!" Nancy reiterated. "We've gone on for three months, we didn't speak at the trial, we haven't helped his appeals. And he's innocent! We know it! He's going to be electrocuted up there to-night! John Ellman!"

Jimmy said: "Nancy, it's our lives or his. It's horrible, I know, but——"

Both turned. The door to the laboratory had opened. Doctor Beaumont, his face graver, stared at them in interrogation.

IN an expensively furnished apartment in the fashionable part of the city, Loder,

Merritt, Blackstone, and Nolan were relishing a late supper.

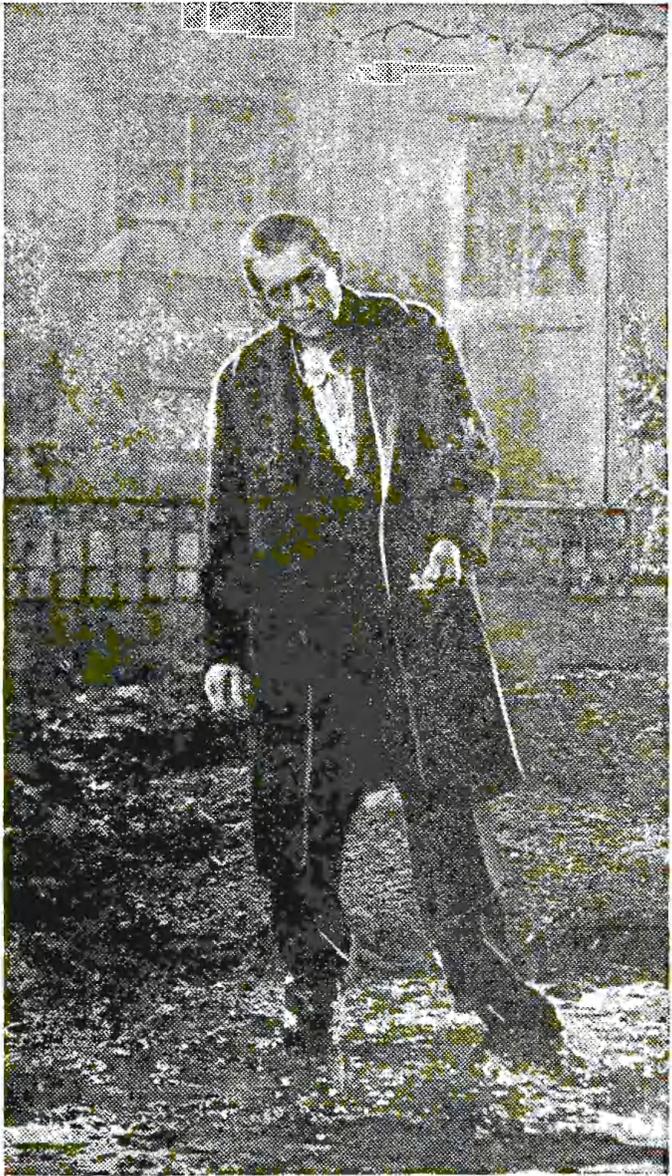
It was Nolan's, the lawyer's, apartment—and his the idea of a get-together banquet on this particular night. Such morbid humor was characteristic of the man. He smiled at the faces about him as he ate breast of chicken with his fingers and with the enjoyment of an epicure.

"It's my own recipe, gentlemen. The white wine's the secret. But I'm deeply hurt, Merritt, that you don't seem to be appreciating it. What's the matter?" as Merritt looked nervously at his watch for the dozenth time. "Got a date?"

Merritt breathed thickly. "Lay off!" he snapped. "You know well enough what's the matter. I won't feel safe until Ellman is dead!"

Loder threw him a disgusted look. "Oh, forget it!" he growled. "You've been that way for three months. Can't you draw the line somewhere?"

Nolan smiled as he wiped his fingers. "We can all rest easy. In two hours it will be a closed book. How I labored over those appeals!" he sighed. "I—Ellman's champion. I tell you, gentlemen," he said with fine irony, "I would be at the governor's at this moment,



Shots racketed—one, two three! Ellman spun around and collapsed!

making a last plea, if I thought there was any——"

He broke off. His butler was at hand, bearing a portable telephone. "There's a Doctor Beaumont. Insists on talking to you, sir."

"Doctor Beaumont? You're sure he asked for me?" Nolan was curious, but completely untroubled.

"Yes, sir."

"I'll talk to him." He accepted the phone as the servant exited, spoke into it. "Hello. . . . Yes. . . . *What?*"

All color left his face.

"John Ellman!"

The others came halfway to their feet.

"You have them? The two witnesses? . . . Your assistants?" He stared around the faces, narrow-eyed, tense, thinking fast. "Yes, yes, as his attorney, of course I should know first. Very well, doctor."

His eyes made motions for the others to be quiet. Loder was glowering. Merritt was already a wreck. Nolan's voice:

"We have something over an hour before he is scheduled to die. But I can't call the governor direct. I'll have to work through the district attorney. Hold those witnesses there. I'll bring the D. A. over as soon as it's humanly possible. Good-by."

The phone went down. Nolan faced his accomplices. He was grim now, though still ironic.

"Those kids," he said laconically. "They've talked. Beaumont's in on it. I've got to stall."

And as the others continued to gape at him: "Of course," with a smile. "That's the answer. I'll get in touch with Werner too late!"

And he leaned back and picked up his wine glass again.

THE warden, standing before John Ellman's cell, shook his head from side to side. "There's nothing left, John. You must turn your hopes to other things. Have you a last request? It's not long, you know."

John Ellman, heavier of face and more flagged of eye than ever, stared through the bars. "They're going to kill me," he whispered, "for something I didn't do."

The warden waited.

Ellman came out of his trance. "Yes, I have a last request. Music. I used to be a musician. If there's any one here who plays, I'd like to hear my favorite piece as I walk—that way." He gestured.

They left him. He went over and sat down heavily. After a little, a convict came with a cello, and played while Ellman was prepared for the electric chair. It changed a little the big face; softened it.

Clocks all over the country were ticking off his last minutes.

Down in the city where he had been sentenced, Nolan rode beside District Attorney Werner in a limousine bound for Beaumont's, having waited until the last possible minute to start the machinery moving for Ellman's release! And, in Beaumont's laboratory, the scientist and his two young assistants waited feverishly.

But of all this John Ellman knew nothing. He looked back on the fatal night, the fatal moment when he saw that body in his rented car!

"I don't want to die!" he whispered. "I want to live!"

The warden returned, with guards and a priest. The final preparations were made, while the convict played soulfully on his cello, and Ellman listened.

Then the door was opened.

Ellman, resigned to his fate, passed out.

They moved down the passage between the cells, followed by the good-bys of other doomed men. The party entered the door at the end—and Ellman; for the first time, saw the hideous chair.

He fell back as though slashed. A guard took his arm. Slowly, they moved on. And on. And—

IN the anteroom to the warden's office, two guards and a trusty chatted about the prison's baseball team.

"It don't look so good, what with our best pitcher out on parole."

The warden's telephone rang near by. One of the guards rose slowly as he said, "I was reading in the paper where this former big leaguer, Carr Smith, got himself in trouble."

The phone rang again.

"Carr Smith, the shortstop!" exclaimed the trusty. "What kind of trouble?"

The guard reached for the phone. "Assault, with intent to kill."

The trusty said: "He'd *make* our team!" And then hopefully: "Was the other guy *really* hurt?"

The phone rang a third time.

In the death chair John Ellman felt the straps, stared ahead, waited. In his executive mansion, the governor clutched the telephone, waiting. In the city, in Beaumont's office, the scientist, his assistants, Nolan and George Werner waited tensely also.

And in the warden's office the guard with the phone in his hand paused to say: "I dunno. I hope they send him here." He took off the receiver. "Warden's office."

A voice crackled. Respect stiffened the guard's face. "Yes, sir. Yes, governor. What! *Ellman?*"

The last was a shout. But even as he uttered it, the lights in the room dimmed. Ellman had got the first jolt!

CONSTERNATION reigned in three widely separated rooms a moment later—the death chamber, the governor's library, and Beaumont's office. Everywhere, the death of an innocent man was taken as a personal responsibility.

Nancy slumped, sobbing, in a chair. Jimmy walked back and forth, chalk-white. Beaumont stared at the wall, and Werner choked hoarsely: "Already dead. We were too late, by minutes. And he was really innocent all the time. I feel like a murderer, myself!"

Doctor Beaumont, whose mature courage had forced this move on his young assistants, did not reply to the D. A. His fine eyes, circling the laboratory,

swept over the jars, the microscopes, the "glass hearts," the electrical resuscitator. His mind was on a body, even now being carried from the death room in the State's prison.

The girl's cries filled the room. She was blaming herself now; and Jimmy, trying to comfort her, could find no words. It had been his fear for her that had caused this; but he still felt himself accused.

Beaumont looked at one and then the other. Something came into his eyes in that instant, perhaps as he thought of their lives, marred permanently by the death of one John Ellman whom either could have saved. Without warning, he leaped up and grabbed Werner's arm.

"Get the governor back! Tell him to call off the autopsy!"

The D. A. stared open-mouthed. "Why?"

"Don't ask questions!" Beaumont shouted. "There's no time to lose! Call him!"

It may have been that Werner thought the scientist mad. Certainly he could not understand the fierce gleam in old Beaumont's eyes, the biting clutch of his fingers. But, whatever he thought, there was that in Beaumont's face which brooked no refusal.

George Werner reached for the telephone.

Jimmy, straightened abruptly from Nancy, stared at his chief. His eyes, not old and wise like the doctor's, reflected the denouement as it crashed through his brain. He took a step forward. "Doctor!" he cried. "The resuscitator? The 'heart'——"

Beaumont nodded slowly, with an expression on his face Jimmy had never seen before.

"Yes," he said. "We shall attempt it!" He looked at Werner, who had the governor on the phone.

THEY got John Ellman's body at a little before five o'clock that morning.

They got it just as it had come from the electric chair, for Werner's call had staved off the prison autopsy by a matter of seconds.

It came in the gray uncanny light that precedes sunrise—came to a laboratory where waited Doctor Evan Beaumont and Jimmy and Nancy, several nurses and an interne, while around them the city slept, unheeding.

It was delivered in a private ambulance, specially chartered. Men who knew nothing of this business but marveled none the less portaged a stretched figure shrouded with white cloth up stone steps, into the building and down a corridor into the laboratory.

"On that table," directed Beaumont, indicating.

The corpse of John Ellman was laid out on the table in the center of the laboratory.

"Very good. You may go."

The carriers exited, removing their stretcher. Beaumont advanced to the sheeted form, while behind him his staff watched with fascinated eyes.

From off to one side, as Doctor Beaumont removed the sheet that covered the body, Jimmy's voice sounded tautly and hoarsely.

"We're almost ready."

Beaumont tossed aside the sheet, gazed upon the body. No expression—either of hope or of fear—was visible upon the doctor's face. Only the intense, all-absorbing concentration of a pure man of science. He might have been Euclid, gazing for the first time upon a demonstration of his geometry, or Columbus, watching a ship's sail disappear over the horizon, while he hypothesized that the earth was a globe.

"The tubes," Beaumont breathed, and the interne and the nurse hurried to push forward a large and strange machine from which tubes elongated like the arms of an octopus. With his own hands, Beaumont attached them to a mask which he fitted over Ellman's face. He

affixed clamps to the dead man's upper and lower arms, and electrodes to his finger-tips, from which wires led to the machine.

He stepped back.

The light directly overhead was blinding. Out of the drug-room door came an instrument table, wheeled with soft squeaks by a following nurse. Jimmy came after, with Nancy behind him. Beaumont gestured, and the young man went to take his place beside an electrical switchboard, after a single look at the body.

"I think we are ready," murmured the scientist, without emotion, though every one knew that his life's work hung upon the next moments.

"Ready," Jimmy echoed. He was managing, by a superhuman effort, to emulate his superior's calm.

Doctor Beaumont gazed a moment longer at the lifeless flesh before him, while his mind fleetingly lost its singleness. He wondered if here, now, he was to break through a veil that had never before been lifted!

"All right, Jimmy!"

Jimmy touched a dial!

THERE was a cardiograph—a delicate instrument to register heart beats—on the wall near the body. Its needle remained stationary as the first flow of mysterious current attacked the corpse.

There was an indicator set behind glass on the strange machine from which tubes ran to the corpse of John Ellman. Its marker, too, showed nothing.

Doctor Beaumont looked from the dead man to the indicators on the wall, back again, and then repeated the process.

His face, like the needles, gave clew to nothing whatever. To his helpers, he was a stone image, an observer, a creator perhaps—but never a compound of emotions. He watched and acted—but seemingly he felt nothing.

His glance swept to Jimmy, passed a message. The dial was turned farther.— Still nothing.

Doctor Beaumont allowed the faintest shadow of dismay to track across his face and then vanish. He extended a hand, touched the nearest of the dead fingers before him.

Cold. The others could feel it, even watching him. Beaumont looked at Jimmy, inclined his head—and once again the dial was turned.

Now no one breathed or moved. Beaumont was a statue, hammered out of whiteness.

Distantly, from the world that had been left behind when this thing started, a tower clock chimed softly—five times. It brought a start from the nurses, from Nancy, but no move whatever from Beaumont and the other men.

The chimes died into nothingness and only the laboratory remained, with all eyes on a corpse on a table that rocked slowly back and forth—a teeter-board arrangement.

Beaumont waited, watched.

Jimmy stopped turning the dial.

For a moment it was as though the world stood still; then—something happened!

What it was, no man could have said—a tinge of color, an indefinable thing called “life” that showed itself fleetingly in the passive hand of the patient. But it was enough to stiffen the frame of the heretofore emotionless scientist, to bring a flash to his eyes and a color to his own cheeks!

“Turn it on full!” he cried.

Jimmy turned the instruments to their maximum. The others crowded closer. The needle of the cardiograph began to take life, quivering slowly, but with gathering strength! The indicator of the other machine moved up behind its dial! Gradually the plunger of the “metabolism” equipment began to move with Ellman’s breathing!

His eyelids trembled.

**MA—2**

A finger stirred.

Beaumont jerked up.

On his aged face was wonder, exaltation. In a vibrant voice, he cried: “He is *alive!* He will live!”

And the others knew that he spoke truth.

THE news was flashed that morning, two hours later, around the globe.

For the first time in history, science had brought back the dead from the grave!

John Ellman lived!

Feebly, as yet, it was true. Dazedly—and as though something had been lost in that five hours of nothingness after his electrocution. But he lived. He breathed. He sat in a chair in Beaumont’s office and gazed upon wondering, awe-struck faces, and tried to answer questions, tried to be a human being again.

Doctor Beaumont looked upon this creature whom he had, in a sense, recreated, and wondered what it could tell him when the shock had passed, when normal life was once more resumed.

As for Sam Loder, and Merritt, and Blackstone, and Nolan—the inconceivable had happened to them, and they were a badly frightened group of men. Their frame, their murder of John Ellman, via the State, had been completed. And then an impossibility had upset it. The work was *not* done.

Doctor Beaumont, two days later, made it known that he proposed to hold a private reception for certain scientists and figures of importance in the city, whereat he would display John Ellman, the man from the grave.

A brief formal note invited Nolan, as Ellman’s attorney, to attend. Similar ones went by mail to Merritt and Blackstone and Sam Loder. All were prominent in the city’s politics: there was nothing strange in that.

But the thought of going to gaze upon their victim produced another conference among the four, in Loder’s living room

the night before the reception. Merritt was in a panic. Loder scowled. Blackstone paced nervously up and down.

Only Nolan retained his coolness, saying: "I tell you, there's still nothing to worry about. He's alive and they've cleared him—but what of it? *He* doesn't suspect anything. And Judge Shaw's murder is three months old; they'll have a fine time going back and pinning it on Trigger and us!"

No one answered him at once. But then Merritt was on his feet with a ghostly look on his face, pointing at them.

"He won't suspect, you say? How do we know?" His voice trembled. "There's a rumor out that John Ellman is a changed man since he was electrocuted. They say he acts like he knows things that he didn't know before. It was five hours from the time he was burned until Beaumont brought him back to life. Could he have learned about us, and Trigger, and what we did to him during those five hours? Could he have learned how we framed him, *while he was dead?*"

FORMALLY clad men and women thronged the reception hall of Doctor Beaumont's house the next evening. Conversation buzzed, while behind it all lurked a common tense curiosity, the same air of restless waiting.

There were scientists here from all parts of America, they having flocked into the city as though to a convention in the past few days. There were city officials, local men of prominence and their wives. Nancy and Jimmy were present. And present, too, were Sam Loder and Nolan, and Blackstone and Merritt. They stood apart from the others, talking quietly.

Doctor Beaumont made an appearance at the back of the spacious hall and moved forward, nodding and greeting guests. There was no hiding the quiet

satisfaction in his face at this testimony to his miraculous performance.

"I will bring Mister Ellman out in a moment," he said to his guests. "First, I want to say that I think it will relieve him of any embarrassment if, instead of a formal introduction, he just sits down at the piano"—he gestured toward a baby grand in one corner—"and plays something for you. He was a musician, you know, of considerable talent."

Every one nodded excitedly, vaguely, and the doctor turned and went a little way toward the rear door. "All right, Nancy," he said, and the door opened.

John Ellman came forth, led by Nancy.

On the girl's face was a glow that made her lovelier; she seemed to be personally and peculiarly wrapped up in the man whom she led. But no one noticed that, except perhaps Jimmy. All eyes were on John Ellman's large, neatly clad figure—the man from the grave.

He came slowly up the big hall, looking this way and that without self-consciousness but with a faintly puzzled air as though all this business intruded upon some thoughts of his own. That he had changed since his "first life" would have been evident to any one who had seen him before.

There was a haze to his eyes, a far-away look in them. He was older, but he was also, in a sense, more childlike. Following Nancy, he made his way to the piano, where Doctor Beaumont waited.

In their far corner, the four politicians watched and held their breaths, wondering, fearing, wishing they were elsewhere. Merritt's face was pale, twisted. As John Ellman sat down at the piano, some one threw a light switch and the room was left in semi-darkness except for a brilliant light over Ellman, and one or two floor lamps.

One of the latter picked out the staring faces of Merritt and Blackstone and Nolan and Loder.

A HUSH held the room for an instant, and then Ellman began playing. It was "Kamennoi-Ostrow," the same piece that had been plucked from a cello while he walked to the electric chair. Nancy and Beaumont retreated, leaving him alone; he played softly at first, then more loudly.

Watchers near the piano saw a change come gradually to his face. He might have been a psychic medium attempting to establish contact with a presence in the room which he could feel but not yet define.

The music swelled. It became harsh, vicious. Ellman's face lifted. There was some sort of knowledge now in those strange eyes. He gazed off into the audience, questing, his head turning in slight jerks as his fingers tore at the ivory keys.

Then, suddenly, his stare became fixed. He was looking straight at Merritt!

No one could see what passed between the men in the seconds that followed. The music thundered through the great hall, but Ellman's gleaming eyes did not stir from Merritt's face. It was as though he had found something that a secret knowledge had told him was here!

His eyes burned across the darkness at Merritt's face. The craven politician half rose from his chair, then slumped back. That gesture brought what might have been a mocking smile to Ellman's face.

His eyes moved, roved again. This time they fixed themselves on Blackstone. Again, there was the same fierce certainty and mysterious knowledge. Blackstone stared back, tugged at his collar.

Merritt whispered thickly: "He knows us! He's *learned!*"

The smile of John Ellman became settled. He released Blackstone and without a second's hesitation this time, bore down upon Nolan and Loder. They, too, stared back, though with more control than the others had manifested. The other guests, meanwhile, were aware only

that something peculiar was happening; what it was they did not know.

The tautness was snapped by a sudden break in the music. With a crashing discord, John Ellman ended his recital. Simultaneously, Merritt and Blackstone stumbled for an exit.

They came together in another room. They were joined there a moment later by Nolan and Loder, both of whom, though worried themselves, were angry at their accomplices for displaying their feelings.

"I'm not going back in there!" Merritt ground out. "I'm getting out of here!"

Blackstone nodded: "Me, too. I'm going to put Trigger to work on that thing in there!"

Nolan and Loder met each other's eyes.

"What do you think, Loder?" Nolan asked coldly.

Loder squirmed under the lawyer's level gaze. Then, suddenly, he blurted out:

"I think he knows, at that!"

TRIGGER SMITH put down the telephone, picked up his highball. It was a half hour later that night, and the killer had just listened to the imperative voice of Blackstone, telling him that John Ellman had to be put out of the way—that somehow he *knew* and was a menace to them all.

Trigger had scoffed at first, then had argued, finally demanding three times his usual "rate." Blackstone had accepted, saying he would come in half an hour.

"Huh?" Trigger muttered scornfully. "Afraid of that guy! Just because they brought him back to life." But a shadow crossed his own face as he reflected that he, of them all, would be easiest for Ellman to suspect!

He turned back to his small, scantily furnished room—such a place as a hired gunman would maintain, from which he could flee on a moment's notice and with a minimum of packing. It was sordid,

barren, in the harsh light of an overhead bulb, whose pull-cord hung a few inches below the shade.

Trigger walked to a mirror and eyed his dapper, heavy frame. He straightened his tie. Eyes reflected the conflicting thoughts that chased through his limited brain. He scowled.

Suddenly he turned and went to the center table, opened its drawer and took out an automatic pistol. With it he got cartridges, cleaning rags, and pulled up a chair beside the table. He sat there with his back to the door.

He began cleaning the gun, and as he worked the faint trouble left his cold eyes and he smiled to himself. Had he not been thus self-satisfied he might have heard the doorknob as it turned slowly, inch by inch. He might have heard the door itself as it opened from the dark corridor outside. He might have seen a face—

But Trigger was thinking of how a gun cures all fears, just as it had cured the integrity of Judge Roger Shaw, some months ago. He could not have dreamed that John Ellman, slipping away from Doctor Beaumont's house immediately after the reception, would have been led to this dingy room by something which Ellman, himself, could not have explained!

The door swung wider. John Ellman's full avenging figure stood there, outlined against the blackness of the corridor. Still Trigger suspected nothing. Quietly, Ellman closed the door.

And then Trigger heard—and swung about!

FOR an instant he stared, thunder-struck. Then a taut crooked smile tugged at his lips as he came slowly to his feet. "Well, I'll be——" he said softly. "Here I was about to go call on you, and you come and save me the trouble. Have a seat."

Ellman did not stir. After a pause that pulled at the killer's nerves, his

guest said slowly, hollowly, "Why did you kill Judge Shaw?"

Trigger started, snarled: "Easy with that stuff, buddy! I never saw the judge!"

Ellman pushed on stubbornly: "I thought—that night—you were my friend. But you only hired me to trap me. You murdered the judge and put his body in my car!"

Trigger descended slowly to his chair, reached for his gun. He said: "You're nuts, Ellman," as he pulled the cartridge box toward him and began loading the pistol's clip, still without taking his eyes from the other.

John Ellman did not heed the movement. "You took my life!" he said slowly.

Trigger jumped up. The gun, loaded, was in his hand and leveled. "And I'm gonna take it again unless you got cat blood in you! Nobody's going to bring you back this time!"

He aimed pointblank at Ellman. The man from the dead started toward him. Trigger backed off, snapped: "Stay where you are!" He tightened his grip on the gun, but he was strangely powerless to pull the trigger!

John Ellman came on, kept coming, and as he passed beneath the light an upraised hand caught in its switch cord, pulled it with a snap!

Blackness hit the room on the instant! Only Ellman's face stood out, unearthly, as he pressed on toward Trigger. The gunman tried desperately to bring himself to action. Horror and panic swept over his face. His mouth opened.

"No! No!" he choked. "Get back or I'll——"

Then Ellman was upon him, clutching the gun! They struggled for it! Its black metal twisted about—Trigger's hand finally tugged and a bullet crashed out——

John Ellman fell back a pace, stared down at the collapsing body. He turned abruptly and left the room.

NOT many minutes later, a horrified Blackstone was gaping down at the lifeless thing that had been Trigger Smith. Hearing the shot from downstairs, he had rushed up, narrowly missing a face-to-face encounter with John Ellman, lurking in the shadows of the hall.

Blackstone's nerves went to pieces. He fled out and down to the street, leaped into his car and drove madly for his own apartment.

More than the sight of John Ellman's eyes at the reception an hour ago, the sight of Trigger, dead by his own gun, convinced him that they were up against a supernatural thing for which there was no defense!

Trigger! The coldest-blooded rodman in the city—dead by his own hand!

Blackstone packed a bag, grabbed up all he could carry for an extended trip, hurried out and back to his car and made for the railroad station.

Flight from the city was all he could think of. Loder and Nolan and Merritt could look out for themselves; he was going to put space between himself and that creature who had once been John Ellman!

At the station, he found that a train was due in five minutes. He bought a ticket. The platform was deserted as he hurried out, and shortly he heard the whistle of the approaching train.

Relief swept over him and he started down the platform so as to board the smoker at the train's end. Then, just as suddenly, a frozen man, he halted!

Standing there before him, was John Ellman!

His eyes burned on Blackstone's face, accusing and vengeful. He moved forward—seemed to float!

"Get back!" shrieked the terrified Blackstone. "Get back! I'll——"

Wildly, he turned, stumbled, started to run. Without reason he did it, with no thought but to escape those eyes—those eyes burning their message that *they knew!*

He did not hear the blast of the approaching train as it bore down the track. The onrushing glare of the headlight was nothing to him.

He dashed out and upon the tracks, arms outflung, gaze fixed on the fence that divided the tracks, over which he could vault and reach the safety of the opposite platform and——

The screech of air brakes sounded like a siren! Blackstone's sudden scream rose above all else for a terrible moment!

The scream ended abruptly. The train crashed on. John Ellman looked, dropped his head, turned and vanished.

LODER, an hour later, paced the floor of his living room.

Nolan leaned against the mantel and tried to appear self-confident.

"First, Trigger," said Loder, "then Blackstone. Within two hours! You can't tell me that train was an accident!"

Nolan pulled at his underlip. He was not quite as suave and assured as usual. "I can't tell you anything—now," he retorted. "We're up against something. We've got to think fast—handle it."

The door bell jangled. Merritt rushed in. He looked ten years older. "Have you heard?" he cried. "Blackstone——Trigger!"

Loder growled. "Sure, we've heard. Who are those men out on the sidewalk?" He was pointing through the window.

"Mine." Merritt was hoarse. "Bodyguards! I'm taking no chances. I'm going back to my place, now, and I'm staying there until this—this business is stopped!"

Nolan looked at him, and sneered. "Always yellow!"

"What else can I do?" Merritt whined. "Nothing—you can't stop a ghost!"

Loder snarled: "Get out of here. You're no more use than an old woman. Get out!"

Merritt departed. At the window, Loder and Nolan watched him join his

guards, dart nervously into a car and speed away.

"Well?" said the political boss. "Where's that wonderful brain of yours?"

"Working." Nolan clipped out the word. "I've got it all figured out, now."

His words automatically drew Loder closer to him while he explained: "Ellman is still indebted to me for his defense. Beaumont may have brought him back to life, but I'm the one who defended him in court! I'll get a court order to-night, directing Beaumont to turn Ellman over to me, as his guardian. I'll say he's not quite right yet, and I'm going to sue the State in his behalf for false execution. Once we get our hands on the man, we can dispose of him!"

Loder thought that over, and nodded. "Now you're talking!" he rapped. "Let's get going!"

MERRITT had reached his apartment in a high-priced section downtown.

"One of you stay here," he directed his guards, indicating the dining room at the left of the entry hall. "The other—get into my bedroom."

He was sallow with an unnamable fear. The hired guards regarded him amazedly, but they took up their posts. Merritt went into his living room, mixed himself a stiff highball and downed it in three gulps.

At the end of the room, French windows faced the street far below. Lights flashed through their curtains. A storm was rising and the rumble of thunder had loudened and become more frequent in the past few minutes.

Presently rain beat against the windows, and the wind blew one partly open. It clattered against the side of the case-ment with the hollowness of an empty coffin.

Merritt flew across the room, reached out and slammed it shut. His mouth was twitching as he turned away and looked at his watch.

There was nothing to do but go to

bed, but he foresaw little sleep to-night unless he drank himself into a stupor. He kept seeing Blackstone—poor, dead Blackstone—rushing out onto the railroad tracks while a train's mass bore down upon him. In his mind's eye, he saw John Ellman standing near by—as he must have been standing—with his eyes driving them all to death and—

Merritt uttered a throaty noise and made for the sideboard. He mixed and drank more whisky and soda. Flushed, he mopped his face with a handkerchief, picked up a magazine, settled down to read.

The print danced before his eyes. Outside the storm grew, blotting out all nearer sounds. Merritt thought he dozed, while something urged him to awake, to go and check his guards who might be dozing, too. He started up suddenly. His eyes strained in his head.

In the doorway to the entrance hall, dripping from the rain, stood—John Ellman!

How long he squatted there like a canary before a snake, Merritt could not have known. Disbelief fought in his numbed brain with a cold, horrible fear. He wanted to think that this was an illusion, born of his fears. But then Ellman started walking toward him!

Merritt fought upward, scrambled from the chair and backed away. His throat ached to scream for his guards, but he could not. From some spot that might have been miles away, he heard his voice say hoarsely:

"What—do you want? What are you going to do to me?"

No answer came from the walking corpse. By a pace and then another, John Ellman shortened the distance between himself and the politician. Merritt clutched his tightening throat, still backing.

"I didn't do anything! They—the others—did it——"

Ellman came on, relentlessly! On his

line-carved face was a look, now, that was grim and savage in its satisfaction.

Mad with fear, Merritt swung about and dashed for the end of the room. The vision of Blackstone at the station must have left him then—he did not see the French window any more than Blackstone had been aware of the train.

With a crash, he struck the one which he had shut—but not locked—a moment before. It yawned outward with him. He pitched through—screamed!

His body, hurtling downward to the sidewalk in the rain, grew smaller and smaller to Ellman's peering eyes.

LODER and Nolan sat in the politician's car across the street from Beaumont's house and watched the white stone building.

The rain still fell, though now but a drizzle. It was after midnight. Nolan had got his court order, and had displayed it to Beaumont only twenty minutes ago.

The scientist agreed that John Ellman would be turned over to him to-morrow. To-night, said Beaumont, was impossible. Ellman had just come in after a foray in the rain. His health was endangered.

"There's his room up there," Nolan pointed.

Loder grunted, looking at the window. Wet with sweat, his pocketed fingers wrapped themselves about a heavy automatic—

Inside, meanwhile, Doctor Beaumont and Nancy and Jimmy tried to learn from the blank-faced, heavy-eyed creature who was John Ellman what he had been up to to-night.

The news of Trigger's death had not yet reached them, but a radio flash had told of Blackstone's end under a train, and not more than twenty minutes before Ellman had returned, another announcement had retailed the death of Merritt, found on the sidewalk before his house.

What lay behind these, and their connection with the unlocked brain of the

man from the Beyond, Doctor Beaumont more than suspected. He had watched Ellman closely in the past two days. As he had said to District Attorney Werner earlier that evening:

"I'm convinced that he has knowledge not received from man!"

But what that knowledge was, and how Ellman had received it, the scientist could not discover, for all his careful probing questions. He stood up with a gesture for Nancy to take Ellman to his room.

"Come, John," said the girl. And Ellman, with a gentle smile for her, followed her out of the room and down the hall.

A moment later, Nancy stood outside the closed door and wondered how this would end; whether Doctor Beaumont would succeed in lifting the veil that now seemed to hang between John Ellman's mind and the everyday world. She was about to start back to the laboratory when a noise halted her.

A window was being raised in Ellman's room! The light in there suddenly went out. The girl knew that their patient was leaving by his window—and immediately she resolved to follow him, alone, and learn where he went!

Hurriedly, she donned a coat and slipped out by a rear door. Ellman was striding up the street, head bowed against the drizzle, his shoulders hunched. A heavy sedan that had started up down the block and was tooling in his direction went unnoticed by the girl as she followed.

ACROSS town for five blocks Ellman led her, while the sedan cruised slowly behind, only its parking lights burning. Nolan and Loder watched both figures, muttered together, as Loder handled the wheel—

Nancy, with a start, realized after twenty minutes where Ellman was heading. They had reached the park section of the city where residences were scattered. Just ahead a wrought metal sign

beside a roadway said, JACKSON MEMORIAL CEMETERY. Beyond it stretched the darkness of the home of the city's dead, broken only here and there by the white glimmer of a headstone or a monument.

John Ellman turned in at the gate and walked through the darkness of the graveyard path. The girl followed.

Somewhere behind them, a car stopped and two men alighted and pressed forward.

The path wound through trees and past many mounds that looked like miniature hills in the night. Then, ahead, a small building showed, a tool house or something of the sort. Into it vanished Ellman's big figure, and the girl hurried forward.

She stopped in the doorway. A black shape that was Ellman's stood by the shack's window, gazing out into the darkness upon all the sleeping dead.

Nancy spoke. "John!"

He turned swiftly and his face stared at her.

She spoke again. "Why did you come here?"

He recognized her, then, and came a pace forward, his features softening. He said, "It is so peaceful and quiet."

"But you can't stay here! You must come back with me! Please, John!"

The man shook his head, and he did it in such a way that the girl knew he was decided. For the moment she was nonplused. Then the only solution came to her—she must telephone Doctor Beaumont at once. She should not have followed alone, anyway.

With a word for Ellman, she turned and vanished into the cemetery, running down the road. She did not see the two figures who crouched behind a tree not far from the shack. Nor the glint of metal in the hand of one!

"NOW'S the time." Loder whispered.

John Ellman's figure could be seen faintly in the door of the shack. Nolan

was fearful. "You're staking everything!" he hissed.

Loder said, "We've got to," and raised the gun.

The man there had not seen them. He was harkening to the distant retreating footsteps of the girl. Loder took careful aim in the darkness. Shots racketed, lancing fire—one, two, three!

Ellman spun around, clutched at the back of his head, and then collapsed.

Loder and Nolan broke from the trees and sprinted off into the darkness.

Nancy heard, turned, and rushed back, horrified. But she did not see the murderers. They regained the car and Loder took the wheel and Nolan panted: "Around the Boulevard way! Back to my rooms! When this gets out——"

"We had to!" Loder kept saying. "He *knew*! Sooner or later he could have told!"

He drove madly. They raced on along the cemetery wall and then around it on the Hillside Boulevard, from one side of which a cliff fell away sharply to the city's ash dumps three hundred feet below.

Hunched behind the wheel, his heavy face set and contorted, Loder pressed his big car as he had never before. The roadway was wet and treacherous; the misting drizzle still made visibility poor, but he ignored those things.

Nonetheless, it was Nolan, ironically, who brought on their doom. They were almost to the end of the Boulevard and its cliff below when the tall criminal lawyer suddenly threw a hand forward, pointing, and shrieked:

"Look out! *It's Ellman!* Right in front of us!"

Whether Sam Loder shared that phantasm was never known. But his response to Nolan's cry was automatic; he tugged fiercely at the wheel.

The car tacked sideways, swerving madly at better than fifty miles an hour. It made for the cliff. Loder's brakes

screached. The heavy machine swung the other way, then started to skid.

For seventy yards it flashed back and forth on the glasslike roadway, while Loder sweated and gaped and tugged at the wheel, while Nolan clutched the door and yelled.

Then front wheels bounded off the road on the cliff side, found the shoulder and pulled the heavy car behind them. It wobbled there, slowing, as Nolan tried to throw open his door and leap.

He was halfway out—and Sam Loder was pinned behind the wheel—as the limousine went over the cliff and somersaulted down—down—down to rocks and refuse far below.

There it exploded, burst into flames.

NEAR the cemetery tool shed, Nancy was waiting in an agony for Doctor Beaumont and Jimmy to come, she having fled away for long enough to phone them.

The man who had been framed by Loder and his crowd, after coming out of prison—who had been executed and then brought back from the dead by Doctor Beaumont—was filmy-eyed now, weak of voice. Blood trickled from the side of his mouth as he tried to smile up at the girl's face.

A car's motor stopped somewhere, and Beaumont and Jimmy came rushing. To the doctor it was evident immediately that this time Ellman was dying, not to be resuscitated. Loder's bullets had struck him in body and head.

"Help me, Jimmy," Beaumont said hoarsely. "Inside!"

They carried him into the shack, laid him on a table there. Beaumont knelt and bent over his "creation," stared into Ellman's eyes.

"You can't save me this time, doctor," Ellman whispered with a faint smile. He added in a strange voice: "I remember now—all those things you asked me. I know. That bullet—in my head—"

Eagerly, the scientist said: "What things, John?"

"Nolan and Loder— They are dead now, too—and those other men. They framed me, they sent me to the chair."

"But how did you find out?" the doctor asked hoarsely, in a last desperate effort to break through the veil before this man died.

"You didn't know before your execution. How do you know now?"

Ellman choked, then said faintly: "It's—hard— I don't seem to be able to say it. You mustn't ask, doctor. Leave the dead to their Maker. The Lord our God is a jealous God."

"But—can't—can't you give me an inkling? What is death, John? Can't you put it into words?"

Ellman blinked. His voice came from far away. "After—the—shock—I seemed—to know—"

The words trailed off. His eyes had closed. A shudder clutched the frame, left it still, and Doctor Beaumont raised his head as Nancy, sobbing, threw herself into Jimmy's arms.

"The Lord our God is a jealous God!" whispered the scientist reverently.

Slowly, he got to his feet.

For sheer excitement, interest, suspense and thrills, there is only one magazine that stands far above the rest—THE SHADOW MAGAZINE. Twice a month, at only ten cents a copy, you get in each issue an eighty-page novel—really book-length—short stories of fast action, and the unusual features of a code department which gives you codes you yourself can use, crime problems, and crime facts. Go to your newsdealer to-day and get a copy; you'll never want to miss another!

# THE LEATHERNECKS HAVE LANDED

"Ex-marine . . . kicked out of the service!" That's the record of Woody Davis, a Shanghai drifter. Still, when duty called—

"WOODY" DAVIS, his feet set wide apart, stared up at the sign,

TRANSPACIFIC MINING COMPANY  
SHANGHAI DIVISION.

This was the place, all right. His lips formed a grim smile; his gray eyes narrowed as he entered the building.

He found himself in what looked like a warehouse, piled high with crates and boxes, variously labeled CROFTON CANNED SOUPS, CROFTON CANNED VEGETABLES. And then he saw the bending figure of a man—the man—pushing some of the boxes aside!

A sneering smile flitted across Woody's mouth as his quarry whirled, startled by the strange footsteps. It was the same Dresnov—the same thin face, the same shifty eyes, the same ugly scar across that jutting chin.

THE Russian's eyes narrowed at the sight of Woody, recognition flaring in

them, too. His thin lips curled as his hand darted under his coat for his gun. But the gesture did not escape Woody's alert eyes.

He leaped forward, the ugly scar on Dresnov's chin a target for his fist. His right uncorked a terrific punch that sent Dresnov reeling. As he stumbled backward, Woody jerked the gun away from him and tossed it into a space between the walls of boxes. Now he was ready to fight!

Dresnov regained his balance but Woody's fist landed on that scar again. The Russian's powerful fists smashed back blow for blow. There was iron in those fists, but there was iron in Woody's heart, too!

This was more than a slugging match to him, more than an ordinary brawl over a dame. This was a fight to avenge a buddy's death! A fight to avenge a disgrace!

Woody launched a sudden furious attack, barging into Dresnov with both

## THE CAST

LEW AYRES.....Woody Davis  
James Burke.....Corrigan  
Jimmy Ellison....."Mac"  
Ward Bond....."Tex"  
Victor Wong.....Cheng

Story by Wellyn Totman and James Gruen.

Screenplay by Seton I. Miller.

Directed by Howard Bretherton.

Supervised by Ken Goldsmith.



A fictionization of the Republic Picture of the same title.

battering fists, keeping his head clear, knowing where every blow was meant to land and seeing it land there!

He saw nothing but that scar. With the unerring eye of a sharpshooter, he aimed blow after blow at it, unmindful of the crushing body punches Dresnov dealt him. Relentlessly, he drove Dresnov on, battering him, driving him back, back, back!

A swift, twisting right to the chin staggered Dresnov. Another toppled him heavily, his head cracking sharply on a heavy crate!

Woody paused a moment as he watched Dresnov roll on the floor. He

breathed heavily, his fists red with blood. When the Russian came to his feet, one more blow would finish him. But suddenly a light flared in the renegade's eyes; he made a dive for the space between the walls of boxes.

The gun!

Woody saw the gleam of metal and dove after him. He felt the cold touch of steel in his hand, and Dresnov's fingers gripping his. With the grim silence of on-rushing death, the two struggled for possession of the weapon.

Then a shot rang out! Dresnov's body went limp under him, the head dropping forward!

Woody rose slowly, letting the lifeless body slide to the concrete floor, his eyes staring at it with a dull gaze, the gun dangling from his fingers.

"DROP that gun!" a voice broke into the silence.

Woody looked up, looked directly into the muzzle of an automatic. He saw a husky, middle-aged American taking



With the grim silence of onrushing death, the two struggled for possession of the weapon.

him in from head to toes with narrowed eyes.

Just then a shrill whistle sounded outside, followed by a babel of excited, high-pitched voices. Woody tossed the gun back toward the Russian, pulling out a handkerchief and wiping his hands. Let the police come! What difference did it make now?

Without a word of explanation, the American raised his gun and fired two spaced shots at the warehouse ceiling. The second bullet shattered the globe and the reflector in the light that hung overhead, plunging the place into pitch-darkness.

"I must be getting old!" the man exclaimed loudly. "Taking two shots at that distance!" He dug his hand into his pocket. "Guess you win!"

Before Woody could open his mouth to find out what this was all about, the door swung open and the sergeant of the Sikh police was in the room. His flashlight picked out the figures of the two men.

"Hello, Mr. Corrigan," the Oriental said respectfully. "What's the trouble here?"

"Just a little bet that I could still hit 'em with one shot. Sorry if I've disturbed any one. This is Mr. Edwards, a friend of mine," he introduced Woody. "Bad enough losing a five-pound note without being arrested for disturbing the peace, eh?"

He handed Woody a bill.

The sergeant glanced about. The muscles in Woody's jaw tightened. The Russian's body was hidden by the boxes. If the sergeant didn't take it into his head to go snooping about the place, all might be well. But—

"Well," the sergeant grunted, "please do any future target practice outside the city, Mr. Corrigan."

"O. K., chief!" Corrigan laughed as the policeman left.

"DEAD?"

Corrigan nodded toward the boxes when they were alone again.

Woody nodded his head.

"What was the fight about?"

Woody's eyes narrowed, that light flaring in them again. "He killed a friend of mine," Woody answered finally.

"What are you doing in Shanghai?" Corrigan asked.

Woody shrugged his shoulders. "I was a marine when I got here," he explained, "but they busted me out of the service. So I thought I'd hire out with the Chinese as a gunner in this revolution of theirs."

Corrigan eyed him carefully. "Which side?"

A bitter smile flitted across Woody's mouth. "Doesn't make much difference."

Corrigan hesitated a moment. Then: "Since you waded in here and left me short-handed, how'd you like to hold Dresnov's job?"

"Doing what?"

"Taking supplies up the river." Corrigan smiled wryly. "To the rebels," he added.

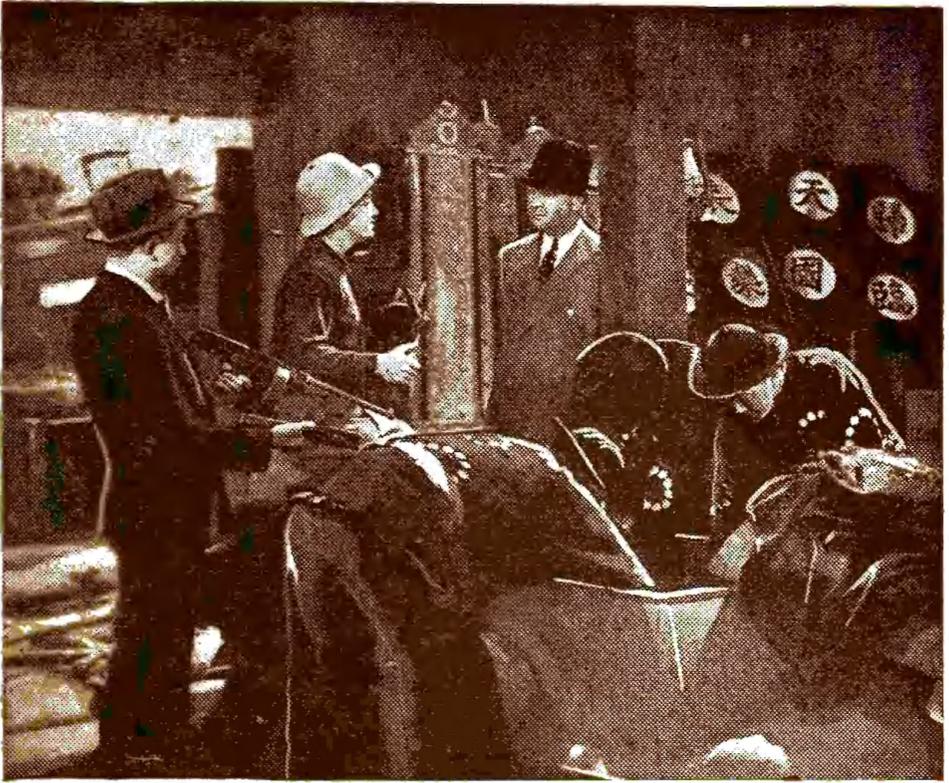
"Guns?" Woody confronted him.

"Machine guns and ammunition."

Things seemed clearer to Woody. "No wonder you covered me just now," he grinned.

"I don't like to have the police messing around these soup crates and supply boxes," Corrigan said calmly. "The job pays big money—two thousand a trip. But the risk is big, too. You're the goat if anything happens. Transpacific has a big, legitimate business shipping supplies to the interior. If any contraband is found, *you* stuck it in with forged labels. If it gets through, Cheng has a funny habit of raiding our warehouses and making off with rice—or anything else he finds."

"I'll take the job," Woody said quietly.



They watched the men take the machine guns out of the coffin.

WOODY was leaning against the rail of a Chinese junk, smoking a cigarette, as he watched the coolies load the boat when Corrigan came to him with the bad news. A military cordon had been thrown around the settlement and every warehouse was being searched with a fine comb for the guns that were to be smuggled to the rebels.

Everything was out of the warehouse on the junk except the sixty machine guns Woody was holding there until the next trip. "We can have them down here at the water front to-night," Woody said calmly, as he tossed his cigarette into the black waters.

"Not a chance!" Corrigan growled. "They're stopping all traffic at every gate, and there are outposts of U. S. marines all along the river!"

"Don't worry," Woody said easily. "I'll have them here by noon to-morrow!"

"I doubt it," Corrigan said, "but if you do get them on board it means a two-hundred-dollar bonus!"

Woody laughed. "You'd better stop by your cash drawer in the morning."

THERE were marines everywhere as Woody strolled up the street near the Soochow gates. They were posted near the bridge stopping all passing vehicles to examine their contents.

He looked at them enviously, remembering when he had been one of them. But then he smiled grimly. This was no time to get sentimental! He glanced at his watch.

"Woody!"

"Why—Mac—hello, Mac!" Woody warmly greeted an old pal of his, all resplendent in a new lieutenant's uniform. "What are you doing here, Mac?"

"Guarding this gate," Mac said, proud as a kid.

"You're——" A grin spread across Woody's face. "You're guarding this bridge?"

"Sure, what's so funny about that?"

"Against what?" Woody asked with feigned amusement. He knew only too well that Mac's duty was to intercept the machine guns which were due to cross this very bridge in a few moments!

"I can't tell you," Mac shook his head.

A tumultuous clamor broke into their conversation. The air filled with weird cries, singsong chanting, the blare of horns.

"Get a look at the funeral!" Mac exclaimed.

The procession came winding up the narrow street, passing directly in front of them. It was a colorful sight. The casket, covered with rich drapes inside a heavily ornamented palanquin, was carried on the shoulders of a number of natives. Behind it, grotesque papier-mâché figures rose in the air, turning, swaying in the hands of the people who carried them as they chanted a mournful song. Bright banners streamed above it all, giving an almost carnival atmosphere to the spectacle.

One of the marines stepped in front of the procession, holding his rifle up. He was greeted with cries of protest from the mourners.

"Hey, Greer!" Mac called out. "Let them go. You can't stop a funeral!"

Greer lowered his rifle, stepping back as the procession went on, the chanting growing louder, the singing more weird.

"They sure give them a royal send-off, don't they?" Woody commented.

"Yeah," Mac said, staring after the funeral, not noticing Woody's faint smile of elation.

"Well, it's twelve o'clock. I've got to

beat it," Woody said. "So long. Don't let the enemy get past you."

"I won't!" Mac answered him with assurance.

CORRIGAN paid Woody his bonus as they watched the men take the machine guns out of the coffin and the papier-mâché figures. The guns were then covered with white cloth and slipped into the middle of burlap bags filled with rice, then sewn up so that even a close inspection would reveal nothing but rice in them.

Woody took care of the loading of the junk while Corrigan left for his train. He had to go on ahead, to prepare the carts at the end of the river to carry the stuff to the interior.

The junk finally made its way up the river slowly. Woody stood at the rail, a machine gun ready for emergency. Their course took them past an American cruiser, gleaming in the noonday sun. The reflected glare nearly blinded him so that he had to turn away.

He was glad to turn, glad for an excuse not to see the other boat. A long time had passed, many things had happened since last he trod the decks of that cruiser in the service of Uncle Sam! From the dirty poop of a Chinese junk bearing contraband, there was something almost sacreligious in looking upon his old troop ship. He knew then that he would gladly trade his smuggler's gold for the cool khaki of the service!

IT was a long, hot, dirty trek from the end of the river journey to the settlement. Woody wiped the sweat from his forehead as he walked alongside of the gang boss. It had been a tough jaunt, all right, but they were near their destination.

"Is that the Transpacific?" Woody asked the gang boss as a group of warehouses and oil tanks loomed in sight.

"No. Melican Oil Company. Number One boss there Mr. Hewitt. Our



Cheng barked out orders to his men.

place beyond village little bit, toward hills."

The sky was black with the Chinese night as they finally reached the Transpacific warehouses. Corrigan greeted Woody with a welcoming smile from the porch of the office. The ex-marine followed Corrigan into the rough but comfortable quarters.

Sinking into a chair, he gulped the drink Corrigan offered him. "What's the next move?" he asked, setting the drained glass down.

"Cheng makes the moves from now on," Corrigan replied. "We'll keep up a front delivering dynamite and supplies to the mines around here. That's supposed to be our business, you know. Then, when Cheng needs supplies, he'll 'raid' us and take them."

THERE was a sharp rap at the door. Corrigan and Woody looked at each other. Corrigan rose slowly and went

to answer. But there was no cause for alarm. Their visitor was the resident manager of the American Oil Company's local station.

"Oh, come in, Hewitt," Corrigan said. "Meet my new assistant, Mr. Davis."

"How're you?" Woody firmly gripped the hand offered to him. He liked the elderly man on sight.

"We're going to need protection here!" Hewitt said excitedly to Corrigan. "I just learned that Cheng came across the border at Ho Tao! I keep runners out along the border and one just came in with a report—Cheng slaughtered some of the Nationalist troops there, and he's moving into this district!"

"Using runners, eh?" Corrigan grinned. "You must have the jumps, Hewitt. There's no reason to worry about the rebels. They're only interested in chasing the Nationalists out of the provinces, not running American capital out."

"They're interested in everything they can get their hands on," Hewitt said angrily, his heavy-browed eyes flaring. "They're nothing but a dirty rabble of cutthroat bandits. They've murdered residents in every station they have come to! I'm sending a message to Shanghai to-night, asking for a detachment of marines. And I'll stand a better chance of getting them if your company asks protection with me."

"Count me out," Corrigan said with a laugh. "I'm not going to be responsible for dragging the marines in here on a false alarm."

Hewitt's lips tightened. "I'll send for them myself!" he spat out. The door slammed angrily behind him as he left.

"YOU'D better find a way of stopping him, Corrigan." There was an ominous calm in Woody's voice. "If the marines come in here this deal is off."

"Getting soft?" Corrigan jeered at Woody.

"No." Woody stared at him with a frank gaze, a hard glint in his eyes. "But I'm an ex-marine. The outfit in Shanghai is my old outfit. The boys in it are my old pals. I don't care what happens to me—I don't even mind pulling the wool over their eyes once in a while—but I'll be damned if I'm going to be a party to a scrap where any one of them is liable to be killed! Espe-



The third shot came from Woody's gun.

cially by machine guns I brought!"

Corrigan leaned across the table. A lamp flared between the two men, bringing out the sudden hate in their eyes. "And I'm not going to lose the money I got tied up in this deal!" he barked.

"When is Cheng coming to raid the place?" Woody asked.

"Next week. He doesn't expect the stuff here before then."

"If you could get word to him that it's here now, he could grab it and duck before the marines get here," Woody said.

Corrigan hesitated. He knew he'd be better off getting rid of the stuff before the marines messed around. "Cheng's probably in the mountains this side of Ho Tao," he said. "It'll be a job to find him, but it's worth a try." He paused for a moment as he weighed his chances. Then: "I'll start at once!"

THE leathernecks had landed! Dog tired, dusty after their long march through the wild country, making their own trail part of the way, wading through muddy rivers, they were glad to get to the settlement, to find a place to bunk. Captain Halstead, head of the detachment, and Mac, his first lieutenant, headed for the American Oil station.

Hewitt was relieved to see them. "I've just warned all my employees to come here to the house in case of attack."

"Good." Halstead nodded his head.

"Are there any other white people in the village?"

"Two men up at the Transpacific warehouse." Hewitt replied. "Corrigan and a new fellow, Davis."

"Davis?" Mac perked his ears up. "What does he look like?"

"Young, rangy fellow, with black hair, middleweight. He came in a few days ago with a wagon train of supplies. A fellow named Dresnov had the job before but Corrigan mentioned that he had an accident in Shanghai."

Halstead had been listening closely. At the name of Dresnov his eyes lit up. "Did Dresnov happen to have a scar on his jaw?" he asked.

"Yes." Hewitt looked surprised. "Why?"

"We've heard of him. They're an outfit we've been looking for in Shanghai. We think they've been smuggling guns

and ammunition into the interior for the bandits."

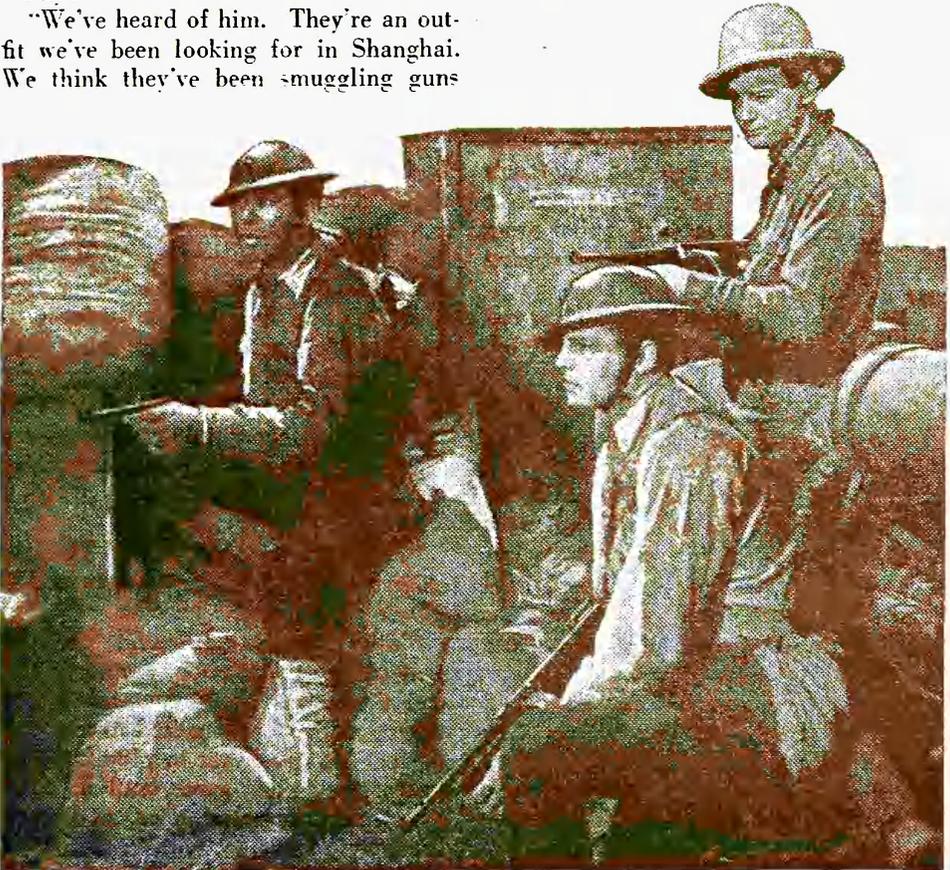
"But——" Hewitt began and then his eyes widened. "Say! No wonder Corrigan didn't want protection!"

"He didn't, eh?" Halstead turned to Mac. "Go up there with one of the men and get them!" he ordered.

Mac strode into the night. Woody Davis—it didn't seem possible! Woody was hot-tempered, all right, but to be messed up in a dirty game like this——

He stopped before a tall, lanky marine. "Bring your rifle, Tex, and follow me. We've got some work ahead of us!"

CORRIGAN and Woody were checking over the ammunition. They figured



"They're trying to rush us!"

Cheng would be there in half an hour.

"I didn't even have to mention the marines," Corrigan said. "They used up most of the ammunition in their last fight, and when I told them the stuff was here they jumped to get started. How soon will the marines get here?"

"I don't know," Woody replied truthfully. He had not heard of their arrival. He glanced around the warehouse. Ammunition boxes were piled against the walls.

Woody watched as Corrigan pried open a small box. In it were layers of egg-shaped hand grenades. Woody reached out, picked up a couple, and slipped them into his pocket. "Just in case they get tough," he said to Corrigan.

"Don't move!"

Somehow the voice was familiar to Woody. He turned, and his eyes met Mac's, then Tex's.

"Why——" He smiled, but the smile faded as he saw the automatic in Mac's hand, the rifle in Tex's. He looked at the men again, and saw that they were no longer his friends. They were staring at him with contempt.

"You're under arrest!" Mac addressed Corrigan, then turning to Woody, "You, too!"

"I've heard that before, but it sounds funny coming from you," Woody said. "I——"

The sudden thunder of rifles froze the words in Woody's mouth. With searing lead and blood-curdling cries, Cheng was announcing his arrival to all the world! The office doors crashed open, and the famous bandit confronted the four Americans!

"YOUR trap didn't work, Mr. Corrigan!" He spoke with venomous hatred in his voice as his men disarmed Tex and Mac. "We are ready for your marines in spite of your foolish trickery!"

"I didn't——" Corrigan began, but two reports from Cheng's automatic cut

off his words. He crumpled to the floor, his mouth still open, his body striking the ground with a thud. Woody saw the Lueger bear on him.

"Corrigan didn't know the marines were here!" he cried, the veins in his temples heavy with rage. He was more angry at the cold, ruthless killing than afraid of the next shot.

"You work for him?" the bandit leader asked.

"Yes," Woody admitted.

Cheng turned, barked out orders to his men. They came forward, grabbing Mac and Tex suddenly. It was no easy job. It took three men to overpower Mac and as many to control Tex. But they were both finally bound fast to posts. They jerked Woody's automatic from his pocket, but left him free.

Cheng approached Mac. "How many marines are in the village?" he snarled at him.

Mac might have been deaf. Only the look of cold contempt on his face revealed that he had heard the question.

With a brutal gesture, Cheng struck Mac full in the face with the barrel of his automatic. Not a sound came from Mac's lips as the steel tore across his flesh, leaving an ugly red-flowing gash.

Tex squirmed in his ropes, glaring at Woody for letting Mac take it, for standing there, doing nothing, saying nothing. But Woody's face was expressionless, without emotion.

"IS that the ammunition?" The rebel chief turned, addressing Woody and indicating the boxes.

"Yes," Woody admitted. He knew well enough that the men would find the stuff themselves. Only the machine guns were well enough disguised to avoid detection. It was better to play into their hands, play their game until he found an opening, a way out, a way to do something.

Cheng was quick to notice that there was something missing. "Where are the

machine guns?" he snapped at Woody.

"There aren't any," was Woody's calm reply. "I couldn't get them out of the Shanghai warehouse. The settlement was blockaded so tight you couldn't have smuggled them out in a funeral procession!"

He spoke the last words slowly, carefully, glancing at Mac to see if their meaning had penetrated. The sudden light in Mac's eyes, the faint smile did Woody's heart good. Mac understood now. Woody may have been responsible for one marine's death but he would lay his life down for these fellows!

Cheng walked over to the rice bags. "What's in these sacks?"

"Food supplies," Woody replied. He met the bandit's questioning look without blinking an eyelash. The man felt

the sack, then drew out his knife and slashed into it. Rice gushed to the floor. He felt the sack again, grunted, and turned.

Men arrived with a wagon now and started to load ammunition. Sounds of rifle fire stuttered through the night. Woody became aware that the Chinese rebels were fighting to hold off the marines—that a furious battle had been raging while he and his two friends had been at Cheng's mercy!

He strolled about casually, watching the men load the ammunition. The wagon finally left, only a rebel officer and a guard remaining.

SUDDENLY Woody saw the officer turn his eyes on the rice sack as he approached it slowly, watching the trickle



Woody leaped to his feet and sent the grenade pegging to the warehouse.

of rice. The hard angular shape of a machine gun showed through the burlap bag! He snapped an order to the guard who ran out, then turned to Woody.

"No machine guns!"

The tone of his voice was veiled with threats of what was in store for Woody. But Woody was looking at Corrigan's body, still lying in a pool of blood. They had overlooked the gun that was still in the dead man's holster!

Mac's eyes, too, saw the gun loosely strapped to the dead man's side. He sensed what was in Woody's mind and did the first thing he could think of to distract the officer's attention.

"I'll tell you how big our outfit is!" he said suddenly.

The officer turned at Mac's voice. As he turned Woody dove for Corrigan's gun!

A bullet from the officer's Lueger jolted his shoulder as he jerked the gun out. Another tore the floor beside him. But the third shot came from Woody's gun, and the officer's Lueger clattered to the floor. His twisted, limp body slumped after it!

THE captive marines grinned as Woody rushed to the front doors, bolting them. Then, with a knife from the officer's body, he slashed the ropes that bound Tex and Mac with quick rapid strokes.

"Good work, Woody!" Mac said.

"If they get hold of those machine guns we won't have a chance!" Woody said. "Let's get at them, ourselves, before Cheng does! They're all assembled, ready to fire."

Without a moment's hesitancy, they tore at the sacks, digging through the rice, getting at the guns. Woody broke open a crate for drums of machine-gun bullets. Grabbing a drum, he slammed it into his gun and darted to a window. A party of bandits summoned by the guard were approaching! They were only about twenty yards away!

"They're coming up!" he warned the others. He jammed the muzzle through the windowpane, and started the "typewriter" on its conversation of death!

His first blast crumpled the front line. The others dropped to the ground, opening fire on the warehouse! Bullets smashed through the thin walls, tore at the heavy timbers.

Tex stood, feet apart at the door. He slammed the drum home on his gun, had another tucked under his arm.

"They're trying to rush us!" Woody yelled to him.

"Move away from there, babies!" he shouted as he trained his gun on the doors, cutting loose, sweeping back and forth across them. The cries on the other side, the sound of falling bodies told him the attack was momentarily stopped.

"THERE'S a new bunch coming up this side," Mac yelled from another window.

"We won't be able to hold out!" Woody shouted from his place.

"We ain't doin' so badly," Tex snorted, letting out another blast. "Say—is that stuff against the wall labeled 'dynamite'?"

"It sure is," Woody nodded.

"Thought so!" He paused while he directed a withering blast through his window. "I don't like seeing bullets chipping the corners of those boxes," he said.

"Say!" Woody exclaimed. "That's the way to keep the guns from them!" He dug into his pocket and held out a hand grenade. "How about going out the back way and laying an egg on this place? With all the dynamite in those cases——"

The three men looked at each other. Mac grinned slowly. "We won't have much chance of getting through, but it will be fun to watch!"

Tex gritted his teeth. "O. K. with me. Let's shove!"

Woody peered out of the back door as Tex and Mac put fresh drums on their guns. "All set!" he said over his shoulder. "This has to be quiet, though. Don't shoot unless you have to!"

OUT they went, plunging into the darkness, crouching on their hands and knees. A bullet sang above them! Seen already! They threw themselves flat on their bellies, lying motionless for a moment.

They saw Cheng and his men run into the building to investigate the sudden stillness.

"This is far enough." Woody whispered tensely.

"Let 'er go!" Mac breathed. "We'll keep 'em down for you!" The men cut loose with a sudden, wide-sweeping blast of fire.

Woody leaped to his feet, grenade in hand and sent it pegging to the warehouse. It crashed through a window and a terrific blast flung him to the quaking ground.

The roof shot to the sky in a thousand bits. Men hurled, soaring up only to fall back to what was now a roaring pit of flames.

The survivors opened up anew on the three Americans.

"Let's go!" Woody shouted, turning to Tex. But Tex jerked forward suddenly, his head slumping on his hand.

"TEX!" Woody crawled to him. He knew what had happened the minute he put his hand on Tex's shoulder, yet he didn't want to believe.

He turned the marine over. Tex—they'd gotten Tex! A bullet cracked in the dirt beside Woody. He struggled back to Mac.

The warehouse flames lit the sky, now. "It's making good targets of us," Woody said. He looked ahead and saw three big steel oil drums, two upright, one lying flat, about fifty yards away. "Let's make a run for them!" he said.

"O. K.!"

They both gave a final burst of fire from their guns, then scrambled to their feet in a mad dash—bullets whining, tearing the dirt all around them.

Woody turned to say something to Mac. But Mac was pitching forward, an agonized look on his face. Woody ran back, kneeling beside him.

"Mac!" He was still alive! Clutching his gun, Woody held Mac under his free arm, dragging him toward the oil drum barricade.

There was no let-up in the crashing about him, but on he went. Those few yards seemed like miles. He felt dizzy, dazed, exhausted. The drums! If—only—he—could—reach—

He sank to the ground, pulling Mac's body with him, safe behind the drums!

A bullet cracked suddenly, hitting the rounded side of the flat tank. In the fleeting instant, he saw the steel dent under the leaden impact. But he failed to see the bullet flatten out and deflect then, flying straight at his head. Suddenly—blackness.

WOODY opened his eyes. Nothing but infinite whiteness before him. Then a face came into view, a familiar face.

"Mac," he managed.

"Hi, Woody. How're you feeling?"

"Why, all right, I guess. You?"

"Fit and ready to go. You'll be all right, too."

The face was gone, he stared at the whiteness again. Sure, hospitals were white. He saw another face now. Captain Halstead.

"We came to tell you that we want you back, Woody. We're shoving off next week. The doctor says you'll be ready to go then."

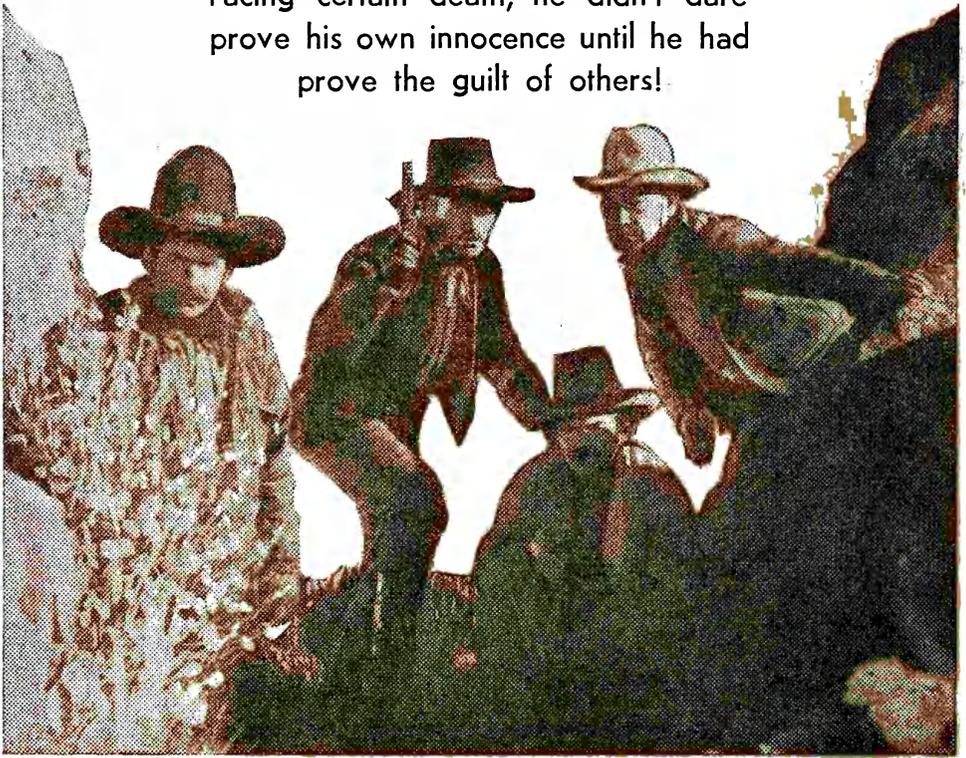
"Where are we headed for, captain?" Woody asked.

"The Philippines. Can't promise you much action, though."

Woody smiled gratefully. He was a leatherneck again!

# SILVER SPURS

Facing certain death, he didn't dare prove his own innocence until he had prove the guilt of others!



JIM FENTRISS, foreman of the Two-Diamond spread, stopped abruptly as he stepped inside the stable, the muscles in his lean face tightening and his blue eyes losing their good-natured look.

Two men stood before him, one heavy-set, dark-faced, with evil stamped in his eyes and over his crafty features. The second was young, not more than twenty, a sharp-faced boy, with flashing dark eyes and a head of black hair.

The older of the two, Durango, swerved at the sound of Jim entering, letting his right hand fall to the butt of his gun. A sneer distorted his face as he stalked insolently out of the barn.

"I want to talk to you, Kid," Jim said hoarsely to the boy, dubbed the "Yuma Kid" by the cowboys. "Don't get too thick with Durango. He's bad medicine."

The Yuma Kid's thin face curled up in a sneer.

"What I do is my business!" he shot back. "If you had half the nerve of Durango, you'd be a man!"

"I'm trying to warn you," Jim answered quietly.

"If you don't like my style, why don't you fire me?" the Kid sneered. "You ain't got the nerve to fire Durango. Now get out of here before I go for my guns because some time I'm going to have to blow your brains out!"

The Kid's hands went for his six guns. Jim looked at him wearily, his arms hanging limply at his side. The Kid gave a taunting laugh and walked out of the barn.

For a long moment, Jim stood staring into space, his face and eyes wearing

a peculiar expression. The sneering attitude of the Yuma Kid, and his childish boast about blowing his brains out, did not worry Jim.

Yet he knew he would never have taken that threat from any other living man. Durango with all his vaunted gun play, would never have dared to make it. Even "Silverspurs" Holden, who was behind the gang of outlaws and rustlers that were terrorizing the country, and who had sent Durango to the Two-Diamond Ranch to line up the men as rustlers, would have thought twice before risking the lightning speed of Jim Fentriss on the draw.

AS Jim Fentriss stood staring into space, two people were watching him—two people who had heard the threat of Yuma Kid and had seen Jim swallow it without a word.

One of these was a girl, Janet Allison, who had arrived at the ranch two weeks before from the East. She was young and pretty, with the culture of an eastern finishing school combined with the strength of character expected in the daughter of Webb Allison, owner of the Two-Diamond spread.

Her arrival in town had been heralded with a hold-up of the express boxes holding the money for the bank. It had been her first taste of the reign of lawlessness that had spread into the country. She had seen Silverspurs Holden, the man heading the gang of outlaws. She had seen the robbery take place with no at-

tempt on the part of the sheriff to interfere.

Jim Fentriss had driven her home, taking the long route. She was stubborn and accustomed to having her own way. Jim had not given it to her. She had protested and fought, but she had admired him for it.

Yet now, how could she be sure?

That the Yuma Kid was mixed up with the Silverspurs gang, represented on the Two-Diamond spread by Durango, was obvious to everyone. That Jim Fentriss had taken the insult from the Yuma Kid as if he were afraid to either fire him or Durango was too obvious to Janet.

As Jim finally turned to walk out of the stable, he saw her. Her eyes were cold and mocking. He flushed, mumbled some unintelligible word, and walked away from her rapidly.

The second person who had witnessed the scene with the Yuma Kid was "Drag," an old gnarled Western fighter, who got his nickname because of an affected drag of his hand as he went for the draw. This dragging of his right hand had fooled many a would-be killer, and in the West there were few who could beat Drag on the draw.

Drag was a government agent, sent to investigate Silverspurs Holden and his gang and to break them up. His wrinkled old face took on an amazed and puzzled look as he listened to the Yuma Kid's conversation with Jim. It wasn't the first time he had seen the two to-

#### THE CAST

BUCK JONES.....Jim Fentriss  
Muriel Evans.....Janet Allison  
J. P. McGowan.....Webb Allison  
Robert Fraser.....Art Holden  
Bruce Lane.....The Yuma Kid

Story by Charles Alden Seltzer.  
Screenplay by Joseph Franklin Poland.  
Directed by Ray Taylor.  
Produced by Buck Jones.



A fictionization of the Universal picture of the same title.

gether. It was one of the first things he had noticed when he arrived to work under cover on the Two-Diamond spread.

FROM the stable, Drag went directly to the ranch house, where old Webb Allison was in his office.

"Webb," Drag demanded, "do you trust Fentriss?"

"Sure," Allison shot back, "I'd trust him anywhere."

"He spends too much time with the Yuma Kid," Drag answered. "The Kid is mixed up with Silverspurs Holden and Durango. Fentriss knows this, and yet he doesn't fire him."

"I can't explain that," Allison said, "but Jim is one hundred per cent square!"

Drag shook his head and then related what he had heard in the stable, warning Allison that Fentriss would bear watching.

While this conversation was going on, Jim was riding across the range. He was headed for no place in particular. He wanted to be alone, to try to figure things out. The presence of Janet in the stable worried him. His conversation with the Yuma Kid made him feel sick all over.

He knew a show-down had come. He had tried to postpone it until he had learned how many men on the ranch had lined up with Durango. The scene with the Yuma Kid, witnessed by Janet, made it impossible for him to go any further with his original plan. Now he could no longer delay the show-down with Durango. But the Yuma Kid—

Suddenly Jim's body stiffened. Far ahead, in a small canyon, he saw some one riding rapidly, headed for an old deserted cabin. He saw that it was a girl, and despite the distance he recognized Janet's horse and the scarf around her neck. From another direction he saw a man riding toward her.

It was Dude, one of his own cowboys. The sight of the girl he believed to be Janet, riding on her way to a rendezvous

with Dude, stunned Jim. He watched the two riders approaching each other, each headed for the cabin.

They disappeared over a sharp incline. Jim waited a minute and then turned his horse in the direction of the cabin, deciding to investigate. Fifteen minutes later he rounded a small knoll and came in sight of the cabin again.

A woman's scream, pitiful and frantic, cut the air. Jim gave his horse rein, and it raced for the cabin and the screaming girl. With a flying leap Jim was on the ground, running for the front door of the cabin. He burst inside, then stopped abruptly.

HE was staring at the back of Durango, who was struggling with a girl! Durango turned. The girl pulled away and disappeared out the rear of the cabin before Jim had a look at her face.

And as Durango turned there was no time to investigate. Durango's right hand streaked from his holster. But with lightning speed, Jim's gun came out, crashed down on Durango's wrist, knocking the gun from his hand!

With a bellow of rage, Durango lunged at him. Jim side-stepped the lunge, bringing his right around in a sharp uppercut that cracked against Durango's jaw, sending him tottering back. Durango bounced back, charging at Jim with a bull-like rush.

Jim met this rush with blows that sapped the furious strength of Durango. For weeks Jim had waited for this chance. All his pent-up fury, all the hatred he had held for this man, whom he knew was organizing good cowmen to work for Silverspurs Holden, found expression in his blows.

A right crossed over a sharp left sent Durango to the floor, a bloody, squirming heap. He tried to get up, but couldn't.

"You've been asking for this for a long time," Jim said. "When you get yourself together, come to the ranch and

get your pay. You'll need it to get out of the country."

Durango's only answer was a groan. Jim turned and walked out of the cabin, his mind still dazed at the sight of Janet riding for the cabin. Where had she gone to so suddenly? What had happened to Dude? These questions leaped through Jim's mind as he jumped on his horse and rode away.

Inside the cabin, Durango struggled to his feet. His gun lay on the floor near him. He picked it up, stumbled out of the cabin and around the corner. Jim was riding away from him, his back making a perfect target. Durango raised his gun slowly, taking a careful aim.

His fingers started to close on the trigger, but as they did, a shot came from somewhere behind him. For a split second Durango stiffened. The gun dropped from his hand, and then he slumped to the ground in a lifeless heap.

BACK at the ranch, Jim went to the ranch house, looking for his boss. Alli-

son was nowhere to be found, but Janet was there with Peggy Wyman, a girl friend visiting her from the East. Peggy lay on a couch, her face pale and her eyes filled with terror.

"Seen Dude around here?" Jim asked Janet coldly.

A half-amused smile came to her face as she answered: "Did you expect to find him here?"

"I'm firing him," Jim replied curtly. "Fooling around too much with girls and not doing his work!"

"There are others you might discharge, too," Janet taunted. "Durango and the Yuma Kid, for instance."

Jim flushed at the mocking insult. He tried to control his feelings.

"I just fired Durango," he said.

The sound of horse's hoofs outside the house stopped any further conversation. Jim went to the door and saw Webb Allison, Drag, and several cowboys. Across Allison's saddle lay an inert body.

"Jim," Allison said, "the boys found Durango dead outside the east cabin. He was beaten up and then shot through the back. Know anything about it?"

Jim stared at the lifeless body lying across the saddle in stunned amazement. He heard Janet give a stifled cry behind him. Jim looked at her. Her eyes gave him a pleading look.



With a bellow of rage, Durango lunged at him.

"Why, no," Jim answered casually. "I don't know who could have killed him."

"We've sent for the sheriff," Allison said. "And here he comes now!" he added as hoofbeats broke the stunned silence.

Two men were riding toward the ranch house. Behind them were a number of cowboys led by the Yuma Kid—the cowboys on the ranch friendly to Durango and Holden.

And with the sheriff was Silverspurs Holden himself! The hands of Allison and Jim went for their guns at the sight of the rustler, but a word of warning from Drag caused them to let their guns alone.

"The sheriff is in with Holden," Drag warned. "All he needs is an excuse to start trouble!"

IN the ranch house, Peggy Wyman was in hysterics. Janet was standing over her, trying to quiet her nerves.

"What shall I do," Peggy wailed. "If I'm questioned I'll have to say——"

"—that Jim Fentriss fought Durango and killed him?" Janet cut in. "You can't do that! You've got to keep out of sight until the sheriff leaves—and then you have to leave for home. It's the only way!"

"I didn't mean any harm, riding your horse out to meet Dude," Peggy wailed. "Durango rode up to the cabin at the same time and Dude got scared and ran. Then Jim came in and I slipped out the back door before he saw me——"

"Keep quiet!" Janet warned. "As soon as the sheriff leaves I'll have you driven to town."

Outside, the sheriff and Holden were looking at Jim with accusing eyes. Behind them was the Yuma Kid and the cowboys, ready to back up any gun play that might start.

"You were around the east cabin, Fentriss," the sheriff said to Jim. "And you didn't get along with Durango."

"Not so well," Jim agreed. "He wasn't a good worker—for *this* outfit."

Silverspurs Holden, tall and suave and brutal in looks, flushed angrily at the pointed answer.

Webb Allison looked sharply at him and demanded: "Just what is your interest in this, Holden?"

The sheriff answered before Holden could collect his wits. "Holden's my deputy. He's going to help me solve this murder."

"Like you solved the robbery in the station in town?" Allison asked meaningfully.

"Those robbers were strangers," the sheriff hedged uncomfortably, "and they got away."

"It's silly to say that!" It was Janet, standing white-faced but resolute in the open doorway of the ranch house. "One of those robbers is right here! That man, Holden! I saw him leading the bandits myself!"

THE Yuma Kid stiffened. His hand crept toward his holster. The men with him tensed for gun play. Holden glanced over his shoulder at his men, his eyes cold and deadly.

"You're dead wrong, young lady," the sheriff answered angrily. "Art Holden was at Dry Creek with me all that day! We came here to get Durango's killer—and we're not leaving until we do!"

The Yuma Kid's gun snapped out of the leather. His men moved in closer to the sheriff and Holden, each making a swift draw. The eyes of the sheriff and Holden were on Jim. He looked at Janet and then at her father, as if trying to make up his mind what to do.

There was no question that he was cornered.

He had no illusions what would happen to him if he were arrested and taken to town. He'd never get there alive—he knew that! It was Holden's and the

sheriff's chance to get him out of the way.

Yet if he fought it out on the ranch, Janet and her father would be in sudden, inescapable danger from the flying lead!

Jim's decision came with startling rapidity. The sheriff's horse was near him. Jim twisted slightly to the right, raising his body up on his right toe. Then he sprang, a long, leaping dive for the neck of the horse! His arms went around the neck as he swung his legs up!

His flying feet caught the sheriff on the shoulders, knocking him to the ground. The horse leaped forward, Jim flying hard over the neck. For one breathless instant every person in front of the ranch house was dazed by the swiftness of Jim's action.

Then the Yuma Kid and Holden came to life with roaring guns. They whirled their horses in the direction Jim was taking, but the sheriff's horse was too fleet

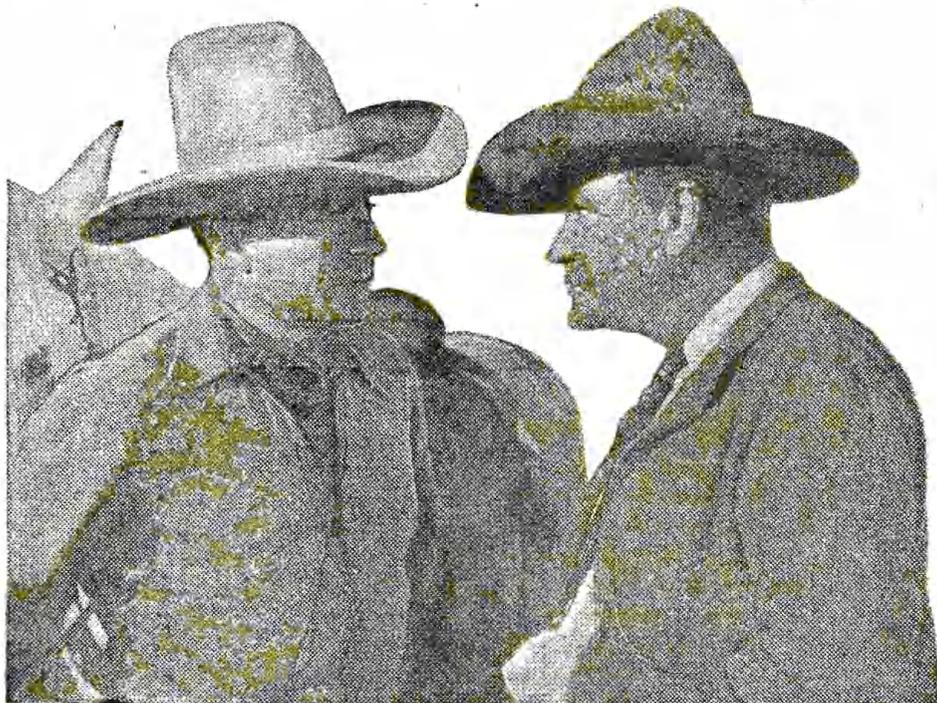
for them. Jim headed into the bad lands that lay to the east of the Two-Diamond Ranch.

THREE hours later he rode down a shallow wash gully on the far side of the bad lands. The Yuma Kid and his men had long since lost Jim's trail. Jim knew he would be safe for several hours—until the sheriff got to town and organized a posse to search for him.

It would no longer be a question of Holden and the sheriff arresting him. His flight from the ranch would be sufficient evidence of guilt for the sheriff to organize a posse of at least fifty men who would shoot him on sight for a fugitive outlaw. He had walked into their trap—and he knew too well that that trap meant certain death!

It did, unless——

Jim turned his horse to the west and started back through the bad lands. His mind was made up now. He knew defi-



"We came here to get Durango's killer—and we're not leaving until we do!"



Jim squeezed the trigger, but there was only a dull snap.

nately what his plan of action must be from this point on. And the first thing to be done was to return to the Two-Diamond, even though it might mean his death!

Evening was falling as he rode out of the bad lands and onto the range of the Two-Diamond spread. He knew that by this time several posses would be searching for him. But he had to take the chance.

To his right he saw a buckboard driving rapidly along. He saw Janet and Peggy in it. A man from the Two-Diamond outfit was at the reins. Jim raced toward the buckboard, catching up to it as it was making a sharp turn in the road.

At the sight of him, Janet gave a startled cry.

"Jim, we're taking Peggy to town! She's leaving for home so she can't testify against you!"

Jim looked at her and then at Peggy in amazement.

"Listen, Mr. Fentriss," Peggy said. "I was the girl in that cabin. It wasn't Janet!"

"Did you kill Durango?" Jim asked.

Peggy shook her head and countered with: "Did you?"

"I didn't," Jim answered viciously. "And I don't know who did. But I'm going to find out—if I get killed doing it!"

"You must be careful, Jim," Janet warned. "Holden and the sheriff will kill you on sight. But meet me to-morrow noon at Eagle Rock near that old cabin, and if I'm able to find out anything in the meantime, I'll tell you then."

Jim nodded and turned his horse away in the direction of the cabin. His mind played with a strange theory about the murder. At the cabin, he hid his horse in a clump of bushes.

HE did not go in the cabin. The night was falling in a gray light of twilight. At the corner of the building, he looked down at the ground and saw where Durango had fallen in death. Blood was there—a large, dark splotch that had caked the dirt.

Jim walked directly away from this spot, headed off at an angle. Durango had been shot in the back. If Durango had been watching him as he rode away after the fight, the bullet had been fired from this direction. And wherever the

killer had stood, there might still be traces!

At a clump of bushes some thirty yards from the cabin. Jim stopped, dropped to his hands and knees, and examined the ground. In the twilight, he could see the faint outlines of foot-prints. There was a half-burned cigarette stub.

Jim stood up. The killer of Durango had hidden in that clump of trees, waiting for his chance to give the fatal shot. But who could it have been? Jim got down on his hands and knees again, feeling along the ground with his fingers. They touched something soft.

In the twilight it was only a dark piece of cloth. Jim stood up, lit a match, and looked at the cloth. The muscles in his face tautened. The lines contracted about his mouth.

The cloth was a handkerchief, an expensive red silk bandanna, with a dark rose woven in the center. Jim stared at it with startled eyes for a moment, and then crushed it in his hand and walked slowly to where his horse was tied.

From the cabin he rode to the top of a high, knoll-like hill that overlooked the country for several miles. He dismounted, led his horse behind a boulder, and then went back to the top of the knoll and lay flat on his stomach.

Darkness had fallen, but an early moon was rising slowly, casting a bluish haze of light over the earth. For over an hour Jim lay there. The moon rose higher. The bluish haze grew brighter. Weird and ghostlike, the white rocks rose up on the moonlit mist. A deep canyon yawned up at Jim like a pit of death!

At the end of an hour, Jim saw the blackness move far below him. A horseman came out into the moonlight. Another joined him. And then a third came out of the night. Furtive and stealthy, the three riders moved over a narrow trail.



Suddenly their horses turned to the right and disappeared in the darkness. Jim was on his feet, running to his horse. He leaped in the saddle and rode slowly down to the trail where the three horsemen had been. Jim did not ride along this trail. He kept to the right, in the darkness of a ledge of rocks.

He came to the spot where the three had disappeared. He saw a yawning black hole that led into the side of a hill. He knew that beyond this cave must lay the Lost Canyon, which could

otherwise be entered only by a dangerous scaling of steep cliffs.

The dark hole where the three horsemen had ridden was a secret entrance. Jim was sure it must lead to Holden's hide-out, but he made no move to enter. Instead, he turned his horse and started back toward the Two-Diamond Ranch. The handkerchief in his pocket, found where the killer of Durango had stood, was more important to him than Holden's hide-out!

A LIGHT burned in the library window of the ranch house when Jim rode into the yard. He came up cautiously from the rear, every nerve alert for signs of the sheriff or Holden. But the corral and the outbuildings were silent and deserted.

Jim jumped to the ground and started for the ranch house. As he neared the open window of the library, a man came out of the darkness, carrying a saddle and a blanket. Jim stopped, jumping back in some bushes. It was the Yuma Kid.

Jim walked out of the bushes and up to the Kid. "Where are you going?" he asked quietly.

The Kid started in surprise, his hands unable to go for his guns because of the saddle and the blanket.

"I'm through with this outfit, and you, too!" the Kid snarled. "I'm quitting."

"Joining up with Holden for good?" Jim murmured.

The Kid dropped his saddle and blankets. His hand went for his gun, but Jim's right shot out and knocked him off balance.

"Let me alone!" the Kid cried. "I'm sick of your interference! I ought to shoot you, but what's the use? I wouldn't be bothered plugging you!"

The Kid picked up his saddle and blanket and walked away, leaving Jim standing in the darkness, dejected and hands hanging limply at his sides.

At the window, Drag looked at Webb

Allison. The two men had heard the conversation and witnessed the strange scene.

"I told you Fentriss was mixed up with the Yuma Kid and Holden," Drag said. "The Yuma Kid has something on him, to talk that way to a man that draws with the speed of Fentriss."

Webb Allison shook his head wearily. "I guess you're right," he agreed. "It looks bad."

Jim entered the library. The two men turned and looked at him with suspicious eyes.

Jim wasted no words. "I found Holden's hide-out," he said. "It's in the Lost Canyon. I risked meeting a posse to come here to tell you. I'm more interested in Durango's murder now than the hide-out, but I'm willing to lead you through the secret entrance, if you want to raid it."

"When I raid Holden's hide-out," Allison said coldly, "I'll pick my own men for the job. You being around the ranch isn't very healthy for us, with the posse out searching for you."

Jim looked at Allison with a hurt expression in his eyes. He didn't understand what lay behind Allison's words, but he did know that he had been given a very pointed hint to leave the ranch and stay away. So without a word he turned and walked out of the house.

"To-morrow we'll take a bunch of loyal men and go into that hide-out," Drag said. "And I'm betting good money we'll find Jim Fentriss there with Holden!"

Allison nodded slowly, but said nothing.

AT noon the next day, Jim rode out of a box canyon, where he had spent the night, toward the cabin where he was to meet Janet. His mind was still dazed at the words of Allison the night before. He hoped Janet could give some logical reason for the sudden change in her father's attitude toward him.

He rode slowly, his eyes scanning the rocks and trails as he went. He knew Janet would be waiting for him on the old ledge of rocks to the east of the canyon. He got to the ledge, to the spot where Janet should have been, but she was nowhere to be seen.

His spirits sank. Had she deserted him? This thought flashed through his mind as he thought of the words of Allison. He reached in his pocket and picked out the red silk bandanna handkerchief dropped by Durango's killer. He looked at it with pain-filled eyes and stuffed it back in his pocket.

He started to turn his horse away. Something caught his eye. He was on the ground in a long jump. Lying in front of him, near the rock where Janet was to meet him was a torn piece of dress and a splotch of blood.

And scrawled on the white brimstone rock was the message: "Silverspurs Holden has taken me to his hide-out."

Jim wasted no time in staring at the message at the rock. With a leap he was on his horse, racing for the trail that led to the secret passage to Holden's hide-out!

In the hide-out, Holden was giving curt and sharp orders to his men to let Jim get into the canyon alive.

Through the window of an old shack, he said to Janet, who was held prisoner there: "When your hero finds you are gone, he will read your message to him. We're letting him get through the secret entrance—but then he'll be a dead hero!"

Janet's face was bloodless. Her eyes flashed, but she said nothing.

Out on the trail, Jim came to the spot where he had seen the three horsemen disappear. He turned to the right, followed a wash ravine a few yards and saw a large rock lying loosely against the opening. He jumped off his horse, heaved the rock aside and saw the dark tunnel leading through the hillside. Mounting again, he rode into the dark-

ness of this opening, both hands gripping his six-guns!

He came out of the darkness onto a trail that led along a ledge of rocks. Only a grim, deathlike silence greeted him. He knew he was riding into Holden's hide-out, yet he had seen no one.

He came to the end of the ledge trail, rode down into Lost Canyon. At the far end he saw several old shacks and a pole corral. Jaws set and every muscle flexed, he rode for those buildings, knowing that any minute death would spurt out at him from hidden spots!

IN Holden's shack, men were waiting with rifles aimed at the oncoming rider. Janet had fallen to the floor, burying her face in her hands. Holden waited, watching Jim come closer. Holden's hand was up, ready to drop for the signal that would send a barrage of lead at Jim!

The hand moved slightly. Jim was within fifty yards of the shack, a perfect target. Holden's hand dropped, and five rifles spurted fire at Jim! For a split second he stiffened in the saddle, and then toppled forward, his hands grabbing the mane of his horse to keep from falling to the ground. With a wild yell, Holden's men jumped out into the open.

But their yells stopped suddenly. They stared in stark amazement at what they saw. Coming for them with the racing fury of a demented beast was the horse Jim was riding!

Blood flowing from his mouth and from a wound in his left side, Jim was hanging on the horse, his right hand holding a six-gun that was sending death to the men that had come out from cover! The fury of the horse's charge threw dismay into the ranks of Holden's men, and before they could get their senses back, Jim was in their midst, his gun taking a deadly toll!

The horse lunged. Jim fell to the ground. He came up with lightning

speed. Holden was in front of him, bringing his gun down. Jim squeezed the trigger of his gun, but there was only a dull *snap*.

Behind Jim and around him, he was faintly conscious of another furious fight going on. Men were yelling weirdly. Guns roared and bullets screamed through the air. Jim's brain was dazed and numb. He only knew that Holden was closing his finger around the trigger of his gun.

Jim plunged and dropped, his hard shoulder hitting Holden's knees. Holden's gun fired, the bullet going harmlessly over Jim's head. Holden thudded to the ground, with Jim on top of him. Holden snapped his right at Jim's chin, freeing himself and toppling Jim over onto the ground in an inert heap.

Holden leaped to his feet, ignoring the furious firing still going on all around him, and hurled himself at Jim's limp body. But Jim, blood-covered and groggy, saw him coming!

He rose up on his hands and knees, throwing his body in front of the charging Holden. Holden went over him, turning a somersault. Jim came up, dived for Holden's legs.

But Holden turned and caught him with a hard left to the mouth, sending him reeling back. Holden's hands reached for his gun. His fingers closed on it, brought it up! Jim, lying on the ground, shot his hands out for Holden's ankles. They closed around them and, with a yank, pulled Holden's feet out from under him.

He crashed to the ground, his head hitting a stone. He groaned weakly, rolled over on his side, limp and unconscious. Holden was beaten!

JIM staggered as he got to his feet. He looked around, blinked strangely at what he saw. Standing with his back to the wall of the shack, badly riddled with bullet, was the Yuma Kid.

Men lay piled around him. Three were standing. As Jim watched, powerless to act, the Kid's gun sent one of the outlaws to the ground! But then the others sent two more bullets tearing through the Kid's body. He sank to the ground.

From the edge of the canyon came the wild shouts of men. The two remaining outlaws looked up and saw Allison and Drag coming down the steep cliffs. The outlaws turned and ran, but their escape was cut off on all sides.

Jim stumbled over to the body of the Yuma Kid. He picked the body up, swayed weakly with the weight, and then stumbled into the shack as Janet opened the door.

Ten minutes later Allison and Drag came riding down to the shack. They walked into the cabin and saw Jim bending over the body of the Yuma Kid.

"I told you we'd find Fentriss here!" Drag said harshly.

Then Allison saw Janet. He gave a cry of surprise, but Janet motioned him to be still.

From the dying lips of the Yuma Kid came faint words, meant only for Jim's ears.

"You were right, Jim," he was saying. "I—I—I took—the wrong trail. You tried to help me—you always were a big brother to me—I was a fool. Maybe I'm heading for a better trail, though. I didn't know Holden wanted to kill you until I got here—I tried to get Holden—I fired too quick—I did my best, Jim—I got six of them before they got me—"

The Kid's words died away feebly. He closed his eyes and then opened them.

"Good-by, Jim," he whispered. "You got my red silk handkerchief there in your pocket—I lost it when I killed Durango. You knew all the time. Durango was going to kill you—and I got him! I guess I was too soft. I—loved you, Jim. I always loved you—brother—"

Jim stood up. He tried to say something, but the words died in his throat. The Kid looked up at him, smiled wanly, and then closed his eyes in death.

Janet's hand reached out for Jim's. He felt her touch and looked at her.

"I liked the Kid a heap," he said simply, brokenly.

Janet said nothing. Her hand remained in his. Allison looked at Drag, and the two men moved silently out of the shack.

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## THE GARDEN MURDER CASE

*A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, with Edmund Lowe, Gene Lockhart, and Virginia Bruce.*

Another of S. S. Van Dine's, Philo Vance mysteries comes to the screen with Edmund Lowe playing the part of an erratic detective. It is a fast-moving and believable mystery, in which the attempts at smartness for a change do not overcrowd the suspense and action.

RECOMMENDED WITHOUT RESERVATION TO ANYBODY WHO LIKES MYSTERIES. AND WHO DOESN'T?

## CALL OF THE PRAIRIE

*A Paramount picture, with William Boyd and Muriel Evans.*

Here is one of the best cowboy pictures ever to come to the screen. Adapted from the well-known book, "Hopalong Cassidy's Protégé," it presents a well-balanced story of action, drama, and fresh humor.

IT IS GOOD TO SEE A WESTERN PICTURE GIVEN A CHANCE IN ITS PRODUCTION. THIS ONE TURNED OUT PERFECTLY.

## THE AMATEUR GENTLEMAN

*A United Artists picture, with Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and Elissa Landi.*

This is the first of Fairbanks, Jr.'s, attempts on picture production. It is not often that a star has as much sense in dramatic values as Mr. Fairbanks seems to have, which probably accounts for the fact that this is the first successful picture produced by an actor. THE AMATEUR GENTLEMAN is a costume picture, dating back in English history to the time of stage coaches and tri-cornered hats, but it has plenty of action and color. It is a story of a bold young man who breaks into society to save the life of his condemned inn-keeper father.

YOU WILL GET A BIG LAUGH OUT OF THE 18TH CENTURY PRIZE FIGHT.

# HERE COMES TROUBLE!

Hell pops loose in the stokehole!  
A king's ransom in jewels is stolen  
from the purser's safe! Avast, there!  
Here comes trouble!

## THE Mahal Ruby!

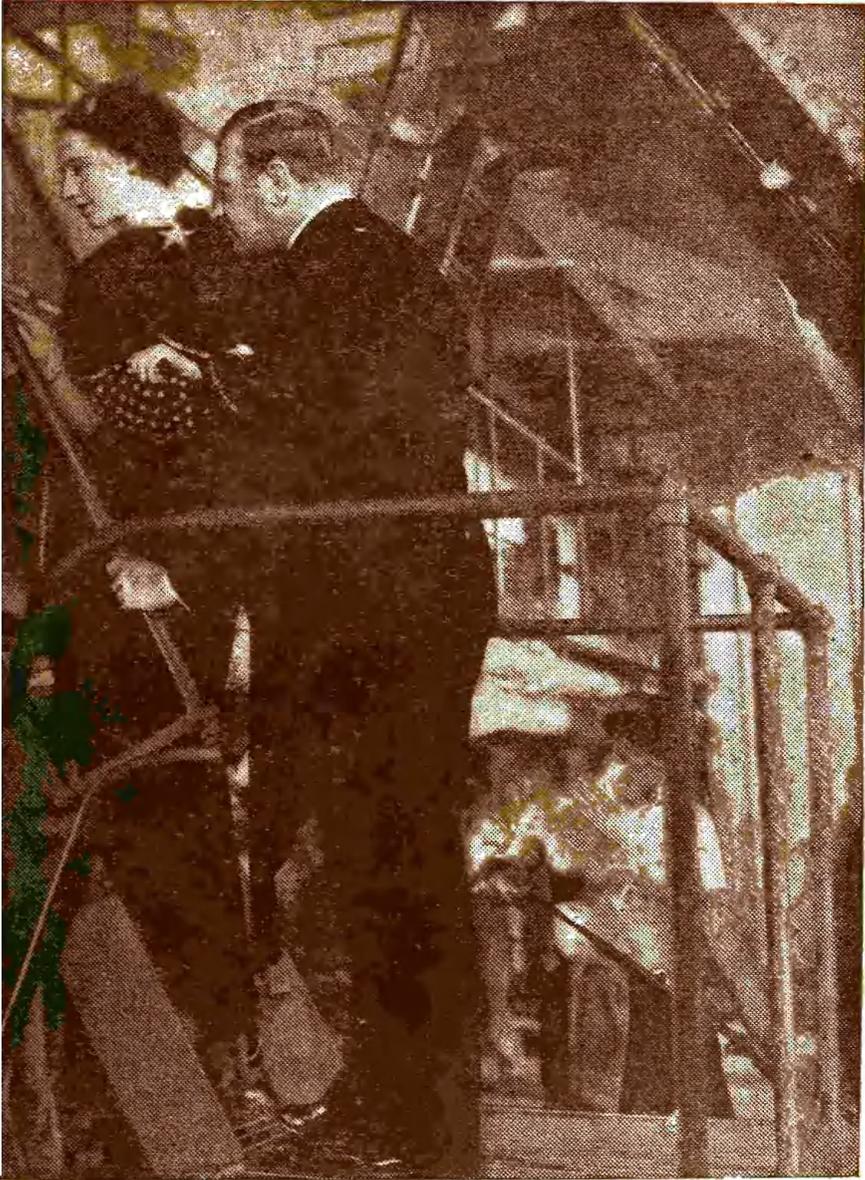
Ivan Ivanovitch Petroff lifted between appreciative finger tips the shimmering drop of pale blood-red which had once been the all-seeing eye of a great stone idol deep in the jungles of the Poonjab.

He turned the stone to and fro to catch the light and smiled pleasurably at its

clear radiance. This was the end of a long, long search. For years he had followed the trail of blood which was the history of this fabulous stone.

Stolen long ago, passed from hand to hand, always with violence and bloodshed, the Mahal Ruby had acquired a reputation and a price. And Petroff,





### THE CAST

PAUL KELLY.....Duke Donovan  
Mona Barrie.....Evelyn Howard  
Halliwell Hobbes.....Professor Howard  
Gregory Ratoff.....Ivan Petroff  
Sammy Cohen.....Grimy

Story by John Bright and Robert Tasker.

Screenplay by Robert Ellis, Helen Logan,  
and Barry Trivers.

Directed by Lewis Seiler.

A fictionization of the 20th Century-Fox picture of the same title.

clever jewel trader that he was, had wanted it.

Bandits nowadays followed different tactics, Petroff thought wisely. He smiled obliquely at the suave little Hindu, Madrah Singh, in whose delicate fingers now lay Petroff's check for a hundred thousand dollars—purchase price of the ruby. Cutthroat no more, but bandit still, said Petroff to himself.

From his waistcoat pocket he removed a long Havana cigar. Carefully he slipped the band down, and with a last appreciative glance at the ruby, laid it in a little hole gouged in the cigar's fat middle. Deftly he slid the band up and replaced the cigar.

With polite adieus to Madrah Singh, Ivan Ivanovitch Petroff stepped out into the clear Havana sunshine and hailed a passing cab.

"Pier 15," he said. With his hand on the door, he turned. Some one had called his name.

Almost before he could breathe, two men had jostled him into the cab, greeting him with an effusion that hardly was in keeping with their actions. One of them, Petroff saw, was dapper and polite, with an English accent. But the other was dark and jowly, and very impolite. This one lost no time in gouging Petroff's well-padded ribs with the nose of a blunt automatic!

"Let's have it," he growled. "And don't waste no time about it!"

Petroff raised his eyebrows. "Oh, I see," he said politely, "you want the ruby?"

"Quit your stalling, mug," the thick man snapped, and started a thorough search of Petroff's person.

"You're wasting your time, gentlemen," Petroff assured them calmly.

"Oh, yeah?" The man dived triumphantly into Petroff's waistcoat pocket. "What's this?"

"A cigarette case. An heirloom. Only sentimental value——"

"Come on, come on!" the dapper man said impatiently. "Where is it?"

Petroff shook his head sorrowfully. "Sorry, gentlemen," he said. "I always anticipate the possibility of such a meeting, so I sent the ruby ahead by messenger."

They stared at him, open-mouthed. They were still confounded as the cab drew up to the pier.

"Well, here we are!" Petroff said cheerfully. "I must tear myself away."

He dismounted. "Smoke, gentlemen?" He proffered a large Havana cigar, and at their snarling refusal, placed it jauntily between his own teeth and strolled away.

Though he smiled, Petroff breathed a little more easily as the launch bore him toward the anchored ship. He had been wrong. All the cutthroats were not yet gone from Havana!

HE twirled the cigar between his lips. Wait till he told his shipmates, the Howards, this fine story! They had been much interested in his description of the ruby. He puffed up the ship's ladder and hastened toward the purser's office. Ah—there they were—Professor Howard, a dignified, scholarly man of his own age, and his daughter, Evelyn, a dark, beautiful girl with glowing eyes and a fascinating smile.

"Hello, hello, hello!" Petroff called, and Evelyn turned with a welcoming smile.

"Hello! Did Lady Luck smile on you?"

Petroff chortled. "Smile?" he said. "She laughed!"

"You have it?" the girl said eagerly.

Petroff removed the cigar from his mouth. "Right here," he said, pointing to his cigar. "It's colossal!"

With thumb and forefinger he slid down the cigar band. From its little gouged-out hole Petroff shook the ruby into his palm and rocked it back and



Duke staggered back to where Grimy lay . . . tried to lift him up.

forth to catch the light. Big, of an amazing lightness and clarity, it gleamed softly.

"It's beautiful!" Evelyn breathed.

"Isn't it gorgeous?" Petroff asked proudly.

"It's so gorgeous—that—it frightens me!" the girl said.

The professor put out his hand. "May I?" he asked, and Petroff laid the ruby in his palm. He stared at it, holding it between a trembling thumb and finger.

"Why, dad!" Evelyn said sharply, gripping his quivering wrist.

"Its—its tragic history makes me tremble," faltered the professor, and returned the stone.

"That's what makes it a good investment," Petroff said lightly. "I already have a customer in New York who will double my price. Mr. Brooks"—he turned to the purser—"will you put this away for me?"

"Yes, sir," said Brooks, taking out an

envelope. "Gosh, Mr. Petroff!" he exclaimed, staring down at the shimmering drop of color in his palm, "this must be worth more than the whole cargo!" His hands shook as he sealed the envelope and handed Petroff the receipt flap.

"What is this?" Petroff exclaimed jovially. "Everybody's nervous! Lock it up quick!" He turned to the professor and Evelyn. "Now, if you will join me at the bar, I would like to buy a drink. After all, we have reason to celebrate!"

"Yes, we *have!*" Evelyn exclaimed feelingly, and her father shot her a meaningful look.

They were in the bar when the growling shudder and pound of the engines and the whistle's long hoot told them that they were on their way out of Havana harbor, northward bound once more.

AS they left the bar a short time later, walking toward their staterooms to dress for dinner, Evelyn Howard's attention was drawn by a sailor who, in the company of one of the ship's officers, was coming down from the bridge.

"Hello," she said brightly. "Don't I know you?"

The sailor's face reddened with embarrassment. He was a young man of the type which few people can embarrass—ordinarily smart and fresh. But obviously this chance meeting was too much for him.

"Y-yes'm," he admitted. "I—I'm Duke Donovan. Me and my pal—we sort of took over your taxicab back in Havana, I guess, ma'am."

Then Evelyn Howard remembered the two tornadoes in white and blue, flying before the stormy wrath of a Cuban café proprietor. They had leaped into the cab she was occupying and forced the driver to speed them to a place of comparative safety. It had been an amusing incident during her day ashore.

Duke tried to continue. "I want to tell you how sorry I——"

"Oh, you mustn't be," Miss Howard cut in. "It was most thrilling!"

The officer ordered Duke below decks and turned, when he had gone, to continue apologizing for Duke's actions on shore.

"Not at all," she insisted. "But wasn't he an officer of some sort? It seems to me his uniform——"

"He was," the officer replied grimly. "He used to be our third engineer. But they put him in jail in Havana after he wrecked that taxicab, and held up our sailing for an hour. The captain's reduced him and put him in the stokehole."

"Serves him right!" Professor Howard concurred heartily. "Such punishment is only fitting and proper. The man's more than likely just a thug! Come, my dear. Are you with us, Petroff?"

Together, the little party continued on their way. But not without further interruption. On the second deck, Petroff paused abruptly. Two men, mounting the stairs, looked very much like *his* friends of the Havana taxi!

Detaching himself from the Howards, he hurried a little. When he stepped inside his stateroom, complete chaos confronted him! The place had been hastily, thoroughly searched! He frowned a little, then reached inside his waistcoat for the purser's receipt, as if to reassure himself. Then he smiled. A little excitement on the trip, perhaps!

THAT night, while Evelyn Howard stood at the ship's rail, listening with apparently rapt attention to the solemn young purser, Mr. Brooks, discourse upon the science of navigation, the professor sat studiously regarding a volume titled, "Studies in Ethnology." But between the pages lay a sheet of paper bearing a carefully penciled floor plan—the plan of the purser's office, with doors and communicating corridors marked, and the safe outlined in red!

He hastily opened the book at another

place as Evelyn and Mr. Brooks approached, and looked up with an indulgent smile.

"I've been having the most thrilling time!" Evelyn said with seeming enthusiasm. "Mr. Brooks has been showing me all over the boat!"

"I never met any one who was so enthusiastic," Brooks exclaimed eagerly.

"But you haven't had a real thrill until you've seen the engine room."

"Yes, but——" Evelyn began, but Brooks interrupted.

"I'll fix it with the chief engineer and be right back." The purser dashed away and Evelyn dropped wearily into the chair beside the professor.

"I see you are making quite a bit of



While Brooks worked the combination, the professor entered noiselessly through the partly opened door.



"Those two men tried twice to get

progress with that handsome young man," he said dryly.

"I'm so sick of looking over the ship with that walking encyclopedia, I could scream!" Evelyn said through her teeth. "My feet are killing me! I've been to the bridge, the wireless room, the galley—everywhere but the crow's nest. And now—the engine room!"

"It's all in a day's work, my dear!" the professor told her, low-voiced. "And perhaps you can get better acquainted with that young engineer. He might prove useful."

Brooks came hurrying back in the company of Petroff, and the professor's look became once more scholastic and benevolent instead of shrewd and calculating.

"Is it all fixed?" Evelyn exclaimed brightly. "I'm sure it's going to be most exciting."

"What is?" inquired Petroff's genial voice. "May I go along?"

Evelyn welcomed him eagerly, and they all went off to the engine room together.

The girl looked about in genuine wonder at the gleaming drive shafts, the pow-



the ruby. Now they try again!"

erfully revolving wheels, the myriad gauges with their anxious needles. Then, her eye caught by the roar and flare of fire, she glanced down through the grating on which they stood, into the stoke-hole beneath.

Their backs and faces grimy but glistening, the stokers bent rhythmically to the open furnace doors, to the coal heaps, to the furnaces again.

Evelyn's face lighted as she spotted Duke's face among those below. Glancing up, Duke caught her smile, and fell to shoveling vigorously.

"MORE coal, Grimy!" Duke shouted above the din of the motors, the roar of the flames, and the clatter of coal shovels. "Grimy," his pal, who sat mooning on a wheelbarrow, sprang into action.

As Duke straightened up for a minute he glanced sharply at the man stoking next to him. "Malay Mike" was a slight little man, and only yesterday Duke had sent him to sick bay for rest. Short-handed, the big Swede foreman, "Ox," had put him back at work. He was staggering now, his hands to his head.

Duke put out a hand to steady him,

but Mike pushed him away dazedly and threw down his shovel.

"Get him some water!" Duke yelled to Grimy, all thought of showing off for the girl forgotten. He did not notice that she was now on the floor of the stokehole with Petroff and the purser.

"Come on, Mike," Duke urged. "Get a hold on yourself."

"Yeah," Ox snarled, "pick up that shovel, you welsher!"

As Mike stumbled toward the coal pile, Ox pushed him, and Mike wheeled on him crazily, shovel upraised.

"You!" he screamed. "*You* make the fires in my head!"

Ox lunged at him. Mike brought the shovel down on the big man's head with a force that floored him, and leaped away from Duke's restraining hands.

"Keep away from me!" he yelled, swinging his shovel wildly at the other stokers, who had gathered round in an effort to subdue him. His bloodshot eyes searched fearfully for a way of escape, and he sprang for the stairs.

Evelyn and Petroff cowered to one side, petrified with alarm at the sudden turn of events.

Shouting, the stokers closed in on Mike, and the little man retreated to the bulkhead, his shovel swinging in a vicious semicircle.

Sobbing with fear and with the pain of the fires in his head, he glanced around. He was trapped!

With desperate, crazy yells, he turned and started beating with his shovel on the coupling of the steam line that led from the boilers to the engine room above.

Suddenly the place was filled with the deadly hiss of live steam, rushing clouds of blinding, scalding vapor!

Mike, closest to the heat, crumpled in an exhausted heap. The other stokers, knowing from experience that the floor was the safest place, dropped swiftly on their faces. But Evelyn and Petroff stood stock-still in the path of the steam!

DUKE gathered himself. The single instant had made the stokehole an inferno where it was next to impossible to see or breathe.

He peered through the gray curtain to make sure where the two stood. A little way behind them was a recess in the wall.

"Shut off that steam, somebody!" Duke yelled, and plunged toward the girl and Petroff.

There was no time to be gentle. With all the force of his rush behind the blow, Duke hit Petroff on the shoulder, tumbling him backward onto the floor. With a swift movement he scooped Evelyn up in his arms and stumbled with her toward the recess where he had thrown Petroff. Gasping, he stood there with his back to the stokehole, keeping his body between the girl and the direct rush of the steam.

He glanced around over his shoulder. They'd all be steamed alive like a bunch of lobsters if somebody didn't get to that shut-off valve pretty soon.

Through the shifting clouds he could see that Grimy had wrapped a burlap bag around his head and was attempting to reach the bulkhead. MacWhinney was yelling some command, but the rest of them were flat on their faces. Duke muttered savagely as the deadly heat drove Grimy back, burned and collapsing.

He pushed the girl down into the corner with Petroff.

"Stay here!" he yelled, and lowered his head for the plunge back into the steam.

Halfway across the stokehole he stumbled over Grimy's wheelbarrow. As if it were a toy, he snatched it up and held it before him for a shield as he staggered, panting desperately for breath, toward the hissing outlet! With one scalded hand, he thrust the wheelbarrow against the broken coupling; with the other he fumbled for the valve, found and turned it!

The deadly hissing sound died, and

through the choking clouds, Duke staggered back to where Grimy lay on the floor. He tried to lift him up, then crumpled to one knee, gasping and exhausted.

Dimly he heard MacWhinney shout:

"Get these men to the sick bay!" And Petroff's protest:

"Sick bay! What are you talking about? These men are heroes! Nothing on this ship is too good for them!"

WHEN Duke and Grimy came fully to themselves next day, bandaged within an inch of their lives and elegantly established in the bridal suite, they decided that the life of a hero was worth the sacrifice necessary to secure it. They basked in the admiring attention they received, particularly that of Evelyn Howard. She was sweetly proprietary and much concerned. She brought flowers and gifts—a cigarette lighter and a book of poetry for Duke; a box of candy for Grimy and his pet monkey, Jenny. Duke didn't know quite what to do with the poetry, but the lighter delighted him.

To cap the climax, Petroff came smiling in to announce that he had persuaded the captain to give Duke back his third engineer's stripe, and Duke beamed happily, convinced once more that the world was a great place and Duke Donovan a great fellow.

Late that night, Evelyn Howard stood at the rail with Brooks, the purser trying to cover her boredom with his steadily continuing lecture on the stars and their relation to navigation. As he talked, her fingers toyed with the clasp of her bracelet, loosening it.

"Oh, dear!" she exclaimed as it dropped to the deck. "There it goes again!" She looked up at him with a little worried frown. "The clasp must be loose. My mind would be much easier if it was back in the ship's safe," she said. "Would it be asking too much for you to put it there?"

He hesitated a moment—it was very

late. Then he yielded to the appeal in her glance, and they went together toward the dimly lit purser's office.

As he turned the knob to the safe, Evelyn stood near the doorway. Swiftly she nodded to some one outside, and while Brooks talked, working over the combination, the professor entered noiselessly through the partly opened door. He and Evelyn glanced at each other, and he moved silently toward Brooks.

"You can't be too careful of a bracelet like this, Miss Howard," the young man was saying solemnly, swinging open the safe door. "It's a beautiful specimen of the jeweler's—"

There was a small thud, Brooks grunted, and Evelyn's lips curled scornfully as he crumpled to the floor.

HALF an hour later, a wandering drunk in bemused search of the purser, stumbled over the bound body of Evelyn Howard on the floor of the purser's office. His mouth dropped open and he gazed around wildly. As he brought his eyes to focus on the open safe door and then on the body of the purser, also bound and gagged, he shrieked hoarsely and fled into the corridor, making a racket that brought the ship's captain, Petroff, Duke and Grimy quickly to the scene.

The safe had been thoroughly rifled, but only the Mahal Ruby was missing—that and Evelyn Howard's bracelet!

Petroff grew livid. Then his eyes bulged as he caught sight of two familiar faces in the group outside the office—the men who had held him up in Havana!

"Captain!" he shouted excitedly. "It's as simple as X Y Z! These two men tried twice to get the ruby. Now they try again!" Rapidly he explained to the captain, and the two thugs, protesting their innocence, were taken along to the captain's office for the inquiry.

"Now, Miss Howard——" the captain said.

"It all happened so quickly," she faltered helplessly. "One of the men seized

me while the other struck down Mr. Brooks and snatched my bracelet. Then they rifled the safe."

The captain gestured to Petroff's two suspects. "Can you identify these men?" he asked.

"I was so terrified," she said uncertainly, "and the light was so dim——" She swayed unsteadily, and Duke caught her in his arms.

"This excitement has been too much," the professor said anxiously. "I must ask you to excuse my daughter, captain."

"Certainly," the captain granted, and Duke started down the corridor with the girl in his arms.

"YOU'VE been very kind, Mr. Donovan," Evelyn said gratefully when Duke had deposited her in her stateroom. The professor adjusted some pillows for her.

"Don't mention it," he said. "Is there anything else I can do for you?"

"I should like a cigarette," she said, and he gave her one from a crumpled pack. When he offered the lighter she had given him, she took it from him and held it in her own hand.

"You know, I think your monogram would look rather nice on here," she suggested. Then she swayed dizzily, her hand to her head. "Oh!" she murmured. "Some water, please."

Duke went quickly into the adjoining room, and Evelyn sat up, her dizziness gone like magic.

"Give it to me!" she ordered sharply, and the professor put into her hand the fabulous drop of shimmering red called the Mahal Ruby. Quickly Evelyn unscrewed the cap of the lighter, and stuffed the ruby down among the coils of packing. Duke's footsteps returned, and the professor bent over the girl solicitously while she hastily put the lighter back together again.

"Thank you," she smiled sweetly as he handed her the water. He grinned back, and turned to go. "Mr. Donovan, your lighter," she reminded him.

"Yeah," he murmured, taking it. "Wouldn't want to be without that."

"Good night, and thank you," the professor said, and turned to Evelyn with a smile as he closed the door after Duke.

"Very clever, my dear," he commended her, and she gave a big sigh of relief.

"Now we have nothing to fear so far as the customs is concerned," she said.

He pulled from an inside pocket Evelyn's bracelet. "Remember, my dear, you lost this in the late robbery," the professor reminded her, and flung the bracelet through the open porthole.

"There goes five thousand dollars," she murmured regretfully.

"A good gamble," he said. "Five against a hundred. Good night, and pleasant dreams!"

AMID the bustle of landing, late next afternoon, Grimy sat and watched enviously while Duke dressed, with extreme care, to go ashore.

"Gee, you get all the breaks," he marveled, fingering the engraved card that bore Evelyn Howard's name and a Westchester address. "That gal must be strong for you, givin' you presents and invitin' you up to her house, and everything."

Duke knotted his tie with elaborate care. "It's strictly business," he protested insincerely. "The captain's gonna be there, and some company officials and——"

Abruptly he let out a howl of rage. Grimy's monkey, Jenny, had become curious about the lighter, lying with Duke's other things on the table, and had it thoroughly apart.

Placatingly, Grimy put it back together again and handed it to Duke, now ready to go ashore. "Here it is, good as new," he soothed, and watched wistfully while his friend swaggered out.

Duke had hardly had time to get off the pier when Grimy burst out the door of their room and pelted up the stairs to the captain's quarters.

The captain, Petroff and a police captain stared in surprise as Grimy bolted in without knocking.

"Captain——" he started breathlessly, then thrust out his big paw and opened it, palm up. Petroff gasped and hastily picked the Mahal Ruby out of Grimy's trembling hand.

"Where did you get it?" he demanded.

"I f-found it on the f-floor of our room," Grimy stuttered. "I don't know how it got there—and I'm sure Duke don't know anything about it——"

Petroff sniffed curiously, then lifted the ruby to his nostrils. "Smells like gasoline," he said, and looked at Grimy questioningly.

A gleam of light touched his excited face. "Jenny had Duke's lighter all apart," he said. "Maybe——"

As fast as he could make the words come out, he told them about the lighter Evelyn Howard had given Duke, how Jenny took it apart, how Duke was going to the Howard's for dinner. "With you, captain," Grimy finished, and the captain shook his head.

"That's the first I ever heard of it," he said.

Petroff gave an excited exclamation. "She was using him for a cover up so he would take the ruby through customs for her! That's why she gave him the lighter. When he turns up there to-night without the ruby, he's going to be in plenty of trouble!"

He whirled on the police captain. "Come on, let's go!" he said, then turned to Grimy. "Do you know where she lives?"

Grimy frowned. "Something to do with sea food," he muttered, "and the compass."

IN the Howard house on Pearl Drive in Westchester there was an air of tense waiting.

"If you ask me," said a big man who looked not at all like a butler in spite of the livery he wore, "it was a risky

piece of business to let that ruby out of your hands."

"Nobody asked you, Slug," Evelyn said shortly.

"Mr. Donovan is late," the professor reminded her uneasily.

"Well," said "Slug" threateningly, "if this is a set-up——"

The doorbell pealed sharply, and Evelyn rose hastily. "Get in the other room," she ordered two tough-looking gentlemen with strangely bulging pockets. "Let him in, Slug. And try to act like a butler."

Slug snarled and went to the door, to let in a broadly smiling Duke.

"Mr. Donovan?" Slug inquired politely. "You are expected, sir."

Beaming, Duke greeted Evelyn when she came in, and handed her the bunch of flowers that he awkwardly carried.

"Guess I'm early, huh?" He looked around. "Nobody here yet."

"Perhaps they're having difficulty finding the place," Evelyn suggested. "Have a cigarette?"

He took one and held up his lighter.

"Oh, about that monogram," she said, and took it from him.

The butler entered with cocktails.

"Telephone for you, Miss Howard," he said, and Evelyn excused herself and left the room, the lighter in her hand.

"Have a cocktail, mister?" asked the butler.

Duke nodded. As the big man bent to give him the drink, a perplexed look crossed Duke's face. The bulge of the butler's coat, as he stooped, revealed a gun in a shoulder holster!

Worried and suspicious, Duke glanced toward the door. Evelyn had said these were new servants. Perhaps there was trouble brewing. Maybe some gang was planning to hold up the Howards and their guests! He sipped his cocktail, listening intently.

Presently a murmur of voices from the other room grew louder. Duke edged forward on his chair.

"I don't know where it is!" he heard Evelyn say fearfully. "I don't know!"

Her scream stabbed the air, and Duke's leap took him halfway across the room. Slug, the butler, moved to interfere, but Duke's big, shovel-toughened fist lifted him crashing across a table five feet away! Hardly pausing, Duke scooped up the gun Slug had dropped and plunged through the door.

"STICK 'em up!" he bellowed, and the two toughs who had Evelyn by the arms reached hastily for the ceiling. The professor followed suit.

"Not you, professor," Duke said gently, and stepped protectingly to Evelyn's side. "Don't worry, Miss Howard," he assured her. "I'll handle 'em." He started backing away, drawing Evelyn with him.

"You guys get back there and keep your hands up," he told the men. "Professor, call the police."

Obediently, the professor dialed—with his hand on the cradle of the phone! "Hello!" he shouted to the dead line. "Hello, police department——"

As Duke, backing, reached his side, the professor brought the telephone down with terrific force on Duke's right arm. The gun flew from his hand and the two against the wall were on him before he could move.

Evelyn snatched up the gun and faced him furiously. "You idiot!" she cried. "What did you do with that ruby?"

Duke stared at her in bewilderment. "Ruby——"

She held out the dismantled lighter.

"Yes," she said impatiently. "It was in this lighter. I put it there myself."

Duke gazed around at the snarling, vindictive faces. His black eyes snapped with anger. Nobody yet had ever made Duke Donovan the "patsy" without regretting it!

"I get it," he said slowly, putting things together in his mind. "You've been makin' a sucker out of me."

"What do you suppose I was playing you for?" Evelyn sneered. "Where is it?"

Duke grinned, though his face was red. "Sister, that's your headache," he told her. "If I knew, I wouldn't tell you."

The professor stepped closer. "Is that so?" he snarled. "Maybe we can find a way to make you talk!" He nodded to one of the men, and the fellow slugged Duke viciously in the stomach.

Duke's grin froze as he staggered back against the wall, but he laughed to himself as his eyes searched rapidly. If these babies thought they were going to have a picnic with an old barroom brawler like Duke Donovan——

He saw the other man's fist headed for his chin as he reached the light switch and ducked. He heard the man howl as his fist hit the rough plaster wall, and in the dark Duke dived for whatever legs he could grab.

DOWN Pearl Road sped the police car bearing Grimy, Petroff, and the others. To recall the name of the street was as much as Grimy had been able to manage. They were cruising for the number.

Suddenly Grimy yelled: "Stop!" and the driver brought the car to a sudden halt.

From a house off the road came unmistakable sounds of combat. A chair came hurtling through a ground-floor window, and Grimy yelled excitedly:

"That's the house!"

They tore up the driveway. As they approached the door, the body of a man came through the window, doubled up as if hurled from within by a mighty hand. Before the broken glass had stopped tinkling, Duke Donovan rocketed after him, feet first and with fists flashing. Grimy howled with delight and piled on, while Petroff and the policemen hurried through the door.

When the lights were turned on they

revealed the results of Duke's years of training in the ports of the world. Under the one table left standing in the room lay the unconscious professor. Evelyn cowered in a corner, and in the middle of the floor, Slug was having the stuffing pounded out of him by his bewildered confederate.

"Well, my friends," Petroff said jovially as the policemen dragged the professor to his feet and pulled Evelyn from the corner. "I must admit that this is the first time in my life I couldn't read human nature in a flash." He shook his head. "Now, Mr. Professor, you will have plenty of time to finish your ency-

clopedia—and your lady friend can help you."

He chuckled and looked around for Duke.

Having polished off the man they were working on, Grimy sat back and took a look at Duke Donovan. He snorted. The upper quarter of Duke's face was of an extreme puffiness, colored deep purple, with effective tracteries of green and yellow.

"Some shiner!" said Grimy. "That's what you get for mixin' with class."

Duke grinned. "From now on a good fight is all the class I want," he said. "Come on, let's go find a drink!"

# Better and Better

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# THOROUGHBREDS ALL

There are all kinds of thoroughbreds—  
only Cyrus Benton didn't know it.

"KILL that cur! He's lamed 'Sir Patches' for life. Kill him!"

The voice of Cyrus Benton roared from the stable door with diabolical fury. Inside the stable, one of his fine race horses, Sir Patches, was plunging and rearing wildly, while two men who had been trying to bandage a bowed tendon, were holding the halter frantically.

Out in the stable yard, the pup, a little furry ball of a mongrel, was scooting across the ground, heart fluttering with fear.

The trouble had all started with a cat—at least, the immediate trouble for the pup. A moment before, he had spied the cat and had taken after it with merry yelps.

The cat happened to be the gardener's pet and he had hurled a hoe at the pup, missing him by inches. The dog had dashed into the stable under the legs of Sir Patches just as the men were putting the bandage on the horse's leg. The horse had been frightened at this sudden appearance of the pup and had gone into a kicking spree.

BENTON, vigorous and with the typical temper of a sporting aristocrat, had gone into a rage of uncontrolled anger. Even John Woods, the young trainer, and the only real friend the pup had on the ranch, lost his temper.

At Benton's words, John rushed out of the stable, grabbing a stick as he ran. The pup turned, saw him and stopped, expecting a gesture of friendship from the man who always played with him and fed him. But the stick left John's hand, whirling through the air at the pup, who gave one startled look and dove for a hole under a barn building.

A stable boy came charging out of the stable with a pitchfork. He ran over to the building where the pup had disappeared and started poking in the hole with the pitchfork. At the sight of this, John's anger against the pup turned suddenly to the stable boy.

Wrestling the pitchfork from him, John cried: "Lay off that pup! I'll handle him! Here, Boy," he pleaded with the hidden pup. "Come on out. I'm awfully sorry——"

## THE CAST

JOHN WOODS ..... John Arledge  
Mercel Olsen ..... Cyrus Benton  
Louise Latimer ..... Gloria Benton  
Ethel Vogau ..... Mason  
and  
Warrior and Boy

Story by Tom Storey  
and Earl Johnson.  
Screenplay by Frank  
Howard Clark and  
Jack Pettit.  
Directed by  
Glenn Tryon.  
Produced by  
Robert Sisk.



A fictionization of the RKO Radio picture of the same title.

But the pup remained under the barn, too frightened to come out.

"All right, Boy," John said. "I got mad a minute ago. Now it's your turn. come and see me when you get over your mad spell. 'Bye, now."

John walked back to the stable where the attendants had quieted Sir Patches, but the pup remained under the barn, waiting until he believed it safe to venture out.

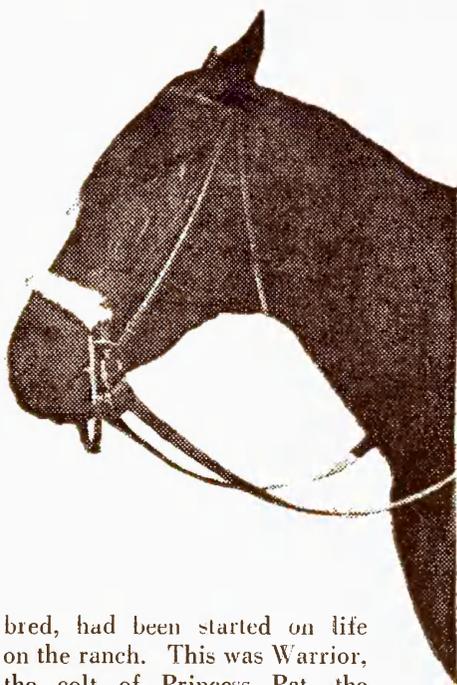
THIS unpleasant episode was only one of a long series that had marked the six months of his life. His mother was one of Cyrus Benton's pedigreed shepherd dogs, but his father was suspected to be a wolf on the range.

Benton had ordered all the pups in the litter killed and the mother, his prize dog, sent to the sheep ranch. As this order was given, Boy had wandered away from the mother for his first excursion into the world. All he knew was that his mother and his brothers and sisters were gone when he crawled back into the kennel.

On the day that Boy had been born, another animal, a full-blooded thorough-



MA-5



bred, had been started on life on the ranch. This was Warrior, the colt of Princess Pat, the aristocrat of all of Benton's fine horses. Grenadier was the colt's father, and on both sides he was a thoroughbred whose entrance into the world created a furor of interest on the ranch.

The pup and Warrior had met on the third day of their lives. Boy, on the excursion into the world which had saved his life, had wandered into the stall where Warrior, a wabby colt, stood weakly on spindley legs, bewildered and dazed by all the excitement he had caused.

Boy looked at the colt, wondering what kind of creature he was. The colt returned the look, and in that instant sprang a strong friendship between the two.

SOMEHOW the pup managed to live through the first months of his life. John Woods, the young trainer, fed him milk. Benton himself cursed at the sight of the mongrel pup and wanted him killed, but John pleaded for his life and saw to it that Benton saw little of the pup.

As soon as Warrior was able to run, he started to play with the pup. Their game was simple and exciting. Boy would run like a streak, his little ears flopping back, until he got far ahead of the colt, and then Warrior would race after him, overcoming the handicap like a streak of lightning.

But Warrior was a thoroughbred—and the pup was a mongrel. Boy was never allowed to forget this. His life, except with Warrior and John, was not pleasant or kind.

Cyrus Benton looked on all things with utter disdain if they were not thoroughbreds, whether man or beast. This feeling was experienced by all his help, with the exception of John Woods, and the pup was treated like all mongrels were treated on the ranch.

LYING in the darkness of the hole under the barn, the pup shivered from fright. Even John, his friend, had turned against him—had hurled a stick at him!

This betrayal shot through the pup's heart like a sharp knife. It was night before he ventured from the hole. He half expected to find John waiting for him, to take him up and play with him. That would have eased his fear and stopped the frightened shivering of his little body, but John did not appear.

The pup did not know that John had come out into the barnyard several times, calling for him, and that he had been forced to go to town a few minutes before the pup ventured forth. The pup only knew that his one friend was not there.

So he sneaked across the yard to the stable, where his other friend, Warrior, was in his expensive stall. Boy sniffed at the closed door and whined. From inside came the soft whinny of Warrior, but in the next minute, the gruff voice of Davis, the stable hand that had gone for the pup with a pitchfork, yelled:

"Get away from that door, you mongrel!"

The next thing the pup knew, a grain-bucket was hurled at him. It missed him by inches and crashed against the side of the barn.

With a yelp of fear, the pup ran from the barn, stopping at the edge of the corral. From somewhere out on the range came the long, mournful wail of a wolf. It died away in the night weirdly. The pup cocked his ear and looked out toward the range, feeling a thrill he could not understand.

AGAIN came the wail of the wolf. The pup rested his paws on the lower rail of the corral fence and listened, fascinated by some new instinct. Suddenly from the bunk house came the sound of laughter and music.

The pup took one last look at the night whence the howl of the wolf had come, and turned and trotted over to the bunk house. The music and the laughter of the men was something he knew and understood. It brought back Boy's memories of John.

He listened to the music for a while and then went to John's house to crawl in the door always left open for him. But the door was closed. The pup scratched against it frantically and forlornly whined.

This was something that had never happened before. This, and the stick John had hurled at him. The whole world seemed upside down to him. Again he heard the mournful wail of the wolf. The pup saw Cyrus Benton come out of the ranch house with a rifle in his hand.

Benton walked to the corral fence and saw the indistinct outline of the howling wolf. The gun came up, roared. The wolf ceased his mournful howl.

The explosion of the gun in the hand of the man who hated him sent terror into the heart of the pup. He looked at the closed door that John had always left open for him. He remembered the stick that had been hurled at him.

Then he turned, slinking away in the darkness, running madly past the corral and out into the night.

Back in his stall, guarded closely, Warrior whined and pawed the straw at his feet nervously, as if through some strange way he knew that the pup was racing out into the night away from him forever.

MORNING broke in a haze of misty gray. The pup was in a strange country. He was cold, hungry, and weary. He had hardly stopped running since leaving the ranch.

Now he was in the woods. Great birds flapped their wings over him. They scared him. He had never seen birds that could fly. The chickens at the ranch had always walked.

Strange sounds were around him, now—sounds he had never heard before. Somewhere to his right a wild cat screamed. The pup leaped under a log in terror.

He ventured out from the log cautiously, his eyes trying to take in everything at once. He went down a narrow lane. The wild cat was crouched under a tree. A mere cat did not frighten him. At the ranch he chased the cat all over the barnyard!

With a good-natured bark, he dashed at the beast, but the cat hunched his back, spit at the pup and then rushed him. The pup turned and ran, his tail between his legs, darting under a log just as the

wild cat sent out a vicious paw to tear him apart.

What happened next was pretty much of a terrifying nightmare to the pup. He couldn't stay under the log forever. He was hungry and thirsty. Hours later, he crawled out and sneaked to a river. He saw a bear cuff a fish. There had been a pet bear at home and the pup had played with it. So he ran up to this bear, intending to share his fish.

The bear was stunned for a moment by such bland effrontery; then he growled and Boy scampered away. He left the river, dazed and unable

to understand why all animals were suddenly so unfriendly. Then he came into a valley and he felt the strange thrill that had come over him when he heard the mournful wail of the wolf the night before.

He saw a herd of wild horses fleeing in mortal terror before a howling pack of wolves!

BOY looked at the wolves with the feeling that he had found new friends. He saw the pack bring down a colt and hungrily devour the flesh. The pup licked his chops and ran happily after the pack.

The leader, a tall, bony beast, over-seeing the eating of the colt, saw the pup, growled menacingly and rushed him. Boy never knew exactly what happened. In that split second he never



Boy . . . the body of a wolf and the fur of his pedigreed mother.

had a chance to realize that death was upon him!

He was thrown into the air, the teeth of the leader biting his flesh. He slipped out of the wolf's mouth and fell to the ground. Too frightened to yelp, he squirmed away. A fight in the pack, diverted the leader's attention for a moment and in that moment, the pup, getting strength back, was racing through the grass for the safety of the river.

He got there safely, body racked with pain and mind stunned by what had happened. He found the remains of the fish the bear had been eating. He picked it up in his teeth and ran frantically for the great cliff bordering the river. He was famished. He was willing to risk anything for food.

Far up the cliff he found a cave. This gave him a feeling of safety. He bolted the remains of the fish, licked his chops contentedly and looked around, surveying his new home.

SUMMER passed and autumn came, with the falling of the leaves and the pleasant chill of sunny days. Winter followed with banks of snow and raging blizzards, and when this passed, spring with its garlands of flowers and melodies of colors.

A second winter came and passed, and Boy, now full-grown, stood in the opening of the cave. He was tall and bony, a beautiful beast, with the body of a wolf and the colored fur of his pedigreed shepherd mother.

In those two years, his fame had spread over many valleys. The trappers called him "Lightning" and feared him. The Cattle Men's Association had a reward on his head of five hundred dollars. Many had tried to collect this reward, but the trappers shook their heads and said that Lightning was immune to death.

Powerful and deadly, Lightning struck right and left, disappearing before any one knew he was around. He had not

changed his home. His cave was now filled with the bones of the victims brought there to be eaten.

In the time that had passed, he had run into the wolf pack and had taken a mate. At the same time, he had met the wolf leader that had thrown him in the air that eventful day when he first wandered forth into the valley.

The meeting with the leader had been over in a few minutes. Lightning, powerful, and goaded on by the fury of hatred, hurled the leader into the air, tore his throat and flanks. The wolf had fled through the grass in fear, just as Lightning had done as a pup.

Lightning had never returned to the ranch. The memory of Warrior remained a vague and far-away thing, a gnawing loneliness that he could not fight off.

The tenderness of John Woods was another thing he could not forget. There were times when he went on some high knoll and howled mournfully, not at the night or for a mate but for those two back at the ranch whom he had loved as a pup.

AT the ranch, Warrior had grown into a beautiful two-year-old, the pride of Cyrus Benton and every one at the ranch. All other horses were overlooked. It was Warrior who was to bring fame to the sporting reputation of Benton.

The care of Warrior was given wholly to John Woods who treated the colt as he would a child, breaking him to ride and training him in every known art of the race track.

One day a car drove up to the ranch. In it was George Mason, a race-track man who knew bets as well as horses—and who wasn't averse to making horses win bets for him, resorting to any means necessary. With him was his shadow, a shifty-faced individual named Crane.

Mason had come to the ranch to look at Bobolink, one of Benton's better

known horses. Warrior had not yet been put on the tracks. But when Crane went to witness Bobolink run, he got his first sight of Warrior.

IT was a dramatic, bewildering sight. Old Eph was leading Warrior. Bobolink was saddled and ridden by a jockey. The jockey started Bobolink on a trial heat. Warrior seeing the horse start, broke away from Eph and started for the track.

Bobolink was twenty yards ahead of Warrior when the riderless colt reached the track. With a long stride that held the spectators breathless, Warrior took after Bobolink, gaining with every stride. And then to the amazement of the small crowd, the colt caught up with the horse and passed it on the home stretch.

"What horse is that?" Crane fairly shouted.

"A *race* horse," John answered.

"I bred him myself, by Grenadier out of Princess Pat." Benton added proudly.

"I've got to have him." Crane said. "I'll give you ten grand."

"Ten grand?" Benton repeated. "Why, man, Warrior is a colt—never been ridden!"

"I'll make it fifteen grand," Crane said with feverish excitement. "I'll make it twenty grand!"

"A man who would pay twenty thousand for an unbroken colt is crazy," Benton said, shaking his head. "And the man that would refuse such an offer is crazier still."

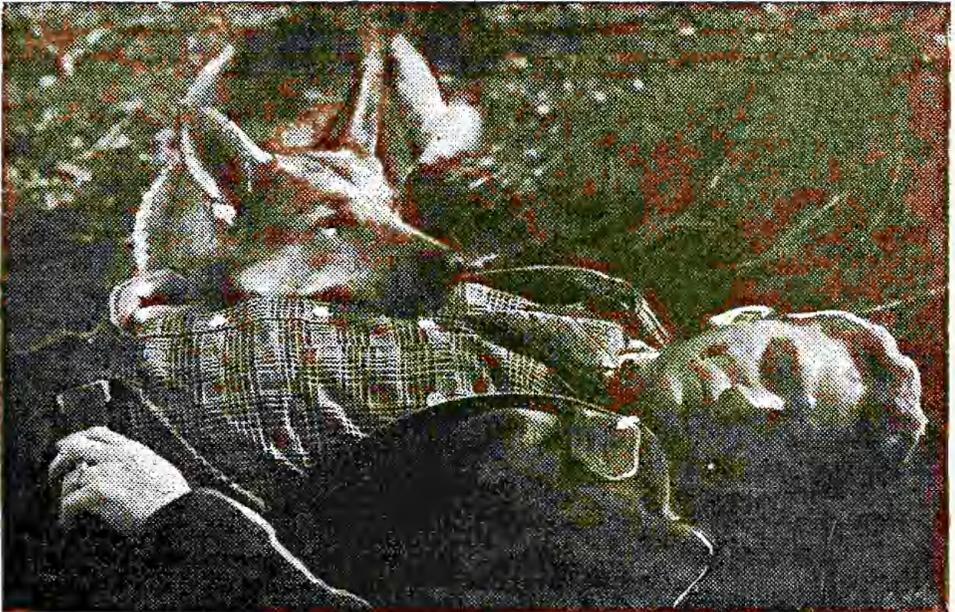
"Then it's a deal?" Crane said eagerly.

"No!" Benton fairly shouted. "He's not for sale at any price!"

"I NEVER saw you give up so easy, boss," Crane said when he was alone with Mason, later.

"Did you *ever* see me give up?" Mason shot back. "There are ways and ways to get what you want. I am going to get what I want to-night. We'll go back to town for a couple men."

Night settled over the Benton ranch



He whined nervously, but made no move.

in a haze of misty gray. From the house came no lights. In the barn, old Eph, the watchman, slept. It was nearing three in the morning.

Shadows moved in the darkness outside the barn. Stealthily and swiftly they darted for the door. The door was open. Two of the shadows entered through it. Old Eph continued to sleep. Out of the darkness behind him a man crept. A cloth soaked in chloroform was thrown over the old watchman's face. He groaned and struggled, but his struggles quickly died out. He slumped to the floor unconscious.

The men that had entered the barn worked quickly, although they knew the chloroform would keep the watchman out for half an hour. They threw a cloth over Warrior's head and led him out of the barn to a truck waiting at the road.

IT was a good half hour later when the dazed Eph raised the alarm which brought the ranch to life with wild scurrying and shouting. But this shouting and scurrying did not bring Warrior back. In a trailer truck, he was being hurried to a remote and isolated canyon twenty miles away.

In a shack in this canyon, Crane, Mason's henchman, was working with buckets of paint.

"Make Warrior a roan," Mason instructed him. "We can keep him that way until after the races. Then——"

The sound of the truck broke in on their conversation. Crane went out to the pole corral where Warrior was being unloaded.

Twenty minutes later, he staggered back into the shack, body bruised and face covered with blood.

"Nobody is ever going to paint *that* horse!" Crane groaned. "He's an outlaw if there ever was one! Like to killed me!"

Benton jumped to his feet.

"Where is he now?" he demanded.

"The last I saw of him, he was racing over the canyon rim," Crane answered. "He broke the corral fence——"

"Come on!" Benton cried. "We're going after him!"

AS they searched the canyon in the early dawn, so intent were they that they did not see on the far rim two riders. It was John Woods and Andy, another of the handlers on Cyrus Benton's horse ranch.

"This is the only way Warrior could have gone," John said. "It's the only part of the country to hide anything."

"Look!" Andy cried. "There's a shack down in that canyon."

The two men rode down to the shack, so recently deserted by Mason and his crew. There were tire marks in the dirt. The corral fence was broken. John, however, paid no attention to these. He was running to the side of the corral where an object lay on the ground.

"Warrior's halter!" he cried. "He's been here!"

"And judging from the fence, he's gone," Andy said bitterly.

"We'll find him," John gritted. "We've got his tracks to follow, now!"

BUT Warrior was far away by this time. Motionless on a narrow ridge many miles from the shack in the canyon, he gazed on a herd of wild horses grazing below, led by a great stallion.

Warrior whinnied loudly. The mares with the stallion looked up, saw Warrior outlined against the sky like a statue in bronze. The stallion stopped grazing, turned to look at the intruder. Then he moved to his place at the head of the herd.

Warrior trotted down toward the herd. The stallion glared at him with open hostility while the mares showed their approval of the newcomer.

In a fury of rage, the stallion charged Warrior. Warrior reared back, brought his front hoofs up and beat the great

stallion down with an avalanche of crushing blows.

In a flash the stallion was up, charging into the fight with all the cunning of a wild horse. Warrior retreated under the fury of his attack.

He brought his hoofs up again. Down they came, catching the stallion on the neck! The stallion took the blow with a wild scream and pushed Warrior back.

The fight took both up a hill to a cliff, the stallion fighting with the fury of a wild beast and Warrior, recovering his strength, fighting with the cool courage of a thoroughbred. He waited for another chance to bring his hoofs down on the stallion.

It came when they were both near a precipice. Warrior reared back, his hoofs high, and pounced down with deadly fury. The stallion tottered on the brink of the cliff for a moment—then slipped, screaming, to his death fifty feet below.

Warrior looked at the crumpled heap far below, and then trotted back to the herd and took his place at their head.

WHILE Warrior was leading his pack of wild horses, John was riding alone in a valley some distance away. His face was haggard and his eyes red-rimmed from lack of sleep. He had lost Warrior's trail, had searched for him night and day but he had found no trace of him.

Two trappers came down the narrow trail. One had his face swathed in bandages.

"Seen any horses around here?" John asked.

"We ain't seen any-

thing but Lightning," one of the trappers replied. "Take a squint at my partner. He had a run-in with him."

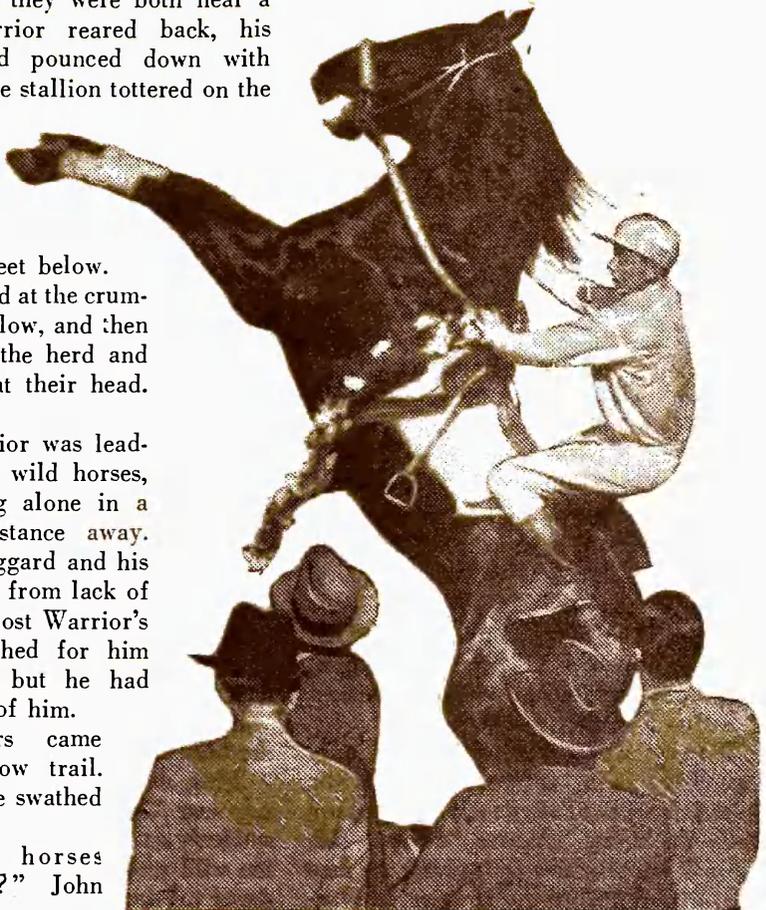
"Who's Lightning?"

"The biggest, meanest, killingest wolf living!" the trapper answered. "Better look out for him. We ain't seen no horses, but a herd of wild ones over the Mashed Cat Meadows."

"Was there a big bay stallion with them?" John's voice betrayed his sudden interest.

"Seems to me there was," the trapper replied. "Big and powerful—not yet a three-year-old."

"Maybe that's the one I'm looking for," John said.



Warrior reared up to greet Boy.

"Mebbe so. But look out for that critter, Lightning!" the trapper warned.

A WOLF pack moved noiselessly through the brook close to Mashed Cat Meadows. The pack was tired and hungry. They stopped and lay down, panting from exhaustion. But their leader did not lie down—his job was to be on the lookout for food.

A day had passed since the pack had made a kill. The gnawing terror of hunger was gripping them. Lightning, their leader, the terror of the wild, crept to the peak of a hill to have a look at the country. He sniffed and stopped suddenly.

He looked down into Mashed Cat Meadows. What he saw caused every nerve in his body to tingle and the hunger at his stomach to cry out for food.

The herd of wild horses, led by Warrior, were grazing below him. Lightning forgot about his hungry pack. He slid down the hill, his belly scraping the earth.

Warrior, grazing leisurely, looked up quickly and gave a warning snort. The other horses raised their heads. Then, a moment later, they were grazing again, oblivious of their danger.

Lightning came to a precipice. He crouched for a spring, directly over Warrior. His muscles tightened under him. A swift spring at the throat of Warrior and it would all be over before the stallion could hope to throw the wolf over!

HIS muscles bunched as he started the spring. As he did, Warrior saw him. He gave a shrill whistle of defiance and reared up, waiting for the attack.

The mares and colts, sensing the danger, fled from the scene. Warrior stayed, too proud to give ground to any foe. Lightning changed tactics. He came down a narrow trail along the face of the cliff. Closer and closer to Warrior his lean, powerful body came.

Still Warrior did not retreat. He stood steadily, never betraying his knowledge that the body coming for him was a foe he could not hope to defeat. One successful lunge at his throat, and the wolf's teeth would be ripping into his jugular vein!

Warrior snorted, pawed the ground, and then reared up, hoofs high, ready for battle. Relentless and deadly, Lightning moved closer, waiting for the right distance to make the murderous lunge. The hoofs of the horse did not worry him. He could move with greater speed than any horse's hoofs!

LIGHTNING'S legs doubled up under him for the death leap. Then suddenly something happened that no human being, watching the duel of death, could have understood!

Lightning's muscles relaxed. He sniffed the air curiously. He rose to his feet and walked toward Warrior. And Warrior raised his head, gave a soft whinny, and walked up to Lightning!

They looked at each other for a moment and then Lightning wheeled to the right and started to run madly over the grass. Warrior watched him until he got far ahead and then he started to race after him, stretching his long legs with an enthusiasm he had not known for nearly two years. He passed Lightning.

Again and again they played their old game, until both were tired. Then they started off together through the peaceful valley, Lightning following at the side of his old friend, barking happily.

Late that evening, they caught up with the herd of mares and colts. Lightning trotted up to the head of the herd with Warrior and together he and Warrior led the herd to a new grazing ground.

When dawn broke, Lightning was lying near Warrior. His ears went back suddenly as he sniffed the air. He heard the wild scream of a colt that had wandered too far from the herd.

With flashing leaps, Lightning covered

the ground to where the colt was being brought down by Lightning's former pack of wolves. With a snarl of rage, Lightning sprang at the pack, his teeth tearing flanks and throats with a deadly fury!

Warrior came charging into the fight. The pack of wolves retreated, then broke into full, panicky flight, with Lightning chasing them. When he came back, Warrior gave his low whinny, Lightning barked in answer, and the two took their places at the head of the herd again—this time with the consciousness that they could protect the mares and colts against any enemies.

YET close to them at that moment was an enemy that both were helpless against. A friendly enemy, who was out to challenge their leadership of the pack and to take Warrior alive.

It was John. Still doggedly pursuing his quarry, he rode over a sharp incline and suddenly saw a herd of horses, with Warrior at their head! Lightning had raced ahead to search the valley for any wolves that might be lurking in the brush.

At the appearance of John, the herd stopped suddenly and looked at him. In the lead, Warrior, quivering with a new excitement, looked at his friend. The haggard and drawn look left John's face and he grinned broadly.

"Came a long way to see you, Warrior!" he called out in a hoarse voice. "But it's worth it. How are you, lad? What are you doing at the head of those wild horses?"

The sound of John's voice caused Warrior's ears to perk up. The herd started to run, but Warrior stood as if hypnotized as his old master rode nearer. At a cautious distance, John dismounted and started toward Warrior, but the horse backed away.

"All right, old fellow," John laughed. "We'll play a little while—but you're going back with me."

Warrior turned and started to race after the herd. John leaped for his saddle and gave chase, his lasso rope swinging in a wide loop.

BUT as he started to swing for Warrior's head, there was a crack of a rifle behind him! John fell face forward in the saddle, tumbled off the racing horse. He thumped in an inert heap on the ground.

Behind him, in a clump of trees, Mason brought his rifle down.

"I'd murder anything to get that horse!" he muttered grimly to Crane, by his side.

"Why didn't you let him catch that wild beast first?" Crane protested.

"Why don't you use your head?" Mason countered. "The horse and the herd are headed for that blind canyon. Come on!"

Mason and Crane leaped on their horses and raced after the herd. With Warrior leading them now, they rushed through the narrow opening of the blind canyon and charged inside. Mason and Crane came through the opening minutes later. They dismounted and closed the opening with two tremendous boulders which they rolled into place behind them.

"Now we got him!" Mason cried.

"Maybe we got some broken bones." Crane answered ruefully. "I tried to paint that beast—once!"

Mason paid no attention to his words. He rode on into the canyon. The herd had stopped, realizing that they were in a trap. The mares and colts stampeded. Warrior lifted his head and scanned the cliffs around him for a path to freedom.

Mason and Crane closed in on him, lasso ropes swinging. Warrior was back to the canyon wall, rearing and pawing at them. Mason's rope sung through the air and looped over the horse's neck.

But as it did, a brown form came hurtling through the air, crashing against the rope, knocking the grip end from

Mason's hand. In the next second, Lightning whirled with a vicious snarl on Mason, his body hurtling off the ground with a speed almost faster than light!

CRANE'S rifle roared. A bullet clipped Lightning's ear. The force of his leap knocked Mason out of his saddle. Warrior, seeing Lightning, charged the two men. Mason scrambled to his feet, vaulting for his saddle, and his horse turned and raced for the opening of the canyon. Crane beat Mason there. He pushed the boulders out of the way and the two went through the opening on terror-stricken horses.

Warrior led the herd out of the trap they had run into. Lightning trotted along at his side proudly, barking happily.

But the danger that hovered over Warrior was still present when the herd came to a meadow and started to graze. Mason and Crane saw the herd from a ridge.

"Wait until that wolf leaves," Mason said. "I'm getting that horse if it takes me a year!"

"Or until you get killed," Crane added curtly.

Lightning sneaked off in the brush to hunt for food and danger to the herd. Crane and Mason saw him leave. They approached the herd from opposite sides, ropes ready for action.

Slowly they closed in on Warrior. He snorted at a danger he recognized instinctively, but could not understand.

The herd took flight at his signal of alarm. Warrior remained, rearing up on his hind legs and pawing the air.

Then Mason and Crane came at him, riding furiously out of the brush. Their ropes went around his neck and legs. He was pulled to the ground, kicking and helpless.

Mason leaped off his horse, fixed the ropes around Warrior's legs to hobble him. Then he led the magnificent steed

to a small canyon where he would stay, hidden, until a truck could come to get him.

BACK where the herd had been grazing, Lightning was sniffing the ground and barking loudly for his friend. He ran wildly over the valley. But the soft whinny of Warrior did not answer him.

An unfamiliar scent came to Lightning. His bark turned into an angry snarl. His body crouched as he moved over the ground, trying to trace the scent. But it was vague and indistinct.

Instinct took Lightning to another valley—the valley where John had been shot several hours before. As Lightning moved through the brush, he stopped and sniffed suspiciously, his lips curling in a snarl.

He had picked up the scent of man! In his animal mind that meant a trace of the men that must have taken Warrior!

He went flat on his belly and crawled through the brush just as John, recovering consciousness, was struggling to get his bearings. His face was covered with blood where the bullet had grazed the bone. His head swam crazily and he was too weak to get off the ground. He fell back on his face.

Lightning saw him and the snarl of hate remained on his lips. He crawled closer, ready to spring at the body if it moved. It did move. John raised himself with his arms and looked around helplessly. His brain was clearing slowly and strength was coming back to him.

The muscles in Lightning's powerful legs bunched for the leap.

His jaws opened for the death grip on the man's throat. Then he leaped; but as he did, John fell back on the ground with a loud groan. Lightning hurtled over his prone body, landing on four feet a little beyond him.

John turned, saw Lightning. He remembered the words of the trapper. He knew he was facing the most dangerous

wolf in the country, facing him unarmed and in a weakened condition. As his hand reached out for a stick, he groaned again.

LIGHTNING had flattened himself for another spring. This time he would not miss, but the groan he heard made him pause.

John lay on his side, right hand gripping the club, ready to defend himself as best he could. He looked at Lightning. Surprise came to his face, and then a weak grin of recognition.

"Wolf?" he whispered. "You're only part wolf. The better part of you is shepherd. Come here, Boy—I've missed you ever since you left us."

At the sound of John's voice, Lightning rose to his feet. He whined nervously but he made no move to come to John. John had stumbled to his feet and stood swaying weakly, his right hand still holding the stick.

"Come on, Boy," John pleaded. "I'm sorry I threw that stick at you—you had a right to get mad—but that's over." John looked down at his hand and saw the stick and smiled as he threw it away. "See?" he continued. "How's that, Boy? You'll come now, won't you?"

Lightning looked at the stick and then at John. Then he came slowly toward his friend. John went to his knees and held his hand out to this man-killing wolf—this scourge of the countryside!

Lightning came up to him, and at the first touch of John's hand, he leaped and barked with joy.

"I'm pretty weak, Boy," John said. "You're going to my camp with me now. But you've got to take it slow because I can't do much running."

AT the camp, Gloria, the daughter of Cyrus Benton, was trying to do a job of cleaning up and making the place livable. She had arrived several hours before, unknown to John.

When John, followed by the happy

Lightning, entered the shack, Gloria looked at him and then at the dog.

"John!" she cried. "You've been hurt! Where——" She caught her breath, her eyes wide in terror at the sight of the wolf-dog.

"Don't you remember him?" John answered. "It's Boy, the pup that used to play with Warrior. He grew up——"

"He surely did," Gloria answered, relieved. "And in the wrong neighborhood!"

"He's a good boy—from a bad family," John laughed. "But what are you doing here? How about your father? You know he thinks his daughter should only associate with aristocrats—thoroughbreds."

Gloria laughed. "I've associated with you since you were a pup—and what father thinks doesn't make any difference."

Lightning started to growl. He barked sharply, as if he suddenly remembered Warrior. He pulled at John's pants leg.

"I'm afraid of that beast," Gloria said. "Get him out of here."

But John had no chance to do that. Lightning suddenly stopped tugging at his trousers. He darted out of the shack and disappeared in the brush.

AN hour later, he was moving swiftly over a ridge, his nose to the ground, trying to pick up the scent he had lost when he first started to trail the men who had taken Warrior.

Lightning left the ridge and covered a broad expanse behind it. He found nothing. He cut across a valley, and entered a section of rocks and cliffs. Suddenly he gave a wild bark. His nose went up to the wind. He streaked across the rocks for the rim of a canyon, his nose still with the wind.

He went over the edge of the canyon in a sliding leap. Below him, lying on the ground, tangled in the ropes around his legs and neck lay—Warrior!

Lightning was at his side in a flash, tugging at the ropes. Warrior whin-

nied weakly. Lightning tried to cut the ropes with his teeth. Then he pulled and yanked. But the ropes did not give. Again Lightning lay on his stomach and chewed one of the ropes.

The rope snapped. Lightning chewed another rope. It gave. And with a powerful effort, Warrior was on his feet, ropes hanging from his neck and legs.

Lightning barked eagerly and started for the entrance of the canyon. Warrior looked at him but did not move. Lightning rushed back, biting Warrior's ankles to make him follow.

Then suddenly, Warrior trotted out of the canyon. Lightning raced ahead of him, in the direction of John's shack.

EVENING was falling when he shot into the cabin, barking insanely. Gloria screamed and leaped back, fearfully. Lightning continued his crazy yelling, pulling at John's trousers.

"Quiet, Boy!" John said. "What's the matter?"

"He's trying to kill you!" Gloria screamed. "Kill him! Kill him!"

John shook his head.

"He's trying to tell us something," he answered.

Lightning pulled him along to the door. John stopped and gave a shout of joy.

"Warrior!" he cried. "He brought Warrior back to us!"

Gloria came slowly to the door. Now her fear of the dog was gone. She looked at Warrior, who stood in front of the door, whinnying softly. Gloria's arms were around the horse's neck and she started to cry softly.

"Warrior," she whispered. "Warrior—you've come back! You've——"

"You mean," John corrected, "Warrior was brought back to us—by Boy!"

Gloria turned and looked down at Boy. He looked up at her with pleading eyes. Dropping on her knees, Gloria threw her arms around his neck and kissed him.

"Whoever said you aren't a thoroughbred doesn't know what they're talking about!" she cried. "You're a thoroughbred—every inch!"

Boy looked up at John and gave a happy bark.

A MONTH later was the day of the great race. The track was filled with milling thousands. Flags decked the flag poles. Animation and excitement reigned.

At the stable, Benton and Gloria stood admiring Warrior. Boy was there also, held under leash by Andy. John stood at Warrior's side, petting his neck affectionately.

"There isn't a horse in the world that can beat him, Mister Benton," he said.

"Win or lose," Benton answered, "I was never prouder to see my colors on a horse."

But while Benton talked, Mason and Crane were closeted with two men in a building near the track.

"Is everything oke?" Mason asked them.

"Warrior won't have a chance," he was told. "We got Fanton's jockey fixed to throw his horse in front of Warrior and pocket him. Then——" It took some time for the man to outline the complete plot. When he was finished. Mason smiled with assurance and walked out of the building, followed by Crane.

THE start of the race found John quivering with excitement and Gloria gripping her father's arm frantically. Boy stood near the rail, held by Andy. Warrior, ridden by the famous jockey, Littlespot, was prancing wildly on the track. Littlespot brought him back in the starting position again, but only after a struggle with the spirited animal.

At the starting gun, Warrior broke with the other horses and the race was on. Warrior fell into third position, as Mr. Benton had planned. California Lad led at the quarter, with Fanton second.

At the back stretch Warrior pulled up within a head of the leader.

Then it happened!

The jockey riding Fanton brought his whip up, cracking Warrior in the face! Dazed, Warrior fell back, and Fanton's jockey yanked his horse in front of Warrior, pocketing him against the fence.

For a long moment Benton and Gloria stared stupefied at what had happened. They did not see the whip-blow to Warrior's face. They only knew that Warrior was pocketed and there was no chance for him to get out. California Lad increased his lead to two full lengths. Other horses passed Warrior, who was still held against the fence.

He dropped back to last place, unable to get away from the fence without fouling Fanton who was being ridden at his side. The crowd, not knowing what had happened, rose to their feet and cheered California Lad. The horses came around the last curve of the home stretch.

Then suddenly the crowd stopped cheering. They were looking at a grim drama of certain death being staged on the track. Boy, sensing that Warrior was in trouble, had broken the leash and was out on the track, directly in front of the oncoming horses! In a second, their hoofs would crush him to death!

THE horses thundered down on him. He was suddenly swallowed up in their cloud of dust. The crowd gasped. Then out of the dust came Warrior, streaking forward like a flash. And ahead of him was Boy, racing with all the speed he could muster!

Boy sped past the horses, leading Warrior on at breathless speed! Then he stopped at the finish line, well ahead of the pounding pack. He whirled and barked as Warrior came on, straining every muscle to beat the other horses to his wild friend and companion.

If he didn't get there first, Warrior knew that the other horses would crush Boy to death—that he would never move

until he reached him! It was their old game, played when they were pups and when they roamed the mountains as two wild creatures!

Inch by inch, Warrior pulled up on California Lad. Boy was waiting faithfully for him to reach him first. He was at the finish line. His barks of encouragement to his friend came through the grand stand.

But Warrior's efforts failed to take him past California Lad. That great horse was within a few yards of the finish now, his hoofs cutting the dirt. In seconds they would be crushing Boy's immobile body. Yet the dog did not move!

He gave one last, wild bark. Warrior heard it. With a wild, insane burst of speed he fairly flew through the air! The crowd roared. They were watching the impossible! Warrior's head went in front of California Lad. They crossed the finish line—with Warrior leading!

OUT of the dust of the finish came Boy, having darted out of the way the second Warrior reached him and the finish line.

"A great performance!" Benton cried, running up to John.

"You mean," John corrected him, "the dog is a great trainer. *He* won the race!"

Benton coughed uncomfortably.

"I still say," he answered, "that it takes three generations to make a gentleman. I guess I just didn't know what generation to start with—and that applies to others beside the dog."

John looked at Gloria. Her hand reached out to grasp his. Their hands met. Then Gloria laughed and said:

"The wreath they gave Warrior is where it belongs, all right!"

John looked out on the track. Warrior had reared up to greet Boy, and the great wreath thrown around his neck had slipped off. It was lying across Boy's back as the horse and the dog rubbed noses happily.



They were nuts about teeth—and a toothsome blonde—and the wide open spaces where cavities were cavities!

“PAINLESS DOC” PENNINGTON, and his assistant, Roy Banks, had taken Horace Greeley’s advice. They’d have taken more than that, only Horace had things pretty well nailed down around his old shanty. Oh, even in 1850, Park Avenue had shanties. There was Elmer N. Shanty—the Shanty Irish—and, on occasions, Shanty Claus (hic).

But Doc and Roy had left the débutantes, the *Tribune*, and little old New York far behind. In fact, the overland stagecoach, in which they were bound for the Indian Territory of the West, would be reaching Newark in two days! And that wasn’t sparing the horses!

There was a rumor of another heavy-weight rassling match at Madison Square

Garden, which explained, somewhat, why the westbound stage was a bit crowded of a New Jersey afternoon—that, and the fact that there was a gold rush in California. So, as the stagecoachers phrased it, it was: “Westward Ho!” In truth, it was: “Ho-ho-ho!” because there was more rush than gold. And the grunt and groan boys didn’t appear at the Garden anyway.

From their upper berth, with their stocking feet dangling in and out of the beards of the men below, Doc and Roy were listening to the conversation of the excited group in the coach.

“It won’t be many weeks before we’re in California,” said one of the passengers.

"There'll be gold in them thar hills," croaked another old prospective prospector.

But Doc and Roy weren't interested in the gold in them thar hills. It was the gold in them thar cavities which they were thinking about. Yes, sir, if there was gold in them, they'd take it out; if there wasn't, they'd put it in. They were dentists in the true sense of the word. Nothing false about *these* gentlemen!

They hadn't been in the profession very long. But their apprenticeship of twelve years in the plumbing business served them well. Twelve years! And not once had they forgotten to forget their tool case!

AS they rode along, the boys were harking back to these old days. To them, it seemed only like day before yesterday that they had exchanged their pliers for the forceps. It should have seemed like that, because it *was* only the day before yesterday.

In those days Doc was known as Ewald "Double-or-nothing" Jones. How he became "Painless Doc" Pennington was another story.

One day, the two washbowl wrestlers had just put the finishing touches on a dental sink for Doctor Philip Pennington, New York's painless dentist. And those finishing touches finished the sink all right. In fact, it was sunk. But so was old Doctor P. He couldn't pay the boys for the repairs they had made. To say nothing about the destruction they had made.

Whereupon, Ewald helped himself to a half dozen forceps, cocked his ubiquitous cigar to 45° N. by E., and shouted, "Double or nothing!"

A coin was flipped and Pennington lost. "Double or nothing!" again was the cry; and again the filling fixer lost. This time he lost his drilling machine. The game went on and on—

By the time the sun went down, Ewald and Roy, the bathroom busters, had "Double or nothing" the dentist out of all his equipment, from the chair right down through the pivot teeth and the college diploma. In fact, the only thing left in Pennington's office to remind him of his profession was a broken-down toothpick. Even his own teeth (upper and lower) had fallen before this bivouac of bicuspid bankruptcy.

And that was the moment when Ewald and Roy were graduated from plumbing to dentistry. From that hour hence, Ewald was to be known as "Painless Doc" Pennington; and Roy, his first assistant.

But, as Roy observed at the time, they couldn't practice in New York. Everybody knew them there. So, they decided to go West—to the vast Indian Territory. Amos and Andy hadn't come to the redmen yet, so business was promising.

Carefully packing the dental supplies on the top of the stage, they settled themselves in the coach among the future Bronx cowboys and the Brooklyn cactus pickers. And with a "Yippee!" and a "Yowhoo!" they were off.

### THE CAST

BERT WHEELER.....Roy Banks  
 ROBERT WOOLSEY...."Doc" Pennington  
 DOROTHY LEE.....Mary Blake  
 Harry Woods.....Hank Bewley  
 Richard Alexander.....J. Little



Story by  
 Thomas Lennon and  
 Fred Guiol.

Screenplay by  
 Al Boasberg and  
 Jack Townley.

Directed by  
 Fred Guiol.

A fictionization of the RKO Radio picture of the same title.

FOUR days out of Newark, somewhere in the wilds of Pennsylvania, the stagecoach hit a rock in what was commonly called a road in the Keystone State. Doc thought it was the keystone, itself, that they hit, because the jolt was terrific, throwing the passengers hither and yon. In fact, when the dust cleared away, Doc and Roy discovered six faces they hadn't seen thus far on the journey.

Among this new half dozen was a pretty little miss who stood out like Ginger Rogers in an Old Man's Home. One look at her, and Roy and Doc were ready to quit the dentist business and go straight.

They would have, if the girl hadn't opened her lunch box and started to eat a rosy red apple. This opened Doc's professional eyes even further—he hadn't eaten in two days, himself.

"My dear little girl!" he addressed her. "If you eat that way, you won't have a tooth in your head in a week!"

"What am I doing wrong?" The girl was, indeed, surprised and alarmed.

"Cross-country mastication!" Doc replied. "Wait. I'll show you." He reached over and took the apple. "Now, in eating an apple or a pear—"

"She knows how to eat an apple!" Roy cut in. He was always one to save a lady in distress—or dat dress, it made no difference.

Doc glared at his assistant. "Yes. But does she know the difference between an apple and a pear? Miss, you can pare an apple, but you can't apple a pear! For instance—it takes two apples to make a pair, but only one pear to make a——"

DOC was really wound up in the fruit and tooth business. And it required two weeks and three States to get him unwound. As they bounced through Ohio, the Ohioans were oblivious to him—they never even heard him. But that was all right with Doc. He'd never heard of Ohio! Iowa was all ears. "That's

where the tall corn grows!" As they reached the Missouri River, Doc was still going strong.

"—and always bite an apple from right to left. It's an old dental maxim—poetical, but true. It dates back to Adam. And of course you all know about Adam's apple."

At this point, Doc paused for breath. The temporary silence awakened Roy who had been asleep since Pittsburgh.

"Aw, gee, Doc," the assistant molar molder protested, "why don't you give these people a rest!" Then he added shyly, "Particularlly this young lady."

"Thank you," the girl answered. She was shy, too. Shy two first-class eardrums.

"All right, Roy," Doc agreed, "you talk to her for a little while. Say, from now until the middle of next week. Then I'll get back in the harness again." This last crack brought a contemptuous neigh from the eight lumbering steeds up front. Horses and congress always vote in ayes and neighs.

Four days of silence passed within the stagecoach. Roy was trying to think how to start talking to this prairie flower. It was evident that Roy was a long, if not a deep, thinker. Finally, he gently cleared his throat. The farmers in the neighborhood thought another dust storm was coming up. Then he opened up a flowing barrage of oratory.

"Hello," he said.

"Hello," the girl replied.

Doc opened one eye. "Say! I didn't tell you to make a speech."

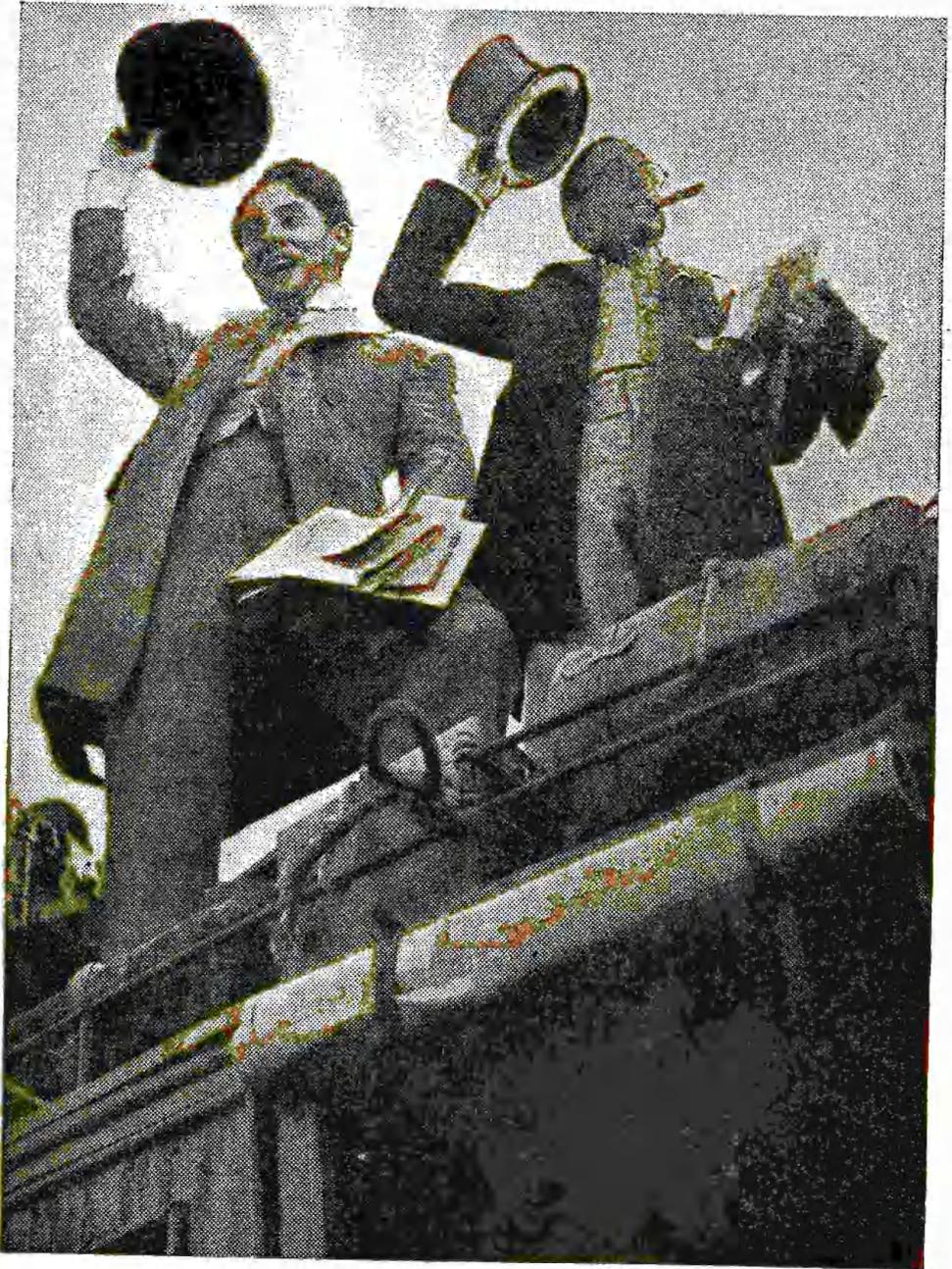
"What's your name?" Roy asked the girl, with a leer at Doc.

"Mary Blake."

"Mary Blake! Gee, what a pretty name. Mine's Roy Banks. Where are you going?"

"Out to the Indian Territory. I've got a job teaching school out there."

"The Indian Territory!" Roy was delighted. "That's where we're going. To Little Town."



"You're now looking at Painless Doc Pennington—the only dentist who ever attempted to fill the Grand Canyon!"

"Little Town!" Mary, the schoolmarm, exclaimed. "That's exactly where I'm going."

"Gee!"

"Gee!"

"Whoa!" Doc interjected, just to keep the horses in the right direction.

JUST as the Dutch spendthrifts had given the Mohawks a string of beads for Manhattan, hoping they'd strangle themselves before they got back to Poughkeepsie, so had the white brother been kind to his red brother in the West. In exchange for Texas, California, Wyoming, a tepee, and two left foot moccasins, the Indians had been given two bass drums and a vast territory of fertile prairie land—so fertile they could count the blades of grass on their fingers on a clear day. (Of course, that was during the years that the grass grew at all.)

Also the Indians had been blindfolded and then told to guess where their territory was, and to go to it. Not only that, but they were told to stay there.

Little Town was located in the northeast corner of the southwestern part of the Indian Territory—just north of the appendix, on the edge of the stomach. To the Indians it was a pain. Chief Rain-in-the-puss got it right the first time when he looked at Little Town and said that the Indians had a pain in their stomach.

Something bothered them, anyway, because they were on the warpath. And white brother or no white brother, a scalp was a scalp to them. With or without dandruff.

On this sunshiny afternoon the Little Towners weren't thinking about the Indians. They were drunk with excitement—the West's new name for corn likker.

Either they had just gotten the news flash of the California gold rush, or else they had just heard that Doc and Roy were on their way. For, every Little Towner, except one, was preparing to

get out of town. That one was "Big Tom" Little, who owned the town and half the Indian's wigwams. Ugh!

Little was striding up and down the crowded street, getting in everybody's way, desperately trying to persuade them to stay home, not to go to California.

"I'm telling you," Little shouted a little, "you'll never get there! No wagon train that ever left here was ever heard from again."

"We ain't a-worrying!" the excited crowd shouted in reply.

"You'll be sorry," Big Little taunted.

"You're just mad because you won't have any one to rent your buildings to," called Lem Prouty. Lem was the village blacksmith. And the Indians always referred to him as the "great white father," which was something Lem never could understand. He never even got a hint from looking at his eighteen children!

"The Indians are on the warpath!" Little persisted.

"Don't you worry about us," put in another future grapefruit grower. "Hank Bewley'll get us through. They say he's one of the best scouts in these parts."

THAT was true. Bewley was one of the best scouts. But it all depended upon what he was scouting for. Right now he was under the table in the back room of The XX (the Double-cross) Saloon, scouting for his pal, "Trigger." Only Trigger didn't live there any more. After ten days, Trigger had come to and decided to go home. *He* was no bar-fly!

Disgusted, Bewley tossed down a dozen Mexican Martinis and rolled back out into the street. Climbing upon the end of a covered wagon, he ordered the crowd to gather around. He was about to make a speech. (Now, the Indians were going to get gas on their stomach.)

To these roving ranchers Bewley was a combination of "Little Eva," Napoleon, and the Detroit Tigers. They trusted him, praised him, but never loaned him money. He was their friend, their leader,

their guide, their palsy-walsy. As Hank stood there on the wagon the crowd cheered and shouted. Whooping it up for dear old Bewley!

"My friends," the scout began. "We're pulling out of here at dusk." (*Cheers.*) "Remember! It takes provisions and equipment to lick the West. (*More cheers.*) And PLENTY of water!! (*Groans.*) And good containers to carry it in." (That was one way to avert an Indian attack—they could drown the Indians.)

"Have plenty of grease on your axles . . . have all your animals well shod. Ain't nothin'll slow down a bunch of horses quicker than sore feet."

AT this high light in his speech, Bewley spied his pal, Trigger, weaving in

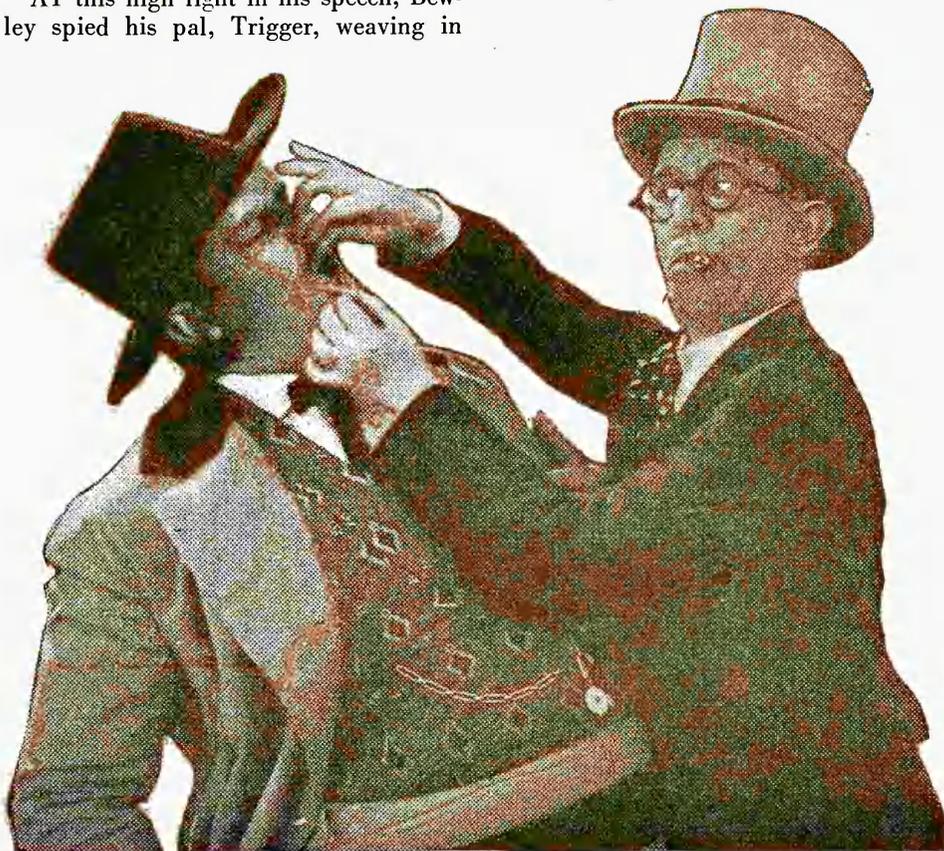
and out of the spittons in front of the local barber shop. After shouting a few more orders to the crowd, Bewley jumped off the wagon and hurried over to his henchman.

"All ready to go, Trigger?"

"Yeah," Trigger replied quietly. "Think this trip'll be as easy as the last one, pardner?"

"There's nothing to worry about," Bewley assured. "We lead the wagon train into Lone Gulch and Chief Cyclone and his warriors will be there in ambush. When it's over, we get the cash—they get what's left."

Trigger was still a bit uneasy, and unsteady, too.



They were right when they called Doc a "practicing dentist." He practiced on anyone who would let him!

"Yeah, Hank, but when we went across before, the cavalry wasn't in that territory. They are now. If they catch up with us, it'll be too bad."

"Forget it, Trigger," Bewley assured with mock cunning on his face. "We can always tell them we were ahead scouting, and couldn't get back!"

THIS villainous plotting was suddenly brought to an abrupt halt by a mild roar at the east end of town. Racing, surging, thundering down Main Street of Little Town came the overland stage, with Doc and Roy at the controls.

On and on it came. Past the barber shop; past the Double-cross; three times around the post office; into the hotel lobby and out onto the street again. The boys didn't know how to stop it.

Had it been a leaking radiator or a toothache, it would have been a different story. But a horse is a horse is a horse is a horse, to quote Miss Stein, and all their monkey wrenches couldn't stop it. Doc was ready to lower the lifeboats. But Big Tom Little stepped into the street, grabbed one of the horses, and brought the stage to a stop.

"Thanks, pardner!" Doc shouted. "I was just going to do that myself!"

As the passengers got out, the mob in the street crowded around them. There were kisses and hugs and greetings of welcome. Doc set a new record of kissing twenty-one squaws without getting shot. Roy just hugged. Hugged the dental chair and a big set of papier-mâché teeth.

"Don't go away, folks!" Doc shouted. "Don't go 'way! Allow me to introduce myself. You are now looking at Painless Doc Pennington—the only dentist who ever attempted to fill the Grand Canyon! I don't imagine that you left a stone unturned to welcome me——"

One of Lem Prouty's eighteen took aim with his sling-shot, and something hit Doc smack on the conk.

"Now, I'm sure you didn't!" Doc

added quickly. "However, let me introduce my assistant, Roy Banks. We'll be ready for business just as soon as we secure an office. Get out those handbills, Roy, and let's get 'em circulated. We've got to build up our circulation!"

Immediately, Doc and Roy were off down the street, throwing handbills to each and every Little Towner. As the people read the bills, they broke out in laughter.

"If they expect any business here, they'll have to pull their own teeth!" chuckled something under a ten-gallon hat.

"They won't have no trouble getting an office, though," said another.

"Ha!" added a third. "They'll have the whole town to themselves."

IT was a big joke to these Westerners. They took their humor hard, like their liquor. But, to Big Tom Little this was a real-estate boom of no small proportions. So Big Tom lost no time in hurrying down the street after the wisdom-tooth wizards. When he finally overtook them, they were twenty-five feet up in the air holding a consultation concerning the teeth in the George Washington statue.

"Hey, Doc!" Little called up at them.

In a flash, the boys were down from the statue. And before Little could say another word, they flipped him into the chair, propped open his mouth, and stared in.

"Wait till I strike a match," Roy offered. "We can see better."

"Ah!" Doc uttered with his best professional manner. "Your front laterals indicate hardening of the enamel, which will lead to varicose veins of the bicus-pids, and a nervous breakdown."

"Couldn't we put in a new sewer system?" Roy inquired.

"No!" Doc snapped back. "And don't let any more of those matches fall down the patient's throat!" He turned to Little. "That'll be \$3, please."

"Pardner, there ain't nothin' wrong with my teeth." Big Tom drawled as he got up out of the chair. "I'm a real-estate man, and I hear you're interested in an office."

"Your hearing's pretty good, pard," Doc replied. "But I'm still worried about those teeth. Yes, we're looking for an office."

"Well, stranger, you're standing right in front of the best office in this town. And by luck, it's vacant. Step inside and take a look at it."

The boys broke through the cobwebs on the door and went in. In a split second, they came tearing out again.

"Say!" Roy yelled, "that's not an office. That's a zoo!"

Big Tom explained to them that the building had been previously occupied by the "TRAPPERS AND TRADERS FUR & TAXIDERMY COMPANY"; and that the company had forgotten some of their models. That explanation satisfied Doc, but it took a bit of coaxing to get Roy to reënter the building.

The walls of the office were lined with stuffed birds and animals from all parts of the West. Huge teeth and fangs were

bared; and glassy eyes stared down at their every move.

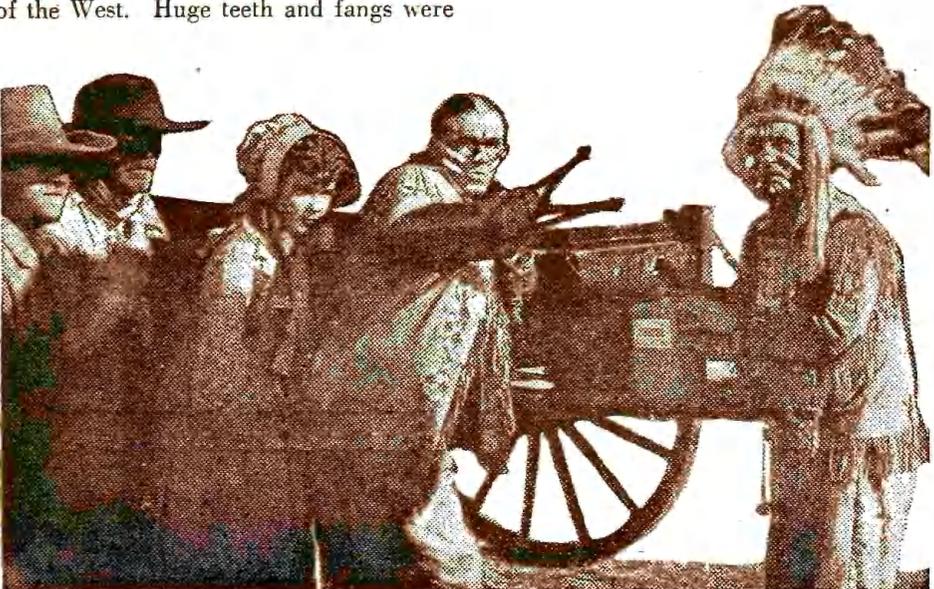
"Some tough-looking birds around here," Roy remarked in a frightened tone.

"Yeah," Doc replied. "I'm going to send home for that stuffed turkey we had last Christmas. That was tough enough to be in here, too."

They inspected the building from bow to stern, from cellar to attic, from right to left, and upstairs and down. All the time, Big Tom kept up his sales talk about the fresh air, the heat, the light, and the additional rooms for sleeping quarters.

He would probably have put through his deal sooner, only he unwittingly mentioned the plumbing. And, to Roy and Doc, that was like playing the Star Spangled Banner. For, during the next two hours, Doc argued about where the water was when you turned on the spigot and no water came out!

At length, Little, exhausted a little, brought the discussion to a close with the tactful remark, "Well, how much rent will you pay?"



He loaded the sling with a chloroform-soaked sponge and took aim.

After a huddle, the teeth terrifiers replied, "Five hundred!"

"Five hundred dollars——" Big Tom gasped. "Boys, for five hundred dollars you can have the place!"

AS he departed—just to celebrate the sale—Big Tom brought out the old whisky jug. The jug was the only old part of it. However, it worked. But the boys didn't. They had intended to, but they didn't.

And when the Eastbound stage pulled out at nine o'clock, with Tom Little packed in among the cactus plants, Doc and Roy were studying the dental problems in their patient-filled office. The patients being the former models of the "TRAPPERS AND TRADERS FUR & TAXIDERM COMPANY."

Wabbling bleary-eyed about the room, Doc paused to steady himself against the hatrack. His hands felt the brim of his hat. Blinking, he turned and spoke.

"Madam, you jush got here in time. I would shay that you have a very rare condishion—known as dentaflexis—causing the teeth to become pliable and wave in the wind——"

"Hey, Doc!" Roy interrupted. "Come here."

After several detours around the room Doc arrived at Roy's side. Roy, weaving back and forth, was holding onto an ugly-looking boar's head.

"Washamadder?" Doc was losing his grip—to say nothing of his sight, hearing, and equilibrium. He had already lost his shoes.

"Shomething serious," Roy replied. "He wants a tooth filled, and I can't get hish mouth open!"

Doc meditated a moment, considering the case in semisilence. Finally, he reached a verdict.

"He's got lock-jaw!"

That consultation floored them both. In fact they rolled all the way under the dental chair. And from then on, it was all quiet on the western front.

THE next day dawned bright and early. And it dawned upon Doc and Roy to get up and get ready for business. As the sun eked its way in through the cracks in the window shades, the events of the night before were brought to light.

Doc had spent the night under the chair with his head snuggled in between the uppers and lowers of the papier-mâché set of teeth. Roy was all gummed up, too.

The stuffed animals were now a joy to the dental world. The coyotes had gold fillings by the dozen; the wild cats were left with nothing but their gums; and the goats had exchanged molars with the grizzly bears. The giraffes were left untouched, however—Doc and Roy hadn't been able to reach that far. All in all, their practice had been varied, if not extensive.

It didn't require much time for them to "set-up" for business. And by eight-thirty and a half they had the chair bolted down, the instruments sharpened, and the chloroform uncanned. The drums were rolled, the dental college alma mater was sung, and the doors were thrown open. Roy was a pretty good thrower, and the doors landed across the street.

But no patients came. The only thing that passed through the doorway was the odor of the night before, on its way out.

The boys hurried out into the street. The place was deserted; no people; no noise. Little Town had become a ghost town overnight.

"I guess these people sleep late around here," Roy remarked as he stared up and down the empty street.

Doc went into the middle of the street and cupped his hands.

"Yoooooo-hoooooo!"

No patients arrived, and Doc's patience departed.

"YOOOOOO-HOOOOOO!" he thundered out again.

Suddenly, Roy's attention was attracted by something flapping on the doorsill of their office. It didn't look like a patient, but they couldn't take any chances. Back into the office they ran.

"It's a letter!" Roy shouted, as he spied an envelope tacked to the sill.

"Well, open it," Doc suggested. "Maybe somebody wants a tooth filled by mail."

HURRIEDLY tearing open the letter, they discovered that it was from Mary Blake, the prairie pedagogue, their comely colleague of the overland stage. The letter explained everything.

Upon arrival, Mary had learned that the entire community was California conscious. The school board had ruled that, if she wanted her job she would have to go along with the wagon train and teach the children en route. They were headed for the gold fields and they weren't coming back.

Even though the boys knew that the earthquakes and Hollywood would change the Little Towner's minds, they were more than a little discouraged.

"They can't do this to us!" Doc growled. "I'll take it up before the next council meeting."

"We got to find a way to bring those people back here so that there will be a council to meet to take it up before," was Roy's downhearted reply.

SUNK in despair up to their neck, and mud up to their knees, the boys sat down. Business hadn't been so good that day, and now this news. They were both in the mood for a good funeral, but the only one around was their own.

Then, quietly, out of the west came the dull beat of horses' hoofs. A moment later a covered wagon and four horses raced into Little Town, and careened wildly down Main Street.

With the first sight of it, Doc and Roy leaped into the street. Shouting, wav-

ing, blowing whistles, they brought the wagon to a stop.

Strutting boldly up to the wagon, the dental dynamiters were all ready to add or subtract. That was, as far as teeth were concerned. But they soon made a discovery which almost jarred their own fillings loose.

Slumped down under the seat was the driver. Slack reins in one hand and a scrap of paper in his other.

"Is he full of liquor?" Roy asked.

"He's full of lead!" Doc replied as he lowered his cigar to half mast.

"Then it's *his* funeral, not ours," Roy answered.

There was really nothing the boys could do. The dental union had ruled out embalming and grave-digging at their last convention. They were about to leave the corpus delecti to amuse himself, when they caught sight of the note in his clenched fist.

Thinking that it might be the driver's will, and themselves his heirs, they passed a motion to read the note at once. It was a difficult scrawl but it made sense.

Little Town wagon train in danger  
—Indians—massacre—notify Army  
Post. Overheard train being led  
into ambush by Hank Bewley—

Instantly, a cloud of dust arose from Main Street. Doc and Roy tossed out the corpsey-worpsy, loaded in their dental equipment, and dashed off across the prairie.

Lives were at stake! Or would be if the Indians got hungry. And Mary Blake was on the threshold of premature baldness; the redman might decide to un-tress Mary, the elegant educator!

MID-AFTERNOON found the Little Town wagon train far out on the parched prairie, trundling along toward Lone Gulch. With these covered-wagon cruis-

ers it was "So far, so good." They hadn't run out of gas, nor had any flat tires. And they all had the same heads of hair that they started out with.

Their chief worry had been the sling-shot of Lem Prouty's pride and joy, Morton. His was the dead eye which had drawn the bead on Doc back in Little Town.

As they rambled along, Mary Blake was instructing her class the difference between a tomahawk and a soup spoon—just in case! It had something to do with, "Which would you rather have sticking in your face?"

BEWLEY and Trigger, the scampering scouts, were far ahead of the wagon train. Almost into Lone Gulch. In the Gulch, rarin' to go, were Chief Cyclone and his braves. His braves were a much stronger outfit than the Boston Braves. They finished third in their own league.

So, aside from a few like Bewley, the Little Towners were anticipating a peaceful afternoon of racing with the tumbleweed. But, suddenly, into that Western tranquillity came the charging dentists. And dentists can charge!

Swooping in from nowhere, with sirens blowing and bells clanging, Doc and Roy stampeded up to the wagon train.

"Hold your horses, boys!" Doc shouted. "The Indians are coming! Bewley is selling you short to Chief Cyclone——"

"Everybody—tall *and* short," Roy added quaintly.

If there was doubt, or anything else, in the minds of the Little Towners, Doc and Roy dispelled it by brandishing the scrawled note as evidence.

And the traveling toothmen had arrived just in the nick of time. For, lo! Over yonder hill came Chief Cyclone and his Boston Braves! (This should be the Cherokee Braves, shouldn't it? Editor.) (Who cares? They won't win, anyway. Author.)

"FORM the circle!" the cry went up throughout the wagon train. "Form the circle!"

Slowly, but in time, the corners were knocked off and the circle formed. Women and children were brought to the center; trunks were upset and set up as barricades; muskets were taken out of the moth balls; and the siege began.

The Indians rode around and around. Doc thought it was a merry-go-round, so he hung up a brass ring. For that stroke of genius he was placed in command. Seeing that they were outnumbered by their foemen, Doc installed Lem Prouty's eighteen sling-shotters in the second-line trenches. The graybeards, he put up front. He hoped their beards would act as camouflage.

And the Indians rode 'round and 'round. oh-ho-ho-ho!

GETTING nowhere shooting moth-balls out of old rusty muskets, Doc went into conference with Roy. They came out of it quickly, and with them their dental sponges and chloroform. Filing into the second-line trench, they halted along side the Prouty regiment.

"Give me one of those sling-shots," Doc ordered. "This isn't ethical, but war is war."

Without hesitation he loaded the sling with a chloroform-soaked sponge and took aim. *Twing! Squash!!* The sponge scored a direct hit in the mouth and another redskin bit the dust!

Still, the Indians rode 'round and 'round. And not one of them had hooked the brass ring yet!

BUT, at length, Doc saw that his men, methods, and muskets were failing before the innumerable host of rough-riding redmen. He turned to Roy.

"Son, I can't give up the ship. It's up to you. We need help. Ride to the army post for Captain Smith and the cavalry. If you can't get him, bring

Jack Dalton and the United States Marines!"

While Roy rode off, Doc went back to his problem of what to do with the Indians. There wasn't any problem in what the Indians would do to him. Then, suddenly, an idea hit him—hard! He picked himself up off the ground and started running around in circles to encourage the Indians.

If he could keep them moving around that circle long enough, they'd get dizzy and the whole battle would be over! But the Indians had done this before. In fact their entire lives had been spent in going 'round and 'round.

For one hour more, for two hours more, for three hours more, Doc and his men held the line. But as the shadows lengthened it looked like Chief Cyclone and his boys were going to push over a score. Second down and one yard to go!

Things looked black for Doc. But if he had glanced over his left shoulder he would have seen that things were blue again. Dark blue.

High up on the surrounding ridge the bugles blew, the flags waved, and Roy and Captain Smith led the U. S. Cavalry into battle.

To Doc's surprise the Indians stopped going 'round and 'round. In fact, Bewley, Trigger, Chief Cyclone, and all the braves were in full retreat. But the retreat didn't last long, nor far enough.

Because Captain Smith and his boys were soon going 'round and 'round the Indians!

BACK at the wagon train Doc and Roy were receiving the praise and gratitude of Mary and Prouty, and all the other Little Towners. As they sat there, glowing, a delicate "twing" came from the far end of the circle. Something hit Doc on the conk.

"Son, the war's over!" Doc grumbled as he picked up the stone young Prouty had shot. But he said no more for a moment. His attention was centered on the stone. As he looked at it, his eyes popped and his cigar took on life afresh.

"Where did you get that stone, my boy?" Doc questioned.

"Back in Little Town. I got a bag full of them, just like that, in our wagon."

"HEY!" Doc shouted. "That's GOLD!"

If the natives never worked fast before, they sure put on the pressure in getting their wagons turned back toward Little Town. And in the twilight, Doc, Mary, and Roy rode slowly back over the prairie. The schoolmarm addressed the two tooth takers.

"For your bravery and kindness, you get a kiss."

"Double or nothing" Doc replied. And he puckered up his cigar-laden lips.

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## DESIRE

*A Paramount picture, with Gary Cooper and Marlene Dietrich.*

All of Miss Dietrich's previous pictures have been very heavy handed things. Now, however, Paramount gives her a chance to do a comedy with Gary Cooper, which has all the lightness and good fun of "Hands Across the Table." You will like this one if you have never liked Dietrich before, and you will find her much more delightful in this, if you have always been one of her fans.

MARLENE DIETRICH—GARY COOPER—AND A GRAND TIME.

# They've got

## "ANTS in the PANTRY"

Columbia's famous nuts

### THE THREE STOOGES

gives you their latest dizzy  
comedy script in its original form

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is the scenario used in making the Three Stooges' comedy, "Ants in the Pantry." Needless to say, there is much that goes into the filming of a picture that does not appear in a script—mannerisms of the actors, bits of action that are developed "on the lot" during the shooting, et cetera.

But, as substantially as possible, the scenario which is put in the director's hands—and which you now have in yours—is what is seen on the screen.

Different producing companies have different styles in which their scenarios are written. However, they all follow certain general lines. One standard rule is that the first line of each scene should contain the scene number, the scene subject, and the camera instructions. Thus we have:

12 FULL SHOT—INT. MRS. BURLAP'S DRAWING-ROOM.

The term, *FULL SHOT*, tells the cameraman that he is to include everything in the scene that he can get. Other camera instructions, such as *CLOSEUP*, *CLOSE SHOT*, *MED. (Medium) SHOT*, et cetera, cover other situations. The

camera angles are changed for each scene to avoid monotony.

Most scenes change from one to the other by simple "cuts"—that is, by ending abruptly and starting immediately. However, sometimes the scenario writer wants to get a special effect, such as a change of locale or time. In this case he frequently resorts to a "wipe off," or a "dissolve"—two different methods of showing two scenes on the screen at the same time, one scene disappearing while the next one appears.

THE art of reading and enjoying a scenario lies not so much in understanding what you see on the paper before you, but in being able to visualize what it will look like on the screen. In order to really enjoy this script to the fullest extent, you should be familiar with the Three Stooges' style—you should know how they line up before the camera, what the difference is between a double slap and a double-triple slap, et cetera.

However, in view of the fact that the Three Stooges are among the screen's most popular lunatics, we feel sure that the majority of our readers will find themselves on well-traveled territory as they read on.)



Moe

Curly

Larry

FADE IN ON:

1 *SIGN* reading:

"LIGHTNING PEST CONTROL, Inc.  
Rodents Exterminated  
HERMAN MOUSER, Manager."

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

2 *MED. CLOSE SHOT—INT.*  
*MOUSER'S OFFICE*

*Mr. Mouser, a middle-aged Dutchman with a handle-bar moustache, is on; he has a worried look. A stenographer is opening letters as she hands them to him. Mouser speaks with a thick Dutch accent.*

MOUSER: Any checks?

STENOGRAPHER: No checks, Mr. Mouser. All bills.

*Mouser gets frantic as he exclaims:*

MOUSER: Bills, bills—nothing but bills! This rat-catching business is going to the dogs! . . . Where are those three loafers?

*Stenographer points to the next room and says:*

STENOGRAPHER: They're in there talking politics.

MOUSER: Politics—

STENOGRAPHER: Yeh. I just heard one of 'em say, "Let's have a new deal."

*Mouser leaps to his feet angrily and goes toward the office door adjoining, saying as he walks:*

MOUSER: What you mean—a new deal?

2a **CLOSE SHOT—OTHER SIDE OF DOOR**

*As Mouser enters and takes it as he sees:*

3 **MED. FULL SHOT—BACK ROOM**

*Rodent exterminator paraphernalia is scattered about. The THREE STOOGES are on playing cards. Moe is shuffling while Mouser watches upstage. Moe gives the cards a final riffle, shoves them over to Curly.*

MOE: Cut 'em.

*Curly cuts the cards. Moe gets angry, and says:*

Oh, so you don't trust me, eh?

*He throws the cards at Curly, who ducks.*

4 **CLOSE SHOT MOUSER**

*At door. The cards hit him in the face.*

MOUSER: Voss iss loss here?

5 **FULL SHOT BACK ROOM**

*The boys all turn and see the boss—as Larry and Curly jump up and exit, frightened. Moe steps over to Mouser.*

MOE: Good mornin', boss. Any calls?

MOUSER: Calls he wants yet! Get out, you loafers und dig up some business, or you're fired!

MOE: Rat catchin' ain't what it used to be.

MOUSER: Don't argue mitt me!

*He turns away, and as he does so, Larry enters with a steel trap. In his other hand he carries a butterfly net. Moe looks at Larry.*

MOE: (*pointing to trap*) What's that for?

LARRY: To catch mice, of course.

MOE: Catch mice—with *that*?

*He grabs the trap from Larry and throws it on a chair, disgustedly; then turns to Mouser.*

MOE: Give us another chance, will you, boss?

*Mouser weaves around, points a finger in Moe's face as he says angrily:*

MOUSER: All right—but if you don't bring in some business to-day, don't even come back!

*He starts to sit down in the chair, as Moe answers.*

MOE: Okay, boss. Leave it to us—

6 **CLOSEUP, TRAP**

*Springing on Mouser's seat.*

7 **MED. CLOSE SHOT**

*Mouser as he reacts to trap and yells.*

MOUSER: Help! Help! Take it off! It's biting me!

8 **FULL SHOT, GROUP**

*Mouser stands up with trap on seat. Moe grabs chain of trap and starts to pull; gives it a big tug. Trap comes loose and Moe falls over backward—pulling out the entire seat of Mouser's trousers.*

9 **CLOSEUP MOUSER**

*As he falls on his hands and knees, exposing seat of his pants.*

10 **FULL SHOT, GROUP**

*Mouser turns on them angrily.*

MOUSER: *Dumbkofs!* Get out!

*The boys exit as we*

**WIPE OFF TO:**

11 **FULL SHOT—EXT. FRONT ELEGANT-LOOKING MANSION**

*SHOOTING through iron gate, front of house. A party is in progress—cars driving up, people getting out, et cetera. The Three Stooges enter with all their paraphernalia. Curly carries a bag of cats; one cute-looking kitten is sticking its head out through a hole in the sack. Larry carries a large black suitcase in one hand, and a small cardboard box perforated with holes in the other. Moe carries a butterfly net and a small pair of bellows. Moe takes in the situation at a glance, turns to Larry and Curly.*

**MOE:** I think we struck oil. Come on.

*PAN WITH THEM to a side door. As they enter the premises*

**WIPE OFF TO:**

12 **FULL SHOT—INT. MRS. BURLAP'S DRAWING-ROOM**

*Guests arriving—some in costume, some with week-end bags, et cetera.*

13 **MED. GLOSE SHOT AT HALL ENTRANCE**

*Mrs. Burlap is on greeting guests. A woman, a friend of Mrs. Burlap, is standing near her. Butler enters and announces Lord Stoke-Pogis. He comes in and Mrs. Burlap greets him.*

**MRS. BURLAP:** My dear Lord Stoke-Pogis! I'm so glad you're going on the Fox Chase with us! You look chawming!

**STOKE-POGIS:** Thank you. You know, the lawst time I rode to hounds was with His Grace, the Duke of Chatterbury.

*Gawkins, the butler, steps forward and takes Stoke-Pogis' week-end bag. Mrs. Burlap's friend nudges her in an aside.*

**MRS. B.'S FRIEND:** This occasion will undoubtedly place you at the top of the social ladder.

**MRS. BURLAP:** Do you really think so?

*The woman friend nods assurance.*

14 **EXT. GARDEN, AT SIDE OF HOUSE**

*Taking in small bedroom window. We see three cyprus bushes slowly creeping toward the house. As they come to a stop a dog runs in, sniffs at one of the bushes. Moe's head appears and he shoos the dog away; then turning toward the two other bushes—*

**MOE:** Come on, guys—let's get go-in'.

*They drop the bushes and quickly raise the window. As Larry and Moe boost Curly in—*

15 **FULL SHOT—INT. BEDROOM**

*It is beautifully dressed with closet up-stage. Curly and Larry come in through window. Larry opens the suitcase, takes out a quart jar.*

**INSERT: QUART JAR**  
labeled: "RED ANTS"

**BACK TO SCENE:**

*Larry goes over to bed, pulls back the covers and pours ants in the bed. Curly picks up a box from suitcase, walks to closet door, PAN WITH HIM as he takes out a handful of moths from the box and throws them in the closet, all over the clothes, then sprays in full contents of box. He quickly closes the closet door.*

16 **CLOSEUP LARRY**

*He takes out a box of mice, tiptoes, to hallway door, opens it and shoos the mice out.*

17 **FULL SHOT OF BEDROOM**

**CURLY:** Hurry up. Somebody might catch us.

**LARRY:** Take it easy. They can't hear us.

18 **EXT. CLOSEUP AT WINDOW**

*With shade down. Moe pulls it aside to look in—as it flies up with a BANG!*

19 **FULL SHOT OF BEDROOM**

Larry and Curly gather up their things, slap them into suitcase—Larry pinching Curly's fingers. He yells:

CURLY: OUCH!

Both of them quickly dive out of window.

20 EXT. WINDOW—FULL SHOT

Curly and Larry land on Moe and they fall into some bushes. As Moe comes up—

MOE: What's the matter with you guys? Want us to get caught?

21 FULL SHOT—INT. BEDROOM

Maid enters with some wraps over her arm, goes to closet door, opens it. A cloud of moths fly out. She takes it, alarmed, just as Mrs. Burlap and her friend enter, talking and laughing ad lib. The maid slams the door shut quickly, as Mrs. Burlap sits down at dressing table and her friend sits on side of bed.

MRS. BURLAP (to maid): Della, get me those other shoes—these hurt.

MAID: Yes, ma'am.

She slightly opens the closet door and reaches down for some shoes.

22 CLOSE SHOT, MRS. BURLAP'S FRIEND

Sitting on bed, talking. She starts to get itchy and scratches herself while talking; finally excuses herself and leaves the room.

23 MED. SHOT—MRS. BURLAP AND MAID

Mrs. Burlap at dressing table. Maid enters and sets down shoes, pulls off Mrs. Burlap's shoe and quickly puts on the other—as Mrs. Burlap lets out a quick scream and pulls her foot out of shoe. A mouse leaps out of shoe and scoots across floor and out of room. Mrs. Burlap and maid take it. The maid screams, as Mrs. Burlap quickly gets into bed to get her feet off the floor, yelling:

MRS. BURLAP: Gawkins! Gawkins! Get GAWKINS!

MAID: Yes'm.

She exits hurriedly.

24 FULL SHOT OF BEDROOM

As maid goes out, Mrs. Burlap's friend returns and sees Mrs. Burlap scratching.

MRS. B.'S FRIEND: I thought it was just me, but I see you have them, too.

MRS. BURLAP: Oh, this is terrible! I can't understand it!

At this point the maid returns with Gawkins, the butler.

GAWKINS: Did you call, ma'am?

MRS. BURLAP: The house is infested with rodents, ants, mice, and—everything!

MAID: And moths!

MRS. BURLAP: Do something about it immediately!

GAWKINS: Very well, ma'am.

He exits. Mrs. Burlap turns to her friend.

MRS. BURLAP: If any one finds out, I'll be disgraced forever!

25 EXT. BACK DOOR OF MANSION

The Three Stooges enter. Moe rings the bell. Door opens and Gawkins the butler appears.

GAWKINS: What is it?

MOE: Have you got any mice, rats, fleas, or bugs you want exterminated?

GAWKINS: Heaven must have sent you to us! I'll say we have. Come right in.

The three look at each other significantly, as Gawkins admits them.

26 DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY—MED. SHOT

As butler and boys enter.

GAWKINS: One moment, please.

*He exits. The boys look around.*

CURLY: Swell dump, huh?

MOE (*to Curly, who has cats over his shoulder*): Ditch those cats.

CURLY: Where'll I put 'em?

MOE: Put 'em where you got 'em.

*Larry reaches in a box and pulls out a mouse. He is about to set it on the floor when Moe gives him a boot and straightens him up.*

MOE: What's the matter with you—are you crazy? Ditch that mouse!

*At this point the butler enters upstage.*

GAWKINS: Right this way, ma'am.

*Larry quickly flips the mouse in his hat and puts his hat on.*

## 27 CLOSE SHOT OF GROUP

*Gawkins and Mrs. Burlap enter.*

GAWKINS: These are the pest exterminators.

MOE: How do you do?

*Moe turns to Curly, who imitates him—then looks at Larry.*

## 28 TWO SHOT, MOE AND LARRY

*Seeing Larry has not removed his hat, Moe nudges him and says under his breath:*

MOE: Tip your hat.

*Which Larry does—revealing the mouse on top of his head. Moe quickly brushes it off.*

## 29 GROUP SHOT

*Mrs. Burlap raises her lorgnette and looks at them.*

MOE: What you got, lady—rats?

LARRY: Maybe she's got ants.

CURLY: I bet she's got fleas.

*Mrs. Burlap takes this indignantly; then recovers.*

MRS. BURLAP: It's most embarrassing to admit it—but we have everything!

CURLY: You're tellin' us!

*Moe elbows him quickly, as Mrs. Burlap turns to Gawkins and says in an aside:*

MRS. BURLAP: You'd better dress them as guests, so no one will know why they're here.

GAWKINS: Yes, ma'am. Very well, ma'am.

*Mrs. Burlap turns to Moe.*

MRS. BURLAP: This is very embarrassing for me. If you will exterminate the rodents without any one being the wiser, I will reward you handsomely.

MOE: You can depend on us, ma'am.

CURLY: We never miss.

LARRY: You can say it again.

*Moe shuts them up.*

GAWKINS: Right this way—

*They follow the butler through a bedroom door, as Mrs. Burlap exits to drawing-room, quite worried.*

## 30 FULL SHOT—INT. DRAWING-ROOM

*Guests on, all dressed for Fox Hunt. Mrs. Burlap enters and starts to peer about under settee and chairs cautiously. She lifts the corner of a rug and looks underneath.*

## 31 MED. CLOSE SHOT

*Stoke-Pogis enters with another woman. Mrs. Burlap quickly regains her composure as she says nervously to Stoke-Pogis:*

MRS. BURLAP: Have you noticed anything?

STOKE-POGIS: Why, what do you mean?

*Mrs. Burlap realizes she spoke out of turn and covers it.*

MRS. BURLAP: Did you see my new necklace?

*She shows the pearls to him and he examines them minutely.*

STOKE-POGIS: They are beautiful—just like the owner.

MRS. BURLAP: Oh, Lord, you're such a flatterer!

### 32 CLOSE SHOT AT BUFFET AGAINST WALL

*Several guests are having drinks. Among them is seated a drunk, who is filling his glass by first squinting a little shot of seltzer and then half filling the glass with whisky. As he starts to drink—*

### 33 CLOSEUP OF HIS FEET.

*A mouse is climbing up the outside of his pants-leg.*

### 34 CLOSEUP OF DRUNK

*He is drinking as mouse climbs on his knee. He finishes drinking; sees mouse; looks at glass and puts it down quickly, while wildly staring at mouse.*

### 35 CLOSEUP MRS. BURLAP

*As she sees mouse and exits.*

### 36 MED. FULL SHOT

*Of the drunk as Mrs. Burlap enters. He looks at her, bewildered and yells out.*

DRUNK: Look! Look! A mouse!

*Embarrassed, Mrs. Burlap quickly brushes the mouse off his knee with her fan.*

MRS. BURLAP: There now, Tony, you mustn't drink so much. Next thing you know, you'll be seeing pink elephants.

*He looks back at his knee, sees the mouse is gone and is puzzled. Mrs.*

*Burlap glances about furtively, hoping no one else has seen or heard.*

### 37 FULL SHOT OF HALLWAY

*The butler comes out of a bedroom door, followed by the Stooges. They are dressed in fox hunting costumes.*

GAWKINS: Get to work at once, but, please, don't make yourselves conspicuous.

MOE: Okay.

*Butler exits.*

### 38 CLOSE THREE SHOT—STOOGES

CURLY: What does he mean—'conspikerous'?

LARRY: It's dee-rived from the Latin—"no-conspik-english."

*Moe gives Larry a dirty look.*

MOE: Where did you go to school?

LARRY: Oxford.

MOE: You better go back to high shoes.

*The boys put a can of spray and various exterminating implements in their coats as they exit to drawing-room.*

### 39 MED. FULL SHOT—HALLWAY ENTRANCE TO DRAWING-ROOM

*The boys enter. Mrs. Burlap sees them as she accepts them formally as guests.*

MRS. BURLAP: Come right in, gentlemen.

*Curly steps forward very proudly, as Moe pulls him back by the coat tail.*

MOE: She said gentlemen! Didn't you hear her? Spread out.

*The boys exit in different directions as Moe walks behind the settee on which Mrs. Burlap is seated with Stoke-Pogis.*

### 40 CLOSE SHOT—STOKE-POGIS' FOOT

*A mouse is on his shoe.*

## 41 MED. FULL SHOT—MRS. BURLAP AND STOKE-POGIS

*He crosses his legs and brings the mouse into view. He is not aware of it, but Mrs. Burlap sees it. She quickly tries to attract Moe's attention, but Moe ducks down behind the couch, having seen something at this point.*

STOKE-POGIS: You know, I feel younger than I ever have before.

MRS. BURLAP (*gives a forced laugh*): How are your reflexes?

*She hits Stoke-Pogis on the knee with her fan.*

STOKE-POGIS: Fine.

*His foot flies forward, kicking the mouse off, over his head—without his ever having seen it.*

## 42 MED. CLOSE SHOT—MOE

*Looking under settee as the mouse lands on his head. He gets up, puzzled—feels something on his head, as Curly enters, draws a hammer from his coat.*

CURLY: Stand still! Stand still!

*He swings hammer on Moe's head as mouse leaps. Moe takes a smack, hauls off and hits Curly. He looks off.*

## 43 MED. CLOSE SHOT

*A gushy débutante talking to a man, as mouse crawls up on her shoulder. She starts to twitch about, as Curly enters: raises hammer to strike; changes his mind and slaps débutante on the back. She turns suddenly. Curly laughs quickly—laughing it off with a big Hello.*

CURLY: How are ya, pal? I haven't seen you for a long time.

DEBUTANTE: How dare you!

*Her escort steps forward.*

ESCORT: Do you know him?

CURLY: Sure she knows me. (*He pinches the girl's cheek.*) How can she ever forget me?

MA—7

*The escort angrily raises his fist to take a poke at Curly, as Moe steps in and grabs his arm.*

MOE: I wouldn't do that, friend. You know how dames are.

*The girl exits indignantly as Moe elbows Curly in the stomach. Curly takes it. The man turns about to look for the girl, as we see the mouse on the back of his collar. Moe sees it; quickly pulls out the Flit can and gives the mouse a quick spray.*

## 44 CLOSE SHOT OF MOUSE

*Running down the back of the man's collar, as he turns into CAMERA, surprised.*

## 45 FULL SHOT

*The man starts to shake all over, as Mrs. Burlap enters.*

MRS. BURLAP: Would you care to dance?

*She motions to Moe and Curly to beat it.*

MAN: Dance?

*As dance music starts—*

## 46 CLOSE SHOT. MAN'S FEET

*As he shakes mouse out of pants leg.*

## 47 MED. CLOSE SHOT

*Mrs. Burlap sees the mouse on floor and says to man:*

MRS. BURLAP: Oh, never mind, we can dance later.

*She tries to step on mouse, and exits—trying to stamp on mouse.*

## 48 CLOSEUP BUFFET

*With drinks and hors d'œuvres, including a plate of cheese. A number of mice are hovering around the cheese, as Larry sneaks up on them. He quickly pulls a net from under his coat, makes a swipe at them. They scatter. He knocks a number of plates off the table, then quickly hides the net under his coat, as he assumes an air of noncha-*

*lance. A woman quickly turns when she hears the dishes crash.*

LARRY: It must've been an earthquake.

WOMAN: I didn't feel anything.

*Mrs. Burlap enters and greets the woman. Woman exits with man to dance, as Mrs. Burlap turns to Larry.*

MRS. BURLAP: Will you please be less obtrusive and get through as quickly as possible.

*Curly enters with a bag of cats over his shoulder—one cat peeking out of the hole in bag.*

CURLY (to Mrs. Burlap): Wait till I set these cats loose, you won't have a mouse in the house.

*Mrs. Burlap sees the cats and exclaims:*

MRS. BURLAP: Great Scott! Hide those cats! Get them out of here!

*At this point Lord Stoke-Pogis enters and asks Mrs. Burlap to dance. Larry quickly pulls the cats off Curly's shoulder, hides them behind him and they exit.*

#### 49 CLOSE SHOT AT PIANO

*Larry and Curly enter. They look around for the best spot to dump the cats. Then not knowing what to do, Larry quickly lifts the lid as Curly dumps the cats in the piano and slams the lid shut, just as Moe enters.*

MOE (to Larry): Go get the cheese. (Then to Curly:) The mice are under that couch. (Points off.) Go drive 'em out. I'll be right over there.

CURLY: Okay.

*Curly exits.*

#### 50 MED. FULL SHOT AT SETTEE

*Curly enters and starts to peer around. Two people are seated on the settee. Curly gets down and tries to peek under the settee. Unable to see, he slightly raises the woman's dress. She sees him and slaps his hand. As he realizes what he is doing, he apologizes.*

CURLY: Pardon me.

#### 51 MED. FULL SHOT—ENTRANCE BET. LIBRARY AND DRAWING-ROOM

*Moe enters, hammer in hand. He motions to Curly.*

#### 52 MED. FULL SHOT AT SETTEE

*Curly gets down behind the settee, where he jumps up and down, in order to scare out the mice.*

#### 53 CLOSEUP—CORNER OF COUCH

*A lot of mice run out.*

#### 54 MED. FULL SHOT—ENTRANCE BET. LIBRARY AND DRAWING-ROOM

*Moe waiting for the mice to come out. Guests are walking to and fro from each room. Moe sees mice.*

#### 55 CLOSE SHOT, FEET OF GUESTS

*Moe's hammer comes down, as he hits the mice. We see pairs of feet walk by. People let out yells.*

#### 56 FULL SHOT—ENTRANCE BET. LIBRARY AND DRAWING-ROOM

*The guests are jumping up and down, yelling and holding their toes. Moe, seeing what he has done, quickly scampers out.*

#### 57 MED. FULL SHOT BEHIND SETTEE

*Curly jumps up and down, as Moe enters.*

CURLY: Did you get 'em?

MOE: I came close.

*Larry enters with some cheese; lifts the lid from the box.*

#### 58 REVERSE ANGLE—MED. FULL SHOT

*Guests on settee get the aroma of the cheese. They get up and leave.*

## 59 CLOSE SHOT OF STOOGES

LARRY (to Curly): Try this, will you?

*He holds up a piece of cheese to Curly; then steps behind him, his arms outstretched, waiting for Curly to fall—but Curly doesn't fall.*

LARRY: You all right? Feel dizzy or anything?

CURLY (chewing on cheese): I never felt better in my life.

LARRY (turning to Moe): Guess you didn't put enough rat poison in the cheese.

*At this, Curly gulps, spits out the cheese and takes a smack at Larry; misses him and hits Moe, who gives them the double slap. Turning to Moe and pointing to Larry—*

CURLY: What does he think I am—a rat?

MOE: Yeh. What about it?

CURLY: Well—don't tell everybody.

## 60 MED. FULL SHOT

*Professor at piano. Mrs. Burlap and friend, with Stoke-Pogis are on.*

MRS. BURLAP: Ladies and gentlemen—Professor Goober will render the Prelude in C sharp minor.

*Goober seated at the piano, takes a quick bow; adjusts the stool and seats himself again.*

## 61 MED. CLOSE SHOT—STOOGES

*Curly takes it when he hears the announcement and looks at Larry.*

MOE: Come on. Sit down and keep quiet.

*Apprehensively, Curly and Larry sit down with Moe.*

## 62 MED. CLOSE SHOT AT PIANO

*The professor raises his hands and is about to start—when the keys start to play of their own accord, accompanied*

*by yowls, meows, and squalls. The professor reacts, astonished, as he repeats his action. He starts to play as we hear a mad scramble inside piano.*

## 63 CLOSEUP—MRS. BURLAP, HER FRIEND AND LORD STROKE-POGIS

*They look at each other, astonished. Mrs. Burlap knows now where Larry has put the cats.*

STOKE-POGIS: My word!

## 64 MED. CLOSE SHOT—STOOGES

*Moe hears the cats and turns to Curly.*

MOE: Who put those cats in there?

CURLY: Well, you told me to get rid of 'em, didn't you?

*Moe gives Curly the double-triple slap as he snatches the net away from Larry and exits.*

## 65 MED. CLOSE SHOT, PROFESSOR

*He gets to his feet, looks under lid of piano, and several cats leap out. He quickly bangs down the piano lid.*

## 66 CLOSE TWO SHOT, MOE AND STROKE-POGIS

*One of the cats leaps on Stoke-Pogis' head, as Moe enters with the net, takes a swipe at the cat; pulls it off—with Stoke-Pogis' toupee caught in the cat's claws. Stoke-Pogis quickly grabs toupee and tries to put it on, but puts it on backwards; smilingly tries to regain his composure.*

## 67 MED. CLOSE SHOT AT PIANO

*Larry and Curly enter. Larry opens lid of piano, reaches in to get the cats, using the stool and keyboard as a ladder. Unable to bend down far enough, Larry turns to Curly.*

LARRY: Hold my feet.

*As he then reaches way down inside the piano. We hear the banging of piano strings and the howling of cats, inside. Some of them jump out as Larry's feet start to kick and we hear him yelling:*

LARRY'S VOICE: Pull me out! Pull me out! They're scratching me!

*Moe runs in to help Curly. Both of them yank on Larry's pants—until they come off. Larry slides out of sight into the piano. Curly and Moe quickly leap up on top of piano.*

68 **CLOSEUP—CURLY'S AND MOE'S FEET**

*Trampling on the keyboard.*

69 **MED. FULL SHOT AT PIANO**

*Curly and Moe both reach way down for Larry and start pulling him up. Moe hands Larry his pants; he pulls them into piano.*

70 **GROUP SHOT**

*Mrs. Burlap, Professor, and Stoke-Pogis.*

**PROFESSOR:** This is outrageous! Good-by!

*He exits. Mrs. Burlap turns helplessly to Lord Stoke-Pogis.*

**STOKE-POGIS:** What kind of people are those, anyway?

71 **MED. FULL SHOT AT PIANO**

*Moe and Curly pull Larry out of piano—all scratched up with wires around his neck and ears. Curly quickly crouches down and starts banging under piano. The rest of the cats leap out and disappear.*

72 **MED. SHOT**

*Mrs. Burlap, Stoke-Pogis and butler. She turns to Stoke-Pogis.*

**MRS. BURLAP:** Oh, this is terrible—terrible!

*Gawkins comes in, carrying a tray. She turns to him:*

**MRS. BURLAP:** Throw those men out!

**GAWKINS:** Very well, ma'am.

*He exits.*

73 **MED. FULL SHOT AT PIANO**

*The Stooges on. Gawkins comes in to them.*

**GAWKINS (politely):** Will you leave of your own accord—or shall I use force?

**MOE:** Well, you don't have to get tough about it.

*Curly steps forward.*

**CURLY:** Don't talk back!

*The butler is surprised, as he hasn't done a darn thing. Moe slaps Curly, as Larry looks down and sees:*

**INSERT: BUTLER'S FOOT**

*A mouse on it.*

**BACK TO SCENE:**

*Larry grabs a hammer and gives Gawkins a smack on the toe. Gawkins lets out a yell, throws tray in the air and does a high one, grabbing his toe and screaming.*

74 **MED. CLOSE SHOT**

*Mrs. Burlap and Stoke-Pogis. He takes advantage of the excitement, pulls out a pair of scissors and snips the back of Mrs. Burlap's pearls.*

**INSERT: PEARLS**

*They fall to her feet.*

75 **MED. FULL SHOT**

*Mrs. Burlap and Stoke-Pogis. He picks up the pearls, pockets them, and exits. Mrs. Burlap exits in opposite direction.*

76 **MED. FULL SHOT AT PIANO**

*Gawkins on floor. Moe turns to Larry.*

**MOE:** What'd you hit him for?

**LARRY:** Well, I saw a mouse.

*And Moe slaps Larry, as Curly says:*

**CURLY:** So did I.

*And Moe slaps Curly. Mrs. Burlap enters.*

**MRS. BURLAP:** Will you please get out of my house, or shall I call the police?

**MOE:** Never mind, lady. We'll go.

MRS. BURLAP: This way, please.

*She exits, followed by the Stooges. Moe is giving Larry and Curly hell as they exit. They come to archway leading to hall, as Mrs. Burlap suddenly discovers the absence of her pearls. She turns quickly on the boys.*

MRS. BURLAP: Just a minute: Which one of you stole my pearls? I'll give you exactly five minutes to return them to me, or I'll call the police.

CURLY: The dame's crazy. What's she talkin' about?

*Mrs. Burlap exits toward telephone.*

#### 77 CLOSEUP AT PHONE

*As Mrs. Burlap comes in and picks up receiver.*

MRS. BURLAP: Give me the police station—

#### 78 THREE SHOT—THE STOOGES

MOE: There's a crook in the house.

CURLY: Yeh—a rat.

MOE: We can catch rats just as well as mice. (*Turning to Larry.*) Get the ants.

*Larry exits through library drapes, up-stage.*

CURLY: Who do you suspect?

MOE: I'll soon find out!

#### 79 CLOSE SHOT MRS. BURLAP

*As she speaks into telephone.*

MRS. BURLAP: Hello, hello—operator!

*She lifts the phone and we see the wire is cut.*

MRS. BURLAP: Ah-ha! They've cut the wire.

#### 80 MED. SHOT AT CURTAINS

*Curly and Moe are on, as Larry peeks through from library and shows Moe*

*the ants. Moe motions him back; then looks suspiciously at a man near him. As the man turns, Moe says to him secretly:*

MOE: Would you like to see these?

*He pulls out some postcards and shows one to the man. Man takes it, very interested as Moe motions with his head.*

MOE: Follow me—

*Moe exits through curtain; man follows him*

#### 81 OTHER SIDE CURTAINS—IN LIBRARY

*Moe and man enter. Man looks at rest of postcards and laughs as Moe signals to Larry to give him ants. Larry sprays them on back of man's neck. He stops laughing, starts scratching; starts taking clothes off—first his coat. Moe quickly looks in coat pockets. Curly runs in.*

MOE (*to Curly*): Look through his pants.

*Moe exits.*

#### 82 LIBRARY AT CURTAINS

*A group of men are standing there as Moe enters; shows them postcards. They follow him into library.*

#### 83 CURTAINS, OTHER SIDE IN LIBRARY

*Men enter; pass postcards to each other, laughing. And Larry gives them ants, in rapid succession. They get itchy and start to take off clothes. Moe exits.*

#### 84 OTHER SIDE OF CURTAINS

*Moe comes through, just as Gawkins enters, limping. Moe sees him.*

MOE: May I see you privately for a moment, please?

GAWKINS: Certainly.

*Moe exits through curtains, followed by Gawkins.*

85 *FULL SHOT OF LIBRARY*

*Men have their clothes off and are in long underwear, scratching, as Larry and Curly go through their clothes. Gawkins sees this and exclaims.*

GAWKINS: What on earth has happened?

*Moe gives Larry the high sign, and Larry shoots ants on Gawkins. He starts to scratch, also remove his clothes.*

86 *HALLWAY ENTRANCE TO LIVING ROOM*

*Mrs. Burlap and lady friend enter. Mrs. Burlap calls:*

MRS. BURLAP: Gawkins! Gawkins! Where are you?

87 *MED. FULL SHOT OF LIBRARY*

*Gawkins is undressed, scratching with the rest of the men, as the boys look through his clothes. Gawkins comes to attention.*

GAWKINS: I'll be right out, ma'am.

*Mrs. Burlap enters with her friend, through curtains. They both look on, astounded.*

88 *REVERSE CLOSEUP, GAWKINS*

*He sees Mrs. Burlap—takes it big.*

89 *CLOSEUP, MRS. BURLAP AND FRIEND*

*Mrs. Burlap faints in her friend's arms. She drags her out of scene.*

90 *MED. SHOT DRAWING-ROOM*

*Mrs. Burlap and friend come in through drapes. Mrs. Burlap falls into arm-chair, as many women guests enter.*

WOMEN: Have you seen our husbands? etc., etc.

MRS. B'S FRIEND: Yes—er—no—

WOMEN: I wonder where they are?

*One woman starts into library, as Mrs. Burlap's friend tries to prevent her, but she is brushed aside as other women exit.*

91 *MED. FULL SHOT LIBRARY*

*Men on, undressed. Women enter, see their husbands, who scatter in all directions.*

92 *MED. CLOSE SHOT*

*Of the women. Horror-stricken, they retreat.*

93 *CLOSEUP STOOGES*

*Looking through men's clothes. As they look up—*

MOE: That's all the men there are. The thief must be a woman.

*Mrs. Burlap's friend enters.*

MRS. B'S FRIEND: Haven't you caused trouble enough already?

*Moe gives Larry the high sign, and he douses the back of her low-cut gown with ants. She takes it; as she starts to unfasten her dress, three husky men enter with overcoats on, grab the Stooges and hustle them off.*

94 *EXT. HOUSE*

*As the Stooges come flying out in quick succession.*

95 *CLOSEUP—STOOGES*

CURLY: I guess we're all washed up now. The boss won't believe what happened.

LARRY: We can make more money in the fox-hunting racket, anyway. Why bother with rodents?

MOE: That's an idea—

*WIPE OFF TO:*

96 *STOCK SHOT—FOX HUNT*

*In which a number of people and dogs are chasing the fox over a meadow, accompanied by the sound of horses' hoofs and yelping of dogs.*

## 97 FULL SHOT—EXT. MEADOW

*Moe is riding a sway-backed horse; Larry a donkey, and Curly a bicycle. They all pull into a clearing and stop momentarily to look around.*

## 98 CLOSEUP CURLY

*He sneezes, takes out a handkerchief and blows his nose. It sounds like a Bugle.*

## 99. CLOSE TWO SHOT, MOE AND LARRY

LARRY: Didja hear that trumpet? They must've located the fox!

## 100 CLOSEUP CURLY

*Hearing this, he looks around and sees:*

## 101 CLOSEUP, A SKUNK

*coming out from behind a bush, where it stops to look.*

## 102 MED. SHOT

*Curly turns and speaks to Moe and Larry.*

CURLY: I see a fox!

*He sneezes, exits with a sack in his hand. PAN WITH HIM as he runs to skunk and, getting down on his one knee, calls gently:*

Come, foxy, foxy, foxy—

*The skunk takes one look at him and starts to run. Curly runs after it, leaps on top of it, picks it up, and puts it in the sack, and exits.*

## 103 MED. FULL SHOT, CLEARING

*Moe and Larry are on, looking around, as Curly runs in.*

CURLY: I got hib!

*He sneezes again, holds the sack up close to head of Moe's horse—which does a pass-out. Moe and Larry see what happened; they grab their noses and yell.*

MOE & LARRY: YOU SURE DID!

*They run out, leaving Curly wondering as he looks into the sack, still puzzled.*

FADE OUT.

THE END.

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## THE OREGON TRAIL

*A Republic picture, with John Wayne and Ann Rutherford.*

(See the March MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE for the full fictionized story of this picture.)

John Wayne is fast becoming one of the best-liked Western stars, because he hasn't fallen into the rut of routine cowboy pictures. Here he is the captain of a troop of cavalry in 1835. We get an insight into the activity of the U. S. Army during those pioneer days. This is a stirring adventure picture with its struggles to keep the West safe.

WE DOFF OUR SOMBREROS TO MR. WAYNE. GIVE US A LOT MORE LIKE THIS ONE.

# THE MYSTERIOUS AVENGER . . .

The Code of the West left Ranny no choice. His father was shot—and someone must die!

RANNY MAITLAND rode out of the darkness of the wash trail onto the grounds of the Lockart ranch. He rode slowly, his lean face tense and every nerve alert. In the shadowy darkness around the corral, he saw a number of horses and rigs. From the big barn to his right came the sound of music and laughter.

At the corral he jumped to the ground, tied his horse and turned to look at the big barn. A form moved away from it, disappearing into the night. Ranny wet his lips, and walked toward the building, hands resting on the six guns at his belt.

Three men stood in the doorway as he entered. One was tall, with a thin face and small, shifty eyes. Those eyes bored into Ranny—curiously and suspiciously.

“Could you tell me where I’ll find Mr. Lockart?” Ranny asked him.

The man’s face remained expressionless as he answered: “He’s inside. Come with me.”

Ranny followed him inside. He saw

he had walked into a barn dance. Three fiddlers sat on an improvised platform and part of the crowd were dancing, while others stood at the side, clapping hands to keep time with the music.

“This is Mr. Lockart,” Ranny’s guide said as they walked up to an elderly man, with the bearing and looks of a successful cattleman. Lockart had honesty and high character stamped on his every feature.

Ranny looked at him, his eyes registering amazement. In the strange and grim rôle he was playing, he had not expected to find Lockart the type of man he saw now.

IN Ranny’s pocket was a letter from his father, received a week before at the Ranger’s Station far to the south of the Lockart Ranch.

The letter read:

MY DEAR SON:

If you can, I wish you’d come to Medicine Springs. I need help and

## THE CAST

CHARLES STARRETT . . . . . Ranny  
Edward Le Saint . . . . . Lockart  
Joan Perry . . . . . Alice  
Charles Locher . . . . . Lufe  
Wheeler Oakman . . . . . Brophy

Story by Peter B. Kyne.  
Screenplay by Ford Bebe.  
Directed by David Selman.



A fictionization of the Columbia picture of the same title.

I need it bad! My neighbor, named Lockart, is robbing me blind. It's nearing a show-down and I need some one I can trust. DAD.

Ranny had gone to his captain, intending to ask for a leave of absence to visit his father, whom he had not seen for years. Instead, the captain had greeted him with the information that he was planning to send him to Medicine Springs to act as an undercover man to discover evidence of a gigantic rustling ring working that section.

And the request had come from Lockart himself, naming Ranny's father as the man behind that ring!

Ranny had made no mention of the letter from his father. He had accepted the assignment, hoping he would have a

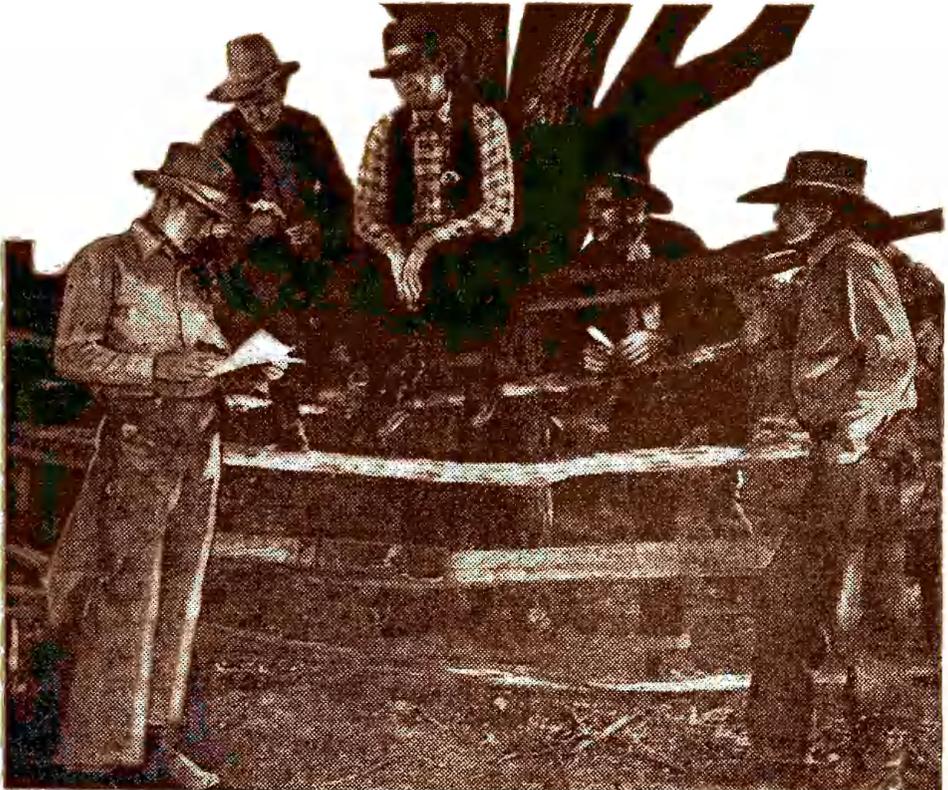
chance to explain everything to his father the moment he saw him.

He had ridden to Medicine Springs, fully convinced that Lockart was the brains behind the rustling gang. But looking at the man, Ranny knew at once that he was far removed from such a thing.

"MY name is Morgan," Ranny lied to Lockart. "A friend of your suggested I drop in—but it seems I've picked a bad time."

"Not by a jugful!" Lockart said with a friendly laugh. "You're just in time to help celebrate my daughter's birthday."

For the first time, Ranny was conscious of a pretty girl standing near Lockart. He introduced her as his



A letter from his father read, "I need help, and need it bad."

daughter, Alice. Then he introduced his foreman and the sheriff.

Ranny acknowledged the introduction to Alice with obvious embarrassment. The introduction to Brophy, the foreman, was different. Brophy was the man who had guided Ranny to Lockart, and Ranny knew instinctively that he was a man he would never like or trust. The sheriff was friendly and shook the young Ranger's hand cordially.

"By the way," Lockart questioned, "who was the friend of mine that told you to drop in?"

"Dan Thomas—down Del Rio way," Ranny answered, shooting Lockart a quick look. He wondered if he would recognize the Ranger captain's name.

For a moment Lockart studied Ranny's face closely, and then, with a booming laugh, said:

"Old Dan Thomas! Any friend of his is welcome here. But come over here and tell me about that old rascal!"

WHILE Ranny and Lockart talked, a lone rider moved along the line of ponies and rigs at the corral. Deliberate and unhurried, the man dismounted, tied his horse, and started for the barn.

Brophy standing in the doorway, saw him. His body stiffened and his right hand pawed for his gun. But every man had been required to deposit his gun on a table before the dancing. Brophy's clawing fingers found no cold steel in his holster.

With lightning speed, he turned, ran into the barn, up to where Ranny and Lockart were standing.

"Old Man Maitland just rode up outside!" Brophy announced to Lockart. "He's comin' in!"

The sound of Brophy's voice carried beyond Lockart and Ranny. The music was suddenly stilled. The rumble of conversation ceased abruptly. Alice ran up to her father, her eyes giving him a pleading look.

The friendliness of the rancher's face left. Hard and cold lines formed around his mouth. Then he was conscious, as was every one in that great room, that a white-haired old cattleman, with a finely featured face, was standing in the doorway, surveying the assembly with a smile.

"Evenin', Lockart," he said easily.

"Stop where you are, Maitland!" Lockart ordered. "If it wasn't for this party, you couldn't have got within a mile of my ranch without being shot off your horse!"

"SORRY, Lem," Maitland answered. "I've got business with you—and it's not war."

The old man reached for his six-gun, pulling it from his holster by the barrel, showing that he was on a peaceful mission. But as he did this, his eyes fell on his son, standing near Lockart. Maitland stared at Ranny in sudden amazement, but in that deadly second, Ranny moved his head almost imperceptibly, flashing a signal to his father not to give him away.

Maitland caught the signal and smiled as he handed Ranny his gun. But Lockart suggested that they go to the house to talk, each taking their guns.

The crowd stared in amazement at this. The sheriff protested violently, but Lockart waved aside the protest, giving his word that nothing would happen.

Lockart did not bother to go to the table for his gun. He motioned Ranny for his weapon. Ranny slipped his gun belt off and gave it to him. At the same time, he handed his father's back to him.

The two cattlemen walked out of the barn. Somebody called a dance. Ranny turned to Alice and took her for a partner. They danced in silence for several minutes.

"I reckon I'd better trail along," he finally said to her, "and keep an eye on things."

"Please don't," Alice pleaded. "You

may spoil everything. Down in their hearts they really like each other. If we leave them alone, they may get this silly quarrel patched up."

ALICE'S words were cut short with the roar of a gun, from the direction of the house! The music stopped. Men looked at each other, and then made a dive for the table holding their six-guns.

A second shot from the same direction brought Ranny to his senses. With a running leap, he was through the door of the barn. He landed outside and raced through the darkness for the ranch house.

There was no light showing through any window. He crashed through the kitchen door, stumbled over a chair, and went through a second door into the living room.

He struck a match, touched it to a lamp on a table. The lamp flickered, threw out a yellow light, which slowly increased in strength. As Ranny turned, looked down at the floor, every part of

his body became rigid and his eyes filled with pain.

Lying on the floor was his father, with a wound over his heart and one in his head!

Ranny stared down at the lifeless body, stunned and unable to move. He heard the sheriff at his side gasp that Maitland was dead. Then he heard some one suggest that the body be taken to another room.

Ranny heard Alice give a cry behind him as she gasped: "What happened? Where's dad?"

"Maitland's dead—and your father's gone!" the sheriff answered.

A YOUNG man, barely more than a boy, pushed his way into the room. He was Lafe Lockart, Alice's brother.

"Are you tryin' to say that dad did it and ran?" he demanded of the sheriff.



The sheriff looked at his gun and saw it had been fired twice.

"What would you think?" Ranny demanded, eyeing the young man coolly. "It it was your father dead—and Mr. Maitland that was gone?"

"That'd be different. Maitland was

"Don't say it!" Ranny interrupted angrily.

But he caught himself before he said more. The irony of his position flashed on him. Nobody in that room knew he was a Ranger, or Maitland's son. They all believed him to be a man named Morgan, and only Lockart knew the truth about his mission.

Without warning, a door swung open and Lockart staggered into the room, his face pale and blood on his forehead. He stared at the crowd in amazement.

"Who did it, dad?" Lafe cried. "Maitland's been killed."

"I don't know," his father answered. "Maitland came here to-night to tell me who's stealing our stock. He was about to name them when some one opened this door behind me and shot. The lights went out. I ran into the room after the man. Something hit me on the head and—and I just came to."

HIS story did not impress the sheriff. He demanded Lockart's gun. He looked at it and saw that it had been fired twice.

"That—that—is impossible," Lockart protested. "I didn't fire my gun. Maybe the killer traded guns with me after I dropped—"

"That will be pretty hard to prove," the sheriff answered.

"No, it won't," Lafe cried eagerly. "Dad had Mr. Morgan's gun! Mr. Morgan can tell whether this is his gun or not."

Ranny took the gun, looked at it, but shook his head, explaining that there was nothing to distinguish it from another of the same model.

"That don't leave me any choice, Lem," the sheriff said to Lockart. "I'll have to take you!"

But before the sheriff could make a move, young Lafe had yanked his guns out and had covered the crowd. He yelled to his father to make a break, but his father smiled wearily, walked over to him and took his guns and handed them to Ranny.

"I wish you'd help Lafe run things while I'm away," he said to Ranny. Then to the sheriff he added: "If you don't mind, sheriff, I'd like to speak to Mr. Morgan alone."

The sheriff looked at the crowd and then at Lockart. He nodded agreement and the crowd filed out of the room.

"BEFORE Maitland was shot, he told me one thing I want you to know," Lockart said to Ranny.

"What's that?" Ranny asked curiously.

"He told me you were his son," Lockart replied, taking Ranny's hand. "I want you to know that your father and I were friends. I never believed he stole my cattle and he never believed I stole his. We were just old fools, but before he died, we fixed that up. I am as much interested in finding the killer as you, son—and good luck!"

"Thanks," Ranny said hoarsely. "It's not going to be easy. We'd better not tell even the sheriff who I am."

AN hour later the crowd that had gathered for the barn dance had left, and over the barn, the ranch house and other buildings fell the stillness of a soundless night. Lockart had been taken to jail. Alice had gone to her rooms.

On the far side of the ranch house, Ranny crouched in the shadows of the buildings, his eyes piercing the darkness that was no longer relieved by moonlight. Lafe was at his side, his young face pale and tensed.

For nearly an hour they had crouched there, his eyes staring into the darkness. Lafe tried to engage Ranny in conversation. He insisted that Ranny knew whether the gun taken from Lockart was



"Drop your guns and get away from that safe!"

his or not. But Ranny merely answered by saying he would know in a little while.

Then suddenly the darkness ahead of them moved!

A figure came out of the house, running for a clump of brush behind the corral. At the brush, the man dropped to his hands and knees, fumbling among the shrubs.

"It's Brophy!" Lafe gasped. "What's he doing?"

"Trying to find the gun he threw away," Ranny answered in a whisper.

Brophy apparently found what he wanted. He rose to his feet. Something dark was in his hand as he turned and disappeared into the night.

"He's getting away!"

"Let him go," Ranny murmured. "There's more than one man in this—and our job is to get 'em all. We can prove

Brophy got the gun when the time comes."

"But you suspected Brophy?" Lafe questioned.

"Naturally," Ranny replied. "When he left the barn he was wearing a gun. When I saw him in the room where Maitland was murdered, he didn't have one. You get some sleep now. When dawn breaks I'm riding to town to get some information from your dad."

IN town, Ranny got little additional information from Lockart. The rancher repeated his conversation with Maitland. He added, however, that Maitland told him he had evidence in the safe in his ranch that would prove his statement.

Ranny left town over a trail that led to the Maitland ranch. A strange feeling came over him as his horse started down the slope that led into the valley

that had been his father's home, a home Ranny had never known as his father had moved there after he joined the Rangers.

But as Ranny rode over the crest of the hill, two horsemen on the hill opposite disappeared, riding down a back trail that led to the Maitland ranch house.

Ranny did not see them. He was busy trying to piece together the strange events of the murder of his father. Puzzling as it seemed to him, there was one element that held no mystery. That was the fact that he was sure he was riding into a death trap as he went down that hill into the valley where his father's ranch was located!

Whoever was behind the gang of rustlers was playing a dangerous game. One man had been killed and Ranny knew the minute it was known that he was a Ranger, his life would be snuffed out as quickly as his father's!

HE crossed a small stream and rode up to the house, a low, rambling building, with a porch running the length of the front part. Ranny approached the front of the house, his sixth sense telling him that the silence hanging over the house was filled with danger.

He stopped in front of the house and started to dismount, but as he did, it seemed that the very bowels of the earth burst up in his face. There was a terrific explosion. The concussion of the explosion sent Ranny to the ground, his senses whirling in every direction.

He hit the ground with a heavy thud. For a split second the darkness of unconsciousness hovered over him. But it did not close in on him and his brain cleared slowly. He got to his feet, swaying weakly. He blinked at what he saw.

The ranch house was in front of him, but the walls were blown out and not a pane of glass remained in the windows. A foglike smoke was drifting

through the broken windows. He shook his head to gather his thoughts, then he walked up on the broken porch and through the front doorway.

Inside the house, he stopped abruptly. Two men were kneeling before a safe that had been blown open. One of these was Brophy. The other was Gilman, the foreman of the Maitland ranch. Brophy was pawing hurriedly through the papers that had been blown from the safe.

"IS this a private snooping party," Ranny asked quietly, "or can any one get 'in it?'"

The men whirled. Gilman's gun streaked out of the leather. Ranny's gun roared and Gilman's flew out of his hand as the foreman clutched his wrist, his face writhing in pain.

"Serves you right, you fool!" Brophy said to Gilman. "Come on in, Morgan! I guess we're all here for the same purpose."

"Maybe so," Ranny replied coldly. "Drop your guns and get away from the safe."

Brophy got to his feet, dropped his gun. Gilman was still holding his wrist.

"I reckon this looks sorta funny, Morgan," Brophy explained. "Me being foreman of the Lockart outfit. But the truth is I'm on Maitland's pay roll. Gilman and I have been workin' together helpin' trail down the killers."

Ranny smiled coldly. The brazenness of Brophy was startling. The story was good—too good to disprove, now that Ranny's father was dead!

"How does robbing the safe fit into the story?" Ranny asked.

"I knew there was evidence in the safe," Brophy answered easily. "I wanted to turn it over to the law before the Lockarts got it."

Ranny walked to the safe and went through the papers. He found a number of squares of cowhide, Cross-in-a-box brands.



The sheriff shook his head. He couldn't let a man charged with murder out of jail!

"If you look closer," Brophy said, "you'll see they've been raised from Maitland's straight M brand. I reckon that letter there will explain things."

Ranny picked up a letter and read:

DEAR MR. MAITLAND:

The Cross-in-a-box brand you inquired about is registered in the name of Lafe Lockart.

JAMES MCCORMICK,  
Registrar.

THE muscles in Ranny's face tightened. He looked at Brophy and said: "It doesn't look very good for the kid, does it?"

There was a commotion at the door and two men dragged Lafe Lockart into the room.

"We found this man prowling around

the place," one of the men said to Brophy. "What'll we do with him?"

"Turn him over to the law," Brophy said. "I guess he was after the letter you've got, Morgan. But I beat him to it."

Lafe looked at Ranny with bewildered eyes. Ranny handed him the letter and said nothing.

"This is a lie!" Lafe cried. "I never registered any brand. Why don't you arrest Brophy for killing Mr. Maitland? We saw him sneak out and get the gun and——"

Brophy laughed easily.

"I guess I can admit that," he said. "I went out to get it because I saw Lafe Lockart throw it there after his father shot Maitland. I was afraid Lafe would do something like that. I saw him sneak out of the barn when his father and

Maitland left. I trailed after him, but Lockart shot Old Man Maitland before I could do anything. Then I saw Lafe throw the gun in the bush."

"Why didn't you say something about this at the house?" Ranny asked.

"I didn't know what he threw in the shrubs until I went out there and found it," Brophy replied.

"All right, Lafe," Ranny said wearily. "I guess you'd better come with me to the sheriff."

As Ranny and Lafe walked out to their horses, Gilman looked at Brophy, who winked back and said: "As soon as they get started, trail 'em. If anything goes wrong, you know what to do."

"We sure got out of that pretty slick," Gilman laughed.

"We're not out of it yet," Brophy answered. "That man Morgan is a Ranger—and he's no fool!"

ALICE was at the jail when Ranny rode up with Lafe. She greeted him with profuse thanks for all he had tried to do for her father; but Lafe broke in with a sneer, announcing that he was under arrest for rustling.

Lockart looked at Ranny, stunned by the news. The sheriff said: "Is this some sort of a joke, Morgan?"

Alice turned on Ranny angrily. "And you're the man we counted on to help us out of our trouble!" she exclaimed in sudden bitterness.

Then, without giving Ranny a chance to explain, she turned and ran out of the door.

Ranny handed Lockart the letter from the registrar without comment. Lockart read it in amazement.

"You don't believe I did it?" Lafe demanded of his father.

"I don't, son," Lockart replied. "I can't explain this letter, though."

"You don't have to," Ranny said. "He's not guilty. Look at these brand hides I found in the safe. Your brand's an hour glass, Mr. Lockart. These

brands here were originally an hour glass before they were altered—not the M brand Brophy tried to make me believe. Lafe wouldn't rob his own ranch."

"I reckon not," the sheriff said dubiously, "but that don't prove anything."

"We can prove it by finding the real rustlers!" Ranny cried. "If they haven't shipped their last stolen cattle, we still have a chance!"

Without another word of explanation, Ranny walked out of the jail and to the telegraph office. He hurriedly wrote a message, handed it to the operator, with instructions that the answer be delivered to him at once.

THE answer came two hours later. It read:

RANCE MORGAN

MEDICINE SPRINGS TEXAS

LAFE LOCKART ORDERED CATTLE CARS  
DELIVERED BLOCKADE CANYON SIDING  
TENTH THIS MONTH

JAMES WHITSON

DIVISION SUPT R L & A R R

"The tenth is to-morrow," the sheriff commented. "We'll have a posse at Blockade Canyon——"

"And the rustlers won't come in a mile of it," Ranny cut in. "You're going to get a posse—but we'll make the rustlers think it's for a different reason. You're going to have a jail break. Lockart and his son will escape and the posse will start out after them. But they'll wind up in Blockade Canyon.——"

The sheriff looked at him and shook his head. He couldn't let a man charged with murder and one with rustling out of jail!

Ranny smiled and assured him he would have nothing to do with the jail break and that he, as a Ranger and an officer of the law, would vouch for the prisoners' safe return.

But while Ranny and the sheriff talked,

Gilman was racing out to the Maitland ranch with news for Brophy.

"Better try not to move them steers to-morrow, boss!" Gilman cried. "That Ranger knows all about them. He wired the railroad. I sneaked up to the jail and heard them planning a fake jail break. Lockart and Lafe are getting out and a posse will be formed to get them, but this posse will raid the canyon. We better beat it out of the country."

"It's too late to run," Brophy said. "Besides, I got a little plan that will get us out from under—and put the Lockarts where we want them!"

THE next morning the quiet of the cowtown was broken by the wild yells of the sheriff and the thunder of his guns firing in the air.

"The prisoners are gone!" he yelled. "There's been a jail break."

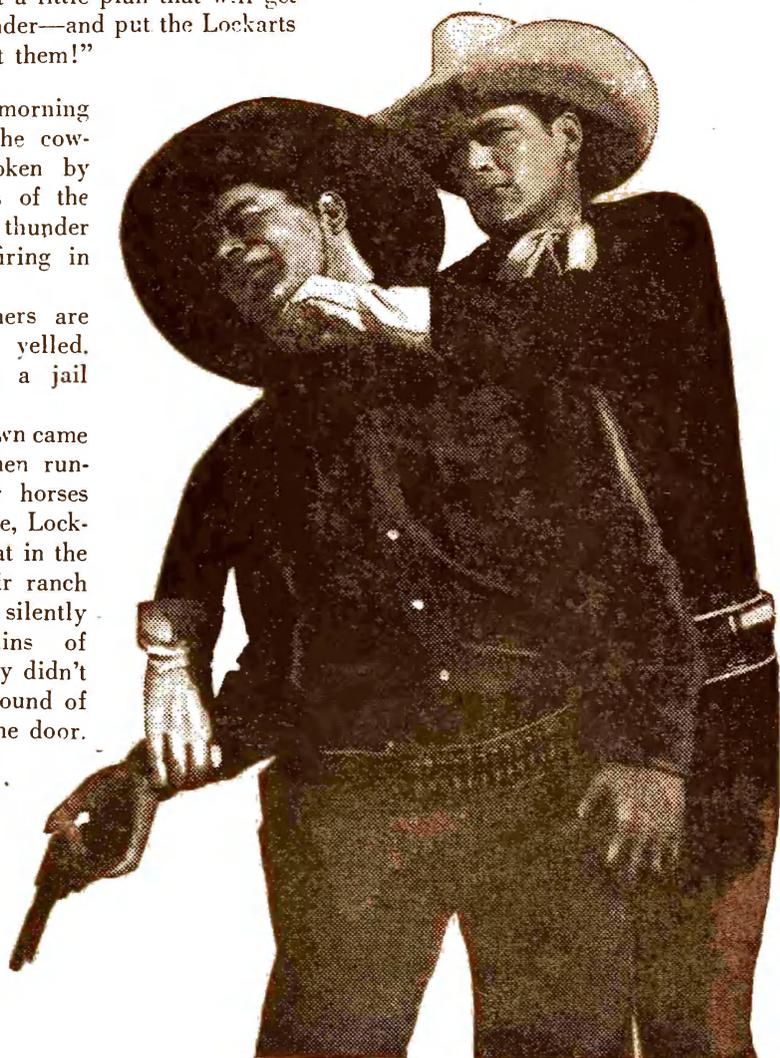
While the town came to life with men running for their horses to form a posse, Lockart and Lafe sat in the kitchen of their ranch house, looking silently at the remains of breakfast. They didn't hear the soft sound of a footstep at the door. They heard nothing until the door opened and Brophy stood there, six-guns leveled at them.

"I heard there was a jail break," sneered Bro-

phy. "I thought I'd come out and collect the reward."

Outside Alice had ridden up to the ranch house. She ran to the window, peered inside, her face going a deathly pale. She saw Brophy covering her father and brother. She turned and ran back to her horse, leaped in the saddle, and rode away.

OUT at an isolated building, near Blockade Canyon, Ranny waited for the



Ranny was on him again, sending lefts to the jaw.

posse to appear. It was already over an hour late. The sound of horse's hoofs caused him to turn quickly. Alice rode up to the building, leaping to the ground.

She started to tell about what she had seen in the kitchen, but from the canyon came the cry: "Hey, Mo-o-organ!"

Ranny walked around the building, and looked into the barrels of three six-guns, held in the hands of Brophy and two henchmen. And with them were Lockart and Lafe bound hand and foot!

"Drop your gun and come here!" Brophy ordered.

Behind Ranny and out of sight of Brophy stood Alice. "Toss it where I can get it," she whispered to Ranny.

"Not a chance," Ranny whispered back. "Get out of here—or you'll get killed!"

Alice disappeared inside the building. Ranny walked up to Brophy and his men.

"You don't seem glad to see us," Brophy laughed. "We brought you the prisoners that broke jail. You ought to be mighty glad that we brought you the man who killed your father."

"So you know I'm Maitland's son?" Ranny shot back. "That's interesting because it proves that you killed my father! You were behind the door when you heard him tell Lockart that! Nobody else knew it! Don't forget that, Lockart!"

"He ain't going to forget nothin'," Brophy sneered. "He ain't living long enough for that. Guess why I brought them here? They're going to be caught drivin' that herd of rustled cattle! You and me are going to catch them. There'll be a stampede and a gun battle. After the battle there won't be any one left but me and my men. *Nobody to do any talking!*"

BROPHY ordered Gilman to take Lockart and Lafe off the horses.

"Get them out of sight and keep the

Ranger covered," he said. "I'll start the stampede."

Gilman pulled the two Lockarts from their horses and dragged them in the building. He leaped back suddenly, sent his fist out sharply and Alice, who had been hiding behind the door, went to the ground in a crumpled heap, a gun in her hand.

"Maybe you thought I was too big a fool to know you were here," Gilman sneered at the unconscious girl. "We saw all that when we rode up. Now you——"

He never finished that sentence. Ranny had twisted to the right and then his body went hurtling through the air at Gilman. Two guns roared. Bullets clipped Ranny's clothes. His shoulders hit Gilman and sent him to the ground, the gun falling from his left hand.

Ranny leaped for the gun. Gilman came up, a gun in his right hand. His bandaged wrist made the move slow. The gun in Ranny's hand roared and Gilman screamed, grabbing his wrist a second time.

THERE was a terrific explosion behind Ranny. A stinging, burning sensation shot down his left shoulder. He swerved. Another bullet caught him in the flesh of the leg. He went to the ground with a thud. Two bullets clipped the dust at his head. His gun came up, roared twice and one of the men with Brophy toppled to the ground.

With a supreme effort, his left side numb and his right leg filled with hell-fire, Ranny came up on his toes, thankful that no bones had been broken in his body.

His gun roared. Brophy ducked and as he did, Ranny leaped for the neck of his horse, which was close to him as Brophy had ridden up to give the death shot to the Ranger.

Ranny's arms went around the neck of the horse. It was a foolish, absurd chance, but any chance was better than

the certain death that faced him on the ground. With a frantic effort he swung himself up, his legs swinging in a flashing arc over the horse's back. His heels caught Brophy across the face, knocking him to the ground.

He fell with a vile curse, Ranny released his grip on the horse's neck and fell to the ground, coming down on the struggling rustler. Brophy threw him to one side with a bellowing curse, but as he did, Ranny caught him by the foot and twisted it around with all the strength left in his arms.

Brophy screamed from pain. Ranny was on him again, sending rights to his jaw. The blows landed with feeble force. Ranny's head was spinning crazily.

He could hear Lockart yelling encouragement to him, but the rancher and his son were bound too tightly to even crawl out to Ranny. Brophy's fist caught Ranny on the side of the head, sending him to the ground in an inert heap. Everything was turning crazily in front of Ranny's eyes.

He saw Brophy jump to his feet, reach for his gun which lay on the ground. Ranny saw this gun come up. Ranny moved. His hands went out and caught Brophy by the ankles. He pulled them toward him and Brophy's gun roared as he crashed to the ground.

Then Ranny heard the sound of yelling men and racing horses. "Brophy's gang coming to help him," was the thought that seared through Ranny's numbed mind! He tried to pull himself off the ground, but he fell back helpless—unconscious.

WHEN he came to, men were talking over him. He tried to think but his mind was a mass of distorted thoughts. He opened his eyes. Something like a grin came to his face.

Standing over him was Lockart and near him was the sheriff.

"Son," Lockart said hoarsely, "you did the trick! You stood Brophy off until the posse arrived! I didn't think you could do it with those wounds. But you did, and the posse has Gilman and Brophy and they found the cattle in the canyon, guarded by Brophy's men!"

"I guess there ain't much question now who killed your father, son," the sheriff said. "We got you and Alice and Lafe and Lockart who heard Brophy practically admit he fired the shot when you called him on knowing you were Maitland's son. This and the cattle is all we need."

"Those men we caught with the cattle," Lafe added, "are willing to talk to save their necks. I guess I acted the fool all along, Maitland, but I want to tell you how sorry I am."

Ranny struggled to sit up. His eyes went beyond Lockart, the sheriff, and Lafe. They rested on Alice, who was standing near by, looking at him.

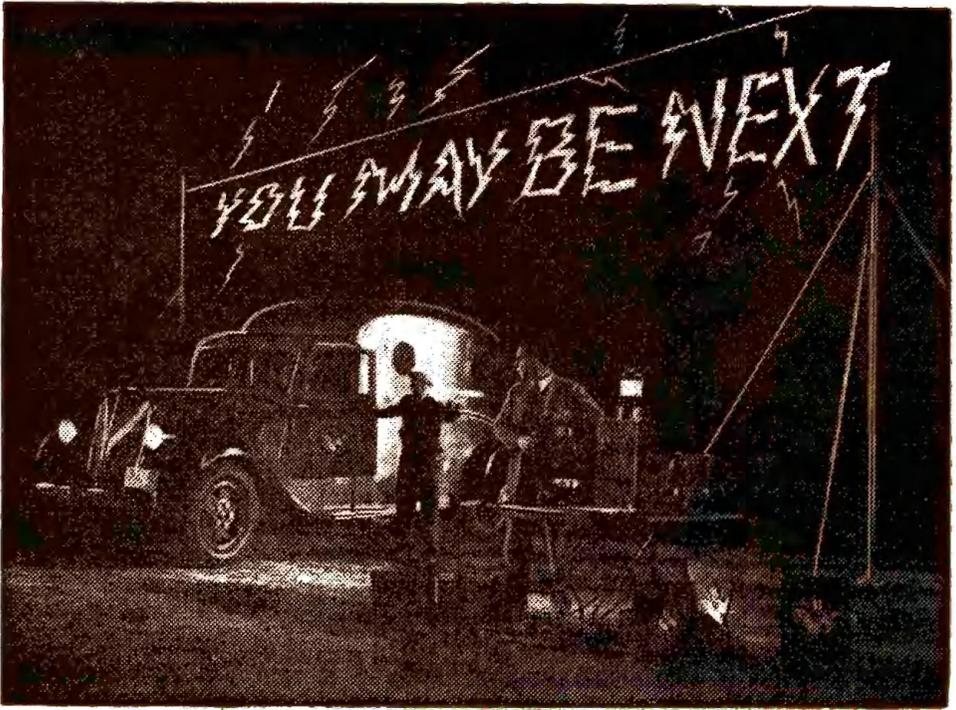
"I can't ever tell you how sorry I am," she said to Ranny. "The way I acted—and all the time you were trying to help us. I—I suppose—you will be leaving now?"

Ranny grinned weakly. "Well, I was sorta hoping you'd ask me to stay—for supper, anyway. I'm—hungry."

"Stay for supper," Alice said, dropping to his side and taking his head in her arms. "You're welcome to stay forever—and I'm not ashamed to say it with dad and Lafe and the sheriff looking on!"

"Ashamed?" Lockart said. "Maitland was the best friend I ever had and he died trying to help me. I hope his son will be more than a friend!"

"So do I," Ranny replied weakly, but with a real meaning as he looked into the tenderness of Alice's eyes.



Neil was Mr. Average Citizen, honest and industrious. How could he be used to bring about the most daring hi-jacking plot in the history of crime? Read this and find out!

THE powerful gasoline lamp struck weird gleams and shadows from the panels of the portable radio transmitter. In front of the banked switches and dials, Neil Bennett, ace field technician of the American Broadcasting Corporation, bent over his hand mike as unconcernedly as if he were back in his own laboratory in the ABC Building, instead of in the middle of a very dark, very lonely Long Island meadow.

Forty feet above the wiry young expert's head, the portable testing mast lost itself in the upper blackness. There were no sounds save a faint, steady hum from the transmitter, and the distant, spasmodic squawking of auto horns on the North Shore Highway, three miles away.

For a moment, Bennett made swift, incisive notes in the notebook that he balanced with practiced ease on his knee. Then he shifted his attention to the instrument panels, threw a switch, adjusted a dial with delicate care. The earphones clamped to his sorrel-thatched head hummed softly as he moved onto the wavelength he was seeking. He dropped his mouth to the mike, said sharply, "Eddie! Hey! Eddie! Wake up, will you!"

The only answer was a rhythmic note that rose to a burbling crescendo, checked suddenly, rose again. Neil Bennett grinned. He was on the right wavelength now. No other sound on earth had quite the quality of Eddie House's snore.

Bennett stuck the mike fairly against his face, yelled, "Eddie! Wake up!"

There was a gasp in the earphones, a muffled exclamation. Five miles away Neil's assistant, Eddie House, had stopped snoring into the open microphone of the ABC field transmitting truck, and got back on the job.

Neil Bennett said crisply, "It's about time! Are we testing this area, or aren't we?"

Eddie's hurt tones came over the air. "Aw, now, Neil. I wasn't asleep."

Bennett said wearily, "O. K. You weren't asleep. Stand to, now. Here she comes!"

HE reached forward, threw another switch on the panel. A low, moaning plaint throbbled from the transeiving set. There was an instant of silence in the earphones, then Eddie's voice, crisp now and businesslike, said, "A couple of miles here. Kick 'er up to eighty per cent modulation."

Bennett adjusted a dial. The pitch of the broadcasting test note rose from a low moan to shrill, piercing squeal. Eddie's voice clipped hastily, "O. K. That's plenty. You can make China on that channel." He paused a moment, said plaintively, "Say, Neil, when are we goin' home? It's nearly two o'clock."

Bennett made a notation in his book, grinned sardonically at his microphone.

"What do you want to go home for? You're getting just as much sleep out here. And you'd better get used to it.

It may be a month yet before I decide just where we'll build the new station. Got to work nights to avoid interference. You know that as well as I do."

Eddie's answer was terse and ether-shaking. Bennett laughed.

"Yeah, but is it my fault if you spend your off-nights holding hands with that switchboard girl? Anyhow, we've done all we can to-night. C'mon in, if you can find your way back."

He slipped off the earphones, turned the set off, and bent over his notebook again. As he worked, his elbow accidentally touched a poised knife-switch. Silently, the blade fell into place, sending the shrill test-hum out anew. Pre-occupied with his calculations, Bennett overlooked it.

Minutes slipped by. Bennett lifted his head suddenly, scowled into the dark. Time Eddie was getting there. Maybe the dumb cluck had lost his—

SOMEWHERE to the north a siren moaned, rose to a shrill, racing scream. Bennett jerked erect, his notes forgotten. That was a police car, and it was traveling fast!

Farther south another siren answered, and then a third.

For a moment Bennett listened, frowning. The cops were after some one, all right. But it wasn't a straight-away chase. The cars seemed to be circling, turning back on their tracks like baffled hounds!

Bennett snatched up his head-set, fum-

### THE CAST

LLOYD NOLAN.....	Neil Bennett
ANN SOTHERN.....	Fay Stevens
Douglass Dumbrille.....	Beau Gardner
John Arledge.....	Eddie House
George McKay.....	Mitch Cook

Story by Henry Wales and Ferdinand Reyher  
 Screenplay by Fred Niblo, Jr., and Ferdinand Reyher.  
 Directed by Albert Rogell.

A fictionization of the Columbia picture of the same title.



bled swiftly to throw his receiver into the police-broadcast channel. Then he swore frantically, snatched at the forgotten switch.

Even as he grabbed it, there was the roar of a racing motor and a truck swung wildly down the lane into the field. It was the ABC truck; with Eddie House, pop-eyed and gesticulating behind the wheel.

He jumped down, yelled, "Hey, Neil! For cripes sake shut down! You're 'jamming' the cops' broadcast! There's a hold-up an——"

But the switch under Bennett's fingers was already clear. The droning hum in the head phones stopped abruptly. In its place the voice of the police broadcaster snapped through, clear and urgent.

"Calling all cars! Calling all cars! Interference gone now. Get this! Two mugs tried to crack Bayview First National. Robbery unsuccessful, but shot and killed night watchman. Escaped in black sedan, license number 6-R-415. Last seen going west on North Shore Road. Police broadcast jammed by interference from unknown source, so the bandits have a fifteen-minute start. Repeat description: black sedan——"

BENNETT snapped the receiver off, said ruefully, "Damn! And I had to be the one that jammed the cops!"

Eddie House drew a long breath, mopped his face unhappily.

"And how it was you! One of the radio cars jumped me just as I was pullin' onto the highway. If it hadn't been that you was jammin' their radio, and even a cop could tell I was shut down, they'd 'a' put the slug on me right there. But I give 'em a line an'——"

Bennett said sardonically, "Yeah? It couldn't have been such a hot line, though. Here they come!"

A light-green coupé swung into the lane, jerked to a stop beside Eddie's truck. Two uniformed men scrambled out, walked swiftly across the field to-

ward the radio men. The first one, burly and red-faced, with a sergeant's stripes on his sleeve, stared suspiciously at Neil Bennett.

"What's goin' on here, anyhow?" he snapped. Somebody just jammed the life outa a hold-up alarm, an' I got a triple-A hunch it was——"

"It's a good hunch," Neil said quietly. "I jammed that broadcast. It was an accident. I'm sorry. We're an American Broadcasting experiment crew, testing for a new station. I just happened to get on the police channel by mistake. It won't happen again."

The sergeant snorted. "It better not happen again! And, anyhow, how do I know——"

"You can check up on us," Bennett said crisply. "This is all ABC equipment. Look it over. Here are my licenses. And you can check us with J. J. Held. He's acting director of ABC. Is that enough?"

The policeman handed Bennett's papers back to him, growled, "Yeah, it's enough till you pull another boner like it. Then it's a jail sentence. And don't forget it!"

He turned on his heel and strode back to his car, followed by the driver. Eddie stared after them, murmuring, "Gee, Neil, you shouldn't ought to lip a cop that way. I know that guy. Name's Flannigan, and he's poison if you rub him the wrong way."

"Forget it," Bennett said wearily. "It won't ever happen again. Come on now. Let's get this junk aboard and roll for home."

FOR ten minutes they worked with swift precision, dismantling the transmitter apparatus and stowing it aboard the truck. Bennett worked silently, still sore at himself for the slip he had made. Mucking up a police band and letting a bunch of killers go free was pretty bad!

They shoved the last of the portable apparatus into the truck, climbed aboard.



Neil ducked instinctively. Too late. He felt the stunning blow, saw lights.  
Then—blackness.

For two miles they bumped gingerly over the rough country lane, then swung onto the smooth stretch of the North Shore Road.

Eddie relaxed then, let his pudgy hands rest more lightly on the wheel. Neil Bennett was bending over his notes again, studying them in the light from the dashboard. The truck braked suddenly.

Bennett jerked his head up, said, "Hey! What's the idea."

"Guy wants a lift," Eddie said tersely. "Why not?"

Neil shrugged, stared through the windshield at the man who stood a little ahead in the glare of the headlights, jerking a hopeful thumb out over the concrete. He was slender, good-looking in a hard way. His dark suit and hat were smart, good quality.

The truck slowed to a stop. Bennett tensed a little as the man walked toward them. That robbery at Bayview—

Eddie reached across to swing the door open, said affably, "What's the matter, Buddy? Your girl make you walk home?"

The stranger grinned ruefully, said, "Nothing like that. I blew a tire a couple of miles back. Give me a lift as far as the Green Tree Inn and I'll stand you boys a drink."

"Sure," Eddie said. "You live there?"

The stranger smiled faintly, his eyes flicking from Eddie's face to Neil Bennett's.

"I own the joint," he said. "Name's Gardner. 'Beau' Gardner to my friends."

NEIL relaxed, shoved over to let Gardner climb in. The guy was all right. Or if he wasn't, they'd soon find out. The Green Tree Inn was just a few miles down the pike.

Eddie slipped the truck into gear and they rolled forward again. Gardner drew a long breath.

"Boy, I sure thought I was in for a walk! A couple of cars passed me, but when I flagged 'em down they just put on the gas and went past like bats out of hell."

Eddie chuckled. "No wonder. There's a bunch of gunmen loose somewhere in this part of the island. Those cars probably had heard about it."

Gardner whistled. "So that was it!" He shot a swift look at the two men beside him, said, "Did they—did the cops get these guys?"

Eddie shook his head. "Naw. The cops had the radio on 'em, but—uh—somebody kinda got on the police band and jammed 'em. By the time—uh—somebody got off the wave, the bandits were clear."

Gardner looked puzzled, said, "I don't quite—"

Eddie started to explain further, but Neil Bennett jerked a vicious sign-off elbow into his loquacious assistant's ribs. Eddie shut down—temporarily.

Gardner twisted a little in his seat, peered curiously into the back of the apparatus-filled truck. His voice was carefully casual as he said, "Say, what are you fellows, anyway? Linemen?"

Neil Bennett shook his head. "No, radio."

"That's it," Eddie chipped in cheerfully. "ABC field crew. We been out testin' for sites for a new station. Gotta work nights like this so we won't interfere with other stations."

THERE was an odd note in Gardner's voice as he said, "So you won't interfere——" He smiled in sudden understanding. "I get it. The 'somebody' who messed that police call——"

"Not a bit of it!" Eddie said hastily. "The—uh—cops thought so, but—uh—all a mistake——"

Gardner laughed. "That's O. K., Buddy. It won't go any further than me. But, say, there's angles to this radio business I never thought of. You mean to say that with a portable set like this——"

Neil Bennett said curtly, "Nothing like that. It was just an accident. A chance in a thousand. It couldn't happen again."

Eddie shot him an injured look, said, "Whaddaya mean, Neil, *couldn't* happen? Why, with an outfit like this——"

Bennett gouged out with his elbow again. Eddie signed off abruptly.

Ahead of them a Neon 'sign blazed "Green Tree Inn" against the dark. Eddie maneuvered into the driveway, drew to a stop near the door. Gardner climbed out to the gravel, said, "This is the place, boys. Come on in and have one on the house."

For a moment Neil Bennett hesitated. He still wasn't quite sure. But Eddie was already on the ground, heading for the door. With a wry smile, Bennett followed.

Once inside, his suspicions subsided. A waiter came forward, spoke to Gardner with the obvious deference of an employee. And the roadhouse itself looked respectable, well-mannered.

Beyond the circle of tables, a girl in evening dress was singing to the muted



Neil shuddered convulsively as the icy water dashed against his face.

accompaniment of a small orchestra. Neil checked in the doorway, listened with sudden surprise. She had a voice, all right! More to it than just the notes. That special something—personality. And she wasn't hard to look at, either!

NEIL looked up, flushed slightly as he caught Gardner's eyes on him. Neil grinned, said lightly, "Nice voice that girl's got."

Gardner nodded slightly. "I think so. Like to meet her?"

There was an odd glint in his eyes, partly amusement, partly something else.

He led the two radio men to a corner table, caught the girl's eye as she finished her song and bowed graciously to her applause.

She came across to them as the orchestra struck into a blues number and couples started to drift out onto the floor. Gardner said, "Fay, meet a couple of friends of mine. Miss Fay Stevens, Mr.—"

"Bennett," Neil said. "And this is Eddie House. He'd be a good guy if he didn't sleep when he ought to be talking, and talk when he'd be better off asleep."

Eddie said, "Aw, now, Neil——"

Fay Stevens smiled, slid gracefully into the chair that Neil drew back for her. Gardner said, "Buy 'em a drink, Fay, and be nice to 'em. They just did me a pretty good turn."

Then he patted Neil Bennett's shoulder lightly, and said, "Excuse me a moment. Got to see how things are going."

He walked lightly away, nodding to couples at the table as he passed. Neil didn't watch him go, for the very good reason that Fay Stevens had all his eyes. Close to, she was even better looking than he had first thought, if that was possible. Neil gave her an engaging grin, went into direct action.

"YOU'VE got a nice voice, Miss Stevens. Too nice for a small-time place like this. You're wasting your time."

Eddie made a sudden, gurgling noise in his high-ball. Neil shot him a stern look. Eddie subsided. Fay Stevens laughed a little uncertainly.

"You do work fast, don't you? For a minute I thought you meant it."

Neil grinned. "Let's get better acquainted, then. Dance?"

She nodded and followed him to the floor. For five minutes, talking to her, feeling her featherweight on his arm, Neil managed to forget pretty completely where he was and how he had gotten there.

Then the music stopped, they drifted back to their table. Eddie was gone. Neil scowled, leaned back in his chair to look through the door into the bar. Eddie was there, all right, flanked on one side by Beau Gardner, on the other by one of Gardner's bull-necked assistants, named "Mitch."

Eddie held an empty glass in one hand, made demonstrating movements with the other. He turned a little, caught Neil's eye fixed on him. As he put his glass down hastily and came back to the table, Neil stood up and said:

"Come on, chump. We've got to be

on our way." He turned to Fay Stevens. "That's a date, then? To-morrow at two?"

She hesitated a moment, turned to Gardner. "Oh, Beau, Mr. Bennett says he can get me a radio audition. But I don't know——"

Gardner's eyes flicked swiftly across her eager face. Then he smiled. "Sure," he said. "That's fine, Fay. Bennett's in radio, all right. And he's a good guy. You go ahead."

Neil grinned. "Swell. Thanks for the drinks, Gardner. Be seeing you."

OUTSIDE by the truck he shoved Eddie forcibly away from the wheel.

"You don't drive. Not after lettin' those guys pour high-balls down your hatch like that. I suppose you told 'em everything—how the transceiver works—how we jammed the cops and all the rest of it."

"Nottatall." Eddie hiccupped indignantly. "Jus' sort of explained things to 'em. You got a fine right to talk, anyhow! Promised that dame an audition. Ol' J. J. Held'll be so hot at you after the cops complain about what happened t'-night that——"

"Forget it!" Neil snapped. "She'll get the audition." He drove for a moment in silence. Then: "That guy Gardner—there's something fishy about him. What would he want to pump you about the testing apparatus for, anyhow?"

"Can't imagine," Eddie said. "Jus' scientific curiosity, I guess."

"Yeah," Neil said. "And maybe not."

He drove on in silence. Twice, as he threaded through the sleeping Long Island towns, he had an odd feeling that he was being followed. But when he slowed, looked back, there was no trailing car in sight. On the seat beside him, Eddie snored loudly.

BACK in Manhattan, he stopped in front of Eddie House's apartment, shook his assistant awake. Eddie stretched, and



He fired blindly as the door slammed open.

said sleepily, "Yeah, but how about the truck?"

"I'll take it in," Neil said. He scribbled a sheet from his book, stuck it in Eddie's fist. "I'm going to finish my calculations to-night, and get a late sleep to-morrow. I may not get up to ABC much before two myself, so give this

note to Ted Lane. It'll get Fay Stevens her audition, all right. And tell Ted if he's bright he'll give her a guest spot on the Murgatroyd program at seven. Don't you forget, or I'll ram a mike down your throat!"

"I won't forget," Eddie yawned from the sidewalk, "but if you think you can

put over a fast one like that on ol' J. J. Held——"

Neil said. "Nuts!" slipped the truck into gear.

The ABC garage was farther uptown, on 57th, near Tenth. Neil swung into Ninth Avenue, rolled smartly along under the looming shadow of the "L."

As he was crossing 54th, still under the "L," a dark sedan crept up on his left, cut sharply across between the pillars. Neil swore as he jammed on his brakes.

The sedan swerved, jolted to a stop. Metal squealed as the fenders ground together. Still swearing, Neil jumped down to the pavement. A man climbed out from behind the wheel of the sedan.

"Sorry, bud," he said. "Guess it was my fault."

"You're damn right it was!" Neil snapped. "What the——"

"Yeah," the other said softly, "an' I guess this is my fault, too."

Neil saw his arm swing back, ducked instinctively. Too late. The arm swung down. Neil felt the stunning blow against his ear, saw flaming, lurid lights. Then—blackness.

IT seemed ages later when he came to. He knew it was hours anyhow, because it was daylight again.

He tried to move a little, felt the metal pressure of handcuffs on his wrists. His mouth was bound shut, too, gagged with tape. He was lying on a cot in a small room with drawn shades. His head hurt like the devil.

He tried to shift on the cot, relaxed suddenly as he heard some one rattle the handle of the door. Through slitted eyelids he watched the door open, a man come in. It was Beau Gardner's henchman, Mitch!

Mitch stared at him, then said over his shoulder, "He's still out, chief. 'Birdie' certainly took a healthy crack at him!"

Gardner's smooth voice said, "He'll come around. And even if he doesn't, it

won't be much skin off our noses. I could use him, though. It'll make the racket easier."

In spite of himself, Neil felt his muscles tighten.

"I guess you know what you're up to, Beau," Mitch said. "but it's a little too fast for me."

"It's simple," Gardner said. "The old rackets are all washed up. Look what happened last night at Bayview. If this cluck hadn't been testing and jammed the cops' radio, we would have been in plenty hot water!"

"I get it," Mitch said slowly. "You mean the next time we pull a job we can jam the cops ourselves an'——"

Gardner snorted derisively. "I said big money. You heard what the dumb assistant said at the bar. With that outfit you swiped last night, we can jam anything on the air. Get that? *Anything!*"

"There's millions tied up in radio. Some big commercial broadcast's on the air. We jam it, ruin the program. Thousands of dollars of radio time and talent wasted! The outfit can be operated from a moving truck, so before the cops can put any kind of radio spotters on us, we'll be miles off to somewhere else. How long do you figure the radio company'll be able to stand that before they kick through with heavy sugar?"

MITCH whistled. "There's somethin' there, all right! But what if this guy don't come to, or won't coöperate? We gotta have him, don't we, to run the outfit?"

"Nothing like it. I got Ernie Schall on the job already. If there was ever a better radio man on Rum Row, I never heard of him. He's got the radio outfit almost moved over into that old laundry truck already. He says there's nothing to it, and he ought to know."

Through his eyelashes, Neil saw Gardner smile mirthlessly, then go on. "And here's the swell part. I figure the

take will be two hundred grand, at the very least! And then, we'll give 'em the criminal—dead! This guy's missing already, with his radio truck. The cops suspect him of jammin' their broadcast last night. So when they find him and his outfit smashed up against a telephone pole somewhere——”

He broke off with an expressive shrug. It took all Neil Bennett's control to lie still, continue his heavy, regular breathing. So that was it! Gardner would blackmail the broadcasters and *he'd* get the blame! Then, some day——

GARDNER said harshly, “Get some water. I want to bring this mug around and learn things.”

Mitch's footsteps retreated, came back again. Neil shuddered convulsively as the icy water dashed against his face.

“That brought him to!” Mitch said.

He grabbed Neil by the shoulder, jerked him erect.

“On your toes, bright boy. The boss wants to talk to yuh!”

Roughly, he jerked the tape from Neil's lips. The radio man swayed with pretended grogginess on the edge of the cot, stared around him.

He had a good look at the room now. It was small, furnished with nothing but the cot he sat on and a couple of chairs. But there was a radio in one corner, with a telephone on the stand beside it.

Gardner stepped in front of him, a hard smile on his face.

“What I want is the names of a couple of big shots over at ABC. How about it?”

Neil stared at him, said nothing. Gardner smiled, tight-lipped, said, “All right, if you want to be that way. But you'll talk.”

He turned to Mitch, said, “Tell Ernie to take his stuff to the first place I told him about. Tell him to jam hell out of the ABC station for about five minutes just to give 'em a taste, and then phone here!”

Mitch nodded, left swiftly. Neil Bennett sat very still on the edge of the bed, his mind working furiously. If there were only some way he could send out word! Eddie would be in the studio, getting a grilling on last night's happenings. If he could only ring him in on it, give him some kind of a clue!

Neil dropped his eyes, stared hopelessly at the edge of the cot beside him. The edge of a packing box stuck out from beneath the bed, showed the stencilled legend, “Green Tree Inn.”

Neil's muscles tightened suddenly. It was an idea! A thin one, but Gardner had asked for the names of some “big shots” at ABC. Well, he'd get them!

OUTSIDE, there was the sound of a truck grinding over the gravel, the heavy throb of its motor as it picked up speed on the road.

Gardner grinned sardonically at Neil, walked across to the radio and switched it on. Neil said, “370 kilocycles—that's 69 on your dial.”

Gardner spun the knob, said, “Obliging, aren't you? Stay that way, and you'll save yourself lots of grief.”

Neil shrugged, said nothing. He had to stall now, play for time. The radio hummed, warmed to the pulsating rhythm of a dance band. The number ended, and the announcer's voice gave the station identification.

“The next number by Lennie Marin's boys will be——”

His voice vanished abruptly, drowned in a raucous, grating squeal. Neil grimaced involuntarily, swore under his breath. Ernie Schall was right on the job, had nailed the ABC wavelength to a fraction!

Neil had a swift mental picture of one of Gardner's men tooling the disguised truck over the lonely Long Island roads, the renegade radio man crouched in the back, manipulating the dials of Neil's beloved set with deadly skill.

The frightful squealing continued.

Gardner threw his head back, laughed delightedly.

The squealing stopped abruptly. Ted Lane's voice came back.

Gardner gave a satisfied nod, switched the radio off again.

FIVE, ten minutes slipped by. Then Gardner picked up the telephone, said sharply, "Ernie! You on deck?"

Neil Bennett's eyes narrowed as he watched. He had the whole set-up now. The Green Tree Inn must have been an important headquarters in the old rum-running days. The phone was a concealed private line, with no tie-in with a commercial company.

Probably there were a dozen points along the North Shore that could contact the inn that way with no chance of recorded calls. Ernie could move from place to place, in direct touch with Gardner all the time, while he pulled his dirty work on the air waves, and always keep a good jump ahead of direction-finders while he was doing it!

He was on the job at point Number One already. Gardner said into the phone, "O. K. Now, here's the dope. Contact the ABC on that short wave—in code. Tell 'em that last bit of interference was just a taste of what's coming. Got it?"

Apparently Ernie had it. There was a pause. Gardner swung toward Neil. His face was harsh now, merciless.

"Your turn now, mug! I want the names of the big shots—the right guys to dicker with!"

NEIL'S eyes dropped again to the box with the stencilled legend.

"Well," he said slowly, "There's J. J. Held. He's general manager."

Gardner nodded, relayed the name over the phone.

"Then," Neil said, "there's Bernard Pine, the legal counsel for ABC."

"Right!" Gardner clipped. "The mouthpiece. That's who we want!"

Neil hesitated a moment, tried to make his voice casual as he said, "And there's J. Edgar House."

Gardner swung from the phone, snapped, "Huh? What's he do?"

Neil shrugged. "Oh, he's a sort of fixer for the company——"

He held his breath while Gardner hesitated suspiciously, then let it out again as the racketeer relayed the third name over the phone. At least, Gardner hadn't recognized Eddie House's name. And back at the studio, that ought to mean something, thrown in that way with the real big shots. If the thing only worked successfully——"

Neil drew a long breath. It was done now, anyhow.

Gardner snapped into the phone, "Got 'em? All right, tell 'em those are the guys we deal with, and no others. Make it hot!"

He looked across the lifted phone at Neil, said, "Tell 'em, just to show what we can do, we'll jam the Murgatroyd hour to-night at seven! It's their biggest commercial program, so that ought to get action. And sign that message Neil Bennett!"

He slapped the phone down triumphantly, said, "I guess you get it now, mug! You take the rap! And it isn't all business, picking the Murgatroyd hour, either. Fay Stevens thinks you're pretty swell because you got her a spot as guest artist on it. She won't think so when it's jammed, and they tell her you did it! Think again before you try to get your hooks in another guy's girl!"

"Be yourself!" Neil said harshly. "She wouldn't any more give time to a heel like you than she'd——"

Gardner crossed the room swiftly, drove his fist into Neil's face!

Neil's head slapped back against the wall. Before he could move, Gardner whipped a roll of tape from his pocket, jammed hastily torn strips across Neil's mouth. Then he turned on his heel and left the room.

NEIL got to his feet, crossed groggily to the radio and turned it on. It was tough work, with his hands manacled behind him, but he managed to throw the short-wave switch, get onto the police band. Headquarters was monotonously droning out the numbers of stolen cars.

Neil cut the voice to a whisper, waited. He knew it wouldn't be long. J. J. Held wasn't the man to waste time!

Ten minutes went by, then the police broadcaster broke off abruptly with, "Attention all cars! Attention all metropolitan police stations! Wanted—Neil Bennett, technical expert of the American Broadcasting Company. This man is six feet tall, sandy hair, blue eyes, light complexion. He has stolen a portable broadcasting truck belonging to ABC and is using it for criminal interference with the programs of that company. Motive, extortion. This man is probably desperate. Take no chances! Repeat. Wanted——"

With a sick grimace, Neil switched off. So he was a criminal, a hunted man! Gardner's scheme had worked. ABC would never be able to fight the racket. Nothing left now but the pay-off, the finding of Neil's body somewhere with the smashed, incriminating transceiving apparatus.

Desperately, Neil swung to the window. He had to get out!

Steps sounded outside the door. Neil flung himself onto the cot. The door opened and Mitch came in. He grinned at Neil, put a chair halfway between the door and window and sat down. Then he drew a flat, blue-black automatic from his pocket, pointed it in the general direction of Neil's head, and settled himself comfortably to wait.

TWO hours later he was still waiting. Neil watched from the cot, sullen, hopeless. The radio was going now, tuned to ABC. The sequence of programs told Neil it was almost seven. Beau Gardner

came in, said, "It's your big moment, Bennett. In another ten minutes your name'll be a household word. Or at least as soon as the papers get out!"

Neil glared helplessly. His mind was made up now. He knew his long shot had failed. He was going to make a break, even though it meant certain death. But at least, if they found bullets in him, some people would suspect the truth!

The radio program changed. Ted Lane's voice came on, smoothly running through the patter of the Murgatroyd hour.

"Do you suffer from gas, sour stomach, or dizzy spells? Two generations of satisfied users rise to proclaim Murgatroyd's famous Fruit Flavor Tablets, the remedy——"

Lane's voice blurred, vanished in a tearing screech! Somewhere, Ernie Schall was doing his stuff!

Gardner and Mitch were laughing delightedly. Ernie Schall was playing tricks, letting garbled bits of the program through, clamping down again. Mitch rocked hysterically in his chair, then froze suddenly as some one rapped on the door.

Gardner whirled out. Neil heard muttered voices, some one saying:

"There's a slip somewhere, I tell you! The look-outs are phoning in! Cop cars all around and closing in!"

Gardner's voice said fiercely, "They can't be after Ernie's radio car. He's ten miles away—the Van Nostrand place!"

Neil's heart jumped. Maybe Eddie had caught on!

Gardner's voice snapped, "Come on. Get out the car. We'll have to get Bennett out of here!"

THERE was a vanishing rush of footsteps. Neil tensed. It was now or never!

Mitch was standing uncertainly, half facing the door. Neil braced himself, flung himself headlong from the cot.

His shoulder hit Mitch's knees, knocked the thug in a spinning sprawl. Mitch's head slammed the floor and he went limp. The gun clattered from his hands.

Neil wrenched around, grabbed it, managed to twist it awkwardly to his hip, facing the door. He fired blindly as the door slammed open. Beau Gardner, charging through, gun in hand, staggered, lurched back out of sight.

A gun blazed from the darkness of the hallway, kicked plaster behind Neil's head. He fired again, praying for a lucky hit. There was no answering shot from the hall. Suddenly, sirens screamed in the road outside. There were yells, a thunder of shots. Some one screamed shrilly. Then silence.

NEIL drew a long breath. His knees felt suddenly weak. He slumped down on the bed, still keeping his awkward grip on the gun.

Feet clattered in the hallway. He twisted around, trying to cover the door again.

Then he relaxed with a broad, satisfied grin. The first man through the door was a cop! The second was a cop, too—Sergeant Flannigan of last night's patrol. And behind him came Eddie House, pop-eyed and breathless!

Eddie gave a whoop of joy as he saw Neil, took in the meaning of the handcuffs, the adhesive gag.

"Didn't I tell you?" he yelled at Flannigan. "He's no blackmailer! The whole thing was a frame!"

Flannigan ripped the tape from Neil's mouth.

Neil said, "Thanks. First thing is the radio truck! It's operating from a place called Van Nostrand's. I heard Gardner say so. Know where it is?"

"You bet!"

Flannigan whited, barked an order into the hall. Motors roared outside.

"And then"—Neil rattled the cuffs that

held his hands—"I'd kind of like to get rid of these. I think the guy on the floor there has the keys in his pocket."

Flannigan went swiftly through the unconscious Mitch's pockets, came up finally with the keys. A twist, and Neil was free again.

Flannigan stepped back with a grin. "For a guy that was hog-tied, you seem to have put up a pretty fair scrap. I guess it was you who winged Gardner. We caught him on the stairs."

Neil nodded. "Yeah, but it was touch and go. If you hadn't come when you did——"

"THAT," Sergeant Flannigan said, "is somethin' I haven't figured yet. House, here, practically kidnaped me and made me knock over this joint. He was sure you were here. But how——"

Eddie grinned, dragged a paper from his pocket. "It was Neil's message—the one that was supposed to name the ABC pay-off men.

"I knew it was a phony—first because my name was one, along with a real big shot like J. J. Held, and second because there isn't any such guy as Bernard Pine! It had me stumped—till I happened to look at the last names in the order they came over the short-wave. Look at 'em yourself. Held—Pine—House!

"Then it was easy. Pine—that's a green tree—Held Green Tree House—Held Green Tree Inn. Get it?"

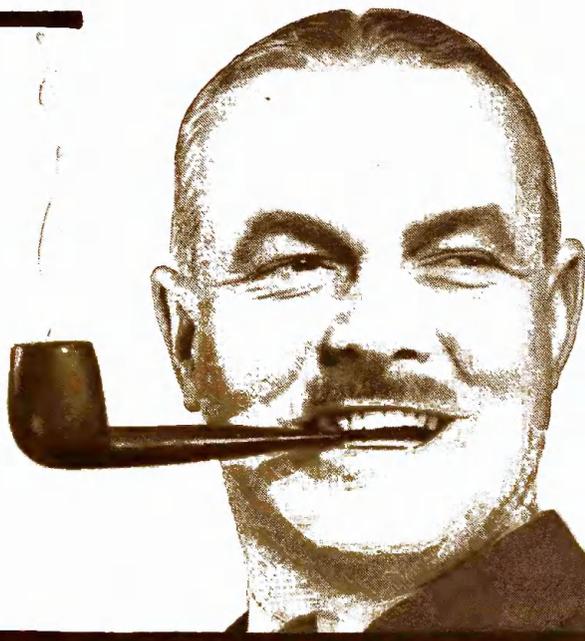
Flannigan said, "Yeah, but of all the crazy——"

Neil Bennett said, "It worked, didn't it?"

He crossed to the radio, twisted the dial to bring the ABC broadcast in. It was clear again. Over his shoulder, he said:

"The Murgatroyd program's still got half an hour to run. Fay Stevens might be next. I couldn't just sit back and miss that, could I?"

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