DETECTIVE

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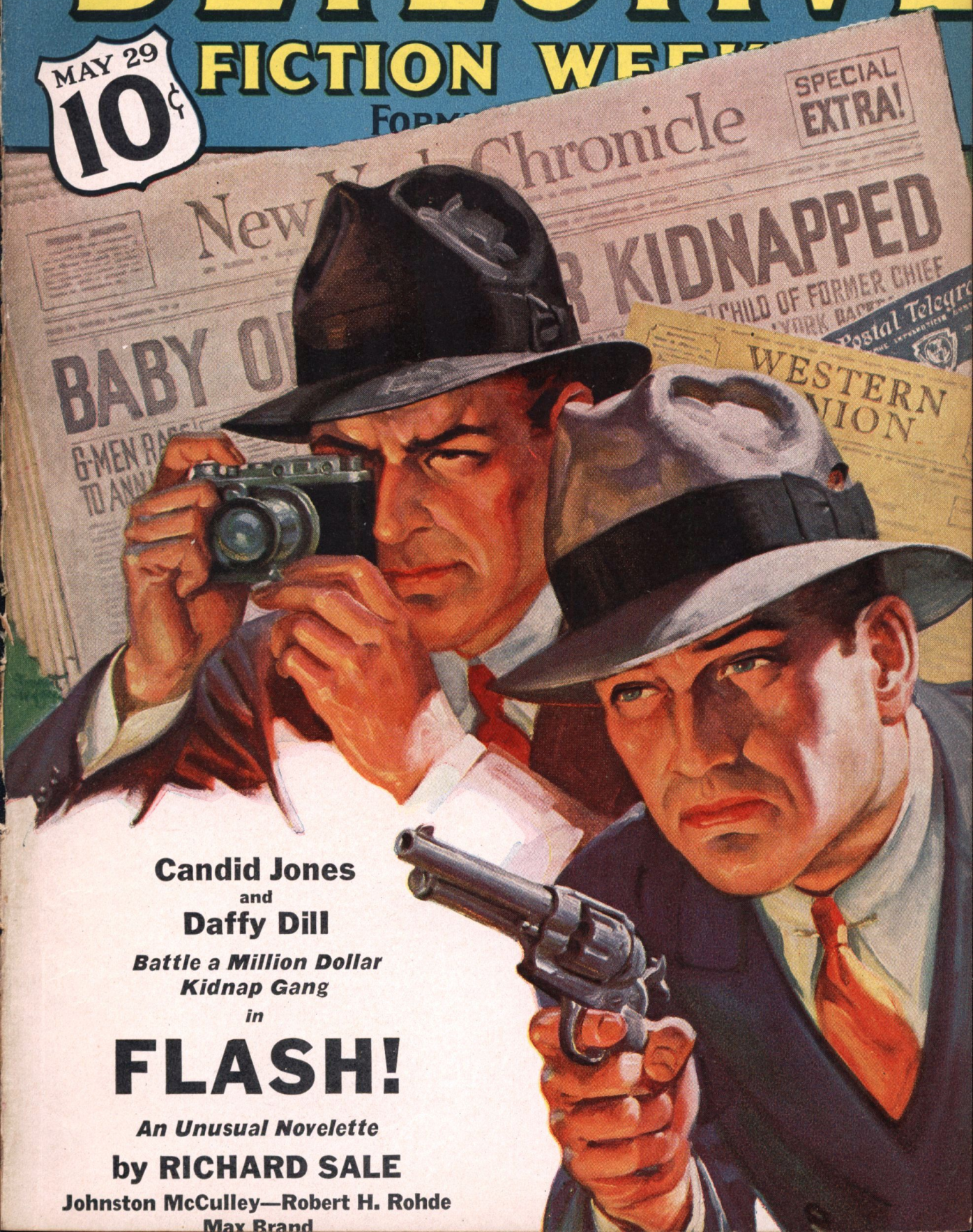

Candid Jones
and
Daffy Dill
Battle a Million Dollar Kidnap Gang
in

FLASH!

An Unusual Novelette
by RICHARD SALE

Johnston McCulley—Robert H. Rohde
Max Brand

He Slept in a $25,000 Bed

GEORGE J. GOULD did not sleep well in his $25,000 bedstead at Lakewood, N. J. That was not because of any defect in the bedstead, which was solidly and comfortably built; nor was anything wrong with the downy feather mattress or the silken coverings or with the balmy fragrance of pine forest that swept through Georgian Court, his summer mansion near the Jersey coast.

One who knows the story of *how* his father had piled up a hundred million might be inclined to think that George's slumber was disturbed by remorse. For Jay Gould had been a railroad wrecker. His great fortune, said the *New York World,* had been "built upon the ruin of his early benefactors, and increased beyond the dream of avarice by the remorseless sacrifice of later associates and friends," and the *World* predicted: "Ten thousand ruined men will curse the dead man's memory."

No, Jay Gould's heir could have slept in serenity for all the ghosts of ruined men. The Gould conscience was quite elastic in that respect. The vision that did come to him, however, in that luxurious bedstead, haunting him night and day, was the vision of a Gould railroad system that extended from the Golden Gate to the Atlantic seaboard. It was this vision, and the troubles attending it, that gave him many a sleepless night.

It was a monumental ambition. Even *Jay* Gould, with all of his cunning and power and wealth, had failed in such a project. But George was determined to succeed. In 1892, when he was 28, his father had died and left him in absolute control of nearly 6000 miles of railroad. Soon the young Gould had five big roads under his thumb—

You'll find the rest of this amazing true story, "George Gould's Transcontinental Dream," by H. R. Edwards, with plenty of illustrations, in the June issue of Railroad Stories, now on sale. If your news-dealer is sold out, get your June copy by sending 15 cents to 280 Broadway, New York City.

RAILROAD STORIES MAGAZINE

DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY

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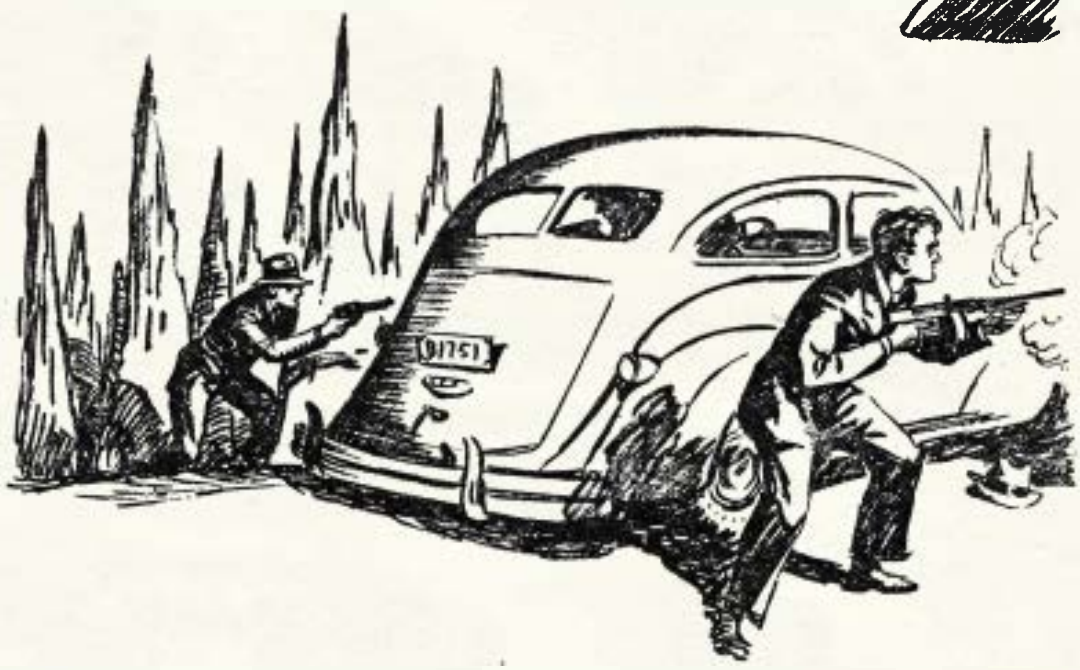
FLASH!



Machine Gun Savell came out on Candid's side firing a Tommy gun

Candid Jones and Daffy Dill Join Forces for the First Time and Scoop the Nation on a Million Dollar Kidnaping

Hotel Lincoln
Ann Arbor, Michigan
April 1

Miss Dinah Mason
Movie Reviewer
The New York Chronicle
New York, New York

DINAH, you gorgeous thing!

The first thing you must not do when you get this letter is to tear it up. Don't gnash your pretty teeth away and for Pete's sake, take your gnarled hands out of your standing-on-end hair. I can explain everything. Well—almost everything.

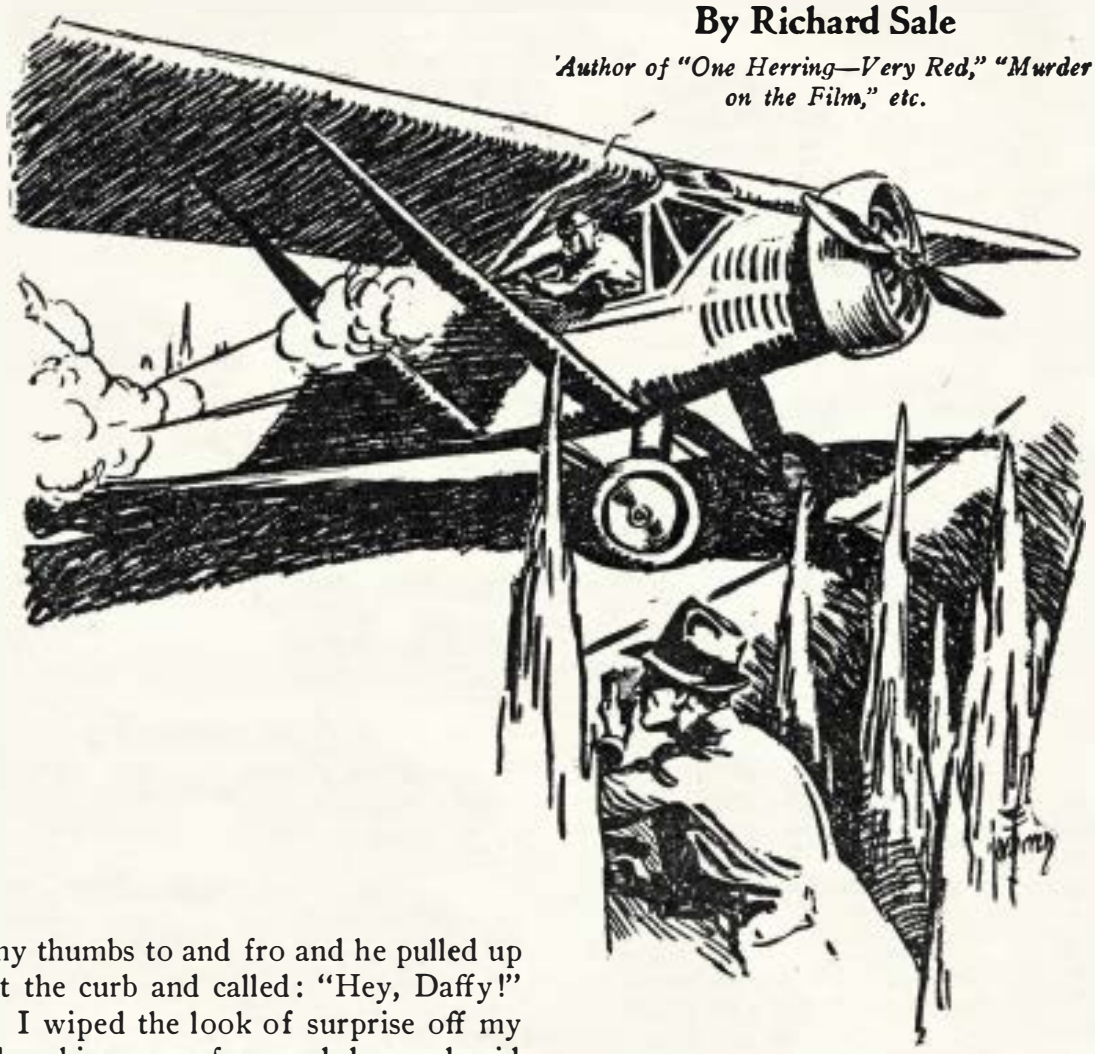
In the first place, I didn't mean to stand you up. But when a guy is working for a slave-driver like the little elf on the south fringe of the Chronicle's city room, he has to put duty before pleasure. Here's what happened.

I was standing on the corner of Broadway and 44th Street near the Hideaway Club yesterday noon and I was waiting for you to show up and keep our luncheon date—you were only half an hour late—when who should come riding by in his sleek black prowl car but Lieutenant Poppa Hanley. In case you don't remember, Poppa is the homicide bureau's only claim to fame. He saw me standing there twirling

DFW COMPLETE NOVELETTE

By Richard Sale

Author of "One Herring—Very Red," "Murder on the Film," etc.



my thumbs to and fro and he pulled up at the curb and called: "Hey, Daffy!"

I wiped the look of surprise off my cherubic young face and dropped said look lightly to the pavement. Then I walked over to the prowl car and shook his hand and said: "Poppa, my fran. You get homelier with the passing days. If those ears hang down any lower, you're going to wear out the collar of your coat from the friction."

"Haven't seen you since the night we laid the banshee on 72nd Street," Poppa said. He seemed to be suppressing some sort of excitement. "I suppose you're waiting for a street car."

I said: "As a matter of fact, I am attending that angelic vision, that displayer of platinum-haired locks, that young and pulchritudinous—"

"You mean you're waiting for Dinah Mason," Poppa said, interrupting. Wasn't that nice of him?

"I am," I said.

He took out a cigar, bit off the end, and then he started chewing lustily on the stogie. You and I know that Poppa has never smoked in his life. So the instant I saw him start chawin', I figured that something big was on the make.

I said: "Why the overworked incisors, Poppa? Has Hanley got another homicide in this fair city of ours?"

Hanley stared at me a second or two, then grunted. He took the stogie out of his mouth with great care. "Daffy,"

he said sort of hollowly, "do you remember Al Temple?"

"The Dutchman?" I said. "Old Baron Temple, the Broadway killer?"

"The same," Poppa nodded.

I said: "How could I forget him, Poppa? He staged a two year reign of terror in this city back in the pre-repeal days. He was the biggest beer runner in town. He was the biggest slot machine racketeer before the vice squad put that business on the blinko. He was behind the April Fool's Day massacre of those Schorelli mobsters in the back of that Bronx garage in 1928. Six of 'em shot down by machine-gun, forty-eight bullets in their backs. I covered that yarn for the Chronicle.

"Sure, I remember that palooka. Poppa. Baron Temple, born crooked, lived crooked, will die crooked. A big burly black-haired plug-ugly with an indented nose and dead fish eyes. He had a split tooth in the front of his mouth and he always stuck a toothpick in there."

Poppa Hanley shook his head. "That's remembering, Daffy," he said. "Not bad."

I said, "Pretty good, eh?"

"No," he said, smirking. "Just not bad. Well, I may as well tell you and break your stony heart. We just had a flash at h.q. on the teletype. A gang of ginzos walked into Al Temple's home in Michigan no more than three hours ago and snatched Temple's own kid—a two year old girl! How do you like them berries? That's eating the biter bit. That's irony for you! Gangsters snatching a gangster's kid!"

I said, "What a yarn! And me in New York without a chance in the world of breaking it! You mean to say— Judas! I never knew Baron Temple was even married! The last I heard of him, the government finally caught him on his income tax returns and he did a year at Atlanta!"

"That's it," said Poppa. "A lot of people know very little about Baron Temple. All they ever heard of him was his booze-running and his killings and his year in stir. Listen, Daffy, the whole time that guy was running loose in this town, cleaning up a capital of five million dollars, he had a wife out in Ann Arbor, Michigan, along with a home he owned under the name of John Brown. When he got out of stir three years ago, he dropped out of sight and finally turned up at his home. He's been living there with his wife."

"Tough on a kid that young," I said. "Who snatched her?"

"Nobody knows," said Poppa Hanley. "The F.B.I. is covering it already; local police in Ann Arbor are up to their ears in it. Boy, I'd like to be out there! I've got hunches!"

"What kind of hunches?" I asked.

"Well, listen," said Hanley. "Remember the boys who used to be in Temple's mob? No, you don't, I can see that. I'll spill them off for you. There was Machine Gun Jimmy Savell. The little pint-size runt who never said a word. I've always sworn Temple had him do the job on the Schorelli boys in that garage. There was Pinky Sherman, who took care of collections. An effeminate sort of killer. Acted like a sissy but could throw lead from a .45 like Buffalo Bill. The only one in the mob who wasn't a rat. Pinky Sherman could take it standing. There was Black Benny Dorgan, who hated Temple's guts and wanted to be mob leader himself. A fat, smart guy. Very clever, like a snake. And very oily like a virgin gusher. I always wanted to pot Black Benny but I never got the chance. There was Rork Shapiro, the smiling killer. He could knock them off laugh-

ing from his stomach up. Some crew, eh?"

I said: "Yeah. What's your hunch?"

"After repeal, Temple broke up the mob. He was stepping out of the rackets. He did his time at Atlanta and figured he'd lead a life of ease on the five million fish, savvy?"

"Smart," I said.

"Yeah—but Black Benny Dorgan thought he was smarter. He kept the boys together. I think they did a series of jewel heists around this burg, but we could never lay it on them. Big boys, Daffy, with a shyster who can work miracles with a habeas corpus writ . . . I have not seen Black Benny, nor Machine Gun Jimmy, nor Pinky Sherman, nor Rork Shapiro around New York for two months. I remember how Black Benny hated Al Temple. And so I figure those boys went west, laid a groundwork, cased Temple every day. And I figure now that they've snatched Temple's kid and they'll hold him up for a million bucks before they're through. They know he'll play ball. He knows they mean business.

That, Dinah my hollyhock, was more than I could stand. I said goodby to Poppa and I rushed for the nearest telephone to let the Old Man in on all this very elegant news. I called the Chronicle and got the Old Man and I started to tell him what I'd learned but I never got the chance.

"Daffy!" he yelled. "I've been combing town for you! Looking high and low! Listen now and get this straight. You grab a cab wherever you are and rip for Newark. There's a plane leaving for Detroit at two p.m. I've reserved a seat on it and I sent Solly Sampson down to the field with an expense account and a toothbrush for you. Grab the plane and when you get to Detroit I'll have another ship waiting there to fly you to Ann Arbor! You're covering the Al Temple snatch for the Chronicle and Kenyon says you can go the limit to get a top yarn! You'll find out about the details when you get out there. Put up at the Lincoln Hotel and keep me informed by wire and telephone of any developments. And, Daffy, bring home the bacon or else—"

"Hey," I said, amazed at the Old Man's enthusiasm. "I can't go out there. I've got a date with Dinah for lunch at the Hideaway."

"Forget Dinah!" roared the Old Man. (He said it, Angel-eyes. It wasn't your very own Daffy.) "You get that plane pronto! Dinah's a newspaperwoman. She'll understand. Now lam!"

So what could I do? . . . I lammed. I met Sampson at Newark and I got my ticket and three hundred bucks and a Dr. West toothbrush from him and I got on the plane and before I could catch my breath, somebody said we were over Ohio. It's a marvelous age we're living in.

I haven't been out to see what's going on at the Temple menage yet. I figured I'd drop you this note first to make sure you're still not standing on 44th Street waiting for me. For while the Old Man was right when he said you were a newspaperwoman, I have my doubts as to whether you're going to understand.

Drop me a line at the hotel. I'll be here a week. Then back to your fair presence and that lunch at the Hideaway. This is hardly the place for my nine hundred and ninety-ninth proposal but consider yourself asked.

Hugs and hisses,
Daffy.

NA 55 DPR—MH NEW YORK NY 120P
APR 1
DAFFY DILL
HOTEL LINCOLN

ANN ARBOR MICH UNIV STATION
LISTEN YOU SAWED OFF LOCUST PLAGUE STOP YOU'VE BEEN IN THAT TOWN FOR SEVEN HOURS AND NOT A PEEP OUT OF YOU STOP IN CASE YOU DON'T REMEMBER THERE'S BEEN A SNATCH STOP GIVE THE OLD MAN 210P

NPR RPM—MH ANN ARBOR MICH 220P APR 1
THE OLD MAN
NEW YORK CHRONICLE
NEW YORK NY
WHAT A TOWN STOP NO LEADS NO CLUES NO NOTHING STOP WENT TO TEMPLE HOME AND GOT BOUNCED OUT ON MY EAR STOP WENT TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS AND GOT BOUNCED ON MY YOU KNOW WHAT STOP WENT TO FBI HEADQUARTERS AND GOT BOUNCED OUT ON MY HEAD STOP JUST A BOUNCING BABY THAT'S ME STOP LAY OFF ME UNTIL I'VE GOT SOMETHING OR I'LL PUT SPIKES IN YOUR SPINACH DAFFY 240P

Ann Arbor Evening Mail, April 1, 1937

KIDNAPERS DEMAND MILLION DOLLARS

Huge Ransom Asked For Return of Child, Mail Reporter Learns

Exclusive! Copyright by the Evening Mail

One million dollars in cash was demanded today by kidnapers for the return of two-year old Edith Temple in a ransom note received by the child's father Al "Baron" Temple, Ed Browning, staff reporter, learned exclusively for the *Evening Mail*.

The ransom note was composed of printed words clipped from newspapers and pasted together. Details of the note were not revealed to government agents or local and state police working on the case. So far authorities have been unable to find a single lead to the child's kidnapers.

NA55 RP—MH NEW YORK NY 755 A APR 2
DAFFY DILL
HOTEL LINCOLN
ANN ARBOR MICH
SCOOPED BY A HOME TOWN HICK STOP FIND YOUR NEXT JOB ON A WEEKLY THE OLD MAN 802A

Daffy Dill, Esq. New York
Hotel Lincoln April 2
Ann Arbor, Mich.

LISTEN Screwball:

About five p.m. on that day when you were supposed to have lunch with me, the street cleaning department picked me up and drove me three blocks in the covered wagon before they found out I was not a stray ash can. I couldn't blame them. I'd been standing on that corner waiting for you for four hours.

I must congratulate you on your splendid work out there in Michigan. I see by the papers today that some palooka named Ed Browning got a scoop by finding out the ransom note had arrived. I also read between the lines that another palooka named Daffy Dill was undoubtedly shaving himself with a broken razor while the whole thing was going on. May you cut your pretty throat.

You ask me to forgive and forget.

All right . . . I'll forget. As far as I am concerned from now on, you might as well be in a leprosarium. If I ever speak to you again, it will be only because my mind falters, and you shouldn't visit me in the asylum.

May you have a relapse,
Dinah.

(*Radio Bulletin, Station WEAF New York*, 8 *p.m., April 2*)

FLASH! Ladies and gentlemen, we interrupt the Bide-a-Wee program this evening to bring you a special news bulletin through the courtesy of the Broadcast Press Service.

Flash! G-men of the Federal Bureau of Investigation had in custody tonight one of the kidnapers of little Edith Temple, who was snatched from her home on the afternoon of March 31st.

The man was identified as Rork

Shapiro, known in New York as the Smiling Killer. He was formerly a member of Al Temple's gang during the prohibition era. It is believed now that Temple's former gang has turned on him and had engineered the entire kidnaping. The capture of Rork Shapiro was effected by a newspaperman and an insurance sleuth who turned him over to the Federal men. According to John Wilston, chief of the FBI, the two men were Daffy Dill of the New York *Chronicle,* and Candid Jones of the Apex Insurance Company.

We resume the Bide-a-Wee program now with Hall Flower's orchestra playing . . .

NA25 DPR—MH NEW YORK NY 1030P APR 2
DAFFY DILL
HOTEL LINCOLN
ANN ARBOR MICH
YE GODS AND LITTLE FISHES STOP ARE YOU WORKING FOR ME OR FOR THE BROADCAST PRESS SERVICE AND THE FBI STOP WHERE IS THE STORY STOP YOU'RE THE WORST NEWSPAPERMAN IN THE WORLD THE OLD MAN 1034P

NA44 FGD—GH ANN ARBOR MICH 1045P APR 2
CITY EDITOR
NEW YORK CHRONICLE
NEW YORK NY
STORY BROKE TOO LATE FOR FINAL SPORTS EXTRA STOP IT'LL KEEP STOP COMPLETE NITE WIRE STORY EXCLUSIVE FOLLOWS STOP FLYING OUT OF HERE TONIGHT FOR EL PASO TEXAS REACH ME AT THE GUNNYSON HOTEL THERE FROM NOW UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE DAFFY 1056P

HELLO? Listen, Central, my fine-feathered little friend, you voice with the smile, you! I want to call Lieutenant William Hanley of the homicide bureau in New York City. No . . . it's a person to person call . . . Sure, I'll pay for it . . . Who's calling him? Why, I am, of course! My name —oh. Daffy Dill . . . No. Daffy Dill. Daffy. D as in dither—that's right . . .

Hello . . . Is that you, Poppa? This is Daffy. My, my, what a nice telephone voice you have. You ought to be on the radio. You sound as though you were in the next room. Isn't this a marvelous age we're living in . . . All right, all right, keep your shirt on, Poppa. I just wanted to tell you your hunch was right. Black Benny Dorgan has engineered this whole snatch.

Eh . . . Oh. You heard it on the radio. Well, Rork Shapiro didn't say so. He wouldn't say that. But it's as plain as your face that Black Benny and Pinky Sherman and Machine Gun Jimmy Savell have got the Temple kid. They're holding up the Baron for a million bucks and they'll bump that kid in the bargain. I don't figure they'll ever try to get her back. They've got to cover their trail. They left Rork Shapiro in town to collect the mazuma while they lammed for the hideout. Now that Shapiro's been caught, no telling what they'll do. Might get panicky, bump the kid, and take a powder. We're going after them tonight . . . Who . . . *We.* Me and Candid Jones. Sure, he's here. Read all about it in the Chronicle tomorrow.

Now here's what I called you about. We got Rork to talk a little and he said Black Benny had a hideout near El Paso, Texas. But Rork Shapiro didn't know where it was himself. I figured you knew that Temple gang in the old days as well as anybody did. And that you might have a lead as to where the El Paso hideout might be. Do you know?

You don't . . . What did you say? . . . Oh! You *can* find out! Are you sure? . . . Swell, Poppa, I could kiss your hanging ears! Now get this: Candid

and I are taking a plane out of here tonight for Texas. We'll put up at the Gunnyson there. But you find out where the hideout is and put it on the police teletype and I'll pick it up at El Paso h.q. . . . You got that?

Thanks, Poppa, you great big handsome man! My only regret is that you aren't along to lay one of 'em on the nose . . . And listen, if you see Dinah, put in a good word for me. She says she'll never speak to me again . . . What . . . Your wife said that to you once . . . And now you have three kids . . . Poppa! Such a thing to say! Good night, pal, and take it easy . . .

City Editor
The Chronicle
New York, N. Y.

Hotel Lincoln
Ann Arbor, Mich.
April 2

DEAR Rasputin:

Well, you've got your story by this time. I just finished banging it out right here in the hotel room and I'm in a hurry, so pardon the errors. I just called Poppa Hanley for some info, and things look rosy. So here's what happened since I got to this collitch burg, which is a nice town by the way.

I had a lot of hard luck at first. I went out to the Temple home which was on Ann Arbor road north. It was a modest little dive that cost around fifteen grand. Just a quiet place, which surprised me, knowing how Al Temple went in for luxury when he was in the big city.

I tried to get in but there were police all over the place. Finally I sneaked in the back door and I stood around among a lot of brass hats and cops and tried to look like a gum-heel. But who —of all people—should recognize me but Baron Temple himself. He hadn't changed much. He still looks like the good old gorilla he was and he still has killer's eyes. There's nothing more he'd like to do at the moment, I'll bet, than have tea for two with Black Benny Dorgan.

Anyway, I was standing there when Temple got up and came over and hit me one on the jaw. I am proud to say I remained on my feet and let him have one back in the bread basket which I saw was big and soft. He woofed and then started cursing. "That guy's a newspaperman!" he yelled. "His name's Daffy Dill and he works on a New York sheet and I'm damned if I have to have reporters in my house!" The brass hats agreed with him.

When I picked myself up off the sidewalk, a guy with a fedora hat stuck on the back of his head like a collitch kid came up to me. At that point, I almost didn't give a damn whether Al Temple got his kid back or not. But I'd seen her picture inside and she really is a cute youngster, chief, tiny and blond and pretty.

The guy in the fedora introduced himself. "My name's Browning," he said. "Ed Browning. Ann Arbor Evening Mail. You're Daffy Dill. I've heard of you."

"Glad to know you," I said, figuring we'd be friends. "How does a guy go about getting the news in this burg?"

"He doesn't," Browning said, sneering a little. "I'm the only guy who gets news in this town. I've got ins. Nobody else has. And that goes for you. Oh—I might tip you off to a couple of things now and then. Stick around."

Boy, was he hot! He was laying for me because I was the city slicker. And he rubbed it in.

I finally left him and went down to police h.q. to see what I could see. They threw me out there too.

After that I went to FBI headquarters and got nothing. I felt pretty low. So I went back to the hotel.

When I unlocked my room and went in, there was a man in my room. He was a pretty big fellow, kind of homely, his face filled with freckles, his hair shiny as bright copper. He looked pretty familiar but I couldn't place him for a moment. He had a candid camera—one of those Leicas—in his lap and he was toying with it when I spotted him. He saw me and he slipped the camera inside his coat on a strap and then he got up. He had a strong jaw and clean eyes and I couldn't help liking the bird before he'd spoken. There was an air about him that meant Business with a capital B.

"You're Daffy Dill," he said quietly. "I've seen you before at the homicide bureau. But you don't know me. You pal around with Poppa Hanley. I pal around with Inspector Harry Rentano. My name is Jones. Candid Jones."

"Candid Jones!" I said, surprised and pleased. "Well, shut my mouth. It's a pleasure." And we shook hands. "What are you doing out here?"

"I'm a working man again," he said. "Back on the flatfoot trail. I haven't given up photography, but I'm doing special jobs as an Apex operative when they ask me. Apex Insurance Company had Edith Temple insured for fifty grand. They sent me out to protect themselves—get the kid back if possible. I suppose you're covering for the Chronicle."

"I'm supposed to be," I said. "But this isn't much of a town for covering anything but your own fair form with a blanket."

"I know," he said. "It's a closed shop. Have you got any ideas on this thing at all?"

I said: "Poppa Hanley figured that Temple's former gang had double-crossed him and had pulled the snatch."

He said: "Poppa Hanley happened to be right. Rork Shapiro is in town. But the others aren't."

I asked him if he were sure.

"Sure?" he said. "Look, Dizzy, I don't go off half-cocked like you do—"

"—such compliments!"

He grinned. "You can take it, eh? O.K. I know Rork Shapiro is in town. I got a picture of him yesterday. I had it developed. Take a look."

It was Rork Shapiro all right. He was just coming out of a dive and he was—as usual—smiling. "I got that from across the street," Candid said. "I used a two-inch telescopic lens. Makes a nice closeup, eh?"

"Candid," I said, "you warm the cockles of my foolish heart. But may I ask why you have paid me this visit?"

"Sure," Candid said. "I figured we ought to work together, Dizzy. You get the story. I'll take the pictures. And the both of us to take Black Benny Dorgan sooner or later."

"You're on," I said. We shook hands again and I began to like the cuss better and better. He had an iron grip and a slow smile.

"All right," I said. "You've got a lead. Maybe I have one. Follow me, my fran, and we shall see what we shall see."

We covered the dive and about eight o'clock Rork Shapiro came along to go in. We stepped out on either side of him. He was lightning fast. He went for a heater and I started to grab at his hand. At the same time, Candid Jones konked him one on the skull with a sap and then we herded him into a hired car. He was out for half an hour. Shapiro was. Candid plays for keeps.

We drove out to the home of a friend of Candid, Professor Wilbert Fotheringay. There we revived Rork Shapiro with some ice water. He came out of it with his same fixed smile.

"As I live and breathe," he sneered, "if it ain't Daffy Dill and Candid Jones! A lousy scribe and a would-be flatfoot. Still trying to make a living, eh, boys? Well, you ain't got nothing on me and you're going to pay through the nose for pulling this little job. In case you don't know it, guys, abduction is a criminal offense."

"You ought to know," I said. "You've done it often enough."

"Funny guy," said Shapiro, smiling coldly.

"Sure," said Candid Jones. "Daffy is a very funny guy and I don't like the way you said that." He let Shapiro have a flat open hand smack across the cheek. "Now suppose you start to talk, rat. Let's hear you spill the beans. You were in on that snatch, Rork."

"You're a liar," Shapiro said, trying to smile again and not doing so good because of Candid's slap.

"You're a liar," Candid said. "And here's the man to prove it. Meet Professor Wilbert Fotheringay."

"Why, I was out in the garden cutting violets when it all happened," said Shapiro.

"I know how we can make him tell the truth," said Fotheringay, stroking his white goatee.

"How?"

"By my lie detector," said Fotheringay. "It works excellently. I invented the machine all by myself out here during the winter nights. It's very ingenious."

He brought out the lie detector. It came in many parts. Fotheringay wrapped a bulb around Rork Shapiro's arm. Next, Fotheringay set up a motion picture screen at the other end of the room. Back by us, he plugged in a motion picture projector equipped to take a roll of transparent white paper which came off another roll affixed to the high blood pressure machine.

"Here is the *modus operandi*," Fotheringay explained at length. "The pressure bulb is fixed on the subject. Should the subject attempt to tell a lie, the pressure of his blood will jump alarmingly. In the manner in which an earthquake rocks a seismograph, that jump in pressure will make this pen jerk. This pen is registering the pressure in ink on the roll of paper. I turn on the projector and we see these bumpy lines enlarged on the screen and moving all the time. If Shapiro tells a lie, you will note an abrupt mountainous peak appear in place of the even bumps. You may begin, sirs."

He turned on the projector and we could see the pen line on the transparent paper transmitted to the silver screen at the other end of the room. The line kept moving steadily on and off the screen as it registered Shapiro's blood pressure.

Shapiro tried to break away but I held him. His eyes were furtive and a little frightened. He didn't like the lie detector. Candid Jones took out a pistol. It was a terrifically big cannon, a Lüger. Instinctively, I edged away from it. Shapiro's eyes popped when he saw it. Candid said: "You handle the questions, Daffy. I'll handle the slugs in case Rork blows his top."

I stood up and shook a finger in Shapiro's face. "You were in on the Temple snatch, Rork," I said evenly.

"No, damn it!" Shapiro shouted. "I wasn't! I didn't have anything to do with it!"

We looked at the screen. It looked as though the Rocky Mountains had just moved in on the flatness of the Arabian desert.

Fotheringay said: "Oh, how he lied! Oh, I never saw the machine register lies with such verve as this time!"

"The truth," said Candid Jones. "You can't beat a machine, Rork. It's got the finger on you and you'd better play ball."

Rork Shapiro was panting. It was beginning to get him and you couldn't blame him very much. He pleaded, "Listen boys, you've got me all wrong. Give me a break. I'm clean on this—"

The lie detector registered Pike's Peak. Fotheringay said, "Oh, he's still lying, gentlemen. He's still lying."

I said: "You'd better come clean, Rork. You can't beat that machine. You were in on that snatch, weren't you?"

"Yes!" he shouted. "For Pete's sake yes! Now leave me alone! That damn thing will drive me nuts!"

"And the rest of the gang consists of Black Benny, Pinky, Machine Gun Jimmy Savell?"

"Yes—yes—"

"He's telling the truth now," Candid said, standing in front of Shapiro so that he could not see the screen. "Keep talking, Rork. Where've they gone?"

"I don't know," said Shapiro. "I don't know—"

"A lie," said Fotheringay. He sounded very blithe.

"Where've they gone?" Candid asked, his voice steely.

"—El Paso—Texas—" Shapiro faltered, his eyes rolling a little and his face as white as death. "Benny's got a hideout there—I don't know where the hideout is—I swear that's the truth—I don't know where it is—"

"That does it," I said. "I can find out where the hideout is myself."

Candid Jones said: "O.K. then. Let's turn this rat over to the G-men. They make guys talk even without lie detectors."

So we left and went back to Ann Arbor and turned Shapiro over to the federal agents. And afterwards I told Candid that Professor Fotheringay's lie detector was a wonderful thing but Candid only laughed. "Why, Daffy," he said, "that damn lie detector wasn't worth the powder to blow it to hell. Every time Shapiro said a word, his blood pressure registered a mountain on the screen. Even when he was telling the truth! That's why I stood in front of him so that he could not see the screen. Fotheringay is a nice enough old coot but when it comes to inventions, he's terrifically terrible."

So that's how it was. Candid and I are flying down to Texas at 1 a.m.—a mere—bare hour. Reach me at the Gunnyson hereafter. And for Pete's sake, try and make Dinah understand that I am, after all, just a nice guy trying to get along.

May you avoid banana peels,

Daffy.

(*Radio Bulletin: Station KDX El Paso, 9 a.m. April 3.*)

GOOD morning, ladies and gentlemen. Your Renno—R-e-n-n-o—reporter is on the air with the news of the world. Ann Arbor, Michigan. Rork Shapiro, one of the members of the Black Benny Dorgan gang which snatched the daughter of Al Temple, former rum-runner and public enemy, was shot and killed by government men last night when he attempted to make a getaway while being transferred from FBI headquarters to a local jail. At the same time it was learned that his amateur captors, Daffy Dill, a newspaper reporter, and Candid Jones, an insurance sleuth, had arrived in El Paso via the crack airliner Sky Queen, hot on the trail of the others in the gang. G-men also are on the way to that city and local police have been warned that Black Benny Dorgan is

hiding out near there. There has been a break in the Temple case. No ransom will be paid. John Wilston, chief of the FBI, promises the apprehension of the kidnapers within twenty-four hours . . . Rome, Italy. Mussolini today announced—

NA33 RH—TRY NEW YORK NY 923A APR 3
DAFFY DILL
HOTEL GUNNYSON
EL PASO TEX
OH BOY OH BOY OH BOY STOP YOU'RE GOING GOOD STOP DON'T GET YOURSELF KILLED NOW AND SPOIL EVERYTHING STOP GET THEM DAFFY AND YOU GET A BONUS AND THAT GOES FOR YOUR FRIEND JONES THE OLD MAN 934A

NA34 RH—TRY NEW YORK NY 923A APR 3
DAFFY DILL
HOTEL GUNNYSON
EL PASO TEX
TELL YOUR FRIENDS TO STOP PERSUADING ME THAT YOU'RE A GREAT GUY STOP I WOULDN'T MARRY YOU IF YOU WERE THE FIRST MAN ON EARTH STOP IF I NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN IT'LL BE TOO SOON STOP ADD ANY REMARKS YOU CAN THINK OF IN A SIMILAR VEIN STOP PLEASE TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF MANIAC STOP IT'S NOT THAT I CARE STOP WHAT WOULD YOUR MOUSE DO WITHOUT YOU DINAH 935A

(Police Teletype Message: New York to El Paso)

. . . FOR INFORMATION OF EL PASO POLICE . . . DAFFY DILL NEWSPAPER REPORTER DUE IN EL PASO BY NOW . . . HEREWITH MESSAGE FOR HIM AND YOU . . . BLACK BENNY DORGAN'S HIDEOUT NEAR EL PASO AS FOLLOWS . . . LARGE GRAY FARM HOUSE ON TUELTICAPI ROAD NEAR NEW MEXICO BORDER AND LAS VEGAS . . . DORGAN PROBABLY THERE NOW WITH PINKY SHERMAN AND MACHINE GUN JIMMY SAVELL . . . ALSO KIDNAPPED CHILD . . . APPROACH WITH CAUTION . . . THESE MEN ARE HEAVILY ARMED AND WILL SHOOT TO KILL . . . LT HANLEY NY HM SQ . . .

"HELLO? Hello, operator. Please connect me with Room 413 and make it snappy . . .Hello? Is that you, Candid? . . . This is Daffy. I'm so hopping mad I could eat a cactus plant and wash it down with hydrochloric acid! . . . What's the matter? We've been taken, that's all. By these hick town cops! They wouldn't give me Poppa Hanley's message! . . . No, they wouldn't! They told me to go jump in the lake and they said they didn't believe I was Daffy Dill! That's just an out for them! You get the idea, don't you? They want to grab the glory of knocking off the gang and getting back the kid. They just walk into a setup and they want the laurel wreath. I'm fighting mad! . . . Where am I? . . . Downstairs in the lobby. I'll be right up. . . . And I even bought me a rod downtown. A nice big shiny Colt grave-scratcher, a genuine six-shooter some cowhand turned in. It was all primed and ready to go and this happens.—*Wait a second!*—Candid, can you hear me? . . . Listen . . . I just saw Pinky Sherman . . . He went by the lobby desk and got in the elevator—there he goes . . . He's on his way up! Listen, pal, take it easy. I think he's on his way up to our room! I'm coming up myself. Watch your flesh. . . ."

(Police Radio Call to El Paso Prowl Cars, 10:30 a.m. April 3.)

. . . Calling car sixty-three . . . calling sixty-three . . . proceed at once to Hotel Gunnyson . . . gun fight in Room 413 . . . man seriously wounded . . . calling sixty-three . . .

(Radio Bulletin: Station KXX, El Paso, 11 a.m. April 3.)

FLASH! We interrupt this broadcast to bring you a special newscast. Flash! Pinky Sherman, notorious

killer in the Black Benny Dorgan gang which kidnaped Edith Temple, was shot and killed at the Hotel Gunnyson thirty mintues ago. According to George Gunnyson, manager of the hotel, Pinky Sherman attempted to enter a room engaged by Candid Jones and Daffy Dill. Sherman, feeling that Jones and Dill were too close on the trail of the child, was going to kill them both and cover the gang's trail. Daffy Dill, however, saw Sherman go upstairs and followed him with a gun, having called Candid Jones on the phone to warn him. Sherman went into the room shooting, missed Jones and took a shot at Dill behind him. Jones then fired five bullets into Sherman's body. It was thought at first that Dill was gravely wounded, but at the Damatian Hospital it was disclosed that the bullet had merely creased his head and knocked him out . . . Kindly read your daily newspaper for details . . .

The El Paso Evening Clarion, April 3.

DORGAN GANG ESCAPES FROM POLICE TRAP!
ABDUCTORS FLEE WITH MICH. CHILD

(Copyrighted 1937)

Black Benny Dorgan, brains of the sinister Dorgan gang which snatched Edith Temple on March 31st, escaped from an isolated hideout near the New Mexican border early this afternoon, carrying with him the two-year-old child and the last remaining member of the gang, Machine Gun Jimmy Savell.

It was believed that Dorgan was tipped off by a short wave radio set which was found at the farmhouse. The police informed squad cars by short wave to proceed to the house and Dorgan fled at the alarm . . .

NA67 THG—WS NEW YORK NY 420P
APR 3
DAFFY DILL
HOTEL GUNNYSON
EL PASO TEX
A FINE NEWSPAPERMAN YOU TURNED OUT TO BE STOP WHY DON'T YOU GIVE YOURSELF UP STOP SCOOPED AGAIN STOP IT'S GETTING TO BE A HABIT WITH YOU SO I'M NOT SURPRISED THE OLD MAN 427P

NL98 JH—SWE EL PASO TEX 500P
APR 3 COLLECT
CITY EDITOR
NEW YORK CHRONICLE
NEW YORK NY
ONE MORE PEEP OUT OF YOU AND I'LL PROMISE TO KNOCK YOUR BLOCK OFF THE FIRST AND LAST TIME WE MEET STOP HOW DO YOU EXPECT A GUY TO REPORT A STORY WHEN HE'S OUT COLD FROM TAKING A SLUG ACROSS THE SIDE OF HIS HEAD QUESTION MARK YOU'RE THE KIND OF GUY WHO DROWNS BABY DUCKS STOP NOW LAY OFF OR ELSE CANDID JONES 510P

Hospital Discharge

Patient: Daffy Dill. *Address:* 45½ West 45th Street, New York, N. Y. *Admitted to hospital:* April 3rd, 10:45 a.m. *Case*: Gunshot wound on left temple. *Remarks:* Bullet made four inch furrow flesh wound. Patient unconscious for two hours. Responded readily to treatment. Six stitches in wound. Temperature 101 time of admittance. Normal when discharged. Patient asked to be discharged on own responsibility at 5:30 p.m. Discharge granted. (Signed)

J. Lewis Coxe, M.D.
Attending Physician

NA23 RMX—LP NEW YORK NY 1002P
APR 3
DAFFY DILL
HOTEL GUNNYSON
EL PASO TEX
GET IN TOUCH WITH ME PRONTO
POPPA HANLEY 1006P

"HELLO? Listen, my young Texan telephone operator, I'm calling long distance. The name is Daffy Dill, the destination is the New York Homicide Bureau, the desire is that you make it as snappy as possible . . . Ah me, what a head. Gosh, Candid, it

feels like a balloon! . . . Hello? Hello! Is that you, Poppa? . . . How are you? Oh, I'm O.K. Me and bullets always agree, you know that. . . . I got your wire and I called right away. And listen, no more of that teletype stuff. Those lunkheads pulled a phoney on me and tried to take Black Benny Dorgan all by themselves. Did they botch it! Imagine putting a call out to radio cars! And Dorgan heard them a mile off. I don't know where he is now and neither does anybody else. . . . *What? You* do? . . . Candid, Poppa says he knows where Black Benny Dorgan is heading. Hold your hat, we'll be leaving . . . Go on, Poppa . . . Yeah . . . Yeah . . . Well, I'll be damned! Just a second, Poppa. Listen, Candid. Poppa says that Black Benny was picked up in 1926 on suspicion of having lifted the Mogul Diamond. Maybe you remember—you do? Well, Poppa says that Black Benny's alibi was that he had been at the Two Bar X Ranch twenty miles east of Needles, California, at a small town named Yucca. Poppa says it's a regular gangster's haven—you know—like that hotel dive in Hot Springs, Arkansas? . . . Hello, Poppa? What do you suggest this time? . . . Uh-huh. They went by car no doubt but we may be wrong. . . . Uh-huh. If we take a plane and get there first—I get it, I get it. Okay, Poppa. Thanks a million. We'll see you in the only city in the world in a couple of days. Candid says to remember him to Rentano. So long, Poppa!"

NA56 TYU—LS NEW YORK NY 1030P
APR 3
CANDID JONES
HOTEL GUNNYSON
EL PASO TEX
PLEASE TAKE CARE OF DAFFY AND SEE THAT HE DOESN'T GET SHOT AGAIN STOP I'M DEPENDING ON YOU DINAH MASON 1035P

NA58 TYU—LA NEW YORK NY 1034P
APR 3
CANDID JONES
HOTEL GUNNYSON
EL PASO TEX
WILL PAY YOU A GRAND IF YOU BRING BACK FOTO OF BLACK BENNY DORGAN IN ACTION STOP WILL ALSO LAY OFF DAFFY AS REQUESTED STOP HOW ABOUT IT QUESTION MARK THE OLD MAN 1040P

NA34 FGH—MH EL PASO TEX 1035P
APR 3
CITY EDITOR
NEW YORK CHRONICLE
NEW YORK NY
HAVE ALREADY PROMISED CANDID TWO GRAND FOR FOTO YOU CHEAPSKATE STOP TELL DINAH SHE'S CRAZY ABOUT ME STOP YOU'LL HAVE YOUR STORY BEFORE NOON TOMORROW OR ELSE DAFFY 1039P

F-L-A-S-H
LAS CRUCES, N.M.—(AP)—TEMPLE KIDNAPERS KILL STATION ATTENDANT

B-U-L-L-E-T-I-N S-U-B F-L-A-S-H
LAS CRUCES, NEW MEX. APRIL 3: TWO MEN, BELIEVED TO BE BLACK BENNY DORGAN AND MACHINE GUN JIMMY SAVELL, SHOT AND KILLED A GAS STATION ATTENDANT ON THE SANTA FE TRAIL NEAR HERE TODAY.

THE GANGSTERS WERE HEADING WEST. LAS CRUCES POLICE BELIEVE THE MURDER WAS COMMITTED TO PREVENT IDENTIFICATION AFTER THE MEN HAD STOPPED FOR GAS. JAMES MORRELO, A SHOE SALESMAN, PULLED INTO THE STATION JUST AS THE TWO MEN ROARED OFF IN A BLACK CADILLAC. HE FOUND THE ATTENDANT'S BODY, IDENTIFIED LATER AS JOHN MARX, AND NOTIFIED THE POLICE. (MORE TO COME.)

"HELLO? Hello, is this El Paso airport? This is Candid Jones at the Hotel Gunnyson . . . Yes . . . I want to charter a fast cabin plane for two people to fly to Yucca, Arizona,

immediately . . . You have. Good. We'll be right over."

(Radio Bulletin: Station WEXX, Phoenix, Arizona, 11 *p.m. April* 3.)

YOUR radio newsman is on the air again to bring to you the latest news flashes from coast to coast . . . El Paso, Texas: G-men have chartered a plane and are making ready to fly west on the trail of Black Benny Dorgan and Machine Gun Jimmy Savell, kidnapers of little Ruth Temple. Dan Purman, chief of the Federal western division, believes that Dorgan is planning to hide out somewhere in the desert. All state police have been notified and a dragnet is being spread to cover all main highways. . . . Ann Arbor, Michigan: Mrs. Al Temple collapsed here tonight when told by police that there was little hope of finding her two-year-old daughter alive. Police are of the opinion that Dorgan and Savell have slain the girl and hidden the body rather than be hindered in their escape by her presence.

Flash! Here's a last minute news bulletin which just came in hot off the wire. *Flash!* Black Benny Dorgan and Machine Gun Jimmy Savell are in Arizona! They broke across the state line at nine thirty tonight and killed two state policemen in a running gun battle at the border station. The police were killed by machine gun bullets believed to have been fired by Jimmy Savell. The gangsters' black Cadillac was found deserted fifteen minutes later, indicating that they took another car by force and are still heading west. There was no sign of Edith Temple in the deserted Cadillac. . . .

"HELLO . . . Get me the New York Chronicle. . . . Hello, is this the Old Man? . . This is Poppa Hanley down at h.q. I've been sitting at this desk all night with Rentano, chewing my fingernails. We wondered if you'd had any word from either Daffy or Candid. . . . You haven't heard? Hell. . . . They should have been at Yucca hours ago. It's six P.M. *now* . . . Okay, then. Give us a ring when you hear anything. . . ."

"HELLO, police headquarters? This is Al Temple speaking. The missus is feeling pretty bad boys, and she asked me to give you a buzz again. Have you had any word yet? You ain't? . . . Well . . . Sure, boys, sure, I know you're doing your best. . . . If I could just wrap these hands around that dirty little rat's throat—Dorgan I mean. Yeah, yeah, you're right. That don't do no good . . . Well . . . Look, boys, gimme a ring the first thing you hear from the west, heh? Thanks a helluva lot, boys. . . ."

(Radio Broadcast: Station KXEX Los Angeles, 9 *a.m. April* 4.)

A STRANGE, uncanny silence has settled upon the Temple kidnaping. There have been no new developments since it was established that Black Benny Dorgan had entered Arizona. His trail seems to have been lost completely. It is believed that Dorgan and Machine Gun Jimmy Savell are heading for the California border. All state police have been asked to guard all entry places and the Los Angeles police have erected a barricade at Blythe. Fixed machine guns are ready to rake any car which does not stop at the border when signalled. Repercussions of the incident in El Paso yesterday. . . .

NA23 TR—EM NEEDLES CAL 1001A
APR 4
CITY EDITOR
NEW YORK CHRONICLE

NEW YORK NY
FLASH WE KILLED SAVELL CAPTURED DORGAN RESCUED EDITH STORY FOLLOWS PIX GOING BY WIRE DAFFY 1005A

(The New York Chronicle, Noon Stocks Edition, April 4.)

EXTRA!
EDITH SAFE!
DORGAN CAPTURED!

SAVELL KILLED IN GUN BATTLE WITH REPORTER

Daffy Dill and Candid Jones Hire Plane to Trap Kidnapers on Desert

CHILD IS ALIVE

Exclusive to the New York Chronicle
BY DAFFY DILL
(See Special Wirephotos on Page 5)

NEEDLES, CALIF. April 4: We found Edith Temple safe and sound in the dawn of a desert day on the Arizona border this morning. By we I mean a gentleman named Candid Jones and myself. We not only found Edith Temple, we also found Machine Gun Jimmy Savell and Black Benny Dorgan. And when the smoke had cleared away, Jimmy Savell was dead. . . .

Needles, California
April 4
Via Air Mail

Lt. William Hanley
New York Homicide Bureau
Centre Street
New York, N. Y.

MY very own fran, Poppa:

Undoubtedly you are reading all the hooey in the Chronicle at the moment. That's why I'm writing to tell you the whole yarn. No matter how you write it a newspaper story is still a newspaper story and you have to leave out some things and put in others. So here goes the opus. Hang on.

Your tip last night in El Paso was hot stuff. Poppa, you can be very proud of having hit the nail on the nose.

Right after you called, Candid chartered a four place Cinna monoplane, a nice little red job. It cost us five hundred bucks. We went down to the airport around midnight and we met the pilot, a nice enough guy named Phil Merry.

"Where bound, gents?" Merry said when we got in.

"Yucca," I said. "Can you make a night landing?"

"I've got flares," said Merry. "We can make a landing easy there. They got a stretch of desert cleared off. Emergency landing field for VTH Lines, you know, the transcontinental ships."

Candid said: "And don't spare the horses. We're in a hell of a hurry."

"What'd you say your names were?" Merry asked, peering.

"We didn't say," I said, "but since you ask they're Daffy Dill and Candid Jones."

"Why," Merry said then, "you two guys are chasing the Temple snatchers!"

"Right the first time," I said. "Shall we away?"

We awayed all right. It got under Merry's skin and he was a right guy. Gosh, Poppa, he didn't even want to get paid when he learned we were after those two rats. He took us up to 15,000 feet and we stayed there all the way, hell bent for leather. That ship could fly and Merry made it do tricks.

Now Merry had a short wave radio set in his ship and he gave us an idea how to work the contraption and Candid and I listened in to hear what we could hear. Pretty soon the amateurs started buzzing back and forth and—what a break for us—two of them got hot on the Temple kidnaping. They started talking about how Dorgan and Savell had switched cars, how they'd got into Arizona.

Along about five A.M. when the sun was coming up back of us nice and red

like your nose after three drinks, Candid got a flash on the short wave set that nearly knocked him over. And that guy is a pretty cool customer, let me tell you.

"Daffy," he said, "get this. Black Benny knocked off another gas station guy no more than an hour ago. But the guy lived to tell the tale. He said they were in a gray Buick and heading for Cross Mountain near Sandy Creek . . . Ask Merry where we are now."

I tapped Merry on the shoulder and gave him the business.

"We've been running behind time," Merry said. "A couple of head winds here haven't been any help. We just passed Rock Butte ten minutes ago. I can pick up the Cross Mountain road easily if you say the word. Daylight's due to break anyhow. There's the sun."

I said: "Do that little thing, Merry."

Those mountains didn't look too nice for landings. Arizona is a funny state, Poppa. It's got the flattest deserts, the biggest rivers and dams, the nicest cattle country and the damnedest crags and canyons you ever laid a glimmer on.

About twenty minutes later on the other side of Cross Mountain going downhill toward Yucca, we picked out a lone car traveling like the wind. We didn't come down much for two reasons: mountains and not wanting Dorgan to be suspicious of the ship. But we could see that car plain as day. It still had headlights on and it was gray. The sun was up pretty well then.

"Well," Merry said, "those guys have got to go across the Mongo Desert west of Cross Mountain. It's a flat lake bed about ten miles long but there's one part they call the Devil's Floor where the highway passes through a maze of petrified stalactites. What I mean is, a car has to stay on the road. If it touched those stalactites, the tires would blow out and the car would be tossed all to hell."

Candid nodded as though he understood but I didn't get it.

"How come?" I asked. "What's the bee in your fedora?"

"Why," Merry replied, "it's a nice highway. I'll beat them there in the ship and I'll land on the highway. There are no poles no wires, no nothing. Then I'll taxi the ship around facing them and kick over the prop. They can do three things. Hit a whirling prop head on, hit the stalactites and crash, or stop. My comrades, I have seen the Devil's Floor and you can take my word for it—they'll stop."

"No sooner said than done," I said. "Descend, Merry."

MY ticker was rubbing against my Adam's apple on that landing. The roadway looked like a strip of toothpaste when we tried to land on it. But this Merry was O.K. and he set her down with nary a jitter and we finally taxied to a stop. He jazzed the engine and shot the tail around to face east on the highway.

"No," Candid said. "They could sneak by under a wing maybe. Stick her right across the lanes."

So we parked the monoplane right on the highway north and south so that a streamlined eel couldn't have passed on either side without going off into the Devil's Floor.

And this Devil's Floor was well named. A pack of sharp knife-like spears sticking straight up off the lake bed like a bad dream. Solid rock, they were, and very nasty.

"I give them ten minutes," Candid Jones said. "How about it, Daffy?"

"I don't know," I shrugged.

"Just about that," said Merry. "They

ought to be down the mountain now."

We got out of the ship. I took out my Colt .31 gravescratcher, the original ole six-shooter and I made ready to start fanning the hammer. Candid got out his Lüger 9 mm and his Leica camera and Merry went back to the plane and got out a 20 gauge double-barrelled shot-gun which he used to go coyote hunting from the plane with. This six-shooter I have is something, Poppa. I got it in El Paso and I'll give you a look when I get home again.

I said: "Candid, I'm going down the line about thirty feet and park the carcass behind one of them Devil's toothpicks. That way, I'll cover them from behind."

Candid said: "Good, Daffy. I'll go down about fifteen feet and cover them from the opposite side."

"How about me?" Merry asked.

"You want to be in on this?"

"Definitely," Merry said.

"Then you stand—no—get in the plane for cover and stick that riot gun out the window. If things go wrong, let 'em have it where it'll kill," Candid said quietly.

"No," I said. "You can kill Savell if you want but let's bring Dorgan in alive so there won't be any lynch law stuff in this."

Candid laughed coldly. "Lynch law? When those rats have a machine gun?"

"I know," I said. "But I think the G-men and the cops would like to have Dorgan to work on."

"O.K.," Candid said. "Let's go."

We went down the road. I found me a nice toothpick of rock and hid behind it and took a look for Candid but I couldn't find him anywhere. I saw Merry climb into the plane and I saw the maw of that shotgun cover the road.

It couldn't have been more than five minutes later when the gray Buick came highballing around the curve in the road and burst down upon the plane.

Black Benny Dorgan was driving and I never saw a guy look so surprised as when Dorgan saw that monoplane parked across the road. He started to swing around it and saw the stalactites. Then he jammed on the brakes and skidded to a harrowing stop, spinning half around.

He knew the jig was up. He came out of the car running fast for cover. Machine Gun Jimmy Savell came out on Candid's side, running low and firing a Tommy gun at nothing in particular. Inside the car, Edith Temple was crying, "Momma, momma!"

I came out from behind the toothpick and went after Dorgan. Over on Candid's side, the submachine gun began to keep a steady chatter and the slugs were slapping against the rocks. I heard the roar of the Lüger twice and then a terrific explosion. I realized that Merry had fired the shotgun.

The submachine gun stopped chattering. When I reached the highway I saw Jimmy Savell dead there, nearly torn in half from the buckshot, and two slug holes in his head from Candid's pistol.

Candid came running after Dorgan from the other side and we both closed on Black Benny, who whirled around, firing a series of wild shots at us which came close but no cigar, if you get me. Candid yelled to Merry not to use the other barrel on Dorgan.

"Daffy!" Candid cried then. "You take Benny! I've got to get a photo for the Old Man!"

Benny stopped running and turned to make a stand and I let him have one low with the Colt gravescratcher. I hit him in the left knee by luck and the

slug knocked him flat on his back.

"Great!" Candid yelled. "Caught him falling!" He had the candid camera up to his eye and was shooting pictures for all he was worth, his Lüger hanging in his other hand.

When Benny fell, I dove on top of him and I began to wallop him with everything I had, including the barrel of the gravescratcher. Candid finally pulled me off the ginzo and said: "For God's sake, Daffy, you were the guy who wanted him alive. Lay off. I think you've busted his skull. You clubbed him long enough for me to take eight pictures."

And that was the works.

We put the kid in the plane. Candid piled Dorgan and Savell back into the car and drove it. Then I flew off with Merry for Needles to get the story on the wire and have Candid's film developed.

By the time Candid reached Needles, the fotos had been developed. I put them back on the plane and Merry flew to Los Angeles and had them wired to the Chronicle by Associated Press Wirephoto Service. I parked in the Needles telegraph office and wrote my story and sent it off to the Old Man and it didn't take long before G-men were there in quantities and Edith Temple was in custody for return to her parents. I had to answer a lot of questions, my fran.

So that's the dope. Take it easy, many thanks, and I'll see you soon, Poppa. Yours in haste,

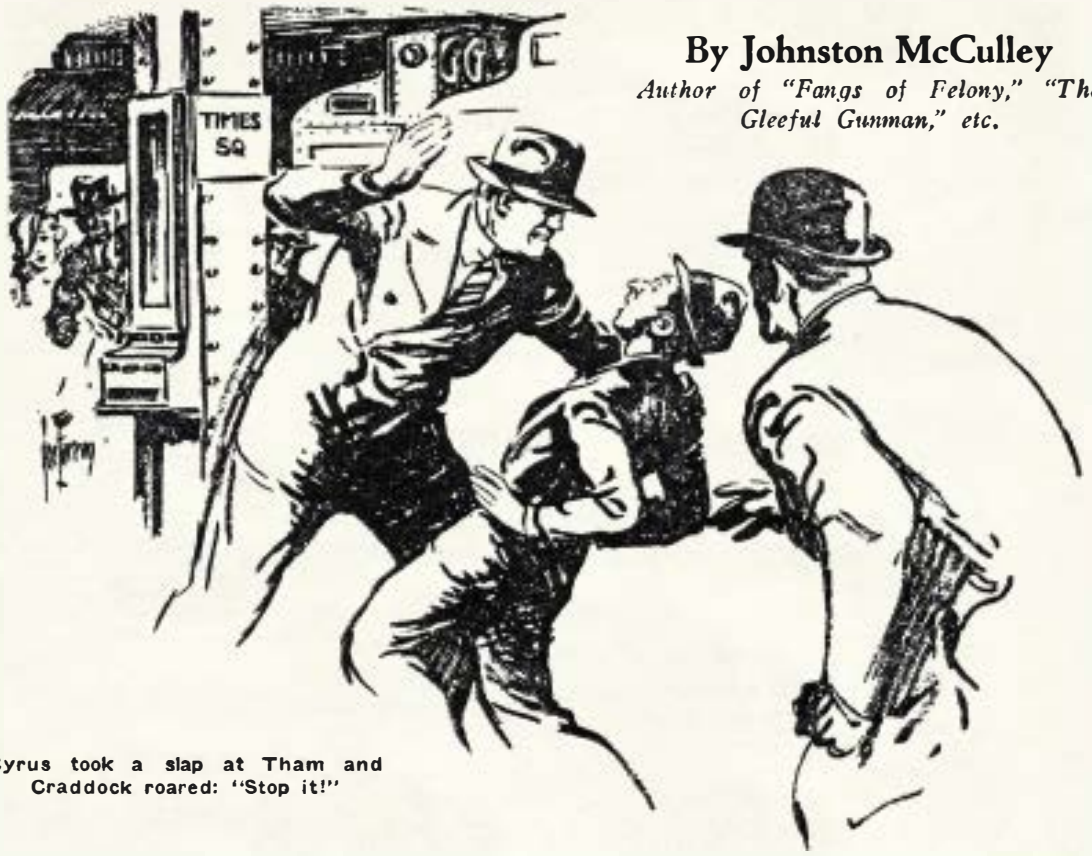
Daffy.

NA56 HJK—LK NEW YORK NY 200P APR 4
DAFFY DILL
NEEDLES CALIF
SCOOPED THE NATION STOP BEST JOB OF YOUR CAREER STOP CONGRATS THE OLD MAN 210P

NA67 YUI—P ANN ARBOR MICH 240P APR 4
DAFFY DILL & CANDID JONES
NEEDLES CALIF
MAYBE I'VE HAD YOU GUYS WRONG ALL MY LIFE STOP ANYWAY THANKS AL TEMPLE 245P

NA54 DFS—MH NEW YORK NY 247P APR 4
DAFFY DILL
NEEDLES CALIF
ALL IS FORGIVEN STOP COME HOME TO GARBO DINAH 250P

NA99 DSA—QW NEEDLES CALIF 300P APR 4
DINAH MASON
NEW YORK CHRONICLE
NEW YORK NY
FAIR WEATHER FRIEND HAH QUESTION MARK CANDID AND I ARE CATCHING THE SANTA FE CHIEF TODAY FOR HOLLYWOOD TO SEE THE REAL GARBO STOP WE'LL BE HOME MAYBE IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS STOP MEANWHILE THE CROWD WILL KINDLY STAND BACK STOP CALIFORNIA HERE I COME DAFFY 310P



Cyrus took a slap at Tham and Craddock roared: "Stop it!"

By Johnston McCulley
Author of "Fangs of Felony," "The Gleeful Gunman," etc.

Thubway Tham Meets a Racket

CRIME DOES NOT SHORT

Thubway Tham Declares: "It'th a Thad Day When an Honetht Dip Hath to Pinchhit for the Polithe!"

ON the crowded platform of the Times Square subway station, elbowed and jostled by human beings of all ages and descriptions, Thubway Tham waited for a downtown express.

Beg pardon? You don't remember Thubway Tham? Oh, surely! The little pickpocket who plies his nefarious trade in the subway, who speaks with a lisp, and who is being trailed eternally, and unsuccessfully, by Detective Craddock. Remember him now? Fine! To resume—

Thubway Tham waited on the crowded platform for the downtown express, and all the elbowing and jostling could not deter him from keeping close to the obese, red-faced man who seemed to radiate a glow of prosperity.

Thubway Tham had followed the obese man down from the street. Tham had been looking for a prospective victim, and the obese man looked like the answer to a pickpocket's prayer. Tham was out of funds, and needed a fat lift. He needed to replenish his

purse, for a man must eat, and also his room rent was due at the lodging house of "Nosey" Moore, the retired burglar, where Tham had a room he called home.

The downtown express roared into the station, the doors of the cars slipped open, the outcoming and ingoing passengers assaulted one another as usual, the doors slid shut again as guards thrust and squeezed the last unfortunates into the cars, and the express thundered on through the tube.

That was all normal.

Thubway Tham was close to his prospective victim in the crowded car. The obese man was grumbling as he clung to a strap and swayed. Thubway Tham brushed against him expertly and assured himself that what he suspected was an actual fact—the obese man carried a wallet in his hip pocket.

Carrying a wallet in a hip pocket is an invitation and a challenge to any dip. The experienced leather-lifter has only contempt for a man who guards his money no better than that. Such a man, a dip reasons, should be robbed to further his education.

"The thimp!" Thubway Tham muttered. "The thilly ath!"

Tham did not make a move until the train was sliding to a stop at Fourteenth Street. There, as the doors flew open and the fight to get in and out began, Tham's nimble fingers did their work; a wallet was extracted from the obese man's pocket and transferred to Thubway Tham's, and the latter was out on the thronged platform and starting for the street.

Thubway Tham had the wallet, and the next thing in order was to "ditch the leather." Wallets may be identified easily and be the cause of serious trouble if found in the wrong hands, but it is very difficult to identify ordinary currency. A dip is in grave danger until the leather is ditched.

Very grave danger.

As Tham went slowly up the stairs to the street in the midst of the elbowing crowd, his hand was in his pocket and his fingers were opening the wallet and removing its contents. Up in the street, Tham deftly took the empty wallet out of his pocket and dropped it into a convenient trash can, then walked along briskly, whistling, like any honest citizen going about his honest business.

There remained now only profit-taking. Around a corner, Thubway Tham brought out of his pocket what the wallet had contained. His eyes bulged and a growl of disgust escaped him. He had a dozen pieces of worn stage money—and a typewritten message on a slip of paper.

His careful work, the risk he had run, had profited him nothing. Tham's eyes blazed. He felt he had been defrauded. He glanced at the typewriting on the slip of paper which had been in the wallet with the stage money, and gasped as he read:

> When you picked my pocket, you were seen by one of my associates, who is tailing you now. Come to the address below and see me, and you will learn something to your advantage. Come as soon as possible, or else—!

Thubway Tham thrust the slip of paper back into his pocket and glanced around swiftly. Approaching him in very determined manner was a man of huge size and mean visage. His narrowed eyes seemed to flame as he looked at Tham, his mouth twisted, and from one corner of it came hissed words:

"Do as that paper said, dope! And make it snappy! I'll be seein' yuh later."

Then the other went around the corner and was gone.

Thubway Tham gulped. He took the slip of paper from his pocket again and saw a name and address at the bottom of it. The name was Richard Sampson, and the address was up in the West Seventies.

Tham perused the message once more. There seemed to be a definite threat in it. Of course, he could merely destroy the paper, laugh, dust off his hands and go his way. But that *"or else—"* deterred him. And his curiosity was aroused. He wondered what he could learn that would be to his advantage.

Half an hour later, Thubway Tham was in the West Seventies searching for a number. Having found it, he entered an apartment house and asked the elevator boy about Richard Sampson. He was taken to the fourth floor and directed to a door at the end of the hall.

Tham rang, and the door was opened promptly a few inches by the man who had accosted him downtown.

"You're sensible, mug!" the man at the door said, opening it wider. "Come in!"

THAM found the obese man sprawled comfortably in an easy chair in the living room, smoking a fat cigar and with one hand wrapped lovingly around a highball glass. The apartment was lavishly furnished. The place looked like money.

"Are you Mithter Thampthon?" Tham asked.

"I am, my man."

"I found thith wallet on the thtreet, and thinth the addreth ith in it, I brought it here. Thought maybe you'd lotht it. If there ith a reward, I thure can uthe the money."

The obese man laughed. "That's a new one!" he said. "You didn't find this wallet on the street. You picked it out of my pocket. And a good job it was, for I never knew when you did it. I like clever men. But clever men never lie to me. Sit down!"

"But I wath thayin'—!" Tham began.

"Sit down, mug!" the man who had opened the door said, and thrust Tham violently into a chair.

"Not so rough, Cyrus," Mr. Sampson instructed. "After all, this man is a clever dip and may be of value to us."

Tham concluded he did not like this man Cyrus. Nor was he especially enamored of Richard Sampson. He glanced from one to the other, and waited patiently until Mr. Sampson emptied his highball glass and smacked his lips.

"Now, we can talk," Richard Sampson began. "You, my friend, are a dip. That wallet has decoyed many dips to this apartment. One or two failed to respond, and— But let us not speak of sordid things. So many bodies are found floating in the river these days."

Thubway Tham shivered slightly. "What ith it you dethire of me?" he asked.

"In a word, my man, I am organizing dips. Why not? About everything else is organized. There is strength in organization, my man."

"I don't underthtand," Tham protested.

"There's nothin' between his ears but space, Boss," Cyrus put in plaintively.

"Be quiet, Cyrus! Give him time," Richard Sampson snapped. "I'll explain, my man. I'm putting pocket-picking on a business basis. I direct a

band of dips. I assign then to districts, shift them when necessary, tell them where and when to work. If one meets with disaster, I see that he gets bail and a mouthpiece. If he's jugged, I have him sprung. System! Coöperation! No waste motion!"

"I thee! But thith doeth not intereth me at all," Tham returned. "I am not a pickpocket. You have made a mithtake."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Mr. Sampson. "Hear that, Cyrus? He's becomingly modest. Says he isn't a pickpocket!"

"Whatever he is, I don't like his looks," Cyrus growled.

"Now, Cyrus, don't let yourself be prejudiced. Don't itch to handle him roughly." He faced Tham again. "I've decided you'll do, my man. Consider yourself one of my workers. Now, as to orders—"

"Whatever thith game ith, I don't want any part of it," Tham interrupted. "Whatever I am ith my own buthineth. I don't need any organithation. I've got a thythtem of my own. Tho, I gueth I'll be thayin' good-by and be gettin' along."

Mr. Sampson laughed again. "You'll be the death of me!" he chortled. "Your serious face as you talk —one would almost think you meant it. Nearly had me fooled for a moment. Understand me, my man, you're *already* one of the organization, whether you want to be or not."

"Or else—!" Cyrus reminded grimly.

"I'll start you in the subway, since there is where I found you," Mr. Sampson continued. "At three tomorrow afternoon, start from the Times Square station and catch a downtown express as you did today. And get busy! I expect a good haul your first day with me."

"And don't forget you'll be watched," Cyrus warned. "Don't think you can sneak out of here and not do as you're told. We'll hunt you down and—"

"Now, Cyrus, don't frighten him," Mr. Sampson rebuked mildly. "Don't make him timid. A dip isn't at his best when he's timid. Don't start boasting, Cyrus, and tell him how you beat that fellow insensible last week for holding out."

"Whatever you say, Boss," Cyrus agreed.

"For the protection given you," Sampson continued, facing Tham again, "and for my trouble in directing your work, you will remit to me fifty percent of your take."

"I thould give you half?" Tham cried, astonished.

"And there'll be extra assessments from time to time," he was informed ominously.

"And don't try to argue!" Cyrus put in.

"If you're caught holding out— But you're far too sensible to try a thing like that," Mr. Sampson said. "I wish you'd been around here last week. One of the boys tried holding out, and what Cyrus did to him! You could hear him howl half a mile. We had to play the radio very loudly to drown his cries. Didn't we, Cyrus?"

"Yeah," Cyrus replied, smacking his lips in memory.

"That's all, my man," Sampson concluded. "Start at three tomorrow afternoon and do your work. You'll be tailed and watched by somebody. At exactly seven o'clock, be at the Eighth Avenue entrance of Madison Square Garden. Have the split ready, and I'll meet you and pick it up—or send Cyrus. Make me proud of you, my boy, on your first day with me!"

"Thith," Thubway Tham complained bitterly, "ith a racket."

"How quaintly he talks," Mr. Sampson exclaimed. "Doesn't he, Cyrus?"

"Yeah," Cyrus said. "This way out, dope!" . . .

AT two o'clock the following afternoon, Detective Craddock, strolling through Madison Square, his eyes alert to catch wanted malefactors, beheld Thubway Tham sitting on his favorite bench.

Tham seemed downcast about something. Craddock approached carefully and watched him. The expression in Tham's face was one of bafflement.

"Well, well!" Craddock said. "If it isn't my old friend, Thubway Tham. And looking blue! Isn't the world treating you right, boy?"

Tham looked up at him. "Tho I thee your ugly fathe again?" he moaned. "Are you thtill on the polithe forth, or have they got withe to you by thith time?"

"I still function as an officer," Craddock admitted, sitting beside him. "And one of these days—"

"Oh, I know!" Tham interrupted. "One of thethe dayth, you are goin' to catch me with the goodth and thend me up the river to the big houthe for a long thtretch. You have haid that tho often, Craddock, that I know it by heart. Thome day, thurprithe me by thayin' thomethin' new."

"Some wise man, Tham, said there is nothing new under the sun."

"He," Tham declared with feeling, "was a thimp! There ith thomethin' new almotht every day, and every one ith worthe than the one before!"

"Ah! I take it you're displeased with life?"

"I am on the thpot," Tham declared sadly.

Craddock showed concern. "Is that merely a figure of speech, my lad, or do you really mean it?"

"I mean it, Craddock. You polithe make me thick. Right under your nothe thingth happen and you never thee 'em. Honetht men are bein' mithtreated—"

"What's this all about, Tham?"

Tham regarded the detective carefully again before he spoke.

"I know all thorth of perthonth," Tham said. "I am a mixer—"

"You mix your fingers in the pockets of all sorts of persons, you mean."

"Now, Craddock, ith that kind? I am tryin' to tell you thomethin'. One of the perthonth I know ith a dip. He wath tellin' me thomethin' thtrange."

"Let's hear it, Tham."

"There ith, in thith man'th town, a perthon who utheth trickth to gets diph in hith power. Then he maketh them work for him and give him half the proceedth. He hath a plugugly or tho, and if the dip doeth not behave, he geth hith."

"I am commencing to understand, Tham."

"Then there ith hope for uth all," Tham retorted. "Thith friend of mine ith an honeth dip. He wanth to work alone, and not for thome thimp who ith runnin' a racket. He—"

"I see. This unknown is racketeering among the dips, huh?"

"Yeth, thir. The thame old protection game. You work for him, or elthe—"

"Suppose you just laugh and refuse?"

"Then," said Tham weakly, "there ith Thyruth."

"Who?"

"Thyruth."

"Oh! You mean Cyrus? Who's he and what does he do?"

"Thyruth ith the thtrong-arm man. My friend, the dip, athked me what to do. I am tryin' to think what to tell him. In a cathe like thith, Craddock, what would you do?"

Craddock grinned, then became serious. "This thing better be looked into. Did your friend tell you anything more?"

"Yeth. He ith ordered to thtart work thith afternoon at three at the Timeth Shquare thubway thation. He ith to be followed and watched, perphapth by thith Thyruth. At theven o'clock he ith to thhow up at the Eighth Armory entrance of Madithon Thquare Garden and thplit."

"Interesting," Craddock opined. "And what is your friend going to do about it?"

"That hath not been dethided."

"Do you happen to know the name and location of the gentleman starting to run this racket?"

"I," Thubway Tham said proudly, "am not a thtool pigeon. I thertainly have told you enough, Craddock. You are a detective—at leatht you get paid for bein'. It ith up to you to detect."

"And haven't you thought of any way in which you may help this mythical friend of yours, Tham?"

"Mythical?" Tham questioned, lifting his brows.

"Oh, well! We understand each other, Tham. You're a dip, and some day I'll land you. But just now, this other thing is bigger and calls for attention."

"Yeth. It ith a thythtem, an organization," Tham replied. "Coöperathion! No wathted mothion."

"Something tells me, Tham, that you have a plan, and that if I watched you closely—"

"You," Tham said, "couldn't watch anybody thlothely. It jutht ain't in you, Craddock. Well, I gueth I'll take a little thtroll."

"Going to play around the subway this afternoon?" Craddock wanted to know.

"Pothibly I thall take a brief ride in the tube," Tham informed him. "Why do you athk?"

"It's almost three o'clock, I notice." Craddock grinned.

"THO it ith!" Tham agreed. "What a cointhidenth! I wath jutht wonderin' if my friend would run acroth that plugugly thith afternoon. Maybe if he could pick a pocket and thlip a wallet into the plugugly'th coat—"

"But he might be seen picking the pocket."

"Yeth, that ith tho," Tham mused. "I wonder what he could do?"

"If he was sure somebody was near to protect him, he might pick a row with the plugugly, and the plugugly be arrested and sent in and held incommunicado so he couldn't send word to the Big Boy—"

"Yeth, that ith an idea," Tham said. "Well, Craddock, I mutht be gettin' along. Ath much ath I like your company, I know you have work to do."

Thubway Tham grinned, arose from the bench and wandered away. He went over to Broadway and walked at an ordinary rate of speed toward Times Square. At exactly three o'clock, he was on the platform waiting for a downtown express—and he knew that Detective Craddock had followed him and was watching him even now.

Tham glanced around the platform and discovered Cyrus playing at a gum slot machine. Tham sauntered toward him, after a rapid glance which assured him that Craddock was not far away. Cyrus glared and growled as Tham brushed against him.

"Keep away from me, dope! Take the next express, and get busy!" Cyrus hissed.

Tham gulped and gathered courage. His shrill voice rang out through the din.

"Who are you tellin' to get out of the way?" Tham cried. "Do you own thith thubway, maybe? Get out of the way yourthelf!"

"Are you screwy?" Cyrus hissed, his hands raising for a blow.

"Don't you thtrike me!" Tham wailed. "You take on thwing at me, you big ape, and I'll thlap you down!"

"Say, you—" The bewildered and infuriated Cyrus clutched Tham by the shoulder.

"Let me go, you ath!" Tham screeched. He kicked at Cyrus' shins, and the latter uttered a howl of pain. He took a slap at Tham, too, and Tham dodged. Then Craddock was on the scene.

"Stop it!" he roared, flashing his badge. "Come right along with me. We've been having too many of these subway platform fights."

"Now, offither—" Tham began.

"Shut up!" Craddock barked.

"What's the idea?" Cyrus howled. "This little guy's crazy. He began cussin' me out—"

"I heard and saw it all," Craddock broke in. "Come along! Hesitating, are you?"

Nippers flashed and encircled Cyrus' wrists, and Craddock jerked him along to the stairs, Thubway Tham trailing behind, the curious crowd parting to let them through.

On the street, Craddock went to the nearest box and rang for the wagon. When it came, he turned Cyrus over to the wagon crew.

"Keep him in the dark," Craddock instructed. "No phone calls."

"Hey, what's the idea?" Cyrus demanded. "I want to phone a mouthpiece. I'll have your badge for this, flatfoot!"

"In the dark!" Craddock repeated firmly to the wagon crew. "And you—" he added, facing Thubway Tham, "get on your way. I saw the whole thing, and you wasn't to blame. Get going!"

Tham went as far as the middle of the block, ignited a cigarette and waited. Craddock sauntered toward him after the wagon had departed down the street.

"Tham, when did you say your friend had to show up at Madison Square Garden for the split?" he asked.

"Theven o'clock at the Eighth Avenue entranthe. I thuppothe he will meet the Big Boy now, thinthe thith Thyruth ith in jail."

"That'll be interesting," Craddock said. "I wonder what your friend will do?"

Tham's eyes twinkled. "If I wath him," he replied, "I would be hopin' that a copper would be handy, becauth maybe the Big Boy might turn dip himthelf."

"I don't quite get that, Tham."

"You couldn't be ecthpected to, Craddock. It ith very deep," countered Tham. "Let uth hope, however, that thome brave offither of the law will be able to keep hith eyeth open and know what to do when he seeth a chance to do it. The Big Boy, who ith tryin' to make a racket out of pocket-pickin', ith a menath to the community."

"No doubt," Craddock agreed.

"He ith altho," Tham added, "a menath to dipth. . . ."

IT was about five minutes after seven when Thubway Tham sauntered along Eighth Avenue and approached

the entrance of Madison Square Garden. There was a throng in front of the big sports arena. The six-day bike race was on, and the fans were hurrying to watch the evening grind and sprints.

Tham saw Detective Craddock loitering at the fringe of the crowd, and Craddock saw Tham. They did not recognize each other's presence. Tham went on slowly, until he saw Mr. Richard Sampson standing in all his glory under the lights. Mr. Sampson seemed perturbed about something, and Tham sensed it was because he had received no report from Cyrus.

Catching sight of Tham, Mr. Sampson straightened, glanced around quickly, and gave Tham a warning look. Tham took a cigarette from his pocket, and a book of paper matches and prepared to light a smoke. He stopped directly in front of Mr. Sampson, struck a match, cupped his hands around the tiny flame and lifted them to the cigarette between his lips.

"It ith in a new wallet I bought, in the right hand pocket of my coat," Tham whispered from behind his cupped hands.

"Stall!" said Mr. Sampson. "Let me walk down the street a bit. Follow, and stop in front of me to light your cigarette again. Too many people here."

Tham stalled, and Mr. Sampson wandered on down the street and stopped to look into a show window. Tham gave Craddock a look full of meaning and slowly followed. When he came opposite Mr. Sampson, so close that the latter could touch him, Tham struck another match and pretended to be lighting his cigarette again.

"Get it!" he hissed.

Mr. Sampson put his hand into Tham's pocket and extracted the wallet and put it into a pocket of his own. As he worked, he spoke:

"Have it in a wad after this, you ass! Have you seen Cyrus?"

Tham puffed at his cigarette, tossed away the burnt match and pretended to be looking down the street as he replied: "Not thinthe early this afternoon. He wath arrethted in the thubway thation for thtartin' a fight."

"I'll have his hide for that!" Sampson growled. "You show up at the apartment at ten in the morning."

Tham started to walk on. And at that moment, Detective Craddock, who had witnessed everything and had realized what play to make, made a sudden rush forward, pressed Mr. Richard Sampson back against the wall, and snapped handcuffs on his wrists.

"Caught you at it!" Craddock roared. "Saw you with my own eyes pick this man's wallet out of his pocket."

"What ith thith?" Tham asked.

"This fellow got your wallet, my man. Look and see."

Tham felt of his pocket. "My wallet ith thertainly gone," he admitted, "but I don't know who got it."

"I saw him get it. A moment, till I frisk him." Craddock brought out the wallet. "Is this yours?"

"That happens to be my own wallet," Sampson declared. "You have made a mistake, officer. Take these confounded things off my wrists. I could have you broken for this. Ask the man. He'll tell you he never saw that wallet before." And Mr. Sampson's eye warned Tham to say just that!

Tham accepted the wallet from Craddock, looked at it, opened it and glanced at the meager contents.

"Thertainly it ith mine," Tham said. "It ith a new one I jutht bought.

Nothin' in it but thome paperth. Thee?"

"That settles it!" Craddock barked. "You'll come along with us and make an affidavit of identification of the wallet, my friend, and that'll make it unnecessary for you to appear in court, since I saw the crime with my own eyes. The wallet will have to be retained as evidence, of course."

"Yeth, thir," said Tham, meekly.

"But, I tell you—!" Richard Sampson blustered.

"Tell it to the judge!" Craddock broke in. "You'll do a handsome stretch for this in the Big House. We've had too much of you dips around here lately.. Making examples of a few."

"I never heard of thuch a thing," Tham said. "The very idea! A man can't even walk along the thtreet any more without thome thcroundrel robbin' him of hith wallet. It wath very fortunate, offither, that you happened to be tho clothe and thaw him. The polithe forthe ith great—coöperation, thythtem, no wathted effort!"

Not for Us

A GENTLEMAN named Ernest Vincent Wright has written a 50,000 word novel without once using the letter "e". He tied down the "e" bar on the typewriter and dodged all words using that letter.

As a curiosity, there is something to be said for this feat. Probably it could be duplicated with every letter in the alphabet.

Writers of detective stories, however, are urged to avoid this new form. It would lead to very awkward complications. If an asterisk were used instead of "e"s, for instance:

"J*d Park*r, Sp*cial Ag*nt of th* F*d*ral Bur*au of Inv*stigation, had a fri*nd on th* Stat* Polic*, anoth*r who was a d*t*ctiv*-s*rg*ant of th* Homicid* Bur*au of th* N*w York Forc*, and a sl*uth who work*d for an insuranc* company. Tog*th*r, on* night, th*y fac*d a machin* gun si*g* from a gang of raek*t**rs!

—*John South*

Bandit's Receipt

As the note fluttered from his hand, Tom Durkin looked into that yawning muzzle

In Which Tom Durkin Proves That C. O. D. May Also Mean: Caught on Details . . . !

By Robert H. Rohde

Author of "Death Goes to Sea," "The Kid vs. the Racket," etc.

A BLUSTERY, raw, December wind was knifing down off the river and the driver of the small coupé seemed, to Tom Durkin's keenly appraising blue eye. to be chilled to the marrow. Not only did he look cold, but he sounded cold.

He sat hunched deep in a heavy overcoat, raised collar and low-drawn hat brim leaving only the tip of a sharp nose exposed; and when he swung over to the curb and hailed Durkin, blissfully convoying blonde Lana Lang and her plump little payroll satchel across the meadows, his teeth were audibly chattering.

"I'm all twisted around," he complained. "Can't find my way at all. Maybe you could tell me how to get to this address."

As the coupé veered Durkin had snapped alert, let go his hold on Lana's arm and swung around so that his wide shoulders sheltered her and the satchel. For an instant, his hand hovered close to the holstered police positive on his hip, and at that instant the XLO Corporation's payroll was practically as safe as if the money had still been in the armored bank vault.

But the thin-blooded stranger, on a swift size-up, appeared no more sinister than his request. He hadn't even glanced at Miss Lang's bag. His attention, as he poked a crumpled slip of paper through the coupé's open window, was centered on Tom Durkin.

He held it there.

To Durkin, it was all natural and logical—commonplace. He had patrolled the East End's maze of meadow streets for two bleak years before he loaded his uniform with mothballs and went on detective duty, and he knew how easy it was for people unfamiliar with the section to lose their bearings there.

He hadn't, for just a flash, fancied the idea of that hidden face. But after all, what of it? Himself, he liked cold weather and could take a lot of it. Lana could too—and luckily, considering that tight-fisted old J. G. Showalter at XLO never let her use a company car or a taxi between the bank and the factory. The fellow in the coupé, though, was different. He didn't have enough of the old anti-freeze in his system, so why shouldn't he bundle up?

A man had to keep warm.

A cop who didn't think as fast as Durkin might have held onto a suspicion longer, but Durkin's faded as swiftly as it had risen. Automatically he reached for the paper slip and strained his eyes over its penciled scrawl.

It was half past four, and in the early twilight of winter, the visibility wasn't so good. But he could make out the writing clear enough, and as he read he blinked and groaned and went suddenly rigid.

What he saw was no hard-to-find East End address, but a couple of terse and devasting sentences:

This is a stick-up. If you want to live, don't reach for your gun.

As Durkin looked up, his fingers released the paper. A gust carried it into a bush in the vacant lot behind him and, caught there, it hung fluttering like a white flag of surrender.

Surrender too was in Tom Durkin's eyes after one blank second. He was staring into the muzzle of a pistol in a not-too-steady hand—a nervous hand set to jitter out a spray of death at the faintest sign of resistance.

"Easy, brother, on that trigger!" he counseled softly and his own hands, palms forward, lifted in a prompt, stiff, port-and-starboard Fascist salute.

LESS than a minute after it had stopped, the hijack coupé was moving again. Lana Lang's satchel was in it and Tom Durkin's service gun was in it, and when it had whisked around a corner it was irretrievably, untraceably gone. There was no tail plate, no tattling license number. The car itself was wholly undistinguished, the exact counterpart of several hundred others of the same popular make and model chugging around town. And there was no possible way, either, of tracing any part of that twelve thousand dollars in the satchel. All in small-bill cash divided among half a thousand envelopes, it was money that would circulate anywhere and any time without calling the slightest attention to itself.

Durkin's face was beet-red as he looked after the vanishing coupé. He made no effort to pursue it. That would have been just so much lost motion out there on the lonely meadows, and no one knew it better than himself. He stood and scratched his head and looked glumly at little Miss Lang.

Sixty short seconds ago he had been

Number One man with her—her hero. Now what was he?

She answered that herself. Sobbing, she told him: "Oh, Tommy, I know it wasn't your fault. He was so smooth, so smart, that—"

She stopped there because Durkin had moved suddenly away from her. As he swung she thought he meant to cut cross-lots with some desperate idea of heading off the hijacker, and she cried out in panic: "Let him go, Tom! You'll only stop a bullet!"

But Durkin was already halting then. In his hand again was the slip of paper that had brought his guard down. He had retrieved it in mid-flight as another gust lifted it dancing out of the bush, and he was holding it gingerly by a corner when he returned to her. He didn't, somehow, look so forlorn. The smile that jerked at his lips was a thin one and a wan one—but still a smile.

"A smart lad, right," he nodded. "But maybe he out-smarted himself. I'm holding this little souvenir, anyway. Who knows but what it's a receipt?"

It was ten minutes later when she learned what he had meant by that. They had reached the XLO office telephone then, after a breathless dash over the meadows, and Headquarters knew all that Durkin had to tell about the heisting of the payroll.

J. G. Showalter, the XLO Corporation's founder and sole owner, also knew and his always testy plump face was purple with wrath.

"A clue!" he rasped when Durkin turned from the phone and hopefully produced that ragged-edged bit of paper. "Devil take your clue! Fancy detective business be hanged! Why, damn it, you flopped on even the plainest and simplest kind of common every-day police work—flopped and cost me twelve thousand good hard dollars. There wasn't a cent of insurance on that payroll. It's all loss, dead loss."

Flushing, Durkin said briefly: "It happened. All I can do now is try to get the guy."

He laid the stick-up man's decoy slip on Lana's desk and pulled her goose-neck lamp around.

"This," he said, "may get him. In a minute I'll be able to tell you better."

At his side young Harvey Showalter, J. G.'s gilded nephew, leaned forward and read aloud the scribbled words.

"And you fell for it!" he grunted. "Made no attempt at all to call his bluff!"

"He was a green hand, a lot more scared than I was. I knew he'd shoot. The payroll was as good as gone with that rod covering me—and no dead hero would ever get it back. That's how *I* figured it."

Durkin's voice was hard. He didn't like Harvey, and he knew it was mutual. In all the months since frugal J. G. Showater had demanded and won a police escort for his payroll, thereby saving no small amount in insurance premiums, he hadn't exchanged a dozen word with XLO's heir apparent. But there was a chill of hostility between them; had been from that early day when Lana Lang had begun to smile out of dates with Harvey Showalter and spend so many of her evenings with red-headed, fast-working Sergeant Tommy Durkin.

The younger Showalter repeated: "You figured! And what's the idea now, Durkin? Is it going to be a graphology reading? Do you expect that handwriting is going to tell you anything about the crook?"

Durkin had fished out a pencil. Its point looked sharp enough to Lana, but

it didn't seem to please the pencil's owner. He flipped open a pocket knife and was scraping with it at the lead as he answered Harvey.

"Nope. The handwriting's disguised, it looks like. It's a better idea than that. You wait."

Scraping, he held the pencil directly over the paper so that a powdery graphite rain descended upon it.

"The regular powder's better," he said. "But this will do the trick. It'll tell me, anyway, whether I've got anything that'll help snap back that twelve grand."

Very gently he shook the paper until the lead scrapings covered the whole surface. Then, softly, he blew them away and leaned closer.

"Hurray!" he cheered. "Congratulations, everybody! We've got a fingerprint!"

HARVEY SHOWALTER'S jaw dropped and for an instant his naturally protruberant eyes were out on his cheeks.

"B-but there's a lot of prints!" he stammered. "And listen—how do you know they're not all your own?"

Durkin grinned.

"Most of 'em are," he nodded. "It's a good thing for a cop to know his personal prints—avoids a lot of confusion at times. I know mine as well as I know my face; know every whorl and loop of 'em. But there's a little stranger here, and that's the payroll pay-off."

He looked at Lana Lang and laughed.

"Yes—receipt!" he jubilated. "A receipt for twelve thousand dollars, with a signature that never can be denied. Everything else is just routine. We're bound to get our man!"

Harvey Showalter said, "Yes?" and said it skeptically. Durkin said, "Yes!" and said it confidently, and to Lana the difference in the tone of their voices summed up the essential difference between them — the difference that operated to make a cheap *table d'hôte* and a movie with Tom as the host so much more enjoyable than Harvey's expensive *à la carte* dinners and the glittering floor shows of the night clubs.

Spoiled early, Harvey had turned out a pessimist. He had a snap in the sales department. If there had ever been a week when he really earned half the salary he drew, it was a week that had escaped Lana's attention; but regardless he was always grouching. Once, when he had taken a couple of highballs too many, he had confided that only a rare faculty for picking the right horses enabled him to make both ends meet.

Tom Durkin was a born optimist. Lana knew it was hard work and good work that had brought him up out of what he called "harness" to detective duty; but Durkin himself insisted it as luck. He had called it luck when he took top marksmanship honors on the police pistol range. Everything was luck to him, a "swell break."

"I've had a lot of lucky things happen to me," he had told little Miss Lang at their first meeting, "but this assignment is the luckiest yet. My gosh, if the Skipper hadn't sent me out here today, I might've dragged out my whole life without knowing you existed. That would've been awful."

After gloomy Harvey Showalter, Tommy was a treat. The bright side was the only side he ever saw, and his reaction to that fingerprint was utterly characteristic. To him it was the handle of a leash with the lost payroll on the other end; and from the

moment of discovery he was himself again, cheerfully certain that he'd have the hijacker in handcuffs while the loot was still intact.

He was depending one hundred per cent, of course, on finding a duplicate of the robber's fingerprint in the Bureau of Identification files downtown. Without his saying so, Lana Lang was sure that he was and when he called her up that evening his first few words put ice into her heart.

At police headquarters Durkin's big clue, the key clue which a few hours ago held such high promise, had missed fire. Nowhere in all the files of the Criminal Identification Division was there a print corresponding to the one on the stick-up slip. Locally, at least, the crook in the coupé had no police record.

"But that's all right," Durkin consoled, turning on the sunshine. "Lady Luck did plenty when she fixed me up with that fingerprint. She's like all the girls. When you don't press her you get farther. I never expected her to have things rigged so that the print would give me the hijack bird's name and aliases and full description right off the bat. On the square I didn't!"

Lana faltered, "Then — tell me straight, Tommy—the truth is that your clue's no good?"

"Who said so?" Durkin demanded. "It's sure conviction for that smart heister, isn't it? You bet your Sunday pumps it is! Even with all the riding I've had, the big guns at Headquarters admit it. Once I catch up with him, he's cooked."

For once, though, practical Miss Lang found no lift in his buoyancy. She was terrifically fond of Tom Durkin, as that bright little solitaire on the third finger of her left hand attested, but of a sudden she realized there was a point at which optimism began to pall.

"How," she wanted to know, "do you catch up with a person when you haven't seen his face? How do you pick him out? Neither of us have the slightest idea what the hold-up man looked like."

"He had," averred Durkin, "a pretty sharp sort of nose. We know that, don't we?"

"So what, Tom? You don't happen to have a sharp nose, or Harvey Showalter or J. G. But otherwise there are a lot more sharp-nosed men in the city than any other kind. I've noticed it."

Durkin said: "I wasn't thinking of a round-up. It couldn't be done. Sharp noses come within the law. But did you notice the gun-hand? It certainly wasn't a hand that ever did an honest day's work."

DESPITE herself, Miss Lang's voice sharpened a little. "What," she asked Durkin to tell her, "would you expect? When dishonest work pays twelve thousand dollars an afternoon—" She didn't like the way that sounded and broke off, contrite. "But honey," she said, her snippiness smothered under by her anxiety, "were you able to make them understand at the Detective Bureau that you weren't to blame? I've been so worried about you. Right after you left J. G. called the Police Commissioner and talked to him on the private wire, and I was afraid you might find yourself up on charges or something."

"It all blew over fine," Durkin said lightly. "Naturally there had to be something done about it. The Showalters have got a big political drag, see? It might've been worse if it hadn't been for quite a few good collars I've made. The way it stands, I'm just

shifted for a while to another assignment."

"Is it just as nice work, Tommy?"

"Oh, absolutely. It's a good clean job. One I've been on before. I'll lose a little pay, maybe. But not for long. As soon as I grab Mister Hijacker, everything will iron out. I've got the Skipper's promise. He'll be sitting at the Bureau rubbing a rabbit's foot for me, too."

It was toward nine o'clock then and Durkin, talking from downtown, was nearly an hour by trolley from Lana's boarding house.

"I won't come out tonight," he said. "But tomorrow I'll be in the neighborhood of the plant and I'll be seeing you there."

A little more than twelve hours later he did see her there. Just at ten o'clock Saturday morning he walked into the XLO office, and with him came a strong aroma of camphor.

Harvey Showalter, loitering by Lana's desk, stared and sniffed and grinned.

"Why, Durkin, I'd hardly know you!" he exclaimed. "What a change clothes make!"

As Harvey went swaggering out to the jaunty roadster in which he covered his sinecure sales route, Lana herself was staring at Durkin through a mist. She had realized at first glimpse of him what his "little" pay loss had been. It was, no question, the whole eight-hundred-a-year increase he had won along with his new—and as they both supposed permanent—rating of detective-sergeant, the raise that had guaranteed a June wedding.

Tom Durkin, very obviously, was a detective-sergeant no longer. He wasn't even the probationary plainclothes man he had been when he and Lana Lang began their weekly walks. "Busted" for his failure on the meadows yesterday, he was again at the bottom of the police ladder—a harness cop in a camphor-pungent uniform he had believed put aside forever.

And yet he didn't seem crushed.

"Surprise!" he smiled. "Don't look so horrified, sweetness. Haven't you always said that you liked me best in blue?"

He could smile, but Lana couldn't. Not only had Tom been reduced to the ranks, but he had been assigned, out of all the police beats in the city, to face the smirk of Harvey Showalter and the glower of old J. G. on the meadow tour — a beat ordinarily shunted off on either the greenest rookies or superannuated patrolmen withdrawn from more active posts and set out to graze until they reached retirement age.

"A dumb-cluck job—sure," Durkin nodded. "But I asked for it. One part of the answer to that hold-up is right here in the XLO plant. It's better than a hunch; it's a cinch. Sure as shootin', somebody on the inside was in cahoots with the robber. If he wasn't an amateur, I'll eat every brass button on me without cream or sugar. And no amateur could have pulled as smooth a piece of work without exact information beforehand, take my word for that."

Miss Lang, who had had some such thought herself, crinkled her forehead and sighed.

"But," she pointed out dismally, "there are more than five hundred hands in the factory, and every week many are quitting and new help coming on. We might as well face facts, Tom. Among half a thousand men, how could you hope to pick out the guilty one?"

Durkin shrugged. "Well, I'll be

around when they're coming and going," he said. "Anyway, I can look 'em all over."

Then J. G. Showalter popped out of his private office and blinked amazedly at the new cop on the beat, and Patrolman Durkin stiffly touched the visor of his helmet and departed.

IT was far from Lana's thoughts that the "breaking" of Tommy Durkin could possibly lead to anything like an estrangement between them. That it would postpone their marriage went without saying, for Durkin had been emphatic in insisting that she resign her job at XLO when they set up housekeeping. Beyond that, she felt in her heart that his misfortune really had brought them closer together.

But a rift did develop, and within the next few days, and it was Harvey Showalter who brought it about.

During those days, Lana had been seeing Durkin much more often, indeed, than she had when he was in the detective bureau. Seeing him, though, only as he scooted past the office on his rounds in his perky little police flivver.

He never came into the Showalter domain again, which after all was understandable, and between Saturday and Wednesday Lana saw him only once to speak to. That was on Monday morning, when he rattled up alongside her as she walked to work, and the conversation was brief and disappointing. Durkin then broke a date for that night, told her vaguely that "a lot of things" would keep him occupied during his hours off through the next week or two and suggested that for convenience the operator at the precinct station house might sometime have occasion to make contact with him via the XLO telephone.

"Just in case," Durkin said, "of anything coming up between my regular rings. It'll be police business, so the company can't very well object. You just grab any messages, baby, and whenever you have one give me a wave through the window. I'll be coming by as often as I can, and I'll always be watching."

But on Monday and on Tuesday all was quiet on the meadow beat. Durkin's predecessor on the tour, an old-timer about due for pensioning, had been a poky driver, but Durkin was a speed merchant. With a square mile of territory to cover, he contrived to swing past the factory at incredibly brief intervals. However, there were no calls. Lana always had a smile for him, but never a wave.

What he was doing with his evenings she didn't know. Her own hope that he would ever get track of the hijacker had vanished the instant she saw him in uniform. If they'd kept him in plain clothes, turned him loose to devote his whole time to recovery of the payroll, there might have been a chance for success. But since the police powers had seen fit to inflict this punishment on him, what chance now? Privately, she was certain he was wasting his time. That he was doggedly trying to pick up the cold trail, giving every off-duty minute to the quest, she never doubted.

Then, on Wednesday morning, along came Harvey Showalter with disconcerting news to retail.

"Oh, by the way, Lana," he said, with a glint in his eyes that belied the offhand tone, "I ran across our friend Durkin downtown last night and came pretty near stepping into one of those embarrassing moments you read about. The girl friend he had with him was a ringer for you—from the rear, any-

way. I started over to say hello and didn't discover my mistake until I was right alongside their table."

And Harvey wasn't lying. Staring at him, Lana knew that he wasn't. She said nothing and Showalter blithely continued:

"Yep, Durkin's lady was a brand new blonde, a perfect stranger to me. And there the two of them sat, holding hands right out in public in the Alcazar. Of course, I'd been surprised in the first place to see Durkin patronizing a restaurant with a cover charge; it seemed a little rich for his blood. *You* never knew him to go in for the tony places, did you?"

Lana said faintly, "I don't like them myself. Never wanted Tom to take me to them."

Harvey gave her a jerky smile.

"Well, last night's blonde wasn't your type. Not by half an inch of lip rouge she wasn't. And her finger nails were as red as her lips. Live wire was written all over her. Considering the voltage, it was a wonder Durkin could let go her hand so quick. He turned all colors, but when I passed by pretending I hadn't noticed him he soon enough got his nerve back. Darned if he wasn't playing pat-a-cake with Blondie again before the waiter brought my cocktail."

With a supreme effort, Lana maintained outward composure.

"Thank you so much," she said evenly, "for telling me this. Is there any more?"

"No, that's all," smirked Showalter. "It just struck me as a laugh. Funny too, isn't it, that Durkin should have been put on patrol duty out here where he whiffed his big opportunity to capture a stick up man red-handed? Is it plain coincidence, do you s'pose, or are they aiming to keep his face red?"

WHEN Durkin phoned her later in the day from one of the stores over on Clinton Boulevard, at the edge of the meadows, Miss Lang's voice was cool.

She said casually, "Oh, hello, Tom," and then listened in aloof silence while he set about breaking another date with her.

For months back he hadn't once missed taking her to a movie on Wednesday evenings, but now he was begging off.

"There'll be seats at the box office in my name as usual," he said. "But tonight you'd better take a girl friend. Myself, I'm going to be tied up."

"At the Alcazar again, maybe?" Lana icily suggested.

Durkin wasn't jolted. "Harvey spilled, did he? I might have known he would," he said easily. "It was a business matter I was on at the Alcazar last night, sweet. Guess I don't have to tell you that. You know I chucked away all my other telephone numbers the minute you gave me yours."

But Lana, woman-like, couldn't help wondering. It was hard for her to concentrate on her time-sheets with a doubt nagging at her and Tom whizzing by in the flivver every ten or fifteen minutes to freshen the question in her mind. She had been so certain since he slipped that ring on her finger that he would never give her reason for jealousy, never give another girl as much as a second glance. Now her confidence was shaken. A whisper kept repeating in her mind that perhaps she'd been too hasty in saying *Yes* to Tom. Perhaps she'd be saving herself a lot of future heartaches if she gave him back the solitaire and summarily called it quits.

Another Friday rolled around and there had been no further direct com-

munication from Durkin. He was a flitting blue figure in a flivver to her, a racing question mark, nothing more.

That morning J. G. Showalter told her she wouldn't have to go to the bank. He had lost faith in police protection. Subordinating economy to safety, he had signed a contract with a trucking company specializing in money transfers and the payroll cash would come to the plant in an armored car.

At half past four, when she was momentarily expecting arrival of envelopes, the phone jingled and a bass voice said:

"This is the East End police station. I've got a call for Patrolman Durkin. Is he around?"

Durkin was around. Lana knew it, for she had just heard those two brisk honks that always announced his approach. She darted to the window and waved, and, just opposite, the police car bucked and skidded and stopped.

Racing in, Durkin panted "For me?" and snatched up the telephone. "Yes, this is Tom himself," he snapped. "What is it?"

Lana, beside him, knew that it was no longer the bass voice coming over the wire. It was a much lighter voice and as it babbled on she stiffened. This plainly was an outside call, relayed through the precinct switchboard, for the voice was unmistakably feminine.

"Police business?" Lana frigidly inquired.

"Nothing but," Durkin assured her without batting an eye, and then the other woman had his whole attention.

Outside another car had stopped, and that was the armored car at last. Lana, white-faced, turned away from Durkin; like an automaton she accepted and signed for the payroll.

She heard Durkin say, "Okay, darling, be looking for me!" Then he had hung up and stood by her desk looking into a little red-covered notebook.

In another moment he was racing out without a word to her; and the door had slammed behind him when she noticed that his notebook somehow had missed his pocket when he whisked it out of sight, and was lying on the floor.

She moved mechanically to pick it up, but when she called to him he didn't hear. Or else, she bitterly thought, he preferred not to face her then and was pretending not to have heard. He kept going and going fast, vaulted into the small blue car, kicked the starter and streaked.

Lana put the book down, but her curiosity didn't let her leave it down. She had seen it many times before. Durkin called it his "date book" and when she first met him it had bristled with the names and phone numbers of girls he had been playing around with —used-to-be's, he had solemnly assured her, who were out of his life forever since she had come into it.

Vividly, the ceremony Durkin had made of casting them out, that night when he brought her ring, his elaborate sober byplay of ripping up the pages and watching them blaze and dwindle to ashes on a cigarette tray in the boarding-house parlor, came back to her.

She had told him she wasn't worried about him and never would be. He could have as many girl friends as he wished, for all of her. She wasn't, she wanted him to understand, the jealous kind.

But now, put to the test, she knew that wasn't so. She couldn't tolerate competition. Her pride forbade. Tom Durkin, if he wanted other girls, could

have them. He couldn't—he could put that in his pipe!—have Lana Lang too.

When she opened his book, justifying herself with the thought that she had not yet put off his ring, her eyes dwelt stonily first on the torn inner edges of the pages that had burned. On other pages her own name was repeated a hundred times. It was Lana for this, and this or that for Lana, consistently to the middle of the book.

That was comforting.

And then came a series of entries over which she caught her breath—very recent entries which were proof positive that Tom Durkin, engaged or not, had started that old "stepping" again.

At the top of one page he had written, neatly and with what seemed to Lana a callous facetiousness: "Ladies' Aid." And that page and the next two or three following were covered with names and phone numbers and addresses—girls' names every one of them.

There might have been a dozen of them, might have been as many as twenty. Lana didn't stop to count. She had seen enough and when she replaced the notebook on her desk, the Durkin solitaire was off her finger and resting significantly upon it.

FOR half an hour after the factory whistle blew she was busy at the pay window, and when she passed out the last envelope at five-thirty the others of the XLO clerical force had gone for the day and the office was deserted. J. G. Showalter was still in his big private room in the corner. Harvey, who normally couldn't get his pay in his hands a minute too early, had been delayed downtown that afternoon and came zooming in his roadster to claim it as Lana was putting on her hat.

"How," he asked her, "for dinner and dancing at the Alcazar tonight? Or if you'd rather not take a chance on meeting Officer Durkin we could go somewhere else."

Lana looked at him thoughtfully; looked for another moment at the date-book and the ring.

"Officer Durkin?" she repeated. "Why should *I* care? I'm not crazy about the Alcazar, true enough. But—why not?"

As she assented a car was turning the corner. Its headlights whitened the office windows for an instant when it swung onto the factory street and as it approached Lana guessed from the rattling that it was Tom Durkin's flivver.

It was. It stopped outside and Durkin came in and beamed at Harvey.

"Hello, Showalter," he greeted. "Were you going somewhere?"

Harvey smiled, "Downtown to dinner with Miss Lang."

Durkin glanced quickly at Lana and his eyebrows raised at her nod.

"That's nice," he said. "But I want to talk to you for a couple of minutes."

"To *me?*" Showalter stared. "What about?"

"Horses," Durkin told him, dead serious. "You play 'em quite a lot, don't you?"

J. G. Showalter had come to the door of the private office and was peering out.

"Miss Lang," he barked, "will you please tell that policeman that he's an eyesore to me? Just ask him to step out unless he has official business here."

Durkin spoke up for himself.

"There's no secret about it, Mr. Sho-

walter. You can listen if you want to. I was just asking your nephew about betting on the races." His blue eyes shifted back to Harvey. "Sure," he said. "You play the ponies. I know it. And—listen—mostly you've made your bets through a bookie named Sam Greenberg. Ain't it so?"

Harvey Showalter flushed. "It's no affair of yours!" he ripped out.

"It might be," Tom Durkin said quietly. "I just had to take a run downtown and while I was there I was talking to Greenberg. The way I understand it, he let you make a lot of heavy bets on the cuff—let you lay him I. O. U.'s against coin of the realm until you were nearly five thousand dollars into him. Then he hollered. Right?"

Harvey wheeled away from him and caught up Lana's arm.

"Come on!" he said. "Let's go. This fellow's off his nut."

Durkin stood blocking the way to the door.

"Be nice, Harvey," he advised. "Ever since the first of the month—anyhow, that's the way Greenberg told it to me—he kept after you to make good on your markers. Finally he was threatening to come out here to the plant and lay the I. O. U.'s on your uncle's desk and ask *him* what about them. And that brought you around. Last Saturday you showed up and handed Sammy forty-nine hundred dollars, which evened you with him. What I'd like to know is where you got the cash."

J. G. Showalter came waddling forward. He puffed out his cheeks and wheezed:

"Forty-nine hundred dollars! Utter nonsense!" Then his eyes locked with his nephew's and he grunted: "Damn it, you don't mean it's *true!*"

Harvey swallowed hard and squared up his shoulders.

"I'll explain to you, Uncle Jim," he said. "Gladly. But hanged if I intend to let Durkin badger me. He's simply trying to stir up trouble. Can't you see it?"

"But — forty-nine hundred, Harvey!" J. G. was bewildered. "How did you come by so much money? We'll discuss the matter of the gambling later. But tell me right now about the forty-nine hundred. Great Caesar, it's more than I pay you in a year. And you've been spending every cent of your salary."

Harvey cleared his throat and smoothed out his voice.

"Uncle Jim," he said, "leaving aside Durkin's motive in bringing this up, I'll own that I got in too deep on the races and lost my head. This man Greenberg inveigled me into making big bets, volunteering that my credit was perfectly good with him. In the end it was a lucky break that enabled me to pay off. I was in a dice game with some out of town people last week and I had a tremendous winning streak. I won the forty-nine hundred that Greenberg had stung me for—that and a few hundred over. When I squared up with him I made a vow that I'd never gamble again. There you have the whole story."

"Huh!" grunted J. G. Showalter. "Horses, dice — disgraceful!" He scowled at Durkin. "Well, what's it to *you?* This seems to be strictly a Showalter concern. Take your nose out of it. Be on your way, you infernal botcher. You hear me? Clear out!"

DURKIN nodded and swung on his heel and made for the door. When he yanked it open Lana saw that another car had stopped outside

and stood parked between Harvey's roadster and Durkin's Ford.

"Ready!" shouted Durkin. "Bring him in!"

Then he came back and faced the Showalters as a trio from the third automobile entered the office. A glance told Lana Lang that two of them were city detectives, but it was the man between them who held her eyes riveted.

He was—!

He was a slight man, dapperly dressed and notably harrowed—a man with a thin face and, she saw with a start, a very sharp nose.

"Introducing," said Durkin with a smile and a flourish, "Mr. George L. Chipway. But perhaps Mr. Chipway needs no introduction in Mr. Harvey Showalter's case. You know Chipway, don't you, Harvey?"

Harvey had no color at all as he quickly shook his head.

"No, I don't!" he cried. "I never saw him before."

There was a moment of tense silence.

The man with the pointed nose shot out an accusing wrathy finger.

"That's a lie!" he blazed. "If I'm going to prison over the payroll job, you're going with me, Showalter! You put me up to it. You knew I'd gone to the cleaners in Joe's poker game and was as hard pressed for money as you were. I told you I'd never done anything worse than gamble, wouldn't have the nerve to tackle a stick-up. But you argued and insisted, telling me when and where and how, until you had me believing I could get away with it. Well, you see that I haven't—and that means that *you* haven't either!"

He leered.

Durkin nodded approvingly at the sallow Chipway.

"Thanks," he murmured. "And now, George, this large gentleman with the earmarks of liver trouble is Mr. J. G. Showalter, Harvey's uncle. Would you mind telling J. G. just how you and Harvey split the XLO payroll after you lifted it from Miss Lang and me?"

"Fifty-fifty," said Chipway. "Six thousand and some odd change apiece, just like I told you after you cut in on my manicure."

Durkin grinned at Lana.

She managed a weak smile.

"That's what I was driving at," he told her, "when I said he'd 'nail himself.' Those finger-nails of his—notice 'em!—were what trapped him. Maybe I didn't see much of *him*, but I did get a load of his hand. The polish on the nails and the way the cuticle was clipped and pushed back was a sure tip-off on him as a guy who every so often would be getting himself a manicure.

"Get it? And how many places in a small city like this can a man get a manicure? We've got more than a hundred beauty shoppes in town, but they're only for dames. Men go to barber shops to get their hands prettied, and out of all our barber shops only fourteen play to the manicure trade.

"That was my clue.

"Ten shops have just one manicure girl working, and the others have two each. It figured out to eighteen ladies that I had to get acquainted with and educate. The dizzy blonde that Harvey saw me with at the Alcazar was just one of them. I was showing her about fingerprints—but you know what Harvey thought I was doing."

Lana nodded.

J. G. Showalter had dropped heavily into Miss Lang's chair. His face, purpled, was wet with perspiration.

"Harvey!" he groaned. "Deny it!"

Durkin shrugged. "The best thing you can do for Harvey," he said, "is

tell him to keep his mouth shut. He's under arrest and anything he says may be used against him." He turned again to Lana. "So there you are, Sugar. As fast as I could contact 'em and teach 'em about loops and whorls, I had the manicure cuties on the watch for a sharp-nosed gink. Every girl had an enlarged photo of the print that Mr. Chipway left on the payroll receipt and instructions to sneak prints of every dude with a sharp nose and compare 'em with the enlargement. Of course, playing around the way they do with customers' hands it was easy for them. Sooner or later in the natural course of things Mr. Hijacker was sure to drop in the net.

"It just meant waiting.

"He dropped this afternoon. That was the phone call, and the pretty little brunette that phoned me kept him listening to a lovely line of patter until I could get downtown. I found Chipway very accommodating—after I showed him he was convicted in advance of trial. You could have knocked me over with a straw when he told me about Harvey's part in the game. But when he steered me onto Greenberg and Sammy talked, I knew I had two unbeatable cases instead of just the one."

FIVE minutes later only two cars were at the curb. Harvey hadn't needed to use his roadster. The big Detective Bureau machine had taken him away, along with Chipway and apoplectic J. G., leaving Durkin and Lana Lang alone in the office.

Durkin broke out suddenly: "Oh, say, did I drop my notebook anywhere around here, I wonder? I had my Ladies' Aid listed in it, and I sure ought to get around and hand every one of those manicure queens a nice substantial present. I can afford to, because the city put up a thousand dollars reward for the XLO robber, and the brunette that did the finger work on Chipway is going to be tickled to death with half."

Then he saw that little red book on Lana's blotter—and saw what lay on it.

"Honey Dew!" he rebuked. "Aren't you pretty careless with your ring? What was the idea of taking it off? You said you never would as long as you lived."

A great meekness descended upon Miss Lang.

"But, Tommy," she cooed, "I love it so that I can't bear to think of losing the stone out of it. I just took it off while I washed my hands."

By Max Brand

Author of "Seven Faces," "The Granduca," etc.

"Just turn your back to me and keep your hands up," Muir directed

The Face and the Doctor

A Scandal Big Enough to Rock New York! And Pete Muir Was Just the Man to Get the Lowdown on the Upper Underworld

WHAT HAS HAPPENED—

PETER ANGUS MUIR, ace private investigator, was looking forward to meeting his old crony and fellow-adventurer, Everett Franklin, at O'Doyle's saloon on Third Avenue, New York City. But long after the appointed hour, Franklin does not appear—so Muir on a hunch and on information which Franklin had mentioned previously, calls at the offices of Dr. David J. Russo, a young dietitian and surgeon, eminent for his researches in the Orient. Muir believes that Franklin may have called there earlier in the evening.

At Dr. Russo's office, Muir, introducing himself as Oliver Croft, meets a nurse, Katherine Edwards. Both suspicious of each other's identity, they parry in conversation for a time, and Muir leaves. But he returns shortly after, forces his way in the office, and discovers in one of the doctor's closets the corpse of his friend, Franklin—his face horribly mutilated.

Having overheard the nurse phone a Greenwood number to inquire about one

This story began in Detective Fiction Weekly for May 22

Philip Baldwin, Muir decides to follow the trail of Dr. Russo to Stowett's Tavern, situated in suburban Westchester. There Muir meets Baldwin, and after taking lodging in the Tavern, he senses that he is virtually a prisoner. At nightfall he suddenly sees Dr. Russo outside the Tavern heading for the hills.

PART II

LEANING from the window, Muir looked down and saw no edges on which toes and fingertips could get a grip for climbing, but at the side a strong iron drainage pipe from the eaves above ran to the ground.

He turned back to Katherine Edwards and found her just lifting her head, though the deadly grayness was still in her face. Muir dropped on his knees beside the chair and took both her hands.

"I have to go out," he said to her. "And you must stay here. Perhaps I won't be long. Are you afraid?"

She shook her head, but terror was so great in her that she could not speak.

"You are," said Muir. "You're frightened to death, but you'll be safe, here. Do you believe me when I say that I'll come back?"

"Yes," she managed to whisper.

"Before I go, can you tell me, quickly, whatever you knew about Doctor Russo and Baldwin?"

She looked up at the ceiling. Speech struggled for an instant with a restraint of the spirit. "I can't," she admitted.

"I must go," said Muir. "God knows that I wish to stay with you, but I can't. Be specially kind to Baldwin. Say anything that you think he wants you to say. And wait for me. I'll be back."

When he got to the window and slipped through it, he saw her standing by her chair, still so unsteadied that she had to keep a strong hold on the back of it with one hand, but the other she kissed to him with a sudden smile.

Then his hands were on the pipe, and he walked down it, foot and hand, like a sailor. He had to pass into an uncomfortable brilliance of light from the lower window, before he reached the ground, and shrinking aside from it, he peered through the window into the interior of a naked room which held neither stove nor table, but only a pair of chairs.

It had something else for the eye of Muir, however, for against the opposite wall, standing rigidly straight with his arms folded high on his chest, was Philip Baldwin, contemplating whatever fate lay before him with an unfaltering eye. He did not move during the seconds Muir gazed at him; he gave an impression of continuing immobility, as though he were apt to remain there for an indefinite time.

Muir, stepping back again from the window-side, climbed the bank beyond the verge of the widening shaft of light. He reached the brush, passed through it, wound among the trees beyond, and so came into the open of the hillside. It climbed slowly, receding in a broad sweep on which he passed with good speed. He was over the edge of the rise and the tavern had disappeared from his view, before he ventured to use the flashlight to find the trail.

The footsteps, in fact, he did not discover, but he came on a path that crawled in a wavering line over the hilltop and into the next hollow. Along this he stepped rapidly, keeping his eyes fixed on the ground, the more quickly to adapt them to seeing by this dim light.

For in the sky above him the rain clouds were clearing so that there was hardly more than a fine mist adrift be-

tween the earth and the stars. The rainfall had stopped and through gaps in the curtain overhead tangles of stars, that seemed to blow back against the sweep of the clouds, appeared and were lost. A half moon that was sailing in the zenith was sometimes an obscure blur behind the mist, and again a flashing moment of silver that showed Muir more clearly the landscape before him.

It was typical of the Westchester countryside. A lucky chance has placed near the ugly concrete mountains of Manhattan that broken, charming sweep of hills and small horizons, all charmingly confused so that the moment one is out of the sight of roofs, there seems to be nothing but complete wilderness.

THE path swerved a bit toward the right, going through the hollow, and in an open stretch Muir saw, when the moon came out again through the clouds, a figure leading him, a tall, spare fellow with a pack behind his shoulders.

Muir quickened his pace, but he would not draw too close because he hoped that the figure in front might lead him to something more than a mere capture. He merely kept inside that distance at which moonlight became dangerously bright—in case the doctor turned and looked back—and the shadowy verge in which he barely could make out Russo through the clouded dimness of the stars.

He came to a branching of the path and found that Russo had taken the right-hand turning that pointed suddenly into a hill whose side had been gouged away so that the next burst of moonshine showed huge strata of rain-polished rock tipped in a syncline that had been laid bare in a perpendicular cliff. It was a quarry, he could guess, and a moment later he was on an abandoned road now overgrown with weeds and grass and even with small shrubs, but whose surface remained trampled hard by the trucks which had rolled over it.

A thick cloud abolished the moon from the sky, unluckily, at this moment, but as Muir began to stumble, dim flashes commenced ahead of him, and then the wide, pale, steady glow of a flashlight as Russo turned from the old road into the floor of the deserted quarry and its litter of stone heaps.

Right up to the face of the cliff the light continued and remained there for a moment, occasionally throwing wild glances up the overhanging face of the rock, for here a whole section of the piled strata was breaking away from the main mass of the stone, and a wide fissure promised, one day, a fall that would cover the entire floor of the quarry with a litter.

The flashlight, having delayed for a moment under the cliff, now turned and came back toward Muir; so that he had to slip behind one of the scattered boulders for protection. As a matter of fact the footsteps of the doctor came straight toward him. The flashlight threw its broad cone directly on the rock so that he could not tell on which side Russo might pass, but waited, gun in hand, in case he should be seen.

A veering of light at the last moment gave him his cue and he stepped to the left behind the great stone as the footfalls came by. He heard the swishing of the long raincoat around the legs of Russo, then the steps and the light went by, and he could see how the doctor was leaning to support the weight of the heavy pack which he carried. Among the farther stones the flashlight now disappeared and left Muir in a quandary for an instant.

If he delayed here, he might very well lose the trail of the doctor completely, but he had an unquenchable desire to see what had delayed Russo under the edge of the cliff; therefore he continued deeper into the quarry. He even ventured, now, to use occasional flashes of his own light, though if the doctor looked back he might see those small gleams of the torch against the lower face of the cliff.

MUIR found the tracks of Russo to guide him, at last, to the verge of a little pool that filled an accidental hollow at the base of the cliff. Now, glancing up, the angle at which the upper rock leaned out seemed a momentary peril, but he could find nothing else of the slightest interest except the dark water of the pool. Into that, therefore, he turned the penetrating ray of his pocket light.

The stained water turned the ray after it had penetrated only a short distance, showing yellow streaks of obscurity, the stains drawn from dead leaves that had blown into the pool. One paler bit beneath the surface he took to be the gleam of a white stone. He leaned closer, steadying the ray on that faintly visible object until he made out the blur of a face, and then the features and the half-open eyes of Everett Franklin.

A gust of wind, the next moment, sent a thousand small ripples over the pool and blotted out the face of the dead man.

Muir turned and went rapidly back through the quarry to pick up the trail of Russo if he could. When he came to the edge of the quarry, he climbed up on one of the largest of the fallen boulders and scanned everything that lay before him, eagerly, but with patience, for a single glint of disappearing light, anywhere within the range of his vision, would undoubtedly be Russo and give him the trail again.

There was not a single eye of light, not a ray to be seen except for one steady gleam at the left, a mile away, from what was undoubtedly the window of a house. His eyes began to ache from the intensity with which he probed the night. Then the moon slid out through a wide gap in the upper clouds and showed him the whole face of the land.

But there was no sign of a moving figure. Any of a hundred groups and groves of trees might be covering the man with the pack, of course, and so Muir continued to sweep the whole field with his eyes until the moon like a sailing ship struck another storm of clouds, threw up a great white bow wave, and then sank from sight behind the mists again.

Russo definitely was gone from him!

The whole brilliance of excitement left Muir then, and there remained to him only that bulldog persistence which an old hunter must possess, whether his quarry be human or less noble. He returned at a run, uphill and down, to the place where the trail had forked right and left.

There he studied the ground with his flashlight to find footmarks if he could, but the entire surface, at that point, was either hard rock or heavily compacted roughage of broken stone which took no imprints. As he sat on his heels, studying the place, it occurred to him that Russo might well have seen, from a distance, the glimmer of the second light in the quarry; and perhaps he was back there at the tavern with that huge, immobile figure of the thinker, Philip Baldwin. The night-journey would be put off to another day.

It might be best, in any case, now

that the trail was lost, to get to the nearest telephone and summon the police. The body, at least, had been found, and a thousand things might flow from that. Or did Russo plan, during the night, to set off a small charge of blasting powder that might make the great rock above the pool lean outwards and then bury the dead under ten thousand tons of broken debris?

The strange numbness of mind that had troubled Muir more than once during the last few days had returned on him again; it was like a sort of suspended dizziness, or again it was like penetrating fingers of cold that pierced his temples and joined together in his brain. He got up, shaking his head and massaging his temples with the palms of his hands. Then he took the left branch of the trail, blindly, and went up it at a dog-trot.

HE COULD maintain that gait for hours, as a rule. He had learned it by watching the negro carriers in Africa, where the black boys will take even a sixty pound headload forward at a sort of swinging, shambling run for miles at a time. Ordinarily he was tireless at that gait, but his knees were made of cork on this night, and in a few moments he had to stop.

He went on again, after that, with a grim pinching of the lips, for he knew that whatever lay ahead of him on this night, he would be terribly handicapped for carrying it through.

The footpath now angled steeply up a rough hill where the footing was so bad that he risked using the flashlight again and again to find the way among the rocks, but it was when his foot slipped and his thumb automatically snapped on the light that its random shaft found in the darkness a staggering little shack at the right of the trail.

He paused there to take breath again and look about him. From this height the countryside was no longer a wilderness, for single lights scattered everywhere, and little bright groupings that marked the big estates, while whole fleets crowded together to make the villages and crossroad towns.

A cloud as black as thunder had submerged the moon again, and when he played the light along the hard rocks of the trail again, he realized that he was following a hopeless mission. No footprints would appear among those stones, there was no sign of surface soil.

He found the shack again with his torch. It was composed of corrugated iron, and box-boards, and saplings, and tin oil cans hammered out flat and still holding the bright dint of the hammers, here and there, like the sparkle of mica in a rock. It was more like a tramp's shack in the far West than anything he ever had seen in the East before.

One hearty blast of wind would have seemed strong enough to shoulder it to the ground, and yet it carried unmistakable signs of years of weathering. Above the sagging roof, a weak little chimney stood up, with a twisted elbow turn in the middle of it.

Muir had taken the light from it when he heard the unmistakable noise of a man coughing. The rising wind muffled the sound, but nevertheless he made sure that it came from the shack, so he went carefully toward it. The wall that faced him was entirely blank, but when he turned the corner he saw the rectangle of a door faintly sketched in by rifts of light that soaked through the cracks.

At that door he paused for a moment, listening to the sounds of someone astir inside. After that he fumbled,

found a latch, and pressed it slowly down. When he jerked the door open, he looked in with the big automatic ready in his right hand and the pocket light in the left.

There was no need of illumination from the outside, however, for on the central pole that held up the rooftree of the shack hung a lantern that gave a mild light to the interior and shone on the bearded face of Doctor Russo.

CHAPTER VII

The Chill of Death

THE doctor already had spread out his knapsack, which was a folding affair that contained many sections, and at this moment he was touching a match to the fuel he had put in a little stove, flimsy with rust, that stood in a corner of the room. When he saw the gun of Muir and the man behind it, he lifted his hands above his head, silently, and then got with difficulty from his knees to his feet.

Muir stepped inside and secured the latch of the door behind him.

"Just turn your back to me and keep your hands up," directed Muir. "Up a little higher, please."

"Certainly," said the doctor, and turning with the quick obedience of a soldier, he stretched his arms higher above his head, so that the sleeves of his raincoat slipped down over his narrow, hairy wrists.

Muir gave the room a first glance. It was more like a stable than a house. For a floor there was merely broken rock that had been tamped down to a fairly smooth surface like that of a new gravel road; a pair of hand-made stools, a bench of the same manufacture, the stove, and a little army cot in a corner made up the greater part of the furnishing though a few odds and ends of garments hung from nails along the walls.

It was as desolate a habitation as one could find. The look of it reminded Muir of grim Yorkshire moors. And mild as the wind was that blew over the Westchester hills, it moaned through the chinks of those flimsy tin walls like a great winter storm.

"A gun on you?" asked Muir, stepping up behind the doctor.

"Yes. Under my left arm," said Russo.

"Unbuckle it and drop it to the floor," commanded Muir, and laid the muzzle of his gun in the hollow of the doctor's back.

"As you please," said Russo, with his perfect calm, and a moment later he had dropped the weapon, in a holster of new leather, to the floor at his feet.

"Anything else?" asked Muir.

"A pocket knife," said the doctor.

"We'll see," said Muir, and ran his left hand rapidly over Russo's body.

He found a bulky wallet in an inside coat pocket and removed it. He took the pocket knife, also, and found it to be one of those ponderous, useful boy-scout affairs, with a blade big and sharp enough for murder. He found and left a cigarette lighter, and a few unimportant odds and ends.

"That's all, I think," he told Russo. "Sit down on that stool, if you will. I'll take this other one . . . I'm putting the gun across my knees and I'll have to tell you that I won't hesitate to use it if a pinch comes."

"I'll be absolutely quiet," said the doctor. "May I smoke?"

"Please do," said Muir, and opened the fat of the wallet.

He found inside it two letters and a closely compacted sheaf of bills. He took out the stack of money, and holding it close to his ear flicked it rapidly

under his thumb, counting by tens. There were two thousand dollars in twenties and three thousand in fifties. The sum of five thousand was exactly even. In addition the wallet contained a few crumpled one-dollar bills.

The letters were unaddressed and typewritten, the signature in both cases being a sprawling sort of monogram in which letters could hardly be distinguished.

"Dear Bert," read the first letter. "This is the doctor. Treat him well and do what you can for him to help him on his way. He'll tell you the details. I think a tramp freighter, but use your own best discretion. He wants to travel decidedly incognito."

The second letter was addressed to "Dear Garrison" and read: "You've often wanted to clear off the old scores and get a debt out of your mind. If you still feel that way, you can go as far as you want with my friend the doctor, and I'll appreciate it as though you were acting for me. He'll tell you what he wants."

Muir refolded the letters, restored them to the wallet, and pushed the wallet into his coat pocket.

"Where were you to find 'dear' Bert?" he asked.

The doctor drew a deep inhalation from his cigarette and seemed about to speak as he lifted his head, but he merely blew forth a long, thin stream of the smoke.

"It's to be silence, is it?" asked Muir.

"I'm afraid so," said Russo, shrugging his thin shoulders.

UP THE open draft of the stove the flame was roaring so fast that the chimney trembled with a small note of singing. Muir arranged the draft, dropped from the heap at hand another chunk into the fire, and closed down the stove again. After that he turned to Russo and said: "I've just been over at the quarry looking into the pool. There's a face in it that's been badly damaged, doctor. Do you know anything about it?"

The doctor said nothing.

"You know, Russo," said Muir, "I can turn you over to the police and they have ways of extracting information that don't break the skin but are apt to break the heart under it."

"I've heard something about their ways," nodded the doctor.

"You still feel that you won't talk?"

"My dear fellow, I'm perfectly certain," said Russo.

"About Philip Baldwin, for intance?" asked Muir.

The doctor drew again on his cigarette.

"Or about Everett Franklin?" insisted Muir.

The doctor breathed out the smoke again.

"I admire you," said Muir, suddenly. "I can't help it."

"Thank you," said the doctor.

"In a way, I think you're rather glad it's over, aren't you?" asked Muir.

"In a way, yes," said Russo.

"Stand up and take that flashlight of yours," directed Muir. "We're going down to the village just over the hill. The state police can be called from there in a few moments."

The doctor, in silence, rose, buttoned up his raincoat, placed his hat on his head, and lifted the flashlight.

"You'll keep playing the light on the trail," said Muir. "I'll follow behind you, closely. You won't try to run?"

"I understand perfectly," said the doctor. "The dead man was a friend of yours?" he added, in the mildest of conversational tones.

"Rather a dear friend," said Muir.

"Ah, what a pity!" murmured Russo. "A good fellow, was he?"

"I'll tell you his history while we're on the way," said Muir. "But I'm in a hurry, just now. You first, doctor."

The doctor, accordingly, went first through the door, and Muir followed him into the wet of the open night.

"To the left, and take the path again, right on over the hill," said Muir. "You see that patch of lights down there? That's our destination."

"Thank you," said the doctor, and stepped out obediently toward the footpath.

"About Everett Franklin," said Muir, "I could tell you a good many . . stories . . . but . . ."

A sudden chattering of his teeth stopped his talk. That numbness which had been in his brain like a danger asleep, now roused and poured a wave of chilling cold through his mind, through his body, until it struck the pit of his stomach and shook him as a parent shakes a child.

His legs turned into a sodden weight and there was no strength to swing them because at the vital center of strength lay that freezing stone which spread its cold upward through his heart and downward to his feet.

HE COULD imagine heat strong enough to strike through the entire body at once, the sort of heat that streams from the surface of stars a thousand fold brighter than our sun, but he could not imagine cold that was able to penetrate the whole blood stream with ice in a single instant. Yet that was how the blow struck him and dropped him to his knees.

The gun shuddered out of his hand and rattled away among the stones, yet all the strength of his body and his will was focused in that right hand. He reached after the automatic, and his shuddering grasp fell on the foot of the doctor, but when he tried to trip up Russo his fingers jerked away from their hold.

Whatever he saw now was in series of flickering images like an early motion picture, for the powerful vibration jerked his head in a violent tremor that would not end. In those intermittent flashes, therefore, he saw Russo's spotlight find the revolver and the lean hand of the doctor picking up the weapon.

He found himself pushed over on his back, by Russo. The vague silhouette of the doctor was high above him, against the sky, but the gun hung inside the cone of the flashlight. Even that immediate danger of death could not clear the brain of Muir from the dreadful yearning for warmth. He wanted scalding water to wash down his throat and thaw the ice that was forming inside his body. He wanted to walk into the glare of a furnace to restore life to his flesh.

With half his mind he was aware that Russo had dipped into his coat-pocket and removed the fat wallet, but even that was dream-like and of no importance. Far greater in significance was the disappearance of the light, the clicking of the feet of the doctor on the rocks as he withdrew, and then no sound whatever except the swish of the wind through the trees.

That paroxysm abated suddenly. Even when it had diminished, he was able only to gain his hands and knees and crawl, with the sense that the wind was blowing the dreadful cold into him again, pouring like a river of ice straight through his body; but he was led on by a heavenly vision of the stove in the shack. If he could build up a fire that turned the stove red hot, and then

embrace it with his arms and press the heat into the pit of his body. . . .

The full power of the chill swept back on him again and laid him helplessly on the ground. He began to roll, twist, and squirm toward the shack, though his shuddering eye made him see it now here and now there.

He had no explanation except that they might have poisoned his beer at the tavern. But at last he had gained the door of the shack and was reaching for the latch. His hand would not hold it. When he stretched up his arm, the cold stabbed him with a thousand icy daggers and crumpled him in a ball again. An idiocy had entered that good right hand, for it would not obey his will.

CHAPTER VIII

Kate Does Her Part

IT SEEMED to Muir that the entire night flowed over him by slow hours and hours but that the morning would not come to give eyes to his misery. Then the door thrust open and he was aware of long legs striding past him, of the radiance of the lantern, split into a thousand shuddering beams by the rapid vibration of his head; and then of the face of the doctor bending above him, and the hands that drew him into the shack.

But no warmth was there. He stretched out his trembling hands and could not find the least amelioration of the terrible cold. By slow degrees, taking hours as it seemed for every move, the doctor with a frightful deliberation freshened the fire.

Coals still were shining in the interior of it like bright golden promises of life to Muir; and now with the roaring draft the stove began to tremble and the chimney to sing its song. Russo dragged the army cot to the side of the stove and lifted the weight of Muir to it.

He had seemed like a cold-eyed devil, before; but now he was an incarnation of mercy. He had yellow tablets in his hand and he was putting them on the tongue of Muir. He was pouring whiskey from a flask and holding it at the lips of the sick man. Half of that divine liquor was wasted by the unsteady lips of Muir before the tablets were washed down.

But even with the stove red hot and the whiskey inside him there was only a gradual amelioration of the cold that froze his very soul.

As the vital warmth began again, increasing in him like a windowlight toward which he was traveling slowly, his mind steadied first from that mortal shuddering, and he studied the face of the doctor. There was much to see in it, as Russo sat huddled on a stool beside the bench fighting out a struggle between the brain and the heart.

Once he stood up suddenly with a desperate grimness in his mouth and eyes and the gun pointing from his hand; again he sank back and covered his face from the idea that had come to him, pulling away his hands by degrees until his troubled eyes were fixed upon Muir again.

He sat closer to the cot, finally, and Muir felt cold, steady fingers taking his pulse.

"Blackwater fever," he heard the doctor saying, "and a hundred per cent form of it. But the quinine will stop it. The way brakes stop an automobile. I'm laying them out in doses. You have enough in you now to give the fever a check. In half an hour you'll take this batch . . . these on the edge of the bench, do you see? And half an hour after that, the next lot. An absolute

specific, and you can have faith in it. You have nothing but a marvelously heightened form of malaria, my friend. Go a little sparingly with the whiskey. . . . Good-by and good luck to you."

That was how Muir found himself alone.

It was like thawing ice in freezing water, the cold departed from him so slowly; and then heat swept over him like a wall of fire; and after that the cold struck back through his sweating skin at his vitals.

It was not more than six in the evening when the chill of the fever struck him down; by eleven he was sitting up on the cot with his head ringing violently, but the numbness totally gone from it. He could rise. He could stand. He could turn his eyes about the room to reform the picture of it; and it was then that he discovered his automatic hanging by the trigger-guard from a nail on the center-pole.

He pushed open the door of the shack and found outside a transformed world without a breath of wind blowing through it, so that the light of the westering moon was able to freeze the ground steadily.

MUIR had no strength. By the time he had taken twenty steps, the thought of the warm stove and the cot lay like the hope of heaven behind him and he had a childish feeling that if he turned his head once to glance back, he would be unable to resist the desire to return.

And he felt with insistence, like a vocal pulse along his blood with every stroke of his heart, that he must return to Katherine Edwards; for the picture of Philip Baldwin leaning above her in the doorway grew into a fantastic figure of evil in his imagination. He dared not think what he could accomplish after he had reached the tavern.

Long before this they must have missed him from his room and on his return they would have a definite way to receive him; but conscience had a whip to flog him forward.

In his hands there was no strength and his knees sagged. He had no intelligence in his feet. They seemed to find out stones for him to stumble over. On the steep of the slope he was down half a dozen times, once to roll headlong in the mud; and where he came to the sharp rise of ground beyond, he took the more difficult places patiently, on hands and knees.

From the first glimpse of the tavern lights on the hilltop to the moment he was beside it seemed a long and bitter hour. He came down through the trees staggering, at last, with the weight of the automatic as crushing as a heavy knapsack; and he felt that only the burning pains in his hands and knees, lacerated many times by his falls along the trail, kept his consciousness alive.

Beyond the cluttering of little popular priced cars which had pulled up near the bar door he saw a big low-lying automobile with two yards of hood nosing out in front of it. He marked that car specially with his eye before he stepped up to the bar-window and looked inside. Jeff presided in sweating haste, serving long rows of beer to the laborers who had come in from the farms and dairies of the neighborhood. Baldwin, naturally, was not there.

He was in a small room at the back of the tavern, one of the two dingy parlors through which Muir had passed that afternoon, with its damaged upholstery and stale odors of cookery. He sat at the center table with Katherine Edwards opposite him, and with both gesturing, extended hands he was making a strong appeal.

The second window was left partly ajar, but even through this Muir could make out only snatches of the conversation, for in the barroom the country boys were raising a fine racket of laughter and stamping. But there was enough to fill the eye of Muir, and even more than the faces of the girl and Baldwin, he stared at a little miniature toy, one of those tiny dolls with a weighted base which can be made to rock with extended arms through the most fantastic motions of a buck-and-wing.

Baldwin, even as he pleaded with the girl, still with an automatic touch from time to time kept the odd little toy in motion, so that it was bowing, pirouetting, spinning, side-swaying continually.

Its movements seemed to enchant Muir as he watched.

Even the table was presently too much distance for big Philip Baldwin, and he came with his chair around the corner of it, sitting down with his back to Muir and the window. He had his arm around the girl, now, and Muir could see her face, rather pale but still smiling.

In a sudden lull of the barroom noise, he made out, dimly, that soft and eloquent voice as Baldwin said: ". . . and why not now, Kate? I've made the arrangements, and we can be married tonight and on the ship in the morning. I want to take you South, Kate, where we can get the cold and the ugliness of the winter out of our souls. And in the spring we'll come back. We'll come back from Egypt and Sicily. The New York game will be ready to open out, then. Tell me you'll go, my dear?"

He leaned back from her to study her face as she answered and so was able to see the same picture that Muir had from the window—a white, sick horror that shrank the very pupils of her eyes.

BALDWIN got slowly up from his chair, so that Muir could not see the girl any longer. An uproar in the barroom dimmed the deep voice of Baldwin, also, but he could see how one of the man's large hands held the crossed wrists of Kate, and shook them with a recurrent pulse of anger.

Unsteadily Muir got around to the back door of the tavern, helping himself with his hands against the wall. It was unlocked. He passed into the kitchen with a fumbling step. From a side pantry a woman's voice sang out: "Is that you, Eddie?"

He went on over the linoleum from which the decorative design had been worn away; the path on it between the stove and the sink actually sank as deep as the under-lining. He was through the doorway into the hall as the shrill voice called again: "Eddie! You boiled again, you beast?"

Around the angle of the hall would be the door to the rear parlor. He took out his automatic. It burned against his torn hand. Then he took the elbow turn of the hall so quickly that he almost collided with the chauffeur, that pale, silent, forward-looking fellow named Jim.

He was as silent as ever, now. He merely reached for Muir's gun with his left and with his right hand reached inside his coat for his own weapon. Muir hit him with the heavy barrel of the gun across the head. There was force enough in the blow to make the steel barrel ring.

It dropped Jim to his knees with one hand fumbling before him through the dark of his mind and the other hand slowly dragging out his revolver.

Muir struck him again and watched him collapse on his face.

Then he pushed open the parlor door and stepped through with his automatic showing him the way.

He heard Baldwin saying: 'What did it, Kate? What turned you suddently, like this? I'm going to have it out of you, so you might as well tell me now."

He had crowded her against the wall and fenced her in with his two big arms.

His voice was as soft as ever.

"It's nothing," stammered the girl. "It was only that I felt a pain. . . ."

"You know, my dear, that it's my profession to detect the lies and the liars," said Baldwin. "And this lie of yours is registered with all of the usual signs. You're not doing it well, so tell me the truth. Something has happened that turns me into a beast in your eyes —as though I were a common thief— or a murderer?"

He tried the last word tentatively, drawing his head back to watch her face more carefully.

"That's it, my friend," said Muir, as he locked the door behind him. "Murder is the idea, Baldwin. Or whatever your real name is."

Baldwin jerked his head about and stared over his shoulder.

"And whatever your real face was," said Muir, "the one you're wearing now is good enough for you, old fellow. Kate, get those window-shades down and then sit down at that telephone."

Baldwin, slowly turning from the wall, studied his man with penetrating eyes. The shudder had not left Muir. He had to support himself against the wall, but his right hand and the gun were steady.

"It was you," Baldwin said, nodding a little. "It was you who talked to her?"

"Has she been stalling you along all evening till now?" asked Muir. "Has she been using up your time ever since you found I was gone and you wanted to make your getaway, fast? Ah, Kate, you've done a fine bit of work for us all! But she couldn't stand for it, in the end. She couldn't stand it, Baldwin, when the murderer put his hands on her. . . ."

"Murder?" said Baldwin.

A hand wrenched suddenly at the door.

"Chief, are you there?" cried the voice of Jim.

"Back up and give yourself room," called Muir. "The police are coming on the run, Jim, and they won't want you, if they don't find you here. Call the operator, Kate, and ask for the police in a hurry."

CHAPTER IX

A Doctor's Human Sculpture

INSPECTOR TORY, as he walked up and down through the huge, tapestried bedroom, kept one hand for his cigar and one for gestures.

"He broke down as soon as he was recognized," said Tory. "But how did you know he was not what he looked to be? I never would have known Magistrate William Cheney with a map like that. I never would have guessed 'Beautiful Bill' to be that dish-nosed fellow. A hundred and thirty-five thousand dollars was all we *know* that he lined his pockets with. There may have been half a million more. He lived up twenty graft streets. Peter, can you imagine the most handsome crook in New York allowing his face to be wrenched out of shape by a doctor?"

Peter Angus Muir did not look up

from his bed tray on which he was causing a gay little figure dressed like an Italian peasant in gala costume to whirl and bow and dance on its weighted pedestal.

"There was the cleverest part of it," said Muir. "A face-lifting operation leaves definite scars, but a big scar in plain view on the side of the face—one wouldn't be apt to consider that the deliberate result of a doctor's work. . . . They have poor Russo now, you say?"

"They nabbed him in Virginia—Norfolk—and he confessed. I have the verbatim copy in my pocket. There's nothing but pure daylight on this case, now, if you'll be big-minded and tell me how you arrived at your results."

"I want to settle the doctor, first. You can admit him to State's evidence and get him out of trouble, can't you?"

"Scot-free? Impossible! It would cost me my hide!" complained the inspector.

"Give your hide to him, then," said Muir. "He saved mine. All of it."

"What the devil do you mean by that?" asked Tory, sitting down suddenly on the foot of the bed.

"Mix me a Scotch, will you?" asked Muir.

"You can't start drinking this early in the morning," said the inspector in his dry manner.

"Mix me a Scotch, will you?" said Muir.

Tory rose with a sigh.

"Imagine a man like Russo," said Muir, "with the electric chair shining right in his eye, and the law holding him by the nape of the neck—imagine him when a disease knocks the law flat as a pancake at his feet. He sees his danger knocked down. He's free. The man of the law will die not owing to his fault but from the natural process of the disease, and exposure to a December night.

But Russo is a *real* doctor, you see. So real that the practice of a dietitian didn't satisfy him at all. He had to give up his big practice in New York and run off to the Orient to track down some obscure disease or other. He had to keep his hand in as a surgeon, too. He had to be everything. Medicine and surgery is his life.

There he sees me knocked out as helpless as a child and his way free and clear to escape, but he can't let go of me. He wastes terribly useful time in getting to the village drugstore and buying quinine, because that professional eye of his had probed my case to the root at a glance. Not so easy, old fellow. Blackwater fever isn't seen in this part of the world, and my fit might have looked like epilepsy or anything, for all I know. But that clear old eye saw the truth and the specific remedy. Once he saw what to do, he had to do it, even if it cost him his own life. . . ."

"Damned magnificent," murmured Tory. "But a fellow who does a face-lifting operation on a criminal . . ."

"He didn't know that big Baldwin—Cheney, I mean—was a criminal. He only knew that his favorite nurse had brought in the case of a man she said had been ruined by a mere social mistake. As a matter of fact, she's talked the whole thing over with me. She was so fond of Cheney that he easily bamboozled her. He convinced her that he'd done nothing. He was merely a scapegoat.

"The doctor looks into the case. He looks into the man's mind. And he sees evil there. Handsome Bill wants a new face. The doctor gives him one. But *what* a face! A picture of evil, eh? Imagine a doctor who uses flesh and

blood the way a sculptor uses marble?

"He made the thing he saw—the evil in the soul of William Cheney. And when the bandages were off and Cheney saw himself, he smashed hell out of the mirror that showed him his new face. He was so sensitive about faces that he was upset when he saw a cut on the face of a dog. It's a good story, isn't it, old son?"

HE lifted the Scotch and soda and took a long pull at it. "I want the doctor given a clean pair of hands, or you get no testimony out of me," he said.

"We don't need it," said the Inspector, grinning. "Not since Cheney has confessed."

"You're going to give the doctor a clean bill of health," said Muir. "Not for Peter Angus Muir but for the sake of medicine and the health of the world. You hear?"

"Very well, Peter. I'll wangle it," agreed Tory. "Will you stop playing with that damned doll and put your mind on this case for me?"

"I'll do what I can," said Muir.

"We have a tight case all around, as a matter of fact," said Tory, "but there's one other person we'd like to talk to. There was a nurse in charge at the doctor's office and I'd like to get hold of her. But she's disappeared, also."

Muir pressed the bedside bell three times.

"She hasn't disappeared," he said.

"Not at her apartment," insisted Tory, "not at her—"

His voice trailed away, for the door had opened and a nurse in the crisp blue-white of a freshly laundered uniform entered. Inspector Tory, forgetting his words, looked from the bit of lace on her bright hair to the green of her eyes which dwelt upon Muir in a way that stripped the years suddenly from Tory and left him a mere boy again with a boy's mind that looks up at womanhood and finds divinity in it.

"I want you to meet Inspector Tory, occasionally a friend of mine," said Muir. "This is Katherine Edwards. The police had an idea that they wanted to talk to you, Kate. But Tory changed their mind for them, didn't you, John?"

"The fact is—" said Tory.

"Between you and me, John, you'll agree that facts rarely count for much," suggested Muir. "Only selected facts are the ones that tell. And that's why the police have lost interest in Kate. Isn't that true?"

The inspector made a sudden gesture of the hand and of the spirit.

"I'll make it true!" he said, and his heart kept on swelling as she smiled at him.

"You must rest, Peter," said the girl.

"Presently, my dear," said Muir.

"Now," she insisted. "You're tired out . . ."

Muir took her hand in his long, thin fingers and smiled up at her in a way that startled the inspector to the heart.

"Five minutes more and it will all be talked out," said Muir. "And then I'm going to rest—forever!"

"In five minutes, then?" she asked.

"Yes," said Muir, and she disappeared.

"And *that's* why you almost killed yourself?" asked the inspector.

Muir smiled, grew absent-minded, and then answered: "We were talking about this dancing doll, weren't we?"

"I was begging you to take your hands off the infernal thing and put your mind on the case," said Tory.

"THIS doll *is* the case," said Muir. "When I saw Baldwin—Cheney, I mean to say—playing with this miniature toy while he talked to Kate—then the picture was complete. I knew who had been living at the doctor's offices, who had had the miniature pack of cards, the miniature broken toy that I saw a fragment of. I knew who had smashed the mirror when he saw his face in it, too.

"Already I'd seen Baldwin at the tavern turn his back suddenly to a mirror behind the bar. The broken mirror, the scar on the face, and that ugly face which didn't match the beautiful forehead and eyes at all. You see how the idea grew in me, don't you? But all like a mist, all nebulous until I saw this little toy that Baldwin's damned fingers were dancing on the table while he talked to the girl." His voice trailed away.

"Peter, are you in love?" asked Tory.

"I am," said Muir. "You'll have to save her from me. Ideal beauty doesn't exist, but it can be suggested. And it's an odd thing that I never paid the slightest attention to green eyes, before. Go away and leave me, will you? I'm going to sleep all day. I wouldn't get up if Gabriel's horn was blowing."

"But you haven't explained half of it," complained Tory.

"There's one part that needs explaining I can't give," said Muir. "Why didn't Baldwin—Cheney, I mean—recognize me at the tavern, if he was the man who locked me in the room upstairs?"

"The doctor's story explains it," said Tory. "You know what it contains?"

"Brief it, will you?" asked Muir.

"It isn't long. He'd performed the operation, and installed his healing patient as a pseudo-laboratory assistant. One day Everett Franklin came in with a real case of dyspepsia and heard Cheney speak in the next room, and bounced right out of his chair, saying he thought he recognized the voice. The doctor was badly frightened. He knew, by this time, that he'd been bamboozled into working on a criminal.

"But if the voice were known, he was sure that the face would not be, so he opened the door and introduced Franklin to Philip Baldwin, and the thing seemed to go off like a charm. But Franklin came back to the house later. A suspicion must have stuck in his mind. He remembered that voice, still, and of course he remembered the missing magistrate, that brilliant young fellow Cheney who had skipped away with so much dough. At any rate, Franklin came back, found Cheney, and taxed him with his real name. Cheney killed him on the spot and then—"

"And then," said Muir, "with the hate and envy of a man who had once been 'Handsome Bill,' he leaned over and slashed the face of poor Everett to shreds—the damned rat!"

"HE'LL burn for it," said the inspector. "But when Cheney had done his work, he simply called in the doctor and pointed out that Russo himself would be more suspect than he for a murder with a scalpel in the doctor's own office. The thing to do was for them both to combine in getting rid of the body. The doctor could do nothing but obey.

"He went for his automobile, and while he was away Cheney telephoned to the girl he loved—to Katherine Edwards—and said the doctor was going to the country on a case and needed her. He didn't suspect that she would be in lack of something that would bring

her back to the office before she went into the country.

"And the place he directed her to, the place he took the doctor, was his own hide-out, where he'd been lying low before he went into the city to have that facial operation. A place where everybody had been a bit corrupted by easy money, you see."

"I do see," said Muir. "He was going to make his last play for her. Not knowing that the doctor's sculpturing in living flesh had shown her too much of the truth about Cheney."

"After the girl, then you appeared," said the inspector. "And of course, Cheney in the dark of the house was on tenterhooks. He opened the door to have a glimpse of you—opened it only a crack. But when he did that, you were after him in a flash. He only had an impression of a tall man quick on his feet—and ran up the stairs with you behind him—dodged into a corner—let you run past—locked you in a blind alley, so to speak—and come down the stairs to find the doctor and his car at hand. They put the body in the car and went out to Greenwood and the Tavern. There's that part of the story clear enough."

The door opened slowly and the girl stood on the threshold.

"I'm afraid we'll have to break off," said Muir.

"But I still want to know—" began Tory.

"I'd like to go on," said Muir. "But you can see for yourself that I'm under orders. This will have to be the end, John."

"The end?" echoed Tory, with singular meaning.

"Yes," said Muir. "The end."

The Elopement Dodge

OBTAINING the signature of the unwary has always been one of the keenest joys of the bunco man. The unvarying success of a stratagem employed frequently in the '80's was due to the truth of the sentiment that "all the world loves a lover."

The unsophisticated farmer, jogging along in his buggy, encounters a young couple, driving the opposite way in frantic haste. The swain stops and hails the farmer. In exceedingly agitated accents, he confides that he and the beautiful and seemingly bashful damsel beside him have eloped, and are anxiously seeking a clergyman. Will he be so kind as to inform them where one may be found?

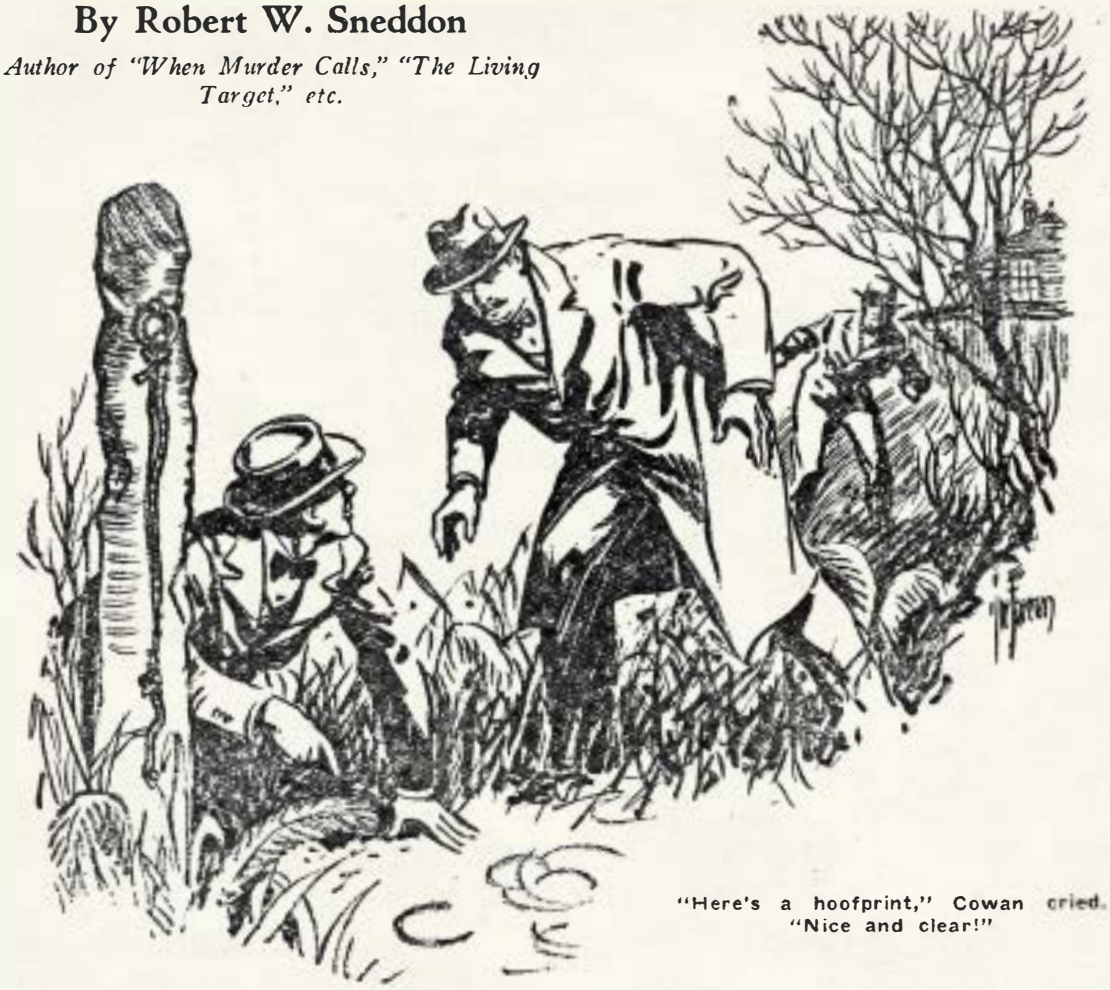
While he is cudgeling his brains in an endeavor to be helpful, along comes another rig, driven at a sober gait by a benevolent-looking, elderly gentleman, wearing a white-choker tie and other items of ministerial garb. The swain hails him. Is he by any chance a clergyman? He is. Will he perform the marriage ceremony? He cheerfully assents. After the ceremony, he digs up a marriage certificate, which the farmer signs as a witness.

Away drives the farmer, joyous in the recollection of his part in the happy affair. He is still joyous when he runs into that signature again, at the bottom of a promissory note, discounted by his banker, who has paid the cash to a benevolent-looking, elderly gentleman in clerical garb.

—*Sturgis Mallory.*

By Robert W. Sneddon

Author of "When Murder Calls," "The Living Target," etc.



"Here's a hoofprint," Cowan cried. "Nice and clear!"

Murder Down Under

THOUGH the month and day were August 25th, yet it was the winter season of 1920 in the Dominion of New Zealand. Detective-Sergeant Cummings of the city of Auckland was glad to get to bed and forget police duty.

It seemed to him that he had hardly laid his head on the pillow than he was awakened by the insistent ringing of a telephone. He switched on the light and glanced at the clock. One A. M.

"Yes?"

"Sergeant Cowan speaking from Pukekone police station."

"This is Cummings. What's wrong at this time of the morning? I was just dropping off."

"Sorry, but there's been a nasty murder at Pukekawa. I've been trying to get the Super but can't raise him. Will you pass on the word?"

"Yes. What are the details? Wait till I get a pencil. All right. Eyre—yes, she heard the dog bark—and later a shot—top of her husband's head—yes. Got it."

"Right, Sergeant, I'm leaving now for Pukekawa with Constable Wolfen-

dale. I called Dr. Wake to get there as soon as possible."

Sergeant Cummings got dressed. He reported to District Superintendent Wright, and within an hour was on his way by car, accompanied by Detective McHugh.

Owing to the winter rains, the roads were very bad and it was slow traveling the fifty-four miles between Auckland and the small township of Pukekawa with its post office, few stores, and scatter of houses. It was close on seven when the two police drove up to the scene of the crime, a small one-story cottage or bungalow, owned by Sidney Seymour Eyre, sheep farmer and contractor.

It was a small residence for one who owned so many acres of land about it —a property valued at sixty thousand dollars—but Cummings did not stop to consider this. He was only concerned with the material aspect of the house. He saw it stood within a tall hedge, ten to twelve feet high. The ground about the house had been recently ploughed, all but a well hardened path about a foot wide encircling the house and leading off back and front.

There was a window, each side of the front door, the sills of which stood well above the ground, since the house was built on a two-foot foundation. And the window on the left was raised, leaving an open space of two feet.

"That is Eyre's bedroom. He was sleeping on a single bed just below that sill," explained Cowan, "and someone did the trick through the window with a shot gun. But you best get the story from Mrs. Eyre herself. Here she is. This is Detective-Sergeant Cummings, Mrs. Eyre."

Cummings saw before him a woman in her forties with some claim to good looks in spite of all the hard labor which must have been hers. Though she bore the marks of tragedy on her face, she was trying to collect herself.

"Take your time, now, Mrs. Eyre, and tell us just what happened."

But it was quite some time before she was able to give a coherent story.

"The children were all off to bed—I have five of them—two girls and three boys. Philip is the oldest. He's seventeen. And then comes Doris. John is twelve, Ainslie is ten and the baby Beatrice is four. Dad and I sat talking a bit—he was thinking about a new house and maybe moving. He went to bed at nine. Dad had his bed by the window. He had to have the air, on account of his breathing. I slept in the double bed on the other side of the room. I wakened suddenly to hear the dog bark. He kept on, so I called to him to keep still and he stopped—" Mrs. Eyre choked.

"Yes, I understand how hard it is," Cummings prompted, "But there's no hurry. The dog stopped barking, eh?"

"Yes. And I must have fallen asleep again. Then all at once, a gun went off. It sounded like it was right in the room and I felt wet on my face. I sprang out of bed and called 'Dad, Dad! What happened?' but Sid—that's my husband—didn't answer. I thought I heard footsteps of some one moving. I struck a match and the room was thick with smoke, and—and—"

"Yes?"

"And I saw my husband lying there, blood all over his face and head. I screamed, 'Dad, Dad!' and ran out of the room. I knew he was dead—killed instantly. Philip called, 'What's wrong, mum?' and I said—I think I said, 'Someone's shot Dad. His head is blown open. I want you and John to run to the post office—it's nearly two miles away—and ring up the police.

Tell them to come at once with a doctor.' "

"Did they go right away?"

"Yes, at once."

"Did they see anyone on the way or anyone outside?"

"No."

"And you didn't see anyone yourself?"

"No, the room was filled with smoke."

"But it was bright moonlight outside. Didn't you look out of the window or the door, Mrs. Eyre?"

"No, I was all upset. I never thought. Oh, I can't stand any more!"

Cummings saw there was nothing more to be extracted at this point. So he went inside.

IN the disordered bedroom, a stocky man was standing, drying his hands on a towel. He nodded as the Sergeant entered.

"I'm Dr. Wake, and I suppose you must be Sergeant Cummings. Cowan said you were coming. Glad you're here. I have a confinement sixteen miles away, just about due."

"Glad to meet you, Doctor. I suppose you could do nothing?"

"Not a thing. Just take a look." He pulled down the sheet.

"No," said Cummings grimly. "Whoever did it made a good job."

"Yes," said Wake. "Close range. The pellets didn't have a chance to scatter. In my opinion, the gun muzzle was not much over six inches from the head. You notice the cheeks marked with the hot gases."

"Fired from outside the window?"

"I should say so."

"But you couldn't swear to that?"

Dr. Wake smiled. "It's up to you fellows to discover that! I am only a medico—not a Sherlock Holmes!"

Cummings looked at the window, then to the bed on the opposite side. "Ten feet away, that bed. Look at that bed, and the wall beyond and the clothes—that was Mrs. Eyre's bed, I believe?"

"Yes. Of course. These are blood and brain spatterings you see."

"Then Eyre's head came between the gun muzzle and the wall. The direction in which that matter was carried shows the gun was fired through the window."

"You're right. Must be so."

"The only thing wrong is that this window sill must be—let me see, I have a measuring tape—I'll just step out and measure."

Cummings was back in a couple of minutes.

"That sill is five feet two inches from the ground," he announced.

"That's bad," said Wake. "No one could put a gun to his shoulder and fire down into the room at that height!"

"Not unless he stood on something. As a matter of fact, there's a child's express wagon there. A wooden cart."

"Ha!" cried Wake. "Footprints?"

Cummings shook his head disappointedly. "Not a one. Not on the wagon, nor on the path. That volcanic dust never takes prints, and I can't see a single mark on the ploughed soil. But he came up on the path all right. Oh, just one thing more, doctor. Do you think you can indicate—roughly—just how the gun was pointed to make this wound? Take this piece of bamboo. Now how would you say the gun lay?"

Dr. Wake maneuvered the cane on the window sill.

"I should say like this, Sergeant. Only—hum—well—"

"Something wrong?"

Cummings bent down and squinted along the cane.

"The angle, eh? No, don't quite get it. Well, I want to see those pellets, doctor, when you finish. We can determine what sort of a cartridge was used. Hello, almost missed this one. Just shows you. See what time the clock stopped—over there on the chest of drawers."

"Eleven nine, eh?"

"That times the murder pretty thoroughly if the clock was going when they went to bed."

"It was. I understand it's the only one in the house. I asked the boy—the big one—and he said it was going last night."

"Well, I'll get along," said Cummings, but the door closed only to open again as he came back at once. "Excuse me, Doctor. Let me have that cane again. How's this? This is the stock of the gun and I put it to this shoulder, see?"

"Well," said Wake, "what of it? I don't quite see—"

"On my left shoulder, doctor! Don't you see. If the gun was fired from the left shoulder, the angle would be all right!"

"From the left—by Jove, you're right, Sergeant! A left-handed man. All you have to do is find a left-handed man"

Cummings smiled a trifle sourly. "It's not quite so easy as all that. Looks to me you must read those serial mystery stories in the Auckland *News*. It's on the lines of a murder at Ramarama in—1915, far as I can recall—man the name of Perry shot through an open window, just like this. He was in bed with his wife at the time. He was killed and the wife got never a scratch."

"And the killer?"

"Never got him."

Cummings went back to the living room to question Mrs. Eyre once more.

"You heard footsteps going away, that is what you said?"

"Yes, towards the back."

"And did you hear the sound of a car or a horse?"

"I thought I heard a horse canter over the bridge at the back."

"Did the dog bark again then?"

"I don't remember. No, I don't think so."

"That's odd. So it might have been someone the dog knew? How long have you had the dog?"

MRS. EYRE hesitated. "Well, it really belongs to a man who worked here for my husband, but he left five weeks ago. He took the dog with him but it came back. The children were fond of it so we let it stay."

"Is this man still in the neighborhood?"

"I believe he's working for Mr. Granville at Glen Murray."

"Might I have his name, Mrs. Eyre?"

"Thorn. Sam Thorn."

"Do you know if your husband had any enemies, Mrs. Eyre?"

"Oh no!" she cried out sharply. "Why should he? He was a good kind man to everyone."

Cummings left her and came out. He called Cowan and McHugh and the three men went slowly towards the bridge back of the house a hundred and fifty yards. They kept their eyes on the ground but could see no definite footprints. Just above the bridge was a large post surrounded by a patch of high fern and Cummings stopped short.

"There's been a horse hitched here lately. The grass is cropped short in a two-foot circle." He stooped over. "Pity, no hoofprints—"

"Looking for hoofprints?" asked Cowan walking ahead. "Here's a couple,

but nothing distinct. Wait, here's one—"

Cummings advanced and went down on his knees.

"Yes, this is pretty clear. See if you can find any more."

"Got a couple here—heading for Tippins'."

"All right. Just a minute till I measure this one first. Give me some of that fern and I'll cover it for protection. Get some wooden boxes later, McHugh, and cover them up."

Cummings followed the tracks of the same horse past Tippins', the next sheep station, and up the back road dividing it from Eyre's property, leading in the direction of the road to Glen Murray, 18 miles away and Tuakau.

He stopped four miles from Eyre's house, measuring here and there.

"There's been four horses passed this way, but we have a pretty fair idea of the shoes of the horse we want," he said. "Handmade, all of them. No factory stuff. You can almost see the hammer marks—about one-inch strip iron, I should say."

"They look extra big to me," McHugh suggested.

"That's right, and you ought to know," Cummings agreed. "You were a blacksmith before you joined the force. And the near front shoe is wider across the center than the off one."

"Plain shoes, no heels. It's not often you see that," said McHugh. "That near front shoe now is not concaved on the inside. Look at the fullering bulge each side the clip of the toe, and this one, the bulge is on the right side of the clip same as the off shoe."

"That horse overstepped quite a bit in its gait," said Cummings thoughtfully, looking at the adjoining prints.

"Nothing to do but find the horse," said Cowan with a grin, "Like what I overheard Dr. Wake suggest about the left-hand man. Well, we just got to look over a couple of thousand horses in this district."

"That will be your job and McHugh's, and you'll be looking at horse hoofs for quite a while," Cummings commented. "What do you know about this Thorn who used to work for Eyre?"

"Not much. I've seen him around though—a little fellow, can't be more than five feet three. I understand he's working at Glen Murray—" Cowan added with a wink, "I don't suppose by any chance we're headed there."

"We've got nothing against him. Now, have we got those boxes over the prints? Right, we'll go back to the house."

Dr. Wake was just leaving. He handed Cummings a small box.

"Forty pellets. There may be more, but I imagine that's enough."

Cummings opened the box and examined its contents. Some of the pellets still retained their original roundness, though many were flattened.

"And here's a gun wad I picked up," added Wake. "What you can do with the pellets beats me. They all look alike."

Cummings picked up one and laid it on his palm.

"Might be a number seven, but there's a gunsmith, Hazard, in Auckland, who can tell me. He's a wizard about anything connected with a gun. Thanks. How's Mrs. Eyre holding out?"

"Remarkably well, considering. Must have been a shock to get her husband's blood all over her—"

"She mentioned something about her husband's breathing. Know anything about that, doctor?"

"Touch of asthma. He went to Canada on a trip for his health, in 1917 I believe and enlisted in the Canadian force. How the devil they passed him, I don't know. He came back little over a year ago—"

"Just so. Pretty big place for a woman to run alone. She must have had help."

"Oh, she had! Short fellow called Thorn or some such name. Came about the end of 1918. I don't know when he left."

"Five weeks ago, I understand, Doctor. That means he must have been here nearly a year after Eyre came home. You don't happen to know on what terms these three people were?"

"Ah-a-a! Sergeant. Well if you want to know, not a damn thing. None of my business. But I suppose it's yours now."

"Yes," said Cummings, "all in the day's work. Hello, here's a car. Looks like my Superintendent. He has Dr. Smith with him. Will you take care of Dr. Smith, just a minute, and then you can dash off while I have a chin with Superintendent Wright."

HIS report to his superior officer was to the point.

"Someone who knew the place, sir. No motive on the surface yet, but not robbery. Someone who could use a shot gun and had one. We have samples of the ammunition. He came on horseback and we have prints of the shoes."

Wright listened attentively to the details. He went and saw Mrs. Eyre and the oldest boy but got nothing more from them.

Dr. Smith agreed on the left-handed killer theory.

"This is your case, Sergeant," said Wright as he drove away with the doctor, "You know what to do."

About eight Cummings prepared his written report, got Cowan and set off in his car to Glen Murray, leaving Constable Wolfendale on the premises.

He had verified the horseshoe prints with the aid of the occupant of the Tippins' property, a Herman Sharpe who said he had heard his dogs bark in the night. Sharpe enlisted the aid of a native tracker, a Maori known as Brown Bonga, and they also had followed the prints for a number of miles. They found they headed in the direction of Glen Murray.

Cummings drove steadily. They got to their destination in less than an hour.

"That's where he'll be—in the whare there," said Cowan pointing to the shack. "There's a horse hitched to the rail."

"Right. You take a look at the shoes. Yes, there's a light in the whare. He's there all right."

They drove up quietly and got out. Cowan picked up one of the hitched horse's front feet.

"Not this fellow. He's got heels," he whispered and pushed open the door for Cummings.

"You there? Thorn!" Cowan called sharply. "Visitors."

The man on the tumbled bed, with coat and boots on, grunted, then sat up suddenly.

"What the— Oh, good evening Sergeant Cowan! Thought it was some drunken swagman—"

"This is Detective-Sergeant Cummings from Auckland, Thorn."

"Yes?"

Cummings noted that Thorn showed no emotion of any sort, no fear, no surprise.

"Mr. Eyre, for whom you used to work, was shot by someone last night," he said crisply, "and we've come to

see if you can assist us in our inquiries."

"Yes?" queried Thorn dully, swinging his legs round and sitting up on the edge of his bed.

"The top of his head was blown off with a shot gun."

"Yes?"

"Can you tell us when you were last at Eyre's station?"

"Last Sunday week."

"How did you get on with Eyre?"

"Oh Sid and I had our differences, but I got on well with the rest of the family."

A cool one, Cummings commented to himself as he watched Thorn yawning and gaping between answers. He looked about the untidy shack.

"Got a shot gun here, Thorn?"

"Yes."

"Let me have a look at it, or—no, show me where it is."

Cummings took the shot gun from its case, and as he did so some cartridges fell out on the floor. Cowan picked them up.

"Peters' number seven—ballistite," he said. "That right, Thorn?"

Thorn made no reply, nor did he show any interest as Cummings squinted down the barrels and sniffed at them.

"When was this cleaned last?"

"I cleaned it yesterday or today."

"You ought to know. When did you clean it?"

"Yesterday or today," Thorn repeated mechanically.

"It smells to me of fresh powder," said Cummings, sniffing again. "When did you use it last?"

"I may have used it since I came to this whare or I may not. I used it at the whare near the house, shooting rabbits. I've fired it twice."

"Um. Where were you last night?"

Thorn made a curious ambiguous answer then:

"Oh, well, I'm going to say I wasn't out."

"The position is this," Cummings insisted, "what we want to know is: were you out last night?"

"Did anyone see me out?" Thorn countered.

"I've been told you were out," said Cummings.

"No one knows here. Granville left shortly after five," said Thorn sullenly.

"Well, you know best, Thorn," said Cummings pleasantly, "we'll see you again."

THEY drove away to stay the night with Cowan. A neighbor dropped in and in the course of conversation let fall an important piece of information. During Eyre's absence, and after, Thorn had been very attentive to Mrs. Eyre. It had caused some talk in the neighborhood.

"We have our motive, all right," Cummings said to Cowan, after their informant had departed. "Mrs. Eyre is a pretty well-to-do woman now. It was to Thorn's benefit to get Eyre out of the way."

"You think maybe they planned this thing together?"

"I don't know what to think, Cowan. I'll look about tomorrow. We'll start by going to Glen Murray and looking over the horses."

They were back at Glen Murray bright and early. James Granville was waiting for them, and Thorn was with him.

"I want to see the horses here," said Cummings. "How many has Thorn got with him here?"

"There's five in the seventy-acre paddock. That gray one, Dandy, is the one

Thorn usually rides," said Granville pointing.

"Do you know if Dandy was out Tuesday night?"

"It was in the paddock when I left Tuesday evening and I saw it there first thing in the morning. And there is Major and Dick—"

"Yes, I saw Dick hitched here last night. What's the name of the heavy one that looks like a cavalry horse?"

"Mickey, the best saddle horse of the lot, and what a worker!"

"All right, Mrs. Granville, I want to look at the shoes of the lot."

"Anything you say, Sergeant. Get them, Thorn."

Cummings and Cowan examined all five horses. All but Major had shoes on all four hoofs, Major having slippers on his two hind ones. Mickey was the only horse shod without heels, that is, with perfectly plain shoes, and seeing that, Cummings took out his measure.

"Read off the measurements of the prints you got there, Cowan," he said, and Cowan obliged.

Cummings applied the rule and nodded with satisfaction.

"These are the shoes I want—the front ones. They measure exactly with the prints. I want those shoes, Mr. Granville. Can you get them off for me?"

"I'll do that."

Thorn watched the proceedings but said nothing.

"I want to see you, Friday, at the station," said Cummings as he left. "Sergeant Cowan will expect you there."

"I'll be there. Why not?" Thorn promised.

"You're leaving him at liberty?" asked Cowan as they drove away.

"Where would he run to on the island? Besides we haven't anything definite," said Cummings.

"But the horseshoes?"

"They may match, but there are a good many horses in the district, Cowan. And it's up to us to prove none of them have shoes like Mickey's. We have good enough proof for ourselves, but not for a jury."

"But what about the cartridges? Surely we have him on them?"

"Same answer, Cowan. There may be thousands of Peters' number seven in the district. We've got to find out before we can be sure Thorn fired the pellets I sent to Hazard, the gunsmith."

"I see," said Cowan disappointedly. "Where to now?"

"Back to Eyre's. I want to talk to Mrs. Eyre."

They found the widow just back from staying at a neighbor's and Cummings opened the attack at once.

"Mrs. Eyre, you haven't been quite frank with me. You did not tell me of your relations with Thorn."

"What do you mean? He's a married man with six children of his own."

"That may be so, but I understand he left them, or they left him. Now, Mrs. Eyre, you have got to make a plain statement—for your own safety—"

"Safety?" She echoed the word and moistened her lips. "I don't know what you mean."

"You may be involved more than you know, Mrs. Eyre. Now, it's nothing to me as regards morals, but it will be better for you to tell the truth. You were living with Thorn, were you not?"

MRS. EYRE shot a bitter look at the policeman's pleasant frank bronzed face. "What of it? What difference is it to you?"

"Just this. There might be some thought that you had part in your husband's death."

"No," she said sharply. "It's true about the other thing though. Sid was away and that's how it began. But when Sid came back I told Sam it would have to stop. He was jealous of Sid. He kept after me. He made all kinds of threats if I did not give in to him he would go to Sid and tell him all—and there were the children, you see—"

She appeared humiliated.

"How do you feel towards Thorn now?"

"I hate him. I can't stand him, that's the truth. When I think what he made me suffer, I can hardly bear to think of it."

"Did Thorn ever make threats against your husband?"

"Well, shortly before he left here, he said to me, wouldn't you be better off without Sid? I told him he should be ashamed to say such a thing."

"You're not afraid to be left alone here now? Do you have a gun in the house?"

"I never fired a gun in my life."

"That is not quite answering my question, Mrs. Eyre. Is there a gun in the house?"

"Phil, my boy, has one."

"I want to see Phil. Is he around? Call him, please."

The youth appeared.

"I'll go with you and look at your gun," said Cummings.

He examined the shot gun.

"You don't bother to do much cleaning, young fellow. When did you use it last?"

"About a week ago."

"Got any cartridges? Let me see them. Peters number seven, eh? Where did you get these, Philip?"

"From Sam—I mean Sam Thorn who used to work here. I bought them in May. I just got six left."

"Sam a pretty good shot, eh?"

"I should say he is. You should see him—shoots from his left shoulder."

"Left-handed, eh?"

"That's right."

"Well, you take good care of your mother, my boy."

"I'll do that. Do you think you can catch the fellow that killed Dad?"

"We'll try to. You were pretty fond of him, weren't you?"

The boy nodded miserably and his eyes filled.

"Why did you ask that last question?" Cowan demanded as they drove away. You didn't have any idea Phil was in the murder? Of course, he had a gun and the same cartridges, but—damme—!"

"No, no," said Cummings testily. "He had nothing to do with it, but you never know what some lawyer may pounce on."

He was satisfied with the progress he was making, but there was still much to be done.

Cowan, McHugh, and Mounted Constable Wolfendale were scouring the district, making a survey of horses. They examined in all 1303 horses, of which 418 were shod. Of these 418 the only shoes identifiable with the tracks were those worn by Mickey.

On September 10, Wolfendale rode Mickey from Glen Murray. He left at 5:50 P. M. and reached the Eyre cottage at 8:20. The horse turned of its own accord into the back road where the first shoeprints were found. Mickey's coat was quite dry. Though the horse had been worked that day it showed no sign of distress.

The constable noted that the horse had a tendency to bore to the right. It was a big striding horse and walked

wide. There was not the slightest doubt that Mickey was the horse which had been hitched to the post near the bridge the night of the murder.

Cummings was ready to act, for he had some additional information.

A newspaper reporter had heard Thorn talking with a man Taylor in the bar of the Tuakua hotel. "What do you think is going to happen, Bill?"

"Damned if I know, Sam, but the police are going to get someone."

"If they get me," said Thorn, according to the witness, "I'll drag someone else into it. There's someone nearer the rope's end than they think they are."

"I wouldn't say that, Sam," his friend warned him." You know if you are innocent or guilty—but you want to be careful what you say."

When this conversation came to Cummings's ears, he was just ready to strike, so he had Thorn brought in.

The man was sullen.

"You have been doing some talking about involving another person. Will you tell me what you meant?"

"I won't tell you."

"Mrs. Eyre?"

"No."

"Any member of the family?"

"No."

But Thorn was doing no more talking. He was arrested that day, September 11. He was brought to trial in the Auckland Supreme Court on November 15.

THE defence was that no one had seen Thorn at Eyre's the night of the murder, and that the evidence against him was purely circumstantial. It was contended, in spite of what appeared to be sound testimony by doctors and others, that the gun might have been fired by a right-handed person, even within the room. The defence then said it was quite possible that the gun might have been discharged by Mrs. Eyre, the gun being her son's, and that when she told the police she had never fired a gun in her life she was stating an untruth. She knew how to handle and had handled a gun.

The argument so befuddled the jury that they could not agree.

The judge ordered a retrial.

A new trial commenced November 29, and once more Thorn's counsel challenged Mrs. Eyre to tell the real truth.

"Is it possible there is something behind this awful business which this woman, with her iron nerve, declines to say and will ever decline to say?"

Mrs. Eyre freely testified as to her affair with Thorn, but defended herself and her son Philip against every allegation of the defence counsel.

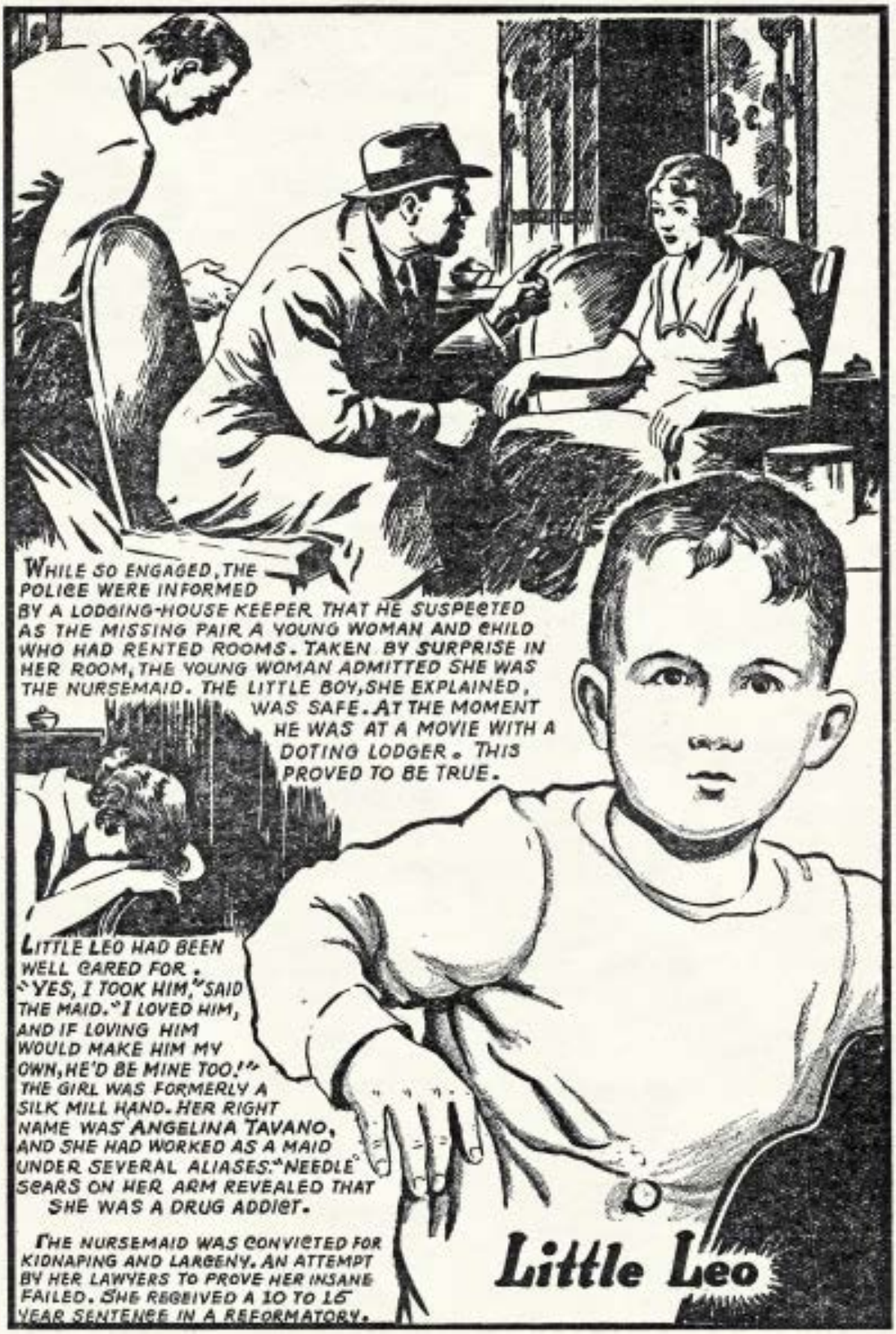
There was really no need for her to do so, for Sergeant Cummings presented his accumulated evidence, supported by his assistants and the medicos, so clearly that no jury with common sense could question it.

Only one man could have fired the gun. In a wide area only Thorn and Philip had cartridges such as killed Eyre. Mickey's newly made tracks led the crime directly to Thorn's shack at Glen Murray. He had set his eyes covetously on Eyre's wife and property and killed to secure them.

And mentally following Cummings on his sleuthing trail, the jury apparently saw the whole thing. They retired and came out with a verdict of guilty, and in due time Thorn was hanged in Auckland prison.

Hanged by horseshoes, which popular superstition believes to be lucky. They were anything but that for this man.

Coming Next Week—



Billy, the Kid

MURDER CARAVAN

Tony Savage, Ace Investigator, Uncovers New Trails in Old New Orleans, While Covering the National Crimefront from Coast to Coast

WHAT HAS HAPPENED—

ANTHONY SAVAGE, ace private investigator for the Pan-America Insurance Company of New York, and his assistant, Briggs, were driving northward along a main Florida highway in their coupé, to which is attached a new silver trailer equipped with a short wave radio. They are suddenly halted by the appearance of a hatless, bearded man, a typical Florida cracker, who stumbles onto the macadam road almost dead from exhaustion. Just as the man reaches the road he is shot by a gunman hidden in the thick forest alongside the highway.

Savage gets out of the car and rushes to him just as the man expires and whispers, "Bellamy!" To Savage this is a significant coincidence, for he and Briggs were on their way to "Flamingo Groves," the Florida estate of Roger Bellamy, President of the Arcade Steel Company and a heavy policy holder with the Pan-America Company. Savage carries the corpse of the unidentified native to the side of the road, and drives but a short distance when a small coupé stops in front of the car and trailer, and an indignant girl accuses Savage and Briggs of leaving a body behind in a hit-and-run accident. At the point of a gun, she orders them to drive to "Flamingo Groves," informing them that Bellamy is dead there. The woman is Rita Carstairs, reporter for the New York *Star*.

They drive to "Flamingo Groves," where Tony, after he has identified himself to the sheriff, begins his investigation of Bellamy's death. The wealthy man had been found drowned, caught under an overturned boat. He had been insured by Pan-America for $300,000 for death due to natural causes and $525,000 in case of an accidental death. The New York office phones Tony full authority to proceed with his investigation.

During his further inquiries, Tony meets Joan Bellamy, daughter of the deceased, and Jerry Goddard, her fiancé, a young man of unstable character. He also meets Prendergast, the family lawyer, and Clark, a boatman on the estate. The latter grudgingly rows Tony to the scene of Bellamy's death. There Clark suddenly assaults Savage. During their fight, Clark is mysteriously sniped by someone hidden in the thicket ashore. Savage makes his way back to the dock, and Briggs informs him that Bellamy had been in a financial jam, and that a man named Larnigan, who is connected with Bellamy's business operations, had skipped out of town.

It is known that Larnigan is a crack marksman and that he had had a rifle

This story began in Detective Fiction Weekly for May 15

By T. T. Flynn

Author of "Death on the Waterfront," "The Sheriff Scores," etc.

"Don't have a nervous spasm and shoot me with that gun," Savage said

with him. Savage arranges to have him investigated in New Orleans where he maintains his residence.

MEANWHILE young Goddard and Joan Bellamy take Bellamy's body to Cleveland for interment. Prendergast demands quick settlement of the insurance policy. And the men who had been visiting "Flamingo Groves" with Larnigan—Chatham, Robertson, Jackson and Borden—request permission to leave.

A short while later, Savage learns from the local telephone operator that Larnigan has been found burned to death in the charred wreck of his automobile, near Torrington, close to the Alabama line.

Savage and Briggs drive out to the scene of the wreck, and note that Larnigan's rifle is not among the wreckage. They learn that Miss Carstairs has been there ahead of them and is on her way to New Orleans. They follow and are stopped at a toll bridge.

CHAPTER XI

Strange Coincidence

THE morning wind off Mobile Bay carried the salt tang of the sea and the soggy breath of the marshlands flanking the long toll bridge. And Anthony Savage, with one foot out of the big gray car, chuckled at the toll collector's question.

"Following the young lady?" Savage repeated. "Well, I might be at that. Did she say where she was going?"

"If she did, I wouldn't tell you," was the tart reply; and the thin-lipped collector leaned out and looked back at the long sleek trailer behind the car. "What's all this about? Maybe I ought to have the police come out an' look into it."

Savage chuckled again. Despite the long night's drive, through those grueling hundreds of miles from the east coast of Florida, the tanned leanness of his face had a reassuring strength that would have impressed a woman at once. The toll collector caught a bit of it himself. Some of the challenge went out of his manner.

"I may want the police myself," Savage told him. "But right now, think back to yesterday morning—say the first two hours after daybreak. Did a car cross the bridge, going west, which might have seemed suspicious—now that you think about it?"

"How do you mean 'suspicious,' mister?"

"Oh, any way. Hurried, perhaps. The driver might have been nervous, jumpy, as if he had something on his mind. Perhaps they merely made you feel that way for no reason at all."

"*They?* How many were in the car, mister?"

"I'm only guessing," Savage admitted. "Perhaps only one."

"Two," said the toll collector bruskly. "I was sleepy an' didn't move fast enough to suit 'em. The little shrimp behind the wheel got fresh about it. Said if the State was too cheap to put in a free bridge, it might at least hire a man to stay awake an' take the money. Feller with him told him ugly-like to keep quiet. The young lady asked me a couple of hours ago about the same thing. Who were those men?"

"I'd like to know," said Savage. "There's a chance they are wanted by the police. Can you describe them?"

"Police, hey? She didn't say so. If I'd known that I'd have had 'em and their trailer stopped before they got into town."

"Trailer? You didn't say anything about a trailer."

"You didn't ask me."

"Was there one?"

"I said so, didn't I, mister?"

"What kind of a trailer was it? What color?"

"Just a trailer," said the toll collector. "Kind of a red color, I think. Maybe not. There's so many trailers on the roads these days."

"Was anyone riding in the trailer?"

"I ain't here to look inside vehicles, mister."

"Did the trailer have New York tags?"

"I reckon so. The car had. I didn't look."

"The two men—what did they look like?" Savage pressed.

"You're askin' a lot, mister. Seems to me the driver was a kinda little feller. He needed a shave. His straw hat was kinda tipped over one eye. I remember his crooked nose, like it had been broken."

"And the car?"

"It was kind of an old car, dark-blue, maybe. It was a sedan—Chevrolet, Pontiac or something like that. Maybe it was a Ford. But it had New York tags. Most always it's a New York tag that tries to pick an argument," said the toll collector acidly.

Savage smiled as he closed the door. "It's a habit with us, like scratching your back. You have to get used to us, before you can tell what we'll do. Well, thanks for the information."

"I'm used to a lot of things," snapped the toll collector. "Pay your toll before you rush off!"

"A TRAILER!" Savage said with emphasis as he drove off the bridge. "Briggs, what do you make of that?"

"Hundreds of them on the highway," said Briggs laconically.

"I know; but at that particular time yesterday morning, driving west, with a hurried, nervous driver."

"Maybe he was hungry."

"Dammit," said Savage, "use your head—not your stomach!"

"My head gets dizzy in this," confessed Briggs. "Nothing adds up. This fellow Larnigan's dead. Back there in Torrington you made it sound like murder. Now you turn up two men driving toward New Orleans with a trailer. If they killed Larnigan, why did they do it?"

They were entering Mobile. The noisome fumes of a burning dump or a factory made Savage wrinkle his nose in distaste as he confessed:

"If they did, I don't know the answer. Perhaps Miss Carstairs does. She's acting like it. Her New York newspaper seems to have picked the report of Larnigan's death off the press wires, connected it with information Miss Carstairs had sent in about Bellamy's death, and telephoned it to Bellamy's house. She thought it important enough to keep secret. She left immediately.

"And she tried to keep me from knowing where she had gone or what she intended to do. From what I've seen of the delightful young lady so far, she considered Larnigan's death highly interesting."

Briggs granted: "She's got a bee in her ear about something, driving the way she is. Do you think that Torrington sheriff was lying when he said he hadn't seen her? She came through there not long before we did."

"I think she got all the information she needed when she telephoned the Torrington sheriff from Jacksonville last night," said Savage. "She knew traffic this way would have to cross the toll bridge here, unless it made a long useless detour up north. She knew the approximate time Larnigan's car burned up. Anyone passing the spot at that time would be here at the bridge not long after. And the facts bear her out. That New York car and trailer hurrying west is too timely to be a coincidence."

"You really think those guys killed Larnigan, Chief?"

"That wreck," said Savage, "was almost too much of a coincidence. It removed Larnigan from the scene at too apt a time. It freezes the facts so they can't be explained. Larnigan ruined Bellamy. There was bad blood between them. Larnigan was out all day with a rifle at the time Peckham and Clark were killed by rifle fire. Larnigan came back with mud on his shoes, left suddenly and mysteriously—before he was asked to explain his movements during the day. And now he's dead and never can explain those movements."

"Smells bad," admitted Briggs. "All but the rifle. Would they be dumb enough to kill Larnigan, and then steal his rifle?"

"Killers," said Savage, "are never very bright, Briggs. That's why they're killers. You should know that by now. An expensive rifle—which Larnigan undoubtedly had—would be a temptation."

BRIGGS dubiously insisted: "I still can't figure Larnigan murdered. He drove fast to get where he was when he died. How could anyone know he was coming? How could they pick him up so neatly along the road?"

"Three ways that I can think of, Briggs. First, Larnigan made a telephone call to New Orleans on his way out of Cohatchie. Johnston, in New York, traced the New Orleans number for me, and wired me yesterday afternoon. Larnigan telephoned the apartment of a Miss Moira Sullivan. She might have let someone know Larnigan was driving through. Again, someone might have been watching Larnigan, when he left Bellamy's place, and followed him."

"He was followed a long way then, Chief, before anything was done."

"I've thought of that," Savage admitted. "There's a third chance. Someone around Bellamy's estate might have watched for Larnigan to leave, and sent word ahead."

"Where are we going?" asked Briggs.

Savage smiled. "Larnigan was heading toward New Orleans. The two men headed that way. They're there now if they went on through. Miss Carstairs seems to be going also—so we'll follow the crowd."

"She's not an iron woman. I'll bet she stops in Mobile today."

"I hope so. She's driven too far now to be safe behind the wheel. We'll find her after she gets to New Orleans. You got some sleep last night, didn't you?"

"A few hours."

"And that," said Savage, pulling over over to the curb and stopping, "is a few hours up on me. Take the wheel, Briggs. Don't drive over fifty. And watch for a red trailer."

CHAPTER XII

Down in New Orleans

AT five P. M. New Orleans traffic was heavy on Rampart Street, when Briggs found the parking lot, two blocks from Canal, for which he had been looking. The big trailer lurched as it rolled up the sidewalk ramp.

Inside the trailer Tony Savage nicked his chin with a razor and grimaced at his reflection in the bathroom mirror.

The trailer stopped. Someone rapped sharply on the door.

Razor in hand, lather over half his face, Savage opened the door an inch or so to look out.

And a big hand on the outside opened the door wide and a burly figure ducked to enter. Bill Nugent, gusty supervisor of the New Orleans office of Pan-America Insurance, came in like a half-gale of wind, roaring:

"So this is the kind of an outfit you end up with? A trailer! And shaving and dressing in the middle of Rampart Street at five in the afternoon! The insurance game has gone to the dog house when you can get by with it! How're you, feller, even if I have been waiting an hour for you to roll in?"

Bill Nugent grabbed a hand and wrung it enthusiastically, and then staggered as the trailer started ahead with a jerk.

Balancing on widespread feet, Savage grinned.

"You get used to it, Bill. Sit down and be comfortable. I just got out of bed. Slept from Mobile."

Bill Nugent, who was six feet and an inch of beef, muscle, breeziness, curly hair and a ready grin, collapsed on the divan as the trailer stopped with another jerk and began to back.

"Slept from Mobile? In here? On the highway? Well I'll be damned! Say, this seat is soft! Better than anything I've got at home. Go on and finish your shaving—and don't cut your throat while this halootin' is going on," said

Bill Nugent as Briggs maneuvered the long heavy outfit into a parking space.

Savage left the bathroom door open as he returned to his shaving.

Nugent's gusty voice followed him in.

"I got your wire from Gulfport saying to meet you here on this corner. Thought you said you slept all the way?"

"I woke up long enough to telephone Briggs to send the wire at the next town."

"Telephoned the driver? You haven't got a swimming pool along, have you?"

"Ice in the ice box; Scotch and soda in the cabinet above. Mix up three long ones. Briggs will need one. Did you get in touch with the detective agency?"

"Clancy, the local manager, is coming over himself any minute," Nugent chuckled boisterously as he went to the ice box. "Clancy's New York office must have told him it was do or die for dear old Apperson Agency, the way he 'yessed' me around. To listen to him, you'd think Pan-America was the fair-haired account in the whole Apperson Agency chain. Why didn't you say you had Bourbon? This isn't a Scotch town. How much can you take?"

"Jigger and a half; three-quarters up with the soda. Scotch for Briggs too. Plenty of it. Have you heard from Johnston, in New York?"

"Damn!" Bill Nugent roared as the trailer gave a final jerk and stopped. "How can I squirt seltzer standing on my head? Did I hear from Johnston? My dear fellow, old rustyneck himself called me this morning from New York and ordered me to give you the keys to the town. That was the first I knew you were coming. Like old times, hey? Arg-h-h—where'd you get this Bourbon?"

BILL NUGENT had not changed much in the ten years since they had started together with Pan-America in San Francisco. Now when Savage emerged from the bathroom, Bill thrust out a glass and collapsed on the divan, one long leg over the other, and grinned across his glass.

"You louse," said Bill fondly. "After I kill that bottle of Bourbon, you can haul me home in this rolling boudoir."

Briggs unhooked the car, and came in, unshaven, bleary-eyed, and acknowledged the introduction to Nugent.

"What a day!" Briggs groaned. "Two punctures to make it sweeter. Anything else, Chief, before I get some sleep?"

"Turn in, Briggs." Briggs took his drink into the rear bedroom.

Minutes later someone else knocked on the door.

Bill Nugent roared: "Come in, Clancy!"

Nugent had ducked inside like a bear rolling into a den. His command brought a smaller man bouncing into the trailer, with bright eyes darting about the interior even as the newcomer closed the door.

Bill waved a big hand from the divan.

"Clancy—Savage. Pour yourself a drink, Clancy, before you take crime by the throat."

"Not much, just a taste," said Clancy in a soft voice that belied his quick bright eyes and round red cheeks.

Savage cracked ice into a glass, pushed the glass over beside the bottles and sat on the edge of the divan while Clancy poured his drink.

"Hey! Stop him!" said Bill Nugent in anguish as the Bourbon gurgled steadily. "He'll leave me sober."

Clancy dusted seltzer over the gargantuan drink, saluted Bill with the

glass, and took half of it without stopping for breath.

"It's been a hard day," Clancy sighed. "Mardi Gras starting tomorrow and double work for us. Mr. Savage, I put your business ahead of everything. First off, I've had men combing the town for that car and trailer you wired about today."

"Ha!" said Bill Nugent. "Another wire. You wake up with a hatful of ideas to execute, Tony."

"Pipe down, Bill. This is important. No trailer, eh, Clancy?"

"The town's lousy with trailers," said Clancy. "They're in from everywhere for Mardi Gras. But a blue sedan, a red trailer, New York tags and a short man with a crooked nose is a hell of a combination to match. No soap on it so far. We can't break into every trailer we find and see what's inside, of course."

"And the tags could have been changed," said Savage. "All right—keep looking. And the other matters?"

"I sent two men to watch Larnigan's house," said Clancy. "We checked this Miss Moira Sullivan whom Larnigan telephoned from Florida."

"Larnigan is dead," said Savage.

Clancy nodded. "I saw it in the papers."

"I consider it important—and suspicious," said Savage.

Clancy turned his glass slowly in his fingers.

"The papers made it an accident," said Clancy. "Burned to death in his car. Why is that suspicious?"

Instead of answering, Savage asked: "Who is the Sullivan woman?"

"Larnigan's confidential secretary," Clancy informed him. "She's been with Larnigan nine years. She's the one person, tried a few big entertainments to crash local society. They didn't go over. His cotton operations had ruined a family or so who counted—and his money was too new.

"He gave it up, had small parties now and then for friends, but for the most part lived there alone when he was in town. Did a lot of his work there, I understand. Sometimes he wouldn't come near the office for days. Miss Sullivan and a steno would come out to the house."

"Fast work to get all that, Clancy."

"You got service over everything else in the office," said Clancy, blinking his eyes.

"Anyone suspicious come to the house yesterday, last night or today?"

Clancy looked him straight in the eye. "Were you expecting someone?"

"Then someone did visit the house?"

CLANCY nodded. "Just after dark last night two men walked into the grounds. I'd had a couple of men watching the front for Larnigan's automobile, until I read that Larnigan was dead. I pulled one of them off. No use keeping watch for a dead man to return."

Bill Nugent lumbered over to the Bourbon bottle and held it up to see how much was left. "Sometimes the dead walk," Nugent counseled. "I've seen things after a party that you wouldn't believe."

Clancy ignored the interruption. "I kept one man around the front of the place just to check on what happened. One car went in before dark. It was Miss Sullivan, the secretary. She was inside about half an hour and then drove out, wiping her eyes. And then about eight o'clock these two men walked in. My man didn't see where they came from."

"What did they look like?"

"It's dark along there. He couldn't

see them clearly enough for that. But they went toward the house. No house lights came on—and the two men never did come out."

"A mystery," said Bill Nugent.

"My man told his relief before midnight," said Clancy. "The relief kept watch—but the men did not appear. If they left, they left by another entrance and got away from us."

"Naughty—naughty," chided Nugent over his shoulder. "Clancy the Great and the Apperson Agency fall down with a bang. What's Pan-America paying you for? Tony, got another bottle? This one won't last me until dinner time, if Clancy has another wee one out of it."

"That's all you get," Savage assured Nugent flatly. "Clancy, have you got a skeleton key?"

"I can get past most doors," said Clancy promptly.

Bill filled his glass with seltzer and demanded: "Tony, what the hell is this all about? I'm in a fog from all the talk. Nobody ever has told me what's up. Are we going in for crime in a big way tonight with a skeleton key?"

"You," said Savage heartlessly, "are going back to the office and drink ice water. The less you know, the less you can tell if you're cross-examined. Handcuffs and headlines don't go with the branch manager of an insurance company that writes theft and burglary insurance. I'm going out alone, or with one of Clancy's men."

"I'll go with you," stated Clancy promptly.

CHAPTER XIII

Mysterious Sam

THE gay, irresponsible spirit of Mardi Gras was already capturing the city. Canal Street was blossoming out in flags, banners and festoons of lights. Visitors were crowding the city. Antoine's, in the French Quarter, where Bill Nugent insisted the three of them dine, was filled early with patrons who stared curiously about that venerable home of famous cuisine.

Afterwards Bill Nugent, protesting bitterly, was dropped at his office. Clancy's automobile rolled swiftly south on St. Charles Avenue into a quieter part of the city.

They turned presently off St. Charles into a side street, and quickly parked the car and went forward on foot. The rush of the modern present had been left behind. Houses they passed were rather shabby and old—though not so old as the ancient buildings of the Vieux Carré where they had just dined.

They came to a brick wall higher than the reach of a tall man. Vines struggled across the top of the wall, branches of huge old trees arched out over the sidewalk, and they came to a parked automobile. A man lounging behind the wheel emerged hastily when Clancy spoke bruskly to him.

"Anyone in there, McReady?"

"Not a soul, Mr. Clancy."

"We're going in. Watch sharp. If we don't come out in a reasonable time, use your head better than you did with those two men last night."

"I'll be in any time you say," McReady assented uncomfortably.

"Give us half an hour."

"Make it an hour," said Savage.

"An hour," said Clancy to his man. "Not a minute more. I'll be timing you." Clancy chuckled as they walked on. "If I don't let those fellows know who's running them, they get careless. Here we are. Anyone coming?"

An iron fretwork gate was at Clancy's elbow; the twin gates of the driveway were just beyond; and rusty

hinges grated as Clancy opened the gate and stepped inside the grounds.

A faint seep of light came over the wall from the next street intersection; it did barely more than brush a lighter tint over the black shadows under the big trees. A jungle-like garden flanked the walk and pale shell surface of the driveway.

The damp air was heavy with the presence of growth. It was, Anthony Savage thought, like the approach to Roger Bellamy's Florida estate; only here were no orange trees and smiling skies.

Here was, suddenly, a well-like opening of space, up which one could look to the stars—and the somber bulk of the house was before them.

A silent house, a dark house, that seemed to brood, cut off from the city, cut off from life.

"Nice rat's nest," Clancy muttered. "Gives you the creeps, eh? Makes you wonder what really happened to those two men last night."

They tip-toed on a porch that had a second porch above it for the upper rooms. Clancy masked a tiny pocket flashlight in a handkerchief and tried keys; in a minute he grunted with satisfaction and opened the door. They stepped into pitch blackness faintly redolent of excellent tobacco, better liquor and the invisible imprint of the man who had lived here.

Savage had brought a small flashlight also. They listened a moment, and then Savage's light knifed through the blackness to the first rise of a graceful staircase. He led the way up to the second floor and looked in room after room. Near the back of the house he found a spacious room holding bookcases, comfortable chairs, a desk by the windows and two filing cabinets in the corner.

SAVAGE prowled about the room. A filing cabinet standing at an angle from the wall caught his attention. He inspected it a moment, masked his fingers with a handkerchief, and gave the cabinet a tug. It swung out. One corner was hinged cleverly into the wall.

In the wall the polished steel door of a small safe stood ajar the fraction of an inch. With the handkerchief, Savage opened the safe door and put the beam of his light inside.

The safe was empty.

Clancy whistled softly. "Did a couple of wise guys break in here last night and prowl the place? Or did Larnigan leave his safe open and empty that way?"

"Larnigan's secretary was here yesterday," Savage reminded. "She may have done it." Savage closed the door, pushed the filing cabinet back into place, and added: "But I doubt if either Larnigan or his secretary would leave the safe exposed this way. Habit, if nothing else, would make them close it."

Clancy looked in several of the desk drawers.

"Somebody went through this desk in a hell of a hurry," commented Clancy under his breath. "Looks to me like—"

Clancy cursed, jumped back as the desk telephone rang sharply.

"Holy smoke, that startled me! Who's calling here this time of night?"

The telephone rang again, and rang faintly on another extension downstairs at the same time.

"Maybe it's Larnigan calling," Clancy said in a lighter vein.

A third ring followed. Savage was at the desk by then with his light on the instrument. He lifted the receiver, said carefully: "Hello? . . . yes. . . "

A moment later he hurriedly summoned the operator

"Hello—hello! Operator? Who was calling this number? . . . Yes, I know the party hung up. I want the name and address traced at once. Police business . . . yes! Let me know as quickly as you can!"

"What is it?" Clancy demanded excitedly when Savage hung up.

"A man said, 'Sam?' And when I said it was, he snarled: 'You're a liar!' and hung up!"

Clancy snapped instantly: "That's hot! If it was a legitimate call, he wouldn't have cut it off that way."

"Yes—that's why I'm trying to trace him."

"Sam!" Clancy repeated with growing excitement. "Who's Sam? What's he doing in this house tonight?"

"He isn't here."

"Someone thought he was," said Clancy. Blackness filled the room like a solid substance. Clancy was moving restlessly about. His agile mind advanced another idea. "Maybe that chap merely wanted to see if someone were in the house."

"I doubt it," Savage differed. "He could have hung up as soon as I answered. No—he expected Sam to be here. He wasn't surprised when the telephone was answered. But when he heard my voice he was so startled he snapped back at me before he hung up."

"Then where is Sam?" demanded Clancy.

"I'd give something to know."

Clancy muttered impatiently: "Why the devil doesn't that operator trace the call?"

"Quiet!" Savage ordered softly.

A door closed downstairs with a hollow bang.

"Sam!" breathed Clancy. His feet scuffed softly as he made for the door.

THEY were both at the door when the upper hall lights flashed on. The unexpectedness of it had the force of a blow. Clancy stepped back involuntarily, closing the door to an inch. He had drawn a revolver from a hidden holster.

Steps began to ascend the stairs.

"Two of them!" Savage whispered. He had not brought a gun; now he wondered if it wasn't an error. He hadn't looked for this, hadn't expected trouble, no matter what they found.

The steps were slow, deliberate, but quite audible. No one else, obviously, was suspected of being in the house. One of the strangers spoke. The sound rang along the hall with an eerie clarity.

"He was heah—standin' right heah when he stopped. An' I reckon this is far enough now. We bettah go back."

A negro said that nervously. And the voice which replied scoffed lightly: "There's nothing here to hurt you. Show me Mr. Larnigan's bedroom as you promised."

"Put up that gun," Savage said under his breath to Clancy. He moved by Clancy into the hall, calling: "Rita Carstairs? It's all right—I'm Anthony Savage."

The negro cried out with fright. There was a faint scuffle of movement on the stairs, a sharp order.

"Stay here with me! I know him! He won't hurt you!"

"Coming," said Savage. "With my hands in the air. Don't have a nervous spasm and shoot me with that gun you're holding."

He walked smiling to the head of the stairs with his hands over his head.

Rita Carstairs was there, four steps down, pale, somewhat shaky, her left hand clutching the sleeve of a middle-aged negro, her right hand holding the

compact revolver Tony Savage had once before faced.

She lowered the gun, released the negro. Color flamed into her face as Savage chuckled:

"How you flit about, Miss Carstairs. Let's see—you were going to Havana when you left Bellamy's place, weren't you?" Then he saw she was trembling, realized her shock, and said with quick sympathy: "I'm sorry. Forgive me. I'd have been knocked off my pins myself."

And Rita Carstairs answered unsteadily:

"D-darn you, Anthony Savage! I should have come after you shooting. It wouldn't have been so funny." And then she questioned suspiciously: "What are you doing here? Where did you come from?"

SHE came to the top of the stairs. The negro followed her reluctantly, rolling his eyes doubtfully at Savage. His neat black suit and his manner placed him, at half a guess, as Larnigan's butler.

And it occurred to Savage that he had missed a trick in not looking the butler up before entering the house. The butler might know something. He must, to be here in the house with Rita Carstairs.

"Havana," Savage grinned, "didn't appeal to me. So I went the other way, much as I hated to leave you. And I should be sorry to see you—and I'm not. Welcome to our little playhouse. Here's a friend of mine. Miss Carstairs—Mr. Clancy."

"Surprised—and twice as pleased," said Clancy gallantly. Admiration was in Clancy's look, and a question also, for Clancy was completely in the dark as to whom Rita Carstairs might be.

The telephones rang again, downstairs and up. The negro jumped, made as if to bolt down the stairs, and then quavered: "I wonder who's callin' heah tonight?"

"I'll get it," said Clancy, and ran back to the study as the telephones rang again.

Rita Carstairs drew a breath.

"I go all wobbly inside when I wonder what I'd have done if it hadn't have been you," she confessed. "I'm glad to see you too, although, darn it, I thought I'd left you safely in Florida and that I'd been very clever in coming here."

"Matter of fact you were clever. I'm still admiring," said Savage. "You know I didn't notice that dimple when you smiled before. And will both of you please come into the study and be very quiet while I ask you questions?"

"Listen to the man," Rita Carstairs marveled. "Mr. Savage, *I* didn't come to New Orleans to be complimented on my dimples. I certainly shan't answer any questions I don't care to—and why should I be very quiet?"

But she was not as indignant nor as defiant as she sounded.

She was younger tonight, Tony Savage believed, than she had appeared in Florida. Not at all the hard-boiled newspaper woman he had thought. She had been cruelly startled here on the stairs. The reaction left her still reaching to his presence for comfort, whether she knew it or not.

And she moved back along the hall with him, the negro following doubtfully, and Clancy came out to meet them with a worried frown on his face.

"That call came from a telephone booth in the Marr Pharmacy, on Canal Street," said Clancy. "So that's *that*—and where do we get off?"

"Go down and cut off the lights, Clancy. Make sure the front door is locked."

"And then what?" said Clancy.

"We'll see what happens. Sam might come along yet. And if he's coming—and hasn't seen these lights—he's apt to be here any minute. Hurry."

Clancy was off down the stairs without a word.

And Rita Carstairs was again suspicious. "Who is Sam? What are you two men up to?"

Savage smiled wryly.

"I don't think we know ourselves. Come into the study here and be quiet. What's this man's name? Is he Larnigan's butler?"

"You do know everything don't you?" said Rita Carstairs. "He is Larnigan's butler. His name is Jasper. And I insist that you tell me what this is all about," said Rita Carstairs as she stepped into the dark room.

Savage laughed.

"I'll trade you," he offered. "Have you traced those two men about whom you were asking questions at the Mobile toll bridge?"

The hall lights went out as Clancy reached the switch. And Savage heard Rita Carstairs gasp as he moved through the black doorway to join her.

CHAPTER XIV

Jasper's Testimony

RITA CARSTAIRS' voice in the darkness sounded disconcerted, discomfited. "I believe you're a devil, Anthony Savage. How much do you know about what I've been doing?"

"Bet you rested in Mobile. Let's see—your newspaper telephoned you that Larnigan was dead—and you left Bellamy's place at once to look into the matter. You had an idea it might tie in with Bellamy's death. You telephoned the Torrington sheriff from Jacksonville and asked him all about the wreck in which Larnigan was killed. And you thought of the rifle too. Clever girl. Then you remembered the Mobile toll bridge, where everyone driving west would have to stop, and you drove all night to get there and question the toll collector."

In the dark, at his shoulder, Rita Carstairs confessed helplessly: "You *are* a devil! A fiend incarnate. I hate you for it and I'm afraid to think while you're around. How much more do you know about me?"

"Mustn't tell everything at once. I may need something later. Tell me, have you any idea where those two men are now?"

"So you *are* fallible?"

"Now and then."

Clancy followed the thin beam of his torch into the room. And the white edge of the light unexpectedly flicked over and touched Rita Carstairs' face. And a breathless dash of admiring color was in her cheeks, and more than the ghost of a smile on her mouth as her face was lifted to the spot where Savage's voice had been speaking.

The revealing light vanished as quickly as it had come. But it left Tony Savage's pulse beating faster and he hardly heard Clancy's sarcastic undertone:

"Here we are—nice bait for a neat trap. Hadn't Miss Carstairs better get back into a corner—just in case?"

"Yes, of course. Give me your hand, Miss Carstairs. There's a chair in the corner."

She denied him promptly.

"You don't need my hand. I can find the chair. But I shan't even sit down until I know what this is all about."

Savage was conscious of the need for haste. The blackness pressing about them, their low voices against the brooding silence of the big house, the unsolved mystery of the telephone call were breeding tension moment by moment.

Under his breath he told her about the telephone call.

Rita Carstairs did not laugh; she was instantly troubled.

"I wondered if someone hadn't come here to the house," she said in a low voice. "I registered at the hotel and drove out here, and saw a light through the side gate, and went in and talked to the butler. No one seems to have thought of him. He was still frightened over something that happened last night."

Rita Carstairs paused, and said carefully: "Last night the butler thought he saw a light in the house. He wasn't sure, so he came over to see. And when he stepped in the front door and turned on the light, he saw a man on the stairway holding a suitcase. He says it was Larnigan—he's certain it was Larnigan's ghost. He turned off the light, slammed the door and ran home and locked himself in with his wife. He hasn't come over to this house since. I showed him my gun, and persuaded him to admit me so we could see what really did happen."

Clancy whistled softly. "Ghosts, huh? What next?"

The butler's quavering voice assured them from the darkness: "Sho enuf de ghos' was on de stairs, holdin' dat old brown cowhide travelin' bag of Mistuh Larnigan's. Packed it many a time, I has, valetin' him like I done."

"Now wait a minute," said Clancy. "Maybe you saw something—but you didn't see a ghost. I'll swallow anything but that."

"Did you see his face clearly?" Savage asked.

"NO suh. His hat was pulled kinda low. But it was Mistuh Larnigan, suh. His sister done come yesterday an' tol' us he was daid. I read it in de paper too—an' den I see him an' he spoke to me. Only Mistuh Larnigan speak to me like dat ghos' done, suh."

"What did he say?"

"He say, 'Who's dat? Is dat you, Jasp?' Yes suh, 'Jasp' he call me. Only Mistuh Larnigan call me 'Jasp', suh. An' I run home an' locked de door."

The butler's voice quavered in the darkness. "White folks, ain't dis enough? Reckon we better go on out now?"

"I'll be damned!" said Clancy in amazement. "Jasper, what time was this?"

"Bouten nine o'clock, suh."

"Larnigan was twins then," said Clancy. "Those two men went in a little before that. And my man lied about there not being a light. He was looking the other way when this man turned on the hall light. I'll let him know about that."

"Where was the tan cowhide bag kept?" Savage questioned.

"In Mistuh Larnigan's bedroom."

"And you haven't looked in there since?"

"No suh."

"Take him in there, Clancy, and look around. Keep as quiet as you can. Miss Carstairs, let me have your gun."

Rita Carstairs' small hand was cool as she passed him the gun. The short-barreled revolver, thirty-two caliber, felt snug and comforting in his hand.

"I'm going downstairs," Savage said. "Miss Carstairs, you'd better sit there in the corner, until we see what's going to happen."

"I don't like to be packed off in a corner while something may be happening."

"I didn't ask you if you liked it," said Savage. "There may be a little danger, you know."

"And you're being thoughtful of me?"

"What else?"

"I'll wait demurely in the corner, Mr. Savage."

He heard her sit down, as he slipped out of the room. And he was smiling faintly as he went to the stairs, and down the stairs one step at a time, straining his ears to read the vague sounds of the big house.

And while one part of him was tense, alert, a bit of his mind was back there in the study with Rita Carstairs.

Rita had been almost meek as she obeyed, not at all like the girl who had challenged him on the Florida highway south of Bellamy's estate. Not like the cool girl who had tried to outwit him at Bellamy's, who had just completed a brutal automobile drive many men would not have tried.

"She's a reporter," Savage told himself. "She's after a story before anyone else gets it. Running into us here didn't make her day perfect. So what's the catch?"

The answer was there for him.

"She's too meek. She's got something up her sleeve," he decided.

AND Tony Savage smiled to himself, wondering what it would be, and then he fell to musing on that moment when Clancy's torch had brushed her face.

Something creaked in the back of the house. He listened a moment, then relaxed. These old houses were full of furtive noises. You could think of the sounds at a time like this as the ghosts of people long dead who had once lived and laughed in this house.

But then you'd have to believe that Larnigan's ghost might have returned. And you couldn't. Larnigan was dead. Tony Savage was as positive as Clancy about that. Larnigan had returned alive —or someone had returned for Larnigan. Take your choice. None of it made any sense, for it all went back to Roger Bellamy, dead in that swamp-bordered pool of water called Gator Sink. And to Lafe Peckham, shot from behind, and Clark, murdered with a guilty secret on his soul.

And when you knew all that, you knew nothing, save for the concrete fact of young Jerry Goddard, engaged to Joan Bellamy and branded by the Teasdale girl as Clark's son.

You had three men dead—and Larnigan, whose ghost walked by night, here in New Orleans, a thousand miles from Bellamy's Florida estate.

And over it all you had Bellamy's half million of insurance—and Bellamy's fortune which had been snatched away from him. Control of Arcade Steel. Millions more there. But Larnigan had taken that—and Larnigan's automobile a few hours later had been a charred mass of wreckage with an unrecognizable body inside

And Larnigan's rifle was missing from his automobile—and Larnigan's cowhide bag had been carried out of this house a full eighteen hours after, and several hundred miles away from, the wreck.

And now, almost twenty-four hours after the bag had gone, the telephone was ringing for Sam—whomever he might be.

Savage was musing on that when he heard the creak of a door hinge somewhere toward the back of the house.

Rigid, he listened. And again through the silence he heard the soft creak—the creak of a hinge.

CHAPTER XV

Larnigan Alive?

THE breath of a wind on a shutter could have made the same sound. A draft against an inside door could have done it. But the sounds were inside the house—and there were no drafts. Tony Savage knew as he moved quietly forward that a new presence had come into the house.

A door at the back of the entrance hall gave into another hall leading to the rear part of the house. It was back there that the hinge had creaked. Someone had entered the house through a rear door.

Tony Savage put his ear against the door which separated the front and back halls. He heard the presence coming toward him. Slow creaks in the back hall—each one slightly closer, as advancing feet pressed on the floor boards.

And in that slow, furtive advance there was more threat than lips could have voiced. The very caution of the man carried malevolent warning.

A thin edge of light licked under the door and went out. That would be a flashlight on for an instant.

Savage made sure of his gun. His palm was damp, his fingers taut. The hardest part was waiting until the door opened. And Clancy couldn't be warned. Carefully, Savage rested his left hand on the door knob.

Hard as he was listening, he heard no movement of the lock mechanism. But abruptly the man was there on the other side of the door. The smooth metal surface of the doorknob slowly revolved under Savage's touch.

And the door was hung wrong!

The door should have opened inward. But this was an old house. Savage had not passed through the door nor examined it. And the door moved out toward him. It struck the edge of his shoe. He shifted his foot quickly—and the door came against his elbow, so that a moron on the other side would have known his presence.

A gun crashed out beyond the door. Splinters flew against Savage's neck and chin as the bullet smashed through the wood panelling and grazed the front of his chest. . . .

Once—twice—three times the gun beyond the door blasted viciously through the wood. And Tony Savage's involuntary jump back against the wall carried him over the borderline between life and death. For one of the bullets grazed his arm. Like the cool flick of a finger on bare skin—no more—so lightly could death touch.

And then Savage was shooting back through the door, with the jumpy recoil of the small revolver punctuating the sudden fury that flared in him against the killer beyond the door.

Four shots he fired while a man might breathe twice—and the fourth shot brought realization that he alone was firing. He jerked open the door and threw the light of his torch into the blackness beyond.

Ears ringing from the shattering concussions could not hear footsteps. But no body lay on the floor beyond the door. The narrow beam of the torch carried down the length of the hall to a figure dodging into a doorway.

The man fired one more shot toward the light. Savage heard the dull slam of the bullet in woodwork beside the door. His own hasty shot was as wild. The figure vanished; the door slammed behind it.

And as he ran after the man, Savage took a conviction that would have held under oath. His small electric torch was not too powerful. The dodging figure had not been too clear. But for a split-instant his light had shone on the pale face of the stranger. The man's nose had seemed crooked—as if it had been broken. He was short, slight in build.

A rather short man with a broken nose! So the collector at the Mobile toll bridge had described the driver of car and trailer which had crossed the bridge shortly after Larnigan's automobile had crashed and burned!

A second door slammed farther back in the house as Savage lunged through the doorway where the stranger had vanished.

HE found himself in the dining room. Back of the dining room was a small butler's pantry. Beyond the pantry was the kitchen. And it was the kitchen door, opening on a back porch, that had closed.

The door was locked; locked from the outside evidently. Savage wheeled as a rush of steps came from the front of the house.

Clancy's shout reached him. "Savage! Where are you?"

"In the kitchen! Get out the front door and around the house! He's gone!"

Clancy ran back toward the front door.

Savage unlocked a kitchen window, shoved it up, kicked out the screen wire, and stepped out on the back porch. The porch was empty. He'd known it would be; and the shadows under the great trees out back were dark and quiet.

Savage stopped and listened intently. And the thump of his heart and the rasp of breath in his throat were the only sounds he heard. Then at the side of the house Clancy's yell of satisfaction was loud.

"I've got him!" Clancy shouted.

But as Savage skirted the end of the house at a run, he heard Clancy cursing. His light picked out a big man and a small man. And Bill Nugent's wild protest met him.

"Dammit!" Bill Nugent cried. "You didn't have to tear my stomach out with that gun muzzle! I t-tried to t-tell you who I was!"

"I ought to have shot you!" Clancy snarled. "Skulking around in the bushes that way! What'n hell are *you* doing here anyway?"

"Time for that later!" Savage panted, coming to them. "Bill, did you hear that fellow leave the house?"

"I heard someone," said Bill Nugent darkly. "And then this undersized gorilla jumped me with a gun."

"Which way did the man go?"

"I should know," said Bill. "Somewhere toward the back, maybe. It might have been over there toward that little house. I heard a door close and someone running—and then someone came out the front—and I looked for the house to fall in next. Who started this damn war anyway?"

Lumbering steps galloped along the front driveway. A hoarse voice called: "Hey, Boss! Are you there, Boss?" Clancy's man puffed up to their lights, demanding: "Didn't I hear some shots?"

"No!" retorted Clancy sarcastically. "You didn't hear anything! It was all a mistake. Asleep in the car, weren't you? Did you see anyone come in the grounds? Did you see anything suspicious? Come on, out with it!"

McReady vigorously panted a denial.

"This gentleman was looking for you," said McReady. "He stopped at the car an' asked if you were in the

house, an' said not to bother to come in with him."

"So that made everything all right and you went back to sleep!" snarled Clancy. "If you'd been on the job, you might have spotted that fellow leaving! What are you standing there for? Go out and look for him! Drive around the block! Drive around the neighborhood!"

McReady puffed off.

Savage said: "We'll waste time in looking for him now. He didn't enter the house as smoothly as he did without having a getaway ready. Bill, did those shots sound very loud outside?"

"Sounded like cannons to me," said Bill.

"WE'D better notify the police," Savage decided. "Even if no one in the neighborhood heard them, Larnigan's butler will report this. And there may be fingerprints on the doors that chap opened and closed. The back door especially; he locked it from the outside. I've a sketchy description of him I'll want to follow up. Get out of here, Bill. I told you not to come around here and get in the headlines."

Bill Nugent was still aggrieved.

"I should twiddle my thumbs while you roust around in the thick of things. I've got an air mail letter and a couple of telegrams for you. They were at the office when I got back. I thought you'd want 'em in a hurry so I brought them here to you."

"Thoughtful of you, Bill," said Savage as he took the letter and telegrams. "Now scram. Go back to the trailer and wait for me."

Bill Nugent departed, grumbling under his breath.

And Clancy said: "I was in the bedroom with the butler when the shooting began. Before I started downstairs, I told him to telephone Lieutenant Hitchcock at headquarters and ask him to get out here as fast as he could. Hitch is my brother-in-law. I thought if the cops had to be in our hair, Hitch was the best bet. He's smart as a blade and no headline hound. Not as bad as some, anyway," Clancy corrected himself.

"Fast thinking," approved Savage, and became aware as he spoke of a warm dampness on his right arm.

He remembered then the cool flick of a bullet. His torch showed the rip in the coat sleeve where the bullet had passed. Blood had soaked through to the cloth of the coat.

Standing there in the open, Savage removed his coat and rolled up the sleeve. The wound was a raw furrow through the flesh. The blood flow was slackening.

When Clancy heard how it had happened his comment was terse.

"Luck was all that saved you. So that was Sam?"

"That was Sam," said Savage dryly.

"I wonder what he wanted."

"Something he had no business to have," Savage guessed as he put the coat back on. "He was ready for trouble."

"D'you think he was tipped off that someone was in the house?"

"No. I think he was the man the butler saw last night, or at least knew about it. And he wasn't sure there wouldn't be someone watching tonight. But he had to get in the house badly enough to risk it. He came as quietly as he could, with a gun ready. The moment he realized someone was there on the other side of the door he started shooting."

"Which doesn't make him a penny-ante prowler."

"Yes, that's obvious," Savage agreed

as he turned toward the front of the house. "What did you discover in the bedroom?"

"The cowhide bag, some shirts, underwear, socks and so on were gone, as nearly as the butler could figure. And can you make anything out of that? Who would drop in for a selection of Larnigan's clothes—except Larnigan himself?"

"I DON'T know; I'm beginning to get dizzy when I think about it," confessed Savage. "But I do know this, Clancy—and it's something to think about. If Larnigan was around here—or sent someone here—then Larnigan's earned a charge of murder. Someone died in his car, you know."

"How we do arrive at conclusions—which lead nowhere," remarked Clancy sarcastically. "Murder? Larnigan? A man with as much money as he had? Now where does that lead you?"

Tony Savage had to chuckle ruefully.

"Back to Sam," he said. "Who is Sam?"

They were at the front of the house. And a police siren sounded at the corner of the block. A moment later the glaring headlights of the police car swung into the grounds from the street.

"Here comes someone you can ask," said Clancy. "I give up."

CHAPTER XVI

Lieutenant Hitchcock

THE headlights poured a glare over them. The automobile, a two-man patrol car, came to a skidding stop in front of the house. Two uniformed men plunged out.

The first man out held a revolver. Bruskly he demanded: "What's wrong here?"

"A prowler," said Clancy. "He opened up with a gun."

"Where is he?"

"He got away. Have either of you heard from Lieutenant Hitchcock?"

The second man growled:

"Why should we hear from Hitchcock? We got a broadcast there was trouble here."

"Hitchcock's my brother-in-law. I've sent for him," said Clancy. "I'm Clancy, manager of the Apperson Agency."

"Yeah?" was the not too cordial reply. "And what does that make you? What are you doing here? This is James Larnigan's house, isn't it?"

"It is."

"He's dead."

"Did anyone say he wasn't?" And out of his imagination, Clancy said: "Someone was prowling the house last night. We were watching tonight."

"Who's this man?"

"This man," said Clancy before Savage could answer, "represents the insurance people. You know—they pay when things are stolen. They don't like it to happen."

"Wise guy, aren't you? Anyone else around here?"

"Larnigan's colored butler and a newspaper woman are upstairs. The lady," said Clancy again out of his imagination, "came out on the chance she'd get a story if anything happens."

"You may be Hitchcock's brother-in-law," said the broad-shouldered policeman who had ducked out of the car before it stopped, "but this sounds screwy to me. Let's go in and see the butler and the lady."

Savage led the way in, turned on the hall lights, pointed out the bullet-splintered door, and gave a terse account of what had happened as he guided the officers upstairs.

They found the butler in the study, crouching in the desk chair by the telephone. He was still trembling when he saw the uniforms and stood up.

"Praise be, de Law!" he quavered. "White folks, I been scared to move!"

"Where's the lady?" Savage asked, looking around.

"I been wonderin', suh. She didn't answer me, suh. It was dark in heah an' I sat still an' waited."

Savage stepped to the door and called.

Rita Carstairs did not answer.

The husky officer—he had a protruding under lip and bushy brows—spoke with heavy sarcasm.

"Yeah—where's the lady?"

Clancy answered Savage's quick look of inquiry.

"I didn't see her," said Clancy, with a worried frown. "I thought she was in here."

Tony Savage had never felt anything like the quick sharp stab of worry that came to him. He put it aside. Rita Carstairs could take care of herself. But—she was gone.

"We'd better look around," he suggested hurriedly.

"Yeah—and all three of you better stick around," he was informed by the husky officer. "This is getting screwier every minute."

THEY searched the upper floor and the lower. Rita Carstairs was not in the house. But there was a back flight of stairs down which she could have gone. Tony Savage told himself firmly she had gone down those stairs, and out of the house very quietly, for some reason of her own. He'd expected some move from her. Well, she'd made it.

They were in the front hall when another automobile drove hurriedly to the house. The man who ran up the front steps came with a certain jauntiness, despite his hurry. About thirty, his age rested lightly on his shoulders and in the careless angle with which he wore a fine weave Panama hat.

"Still alive, Clancy?" he said with lifted eyebrows as he came to the door. "Who's been killed here? I never did get it straight from the telephone call I answered. Colored fellow. Sounded like he was hysterical. Hello, Bradshaw. Everything under control?"

Bradshaw was the heavy set officer. He jerked his head at Clancy.

"This man said he was your brother-in-law, Lieutenant—but I had my fingers crossed until you came. This house was prowled. There was some shooting an' a woman's missing. It's all screwy to us. Maybe you can straighten it out."

Lieutenant Hitchcock said cordially: "If Clancy's involved, it probably is screwy. I'll take over and try to straighten it out. You men may go on. If you need any details for your report, call me when you get off duty."

The officers departed.

Savage ordered the butler to get some bandage and antiseptic. Lieutenant Hitchcock listened closely to the account of what had occurred, and why they were on the property.

"The idea, Hitch," said Clancy, "is to keep this out of the papers right now. If Larnigan's alive, it won't do any good to break it in print. Savage is all right. Pan-America Insurance guarantees that."

Lieutenant Hitchcock eyed Savage thoughtfully.

"I read about Roger Bellamy's death," Hitchcock said. "You say this business of Larnigan ties in with that and Bellamy's insurance?"

"I'm convinced of it, Lieutenant,"

Savage said. "Just how, I can't tell you."

Hitchcock nodded.

"We'll go easy on the publicity. I'll look around while you're getting that arm fixed."

Clancy went with him. And Savage paused there in the front hall to read the telegrams and air mail letter which Bill Nugent had brought.

The first telegram said:

NUGENT NEW ORLEANS INFORMS ME YOUR ARRIVAL EXPECTED ANY HOUR STOP HAVE JUST BEEN INFORMED BY PALM BEACH DETECTIVES THAT JERRY GODDARD BOARDED TRAIN THIS AFTERNOON FOR NEW ORLEANS STOP FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT GODDARD IN MAIL

SIGNED JOHNSON

Savage's eyebrows shot up as he read that. Under his breath as he opened the second telegram, he said:

"Now what the devil! What's Goddard coming here for? Larnigan?"

The other wire had been dispatched an hour later.

REPORT OF JAMES LARNIGAN'S DEATH JUST BROUGHT TO MY ATTENTION STOP PAN AMERICA NEW YORK OFFICE UNDERWROTE NINETY THOUSAND DOUBLE INDEMNITY INSURANCE ON LARNIGAN STOP IN LETTER YOU WILL NOTICE HOLLYWOOD DETECTIVE AGENCY REPORTS JERRY GODDARD TELEPHONED FROM COHATCHIE FLORIDA TO HOLLYWOOD NUMBER LISTED IN NAME OF LORETTE ARMOND STOP GATHER FROM YOUR REQUEST TO HAVE LARNIGAN CHECKED NEW ORLEANS THAT LARNIGAN IS INVOLVED IN BELLAMY MATTER STOP PAN AMERICA HOLLYWOOD REPORTS LORETTE ARMOND HAS SERVED NOTICE OF DESIRE TO COLLECT LARNIGAN INSURANCE QUICKLY STOP BELLAMY LAWYERS HAVE SERVED LIKE NOTICE IN RE BELLAMY INSURANCE STOP THIS OFFICE MYSTIFIED BY SUSPICIOUS TANGLE OF FACTS AND COINCIDENCES STOP LOOK TO YOU TO SUPPLY SATISFACTORY EXPLANATIONS QUICKLY

SIGNED JOHNSON

The air mail letter contained a summation of reports Johnson had received. Savage hurriedly scanned it and thrust it into his pocket to be digested later.

He found the butler, had his arm washed and bandaged as best they could on the spot, and met Clancy and Lieutenant Hitchcock in the second floor study.

"I'd like to leave immediately with Clancy," Savage told the Lieutenant. "We can take this up later, if you're agreeable."

Hitchcock had just put down the telephone.

"Sudden, isn't it?" he suggested.

"I've just read two telegrams that I must attend to."

"I see. Well, go ahead. I've sent for a fingerprint man. When we're through here, I'll be at Headquarters."

Clancy's shorter legs worked fast to keep up with Savage as they left the house. Clancy was mystified. "What is it?" asked Clancy shrewdly.

"Half a dozen things. The first," said Savage grimly, "is the Sullivan woman. Larnigan's confidential secretary. I've got to question her. And I want a couple of your men to watch her from now on."

"Afraid she'll run away?" asked Clancy?

"I'm afraid she'll be murdered," said Savage. "That is—if she isn't dead already."

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

Dove tore off the cover and—the box was full of old leaves!

I Want That Killer

By J. Lane Linklater

Author of "Killer's Territory," "The King Goes Mad," etc.

"Sad" Sam Salter Did a Sweet Job When He Solved the Mystery of the Candy Box!

DETECTIVE-SERGEANT "Sad" Sam Salter stopped his plodding advance a few yards short of the entrance to The Green Asp. An old lamp post against a board fence partially concealed him. It was close to midnight. Glaring lights flicked sickly shadows across the feverish faces of the parties straggling into the canopied entrance.

There was something very patient, long-suffering, in the motionless posture of "Sad" Sam Salter. And his face, glimpsed dimly in the murky light, was a peasant face, broad and placid. The eyes, however, were large and luminous; the eyes of one not concerned with the ordinary routine of the game but rather with the passionate pursuit of a personal duty.

For some time Salter watched without moving.

Presently he stirred a little. A party of four, two men and two young women, alighted from a car at the curb. The four,

DETECTIVE DFW SHORT

mildly hilarious, scampered across the carpeted pavement and were admitted by the doorman, vanishing from view through the doorway.

Salter quietly backed away. In a few moments he had found a gate in the board fence, and slipped through. Inside there was a yard adjoining the Green Asp, the property of the night club. There were three cars in the yard, near a side door of the building; nothing more. The yard was dark except for the light sifting through a closed window near the back of the building.

Salter leaned, almost invisible, against the fence, his gaze fastened on the side door.

It was at least fifteen minutes befor the door opened cautiously. The figure of a woman blurred briefly in the light. The door snapped shut again. Like a fleeting shadow the woman sped across the yard to Salter.

She spoke breathlessly, in a low voice: "I can't stay long, or he'll suspect."

Salter nodded. "I don't want you to run any danger. Maybe you shouldn't—"

"I don't care about that," she cut in. "I'd do anything to bring that boy's murderer to justice.

SHE looked like a midget against Salter. Richly dressed, a bluish evening gown partly visible beneath a fur coat, she was in the early twenties, her features soft and round, her hair a wispy brown.

"We were in Karl Dove's apartment about an hour ago," she ran on. "Karl went into the next room to answer the phone. I happened to go to the door of the room while he was talking. I think he was talking to Pete French."

"Did you hear what he said?"

"A little. Karl told Pete that we were on the way to this place, and that he would stop at Boult's cigar stand. I thought that might mean something, so I made an excuse to go to my own apartment, which is in the same building. Then I phoned you."

Salter's voice rumbled hoarsely. "What happened at Boult's?"

"Well, Karl stopped his car at the curb. Boult's is open to the sidewalk. Karl went to the stand and bought cigars from the clerk. There was a tall thin man standing against the counter. He didn't talk to Karl, nor Karl to him. But something passed between them."

Salter muttered: "That was Pete French, one of Karl's men. Did you see what French gave him?"

"It was a package, wrapped in light paper. It looked something like a small box of candy."

"Only," said Salter, "it wasn't." He paused heavily. "You planted that gun all right?"

"That was easy." She looked up at him anxiously. "You think it will work all right?"

Salter shrugged. "If I have good luck."

There was deep distress in her voice: "It was a shame about Bobby Time. I liked him—a good boy. Whoever killed him should pay the penalty."

"Well, better hurry back before you're missed," Salter said rapidly. "Where are you sitting?"

"A table in a booth on the west side, near the back." She looked up at him pleadingly. "You'll do what you can?"

"As much as it takes," Salter promised. "I'll be in pretty soon. Dove will want to get away to open that package most any time. But you keep him busy until I've been gone about fifteen minutes."

The young woman nodded, touched his hand as if in gratitude, and ran back to the side door, disappearing inside.

Salter remained motionless for a little while. He frowned thoughtfully. He was worried about the young woman. He admired her courage, but he knew that in taking hostile action against Karl Dove she was running grave risks—in spite of Dove's ardent interest in her.

A brave little girl, Rita Banson. Salter had met her a number of times before. Her success as a musical comedy star had not robbed her of her interest in the unfortunate. That was the reason for her previous meetings with Salter. And Salter himself, to the disgust of his associates at headquarters, was constantly taking a too-active interest in cases involving friendless humanity—cases which could easily be ignored but which might create serious trouble if agitated by too conscientious police action.

Rita Banson had been gone time enough, Salter thought, to rejoin her party. Salter moved quietly away from his post, slipped through the gate to the sidewalk. He trod slowly toward the entrance of The Green Asp. The doorman recognized him, stared at him curiously as he went in. This, Salter was aware, was enemy country; the place was owned, indirectly, by Karl Dove.

INSIDE, he ignored attendants, made his way down a festoon-decked aisle toward the rear. He stopped at a booth in which four people were seated, peered in.

A well-tailored man, plump of face, spoke up quickly: "Well, if it isn't good old Sam Salter!" His voice was soft, smooth. "Come right in, Sam!"

Salter made no effort to sit down with them. He stood at the foot of the table, leaned over a little, stared at them broodingly. His fingers, broad and long like a series of night sticks, pressed down into the table cloth. At Dove's elbow, he noticed, was a small package, still unopened.

"Hello, Dove," he said.

"Glad you dropped in, Sam," Dove went on with hollow warmth. He waved a hand at the others. "You know my friends? Here's the beautiful Rita Banson, in person!"

Rita bowed at him as if it were the first time they had ever met. Salter merely nodded.

Dove indicated a smiling young man with shifty, narrow-spaced eyes, across the table. "You know my secretary, Frank Rota. And here—" his waving hand moved toward the other young woman, blond and a bit gaudy—"is Frankie's special friend, Babe Blum. Now you know 'em all. Sit down, Sam."

But Sam Salter shook his head. "I'm busy," he said. His gaze fell directly on Karl Dove. "Maybe you know about it. At the apartment house where you live there was a young bellhop named Bobby Time. Bobby was a good kid, trying to get along. He'd been in trouble once, but when he got out of that he headed straight." Salter paused. "The kid got bumped early yesterday morning, about one o'clock, out on Fordham's Bridge. There's no river under that bridge, just a deep gulch—"

"Too bad about Bobby." Dove laughed a little. "He was a good boy, all right. But I wouldn't work too hard on it, Sam."

"Why not?"

Dove shrugged. "Well, you know how it is. You'll want a pension some day. So why look for trouble? Best

way is to be a good copper. Anyhow, probably one of his old pals got even with him for something. That's the way those things go."

Salter spoke doggedly: "Somebody bumped the kid. So something oughter be done about it."

Karl Dove's voice sharpened a little. "The kid had no connections, Sam. And no family. If you just let it ride, the whole thing will be forgotten in a few days." Again, his voice purred. "It doesn't mean a thing to me, Sam. I'm just thinking of what might happen to you, that's all. Wish I could help you, Sam, but—"

"Maybe you can," said Salter.

Dove stared at him. "Yeah?"

"Yeah. You're the king of a dozen rackets here in town, Dove. You get all the dope. Maybe you know something."

Dove shook his head. "Don't believe all you hear about me, Sam."

"How about Jeff Ball?" Salter shot at him abruptly.

"Ball?"

"Yeah. Jeff Ball. Confidential man of yours. What about him?"

Dove's laugh was low and a little unpleasant. "You're getting unsociable, Sam. Sure, I know Ball—he runs the florist shop below the apartment house. But he's no part of my business."

Salter did not dispute the point. He was silent a moment. "How about this grand jury investigation, Dove?"

Karl Dove fidgeted. "What the devil do I care about it?"

"Well, seems like the grand jury is quite interested in your affairs. Ain't you nervous about it?"

Dove smiled suddenly. "Did you ever know me to be nervous about anything, Sam?"

"Not on the surface. But it looks like they're getting close to you—"

Dove sprang to his feet. He glared at Salter. "Listen, you fool flatfoot, if you won't go home to bed, just get the hell away from here. I'm tired of you. What has Ball and the grand jury and my affairs got to do with a fool bellhop that got smeared?"

"I was just wondering," Salter said humbly.

"Then go wonder somewhere else," snapped Dove.

"Sure," said Salter.

HE turned and strode slowly back along the aisle to the exit. A block down the street he found a beer joint. There was a telephone in the far corner. Cupping his hands over the mouthpiece, he called headquarters, got Captain Darwin on the wire.

"Skipper," he said apologetically, "I'm working on that Bobby Time killing."

There was a pause at the other end. "Yeah," came Darwin's voice then. "So I guessed. But I thought I told you to go easy on that. We got all the dope there is to get anyway."

"I don't care about the dope," Salter said patiently. "What I want is that killer!"

Darwin was sarcastic: "And you got him, huh?"

"No, skipper," admitted Salter. "But I got a pretty good idea of the setup. Now, I was just talking to Karl Dove—"

"Dove!" croaked Darwin. "You just love juggling with dynamite, don't you, Sam? Are you telling me that Dove done it?"

"I wouldn't say that, skipper. Not right now, anyway. I only say that Dove was back of it. Now, I done a lot of checking. I know that twenty minutes before Bobby was killed, Dove drove away from the apartment garage

in a certain car. And twenty minutes after—"

"Sam," Darwin said solemnly, "you better come in right away."

"But," objected Salter, "I got to go—"

"I know," yelled Darwin. "You got to go see a guy! That's all I ever get outer you when you call in. You got to go see a guy! Well, you ain't going to see no guy this time! My orders is to—"

But "Sad" Sam Salter, with a heavy sigh, dropped the receiver into place and walked away.

Some two blocks distant he got into his car and headed it across the city. It was a long drive, and it took him into a fine residential neighborhood. Here were large houses hidden in tree-encircled grounds. Salter parked his car at an inconspicuous spot, walked three blocks, and turned into an iron gateway. He strode up the gravelled driveway to the front door of the house.

The house was completely dark. Salter jabbed at the door bell. For some time there was no response. He jabbed again, and then again. Presently a faint light glimmered through the glass of the door. Then the door opened.

The man inside was a bald-headed, pompous manservant in a dressing gown. He had apparently been sleeping. He glared at Salter as if distressed.

"I want to see Mr. Ransforder," Salter announced.

"I'm very sorry," said the manservant. He eyed Salter distastefully now. "The master retired some time ago."

"Then the master better get up," Salter retorted. He showed his badge of authority. "I'm coming in."

He pushed past the manservant, who closed the door. The man hesitated, shrugged helplessly and marched up a wide stairway. He returned in a few moments and took Salter to a large library.

"Mr. Ransforder will be down directly, sir," he said.

But it was nearly ten minutes before Mr. Ransforder stalked in. He was large and breathed gustily. His fleshy face was a dead pan, and his dancing extra chins were the only part of him that showed animation.

"What is all this?" he demanded brusquely.

Salter's large, luminous eyes peered at him grimly. "It's about a murder," he said.

"Murder? But what the devil—"

"You mean you don't know anything about it," put in Salter, a little wearily. "But you're chairman of the grand jury, so you've heard of murders."

"Of course. But—"

"And you'd rather not get woke up in the middle of the night. Sure. But everybody said what a fine man you was, when you, a rich man, and sort of retired, agreed to serve as chairman of the grand jury. For the good of the city, huh?"

RANSFORDER gazed at him guardedly. "Perhaps so, perhaps so. But what do you want?"

"A lad named Bobby Time was bumped last night."

Ransforder's chins waggled as he nodded. "I saw something about it in the papers. But it didn't seem important, so I haven't followed the details."

"I'll tell you about it," said Salter. "Bobby was a good lad, going straight. But he was working at the fancy apartment house where Karl Dove lives.

He was kinda scared maybe Dove would get him mixed up in something. You know about Dove, huh?"

Ransforder flushed a little. "Of course. Dove's affairs have been of some interest to the grand jury."

"Yeh. And something big was due to blow up in a couple of days. Things were getting hot for Dove, huh?"

"That," said Ransforder, "is quite possible. But I fail to see—"

"You," persisted Salter, "could help Dove a lot, huh? F'instance, you could get your hands on evidence—"

"Why should I?"

"You might not be as rich as people think," Salter said patiently. "Dove's rackets bring him nearly a million a year. It would be worth a lot to him to be let alone."

Ransforder's little eyes glittered. "What the devil are you getting at?"

Salter stroked his nose reflectively. "It was like this, Ransforder. Over at Dove's apartment house there's a florist shop. It is run by a man named Ball. Maybe other people don't know it, but I know that Ball is Dove's man, and his flowers are just a blind for other business—maybe even murder. Well, last night, at midnight, when Bobby went off duty, Ball hired him to deliver a package. The package was supposed to contain flowers, but maybe there was cash instead of carnations in it."

"I'm getting tired of this," Ransforder muttered irritably. "Why tell me about it "

"Well," said Salter, "Bobby had to deliver the package somewhere—and I thought it might be to you!"

Ransforder moistened his long thin lips with a sharp tongue. "You don't care much what happens to you, do you, Salter?"

"Not much," said Salter. "Anyway, it was a pretty good trick, having an innocent party make the delivery—makes it harder to check back to the right parties if there's a slip-up."

"You seem sure—"

"I am. Bobby drove away from Ball's shop on his bicycle. I was out this way yesterday and found bicycle tracks. And, not far from here, coming this way, the tracks in loose gravel showed that Bobby had a bad spill—made a turn too quickly. His hands were grazed, too, and the knees of his pants torn a little."

Ransforder's voice was as cold as his eye as he said: "That means something?"

"It does. When Bobby tumbled, he would accidentally bust open the package—I found a small piece of wrapping paper, too. Of course he would see what was inside. Naturally, that would alarm you very much—and it would be bad news for Dove, too. So before sending Bobby back with another package—"

"Another package?"

"Sure. Dove would be buying something, wouldn't he? But before sending Bobby back, you would phone Dove and tell him what happened. Then Dove would probably tell you to have Bobby stop and wait for someone on the Fordham Bridge."

Ransforder sat down and was very quiet. His face was a queer green, with purplish spots around his nostrils.

"It is easy to see," Salter went on, "what happened then. Bobby got off his bicycle and waited. He leaned against the bridge railing, stared down into the gulch below. Presently a car came driving over the bridge. Bobby half turned around. The car stopped. Someone took a couple of shots at Bobby—and it was all over for him. The man in the car got out, but there

was another car coming—a strange car—so the killer got back in again and drove on fast. The people in the car behind just happened to be coming that way. They saw what happened from a distance, but didn't see who the killer was. They got out, took a look at Bobby, then went on and phoned headquarters."

RANSFORDER fixed Salter with an odd intent gaze. "You're a fool, Salter. Did you think that you, a lone flatfoot, could get away with anything like this against—"

"The setup is easy to figure," Salter rumbled on, unperturbed. "I can see all that. I know that you and Dove are in it together. *But what I want is that killer!*"

Ransforder jibed: "So you want the killer!"

Salter gazed at him somberly. "I guess you wish that you could get in touch with Dove right now, huh? I guess you phoned him before you came downstairs to see me, huh? But you couldn't reach him. Do you know why?"

Ransforder smiled. "I'm supposed to ask why, am I?"

Salter nodded. "That's right. And I'll tell you. Dove had already started out this way!"

Ransforder seemed both astonished and pleased. "You mean Dove is already on his way to my place—here?"

"Yeh," said Salter.

"Then we'll all have a very pleasant meeting, Salter."

"Yeh," said Salter. "We—"

There was a slight creaking at the far end of the room, as if the large French window there was swinging open. Curtains parted. A gust of cold night air swept through the room. Two men were standing just inside the window.

It was dark at that end of the room, but it was easy enough to recognize them. One of them was Karl Dove; the other, his "secretary," Frank Rota. They were advancing noiselessly, casually, down the room toward Salter and Ransforder. They were both holding automatics.

Salter glanced at Ransforder. The big man seemed relieved to see them.

Dove spoke quietly, grimly. "Get Sam's gun, Frank."

His automatic was pointed directly at Salter. Rota slipped around Salter, frisked him thoroughly, took his revolver. Salter was motionless, and apparently not surprised.

Ransforder chuckled. "You came just in time, boys. This fool—"

"Shut up," Dove snapped, harshly. "You're not fooling me, Ransforder!"

Ransforder's eyes were startled, amazed. His jaws clamped shut.

"I might have known you'd double-cross me," Dove went on. "Well, you can't get away with it."

Ransforder gurgled. "But—you—you're mad, Dove! I didn't—"

"No use trying to kid Karl Dove," Salter put in easily. "Dove is smart. He knows how to figure the angles. He knows we been working together, Ransforder."

Ransforder's flesh-laden head wobbled from side to side. "This—this is all absurd!" he croaked. His head suddenly came to a rigid stop, and he was staring at Rota's automatic, which was now trained on him. "For God's sake, take that thing away! I—I don't understand—"

"You understand all right," Dove barked. "The grand jury had a bunch of my cancelled checks. They made things look pretty bad. You could get your hands on them easy. I offered you fifty grand for them. You accepted. I

sent you the cash last night, and you got it all right. But I didn't get my cancelled checks!"

Ransforder gaped at him. "But I—I sent them. I gave them to the boy, in a box—"

"I got the box," Dove cut in. "I opened it less than half an hour ago. Here it is!"

From under his buttoned coat he jerked a small package. There was an outer covering of light wrapping paper, and he whipped that off. The box looked like a small shoe box. Dove removed the cover and—

It was full of old leaves!

RANSFORDER gaped. "But I—I put the checks in it myself! Somebody must—"

"Stop talking and produce!" Dove said grimly.

"Produce? But what?"

"If you really got your hands on those checks, I want them! If you didn't, I want my money back!"

"But I—I put the checks in that box. And I haven't got the cash here anyway. I put it in a safety deposit box yesterday. I—"

"You'll produce either one or the other," Dove said evenly, "right away. I'm tired of stalling."

"But I—"

"Shut up and produce!" Dove spoke with tense impatience. "I'll give you just two minutes!"

Ransforder's fleshy face quaked with fright. His lips moved inaudibly.

Detective-sergeant "Sad" Sam Salter had been sitting very still, watching the others moodily. He spoke up now, quietly. "You're threatening the wrong guy, Dove. You should be talking to *me!*"

Dove gazed at him. "Yeah?"

"Yeh. Ransforder can't get you either the checks or the cash. I can't get you the cash, but I *can* take you straight to where the checks are. And you'd rather have the checks than the cash, wouldn't you?"

Dove smiled a little. "Speak fast, Sam."

Salter heaved a shoulder in a shrug. "Not much to say. I'll take you to those checks—on one condition."

"Condition?" Dove sneered. "I don't need any conditions. You can take me to the checks—or you'll get yours right here!"

Salter seemed unmoved. "That don't faze me, Dove. I know you figure on bumping me anyway. I stick by the condition."

Dove hesitated. "Name it!"

"It's easy. We'll go in your car. You, Dove, will drive. We'll go by way of Fordham Bridge. And we'll stop at about the spot on the bridge where Bobby Time was murdered!"

Dove's eyes glittered with suspicion. "A trick, eh?"

Salter shook his head. "There'll be no one there, if that's what you're thinking. I work alone. We'll stop there for just a minute—and then drive on to where the checks are."

"That's all?"

"Except," added Salter, "I want someone else with us. Ransforder here has a guy working for him—the bald-headed old boy who let me in. He'll do. We'll take him along."

A swift glance passed between Dove and Frank Rota. Then Dove nodded briskly. "Okay." He turned to Ransforder. "Get that man of yours down here."

Ransforder was almost beyond speech, completely beyond movement. His thin lips chattered: "The— that bell rope over there."

Rota backed carefully to the wall,

pulled on the rope. A bell tinkled faintly somewhere in the house. Rota moved close to the door. They waited silently. Presently footfalls approached the door. The ponderous manservant stepped in. Rota slipped quickly to his side.

The servant seemed to collapse as his startled gaze took in the scene. But he straightened with an effort and spoke to Ransforder. "You rang, sir?"

Ransforder's tongue struggled for words. "Yes, Porter," he managed to say, "you're to go with these men."

Porter moved his white face slowly from one to the other. "But—but where to, sir?"

"I don't know," Ransforder said wearily. "Wherever they take you."

"But, sir, I—"

"Shut up," snapped Dove. "Just do as you're told. All right. Let's get going."

RANSFORDER sunk helplessly in a chair. The others moved across the room toward the French window, Salter and Porter ahead of Dove and Rota. Dove had an automatic stuck against Salter's back. Rota was covering the manservant with an automatic in his left hand, while in his right he held the revolver he had taken from Salter.

They reached the window. "Wait a moment," Dove said softly.

They stood very still. There was, suddenly, a terrific blast.

Salter, without turning his head, knew what had happened. No cry had come from Ransforder, but Salter knew that Rota, using Salter's revolver, had blasted the life out of the big man sitting in the chair.

Salter said mildly: "You shouldn't-a done that. He deserved it, all right, but you shouldn't—"

"Let's get out of here," Dove cut in impatiently. "No man can cross me up and get away with it, no matter who he is."

In a moment they were out on the driveway. Near the corner of the house was a dark sedan; Salter recognized it as the one in which Dove and his party had arrived at The Green Asp, not so long before. Dove took the wheel. The quaking Porter was given the seat beside him. Salter was in the rear seat, with Frank Rota.

Rota sat well back in the corner. He had the automatic trained on Salter, the revolver on Porter's back.

Without a word, Dove started the car away. Porter, in the front seat, was moaning. Salter's big fingers played idly on his knees. Rota was watching alertly.

Presently Salter sat up a little. Just ahead was the Fordham Bridge. Salter, without watching or listening for anything, seemed interested. The car rumbled onto the bridge.

Almost halfway across, the car came to a quiet stop.

Karl Dove half turned. "Okay, Sam. We're here. Now what?"

Salter sighed with queer satisfaction. He didn't seem to realize at all that, no matter what else happened, he was marked for a quick death. "That," he rumbled, "was just what I wanted to be sure about."

"About what?" Dove said sharply.

"Just who the killer was. Now, I—"

"To hell with that. What about those checks? You said you'd take me to them."

"So I will," Salter said agreeably. "In fact, you'll take yourself to them. They're down at headquarters, Dove!"

"What?"

"Down at headquarters, I said. So

you can drive there. You see, Dove, when Bobby Time was waiting here—waiting to be killed, although he didn't know it—he had the box with the checks. He had his bicycle leaning against the rail. He was leaning against the rail, too, looking down into the gulch, I guess. Well, the killer came along and shot Bobby."

Dove waited silently.

"Bobby had the package in his hand," Salter went on, "maybe sitting right on the top rail. He got killed. The package just dropped over the rail into the gulch below. The killer couldn't go look for it, especially because he saw a strange car coming along behind. So he beat it."

"You're talking too slow, Sam," Dove said in a low voice. "What—"

"You wanted that box of checks bad, Dove. But you was smart. You knew the box was down there in the brush of the gulch, a hundred feet below here. You was wise enough not to go near it all day yesterday. But you had one of your lads—Pete French—go look for it last night. He found the box, phoned you, and you met him and got it at that cigar stand just two-three hours ago."

Dove was staring at him. "So you—you—"

"Yeh," Salter said placidly. "I found that box myself, an hour after it dropped into the gulch. I had a hunch maybe something was dropped there. Then I figured maybe it might produce something if I could work up a little play between you and Ransforder, so I just took the checks out of the box, filled it with leaves, wrapped it up again—and left it there!"

THE silence that followed was heavy with the threat of death. Porter was still moaning. But "Sad" Sam Salter still seemed to be oblivious of danger, and he sighed a little, his head bent low.

Dove, turning so that he could look at Salter, flicked a quick look at Frank Rota.

"For an old flatfoot, Sam." Dove said, "you're pretty smart." He drew a quick breath. "You're *too* smart. And its too bad—for you. Now I—"

"They're going to kill us!" It was the manservant, Porter, suddenly wailing, going to pieces. "I know it! They're going to murder us in cold blood!" His voice raised to a shriek. "They're going to—"

"Shut up!" cut in Dove savagely. He spoke to Rota: "Better take care of this right now, Frank!"

"Sure," murmured Rota.

He was steadying his right hand, with the revolver, pointing it at the back of the bald-headed manservant. Porter cringed helplessly. With an almost imperceptible movement, Salter's right hand dropped down to the floor of the car, near the corner, came up with a small dark shape in it.

A thin sheaf of fire spurted at Frank Rota, from Salter's hand. Noise boomed through the night.

Rota was keeling over, caving in. In a moment he was an inert mass in his corner of the car.

Karl Dove's hand whisked toward the holster under his coat. He had his gun out. But Salter lunged up and forward. Dove's automatic was cracked out of his hand, smashed through the windshield. Salter had the warm rim of his gun against Dove's neck.

"That's all, Dove," he rumbled.

Dove gasped. "Where—did you—get it "

"You mean this little gun?" Salter said mildly. "Belongs to a friend of

mine. Planted it in your car. That was easy. Sorry I had to plug your pal Rota, but he was going to kill Porter. I couldn't let him do that."

"Didn't know Porter was a friend of yours," sneered Dove.

"Never saw him before tonight," admitted Salter. "But I need him—as a kind of witness."

"Sure. He saw Ransforder get his."

"Yeah. But that ain't all. You see, I knew you drove away from the garage about twenty minutes before Bobby was killed. And I knew you drove back in that same car about twenty minutes after. Also, I think the folks in the car that saw the killing might identify the car they saw ahead of them. There are also a few other little details I have worked out. But there was one thing I wanted to be sure of."

Karl Dove fidgeted under the pressure of Salter's gun.

"This bridge," Salter went on, "is nearly three hundred feet long. I asked you to stop just about where Bobby got killed. You had no way of knowing, Dove—yet you stopped the car within three or four feet of the spot! *So now I know you done the job yourself!*" Salter leaned forward. "That's all I wanted—just the killer. So—you can drive on down to headquarters now, Dove."

35 Will Be Murdered Today

TWO HUNDRED thousand persons who will commit murder are at large in the United States today. They will kill 300,000 of their fellowmen. During the twenty-four hours to end this coming midnight, thirty-five persons will be murdered. Thirty-five are murdered in the United States every day.

These startling figures come from J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice. He bases them upon the bureau's tabulation of 1,500,000 major crimes committed annually by 3,500,000 persons.

Most appalling of all is the increase in serious crimes committed by juveniles. Seventeen of every hundred persons arrested for major offenses are less than twenty-one years of age.

A survey of 343,132 arrest records forwarded to the Department of Justice by state municipal authorities during nine months in 1936 revealed that 59,954 of the prisoners had not yet reached their majority.

Of these minors, 526 were charged with criminal homicide, murder in its various degrees; 708 were charged with carrying deadly weapons, 3,622 with robbery, 2,307 with felonious assault, 8,660 with burglary, 11,801 with larceny, and 943 with criminal assault. In the same period, 3,944 of the 8,351 charged with automobile theft were under age.

Further revelations by Mr. Hoover in his analysis of crime in America show that the average term served by convicted murderers is only forty-three and a half months—scarcely more than three and a half years! And that the average time served by prisoners sentenced for life is only ten years.

—*J. W. Barry*

Practical Finger Printing

Workable, Up-to-the-Minute Methods for "Lifting" Fingerprints

How to Take Fingerprint Impressions

By Lieut. Charles E. Chapel

U. S. Marine Corps, Member, International Association for Identification

YOU CAN BECOME a fingerprint specialist! You can easily master the essentials of this fascinating profession that offers splendid opportunities for pleasant employment with congenial surroundings. This week we discuss how to take fingerprint impressions.

First, for practice you will need perfectly smooth, glossy white paper. Later, when you have become proficient, you will find it more convenient to use cards, ruled to receive the rolled impressions of the fingers of both hands, and the plain prints, too. At the beginning we shall not go into detail about the difference between rolled and plain prints, but we want you to know that there is a difference so that the idea will not appear too suddenly.

Second, you will want some printer's ink. Ordinary printer's ink from your neighborhood job printer, will do, but the kind that comes in tubes, for mimeograph work, will give the clearest impressions.

Third, the ink is spread on the slab or plate with a roller. The kind sold for mimeograph work is best, but a hard rubber roller sold by a photographic supply shop is satisfactory.

Fourth, the slab or plate can be polished plate glass, or polished brass or copper. Even a sheet of tin will meet our needs, but the glass is the most popular with professional fingerprint men. About six by ten inches is about the right size.

Fifth, mount your glass plate securely on a table about four feet high so that the plate is flush with the edge of the table nearest the person to be fingerprinted.

Sixth, have a supply of benzine handy to clean the fingers of your subjects when necessary, and to clean your glass plate of old, dried ink. The benzine can be best handled in a four-ounce bottle with a shaker top. Ether, benzol, gasoline, or ordinary soap and water will serve the same purpose. Obviously, you will want a supply of clean, dry rags for wiping the hands of your subjects after applying the benzine.

Seventh, at one side of the glass plate you will place the paper or card on which the prints are recorded. This paper or card is held to the table by a frame, made of tin or brass, and open so that the card is flush with the edge of the table. Frames are made in different designs. One of the best is nothing but a hollow rectangle, a little larger than the card, secured to the table on three of its sides, the fourth permitting the entrance of the card. Of course, you can get along without the frame, but it saves the loss of cards from fumbled impressions.

Now we have all the equipment that we need, and we are ready for business —or pleasure, according to your attitude toward this science that has many of the aspects of a game, but with rewards that in the other professions come only after long years of effort.

Spread a thin coat of ink and roll it evenly over the plate. Have your subject stand directly in front of the table, with you on his left. Fold back the fingers of his right hand so that they will be out of the way. Grasp the right hand of the subject and ink his thumb by first placing it so that the right side of the nail is next to the slab, then rolling the thumb to the left until the left edge of the nail touches the slab. In this manner the entire ridge surface of the thumb between the nail edges is inked.

Place the thumb on the card or paper and in the same manner as you inked his thumb, roll it from right to left on the card, leaving behind a clearly defined impression of his ridge pattern. Then, in succession, ink and record the impressions of the index, middle, ring, and little finger of the right hand. Without changing your position, repeat the process for the left hand of the subject.

These are called the "rolled impressions." The conventional card has spaces for the five fingers of the right hand at the top with those of the left hand underneath. The bottom of the card is customarily divided into two sections, the right section for the plain impressions of the right hand, and the left section for the plain prints of the left hand.

THE plain impressions are given less room on the card for two reasons. First, the impressions of the thumb are omitted; second, plain impressions are made by extending the four fingers of each hand so that they lie in a natural position, touching side by side, and then impressing them on the card without rolling. These are made for one hand at a time, the right hand first.

The purpose of the plain impressions is to act as a check against the rolled prints, in case the operator recorded the rolled prints in the wrong order. The importance of placing the rolled prints in the proper order will be explained to you when we come to the classification of prints, since the file number of a person's prints is partly determined by the order in which certain ridge patterns occur on the fingers. Some bureaus go so far as to record the plain thumb impressions underneath the plain finger prints, but this is unusual.

The exact design of the record card varies with different institutions, but in general they must follow a standard, uniform pattern to facilitate the interchange of records. At the top edge are spaces for the name, aliases, prison registration number, and classification number. At the bottom edge are spaces for the date, the signature of the operator, and sometimes for the signa-

ture of the subject. Since fingerprints of perfectly innocent citizens are often recorded for identification purposes only, some bureaus adopt a colored border for such cards, while others merely print: NON-CRIMINAL, or FOR IDENTIFICATION ONLY at the top of the cards.

No matter how good the ink or the cards, the difference between good and bad prints is largely a matter of the skill of the operator. In inking the fingers, a new spot on the ink plate is chosen for each finger, and only one finger is inked at a time in taking the rolled impressions. To maintain an even pressure for all fingers, the operator can place his left hand over the finger being inked and give it a firm, steady contact with the paper. If left to the subject, some of the impressions will be clear while others are faint or blurred.

To fingerprint people without their knowledge, find some excuse to hand them a clean, polished bottle, glass, or cigarette case. The perspiration naturally found on everyone's fingers will leave an oily impression which can be developed by dusting the exposed surface with finely powdered charcoal, or some other fine, black substance, and then photographing the lines left after blowing away the excess powder. Such prints are called "latent prints." They are the type usually found at the scene of the crime, and require special study for successful treatment. This is a subject in itself, which we shall discuss in a later issue of this magazine, but we present it briefly now so that you can answer the questions of your friends when they come to be fingerprinted.

When you have developed a reasonable amount of local reputation as a fingerprint enthusiast, you may be called upon by the coroner, or by the police, to take the fingerprints of dead bodies. This may seem gruesome to you, but remember that you are now in a professional class, and cannot ethically avoid this duty any more than a doctor or lawyer can refuse to approach cases involving death.

If the body has not been dead long, unclench the fingers and ink each one by itself with a small, narrow, rubber roller. Then place a piece of smooth, glossy, white paper in a spoon-shaped block of wood and roll it over the finger tip. If the fist is tightly clenched, you can overcome the contraction by dipping the hands in hot water for a few minutes. If that fails, make a small cut at the base of each finger and it will relax.

Unfortunately, many unknown dead have been in the water for several days and have developed an unnatural condition that makes fingerprinting difficult. To remedy this condition, dry the finger with a soft cloth, and then inject glycerin under the finger tips with a syringe until the skin surface becomes smooth.

In extreme cases, where the ridges have disappeared from the surface of the skin, the finger tip skin is cut off and kept in a bottle of formaldehyde solution until ready for further treatment. Since the next lower layer of the skin carries the pattern of the ridges, the surface layer may be peeled off and the underlying ridge design photographed, or even inked and recorded in the regular manner. It is this special, exceptional technique that distinguishes the fingerprint expert from the novice in the profession.

ANOTHER unusual request is for the fingerprint expert to take the impressions of the palm of a suspect.

This occurs when a crime has been committed, with no fingerprints left behind, but instead the impression of the palm of the hand. To take a palm impression, you will need a block of wood about one foot long, with the surface curved on the inside toward the subject. One half of the curved surface is covered with polished copper or brass, and the other half holds a sheet of paper. The metal side is inked, the hand pressed lightly against the ink, and then against the paper, with the fingers slightly spread apart. To give pressure against the wrist and knuckles, the operator presses against the hand as it is inked or recorded. The impression left on the paper is then compared with the palm print found at the scene of the crime. Although there is no standard identification system for palm prints, as there is for fingerprints, it is often possible to find more than fifty characteristic points for identification between the impression taken from the suspect and that found at the crime.

Sole prints sometimes occur in criminal cases when the burglar or murderer has removed his shoes and socks, but the most common occasion for taking sole prints is the registration of an infant in a maternity hospital. An epidemic of law suits started by parents who thought that their little Johnny had been traded by a careless nurse for some neighbor's little Tommy forced the hospitals to adopt foot-printing. The sole is inked with a roller, and then the infant's foot is pressed against a paper on a table. Fingerprints can be taken from babies, but the ridges are so very fine that it requires magnification to distinguish the pattern, and even then it sometimes happens that the ink is so coarse that it fails to bring out the delicate ridges of the very young arrival.

Once in a thousand times, the police find fragmentary impressions of fingerprints that are not large enough, or lack the necessary patterns, for identification. If they come to you with this problem, assume your most haughty manner, and inform them that you must now resort to "poroscopy." This is a five dollar word which means that you will examine the skin surface of their suspects for the size and shape of their sweat pores, and then compare your results, under a microscope, with their fragmentary impressions found at the crime scene. To do this you will find that printer's ink is too coarse. Instead, you will order this preparation from your pharmacist:—

4 parts, by weight, tallow.
4 parts, wax.
1 part, spermaceti.
16 parts, resin.

When mixed, this will form a semi-solid, which must be kept in a shallow, covered dish. Rub the finger or palm of the suspect against this mixture, and then press it on glossy paper. Treat the exposed paper with oxid of cobalt and you will have a pattern that remains visible temporarily.

To keep the pattern visible for any length of time, spray it with this formula:—

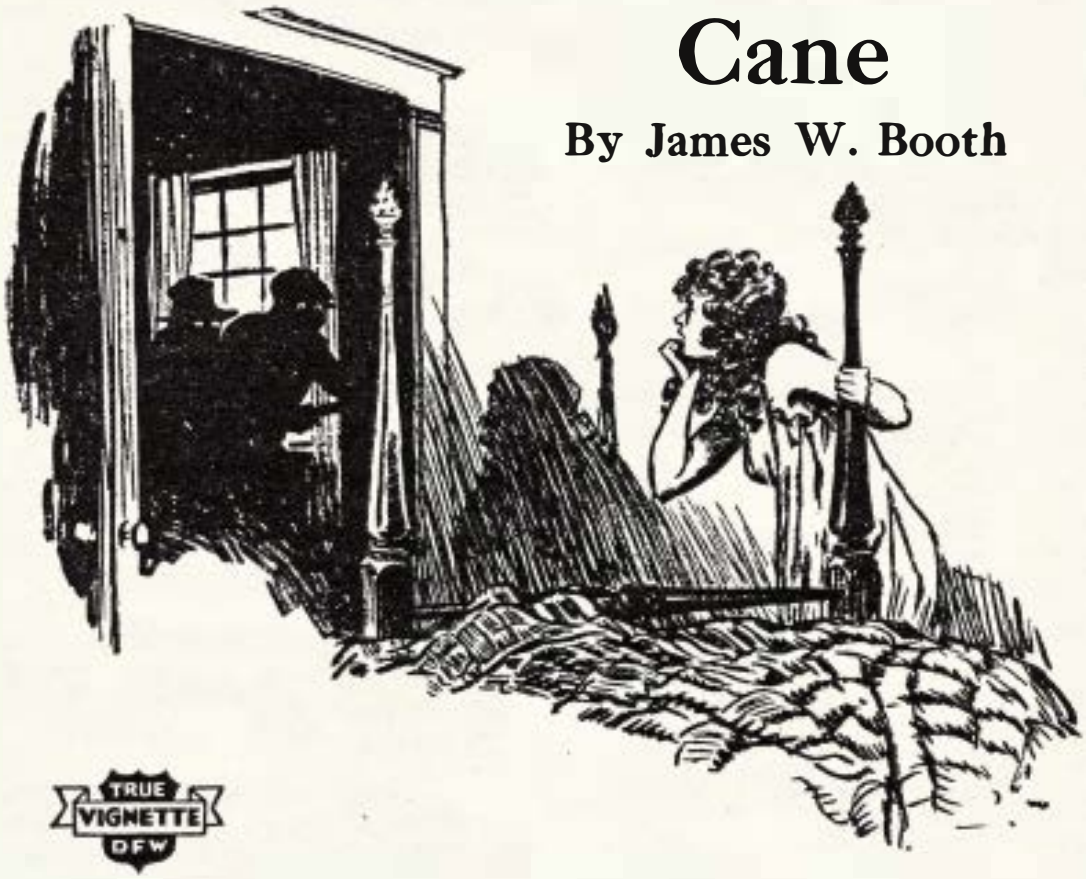
1 part, 45% formalin.
2 parts, alum.
5 parts, gum arabic.
50 parts, water.

The resultant pattern can be photographed, or examined at leisure under the microscope.

Another method of accomplishing the same result in a shorter time is to have the suspect press his hand against a clean, glass plate, and then heat iodine crystals so that the fumes will bring out the pattern of the pores on the glass for identification.

The Curious Cane

By James W. Booth



In the Dead of Night, a Young Husband Fights for His Life and Pleads in Vain with His Wife for Help!

IN Higginsville, Missouri, in 1904, virtually everyone knew Aggie Meyers. And why not? Young and beautiful, Aggie was a heart-breaker, the town belle.

Then, too, virtually everyone knew Old Man Hottman, who hobbled about town on his cane, and invariably had a cheerful greeting for those he passed, and a funny anecdote to relate to those who had time to tarry with him and listen to it. A character was Old Man Hottman and his cane.

But on the morning of May 11, it was Aggie Meyers, not Old Man Hottman, that Higginsville folk were thinking about, and sympathizing with. For tragedy, cruel and murderous, had descended upon the modest home where she and her husband, Clarence, lived.

Dawn was just breaking over the Missouri countryside when Aggie's frantic, hysterical cries aroused neighbors from their slumber and brought them rushing to her home to find out what possibly could be the trouble.

It did not take them long to dis-

cover. In the bedroom, Clarence Meyers lay with his throat cut from ear to ear, his skull bashed in, and a half dozen knife wounds in his back.

Aggie had been awakened sometime after midnight by hearing a noise in the kitchen, so she told the town authorities. Curious to know what it was, she had arisen and, as she started out of the bedroom, had been overpowered by two giant Negroes. As one of them grabbed her, she had fainted. Several hours later, she regained consciousness and found her husband murdered.

Investigation revealed that much of Aggie's jewelry was missing, but no trace of the two giant Negroes was to be found, although the surrounding countryside was searched in fine-tooth comb fashion, and a description of them broadcast throughout the State.

Clarence Meyers was buried and, shortly after his funeral, Aggie departed from Higginsville for a rest—to endeavor to forget, if that was possible, the gruesome tragedy which had entered her young life. The case, to all outward appearances, had gone down on the Higginsville police records as unsolved.

But one young detective was unable to reconcile himself to certain features of the story Aggie had told. Particularly was he unable to visualize a person remaining unconscious as long as Aggie apparently had. But then, he was not an expert on such things.

To get expert opinion, he sought the advice of a physician.

"It is possible," said the medical man, "but—"

The *but* was all the detective needed. Then and there he determined to make a thorough search of the now-vacant Meyers home. Possibly there he would be able to unearth some overlooked clue.

At first, his search was fruitless. And then, hidden away in the basement of the house, he came upon a blood-stained cudgel. He whistled as he recognized it. No wonder, he told himself, he had been unable to reconcile himself to Aggie Meyers' story.

Aggie Meyers was arrested in Walla Walla, Washington, and arrested with her, and likewise charged with the murder of her husband, was Frank Hottman, Old Man Hottman's grandson.

From Hottman's lips came the gruesome story of the merciless slaying. Once her husband was asleep, Aggie had admitted her lover, for such Hottman proved to be, into the house, and together the two had killed Clarence.

As Meyers, now thoroughly awake, grappled with Hottman, he cried to Aggie, "Help me, honey!" In response, so Hottman's confession stated, Aggie had driven a pair of scissors into his back, and then, with her husband's razor, had cut his throat while her lover held him.

UNMOVED by Hottman's confession, Aggie clung to her story of the two giant Negroes, and steadfastly maintained her innocence of the horrible crime with which she was charged. She never changed her story, although a jury convicted her of first-degree murder. Along with her lover, she spent nineteen years in prison before a parole was granted.

Had Old Man Hottman hobbled around Higginsville on an ordinary cane, the crime of Aggie and her lover might never have been discovered. For it was no ordinary walking stick the old gentleman used. It was a cut-down billiard cue. And a cut-down billiard cue was the blood-stained cudgel the young detective found!

SHORT SHORT

By Edwin Baird

"I hate to do this to you, but—I'll make it as painless as possible"

Invitation to Death

Berger Made a Deal With Death—But Then He Attended a Revival Meeting!

BUGHOUSE SQUARE writhed with life.

On that warm summer evening its orators played to capacity crowds. The largest clustered about an evangelist who leaned down from his sidewalk pulpit, feverishly exhorting in a hoarse voice. A gasoline torch flared beside him. Behind him hung a Biblical chart. A white-robed woman weaved through his congregation distributing printed cards.

The members of his scrubby flock watched him sluggishly, sullen heads lowered, sodden eyes lifted, in dull inertia. They were a drab, torpid, apathetic lot. But there was one among them who stood out conspicuously: a thin, dark young man with protruding ears and receding chin, and a weak, dissipated, characterless face. He wore a Tuxedo and a Panama hat. His name was Donald C. Berger, Jr., recreant son of D. C. Berger, millionaire soap

manufacturer, who long since had disowned him and cast him adrift in hopeless sorrow and anger.

Every evening for the last three weeks young Berger had visited Bughouse Square, and he had spent considerable time studying its human driftwood. He seemed to be seeking a certain outcast.

Tonight, he leaned against the evangelist's box, intently observing the stupid faces around him. The white-robed woman brushed past him with her cards. He paid her no attention.

Dissatisfied, he turned away and wandered across the Square, narrowly eying the occupants of the benches that lined the graveled walk. Spineless derelicts, all of them, washed up here in this stagnant harbor by the muddy tides of a great city. They stared at him curiously as he sauntered past. He was indifferent to their stares.

He heard a voice call to him:

"Hey, Commodore! Are you good for a dime?"

He looked in the direction from which the voice came. Its owner sat on the grass beyond the benches. In the shadows he was little more than a shapeless bundle of rags.

"Stand out here," said young Berger, "and let me have a look at you."

The bundle of rags assumed a vertical posture, shuffled over to the graveled walk, and slouched beneath a lamp post. The light revealed the bundle of rags as a trampish young man with a dark stubble of beard and an insolent grin.

YOUNG Berger surveyed him sharply from head to foot: discolored felt hat, dirt-caked face, tattered coat, soiled shirt, filthy hands, torn trousers, ragged shoes—a slovenly, repulsive young pariah. Young Berger removed the faded hat and closely examined his unshaved face.

"Well, Commodore, if you're troo wid your inspection, how about dat dime?"

"If I gave you a dime," young Berger asked, "what would you do with it?"

"I'll be honest wid you, kid. I'd buy meself a drink."

"In that event," young Berger said, "come with me, and I'll get you a drink."

They left the Square together. Young Berger's car, a smart roadster of expensive make with the tan top lowered, was parked nearby. They climbed in and started north in Clark Street.

"Where we goin' for dis drink?" asked the young ragamuffin.

"To my apartment," said young Berger. "But first we're going to a barber shop."

He stopped at a Clark Street barber shop, and gave the tramp a dollar.

"Go in there," he said, "and get a haircut and a shave. I'll wait here."

He sat in his car, watching the shop, till he saw the vagabond in the barber's chair; then he alighted and entered an adjacent liquor store.

"I want a case of bottled beer," he told the proprietor, and flipped a $10 bill on the counter. "I'll have a man call for it within an hour. Right?"

"Right," said the proprietor. "Just hand him this card."

Young Berger put the card in his pocket and returned to his car. And now, from another pocket, he took a small flat can, unscrewed the top, and rubbed his fingers in its contents.

The flippant young tramp, looking more flip and somewhat less trampish, left the barber shop and climbed into the car beside young Berger.

Young Berger's right arm was extended along the back of the seat.

"Get a good shave?" he asked pleasantly, and drew his right hand across the other's right cheek, around his neck and up the left side of his face, leaving behind a jagged black smear.

"Hey! What de—" The tramp rubbed his freshly-shaved skin, looked at his blackened fingers, and then at young Berger. "Say! What de hell's de idea? You gone off your nut? I gotta good mind to smack you in de puss."

"If you do," smiled young Berger, cleansing his fingers with a white linen handkerchief, "you'll miss that drink."

He tossed the handkerchief in the street and drove on.

He stopped at the canopied entrance to a streamlined building in Astor Street. The doorman stepped briskly to the car, opened the door, looked curiously at the grease-smeared stranger and inquiringly at young Berger.

"A friend of mine, Dennis," young Berger explained.

He crossed the sidewalk with his ragged companion. Near the gleaming doorway stood a police officer, one Matthew Foley, assigned to this neighborhood because of several recent robberies on the Gold Coast.

FOLEY frowned at the tramp, then looked at young Berger and touched his cap. "Good ivinin' to ye, Mr. Berger."

"How are you, Foley? . . . And why are you scowling at this poor chap? He's down on his luck and needs a friend. I ran across him tonight in Washington Square and invited him home for a drink."

Foley continued to frown disapprovingly.

"Speaking of drinks," young Berger went on, feeling in his pocket, "I've a case of beer at Goldman's liquor store, over in Clark Street. It's yours if you want it. Just give them this card. The proprietor expects you."

"Thank ye kindly, sor," said Foley, hiding the card in his uniform. "I'll pick it up in the marnin'."

"Better pick it up now," said young Berger. "I told the man you'd be there tonight."

"But I'm not off duty till midnight, sor."

"Tush! Who'll ever know? There's my car. Use it if you like. Drive over, get the beer, take it home, then return. You'll be back before eleven."

"The lieutenant will be passin' in foorty minutes," said Foley. "I'll wait till thin, annyhow."

Entering his top-floor apartment, young Berger locked the door and led his guest to a bathroom.

"Before we have that drink," he said, "get in there and clean yourself up."

"Sa-ay—"

"If you're to drink with me," young Berger coldly interrupted, "you must drink as a gentleman. Go ahead now and bathe, while I lay out fresh clothes for you. And don't forget to brush your teeth and clean your fingernails. You'll find a nail file and a new toothbrush in the cabinet."

When the young vagabond emerged from the bathroom he found awaiting him a complete outfit of evening clothes, the exact counterpart of young Berger's apparel. Young Berger assisted him in donning the unfamiliar raiment, then stood beside him before a tall mirror. And now all at once something became startlingly clear. The receding chins, the protruding ears, the weak, dissipated, characterless faces . . .

"Jeez!" wonderingly exclaimed the

homeless tramp. "We look like a set o' twins!"

"Identical twins, one might say," amiably agreed young Berger. "Same height; same build; same color of hair and eyes; and practically the same features."

"And in dese headwaiter suits—"

"We're like Tweedledee and Tweedledum," smilingly finished young Berger. "Well, your drink's waiting in the next room. My houseboy isn't here tonight, but I think we can manage without him. Go ahead and help yourself. I'll join you presently."

His guest entered the adjoining room and made a swift approach to the Scotch and White Rock. And while he poured and mixed himself a drink, young Berger closed and locked the intervening door, and entered the bathroom. His guest's grimy garments were heaped in a corner.

Young Berger stripped and put them on. Then he smudged his face and neck from the small flat can, and put on the frowzy hat. He studied his slatternly reflection in the bathroom mirror. He looked, now, as his guest had looked; or enough like him, at any rate, to fool any casual observer.

AND now young Berger went to his bedroom bureau, and from the top drawer he took a .38 caliber revolver. He twirled the chambers, made sure all were loaded. Then he stepped into the adjoining room.

His guest sat drinking zestfully, his back turned to the door. He looked up over his shoulder as he heard the door open—and into the barrel of young Berger's gun.

He had opened his mouth to speak; but now, though his mouth remained open, no sound issued from it. He gaped in speechless astonishment.

"I hate to do this to you," said young Berger, "but—I'll make it as painless as possible." Then he fired two shots into his guest's head and two more shots into his body.

The young man crumpled in his chair. A crimson blotch stained his white shirtfront. The glass slipped from his hand and fell to the rug with scarcely a sound. Then his body slid sidewise, and he toppled over in a grotesque heap. He was dead before he struck the floor.

Young Berger stood over him and deliberately fired two more shots into his face. That ought to disfigure him, just in case . . . Now to turn the bum's pockets inside out. Rifle the sideboard. Rough-house the place. Put the silver in the traveling-bag, already packed for a quick getaway. The thing was working beautifully. Tomorrow, Gwen would identify the body as his. Later, she'd collect the insurance. Two hundred thousand dollars . . . Then they'd meet in New York and sail for Paris. Might grow a mustache while waiting for her, and start wearing glasses. Better leave by the tradesmen's entrance. The rear doorman was off duty now, and Dennis would be busy in front. He looked cautiously from a window at the street below. Foley was gone. He wouldn't return for at least an hour.

He picked up his bag and went to the kitchen. Ear to the door, he stood listening acutely. No sound outside. All was clear . . . He'd slip out the back way, go to an obscure hotel, change back to decent clothes, then start for New York . . . He pulled the faded old hat far down on his head, turned up the collar of the seedy coat, and opened the door and stepped into the rear hall—

And stood as if paralyzed.

Patrolman Foley confronted him.

"Ah!" said Patrolman Foley, and reached for his service revolver. "Just as I ixpicted! So ye robbed Mr. Berger after he befriended ye! And prob'ly slugged 'im into the bargain. Well, we'll just go back and have a look." He took the bag and the young man's arm.

"It's a good thing," said Patrolman Foley, as they crossed the kitchen threshold, "Mr. Berger remimbered that case o' beer, because he gimme the wrong card by mistake, and that's what brought me back."

As young Berger returned to the room of death, in custody of the officer, he glanced at the card in the officer's hand and read its fearful legend:

PREPARE TO MEET THY MAKER!

Cipher Solvers' Club for February

(Continued from last week)

CIPHERS are winning new converts every day! For instance, there are many new names in the following list of readers who submitted answers to ciphers Nos. 31-54, inclusive, published in our cipher department during February. The solving total for February was 7,033 answers, raising our total for the first two months of the year to 15,727 answers. The special signs preceding names indicate °Inner Circle Club and †Honor Roll membership. Watch for our March Solvers' Club, cryptofans, in an early issue! And don't fail to try the ciphers in this week's issue!

Eight—Amahan, Olney, Tex.; Charles Boulton, New York, N. Y.; Mis-Led, Van Tassell, Wyo.

Seven—Frank H. Brady, Brooklyn, N. Y.; †Myrtle Lee Bunn, Washington, D. C.; George Danyluk, Drumheller, Alberta, Canada.

Six—William J. Applegate, Philadelphia, Pa.; Donald Armstrong, Brooklyn, N. Y.; †William C. Avery, Van Nuys, Calif.; Boston Bean, Boston, Mass.; Biff, Point Lookout, N. Y.; Jim Bill, New York, N. Y.; Janece Bippus, Evansville, Ind.; Joseph G. Brown, Chicago, Ill.; †How Carso, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; Cliff, Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada; °Joseph E. Conklin, Riverhead, N. Y.; W. E. Deaton, Joliet, Ill.; †Ah-Tin-Du, St. Paul, Minn.; Allah Gator, Massillon, Ohio; H. J. Haewecker, Brooklyn, N. Y.; A. N. Hansard, San Juan, Porto Rico; †Helen, Boonton, N. J.; †Donald Houghtalin, Ann Arbor, Mich.; †Kappa Kappa, Seattle, Wash.; John Warren Lincoln, Roseland, N. J.; RAB, Penticton, British Columbia, Canada; Lawrence Renaurd, New York, N. Y.; CaNaRev, Stanhope, Quebec, Canada; Ernest Rohrer, Elmira, N. Y.; N. H. Russell, Schenectady, N. Y.; F. K. C. Sauberzweig, Astoria, N. Y.; †Ben Shimkus, New York, N. Y.; Mrs. Marvin P. Souther, Brea, Calif.; D. B. Turner, Henderson, Tex.; †Ty N. Twist, London, Ontario, Canada; Chi Valor, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; †Ky-Mo-Wash, Seattle, Wash.; Geo. Williams, Reliance, S. Dak.

Five—Ernest H. Carling, New York, N. Y.; †Eatosin, Marietta, Ohio; Virginia Freeman, Akron, Ohio; Ginhuts, Wit's End, Nitro, W. Va.; Fred H. Sautter, Brooklyn, N. Y.; W. L. Staley, Fort Dodge, Iowa; Sunoco, Bronx, N. Y.; Geo. D. Swing, Philadelphia, Pa.; Tex, Joplin, Mo.; Ione Toelle, Ferguson, Mo.; †John Toscano, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Ida M. Volk, New York, N. Y.; E. J. Wethey, Exeter, Ontario, Canada.

Four—Robin Hood, Chicago, Ill.; Ichor, Washington, D. C.; Irving Kay, Savannah, Ga.; Louis E. Krieg, Allentown, Pa.; John M. Seals, Paterson, N. J.; Zyaz, Fort Montgomery, N. Y.

Three—Arthur M. Barron, New London, Conn.; Mary Emlyn, New York, N. Y.; Mary E. Haynes, Guthrie, Okla.; Frank Martin, Dorchester, Mass.; Elmer E. Rusk, Gallipolis, Ohio; †Sunny, Chicago, Ill.; Yumca, Norfolk, Va.

Two—John J. Gannon, Jr., Phoenix, Ariz.; Ed. Gladstone, West New York, N. Y.; Dr. C. S. Thompson, Guthrie, Okla.; Eugene "Wash" Tubb, Shattuck, Okla.

One—C. S. Bruner, Hawesville, Ky.; M. P. McKee, Philadelphia, Pa.

Corrections—†Baab, Verdun, Quebec, Canada, 30 answers for January instead of 24; †Elvin Crane Paynter, Millville, N. J., 18 answers for January not previously credited; Iris Goldthorpe, New York, N. Y., 19 answers for December instead of 15, 16 for November instead of 5, and 14 for October not previously credited; GKC, Seattle, Wash., 20 answers for November, 1936, instead of 10.

Dead Man's Orders

"This is a real haul!" the guard said.

By Bob Gordon

Carlton Hacker Was Perfectly Willing to Obey Orders—into a Double-Cross Murder Rap—and Out Again!

CARLTON HACKER was new on the job, so Fred Kliegsmuth, Central City manager of the Allegheny Armored Car Service, was giving him instructions.

"We run this business on a strictly military basis," he snapped, with a tone and expression that intimated he would stand for no fooling. "One violation of orders—just one—and you'll find yourself looking for a job again. Is that clear?"

"Perfectly," Hacker answered, trying to keep a respect he did not feel in his voice. He could understand a little man adopting a bullying manner to compensate for lack of size; but that a bulky, thick-necked specimen like Kliegsmuth should have to become offensively domineering to show he was boss was . . . But he'd better listen.

"I'm putting you on with two old-timers," Kliegsmuth continued patronizingly, "so you'll learn the ropes. Walter Gill here is driver. Oscar Denham is the other guard. Denham is in charge of the car. You'll take orders from him."

Hacker turned and nodded to the other two members of the crew. He could get acquainted with them later. Offhand, Gill seemed a decent sort of a chap; an ex-marine, likely, who had acquired a family, and who was guarding money now, instead of Navy Yards, because there was a better living in it. Denham was big too, but older and a trifle flabby. His eyes held shrewd appraisal, rather than the friendly greetings of a fellow worker, as he barely moved his head in response to Hacker's nod.

"Now here's the way we work," Kliegsmuth was explaining with an exaggerated

air of patience. "You start out in the morning under sealed orders that I have prepared. You don't know where you're going until the driver opens the first envelope after the door is locked.

"You make that call. Then Gill opens the second envelope, which tells you where to go next. We work things that way so nobody can be tipped off as to your route or what you'll be carrying.

"When you make a stop, the driver remains in the cab. One man steps from the body of the truck into the cab, closes the door behind him, and gets out of the truck. When he sees that all is clear, the second man comes out the same way, and covers the first man, who makes the collection. If it's a delivery, the first man covers the second as he steps out with the money. Understand?"

Hacker nodded. All this had been explained to him before.

"And," Kliegsmuth pointed a pudgy finger at the new guard's face, "you are to obey implicitly any orders given you by Denham."

"Suppose Denham's orders conflict with your instructions?"

Hacker could tell by the way the boss bit into his cigar that he didn't like the question.

"Obey the latest orders you receive," Kliegsmuth growled. "The man on the spot is in the best position to know what to do in an emergency."

WITH the uniformed crew locked inside, Gill maneuvered the big armored car from the garage. Out on the street, he reached into the pocket of his gray whipcord tunic and withdrew two envelopes. He slit open the one marked No. 1," replacing the other.

"Allegheny Bank and Trust Company," he called through the square hole in the armor that separated the cab from the body of the truck.

Denham made no comment; Hacker followed his lead and said nothing about the day's work. Instead, he tried, as the truck moved through the morning traffic of Central City, to get acquainted with his fellow guard. The attempt was not a success. Gill answered the friendly questions with curt monosyllables. There was a faraway, preoccupied look into his slate-green eyes.

At the first stop, Hacker stood on the sidewalk, by the door of the cab, while Denham went inside. Gill sat on his seat in the cab, an automatic clutched in his hand. Denham came out presently with a leather pouch that bulged with its load of bundled currency. The pouch was padlocked, and sealed as well, by a wire that went through the staple, to be secured at both ends by a lozenge of soft alloy metal.

After both guards had reëntered the truck, Gill shot the bolt of the cab door and opened the other envelope.

"The Maxwell Steel Mills at Ironville," he called back through the aperture. "That means we've got at least three hundred thousand aboard for pay rolls."

"Which way do we go?" Denham asked.

"The long way—to Bellport and then over the mountain."

As the truck began to move, Hacker asked, more for the sake of conversation than because he cared:

"I suppose they take a different route and a different time each trip, so a stick-up gang won't know where to expect us?"

"Something like that." Denham seemed to be getting more surly by the minute."

Hacker was becoming annoyed at the other's utter lack of cordiality. After all, they had a sixty-mile ride ahead of them, on a hard bench, in a truck that

seemed to have no springs. He wished Denham was driving, and that Gill was inside with him. Gill at least showed signs of being friendly.

Though the unheated interior of the steel-clad truck was chilly, he watched a mustache of sweat forming on Denham's lip. He asked:

"Has the job got you worried?"

Denham looked up sharply. "What d'ya mean?"

"You seem to have the weight of the world resting on your shoulders," Hacker laughed. "I thought maybe guarding all this money was getting you down. You've hardly said a word since we started out."

"I ain't the gabby kind."

"Apparently not." Hacker lapsed into puzzled silence after the rebuke.

A HORN honked raucously, three times, behind the truck, after they had ridden in silence about forty minutes. Hacker thought of how nice it would be if they had windows in the cab, instead of those tiny loopholes. Then he could see the scenery, the passing cars. The bare steel walls of the jolting truck were already becoming monotonous. It was chilly, too.

As if thinking the same thing, Denham reached into his hip pocket and drew out a pair of black silk gloves. He donned one, on the left hand, put the other back in his pocket. Hacker watched him with bored interest. There was nothing else to watch.

Again the horn sounded three times outside. This time the car seemed to be going past.

Denham glanced down at the money pouch.

"We got a lot of dough here," he said. "And Ironville's a tough town. Your gun's loaded, ain't it? You know how to use it?"

Hacker resented the questions. Did they think he was an absolute dumbbell? He said: "Certainly," let the one word answer both queries.

"Better let me see." Denham held out his gloved hand.

"See what?"

"Your gun, stupid. I'm responsible here. I gotta make sure."

Hacker shook his head in wonder. The job did have this fellow down. Oh well—he pulled the automatic from his holster, handed it over. Kliegsmuth had said that Denham was the boss.

Denham stared down at the automatic. Then he reached into his holster and drew his own .45 with his right hand, seemed to be comparing the two weapons.

He looked up suddenly. His lips were drawn back in a snarl that revealed yellow teeth. Vicious lights swirled in his eyes. He was covering Hacker with his own gun.

"Back to the rear of the truck!" he grated. "Lay down on your stomach! Don't move or I'll drill you."

Hacker's face wrinkled in a tight, humorless grin. If this was Denham's idea of a joke, it was in mighty poor taste.

"Think it's funny, huh?" Denham flared, his hand tightening on the pistol's grip. "I'll give you just five seconds. This is a stick-up."

There was no mistake. He meant it! Hacker thought an instant of leaping across the narrow cab. The look in Denham's eyes told him that if he did he'd be leaping squarely into a red-hot slug from the gaping muzzle of that .45. After all, his life was worth more than even the Maxwell pay roll. It wasn't as if he had a fighting chance. He slunk to the rear of the truck, lay down against the cold armor plates.

And while he was moving back, Gill

glanced over his shoulder through the hole in the front armor—looked squarely into the muzzle of the other gun, Hacker's gun, held in Denham's gloved left hand.

"Stop the car!" Denham shouted.

Gill had wild thoughts too, thoughts of running into a tree, of stepping on the gas and daring Denham to shoot. But there was that sedan up ahead, the one that honked three times when it passed, only to slow down again as it got ahead. He could see now that its occupants were waiting for him to stop. He didn't have a chance, he realized, to save the money. And, after all, he had a wife and two kids at home.

He took his foot off the gas, eased it down on the brake.

THE instant the wheels of the truck came to rest, Hacker's .45 recoiled in Denham's gloved left hand. Two more shots rang out while the echoes of the first still pounded deafeningly against the steel plates, until the armored interior of the truck was an inferno of shattering sound.

The look of resignation in Gill's eyes changed to one of agonized surprise as the first slug ripped through his back; then to the stark stare of death as the other two bullets mushroomed inside his skull.

Blind fury surged into Hacker's brain as he watched the cold-blooded murder, helpless to interfere. His muscles tightened. He gathered himself to spring off the floor, hurl himself at the snarling killer.

Flame spat at him from Denham's Colt. The slug flattened itself against the steel armor over his head, splashed searing molten metal on his neck, seemed to stun him with the shattering fullness of the sound.

The thought flashed through his brain that Denham was going to murder him too. Instinctively he slumped back on the floor, played possum. A dead man can do nothing; and he realized that another move would be his last. It would be stretching his luck too far to expect Denham to miss again at that range.

Denham shot open the bolt of the inner door, backed into the cab, and unbolted the outer door. He kicked it open, tossed Hacker's automatic outside. Then he reëntered the armored compartment quickly, grabbed up the pouch of money while keeping Hacker covered, and went back outside.

The instant the armored car had stopped, the driver of the black sedan up ahead had jammed on his brakes. Two men were running back now, one carrying a tommygun, the other brandishing an automatic. They were waiting outside when Denham climbed down from the cab of the armored truck.

The man with the automatic picked up Hacker's gun, where Denham had tossed it in the weeds beside the road, picked it up with hands encased in kid gloves.

"Everything O. K?" the thug with the tommygun asked as he reached for the money pouch.

"Just as planned," Denham answered, handing over the loot.

The other fellow said: "Is this the gun you shot the driver with?"

"Yeah, that's the other guard's. I didn't leave no prints on it."

"That's swell. Me neither." With that he fired the three remaining slugs into Denham's chest.

Denham clutched at his heart. He died before his hands could get that high. He fell forward on the gravel shoulder of the road and rolled over into the ditch.

The thug who had shot Denham

tossed Hacker's empty automatic into the open door of the armored cab. Then both ran for the car up ahead.

With a whine of gears, the sedan whirled off up the road, but not before Hacker, using Gill's .45, and firing through a loophole in the cab, had sent one bullet drilling through the built-in trunk behind.

A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD flivver, full of rattles and squeaks but still full of pep, came speeding around the curve from the direction of Central City. Its driver, a high-school boy in a hurry for no particular reason, spied Hacker's gray uniform, spied the gun in his upraised hand. He stepped on the brake pedal. One wheel locked, and the flivver came to a sliding, shuddering stop at Hacker's feet.

Hacker jumped in beside the driver without ceremony. "There's just been a hold-up here," he snapped. "Two men killed. Rush me to the nearest phone."

A flush of excitement spread over the kid's downy face. His narrow chest swelled with sudden importance.

"Sure will, Mister!" he thrilled. "Gee whiz!"

He slapped the gear into second and let in the clutch with a jerk. Hacker's head snapped back with the sudden start. The needle behind the cracked glass of the speedometer was up to forty before the youth flipped the gear lever into high. After that it fairly leaped to sixty. The young driver's face was wreathed in a tense grin as he leaned over the wheel, the better to see through the grimy windshield.

After two miles of clattering, lurching speed over the winding macadam, during which Hacker reloaded both his and Gill's automatics, the garish signs of a filling station on the outskirts of Bellport loomed ahead.

"In there," Hacker indicated.

The kid nodded, kept his foot on the gas until the last possible instant, then skidded into the service station driveway with a squeal of his single brake.

Hacker had a nickle in his hand before the flivver shuddered to a stop. The station attendant was already using the phone, fixing up a date for the evening. Without a word of explanation, Hacker grabbed him by the collar and pushed him, too surprised to protest, across the room. He slammed up the receiver through which shrill clucks were still sounding, plucked it off the hook again, and thumbed his nickle into the slot. He dialed just once—the red "O".

"State Police!" he barked. "Make it snappy!"

With clipped phrases, he poured the details of the robbery into the sergeant's ear.

When the sergeant said: "Okay, go back to the scene of the crime and wait until we get there," Hacker said "Sure," but had no idea of doing that.

He stood in the station a moment, chewing his thumb nail, while the kid outside in the flivver champed at the throttle, hoping for more excitement.

Hacker decided to give him some.

The State Police, he knew, and the local police for miles around, would have every road blocked in a few minutes. Thugs smart enough to pull a robbery as smooth as that, would be smart enough to know they couldn't hope to get very far by auto. If they were local crooks, they might have a local hideout; but there was one phase of the robbery that made Hacker think they didn't plan to remain in that vicinity.

He ran out to the car, asked the kid: "Is there an airport near here?"

"Yeh, a small one east of Bellport about two miles."

"What's there?" Hacker questioned.

"Just a couple of crates they take people riding in on Sundays."

"Let's roll!" said Hacker.

A SMALL, high-wing cabin plane was taxiing to the far corner of the field when the kid brought the flivver to a skidding stop in front of the unpainted hangar.

Hacker's hunch had been correct. There was the black sedan. Identification made certain by the bullet hole in the trunk.

"Where are the occupants of that car?" Hacker barked.

A mechanic, dragging a pair of wheel chocks behind him, motioned with his head toward the plane, now turning around at the other end of the field.

"Out you go," Hacker ordered his driver. "And keep under cover. There might be some shooting—and possibly a new car for you."

The kid started to protest, got a glimpse of the determined flame blazing in Hacker's eyes, and slid from behind the wheel. Hacker's bulk took his place before the youth's feet touched the ground.

Without waiting to close the door, Hacker let in the clutch and swung the car toward the center of the field.

Already the tail of the plane had come up and it was roaring down the field. Hacker stamped heavily on the gas and guided the flivver straight for the center of the runway.

Plane and car were approaching at right angles. Making a snap judgment of speed and distance, Hacker pulled the wheel a trifle to the left, jerked the hand throttle all the way down, straightened the wheel onto the new course, and climbed out onto the running board.

The pilot of the plane pulled back desperately on the stick, but had neither speed nor altitude enough to avoid the crash. An instant after Hacker jumped clear, hunching his shoulders and drawing up his knees to take the fall rolling, one wheel of the plane plowed into the raised top of the speeding flivver.

There was a loud noise of rending, grinding steel, of shattered glass, as the car, struck at an angle, went over on its side, leaped into the air.

Like a running man who stubs his toe, the plane seemed to stagger an instant before its nose plunged toward the ground. As the whirling propeller snapped off short, the tail came up and went on over. The wings crumpled and the fuselage came to a sliding stop on its back.

Bruised and shaken from his rolling fall on the turf, but not seriously hurt, Hacker picked himself up and ran to the wrecked plane.

The door of the inverted cabin hung partly open, gaping on sprung hinges. Prepared for anything, expecting the worst as he sniffed the fumes of spilled gasoline, Hacker plunged inside, his own gun in his hand, Gill's in his pocket.

There was no fire, though. The last act of the pilot, the man who had driven the car after the holdup, had been to cut the switch when he saw the crash inevitable. He hung in the inverted seat now, by his safety belt, his neck broken, his eyes still open, glassy and staring.

The other two were still alive. The thug who had shot Denham lay against the back of the twisted pilot's seat, where he had been hurled when his belt snapped. He was whimpering, trying to wipe away the blood that seeped into his eyes from an ugly gash on his forehead. The money pouch that had been in his lap, now lay a few inches from his head.

The other figure still hung from its

safety belt. It moved an arm when Hacker thrust his way into the cabin, then remained motionless.

Still fearing fire, Hacker picked up the leather pouch of loot and hurled it through the door. Then he shoved his hands under the shoulders of the blubbering bandit and dragged him outside, patted his pocket, helped himself to his gun. The fellow was badly hurt, but still conscious—no use taking any more chances.

He heard a thump inside the cabin. The other fellow was trying to kick himself loose, he thought. He thrust his head and shoulders back through the door. The third bandit was no longer dangling from his seat. Instead, he lay on the roof of the cabin, propped on one elbow, pushing the ugly snout of the tommygun in front of him. A snarl of hatred twisted his swarthy features.

Hacker yanked his head back just as the muzzle of the sub-machine gun squirted flame and lead slugs. The terrible staccato of that gun shattered the deadly hush that had followed the crash. Splinters ripped from the plywood shell of the cabin. Jagged holes appeared suddenly in the bent, partly-open door.

As Hacker leaped for precarious safety behind the crumpled wing, a hollow "pouf!" came from inside the cabin; and instantly the interior of the plane was a mass of swirling, licking flame. The flash from the muzzle of the tommygun had ignited the fumes of spilled gasoline.

The gunner inside screamed once, a horrible shriek of agony and terror, as the gun became silent in the hands. Searing flames rushed into his lungs as he breathed to scream again.

Hacker ran to drag the whimpering survivor away from the terrific heat of the blazing wreck.

AFTER calling the Bellport police, asking that an ambulance and a guard be sent out for the survivor, Hacker got Kliegsmuth on the phone.

"The truck was held up two miles from Bellport," he reported. "Denham killed Gill and then opened the doors for the bandits."

A sarcastic "Oh yeah?" greeted the announcement.

"Yeah!" Hacker shouted into the receiver. "And then the bandits shot Denham—killed him."

"What's that?" Kliegsmuth fairly shrieked. "Say that again!"

Hacker repeated the statement, waited while the boss poured a stream of lurid profanity into the phone, then announced:

"They tried to escape by plane. I stopped them and recovered the money. Only one of the bandits remains alive, and he's badly hurt. What will I do with the money?"

There was a brief moment of silence, then Kliegsmuth's voice again:

"You say the money is safe? That one of the bandits is still alive? Is he unconscious?"

"I have the money," Hacker repeated, emphasizing each word. "The surviving bandit is badly banged up, but he'll live—and he's conscious, though almost delirious."

"Fine!" Kliegsmuth snapped. "Have the police hold him incommunicado, don't let him talk to anybody. You take the money and wait at the Bellport Hotel. I'm driving over. I'll be there in half an hour."

Kliegsmuth arrived a few minutes after he said he would. His thick hands were trembling as he signed the register for a room at the hotel. A bellboy stood by expectantly, carrying a large leather traveling bag that looked new. Hacker had been waiting in the lobby, hand on

holstered gun, the money pouch in his lap. He walked over and greeted the boss.

In spite of his several brushes with death, in spite of his mud-stained new uniform, Hacker appeared calmer than his bull-necked boss.

"Come up to the room," Kliegsmuth ordered, and there was a nervous tenseness to his voice.

Up in the room, Hacker locked the door, reached for the pouch. He broke the metal seal without ceremony, took a small key from his pocket and unlocked the brass padlock. He inverted the pouch, and neat bundles of greenbacks cascaded onto the counterpane.

The amounts of currency in each bundle were printed on the paper bands. It took Kliegsmuth only a few minutes to count the pile. The whistle he exhaled sounded like a railroad train braking to a stop.

"Three hundred and seventeen thousand dollars!" he announced. "It's all there. What a haul that would have been! And what a setback for the company if we'd have lost it! For a new man, you did a mighty fine job, Hacker."

Hacker smiled wryly at the qualified praise.

Kliegsmuth scooped the money back into the pouch, snapped the padlock shut over the hasp. Then he reached into his pocket, withdrew a strip of three-cent postage stamps. He separated three stamps from the strip, licked them, pasted them over the hasp, so that they lapped over onto the leather.

"That improvised seal is for your protection, Hacker," he said. "You've witnessed my count of the money, and have seen me seal it back in the pouch."

His smile was almost benign as he continued:

"Now ordinarily I, that is the company, wouldn't entrust this much money to the keeping of one man. You, however, have shown such extraordinary resourcefulness and courage, that I am going to let you take this the rest of the way to Ironville yourself. The steel mills will be expecting their payroll, and we wouldn't want to disappoint them."

"Couldn't you drive me up?" Hacker suggested. "It's only about twenty-five miles more, and you have your car outside."

"No," Kliegsmuth said curtly, his face clouding, "I'm needed back at the office. After all, we have more than one truck working, and have more than one client.

"Now here's what you'll do. You'll go down to the U-Drive-It garage and rent yourself a car. Then you'll drive this money up to the Maxwell plant yourself. I'll guard the money up here until you get back with the car."

Hacker opened his mouth to protest, thought better of it when his gaze met that of Kliegsmuth, and went out to rent the car. He parked in front of the hotel, in spite of the doorman's protests, and went back to the third-floor room assigned to Kliegsmuth.

Kliegsmuth handed him the pouch. Hacker hefted it, glanced at the seal, shot a direct glance at his boss, who seemed to be having trouble getting into his coat. Kliegsmuth went down to the street with him, stood on the sidewalk until Hacker, the pouch on the seat beside him, drove off in the rented car.

Hacker didn't drive far. He parked the car around the first corner, left the leather pouch on the seat; and without bothering to lock the doors of the sedan, rushed back to the hotel.

He handed the bellhop a dollar, whispered: "Find a cop, send him up to 316 right away."

He had to wait for the elevator to

take him to the third floor. He knocked. Kliegsmuth's voice called sharply: "Who's there?"

Disguising his voice, Hacker replied: "Telegram for you, sir."

There was a brief pause, then: "Come in!"

Hacker turned the knob and stepped inside, his hand on his holster. He glanced around the room, didn't see the boss, he took a step inside.

Something hard pressed into his ribs from behind. Kliegsmuth's voice over his shoulder grated: "Reach, Hacker! Reach high!"

Hacker slowly raised his hands over his head. Kliegsmuth kicked shut the door behind which he had been hiding. He reached over and took the gun from Hacker's holster.

"Now get over and sit on the bed," he snapped.

Hacker complied.

KLIEGSMUTH'S ruddy face was mottled with livid splotches, his thick lips were drawn back over his teeth, his eyes were glassy. He rumbled:

"You got your orders. What are you doing back here?"

"Carrying out my orders." Hacker tried to put a nonchalance in his voice that he did not feel. "You told me to take the money to Ironville. I came back for the money."

"What are you driving at?"

"It's in your hand bag there, isn't it?"

"Certainly not!" Kliegsmuth's tone was vehement. "I turned the sealed pouch over to you."

"But you removed the seal while I was out hiring the car," Hacker maintained steadily. "Then you took out the money, replaced it with something that didn't weigh quite so much, and sealed the pouch up again."

"You're crazy!" Kliegsmuth bellowed.

"Then why are you holding a gun on me?"

Kliegsmuth's lips wrinkled into a snarl. "All right, you're wise to me. What do you want me to do? Split with you?"

"That's an idea," Hacker stalled.

"Fifty thousand," Kliegsmuth offered, almost eagerly. "You go your way, I'll go mine."

"That the best you can do?"

"That's the best you can do," Kliegsmuth retorted. "Take that or die—like Gill died, and Denham, with a bullet through your guts."

"You don't leave me much room for argument," Hacker said with a wry smile. His ears were cocked toward the door, listening for footsteps.

"All right, fifty grand for you, the rest for me. Now tell me how you got wise to me?"

"I was suspicious of you from the start," Hacker answered. "When Denham asked for my gun and then shot Gill with it, I figured he might be doing a solo; and that he used my gun so a ballistic check would involve me.

"But when the other car stopped, I figured you must be in on it, for you said that only you knew beforehand the route the trucks would take.

"Killing Denham was a double-cross, wasn't it?"

"Yes," Kliegsmuth admitted. "But I wasn't in on it. Denham was supposed to make it look as if you killed Gill and held him up while you opened the doors. Then Denham was supposed to kill you as if he had turned the tables after the others had driven off with the money. Denham and I were to meet the three hoods tonight and split the loot—but the dirty crooks wanted it all for themselves. They crossed Denham when they

killed him and they crossed me when they were going to skip out before I got mine. They would have succeeded, too, if you hadn't wrecked their plane."

"I figured that's how it was," Hacker nodded. "And it was because killing Denham made me suspect a double-cross that I went to the airport. The gangsters, if they decided to cross you, would try to get out of the country in a big yank.

"You almost convinced me I was right," he continued, "when I talked to you over the phone and you said the surviving thug was not to be permitted to talk. Why should you care?

"I had further proof when you came here with a traveling bag. Why should you have that, if not to carry the money?"

"But how did you get wise that I took the money from the pouch when you were out?" Kliegsmuth demanded. "The seals were the same when you returned."

"Not quite the same," Hacker contradicted. "The first three stamps came from the end of the strip. There was a tiny strip of blank paper on the end. When I got back, the stamps were upside down, and the tell-tale edge of paper was no longer there."

"All right, all right, you win," Kliegsmuth growled. "Let me give you your share so we can clear out. They'll be after us soon if we don't show up with the money."

"Better leave it all in the bag," Hacker said sharply. "I didn't risk my neck for that money to let you get away with it."

"What's all this talk been about then?" Kliegsmuth demanded. "Stalling for time?"

"Partly." Hacker sat tensely on the edge of the bed and watched the whitening knuckles on the other's hand as it closed about the grip of the automatic. "I wanted to get a confession from you, but time was the big thing."

The elevator door clanged out in the hall.

Seeming not to hear it, Kliegsmuth raised the gun, took careful aim at Hacker. "Well, your time has come!"

There was a heavy knock at the door.

He took three steps backward on his toes, stood so he would be behind the door when it opened.

He squared his shoulders as if to steady himself, called: "Come in."

The door started to open. Hacker caught a glimpse of a blue uniform.

"Stay back!" he shouted, as he threw himself backward, rolled over on the bed, clawing at his pocket. "Stay back! He'll kill you! He's behind the door!"

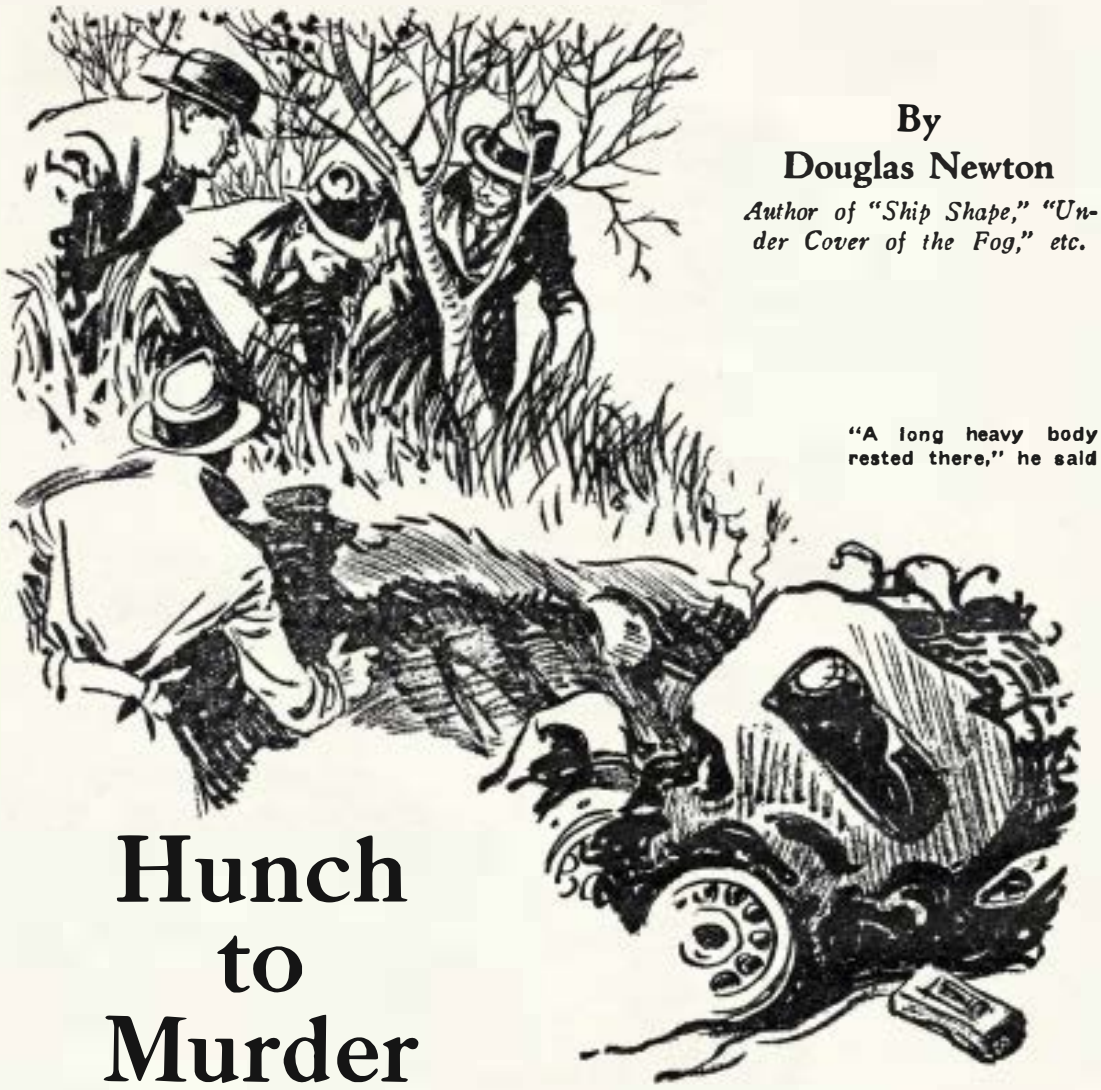
TRAPPED, a snarl of desperation on his thick features, the lust of killing in his eyes, Kliegsmuth squeezed the trigger. Hacker rolled behind the bed, onto the floor.

Gill's gun came free in his hand at last. He raised it to bring down the kill-crazy Kliegsmuth, but he was too late.

With the muzzle of his .38 at the crack made beside the half-open door, the policeman in the hall pulled the trigger three times. Still firing blindly into the carpet, Kliegsmuth collapsed behind the door which had twice been his place of ambush.

Hacker went over to the yellow leather handbag, glanced inside, and smiled grimly at the pile of bundled greenbacks he saw.

"I have orders to take this payroll to the Maxwell Mills at Ironville," he told the cop who stood looking down at Kliegsmuth's body. "The man who gave me the orders is dead, so perhaps I can carry them out."



"A long heavy body rested there," he said

Hunch to Murder

By
Douglas Newton
Author of "Ship Shape," "Under Cover of the Fog," etc.

"I Feel," Mused Paul Toft, Psychic Detective, "That This Is More Than a Mere Auto Accident. . . ."

CURIOUSLY enough, Inspector Grimes actually forecasted Hubert Leander's death when the butler at Leander Edge rang up Stripe Police Headquarters about him.

"Hubert the rip hasn't been home all night," he said. "They had an idea we had jugged him as a drunk and disorderly again . . . Shouldn't be surprised to hear that that darn ugly car of his has broken his silly neck at last."

All Stripe and half the county knew Hubert Leander and his big car—and little of the good of either.

He was the owner of Leander Edge, a fine estate outside Stripe, that his family had held for centuries. He was also as backboneless and unprepossessing a young brute as had ever disgraced the history of a great and historic name. His only instincts seemed to be to sit boozing in Stripe bars, to fling his money away in gambling and other excesses, and to hurl his powerful car along our roads at a speed that

made men shiver. Inspector Grimes was not the only one who felt he would end in a drunken and ugly smash.

And now it had happened. Grimes had only time to find out that the young scallywag had left "The White Lamb" at eleven—one could almost clock him by the closing hours of bars—and driven off, drunk as usual, from Beeling's Garage where he parked his car, when the policeman at Leander Edge was on the phone to say he had been found—killed in a motor accident.

Grimes phoned me, as Medical Officer, to come along and examine the body and within half an hour I stood in a country lane with the little group gathered about the wrecked car.

It had struck both embankments of the lane, crashed onto its side and then caught fire. It must have been a terrible blaze for never have I seen a car so burned. It was a mere twisted mass of blackened metal. Everything else had been burnt to ash, even the paint, even the tires to the wires. The reason for this was that not only had the tank been full, but a great number of gasoline cans had been packed in the rear of the car. The whole must have made a furnace of quite incredible ferocity. It had burnt itself to the bitter end, too, for now the wreckage was practically cool. Nobody had interfered with or even seen the fire, for the deep cutting in which it had occurred was fringed with overhanging trees that had blotted out all sight of it.

Few people ever used the lane, the Leander Edge policeman told us, and Hubert Leander did only because it provided a short cut home, there being a gate to his land about a quarter of a mile on.

Of Hubert Leander, the less said the better. The crash had spilled him onto the road and those ghastly gasoline cans had fallen all over him. He had been in the very core of the fire so that now his body was something hardly recognizable as human. In fact, apart from a few fused trinkets found later, the only means of identifying him was the one blackened license plate remaining to the car.

"Drunk at the wheel once too often," Grimes said. "Something like this was bound to happen. I only hope he died before the fire got him—did he, d'you think, Dr. Jaynes?"

"Impossible to say with a body in that state," I said. "But from the repose of it I'm inclined to think that he was unconscious at least, from the moment the car crashed."

"Most likely. It was a bad smash," said Grimes looking at the fresh scars on the walls of the cutting. "He charged the right bank, there, in the dark, cannoned off, hit the other bank and overturned. All plain enough."

"Rather a lot of gasoline?" said a dreamy voice behind us. "I mean . . . for a private car . . . and . . . and, well, all that . . . "

"Hallo, Toft," Grimes said off-hand as he turned to the reedy, top-heavy detective at his elbow. "Forgot I brought you along. But—" his eyes questioned the butler who was one of the small group, "it's a point."

"Mr. Hubert often brought back gasoline from Beeling's when we needed it in a hurry," said the butler.

"I mean . . . such a lot?" said Paul Toft mooning over the wreckage. "Unusual . . . surely?"

GRIMES grinned at his lank colleague. Paul Toft often irritated him by his uncanny habit of upsetting routine deductions and catching criminals by "merely moseying round and getting feelings instead of clues," as

he put it, but in a case so transparent as this he could be indulgent. Even the butler thought the point trivial and said with a shrug:

"As to that, sir, you'll have to ask Mr. Edwin."

"Mr. Edwin?" muttered Paul Toft blinking like an owl.

"Mr. Edwin Leander, the dead man's uncle," Grimes put in. "He manages the estate, you know. . . . Why isn't Mr. Edwin here?"

"Confined to his bed sir," said the butler. "One of his sciatica attacks. He gets 'em cruel. Been in bed ten days this time. He requested me to inform you gentlemen he was ready to give any information you require."

"Well, it's purely formal, but we might as well get it over," said Grimes going towards the police car. Paul Toft didn't move. Still brooding over the wreckage he muttered: "Did—did Hubert Leander ever have an accident before?"

"Should say so," said Grimes indifferently. "I've pulled him in for reckless driving a dozen times myself."

"Reckless driving—yes," said Paul Toft in his far away voice. "But an accident—know of any?"

Grimes failed to remember any, glared at his subordinate and then swore softly. Paul Toft stood as limp and as vague as ever, but now the fingers of his left hand were churning steadily. And when Paul Toft took to massaging a piece of India rubber like that it generally meant something in the air.

"What's biting you?" Grimes snapped. "There's no call for any of your looney hunches in this?"

"I don't know," said Paul Toft. "I feel—"

The Leander Edge policeman sniggered outright. Old "Ifill" was at it again. That "I feel" was already a joke, an irritant, a nickname and a word of awe throughout the county. Paul Toft's eyes merely brooded on the man as he asked: "Well . . . you know of any?"

"Accidents? I can't say as I do," the local man hesitated, then his eyes enlarged in surprise. "But, lummy you're right. 'E never *did* 'ave one! Used to boast of it an' say 'e was a fool-proof driver. No—'e never 'ad a smash before. Never!"

"Not even when drunk?" I put in incredulously. As M.O., I'd certified Hubert Leander intoxicated on two occasions and had the vividest remembrances of his deplorable state.

"'E used to say there was less chance then than ever," said the man with a certain gusto. "I know because I tried to get 'im to go 'ome when 'e was lit up. 'E used to say: 'Garnage, old mutt, the drunker I am the better I drive.' An' it were true. 'E was a marvel as a driver sober but drunk 'e didn't seem to know 'ow to make a mistake."

"That's what I mean," muttered Paul Toft. "Never an accident sober or drunk . . . yet on this easy and familiar bit of road . . ."

Grimes laughed with just a touch of relief. One never quite knew into what uncomfortable deeps old Ifill's queer gift would lead one. But here . . .

"That's exactly how and where accidents happen most," he said. "It's when things are easy an' familiar that one gets careless. Why you can almost see what happened here. He had to go slow up that hill an', being impatient to open out on the flat at the top, he fuddled the turn or the change of gears or something, stepped on the accelerator instead of the clutch, maybe. An' being slack an' in drink he wasn't quick enough to recover. You just can't get

one o' your spooky twists out o' that. . . . Now come along. We don't need to hang about all day over a case like *this.*"

Paul Toft obeyed in silence, but I, who he admitted had a strange and at times helpful affinity to him, felt that straight-forward though this matter seemed there was something in it that stirred the strange unease in him.

DESPITE the obvious agony of his painful complaint, Edwin Leander had got out of bed and into a dressing gown to receive us in the office of the little ground floor suite he inhabited in the secluded East wing of the Leander house.

He was naturally horrified at his nephew's death, but rather at the appalling form it had taken than from any acute personal regrets, we felt. It was, in fact, plain that Edwin Leander could have had very little in common with his dissolute young kinsman. He was a man between fifty and sixty; one of those big, steady, almost austerely responsible men who make the cream of the landowning class. They live for nothing else but to carry on undiminished and untarnished the tradition of their great name and estates.

That, indeed, had been Edwin Leander's job for most of his life. A younger son, he had managed the Leander Edge lands while his elder brother owned them, keeping them solvent though that brother had done much to damage them by Stock Exchange gambling and other extravagances in London. He had done it so supremely well that, fool though his brother's son and heir was, he had not been such a fool as to dismiss so wise a steward when he succeeded. On the other hand he had made his uncle's task infinitely harder. Hubert's gambling excesses were even wilder than his father's and the already weakened estate was becoming very seriously drained. There had been, Garnage, the policeman said, many signs of pinching and economy of late, while local opinion held that, given a couple more years of the pace Hubert was setting, the lands would be sold out of the family for good.

Not surprising then that Edwin Leander could not pretend to be heartbroken at the removal of someone who represented only danger to the name and heritage that was almost a religion to him. He was frank enough about this.

"Hubert and I really had very little to do with each other," he said with an ill-suppressed groan from the pain he was suffering. "I know practically nothing about his doings. I took it that he was in Stripe all yesterday, as he was five days out of seven. But, actually, I haven't spoken with him for —three days isn't it, Tomlin?"

"Eh?" barked his valet with a deaf man's scowl, and when the question was shouted at him. "Six days it is, sir, since Mus Hubert as much as looked in on 'ee."

"Six, then . . . this infernal pain muddles my head confoundedly . . . Well, I knew nothing, but when Tomlin, here, told me he had not returned last night I thought it wise to institute a search. With his habits one was always anxious—though if I'd suspected this dreadful thing . . ."

"Naturally, sir," Grimes nodded sympathetically. "But he would run risks an' some of us have seen this sort o' thing coming from a long way off. In fact, there'd be no need to trouble you at all, sir, but we have to prepare a statement for the coroner

. . . If you'd kindly answer a few formal questions—"

EDWIN LEANDER was as sensible as he looked. He told us without resentment that he knew of no entanglements and was certain Hubert had no real enemy outside himself; that he was, apart from his excesses, reasonably healthy, and though Hubert had told him that a London doctor had warned him that his mode of life was damaging his heart, he, Edwin Leander, had seen no sign of it, nor had Hubert altered his habits. He agreed that his nephew had never had an accident before, was, indeed, a magnificent driver, but even the best drivers made a slip sometimes, and when it happened to one as reckless as Hubert the result was usually terrible.

Grimes nodded agreement, this was exactly as he felt. But because Paul Toft for all his moonstruck ways got under his skin, he said:

"There's one last point, sir, about that gasoline Mr. Hubert was bringing back. There was a great deal of it—was that usual?"

"Gasoline?" Edwin Leander was obviously at sea. "What gasoline?"

"He had a great many tins in the back of his car," Grimes said.

"Yesterday?" frowned Edwin Leander. "But it was the day before we phoned Beeling's, surely, Tomlin?"

"No, sir," said the servant after the question had been repeated at a shout. "Yesterday it wur. I asked you about it day before, aye, an' day afore that, but it wur only yesterday you give me the order to ring up Beeling's."

"Are you quite sure?" said Leander.

"Dead sure, Mus Edwin. For why—didn't the 'lectrician come spanneling around in a stew to say there'd be no light as he hadn't no oil? An' didn't you 'ave to drag John Hosmer away from poor Tom Oliver's burying for to go over to Mr. Sonderby's to get a couple o' cans against Mus Hubert's bringing a supply?"

"Quite right," said the sick man, his face clearing. "This damned sciatica has made me woolly-witted. Yes, we phoned Beeling's yesterday to load a supply into the back of Hubert's car. Quite a usual thing. We always deal with Beeling's, and we knew Hubert put his car up there even if we didn't know where to find Hubert. And it's true the supply was larger than usual. My illness has made me neglect things and we got very low. An important matter with us, for we use a great deal of gasoline on this estate for farm work and the lighting engine as well as for cars."

Grimes sent a little smirk at Paul Toft, as though to say, "There's your sinister *feeling* blown to smithereens." He was preparing to close the interview when the lank detective blinked, fumbled with his rubber and said: "And—er—well, who will succeed to Leander Edge now Hubert is dead?"

Grimes shot a savage glare at him, but I confess to knowing a sudden excitement myself. Edwin Leander was the uncle of the dead man—was he the next of kin?

Edwin Leander merely shrugged. "Well, I *don't,*" he said. "Hubert's younger brother, Gerald, is the heir. He's in the army, stationed at Wraley in the North. A nice boy, steady, responsible—" his lips gave a twisted smile—"and I'm betraying no secrets in telling you that *that's* not altogether unpleasant to me."

GRIMES, half chuckling at so decided a set back to Paul Toft's suspicions, dragged us away then. He

grinned openly as Ifill showed a marked disposition to return to Stripe in my car and not his. I thought myself that the dreamy fellow wanted to escape a teasing on the failure of his "hunch." Or I did until we got under way. Then: "Go back by the scene of the accident, Jaynes," he muttered. "Might—might take another look round."

I obeyed. It was useless to argue with him when he was in that mood. Useless to try and make him talk, too. He just lounged back, his eyes lost to the world in a sort of mediumistic coma . . . only his fingers worked and worked on that bit of rubber all the time.

Arriving by the burnt-out car he did exactly as he always did—mooned around. The poor charred body had been removed to the mortuary, but he stood brooding over the wrecked car for a moment. Then apparently not getting one of his queer, water-diviner thrills from it he drifted away. He seemed to wander quite aimlessly up and down the road so that even I grew bored and sat yawning, until suddenly I looked up and saw him staring at me. He did not call. There was that strange sympathy between us that always made me know when he wanted me particularly.

He was on the hill up which Hubert Leander had climbed to his accident, and, as I reached him, he held out his hand. Then I did get a thrill. On the palm of it, crushed but quite recognizable, was a cartridge.

"From a rook rifle," Ifill said in his sleep-walker voice. "Sort of small, unobtrusive weapon that creates no suspicion . . . A fresh cartridge, see, though it was crushed into the road by one of the motor wheels."

"You mean," I said with pulses hammering, "Hubert Leander got his death —through that?"

"That or another," he frowned. "The type of gun firing this isn't a self-ejector . . . since this cartridge was on the road the killer must have reloaded and fired again—to make sure. . . . First shot didn't kill him outright, perhaps. Not easy to kill with a small caliber weapon like this—even close up . . ."

"Close up!" I gasped, and his cloudy eyes blinked and became brilliantly awake.

"Oh, but that's all so obvious, Jaynes," he said. "This lonely spot, chosen by someone who knew it would give cover and time to do all he wanted. Chosen by someone who knew Hubert's habits. And this hill. However Hubert pushed his car he *had* to come up slow. The man knew he could stop him easily here—and, of course, he was someone Hubert would stop for. . . .

"The murderer counted on all that. Knew that Hubert would be unsuspicious even of the rook rifle he carried. So, he stood in the headlights and when the car stopped, walked close up and shot his man at point blank range . . . then seeing, or fearing Hubert was not dead, gave him a more certain shot—through the eye, maybe . . ."

"Good grief!" I cried. Then: "But would a coldly calculating brute like that have left that cartridge behind?"

"Couldn't find it in the dark," Ifill mused. "And did it matter? An estate like this . . . rook cartridges scattered all over it . . . And nobody would dream of so small a weapon killing a man, except—" His extraordinarily charming smile flashed out—"except a muddle-headed dreamer like me."

"But—it's only dreams, mere suppositions," I said.

"No," the brooding look returned

at once. "That's how Hubert Leander died. I feel it—definitely."

"But wait a moment!" I cried. "Even rook shot wounds can't be hidden—"

"That, of course, was the reason for the fire," he said so casually that I gulped. "Obliterated all evidence. I always felt there was something queer about that unusual number of gas containers."

I gasped again, seeing the ghastly implication of the thing, though I don't know whether Paul Toft actually did. He didn't bother. He was just moving from feeling to feeling as usual. Having "felt" in the beginning there was something wrong in this "accident," he merely let his strange gift lead him on step by step to whatever end it chose.

"There's the whole scheme," he mooned now. "Hubert Leander shot dead at the wheel of his stopped car . . . The murderer on the footboard starts the car, lets it gather speed, steers it so that it hits the embankment . . . jumping clear in time himself. The car bounced off into the other embankment and overturned . . . probably that was a bit of sheer luck . . . Then there was the arrangement of all those cans about the body. The oil was lit—and the body charred out of all knowledge—even the wounds obliterated . . ."

"Superficially," I cried waking up. "I'll admit, if you are right, it was a diabolically brilliant plan to destroy the evidence of those shot wounds, but only superficially—"

"That was all he wanted," Ifill droned on. "He saw that, knowing Hubert as we did, we'd pass the thing as a natural accident without troubling to examine closer."

"But I'll examine closer now," I cried. "Thanks to you . . . and I don't think even rook rifle wounds will escape the post mortem examination I'm going to make."

INSPECTOR GRIMES knew by now that Paul Toft's "hunches," when backed by facts like that cartridge, were too important to be ignored. He was even a little excited about it, though uneasy. He, at any rate, had no doubt where the implications led.

"Yeh," he scowled. "If your feelings pan out right the whole business—the fake accident, the extra gasoline and all—was darn cleverly planned by someone who knew both Hubert and his habits and the workings of the estate. But who was it? Edwin Leander?"

"I don't know," murmured Paul Toft. "I mean, I feel—well, yes, the way things are working out only Edwin Leander. . . ."

"I thought so," Grimes burst in. "An' the blazes of a fine idea *that* is. The man was bedridden, couldn't have stirred out on the testimony of his doctor, while that valet of his is ready to go into the box and swear he slept solid from 7:30 in the evening to 8 next morning, having taken a sleeping draught because of the bad night he'd had before. An' then, what does he gain by it anyhow? He isn't the heir."

"What," Paul Toft asked, "about the heir?"

"Forget him," snarled Grimes. "The whole of his regiment is ready to certify that he was at Wraley, three hundred miles away, on the night of the accident. It just couldn't have been him, as it just couldn't have been Edwin Leander. An' who else is there?"

That was true. Facts simply piled up against Paul Toft's theory. The police combed the district for any man

or woman who had even the remotest reason for disliking Hubert and not an incriminating clue was found among the lot of them. Everything the police turned up went more and more to prove the impossibility of murder.

I dealt the most decisive stroke against it myself.

My post mortem examination of the charred body not only failed to reveal the slightest trace of any sort of bullet, but not even the most stringent—I might even say anxious, for I was Paul Toft's friend—search revealed the slightest hint of foul play.

And there was even worse to it than that.

I actually made a discovery that put murder right out of court . . . That specialist Hubert Leander had consulted in London had been right. The young drunkard's heart had been in a really bad condition. In fact, I decided that it had been the cause of the accident. I formed the opinion that his heart had given out on him as he drove, and it was the wheel relaxing in his dying hands that had caused the car to swerve, dash into the embankment and so on to the final smash. He was dead even before the car hit anything.

"Darn regular mare's nest, ain't it?" Grimes roared at Paul Toft when he heard my report. "I've always known, sure's life's life that one day your looney tricks would get us into serious trouble—an' it nearly did this time, by heck. Trying to pin a murder on an important gentleman like Mr. Edwin Leander! Trying to turn something that any fool could see was plain accident into a shooting!"

"I wonder," said Ifill with his exasperating and dreamy calm, "Who was shot then?"

"Shot me foot!" shouted Grimes. "Nobody was shot! You've just heard Dr. Jaynes, here, tell you there was no earthly chance of that body ever having been shot. An' you know from evidence that only Hubert Leander was in that car. Beeling's swear he left alone. A bicycle policeman saw him driving alone only a couple o' miles from the place where he crashed. Only Hubert Leander was in the car, only one body was found, an' as the doctor certifies it wasn't shot, nobody was shot."

"Oh, but that's certain," said the astonishing fellow. "I feel it so definitely now . . . someone was shot."

"You *feel*—here, get out of this before I do some shooting myself!" Grimes roared. "This case is closed."

SEVERE though the set back was to Paul Toft's uncanny gifts, I had to agree with Grimes.

"You say a man was shot there," I told him as we left the Inspector. "But who? Where's his body? Where is even a clue to him? You've been combing the district pretty thoroughly in the last three days, have you even heard of anyone else missing? No—I thought not. There it is then. It could only have been Hubert Leander and I must swear in court a bullet did not kill him."

He was up against insurmountable facts, and yet as he wandered off, looking as if presently the great dome of his head must snap his reedy body, I was quite convinced that he was as obstinately set on his murder as ever.

And he was.

Next morning he drifted into Grimes' room while I was there, looking vague, wearier, dustier and more determined than ever. Grimes looked up with a grin. He had got over his exasperation and was enjoying his triumph, and said:

"Hallo, Toft, *felt* your way to that

corpse full of rook rifle bullets yet?"

Ifill sank length by length into a chair and found a piece of rubber.

"That was a good point," he murmured. He smiled at me. "You started me off as usual, Jaynes . . . 'Who's body is it?' you asked . . . That gave me another idea about that gasoline. It wasn't perhaps to hide the evidence of wounds as I'd thought . . . A fire like that would destroy the identity of *any corpse.*"

"What!" rapped Grimes. "What in the name of lunacy are you blaahing about now?"

". . . Certainly," the lank fellow mused on, "a man as thorough as that killer would think of everything . . . the chance of a post mortem finding gunshot wounds in even a charred body . . . and if he saw a way to avoid that risk . . ."

"A way! What way, you madman?" Grimes demanded.

"Why—by using another body," said Paul Toft with a dreamy calmness that made his suggestion more staggering. "Another body free from bullet wounds . . ."

"Another body!" Grimes was nearly choking. "Have you gone stark crazy this time, man? Another body—where was he to get this body, aye, and have it ready at the time and place pat for his crime?"

"Oh . . . not so hard," murmured Paul Toft. "He had only to wait . . . as he *did* wait. That order for gas was kept back from Beeling's for eight days."

"Eight!" I put in. "Edwin Leander said—made it seem only three or four."

"Eight," said Paul Toft. "The estate storeman was nearly frantic about it—he told me himself. Queer that in an estate so efficiently run. Only not queer when you realize it was held up for something—that substitute body. It all hinged on that. Even the accident . . . Hubert could have been killed on that spot any night in the last six months, he drove drunk over that route as regularly as a clock . . . but that had to wait for the thing that completed the plan, too . . . that substitute body that was to help the murderer defy detection . . ."

Grimes was staring at the lank man with a queer look that was not devoid of awe. He said thickly: "And you know how he got that—that other body, Toft?"

"Well, I feel . . ." the strange creature stirred out of his brooding and got up slowly. "If you come along now in your car, Grimes, we'll look."

As we shot towards the scene of the "accident" I could see that Grimes was wrestling with incredulity and yet wonder at his queer colleague's gist. On the face of it Ifill's suggestions were impossible. The thing was plain motor accident on all the evidence, yet—

"There's Hubert Leander's body," the Inspector burst out once. "What became of that, hey? You can't hide away dead bodies so easy, even if you can find a substitute. An' in all our search there hasn't been a trace of it."

"Wait," sighed Paul Toft hardly rousing himself.

At the scene of the accident, or rather at that point where Toft had found the rook rifle cartridge, we got out. At once the lank detective made for the embankment on the Leander Edge estate side, climbed it and led us straight to a thick clump of gorse on the top. He pointed to a patch of crushed and withering branches on the ground level.

"A long, heavy body rested there," he said and squatted. "Here's a waistcoat button, too, off Hubert's clothes,

I feel . . . difficult stripping a body in the dark—and under strain." He held up the open palm of his hand. "What do you make of these pieces of dirt?"

"Red clay! That's rummy," said Grimes and it was. All the surface soil here was the whitey grey sand usually seen amid gorse and pine.

"Brought here on his boots," said Paul Toft. "Dropped off as he stood waiting . . . Good place to watch and listen for a car, and yet remain hidden —with that other body, eh?"

"Darn good," said Grimes and a thickening of excitement was in his voice. "How did you find this, Toft?"

"By just moseying round until I felt something was near," Ifill said with his quick smile. "Jaynes with his talk of another body started me . . . but I've told you that. Come along."

HE stood up and shot forward with a jerk, taking us through the bushes and over the rough ground until we came to a little sheep path. There he stopped and pointed down. We saw plainly the deep indentation of a single wheel and to the rear of it two square dents on each side of the path.

"A barrow," said Grimes. "One o' those long ones, too, that gardeners and nurserymen use for boxes of plants . . . and by heck, here's some more red clay—flaked off the wheel."

"Yes," said Ifill who had obviously seen it before. "We'll follow the wheel tracks. Two sets, you see . . . here and back. Both deep. That barrow carried a heavy load both ways."

We followed for a quarter of a mile, my pulse, at least, hammering excitedly. Presently we came to a fence and Paul Toft told us casually that it enclosed the gardens of the Leander house and that we should lose the trail on the gravel paths. That was so, but it did not bother him; he had already been over the ground. He led us through the gardens, avoiding the house until, just by the East wing, we came to a tall yew hedge. He took us through a gate in this and immediately we picked up the wheel marks in the soft turf beyond. Only that wasn't what made Grimes gasp.

"Yes—the chapel and graveyard of the estate and village," Paul Toft said as he followed the wheel tracks right up to a grave so new that not only was it without a headstone but a little mound of fresh earth left over from filling it in stood by its side—*and the earth was red clay.*

And it was the only red clay likely to appear in the district for it had been dug from four feet under the sandy topsoil.

Brooding for a moment over the grave, Paul Toft turned and called over to us a stocky labourer who was mowing the grass and asked whose grave this was.

"Why, that be poor Tom Oliver's," said the man, and I started. Hadn't I heard that name lately? I was even more startled when in response to Ifill's question he said:

"What did 'e die of—why, the 'eart disease, of course."

"Suddenly, eh?" said Paul Toft looking keenly at me.

"That 'e didn't," said the man. "'E made a martel 'ard fight of it, poor lad. Seven days 'e lived on arter the very day the doctor said 'e wur finished."

Seven days—I heard Grimes gasp. He was thinking of that eight day delay in ordering necessary gas supplies. Just as I had realized how well this man's heart disease fitted the charred body I had examined. Startling, but even Ifill was to be startled. He asked:

"Mr. Edwin was very interested in the dead man I suppose?"

"Why nacherally," grinned the man, "seeing as how Tom Oliver were a sort o' cousin." Then seeing the sensation he had caused he made the most of it. "Ye see one o' the Leander women ran off and married Tom Oliver's grandad."

Paul Toft blinked at that shock but he was quick-witted enough to say: "Is that so? . . . Was Tom Oliver anything like a Leander in looks?"

"Well, 'e wur, I s'pose," the yokel said. "Like Mus Hubert mostly, same tall build, same face—a bit, though o' course different like."

"I see," said Paul Toft. "And you'll be John Hosmer, the grave-digger?"

"That's me, sir, grave-digger and general odd-job man," grinned the yokel and in a flash I remembered Tomlin's mention of him and waited for the next question with a beating heart.

"And you buried Tom Oliver here a couple of days before poor Mr. Hubert died," said Ifill.

"No, sir, the very day before he died," said the man.

"Sure it wasn't two days before?" asked Paul Toft.

"Take me oath on it," grinned the man. " 'Ow I remember it is like this: I 'ad to go off immediately arter I'd lowered Tom into this grave for to get a couple o' cans o' gas from Mus Sonderby. It was because we was out o' gas that Mus Hubert brought that girt lot along that burnt him up."

"I see," said Paul Toft. "You remember because you had to work late that night filling in this grave?"

"No," said the man. "It's just having to leave poor Tom uncovered like that that makes me remember. Knocking off at six I didn't 'ave time to tend to 'im that night. I didn't fill in the grave till next morning."

"HE planned it down to the last fraction, you see," Paul Toft told us when we'd left the graveyard. "He saw his chance for obliterating all suspicious evidence in the resemblance between Hubert and the dying Tom Oliver. Tom Oliver's death foreseen, no doubt, months ahead gave him the idea. He held back his plan to kill Hubert until Tom Oliver was really dying, though he had to hold back, as the business of the gasoline shows, rather longer than he thought because Tom Oliver was obstinate in dying. Then, the day Tom Oliver was buried he made use of that lack of gas to send John Hosmer off so that the grave should not be filled in that night. . . . It was all so easy after that. He pretended to take a sleeping draught so as to shut Tomlin out of his room early—and add strength to his alibi. Then he slipped from his lonely east wing suite into the deserted church-yard—nobody ever comes here, it's on estate ground, and there isn't a parson for the chapel's served from Stripe. The task of unscrewing Tom Oliver's coffin and getting his body away to the road by that barrow was nothing to a man so big and active as Edwin Leander. The rest you can visualize for yourselves. He stopped Hubert as I have described, he was about the one man Hubert would have stopped for, and when he had killed him he dressed Tom Oliver's corpse in Hubert's clothes and staged that accident and fire so that Tom Oliver's not Hubert's body should be burnt beyond identification. It was Tom Oliver he did not want recognized, he had a safe hiding place for Hubert and his tell-tale gun-shot wounds in that grave. Hubert Leander

was in the coffin that John Hosmer covered up—next morning."

"But why did he go to all that trouble?" I cried. "A well staged accident—"

"The cleverest might have left clues," said Paul Toft. "Also you can never be certain of accidents. The only way to make sure of Hubert's death was to kill him personally and definitely." He looked at Grimes. "You'll get an exhumation order for that body—and a warrant for Edwin Leander?"

"I suppose so," said the bewildered Grimes. "And yet there's Edwin Leander's alibi. He was bedridden—"

"With sciatica," said Ifill. "Could a doctor tell if he really had sciatica, Jaynes?"

"No," I said. "There are no outward signs. It's a nerve complaint, you see, and a doctor can only go by what his patient tells him, though of course he can see the pain the complaint causes."

"Which could be easily faked by a man who had had attacks before," said Paul Toft. "Getting his doctor to declare him bedridden and incapable was part of his brilliant plan. In fact, there's only one thing even now that can drive home his guilt—and we'll find it only when we open that coffin."

Well, that coffin was damning enough. It bore the name plate of Tom Oliver certainly, but the body it held was Hubert Leander—Hubert Leander killed by two discharges of a rook rifle—in the head and right eye.

Edwin Leander shot himself after the exhumation order had been presented to him.

He left a letter not excusing but explaining his crime. Hubert living had been a danger to the one thing Edwin cared for in this world—the Leander estate. Hubert had not only drained it to danger point, he was actually threatening it with complete extinction. He had been coquetting with money lenders with the idea of mortgaging it for a sum that would enable him to indulge in one great gambling orgy at Monte Carlo.

"Leanders have lived at Leander Edge for seven hundred years," Edwin Leander wrote. "And I, who am a Leander, was not going to see all that my ancestors had wrought wiped out through the caprice of a drunken lout. I don't regret what I have done . . . The great tradition of my race and name, which with men like me is a creed, will now be able to go on in honorable hands. . . ."

To save trouble and minimize scandal, he described how the impending death of Tom Oliver had given him his idea for removing his nephew without risk—*or public shame.* His plan was exactly as Ifill had outlined it and need not be given here. But Edwin Leander's closing words are interesting.

"It was my bad luck to encounter that weird creature, Toft," he wrote. "I'd never have been suspected but for him. Ordinary police methods would have found nothing . . ."

"And that," nodded Grimes, "is plain but unpleasant fact. Only a—a ju-ju man like you, Ifill, could have—have, well, dammee, *felt* the truth behind that absolutely rock-bottom evidence of plain accident."

A bottle was the sole clue

Two Labels

By Major C. E. Russell

WHEN Rose McCue, a chambermaid in a midtown hotel entered room 178 she was ill-prepared for the gruesome sight that met her gaze. The body of the elderly occupant, William H. Jackson, was sprawled on the floor.

When the police arrived a criminologist from the department was with them. An examination by the doctors showed that death had been caused by manual strangulation.

A careful search of the room showed that the murderer had covered his tracks well. Not until the criminologist discovered an empty gin bottle shoved far under the bath tub, did he have any hopes of breaking the case. There was a strong odor of chloroform about the bottle. He took it to headquarters.

An examination in the quiet of his office showed that there were two labels on the bottle—the upper one was the type of label used by druggists when selling poison. However, for some reason, it did not carry the druggist's name and address. Removing this label, the criminologist found a gin label bearing the name of a New Jersey druggist. This druggist was visited and his records searched. Among them was a sale of chloroform to a woman on West Fiftieth Street, New York City.

A few hours later this address was placed under surveillance. After two young chaps had entered, and later a man and a woman, the police went in. In answer to a question, the woman admitted purchasing the chloroform, but when asked to produce the bottle, found it was gone. Inadvertently, she let slip the name of Paul Geidel as the one who must have taken it. When Geidel came home, he was arrested.

At his trial, his lawyers tried to break down the evidence of the bottle, but the criminologist clinched it, when he showed that Geidel's fingerprints were on the bottle.

As he was led away, after being found guilty, Geidel was heard to curse himself for not obeying the hunch which warned him that some day that bottle would prove him guilty. It did.

Civil Service Q & A

By "G-2"

Could You Qualify as—

Police Patrolman	Special Agent (G-Man)
Police Detective	Secret Service Operative
Policewoman	Post Office Inspector
Fingerprint Expert	Customs Patrol
State Trooper	Immigration Patrol
Crime Prevention Investigator	Anti-Narcotic Agent
Probation Officer	Parole Investigator
Criminologist	Prison Keeper
Police Radio Expert	Internal Revenue Agent
	Alcohol Tax Agent

This department will give you every week typical questions asked in civil service examinations.

Special Summer Jobs

MODERN health education has been adopted by many progressive cities and the health programs usually are carried out by civil service employees in the school, parks and playground departments. The most popular jobs are those of swimming instructor, life guard, public swimming pool operator, play instructor, playground director, coach and play counsellor. Perhaps the most popular of these jobs is that of swimming instructor for which a practical, non-written test usually is given.

Since swimming is not taught all year round (except in cities which operate indoor swimming pools) the job is usually temporary. Pay ranges from $3 to $6 a day; age limit is generally fixed at 18 through 35. Men and women are admitted to examinations. Duties of a public swimming pool operator and instructor are: to control, maintain, operate, patrol pools, and to instruct group swimming classes at the pool. A standard set of requirements and qualifications are: three seasons' experience as life guard, swimming instructor, director of an established swimming pool and bathing beach. In the practical-oral test, candidates are expected to swim 50 yards in not more than 35 seconds; to demonstrate the elementary crawl and breast strokes; undergo a severe life-saving test, operate an inhalator, provide resuscitation, and render first aid. Candidates will be rated on their proficiency, alertness of mind and body, ability to give directions and obtain coöperation.

Below is given a composite test for the positions of play director, play-ground director, athletic instructor or coach and health education teacher.

Q 1—Name the 19th century schoolmaster who introduced athletics in the school curriculum.

Q 2—A. A. U. stands for —— —— ——.

Q 3—The Olypmic games are held every —— years.

Q 4—A hexathlon consists of —— events.

Q 5—One meter equals —— inches.

Q 6—In what time is the Star Spangled Banner written?

Q 7—What composer wrote "Land of the Sky Blue Waters"?

Q 8—Who was the March King?

Q 9—What is the time of a waltz?

Q 10—Which of the following are wind instruments—viola, French horn, harpsichord, bassoon?

Q 11—Name a graceful dance of Ancient France written in Common time.

Q 12—What is the meaning of the musical term *adagio?*

Q 13—In treating a person for —— the patient should be placed in a lying position with head level or low, stimulants should be used and external heat often applied.

Q 14—Picric acid is used in treating ——.

Q 15—The mechanical device used for giving respiration is known as an ——.

Q 16—The longest and shortest bone in the body is ——.

Q 17—The regulation number of players in volley ball should be ——.

Q 18—In this game, aside from fouls, only the —— side —— scores.

Q 19—In tennis —— straight points shall constitute a game.

Q 20—Name three forms of dodge ball suitable for match games.

Q 21—In playground ball —— strikes are out.

Q 22—In baseball more than —— innings constitutes a regulation game.

Q 23—A feinted pitch is known as a ——.

Q 24—Hitting a ball without swinging at it is known as a ——.

Q 25—Shotput is classified as a —— event.

Q 26—A child who avoids playing with others is called ——.

Q 27—Empero ball is a form of —— ball.

Q 28—In empero ball, fouls score —— points.

Q 29—In handball —— points shall constitute a game.

Q 30—In playground ball the pitcher's box should be —— feet from home.

Q 31—In basketball —— fouls disqualify.

Q 32—Diagram a round robin tournament for a seven-team league, three league games to be played each day for seven days.

Q 33—Give three positive means of preventing accidents in playgrounds.

Q 34—List ten qualities that make a genuine leader of a playground instructor.

Q 35—The school of gymnastics in ancient Athens was called the ——.

Q 36—In raising the leg forward the muscles extended are the ——.

Q 37—A good pass in basketball is one which goes (a) high; (b) a great distance; (c) directly to a team mate; (d) to a space to which the team mate can run; (e) below the knees of the receiver.

Q 38—The science of poisons and antidotes is called ——.

Q 39—In ladies' singles Badminton matches the game shall consist of ——.

Q 40—In speedball the ball may be caught or otherwise played with the hands whenever it is clearly a ——.

Q 41—In field hockey the penalty for a substitute entering the game without reporting to the scorers and one of the umpires shall be ——.

Q 42—In volley ball the team scores only when it has —— the ball.

Q 43—The term applied to the shifting of players for each new service in volley ball is called ——.

Q 44—In basketball blocking is ruled (a) a violation; (b) a personal foul; (c) a technical foul; (d) outside ball.

Q 45—The number of players in a full team in softball is ——.

Q 46—The game of softball under ordinary conditions shall consist of —— innings.

Q 47—In basketball the penalty for pushing a forward in the act of shooting the basket is always a —— foul.

Q 48—In the operation of swimming pools —— is added to the water to insure the precipitation of foreign matter.

Q 49—Two strokes under par in golf is called an ——.

Q 50—The country that won the Davis cup for 1935 was ——.

Q 51—The earliest attempt in America to prepare teachers of physical training was made by ——.

Q 52—The winner of the men's singles in tennis in the U. S. for 1935 was ——.

Q 53—A person suffering from sunstroke should be placed in a —— position.

Q 54—If in doubt as to whether or not a bone is fractured, treat it as a——.

Q 55—In all cases of serious bleeding think first of resorting to ——.

Q 56—An instrument for measuring force or power exerted by muscles in doing work is a ——.

Q 57—The muscle that acts counter to another muscle is called ——.

Q 58—(In the following, check your choice of answers.) An official volleyball

game consists of (a) four 15-minute quarters; (b) two 30-minute halves; (c) four 7-minute quarters; (d) two 15-minute halves.

Q 59—On an incomplete forward pass in football the referee rules the passer was roughed. The penalty is (a) loss of 15 yards from the spot of the foul; (b) the foul and the incomplete pass offset each other; (c) loss of one-half distance to the goal line; (d) loss of 15 yards from the spot where the ball was put into play.

Q 60—After a safety in football the team making it shall put the ball in play by a free kick (a) anywhere on its own 30-yard line; (b) anywhere on its own 20-yard line, 10 yards in from the side line; (c) anywhere on its 20-yard line; (d) the middle point of its own 30-yard line.

Q 61—Time is out (in football) and a play is about to be started when a substitute comes on the field. The ball is snapped while 12 men are on the field. The referee must rule (a) another time out; (b) delay of the game with a 5-yard penalty; (c) 12 men on the field with a 15-yard penalty; (d) disqualification and loss of 15 yards.

Q 62—The penalty for flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct in football is (a) team penalized 15 yards; (b) player disqualified; (c) disqualification and loss of one half distance to goal line; (d) disqualification and loss of 15 yards.

Q 63—Player A of A basketball team shoots and makes the basket. While the ball is in the air Player A of A team commits a personal foul. (a) the basket is disallowed and team B player is granted a forward throw; (b) the basket is allowed and team B player is allowed a free throw; (c) team B is given the ball out of bounds; (d) jump ball at center.

Q 64—With the first base occupied (in baseball) and one man out, the batter hits a high fly to shortstop who drops it: (a) batter may become base runner; (b) batter is out automatically; (c) umpire rules infield fly; (d) fielder's choice.

Q 65—With runner on second (in baseball), pitcher in position in the box, pitcher steps toward second, makes motion to throw but withholds ball (a) it is a balk; (b) it is a delay of game; (c) a ball is called on batter; (d) legal.

Q 66—A decathlon consists of —— events.

Q 67—There are approximately —— meters in a mile.

Q 68—Athletic tests, in which individuals who pass a certain standard get a badge or certificate, are called ——.

Q 69—Such tests are sponsored by the —— Association.

Q 70—What game is played in double circle formation?

Key answers for this test are not available. A cursory examination of the questions should tell you whether or not you should undertake such a test. To rate your answers allow 1 3/7 points for each correct answer. If you attain a total mark below seventy you'd better pass up such a test or go into a long huddle with text books or some friend who knows health education as well as sports, games and recreation. They are getting to be pretty technical subjects in this advanced age.

COMING NEXT WEEK—SHORTHAND TRIPPER-UPPERS

They're Swindling You!

The "Picking Up" Game

By

Frank Wrentmore

This is the eighty-sixth of a series of articles exposing business rackets that cost you billions of dollars every year! Mr. Wrentmore is an authority on swindles and frauds, well known to legal, financial and commercial associations.—The Editor.

ALBERT R. GAREIS of New York City writes the title of this week's article and provides the introduction. He says:

"A year or so ago I worked in a Wall Street office and one evening I boarded a subway train to go to my home in West 179th St. A new passenger entered the car a few stations further up-town, and took the vacant seat at my right. Suddenly he began to look toward the floor, then stooped and picked up a piece of folded white paper such as jewelers use to wrap unset diamonds.

"The 'lucky' finder unfolded the paper and 'lo and behold,' there *was* an unset diamond and a penciled memorandum on the paper reading '2 karat.' After emitting a few grunts of satisfaction the stranger looked at me smilingly and said, 'Ain't I a lucky guy, picking this up in a subway train? I ought to get at least $15 or $20 for it.' I looked at him and smiled. He left the train at the next station."

Mr. Gareis goes on to say that this was such an obvious attempt to swindle him that he was surprised the man would think that any New Yorker would be so ignorant of the value of a two karat diamond as to believe that it was worth such a small amount. He adds that he knew the paper was not on the floor when he entered the car, because he has a habit of looking at the seat and floor before sitting down to avoid landing in a piece of second-hand chewing gum.

That one went wrong. Usually it isn't as crude as that and more often the bait is a wallet. Diamonds tend to arouse the suspicion of the average individual and few laymen can distinguish between a genuine diamond and a good imitation. Even some jewelers are fooled on the *quality* of some manipulated gems.

But with a wallet it's different. The intended victim can see and immediately realize the apparent value of the contents of a pocketbook, and the confidence man who uses this ruse as an introduction employs it merely to enlist the interest of his prospect as a preliminary to a more elaborate swindling routine. He isn't content with a miserable twenty dollars "tap."

The "wallet finder" is a friendly chap. He immediately declares his victim "in" on his find but he is always careful to select a prosperous looking partner. When the wallet is examined it usually contains a reasonable amount of cash, a check for a very substantial

amount, personal papers and a couple of newspaper clippings; one of which is from a small town newspaper stating that Mr. Loser is going to New York where he will stop at the Such-and-such Hotel.

Mr. Sharper suggests that they call Mr. Loser at his hotel. They do. Mr. Loser asks them to call and gives an excuse on the telephone why it is impossible for him to leave the hotel at the moment. When they call, Mr. Loser is apparently overjoyed to get his wallet and check and offers Mr. Sharper and his friend a cash reward. Mr. Sharper, however, is satisfied to have been of service and declines to accept any money. Mr. Loser does not press the point, but he does insist that both of them shall be his guests at dinner. They accept.

DURING dinner, the two confederates become quite friendly with Mr. Simpson and after three or four drinks, Mr. Loser loosens up and tells them very confidentially the real purpose of his New York trip. The story he tells is fitted to the circumstances. It would be quite ridiculous, of course, to try to interest a Wall Street man in their particular brand of phony stocks or an experienced follower of the ponies in the race track swindle. (The success of nearly every swindle is based on the fact that the victim is not familiar with that particular racket. Hence these articles). The finale of his story is always the same, however. He proposes to permit the honest finders of his wallet to participate in the profits of the deal he is engaged in and when the time for parting arrives, an appointment is made for the next day when the details will be arranged.

In order to give color to the story, the papers in the wallet (which the finders, of course, have already examined) seem to bear out Mr. Loser's yarn and the story told by Mr. Loser, whatever it may be, has one clinching argument. It is a "sure thing." The participants cannot lose. Mr. Sharper leaves the hotel with Mr. Simpson and as a part of the build-up discusses the deal from various angles. By the time he is through, Mr. Simpson is ripe.

At the next day's appointment a hitch develops. It appears that the new partners will have to put up a certain amount of money—only temporarily, of course—to insure the success of the deal. Mr. Sharper leads the procession and gives Mr. Loser the cash for his share. This generally has the effect of bringing Mr. Simpson into line, and he, probably reluctantly, digs. It appears that now that they are to take equal risks that the profits are to be shared equally—but there are never any profits for Mr. Simpson.

That, in brief, is the follow-up on the "lost wallet." It is almost the invariable introduction to the race-track swindle and certain stock frauds, and until someone devises a better come-on the "picking up" game, will continue to be instrumental in separating Mr. Simpson from part of his bank roll. Don't be a Simp-son.

Next Week—Foreign Rackets

Solving Cipher Secrets

A cipher is secret writing. The way to solve ciphers is to experiment with substitute letters until real words begin to appear. In solving, notice the frequency of certain letters. For instance, the letters e, t, a, o, n, i, are the most used in our language. So if the puzzle maker has used X to represent e, X will probably appear very frequently. Combinations of letters will also give you clues. Thus, the affixes -ing, -ion, -ally are frequent. Read the helpful hints at the beginning of this department each week. The first cryptogram each week is the easiest.

M. E. OHAVER
"Sunyam"

INTERESTING NOTES, this week, about cipher organizations, both local and national! Arty Ess, official editor of the *Enigma,* National Puzzlers' League publication, reports that about one hundred members attended the recent N. P. L. convention in New York City. B. Natural was elected president, and Rochester, N. Y., was chosen as the meeting place for the convention to be held on next Labor Day. In the contests, Arty Ess won the solving cup permanently by taking the third leg. Great work, Arty!

Several new local cipher clubs are being organized, and clubs already formed are growing steadily. Besides those already announced in Winnipeg, Rochester, Cleveland, and Chicago, clubs are now being formed in Minneapolis and San Diego. Fans who live in Minneapolis or vicinity should get in touch with Mono Verde (Thomas T. Vail), 2557 Dupont Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. And for information about the San Diego club, contact Wash (Charles E. Washburn), Reiss Hotel, 1432 First Ave., San Diego, Calif.

Our recent Chicago club publicity brought in several inquiries. This organization is now known as the Garfield Park Puzzle Club. The officers are: Windy, President; O'Casey, Vice President; Sue de Nymme, Editor; and Sunny (Miss Isabelle M. Murdock), 6233 N. Sayre Ave., Chicago, Ill., Secretary and Treasurer. Meetings are held at the Garfield Park Administration Bldg., 100 N. Central Park Ave., Chicago, on the first Monday of each month at 7:30 P. M. Write to Sunny for further information. Cipher clubs are requested to send us their notes for publication in this column.

†Hoodwink's "Aard-vark," cipher No. 54 in our issue of February 27, was pounced upon mercilessly by our Solvers' Corps and figuratively torn limb from limb! Par on this construction had been set at 200 solutions, but no less than 306 answers were submitted, breaking all records in solutions to Inner Circle challenges! For another intriguing challenge, see the current No. 132, by Ksea.

Vedette opens this week's cryptic spread with an appropriate division puzzle. The key is numbered: *01234567 89.* The first subtraction identifies symbols A, M, and Y. Guess the first word in Millexes' crypt, duly noting VYO and VA, and you will have all of the letters in the second word. Comparison of ZE and -ZEX also provide an entering wedge. In Echeconne's message, identify VHLLH by its pattern, noting also its use before a quotation. Continue then with HLTYS, LTYDS, and GTH.

In Roly-Poly's contribution, note NU and -NUA, also -L' and -LNTUL, for a starter. Follow up with OSUUTUL, SUK, and LTGUKNUA. The asterisks indicate capitalization. An odd feature in Aivlys' construction is the monofrequent symbol Q. Observing the finality of symbol P, you might try for EPPEFBP through its pattern. Ksea's isologic (words of the same length) cipher carries a par of 200 solutions.

No. 127—Cryptic Division. By Vedette.

A R M Y) A M C N H R I (B I G
Y N G R

N Y R R
N M H I

B G G I
B H N C

C A R

No. 128—Thermal Indexes. By Millexes.

VYOUO VOUVU BSO KUON FG LBENG RBTOSU VA NOVO-SRZEO VYO MBSZAKU UVBXOU ZE FAZHZEX UKXBS: VY-SOBN, DOBSH, FHAM, POBVYOS, UAPV, FBHH, YBSN FBHH, LSBLT, LBSBROH.

No. 129—Dangerous Ground. By Echeconne.

VHLLH RHS VFSSDYX VYZ: "VDAOZXYSALHHX TOAEF-ZXA GTH KFNOY LTYDS NDKYA, ATHONX FKHDX HLTYS TOAEFZXA' VDAOZXYSALHHX GDKYA."

No. 130—The Blue and the Gray. By Roly-Poly.

DXSAL ESFNUA T'YP ESPPNTPL' APSFYL; VGHYK HPG-VRYHL LTGUKNUA HSRL; LNXYUH PNDXY-LHSOZL; VG-LNO DPTV HWY DNDY SUK KPGV; OSUUTUL MGPNYK NU DXTEYPL—*VYVTPNSX *KSB NVRPYLLNTUL.

No. 131—Unexpected Ally. By Aivlys.

PREPXSTYZBFDA STNABENP BHHL YBTS, HSLEFD YEPX, UFEVHDUP, QLY. GELNHD EPPEFBP SEDUFLP, RXH OTVG LXNHTAX RFDUHR. PLTGFU RELYXVED UFPENVP MFY-LFV, TDRFLLFDABK EFUP YNHHZP.

No. 132—Contrasted Contacts. By Ksea.

ARCH INTO LORE YNUC BIYR DNFB. OZIF IRKE, NDHR FNDB, SKRT EZVY SNKT ODRP. KLQB VRNP BFBH QZKB QRRT! HDRJ RNSH SZEQ HRSP HRSN.

LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

121—Key: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
C L E A R M I N D S

122—The Hottentots, South African race, are so called from the frequent use of the syllables "hot" and "tot" in their language.

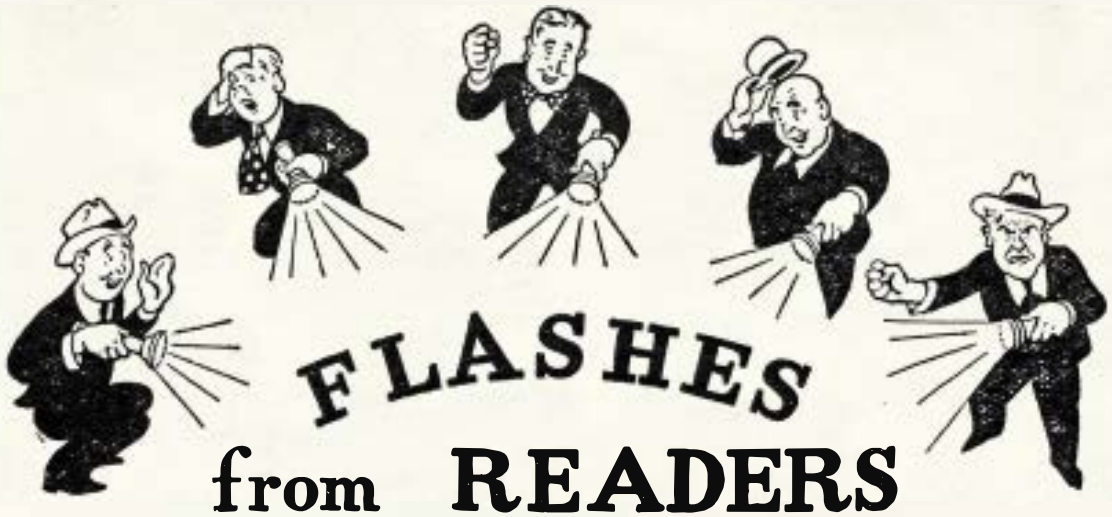
123—"Frowzy quacks blight, vex, and jump" is the shortest sentence extant containing every letter in the English alphabet. Only "a" and "u" are repeated.

124—Lazy, languid lions loll. Eleven elegant elephants entertain. Huge hairy hyena howls. Colored clown chases crowd. Peculiar parade; silly show.

125—Bronx cheer: multivibrational, upwardly burbling, labio-lingually activated, pneumatic acoustical phenomenon registering disapproval; vulgarly termed "raspberry"!

126—Knavish thugs prowl antique bungalow; stumble over misplaced andirons; disturb ugly watchdog. Flying dust marks quick exit!

Readers who submit answers to one or more of this week's puzzles will be duly credited in our *Cipher Solvers' Club* for May: Address: M. E. Ohaver, DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY, 280 Broadway, New York, N. Y.



FLASHES from READERS

TWELVE stories—that is what we are presenting to you this week. Twelve stories, exclusive of departments and features, led by those two popular heroes *Candid Jones* and *Daffy Dill,* in that unusual, exciting novelette *Flash* by Richard Sale. If you don't like it, we will be disappointed.

Next week, too, we have a fine lineup of detective fiction in store for you. The leadoff man is Richard Howells Watkins with his mystery of the automobile races *Speedway Murder.* And Cornell Woolrich stands near the top of the batting order with another of his weird tales *Wake Up With Death,* the story of a man who, awakening in a strange hotel room, finds the body of an attractive young lady on the floor and realizes that he must clear up the crime before leaving the room or calling the police. We promise that you will be held in suspense while he tries to do it.

THERE we go encroaching on the territory of the editor who writes the *Coming Next Week* department on the last page, when we should be devoting space to readers' letters. You will pardon us, we hope. We could not avoid calling attention to that next issue.

We will waste no more time, but get right down to those letters. When we first saw the one that follows, our ears got red. We have been around Manhattan a long time; we've thrilled over and over again to the bright lights of Broadway; we've climbed the long spiral stairway inside the Statue of Liberty on Bedloe Island to get a sweeping view of the bay; we've walked across Brooklyn Bridge; well, we've "done" New York as well as any tourist, but for some odd reason we haven't given much attention to alleys. Before getting ahead of our story, read this:

DEAR EDITOR:

Peradventure I'm getting too hypercritical since passing the half-century mark, but I have a suggestion for improving some of the stories you print, with the plot laid in New York. Here it is: Get a number of those large maps like they have in the subway and L stations and mail them (collect) to out-of-town contributors. Careful scrutiny of these maps will disclose to them the startling fact that there are *no* alleys in Manhattan.

In his latest (April 17) *Johnny Dolan* story, Mr. Edgar Franklin has *Johnny* say, "I'm comin' along Forty-fifth street an' I see this mug in the *alley,* countin' his roll." There used to be a Peacock Alley in the old Waldorf, and there are plenty of bowling alleys, and just flocks and flocks of the one-way streets, but

absolutely NO alleys in the whole town where one can dart into and "count his roll," make a quick change in his disguise, or any of the other things that are done in an alley.

Naturally, I don't expect you to publish this. Reading about the "alleys" in New York every so often sorta gets in my hair, so I started writing—and this is what came out. Hope it hasn't taken up too much of your valuable time reading it.

I still think you have the best detective magazine on the market, and as to long stories, short stories, serials or otherwise, the title to one of the popular songs expresses my sentiments. I think it is "Stay Just As You Are." Anyway, that's the general idea.

Good luck, best wishes, happy landings and all that sort of thing.

H. L. WILSON,
Columbus, Ohio.

After reading that we called in the office boy and said: "Listen, son, get out quick and find some alleys in Manhattan. A reader has us on the spot." When he returned, he told us something we had always known but simply overlooked, as Mr. Wilson must have. There are alleys in New York, not many that run the full length of the block it is true, but they can be found, especially alongside of theatres in the district where *Johnny Dolan* saw "this mug countin' his roll."

DUE to lack of space we have been unable to publish the many letters praising Mr. Wrentmore's department, *They're Swindling You.* The following is a typical example:

DEAR EDITOR:

We noticed, with a great deal of interest, your article in the April 3 edition of DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY in regard to bad checks. This plan of detection was devised by this Bureau in February, 1936, and to date has received considerable recognition.

We wish, at this time, to express our appreciation for your wonderful series by Frank Wrentmore entitled *They're Swindling You.* I notice in the current edition that you state "This is the 79th of a series of articles exposing business rackets that costs you billions of dollars every year." We wish that it were possible for every person to read every one of these wonderful racket stories and we are sure that millions of dollars would be saved.

We want you to know that we appreciate every bit of your fine publication.

TACOMA BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU,
WALTER WEST, Manager,
Tacoma, Wash.

EVERYTHING has been calm and peaceful so far, but here is the letter that caught us right in the midriff. We are still gasping for air—so, pardon us, until we get our bearings again. We wired and phoned Carroll John Daly and he told us: "I'll try to rescue you, Mr. Editor. I'll see if I can get *Satan Hall* to cut capers on my typewriter again." So, that's that and here's the letter:

DEAR EDITOR:

This letter has been brewing for over a year. Taken as a whole I don't care for the average run of fiction magazines, but DFW has been an exception and I have been a faithful reader of this magazine for years.

I probably would never have written this letter had I not seen Mr. Chapman's letter in my magazine. Now I won't challenge you to publish this letter as I am interested in results only and as a reader of long standing I feel entitled to a little attention. For many weary weeks I have hurried to the news stand on Wednesday morning and snatched my copy of DFW (which incidently I have a standing order for) and hastily scanned the index and for many weeks I have been disappointed.

Now that excuse you handed Mr. Chapman won't go on this character. I'm pinning you down and demanding satisfaction. I like most of your stories because they are good everyday stuff that could happen and I believe I speak for lots of readers when I say give us plausible stuff. You almost lost this reader with that epidemic of "Evil Eye" stuff.

Now to get to the point. Give us Daffy Dill, Riordan, Candid Jones and Mister I'm TELLING YOU I WANT SATAN HALL AND I'M NOT JOKING. And please tell our good author, Carroll John Daly, not to let him go soft on us, just to keep him like he was.

Hoping you will receive this in the spirit in which it was sent, I remain your friend and well-wisher—if I get Satan Hall.

JOE G. HESTER,
San Antonio, Texas.

COMING NEXT WEEK

Speedway Murder

***By* Richard H. Watkins**

Murder smacks thick lips and Death chuckles in his cowl when men of steel drive monsters of iron around the brick-paved speedway.

Wake Up with Death

***By* Cornell Woolrich**

Without leaving that ugly hotel room, Don Stewart had to snare the mob of framesters who had ticketed him for a session with the chair!

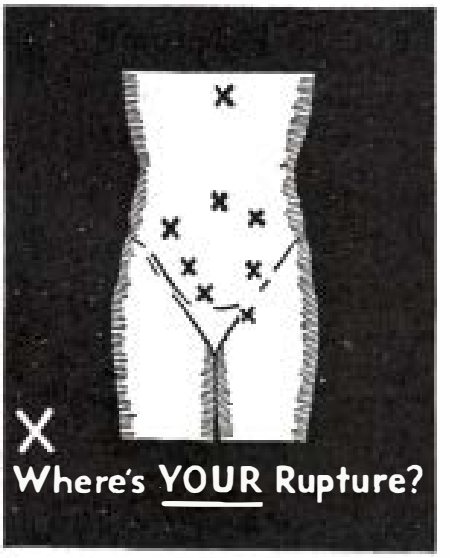
Voodoo Vengeance

***By* Dugal O'Liam**

It took strange African magic to choose between the men suspected of murdering the man no one should have reason to kill. . . .

DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY

don't Worry about Rupture



●Why put up with days . . . months . . . YEARS of discomfort, worry and fear? Learn now about this perfected invention for all forms of reducible rupture. Surely you keenly desire—you eagerly CRAVE to enjoy life's normal activities and pleasures once again. To work . . . to play . . . to live . . . to love . . . with the haunting Fear of Rupture banished from your thoughts! Literally *thousands* of rupture sufferers *have* entered this *Kingdom of Paradise Regained.* Why not you? Some wise man said, "Nothing is impossible in this world"—and it is true, for where others fail is where we have had our greatest success in many cases! Even doctors—thousands of them—have ordered for themselves and their patients. Unless your case is absolutely hopeless, *do not despair.* The coupon below brings our Free Rupture Book in plain envelope. Send the coupon now.

Patented AIR-CUSHION Support Gives Nature a Chance to CLOSE the OPENING

Think of it! Here's a surprising yet simple-acting invention that permits Nature to close the opening—that holds the rupture securely but gently, day and night, at work and at play! Thousands of grateful letters express heartfelt thanks for results beyond the expectation of the writers. What is this invention—How does it work? Will it help me? Get the complete, fascinating facts on the Brooks Automatic Air Cushion Appliance—send now for *free* Rupture Book.

Cheap—Sanitary—Comfortable

Rich or poor—ANYONE can afford to buy this remarkable, LOW-PRICED rupture invention! But look out for imitations and counterfeits. The Genuine Brooks is never sold in stores or by agents. Your Brooks is made up, after your order is received, to fit your particular case. You buy direct at the low "maker-to-user" price. The perfected Brooks is sanitary, lightweight, inconspicuous. Has no hard pads to gouge painfully into the flesh, no stiff, punishing springs, no metal girdle to rust or corrode. It brings heavenly comfort and security—while the Automatic Air Cushion continually works, in its own, unique way, *to help Nature get results!* Learn what this patented invention can mean to you—send coupon quick!

PROOF!

Read These Reports on Reducible Rupture Cases.

(In our files at Marshall, Michigan, we have over 31,000 grateful letters which have come to us entirely unsolicited and without any sort of payment.)

Like Brooks Best

"I bought one of your Rupture Appliances in 1933, wore it day and night for one year and laid it aside last December. The rupture hasn't bothered me since. I used several others without success until I got a Brooks."—J. B. McCarter, Route 2, Box 104, Oregon City, Ore.

"Runs and Plays"

"My son has not worn the Appliance for over a year. He wore one for ten years and I am very grateful now to think he has laid it aside. He is twelve years old, runs and plays hard like all boys and is never bothered about the rupture."—Mrs. M. George, Route 1, Box 103, Cumberland, Md.

SENT ON TRIAL!

No . . . don't order a Brooks now—FIRST get the complete revealing explanation of this world-famous rupture invention. THEN decide whether you want the comfort—the freedom from fear and worry—the security—the same amazing results thousands of men, women and children have reported. They found our invention the answer to their prayers! Why can't you? And you risk nothing as the complete appliance is SENT ON TRIAL. Surely you owe it to yourself to investigate this no-risk trial. Send for the facts now—today—hurry! All correspondence strictly confidential.

C. E. BROOKS, Inventor

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City----------*State*----------

State whether for Man ☐ *Woman* ☐ *or Child* ☐

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Posed by professional models

BUT SCIENCE HAS PROVED THAT THOUSANDS *DON'T HAVE TO BE* SKINNY!

NEW "7-POWER" YEAST TABLETS GIVE THOUSANDS 10 TO 25 LBS.

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THOUSANDS of skinny people who never could gain before have quickly put on pounds of solid, naturally attractive flesh with these new "7-power" Ironized Yeast tablets. Not only that, but they've gained naturally clear skin and lovely color, new pep, new friends and popularity—in almost no time!

Scientists recently discovered that hosts of people are thin and rundown for the single reason that they do not get enough Vitamin B and iron in their daily food. Without these vital elements you may lack appetite, and not get the most body-building good out of what you eat.

Now one of the richest known sources of Vitamin B is cultured ale yeast. By a new process the finest imported cultured ale yeast is now concentrated 7 times, made 7 times more powerful. Then it is combined with 3 kinds of iron, pasteurized whole yeast and other valuable ingredients in pleasant tablets.

If you, too, need these vital elements to aid in building you up, get these new "7-power" Ironized Yeast tablets from your druggist today. Note how quickly they increase your appetite and help you get more benefit from the body-building foods that are so essential. Then, day after day, watch flat chest develop and skinny limbs round out to natural attractiveness. See better color and natural beauty come to your cheeks. Soon you feel like an entirely different person, with new charm and new personality.

7 REASONS WHY

1. Rich red blood, necessary to nourish and build up the body is promoted where more iron is needed.
2. Hearty appetite to enjoy plenty of good food is assured those who specifically need Vitamin B.
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6. Growth, development and increase in weight are promoted where retarded by Vitamin B shortage.
7. New energy, strength and pep are quickly given to thousands who need both Vitamin B and iron.

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No matter how skinny and rundown you may be from lack of enough Vitamin B and iron, try these new Ironized Yeast tablets just a short time, and note the marvelous change. See if they don't aid in building you up in just a few weeks, as they have helped thousands of others. If you are not delighted with the benefits of the very first package, your money will be instantly refunded.

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