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Bluebook FOR MEN

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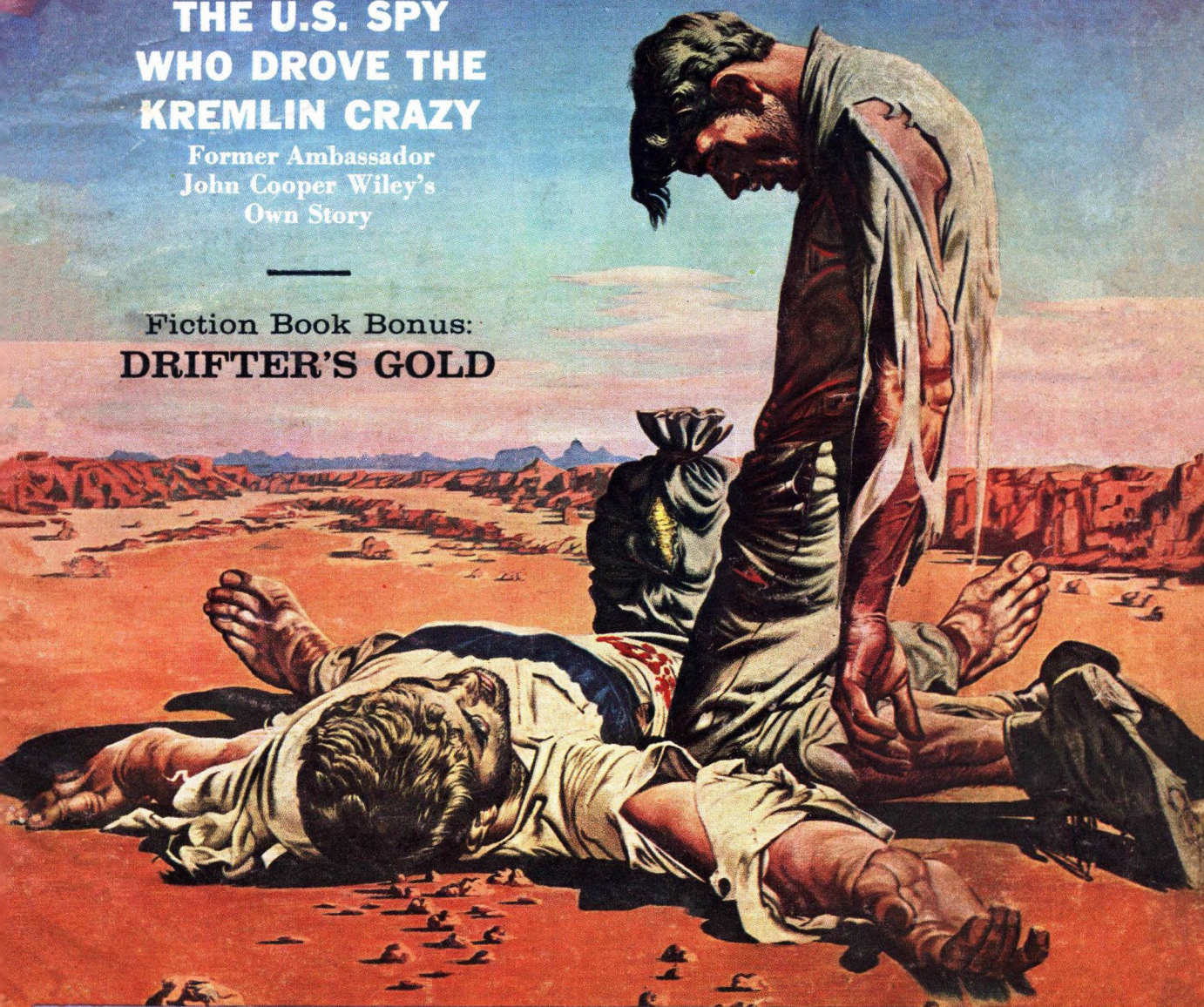

Stories By:

JAMES MERRIAM MOORE - THEODORE IRWIN - JACK DILLON - TOM McMORROW
A.V. LORING - LADISLAS FARAGO - RICHMOND P. HOBSON, JR.

Make More Money in One of Today's FASTEST-GROWING Industries

We'll train and establish you in YOUR OWN LIFETIME BUSINESS

U.S. Dept. of Commerce says— 45 million homes in U.S. with . . .

$750 million yearly potential in rug and upholstery cleaning . . .

In your town, just 2 jobs a day earn $8,750 profit first year . . .

You become an independent business man with financial and social success.

Big Future in Dynamic Industry

Join the thousands of opportunity-minded men like those pictured below who are sharing in the profits that this remarkable home-furnishings cleaning field makes possible. We can help you make more money in a booming industry which the Dept. of Commerce estimates as having a $750 million dollar a year potential!

We will train you as a cleaning specialist, show you the proven methods for building business, and work with you providing over 27 continuous services that help assure your growth.

Arlis Wilson of Tulsa says: "As a Duraclean Dealer I have the ideal setup. I am operating my own business, yet have at my disposal a staff of experienced men at Headquarters who will help me on a moment's notice."

We Help Build Your Business

YOUR personal success is of the utmost importance to Headquarters, for as you grow so grows the Duraclean Dealer organization. Thus, your initial training is only the beginning of a continuous assistance program designed to build your business. When you contact Hdqtrs. you receive prompt, expert counsel from a staff of specialists. Some of the over 27 services you receive are conventions and regional conferences, new product development, trademark protection, sales letters, tested ads, local promotional materials, a monthly sales-building magazine, plus a host of others.

Backed by National Advertising

You are backed by a National Advertising program which is larger than all other similar programs in the industry combined. **Consumer Advertising:** Ads dramatizing Duraclean services reach millions through leading magazines as *McCalls, Parents', House & Garden, House Beautiful, Canadian Homes & Gardens, Sunset, New Yorker* and others. **Trade Advertising:** More and more retailers are turning over customers to Duraclean Dealers for servicing. Key trade magazines as *Interiors, Floor Covering Profits, Furniture Retailer, Cleaning & Laundry Age*, are a few of many used in targeting local retailers to become your agents.

What Dealers Say

W. Lockiebill (St. Louis): My 28th year! Began during depression and built business on good service.

D. Chilcott (N. Platte): Duraclean say gross $9.00 per hour. I gross up to $12.00. Many dealers do much better.

M. Lyons (Chgo): 3rd year should hit $100,000; 2nd was $60,000; 1st $40,000. Hdqrs help make it possible.

E. Roddey (Hampton, Va.): Did $600.00 first 12 days in January. My business keeps growing each month.

Start Part-Time If Employed

Even if you are now employed, you may start enjoying the financial independence of your OWN business. Many dealers start part-time, and as they expand their operation beyond what they can service on a sparetime basis, they switch to full-time. Later they expand further by hiring servicemen. This could be your pattern for success.

You will receive local training with an established dealer and at our 5-day, 50-hour factory training school. Thus, under our guidance, you become an expert in the care of rugs and upholstery, a profession for which there is now great demand.

Alert dealers can gross $9.00 hourly, plus $6.00 on each serviceman at national price scale. You enjoy big profits on both materials and labor. Everything furnished to get you started.

Six Ways to Make Money

A Duraclean Dealership qualifies you to offer six different services. Thus on many jobs you multiply profits.

1. **Duraclean:** Unique ABSORPTION process for cleaning and reviving rugs, carpets, upholstery. Recommended by leading stores and manufacturers. No scrubbing, soaking, shrinkage. Aerated foam manufactured by portable electric Foamovator safely removes dirt, grease, unsightly spots. Dries so fast customers use furnishings in a few hours.
2. **Durashield:** *Soil-retarding* treatment that KEEPS furnishings clean MONTHS longer. Applied after cleaning, this invisible film protects each fiber from dirt.
3. **Duraproof:** Protects against damage by moths, carpet beetles. Only such treatment backed by 6-year Warranty!
4. **Duraguard:** A flame-proofing treatment which reduces fire damage by retarding charring and tendency of fires to flame up. Theaters, restaurants, hotels, homes, offer huge potential.
5. **Spotcraft:** Special chemical products which enable you to handle most all spot or staining problems.
6. **Carpet Repair:** Special tools and know-how equip you to provide this specialized service.

Easy Terms

A moderate payment establishes your own business—pay balance from sales. We furnish electric machines, folders, store cards and enough materials to return your TOTAL investment. You can have your business operating in a few days. Mail coupon today!

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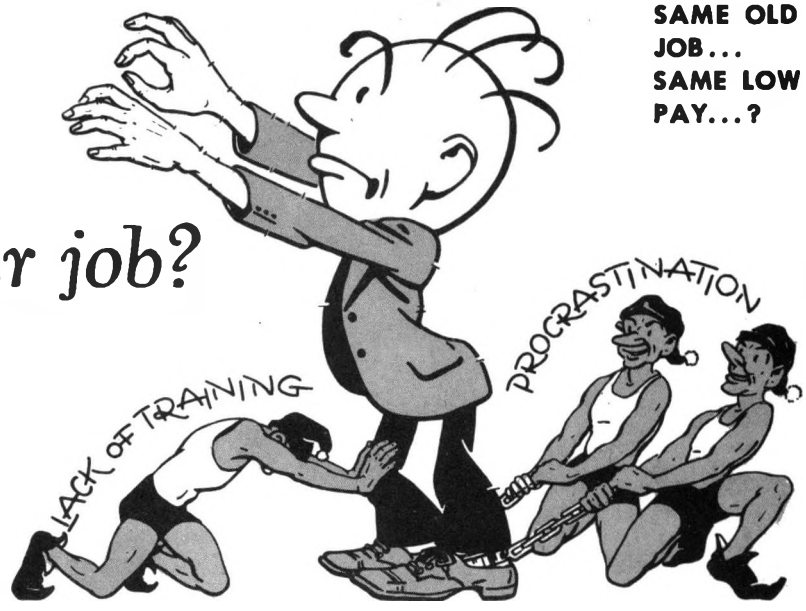
DURACLEAN COMPANY
O-N10 Duraclean Bldg., Deerfield, Ill.

Are You "STANDING STILL" *on your job?*



SAME OLD JOB... SAME LOW PAY...?

You can justify a real pay raise and a better position—by making one simple move—the move that opens the way to more earnings and promotions–*practical training*.

If YOU are "standing still" on your job—no promotions—only token increases in pay—then you had better do something about it. You know that if you are untrained, your chances of getting ahead are slim. NOW IS THE TIME TO PREPARE.

WILL RECOGNITION COME?

The only answer, as you know, is that success *does* come to the man or woman who is really *trained*. LaSalle has provided the "key to success" for many thousands of ambitious people who have sought our training for more than fifty years.

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Bluebook FOR MEN

Contents for October 1960

Vol. 100 *No. 1*

Cover painting by Fred Freeman

BOOK BONUS

FICTION

PERSONALITY

ARTICLES

MYSTERY

SPECIAL FEATURES

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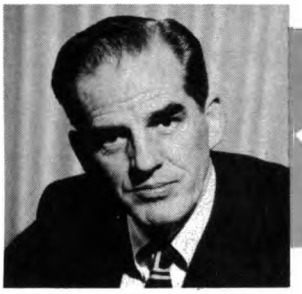

The Way We See It

You are holding the first copy of a new and different kind of magazine for men.

At which we can hear some joker (and him we can do without) pipe up and ask "Who needs it? Magazines for men we got, in carload lots."

Get lost, Doc. Sure, there are lots of magazines for men, and even though it kills us to admit it, there are a few good ones around, too, some of which we even like to read ourselves in our spare time, whatever that is. But we don't know of any mag on the stands today that's exactly like what we hope to do with *Bluebook.*

What we have in mind, see, is that there isn't an awful lot of good escapist, adventure reading on the stands today. Sure, there are magazines that will tell you how to build your own dental lab, how to catch a tuna with a bent pin and a broomstick, and even who put the overalls in Mrs. Murphy's whatsit. Us, we don't know any of these things; and maybe we're just a bunch of squares.

What we *do* know is that we like a magazine that doesn't set out to scare hell out of its readers by constantly screaming "Jeez, look what they're *doing* to us!" and demanding that the readers get off their duffs and remedy the situation. Our point of view, if you can call it that, is that the readers should stay right there on their duffs, pulling on a can of beer or something, smoking their pipes, and enjoying themselves by reading some of the fancy fare we plan for you.

So, relax—and enjoy yourself.

* * *

We have a particular feeling that there's a raging need for some good male short fiction. Offhand, we can't think of another magazine today that turns up, month in and out, with the kind of fast-reading adventure fiction that used to be so plentiful—and which, let's not kid ourselves, was the breeding ground for so many of the top male writers today.

Today, you want to entertain yourself of an evening with some high-grade and exciting action stories, and about all that's left to you is your television screen, a lumps-and-love paperback, or a comics book.

We repeat, we aim to change such things. We particularly aim to change them in this first issue with such snazzy fiction stories as Will Cook's "Pinch," which we are instructing the printer to put on pages 34-35; Tom McMorrow's swell baseball story, "Super Star," which probably will turn up on pages 28-29; "Passage Home," a sahib-and-stengah yarn in the best Somerset Maugham tradition, which you should be able to locate on 22-23, and "Side Trip," a dandy little post-war gem, which every veteran owes to himself to read, and which ought to be on pages 18-19.

If there's any story that exemplifies the kind of writing we hope to bring you regularly, though, it's that humdinger of an action piece by Jack Dillon, which the man in charge of titles around here decided—for some reason or other—to call "R.S.V.P." and which gets rolling on pages 38-39. If you can read this one without getting a nice warm feeling down deep somewhere, and without admitting there still are some fairly fine people loose in the world, then we're backing the wrong entry.

* * *

Of course, the only way we're going to know if we're on the right track is if a passel of you readers let us hear same. We could, naturally, hire one of those pollsters to go out into the highways and hedges with a copy of *Bluebook*, asking everyone he sees what they think of our little pamphlet. But the hell with that; pollsters cost money, and, besides, they're all tied up right now asking people which team they're going to vote for come November.

So drop us a postcard, will you?

Better yet, if you like us, forget the postcard; instead buy a half-dozen extra copies of this issue, and give them away as Arbor Day gifts to your friends. We need the money, bad.

* * *

Which ought to be about enough of this. Better you should start turning pages and get on to some of the high-priced talent we've spared no expense to bring you. Before you go, though, you might be interested in the story of this Hollywood cut-up who has recently become involved in a series of all night poker sessions. Which prompted a pal to remark:

"Look, Sam, you're a lush and a chaser, and that keeps you up half the night. And now you're going in for poker so you'll have something to do with the rest of your night-time hours. And what I wonder is—how are you able to get any rest?"

"Well," Sam explained, "fortunately, I faint a lot."

Which is a good explanation. ●

Maxwell Hamilton

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It's **easy** with our way of selling shoes. We set you up in a complete "shoe store" business you can run from your home. **We** carry the stock and ship the shoes. All you do is show the styles to your family, friends, people where you work, etc....and take orders. You have a profitable business with no rent, light bill, clerk hire or other costs to worry you. **You keep 100% of your profit!**

Here's why you'll make money!

● You offer **170** comfortable fast-selling styles...far more than a store! ● You have an amazing range of **sizes (2½ to 14)** and **widths (AAAA to EEEE)**. Even hard-to-fit people can buy from you! ● Because we carry over 200,000 pairs in stock, your customers get **exactly** what they want ...no misfits or substitutions! ● You feature exclusive Velvet-eez shoes with foamy-soft **air-cushion innersoles** that let you "walk on air." Built for supreme comfort, Mason shoes also feature built-in strong steel shanks, Air-Cushion longitudinal support, Nylon stitching. Advertised in scores of famous National magazines, they'll be available **only** from **you**—not sold in stores! ● You save your customers money, and the **time they would** waste "shopping around" shoe stores.

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70 Styles for Women! Satisfy almost every taste! Many comfort features. Low-heeled, high-heeled, casuals, service shoes, latest styles!

No wonder you'll have the biggest and best "shoe store" business in town!

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Since 1904
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As soon as we receive the coupon below we'll send you a complete Business Outfit **FREE and postpaid!** It features the entire Mason Collection in full color; contains 10-second Air Cushion demonstrator, valuable Booklet chock full of how-to-make-money hints, special Measuring Board, advertising reprints...everything else you need to start making cash profits from the first hour! We'll also show you how to earn monthly **Bonus Checks** and win costly prizes **Free!**

Mason Shoes will be available ONLY from You!

Because Mason Shoes are not sold in stores, you get **repeat** orders from delighted customers almost automatically! Steady cash profits every month! Since everyone you know wears shoes . . . **EVERYBODY IS A PROSPECT!** No wonder this is the perfect "off-hours" business: a quality product everybody needs . . . a product that is used up and needs replacement . . . one you can take orders for 12 months of the year. Want to see how much money **you** can make? For a 3¢ postcard **you** can try it NOW . . . start your exciting business **right away!**

RUSH THIS STAMP FOR YOUR *FREE* BUSINESS OUTFIT!

Mr. Ned Mason, Vice President — Dept. G414
Mason Shoe Mfg. Co.,
Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

Yes, I'd like to give myself a $168 a month raise! Please set me up as your man in my community by rushing my Complete Starting Shoe Business Outfit FREE and postpaid so I can start making extra money from my first hour!

Name_____
PLEASE PRINT

Address_____

Town_____ State_____

Gripes, growls and grunts from the paying customers. Anything on your mind? Let's hear it!

To the Editor:
Dear Sir:

Congratulations on the good news that you're starting up Bluebook. A lot of us readers have been looking forward to hearing this good word for a long time, and now it's come true!

Here's a suggestion—how about having a record column in your new publication? As a teen-ager with one of the best record collections in my school, I'm always interested in reading about new recordings by my favorite entertainers.

So how about it?

William Taftley
Oklahoma City, Okla.

Frankly, Bill, we can't imagine anything duller than reading about music. Music's for listening, in our opinion. However, if enough readers want a record column, we'll have one. But they've got to make themselves heard first—Ed.

* * *

To the Editor:
Dear Sir:

I heard about the new Bluebook from a friend who'd read about it in a trade magazine, and I'm writing now because I wanted to urge you not to emulate the other magazines for men which now are on the market, and which are loaded with sex and every other evil imaginable.

Can't you possibly keep it clean?

Mrs. Helen Olinski
Scranton, Pa.

Sex and "every other evil," Helen? What clown told you sex is evil? Tell him to drop dead. Meanwhile, we'll wash behind the ears every day—Ed.

* * *

To the Editor:
Dear Sir:

How about a fishing column?

Tom Albers
Memphis, Tenn.

* * *

To the Editor:
Dear Sir:

. . . I hope you're planning to do some pieces on hunting.

Vincent Keller
Kansas City, Mo.

To the Editor:
Dear Sir:

Bowling is today's most popular sport, and you're surely going to cover it, aren't you?

Edward Kastner
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Editor:
Dear Sir:

Don't forget skiing!

Kevin Sweeney
Des Moines, Ia.

Ditto what we said about records—who wants to *read* about skiing, hunting, fishing and bowling? To hell with reading what some other jerk says about them; let's get out and do them ourselves. Or better yet, avoid muscular aches by sitting on your fanny reading all the other interesting things we have in succeeding pages—Ed.

* * *

To the Editor:
Dear Sir:

I am delighted to hear you plan a publication aimed at the male reader who misses the many wonderful old magazines we used to be able to buy, and which gave men the kind of rugged fiction that has just about disappeared from our lives in this era of television and all the other so-called modern forms of entertainment.

It seems to me that many of today's top writers got their start in such magazines as *Black Mask*, *Flynn's*, and the old *Bluebook*, and I, for one, miss all the great stories they used to write. Bring this kind of writing back, and you'll have at least one loyal reader for as long as I live.

Paul J. Buchbinder
San Francisco, Calif.

Stick around, Paul, and see how we make out—Ed.

* * *

To the Editor:
Dear Sir:

With all the magazines and paperback books piled high on our newsstands, I sure admire you guys for your courage in bringing out still another one. You must have a publisher who married money.

Fred Steckler
Cumberland, Md.

He owns a toll-bridge—Ed.

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Many CTI graduates go in business

It is relatively easy to start a repair business in the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration field. Armed with up-to-date knowledge, seasoned with skill acquired through practice on kits, and equipped with tools and gauges, many graduates start out on their own. Some expand into retail stores. Others have contracts to service taverns, restaurants, food stores and commercial buildings. The more resourceful become contractors. Conditions for success are excellent.

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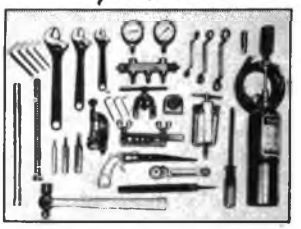
The average CTI student is eager to put his skill to profitable work, on a part-time basis. Though most students prefer to tie up with local dealers and repair establishments, a surprising number are independents. The extra cash helps meet training cost. Often there's enough to bank, or invest in more equipment.

Letters prove efficiency of training

"I have a business of my own servicing domestic and commercial refrigerators."—*Paul Humphrey, Colo.* "I made $1,000 while training, and am now a refrigeration man for a dairy."—*Giles Minton, N. C.* "I opened a little shop and am swamped with work."—*Charles Corley, Kan.* "Doing service work on a part-time basis the past 10 months, I earned $2,400. Have a nice business."—*Renos Johnson, Ind.* "My firm advanced me to field superintendent."—*Milburn Dougan, Ark.* You can do as well as these graduates!



An exclusive feature of CTI training is that you get parts to build a ¼ h.p. commercial-type condensing unit (above). You also receive mechanic's tools and gauges (right). After unit is assembled, you can build an air conditioner, freezer, refrigerator or milk cooler. Only CTI sends *working* kits.

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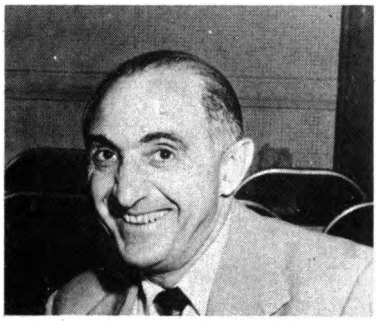
Blue Notes

Some assorted background facts on who wrote what, and why, in this issue of Bluebook

Theodore Irwin and his do-it-yourself typewriter combined to turn out "Night of the Navy's Biggest Binge," which readers with 20-20 vision will be able to find on pages 20-21. A former newsman and war correspondent, Ted has written more magazine pieces than he can remember, and a clutch of books, two of which later became moving pictures, as they're called.

A husband and father who lives in



a place called Scarsdale, N.Y., Ted has been described as a man who "plays golf in the low 140's," and is rumored to have a bowling average almost as good.

Sounds like quite an athlete.

* * *

Joseph Lawrence, who never has owned a share of stock in his life, admits to the authorship of "Black Thursday," the account of the 1929 Wall Street crash to be found on pages 30-31. Lawrence's one other claim to a place in history, to hear him tell it, stems from the fact that he is the president and chairman of the board of The Sanitary Diphthong Company ("Word Manglers To The Trade").

Chairman Lawrence is a temporary bachelor who, when he isn't writing, makes a fair living racking up balls in a Chicago billiard academy, and between times playing Kelly Pool with the owner's wealthy, if half-witted, son. He aspires to grow up to become the President of the United States.

* * *

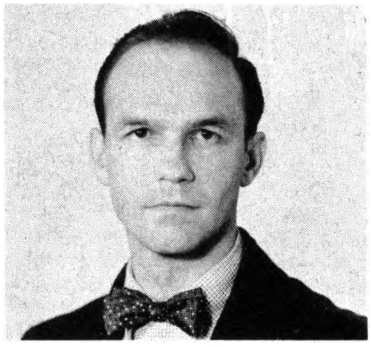
Henry A. Milton, latest in a long line of writers who've solved the "Locked Door" mystery (see pages 26-27), is a Californian by birth, which he says makes him a member of one of the most exclusive clubs this side of the U. S. Senate. A toggle switch thrower by trade, which he admits is his son's description of an airline pilot, Hank is married to a girl who, when he met her, ran a laundry in a mental hospital, and he feels this ideally suits her for the task of presiding over his own booby hatch, which, in addition to him, includes three boys and a girl-child, five cats, a beagle hound, a bowl of guppies, and a king snake.

He says they do very little entertaining, and he can't for the life of him understand why.

* * *

If you've read "Side Trip" (pages 18-19)—and if you haven't, better skip back right now and do so—you won't be surprised to know that its author, Wayne Hyde, like the hero of his story, is a veteran of World War II. A former paratrooper in the European theater, Wayne was wounded twice, a circumstance which was not completely without its good points (he married his Army nurse). Now 37, with three children, he lives in Washington where he's on the staff of Voice of America.

A real sentimentalist, as his story proves, Wayne used the proceeds from the first story he ever sold to buy his wife a washing machine. (Although why women need a machine to wash themselves when it's so easy to do it by hand, we'll never know.)



Concerning his story, which we feel is one of the most moving we've ever read, Wayne came up with this explanation:

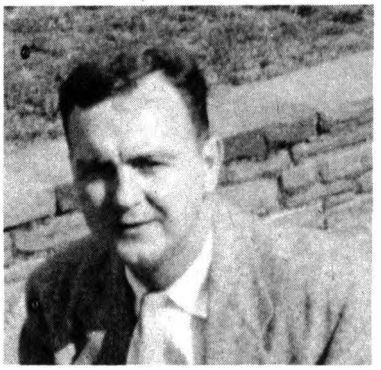
"I once interviewed Somerset Maugham, who passed along this advice to would-be writers: 'Don't wait for experience to come to you, but go out and find it. And when you've found it, put it down as simply as you can, without any frills or embroidery.' I'm trying to do just that. I don't know any big words anyway."

With a story like "Side Trip," Wayne, who needs big words?

* * *

When you finish "Thrill of Conquest," on pages 24-25, chances are you'll decide the author is a sleek George Raft type, who probably runs a small-town gin mill when he isn't writing short stories. Which is why we find it pleasant to report that G. G. Revelle is a 6'1", 190-pounder, a flyer with 24 combat missions over Germany to his credit, and a guy who got as far from gin mills as he could by becoming a physical education instructor in a playground.

Now concentrating entirely on writing as good a way to make a living as any, Revelle has two upcoming novels to his credit, a host of science fiction yarns in his background, and a certain reappearance in



Bluebook in the near future, if the present proprietors of this little publication are returned to office by the voters.

Married and the father of a son and daughter, Author Revelle admits to a love for bowling, which he does several times a week; enjoys a poker game and a good joke in about that order, and, when he has none of the former to occupy his mind, he goes camping.

Incidentally, his original title on "Thrill of Conquest" was "Kill Me, Please," although we're damned if we can figure out why. Can you?

* * *

For those who are too old to remember the Spanish-American War, we'll break down and tell the kiddies that Richmond P. Hobson, Jr., who wrote "The Red Line of Death" (pages 32-33) is the son of one of the legendary heroes of that particular conflict, the orginal Richmond P. Hobson. It was the latter who took a gunboat into the harbor of Santiago, Cuba, and, under the guns of the entire Spanish fleet, sank her across the mouth of the harbor, thus bottling up the Spaniards and freeing Admiral Dewey's ships for their subsequent conquest of Manila.

But we guess Rich, Jr., is tired of being so designated, and would prefer to ride on his own reputation as a writer. No sweat, Rich; you'd have made it no matter who your old man was ●

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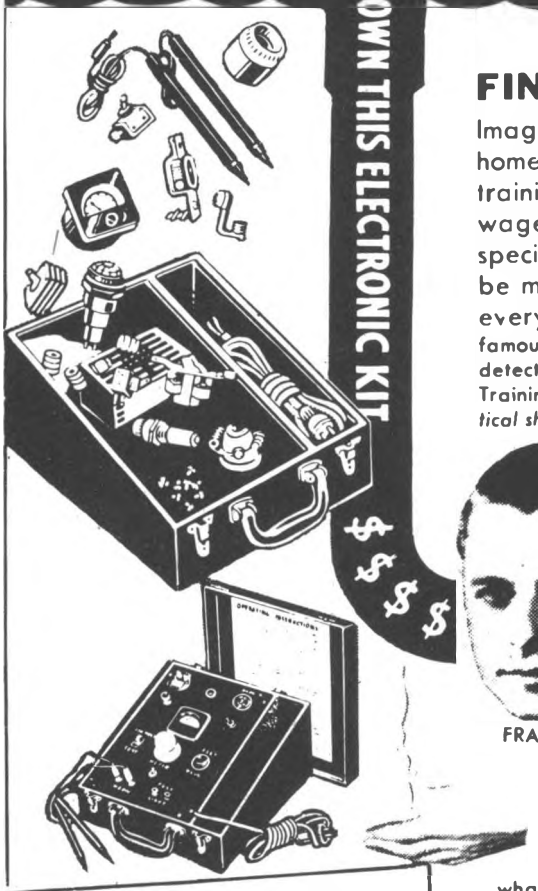

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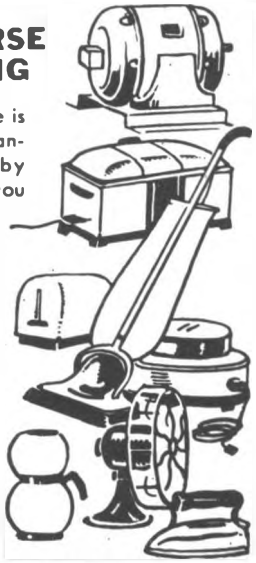

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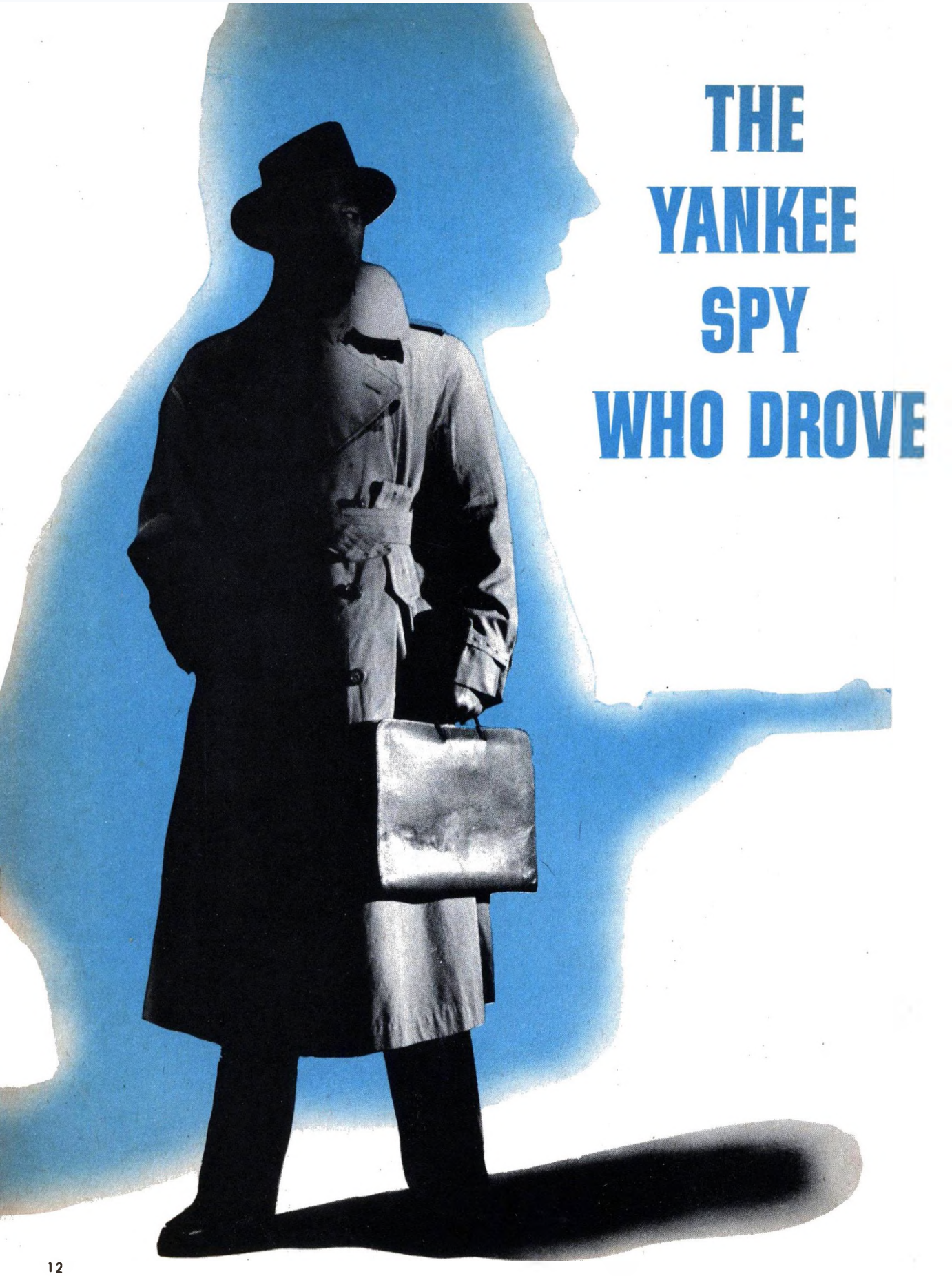

THE
YANKEE
SPY
WHO DROVE

The amazing, true story, told here for the first time, of the fabulous secret agent, Robert T. Lincoln—who makes every other spy seem like a character out of fiction

THE KREMLIN CRAZY

By John Cooper Wiley

Former American Ambassador to Iran, as told to Ladislas Farago

On a bleak November morning in 1950, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas slipped into the White House for a date with President Truman. Those were ominous days. The war in Korea was in its fifth month; the Red Chinese had just joined the issue; trouble was brewing in Afghanistan and Tibet, and Intelligence had located the Red Army of the Soviet Union on the Persian border, apparently waiting for the green light to invade Iran.

Justice Douglas, an inveterate globetrotter specializing in hot spots, had just returned to Washington from some of the hottest. He was now due to give the President a first hand report about his experiences.

When he emerged from Mr. Truman's office, he was buttonholed by a reporter for *The New York Times* who asked him point blank: "Did you have any clandestine meetings with Major Lincoln in Iran?"

This was a delicate question. That name Lincoln was not supposed to be bandied about in public, for the Lincoln the reporter had in mind was a far cry from Honest Abe. This one was the most mysterious officer in the U.S. Army, and his full name was Robert Throckmorton Lincoln. He was a rare species for those days —an *American* spy, reputed to be the best by any standards. He was said to be operating in the very places Douglas had visited.

Now that the cat was out of the bag, Douglas simply said: "Well . . . yes, I saw him over there, north of Maku. He's running a line of agents over the Russian border. He was also in Korea and came back through Tibet. He has been around!"

Apparently Justice Douglas was an authority on Bob Lincoln, for wherever he went, he kept bumping into this mysterious American. Lincoln appeared to be a peculiar spy. Unlike most secret agents who shun the limelight, he was always in the center of the stage but always moving, for he was a mercurial, compulsive adventurer, as elusive as the jackpot in a rigged slot machine.

For all of Lincoln's obvious eccentricities, Justice Douglas was full of praise of the man. He called him "the fabulous Robert T. Lincoln" and likened him to Lawrence of Arabia, the greatest legendary spymaster who ever lived—until Lincoln joined the fraternity.

On this occasion, too, Mr. Douglas (who himself never managed to rise above the rank of private in the Army) announced with paternal pride that Lincoln had been promoted to full colonel. "And he deserves it," the Justice said. "His exploits have been truly fantastic!"

The Douglas-Lincoln partnership, in particular, was reported to be yielding enormous dividends. It was giving the Reds in the Middle East an acute case of acidosis with a series of tricky crises. These began with a grim-looking incident whose built-in melodrama resembled, on a smaller scale, the recent emergency kicked up by the wayward U-2 that ran into trouble over Sverdlovsk.

In June 1950, Moscow raised hell about a mystery plane that kept appearing on their side of the border, penetrating as far as Baku, they said, in the rich oil region of Soviet Azerbaijan.

In answer, the Persians protested: "It was just a harmless prospector plane looking for oil in our part of Azerbaijan."

But Moscow shot back: "The hell it was! It was an American spy plane taking pictures of our strategic installations. This was brazen aerial espionage, directed by the notorious American spy, Major Lincoln!"

Then in August, a second crisis suddenly developed in Kurdistan, another embattled Persian province bordering on the Soviet Union. An amazing Iraqi Kurd named Mulla Mustafa Barzani, who was one of the Reds' best guerilla leaders, appeared at the Iranian border with a well-trained, well-equipped horde of 10,000 "volunteers." It seemed to be all set for Barzani to march across the disputed border, and thus confront the world with another Korea.

Immediately, someone in Teheran, capital of Iran, pressed the panic button. The whole country was in an uproar, for there was (*Continued on next page*)

The story told here by Ambassador Wiley (left above) almost popped into the open when Supreme Court Justice Douglas (far right) was questioned by reporters at the White House after briefing President Truman on the mysterious activities of Spy Bob Lincoln

YANKEE SPY continued

apprehension that Iran's own disgruntled Kurds, most warlike of the northern tribes, would flock to Barzani. If that happened, there would be no power in Iran that could stop the daring adventurer.

At the height of the crisis, on August 18, Justice Douglas suddenly showed up in the eye of the hurricane, at the Russian border. Promptly following his arrival, as if by magic, General Barzani's forces melted away. Zero Hour came and went. The dreaded invasion failed to come off!

Radio Moscow spewed hot lava for weeks afterwards, pinpointing Justice Douglas as an unscrupulous meddler and again crying: "What's more, he's an accomplice of the notorious Major Lincoln!"

Douglas disclaimed any credit for the miracle. He said it was Lincoln who had pulled the strings that made Barzani think twice before rushing headlong into certain disaster. "Lincoln succeeded in organizing an anti-Barzani force of loyal Kurds," he said, "that was more than a match for Mulla's irregulars." The bazaars in Kurdistan even buzzed with a story that Lincoln himself had ventured across the border for a palaver with Barzani, and had persuaded the brilliant Kurdish soldier-of-fortune to double-cross his Red masters.

Wherever you went, seemingly, in international circles, you were greeted by the name Lincoln. The man was truly fabulous, according to all reports, and, try as he would, Justice Douglas couldn't help but give the American spy the credit that was due him—not, that is, without immodestly taking all the credit for himself, which Douglas hardly could be expected to do.

Douglas and Lincoln were reported to have met again in Ispahan, a traditionally restive city in Central Iran, famed for its perpetual intrigues and bloody massacres. They were seen together after that at Kuhdasht, capital of the trigger-happy Lurs, just half-an-hour before two hostile Lur factions clashed in a bloody skirmish on the main street of the town.

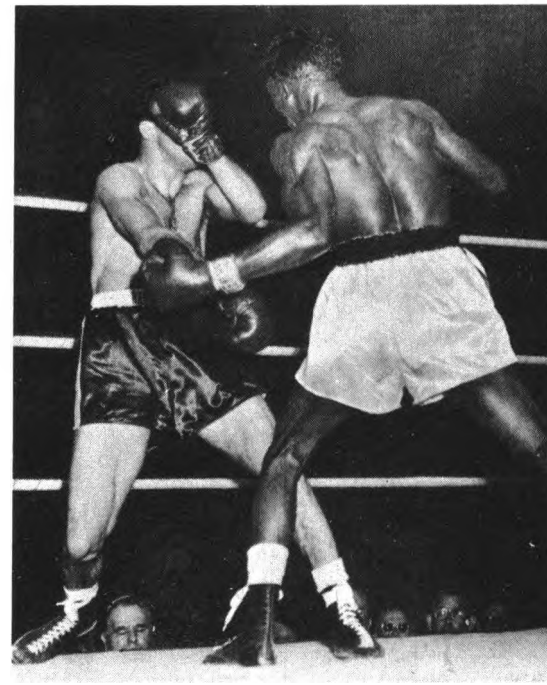
This now seemed to be no coincidence any more —Lincoln being where Douglas was, and Douglas being where trouble brewed. But while Justice Douglas was quite conspicuous wherever he went, Lincoln somehow managed to remain elusive. Red agents were out in force with orders to track him down and bump him off at all costs. But he always managed to take the proverbial powder, often, it seemed, in the eleventh hour.

The whole of Iran by now was seething with unrest. There was some brisk gun-running in the Persian Gulf, for example, ferrying rifles and ammunition to the rebellious tribes of the south. The Reds now charged that the Douglas-Lincoln partnership was behind that, too.

Then word reached Teheran that a faceless foreigner was organizing a guerilla force among the Gashgais, another restive tribe, in the hinterland of Ahwaz, where a few years before a British agent had instigated a costly but futile uprising. Now in 1950, Douglas (*Continued on page 76*)

The Little Box That killed BOXING

A noted sports authority names names and calls his shots, as he shows you how TV fights are rigged by the mob—until boxing is as dull as a chess match



The Ralph Dupas-Joe Brown fight was on the level, Parker says, only because fans were warned in advance that the arrangements smelled very strongly of "skulduggery."

A BLUEBOOK
Interview With Dan Parker

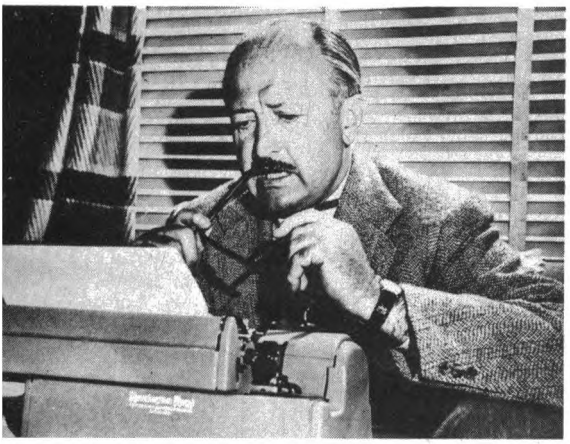
"WHAT the lamprey eel has been to the trout in the Great Lakes, television is to sport. Once this cyclopean monster fastens its baleful eye on its intended victim, the sport becomes a satellite without a soul of its own and whose mission is to make sure that the show goes on."

In words like these, Daniel Francis Parker communicates with his millions of readers from coast to coast who buy the newspapers that carry his syndicated column, and who try to decode his mordant messages as best as they can. Dan Parker's prose gives his readers a vicarious thrill. Nowhere else can they find the ominous shadows he draws over the vast and furious jungle of mercenary sports.

"You have been called 'Dan Quixote' and 'Sport's Last Angry Man,'" we told him the other day as we faced him in his barren, metallic office at the far end of the *New York Mirror's* hectic city room, from which all but the initiated are strictly barred. "You are a unique specimen, they say. Men who used to dig, like Francis Albertanti and Bill McGeehan, are gone. The sports writers of today, as Nat Fleischer put it, take what is handed out to them on a silver platter and take it for granted. It isn't fashionable to be angry any more. What makes you angry?"

"Television, for example," he said eagerly, in a voice that was deceptively benign and with none of the brimstone that burns in his column. He was talking more in sorrow than anger, but his words belied his low, genial voice.

"That lamprey eel simile," he said, "is particularly appropriate for TV's (*Continued on next page*)



Dan Parker

Frankie Carbo

James D. Norris

Dan Parker at his desk (upper left) prepares another blast at his two pet adversaries, Frankie Carbo, the notorious "Mr. Grey" (above), and wealthy James D. Norris, former czar of boxing until his control was wrested from him.

BOXING continued

infiltration of the sports field. It reveals strikingly what catastrophic results can stem from man's efforts to improve on nature. The waters of the Great Lakes used to teem with lake trout which supported a great industry. Then the Welland Canal was dug, connecting the lakes with the sea. Eels by the millions came into the lakes to spawn and then live as parasites of the lake trout."

He went on, slowly and quietly, almost painfully searching for every word, deep shadows of furtive frustration darkening his eyes.

"Television is an electronic lamprey eel," he said, "sinking its fangs into the sport's body. Little by little the sport loses its identity and becomes merely a branch of the television industry."

Dan Parker is a tall, gaunt puritan from New England who, at 67, looks like a debonair, polite college president in his early fifties. But his outward appearance, like his hesitant voice, is deceptive. In his self-chosen role, he is like a latter-day Joshua forever trying to bring down the walls of Jericho with the sound of his battered typewriter, on which he pecks out, two fingers at a time, sportdom's most acrid copy.

"Look what TV did to boxing," he said in his even voice. "Television now runs the show! Its object is not to popularize the sport or to improve it, to recruit new fans for it—although God knows, we need something that would steel our youth and stir them into some physical activity through emulation. But, no! As far as boxing is concerned, television's principal object is to build up program material, synthetically, well in advance, so that twice a week, a main bout will be available to provide the framework for sales pitches, as preposterous as some of the bouts, for the product that is footing the bill."

Parker's little office is ostentatiously bare of the usual trophies and the cringing autographed portraits of celebrities which invariably adorn the workshops of his colleagues. Missing, too, are the framed testimonials to show that his one-man crusade had won for him some of journalism's most coveted prizes—the Head-

liners' Award in 1940; the George Polk Memorial Award in 1954; and the Newspaper Guild's Page One Award in 1951 and 1956.

There are only three pictures on Parker's wall, combined in a single frame—color photographs of Joe Louis, Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney, in their wartime uniforms. That's all he cares to display after thirty-four years at the helm of the *Mirror's* sports department, and on the eve of his fiftieth anniversary as a working newspaperman.

His partisanship begins and ends with those three on the wall. He is reluctant to make a show of his friends by exhibiting them, maybe as a subtle consideration for the men who stand by him. Their pictures on Dan Parker's wall might hurt them.

There is a bruised, old television set in his office—an inevitable tool of his trade—but it seems to be deliberately neglected and abused, like a symbol of his abiding indignation.

"Once," he said, "when boxing was its own master, there had to be an excuse for matching two boxers besides the purely commercial one of making money. There was keen competition between rival promoters who operated in all the key cities where boxing was legal, and this made for a healthy condition of the sport. There was a steady output of new talent, which had plenty of time to develop. Promoters bid for the most attractive matches, and thus the most deserving boxers in due time became champions. The chaff have fallen by the wayside."

He paused, as if drawing a hyphen between the past and present. Then he went on, still in his same calm voice:

"Now there is no competition, except the synthetic type provided by the two divisions of the outlawed I.B.C. which still run the show. Virtually all the top-line boxers (most of whom would have been preliminary boys in the pre-television days) are managed by a criminal underworld syndicate which synthetizes the champions, and supplies the 'talent' for promoters to line up for the TV people who have the last word. Boxing Commissions accept their subservient role with a docility that is a sorry commentary on what is going on, as the once-thriving sport is sold out to the hucksters at every turn."

We asked him if he thought that boxing was the only sport which suffered from the electronic eel, and he shot back in a voice that was now slightly raised:

"Hell, no! It is the worst example of all, but the National Basketball Association is also a captive sport, run to suit television's demands. Baseball no longer can call its soul its own. The one-eyed lamprey-eel has already drained the life blood out of the minor leagues, but the TV show must go on, and so our so-called national pastime (which baseball is not, horse racing is) has become a mere advertising medium for beer, cigarettes, cigars.

"Who can remember when baseball magnates wouldn't even permit such advertising to be pasted on their fences!

"Pro football is thriving on its TV arrangement, which calls for 'time outs' at intervals in every game so that TV sponsors can sneak in their commercials. The result is that a new league eager to get in on the gravy is being formed which could provoke a battle royal.

"And now, the one-eyed monster is moving in on golf!" He looked at me with half scandalized, half starry eyes, as if asking, "Would you believe it—*on golf!*" He went for a clipping in a scrap book, to submit it as evidence to clinch his case.

"My confrere," he said, "Harold Weissman, a great reporter, scooped the field on the fantastic story of Sammy Snead, a golfer who is the soul of honor. During a match with Mason Rudolph that was being taped last December for the 'World Championship Golf' series, Sammy discovered he had one more club in his bag than the rules allowed."

The tape was produced by Screen Gems, a giant Hollywood syndicate of TV movies. It was shown as made on April 2, 1960, on the whole NBC network. It was a phony, according to Parker.

"Rather than win unfairly," he said, "Snead deliberately 'dumped' the match to Rudolph, feeling that the show had to go on because of the time and the money spent on it by Screen Gems. Sammy took what he thought was the most honorable way out. With no reflection intended on Snead, this incident certainly proves that it was a show and not a contest. If this had been a tournament, with the world's championship at stake, Sammy would have been disqualified. But where TV is concernd, its interests come first, always."

Sammy Snead, of all people, succumbing to TV's corrupting influence! Parker appeared sincerely moved as he related the incident:

"When a sport in *any* field ties up with TV, its going to be tailored to fit the camera, not vice versa. Eventually, every branch of athletic endeavor may be reduced to this subservient role, the inevitable fate of those who apparently can't *(Continued on page 82)*

Typical of today's boxing bouts which Parker blasts was the Machen-Johnson fight last spring. Called "dull" by the AP in its most charitable vein, the TV "show" put fans to sleep in droves.

SIDE TRIP

Ever feel you'd like to meet your old C.O. again, so you could tell him what a 22-carat s.o.b. he was? Beckett had had that feeling for 16 years . . . and finally got his chance

By Wayne F. Hyde

The thin, dog-eared telephone book hung on a chain inside the phone booth—a short chain, so I had to stand inside the booth to look up the number I wanted. And it was dark in the booth, which meant I had to close the door so the light would come on. I stood there, sweating, looking through the book, trying to find the Norwood Machine Parts Company. It was a miserably-hot August afternoon, and the smell of stale cigarette smoke and cheap perfume in the booth didn't help to make it any better.

I thumbed through the book to the N's, and went down the column until I found the section I wanted. Noble . . . Noonan . . . Norman . . . Norwood. There it was. Norwood Mach. Parts Co. I got the phone number, and was about to open the door of the booth to let in some air when I noticed the name just above Norwood.

Norman, Eustace C.

And back through the years came the memory of a scrawled signature written in a heavy hand. *Eustace C. Norman, Captain, Infantry.* "Useless Eustace", we'd called him. He'd been my commanding officer in the Army.

I stared at the name in the phone book for a moment, forgetting the heat, forgetting the phone call I was about to make. I could feel my heart thudding in my chest. Had I found "Useless Eustace"?

I could still see him—a thick-armed, bull-necked, stocky man with a big jaw and short-cropped dark hair salted through with gray. He walked erect, his heavy shoulders straight, barrel chest always stuck out as though he'd forgotten how to exhale. He had a rugged-looking face, and he usually wore black sunglasses—the kind that look like goggles. You couldn't see his eyes behind them, and you never knew where he was looking. It was one of his gimmicks.

Useless was an impressive-looking man. If he'd been able to go through life on his appearance alone, he'd have been a tremendous success. But the minute he opened his mouth the illusion was shattered, because his voice didn't fit his appearance.

It was a featherweight voice, hesitant and almost apologetic. And the voice—not the appearance—told what kind of a man he really was. Norman was a bumbling incompetent, unfit to command any kind of an Army unit. He was useless.

I'd had a close friend in the platton named Overbrook, who hit it right on the nose once when he'd said, "Once Useless makes up his mind, he's full of indecision."

We'd laughed about it at the time, but, a long time later, a lot of us remembered it when Norman was directly responsible for the death of five good men—including Overbrook—and the wounding of eight others—including me.

The company had been on an outpost in the Bulge. We'd been out there three days; spent Christmas out there, in fact. There had been no action at all, and we'd had a fairly easy time of it. Norman had been in touch with Battalion by field telephone while we were there, and when they'd ordered us back, he'd gotten the company out within ten minutes. Battalion itself had changed position, and had given Norman its location. But he'd led us along the wrong road to get to them, pulling his rank when Lieutenant Moss and Roper, the first sergeant, tried to tell him we were going the wrong way. Norman had had his way—and had led us right into an ambush.

The Krauts opened up on us without any warning at all, firing from their dug-in positions. They had every advantage, and they made the most of it. They did all their damage with their first bursts of fire. I was in Moss' platoon, and we were in front, so we got it. Moss, Overbrook and three others died there. Eight more of us were wounded.

As the medics carried me away, I remember seeing Useless crouched behind a big tree at the far rear of the company. I don't know how he got there, since he'd been up front with us when the firing started. Anyway, he hadn't been hit. He looked in my direction as I was carried by him, but I couldn't tell if he were looking at me. He was wearing those dark goggles.

That was the last time I had seen him. A long time later, I met one of the men from the company back in the States, and he said he'd heard Useless had been wounded near the end of the war in Europe, but that (*Continued on page* 42)

ILLUSTRATED by NORMAN EASTMAN

Night of the Navy's Biggest Binge

by Theodore Irwin

ON A GRAY and otherwise serene morning in April, 1914, the officers and men of the United States Navy were staggered by a shocking and sensational General Order which was sent out from Washington and flashed to all the ships at sea. Although startling in the extreme, the order was surprisingly brief.

As of June 30, it said, all drinking of alcoholic beverages of any kind, aboard ships and at shore stations, would instantly cease.

The order, a permanent one, was signed by the then Secretary of the Navy, The Honorable Josephus Daniels, of North Carolina.

Almost at once, as though touched off by a giant fuse that circled the globe, a monumental roar went up from Panama to Patagonia. Screams of anguish and disbelief, from lowly picket boats to battlewagons and vented by sailormen from apprentices to admirals, erupted wherever Navy joes gathered. It was a damned outrage, they choked, a colossal insult to every fighting man who ever took the oath, and an order that couldn't possibly be enforced!

But the underscoring was not long in being given. The order would stand, SECNAV reaffirmed, and let's have no guff about it. The Secretary, being a Tarheel teetotaller himself, had spoken, and that was that.

Almost as soon as they could (*Continued on page* 87)

ILLUSTRATED by VIC PREZIO

They planned it for months, and it was all they'd hoped it would be —the wettest, wildest, wackiest night in all naval history!

Moira had only two ways to get home, and the American didn't buy the first one. Which left her with no other choice. . .

Passage Home...

By James Merriam Moore

AFTERNOON heat, in Bengal just before the monsoon, crowded through neglected gardens sequestering the Club at Nasiribagh, and pushed like a bully into the shuttered bar where one electric bulb hung from the sagging ceiling-cloth by a fly-fuzzy cord. Again, after ten years, I was smelling this heat's special odor of roasted paint and mildew.

The Hindu barboy in soiled white jacket and baggy trouser-draped *dhoti* pushed my drink across the counter, and at once the little pauper piece of ice in it seemed to melt through the glass and began to puddle the teak of the bartop. The boy cocked his head at me sidewise as a draggled bird would perk. "Oh, ah, yess. Mr. Amert have telephone I forget to say. Soon he will come and drink with you." The narrow profile, mostly beak, kept one curious eye on me.

When I'd been one of the Americans stationed in the CBI during the war, a native would have called the Club's English secretary sahib, not mister. Now that India ruled itself, I wondered how stranded groups of British holdovers in small up-country towns like Nasiribagh were really getting on. Well, that was no affair of mine. What I wanted now was to finish this last chore of my business here—this interview with a man named Amert—and be on the train to Calcutta and a plane for home. If the Boston investors, for whom I was making this survey, decided to finance a plastics plant at Nasiribagh —which seemed likely if they read my report with the care it deserved—then American technicians, moving in, would need some sort of recreation-center; some amenities, as the British would say. We might find it advisable to take over the Club.

Suddenly, in the mirror over the bar, I saw a woman at the doorway behind me. The mirror was so charted with atolls and shoals of mildew that her face was just a pinched white V, but the sumptuous mass of her hair, nearly the wine dark of burgundy, was arresting. Her frosty English voice, nervous and angry, called to the barboy: "Where is Amert sahib? The Club accounts simply have to be ready for this American—"

I'd turned on my stool and she stopped. She couldn't be thirty. Her clothes were shabby: spindle-heeled slippers, incongruous with the white cotton blouse and blue skirt, sleazy and faded from a lot of washings. Thin, nothing plump about her, still she had beauty in an intense, wasted way. To love a girl like her would be to take a fever. Before the barboy could answer, she disappeared down the passage. Two heavy, old-fashioned ledgers under her arms burdened her awkwardly.

THE BARBOY, hopping from subject to subject, pecked at me again. "No one is called sahib any more. And soon our Congress Party will pass laws against mud houses. Then we shall have all fine houses like in America. Sar, would you like some very fine sport? Very bad tiger has been taking cattle from edge of village. Tonight perhaps they organize tiger-shoot." But seeing someone else over my shoulder he turned to the shelf under the mirror and, without order, put the gin bottle and another glass on the bar.

Across the stool beside me slid a fat knee, white and soft like something under a stone. As the man hoisted his body up, the hem of his khakhi shorts garroted the flesh of his thigh, and the belt of his bush-jacket strained to give him two bellies.

"Hello, my lad. I'm Amert." His hoarse voice had a defensive outraged pant in it as if he'd just succeeded in pushing through those who wilfully blocked his path—a voice with great possibilities for (*Continued on page* 46)

ILLUSTRATED by GEORGE WILSON

Mark had everybody pegged—and it was like shooting fish. Then he made his one big mistake. . .

THRILL of CONQUEST

By G. G. Revelle

SAM was having difficulty with the gun. It wouldn't stay pointed at my face. And it was a farce—the gun—for we both knew he lacked the nerve to use it.

"Thelma!" His voice cracked. "With all the bitches you have chasing after you, why pick on Thelma?"

In a way it was pathetic. His eyes were narrow and he was shouting. But his lower lip was trembling and his face was white.

The girls in the line understood the pitch when she and Sam began to get cozy. Thelma was a head taller than his five-eight. They made a "Mutt and Jeff" combination if ever there was one. Sam would wait by the rear tables until the line waltzed off with their feet in the air. Then he and Thelma would disappear like two kids looking for a barn to sneak their first smoke in. Later they would return with a guilty look on their faces. Perhaps not so much so on Thelma's.

But Thelma was no "Jeff". She had long dreamy legs that make a man twist in his dreams and a cute, yet serious face. Up-swept bosom and a nice narrow waist. Even the girls admitted she was a good dancer.

And poor Sam.

His driver's license showed one-fifty in weight. Actually he scaled in at one-thirty-five. There was a bald spot on top of his head the size of a half dollar and with eye glasses, he looked owlish. Holding a shaky .38 on me he looked ridiculous.

"Take it easy, Sam," I said evenly.

ILLUSTRATED by OSCAR LEIBMAN

He was standing at the other side of my desk, glaring, praying for the nerve to pull the trigger. Carefully I swung around on the swivel chair and plopped my feet up on the desk.

"You're going off half-cocked! What makes you think I forced Thelma?"

"She told me—this morning."

I lit a cigarette and shoved the lighter back on the desk.

"She told you I forced her and now you're ready to defend her honor, the hard way. A little silly, isn't it? If I wanted your wife do you think I would have waited until *after* you were married?"

He took in my six-foot, sprawled-out frame.

"I know you—and the girls in the line." he said tightly.

"You should," I reminded him. "We've been partners here for three years. Have you ever seen me operate out of the chorus line?"

He didn't answer because he knew I was telling the truth.

"So why rape your wife! With all those eager dolls outside! It doesn't make sense—unless she wanted you to come here like this."

I watched the gun lower and went on.

"This is a nice club we own. Money is coming in as fast as we can count it. So what happens if you squeeze that trigger? I have no relatives. You have only Thelma. Who winds up with everything?"

"Thelma wouldn't dream of such a thing," he stammered.

It was funny. Sam was short on looks and long on head power. He kept the books, paid the bills, and made the chef keep his fingers out of the salad. He married Thelma a little over a month ago, made her quit the line and they spent three weeks in Mexico drinking Ramo's Fizzes and sleeping late in the morning.

"How long have you known her, Sam?"

"Six months," he said loosely.

"Six months! And married five weeks." I paused for effect. "How long have you known me—three years."

He started to say something but bit on the words.

"She came out of the line here at the club," I said. "But where did she spend the rest of her twenty-odd years?"

"Texas," he blurted.

"Texas is pretty big—twenty years a long time."

I didn't want to lose Sam. He was a square as far as women were concerned. But he was good on the books. And he was honest. That was important.

"She married you because it was a good deal, Sam." I stared at the cigarette. "Now she wants a better one."

"You're lying, Mark! Thelma told me all about it. You forced your way in the beachhouse the night of the coming-home party. She was changing her swimsuit. You—"

"The party was two nights ago and she only told you today?"

"She was afraid."

I laughed. "Of what?"

"Of what I might do." It came out wobbly and he looked down at the gun in his hand.

"I'll bet." I leaned back in the chair and blew some smoke at the textured ceiling. "What made her change her mind?"

"I noticed the bruises on her legs and arms."

"Two days later?" I grinned. "Christ, Sam. Are you rational?"

"I was working late on the books," he said tiredly. "It's the end of the month."

I got up then and went around the desk. I took the gun from his hand like it was a toy. I took his arm between my thick fingers and squeezed.

"I've had enough of this, Sam. I've had enough of Thelma. One of these days you'll storm in here and try to blow my brains out again. The next time you might get up the nerve to do it. And all because that scheming dame you married has filled your head with a lot of wild ideas. It can't go on like this. So I'll buy you out—now. How much do you want?"

"Now listen."

"No. You listen. You know my temper. The next time, if you didn't get me, I'd kill you. Either way, we would both lose. If I buy you out there won't be any chance of that happening."

"Mark!" he said loosely. He looked at the gun I was holding and shook his head. "I must have been crazy."

"It wasn't you talking—it was Thelma."

"But the bruises! I saw them. She couldn't do that to herself!"

"You'd be surprised what a woman can do if she wants to."

Sam looked at my face long and searching. His eyes seemed hollow and deep, with no life left in them. I felt sorry for the fool. With all his brains, he didn't know women.

"Unload her, Sam. Go back to the old days. There are plenty of dames in the line. Play the field and you won't get hurt."

"But I love her!"

"Then stay with her. But get out of the club."

He hesitated then, like a man in a trance, searching my face. His shoulders dropped an inch when he turned and walked to the door. There he stopped. "I'll talk to her."

I shrugged.

"Sorry, Mark. I guess I was a fool, the gun and all. What *do* I know about her?"

"Nothing," I said.

"You weren't scared. If you did it you would have been scared."

"I guess I would."

He gave me a sick grin. "You've always played fair with me, even when I was on the honeymoon. I checked the books, you know, when I got back. You haven't even drawn your cut for the month. What do I know about her?"

"Nothing," I repeated, throwing the gun on the desk.

I WATCHED him from the window as he went out to the lot and climbed behind the wheel of his convertible. A sleep-walker had more energy.

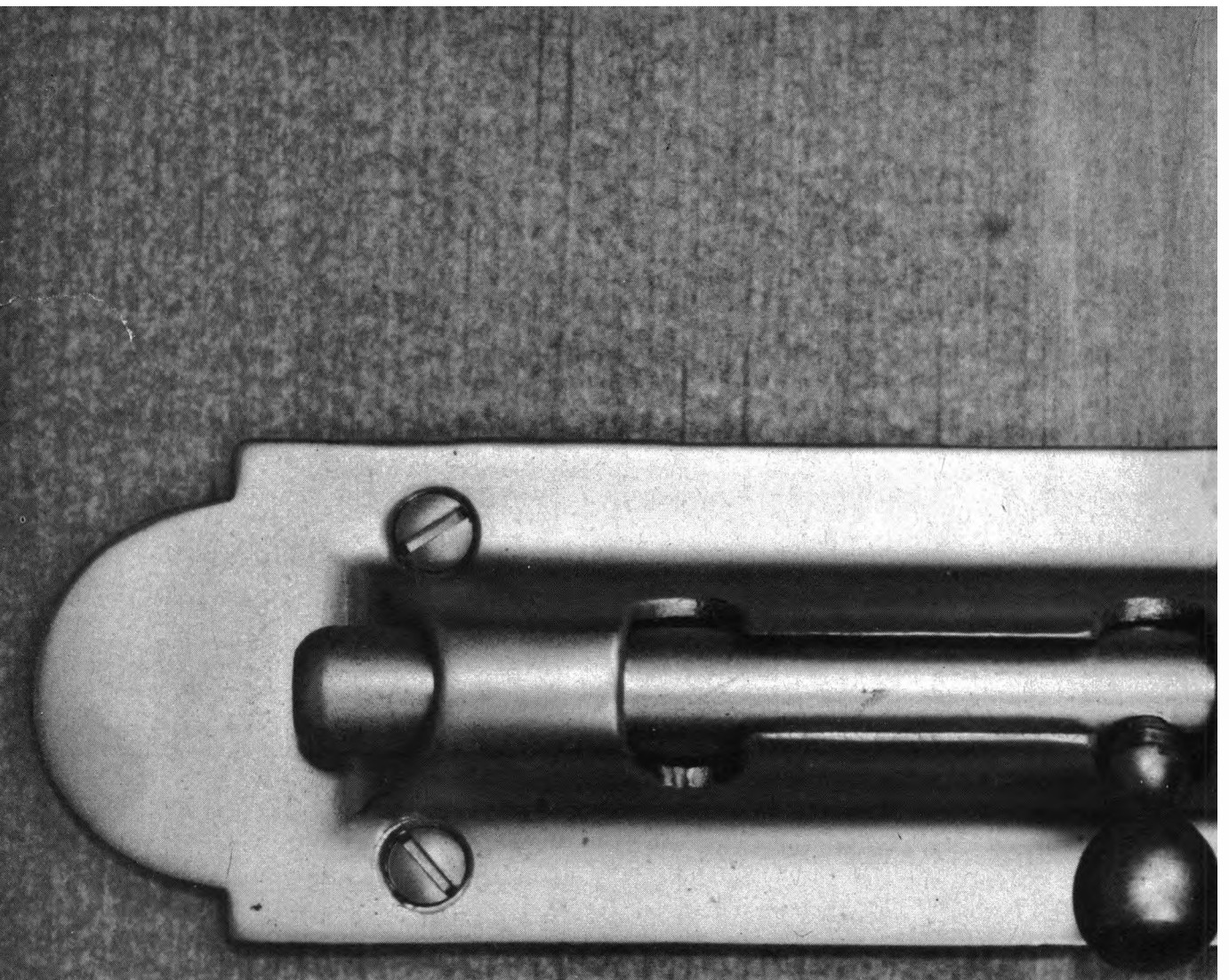
As he drove away, I tossed the gun in the desk drawer and went out to the bar and watched the three new girls wiggle through their steps for an hour. Abe kept running through a fast routine on the piano, one that would give them a good test. While they were dancing, the girls kept glancing my way. It was easy to see what was on their mind—the one lead spot that was going to be open in another week.

When Abe gave them a breather, I ambled over to the piano.

"What do you think, baldy?"

"The redhead," he said. "Nice voice too. Really burns you inside when she hits the low ones."

"I'll think about it," I told him. I didn't want to make a hasty decision, not (*Continued on page* 46)



LOCKED door

The door was securely bolted from the inside, and only the dead woman could have locked it. Yet it turned out to be . . . MURDER!

By Henry A. Milton

Of all the puzzles that have fascinated mystery-story writers since the day the first caveman stumbled across a dead body, none has been more intriguing than the enigma of the mysterious murder committed in the room locked from the inside. It probably ranks with the cadaver in the English country house library as the number one plot in murder mysteries—Ed.

One evening, Edwin F. Mueller of San Francisco bustled into the police precinct nearest to his house on Turk Street, and announced to the desk sergeant on duty that he'd been locked out.

"What d'ya mean, you been locked out?" the sergeant asked.

"I mean I can't get into my apartment," Mueller said. A colorless and nondescript individual, who bore the unmistakable stamp of the struggling, middle-aged bookkeeper that he was, Mueller sweated now in his heavy, winter-weight suit and celluloid collar, and clawed ineffectually at his stringy, unkempt mustache.

Sergeant Garrity, who perspired profusely himself as he stared at the big wall clock on the precinct wall and considered that he lacked but ten minutes to going off duty, heaved a heavy and wheezy sigh. "You mean you lost your key?"

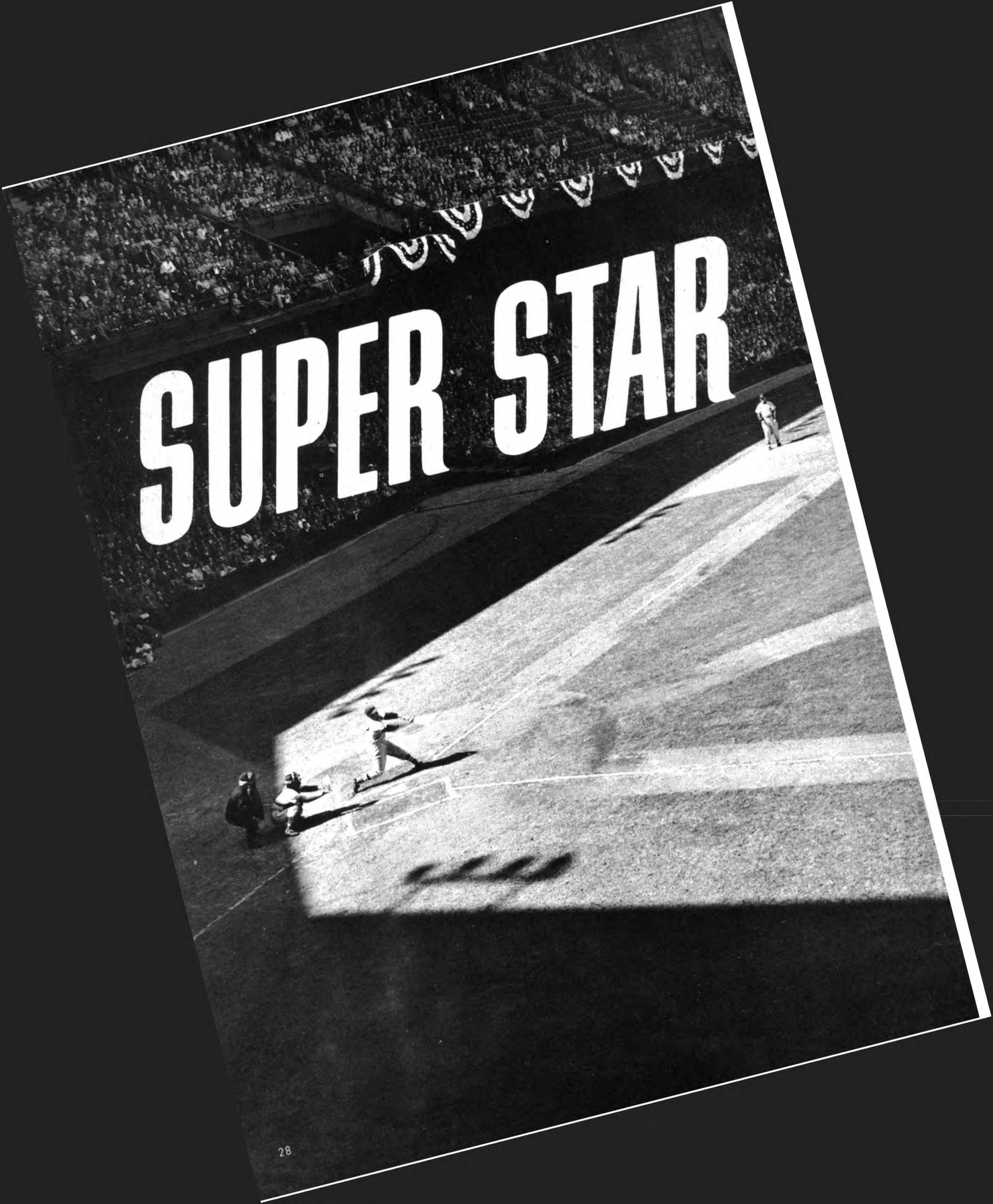
"No," the man at the rail said, starting to put his hat down on the desk, and then, thinking better of it, put it back on his head. "I've *got* my key. But it won't work. The bolt is fastened from the inside."

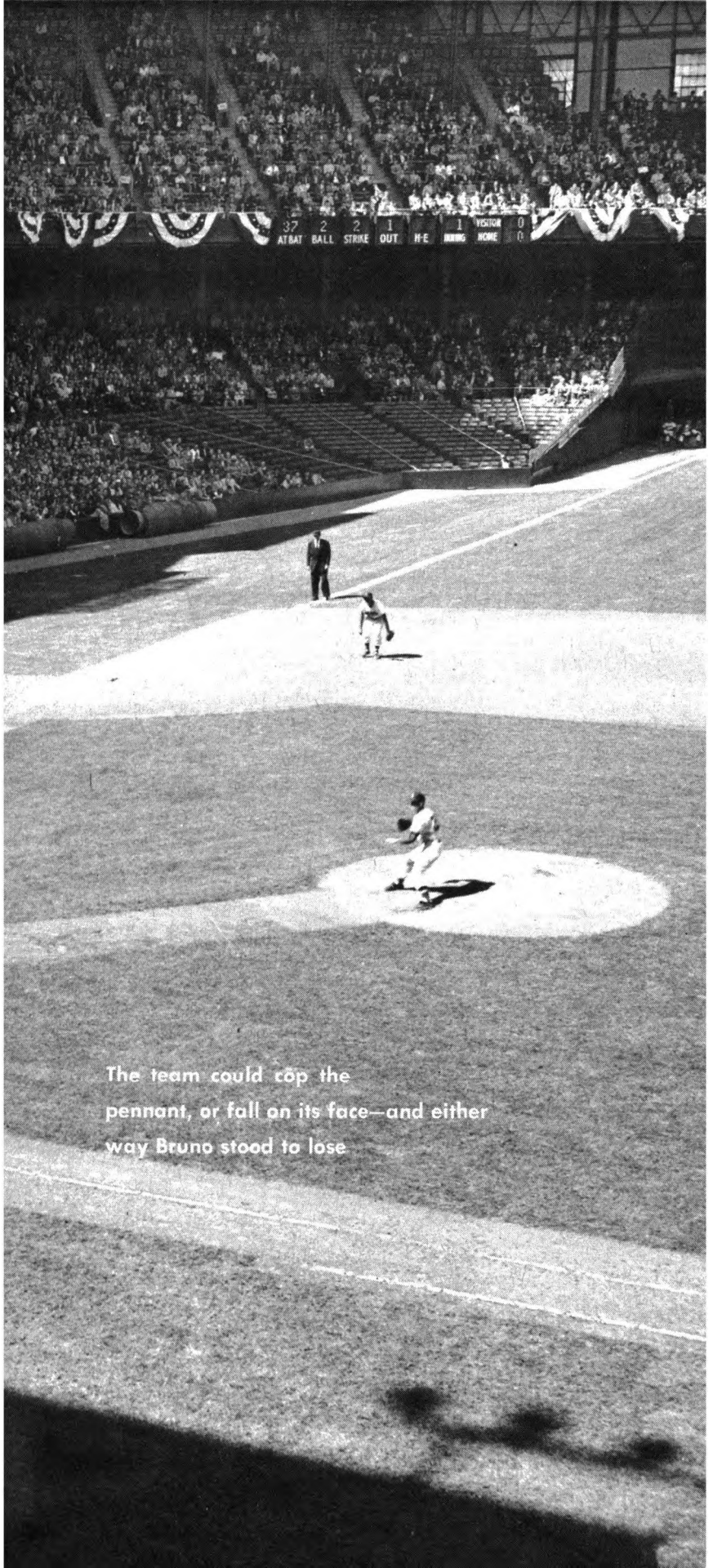
"You try knocking?"

"Of course," Mueller said patiently. "But there's no answer. And my wife has never been out before when she knows I'm coming home from work. I—I'm sure something terrible has happened."

Sergeant Garrity wheezed again, and indicated a patrolman who lounged against the back wall and who also contemplated an early relief.

"Boyle," the sergeant (*Continued on page* 70)


SUPER STAR



The team could cop the pennant, or fall on its face—and either way Bruno stood to lose

By Tom McMorrow

On the jet, with Colorado five miles away—straight down—I take out the telegram and look at it again. There's still just the minimum fifteen words: "IMPERATIVE DISCUSS WITH NO ONE TAKE FASTEST TRANSPORTATION WILL EXPECT YOU MY OFFICE AT 8:30 TONIGHT—STECKER." This is my first trip in a jet, but I can't enjoy it. When the general manager of the world champs sends you a wire like that, something is very wrong.

But why me? Why call for little Bruno Agnelli?

The guy sitting next to me is one of those gabby characters that have to know your business. But at least I have an answer that shuts him up. Why am I going to Los Angeles? "I don't know," I tell him, and pick up a magazine.

I might as well have held it upside down for all I read of it.

Later, as we're rolling along LaBrea, out of the hills into L.A., the cab driver says, "Rifle office? What's going on there tonight?"

"I don't know," I tell him, truthfully.

"You with the ball club?"

"I manage their farm club in the Midwestern League."

"Oh. Think the Rifles are gonna win the pennant?"

"I couldn't say. I only see half a dozen big league games a year."

"Well, I'll tell you right now that those Yanks don't have a chance of catching them." Everybody's an expert.

The Berkley Building is all chrome and glass—not much like the clapboard taxpayer where the Carrville Cats rent a couple of desks and a filing cabinet. The night guard gives me a hard time. "Sorry. Can't let you go up."

"Look, they sent for me. Call somebody, will you?"

He sighs and reaches for his phone. "What was that name?"

"Agnelli. Bruno Agnelli."

"And what do you do?"

I get sore. "I manage a bocce team, in the Italian League."

"All right, all right. I can't let just anybody go up, you know. There's somethin' big cookin' up there tonight. Johnny G himself went up half-an-hour ago."

I call (*Continued on page* 54)

BLACK THURSDAY..

By Joseph Lawrence

Late on the morning of October 24, 1929, a fellow climbed out onto the ledge of an office building on Broad Street, opposite the Stock Exchange in New York, and began to patch up a section of the coping that had worn loose. It was about as drearily humdrum a piece of work as you can find this side of a button factory, and ordinarily it wouldn't even interest the people whose hobby is watching ditch-diggers.

Yet it's doubtful if any journeyman in the history of labor ever created a bigger stir than this particular toiler.

For, within minutes after his appearance on the ledge, he had drawn a huge and excited throng in the street below, a mob which surged and shouted and pointed at him wildly. Soon after, Police Commissioner Grover A. Whalen got into the act by sending a special police detail to the area "to insure the peace." A rumor sprang up that the National Guard was on the way. Reporters and photographers raced to the scene. And so famous did the workman become that he since has been mentioned in no less than three popular histories of the era, and any number of news stories.

The obvious question then is, what the hell was this joker doing out on that ledge to create so much excitement? And the equally-obvious answer is, nothing. He was patching up the coping. Period.

But where the guy might have gone about his chore unheralded on almost any other day in history, the fact that he'd chosen October 24, 1929, to do his repair work guaranteed him immortality. For October 24, 1929, since has become famous as Black Thursday, the day the bottom fell out of the boom market, the day thousands of Americans switched in a matter of minutes from being reasonably wealthy into penniless bums, the day $30 billion vanished like dry leaves in a typhoon, and the day the so-called Golden Age came to a close and the Great Depression of the thirties officially began.

Black Thursday.

Already that morning, eleven speculators were rumored to have jumped to their deaths in the canyons of Wall Street, and the guy innocently repairing the coping was expected by all who saw him to be the twelfth; the crowd had gathered in the street below, in fact, just to be in on the kill.

It was just not a day to climb out on any ledges.

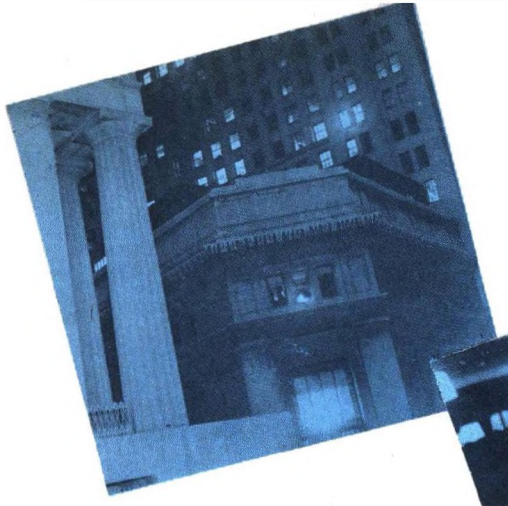
Inside the Stock Exchange, the trading floor was bedlam, so much so that, by noon, the Exchange's governors met and solemnly decided to close the visitors' gallery, in order to shield the public from the frenzy below. Ironically, the last rubberneck to be shooed-out into the street was the former Chancellor of Great Britain's Exchequer, the Honorable Winston Churchill, then on a tour of the United States.

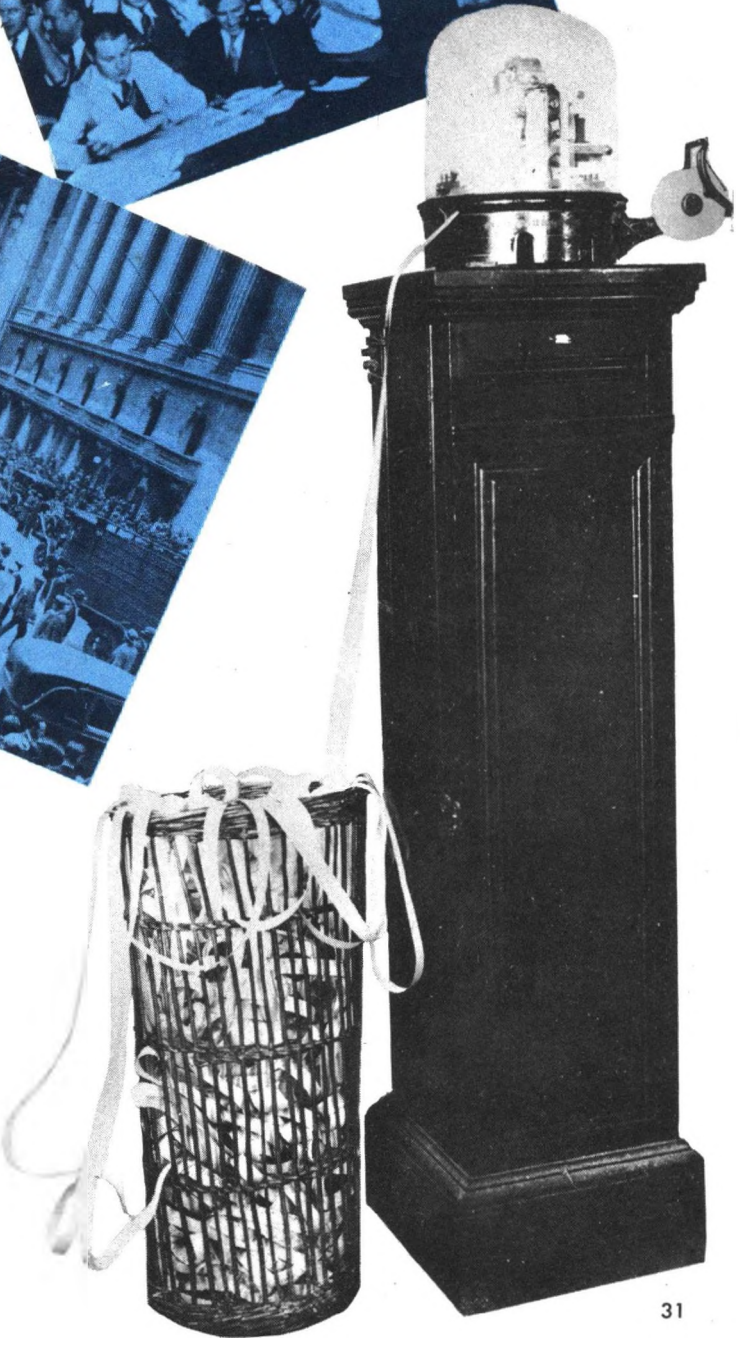
As to the scenes the Honorable Winnie was denied a chance to observe, they have since been described by the last witnesses to leave the gallery as looking like a bargain basement where they were selling 12-year-old Scotch at a buck a fifth, or like a whole series of disorganized football scrimmages.

Traders, brokers, stock specialists, messengers, clerks and customers' men milled and shoved and bellowed at one another in a frenzy of selling—or trying to sell—at prices that tumbled so fast no man or machine could keep abreast of them. The long bull market, built up point by point over a period of four years, was collapsing in such a wild and chaotic bust that even blue chipstocks, supposedly immune to such disasters, were caught in the downdraft, and plummeted dismally.

General Electric, for example, which had opened that morning at 315, tumbled to 283 within an hour after the opening of the Exchange, a loss of a point every two minutes, and with no end in sight. Auburn Auto, which had gotten a jump on other issues the day before by dropping a fantastic and unbelievable 77 points in one day, now opened at 260, and quickly skidded to 235. Montgomery Ward went from 83 to 50 so fast the clerks couldn't record the decline, and the ticker was so far behind it was virtually useless. U. S. Steel joined the parade to the depths by opening at 205, sliding down past the 200 mark in a matter of minutes, pausing momentarily at 195, and then continuing to slide. At 11 o'clock, it was at 193 and still dropping.

It was a broker's nightmare of everyone offering to sell and no (*Continued on page* **72**)





Anyone caught up in the current fever to buy stocks owes it to himself to read this—the story of what happened to another great era of speculation

In a lonely mountain cabin, miles from civilization, Rich had to make a decision that could mean a man's life—or death

THE RED LINE of DEATH

By Richmond P. Hobson, Jr.

I WAS SPENDING some time at Batnuni Ranch, helping Rob Striegler work over our hospital bunch and haul in extra hay and firewood, when a strange urge to get back to the Pan Meadow began to work on me. I wasn't supposed to land there on my long circular ride—Batnuni to Pan Meadow to Lashaway's to Nazko—for another ten days, but I suddenly changed my mind and decided to ride immediately to the Pan Meadow. The strange, back-lands moccasin telegraph, for which I hazard no explanation, had connected.

I got away to an early start. The weather was mild. My saddle horse, Black Bear, leaned into his hackamore bit. The dog, Bear, fell into his usual lead position, and we drifted across the uncut miles of windfall on our short-cut, saddle-horse trail in record time. We had good luck at the Blackwater crossing. Ice had at last closed over the roaring torrent, as it nearly always did in late January or early in February.

I tied my horse to a tree and, using my saddle axe, tested the strength of the ice. Two and a half inches of ice which rests solidly on flowing water with no air space between the two, can safely support a man and saddle horse. Four inches will support a team and sleighload of two tons.

There were all types of ice. Clear ice stretching across deep, black-looking water on a level lake will support three times the weight that medium river-ice can stand.

We always test the ice up here before crossing any body of water, for many teams and a number of men have gone to a watery death because of over-ice-confidence, as it is referred to in the bush. In order to distribute the weight over a larger surface and be in a better position to move fast if the ice gives way, a person should always lead his horse.

The dog made his own test of ice by crossing it. I watched him. He held his shaggy tail high in the air, swinging it from one side to the other in a kind of balancing motion. Several times he skidded to a stop, lowered his broom-like tail, cocked his head to the side and listened intently to the roaring noise made by the river as it hurtled by beneath the three questionable inches of medium ice. Old Bear would straighten up his tail after he was satisfied, and step cautiously ahead for a few steps, then break into his shuffling trot.

At the far side of the river, Bear sniffed at a big spruce tree for a moment, then turned round and looked back at me. When he saw that I was waiting for his final decision, he galloped nonchalantly back across the channel, this time paying no attention to the ice. He came up smiling and with his tail wagging.

I scratched his ear, gave him a pat and, untying my horse, we advanced across the river. The ice made a slight swaying bend when we got over the middle of the channel. I was glad when we reached the spruce trees on the far side.

It was nearly dark when we broke out onto the wide Pan Meadow opening. Far up ahead I heard cattle bawling, which meant that something was wrong. It was black dark by the time I reached the corrals and barn. Cattle were milling about an unloaded rack of hay. They were hungry. The load of hay had been almost cleaned up by the bunch that surrounded it.

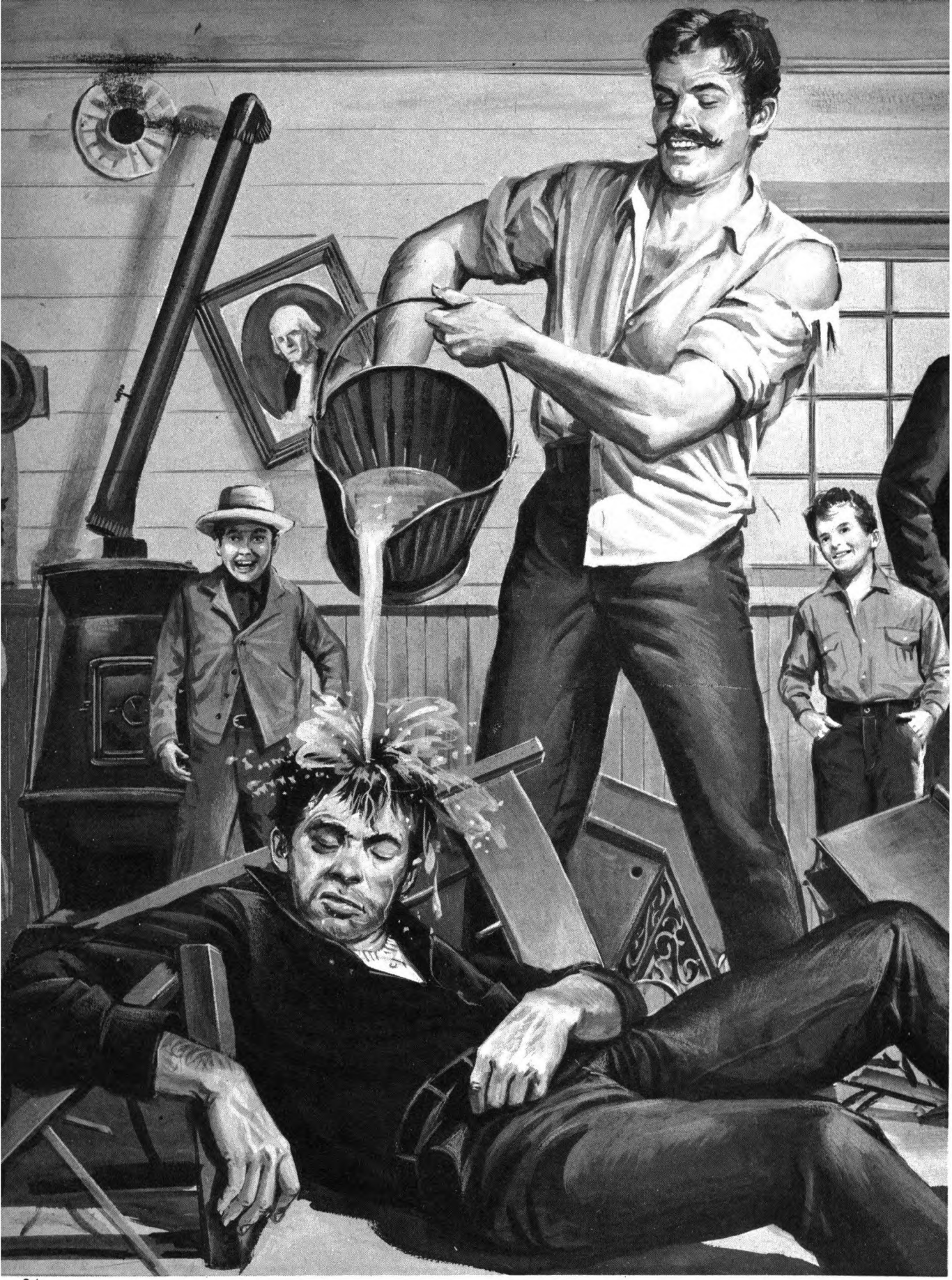
The team had been unharnessed and turned loose with the saddle horses, and a gate had been left open so they could get out onto the meadow to rustle.

I looked up towards the cabin. No light.

EVERYTHING pointed to a last-minute adjustment that a good cattleman would make if he wasn't going to be around for several days.

I hurriedly stabled and fed (*Continued on page* 49)

ILLUSTRATED by VIC PREZIO



PINCH...

Pinching a lady isn't always the best approach.

But it sure worked like a charm in Grizzly Flat

By Will Cook

SCHOOL has a certain significance in my life, so the graduation of my grandson was of particular interest, since he maintained high marks—and he was a Muldoon. I met his teachers, talked with them, and on the way home I got to thinking about my own school days, and about my teacher in particular, and I concluded that these modern schoolmarms wouldn't have lasted thirty days in Grizzly Flat.

I ought to point out now that I was 26 when I started to school, and I wouldn't have gone at all if it hadn't been for Angie Wringle, and that someone pinched her in Lawler's store.

Grizzly Flat had been enjoying a wave of prosperity; a railroad was being built and the town did a land office business, mostly in poker, whiskey, and fines. I've always been asked why railroad builders fight so much, and make so much noise, and get drunk so often. And I've tried to explain how hard the life was, and how a man was always moving from one place to the other, with no roots at all, and how for the most part they were uneducated laborers and didn't know any (*Continued on page* 51)

ILLUSTRATED by BRUCE MINNEY

Fiction Book Bonus:

DRIFTER'S GOLD

by A. V. Loring

ON A HOT evening in June, Ken Austin walked into New York City's Grand Central Terminal with the briskly unhurried step of the practiced commuter, and was promptly engulfed by the tide of homeward-bound suburbanites.

Turning left at the information booth, his feet automatically carried him down a flight of marble steps to the lower level and through an iron gateway to the fourth car of the 5:29 local to Mt. Kisco.

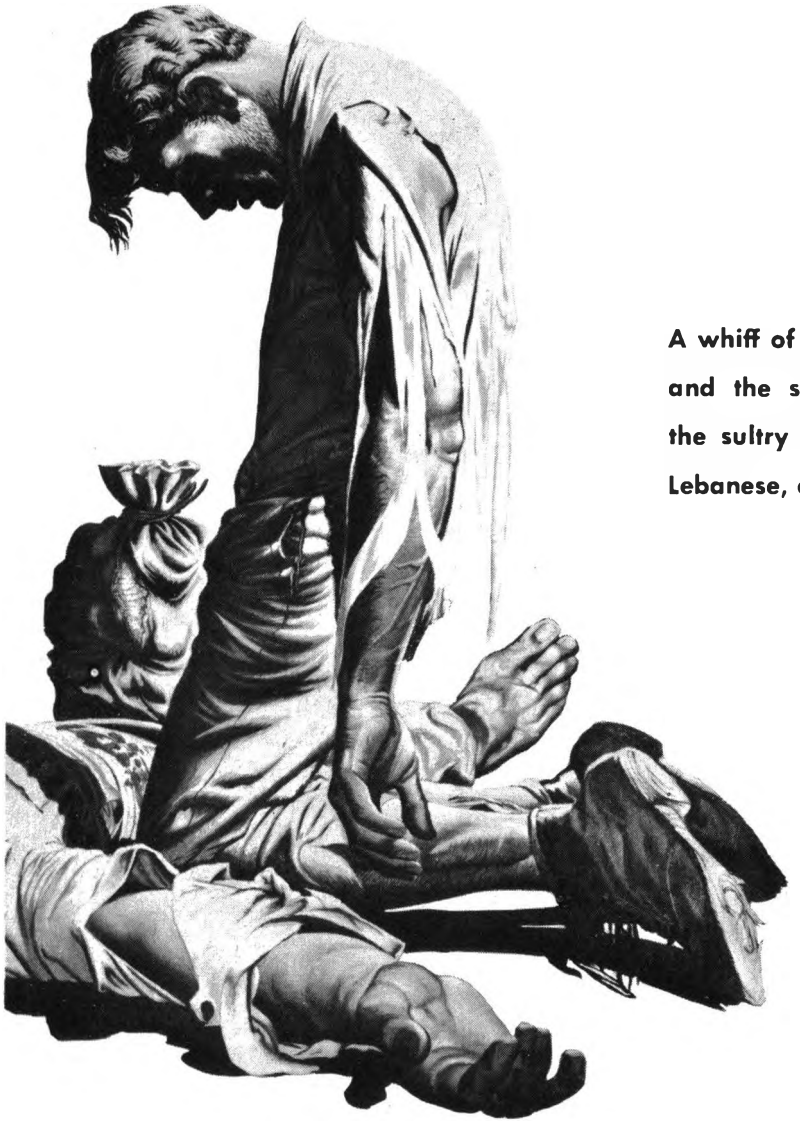
After nodding a greeting to the elderly conductor on the platform he found a seat near the window, and removed his somewhat wrinkled seersucker jacket, sighing in annoyance at the non-performance of the air conditioner.

He might have expected the car to be stifling. It was a topper to a day in which, besides many minor irritations, there had been his frustrating failure to close the Kelly Construction Company liability insurance contract for the new Park Avenue project. He had been angling for underwriting the insurance on the multi-million-dollar, 30-story office building job for several weeks.

Relaxing in his seat he tried to shrug off his disappointment. In over-all business he had been doing pretty well, he consoled himself, and besides, you can't win 'em all.

Ken Austin was 38, blond, weighed 180 pounds, and stood a trifle under six feet in conservative, dark brown loafers. Not bad looking, his regular features were only slightly marred by a scar over the left eye, a memento of some long forgotten high school football game. "Interesting," women usually called his face when they troubled to look at it twice. His shoulders were wide, his muscles still reasonably firm, a dividend earned by conscientious weekend attention to hand mower, garden spade and tennis.

His full name was Kenneth W. Austin, as attested by the neat gold lettering on the door of his office on East 39th Street, under the legend "International Casualty Insurance Company of Hartford, Inc." He had added the "W" to the middle of his name (which signified nothing) on the same day he added "New



A whiff of pomade on a commuter train, and the searing memory of it all came back—the sultry Eurasian, the greedy Lebanese, and the whole terrible, grisly ordeal

York Agent" after it (which signified a great deal).

The train began to move and he was grateful that the seat next to him remained unoccupied. With luck he would not have to share it all the way to Mt. Kisco.

With luck, too, Fran would meet him in the station wagon without the kids. There were two of them, Ken, Jr., ten, and Suzy, five. Both were noisy and irritatingly active when a man preferred quiet.

"Know what happened in kindergarten today, Daddy?"

At the moment, Ken Austin didn't give a damn what happened in kindergarten. He was hoping for a cooling Tom Collins with Fran at Tim's Bar, across from the station, before the nightly plunge deep into the pool of family routine. Once in a while it would be nice to have the feeling that Fran was an attractive, feminine companion, rather than a conventional suburban housewife.

Several passengers entered the car when the train stopped at 125th Street. One of them paused before him in the aisle. Glancing up briefly, and without encouragement, Austin eyed a young fellow with a dark complexion and black, shiny hair.

Syrian, Lebanese, Arab—anyhow, one of the Eastern Mediterranean countries, Austin speculated without particular interest.

With an amiable grin and a display of white teeth, the man sat down beside him. Austin closed his eyes to discourage any attempt at conversation. The hand in his right pocket touched the money clip and fingered the gold sovereign on it. The heavy scent of pomade came to his nostrils and he identified it. Beirut Rose Hair Dressing, he thought to himself, the smell bridging several years.

They used a lot of that rose stuff in Lebanon. They dried the roses in the sun and beat them into a flat confection that was ancient before Christ was born. They used the roses as a base for a hair-dressing that smelt sickly sweet.

The last time he had smelled Beirut Rose Hair Dressing was on the shiny, pomaded hair of George Goral, aboard the *S. S. Zaida*, Port *(Continued on next page)*

DRIFTER'S GOLD continued

Austin dropped the bag of gold. He would never have made it this far if he hadn't stealthily thrown out some of the coins. Now it didn't matter; he was barely alive.

Said to Bombay via Aden. . . . .

* * *

KENNETH AUSTIN, without the "W" in his name, had been working out of the Port Said office of Hartford Universal, of Connecticut, in those days, writing liability for American-financed projects all over the Near East. It was only a few years after World War II.

There were plenty of those projects. Shining steel rails groping towards snow-capped mountains from the Persian Gulf; pipe lines snaking across the blistering An Nafud, in oil rich Saudi Arabia; apartment houses in Tel Aviv and office buildings in Istanbul; power plants in Beirut and refineries in Bahrein. The rim of the Mediterranean and the long-slumbering lands far beyond were suddenly astir with modern progress.

In the impressive red brick and white-colonnaded home-office in Hartford, Barry Lewis, chief of the insurance company's profitable Near East Division, kept up a flow of cablegrams and radiograms to Port Said that sent Austin hopping from dam construction in northern Iraq to well-drilling operations in the Libyan Fezzan.

For two years he had been traveling from project to project by plane and ship, by jeep and camel, and, for the most part, enjoying it. Back in Hartford, Barry Lewis dictated satisfactory quarterly reports to pert, air-conditioned secretaries, and had reason to be glad that Austin was an enterprising, loyal and ruggedly enduring young representative—until one day when he received a request from Austin headed "Re: Long deferred Stateside vacation".

This happened to be a decided inconvenience to Lewis. There was a two-million-dollar wharf construction project in the offing on the Bombay waterfront. It could mean a nice piece of liability underwriting for the Near East Division. He had picked Ken Austin as the bright young man who could handle it.

His reaction to Austin's memo was characteristic; he immediately placed a person-to-person telephone call to Port Said.

"About your request for a vacation," he began, with argumentative abruptness. "What's Connecticut got that Egypt hasn't?"

"Hartford," Austin answered succinctly, sensing a turn down.

"Now look here, old chap," said Lewis, smoothly switching tactics in mid-conversation. "You *know* we can't spare you right now. The Burbank Construction Company job is beginning to simmer on the back burner.

"You've never been to Bombay. Why not treat it as a change of scene, a vacation and a business trip all in one? Plenty of time to take a nice sea voyage to India, and to see interesting sights. Of course there'll be a bonus for you, if you land the Burbank contract."

Lewis could make sounds like an understanding father confessor or an indulgent philanthropist when the situation warranted it. He hadn't been made chief of the Near East Division for lack of either salesmanship or diplomacy.

"Well—" Austin demurred. He was thinking about that cute Hartford girl, Fran Taylor. How long would

she wait? But Lewis had struck a sensitive chord. Austin was both adventurous and ambitious. Besides, he had never been to India.

"Fine!" said Lewis heartily. "Have a good time, old chap, and don't forget, I'm depending on you."

AND SO Ken Austin dutifully postponed plans for a Stateside vacation and a reunion with his girl, and booked passage on the *S.S. Zaida.*

When he boarded her, an hour before sailing time two mornings later, he found her moored near the western breakwater, with a nestling lighter feeding her the last of a mixed cargo of sacked grain, drummed gasoline and baled rags to be shrewdly re-worked into authentic-looking oriental rugs.

She was the ugliest ship in the harbor, a 3,000-ton, Hog Island relic of World War I about to be consigned to an honorable demise on the scrap heap, when the Eppinas Greek Line bought her for a song and put her into service on the Red Sea run. Her hull was black, with leprous patches of red lead, and her eight-cabin island, standing dejectedly between her two well decks, was dirty white. Symbolically, the back of the colossal statue of Ferdinand de Lesseps, dominating the harbor of Port Said and the entrance to the Suez Canal, was turned to her in scorn.

Austin was regretting his decision to sail on the *Zaida,* as he made his way 'midships behind a curly-headed, dark little Madrassi, who functioned as cabin and mess-room steward. Stubbing his toe on one of the many rivets protruding from the iron deck plates, he swore silently. Barry Lewis, he reflected sardonically, had sold him a bill of goods.

He shrugged off momentary resentment. After all, he had no one but himself to blame. He had impulsively booked passage, sight unseen, on this ancient tub.

Leading the way into a small hot box of a cabin, the Madrassi deposited his luggage beside his berth, and switched on a rusting electric fan.

His blackish, red-veined eyes appraised the good saddle leather of Austin's two traveling bags shrewdly. This American was probably good for a tip of at least three pounds, Egyptian, at the end of the voyage, if he gave service.

He rated passengers on the *S. S. Zaida* by long experience. The occasional Americans who traveled on the old ship, except for missionaries, were at the top of the list. Mr. Austin, he was certain, was neither a missionary nor a vacationing school teacher traveling on the *S. S. Zaida* simply to save money.

"My name is Tom Makandja, sar," he said tentatively.

The electric fan whirred with a noisy hum. The blades stirred the hot, fetid air ineffectually, without cooling it. Austin was removing his sweat-soaked shirt.

"Carrying any other passengers, Makandja?"

"Three, sar. A Mr. George Goral, in Cabin One, A Mr. James Land, in Two, and a Miss Jeanne Mazar, in Three. They came aboard last night."

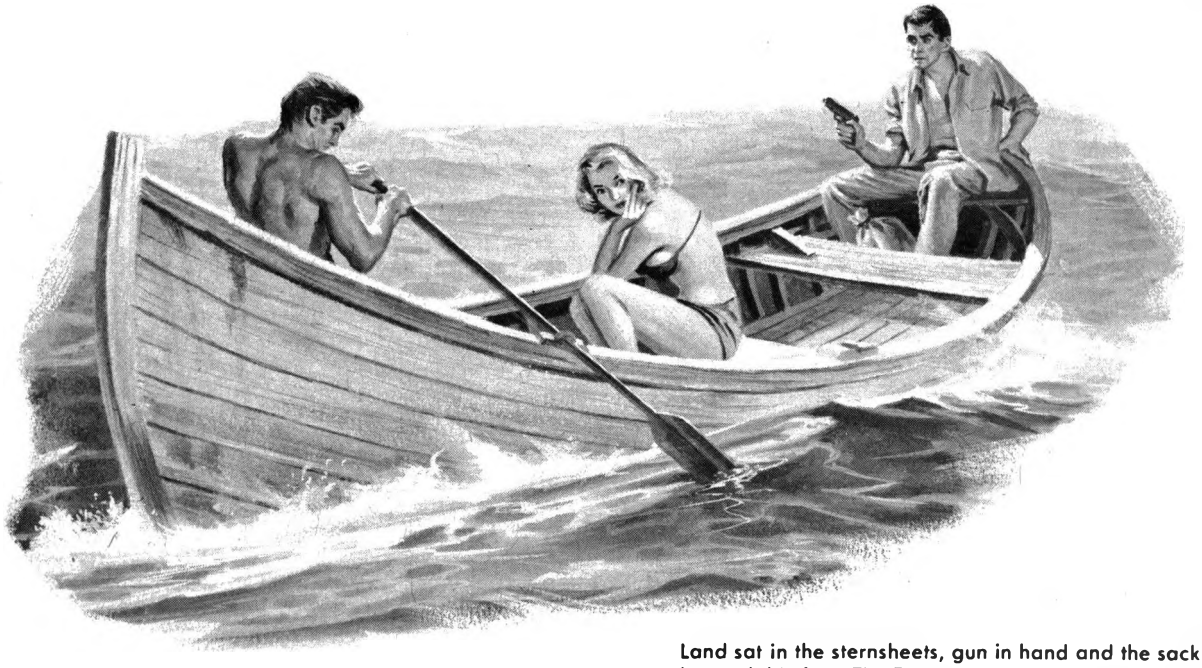
With a nod, Austin lifted one of the bags to the berth. Despite the presence of other passengers aboard, he intended making himself as comfortable as possible. He selected a pair of swim shorts and rope-soled alpargatas.

"If there is anything you wish, sar, ring that button," the Madrassi said from the doorway.

"You can depend on it," Austin told him, and began stripping.

WHEN HE went out on deck, the *Zaida* was slowly getting under way. Her blunt bow was pointed towards the heat haze of the Canal, and there were rumblings of weary diesels somewhere deep in her bowels.

A canvas awning had been rigged over the tiny passenger deck, aft of the cabin. Two of the weather-beaten steamer chairs piled against the bulkhead had been unfolded, and were *(Continued on page 62)*



Land sat in the sternsheets, gun in hand and the sack beneath his feet. The Eurasian took off her lifejacket, followed by her coolie coat. After a cool glance at Austin, she turned and gazed steadily out to sea.

R.S.V.P.

Ex-Sergeant Fry wasn't one of those bright college kids. So he knew only one answer, and that was to keep fighting

By Jack Dillon

JIM FRY said, "You're sure you know who I mean?"

The bartender grunted, "Yeah, Bill Tobin. Redheaded guy. If he'd been in, I'd know it. I been on since two this afternoon."

Jim scowled. The clock over the bar read nine. "Okay. Thanks. Look, if he calls or anything, I'll be outside getting some air."

He went out frowning. Bill's wire had read, "In jam. Can you get next train to Midville? Meet me Dwyer's Bar six-thirty Tuesday." Bill would have been early, not late. He'd looked up to Jim ever since he'd been the college boy's sergeant in the Marines.

They'd made some team. It had been Bill who had talked their way out of jail the day the judge had looked at Jim and said, "Sergeant, you seem to have demolished three tables, one pin ball machine and a phone booth. Just how does one demolish a phone booth?"

"Well," Jim had said, uneasily, "this one sailor had Bill down, and I didn't have anything else to throw at the other three, I guess."

"You threw a phone booth at them?"

Bill had said, "They asked us what hotel we were bellhops for, Your Honor. The Sarge didn't want to fight, but what could we do?"

But getting them out of the Jap's trap, that night on patrol, had been strictly Jim's job. "I'll move up and open up on them with the Tommy gun. When you guys see where they're shooting from, pour it on."

Now, retired at 44 after twenty years in the service, Jim wondered if Bill had ever got over his crazy hero worship, and realized that you'd swap 6 feet 3 of useless muscle for just half his education. Here was Bill with his own trucking business now, and what did you have? A pension and a job in a hardware store. And you'd quit that.

When he saw the car pull up, he turned to start toward it, then stopped. Three men got out, but none of them was Bill. He took out a cigarette and started to light it, then let the match drop to the sidewalk. The men had stopped, one on each side of him, one in front. What was this?

"Your name Fry?" said the man in front. He had a nice, clean-cut look, and seemed about 30.

"Yes?"

"Your friend, Bill, can't make it. He said to tell you thanks for coming, but it's all taken care of."

A cold feeling started up Jim's spine. "He couldn't tell me himself, eh?"

"Well, you know how it is. Bill's pretty busy these days."

"Uh huh. Well, I'll look him up tomorrow then."

"Well, Bill, he said maybe you just ought to go back to Chicago, Mr. Fry. He knows you have your own affairs to think about."

"Oh, I couldn't come all the way down here without at least saying hello. I'll just stick around for a day or two."

The nice, clean-cut man said, "Pinks, explain to Mr. Fry that we don't want him to put himself out."

At the touch on his arm, Jim backed out from between the two men and said, "Sure. Tell me all about it."

One of the men was hefty, the other just average. The hefty man was Pinks. The lower part of his face had a wide look, as though his jaw had been cut out of a cantelope. He smelled of peppermint. He reached for Jim's arm again. Jim caught him by the wrist and elbow and grunted as he bent and wheeled Pinks over his back to the sidewalk.

Pinks' pal took a step forward, then thought better of it.

The nice, clean-cut man said, "Ah, you can't beat the army for keeping a fellow in trim." He had a pistol in his hand.

Jim shrugged. "Chicago, eh? Well, I guess I'd better go see about the train schedules."

The nice, clean-cut man smiled. "Good night, Mr. Fry."

(*Continued on page* 58)

ILLUSTRATED by BASIL GOGOS

Side Trip

Continued from page 19

he hadn't been badly hurt.

I had left a leg in a field hospital in France. And in the long months of recovery, and learning to walk again with a prosthesis, I'd sworn that some day, *somewhere*, I'd catch up with Useless Eustace Norman.

I suppose a lot of men have made a similar vow at some time during their service career. Most of them do nothing about it at all. They calm down and do a little thinking, and then they forget about it. I had done the same thing. Sixteen years is a long time, and I hadn't ever really gone looking for Norman. I never thought I'd see him again.

I stood outside the phone booth now, smoking a cigarette, and thinking about it. I doubted whether the Eustace C. Norman in the phone book and the one I had known were the same man. The name was not a common one, but there could have been any number of Eustace C. Normans.

I had driven nearly 80 miles out of my way to come here to this little town of Dunbar. I was on my way from our eastern office to take over a district managership in St. Paul for my company, but I'd been asked to stop off in Dunbar to pay a courtesy call at the Norwood Machine Parts Company. We manufacture heavy machinery; and we had completely equipped the Norwood plant; so that made them good customers. It was supposed to be good business to keep customers happy, so here I was.

I finished my cigarette and got back into the phone booth. The call to the Norwood plant took only a few moments. I told some secretary who I was and what I was doing, and then I was telling the same thing to the plant manager. He invited me to come out and told me how to get there, and I thanked him and hung up.

I was in the lobby of the Dunbar House, which was probably the only hotel in town. I wasn't staying there —I'd just stopped at the first likely-looking place I found on the main street of the town to make the call.

Off the lobby there was a bar with one of those hand-painted, frosty-looking signs that read, *Air-conditioned* over the entrance. I went in. There were only two other customers in there, two men in business suits sitting at the bar. I took the first stool I came to and ordered a large coke with ice.

The room was cool and comfortable, and I wondered why the hotel lobby hadn't been air-conditioned. I decided the bar probably got more business than the hotel did, and that that was the reason.

When the bartender brought my coke, I was thinking about Norman again, and I said, "Do you know a man in this town named Eustace Norman?"

The bartender wrinkled his forehead, made one of those let-me-think faces, and said, "Eustace Norman, Eustace Norman? No, I don't think I do. Friend of yours?"

"We were in the Army together."

"Oh. No, I don't think I know him," he repeated. "What does he do?"

I shrugged. "I don't know. I haven't seen him in sixteen years. What does anyone do in Dunbar?"

He didn't like that too well. He frowned a little. "Well, lots of them work at the Norwood plant. That and private businesses. You know, merchants and so forth."

I nodded and finished off the coke, paid for it and got out. I wanted suddenly to get back on the road to St. Paul again. I'd have to go to the Norwood plant but I'd make it as brief as possible. I've never liked those quiet, nothing little towns like Dunbar, that seem to go to sleep on summer afternoons.

Going through the lobby, I started to pass the phone booth. I don't know why I did it, but I stopped and looked up Eustace C. Norman again. For some reason, I wrote the phone number on a slip of paper, and put it in my pocket.

Outside, my car was parked nose-in to the curb with others, heat waves shimmering from it under the hot sun. I got in and it was like an oven in there. I rolled down all the windows but it didn't help much.

Neither had the coke. I was still hot and thirsty, and I was sorry I'd bothered to come. The last ten miles to Dunbar had been over detoured, dusty roads, and I had that to look forward to when I left. I was in a bad mood.

I had to ask directions a couple of times to get to the Norwood plant, but you couldn't get lost in Dunbar. The town wasn't big enough. I found the plant on the edge of town, parked the car in the lot and went in.

I was kept waiting in an outer office for some minutes before the plant manager finally got around to seeing me, and that didn't help my disposition much either. He was one of those big, jovial types and he shook hands as though we were old college roommates. He was a terrible bore, and he insisted upon giving me a guided tour of the plant, pointing out this piece of equipment and that one, telling me what it did, how it was working out, the whole routine. I knew more about the machinery than he did, and I was only half-listening, thinking about Useless again, wondering what I'd do if I should meet him.

Finally the guided tour was finished. I'd wasted more than an hour, and I was impatient to get out of there. I told the plant manager—whose name I never did get—to call on us for anything he needed, we went through the usual thank-you-and-goodbye bit, and finally I was on my way.

As I drove out of the lot, I put my hand in my pocket for a cigarette. I pulled out an empty pack, and with it the slip of paper on which I'd written Norman's telephone number and address. I wondered for the umpteenth time whether it was the same Norman I'd known.

What would I do if I met him? Once, I'd had visions of beating him up, making him crawl and ask for my mercy, of somehow making him pay in some way for what he'd done to me, and to Moss and Overbrook, and all the others. The fist against the face, the boot thudding into the ribs—in those days it had seemed a simple and righteous solution. I used to wonder, too, how Norman would react to something like that. Physically, he was one hell of a man, and I'd had doubts that I could take him. But my imagination seemed limited to physical violence. I could think of no other way to repay him.

I knew now that I wouldn't do anything like that. I didn't know *what* I'd do. Probably nothing at all. *If* I ever met him again.

I stopped at the first store I saw, and went in for cigarettes. The proprietor was an old man, and the store was at least as old as he was. I was the only customer, and when the old man gave me the cigarettes he wanted to talk.

"I s'pose you been over to the Norwood plant," he said, inclining his head in the direction of the plant. "Salesman?"

I nodded.

"Nice place," he said. "Real up-to-date. Been good for Dunbar. Lots o' folks workin' there wouldn't be workin' at all if it wasn't for Norwood."

I broke open the cigarettes and lit one. "How big is Dunbar?" I asked.

"Oh, must be eight, nine thousand by now."

"You live here all your life?"

"Not yet," he said slyly, and then cackled as though it were the snappiest comeback he'd ever heard. "Not yet," he repeated, so I'd be sure to get it, cackling again.

"I suppose you know almost everyone in town, don't you?"

He nodded, still grinning. "Quite a few, quite a few." He was proud of it.

"Do you know a man named Eustace C. Norman?"

He thought a moment. "Nope. I'd know a name like that if I ever heard it, and I ain't heard it."

I got the slip of paper from my pocket and looked at it. "Where's Twin Falls Road?" I asked.

"Goes to Twin Falls," the old man said, slapping his knee and cackling again. There was no doubt about it, he was the local wit. Finally he regained control and told me how to get there. I thanked him, and left before he could offer another sampling of his humor. These Titus Moody types kill me.

As I got into the car, I remembered those ten miles of detoured roads again. It was still very hot, the leather seat in the car was like a griddle, and

there was a dull ache in the stump of my leg. It reminded me of Useless, of course.

I don't think I'd even thought about him for years. Now, since I'd seen the name in the phone book, I couldn't think of anything else. As I drove back through Dunbar's main street, I wondered if I ought to stop and call the number I'd written on the slip of paper. But what for? If it turned out to be the Norman I knew, I had nothing to say to him. Or did I? Would he remember me? I doubted it. I didn't think he'd even known the names of half the men in the company.

The old man in the store had said Twin Falls Road was off Dale Street, and that Dale was off Main. I had just told myself that I wouldn't call that telephone number, when I saw the street sign for Dale Street. I turned left on it before I realized what I was doing. All right, I told myself, so I'll just drive by the house.

Twin Falls Road led off Dale Street to the right, a few blocks further on. It was a blacktop road, and I swung into it and drove slowly, glancing at the rural mail boxes set on posts on the right side of the road. Most of the houses were small, set back off the road among trees and hedges and neat lawns.

I had driven more than a mile before I saw the mailbox. Painted white, the name *E. C. Norman* was neatly lettered in green on it. The house was on the left side of the road, a small brick place surrounded by a lot of trees, shrubs and flowers. There was a seven-year-old car in the driveway, a gray Chevrolet, clean and shining as though it weren't used much.

I drove past the house slowly. I didn't see anyone. A hundred yards up the road, I turned around and came back. This time I was in front of the house when I made up my mind. After sixteen years, I wanted to know what he was like. I had no idea what I'd say or do. I'd have to play that by ear. And perhaps it wasn't even the same man. But I'd probably never get another chance to find out.

I backed up, turned into the driveway and parked behind the Chevvy. The moment I'd gone up to the front door and rung the bell, I was sorry. What was I *doing* here? I stood there, wondering if I had time to get to my car and away before someone came to the door. I didn't.

The inner door opened. A woman stood there, smiling at me questioningly. She was in her late forties, plumpish, gray-haired and with glasses—a pleasant-looking woman. I was relieved. I was sure I had the wrong house now.

"Mrs. Norman?" I asked.

"Yes."

I hesitated. "Is your husband the same—" I almost said "Useless". "—Eustace C. Norman who was a captain in the 601st Infantry Regiment during World War Two?" The question sounded stupid to me, but she smiled and nodded.

"Why, yes," she said, surprised.

"Company G?" I asked, unnecessarily, because I knew now.

"Yes, that's right."

So I'd found him, and now I didn't know why. "I was in his company," I said. "My name is John Beckett. Is your husband at home now?" I hoped not. I'd make some excuse if he weren't, and say I'd be back later, but I wouldn't come back.

She held the door open. "Yes, he's at home. He's out in the back yard. Come in, Mr. Beckett."

I went in. She started immediately for the rear of the house, and I followed. The place was nicely, but not expensively furnished, and was neat and clean.

"Eustace will be glad to see you," she was saying. "I know he hasn't seen anyone from his old outfit since he got out of service. He's talked a great deal about the company."

I'll bet he had, I thought. He'd probably made himself out to be a great hero, the salvation of Company G. I felt vindictive as hell all of a sudden.

There was a screened-in porch on the rear of the house, and as we stepped out onto it I could see Norman in the back yard. He was standing in the deep shade of a big tree, watering flower beds with a garden hose. He had his back to us, but I couldn't mistake that stocky figure. Legs spread slightly, one hand on his hip, he stood in the same pose I'd seen so often.

"Eustace," Mrs. Norman called, and he turned. I could see he was wearing dark sun goggles. "There's someone here to see you, dear," she called. "John Beckett, from your old Army company."

"Well, for God's sake!" Norman called in surprise. "Come on out!"

Mrs. Norman beamed at me. "You go ahead," she said. "You two probably have a lot to talk about."

I pushed open the screen door and went out into the yard. Norman was a good hundred feet away. He turned off the garden hose at the nozzle and put it down, then turned and moved out of the shade toward me.

I saw him clearly for the first time then, and I was a little shocked. His hair was still thick and close-cropped, but it was almost white. His barrel chest had slipped considerably, and now it was just a paunch. I realized for the first time that he must be over 50 years old now. He looked it and more.

He wiped his hands on the sides

"I want my Mommy!"

of his old khaki pants as he came toward me. "This is a real surprise," he said.

"I found your name in the phone book," I said foolishly, not knowing what else to say. He stopped and put out his hand, rather uncertainly, as though not quite expecting me to take it. We shook hands, he grinning at me, and then he turned and moved back into the shade where there was a round metal table with a big white and green umbrella over it and a few chairs around it.

"Sit down, Beckett, sit down," he said, settling himself in one of the chairs. I took one across the table from him. I still didn't know what to say.

"Do you remember me?" I asked finally.

His forehead creased over the goggles, as though surprised at the question. "John Beckett?" he said. "You were in Lieutenant Moss' platoon. You used to buddy around with Chuck Overbrook. Sure, I remember you."

It was my turn to be surprised. I didn't think he'd even taken enough interest to know the names of most of us. "Moss and Overbrook were both killed," I said bluntly, annoyed because he had tossed off their names as though they didn't matter.

He nodded. "I know. They were killed on the same day." His featherweight voice got a little harsh. "Three others too. And eight more wounded in the same action."

I didn't say anything. There was a little pause and then he said, "How's the leg? You're getting along all right on it?"

I stared at him. I couldn't see his eyes behind those dark glasses. "Do you remember that?" I said then.

"Do you think I could forget it?" he asked. "I remember a hell of a lot of things that I'll bet most men in the company have forgotten. I remember you, for instance, Beckett. You were one of the rebels. You and Overbrook, and a few others. That was a long time ago, and you were a kid then, but do you deny it now?"

I shook my head. "No, I guess not."

He leaned over the table, putting his elbows on it, smiling a little. "You're surprised that I remember that, eh? That I even remember you as an individual. Would it surprise you to learn that I remember every man and officer in the company as an individual? I can remember all their names and middle initials, Beckett. I could go down the list alphabetically right now and get it right. I've done it."

"What does that prove?" I asked.

He shook his head. "Nothing at all, perhaps. Once I thought it did. What I'm trying to say is that I knew my men better than they thought I did." He paused, and then said quietly, "I knew you'd lost a leg, Beckett. I couldn't have known that without checking, because it was amputated three days after you were wounded."

I looked across the yard at the flower beds, the three or four other big trees, the high fence surrounding the yard. Why, I wondered, had he bothered to find out what had happened to me? I turned back to look at him. He sat there, heavy with the weight of a husky man going to fat, very tanned but unhealthy looking. The sun reflected off his dark glasses even though we sat in the shade of the big tree. He stared back at me for a moment.

"What do you do for a living?" he asked then.

I told him, told him how I'd happened to be in Dunbar and had found his name in the telephone book.

He nodded. "Do you make a good living?"

"Yes, I'd say so."

"Married?"

"No."

The next question startled me. "Why did you come to see me, Beckett?"

"I told you," I said. "I wondered if the name in the book was yours. I decided to find out." I was on the defensive suddenly. I still didn't know exactly what I'd had in mind in coming here, but this wasn't it.

"And then what?" he said. "What did you plan to do when you saw me?"

"Look, I only came to talk."

He shook his head. "I think there's more to it than that, Beckett. You never liked me. None of them did. But someone else coming across my name might have passed it up—forgotten about it. Not you. I said you were a rebel. I think you probably still are, to a certain extent. So you had to come out here to see the old man and remind him of a few things out of the past—rub a little salt into the wounds, eh? Am I right?"

He didn't give me a chance to answer, didn't want me to answer.

"Sure, I'm right," he went on, and there was none of the apologetic hesitancy in his voice now. I realized that there hadn't been since he'd started to talk. "I know what I was, Beckett. I know it better than you do. The day I led Moss and his platoon into the ambush—December 27, 1944—was the culmination of all the wrong things I had done since I received my commission. For those men who died that day—and those like you, who were wounded severely enough to be taken out for good—it was the end of it. Not so for me, Beckett. I knew I was directly responsible for what happened that day. I had to live with it for all the days I would still be in combat. I've lived with it for years. I need no one to tell me about it. That's what you came here to do, isn't it?"

I didn't answer. I couldn't have given him a truthful answer anyway. I lit a cigarette, just to give myself something to do with my hands. Norman seemed far more at ease than I did. I wondered how he could tell me these things.

"Why are you telling me all this?" I asked finally.

He smiled a little, tiredly. "You honestly don't know, Beckett?" The dark goggles stared at me for a moment and his smile faded. He tapped his fingers softly on the table top. "In the Army I used to hide behind these glasses. They gave me a sense of security of sorts, as though I could keep the world from looking at me—from knowing what I was. But I wasn't fooling anyone, was I, Beckett? I know what they used to call me. 'Useless'. They weren't too far wrong."

His fingers stopped tapping on the table, and when he spoke again there was in his voice all his own private agony—and it was as though he had aged suddenly.

"Do you know what it means to wait for a bullet, Beckett?" he said. "Can you understand that? After Moss and Overbrook and the others were killed, I waited for mine. I couldn't bring myself to stand up and get it, of course. I didn't have enough guts for that. But I thought it should be the only way an officer should leave his company—a *good* officer, I mean. I knew I'd never be that, but I had to keep up appearances, didn't I?" He smiled wryly.

"That's a hell of a way to talk," I said. "Waiting for a bullet . . ."

Norman raised a hand. "Don't misunderstand, Beckett. I don't mean I wanted to die. I didn't at all. I said I believed it to be the only way a good officer should leave his company. Let me continue.

"I don't know whether you knew it or not, but the company took part in a good many combat actions after you left. We lost men—killed, wounded, prisoners—but I was still around. Finally, on May 1st—seven days before the war ended in Europe—I got mine. So I was taken out—wounded. The way a good officer should leave his company—with honor. At least, with *that* much honor. There was little satisfaction in it for me, because it was far too late by then. And—I admit it—I was hoping by that time that I'd make it all the way through."

I put my cigarette out under my heel in the grass, taking longer with it than necessary, moving the chair around a little and resettling myself.

Norman waited and then said, "You're uncomfortable, Beckett. You needn't be. This is *my* confession, not yours. There's actually not much to tell. I must say that it's not as easy to tell it as I thought it would be, considering I've waited sixteen years for this."

I looked at him sharply. "What do you mean, you've waited sixteen years?"

He sighed. "I've put a great deal of thought into this, Beckett. I've gone over it word by word through the years. Once I even wrote it all out—and then destroyed it. I thought it would be best if I could tell it to someone from G Company, someone who had been there when it all hap-

pened. I have no alibis, no excuses at all for the kind of man I was. As an officer—a leader of men—I was a dismal failure. I admit it now. I admitted it then. But only to myself. I'm not asking for forgiveness or pity or even understanding. The important thing is that you know. And I don't care what you do with that knowledge. I'm glad you came—*especially* you."

I frowned. "Why me?"

He gave me that wry smile again. "Because, if you don't mind my saying so, you were one of the worst of the rebels in the company. You typified the other hardrocks—the guys who hated my guts most of all. You and the others like you should know that I was aware of what you felt about me—and that I knew your feelings were justified."

I started to say something—a token protest perhaps, but Norman interrupted.

"There's something else," he said. "I haven't been feeling sorry for myself all these years. I haven't thought that if I had it to do all over again I'd do it right this time. I know I *couldn't* do it right, Beckett. It's not in me. No one can help being the kind of man he is. *You* can't help being a rebel." He shook his head. "There is no satisfaction, either, in knowing that there were other officers like me, or that there still are today. They're human beings."

He leaned back in his chair and took a deep breath, and, for a moment, his big chest stuck out again. "I know you didn't expect this, Beckett. How long have you been here? Fifteen or twenty minutes? You didn't come here for small talk, and I wasn't going to waste your time or mine with it. I got right to the point, and I would have with any man from the company who came here. I stopped being afraid a long time ago, shortly after I was wounded. I've looked forward to the day when I could tell this to someone from G Company."

"Why didn't you go to one of the company reunions, if you wanted to tell someone?" I asked. "They have them every year."

He nodded. "I know. Over the Labor Day weekend. They don't send me invitations, and I can understand why. And do you think I could sit there in front of them and tell them these things? Could *you*, Beckett, if you were in my place?"

"I doubt it."

"Do you go to the reunions?"

"No. They only fight the war all over again, and I don't care to do that."

"Neither do I," he said seriously. Neither of us said anything for a moment, and then Norman seemed to rouse himself.

"Do you have any questions?" he asked quietly.

I was silent for a moment. "Yes. You said that if you had to do it all over again, you still couldn't do it right. Shortly after that you said you stopped being afraid a long time ago."

He nodded. "That's right. I *couldn't* do it right if things were as they were then. And I said I stopped being afraid shortly after I was wounded. It was a little difficult telling you these things, Beckett, but I wasn't *afraid* to tell you. It's easier if you don't have to look at the person you're saying them to."

I didn't understand. "If you don't have to look at the person? What do you mean?"

Norman reached up and took off the dark glasses, and his sightless eyes stared past me. I was shocked. I didn't know what to say.

"You see," he said softly, "why I've stopped being afraid? I don't have to see the disgust in men's faces any more. I am safe here in my own yard, with its high fence. Here I know what I am doing every minute. I can be happy here, and live out the years I have left in comparative security."

He put the glasses on again.

"I'm sorry," I said inadequately. "I didn't know."

"I know that." The silence again between us. "You don't have to stay, John," he said then. "You can leave now if you want to. I don't want your pity. I'm very self-sufficient for the first time in my life."

I stood up slowly. When he heard what I was doing, he stood also. "I'll stop by again sometime," I said.

Norman smiled and shook his head. "No, you won't, John. You've satisfied your curiosity. You've found out where and how the old man lives. You came here for a purpose, but you weren't quite sure what it was. Don't you think I know—have known for years—that whoever came here from the company would come with the idea of somehow getting even? I never really expected anyone to come. But I'm sincerely glad it was you, John."

I didn't answer for a moment. I knew he was right about my never coming again. He was way ahead of me. "I'm glad I came, too, Captain," I said.

Silently, he held out his hand, a little off center, and I shook it.

"Goodbye, Sir." The words came naturally.

"Goodbye, John. Good luck to you."

I turned and went across the yard. At the driveway, I stopped and looked back. Norman was still standing where I'd left him. I waved, and then remembered, and brought my hand down.

As I was about to get into my car, Mrs. Norman came out of the front door. "Mr. Beckett?"

I turned. "Yes?"

She came over to me. "Did he tell you?" she asked.

I stared at her in surprise. "You knew?"

She nodded. "Of course. He talked about it often. What was your reaction?"

I hesitated. "Is it important?"

"Yes, it is."

I turned and looked toward the rear of the house, but I couldn't see the yard from where I stood. "Mrs. Norman," I said carefully, "I think I've grown up a little bit today—and I think the captain got a little younger. It must have been hard for him to say those things."

She smiled for the first time. "He's had the words ready for sixteen years—and he isn't hiding behind those dark glasses any more."

"I know."

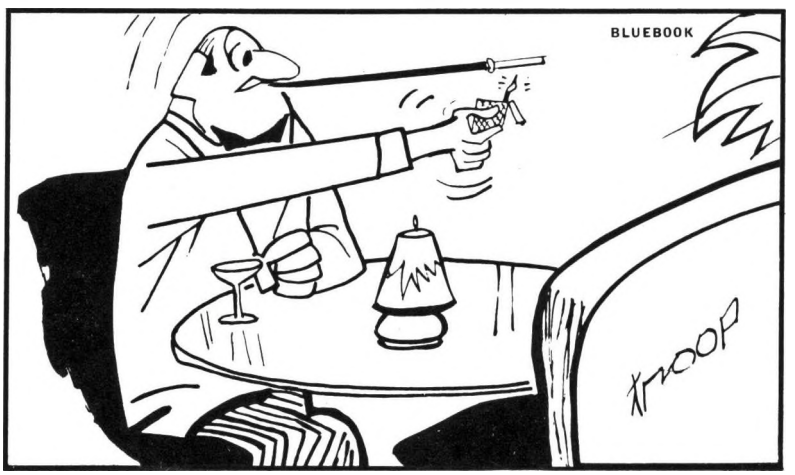
"Thank you for coming, Mr. Beckett." She held out her hand, and I took it.

"Goodbye, Mrs. Norman."

I got into the car and drove away. It was cooler, and I heard distant thunder. It would rain soon, and the heat would break.

I knew I'd never see Norman again. We had said everything there was to say to each other. But I had a great deal to say to the men who would attend the company reunion over the Labor Day weekend. I'd never gone to those reunions, but I was going to make sure I made this one.

I wondered if I'd be able to explain to those hardrocks—if I'd be able to say it all as well as Captain Norman had ●



Thrill of Conquest

Continued from page 25

until I talked to the girls.

I went back to where they were resting.

"The lead spot won't be open until next week. You'll all work the line till then."

The redhead winked. "But it will be one of us, won't it Mr. Thomas?"

I grinned. "It will be one of you."

The redhead moved on the small bench and ran her tapered hand over a full thigh. "I have some routines, Mr. Thomas. Want to see them?" The other two girls gave her a dirty look and I smiled at them.

"You all will have another chance."

"Tonight?"

"Maybe. I'd like to see a solo. Tonight it could be."

The blond got up then and moved close to me.

"I have a few routines you might like, Mr. Thomas."

"Fine." I gave her a pat. "But a little later."

I walked away, grinning to myself. Let them squirm a little; it would make it easier.

By the time I hit home, showered, snapped a couple of fast ones from a bottle of Black and Black, it was nearly eight. I slipped into a fresh suit and headed back to the Club. Traffic held me up but I made it by nine.

The doorman nodded with a big smile as I went by. I flipped the keys to him.

"Have Harold move it near the back door in an hour. I might be leaving early." I was thinking of the redhead. She seemed the most eager.

The club was nearly empty. A few steady flies were seated at the bar. Steadies. I waved and kept on going to the five-piece combo warming up.

"Keep the beat steady for the floorshow."

The fat man warming up a set of kettles looked up.

"The girls are complaining. You're catching them with their legs in the air."

The fat man laughed. "Are *you* complaining?"

I shrugged. "I want a good show."

Tiny wiped the grin from his dark face with a handkerchief. "I'll keep the beat tonight."

I nodded and went to the office.

She was standing by the desk, holding the gun I had taken from Sam.

"Stop right there, Mark."

Her hand wasn't like Sam's. It was as steady as a Sherman tank. The barrel never wavered, it traversed as I edged foreward.

"I mean it, Mark."

I glanced at her eyes and stopped edging. Her oval face was set and hard.

"He left me, Mark." It came out cold and quickly.

"So!"

"He wanted to believe me. But you changed that."

I took out a cigarette, lighted it, looking at the gun.

"Put the gun away, baby. You might get hurt."

"He told me to get out. I was no good!"

"You can't get away with it. There are too many people outside who would recognize you."

"Did you get satisfaction from that, Mark?"

"Now listen . . ."

"You're a big man, aren't you. You like people to kneel down to you."

There was only a couple of sheets of plaster and a few two-by-fours between me and the crowd that was growing outside. So near and yet so far.

Her cute face was hardened like a sheet of gray steel. And it was so damn quiet in the office. Only her heavy, uneven breathing was making a sound. "Sam knows what he wants," I said.

"So do you. You want to be chased. And when they don't run, you break them—like you broke me. I didn't run after you, did I, Mark? I didn't want any part of you. I told you that, the first night you grabbed me coming out of the dressing room?"

"Girls are a dime a dozen," I said.

Her laugh was brittle. "Except the ones you can't have."

The ones you can't have, I thought to myself. She fought like a tiger in the beach house, but it was worth it —every second of it. She didn't understand. It wasn't because I wanted to get even for her choosing a runt like Sam instead of me. It was the thrill of conquest, the challenge. I needed the fire of her flesh fighting me off.

"You raped me and it's over, Mark. I could have forgotten that. But you made Sam leave me. Everyone said I wanted his money. But I love him. Do you hear! I love him!"

"Go to the Police," I laughed. "Press charges."

Then she laughed—a high quiet laugh.

"When was the last time you had a girl, Mark—*last night?*"

Unconsciously I nodded, my eyes frozen on her face.

"I hope it was good—real good."

"You'll burn!" I shouted. "You'll get the chair!"

Her blonde hair rippled as she shook her head.

I screamed then, at the top of my lungs. "You're crazy. You're crazy!"

"I hope it was good last night, Mark," she said calmly. "It's going to have to last you a long, long time."

Then she smiled. "And I won't die for shooting you. Not unless I aim too high and kill you."

Sam had pointed the gun at my face. Thelma had it pointed lower, much lower.

The room exploded with a roar and there was a horrible pain. I fell screaming and clutching, and she was still laughing. ●

Passage Home

Continued from page 23

arrogance, though. Younger, he must have been the pink-and-white, well-featured English type. Now only the arched nose and thin nostrils stayed delicate. It gave him a turtle look. And already, at four in the afternoon, he was somewhat drunk.

He poured himself gin. Ingratiatingly the barboy slipped another piece of ice in my glass; none in Amert's. Amert signalled the omission by moving his glass an inch. For answer the boy simply walked out of the room.

Amert went behind the bar and fetched his own ice. "Never talk business before natives, you know," he covered. "Now then. Just tell your principals to name what they want done and I'll see it's laid on." He poured himself another, celebrating, really. He well might. The few British left in Nasiribagh weren't enough to keep up the Club that was his only living. I was the Godsend who could bring back spacious days of the war and before. He went on talking largely, expansive with promises, hardly letting me get in a question.

A servant, much older than the barboy, came in and tried to get his attention, a servant with some remains of deference who still wore turban and faded sash striped in what must have been the Club colors and clasped with big brass initials. 'Your niece, sar. She wish very much to see you about Club accounts."

Amert knocked the solicitous bony hand from his sleeve. "Damn it, tell her to carry on. I'm not to be disturbed at the moment."

The old man faded off, clucking futilely. Amert blinked at me, rather vague now, his grey eyes like watery oysters. "She's always haring around after me," he complained. "Nagging little beast."

"But it's your financial statement I'm trying to get at," I told him.

"Quite in order, don't fear. Books at my bungalow, though. Dine with us there tonight and you'll have them. Just my niece and I. Charming girl. Just a quiet evening." With that he climbed down from his stool and laid a starboard course toward the door. The old servant appeared again and steadied him out. I heard shouts and chatter in the driveway, then the clopping of a tonga-cart pony. Well, after dinner Amert might be more sober.

I finished my drink and went through the dim billiard-room to the verandah. Instantly the old servant was with me. "Tea, sar?"

"No." But then I saw Amert's niece at one of the wicker tables further down, a tea-tray beside her, intent on the ledgers and a pile of chits from which she was making entries. "All right. Tea," I said, sitting down at another table. Perhaps she might give

me an advance look at the books, but I'd let her offer it. She must know on which side her bread was buttered.

A black satyr in white loin-cloth, with goatskin water-bag slung over his shoulder, splashed water on grass mats hung from the verandah eaves, starting a smell of wetted dust and a breath of coolness. Out on the maidan, the town park adjoining the Club grounds, a wizened rider, overshadowed by his pith helmet, cantered sedately, upholding the tradition of empire by knocking a polo ball down tree-dotted vistas, hazing now, dustily golden in quiet evening light. But there was scurry and dash and flitters of color in the soccer game going on out there too, a mixed game of British in boots and stockings and natives who played barelegged and barefoot, their insteps taped.

My tea came, with sandwiches of dingy bread and dubious pink fish paste. The soccer game broke up, Indians going one way, Englishmen coming by the open end of the verandah where the girl sat. They stopped and stood about, kidding one another, trying to get her into their talk. Moira, they called her. But she was short with them, keeping busy with her books, questioning the old servant now and then.

The soccer players began to look at me, debating among themselves, but finally they went off. In a few more minutes Moira picked up her books and clicked toward me in those absurd spindle heels. Now, I thought, she'll speak. But she didn't even seem conscious of me. And as she went into the Club I saw how gaunt the tendons of her ankles stood out above those ridiculous heels and how deep the hollows were on either side.

When the old servant came for my tray I asked idly: "What were those Englishmen saying when they were looking my way?" I wanted to know how the holdovers were taking the factory idea.

"Sar, they wonder whether to invite you on tiger shoot tonight. But they say in America wild animals do not depredate on edge of towns, so perhaps you will make bad report if you knew."

"Then why do you tell me? Don't you want to see the plant here?"

He made the nod of head and jerk of head, the Indian double reflex that may mean either assurance or evasion. "Oh, very much I want. But I think if money is to be made, your principals will not care about wild animals. And if I report all things to you candidly then perhaps later I shall be trusted person with American manager."

"Where is Mr. Amert's bungalow? I'm going there for dinner."

"Dinner, sar?" He hesitated. "I will see if the memsahib is still in the Club."

"No." The girl's attitude had annoyed me a little. "You tell me." With reluctance he gave directions. "OK," I said. "Have a tonga at the Club gates in an hour."

I crossed the weedy tennis-courts to the guest quarters. After I'd changed after an inconvenient bath in a tin tub—if my fellow-countrymen were to be accomodated here something would have to be done about plumbing—there was no tonga at the gates. In spite of his hectoring, Amert had let the help go slack. But the evening light had cooled from gold to bronze. I'd walk.

Beyond the town I came to Amert's bungalow—a steep, roof-peak of thatch, steeple-like against the last of the lemon sky with a low wall of grounds from the road. I looked for the usual watchman, but Amert didn't seem to employ a *chowkedar*. Grass left only car ruts in the drive, and branches of unkept border fingered me. With dusk the verandah was a black indentation under the upsweep of thatch, but through the rusted screen there was still daylight enough to see into a central hall. The hall was empty.

I rapped on the door-frame. Finally I called. "Mr. Amert!"

At that a curtain swished. Cross-hatched by the screen like a blurred TV figure, Moira clicked toward me. She still wore the faded blouse and skirt. "Who's there? What do you want?"

"I'm sorry if I've got the hour wrong, but your uncle did ask me to dinner."

"Oh. You. He asks anyone to dine after a few drinks. And he isn't my uncle except by marriage. And there isn't any dinner, and he's quite bottled at the moment—in there." She jerked her head toward some room off the hall.

Abruptly I turned to go, but then she said: "You may as well come in. You won't get anything at the Club either. Your tea will have to do you. It did me. I suppose it's the accounts you want to see. I keep them. I'm Moira Kane."

She probably knew my name but I gave it anyway. Unbolting the rickety screen, she led me through the hall. She didn't offer her hand, in fact she was using her hands to conceal some small bright thing she seemed not to want me to see. But when we came through to a rear verandah, lit by one bulb that flickered like a candle, she changed her mind and placed a little .22 caliber revolver on a scratched table that centered a grass mat and a few chairs. Her hair and the nickel of the pistol were the only gleams. Everything else was a drab dust-brown.

"Not much protection in a toy weapon like that," I commented.

"All I could get in the bazaar. We don't run to house servants—since you seem to notice things. Sit down, please."

A splinter of frayed wicker rasped my jacket as I settled in one of the chairs. For a moment she walked up and down as a man would, making up his mind. "All right," I said. "What's wrong with the accounts?"

She stopped to stare at me. "Nothing wrong—with the books. Oh, I see. I suppose we appear badly off enough to steal."

"Well, then?"

She established herself decisively in an opposite chair. "The Club's solvent. Practically no cash balance, though." And she added grimly: "Like Amert and me. I debit our food and his drink against his salary plus a native bookkeeper's wage—which is all I seem to be worth. After his bar bill's ticked off we've never any money left. He has tantrums when I tell him. But he won't keep proper accounts himself any longer. He'd be stranded without me, and he knows it. So he merely hates me." She leaned forward. "You've seen him. If your people take over the Club you'll sack him, won't you? Are you going to take over?" And she waited, hands clenched on the meagre skirt over her knees.

In a daylight office I wouldn't have let myself be pinned down. Maybe I wouldn't even feel too sorry for a holdover like her. But here in the Indian night, tremendous fields of stars powdered on the black silk of the sky outside, I turned a little soft. "Don't worry. He's a drunk, but we'll need him for a while, because he knows the local ropes. I know that's necessary out here. And I hope you'll stay to help."

I thought she'd be relieved, even grateful. But suddenly she bent all together in a paroxysm of crying. "Stay? Do I have to stay? Oh my God, why don't you sack him? The only way I'll ever get home is for him to get sacked—or die. Then they'd take up a subscription for my passage home. Look at me—" she thrust out her legs, "silly dancing shoes with a blouse and skirt. I can't even get to the Hills. Monsoon heat. Year after year. I used to be pretty. Look at me now. Scrawny. Stringy. At home I'd fill out again. I might even marry. I—I—" The rest was sobbing, heavy ugly sobbing, but she didn't seem to care—which wasn't much of a compliment.

I got up to leave. I'd already gone ahead of myself to promise jobs for them, and she didn't even thank me. I pointed out: "On our salary scale you'll be able to save your passage in a few years. This talk about Amert's having to get sacked or die before you can go home on subscription strikes me as plain corny."

I don't pretend to know much about women, but the change in her was a shock. The wild sobbing cut off—the choke went out of her voice—instead, cold anger took over.

"You fool!" she said. I moved toward the hall, but she wasn't letting me go yet. "Don't you see the more we get the more Amert will drink? And—" she mimicked me—" 'in a few years' indeed! You don't know what heat after heat in India does to a white woman once she begins to waste.

Or what it's like to be broke in a place like this."

It always pays to leave on a courteous note, but she kept after me venemously. "Perhaps I should offer you a week-end in Calcutta in exchange for my passage. But I couldn't seduce anyone the way I am now. Besides, I'd loathe it. In your own way you're quite as selfish as Amert."

And then, to my utter relief, a motor-horn began honking and voices were calling from the driveway in front: "Amert! Are you there? Hunt's up!"

We heard Amert blunder out of his bedroom and shout back. He sounded practically sober again.

"Tiger shoot," Moira told me contemptuously. "That would resurrect him. Maybe you enjoy killing things too. Go ahead."

On the front verandah, lit by headlamps of a rackety little car, some of the soccer players were briefing Amert. The tigress, an old one, poor skin, had taken another goat from the night-pen on the outskirts of town and dragged it into the bush across a stream. Natives were posted watching. If we hurried we could shoot the beast when she came out to drink after her meal.

Oh yes, Amert knew the spot well. He'd get his car and lead. He was hearty again, slapping me on the back as though he'd known all the time I was in the bungalow, telling the others he'd make a real *shikkari* of me before I left. He lent me a rifle and went for his car under a shed down the drive, taking two of the men to ride with him.

With the other three I started for their car in front of the verandah. The shoot didn't interest me but it was the simple way to leave. Suddenly the girl called after us: "Wait for Moira, you silly boys." And she came running after us, struggling into a man's bush-jacket that flapped on her; dropping her shiny little pistol into one baggy side pocket.

"Why the pop-gun?" the driver of our car teased. "Going to tickle old pussy under the chin?"

She began to laugh. I couldn't have imagined her giddy like this. Still hysterical, maybe. She slid engagingly into the front seat, pulling me by the arm to squeeze in after her. The other two men got in behind and we followed Amert's tail-light out onto the road, turning away from the town.

"Do sit still, Moira, so I can steer," the driver complained. But she couldn't seem to stop wriggling, acting kittenish.

The moon was climbing now but the tree-arched road was dark. Through its darkness came a faint tingling of bells. The taillight of Amert's car slewed aside, and down the road a double-dot string of red eye-balls gleamed—a train of bullock carts moving patiently toward us in single file, swaying, grunting, jingling. The sleeping drivers never raised from their grain-sack beds, and we had to turn out and jounce, two wheels in the ditch, the length of the train, our eyes and nostrils stung by pungent, sick-sweet dust. As the car bounced I pulled the patch pocket of Moira's jacket out from between us so her toy pistol would stop grinding my hip. She didn't seem to notice. She was staring ahead, silent now.

We turned off the main road into a sandy narrow track. In our lights the trees swam in aquarium green, and showed small furrows crossing the sand of the track. "Snaky tonight," the driver remarked. "Moira, you should have worn boots." She began to laugh again.

Then Amert's tail-light swung aside and flicked out. We parked behind him, switching off our own lamps, getting out and following the others silently down the dark tunnel of the track to its luminous end—to a wide stream-bed of stones, cream colored in the glare of the moon. A shiny trickle of water ran in the middle. It was so bright out there I could make out the smooth shapes of the stones, but on the far side jungle loomed solid, black, silent.

A native, waiting at the end of our tunnel track, was gesturing, and Amert posted us in the bush along the near side of the stream bed; Moira and he and I together, the rest strung out at intervals on our flanks. "The beast's lying up in that jungly bit across," he whispered to me officiously. "Must have finished feeding. You'd think she'd come out to the stream to drink. Don't hear a sound, though. I'll make a recce anyhow," and he started forward.

Moira, beside me, didn't move to stop him, but her voice, speaking very slowly and quite aloud, was as deterring as a pull at his shoulder. "Don't go out there. Don't. I warn you."

And Amert, still perhaps a bit high, hissed: "Hush, you nagging little bitch!"

With showy elaborate caution he crept out into the open moonlight, across the stones, across the stream. There he crouched, listening, within ten yards of the black thicket on the far side.

A bush rustled. But it was a bush beside me. Moira was moving forward too. Casually she strolled out toward Amert, one hand in the pocket of her ungainly jacket.

"Hear anything?" she called coolly. And at the sound of her voice, a purring yowl came out of the jungle across the stream.

"Get back, both of you!" someone cried.

But the girl was already abreast of Amert—a car's length from his side, though. The yowl quavered again, definitely spotted in the bush this time. Moira said in her same high clear voice: "Yes, let's tickle up old pussy a bit." She pulled the toy revolver from her pocket and fired.

I heard the little pin-prick bullet spatt. The yowl rose to a squall. The dark of the jungle beyond the creamy stones pried apart. A black streamer arched through the moon glare.

There was and eternity of silence, almost a poised suspension of time and space, then the animal landed.

It was on Amert, not Moira, the streamer curved down. He shrieked once. Then all the rifles broke out along our bank. The mass of the tigress humped up from Amert, swayed, rolled over slowly beside him.

The girl threw her pistol against the visage of the moon and knelt on the stones, her arms across her face.

We ran out to them. The tigress was dead. There wasn't anything more we could do for Amert. Moira was unhurt.

In the morning they buried Amert. In the afternoon, on the railway platform, the English of Nasiribagh dutifully saw Moira off for Calcutta. I was taking the same train. By skipping the funeral I'd managed to go through the Club books and they were just as Moira said they'd be, after all.

"Ride in my compartment a while," she asked when the people had gone and the train was about to start.

For some time she sat looking out the window. Rails clicked, cinders rasped on the roof. Finally she said: "It was decent of you to subscribe such a lot to my passage home. Or did it seem good policy to head the list? Thanks anyway. Now I'll be able to get a proper outfit in Calcutta for the voyage."

"Forget it," I told her uneasily.

She turned to the window again. Against the scuffed black leather of the seat-back her wine-dark hair took sombre lights. Suddenly she faced me: "In Nasiribagh they're saying a fool of a girl had no business on a shoot. But that's not what you're thinking. Because you know. You know I had only two ways to get home. And you wouldn't sack him. That left only one. But listen—" her fingers twisted one unmatching button of her blouse—"I stood out there beside Amert, didn't I? The tigress could have taken either of us, couldn't she? It was a fair gamble."

I wished I hadn't come into her compartment. Then I thought of a phrase I'd read once: "I doubt we have the right to interfere with the principle of life."

Her hands dropped from the twisted button to smooth the scant skirt on her knees. She watched her hands curiously as though they moved of their own accord. "So that's your answer," she whispered. Then, brisk and rather louder than necessary: "When the train stops at the station we're slowing for now, please go to your own compartment."

And when the train stopped and I opened the carriage door, she spoke once more after me: "What a prig you are."

Maybe I am, but after all— ●

Red Line of Death

Continued from page 33

my horse, shoved through the cattle, and trotted up the hill to the bunkhouse.

I pushed open the door and yelled, "Simrose," into the darkened room. For a moment there was no answer and then I heard his voice. It was weak and crackly.

"Rich—that you? Lamp's in corner by stove—"

The last of his words was strained—barely audible. I didn't ask any questions. I groped around for the lamp. I heard Simrose retch violently. I found the lamp and lit it with my lighter—then crossed the floor to the bedroom carrying the light.

The dull glow of the coal-oil lamp flickered weakly over Simrose's gray face. He was vomiting over the edge of his bunk into a lard pail.

I wiped his face with a towel.

"Blood poison," he gritted. "Scratched my hand on a rusty nail a week ago. Tried to make Lashaway's this morning. Fell off my horse—couldn't make it. Been down four days now. Don't know if you can do anything—"

One of Albin's hands was wrapped in a wet towel. He pointed at it.

Now I set the lamp down on a coal-oil box next to the pole bunk. I stood over Simrose and carefully unwrapped the wet towel.

His hand didn't resemble a hand. It was swollen and shining like a balloon. The back of it, near the wrist, was black. I turned it over and looked at his arm, hoping against hope that I wouldn't see it—but I did—a dull red line running up the inside of his arm to his armpit, where a hard little knot had formed.

I tried to sound nonchalant.

"O.K., boy," I said. "We'll fix you right up. Three days and you'll be up and about. I'll be back in a minute—got to start the fire and heat up some water."

"Sorry about the cattle," Simrose whispered. "Got hay out to 'em till yesterday. Got water holes opened this morning, but I couldn't pitch hay—head aching like hell—kept passing out. Should have tried Lashaway's yesterday."

"You've done a great job as it is," I told him. "The cattle have only missed a feed or two. Don't worry about that."

I left the room, headed for the woodpile, got a fire going in the cookstove and filled the empty water buckets with fresh snow.

While I was lining things out, I thought back over the years to blood-poison experiences that had been thrown in my direction. I knew I couldn't afford to make a mistake. There wasn't much time left—every wasted minute lessened Simrose's already slim chance of pulling through.

He was in the second stage of blood poison, and was now approaching the third and last stage. The line of blood-poison death was easily determined by the red line that ran up the inside of the arm to the armpit, where the glands swelled, or inside of a man's leg to the groin where a similar congestion would take place. The frontiersman's term, the red line of death, couldn't have been a more fitting description, for it meant that the poison had entered the blood stream, and in those days, before the wonder drugs of sulpha and penicillin, unless a deep-cutting operation could be performed, the victim had little, if any, chance of living.

The knot under Simrose's arm meant that in a short time the poison would reach the heart. Then it would be all over. Quite often between the second and third stage of blood poison, amputation of the affected part is necessary to save the life of the victim. That is where a layman's skill ends and a surgeon is necessary. He has to decide just how far up the red line to amputate. Sometimes a second and third amputation is necessary, as the surgeon moves ahead of the storm center of the blood-poison pressure, surging forward towards its ultimate objective—the heart.

The Pan Meadow was over a hundred and fifty, sleigh-road, deep-snow miles from Quesnel and the nearest doctor. It would take five days with a grain-fed team to reach it. Simrose would be in the far-beyond long before we reached medical aid. It would take four changes of relay horses and at least forty-eight hours to reach Quesnel by saddle horse to get a plane, and, what's more, it was doubtful if any plane in use at that time up here, could have safely landed and taken off at the hummocky Pan Meadow.

There was only one chance, and a mighty slim one at that, to pull Simrose through. I would have to operate on him myself, and put my trust in God that I would do the right thing, for I was fully aware of my inadequacy. If Simrose lived through this ordeal something greater than just Rich Hobson would be responsible.

Now, as the snow melted down in the pails, and the first bubbling sounds of boiling water spread through the quiet room, I began my preparations.

I cleaned off the table and pulled it up to the bunk, then unrolled a wide chunk of clean gauze and tacked two lengths of it across the table where I planned to strap Simrose's arm down. I scalded out an enamel wash basin and an aluminum cooking pot, and, as I worked, I tried to visualize what was soon to take place.

Our first-aid kit consisted of little more than mercurochrome, adhesive tape, bandages, a small operating knife that I had used for cutting calves and lancing cattle infections. I had several pairs of pliers and a half-dozen, unused razor blades. One pair of long narrow-nosed pliers was made to order to hold a razor blade with. I tapped the nose of the pliers tight with the razor blade between its teeth. This would give me a good handle to grip when I was doing the cutting.

I rolled several slivers of gauze into thin little rolls to be used for drains.

Now I noticed that the dull light of the coal-oil lantern was so dim that my eyes hurt when I tried to concentrate on a tiny object for long. It occurred to me that candlelight would throw a softer, more natural light around the table. We had a stock of ordinary candles in all of the company bunkhouses. I found a box of them, plastered six down solidly in convenient spots around the table, and lit them. My light problem was now solved. The candles threw out better than the coal-oil lantern.

I refilled one bucket of snow water and scalded my crude instruments in the aluminum pot. I set a pair of pliers in a convenient position close to the pot where I could use it to lift them out.

Now I arranged small piles of cotton, different lengths of gauze, and the quart bottle of mercurochrome on one end of the table, where they could be reached without undue fumbling or misplacing. I brewed up some powerful tea, sipped down a half-cup myself and took a full cup into Simrose.

I returned to the operating table and once again inspected every little detail of that workbench. As I looked over this crude backwoods setup, and drank another cup of tea, I tried to make the final decision. In the next few minutes I would have to make up my mind, and then put everything I had into the course that I chose.

I remembered that in the old days, rather than take a chance with a man's life, many doctors performed an amputation. But amputation by an experienced surgeon, with the proper equipment and facilities at hand, was a far different proposition than it was here in the remote Pan Meadow, with me as the doctor.

The thought of amputation appalled me. My head swam. My mind drifted back through the years to the East Texas oil fields—the Discovery Well, Longview, Kilgore, Gladewater, at the time the toughest towns in America. In the great oil-field rush, overnight, hundreds of oil derricks were flashing high into the sky across the great East Texas new-found oil dome. The date—1931.

I was working as a roughneck for an oil-contracting outfit who used old and obsolete equipment, but banged through a producing well every twenty-six days, at thirty-eight hundred feet, to Austin chalk and then oil.

I thought of the day when, swinging my set of dun tongs through a spray of flying mud into the whirling pipe above the rotary rig, my glove got slightly fouled, was torn off my

left hand, leaving a slight, not-worth-mentioning-cut.

I remembered the infection that took hold of my hand several days after the accident, the lancing of the knuckle followed by a further and unexplainable swelling.

I thought of the free-for-all fist fight in the roaring tent city east of town when I joined my fellow roughnecks in an all-out, clean-fun, supremacy battle with a neighboring crew. I could not easily forget the terrific pain that shot through my infected hand to my shoulder blade when I connected with somebody's head. And then—a deep throbbing—a red line running from my hand to armpit—and the final wind-up in the Longview hospital with second-degree blood poison.

I thought of the second lancing of my hand with unsuccessful results, and two days later the feeling of horror that swept through me when the overworked young doctor announced in a hard, cold-blooded voice that amputation above the wrist was necessary, that it was mandatory that I get immediately in touch with my nearest of kin.

Like Simrose, I was violently ill at the time. It was five o'clock in the evening when the doctor announced his decision to amputate. The operation was scheduled for one o'clock in the morning. As he hurriedly left the ward, I remember shouting at him that I refused the amputation, and that I would never give him the address of my family—that any decision that was to be made would come from me.

And after the doctor left and the minutes ticked relentlessly on towards the loss of my arm, I remembered sweating out the dark, helpless hours on that hospital cot.

I don't know how long I had been delirious when, out of a distant haze and a fit of vomiting, I saw the face of my old Los Angeles boyhood friend, a manager of his father's East Texas oil empire, 24-year-old Gordon Green Guiberson.

I tried to grin up at Gordon. I can still hear those carefully-thought-out words of his. By the tone of his voice and the look in his eye, I caught the feeling that he had been trying to get through to me for some time.

"Listen, kid," he was saying. "Try to concentrate. Just for a few minutes. We're all set for action, but you've got to do your part. Do you hear me now? All right then, now I'm telling you for the third time, you're gonna lose your arm tonight and maybe your life here in this slaughter pen. Our one chance is Dallas. A train goes through here in fifty minutes headed for there, and you're gonna be on that train, see? I've had to work fast. We did everything we could to arrange your transfer from Longview to Dallas Hospital and the best surgeon in Texas, Doc Stone, but I can't make this arrangement stick with this dim-witted hospital bunch here. They say the time is too short and doctor's orders are that you can't be removed from here under any circumstances. It has something to do with workmen's compensation. They've got the law on their side."

Gordon cleared his throat.

"I called Dad up in Dallas. He's made an appointment with Doc Stone at the St. Paul Hospital to operate to save your arm instead of amputate, that is if we don't arrive there too late—and if it's humanly possible."

I was too weak to answer but my head was clearing, and I began to take in the proposition that Gordon was planning for me. It was about 105 degrees in the hospital room and 115 degrees on the streets of Longview. Gordon was sweating profusely. The water was trickling down his neck and off the end of his nose. Now his eyes twinkled and he let go his low, earthy guffaw.

"Boy," he said, "our friends, Buffalo Kennedy and Bunk Lock, are going to be here any minute now. They'll have a set of extra clothes with them to replace your outfit, which the nurses must have hid some place. Vi is going to be in front of the hospital with the car running and when Buffalo, Bunk and I get you through this hospital mob—and I'm telling you now, nobody's going to stop us—we'll be down to the station in ten minutes. Vi and I are going with you."

Blond-headed giant, Buffalo (Gilbert) Kennedy, six-foot-three, 230 pounds, was a trouble-shooter for a big oil company. So fabulous was this two-fisted, former Texas Ranger's reputation in those toughest towns of America that, before most mob fights or saloon brawls went into action, everyone chorused: "Which side is Buffalo Kennedy on?"

Bunk Lock was a hard-bitten, iron-muscled roughneck—another formidable opponent if you happened to choose the wrong side of an argument.

When they arrived, Buffalo and Bunk laughingly shed off a layer of their clothing, picked me up, twirled my 180 pouds as if I were a babe in arms, as Gordon pulled my new clothes on.

I'll never forget the sudden, hushed silence in the passage way and outer offices as we marched through the hospital, Buffalo Kennedy in the lead, the carved handle of his long-barreled six-shooter slanting forward out of the top of his Levi pants—the slow, gleaming-eyed, questioning look that he flashed from one side of the motionless hospital crowd to the other—and behind him the hard-faced Gordon Guiberson and Bunk Lock, carrying me along as if they were toting a child.

From the time we left my hospital ward to the moment when the boys lifted me into the car, where Gordon's wife sat at the wheel, I had the feeling that these Texas men had been hoping that somebody would make the grave mistake of interfering with our march towards the front door. But even the guards, whose business it was to stop any such law-defying shenanigans in the East Texas oil-field hospital, melted into the crowd of gaping-mouthed onlookers.

It is because of those three heady, tough, adventure-loving friends of mine that I still have a left hand that has come in handy on such things as shoveling manure and pitching hay.

I could still see Doctor Stone and his gauze-masked assistants around me in the operating room of that Dallas hospital—my arm strapped to the table. I remembered Doc Stone saying that everything was going to be fast and not too painful. I remembered watching the doctor at his work—the terrific relief I felt when his knife eased to the core of infection.

Several days later I remembered asking him why the Longview lancings had failed to eliminate the infection, and luckily his answers and his explanations came back to me, eight years later, in a candlelit shack in a frozen world three thousand miles north of Texas.

This time the actors had been switched, and I was to be the doctor and Simrose the patient. The great Texas doctor's words sprang to my mind:

"They didn't cut deep enough. I had to reach down through the minor flesh area to the seat of the infection, which was near the palm of your hand. Another few hours it would have been too late."

And there it was—the answer. Doctor Stone's answer—*cut deep.*

That's what I would do. Cut deep to the core of infection, and Simrose's hand would be saved.

It was as if a great weight had been lifted from me. From that moment on, to the end of the operation, I never once had a doubt but that I was doing the right thing, and that the outcome would be successful.

I eased Simrose onto the bunk.

"Don't worry about strapping my arm down," he said. "I won't pull her back. Anything will be better than those tom-toms that're beating away in there now."

And Simrose was tough. He didn't flinch—my knife and plier-handled razor blade didn't miss the mark—and I didn't get squeamish when I cut in the drainage holes.

And then the dressings were on, and it was all over—and Simrose was saying. "Wowie, wowie! I never felt more relief in my life."

And then Bear was whining and complaining about my not putting the evening meal on the stove.

A week later Simrose drove his team and wide-racked hay sleigh out onto the meadow towards a distant haystack. He waved his pitchfork at me, and I raised my hand at him from my saddle horse as I trotted off in the direction of Nazko.

Pinch

Continued from page 35

better.

But the truth of it is that we were unwanted, and resented it, and we made people notice us, the good people, by being so much trouble.

The railroad paid every week, on Saturday, and Grizzly Flat underwent considerable change because of it. With one exception, every woman in town, married or single, stayed at home from five o'clock Saturday until Monday morning.

The exception, of course, was Angie Wringle.

She was 22 or so, rather tall, I thought, but shapely as a man could want, and she held no fear of man or animal; and on Saturday night, the two often blended so that it was difficult to tell one from the other.

We were congregated in Lawler's store that evening when she came in; we always bought the things we needed, like shirts, or boots, or things like that while we still had money, and were sober enough to attend to business.

There wasn't a head that didn't turn when Angie came in. She walked up to the counter bold as you please, her head high, her pale eyes daring any man to open his mouth. There was hardly enough room for her to squeeze through, but she did, without touching anyone.

"Did that cloth come in from Sacramento, Mr. Lawler?"

"No, ma'am, it didn't," Lawler said. This sort of thing made him uneasy, and he didn't hide it very well. "Come in Wednesday, Angie."

"Thank you, I will," she said, and turned, almost bumping into Tim Murphy, who had moved quietly to stand behind her while she had faced the counter.

"Now boys, no trouble," Lawler pleaded, but we ignored him.

Tim smiled. He was a handsome Irish lad, big as a door, with the strength of two men. "Ye say the word, and I'll run to Sacramento and get the cloth for you."

She ignored his smile, and faced him as coolly as you please. "If you want to be a help, there's a rick of wood that needs splitting for the school house stove."

Tim Murphy shook his head. "After ten hours a day with a pick in me hands, I've a fair itch to hold somethin' soft, like cloth, or a colleen's waist."

I studied her face, and would have been content to do so the rest of my life. It was rather square, with a firm, finely molded jaw. Her nose was straight and small and her lips were soft and gentle curving, and I wanted badly to see her smile, at me particularly.

But I held little hope for that.

She wasn't afraid of Murphy, or of any of us, and that bothered us some, but it bothered Tim in particular. If he'd just stepped aside then, everything would have been all right, but he didn't; he was a man who liked to leave his brag about.

"Now what harm is there in a tweek on the cheek, or a pinch in fun?" Tim asked.

"I don't hit very hard," Angie said. "But I've handled enough tough school boys to know that I could break your nose with one punch. Am I going to have to?"

I said, "Why don't you let the lady pass, Tim?"

"When a thing is done," Murphy stated flatly. He continued to smile at Angie Wringle. "Ye're in a perdicament for sure. If ye turn about, I'm liable to pinch ye. And if ye stand as ye are, ye're liable to be pinched by a lad standing behind ye." His glance touched us with the dare in it. "What lad among you has the courage? Show it to me."

Lawler was wiping his face and looking worried, and we stood there, with Murphy's dare, and Angie's dare, and the teetering of the thing was awful on the nerves. I knew Murphy wouldn't break; he was putting on this show for us, and he turned a little ugly when things went bad for him. He'd already crippled two men in fights; of course Angie wouldn't know that, and she was simply not afraid of Murphy, and she should have been.

She shrieked and jumped and whirled away from us, surprise and anger making her eyes like ice. And she looked at each of us in turn, then said, "Animals."

Tim Murphy laughed and said, "If the lad will step forward, I'll buy him drinks."

None of us moved, and this brought a frown to Murphy's face.

Angie Wringle said, "You don't even have that much courage, do you?" And she walked out, as proud as ever, but angry; I could see it clean through her, a flame inside her, the kind a man will carry, lasting a long time, very unforgiving. It was, I'm sure, the first time anyone had touched her, and it marked a point in her life that she would never forgive nor forget.

Lawler sighed and said, "Gents, you shouldn't have pinched her." He shook his head as though this was the saddest day of his life. "Up to now, she's kept her peace, because no man has actually bothered her. Now you've declared war with Angie, and I wouldn't like to make a bet that you'll win it."

Tim Murphy laughed explosively. "What the divvil can *she* do?"

"I'll tell you what she has done for Grizzly Flat," Lawler said. "She got a school built here when no one else could do it. And she got the church painted, and an organ for it." He tapped his finger firmly on the counter. "And you roughnecks owe your jobs to Angie Wringle, because she spent many nights writing the letters and drafting the petition to get the railroad brought in in the first place." He straightened and shook his head. "You've made a mistake. A big one."

We all laughed and went out and stood too long at the bar down the street, and had our fights and somehow managed to get back to camp in time to go to work Monday morning. I hadn't forgotten the incident at all, but most everyone else had, until the foreman made his speech.

"It's come to me attention," he said in his bullhorn voice, "that there's those among you that have been guilty of ungentlemanly conduct." I swear that he looked at me and I resented being singled out like that. "Now we'll have no more of that! There's whiskey to be had, and cards when you think your luck is up, and girls at the saloon to pinch if you feel gay." He shook his finger at all of us. "Now this is a matter that has to be set right. Until now we've had no genuine complaints from the town, outside of too much noise, and too many Irishmen on the streets. It's come straight down to me from the superintendent's car that an apology is forthcoming. To the man you elect to make it, I'll give him time off with no loss of pay."

We went to work and had no chance to discuss it until that night in the tent. Murphy came in after mess and I could see he was in a sour frame of mind.

He said, "It's a damned big stink made over a little thing. And bless me, what plagues me most is that I didn't even pinch the girl." He looked at all of us again. "None of ye will say, eh?" He waited a moment for us to speak, and when no one did, Murphy slapped his thighs in disgust. "A bunch of yella bellies!"

"Did you come here to tell us that?" I asked.

Murphy looked steadily at me. We got along, but there was one thing between us yet undecided: he had never fought with me, and I knew that in the back of his mind was the wonder of whether he could or not. I might say I wasn't a scrawny man at 26, for I stood an even 6' 1" in my stocking feet and weighed 190 pounds. My growing years on an Irish farm, another six in the forecastle of a merchant ship, and now two years with the railroad had left me with no fat at all.

"You'll talk for us," Murphy said flatly, still looking at me.

"Why me?" I suddenly demanded. This was the last thing I wanted to do, to go to Angie Wringle and look her in those pale steady eyes and speak. Perhaps it was because I felt a more acute guilt than the others, or maybe it was because I knew Murphy had singled me out in spite. These things ran through my mind quickly, and then I said, "All right, Murphy. I'll see her in the morning."

"And be careful what you say," he warned. "Don't make me look small.

In fact, speak no names at all. Just say we're sorry and let it go at that."

"Are you afraid of her, Pat?" I asked.

He was deeply insulted. "I'm afraid of nothing! And ye mind yer words with me, Muldoon, or I'll take the measure of ye yet."

Then he stomped out, leaving that threat hanging in the air.

A few minutes later I left the tent and walked over to the foreman's shack. He was sitting outside, smoking his pipe, and when I walked up, he said, "You, Muldoon?"

"Yes," I said. "And bless me, I don't know what to say."

"You'll think of something," he said. "Take the morning off."

I dreaded going to the school house; it was set in a grove of trees, near the edge of town, and as I walked toward the door, I could hear Angie Wringle giving a lesson in arithmetic, a most mysterious subject to a man who couldn't add or subtract, or barely count his pay.

My knock brought her lesson to a standstill. One of the pupils opened the door, and Angie Wringle looked at me.

"What do you want?"

I had my hat in my hands, and a clean shirt on, and my neck properly scrubbed, which made me feel pretty foolish for having gone to so much trouble. "A word or two in private, ma'am."

She glanced at the watch pinned to her dress, then gave the children a recess. I stepped inside and felt like a giant among the desks. Or maybe Angie Wringle made me feel small; she was so poised, so sure of herself, and I wasn't at all.

"I'm Linus Muldoon," I said, bowing slightly. "The lads at the camp are sorry for what happened at Lawler's. I'm to say so."

"Is Mr. Murphy sorry?"

"Well now, I don't know. He said he was."

She kept looking at me, and I wished she wouldn't. "I'm asking you if you think he's sorry."

It was her way, I suppose, to pull the truth out of a man. "No, I don't think he is anything but angry. Somehow you've made him seem small, and it's a thing Murphy doesn't like." I sat down on one of the desks. "Ma'am, I'm sorry about what happened, but in a way, I think you were unaware of the spot you were in. Murphy always has his way."

"Why?"

I shrugged. "Because no man has stood up to him. It's a pity you were pinched, and it was a humiliation to be sure, but it got you from the store before harm came to anyone. I've never seen Murphy bother a good woman, but I don't trust the man."

She left her desk and came over to stand near me. "Mr. Muldoon, who pinched me?"

"I couldn't say, ma'am."

"Can't or won't?"

"Won't then." I got up and turned toward the door; she walked with me. The children ran and played in the yard, but I didn't pay much attention to them at all.

"Mr. Muldoon, I'm going to accept *your* apology," Angie said softly. "But not Mr. Murphy's. Grizzly Flat needs some taming down. Mr. Murphy needs some too. You tell him that."

"Wouldn't it be better if we forgot it?" I suggested.

"If you were in my place, would you?"

I saw her point; if she lets this go, it would be a victory for Pat Murphy, and he was a man who built himself ever bigger on victories like this.

When I went back to the railroad camp and told Murphy, he blamed me for making a mess of the job, but I figured he would, and thought nothing of it. As the week went on, Murphy began to gather a force behind him, and form a plan of his own. What Grizzly Flat needed was one good demonstration of railroad hands on the rampage, and Murphy figured to bring it off Sunday. With the week's pay in hand, Saturday night would be spent drinking and getting ready. He picked twenty men he knew he could lick, and me, because he was still thinking about it.

Which was Murphy's mistake, because my conscience bothered me so badly that I went one evening to Angie Wringle's house, and told her the town was going to have no peace that coming Sunday.

That's really all I intended to tell her, but as it happened, I stayed for coffee and a piece of cake, and got to talking, and when I left it was nearly eleven o'clock. She could make the time pass fast, and I was both sorry I'd stayed so late, and sorry it was so late that I had to go.

I didn't touch a drop Saturday night; I kept my pay intact in my pocket, and it was a pleasant, new feeling; the compulsion to spend it all was somehow gone, very mysteriously. Murphy and his bunch stayed in town and slept in the alley, which is comfortable enough after you've had considerable to drink. I went to the stable, made a bed in the hay, and and didn't wake up until well after sunup.

Singing woke me. Women singing hymns, and I thought it was coming from the church; then I recalled the church was across town, and you couldn't hear the singing from the stable.

After washing in the horse trough, I went down the main street, and found Murphy and his men gathered in front of the saloon. Sure enough, it sounded as though a prayer meetin was going on in there.

This wouldn't stop Murphy, I knew, and he led the way, entering with a ringing whoop. The bartender was in his place, nervously wiping the polished cherrywood, and the four girls who always danced so provocatively now sat at a poker table, seemingly embarrassed by their brief dress. The gamblers sat around, toying with their cards, patiently waiting for all this to end so they could get on with business.

Murphy was angry; I'd never seen him so loud. I went down to the end of the bar and stood there, and when I looked up, I saw that Angie was looking at me. I couldn't guess what she thought, and I didn't want to. My first impulse was to get out right away, so that afterward she wouldn't connect me with Murphy's meanness. But I didn't go because she was there; if anything broke, and I expected it would, I wanted to stand between her and Pat Murphy.

For an hour Murphy and his bunch ranted and drank and did not disturb the ladies at all. I recognized several as being the wives of prominent business men in town; they were all genteel women, and I'm sure embarrassed to be in a saloon. But they had courage. I had to give them credit for that.

Until the moment when Murphy yelled for silence, I hadn't known which way it was going to turn. And when he walked over to Angie Wringle, I stepped farther down the bar so that I was close to both of them. In my mind I had it all figured out. That bottle sitting so full and heavy on the bar was going to be fractured on Pat Murphy's skull, and then those two chairs at a nearby table were going to be kindling if he tried to get up.

But the bottle stayed there, and the furniture was spared.

His eyes were red and mean, but he kept his hands to himself when he faced Angie. "All right. Sing yer psalms! I can do me drinking on another day."

"But not on a Sunday," she said calmly.

"Aw now wait a minute," the bartender said, a plea in his voice.

She turned to him. "The saloon will be closed on Sundays from now on, or we'll be here to hold prayers all day long."

"You'll drive away my customers!"

"Then close," she said. "What about it, Mr. Bullard?"

He sighed like a man betrayed, then flung wide his hands. "It's closed, it's closed." Then he poured himself a drink and stood there, much saddened.

Pat Murphy remained there, a threat, a menace, I saw now; there was less and less room for the Murphys in the world, and something was going to have to be done about it. Perhaps Angie was already doing it.

"This isn't finished," Murphy said. "Lady, you can bet on it."

"I don't bet," Angie said firmly. "Mr. Murphy, you're bound to get licked some time. Why not now?"

"Agggh," he said, and made a cutting motion with his hands.

Then he walked out, and his followers tagged along behind; only I

stayed, thinking that Angie was more than a woman, a school teacher. She represented the good in a town, or in people, and Murphy was the bad, so it was natural that they should meet. But was the contest always so uneven, with the good the weaker of the two?

"Your friends have gone, Mr. Muldoon," Angie said.

"I'm not with them," I told her, and it was partially true, even though I'd come in with them.

"Would you like to sing with us?" she asked.

"I don't know any hymns," I said.

She opened the hymnal in her hands. "The words are here."

I shook my head. "I can't read."

She didn't say that it was a pity or raise her eyebrow; she acted like she knew how it was when you went to work at the age of 8, and never had time for anything else.

"Then perhaps you'd like to listen," she said. "We have time for one more."

"I would, thank you," I said.

A man, I suppose, can fall in love with a woman for a lot of reasons all packed in together to where he'd have a hard time sorting any of them out, but I'm sure I fell in love with Angie Wringle because she had a heart so big that she didn't have to make any man seem small in order for her to appear bigger herself.

When they were through singing, the ladies left, except Angie; she seemed to be waiting for me.

"Could I walk you home?"

"Thank you. I wanted you to ask."

She put her hand on my arm, and it was a nice feeling, to be with her. On the way down the street, she said, "Would you really have hit Mr. Murphy with that bottle, Linus?"

I was so surprised that I couldn't say anything for a moment, then I laughed and said, "I'd have split his stupid Mick head with it if he'd batted an eye the wrong way." Then I looked at her. "How did you know?"

"I saw you glance at the bottle, and I saw your eyes. You have a very determined expression, Linus." She walked on a way in silence, then asked, "What will he do now? Murphy, I mean."

There was no answer I could give her, and I wanted to tell her that Murphy wouldn't cause her any trouble, but I really didn't believe it would be that easy.

At her gate I hoped that some excuse would present itself so that I could stay and talk some more. She must have read my mind, for she said, "I baked some cookies last night, Linus. And it would be no trouble to put on a pot of coffee."

Then she smiled at me, and I knew she hadn't read my mind at all; she didn't want me to go, and it was a dizzying feeling which has never really left me.

I went back to the railroad camp at dark. The cook's tent was empty but I didn't want anything to eat. In my own tent, I sat down on the bunk. The three other men who shared it with me lay there staring at the spark holes in the canvas; they had all been in the saloon, and I guessed they were thinking it over.

Finally one of them said, "I felt like a damned fool, Muldoon." He turned his head and looked at me. "Murphy's in a fit. He beat the devil out of one of the bridge gang an hour ago."

The man across from me raised up and said, "Linus, can you lick Murphy?"

I shrugged. "Never tried."

"How come he hasn't called you out?"

"No reason," I said.

"You've got a reason," he pointed out. "The school teacher. Everyone knows you stayed after we left. And walked her home." He swung his legs to the floor and faced me. "Linus, she's got the guts to stand up to Murphy, but not the weight. She can go just so far, then a man will have to take over. And not any man, Linus. It will have to be her man."

He was as dead right as a man could be, and I knew it. But how did a man go about it? Did he just walk up to Murphy and challenge him? I didn't think so. If I licked Murphy, he'd have to know why; there would have to be meaning to it.

And I'd just have to find some way to bring it about.

As it turned out, the reason came to me as I was leaving the mess tent the next morning. The foreman was waiting as though he had a lot on his mind, and he took me by the arm and pulled me to one side.

"Murphy's left camp," he said.

"Quit?"

He nodded. "He said he was going to school. Does that make sense to you?"

It did, and I left on the run. The foreman called after me and told me to take a horse, and by the time I got saddled up, half the camp heard about it, and the men were laying down their tools and getting ready to follow me to the school. It was, I'm sure, a poor way to run a railroad, but the foreman came along too.

School was in session, only the children were clustered around the door, now very quiet and solemn. They seemed surprised to see me gallop into the yard and fling it off, and and then wagons followed and the railroad hands piled out.

I stepped inside and stopped there. Murphy had wedged his bulk into one of the seats, and he had rocked it back and forth until the screws were torn loose. Angie Wringle stood behind her desk, her face flushed, a deep anger in her eyes.

"An unruly student?" I asked.

Murphy turned and looked at me then; he scowled and said, "Keep out of this, Muldoon. I'll only tell ye once."

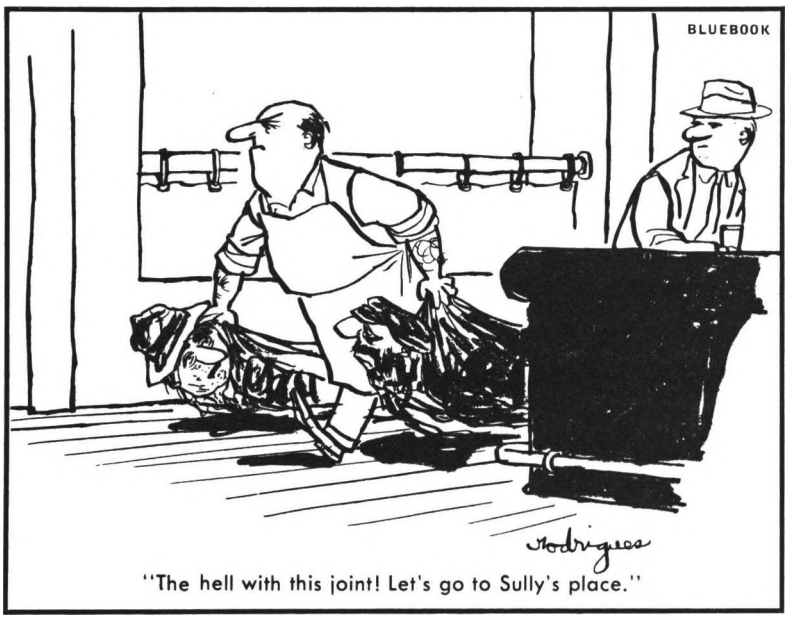
"I can't," I said mildly. "I'm going to run for election to the school board, and I want to have everything orderly." I made an upward motion with my hands. "You've licked a lot of men in camp, but not me. If you'll take that beef out of the seat, I'll give you a chance."

"Wait!" Angie said. She bit her lip a moment. "Mr. Murphy told me he came here to learn. He's a very bad student. Mr. Murphy ought to spend a half hour in the corner with the dunce cap on."

"Why, he'll be glad to do that," I said, smiling.

That did it. Murphy came erect so fast he tore the top clean off the desk, and I hit him just before he came fully erect. There wasn't anything soft in that punch, because he went backward and wiped two desks completely out of the way while doing it.

With my foot, I swept some of the



"The hell with this joint! Let's go to Sully's place."

litter aside and was waiting for him when he got up. I suppose I didn't really give him a chance, if you want to consider all the rules of gentlemanly boxing, but with an ox like Pat Murphy, you play it rough and sudden and put him down hard.

He went up against the wall hard enough to crack the plaster, and I went after him, pinning him there, hitting him four times, hitting him with all the strength I had. I had anger behind me, and love for a woman, and Pat Murphy didn't have a dog's chance.

When he fell his face was bloody, and he couldn't get up; he only lay there and groaned. One of the railroad men emptied the coal scuttle, went out to the pump and brought it back full. Angie bit her lip again when a mess was made of the floor, but she said nothing.

When he finally got to his feet, I was going to make him sit on the stool like Angie wanted, but she wouldn't have it. She came around the desk with a brass edged ruler in her hand, and she ordered him to the stool.

I was afraid for her, but I held back out of respect, or admiration. Muhphy pawed at his bloody face and lifted his hand once, and the forty men crowded into that small schoolroom growled, and he let his hand drop and shuffled over to the stool.

She put the dunce cap on his head, and you could just see his shoulders go round; he seemed to get smaller every minute he sat there.

With a bellow that was more hurt than rage, he rammed through those blocking the door and ran down the street.

Angie said, "My, this place is a mess." She looked at me with some reproach. "There's a school board rule against fighting on the grounds." Then her smile appeared like the sun after a day of rain clouds. "But I think they will forget it this time."

The railroaders filed out; they had a lot of work to do, and they'd seen what they'd come to see anyway. But I didn't go. I remembered the children outside, and stepped out and motioned for them to come inside.

They took their seats just as polite as you please, and Angie opened her text book. Then she looked at me and said, "Linus would you like to sit down? We're having reading."

"Thanks, I will," I said, not feeling at all embarrassed. "But I don't know as I can keep up."

She smiled, just for me. "Well, you can always catch up in the evenings, Linus."

That was certainly the truth. Angie taught me to read, and a lot of other things, and when I retired from the railroad I was district manager out of Tonopah.

She was a wonderful wife too, but do you know, that woman wouldn't marry me until I admitted that I'd pinched her in Lawler's store?

I had to apologize for it too. ●

Super Star

Continued from page 29

myself an old pro, but I got to admit that this excites me. What would the top player in baseball and little Bruno have in common? "Uh—is Johnny still up there?" I ask the guard.

"No, he left.—Hello, office? Say, I got a man here says he wants to see Mr. Stecker . . ."

Twenty stories up, I find people hurrying across the glossy floors, past murals that show Johnny G and Murdo McGavin, the grand old manager of the Rifles. "Agnelli?" says a secretary. "Is that one '1' or two?"

"Two," I tell her, and perch myself on the edge of a big leather chair.

I'm sure glad, at this point, that I talked this trip over with at least one person, even if the wire did say, "IMPERATIVE DISCUSS WITH NO ONE . . ." My wife Ethel, I mean. She made me put on a white shirt and a tie.

Some of the men from the ball club are there, I notice. Big, fat Goetschel, the pitching coach, is easy to spot, and I also recognize Doherty, who coaches at first base. Goetschel comes out of the door that's lettered GENERAL MANAGER, stops to talk in a low tone to Doherty, and then they walk off together. I have caught some of what he says, and it don't seem to make sense, but then none of this does.

The secretary comes out again, and I figure I ought to make conversation. "Looks like everybody's here tonight but the manager."

"The manager?" She looks surprised. "Didn't you know? Mr. McGavin's in an oxygen tent. He suffered a heart attack this morning. They're ready to see you now, Mr. Agnelli."

I'm so astonished, I guess I must look like a wooden man, getting up and following her. Who could picture Murdo McGavin, that roaring old character, in an oxygen tent?

The door opens. There stands Mr. Stecker. I had forgotten how big he was. And when I see the three men sitting behind him, it all comes to me in one of those blinding flashes you hear about. Those three are the owners of the Los Angeles Rifles. And I am the new manager.

I'd hate to hear a record of myself at that meeting. I must of seemed pretty dumb. I got to watch my English anyway, you know. But that night I couldn't watch anything. I couldn't even get half of what Stecker was saying.

It comes through to me only in waves: "Had our eye on you . . . solid baseball man . . . Had to keep it secret—reporters would have mobbed you . . ."

And I'm saying darn fool things like, "Sure you want to do this? I don't know the league—"

"We understand that . . . got a personnel briefing scheduled with the coaches . . ." This Stecker is a good general manager. He's one of those quiet-talking giants, a guy who started in professional sports as a tackle with the old Duluth Eskimos. He's no spectacular wheeler-dealer, like Lane or Veeck, but he gets the kind of strong man's respect that people give to a George Weiss.

I watch him, and I try to concentrate on what he's telling me about a press conference at 9 a.m.; an apartment has already been rented for me; a line is being held open to Carrville so I can tell my wife personally; requests for television appearances to be handled by the publicity department . . .

And I try to tell myself: Bruno, snap out of it! You were a little man for 41 years. Now you're a big one, just by walking through that door. Simple?

Then one of the owners speaks some words that snap me to attention, in a hurry. "Naturally you'll make no decision," he says, "without first consulting Mr. Stecker."

"Field decisions?" I ask him. "I'm sorry gentlemen. You can't manage a ball club that way. Not in Carrville, Kansas—not in Los Angeles."

"Of course not," says Stecker, smooth and easy. "I know what you really meant, Henry. You meant that Bruno must feel free to call on us for help at any time." Every general manager spends a certain part of his time explaining what the owner really meant.

Was this really my big chance or was I a set-up—a patsy?

All night long, I can only think about my unbelievable luck, taking over the first-place club in the American League. I mean, would a kid like to have a real fire engine, with live firemen? But at the same time I'm not so dreamy that I don't know the true situation. A minor league-manager has been boosted up to one of the top spots in baseball for one simple reason. Nobody else would take the job.

Figure it out for yourself. Here's a ball club in first place by just two games. And it's September. If they win the pennant, you're the bum who came along for the ride. And if they blow it, you're the bum who ruined them.

So the big boys are sitting back to watch the fun, and waiting for next spring, when a real manager will be hired. It's easy for me to understand, now, what Goetschel, the pitching coach, had meant when he said to Doherty, "Not with a ten-foot pole."

Well, at least I'll have the privilege, I think, smiling as I look at the ceiling, of having the Great Johnny G on my team for a few weeks. I mean, for the chance to manage a man who hits like Williams and plays the outfield like all three DiMaggio brothers, any minor-league manager

would invite his mother-in-law to the house to stay.

My wife, when I talk to her long distance, says to me, "Shall I take the kids out of school, Bruno? They've just started—"

"Leave 'em in school, Butch," I tell her. "Let's not make any plans. I mean, what's gonna be with this ball club is gonna be, and I can't change it. After all, they're champions. So we just relax and hope our luck holds out."

So now I have it all figured out, and I can go to sleep. It's going to be as simple as that. Of course this is before I meet the Los Angeles Rifles.

First, I have to meet the press. "Gentlemen," says Mr. Stecker as flashbulbs pop and television newsreel lights glare in my face, "This is Bruno Agnelli."

"One 'l' or two?" asks a reporter.

"Two," says Stecker. Then he makes a nice, short little speech about me. "Mr. Agnelli is a stranger to you boys, but you'll notice that he looks like a man who can handle himself in a tough situation. He can. He can also handle men. That's why he's here."

I tell the reporters that I never played a day in the majors, and have fifteen years in the Rifle system, first as a scout and then as a minor-league manager.

"Win any pennants in the minors?"

"Just one, in seven years."

Jotted notes. "Didn't have the manpower, was that it?"

"No, that's not it. A manager in the lower minors is not there to win championships. He's there to teach boys to play baseball."

Mr. Stecker chimes in then with the word that every player I have ever sent them has been well-schooled. But the way this reporter starts off his story is like this:

Bruno Agnelli, who has not been trying to win a championship for seven years, took over the pennant hopes of the Los Angeles Rifles today.

It's plain that most of them figure me for a stooge, and I do my best to stand up to them. One tall, sour-looking guy asks me the difference between a major leaguer and a minor leaguer.

"Sometimes, only the uniform," I tell this character. His little smirk tells me I better keep talking, so I add, "What's the difference between writing for the *Los Angeles Tribune* or—let's say, the *Swamptown Gazette*?" That gets a smile, and a few quotes.

At the ball park, I meet my players. My first impression of Johnny Genovese, who is known by the nickname of Johnny G, is not much of an impression at all. I look up at him and say, "Hello, John," and he says, "Hello," without smiling, and then I am shaking hands with the next one. But then I always hear how he is this shy, reserved type.

After a while, I go out, sit on the bench and get paid for watching a ball game. And the next day I watch another one. They lose the first and win the second, but that is not important. What *is* important is that after two games I know this team is not going to win any pennant. I've sat on too many benches not to know a bunch of sure losers when I see them, and I don't care if they're in first place or not.

So when Mr. Stecker comes smiling into my little office after the win and asks me if everything is okay, I tell him, "No, it's not."

"It's not? I don't understand."

"There's tension in the dugout. They're wound up tight, and much too quiet. Why would that be?"

For the first time, his manner toward me changes. "Tension?" He speaks coldly. "You must be imagining it." I get the message, and we drop the subject.

I give it one more try, speaking to Goetschel when we're both taking our showers. "These guys act like they're scared. What are they afraid of?"

The old bird frowns, like this question puzzles him. Then he smiles and tries to help. "Well . . . my pitchers are afraid of Mantle—and I guess they're all afraid of the tax collector, when they get that World Series check—uh—hand me the soap, will you?"

After the next game, which they manage to blow in extra innings, I have figured out my answer. The Rifles, as you know, are what the sportswriters like to call a hard-bitten ball club. Well, I know now what's biting them.

This Johnny Genovese has won the Most Valuable Player award four times. Also, he is famous as a sportsman. He never argues with umpires, always tips his hat to the fans, and even to out-of-town crowds that boo him. You can read any paper, and see where he's the inspiration for the whole team.

But throw away the papers, spend a few days with the Rifles in the close quarters of their dugout, and here's what you find out. The big hero is, in plain talk, a mean bum, and the answer to the question I'd asked Goetschel is—These guys are afraid of Johnny G.

Before the Sunday game, I stand outside the batting cage and watch him. He stands there in his lanky, round-shouldered way, leaning on the bat as he waits his turn to go in the little door and hit. Stanowicz, a kid outfielder the club has just brought up from Triple-A for pinch hitting, walks up to him.

Stanowicz is one of those little barrels, strong but stubby. Johnny, at six-two, towers five inches over him. "Say, Johnny." Stanowicz is hefting his bat. "I wonder if you'd give me a tip."

Johnny looks at him, his long face gloomy; but then that's his usual expression.

"Ford fooled me twice the other day with his curve ball," says Stanowicz. "I wonder if I'm choking up too much—or maybe I should move closer to the plate—"

"I'm not the batting coach, Chief," says Johnny. And he turns his back on the little guy and begins watching them shagging flies in the outfield.

The kid looks at baseball's most beloved player and his mouth just stays open. After a minute, I call him over. "Stanowicz," I tell him, "when you get in the cage, I'd like you to try something."

"Yessir?" He scowls at me, concentrating. He is a good, serious worker.

"Keep your right shoulder up where you can see it when you're looking at the pitcher," I tell him. "You're taking the smoothness out of your swing by dipping that front shoulder too much."

"Oh. Yeah, I see what you mean," he says. "Thanks, Skipper." He is the first one to call me that.

I think the tip helps Stanowicz. Anyway, he gets a pinch single for us that day. But he's learned something else, too—Steer clear of Johnny G.

When you're on a champion team, you know, with a crack at ten or twelve thousand dollars per man in World Series money, you better be careful not to get the big star sore at you. Because the cellar team is always ready and eager to trade for players from the champs.

We win that Sunday game, but the Yanks take two in New York, and the lead is down to half a game. The pressure is on.

Monday morning, Stecker calls me into his office to discuss Johnny G Day, which is coming up the following Sunday. The Johnny G Day Committee, made up of a movie actor, a rock-and-roll singer, and a night club operator, is on its way up.

"I thought I'd discuss it briefly with you before they got here," the G. M. says, smiling like a man making little plans for a party.

"Uh-huh."

"I can see you're not too enthusiastic." He keeps right on smiling. "Well, managers seldom are, but these special days are a necessary evil. The Committee wants the Day, the public wants it—and that's what we're here for, after all, isn't it?—to please the public?" He looks me right in the eye.

I hang around there long enough to shake hands with the movie star and the rock-and-roller and the night-club bigshot. The actor, whose price runs somewhere around two hundred grand per picture, wants to swap jobs with me, "Just for the privilege of associating with the greatest guy in sports."

I can see from the beaming faces around me that it's going to go on like this, so I excuse myself as early as I can.

I got a rough job ahead of me that night. What I don't know is just how rough it's going to be.

We lose to Detroit, 4-2. I keep the reporters out of the clubhouse after the game.

"Sit down, boys," I tell the ball club. "Your showers can wait. We're gonna have a little talk."

The players look at each other, and sit down slowly around the room.

I get up on a little equipment trunk so they could all see me. "That was a real nice game you played out there tonight," I tell them. "What was it? Cricket?"

There's a couple of nervous laughs.

"A man gets called out on strikes," I start off, real matter-of-fact. "The pitch is outside—it's a bum call, but he walks away without a word. Very proper. Another man gets dumped hard at second base, but he don't squawk either. And three men play Alphonse-and-Gaston around a pop fly, so it drops."

As I am talking, Johnny G is quietly putting away his cap, unbuttoning his shirt.

"I never seen such a polite ball club," I go on. "But while you boys are winning the Sportsmanship Award, some tough outfit with no manners at all is gonna run off with the American League pennant."

Johnny Genovese mutters something I can't quite hear.

My voice gets louder. "I wanna see somebody from Detroit or Chicago picking theirself off the ground for a change! I wanna see a couple of you outfielders crash together under a fly ball. I'll even take a fight with an umpire!"

The heads are lifting now. The eyes are looking at me, some guilty, some angry. I am starting to get to them. And then it happens.

"You know," I tell them, real sarcastic, "over in Japan, they bow to the umpires, and they bow to the other team. They go for polite baseball over there. But this is not the Japanese League!"

"It's not the Midwestern League, either," says Johnny Genovese in a loud, clear tone, and he walks out to the showers with his towel and his soap.

And that's the end of my little fight talk.

The next day he does something so strange that it immediately becomes one of his legends. Let me tell you how it was for us. The ball club, I mean.

Like I told you, they are playing this stiff, bad baseball. For one thing, the centerfielder and the shortstop are scared stiff that they'll have a collision with Johnny, who plays left. Any ball that he could get near is automatically his, and everybody shies off. This way, he gets to make a lot of spectacular catches—and every couple days a ball will drop in that one of those other guys should of handled.

And this Sportsman routine of his. They all follow him in that, too. Now I figure it's swell to be a gentleman when you're a star, but some of us have to scramble for what we want. And if we don't, we're gonna get pushed. The pitchers around the league throw at the Rifle batters like at no other club, base runners come sailing in spikes-high, and we are known in the dugouts as a team that can be hustled out of a game.

As we go into this game, the lead is gone. The Yanks were idle the night before, and the loss dropped us into a flat-footed tie with them.

Our opponent is Chicago. I send out Garry Peiffer, our big right-hander, who has sixteen years in the league and 203 victories. Peiffer is on, but everybody else is off. There is a boot at short, a wild throw from third, and the Go-Go-Go Boys steal three bases. And, in the fifth, Johnny Genovese makes an error, dropping a routine fly ball.

This is unusual, and maybe you think it explains what happens later. If you do, you'll have about the whole country for company.

When Chicago comes up in the eighth, we are hanging on to a 6-5 lead, which we got thanks to a pinch double by Stanowicz with two on.

Aparicio beats out a hopper to short.

Fox sacrifices him down.

Big Klu steps in.

We don't want him to pull, of course, so we give him one low and away. The old pro times it just nice, hitting where the ball is pitched, and bangs a long shot to left.

It's over Johnny head, but he takes off after it, and with that smooth stride that's faster than it looks, he gets it under control. Then, the way it will happen to the best of them, he loses his line on the ball. He looks over the wrong shoulder, switches and looks over the other one, which costs him half a stride, and the ball goes off his fingertips.

It is a bad play. The Los Angeles crowd lets out a yell that's like a cry of pain, as Aparicio scores and Kluszewski goes into third standing up.

I kick my foot on the duckboards and turn away.

Then Goetschel taps me on the shoulder. I look where he's pointing.

Johnny G is trotting toward us.

"What's he want?" I ask. "He's got his glasses." He keeps on coming.

The crowd wises up before I do. A hush fell over them at first, but now the applause starts. Johnny G is taking himself out of the game.

On his way off the field, he passes between the shortstop and third baseman, who have made two errors apiece, and let in four unearned runs. Last, he passes the catcher, who has seen those three men steal, has a passed ball, and strikes out twice, so far, with men on base.

They stand out there in their positions with their shoulders slumped, and watch our hero jog into the dugout to what now becomes a standing ovation.

"What the devil are you doing?" I shout at him as he comes clumping

"I'm benching myself—Skipper." He says it with those needles, you know? Boy, I'm ready to split.

"What for?" I yell. My nose just comes to his chest and it's almost touching it now. "Because you made a couple bum plays? The whole team made bum plays! What are you? A god?"

"Better quiet down, Skipper," he says. "They're watchin' us from the press box. This won't look good for you." And he starts for the runway, to go into the clubhouse.

Flaherty, who is umpiring at the plate, sticks his head into the dugout. "What are you gonna do, Bruno?"

What *can* I do? I send in Willie Clory, a young Negro boy with great speed, to play left field.

Big Klu, gets home on a sacrifice fly, and we are back in the hole, 7-6.

And, sure enough, the way it will always happen in these situations, Willie comes up to bat in the middle of a rally. It's the ninth, two on and nobody out. Like I said, Willie has great speed, but you can't steal first. I figure I will hit and run with him, which is the book play, both for his speed and the situation. But Pierce, who has come in to save the game for them, strikes him out and Lollar gets the runner at third with a snap throw.

So it winds up Chicago 7, Los Angeles 6, and the scoreboard shows that New York has won another one.

You should see the papers the next day. Johnny G is a bigger hero than ever. Of course, it's a shame, they say, that he wasn't in there to bat in the ninth, but he just felt he wasn't right, and a champion like him will not play if he cannot give the team his best. He did it for the team, they say.

I will tell you what he did for the team—he proved to them that he wasn't one of them.

By the weekend, we are two-and-a-half-games out, and I have told Ethel not to make any plans to be in Los Angeles in the spring.

On the morning of Johnny G Day, the clubhouse is a busy place. Appliance company men and press agents are so thick you're falling over them. Each is making sure his product will get the proper plug.

"Now listen!" one of them is hollering. "You can't just announce it as a 'Heppelmann Hi-Fi.' It's got to be a 'Miracontrol *Spec*trotone Heppelmann Hi-Fi.' Either I get that, or I'll yank the set off the field!"

"Excuse me," I say to him. "I'd like to get into my office."

"I'll yank it," he warns.

"So yank it," I tell him. I go in the office, and all the time I'm dressing this goes on.

The commercialism don't seem to bother Johnny. In fact, he is showing a good, hard business head himself, as he sits there in front of his locker. "No taxes!" I hear him yell.

"If I gotta pay a tax on it, I don't want the car."

The dapper little sports car man is knocked over by that one. "Johnny—you *can't* turn down the Swordsman—it's a gift from the club!"

"Nobody told me about no taxes. You better fix it, Chief."

He's in great form. As I listen, I start to get an idea.

After a while the photographers come in.

"What, more pictures? What am I, an actor or something?"

"It's your day, Johnny."

"No kidding—I thought it was April Fool. All right—I'll give you two minutes."

After the still photographers are through, a newsreel man hurries up. "Say, Johnny. I just got here, and I missed it."

"Too bad."

"Uh—yeah—look, all I want is a quick shot—"

"That's what they all want."

"Just a quickie, putting on your cap—you know?"

"Is that what you want, Chief?"

I know he can go on for five minutes like this. I slam the door.

When I come out a few minutes later to head for the field, he is conducting a cheerful little press conference with the reporters. Whenever anybody shows up that could write something about him, boy, does he change.

They line us all up, from home plate down the baselines, to watch him receive his gifts and listen to the speeches. Right next to me at the plate are bunched the photographers. I can hear the newsreel man telling them how he was treated.

"You want me to tell you the payoff?" says one of them. "You're gonna tell the little guy in your grocery store that this bum is a bum, and you know what he'll say to you? 'You're crazy!' "

Then Johnny G is introduced, the packed ball park rises with one tremendous roar, and the photographers get frantic. "Over here, Johnny!—Wave, Johnny!—Smile, Johnny!—Smile!"

Johnny smiles.

Then he stands next to me while they read off the commercials, and I say to him, "Big day, eh, John?"

"Huh?" He is not used to conversation from me. "Oh—yeh."

"I got something special planned for after the game, too."

He snaps his head around to me.

"A little surprise party," I mutter, so the photographers won't hear.

"No, Johnny!" they yell, "Smile!—Over here, Johnny!"

Johnny throws back his head and smiles, and through his bared teeth he says, "Don't tangle with me, Agnelli."

I got him worried, and he scowls at me all afternoon. I know it will not affect his play, though. You can't bother the great ones. He hits two home runs and we win it, 9-7.

When the players come into the clubhouse, whooping because the Yanks have split in Boston and we shave off half-a-game of their lead, a guard slams the door behind the last man and locks it. Goetschel announces that the skipper wants a meeting. And Johnny G comes busting into my office.

"What is this?" he barks at me. "What are you tryin' to pull here?"

"Relax, John. I'm just gonna get tough with this ball club, that's all."

I don't waste my breath being sarcastic with them this time. "That was a rotten game," I tell them. "You guys give away three runs with your bum fielding, and if not for Johnny's two home runs, we're losers again. Now get this. Every regular on this club is fined one hundred dollars."

That really hits them. Eyes pop open, breath is sucked in, and Johnny G steps forward. Before he can open his mouth I say, "Of course there's one exception to the fine, and that's Johnny. No need for him to suffer because you guys are playing miserable ball."

Johnny stops and stares at me. Little by little you can see this triumphant look come over his face when I tell them, "Tomorrow at 10 a.m., before we catch the plane for Chicago, I want every man right here, suited up. Special workout. Everybody but Johnny, that is. He can meet us at the airport. That's all. Take your showers."

The next day, a mad-looking bunch of ball players shags flies and holds infield drill. This is bad enough, but then I order wind sprints for everybody.

"Maybe if you get in better condition, you'll run those bases like you wanted to get there!" I holler at them. And for half-an-hour I watch Goetschel and Doherty run them back and forth across the outfield.

Doherty, the red-faced Irisher, is a pretty blunt-talking guy, and when they come back, breathing heavy and sweating, he tells me, "There's a lot of resentment, Skipper. I mean about Genovese being excused from this."

"But I figure they ought to like this," I answer him. "I'm only treating him the way everybody else does around here."

Johnny is in his glory. The manager has surrendered to him, unconditionally. It's like you gave a second-story man a license to steal. He lords it over the whole organization like never before, and his pals, who are night club characters and those guys who don't seem to have a job and are called sportsmen, start hanging around the clubhouse and asking the attendant to bring them beer.

The club gets tighter.

In Chicago, we open with a night game. Peiffer pitches a three-hitter, so we win, 2-0. But the next day we lose to Donovan, 5-2.

I call a post-game workout, which is mighty rare in September. And again I excuse Johnny G.

The players get madder.

We manage to get out of Chicago with two out of three, and move on East, two games back.

The Rifle right-fielder is a smiley kid, with curly black hair, called Nick Thomas. Nicky is a good-natured-Charlie type, who just likes everybody. But in the Thursday game he throws a mean, football-type block at a catcher who is blocking home plate against him, the guy lays there with his wind knocked out, and Nicky rolls over the plate—safe.

We win that game, 3-2. In the clubhouse, I announce that Thomas' fine is lifted.

Friday is a night game, and in the first inning Bob Glaubach, our lead-off man, has to dive in the dirt when a pitch comes straight for his skull. Bob picks himself up, picks the bat up, and goes after that pitcher. They throw him out of the game, of course, but that puts a stop to the bean balls.

In the eighth, our man Pep Evans, in centerfield, makes a desperate running catch, and then crashes into Johnny G. They both get up dazed, but it's an out instead of an inside-the-park homer with two on.

We win that one, 6-4.

The win puts us back in a first-place tie, with a week to go. Everybody is excited now, because this club has real momentum up. But there is still one thing I want to see before I am sure this club is going to be all right.

Tuesday night, we're in New York, dressing for the game in the Stadium, when it happens.

Johnny G is passing Peiffer's locker. A couple of the big pitcher's friends are visiting him, and Johnny has to push by them to get to his place. As he does, he mutters something.

"What did you say, Genovese?" says Peiffer in a voice you could hear in the shower room.

"You heard me, Chief. I said, 'Why didn'tcha bring the kids and make it a picnic?' "

Peiffer turns immediately to his visitors and says in a strained-but-smiling way, "I'll see you later, folks. Got to straighten something out."

You can see how high Johnny is riding, to talk to Peiffer this way, because this Peiffer is not one of them gawky pitchers with the long, skinny arms. He's the 220-pound, Early Wynn-Mike Garcia type, only with a Dutch puss on him. He's 38-years old, but the lines in his big face only make him more rugged-looking.

He walks over to Johnny. "Don't ever call me Chief."

Johnny turns to him, slow and graceful. "No?" he says.

I'm out of my office by this time, players are gathering around, Thomas has slipped off the rubbing table to see why it got so quiet all of a sudden, and Goetschel has walked in from the washroom with shaving lather on his face.

"I don't take Chief from you," Peiffer says. "Who the hell are *you* to talk to me like that?"

Johnny smiles, pushing his face into a grin the way he does when the photographers ask him to. "Who am I?" he says.

"Yes! A .350-hitter, is that what you're gonna tell me? Well, I'm a 20-game winner, Mister, and my name is Peiffer." They're standing close enough together now that you could not pass between them. "You got that?"

Johnny turns away. He takes a couple things from his locker and starts for the washroom.

"Take your walk, Johnny," says Peiffer quietly.

And as Johnny walks, with Peiffer looking after him, you can see that smile still on his face. It gives you a kind of a funny feeling.

The day we clinch the pennant, I call Ethel long distance in California. "Isn't it great?" I shout into the phone.

"Oh, yes, Bruno, and I've spoken to Mother and the kids, in Carrville. They've declared a school holiday there. But what's this in the Tribune? I *know* it's a lie, Bruno!"

That tall, sour character who has been after me since the first press conference has come up with a big scoop.

According to his special information, the Rifles actually win the pennant on Johnny G Day. On that great day, he writes, Johnny comes off the field, slams the clubhouse door on all visitors, and reads the riot act to the ball club. Start playing ball right now, is the message, or the pennant is lost. And from that day, the team catches fire.

I would laugh at this story, except for one thing. General managers read newspapers, too.

That night, they have Johnny and Peiffer and me on a coast-to-coast telecast. And at the studio, where some chorus boys with "RIFLES" across their uniforms are getting ready to do a baseball ballet, I see the big man who runs our organization.

"Bruno," says George Stecker, "I want to talk to you."

I join him behind a piece of scenery. "Yessir."

"That's quite a story in the Trib," he says.

"Quite a story." I just watch him.

"I like a good dramatic story," he says, watching the hurrying television technicians with a lot of interest. "If I hadn't got into sports, I might have wound up putting on shows in this business. Yessir, I love a good drama. When I was a kid, I used to read thrillers all the time. Those sports novels—'The Red-Headed Halfback'—what a hero he was! That's what the public wants."

I start to smile. "Heroes," I repeat. All the world loves a lover and a baseball hero.

"Right." He smiles back at me and says, without making it too serious, "We do our job—you and me, I mean—and we don't tell the public our troubles. We tell 'em what they want to hear."

He winks at me.

Now a guy with earphones and a script waves to me, and the general manager says, "About that speech they're gonna want you to make—of course they'll want you to discuss Johnny G. I don't think I have to suggest anything."

"I know the speech."

He takes my hand in his football player's mitt, and shakes it. "You're all right, Bruno. And listen—if I know you, you'll be on the phone to your wife right after the telecast. Tell her to look over our schools in California. They're really not so bad. I mean a guy like you wants his kids near him—right?"

A couple minutes later I get introduced to the show's director. He's a real earnest young guy. "I wonder if you could convey to the public," he says, "what it's *really* like, being associated with the ball player all America loves?"

"My friend," I tell him, "It's a challenge, believe me."

"That's good!" he says. "Clarence, make a note of it. We'll use that."

R. S. V. P.

Continued from page 41

When they drove off, Jim turned toward the heart of town. Some reception. Why weren't they scared he'd go to the cops?

After three blocks, he found a patrolman. "Hi. You see Pinks around tonight?"

The patrolman said, "Ain't seen him all day. You try the bowling alley? Him and Binney are usually over there when you can't find them around."

Some cops. "Thanks. I'll take a look."

A block further, he turned into a coffee house. When Bill hadn't shown up at the bar, he'd called his office and then his hotel. It had been after hours for the office, but a late worker had answered, saying Bill hadn't been in all day. The hotel had said the same. Nobody knew anything, but the nice clean-cut man. Now what?

"You feel all right, Mister?"

Jim looked up. The waitress was in her thirties, and had just got over being pretty. Her black hair was drawn up fashionably, and her uniform was as neat as a new box of candy, but there was a wary, holding-back look in her dark blue eyes, as though too many things had gone wrong to go around humming happy tunes. Jim said, "Did I look sick? Happens every time I try thinking."

"Coffee?"

"Black." While she poured it, he looked at himself in the mirror. Twenty years of sun and wind had turned his face into an old boot. His eyes had a squint, his hair was short and as gray as steel wool, and his mouth looked as though the slash had been made in his face and needed only the addition of lips to be complete. Home is the soldier, boy. Home nowhere.

"Sugar?"

"No, thanks. You know much about this town?"

"What do you want to know?"

"Ever hear of a guy called Pinks?"

"No."

"Is there any kind of mob around here?"

"What kind do you want?"

"Like that, eh?"

"Are you down and out? Coffee's on the house, if you are."

"Won't you get in trouble?"

"What can they do? Fire me?"

Jim smiled. "Well, I'm down and out, but not that way. I think an old buddy of mine's in trouble, but I don't know the ground rules around here."

When he had told her about it, she said, "Mister, I hate to tell anybody to quit, but it doesn't sound to me as though you'd be helping your friend by trying to do anything about it. The police around here only take the job for the graft in it."

"Isn't there anybody who can tell me who's who?"

"Well, you could try the newspaper. But what could you do about it, even if you did learn anything?"

"Well, I'll tell you. I met a lot of college guys in the war, but Bill was the only one who ever wrote afterward. It probably won't make any sense to you, but it's kind of nice having a pal with the stuff it takes to be somebody. Sort of like having a nephew to be proud of, you know? If he's in a jam, I can't just go home and forget about it."

She had begun to take off her apron. "Never having won any awards for intelligence, I suppose I may as well show you where the newspaper office is."

She turned out the lights, after turning off the range and washing the coffee containers, and they started across town on foot. Jim said, "How come the helping hand? You don't know me from Adam."

"Maybe I just know so many heels I'm hypnotized by the contrast."

The newspaper office was in a three-story brick building. Jim and the girl looked at it blankly. "Who would I ask for?" Jim said.

"I don't know. Lets just go in and see."

Inside, they found that the receptionist had gone for the night, but a balding man sat at an ancient typewriter pecking out a story with a tired but intent look. Jim and the girl approached him uncertainly and he looked up. "Help you?"

"Well, if you can tell us anything about this burg," Jim said. "A friend of mine's in some kind of jam."

When he'd told the bald man about it, the fellow leaned his arms on the typewriter and said, "Pinks. That would be Roger Blake's crowd."

"What's with them?" Jim asked.

"Well, they made their dough in the numbers game, but they're getting into some legit stuff these days. I heard they bought some trucks and are going after hauling business in a big way."

"Trucks!" Jim said. "Bill was talking about going into trucking."

"You sure?" The bald man picked up his phone. "Friend of mine's a driver. Lemme give him a ring."

Ten minutes later, the bald man hung up with an empty look. "That's it . . ."

Jim looked at the girl and then back at the newspaperman. "What do you mean?"

"Your friend's been having a few accidents. Trucks forced off the road, shipments hi-jacked. Word is he's been getting too much business."

The girl said, "You mean business Roger Blake wants?"

"This guy I just called says Bill Tobin's customers have been sticking by him. Looks as though, when they couldn't wreck his business, they just grabbed him."

Jim pursed his lips. "I gather the cops around here aren't much good."

"Oh, I don't know. If you were Roger Blake, you'd think they were terrific."

"Isn't there anything that can be done?" the girl asked.

"Short of getting a gang of your own, no." The newspaperman stood up. "I just don't know what to tell you, Mr. Fry. Blake isn't some kid stealing apples. He's a corporation."

Jim looked down at his hands. If *he* was in a jam, Bill Tobin would know what to do. But what did you know? How to set up a mortar? Get a bunch of guys killed taking a beach? Why couldn't Bill have called somebody who had something upstairs?

"Okay," he said at length. "I guess I'll need a little more information and a gun."

"Just what do you think you're going to do?" the girl asked. "Why is it that everybody I know seems to be either a bum or a dope?"

The bald man said, "Wouldn't do you any good anyhow. This isn't some beach where you and them shoot at each other, chum. If I were you, I'd go back to Chicago and hope your friend Tobin just gets lucky."

"The first thing I'll need to know," Jim said slowly, "is where this Blake crowd hangs out."

An hour later, he found himself in a doorway across the street from the McNaughton Bowling Alleys. It was in the north end of the small city. To the south, the fires of smelters along the river turned the low clouds orange. The shadow of the city against the glare somehow made him think of tombstones in the rain. This was going to be a crazy way to do it, he thought bleakly, but if you were going to do anything at all, you might as well stick to what you knew something about.

He saw the man called Pinks and another man come out of the alley and start down the street. He took a deep breath and wished the newspaperman had given him a gun. Well, you couldn't have everything.

He crossed the street behind them at a lope, then slowed to a walk to keep them from hearing his footsteps. He reached them just as they stopped by a car.

The thud of his hand-edge into the other man's neck had the dull sound of a book dropped on a bed. Pinks whirled and caught Jim's hand across his windpipe. He went down wheezing. Jim picked up the other man first. He stood him against the car and let fly at his jaw. It made a popping sound. The man turned around and faced the car and fell like a log. "You," Jim said to Pinks. "Get up."

Pinks held his throat and gurgled. With a grunt, Jim pulled him to his feet and shoved his head against the car door. Pinks pawed at him. Jim sent a fist into his middle, and the hefty man went stumbling across the sidewalk into the side of a building. The next moment he was on his back, a bruise starting beside his eye. Jim said, "Tell your boss to let Tobin go."

He frisked them but neither was carrying a gun. He left them there and walked back downtown.

It was midnight when he reached the girl's flat. His feet hurt, and he was a little winded from walking fast. "Hi," he said when she let him in. "Round One for our side."

"Are you all right?"

"Well, I'm a little pooped, but I'll live. That bowling alley must be three miles from here."

"You're a nut, do you know that? Why don't you stretch out on the couch. I'll put some coffee on." She stopped. "Did you have anything to eat today?"

"What is it with you? Don't you like people unless they're bums? Yes, I had something to eat today."

"I think I'll make you some soup just the same. I thought Marines did a lot of walking. What's so much about three miles?"

"Marines don't wear shoes like these. They looked pretty nifty when I bought them, but they sure aren't made for the footsoldier." He gave her a tired grin. "Dorothy? That what you said your name was?"

"And don't call me Dottie. And don't fall asleep before your soup's ready."

When he wanted to set her alarm for one o'clock, she stared at him. "What are you going to do? Get a good forty-minutes' sleep?"

"Gotta keep 'em on the run," he said. "Don't worry. I'll be more awake after forty-five minutes than I would after two hours."

At one thirty, he stood yawning in the shadows down the block from a bar called the River Club. Brother, he thought, six months out of the service and you're coming apart. At least the alarm hadn't waked Dorothy. He had put it under his pillow on the couch so she wouldn't hear it in her bedroom. Funny, a girl like that waiting on tables, probably one seamy character after another giving her a hard time, yet in comes a perfect stranger with a hard-luck story and she closes up shop to lend a hand. With a girl like that, a guy'd have a real team on his side . . .

He stiffened. A man and woman had come out of the River Club. They were turning down the street toward Jim. The discription the newspaperman had given him of a torpedo called Al Janey was of a tall slick sort who liked the River Club. And this girl was a blonde, and Janey's girl was supposed to be a blonde.

Jim walked toward them as though on his way somewhere. As they drew abreast, Jim heard the man say, "You and your lousy champagne. Hold your breath and count ten. That always stopped the hiccups for me."

Jim hit him in the middle of the face. Janey ran backward out into the street and sat down. Jim walked out and picked him up. The woman screamed. Jim said, "Tell your boss

to let Tobin go." He sank a fist into Janey's beltline. The tall man folded over it with a gasp and sank to his knees. Jim ran across the street into the darkness, as people began to come out of the River Club to see what the screaming was about.

It was two thirty in the morning when he got back to Dorothy's flat. He took off his shoes in the hall and let himself in, tiptoeing across the floor to the couch. He couldn't seem to get his breath. You're getting old, boy. You just can't take all this night life any more. He turned on the table lamp and set the alarm for 4, and put it back under his pillow. Well, Bill, maybe it won't work, but we're sure giving it a try.

At 4, the buzzing in his ear woke him again, but as he sat up, his body felt as thought it had been drugged. Wow. Some duty.

"You aren't going out now?"

He blinked sleepily. Dorothy stood in the bedroom doorway, housecoat clutched around her neck. "Well, that's the idea, I guess."

"Look at you. You look as though you had pneumonia already."

"Always look like this when I wake up." He got up, rubbing the back of his neck. "Well, see you in a little while."

"For heaven's sake, let me make you something to eat, at least."

"You're just bound and determined to feed somebody. Look, it'll be light in another hour. Lets take a rain check on the chow."

"A nut. Everybody I know is either a heel or a nut." She looked worried. "Jim, I don't want you to go out."

"You know, you'd make somebody a good mother."

At quarter to five, he had reached the Crestwood Arms, an older apartment in what looked as though it had once been a wealthy neighborhood but had since gone to seed. In the foyer he found the name he was looking for: R. Knapp. Well, that was what newspapermen were for, to keep you informed. He tried the inner door. It was locked. Yawning, he pressed Knapp's button. There was finally a buzz at the door, and he let himself in.

Knapp lived on the third floor. He went up in the lift, trying to blink the sleep out of his eyes. Be one hell of a ding-a-ling if this Knapp had a gun. Talk about crazy.

He got out of the elevator, tense now, and turned down the corridor. There was a door open halfway down, and a man was standing there in a bathrobe and pajamas. He was stocky and had black curly hair and a mustache. Jim said, "Mr. Knapp?"

"Yeah. Who are you?"

"Oh, I'm sure glad I found you." Jim walked up to him and drove a fist into his jaw. The stocky man fell against the door, astounded, and Jim pushed him back into his room.

"What the hell is this—?" Knapp asked, alarm and anger in his eyes.

"What do you think?" Jim pulled back his fist and Knapp drew back.

"I don't even know you! What's the matter, you crazy or something?"

"Sure. I'm going to beat your head off."

"Now . . . now wait a minute . . . !"

Jim followed him until Knapp was in a corner. Suddenly he threw a punch straight out and caught Jim in the jaw. He lunged forward as Jim went down. Jim rolled clear as Knapp came down and kicked him in the chest. The stocky man fell backward, and Jim jumped up and leaped on him as he tried to reach a table. Both men rolled over. Knapp's arms tightened around his chest and squeezed. This son was strong. Jim chopped the edge of his hand into the bridge of his nose. Knapp let go and Jim got up and swung for Knapp's jaw. The blow sent its impact all the way up to Jim's shoulder. Knapp fell backward onto the table and lay there, feet hanging down. Puffing, Jim said, "Could've used a guy like you in the outfit." He slapped Knapp's face until he opened his eyes. Jim said, "Want any more?"

"What—what's it all about?"

"Tell your boss to let Tobin go." Jim pushed him roughly. Knapp fell off the table to the floor. Jim opened the table drawer. There lay a loaded revolver. Jim picked it up and put it in his pocket, then crossed the room and yanked out the telephone cord. Knapp, on his feet now, said, "I don't know who you are, Mac, but don't think I can't find out."

"My name's Fry. The next time I see you I'll really do a job on you. That real clear? The next time I see you!"

Back in Dorothy's apartment, he dropped to the couch in exhaustion. "Nothing like working nights."

"What happened to your chin?"

He shook his head wryly. "Brother Knapp was no pushover. Am I bushed! Hey, you know you're quite a guy, giving me a hand like this and all. I sure wish I knew how to pay you back."

"Did it ever occur to you that your friend Tobin must think you're quite a guy, yourself?" She had put coffee on and sat down, housecoat pulled tightly around her, to look at him anxiously. "Seriously, Jim, you've gone as far as you can now. They'll be looking for you the next time . . ."

He lay back on the couch. "Yeah. Now how can I get around that?"

"Well for one thing, you can . . ." Her voice trailed off. He was asleep. She sighed and shook her head. She picked up his blanket from the floor and covered him with it. "Well, Mister, it's sure something to see you try, anyhow."

It was two that afternoon when Jim woke up. The flat was empty. He picked up the blanket and folded it and went out to the kitchen. Dorothy had apparently started to wash the dishes and then had to leave to get to work on time. He finished them for her and then just stood there. You couldn't go on sponging off her. Would she get sore if you brought some food in?

He checked his wallet. Sixty-five dollars. Back in Chicago he had twenty more in the bank. At least his pension check would be in in a few days. But what good it would do him sitting in his mail box in Chicago, he didn't know. If only the hardware store had said he could have his job back when he got home. He'd got the job after his discharge, but the owner wouldn't give him a leave of absence. He'd had to quit. Well, what could you do?

He went out and found a delicatessen and bought some soup and cold cuts. On his way back to the flat, he picked up some beer and a newspaper as well. As he let himself back into Dorothy's apartment, a feeling of coming home came over him. What a prize you are—know a girl one day and you move right in.

He had a couple of sandwiches and a bottle of beer, and wondered what to do next. With all the lawyers and private detectives and whatnot who knew how to handle stuff like this, why had Bill ever picked on you? You'd probably get the poor son killed.

By six o'clock, it was getting dark, and Jim picked up the gun and went out. They'd probably be laying for you now. This Roger Blake would have a couple of guys around his place, and the rest would probably be going around in pairs. What about that trucking business of his, though?

Jim found it in a phone book in a drug store and walked across town to Blake's garage. There was a light on inside but the big doors were closed. He took a deep breath and thought, here goes nothing, and took out the pistol and went in.

"Hey," said a mechanic, "we're—" He looked at the gun and stopped.

A man in a sports coat came out of the office. "What's the matter, Mickey?"

Jim said, "Just don't get excited. I got enough to do without shooting you, too. Here." He tossed the man in the sports coat a package.

The man looked at it uneasily. "What is it?"

"Sugar. Open it up."

The man in the sports coat had trouble. It was as though his fingers had all got thick.

Jim said, "Now start pouring it in some of those gas tanks."

"What?"

Jim fired the gun. Its boom shook the barnlike room. A chunk of concrete hopped on the floor near Sports Coat's feet. "I'm a pretty lousy shot," Jim lied. "Next one might hit you somewhere."

Sports Coat looked as though he had been standing in the rain. Perspiration ran down his face, and the box of sugar began to shake in his hands. "S—S—sure! Sure!"

There was ten trucks inside. When the man in the sports coat had poured

sugar in the gas tanks of five of them, Jim said, "That's enough. Now when you call Blake, just tell him to let Tobin go, you got that?"

Roger Blake's apartment was in a modernistic two-story building, with a gleaming aluminum projection that extended across the sidewalk from the front doors to protect you in bad weather. Jim passed it and went to a drug store and phoned him.

"Hello?" It was the voice of the nice, clean-cut young man who had stopped him the night before.

"Blake? This is Fry."

"Oh yes, the man who doesn't take good advice."

"You want to talk this over now?"

"Where are you?"

"In the bar down the street from your garage," Jim lied. "Don't bring your friends."

"Anything you say," Blake said smoothly. "I'll be there in five minutes."

Jim went back toward Blake's place, and waited in the shadows across the street. Presently, three men came through the lobby and out the door. One was the nice, clean-cut man. Jim wiped the sweat off his forehead with his sleeve and waited until they were clear of the door, then leveled the revolver and fired, and then fired again and then again. At the first blast the glass came out of the door, and the three men stopped as though frozen on the sidewalk. At the second, they were throwing themselves to the ground, and with the third there was a *spang* and a thud as the bullet ricocheted off a car bumper into the side of the apartment. For a second, Jim stood there squinting at them through the darkness. They laid as flat as they could and Jim ran down a dark driveway on his side of the street, cut through a back yard, ran as hard as he could across a vacant lot, and caught a bus that was just pulling away from the corner. The driver said, "You didn't have to run for it, Mac. There'll be another one along in ten minutes."

His side ached from running. He said, panting for breath, "I'm a . . . little late . . . as it is."

He got off the bus a block from Dorothy's cafe, but instead of going in he crossed the street. He'd been enough trouble already. They'd have every cop in town looking for him now. The best thing he could do was stay as far from her as possible.

He stepped into a doorway and lit a cigarette. Was Blake sweating yet? Well, he'd never expect you to turn up at his truck terminal again tonight. Why not hit there now?

He walked it, a little surprised to find himself wondering what Dorothy was doing now. You must be nuts. What would she ever see in an old shoe like you?

"Move and you're dead."

The voice came from behind. Something hard rammed into his back. He closed his eyes. Brother . . .

A hand felt over his chest and middle, found the revolver. The voice said, "Now walk."

He walked toward the garage, breathing deeply. He'd been shot once in Korea. He knew what it was like. Boy. Boy, oh boy.

"Inside."

He went in. There was Roger Blake, the All-American-looking guy. And Pinks and Janey and Knapp. And three men Jim didn't know.

"Well now, Mr. Fry, you just have no idea how happy I am to see you."

"I got an idea."

Blake said, "Pinks? I believe Mr. Fry's first debt is to you."

The hefty man with the peppermint smell hitched at his belt and said, "Boss, you're a real sport." He swung for Jim's jaw. Pain shot through Jim's head in a pure white light. He staggered but kept his feet. If nothing else, you could burn the son up.

Pinks gave him a surprised look and stepped back and let go. It was as though a flashbulb had popped in Jim's brain. The next thing he knew his face was wet and he was on his back on the garage floor, his head a balloon of pain. Standing over him with a bucket was Knapp, the stocky man with the curly hair and mustache. "Come on, boss. You gave Pinks a crack. What about me?"

Roger Blake said, "You're being infantile. Mr. Fry, I expect as a Marine you'd rather walk than be dragged. Help him up, Knapp."

Jim shook his head dazedly as the stocky man stood him up. "Walk where?" he asked in a thick voice.

"Oh, come now, Mr. Fry. Your imagination's better than that. Take him out to the car, gentlemen. We'll stop by the river on our way home."

Pinks kept to his left and Knapp to his right as they reached the door. Jim thought, last chance, boy. He shot both elbows out. Pinks gave a grunt, Knapp a gasp, and Jim dove through the door and somersalted across the sidewalk to the street. A pistol's clap broke out behind him, and then two more. He got to one knee, and dove behind a parked car, hit the pavement rolling and came up running. Shots cracked the night behind. He ran into a cafe, through the kitchen and out the back door. He was in a dark yard. He ran across it, came to a fence, pulled himself up and over. He heard shouts. He lay on the ground, chest heaving. Now what?

Japs had surrounded his patrol once. With no way out, he'd attacked. They had been surprised and he'd broken through. Well, these sons couldn't be any better fighters than those Japs. Time to get going, boy.

He made his way to the next street and soon found himself at the rear of Blake's garage. He picked his way through a yard heaped with old car parts, discarded stoves and broken furniture, and peered through a back window. A mechanic and another man were talking in the middle of the floor. The rest of them must have gone out to look for him. He watched until the two men went into the office, then climbed through the window. He got to one of the trucks whose gasoline hadn't been fouled, and got in. The big doors were closed. Sure be funny if this didn't work. He started the truck up. The two men ran out of the office. He put it in gear and headed for the doors. They burst out like great wings, the cracking of the wood as sharp as an artillery piece. Blinded for a moment, he careened across the street, yanked on the wheel, roared around the corner.

He drove some six blocks before turning back. Blake and Company would have heard the racket and got back to the garage by now. He rubbed his face. What did you expect, soldier? Sandwiches and free beer?

He pulled back onto the street the garage was on, slowing the truck until he had almost reached it. Then he stepped on the gas. The big truck hummed under him. Now! He swung the wheel, opened the door and jumped. He hit the pavement as the truck hit the smashed door. His legs couldn't keep up with him. The street flew up into his face as the truck tore away part of the wall and piled on through it into the garage. The crash inside sounded like an explosion.

Get up, boy. You can do it. Get up.

He lurched to his feet and staggered into the garage. The floor was strewn with debris. The truck had slammed into another and overturned it. He slammed a fist into the first one and grabbed the pistol from his hand as the others woke up. One of them fired wildly. Another was bringing up his pistol. Jim dropped to one knee and got off two shots. One hit a truck and the other broke a window. The man trying to aim dropped his gun, and the one who had fired at him threw his pistol across the floor. "Don't shoot!"

Big Pinks had no gun, but swore and ran at Jim with his fists. No time for rules. Jim shot him in the knee. Pinks went down on one side, and stayed there like a listing ship. The rest stared at him with white faces, their hands high. In the distance sirens started to scream. Jim picked up some guns and stuck them in his belt. "You," he said to Knapp. "Come on."

The stocky crook obeyed with a start. He almost broke into a run as Jim gestured toward the door. Outside, Jim pointed to the right. "Get going." They made it to the corner as police cars reached the garage. "Down this street," Jim said. When they were in shadows, he said, "Okay. Hold it."

Exhaustion had swept over him like some unhealthy wind. He found himself breathing in sighs. Don't poop out now, old shoe. "Where did Blake go?"

"I—I don't know."

"Then I don't need you any more, do I?"

"Wait! Wait a minute! I know.

He—he's got a place over on South Street . . ."

"What did he go over there for?"

Knapp was breathing hard. "That—that's where we have Bill Tobin. When you got away, Blake said he'd use your friend to flush you out."

"Let's go."

South Street was a narrow, brick street of machine shops, boarded-up junk yards and warehouses. By the time they reached it, they had walked eight blocks and Jim leaned against a telephone pole to rest. His head and leg ached from the spill he'd taken from the truck. It seemed as though he was walking from memory. "Now where?"

"The place with the light down the block there. It's a kind of used-tool place."

"Where's Blake's car?"

"In back, I guess."

The alleyway was dirt, with a weedy hump down the middle. The shadows of warehouses rose all around them, and the yard behind the store was dark. Jim said, "You go in first. Go in talking. Say the cops are looking all over for me."

"What—what are you going to do?"

"Who knows? But I'll be doing it right behind you."

Knapp crossed the wooden landing in the rear hesitantly, and Jim gave him a push. "Start talking. Call out it's you."

"Boss? It's me! Knapp!" Knapp opened the door and started into a lighted room. Beyond him, Jim saw Blake jump up from a table with a gun in his hand. Knapp said, "The cops are looking all over town for . . ."

Jim kicked him. Knapp stumbled forward. Blake, pistol ready, leaned to the right and then to the left, trying to get a shot around Knapp. Suddenly he just sat down. "This is absurd."

Holding pistols on both men, Jim said, "What about Tobin?" Blake turned around in his chair to face the wall. "Your friend is in the next room. Take him will you, and get out of here."

"That's not enough? How do I know you won't grab him again?"

"Mr. Fry, you've beaten up my men, smashed my trucks and wrecked my terminal. Do you know who I had to answer to after you shot up my apartment? Do you know who's waiting for me at the terminal now?"

Jim just looked at him. "Cops?"

"Newspapermen. Nasty, nosey, nit-picking newspapermen, all wanting to know about the gang war. Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland—how did they all hear about it?"

Jim thought of the balding reporter with the old typewriter and dead cigar in the newspaper office downtown. He'd found a way to give you a hand after all . . .

Jim said, "What's that got to do with your grabbing Tobin again?"

"Mr. Fry, I quit the numbers and got into trucking to put my money into a legitimate business. I can't afford this kind of limelight. If I could have got your friend's customers without too big a smell, all well and good. Now, thanks to you, we have the smell. Very well. Just promise me you won't let your friend catch cold or get hit by a car. If those prying character assassins pin anything else on me, I won't have a customer left."

Jim took his gun and went into the next room. There was a redheaded man tied in a chair and gagged, his eyes wide. Jim said, "Boy, you spent the whole war sitting on your duff, and I see you're still at it."

When the gag was out of his mouth, Bill Tobin said, "I don't believe it. I thought I'd had it."

"You always were more trouble than you were worth. Are you all right? There's a guy we have to go see . . ."

The "guy" was at his dilapidated typewriter in the newspaper office, cold cigar in the corner of his mouth, pecking away with two fingers. The floor was littered with empty coffee cartons, sandwich papers and newspapers from other cities. Jim said, "Hi."

"What the hell are you doing alive? Here I just finished the most beautiful obit. I ever wrote, and what good is it?"

Jim told him what had happened, and Bill added, "But we'd still be up the creek if you hadn't called in the press."

The newspaperman shrugged. "All I did was put the story on the wire to see what good it would do. You seen that girl yet? I haven't been able to get two sentences down in a row for answering that damned phone. Way she's been calling about you reminds me of my ex-wife. Used to call all over town about me, that woman."

It was two in the morning when Jim got to Dorothy's flat. Bill had flatly refused to come. "What do you need *me* for? Just tell her you're a vice-president in a big trucking company. If that doesn't do it, nothing will." Now Jim wasn't so sure. What would she think, his coming around like this?

"You're all right!" She stood in the doorway, staring at him. "Well, don't just stand there. I'll make some coffee and heat up some stew."

"Still trying to feed me."

"What's so funny about it? Look at you. You look like a bum. Heels and stray cats, that's all I seem to know." ●

Drifter's Gold

Continued from page 39

occupied by male passengers.

Jim Land, the wavy-haired blond giant, sprawled in the chair nearer the rail, in T-shirt and chinos, acknowledged his casual introduction with a grunt. He was about 30, with a squarish face and heavily-muscled forearms.

American, Austin decided; maybe an oil crew boss or 'dozer jockey returning from a leave. He had met many Jim Lands throughout the Near East. English, Dutch or Scandanavian, as well as American. Mostly they were short on conversation with strangers, fluent in Arabic or Swahili with their native work gangs.

The other man, George Goral, was short and heavyset, without being fat. A Lebanese, he had glossy, thick black hair, eyes with a deceptive softness, and a smiling mask moulded on an oval face. His open sport shirt was white and expensive, his white ducks and shoes spotless.

"Welcome aboard, Mr. Austin," he said cordially. "The steward informed us there would be another passenger. Do you care to join us?"

His hand motioned hospitably towards the unopened steamer chairs. Austin became aware of the impressive diamond ring sparkling on his index finger, the heavy scent of Beirut Rose Hair Dressing emanating from his glossy hair.

George Goral had an air of politeness, as much a part of his stock in trade as his fixed smile. It was a characteristic of many Lebanese he had encountered in his travels, Austin reflected, including a murderous gun-runner on the Azerbaijan border, and a slaver in Khorramshahr who specialized in supplying young European girls, at fancy prices, to wealthy Persian Gulf sheikhs.

Unfolding a chair, Austin settled down in it, between Goral and Land. He had already decided that he didn't particularly care for the company of either, but he didn't wish to appear stand-offish. Whether he liked it or not, he'd be seeing a lot of them before the ship docked in Bombay.

The *Zaida* was moving cautiously into the Canal when her fourth passenger appeared on deck, and, to Austin, she was an unexpected and pleasant surprise.

Jeanne Mazar was a Eurasian, and exotically beautiful. Dark-haired, with an intriguing slant to wide, greenish eyes, she moved into his vision with quiet feline grace, wearing a short, coolie coat. Open, it revealed the scantiest of white bikinis. The bikini left little to the imagination.

Austin observed, with unqualified approval, that her breasts were round and firm, her stomach flat and the curves of her hips, below a slender waist, sculptured perfection. Her legs were long and gorgeous. Her slim feet rested on open bathing clogs. Her skin was poured honey, both in color and smoothness.

His first thought was "God! what a beautiful package!" His second was a resigned "What the hell is she

doing on an old scow like this?" She answered both with a nod and a cool, sophisticated smile.

Admiring male scrutiny obviously was no novelty to the exotic-eyed Eurasian. She was well qualified and thoroughly experienced in utilizing it to advantage, as might sorrowfully be attested by a wealthy French banker in Algiers, an Iranian diplomat in Teheran, a Texas oil man in Cairo, a British rubber planter in Singapore, and at least a half dozen other males elsewhere who had been infatuated by her charms. She had been around. Plenty.

"Miss Mazar, Mr. Austin," said Goral, playing the part of host.

Her smile became warm and friendly as she acknowledged the introduction, and almost immediately things began looking up for Ken Austin. The voyage to Bombay aboard the *Zaida* was no longer something to be endured, but a cruise with an enchanting prospect.

The prospect was realized sooner than he had dared anticipate.

He sat beside the charming Eurasian, in the stifling little mess salon presided over by the skipper, Cant. Armand Dupre, a round-faced, talkative Frenchman. He stood with her at the rail later, and together they watched the minarets of Port Said slowly recede above the heat haze of the day.

For a long time after that, with their steamer chairs side by side, they chatted on deck, sharing the coolness of the night and the brilliance of the stars.

And, when at length he suggested that they have a night cap in his cabin, she was smilingly agreeable.

He opened the bottle of excellent Scotch he had providentially packed in one of his bags, and rang the bell above the wash basin. Makandja appeared a few minutes later.

"Think you can round up some cracked ice and another glass?"

"Yes, sir!" the Madrassi answered, and happily revised his estimate of the amount of the tip he expected at the end of the voyage. This American, he assured himself, was a real *chuki-m'diz*, a party fellow, and probably was good for five pounds, Egyptian, instead of three. Perhaps even more.

He reappeared promptly with two glasses, a bowl of ice and a pitcher of water on a tray, and a conspiratorial grin on his face. He looked like a well fed rhesus monkey.

Austin made two drinks—on the rocks. Jeanne Mazar sat on the edge of his berth, idly watching.

He was acutely conscious of her gorgeous legs, crossed in provocative display below her white cotton dress, a spike-heeled shoe dangling carelessly from the toe of a slender foot.

Seductive as hell, he thought to himself. He handed her a glass, and glancing downward at her fine shoulders and the tempting cleft in the neckline of her dress, the blood suddenly began racing through his body.

Her smile was a challenge that he resisted until after their second drink, and when he took her in his arms he felt her tremor of anticipation. Her face was uptilted, her soft, sensuous lips parted.

"Austin!" she whispered, and it scunded like an urgent command.

He gathered her up eagerly, and her arms closed strongly around his neck. She was still clutching him tightly when he placed her on the berth.

Lost in a transport of ecstasy, the ease and rapidity of the conquest never entered his mind. . . .

Hours later he drifted off into satiated, tranquil sleep, with Jeanne Mazar in his arms.

And when he woke up, shortly before dawn, she had gone.

* * *

Moving slowly out of the Suez Canal, the *Zaida* dropped her dapper Egyptian pilot into a motor boat that scurried alongside, and, with a series of shudders that ran from bow to stern, increased her speed to 12 knots as she came into the glassy Gulf of Suez.

Amidships, the passengers' quarters became a tiny world in limbo, monotonously suspended between molten sky and lacquer sea.

The *Zaida* offered no entertainment and the minimum of conveniences, leaving passengers to their own devices. Deck space was too limited for walking, and the blazing sunlight slanted under the awning, and heated the iron deck plates like a gridiron long before mid-morning.

As the ship plodded along the arid coast of Sinai and into the Red Sea, her passengers idled away the days in steamer chairs, engaging in sporadic conversation, for lack of anything else to do, or gazing out across the sun-blistered rail to sea.

George Goral was the most conversational of Austin's fellow passengers. He was an importer, he said, enroute from Beirut to Bombay to visit one of his agencies.

Jim Land, for the most part, was silent. He volunteered scarcely any information about himself, other than that he had been in the Near East for several years. Usually he sat in the background, quietly listening.

Somehow—and unexplainably—Austin had a feeling that Land and Goral had known each other somewhere else, before meeting as fellow passengers on the *Zaida*.

The Eurasian was also somewhat of an enigma. Their relations were impersonal and friendly during the day, ardent and tempestuous in his cabin, which became their nightly rendezvous.

It was not Jeanne Mazar's first shipboard romance. Of this Austin felt certain. She had handled it with a sophisticated discreetness which quickly won his admiration, and he fondly believed that neither Goral nor Land suspected what was going on between them.

Often, late in the afternoon, the skipper joined them under the awning. Capt. Armand Dupre was socially inclined, and had an eye for women, as he readily admitted. Especially the Eurasian. He paid her many gallant compliments, basked in the smiles she gave him from her steamer chair, and assured her, over and over again, that no one as beautiful as she had ever ornamented his ship.

"But surely you have had women passengers before," she smiled.

"Zut alors!" his round face made an expressive grimace. "Dried-up missionaries, school teachers, veiled Arabs."

"Arabs, Captain?" George Goral showed interest.

Capt. Dupre nodded expansively. He enjoyed talking to passengers.

"But of course! The *Zaida* formerly carried deck passengers. Sometimes as many as a hundred Arabs and their women at a time, crowded down there on the forward well deck. The Arabs made their hedjaz, their pilgrimage to Mecca, and they brought their women with them. We picked them up in East African ports, and carried them over to Jidda. It was a most profitable trade."

"Why'd you stop it?" Jim Land asked curiously. "The hedjaz still goes on."

Dupre shrugged his shoulders.

"Last year, we were en route to Port Said from Jidda, when the *Zaida's* diesels stopped for want of fuel. Diable! This was odd, for the 12-foot-deep tank in the forward well deck was supposed to be almost full of diesel oil.

"McGowan, our chief engineer, dove to the bottom of the tank and examined the outlet valves. Merde! Nothing is more foul than diesel oil to swim in. It clots the pores of the body, clogs the nose and ears. Paugh!

"He came up, had us pass him a line, and went down a second time. When he surfaced again he told us to haul in on the line, and there was the corpse of a young Arab girl lashed to the end of it. A pretty little thing, about 18 years old.

"The suction of the engine had drawn her body against the outlet valves, cutting off the fuel supply. We found a ten-inch *kungi*, one of those murderous desert daggers, buried to the hilt between her breasts."

"And how had it happened, Captain?" Goral prompted gently.

Dupre shrugged again. "Pas que je sache? I have seen many things happen aboard ships on the Red Sea run. Murder, slave trading, the smuggling of narcotics, gun running.

"Several years ago, the old League of Nations created a slavery suppression patrol, and appointed the British Navy to do the policing. Of course the British took that to mean complete authority over all crime, and the Red Sea Patrol made an investigation. Nothing whatever came

of it, except that our owners, the Eppinas Greek Line, were forbidden to carry any more deck passengers.

"Naturally, we've obeyed these orders. But the British are suspicious. Every so often one of their Red Sea patrol craft looks us over for possible violation of laws on the trip to Jidda."

Austin caught the significant glance that was exchanged by Goral and Land. It was as though they shared a secret.

Come to think of it, they always seemed to be together, Austin mused. Since boarding the *Zaida*, he hadn't seen one without the other being close by.

The *Zaida* cruised on southward, passed Jidda, and the peaks of the Jabal Hijaz reached skyward, with the ugliness of broken teeth backgrounding the rolling sands of the Saudi Arabian and Yemen coast.

She was still a good distance from Bab el Mandeb, and a 90 degree swing into the Gulf of Aden, when Austin woke up as usual one morning, with the faint fragrance of perfume lingering in his cabin.

He yawned and stretched, reflecting that Jeanne Mazar was by now undoubtedly sound asleep in her own berth. He had become accustomed to her silent pre-dawn disappearances after their nights of ardent romancing, when she discreetly returned to her own cabin before anyone else was astir.

He got out of bed, donned a pair of shorts, and then switched on the bulkhead light above the wash basin. He reached for his razor, inserted a fresh blade, and swore when he glanced down at the basin—Like a straight red pencil line, a single file of tiny mirazi ants was crawling up the wooden bulkhead, and across the chipped porcelain basin to the soap dish.

Tiny red ants are fairly common throughout the tropics, from Recife to Jakarta, and are only a minor, non-biting nuisance of the insect world. They can be vanquished easily with bug spray.

Curious as to where they came from, Austin's glance followed the line downward beneath the wash basin. They were streaming from an opening no bigger than a nail hole, about a foot above the deck.

He inspected the hole more closely, and saw that a squarish panel had been cut in the bulkhead.

"Fairly recently," he muttered, noting traces of sawdust on the deck. The location of the panel puzzled him, for it appeared to serve no useful purpose.

On an impulse, he inserted the blade of his pocket knife in the crack, and probed. The blade of the knife, when he withdrew it, was covered with a powdery substance that looked very much like dried shoe-whitener.

Austin's eyebrows furrowed. Whoever had cut the panel apparently had not bothered to repaint the cracks. Or perhap had been presed for time.

With mounting curiosity, he inserted the knife blade again, and pried. The square of half-inch wood came out easily enough, disclosing a small canvas sack tied at the neck with string. Reaching for it, he was astounded by its heaviness.

"Now what the hell—" he muttered, and untied the string.

The gleam of old British gold sovereigns met his eyes. The sack was filled with them! Last struck in 1917, though already disappearing rapidly from circulation in 1914, shortly after the outbreak of World War I, they represented a literal fortune in gold.

He picked up several with shaking hands, and examined them more closely. Most of them bore dates of the early 20th Century, a few the years of the late 19th.

A kaleidoscope of thoughts revolved rapidly in Austin's mind as he fingered the coins. Thoughts in which, he admitted to himself, keeping this treasure trove predominated.

I'll pack 'em in one of my bags, he told himself, smuggle them ashore in Bombay and—

It was the word 'smuggle' that gave him reason to pause and reflect.

He was well aware that gold in any form could not be brought into India. Several warnings had been issued by the Ministry of Treasury, and newspapers throughout the Near East had been carrying stories about the activities of daring gangs of gold smugglers. The latter were raising hell with India's financial structure, devaluating the rupee, and undermining the entire country's economy with their millions of dollars of smuggled gold.

They bought it for $32 an ounce in the oil-rich countries of the Near East, slipped it surreptitiously into India by ships from Red Sea and Persian Gulf ports, or by caravan over the 3,000 mile-long Pakistan frontier, and sold it for $60 an ounce in the black markets of Bombay, Madras and New Delhi, almost doubling their money on each trip.

It was a tidy, but risky, profit. Indian authorities were cracking down hard, imposing severe penalties on anyone caught involved in the racket.

Austin came down to earth with a jolt.

There was more to this than the possibility of being caught by the Indian customs or police, and being sentenced to a long term in a crawling, stinking prison. There was the much more imminent risk of being murdered by whoever was using his cabin to hide the gold, *if* they found out he had discovered the cache.

His lips tightened into a grim line, and he chewed this over. Who was behind the gold smuggling on the *Zaida?*

Some of the crew? No, it didn't seem likely. They would have had ample opportunity to do a more workmanlike job in concealing the thin saw cuts around the panel. Whoever had sawed it had done so in haste.

Goral and Land? Far more probable, he decided. According to the steward they had come aboard the *Zaida* on the evening before the sailing from Port Said.

There was something else the Madrassi had told him: Jeanne Mazar also had come aboard the evening before. If *she* was in on the scheme, he, Austin, was not only a pigeon but a prize idiot as well!

With rising anger, he stepped to the berth and sat down in the spot where she had sat, and where she had displayed her long, gorgeous legs on their first evening together.

Sure, the panel under the wash basin could be seen from this position. It could be spotted from anywhere on the berth!

Controlling his temper, Austin put the sack back in its hiding place, replaced the panel, and rang for the steward. He was careful to stand in front of the wash basin when the Madrassi appeared.

"I've seen a few ants around. Got an extra can of bug killer in your locker?"

"Yes, sar!" the Madrassi grinned apologetically. "I shall attend to the spraying as soon as you go to breakfast."

"Oh it's not that important. Just bring me the can and I'll take care of them next time I see them."

Austin had no intention of letting the steward poke around under the wash basin.

"By the way," he added casually. "Did Miss Mazar come aboard at the same time as Mr. Goral and Mr. Land, the night before we sailed?"

"Yes, sar!" The steward's eyebrows wrinkled in thought. "You see, sar, at first I was notified that we would carry only three passengers, so I gave them their choice of cabins. It is quite customary.

"Mr. Goral selected this one because the port hole faces forward, and there is more air when we are underway. On the following morning, the ship's agent informed me that you had booked Cabin Four, so I transferred him to Cabin One."

"I hope he didn't mind changing?"

"Not in the least, sar. He, himself, pointed out that he had originally booked Cabin One."

The steward departed in quest of a can of bug juice, and Austin lit a cigarette. What he had been told could explain several things. Goral might have brought the gold aboard and hidden it in the cabin. Then, when he had transferred to Cabin One, he had been well satisfied to leave it in the cache. Should the *Zaida* be searched by the authorities before the end of the voyage, and the gold uncovered, it would be Austin, not Goral, who'd be suspected of smuggling.

It was a perfect setup, Austin had

to concede. All Goral had to do was sit back, enjoy the voyage, and keep Austin's cabin under observation, to be sure the gold wasn't discovered. If it was, Goral then would be prepared to take other measures.

Like, for instance, putting a knife in my back and dropping me into the deep tank, Austin thought wrathfully. Goral had seemed unusually interested in the skipper's story about the Arab girl.

His wrath was suddenly replaced by chagrin. He was thinking now about the beautiful, sexy Eurasian.

It had been she who had kept him under observation for Goral!

In their nightly rendezvous in his cabin, it had been easy for her to see whether or not the cache had been disturbed.

He crushed his cigarette in annoyance in the wash basin. It was more than mortifying to his male vanity to find out that all of Jeanne Mazar's supposed ardor and passion had been sheer subterfuge.

* * *

When Austin went out on deck after breakfasting alone, Goral and Land were already in their deck chairs, and he tried to keep his voice casual in greeting them both.

The Eurasian wasn't on deck, nor did he expect to see her until much later. She was a late sleeper, seldom appearing at the breakfast table.

Glancing out across the oil-slick sea, Austin saw the island of Kabir Hanish, sweltering in the heat haze well off to starboard; which indicated that they were far down the coast of Yemen and approaching the Aden Protectorate.

Looking forward, he saw Capt. Dupre standing in the wing of the bridge, and he debated whether or not to take the skipper into his confidence. He decided not to, at least for the time being. Play it cadgy, Austin, he counseled himself; wait awhile and see what develops.

Jeanne Mazar came out on deck wearing a short cotton coolie coat and a scanty bikini as usual. This was a green one he had not seen before, and he noted that it matched the exotic green of her slanted eyes.

She seemed rested, and at perfect ease. Greeting her three fellow passengers, she settled comfortably in a chair, and George Goral promptly engaged her in small talk, including Austin and Land in the conversation.

Land sat with his back to the bulkhead, listening in silence. Appraising him anew, Austin understood now what had been puzzling him about the blond giant. He had wondered why Goral, unquestionably an intelligent and articulate man, was always in the company of the taciturn Land. And now he had it figured out: Land was less of a companion than a bodyguard or hired retainer, perhaps even the Lebanese's strong arm boy as well!

Goral was talking now with animation. Something about an experience while pearl trading in Bahrein. It was while the man talked that Austin, listening idly, heard a sudden commotion below, on the forward well deck. A moment later, the short, stocky figure of Davi, a Malay oiler, appeared abruptly in the engine room companionway. Wearing only pink shorts, he was brandishing a wicked, wide-bladed barong. The long knife flashed in the sunlight as he began swinging it over his head. Then, suddenly, he screamed.

"Kalo Allah mao!"

It was an hysterical scream, high, thin and terrifying, and it chilled Austin's blood.

Only once before he had heard a scream as unearthly as this; almost a year before, from the foam-flecked lips of a Malay stevedore, unloading Lend-Lease cargo on a wharf in Istanbul. The Malay had run the length of the wharf, shrieking and slashing at bystanders with a barong, and had killed five men before he was cornered on The Street Called Straight, and brought down in a hail of police bullets.

"Kalo Allah mao!" Davi screamed again.

"He's gone amok!" Austin muttered grimly, looking down over the rail.

"Crazy bastard!" Land was beside him at the rail, a .38 automatic in his hand.

Goral also jumped to his feet. His arm shot out, and his diamond ring sparkled as he laid a restraining hand on Land's wrist.

"Wait!" he ordered sharply. "As long as he doesn't try to come up here, this is no affair of ours."

Still waving his knife in crazed indecision, Davi spotted the cabin steward as the latter emerged from the galley and started forward, carrying a tray to the bridge. With another scream, Davi took after him.

Suddenly the barong chopped downward. The sickening 'chuck' of the heavy blade came to their ears. Austin ran up to Land shouting, "Give me the gun, I'll get him." Land resisted, but Austin grabbed it.

The steward fell to the deck, his head split open. Tray and crockery clattered noisily when they slipped from his lifeless hands.

"Stay clear of him, everyone!" Austin roared, and moved toward the madman.

Frenec, the young wireless operator, appeared on the well deck. Unaware of the danger, he headed for the bridge with the noonday weather report, then came to a horrified stop at the sight of the steward's body.

With a rush the Malay was on him, waving his bloody barong. His

"Hell, this is a dull game. Let's try gin rummy for awhile."

first savage blow bit deeply into Frenec's shoulder.

A shudder ran through Austin as Davi now prepared to strike again. He couldn't shoot for fear of hitting the radioman. But the sight of Austin with the gun in his hand stayed the maniac momentarily.

Now there was a shot from the direction of the bridge. Capt. Dupre, and Ludwig, the second mate, both had revolvers, and were descending to the well deck. Austin himself started to close in from amidships.

Glancing about wildly, the Malay now abruptly scurried toward the galley, and slugs thudded into the bulwark behind him when he darted through the port-side doorway.

He came out of the galley on the starboard side a moment later, with the barong in one hand and a lighted kerosene lantern in the other. Screaming, he now headed toward the stern, triumphantly swinging the lantern.

"Intends to light his way to Heaven," Austin muttered tautly.

At first the lighted lantern seemed to be only a manifestation of the Malay's crazed brain. But as he dashed aft, straight toward the deck cargo of gasoline drums, it became fearfully evident that he had a very definite purpose in mind. He intended to light his way to Heaven all right; not with a kerosene lamp, but *with a blazing ship!*

Both Dupre and Ludwig at once began to fire in desperation. They were on the wrong side of the ship, too far forward for their bullets to find the target.

"Stop him!" Dupre roared.

Taking careful aim, Austin triggered twice. His first bullet scratched the Malay's head. The second drilled him through the right lung.

Davi swayed and then staggered forward. At a distance of ten feet, he stopped, and drunkenly tossed the lantern. It broke against a gasoline drum close to a vapor vent, and the explosion was instantaneous. With a thunderous blast the stern of the *Zaida* was enveloped in a sheet of yellow flame, and the Malay was literally carried part way to Heaven, in many widely-scattered pieces.

Half-deafened by the blast, Austin ran back and grabbed the Eurasian's arm. She was clutching the rail, seemingly stunned by the concussion.

"Are you all right?"

"I think so," she said haltingly, and then her head cleared. "Yes, I am all right."

He looked about swiftly. Goral was no longer with them. The engine room gang was coming up from below, and forward, seamen were preparing to put a boat over the side. He gave Land back his gun.

He glanced aft now at the pall of blackish smoke mounting towards the sky. "No need to panic," he reassured the girl. "Sea's perfectly calm, and the fire doesn't seem to be spreading much from the stern. Not yet, at least. We've still got a little time."

He then steered her quickly into her cabin, pulled a life jacket from under the berth, and helped her put it on.

"Now gather up your valuables," he instructed. "Tie them up in a scarf, and put them in the pocket of your coolie coat."

She obeyed, quickly taking several pieces of jewelry from a small hand bag, then glanced towards her cosmetics and toilet articles on the table.

"I've still got room in my other pocket."

"Okay," he nodded. "I'm going for my own things. I'll be back in a minute."

In his cabin, he quickly stripped off his shorts, trust his legs into slacks, and found his comfortable old pair of field shoes. He was collecting his razor and a few other toilet articles when Goral walked in, followed immediately by Land.

"What are you doing, Mr. Austin?" There was a set smile on Goral's face, quick suspicion in his voice.

"You've got it all wrong," Austin snapped angrily. "That's the question I should be asking you, isn't it?"

He regretted the words almost as soon as they left his mouth. He realized he had made a serious mistake.

"All right, Land," the Lebanese said, still smiling. "We've got something to attend to. Get rid of him." ering nerves. "What—"

He stepped back against the bulkhead to give Land room. The blond giant's hand went swiftly to the waistband of his pants, and he pulled out his automatic.

God! thought Austin, as his stomach heaved up into his throat; he's going to kill me, just like that!

From the taut grin on Land's face as he raised the .38, Austin knew he didn't stand a chance. He had been right; Land was not only Goral's hired bodyguard, but his hired killer as well!

"Land," he said desperately, "wait—"

With business-like efficiency Land turned and triggered the automatic.

At a distance of four feet he put a bullet into Goral's smiling face!

Shifting the muzzle of the automatic toward Austin's belly, the thug glanced briefly at the body of the slain Lebanese.

"I figured on doing this at the right time," he said coldly. "That crazy Malay bastard, setting fire up there, made this the right time."

"I don't understand," Austin said tensely.

"I wouldn't worry about understanding, if I were you, buddy boy," Land sneered. "I'd just keep right on worrying about living. Maybe you will. Anyhow, for awhile—if you follow orders. Otherwise—"

The muzzle of the .38 made a sinister little movement.

"Otherwise you'll go out the hard way, with a slug through the belly, not quick and easy like Goral. Now kick open that panel there under the wash basin. There's a sack behind it. Haul it out."

Austin obeyed in silence. He was still jarred by the swift, brutal murder of Goral, and he needed time to think things out. In the meantime, he'd take Land's advice to follow orders and remain alive.

He looked up now to see the Eurasian standing in the doorway. For a fleeting moment, when she sighted Goral's body, he thought he detected a startled expression on her face. But when she walked coolly into the cabin, he decided he had been wrong.

"We're taking buddy boy with us," Land told her. "He's got the muscles to carry the bag. It may need some carrying after we get ashore."

She nodded without a change of expression, and gazed downward at Goral's outstretched hand. Kneeling down, she coldly removed the diamond ring from the index finger, and Land gave her a crooked grin.

"That rock of his makes an extra dividend. It's worth plenty."

"I've always admired it," she said, slipping the ring over the the corner of her scarf and securing it with a knot. She returned the scarf to her pocket, and Austin repressed a shudder at her cold-blooded matter of factness.

Land told the girl to cover Austin. She took out a .32 and held it firmly in a slim hand.

"Don't get any ideas," the blond warned Austin. "She knows how to use it. I'm taking a look around outside."

He walked out of the cabin, and they stood facing each other, with the sack of gold coins between them and the dead Lebanese at her feet, his smashed face dripping blood upon the deck.

There was a sudden dryness in Austin's throat, and he felt as if he were in a horrible nightmare, trying to fight his way back to reality. He groped for words, but words refused to come, and he knew all too well this was no dream.

The Eurasian watched him alertly. She held the .32 expertly, and though it was not actually pointed at him, he knew she would be quick to use it at his first suspicious movement.

Her beautiful face was impassive, without suggestion of apology or explanation for her sudden switch in behavior. Silence, and the gun in her hand, indicated more eloquently than words that she had marked him for a pigeon from the first moment her green, predatory eyes had seen him.

He waited Land's return tensely, cursing himself again for his stupidity. Knocking around the Near East, he had met women that were good, bad or indifferent. Some of them he had romanced and some of them he would not have touched with a ten foot pole, but none of them had ever taken him as though he were an in-

fatuated high school kid.

Except Jeanne Mazar.

Land returned, wearing a crooked grin of satisfaction.

"The skipper and crew have abandoned ship," he announced. "Their boats shoved off for Kabir Hanish Island. Fire's still confined aft. I don't think this old hooker'll burn out unless there's a rise in wind. Now pick up the sack, buddy boy. It's time we got moving."

Austin obeyed, heading for the deck with Land and the girl behind him. He hadn't realized before how heavy the sack was. Now it felt like lead.

On deck, Land took the lead, guiding them forward and to port. He swung along with a confident step, as though he knew exactly what he was doing.

Coming to a halt at the port rail, he pointed a thumb at a small, lap-straked boat, hanging outboard in her davits.

"Skipper's own tidy little dinghy. Stocked with water and rations. I've already checked."

Land was thorough, Austin had to admit to himself, as he lifted the sack into the dinghy amidships; the giant hadn't missed a trick.

He now followed the girl into the dinghy at Land's order, and took up a position at the bow rope. With Land standing in the stern they lowered away. The *Zaida* quickly became a scabrous, black-and-red leaded wall of iron, her hull looming up high above them.

"Come back amidships and take the oars," Land ordered.

Austin shifted position and began to row. A short distance, and the dinghy was beyond the shadow of the freighter, and the sun was beating down upon the mirrored sea with frightening intensity.

Land sat in the sternsheets, .38 in hand and the sack on the deck between his feet. The Eurasian took off her life jacket, followed by her coolie coat. She folded the latter neatly, and placed it on the life jacket. After a dispassionate glance at Austin, she gazed imperturbably out to sea.

Austin faced her over the oars. In her revealing, sexy bikini, she looked as if she had just left a beach cabana instead of a burning freighter!

"Swing the bow hard to starboard," Land ordered. "Make for the coast, not Kabir Hanish Island."

Austin obediently brought the dinghy around in a half circle. He understood the reason for the order. Capt. Dupre and his crew were heading toward the island, not more than a mile or so to port. If the passengers did not turn up on the island, it would confirm the skipper's belief that they had been killed in the first searing blast of the explosion. Land was more cunning than he had thought.

"Put your back into it, buddy boy," There was menace in the giant's voice. "It's time to find out if it's worth the trouble of keeping you alive."

* * *

The desolate shore of the Yemenite coast shimmered and baked in intensity of the sunlight, and the low dunes, rolling back from the sandy beach, appeared to be slowly dancing up and down against the fiery sky. As far as the eye could see, there was no sign of human habitation, no bush or tree; only the dazzling whiteness of sand, and, in the heat-hazed background, an indeterminate line of dark red-and-copper hills.

Austin had no idea how long he had been rowing before the bow of the dinghy touched the beach, nudged by oily little waves that vanished in lacy froth. Judging by the sun dipping toward the horizon, it had been for several hours at least.

The deep sand sank beneath Land's weight, almost covering his feet when he stepped ashore and looked around.

"We'll stay here for the night." He was addressing the girl. "It's best to get rid of the boat and lie low for a day or two."

The girl nodded. "And then?"

"We'll flag a passing dhow or sambuk. Fix it up with her skipper to take us back up the coast to Suez, or maybe right on down the line to Zanzibar. Hell, it doesn't make any difference, as long as it isn't a British port."

He turned to Austin. "We're emptying the dinghy. Sack first, then water cask and rations. Hop to it."

After Austin had unloaded, Land removed his shirt and shoes, and added them to the pile on the beach. The girl kept Austin covered while Land shoved the boat off the sand and began rowing.

They watched in silence. The blond rowed out for a quarter of a mile before he stopped, and the dinghy began to drift slowly. Satisfied that the current had caught her, he shipped the oars and dove, swimming back to the beach with powerful strokes.

"That's taken care of," he grunted, coming out of the water and reaching down for his shoes. "Okay. Carry the sack and that pack of rations, and we'll get going. I'll handle the water cask."

The Eurasian gave him an inquiring glance, and he jerked his thumb towards the dunes several hundred yards inland. "We can camp out somewhere up there for a day or two without being seen, in case the British send a search plane up from Aden to look for survivors. In the meantime we can be watching for a chance to flag a dhow."

The sand made eerie little sounds beneath their feet as they headed for the dunes, whispers which at times seemed to be almost human. Leading the way, Land climbed to a rise in ground between two dunes, and came to a halt.

"I'll be damned," he muttered.

Beyond the rise, on the downward slope, an enormously wide wadi appeared in view. Once, in some remote age, this dried-up watercourse had been a surging river, cutting its way ever deeper through primeval rock on its way to the Red Sea.

Over a span of uncounted centuries, the river had slowly vanished. It had left the wadi behind, guarded by grotesquely-shaped cliff-like banks to witness its disappearance. It was like many other wadis and geological phenomena, still awaiting discovery in the little-explored region of southern Arabia, in Yemen, in the Hadhramaut of the Aden Protectorate, and in the vastness of the Rub' al Khali or Empty Quarter.

They made their camp between the dunes, and with the coming of nightfall, the temperature plummeted abruptly to grateful coolness.

Austin stretched out in the soft sand between the Eurasian and the loudly-snoring and mumbling Land, trying to ease his aching body into a more comfortable position.

It wasn't that he had grown soft. He had always kept himself in good physical condition. But the torturously long row from the *Zaida* had made severe demands upon the muscles of his back and arms, and had raised cruel blisters on the hard palms of his hands.

He stirred, shifting his body, and almost immediately Land was awake, raised on an elbow and staring at him suspiciously in the soft starlight. Loud snorer Land might be, but he also was a light sleeper.

Austin turned on his side and glanced at Jeanne Mazar. She lay with her lovely hair pillowed on her folded coat, her seductive body as fully relaxed as a sleeping cat—or tigress.

Looking at her, Austin reflected that he could expect no help or mercy, if and when Land made up his mind to kill him. There was nothing soft about her but her body. She was out for everything she could get, from anyone.

The conversation between her and Land now came back to him. It was obvious that she had changed her plans after Goral's murder. Opportunely, and without a qualm.

When the three of them had gone aboard the *Zaida* at Port Said, they obviously had planned to smuggle the gold into India, but Land or the girl secretly had something else in mind—to double-cross their Lebanese partner.

And now his own life was at stake. The blond would kill him sooner or later, unless he managed to escape.

Austin had no illusion about this whatever. It would be a mistake for Land to let him live, and perhaps testify later about the killing of George Goral.

Austin tried not to think about it. Not now at least. And after awhile he fell into troubled sleep.

He was wakened by hot sunlight, penetrating redly to heavily lidded eyes, and he sat up stiffly, stifled a groan and found himself alone with

Land.

"Okay if I take a swim?"

Land grinned at him crookedly. He seemed to be in good spirits.

"Okay, buddy boy. I can watch you from here. The beach seems to be sort of popular this morning."

Austin got to his feet and looked down. The Eurasian was swimming several hundred feet from shore. She swam gracefully, and the wetness of her honey-colored arms and shoulders gleamed in the sun.

He stripped down to his pants, and an idea suddenly came into his mind while he was walking toward the beach. This was an unexpected opportunity to talk to the girl alone, and to sound her out.

She doesn't give any more of a damn for Land than she did for Goral or me, he thought to himself; all she's interested in is the gold—all of it.

Perhaps, if he handled things right, he'd be able to make a deal with her. Land trusted her, and if she could get Land's gun away from him on some pretext . . .

Austin's face hardened. He'd kill Land in cold blood, if he'd had to, and he suddenly knew it.

She was coming out of the water when he reached the beach. The dampness glistened on her lithe body, and it was hard to believe that this tanned beauty in the bikini was so ruthless a woman. Maybe those tender moments in the cabin were not as callous as he imagined; maybe deep down inside her there lingered at last a spark of affection. If he could kindle it again, and get her to help him . . .

"Jeanne. Wait a minute."

"Yes?" The single word was more chilling than her nod. Her green eyes scanned his face shrewdly, as if she had divined his thoughts.

"Let's talk a little. Maybe we can work out something together."

She laughed at him, a cruel, haughty laugh. "You're not in a position to work out anything. Any more bright ideas? Or shall I have Land shoot you now?"

It was the way she said it that made the whole jigsaw suddenly work itself into place. *She was the mastermind!* It was *she* who had ordered Land to kill the Lebanese!

He strode angrily into the salt water, conscious that he had made a glaring mistake. Another one might prove fatal. The girl, like Land, was playing for keeps.

No plane appeared in the blaze of the sky searching for them that day. Nor the following day, either. They sighted several dhows, sailing far out to sea, but the distance was much too great for anyone aboard to see the blond giant on the beach waving a white shirt in signal.

Toward evening on the second day, Austin gathered driftwood at Land's order, and carried it to the camp-site. With the coming of darkness, he lit a fire. Either one or the other of them always kept a gun handy, so that it was difficult for Austin to make a grab for a weapon or run off into the night and make his way alone back to civilization.

"We'll have better luck with the fire," commented Land. "Maybe one of those fishing sambuks will see it during the night. If not, to-morrow a dhow will probably spot the smoke, and put in to investigate. We'll keep the fire going from now on."

In the course of the next day, they sighted four dhows, all of them well out to sea. There could be little doubt that the blackish column of smoke rising lazily to the sky was plainly visible. But the dhows either failed to interpret the smoke as a signal, or they were not curious. None of them changed course or approached the coast. They were not looking for trouble not of their own making.

By evening, Land had lost some of his confidence. They were down to the last of the rations. He thumped the water cask, and it gave the hollow sound of near emptiness. Austin had been given almost no water. His lips were already puffy and parched.

Land turned to the girl. "We can't stay here much longer without water," he said. "Let's hide the gold, get rid of him, and head up the coast for the nearest village."

"We'll never find this place again. We'll have to take the gold with us."

"Then we'll need strong boy here—we need the camel to carry the gold."

They continued to talk as though he were not present. One minute he expected a bullet through his head, the next he heard himself described as a beast of burden. A dozen plans telegraphed through his mind. Every bit of strategy he learned during the war, footslogging through France and then Germany, went back and forth through his brain, but he could come to no answer. Only one overall scheme emerged that made sense: Divide and conquer.

But how?

They were still talking. "How far is it to the nearest village?" the girl asked.

Land shrugged. "Nearest one is Maushij, according to the chart I saw aboard the *Zaida*. I figure it's about 60 miles along the coast. Overland, I figure it to be about 30 miles; they don't put land distances down on nautical charts, so I'm not too sure about that."

"Do *I* have any say in this?" asked Austin.

"No!" snapped Land, a look of contempt on his face.

"Wait. What harm is there in listening to him?"

Taking this as his cue to talk, Austin said, "I suggest we travel by land, at night, when it's cool. Also, let's fill the keg with salt water. At least we could wet ourselves down when the heat gets bad."

"See, Land," the girl jeered, "you must listen to your enemies. Sometimes they make some sense."

Land shot him a dirty look. Austin had successfully driven the first wedge between the conspirators. With the gun in Austin's ribs, Land made him hoist the sack to his shoulders. He figured there must be over 100 pounds of gold coins. The only lucky break was the fact that the bag was large, so that the coins were loose, enabling Austin to carry it sometimes like a saddle bag over one shoulder, and sometimes like a coolee carrying two water buckets on a pole, across the back of his neck, with the weight evenly distributed on either shoulder.

Land led the way, his gun in one hand, the keg of salt water on one shoulder. Austin followed along the sandy, rocky, barren path. Following in the rear was the Eurasian.

The going was rough, and even though the trip across land was half of that following the coast, Austin wished they'd gone the other way. Without food, and in his weakened condition from lack of water, he felt every pebble he stepped on.

When he'd slow down, he'd feel the nuzzle of the revolver prod him, and yet, by the time dawn cast a cherry glow on the sky, they'd travelled no more than two miles.

"Look for some place to hide—to get out of that sun—it's going to be hot," gasped Austin.

Land and the girl searched the horizon, but there wasn't a tree or a bush to be seen.

"Let's turn back," said Land, "we'll never make it."

"We'll make it," said Jeanne. Her mouth was a thin line; gone were the full-lips of the passionate woman. The face was now hard, and her eyes were the gleaming flames of a hungry miser. The thought of the gold, and what it could buy, was driving her wild. Austin could sense this even as he watched her.

They huddled in the sand in a scooped out shelter, a sort of fox-hole that gave them scant protection from the desert sun. The air was still, and each breath was a searing pain in the chest—a drink of burning breath that could not possibly sustain life.

At Austin's suggestion, they dampened a rag with warm water from the keg, and wiped their faces with it, faces that were turning reddish-brown. Land's blond hair was almost bleached white now, and Austin could sense that his own was no better. They got underway again.

By nightfall, the coolness chilled them so they shivered. At one point they heard a plane, and saw its shadow flit across the stars, but they had no way of signalling to the pilot.

Deliberately, Austin slowed up, letting Land get about 100 feet ahead of him. Jeanne continued to prod him, and he began to talk to her. "I think Land is going to double-cross you."

"He won't. He wouldn't dare. This is one of your tricks," she spat.

"Look, I don't give a damn which one of you gets the gold—but I

wouldn't want to see you killed. After all, you once liked me enough to—"

"How do you know?"

"He talks in his sleep."

There was a silence as she prodded him to keep moving. She said nothing for fifteen minutes.

"What did he say?"

"Well I didn't hear everything—"

"What did he say?"

"Something about 'I could buy a tramp like her in any port for a pound. Don't have to give her a thing—"

"You're lying."

"Ask him."

"But how can I?"

"Exactly!"

There was more silence. Land had stopped for a rest and they were now up to him. He said, "We should make better time from now on. We've been climbing uphill gradually, now we are on a plateau that appears to be quite level."

"I can't carry that bag much further. I'm tired—and hungry—and thirsty."

Land pushed the gun into Austin's belly, hard, and slammed a big fist under his chin, shoving upwards viciously. "Look, sonny boy. If you're hungry, I'll be happy to rip off one of your ears and feed it to you, fricasseed. And when you stop carrying that bag, you stop living!"

Austin swallowed and nodded. He'd got the message all right; even his old appendix scar itched.

They were on the move again now, but stopping more often to rest. By dawn the rests were longer than the travels. Again they dug out a hole and crawled into it to escape the next day's heat.

"Why don't you leave the gold here. We can make better time without any weight," said Austin.

Jeanne swung her pistol at him. His reflexes were too slow to evade it completely and the barrel glanced off his temple. He was in a half-daze when he heard her laugh and say to Land, "Darling, do you talk in your sleep?"

Austin wished suddenly that the earth could swallow him. He waited and waited for Land's answer. The big blond laughed and said, "Sure. My mother always gave me hell over it."

Relief blacked Austin out, and he fell into a sleep.

The heat woke him up. He shivered in the roasting sunlight. None of them realized how weak they were. By nightfall they arose out of the hole like three zombies. Austin tried but couldn't lift the bag of gold.

"Lift it or I'll put a bullet through your brain!" barked Land in a croaky voice.

Austin summoned the last ounce of strength in his body, and lifted the sack to his shoulders. It weighed a ton. Land wavered along in the front.

Austin was getting desperate now. He didn't know if he were on the verge of insanity, and he didn't care. The others *must* be almost as crazed as he. Desperate moments call for desperate measures, and he slowed down again. But Jeanne didn't prod him any more; she was now keeping her eyes fixedly on Land.

Then, in an instant, it happened. Land, gun in hand, turned toward them. Austin shouted to Jeanne, "Look out, he's going to shoot you."

Jeanne aimed at Land and pulled the trigger once, twice, three times. Only one bullet hit Land, piercing his belly and coming out his back. At the same time, the dumbstruck giant came to life, pumping two quick bullets at his amour and partner in crime.

The girl was dead before she hit the ground. Land forced himself up, gun still in hand and crawled toward Austin. "Take that . . . ring off her scarf. Give . . . give it to me."

There was no honor among thieves —and no sentiment. Both men, who had made love to her in their own way, took one last look at the parched body of the once-beautiful girl, and then continued on their course, Land weak, stumbling, fighting to stay on his feet.

The man must have a tremendous reservoir of strength, for he continued, hunched over, for another mile. Around his wound, Land had used part of Jeanne's bikini as a bandage. It was soaked red in the front now, and Austin knew that if Land didn't stop soon, he himself would collapse.

The soles of his shoes were now worn through, and he could feel every stone hit his feet like a bullet. The rags that clung to his body were not recognizable as clothes. Yet, Land was worse off.

The trail of blood leading the way for the drifter's gold could lead nowhere but to death.

Suddenly, like a proud stag that is hit by a single shot, Land toppled over. He rolled once and in one last tremor of life, his feet and arms stretched in a death spasm. Then the spark of life disappeared, leaving a mask of death, a green face, his eyes popping from the handsome head, but revealing the greed and cruelty of a possessed man.

Austin dropped the bag of gold. He would never have made it this far if he hadn't stealthily thrown out some of the coins and stuffed the bag with rags. Now it didn't matter. There was nothing he could do. He was alive, but barely so.

He didn't see the dawn, though his eyes were open. He didn't know if he were sitting or standing, though he knelt beside the body of Land. He didn't hear the airplane pass overhead, nor see the pilot spot the skeletons of men in the desert. He didn't know that two hours later, a land jeep had come to pick him up, nor did he hear the British soldier say, "He looks like he's carved out of sandstone. Is he alive?"

They also found something else. A sack, filled with old British gold sovereigns—and rags.

They flew the unconscious man and the sack back to Khormaksar, where the gold was impounded pending investigation. The investigation was delayed for almost a month while Austin recovered slowly in the Aden hospital.

For several days, it was touch and go as to whether he'd live or die. It was more than a week before he was removed from the critical list, with his body still blackened, his lips cracked and swollen.

The medicos told him he had been very lucky, that few men can lie unconscious in a wadi under the Yemen sun for an hour or more, and live to tell about it.

The authorities of the crown colony asked him polite but innumerable questions, not only about the gold sovereigns but about the slugs in Land's belly. They became even more polite after they communicated with Barry Lewis, chief of the Near East Division of Hartford Universal of Connecticut. When it came to giving character references Mr. Lewis was tops.

In the end, the British authorities confiscated the gold, and put Austin on board a luxurious P and O ship which called at Aden, en route to Mediterranean ports via the Suez Canal.

Ken Austin's eyes opened almost automatically as his train neared Mt. Kisco. He smelled Beirut Rose Hair Dressing, and he thought again about George Goral.

The young Lebanese on the seat beside him smiled. He didn't look at all like Goral. He stepped politely out into the aisle when he saw that Austin was getting up.

Austin moved out, and took his place in the line of commuters waiting to get off the train. He stood behind Ben Watson, who owned a split level not far from his own rambling ranch. Watson nodded a greeting.

"Coming to the upzoning hearing tonight? Two acre zoning will be a damned good thing. It'll help to keep some of the riff-raff out."

"Maybe," Austin answered noncommittally. "I'll see if I can get away. Fran may have something else on tap. P.T.A. committee meeting or something. You know how it is when you have kids."

Watson nodded sympathetically, and pretended to understnd. He didn't have kids. He and his red-haired wife lived in their split level with a sleep-in housekeeper, and had few domestic worries.

The train stopped and Austin got off. Fran was waiting with the station wagon parked in the usual place.

Both of the kids were with her as usual.

"Know what happened in kindergarten today, Daddy?" Suzy called out as he approached.

Kenneth W. Austin sighed quietly.

Summoning the usual smile of interest to his face, he plunged back into family life.

Locked Door

Continued from page 27

said. "Go along with him, will you, and see if you can help him out. Probably the lock's stuck."

The policeman growled, and started for the door, nodding to Mueller to follow him. Five minutes later they mounted to the second floor of a dingy, frame apartment house three blocks from the police station, and the patrolman asked for Mueller's key. Slowly the bookkeeper detached it from a ring and handed it over.

"Key works all right," the policeman said, after turning it several times in the lock. "Looks as if the door's bolted from the inside." He added this with an air of imparting all the wisdom of the Sanhedrin.

Mueller began to froth perceptibly. "That's what I've been *saying*," he growled, and restrained himself from adding, "You dumb flatfoot."

"There's a heavy iron bolt on the inside of the door," he went on, "and I've told my wife to always have it locked when she's here alone. If you look, you can see it's still in place."

At his suggestion, Boyle dropped to his knees and put his eye to the edge of the door, near the lock. "Yeah, you're right," he finally agreed. "She's bolted, all right."

The policeman scratched his chin, and then came to a decision. "Is there a janitor here?" he asked. Mueller said there was, that he lived in the first-floor-rear.

"See if he's got a crowbar, will you?"

Mueller went off, and a few minutes later returned with a tired little man in baggy work pants and a blue shirt, from which the collar had been removed and which was fastened at the neck by a cheap, gold-plated collar-button. He carried a small crowbar.

"Mr. Jensen says he hasn't seen my wife all day," Mueller said worriedly, jerking his thumb toward the janitor. "I tell you, I *know* there's something wrong."

Boyle grunted, and took the crowbar. A moment later, and the door came open with a grinding wrench.

It revealed a tawdry, threadbare living room that fairly screamed failure and frustration. A rug that was worn thin except at the untrod edges supported a creaky Morris chair, a gate-leg table that was scratched and worn, a book-case crammed with well-thumbed books, an assortment of bric-a-brac, and a mohair sofa that must have been the pilot model for the species. And that was all.

In the kitchen, the breakfast dishes still rested unwashed in the sink; the bedroom showed a chest of drawers, a bureau, and a huge brass bed; the narrow bathroom revealed a chain-pull toilet with overhead tank, a tub that sat high on the tile floor, and a wash basin in which water dripped steadily from a worn washer.

It was only when Patrolman Boyle opened the bedroom closet that an explanation of why no one had answered their knocking at the door was forthcoming.

Mrs. Mueller, or a plump facsimile, hung suspended from the overhead, a pair of neckties around her bulging neck, her tongue jutting out, her face a ghastly blue, and her eyeballs protruding like marbles in a mosaic. She'd been dead for hours.

"Oh, my God!" screamed Mr. Mueller, and collapsed on the bed.

The case was scarcely either a new or sensational one. Another middle-aged and unhappy housewife, despairing of any hope to improve her dreary existence, had taken the only way out. It was suicide, pure and simple, and the San Francisco cops of the pre-earthquake decade quickly dismissed it from their minds.

Naturally, there was a routine investigation, but it turned up nothing to arouse suspicion in any official minds that the death of Henrietta Mueller wasn't all it appeared to be.

The couple had struggled every minute of their 25 years of marriage. Dull, plodding, completely lacking in ambition, Edwin Mueller had been constantly in debt and neighbors and friends testified that his wife had spoken many times of their desperate financial plight.

Perhaps if they'd had children, a neighboring busybody suggested, it certainly might have given poor Mrs. Mueller something else to think about other than her own drab existence.

But there'd been no children, and —it was hinted—a steady tarnish had dulled the love the Muellers must once have borne toward each other. In short, Mrs. Mueller had appeared to have had little affection for the pencil-pushing Edwin, while the latter rarely arrived home with an eagerness sometimes expected of a breadwinner returning to his nest.

In essence, it was another case of frustration piled upon frustration, until finally the string snapped.

The San Francisco police wasted little time in listing the tragedy as a closed case.

Statements, of course, were taken from Mueller, himself, who declared that his wife, when he'd left her that morning, had seemed no more nor less depressed than at other times; from the neighbors, who—aside from making a few derogatory remarks about the colorless Mueller—declared they'd heard nothing unusual from the Mueller apartment during the day. Tradesmen and shopkeepers in the neighborhood were virtually unanimous in agreeing that Mrs. Mueller had not been one to splurge, and indeed often indicated that it was going to take a bit of doing for her to get through the month on her meager allowance for food.

But a skinflint husband hardly was something new, and, since there certainly was no way for anyone to have entered or left the flat except through the front door—which Officer Boyle was able to assert had been securely bolted from the inside —there was not a shred of suspicion that the demise of Mrs. Edwin Mueller had been anything but an open-and-shut case of suicide.

And so the books were closed in the matter. Mrs. Mueller was duly buried in a cheap casket, after a funeral attended by a handful of neighbors who lived on Turk Street. Mueller went back, after a decent interval, to his bookkeeper's stool at a steel and wire yard. And, a month later, there were few if any San Franciscans who could have told you there'd been any such individual as Henrietta Mueller.

But one close friend of the deceased kept the latter's memory alive: Mrs. Birgit Axelsen, a plump, Norwegian widow who lived down the hall from the Muellers, had liked the drab bookkeeper's mousey wife, and had felt sorry for the woman in her marriage to such an obviously stingy and unloving man.

As Mrs. Axelsen saw it, there had been nothing wrong with Mrs. Mueller that a few kind words on the part of a good man couldn't have corrected. She lived now in regret that she hadn't been more friendly to the dead woman. What's more, Mrs. Axelsen's regret took the outward form of sitting at her front window and sneering openly at the unsuspecting Mueller as he came and went on his same old dreary rounds.

And it was this spectator duty, a month later, that suddenly aroused a curious thought in Mrs. Axelsen's nosy nature—was she mistaken, or was that a new suit Edwin Mueller was wearing?

Why, of course! The threadbare salt and pepper, with the mends and patches which Mueller had worn for years, had been replaced by a blue serge job that carried a neat crease in its trouser legs. What's more, the sweat-stained bowler had given way to a new fedora, and—Glory be to God!—the man even wore a blue flower in his buttonhole!

Mrs. Axelsen was both aghast and furious. The gall of the man—and so soon after his wife's death and burial —to go parading in such obvious finery! Had he no shame? No proper feeling for the amenities?

Most important of all—where had he gotten the money? Probably, Mrs. Axelsen sniffed, saved it from the cash he should have spent on his poor wife.

Mrs. Axelsen seethed quietly, and took to giving Edwin F. Mueller even more of her time from the front window. There was no question in her mind now that the man was a complete no-good who had driven his poor wife to suicide and was now flaunting his heartlessness for all the world to see!

It was inevitable that Mrs. Axel-

sen should very shortly begin to vent her indignation aloud. One eager listener was a Mrs. Benton, with whom Mrs. Axelsen was wont to exchange pleasantries on her trips to and from Bauer's butcher shop.

Mrs. Benton's husband, George, was a detective on the San Francisco police force.

"Oh, I know it's gossip," Mrs. Benton said one night, as her husband smoked his pipe and read his paper, "but it does seem to me that the man could show a little more respect for his poor wife, and her only six weeks in her grave."

"Well, from what I hear, there wasn't very much love lost between them" Benton said, barely looking up from the sports page.

"Love or no, it's the Christian thing at least to wait until a body's remains are cold before carrying on."

"Now, Millie, just because a man buys a new suit is no reason to suggest he's carrying on, as you put it. After all, maybe he couldn't afford a new suit when he had two mouths to feed."

Mrs. Benton's response was a grunted "Humph!"

Which would have been the end of the matter if Benton hadn't been on a routine investigation one week later. At an International Settlement *bierstube*, he did a double-take; for there in a quiet corner and living it up in considerable splendor was his neighbor, Edwin F. Mueller.

And his companion was a young, bosomy, and high-blown blonde!

George Benton was both surprised and curious. Could there have been something to Millie's suggestion that Ed Mueller was now a bit more free with his money than his previous circumstances had indicated he could afford? And was it possible that he had indeed begun to "carry on," as the womenfolk like to put it?

Even more importantly, could it be that the death of Mrs. Mueller had been a most fortuitous happening indeed!

George Benton began a quiet investigation.

It took practically no art of detection to learn that the blonde was a domestic, a girl named Emily Curran, whose attributes were few when it came to gray matter, but whose physical attractions had been noted by more than one young San Francisco buck. But the panting swains didn't get far with Emily once she let them know that, unless they had money to spend on her, they could jolly well go peddle their papers.

In. the meantime, she had been courted by several willing spenders in the middle class division. As Benton's report showed, however, she had devoted most of her time during the past six months to a gentleman named Edwin F. Mueller.

Mueller, the reports indicated, had been able to show her the kind of good time she preferred.

Benton now dug out the file on the death of Mrs. Mueller.

It showed him very little he didn't already know. Mrs. Mueller had been a quite obvious suicide—a despairing woman who had bolted the door from the inside, grabbed up a pair of her husband's neckties, and, without so much as leaving a note, had hanged herself in the closet.

"Better forget it, George," Inspector Timothy F. O'Brien told the detective, when Benton laid his findings on his superior's desk. "You can't argue with that locked door. I can tell you there's no possible way, no fire escape or any other means, for anyone to have entered or left the apartment *after* Mrs. Mueller's death. I'll admit—Mueller is a bastard—but I'm afraid that's all he is."

"I know," the detective growled. "You're probably right, and I'm probably barking up the wrong tree. Still, I'd sure like to take another look at that apartment."

"Well, that's easy," O'Brien said. "We can always go back there on one excuse or another; you know—some minor thing we wanted to check on."

O'Brien and Benton did exactly that. On the following morning, soon after Mueller had departed for his long day at the steel and wire plant, the two detectives, using the janitor's master key, entered the Mueller apartment and began to poke around.

Where the apartment had been drab before, it now seemed even seedier. Dust was clinging to mouldings, dirty dishes were piled high in the sink, and clothes were strewn around in cluttered disarray. It badly needed a woman's touch.

Yet, the thing that brought the policemen up short was the obvious evidence that the apartment *had been getting a woman's touch*—of a sort.

In the closet hung a corset with blue ribbons, a silk nightgown and a scent-laden kimono.

And each of them was in a size considerably smaller than that worn by the late Mrs. Mueller!

"Looks as if our friend doesn't lack feminine companionship," O'Brien mused. "Do you suppose these belong to the comely Miss Curran?"

"They could be her size," Benton said.

Yet, even the detective had to admit that there was no serious crime in a man engaging in a little dalliance. Or was there?

Inspector O'Brien now turned his attention to the door. It had been repaired since the forced entry by Patrolman Boyle, and it bore evidence of having been refinished by a skilled carpenter.

In prying open the door, Boyle had forced the crowbar into the space between the frame itself and the doorjamb, forcing the door inward. This pulled the screws, that held the bolt's hasp to the door, out of their sockets. A new bolt was fastened on an inch higher on the door than the old one. He could see the six round spots where the old screw holes had been neatly filled, sanded, and stained to match the rest of the door.

"Certainly nothing out of line about that," O'Brien said. "Boyle made no bones about the fact that the door was bolted from the inside and he had to force it open. I'm afraid your man Mueller is as innocent as he says he is, George."

"Yes, dammit," the detective muttered. "But, if ever a case smelled—"

"I know how you feel. But I think women hate to see a widower enjoying himself, and it's coloring our thinking. Mueller didn't get along with his wife and everyone around

"If you don't like this planet, why don't you go back where you came from!

here knew it. Once she was gone he wasted no time getting a new playmate.

"But that doesn't make him a murderer."

Losing interest in the case, O'Brien began to thumb idly through the books on the shelves of the bookcase, while Benton poked around the dingy flat in search of any small clue that would confirm his suspicions that Mueller had done away with his wife.

The books were undistinguished, O'Brien noted, being mainly Nick Carter thrillers and similar detective stories. Occasionally he discovered a slightly-higher class of reading material such as *Ben Hur* and *The Klansmen*. The majority, strangely enough —were murder mysteries.

While waiting for Benton, the Inspector began to leaf through the books on the top shelf. It was then that his own interest quickened perceptibly.

Whoever had read the books had been uncommonly interested in the methods of murderers.

And in every single case the reader had skipped through the early pages of the story—some of them hadn't even been cut!—in order to concentrate on the denouement. In one story, there even were badly erased pencil marks that showed the reader had studied it as though it were a textbook. And O'Brien really sat up with a jolt when he read this particular case.

It concerned a murder committed behind a locked door!

From that moment on, O'Brien was as convinced as Benton that the suicide of Mrs. Edwin Mueller was really murder.

Yet how had it been done?

The inspector and the detective combed through the Mueller apartment with exasperating thoroughness. They dumped flour, meal and other dried foods out of containers, looking for *anything* that might offer a clue. They raised and lowered the windows. They measured the distances from sill to ground, and from the Mueller apartment to the ones on either side and above and below it. They studied the inside of the door with such painstaking scrutiny that nothing escaped their attention.

Yet it all revealed nothing. No matter how they tried to figure it, Mrs. Mueller, and Mrs. Mueller alone, had bolted the door from the inside and then taken her own life.

Annoyed with their inability to discover the secret of what they were certain was a cunning murder, Benton and O'Brien returned to Headquarters. They spent long hours trying desperately to find the lead that would give Mueller's scheme away. And after hours of kicking it back and forth, they still were no closer to a solution than they'd been before.

Furthermore, an indignant visit from Mueller himself, later that day, protesting the violation of his privacy, also availed the police nothing—at least, at first. The man was the soul of righteousness. He let it be known that this continued probing by the police was both disturbing to him in his bereavement and illegal. He demanded that it be stopped.

"This—this suspicion," he thundered, "could cost me my job, inspector. After all, I think it's obvious that my —that Henrietta did away with herself and I will not have you suggesting anything to the contrary."

"Nobody's suggested any such thing, Mr. Mueller," O'Brien said, quietly. "Whatever gave you *that* idea? I told you—we neglected some small routine details for our files and went to your apartment for that reason alone."

"Well, I—well it certainly *looks* as if you're suspicious!"

But Mueller had tipped his mitt badly, and he knew it. He beat a flustered retreat from O'Brien's office, trying desperately to get out with as little more disturbance to his composure as possible.

"George," O'Brien said, when the bookkeeper had gone, "where did you say Mueller works? In a steel and wire yard, isn't it?"

"That's right. He's a bookkeeper for old man Gage, down at his South San Francisco plant."

O'Brien stared out the window at a ferry poking its way into its slip after the run from Oakland, and then swung slowly toward the detective. "George," he smiled, "you and I have been a couple of fools. Come on!"

Twenty minutes later the two policemen were hiding in a doorway on Turk Street across from the Mueller apartment. Soon, the little bookkeeper bustled out of his front door in an obvious departure for another evening of fun with the playful Emily. O'Brien and Benton went in.

This time they didn't bother with the janitor. Instead, they hurried up the stairs to the second floor landing, quickly opened the door to the Benton apartment, and went to work.

On his knees O'Brien examined the lock of the door minutely under a powerful lamp. He was peering through a thick magnifying glass. A second later he cried out. "Look! Look here! Each of these holes where the screws held the hasp in place are exactly the same—except for this one. And this one is the only screwhole that goes all the way through the door to the outside!"

Benton examined the holes through the glass. *One* of the screwholes penetrated the frame of the door. The small, almost pin-point hole where it emerged on the outside had been so cleverly sanded and finished, that without the aid of a powerful glass it would have been invisible.

O'Brien took from his pocket a strand of steel wire so fine it was almost like thread. Then, digging with a small probe he quickly removed the filler that had been put into the one screwhole.

When the filler was out, the wire easily went through the hole to the other side!

The inspector demonstrated how easy it had been for Mueller to bolt the door inside after he'd closed it from the outside. O'Brien looped the thin wire around the handle of the bolt, holding onto the other ends of the wire as it came through the small screwhole.

Then, with the door shut, a sharp pull on the ends of the wire promptly slid the bolt home. After that, it was simple to release one end of the wire, pull on the other and thus slip the fine strand out through the hole.

The door had been bolted on the inside—*from the outside!*

"Let's go have another chat with Mr. Mueller," O'Brien said.

Later, faced with the obvious fact of his guilt, Mueller attempted to brazen it through. But with the door to his apartment removed to Police Headquarters, and the same demonstration put on for the District Attorney, the little man broke down and admitted his guilt.

He'd tried to get his unwanted wife to divorce him so he could marry the fetching Emily—who was 25 years his junior. When she'd wailingly refused, he put into action the scheme he'd been planning for five years. What's more, he'd have gotten away with it too—if it hadn't been for the prying eyes of the busybody Mrs. Axelsen.

As for Emily, she was cleared of any complicity in the murder, and wasn't obliged to stand trial. She didn't even bother to attend Mueller's own trial.

Some months later, she was attending a draymen's picnic down on the peninsula when her latest boyfriend pulled her into the bushes and began struggling with the cord on her dainty corset. At that same moment, several miles away at San Quentin, someone else was struggling with another cord.

It was around the neck of Edwin F. Mueller, and the business end of the loop looked exactly like another loop—one that had closed the bolt on a murder mystery.

Black Thursday

Continued from page 31

one offering to buy, and the result was financial ruin. In the midst of this chaos, a clerk at one post on the Exchange floor fainted from the excitement, and was completely ignored; no one had any time for weak sisters in this melee, and it didn't matter whether the guy had had a heart attack, was dying, or was already dead.

A messenger boy, passing a wild-eyed broker, was given a hundred-dollar bill and told to go buy cig-

arettes. When the boy returned, the broker who'd sent him screamed "*What* cigarettes!," and told the kid to get lost. Far from cigarettes, or change from a measly century note, brokers had but one thing in mind—to try to find buyers for the millions of shares of stock that were being dumped on the market in a sudden, panicky and frenzied orgy of selling.

One block of 20,000 shares of Kennecott Copper appeared on the ticker, and never even caused a ripple; it was peanuts in this wild and crazy selling wave. Another 20,000-share block of General Motors soon followed it, and, before the day was over, a record total of 12,894,650 shares changed hands, and at prices which were fractions of what the issues had cost just a few days before!

As the word went out to investors everywhere that the panic was on, all telephone cables leading into the Exchange became hopelessly clogged, and an investor trying to get word to his broker might just as well have been trying to telephone the moon. In the same way, telegraph and cable lines bogged down under the unprecedented mass of messages; the liner *Olympic*, at sea in mid-Atlantic, later reported it had received an all-time record of 100 radiograms that morning in the two-hour span between 10 o'clock and noon, with an equal number of orders to sell, "at the market price," leaving the ship bound for red-eyed brokers back home.

Yet those same brokers, in offices all over New York City, and shortly afterward in cities throughout the country, were as much at sea as to what was happening in Wall Street as if they too had been on the *Olympic*. While customers sat bug-eyed in crowded brokerage offices and stared grimly at the screen carrying the latest prices, or tried desperately to shove someone aside from a spot near a ticker, they might just as well have been home in bed—the screen and the tape were so far behind that no one knew at any given moment whether he still had anything left, or had been wiped out without his ever realizing it.

At 1 o'clock that afternoon, the ticker still was reporting 11:30 a.m. prices, prices which—while you looked at them—changed like the mileage gauge on a speedometer in reverse, going from 9 to 8 to 7 to 6 to 5, and just that fast. And, since the ticker carried only the final digit in the listings, a man who turned his head away to get a light for his cigarette didn't have the vaguest idea whether his stock was moving from 189 to 188, or from 159 to 158, or even if it might not be going from 59 to 58!

It was 7:08 o'clock that evening, in fact, *more than four hours after the Exchange had closed*, before the ticker finally recorded its last sale of the day, and gasped to a halt.

It was a day which, even now, 31 years later, brings a grimace to the faces of men who were caught up in the midst of it, and rare is the individual among them who can recall any other day in their lives—not Pearl Harbor, or VJ Day, or a Presidential Election—with half the clarity with which they can tell you exactly what they were doing, or saying, or thinking, at almost any hour of Black Thursday.

What was the cause of it all?

Who knows? You can find shelves of books in your local library, that carry reams of heavy-duty thinking by all manner of economists and soothsayers as to the causes of the crash. And most of them add up to nothing; most people just aren't sure.

Nearly every deepdome, however, is agreed on one thing that was basic to the events leading up to Black Thursday—that the twenties in America were a time when almost everyone, regardless of his education, social position or background, was convinced of his chances of getting *very* rich, and doing it almost overnight and from scratch.

In such an atmosphere of gold rush fever, most people, regardless of their knowledge or lack of it as regards Wall Street, needed only a mild push to make them haul the savings out of the sugar bowl and sink them into some rumored good issue or two. The pushes were easy to find.

One came with the publication in *The Ladies' Home Journal* (Never Underestimate The Power Of A Woman") of an article by John J. Raskob, the immensely-wealthy vice president of General Motors, and chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Mr. Raskob's little essay was given the alluring title of "Everybody Ought To Be Rich," and it went on from there to explain how a man who was able to save just $15 a month, and who put this money regularly into common stocks, would be worth $80,000 at the end of twenty years, and would have $400 a month income from dividends!

That was enough of a push for most of the boys and girls. For thousands of others, however, twenty years was a fur piece to have to wait for your ship to come in, and they looked around for quicker ways of docking it. They didn't have to look far.

There were, for example, such intriguing ads in the papers, some of which had such a charge of come-on in them that even conservative investors began to crowd around. One such ad was the one placed by a Boston firm, telling of its newly-published investors' guide. This one carried the heading, "He Made $70,000 After Reading *Beating The Stock Market*."

Seventy grand after reading one lousy booklet! Man, that beat waiting twenty years *any* day.

In short, almost everywhere you looked you found new evidence to prove that the pot of gold wasn't at the end of the rainbow but right here for the taking. "Anyone," said General George R. Dyer, of Dyer, Hudson & Company, in a news interview, "who buys our highest-class rails and industrials, including steels, coppers, and utilities, and who holds onto them, will make a great deal of money, as these securities will gradually be taken out of the market."

Hurry, hurry, hurry! Step a little closer, folks, and get your money down on the big wheel!

And the folks hurried to get it down. As a result of which, by June 1, 1929, the country had reached such a pinnacle of prosperity that a really poor man was hard to find—at least in the vicinity of the major markets. As John Galbraith again writes about the period, "Never before or since have so many become so wonderously, so effortlessly, and so quickly rich."

But it was the last big splurge. Unbeknownst to nearly everyone, the country was about to embark on its last wild spree, its last summer of fun and frolic for a good many years to come, and—for some Americans—forever.

It was a summer that literally was destined to shake the world.

It started quietly and inauspiciously. Friday, May 31st, of that long Memorial Day weekend, was the hottest of the year, atmospherically, until that date, with the thermometer at an official 90 degrees, and with the usual nine lives lost as a direct result of the heat.

As for the headlines that Saturday morning, in addition to news of the heat, they were equally lacking in significance: Nine hundred bottles of rare whiskey had been flushed by Prohibition agents from a secret cache on the liner *President Harding;* Henry Ford had announced the sale of $30 million worth of cars to Russia; President Hoover urged speed in the reduction of arms; fliers Roger Q. Williams and Lewis Yancey were at Old Orchard Beach, Me., awaiting good weather for a proposed flight to Rome; the Philadelphia Athletics were leading the American League, the St. Louis Cardinals the National, and some young squirt named Leo Durocher had taken over the day before as shortstop for the New York Yankees in place of the veteran Lyn Lary.

Financial news? It was way back in the financial section, Bud. Where else? Even *The New York Times* seemingly felt there was no place on the front page for routine reports of more people getting rich, and even the fact that May had set a new all-time record for the total of shares traded on the New York Stock Exchange in a given month—a staggering 91,283,550, or *10 million more than the previous high figure reached in April, 1928*—was deemed of little importance to the public. After all, it merely proved what everyone knew, that more people were buying stocks than at any time in history.

Buying them, yes. Owning them? Well . . . perhaps. With an investor required to put up no more than 10 percent of the purchase price, many Americans (estimates have since placed the figure at more than a million) were in margin up to their ears, confident that their issues would rise as they had been rising for upwards of four years, and that the call never would come from the broker to get up the rest of the purchase price. After all, why should it?—the other 90 percent would be made up out of profits.

But no one worried about such things on June 1. And no one could be expected to foresee that, on that particular day, the stock market was to take off on its last wild, dizzying spin into the stratosphere. Virtually every major isssue began right then to climb, and some of them didn't just climb—they took off vertically, and went straight up.

One such comet was Auburn Auto. The Auburn was a sleek, supercharged luxury bus that was to the conservatives what the Stutz Bearcat was to the playboys. Expensive, it reeked of class and success and luxury—words most people felt soon would be used to describe *them*—and Auburn was a very favorite issue with hosts of traders who sincerely believed Utopia was here for everyone.

On May 31, Auburn stock closed at 243½, just a few points above *The New York Times* average of 234¼ for the 50 leading issues on the New York Exchange.

A month later, on June 30, the *Times* average had jumped to 266, while Auburn—its comet tail barely visible far out in space—soared to 325¼, a gain of 81¾ points in 30 days, or a nice solid pick-up for a guy who happened to have latched on to a few shares of it back there on June 1.

By the end of July, the June gains looked like chicken feed. The averages were now up to 281, but that was nothing compared to Auburn; it had spiralled to a new high for the year of 424, or another solid gain of 98¾ points for the month. And again a new record of total stock sales was recorded, 93,378,690 shares changing hands between July 1 and July 31.

And all around the country the speculative fever boiled and seethed. Colleges and technical schools reported a fall-off in registration for fall, as high school graduates said the hell with more education, and plunged instead into the lucrative jobs—as messengers, clerks, and even errand boys—that were going begging in brokerage houses. At summer resorts, tickers were being installed even in lockerrooms, bath-houses, and on golf courses. And such luxury liners as the *Ile de France* and the *Leviathon* made news by establishing branch offices of brokerage houses on their main decks, to enable the jaded traveller to keep abreast of his investments even while taking Mama on the grand tour.

August was another record month, with 95,704,890 shares being traded this time.

But the first traces of panic were in the air, and rumblings of warning began to be heard for the first time. Roger Baabson, the New England statistician, was the first to sound off with a pessimistic wail. "Sooner or later," Babson told the Annual National Business Conference on that Sept. 5, "a crash is coming, and it may be terrific."

All of which went over in most quarters like a lead balloon. *Barron's*, the widely-respected financial weekly, dubbed Babson sarcastically as "the Sage of Wellesley," and cautioned its readers that he was not to be taken seriously by anyone familiar with "his notorious inaccuracy." The economist Irving Fisher, of Yale, also let fly at Babson. "There may be a recession in stock prices," Fisher scoffed, "but not anything in the nature of a crash." And even the usually-reliable *Wall Street Journal* tended to pooh-pooh Babson's pessimism, laying the halt in the "major advance" of most stocks to a temporary pause for "technical readjustment."

Sure. And, for the next few weeks the optimists seemed to have the right dope. As an example, there was always Auburn. From 480, it went back up the next day to 496, then to 499, slipped a bit here and there, bounced back to attain its high for the year of 514 on Sept. 18, and only then began to go a touch soft again.

But it was only a technical readjustment. Things were going to be as bright and sunny as ever. Weren't they? *Huh, Daddy!*

No, Junior, they weren't. And it soon became apparent to anyone who could read a stock table that maybe this little old technical readjustment was getting out of hand a bit. Even though the financial wizards were calling the market such things as "spotty" and "ragged," there was no question that the trend—throughout September and October—was down.

By the week ending Friday, October 4, in fact, U.S. Steel, which had been at 261¾ a month earlier, was down to 204; General Electric had fallen 50 points below its high for the year; RCA had dropped 32 points; American Can was off 20, and Auburn was now at 385, a hefty 130 points below its position just two weeks earlier (It fizzed back up to 433 ten days later, but that was its last big gasp).

Again the soothsayers rallied to let the little man in on the benefit of their superior knowledge, and to slough off any worries anyone might have about the market.

Charles E. Mitchell, chairman of the board of the great National City Bank of New York, piped up that "the markets generally are now in a healthy condition. The last six weeks have done an immense amount of good by shaking down prices." Irving Fisher again took to the podium to state that stock prices had reached "what looks like a permanently high plateau," and to remark that he expected to see the stock market, within a few months, "reach a level a good deal higher than it is today." And the Harvard Economic Society (not to be outdone by Fisher of Yale) foresaw "another period of readjustment," but no serious consequences which couldn't be checked easily.

Yet not everybody, in those dog days of early autumn, was completely optimistic. There was always Babson, of course; and he had some fellow-travelers: As early as March, international banker Paul M. Warburg had been remarking that, if the trend toward "unrestrained speculation" was not halted, it would bring about a collapse and "a general depression involving the whole country." (Wall Street promptly jumped on Warburg, accusing him of "sandbagging American prosperity.")

Poor's *Weekly Business & Investment Letter* was another that cried out against the "great common stock delusion," and warned that further lows would be seen before there'd be any upturn.

On October 7, the Standard Statistics Company urged its clients to follow "an ultra-conservative policy" in view of the present situation.

But such spoil-sports might just as well have been talking to themselves. They were outweighed and outshouted on every side.

As late as the evening of Wednesday, October 23, in fact—the very eve of Black Thursday—good old Professor Fisher was being quoted as saying he expected stock prices to rise. R. W. McNeel, head of his own financial service, also radiated optimism, and was quoted in a column, two days before the crash, as saying he felt prices had "hit bottom." As for Chairman Mitchell, of National City, he arrived in New York from a European trip on October 22—again just two days before the panic—and strode down the gangplank with the cheery pronouncement that all was well. "I know of nothing fundamentally wrong with the stock market," he said, "or with the underlying business and credit structure."

He was to find a few things, less than 48 hours later.

Although it has been called Black Thursday, because of the sheer panic that ensued that morning, the first real symptoms of a crash ended at noon that day. At that hour, the host of reporters who'd poured into the financial district, and who'd spend the morning rushing from one reported suicide to another, or in trying to make some sense out of what was happening, now got the word that the Marines—in the persons of the country's leading bankers—were landing on the beachhead. Specifical-

ly, a meeting had been called, the press learned, at the offices of J. P. Morgan & Co. in order to stem the tide of the downward plunge.

Shortly after, the crowds in the street outside the Exchange forgot about people on ledges, or the clamor that echoed from the Exchange floor, and surged across the street to the front door of The House of Morgan, in order to watch the distinguished visitors as they arrived one by one.

There was Mitchell, of course, of National City, now considerably less cheery than he'd been two days before; there was Albert H. Wiggin, head of the Chase National Bank; William Potter, head of Guaranty Trust; Seward Prosser, top man at Bankers Trust; George F. Baker, Jr., of the First National Bank, and, naturally, their host, Thomas W. Lamont, Morgan's senior partner.

Morgan himself was not there, reportedly being in Europe, at Baden-Baden, where he'd gone for the baths. But, as one guy on the sidewalk said, he should travel so far—a bath he wants? He could have gotten one right there on Wall Street that day.

In a matter of minutes, these gentlemen got down to cases, namely what the hell was going on around here? But, wise as they were in the ways of finance, they weren't about to come up with any ready answers. About all they could establish definitely was that there'd been an unprecedented wave of selling—indeed of dumping—of securities, and the result had been stark fear and panic.

(It was only later that most students of the market reached the conclusion that the panic hadn't stemmed from short-selling, as was originally suspected, but from *forced* selling. With literally hundreds of thousands of shares of stock held—as Frederick Lewis Allen wrote in *Only Yesterday*—"by miserable traders whose margins were exhausted or about to be exhausted," it was inevitable that these shares should be dumped on the market. And with no buyers waiting to snap them up, the result was a collapse in the price structure, as the market—built on a flimsy structure of speculative credit—came crashing down around its own ears.)

In any case, it was up to the bankers to see what could be done about it, and they quickly arrived at a decision—each man pledged, on behalf of his own bank, the sum of $40 million, with which amount it was decided, not—Lamont told reporters later—to try to hold prices at any given level, but merely to make such purchases as were necessary to "keep trading on an orderly basis."

But it wasn't that remark of Lamont's that still is remembered by most news veterans of the day, but one the banker made as the meeting came to an end, and he threw open the big doors in front of Morgan's office. "There has been," he said, in a classic bit of understatement, "a little distress selling on the Stock Exchange."

Regardless, when the news of the bankers' meeting reached the floor of the Exchange, optimism was restored momentarily, prices steadied, and the heavy selling came to a halt. And when Richard Whitney, the vice-president of the Exchange and the man designated by the bankers "to make sure purchases as were necessary," strode onto the Exchange floor after lunch, and began buying 10,000-share blocs of certain key stocks, the traders knew that rescue was at hand, and the panic—at least for the moment—had been averted.

It was a brief respite, though. Even though the situation brightened somewhat on Friday and Saturday, when brokers began buying again in hopes of picking up some bargains, the newspapers left no doubt in the public's mind that a major stock market collapse had occurred.

What's more, for the first time since the speculative boom had begun, *The New York Times* felt the news from Wall Street was of enough importance to warrant the key spot on its front page. "WORST STOCK CRASH STEMMED BY BANKS," screamed the three-column scarehead on its lead story on Friday; "12,894,650-SHARE DAY SWAMPS MARKET; LEADERS CONFER, FIND CONDITIONS SOUND."

Yet, despite the sobering seriousness of Black Thursday, it turned out to be nothing compared to what was to follow. *The Times*, in fact, on the day after Black Thursday, didn't event comment editorially about the crash, limiting its editorial page remarks that morning to such standby topics as the traffic situation, child health, the Fusion Party, and the efforts being made to stamp out the fruit fly.

Which was just as well; there were going to be many days in the immediate future when the *Times* was going to look back longingly at its worries over such petty items as the fruit fly.

The real rout began the following Monday. Auburn Auto now began to show that it had the ability to go down as fast as it had gone up; it had dropped 25 points on Friday, another 10 on Saturday, and, on Monday, Oct. 28, it skidded another 25 points, ending up at 190. It also had some company on the toboggan. Steel fell off 17½, General Electric went down 47½, Allied Chemical slipped 36, Westinghouse slumped 34½, and so on. Finding a stock that was rising, or holding steady, was like prospecting for cobalt in the vestibule of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Again the ticker staggered along hours behind, and again hollow-eyed clerks worked until dawn trying to get ahead of the mountains of paperwork that accompanied 10 to 12-million share days.

Many brokerage firms took over entire floors of hotels so as to have rooms available for their harried help

to catch a few hours sleep between market sessions, and this practice was one which led to the standard gag of the hour. When requesting a room at a hotel, the clerk invariably asked a man if he wanted it "for sleeping or jumping?"

Tuesday, Oct. 29, turned out to be the grimmest of all, and a day which still stands as the very worst in the history of Wall Street.

By now it had become apparent that the bankers had been able to do little more than stem the tide of the collapse; after all, what could six men, even a sextet heeled with $240 million, do in the face of a nationwide stampede of selling?

Within minutes after the opening of trading that Tuesday morning, the typhoon erupted in all its force. Great blocks of stock, in 10,000, 20,000, and larger lots, were dumped on the market in a veritable avalanche, with not a buyer to be found anywhere. It was such a deluge that disorder soon turned to rout. One stock, that of White Sewing Machine—which had been at 48 just a few weeks earlier, and had sunk to 11 the day before—now was put on the market with no takers at any price. Eventually, one of the Exchange's errand boys entered a bid of a dollar a share for the stock—as a gag—and got it.

By 11 that morning, an hour after the opening of the Exchange, the volume of trading stood at 3 million shares. By noon, it was at 8 million, and by 1:30 it had passed the 12-million mark, three times the figure which, just a year earlier, had been looked on as a record day's volume! And before trading ended that afternoon, an all-time high of an incredible 16,410,030 shares had changed hands, a record for one day which never was surpassed before or since.

As for the averages, they had been cut almost in half in less than a month's time—from a high of 311 to a low of 164.

Demoralized? The Stock Market was a shambles, and more than one man asked himself how long it could go on, how long human strength could stand up under the brutal battering being suffered by every man and boy having anything to do with Wall Street?

Naturally, hundreds of thousands of small investors lost everything in the crash, and the chauffeurs, barbers, and elevator operators—who only a few months before had been bragging to one another about their killings "in the street"—now looked around grimly for even a job that would enable them to start over.

Hundreds of thousands of others lost businesses, their savings, and all hope of a future, and, had most of them been able to look ahead to the years of depression that followed the crash, it's probable that many more of them than actually did would have climbed out on a convenient ledge and taken the jump.

That some actually did destroy themselves was apparent from the newspaper reports of the closing days of 1929. Yet there was nothing like the sea of bodies lying on the sidewalks of Wall Street which was described for its readers by one bug-eyed London newspaper, whose correspondent cabled that it was dangerous to walk through the financial district for fear of being conked on the noggin by the falling bodies of desperate stock speculators.

As a matter of fact, there was no suicide wave to speak of. Although the suicide rate for New York City, and the United States as a whole, rose slightly in 1929 as compared with 1928 (15.7 per 100,000 of the population in 1928 and 17.0 in 1929), *the greatest number of suicides in 1929 occurred during the summer months*, when the market was zooming and there was no apparent reason for taking the plunge! As for the months of October and November, when the panic was on, the suicide rate was lower than at any time of the year with the exception of January, February and September.

True, those who did end it all, managed to do it with something of a flourish. A Philadelphia broker adhered to tradition and leaped into the icy waters of the Schuylkill. Another chap who'd reputedly lost his all in petroleum stocks poured gasoline on himself, and struck a match. And the chairman of the board of the Rochester (N.Y.) Gas & Electric Company demonstrated that he had a touch of the poet in his soul; loyal to the end of his company's chief product, the gas company chairman destroyed himself in the best way he knew how. He took gas. ●

Yankee Spy

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happened to be passing through Gashgai territory, and a telegram of his to the American Embassy in Teheran candidly conceded that he had met Lincoln on the way.

In his wire, Douglas said: "Just met Lincoln. He dissatisfied with curtailed expense appropriations and mad because not promoted." The Embassy wired back: "Advise Lincoln he has just been promoted full colonel but he must limit spendings to out-of-pocket expenses; will not be reimbursed for anything else."

Douglas was gone when the wire arrived. Since it contained this reference to Lincoln, it was turned over at once to the district intelligence officer of the Iranian Army. The Communists had their plants in every Iranian government agency, including the Army's intelligence bureau in Ispahan, and so they had a copy of the wire within minutes of its arrival. They blew up in righteous indignation. Now wasn't this proof positive, they cried, that the notorious

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HOME on the RANGE

by THE CHEF

Give your girl a night off! Whip up one of these all-male dishes, prepared by some of the world's greatest chefs

When a friend named Jim Hausman sent me a couple of cases of beer recently, a copy of Myra Waldo's "Beer and Good Food" cook book, and a whole bunch of suggestions for cooking with beer, it was enough to get me out of the Morris chair and into the old lady's kitchen in a hurry.

If you're the kind of guy who can't get a real head on his beer, here's a way to beat the problem, particularly with a couple of old standbys that can be kept in your refrig' unopened until ready to be used. I'm referring to that always popular combination, frankfurters and sauerkraut, which can appear on your table as a chef's special, and will make your missus think you've developed some kind of magic touch, while she relaxes somewhere besides over a hot stove.

When you come to think of it, beer is a natural flavor to add to frankfurters and sauerkraut during cooking, because it's the favored beverage to accompany them. You can easily multiply the amounts to feed a party crowd, and it's good on such occasions because it can be prepared quickly, inexpensively and with a minimum of fuss. This recipe serves 6.

FRANKFURTER SAUERKRAUT CASSEROLE

- 1 can (29 ounces) sauerkraut
- 1 cup bottled or canned ale or beer
- ¼ teaspoon caraway seed
- 12 Frankfurters

Drain sauerkraut; turn into a 1½-quart casserole or baking dish. Add beer and caraway seed; toss lightly. Cover; bake in a moderate oven (375°F) 20 minutes. Uncover. Top with frankfurters and bake 20 minutes more.

* * *

Occasionally, you won't want to be bothered with too much of a main dish, particularly in hot weather, but you'll need something that sticks to the ribs, tastes good and doesn't require too much fixing. That's why this onion soup with beer as the surprise ingredient should please everyone.

ONION BEER SOUP

- 5 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1 quart thinly-sliced onions (4 to 5 medium)
- 5 beef bouillon cubes
- 4 cups water
- ¼ teaspoon Tabasco
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 12-ounce bottle or can beer

Melt butter in a deep saucepan. Add onion slices and cook until tender, but not brown. Add bouillon cubes, water, Tabasco, salt and beer. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer 1 hour. Serve with toasted French bread slices and grated Parmesan cheese. Serves 4 to 6 people, depending upon how greedy you are.

* * *

Now, if you'd rather have your wife do the cooking, tell her there's no pleasanter aroma than that of beef stew to greet a hungry man at the end of a long day. Here's a suggestion. The following beef stew recipe calls for a subtle tang and helps to tenderize the beef while it simmers. Serves 4 to 6 people.

HEARTY BEEF STEW

- 1½ lbs. beef stew meat, cut in 1½-inch pieces
- 1½ teaspoons salt, divided
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 3 tablespoons fat
- 2½ cups water
- ½ cup ale or beer
- 2 celery stalks with leaves, finely cut
- 1 bay leaf
- 6 whole cloves
- 12 small white onions, peeled
- 6 medium carrots, scraped and halved
- 3 medium potatoes, peeled and halved

Blend together ½ teaspoon of the salt, pepper and flour; roll pieces of meat in blended mixture; reserve leftover flour. Put fat in a heavy kettle; water, beer, ½ teaspoon of the salt, add beef and brown on all sides. Add finely cut celery, bay leaf and cloves. Cover; simmer 2 to 2½ hours or until meat is almost tender. Add remaining ½ teaspoon salt and vegetables. Cover and cook until vegetables are tender. Measure reserved flour. If necessary, add enough add'l flour to make 2 tablespoons. Add 3 tablespoons water; stir to a smooth paste. Gradually add to stew, stirring constantly, until thickened.

Douglas-Lincoln partnership was at work again!

Whatever Justice Douglas was doing in those parts, however, he was a mere Johnny-come-lately as a trouble-maker. Major Lincoln had preceded him by at least four years.

The Reds first stumbled on the mysterious Yankee spy in the winter of 1946, under circumstances annoyingly similar to the stillborn Barzani invasion of 1950, except that it was not so stillborn at that time.

In 1946, Iran was high on Moscow's shopping list. The oil-rich, strategic country was a powder keg. The British, who owned the oil and tried to control the country, were hanging on to this precious plum by the bare skin of their teeth. The Soviets, on the other hand, regarded the time as ripe to grab the country. Accordingly, they first tried to seize it with the Red Army. When that invasion was checked in the United Nations, Moscow assigned the job of conquering Iran to her spies.

The lines were clearly drawn. Crack British agents suddenly found themselves confronted with a giant Soviet espionage network that had its tentacles everywhere. The strings were pulled from behind the walls of the huge Soviet Embassy compound, in Teheran, where FDR, Churchill and Stalin had held their famous wartime conference.

Top man on this weird totem pole of intrigue was not the Soviet Ambassador, a poker-faced, taciturn envoy named Sadchikov, but an obscure subordinate of his. The latter was listed in the diplomatic blue book as Daniel Komisarov, with the official title of Press Attaché. There was ample reason to believe that the name was an alias, the job at the Embassy a cover, and the man himself a Soviet spy-master.

In actual fact, Comrade Komisarov was the resident director of Red espionage in Iran!

Komisarov, a dapper and gregarious man, was an honor graduate of the Soviet spy school in Tblis, where Red agents are produced on a conveyor belt for the Middle East. He spoke fluent Persian, and was a familiar fixture at the Aibeta Cafe, on Teheran's Islambul Avenue, that was the favorite hangout of secret agents.

With an army of spies under his command, and even his Ambassador taking orders from him, Komisarov was masterminding an ambitious plot to grab Iran while the grabbing seemed good.

Into this pressure cooker of plots and counter-plots suddenly stepped two obscure Americans. One was a tall, florid-faced, bristle-haired diplomatic necromancer, Gerald F. P. Dooher, a 35-year-old free-wheeling Irishman turned red-blooded American. Dooher was the American consul in Tabriz, ancient capital of Persian Azerbaijan, then seething with intrigue.

Gerry Dooher was an extraordinary diplomat. He had been a journalist, a broker and an oil economist, and worked for General Motors for ten years, before he blossomed out as a trouble-shooting diplomat. He learned to speak fluent Persian in the Army during the war, and did it in nine months flat. After the war, he was sent to Tabriz by the State Department because he was a bachelor and still something of an outsider in the Foreign Service, and was therefore regarded as expendable.

Dooher was the right man for a hardship post like Tabriz, caught in the squeeze between East and West. He loved danger and thrived on ambiguous situations, several of which were of his own creation. With the Reds in control of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, Dooher was expected to keep a tapline open as best as he could, and also stay alive in the process.

For all his free-wheeling diplomacy, however, Dooher's hands were tied. Accordingly, his place on the clandestine front had to be filled with another obscure American—Major Robert Throckmorton Lincoln.

Lincoln's abrupt appearance behind Dooher's broad back baffled Komisarov. Americans have been traditionally missing from the dark spots where espionage agents usually congregated. Therefore, an American super-spy like Lincoln was unprecedented.

Yet there he was—and from then on, it seemed, the big badger game for Iran was somehow reduced to a spirited private war between Comrade Komisarov and Bob Lincoln.

Komisarov's policy was to bore from within. In Azerbaijan, he worked through a Moscow-trained politician named Jaafar Pishawari. In Kurdistan, his organization man was a brooding local big shot, Ghazi Mohammed. The Ghazi was a devout Moslem and a sincere Kurdish patriot, but in his blind zeal, he became a helpless pawn in Soviet hands.

Komisarov's plan was broad but simple. Pishawari and the Ghazi were to stage local uprisings, seize control of their respective provinces, then offer them up to Moscow on silver platters. What's more, everything went according to Komisarov's plan at the start.

Then, all of a sudden, the Red tide was stemmed and turned as the result of the appearance of a shadowy stranger in the north; and from then on everything Komisarov plotted was effectively counterplotted. For one thing, seemingly nothing could be kept secret from this stranger. Every decision reached behind the closed doors of the Ghazi's cabinet at Mahabad, capital of Persian Kurdistan, leaked to the newcomer within hours.

At the same time, the latter appeared to be busy in the nearby Zagros Mountains, organizing his own forces among Kurdish tribes, for the show-

down with Barzani's army that was the focal point of the insurgency.

When the showdown came at last, it was anti-climactic. The governments of Pishawari and the Ghazi collapsed. The Barzani army fled. Pishawari escaped across the border into the Soviet Union, but the Ghazi was trapped and hanged. On December 13, 1946, the Shah's army could enter Tabriz and Mahabad without firing a shot.

The key to this amazing contretemps appeared to be a tall, sparsely-built, trim old man, Amar Khan Sharifi, chief of the Shakkak tribe. Amar Khan was strickly anti-Soviet, but he had joined the Ghazi's cabinet as Minister of War, the key cabinet post. He did his best to keep Kurdistan out of the Soviet grab-bag, and when the Red plot was foiled, Moscow went after Amar Khan with a vengeance. Radio Moscow and the black transmitters across the Soviet border promptly called him a traitor to the Kurds.

"He was working as the front man for a foreign intruder," the Reds clamored, "for none other than the notorious Major Lincoln!"

As Moscow saw it, Lincoln was the mysterious stranger, as much the mastermind behind the Iranian victory as Komisarov was the scapegoat behind the plot that flopped. Moscow Radio broadcast the inside story of Lincoln's cooperation with Amar Khan: "The greedy Khan," they said, "betrayed the Kurdish cause for even less than a bowl of potage. He sold out to Lincoln for a single jeep he was promised, but which he never received!"

Major Lincoln seemed constantly to be in the thick of things. When he was informed that Pishawari was planning to go on the lam, he hurried to Tabriz and saved the Azerbeijanian gold hoard which the rebel leader had hoped to take with him to the Soviet Union.

In the meantime, Barzani retreated with his forces into Iraq, and then suddenly re-entered Iran and tried to fight his way through to a haven in the Soviet Union. Lincoln had the professional's admiration for the conspiratorial skill of the young Kurdish general. He decided to save him from the Ghazi's ignominious end on the gallows. He rushed into the enemy camp and, with the help of a certain Omar Agha, chief of the pro-Barzani Milani tribe, showed Mulla a shortcut to Russia. True or false, this was the popular version of Barzani's escape as whispered in the bazaars and cafes of Mahabad by starry-eyed, admiring Kurds. Again Lincoln's prestige and popularity zoomed.

In the wake of the total Red failure in Iran, Komisarov was booted out and a new spymaster appointed to replace him. The new man was an Armenian, posing as a secretary at the Soviet Embassy, and listed as Constantine G. Oganessian on the diplomatic roster.

From the day of his arrival in Teheran, Comrade Oganessian constantly sought a showdown with Lincoln. He was aware of his adversary's one critical weakness: Lincoln was like Dorian Gray—his way to get rid of feminine temptation was to yield to it.

Oganessian therefore decided to catch Lincoln on a hook baited with a beautiful woman. He brought to Teheran one of the Reds' best female decoys, a Moslem glamor girl named Fatma Khanum, who was as voluptious as she was efficient.

The idea was to dump beautiful Fatma on sex-crazy Lincoln, have her ensnare him, and then set him up for the knock-down. What's more, Oganessian's plan seemed to be working well—up to a point, Lincoln *did* seduce Fatma, but their torrid affair failed in the end to yield the results Oganessian had anticipated. On the contrary, Teheran gossip-mongers asserted, Fatma Khanum became Lincoln's major source of information—on Oganessian!

By then, the Reds were not the only ones deriving a vicarious thrill from the manhunt for this elusive American agent. The tally-ho was joined by the British Secret Service in Iran, and especially by the Iranian security organization, headed by General Gilanshah.

The general was an avid collector of Lincolniana, and he had a bulging dossier about the major. He was getting thoroughly fed up with him, too,

and had decided to put an end to his adventures. In a desperate attempt to catch him, Gilanshah ordered the whole vast tribal territory in the south closed to *all* foreigners, because he suspected that Lincoln was in the south organizing the tribes against the Teheran government. But Lincoln, who fretted and improvised when he had nothing to do, was not in the south after all. Either that or he had managed again to slip out of the dragnet, for he couldn't be found.

Ubiquitous as he was, Robert T Lincoln seemed for a fact to be a mere figment. For, no matter how Komisarov and Oganessian, and the assortment of other competing spy organizations, tried to make him materialize, he remained an elusive figure of quasi-fiction, like a modern Scarlet Pimpernel. The rumor mills of the whole Middle East even buzzed with the story that the American super-spy was nothing but a practical joke someone was playing on the gullible Russians.

Then all of a sudden, through a series of curious mishaps, Lincoln ceased to be a figment. Virtually overnight, in the spring of 1949, he became as real as a secret agent can even hope to become.

One of the "slip-ups" was traced to Dooher, who had been transferred to the American Embassy in Teheran. He was a superb political officer, a sensitive job in those parts, but he could be "careless" once in a while. Such as when he would drop scraps of paper on which he had jotted down telltale data about Lincoln. Some of these scraps wound up in the pockets of an eager and young Persian reporter working as a stringer for the Teheran bureau of a big press service and they promptly found their way into the Lincoln dossier of the Iranian Army's intelligence service.

Oganessian had his agents firmly planted in Iranian Army Intelligence, and was soon given copies of these information scraps. Thanks to them, Lincoln became increasingly real; and then completely genuine, in the wake of a *faux pas* committed by an American Embassy attaché, whose anonymity will be preserved for charitable reasons.

The young American attaché committed the worst blunder of which a diplomat can ever become guilty—he "left" his briefcase in the Albeita Cafe, the hang-out of the Red agents. When he hurried back to recover it, the briefcase was gone.

The loss of diplomatic briefcases is a familiar switch in the plots of spy thrillers, but once in a while it *does* happen in real life—by accident—or design. The disappearance of this particular briefcase seemed to be especially embarrassing, because it was literally bulging with classified documents, including several about Major Lincoln.

The papers included Lincoln's "bio card" with the detailed story of his life; and a secret report, No. USIS—B-39-T-407, prepared for internal use by Lincoln's own organization.

It contained all the data and derogatory information spy agencies collect about their own operatives!

There was no doubt that, conditions being what they were in Teheran, the invaluable attaché case had been picked up by someone who knew how to make the best use of its contents. Sure enough, it soon became evident that Oganessian had gained access to them.

But whoever took possession of the attaché case must have sold his booty not merely to the highest bidder, but to *all* bidders. For the same papers also showed up in the files of various Iranian security organizations, and in the archives of the British Secret Service. Eventually they even found their way into the Turkish Army's G-2 in Ankara, and even to the Syrian Military Intelligence Service in Damascus, many miles from the Teheran cafe where they had been lost.

Out of the lost briefcase there now emerged a clear picture of Major Robert Throckmorton Lincoln, with all the guarded and embassassing secrets of his adventurous life. And he turned out to be the strangest secret agent who ever dwelled on spydom's shady lane.

The papers showed that he was born on October 10, 1909, in Slippery Rock, Arkansas—so he was no youngster any more in a profession that needed the vigor and blind daring of foolish youth.

The papers revealed moreover that Lincoln was no paragon of virture. If anything, he was a showoff and a chaser, like a swashbuckling pirate left over from the 18th Century.

The papers also disclosed that Bob Lincoln had traveled an especially crooked road to his dubious destination as a spy. His family background was mostly blank, though he was said to be related to the famous writer, Booker T. Lincoln, as well as being a descendant of Thomas Jefferson on his mother's side. There, however, all respectability ended.

"Unfortunately," the secret report stated, "Lincoln's career has been somewhat checkered, and he appears to have devoted most of his mature life to shady pursuits. From 1930 to 1933, he was a rumrunner; from 1933 to 1939, a confidence man. He is known to have a wife in Springfield, Missouri, with whom he has one child. He is reliably reported to have at least two Kurdish *sighehs* (concubines)."

According to the papers, Lincoln's dazzling career in espionage began in 1939, when he was 30 years old and stone broke. In the summer of that year, he turned up in the mysterious north of India, ostensibly to study the languages and dialects of the region.

Most embarrassing among the missing documents, however, was a cable that exposed Lincoln as a reckless philanderer. Dated March 21, 1949, it had been sent by Major General William J. Donovan, wartime chief of the O.S.S. Although Wild Bill had supposedly retired to his lucrative law practice after the war, the cable indicated he had kept a finger in the spy pie, for his wire contained a left-handed compliment to Lincoln, both as a secret agent and as a virile man. It read in part:

"For publicity purposes my visit to Teheran is pleasure; actually I am out to investigate Lincoln's activities. Reports of his excesses among the Kurdish women have reached the President, and while he is one of our best operatives, he's got to get on the beam morally . . . He has got to drop everything, including any woman with whom he might be entangled at the moment, and come to Teheran with clean, clean hands."

It did not take long to recognize the repercussions of Major Lincoln's exposure. References to him now thickened and multiplied, and they were made in much firmer terms, with data culled from the stolen papers and embellished to suit their users.

Finally, Lincoln became actual flesh and blood when he showed up one day at a Teheran hotel, and registered by using his own by now celebrated name!

What was more, he even added his code number by which he was known inside the U.S. Secret Service—"No. 1776." Even in his code name, he was a true patriot down to the smallest detail.

When the major thus came out of hiding, the various secret services of the Middle East were seized by a veritable Lincoln mania. It even spread to Turkey, where it burst into the open in a comic incident. Shortly after Lincoln's inadvertent exposure, in the summer of 1949, a group of American archaeologists planned an expedition to Mount Ararat, in Turkish-Armenia, where according to the Bible Noah's Ark had come to a rest after the Deluge. To Muscovite minds, however, this expedition was but an other American spy plot, and the Russians were convinced that Lincoln was behind it.

The Turks were even sufficiently impressed to ban the expedition, thus hoping to keep Lincoln out of their hair. However, they finally were persuaded that this was a genuine scientific venture, and that Lincoln had nothing whatever to do with it. Permission was then granted, and the expedition was allowed to proceed to Ararat.

By then, Lincoln's prowess was taken for granted. Strange though this may sound, the Reds became his most ardent fans. Although they continued to blast him on their radios and in their papers, there now sneaked a tone of subtle admiration even into their attacks.

Lincoln thus became much like an iceberg, with part of him showing, but with much more of him sub-

merged. Meanwhile he continued as a permanent item on Radio Moscow, but now he also appeared in the newspapers of his own native land. Already in 1949, he was mentioned in a Washington column by Robert Allen; and then, on November 3, 1950, *The New York Times* also deemed him a fit piece of news.

Wrote the *Times*: "Lt. Col. Robert (or Roger) T. Lincoln, daring secret intelligence agent of the United States, has been promoted to full colonel for the fine work he has been doing in the Middle East and Far East. Lincoln has been spying well ahead of Communist aggressors. Not only has he passed through Korea, but at last report he had managed to survey Tibet before the Chinese Communist invasion. Colonel Lincoln is often referred to in a hateful way on the Russian radio. His espionage activities along the Soviet border of Iran enrage the Communists, and his exploits have been stirring the suspicions of Iranian, Syrian, Turkish, and other Intelligence Services."

The appearance of this article in the *Times* created a crisis, not in Iran or within the Soviet secret service, but in the very heart of the U. S. State Department. When Dean Acheson, who was then Secretary of State, stumbled upon the piece, he almost choked on his morning coffee. He demanded to be told who in his department was guilty of such gross indiscretion, leaking the story of this American super-spy to the *Times!* It needed some tall explaining to calm Secretary Acheson's fury.

Even so, Colonel Lincoln continued to crop up in the news. He remained an intermittent news item until 1953, when suddenly he seemed to have gone so deep under cover that simply nobody was able to find him any longer. And his sudden disappearance disturbed his adversaries far more than his abrupt appearances ever did. Moscow apparently assumed that a silent, invisible Lincoln was far more dangerous than a loud and gregarious one, and they surmised that he must have been up to something really sinister when he managed to impose upon himself this ironclad incognito.

Unfortunately, not much more remains to be told about Bob Lincoln and his fabulous spy career—except one thing:

There is reason to believe that Robert Throckmorton Lincoln never really existed!

This suspicion stems directly from a story written by Cyrus L. Sulzberger, in the same *New York Times* that so aroused Dean Acheson's ire with the original revelation of Lincoln's existence. Wrote Sulzberger, chief foreign correspondent of the *Times*, after a visit to Teheran:

"Major Lincoln was born [in the late fall of 1948] after the Soviet radio had mentioned the activities of a mysterious American of that name. Ambassador Wiley, a man whose brilliant diplomatic career has never

erased his sense of humor, was discussing the Russian broadcast with his political attaché, the genial Gerald F. P. Dooher. Both of Irish antecedents and salty imagination, they decided that—for the good of the United States Government and the pleasure of this historical epoch—since Major Lincoln did not already exist, he should be created."

And so, Sulzberger's story went on to say, Gerry Dooher and I created him. And, with Sulzberger's revelation of our alleged spoof, the life of the mysterious Bob Lincoln supposedly came to an end.

But it isn't easy to kill a legend as elaborate and as fantastic as that of Robert Throckmorton Lincoln. And, as a matter of fact, Sulzberger's "obituary," far from burying Lincoln, actually made him even *more* of a top-secret agent—simply because the Russians refused to believe the *Times* was telling the truth!

What's more, the Reds assumed that the Sulzberger article killing off Lincoln actually was still another sly maneuver, cleverly concocted by the U. S. Secret Service, in order to provide a foolproof cover for Lincoln's activities, and thus confuse the attempts of those whose job it was to track him down!

How real Bob Lincoln was and, to a certain extent, how real he may still be in the minds of his adversaries, was shown by the most recent item of Lincolniana, with his old friend, General Barzani, figuring once more in the tale. Barzani, who seems to have the nine lives of a Kurdish cat, has survived all the perils and vicissitudes of his adventures. Today, at the age of 51, he is back in his native Iraq, heading the Communist Party in Baghdad.

His return to Iraq was made possible by the revolution of General Kassim that re-opened the country to the Reds. But there is something about Barzani that is filling his Moscow bosses with new apprehension. According to certain intelligence reports from Baghdad, *Lincoln is hiding somewhere in Iraq!* What's more, he is said to be working closely with and on Mulla Mustafa Barzani, weakening his allegiance to Moscow!

In the shadowy underworld of espionage, it is difficult indeed to resolve where fact ends and fiction begins. At lot of ingenuity and imagination usually goes into the development of "covers" and "legends" to endow real life secret agents working in the field with a deceptively fictional fame. Who is there to say that Robert Throckmorton Lincoln was all fact or all fiction?

At the height of his career, in fact, the Soviets, determined to catch him either alive or dead, had placed a million ruble prize on Lincoln's head. As far as it's possible to ascertain, that reward, the crowning recognition Robert Throckmorton Lincoln had received at the hands of his opponents, has never been cancelled. ●

Boxing

Continued from page 17

resist selling their birthright for what turns out to be a mess of potage.

"Boxing was most vulnerable," Parker continued, "so it is small wonder that it was to be the first in line to be totally corrupted. What you see on TV on Wednesday and Friday nights is no longer a hoax. It is tantamount to crime perpetrated by an unholy alliance of unscrupulous promoters, greedy mobsters, scheming sponsors and the sly TV industry that apparently is totally blind to moral considerations. Those quiz scandals we used to get so indignant about were nursery games compared with boxing on TV.

"The sponsor dominates the bout—who else? (After all he's the one who picks up the tab.) Take last Wednesday's bout, for example. It originated in Indianapolis, another spot tightly controlled by the I.B.C. To add insult to injury, it was refereed by Frank J. Gilmer, chairman of the notoriously lax Illinois State Athletic Commission, and a faithful friend of Jim Norris, boxing's invisible man these days.

"Did it matter that it was light-heavyweight champion Archie Moore versus Willi Besmanoff? Archie had plenty of fat to spare; he weighed in with 206½ pounds that would slow down even the sleekest weather balloon if used as a ballast. The bout had three products to sell: Viceroy cigarettes, Alka-Seltzer and 1-a-Day Vitamins, with Sir Walter Raleigh tobacco and those mentholated Kool cigarettes thrown in as spots.

"It was an hour show, and counting every mention of the products, it had a total of 18 commercials, some brief, some long. You need the entire 10 rounds of a bout to accommodate that many commercials, and so, the first thing a sponsor with any sense will tell the promoter is, 'See to it that the fight goes the limit!' Most of them do. Between January and June, 1959, 39 of the 51 TV bouts ended by decision after the completed 10th round. Madison Square Garden appears to be most accommodating in this respect. It housed fourteen of these TV main bouts, and thirteen of them went the limit. There was only one slip-up: Carlos Ortiz, one of the controlled fighters, got out of control and finished off Kenny Lane, by TKO in the second round."

As Parker sees it, by telling the fighter to make place for all the pre-arranged commercials, and the more the merrier, the customers are prevented from getting their money's worth. "If a fighter is instructed to go the limit," Parker went on, "it means, of course, that he can't cut loose. Today, you see a lot of untutored pampering in the ring, a fighter carrying his opponent, seeing to it that he won't get too badly hurt or hit, or else, for heaven's sake, the bout might end too soon, and the announcers are left holding the bag with all those unsung commercials."

But commercials, no matter how many or how preposterous, are not Dan Parker's pet peeves. The callous cut-offs are, when the camera turns to a scheduled commercial even when there is something worthwhile to see in or around the ring; or when it squeamishly cuts off a scene that promoters, for the sponsors' sake, regard as embarrassing. This takes all the color out of the prizering.

"One of the hottest scenes in boxing's TV history," he recalled, "was never seen by the customers, yet it was better and more thrilling than all the ten rounds of the bout that preceded it. It involved redoubtable Al Weill, first matchmaker of the I.B.C. regime, who later resigned to assume the more lucrative management of Rocky Marciano on his way to the heavyweight championship.

"It seems, Weill had crossed up the manager of the main event fighter, by giving him a bum steer on whom to bet. Al had been getting the gilt-edged tip, but by the time he conveyed it to the gullible manager, the tip favored the pre-arranged loser. The manager was strictly from Greenwich Village, not inclined to be a good sport, especially when his own money was riding on a bet. When Al's hush-hush tip came a cropper, the Village idiot jumped into the crowded ring in which Weill was ministering to the winner, and started a main bout of his own—giving Al the thrashing of a lifetime.

"What do you think happened? The squeamish camera promptly abandoned the event. The customers were solicitously treated to an unscheduled commercial, whereas in my opinion they had their constitutional privilege to partake of the unscheduled bout."

Parker, who is an avid collector of Weilliana in all forms, shapes and mannerisms, ventured his sole smile of the interview when recalling the story behind his favorite cut-off. "If I were czar," he said, "I'd suspend the license of of the promoter who permits such cut-offs, whatever they are—though frankly, most of them provide only comic relief and cannot take one's mind off the more sinister aspects of crooked boxing on television."

"What," we asked, "is in your opinion the most sinister influence TV has bestowed upon boxing?"

The answer came in a flash, with eyes flashing in accompaniment: "It was the firm entrenchment of the mobsters in a position from which they could rule and ruin the game."

As Parker sees it, when Jim Norris came on the scene in 1949 with his historic idea of putting the fights on TV, he ran into unexpected difficulties from a not entirely unexpected source. He was all set to go already

in 1950, for the technical facilities seemed to be available, but the fight managers balked. They wanted a 50% cut in the main bout, the sole event of the card that was to be televised. It would have come to a respectable sum, anything up to $30,000. Norris countered by offering a flat fee of $4,500, later raisng it to $5,000.

A hassle followed, and for a while it seemed the whole TV idea might founder on the difficulties with the independent-minded fight managers, who had grown fat and cocky during the years of the benevolent Mike Jacobs dictatorship.

"It was Mike Jacobs who signed the first TV contract, with the Gillette people," Parker recalled. "It was in 1944, for the Willie Pep-Chalky Wright bout that went on TV on September 26 of that year. But it was a limited affair, confined to New York, Philadelphia and Schenectady. Norris needed a coast-to-coast hookup to make his big idea pay off. The fight managers kept balking, and not merely on the money question. Norris and his associates found it increasingly difficult to deal with so many independent-minded operators in the cauliflower cartel, especially since they had to plan long in advance and needed ironclad assurances that they would be able to deliver what they promised.

"If you are to deliver 104 main bouts a year," Parker said, "You have to have tight control of boxing from a centralized nerve center. Now the bouts had to be arranged, like those rigged wrestling matches, week after week, just like any TV Western that runs in a series.

"Norris realized that what he needed to assure the flowering of his big idea was a firm hand to keep the managers in line—a czar who would operate behind the scenes with powers of persuasion and compulsion. He was looking for a supermanager whose word would be the law, operating through a bunch of quasi-managers, some of them sheer figments, others completely subservient to the superman's whim and will.

"This was how Jim Norris and his associates, Art Wirtz and Truman Gibson, grafted Frankie Carbo on boxing."

Parker went on: "Carbo came in with a whip and soon enough, sure enough, the recalcitrant managers lined up for the dole. Thanks to Uncle Frankie's special skill at persuasion, they accepted an allotment of $4,500. And thanks again to Carbo's efficient handling of a delicate situation, Norris and his I.B.C. could, on July 21, 1951, at last make the overdue deal for the televised Wednesday and Friday bouts which stayed with us for almost a decade."

"Frankie Carbo," we said. "For longer than we care to remember, he was the man who made you angriest. What about Carbo?"

"It's a long story," Parker said, "because it was a long and uphill

fight, and though Uncle Frankie is now a non-paying guest in a New York jail, the fight isn't over.

"I first became interested in Carbo early in the 1940s," Parker said, "when he was still on the West Coast, mainly as one of the organization men of the defunct Murder, Inc. What made me look him up was the fact that he seemed to be interested in boxing, as a kind of sideline it seemed, and on a relatively modest scale.

"He was mixed up with a Lithuanian boy, a heavyweight who used the name of 'Eddie Hogan,' and I became interested chiefly because this Hogan happened to be from Waterbury, Conn., my own home town. Carbo brought him from Los Angeles to New York, then got mixed up with a middleweight named Babe Risko, via the Syracuse branch of the Mafia.

"I called the library, on a long shot, to find out if they had anything on Carbo, and, sure enough, they had a slim envelope proving to me at once that Signor Carbo was the kind of philanthropist the game could well do without. The clippings showed him at the wrong end of a murder charge, but coming out on the right end nevertheless, thanks to a crazy, mixed-up Los Angeles jury.

"In that case, a witness—a fellow member of Murder, Inc.—testified that he was in the murder car in which Harry (Big Greenie) Greenberg was fatally shot, and testified under oath that Carbo had done the job. A woman identified Carbo as the man she saw walking rapidly away from the car in which Big Greenie had met his unlamented end, smoking a long, black cigar. But because the mobster who testified he saw Carbo fire the shot had a criminal record, and his testimony wasn't corroborated by a person of good character, the court ruled that the jury should disregard it."

Dan Parker went on: "This was the first I had on Paolo Giovanni Carbo and not much more—until 1946, when his name suddenly popped back into my mind, during a waterfront investigation. It developed Frankie had deposited $300,000 in a New York bank during a nine-month period in 1945, although he had no visible means of support. There was ample reason to suspect that the money came from his growing involvement in the boxing game. But there was little if anything one could have done, because there was nothing in the statutes as yet providing penalties for those who acted as unlicensed, undercover managers of fighters.

"So Carbo dropped out of the picture as quickly as he faded in, and stayed out, too, more or less, because during those days in the '40s, a mobster like Frankie could not get too far. Boxing was the plum of Uncle Mike Jacobs, the ex-ticket broker from the old Normandie Hotel, who became the Mr. Big of the game in the footsteps of Tex Rickard, thanks to his own brain and Joe Louis' brawn.

"Uncle Mike was keeping a fairly decent house. There were mobsters in the game, to be sure, like Bill Duffy, for instance, but Jacobs knew how to keep them on the fringes. So next time Carbo's name really cropped up was only years later, in 1952, again in connection with a waterfront investigation.

"Now he was pinpointed as an intimate associate of Albert Anastasia, who was slain in New York in a barber's chair; and seemed to be the mob's executive veep in charge of what my late friend, Bill McGeehan of the *New York Herald-Tribune*, so aptly called the "manly art of modified murder"—boxing. Already in 1921, McGeehan tried to dispel the illusion that boxing was a sport. He told a governor of New York State: 'Prize fighting is not a sport. It is a gigantic business,' adding that it had 'its crooks, its gamblers, and its undesirable elements.'"

"By 1952, this was a gigantic understatement, chiefly because of Carbo," Parker continued. "But even then, his link to the game seemed to be minor or tenuous. He was spotted as a fight mobster because of his apparent association with one Anniello Ercole, a fight manager of unsavory reputation out of Brooklyn. Carbo himself clammed up during the investigation; he was arrested on January 17, 1953, but the charges against him were dropped three months later, and he could vanish again.

"By then the whole character of boxing had changed," Parker told us. "Mike Jacobs retired in May, 1944, and his empire was taken over by the Norris crowd, from Chicago, headed by 47-year-old, suave, elegant James Dougan Norris. He was the multi-million-dollar heir to an enormous grain fortune, made in a few quick years by an ex-Canadian, the elder James Norris of Chicago. Old man Norris had branched out, and before long he controlled insurance companies, elevator factories, all sorts of major industries—as well as the St. Louis Arena Corporation, the Indianapolis Coliseum, the Chicago Stadium Corporation, the Detroit Olympia. Now, in 1949, Madison Square Garden was added to the empire.

"Old Norris liked tennis and golf for his own private pastime; he raced some mighty fine horses, and, being a Canadian by birth, he was a natural and noisy buff of ice hockey. The Norris clan controls two clubs in the National Hockey League, which used to be called the Norris House League.

"Son Jim was all out to conquer boxing, for better or for worse, especially for worse. He was born in 1902 in Chicago, and got his middle name from his mamma, Ethel Carlisle Dougan. Unfortunately for Jim, his mother died when the boy was only 8 years old, and, although Jim was the apple of his father's eye, a motherless boy has quite a struggle on his hands. He had the best of everything but somehow he had a hankering for the worst of some of the things. He grew up with a strange infatuation for mobism, which is but a letter away from momism—but it's an entirely different ism. As a youngster, he became especially close to Sam Hunt, a notorious Capone gangster, who got his nickname, 'Golf Bag Sam,' not from any weakness for the noble sport, but from the fact that he used to carry his submachine gun in a golf bag.

"Young Jim Norris—they called him 'young' though he was in his late forties—came in from Chicago with an ambiguous reputation, and boxing took a turn for the worse. The mob that Uncle Mike Jacobs knew how to keep out on the fringes now surged toward the center. But the race to the abyss (or what Al Weill prefers to call the "abscess") could still have been avoided had not Jim Norris had the big idea about TV boxing. Jim came in with TV, and the two became inseparable. Without Jim Norris and without TV, Frankie Carbo would have remained a fringe character. With them as boosters, he developed into the czar.

"He became the power behind the Norris throne. For a while, though, he knew how to remain a mystery man, for he is extremely secretive by nature, trusts nobody, and has a genuine passion for anonymity. Frankie was still regarded as merely a fringe character when the grapevine buzzed with a mysterious Mr. Big who, it was said, pulled the whole Norris empire on invisible strings. They referred to him by a series of names—as Mr. Grey, the Ambassador, the Superintendent, Our Friend, and Mr. Pearl—but mostly as Mr. Grey, especially when they had to mention him on the phone."

"Carbo's operation had innumerable ramifications," we interpolated, "and by now, thanks to New York District Attorney Frank Hogan, much of it is history. Is there a way to show, by the example of a single bout, how the Carbo Method operated?"

"I think there is," said Parker, "and I was coming to it. It is tied to Joe Brown, the Baton Rouge fighter they call the Creole Clouter, a 34-year-old ex-carpenter who has been wearing the lightweight crown since 1956, when he clobbered poor Bud Smith into pulp.

"Take Brown's bout with Ralph Dupas of New Orleans, a year ago this last May. It was a textbook example of what I mean—almost like a case history of Dr. Carbo's operations. It was so openly brazen, the way it was rigged—a bout featured big on television—that it could no longer be regarded as an exception to the rule; it was the rule itself.

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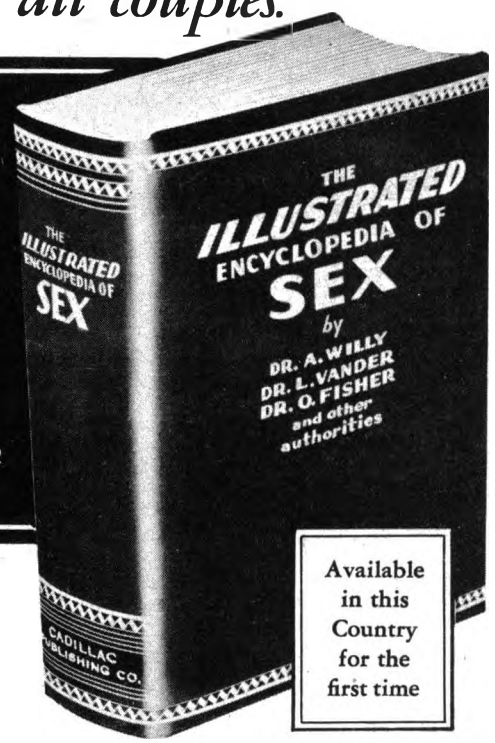

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strong New Orleans boy who started out as a pro in 1950 by losing to Jitterbug Smith in the 4th round. You may even recall him for another reason—He figured in the news because he was supposed to have a bit of Negro blood, but was ruled a paleface when his accusers could not prove the charge.

"Well, Ralph had his ups and downs, but he was itching all over to have a shot at the lightweight championship, for reasons known only to himself. But he was managed by one Whitey Esneault, not exactly a paragon of all virtues, but an independent manager untainted by the mob. Whitey could not get the shot for Ralph, naturally, for he was subsisting outside the charmed circle.

"Suddenly he got touched by the magic spell. Ralph's big chance came in May 1958, when the Carbo crowd needed a big bout for TV and was looking for a safe opponent for Joe Brown. They remembered Whitey's frantic efforts to get a championship bout for his boy, so they got in touch with him.

"This was not one of those routine deals, the mob muscling in on a fighter. This was a fancy scheme. They told Whitey his boy would be matched against Joe, provided—there is always that 'provided'—he agreed to share Ralph with Angelo Dundee, one of Carbo's phantom managers. Whitey agreed, Dundee was brought in, handing the bout to Lou Viscusi, since Dupas had been ruled a Caucasian and New Orleans doesn't allow any racially mixed bouts, even if Joe Brown also was from Louisiana.

"The bout was scheduled for May 7, 1958, in the Houston Coliseum, with coast-to-coast TV and all that—another smelly bout in the now familiar series of "how-can-we-lose-matches?" for which America can thank Carbo and his sordid invisible empire. As usual, Carbo was in *total* control from absolutely all angles. He controlled both fighters: Brown through Viscusi, Dupas through Dundee. And though managers are not supposed to promote, Viscusi also promoted the bout for the 135-pound title, with Carbo as his silent partner, and the I.B.C. as co-promoter.

"All this was visible to the naked eye. But there was still another, sordid angle that was not so readily discernible. Dupas was not only getting a shot at the title—he was to get the title itself. Plans were made in strictest secrecy to pass the title on to Ralph, temporarily, so as to provide a betting cleanup, and some excitement for the return match, when Brown was supposed to regain the title.

"But there was a lot of underground murmur in the French Quarter, where the fans felt the honor of New Orleans was at stake. Word reached me, as well as Congressman Hebert, about the upcoming skulduggery. I exposed the plan in a column on May 4, three days before the bout; and the Congressman did the same on the floor of the House. 'The fight may be a sizzler,' I wrote, 'but anyone who bets on it, after being forwarned, deserves to be taken.' "

"The result was an honest fight," Parker continued, "although Brown had to KO Dupas twice. Referee Jimmy Webb, who must have mixed up his signals, let the fight go on after counting 10 over the New Orleans jitterbug, who had been felled by Brown's lightning left hook in the 8th round. But then Joe finished the job, giving Webb ample time to count as long as he pleased." Parker grew only a slight bit pensive as he added: "It is amazing how honest boxing can be when the law is on the march after some of the brazen thieves who have all but murdered the sport.

"How tight is Carbo's control over boxing on TV?"

"Tight, very, *very* tight," Parker said with emphasis, "and it does not make much difference where Carbo happens to be at a given moment. There is a henchman of his, name of Eddie Coco, who's serving life on a murder charge, but that does not prevent him from collecting his regular stipends from a Carbo-controlled boxing club or from having a cut in a Carbo-controlled fighter. There was an assistant matchmaker at the Garden who could not even hear the time tick without being reminded that he was Uncle Frankie's serf, body and soul. He was Mushky McGee and the constant reminder was a wristwatch inscribed, 'From Frankie to Mushky!'

"During the long rule of Billy Brown as matchmaker of the Garden, a daily call went out to 'Mr. Grey' at his Hollywood, Florida, retreat, to report developments and get instructions. And though you can't call a city jail as simply as a Florida mansion, there are means and ways to maintain a line of communications to Uncle Frankie.

"Carbo has his tentacles everywhere. He's nationwide, and even international, with lines to Montreal and Havana, and on to Italy and parts beyond. And it doesn't make any difference that he has been jugged. From the way things look, he's directing country-wide fistic operations from a hospital ward in the City Prison, from the hospital ward because he recently had a diamond, or maybe an emerald, removed from one of his kidneys—at the expense of the people of New York.

"Look at the havoc," Parker said, "which Jim Norris, Frankie Carbo and company have wrought in boxing, and how they've ruined the game by knocking its most powerful personal incentive—money—for a loop. During Mike Jacobs' reign, between 1937 and early 1949, total attendance at the Garden was nearly 4,000,000, total receipts $14,805,274.41. The year 1945 produced the all-time record, with 540,928 spectators paying $2,262,787 to see 37 bouts.

"During the Norris period of comparable length, total attendance fell to a little over a million, and receipts to just $4,000,000. Last year was the worst ever, with only 59,558 spectators paying less than $125,000, a puny sum if there ever was one!

"The talent received about half of Uncle Mike's total gate, something like $7,000,000. Now the talent is left out shivering in the cold, while, Norris, Carbo and the rest are warming themselves around the hot stove.

"Under the terms of his contracts, Norris was getting $100,000 per 'show' from Gillette, a little more from split sponsorships. Total cost per show was said to be $45,000 for all expenses, including talent, production, 15 per cent agency commission, etc., but not including time and commercials. With 104 bouts a year, gross receipts thus amounted to over 10 million dollars, with more than half of it remaining in coffers over which Norris, Carbo and associates had control.

"On the other hand, talent was paid just a little over half a million dollars in all these years or less than a tenth what they made under Mike Jacobs' benevolent dictatorship! Much of it was further decimated by kickbacks and other tributes paid to the Carbo organization in one form or another.

"The fighters are the worst off, as the sad case of Vince Martinez proves. When Honest Bill Daly succeeded in luring Vince back into his stable, he agreed to 15 per cent of Martinez' purse as his cut. But in the end, Honest Bill managed to wind up with about 40 per cent through his personal mastery of advanced arithmetic.

"Nothing has changed—not even Norris or Carbo. The majority of the Boxing Commissions allow the Norris-Carbo crowd free rein—with shooting matches between stable mates, promoted by the managers and managed by the promoters.

"The symbol of it all is a certain Mr. T, described as a generous Brooklyn sportsman, who is sponsoring the pugilistic career of Billy Lynch, of Hartford. He shows up wherever important people congregate, supplying certain pink pills for Billy's opponents. They are 8-5 ringside favorites as a rule, but lose in big upsets, as did Andrew Brown in New Orleans."

"Well, who do you say Mr. T is?"

Dan Parker looked at us with genuine curiosity as if he expected us to give him the answer. But we just shrugged, batting the ball back to him. He opened up with a triumphant roar:

"He's the notorious Ercole, of course, the disbarred fight manager, the late Albert Anastasia's bosom pal, the character whose intimate association with Carbo in 1952 almost tripped him up."

Which is where we came in! ●

Navy Binge

continued from page 21

catch their collective breaths, and were certain the order wasn't some monumental hoax, which would be rescinded as soon as cooler heads could prevail, Navymen began to wonder out loud what could be done about it. Their long-popular wine messes were liberally stocked with all manner of grog, from beer and wines to bourbon, rye, scotch, and literally any other kind of beverage designed to make a man happy.

And what were they to do with it?

Pending an answer, the entire Navy seethed and muttered. Black crepe appeared on cabin doors in mourning over the grim order. Wreaths were strung up on signal lanyards. And notes edged in black were passed back and forth from ship to ship, from ship to shore, and even between men who heretofore had had no desire whatsoever for strong drink.

Then someone got a brilliant idea —since June 30 would mark a day that would live in infamy, why not have it go down in history as one to be remembered?

Accordingly, plans were started. The wine mess ending would be an event celebrated by one of the most fantastic wetting-downs in Navy lore! There would be a fleet-wide, world-wide party the like of which no man ever had attended before, a global jag that every sailorman would remember, a monstrous binge unmatched in the long and bibulous history of intoxication. . . .

A great tradition had been smashed by Daniels' bone-dry edict. For centuries, British tars had had their daily ration of rum at six bells, each drawing half a pint (one part rum and three parts water). It came to be known as "grog", after the grogham or rough cloth in a suit worn by an admiral in the Royal Navy. After the U. S. Navy adopted the pleasant custom—and doubled the tot, naturally —a popular chanty celebrated its virtues:

"For grog is our starboard, our larboard,
Our mainmast, our mizzen, our log
At sea, or ashore, or when harbour'd.
The Mariner's compass is grog."

When, a year after the Civil War started, Congress abolished the "spirit ration" for enlisted men, the wardroom and captain's wine messes were left unscathed. After all, officers were accustomed to the sherry, Madeira and stronger drinks that could be labelled "wines;" and the messes meant gracious living, and officers couldn't be expected to break their habit of having at least a bottle of beer before turning in. It was considered essential for a Naval officer to get drunk, provided he did it in a "genteel manner."

But on some occasions seafaring men fell short of behaving like gentlemen. Courts martial of officers for hitting the bottle too hard and too often became common. On a cruise to the West Coast of Africa, Commodore George H. Perkins reported that one of his tippling commanding officers died of the DT's, and another had to be sent home in disgrace for being constantly crocked.

Josephus Daniels, coming from a dry state, was appalled at what he called "so much drunkenness." The saddest hour of his official life, he said, came when he had to approve the court martial findings against an officer for intoxication.

"This officer told me," Daniels related, "that he had never tasted intoxicating drink until he did so at the wine mess on the cruise. Officers are now commissioned at the early age of 22. Has the Government a right to permit this temptation which too often destroys the highest usefulness of youthful officers?"

Convinced the answer was no, Daniels issued his General Order No. 99 in the form of an amendment to Navy regulations:

> "The use or introduction for drinking purposes of alcoholic liquors on board a navy vessel, or within any navy yard or station, is strictly prohibited, and commanding officers will be held directly responsible for the enforcement of the order."

The reaction, as indicated, was vociferous and violent. While the bluenoses gleefully applauded, the press blasted Daniels with ridicule, depicting him as "Sir Josephus, Admiral of the U.S.S. *Grapejuice Pinafore.*" Editorial writers stormed:

"An attack on personal liberty . . . a piece of executive despotism . . . there can be no navy worthy of the name that is clothed in humiliation . . ."

Cartoons showed ships with ivy trailing out of the muzzles of their turret guns, potted geraniums arranged around the barbettes, rocking chairs and rugs on quarterdecks and lace table-clothes spread on the mess tables.

Humorist Finley Peter Dunne, in one of the superb "Mr. Dooley" discourses, took a mighty swipe at the Secretary.

"It's hard f'r me to think iv a timprance navy," said Mr. Dooley. "Somehow or other, me idea iv sea fightin' an' booze fightin' is so wound up together that there ain't anny romance in wan without th' other.

"I see that me friend Josephus Daniels has decided not to go abroad a man iv war again. It makes him seasick. But if he shud make up his mind some day to face th' turrors iv th' deep, th' chances are that th' Captain wud take him be th' coat sleeve an' say, 'Misther Sicrety, wudden't ye like to have a look at our coal cellar? Step right through this open hatch.' Or, 'Misther Sicrety, wud ye be so kind as to go out an' get on that target an' keep th' score f'r us?'"

To the Navy's officers, Order No. 99 was a crushing blow to their dignity, standard of living and personal honor. The ship was their home and badge of pride, the wardroom mess their club and citadel. And what potable could they offer foreign officers who were being entertained on our ships—ice-water?

All hands took to singing the parody of an old song, "The Armored Cruiser Squadron":

"Away, away, with sword and drum
Here we come, full of rum,
Looking for something put on the bum
In the Armored Cruiser Squadron.
Josephus Daniels is a goose
If he thinks he can induce
Us to drink his damn grape juice
In the Armored Cruiser Squadron."

The crackdown had come at a time when the National Anti-Saloon League was stirring up Congress, nine states had already gone dry, and West Virginia was just then closing hundreds of saloons. A note in *The New York Times* solemnly reported that "late scientific research has conclusively proved that alcohol is a dangerous narcotic." The temperance drive, however, hadn't yet reached its peak, and Prohibition was not to go into effect for another six years. Yet the "sinking" of our Navy was hailed as a great victory by the Drys.

Off in Berlin, German seamen were reported as laughing at us. In the navies of France, Italy, Spain and Austria, a daily ration of spirits was still in vogue. In the Russian Navy, the drinking of water was regarded as injurious to health. Only the Canadian Navy enforced abstinence—and ironically Canadian ships run by teetotallers had a particularly unfortunate habit of stranding and meeting with other mishaps.

During the late spring of 1914, as the dry deadline came closer and closer, tensions mounted. World War I was to erupt in a few months. We became involved in a ruckus with Mexico, then in the throes of revolution and civil war. The U.S. refused to recognize the Huerta regime, and we rushed most of the Atlantic Fleet to Mexican ports. To these forces were added ships of the Old Special Service Squadron and units of a torpedo flotilla. Daniels' devastating ban was forgotten for a while. But when the excitement quieted down, boredom set in, and the Navy's thoughts returned to its gruesome predicament.

Slowly, June rolled onward and the liquor supply gradually began to diminish. Here and there, a grim all-night party was staged. A lot of the spirits were sold to people ashore. On some ships, bottles of beer were handed out to enlisted men, and some were transferred to a club in Vera Cruz. A small supply was placed in locked cabinets, to be shipped back to the States. The ship's surgeon had his share for medicinal use only.

But there was still a tremendous volume of the salubrious spirits aboard. With June 30th breathing

down their hot necks, the Navy men again wondered, what in hell could they do with it all?

They had spent long months of watchful waiting off Mexico, swinging at anchor within sight of shore but with no chance of liberty. Pent-up, frustrated and fidgety, it was high time to blow off some steam.

What to do? Why not have one last whopping and illustrious wingding, a mass bacchanalian toot throughout the entire U.S. fleet that would show the world our Navy could drown (in drink) as gentlemen?

The happy idea was first broached by a red-headed, husky Philadelphian, Ensign Johnny Farrow, on the U.S.S. *Connecticut*. Johnny had grown so fond of the wine mess that its imminent demise virtually meant, to him at least, that the end of the world had come. He tried the notion of a colossal farewell party on a lieutenant, who enthusiastically passed it on to the captain. Eventually word went all the way up to Captain R. H. Jackson, Chief of Staff on the fleet flagship.

Like spontaneous combustion, the proposal spread to every ship assembled off Vera Cruz and then to others all over the globe. Most of the Atlantic Fleet had gathered off Mexico: the flagship, *Wyoming*, the *Florida, Arkansas, Louisiana, Vermont, Connecticut, Virginia, Georgia, New Jersey, New York* and *North Dakota*. There were also smaller ships as well as scores of tugs and auxiliaries.

Besides the U.S. vessels, there were seven men-of-war from five foreign nations—Britain, Germany, France, Holland and Spain—all alert to the slightest sign of trouble in Mexico. Forgotten that day were the ominous clouds of war over Europe. The international fraternity of the sea was always as ready for revelry as it was for battle.

The evening of June 30th, pleasantly balmy and fanned by a breeze, descended on the ships at anchor. A full moon cast a silvery sheet over the calm sea.

The gala wet-down began in a low key.

At precisely eight bells in the evening watch (8:00 p.m.), the hellbender was launched. From the flagship, a visual signal was flashed around the fleet by Captain Jackson:

"Prepare to bury King John Barleycorn stop Burial party of pall bearers and mourners will call. Execute."

Our Navy was fully prepared. On all capital ships, the wardroom, J.O. and Warrant Messes were set up as if for smokers. Mountains of food and drink were spread out for guests. On the groaning festive boards were turkeys, hams, baked beans, baked macaroni, canned salmon croquettes with French peas and other choice edibles. Every effort was to be exerted to imbibe the contents in the wine stores.

With consummate efficiency, steam launches had been given an all-night assignment to ferry "calling committees" among the ships. As the evening edged on, and visitors became more and more lubricated, climbing up and down ladders became tougher and tougher on them. But the reception committees on board were able to slip out to their bunks for a breather whenever they felt a bit addled.

Clearly, this party was no run-of-the-mill carousal. Ships competed with each other to put on the best show. Apparently the most creative were the men on Johnny Farrow's *Connecticut*. There, at Johnny's suggestion, the Mess Room was converted into a replica of a Wild West saloon, complete with bar, brass rail, spittoons and gambling equipment. Even the picture of a seductive nude graced the mirror behind the bar. Men were decked out as cowboys, but (under the circumstances) minus six-shooters to prevent casualties. Junior officers specialized in champagne, which flowed in torrents. In the Wardroom, the main feature was a Knockout Punch, with whiskey, beer and champagne as chasers.

Where was the top brass? Early in the evening, the admiral made formal calls on each mess. Then, tactfully, he stayed in his cabin throughout the blowout.

"Funeral parties," including men from German, British and other foreign vessels, kept arriving in launches, steamers and speed boats, then moved on from ship to ship. The harbor was swollen with small boats as they snaked in and out among the roaring parties. Corteges of the boats were formed, some with as many as twelve in a column.

On the American battleships, gangways blazed with extra lights—partly for the celebration, mainly as protection for weaving revelers. Visitors were greeted in a strange, nonregulation fashion. Mess attendants, wearing reversed caps and arms, received the mourning committees. Generally the bugler and bos'n's mates produced most of the familiar Navy calls. Aboard the U.S.S. *North Dakota*, the skipper himself—Captain C. P. Plunkett—flanked by eight junior officers as sideboys, welcomed his guests. The honor guard of officers stood at attention—with brooms.

By ten o'clock, as the conviviality turned rosier and rosier, the gentlemen in the calling committees got rid of their formal attire. For uniforms, they wore everything from tennis shorts and mess jackets to dungarees and cocked hats.

Protocol was observed, after a fashion. At each ship visited, a Funeral Oration was delivered. The mourning guests called on the captain, then the Wardroom, the Junior Mess and finally the Warrant Officers' mess. Captain E. W. Eberle of the U.S.S. *Washington* meticulously obeyed Daniels' Order No. 99 in letter and spirits. Officially, he announced:

"No alcoholic *beverages* will be permitted on board this ship."

Then he ordered a sumptuous farewell banquet in honor of the departing Wine Mess for the Wardroom officers. The menu he conceived proved to be a work of gastronomic genius. Although not a bottle of liquor or wine was in sight, the alcoholic content of the repast was stupendous.

First course was a fruit cocktail consisting mostly of red and green maraschino cherries floating to the brim with maraschino, a liqueur distilled from the fermented juice of the marasca. Guests were warned not to lift the cup; the liqueur had to be imbibed with a spoon.

For the fish course, the sauce on the Lobster Newburg had a triple shot of sherry.

The entré was a roast, a colossal Virginia razorback ham. This was liberally basted with Moet and Chandon Cordon Bleu '92. Here, table manners could be abandoned and the diners could dunk as much of the "gravy" as they wanted.

There was a Roman Punch which would be classed today as a frozen Bacardi. The melted part couldn't be drunk; it had to be spooned out, but there was no limit on seconds.

For dessert, Captain Eberle concocted a fruit cake with pungent hard sauce that had been soaked for days with Martel '87. Accompanying the cake were large bowls of heavily-brandied peaches.

Topping it all was the highly alcoholic Cafe Brulôt, though the cup first had to be filled with no less than 51 per cent pure coffee.

After the first round of the potent Cafe Brulôt, the *Washington's* quartettes broke out into "Sweet Adeline" and then progressed to "High Barbary," "Samuel Hall" and other ribald songs until the sad occasion turned the melodies maudlin.

At midnight, most of the ships conducted solemn burial services for John Barleycorn. On the *Connecticut*, a coffin was built and a bottle of bourbon carefully placed in it. The Marine Guard stood at attention. The ship's band played a dirge. And as the men watched with tears in their eyes, John Barleycorn was dropped over the side into the briny deep.

Elsewhere, black wooden boxes were filled with "dead soldiers" (empty bottles). The Executive and other officers acted as pallbearers, carrying the boxes on deck to the tune of "The Funeral March." Then, as the bugler sounded taps, each bottle was gently cast overboard.

And so it went, with the jolly obsequies taking assorted forms aboard American ships all through the seven seas. Those off Vera Cruz, however, came to several smashing climaxes.

Some time after midnight, a mourning party that had made the rounds of all the host ships decided to pay

a return call on the *Georgia*. One of the officers, Lieutenant Warren Hastings, was obviously feeling no particular pain. Through the deck skylight, he thought he saw signs of activity in the junior officer's mess.

"Stand from under, below!" Hastings yelled, and jumped right through the skylight.

Down he crashed to a transom two decks below. He not only wrecked the transom but fractured both his legs. The commotion so unnerved the men on the *Georgia* that practically everyone but the doctor reeled off to his bunk.

Aboard the *North Dakota*, bedlam had taken over the Wardroom as the men, high as kites, zigzagged around singing, making speeches and performing weird acrobatics. Inspired by what he considered a brilliant idea, the executive officer stepped out and soon reappeared in an odd get-up: a baseball mask and a chest protector.

"Fill up your glasses!" he shouted. "I want to propose a toast."

A degree of quiet settled over the room. A bit unsteadily, he lifted his glass.

"Here's to . . . here's to Josephus Daniels!"

All hell broke loose. Sandwiches, rolls, the carcasses of turkeys, hambones, anything loose was pitched at the Exec and he fell under the barrage. The Wardroom was a shambles, men started slugging each other, and only the fact that they were all cockeyed drunk kept the merry battle from raging all through the night.

As dawn broke on July 1, 1914, the decks, gangways, galleys, corridors and wardrooms of the United States Atlantic fleet were strewn with the bodies of men who had passed out before they could reach their bunks. Probably not a bottle of liquor or wine remained in any of the wine messes; it's reasonably safe to say that enough was consumed to float any of the battleships on which they were served. And as the sun rose higher, a momumental mass hangover took over the U.S. Navy.

Daniels' damnable order has since been modified. Sparked by the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, officers' clubs and stores at shore naval stations may now sell liquor, and enlisted men can buy beer. Today, many warships also keep small supplies aboard, but they're in charge of the medical officer, who can issue a drink only for medicinal purposes. It's good to know that during World War II, the nectar of the gods was found to have therapeutic value. Particularly on aircraft carriers and submarines, a good drink was able to lessen shock and reduce tension after tough missions.

But that's just a drop in the quaffing bucket compared to the halcyon days of grog and the free-flowing wine mess. At least the Navy can be proud that on the 30th of June, 1914, it paid a fitting farewell to a fine tradition with a most stupendous and magnificently-bibulous spree. ●

Jimmy Dykes may not be the best manager in baseball, but he certainly is the best source of copy for newsmen who come to him looking for laughs.

There was the time, for instance, that Jimmy was managing the Baltimore Orioles, and having no luck whatsoever in getting them out of the American League cellar. It was, in fact, freely rumored that Jimmy's days as Baltimore manager were numbered, and, sure enough, Jimmy was summoned one afternoon for a closed-door conference with the team's board of directors. When he emerged from the conference, looking crestfallen and disspirited, he was met by a sportswriter.

"What goes?" asked the newsman.

"Dykes," said Jimmy simply, and started to pack his bag.

* * *

The propensity of the Washington Senators for hiring Cuban, South American and other Latin American players is well known, and, some years ago, when Charlie Dressen was managing the Nats, the team had so many Spanish-speaking operatives it was practically a traveling rumba band. Then owner Clark Griffith came up with one more phenom, a classy-fielding shortstop from Venezuela.

"Look," said Dressen to the second-baseman, the one member of the team who spoke English and nothing else. "You better start learning Spanish so you can get along with this Spic."

The second-baseman snorted in disgust. "The hell with that," he said. "Tell *him* to start learning English. After all, I was here first!"

* * *

Babe Herman, the old Brooklyn Dodgers outfielder, was always good for a laugh, many of them the result of his own shrewd sense of what made good newspaper copy.

One day, as he left home for an afternoon game, his wife told him she had to spend the day shopping, and would the Babe mind taking care of their 7-year-old son? So Herman took the kid to Ebbets Field and installed him in a seat in back of first base, telling the boy to stay there until the Babe came to pick him up after the game.

However, this was one of those days on which Herman was in his best form, and, in addition to going 4-for-4 at bat and hitting a homerun, he made several spectacular catches in the field. As a result, he was bubbling over when the game ended, and, in his happiness, forgot about his son sitting up in the stands.

Later, he was so enthused about telling his wife of his exploits of the afternoon that Mrs. Herman had trouble interrupting him. But she finally got a word in, asking him pointedly, "Where's the boy?"

For a moment, Babe looked blank.

"What boy?" he asked. "Oh my gosh! I left him at the park!"

Sure enough, when Babe got back to the empty ball park, there was his son, still sitting all alone and waiting to be picked up.

* * *

Back when he was an ace right-hander for the Brooklyn Dodgers, Ralph Branca did his share of duty in the bullpen. And the favorite outdoor sport of the bullpen brigade, to help them pass the long dreary hours of sitting in the sun, was a game which consisted of choosing "all-time" ball teams. There was the All Time Wealthiest Club, made up of the nine players deemed to have the most scratch stashed away; there was the All Time Ugly Club, composed of the nine ugliest active players; the All Time Handsomest Nine, etc.

The only peculiarity about all these different imaginary teams was that Joe Adcock of the Milwaukee Braves, always was listed on each of them. The All Time Wackiest Ball Team? It had "Adcock, First Base" as one of its members. The All Time Left-handed Club? "Adcock, First Base" was one of them, as he was also on the All Time Righthanded Nine.

Thus, when Branca was signed several years later by the Detroit Tigers, he had no trouble identifying one congratulary telegram as one that had come from his former mates.

It was signed "Adcock, First Base."

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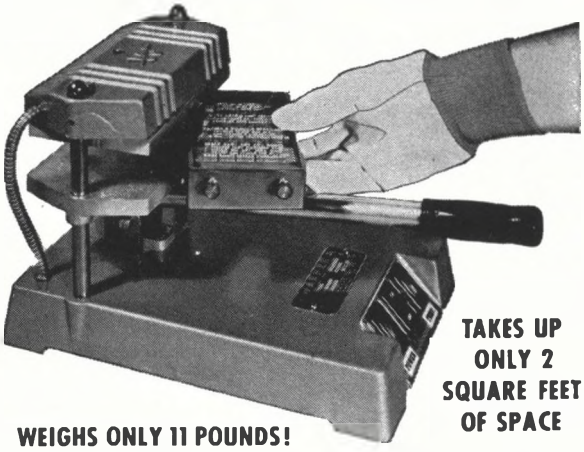

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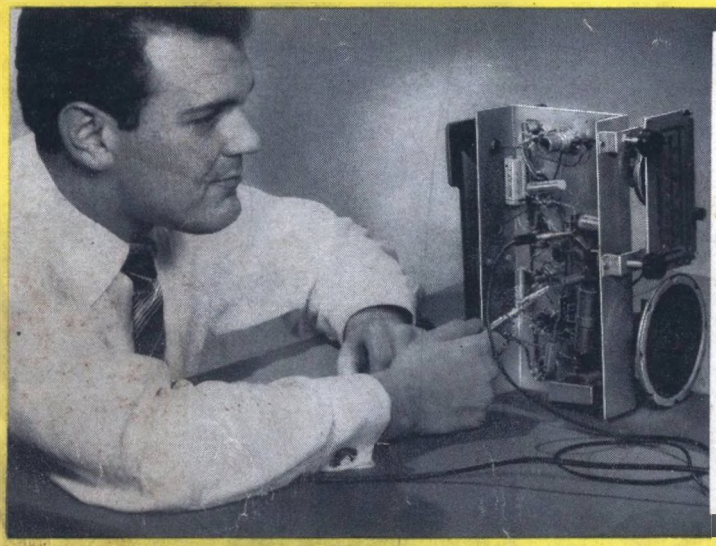

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OLDEST and LARGEST

Home Study Radio-Television School

N.R.I. Trained These Men

ENGINEER STATION WHPE

"Thanks to NRI, I operated a successful Radio repair shop. Now I am an engineer for WHPE." VAN W. WORKMAN, HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA

QUICK SPARE TIME CASH

"Knew nothing about Radio-TV when I enrolled. After 15 lessons started repairing sets. My future looks bright." DONALD B. ACKERMAN, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

HAS OWN TV BUSINESS

"Quit my job to do Television work full time. I love it and do all right financially." WILLIAM F. KLINE, CINCINNATI, OHIO

Prosperous Fast Growing Industry Offers You GOOD PAY-BRIGHT FUTURE-SUCCESS

It's the trained man who gets ahead—gets the better job, drives a better car, lives in a better home, is respected for what he knows and can do. For a job with a future—find out how you can train at home for Radio-Television.

TODAY'S OPPORTUNITY FIELD

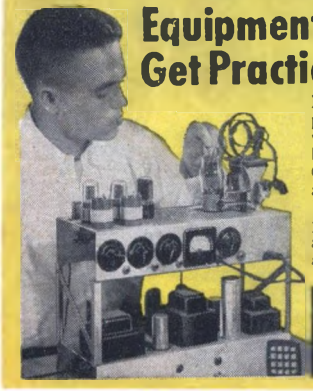
Training PLUS OPPORTUNITY is the ideal combination for success. And today's OPPORTUNITY field is Radio-Television. Over 125 million home Radios plus 30 million sets in cars, plus 40 million TV sets mean big money for trained Technicians. More than 4,000 Radio and TV broadcasting stations offer interesting and important positions. Color television, portable TV sets, Hi-Fi, assure future growth. Find out about NRI. Since 1914—for more than 40 years—NRI has been training ambitious men at home in spare time for Radio-TV. With NRI 50-50 method, you study basic principles AND learn by practicing with actual equipment NRI furnishes. You learn with your hands and your head. You get dependable training, backed up by the reputation of the oldest and largest home study Radio-TV school.

ADD TO YOUR INCOME SOON

$10-$15 A WEEK IN SPARE TIME

Soon after enrolling many start earning extra money fixing sets. Many open their own full time Radio-TV shops after getting NRI Diploma. MAIL COUPON. Get FREE Sample Lesson and 64-page Catalog showing equipment supplied, outlines of courses, opportunities in Radio-TV. Price is low—terms easy. Address: **NATIONAL RADIO INSTITUTE, Dept. OKQ8 Washington 16, D. C.**

Without Extra Charge NRI Sends Equipment You Need to Get Practical Experience



Nothing takes the place of practical experience. That's why NRI training is Learning-by-Doing. With Servicing Course you build Radio shown at top and other equipment. With Communications Course you build Transmitters at left and other equipment. Catalog shows all equipment you get.

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