How To Spot Gyp Auto Dealers

Bluebook

25c
JULY

MEDICAL REPORT

By Lawrence Galton

PATCHY BALDNESS: Many men will believe anything about hair, especially if they're losing it, "cures" for ordinary baldness are expensive foolishness. The common bald pate can be blamed on parents and inheritance. But if you have a patchy kind of baldness called *alopecia areata,* a new medical treatment may help. Why hair falls out in spots—sometimes from the scalp, sometimes from the whole body, and in people of any age, even children—remains a mystery. But use of an emulsion of benzyl benzoate (Burroughs-Wellcome Co.) shows promise in restoring such hair. Two Baltimore physicians, Drs. H. M. Robinson, Sr., and Jr., reporting to the Southern Medical Association, told of good results in 90 percent of patients who used the emulsion under their direction.

POISON IVY: Back in Colonial days, Capt. John Smith (of Pocahontas fame) was introduced to poison ivy, a plant found nowhere in the world except North America. He described its effect as a disease that "causes no great ills" and passes in two weeks. While fifty million Americans who get the rash at the brush of a leaf might argue about the "no great ills," Smith was right about the two weeks. Until recently, no remedy cured poison ivy in less time. Now, skin specialists have been finding that the anti-arthritis hormone, cortisone, taken internally, or its sister hormone, hydrocortisone, applied as a salve, often halt the itching within hours and clear up severe poison ivy in days. An anti-ulcer drug, Prantal, is the latest help. According to a report in Annals of Allergy (Vol. 2, p. 580), 73 patients, including 26 children, who took tablets of the drug, were freed of itching within 24 hours, and of oozing within 48 hours. Outbreaks cleared up completely, in some cases, within three days.

LIVER TROUBLES: It strikes suddenly and hard. Fever, loss of appetite, nausea and general discomfort are among the first symptoms. Then the liver swells and becomes painfully tender, and jaundice appears. This is viral hepatitis, a common virus infection of the liver. Recovery often takes six to eight weeks and, even then, relapses occur in 15 percent of all patients. Now, the anti-arthritis hormone, cortisone, is proving valuable. In severe cases, it has dramatically reduced the size of swollen livers, gotten rid of the tenderness, brought other improvement quickly. Cortisone, too, is proving to be a boon to some patients with severe cirrhosis of the liver. It has helped when diet, vitamin and other usual treatments have done no good. A report to guide doctors appears in International Record of Medicine and General Practice Clinics (Vol. 166, p. 345).

BURSITIS: When shoulder pain and stiffness won't budge for other treatments—injections of adenosine-5-monophosphate work wonders. So report medical researchers in the Journal of the American Medical Association (Vol. 154, p. 239). They gave the injections to 36 patients, most of whom had had stiff aching shoulders for more than six months. In 31 of the 36, the bursitis disappeared. In some cases, three injections were enough to do the trick. Average number of injections: nine.

FOR YOUR WIFE: A laugh or cough is enough to cause many women an embarrassing loss of urinary control. This, which doctors call urinary stress incontinence, stems from a weakening of muscles that in women aren't very strong to begin with. If your wife has the problem, a few, simple exercises may solve it. A Johns Hopkins University expert gave such exercises to a large group of women. Results were excellent in three out of four cases, he reports in the Journal of Urology (Vol. 69, p. 511). Your wife's physician can teach her the exercises quickly. They're easy to do and need to be repeated only a few times a day. At the very least, she can expect great improvement; at most, a complete cure.

BRIEFS: A new ointment (Neo-Cortef, Upjohn) containing an antibiotic and the hormone, hydrocortisone, is proving effective in many skin disorders including eczema, contact dermatitis and a patchy, blister type of outbreak on the hands. . . . Newest antibiotic, tetracycline, is often as effective as other antibiotics in combating infections and has the advantage of producing fewer unpleasant side effects. . . . As many as one out of three "polio" patients admitted to a hospital during an epidemic don't have polio at all but rather have a fear-induced paralysis that usually disappears with reassurance.

Like all medical advances, those reported here are not 100 percent cure-all. Only your doctor is qualified to judge whether a new development may help in your own particular case. For further advice, see him.

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ARTICLES

STORIES

NOVEL

FEATURES

The short stories and novel herein are fiction and intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

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POLITICS IS PEOPLE

By Robert Bendiner

Talk about frozen assets. The Federal housing people have $218,000 tied up in defaulted loans to Eskimos for igloo improvements. It seems that shortly after the war, the government thought it might improve the health of the North Alaskan aborigines if it could persuade them to put in wooden floors and waterproof roofs. So loans up to $500 were offered and snapped up.

The Eskimos did a good enough job on the igloo reconstruction program, but they couldn't make the jump from a fish-hook economy to mortgage financing. As Pere F. Seward of the Housing and Home Finance Agency explained to a House committee: "You loan money to an Eskimo on his personal note which he cannot sign in the first place. He makes an X. If the fur-trapping season is good, or if the fishing is good, he will pay it back—maybe. The interest rate is 4 percent, but the Eskimo doesn't know anything about interest."

About a third of the borrowers have come through. The others take the classic view of the debtor who declared that paying interest was against his principle and paying principal was against his interest.

The hapless State Department is in trouble again. A speaker at a recent meeting of the Women's Christian Temperance Union told the good ladies that the Department was serving 12,000,000 cocktails a year and suggested a taxpayer's suit to stop this pickling of public funds in alcohol.

We certainly don't want to start another "numbers game" involving the Department, but that 12,000,000 figure does seem a little high. To maintain such a rate the diplomatic corps would have to issue 32,876 cocktails a day, including Sundays. With 76 embassies and legations scattered around the world, this would have each ambassador and minister ladling out 432 drinks a day—56 an hour, or roughly a Martini a minute.

Now that's a pretty good rate for professional bartenders, let alone diplomats. Even skipping the olives, it wouldn't leave our representatives much time for negotiating, observing,

reporting, or bowing to heads of state, much less for the kind of skullduggery that some Senators charge them with.

And if, as good hosts, they scorn to let a guest drink alone, they'd all be flat on their faces by noon. No, the diplomats are either being slandered or outrageously flattered, and in either case we ought to have a recount.

As though there weren't enough booby-traps in the life of a public servant, the long arm of coincidence has to reach out every once in a while and make a nuisance of itself.

Take the case of Senator Hubert Horatio Humphrey, of Minnesota. Up for re-election, the harried Senator finds that some of the folks back home have been confusing him with Secretary of the Treasury George Magoffin Humphrey, whose activities, worse luck, are very much in the news.

As it happens, all that the two men have in common is membership in the Clan Humphrey, Hubert being a militant Fair Deal Democrat and George a mild, middle-of-the-road Republican. The Senator doesn't mind having people occasionally plague him with their tax problems when they think they're talking to George, but voters are something else again.

"I'm not too happy," he told the Senate recently, "about picking up my daily paper and reading: 'Humphrey Raises Interest Rates'; 'Humphrey Against Tax Reduction'; 'Humphrey Finds No Urgency in Action to Halt Recession'." All very understandable for a man who's been blasting away for low interest rates, tax reduction, and immediate government action on the economic front.

At least in the case of the two Humphreys there is nothing deliberate. Imagine how irritating it must have been for the late Senator George W. Norris when the opposition put up an obscure Omaha grocer named—you guessed it—George W. Norris.

Sometimes, of course, a candidate is helped by this sort of thing. In every presidential election from 1932 to 1944 reporters tripped over venerable recluses who came out to vote for Roosevelt in the happy belief that the Rough Rider was still riding. But some say F.D.R. would have won anyway.

All the Minnesota Senator can do is place one of those legal ads in the papers saying: "George Humphrey never having shared my political bed or board, I am not responsible for his national debt"—and let it go at that.

* * *

Wind Over Washington

(from the Congressional Record)

SENATOR MILLIKIN (R., Col.) *flies at a high rhetorical level and is brought to earth:* No, that is an Icarian syllogism.

SENATOR HUMPHREY (D., Minn.): Mr. President, that is too much for me.

SENATOR MILLIKIN: In other words, the Senator from Minnesota would pin wax wings on his own back, in an attempt to fly. However, because of his unsure base, he would land in the ocean. In short, I cannot say that such wings would be stable.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Is not that just another way of saying I am all wet?

* * *

REPRESENTATIVE WHEELER (D., Ga.) *on hearing that a tenant of a federal housing colony has been sent to jail, gets in a subtle dig at all such projects:* Then am I right in assuming that he has essentially the same type of public housing but now does not even have to pay the nominal rent?

Controversial Coach

"The Most Hated Man in Basketball" (March), by John S. Phillips, contained more wrong statements, distorted facts and pure baloney than any sports article I've ever read.

I will note only a few of the wrong statements:

1. Kansas won the N.C.A.A. championship in 1952, not by defeating LaSalle College in Madison Square Garden, but by beating St. Johns in Seattle, Wash. Kansas played and beat LaSalle in the Olympic play-offs.

2. Engleman's first name is Howard, not William.

3. So Kansas State "won the first game with the Jayhawkers easily"! I saw that "easy" game. It was a see-saw battle with Kansas State winning 92-88. Also, they played the 80-66 game in Lawrence, not in Manhattan, Kan.

4. Phog didn't start the Press defense last year, as the article says, but in the middle of the 1951-52 season.

Bernie Morgan, *Kansas City, Mo.*

The author admits to fumbling a few of the facts, as above, in his haste to meet an early deadline. We hope his face is red. Ours is.—ED.

I received a letter from my home town of Lawrence, Kansas, telling me to buy a copy of BLUEBOOK and read the article on Phog Allen. I did.

For fifteen years I worked on the campus at the University of Kansas in close proximity to Dr. Allen. Mr. Phillips did a very competent job of portraying the character of this unusual man. I think there were several things that could have been left out of the story, but the over-all picture one gets of Phog Allen is better, and more like him, than most of the articles you read about him.

Mary Mann, *New York, N. Y.*

As a writer of headlines myself, I know how difficult it is to get one that will attract attention, yet not be too strong.

Address all letters to: The Editor, Bluebook Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, New York 17, N. Y. All letters must be signed. None can be acknowledged or returned.

There have been strong feelings in people's minds concerning Phog Allen. But it seems to me the line, "The Most Hated Man in Basketball," gives an unfortunate impression. In my opinion, and that of thousands of others, he is an outstanding example of successful, and yet clean, sports participation. And, as a matter of fact, there is much in the article itself to bear this out.

Doubtless the basketball people in the East hate to see him come to New York. He has called the turn on too much trouble there. But, taking the country as a whole, it probably would be accurate also to headline an article, "The Most Admired Man in Basketball," with Phog as the subject.

Howard Turtle, *The Kansas City Star*
Kansas City, Mo.

Maybe the title should have been, "The Most Controversial Man in Basketball."—Ed.

Tote That Bar Bell!

You really goofed when you accepted the article, "Who Needs Muscles?" (April). I'm afraid the author, in his youth, was frightened by a bar-bell man.

I am not a lumpy (as he puts it) body-builder or a competitive weight-lifter. I'm like hundreds of other guys who use weights to improve appearance and keep healthy. And take it from me: It really works.

In the summer, I play a little baseball, and in the winter, some hockey. Bar bells keep me in condition the rest of the year so that I can enjoy these sports without getting a lot of sore muscles.

Also, I own a house and have three boys, so there's plenty of work for me. I find that bar bells increase my supply of energy and decrease my fatigue.

P.S. The picture of the bodybuilder identified as Roy Stanley is Roy Stanley Hilligen.

Leslie Spicer, *Detroit, Mich.*

The author didn't say exercising with bar bells to keep in shape is bad. He did say excess muscles aren't particularly useful and are often detrimental. Hilligen's last name was inadvertently dropped by a caption-writer.—Ed.

Dig That Treasure!

"Presenting: The World's Richest Treasure" (April) was tops. For if there's anything I like better than a good treasure-hunting story, it's another of the same—or finding the treasure itself.

Treasure hunting happens to be my hobby, but on a very much smaller scale. And I expect to keep it that way, too. When those fellows can get Inca gold, or gold any place else, without getting mixed up with the deadly fallen angels guarding it, I want to know about it.

How about an article about treasure hunting on a smaller scale—at home, for instance?

Jeptha J. Ross, *New Orleans, La.*

Got one coming up. It's all about rockhounding—hunting for gem stones that bring big prices.—Ed.

Why go down to South America to hunt treasure when there are two great treasures hidden east of the Mississippi river?

First is the silver hidden by mound-builder Indians in caves in the Appalachian mountains from Maine to Tennessee and North Carolina. There are a thousand tons or more of nearly pure silver. Silver from this supply bought the guns the Indians used from 1614 to Custer's last stand in 1876.

Second is the five million dollars in gold bars raised in France for the use of General Washington in 1778. This was hijacked by Indians under the deserter, Simon Girty, three miles west of Lock Haven, Pa. The next year, General Sullivan's campaign broke the Indian power, and Girty, then in Canada, didn't dare come down for the gold, which was hidden in a cave.

Two highwaymen, Lewis and Conly, found the gold and transferred it to another cave, which has never been found. Lewis and Conly were shot and killed by a sheriff and his posse in August 1820. They died, refusing to reveal the location of the cave holding ten tons of gold bars.

H. M. Cranmer, *Vice President*
Pennsylvania Folklore Society
Hammersley Fork, Pa.

Editor's Note:

One of the things we've noticed in the last couple of years is that every time you write a medical article for a magazine you immediately get 9,472,356 letters from readers; write any other kind and you get 3. Why? Well, seems the doctors have been so busy discovering ACTH and streptomycin that they haven't been spending enough time cultivating good relations with their patients. Or something. Result is, apparently, that people don't get all the information and/or service they want from their doctors. So when they see another possible source, like the author of a magazine article, they write to him.

That's why we decided to start a medical column (it's on the inside front cover, this issue). This is strictly a news column; it tells you about new developments in all sorts of areas, some of which may be of immediate, personal value to you. But it doesn't offer a nickel's worth of panaceas. Take the item on poison ivy in this month's column for instance: If you suffer from the pesky stuff maybe this new drug will help—and maybe it won't, since people are different. But we figure that if you know about these new developments you can ask your doctor about them and if they're right for you he can prescribe them.

A good many doctors get sore at magazines—justifiably, we think—when they publish articles about some new miracle drug which is guaranteed to cure cancer or hog cholera overnight. Immediately the doc gets swamped with requests for the miracle-worker from his patients and if he tells them that the thing hasn't been thoroughly tested yet and may darn' well make them sicker, he's a heel. We don't aim to go in for that kind of irresponsibility in the medical column, which is the main reason we got Larry Galton to write it for us.

Larry was all set to be a doctor himself when his father died and he had to quit school and go to work to support himself and his mother. But his interest has never waned, with the result that he's one of the most prolific medical writers you can find today. He has columns in half a dozen magazines, he's written several books, has done nearly a hundred medical radio-scripts for Radio Free Europe, and is now on NBC's radio show, *Weekend.*

Franklin M. Davis, Jr., who wrote the novelette on page 34, ought to know what he's talking about. He's a lieutenant-colonel with the 2d Armored Division, stationed in Bad Kreuznach, Germany—"sufficiently close to the Iron Curtain to be interesting; but sufficiently far away so the border troopers, who do the real work, look like heroes."

Davis has been in the Army long enough to have served in the old horse cavalry under an irascible, colorful colonel named George S. Patton. Later Davis switched to tanks, was exec of a tank battalion during World War II, taught at the Armored School at Fort Knox, and is currently winding up a four-year tour of duty with the 2d Armored.

He loves BLUEBOOK. This weakness may be accounted for in part by the fact that we bought his first published story—some four years ago—and have bought half a dozen others since. We like him, too.

We're a little awed by Bill Gresham (see page 12). Four or five years ago we read his first novel, "Nightmare Alley," and for days had nothing but. One of the fastest-moving, most exciting books ever, as far as we're concerned. So when Bill dropped into the office a couple of months ago, we couldn't believe it was the same guy. Seemed so normal, and didn't hardly kill anybody the whole time he was here.

Bill hails from the Eastern Shore of Maryland, but has been all over the country in all sorts of jobs and has fought in a couple of unorthodox wars. He has a couple of unorthodox hobbies, too—guitar-playing, magic, and mind-reading.

Clark Hunter Bradford ("Having Babies Is a Cinch," page 28), on the other hand, has been in only orthodox wars. He joined the Navy at 17, was a gunner's mate on the *USS Ranger* in the Pacific and, for his sins, was sent to officer training school at Princeton and Columbia. After the war he worked on magazines while getting his BA from Columbia, then promptly took off for Europe with $50 and a beat typewriter.

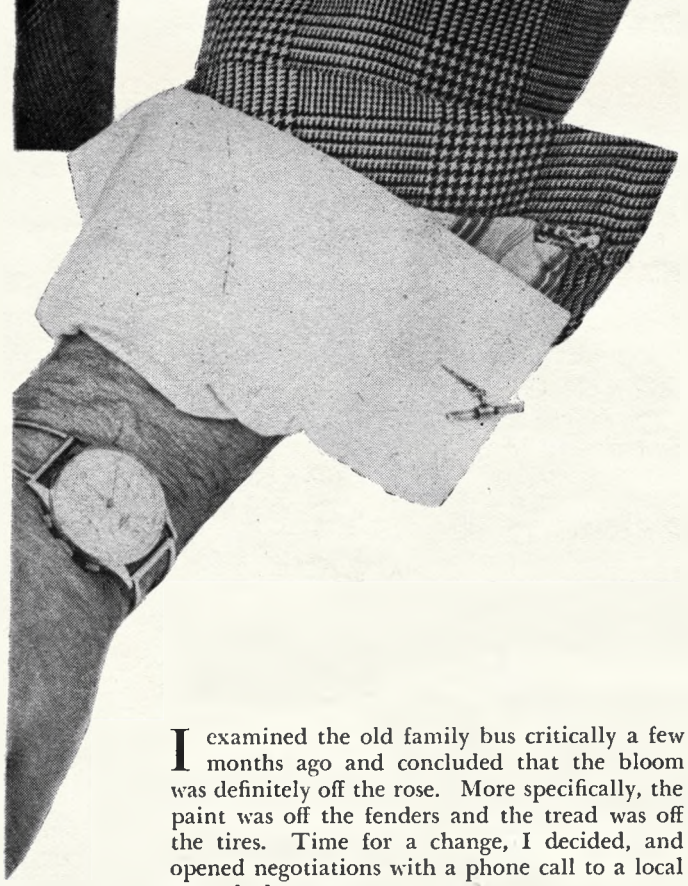
Banged around Europe, Asia and Africa, being everything including bodyguard for a couple of years, and came back to the U.S. where he was a professional fighter. Things went along fine for a few months, but then they matched him with a real artist. By the time the first round was over Bradford's enthusiasm had noticeably retarded, and three rounds later he'd made a discovery: "a man can get hurt in there!"

So he got a job and began stacking up some money for a trip to South America. A model named Wendy changed his mind. A good deal of the research for the present article was furnished by his very small son.—A. F.

SWINDLERS IN THE SHOWROOM

The car sharpies are at it again, with a fresh bag of tricks and fast shuffles. Here's how to recognize them— and stay off the sucker list.

BY LESTER DAVID



I examined the old family bus critically a few months ago and concluded that the bloom was definitely off the rose. More specifically, the paint was off the fenders and the tread was off the tires. Time for a change, I decided, and opened negotiations with a phone call to a local auto dealer.

"How much," I asked a salesman, "for a 1949 Ford as a trade-in on a new car?" I described my car's condition accurately and impartially, and his answer came: "Easily about $750, give or take a ten spot." I made a few more calls, got much lower estimates, and went down to the first place to do business.

At the showroom, the salesman examined my car a long time, then shook his head sadly. "Needs a lot more work than I thought," he told me. "Best we can do is $500."

Original estimate: $750. Offer: $500. Difference: $250.

Next day, I brought my wife down and we selected a new car. Then we adjourned to the rear and the salesman began filling in the contract forms. Suddenly he stopped and looked at me. "That's a 1950 model you've got, isn't it?" he asked. "No, a '49," I replied. Then—"Wait a minute. I'm afraid there's a mistake somewhere." He went out, conferred with the owner and returned, looking pained.

"I've pulled an awful boner," he said unhappily. "I thought all along you had a '50." So he cut the trade-in price to $300, whereupon we rose to go.

"Wait a minute," he said hastily. "Let me talk to the boss again." He came back with a smile. "Because of the inconvenience we caused you, coming down and all, we can raise the allowance to $350," he said.

Well, we bargained a while and finally set the ante at $400.

Original estimate: $750. Final allowance: $400. Difference: $350.

As soon as the deal was completed, I began to have misgivings. And I brooded about it all next day. Was I the victim of a fast shuffle? If so, was I an isolated victim or had I been taken by a slick, come-on formula that was hacking away at the pocketbooks of other car-buyers too? I made a few inquiries among persons who had been in the market for new automobiles and soon learned that mine was a mild experience. I turned up this story:

One man, whose car was easily worth $1,200 on a trade, was quoted the ridiculously low price of $650. Indignantly, he demanded to see the manager who turned on the salesman and blistered his ears with a two-minute bawling-out. "Give the man the $1,000 his car is worth," he concluded, "and next time you try a stunt like that, you're through!" The buyer accepted at once—he had foiled a salesman's attempt to pull a fast one and nothing fattens the ego more. Not until much later did he realize he'd been taken himself by a neat bit of play acting, plot and dialogue carefully rehearsed by salesman and boss.

Suspicious Business

Well, I had had a taste myself, and here was another, stronger one. So by now my suspicions were thoroughly aroused. Accordingly, I poked my nose into the situation for a number of weeks. I posed as a potential car buyer, talked with customers who had been victimized, interviewed officials of law-enforcement agencies and plowed

through reports of Better Business Bureaus from all over the country.

I learned a hatful, and if you're in the market for a car now that the hit-the-road season is at hand, hitch your chair closer and listen carefully. You may save yourself a considerable lot of grief, big chunks of time and even bigger chunks of cash.

Because this is the shocking story:

Wide-scale tricks and sharp practices, even downright swindling, are going on all over the U.S. in the selling of new and used cars. Unwary buyers are being taken over the hurdles by a variety of slick selling gimmicks that will amaze you by their gall and sheer inventiveness.

Understand this at the beginning: The majority of automobile dealers are perfectly honest and reliable businessmen who won't allow shady methods in their showrooms. But skullduggery of fancy proportions is being performed by a widening fringe of artful dodgers who operate in that never-never land between the legal and illegal, and frequently step over the border into the land of pure gyp.

It is this fringe which, according to the Association of Better Business Bureaus, is responsible for "a rising tide of public doubt, suspicion and resentment." It is this fringe which has prompted investigations by many state and local agencies, who are alarmed at the growing menace. It is this fringe which the auto dealers themselves are trying to stamp out. And, finally, it is this fringe which the Buffalo Better Business Bureau had in mind when it reported not long ago:

"Frankly, some of the transactions have shocked even us—the bureau staff—who should be hardened by this time to the realities of the heartlessness of a few operators and the rough deals handed out to the public."

Complaints and inquiries are skyrocketing. Last year alone, 91,668 beefs and questions about auto deals swamped the offices of the Better Business Bureaus. New-car inquiries and complaints rose fully 31 percent over the year before; used-car ones were 27 percent higher than 1952.

Tricks of the Trade

What are some of the tricks being pulled? Listen:

The most widely-used gimmick is the "would you take" card inserted in the windshields of parked cars or mailed directly to automobile owners. Generally it's a printed or mimeographed form, reading: "Would you take $——— for your car in trade on a brand new 1954———?" The salesman's name is signed and there's frequently a hurry-up phrase to the effect that the dealer has a buyer available for your old bus, or that the offer will expire in a couple of days.

The price quoted? It's frankly sensational, calculated to bug your eyes and send you rushing to the showroom. Here are just a few I saw: $1,400 for a 1949 Ford, $1,750 for a 1950 Chevrolet, $2,100 for a 1951 Studebaker, $1,950 for a 1951 Chevrolet, $3,350 for a 1951 Mercury. Tantalized by the prospect of a whopping bargain, the recipient drives over.

Then the fun begins. What happens next is called "bushing" in the trade, extra-slick, high-octane selling carried out in a variety of ways.

Sometimes, the salesman immediately assures the customer he'll get the price offered and encourages him to pick out a new car. Warmed by the thought of the heavy cash he's saving, the customer does so, then watches while the papers are drawn up. Finally, the salesman says he must get the manager's approval. Here comes the kicker.

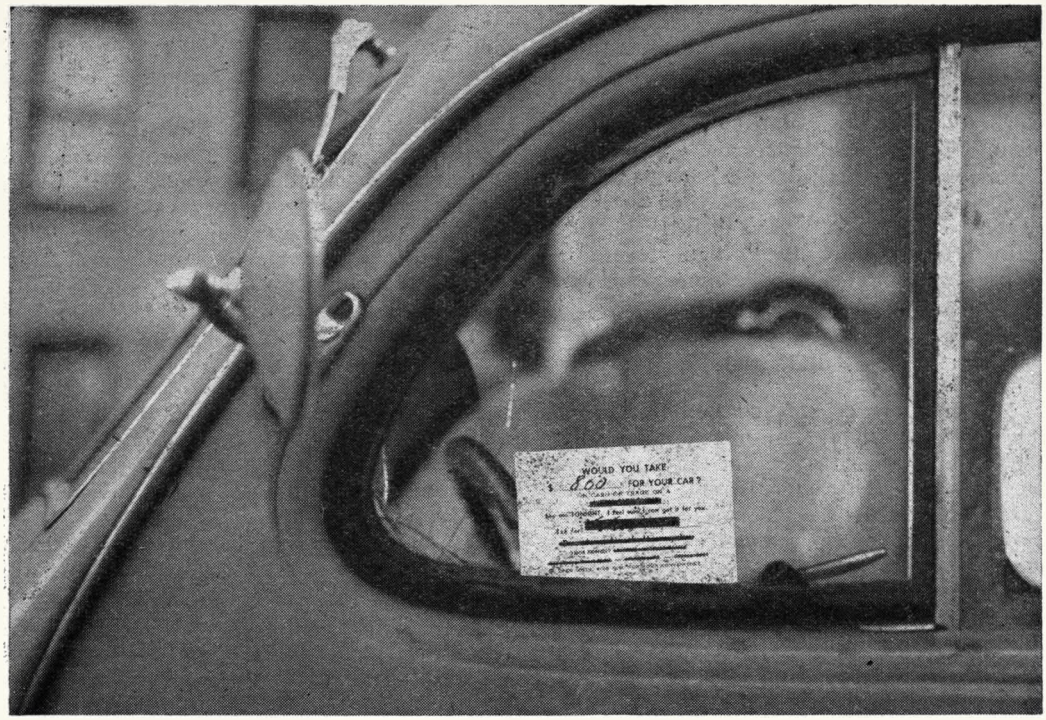
Showrooms Barrymores

The boss approaches, sees what's being offered and blows his stack. He demands a much lower trade-in price. But the salesman stands his ground and they nearly come to blows in the presence of the customer. Actually, it's an elaborate display of dramatics that could qualify for an Academy Award and it always ends with a "compromise" that's a great deal lower than the figure scrawled on the "would you take" card. Frequently the customer is so impressed by the act that he accepts. . . .

There's another variation of the bushing game: The salesman admits at the start that the price on the card is somewhat inflated, citing one of several excuses—a new man was assigned to the job and he was way off on his appraisals: a motor defect showed up which couldn't be spotted before; your card was intended for another automobile. The big point is that once they've got you in the showroom they can train their heavy selling artillery on you.

Suppose you want to leave before the pressuring is successfully culminated? The cagey boys have anticipated that eventuality. You get into your car and find the keys are missing. So sorry, says the salesman; Joe must have taken them by mistake. He'll have Joe paged, but meanwhile, let's talk some more about this gorgeous two-tone job. One car owner reported: "I hung around for an hour, with the salesman talking my head off, before the other guy turned up with my keys." Said another: "I drove off in disgust, using an extra set of keys."

Still another switch is the gambit called "roast beefing" the customer, and it's the opposite of bushing. It's the gag we spoke of before, wherein the salesman cites a low figure, then performs an Abbott and Costello routine with the irate boss who sides with the poor customer.



One of the most widely-used gimmicks of the auto sharp-dealers is the "would you take" card, on which a bounteous offer is made for your car as a device to lure you to the showroom.

It's being used with particular effectiveness in Akron, Ohio, according to John L. O'Brien, manager of the Better Business Bureau there.

Concerned officials have called the would-you-take method everything from "unethical" to "a racket."

Heartless Promise

Small wonder: One woman in Santa Barbara, California, telephoned a Los Angeles auto firm long distance and asked if the $900 price quoted on a card from the firm was a definite offer. It was a longish trip and she plainly stated she didn't want to go on a fruitless journey. The answer was emphatically yes. So she drove down and was told her car would be accepted as a trade—for a big $75!

Small wonder: In the space of one week, three separate cards were attached to the same automobile in Chicago, Illinois. The first offered $1,000. The second upped the price to $1,395. And the third pulled out all the stops, magnanimously quoting $2,800, more than the buyer paid for the car three years before.

Small wonder: I called an auto salesman whose name was signed to a batch of recently-issued cards. I told him $1,750 had been offered for my 1951 Chevvy. Was it on the level? Sure, he said, come on down. In fact he remembered the car—he had appraised it himself. There was a small flaw, however. I didn't have a 1951 Chevvy and had received no card.

Another broad category of fakery lies in bait advertising, either on handbills or in local newspapers. These are trickily worded or downright false claims which have just one ambition—to get you into the showroom and expose you to atomic sales radiation.

» In Louisville, Kentucky, an investigator was intrigued by a "save $700" ad for a late-model car. When he looked into the matter, he found that the saving was not based on what the car was worth then, but on its price "when new."

» In Dallas, Texas, a number of dealers took flashing ads which proclaimed, "No money down." Customers flocked in, only to learn that they couldn't drive away the cars without paying something. The dealers wanted a down payment in the form of a chattel mortgage on household goods or other property.

» In Chicago, a dealer advertised a used car in glowing terms as an "amazing, suburban driven, one-owner, four-door" job. Its upholstery was "like new," its chrome "sparkling mirror bright." The report of a Better Business Bureau shopper-investigator who answered the ad: "The car displayed as that advertised was

found to be a rusty, dilapidated vehicle with pitted chrome, dirty upholstery and worn tires." The shopper asked the salesman to start the motor and got the reply: "It won't run half the time." When it was pointed out that the ad stated: "Motor, clutch, brakes and ignition have been thoroughly checked," the salesman made this amazing retort: "They *have* been checked—and the car won't run." And then the blitz began in earnest, the attempt to high-pressure the shopper into another, much more expensive automobile.

Irresistible Bait

Still another device being employed to sell vehicles is the phony "business opportunity" dodge and it's angled strictly at the truck field. Come-on offers blare out: "Would you like a secure future in the trucking business? I have a good contract waiting for you!" . . . "Drivers wanted, $500 per week" . . . "Make up to $2,000 per month, contract guaranteed you!"

The bait is irresistible, the sucker bites, he's hooked. Listen to what the Detroit Better Business Bureau has found about these offers:

"Factory workers and others anxious to establish themselves in such an allegedly remunerative business," says a recent report, "have been induced to make substantial down payments on trucks costing from $4,000 to $8,000, but have later complained that so-called 'employment contracts' offered them through some third party contained no assurance whatever of regular trucking work and included a cancellation clause for the benefit of the 'employer.' Several auto dealers have been called on the carpet by the prosecutor and warned that this truck-selling gimmick is illegal, constituting both deceptive advertising and apparent violation of the Michigan Employment Agency Statute. They were required to make restitution to complainants."

Now let's turn to one of the fastest shuffles of all in both the new- and used-car fields. Incidentally, these days there's much less sawdust, oatmeal or banana put in the transmissions of jalopies to quiet noisy gears. And heavy oil is being used less to "tighten" a loose engine by filling the spaces between the pistons and cylinder wall. Motorists are generally hep to these crude stunts by now. So the swindle boys scouted around for a new angle.

They found it in a neat little gouge called the "pack." This works just as well for new cars as for old ones.

The "pack" funnels at least $50 million into the bank accounts of the phonies each year, according to recent estimates. Thousands of buyers are being victimized annually and the pickings are especially lucrative this time of year, when the used-car customers begin swarming over the lots.

It's got to do with installment buying and here's how it works:

Fellow name of Ed Miller, family man, buys a 1951 sedan, makes a down payment and figures to finance the remaining $850. A few days later, he gets a letter from the finance company informing him that his payments will run $83.33 a month over a 15-month period. Now this figure includes car insurance and Ed is pretty satisfied with the deal until he starts doing some arithmetic.

Then the fact dawns that he is actually paying a total of $1,250 for an $850 loan. Well, the $400 difference does include insurance. But he learns from a broker that insurance would only come to about $80. Subtract that, and his finance charges still total $320, or roughly 40 percent.

The sad truth is that Ed will be paying just about seven times more for finance charges than he should. One investigator discovered that the amount *overpaid* by most victims actually exceeds the operating costs of the car for a full year, including gasoline!

Now here's what went on behind the scenes: The used-car dealer and the finance company got together to make the finance charges as high as the traffic could bear. Then, when the contract was filled out, all charges—including financing, insurance, fees for service, accessories and what-not—were lumped together, or "packed." Ed was never told how much he was paying for what. And, foolishly, he never asked.

He was lucky, at that. Take this case described in a recent bulletin published by the Kansas City Better Business Bureau: A man bought a 1950 car for $850, got a $250 trade-in allowance on his old auto and paid $50 in cash. The remaining $550 was to be paid in 18 monthly installments of $58.16—which added up to a whopping $1,046.88. Get the figuring: The unpaid balance was only $550, yet his finance and insurance charges amounted to $496.88—nearly 100 percent more!

Free-for-All Financing

Now there is one vital point which neither Ed Miller, the Kansas City buyer nor many thousands of others realize. It's this: A finance charge is *not* interest. It is the difference between the cash price and the time price and is *not* fixed by law. Each finance company determines its own so-called rate or charge. Further, there is *no* uniformity in these rates, which vary from $5 to $30 or more per $100 when payable in 12 equal monthly installments. A few States have passed laws limiting the rates on auto loans, but not many.

In other words, it all adds up to the fact that you, as a car buyer, are in a position of bargaining—not only on the price of the automobile and the value of the trade-in—but on the finance charge as well. Some chiseling dealers, in cahoots with equally larcenous finance firms, actually have several different rate charts provided by the company, each specifying a different set of rates for the same amount of money loaned. If a prospect looks as though he can pay the higher figure, out comes a chart with a higher rate.

If a customer gets enmeshed and complains after he learns the score, he gets a nice brush-off at both ends. "What do you mean, the rates are too high?" the dealer demands. "Here's the finance company's rate chart—what can I do about it? Go see them." And at the finance firm's offices, the customer is politely told that the company assumes no responsibility for a contract signed with the dealer.

Comparatively Speaking

I envy the people who live in the past,
And daily the feeling grows deeper:
While having no cares about foreign affairs
They of course find the living much cheaper.

—MARY ALKUS

What the buyer is not told is simply this: the dealer gets a kickback from the lending firm —the higher the rate, the more his cut!

Now, is there any way you can avoid being taken by the "pack" gyps? There is. Here are some tips and mark them well:

1. Compare the rate of the various financing institutions, including banks, loan companies and the like. Many advertise their charges or will gladly furnish them on request. Pick the one that offers you the best deal.

2. Never—but *never*—sign a contract in blank, with the provisions to be filled in later. Read before you sign, know what you sign and get a copy.

3. Don't depend on verbal promises by salesmen. Demand that all details concerning the financing be put in writing.

4. Insist on an itemized statement of financing charges that sets down the following information:

(a) The cash delivered price of the car, specifying any and all extras.

(b) The exact amount allowed for the trade-in car, if there is one being turned in.

(c) The amount of the finance charge and for how many months it's payable.

(d) The cost of insurance and the exact type and amount of coverage involved. Demand either your insurance policy or a written contract for the amount and type agreed upon. This is important. Many persons have discovered after an accident that they actually didn't have the protection they had been led to believe that they had.

So—add it all up and you see a mess of cunning and trickery throughout the business. Better Business Bureaus admit they are fighting an uphill battle to "maintain some semblance of order and sanity in this major industry's previously respected business methods."

But there are a few bright gleams on the horizon. The bushers, roast beefers and pack boys are beginning to feel the sting as the law and the industry itself takes up the whip against them.

In Charlotte, North Carolina, for instance, a dealer was recently handed a 30-day suspended sentence on the road gang when his "would you take" offer boomeranged. He was convicted on charges of misleading and deceptive advertising. In California, a salesman was charged with soliciting without a license and fined $200 for slapping a phony offer on a windshield. A number of recent complaints about packing have been submitted to the Federal Trade Commission in Washington.

In Cleveland, the Automobile Dealers Association has set up a unique "court" where complaining buyers can take their claims against dealers. Members found guilty of fraudulent or unethical practices are required to set things right forthwith or face expulsion from the association. In Wisconsin, the Milwaukee County Automobile Dealers Association has adopted a resolution sharply condemning the auto tricksters.

There's more. In Los Angeles, a code of advertising principles has been drawn up by the Better Business Bureau's Automotive Advisory Committee and okayed by all directors of the city's Motor Car Dealers Association. And the BBB has just launched a nationwide campaign to educate the public about the activities of the busher, whom it blasts as "a parasite among automobile dealers."

These are good signs and they'll help. Meanwhile, the best way to side-step the sharpies while car-shopping is to know the score and to keep your eyes wide open and your wallet tightly closed—until you're sure.

And remember that "would you take" really means "would you be taken."

—By Lester David

When fear rides with a stunt driver, death is often a passenger, too. But Lefty wasn't afraid for his own life; he was afraid for his wife.

The Daredevil's Daughter

BY WILLIAM LINDSAY GRESHAM

Over the public-address system of the fairgrounds bellowed the voice of my announcer, Charley Blunt: "You are just in time for the first performance of Cannonball Ed Findlay and his Motor Maniacs; two hours of spine-chilling acrobatics in open-top convertible cars. You will see an auto daredevil thunder up a ramp that ends in air, leaping to land on an old car which will never be the same again. . . ."

The day was sunny, the afternoon promised heat. The grandstand was a pretty sorry-looking ramshackle mess of boards. I had booked into this little fair on a straight percentage deal, just to fill in a couple of vacant days.

My bunch was all set on the infield of the track. In their black-and-gold uniforms the boys that set up the ramps were playing poker on a blanket behind the infield stage. Lefty Meeker, one of my drivers, was double-chaining the safety belt in an old junker he was going to use in the T-Bone crash, where he shoots the car up a double ramp and dives, nose down, on top of another old wreck, trying to flip his car over on its back to form the shaft of a letter T. Lots of fellows have been hurt doing T-Bones. Now Lefty was still tinkering with the junker. He had knocked all the glass out of it, had left only a gallon of gas in the tank and had wired the doors shut. There was nothing more to be done. I knew the kid was worried and it wasn't like him.

I looked around for the reason and found her sitting in the shade of Lefty's little trailer: his wife, Carla. She was in a beach chair, knitting, but not doing so well with it. Of all the girls Lefty could have married, Carla was the one either the least likely to worry about him—or the most likely. She was a daredevil's daughter. All the rest of us had come into the thrill show business in one way or another, but Carla was born in it, the daughter of Ben D'Amiano, grand old man of the business.

I walked over to her and hunkered down in the shade. "What's the matter, kid? Got butterflies?"

Carla pushed the knitting back in a bag and sat with her hands clasped, as if she were kneading something between the palms. At last she said, "Ed—I feel so *useless*. Just sitting here." She was twenty-two, black-haired, blue-eyed, in love and in a panic.

I decided to give it to her with no soft soap. "Your dad wouldn't have wanted you to marry some timid guy who was always hedging his bets. Would he?"

She shook her head.

"Look," I said, keeping my voice down so Lefty wouldn't hear us over where he was fussing with the junker. "You didn't worry about Lefty before you married him."

Her face was tormented and puzzled. "I know. That's what's so dumb about—about the way I feel now."

"Your boy is shaping up to become a really great stunt man. He's never taken an unnecessary chance in his life. He wouldn't have been with me four seasons if he was careless."

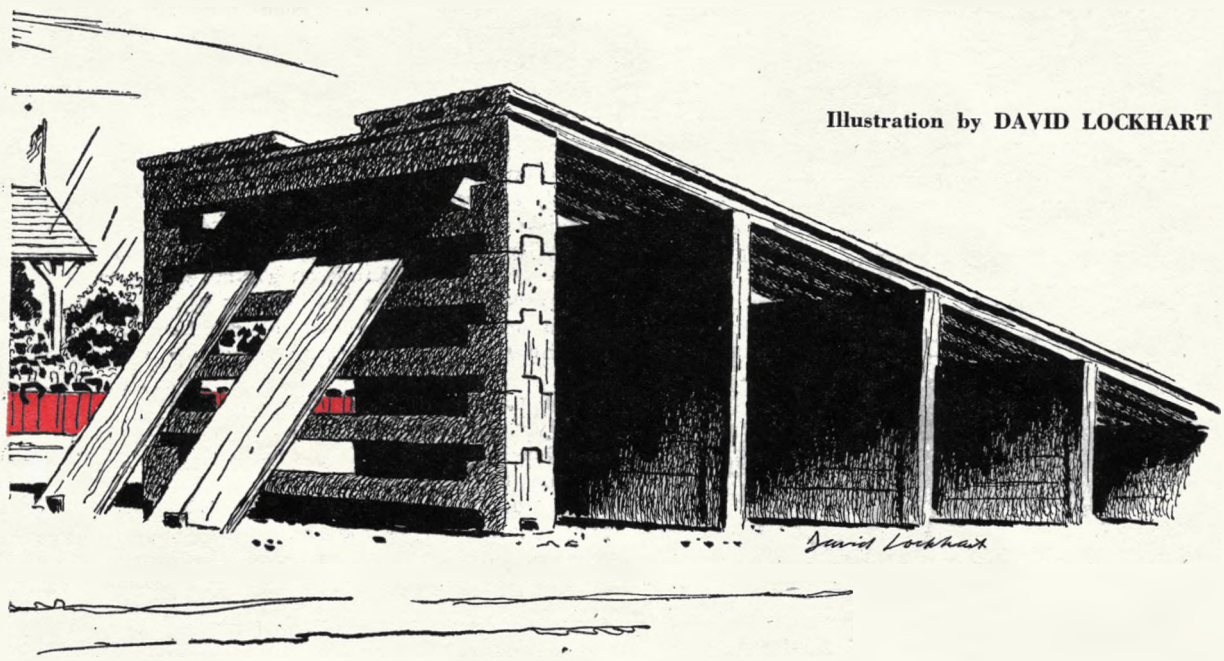


Illustration by DAVID LOCKHART

"I know, I know, I know." Carla lifted herself lightly from the chair and fished around in the pockets of her jeans for a cigarette. I gave her one. Her hand, cupped around my lighter, was shaking. "Ed, you don't have to draw me diagrams. I grew up on the show. Or have you forgotten?"

"No one could forget your dad," I said, and something in the tone of my voice made her lean over and squeeze my shoulder.

I stood up and looked around the trailer at the grandstand. Charley Blunt was still ballyhooing away, trying to talk a few more people into spending a buck for an afternoon of chills and thrills. . . .

It was five years since Ben D'Amiano's death at Breckenridge Fair. It was running off before me now like a movie film in my head: For the last stunt of the show, the big jump from one ramp to another that he did himself, Ben had set up something everyone told him couldn't be done. He had built a wall of thin boards and placed it midway between the ramps and about six feet above the ground. The idea was that Ben would come pounding up the ascending ramp, take off, fly thirty feet through the air, hit the board wall which was blazing with gasoline, crash through it, travel thirty more feet, land on the descending ramp and coast on down to the track. No one had ever done it before in the history of auto thrill shows.

I could see Ben take his ramp car, which he always serviced himself and kept in beautiful shape, out of the infield and once around the track, throwing it into skids right and left, testing the consistency of the clay. Once around again and this was it. When I gave the ramp kids the word they sprang forward with their torches and lit the board wall which went up in a swirl of orange flame. Ben came barreling down, heading for the ramp as eight thousand people in the stands held their breath. His wheels took it with a hollow boom and he was off, shooting toward the fire wall. Crash of boards and he was through it, wood blazing and flying everywhere. But something about the way he hit it had set him off his course. He reached the receiving ramp but at an angle, shot off it on the grandstand side, landed on his right front wheel and went into an end-over-end roll that smashed him into the concrete wall of the stand. When I raced over and looked in, he wasn't cut up or bleeding anywhere. He looked like he was taking a nap; his neck was broken at the moment of impact when he hit that concrete wall.

"Sweltering day, isn't it?"

CARLA had smoked her cigarette down to an inch long in a few puffs. Now she dropped it to the grass and ground it out with her sandal. "I went 'chicken' when Dad got it," she said almost in a whisper. "I never drove in a show again. Only—I didn't think I'd get chicken about Lefty. And now I have."

"Any idea why?" I asked, just to get her to talk it out.

She shook her head. "I've wondered and worried about it but it doesn't make sense. It's as if—as if I'm afraid something will happen to him before he's had a chance to—"

"To do what?"

She gave up. "I don't *know* what. It's all mixed up in my head."

"Nobody knows what makes a driver suddenly go chicken. But when he does it's time to quit," I told her.

Lefty was wiping his hands on a piece of waste doused in gasoline and when he saw me he grinned and smacked the hood of the junker. "Solid as a brick. Bet I can T-Bone her twice," he called.

Suddenly Carla gripped me by the arm. "Ed—doesn't Maggie worry when you do the Big One?" This was the ramp-to-ramp jump that ends our show, the one I do myself.

"When I married Maggie," I told her, "she was doing that jump herself on a motorcycle. Maggie stopped driving when we started having kids, but she figures that this is our business and that people kill themselves falling down cellar stairs, after they've been knocking themselves out for years trying to pile up enough dough to retire on. I don't have to teach you the business,

Carla. I've never had a man killed, working for me, and I've been with it since before you were born. Or pretty near."

I started to turn away but she came after me. "Ed—there's just one thing I can think of that might fix things. Look, Ed, some day—today—let me get in a junker without any build-up and take it over in a roll. I've just—just got to do it, that's all."

I shook my head patiently. "Can't, kid. Against my own rules. Nobody does anything on impulse. Or on a dare. Or to prove they aren't chicken. Tomorrow morning you can do a few skids, easy ones. After about ten days of getting the feel of the car I might let you do a wing-over from a ramp one foot high."

She turned then without speaking and went into their trailer. I couldn't help her any. If she wanted to get back to driving she would have to go through the mill like any other apprentice driver. She was too tense for me to take chances letting her do anything big.

I walked over and started shooting the breeze with Lefty, who was telling me that his ramp car had a murmur in the transmission. None of the other boys could detect it, but he was so used to driving it . . .

I looked past him. Sitting in the shadow of the outdoor stage by the fence was my top driver, Bullet LeFevre. He was black-haired, black-eyed, slim, nearing forty and a terrific guy with the women. He was up-ending a frosty bottle of beer.

WHEN I came over to him he looked guilty around the edges. He set the bottle down carefully. "Goes good on a hot day." Without saying a word I bent and picked up the bottle. It was a quart and it was more than half gone. Deliberately I moved back a few feet and emptied it on the grass. Then I put the bottle down again beside Bullet.

I said evenly, "I'm sorry you did this, Bullet."

He jumped to his feet like a cat, brushing off the seat of his riding breeches. "What do you mean, Ed?"

"You know what I mean. I told you before—one warning. And then the curtain comes down. I don't care if you are the top man. I don't care if you could drive a car around the track six laps on two wheels. Drinking before the show is a good way to kill yourself—or Lefty. Or Speed. Or me."

"Ed—what's a bottle of beer?"

"The most dangerous thing in the world for a high act or a motordrome rider. Or you. Because you can't *feel* it. But it slows down your reflexes."

He took a deep breath, not looking at me. Then he said, "You willing to take a chance on me staying with it until the end of the week?"

He sounded perfectly sober. He had more flash than all the rest of us put together; the crowds loved him; at the end of each show the kids flocked around him for autographs. I appreciated his not walking off then and there.

I said, "Thanks, Bullet. For not blowing your cork at me. You know what's behind my rules. I'll take a chance on you for this date. But no more beer. Okay?"

He just winked at me.

CRAZY fool. Bullet had always been a "cowboy" at heart. He was a race driver; had come from the speedways. He was reckless, and if there's one thing you don't want a daredevil to be, it's reckless.

Turning back I saw Lefty and Carla standing close together. She pressed her forehead against his chest and his arms went around her tight. They held it for a moment, then Carla pushed him away and avoided his hands. I looked at my watch. We were due to start in five minutes.

The ramp boys were standing by with the single ramps for the precision ride that opened the show. I got in my car and signaled the others. The exhaust manifold had been disconnected for the show and the engine roared. I put her in second and drove down to the far opening in the infield fence, then out on the track. We lined up with Speed Schoonmaker, the newest driver, in the lead, then Lefty, then Bullet, then me.

Charley Blunt on the microphone up on the stage was firing away, his words coming like slugs from a machine gun. "Introducing Cannonball Ed Findlay and the world's champion auto daredevils . . . here they come, ladies and gentlemen, with Lady Luck riding on one running board and the Dark Angel on the other . . ."

We spun the cars to a stop before the crowd. It wasn't too big. As I took my bow I figured our percentage would maybe just cover expenses, if I didn't take any bite out of it for myself.

Our first stunt was the crisscross, driving around the track with the number-two car shooting out and passing number one, number four passing number three. Then we all turned and came the other way, crisscrossing again, bumpers about six inches apart. All went well, only Bullet LeFevre nudged Lefty with his bumper and it looked for a second like Lefty was going into a roll. I got set to drive around him for if he rolled I didn't want to tangle with him. That would be a real sweet mess. But he brought his car back on four wheels in good shape.

As we turned, down at the other end of the track, I called out to Bullet, "Take it easy, kid."

I could see that his face was shining with sweat and it had no business doing that this early in the show. I began to wonder if that bottle of beer had been his first one.

Next came "wing-overs," where we took a single low ramp with the wheels on one side, came off the high end and coasted along on two wheels for a few feet before slamming back again on all four. Once down, then back, lead car with its left wheels, second car with its right. So far, so good.

The ramps were blocked up another foot by the ramp kids. Lefty Meeker was going to do a barrel roll. This is like a wing-over except that the ramp is two feet high at the far end and the idea is to see how far you can travel, balancing the car on two wheels.

Lefty took off. I saw Carla Meeker sitting by the stage on the infield, hugging her knees. Her face was white under her tan. When Lefty shot off the ramp he slid along, body sill plowing a furrow in the track, swerving in toward the fence, then toward the grandstand, on and on as the crowd was hoisted to its feet howling. After about thirty yards Lefty brought the car down flat again, turned it and hurtled back, braking before the center of the stand and leaping out to take his bow.

I couldn't see Carla anywhere now. She had probably given up and was inside the trailer, trying to guess from the sound of the crowd and Charley Blunt's battery of comment what was going on.

Speed Schoonmaker came next with a fire-wall crash. The wall was like the one Ben D'Amiano had tried to work into the big jump, only it was set up on the ground. It was a frame of two-by-fours with half-inch pine boards nailed on, and the kids poured gasoline over it and set it ablaze just before Speed smashed through it.

THE crowd wasn't too big but more had come in. We'd "get up the nut" all right. If more came in at a dollar a head we might even make a little.

While the kids were clearing away the remains of the board wall we had a demonstration of how to pull out of a skid. Speed came down the track first, skidding his car left and right, kicking up the dirt and braked it in front of the grandstand. Lefty came from the other end of the track, seeing how much dirt he could spray up before he had to pull the front end around to come out of it. Then came Bullet LeFevre.

He started off and I could see that he was cutting his pull-out too sharp. He was over-steering. I looked toward the infield. No Carla. As my glance traveled back I heard the crowd shriek before I actually focused on Bullet. I saw his wheels on the right side leave the ground, then saw the full underside of the chassis. The crowd was on its feet.

He rolled, crouched down against the seat, clutching the steering wheel, his safety belt taking the tug of gravity and centrifugal force. With a banging and clattering, his windshield splintered and flattened. He came back to his wheels, then he went up again, balanced on the two left wheels for an agonizing moment and fell back on all four. He had missed rolling through the rickety fence in front of the grandstand by a foot. And that fence was lined with local kids, too startled to scoot back out of harm's way.

The crowd was cheering, waving hats, whistling. Bullet unhooked his belt, stood up in the seat and waved to them, the grandstand smile on his face. Crazy fool. That roll had cost me a good ramp car. I could use it, of course. But if the frame was sprung it wasn't too good for precision driving. Well, that was what the people wanted, it seemed. That was what they paid their dollar to see. If Bullet had broken an arm it would have been even better.

AS Bullet brought his car back to my end of the track I watched it carefully. The axles seemed okay from the way it handled, but it would take a complete going over before I let anybody drive it in the crisscross again.

I took my own spins very easy and didn't even stand up to bow. Bullet was scheduled to do a roll-over next so I coasted back into the infield to give him the track all to himself.

The boys had pushed out the wreck that was to do the roll and it was chugging down the track while they set up the single ramp, two feet high at the far end.

Down the track the junker turned. The boys waved "all clear" and here it came. The old buggy had plenty of spunk. I'd paid $40 for this one, figuring we could roll it several times and build the show. Bullet seemed to be slumped down in the seat, lower than he should, and I prayed he wasn't really soused; I still had my eye on the kids hanging around in front of the grandstand near the fence.

The junker came straight ahead, like a bullet, took the ramp with its right wheels as the front wheels spun right. The car plunged over on its side, rolled once, back to its wheels, over again . . . on its side . . . on its roof, lifted slowly again and slammed down on its side. The roof had not collapsed but both front fenders were off and the hood had sprung loose.

I ran over to see how things were inside. It's the rule of a thrill show that the driver, after a roll or a T-Bone, never unhooks his belt and tries to slide out until the track foreman or the boss gives him the go-ahead. There are times when a junker will land on its nose and stay

balanced there and if the kid, who isn't sure which end is up, were to try to come out too quickly, it might topple over and mash him.

I stuck my head in the uppermost window. Then I got one of those jolts like when you're going downstairs in the dark and think you've come to the last step only there's one more.

Bullet LeFevre wasn't in the car. Peering up at me elfishly from under Bullet's crash helmet was the face of Carla Meeker. Her eyes were sparkling. She said, "Oh, Ed, I'm fine. I knew I just had to get in and roll it without having time to worry and stew about it. Once I started it down toward the ramp I was fine. Ed—I'm okay. I can drive!"

"Get out of there!" I hollered. "Good God, Carla, if you'd been hurt—"

She unhooked the belt and took my hands, as I started to help her out. Charley Blunt, watching from the stage, swallowed twice, so hard you could hear it over the P.A. speakers, then went into his pitch. "Ladies and gentlemen—presenting as a surprise feature of the day—the return of Carla D'Amiano, daughter of the great daredevil, Ben D'Amiano. Let's let her hear it, folks!" And he nearly wore his palms out, clapping.

Carla wasn't all the way out of the window when somebody reached over, took her hands out of mine and bunted me away. Lefty's face was like chalk. He lifted her out and took her in his arms as the crowd went crazy. . . .

Next day I called the whole crew together on the infield. Lefty and Carla were sitting near each other on the grass, but not with their hands touching as they usually did. They looked sort of hollow-eyed. I guessed that the night had been spent mostly in gab.

"To begin with," I said, "if Bullet hadn't scrammed I would have had to take him on right out here behind the stage. To hell with sentiment, Carla is not on my payroll and she hasn't signed any release. And another thing—I'll say this again because you've all heard it before: On a thrill show nobody gets any private ideas. If you want to try something new you come to me and we talk it over. Maybe I can give you some angles. If it's too dangerous, in my opinion, you don't do it. Right?"

All nodded.

Lefty broke the silence by raising his hand. "I've got something to say, Ed. I guess you all know how I feel about what Carla did. I sort of blew my cork last night—"

"All night," Carla corrected. She was looking happier than I had ever seen her since she was married. She looked like a cat that's just found out how to open the parakeet's cage.

"Yeah—all night, I guess," said Lefty. "We had quite a hassle over it. But Carla's right, Ed. She finally made me see it. If she's got her nerve back and if she's in the show—really with it—she won't worry about me. What it means is, she feels we ought to do everything together."

Carla stood up. "Got a deal for you, Ed. Take me on as a driver. With Bullet gone the other boys can all move up a notch and I'll be the 'baby.' "

I looked at Lefty and he just nodded, his eyes somber. Carla was radiant.

IN precision driving, wing-overs and crisscross, we put Carla in beginner's position at the head of the line. But this was just formality. She was a good driver now that she had found herself again and she was the happiest kid in seven counties. But after a couple of days Lefty began to look gaunt. He was never a very heavy guy but now his riding breeches had wrinkles at the waist.

When Carla started off to do a roll, Lefty stood by the infield fence, gripping it with his hands; as the old junker would leave the ramp, its battery flying out, loose glass from inside the doors spraying the track, he would duck his head as if he had been slugged in the jaw. The shoe was on the other foot now. Carla had taken the strain all season. Lefty looked like he was going to crack in a week. I began to worry about him myself, for we had some of our biggest fair dates

coming up. His driving was cautious and alert, but the kid looked like hell. . . .

Then we hit the Great Breckenridge Fair.

I got out to the fairgrounds early and pulled in behind the stage. My auto-carrier trailer with the junkers aboard had come in during the night. Likewise my big stake-bodied semi with the ramps and lumber for the fire walls. We had driven our ramp cars over in convoy, but Carla had started off early so she wouldn't have to push the trailer so fast. Now she was all settled on the infield with light and water connections.

It was early but the crowd was starting to come in. Looking up at that mammoth steel and concrete grandstand with its thousands of seats, I thought to myself, "We better be good." It was the first time I had ever played Breckenridge with my own outfit; I knew the boys felt the way I did. I only hoped they didn't get too enthusiastic and take chances, but there was that danger—with a mass of people like that looking down at you.

I had something else bothering me. Carla had come to me as we were leaving our last spot and said, "Ed—I want you to let me do something at Breckenridge which I know will be all right. Only don't tell Lefty ahead of time."

I just looked at her, waiting for it.

"I want to do a T-Bone."

"No."

"Please, Ed."

"No."

"Ed—it means more to me than just vanity. Or being foolish, for kicks. Or because it's the place Dad got it. It's nothing like that. I just —I just have to do it."

"You know what?" I told her. "You'll kill Lefty. That boy can't take much more worry over you. He never worries about himself. He's careful. But with you on the show, the lad just can't take it. He must have lost twenty pounds."

SHE nodded, her face sad. "I know, Ed. But it has to be this way. At first I wanted Lefty to settle down and maybe have some kids and start a speed shop, working on modified stock cars. But he has the thrill show in him and I understand that. I didn't know I was going to be so chicken about him. But now I feel grand. It's like having Dad back again, in a way. For me to be with it, driving. It's the only way Lefty and I can really stay together. And, oh, Ed—without him, I'd just die."

"What's this T-Bone of yours supposed to do to Lefty?"

She went on breathlessly, "I'll only do it this once. It'll be good for the show; after all, we've really got to 'wind it out' here at Breckenridge. Right? So let me do a T-Bone. After that, Lefty won't worry so much when I do simple roll-overs."

The psychology might work at that, I thought.

"Only one thing, Carla—if Lefty takes a poke at me for letting you do it, you and him pay for having my bridgework put back in. Is it a deal?"

I wasn't altogether kidding—every time I get in a ruckus, even if I win, the dentist's bills mount up. It's an item.

WE had to keep Lefty occupied somehow while Carla was getting set. Speed Schoonmaker was supposed to do the T-Bone and at the last minute I set Lefty looking at the ignition of my ramp car. This kept his head under the hood for a few minutes which was all we needed.

Down the track the junker waited and Charley Blunt, burbling away over his mike, failed to mention the name of the driver. The crowd didn't notice, being caught up and swept away by Charley's torrent of words:

"Here it comes, ladies and gentlemen, the sensation of the thrill-show world, the most hazardous feat an old car has ever performed; the rending, tearing, buckling, bounding *T-Bone crash!* And here *she* comes, folks, none other than that little lady with nerves of steel, Carla D'Amiano, the daredevil's daughter . . ."

Looking down from the stage I could see Lefty come out from under the hood of my car as if he had been jerked by a rope. He stood by the fence, crouched over as if ready to vomit. His shoulders were hunched and he had a look on his face as if he were having a bullet probed out of him without an anesthetic.

Carla gunned the junker up the track, took the double ramp with a hollow "clunk;" then the old car leaped into the air in a beautiful arc and landed nose down on the wreck laid out crosswise to receive it. The radiator tore loose and flew out on the grandstand side, showering hot water. A wheel spun off and rolled straight down the track as the junker twisted to one side. A roar came from eight thousand throats at once as it tangled with the receiving junker, pivoted crazily on its nose, then ripped loose and bounded end-over-end toward the concrete wall of the grandstand. I was halfway across the track before I knew it, and out of the corner of my eye I could see our tool truck rolling out, carrying the fire extinguishers.

The junker bounded once more and finally crunched down on its back, inches from the wall. I looked in.

Carla was hanging by the waist from her safety belt. Her lip was cut and bleeding. I shouted, "Baby—you all right?"

Her voice was the sweetest sound I'd heard in many a day. "I think so, Ed. My eyes smart

—I think I must have gotten some battery acid in them." Unfastening her belt she twisted around and sat down on the bulged up roof. She spit on her hands and rubbed the saliva into her eyes, diluting the acid.

"That's better. How's Lefty?"

Then I knew something was wrong with the picture. I looked toward the infield. The other boys were swarming around but Lefty was still gripping the fence rail, bent over as if he had a cramp in his guts.

I lifted Carla out. She touched her handkerchief to her lip and held it there, waving to the crowd with her free hand. At the sight of the scarlet handkerchief the mob seemed to go into a convulsion. They whistled, they screamed, they moaned in a weird way that was familiar to me, only this time it was more intense. After all, the blood belonged to a pretty girl.

I said to Carla, "Better get over to your guy, kid. He looks like he's in bad shape."

We hurried over together. When Lefty raised his head he didn't try to talk. He gripped Carla's wrist and pulled her back behind the stage. There he held her, his hands gripping her shoulders for a moment. Then he put his head down, rubbing his cheek against the top of her helmet. I saw the kid's shoulders leap. Lefty was crying.

Carla reached up and unfastened her helmet, dropping it to the ground and fumbling with the buckle of Lefty's helmet. He whipped it off. They didn't know I was there and they cared less. The crowd in the grandstand was forgotten. Lefty slid down to his knees, and then sat on the grass as Carla dropped beside him. She held his head against her breast. She said, "All right, darling. Carla's all right."

Finally he said, as if he were strangling, "Honey. Please, *please* don't ever do a T-Bone again."

She held him tighter. "I promise, darling. No more T-Bones. Just roll-overs, darling. Little ones."

He nodded with relief.

IT worked. The rest of the season Lefty was his old self again. Carla kept rolling the cars and Lefty would be the first one out there to make sure she was okay.

On the last date of the year, when we were loading the equipment for winter quarters, I said good-by to Carla as she got in their car hitched to the trailer. Lefty stayed by me for a little last visit.

"You kids coming out with me in the spring, of course," I said, making talk.

He nodded. He had grown up a lot that summer. Now he was all man, a thoughtful, cautious man. "I'll be with you, Ed. And Carla will be with me. But not as a driver. I don't think she'll be driving again."

"Quite a gift of gab!"

My eyebrows went up at this, for I knew he had promised her. He shook his head. "I'm not welshing on my promise to her, Ed. Nothing like that. Only—I just don't think she'll want to." Right then there was plenty of man in his smile. . . .

The following season Maggie figured the kids were big enough not to get in trouble on the infield so we bought a forty-five-foot trailer and she came out with them. Carla didn't drive. She had lost the bubbly excitement of the summer before, and now she sat in the shade of our trailer, talking to Maggie and knitting and playing with the kids. She was perfectly content to watch the show from a beach chair by the infield fence.

That year Lefty was really great. He was all Bullet LeFevre had ever been, and sensible, too.

At Breckenridge Fair he really wound it out. This time, after months of figuring and experimenting, he had a high board wall built and set between the two ramps for the closing jump. Lefty had sawed through the boards halfway, leaving about a quarter inch of wood in a straight line down the center. When he sailed up the approach ramp and took off, he hit that blazing wall dead center and went through it as if it were a paper hoop, landing on the receiving ramp in perfect alignment and rolling down to the track.

Without even taking off his uniform he hustled Carla into his ramp car and drove her cautiously to the hospital. Four hours later their daughter, Karen, was born.

—By William Lindsay Gresham

Why Are The Ball Parks Half Empty?

The blithesome whirr of the baseball turnstile no longer is loud in the land. Why are people staying away? A former star player and manager explains the cause—and the cure.

BY FRANK FRISCH as told to CHARLES DEXTER

It was the Dodgers against the Giants at the Polo Grounds. Jackie Robinson singled. He stole second and danced off the bag to cheers and boos. Then Gil Hodges bunted. By the time the scurrying catcher grabbed the ball, Jackie was almost to third. Too late to make the play there. So the catcher rifled the ball to first. Hodges was out by a step.

And Jackie, instead of tagging up at third, sped around it, tore for home, and slid safely into the plate.

The crowd roared and buzzed. A grizzled old fan sitting next to me yelled, "That's baseball the way it should be! That's old-time play!"

Yes, it was old-time play—a disappearing variety. I thought of this incident a few months later as I read some sad figures in my newspaper. Major-league attendance dropped from roughly 21 million in 1948 to 14½ million in 1953. In the same time, the number of minor leagues declined from 59 to 38. One out of every three fans who went to ball games six years ago is staying away today.

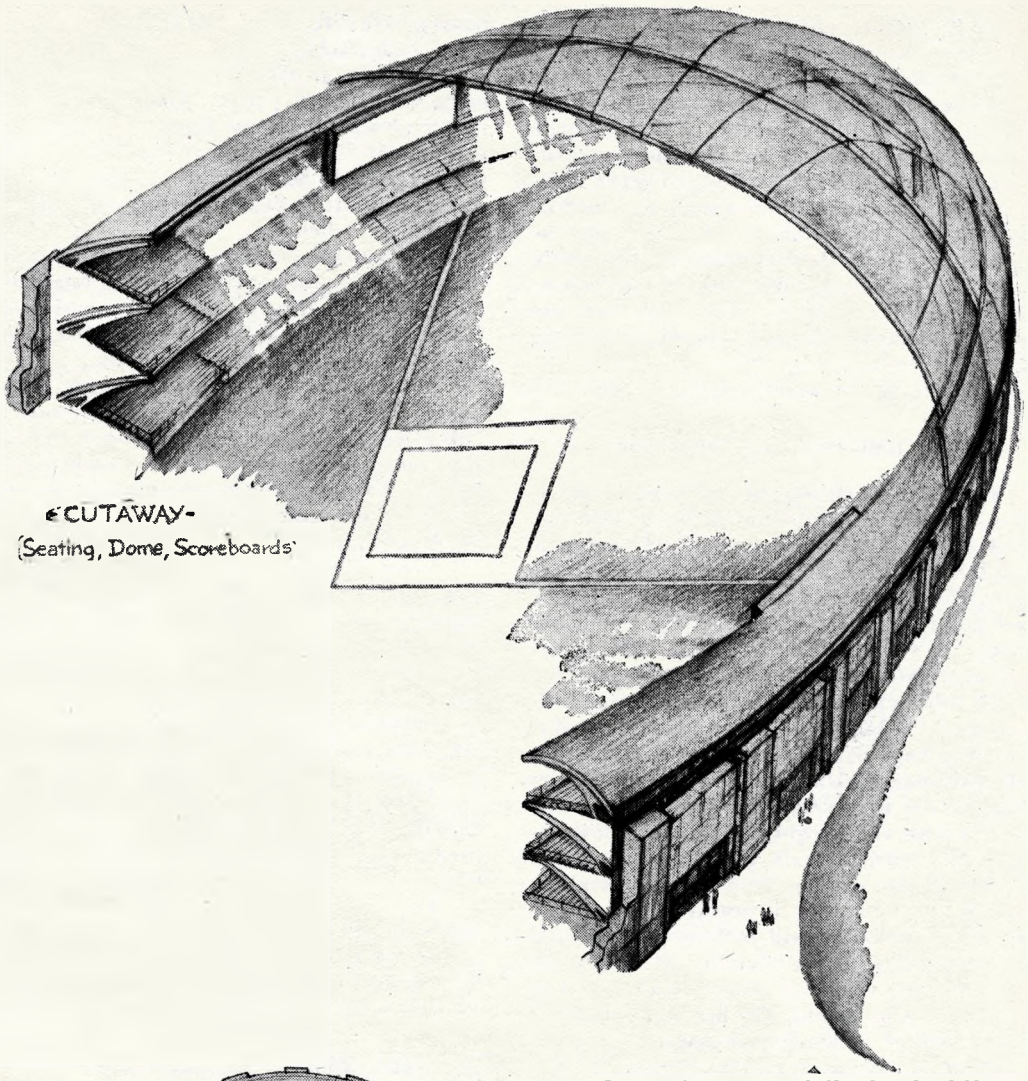
Something sure is wrong with the grand old national game. Everybody and his maiden aunt have an explanation—television, night games, fast autos, long week-ends, scrabble, chlorophyll, or general cussedness.

As one who played in 50 World Series games and managed the Chicago Cubs, the Pittsburgh Pirates, and the St. Louis Cardinals when they were the Gashouse Gang, I naturally have my own slant on it. And it's this:

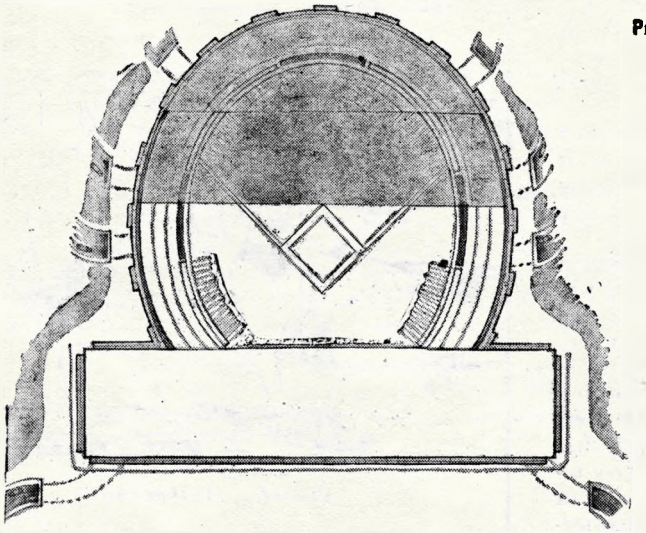
1. Baseball no longer makes anything like full use of the game's tried-and-true features of play that gave it its original popularity. There just isn't enough hard, brainy, old-time play.

2. In most cities, the game is played in uncomfortable parks—antiquated years ago.

Only a few baseball magnates have had the horse sense to do anything for the comfort of today's fan. He may sit in a deep-plush chair at a movie palace; see a football game in a scientifically designed bowl where the view from even the 80th row is excellent; relax on a sofa at home and watch TV for free.



Projected Design and Sketches by LILI RETHI



FRISCH'S DREAM BALL-PARK: The general plan will be just the reverse of today's parks—the stands will be curved to face the infield. A plexiglas roof will roll out in bad weather. Sketch at left shows overall plan of stadium. For further details, see drawing on page 25.

Or he may go out to the baseball stadium and sit in a seat that must have been made for a square-bottomed mechanical man. If the seat's beyond first or third base, he'll get a stiff neck from craning at the plate. Even if he's in a favored location, chances are he'll have to look around a post to see the action. There's little protection from the weather—a sudden rainstorm can soak half the customers. Parking space is limited and costly. Refreshments are still mostly confined to peanuts, hot dogs, beer and soda pop. Toilets are toilets. All in all, the fan's comfort and convenience appear to be considered trifling matters.

There'll have to be some changes made.

The Ball Park of Tomorrow

I envision a ball park of the future in which use will be made of every available gadget and invention to please the customer. His car will be speedily parked in an underground garage. There'll be a nursery where Baby can be left in good hands while Mama cheers for the home team. The stands will be of cantilever construction, eliminating posts, and curved to face the infield. Seats will be spacious and cushioned with foam rubber. Johnny will have his peanuts and Coke, but Papa will be able to take Mama to a well-appointed cocktail lounge for a nip or the whole family to the café for pre-game dinner. As for Junior and his girl, he can take her dancing in the lounge after the game.

Above the playing field, a vast plexiglas roof will roll out when it begins to rain. The electrified scoreboard will include pitchers' and batters' averages. An announcer will explain the points at issue whenever there's rhubarb. The players' dressing rooms, the bull-pens, and the dugouts will all be air-conditioned.

Some of these features already exist in a few parks. Others are part of a plan already drawn up for the Dodgers' new stadium—when and if historic Ebbets Field, built in 1909, is abandoned by the club.

Yet it goes without saying that even the most modernistic ball park will never attract patrons if the game doesn't appeal to them. And in my opinion, the game is now being played in a way that definitely threatens its appeal.

Baseball was ending an era when I reported to the Giants in June, 1919. My manager was John J. McGraw. McGraw had starred on the invincible Baltimore Orioles of the 1890's when, as recalled in Specs Toporcer's lively article in the April BLUEBOOK, the Orioles were creating "inside baseball." McGraw faced the foe with fire in his eye, daring all comers to knock that chip off his shoulder. To win he used every resource of the game: the bunt, the hit-and-run play, the stolen base, the subtle fielding maneuver. He dictated our every move at bat, and called each pitch our hurlers threw.

To John J. McGraw baseball was a chess game with human pawns. He thought himself into ten National League pennants in twenty-one seasons. His brain waves won the final game of the 1921 World Series for us Giants—though he never received credit for the brilliant play that ended the thriller.

The nation's business was paralyzed during that historic Subway Series. In the final game, Artie Nehf, our little southpaw, was outpitching Waite Hoyt, the Yankees' Boy Wonder, 1-0 as the Yanks went to bat in the ninth.

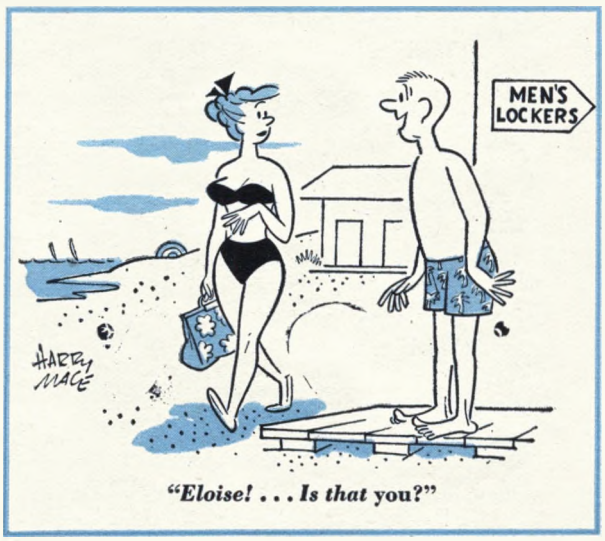
Aaron Ward walked with one out. Frank Baker, the old home-run champion, pinch hit. Baker drove a sizzling grass-cutter to right for an apparently sure single. Out of nowhere came Johnny Rawlings, our second-sacker, to knock the ball down and, while still on his knees, to toss Baker out at first.

Long George Kelly, our first baseman, glimpsed Ward scooting to third with the potentially tying run. Kelly reacted with split-second speed. He hurled the ball straight and true across the diamond. I snatched it and pinned it on the oncoming Ward.

Everyone raved about the rare double-play. Everyone hailed Rawlings, a utility infielder, for his terrific stop and throw. But no one knew that McGraw had not only ordered Nehf to pitch to Baker inside and low—his strength—but had posted Rawlings on the short right-field grass where Baker was most likely to hit.

I daresay that double play did more good to baseball than a bucketful of home runs.

Home runs were already in the air in 1921. Babe Ruth had hit 59 that year, more than twice as many as any other player in history. The Sub-



"Eloise! . . . Is that you?"

way Series and the two that followed in 1922 and 1923 marked the clash of two great forces: brain-power, as exemplified by McGraw's inside baseball, and brawn, in the person of the great Ruth.

The Giants won 12 of 19 games in the three Series, and two world's titles. But Ruth and the Yankees set the pattern for baseball in the years that followed.

The Babe was the greatest box-office draw of all time. Naturally this made owners of the other teams envious. They wanted Bambinos of their own. Since such didn't grow on trees, they tried to manufacture a few—by tinkering with the very heart and soul of baseball. They livened the ball by enlarging its cork center. They moved fences toward the plate. They outlawed the spitball and reduced the pitcher's effectiveness as much as they dared.

Slugging Isn't Everything

Players realized that home runs bought high-priced cars and singles bought flivvers. They dug spikes into the batter's box, held the stick low on the handle and swung from their heels. The character of the game changed. Infielders were forced to play deep, making tricky defensive plays difficult. Outfielders, whose defensive throwing had been a feature of the game, went back to the fences. Scores rose into two figures daily. Business boomed, for fans worshipped the titan who could produce a zooming, 400-foot fly.

But we all failed to realize that although the Babe led the Yankees to flag after flag he was vastly more than just a slugger. He was unique, the super-star of the century, a baseball genius who never made a mistake. He could hit, run, throw, pitch, play first or the outfield.

Many a would-be Bambino has come along since Ruth. A few have been genuine bred-in-the-bone home-run producers: Gehrig, Foxx, Williams, DiMaggio, Greenberg, Kiner, Mize. The vast majority are like a rookie who came up to the Yanks in 1944 and hit three homers on opening day.

Newspapers hailed this lad, whose identity I shield for he is but one of many such, as the new Babe Ruth. Day after day he swung for the fences. Day after day he popped up, flied out, hit harmless grounders or fanned. In July, when his average was .211, Manager Joe McCarthy personally supervised a morning batting drill.

"Just meet the ball," he said. "Learn to place it, and you'll bat .300 by September."

The kid obeyed during practice. During games he whaled away. He made just four home runs that season. One year later he was in the minors, where he still plays today.

The years have passed and we still have no new Babe Ruth. Strong boys hit homers. They neglect the rest of the art of batting, and the game suffers.

Batting *is* a fine art, as Wee Willie Keeler proved half a century ago. Keeler, a mere 5-foot-6 wisp of a man, compiled a .345 lifetime average by "hitting 'em where they ain't." He was the original place-hitter. In 1924 Rogers Hornsby of the St. Louis Cardinals created the highest batting mark ever reached in the majors, .424, also by "hitting 'em where they ain't."

Hornsby weighed 155, little more than Keeler, when he broke in as the Cards' utility shortstop in 1915. At the season's end Manager Miller Huggins said: "I'm sorry, Rog, but you're too light for the big leagues. Report to us next spring and I'll send you to Joplin."

The Rajah spent the winter on an uncle's farm, drinking quarts and quarts of cream. He reported weighing 180 and hit so hard that he quickly won the regular shortstop post, batting .313 for the year.

By 1919 Raj had mastered batting from all angles and to all fields. He met the ball wherever it was pitched to him. He placed hits just beyond the reach of frustrated fielders. He smashed to left or right with equal power. During his career he made 2930 hits, and won eight league batting titles.

I believe his recent failures as manager of the St. Louis Browns and Cincinnati Reds were due to his impatience with modern players who neglect to perfect their play as he did.

The Displaced Place-Hitters

The truly great batters of the past were place-hitters: Cobb, Speaker, Wagner, Simmons, Waner, Appling and many others. The champion Chicago Cubs of 1929 fielded an almost entire line-up of place-hitters: Grimm, English, McMillan, Cuyler, Stephenson, Hartnett—and Hornsby.

Today, place-hitters are few. It's worthy of note that two recent American League batting kings are little fellows who hit to all fields: Ferris Fain and George Kell. So do Jackie Robinson and Duke Snider, but the majority still dream of distance. They hit more homers than they should, and fewer hits than are necessary for the good of their teams. They have made the home run cheap.

Once upon a time every major leaguer worthy of the name was an expert bunter. The bunt was then, as now, useful in advancing runners into scoring position. It was also used as an offensive weapon. Ty Cobb did not disdain the bunt. None of McGraw's Giants dared face the boss until he knew how to wangle a hit out of a squirting little dribbler.

I squirm when I see a typical modern player pull his hit into a fielder's glove when the defense has been shifted into position just for that. In

such cases there is always a wide gap in the opposite side of the diamond. A place hit, a drag bunt would mean an offensive advantage. A few great stars know the trick: Billy Goodman, of the Boston Red Sox, who won the American League batting title with .354 in 1950; Phil Rizzuto, a true-blue all-time star; Pee-Wee Reese, another old-timer in modern dress; Jackie Robinson, and —well, you name 'em!

In my opinion, Ted Williams, natural home-run hitter that he is, would bat .500 if he learned to bunt. He could take a leaf from Cobb's book, for Cobb played baseball to the hilt, never missing a trick.

Cobb stole 96 bases in 1915. Cobb stole 892 bases in his major-league career. Cobb knew that speed is the crowd-catcher, and also the tastiest ingredient in the baseball stew.

Exciting Thievery

The stolen base is often far more exciting than the home run. Jackie Robinson perches off first. The pitcher tries to pick him off, and the crowd yells *"Oooh!"* He poises, he cavorts, he goes! He slides into second and is safe by a fingernail.

Now he's toe-dancing off second. The pitcher wheels and throws to the leaping shortstop. Jackie slides safely back. Now the pitcher gets ready to face the plate again. And Jackie is off again—and makes it!

He's on third. He's defying the pitcher to stop him from stealing home. The crowd is in an uproar. He feints, fakes—and there he goes! It's an eyelash decision. He may be safe, he may be out. He's safe!

The crisis has lasted for five super-dramatic minutes. Everyone is having a heck of a good time. But how many base-runners play the old cops-and-robbers game today? A mere handful. How many times does a runner, like the Yanks' Bob Meusel and Mike McNally, steal home in a vital game, as Bob and Mike did in successive games of the '21 Series?

The stolen base adds action, color and thrills to baseball. It can only be used when the risk is equal to the possible gain. It has been abandoned by almost all big-league teams today, the Dodgers a notable exception. It should be restored to its old importance for the good of baseball.

And the pitcher should be restored to his pre-eminence on the mound. Modern pitchers are every bit as good as their dads and granddads. Maybe even better, for they labor under greater difficulties. The pitcher who tosses two no-hitters in a single season, as Allie Reynolds did in 1952, is of heroic stature. The pitcher who wins 28 games in a single season, as Robin Roberts did in 1952, is a modern iron-man as great as the original, Joe McGinnity. A craftsman like Warren Spahn or Ed Lopat is equal to the best of the past.

I speak for the value of the pitchers' duel—the 1-0, 2-1, 3-2 game which chills the marrow from opening pitch to final out, the game that sends spectators home with as warm a glow as from a great drama of the stage.

Back in the era of the dead ball the pitcher dominated the diamond. He stirred the imagination of fans. He was Walter Johnson, the Big Train; Christy Mathewson, the Fadeaway Artist; Grover Cleveland Alexander, the Control King. Even during the 1920's and 1930's the pitcher still held sway: Carl Hubbell, Herb Pennock, Lefty Grove, Dolph Luque, Burleigh Grimes.

The pitcher was a giant untamed. He threw cannonballs and lobbed shuttlecocks. He jug-handled his curve and he knuckle-balled. He sometimes used foreign substances on the ball, emery, dirt; he used bottle caps and even razor blades. He moistened the ball with saliva to make it zig and zag on its way to the plate.

Grimes was master of the spitball. I played behind him when he won a two-hitter from Grove and the Athletics in the 1930 World Series; and again when he wrapped up that classic in the final game. Burleigh was then 38, but he could throw his spitter through a knot-hole at 60 feet, 6 inches. Playing second behind him was easy because, once I caught the catcher's sign, I knew that Burleigh would put the ball exactly where it was intended to go and I could post myself exactly to field it.

Burleigh still threw the spitter in 1930 because pitchers who had entered the leagues with that weapon were permitted to use it until their careers ended. In the meantime, youngsters were deprived of the pitch, to the detriment of the game.

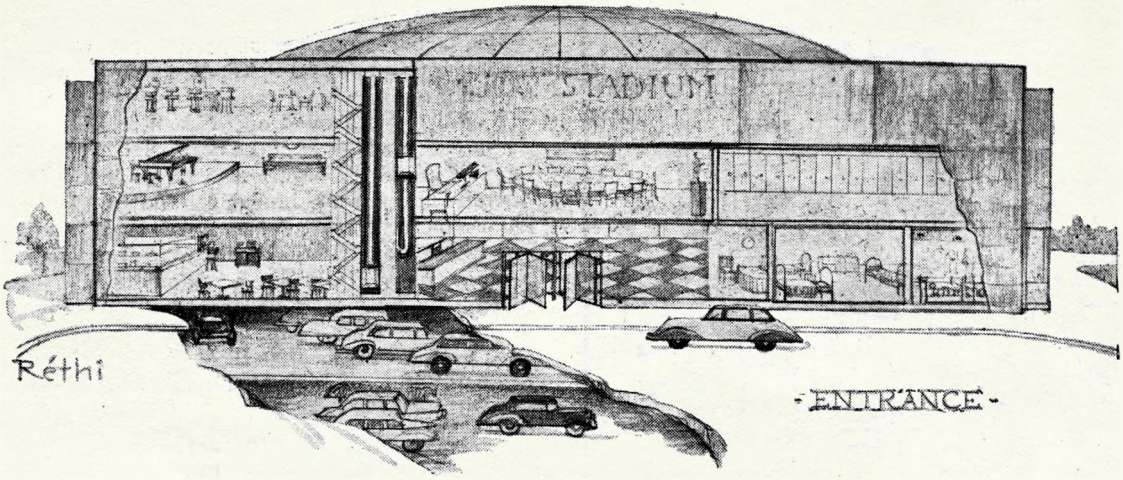
What's Wrong with Spit?

I believe that the use of foreign substances should be banned, as is now the law. But I also believe that the spitter should be restored to legality for an experimental season or two. Its use would reduce the batters' ability to survive by power alone. I would bring back "inside baseball," the pitchers' duel, the melodrama of the tight, tense game.

If nice people object to the word "spit," let's call it the "moister" or the "dewdrop." Under any name it will smell as sweet.

It might also end the use of the "slider." Nearly every modern pitcher throws the slider, a modest curve created by rolling the ball off the fingers and jerking the elbow as the delivery is made.

The slider is an unnatural delivery. It brings abnormal pressure on arm muscles, causing the formation of calcium deposits at the el-



Frisch's dream stadium will really cater to the customers' comfort and convenience. There will be a vast underground parking garage. The ground floor will feature a cocktail lounge, rest rooms, and a well-attended nursery. The second floor will have a ballroom-lounge, a conference room, and locker rooms. The top floor will contain a restaurant and administrative offices.

bow. It often causes sharp pain and a dead arm for several days. X-rays reveal bone chips; an operation is recommended and a pitcher's career is brought to a premature end. Restoration of the spitball will reduce the slider to its proper place in the pitcher's repertory—a special curve used only in tight spots.

Last August, Roger Peckinpaugh, Yankee shortstop of the 1910's, dropped into the Stadium for an old-timers' celebration. "Frank," he said, "baseball is still the greatest game but the boys have changed. In my days we were so glad to wear a big-league uniform that we'd have played for nothing—and nearly did."

Baseball was a game of heroes thirty-five years ago. Records were being smashed. Seemingly impossible plays were being made every day. The accent was solely on victory.

Don't get me wrong! I'm for the players. I'm in favor of luxury training camps in a country-club atmosphere. I'm for air-conditioned club houses, thick steaks, de luxe trains and hotels, five-figure paychecks. Baseball is a game of highly specialized skills—and the boys deserve the best.

But I am *not* in favor of sloppy practice sessions and a devil-may-care attitude toward learning specialized skills.

I do not accuse all teams of such malfeasance. The Yankees and Dodgers play aggressive, businesslike ball. So, from time to time, do other teams. And the players of today are as fully capable of playing subtle baseball as their forebears.

McGraw's Giants reported at the ball park at 9 A.M. They practiced for two or three hours. They rested for an hour. They practiced again an hour and a half. The game began at three. It was over far more quickly than most games today. If a player was in a slump he stayed after the game and worked on his batting until dark.

Practice improves play. I can recall stripping to the waist and batting fungoes at a pitcher while I was a Giant coach. "I don't see why you make me run so much," said the rookie hurler. "To build your leg muscles," I growled. "You ought to be out there running all by yourself instead of making an old fellow like me hit to you. With your attitude you'll be back in the minors next year." He was.

I recall a Pittsburgh outfielder who covered center, left, and right like a gazelle. He could throw, he could make double-plays to the plate. But he couldn't hit a high, outside pitch and he fanned more than 100 times each season.

"Take half an hour extra batting-practice every day for a month," I told him. "Work on bunts. Just meet the ball." He did—for three days. On the fourth he bunted for three minutes, swung for two, then went to the outfield where he was happier catching flies. His major-league career ended in seven seasons, during which he was traded from team to team. He might have been one of the great center-fielders of all time.

In the 1921 Subway Series shortstop Davey Bancroft twice snuffed Yankee rallies with the cut-off play, which requires quick thinking, quick ball-handling—and practice.

"Say— How'd you like to baby sit with me sometime?"

If a Yankee was on first when the batter singled to Ross Youngs in right, Youngs would bullet a throw to Bancroft, who'd have posted himself midway between second and third. If there was a chance to retire the base-runner at third, Davey would let the ball bounce past him, yelling to the third baseman: "Take it!" If the base-runner seemed sure to make third safely and the batter was trying for a double, Davey would catch the ball and fire to second for an out. If the batter had rounded first and hesitated, Davey would rifle to first to catch him off the bag.

How cheaply the dazzling cut-off is regarded today is proved by an item I read in my morning paper last winter. Birdie Tebbets, new Cincinnati manager, had discovered that the cut-off was not being taught in the Redlegs' farm system and had designed a chart for farm managers!

Imagine an old-time shortstop not knowing the cut-off! Only a few major-league shortfielders execute the play brilliantly: Rizzuto, Reese, Chico Carrasquel and Alvin Dark. Yet it's a crowd-pleaser, a bit of baseball magic.

Dark is the Giants' take-charge guy, brimming with personality. Alvin learned how to spark a team from his old double-playmate, Eddie Stanky. Like Stanky he can keep his teammates on their toes.

Little Eddie made much out of little. He was a throwback to the days when brain outwitted brawn. Too small to slug, he'd get on base by drawing walks—over 100 each year. Not a fast runner, he took extra bases by getting the jump on the ball. His arm was not overly strong, he covered limited territory at second, but he ranked with the best as a fielder by knowing where opposing batters would hit.

And Eddie was a box-office draw. Fans paid to boo him. They cheered as he fought for his rights, facing the spikes of bigger men, jutting his jaw into umpires' faces and rousing ire with his fierce zest to win.

Eddie concentrated on baseball and is now the successful manager of the Cardinals. He, too, reminds me of the old-timers. He has no other interests apart from the game he loves. He is not a radio or TV star; he does not run a department store, nor sell liquor, real estate, insurance, clothing, sports equipment or automobiles. Not that I blame players for devoting their off-seasons to other endeavors or for preparing themselves for a business career after their retirement from baseball. But the game should be their sole interest while the season's on.

A man cannot play at top speed in late innings of a close contest while his mind is on his post-game TV appearance. He cannot outthink the opposition if he's wondering whether he'll talk from a 'script or must ad lib. He should not devote his mornings to preparing radio transcriptions in a network studio. He should breathe, eat and drink baseball from dawn to midnight, and dream baseball from midnight to dawn.

Baseball is a game of speed, power, brains, and disposition—the four vital elements that make the star. Speed means hustle; and hustle means running to and from the bench between innings so that spectators may enjoy a spirited game. It means avoiding unnecessary conferences between manager and pitcher, manager and batter, captain and pitcher, bat boy and park cop.

Marathon Baseball

Last year the Yankees and White Sox were engaged in a game which lasted three hours and 52 minutes. Pitchers, vainly trying to keep the ball away from the plate, constantly ran the count up to three balls and two strikes. Pitchers were changed every inning or two. Balls were inspected after a mild foul—on one occasion a ball was thrown out of the game after it had taken one bounce on a wild pitch. It was slow-motion, dreary baseball which sent many a fan home resolved to think twice before taking another nap on a hard Stadium seat.

It was desperately serious baseball, which is all to the good, for the game should be taken seriously from start to finish. Yet relaxation is the mark of a true professional, and a good laugh often relaxes tension.

I like to think of my 1934 Gashouse champions as one of the great teams of all time. They fought bitterly for victory, rallying repeatedly to win in last-second drives. Yet they were the most relaxed team on which I have ever played.

It was still the day of the healthy laugh in baseball. Germany Schaefer with his zany tricks was gone, but Nick Altrock and Al Schacht still clowned from the side-lines. I liked a little hilarity from time to time myself, and so did my players.

In the midst of a clubhouse meeting Pepper Martin politely asked me if he might say something.

"Go ahead," I said.

Martin pulled a piece of paper from his pocket. "Here's something that puzzled me, Frank," he said. "My garage man soaked me thirty-four dollars to fix up my midget auto. I think the bill's too steep."

I was stunned. We faced the Giants in a crucial game that day and I had been carefully analyzing their strengths and weaknesses.

"Say, Frank," said Rip Collins, "I don't think thirty-four bucks is too high."

"What did he fix, Pepper?" asked Dizzy Dean.

"Valve intake in the engine, but he's trying to charge me for extra parts, labor, and everything but the gasoline."

Everyone began to talk at once. Dizzy said the bill was too high. Ducky Medwick defended the garageman. Voices were raised, the men leaped to their feet and argued noisily. My team was splitting up on the question of Pepper's midget auto.

"Quiet!" I commanded. "What the heck does Martin's tin can have to do with this ball game?"

Everyone whooped. I was being taken for a sleigh-ride. I threw up my hands in surrender. "Meeting dismissed," I said.

And the Gang raced laughing onfield and won the game.

The Gashousers were colorful from Collins on first to the clubhouse boy. It was still the day of Babe Ruth, of Leo-the-Lip Durocher, of fiery Dick Bartell. Carl Hubbell pitched his uncanny screwball, Lefty Grove still poured his fireball, and the Waners still stroked their poisonous stream of singles.

We have equally colorful stars today. We have Billy Martin with his never-say-die spirit and Jimmy Piersall with his death-defying catches. There's Lopat and his precision pitching and Willie Mays with his magnetic glove.

The Main Ingredient

But we also have too few colorful stars and those concentrated on too few teams. The Yankees, the Dodgers and the Cardinals have dominated baseball during the past fifteen years. They have played with speed, fire, and imagination. More of the same old-time dash and thoroughness is the main ingredient in my prescription for baseball's ills.

For there is nothing like a close pennant race, eight teams bunched in September, all snorting as they leap for the wire. Give them this, and a comfortable place to see it in, and fans by the hundreds of thousands will rise up again and pour toward the stadiums. —By Frank Frisch

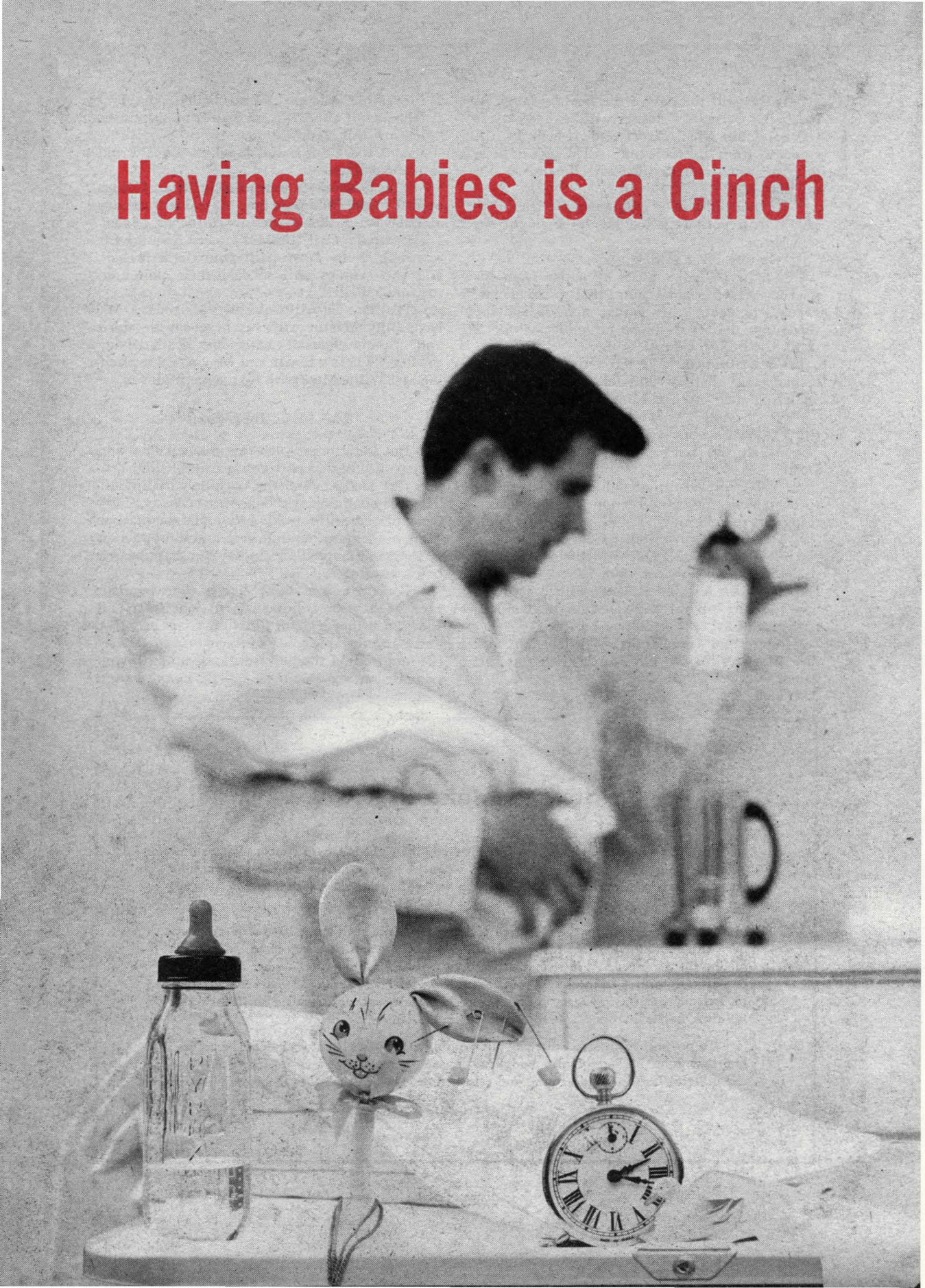
How to Make $190,000

■ You start with $525. Then you buy a horse—the right horse, of course. That's how John McKnight did it. He invested $525 when he purchased Agrarian-U as a yearling and has since been repaid umpteen times by the gelding, which went on to win $190,000 for him.

How do you acquire the ability to pick horse flesh in such a notably successful manner? Undoubtedly, it helps to be of Irish birth and the son of a horseman, and with a feeling for the breed. At least that background worked for John McKnight. And with it, he naturally turned to thoroughbreds at an early age. He rode and trained steeplechasers in Ireland, was buying-agent for the English government, and raced a small string of his own horses in Canada before coming to the United States.

To prove that his knack for picking winning race horses is not luck, let it be pointed out that John McKnight also bought Blenweed, a mean five-year-old, for $1500 and the grateful horse turned around and returned $100,000 in winnings to his new owner.

Having Babies is a Cinch



If you're a fresh-caught father or a veteran one,

you should find this wonderfully entertaining reading.

BY CLARK HUNTER BRADFORD

Without fathers, the birth rate would be cut down considerably. Without providers, the death rate would skyrocket. Caught in the middle, the human race would soon be one with the dodo.

Despite these self-evident facts, there is a powerfully imbedded folklore in which fathers at the time of childbirth are half-witted. This mythology defines an expectant father as a man who dashes wildly about, crashing into things, as he rushes downtown to buy truckloads of professional football and baseball equipment for Junior. At the office, he jibbers about the blessings of fatherhood while chain-smoking pencils and sharpening cigarettes. When the child is actually born, Dad passes out cold.

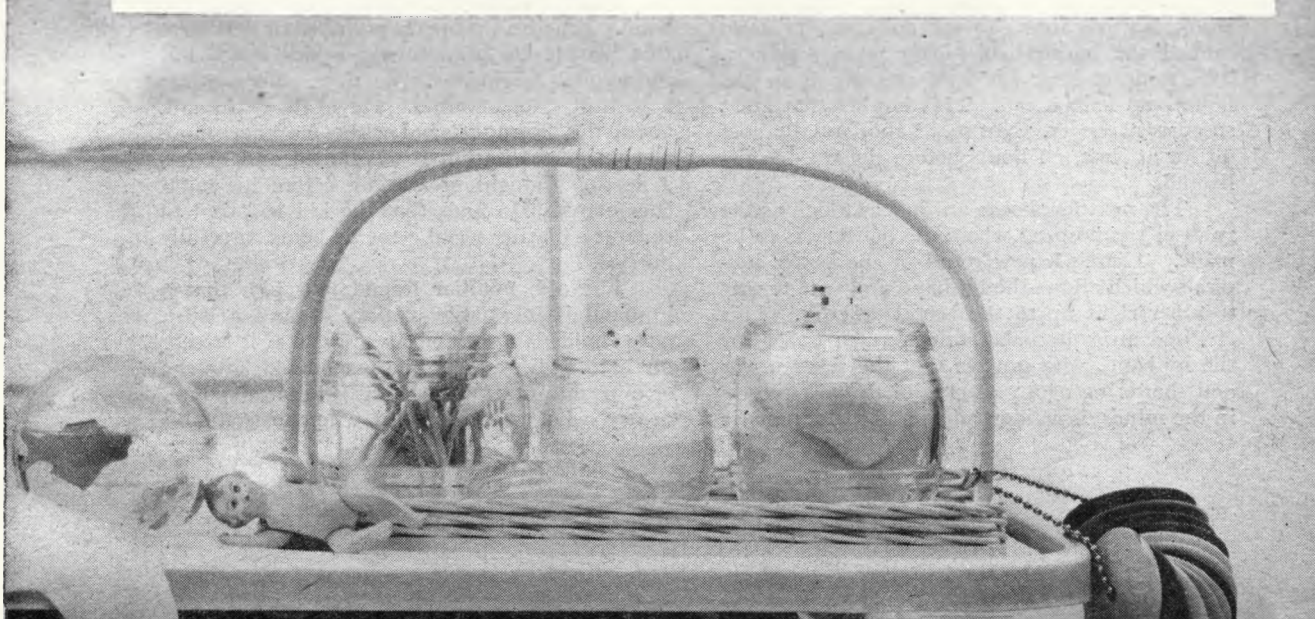
As a result of this fairy tale, the potentially fine father often winds up as completely confused and useless as he's supposed to be. His lack of knowledge may make him nervous and resentful at home. At best it means a poorly balanced up-bringing for the child, and at worst it can give the kid an acute case of momism and general monsterhood.

Oceans of written and spoken words wash around the mother at the time of pregnancy. She is told clearly and repeatedly what to do in every situation from adjusting her prenatal psycho-physical reactions to adjusting a diaper pin. This is as it should be.

But the only thing the father ever hears is funny "we've never lost a father yet" jokes, and advice like, "keep out of the way, you ox."

Ironically, it is more important now than ever that a father take an active part in the care of his children. Time was when we were a nation of farmers, blacksmiths and cattlemen. In those days father worked near home where he could keep an eye on the kids. Now, we fathers spend most of the day in factories or offices and the youngsters grow up spending comparatively too much time with women. To counterbalance this, a man should take advantage of what time he does have with his offspring. He should feed him at least once a day, change his diapers occasionally and play with him regularly. Only in that way can the baby become familiar with the masculine touch in general and get to know and like his father in specific. Only in that way can the father realize that babies in general are nice people and that his child in specific is a magnificent specimen.

At the time of childbirth a man can be a real help physically and morally to his wife. He can let the baby know right at the start that there are two separate sexes in the world



and that both of them can be understanding friends.

Even before the infant is born the father-to-be can help. His wife is carrying unaccustomed weight and should do setting-up exercises regularly to help her muscles. It's a lot easier if the male half joins her in this toe-touching. Also, since she's packing what is tantamount to a heavy knapsack strapped on the front of her twenty-four hours a day, her tendons and muscles will be in better condition if he massages her back and legs occasionally. He should see to it that she gets plenty of relaxation and should encourage slow, deep abdominal breathing. The average expectant wife tends to eat heavily, but her weight should be kept down. Her dieting becomes simpler if he reminds her of it, or better still, goes along with her in refusing chocolate cream pie for dessert. And, when an expectant mother suddenly gets illogical, unhappy tears in her eyes, if her husband gives her a quick wink and says equally illogically, "You're cute," it somehow amounts to pure genius.

Signs of Warning

Regardless of the advances made in medical science, nature still plays a basic role in childbirth and furnishes indications which warn that there will soon be a third for dinner. A few days before birth, the baby usually settles in the pelvis and the mother is happy to discover that she can breath freely again. During the last two days the expectant mom may have an unusual amount of energy and feel exceptionally well. If the child has been an active kicker, he will probably quiet down, as though he sadly realizes his free-loading days are about over.

Then contractions begin. There may be a couple of phony starts, but when contractions last about thirty seconds and come roughly every twenty minutes, it's time to go to the hospital.

Again modern mythology tries to foul up the expectant father, for the popular conception shows him sprinting out the door minus his pants, leaping into the car and roaring away toward the hospital at ninety miles an hour. Ten minutes later his wife emerges from the house and hails a cab. This implies that great speed is necessary. Not so. Labor usually goes on for at least ten hours before the child is delivered.

The next few hours are just as tough as the rules of the hospital where the delivery is to be made. There's a new trend in the better hospitals which allows the husband and wife to stay together right up to the actual delivery. This civilized attitude makes things much easier for the husband, who can see that the sheer terror and shattering agony of childbirth exist mostly in the minds of maiden aunts and melodramatic women writers. And also for the wife, who can face the uncertainty and exhausting discomfort of delivery with greater assurance and calm because her husband is with her. The vast majority of hospitals, however, still believe in the idea that the man should be neither seen nor heard. They have short, strictly enforced visiting-hours during the wife's stay, and no visiting-hours at all shortly prior to delivery.

Since he can do nothing under these circumstances, the abnormally shrewd husband will go someplace where relaxing is possible and relax. The normal fellow will get as close as he can to his wife, usually a waiting room in the hospital 10 floors away. He will then stare at the huge, grim clock with the mercilessly sweeping second hand that is always thoughtfully provided by the management to drive husbands mad. He has nothing to do but watch as the seconds whirl inexorably away. Each man must fight his own personal battle at this time, but it's good to bear in mind that birth is a perfectly natural occurrence that has been going on successfully for centuries.

Then the news comes that your father is a grandfather and you're somewhere in between.

According to the jokers, the old man now races to the nursery like a herd of stampeding horses, decides the wrong baby is his and cries out about how beautiful it is. Then he stands on his head, juggles any available objects, makes ghastly faces and waves his hands frantically at the child like a rookie cop trying to unsnarl a traffic jam.

The truth is that most husbands rarely do anything but smile at the youngster, or perhaps raise a hand in an attempt to gain its attention. Their secret feeling is that, like a newborn puppy or foal, it's so completely ugly that it's kind of cute.

Weird New World

Once the wife and Junior are back home, a whole new world of situations confronts the husband. If he isn't properly prepared, it will seem that his life has been turned upside down and inside out. Nighttime is daytime. Sleep is just a wishful state of mind. He hears weird talk about the "formula" and wishes he knew more algebra. Sterilization is mentioned and he has a fleeting thought of Pasteur before his mind goes blank. He finds that the kid is forced to commit a glaring social error by being forcefully burped.

The old, familiar legend tells him that a husband is invariably panicky around a baby, never holds it right and always makes it scream for help. He can become bewildered, grouchy or outright antagonistic toward the seven-pound demon who takes away his wife, busts up his

erstwhile happy home and, on top of it all, complains about it. He can, under these conditions, understandably have fond visions of attaching a millstone to the little blighter's neck and dropping him in the bay.

But if he'll lay down that millstone a moment and think it over, common sense will tell him that while babies do offer hardships, they also offer their own rewards and certainly need not be diapered dictators. That same common sense is the key to all proper treatment of all children.

He's No Bubble

Here, written for men only, is an outline of the simple knowledge needed in taking care of a new kid.

The first problem a man faces is learning to handle a newborn. Don't touch him as gingerly as a bubble. He won't explode. On the other hand, he isn't too tough, either, so don't drop him or he might break. A newborn baby should be picked up like a drunk with a lead head and a rubber spine. He should be held close both for emotional warmth and physical support. All joking aside, he has a hole in his head. His cranium is incompletely formed, so his skull must be treated gently.

Don't expect him to be overjoyed every time he sees you or hears your voice, because for the the first three to five weeks, while he reacts to noises he can't tell voices apart, and though he recognizes shades of light and dark he can't distinguish between the faces hovering above his crib.

There is a scab about the size of the tip of your little finger at the cord area. It should be cleaned gently with alcohol on a piece of cotton and bandaged with a gauze pad until the scab comes off of its own accord after a few days. The incision of a circumcised boy should be covered with a gauze bandage which has been dabbed with petroleum jelly. While these two spots are healing, the son and heir should be bathed only with a sponge. When they've cleared up he can be given a bath every day in water at body temperature, but the lad will not appreciate getting any soap in his eyes, ears, nose or mouth, so just wash his head carefully with a damp washcloth. If the ears or nose have to be cleaned, use a soft, dry cotton swab.

Try to remember not to rub the youngster dry. It's not as hard on his skin if you pat the water off with a soft towel.

Folding a diaper is as simple as diving off a 100-foot tower. The first time requires the most determination and is the most difficult. Clean your gurgling pride and joy with baby oil or lotion around his plump derrière to keep his skin from chapping. Then fold the diaper in a

wordly wise

BLUE BOOK

Since the very beginning of government by Parliament, English lawmakers have taken enormous pride in that institution. Quite early in its history, clerks adopted special insignia by which to designate official records.

When printing came into vogue, it became customary to bind many Parliamentary documents in a distinctive type of blue velvet. A lawyer who wished to consult the ultimate authority was therefore likely to turn to one of his blue-bound volumes. So great was the impact of these official publications that any authoritative tome, no matter what the color of its binding, came to be called a *blue book*.

—By Webb Garrison

rectangular shape—unpleasant, sometimes tragic, drainage problems result from the old-fashioned, triangular form—and pin it firmly so that it fits like a snug pair of shorts.

Thanks to a happy combination of inventive genius and business acumen, merchants are now vending disposal diapers and ready-shaped diapers, including several snap-on styles. They are easy to work with and for the most part inexpensive. Many hardened family men swear by them.

Nothing Really

There comes a time in every father's life when he must face what is sinisterly known as the formula. Why the formula has to be called the formula is a big mystery. It conjures up visions of high-domed scientists crouched over insidiously bubbling test tubes and Bunsen burners in gleaming laboratories filled with vials and complex chemical apparatus. Actually, a baby's formula is nothing but a mixture of milk, water, dextrins and maltose—the latter two being forms of sugar. It's easier to make than a good martini.

For about five bucks you can buy a kit with all the necessary items for making the sprout's dinner, bottles, nipples, a measuring cup and a big pail with a rack inside of it.

A youngster usually needs six feedings a day at first. At each four-hour meal, he can eat about one-half ounce of milk for each pound he weighs. Thus, a ten-pounder would take five ounces at each feeding.

Your job: to prepare six bottles, each one containing five ounces of delicious formula. You do this by making one batch of thirty ounces and divvying it up between the half-dozen bottles. A typical thirty-ounce concoction consists of ten ounces of evaporated milk, twenty ounces of water and three tablespoons of the sugar stuff. You toss all this into a pot, mix well, and divide the liquid into the bottles. Then you put the bottles in the rack which is inside the pail. You put nipples on the bottles, put a few inches of water in the pail and put the whole works on the stove where you boil it for twenty-five minutes.

That's all that you have to do to have the kid sending his compliments to the chef regularly.

Each child is slightly different, so the above formula is only typical. Your doctor or hospital will supply your wife with the exact measurements for your particular baby.

Two things about actually feeding the urchin. First, he should be burped once or twice while taking a bottle. This unrefined but necessary act is accomplished by putting him on your shoulder and slapping his back a few times to force gas out of his stomach. If it's the 2 A.M. feeding and you can't lift him to your shoulder, put him over your knee and jig the knee up and down a few times. Second, if while you're nicely feeding him, he suddenly shrieks as though a boarding cutlass has been run through him, don't panic. The nipple is probably clogged and he is displeased. Unclog it or get another one fast if you don't want to receive threatening letters from neighbors five blocks away. A youngster takes his eating seriously, and if he thinks he's being trifled with, he can drown out an air-raid siren.

Except for seeing to his physical needs, there isn't much problem with the average, healthy newborn. He could give lessons to a professional bum on the art of loafing, and spends most of his time sleeping. During his youthful hours a certain amount of crying is normal. Sometimes he's signaling for food; sometimes he's simply disgusted with life. But discounting a reasonable flair for vocal discord, as long as he looks and acts all right, he is all right.

Acting Like a Baby

As time goes by, the fact that family member No. 3 is a human being becomes more and more apparent. He may become a serious, studious type who quietly examines people with ill-concealed suspicion. He may be a gregarious personality-kid who thinks that everything in life is both friendly and hilariously funny. One thing all squirts have in common is that when they smile, they smile from stem to stern. It's infectious enough to make you feel like smiling back, even if you've just made a payment to the obstetrician.

At three to six months of age, depending pretty much on his own say-so, the youngster is started on solid foods—cereal and strained fruits and vegetables. If he balks at eating, don't set an example by eating some of it for him. It tastes horrible.

At around three months he may get either colic, which is gas in his intestines, or "irritable crying." After all the fancy talk on these subjects is finished, about the best you can do for him is offer your heartfelt sympathy and give him a couple of ounces of warm water in a bottle.

Then one fine day between six months and a year, you turn away from number three for a moment and when you turn back he's disappeared. He has learned to crawl and is off to explore the world like a jet-propelled turtle. Crawling is to the baby what a straight man is to the comedian, an invaluable prop in bringing the house down with belly laughs. Some kids never learn to crawl but do an energetic sidestroke or breaststroke and look frustrated. Oth-

ers learn to crawl backwards while still others set out sideways. Some powerhouses crawl on hands and feet, instead of hands and knees. A few rock back and forth with fierce energy but go nowhere. The humor of this comic opera is marred only by their speeding over the edge of a bed or down the stairs. Such self-destruction should be averted. Some fathers, carried away by enthusiasm in teaching their kids to crawl, have been known to spend considerable time on their stomachs. It's good, healthy exercise for both.

Standing usually comes in the eight-to-twelve-month period. This is great stuff because the tadpole suddenly doubles his height and sees things in a new perspective. Only trouble is, a lot of children learn to stand up while holding onto a support, without learning to sit back down again. This leads to complications. He may stand up until his legs are ready to cave in, then put out a distress signal in the form of a scream that shakes the walls. His situation is similar to that of a climber half way up the Matterhorn. He isn't sure exactly how far it is down, but he doesn't want to find out the hard way. Often, as soon as you've rescued him from his dizzying, self-imposed height, he will scramble right back up and be yelling for help again within two minutes. No one's perfect.

Gradually, a typical youngster will work out a modified Tarzan method of swinging through his bedroom jungle. He reaches from one thing to another for hand support and plops his legs along after. In due time he stands without his hand supports. Usually between ten and fifteen months, without fully realizing the world-shaking consequences of what he is doing, he lets go with both hands at once and takes a step all by himself. It isn't long after that when he's running impromptu races with you and coming uncomfortably close to winning.

During these periods of learning to walk, you can help the miniature athlete by giving him a hand to aid his balance, and by seeing to it that he doesn't walk into opened doors or off the front porch. It's good for the kid to receive a few bumps so that he'll learn to be careful, but if he's hurt painfully he may decide to hell with it and sit safely ensconced on his fanny for a long time.

What Kind of Talk Is That?

If you've never heard any accurate figures on when a baby starts to talk, it's because there *are* no accurate figures. At roughly a year most kids start saying a very few, simple words, and they start taking a great deal in. If some miserable in-law keeps telling them, "Widdle bumpkins is a pootiest babykins ever," they will grow up thinking that's the king's English. If they are spoken to reasonably, they will, aside from a little trouble at first with pronunciation, speak intelligently. Their learning to talk can be a good game. Once they catch onto the game, you shoot them words and they'll shoot them back, slightly modified.

Tell them, "butterfly."

You get back, "boo-fye," but in time it progresses through, "booerfye, booterfye, butterfye and butterfly."

There are youngsters who don't talk until two or even three years of age. This doesn't necessarily mean they're dopey. Chances are they are shrewd little characters who want to be sure of their ground before they make any statements that might be held against them.

The Great Eye-Opener

It has been truly said that "the son is father to the man." If a guy doesn't watch himself closely, he's likely to become a much better man while helping bring his son up, for he re-learns a lot of things that may have slipped his mind in growing up. Through the kid's eyes he sees once more the basic things that make life worthwhile, the real need for understanding and companionship, the great fun that can be had from playing with a simple block of wood, the incredible value of a happy, carefree laugh.

A man can have a fine life without ever having a child. He can have an enjoyable time if he never even gets married, but spends his years and money on beer, babes and Bach. Most men, however, know that the genuine values of life can be found only in a good marriage.

Sure, you can go along with the mythology that fathers and babies are like oil and water. You can tremble in your boots at the thought of a child and chew your fingernails down to the ankle. There's no doubt but what you could make it to Morocco and join the Foreign Legion there.

But if you make use of some common sense, and meet the situation halfway, you'll discover that having a baby is neither terrifying nor complicated. You'll have to spend some money and do some work. But it won't break you or exhaust you.

Then too, the kid is a product of the woman you chose for a lifetime partner and wonderful you, so what higher recommendation could anyone have?

A child is not a monstrous package of delicate nerves, neurosis, sickness, temperament and screams. Neither is he a bundle of smiles, sweetness and light. He's a little human being with a big, new world in front of him. It's a cinch to give him a hand in getting out into that world. And it's kind of fun, too.

—By Clark Hunter Bradford

A BLUEBOOK NOVELETTE BY FRANKLIN M. DAVIS, Jr.

BORDER INCIDENT

To save the life of your small son, would you take a desperate gamble that might start a war?

This particular day began for Colonel Lance as had so many others that stretched behind him now in a vague and numberless cortege. He woke just ahead of the alarm, and there was the brief instant of being aware of the German October sun stippling the rug through gently flapping curtains and the sharp challenge of the autumn air in the room. There was the surge of delight; nothing had ever happened and his lovely wife Deane was there beside him —he had only to reach out his hand to touch her. And then there was the knowledge it wasn't so.

It was deep within him now, so deep that he wasn't really conscious of closing his heart against the pain. It was a reflex, like pushing the alarm knob in on the clock.

So his first real thought was of whatever adjustment had to be made in the day because of the circumstances. This was accompanied by a small snarl at himself, a lot like Cotton the dog snapping at a burr in his coat. The greater, deeper hurt was lost in the sharp incision of the lesser. And because he was concentrating on something, even though of short moment, any larger issues could go unfaced for now.

Lance suspected this was an unsupportable attitude and, groping for his slippers with his feet as he swung out of bed, he remembered Deane's saying about somebody, *"Isn't he silly? He doesn't know the Army comes before family."* Lance had wondered at the time at Deane's calm acceptance of that philosophy. Now that she was gone and he was carrying it on without her, he wondered at its validity himself.

He hadn't had to stay in Germany—the Army recognized his problem, the Career Management jokers had even offered him a stateside assignment when he took Deane's coffin home—but there'd been no point in taking the job. He couldn't have enjoyed the States now. There'd always be something there to remind him she was gone. It would

be in all the little pieces that had fitted into their own sweet mosaic so lately shattered.

So Germany was the answer. He wasn't really a part of the place and neither had been Deane; they'd been there because the Army'd sent him. That's where the work was. He could throw himself into it and drive out the devil that gripped him inside. At least, he thought, slipping past Win's door and going into the bathroom, it looked as if you could. But there was still that business of the mornings—and the coming home at night. . . .

Just how tough it was on Win he couldn't tell. Their son had taken it pretty well, considering. But the boy seemed to be in his own private world. Sometimes there was more to ten-year-old kids than you thought.

Lance snapped his toothbrush at the faucet in annoyance: in the excitement of that business last night he'd forgotten all about the patch Win wanted him to get from that new replacement sergeant!

When Lance finished shaving he stopped at Win's door and knocked lightly. There was no answer, so he turned the door handle softly.

Win sat looking at him from the edge of the bed, his short-cropped light hair a little tousled and the mists of sleep only just drifted from his face. He had a first-baseman's mitt on his left hand and was idly plunking a baseball into the glove. His bat was lying across the dog Cotton, who was curled deep in the blanket.

IN his striped pajamas the boy looked like a slightly raffish baseball clown. But there was a closed expression on his face as he sat there, turning the ball.

"You hear me knock?" Lance's voice sounded rougher than he meant it to. Dammit, he thought, I don't have to bark at him. What's the matter with me?

"Yes, sir."

"I didn't hear you answer me."

Win sat a little straighter and looked up at him, the cornflower eyes and the sidelong look so much like Deane that Lance caught his breath. "Cotton was sleeping," Win said. "I didn't want to wake him up. Why, did you want to tell me something?"

Lance hesitated. "Well, no—except that I can't wait to eat breakfast with you. I've got to get out to the outfit a little early."

Win lifted his bat gently off the dog and then leaned down to rub his free hand in the dog's harsh coat. Cotton opened one eye and closed it again. "I waited up for you last night." Win rubbed his face against the dog.

Illustrated by STAN DRAKE

"Don't rub your face on the dog!" Lance's voice was sharp. "You don't know where he's been." He recognized in the boy's comment an oblique way of asking about the patch—he knew how much the boy wanted it and was angry at himself for forgetting to pick it up. And he realized he was taking this anger out on Win. He tried to explain. "Somebody tramped the panic button out at the battalion and I couldn't make it. And I admit I forgot about the patch. But I'll bring it today. For sure."

Win sat up and started to finger his pajama buttons with one hand, making a helpless effort to use his other hand without taking off the baseball glove. He looked slowly at his jacket wadded in the corner by the Quartermaster bureau. It was a green zipper jacket, covered on back and sleeves with Army and Navy emblems until it looked like a recruiting poster instead of a garment. "There isn't another kid in the school has got an Air-Sea Rescue patch," the boy said. "But I really have to get it pretty soon."

LANCE went over and picked up the jacket, shook it out, and hung it over a chair. "I don't know why you can't remember to hang up your clothes. And where can you put the patch? There's no room on this thing."

Win's voice was muffled in his pajama jacket. "I have to get it. To sell—swap, I mean."

"You shouldn't ever sell those. I thought you always swapped them."

"I do. Most of the time." Win looked around for a place to leave his pajama jacket, then folded it carefully and placed it on the bed. His torso looked a little picked and scrawny but he was long in arm and chest. Lance saw with sudden surprise that he was painfully thin, then saw his eyes looked a little tight.

"What time did you get to bed last night?" Lance asked.

Win sat down on the bed again and stroked Cotton's head. The dog raised up once, then nosed back into the comforter. "Oh," the boy stared out the window. "I listened to Groucho Marx, I guess." He looked at Lance almost hopefully.

Lance knew why. Groucho had always been a family program before, the three of them sitting around the living room, Win with his head almost in the receiver, Deane in the big armchair, a smile curving her mouth. Lance felt the pain again and he wanted to say something to the boy to let him know he understood, that listening to Groucho was okay, that maybe before long they'd get back to listening to it together when things settled down again. But he couldn't think of how to put it all in a few words so the boy would understand. All he said was, "That's O.K., Win. That's O.K." Then Lance

looked at his watch and said, "Listen, I've got to get started. I'll see you tonight."

"Can you bring the patch O.K.?"

"I'll bring it. Darn it, I said I would, didn't I? Don't be a dinger, Win. If somebody tells you they'll do something, they'll do it. Don't cling at them." Lance recognized again he'd said more than he needed to; he tried to make it up by giving the boy a friendly poke in the ribs, but Win turned away and started to get some clothes out of the dresser. Lance stood there for a moment, then went out. No question about it, it started the day wrong. But how could you get next to the kid?

He hustled his dressing and when he'd finished his breakfast and picked up his hat and gloves he stopped by the kitchen to square away Frau Liebeck, the housekeeper. He handed her the commissary list she'd left by his plate saying, "This seems all right, Frau Liebeck. Go on and pick it up. By the way, are you giving Win hot soup at noon?"

Frau Liebeck wrung her thick hands in her spotless apron and bobbed her head. A look that might have been dismay settled behind the steel-rimmed glasses on her broad face. "*Ja ja, Herr Oberst.* Yes, Colonel. *Alles* is like when Missis was *hier.*"

"O.K.," Lance said. "I just thought he looked a little thin."

Frau Liebeck picked at her apron. "*Herr Oberst,* it is not the eating. By the eating is good. But he is lonely, the boy. You must be home some mores." She looked up at him a little fearfully.

Lance spoke quickly. "I know he's lonely. You don't have to tell me that. I know my own house, don't I?"

FRAU LIEBECK colored, her skin taking on a shiny look. "Please, *Herr Oberst,* I do not interfere. I only—"

"I know, Frau Liebeck." Lance tried to mollify her. She meant well, but like all Germans, she didn't understand American kids. "I guess I'll be home at the regular time. If I bring anyone with me I'll let you know." He went out the door, a little embarrassed at his display and conscious of Frau Liebeck looking after him, her hands still held against her apron. Damn, he thought, I'm getting jumpy. But what could you do? Sure he'd like to be home more—but you don't shag 800 men in a battalion of armored cavalry around the Zonal Border and do it from your living room. That ought to be obvious to anybody.

He went on out to the front door, checked the hang of his jacket and the angle of his cap in the mirror hung under the antlers and then went out to where Kowalski was waiting at the curb behind the wheel of an Opel GI sedan. Lance got in the car, settling himself in the back seat, and fished Kowalski's paper out of the front seat. "Morning," Lance said.

"Good morning, sir." Kowalski replied respectfully and put the car in gear and eased out of the driveway. That would be Kowalski's speech for the day, Lance thought, but you'd look a long time before you found a better driver. The boy wrapped those big paws over a wheel and the car didn't dare try to get away from him.

Lance leafed through the paper but there was nothing in there about last night. Not that there should have been, particularly. And it was still a little early. But after all, it was a pretty big deal and there was going to be a noise sooner or later.

HE put the paper down as Kowalski pulled the car to a stop on a cobbled road cutting into the main blacktop through the town. There was a stream of bicycles and carts on the road ahead of them and Lance scowled at his watch. He wanted to get out to the *kaserne* to check on the old professor and to make some calls before the day got very far under way; now that they were in the early-morning traffic stream, it was going to take a little longer.

Passing through the narrow main street and looking at the beamed and plastered walls of the buildings shadowed by deep overhanging cornices, Lance sensed again the dark and brooding medieval aspect of the place, so strong you expected to find guild-halls, silversmiths and money-changers behind those mullioned windows instead of fat little shopkeepers selling sausage and fruit and wine. Lance wondered why it was the place always seemed so sort of gloomy, even when the sun was splashing over the red tiles of the spreading roofs and the crisp day carried some kind of spur to everyone hustling and teeming in the streets.

The answer, of course, was in your state of mind. He wondered if the sooty chimneysweep ahead of the car, balancing his ladder on his shoulder while he maneuvered his bicycle with no apparent risk to his traditional silk topper, worried about the Russians; or did the slim girl with nice legs looking in the shoe-store window know what would happen to her when the Russians came busting out of Hessenau a few short kilometers away? So the darkness was the threat; if you noticed it your life was colored by it. But if you could make yourself ignore it, it was business as usual.

Kowalski wheeled the sedan into the *kaserne* gate and Lance returned the smart salute of the sentry as the striped traffic boom was raised to let the car in. "Drive on down to the dispensary, Kowalski, will you?"

At the dispensary Lance ducked into the waiting room and asked the medical sergeant policing up after Sick Call, "Lieutenant Delk around?"

The sergeant closed the glass-door cabinet he'd been putting shot-bottles in and said, "He's been in with the old man almost all night, sir. I'll see if he can come out." He disappeared into the small wardroom, closing the door behind him. Lance moved restlessly around the waiting room, looking at the sterile efficiency of the gleaming metal instruments in the cabinets, the row on row of cotton-wadded pill bottles. He wrinkled his nose at the sharp smell that always hung around dispensaries, and ran his hand idly over one of the scarred waiting-room benches to see if the medics were keeping the place dusted.

"Clean?" Delk's dry voice spoke behind him and Lance turned.

"Hello, Doc. How is he?"

The medic's white jacket was rumpled and his deep-set eyes were smudged with fatigue. He jammed his stethoscope into his pocket and took out a package of cigarettes. When he bent to get a light Lance saw the sweat under the bristly hair matted on his forehead. Strain was on his face and it showed through the what-the-hell look that belonged there ordinarily. Delk took a deep drag on his cigarette and blew the smoke up past his nose with a heavy breath. He shook his head. "He's gone, Colonel. Half an hour ago." Delk shook his head again. "Rough one. He never had the heart for that trip."

"My God. That's too bad. What about the girl?"

"She's in with him now."

THE door behind them opened and the girl came out. She was dry-eyed but her face was white and the pallor made the bones of her cheeks more prominent than Lance remembered them from yesterday. Even though her mouth still looked too wide in her face it was a little softer now and there was the faintest movement at the corners. She stood for a moment looking at them, her hand on the door, and in her belted coat and the sort of listening attitude of her body she looked small and hurt. Lance felt a sudden urge to reach out and pat her shoulder. Then she moved quickly away from the door and stood in front of them, her feet wide apart and her hands deep in the pockets of her coat. "There he lies," she said. "Now he is dead! I hope that this makes you happy!"

Lance started. "Miss Ahrenhorst, please. Don't feel that way. You know—"

"I know nothing! I have not wanted him to come here but to bring him to the German hospital, of course. But you have insisted he be here. Under a guard with a gun!" She spat the words at Lance, her eyes turned dark and luminous in her face. "Oh," she said, "how could you be like this? How could you do this to us?" She flung herself into a bench and turned her face to the wall, her shoulders hunched under the coat and her dark hair tumbling over her hands as she tried to catch a sob.

DELK shook his head warningly at Lance and for a moment they stood looking at the girl. She got control of herself quickly and turned to face them, pulling her feet together in front of her and gripping the edge of the bench with both hands. "A guard with a gun! Do you think he's proof against Grozius? Grozius' power is weakened because we have escaped; he would never sleep till he finds us again. So now my father is dead! Is this how you Americans must do things?" She sat staring at them, her face worn and pinched.

"Look, Miss Ahrenhorst," Lance said quietly. "We're terribly sorry this had to happen. But your father wasn't well when you brought him here. You knew that."

"Of course I knew!" She flung the words at him. "But is there some law you could not get him to a hospital?"

"Your father had a stroke. He was too ill to be moved. You understand that, don't you?" Lance exchanged looks with Delk and the medic went over to a cabinet and started fiddling with some bottles.

"I understand only this." The girl's voice was lower now, but the words were tight as though she were holding back a spate of anger. "My father has come here by himself with something of great value. The Americans are only too glad to get it. But they do not care what becomes of him." She bit her lip and bowed her head.

"Here, drink some of this." Delk tried to hand her a glass and then when he saw her hand was shaking too much to take it he helped raise it to her mouth.

Lance sat down beside her. "Miss Ahrenhorst, we all know what you've been through and what trouble you had getting here. I told you last night we were out of line in keeping you here, you know. All East Zone refugees are supposed to go to the German police. But it was your father who asked for military protection and we gave it to him. And now that we know why, we appreciate all the more the effort he made to get here. So think of it this way: he lived to get this far, he knew he was free when he died. Doesn't that help a little?"

She turned away from the glass with a shake of her head and buried her face again. There was another sob.

Lance stood up. He jerked his head at

Delk and the doctor followed him into the hall. "Get her into bed, Doc," he said in a low voice. "She's been under a helluva strain. Put her in the ward in there and wait till she gets calmed down. The mess hall can run a tray over if she needs anything to eat. And you better get in the sack yourself. You look a little beat."

Delk tossed his cigarette into a sand-filled oil can. "I hated to lose that old boy," he said. "He was quite a character. But a stroke—" he shook his head. "You can't figure it. So what happens now?"

Lance moved toward the door. "I'll have the exec arrange for moving the body to the Heinie morgue. Intelligence'll want the girl, for a while anyway. So just get her fixed up. I'll see you later."

Delk nodded and Lance went on to his office. He tossed his cap and gloves on the window ledge and stood looking for a moment at the parade ground where the spread of smooth lawn, oddly green for so late in the year, faded into the sweep of terrace that marked the entrance to the family quarters and the road to Deggenschirm.

THERE was a movement of color at a doorway in the family area and Lance saw a girl come out with an armload of washing to hang on the lines strung behind the building. Somebody's maid, probably with baby things, judging by the white squares going up. Then there was a twinge again—Deane's baby would have been four months old now.

He turned back to his desk. Death at one side of the post, life at the other. Well, there it was. And if you can't stand it, he thought, why don't you take that fat desk job?

Lance punched the button on his desk viciously and when the exec, Major Grimski, stuck his head through the outer door, Lance said, "Bill, the old man died. Get with the *burgomeister* on getting him out of here but hold up on the burial details until we can find out if the daughter wants him buried in Deggenschirm or where."

The exec raised his eyebrows, creasing deep wrinkles in his bald skull. "Died, hey? That's not so good. Gilly says that stuff was really hot."

Lance nodded. "That's what we figured. Ask Gilly to come in here, will you?"

Lance settled back in his swivel chair, then turned to adjust the battalion colors in their shell-casing stand behind him so he wouldn't brush against the silk. There was a knock on the other door by the adjutant's office and Lieutenant Gilman came in. "Good morning, sir."

"Morning, Gilly." Lance waved at a chair. "You know the old man died?"

Gilman folded his lean length into a leather settee and looked soberly at Lance through his hornrims. "Yes, sir. Major Grimski just told me."

"You think that poop is pretty hot, hey?"

Gilman leaned forward in the chair, started to speak, then said, "I better close all the doors, Colonel." He got up and checked the latches on both doors, then came back and sat down, edging his chair nearer Lance's desk. "It's like we thought yesterday, Colonel Lance. I can't follow all the math, of course, and some of the notes are hard to read, but it's hot all right. It's a bomb. As near as I can tell from what we picked up yesterday and what's in the notes it uses an isotope of cobalt."

Lance compressed his lips. "Can you tell for certain it isn't some crackpot deal?" This was a pretty high-level gadget to be keeping in a battalion Intelligence safe.

Gilman nodded vigorously and propped his hands on his knees. "I'm sure it's not, sir. From the little they gave me down at the school on this stuff I'm certain the old man knew he had a hellaceous big bomb. I can't imagine him making the trip otherwise."

Lance blew some smoke in the air. "Neither can I, really. But I can't understand how he got away. You can't tell me the Russians didn't know what he was working on, for the love of Mike. They'd be willing to send a couple of divisions after this right now, I'll bet."

"I know how they got away. Or I've got a pretty good idea. I think the girl had to shine up to some Russian."

Lance made a face. "Great. And the old man let her do it."

"I don't think he really cared. He was a real scientific type, you know. The search for truth and all that. And he'd been in his lab for weeks, he told me. Even ate and slept there. Another thing, the Russians, at least the local

make it easy

One of the most unexpected tools for a home carpenter to use is a mattock or "grubbing" hoe. It's also one of the handiest. The wide blade enables you to pull sheathing boards off rafters or studding, or tear up flooring, with a minimum of splitting. The short blade, combined with the long handle, gives you terrific leverage. . . . For ripping off tar paper, try a spade. For wooden shingles, sharpen the edge of the spade so it will cut through the shingle nails.

—Louis Martin Reitz, Bourbon, Mo.

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wheels over there, don't know he was working on this stuff, he says."

"He said," Lance corrected him. "I don't believe that. But the big thing now is to get the stuff out of here. No word from Regiment, I guess, huh?"

Gilman shook his head. "No, sir, not yet."

Lance looked at his watch. "You go ahead and rack up a 'copter and an escort plane for the notes, will you? You better have the Air Section rig some kind of a gun on the escort plane. Send the notes on up there and I'll call the colonel and tell him about the old man."

"Yes, sir." Gilman went out of the office.

LANCE picked up the phone. When the colonel eventually got on the wire Lance said, "Good morning, sir. This is Colonel Lance at the Second Battalion."

The colonel's voice was brisk. "Morning, Tom. How's your prize package?"

"He died, sir. About an hour ago. Delk did the best he could but you never can tell about strokes, I guess. He just didn't have any heart left."

The colonel whistled. "That's not so good. Listen, Tom, you better hold him right there. I've notified the people up the line and everybody's pretty excited. Apparently Berlin doesn't have anything yet but Heidelberg thinks the Russians are keeping it doggo. So it's important they don't know the old man is dead, do you see? Don't go making any arrangements yet; just keep him there."

Lance frowned at the telephone. "Right here in my dispensary?"

"Where else?" The colonel sounded sharp. "You can't put him in a mess-hall refrigerator, can you?"

"That's not what I meant, sir. After all, we ought to honor him a little under the circumstances, it seems to me. Any objection to a memorial service or something, just so his daughter will feel a little better about the whole thing? She's taking it a little big. It's pretty rough they got this far and then he died."

The colonel was silent on the other end of the wire. Then he said, "No, I guess there's nothing wrong with that. But it's imperative there be no leak. So don't be too ostentatious about it. If you have any of your Germans working around the dispensary or anything like that get them out of there *schnell!* This is really something, as near as I can tell, and I don't want to take any chances."

"Yes, sir. Just a minute." Lance thumbed the pushbutton. When Grimski stuck his head through the door, Lance put a hand over the receiver and said, "Hey, secure from that morgue arrangement business. The Old Man says we've got to keep Ahrenhorst here for a while. Intelligence reasons. And clean any Germans out of the dispensary. I think the scrubwomen have been there already but tell Delk the place is under a security screen from now on. He can have his sergeant stand by with a medical kit over in C Company day room or something if anyone's missed Sick Call. Okay?"

Grimski nodded. "Roger. Yes, sir."

Back on the phone Lance said, "Colonel, I'm flying the notes up there as soon as I can get a guard plane organized for the copter. They ought to be up there within an hour."

"O.K.," the colonel answered. "Heidelberg's flying a team here to pick them up. Anything else?"

"No, sir."

"Well, I'll be down to see you this afternoon some time, as soon as I get this Heidelberg crowd out of my hair."

"Yes, sir."

The colonel hung up and Lance put his phone back in the stand. He finished his cigarette, thinking, That's not so good, keeping the old man's body here. We can't kid the Germans, they know about it already. Hell, there must have been a half dozen or so saw him come stumping up to the kaserne gate, a bag of bones of a man leaning hard on his daughter's arm.

Lance got up and went over to the operations office where he had to finish up a report on ammunition, and by the time he and the operations officer got through some knotty figures on training pyrotechnics it was lunchtime.

"Who's the babe down at the end?"

Lance was just finishing his coffee at one of the green-topped tables in the shining mess-hall when the mess officer came out of his glassed-in office behind the line of urns and racks and came over to the table. "Telephone for you, sir. In my office."

Lance pushed his coffee mug back. "Thanks Joe."

Frau Liebeck was on the phone, her voice high and strident. *"Herr Oberst, Herr Oberst, es ist Win, er ist nicht—"*

"Frau Liebeck!" The connection wasn't too good and Lance ground the receiver into his ear, conscious his heart was pounding heavily. "Slow down. *Langsam.* I can't understand—"

She launched a spate of German again.

"Moment! Moment!" Lance looked out of the office door to where the mess officer was collecting cash-meal money from Delk and a few other officers. "Joe, you got somebody who can speak German handy? My cook's in a flap about something to do with my youngster."

One of the German kitchen-police boys was brought to the phone where he listened intently for a few minutes, his thin face shadowed with concern. He turned from the phone and said, "Sir, it is your cook. She is saying that the boy did not from the school come back. He is since an hour late for his food. The other children have gone back. The teachers, they know nothing."

Lance felt his face drain. My God, he thought, what's that goofy kid done now? Taken off by himself?

He could see the morning so clearly; the boy needing something that was just beyond Lance's power to give him, just the way Lance needed something that could stiffen him inside. Whatever it was, he hadn't been able to give it to the kid, so Win had got on a tear and took off. "Ask the cook if the dog's gone. The boy wouldn't go very far without that dog."

The mess boy spurted some German into the phone, then did some nodding, some more German, and some more nodding.

"What's she say, for God's sake?" It always took an interpreter an hour to get a simple point across.

"She says no, sir. The dog is still by the house."

Lance thought a moment, a sharp ache in his chest. What could the boy have done? Maybe gone off to eat his lunch alone somewhere? But on what? He didn't have any money to speak of, no German marks anyway. It wasn't like him to do that. And what had to be done? He couldn't get away himself to go look for the kid, not with all this stuff going on. Hell, Win was ten years old, he probably wasn't above playing hookey. Frau Liebeck was an old spook, alarmed over nothing. "Tell her I'll send Kowalski out to look for him. And tell her to go over herself and check around the snack-bar. She can take the bus down."

The boy rattled into the phone. Then he turned to Lance. "She wants you to come. She says she is worried."

Lance took the phone impatiently. "Hello, Frau Liebeck?"

"Ja, Herr Oberst." Her voice sounded querulous and far away. *"Ich habe angst*—I am afraid, *Herr Oberst.* This he has never done. Not even when the *mutti* has died."

"Come on, Frau Liebeck, calm down. He's all right. Kowalski'll be over there and help you out. And you take the bus on down to the snack-bar. He's probably buried in the comic books or something. I can't come now; I'll be tied up here most of the afternoon."

Frau Liebeck sighed. *"Jawohl.* Yes, indeed." Then she hung up.

LANCE hurried out of the mess hall and rounded up Kowalski at the parking strip in front of the headquarters building. "Check with some of his buddies around the school there, Kowalski," he finished. "See if anyone saw where he headed. And look down on the German soccer field, he goes down there once in a while. Go see his teacher too. He might be sulking because he flunked his arithmetic or something."

Kowalski saluted, then jumped into the Opel and sped out the gate. Lance stood looking after him, fingering his lip. There was a vague spiral of uneasiness in his mind. He suspected maybe he'd been trying to convince himself of something that wasn't so. But who would mess with the kid? He spoke enough German to get along; the Germans never bothered anybody anyway as long as they minded their own business. It was a queer deal all right, and maybe he was silly not to phone the Colonel that he couldn't make it and that the exec, Major Grimski, would see him this afternoon. If the kid was hurt or something it'd make him feel better if his old man came after him.

But maybe this was just a bid for attention; Lance recognized he probably hadn't been paying enough heed to the boy since he'd come back. But what could you do? It had taken him five weeks, even with all the travel priorities, to get Deane home and the funeral over and get back. That put you miles behind on the job.

Lance went on into his office and telephoned the regimental adjutant. "The Colonel coming down for sure, Whitey?"

"Yes, sir. He expects to take off in the 'copter about three."

Lance looked at his watch. It was 1:45.

He hung up the phone and walked over to the adjutant's office, telling the sergeant-major, "Have a jeep stand by to pick up Colonel Renihan when he comes in, will you, Sergeant S'Appollo? He'll be in around 3:30 in his 'copter. I'll be over at the dispensary if any calls come in."

Lance found Delk working at his desk, looking neater in a fresh khaki shirt but still a little smudged under the eyes. Lance sat down.

"You got the word on Ahrenhorst's body?"

"Right." Delk leaned back in his chair. "You know, the old feller kind of bothered me. He had a real dignity—you know? I knew he was somebody the minute they brought him in here."

"I thought the medics looked on people as so many cases."

Delk smiled. "You ought to know better than that. Most of the time it's the people who make the case."

"What do you mean?"

"Speaking as your physician and not as one of your lieutenants, I'll tell you what I mean. You're making a case out of yourself."

Lance raised his eyebrows. "I don't get it."

"You're duty-struck; you're wound too tight. You'll let this outfit run you into the ground. Why'd you stay out here this afternoon? Why didn't you take off and look for the boy?"

"I don't know, Doc," Lance said. "I don't think it's anything to worry about, really. He's off on some wild trip or other, that's all."

THE doctor shrugged. "Even if he is, it wouldn't hurt you to take the afternoon off and go scrambling around with him. That boy's in a fog, you know? He's lost his mother, everything he had to hang onto's been busted up. An Army brat needs extra security around the place because he moves so often. He doesn't have the deep roots or the ties the average kid does. So that blank in his life has to be filled with extra affection. You ought to recognize that a little more."

"Are you telling me I'm a lousy father?" Lance's voice was bitter. He felt a deep hurt, as though suddenly everything he'd had locked away spilled out in front of him.

Delk's voice was low. "I'm not saying that at all. But you've been hit pretty hard. You don't get over things like that quickly. But the boy's been affected too. And he doesn't have the resources of maturity and experience that you do. Not only for him but from the standpoint of pure military efficiency, you ought to relax a little more."

Lance started to say something sharp—then thought better of it. Delk meant well enough. And there was a lot unspoken, he could see that. Maybe he was too duty-struck, maybe military efficiency was all he was interested in. But when you took the Army's shilling you put everything else aside, didn't you? And if you didn't get to the head of the parade, the parade got snafued. There was an old saying—you can't push spaghetti. And troops were like spaghetti, they had to be led and you didn't do it sitting on your tail feeling sorry for yourself. He changed the subject. "There's no doubt you're right, Doc. But what's done is done, now. How's the girl?"

DELK reached for the ashtray. "She was stirring around in there awhile back and she drank some coffee but didn't eat much. No noise out of her."

They were interrupted by the jangle of the telephone. It was for Lance.

The receiver was cold to his ear and he could hear the blood roaring in his head.

"This is Kowalski, sir. Sir, I can't find the boy any place. And there's something funny, sir. A little kid in his school, he said the boy was talking to some guy with a car then got in the car, sir. Any more instructions, sir?" Kowalski finished, breathless.

Lance closed his eyes for a long moment. Something was haywire. Nobody'd be picking Win up to run him home from school, he lived too close. And he knew better than to get in a car with strangers. The fright boiled up in Lance. He swallowed and tried to keep his voice calm. "Kowalski, look. Go find the principal and cut her in on this. She can probably talk to the kid that saw Win take off a little easier than you can. I'll get the Provost Marshal on this right away. You tell the principal everything you told me if she doesn't know it already and then come on back out here."

"The principal knows sir. She's called the MPs already. She—"

"Okay, good stuff. You come on back here as soon as you can." Lance waited for Kowalski to hang up, then when the *kaserne* operator came on the line he said, "Get me Deggenschirm Military Police."

A brisk voice answered after a brief humming and clicking. "Military Police, desk sergeant speaking, sir."

"This is Colonel Lance out at Panzer Kaserne. Is Major Tumulty there?"

"Just a moment sir."

When Tumulty answered Lance said, "Hello, Tumulty? You got the word on my youngster, didn't you? How many people can you shake out to look for him? And do you want any help from up here? I don't like the way it sounds."

Tumulty sounded cheerful. "Don't worry about a thing, Colonel. I've got four patrols out now and as soon as we can get some firm details on just what this is all about I'll give you a call. I've got a fair description of the boy from my dependent files, but how was he dressed?"

"He must have been wearing his patch jacket. You know, one of those zipper jobs covered with all kinds of Army patches. It's a green jacket, basically. Probably had on his brown corduroys. No hat. May or may not have been carrying a first baseman's glove."

"That'll help. Don't worry about a thing, Colonel. We'll stay right with it. Anything else, sir?"

Lance paused, swallowed, then said, "No. No, thanks, Tumulty. Keep me posted." He hung up the phone and rubbed his eyes. What was the deal? He thought of Win, a small, serious little reed, getting battered by all the forces that could boil up against him in Germany; and because it made him feel poised on the edge of a black swirling vortex, he forced himself to think away from it. Hell, what's the matter with me? That car was probably some kid's mother or something. Why do I always have to figure the worst?

Then he thought of the patch and the morning. He still hadn't gotten around to picking the thing up from that sergeant.

He turned to Delk. "Doc, can you send one of your people over to A Company and look up this Sergeant Wellman over there? He's in the Supply Room. He's got an Air-Sea Rescue patch he said he'd give me for the boy. If I don't bring it home tonight I'll have to sleep in the street." There was a small comfort in talking about the patch, and he could picture the boy's delight when he got it. It was something to hang onto.

The medic nodded and went out. Lance looked at the phone wondering if he shouldn't call the school. A step behind him made him turn and he saw Miss Ahrenhorst, looking a little more pulled together than she had in the morning.

SHE made a tentative movement toward him with a slim hand and said, "Colonel Lance, I must tell you that I am a little sorry about this morning. I understand that you have tried to help us. But try to understand me about this Grozius." She moved a hand to her throat and Lance saw the shadows move into her eyes again. "He is terrible, that great fat man. We could never be too far from him. So it is only that this has been very difficult for me, to help my father not quite far enough and then to be able to do nothing." She looked up at him earnestly, her face still drawn.

"That's all right," Lance said. "I know how it is." He looked at her, trying to get the right thing to say, but knowing there wasn't much you could say when someone had lost somebody close. "But don't worry about this man, this Grozius. You mentioned him this morning. You don't have to be afraid over here on this side. That's all behind you now, they don't have any influence over here that can hurt you." Lance was silent a moment. "We could arrange a little memorial service if you'd like," he said. "We—I can't arrange for movement of your father just yet."

She nodded her head. "I think that would be very good. I—"

She was interrupted by the jangling of the telephone on the desk. Lance answered it, hearing the sergeant major on the other end. "The Regimental Commander's helicopter just landed, sir. The jeep's gone after him."

Lance looked at his watch. It was 3:10. "I have to go just now, Miss Ahrenhorst. I'll have the chaplain contact you about the service." He got over to his office in time to meet the Regimental Commander entering the building.

"Good afternoon, sir," Lance said.

"Hello, Tom." Colonel Renihan reached out a big paw and shook hands. He was a block of a man with thick shoulders and a tough square face, almost ugly except for the stamp of discipline around his mouth that turned the harshness into firm authority clearly exceeding that demanded by rank.

IN the office the colonel said, "What are you doing down here Tom, running a physics lab?"

Lance grinned briefly. "I don't know, sir. My Intelligence officer says the stuff was pretty hot."

The colonel nodded. "The papers got there all right but the Heidelberg team hasn't showed yet. I got tired of waiting for them so I came on down to chew the boot with you a little on this thing."

"How long before we can move the old man?" Lance didn't like the idea of leaving him in the dispensary any longer than he had to.

"I think we can run him to the military morgue in an ambulance tonight," Renihan said. "High-level Intelligence is still kicking it around."

Lance nodded. "Would you like to talk to the girl, sir? I can get her over here."

"I'd like to."

When the girl came in and introductions were over Renihan said, "Sit down, won't you, Miss Ahrenhorst? I was sorry to hear about your father. The Army appreciates more than I can tell you the efforts you made to get here and of course, his contribution."

Renihan went on with a few more general

comments while Lance fidgeted. He wanted to get some more dope on Win. He was wondering if he should tell the colonel about the thing when his phone buzzed. "Pardon me," Lance said and picked up the phone.

"This is Grimski, Colonel. I know you've got the old man in there but can you get away long enough to step across the hall? There's a *Deutsche Post* messenger here with a box for you. He says he was told to give it to you personally with the greatest haste, it's very important, and he won't give it to anyone but you."

"I'll be right there." Excusing himself, Lance stepped across the hall to Grimski's office. An elderly German in the blue and yellow-piped jacket of the German Postal and Telegraph Service was standing uneasily in front of Grimski's desk, holding a small package. Gravely he handed it to Lance. "To sign here please." The German extended some kind of blank form.

LANCE took the package and shook it experimentally. It was about half the size of a cigarette carton, weighed very little, and was wrapped in the shoddy paper the Germans seemed to use for all bundles. The address was correct, marked in a thick grease pencil: *Lt. Col. Thomas Lance, Commanding Officer 2d Battalion, 27th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Panzer Kaserne, Deggenschirm.* There was a small slash, German-fashion, through the shank of the figure 7.

Lance signed the form mechanically. "Who gave you this?" He asked sharply.

The German shrugged. "There has been a telephone call for a messenger to come to Bauerhof Almguste on the Hessenau road. There is a man there who has given me this parcel and the orders it is only for you." He shrugged again. "That is all I know. He paid the fee and I have left."

"On the Hessenau road? What time? What did the man look like?"

The messenger lifted his cap. "It is perhaps an hour ago. The man is not big, not small. He has black hair."

"German?"

"Oh, yes."

Lance shook his head and looked at Grimski. "Queer. I'm not expecting any packages." He hefted the package again, then ripped it open.

"This is all, sir?" The messenger was edging toward the door.

"Better wait," Grimski said.

Lance took a small cardboard box from under the wrapping paper and opened it slowly. Then he gasped. All the package held was a piece of green jacket, scattered with Army patches. Lance pulled it out carefully and saw that it was a sleeve, the right sleeve to Win's jacket. A printed note pinned to the cuff read: *Next time we will send the arm.*

Lance felt a wave of sickness wash over him, leaving the conviction in one half of his mind that the boy was already dead, tossed like a sack of old clothes in a country ditch somewhere. The picture was so clear he could see the frost-colors on the leaves of trees and identify a rutted dirt road winding into the distance. But Win's face didn't show. There was a blank under a shock of light hair.

With the other half of his mind he seemed to be thinking more clearly than ever. Because this was funny, this was queer, this had a twist. There was nothing for any snatch-artist to gain by kidnaping Win; Army officers can't pay ransoms. And the boy couldn't have been gone for more than what—he looked at his watch again—five hours at the outside. So what did it mean? What was the angle? He forced himself to calmness. "Okay, Bill. You heard about Win, I guess?"

Grimski nodded soberly.

Win had stayed with the Grimskis when Lance was gone with Deane; he knew the bald major and his dumpy little wife had a real affection for the boy. "Put this messenger through the wringer, Bill. Get a description of who gave him this box; get Tumulty out to that Bauerhof. See if we can get a lead." *Next time we'll send the arm.*

HOLDING the sleeve in his hand, Lance walked across to his own office. Something of what he felt must have been on his face because the colonel broke off talking with the girl and said sharply, "Tom! What's the matter? What's that thing?"

Tonelessly Lance gave him the story. The colonel sat listening, his face frozen. When Lance finished Renihan drew in his breath with a long hissing noise. Then he said softly, "I'm sorry, Tom. Somebody's been seeing too many gangster movies." Renihan sat there, his hands on his knees, looking at something on the wall.

The girl stared at Lance, her face white. She said in a small voice, "The poor baby. The poor baby."

Lance spread the sleeve out on his desk, fingering the patches, thinking of how the jacket had looked wadded up on the floor that morning. I had to give him hell for not hanging up his clothes, he thought. He shook his head. How could you figure it?

His phone buzzer startled him. He picked up the instrument mechanically and spoke absently, "Colonel Lance."

The man's voice on the other end sounded faint and faraway and carried an indefinable

accent underneath an oily smoothness. "Colonel Thomas Lance?"

"Yes. Who is this?"

"You do not know me of course. But I ask you—have you received the small parcel?"

Lance stiffened. "Yes, I received it." He slipped his hand over the receiver and hissed at Renihan, "Get this call traced. It's something about the boy!"

The colonel shot out of the room.

The voice continued. "You have read the message on the parcel, Colonel. You understand I mean business?"

"I understand."

"You will receive instructions very soon. Good day." There was a click and the voice was gone.

Renihan came back into the room. "Your switchboard's trying a trace but I don't think there's much chance. The operator says the call came in from Deggenschirm over the dial line and was probably toll-dialed. What did they say?"

Lance told him. The colonel shook his head. "You can have any facility the Army's got to help, you know that. But I think all we can do is wait for the next message and see what the ransom requirements are and play it from there."

"Why should they kidnap my kid? I can't pay any ransom money. Not on Army pay."

The colonel picked up his hat and gloves. "These Europeans think all Americans have money, Tom, you know that. And you forget you're a big wheel in Deggenschirm. It's about that simple." He adjusted his hat on his gray hair. "Tom, I've got to get back up there and see these Heidelberg people. Give me a call as soon as you get anything on the boy. I'll put the CID people up the line on it if Tumulty hasn't already." He turned to the girl. "Thanks for the information, Miss Ahrenhorst. It may be this Heidelberg crowd'll want to talk to you. Our order of battle people will be interested in this bird Grozius. So I may ask Colonel Lance to send you up."

Lance gasped. All the package held was a piece of green jacket, scattered with Army patches—the right sleeve to Win's jacket. A printed note was pinned to the cuff.

The girl shook hands with the colonel and with Lance the way Europeans do and left the room. At the door the girl turned and said in a low voice, "I pray for your little boy, Colonel. My own troubles do not seem so large." Then she was gone.

Renihan started out the door saying, "Don't bother coming out to the 'copter, Tom. You've got enough on your mind."

Lance picked up his hat. "I'll go out with you, sir." His refuge, he thought, lay in the routine. There was still the job to do.

BACK in his office, Lance noticed in his IN basket the Air-Sea Rescue patch, probably sent over by Delk. He picked it up, a blue square with a Disney-cartooned helicopter straining at a cable holding up a whirling globe. The words AIR-SEA RESCUE were stitched into an arc on the top of the square. Fingering the rough texture of the weaving, Lance felt a bond with the boy that was strangely deeper than anything he remembered for a long time. . .

The adjutant burst in. "Messenger's here, sir. This is probably something. We're holding the messenger." He handed Lance a *Deutsche Post* envelope addressed as had been the package.

Lance hurriedly ripped it open and read the letter inside:

> *Colonel Lance: The boy will be returned to you unharmed when you deliver Dr. Manfred Ahrenhorst and his notes to the East Zone border guard station at Klein Umstadt. Upon receipt of this person we will direct the delivery of the boy to the vicinity of your garrison. Ahrenhorst will be at the guard station in Klein Umstadt at 7 hours on 28 October. The delivery of the boy therefore depends on you.*

So this was the angle. The boy was being held by the Reds, insurance for the return of Ahrenhorst and the notes.

He read the note again, then reviewed the facts as he had them. The Ahrenhorsts had arrived at the main gate about four the afternoon before. By the time Lance had gotten the word and they'd had Gilly do some checking on the papers and talk to the old man a little it was around six. They all ate a late supper in the mess hall; the old man had the attack while he was sitting there, smiling benignly over his coffee. So they squared him away in the dispensary.

Then there were more calls and counter-calls to Regiment. The guard went on the dispensary door about nine. It was about 10:15 when Lance finally headed through town for his quarters. And Win must have been snatched around 11:30 that morning, that was when school let out at midday.

So whoever engineered this thing had done it very fast. They knew what they were after. But the girl—or maybe it was the old man—had said the Russians didn't know what he had. That didn't really figure though. You couldn't rack up something this big without doing enough tests to be sure of what you had. So somebody must have gotten a smell of it.

Lance read the note again. No signature—and no mention of the girl. *Upon receipt of this person we will direct the delivery of the boy to the vicinity of your garrison.* Very neat. Only Dr. Ahrenhorst was dead.

Lance slapped his hand on his desk. "Smitty," he called out to the adjutant. "Take this over to Major Grimski; tell him to make a copy of it and get the original down to Major Tumulty right away so they can run some tests on it, fingerprints, where the paper came from, and so on. And bring the copy back in."

Lance tackled the phone and after some delay while a line got cleared he had the regimental adjutant. "Give me the Colonel, Whitey."

"He's tied up with those Heidelberg people right now," Whitey said.

"Go get him, damn it; this is urgent."

IT only took a moment for Renihan to come on the line. "Yeah, Tom?"

Lance waved Smitty in the door with a copy of the note, told Renihan how he got it, and read him the message. "Want me to read it again?"

"No, I've got it, Tom." There was a pause. "That's great, isn't it? Ahrenhorst's dead."

"Yes, sir. So now what do we do? I know what'll happen to the boy the minute whoever-it-is over there finds out the old man is gone."

"Don't say that, Tom!"

"What else can I say?" Lance's voice went up. "There's only one reason anybody snatched the boy and that's to be certain they get the old man. And his goddam notes. Now what do I do? Let 'em kill the boy?"

"Tom, take it easy." The colonel's voice was kind. "I know what you're going through. But we can't stampede this thing. It's awful hot; I'm surprised they didn't try to kidnap me to get it back. Let me chew this over with this Intelligence waffle-bottom here. I—"

"That won't do any good! You told me I could have any facility the Army had, didn't you?"

"That's right."

"Okay. I want to park a tank battalion around Klein Umstadt tomorrow and grab off whoever shows up; I'll find out where Win is if I have to spit 'em on a 90-millimeter tank gun!"

"You're upset and worried, Tom. Klein Umstadt is over the Zonal Border, you know that. We can't start a war."

"For my money the war's already started. Kidnaping a little kid, for God's sake!"

The colonel's voice was unruffled. "They don't play easy, we've known that all along. You sit tight down there. I'll talk it over with this Intelligence man right away and give you a call. Okay?"

Lance wanted to throw the phone across the room but he held himself in with an effort and said, "Yes, sir," then hung up. He had a feeling the rug had been jerked out from under him. Because even if it was a wild solution it was the only one he could think of, and it was up to the Army to help him. He held out no hopes for the colonel's call back. He got up from behind his desk and started to pace the room. On the third lap at the window he called to the adjutant, "Smitty, get hold of Miss Ahrenhorst and get her over here."

When the girl arrived questioningly at the door Lance said, "Come in. Sit down. Look, there's a few questions I need answers to. Read this thing." He handed her a copy of the note. She looked at him sharply, then took the paper.

Then Grimski thrust his head in. "Tumulty wants to talk to you on my phone, Colonel. Want me to have it transferred in here?"

"No, I'll take it over there."

TUMULTY sounded more reassuring than the new facts he reported warranted. "We've traced the car to the Border, Colonel—apparently a 51 Opel *Kapitan,* blue—"

"Headed toward Klein Umstadt?"

"No, sir, the Hessenach road."

"Can you get somebody into Klein Umstadt?"

Tumulty paused. "I don't know. That's across the Border. Why?"

"You get the note I sent you?"

"No, sir, not yet."

Lance gave him a run-down on the note. Tumulty whistled. "So it's a bargain, huh?"

"Yeah, a bargain all right." Lance thought about telling Tumulty that Ahrenhorst was dead but thought better of it. "Now answer my question. Can you get an agent or someone into Klein Umstadt for some kind of reconnaissance, or not?"

"I don't know." Tumulty sounded dubious. "I can get the Kraut cops to give me a hand; they've already got the Border Police alerted. I think I can get somebody in there. One of our stoolies or an agent or something. It's only right back of the Border crossing point."

"Okay, you do that." Lance paused, then said, "Now listen, Tumulty, don't fail me on this. I'm going to get something over there if I have to start a war to do it. I'll get that kid back. Understand?"

"Yes, sir, Colonel—but you don't actually know the boy's there, do you?"

Lance snapped, "I know I don't know it. But somebody'll be there at seven. I'll grab him and do some dealing. So I want to know what's there now, any troops, any vehicles, anything that might slow me down."

THERE was silence at the other end of the wire. "You still there?" Lance asked.

"Yes, sir, I'm just thinking. Colonel, we can get somebody over there all right but making a snatch's something else. I—"

"Listen, do what I asked you, will you? My own regimental commander's getting shaky on this thing, now don't you weasel out too. Get an agent racked up and find out what's there. I'd like to know what the ground looks like, what cover there is around there, whether there's any Russian or Vopo troops in there and all the rest of it. Isn't that simple enough to do?"

"Yes, sir. I'll bring the agent out to the *kaserne* the minute he gets back, probably around one or two in the morning, maybe earlier. Anything else, sir?"

"Yes, don't waste so much time." Lance banged the receiver down and stalked back to his own office. Now that he was giving someone hell he felt a little better.

Miss Ahrenhorst was holding the note as if it were going to bite. She looked at Lance and said, "Grozius."

"Grozius? What do you mean?"

She waved the note. "You do not know this man. He is the security police, the MVD. He has done this. Only a man like Grozius could do this. Now I can understand better why you have the sleeve."

"Tell me a little more about Grozius."

"He feeds on power, this man, and grows thick and fat. So because my father has gotten away it is a personal insult. So he does this thing to get us back. We have defied him, something that no one on earth can do to him. So he takes this way to get us back."

Lance pulled at his lip. "Do you think he knows what your father had in his notes?"

The girl shrugged and looked out the window. The parade was graying under the lengthening shadows and the guard detail was readying the flagpole for Retreat. She jumped when the evening gun boomed and waited until the last notes of the bugle had died away before she spoke. Then she said, "If he knows I do not like to think how he knows."

"What do you mean?"

"You will not understand this because you

are an American and cannot know what it is to live under those—" she narrowed her eyes and sought for a word "—those arrogant cruel beasts. Since they have first picked up my father they have spied and starved us and hurt us. Can you understand this?"

Lance nodded. "I can understand."

"So I had to help my father. He is my only family."

Lance nodded again. He could understand that, too.

"So one day there came a man, a young man, he is named Gregor Daniloveff. He is a Russian too." The girl was silent a moment. "He is to work with my father. And because he can laugh, he can sing, he can be happy, he is a light in that dark place." A sad sort of smile drifted over her face. "It is not hard, after a time, to forget he is a Russian. Because even when Grozius comes Gregor is somehow above him, he has more—more spirit, do you see? And one day he tells us when we are having a little tea in the laboratory that we must go. That he will help us. That we must take the notes and come over here. He says that one day these notes will help the dignity of man. So we come."

"Then it wasn't your father's idea?"

"Oh, yes. Always my father has had this thought, to get away. But he cannot do this, an old man like him. But with Gregor he can. Gregor is to join us—" She shrugged, letting the words hang in the air. "So now that Grozius knows he can only have found out from Gregor." She sighed and Lance saw a mist of tears in her eyes. "Gregor would never tell himself. Of this I am certain. And I do not like to think how Grozius found out." She blinked the tears away but had to bow her head to do it.

LANCE was silent. It made a black picture all around. He had a vision of charging over there with a tank battalion—and even as he thought about it, he knew how foolish it was, and he knew that Renihan was right. There was too much over there pressing against the Border, too much for anything. Too much for Gregor, too much for old man Ahrenhorst, too much for Win. What it boiled down to, no matter how you looked at it, was very simple: was the life of a small boy worth using force to shatter the delicate balance on the Border? Would the Army run troops over there to get the boy back?

Looking at the whole thing as objectively as possible under the circumstances Lance knew the answer even before the call from Colonel Renihan interrupted his talking with the girl. But his objectivity didn't keep Lance from a desolate sense of sinking deeper into smothering darkness when he heard Renihan's words.

"I'm sorry, Tom; I really am," Renihan went on. "But you know the score, you can see the reason. Heidelberg says they'll negotiate at Berlin. They—"

"Negotiate? With what?" Lance cut him off, the sure knowledge that there would be no direct action draining through him. "They want the old man. The old man's dead. When they find that out they'll—" he couldn't bring himself to use the words that flamed in his mind so he finished, "—they'll do away with the boy and you know it. Negotiate, my foot!"

"Tom, don't flip your lid. That's not going to help. There's other people beside Ahrenhorst, you know. And they won't tell the Russians the old man is dead. Not yet. And you aren't to mention it either, don't say a word about it. It'll work out, Tom. Just have a little faith. You aren't in this by yourself, don't think that for a minute. The whole European Command's behind you."

Lance snorted. "Behind me with what?" He asked the question bitterly. "A bunch of staff officers arguing at diplomatic level? That won't cut any butter and you know it!"

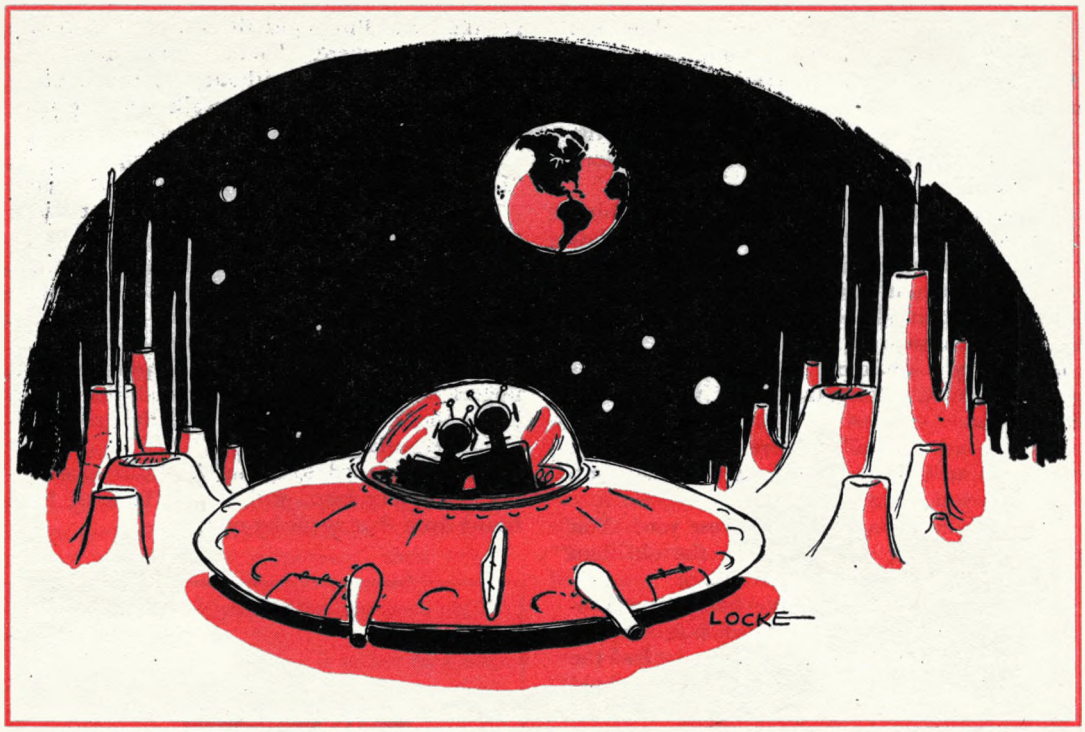
"There's nothing else I can tell you. You've got to trust them up the line. You can see that."

Lance was silent for a long moment. Then he said, very quietly, "Yes, sir." And hung up the phone.

HE looked at Miss Ahrenhorst in the chair. She had an air of watchfulness, as though she expected something to happen suddenly. She reminded him a little of Deane, the way her head was raised and the way the shadow fell across her face. Something Deane used to say came to his mind: *Count your blessings, things could always be worse.*

But where was there any blessing in all this? It seemed like that was a Pollyanna idea, a refusal to face something just because it was grim. Something of his mood must have communicated itself to the girl. She stood up and said, "Everything has happened so fast; it is too hard to believe. So much happened since yesterday."

Lance stopped his cigarette halfway to the ashtray. He felt the pounding in his throat that told him he was close to something. If he took Deane's advice and counted his blessings there was a lot of comfort in knowing something about the situation. After all, he could be sitting there knowing only that the boy was gone. It had all happened too fast, really. Because what was the psychology of the kidnaper? To exploit concern, to capitalize on fear, to wring that gnawing ache for all it was worth and squeeze the last drop out of the tear-rimmed pictures springing up in your mind.



All that took time. If you were going to run the build-up right, to put on the show with professional skill so to speak, why wouldn't you wait a little while to let the parents seethe themselves limp? And if Grozius were in it, then there were Russian overtones rung in which should drag everything out to the Oriental ultimate in pain.

So, pursuing the idea, it looked funny that in eight hours the boy had been snatched, a contact made, and a rendezvous arranged. Why?

Lance ground his cigarette out. Something beside fear was in him now; he was hot on an angle and the relief it brought him was enormous. "If what you say is right," he said to the girl, "what do you think it means?"

The girl looked at him blankly. "Means?"

"Yes. It *has* happened fast. This business about my boy, I mean. Why do you think it was done?"

The girl shrugged. "Only because Grozius wants my father very badly."

"I don't think you understand me. Look at it from his side for a minute. From Grozius'. Why should he kidnap a child, an Army officer's child at that? Why didn't he just send a carful of agents in here to get your father, for example? That's the way the Russians have pulled off every other snatch they've made over here, isn't it?"

She looked at Lance helplessly. "I cannot say. I only know that Grozius will use the method that suits him best at the time."

Lance nodded. Then he got up from the desk and started to walk back and forth on the rug. After a moment, "Thanks a lot, Miss Ahrenhorst," he said. "If I need you for anything I'll call you." He wanted to be alone to think.

The girl slipped out of the room, leaving the note in the chair. Lance picked it up and read it again. A sentence from the Army texts crossed his mind. *The good commander makes the best use of his tools regardless of the situation.*

You were supposed to use your tools. But how? The question quivered in his mind as he paced back and forth, unmindful of the darkness steeping the room. Because there was an angle, there was a use for the tools when you got right down to it.

LANCE didn't know how long he'd been marching back and forth in his office when the telephone signaled. The buzzer rattled insistently, and he felt as if he had to bring himself back a long way before he could make himself answer the phone.

"This is the operator," a tinny German-accented voice said. "We have a call for you. I think it is the same man who called you before. He is dialing in from somewhere."

"Put him on." Lance felt his heart jump.

"Colonel Lance?" It was the same voice, oily-smooth and with the indefinable accent.

"This is Colonel Lance." He forced himself to stay loose. This call tied in with the angle, this was consistent with everything happening fast.

"You have my message by now," said the voice. "Do you agree to carry out the conditions I stated?"

Lance's breath quickened. Everything hinged on the next few words; this was the last card in the stud game, it was throwing the reserve into the battle, it was—hell, it was the whole show. Lance bit off his words. "I agree to nothing. I refuse to turn the man back under the conditions you outline. The meeting place is not satisfactory." That'll get you, you bastard, he thought.

"Not satisfactory?" There was what could have been an indrawn breath at the other end. "What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. I don't trust you. You turn the boy over when we turn the old man over. Not at any other separate place."

There was a pause. "We hold the advantage. You want the boy returned, is it not so?"

Lance grinned briefly. He knew he had the man by the very nature of his stalling. "I hold the cards. You want the old man, don't you?"

There was a long silence. Then the man said, "Very well. We shall return the boy when the doctor is in our custody. At Klein Umstadt. There will be no tricks, Colonel. You nor anyone else is not to be allowed at Klein Umstadt. When the old man is in our hands the boy will be released to walk in from Klein Umstadt. And he will be covered by our guns every step of the way in case you are thinking of any American tricks."

Arrogance dripped into the wire and Lance could see the man at the other end, furious at having the plan changed but not able to avoid it. Lance felt like cheering. "I understand," he said. "Klein Umstadt at seven tomorrow morning for the old man and his notes. No tricks."

"You understand correctly, Colonel." The connection was broken.

Lance got up and carefully pulled the shades over his office windows, walked around and put on all the lights, then sat down at the phone. There were lots of calls to make, lots of people to see. . . .

There were only a few bad moments. One came when they talked to the girl. She stiffened, and at first Lance thought it was fear. "You will never fool Grozius," she said. "He will know that you are not my father the minute he sees you."

Lance was patient. "I'm not trying to fool him," he said. "Besides, you know how dark it is at seven. All I want to do is get close enough to him to get a gun on him. Then I'll see we get the boy. But I just think it'll look strange if you're not there. I don't think your father ever went anywhere without you the last few years did he? Could he walk without your help?"

The girl shook her head. "I go," she said. "I must. But it cannot bring but more tears."

And then Lance saw it wasn't fear but worse: a spiritless resignation.

There was another bad moment with the pilots. "It's not that I don't want to put that thing down in there, Colonel," one of them said. "But it'll be dark. It's a question of being able to do it." So they bent over the maps some more, fingers tracing contours and wood lines until Lance shook his head and shoved the green-and-white map sheet away.

Lance turned to Grimski. "Bill give Tumulty another buzz, will you? He must have heard from that agent by now."

But Grimski came back shaking his head. "No word yet, Colonel." He paused. "We better forget about him."

Then the pilot laughed, a tight little rasp, and jabbed his finger at a white space on the map that meant open ground. "I'll be right there. All you have to do is get there." And it wasn't a bad moment any more.

The worst time came when everything was racked up and they were sitting around red-eyed having coffee. "Colonel," Grimski said, "you know what the regimental commander'll do to all this, don't you?"

Lance set his cup down with a little click. He leaned toward the major. "Do you know something? I don't give a damn what he'll do. Because he isn't going to know a thing about it."

Grimski pursed his lips in a soundless whistle.

"I won't insult you by telling you I'll give you a letter saying I assume full responsibility for this thing," Lance said, "because this is my outfit and whatever happens is on me. But the colonel told me the Army'd help me. That was okay with me, I expected that. But then he said I had to sit and wait while they negotiated." Lance ran a hand through his hair. "The hell with that noise. We're working on three angles as I see it. The fact there's some urgency in all this for a reason not too clear, the fact that the Russians can't afford to lose any face, and the fact that we have a very simple means of putting the whole town of Klein Umstadt in an uproar if we have to. So I'm using my own tools. That's what a commander's supposed to do. And if it fails, it fails. How much time have we got?"

Grimski looked at his watch. "Two-and-a-half hours."

LANCE squatted close to the road near the edge of Klein Umstadt and watched the girl move silently down the dull stripe of road twisting toward the heavy shadows swelling out of the houses ahead. The faint mists rising in the morning chill floated softly past narrow windows. The ditches that flanked the road held the metallic glint of water under bushes that marked the edge of the fields sweeping up a gentle slope to the woods on the right. A darker spur of hill rose to the left, only now just beginning to glow with the sun that was still a good half hour or more out of the sky.

Lance could feel himself sweating under the binding weight of the old man's overcoat. The Army .45 sagged in his pocket and he moved so the butt didn't gouge his side. He resisted the temptation to look at his watch again and instead tried to clear the dryness from his mouth by swallowing.

It wasn't easy to squat there, facing the muffled town, feeling cut off from everything, while the girl moved slowly toward the barrier pole and the Border guard shack. He shoved a hand into his pocket and felt the rough texture of Win's patch under his fingers. He'd brought it along for luck, a little talisman that said the thing would go. But rubbing the patch didn't remove the sensation of being alone in a vast morass where nobody gave a damn what happened and there was no way to turn. The illusion was heightened by the chill dampness, by the sharp smell of fresh-ploughed earth. There was no hum of automobiles, no creak of carts, no sign of activity from the little houses under their deep-set eaves. Lance watched the girl's form melt into the darkness to become a darker blur about where the yellow-and-black town-marker sign was supposed to be. The little shack used by the Border post was just beyond the sign, and Lance strained his eyes to stab the gloom, wondering what was inside the shack and in the town and what it meant for him and for Win.

HIS plan was based on two things. One, that Grozius or whoever engineered the thing wanted old man Ahrenhorst in a hurry; and two, that whoever was running the show did not intend to produce the boy when Ahrenhorst arrived. That angle, Lance felt, covered the two most likely possibilities and he was not depending on a specific course of enemy action. By sending the girl into town first to contact Grozius under the pretext her father had collapsed from fright and weakness down the road Lance hoped to improve his bargaining position. And if the boy had been brought down per agreement, so much the better. If not, there would be a little time to get to work.

He looked into the darkness again, seeing a faint shaft of light split the road ahead. That could mean the girl was inside the guard shack and now would be talking to two sleepy Border guards or even to Grozius himself. But suppose Grozius suspected something? Suppose somebody knew what had landed in the open place by the woods, suppose somebody had spotted the vehicles drifting into the ridge beyond? There was so much that could go wrong that all at once nothing seemed right.

A faint scraping down the road rasped at his ear and Lance stiffened. The shaft of light widened, then disappeared. Lance could make out two figures in the murk, then saw the light material of the girl's coat. "Father," she called out clearly, "the guard is here to help you."

Lance raged silently. Guard. That didn't help worth a damn, it knocked the whole thing galley west. Because they had to get to the contact man if they were going to get to Win. Somebody was suspicious; they'd sent the guard down.

And he didn't dare ask the girl anything now; if he spoke in English he'd give it away and his German wouldn't get by. So he tightened his muscles there under the shadow of the bushes and waited.

The girl stopped. Lance held himself in until he could recognize the small sunburst insignia of the East Zone People's Police on the man's cap. Then he sprang at the man and clubbed swiftly with the pistol. Lance grabbed the guard under the arms as he went down and eased him toward the ditch. He gagged him with his cap and trussed him, wrists to ankles behind his back, with his broad leather belt. Then he heaved him nearer the ditch, and pulled some branches over him.

LANCE stepped back. "That's a hell of a note," he whispered to the girl. "How many guards in that shack? Is Grozius there? What about the boy?"

The girl's face was luminous in the dark. "There are only the two guards. They knew we were coming. But there is no one else there yet."

Lance closed his eyes. Now what? It would be only seconds before the other guard got suspicious. He had to be taken care of. And there was no telling how long this one would stay in the ditch. "Look," Lance murmured, "I've got to get the other guard too. Then we'll have to wait. That's all we can do, sit there and wait. Are you scared?"

The girl nodded. "Of course," she said matter-of-factly. "But I help. What do you want that I do?"

"Nothing. Just stay outside while I get the other guard." He slipped to the right of the road and moved toward the guard shack.

He got to the barrier bar, ducked under it, and poised by the corner of the guard shack, listening. It was a rude building, put together with clapboards and a small roofed-over porch. Lance could hear someone moving inside. He saw that the door opened in, being hung on the inside of the jamb.

He eased up on the porch and quietly took hold of the doorknob. He turned it quickly, flung the door back and jumped inside, his pistol held low, his feet apart. Then he almost laughed, it was so easy. The other guard was just lifting a battered coffee-pot from a little gasoline stove in the corner. He was a youngish-looking joker with a mustache penciled under his sharp nose. The coffee-pot fell from his hands as he slowly raised his arm, a look of incredulous fright settling over his face like a shade going down over a window.

Lance gestured him into a corner away from the two stacked rifles, then moved a small table toward him. Lance said, *"Platz! Setz sich!* Sit down!" The man sat down slowly.

The girl came in the door. Lance had her fasten the man's hands to his feet with his belt, then shoved the table over his head. He thought of simply cooling the man off with a quick rap from the pistol, but there were too many questions to be answered.

Looking cautiously around the shack, noting that the two rifles in the corner were well out of reach and that the shack was very small, with just the table and two chairs and some kindling wood for furniture. There was no stove except the gasoline stove. One lamp glowed dully from a cord in the ceiling and there were cracks in the planking around the single window. An old *Wehrmacht* field phone rested on the narrow window sill, along with a heel of black bread and a stump of wurst. The place had the sharp musty almost sour smell he remembered from German soldier bivouacs in the war.

The guard, pulled forward under the table by the way the girl had tied him, glared up at Lance. Lance leaned over and tested the belt as the girl backed away. "Close the door," he told her, "then ask this bird who told them we were coming, where whoever it was is now, and if he knows anything about the boy."

The girl snapped some German. The guard spat at her.

"Ask him again," said Lance.

The guard swore at her.

Lance reached down and turned the front sight of the pistol to touch the man's forehead. He raked it across the skin, just under the hairline, not hard enough to cut, but he could tell it hurt. "Ask him again."

THE guard answered this time and Lance straightened up.

"He says an MVD man gave them the order to hold us here if we showed up. He knows nothing about the boy."

Lance looked at his watch. Seven-twenty. It was twenty minutes past the rendezvous time. If Grozius was really in a hurry something should be showing before long. If he wasn't—well, the guard relief would take them over and that was that. "Ask him where the phone goes." Lance looked out the window toward the town, seeing the sky beginning to brighten. A German came out of the nearest house and turned up the street.

"He says the phone goes to the Rathaus, to the police chief's office in the town."

Lance nodded, still looking out the window. The guard relief came on at eight, which meant they had thirty-five minutes at the most. There was no point in turning the guard shack into a bastion; if nothing happened by five minutes to

eight he and the girl would have to take off. The whole thing would be a flop and he'd never see Win again. He closed his eyes briefly at the thought, then quickly forced the idea out of his mind. Because he had to be right about the time involved; there was some urgency, there was the need Grozius had for the old man. Somebody had to come.

IT was light enough to recognize the car when it eased out of the town. It was a Volkswagen with its blunt little nose to the ground between ridiculously small wheels, like a beagle sniffing the trail. "Get out on the porch," Lance told the girl. "*Quick!*" Then he shifted to a corner where he could cover the guard with the pistol and still see the car through the window.

The car slowed to a halt, its tail light blinking briefly in reflection on the rear fender. Lance heard the girl shift her feet on the porch of the shack, then move slowly toward the car. As she came into his view past the corner of the shack, Lance saw a window roll down in the car. He couldn't see inside but he saw the girl nod her head toward the shack, then saw a fat man lumber out of the back seat of the car and stand gesticulating at the girl. The driver stayed behind the wheel. The man was wearing a dark topcoat and a beret and even in the half-light Lance could see how his thick little lips moved heavily in his face. From this and from the way the girl held herself away from the man, he knew that this was Grozius.

There was no sign of the boy.

Lance stiffened at the window as the girl moved slowly toward the shack, Grozius shuffling along beside her.

"*Achtung! Achtung!*" The guard under the table took that moment to bellow a warning. Lance snapped a shot at him and without even knowing if he hit him ripped open the door and was at Grozius in a great bound. The man was quick; he whirled away and jumped back. The girl thrust out her foot and tripped him sprawling as the Volkswagen driver came halfway out of the car with a gun in his hand. He fired a shot at Lance, the gun making a surprisingly small noise. Lance felt something claw at his coat and a red haze settled over his eyes. All at once he had a great strength, as if all the tension, the anxiety and the ache that had lived inside him so long was blasted into power by the shot. He fired at the driver and saw him fold behind the door of the car, then slump into the street.

"Daddy, Daddy!" A small voice screamed at him from inside the car. Lance's heart leapt, but he couldn't get at the car. Grozius was sitting up in the road, trying to aim a gun into the rear seat of the Volkswagen. Lance started to fire at him, then saw the girl fling herself onto the man, her skirts flying as she scrambled for his gun hand. Lance jumped onto the man, landing on the great belly with both feet. Grozius screamed once, his gross face turning a thick yellow; then he went limp.

Lance jerked the girl to her feet. "Head for the helicopter on top of the slope. Hurry up! The whole town'll be down here in a minute." Then he shouldered his way into the back door of the Volkswagen and saw Win.

The boy was huddled on the floor of the car. Aside from a lot of dirt on his face and the ripped sleeve on his jacket, he looked all right. Win sprang up and out of the door. Lance turned around, an arm around the boy.

"*Hande hoch!*" The guard stepped from inside the guard shack, a rifle in his hands. He stood on the porch, the muzzle pointing at Lance's belly.

Lance swept Win behind him, his body braced for the shock of the bullet. The guard stood menacingly, a red streak on his forehead, his eyes boring into Lance's face. From the corner of his eye, Lance could see Grozius stirring on the ground. Why didn't the guard shoot and get it over with? Or did Grozius have to have his fun first? He stood there, keeping his hand on the boy behind him.

Grozius lurched to his feet, holding his beret in his hand. Lance saw that he was bald, with deep scars in his head, and that a fine stream of blood had clotted at the corner of his mouth. His eyes blazing, he came up to Lance—and staggered him with a fist to the mouth.

There was nothing to do or say now; there was no way to influence the action any further

"Hereafter, if there's anything you want to know, ask ME. Never mind writing to Dr. Kinsey."

from here. If the rest of the thing was going to work, it would have to be triggered by someone else. But there was no way to give any signal, and Grozius could kill them both before anything could happen.

"I warned you no tricks, you fool!" Grozius snatched the boy and flung him toward the guard, then jerked the pistol away from Lance.

"Where is Ahrenhorst?" Grozius yelled shrilly, thrusting his face at Lance.

"Go to hell!" Lance braced himself for another blow.

None came. Grozius smiled mirthlessly. "We shall see." He turned to the guard, jabbering in German.

Lance saw Win look startled, then shrink toward the porch of the shack. The sentry moved the muzzle of the rifle to cover Win, and Grozius turned to Lance.

"Now," Grozius said, "we shall see who is the most clever after all. You are the great Colonel Lance and you think you can cheat me. So I give you my answer to all of this, *hein?* I know something has gone wrong, that you have no intention of keeping your bargain. So I have no intention of keeping mine. I shall therefore let you watch the execution of your son." Grozius smiled. "Then I shall have you tried for border violation, for murder—" Grozius jerked his head toward the body still in the street "—and for our purposes we will publish your confession. All in due time, of course. Just now we will watch your son die. I—"

"Steady, Win!" Lance called to the boy but the words were lost in a great whirring sound that split the sky. Two planes roared in over the village and a great deluge of noise burst over them. White puffs exploded around the guard shack; machine guns hammered and a rolling wave of fire crashed through the streets.

Lance dived for the guard's rifle. He twisted it out of his hands and sent him crashing into the porch with a butt-jab to the face. Grozius fired at him, standing in the street amidst popping flares and whistling rockets, his face twisted, one arm outflung. Lance laughed and swung the rifle at his head, feeling the shock of the stock splintering against Grozius' head. Grozius collapsed as more puffs bloomed on village roofs and the exploding uproar became louder.

Lance grabbed Win and ran up on the porch. Then a deeper throbbing was beating under the noise. Lance pulled Win into the street as a helicopter circled slowly overhead. Waving his arms violently, Lance signaled the 'copter down and boosted Win up to the bubble while the planes overhead made another pass. Then, hauling himself up on the runners, Lance scrambled into the bubble. "Get on up there," he yelled at the pilot, "they'll start fighting back any minute." The 'copter shot up so fast it threw Win hard against Lance. There was only a fleeting glimpse of the guard shack below, the violence suddenly gone and only the car at the barrier with Grozius, sprawled in the road, and the dead driver to be seen. Lance twisted his head to look for the guard but the copter was already flashing over the woods.

Colonel Renihan set his coffee cup down. "I don't know whether to congratulate you or court-martial you."

Lance shrugged. "It didn't cost the government anything except about a month's worth of training pyrotechnics," he said. "I'll write it up in the report as an unauthorized fireworks display. But you see how I felt, don't you? I figured the Army'd quit on me, I had some tools, I had to use them."

"I can't blame you, Tom," Renihan said. "But you're lucky the girl got away; you'd have been deader than hell otherwise."

Tom looked at Miss Ahrenhorst, sitting primly in the office chair. "She told me she'd help. But I never knew how much it would be. She tipped off the fireworks."

The girl smiled and ruffled Win's hair. "We must really thank the young man. I think the colonel has gotten the idea from the shoulder patch."

Win held up the Air-Sea Rescue patch, and smiled. Lance thought he'd never seen him look better. "I got the idea of taking the 'copters in from that thing," he said, "but I never figured they'd pull us right off the ground." He pushed his coffee cup back. "The light planes, the battle noises, the blanks, and the rest of it were extra fillips. And it worked, that's the thing. But I'd still like to know what was pushing Grozius."

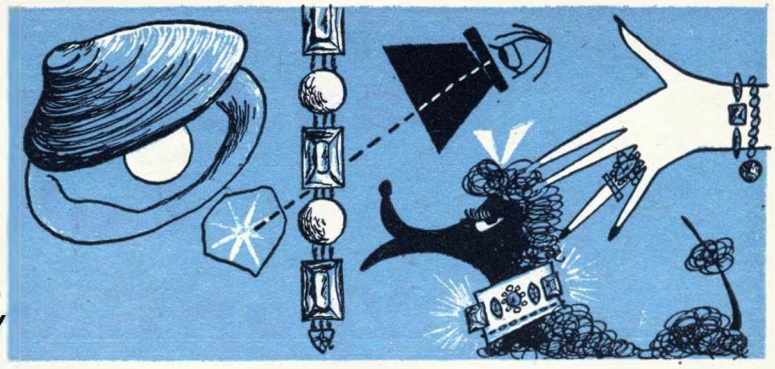
Renihan stood up. "We'll probably never know for sure. But Tumulty's agent—he got back, you know—said the word was around over there that Grozius was pushing because he was in a jam with his own bosses over the escape. However, Grozius hadn't reported what the notes were. So maybe he was trying to get the old scientist's weapon for himself. It makes sense, I guess. The battle for power goes on and on among the Russians, and there must be a lot of in-fighting."

Lance got up to walk out with Renihan. Looking at Win standing with the girl, he thought, I can make it all up to him. It's funny I couldn't see that my own troubles were crowding him right out of things. And he looks nice standing there with her, as if he were pretty happy.

As he went out the door with Renihan, Lance thought that here was a situation worth looking into a little more.

—By Franklin M. Davis, Jr.

READ ALL ABOUT IT...



By JOHN T. DUNLAVY

GEMS

THE largest pearl ever found weighed 14 pounds and came from an oyster weighing 250. It was dredged up from the Sulu Seas off Palawan Island in 1934. It is believed that this pearl took 600 years to form. Despite its size this pearl is practically worthless as jewelry because of its odd shape and poor luster. Pearl fishermen estimate that about 1,000 pearl-oyster shells are opened for each pearl found. Fine pearls are never found in edible oysters. The most unusual pearl treasure known is a rug owned by the Gaekwar of Baroda, India, which is made entirely of threaded pearls. Measuring 10½ feet by 6 feet it is worth millions. It takes from three to five years to grow a cultured pearl. X-ray and complex optical tests are necessary to tell a natural pearl from a cultured one. In 1929 a single pearl worth $250,000 was found in the Persian Gulf.

ONE of the many superstitions connected with gems is that they have special properties. At one time or another people have believed that: zircons hold off fever and prevent plague; moonstones ward off lunacy; emeralds prevent epilepsy; aquamarines renew married love; rubies bring wealth and wisdom; amethyst prevents drunkenness and agate wards off spider bites. Ancient Greeks believed jewels had magical medicinal powers and they often ground up gems into a powder, mixed with wine or water, and drank it.

DIAMONDS, the hardest of stones, are harder than steel. Hardness, however, refers to the scratching ability of a diamond, not its strength against shock. Even a moderate blow from a hammer will crack a diamond. The United States imports about $100 million worth of diamonds yearly, one half of that in uncut stones. It is not unusual for a diamond cutter to spend a solid year studying a rare diamond before attempting to cut it. There are no diamond mines in the United States today. The only state in which diamond mining was attempted was Arkansas and the mine was closed when costs proved too high.

GEMS are usually shown to customers in a north light in rooms painted gray or black so that true colors may be seen. Fluorescent or other artificial light distorts gem colors. In jewelry manufacturing shops where precious gems are handled, wooden grills are set in the floors so that if any stones are accidentally dropped they will lodge safely in a crevice.

THE largest diamond ever found was the Cullinan diamond, which weighed 3,106 carats (one and one-third pounds) and was discovered in 1906 in the Premier Mine in South Africa. It's value was estimated at $75 million. The most famous diamond in history was the 186-carat Kohinoor, believed to have been discovered in India around 2000 B.C. Eventually both of these stones were cut into a number of smaller diamonds and became part of the British crown jewels.

THE jewels in a watch are usually synthetic rubies or sapphires worth about 4¢ apiece. Most gem stones can be duplicated synthetically with all of the chemical, physical and optical properties of the natural stone. While reports are made from time to time of synthetic diamonds, gem experts have never seen any and doubt that this stone can be duplicated by a mechanical process.

BECAUSE their crystal structure differs, no two cut diamonds are exactly alike. This fact led Scotland Yard to devise, in 1938, a method of "finger printing" diamonds based on microscopic photographs of their crystal structure. This method of identifying valuable diamonds has since come into general use.

OPALS owe their play of color to interference of light reflected from various layers within the stone and may be white, green, yellow, blue, red or black. Because of their high water content—often 20% of the weight of the stone—opals may dry out, lose their color and eventually crack in high temperature, low humidity climates. This is why the beautiful black opals found in Nevada frequently disintegrate when brought to the surface. As a result Nevada opal mines are practically useless.

STAR rubies contain six rays of light which form the star. The only twelve-ray star ruby ever known was found in Ceylon in 1948 and weighs 25.2 carats. It is considered priceless. A six-ray star ruby of that size would be worth about $7,500. Also found in 1948, in Australia, was the largest star sapphire ever known—1,156 carats.

Can Chemistry Cultivate Your Garden?

BY CARL H. WINSTON

To have a great garden nowadays, about all you have to do is lie in a hammock—according to some of the claims. Just how valid are they?

During the past couple of years suburban gardeners have been slugged, beaten over the head and otherwise massaged by loud claims for all sorts of gardening "miracle drugs." These wonder-workers cultivate your lawn, carefully killing off everything except the blue-blooded grass strains; they weed your garden, never mistaking the pursley for a petunia; they turn the patch of clay-and-old-shingles that you bought with your house into the blackest humus, to a depth of eight feet.

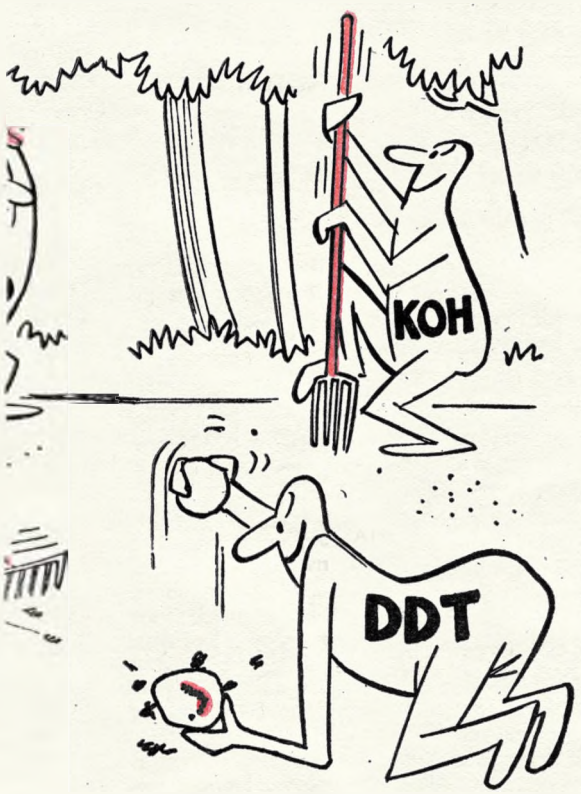
Well, maybe.

BLUEBOOK editors asked me to find out just how valid some of these claims were. I contacted experts of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and talked to those at several State Experiment Stations. I also did a little trying-out in my own rather punch-drunk vegetable plot.

What I discovered was that *generally* these "miracle drugs" are pretty miraculous—but you better use them properly and in moderation. Otherwise you'll wind up with either a very sick garden or a very flat pocketbook—or, possibly, both.

As one instructor in soil chemistry said, "Penicillin, aureomycin and ACTH are all wonder drugs. But you wouldn't stock up your medicine chest with gallon jars of each and expect to cure all your ailments for the rest of your life. So it is with gardening aids. Many of them are invaluable, but you simply have to know what you're doing with them."

Most experts agreed also that some manufacturers have oversold—or at least over-advertised—their products. So let's take a look at some of these new chemicals.



Soil Conditioners: These are probably the most spectacular and important—at least, from a long-range point of view. Some experts believe further development of these may revolutionize our agricultural thinking, ultimately making fertile lands of areas now barren. Their value to the guy with a 20-by-20 garden is something else again.

In 1952 the Monsanto Chemical Co. announced it had developed a product, called Krilium, that was capable of working wonders with inadequate soils. Some observers declared it would prove 1,000 times more effective than manure. Other manufacturers immediately dashed into the field with their versions of Krilium; extravagant claims were hurled; ads implied that any type of poor soil could be changed into fertile land merely by sprinkling the stuff on the ground.

In discussing some of these claims, the Soils Department of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station declared it had tested "more than two dozen substitutes for the original product. Of these," the report stated, "only three were found to be effective. Some of the quickly developed products are known to be virtually worthless. Others may or may not have value. Until they get thorough trials by some unbiased agency, the purchaser should realize that he is doing the experimenting."

By now, many tests have been made and results are heartening. In a paper published in *Soil Science,* it is stated that "because of the increase of water-stable aggregates (in land tested with Krilium), aeration of treated soil is improved, and faster and more complete germination of seeds has been noted. Treatments have remained effective for two-and-a-half years."

Experiments at the University of Arizona

College of Agriculture revealed the fact that "the stand of corn and Sudan grass was significantly better in soils treated with the aggregate stabilizers (Krilium) than in soils without treatment." But it added: "In general the application in concentrations of four tons per acre had no greater influence on plant growth . . . than one ton per acre."

These findings, it must be stressed, were made under perfect conditions by experts in soil treatment. The average gardener cannot hope to test soil-conditioners in such a fashion. Most important, for him, is to know whether or not his soil actually needs improving. As was told me by a professor of agronomy at the Agricultural College of the University of Connecticut: "More important than any reckless treatment of the soil is a proper understanding of your soil. You must know if it needs improvement before you even think of how to improve it."

It has been definitely established that if your soil is what is known as "heavy" or "clayey," Krilium might prove mighty helpful. If it is too light, or sandy, Krilium may help, but the professor is highly dubious—said he'd never seen it work any improvement on sandy soils.

The Monsanto people themselves are eager to point out that Krilium can't help you much if you don't follow directions closely. They advise three types of application: on the surfaces, for lawns; three inches deep, for flower beds and certain vegetables; and six inches deep, for trees, shrubs and deep-rooted vegetables like carrots, beets, potatoes and asparagus.

No matter which method you use, you *must* first prepare your soil thoroughly. This means the ground should be raked and scraped to the required depth. The soil conditioner should then be spread evenly over the entire area. Immediately it should be mixed and spread until it is well distributed. Finally, the soil should be sprinkled lightly with water—and not watered again for at least 48 hours.

The correct amount can best be ascertained by reading instructions. Department of Agriculture officials suggest one pound of Krilium for every 20 square feet of soil. At current rates, this is *not* an inexpensive treatment.

A variation on the overall use of Krilium that has proven quite successful was described for me at the University of Connecticut. That is to pour a liquid type of Krilium along a row of seeds. This prevents crusting of the soil after a heavy rain and permits the seedlings to burst through the ground without difficulty. It's a lot less expensive, too.

All in all, agricultural authorities seem agreed that Krilium, when properly applied, will make heavy soils easier to work, will make them drain better, take water better and will promote early growth of plants.

Important to remember is this: Krilium improves only the structure of the soil; it does not enrich it. Only a recognized fertilizer will do that. And if your garden plot has been producing well for years, you'll be doing it very little good by trying to improve it chemically.

Liquid Fertilizers: The newest wrinkle in fertilizing is the water-soluble number, which is applied by what is known as the foliage system. As is the case with the soil conditioners, this is not a cheap method of doing a needed job; its value lies in the fact that it simplifies and cleans up what can be a messy and arduous chore. But if your garden is small, the cost probably won't break you.

Chemical fertilizers were formerly used in dry form almost exclusively. They had to be mixed in with the soil around the plants and great care had to be exercised to make sure the chemicals didn't burn the plants. But the new products, such as Nu-Green, Hygro, Rapid-Gro, Miracle-Gro, and Folium, are applied directly to the leaves and roots as well as to the soil surrounding the plant. One well-known agricultural writer told me that, in tests he conducted, roses fed with liquid fertilizer sprouted ten buds per plant, whereas untreated roses bore but six. Dozens of other experiments have given similar results.

It is generally agreed, however, that water-soluble fertilizers and foliage feeding are too expensive for large-scale operations. For the small vegetable-garden, most authorities advocate wetting the soil thoroughly with the solution, which is made up—as a rule—by dissolving one teaspoon in a quart of water, or one pound in twenty-five gallons of water. The soil should be thoroughly wetted immediately after you have planted your seeds and should be given the same solution every two weeks thereafter.

The basic principle behind foliage feeding, scientists say, has not yet been thoroughly explored. The theory is that plants can obtain the three elements most important to them—nitrogen, phosphorous and potash—just as easily when the elements are applied directly, as when the plants get them through the earth. Nitrogen is obtained by hydrolyzation of the urea in the solution; phosphorous is absorbed by the leaves and swiftly translocated to the roots; and potash, applied to leaves, can be absorbed and distributed through the entire plant within an hour.

To make water-feeding even easier, several firms are making applicators which can be attached to an ordinary garden hose. A feeder tube, made of plastic, may be filled with the fertilizer (in powder form) and, as the water is turned on, the fertilizer is fed into the stream in

the proper proportion. If your garden is small enough, you may fertilize it from an armchair.

Bug-Killers: Science hasn't yet got around to eliminating bugs entirely from gardens, but it has done a good job in finding new ways to massacre them. As every gardener knows, there are two kinds of bugs: sucking and chewing. The former must be knocked off by contact poisons and fumigation; the latter by stomach poisons. Today's insecticides are designed to do a job on either brand. Some of them, such as a mixture of nicotine sulfate and rotenone, can do both.

Naturally, a smart gardener will determine just what insects are dining on his precious plants and will get the chemical best suited to get them. For dusting, one expert suggested the following as minimum percentages required to do a good job: rotenone, .075; DDT, 3; nicotine, 2; pyrethrins, 0.2. All you need do, of course, is read the label of each can to determine how close they come to these figures.

Weed-Killers: A more spectacular form of murder in the garden is the war on weeds. While mulching does not come under the head of "miracle drugs," it is certainly a modern development and one of the best yet devised for keeping down weeds in the vegetable or flower garden. It is also a highly efficient way of preserving moisture in the soil—a factor not to be ignored during dry seasons such as most of us have been having lately.

Mulching is nothing more nor less than smothering the weeds between the rows in your garden with waste material. This may consist of rotted leaves, compost, buckwheat hulls, grass clippings, paper or even cardboard. I have had great success by strewing on my garden the long reeds I cut down in the adjoining fields. You must be certain, of course, that the mat is thick and impenetrable. Incidentally, mulching fits in well with liquid fertilizing, because the solution can easily soak through the mulch to get to the roots of your plants.

If you mulch properly, you should have no trouble with weeds for the entire season. It may not be the most sightly proposition in the world, but you're growing plants, not scenery.

A more serious problem are the weeds that insist on growing on your lawn. Here science has done a noble job. Dozens of chemicals are now available, and most experts declare them all good for certain tasks.

But here again, a word of warning. Injudicious use of a weed-killer may cause havoc. Contact herbicides, as they are called, are nonselective and that means they will kill not only weeds, but everything else in your garden too. Others, such as 2-4D (dichlorophenoxyacetic acid) for some reason, are lethal only to broad-leaved plants—which makes them invaluable on lawns.

Most commercial preparations advocate a solution of five gallons of weed-killer to 1,000 square feet of lawn. At the University of Connecticut I was told there was some danger if you use more than this amount. Especially when you have high temperature and a fair breeze, the scientists said, the killer can spread—and that would mean the end of such items as tomatoes, roses, grapes and shrubs.

Poison ivy, it has been found, can be hit hard with a new chemical called 2-4, 5-T. A great asset of this product is that it moves along through all parts of the plant, and doesn't kill just the one section it hits. A chemical known as Crag No. 1 is safe on almost any crop, I am told. This one is inactive until it enters moist soil. Ammate is highly recommended by some experts who prefer it to 2-4D—but they say it occasionally has a bad; but temporary, effect on grass.

The "miracle drugs" of gardening are on the shelves of every hardware store; *you* have to supply the common sense. You must decide what job you want done and which chemical will do it best. Science will then take over.

—By Carl H. Winston

The Winner

She sat at the ringside, hating his guts and hoping he'd be badly mauled. He was her husband.

BY HARRY OLIVE

The guard tried to stop her at the entrance of the dressing room. "Sorry lady, nobody goes in."

"I'm Mrs. Cannon," Katie said. She said it as though it were Queen Elizabeth or Mamie Eisenhower. She smiled suddenly, the same smile that flooded rotogravure sections and picture magazines. It was supposed to open all doors. It opened this one.

Cannon was stretched out on the rubbing table, a robe tight around him, a towel around his neck. Johnny Greco was standing beside the table, and Cannon's trainer, Whitey O'Hara, was flexing the fingers and palm of Cannon's right hand through the roll of bandage. Greco turned to face her as she closed the door. "Hello Kate," he said.

"Hello Johnny," she said softly.

"We only got a few minutes, Kate. Don't start nothing," Johnny said.

"Still the peacemaker, Johnny."

Cannon's hand came out, pushing Greco to one side so that he could look at her. He raised himself, sitting up on the table, staring at her. The blue eyes smiling. "Hello, Katie."

"Lew," she said. Her voice was quiet, but something inside her hardened, and the words came out flat and unyielding, without modulation. "You're looking good," she said.

"You too," he admitted.

She always looked good, he thought. No matter what, she always managed to look good. The way she kept the sheen on the black hair. The warm luminous look in the great dark eyes, even when she hated your guts. The whiteness of her skin. She never lost that movie sleekness.

"I've been to see Moran," she said. "He looks good too."

"He's a good boy," Cannon said. "One of the best."

"Better than you, Lew," Kate said. "Younger."

"You better stop, Kate," Greco said.

"No," Cannon broke in. "Don't stop her."

She was leaning against the door, staring at Cannon. "I bet on him, Lew. Your checks for the last three months. I bet it all on Moran."

"You could lose," Cannon said.

"Not this time," Kate said. "Not this time. I don't think so."

He smiled; the small crooked smile that twisted the corners of his mouth up and away. "That's what makes a bet, Katie girl, a difference of opinion."

"You better get out of here, Kate," Greco interrupted.

"I'm going, Johnny," she said softly. "I just had to see the boy and tell him."

"All right, Kate, so you told him. Now, beat it."

"You shouldn't talk that way to a lady, Johnny," Cannon said.

Greco was staring at her, the hate welling in his dark eyes. "I should hand her her head," he said softly. He waited until she had gone before he finished. "There's beatings besides what you can get in the ring, Lew. You shouldn't let her hang around."

Cannon looked at the little manager. "Go ahead. Stop her."

Greco shrugged his thin shoulders.

She sat quietly in the ringside seat. People came by. People she knew. People who knew her. They said, "Hello, Kate. You're looking good. How have you been? Where have you been keeping yourself?"

She smiled. "Around," she answered. Only, she hardly knew whom she was talking to, or what they were really saying.

She sat there. The sound moving around her. The air blue with cigarette haze. Listening to the voices ask her, "What are you doing, Katie, what are you doing?"

She had a sudden thought. It would be easy to shock them. "I'm waiting," she could say. "I'm waiting to see Lew Cannon take a beating. Maybe waiting to watch him get killed in the ring."

Cannon. Cannon who had never taken a beating in the ring. "The ghost," they called him. The newsmen, who tagged everything with a quick and easy label. But sometimes, they called it right. The ghost. A moving wraith. Move fast, hit fast. A flashing left hand that cut and stung. A right, hard and heavy and chopping; a right that could paralyze.

How many times had she sat ringside. Just off his corner. Waiting for the time to come when he would be on the receiving end. Sometimes, it was hard to remember; the mind groped in a haze of gray smoke, ticking them off one by one by one. Seventeen. Seventeen times, watching, waiting, while Cannon kept winning.

Once, somewhere along the way, he had stopped on his way down the aisle to the ring, looking down at her. "How many times is it Katie?" he had asked. "How many times you been waiting for me to take a licking?"

"Fifteen, Lew," she had told him.

"That's a lot of hate to have for a man," he had said softly.

"That's right, Lew, a lot of hate. But you earned it, didn't you, Lew?"

"Did I, Katie?"

"You did, Lew. You did."

BUT the checks kept coming. Month after month. They never stopped. And he never stopped winning.

"What is it, Cannon, conscience money?"

"Call it that," he said.

"So you don't have to feel guilty?"

"I don't," he said.

"You just like me, is that it?"

"Sure," he said. "I just like you."

Her lips had tightened as she had refolded the check and put it in her purse. "All right, Cannon, I'll keep it. Just 'cause you like me. Everytime you fight, Cannon, I'll be betting. Every nickel you send me, I'm going to bet. Bet against you. Bet and pray that somebody clubs your brains out. I'll make a profit out of your blood, Lew, the way you got paid out of mine. You'll be round-heeled and empty-eyed, and I'll be glad."

"Sure, Katie, sure," he said. "It's a deal."

Sometimes, she wondered why he went along with it. Listening to the venom she poured on him. Taking it and still sending a check every month. Trying to buy her off. Trying to pay for something that couldn't be paid for.

Inside herself, she called him a fool. Once, she had even called him a fool to his face. Loudly, firmly. "You're a fool, Cannon. A fool, and fools were made to be taken."

He had looked at her for what seemed a long time. His lips had tightened in momentary

Illustrated by AL GABRIELE

anger. Then, as quickly as it had come, the anger was gone. The lip line softening. A smile ghosting itself into his eyes. "Maybe so, Katie, maybe so." . . .

The crowd noises were getting to her. The semifinal was in its last round. Two youngsters. Eager, willing, but unskilled. They had youth and muscle. But that's all they did have.

She had been watching haphazardly. Watching the blond boy. He moved well. But there was something about him that disturbed her. A mannerism. A way he had of holding the left shoulder low. The arm, bent at the elbow, out and away from the body. Careless, leaving his left side open and unprotected. A very good boy could do it as part of a battle plan. For anyone else, it was an invitation to slaughter.

She had it then. Mike used to do the same thing. The left shoulder low, the arm down, half bent; the beginning of a left hook that cracked across. Short, hard, a punch that stunned and punished. That had almost made him middleweight champion of the world. Almost. Only Lew was middleweight champion of the world. And Mike Teague—brother Mike—was oh so very dead.

Mike Teague who had been good, and Lew Cannon who was the best. Fifteen rounds for the middleweight championship of the world. And the best beat the very good. A husband beat his wife's brother. Beat him badly. Knocked him out in the eighth round.

Knocked him out with a savage left hook to the belly that started him down. A right cross nailed him on the side of the head as he was falling. Sending him all the way.

He was unconscious for twenty minutes.

Later that night, he hemorrhaged. Brain damage.

He died on the way to the hospital.

And Katie Teague Cannon, sitting second row ringside, had watched, while her husband killed her brother. But that hadn't done it. Almost, but not quite.

THE semifinal was over. The blond kid had won. A right decision. Sometimes, they were raw. The kid was doing a happy little jig in his corner; donning his robe, as his handlers held it for him; bounding up and down on firm, still strong, young legs.

They'll go, Katie thought. Soon enough, your legs will go. You have strength and youth, and you're happy with it. But you took too many punches. Too many punches to the head. You wade in and punch, and you're the kind that doesn't learn. In a year or two or three, the flesh above your eyes will be puckered and ridged with scars from too many cuts. The cartilage of your ears will be smashed and flattened, and your ears will be shapeless. The nose will have been broken once or twice, and the tip will be flat and mashed and spreading.

Maybe, by then, they'll have gotten all they can from you. The wise-money boys. They'll have cut you up into little pieces of percentage, and deal, and counter deal. And maybe somebody will be kind and tell it to you: "You're through. You ain't got it. Get out while you can still count without using your fingers. Get out." And maybe enough punches will have been poured into you so you'll listen. Maybe. But don't bet on it. You all start out to be champions.

A roar went up from the crowd. Moran was starting down the aisle. Moran. A crowd pleaser. Built in straight lines from the shoulders down. Solid, with thick legs that seemed planted where he stood. She had seen him go a couple of times before. A move-in, both-hands-to-the-body guy. He could hit and hit hard. Short paralyzing punches that numbed and destroyed. Moran was the one who could beat Cannon. She knew it. Moran was the one.

A loud cry came from behind her. She turned, seeing Moran coming down the aisle. Someone yelled, "You take it, Rock, you take it." Then, Moran was by, clambering up to the apron of the ring, climbing through the ring ropes, doing a little hopping dance as he stood in his corner, waiting.

There was shouting from the opposite side of the arena, and the crowd saw Cannon, moving behind his handlers toward the ring. The black hair combed back. The towel around his neck. The crimson robe, with Lew Cannon in three-inch gold lettering spelled out across the back. Cannon climbing into the ring. Standing in his corner, still. His calm unmarked face quiet, watchful. He turned in the corner once, slowly, looking out over the crowd, his lips compressed into a small smile of greeting. His eyes found her, and his head moved in a small nod of acknowledgment. She felt the stabbing inside her; and wished against it. There must be room for nothing but the hate. Nothing but the hate. . . .

Joe Cropsey, the arena announcer, moved to the center of the ring. He reached for the ring mike that hung suspended from the high mounting. His voice blared out over the speakers, smothering the crowd noises. "Ladies and gentlemen: Under the auspices of the International Sporting Association, Mike Biggo, President, we present at this time, the main event of the evening. Fifteen rounds of boxing for the middleweight championship of the world."

She was watching Cannon. She could never understand it. All his years in the ring, and he was unmarked. The skin smooth, the features still clean and straight and unhammered. There was a warmth in the palms of her hands and,

unknowingly, she wiped them against her thighs, rubbing them along the smooth-textured cloth. Suddenly, there was a hollow emptiness inside her that seemed to fill as quickly as it came. Flesh memory. Remembrance of time together. The feel of his skin beneath her caressing fingers. There was a trembling inside her.

Cropsey was pointing. "In this corner, weighing in at one hundred fifty-nine and a half pounds, possessor of a distinguished list of knockouts, the lethal-hitting challenger, Rock Moran."

There was a screaming burst of sound as the name blared out through the arena.

HER mind was bringing it back in sight and sound. Seeing it. Mike falling, lying still on the canvas; the quivering of his legs as he tried to rise; the pain-smashed face. And Lew standing over him for a moment, then being waved away while the referee counted.

When the match with Mike had been made, Lew had come to her.

He was very quiet, telling it to her in a flat, unyielding voice. "They're going to give Mike the match," he said.

She stared at him; knowing that she was really afraid; very much afraid; only, she wasn't feeling it now. It was deep and still inside her, and she must keep it that way, for now at least, so she could talk.

"It doesn't have to be," she said.

"It does, Katie," he said softly. "I'm afraid it does."

"You're better than he is. You don't have to fight him. You can fight somebody else. Anybody else."

"Next to me, Mike's the best," he said.

"But you're better. They know you're better."

"They need a gate," he explained. "Mike's the only one around who'll draw with me."

"Lew," she said. "Don't do it. Don't fight him."

"He's earned it, Katie. You can't say no to him."

"He'll get hurt," she said.

He tried to reverse it for her. "Maybe he'll beat me," he said.

"Pound for pound, there's nobody in the ring who can beat you." She said it slowly. Unknowingly, pride crept into her voice, despite her pleading. The pride of a woman who knows her man is the best there is at what he does. "Someday, maybe not so far away, there will be. In a year or two, maybe even Mike could do it, and I'd be asking the other way. But not today, Lew. Not today."

"I have to, Katie. It's my job. It's Mike's job too."

"To beat a man's brains out is no job."

"Mike wants the fight. He's been yelling for a match for eight months."

"You don't have to give it to him, Lew," she said.

"I do."

"All right," she said slowly. She turned from where she was standing, walking to where he was. Standing before him, looking up at his face, saying it, even while she knew she shouldn't. "All right, Lew. I'll ask it this way. You're my husband, and Mike is my brother. For me, Lew. For this once, let me have it my way."

For a moment, the indecision fought itself out on his face. His lips twisted. His shoulders moved in a slow gesture of helpless uncertainty. A nerve twitched beneath the left eye. Then it was over. "I'm sorry, Katie," he said.

A needle of sickness caught her between her ribs, and she wanted suddenly to leave the room. "You'll fight him," she said softly, "and you'll beat him. You'll beat him bad."

"It's my *business*," he said. "It's what I do. Mike plays it the same way."

Her face was pale, with lips drawn tight and thin, as though everything she were feeling had to be held in. "Nothing I say seems to make any difference," she said.

"I'm sorry, Katie."

"That doesn't help much, does it?" she asked.

He turned, moving away from her. The room became still, filled with a terrible quiet.

She was hurt. Down to the black, unknown pits of self. Yet, she came out of it. "I don't know why," she said, "but you're still my man."

And they stood there, looking at each other, until he knew there was nothing for him to do except go to her and hold her.

LATER, she admitted to herself, it had been a good fight. Mike had been as good as he had to be for the seven rounds he lasted. Until Lew caught him and finished him. She had gone home and waited. Lew had come in, late. Very late. The two of them had stood there and looked at each other, and then somehow she knew that she couldn't stay still any longer. She was moving to him, holding him to her. And the pain that had been pain for herself was pain for him. For the crucifixion was on his face: eyes burned black, skin white and taut and bruised, until she thought the flesh of him would burst through. All she could do was hold him and say his name. "Lew, oh, Lew, Lew." . . .

The booming of the announcer's voice brought her out of it. "And in this corner, weighing one hundred fifty-eight and a quarter pounds, the middleweight champion of the world, hailing from our own great metropolis, Lew Cannon."

The crowd noises again. Not quite so loud this time. The crowd tires. It wants change. They're not with you anymore, Lew. They want a new champion. And I want it too, Lew. I want you to lose, to be hurt, to be beaten.

It had happened after that night. After she had tried to take the pain from him.

Somehow, for a brief time, Eileen Megan. For a few nights that he stayed away. He had told her it was a rest, a small vacation, to heal the both of them; but it had been Eileen Megan.

She had heard, because what happened to or about Lew Cannon couldn't be kept secret.

She had heard, and waited, and told him.

There wasn't pain. Only the dead weight of numbness. The empty meaningless silence. The looking at him, and knowing that she was leaving.

He had wanted to talk, standing before her, his eyes coaled with the sickness that was in him. But nothing came, and all he could do was to watch her as she left. There was nothing that he could say.

At the door, she had turned, standing tall and straight, looking at him; her voice flat and controlled and quiet. "I'll send for the rest of my things."

"All right, Katie."

"I'm sorry, Lew."

"I'm sorry too, Katie. I'm very sorry."

"No," she said suddenly. "You're not sorry, Lew. If you could be sorry, it wouldn't have happened."

He looked at her, with the awareness in his eyes. "Maybe you're right, Katie."

And then, she was gone.

THE house lights dimmed. The handlers and the managers, giving last-minute ministrations and instructions, yanking the stools away, leaving the ring. The two fighters, the referee and the brilliant glaring loneliness of the ring. Waiting, waiting. Then, finally, the sound clanging over the great burst of sound. The bell.

Both of them moving out to the center of the ring. Moran moving slowly, his thickset body seemingly planted. His chin tucked in behind the left shoulder. His head held low, his gloves high. A fortress on legs.

Cannon moving gracefully. Flicking with a fast left, then another. Shifting, sinking a solid left hook into Moran's ribs; blocking the counter punches with his gloves. Neat and clean and good to watch.

Moran trying to work in close. Wanting to lay his head on Cannon's shoulder and plow his middle with short lefts and rights. Cannon moving, throwing crisp jabs to the head, then working the left hook hard to the body. A minute, two minutes, then Moran, beginning to counter instinctively, dropping his hands when the left hook started, trying to cover his midsection.

The round ended.

Greco waiting with the stool for Cannon. Wiping at Lew's eyes with the towel. "It's working nice," Greco said.

"Yeh."

"You keep it up that way," Greco said. "Three or four rounds of it. Every time he'll see that shoulder twitch, he'll be dropping the hands to cover. Then, you'll let it go to the head."

Lew, grinning for a moment. "You're a real smart boy."

"Sure," Johnny smiled back. "Real smart."

CANNON twisted for a moment, looking around the ringside.

"She's there," Greco said.

"I hope she's enjoying it."

"Forget it. You got a fight to fight."

"I'm fighting it," Cannon said.

The warning buzzer sounded.

Cannon got to his feet, while Greco pulled the stool out from under, patting him lightly on the buttocks. "Don't mix it with him; just work the hook," he whispered.

Lew, chewing down on his mouthpiece, nodded in agreement.

He moved in on Moran at the bell, flicking with a jab, feeling it land with that solid jarring impact. Watching Moran's face as the leather smashed against it. The grind of leather against flesh, the head popping back, the eyes filling with pain and surprise. Some things you never learned to like. The taste of leather in your mouth.

Moving. Flicking and moving and working the hook. Moran taking. Taking and waiting. The skin of his ribs red from the pounding, but still plodding and waiting. Swinging with fierce short punches that missed. Waiting. Strong and taking and waiting.

Cannon was breathing easily. He felt the strength, full in his legs, the muscles loose and well greased. His arms moving like well-oiled pistons. He had the feeling. Strength, sifting through his legs, feeling it purr through the middle of him. A knowledge, a certainty, knowing that he was right. That he could do it. That he was the King. That he could still do it.

Time after time you do it. So many times that you know. That you can feel it. Feel it grow in you, round by round, as you punch and move. Outfighting him. Watching his body, round by round, reddening, blotching with pink. Outthinking him. More than outthinking; it was reflexes. Watching a shoulder move, an arm; knowing what he would do before he began to do it, and beating him with the counter. Working on him through the third, the fourth, the

fifth. In the fifth, his mouth was cut, and the left eye was closing. In the sixth, the right eye; in the seventh, the eyes and the mouth. By the end of the seventh, he was hoping Moran would go down. Go down, kid, go down. I'll beat you pulpy, and it isn't worth it.

Telling it to Greco between rounds. "He should go now, Johnny, he should go."

Greco, shaking his head. Using his hands on the back of Cannon's neck. "No, he's cut, but that's all. He's like a bull, Lew; a little blood ain't gonna stop him."

"Soon," Cannon said, "I'm gonna work the shoulder."

"No," Greco said. "Not yet. Save it."

He said it, then. "The legs are good now. Another couple of rounds, they'll start to get tight."

"Wait a round," Greco said. "He's still too strong. You can't put him away with one, and that's all it's good for."

"All right," he said.

He moved out fast at the bell, dancing on the legs. Lean whippet legs. Still going, still strong. But not for much more. Working the left, once, twice, three times into Moran's face. Feeling the flesh give beneath the leather. The leather coming away with Moran's blood.

Moran, moving in close caught him with a short right under the heart. He fell in close and held on, the pain sharp and intense beneath his ribs. Moran was leaning on him. The rasping of his breath loud in his ears. Moran, thrusting him away, punching with a short left and right to the body, blasting needed air from his lungs. Oxygen that he needed and wasn't getting.

Moving away, trying to dance on legs that felt stiff. The mind demanding. Only the elastic was gone. The many-yeared rubber muscles didn't answer.

The knowledge comes then. The deep-bleeding knowledge that this can be the time. The old man with the scythe, the Stygian shadow. Moran standing in front of him, having the gall to trade jabs. Trade jabs with Cannon.

Not yet, not yet. You're counting too soon, son. Shoving your own left out, once, twice, snapping it into Moran's face a third time. Moving away again; out of range, mouth open, sucking wind.

Moran moving in on him.

He tried it then. It happened without volition. Reflexes responding to Moran's motion. Cannon feinting with the dropped left. Moran lowering his left to block. Cannon shooting out with the right. An overhand right lead.

He caught Moran. Caught him over the extended and waiting left. Caught him hard, high on the left side of the jaw. Moran seeming to stand rigid, frozen with shock and surprise.

Cannon moving, following up. A left hook to Moran's head, another, a short right in close, under the heart. Moran standing, beginning to tremble, trying to fall in close and hang on. Cannon moving away, dancing, giving himself punching room. Moran hanging on, not going down. The crowd on its feet, screaming, frenzied, sensing another Cannon kill.

Katie standing, quiet in the midst of mania. Watching Cannon. Watching the punishment Moran was taking. Telling it to herself. He's the best there is. Hating him. Feeling it soar through her, the hate, searing her inside.

Then, the referee was in between them, pushing them apart, sending each of them to his corner. The bell had sounded, and nobody had heard.

Moran's handlers working on him. Ice packs at the back of his neck. Hands massaging his shoulders, rubbing at his ribs, pulling the elastic of his trunks away from his body so that he could breathe fast and deep.

Greco talking to Cannon. "You've got him. You've got him."

Cannon shaking his head. "I hit him with everything. All there was, I used. He's still going."

Greco rubbing at the back of Cannon's neck. Jubilance in his voice, his small body seeming to shake with excitement. Shaking his head. "You've got him, I tell you. You finish it this round. You go out and finish it."

Cannon looking at him. "Sure, this round I finish it."

The ten-second buzzer sounding. Cannon rising to his feet. Greco moving out of the ring, patting Cannon's buttocks. "This round, finish it."

The bell.

Moving out. Moran in ring center, trying to move in. Trying to get in close. Moving in after Cannon stabbed him with a jab. Moving in and holding.

make it easy

To keep from splitting a board with a nail, (1) start the hole with a small drill or (2) stand the nail on its head and give the point a rap with a hammer. A nail with a blunt point punches rather than wedges its way through wood, thereby lessening the chances of splitting. If you want to flatten the points of a handful of nails, grind them down on an emery wheel.

—Louis Martin Reitz, Bourbon, Mo.

Bluebook *will pay $5 for each "Make It Easy" published, but none can be acknowledged or returned.*

Cannon thrusting against the stocky body, trying to push away, to get loose. Wanting punching room. Not getting it.

The referee breaking them. A moment after the break, Moran back again. Taking the jab, then falling in. Using his weight, leaning on him. Punching inside to the short ribs. Digging with a short left and right. Leaning and digging. Cannon knew suddenly that he wasn't going to put Moran away.

Between rounds, he sat on the stool, listening to Greco talk. "You let him get away," Greco said.

"He got away. I didn't let him."

"You're ahead on points."

"A round or two. Not enough to take it."

"You got four rounds to go. Take three of the four and you're in for sure."

"The way I'm feeling, I'm glad I'm still here."

Greco studied him, knowing Cannon wasn't clowning. "He ain't that good, Lew."

"He's that young and that strong, Johnny."

The buzzer sounded. Greco made the decision fast. "Don't take a beating, Lew. You can run it for four rounds."

"Sure," Lew said.

The bell.

Run it. Sure, you could run it. You could jab and dance away, but the kid would stay with you, fall in close and drop the bombs to your belly while you used up the seconds tying him up. Maybe you can run and save it, but mostly you run and lose it. And then from somewhere inside him, the decision came, and he was meeting Moran, trading punches with him. Feeling Moran give before him. But then the bomb came and exploded in his head, and for the first time, he knew darkness.

"They don't build them today like they used to."

"Four, five, six." On one knee. Listening to the count, shaking a little. Feeling the trembling in his legs as he tried to rise. "Seven, eight." The rocket pain that filled his head. Pushing with his legs and the gloved hand that was still touching canvas. Up at nine, waiting, while Mike Gold dusted his gloves. Moran coming at him. Pawing with a left, another, then falling into a clinch.

A small piece of him heard the crowd's screaming. They've had it, he thought. Then he was busy, trying to move. Trying to keep Moran busy.

Through the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth, into the fifteenth. Playing it that way. Moving, and jabbing with a left that didn't work any more. His lips split. One eye cut and bleeding. Staying with Moran. Punching with him.

The bell sounded. It was over.

Greco meeting him almost in mid-ring. Bringing the towel and robe. Moran draping an arm around his shoulder. "You're the best, Lew," the kid said.

He shook his head. "I was, Rock. Now, you are."

And then he was listening, while the crowd roared through the arena over the announcement: "The winner and new middleweight champion of the world: Rock Moran."

And that was it.

Defeat carries its own smell in a dressing room. Stale in the nostrils. Stale and dry and tired. Defeat carries its own sounds. Drone and murmur, and the fatigue filling the voice so that the words are slurred and muffled. Apology even in tonality.

"You made a good one," Greco said. Max Stein, his trainer, was working on the cuts. The newsmen had already gone. Who hangs around a loser?

The reporters had asked: Did he hurt you? What do you think of Moran as a fighter?

You don't want to blow up at them. They were good to you when you won, and they always treated you right. Only now—now they should go home. But you're what you are, and even a funeral has to be reported; and it should be told with dignity.

"Yes, he hurt me," and, "Yes, I think he's a good fighter." He tried a smile. "Hell, he had to be good to beat *me*."

"What are your plans?"

He didn't have any plans.

And then, one by one, they drifted out, and there was only Stein, to work on his cut face, and Greco, to wrap up the post-mortem.

When Stein had finished with him, he rolled off the table.

"You shower," Greco said. "I'll wait."

"Okay," Cannon said.

There was a knock at the door. Soft. Once, again, then it opened, and Katie walked in. Her face was very white, her eyes big and dark. Closing the door behind her. Leaning against it. Standing there, looking at Cannon and Greco and Stein, and back to Cannon again.

"Hello, Katie," Lew said.

"Lew."

"What do you want?" Greco asked.

"I want to see Lew," she said.

"So you're seeing him," Greco answered.

"That's enough, Johnny," Cannon said.

"All right, Lew," Greco said. He was quiet a moment. Then he began moving to the door, motioning to Max to go with him. Katie standing aside as he came near. "You shower, and get home, and sleep. I'll call you tomorrow."

"All right, Johnny," Lew said. "Fine."

"You be good," Greco said. "Don't do nothin' stupid."

"No, Johnny."

Greco made a circle with the thumb and middle finger of his right hand. "It was a long ride, and a good one, Lew."

"That's right, Johnny, it was."

"See you tomorrow."

"Tomorrow," Lew answered. Then, Greco had the door open, and he and Stein were closing it behind them.

THEY were silent, neither of them saying anything. Cannon broke it finally. "You wanted to see me, Katie?"

"Yes, Lew."

"I don't look pretty tonight."

"No," she said. "You don't."

"You waited a long time to see it. Enjoy it, Katie. Enjoy it."

She drew in breath. A thin line of muscle twitching in her cheek. "I didn't enjoy it, Lew. I was sick. Every time he hit you, I was sick."

He was smiling, the mouth twisted awry. "Me too."

"Please, Lew."

"Why, Katie? You wanted it. For a long time you've been wanting it. So you got it. You should be jumping."

She was shaking her head. Not saying anything, just standing there and taking it, shaking her head. Letting the monosyllables come out with her breathing. "No, no, no."

"You must have hated me an awful lot, Katie."

"No, Lew, no."

"And you got what you wanted. You won, Katie." His laughter was flat, dry. "The winner and new champion, Katie Cannon."

He stopped, staring at her. "All right, maybe I shoudn't have said it, but I figure maybe I've earned it." His voice grew quiet. "So I made the mistake, Katie," he said softly. "So I had someone else. For a short time, there was someone."

"Why was it a mistake, Lew?" Katie asked.

"IT was Mike," he said. "It was Mike, and the pain I had, and the pain I gave to you. I should have come to you with it. It would have been hurt between us, but it would have been hurt that we shared. But I had the guilt in me, and I couldn't come to you with it. So I took it to someone else; and it was a mistake.

"It was a mistake because you're all there is, and I should have known that to begin with. You're all there is, and the best there is, and it isn't ever going to change. But it was a man's mistake; and I made it out of what I am, out of the same thing that makes me know you're all there is; and not knowing *that* was your mistake, Katie, because you've made me pay, girl. You've made me pay, and maybe you've made me pay too much."

"All right, Lew," she said.

"You'd better go now, Katie."

"I could wait," she said suddenly.

"What for?"

"I want to."

"I'm tired, Katie. I want a shower and some sleep."

"I'll wait," she said.

"Maybe later," he said. "Maybe later. You'd better go now."

"All right, Lew," she said.

She walked to where he was sitting on the rubbing table. She reached out with her hand and touched him. Touching the flat of her palm to his shoulders, his chest. Touching the cuts on his face. Caressing them with her finger tips. Her voice was soft. "I lost too, Lew. I know it. I lost too."

He looked at her again. For the first time, the defeat left his eye. "Did you, Katie?"

"Yes, Lew."

He was studying her face. A strand of hair had dropped over her forehead, and he reached with his fingers, pushing it back into place. "Maybe you didn't lose, Katie. But I have to shower now. You'd better go."

"You'll call me?" she asked.

He looked at her again. "I don't know," he said, slowly.

"Oh."

"But I want to," he said. "I want to, and I'll try."

"All right," she said softly.

She was smiling as she walked away. For the first time in many months, she was really smiling.

—By Harry Olive

MAN AROUND THE HOUSE

By John Sharnik

You can't build a plastic house with a spray gun yet, but the new material can save you a lot of work.

That postwar vision of a soil-proof all-plastic house looked like nothing more than a mirage for a while. But it's starting to take solid shape. Only you may be putting it up with a spray gun instead of hammer and nails.

That's the way industrial designer Guy Rothenstein would do it—and it's more than a drafting-board pipe dream. Rothenstein, an imaginative Viennese transplanted to the U.S.A., became intrigued with the Navy's method of "mothballing" its surplus ships. Now he's shooting his liquid vinyl Plastispray out of compressor-driven squirt guns to produce weather-tight shingle-less roofs, seamless wall-to-wall flooring and colorful, washable plaster-less walls —in some cases at a fraction of the cost of conventional installations.

So far large-scale projects like the United Nations General Assembly building have been the only beneficiaries of this civilian Operation Mothball. The residential field is just starting to be tapped. And the amateur-built mothball bathroom or kitchen—squirted out of a household spray-bomb—is, according to Rothenstein and his associates, still no more than "something we've got our eye on for the future." But in the meantime here are a number of other recent developments in the plastics field that the do-it-yourself householder, mired down in the realities of the hammer-and-nails age, can tap right now:

ONE-STEP WALL. For renovating a kitchen or installing an extra bathroom in an expansion attic, consider Mary Davenport's angle, and you can forget plaster, paint and tile.

"Anything that has to be put up piece by piece or layer by layer is archaic—too costly and labor-consuming," thinks Mrs. Davenport. Her views are admittedly colored by the fact that she sandwiches in her activities as a designer between answering the demands of six young children.

Her time-saving dodge is fiberglas-reinforced molded plastic—the same stuff the body of your next car is apt to be made of. Without going to the trouble of ordering a '55 Buick and waiting to dismantle it, you can buy the same material in sheets 2′ or 3′ wide, up to about 12′ long. (Trade names: Alsynite, Barclite, Corrulux, etc. Cost: around $1-1.20 a square foot.)

Flat or corrugated, clear or colored, it is lightweight, shatterproof and waterproof. It can be sawed, drilled and nailed. Which means you can put it up over existing wall surfaces, attach it directly to studs (as Mrs. Davenport and her husband did in remodeling an ancient New York apartment house) or fix it to furring strips directly over brick or concrete block. Fitted moldings and gaskets are available to seal the joints around a tub or sink.

OVERHEAD AND OTHERWISE. To create a simple, inexpensive breezeway connecting house and garage, architect Carl Koch slung these same molded-plastic panels overhead on a simple framework of 2″ x 4″s. As you may have noticed in coast-to-coast television demonstrations of Koch's ingenious, low-cost "Techbuilt" house, the plastic-roofed breezeway not only shelters you from rain in a dash between house and car, but also adds a pleasant expansive line to your property, eliminating the boxy appearance of many small homes with detached garages.

Briefly, a few of the other numerous household uses of the plastic panels that I've run across lately:

1—Laid across the top of an expanded version of Koch's breezeway framework to form a

terrace roof that admits light but shuts off rain and direct sunrays.

2—Set up outside an entrance to form a windbreak, replacing the bulky, unsightly, hard-to-handle winter storm porch.

3—Suspended from a ceiling by long rods to form a simplified version of the wide-area lighting fixture that I mentioned last month.

4—Cut down and mounted on a coffee table to replace—at a cost of about five bucks—a $20 glass table top which an overenergetic five-year-old had pulverized. (This takes the flat panel, rather than the corrugated version, of course.)

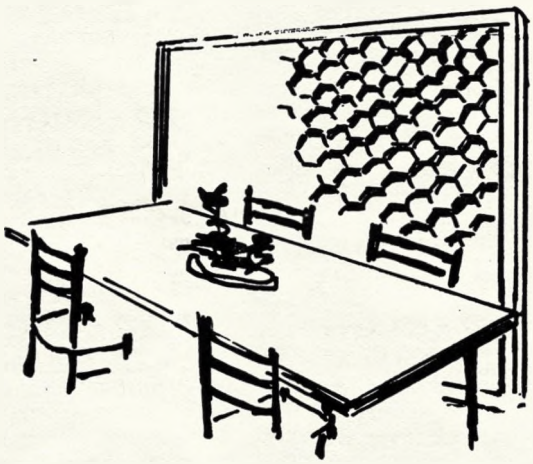
3-D WALL. Couple of years ago I helped a neighbor pull down an interior wall which his wife wanted removed in order to give their living room more of a spacious look and also get some light into a small adjoining hall. We'd stripped off the plaster and lath and were about to tackle the vertical row of exposed 2″x4″ studs, when the guy's wife remarked sadly, "I wish we could leave it that way. Those sticks make such a nice pattern."

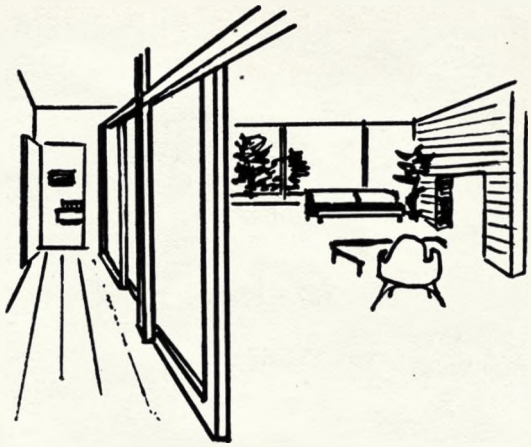
We took out the "sticks" anyway, but according to some recent developments by a New Jersey architect named Kenneth Kassler, the lady may have had something, after all.

Kassler figures that the internal structure of a wall, instead of being covered up by plaster and wallpaper or paint, can be used as a decorative element in the room. He'd reveal it simply by using plexiglas, clear or frosted, in place of plaster or other conventional wall material.

The result is a washable, translucent partition with a kind of three-dimensional pattern frozen into it. It can, Kassler figures, be used effectively as a screen or partition—say between dining and living areas in an open-plan house, or between eating and cooking areas, in a kitchen. It sets off a part of the room without completely blocking off light and space.

As a variation on the simple vertical pattern of studs, Kassler has built some prefabricated partitions with a kind of egg-crate design. He gets this effect by stretching an impregnated-paper honeycomb (the stuff that is used by many millwork manufacturers as the core of plywood flush doors) inside a rectangular frame of 2″x4″s. (See sketch.)





This twist suggests a number of other possibilities for freezing unusual three-dimensional effects into a partition or screen. Build yourself a 2″x4″ frame like Kassler's (he makes each panel 3′x8′), brace it with a couple of cross-pieces, and across them or from them suspend any sort of small item that might add a note of color and interest to a room. It could be a piece of colorful handwoven or handprinted textile, a souvenir of a vacation trip, or—for a kid's bedroom or a basement playroom—your youngster's air force of scale-model planes, hung by wire from the nose or tail. Cover the frame with plexiglas and you've got a kind of vertical display case for family keepsakes or hobby work.

DOUBLE DUTY. How to eat your architectural cake and have it too is a question that Dallas architect Enslie O. Oglesby answered with thermosplastic vinyl sheeting. For the sake of privacy, Oglesby wanted to put a hallway between a living room and a series of bedrooms leading off it. But he didn't want to give up space from the living room or cut off the light that came from its windows.

The solution: a disappearing hallway consisting of a series of sliding panels covered with the plastic sheeting. (It costs around 50 cents a square foot, is available in plain frosted form or with various kinds of textural patterns pressed in.) Pull the panels out to their full extent, and you've got a passageway that permits you to traipse between bed and bath without making yourself a neighborhood attraction through your picture window. Shove the panels back and you've reclaimed the hallway space for the living room. (See sketch above.)

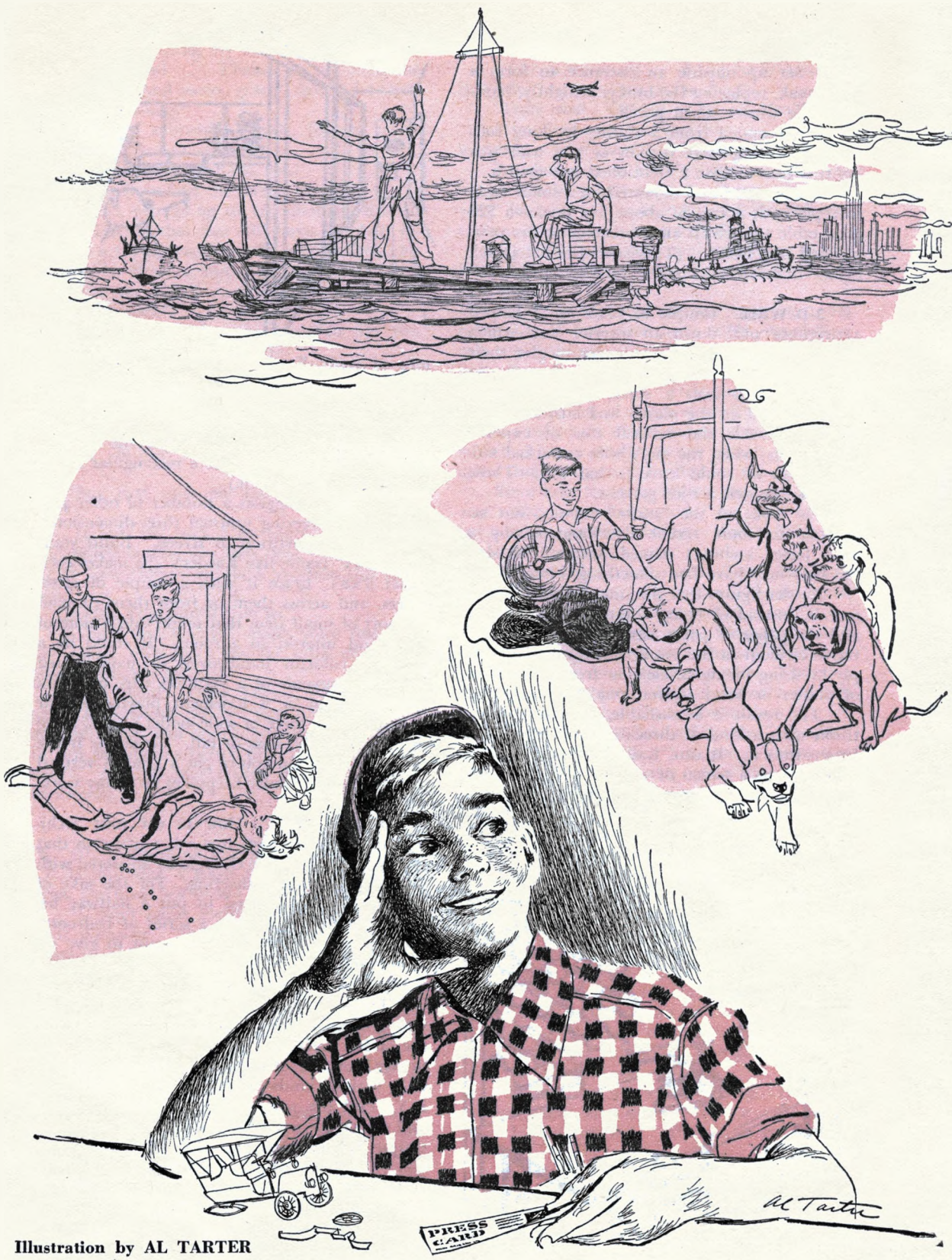


Illustration by AL TARTER

Pop's a reporter, and all I did was try to be a big shot like him. I don't see why everybody had to get so excited.

I Tripped in My Father's Footsteps

BY BEN MERSON

I never found out what a famous son I was till we saw this movie, *Stop the Presses*. I'd told the other kids lots of times that my pop is a reporter for the New York *Bulletin*. But they didn't know what a reporter was. And neither did I much. And then we went to see this movie at the Gracie Square Theater.

The movie was terrific. This guy Scoop Dillon, the hero, ran around with a press card in his hat solving murders, beating the ears off gangsters, telling the mayor what to do, and going everywhere like he owned the city. Scoop looked exactly like my pop, too. Only he didn't have a bald spot and he was a lot skinnier.

Up to the time we saw the picture, Mike Burke was the big shot of our block. Mike's father is a cop sergeant. And he's taught Mike judo and about every other kind of trick, except how to get out of the fifth grade.

But when we walked out of the movies I knew that from now on I was the new boss of the gang. Mike wasn't around. So I took over right away. "Men," I said to the kids, "we've got to work on the raft till supper."

The raft was our summer project. The framework was finished. All we had to do was put on the cross-pieces. Then we were going to use it to stand on when we fished for eels in the East River off 92d Street.

We had been building the raft for a week, ever since school let out. And every day Mike had us chasing around, scrounging for lumber and nails. I didn't mind

this so much, except he wouldn't let nobody do the hammering except himself. And I love to hammer. I always keep thinking that what I'm hammering is Mike's head.

And that's just what I was thinking when Mike walked up as I was knocking a big nail in. "Gimme that hammer," he ordered.

I didn't answer. Just gave him a look like Scoop Dillon gave the crooked mayor who wanted to put him in jail.

"Hand it over," said Mike, aiming a kick at my pants.

Quick as a snake, I grabbed his foot. Then giving it a twist like a pretzel, I butted him in the stomach. He sat down so hard that a bunch of marbles he had in his back pocket busted right out of the lining. Before I could do anything more, the other kids did it for me. They piled on and began giving Mike what-for in return for all the shellackings he'd given them.

"That's enough, men," I commanded. The kids let Mike up. "Scram," I told him, "or I'll mold you like a public opinion."

"What's that?" said Mike.

"It means you ain't running things no more," my best friend Steve Barry told him. "It means like it meant in *Stop the Presses*. Crooked cops and their alliances are done."

"And your father's a cop, and you're an alliance," I said.

"You're all nuts," said Mike. "I saw that movie too. And I asked my father about it. He said reporters were just a bunch of schmoes who couldn't become cops. Like garbage men. They just pick up the leavings."

I made a fist and took a step toward Mike. But he wriggled loose from the kids and scooted along the pier to the sidewalk. "Yeah," he hollered back. "If your old man is such a big-shot reporter, let's see you prove it. You stinker."

MIKE'S crack bothered me. I thought about it so much that I only had time to eat two pieces of chocolate cake during supper. Mrs. Ferguson felt my head to see if I had fever. She's been taking care of me ever since my mom died, when I was a baby. And the chocolate cake was like the one she made for my tenth birthday, when I ate the whole thing myself.

"Don't you feel well, Joe?" she asked me, shaking her head at Pop.

"I'm fine," I said. "Only I guess my stomach muscles are tired."

"Well, then, I guess you'd better exercise your dish-drying muscles," said Mrs. Ferguson.

After I finished helping her, I said to my pop, "I'll bet you're about the greatest guy in New York."

He pulled me up on his lap. "That's a minority opinion, Joe; but a major satisfaction."

"What I mean is that being a reporter just about makes you boss of this town."

"There are some people who think that Tammany has influence, too."

"They're nuts. You even tell the mayor what to do, don't you?"

"The mayor often discusses things with us at his press conferences. And when we make a suggestion he never fails to take it, provided he had intended to do so anyway."

Pop told me all about his job. It was even more exciting than Scoop Dillon's. Because Pop ran into all kinds of new stuff every day. Not just one murder for a whole movie.

Then Pop showed me his press card. "This," he said, "will get you anywhere you don't want to go. Along with a token it will even get you into the subway."

I ATE the rest of the chocolate cake and went to bed. But I couldn't sleep. So I read a comic book and chewed a rubber band, because I didn't have any bubble gum. I kept thinking about Mike's crack that my pop was a phony. Most of the kids didn't believe him. Still, some of them looked like they weren't too sure.

"I guess I'll have to bring Pop over to talk to them," I said to myself. But Pop might decide to talk about fishing or guppies or outboard motors. He didn't always talk about what you wanted him to. And even when he did he was hard to understand, unless you knew him like I do.

Then all of a sudden it came to me. Pop's press card! With that thing I could go anywhere. And take the kids with me. And Mike, too, the stinker. That would prove what a great man my pop was.

When I heard Pop go to bed I sneaked out to the living room. His wallet was still on the table. Pulling out the press card, I ducked back into my room.

Next morning the whole gang was on the pier. Mike too. I ignored him. "Follow me," I told the kids. "We're going to the Yankee Stadium to see the Yankees play the Tigers. And we're sitting in box seats. For free."

"Phooey," said Mike. "There's fourteen of you. And you're gonna get everybody in for free! Why my father's got a cop badge. And he can only get in by himself."

I waved the press card under Mike's nose. "You're forgetting who my pop is. The famous Joe Bates. And me, I'm Joe Bates, Jr. With this card I can go any place. And take anybody that I want. Including you, Stupid. So come along."

The kids gave me a big cheer and we headed for the subway. As we walked down the subway stairs, somebody remembered that it cost fifteen

cents to ride. "Don't bother paying," I said. "Just duck under the turnstiles and leave the rest to me. There's the train!"

They did just as I told them, and we all piled into the train as the doors closed. The platform guard saw us and hollered bloody murder. But he quit hollering when I showed him the press card through the window. He just stood there real respectful, staring at my pop's name and the name of Pop's newspaper.

At the stadium I led the kids right up to the press gate. And we were almost inside when six imitation policemen, wearing gray uniforms, stopped us. I flashed them my card. "I'm Joe Bates, Jr.," I announced. "And these jerks are my guests."

The gray cops winked at each other. Then before we knew what was happening, they locked their arms together and gave us the bum's rush out the gate and into the street.

Mike got the heave-ho with the rest of us. But he snickered like he loved it.

"Men," I told the kids, "there's been a big mistake. Wait here. When I come back everything'll be fixed."

I ran two blocks to a cigar store and telephoned my pop's office. The operator said he was working at Police Headquarters and switched me there. Pop knew about my swiping his press card even before I told him. "Yes," he said, "a Mr. Gilhooley, of the New York subway system, spoke to me about it over the phone. He said I owed the subway system two dollars and a quarter for fifteen stolen rides."

"We'll talk about that later," I said. "Man to man. Like always."

"No, Joseph, we'll discuss it father to son."

HE sounded awful calm. So I gave him a sad pitch on what happened at the stadium. "Pop," I said, "you just *got* to come across with tickets for the gang. Otherwise I'll never be able to show my face in the neighborhood. Everybody'll call me a phony. And then what'll you say?"

"I might agree."

"Please, Pop. It's a crisis. I got to have the tickets."

"O.K., Joseph. But you'll be sorry."

Before he hung up my pop said he had to phone Pete Smith, his paper's baseball writer, who was inside the stadium. And that Mr. Smith would come out to take care of things.

Sure enough, when I got back Mr. Smith was outside the press gate. He looked like a very nice man, tall, with red hair and freckles like a springer spaniel I once had.

Shaking my hand, he took me off to one side and gave me a fistful of tickets. "Take your mob to the seats behind third base," he said.

"Plenty of power in this little ol' motor!"

"Then if Mickey Mantle fouls one you might even get the ball for a souvenir."

"Are they good seats?" I asked.

"Box seats," said Mr. Smith. "Nothing but the best for my old pal. Especially when they don't cost me a penny."

It was a swell game. Mickey Mantle hit a homer and the Yankees won.

We went back in the subway the way we came, without paying. But this time there was such a crowd that the station man didn't even notice us. Even so I didn't feel so good. It kind of bothered me that I'd swiped Pop's press card. And his calling me "Joseph" instead of "Joe" sounded very serious.

POP didn't say a word till we finished supper. Then, pointing his finger at me, exactly the way Scoop Dillon pointed at the crooked mayor, he barked, "I really should warm the seat of your pants, you pocket-sized big shot."

"I'm sorry," I said. "I shouldn't have swiped your press card. Honest, Pop, my mind

went blank. I forgot that crime doesn't pay. From now on I'll remember like an elephant."

"I'm glad to hear that, Joseph. But you won't be able to afford many peanuts . . ." Pop was smiling at me. But the smile stopped just below his nose. ". . . Because, Joseph, you owe me exactly forty-seven dollars and twenty-five cents."

He tossed me a paper napkin with some writing on it. "Here's your bill—sir."

It read:

Payment to subway for 15 stolen rides.....$ 2.25
Repayment to Pete Smith for 15 box seats he bought at the stadium for Joseph at $3 per ticket..... 45.00
Total.....$47.25

I was floored. "Gee, Pop, I only wanted to show the kids what a great guy you were."

"No. You wanted to impress them with your own importance. Wasn't that it?"

"Well . . . I suppose you're right, Pop. But forty-seven dollars and twenty-five cents!"

"It costs big money to be a big shot."

"On my allowance of fifty cents a week it'll take me forever to pay you back, Pop."

Pop's smile crept down to the rest of his face. "Not forever, Joe. Merely one year, ten months, and two-and-a-half weeks. I suggest you find some gainful employment." . . .

I worried all night. And next morning when my best friend Steve called for me to work on the raft I told him I couldn't go. "I got to get a job," I said. "I got to pay back my pop forty-seven dollars and twenty-five cents."

"What for?" said Steve.

I had to think fast. "You mean you ain't heard? I dropped a water bomb out the window. Direct hit. Right on a fat lady in one of those naked-back dresses. The water poured down her like a faucet. My pop paid for the dress. And now I got to pay him."

"I wished I'd seen it."

"I never saw anything like it neither."

Outside in the kitchen Mrs. Ferguson had stopped rattling the breakfast dishes. Pop had told her what happened and she'd been kidding me all morning. She came into my room now, carrying a pocketbook the size of a valise, which she always carried when she went shopping. "I hear the First National Bank needs a new president," she said.

"I don't like banks," I said. "They keep people in cages like a zoo."

"That job's too small for you anyway," said Mrs. Ferguson. "You should do something big. Like washing elephants."

"That's it," said Steve as Mrs. Ferguson walked out the front door. "That's it exactly!"

"Washing elephants?" I said.

"No. Washing dogs. My aunt gave me fifty cents yesterday just for washing her poodle."

It sounded like a great idea. "Steve," I said, "I bet I could find at least five dirty dogs in the neighborhood."

"Phooey," he said. "I could find you hundreds. You just pay me a dime apiece and I'll deliver them here myself."

"It's a deal."

I DIDN'T know what to expect. But I got ready anyway. First I hooked Pop's hairbrush. Then I dumped a box of soap powder in the bathtub and another one in the kitchen washtub. When the bubbles drooled over the sides, I turned off the water and sat down to wait.

Just then the bell rang. I opened the door. Steve marched in dragging a rope. Attached to the rope by their leashes were ten dogs, all scratching themselves like crazy.

"How'd you do it?" I said. "How'd you round up so many dogs with so many fleas at the same time?"

"It was easy," said Steve. "With this!" He pulled a little box out of his pocket.

"Itching powder!"

make it easy

When you have to drill a hole in the ceiling you usually wind up with a face full of wood-shavings, plaster or whatever. Here's a tip on how to avoid such unpleasantness. Take a tin can and put a hole in the bottom slightly larger than the bit you're going to be using. Get a medium-strength spring, slip it over the bit, put the can on top of that so when you attack the ceiling the can is held up in place by the spring. Some of the dust may filter down through the hole in the can, but not much, and you have a fair chance of coming out of the operation with your eyesight intact.

Help the other fellow by passing along tricks and gadgets you've dreamed up for making work around the house easier.* Bluebook *will pay $5 for each "Make It Easy" published, but none can be acknowledged or returned.

"Yep," grinned Steve. "These pooches were tied up outside the super-market. They don't let the women bring them inside. So I just powdered the pooches with the itching powder, and waited for the women to come out. Then I asked them if they wanted their dogs bathed. All the ladies blamed the other ladies' dogs. You want me to get more?"

"Sure," I said. "Meanwhile I'll polish these off."

By now the dogs had got used to their itches or something. And fights began busting out all along the line. The cause was a lady cocker-spaniel, who had wavy blond hair like my teacher, Miss Hoolihan. I had to get that cocker out of the way. So while the other dogs howled, I brought her into the kitchen, stuck her in the washtub, and tied her leash to the faucet.

Leaving the cocker to soak in the bubbles, I hauled the other dogs into the bathroom. Then I chucked them into the soapy water one at a time.

My system worked wonderful. The dogs jumped and splashed and made the suds swirl over them like they were in a washing machine. The dogs just cleaned themselves.

"Heck," I thought, "if I had an automatic dryer, I'd really be in business."

Then suddenly I was inspired. My pop's electric fan! With that I could dry them wholesale.

I waited till all the dogs were washed. Then I hauled them off to Pop's bedroom. It was quite a job. Because the dogs kept trying to drag me into the kitchen, where the lady cocker was swishing around in the tub. But I finally won.

"Relax," I told them. Two of them did, atop Pop's bed. The others stretched out on the rug. Tying all their leashes to the bedpost, I angled the fan and turned on the switch. The fan swiveled back and forth. The dogs shook. And the water blew off 'em like rain. "That'll sure save Mrs. Ferguson some towels," I said to myself as I went back to the bathroom to clean up.

Suddenly I heard a scream like a steam whistle. I opened the bathroom door. Mrs. Ferguson was standing outside. Her mouth hung down and her eyes popped. "Jo-*seph!*" she gasped. "What's happened?"

"Plenty," I said. It was still happening. The dogs in Pop's room had busted loose from the bedpost. And now they were in the kitchen. Barking, roaring, fighting with each other, they kept leaping into the tub where I had left the lady cocker tied to the faucet.

It must have been going on for some time. And in the excitement the lady cocker's leash had got tangled around the faucet handle. Water was pouring from the faucet and sloshing over the sides of the tub. The kitchen floor looked like a river, with dogs, overturned chairs and a couple of broken jars of pickles floating in the tide.

Mrs. Ferguson wrung her hands. "My kitchen. My pickles. My floors—"

"They're O.K.," I said. "It's clean water. I been washing these dogs for money to pay Pop."

Mrs. Ferguson made a gurgling noise. Then she splashed into the kitchen, turned off the faucet and grabbed a broom. I thought she was coming after me. Instead she went after the dogs. "Stand by the door," she commanded, "and I'll sweep the creatures to you."

With our teamwork we had them captured in no time at all.

"Ten dogs," Mrs. Ferguson groaned. Then all at once she began to shake and her voice came out in a funny high giggle. "Lucky you didn't wash elephants like I suggested."

"I'm very glad you like dogs," I said, walking down the hall to answer the doorbell. "Because here comes Steve with ten more."

Mrs. Ferguson screamed. I ran out of the door. And the dogs in the house ran out after me.

I didn't get home till seven o'clock that night. Helping Steve deliver the dogs took time. And I purposely stalled so that it would take longer. I wanted to make sure the kitchen floor had a chance to dry out.

The money the women paid us added up to five bucks. I gave Steve a dollar. "That's your commission," I told him. "A dime a dog. Like we agreed."

"And fifty cents more for the itching powder," he said.

I gave it to him, and we shook hands. "Business is business," I said. "I'm just waiting to see my pop's face when I hand him this dough."

IT was really something to see. You would have thought I was handing Pop a snake. "What's this?" he shuddered.

"It's the money I got from washing dogs," I said. "You told me to get a job so I got one. Didn't Mrs. Ferguson tell you?"

Pop nodded.

"Ain't you proud? Ain't you going to say something?"

"I'm speechless."

I felt kind of hurt. "Ain't you going to say thanks? You're always making speeches about politeness. And here I go and sweat out three dollars and fifty cents for you with my hands, and you don't even say thanks."

"THANKS!" Pop's roar almost made me jump out of my shoes. "Thanks for ruining my hairbrush! . . . Thanks for breaking two chairs!

. . . Thanks for soaking my mattress! . . . Thanks for wrecking my bed! . . . Thanks for breaking the fan! . . . Thanks for polluting the pickles! . . . And *merci, gracia,* thanks for stuffing the plumbing!"

Pop took a breath. "Well, Joseph, aren't you going to say something?"

"I guess I'm speechless, too."

I must have said the wrong thing.

"Aren't you going to say thanks?" snarled Pop. "Thanks that you still have a father, instead of a raving maniac? Thanks to Mrs. Ferguson, who is worn out from mopping. And thanks to the plumber, who only charged me time and a half?"

"Gee, Pop, I was only trying to pay you back. Can't you think of that?"

"Unfortunately I have been thinking of it." Pop didn't look so mad now. Just disgusted. "So I'm not charging you for the wreckage. Your dog money will cover only half the plumber's bill. So now you owe me exactly fifty dollars."

"But that puts me back further than I was."

"It puts me back a lot more, young man. And unless you square that debt, we're not going to New Hampshire for a vacation this summer."

"Gosh, Pop, how'll I do it?"

"You'll find a way!" Pop's voice rose to a roar again. "I'll teach you the value of money, even if it bankrupts me."

I felt awful. Every August, Pop and I go up to Portsmouth for two weeks, and we swim and fish and I run the outboard motor. I love to run that motor better than anything in the world. And all year I keep waiting for those two weeks.

YOU really think Pop means it, about New Hampshire?" I asked Mrs. Ferguson while I dried the breakfast dishes.

"I don't know men's minds, Joseph, only their stomachs." She gave me a wink. "But I thought you noticed last night. Your father's a trifle peeved."

"Peeved ain't the word. But I don't mean just last night. He's been getting grumpier every day. This morning he wouldn't even talk to me. What's bothering him?"

"He complains about his bunions. But it's actually his job."

Mrs. Ferguson explained that Pop's paper had started a news-tip contest, and a lot of readers thought they were Scoop Dillons. They kept phoning the editor with what they thought were hot stories. Most of them were baloney. And it was Pop's job to check 'em, so that the editor didn't bite.

"What if it's a real story?" I asked. "What happens then?"

"The paper prints it. And pays fifty dollars if it's the best news-tip of the day."

"Holy cats! That gives me an idea!"

Mrs. Ferguson dropped the pot she was washing. "May the Good Lord spare me."

I rushed over to Steve's place and told him my idea. He got all excited. "Sure. I'm with you," he said. "The kids finished the raft yesterday. So we don't have to wait."

"Get the provisions and meet me in my house," I ordered. "Mrs. Ferguson'll be out shopping."

By the time Steve arrived, carrying a big paper bag, I had everything ready—my fishing rod, my bathing suit, Pop's road map, and the five-gallon gasoline can which was still more than half full from last year. "Help me haul the outboard motor out of Pop's closet," I told Steve.

We rolled the motor out on its stand, which is sort of like a cradle on two wheels, piled the other stuff on top, and headed for the pier.

Steve kept slapping me on the back all the way. "Oh, boy, what an idea," he jabbered. "I bet nobody ever did it before. Wait'll Mike and the other kids see us."

But the kids weren't there. They must have gone home for lunch. "Who cares?" I told Steve. "They'll be even more surprised this way."

Loading the raft was easy. We just stretched out a long wide plank and wheeled the motor and stuff right down from the pier. Then we nailed a straight piece of wood onto the back of the raft and attached the motor to that.

Steve saluted. "Ready, Captain?" he asked.

"Not yet," I said. "You got to make that telephone call to the city editor of my Pop's paper."

"Why don't you call him yourself?"

"He'll believe it better if a stranger calls him. And you better make sure what you say. Tell the city editor this is the biggest news story since Christopher Columbus. Tell him that the famous son of Joe Bates is sailing to New Hampshire on a raft. An outboard-motor raft."

"The first one in the whole world."

"That's it, Steve. And tell him to hand over my prize money for this scoop to my pop. And that I'll be waiting for Pop on his vacation."

Steve scooted off to find a phone while I filled the motor with gas. He came running back just as I finished.

"That editor was awful excited. He asked me my name, and then yelled for your pop." Steve looked worried. "You think your pop'll be sore?"

"How could he be? With me becoming a hero, and paying him back his money, and inviting him up to New Hampshire with me! Why, he'll be proud."

"What about me?"

"You'll be an assistant hero."

"Let's go," said Steve.

He untied the raft. I pushed the primer and pulled the starter cord. The motor went off the first shot. I fed her more gas and swung out into the East River. The kids had really done a swell job on the raft. It was square in the back and pointed in the front, the same as the aquaplane our neighbors got up in Portsmouth. Only it was better. The logs and planking made it ride high up in the water. And it had a couple of boxes nailed on so you could sit down and take it easy.

I PULLED out Pop's map. "Take a bearing," I ordered Steve.

"What's that?"

"Find out which way is up."

He pointed to the way we were going. "Heck, anybody can see the river goes down."

"Then our course is true. Portsmouth is up."

"Aye, aye, sir," said Steve. "How long do you think it'll take?"

I wasn't sure. Pop and I always go by plane. And the raft wasn't that fast. "It'll take a lot longer than an hour-and-a-half," I said.

"Then we better eat now," said Steve.

He broke out the provisions he had hooked from his uncle's candy store. They were swell. Gumdrops, chocolates, jelly apples, soda pop, and popcorn. We took turns eating and steering.

Suddenly Steve grabbed my arm and pointed toward the shore. "Look! We're getting famous already!"

Cars were lined up on the East River Drive by the dozen. Bumper to bumper. The drivers were all pointing at our raft, waving and hollering and honking their horns.

"They probably want my autograph," I told Steve. "But they'll have to wait till I get back."

In the next fifteen minutes it got even more exciting. Tugs hooted and blasted at us. Planes from LaGuardia Field kept buzzing overhead like flies. And factory whistles blew like when the President rides by.

Steve kept waving to everybody and shaking hands with himself over his head. "Quit acting like a kid," I said. "Show some dignity."

"The heck with that," he grinned. "Here comes the rubberneck boat."

That rubberneck boat is the one that sails around Manhattan every day, loaded with tourists who want to see all the famous sights. My pop says some of them come thousands of miles just for a look at the Triborough Bridge, the garbage plant and the Fulton Fish Market.

I swung out across the current. It wouldn't be fair to all those people if they didn't see us.

We came closer. And all at once everybody rushed to the rail. The rubberneck boat heeled over sideways. The engines stopped dead. And out of the wheelhouse flew the captain, carrying a megaphone. "Go home, you rascals!" he roared.

That made me sore. Because here I was, giving his rubbernecks an extra famous sight to see. "Go home yourself," I yelled back. "Your poopdeck's showing."

All the rubbernecks started laughing, and the captain's face got red as a jelly apple. "I thought you brats were in trouble," he snarled. "But I see you're only looking for it."

Rushing back into the wheelhouse, he began tooting his whistle in a funny up and down way.

"Sounds like he's signaling," said Steve.

From way up the river, another boat which we couldn't see, seemed to be answering.

"Let's scram out of here," I said. "That old captain looks like a pirate. He's probably got a gang somewhere."

I gave that put-put everything she had. And with the wind helping us the raft scooted up the river like a regular speedboat, her nose in the air and the foam flying.

Behind us the rubberneck was almost out of sight. But we could still hear her whistle blowing in that goofy way. And the boat that kept answering got louder and louder, though we still couldn't see her.

Then suddenly we did. Siren wide open, she dodged from behind a string of railroad barges and raced toward us.

It was a police boat.

"Yesterday one girl dropped her handkerchief—wonder what they'll try today."

Cops were rushing around the deck, grabbing up ropes and life preservers. And up in the bow stood a red-faced man, mopping the top of his head, and bawling, "Stop, Joe! Stop!"

"That's your pop," groaned Steve. "And he's boiling mad."

I didn't need to be told. What I needed was somebody to explain what makes smart people like my pop act so silly. Here I was, doing this thing for both of us, and he was trying to stop me.

The police boat made a wide swing, then straightened out so that we were only about thirty feet apart.

"Cut the motor," Pop roared at me. "Shut it off."

I shook my head. I had to finish what I started out to do. Otherwise it would be the end of everything.

"Cut it! Cut it!" Pop repeated hoarsely.

"I can't," I called back. "Not now."

Pop didn't understand. He yelped to the cops, and they heaved life preservers and ropes at us. One of the ropes landed smack in the middle of the raft. And the knot jammed in between two of the planks in the floorboard.

"They've caught us," moaned Steve. "What'll we do?"

"This!" I said, steering the raft straight at the police boat. The sudden swing slackened the rope. I reached down and freed the knot. Then I gunned the motor and heeled off. We were a hundred yards away before Pop and the cops knew what happened.

It took them several seconds to turn around. Then opening the engine wide, they came after us, with Pop leaning over the bow like he was waiting to grab me by the seat of the pants.

That police boat sure had speed on a straightaway. But the raft could make a turn on a dime. So that's what I did. Every time Pop and the cops came near I'd make a sharp swing. And they'd go skidding ahead till they could recover. It was like a dog chasing a cat on the ice.

For ten minutes we kept dodging that way. And by now we were passing the island near the Triborough Bridge. Up on the bridge the traffic jam was even worse than on the East River Drive. And so was the cheering and hollering as everybody leaned out of their cars to watch.

"Look at 'em all pointing at us," said Steve.

I smiled kind of proud. And then my smile froze like an Eskimo Pie. It wasn't at us they were pointing. It was at two more police boats that came tearing around from the opposite side of the island.

Before I could try to zig-zag they had me boxed in. The island blocked me on the right. The police boats on the left. Lined up one behind the other, with Pop's boat in the middle, they moved in closer and closer to us. Soon they were so close that their waves were washing over the raft. "Stop!" snarled Pop.

"You better do like he says," whined Steve.

He sounded scared. And I didn't feel so good neither. The look on Pop's face was something awful.

"I ain't stopping, Pop—" The words kind of stuck in my neck. "Unless you promise you won't be mad—"

Pop practically exploded out of the bow and flew down to the deck. Grabbing up a boathook, he leaned far over the rail and made a wild swipe at the raft. It was at least ten feet out of reach. Tossing one leg over the rail to get closer, Pop took another swipe at us. He missed, slipped, and *kerplunk*—overboard he tumbled.

"Help!" he gargled as we all went sailing by.

The police boats began turning to the rescue. But I turned the raft faster. This was my big chance to square everything. "Hang on, Pop," I yelled. "Here comes Joe Bates, Jr."

He didn't answer. Just sort of chinned himself on the boathook.

It took me only a few minutes to reach Pop. Cutting the motor, I nosed the raft alongside so he could catch hold. Then with Steve and me hauling him by the shirt, he climbed aboard, squishing and dripping.

"Well, Pop," I said. "I guess you ain't mad at me now."

"Mad?" he said. "Oh, my, no. I love you, Joseph—like a hammer loves nails!"

And then he did what he never did before in my life. He grabbed me by the collar, slung me over his knee, and walloped me, but good, while the people up on the bridge cheered like crazy.

So that's the way it ended. Except that the licking didn't hurt half as much as what happened the next day. Pop's paper ran the story all over the front page. And the editor gave it first prize. But did the heel send me the fifty bucks? He did not. He sent it to Steve. Because Steve was the one who phoned in the tip.

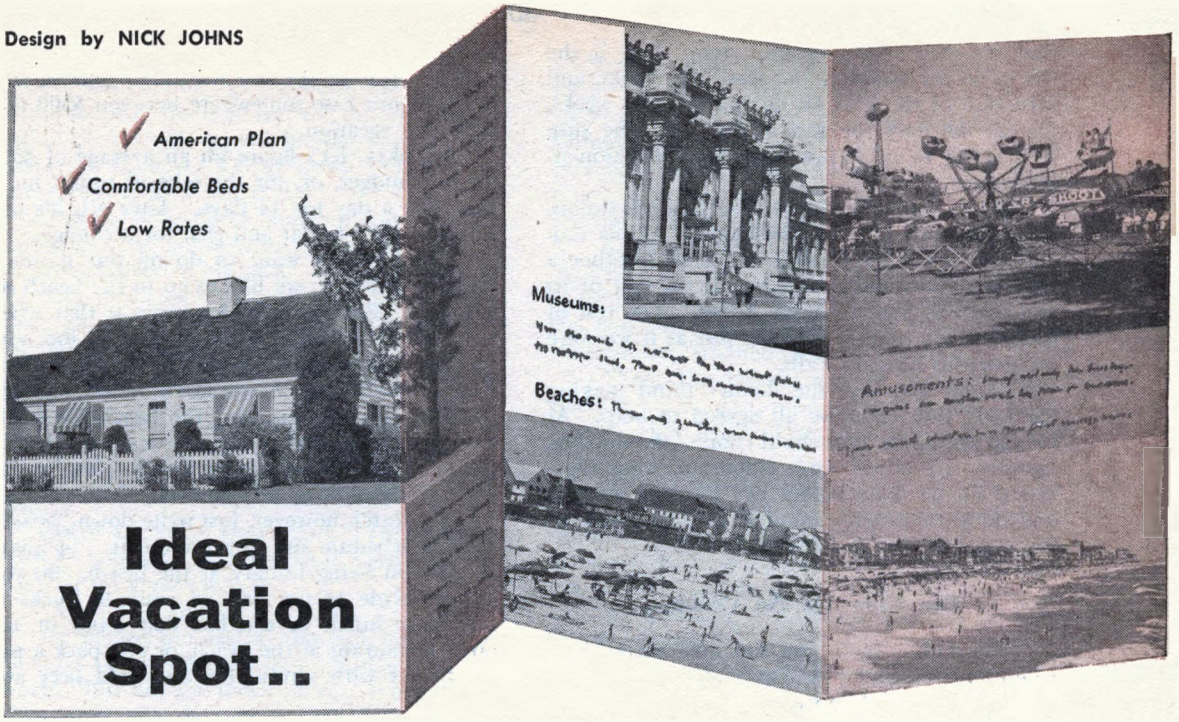
POP took me to New Hampshire anyway. He said we both needed a rest from high finance. And would I please forget about the dough I owed him.

But I'm not the kind of son who forgets. Especially since I got a great new idea for making money. I'm going to raise honey bees. And not like other jerks do it. I'm going to raise them right in our own apartment, so they can never fly away.

Boy, will Pop be surprised!

—By Ben Merson

Design by NICK JOHNS



HOME

Man here says you can have a better vacation by not even going to Echo Lake. There are some tricks to it, though.

BY MAXWELL HAMILTON

One summer night a few years ago this scribbler and his wife found themselves, with the temperature in the 90's, sitting and dripping in a tourist home on Route 66, near Chicago. Overhead, a naked, cobwebby, 25-watt bulb burned dismally; the room contained a three-quarter-size brass bed, one easy chair, a cracked mirror, a wash basin, a faded, threadbare rug, and a copy of a magazine that had been published before the war.

It was the third night of our annual vacation.

Presumably, we were escaping from the humdrum sameness of our existence during the previous 50 weeks of the year, and it was expected that we would return to our workaday life revitalized in mind and body, full of enthusiasm at having seen the sights of our great country.

Presumably. Actually, we checked out of that tourist trap the following morning, pointed our ancient automobile back in the direction from which we'd come, and hurried home to one of the finest vacations we've ever had—in our own backyard.

This year we're planning a repeat performance. Partly this stems from having spent a lot of evenings like that one on 66, and partly from having looked up the word "vacation" in the dictionary, where it is described as "an intermission of activity, employment or stated exercises, as for recreation or rest; a holiday." Note it doesn't say where the "intermission" must be spent. If you're looking for a hot tip on holidays, you'll try spending yours at home. You'll be amazed at the wonderful time you'll have.

There's just one thing to keep in mind—the vacation has to be *planned* just as much as one in Florida or the Canadian Rockies. If you're just going to stay home and listen to the radio or look at television all day, you'll have a lousy time, and you may wind up writing nasty letters to me or to the editor of BLUEBOOK.

So draw up a blueprint. Decide before you start what things you most want to do in your "intermission of activity"—and what you *don't* want to do. You don't want to do anything remotely connected with your job, for instance. So don't even tell those jokers at the shop that you're planning to stay home. They can get along without you for two weeks.

At the same time, it's well to remember

that it's your wife's vacation too. And if she has to do the laundry, and wash the dishes, and take care of the kids all during the two weeks, just as she does the rest of the year, she sure isn't going to be happy with your vacation-at-home idea.

We've always had a pre-vacation discussion, where we came to some conclusions. Mama usually says she doesn't mind throwing together a light breakfast every morning, if the rest of us will pitch in and wash the dishes. The rest of the meals we plan to eat out, just as if we were on a trip to Niagara Falls.

Mama also says she doesn't mind making the beds, but again we all agreed to help. As for the rest of the household chores—the dusting, laundry, mending, and elaborate shopping—they'd all be done before the vacation started, and done thoroughly enough so they could be forgotten till the holiday was over.

The Kids Are No Problem

The kids. Well, you can take them along wherever you go, of course, and loads of families wouldn't think of vacationing without them. Or you can follow the scheme of one businessman I know who vacations at home, hires a sitter to come in full-time for the two weeks while he and his wife roar around like a Hollywood couple who've never heard of children. The cost, he figures, comes out of his vacation budget.

Or you can do as some of the couples who live in Levittown, Long Island's fabulous, low-cost housing development. There friends divvy up on vacations; the Greens agree to take care of the Smiths' kids every day for two weeks while the Smiths do the town. Then when the Greens are ready to take their holiday, they return the compliment.

There's just one thing more to think about—the budget. If a vacation of *any* kind is out of the question for you this year because of the dough involved, then these words aren't for you. Because, although you can stay home for two weeks and never spend a dime, that isn't my idea of a vacation. What I'm talking about is a vacation at home in which you spend the same amount you would if you went away.

For example, how much does it cost you to take a trip in your car? You certainly have to plan on at least 15 cents a mile to operate that heap of yours; you have to figure on at least a dollar apiece each meal for meals, and you hardly can get by for less than from five to eight dollars a night for a passable motel or tourist home. As we've added up these expenditures, they rarely came to less than $25 a day.

But, *this was just what it cost us to exist.* The extras, the fun things, the curios you buy, the swimming you do, the side trips you take to birthplaces of George Washington, the luxuries—these all make the bill tot up to considerably more, in our case somewhere between $500 and $600 per vacation.

So, okay, let's figure on an average of $550 for our budget, or, for the sake of round numbers, $40 a day for 14 days. After all, it's our vacation; let's be fat and rich for a change.

What do we want to do on our holiday? Well, in our case, we like to go to the beach on hot days. But the trouble always is that when we're off from work, everyone else is, too, and the beach is so crowded and the traffic so bad, that we usually just stayed home. Now, though, it's different; we can plan the beach for weekdays, when the rest of the slaves are toiling in the jute mill. So we put the beach down for two days, or three days, or whatever.

You can't, however, just write down "beach" on your schedule and forget about it. You have to plan on being hungry at the beach. So you either decide to use part of your 40 bucks to buy your lunch at the hot dog stand or the fancy restaurant at the beach, or you pack a picnic basket with sandwiches and cold beer and cokes.

After swimming . . . well, how about taking along some dress-up clothes and getting slicked up in the locker-room, and then going over to that snazzy dine-and-dance spot on the pier? Or maybe decide, as we occasionally did, to run over to the dog races at Buggyville, or down to Playland for a night on the rides and the side shows.

Tomorrow? All right. If you've never been to a country auction, maybe tomorrow's a good day to drive over to the next county and see one. If you get over there and there *is* no country auction, then out come the plans—because you always have an alternative in the event of misfires.

Welcome, Strangers!

In our case, we always look for country auctions in areas where there also are summer theaters with matinées, or model dairy farms where they welcome visitors (my wife, a city girl, always has been curious about how they get milk out of a cow). Or maybe you can find a circus, a roadside museum, a state park, an historical society, or possibly even an unusual industry or manufacturing plant where they conduct guided tours (I still recall happily the brewery we once went through on one of these trips).

The point is, you'd visit such things if you were off on a trip a thousand miles from home; so why not do them near by?

In your little vacation-at-home project, plans also must be made adaptable to the weather. Suppose it's raining tomorrow, and you can't go to the auction? Well, in that case, you

drive downtown and see one of the first-run movies. Or you visit your city's more popular museum (you probably haven't seen the inside of it since you were in high school). Or you go "shopping" in one of the more expensive stores (you don't have to buy anything!). Or maybe you just stay home, get out the card table and a fifth of bourbon, and proceed to enjoy yourself. After all, what would you do if it rained and you were spending the two weeks at Grandma Jenks' Boarding House for Summer Folks at $20 a day?

One thing we always plan to do on rainy days is go to the racetrack. It's our once-a-year fling with the nags, and we always do it on our vacation; because horse parks operate whether it rains, hails or shines. You don't *have* to bet, you can just look at the pretty horses running around.

How to Beat the Races

My own feeling, of course, is that you ought to put a bob or two on each race—and, again, it's money that comes out of the daily budget. So you have to decide how much of your $40—or whatever your figure is—you can afford to lose. And you bet only that amount.

If it's still raining when the last race is over, or the movie ends, or the museum closes, then maybe tonight's a good night to call on the Baxters. They're always asking you to drop over anyway, so call them up. After all, *you* don't have to worry what time you get home; you can sleep all day tomorrow.

Other things to do on a vacation at home? Well, how about the ball park? If you want to see an afternoon game some day, without having to see it from left field or the last row in the upper tier, your vacation is the time to do it. You rarely need a reservation for even the best seat, and you feel like a millionaire who's escaping for the afternoon from his office.

If you like participant sports, such as golf or tennis, you can have a field day during your vacation at home. On our schedule, for instance, we always set aside at least a couple of days for tennis and golf—and I don't mean at anybody's exclusive club. I mean on the public courts and courses, which rarely are even semi-crowded on weekdays.

One thing we always try to do when making up our vacation-at-home plans is to get some information ahead of time from such organizations as the automobile clubs, the various Chambers of Commerce, or our State-operated tourist bureau (nearly every state has one nowadays) as to the events they have coming up in our area during our vacation period. These events will range from rodeos and round-ups to county fairs, anniversary and homecoming celebrations, husking bees and even block parties. Then we pick out the ones we think will interest us, and put 'em on the list.

I've said little about the evenings in this blueprint, but they naturally have to be planned as carefully as the rest of the time. If you don't you'll end up not knowing what to do, or you'll sit around and argue about it until it's too late to do anything. *Make those plans!* But make them flexible enough to enable you to change them when something else comes along you'd rather do. As for what there is of a specific nature to do after dark in your locality, you are a better judge of that than I.

But, no matter what, keep at least one evening open for the Big Vacation Party.

The Big Vacation Party? Well, sir, to us, this always is the highlight of our vacation at home, an evening when we don't have to worry about time or money or the big day at the office tomorrow. We discovered early in this business that one of the nicest things about vacationing at home (in addition to sleeping in our own comfortable beds) was that you always have your old friends within calling distance.

So on the night of the Party we call them all up and make a big night. And to make sure yours is as big a success as ours always have been, we suggest you set aside a couple of dollars out of each day's kitty and apply them toward the cost of the party—the drinks, food, favors, or anything else you figure goes toward the making of a real all-out hoe-down.

The House-Swappers

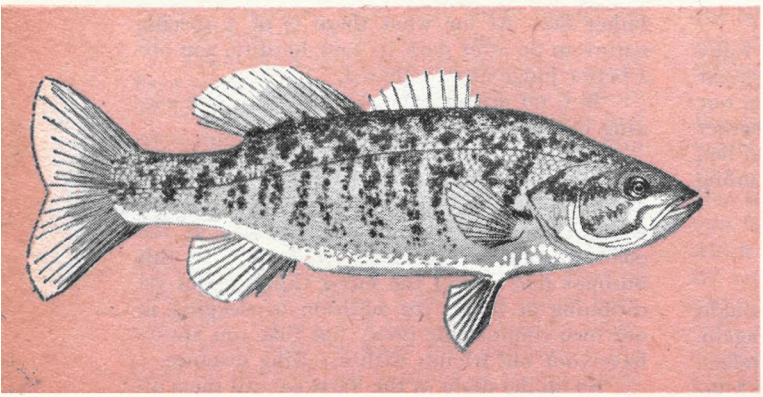
Winding up, this isn't the kind of vacation you'd want to spend every year, naturally. Everyone has to get away now and then. It's merely something to do as a change, as an "intermission in your stated exercises," when you don't exactly leap up and down with enthusiasm over the prospect of another year at Echo Lake or seeing the battlefield at Antietam. Like everything else this side of the tomb, it has its drawbacks, one of which is that—to a lot of people—it isn't a vacation unless you pack your bags and go away somewhere.

But even that objection can be overcome. The man across the street has a friend who lives in northern Michigan, and what they do, they swap houses. The Michigan man figures he lives in the country all year, and his idea of a big holiday is to spend it in the city. The man across the street wants to get out into the country during his time off. So . . . they exchange, and both will tell you they spend their vacations at home.

And I guess they do, at that. Home, as the poet says, is what you make it. Have a good time!

—By Maxwell Hamilton

Angler's Almanac



By Robert C. McCormick

SMALLMOUTH BASS – *also known as Bronzeback Bass, Redeye Bass, Green Bass, Black Bass, Swago Bass, Oswego Bass and, in some parts of the South, Trout.*

MARKINGS: Generally brassy in color, with or without prominent vertical bars, plus curving black stripe from gill to tail. Some look greenish along sides and under belly. Mouth extends only to point in front of eye. Average size in streams: 2 lbs.; in lakes, 2 to 4. Record: 10 lbs., 8 ozs., in Wheeler Dam, Ala., Oct. 8, 1950.

HABITAT: Originally native to Great Lakes drainage, southward through Tennessee River system. Intelligent stocking has made smallmouth one of nation's most sought game fish, now found in all but five states. Needs cooler water for survival than largemouth cousin, hence failure to catch on in warmer Southern states. Best place to look for smallmouths is in deep pools of cool, swift-flowing streams where undercut banks, rocks, tree stumps, etc., furnish plenty of cover for it to hide in by day, from which to venture forth on feeding sprees in early evening and at night. In lakes, during daylight try deeper waters around rocky points, underwater bars, and vicinity of cool underwater springs; in evening, bass move into weedy coves and lily-pad-studded shallows to night-feed on practically anything that moves.

HOW TO CATCH: Since old-fashioned plug-casting annually takes more smallmouths than any other method, relatively new spinning-rods that cast tiny lures incredible distances are practically made for the fish. Any good underwater wobbler (Al's Goldfish, Thomas Eel, spoon and pork-rind combos) will take bass; trick is to keep lure shiny so fish can see it, give 'em natural, fish-like action with slow, twitching retrieves so they'll want to strike. The most sport, though, is to fish at eventide with bass-action fly-rod, 8-9 feet long, dressed with weight forward fly-line, long leader, and top-floating bass bug. Fish the bug as you think its live counterpart would act in water; that is, tumble artificial deer-hair mouse from bank into water and start it swimming at once—a live mouse, fallen in, doesn't wait. Handle artificial frog same way except pause often to let "swimming" frog rest. Other artificials, including bass and trout flies, should be cast upon water, allowed to remain motionless for full minute before twitching slightly. Rest again, then start slow retrieve with another slightest of twitches; above all, take your time—*and fish 'em slow!*

Since smallmouth spawns usually in May-June in shallows along shoreline and may readily be spotted guarding nest, most states ban bass fishing until around July 1. Sometimes, late spring will keep fish in close even after season opens, so it's a good idea at least to try known spawning-beds opening day. Later on, fish will be deep in both lake and stream, can best be reached still-fishing with live bait: minnows, crayfish, hellgrammites, even grasshoppers and worms. Frogs, where legal, are good, too, but don't forget to let fish run at least a dozen feet with bait before setting hook; he needs to turn bait, swallow hook, before you can catch him.

JULY HOTSPOTS

Northeast

Bass men get in their biggest licks in first two weeks of season. Try any of your favorite local waters early and often, then switch to such known producers as New York's St. Lawrence River; Maine's St. Croix River or Sebago Lake; New Hampshire's Sunapee Lake; the Vermont side of Lake Champlain plus the Delaware River between Pennsylvania and either New York or New Jersey. The St. Lawrence, from Thousand Islands to along the western shores of Lake Ontario, is so famous for smallmouths that town of Cape Vincent, near river's mouth, bills itself as "Bass Capital of the World." Fish there may be taken full two weeks earlier than anywhere else in New York State. Bear in mind, too, musky season opens here on July 1, and many's the fish taken around the Thousand Islands ranking with biggest in the land; Niagara River at Ontario's western end is good musky-smallmouth water, too.

As with the St. Lawrence, most other smallmouth hotspots will also produce excellent angling for other species during July. Maine's St. Croix, though primarily noted for some of the fastest bass-fishing extant, is near both the Narraguagus and Dennys Rivers where Atlantic Salmon should be running now; Sunapee Lake in New Hampshire is noted for the Sunapee Golden Trout; Vermont's side of Lake Champlain gives excellent walleyes.

For salt-water specialist: Stripers are on the move now, may be taken all the way from North Carolina beaches to Cape Cod, on up coast to Maine; best bet is to surf cast at night for the big ones, especially when tide is full. Surf fishing for weakfish also good all along Atlantic coast now, too, while channel bass may still be caught from South Jersey around Florida and into the Gulf of Mexico. Blues are around the New York area this month, and along about mid-July tuna should begin turning up off Montauk Point, Rhode Island, Cape Cod and along the Maine Coast.

Midwest

Big news here is late June and early July "run" of smallmouth bass into Great Lakes shoreline coves; once fish come in, every angler along Michigan's peninsulas, around Ohio's Bass Islands, and on lakeshores of Wisconsin and Minnesota have a field day until they leave, usually in about two weeks. Check any bait shop along lake for arrival, then go after bass with snake-sized nightcrawlers on large hooks; for excellent stream fishing during same general period, try St. Mary's River from Sault Ste. Marie south to Lake Huron; rainbow trout grow big here, too.

As in Northeastern states, best bassing comes at season's opening, again in late fall, so check local laws thoroughly. Thus, it's a good idea to combine smallmouth bassing with fishing for some other species; i.e., walleyes in Minnesota, muskellunge in Wisconsin, notably in Manitowish River mouth in Flambeau Flowage near Mercer.

Also try either Wisconsin's St. Croix River from Danbury to Prescott or Minnesota portion of the Mississippi between Brainerd and Minneapolis. St. Croix, making a comeback following years of disuse, is said to contain more smallmouth than any comparable stream, and Mississippi also produces some fair-sized muskies in its Minnesota habitat. Minnesota's Big Fork River, flowing northward to Rainy River on Ontario border, is good, too.

For non-bassmen: Though season's open now on any fish that swims, you'll be competing with summer-time vacationists, thousands of other fishermen, plus usual reluctance of fish to strike in hot weather. If you can't put off your trip until fall, best bet now is a canoe trip through Superior National Forest, along Gunflint Trail; guides at Ely, Minn., will furnish everything you'll need except personal gear for $7 and up daily per person. Write Chamber of Commerce for advance information, reservations. But be forewarned: don't expect outstanding angling in July-August; best sport comes later.

South

By far the best smallmouth waters for fish of a size are those in the TVA Lakes, but fishing for them in July will be hit-or-miss unless you know beforehand many of the better deep-water holes and fish with live minnows. Best bets: Dale Hollow Reservoir on Kentucky-Tennessee border; Wheeler Dam in Alabama. Though seven of the 10 biggest smallmouths reported caught in nation last year came from those two artificial lakes, you'll get more sport now if you stick to fast-flowing rivers like the Tennessee and Little Tennessee between dams, Kentucky's Licking (especially South Fork near bridge on Route 27 at Falmouth); North Carolina's French Broad near Ashville, and upper reaches of Virginia's James near Clifton Forge.

With bass angling (even for warmer-blooded largemouths) likely to be spotty this month, why not try for sport you know should be good—catfishing *à la* TVA? Fish, running to 40-50 pounds, hang around spillways below every one of the nine major TVA dams in Tennessee River below Knoxville, plus the 20-odd minor impoundments upstream on both the main river and its various branches. Trick is to go after them with heavy tackle, strong boats and high-powered motors; operators of fishing docks below dams cater to this sort of sport, will provide all you'll need to try it. Best bet: below Pickwick Landing Dam near Savannah, Tenn.

Elsewhere in South, July heat is just beginning to force fishing into summer-time doldrums, but you'll still be able to find good trouting in the Great Smokies if you'll get off beaten path, back into the rough country; latter requires a long hike from such fishing camps as Fontana Village, N.C., but sport will be worth it. Otherwise, better switch to salt-water sport. Run down to New Orleans and fish the fabulous Mississippi River Delta Country of lakes, bayous and tidal streams. Or Padre Island a surf-fishing paradise off the Texas-Mexico border near Brownsville.

Far West

As throughout most of the year, trout is still the Number One game fish in the 11 Rocky Mountain States, and the deal now is to get off into the back country by pack train for the fishing experience of your life. Best bet is to head for High Sierra Country along California's Route 395 between Bishop and Bridgeport; from there you can either hire guides to pack you in to jeweled alpine lakes above 9,000 feet for California's famed Golden Trout, or else fish scores of big and little lakes and streams nearer highway for rainbows, Eastern brook and big browns. Other good spots: Colorado's Gunnison River, plus near-by Grand Mesa lakes; Montana's Flathead River; Utah's overpopulated but productive Logan River; entire Rio Grande River from its Colorado headwaters near Alamosa to Santa Fe, N.M.; river also holds good-sized smallmouth in its New Mexican waters.

Farther north, summer steelhead begin their annual runs in some Pacific Northwest Rivers in early July, but fish taken now will likely be small. Best bets are the Skykomish River below Index, Wash.; both the North Fork of the Stilliguamish and the Kalama River in Washington, where you'll be limited to fly fishing only; upper reaches of the Hood River in Oregon, and the mouth of the Klamath River in California; in latter stream, fish will get bigger as month wears on.

But for Western salt-water angler, July provides some of the best fishing of entire year for King Salmon running to 50 pounds in northern Washington's Strait of Juan De Fuca; headquarter at Neah or Clallam Bays, plus Port Angeles, and you'll get action aplenty now. And in California, striped bass angling during July is limited largely to trolling both San Pablo Bay and the Carquinez Straits north of San Francisco; party boats run daily out of Dow-Relio's Harbor at Crockett, but any fishing dock in same area will rent you a rowboat and outboard motor, if you want to fish alone.

THE ASSASSINS

A group of teen-age delinquents undertook a crime whose results may prove to be the most terrible in history.

BY ERWIN C. LESSNER

The rise of teen-age gangs, with their stabbings, narcotic addiction, vandalism, sexual license, and brutal beatings, has in recent years become a grim feature of the urban U. S. scene. Yet the results of even their most lurid delinquencies pale beside the vast consequences of a crime that was undertaken by a small group of teenagers in Europe.

The moving spirit was an undersized, bushy-browed youth named Gavrilo. If he hadn't flunked out of high school at seventeen, he might never have thought of turning to violence. He blamed his scholastic failure on his teachers—vicious instruments of a tyrannical government who had flunked him because they knew he loved liberty. He convinced his parents that, if he could make his way across the border to a nation where freedom still existed, he would make up for the lost year and get started in a fine career. He would also somehow avenge the injustice.

Two years later, Gavrilo was living in the capital of that neighboring nation on the small funds provided by his father. He was getting nowhere. He had made no progress in his studies, he had yet to earn a cent, and his bitterness found vent in emotional prattle about suppressed nations with like-minded youngsters in a run-down coffeehouse.

And not even within this small circle of compatriots had the puny Gavrilo achieved prominence. He was outranked by Tryphon, who not only had flunked out of school but also had slapped the teacher; by Nedelko, who had been an anarchist at 14; and by Daniel, who was an authority on Russian revolutionary literature.

One chilly March afternoon they had gathered as usual in their café. Gavrilo, his long face bent over a newspaper, scowled fiercely as he read a dispatch. His small, dark eyes tightened, his thin lips narrowed. Suddenly he cried out, "I shall punish him!"

The waiter openly sneered. The youths had always suspected him of being an informer, but continued to patronize the place because the proprietor never pressed them to pay what they owed for buns and coffee.

"You'd better shut up," Daniel muttered.

But Gavrilo repeated shrilly, "I shall punish him!"

"All right," said Nedelko. "Who?"

Gavrilo thrust the paper at them, his finger jabbing the news item. They read that the man who was slated to be the next top dog in the ruling hierarchy of their native country, would arrive at a border province in June to observe army maneuvers, and would visit the district capital.

In a moment the other three were as excited as Gavrilo. An hour later they had reached a decision: they would murder the big man.

The initiative now passed from Gavrilo to Nedelko. For the murder you needed a weapon; you needed money for travel and other expenses; you needed a secret organization to assist you, for security measures would be tightened. Nedelko had important contacts that could take care of those basic necessities.

The Black Hand

In one of his rare, hunger-inspired working spells, Nedelko had been a helper in a printing shop. There he had met leaders of an underground organization known as the National Defense, which promoted rabid nationalism at home and subversive activities abroad, particularly in the youths' native country. Its lunatic fringe worked hand-in-glove with the Black Hand Society, a terrorist officers' league. Everybody was in awe of the National Defense—and everybody knew that it was unofficially subsidized by Government circles.

Nedelko sought out his contacts. The organization, it turned out, approved assassination. But could such inexperienced lads carry out such a mission? There was amused skepticism.

However, a few National Defense extremists discussed the youths' proposal with Apis, leader of the Black Hand. The murder, they agreed, well might result in a political upheaval. But while they had some 150 trained activists to call upon, it seemed impossible to select a working team from among them on such short notice.

Two weeks after Nedelko's first visit to the National Defense, he was requested to return. He was ushered into the presence of a top man who informed him, still contemptuously, that he and his companions might be given a chance. They would be trained in the use of arms and their morale would be checked. If results were satisfactory, they would be sent across the border.

The training, at an army proving ground, was thorough, yet the coach was no ranking officer, as they had expected, but a railroad clerk and ex-noncom. Morale checks were made by a sullen civilian who did not bother to introduce himself and simply let them talk. "Garrulous but fanatical," his report said.

"Gavrilo and Tryphon are above-average pistol marksmen," the railroad clerk reported to a Black Hand major. "The other two are not so good with the Browning, but they could throw bombs."

At last the youths had undertaken something and had not failed. The National Defense man who had talked to Nedelko now notified the four that the organization would give them four pistols plus ammunition, six bombs, and the equivalent of fifty dollars in cash. They would henceforth take orders from the National Defense.

The expense money of $12.50 apiece seemed scarcely enough, but the boys hastened to agree. The Black Hand major who handed them the weapons and four vials containing potassium cyanide to be swallowed in case of arrest.

By the law of the land in which they would commit murder, no person under twenty could be sentenced to death. None of the boys would be twenty in June, but the major said firmly that suicide to prevent indiscretion was their duty.

At the border they were met by a customs official. The plan was for him to pass them on to a smuggler who knew every path and bush between the customs house and the nearest township in the bordering country. The smuggler was to arrive the following afternoon.

Meantime the official took his visitors to a dance at the village inn. The brandy was strong and the girls were enticing. One girl whom Gavrilo asked for a dance preferred tall Tryphon. The boys, not accustomed to discipline and responsibility, started to quarrel, threatening to break up the team because of a peasant girl they would never see again. The disgusted customs man worked hard and finally brought peace among them.

Persuasion at Pistol-Point

It was a rainy night when they filed along the smuggler's path. Their guide told them proudly how many loads of tobacco he had already taken across without seeing a customs man from the other side. The boys scoffed at trivial tobacco and asked the smuggler to guess what *they* carried. The man guessed tobacco, opium, rose oil. When he learned it was weapons, he grew furious and swore that he, an honest smuggler, would not let bandits befoul the trade. Only the persuasion of four pistol muzzles forced him to lead the boys to the cart that waited to take them to the next town.

Straw was piled up in the rear of the cart. The boys were tired. They pushed their arsenal under the straw, and Gavrilo, Daniel, and Nedelko went to sleep. Tryphon would be on guard.

An old mare pulled the cart. Its slow, monotonous steps, those of the walking coachman, and the lazy squeaks of poorly-greased wheels, turned into a lullaby. Tryphon's head drooped. He dozed off, and his hand, resting on the bombs beneath the straw, pulled one out. He was sound asleep when they approached a troopers' barracks.

That evening a state of alert had been proclaimed along the border. Suspects were to be arrested at once.

The boys slept like logs when the cart, with the uncovered bomb gleaming dully, reached the sentry box. The sentry did not challenge the vehicle. Crouched on the floor, rifle in arm, he snored like a busy sawmill.

Two hours later the coachman shook the boys awake in front of the house of a respected businessman who was an agent of the National Defense. The agent hurriedly got the weapons into his bedroom—and was immediately called away by district authorities who, unaware of his subversive affiliations, asked him to accompany an official on an important tour starting at once.

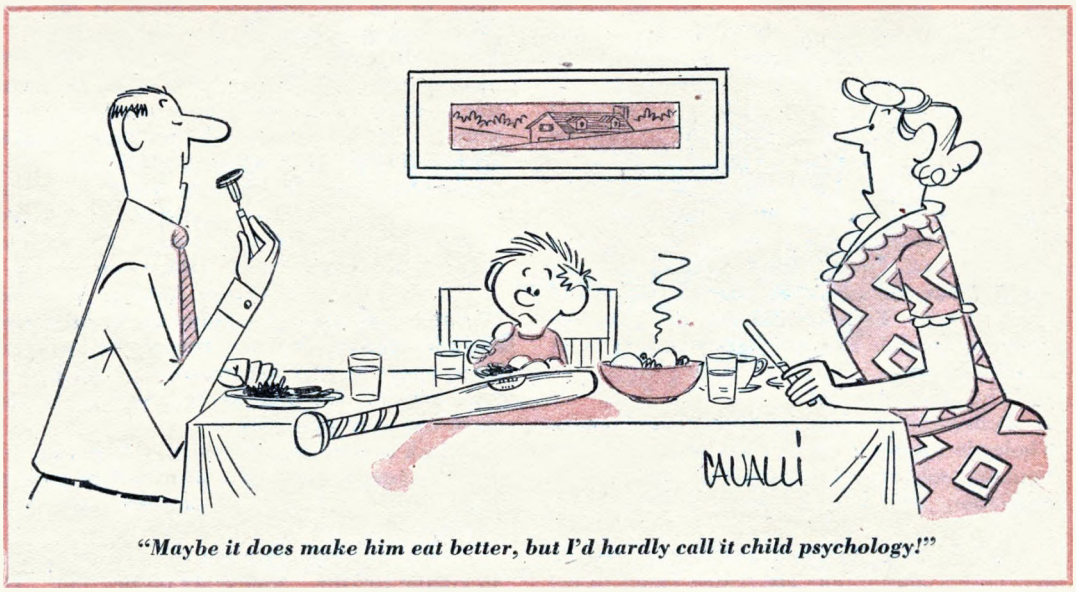
The tour lasted several days during which the agent suffered agonies. No immediate danger would come from the boys; he had told them where to go for shelter. But he had not had time to store the ammunition in the cellar. He had just pushed it under his bed, where the cleaning woman was bound to find it. She would get hysterical and call neighbors, who then would call police. . . .

But on his return, all was quiet. The weapons were as he had left them, covered with dust. The old woman never swept the floor under the bed.

The foursome had been quartered in separate places. They were rested and eager for action. But National Defense agents who had kept in contact with the team reported that they were high-strung incompetents, incapable of producing a workable blueprint of action. Unless an expert was called in, confusion would nip the conspiracy in the bud.

A professional terrorist was at hand. A man of thirty who had worked under many aliases, in many countries, for many illegal objectives, he had never been caught. Though his actual achievements were not spectacular, he was the best available specialist in assassination. He would map the strategy for murder and supervise the execution.

Two full-strength Army Corps had gathered in the province. Roads and railway stations were constantly patrolled. It was impossible for any conspirator to steal into headquarters, railroad installations, or official buildings, to ambush the prospective victim in privacy. It would have to be done in the open.



"Maybe it does make him eat better, but I'd hardly call it child psychology!"

A few days before he and his wife were to arrive, the program of his visit in town was made public: he would ride through the main thoroughfare along a river to attend an official reception in City Hall, scheduled for 11 A.M.

Here, on the street, he would die.

Daniel, the authority on revolutionary literature, and two local volunteers would take up positions in front of the bank building, each carrying one bomb to be thrown on signal from the professional terrorist. Nedelko was to stand across the street with another bomb to be used if the victim's car swerved. A short distance away, at the edge of a bridge, Gavrilo and Tryphon would be stationed to fire pistols should the bombs fail to hit home.

Nedelko, he who had been an anarchist at fourteen, was assigned to keep the bombs in his hideout and to bring them to the bank building on the morning of the crucial day at 8:30 sharp.

That Sunday, Nedelko had a leisurely breakfast in a pastry shop. When he looked at his watch it was past nine. Being already late, he decided that the bombardiers could wait a little longer. He went to a photographer's studio to have his picture taken as a souvenir. A radical newspaper in one hand, his right pocket bulging with bombs, he posed with a friendly smile. The clock at the bank building showed 10:40 when he reported to the irate terrorist.

Excited crowds jammed the sidewalk in front of the building. The conspirators stood in the last row; they could not have waited out front to receive their missiles. Now it was impossible to push through the crowd, and equally impossible for the directing terrorist to change the plan of action. He managed to snatch a few bombs from the latecomer, hissing at him to get to the other side.

Five minutes before eleven, rousing cheers heralded the slowly-driving motorcade. Nedelko still had two bombs. Nervously he squeezed one of them in his right hand, staring across the street where his accomplices were engaged in futile efforts to jockey for better positions. The automobiles came into sight, all open cars, filled with many uniforms, a few dark civilian suits.

The first car drove past the bank building. No bomb was thrown. Another car passed by. A crazed Nedelko brushed his neighbors aside and raced across the street—twenty yards in front of the third car, a dark-green phaeton. He saw a tall man in a general's uniform in the rear seat, a lady in a summer frock at his side, and yet another general. There could be no mistake: this was *the* car.

It took Nedelko but a few seconds to throw his missile—but one second too many. The bomb exploded behind the automobile, injuring one officer and several onlookers. The intended victim was unhurt.

Nedelko was seized before he could even think of swallowing the potassium cyanide. The cars stopped—then continued almost immediately, racing toward City Hall. They arrived there on schedule.

The Impossible Targets

For nothing happened at the bridge. Gavrilo and Tryphon had been there on time. But then Gavrilo, whose flunking out of school two years before had started the whole conspiracy,

ran into a former classmate. This old friend happened to be the son of the attorney in charge of prosecuting major crimes in the district. Time grew short, but Gavrilo could not get rid of his chum. You couldn't tell the prosecutor's son that you simply had to be off to provide some interesting work for his father.

They had walked to a near-by park when the explosion of Nedelko's bomb sent people scrambling for vantage points and gave Gavrilo a chance to break away and sprint back to the bridge. But the cavalcade roared past before he could act. Tryphon did not fire either—it seemed impossible to hit a mark speeding by at 50 miles an hour.

The plot had failed.

Police and troopers established checkpoints. Wholesale roundups of suspects began. Eighty thousand soldiers, outnumbering the civilian population, forged a ring of steel around the town.

Gavrilo and Tryphon could not stay together—two conspirators are always easier to detect than one. Tryphon walked uptown slowly, trying to look inconspicuous, but his face was ashen.

Gavrilo lingered on the bridge. He could not return to his old quarters; his hosts might already be undergoing questioning. He could not hire new quarters; registration laws would compel him to report to the police. He should not keep his gun; they were searching people. But he did not dare throw it away. He had no place to go; but hanging around at the spot would turn him into a sitting duck.

A side street across the main thoroughfare seemed reasonably empty. He went there and stared into the window of a small hardware store. A dark-clad man addressed him, speaking about criminals disgracing patriotic communities. The man talked loudly and a policeman stopped to listen. Gavrilo could not sneak away. The ordeal lasted twenty minutes. When it was over, trooper patrols entered the street.

Gavrilo was desperately bidding for time. Darkness was still eight hours away; he cursed the fair weather. Turning toward the park, the place where he had felt reasonably safe, he saw a policeman. He tried another side street, but there too were uniforms.

Back to the first side street. Many people—troopers among them. He stood before another show-window, as if to get inspiration from school appliances.

An automobile horn sounding, running feet, an engine roaring. Somebody pushed him. He turned, saw a commotion. The mayor's car came recklessly through the narrow street. Another automobile was behind, dark green, a general and a lady in the rear, another general in front of them, an officer on the running board, sword drawn.

Brakes screeched. A squarely-built trooper barred the view. The trooper snapped to attention, moved one step to the right. The car ground to a halt by Gavrilo. The officer on the running board was on the opposite side. From a distance of less than five feet away, Gavrilo looked into the cool, light eyes of the victim.

He drew his pistol.

Two shots. The victim and his wife collapsed.

A hail of blows battered Gavrilo to the pavement. He did not reach for the poison vial.

After the reception at City Hall, the victim had been scheduled to drive to the castle and from there to the railroad station. But he decided to visit the wounded officer in the hospital. The motorcade raced up the main street. Then the mayor ordered his chauffeur to take a short cut. The driver of the victim's car followed him. But to the general who accompanied the victim, this seemed to be the wrong way. He shouted at the driver to stop and back out. The car did stop—and Gavrilo fired.

Both shots were fatal. . . .

Eventually the two bullets killed thirty million people. For the man assassinated was Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian and Hungarian thrones; the assassin was Gavrilo Princep. The place was Sarajevo, Serbia, and the date was June 28, 1914. One month later World War I began.

—By Erwin C. Lessner.

Relaxing Tune

Jimmy Doolittle, when he was a young lieutenant, was flying a general from an Army camp to a city several hundred miles distant. The journey went smoothly until they hit an unexpected storm. The general, feeling the little plane being pitched about, nervously glued his eyes on his young pilot. And as he watched the intense concentration of the man at the controls, listening intently to the radio messages crackling over the earphones, the general relaxed, his fears gradually disappearing.

Safely landed, the general grinned and said, "Lieutenant, that was a nice job. I was downright scared when we hit that storm! Good thing we've got radio—it was nice to know you were relying on official instructions to guide us safely in!"

Doolittle blinked, then he started to laugh. "Sir," he said, "I wasn't listening to the control tower. I was tuned into the World Series!"

—Mary Alkus

Keep A Cool House

By CARL DREHER

Air conditioning adds between five and 10 percent to the first cost of a house. Operating costs vary from high to higher; if you can afford it it's fine. If you can't, you don't necessarily have to shoot yourself. There are fairly inexpensive things you can do to make most houses more livable during the impossible months. Here they are:

Even in the country's worst hot spots—interior Florida, the southwest deserts, the middle western prairies—it's fairly cool for six hours or more during the night. The more of that night air you can pull in, the cooler your house will be for at least part of the following day. That's obvious; what most of us disregard is that the more the building is sealed up while the sun is overhead, the lower the temperatures will be, especially on the first floor. May take some changes in your living habits, to accomplish this, and if you have kids it may be impossible, but it's worth it. Keep the doors and windows closed and blinds drawn as much as possible during the day, and if you have outside shutters close them on the sunny sides of the house. Stopping the sun before it gets into the house is more effective than stopping it after it's in.

That's why awnings are good and, for low houses, sun fences and walls to make a shaded garden or patio on the west side. It's the afternoon sun that's murder.

The ideal shading medium, of course, is trees. A large, healthy tree overhanging a house is a bargain at a thousand dollars. Only God can make it, but you can plant it. A lot of us can't help living in newly-built houses on treeless lots, but some of us have been living in such houses for years without doing anything much about it. It takes only a few years before a tree begins to give shade, and though the cooling effect is slight at first, every little bit helps.

Insulation can help too. Mass insulation, like mineral wool, fiberglass, felt, mica pellets, and similar materials in the form of loose fill or blankets, is a lot better than no insulation at all, but like other building materials it tends to store and re-radiate heat. Mass insulation is primarily for cold weather. The best insulation against heat is the reflective type, consisting usually of several layers of aluminum foil separated by air spaces of 3/4 inch or more. Even if your house is already mass-insulated in the walls and attic floor, it will pay you to staple this multiple metal foil on the attic rafters.

With outside temperatures in the 90s and the sun beating down on the roof, you'll get temperatures of 130 or more in the attic. It becomes an oven which continues to heat the house long after the sun has gone down. Reflective insulation will repel most of this heat. The cost is about $50 per thousand square feet; for a ranch house 50 by 24 with a 1/3 pitch roof it figures out to less than $100 for the material. If you hire the labor, the total cost should not exceed $150. And there's no operating expense —and no noise.

The pleasant thing about these measures—sealing out hot air, shade, and insulation—is that they tend to make mechanical air conditioning unnecessary, but if later you do decide to install it they will greatly reduce the "sun load" and hence the operating costs. Thus, whether you resort to them as palliatives or as aids to air conditioning, anything you spend on them will add to the value of the property.

The last step short of air conditioning is forced air circulation, with fans. If you have a cool cellar and a forced warm air heating system, you can turn on the blower and drop the temperature in the house a few degrees—until the cellar warms up. Far more effective is a large fan in the attic which changes the air in the entire house about once a minute after the outside temperature has dropped into the seventies or low eighties. The fan expels the sun-heated air from the attic, cooler air is drawn from the living areas to take its place, still cooler air is

TWIST OF FATE

LIE-DETECTOR

Don Manuel Baronda, an early California landowner, was one of the first experimental psychologists—although the term was not coined until long after his era.

Don Manuel invented a lie-detector—a psychological gem that was considered infallible. It was a magnificent example of necessity being the mother of invention.

The Baronda ranchos were in the Salinas Valley. As was the custom of the time, the Don was judge and jury when any sort of culprit was apprehended. He was a just man; and the fear of passing sentence unfairly weighed upon his mind.

One day, noting the guilty start of a housemaid when he opened a door unexpectedly and caught her closing a drawer of the señora's dresser, a drawer no servant was permitted to touch, the Don suddenly had his idea for a lie-detector.

The invention was extremely simple. A person under suspicion for a crime would be ushered into the vast room where the old gentleman sat behind a huge carved table. In front of him would be a milk pan, in it a couple of inches of water. The suspect would be told to thrust his finger into the pan and hold it rigid until the water had ceased rippling, and was utterly still. Then Señor Baronda would all at once fire the pertinent question: "Did you steal?" —or whatever the crime happened to be.

Perhaps the man's lips would answer "No," but it seemed that guilty persons couldn't control their reflexes and the finger in the pan would quiver if a lie were told and the tell-tale water would move. It was firmly believed that there would be no reflex finger action from those whose conscience was clear. —Mary Alkus

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drawn from the outside into the living areas; this cools the walls and ceilings, this in turn precools the house for the following day. A fan of adequate size will maintain an inside temperature only two degrees above the outside temperature.

Installed upright in the roof gable, such a fan operates as an exhaust or puller. Installed horizontally in the attic floor, it acts on a push-pull principle. It can be used as a pusher propeller in the cellar, but is less efficient. You can install it yourself, but there are several arguments against it:

The units weigh between 100 and 200 pounds and you will need a helper, or a crew, to get one safely in place.

You probably would find the wiring difficult to do, even if local codes and insurance restrictions permit.

The carpenter work will involve cutting joists or studs with possible structural weakening if you don't know what you are about.

Finally, and most serious, when you are all through you may find that the fan is noisier than you expected.

Fans installed by contractors aren't silent either, but specialists know which makes are the quietest and how to keep them quiet in installation. Still, satisfactory installations have been made by home mechanics. This is just a warning: Know what you are doing before you start.

The fan should have an air-moving capacity in cubic feet per minute about equal to the volume of the living quarters of the house. Our 50 by 24 ranch house, with eight-foot ceilings, will require a 10,000 cubic-feet-a-minute unit. Such a fan may have a diameter of 30, 36, or 42 inches and be driven by a 1/3 hp motor; the cost will be between $100 and $135 list—and discounts are possible. For about $30 more you can get a packaged unit—the same fan in a housing with an automatically opening and closing shutter. This reduces installation cost by more than $30 and also reduces the likelihood of acoustic complications.

Generally, larger fans are preferable; since they run slower while moving the same volume of air with the same size motor, they tend to be quieter. A time switch is an inexpensive and desirable adjunct. With all accessories and extras the cost should be under $200 for high-quality equipment, and about $60 for labor if you don't install it yourself. —By Carl Dreher

COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

'Sorry – your party doesn't answer'

BY LIONEL WHITE

Detective Marty Ferris was case-hardened to murder. But this time it was different. As he set out to track down the killer, he began to plot a murder of his own.

THE TIME *is very short and I should like to have it all clear in my mind.*

In thinking back to the moment I made that decision, it seems to me the complex motives behind it must have been building up over a long, long time—perhaps even from the very day I was born. But the decision itself had to be made at one specific point in my life. I believe I remember the exact moment.

It is odd how we can entertain the vagrant fragments of an idea for months and years, and then some little, insignificant thing will happen and all the pieces will swiftly fit into the pattern of a complete whole. We suddenly have, crystallized in our hearts and minds, a very definite thing—a thing which up until that moment had only been haunting the fringes of our consciousness. It was that way with this decision.

Yes, that is the way it was. It is all very clear to me, now.

The decision came sometime between five and six o'clock on a Sunday morning of the last week in August, shortly after I had returned to the small, one-family house in which Fern and I lived. The house was on the North Shore of Long Island, some 25 miles from Times Square.

But the decision had begun to take form the previous evening. It is probably no coincidence that on that night the Billy Chamlers case broke wide open. Yes, the thing began to crystallize when Sal and I walked into the exotic, scented apartment on East 61st street and I pushed a uniformed patrolman aside and looked down at the still-warm body of the night-club singer. Somehow or other, even then, with the purple-red blood splashed over her white face and dripping onto the equally white pillow, she reminded me in a strange way of Fern.

The call had come to us directly from Captain George O'Shea, who was in charge of the homicide detail at headquarters down on Centre street. It came around eight o'clock on a Saturday night, shortly after we had checked in and while Sal and I were playing a game of cribbage up in the information room.

The captain was very brief.

"A homicide at 560 East 61st street. Third floor. Precinct man reported it five minutes ago. Get going."

Sal and I went uptown in one of the department Mercurys. Sal Brentano is as quiet and subdued as his appearance would indicate. He and I have been partners on the homicide squad, working out of headquarters, for more than five years. He is also my best friend. With his short stature and slight frame, his rimless glasses concealing the eyes of a tired priest, you'd never take Sal for a cop.

An ambulance squatted at the curb in front of the four-story, brownstone house, its engine purring like a sleek, fat cat. There was a second precinct car angled in front of it. Two uniformed patrolmen were keeping a curious crowd moving in each direction, past the house.

A man I vaguely recognized as a plain-clothes man from the local precinct lounged at the open doorway.

"Ev'ning, Lieutenant," he said and shook hands with me. He nodded to Sal.

I tried to remember his name and couldn't. I asked him what it was all about.

"Some night-club singer. Name's Billy Chamlers," he said. "Found by a guy named Sam Duffy. Her manager. She was supposed to be at the Velvet Room in the Maddox House at seven. When she didn't show, this Duffy came over to find out what happened. Said he phoned first and there was no answer. He walked in and found her dead. Head bashed in. The doc's up there now."

I nodded and we turned toward the stairs. There was a self-operated elevator, but we didn't bother with it.

The apartment took up the entire third floor. A beat patrolman let us in.

"Body's in the bedroom," he said.

I was in no hurry and looked around as we crossed the living room. It was something. The wall-to-wall carpet caressing our boots must have been three inches thick. It was powder blue. The walls themselves were a deep purple; that is, three of them were. The fourth was all brick and embraced a wide, flush fireplace. A baby grand piano stood in one corner, its exposed white and black keys grinning at a huge, blond, combination television and record player in a second corner.

"Night-club singers do better than I had thought," I said.

"They don't do this well," Sal answered, one slender hand vaguely indicating the lush appointments surrounding us.

The fingerprint men were already there and a police photographer was setting up his equipment. Perhaps a dozen other men were crowded into the room and most of them I recognized at once as police. A pale, fat man, with the ruined face of an athlete gone to seed, sat hunched in a delicate wing chair and stared sightlessly at the bed. Sam Duffy, I figured.

The doc looked up as we moved across the room and several men stepped to one side.

"She's all yours," the doc said.

I edged close and looked down at her. It was then that I thought of Fern.

There was no doubt about what had happened to Billy Chamlers. She'd been lying there on the bed, stark naked, probably sleeping. Then something had awakened her and she had started to lift her head. Whoever had disturbed her sleep had taken the crystal vase and hit her full in the face. The first blow had probably broken the vase. It had certainly broken that once beautiful face.

But I wasn't thinking of that.

The hair was the same. Even with the crimson brillance of her blood streaking it, it still reminded me of Fern's blonde loveliness—a loveliness that always seemed to form a sort of silvery nimbus around her beautiful face.

The face beneath the hair was nothing now. Probably it, too, had been beautiful. But the body below that shattered head again reminded me of Fern. The same slender column of throat and the same strong wide shoulders supporting beautifully formed, firm and not-too-large breasts. The same flat stomach, swelling thighs and long, slender legs.

This girl was probably an inch taller than Fern, and the delicate olive tint of her flesh was a shade or two darker, even in death. Fern was 26 and this one must have been about the same age. But this girl was dead, smashed into oblivion by the brutal hand of a murderer. Fern was home in bed, softly sleeping and waiting for my return. Or was she?

"How long, doctor?" Sal asked in his soft voice.

The police surgeon looked at his wrist watch.

"Well, it's almost 9:30 now," he said. "Offhand, before an autopsy, I'd hazard a guess of three to four hours. Would make it around six. She was probably hit once and died within the minute. From the fragments, I'd say it was an especially heavy glass vase. Caved in the front of her skull. I'll give you a complete—" His voice dwindled to silence and he turned and began to close his little, black bag.

I turned to the photographer.

"Get your shots," I said. "Then send down for the basket. Who's that?" I pushed a thumb toward the fat man in the wing chair.

"Name's Duffy," one of the plain-clothes men said. "He found her and phoned in. Waited 'til we got here. I kept him."

I nodded.

"Anybody—"

"No."

"O.K.," I said. I walked over to the chair.

"Come on," I said. "We'll talk."

Silently he followed Sal and me out of the room. I turned into the kitchen and the three of us crowded around a small breakfast table in the alcove.

"Let's have it," I said.

He looked up at me and his pudgy face was sick.

"God! She was like a daughter to me."

His voice was a whisper and he talked like a man who wasn't quite aware of what he was saying.

Illustrated by MILLER POPE

Sal nudged me and I knew that he wanted to take it. Sal, with that soft, sympathetic manner of his, is much better a lot of times than I am. He has a way with them; can take them out of fear or out of shock.

"I know how you must be feeling, Mr. Duffy," he said. "But you'll have to try and pull yourself together. There's nothing you can do about her now—except help us find who did it to her. Tell me, you have known her long?"

Duffy looked up at him and for the first time his yellow eyes seemed to show some faint trace of awareness.

"Long? Yes, a long, long time."

His eyes again went blank. There was a full minute of silence and I thought he had gone back into shock. But then he spoke and you could almost hear the sob in his hoarse, barely audible voice.

I'm used to that sob and it never fools me. It can mean anything. I've heard it when I've talked to men who have just lost someone who is the dearest thing in the world to them. But I have also heard it in the voices of men who have freshly strangled their wives. It only means that the person is sick with heartbreak; it doesn't mean that he is innocent or guilty.

"Billy is—was—25. I knew her when she was 15. I'm Sam Duffy. Theatrical agent. I've an office at 1660 Broadway. Been there for years. She came to me when I was running a deal to train radio and stage singers. When she was still a school kid. She's been like a daughter to me ever since."

"You came here tonight," Sal said, "and found her?"

"Yes."

"You telephoned first?"

"Yes. At seven o'clock. She had planned to meet me for dinner a little earlier at the Velvet room. She didn't show up, which was unusual, since she always kept her appointments. So I got worried and came over here."

"And then you rang the bell and—"

"No," Duffy said. This time his voice was sharp and quick. He looked up at Sal, then at me, and there was intelligence and a trace of resentment in his face.

"No. The downstairs door is always open until 10 at night."

"The upstairs door—that too was open?"

"No. You see I have a key."

Sal began to say something, but I cut in quick.

"How long have you been keeping her, Duffy?" I asked.

For a fat man he was amazingly fast.

"You bastard," he screamed, and started to throw a punch. Sal managed to get between us.

"The Lieutenant didn't mean it," Sal said, and his tone was soothing and understanding. He turned to me. "I'll take it for a while, Lieutenant," he said.

Sal made the words sound as though I were a first-class son of a bitch. I shrugged and walked out of the room. It was an old act and we played it to perfection.

I was glad to get away. I didn't like Duffy; I didn't like whatever relationship he may have had with the dead girl.

Christ, I thought in disgust—have I reached a point where I can become jealous of women who have even a vague physical resemblance to my wife?

Bill Albright from the D.A.'s office was talking in the living room with a dumpy little Italian in work clothes, a man whom I correctly figured was the janitor of the building.

"Go back downstairs," he told the man. "I'll be down in a while to see you again." Then he shook my hand.

"Come on out for a cup of java," he said. "There's an all-night restaurant down at the corner."

We took the self-service elevator to the first floor.

You could sense the undercurrent of excitement in the place the second you entered. I knew that the cashier and the two or three men at the counter were probably talking and speculating about the murder. I knew that news of the crime was all over the neighborhood by this time. It was like it always is in this sort of case. Somehow or other it gets out; nobody actually really knows anything, but the news gets out.

"What'd you get?" he asked.

"Nothing much," I said. "Sal's up talking to this guy Duffy who found her." I gave him what I had in a few sentences.

"Duffy," he said sort of reminiscently. "We investigated a guy named Duffy some time back. Post office complaint. He was supposed to be running some sort of theatrical, mail-order school."

"What happened?"

"Nothing. We were just doing a favor for the feds. Made a report and I guess he was in the clear."

He took a sip of coffee and bit into the sandwich. The smell of the raw onion was almost a relief after the heavy perfume of Billy Chamlers' apartment.

"There's a young couple live on the floor above," Bill said. "Cohen. They're in the Catskills for the summer. Place locked tight as a drum. Went in with a pass key and apparently nothing disturbed there.

"Floor beneath is occupied by a professor of some sort. He's in Europe and his place doesn't look as though it's been entered in a couple of

months. First floor has two apartments. Rear belongs to an advertising man. Bachelor. He went out to a bar and then to dinner after getting through work around 5:30. Got in about 15 minutes ago. One of the precinct men is checking the name of the restaurant as well as the names of the people the ad man was with. First floor front is occupied by a music studio. A Miss Rumson, singing teacher, runs it. She was there from four o'clock on. Says she heard nothing; knows nothing.

"Then there's the janitor. He lives in the basement. Wife and four kids, all young. He was in all afternoon and evening. Says he heard nothing. Of course he wouldn't have heard anything from down there anyway. Except the elevator, if it were used, and he can't recall having heard it until about 7:20. That was probably when Duffy showed up."

"Killer sure picked his time," I said.

Bill laughed.

"His time and his girl. Yeah. One thing I did get though. The tenants mostly mailed their rent into the agency. Except for the Chamlers gal. She always gave a check to the janitor and he would in turn give it to the agent, who made a practice of dropping around once a month with the janitor's pay check.

"Well, it just happened that the janitor got the check yesterday and was holding it until the first of the week, when it was due to be picked up.

"$225. Drawn on the Penn National Bank, North Philadelphia branch. Signed: K.V.D. Malcolm. And for the year and a half that the janitor—whose name by the way is Louie Panatelli—has been here, he's always received the same check, drawn the same way. Check was made out to Billy Chamlers, dated yesterday, and endorsed over."

I nodded. It fitted. I figured somebody must have been keeping her. I don't know why, but the idea made me mad.

"We checked the apartment," Bill went on. "Don't know whether anything is missing or not. She had some jewelry in a dresser drawer, but it's mostly junk. There's a colored woman comes in by the day, but this was her day off. We have her name and a vague sort of address up in Harlem. I got one of your boys trying to dig her up."

I said thanks.

"You probably noticed that the windows in the bedroom were open and that one of them leads out onto a fire escape, which runs down the back of the house and ends in an alley. No screens. Checked the lock on the front door and it doesn't look as if it's been tampered with. Regular Yale snap lock."

"You thinking of prowlers maybe?" I asked.

"Thinking of everything," Bill said. "Whoever it was must have come in while she was sleeping. She started to wake up. And that was it. Could have been a prowler."

I nodded. It could have. I didn't think so.

I thought of her lying dead there on that bloodstained bed. And then again I thought of Fern. For some reason, which I'll never be quite able to figure out, I decided to go to the telephone booth in the corner and call my house out on Long Island.

It was the first time I had ever done it—in the three years of our marriage. And God only knows why I did it then. Fern certainly never expected me to call while I was on regular duty.

I could hear the bell ringing, and then a dead silence, and then ringing again. I looked down at my wrist-watch. It was close to midnight.

I knew that if Fern had gone to a movie she would have been back by this time. I hung up and dialed over again. I got the same result. So then I put the dime in the slot again, dialed the operator and gave her the number. I waited while she told me three times that she was still ringing and that there was no answer.

"Something wrong?" Bill asked, when I got back to the table.

"Nothing," I said shortly. "Think I'll skip the second cup and get back."

I stalked out of the lunchroom and headed for the Chamlers apartment.

The cop on the first floor told me Sal was down in the basement talking to the janitor. I went down the inside staircase and pushed a few kids out of my way to enter the apartment. It smelled as strongly of garlic as the Chamlers girl's had of perfume.

Sal and Louie Panatelli were jabbering away in Italian. A folded check lay on the table between them.

Finally Sal looked up. He gestured toward the check.

"I know about it," I said.

"Louie here tells me he doesn't think anything is missing," Sal said. "It also seems several people had keys to the apartment: The maid, Duffy, some tall, thin, elderly guy who always showed up around the fifth and the twentieth of the month. Probably the guy who signs these checks. Louie says he would get the rent check after the old gent's second visit. I'm afraid our gal was a bit of a tramp."

"How the hell do you know?" I snapped.

Sal looked up at me in quick surprise.

"What?"

"Sorry, Sal," I said. "I wasn't thinking. The fact is, I got a lousy headache. Feel crummy. I wasn't even listening to what you were saying."

Sal looked at me sympathetically.

"Look," he said. "Why don't you go on home and hit the deck. The precinct boys are

doing everything that can be done for the time being. I'll stick around for a while and then we can really get started tomorrow, after some of the leg work is out of the way."

"Tell you what, Sal," I said. "We'll go back upstairs and see what's happening. If everything is under control, I'll take you up on that."

But it was almost three o'clock before I finally made the break. I had to talk to the press for a few minutes and then at last I got away. I probably didn't make very good sense to the newspaper boys. My mind wasn't on Billy Chamlers. It was on Fern.

You'd think, after that telephone call which Fern hadn't answered, that the first thing I'd do on arriving home would be to run upstairs and see if she was in. But I didn't. I can't explain just why, but somehow I just didn't. Perhaps, somewhere in the back of my consciousness, I was afraid she wouldn't be there. I don't know.

Usually, when I come home late, I make myself a sandwich and have it with a glass of cold milk. This time, I took out a can of beer, punctured the top and sat at the kitchen table.

Then I took the letter from my pocket, the letter I'd received that morning at headquarters. The one from the friend of mine with the FBI in Washington. I knew its contents by heart, but, nevertheless, I reread it once more. The part I was interested in was brief:

". . . and we have been unable to find any record of a Fern Taylor. There is no such place as the St. Obisbo Convent. The fingerprints you sent me, however, belong to a Joan Bronski, 26 years old, born in Portland, Ore., who served two and a half years in Telahachi Reformatory for Women in California, after a conviction for grand larceny. She skipped parole after being released four years ago and there has been no record of her since . . ."

The fingerprints belonged to my wife. She had written the name Fern Taylor on our marriage certificate when we had been wed three years ago.

I finished the beer, threw the empty can in the sink. I felt sick.

There was a full moon riding low in the eastern sky and it gave just enough illumination so that it wasn't necessary for me to turn on a light in the living room as I carefully crossed it and started upstairs.

Fern had, as usual, undressed in the bathroom, which I could tell from the pile of clothes which lay in a heap where she had dropped them beside the shower stall.

I had planned to take a cold shower before turning in, but I was very tired and didn't want to go to the trouble of digging up fresh towels. So I compromised by washing my face and hands, drying them with one of Fern's discarded towels from the floor.

I opened the cabinet above the lavatory and reached for my toothbrush. I groped for the toothpaste, but it wasn't there. A moment later I saw the twisted tube lying at the edge of the bathtub. The cap was off and was nowhere in sight.

"Damn Fern," I said. "I wish she could remember to put that Goddamned cap back on."

There was a dim reading light still on over the head of the double bed. An opened movie magazine lay on the scatter rug at the side of the bed. Fern had fallen asleep without raising the window and the fetid air in the room was stifling.

Unconsciously I reached over and pulled the linen sheet up so that it covered Fern's naked breasts. She lay flat on her back, in the very center of the bed, her arms spread wide. Her hair—long fine blonde hair, which in certain light looked almost like silver thread, and which reached well below her shoulders when she was standing up, was spread loosely over the white pillow case. Both pillows were under her head and her lips were partly opened as she breathed lightly. The line of her jaw was clean and sweet and she looked like a little girl.

It was hard to realize that we had been married for almost three years. It was hard to believe that letter from Washington.

Fern moaned softly in her sleep as I crawled into bed beside her. She only weighed 110 pounds, but she was a dead weight as I eased her over so that I could find room to stretch out.

I must have lain there for a full half hour, unable to sleep. I was thinking of Fern and of our life together. The moon had disappeared, but the sun had yet to find the horizon. The room lay in darkness. There was no breath of air.

I turned on my side, toward Fern, and the movement must have disturbed her.

Once more she moaned ever so gently. And then she turned on her side so that she was facing me. One slender arm reached out and fell across my chest. She kicked out with one foot and the movement pulled the thin sheet from the upper part of our bodies.

She breathed a little more heavily and for a moment I thought that she had awakened. Her head fell back. I leaned forward and found her lips, which were still half opened.

Fern is the only woman I have ever known or heard of who made love in her sleep. She wasn't awake. That I knew. But it wasn't quite as though she were still fully asleep or were talking in her sleep.

She said, "Harry—oh, Harry!"

It was right then, in that very second, that I made my decision.

Me, Marty Ferris.

I decided to kill my wife.

2

I WAS STILL half asleep when my right hand took the receiver from the hook. It was Sal.

Sal talked for a couple of minutes, filling me in on everything that had been accomplished since I'd left. I was having a hard time following what Sal was saying. My mind was exactly where it had been when I had fallen asleep five or six hours earlier. My mind was on Fern.

"O.K. Sal," I said. "O.K. Hold it and I'll be there as soon as I can."

I couldn't help staring at my face in the mirror as I shaved. I thought, God, can this be the face of a man who has decided to commit murder? And then I felt the fury rising in me and try as I might, I couldn't control it.

When I drew the razor blade down over my lean cheek, my hand shook and I cut myself. The blade was dull and I knew at once that Fern had used it for cutting something and hadn't bothered to replace it with a fresh one. I snapped the razor open. The blade was badly nicked. Looked as if she'd been sharpening a pencil with it.

What the hell is wrong with her, I thought. Where was she brought up, anyway? And that question started it all over again.

Until recently I had believed that I knew my wife as well as it is possible for a man to know the woman with whom he is in love. She had been the only girl in my life; the only person I had ever accepted without question, without reservation. Of course, in looking back now, it seems almost insane that I could have taken the attitude and acted the way I did. I guess it all stems from my background and my personality.

You see, I wasn't like other children, wasn't raised like other children and didn't think like other children.

My mother had left my dad soon after I had been born. She'd run off with a musician. About six months later the two of them had been killed in an auto crash down in Georgia. The way Dad explained it, I didn't feel any special bitterness against my mother—I just thought that all women were bad. Bad and dangerous.

What happened to Dad a few years later, hadn't helped matters much. He raided a Bronx apartment where he had been tipped off that three bank robbers were hiding out.

He killed two of them when they opened fire, but the third got him with a sub-machine gun. Later, the killer was picked up and sent to the chair. But by that time my father was already a dead hero.

Sal—Sal and his mother, Mom—were probably the only ones who knew and still remembered the details of my childhood. For, you see, Mom had raised me after my Dad was killed.

The death of my father, and the story he had told me about my mother, left me with a life-long prejudice and hatred. I always distrusted women and I had a deep-seated, unreasonable hatred of all crooks.

Sal has argued with me about it often enough. And so have the captain and others in the department. Told me that there are crooks and crooks. Some better and some worse. But I look at criminals the way I look at women. Goddamn it, they're either crooks or they're not. Either good or bad. I don't see any shadings!

There's one thing I believe. I believe a man is guilty until he proves himself innocent. The hell with putting it the other way around. An innocent man should be able to prove it easily enough. There are a lot of boys in homicide who disagree with me, but the fact remains, I have one of the best records in the department for sewing up cases. When I work on a case, the D.A. gets a conviction.

Anyway, about Fern and myself. As I say, she was the first woman—outside of Sal's Mom of course—in my life.

I met Fern by accident—literally an accident. In a way, it was a pickup. She'd been walking in front of me down the stairs in the subway station at West 96th street early one morning, and she'd tripped and fractured her ankle. After I'd called an ambulance, I carried her upstairs and checked her into the emergency ward at the hospital.

I don't know what it was about her, but from the very second I held her slight body in my arms, I was gone.

First I visited her in the hospital, and then, later, I saw her in the two-room apartment she shared with another girl. The Lord only knows what we found to talk about, but it wasn't about our families. I never told her much about mine, only that I was an orphan. I guess that was one of the things that had drawn us together. Because she'd told me that she, too, was an orphan, her mother and father having died during an epidemic when she was an infant. She said she'd been raised by the sisters at St. Obisbo convent in California. I'd believed her.

Four months from the day we first met, we were married. She quit her job as I didn't want my wife working. Things were fine for those first two years. I guess we both had so much to learn, so many things to find out, that the time just passed. And then the change began.

At first it was nothing much, just an odd way Fern had of seeming vague and distracted. Almost secretive. Later, a couple of times, I caught her in small lies.

I didn't say anything to her about it, but it worried me.

It wasn't until a couple of weeks previously, however, that things came to a head. At least,

they came to a head in my own mind. I didn't discuss it with Fern.

That was when I came home unexpectedly late one afternoon and the phone rang. It was a man's voice and he started speaking the second I lifted the receiver.

"Get over here kid, right away," the voice said. And then, when I didn't answer right off, the voice went on. "That's you Fern baby, isn't it?" he said.

I hung up. The next day I wrote my friend at the FBI. And I enclosed a set of Fern's fingerprints which I'd picked up off the toothbrush glass in our bathroom.

But I'm getting away from my story. . . .

Anyway, I was still thinking about Fern when the phone rang a second later, and I picked the receiver off the hook. I wasn't surprised when I heard her voice.

"Mart?" she said.

"Who'd you expect, baby?"

Fern laughed. "Dope. How are you? Just get up?"

I said I had.

"I just left church," she went on. "And the funniest thing. I ran into a girl I used to know. Jill Bentley. She's some kind of an actress now—in a Broadway night club. Anyway, she wants me to have lunch with her. So if you don't mind—"

"Go ahead, kid," I said. "The captain put me on a tough one and I gotta meet Sal right away, anyway. I'll call you later. You'll be home tonight?"

Fern gave a sort of half laugh.

"Of course, you crazy," she said. "Where'd you think I'd be?" She sounded surprised.

"O.K.," I said. "I'll call."

I hung up.

Jill Bentley. It was the first time in the years of our marriage that Fern had ever mentioned anyone from her past life. For some damned reason I was suddenly insanely jealous of this Jill Bentley. I determined to look her up; find out about her.

Within an hour I was at the building on 61st street. A uniformed patrolman opened the door for me.

"Your partner's upstairs," he said. . . .

She must have weighed close to 300 pounds. I wondered how she managed to get in and out of the tiny kitchen. She didn't look up as I crowded past her and pulled out a chair next to Sal at the table in the alcove.

"Miss Betty," Sal said, nodding toward the colored woman. "She took care of the place for Miss Chamlers."

"What's new?" I asked.

"Everything and nothing," Sal said. "Mostly that it could have been robbery. Seems there's some jewelry missing. A diamond and platinum wrist watch, which, from its description, must have been worth a couple of grand. It might have been given to her by Malcolm and we're checking on it. Tried to reach Malcolm through the Philly police, but he's out of town. Been gone several days. A pair of pearl earrings and a ring are also missing. Star sapphire set in platinum or white gold."

"You get the medical report yet?" I asked.

Sal nodded.

"Like we first figured. She was struck only once; killed instantly. No other sign of attack."

"About prints," I asked.

"A million," Sal said. "Of course plenty of hers. Also—" He nodded toward Miss Betty, who had just dropped a pair of eggs in some boiling water. "Then there were Duffy's, the janitor's and a couple of sets that belong to Mrs. Panatelli and to her kids. And probably at least 10 or 12 that we haven't identified so far. Also a thumb and forefinger that belong to the guy downstairs. John Haverford, the advertising fellow. Sergeant Kelly talked with him."

Sal stopped for a minute and dug up some notes.

"Haverford is in his late twenties, a bachelor. Pretty much of a playboy, but he makes money at his job. Clean record. He told us he knew the Chamlers girl and has had a couple of dates with her. Admitted he's been in the apartment, but not in the last week."

"I'll get him later," I said. "What else?"

"Damned little. Haverford's alibi seems to hold up. The janitor could have been anywhere. All his wife and kids remember is that he was in and out all afternoon and early in the evening. Duffy cracked up and he's home now. Lives in one of those Broadway fleabags. The Milton Hotel on West 46th. We got a man on him." He hesitated a second, and then continued.

"Found an address book in one of the dresser drawers. This girl must have known half the men in New York."

"Miss Chamlers was good girl," the colored woman said. "A fine girl."

"We know that," Sal said.

"She didn't like that Haverford fella," she said. "He was after her alla time, he was. But she give him no time a day 'tall."

Sal interrupted. "Miss Rumson, the voice teacher, is downstairs waiting to talk. So far we've got nothing at all out of her. Except that she didn't seem to care for Billy Chamlers. Seems that she taught her for a while and there was an argument over money."

Sal pulled a sheaf of photos from a briefcase.

"Mug shots," he said. "Had 'em sent up from downtown. All of them apartment prowlers. Thought we might show 'em around in case there's anything to the robbery theory. If so, maybe the guy cased the place in advance and someone may recognize a picture. Personally, I don't buy the prowler idea."

I didn't either, but I didn't say so to Sal. There was a reason in the back of my mind that made the prowler theory particularly attractive to me, but it wasn't the kind of idea that I cared to discuss.

Sal followed me out of the kitchen and down the hall to the front room. The phone was ringing and I picked up the receiver. It was Captain O'Shea.

"Gotta line on that Malcolm guy," he said. "He's a big wheel in his home town. Banker. Lives in Paoli with his wife, who's social and got important connections. Two kids in college. Not the kind of guy you have picked up. The local boys are checking into his recent activities. They have to play it slow. We'll have a report by tomorrow morning and if it looks the way I think it's going to, I want you and Sal to go down and see him." He hung up.

We took the self-service elevator to the basement. Louie Panatelli let us into the apartment. His wife and four youngsters were in the kitchen.

I took out the folder of mug shots. We were about halfway through them when Louie grabbed one of the pictures and spoke rapidly to Sal.

I understand a little of the language, but they were talking much too fast for me to follow. Sal turned to me.

"The milkman," he said. I took the picture and stared at it.

Wilbur Holiday. Age 24. Breaking and entering. The picture was taken seven years back. It showed a full face and profile of a slender man with a weak chin and watery eyes. A large nose curved over sensuous lips.

Sal took the photo and called headquarters. Hanging up, he asked:

"What kind of a woman was this Chamlers girl?"

Louie Panatelli gave an expressionable shrug.

"A woman," he said. "Who knows? She was always good to the kids. Gave us no trouble. Many people visited her."

"This Duffy," I asked. "Did he come often? Did he stay overnight?"

"Often he was here. Staying—who knows?"

I wasn't getting anywhere and so I left Sal to continue the questioning. But I had learned one thing. Wilbur Holiday had been delivering milk at the apartment house for about four months. He seemed to have the concession for the entire house, but he always left all of the bottles at the janitor's door and stuck the bills in them once a week. As far as Panatelli knew, he never actually entered the apartment house proper.

From Miss Beatrice Rumson I got exactly nothing. That is, nothing except that she hadn't liked Billy Chamlers.

They had a message for me when I got back upstairs. Headquarters had checked on Holiday's record and they said he'd been released from Sing Sing on parole some four months ago. They were able to get in touch with his parole officer and they had his address. The parole officer said Holiday was working for the Greater Boro Dairies as a delivery man and that he had, apparently, been going straight. He went to work at midnight and got off at eight in the morning.

Sal came back upstairs and he looked dead beat. We left the apartment house together. He took the Mercury and dropped me off at the subway. . . .

It was on the fifth floor and the desk clerk doubled as elevator boy. The cage rose as though it didn't think it would ever get there, but finally it did. He clanked the door open and I got out and saw a man from downtown leaning against the wall. I walked over and told him he could run downstairs and find something to eat. To kill about an hour and then come back.

"And Mr. Duffy will not be receiving any more callers for the afternoon," I said to the desk clerk, who was hanging out of the elevator with his ears flapping.

Sam Duffy opened the door.

He needed a shave and the dark stubble stood out on his face in small wiry patches. His eyes were more yellow than ever and his flabby mouth looked as though he were about to cry. It made me a little sick just to look at him.

"I want to talk, Mr. Duffy," I said. "Do I come in?"

It was a sort of combination living room and bedroom. Over against the far wall was an unmade bed, which looked as though it could be converted back into a couch. Next to it was an old-fashioned, wrought-iron ash stand filled with stale cigarette butts. One butt still smoldered and it added nothing to the fetid air in the small room.

In spite of the late August heat, the two small windows were tightly closed. There were a number of framed and autographed pictures on the walls. Most of them said, "With love to Sammy."

Sam Duffy sank down on the edge of the bed as I closed the door and went to one of the chairs. It was surprisingly comfortable.

"Duffy," I said, "my partner talked with

you last night. Before you start, I want you to remember one thing—I'm not my partner. He has the gentle touch."

The fat man's ruined face went a shade whiter and he looked up at me with startled eyes.

"Am I under arrest?" Duffy asked.

"No pal," I answered, "you are not. And don't start yelling for your lawyer or demanding your rights. If you do, you'll end up defending yourself on a charge of resisting an officer—after you get out of the hospital."

The white complexion turned to a delicate shade of green and Duffy's hand shook as he reached out for the cigarette butt. We understood each other.

"I'll tell you whatever you want to know," Duffy said.

"I know you will, Sam," I said. "But don't only tell me what I want to know—tell me the truth. Now then, first about yourself. Let's just start say five years before you met Billy Chamlers."

He'd quit school before he finished sixth grade. He'd become a hoofer. By the time he was 25, he knew he'd never be any good; and the combination of an inborn physical laziness and an avaricious appetite made hoofing no longer desirable. So he'd set himself up as a theatrical agent. He hadn't done too well. He'd had to branch out as a voice coach and teacher.

He'd had several brushes with the law. Nothing serious; just fraud charges when he'd made promises to pupils which he hadn't been able to deliver. He'd run a mail-order talent racket for a while, but the post office had closed him up. He met Billy Chamlers when she answered an ad he'd inserted in a daily tabloid.

I stopped him when he got that far. Just on a hunch.

"Sure that was the only kind of trouble, that post office thing, Sammy," I asked.

"What do you mean?" he said.

"Well, the Chamlers girl was under age when you first met her. So were a lot of other girls who came to you, I guess. Didn't you ever get into any jams of any sort?"

I could tell by the way he reached. God knows, I've questioned enough of them, so that a sort of sixth sense lets me know. I didn't wait for Sammy to answer. I was too sure of myself.

"You dirty, fat louse," I said, and stood up. "Tell me. Tell me quick!"

He let out a sort of half squeal and cowered. He spoke fast.

"Yes, yes. There was that one time with the Kilinsky girl. You know about that?"

"Tell me!"

"It was a rape charge. Statutory."

"And how about Billy Chamlers," I said quick. "How about her. Didn't you . . ."

His reaction was a complete surprise.

"You bastard," he screamed, and he jumped from the bed. One pudgy fist shot out and I grabbed it in mid-air.

"You dirty bastard, you can't talk about her that way. She was clean—clean all the way through!"

Well, I got him quieted down at last. There was no longer any doubt of it in my mind. Whatever his relation with Billy Chamlers, he had really loved the girl in his own peculiar fashion.

He started crying and getting sentimental about her. That's when I shot the question.

"How well do you know Jill Bentley?"

He stared at me for a second without expression.

"Who?"

"Jill," I said. "Jill Bentley."

"You mean the night-club singer?"

I said I did.

"I hardly know her at all," he said. "She ain't no client of mine. I just know her name. What's she got to do with this?"

"I'm still asking the questions," I said. I got up and handed him an opened pack of cigarettes. He'd used up his own.

"I'll tell you what, Sammy," I said at last. "I think you've been leveling with me. Now I want you to do something. I want you to do it on the quiet and if you do a good job of it, I'll see to it that no one bothers you any more.

"I want you to find out everything you can about Jill Bentley. Where she lives; who she lives with, if anyone; where she works; where she came from; who her friends are. Everything."

He nodded and looked at me with a baffled expression.

"Is she mixed up in this?" he asked at last.

"I can't tell you anything, Sammy," I said, my voice suddenly friendly. "Just do what I ask. Maybe I'll be able to do you a favor before we're through. But remember one thing, whatever you find out, you tell me and only me. No one else."

On my way downtown to headquarters, I stopped in a drugstore and called my house. There was no answer.

3

SAL WAS waiting for me in Captain O'Shea's office. I came in while the captain was talking.

". . . and I say," the harsh, loud voice was saying, "you can forget all about a prowler or a

burglar of any kind. It's almost sure to be Duffy, Malcolm or Haverford."

The captain looked up and nodded to me.

"Marty," he said, "I was just telling your partner we have traced Malcolm's movements prior to the crime. He flew in from Philly last Friday and checked into the Waldorf Towers where he maintains a permanent suite. Friday night he spent with the Chamlers girl. Also Saturday morning."

"Has he been questioned?" I asked.

"Not yet. We don't want to alarm him. He'll know of the murder, one way or another, by this time. You can bet that he will be laying low. Certainly, he won't return to New York and take a chance on being picked up for investigation. And he knows we haven't enough yet to extradite him."

O'Shea stopped and lit the cold end of his cigar butt.

"What about Duffy?" he asked.

"I just left him," I said. "First, his alibi doesn't mean much. Said he spent Saturday from four to six in a mid-town movie. Then he went to the Velvet Room at the Maddox House. The doorman, a waiter and a bartender all remember seeing him around the place. But not one of them can swear exactly when he arrived and when he left. My hunch is that he's in the clear."

"Why?"

"Well, the guy was nuts about the Chamlers broad. That I'm sure of. He's normally a greasy, overstuffed yellowbelly, afraid of his own shadow. But make one crack about the girl, and he's ready to take on the U.S. Marines with bare knuckles."

Sal waited until we were outside the office before speaking.

"The Cap's right," he said.

"No Sal," I said. "No. This is one time I think he's wrong. We're going to see Holiday."

So we drove up to the Greater Boro Dairy and got there at exactly 11:40. The night dispatcher let us in and I showed him my shield.

"Wilbur Holiday check in yet?" I asked.

The dispatcher looked over a long, ruled sheet. He nodded.

"Checked in five minutes ago," he said. "Why? Is he in any trouble?"

"Not yet," I said. "But we want him for a while."

Two minutes later, Holiday entered the office. A late Sunday night issue of a Monday morning tabloid was rolled up and stuck out of the coat pocket of his sharkskin suit.

Wilbur looked more than his 31 years. His face was prematurely wrinkled and resembled a sheet of yellow parchment. I didn't like him.

There was no doubt about Wilbur being stir-wise. He started right out before we had a chance to open our mouths.

"God, I knew it!" He almost yelled it. "The second I saw that story and the address, I knew someone would be around."

"If you're in the clear," Sal cut in, "you have nothing to worry about."

"No?" Holiday said, his voice almost inaudible. "No? I still got kidney troubles from the last time the cops questioned me and I didn't have nothing to worry about then, either."

"We're not that kind of cops," Sal said.

"Never mind all that," I interrupted. "Just get your hat, Wilbur. We're going for a little ride. We want to talk to you."

I told Sal to get in the front seat and drive around slowly. I pushed Wilbur into the back and crawled in beside him.

We'd done it often enough before and Sal knew the pattern. He headed downtown and cut into Central Park.

"You were crazy about her, weren't you Wilbur."

I made a statement out of it and not a question. And I threw it at him while he was starting to light up his fourth cigarette.

"Don't say that!" he said, his high-pitched voice a thin scream. "I never knew her at all."

"Never knew who, Wilbur?"

"Whoever you're talking about. I never—"

"Who am I talking about, Wilbur?"

"You're talking about the Chamlers girl," Holiday said. "I knew the minute I saw her name and remembered she was on my beat that you'd be around. The papers said jewelry was missing. But, my God, I been going straight. I never saw her in my life."

"All right, Wilbur," I said. "For the time being you never saw her. Next question. Where were you from four o'clock Saturday afternoon until seven o'clock?"

I could feel his thin form shrink away from me as he huddled in the corner of the sedan.

"I was in a movie."

I laughed.

It seemed that everyone was in a movie that Saturday afternoon. But I didn't say anything to Wilbur. I leaned forward and tapped Sal on the shoulder.

"Sal," I said, "this riding around seems to bother Wilbur's memory. He can't think clear. Take us over to the precinct."

Sal shrugged and pressed down on the accelerator.

"I'm taking Wilbur in and we're having a little talk, Sal," I said.

When we stopped, Sal began to get out of the car.

"No, Sal," I continued. "I can handle Wilbur alone. You might drop back to the Chamlers place and have a talk with Haverford."

Sal shrugged his shoulders and got back behind the wheel.

"Oke, Marty," he said. But just take it—"

"I'll be seeing you pal," I said.

I said hello to the sergeant at the desk and told him I wanted a room for a while. He looked from me to Wilbur and then he winked.

"Upstairs, Lieutenant, or down?" he asked.

"Downstairs," I said.

Wilbur Holiday had been in this room, or one very much like it, some time before.

"Take off your coat and tie, boy," I said. "Make yourself comfortable. In fact, take off your shoes."

For a long moment he stared at me, and then wordlessly he took off his coat and hat and carefully hung them up. He sat in the chair, unlaced his shoes and pulled his feet from them.

I brought my heavy shoe down on his instep and at the same time I sent a short rabbit punch into the pit of his stomach. I slapped him twice in the face as he folded up. Then I pushed him out of the chair and sat down myself. I took my time lighting a cigarette.

"Wilbur," I said, "you know I don't want to do this to you. It isn't as though I'm asking you to confess to murder. I'm just asking you to tell me where you were when it happened. Now tell me."

I stood up and started toward him.

"Don't," he said. "Don't hit me again. I'll tell you. But, Jesus, it will mean I'll have to go back to the can."

"Talk fast," I said.

"I was with a dame."

"So? They put you in jail for that now?"

"This dame—yes," he said. "Her name's Dolly. She's married."

"That's different, Wilbur," I said. "So she's married, eh? Who to?"

My voice was no longer nice and calm. Suddenly I hated this little man in front of me. I don't like people who shack up with other men's wives.

"Her husband's Morris Gottlieb and he's doing time in the big house. He was my cell mate. She has a record herself and if the probation guy finds out about it, I'll be sent back to finish my term. If I go back, Morrie will hear about it and he'll kill me sure."

"He should kill you, you little bastard," I said.

He stood up and I let him have a cigarette and waited for him to light it. His hand was shaking badly and it took a little while. And then he told it to me.

Seems for the last couple of months he'd been keeping his room and paying rent and sleeping in it now and then. But most of the time he'd been living with his pal's wife in a furnished apartment down in Greenwich Village.

He claimed he was with this Dolly broad from noon Saturday until shortly after 11 o'clock, when he'd left to make his milk rounds.

I questioned him closely and he told me they'd stayed indoors the entire time. He had no other witness but Dolly. The way he told it, however, I believed him.

I felt fine. It was just the way I wanted it.

Then I went to work seriously. I took him apart and I did it with everything I had.

The second version was the same as the first, only more complete. I got Dolly's address and a lot of other incidental information. When we were all through, I patched Wilbur up and sat him in the chair. I talked to him like a Dutch uncle.

"You probably think I'm crazy," I said, "but I'm going to give you a break. I'm not going to turn you in. I'm not even going to hold you. You're going to leave here and go home—not to Dolly's but to that furnished room of yours. From now on you're staying away from Dolly. Get it? Completely away!"

He got it, although he couldn't believe his good luck. We went upstairs and passed the same desk sergeant on the way out. He sort of cocked his head on one side and gave us a curious glance. This time, I winked. . . .

Instead of getting out in front of the Chamlers place, I paid the driver off at the corner. I went in and called my house. Fern's voice answered on the first ring.

"This is Marty, kid," I said.

"Baby! Where are you?"

Goddamn it! Her voice did the same thing to me it always did. I was still crazy about her.

"I'm tied up on a case," I told her. "Probably be home very late. What you been doing all night?"

I made it sound casual.

"I got home about six and made dinner," Fern said. "Looked at television for a couple of hours or so and then climbed into bed."

"Get some sleep, kid," I said, and it was hard for me to control my voice. "I'll be along." I hung up.

I walked twice around the block. My face was burning and my mind was seething with hatred and suspicion. She hadn't been there when I'd called around 10:30. Where had she been? Where had she been the night before?

With Harry—whoever Harry was?

I began to shake with rage and knew that I would have to get myself under control. I gritted my teeth and made my way down the street to the Chamlers place. Sal was waiting for me upstairs.

"Jees, Marty," he said, when I came in, "you look as pooped as I feel. Let's call it a night and hit the deck."

I nodded shortly.

"What's with the Holiday guy?" he asked.

"Nothing there at all," I said. "The captain and you were right. He's in the clear."

4

I HAD HEARD the words of that singular phrase at least a dozen times. Once they had been spoken by a brawny stevedore in the back seat of a squad car; again by an emaciated little Puerto Rican in the uniformed men's room at headquarters. Other times by other men in other places.

Always I had believed they lied.

And now, sitting across the breakfast table from Fern, I began to wonder.

For although the words and the accents may have differed, the meaning was invariably the same.

"I loved her and so I killed her."

The ends of her honey, straw hair were still damp from the shower and she wore the Chinese silk robe I had given her last Christmas. Beneath the silk was that lovely, long-limbed body that had meant so much to me. Just looking at her brought a lump to my throat.

Yes, I loved her. Of this I was sure.

And then I thought of that letter in my wallet from Washington. I thought of the lies I knew she had told me. I thought of "Harry."

I hated her.

My hand began to shake and I put the coffee cup back in the saucer.

"Fern, I want to talk with you."

She looked up at me then and sort of half smiled, as though she wasn't really seeing me at all.

"God damn it," I began, "I said I—"

"Don't swear, Marty," Fern said. Her eyes were wide with surprise, but her voice was soft and low and there was no fear in it. "You must have crawled out the wrong side of bed," she said.

"It doesn't matter what side I crawled out," I said. "The point is, what side did you crawl in? And when? You told me you were home all night—but you didn't answer when I phoned at 10:30. Why?"

"Marty!" she said, "Marty, for goodness sake stop trying to make like a cop. It's me—Fern—your wife. If you want to cross-examine somebody, perhaps you'd better get out the rubber hose." She laughed.

I knew that the blood had left my face; that I was trembling. The strangest part of it was I was sitting there and silently praying that she'd have some sort of logical answer.

"I probably fell asleep for a few minutes and didn't hear the phone," Fern said. She stood up and in a second had rounded the table. Before I could move she'd thrown herself into my lap.

Her arms encircled my neck in a strangle hold and the softness of them was more confining than a steel chain. Her lips were inches from my own as she spoke.

"Honest," she said, "I do believe my baby's jealous."

And then she kissed me hard on the lips with her half-opened mouth.

That did it.

There was no Harry, no letter, no telephone call that hadn't been answered. No lies. Nothing but Fern, pressed close to me, her arms around my neck, her back arched as she half lay across me, her opened mouth drinking the strength of my fury and hatred. And also drinking my love.

I hated her, but I loved her.

They must have been telling the truth. Those men who had used the words: "I loved her and so I killed her." . . .

That afternoon, Sal Brentano and I drove down to Philadelphia and talked with K.V.D. Malcolm. It was the strangest damned interview with a murder suspect I had had in all the years I have been tracking down criminals. It came about this way.

Captain O'Shea was pacing the floor of his office when I checked in at headquarters. Sal was standing by the window, drinking from a container of coffee.

"Little note from the commissioner this morning," he growled. There was an unpleasant look around his tight mouth. "Seems that he's friendly with the police commissioner down in Philly. Had a phone call from his pal this morning and this Malcolm guy is willing to talk. There's a law firm down there: Rogers, Wickersley, Ball and something or other. They're so damned important they don't even have to be in New York. They're Malcolm's attorneys. You're to go there, identify yourselves and then maybe you'll get to see Malcolm."

"That's one hell of a way to interview a murder suspect."

"Think so?" Captain O'Shea said. "Well, that isn't all. There'll be a man from the Philadelphia commissioner's office present, too."

"This Malcolm must really rate in Philly," I said.

"He rates in New York, too," the Captain said.

"Why bother with Malcolm at all?" Sal suddenly asked in his soft voice. It was one of the very few times in all the years I had known him that he was sarcastic.

O'Shea swung toward him.

"Because, by God, if Malcolm did it, I expect you to dig up enough evidence to put him in the chair. His high-priced lawyers, his friendship with police commissioners, his position—none of them are any good if he's guilty. They don't want him dirtied up if he isn't. . . ."

It took us an extra half hour to find a parking place near the old-fashioned office building that housed the Philadelphia law firm. When we walked into the lobby it was exactly 1:30.

I asked the receptionist on the 12th floor for Mr. Wickersley and she told us to wait.

We waited.

At ten minutes to three, the woman at the reception desk answered a call at her board and, after she hung up, turned to the man who had been waiting when we came in.

"You may see Mr. Wickersley now, Inspector," she said.

Sal whistled under his breath.

So the commissioner was being represented by an inspector and they hadn't minded keeping him waiting for almost an hour. This boy Malcolm rated.

Five minutes later Sal and I marched into the senior partner's private office. The inspector was there, along with two other men.

You'd have to see Malcolm to believe him. It was the first time I'd encountered an old-fashioned stiff collar in 20 years. He was dressed like Herbert Hoover in his heyday and there was about as much warmth to him as there would be to a 10-day-old corpse.

Simon Wickersley made the introductions.

"Mr. Malcolm," he said, indicating the stiff collar. "And Inspector Moran."

The lawyer started in at once.

"I know," he said, "that you gentlemen are working on a murder case and that you have your duty to perform. We want to help all we can. Unfortunately, Mr. Malcolm, whom I represent, is involved, in a very small way. Mr. Malcolm knew the Chamlers girl. He has known her for several years and, in fact, had a sort of paternal interest in her."

"Paternal interest, hell," I interrupted. "He was keeping her; he slept with her. He's the last person known to have seen her alive. Let's stop beating about the bush!"

Malcolm began to sputter and Inspector Moran started to his feet. But Wickersley proved why he was a high-priced lawyer, even if he might not have known anything about criminal law. He smiled and waved the others down.

"You are partly right," he said in his suave voice. "Mr. Malcolm was, as you say, partly supporting the Chamlers person. Perhaps he may have spent a night at her apartment off and on. But that doesn't mean that he killed her, and you gentlemen are from the homicide squad, I believe, not the vice squad."

I nodded and sat back in my chair.

"What you are essentially interested in," the lawyer went on, "is whether or not Mr. Malcolm had anything to do with the girl's death. Well, I believe we can assure you that he did not."

"Perhaps," Sal interrupted, "Mr. Malcolm would like to tell us where he was at approximately the time the girl was killed?"

"Gentlemen," he said, "that is exactly why we have Inspector Moran present. The inspector has carefully checked Mr. Malcolm's activities from Saturday morning at 10 o'clock until Saturday night at 11:30. After the discovery of the body. And the Inspector is prepared to swear to you that Mr. Malcolm is completely in the clear."

Well, I blew my top. It was one for the books.

"Look here," I yelled. "What is this anyway? This murder happened in New York—not in Philadelphia. We're not here to frame one of your local big shots. We're not trying to frame anyone. We're trying to find a murderer. I don't know whether Malcolm had a motive or not. But from all the evidence so far he may well have had one. All I want to find out is where he was at the time of the crime. You say Inspector Moran knows? All right. If your client can't speak for himself, suppose the inspector tells it."

Moran, I must admit, looked embarrassed.

"Suppose I talk to the lieutenant in private," he suggested.

That's when I tried for a shot in the dark. I guess I was so mad at the run around that I'd forgotten everything else. Forgotten Holiday and Duffy and a certain plan that had been maturing in the back of my mind. I am, I think, a damned good cop and what I was doing was acting like a cop.

"What's the trouble," I asked. "Was Billy Chamlers blackmailing this old goat? It would look like it!"

It went home.

Malcolm himself was the one who tipped his hand. He went white. Only the lawyer maintained a perfect equilibrium.

"Preposterous," he said.

I was on my feet again.

"The hell with this bushwa," I said. "All right, I'll admit Malcolm throws weight around in Philadelphia. He may even count in New York. But get this. They don't let them get away with murder in my town, no matter how much they count. I don't say this guy did it, but he surely isn't acting like an innocent man."

It was then, as I said it, that I had an absolute conviction that Malcolm was completely

innocent. No guilty man could possibly have played it so stupidly.

Moran went down with us when we left. He tried to smooth it over.

"It's like this boys," he said. "Malcolm is an important man down here. He may be an old goat and several other things, but he's a respectable member of this community and does a lot for it. He's explained to me where he was during the crucial hours and I've had it checked. He's in the clear."

"So then tell us where he was," I said.

"If necessary," the inspector said, "I will. But in the meantime, I wish you'd just take my word for it."

"You guys should take a refresher course in police work," I said.

The last I saw of Inspector Moran, he was standing at the curb looking unhappy.

There was an amused expression on Sal's face as we headed north.

"That's one time," he said, "I was glad to see you blow up. You hit it right on the head. There's no doubt that the gal was shaking the old buzzard."

I nodded.

"We get back to New York," I said to Sal, "drop me off any place near a subway. Then go up and see this Haverford guy. He's far from in the clear and we might as well see just how deeply involved he is."

"Why don't you come along?" Sal suggested.

"Other things to do," I answered shortly.

The desk clerk at the Milton Hotel was just where he'd been when I last saw him.

"Into your cage," I said.

"What floor, Mister?" he asked.

I told him not to be a wise guy and he stopped at the fifth. He remembered me all right. I didn't bother to knock; just twisted the knob and walked in.

It was a peculiar thing how each time I saw the man, he left me with a different impression. That first time, when he had sat dazed and in a state of shock in Billy Chamlers' room, he somehow had given the impression of an athlete gone to seed. And then, the other day, in this very room, he seemed to have shrunken in size and he merely looked like a little, fat man with a bad complexion and a worse breath.

The tiny yellow eyes were shot with red, as though he'd been crying. The skin of his fat, jowled face was as dry and colorless as old parchment. It was intolerably hot in the closeness of the room, but the window was almost hermetically sealed. In spite of the heat, he sat fully dressed, but with a bathrobe across his shoulders instead of a suit jacket.

"I'm back," I said, and reached for a chair.

I took my time about lighting a cigarette. He seemed completely unaware of my presence. His eyes stared sightlessly at the floor and he made no move.

"Well," I said at last, "what have you got for me?"

"Got for you?" he asked. "What have I got for you?"

"Yes, damn it," I snapped. "What have you got? About Jill Bentley? Remember—you were going to—"

"Oh," he said. "Jill Bentley. That's right—you wanted to know about her."

He pulled himself to his feet and mashed his cigarette butt into the overflowing ash tray. Then he sat on the edge of the bed.

"She's doing a turn at the Shenandoah. That's a fancy spot up on the East side. Comes on at 4:30 in the afternoon in time for cocktail hour and plays a little piano and does a few blues numbers. Then returns at 8:30 for fill-ins in the evening show."

"You know the manager at the Shenandoah?" I asked.

"Sold him a dance act about a year ago," he said. "That is, if it's the same guy."

"All right," I said. "Then here's what I want you to do. It's just a little after six and you'll still be able to catch her if you hurry. Get over there and get yourself introduced. Tell her who you are. And say that you got a good spot lined up for her in, say Toledo. A new night spot and that it will pay $300 a week. That the owner of the joint is now in town looking over talent and that you want her to meet him."

Duffy raised a pudgy hand and stopped me.

"Jees," he said. "I can't do that. I'm a legit agent and—"

"Shut up," I said. "You're going to do it. And then you're going to make an appointment for 11 o'clock tonight, and you and I are going back together and you're going to introduce me. Except I'm not going to be Lieutenant Ferris. We'll stick to my first name—Marty—to make it easy. But make it Martin Crandall. And I'm from Toledo. I'll be back here at 10:30 to pick you up."

Duffy again began to protest, but this time I stopped him quick.

"Listen," I said, "just do what I want you to do. Otherwise, you can get into your shoes and come on downtown."

We went downstairs and separated after we hit the street. Then I re-entered the Milton Hotel.

Silk shirt was back behind the desk, there was no one else around.

I went directly to the elevator and looked at him from inside the cage. For a moment he just seemed baffled, but then he shrugged and came over and walked in. He closed the door.

"You know everybody in this joint, huh?" he said.

I put my hand out and took his arm as he reached for the starting lever.

"No," I said. "Not everybody. Just Mr. Duffy. And maybe you. And because I know Duffy, you're going back behind that desk and get the pass key to his room."

He started to give me some back sass so I decided to save time. I took my hand from his arm and got hold of the front of his silk shirt. With my left hand I slapped him hard across the face.

"Listen you cheap little pimp," I said. "If you think I don't know how you make your extra dough, you're crazy. Now do what I tell you and do it fast. And one peep out of you and you won't be working here any more."

I released him and he staggered out of the elevator. A moment later, he was back with a key chain. . . .

The first thing I did was open the window to let in a little air. Then I started with the chest of drawers.

It wasn't until I opened the worn leather Gladstone under the bed that I came upon anything that really interested me. There was a collection of canceled checks. A number of them were made out to Billy Chamlers. Malcolm may have been keeping the girl, but Sam was paying his share, too.

And then I found something else. It was tightly wrapped in oilskin, and a thick rubber band had been twisted around it several times. I opened it and saw a bunch of negatives.

I held one up to the light—and I guess I must have blushed.

God, what kind of depraved mentality could take any pleasure in this sort of filth, I wondered. I took a half dozen from the collection and put them into my wallet. The others I carefully replaced in the oilskin and put them back. I went over to the lavatory behind the screen to wash my hands. I felt dirty all over.

I rinsed the soap off and started to reach for the towel, but it was black with dirt. So I jerked a half dozen sheets from the roll of paper beside the toilet. That's when it happened.

He must have had the stuff hidden in the recess in back of the roll, because, when I pulled, it jangled to the floor.

The watch was the size of a dime. It was platinum and encircled with diamond chips. The earrings were pearl tears; the ring a star sapphire.

The initials "B.C." were carefully engraved on the back of the watch.

It didn't prove that Sam Duffy had murdered Billy Chamlers. But it did offer conclusive evidence that he had taken the jewelry from her apartment shortly before her murder, during her murder or right after her murder.

Twenty minutes later, from a public pay telephone on Times Square, I was talking to Captain O'Shea at headquarters.

"So will you let Sal know I won't meet him as I planned, but will be working on another angle?" I said.

"Then there's nothing at all new?" he asked, disappointment heavy in his voice.

"Nothing," I said, and hung up.

5

IT WAS shortly after 11 when Sam Duffy and I entered the night club.

I ordered bourbon and water and Sam asked for cherry brandy. The master of ceremonies, a tall, thin, dark-haired man with a trick mustache and a tuxedo, was just walking out on the stage. A girl in evening dress was softly playing an old number on a spinet. Two baby spots lighted the stage, but the girl was in the shadows.

The place was getting crowded by the time Jill Bentley came on.

It is a peculiar thing, but the first moment I saw Jill Bentley, it wasn't as though I were looking at a person at all. It was like looking at a name.

Fern had run across an old friend—Jill Bentley, "a girl I used to know." And this was Jill Bentley, this tall, slender redhead with a deep, throaty voice; a sensuous, languid manner; a soft, almost delicate touch on the keyboard. What in the name of God, was my first thought, could this girl and my wife, Fern, have had in common?

Her heart-shaped face under the crown of dark red hair was almost bronze and it was completely unlined. She didn't appear to be wearing rouge. The eyes were very large and deep blue, almost black. Her lips were full and passionate under a small, upturned nose. The column of her throat fell away into a deep hollow between her breasts, half exposed by the low-cut dress.

She sang a semi-modern love ballad and if the words hadn't been heavy with sex and desire —which they were of course—her voice would have made them so.

"Knows you're here," Sam whispered. "She's giving it the works."

There was a subdued round of applause after she finished and she bowed and smiled. She didn't sing a second number. Instead, she left the stage and walked down the steps and directly to our table. She pulled a chair out and sat down.

"How's Toledo?" she said.

Her eyelashes were very long and jet black; the eyes themselves, which I had thought were dark blue, were actually azure, like Fern's. The whites were not a pure white but a blue white.

She smiled as she spoke and I was surprised.

"Toledo's fine," I said. "I'm Marty—Marty Crandall."

Sam started to say something and she put up a slender hand and waved it at him, sort of.

"You're the agent," she said with a light laugh. "You don't get to talk." She turned toward me. "This one tells me you're willing to overpay me to come out to your town and do my stuff. You don't look like a guy who owns a night club," she said. "You look more like a cop, or a truck driver."

For a second it almost threw me. But then I made a quick recovery. Hell, there was no reason I shouldn't look like a cop. I was one. On the other hand, contrary to the general belief, people don't recognize cops, just by their appearance, any more than policemen recognize crooks by their appearance. If the police went on looks alone, half the people in town would be locked up every night.

"You do look like a singer," I said. "Also, having heard you, you sound like one."

Sam started to say something. I interrupted.

"Look, Sam," I said. "Now that I've met Miss Bentley, we can go ahead and make our own arrangements. There's no reason for you to sit up any longer and lose your sleep."

The waiter drifted by as Sam was getting to his feet and mumbling good-night. Jill Bentley ordered a dry sherry. We watched a magician do his stuff.

Jill asked me what I thought of the magician and I told her I thought he was good.

"He's terrible," she said. "How long have you been in the night-club business?"

I laughed again. It was silly, but I found myself liking this girl, Jill Bentley. There was a certain direct, unaffected manner about her, a forthrightness, almost a simplicity, which intrigued me. And then again I thought of Fern and I didn't like her at all.

We talked for a few minutes more and she sipped her sherry. The spotlight swung over to our table, and the master of ceremonies called to Jill from the platform and made a smart remark. She stood up and said she'd take it from where she was. The room was sufficiently small that she didn't need a mike.

She sang *Danny Boy* and the girl at the spinet tapped out the tune with one listless hand.

She sat down after she finished and we had another drink while the master of ceremonies went on with his patter.

"I'm through for the night," she said as she lifted her glass.

"Good," I said. "Let's leave this dungeon."

She had suggested Lindy's, but I was afraid of running into someone I knew. Instead I talked her into a place over on Third Avenue.

I wasn't hungry, so I ordered a bottle of cold beer. Jill Bentley had a steak sandwich and started asking me questions. She wanted to know about my club, about Toledo and a lot of other things. I was in trouble right from the first.

"I once worked Cleveland," she said at last. "Good town. Suppose you know the Goldstein boys? They have the Club Friday."

"Sure," I said. "A nice spot. I want to model the Domino after it."

Carefully she put down her fork and she looked me straight in the eye.

"There is no Club Friday in Cleveland," she said. "Let's get things straight. Who are you and just what do you want? If you're a cop, I can save you a lot of trouble. There is nothing at all I can do for you. You probably know that I did a year in prison out in California—accessory before the fact—and I'm registered downtown. But I've been clean since. So don't bother me."

"I'm not a cop," I said.

I had a hard time controlling myself when she said that she'd done a year in California. That's where Fern, under the name of Joan Bronski, had spent two and a half years. I felt a sense of elation as I realized I was beginning to get somewhere.

"All right, you're not a cop then," she said. "But you certainly aren't any night-club man either. Hell, you don't know the first thing about night clubs. And I doubt if you know anything about Toledo. So what are you, mister? Looking for girls for your stable? If you are, keep right on looking. But get the hell and gone away from me."

"Look," I said. "Please don't yell. Just hang on to yourself and give me a second. I can explain everything."

"Can you?" she said, her voice lower, but still nasty. "Can you? Well, then, start explaining why Sam Duffy said you were a night-club owner who wanted to give me 300 bucks a week."

I started talking and I talked fast. I felt like the world's biggest fool, but I went ahead anyway. My face was brick red and I was fumbling around for words and I don't suppose I made very good sense. The fact that I did such a lousy job of it was probably the only thing that put it across. The story I gave her was so damned silly that it almost had to be true. . . .

The one thing I did tell her which wasn't a lie, was that I actually was a cop. I showed her my badge. I figured if I did that she wouldn't ask for further identification.

"You were right," I said, "I'm a cop. Only I'm not working at it. I first saw you at the Shenandoah when I paid a routine call. The department checks all the clubs periodically. Well, I saw you and I heard your act and I thought you

were terrific. So I'm probably a damned fool, but I knew Sam Duffy, and I figured he could introduce me to you. Sam said that he didn't think you'd be much interested in knowing a plain flatfoot and it was his idea I pretend to be something else. I guess I must have half fallen in love with you. Anyway, it seemed to me that I just had to meet you."

You'll never know what it cost me to pull that line. I was sweating like a goat.

She just stared at me with her huge eyes, her mouth slightly opened. She put out her hand.

"Let's see the tin again," she said.

She looked at it for several seconds and then handed it back. Suddenly she started laughing. She doubled over and the tears came to her eyes. She looked up at me and had trouble controlling herself.

"Well I'll be," she said. "Now I've heard everything! So you heard me sing and you looked at me and you wanted to meet me. Look, I really think you must be telling the truth. Nobody, but nobody, not even a cop, could make up anything quite so damned stupid. All right, now you have met me."

"Look, Miss Bentley—Jill—I'm sorry," I began.

"You better order me a drink, flatfoot," she said. "Don't try to explain anything more. Just order me a drink. And then you can pay the check, call a cab and take me home."

It was after two o'clock when we finally left. We'd had several more drinks and had gotten better acquainted.

We got a cab and 15 minutes later were in front of an old-fashioned brownstone building on East 35th street, just off Park avenue.

"Good-night," she said. "You're a cop, a self-confessed liar and probably a bit of a heel, but I like you. Call me sometime."

She turned and went into the house. A half hour later I was sitting in a Flushing subway car, reading the morning tabloid.

6

THE INSPECTOR himself was sitting in Captain O'Shea's chair when I reached headquarters the next morning. The captain and Sal Brentano were standing by the window looking glum.

I said good morning and the captain wanted to know what the hell was good about it.

"Just what have you been doing, Lieutenant," Captain O'Shea asked. I knew that when he called me Lieutenant instead of Marty he wasn't just being formal. He was burning.

"You're supposed to be working on the Chamlers case, you know. Here—"

"I have been working on it," I said.

"Yes?" His voice was sarcastic. Sal interrupted.

"Marty was working on the Duffy and Holiday angles and I was covering Haverford," he interjected, trying to shift the conversation.

"Duffy—Holiday?" Captain O'Shea's voice dripped sarcasm. "God damn it, didn't I tell you that punk Holiday was out of it? This is no prowler job. And what the hell's with Duffy. You got nothing there. What we want to know is what connection Malcolm has."

I blew up then.

"Damn it!" I yelled. "Malcolm! If the big brass would stop trying to protect him, maybe we could find something out. How the hell you expect us to—"

The inspector stood up and lifted his hand. His voice was calm and he didn't get excited. Which is probably one reason he was an inspector.

"Take it easy, son," he said. "There's more to police work than just going off half cocked with an arrest warrant or a piece of rubber hose. You have to handle these things with finesse. We had to go slow with Malcolm. But now we're through covering up for him. I told them that unless he shows up here this afternoon for questioning we'll give the whole story to the papers and get out an extradition warrant. He's promised to be in on the two o'clock train."

It was news to Captain O'Shea and he suddenly calmed down.

"Good," he said. He pointed his short, stubby pipe at me. "You and Sal be here. I want you to personally handle the thing. In the meantime, go out and pick up Haverford."

"You mean hold him?" I asked.

"No, damn it, I don't. I mean question him."

"And suppose he doesn't want to play?"

"Listen," the captain said, his face again red and angry, "do I have to tell you how to conduct police work?"

The inspector caught my eye and winked. A minute later Sal and I left the room. We stopped down the block, across from headquarters, and had a cup of coffee.

Sal said, "Let's get up and see young Haverford. I think you'll find him interesting."

"Listen, kid," I said, "I wish you'd go on up there alone. I have another angle I'm working on; something I'd like to clean up—just for my own private satisfaction."

"Holiday?"

I nodded.

"Hell, Marty," he said, "I think you're barking up the wrong tree there. The captain's right. That punk's in the clear. He'd have—"

"God damn it Sal," I said, and for the first time since we'd been kids together, I was short

and mean with him. "Who the hell is in charge of this job?"

Sal blushed and didn't say a word. He looked away and a moment later I was sorry as hell that I'd snapped at him. I reached over and put my arm across his shoulder.

"I'm sorry, boy," I said. "I didn't mean to get rough. I'm just asking you to trust me, Sal. Let me play this one my way. I know what I'm doing."

Sal knew that I was much too good a cop to waste time with a guy like Willy Holiday on the slender evidence we had.

Of course there were a few things I hadn't told Sal Brentano about the evidence.

I finished my coffee and, after paying the cashier, took out the slip of paper on which I'd written the address Willy Holiday had given me —the address of Morrie Gottlieb's wife, Dolly.

I got off the subway at Christopher street and walked west on Fourth until I came to the house. Dolly Gottlieb lived on the top floor, right rear.

I knocked on the door. I must admit I was curious to see what kind of a woman would have taken up with Willy Holiday. I remembered Morris Gottlieb from the time he had been sent up. He was a cheap strong-arm boy, a product of the lower east side, who had started with thieving and bootlegging back in the old prohibition days. His kind were a dime a dozen.

The girl who answered my knock was in her early twenties and she wasn't pretty. Her weight was right and she had a fairly good figure, although she was short and in another year or so would be dumpy. Her hair was dark brown, parted in the middle and combed severely back from her forehead. She wore horn-rimmed glasses, and she was dressed in a plain, tailored suit. She looked like a librarian.

"Dolly Gottlieb?" I asked.

She nodded.

I took my shield out and showed it to her.

Well, I have met and talked with hundreds of gangsters' wives and women. All kinds. But this one took me right off my feet.

"Get off my doorstep, you flatfoot bastard," she said, "or I'll spit right in your eye. You wanna talk with me, get a warrant!"

I got my foot in the door in time, but it almost broke a couple of toes. Shoving out with my right hand, I slammed the door wide open. The side of it caught her and sent her sprawling back on the floor. Before she could get to her feet, I followed her into the room, kicking the door shut with my heel. I reached down and grabbed her arms and shoved her into a chair.

"Don't get tough, sister," I said. "Willy Holiday sent me and you had better start listening. And one more word out of that dirty mouth of yours and I'll bruise it shut."

I went over to the unmade bed and sat down, taking a pack of cigarettes from my coat pocket. I took a cigarette and then tossed the pack into her lap.

Her glasses had fallen off and her eyes were wide. She stared at me, almost totally without expression.

For a moment neither of us spoke and I suddenly observed that without her glasses, her entire appearance was changed. Her eyes were very large and almost black. She had long, curved lashes. She wore no makeup, with the exception of bright magenta lipstick. The contrast of the lipstick and those dark eyes, with the pale olive skin of her small face, was startling.

I spoke quickly.

"Don't say it—don't say a word," I said. "Just listen. I know all about you and Willy shacking up. Willy's in trouble; he's the number one candidate for the hot seat in a very nice current murder. You're in trouble. Your old man, Morrie, may not know about you and Willy, but sister, he will. Also, you have a record of your own and Willy's on parole. Among other things you and Willy have been consorting. It's an offense in this state, sister."

It was quite a little speech, but it did the trick. If her face hadn't been a dead olive color to begin with, I would have said she went pale. For several moments she just stared at me. I have seen the expression many times, on many faces.

She was a cop hater. You can always tell.

And then she spoke and I got my second surprise.

She laughed. It was a full-throated, completely open laugh.

"Consorting, eh?" she said. "So Willy and I have been consorting. My God, and all along I thought it was something else."

She wasn't frightened; she wasn't annoyed. She was amused.

"I can't say I like you or want to talk to you," she said. "But here you are and here I am and there isn't much I can do about it. So let's have a drink and then you can get down to business."

I made a quick decision. I had been prepared to be tough, but I knew instinctively that with Dolly's type, toughness would get me nowhere.

"Drink sounds fine," I said.

There was a brand new refrigerator in one corner of the dingy room and she opened the freezer compartment. She took out a milk bottle and two jelly glasses with frost on them. She walked over to the card table and set the glasses down and then poured from the bottle.

"Martini," she said.

She lifted her own glass and drank, and I drank mine. It was ice cold, surprisingly good.

"Shoot," she said. "What's the pitch?"

"You and Willy Holiday," I said. "I want to know all about it."

"You must have a dirty mind," she said.

"Never mind my mind. Just talk."

She thought for a moment, and then started.

"Willy was a friend of my husband's. Used to sell 'packages' to him. When Morrie went up the river, Willy started seeing me. Then he just sort of moved in. He'd only been out on parole for a few days and at first he used to come up and just talk. Gave me messages from the old man.

"I don't work. I drink. Well, Willy got this job with the milk company through the parole board; he had a little loose money and he moved in. It didn't mean anything and it didn't hurt anybody."

"It might mean something to Morrie," I said.

She lost her blandness for a second and I could tell that the idea was not pleasant. Morris Gottlieb, as I remembered him, wasn't admired for his gentler qualities.

"Oh, Willy's a harmless enough little pipsqueak," she said, a little too casually. "It don't mean anything. I'm alone, I got no money and Willy's just one of those guys. When Morrie gets out I'll toss Willy back to wherever he comes from and just forget about him."

"When Morrie gets out," I said, "Willy will probably already be back in—for good, or better than good."

She didn't say anything for a minute. Then:

"What's the rumble? You mean to tell me Willy killed somebody? I don't believe it."

"It doesn't matter what you believe," I said. "It's what a jury of 12 men believe. Let's talk about last Saturday."

I could see her mind working.. She knew that I must have talked with Willy; probably figured that we had him locked up incommunicado in some precinct house. She didn't have the faintest idea what he had done or what we suspected him of having done. She decided to play it smart.

"I haven't seen Willy in more than a week."

I stood up.

"Time for another drink," I said. "That's good news, Dolly, although Willy won't think so when he hears it. You were, up until a second ago, his alibi for the time of the Billy Chamlers murder."

I started for the freezer compartment of the refrigerator.

"Hey," she yelled.

I turned back toward her. She was staring at me.

"Screwed again by a dumb cop," she said. "Not so fast, Sherlock. Not so fast. You should make yourself clear. That is, if a cop can ever tell the truth the first try. Sit down and I'll tell you all about it."

Then she started talking. She'd lost her coy sense of humor and was deadly serious.

"Goddamn it, you gotta believe this," she said. "Willy came here sometime shortly before noon on Saturday. We sat here, right in this room, and played the horses over the phone all afternoon. Got the results on the radio. At the end of the day we were out so we went on playing, making bets on the West Coast tracks. Around 7:30 we had some spaghetti I cooked up. Later we played two-handed gin and I took a few more of Willy's dollars away from him. At about 10 o'clock Willy took a shower and shaved and got dressed and then he left for work. Must have been about 11."

"Anyone come in during all that time?" I asked.

"Nobody."

On instinct I played a hunch.

"You mean," I said, "you and Willy were here, in this room, from about 11 in the morning until 11 at night? And nobody stopped by who saw you? Nuts! How about the clerk from the liquor store when you ran out of gin?"

"There was no clerk," Dolly said, obviously suspecting a trap. "Willy picked up the bottle when he went out to square up with Harvey and get the meat for the spaghetti."

The minute the words were out of her mouth, she put her hand to her lips and her startled eyes opened wide. She looked at me as though I had suddenly grown horns.

"Nice going, Dolly," I said. "Very nice. I'll have another drink on that and I think you need one yourself. So Willy went out, did he?"

She started to say something but got mixed up between cursing me and trying to explain about Willy all at the same time.

"Sit down kid," I said, and gently pushed her back into her chair. "We'll have another pour and then you can tell me all about it."

The milk bottle was down around the one-quarter mark after I had filled the glasses.

"Now," I said, "I want you to start over. This is the third time at bat and if you miss, you're out. Keep it in mind; you're out!

"There's a double penalty for being out. First, I'll be taking a little trip up to Ossining and having a talk with Morrie. Morrie Gottlieb, your husband. Second, we're going to put Willy in the chair for murder. Whether you like it or not. He's going to burn. And if you're out, then you're going to take a two to five ride of your own—as an accessory before the fact and after the fact. There's the thing about perjury, also, just in case you get smart at the trial. You can't win if you miss, so don't miss. Now start talking."

For several seconds she just sat there and looked at me. Then she started to talk. . . .

The first part of it was the same. Up until six o'clock. Somewhere around that time they had run out of gin and Willy had gone out. The bookie, Harvey, by this time was into them for a little and Willy decided to pay up.

She couldn't remember exactly how long he'd been away and it didn't do me any good to pressure her. By this time she was so scared that she was sticking strictly to the truth. Anyway, as near as she could figure it, he had returned before eight o'clock. She was willing and ready to swear to this.

It's a funny thing, but as she continued talking, I had a hard time following her conversation. My mind kept going to other things. I was thinking about Morris Gottlieb up in Sing Sing.

A crook; a no good, brutal louse.

But he was married, and here was his wife, a woman who had shared his bed and shared his money when he was making it, calmly talking about the man she slept with while Morrie was doing time for getting that money and paying for the bed.

I thought, what the hell am I worrying about Morrie Gottlieb for? After all, who am I, Marty Ferris, to worry about that cheap crook and his bitch of a wife. I got a wife of my own. Fern.

I should be feeling sorry for Gottlieb? Hell! I should be feeling sorry for myself!

I looked over at Dolly as she talked and I wondered what it was about women that made them liars and cheats.

"Get off your can and get me a drink," I said suddenly.

She couldn't have stopped speaking quicker if I had thrown a cold dish rag in her face. She looked at me oddly for a minute and then wordlessly walked over to the ice box. She began fixing up a Martini in the milk bottle, using cracked ice.

"What the hell could you see in a crumb like Willy Holiday?" I said.

My voice was bitter.

She took off her glasses and turned and looked at me in surprise.

Her voice was soft when she answered.

"Nothing much," she said. "Except I got tired of living here alone; tired of waiting, tired of working. Willy isn't much, but he liked me and he was good to me."

She poured the drinks into the glasses and then walked over and handed me one. She leaned down and I noticed that she looked at me curiously. Her eyes were just above mine as she leaned toward me and I saw that she had opened the buttons on her tailored jacket and that it hung loose.

I stared at her, trying not to. I still couldn't understand what she might have seen in Willy.

She was a tramp; a plain, out and out tramp. Not beautiful, not glamorous, nothing. I didn't even like her.

My hand reached up and I took her glass and carefully set it next to the chair at my side. My other hand suddenly went around her waist and I pulled her quickly down so that she dropped to her knees, her slender body between my legs.

I reached in back of her head and pulled her face up to mine.

She was trembling and her mouth was hot and moist.

I hated her.

I stood up and carried her across the room, never taking my lips from hers.

Later, she cried out and didn't want to let me go.

At 12:15 I left Dolly Gottlieb sitting on the edge of her bed, a drink of straight gin in her hand. She was staring at me with dull, unseeing eyes as I turned at the doorway and spoke to her.

"Remember," I said. "We'll be here tomorrow morning. Around 10 o'clock. Willy and me. You know what to say."

I opened the door and then slammed it shut behind me as I started walking down the mud-colored hallway.

I was filled with hate.

I hated Dolly Gottlieb.

I hated Fern. Somehow in the back of my mind I blamed her for what had just happened.

But mostly I hated myself.

7

I ENTERED the restaurant shortly after 1:30. Sal was sitting at a table in the rear. He stood up as I approached.

"Glad you're here, Marty," he said. "Things are happening. I just talked to the captain. Stalled the interview with Malcolm until late this afternoon. O'Shea is going to keep him on ice until then."

I started to say something, but Sal kept right on.

"It's Haverford," he said. "Things are breaking wide open. I found out that our boy was with Billy Chamlers at five o'clock on the day she was killed. And they were fighting."

In a second I forgot about Morrie Gottlieb's wife, about Willy Holiday and about my own personal problems. Suddenly, I was once more all cop.

"One of those lucky breaks," Sal said.

"After I left you this morning, I went up to Haverford's office. He wasn't in. Well, I was sitting there waiting, when a girl walked in. She stopped at the desk and the receptionist said something to her in a low voice. A second later she came over to where I was sitting. She was Haverford's private secretary and her name was Jane Cummins. A tall, good-looking blonde from a small town in Ohio.

"Seems that she and John Haverford have been running around together for some time—maybe six months. I gathered they had been having an affair and that she was anxious to tie it up with a marriage. About a month back, Haverford began to cool off. That's about the time he began making a play for the Chamlers girl. This secretary of his found out what the score was and she started taking a slow burn.

"Anyway, to cut it short, on the day that Billy Chamlers was murdered, Haverford left the office at around 3:30. Told his secretary he had an appointment at Twenty One Club with a client, but she knew he was lying. She figured he was seeing Billy Chamlers and she decided to have a showdown. She's pregnant, incidentally.

"So she went up to Haverford's apartment expecting to find him there. When he didn't answer the bell, she rang the Chamlers apartment. The latch clicked and she went upstairs. Billy Chamlers and Haverford were in the place together and there was quite a scene."

"What happened then?" I asked.

"Haverford managed to persuade the Cummins girl to leave," Sal said. "Promised to meet her at her place in half an hour. Said he still had some unfinished business to talk over with Billy Chamlers. She went back to her apartment and waited. But Haverford never showed up."

I whistled under my breath. "This certainly changes the picture," I said. "Where's Haverford now?"

"He checked into his office a little before noon. I've got Kelly on his tail. The Cummins girl left just before he came in." . . .

If John Haverford had been expecting us, he couldn't have reached the reception room faster. He was pulling on his light sports jacket as he came through the door.

He didn't bother to shake hands but he gave us what must have been his customer smile.

"Hot," he said. "Let's go downstairs to the bar."

There was a sort of semi-private bar on the ground floor of the building and I gathered it was largely patronized by the advertising firms from the floors above. We took a table in a secluded corner at the rear and the waiter greeted Haverford by his first name.

He tried to keep things on a friendly social basis, but I straightened him out at once.

"We should be having this conversation down at headquarters, Mr. Haverford," I said. "However, where we go when we leave here is going to be largely up to you. I might start out by saying that you have a great deal to explain. Particularly about how you happened to be in the Chamlers apartment around the time she was killed."

He knew at once what must have happened.

"You've been talking with Miss Cummins," he said.

"We have."

"Am I permitted to call my attorney?" he asked.

"You are," I said. "But before you do, I'd like to give you a little advice. Your attorney will be interviewing you down at a cell in the Tombs. If you want it that way, you can have it. On the other hand, it's possible you can give us a straight story right here and now and save yourself a lot of embarrassment and trouble."

He leaned toward me then and he spoke in a clear unhurried tone.

"There's just one thing I'd like to explain first," he said. "I lied before and I'd like to tell you why I lied. I was in Miss Chamlers' apartment, as you know. But if that story had come out, as well as the fact that Miss Cummins was also there, Jane would have been fired. There is a good chance that I would have lost my own job as well."

"O.K.," I said. "I'll buy that for what it's worth. But now let's get down to cases. First, exactly what is your relationship with Miss Cummins; what was your relationship with Miss Chamlers? And I want to know about every minute from 3:30 until eight o'clock of last Saturday."

Right off he admitted having an affair with the Cummins girl.

"You know how it is," he said, "with a pretty woman sitting in the same office with you all day."

I didn't know how it was, but then I have never had a pretty woman sitting in an office with me.

"I didn't realize she was taking it so seriously," he said. He went on to explain the relationship and verified just about everything that Miss Cummins had told Sal.

He told us he had first met Billy Chamlers in the hall of the apartment house in which they both lived. She had misplaced her key.

There had been several dates and he admitted frankly that he had fallen pretty hard for the night-club singer. He had been around a lot, and he realized at once that somebody was probably keeping her.

That had made little difference in his feelings. His problem, however, had been with his secretary and not with Miss Chamlers.

"Jane is extremely jealous," he said. "At one point, she even threatened to tell the head of our concern about my past relationship with her. She did, in fact, call Billy Chamlers on the phone and tell her that we were planning to be married. That was just a few days ago.

"Billy was annoyed. The next time I asked her for a date, she told me she was busy. Then, when I persisted, she told me about Jane's telephone call. She said that she had enough problems of her own and didn't want any more.

"That's how I happened to see her last Saturday afternoon. I had called again and asked to take her to dinner. She told me she was meeting someone for dinner but that I could drop by at three if I wished.

"Well, we talked for a few minutes and she told me that it would be best if I didn't see her again. Jane had sold her a real bill of goods and she was convinced that things between us were serious. It wasn't, you understand, that she would have objected to breaking in on anything. It was only that she didn't want to be bothered. I didn't mean enough to her, I guess."

"How much did she mean to you?" I asked.

Carefully he looked at each of us before he answered. He seemed to measure his words.

"That's a tough question. I liked her; liked her a great deal. For a month or more we'd been playing around and I still hadn't gotten to first base. Yes, I wanted her and wanted her badly. On the other hand, I knew she was being kept; I knew that she could never really fit into the sort of life I hope eventually to lead."

Haverford went on to explain that he and Billy were talking this over when Jane Cummins showed up. He hadn't wanted a scene and he realized that the girl was emotionally upset.

"Anyway, I got her out of the place at once. Told her I'd meet her in a few minutes."

"And then what happened?"

"I talked with Billy for probably another 10 minutes. I tried to reason with her, but she said she was getting bored with me. She'd be just as happy if she didn't see me again. I was a little sore and probably my pride was hurt more than anything else. Also, I was damned annoyed with Jane Cummins.

"Because of this, and because I realized that I was probably unreasonably bothered as a result of Billy's attitude, I decided not to see Jane at once."

"What time did you leave the Chamlers place?"

"As near as I can figure it must have been around five o'clock. I know that I arrived at the bar shortly after five. This bar that we are now in, to be exact."

I nodded.

"From here I went to the Pavillon and had dinner."

"We know," I said. "However, one fact remains. You were in Billy Chamlers' apartment at five. You were arguing with her. You could, possibly, have killed her."

If I expected him to blow up at that, I was disappointed.

"I couldn't have and I didn't," he said. "According to the papers, she was murdered at six o'clock."

"That's a guess," I said. "You were the last person to see her alive."

"The last person except for her murderer," he said. "One doesn't go around bashing in the head of every girl who decides not to date you."

"I think," Sal said, "we better get downtown."

"We'll want you to come along," I said to Haverford. "I'd like to get your statement down and have you sign it."

He looked up, annoyed for a moment, and then shrugged. When the waiter brought the check, he insisted on signing it. We left and took a cab down to headquarters.

I left Sal with Haverford and a police stenographer and went into Captain O'Shea's office.

The captain was alone, his feet on the desk as he slowly sipped from a paper cup filled with his cough medicine. He listened while I told him about Haverford.

The old man smiled grimly.

"He could have done it. As for the motive, right now it looks a little thin. But the guy's a liar on his own say so and maybe something else will turn up."

"You think we should hold him?" I asked.

"Hell no. He can't go far and there's no point making an arrest until we have a case to go along with it. But I want you to make a thorough investigation—everything. In the meantime, I got a little news for you."

There was a pleased, almost smug smile on the old man's face.

"I've just finished talking with Malcolm," he said. "And I think I have something for you. Malcolm's told me all about his relationship with the dead girl. The reason he's been playing it so cagy is because he was being blackmailed. Seems that somehow or other someone managed to get some pictures of him and the Chamlers dame."

The captain took a couple of snapshots from an envelope and tossed them across the desk.

I picked them up and I must have blushed. I blushed for two reasons. The pictures themselves were enough to make anyone blush. There

were two people in them—Malcolm and Billy Chamlers. There was also no question about what they were doing.

I suddenly remembered where I had seen a negative of one of those pictures, a negative I hadn't mentioned to Captain O'Shea.

"It seems," the captain continued as I tossed the prints back across the desk, "that somehow or other some guy got hold of a full set of these and similar pics. Malcolm was sent these two in the mail. And then he started paying off."

"To who?" I asked. "Billy Chamlers?"

"No. Says he used to mail the money to a post-office box at the general post office."

"Had he talked with Billy Chamlers about it?"

"He says no. However, it's hard to say. After all he'd been keeping her for some time, but he'd got tired of it and was trying to cut loose. She didn't want any part of that and had made frequent threats to tip off his family. He was in a tough spot.

"Furthermore, he spent the night with her and the morning of the day she was killed. Claims he left about three o'clock, but didn't go back to his hotel. Instead he said he picked up his car at a mid-town garage and started back for Philadelphia."

"I thought he flew in from Philadelphia," I said.

"He did. But the car was here from his previous trip. We've checked that.

"Well he picked up the car all right. But he didn't go directly to Philadelphia. In fact, the next check on him is when he put the car in a downtown Philadelphia garage around 9:30 that night. So let's say it takes three hours at most to drive to Philly. He could have been in New York as late as 6:30."

I whistled. "Any explanation—"

"None. All he'll say is that he has explained everything to the Philadelphia police. I threatened to hold him, but he still wouldn't talk. He seems a lot more worried about those pictures than he does about a murder charge."

"And where is he now?"

"I turned him over to the post-office people. Convinced him that it would be best all around to try and get their help. I wanted to take his mind off the murder for a while. Also, I'd be pretty anxious to find out just who was blackmailing him. Maybe it was the girl; if so, there is every reason for him to have killed her."

"That may be," I said. "But I don't quite see him telling us about the blackmail if that was his motive."

"You may be right," Captain O'Shea said. "But in the meantime, let's see if we can find the original negatives of those pictures. Find them and prove that Chamlers had them, and I think you have your murder case solved."

"All right," I said. "I'll get on it at once. And in the meantime—"

"In the meantime clean up Haverford. Let's for God's sake get someone out of the way. Either that or get them in jail."

I left. I went back upstairs and picked up my mail before I started again for the room in which I had left Sal Brentano and the police stenographer with Haverford. Leafing through the envelopes, I noticed one from my FBI friend down in Washington.

I ducked down the hall and went into the men's room. A moment later and I had locked myself into a toilet and was tearing open the envelope.

After the first paragraph, I had a hard time focusing my eyes. But I finally got through it.

"I have been in contact with our San Francisco and Portland, Oregon, offices," my friend wrote.

"San Francisco's probation report on Joan Bronski shows that she was living with a man named Harold T. Woodlawn in 1946, which would have made her 18 years old at the time. Woodlawn was indicted on a grand-larceny charge early in 1947, but jumped bail while waiting trial. It was in connection with this crime that Joan Bronski was later indicted and sentenced.

"Her part in the crime is vague, but, from what we have been able to learn, it is believed she helped Woodlawn make his get away and it was hoped that, in convicting her, trace of the man might be found. He has never turned up. Woodlawn, now in his early thirties, had no previous criminal record. He is still wanted by California authorities.

"Portland informs me that Joan Bronski was born in that city in a charity ward at the Municipal Hospital in 1928. Her mother's name was Coral Bronski and she died giving birth to the child. The father is unknown.

"The child was raised in a Catholic orphanage, from which she ran away at the age of 16. She obtained work as a stenographer and apparently supported herself for the next two years. No effort was made to bring her back to the orphanage.

"If necessary, I can forward you details of the grand-larceny case in which she was involved."

The letter was signed by my friend and he had added a postscript asking if I wanted a new flyer put out on Woodlawn. He said that it was strictly a local case and that the FBI had not been called in on it.

Carefully I refolded the sheet of paper and put it in the envelope. Then I just sat there.

I thought about it until I felt the top of my head would burst. I couldn't believe it, but I knew it must be true.

Fern. Fern, my wife. The woman I had lived with and loved. I didn't know what I had expected, once I had learned of her basic deceit, but this last news—the fact that she was not only a criminal herself, but had lived with one—completely took the wind out of me.

I felt the hatred growing in me. I tried to imagine what sort of man this Woodlawn might have been. What had happened to him? Where was he? Was Fern still seeing him?

Suddenly I found myself hating him, hating him more than I hated Fern.

A blinding fury was burning in my heart and I knew that I was rapidly getting beyond control.

I started to put all of the correspondence into my coat pocket when I noticed the letter from the bank. For a moment I stared at it, wondering why I was interested. And then it came to me.

Fern and I had a joint checking account and she handled all of the bills. I merely gave her my check on paydays and she deposited it. She kept track of accounts and all bank correspondence was sent to the house. It had been my custom to cash a check for twenty-five dollars each week for personal expenses.

I opened the bank's letter, wondering why they had written me in care of the police department.

It was a notice that our joint account was overdrawn by more than $50. The notice was signed by the vice president of the bank and he wrote asking that I take care of the matter as he had already twice called it to our attention.

I couldn't understand it. Fern and I had always kept a minimum balance of $500 in the account, not only to give us a cushion, but also to save the expense of paying for checks that we wrote and deposited.

I got up and left the booth and went over to a wash basin and rinsed my face with cold water. I had a splitting headache.

Ten minutes later and I was talking to Sal Brentano in the hallway outside his office. I repeated the captain's information.

"Sal," I said, "I want you to take over alone for the rest of the night. I've got a bad headache and I feel like hell."

"You better go home and see the doc, Marty," he said. "You haven't been right now for several days."

I left headquarters five minutes later. I went uptown as far as Grand Central and I went into the Commodore and had a couple of straight shots of bourbon. I went into a phone booth.

I reached Jill Bentley just as she was leaving her apartment. She agreed to let me pick her up at the Shenandoah after the last show.

Then I called my house out on Long Island.

There was no answer.

8

IT WAS seven o'clock and Sam Duffy didn't look happy to see me.

"Hell, Marty," he said, the second I had entered the room and closed the door behind me, "you sure loused things up. Jill Bentley called and bawled hell out of me. Said you—"

"Lieutenant Ferris," I said. "Not Marty. Shut up and sit down, you fat pig."

For several minutes I merely stared at him. Once he looked up and saw my eyes on him and he quickly looked away. His mouth twitched nervously and he couldn't seem to keep his hands still.

"Duffy," I said at last, "it's about time you started coming clean. You have a few things to explain. I gave you a break—a good break. But you've been holding out on me."

His face went yellow and once more he looked like a dissipated goat.

"Do you own a camera?" I asked.

"I did own one," he said, "but I sold it."

"When?"

"About a year ago."

"Was it the camera," I asked, "that you used to take the pictures of old Malcolm and Billy Chamlers?"

And then it came to him. Up until that moment I don't believe he had had the slightest idea of what I had been getting at. I'll have to give him credit. At least he blushed. He started to stutter.

"You dirty pig," I said. "Get me those negatives!"

Once more Sam Duffy proved that he had had previous experience with the police. He didn't try to bluff it out. A moment later, without a word, he handed me the oilskin package. I took it; didn't bother to open it but held it in one hand and casually tapped it against my leg while I stared at him.

"When did you take them, Sam? Better come clean with the whole story."

"A little more than a year ago."

"How and where?"

"In Billy's apartment," he said. "I got them one night when they—Billy and Malcolm—were half in the bag. I was in the bedroom closet."

"How about lights?" I asked.

Duffy looked at me and blinked. "That's the funny part of it," he said. "Malcolm used to do it with every light in the room turned on."

"O.K.," I said. "So you got the pictures. How much did you shake him down for?"

He admitted that he had taken around $20,000 from the Philadelphian; that they had been playing it easy, setting it up for a final big kill. Billy hadn't wanted to make her big stake until she was all through with the old man.

"She masterminded the whole thing," Duffy said. "She even got most of the money. I'd turn it over to her as soon as I got any.

"There's something else I got to tell you, Lieutenant," he continued. "I'd like to get it off my conscience."

But I held up my hand. I thought I knew what he wanted to tell me. He wanted to tell me about the jewelry. He knew that I had found the stuff and he had gotten a story together to explain it.

"Don't tell me anything," I said, heading for the door. "Only what I ask you. Right now you're in enough trouble; don't make it worse for yourself."

I walked out, slamming the door. . . .

I rang Panatelli's doorbell and the janitor answered. He remembered me.

"Ah, Sergeant Brentano's friend," he said. "How is the sergeant?" He gave me a broad smile.

"He's fine," I said. "Sends his best. I want to go up to the Chamlers apartment and have a look around," I explained. "You have the key?"

"You won't need a key, Lieutenant," he told me. "One of your policemen came an hour ago and is up there now."

It was Jim Gallagher, a first-class detective and one of my own men.

"What the hell are you doing here?" I asked.

"Captain O'Shea sent me over," he said. "Seems that the post-office people are interested in this place and they're to meet me here. We're going to give the joint a real going over. The captain didn't tell me what we are looking for, but I guess the man from the postal office will."

I grunted, pulled up a seat. I wouldn't have much time, but I didn't want Jim to get any ideas.

"When you expect them?"

"They should be here any minute," he said.

"I'm expecting a telephone call," I said. "Don't want to miss it. I wonder if you'd do me a favor, Jim? Run down and pick me up a couple of hamburgers and a container of coffee."

He got to his feet and yawned. He didn't have to put his hat on; he hadn't taken it off. He left.

I knew that the place had already been thoroughly searched. There wasn't even a slight chance that my boys would have missed any obvious spot. I had to find a place and find one fast.

I walked over to the baby grand and lifted the top. I took the package of negatives from my pocket and dropped them down behind the sounding board. Then I pushed them over and out of sight. The doorbell rang as I closed the lid.

It was an inspector from the post office and I had met him before. He was a tall thin man in his sixties and he smiled at me.

"I was expecting someone named Gallagher," he said.

"Yeah, I know. He just went down to get me a sandwich and coffee," I said. "I'm in charge of the case here and I just thought I'd stop by. Those films—and I guess that's what you're here to find—are mighty important. Thought I'd better be here in case I could help at all."

He nodded.

"Well," he said, "they may be and they may not, from what I'm told. Looks as if it might be a long job so I guess we better get started."

He wanted to begin in the bedroom but I suggested the room we were in. I wanted him to find the negatives, if possible.

Jim Gallagher was back within 15 minutes and he handed me the two hamburgers and the coffee.

By 10:30 we were still working on the living room and had gotten nowhere. I must admit, however, that the postal inspector was thorough. We were about through and ready to move on. Jim himself had searched the piano. I had wanted one of the others to find the negatives, but I knew that they probably wouldn't. The next best thing was to have a witness when I found them myself.

I walked over to the piano as the other two stood near by lighting cigarettes.

I lifted the lid of the instrument and fumbled around.

"Got something here," I said.

I waited until they were behind me before I pulled the packet all the way out.

I let the post-office man open the package.

He whistled when he took out the two prints I had seen in the captain's office.

"This is it," he said. "Jees—some toots!"

Jim Gallagher looked away. I remembered that he was a family man.

"I'll have to take these in," the post-office man said. "We'll probably have them printed up and then turn over the originals to you people. I understand they may be evidence in a murder case."

I said that they well might.

"I hope you get him," I said.

Five minutes later the three of us left the apartment. We walked to the corner together and said good-night. . . .

The druggist gave me a pack of cigarettes and change for a dollar bill and told me that the telephone booth was in the back to the right. I entered and dropped my coin in the slot.

Somehow, this time, I wasn't surprised when I didn't get an answer. I guess I expected it.

It was still early, so I walked. I knew that Jill Bentley wouldn't be free for another hour or hour and a half.

The doorman nodded when I went in and the headwaiter treated me like an old customer. Jill must have been watching because she reached us before I was seated. She nodded at the headwaiter and he smiled and left.

"Look," she said, "you don't have to hang around here. I won't be through for quite a while. Pick up a bottle and go on up to the apartment." She reached into the small silver bag she carried and took out a set of keys.

"Wander around for a while and get up there about 11:30. Not before. I'll be along by 12."

I told her to make it as fast as she could and asked her what she wanted to drink.

"Scotch—two bottles," she said.

In the light of the marquee I looked at my wrist watch. It was just a little after 10:30. Well, I'd have plenty of time to get the Scotch and get to her place before 11:30 or 12. And then I remembered something. She had said not to get there *before* 11:30. In fact she had emphasized it. It suddenly struck me as peculiar.

A cab was waiting just down the street, but I didn't take it. I walked to the corner and signaled a passing driver. I gave him Jill Bentley's address.

I wasn't too surprised, as I was paying the driver in front of the building, to look up and see the lights on in Jill Bentley's apartment.

I took out the keys she had given me and opened the downstairs door. I let myself in quietly and then started upstairs. I went to Jill's door and for several seconds I stood outside of it and listened. I could hear nothing. I looked down at the floor and there was no crack of light showing.

I waited a few seconds more and then I took the key and carefully inserted it in the lock. I held the handle tight and gradually began to turn it. When I knew that the latch and catch were free, I suddenly leaned forward and pushed the door inward.

The blow caught me full in the face and even as I felt the hot blood burst from my nose, I crashed to my knees.

His foot caught me neatly in the side of the head.

It didn't quite knock me out and I instinctively lifted my arm to take the second kick.

But he was all through. He merely walked over and closed the door quietly and then neatly stepped over me and went to the couch and sat down.

He must have been about six feet four; he was thin as a hound and had very wide shoulders. His clothes were immaculate and his shoes were highly polished cordovans. He wore a white shirt with tab collar and a conservative necktie. His hair was a shocking red and effected a crew cut. The eyes were gray and lazy. He had a small automatic in his right hand.

"The next time," he said, "knock before you enter." The voice was very soft, very smooth.

I got to my feet.

"Where did you get the keys?" he asked.

"Who the hell are you?"

He ignored the question.

"I asked you where you got the keys," he repeated.

"From Jill," I said. "Jill Bentley."

"Yes?" He looked skeptical. "And who are you and what are you doing here?"

"Name's Crandall," I said. "I'm a friend of Miss Bentley. She gave me her keys and told me to come here and wait for her."

"That was careless of Jill," he said. "Careless. But it was even more careless of you. I'm sorry I hit you, but that was no way to enter a girl's apartment.

"I'm Frank," he said, as though that explained everything. "I'm just leaving."

"You always carry a gun?" I asked.

He turned then and again he smiled at me, without humor.

"Yes," he said. "I do. And do you?"

I didn't say anything. I was still bleeding badly from the nose and my head was splitting. I was still foggy.

"You better go in the bathroom and clean yourself up," he said. "Make pretty for Jill."

Once more I felt an almost indescribable urge to slug him and once more I resisted it. I just couldn't afford any sort of trouble. I walked over to the bathroom and opened the door.

When I came out about five minutes later the place was empty. He was gone.

I shook my head to clear it and I started wandering idly around the room. It was then that my eye fell on the envelope. For a second I just looked at it, where it lay, torn open, on the end table next to the couch. For a second I couldn't make the connection, and then I got it.

It had a small gray square with a blue printed return address in the upper left-hand corner. There wouldn't be two like it and I leaned closer to read the print.

I was right.

It was one of Fern's. I had bought her the stationery set on her last birthday.

I picked it up and it was empty. There was no address on it so it couldn't have been delivered through the mails or by messenger.

Suddenly I knew that Fern had been in that

room. I knew that she must have been there while that tall lean man with the wide shoulders was there.

I sat down on the couch and I was still sitting there when the doorbell rang an hour later. I pushed the clicker and opened the door.

Jill Bentley walked into the room. She closed the door behind her and stood looking at me. Then she laughed.

"A mess," she said. "A real mess, that's what you are. Well, I understand you asked for it. I just hope you didn't forget the Scotch."

9

"ARE ALL your boy friends mobsters?" I asked.

She didn't like it.

"Look," she said. "I told you not to come here until after 11:30. So you came anyway and got yourself roughed up. I guess you aren't even a good cop."

"I'm a good enough cop," I said. "I didn't want trouble in your place."

She looked at me for a long minute and her red mouth was pouted and her eyes were narrow and thoughtful.

"That was Frank," she said. "Frank's my brother."

Quickly I decided that if I was ever going to get anywhere with her, I'd have to make my peace.

"All right," I said. "I'm just a damned fool. You're right, I guess I'm stupid. And I'm sorry for the cracks. I'm also damned sorry I got here before I was supposed to."

"Oh, it's O.K.," she said. "Frank had a date and he was using the place. It was just that he wasn't expecting anyone to come barging in."

So Frank had a date, I thought. And one of Fern's private envelopes had been laying there on the desk. Fern hadn't been home when I called. Also, Fern had known Jill Bentley in the past.

I was beginning to get somewhere, but I had a long way to go. This tall redhead pouring the shot of brandy probably had all the answers. I would have to get them from her, one way or the other.

"If you'll let me," I said, "I'll go out now and get the Scotch. I'm just a big fool I guess."

"Just a dumb cop," she said, "but somehow I like you. All right, go on down and get it. With soda."

I took my hat and went out. I got the two bottles and then picked up some soda. I got the soda in a drugstore and while I was there I made a phone call.

This time Fern answered. Her voice sounded sleepy.

I didn't ask her where she had been. I just told her I was still tied up with the Chamlers case.

"Sal called a few minutes back," she said. "Seemed surprised when he didn't find you home."

I explained that I had started home and then run into something.

"I'll be late," I said. "You go on back to bed."

"Hurry home, honey," she said.

I hung up and went back to Jill's.

The phonograph was going and at once I recognized the voice. It was one of Jill's own recordings.

I went into the kitchen and made us each a drink. I made mine weak and hers strong. . . .

Several times during that next hour I started to talk. But each time Jill would shut me up. I knew I couldn't rush her. I decided the only thing to do was to get her drunk as fast as I could.

But I fooled myself. I guess when I made her the second drink she must have suspected I was making my own short. She smiled sweetly at me and changed glasses.

"You wouldn't try and get a girl drunk, would you Marty?"

I told her that I certainly would.

"Then we'll both get drunk," she said.

We both did.

I can remember, about two or three o'clock, taking off my coat and opening the collar of my shirt. Vaguely I remember kicking my shoes off and Jill and I dancing together. I remember the first bottle suddenly being empty and how surprised I was.

Very vaguely I remember that I got sick and went into the bathroom and then coming back and Jill's saying something about putting the next shot in coffee and it wouldn't taste so bad.

After that I don't remember anything. . . .

It was the strangest sensation.

I knew who I was, all right. I knew that I was Lieutenant Martin Ferris of the New York Police Department. But that's all I did know for a long time.

I was aware of my own choked, heavy breathing. I was covered with sweat and I suddenly realized that I must be in a bed. The sheet over my chest was soaked. It was a bed all right, but there was nothing familiar about it, nor about the sunlit wall at which I looked.

It was then I became aware of the soft breathing next to me.

I rolled myself over and my feet found the floor. I stood up shakily. Every bone in my body ached.

More than a hundred times I have heard drunks and alcoholics swear the next morning that they couldn't remember what had happened the night before. I'd never believed them. Well, I believed them now. To save my life I couldn't remember what had happened. . . .

At 9:15 I left Jill Bentley's apartment and found a phone booth. Fern answered at once and her voice sounded worried.

"Gee, Marty," she said. "Where are you? Captain O'Shea and Sal have both been trying to get you since about six o'clock. They couldn't understand—"

"What did you tell them?" I interrupted.

"Why I told them that you'd called and said you were working on the murder case."

"I was," I said. "I'll call in right away."

"And Marty," Fern said, "try and get home and get some rest."

"Try and be there when I do," I said.

I left the phone booth, went to the street and hailed a cab. . . .

It was a red brick, six-story tenement, almost at the corner. The usual complement of idlers and bums were standing around the stoop. I was about to push my way through when I caught sight of the car sitting at the curb.

It was the department Mercury and I knew at once that it was the car assigned to myself and Sal Brentano. I turned and started toward it and, as I did, heard a slight commotion behind me. A second later and I was facing Sal.

"I been looking all over hell for you, Marty," he said.

"That house you came out of," I said. "That's where Willy Holiday rooms. How'd you happen to be looking for me there?"

"Everyone in the whole damned place is looking for you," he said. "We tried everywhere. I knew that you had been working on the Holiday angle and I thought it might be just possible you were here."

"And was Holiday in?"

"Yeah, he was in. But Marty," he said, "listen. Hell's popping downtown. I don't know where you've been or what you've been doing, but you gotta get down and see the captain."

"To hell with the captain," I said. "Tell him I'm busy. Tell him we're going to crack this thing and crack it soon. Just remind him that I usually do crack murder cases."

I tried to smile at Sal and I patted him on the shoulder.

"When will I tell him you'll be in?" Sal asked, unhappily.

"This afternoon for sure," I said. "Around three o'clock."

"I'll be there," Sal said. "Take care of yourself, Marty."

He put in the clutch and slowly pulled away from the curb. I turned and started back toward the tenement where Willy Holiday had his room.

I had very little time left. Things were beginning to close in and if I were to do what I planned, I would have to get into action at once.

The Chamlers murder case and the solution of my own problems ran a parallel course: I couldn't let one get ahead of the other. Sal's seeing Holiday had been a close and risky thing.

Willy Holiday had a single room on the top floor. I knocked.

The door opened. He was covered only by a pair of blue-and-white striped shorts; he needed a shave and his eyes were bleary.

Without a word he stepped back and I went into the room.

A white iron single bed on which were a pair of grayish, dirty sheets, stood under the window. A round table with a scarred top stood in the center of the room and held an electric coffee pot, a dirty cup and saucer, a half-filled container of milk. In the far corner of the room was a clothes press. Beside it was a half-opened cardboard suitcase which spilled out a collection of dirty linen.

Neatly folded over the back of a straight-backed chair were a pair of linen trousers. Socks and a white silk shirt lay on the seat of the chair and under it were a pair of suede shoes.

He closed the door and stood with his back to it. The black, narrow eyes had lost their sleepy, bleary expression and I could tell by the sudden play of the muscles around his mouth that he was fully awake and alert.

"The other one just left about five minutes ago," he said.

"I know," I said. "I saw him."

I went over to the chair next to the bed and flipped it up spilling the clock and the ash tray to the floor. I sat down.

"Get dressed, Willy," I said. "We're taking a walk."

Willy went over to the chair on which he had hung the trousers. He started to reach for his socks and then he turned to me. His face was white and his hands had begun to shake.

"Look, Lieutenant," he said. "Honest to—"

"Willy, get dressed."

"Can I get washed?" he said. "I just got in from work a while ago."

"Yeah, get washed."

"The basin's in the can at the end of the hall," he said.

"O.K. I said get washed."

He fumbled around in the suitcase and took out a comb and a brush. Reaching into the clothes press he pulled out a folded turkish towel. And then he turned and went toward the door.

I didn't open my mouth as he pulled the door open and went into the hall. The door swung half shut behind him. A moment later I heard the bathroom door at the end of the hallway open and then bang closed.

It took me only a second. My left hand had gone to my upper inside jacket pocket. I had a white, bulging envelope in my hand by the time Willy had reached the end of the hallway. And then I was crossing the room and leaning over the half-opened suitcase. I was careful to dig down well under the pile of dirty linen and I planted the envelope on the opposite side from which Willy had taken his comb and hairbrush. Willy returned five minutes later.

He put on the white shirt and reached for his coat.

"Cripes, Lieutenant," he said, "I ain't had much sleep. I thought everything was cleared up."

"It is all cleared up, Willy," I said. "That is, if you've been telling me the truth."

"I told you the truth," he said. "About everything."

"All right, Willy," I said. "Let's go." I stood up.

We walked down the block to the corner and stood there for several minutes until a cab stopped.

"Where to buddy," the driver asked.

"The Village," I said. "Christopher and Fourth streets."

10

DOLLY GOTTLIEB was a better actress than I would have figured. When she opened the door she just stood there, surprise heavy on her face and a questioning look in her eyes.

"Hi, kid," Willy said. He pushed his way past her and into the room.

She didn't look at me as I followed him in.

Willy turned to the girl the second she had closed the door behind me. I could tell that he was feeling confident, sure of himself.

"This is Lieutenant Ferris of—" he began.

"I'll handle the conversation," I said. "Sit down, Mrs. Gottlieb."

She just stood still, looking at us.

"Holiday here," I said, "has told me a certain story. I'm a police lieutenant and I'm just checking up on a few facts."

Dolly Gottlieb nodded and Willy was completely at ease.

"I want you to remember back to last Saturday, if you can," I said. "From about 11 o'clock on.

"Was Holiday with you?" I asked. "If he was, when did he arrive and when did he leave?"

For a long minute she looked at me and then she looked over at Willy. I watched his face as she started to talk, in a flat monotone, completely without expression.

"Willy came in around 11 o'clock," she said.

"How do you know it was 11?"

"Well, we started to play the horses. We looked over a scratch sheet and put down a bet soon after Willy got here. I phoned the bet in and they gave me time on it, which they always do."

I nodded and I still watched Willy. He had taken out a cigarette and was lighting it. His hand was steady.

"And then what happened?" I asked.

"We had some drinks and we played the races until about four or 4:30."

Willy looked up quickly and there was a sudden surprised expression on his thin face. But he didn't look worried.

"We played all afternoon," he said.

"Let her tell it," I quickly interrupted. "Go ahead with your story, Mrs. Gottlieb."

"We ran out of gin and Willy decided to go out and get some!"

For a second Willy stared at her as though he couldn't quite believe his ears. But he still didn't look worried and he had no idea of what was coming.

"Willy went out for gin," I said. "And then what?"

"Well, he wanted to meet the bookie and pay off," Dolly went on, in the same dead monotone. "The bookie hangs out in a bar and I guess Willy had to wait around for him. He probably had a couple of drinks while he was waiting. I remember I was getting sore 'cause I wanted a shot myself."

Willy started to get to his feet. His face had suddenly gone very pale. He stared at the girl and there was complete bewilderment in his eyes. He still didn't get it.

"Yes?" I said.

"So he got back here around 7:30 or eight and we—"

Willy Holiday's scream of anguish cut her off short.

"Dolly," he yelled. "You got it wrong. Don't you remember? I was—"

I slapped him hard across the side of the face and told him to shut up.

"How do you know it was around 7:30 or eight?" I asked Dolly.

"Why because," she said. "Because, don't you remember Willy, you wanted to get down on the fourth race out at California and it was too late. And the fourth goes off at 7:15?"

For a moment there was dead silence in the room. And then it happened.

Willy was stupid, but he knew a frame when

he saw one. He was off the bed like a shot and I didn't have a chance to stop him. Not that I would have. What happened next, I wanted to happen.

He was screaming as he reached the girl and his right fist shot out and caught her full in the face. She began to fall to the floor and he struck her a second time as she was half way down.

"I'll kill you," he yelled. "You bitch, I'll kill you!"

I let him hit her twice more and then I pulled him off her. Her mouth was a mass of blood and she was choking, but she was conscious. She lay huddled on her hands and knees and the blood dripped onto the floor.

For a minute or two I had my hands full. Willy was like a madman and he was surprisingly strong. I had to smash him a half dozen times, hard in the face, to quiet him down.

Then all the fight went out of him. He sat there, his thin face between his hands, and stared at the space between his feet.

Dolly went into the bathroom and, in a few minutes, came back into the room, the blood wiped off her face. Her mouth was badly cut and swollen, but no longer bleeding. She looked at Willy Holiday and there was loathing and hatred in the glance.

Women, I thought. She's just framed the guy for the electric chair and, instead of hanging her head in shame, she looks like she'd like to murder him where he sits.

"Put the dirty rotten woman killer in the chair," she said in a low, tense voice. Her right arm went around my waist and she leaned close to me.

Willy looked straight at her and suddenly began to cry.

I gave Dolly Gottlieb a pat on her cheek and carefully brushed her forehead with my lips. I wanted Willy to know exactly where he stood. Then I gently pushed her away.

I walked over to Willy and lifted him to his feet by one arm.

"Let's go, brother," I said.

He slumped far over in one corner of the cab and I don't think he even heard me when I gave the driver the address of the tenement. I had to half push him to get him upstairs and into his room. He went over to the unmade bed and sat down.

For a second he just stared at me and I was afraid he wasn't quite ready yet. But then he got started. He talked fast in an hysterical voice.

"You gotta believe me, Lieutenant," he said. His voice was like that of a small child and he was almost crying. "You gotta believe me. I don't know why she's doing it, but she's lying."

He went on and on and I just let him get it out of his system. I didn't say anything, one way or another.

"Lieutenant," he said. "You wouldn't want to frame me. You wouldn't want an innocent man to go to the chair while a killer gets away. You—"

"Why did you kill her, Willy?" I asked suddenly.

"Oh, no!"

He turned and put his head in the pillows.

"Let's take a look around, Willy," I said. "Maybe you got the junk you took off the Chamlers girl here."

He looked at me, surprised for a moment. Then his face lighted up.

"That's it, Lieutenant," he said. "Look around. You won't find nothing. Nothing at all. You'll see that I didn't do it."

"You could have done it all right, Willy. Easy. Hell, less than an hour ago you tried to kill Dolly Gottlieb."

Willy got off the bed and for the first time he seemed a little more alive. He was beginning to realize that he wasn't where he could normally have expected to be. In the back room of a police station trying to explain things.

He pulled the stuff out of the closet and there was nothing there but a lot of old suits and a couple of pairs of shoes. There were a few letters and personal effects, but I didn't bother with them. Next he picked up the suitcase and carried it over to the bed. He turned it upside down and dumped out the contents. He started to paw through them and I watched his face.

And then he found it.

Quickly I reached over and grabbed his wrist. I pulled out his hand and in it he had the white envelope I had planted. He opened his fingers and dropped it as though he held a rattlesnake.

His eyes were staring at me, wide open and shocked.

A ring, a white gold wrist watch and two earrings fell to the bed.

If I had expected Willy to go into another trance, I was due for a surprise. He didn't even scream. He just suddenly sat down on the edge of the bed and his eyes never left my face. Willy knew at last what was happening to him.

"Oh, my God," he said. "Oh—my God!"

We just sat there for about five minutes. Willy stared straight into my eyes and his own never wavered. For the first time in my life I found I had to look away.

"It looks like you're it, Willy," I said.

He blinked a couple of times and kept staring at me.

"I'm it," he said at last, and his voice was barely a whisper.

Suddenly he laughed. It was the sort of

laugh I never want to hear again. He doubled over and the tears came to his eyes. It was a silent sort of laugh ending in a long sob.

"I should have known," he said. "I should have known I'd never have a chance. Don't you want to ask me why I did it? How I did it? Don't you want all the bloody details?"

I leaned over and slapped his face, back and forth, several times. I wanted him to listen to me—closely.

"Willy," I said, "listen to me. Does anything strike you funny about this whole thing?"

"Yeah, funny as all hell," he said. "But then again, I'm me and you're a cop—so it isn't really funny at all. It's natural. You had to have a patsy and I'm your boy. So go ahead and take me in, lock me up, hang me."

"It's not that simple at all," I said. "I'm not going to take you in—at least not just yet. And maybe you won't be locked up at all; maybe you won't even go to trial."

"No?" he said.

"No. That is, if you just sit tight and listen to me for a while. You will admit, though, Willy, that we have just about as tight a little case as we can get?"

"As tight a frame," he said.

"All right, as tight a frame, if you want it that way."

Willy nodded, but he still stared at me. He had no idea where I was going.

"You don't have to be locked up at all, Willy," I said. "In fact," and I waved one hand at the jewelry which I had spread out on the bed, "in fact, all of this can be forgotten. And Dolly Gottlieb—well, we could forget about her, too."

A quick, smart look came over his face and for a moment he watched me sharply. And then, suddenly, he again looked down at the floor and he half shrugged his shoulders.

"I got something like 12 bucks in cash and another 70 in the Bowery Savings Bank," he said.

"You got me wrong, Willy," I said in a very soft voice. "Dead wrong. I'm not shaking you down—for money."

He continued to stare at me.

"At this point, Willy," I said, speaking very slowly and making quite sure he followed every word, "at this time, there is enough evidence to put you straight into the electric chair. You have a record; you got no alibi for the time of the crime. You could have cased the job. The motive is right here," and I pointed to the jewelry.

"Except maybe," he said, "the guy who really did it might slip up somehow. Might even confess."

"Wrong, Willy," I said. "It happens I *know* who killed Billy Chamlers. He's not the kind of man who would ever confess. And as for slipping up—why Willy, if I'm smart enough to put a man in the chair who didn't do it, I'm certainly smart enough to protect the man who did."

"He must have more money than I got," Willy said.

"Don't try to figure it, Willy," I said. "It won't be necessary. I'll give you the blueprint."

This time I had his full attention. And I could see that his twisted mind was completely alert. That's the way I wanted it.

"It's like this Willy. Believe me or not, I can get you the full treatment for a murder that, let's say, you didn't do. You can completely believe that."

Watching him as I talked, I could see that he did completely believe it. Well, he should have; it was true.

"By the same token, Willy," I said, speaking very slowly and carefully, "I can arrange for you to commit another murder and I can absolutely guarantee that you will get away with it—clean."

I stopped then to let it sink in.

"Are you asking me to commit a murder?" he said at last.

"No Willy," I said. "I'm not asking you. I'm only telling you that unless you want the hot seat for the Billy Chamlers job you are *going* to commit a murder. The only difference is that instead of going to the chair for a murder you didn't do, you are going to actually do a murder for which there will be not the slightest chance of your going to the chair. . . .

It took about another three quarters of an hour to get it all clear and through his thick skull. It wasn't as tough as I thought it would be. Willy was a criminal; a born crook and an instinctively anti-social human being.

Once it was completely clear in his mind that this one was being played in reverse—that the danger lay in not committing murder, he switched around fast enough.

His not trusting me was the biggest stumbling block. He figured I would probably double cross him in the end—that he'd go up for two murders instead of one.

So at last I played my trump card. I told Willy who it was he had to kill.

"The victim," I said, "is going to be my wife. So you can see I'll probably have to go on protecting you—that I won't be able to double cross you without putting myself in the chair right along with you."

It took him a couple of minutes to digest that.

"Oh, God," he said, "I'll never get away with it. You'll never get away with it, yourself."

"You're wrong as usual, Willy," I told him. "You will get away with it and I'll tell you why. You will, because there is only one type of killer who ever gets away with it: The man who kills

a complete stranger. He has no motive; there are no witnesses. He just walks off and the police have nothing—nothing at all. That's what this is going to be.

"You never saw my wife; you didn't even know I was married until I told you I was. There isn't the slightest reason why you'd want to shoot a woman you didn't even know existed."

Willy just stared at me. "I haven't even got a gun," he said at last.

"You got 70 bucks in the Bowery Savings Bank," I said. "Buy a gun."

"And about nobody seeing; nobody being around?" Willy asked.

"That's the easiest part," I said. "Tomorrow is Thursday. Tomorrow night my wife—she does it each Thursday without fail—goes to a bridge club. She leaves about five in the afternoon and has dinner in one of the women's homes. Then they play bridge. Until 10:30. They always break up then.

"At 11 o'clock you can expect my wife home. I'll make sure she'll be on time by arranging to meet her there myself. Except it will be you, Willy, that will meet her.

"You'll go to the house—I'll give you the address and all the details—and be there waiting. You'll have to memorize the number of the house and the floor plan. Anyway, you'll get in through the garage which I'm going to leave open. After you get in—it's around in the back off an alley and no one could possibly see you enter—after you get in, you'll leave the garage door open as you found it. Then, while the house is dark, you'll jimmy a downstairs window. I want this to look like a burglary.

"You'll go up to the bedroom and pull open a couple of drawers in one of the bureaus. Just enough to make it look right, but not too much. You'll time it so you have about a 15-minute wait. You probably won't hear Fern when she drives into the garage, but you won't have to. She comes right up to the bedroom. She goes through the bedroom into the bathroom to take off her make-up and wash her hands and face. She always does it.

"You're going to be in that bathroom, Willy, and the minute she opens the bedroom door, you're going to shoot."

Willy's mouth was hanging open again as he listened to me. He didn't look quite intelligent.

"And the getaway," Willy said. "No one might see me? How do you—"

"You go downstairs after it's all over and you look out the front windows. It's a wide, tree-lined street and there are no houses on the other side for an eighth of a mile in either direction. If there's no one on the street—and the chances are 99 in a 100 there won't be at that time of night—you open the door and walk out. You'll have a car waiting a half block away. It had better be a hot car, Willy."

For the next hour, we went over details. Willy had a thousand objections and questions, but I could tell by his very curiosity that it was no longer a question of whether he'd do it or not. He was going to do it all right.

I finally stood up and scooped the jewelry off the bed.

"One more thing," I said. "When it's all over, go on into work at the usual time. And don't slip up; don't make any mistakes. Do just what you're supposed to do. If everything goes right, you'll probably read in the paper Friday morning about the guy who is being charged with the Chamlers murder. That should take quite a load off your mind."

I turned and left Willy Holiday sitting on the edge of his bed. He just stared at me wordlessly.

The door into the bathroom on the third floor was open and I walked into the tiny cubicle. I kicked the door shut and sat down on the toilet seat.

I thought for a second I was going to be sick to my stomach. And for a moment I considered taking out my service revolver and putting a bullet through my head.

11

I HEARD the radio broadcast at one o'clock on Wednesday afternoon. I had gone across town to a bar and grill on lower Broadway and was sitting in a booth having a sandwich and a cup of coffee.

"Less than half an hour ago," the voice said, "John Haverford, New York advertising executive, was arrested in connection with the week-end murder of glamorous night-club singer, Billy Chamlers."

I didn't finish my sandwich but got up and grabbed my hat. I hailed a cab and told the driver to take me to headquarters.

They were all there. The inspector, lean, gray-haired and, in his conservative business suit, as immaculate as ever, once again was sitting in Captain O'Shea's chair. The captain stood over by the file case and he didn't look up as I came into the room. Sal was talking with Sergeant Kelly over in one corner and Bill Albright from the D.A.'s office was talking to a plain-clothes man.

"We were hoping you'd get in," the inspector said.

Sal looked up and winked, but there was nothing humorous about the wink. He was warning me to expect trouble. I made a sudden decision. The best defense would be an offense.

"Damn it," I said, "I understand that Haverford has been picked up. Of all the stupid—"

"You don't like it, eh?" the captain said. "Well by God, if that ain't one for the books. And just where the hell have you been for the last day or so? Who is supposed to be running this investigation, anyway?"

The inspector cut in.

"The fact is, Lieutenant," he said, "we haven't been able to get a hold of you. The Cummins woman spilled her story to a reporter and we had to do something."

"Haverford's no more guilty than I am," I said.

O'Shea glared at me.

"Who the hell said he was?" he asked. "But that's all beside the point. Nobody's guilty until we have a case wrapped up against them. So what have you been doing about it? Huh? What!"

"I've been working along my own lines," I said. "I'll have this thing wrapped up within 36 hours."

"Ferris," the captain said, and this time his voice was quiet and dripping sarcasm, "Ferris, who do you think you are, anyway? A detective in the New York City police system or a damn' Ellery Queen? This department is not a one-man outfit; we don't go in for grandstand plays. We've got an organization."

Once more the inspector interrupted.

"It isn't that we don't have every confidence in you, Lieutenant," he said. "But this is a tricky case and right now it seems wide open. I feel that we should all be pulling together on it."

For a second I hesitated and then I started talking. I didn't want to get into arguments if I could help it.

"I think I can explain what I've been doing and why I've more or less had to play it alone," I said.

"To begin with, we can start with Malcolm. If you recall, I was the one who turned up the evidence that he was being blackmailed because of his connection with the Chamlers girl; probably blackmailed by the girl herself. But we still haven't got a case against him. Because of his connections and influence, I have been ordered to go slow with him. I'm not even allowed to question him. If we should arrest him, we have no reason to believe that he may not turn out to have an absolutely watertight alibi. It is my personal conviction that he has such an alibi; otherwise he'd have long ago come up with a phony one.

"There's Haverford. He could have committed the murder; possibly he had reason to. However, I doubt it. It just doesn't fit. You've arrested him, but now what? Do you think we have a case?

"Anyway, to move on. We have Duffy. Sam Duffy, the girl's agent. He definitely could have done the job; at least it would have been possible as far as the time element is concerned. However, we have found no motive of any sort.

"There are several other persons we have investigated and questioned. The janitor, who had the opportunity of committing the crime: Miss Rumson, the music teacher, from the floor below. In each case, however, we have been unable to establish a motive.

"Then we have the milkman, Willy Holiday, an ex-con with a record for burglary."

Once more the captain interrupted.

"Hell, you told me yourself, Ferris, that you checked his alibi for the time of the crime and that he's in the clear."

"That's right," I said. "I did check his alibi and he did seem to be in the clear. On the other hand, I have gone just a little further. I know you didn't like him as a possible suspect, Captain," I said, "but after all, I'm supposed to be in charge of this case. I double checked on that alibi and it begins to look as though it's a phony."

"Well then why in the hell don't you bring him in here and let's kick the truth out of him," the captain said.

"Captain," I said, "you can bet I'd do that very thing if I thought it would work. I have no doubt but what I could get a confession out of Willy Holiday. None at all. On the other hand, when the D.A. takes this case into court, we don't want some smart shyster for the defense screaming about police brutality and third-degree methods. With a crumb like Willy Holiday, you've got to have an open-and-shut case."

"All right then," the captain said. "So you think maybe Holiday did it, even if I don't. So what's all the mystery about? Why not take the rest of us into your confidence. Why the lone hand?"

I talked to the inspector directly when I answered Captain O'Shea.

"There is no mystery at all," I said. "I've had Sal and the other boys working on the other angles—on Malcolm, Haverford and the others. Because I have felt all along that Holiday was far from in the clear, and because no one else seemed to agree with me on it, I went ahead and covered that angle myself.

"I've worked on a good many murder cases and if I say so myself, I've done a good job on most of them. No one has ever yet seen me trying to grab off any headlines or any medals."

"Lieutenant Ferris is right, Inspector," the captain said. "He's certainly no publicity hound. The only thing is, I just wish he'd sort of kept a little more in touch."

The Inspector stretched and uncrossed his legs.

"It's your case, as you know, Lieutenant," he said. "On the other hand, Captain O'Shea is in charge here and he's your superior. Work it out anyway you want to, gentlemen. But for God's sake let's get this one cleaned up." He closed the door softly.

Sal followed me out of the room and neither of us said anything as we walked down the hall to the stairs.

The Mercury was in front of the building in a "No Parking" space and we climbed in.

"Where to, Marty?" Sal said.

I told him I was going home, to Long Island. He wanted to drive me out, but we argued and then I finally compromised and agreed to let him take me as far as Long Island City.

A few minutes later, while we were waiting for a traffic light, he turned to me again and spoke.

"Marty," he said. "I've been a little worried. We are old friends after all," he added.

"We are that, Sal," I said.

For a moment he hesitated, and then he spoke, looking straight ahead.

"Is something wrong between you and Fern?" he asked. I could see that it embarrassed him. Sal never was one for poking his nose in somebody else's business.

I knew that he meant for the best, and for a moment, I was almost tempted to tell him about Fern. About Fern and the letters from the FBI man in Washington and everything else. But where would I have stopped?

I couldn't tell Sal. I couldn't tell him anything. Otherwise, I'd have to tell him about what I planned to do; about Willy Holiday, about tomorrow night. No, I couldn't tell Sal; Sal wouldn't understand. Sal wasn't married to a cheat and a liar; he wouldn't understand.

"Sal," I said at last, "don't worry, please. Everything's all right. You've been imagining things. It must be this damned Chamlers case. I'm just tired and need a rest."

Sal dropped me at the subway station and I told him I'd keep in touch. The minute the car was out of sight, I walked back and went over to a drugstore on the corner. I called the Club Shenandoah. I was lucky and caught Jill as she was about to go out for dinner.

It was hard to talk to her, but I was still worried about that blank I'd drawn in her place. I still didn't know what had happened and it bothered me. She recognized my voice at once and her words came as a surprise.

"Well, sweety," she said. "I was wondering when you'd call. How are you feeling?"

"Terrible," I said. "Jill, I'm sorry—"

"Honey," she said. "You're something. You really are something. My God!"

I must have blushed. I didn't even know for sure what she meant.

"Look," she said, "I'm going to be off tomorrow night. Have to go in for an hour around 5:30, but I have the night off. Let's pick it up where we left off? What do you say, Marty, let's—"

I said that would be great. I had a quick flash of inspiration. I not only wanted to talk to her; it would also be a good idea to be with her for the early hours of that next evening. It would fit perfectly. I told her I'd be at her apartment at seven o'clock.

I hung up, went back across the street, climbed the stairs and took the train out to the North Shore.

Fern was just finishing a cup of coffee as I walked into the kitchen at eight o'clock.

"Marty," she said. "Oh, Marty—what in the world's happened to your face?"

She stood up and started toward me, a worried look in her eyes.

"Sit down, Fern," I said. "Sit down and don't worry about me or my face."

For a second she looked almost as though I had struck her. Then the hurt expression was replaced by one of bewilderment.

"What is it, Marty?" she asked. "What's the matter, honey?"

"Maybe you better tell me," I said.

I didn't wait for her answer. I reached into my pocket and took out the letter from the bank. I threw it across the table.

"Take a look, baby," I said.

She pulled the folded sheet of stationery out of the envelope. I probably should have waited for her to say something, but I felt the anger coming over me. I didn't want her lies.

"What have you been doing," I said, and my voice was harsh and bitter. "Taking it out to spend on your old girl friends—or was it the old boy friends?"

She looked up at me and her face was suddenly white.

"What did you say, Marty?"

"I said what have you been doing, spending it—"

"You better not say it after all, Marty," she said.

Before I could say another word, she was out of the room. I could hear her half sob as she went through the living room and started up the stairs.

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SHE HAD wanted to talk to me but I hadn't let her. I told her that I'd be home that night about the time she got back from the bridge club and that if she had anything to say, she could say it then.

I left the car for her, as I always did on Thursday.

There was nothing new downtown when I got there and the captain wasn't in yet. Sal was on his way down from the Bronx. I left word that I'd be in touch and then I went out to the street and started walking north. . . .

Willy Holiday was lying flat on his back, on the unmade bed, fully dressed, when I entered his room without knocking. He didn't look up or make any move.

"You're all ready for tonight?" I asked.

Without looking at me, he spoke.

"I never killed anyone before."

"You were never facing the electric chair before," I said.

"Right," he said.

He was all right. I could see that he was all right. Nervous, maybe, and worried; but he'd go through with it.

I left him then. I was sure that he'd be there.

I began to walk uptown again. I had all the time in the world. I almost wished that I hadn't told Jill I would see her that night, but before it happened I wanted that last single verification. The sure knowledge. And Jill was the one who could give it to me. Jill had known her in the past.

My mind went back once more to Willy Holiday. In another 12 hours he'd be dead and the Chamlers case would be washed up. Somehow, I couldn't feel sorry for Willy.

I realized that my timing would have to be perfect. Willy would be there, crouching in my own bathroom, at 11 that night. Fern would walk into the house and up the stairs and open the bedroom door.

It wouldn't be Fern Ferris, Lieutenant Ferris' wife, whose body would slump to the floor with a lead slug from Willy's gun in her breast. It would be Joan Bronski, ex-con and ex-mistress of a criminal.

And when the bullets from my own gun cut Willy Holiday down two minutes later as he left my front door, the man who would lie there dead would be a killer who had come looking for the man who was putting him in the chair for the Chamlers murder. That's when the evidence, the stolen jewels, would come out. That's when the whole story would come out. And the only person in the world who would be able to find any fault with the story would be the dead man himself.

I tried to find flaws, and I couldn't find any.

Willy? No, Willy would go through with his end all right. It was the only way in the world he would be able to escape the rap for the Chamlers job.

Dolly Gottlieb? After all, what did she know? Nothing. Willy *could* have done the Chamlers job while he had been out that afternoon.

Of course there was Sam Duffy. Duffy had taken the jewelry. Probably taken it that evening when he walked in and found the girl's dead body. But Duffy didn't *know* that I had taken them from him. He might guess, but guessing wasn't knowing.

No, Sam Duffy and Dolly Gottlieb would be safe enough. And Willy Holiday would be dead. Captain O'Shea would have his case all neatly wrapped up and the D.A. wouldn't even have to worry about a trial.

And I'd be back where I was three years ago. A good homicide detective who had only one interest in the world. His job. . . .

At seven o'clock Jill Bentley answered my ring. She didn't say a word. Just pushed the door shut behind me and then turned and in a second her long, rounded arms were around my neck and her face was lifted to mine. Her half-opened mouth met my own, while her body pressed hard against me. Her eyes never closed and my hands went behind her back and held her close. We held it for a couple of minutes and then she began to moan.

I stood back and looked at her.

"Listen," I said. "We got all night."

She looked up then and pouted.

"You're a crumb, Marty," she said. "A real crumb. Anyway, baby will play along. I don't know what's got into me; I seem to have fallen for you. My God!"

Then she stretched like a cat and half yawned.

"Liquor's in the kitchen," she said.

I winked at her. The ice tray stuck and it took me a little time, but when I came back I carried two tall iced drinks.

At nine o'clock Jill called the Chinese Restaurant a couple of blocks away and had some food sent up. It was while we were eating and I was trying to figure a way to ask what I wanted to know, that she said it.

"Marty," she said. "Marty, I don't think I'm going to see you any more. I'm beginning to like you too much."

"I like you too, Jill," I said. "I like everything about you. That is, except one thing. I don't like your brother. I think your brother's a crook, a racket guy, Jill."

For a second her eyes went yellow and I thought she was going to blow up. But she didn't.

"Always the cop, eh, Marty?" she said. "But you're wrong, you know. Frank isn't a racket guy, as you call him. He's not even much of a crook. The only trouble with Frank is that he's a little weak and probably no damned good. He

just picks on women—let's them take care of him."

"Women like my wife?" I asked. "Like Fern Ferris?"

She had a glass of water in her hand and it dropped on the table and spilled over the floor. Her face was completely white.

"You're Ferris? You're the husband—the cop she married?"

"I'm the cop she married," I said. "And apparently your brother's the guy she's keeping on the side."

She began to half shake her head, as though she still couldn't quite make it all out.

"Well, I'll be damned," she said. And then suddenly her expression completely changed. Now she was mad. She was no longer baffled; she was burning up.

"Oh, you fool—you stupid, ridiculous fool." She cried out the words and stood up as she spoke.

"You God forsaken idiot," she said, "your wife isn't keeping anybody. I told Frank he shouldn't have done it. I knew—"

"Done what?"

"I don't know why I even bother to talk to you," she said. "I don't know what there was I ever saw in you. Listen, Frank was shaking her down. He knew her in the old days and he knew she was married to a cop now and so he was shaking her down. I tried to get him to stop."

For a second it took me back on my feet. It explained one thing; it explained the money taken from our joint account. It might have explained the envelope laying on the desk that day I knew she had been in Jill's apartment. It might have explained the telephone calls when she hadn't been home. But it still didn't explain a lot of other things.

"How about Harry?" I shot out. "I suppose he was shaking her down, too? Did you try to get him to stop?"

"Harry?"

For a moment she just looked at me blankly.

"Yeah—Harry," I said. "He's probably another friend from the old days. The days you knew her as Joan Bronski."

"Harry," she said, in an almost inaudible voice, "why Harry was her husband."

"I'm her husband, damn it," I said. "Me, Marty Ferris, I'm her husband!"

I let her go and then I went over and sat down. "Tell me about Harry," I said.

"You never knew about Harry?"

"No," I said, "I never knew about Harry."

She began to speak in a slow, careful voice.

"Harry," she said, "was Harry Woodlawn. Harold C. Woodlawn. He married Joan—or Fern—secretly in Mexico, when she was 17 or 18. Joan was a good kid but she didn't know much. Harry was a crook. He pulled a job out on the Coast and that's how your wife happened to be arrested. They thought she knew something about it—but she didn't. She didn't even know Harry was a burglar."

I just stared at her blankly. It was coming too fast and I couldn't quite take it all in.

"You mean," I said, "that Fern was married to somebody named Harry Woodlawn? That she went to jail for something she didn't do?"

"Sure I mean it," Jill said. "Why, didn't you know that she couldn't possibly have been a thief. My God, Marty, you're married to her. Married to one of the sweetest kids—"

"Where's Harry Woodlawn now?" I asked suddenly. "What's happened to him?"

"He's dead," Jill said.

"Dead? How do you know he's dead?" I suddenly remembered that the FBI didn't even know that.

"I know because he was a friend of Frank's—of my brother's. Frank was with him in Mexico when he was killed."

Jill went on talking. I heard her say, "Marty, you're sweet, but you're really dumb. Like all cops, I guess, just plain dumb."

But I wasn't listening to her. I was thinking about something else.

For the first time in weeks I believe that at that particular moment I suddenly regained a part of my sanity. I had been wrong about everything. But most of all, I had been wrong about Fern. I had been jealous of a dead man.

I had accused Fern of infidelity in my heart while I was actually committing adultery myself.

I had been wrong at every turn in the road.

It was at that precise moment, I believe, that I first really loved my wife, Fern, for what she was—not what I thought she was or wanted her to be.

I would have to get home and tell Fern what I had discovered. What I knew about my love.

I suddenly remembered, then, who would be there to meet Fern when she got home.

I was shaking so that I could barely handle the knob as I reached the door.

I remember Jill calling something, but I never knew what it was.

I had to get home, I had to get into that house and into the bedroom before Willy Holiday got there. Before death walked in through the opened garage door and climbed the steps to the second floor.

I must have looked like a wild man, running down the street and half screaming. The second cab stopped.

The man was a fool and I had a hard time explaining to him. But at last, after he insisted on seeing my badge, he believed I was a policeman and he stepped on the gas.

It was just 10:40 when the driver pulled up

a block away from the house. I knew by now that Fern would be safe. But I still had something to do. I prayed that Willy Holiday was not already there; not already in that bathroom, waiting, with the gun cocked.

Quickly I paid the cab off and then ran up the street.

Entering through the garage, I took out my service revolver and held it ready. Carefully I crept upstairs. A moment later and I had thrown the bedroom door open.

Willy had not yet arrived. I knew he would be around any second now, so I didn't turn on the light. I closed the door and walked into the bathroom. I left the door open a crack, but I still didn't turn on a light.

It seemed like hours and I knew the sweat was rolling off my forehead. I couldn't understand why he hadn't come. I wanted to look again at my watch, but I didn't dare show a light. He might, even now, be soundlessly making his way up the stairway.

I remembered how slow time can go when you must wait alone in the dark.

And then I heard a slight noise. The sound of footsteps.

I opened the bathroom door a little wider and I held the gun steady in my right hand. The muzzle pointed directly at the bedroom door.

I heard the creak of the floor boards outside the door. I heard the knob turn. And then the door quickly opened.

I fired three times in rapid succession as the figure loomed in silhouette.

I reached then for the light switch just outside the bathroom door and a second later the room was flooded.

It was then I started to scream. . . .

Later, they told me I never stopped, not even after the doctor gave me the hypodermic and they tried to pry Fern's dead body out of my arms.

13

AS I said in the very beginning, the time is very short. In less than an hour now I shall be walking down the narrow green hallway. I will be going first and the other one will follow me 15 minutes later. I just want to be sure it is all clear in my mind.

In one sense, both of us, that other man and myself, are innocent. On the other hand, we are also guilty. I am certainly guilty of the murder of my wife, Fern Ferris, whom I loved and whom I killed. Of course I hadn't meant those bullets for her; those leaden slugs were for Willy Holiday, the man I had bribed to murder my wife.

By now, of course, everyone knows what happened. You've read all about it in the papers. You've read about how my partner, Sal Brentano, had become worried when I didn't show up, and went around looking for me. How he stopped by Willy Holiday's room to see if I might be there and how he started questioning Willy when I wasn't and then found the gun on him. Of course he arrested Willy and took him downtown and booked him.

I didn't know about that until too late.

No, when I fired those fatal shots, I thought I was firing at Willy. But I wasn't. I was firing directly at the one woman I truly loved. I killed that woman.

I didn't mean to do it and in a sense it was an accident. But in my heart of hearts I consider myself guilty of my wife's murder and that is why tonight, just before I am to die for that crime, I can say that at last my mind and heart are at peace.

It is a rather odd thing that the man who follows me to the chair tonight should be the man who killed Billy Chamlers. Odd because of the peculiar way in which the Chamlers murder was so closely related to my own particular tragedy.

And in a sense it isn't odd, because in many ways this other man has suffered the same sort of thing which I have suffered.

This fat, shoddy, rather disgusting man, Sam Duffy.

He was in love with a woman, too. And he killed the woman he loved. He killed her because he loved her. Not because he couldn't have her, but because he loved her. He just couldn't stand to see what she was doing to herself. And so he killed her.

Why did he take the jewels? He took them because he had given them to her, on several of her birthdays. Somehow, to him, they represented the sweetness of the sentiment that he had felt. He wanted them back to remember her by.

I told Sal all about Duffy once I had regained my senses sufficiently to think straight. I told Sal a lot of things.

To the very last I had to fight Sal—my friend and my partner. He wanted me to plead insanity; he wanted me to tell the true story about my plot against Holiday.

I think, though, I finally convinced him. I convinced him that I'd have no peace until I had paid for the crime I committed. I think he finally understood that it wasn't a matter of importance that it was my gun that killed Fern and my finger that pressed the trigger. It was my lack of faith in her love that killed her.

I was a good cop, but I was a poor human being.

I didn't understand love.

—By Lionel White

JULY'S CONTEST MOVIE: THE CAINE MUTINY

By PAUL FARON

What would YOU do?

. . . if your commanding officer, through incompetence, were risking your own and your buddies' lives? Your answer to this question may win you $10 from BLUEBOOK.

Lt. Maryk (Van Johnson), executive officer of the U. S. destroyer *Caine*, is faced with that problem in *The Caine Mutiny* (Columbia). The skipper, Lt. Comdr. Queeg (Humphrey Bogart), has long been showing signs of a mental crack-up. Then, during a typhoon, Queeg seems to lose all power of decision. Wallowing helplessly, the ship is shuddering under the impact of tons of water that crash upon her in mountainous waves. Her rudder is useless and the vessel blown sideways by the screaming wind.

Maryk is convinced that Queeg is insane when the skipper dazedly refuses to order the ship's head turned into the wind so she can ride out the blow. With the *Caine* on the verge of foundering, Maryk *(right)* invokes Navy Article 184 which permits an executive officer to relieve his commander under certain emergency conditions.

"You'll hang for conspiracy to mutiny!" Queeg yells. But the others back up Maryk. The *Caine* is headed into the wind and is saved.

Back in San Francisco, Maryk and another officer are brought before a court-martial. When Lt. Keefer (Fred MacMurray) of the *Caine* welches and puts the full blame on Maryk, a verdict of guilty seems certain. Tension increases as the questions of the brilliant defense attorney (José Ferrer) bring damaging admissions about Lt. Comdr. Queeg from the Navy psychiatrist.

The film takes a surprising twist when, after the court-martial, Ferrer slings a drink into MacMurray's face *(below right)* and snarls, "You'll be a prisoner of your conscience the rest of your life—if you have any!"

The Caine Mutiny provides one answer to what a man would do if his C.O.'s incompetence were placing all in mortal danger. Your own answer may win you a cash prize. Write it in twenty-five words or less on a postcard and mail it before July 31, 1954, to Paul Faron, BLUEBOOK, 230 Park Avenue, New York 17, N. Y. The most interesting answer wins $10.

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TAKE THE WHOLE FAMILY CAMPING:

Even the baby can go along safely and comfortably if you know how—as the Ernie Schmidts, of New Jersey, do.

BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL:

"The Iron Skipper" by Verne Athanas is the story of a half-demented sailing captain and his crew on a voyage of wild adventure. The action ranges from a battle with Indians to exotic dalliance in a South Seas paradise.

AND IN ADDITION:

A revelation of how the majority of today's houses are inadequately wired, thus increasing the danger of fire . . . "The Ravisher," a novelette, with a surprising twist, of a modern-day Casanova . . . Regular features including Angler's Almanac, Medical Report, and Politics Is People . . . Another big issue of the greatest bargain in magazines today.