TRUE DETECTIVE

OCT.

MURDER-MINDED LAWYER OF LAKE WALES

by RAY BRENNAN *page 12*

DAUGHTER'S REVENGE

Double-length Feature • by D. L. Champion

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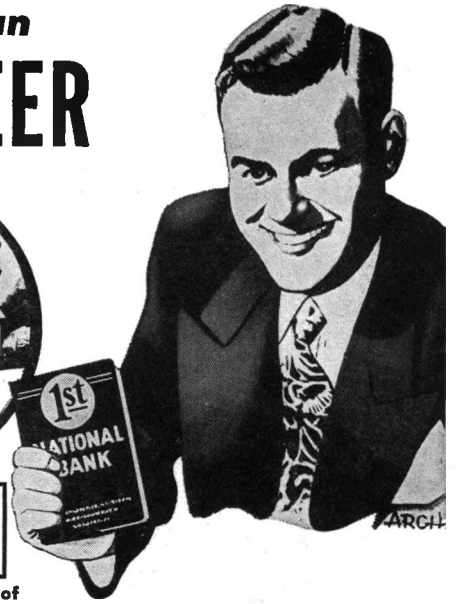

If you're that man, here's something that will interest you.

Not a magic formula—not a get-rich-quick scheme—but something more substantial, more practical.

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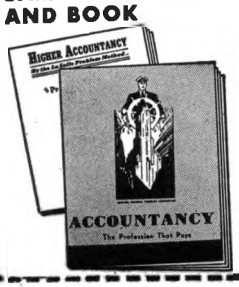

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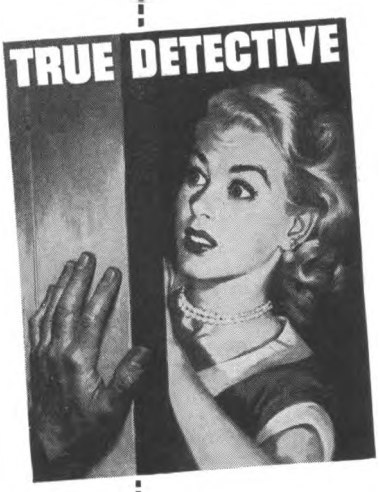

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#11 in Series: Women Who Walked the Last Mile

In St. Anthony's Church at St. Louis, Missouri, Pauline waited for her bridegroom. She was far too pretty a bride to be left waiting at the church, but young Bill Kappen did not appear. Nine miles away an unidentified body was found by the highway. This discovery held the key to the mystery.

DEATH FOR $1

On the evening of July 5th, 1954, two young punks on a murder spree chanced upon a victim at Manhattan Beach, New York. He was Howard Englander, 29, surfcasting from a sea wall. The killers crushed his skull with a 2-foot pipe, snapped his neck, robbed him of $1 and threw his body into the bay. They thought the tide would hide their secret, but it returned the grisly evidence of the crime.

ONE GIRL LIVED

Returning to their home in Pueblo, Colorado, one evening, Mr. and Mrs. Riley Drain found their 16-year-old daughter Dorothy dead in her bed, her head split open. Beside her lay her sister Barbara, 12, similarly bludgeoned. But the younger girl lived to tell a terrifying story and to point to the killer.

For more than a quarter century the objective of TRUE DETECTIVE has been to publish only "A fair and true account of the facts." Every writer for our magazine signs this pledge. We welcome the assistance of all our readers, whether they be law enforcement officers or civilians, in helping us and our writers to maintain this vital TRUE DETECTIVE pledge.

31st YEAR OF PUBLICATION

TRUE DETECTIVE

THE AUTHENTIC MAGAZINE OF CRIME DETECTION

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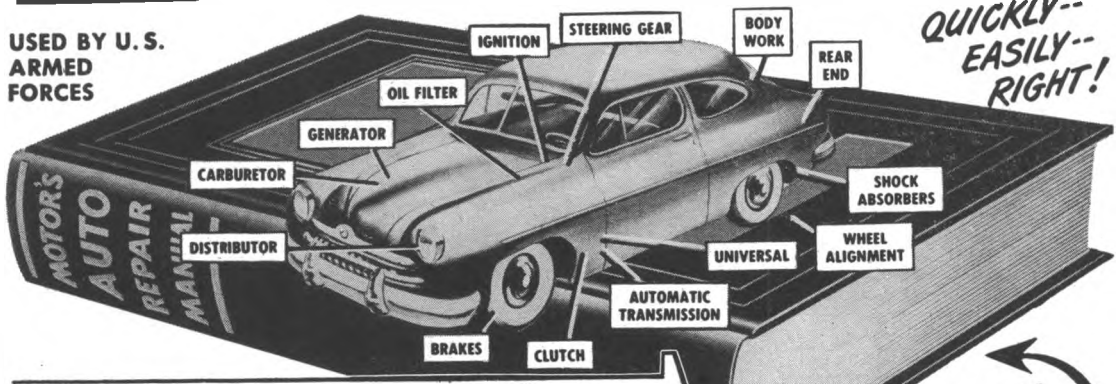

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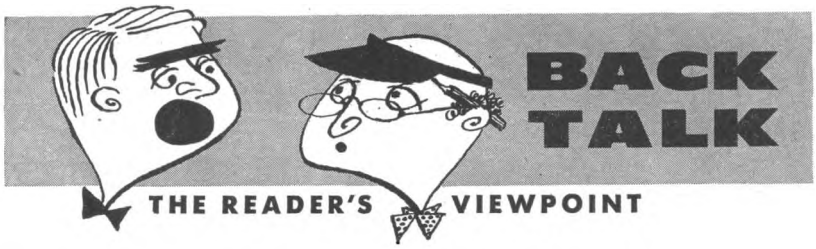

This column is for the expression of the reader's viewpoint and we find that our readers have many definite and varied ideas. Our mail often contains suggestions, requests, praise and condemnation. We will print as many of these letters as we have space for each month. Don't hesitate to write in and let us know what's on your mind.

TEEN-AGE TERROR

"At 32 I am not exactly an old fogy. It wasn't so long ago that I went to high school and college. My elders used to think of my friends and me as wild and undisciplined, but ours were harmless pranks. We probably knew the word marijuana and perhaps had even heard of a mainliner, but the closest we came to vice was sneaking drags on a cigarette.

"Now I am the father of two and I ask myself, as other parents throughout the country must be asking themselves, what is happening to our youth? Frankly, I'm scared. Instead of being a great satisfaction, parenthood has become a nightmare. My jitters are premature because my children have years before they become teenagers, but will things improve between now and then?

"I've just read *Teen-age Lovers' Tub Murder* and it made me sick. Although I am not an authority on crime, I am certain that nothing comparable ever happened in my day. Such cold-blooded monsters just didn't exist."

Charles A. Henning
Springfield, Illinois

Billy Byers

Fern Hile

OLD AND NEW

"I have been reading TD for almost 30 years. Often I like to look over some of the old copies which I keep on file. It seems to me that murder is growing more senseless and more brutal. In the old days we didn't feel sorry for the gangsters who wiped each other out in their private wars. It saved the police and courts a lot of trouble and expense. There were some outstanding cases which we now call classics and which we old-timers still like to talk about. But they were few.

"I just read *No Motive for Fern's Murder* and thought it a perfect example of a senseless crime. The story was very appropriately titled and very well written. It is discouraging to see prices on all commodities rise except the most precious of all, life. A human life is not worth much these days.

"If I am lucky enough to live another 30 years, I hope not to miss a single issue of TD."

Lester Silvers
Birmingham, Alabama

SPEND YOUR MONEY

"Your editorial *Spend Your Money and He'll Keep His Job*, explains so perfectly the only way to maintain and better our standards of living. I cannot commend you too highly for this inspirational message."

George Ferris Essey
Pawhuska, Oklahoma

Ed.: Other readers have commended this editorial in TD's July issue.

BONERS

"In *Daisy Dealt in Death*, a picture of Johannesburg is identified as the capital of the Union of South Africa. The actual capitals are Capetown (legislative), and Pretoria (administrative)—the only country in the world having two capitals."

William C. Adam
Philadelphia, Penna.

"In *The Girl in the Red Sedan*, it says, 'he noticed that there was no drain in the stopper.'"

Talis I. Smits Jr.
St. Paul, Minnesota

Ed.: Such boners seem to be the price we pay for vacationing staff members.

APPEAL

"For a very long time a friend in Washington regularly sent us copies of TD and you cannot imagine how much my husband and I enjoyed them.

"To our great sorrow our friend died 2 months ago. My husband is very ill and I also am in indifferent health. Reading TD was our chief pleasure.

"If any of your readers would care to send us spare copies of this magazine we would be very grateful."

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READER'S VERDICT

In the September, 1954, issue of TRUE DETECTIVE I liked these features best:

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

4 .....

I prefer outstanding current cases ....
I prefer great cases of the past .....
I have read TD for ..... months
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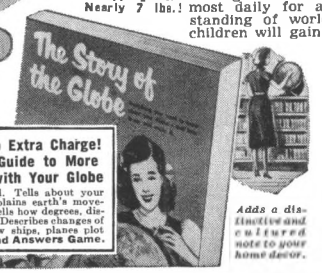

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T
D

CASE FILE

Report of latest legal developments on cases published by TD

Joyce Fern White

LETHAL ENCOUNTER

(TD May, 1953)

Before the sun rises on August 22nd of this year Walter E. Whitaker Jr., 22, will have died in the electric chair in the Texas state prison for the murder of his sweetheart, Joyce Fern White, 18, of Lubbock, Texas.

Walter was an air force cadet at Reese Air Force Base near Lubbock when he met Joyce. They fell in love, her family accepted him and they became engaged. But on the night of January 8th, 1953, Joyce vanished from her home. Walter helped the Texas Rangers and other officers hunt for the missing girl. But as various leads were run down suspicion centered on the young cadet.

After two lie detector tests Walter confessed that he had slain his fiancee and buried her in a crude grave in a cotton patch near Lubbock. He led them to the place. He had fallen in love with another girl, he said, and when he told Joyce of it they quarreled. He wrapped a piece of Venetian blind cord about her neck and "watched her turn blue."

HOLLYWOOD HORROR

(TD June, 1954)

David L. Johnston, 30-year-old Hollywood talent scout and casting director, was found brutally murdered on February 10th, 1954, in his San Fernando Valley bungalow. He had been bound hand and foot, gagged and bludgeoned to death with a log of firewood. His car, wallet and wrist watch were missing. Also some of his clothing.

The car was found on February 11th on Route 66 near El Reno, about 1,500 miles from Los Angeles. Its occupants were Leo J. Densmore, 21, a Canadian ex-soldier, and Ronald J. Maurer, 22, listed as a deserter from Camp Stoneman. Both were wearing Johnston's clothes. Densmore had Johnston's wallet and identification papers.

Both men confessed the crime. At their trial in June in Superior Judge Charles W. Fricke's court they pleaded innocent. The jury deadlocked at 11 to 1 for the death penalty. A new trial was planned, but on July 8th, on advice of their counsel the two youths pleaded guilty and Judge Fricke promptly sentenced them to life imprisonment.

FOUR JACKS AND MURDER

(TD May, 1954)

At his trial for the slaying of John Mattson, 53, a Detroit, Michigan, steel executive, John Lange, 51, a Detroit milk dealer, predicted "I will walk out that door a free man." His defense was that at the time Mattson was shot in his office, he had been at home watching TV.

What apparently had led to the murder was a tangled romance involving four men, all named Jack. It appeared that Lange regarded Mattson as his serious rival in his love for a pretty waitress. He confessed to waiting outside the steel man's office, then shooting him as he sat at his desk on the night of January 25th, 1954. He later repudiated his confession, pleaded not guilty.

The jury found Lange guilty of first-degree murder and on July 7th Judge Paul E. Krause sentenced Lange to life imprisonment.

REDHEAD IN THE HOTEL ROOM

(TD June, 1954)

In a San Francisco tavern it is the custom for a girl concessionaire to take color motion pictures of the patrons. The films are filed behind the bar, to be flashed on the screen at request.

This practice was to result in the arrest of Richard Manning Elliott, 19, for the strangulation murder of Mrs. Elinore Prout, 43, in a hotel room to which he took her after striking up an acquaintance in a bar.

Elliott, a hospital corpsman stationed at Mare Island, had been in the navy two years, spent nine months in Korean waters. His service record was excellent, his officers said.

The youth confessed that he had taken the woman to the hotel room on the night of January 22nd, 1954. When he caught her going through his wallet, he choked her. He said it was not premeditated and he did not know she was dead when he left her in the hotel room.

It was learned that at 15 Richard Elliott had accidentally shot his 10-year-old brother Robert with a gun he had bought for $6. Then, seeing the younger boy's agony, he had fired a second shot which killed the child. At that time he was found "technically guilty of involuntary manslaughter," and released to custody of his parents.

At his trial for the slaying of Mrs. Prout he pleaded not guilty. His attorney recommended that he be sent to the California Youth Authority or to jail.

The judge, however, on June 26th, 1954, sentenced Richard Manning Elliott to serve 1 to 10 years in San Quentin.

HORROR IN THE KITCHEN

(TD April, 1954)

When crippled Mrs. Hattie Bobker, 53, changed her will, disinheriting her sister-in-law, Mrs. Rose Leibel, with whom she lived in Newark, New Jersey, she signed her death warrant. That she feared reprisal was evident from the fact that she wrote to her brothers, asking them to arrange for her admission to a nursing home in New York.

On December 10th, 1953, Mrs. Leibel phoned police that she was locked out of her house. When officers let her in they found the body of Mrs. Bobker on the bathroom floor. She had been slain by 14 blows from a hatchet. A search quickly disclosed evidence that resulted in the arrest of Mrs. Leibel.

On June 16th, 1954, an Essex County jury, after 4½ hours' deliberation found Mrs. Rose Leibel, 49, guilty of first-degree murder and recommended life imprisonment.

CHAMPAGNE AND CYANIDE

(TD April, 1954)

A conversation between Dennis Wepman, 21, and a girl friend resulted in the discovery of a murder. They were discussing Dostoievsky's novel, "The Idiot." Dennis said the grim Russian story reminded him of "the most gruesome thing" he ever had seen. And he told her how his friend, Harlow Fraden, 22, had poisoned his father and mother with cocktails spiked with cyanide, while Dennis waited in the hallway of the Fraden home in the Bronx, New York.

The deaths of the elder Fradens, previously written off as the result of a suicide pact, were investigated. As a result, Harlow Fraden was pronounced insane by psychiatrists and committed to Matteawan State Hospital. Dennis Wepman pleaded guilty to first-degree manslaughter. He then was sentenced to 20 years to life in the state prison.

MEN PAST 40

Who are Troubled with *Getting Up Nights*

Pains in Back, Hips, Legs, Nervousness-Tiredness, Loss of Physical Vigor

The Cause may be Glandular Inflammation

The Excelsior Institute is completely equipped to give the latest and most modern scientific Diagnostic and treatment services.

The highly trained Staff of Doctors and Technicians is so extensive that your physical condition may be thoroughly checked during the day you arrive here.

Men as they grow older too often become negligent and take for granted unusual aches and pains. They mistakenly think that these indications of Ill Health are the USUAL signs of older age.

This negligence can prove Tragic resulting in a condition where expensive and painful surgery is the only chance.

If you, a relative or a friend have the symtoms of Ill Health indicated above the trouble may be due to Glandular INFLAMMATION.

GLANDULAR INFLAMMATION very commonly occurs in men of middle age or past and is accompanied by such physical changes as Frequent Lapses of Memory, Early Graying of the Hair and Excess Increase in weight . . . signs that the Glands are not functioning properly.

Neglect of such conditions or a false conception of inadequate treatments cause men to grow old before their time . . . leading to premature senility, loss of vigor in life and possibly incurable conditions.

Treatments Are Exclusively for Men

The Excelsior Institute is an institution devoted exclusively to the treatment of diseases of men of advancing years. If you were to visit here you would find men of all walks of life. Here for one purpose —improving their health, finding new zest in life and adding years of happiness to their lives.

During the past two years men from over 1,000 cities and towns from all parts of the United States have been successfully treated here at the Excelsior Institute. Undoubtedly one or more of these men are from your locality or close by . . . we will gladly send you their names for reference.

NON-SURGICAL TREATMENTS

The non-surgical treatments of Glandular Inflammation and other diseases of older men afforded at the Excelsior Institute have been the result of over 20 years scientific research on the part of a group of Doctors who were not satisfied with painful surgical treatment methods.

The War brought many new techniques and many new wonder working drugs. These new discoveries were added to the research development already accomplished. The result has been a new type of treatment that is proving of great benefit to men suffering from Glandular Inflammation or Rectal and Colon trouble.

COMPLETE EXAMINATION AT LOW COST

On your arrival here we first make a complete examination. The Doctors who examine you are experienced specialists. You are told frankly what your condition is and cost of treatments you need. You then decide whether or not you will take treatments recommended.

Definite Reservations Not Necessary

If your condition is acute and painful you may come here at once without reservation. Complete examination will be made promptly.

Select Your Own Hotel Accommodations

Treatments are so mild that hospitalization is not necessary so the saving in your expense is considerable. You are free to select any type of hotel accommodation you may desire.

RECTAL and COLON Troubles TREATED Non-Surgically

Rectal and Colon disorders are often associated with Glandular Inflammation. These disorders if not corrected will gradually grow worse and often require painful and expensive surgery.

We are in a position to take care of these troubles either with or without Glandular Inflammation treatments.

The proper treatment of such disorders can very easily change your entire outlook on life.

DO SOMETHING TODAY

Putting something off today until tomorrow is only human nature. Taking a few minutes right now in filling out the coupon below may enable you to better enjoy the future years of your life and prove to be one of the best investments you ever made.

FREE ILLUSTRATED BOOK GIVES YOU FULL INFORMATION

The Excelsior Institute has published a New FREE Book that is fully illustrated and deals with Diseases peculiar to men. It gives excellent factual knowledge and could prove of utmost importance to your future life. It shows how new modern non-surgical methods are prevailing where older methods are failing. It is to your best interest in life to write for a FREE copy today.

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Gentlemen: Kindly send me at once your New FREE Book on Diseases peculiar to men. I am ..... years old.

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DO YOU KNOW THIS MAN

ON OCTOBER 2ND, 1952, Thomas Evans, 70, vanished from a Santa Fe railroad train at Winslow, Arizona. A long time resident of Ottawa, Illinois, retired employe of a sand company there, Evans and his wife were en route to Fresno, California, to make their home with a daughter, Mrs. Howard Brady.

He presumably stepped off the train when it halted at Winslow and it pulled out without him. His wife asked train officials to look for him, but they failed to find him on board. He had a small amount of money and their train tickets with him. Mrs. Evans had the family funds.

That same day a Greyhound bus driver picked up a man believed to be Evans west of Winslow and left him at the police station at Williams, 92 miles further west, at 9 A.M. the following morning. He said the passenger had no bus ticket and he was not allowed to sell one en route. Police released the man and had no further trace of him. Mrs. Brady said her father suffered a recent injury in a dynamite explosion at the plant, when a large dislodged rock hit him on the head. She believed he might be in need of medical or surgical attention, or might be suffering amnesia.

The family has made extensive search in places where Evans might have gone from Winslow or Williams. They contacted police in many cities and the FBI, published his picture and description in many newspapers.

Thomas Evans is described as 5 feet 7, weight 135, brown eyes, dark brown graying hair, ruddy complexion. Has a disfigured right ear with burn scar extending about 1 inch into cheek and a tattoo with initials "T.E." on a forearm. Wears dentures. When last seen he wore glasses, brown pin-striped suit, brown shoes. He may be working as coal miner, farmer, or as engineer in a sand works. He may be in a hospital.

"Mother and Dad had been married nearly 50 years," Mrs. Brady writes. "He was such a precious person, so goodnatured and kind. Please help us to find him."

If you have any information regarding this missing man, please write to: The Editor, True Detective, 203 East 43rd St., New York 17, N.Y.

TD is proud of the success it has had in locating missing members of anxious families. This is a public service for which there is no charge.

When you ask for help in such a case, please send us the following information:

Complete description of the missing person.

Full details concerning employment, habits, characteristic traits, educational and family background.

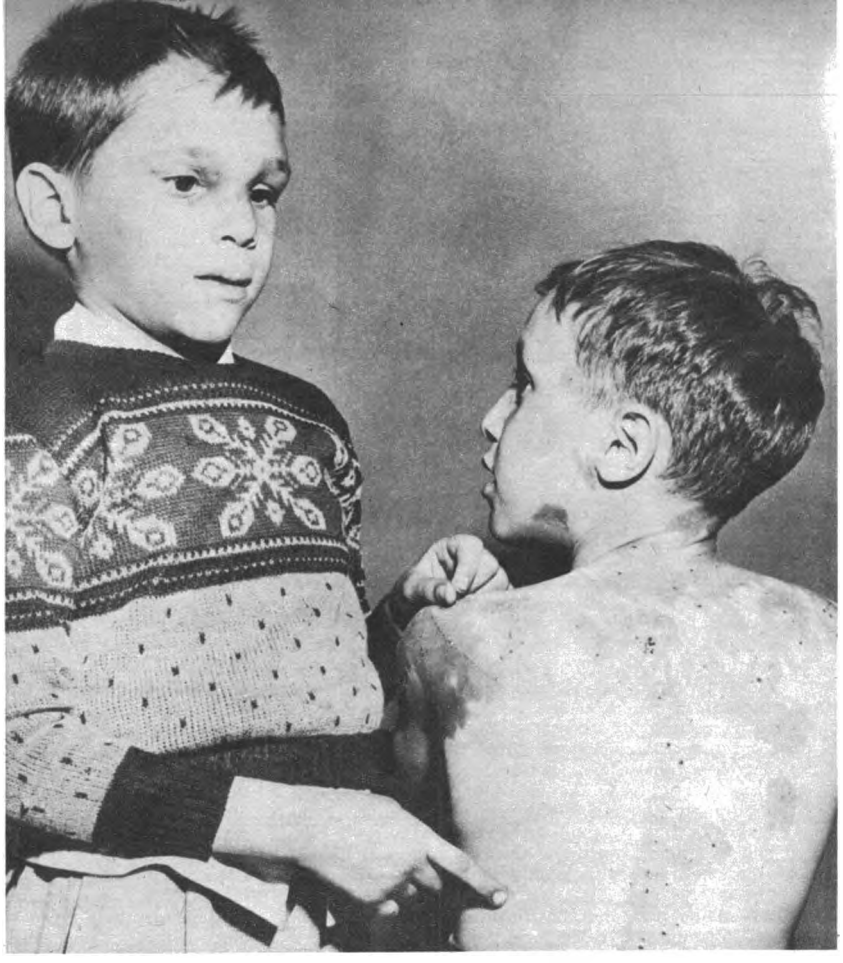
Complete circumstances of disappearance, dates and places when and where last seen.

Letters from state, national or service organizations, police, FBI and employers whom you have contacted.

A good photograph which can be reproduced.

All this material will be returned to you.

a TD public service



Jerry Rozanski is equally as enthusiastic a pilot as he is a photographer. Starting as an air cadet, he received his wings and commission, became pilot instructor. Later he flew 46 combat missions in B-26 Marauders in the European theatre and, after the war, remained with the occupation forces in Germany. Still a reserve in the Air Force, he has returned to his camera. After five years' apprenticeship on the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, he began as full-fledged staff photographer just a year ago. Modest by nature, he likes to credit his success to the help of more experienced men and to the inspiration of his lovely brunette wife of two years.

On their way home from school, at 3:30 in the afternoon, John Doto, 9, and his brother Joseph, 7, stopped in a Camden, New Jersey, department store to get a drink at the water fountain. As they emerged, they were accosted by a teenager who demanded money. When they told him they had none, he began to beat them. A woman passerby intervened and stopped the older boy from abusing the two children. The brothers fled, but before they could reach home, six blocks away, the bully was upon them again. He forced them into a small lot, stripped them, threw their clothes over a wall, and pushed them into a storage space about 3 feet by 6. The younger child was knocked down and beaten almost unconscious. Then the older boy, held pinned to the ground, was cruelly jabbed about 200 times with his own school pencil. The youngsters emerged bleeding and dazed, and collapsed on the sidewalk. Jerry Rozanski's camera is responsible for this graphic photograph of human cruelty.

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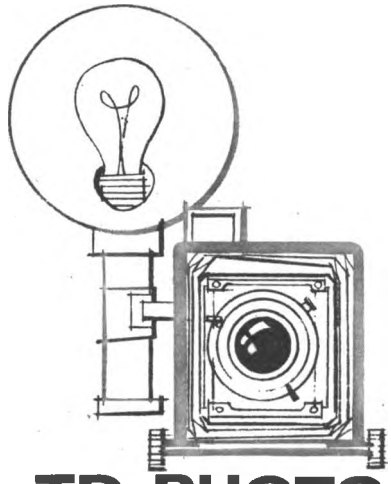


TD PHOTO of the MONTH

Each month the editors of TRUE DETECTIVE will award a prize of $25 for the outstanding picture of the month. Submit entries, with self-addressed stamped envelope, to the Editor, TRUE DETECTIVE, 206 East 43rd St., New York 17, N. Y., with a story of the picture and a brief biography of photographer.

MURDER-MINDED LAWYER OF LAKE WALES

He planned to make corpses out of clients, but first he had to shop for a killer

by RAY BRENNAN

THE GIRL in the telephone exchange flipped over a key on the switchboard before her to check whether two men still were talking on a long distance call. The rumble of a voice came to her and she reached to cut herself off the line. It is against telephone company rules to eavesdrop on conversations.

It was almost lunch time. The bright Florida sunshine was streaming through the windows. Perhaps, at the lovely and romantic age of 18, she might have been day-dreaming a little. Anyway, she was just a trifle slower than usual in getting off the wire. She overheard a few words. And for that accident three people can offer thanks that they remain alive today.

The words were "—kill the old man." They petrified her into motionless silence and she kept on listening. Now it was her duty.

What she had heard were the opening negotiations for murder—mass murder, with profits running into the millions as the motive.

The girl's name must not be disclosed. Federal Communications Commission rules forbid it. So do the rules of her company. Also, she might be placed in terrible peril if her name became known.

The date of the call was January 9th, 1954. The place was the community of Lake Wales, Florida, a two-hour drive to the east from Tampa.

It was a beautiful day, and the most welcome visitors in the great, wide world—tourists with money—were streaming into Lake Wales. The tourists arrived by plane, train and private cars that ranged from $300 second-hand sedans to $10,000 limousines with liveried chauffeurs and built-in air conditioning. All of them had two things in common—money to spend and a craving to escape the cold, snow and slush of another northern winter.

Some of them would spend two weeks in tiny cottages or motels. Others already had crews of maids, gardeners, butlers and cooks making ready their mansions for four-month stays. Many came for the most fabulous fresh water bass fishing in America.

In his first-floor office, in the ancient, high-domed Polk County courthouse at Bartow, Sheriff Pat Gordon was making his own preparations for the tourist bonanza. He and his deputies were studying photographs pasted in a large ledger. They were the pictures of swindlers, blackmailers, burglars, card sharps and dice mechanics. These characters would be rolling into the area to get financially

Lawyer *(center)* with Deputies Ritchey *(l.)* and Gandy marked clients for murder. K. H. Gerlach *(extreme l.)* tells Sheriff Gordon of man he trusted most in the world. Mrs. Byrd Roach, victim of most fantastic kidnap plot

Mrs. Louise Clark Hawley played leading role in real life drama more suspenseful than her own theatricals

fat off the vacationing millionaires, farmers and shoe clerks.

Sheriff Gordon knew that, before the season ended, a New York debutante would have her emeralds lifted, a Dakota farmer would lose his wheat money in a "bust out" craps game, a New York broker would get trimmed by a blonde in a badger game. His job was to forestall all such shenanigans, by booting the crooks out of Polk County and arresting the scoundrels he didn't spot in advance.

What the sheriff wasn't prepared for was a murder plot involving only his own local people.

His first inkling of bad trouble ahead came on January 7th, 1954, two days before the overheard telephone talk. A phone call came to the local radio station in Lake Wales, and a man's voice said, "An old man in the Walesbilt Hotel is going to jump out of his tenth-floor window."

The caller hung up without giving his name. But the station's telephone operator learned the call had come from the Walesbilt, Lake Wales' finest hotel.

Police officers generally make only a routine check of such anonymous phone calls, usually from crackpots, mischief-makers and crude practical jokers. But Sheriff Gordon feared "the old man on the tenth floor" in this case might be K. H. "King" Gerlach, a testy, 81-year-old retired calendar manufacturer from Joliet, Illinois.

For more than 25 years Gerlach had been a resident of Florida, basking in the friendly sun. He was generally known as a millionaire, but he lived simply and quietly in the Walesbilt. Only 5 feet 4 inches tall, and thin, he was a famous wit in the Walesbilt lobby. Sharp and alert, he delighted in driving his big Cadillac on the Polk County highways.

"I've got a few hundred thousand dollars to spend and not too much time left on earth," he often said, "so why shouldn't I enjoy myself?"

The company he founded, Gerlach Barklow Calendars, in Joliet, prospered well without him and returned fine dividends. He was a widower, but his son visited him often, and he had many friends.

When the radio station's anonymous message was relayed to Sheriff Gordon, he sent one of his deputies in Lake Wales to tell Gerlach of the call. The old man took it as a big joke. He telephoned Gordon and said, "Why, Pat, I wouldn't hop out my window. It's ten floors down and that sidewalk is hard. Might hurt myself at my age."

To some big city slickers, Gordon might seem to be a hick country sheriff. They couldn't be more wrong. He is a big man, over 6 feet. He moves slowly, but gracefully. He talks even more slowly than he walks and he has an air of benign innocence. The people who know him say his sharp eyes can recognize a crook as far as he can see in the dazzling sunshine. His courage and stamina are unquestioned.

Pat Gordon put the anonymous, suicide-hinting call away in a "file-but-don't-forget" drawer of his agile mind. He wondered if, perhaps, some man or woman sharpie among the influx of tourists was planning to take a bite out of Gerlach's fortune. There had to be some reason, other than mere mischief, he believed.

That matter popped out into his "active and current" classification 48 hours later when he learned of the overheard telephone plotting. The 18-year-old operator, terrified, went to her supervisor with the story. As a matter of public interest and safety, Pat was notified.

The call had been made from a restaurant in Tampa to the Walesbilt Hotel in Lake Wales. The operator had missed the opening conversation, but the part she heard went like this, to the best of her memory:

Tampa: ". . . ready to kill the old man for two nights."

Lake Wales: "He sits in the lobby every evening. Get him and dump him in a phosphate pit. One flooded with water."

Tampa: "When do I get the other $2,000?"

Lake Wales: "You haven't done the job yet."

Tampa: "I gotta have the other $2,000 first. My man is ready to do it any time you pay off."

Lake Wales: "I've already paid you $2,500."

Tampa: "Look, I'll phone you back this evening. Better have your mind made up and the money ready by that time." Tampa rang off.

Sheriff Gordon listened to the report. It was obvious to him that "the old man" was "King" Gerlach. The anonymous call to the radio station had been made from the Walesbilt. And the death call from Tampa had been received at the same hotel.

Emmett Donnelly, Polk County's leading lawyer, had offices on the hotel's first floor. "King" Gerlach was one of his many clients. The sheriff knew Attorney Donnelly well—but not favorably. There were many people in Lake Wales who speculated openly that Donnelly was behind the murder of a man 22 years earlier.

The victim in the 1932 homicide had been Joe H. Beal, a young lawyer who formerly had been Donnelly's law partner and who had served a term as mayor.

Everybody in Polk County knew and liked Joe Beal and his future in politics was bright. He dissolved his association with Donnelly with the idea of running for Congress. He never got to do it. A shotgun blast ended the world for him one June evening as he sat on his back porch. An assassin killed him from out of the darkness.

Hot Southern tempers blazed and there was talk of a lynching, if the murderer could be found. Emmett Donnelly was one of those who talked big—but not for long.

Suspicious glances came his way and he stayed away from Beal's funeral. He told his first lie by saying law enforcement authorities had ordered him to stay home, against his will. Then, when questioned, he conceded that he held a "small partnership insurance policy" on his ex-partner's life. Such insurance arrangements, he hastened to explain, are not unusual among partners in business and professional life.

But tongues wagged faster when the value of the policy was learned to be $50,000. Suspicion ran as deep and dark as the murky water of an alligator swamp.

Those were the days before the Florida klondike of

Yankee tourist dollars, and no Northerner could hope for much of a break. Donnelly, a migrant from Wisconsin, got one, however. The police charged him with murder, but the county grand jury refused to indict him. Donnelly went free and the insurance company had no recourse but to pay him the $50,000.

The Beal murder case had set off a chain reaction that caused an explosive investigation in Milwaukee, where Donnelly had been a lawyer and assistant prosecutor before clearing out for Florida. Milwaukee authorities quickly dug up the body of Willard Duncan and tested what remained for poison. The analysis was inconclusive, since Duncan was six years dead.

The intriguing fact was that Duncan also had been a law-partner of the insurance-happy Donnelly. In that death, too, Donnelly had collected a neat $50,000 on a double indemnity policy.

Police records showed that Duncan suffered a fatal seizure in his apartment, with Donnelly present. Donnelly made no move to call a doctor, and Duncan was in convulsions when his fiancee and her mother dropped in unexpectedly on the unpleasant scene. The unfortunate ex-partner gasped his last in a hospital, without speaking a word. The official cause of death was given as a brain tumor, and Donnelly was $50,000 richer.

Sheriff Gordon now had a conference with County Solicitor Clifford M. Kelly. He said, "Emmett must be figuring on collecting on another quick death—this time on a client instead of a partner." Kelly agreed that it certainly looked that way.

Since the Tampa caller had promised to "phone back this evening," the sheriff drove up to Lake Wales. As he passed the Walesbilt Hotel, he saw Lawyer Donnelly's 1953 tan colored Chrysler parked at the curb. Millionaire Gerlach sat on the sidewalk, soaking up the sun and watching the vacationers arrive.

Gordon set up a vigil in the Lake Wales telephone exchange. Finally, at 6:30 P.M., there came a call from Tampa. It originated at the same restaurant as before. The Lake Wales operator signaled the sheriff, and he listened in. He sighed softly as he heard the number the caller gave. It was the one listed for Emmett Donnelly's home.

He heard a voice he knew well—that of the successful lawyer, civic big shot and powerful man in Polk County.

"Is the money ready?" the Tampa caller asked. "My man is set to kill him tonight."

There seemed to be fright in the lawyer's voice as he countered, "I've already paid you $2,500, with no results."

The Tampa man cursed, said something about causing trouble and again he demanded another $2,000.

Donnelly said cautiously, "I'll meet you. But don't come to me. I'll come to you. Same place. I'll be in my Chrysler."

It happened that Donnelly lived on—appropriately enough—Crooked Lake, five miles out of Lake Wales. It took Sheriff Gordon and two deputies nearly a half-hour to find the place.

Deputy Floyd Ritchie went alone to the door. Donnelly's wife, Jessie, answered his knock. She said her husband had driven away a few minutes before. He hadn't said where he was going or when he would be back.

Was he en route to pay off his bought-and-almost-paid-for assassin? If so, there was no chance of following him. Sheriff Gordon drove back into Lake Wales with Deputies Ritchie and William Matthews. They stopped at the Lake Wales telephone exchange, thanked the operators for their cooperation and asked for secrecy.

"Don't worry about any leaks from this office," the chief operator assured them. "We'll never say a word, not even to each other."

It was a pledge that was kept. Even today the operators won't discuss the case.

Leaving the exchange, Gordon stopped at the Walesbilt Hotel. The 81-year-old Gerlach was talking with cronies in the lobby. The sheriff said, "Mr. Gerlach, I want you to come to my office for a chat."

The aging millionaire was delighted. He is an avid mystery fan. In the Bartow courthouse, Solicitor Kelly asked some serious questions of the old gentleman:

Q—"Mr. Gerlach, how well do you know Emmett Donnelly, and how much do you trust him?"

A—"Trust him? He's the man I trust most in this world. He's my lawyer. I've known him for years. He handles all my affairs."

Gerlach seemed a bit resentful over the questioning, but also puzzled and disturbed. Kelly continued:

Q—"How much control does he have over your properties?"

A—"Control? Complete control, I should say. He has my will, property deeds, insurance policies, stocks. Just about everything, I suppose."

Q—"Mr. Gerlach, have you ever signed any papers for Emmett Donnelly without reading them first?"

A—"Well, yes, I have. Just routine receipts and the like. I'd do that for Emmett, but for nobody else, you understand. Just for Emmett." (*Continued on page* 91)

In Deputy Ritchie's custody is middleman William Durden *(r.)* who was negotiator and received more than $10,000 to hire a mass executioner

Quiet residential area is center of activity as police, newsmen, photographers descend on murder scene. Areaway is

IT WAS EARLY EVENING, just past dark, but the "Silent Blonde" already was on her tour of cocktail bars and night clubs.

She slid her trim figure onto a bar stool in a small tavern on Wilson Avenue near Broadway in the Uptown District of Chicago's North Side.

The white jacketed bartender approached and she said, "Whiskey sour, please, with bonded bourbon. Very sour, and no cherry or orange slice."

He mixed and served the drink. She paid with a $10 bill and, when he brought the change, shoved a quarter to him for a tip.

Without a word, not even a "thank you," he retired to the far end of the bar.

It didn't pay to try bandying words with the "Silent Blonde." The bartenders, entertainers, cloak check girls and powder room maids in the district all knew that.

She was bored by chatter and she seemed to resent any kind of friendliness. Her stock shut-off to a conversational bartender was: "I don't care to talk or to listen to you, thank you."

The drinking and dancing spots appreciated her patronage, nevertheless. She spent freely, tipped well and always behaved herself.

Observers marvelled at her seemingly limitless capacity for whiskey sours, manhattans, martinis or daiquiris. Yet she never was seen to stagger, spill a drink, or otherwise betray herself as squiffed.

A wisecracking master of ceremonies gave her the name of "Silent Blonde," addressing her during his floor show patter. She gave him a long, icy stare, picked up her purse, walked out and never returned.

Gossip around the clubs was that she had loved her husband dearly and lost interest in everything—friends, family, social life and all—when he died.

Always, she was alone. Never was there any man or woman with her.

And always she was well, but simply, dressed. On the night in question she wore a blue print dress, white bolero jacket, black hat, black pumps and nylons. It was her favorite costume.

Her nails were expertly done, her blond hair simply arranged, her makeup flawless.

As she sat at the bar, a man approached her from a nearby booth. "May I buy you a little drink?" he asked, confident of making a pickup.

She gave him a long, insolent stare and he stood there, grinning fatuously. Then she said, with the air of a person spitting out a bad grape, "Please go away from me and don't come back."

The man, furiously embarrassed by the repulse, tried to stammer out an apology, but she turned her back on him. The watching bartender grinned. He had seen that happen before.

After two more sours she handed the barman a coin and said: "Please call me a taxi. The number is Bittersweet 8-7600." When she was gone, the man who had tried the pickup asked about her.

searched by Mel Bretag (*l.*), Lt. Ascher of crime laboratory

BLONDE, SILENT AND SLAIN

by T. D. METZ

She was bored with chatter, resented friendliness. She was always alone

"She arrives by cab, leaves by cab and always has money," the bartender replied. "I've never seen her with another woman or a man. She's always alone.

"I've known her to be friendly to just one person—an old lady who used to be an attendant in the powder room here. She used to give the old lady big tips, as much as five dollars, and told her she had plenty of money in the bank.

"It was a funny thing—after the old lady died, the blonde never even asked what happened to her."

The Silent Blonde made a lot of cocktail stops that night, which was Wednesday, June 2nd, 1954. She rode from place to place in taxicabs, as always, even when the stops were only two or three blocks apart.

At 1 A.M., she was in a tavern at Milwaukee Street. The night manager, Joseph Grosz, had seen her often, and for the first time she seemed a bit uncertain from drink.

But she didn't order a cocktail. She bought a package of cigarettes, emptied out her purse on the bar and finally came up with two dimes and a nickel.

Rain was falling hard outside, and Grosz ordered a taxi for her. He intended to offer to lend her enough money to pay her fare home. But when he came back from the phone booth she was gone.

About eight hours later, just before 9 o'clock Thursday morning, Raymond Giannonia, a laundry truck driver, was making a delivery in an apartment building at 4743 Beacon Street.

He walked into a dark passageway, about 20 feet long, leading to the rear of the building.

This picture of "Silent Blonde" helped trap her killer

Shown photo of blonde, states, "I never saw her in my life."

What he found sent him running back to the street, yelling for help.

A blonde woman, nude from ankles to armpits, lay in the passageway. Her blue print dress and white jacket were pulled up to her shoulders. Her black brassiere, torn from her bosom, was about 10 feet away.

Her nylon panties had been ripped down to her ankles. She wore no girdle, for her slim figure needed none.

Detectives John Minehan, Harold Thompson and Harry Smith of the Town Hall station were the first policemen to arrive. The body was cold and stiffened.

The Silent Blonde now was mute forever.

The detectives covered her body, except for the face and head, with a blanket. Then they called residents of the building to identify her. None could.

Her purse was missing and the bolero jacket pockets contained only seven cents. Still on her dress was a brooch set with a single pearl.

Captain John Golden, Chicago's granite-faced homicide chief and his top assistant, Detective Leon Sweitzer, were on the scene within minutes. So was Dr. Jerry Kearns, famous medical examiner for the Cook County coroner.

There was a deep, purpling bruise on the left side of her chin, as if she had been knocked out with a blow.

The telltale marks of a murderer were on her neck. Dr. Kearns felt of her throat in a brief preliminary examination.

"Strangled," he said. "Her throat has been torn to pieces. The hyoid bone is crushed and the cartilage badly damaged.

"The autopsy probably will show that blood from her smashed throat flooded her lungs and, in everyday words, drowned her."

There were no other marks of violence on her body, Dr. Kearns reported. Finding on whether she had been raped would have to await post mortem surgery and tests at the morgue.

Sergeant James McMahon, an ace on the homicide staff, was preparing a description to be circulated on the police teletype. He asked Dr. Kearns to estimate the blonde's age.

"About thirty to thirty-five," the doctor replied.

Kearns was 11 to 15 years off base on that one. Her true age was later found to be 46. She had kept her girlish figure and complexion well, and hours on bar stools had failed to give her a middle age spread.

The first clue, setting the time of the murder, came from a young woman, whose bedroom windows overlook the passageway.

"I heard voices down there, looked at my bedside clock and saw it was 2:15 A.M.," she told Captain Golden. "There was a woman's voice, so low I couldn't make out the words. The man's was louder, but he had a funny accent, perhaps Russian. I couldn't understand him, either."

Detective Sweitzer remarked that it had been pouring rain at that hour. Yet, the blonde's clothing, body and shoes were dry.

That meant she must have arrived at the murder spot in a car.

Several Town Hall detectives had seen or heard of the "Silent Blonde" in making their checks of night spots for gambling, vice and other violations. But they didn't know her name.

Lieutenant John Ascher and Policeman Mel Bretag, of the police crime lab, photographed the body at the scene. They also took charge of the blonde's clothing and fingernail scrapings which might show whether she had scratched her killer.

At the Town Hall station, Captain John J. McCarthy received a telephone call, meanwhile, from a distressed woman.

She was Mrs. Esther Schmidt, of 4953 North Austin Avenue. She reported that her sister, Mrs. Helen Anderson Prigge, was missing.

"Is your sister a blonde?" the captain asked, and got an affirmative answer.

The caller added that Mrs. Prigge lived at 4729 North Beacon.

"I'm calling from Helen's place now," she said. "Helen was supposed to meet me for shopping today, but didn't, so I came here looking for her. Her bed hadn't been slept in, and I'm very worried."

Captain McCarthy didn't want to alarm Mrs. Schmidt without cause, so he told her:

"There's been a serious accident at 4743 Beacon, only a little way from where you are. The police are at the scene. Perhaps they can help you."

Mrs. Schmidt hurried to the passageway. The police and the body were gone. Two newspapermen still were present. They described the murdered blonde, her clothing and the

Harry Glos confirms identification with Carl Schmidt (l.) who spared wife ordeal

brooch with the pearl. Mrs. Schmidt heard them out and then said in the toneless voice of a person deeply shocked, "That's Helen. That's my poor sister. How terrible! Who could want to harm her?"

Then she burst into hysterical sobbing. She was too shaken to view the body at the morgue. Her husband, Carl, undertook this painful duty for her. He identified the victim positively as Helen Prigge.

The life of the Silent Blonde, as told by her sister, made a sad, sad story.

She had been deeply in love with her husband, Elmer Prigge, and his death in 1934 had all but crushed her. But she had tried to do the best she could for their eight-year-old son.

Elmer was the inventor of a process used in the manufacture of printing ink. He left a comfortable home, money in the bank and insurance policies. After he was gone, she lived only for the son.

She kept up her social life, worked tirelessly for charities and the Parent-Teachers Association, took an interest in neighborhood improvement work. She was petite, blonde and charming but, for her, romance died with her husband.

Although only 26 when she was widowed, she never thought seriously of another man.

The world, as she knew it, came to an end for her in 1941. Her son, then 15, died that year. She could not be consoled. She could not endure being near the people and places she knew. Old memories crushed her with grief. She sold her home at a sacrifice and took back her maiden name of Helen Anderson. She wanted to forget.

Her homes from then on were a succession of hotels and apartment buildings. She never stayed long in any place. She seemed to flee from neighbors who might possibly become friends.

Only with her sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Schmidt, did she remain warm and friendly. They tried to persuade her to live with them, but she refused.

"I won't intrude on your life together. If Elmer had lived, I wouldn't want anyone with us."

Helen wanted to be among people—but only strangers, not friends. Her life became a round of cocktail lounges and neighborhood clubs. Royalties from her husband's invention kept her in money.

At the places where she lived, her conduct was quietly chaste. The owner of the Beacon Street apartments where Helen had last lived, said, when interviewed by the police, "She was quiet and very, very reserved. I seldom saw her. She had no telephone and her only visitor was her sister, Mrs. Schmidt."

Sergeant McMahon and Detective Sweitzer went through the murdered blonde's apartment. Except for pictures of her dead husband and son, the place was as impersonal as a railroad station waiting room.

There was not a greeting card, a letter, a jotted telephone number—nothing to show she was at home in the place. The apartment was spotlessly neat and clean, every ashtray polished, woodwork gleaming, clothing pressed and on hangers.

"She may have drunk a lot, but she certainly was tidy," McMahon commented.

Captain McCarthy and Golden went over the evidence—what little there was of it—at the Town Hall station.

To them came Dr. Kearns' report on the autopsy. Strangulation was the official cause of death, as suspected. An attempt had been made to rape her, but had not been accomplished.

Seldom had there been a murder case with fewer clues and more contradictions. Captain McCarthy summed up:

"She had no men friends, but a man killed and tried to rape her.

"The killer had to be a man she knew, because that woman whose bedroom window is directly above heard her talking to the man. Or so we must assume.

"He couldn't have been a stranger who accosted her on the street. In that case, she would have been scared, would have screamed, rather than standing talking quietly with him.

Heartbroken sister, Mrs. Esther Schmidt, leaves morgue with the help of husband and Detective Harry Smith (l.)

"She must have arrived at the scene with him in a car. Otherwise, her clothing would have been wet from the rain. And that woman says the man had an accent, maybe Russian. Where does that get us?"

The answer, at the moment, was explicit: "Nowhere."

Mrs. Schmidt, fortunately, had a recent picture of her blond sister. In it she was smiling, and wearing the white bolero jacket in which she was killed.

She had appeared more relaxed that day, and it was the only picture taken of her in many years.

Captain Golden had 20 copies made of the picture. He supplied them to Chicago newspapers and TV stations, with an appeal for anyone knowing of the dead blonde's last movements to come forward.

Ten policemen, carrying other copies of the photo, trudged from tavern to cocktail lounge to night club in the uptown district. Almost everywhere they found people who recognized the Silent Blonde.

She was known in strip tease joints, sedate hotel cocktail bars, quiet side street taverns and outright dumps. Wherever there were people, noise and liquor, Helen sat and brooded.

Again and again, the policemen got, in substance, the same answer:

"Sure, I recognize her picture. She was around a lot. Always riding in taxis and ordering mixed drinks. If you tried to be friendly, she walked out on (*Continued on page 74*)

Murder struck twice in Pat Brennan's life—

first his mother, 22 years later his wife met violent death

AS USUAL when he arrived home from work Patrick Brennan signaled by whistling. It was a low whistle of two familiar notes, as familiar in the home life of the Brennans as coffee at breakfast.

Brennan stood in the doorway of his pleasant dwelling. He held a newspaper in one hand and his empty lunch box in the other. It was a fine April day here in upper New York State, and Brennan quickly slipped out of the mackinaw coat which had seemed necessary when he left the house early this morning but burdensome all the way home.

Hearing no step in the house, either upstairs or down, he whistled again. More loudly this time, the first note sounding quite shrill. He put down the newspaper, tossed his mackinaw over the back of a chair, started along the lower hall.

A glance told him that Sarah, his wife, was not in the parlor, that curtained, dim and conspicuously tidy room which looked ready for any sort of ceremony, but especially a funeral. It didn't look lived in. But the Brennan dining room made up for the Brennan parlor, for here was a room in which the full daily life of an active and happily married couple plainly centered.

But Sarah Brennan wasn't in the dining room, either. Nor was Sarah out in the kitchen.

Patrick Brennan, a paper maker by trade and a popular man locally in the manufacturing village of Brownville, began to feel the first faint twinges of anxiety. Not in ever so many years had his wife failed to be home to greet him on his return from the paper mill—except when Sarah was away on a visit and he knew all about it.

Brennan called out, "Sarah?" He was already ascending the stairs, and he went hurriedly through each of the rooms on the second floor.

In their front bedroom he stopped hopefully before his wife's walnut bureau. There was no note anywhere.

A wave of utterly unfamiliar tension and doubt swept over the searching husband. Yet, there just had to be some logical explanation of why Sarah wasn't at home, why there were no signs of her having even started to get their evening meal. One of the neighbors, probably, or one of the neighbor's children. Maybe the baby over at Jim Farmer's house has been taken bad with something babies take bad with out of a clear sky, Pat told himself.

So, as the April sunset shot its last bright strands of rose gold into the Brennan kitchen, Pat lighted some lights and groped into Sarah's nicely organized ice box. An hour and ten minutes later Pat Brennan heard a solid step on the front porch. It didn't sound a bit like his wife's step. But so eager was he to have it Sarah that he sprang up from beside the table where he had been sitting, idly scanning the local news items of Jefferson County, and rushed to the door.

Even as he flung it wide, he saw his visitor was a man. Yet a welcome one—Jim Farmer must belatedly have come over with a message which Sarah had counted on him to deliver a lot earlier.

"Hello, Jim. Come in," Brennan said, and then, unable to avoid sounding overanxious, "It's about Sarah, isn't it?"

"Not exactly—" the neighbor answered, looking surprised.

"But she isn't home. I thought maybe—she was over to your house—"

"Oh, sure, Pat—she was. This morning," Farmer said. "Mary told me as how Sarah stopped by, saying she was going in to Watertown. To visit her cousin, I think it was."

"Cousin? Funny she didn't tell me."

"Did she tell you the rest, Pat? I mean, about selling us the house?"

"House? What house?"

Brennan's nearest neighbor, James O. Farmer, again looked astonished. And, when he spoke, his tone was deliberately patient. "It's plain Sarah didn't tell you," he said.

"Are you trying to say that Sarah sold you this house?"

"It's what I'm here to say. It's mighty strange, Pat, that Sarah wouldn't have told you," Farmer said somewhat skeptically. "For it wasn't just the other day that she and my Mary closed the deal."

"When was it?"

"Months ago."

Patrick Brennan sat down heavily. He was pale and shaken now.

"I just can't understand it, Jim. It doesn't make any sense," he said wearily.

"Must be a shock," Farmer agreed. "But it's a deal, all right. You can go to the courthouse and (*Continued on page* 78)

by R. J. GERRARD

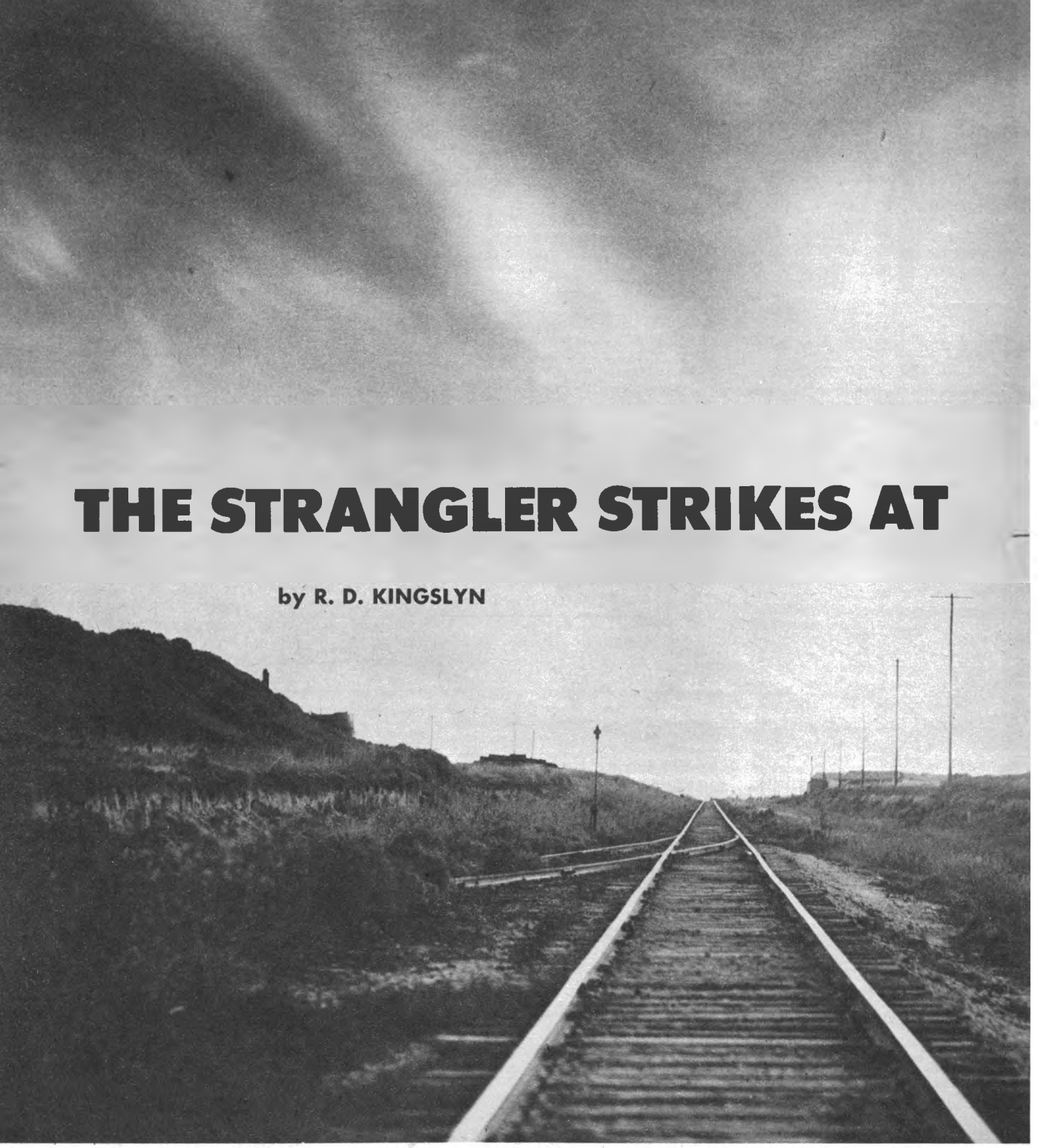
WOMEN who walked the last mile

#10 IN SERIES

SHE

"Nothing but old clothes and junk in that trunk," she said. "You can't open it. The key is lost." The sheriff struck the old lock two sharp blows

KILLED WITH EASE



THE STRANGLER STRIKES AT

by R. D. KINGSLYN

A gold wrist watch stopped at 12:02 and an artificial flower are the lifeless clues

to the anonymous young brunette

ALONG A STRETCH of the New York, New Haven and Hartford railroad tracks near Old Lyme, Connecticut, a railroad section gang was working over the ballast. It was the fourth day of August and the third day of a midsummer heat wave that had the whole countryside gasping for relief. At noon the official temperature was sizzling past 94 degrees.

"Time to knock off for lunch," Joseph Spakowski said.

Tools dropped beside the gleaming tracks. Eyes searched the area for a patch of shade in which to enjoy the noonday meal.

"How 'bout over there, back of that billboard, Joe?" one of the gang suggested.

"Right. Some shade there," Spakowski agreed.

The section hands trudged toward the billboard, erected to present a sales message to passengers aboard the trains. Spakowski was in the lead. Limp with the humid heat, he saw nothing until he was close to the billboard. Then he stopped with a sharp exclamation.

"Somebody there," he said. "A girl—"

"Geez! I see her—asleep."

"Must be crazy," one of the gang muttered, "to take off her clothes, take a sun bath, when it's hot as this."

The young woman was entirely nude. Dark haired, slender and attractive, she lay on her back in the tall grass, her arms folded across her stomach, her face turned slightly to the left.

The little group of men stood for a split-second in embarrassed silence. Then Spakowski said tightly, "It's not a sun bath. Notice her mouth—that's blood."

There was an unmistakable trickle of dried blood at the corner of the girl's mouth and running thinly down her chin. She did not appear to be breathing.

"She's dead, then?" one of the gang asked in a hushed voice.

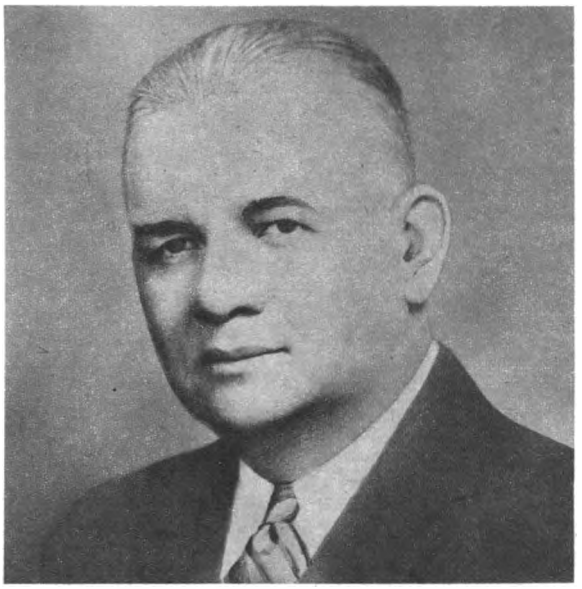
"Somebody should call the cops," another murmured.

"We better," Spakowski decided, "go back out of here the way we came."

Clutching their lunch boxes, the men hurried to the nearest signal tower of the railroad. At this hour it was manned by George McName. Spakowski and a companion climbed the steep flight of stairs and described what they had found.

Young sailor picked up for driving with one headlight

Behind billboard there was shade—and the body of Ida



Comm. Hickey wondered if matches were clue or souvenir

"You're sure she's dead?" the towerman asked. "I'd feel like a dope if I call the police and then it's just some babe thinks she's found herself a safe spot to get an all-over tan."

"She's dead. She has been killed and not struck by a train, either," Spakowski insisted.

McName rang up the Westbrook Barracks of the Connecticut State Police. He talked with the commander there, Lieutenant Carroll Shaw. Shaw called in Troopers William Murphy, George Dunn and Ray Goodale. He also informed the medical examiner's office.

In company with Troopers Dunn, Goodale and Murphy, Shaw sped to the place near Old Lyme. The dead girl appeared to be in her early twenties. On her slender throat the investigating officers found livid bruises, partly hidden by the victim's long dark brown hair.

"Murder," Shaw diagnosed grimly. He turned to Dunn. "Get through on the radio to Groton Barracks. Commissioner Hickey will want to know about this. He was at Groton, up to a few minutes ago."

Trooper Dunn hurried back to the radio car to send the message, while Shaw, Goodale and Murphy studied the scene.

"I would say she has been dead for a number of hours," Shaw estimated. "Not too long, or decomposition from this heat would show more. Probably happened during the night. Look—"

He pointed to the dead girl's left wrist. A gold wrist watch was still in place. Its crystal was broken and the hands stood at 12:02. It seemed probable that the girl's watch had stopped at a moment of desperate struggle, when she had been thrown to the ground.

"If that's right, it fixes the time of the slaying at a few minutes past midnight," Lieutenant Shaw said.

The girl's handbag and clothing were nowhere to be found. Yet the watch was a good one, attached to her wrist by a gold extension bracelet. This seemed to discount the motive of robbery.

Trooper Dunn returned from the radio car, to report that he had sent the message for Commissioner Hickey.

"Next thing," Shaw said, "is to notify the Homicide Squad. And," he added, "you'd better contact Mrs. Haggerty. This is the sort of thing she's awfully good at."

Mrs. Kathryn B. Haggerty was a well-known policewoman attached to the Special Service Division of the Connecticut State Police. By her alertness and ingenuity in discerning and interpreting obscure clues, young Mrs. Haggerty already had played a commendable part in the solving of several homicide mysteries and other baffling crime cases.

Lieutenant Shaw ordered a blanket thrown over the victim's body. Troopers Murphy and Goodale were holding back a steadily increasing crowd of curious spectators. Shaw asked the discoverers of the body to step forward.

Joseph Spakowski and the other workmen had forgotten about their lunch, but stood around uneasily, in case they might be wanted. They immediately identified themselves.

Shaw asked them, "How long were you working on this track today?"

Spakowski answered, "Since early this morning, Lieutenant."

"Pretty well acquainted with this neighborhood, are you?"

"Oh, yes. We come by here or work along here all the time."

"Did any of you see anything else unusual around here today?"

Spakowski said that they hadn't.

The lieutenant nodded. "How many people did you see approaching this billboard, while you were at work within sight of it?"

Eager to be accurate, the men of the section gang consulted one another. Then Spakowski announced that nobody had been seen anywhere near the billboard this morning.

Shaw thanked the New Haven workmen and excused them. Trooper Goodale took the name and address of each man.

"They would have been likely to notice any movement in this direction," Shaw commented. "It means that the killing occurred during the night, probably near midnight. That gives the killer a long start. No telling where he's got to by now."

The distant wail of police-car sirens told that the expected reinforcements were arriving. The first of these was Captain Leo F. Carroll, the officer in charge of the Eastern Division. He was accompanied by a young woman in a neat black and gray uniform. This was Kathryn Haggerty.

Still in her middle twenties, she was one of the first two women appointed to operate as a unit within a state police force in the United States. Mrs. Haggerty and her colleague, Mrs. Evelyn Briggs, had done such excellent work in the experimental year of

their assignment that the policewomen of the Special Service Division of Connecticut had been increased in number, first to seven, then to twelve. Other states, starting with Rhode Island, also began to appoint qualified, energetic young women to their state police organizations.

Edward J. Hickey, commissioner of the Connecticut State Police, joined the group at the scene beside the billboard. Also from Groton came Detective Francis Mangin, Sergeant Frederick Johnson and Trooper Edward Shedroff, all three members of the famed Special Service Division.

Detective Mangin called Commissioner Hickey's attention to the disturbed condition of the turf near the base of one of the billboard's wooden supports. "A struggle could have occurred right here," the detective said.

"Could be," Hickey agreed. "Or the body could have been brought in a car and carried over here. The girl didn't come of her own free will to this lonely spot without her clothes."

Policewoman Haggerty stooped and picked up carefully a small, white pearl button. A moment later she found a mate to it. One of the searching troopers found a third.

"They might have been torn from her dress," Mrs. Haggerty said. "See, the first one I found has a wisp of thread still clinging to it."

Hickey said, "But where is the dress the buttons came from?"

Another official car drew near. It brought Coroner Edward McKay and Medical Examiner E. K. Devitt.

The blanket was lifted off of the young victim. The medical examiner confirmed that death had been caused by strangulation. Allowing for the warmth of the night and the intense heat of the ensuing day, it could be roughly estimated that death had occurred some time between 11:30 P.M. and 12:30 A.M., or about 13 hours earlier. With the evidence of the wrist watch, the time of the killing could be said to have been close to midnight.

"See here," Devitt said to the group of officials. "The marks of the killer's fingers and thumbs are plainly visible." He indicated small, ugly bruises on the front of the victim's slender throat. "The killer stood in front of her. Otherwise the prints of his thumbs would have been on the back of the neck."

"Then it wasn't a sneak attack," Commissioner Hickey said.

"It would seem that she knew him," Captain Carroll agreed.

"And I should say also that the fellow who committed the crime has more than average strength in his hands and fingers," Devitt added.

Beneath the victim's shoulder he found an artificial flower of a blue cotton material. Policewoman Haggerty suggested that it could have come from the girl's dress or, perhaps, been worn as an ornament in her hair.

"But," she added, "since no hair seems to have clung to it, it probably came from her dress."

Sergeant Johnson, combing through the weeds and grass underneath the billboard, came up with a ring set with a brilliant square-cut stone. It proved to be a zircon. Inside the ring was some well-worn engraving: three initials which looked to be either "J.E.S." or "I.E.S."

Commissioner Hickey had been examining the victim's wrist watch with a field microscope. Here, too, were lightly engraved initials. These definitely were "I.E.S."

A few blades of grass showing faint bloodstains had been found. These were placed in envelopes, to be turned over to Dr. Lincoln Opper, pathologist of the State Hospital at Preston.

Hickey had summoned more troopers by radio and these he now sent into Old Lyme, to go from door to door, inquiring as to a missing girl whose description matched that of the murder victim.

"Before you remove the body," Hickey suggested to Coroner McKay, "suppose we uncover her face and allow all these folks—" he motioned toward the curious crowd gathered outside the police lines, "to file past and take a quick look at her."

The officers soon had the throng lined up, single-file. Then they walked slowly past the blanketed form and looked down at the face of the dead girl. But not one admitted ever having seen her before.

Policewoman Haggerty ventured, "Commissioner, couldn't she have come here from Sound View?"

"She could have," Hickey agreed.

Sound View is a typical seaside resort, with its boardwalk, summer cottages and tourist houses spread out over more than a square mile of coastal territory. It drew a large transient population from all over Connecticut at the height of the summer season.

"We'll have our troubles," Captain Carroll observed. "Sound View has a shifting population, people coming and going every day."

"And girls going on dates with fellows that they never expect to lay eyes on again," Hickey added. "But we have to get this girl identified."

As Coroner McKay's assistants lifted the body into the wicker basket, Policewoman Haggerty pointed to a small, dark blue object. It was a book of paper matches which had been uncovered by the removal of the girl's body.

Commissioner Hickey and Captain Carroll examined it carefully. The book of matches bore the inscription of the United States Navy Submarine Base located at Groton, Connecticut, some 15 miles distant. From the appearance of the match clip, it had not long been exposed to the weather. The blue cover looked new and glossy —so glossy that it might preserve the imprint of a user's fingertips.

The grass was pressed down and matted where the body had lain for so many hours. In lifting the book of matches, Commissioner Hickey only touched the cardboard edges with a thumb and forefinger. He held up the matchbook and picked the cover flap open. Three matches had been torn off.

"It could have dropped from the killer's pocket during the attack,"

Policewoman Haggerty offered one man a cigarette and trapped a killer

Mrs. Haggerty suggested. "This may give us a line on him."

Hickey agreed. "But match clips like this from the Sub Base are sought as souvenirs. Anyone might have had one."

"But suppose there are fingerprints on it?" the young policewoman persisted.

Hickey said, "We can check any print we find on this match clip against those on file at the Base."

The body of the murdered girl was removed to an undertaking establishment in Old Lyme. Here Dr. Opper would conduct his autopsy. The doctor came speeding over from Preston, to begin his examination at once.

It was not long before he had information for Commissioner Hickey. The pathologist telephoned Groton Barracks to report that the unidentified girl had been criminally assaulted before being strangled.

The autopsy confirmed that death had resulted from strangulation and that the girl was slain at approximately midnight, or very shortly thereafter, in the first hour of Friday morning, August 4th.

Taken back to Groton for scientific study, the book of paper matches was promptly tested for fingerprints. One clear print developed on the glossy blue surface of the cover. But it proved to be a print of the third finger of the victim's left hand.

State troopers, under the command of Captain Carroll and Lieutenant Shaw, were spreading out over a steadily widening area, trying to learn whether, from some family or summer home, a pretty girl in her early twenties had been reported missing. It seemed most unlikely that the strangler's victim, with her youth, refined appearance and good looks, could be absent for many hours and nobody at her home or place of temporary summer residence become alarmed enough to report the fact to the local authorities.

"It can only mean," Mrs. Haggerty reasoned, "that her folks haven't yet missed her because she is away on vacation."

The policewoman was speeding back to Groton, to change from her uniform into civilian clothes. It was her desire not to alarm a family or raise up barriers of evasion, which the neat black and gray uniform might do. She had months ago obtained her superiors' permission to put aside the uniform when pursuing some domestic investigation.

Driving over to Sound View, to which some of the state troopers also had been assigned, the neatly dressed policewoman now began asking questions in soda fountains and other spots where young people gathered. Soon she came across a clerk serving sodas who told her that two sisters who chanced to hear the radio describe the unidentified murder-rape victim of Old Lyme, had exclaimed, "Say, that sounds like Ida."

With the soda clerk's information, Mrs. Haggerty located the sisters. They hailed from Portland, Connecticut, and were vacationing at Sound View. They were regularly employed in a manufacturing plant in Middletown.

The "Ida" they had mentioned at the soda fountain also worked at the plant in Middletown. Ida, too, was vacationing right here in Sound View, they told Mrs. Haggerty.

"Does she wear a wrist watch?" the policewoman asked.

Yes, a beautiful gold watch with a gold expansion bracelet, the girls said.

"And does she wear other jewelry? A ring, for instance?"

"Oh, yes," one sister said, "she has a lovely ring."

"Set with some kind of stone?"

"A large square-cut stone, like a diamond. A zircon," one of the sisters said.

Mrs. Haggerty asked the two girls to drive with her to Old Lyme. As they were about to enter the undertaking establishment there, two of Captain Carroll's troopers came out, escorting a woman to a car. This was a mother who had heard the radio broadcast about the unidentified young victim of the rapist-strangler. Her own daughter was missing from home and so she had driven hurriedly here from New Haven. She was relieved to discover that the victim was not the girl she had feared to find.

The two girls accompanied Policewoman Haggerty into the undertaker's rooms, gazed reluctantly upon the murdered girl, then nodded, their eyes brimming.

"Yes, that's Ida," they said, shocked. Her full name was Ida Elizabeth Sienna, they added.

Commissioner Hickey was immediately notified by Mrs. Haggerty. He got in touch with his officers in the Middletown area, ordering them to contact management officials of the industrial plant in which Ida Sienna and the sisters who had identified her worked.

Within thirty minutes Hickey was informed that the strangler's victim was one of the eight daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Sebastian Sienna, old residents of Connecticut, now living in Portland, across the river from Middletown.

His men learned that Ida Sienna and her elder sister, Angelina, together with four other girl employees of the Middletown manufacturing company, were taking their vacations in Sound View. The six had clubbed together to rent a cottage for a fortnight. Their holiday had begun the preceding Sunday, July 30th.

The state policemen had obtained the address of the cottage. Hickey passed it on to Mrs. Haggerty, and now she, with Trooper Leonard Menard, was again driving to Sound View, to find Angelina Sienna and bring her to Old Lyme. The officers also took the two sisters who had identified Ida back to the seashore resort.

Angelina Sienna was alone at the little cottage, the four other occupants having gone to the boardwalk. Gently interrogated by Kathryn Haggerty, Angelina admitted that she had begun to worry about Ida. But not until about an hour ago, she said, because she thought that Ida had gone to New London the evening before to attend a dance.

"I decided that my kid sister must have missed the last bus back to Sound View," Angelina said. "But I've stayed home here, thinking she would either return or send me a telephone message. That druggist on the corner takes messages for cottagers who don't have a phone."

Ida, she said, was 23, an independent and impulsive girl, extremely attractive to men but always well-behaved and of excellent character.

It was Policewoman Haggerty's hard duty now to inform Angelina that her lovely young sister was dead. Worse still, that Ida Sienna was the girl of whom the radio was reporting, the unknown girl who had been assaulted and strangled.

Some minutes afterward, when Trooper Menard and Mrs. Haggerty managed to quiet Angelina Sienna's hysterical sobs of grief, they were able to ask her a few questions.

She said that Ida neither smoked nor drank. The book of paper matches from the Groton Submarine Base could not have been hers.

Ida, Angelina said, had been dressed smartly on Thursday evening, in anticipation of the trip to New London to the dance. Her dress was blue, with a flower of the same blue cotton material on the shoulder. There were white pearl buttons on it.

Angelina said that, although she knew of Ida's date, she did not know who was to be her escort. She had last seen Ida walking toward the boardwalk around 9 P.M. Now she remembered thinking that it was a pretty late start for a social affair as far away as New London.

"To me," Angelina sobbed, "Ida was still the kid sister, but she was of age now. Very clever and quick at the factory, able to earn high wages. She didn't want me for a chaperon, just as a pal and sister."

Presently, with the policewoman and Trooper Menard, Angelina Sienna was in a car and on the way to Old Lyme, where the formal identification by some member of the victim's family must be recorded.

Having to identify her sister's body was a cruel ordeal for Angelina, but it was accomplished and the little party headed for Groton Barracks. Commissioner Hickey had sent instructions that he wished to (*Continued on page 76*)

new shackles for old

by RANDLE McKAY

drawing by JACK SALE

WHEN THOMAS FLYNN came ashore at Basra, the famed old Iraqi port, he wanted to find a cool, shady spot, for the Persian Gulf temperature was batting 120.

Flynn was 22 and a British merchant seaman. He was in for a hot time, but he had no idea how hot. He dropped in at a coffee house.

There was a girl in the coffee house. In Iraq, they still have slavery, but Tom didn't know it. He knew what he saw, a slender girl of 19, scrubbing tables. According to the strictest Mohammedan custom, she wore a veil. The eyes above the veil were big and brown and appealing. Flynn found them infinitely fascinating. He asked the girl her name.

"Kawahkib," she replied politely.

"None of that! No loafing while you gab with customers!" the glowering proprietor shrieked.

Tom flushed and sipped his drink reflectively, while the girl hastened to fulfill her Oriental destiny, scrubbing the floor. From that moment Tom had little else on his mind. Just the appealing eyes, the work-coarsened young hands, the unshod little feet! And the bawling, shouting proprietor mistreated this nice kid.

Next day Flynn, ashore again in the sun-scorched city, asked questions. He was quickly and rudely acquainted with the facts of life in Basra. Kawahkib was—a slave!

Inevitably, Tom headed back to that coffee house. He strode in, his hand in his pocket. He dredged up some English money. He crossed the shop and slapped the shillings into the proprietor's greasy palm.

"Look—I want her to go for a walk with me. Show me around Basra," Tom explained.

A sudden glint of greed no bigger than a 4-alarm fire sparkled in the Iraqi's right or better eye. "Excellency, I will sell her to you!"

"I gave you the five bob to get her an hour off—"

"Buy her! The price is dirt cheap because I find that I admire you. One hundred and fifty pounds!"

"Just for a walk!" Tom took the girl's hand. "Come on."

Flynn and Kawahkib strolled from the scene of her serfdom. This walk was followed by other walks. Kawahkib soon tendered her British escort the compliment of taking down her veil. But the eyes still had it. They made the young seaman think of his approaching sailing date and go kind of watery inside.

Language difficulties were overcome by the eternal simplicity of the matters these two had to discuss in so little time. Kawahkib told Tom that she loved him. She didn't want him to go away.

Tom called at the British consulate and found his consul kind, but firm. He was told he could not marry Kawahkib because Moslem authorities object to Mohammedans marrying Christians. Flynn counted his cash resources. He would have bought the girl from her master, but he had nowhere near 150 pounds, the equivalent of $420.

However, he did have something else. He had nerve enough and just enough money to buy an outfit for an Arab boy. And it was disguised as a boy that he smuggled his lovely dark-eyed slave-girl aboard his ship and hid her in his cabin.

Some hours later, the vessel cast off. For the next two weeks, the temperature in the Gulf was never under 123°. During inspections, Kawahkib had to hide under Tom's bunk. She fainted repeatedly, but never uttered a sound. The voyage consumed 44 days.

Eventually they docked at Millwall, England, and hastened to Middlesbrough and the home of Tom's aunt. Police constables knocking at the aunt's door soon put an end to the couple's happy plans for immediate matrimony. In court, the Iraqui girl could only plead guilty to a charge of having entered England illegally. Her sentence, two months in jail. Tom, for having smuggled an alien into the country, also was sentenced, but he obtained his liberty by filing an appeal.

As the end of Kawahkib's jail term drew near, they grew desperate. Tom sat down and told his romantic story in a letter to the Home Secretary, Sir David Maxwell Fyfe.

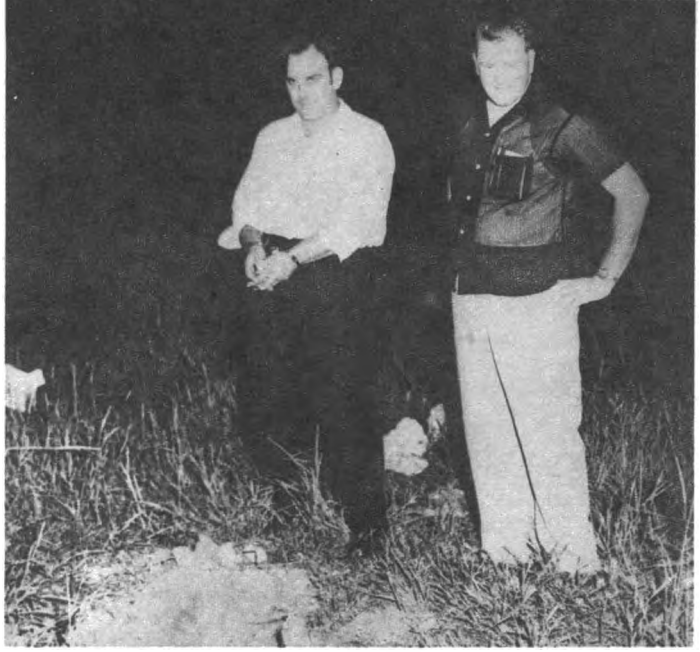
Now the Home Secretary has many unpleasant official functions, such as denying clemency to condemned murderers. But, here, he found he had a pleasant duty. Sir David ruled wisely that Kawahkib should not be shipped back. This decision enabled the slave-girl to throw off forever the old Iraqui shackles, and take on bright new British ones—as Mrs. Thomas Flynn. ◆◆◆

Searching for a young man's body, police find another.

Before he can be identified,

still a third dead man is unearthed

ONE-MAN



by GEORGE K. WYNNE

Prisoner displays only unemotional curiosity as he stands in front of open grave with Sheriff Cochrane

GRAVEYARD

A SMALL-TOWN high-school teacher's salary doesn't go far these days, particularly when he has to provide for a wife and four young children. To augment his income as an instructor in Fresno, Ohio, Clyde Patton took a part-time job as an automobile salesman.

He did all right and the commissions helped, but demonstrating cars at all hours kept him away from home more than he liked. He was steady-going and dependable, and when he wasn't home by 11 o'clock Wednesday night, June 2nd, 1954, his wife wasn't worried.

When, by midnight, he hadn't phoned, she began to fret. Clyde never stayed out that late. At one o'clock Thursday morning, she was becoming alarmed. At two o'clock she was frantic. He must have been involved in an accident, she decided. She telephoned the police in White Eyes Township, but they hadn't heard of any smash-ups. She called the sheriff's office in Coshocton, the hospitals for miles around, and finally several family friends, but nobody had seen Clyde.

"He might have run out of gas," a friend offered. "It could take hours if he got stuck on a side road. People don't stop at night the way they used to, to give a fellow a lift. I wouldn't worry. He'll be along."

Somehow, Mrs. Patton managed to fall asleep just as dawn was breaking. The four youngsters, a boy of 7 and girls of 5, 3 and 2, would be up before long and she'd need her strength to cope with them. At 6 o'clock she sat up in bed with a start. Clyde wasn't home!

In panic, she telephoned the hospitals. There was no report of an accident. She called her husband's employer in Coshocton and he remembered Patton's leaving the salesroom Wednesday afternoon in a 1954 Hudson sedan to call on three prospects.

"I'm not sure where your husband was going," the man said, "but I think there may be a record in the office. Clyde's pretty thorough and usually makes out cards on his customers. I'll go right over and check on it."

Mrs. Patton ran to the home of a neighbor, who agreed to care for the children while she went looking for her husband. Another neighbor gave her a ride from West Lafayette, where the Pattons resided, to Coshocton, seven miles west. There, a check of Patton's record of prospects indicated that he had two definite appointments for Wednesday afternoon, both in Roscoe, about three miles away. A third appointment was for 7 o'clock in the evening in Coshocton. It would be easy enough to see if Patton had kept them.

There was no answer to telephone calls to Roscoe, but the Coshocton resident said Patton had not showed up.

"As a matter of fact, I was kind of peeved about it," the man said. "Some friends wanted to take my wife and me for a ride in their car because it was so hot. But we felt it wouldn't be right to leave the house after we'd made an appointment with Mr. Patton. We waited, and he never even had the courtesy to telephone to say he couldn't make it."

"I'm afraid something terrible has happened," Mrs. Patton said in a shaken voice. "I'm going to see the sheriff."

In a few minutes she was talking to Coshocton County Sheriff Gilbert Kempf and Deputy Sheriff D. F. Walker. She explained that she had been in touch with all the hospitals and she insisted her husband wasn't the type to stay out all night.

"He didn't keep an appointment for 7 o'clock last night," she said. "He just doesn't break dates. If there's one thing about him, he's punctual."

"I assume you didn't quarrel," Kempf said.

"We certainly did not."

"Does he drink?" he asked.

Mrs. Patton shook her head. "I tell you," she declared, "nothing would keep him out all night except an accident."

"Was he worried about anything?" Kempf asked. "His health? Bills? Anything like that?"

Again, Mrs. Patton shook her head, this time more vehemently. "With his salary from the school and earnings from car sales we've been managing all right. Of course, we've got the usual current bills I guess everyone has, but there's nothing pressing. And Clyde's health is good, and he hasn't had anything on his mind to worry about."

"All right, Mrs. Patton," the sheriff said. "Just one more question. Would he have been carrying a lot of money?"

"He never had more than a few dollars in his wallet."

Kempf glanced at his watch; it now was almost 9 A.M..

As more bodies are uncovered, Murder Ridge attracts hundreds of curiosity seekers as well as volunteer diggers

time for Patton to be in school. He called the Fresno High School and talked to the principal briefly. He turned to Mrs. Patton again.

"Your husband hasn't arrived at school. The principal tells me all his affairs are in order, there's been no sign that he had any unusual plans and he's never been absent without calling in early. I guess we'd better start looking for him."

He suggested that Mrs. Patton return home, promising to get in touch with her as soon as he had any news.

"Walker here will drive you back," he said, "and while he's there suppose you let him look through your husband's effects—just on the chance his absence was planned."

When Deputy Walker and Mrs. Patton had gone, Kempf called the automobile salesroom, obtained the names and addresses of Patton's prospects and the registration number of the car he had driven on Wednesday. This number the sheriff broadcast to the state highway patrol. Then he drove to Roscoe. Quickly he ascertained that Patton had kept his second afternoon appointment but the prospect had not been able to get away.

"I told him I was tied up and suggested that he come back about seven last night," the man said, "but he couldn't; he had another call for that hour. He said he'd give me a ring today to make another date."

"Did he mention any other prospects?" Kempf asked.

"Well, yes, he did. He said as long as he had a few hours to kill he thought maybe he'd run out to see a farmer near Nellie in Newcastle Township."

"Did he mention the name?"

"No, he didn't, but he said something about taking Route 715."

"Not much traffic there," Kempf said, "but plenty of hills and woods. A man could run off one of those narrow roads if he didn't know the country."

The sheriff started at once for the little community of Nellie, and after he had gone about twelve miles he stopped at a farmhouse. "See anything yesterday or today of a man driving a brand new Hudson sedan?" he asked the farmer.

"No, nobody around here's got a '54."

"He's an automobile salesman," Kempf said.

"I didn't see him."

The sheriff made two more stops, with the same negative result, but got a lead at the fourth farm he visited.

"I seem to recall a brand new car going by here some time yesterday afternoon; it was headed north," the hired hand stated.

"Any idea what time it was?" Kempf asked.

"Oh, half-past three; maybe four o'clock. I know I was pretty hungry and I had a couple of hours to go till supper."

Another mile up the road, a farmer recalled seeing a new sedan.

"The fellow was going up toward Mount Nebo; that's where Cleet Reese lives, up along the ridge," he said. He estimated the time as about 4 P.M. "No, I don't remember seeing him come back," he concluded. "But I wasn't watching for him and there are lots of roads."

Kempf continued toward Mount Nebo. He turned off Route 715 onto a dirt road at the top of one of the highest hills in the county and noticed a small frame dwelling, sadly in need of a paint job. A huge, barrel-chested man was walking with a brown and white beagle hound.

After Kempf had identified himself and explained his mission the man, Cletus Reese, laughed.

"What would I be doing with a brand new car?" He swept his hands in a circle, indicating the huge expanse of land. "I'm all alone here—me and my hound—with 300 acres."

Kempf nodded. "I guess you don't get much time for pleasure driving," he said.

"Time?" Reese roared. "I don't even get a chance to do any painting, and my house could sure stand it." He pointed to a large field in the distance. "I just got through putting that section into corn." He noticed the sheriff looking at an old upright piano, its varnish worn, on the cement porch.

"You don't know anybody who wants a good piano, do you? All it needs is a tuning and some fixing up."

"No, thanks," said Kempf. "You're sure you didn't see this car salesman?"

"I'm sure," Reese answered. "You might try some of the other folks around. Some of them have more time for joy-riding than I do."

Kempf walked toward the barn a short distance away, with Reese and the dog following.

"You don't mind if I look around a bit, do you?" the sheriff asked.

"Go ahead, look all you want," Reese said.

Kempf opened the barn door; it was filled with tools of all sorts, as well as an accumulation of junk.

"If you can use any of those things I'll give you a break on the price," Reese said. "Some of it's easy enough to fix if you're handy."

"Maybe some other time," Kempf said. "Right now I'm trying to find that car salesman. You're sure you didn't see him?"

"Look, Mister," Reese said, "I didn't see any salesman, and if he showed up here I'd get rid of him quick. I haven't got any use for a new car."

Kempf left, to continue his search. He talked with several other men in the vicinity, and finally located a farmer who distinctly remembered the 1954 Hudson.

"I saw it about half-past four yesterday afternoon," he said, "and I wondered who up here'd be splurging. It was a beautiful job. But what you need around these parts is a tractor, not a fancy passenger car. Well, I saw it go by, coming down the road, and then about five or so it passed again, going up. Seems to me there were two men in it. No, I didn't notice who they were, the sun was in my eyes."

It was late Thursday afternoon when Kempf returned to his office, tired and hot, his mouth filled with dust from the dry, dirt roads he had traveled. Deputy Sheriff Walker was waiting for him.

"Here's a list of names I found in Patton's home," Walker said. "I imagine they're prospective customers."

Kempf scanned the list. "Say, look at this," he exclaimed as he came to the name Cletus Reese. "I talked to him and he swore he had no use for a car. No time for pleasure."

"Reese! Reese!" Walker repeated. "The name's familiar. I'm sure I know him but I don't remember in what connection—seems to me an investigation of some sort. What's he look like?"

"A big six-footer, about 35 or so, maybe 250 pounds, sort of good looking. He's got a big farm away up on a hill just outside Nellie."

Walker snapped his fingers. "Now I remember. I talked to him about six months ago—a missing person case. Wait a minute, I think I can find it." He rummaged through a drawer of his desk. "Here it is."

On Saturday, November 28th, 1953, two days after Thanksgiving, Lester Melick, 58, of Danville, in adjoining Knox County, was to have met his son, Harry, but never kept the appointment. Harry Melick reported the matter to Knox County Sheriff Paul Cochran. Cochran sent out a missing persons notice, and investigation disclosed that on November 28th Lester Melick was seen in a restaurant having a drink with Cletus Reese, an old friend. After that Melick's trail was lost.

Walker recalled that he had gone to see Reese to ask him about Melick but Reese couldn't help, saying he had left Melick at the restaurant and had not seen him since.

"We didn't have anything on Reese, but we found that he'd been a patient in the Cambridge State Mental Hospital for a while in 1951."

"I thought there was something funny about Reese," Kempf declared. "He kept wanting to sell me useless, broken-down things. I think we'd better talk to him again."

The sheriff called the Cambridge Hospital and learned that Reese's closest relative was a sister, a schoolteacher in Millersburg, in whose care Reese had been released.

Unable to reach her by telephone, Kempf next called Harry Melick to find out more about the disappearance of his father.

"Dad just seems to have been swallowed up," the son stated. "I've checked every hospital in the state on the chance that he was hurt or might have had amnesia, and I've covered all the farms and farm agencies. Nobody's heard from him."

(Continued on page 83)

After finding third victim on farm of Cletus Reese (*l.*), neighbors Mr. and Mrs. Flack (*r.*) talk to newsmen

At 28 he was the "Baby Prosecutor," but the overlords of crime soon learned to dread and respect him

DEWEY GANGBUSTER TO GOVERNOR

by CARLOS LANE

THE CEREMONY required no more than a couple of minutes. Nothing fancy, merely the few words necessary to make the nervous young couple man and wife. In the chapel set up in New York's City Hall, just down the corridor from the marriage license bureau, weddings were run off like sales in a busy department store. They had to be. There were always couples waiting, with their two witnesses, in the adjoining anteroom.

"You may kiss the bride," the deputy city clerk who had performed the rites said automatically.

The young man did. Then he shook his best man's hand and pecked at the maid of honor with an obviously brotherly smooch. The deputy clerk handed over the marriage certificate to the bride, then stood looking at the groom with an air of expectancy which not even that befuddled young man could miss.

"Oh," said the groom. "Oh, yes—the fee."

"There's no fee," the deputy clerk replied. "No actual fee, that is. Only—"

The bridegroom blushed, more than a little embarrassed before his bride because he'd had to be reminded. "Sure," he said, digging into his pocket for his billfold. He fingered a five, then glanced from the corner of his eye at the girl to whom he had just been wed, and dug deeper, until he found a ten. It would never, never do to seem cheap in front of her. Not in these first moments of marriage, at any rate.

The deputy clerk pocketed the ten-spot with a hearty

Lieutenants of famous Murder Inc., Louis Capone *(l.)* and Mendy Weiss, don't take ride to Sing Sing to heart. Misplaced confidence in power of Boss Lepke *(above)* sent all three to the chair

Prosecutor drew bead on mob king Waxey Gordon, $5 million operator

Kid Mouthpiece Dixie Davis *(l.)*, bigshot Dutch Schultz. To Dutch death—other people's—was everyday commonplace. He cried when he had to die

smile of thanks and wished the couple good luck and ushered them out the door that led into the corridor. Then he turned toward the other door, where the other couples sat in the pew-like benches, awaiting their turn.

He felt an inward glow. He thought of the 34 bankbooks hidden at home. In each of them the figures added up to more than his yearly salary of $7500.

"What a racket!" He grinned to himself.

In the U.S. courthouse in Foley Square, only a couple of blocks from City Hall, another man considered those 34 bankbooks and the total deposits they had revealed, amounting to $222,388.

"What a racket!" he, too, exclaimed. "That clerk no doubt will insist they all were tips, though the way he gets them, they're extortion."

Across a big desk a young, square-jawed man with earnest, piercing eyes and a bristling black mustache sat with his hands clenched before him on the glass desk top. Thomas E. Dewey had for only a few months now been Chief Assistant U. S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, but he knew what he was after.

"No chance for an extortion case," he said crisply. "But it's going to be too bad for our friend down the street that he forgot to pay the income tax on nearly a quarter-million dollars."

The "Baby Prosecutor," they called Tom Dewey then. He was only 28, and the youngest man ever to hold the post that was his. But, one by one, racketeers and chiselers in the crime-ridden metropolis were learning that the Baby Prosecutor was teething upon the toughest crooks in the city and not upon interstate auto thieves and two-bit bootleggers, the usual grist of the federal courts in the early 1930s.

The City Hall marriage clerk somehow heard of the investigation into his extra-curricular income. He made haste to pay up the big arrears in his tax debt to Uncle Sam, but it did not save him entirely.

He drew four months in the jug, and shelled out an extra $15,000 in fines.

"The first Tammany Hall crook we've ferreted out," Dewey said. He added prophetically, "But not the last. Not by a long shot."

Tom Dewey hated political corruption as he had been taught to despise lying and cheating and other forms of human chicanery in his boyhood back in Owosso, Michigan, where he was born on March 24th, 1902.

The son of a small town editor—and a fairly distant cousin of Admiral George Dewey of Spanish-American War renown—he had grown up in no spectacular fashion. At 17, he was a $30-a-month farmhand. At 21 he held a degree from the University of Michigan. A year later he was in New York City, undecided whether he would study law or try to become a singer.

He had the essential qualities for either career, a fine, natural baritone, and a concise, logical mind and the kind of brain that seldom forgot anything that went into it.

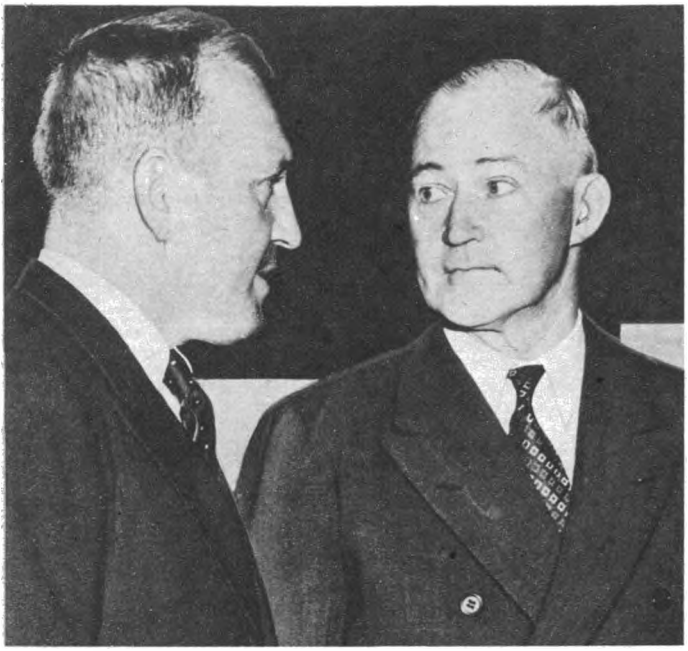
He tried both. He studied law at Columbia University and enrolled as a voice pupil in Percy Rector Stephens' studio.

He got his law degree from Columbia. He got something even more precious from the studio. She was Frances Hutt, a gray-eyed beauty from Oklahoma who, like young Mr. Dewey, was a voice student of Stephens, and who acted as a secretary in the studio.

Out of Columbia, Dewey went to work in a New York City law firm at $1300 a year, and Miss Hutt did a cross-country whirl with a road company of George White's Scandals. In June of 1928, when Tom's earnings had risen to $3000 yearly, they were married.

Neither then could have more than day-dreamed that Thomas E. Dewey one day would be hailed as a great governor of New York, that he would miss the Presidency of the United States by a whisker.

Further, had anyone then predicted that young Tom Dewey would rise to fame because of underworld characters like Dutch Schultz, Waxey Gordon, Lucky Luciano and a good many others of their scummy ilk, the loudest jeers at such a prophecy doubtless would have come from the Deweys themselves. For Tom's firm never touched a criminal case; it handled estates and the legal affairs of



Even talents of master defense counsel Lloyd Stryker could not save former blacksmith Hines *(r.)* from jail

a number of New York's important banks and big hotels.

It was in a suit in defense of a client bank that Dewey suggested employment of outside counsel to assist in the case. He strongly urged the engagement of George Medalie, a lawyer whose reputation fully justified the $150,000 annual income he enjoyed.

During the trial, Medalie was deeply impressed by young Dewey and when, on the last day of the case, Medalie was offered, and accepted, the post of U. S. Attorney in New York, he persuaded Tom Dewey to join his staff as his chief assistant.

In his new job, Tom Dewey was quick to realize how deeply big-time organized crime had burrowed into the civic structure of the city, and into the individual lives of its seven million citizens.

The big-shot crooks, spawned by the unfortunate national mistake of Prohibition, had established virtual dictatorships over public officials, including police, prosecutors and judges.

By 1930, foreseeing the end of Prohibition and the shrinking of their huge profits from rum-running and illicit brewing, they were reaching out in their ruthless greed to capture employers and labor, even huge industries.

Now and then the big shots threw some small fry punks into the maw of the law, to lull the public, but no one ever touched the top-drawer boys.

For one thing, mugs like Schultz and Gordon and Legs Diamond infrequently indulged personally in specific crimes. For another, who would be foolhardy enough to appear as a witness against a powerful hoodlum when the odds were a thousand to one that a wink of Mr. Big's drooping eyelid would measure the prospective witness for a concrete overcoat to wear in the depths of the East or the Hudson River?

Well aware of the impossibility of convicting these overlords of crime for their criminal, often murderous, deeds, Dewey went after them in their most sensitive spot, their bankrolls.

He knew that, scooping in their wealth from almost untraceable sources, they invariably refrained from reporting their entire incomes on Uncle Sam's tax blanks. Within three months of his being sworn in as a federal prosecutor, Dewey was after several of the big boys, angling at them from a direction they never before had considered.

His first job, however, was to break up a $10,000,000 stock market swindle, for which a score of defendants got prison terms and stiff fines.

Next he turned his attention to the policy, or numbers, racket, flourishing particularly in the populous Negro district of Harlem, to the tune of $15,000,000 or $20,000,000 a year, and two of the top policy kings were swatted with back tax bills, huge fines and terms in stir.

There was a New York vice squad cop, Dewey learned, whose salary was about $60 a week, but whose actual income was around $80,000 a year. In his grafting the officer even went so far as to raid speakeasies, confiscate whatever good booze he could (*Continued on page* 87)

Mother-in-law Mrs. Hutt, Mrs. Dewey, sons Tom Jr. *(l.)*, John, know the family man behind the dignified governor

EDITH HAD TOO MANY SECRETS

The bullet that killed the girl saved her killer's life

by GEORGE VEDDER JONES

"I've met the most wonderful man," Edith told her lover

THE SMITH FAMILY lived on East Guernsey Avenue in Abington Township, near Philadelphia. Their home is on a quiet street, among hard-working, respectable neighbors, most of whom go into Philadelphia every day to good-paying jobs.

The evening of April 25th started out like most other evenings. E. J. Smith, a traveling salesman, was away on business. His wife got dinner for their four young children and for her two children by an earlier marriage—Edwin and Edith Snyder, aged 17 and 16 respectively.

Edwin and Edith helped their mother with the dishes, and at 8:30 the four small children were sent to bed. While their mother tidied up the kitchen, the brother and sister went into the living room to study. Both were students at the local high school.

Edwin stretched out on a couch with a book, while Edith, a lovely, curvaceous chestnut-haired girl, sat at a desk near a window to work on her geometry. The window faced toward the front porch and the shade was drawn to within a few inches of the sill.

At school, Edith was known as a quiet, studious girl. Recently she had begun to go on dates with boys, but she never had gone steady with any of them. She was on the girls' hockey team and liked all sports.

At about 8:50, Edwin, who had been engrossed in his reading, looked up sharply. "Do you hear a noise on the front porch, Sis?" he asked.

Edith listened. "No, I don't hear a thing."

"I thought I heard someone out there," Edwin said. He started to get up and investigate, then changed his mind. "I guess it was nothing," he said, and went on reading.

A few minutes passed. Suddenly there was a roaring explosion.

Deafened and dazed, Edwin jumped up. Edith started to rise from her desk. She was clutching at her chest, where a bright red stain was forming on her white blouse.

As Edwin ran to her, she slumped to the floor beside the desk. Her eyes widened pitifully for a moment, then closed.

At police station suspect told officers, "I danced with Edith once in a while, but I really never knew her well."

Sympathetic neighbors gather outside home where killer's bullet slew attractive 16-year-old high school student

Mrs. Smith came running from the kitchen. Stunned and incredulous, she gazed at Edith, now bleeding profusely, lying on her back, her arms flung out on the floor.

Edwin bent down over his sister. "She was shot from the window, Mom," he said in a shaken voice.

Mrs. Smith knelt beside her daughter. Then she collapsed in tears. "Telephone for an ambulance," she sobbed.

Instead of phoning, Edwin ran two blocks to the home of Dr. Hazeltine S. Lever Jr., a police surgeon. He returned quickly with the doctor.

Dr. Lever bent swiftly beside Edith, felt her pulse, opened her blouse and felt her heart. He held a mirror before her mouth.

Then he looked at the two wounds in her chest—wounds of a bullet's entry and exit. Each was well forward in the armpit. The bullet had passed through the girl's chest laterally and emerged, in all probability piercing the heart and both lungs.

He rose slowly and turned to the mother. "There's nothing I can do," he said. "Someone shot her. She died instantly."

The doctor went to the telephone. Within a few minutes, Police Captain Patrick McGee arrived, accompanied by Detective Harry Streeper and his son, Lieutenant Alwyn Streeper, and other officers.

Dr. Lever, who had been looking around the room, pointed to the small hole in the window just below the shade. Then he showed the officers a dent in the plaster of the wall opposite the window. A flattened slug lay on the floor. Captain McGee picked it up and turned it over carefully in his hand, studying it.

Lieut. Alwyn Streeper *(l.)* and Det. Harry Streeper discover

"That poor girl never had a chance," the doctor said. "Someone out there on the porch aimed at her carefully and killed her with one shot."

Edwin Snyder, who had gone outdoors to investigate, came running back into the house.

"I've looked all around," he told the police. "There's nobody in sight and no strange cars. And I didn't see anyone when I ran for the doctor. I don't know who could have done it."

A neighbor, William J. McBride, came into the house. "I heard the shot and ran to my window," he told Captain McGee. "I saw a man run across the Smiths' lawn. He got in a car that was parked a little way up the street. I ran to the porch, but by the time I got there, he'd already driven away, down the street."

McGee asked what the man looked like.

"It was too dark to see," McBride said, "but I noticed that he was tall and stocky and wore a dark suit and a gray hat. He had no coat. He ran like a young man, at least under thirty."

"What kind of a car was he driving?"

"It was a light-colored convertible—looked fairly new."

McGee telephoned the police station and instructed that radio cars be alerted to look for a light-colored convertible driven by a lone young man who was probably armed.

Then the wife of a neighbor who had come in to comfort Edith Snyder's mother told Captain McGee, "Mrs. Smith is very upset, but she thinks she'll be able to talk with you now."

McGee questioned the distraught Mrs. Smith at the dining room table. "I can't imagine why anyone should want to do that to my daughter," she said. "Edith was just a normal American girl. She didn't show any interest in boys at all until about six months ago. Then she began to go out on double dates and sometimes to parties. But she hadn't been serious with any of the boys, as far as I know.

"Everybody in high school liked her. How could such a pretty girl make enemies? All I can think of is that some murderer came to the porch and shot her at random."

"Would your husband know any more about your daughter's activities?" McGee asked.

The mother shook her head. "He was very fond of Edith. But she wouldn't have confided anything in him that she didn't tell me."

Mrs. Smith provided the name of a hotel in Reading where her husband might be reached. McGee telephoned the police of that city and asked them to locate Smith and ask him to come to the police station at Abington.

Then he returned to the grieving mother. "Did your daughter have a special girl friend?" he asked.

"Yes, June Foley. She lives just down the block. Edith may have told her things she kept from me. I don't know."

A police officer was sent to bring the girl over.

Detective Harry Streeper, who had been searching Edith's room, came downstairs carrying a woman's handbag. He opened it before Captain McGee.

The handbag contained among other things ten or twelve folded sheets of note paper. McGee opened one. It read: "Will meet you behind the storage building at four o'clock." It was unsigned.

Another note in the same handwriting said: "Please don't be angry with me for last night. I am in love with you, and I couldn't help what I did. Will see you at the usual place, same time."

The captain examined the other notes. All were in the same handwriting. All were unsigned. They were the sort of notes that boys and girls pass to each other in high school corridors. He showed them to Mrs. Smith and asked if she knew who might have written them.

The mother gazed dully at the sheets of paper. "I don't know," she said. "Girls grow up so quickly. Perhaps my daughter did have a boy friend. But I always told her that if she met a boy she liked she should bring him home so that I could meet him."

Assistant District Attorney David R. Groshens arrived, bringing with him Sergeant Phil Hale, a police technician. They had brought along floodlights, and these were turned onto the front porch and the lawn. No weapon could be found. But Hale spotted faint muddy marks leading from

evidence of a premeditated murder

Edith's bag held love notes, but bullet through window carried death message

the sidewalk up the porch steps. Were they the killer's?

"If so, he must have tiptoed up the steps to the window," he said. "He must have knelt down to take aim. He couldn't have used a rifle, because he was too close to the window. The gun must have been a pistol, a revolver or an automatic."

Hale examined the footprints carefully. "I'm afraid these won't help us," he said. "The killer was wearing rubbers of a standard size and there is nothing distinctive about them. Thousands of people have rubbers that would leave such a mark."

He searched for a shell which might have been ejected from the weapon, but failed to find one. No other clues could be found on the porch or in the yard.

Patrolmen William Scott and John Ferguson, who had been questioning neighbors, brought in a woman who lived on the other side of the street.

"This may not be important," she told McGee and the assistant district attorney. "I didn't see or hear a thing tonight until the shot. But last night, at about half-past eight, I saw a man walking slowly in front of the Smiths' place. I thought he might be looking for some particular house, so I called and asked him. He heard me, but instead of answering, he turned and hurried away."

She said the man was tall and stocky and wore a dark topcoat and a gray hat. He apparently had not come in a car.

"It might be the same man," Groshens observed. "If he came to look the house over, it definitely establishes premeditation."

June Foley, Edith's girl friend, was now brought in. The sweet-faced young blonde had been weeping at the news of her friend's death.

"Edith and I have been girl friends all through grade school and high school," she said. "Four of us—Edith and I and two boys—went out quite a lot together. The boys were Johnny Burke and Robert Heineman. Robert was my date, Johnny was Edith's. None of us was serious about it. We just went roller skating together, or bowling, or to the movies."

She gave the young men's addresses, and Lieutenant Streeper and another officer were sent to bring them to the police station.

"Did Edith know any other men?" McGee asked June.

The girl hesitated. "I'm not sure. Edith had seemed a little different ever since that night, two weeks ago, when we went to the dance in Jenkintown."

June described a party given by a fraternal organization. "It was very informal," she said, "and everyone danced with everyone else. Well, we missed Edith for a while. Then we saw her coming in the door with a strange man. I thought she'd been out somewhere with him. She left him at the door and came over to us. I asked her about him later and she said, 'Oh, he's just a man from Philadelphia I was dancing with.' But I could tell she liked him."

June could give only a sketchy description of the man. "He was tall, well built and quite handsome, and he looked much older than Edith," she said. "But I only saw him for a moment. I think he must have left right after they came in."

"Has Edith seen him since?" McGee asked.

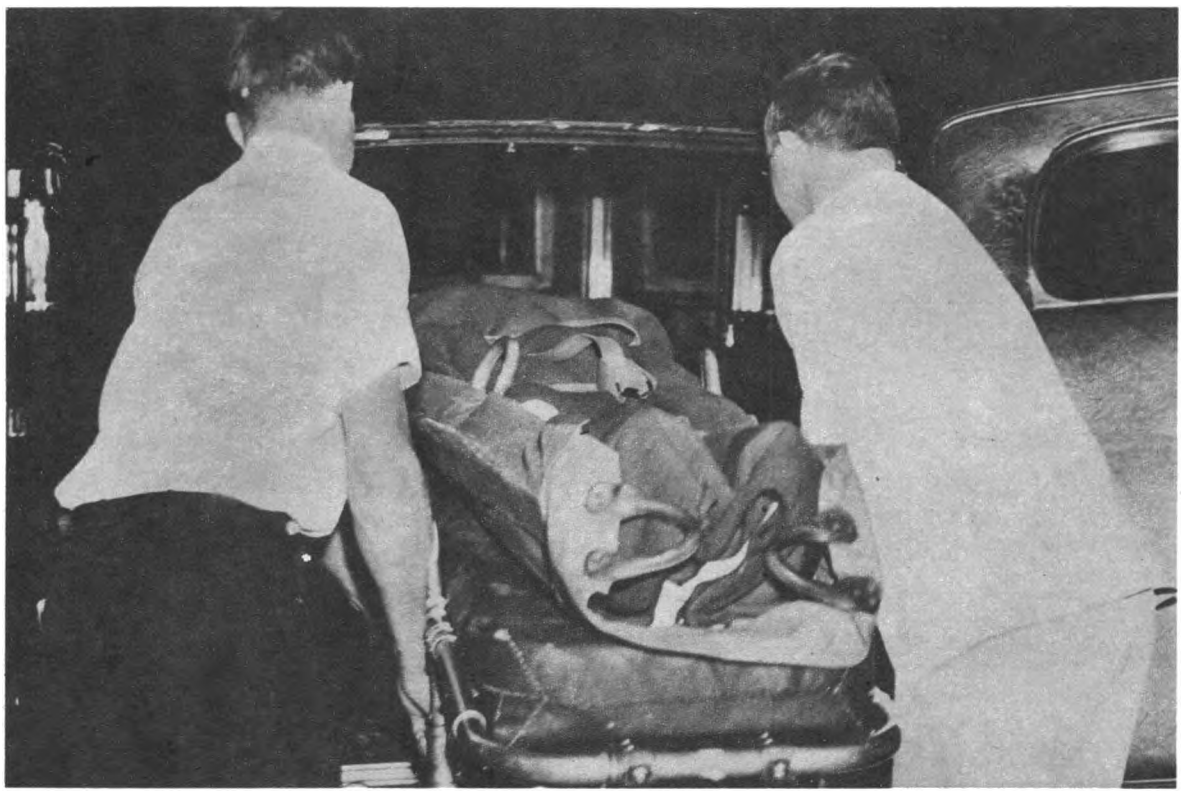
"I don't know. Several times lately when I asked her to go to the movies with me, she refused, saying she was busy."

The captain thanked June for telling him as much as she knew. Then the girl was excused and taken home.

A police ambulance arrived. Edith Snyder's body was lifted gently into it, to be taken to the morgue for autopsy.

Assistant District Attorney Groshens and Captain McGee went to the Abington police station. There they found that

Shortly after Edith sat down to do her homework, desperate summons brought ambulance to bear her body to morgue



E. J. Smith, the victim's stepfather, had just arrived. He seemed in a state of shock.

"I don't know anything about Edith's death," he said. "I can hardly believe it yet."

Brief questioning convinced the officers that Smith had loved his stepdaughter deeply and that he could add no information to the case. He could think of no one who might have wanted to get revenge against him by killing Edith. He was soon released and taken home to his grieving wife.

Shortly after midnight, John Burke and Robert Heineman were brought in by Lieutenant Streeper.

"They were both home and asleep," Streeper reported. "They're from well-to-do parents and live in good homes. Heineman's father is a college instructor. I talked with the parents, and neither of the boys has ever been in trouble. I doubt that either is involved, but we'll question them."

Groshens and McGee first talked with Robert Heineman, June Foley's friend. He was a well-built youth of more than average height, with a serious expression. Groshens' first questions brought out that Robert liked to write poetry and was an accomplished pianist.

"June and I have been friends a long time," he told the officers. "We'd only started going on dates with Johnny and Edith lately."

He described Edith Snyder as a quiet, retiring girl. "We'd change partners and I'd dance with her once in a while," he said. "But I never knew her very well."

Heineman said John Burke was on the football team and the track team. "He's just the sort of man who would appeal to a girl like Edith and they got along well. He certainly wouldn't have killed her."

Heineman said that he himself had been in Philadelphia during the early evening. "I (*Continued on page 72*)

Det. Streeper found the murder gun wouldn't shoot twice

by A. MacCORD

LUGS and SLUGS

SHERIFF CALLAHAN of King County, Washington, is a genial, optimistic man. He was even optimistic about the prisoners in his jail. But not any more.

Some months ago the sheriff decided that it was only fair and humane to let the inmates of his big Seattle jail have some television. But this entertainment could not be for free, at the expense of the county. Those TV tubes and repairs come high.

"I'll tell you men what I'll do," the sheriff announced. "I'll install some television sets for your use. The sets will be controlled by meters placed in the cells. Drop a slug in the meter and the set is turned on for a generous period. Each slug will cost you twenty-five cents. You can buy as many slugs as you want, using your own money which is on deposit with me."

The innovation proved a popular one. Practically every jailbird with a quarter to his credit bought a slug. Those who could afford it laid in a dozen.

For a short time all went well. Then the sheriff, who had opened a television account on his books, began to study it and wonder. The big demand for TV slugs had curiously tapered off.

"Don't the boys go for TV the way they did at first?" he questioned his turnkey.

"Them guys are a bunch of TV bugs," the turnkey told him. "They keep the thing turned on all the time."

But what were they using for slugs? The sheriff determined to find out.

He set a careful watch on the meters in the cells. He personally inspected the jail's portable equipment, including the brooms. Soon he realized what was being put over on him by the men who had hailed him as a considerate jailer.

A chiseling inmate would remove a length of thin wire from a jail broom. To this he would attach a slug, to be fed into a TV meter. Once the slug had turned on the television set, it could be retrieved by pulling it out of the meter with the wire. A carefully manipulated slug could be used over and over again.

"A single two-bit slug could buy a guy TV programs for the whole duration of a ninety-day sentence," the sheriff told reporters. "I hate to say it, but I've got a bunch of crooks in this jail."

"What are you going to do, Sheriff?" the reporters asked him.

"It's already done. We moved the meters outside of the cells. And when we moved 'em, not one of those birds so much as chirped. They saw I was on to their racket. If they want TV now, they hand their slug to a turnkey. He feeds it into the meter. They don't get the fights till we get the slug." ♦♦♦

by ROBERT RANDALL

YOU DIE FIRST

Block of concrete was not enough to anchor her to bottom of lake

IT WAS A SHINING June afternoon in the deep South, in the Mississippi valley. But Mrs. John Dillion no longer thought so.

Mrs. Dillon stood on the shore of Lake Ferguson, within sight of her modest cottage home. She had moored the skiff which she had been laboriously rowing. Now she stood transfixed, staring at something in the blue, sparkling clearness of the lake. It was the nude body of a

A mild June evening,

woman, submerged a little below the surface.

The body seemed to float, yet it did not rise to the surface. It didn't sink, either. The solid contours of the naked body had seemed vague, even doubtful, at first. But the longer Mrs. Dillon stared, the more distinct became this sunken, gently bobbing horror.

Mrs. Dillon tore her eyes away from its fearful fascination. She turned and sped up the rise, plunging into a dense growth of lakeside willows. She stumbled and broke into a run, her lips parted in a frantic outcry, "Help! Somebody help me! Help!"

She would have run the whole 3 miles to Greenville, the county seat of Washington County, if it hadn't been for a neighbor, M. J. Anglin.

He heard Mrs. Dillon's cry for help and quickly set out from his home, running across the field toward her.

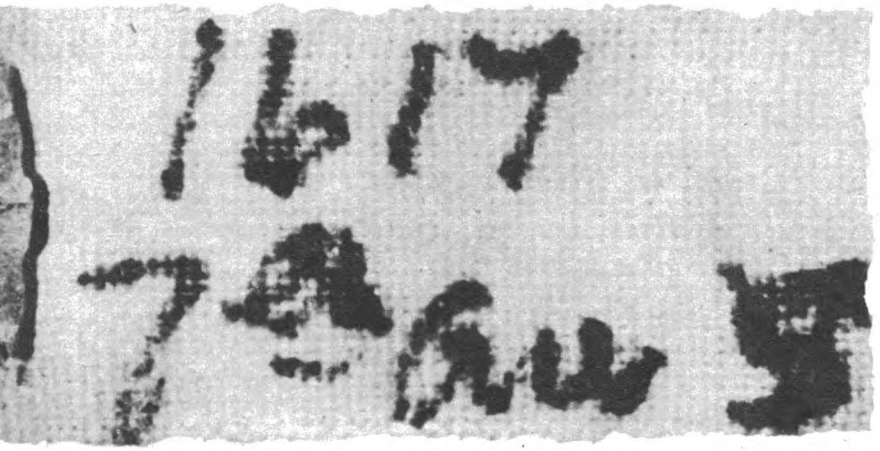
While she stood gasping for breath, he asked, "What's the matter? What's happened?"

Mrs. Dillon gasped out her discovery, a woman's naked body in Ferguson Lake. It didn't either come to the surface or sink out of sight.

Anglin hurried with Mrs. Dillon to the lake shore and saw it for himself.

"Maybe it's caught on something?" Mrs. Dillon suggested.

a peaceful lake, overhanging willow trees—a perfect spot for a strangling



Cleaner's mark 1617 7th Ave. S. led Chief Taggart to pretty girl's identity

"Maybe. But nothing that grows on the lake bottom grows that high. I think," Anglin said, "she's been anchored—to keep her down." The sheriff's got to know about it, right away."

Anglin had to walk a mile to the nearest telephone. Here he rang up the county seat and talked to Sheriff W. L. Crouch. Crouch immediately turned the matter over to his chief deputy, John Sterling, who notified the coroner, Dr. W. B. McMahan.

Within fifteen minutes after Anglin's phone call, Sterling and Deputy Sheriff Henry Mascagni, in company with the coroner and his deputy, C. O. Smith, were driving rapidly over the paved county highway in the direction of the Dillon place by the lake. Soon the officials turned off on to a winding dirt road. A quarter of a mile farther on they stopped.

"Nothing but a footpath from here to the edge of the lake," Chief Deputy Sheriff Sterling explained. "So we get out and walk."

When the officials reached the Dillon cottage, they found the Dillons and the Anglins at the lakeside.

After carefully surveying the scene, Sterling drew Coroner McMahan aside. "Looks like foul play," he observed.

"Certainly does. You notice the body's fixed position, in spite of a stiff inshore breeze," Dr. Mahan said.

"Seems to be anchored by the neck. From the way the head is held down a little lower than the rest of the body."

The coroner agreed. He and Sterling got into the Dillon skiff and rowed toward the tethered nude body. Closer inspection disclosed a strand of wire encircling and biting into the dead woman's neck.

Dr. McMahan leaned from the skiff and disengaged the wire. The body then rose to the surface of the lake, some five or six yards from the shore. It was the body of a young girl, apparently in her late teens.

McMahan had clung to the wire, and he and Sterling began to haul from the bottom of Lake Ferguson whatever was serving as a weight. This proved to be a heavy block of concrete, of a kind commonly used in revetment work along the winding, often flood-threatened, banks of the Mississippi.

The prolonged submersion, plus the strangling effect of the noosed wire dragged down by the block of concrete, had resulted in terrible disfigurement of what must have been a young and pretty face. It might be difficult to identify the victim.

"Anyone know her?" the sheriff asked the group on the shore.

"Maybe it's young Susie Holcombe," Mrs. Dillon called back.

"Who is she?" the coroner asked.

"A girl that was living here with us. She and her husband. Maybe Jim Holcombe's dead, too," the woman said, awed.

"Why do you say that, Mrs. Dillon?" Sterling asked.

"Well, they were here and then, sudden like, they went away together. And none of us has laid eyes on either of 'em since."

"Would you know anything else about this Mrs. Holcombe that could assist us in identifying her?" the coroner asked.

"There's one thing I remember—Sue has a double little toe. Something you don't often see."

"On which foot?"

"The left."

Sterling maneuvered the Dillon skiff smoothly and Dr. McMahan reached down and examined the left foot of the floating body. Then he raised the foot a few inches out of the water.

"That's Sue!" Mrs. Dillon exclaimed. "That's Susie Holcombe. That's her double little toe. Oh, the poor thing. She was a sweet girl."

The problem now was to remove the body and transport it to the county seat, Greenville, where an autopsy could be performed. Dr. McMahan surmised that, although Sue Holcombe appeared to have drowned, her death might have been induced by some other means.

"Because of the condition it is in," the coroner confided to Sterling, "it would be difficult to carry the body over that rough footpath to get it out to the road."

Dr. McMahan carefully lifted the body into the Dillons' skiff, wrapping it in a blanket which had been requisitioned, like the skiff, from the Dillons. Then a sturdy rowboat and two strong rowers were enlisted from the Anglins. Rowboat and rowers towed the skiff and its grim cargo the length of the lake to Greenville.

Meanwhile, Sterling and Deputy Mascagni began a systematic questioning of the Dillons and the Anglins. Mrs. Dillon served as spokeswoman in most instances. The little community of families at this end of the lake made their living by fishing and truck gardening, the product of which they marketed in Greenville.

Mrs. Dillon said that Jim and Sue Holcombe, who, despite a considerable difference in their ages, seemed to be a happily married couple, had first appeared there on Friday, the 7th of this month. They told her husband, John Dillon, that they were broke and wanted work. They were hungry, too, and the good-hearted Dillons had taken the couple in and fed them.

"Then we told Holcombe that, if he liked, he could tend to our truck garden, while Sue could help me with the housework," Mrs. Dillon went on. "This was just for their keep, you understand. We didn't allow to pay them anything. But they both ap-

peared happy to be taken into our home and they did their part. Both of 'em were steady, honest workers. And we all got along right good."

"What did they tell you about themselves?" Sterling asked.

"Very little," John Dillon put in "And we are the kind who don't as questions. Mind our own business.'

"The girl's just a kid," Mascagni remarked. "You say her husband's a lot older. Are you sure he was her husband?"

"John and I didn't ask to see their marriage lines. Jim Holcombe was maybe thirty-five years older 'n Sue. He was lean and strong, though—the kind that's been used to hard work. A friendly, God-fearing, Bible-reading sort of man, probably in his early fifties," Mrs. Dillon explained.

"He read his Bible a lot?"

"Didn't have a Bible with him, not that I ever saw," Dillon replied. "But he could quote Scriptures like a parson."

It developed, that the Dillons' acquaintance with this odd couple had been for only ten days, until the evening of the past Monday, June 17th.

Dr. McMahan, having seen the victim's body started on its water journey to Greenville, had joined the group in front of the Dillons' cottage. "You say that you last saw Sue Holcombe alive on the evening of the 17th?" he asked. "This is the 20th and I'm practically convinced that the girl's body has been in the lake for more than two days. She must have died very soon after you last saw her alive."

"Just tell us, please, everything you can remember about those last hours that the Holcombes were here with you," Sterling urged.

"Well, we all work hard around here, so we go to bed early," Mrs. Dillon began. "Last Monday, just after sundown, I chanced to hear Jim Holcombe talking to Sue, telling her he was going to bathe. Well, she wanted him to come with her to the lake so they could bathe together. He didn't want to. But I heard her coaxing him."

"What did she say?" Sterling asked.

"She said, 'Aw, come on, sweet!' Little coaxing things like that. So Holcombe gave in," Mrs. Dillon continued, "and they went together and stood at the edge of the lake, just down there. The last I saw of them, they were starting to take off their clothes."

It was some while later, she said, and by now pretty dark outside when she awakened and realized that the Holcombes were not yet back. The bed they used stood over in a corner, in the same room with the rest of the family. Mrs. Dillon said that she couldn't get back to sleep and had been startled when Jim Holcombe finally came in alone.

"It was now past ten o'clock, and in a low voice, so's not to rouse the others, I asked him where Sue was. He told me she was waiting for him down by the lake. He said they were going to move on and calculated to stay a spell at the Nethals' on the road to Greenville. He began packing, and he packed their suitcases, mostly all Sue's things, and then he sort of whispered goodbye and God bless you, and off he went."

"Which seems to be the last anybody has seen of him around here, or heard of her, until just now," John Dillon added.

Sterling asked, "Would you say that they got on well together? Or did they have a lot of arguments? Would you say that one of them seemed more in love than the other one?"

Mrs. Dillon said thoughtfully, "I'd say Sue was plenty in love with Jim." She looked at her husband, who nodded. "But they didn't argue much," she went on. "Except last Monday afternoon—"

"What about last Monday?" the coroner demanded.

"Well, Doc," Mrs. Dillon answered, "early last Monday Jim Holcombe went into Greenville. He stayed most of the day. When finally he got back, I heard Sue fussing at him because he'd stayed away from her and from his work here so long. Nothing really serious. Jim hardly answered back a word."

Mrs. Dillon, her husband, the Anglins and others of the community all agreed in their description of the middle-aged and missing James Holcombe. They agreed, too, that his wife, Sue, had been a likeable girl, hard-working, vivacious and exceedingly pretty. Everyone had remarked how young she seemed, compared to her rather sedate, Scripture-quoting husband. But there had been no speculation about the pair's being really married.

The two had told very little about themselves, their previous home or future plans. But each had spoken with the unmistakable accent of the deep South. Maybe they preferred rootless, hand-to-mouth existence, but at least they weren't Yankees or downright peculiar.

Sterling asked Mrs. Dillon about the circumstances which had brought her alone to the spot where she discovered the submerged body.

The woman said that she had several orders of vegetables which had to be taken to Greenville, some supplies, too, that she wished to procure. So she had set out very early, alone, this Thursday morning, using the skiff.

Plying the oars on her return trip, Mrs. Dillon had been fairly close to home when she was attracted by the flight of a buzzard as it wheeled and hovered close to the lake shore. And then, when really close inshore, she had seen something dimly in the clear blue water. Only upon landing, had she been able to discern from the shore just what the buzzard had spotted.

After a few more inquiries, the officials took to the footpath again to their motor car and sped back to Greenville. Sterling and Mascagni hurried to report the case to their chief, Sheriff Crouch, while Dr. McMahan prepared at once for an autopsy, calling in the able pathologist Dr. E. T. White to assist him.

An hour later the sheriff's telephone rang. It was the coroner, with some startling facts which would both clarify and complicate the further processes of investigation.

The girl who had been identified as Mrs. James Holcombe was not a victim of drowning. She had been killed by a strangler. What was more, at the moment of her death Sue Holcombe had been several months pregnant.

"I gathered that the Holcombes had no security," McMahan told the sheriff. "No home of their own, working for their keep. Even so, would a mature man murder his young wife because a child was on the way? Looks more like the act of an illicit lover. She was in trouble now, and this Holcombe may have known that he couldn't marry her."

"I agree," the sheriff said. "Unless, of course, both of them ran into some marauders who did away with the husband as well as the wife."

"That," McMahan reminded him, "could mean dragging Lake Ferguson for the man's body."

"It's one of the things we're going to have to do," (*Continued on page* 95)

He was known as God-fearing man who quoted Scripture like a parson

THE GIRL

It was gay and lived in, a typical young girl's bedroom—except that Ethel *(above)* lay on the floor, dead of 40 stab wounds

a TD mystery

NOBODY KNEW

Who is the man who can bear to live with the horrible memory of Ethel's mutilated body burning in his soul?

by C. L. LAMSON

IT COULD HAVE BEEN almost any girl's bedroom. A draped vanity, a rack of magazines, a cabinet with a dozen pairs of shoes in order upon its open shelves. A sedate dresser stood ranged against one flower-patterned wall. An old-fashioned writing desk was backed against a second wall, its slanted front closed.

There was a bed with a filmy slip flung carelessly on the counterpane. Beside the bed, a small phonograph topped a record album cabinet filled with popular dance recordings.

On the dresser and the vanity were the usual jars and flagons, boxes of buttons and pins, a hand mirror and a comb. It could, indeed, have been the boudoir of almost any girl. But it was Ethel Ellard's room, and the 21-year-old brunette beauty lay butchered on the worn floral carpet at the foot of her bed.

Police Chief Archibald Bullock nodded as Dr. Leo Myles came in, set down his bag and began his task with brusque professional competence. Bullock watched the medical examiner for a brief moment, then shifted his attention to the other two men in the room.

Detective Thomas Curran, a veteran of more than a quarter-century on the force, and his partner, George Fitzgibbons, were officers who knew their jobs much too well to overlook anything. Chief Bullock left them to themselves and went down the banistered staircase to the living room, where a taut-faced young man sat trying to comfort his weeping wife.

He was Arthur Govoni of nearby Winchester which, like Arlington, was one of the suburban communities radiating outward from Boston proper to form the huge hodgepodge of Greater Boston. Under the police chief's patient questioning, he told what he could of the events leading to the discovery of the body of his wife's sister in her bedroom upstairs.

This seven-room duplex apartment, one of a row of such dwellings in Park Terrace, a short dead end street between two main avenues in the heart of Arlington Center, was the home of Ethel and her mother, Mrs. Agnes Ellard.

Ethel and her mother recently had gone to Colorado to visit another married sister. Ethel, the youngest of nine children, had flown back home alone, leaving her mother behind in the West. Ethel had been living by herself at 6 Park Terrace for the past three weeks. She had been working as a switchboard operator in a large automobile agency in Cambridge.

Her brothers and sisters dropped by frequently to call on Ethel while she was alone. Thus it was that the Govonis had arrived at the apartment at 10 o'clock this Saturday morning, February 10th, 1951.

There was no answer to the doorbell, but the sister and brother-in-law heard sounds from a television set in the living room. They found the front door unlocked, and entered. No one replied to their calls. Govoni turned off the TV, looked through the downstairs rooms, then went to the second floor and found the girl, her yellow sweater and green slacks rent by many knife thrusts and soaked with blood from the wounds.

Dr. Myles said Ethel Ellard had been dead for perhaps 12 hours. "It's the most ghastly thing I've ever seen," he reported. "There are at least thirty stab wounds, maybe as many as forty, all over the body—back, chest, legs, abdomen, arms, everywhere, Chief, except the face."

There was no obvious evidence, the medical examiner said, of sexual assault. Blood splashes on the carpet, a baseboard and wall told the detectives that the bedroom was the murder scene, but the only evidence of a struggle there was that two boudoir lamps had fallen or been knocked to the floor and broken.

Miss Ellard's hands, with no broken fingernails and with no trace of flesh or blood in the scrapings from them, indicated that she had put up no struggle against her killer.

No weapon was found, although there were half a dozen sharp knives in their usual places in the kitchen. A thorough search of the bedroom turned up a thick album of photographs of girls, boys and young men, an address book filled with names, a packet of letters, a number of cards bearing the names and addresses of men. Also two small fragments of gilt-covered wood, which could not be immediately identified.

In the hall downstairs, the telephone had been ripped from the wall. The instrument was carefully preserved for fingerprint examination.

State Detective Lieutenants James Conniff, Gerald McCarthy and Andrew Trodden joined the local officers at the scene, along with Dr. Joseph Walker, a state police chemist, and Assistant District Attorney Edward Viola.

The investigation had to move only next door to produce a witness of dramatic importance. She was Miss Elsie Giles, a lodger at 7 Park Terrace.

"It was between eight-thirty and nine last night," she said, adding that she could fix the time by a television program, "that I heard the girl's voice next door. She said, 'Let me alone! Don't touch me!' "

"She screamed?" Chief Bullock said.

"Not a scream," Miss Giles said. "The partitions in these old houses are paper thin. You don't have to scream to be heard through them. No, she did not cry out as if she was frightened. Her tone was more one of loathing."

Miss Giles, knowing that Ethel was living alone, had called another neighbor, Mrs. Josephine O'Keefe, and the two women had gone to the front of the Ellard dwelling and had peered through a living room window.

The room was dark. They noted that the TV set was on. A crime program was being shown and, seeing no one in the apartment, they assumed Ethel had gone out and that what Miss Giles had heard had been a bit of dialogue from the broadcast.

Ethel Ellard, police soon discovered, had been one of the loveliest, most popular girls in the suburban city of 35,000. She had many dates with many young men. Her photo album held pictures of more than 100 men, although, as the officers learned in the course of their investigation, most of these were high school chums. The photograph collection had been one of Ethel's hobbies.

She was fond of dancing, sang at parties and in her church choir, liked horseback riding and swimming and occasionally bowled. It appeared that Ethel Ellard was one of those girls popular with her own sex, as well as with boys.

However, although she had many good friends, the detectives soon learned that she had no really close ones, no confidante with whom she shared her secret hopes and dreams. As one girl described her, "Ethel was funny about some things."

She seemed sensitive to criticism, often suspecting that her chums were talking about her when they were not. To her pals she often appeared naïve. The officers learned that she seldom showed up at local fun-spots, preferring to go to dances and other places out of Arlington.

One of her closest friends, Mrs. Loretta Martin, gave the police their first lead in their search for the frenzied killer who left the tall, slim, brown-haired girl dead on her bedroom floor with 32 knife wounds.

Ethel had phoned Mrs. Martin at about 8:10 Friday night. The two had spoken earlier of going shopping together in Arlington Center and Ethel had called to beg off, saying it was too cold to go out.

"I agreed with her," Mrs. Martin said. "She told me, too, that she was expecting someone at the house. From what she said, I thought it was Roger Larning. He's the only man she's gone around with since she came back from Colorado."

She added, "There was a funny thing about our conversation over the telephone last night. Usually, when Ethel phoned, we'd talk only a couple of minutes, but last night she hung on for twenty minutes. From the way she spoke, I began to feel that she was trying to prolong the conversation—as if she were trying to stall someone who was with her, whom she was having a hard time getting rid of."

It was exactly 8:30 when the telephone conversation ended, Mrs. Martin said.

It had been at 8:45 when Miss Giles had heard a girl's voice ordering someone to let her alone. Medical data gathered in the autopsy indicated that Miss Ellard had been slain

Police searched garbage cans, ash barrels, vacant lots, plumbing, sewers, in vain, for the death-dealing weapon

Two alarmed women neighbors peered through window, saw TV on, assumed sounds had come from a program

D.A. Thompson and Chief Bullock (*r.*) hope to find suspect in photo album containing pictures of more than 100 men

at about 9 P.M. on Friday. The killer could have been with her, as Mrs. Martin suspected, when Ethel was on the phone. He could have arrived at the apartment shortly after she ended her talk with her friend.

Roger Larning was a tall, good-looking, 23-year-old army veteran. He lived in a trailer about a mile from the Ellard home and worked as a part-time gas station attendant and as a peanut-vending machine serviceman.

Larning denied having had a date with Ethel Ellard on Friday night. He said their next meeting was to have been on Saturday afternoon, when she had planned to make his rounds with him as he serviced the peanut machines.

Larning would not explain where he had been on Friday night. His roommate said Larning left the trailer at around 8 P.M., dressed as if dateward bound, but the roommate did not know with whom or where he had an appointment.

"I did not see Ethel last night," Larning said. "I have an alibi, but it'd get someone else in trouble if I revealed it now."

Roger Larning was held for further investigation. The city and state detectives turned to the victim's family and to the legion of her friends, in a quest for information which eventually filled ten full volumes of 300 typewritten pages, each with statements that told an amazing story of a girl whom everybody seemed to know and yet one whom no one really knew.

Miss Ellard had worked as usual at the motor firm in Cambridge on Friday. She had had this job only since her return from the West. It was one of ten jobs she had held in the two years since she had been graduated from high school.

She had left work at 5 P.M. and took a streetcar to Arlington. Neighbors saw her enter her home a little before 6 P.M. There had been one caller at the apartment, soon after she got home.

He was George "Buddy" Hammer, a man seven years older than Ethel, who had grown up with her brothers and for years had been considered almost one of the family. He was married and a father. He now lived about five miles from Park Terrace.

Hammer did odd jobs for a living. He was a frequent visitor at the Ellard home, where he often made repairs and ran errands for Mrs. Ellard. Knowing Ethel was alone, he had stopped by on Friday evening to ask her if there was anything about the place she wanted him to do. There had not been anything.

After Hammer's departure, Ethel made phone calls to two married sisters. Then she called Loretta Martin and, shortly after that, she had been slain.

The murderer, detectives realized, must have been someone whom she knew well, a man whose presence with her in her upstairs bedroom did not alarm her. The police were certain of this, because there had been no outcry of fear from the victim, and no physical struggle.

Plainly enough, the girl had been seized without warning by a man whom she trusted. It was probable, Dr. Myles said, that one of the first knife thrusts killed her, preventing a scream. Then the slayer, doubtless in a maniacal frenzy, deliberately hacked the girl's body until his passion was spent.

But who could this madman have been? What was his motive? How did he arrive at and leave the Ellard home? Where was the weapon, a double-bladed knife at least four inches long and about an inch wide?

It was the first murder in the city of Arlington in 40 years. Spurred both by the horror of the (*Continued on page* **64**)

"You can't go swimming this time of year," he told the girl, but she plunged into canal *(below)*

by PAT CLAUSEN

THE SWIM OF

Every time they drained the canal, the usual debris came to light— until that Sunday morning when they retrieved the body of the unknown brunette

ONCE A WEEK the Kanawha Canal near the Byrd House Pumping Station in Richmond, Virginia, is drained from its normal depth of 15 feet to a low mark of one foot. At this time, employees of the station frequently walk along the canal banks on the chance they may find some worthwhile object. Once, a worker discovered a gold bracelet, another time, a camera, but more often the exposed muddy banks yield nothing but old automobile tires, empty whiskey bottles and refuse.

At about 7 A.M. Sunday, April 4th, 1954, William Bennett, an attendant at the pumping station, was walking along the canal's edge, scanning the shores. Draining operations had started the night before and the water now had reached its lowest ebb. Bennett surveyed the scene. The usual assortment of junk had collected on the banks, nothing worth retrieving. Then Bennett looked again. There was something strange resting on one bank. It looked like a big bundle of clothes. Quickening his step, Bennett drew closer. Then he stopped, horrified. It wasn't a bundle at all. It was a human body, a scantily clad woman, lying on her back, her lifeless eyes staring at the sky.

Bennett raced back to the station, breathlessly phoned the police. At 7:20 Officers G. D. Stafford and V. W. Klicska responded in their patrol car. They immediately staked off the area to prevent curiosity seekers from disturbing the evidence, and radioed Major John M. Wright, superintendent of Richmond's detective division. Wright directed Sergeants F. S. Wakefield and C. L. Brown to report to the canal at once.

When the detectives arrived, they studied the scene closely. The woman, an attractive brunette in her thirties, was clothed only in a slip. Her feet were resting on the bank, her head was half-submerged in the water. Her body appeared to have been beaten and bruised. There were numerous scraping marks along the shore, indicating that she must have made a frantic attempt to pull herself up the slippery slope before she died. A red coat hung 20 feet away on a low-hanging tree which normally is under water. Another ten feet away, a purple blouse was found, embedded in the mire. Still further down the canal, near the drain, the detectives recovered a black skirt, ripped from hem to waistband. One shoe was discovered about 30 feet up a path leading from the canal to the street. There were also deep marks along the path, suggesting that she might have been dragged over the ground.

Major Wright, Lieutenant E. A. Kelley, Sergeants J. A. Brooks and R. L. Ford and Dr. H. L. Beddoe,

Lt. Eddleton followed killer's directions, found rifle

assistant medical examiner, converged on the scene within the hour. From his preliminary examination, Dr. Beddoe declared, "This woman has been shot through the left shoulder and severely beaten. However, I believe she died of drowning. I'd estimate she's been dead about twelve hours."

When the body was removed to the morgue, a thorough autopsy verified Dr. Beddoe's first conclusions. It was murder. The victim had been badly beaten, a small caliber bullet had entered her left shoulder, taken a downward course and gone out through the lower section of her back. Death, which had occurred between 8 and 9 o'clock the previous night, Saturday, April 3rd, was attributed to drowning. The woman had not been criminally assaulted.

But who was this woman? And at whose hands had she met her fate? The police department had almost nothing to go on. The shapely, dark-haired victim had left no trace of identity among her scattered clothing. No pocketbook had been found, no wallet, not even a house key could be discovered in the vicinity. Furthermore, no one had turned in a missing person alarm.

Major Wright instructed the five detectives to begin a quiet but thorough investigation. The men concentrated on the surrounding area, a location frequently referred to as Lovers' Lane, because for years couples have driven over the short, narrow road to the canal edge to sit in their parked cars. The detectives were in the act of examining tire tracks along the road when suddenly they were stopped by a freak of nature. Unexpectedly and unseasonably, a heavy snow began to fall, quickly covering the ground.

The officers turned their attention to questioning two employees of the pumping station who had been on duty Saturday night.

"See anything strange around here last night?" they asked.

"No, we were inside most of the time."

"How about noises?" the detectives continued. "Did you hear anything like a gunshot?"

The employees shook their heads. "Guess we wouldn't have heard it if there'd been one. These generators in our plant make too much noise."

Residents of the neighborhood were interviewed next. All answered that they had neither seen nor heard anything out of the ordinary or suspicious.

Major Wright decided that if by 10:30 P.M. the slain woman had not been identified, he would send out her description and an alarm over the local radio and television stations. A murder had been committed in Richmond. He had to know the identity of the victim to start on the trail of her killer. At 10, Wright phoned the radio and TV stations and requested that the alarm be released at the 10:30 break. Then something changed his plans. A man named Roland A. Hord arrived at headquarters and was brought directly into Wright's office.

"I'm a taxi driver," explained Hord. "My wife wasn't home when I came off work at six this morning. I wasn't too worried at first. I figured maybe she'd gone to visit relatives and would be back later. I was driving a fare around a while ago and this fellow mentioned that a woman was found in Kanawha Canal. I'm wondering if it could be Mabel."

"What does your wife look like?" asked Major Wright.

"Oh, she has dark hair—with a sprinkle of gray," answered Hord. "She's about five feet five, weighs about 130. She was thirty-nine on her last birthday."

"Any identifying marks on her body—a scar maybe?"

"Yes," said the husband, "she has a burn mark on the lower part of her right arm."

Wright glanced at the medical examiner's report and noted the slain woman also had a burn mark on her right arm. "You'd better come with me," said Wright, rising. "I'll have to ask you to view the body."

When the slab was pulled out at the morgue, Hord advanced hesitantly. He looked briefly, then turned away. Choking with shock and emotion, he said that the dead woman was indeed his wife, Mabel Yates Hord. The detectives asked Hord to return to headquarters with them to gain as much time as possible on the killer.

"My wife's a good swimmer. She just couldn't have drowned," declared the distraught husband. "Someone must have killed her."

"Someone did," agreed Sergeant Wakefield, who was aiding in the questioning. "Perhaps you can tell us who it might have been."

Hord shook his head. "She didn't have any enemies. No one would want to harm her."

"Tell us all you can about your wife," suggested Wakefield. "We'll have to figure out the rest."

Roland Hord began by describing Mabel and himself as a happy couple. They had been married a number of years, had no children, lived peacefully in a brick cottage at 3405 Grayland Avenue, and had the usual number of friends, mostly couples like themselves. Roland worked nights as driver for a taxi company. Mabel had been employed the past six months as a billing clerk in a shoe factory. She had been a dutiful wife and there had been no suggestion of other men in her life.

"When did you last see your wife alive?" asked Lieutenant Kelley.

"Last night when I went to work."

"What time was that?"

"Why, I'd say it was—a little after seven o'clock."

"What had been happening at your house before you left?" asked the lieutenant.

Hord answered that he had come in at about 6:30 P.M. and found his wife entertaining three people, a couple he knew as Mr. and Mrs. Richard Pearson and a man he had never seen before. They were sitting in the living room drinking. Mabel and the Pearsons asked him to join them. However, Hord didn't have much time before he had to get on the job, so Mabel went into the kitchen and prepared her husband's supper. Hord ate from the kitchen table and left the house as soon as he was finished.

"Where do the Pearsons live?" inquired Sergeant Wakefield.

"I don't know exactly," replied Hord. "Somewhere in our neighborhood. I've only met them a couple of times."

"When did you report for work?" asked Kelley.

"I reported in around eight," replied Hord, explaining that his hours were from 8 P.M. to 6 A.M.

Hord was thanked and told he wouldn't be needed any longer that night. After he left, Wright called in his men for a briefing.

"Find that couple, the Pearsons," he instructed. "Get a line on them and inquire about the man who was with them. Do it quietly, but do it quickly. It's important to sew up this case while it's hot and before the killer knows what's happening."

Four detectives headed at once for the neighborhood of Hord's home. In their radio cars, Wakefield and Kelley teamed off and went in one direction, Brown and Ford headed in another. The plan was for each team to comb an area of four blocks on either side of Hord's residence until they learned the Pearsons' address. It didn't take long. Inquiries soon led to the information that the couple lived about six blocks from the Hords. The detectives communicated with each other via their short wave sets. Wakefield and Kelley, nearest the Pearson home, called on the couple while Brown and Ford returned to headquarters.

It was now almost midnight. Mr. and Mrs. Pearson had already retired, but were friendly and cooperative when the officers requested an interview.

"We wanted to ask some questions about Mabel Hord," began Lieutenant Kelley.

"Anything wrong?" Mrs. Pearson asked with obvious apprehension.

When Kelley informed them that Mabel Hord had been found murdered in the canal that morning, the couple appeared genuinely startled and grieved.

"But we just saw her last night," said the woman, shaking her head in disbelief.

"Who would want to kill her?" asked her husband.

"That's what we're trying to find out," stated Wakefield. "How long have you known Mabel Hord?"

"Two or three years," supplied Mrs. Pearson. "Her husband works nights and sometimes she would come over here to spend the evening."

"Did she get along well with her husband, with her neighbors? Do you know of any serious arguments she might have had?"

"No," said Mrs. Pearson, "she was even-tempered. She loved to be happy and have a good time."

Kelley took over. "Tell us what happened yesterday. Where were you during the afternoon?"

"My wife and I went marketing," answered Richard Pearson. "After we brought the groceries home, we went over to the ABC store to buy some liquor."

"What time was that?"

"I'd say between five-thirty and six o'clock."

"Okay," said Kelley. "Go on."

"Well, we met a friend of mine in the liquor store, a fellow by the name of Joe Powell. Somehow we got to talking and somebody said, 'Let's go over to Mabel's house for a drink.' So Joe, my wife and I called on Mabel Hord shortly after six o'clock."

"Had Mabel and Joe Powell ever met before?"

"No, we introduced them," replied Pearson. "Certainly no harm meant. We knew Mabel was married and so was Joe. Joe's a fine fellow, has a good wife and a cute kid."

"What happened when you were at Mabel's house?" continued Kelley.

"Nothing special," said Pearson. "We had some drinks. Roland Hord came home. We asked him to join us, but he said he didn't have time. He ate his supper in the kitchen and left."

Pearson went on to describe how he and his wife, Powell and Mabel Hord then decided to come over to Pearson's house. They drove in Powell's car and arrived at their home at about 7:30. They had a round of drinks and Joe Powell said he was getting hungry and suggested they all go out for dinner. "But we had our dinner ready here and Mabel said she couldn't go."

"Why not?" asked Kelley.

"She said she had a date," revealed Mrs. Pearson.

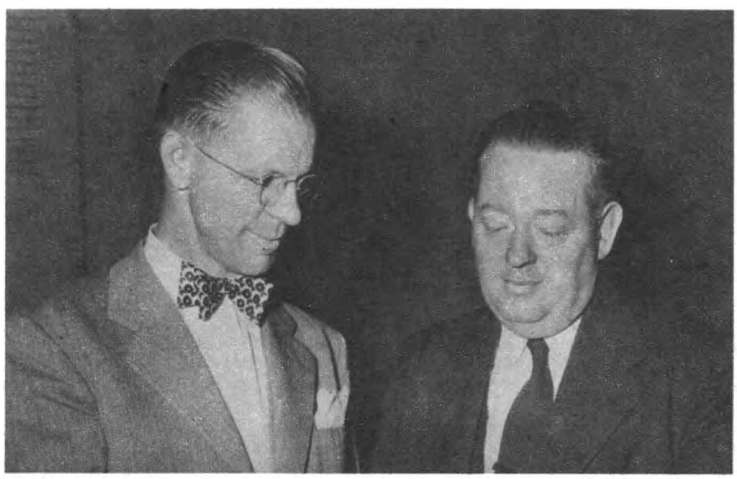
Kelley leaned forward. "A date? With whom?"

"She didn't say. Just said she was supposed to meet someone at Fourth and Broad at eight o'clock."

"Did she have many dates?" the detective demanded.

Mrs. Pearson hesitated. "Not many. But after all, her husband worked nights and sometimes Mabel got lonely sitting home by herself, so she (*Continued on page* 68)

Sgts. Wakefield *(l.)* and Brown did not believe claim of accidental drowning. Major Wright *(below)* headed probe



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She couldn't live a normal life—she couldn't die

DAUGHTER'S

by D. L. CHAMPION

IN THE EARLY MORNING of April 25th, 1929, Cicero Spence stepped down from the bus before the courthouse in Helena, Arkansas. He strode purposefully into the office of the sheriff of Phillips County.

Spence was a big man, broad chested and muscular. At the moment he was furiously angry. He slammed the door behind him and glared at the sheriff, who sat in a swivel chair at his desk.

"Sheriff," Spence said, "I want you to bring in Jed Wilsey."

The sheriff put down the morning mail he was reading. "Arrest him? For what?"

"For stealing logs off my rafts. It's not the first time he's done it. By God, it'll be the last."

"Take it easy, Spence. Now, do you have any evidence?"

"Sure. Half a dozen guys over at Death Hollow told me they saw Wilsey's men hanging around my rafts."

The sheriff frowned. "And will they swear to this in court?"

"You know they won't. They're too scared of Wilsey and his men."

The sheriff shook his head. "I'm afraid that won't do," he said. "I can't issue a warrant without evidence—sworn evidence."

Spence made a gesture of angry despair. "What do you want me to do?" he demanded bitterly. "Ask Jed Wilsey to please confess to stealing my logs?"

"Well, no," said the sheriff. "But your logs are marked. If you found some of them on Wilsey's rafts, that should be enough evidence to send him up for a couple of years."

Spence considered this for a moment. "All right," he said at last. "Maybe that's the best way to handle it."

Five years, one assault and rape and four killings later, it appeared that perhaps this wasn't the best way to handle it.

Cicero Spence left Helena and returned to his home, a houseboat anchored on the Phillips County side of the White River. Spence was a timber boss. All his life he had worked as a lumberman, cutting down the trees at the river's edge, assembling the logs in huge rafts which were floated down river and sold to the big lumber companies.

Jed Wilsey, whose headquarters were at Death Hollow a few miles upstream, was Spence's principal rival, competitor and deadly enemy. A year earlier at the height of the felling season Wilsey had fed free moonshine to a half-dozen of Spence's men, incapacitating them for work.

On one such drunken occasion, during Spence's absence, Wilsey had visited the Spence houseboat and made objectionable advances to Mrs. Spence and the attractive 17-year-old Helen Spence. Spence, for the sake of his family, had let these things pass. Now his patience was thoroughly exhausted.

He arrived home, bitter and resolute, shortly after noon. He was greeted by his wife and daughter. As he ate his lunch he told them of his interview with the sheriff.

Mrs. Spence regarded her husband nervously. She said, "What do you aim to do?"

"I aim to go up to Death Hollow and see if I can find some of my logs."

"You're likely to get into trouble up at Death Hollow."

"I know it," said Cicero Spence, forking the last beans from his plate. "That's why I'm taking my shotgun."

Mrs. Spence paled and shook her head. "No, Cicero. Don't go. Something might happen to you. You mustn't go to Death Hollow."

Helen Spence glanced at her stepmother with some contempt. "Of course, he must go," she said quietly. "There's nothing else he can do. And I'm going with him."

Mrs. Spence threw up her hands. When Helen was in what her stepmother characterized as "one of her moods," it was futile indeed to argue with her

At seventeen, Helen Spence was dark, slim and lovely. She was, moreover, a lonely and curious girl. She had been born on a White River houseboat and lived there until her mother died. Then her father sent her to live with her grandmother in St. Charles.

Helen disliked school as much as she disliked life away from the river. When her father remarried, she insisted on coming back to the houseboat to live.

She was a girl of strong and resolute will. When she had determined upon a course only her father, whom she idolized, could change her mind.

She had been christened Ruth Elizabeth. At the age of eight, she flatly announced her name was Helen. She had been Helen ever since.

It appeared, in an odd way, that Helen Spence was a split personality. She was not schizophrenic in the psychological sense. As a matter of fact, in later years a board of competent psychiatrists was destined to certify Helen as not merely sane but highly intelligent.

However, there were occasions when Helen was driven by a strong and adamant resolve. In such times she would fearlessly attempt any goal. Neither hell, high water nor a sheriff's posse could stop her. When her mind was thoroughly made up, she went toward her objective like a tank out of control.

These periods, however, were alternated by others when Helen felt nothing but weakness and despair. In this mood her fighting spirit seemed to ooze from her. She became suddenly docile and helpless. She felt that the entire world was against her and any struggle was utterly useless.

On this bright, spring afternoon of April 25th, Helen Spence was firm and resolved. She loved her father and she hated Jed Wilsey. By all means, by any means, those stolen logs must be retrieved.

Parenthetically, if they never had been stolen Helen Spence, in all probability, would have lived a normal life and died a natural death.

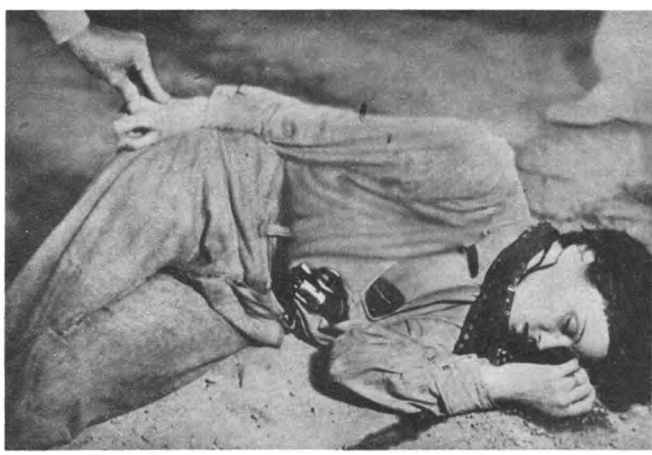
At 2 o'clock that afternoon, Cicero Spence, his wife and Helen climbed into their motorboat. Spence carefully laid his shotgun on the bottom of the boat, took his position at the tiller. Helen and her stepmother sat amidships facing Spence.

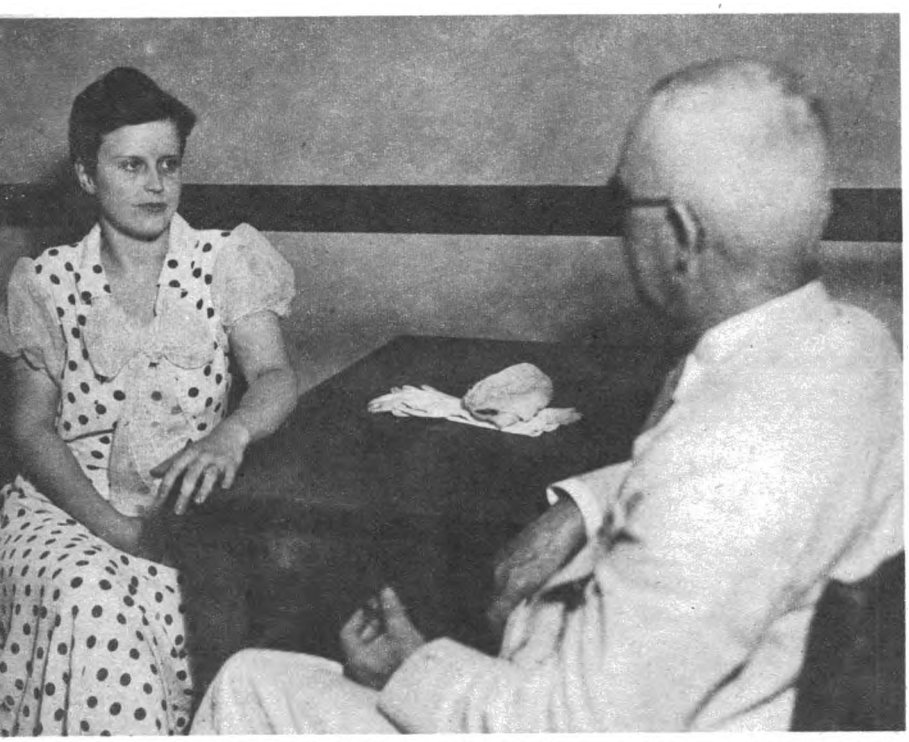
The spring floods had come and the river was high. A brisk wind blew down stream as the little boat hissed through the racing water. Mrs. Spence seemed anxious and concerned. Spence's jaw was

For Helen it was the end of five tragic years. Armed with stolen gun *(below)* she finally made successful escape

a natural death

REVENGE





Stunned, Major Pitcock told Helen, "You're the strangest person I've ever met."

set grimly as he stared ahead at the river. Helen's expression was calm and determined.

At last Death Hollow hove into view. A long wharf protruded into the water from the left bank. Half a dozen men stood on the jetty and as the boat came closer they saw that one of them was Jed Wilsey.

Within thirty feet of the wharf, Spence cut his engine and drifted slowly inward. Wilsey, recognizing his visitor, came to the edge of the pier.

Spence stood up in the stern. "Wilsey," he shouted. "You've stolen some of my logs. I've come to get them."

Wilsey didn't answer. His hand dropped to his hip pocket and when it reappeared it held a gun. Spence snatched up his shotgun. The stock had not touched his shoulder when he let go with both barrels.

The men on the wharf scattered. Jed Wilsey uttered a harsh cry and fell to his knees. Then he dropped from the edge of the wharf into the river.

He sank, then came to the surface. He cried out, "Don't let me drown!"

Cicero Spence leaned over the side of the boat, picked up Wilsey in his powerful arms. Helen reached for an oar and maneuvered the boat to the wharf. Spence laid Wilsey on the tarred boards. Helen looked inquiringly at her father.

"Yes," Cicero Spence said. "He's dead."

He sat down by the tiller, spun the motor and headed downstream. Mrs. Spence buried her face in her hands and was weeping quietly. Spence's expression was one of granite. Helen remained calm and unruffled.

It was 8 o'clock that evening when Sheriff C. C. McAllister arrived. Death Hollow was situated on the Arkansas County side of the river. McAllister had come from that county's seat, the town of De Witt.

Mrs. Spence sobbed bitterly as the sheriff took her husband away. Helen did not.

"You'll be back, Dad," she said. "And you'll be a free man. No one would convict you for killing a man like Jed Wilsey. They probably won't even indict you."

In that she was wrong. Cicero Spence was indicted on May 7th, for murder in the first degree. Mrs. Spence was stricken with sorrow. Helen was indignant.

She visited her father in the Arkansas County jail almost every day. She remained calm and unworried. She was certain that he never would be convicted.

Cicero Spence was brought to trial in the winter of 1929. His plea was self-defense. He asserted that his shotgun had been loaded with birdshot. His lawyers argued that no potential murderer ever started out with such inadequate ammunition.

A tense atmosphere existed all through the trial. On one side of the crowded courtroom sat the friends, employees and relatives of Cicero Spence. On the other, grim and angry, sat the adherents of Jed Wilsey.

The jury pondered the evidence for four and a half hours. Then they returned to the box and delivered their verdict: "Guilty of murder in the second degree." The judge promptly sentenced Spence to serve nine years in the state penitentiary.

Spence's lawyers immediately appealed and the timber boss was released on bail. Morosely, he returned to the White River houseboat.

Helen Spence had been outraged at the verdict. However, she was confident that the conviction would be reversed on appeal. Her father was not.

"Helen," he said, "I don't figure I've got much of a chance. Neither do my lawyers. I'm going to have to serve that nine years."

It was then that Helen's calm deserted her. She loved her father more than anything else on earth. The thought of him in prison for nine years filled her with utter despair. Her mood of high courage and resolve fell from her. In its place came a feeling of utter helplessness.

"What'll become of us without you?" she sobbed. "What are we going to do?"

Cicero Spence had an answer to that. "I want you to marry Buster Eaton," he said quietly.

Helen looked at her father in surprise. She was a pretty girl, slim, dark, with deep brown eyes. For years the swains of the river had paid her court. She had given none of them encouragement.

Buster Eaton, whose houseboat was anchored a mile downriver, had been a more persistent suitor than the others. But Helen had not been particularly responsive. In her own aloof way she was rather fond of him, but she never had considered him as a husband.

Her father spoke again, "While I'm away you'll need someone to take care of you and your stepmother. Buster's a good, solid boy. He's spoken to me about marrying you. I advise you to become his wife."

Helen, now in her docile, despairing mood, did not argue. She bowed her head. She said, "All right, Dad. If you think I should, I'll marry him."

The wedding took place on a blustery morning in January, 1930. At Helen's insistence, her husband moved his houseboat closer to that of Spence, moored it some thirty yards away.

For the next three months, Helen Eaton lived a normal life. Her husband was generous and easy going, genuinely in love with her. She saw her father every day. She was, in all probability, happy—at least happier than she ever would be again until the day she violently died.

Jed Wilsey was dead and her father, in all likelihood, headed for the penitentiary. But by now Helen was resigned to this state of affairs. Eventually, she would have forgotten it. She would have lived normally, contentedly and without notoriety.

But on April 20th, almost year after Jed Wilsey's sudden demise, tragedy and horror once again descended upon Helen Eaton, this time with lasting effects.

On that day, Cicero Spence and his wife climbed into the motor launch and headed for the river town of St. Charles, intending to visit Helen's grandmother. Neither of them got there. And one of them never returned.

That night Helen Eaton lay awake in bed, straining her ears for the sound of her father's returning boat. When she arose the following day the Spence houseboat was still unoccupied.

"Don't fret," said Eaton. "They probably decided to stay overnight with your grandma. But I've got to go to St. Charles today on business. I'll stop by and make sure they're all right."

It was dusk when Eaton came home. His step was heavy and his face was grave.

Helen looked at him sharply. "What's wrong?" she asked. "Has something happened to Dad?"

"I don't know, honey. I hope not."

"Did you see him? Was he at Grandma's?"

Eaton shook his head. "No. He wasn't. He never got there. Neither did your stepmother. Your grandma says she hasn't seen them for over a month."

Helen Eaton frowned and her heart missed a beat. The weather had been good. The river was calm and her father was a first-rate boat handler. There had been no accident, of that she was certain.

And she was equally certain of a grimmer and more terrifying fact. If her father had come to harm, it was the work of Jed Wilsey's men. Impatient of the law, they had taken matters into their own hands.

Helen Eaton put on her coat and hat. Her manner was cool and deliberate, her expression resolute. She was, what her stepmother called, "in one of her moods."

Eaton said uneasily, "Where are you going?"

"To find my father."

"But it's getting dark. You can't go out now. Wait till morning."

Helen didn't bother to reply. Her mind was made up. She walked to the shore and proceeded up the trail along the river's bank.

She walked all night, a persistent ghost, along the river's edge. She scanned the moonlit water and from time to time called her father's name. The sun came up and and she continued her search, without food, without weariness.

By late afternoon she had found nothing. She had met no one who had seen her father or her stepmother. Now hunger assailed her. Her hands and legs were lashed by brambles. Blood from the scratches attracted swarms of mosquitos. She headed for home.

She was almost there. The Eaton houseboat was in sight when an automobile raced down the road, halted at the rickety jetty which connected the houseboat with the shore.

Two men got out, carrying something white, inert and heavy. Helen Eaton uttered a cry, ran at top speed to the car. She said tensely, "Who is it you're carrying? Is it my father?"

It wasn't her father. It was her stepmother. Mrs. Spence was unconscious, almost naked. Her arms and thighs were bruised black. Blood flowed from a wound in her breast. Blood covered her thighs.

With an effort, Helen controlled her emotions. She superintended the men as they carried Mrs. Spence to the boat and put her in bed. She sent Buster Eaton for a doctor and the sheriff. Dispassionately, she questioned the two men.

They knew nothing beyond the fact that they had come upon Mrs. Spence staggering, naked and in delirium, through the woods. One of them had recognized her. They had driven at top speed to the houseboat.

The doctor arrived, attended to the stricken woman. Mrs. Spence was still unconscious and the doctor recommended that, even if she regained her senses, she should not be questioned before morning. She had been savagely attacked, beaten and raped.

Helen sat at the bedside of her stepmother all night. An hour before dawn, Sheriff McAllister of Arkansas County, strode up the jetty.

"Helen," he said, "we found the boat. On the Arkansas side of the river."

"And Dad?"

McAllister shook his head. "No sign of him. There are bloodstains on the bottom of the boat. I've got a dozen men dragging the river. Can your stepmother talk yet?"

"Not yet. Maybe later. You'd better have some coffee and wait."

Mrs. Spence regained consciousness shortly before noon. She drank some soup and, as Helen held her hand, she talked to the sheriff.

"First," said McAllister, "where's Cicero?"

Mrs. Spence closed her eyes. A shudder ran through her. "Dead," she whispered.

White River houseboat, home of timber boss Spence, wife and daughter, Helen

Helen Eaton's eyes narrowed. Her hand tightened on the hand of her stepmother. She said with bitterness and assurance, "If he's dead, someone else is going to die. I swear it."

"Tell me exactly what happened," said McAllister.

Mrs. Spence drew a deep breath and told her shocking story.

She and her husband had set out in high spirits. They had traveled for about an hour when Spence observed two men on the river bank, waving at him. Obviously, they wanted a lift. Spence pulled into the shore and picked them up.

As the boat proceeded down river, the men turned the conversation to the killing of Jed Wilsey. One of them announced that he once worked for the dead man. The conversation, at least to the ears of Mrs. Spence, was amiable enough.

Suddenly the engine began to miss fire. Spence cut it off, knelt down and began to tinker with the motor. As he did so, one of the men, a burly, barrel-chested individual, got up from his seat in the stern.

He whipped a revolver from his pocket and shot Cicero Spence twice in the head. Spence groaned and fell, sprawled over the engine. His killer seized him, attempted to roll him over the side of the boat.

Mrs. Spence screamed and got out of her seat. She grappled with the man, sank her teeth into his arm. He grabbed her, ripped off her blouse and punched her brutally in the stomach.

Then, aided by his companion he tossed Cicero Spence into the White River.

"I don't believe he's dead," Mrs. Spence screamed. "You can't leave him there to drown. Get him to a doctor."

She leaned over the gunwale and tried to seize her husband. The men laughed at her, dragged her back into the boat. Then she lost consciousness.

When she came to the men were carrying her into a moored houseboat. They threw her on a bed, ripped her clothing, beat her unmercifully and assaulted her. Again Mrs. Spence fainted.

When she awoke she was alone. She left the houseboat and reeled hysterically through the woods. It was there that her rescuers found her.

McAllister said, "Who were these men? Do you know them?"

"I know one of them. He was Jack Worls. I never saw the other fellow before."

On the following day, Helen and Buster Eaton moved to the Spence houseboat, to attend the gravely ill Mrs. Spence. Sheriff McAllister went to work.

He learned with little difficulty that Worls' companion on the day of the killing was Jesse Nipson, another lumberman. He also learned that the pair had fled deep into the hill country.

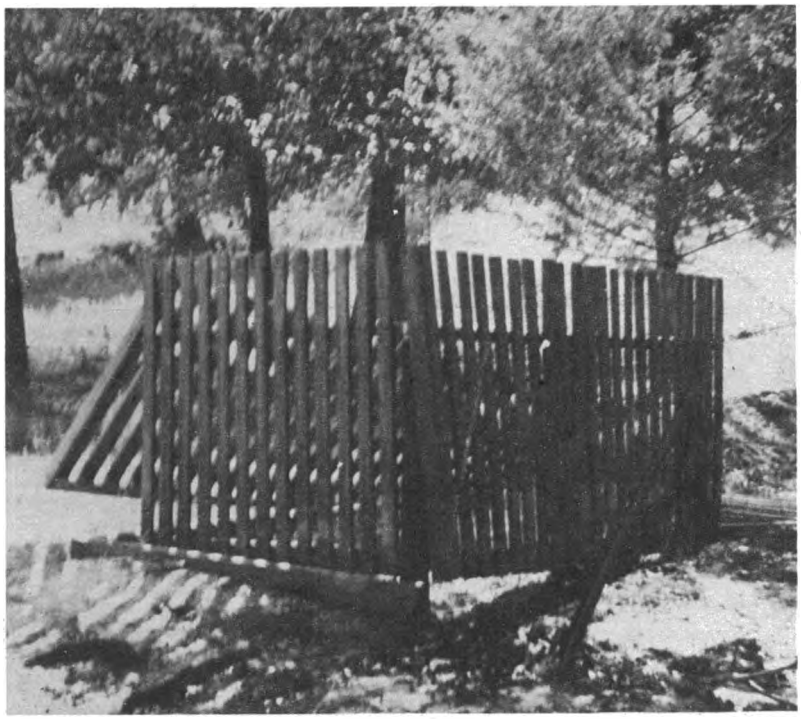
The local doctor strongly advised that a series of X-rays be taken of Mrs. Spence and that she be moved to a hospital in Memphis.

For financial reasons this advice was disregarded. However, in order to raise some cash to help her stepmother, Helen left the houseboat and her husband to take a job as a domestic in St. Charles. She left Buster Eaton to take care of Mrs. Spence.

Buster strongly objected, but in vain. Helen was "in one of her moods."

A few days later, Buster Eaton arrived at Helen's place of employment. He said gravely, "Helen, they've found your father. They pulled him out of the river, down near the Mississippi. The sheriff wants you to go over to De Witt to make the official identification."

An hour after that Helen Eaton stared down at her father's decomposing features in the funeral parlor. She said with



Grave where murdered Spence was buried, fenced to keep it from marauding hogs

perfect composure, "That's my father." Then she fainted. She fainted once again at the funeral two days later.

At that point in her life, she left Buster Eaton forever. She moved herself and her belongings to Little Rock. She could make more money in Little Rock with which to take care of her ailing stepmother.

She worked hard and almost every penny of her pay went for doctor's bills. Toward the end of June, when Mrs. Spence took a decided turn for the worse, Helen borrowed from her employers and her stepmother was sent to the hospital at Memphis. By then, however, it was too late. She arrived in critical condition and in a week she was dead.

On July 9th, word came that Sheriff McAllister had finally caught up with his quarry. He had arrested Jack Worls and Jesse Nipson. Worls freely admitted that he had shot Cicero Spence, but he maintained the tragedy had occurred as he and Spence struggled for the possession of a revolver. He was indicted on a second-degree murder charge. Nipson was held as an accessory.

In the meantime, Helen worked doggedly and dispiritedly at her job in Little Rock. She now was in a mood of futile despair. Her own mother had been dead for years. Her father no longer lived; nor did her stepmother. There seemed to be little reason for Helen Eaton to go on living, either. She cared for no one. She was emotionally a million miles away from the high, irresistible resolve which, on occasion, actuated her.

During Christmas week she reached a decision. Perhaps, it is more accurate to say, she drifted into it.

She quit her job and went to De Witt. On the day before Christmas she entered a restaurant directly opposite the De Witt courthouse. Incarcerated in it were the men responsible for the death of her father. Their trial was scheduled for January 19th.

Helen Eaton sat at a table, sipping a Coke. Opposite her was a De Witt resident, an acquaintance of the Spences for many years, Harold Woodson. Helen stared out the window at the barred cells of the courthouse.

"Harold," she said suddenly, "do you believe they'll convict Worls and Nipson?"

"Why not? They confessed, didn't they?"

Helen nodded. "If the state is going to punish them for killing Dad, I guess I won't have to."

Woodson looked at the lovely, slender girl and smiled. "Don't be silly, Helen. How could you punish them?"

She didn't answer for a moment. When she spoke, it was in a faraway voice. "Then there's no reason for my hanging around."

"You mean hanging around De Witt?"

"No. I mean hanging around the whole world."

Before Woodson could divine her meaning, she took an automatic pistol from her coat pocket. She turned its muzzle to her breast and fired two shots.

Woodson sprang at her, snatched the gun from her hand. Helen smiled weakly at him. "Give it back to me," she whispered. "Let me finish the job.

She was rushed to the hospital, where the doctors found a superficial flesh wound caused by one bullet. The second wound was graver. The slug was lodged deep in her chest, close to the heart.

In spite of the fact that she had no will to live, skillful surgery saved her life. On January 15th, Helen was discharged from the hospital. She was disturbed then by rumors she had heard to the effect that Worls and Nipson now stood a good chance of acquittal. Four days after she left the hospital, she attended the trial, held in circuit court before Judge W. J. Waggoner.

The testimony seemed, to Helen, to confirm the rumors. The case for the prosecution had been severely weakened by the death of Mrs. Spence. She was the principal, the only, witness against Worls and Nipson.

Worls' story, which was corroborated by his friend, Nipson, contended that he and Spence had been arguing when Spence pulled a gun. Worls had closed with Spence and they had wrestled for possession of the weapon. During the fight the revolver had been accidentally discharged. The bullet had killed Spence.

Since there was no one to dispute this testimony, and since Nipson upheld it, almost everyone in the courtroom was of the opinion that Jack Worls was literally about to get away with murder. Helen Eaton dissented.

As she realized that the murderer of her father would, in all probability, go free, her recent despair and futility vanished. An icy, relentless resolution took hold of her.

It was late afternoon, a cold, gray day, when Judge Waggoner began his summation to the jury. The lights had not been turned on. Outside it was dusk. The courtroom was dim.

The judge's voice droned on. Jack Worls sat, inside the railing, at the table with his counsel. Suddenly there was a rustle among the spectators. Someone gasped. Then three shots cracked out.

Panic ensued. As one man the jury fled the box, knocking down a deputy sheriff who barred the way. Some essayed to leap the iron stove to safety and suceeded only in knocking it down, along with five feet of stovepipe.

Judge Waggoner shouted, "Turn on the lights!"

Sheriff McAllister left his post, moved into the spectators' benches. The lights went on to reveal a body sprawled half on the lawyer's table, half on the railing. It slid slowly to the floor and the face came into view. It was the face of Jack Worls.

McAllister saw the slim figure of Helen Eaton moving swiftly down the aisle toward the exit. He followed, put a restraining arm upon her shoulder.

"Helen," he said, "who did that shooting?"

Helen Eaton smiled calmly. "I did."

"Where's the gun?"

"I don't know."

Deputy Sheriff Joe Gordon stooped and picked up something from the floor. "Here's the gun, sheriff," he said. "It's an automatic."

A doctor rushed into the room, bent over the body of Worls. "He died instantly," he announced. "He was shot three times. In the head, the back and the side."

Helen Eaton looked directly at the sheriff as she heard these words. "I'm not sorry I did it," she said. "I'd do it again."

"You had no right to," the judge told her. "The law should take its course."

Helen bridled. "That jury would have turned Worls loose. He shot my father and he was responsible for the death of my stepmother."

Helen Eaton, of whom few people ever had heard, was placed in the same cell once occupied by Jack Worls and on the following day the entire country knew about her personal vengeance. Her name blazed in the headlines. The reporters dubbed her: "The Avenging Gun Girl of White River."

She pleaded not guilty to a charge of murder, was held without bail and remanded to her cell. She remained in jail for more than a year. In all that time her despairing mood of utter futility never

recurred. She firmly believed she had done nothing morally wrong. She was resolved to fight the matter through every court in the state.

She stood trial before Judge George M. Chaplin on March 30th, 1931. Judge Waggoner and Sheriff McAllister were two important witnesses against her. Her own lawyers argued that her great love for her father had temporarily deranged her. They entered a plea of insanity.

Helen took the stand herself. She made no effort to play on the emotions of the jury. She stated calmly that she had merely meted out justice, an act the jury would not have done.

She was found guilty of second-degree murder and sentenced to five years at hard labor in the state penitentiary. To Helen, that was a hard and unjust sentence. However, in the long run it would have been better if she had accepted it.

She didn't. She appealed to the state supreme court and was released on a $1000 bond pending the upper body's decision.

While awaiting the result of the appeal, public sentiment veered sharply in Helen's favor. Jack Worls had not enjoyed a savory reputation. Helen was pictured in the press as a desperate girl, bravely avenging a father whom she loved. When the state supreme court reversed her conviction and ordered a new trial, it was considered highly likely that she would go free.

In spite of the fact that she had been exposed to murder and tragedy at such an early age, there still seemed to be a strong possibility that Helen Eaton could settle down and lead a normal life.

She might have done so, had it not been for Jim Bohots.

Jim Bohots was middle aged, moderately prosperous and the sole owner and proprietor of the White House Lunch Room in De Witt. He had three hobbies, hunting, fishing, and girls. The first two of these were limited by the state of Arkansas to certain clearly defined seasons. The last named was not. It was open season all year, a fact which every one of Jim Bohots' waitresses found out, sooner or later.

While awaiting her second trial, Helen Eaton obtained a job in the White House Lunch Room. She was younger, more attractive than most of Bohots' employees. Moreover, she had achieved a measure of fame. Jim Bohots eyed her appraisingly and decided that she perfectly fitted into his favorite hobby.

He made his pass, which was practised and skillful, and got exactly nowhere. Helen, at the moment was keeping regular company with a young De Witt carpenter. She had no time for anyone else and she made that fact quite plain to Jim Bohots.

Bohots, for his part, was well aware of the fact that Helen badly needed the job in his lunchroom. She could not afford openly to rebuff him. He kept on with his advances.

He still appeared to get nowhere. No one ever saw Helen in his company outside the restaurant. Apparently they never had a date. But Jim Bohots, a persevering wolf, didn't give up. He kept on trying.

That is, he did until February 6th, 1932, when he abruptly gave up girls, as well as hunting and fishing.

It was a little after 7 o'clock in the morning when John Almond, a farmer, drove toward De Witt along U.S. Highway Number 1. He observed a car pulled off the road, with one door open and a man apparently asleep inside. Almond stopped his own car and investigated.

Jim Bohots sat sprawled behind the wheel of his own car. His coat was open and the blood on his shirt front was frozen stiff. He was dead.

Almond raced back to his own car and went at top speed into De Witt. He aroused Sheriff McAllister and the pair of them returned to the spot where Bohots' car was parked.

McAllister found a .38 caliber revolver beneath the fender of the car. Bohots' wallet contained his papers and several dollars in cash. There were no other clues.

Back in De Witt, McAllister learned that the .38 belonged to Bohots, himself. There were no fingerprints on it. However, it had been fired three times. The sheriff summoned an expert from Little Rock to examine the car thoroughly. Then he began a check on all Bohots' employees.

He discovered that the cafe proprietor had left the lunchroom about 10 o'clock the previous evening. He had told no one where he was going. Helen Eaton, it appeared, was not there at the time. It had been her day off.

Two days later the Little Rock expert announced that the only fingerprints he had been able to find in the car were those of the dead man. A coroner's jury brought in a verdict of "murder by a person or persons unknown," and the sheriff became convinced he had an insoluble case on his hands.

He had neither evidence nor suspicions. But, as he considered the matter, he kept thinking of Helen Eaton. McAllister was well aware of Bohots' weakness for girls and Helen was an uncommonly attractive one. Moreover, she had killed a man once before.

He had her brought to his office for questioning. "Helen," he said, "did Jim Bohots ever make a pass at you?"

"Sure, he did. He made passes at everyone. He never got anywhere with me, though," Helen told him calmly.

"That's what I heard. It occurred to me that he might have forced his attentions on you."

Helen smiled faintly. "And I got mad and shot him? No, sheriff. I admit killing Jack Worls. That's all."

She remained steadfast under the sheriff's interrogation. After he released her she was questioned on other occasions by various county authorities. No one succeeded in shaking her denials.

The matter of her second trial for the murder of Worls was something which would cost the county a great deal of money. Therefore, the county solicitor made a deal with Helen and her lawyers. Provided she pleaded guilty to a manslaughter charge in the killing of Worls, the Bohots matter would be dropped and Helen would be sentenced to two years in the penitentiary.

Helen was indignant. She insisted that she had been justified in shooting Worls and she knew nothing at all regarding the death of Bohots. However, her lawyers convinced her that acceptance of the county's offer was the prudent course. Reluctantly she took the manslaughter plea.

In prison she immediately relapsed into her mood of lethargy. She took no interest in her surroundings. She did her work mechanically. She rarely spoke. Once again, she hardly cared whether she lived or died.

The prison authorities mistakenly translated her behavior as docile conformity. Because she caused no trouble, performed her duties silently and without debate, she soon became a trusty. On several occasions she accompanied the matron to the nearby town of Jacksonville to help in ordering prison supplies.

By May, 1933, Helen had served fifteen months of her sentence. And now her spirit once again underwent its curious metamorphosis.

Perhaps it was the spring which caused the change. Her attitude of resignation seemed to vanish with the cold of winter. Now she was sharp-eyed and alert. Her brain was functioning. So was her will.

She decided to escape. Prison life bored her. She yearned for the bright lights of Little Rock, which was the largest city she ever had seen. She made her plans.

She made a compact bundle containing the light dress, stockings and slippers she was permitted to wear on Sundays, a few slices of bread, and a knife, for emergencies only, which she had purloined from the kitchen. Then she waited paitently for her opportunity. It was not long in coming.

A few days later an assistant matron was assigned to travel to Jacksonville to make sundry official purchases. Helen was told to go with her.

In the first store they visited Helen asked permission to go to the rest room. Since she was considered completely trustworthy, the assistant matron didn't hesitate to grant the required permission.

Helen left the store by the back exit, hurried through the streets of the small town until she reached the thick woods on the perimeter. Then she broke into a run.

When it was dark, she bathed in a brook and, taking the bundle from the inside of her shapeless prison blouse, proceeded to change her clothes. Calmly she went to the main highway and hitchhiked a ride into Little Rock.

She was a free woman—for some thirty hours.

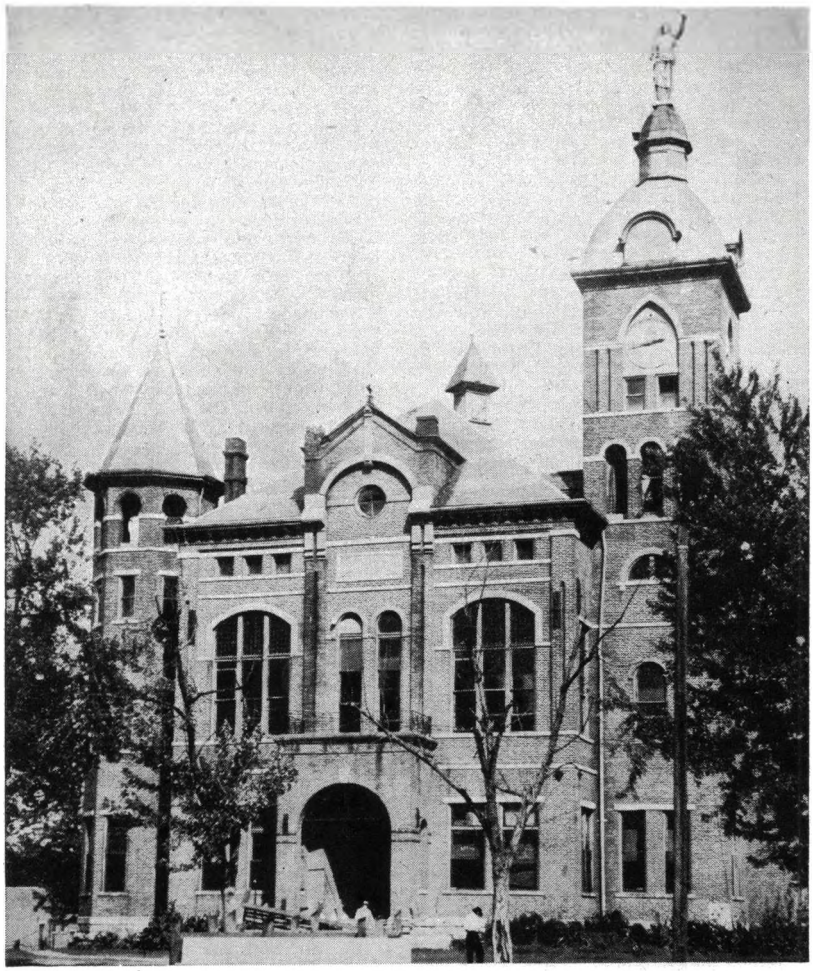
It was then, as she looked into a brilliantly lighted shop window, that a young, uniformed policeman tapped her on the shoulder.

He said with conviction, "You're Helen Spence Eaton. I just read a description of you. You've escaped from the women's prison."

She was taken to the office of Major James A. Pitcock, chief of Little Rock's Detective Bureau.

There she said, "I didn't mean any harm. I just couldn't stand the prison any

"Avenging Gun Girl of White River"



In the De Witt courthouse Helen shot to death man who had murdered her father

longer. I wanted to see the bright lights. I wish I could have stayed a little longer, but I'm ready to go back now."

It was an honest statement and a wistful one. It also was a far more effective speech than Helen Eaton had realized.

The newspapers picked it up sympathetically. Editorial writers felt sorry for Helen. So, in a short while, did the general public. Governor Marion Futrell was deluged with letters and petitions requesting that a parole be granted.

It was, on June 10th, 1933.

Elated, Helen headed at once for Little Rock, obtained a waitress job at Cassinelli's Restaurant and changed her name to Dolores Desmond. Now all her tragic past was behind her. There was no reason in the world why the future could not be absolutely normal, even serenely happy.

But, on second thought, there was. And that reason was to be found deep in Helen's own nature, buried in her personality where even the psychiatrists couldn't dig it out. She hadn't been free a week when her depressive mood descended on her.

Within five days of her release the bright lights of Little Rock held nothing for her. Her job, her freedom, her new friends were meaningless. Despair came to her. The weight of the world was on her shoulders. The weight of her sins was on her soul. Then she made a decision.

On June 15th, she visited the office of Major Pitcock for the second time in her life, this time voluntarily.

"Major," she said, "there's nothing in this world I seem to want. There's nothing worth while. I'd just as soon die as live."

Pitcock, who knew of her previous attempt at suicide, shook his head. "You mustn't try again to kill yourself, Helen."

"I don't intend to. At least, not until I've purged myself of my sins."

"We're all sinners," the major said cheerfully. "You needn't worry about that."

"We're not all murderers."

"That's over and done with," said the major. "You've paid for that mistake."

Helen shook her head. "I'm not talking about Jack Worls. I'm talking about Jim Bohots."

Pitcock blinked. He said incredulously, "You mean, you killed Bohots, after all?"

"He was always pestering me to go out with him. I wouldn't do it because I already had a boy friend. One night he threatened to kill my friend if I didn't give him a date. I got scared and met him that night. We went riding in his car."

Helen Eaton sighed, hesitated, then continued, "He parked when we were out of town and he began to paw me. He wouldn't stop when I told him to. I knew he kept his gun in the car pocket. I grabbed it and shot him. I wiped off the fingerprints and ran back to De Witt through the woods, so that no one would see me."

"What did you do then?" Pitcock asked.

The answer astonished him almost as much as the confession of murder.

"When I got back to De Witt I bought fifty cents' worth of strong cigars. I took them home and walked up and down my room. As I walked, I smoked them all."

Major Pitcock shook his head. "I've been in this business for more than twenty years," he said. "You are the strangest criminal I've ever met."

On July 3rd, Helen was brought to trial before Judge Waggoner. She pleaded guilty to the second-degree murder of Jim Bohots. She drew a ten-year sentence.

Less than a month after her release she was returned to the women's prison outside Jacksonville.

During the first ninety days of her term, her mood of lethargy and despair remained with her. She performed her tasks dully and adequately. She seldom spoke. She was, once again in the eyes of the authorities, a model prisoner.

By autumn, she was beginning to change. She had made a friend, Alta Markham. Alta, a substantially built blonde, was known as the "Bad Girl of the Ozarks." She had been the leader of an all-male mob that derived its living from holding up grocery stores. She was a fearless, decisive girl whose friendship brought out similar latent qualities in Helen.

By late September Helen once more had switched to her strong, aggressive personality. She and Alta made up their minds to escape.

At dusk one night they hid in one of the farm buildings instead of returning to their dormitories. As the guards were conducting the nightly check up, they climbed the barbed wire fence and made for the woods.

They fought their way through the brambles and underbrush until they reached the main road. They raced after a passing truck loaded with farm produce, climbed on it and remained there until the vehicle stopped for a red light on the outskirts of Little Rock.

There they slipped to the road and entered the city. Less than ten minutes later, they saw a policeman. Unfortunately, he saw them, too.

He approached them, glanced at their denim uniforms and said amiably, "You kids wouldn't be from the Jacksonville pen, would you?"

Helen shook her head. "Oh, no. We just hitchhiked in from Memphis. We are going to visit an aunt of mine."

The officer smiled. "From Memphis? You sure took a roundabout route. Two girls are reported missing from Jacksonville. Maybe we ought to go and see Major Pitcock."

The major wasn't too surprised to see Helen. He sent the girls back to the prison, along with a sharp message to Mrs. V. O. Brockman, its superintendent, that there must be no more jail breaks.

Mrs. Brockman immediately ordered the carpenters to build Helen Eaton a special cell, only large enough to hold a cot, a chair and table. Helen was confined there during all her leisure hours.

It was characteristic of the girl that her first reaction to this close confinement was one of utter misery. But that mood didn't last long. Escape, at the moment, was out of the question. And she realized that she had been caught on her

previous attempts because she had been forced, for financial reasons, to remain in the state of Arkansas. She was sure she could remain free if she had money.

Of course, she also could have remained free had she not made a voluntary confession to the killing of Bohots, but it is doubtful that her curious mind considered that.

She cast about for a means of making money. Then she hit upon an idea which seemed absurdly easy. She would write a fictionalized account of her own life and sell it to a magazine.

The superintendent, glad the girl had something to occupy her mind, gave her whole-hearted permission for the project. Helen obtained several pencils, a ream of paper and set to work. She labored tenaciously all through the winter and at last the manuscript was done and despatched to the magazine.

Then one bright summer morning, which turned out to be bleak indeed for Helen Eaton, she found out, as have many authors, that pencils and paper and will are not enough. The magazine rejected the story.

Helen read the letter of rejection, paled, wept and then collapsed. Dr. E. H. Abington, the prison doctor, was hastily summoned.

Helen, he announced, had suffered a heart attack. He insisted that she be assigned to light work only and that she be confined in an airy cell. She no longer was to remain in the tiny compartment especially constructed for her.

"As regards escapes," the doctor told Helen, "you'd better forget all about them. The next time you try it, your heart may stop altogether."

Mrs. Brockman was not at all enthusiastic about removing Helen from her escape-proof cell. However, since the doctor had so ordered, she had no choice in the matter.

The rejection of her story had been a blow which reduced Helen to her mood of black despair, but her removal from the little cell brought back some of her fighting spirit. Again she made an intimate friend. This time it was Ruth Clark, who was serving a term for robbery.

During the blazing hot days of August Helen overcame her dejection completely. She and Ruth made plans for another escape. The first part worked out as all the others did. Unluckily, so did the rest of it.

The two girls jumped on a truck which had been driven through the gates by a trusty. Before the gates had been closed again they raced out to freedom, disappearing down the road in a cloud of dust.

Deputy Sheriff Lem Scott, who was immediately informed of the escape, found out how much gasoline had been in the tank, figured how far it could go and organized a posse with that in mind.

The girls were picked up a few hours later when they stopped at a service station.

It was then that the authorities decided that perhaps Helen was not completely sane. She was sent under guard to a hospital in Little Rock and examined by a board of psychiatrists. They reported her not only sane, but highly intelligent.

Back at the prison Helen reverted to her black mood of futility. "I'm through," she told Mrs. Barr, the matron. "Every time I feel I'm going to do something, no matter what happens to me, every time I feel I just don't care a damn, I get into trouble. Now I'm willing to serve my full ten years. I'm willing to stay here for the rest of my life. I just don't care about anything. I never will again."

In all likelihood, she spoke the truth. On each occasion she had fallen into what her stepmother used to call "one of her moods," trouble, tragedy and disaster had ensued. Now, she was thoroughly beaten, thoroughly resigned.

Left to her own devices, it is doubtful if ever again that unreasoning, resolute compulsion would have gripped her. But she was not left entirely to her own devices. An external circumstance, one over which she had no control, triggered the final explosion for Helen Eaton.

In July, 1934, she still was under the doctor's care. It was the duty of Matron Barr to see that Helen received her prescribed medicine. On a hot afternoon which Helen had spent picking strawberries, she went to the matron's office in the main building for her medication.

Mrs. Barr gave it to her. Then noticing that the girl seemed pale, hot and tired, she said, "Lie down here for half an hour or so, Helen. I'll be back by then."

Helen lay down. But she was restless. She soon arose and paced idly up and down Mrs. Barr's office. She opened the door and stepped into the corridor. She found herself facing another door, one which led to the quarters of the male trusties. Curiosity actuated her. She pushed against the door and it opened.

The cell block was empty. The iron-barred doors were ajar. She glanced into the quarters occupied by Trusty Frank Martin. She blinked at what she saw. It was a revolver.

It wasn't contraband. The trusties at the prison were genuinely trusted. Often they acted as guards and were permitted to carry arms. But Helen thought of none of this at that moment.

The resolve which had been buried so long, so deep within her, stirred. She had failed to raise cash for a successful escape. But a gun seemed just as good. With a gun, no one would dare pick her up. With a gun, she could raise money. At once she was transformed.

She snatched up the weapon, thrust it deep down in her blouse. She walked from the cell block, from the main building, and across the grounds. She walked into a clump of trees which grew at the edge of the barbed wire fence enclosing the prison. She scaled it with ease and strode into the thick woods beyond.

When night came, she was still plunging through the forest. She was weary. She was hungry and her throat was dry. Her ailing heart pounded against her chest.

But her resolve, her iron purpose was unimpaired. Each step took her further away from the prison which she had silently vowed never to enter again.

By dawn her breathing was stertorous and her throat was arid. She staggered out of the woods into a narrow, dirt road. A farmhouse loomed before her.

She knocked at the door. It was opened by Mrs. Hazel Vann. "I'm hungry," Helen said. "And thirsty."

Mrs. Vann looked suspiciously at Helen. Recognition dawned in her eyes. She said, "Wait just a minute."

She slammed the door and Helen heard her calling her husband. Helen shrugged her shoulders. She knew only too well that the Vanns would immediately call the prison and report her in the vicinity.

She turned and re-entered the woods.

By noon she had almost reached the point of exhaustion. Her thirst was unbearable. The heart, of which Dr. Abington had warned her, was pounding like a triphammer. She plodded on and on. There was a ringing in her ears which

Sheriff McAllister saw onset of feud

prevented her from hearing a stealthy footfall behind her.

Suddenly she heard a familiar voice: "Put up your hands, Helen. You're covered."

She turned slowly to see Frank Martin, whose revolver still rested in her blouse. He was armed with a shotgun which was pointed directly at her. She glared at him and patted the butt of the .44 automatic.

Martin said, "Helen, I know you have my gun. So put up your hands."

Helen Eaton met Martin's eyes squarely. She said without emotion, "Go to hell." Then she turned and walked steadily away.

Perhaps her action was one of reckless defiance. On the other hand, despair and frustration may suddenly have seized her. In that moment she may have ceased to care whether she lived or died.

Martin hesitated. He had a duty to perform. Moreover he was well aware that Helen already had murdered two men. He also knew she carried a deadly weapon, which she might turn on him any minute.

He called out again, "Put up your hands."

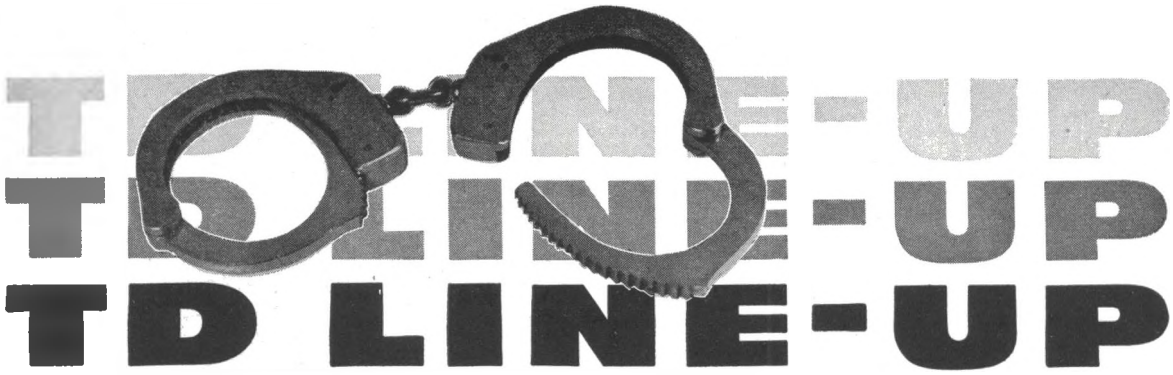
She did not answer. She walked steadily through the trees. Frank Martin drew a deep breath and fired.

Helen Eaton fell and lay still. She had at last contrived a successful escape—not only from the Jacksonville prison, but from the whole universe. There was a huge, red wound in the back of her neck.

In death she regained the public sympathy she had received during her first trial for the killing of Jack Worls. Indignant citizens aimed their fury at Martin and the prison authorities. They loudly objected to the fact that an armed convict had been sent to pick up the girl.

Martin was later indicted for murder but was acquitted by a jury on September 27th. Helen Eaton's body was sent back to the White River area. She was buried in the St. Charles cemetery beside her father.

She was 17 years old when Jed Wilsey had been killed. She was 22 when she, herself, died. Those five years had been replete with tragedy and horror. Perhaps for such a turbulent soul as Helen Eaton the only attainable peace is in the grave. ♦♦♦



Watch for these fugitives

As we go to press, the persons listed below are wanted by the police. The statements appearing below are based upon official information furnished by law enforcement agencies and are published by us in our endeavor to cooperate with them

LOCAL police authorities at St. Louis, Missouri, arrested Roy Frank Haynes on alleged burglary charges on August 2nd, 1951. Haynes was subsequently released on bond, pending his trial, which was scheduled for September. However, at the designated time he failed to appear in court. Authorities could only conclude that he had jumped his bond and they instituted an immediate investigation to determine his current whereabouts.

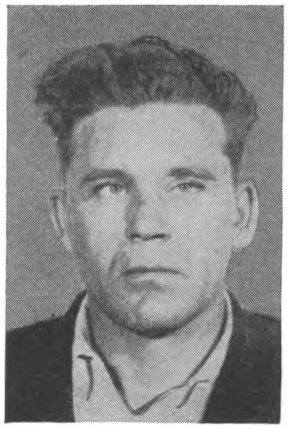
Evidence was uncovered which showed that Roy Haynes had crossed the Missouri State Line. Local officials then requested the assistance of the FBI in locating him. A complaint charging Roy Frank Haynes with unlawful interstate flight to avoid prosecution for burglary was filed before a United States Commissioner at St. Louis, Missouri, on December 12th, 1951.

Roy Frank Haynes, whose record shows previous convictions on larceny charges, has worked at various times as a truck driver, roofer and laborer and may be employed at a similar occupation now. Reportedly, he also worked for a few weeks as a steeplejack in Chicago, Illinois, shortly after fleeing from Missouri. Haynes may be further identified by tattoos of a flower and branch on the inside of his right forearm and of a cartoon character on the inside of his left forearm. In addition, he is noticeably crosseyed.

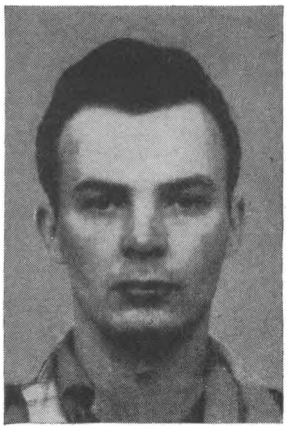
A FEDERAL grand jury at Erie, Pennsylvania, named Thomas Philmon Weltch and three associates in an indictment returned September 18th, 1951. The men were charged with issuing seven fraudulent checks in violation of the statute governing interstate transportation of stolen property and with conspiracy to violate same. Three of the men ultimately were convicted and sentenced on these charges, but Weltch is still at large.

In addition, this fugitive is also sought by the FBI as a probation violator. In 1949, Weltch had been placed on three years' probation after pleading guilty in New York City to a federal charge of transporting a stolen car across state lines. Weltch failed to observe the requirements of this conditional release and on March 15th, 1954, a warrant charging him with violation of probation was issued in U. S. District Court at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Thomas Philmon Weltch, who has worked as a painter, roofer and taxicab driver, has been convicted previously for burglary, interstate transportation of a stolen motor vehicle, and assault and battery. He may be further identified by a deep cut scar in the middle of his lower lip and a scar on his left eyebrow. The FBI warns that Weltch may be armed and should be considered dangerous. He reportedly has carried a small knife in his right sleeve.



ROY FRANK HAYNES. ***Charge: Burglary.*** **T. D.** ***Reward*** **$100. Age, 31; height, 5'6½"; weight, 140; brown hair; blue eyes; ruddy complexion; medium build.** ***If located, notify Director J. Edgar Hoover, FBI, Washington 25, D. C.***



THOMAS WELTCH. ***Charge: Stolen Property-Conspiracy.*** **T.D.** ***Reward*** **$100. Age, 25; height, 5'9"; weight, 140; brown hair; blue eyes; fair complexion.** ***If located, notify Director J. Edgar Hoover, FBI, Washington, D. C.***

WILLIAM DEMSKI. ***Charge: Escaped Federal Prisoner.*** **T.D.** ***Reward*** **$100. Age, 55; height, 5'8"; weight, 146; brown-gray hair; gray eyes; medium complexion.** ***If located, notify Director J. Edgar Hoover, FBI, Washington, D. C.***

RESTLESS, quick-tempered William Demski was only fourteen when he left his home in Cleveland, Ohio, and began to travel. He worked as a farm laborer for a time until he was arrested on a larceny charge and sentenced to one-to-seven years in the Ohio State Reformatory.

Following his parole a little over a year later, Demski went to Alaska, seeking adventure and excitement. There he gradually drifted into activities on the fringe of the law. About two years after his arrival in the territory, the badly beaten body of a local girl was found hidden in an abandoned well. Demski was subsequently identified as her murderer. Shortly thereafter, a Deputy United States Marshal located the fugitive in Seward, Alaska, only to be shot and killed when he attempted to arrest him.

William Demski was ultimately apprehended, found guilty of murder in the first degree, and condemned to hang, but this sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment. He was sent to the federal penitentiary on McNeil Island, located in Puget Sound in northwestern Washington. On the foggy morning of January 30th, 1940, while working on a road project on the portion of the island nearest the mainland, Demski successfully escaped. He was later reported seen in Bremerton, but although a detailed investigation has been conducted, this fugitive is still at large.

PALMER MORSET. ***Charge: Robbery.*** **T. D.** ***Reward*** **$100. Age, 48; height, 5'10½"; weight, 150; brown-gray hair; blue eyes; fair complexion.** ***If located, notify Director J. Edgar Hoover, FBI, Washington, D. C.***

AT ABOUT 10:55 A.M., March 20th, 1950, a police squad car cruising on Western Avenue in Chicago, Illinois, received an alert to watch for two armed men who had held up a loan company office in their vinicity. Within moments, the officers had spotted the getaway car speeding past and, sirens screaming, gave chase. The bandits, realizing they had been spotted, wildly tried to escape. The hectic race continued for over ten blocks and was terminated only when the bandit car crashed into a lamppost in trying to negotiate a sharp turn. Both men were apprehended.

One of the alleged robbers identified himself as Palmer Julius Morset. He was subsequently indicted on three charges of armed robbery in connection with the holdup of the loan company and two other similar crimes with which authorities connected him. Morset was released on $15,000 bond on February 20th, 1951. On March 26th, the case was called for trial, but he failed to appear and the bond was forfeited. When it was learned that he had left Illinois, a complaint charging him with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution for robbery was filed by local authorities before a U. S. Commissioner in Chicago on June 20th, 1951.

Palmer Julius Morset reportedly is armed with a .38 caliber revolver carried in a shoulder holster and is considered extremely dangerous.

$400 REWARDS IN THIS ISSUE—OCTOBER 1954—210 CAPTURES TO DATE

$20,900 Rewards Paid By True Detective — $20,070 Paid By Authorities

Total Rewards Paid To True Detective Readers — $40,970

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Identity of Readers Who Furnish Information Leading to Captures Will Be Held Confidential Upon Request
More Than 1,500,000 Persons Will Read This Issue

The Girl Nobody Knew

(*Continued from page 49*)

crime and by the fact that Ethel Ellard's brother, George, was a city policeman, the local and state sleuths worked all night that first night, compiling names from the address books and the photo album and questioning acquaintances of the victim.

By all her friends the officers were assured that Ethel Ellard was a highly-respected girl, fun-loving but a bit shy. Her recent trip to Colorado had been her third visit to the sister in the West within the past four or five months.

Since her return East, the police learned, she had had dates only with Roger Larning. She had kept, somewhat strangely, a few of her chums thought, to herself, while alone in the big duplex apartment. Her first known social function in the past three weeks had been her appearance at a baby shower for a friend on Thursday night.

After this party she met Larning, a few blocks from her home, and they had had a late snack together.

At the shower, according to two young women who were present, Ethel spoke of a quarrel with a man within recent weeks. That man was Buddy Hammer, the family friend.

Ethel, it appeared, objected to Hammer's criticism of her for "running around too much." Hammer, a man of a volatile temper, voiced a strongly paternal threat to see that the brunette beauty settled down, even if he had to do something drastic about her behavior.

Buddy Hammer, however, had an alibi for the time of the crime. Admittedly, he had been in the Ellard apartment at a little after 6 P.M., but he had reached his own home at around 6:30 and his wife swore that he did not go out of the house thereafter.

In addition, Hammer presented the fact that he had no motive for the savage murder. He never had been romantically interested in Ethel. He had spoken to her about her conduct because he had heard a rumor of a scandal in which she was involved.

"Scandal?" questioned Lieutenant Conniff of the state police. "What sort of scandal?"

"You'd better find that out," the man replied, "from Ethel's own folks. It ought to come from them, not from me."

When Ethel's mother arrived by plane from Colorado on Sunday morning, the detectives learned the truth.

On January 8th, only 32 days before her death, Ethel Ellard had given birth to an illegitimate son in a hospital in Boston.

The birth of the baby had been a closely guarded secret. Ethel's best friends had remained completely unaware of her pregnancy, a fact which she succeeded in hiding by her trips to Colorado and by spending some time in a pre-natal hospital before the infant was born.

Ethel and her mother, as soon as the girl could leave her hospital bed, had flown the baby to Colorado, where it was being cared for by the married sister there.

The name of the baby's father did not appear on its birth certificate. Ethel, however, had named an Arlington young man to members of her immediate family.

He was Mark Howard, a young mechanic who had known Ethel from childhood. He had been one of the first of her acquaintances to be questioned by the detectives. Howard had an ironclad alibi for Friday night. He had been in the company of several friends from before 8 P.M. until well after midnight. He stoutly denied that he could have fathered the dead girl's illegitimate son, and the discovery of another facet of Ethel's character tended to lend credence to his claim of innocence.

Miss Ellard, several witnesses revealed, was in the habit of saying she had a date with one young man when actually she was going out with another. Why she did this, no one knew, but she had been caught in such fibs a number of times.

"And it could be," Lieutenant Trodden guessed, "that she gave the wrong name of the baby's father, shielding the real parent."

"And that man," Chief Bullock said, "could have killed the girl, to prevent exposure. Perhaps because she was demanding money, or marriage. He could be a man already married, therefore vulnerable to any demands she made on him."

"He could be Roger Larning," Lieutenant Conniff said.

After two days in jail, and with the revelation of the birth of Ethel's baby, young Larning was ready to talk to clear himself.

He said he had had a tentative date with Ethel on Friday night, but they had broken it. He had gone out with a married woman in a neighboring town. A few hours later his alibi was substantiated by the young matron.

Now Roger Larning seemed anxious to help the police. Ethel had told him about the baby, he said. He had hinted that Mark Howard was its father.

"But there's only one thing I can tell you for sure about that," he added. "The baby wasn't mine."

He went through the big photo album with the officers. Most of the pictures in the book were identified by names, or by nicknames. A few were not.

Larning pointed to one of these, the likeness of a smiling youth in bathing trunks. "Fred Bulger," he said. "Maybe you ought to talk to him. He was running around with Ethel last summer. He asked her to marry him, but she turned him down."

Bulger, known as "Red" because of his hair, and frequently called "Bulgie" by his chums, was not to be found.

He had left his lodging house in Arlington on Saturday, a few hours after Ethel's body was found. He supposedly had headed for Florida, where he said he had a job in a resort hotel. His departure, however, seemingly had been hurried. He took only a few pieces of clothing with him, leaving a fairly extensive wardrobe and numerous personal effects behind.

Lieutenant Conniff ordered a search for Bulger in and around Boston, and in Florida.

The interrogation of relatives and of hundreds of friends and acquaintances continued. Detectives repeatedly searched the Ellard apartment for a clue which might have been overlooked before.

A sum of money, about $60, and a number of pieces of jewelry had not been touched. The two bits of gilt-covered wood found on the bedroom floor near Ethel's body were identified by Mrs. El-

lard as pieces of an inexpensive jewelry box which had been a Christmas present to the mother some 15 years earlier.

She had not seen the box in several years, Mrs. Ellard said. She could not guess how it came to be shattered at the time of the murder, nor why the killer, as obviously he had done—had carried the rest of the box away with him.

The police also found it impossible to explain why the telephone had been ripped or cut away from the wall. His victim most certainly was beyond calling for help when he fled the premises.

With the passage of a week of futile probing, the police had searched garbage, ashes, sewers, plumbing and vacant lots for the weapon, but found nothing.

Headquarters in Arlington was busy with a continual parade of witnesses who might be able to give any bit of information about the victim, and with tips pouring in by mail and by phone.

A motorist was sought, who had stopped in Arlington Heights, a mile and a half away, to ask directions to Park Terrace at about 8 P.M. on February 9th.

A cab driver reported a woman passenger, who told of seeing a tall man flee across Park Terrace at around 10 o'clock the night of the slaying.

On the chance that the murderer might be someone whom Ethel had met in Colorado on one of her earlier visits, police there checked her acquaintances. Airlines and Pullman reservations between Denver and Boston were scrutinized by police. No lead was turned up.

Although they clung to their original theory that the murderer of Ethel Ellard must have been someone whom she knew intimately, detectives also studied the possibility that she had been surprised in her bedroom by a sex offender who had molested a number of women and children on Arlington streets in recent weeks.

Indeed, the tragic news of the murder encouraged over 100 women, previously silent because they feared embarrassment, to report such encounters.

Several suspects were arrested as sex offenders, but all were able to show that they were guiltless of the death of the pretty young brunette.

A girl who had been one of the victim's closest friends, and who was away from Arlington at the time of the crime, returned home and informed the detectives that Roger Larning had not been Ethel's only escort since her return from Colorado.

On the two Friday nights before the murder, Miss Ellard had been in the company of a red-haired soldier, but who he was or where he was stationed, the informant did not know.

Conniff and the other state officers visited army posts and air force bases all over New England, checking pass lists, searching for this soldier, but he never was located or identified.

The search for Red Bulger took on new importance when it was learned that he had been seen half a block from the Ellard home within an hour of the estimated time of the slaying. In Miami, Miami Beach and a dozen other Florida communities, detectives combed through hotels, looking for the handsome redhead from Massachusetts.

As the investigation moved into March, with little headway to reward the efforts of the officers working on the case, Ethel Ellard's father, hopelessly ill in a hospital, called his sons to his bedside. He implored them never to stop the hunt for the sadistic slayer. A native of Ireland, he once had

been a blue-coated "Bobby" in London.

"If only I could get out of this bed," he mourned, "I'd ferret out that fiend, myself!"

The investigation had other consequences. Ethel's policeman brother worked long and steadily on the case. When he did get off duty, he was granted a vacation. Later he resigned from the force.

Detective Curran, at 60, labored so earnestly in the investigation that he collapsed with a heart attack and died the next day.

"As sure as someone killed Ethel Ellard," said Detective Sergeant Philip Sweeney, "that same person killed Tom Curran, too."

Red Bulger was located at last in Miami. He stated that he'd had no idea the police wanted to talk with him. He offered to return to Massachusetts, to clear himself of suspicion.

Bulger said that on the night of Ethel's death, he had caught a bus to Boston. There he made a reservation on a cross-country bus for his trip to Florida. He said he left Arlington between 8 and 8:30 P.M., and did not return from Boston until early Saturday morning.

"I knew Ethel," he said. "Last summer I was really in love with her, but she said she wasn't ready to settle down and get married. I didn't know anything about her baby. I can tell you this, though—the baby wasn't mine. So far as I ever knew, Ethel was straight as a string."

Bulger's story of going to Boston the night of February 9th was checked. The suit he had been wearing when he was seen in Arlington Centre at about 8 o'clock that Friday night was examined in the state police lab. It was found to bear no bloodstains.

"It looks as if he's telling the truth," Lieutenant Conniff said, after two days' investigation of Bulger's statements.

With Red Bulger eliminated from the list of possible suspects, there still was one other man, also missing from Arlington, whom the detectives wanted to see. He was Al Estes. His name had been found on a card among Ethel Ellard's effects.

Estes had had some dates with Ethel in the past. He was a drifter, spending long periods away from the Greater Boston area, working at all sorts of jobs, staying only briefly in any city. He had a minor criminal record.

Conniff succeeded in tracing him to Philadelphia, where he had arrived only two days after the slaying. He had worked briefly in a laundry in Philadelphia, before moving on south. He was located, early in April, in Pascagoula, Mississippi, where he was working on a river boat after spending 15 days in jail for vagrancy.

Conniff flew to Mississippi. Estes at first denied even having known the dead girl. Then he admitted the acquaintanceship, but swore he had not been anywhere near Arlington on February 9th.

This, too, was a lie. Conniff was able to show that Estes had had rooms in Boston on February 8th and 9th. Estes now admitted this, but he still insisted he had not visited Arlington that fatal Friday night.

In Philadelphia, while Conniff questioned Al Estes in Pascagoula, detectives discovered that when he left the city, the man had left a bundle of clothing behind him in the laundry. Conniff hurried back to Philadelphia, picked up the garments and flew with them to Boston. There lab technicians went to work upon them.

Meanwhile it began to appear that the Ellard mystery was on the verge of a solution. The lies Estes had told, his hurried departure from Massachusetts soon after the murder, his hiding of the bundle of clothing in the Philadelphia laundry—these facts, plus his past record, promoted daily newspaper headlines.

Then it was that the Arlington police were called back to Park Terrace. One of the residents there talked with Sergeant James F. Ryan and Patrolman Gerald Duggan.

"I should have told you this long ago," she admitted. "I kept quiet because I thought you'd arrest the guilty man long before this, and I wanted desperately not to become further involved, if possible. I was more than a little afraid to speak up, too."

"What are you trying to say?" Sergeant Ryan inquired.

"The night of the murder I heard Ethel say more than I reported at first. She used a name. A nickname, rather. What she actually said was, 'Buddy, let me alone. Buddy, Buddy, don't touch me! Don't do it!' "

"Buddy?" Only one person known by that nickname had appeared in the investigation—Buddy Hammer, the close family friend.

Miss Giles had something more to add. There had been a bitter quarrel between Ethel and Buddy about a week before the slaying. He had threatened her. The fight had been plainly overheard through the thin partitions of the old dwellings.

But Hammer had an alibi. He admitted having called at the Ellard home around 6 o'clock the evening of February 9th, but he claimed to have gone straight to his own home, several miles distant, arriving there not later than 6:30, and remaining there all the night. His wife supported that alibi.

Still, if the Park Terrace resident had heard correctly, there had been someone called Buddy with Miss Ellard at 8:45, the time of the murder. If this was true, who could it have been but Buddy Hammer? Had he, somehow, managed to slip out of his house, return to the Ellard home and commit the crime? What could his motive have been?

Except for the alibi and the apparent lack of motive, Hammer closely fitted the police picture of the killer. He had been around the Ellard home so much that, doubtless, he could have walked into Ethel's bedroom without alarming her.

Furthermore, his violent temper had earned him a reputation as a bad man to cross. And, although he had no criminal record, he had used his fists unwisely on a number of past occasions.

CLEVER CANINE

When a lady in Warren, Rhode Island, returned home from a shopping trip, she discovered to her dismay that she had lost her purse, containing $100. She'd never see it again, she was sure.

But the following day a dog of uncertain antecedents ambled up her walk and dropped something at her feet. It was her purse. Breathlessly she opened it. The money was intact. Joyously she embraced the dog, assuring him that this was his home as long as he lived.

—Albert Lippe

Hammer was an army veteran with a bad conduct discharge. From the Veterans' Administration in Boston, Lieutenant Conniff learned that army physicians had labeled him a psychoneurotic. Also, while in service, he had been accused of several sex offenses.

Because Hammer knew by sight all the detectives who had been assigned thus far to the case, investigators were borrowed from neighboring police departments, and set to watch him day and night.

Chief Bullock's men and Conniff and his colleagues tried to break down his alibi. They discovered that a set of overalls and a jacket, which Hammer had worn daily on his rounds of odd jobs, had not been seen since early in February.

Also they found one Arlington woman who said she had phoned the Hammer home on the night of February 9th, at around 8:30. She said that Mrs. Hammer had told her that her husband was out.

They found another woman who had phoned the Hammers at 7 P.M. She said that Hammer had answered the phone, thus backing up his story that he did get home from the Ellard dwelling at 6:30.

Hammer was under secret surveillance for over two weeks, but the men tailing him learned nothing to incriminate him. He finally was brought to headquarters and questioned, but he stuck staunchly to his alibi. His wife as staunchly supported it.

He could not explain what had happened to the overalls and jacket. "Maybe somebody stole them," he said.

He had one answer only to suggestions that he was the sadistic knife slayer: "I wasn't there. I didn't do it."

He challenged the police to pin a reasonable motive on him for the grisly crime. This they found it difficult to do.

There was only one theory they could think of: He had a strong proprietary feeling for the girl. He had known her all her life. Only recently he had learned about her baby. This revelation had angered him.

Buddy Hammer stood up through repeated interrogations. He insisted that the Park Terrace neighbor had been mistaken in the nickname she had overheard that Friday night.

"Hell," he said, "it could even have been Bulgie—for Fred Bulger—not Buddy."

He insisted that the murder must have been committed by the real father of Ethel's baby—a man whom the police never fully identified.

District Attorney George Thompson carefully studied the available evidence pointing to Hammer's guilt. It was not, he eventually decided, strong enough to warrant a prosecution. There had been too many possible suspects in the case, with motives stronger than any which could be attributed to Hammer, and alibis no better than that to which Hammer's wife swore for him.

Thus, there has never been an actual arrest in the Ethel Ellard case.

Probably there never will be unless, by some long chance, a mistake or a guilty conscience betrays the man who walks today with the horrible memory of Ethel's mutilated body burning his soul. ♦♦♦

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The names, Roger Larning, Mark Howard, Fred Bulger, Al Estes and George "Buddy" Hammer, as used in the foregoing story, are not the real names of the persons concerned. These persons have been given fictitious names to protect their identities.

JUDGE'S DILEMMA

by K. RICHARDSON

IN DALLAS, Texas, a county judge made the startling statement that he was going to get rid of a squatter in the jail, even if he had to go to law to get rid of him.

When 46-year-old John Doe was taken into custody on a charge of contributing to the delinquency of a minor, there was a certain amount of scandal connected with the case. A number of people wanted no part of it.

Thus, when the judge had the defendant brought before him, there wasn't a prosecution witness in sight.

"Since the charge against you is not being pressed," the judge told the man, "I am obliged to set you free. You may, in fact, gain your liberty at once by signing a personal recognizance bond."

"Is that the law?" the prisoner demanded truculently.

Surprised, the judge answered, "That is the law. I have no other recourse."

"But I am an American citizen," the defendant rasped.

"Granted—"

"And I demand redress."

"What did you have in mind?" the judge asked patiently. "I have to insist on the bond. It is a necessary formality."

"I won't sign any bond! And I'll stay right here in jail!" the defendant shouted. "As a citizen, I have as much right in that jail as anybody."

The judge studied the situation. He decided to set a date for a new hearing on the case a month later.

Again no witnesses for the prosecution appeared. And again the determined prisoner righteously rejected his proffered liberty.

"Nothing doing!" he shouted. "I'm staying right here."

"Now," the judge declared firmly, "I am going to dismiss this case. And, if this man still refuses to leave the jail, I shall file an eviction suit."

And that is just what he did. ◆◆◆

Swim of Death

(*Continued from page 53*)

went out. Nothing wrong in it, mind you. She just wanted company."

"Do you know any of these dates?" Kelley pressed.

"Well, yes—there was a man named Tom who works at a hotel on Broad. And then another fellow—Steve Collins—she met him at the shoe factory where she worked for a while. But like I say," Mrs. Pearson added quickly, "Mabel didn't mean any wrong. She just liked to have a little harmless fun now and then—maybe an early movie or a drink—"

"Well, what happened?" continued the detective. "Did Mabel leave your house by herself?"

"No," said Mrs. Pearson, "Joe offered to drive her down to Broad Street. They left together about a quarter of eight."

"What else do you know about Powell?" Wakefield asked.

Mr. Pearson answered him, "Well, he works as a house painter, makes good money. He's a big fellow, nearly six foot three. He's about forty years old."

"Know where he lives?"

"Yes—on Grove Avenue."

"Thank you," said Lieutenant Kelley. "Stay close to home. We may want to talk to you again."

Wakefield and Kelley returned to their radio car and called headquarters.

"We found out that Mabel Hord was driven by a fellow named Joe Powell to the corner of Fourth and Broad," Wakefield reported, "to meet a date about eight o'clock the night of the homicide. We're going to talk to Powell and see if he can give us more information on whom she was meeting."

It was 1 A.M. when Wakefield and Kelley rang the doorbell of Joe Powell's apartment on Grove Avenue. There was no answer. Despte the hour, they began to question other tenants in the building, but no one had seen Powell, his wife nor his child all day Sunday. The woman who occupied the apartment below the Powells said she had heard footsteps upstairs on Saturday night and supposed the couple had been home that evening. She had not heard anything out of the ordinary.

Wakefield went around to the back of the building where he was told Powell parked his automobile. The car was missing.

Wakefield and Kelley returned to their own auto and flashed headquarters: "Get me the license number and description of the vehicle owned by Joseph Francis Powell Jr., of Grove Avenue."

In a matter of minutes, a complete description of Powell's automobile and his license number were radioed back.

Sergeant Brown's voice came over the radio, "Let's check all surrounding motor courts. Maybe the Powells decided to spend the week end somewhere outside of Richmond."

"Good idea," Kelley agreed. "But I think we should continue also to check in Richmond. One of Powell's neighbors told us Mrs. Powell's mother lives in the city."

The detectives decided to work with three cars. Brown and Ford would check the motels on Route 1, going north out of Richmond. Brooks would take the motor courts south of the city. Kelley and Wakefield would call on Mrs. Powell's mother.

As dawn began to break over the city, Major Wright was back at his desk, studying the reports that trickled in. Brooks, Brown and Ford had been unable to find Powell or his automobile. Kelley and Wakefield located Mrs. Powell's mother. The Powell child was there, too. They learned that Mrs. Powell had brought her youngster over on Saturday night, explaining she and Joe wanted to go away for the week end. She said she expected to be back Monday morning.

"I'll put a surveillance on Powell's apartment and the home of his mother-in-law," declared Wright. "We need Joe Powell, because he's the only one who can tell us exactly where he drove Mabel Hord and perhaps he can give us the identity of her date that evening."

The five detectives by now had been working around the clock without sleep. Wright called them off to get a few hours' rest. In the meantime, he detailed other offcers to investigate Mabel's two acquaintances—the man known only as Tom, and Steve Collins.

"Try this Tom first," Wright suggested. "Mrs. Pearson said he works at a hotel on Broad Street. Should be easy to run him down. In view of the fact that Mabel Hord was meeting someone in the vicinity, he may be our man."

Tom was located quickly. A dapper, dark-haired man in his 30s, he was employed as an elevator operator in a downtown hotel. He admitted knowing Mabel, but said he hadn't seen her in several weeks. When the authorities wanted to know where he had been at 8 o'clock Saturday night, the elevator man declared he had been on duty at the hotel from 6 P.M. until midnight. The assistant manager verified this statement. "Saturday night is our busy night," he said. "If Tom had skipped out for ten minutes, we'd have known it."

The officers proceeded to the shoe factory where they interviewed Steve Collins. Collins was a friendly, stout man of about 50.

"Yes, I knew Mabel Hord," he stated. "We used to take in a movie or have a few drinks together. I'm a bachelor, live alone in a furnished room. I like to have someone to talk to in the evening."

"Where were you Saturday night?" the authorities demanded.

Steve Collins scratched his head. "Let me think—well, I had supper at a cafe near my rooming house—"

"What time was that?"

"Oh, about six-thirty. Guess I was through by seven-thirty."

"What did you do after supper?"

Collins grinned. "I didn't know quite what to do with myself. Some of my friends have been kidding me about putting on too much weight. And I'd just put away a big meal, including a healthy hunk of strawberry shortcake. So I decided it would be a good thing if I took a nice, long walk." The fat man stopped and chuckled. "That's what I did—just walked."

"How long did you walk?"

"Oh, a couple of hours—maybe more. I read somewhere you burn up 300 calories in an hour's walking."

"Where did you walk?"

"All around the neighborhood."

"See anybody you knew?"

"Not that I remember," Collins said.

"What did you do when you stopped walking?"

"I went home and went to bed. I was tired!"

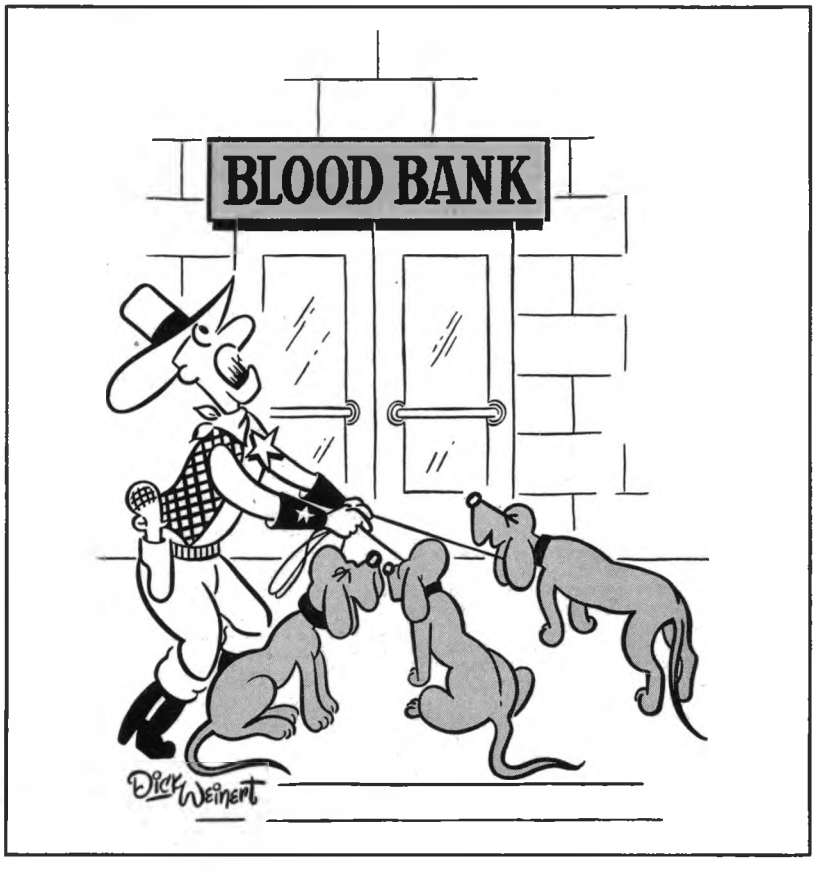
"What time did you go home?"

"Guess it was nearly ten o'clock," replied Collins.

"Anyone in the rooming house see you come in?"

Steve Collins shook his head. "Not that I can recall."

The officers looked at one another and nodded. "Afraid you'll have to come with



us to headquarters, Collins. We'll want to ask you some more questions."

At headquarters, Collins was still amiable and cooperative. Under interrogation, he vowed he didn't own a gun and, in fact, didn't know much about firearms. Furthermore, he declared he didn't know how to drive an automobile. A check showed a driver's license had never been issued to him and a routine search of his room revealed no sign of a weapon.

"Sorry, boys," said Major Wright, "but I don't think Steve Collins is our man. He doesn't seem to have a gun. He can't drive. People usually don't go to Kanawha Canal without a car. And lastly, there seems to be no motive. Of course, his alibi is hard to check. I think we'd better let him go, but keep a surveillance on him."

In the meantime, two other detectives had been sent to Powell's union headquarters.

"Yes," said the union official, "Powell is working on a house on the south side this morning. You'll find him there." He gave the officers the address.

The policemen drove to the house but found Powell was absent from work. The two other members of the painting crew said they thought Powell must be ill, because he usually was right on the job.

The detectives reported their findings to Major Wright. "We're not making much progress," he declared. "All of our suspects have come through clean. The only man we haven't talked to is Joe Powell. We certainly have nothing on him, but he was the last person known to see Mabel Hord alive. He is our link to the killer. We need him—and need him badly. So let's keep after him."

Monday night went by. Tuesday morning, April 6th, the police were no nearer a solution of the murder. Neither Powell nor his wife had returned to their apartment or to Mrs. Powell's mother's home. Wright realized that if he didn't find Powell by evening, he would be forced to send out an alarm for his arrest. He couldn't delay any longer. Yet, by sending out the alarm, he would be taking a chance of frightening Powell away instead of letting him come back without suspecting he was the object of a manhunt.

Patiently and inconspicuously, a dozen or more detectives continued their vigils around Powell's apartment and around the home of his mother-in-law. By late afternoon, Wright knew time was running out. Mabel Hord had been dead almost three days.

At 7 P.M., Tuesday, Major Wright was in his office dictating the teletype which would be issued statewide. He was interrupted by a call from one of his men, standing surveillance.

"Mrs. Powell entered her mother's house about fifteen minutes ago," the detective reported. "She just left. She was alone. My partner is tailing her on foot."

"I'll send assistance." Wright immediately radioed Sergeants Wakefield, C. B. Moore and Ralph Godfrey to converge on the scene. Wakefield and Moore were in one radio car, Godfrey in another.

Wakefield and Moore arrived in the area around 7:15, parked their auto a block away and, in the dark of early evening, proceeded to stroll nonchalantly along the sidewalk across the street from Powell's mother-in-law's home. At 7:22, they saw a tall, broad-shouldered man approach the residence and walk in. They were unable to see his face, but his physique matched the description of Joe Powell. They followed him inside.

"Yes, my name's Joe Powell," said the strapping, good-looking giant when the detectives confronted him in the living room. "What can I do for you?"

"We'd like to ask you a few questions,"

said Wakefield. "Suppose you come with us."

"Sure," Powell readily agreed.

Wakefield and Moore walked Powell to their car. They radioed headquarters that they had Powell with them. Major Wright flashed back the message, "Take him directly to the Police Academy. It's nearest you. I'll meet you there."

Wright at once radioed Detective Godfrey to pick up Mrs. Powell, who had last been reported walking toward her own home, and bring her to the Police Academy in the Mosque Building. At 7:45, Mrs. Powell was placed in the custody of Policewoman Goldie Bass, and Wakefield and Moore took charge of Powell. Lieutenants Kelley and C. C. Eddleton, Sergeants Brown and Ford, a police stenographer and Major Wright arrived moments later. By 8 P.M. the interrogation was under way.

"What can I do for you fellows?" Powell smiled as he sat in the center of the group, garbed in a fireman-red shirt and brown trousers.

"Start by telling us your full name," said Major Wright.

"Joseph Francis Powell Jr."

"Age?"

"Forty-one."

"Do you know a woman by the name of Mabel Yates Hord?" Major Wright continued.

"Yes," Powell nodded, calmly drawing on a cigarette. "Met her once."

"When?"

"Last Saturday night."

"Had you ever met or seen this woman before?"

"No," Powell answered.

"Did you know that she is dead?"

Powell threw his cigarette on the floor and stamped on it. "Yes, I heard she was. Too bad. She was a nice person."

"Suppose you tell us everything that happened from the moment you first met Mrs. Hord," suggested the major.

Powell began to describe how he and and the Pearsons had driven over to Mabel Hord's home about 6 o'clock Saturday evening, how the Pearsons had introduced him to Mabel, how they'd had a few drinks. He described Roland Hord coming home, Mabel cooking his supper, Roland leaving at about 7 to go to work. Then, said Powell, Mabel, the Pearsons and he drove to the Pearsons' house in his car for another drink. He invited the three to have dinner with him, but Mabel refused, saying she had a date.

"Did you drive Mrs. Hord to her date?" demanded Major Wright.

"No," replied Powell, "we got a notion to drive over to the canal."

"And you went straight there?"

"Yes."

"What time did you arrive at the canal?"

Powell passed his hand over his forehead and grinned. "I'm afraid I don't remember exactly. You see, I'd had quite a few drinks by then."

"Try to remember."

"Well," said Powell, "I guess it was about seven-thirty or eight o'clock."

"Go on. What happened when you got there?" asked Major Wright.

"Gosh, I don't remember. I was pretty drunk," Powell repeated.

"We'll wait a while," Wright stated. "Maybe it'll come back to you."

Powell's dark eyes met the steady, blue eyes of the major for a brief instant. Then he looked away and reached for another cigarette. There was the crinkling of the cellophane wrapper on the cigarette pack, a scratch of a match as Powell lighted up, then nothing but dead silence. For three or four minutes, all the detectives in the room sat motionless. Only Powell raised his hand and lowered it as he drew on his cigarette.

"Some of it is coming back to me now," said Powell at length. "We parked the car. I don't remember exactly where. We had a couple of drinks in the car. Then all of a sudden, Mabel said she wanted to go swimming. I said that was a silly idea." Powell paused and rubbed his chin as though trying to recall the details.

"Then what happened?" Major Wright prodded.

Slowly, Powell began to unfold the rest of the story. "You can't go swimming this time of year," he said he'd told his companion. "It's too cold."

"I'm not going to be bossed around," Mabel had replied. "I'll do as I please." With that, she got out of the car, he said, and began to pull off her clothes. Powell called to her to stop, but she stubbornly ran down to the bank and plunged into the water.

Powell finally got out of the car, too, walked down to the water's edge and yelled, "Come out! You'll catch your death of cold!"

"Mind your own business!" Mabel screamed back and continued to splash around in the canal.

Powell gave up and went back to the car and waited. While he waited, he said, he had another drink of liquor. He was beginning to become exasperated. He remembered he had a .22 caliber rifle and some ammunition in the trunk of his car. He took out the rifle, picked up some shells and stuck them in his pocket. He called again, but she wouldn't answer him. Standing near the car, he loaded the gun, raised it and shot over the water "to attract her attention." He reloaded and fired "several shots." Then he called to her again. "Come out! I'm getting hungry. Let's go eat!" But Mabel wouldn't answer him. He became disgusted, went back to his car and drove away.

"That's all I know," concluded Powell.

"What happened to the rifle?" demanded Major Wright.

"I don't know. I guess it's still in the car."

"Where's your car?"

"Parked near to my mother-in-law's house."

"I'll send an officer over right away to check it," said Wright.

A frightened look suddenly came into the big man's eyes. "No, Major, I guess it isn't there. I remember now what happened," Powell continued. "After I left the canal, I drove up a hill to a dead end street. There was a lot of shrubbery up there. I threw the rifle in the shrubs. Then I bought a pack of cigarettes and went home."

The major rose. "Now that your memory of Saturday night has returned, I'd like you to drive me and some of my men over the same route you took from the time you left the Pearsons' house until you got home."

Powell was on his feet. "Sure, Major," he said obligingly.

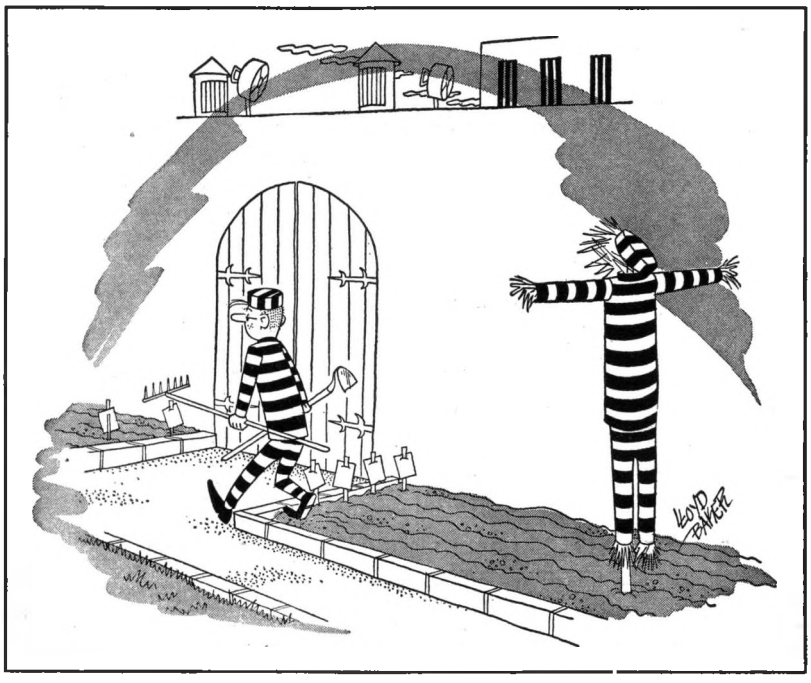
Accompanied by Major Wright, Lieutenants Kelley and Eddleton, Powell was driven to the Pearson residence in a police car There he was directed to take the wheel and retrace his path of Saturday night. Powell drove the officers to the Kanawha Canal. He was hazy as to the exact location in which he had parked, but surmised it was about 30 feet from the water. He then drove the men up a hill to Garrett Street, pointed to a vacant lot with high shrubbery and said, "I threw my rifle in there." Lieutenant Eddleton got out with his flashlight and began to search for the gun. In a few minutes, he called to the others: "I found it! It's a .22 rifle, all right. It's not loaded."

When Eddleton brought the weapon to the car, Major Wright asked Powell, "Is this your gun?"

"Yes," admitted Powell.

The authorities drove Powell back to the Police Academy to continue their questioning.

"Joe," declared Major Wright, "our facts show that Mabel Hord was dragged from some spot above the canal. It appears to us that she was dragged along the path and probably leaped into the canal, trying to escape her attacker. There are definite signs of a struggle along this path. Also, there are indications that the woman made a desperate attempt to get out of the water and pull herself up the muddy bank. She was a good swimmer. There was no reason for her to drown unless she had



been rendered physically powerless to swim."

Powell avoided the major's direct gaze and fidgeted with the creases in his trousers.

"Furthermore," continued Wright, "our medical examiner reports that she was beaten. Also she was shot at close range. The bullet took a downward course, coming out the lower part of her back. If, as you told us, the bullet was fired at a distance of thirty feet, it would have gone through her body at a horizontal angle and would have caused an entirely different type of wound. We think Mabel was in the water and was shot by someone standing close by on the bank directly above her. Have anything to say, Powell?"

The big fellow blinked a moment. "I don't know," he muttered. "I told you I took several shots at her, but I didn't know I hit her."

"You haven't confessed. You remember that," Major Wright pointed out. "When we started talking to you, we only wanted to learn where you had driven Mrs. Hord and if you had seen her date. But in the past four hours, you've told us a great deal more, Joseph Powell. We're booking you on the charge of homicide."

It was, by now, almost midnight. Mrs. Powell, questioned in a separate room, quickly explained the whereabouts of her husband and herself during the past three days. Powell returned home late Saturday, she revealed, and told her he was in trouble, but didn't explain what kind. She

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tried to get him to talk, but he simply said he wanted to get away for a while. She assumed it might have something to do with his job and did not press him further. She took their child to her mother's home and she and Joe left the city early on Sunday morning. That night they spent in the car, parked on the side of the road. Monday night they visited friends in another town. On Tuesday, Joe seemed to be himself again and they decided to return to Richmond that afternoon.

Police realized at once that the distraught Mrs. Powell had no inkling of the kind of trouble her husband had reference to. They thanked her for her cooperation and gently helped her out of the room.

Joe Powell was placed in the police lockup overnight and the following morning waived preliminary hearing before Judge Harold C. Maurice. A murder charge was certified against him and bail set at $10,000. Unable to raise bond, Powell was remanded to jail until May 3rd, 1954, when the grand jury formally indicted him for first-degree murder. On May 25th he pleaded guilty to this charge, which, according to Virginia law is punishable, by 20 years to life.

On July 14th Joseph Francis Powell Jr. was sentenced to a term of 40 years in the Virginia state prison. He will not likely soon again frequent the lovers' lane along Kanawha Canal. ◆◆◆

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The names, Steve Collins and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Pearson, as used in the foregoing story, are not the real names of the persons concerned. These persons have been given fictitious names to protect their identities.

Edith Had Too Many Secrets

(*Continued from page 41*)

drove over to a piano recital by myself," he said. "The pianist was someone I wanted very much to hear."

"Have you got the ticket stub?" McGee asked.

Heineman reached into his pockets. "No, I guess I threw it away."

"What kind of a car do you drive?"

"An old Buick sedan. It doesn't run so well any more."

"What color is it?"

"Black."

"We checked over his car, Captain," Streeper put in. "We didn't find anything and it certainly isn't the light-colored convertible the neighbor saw."

The officers now talked with John Burke. He appeared greatly upset over Edith's death.

"I'd just started to fall in love with Edith," he said. "How could it have happened?"

"Did you go to a dance with her in Jenkintown about two weeks ago?" Croshens asked.

"Yes."

"Did you see her with another man?"

"Yes. She left the dance with him and they were gone for nearly an hour."

"Did she explain where she'd been?"

"No, I asked her, but she said he was just a man from Philadelphia. He had invited her out to have a Coke."

"Did you notice any change in her attitude toward you after that?"

Burke hesitated. "Well, not exactly after that. I did notice a change, but it seemed to begin before she met that man. Several times, when I wanted a date with her, she said she couldn't go out. She would give me no explanation."

"Do you own a gun?"

"No, I never owned a gun."

"Have you a car?"

"Yes. It's a gray Chevrolet convertible."

"We checked his car over, too. Didn't find a thing," Streeper put in.

"Where were you last night?"

"I drove to Jenkintown to have some work done on my car by a mechanic I know there."

"What time did you get home?"

"A little after nine o'clock."

"We'd like a specimen of your handwriting, please," Groshens said. "In pencil, on this paper." He drew a yellow manila sheet from his desk.

Burke hesitated. "What do you want me to write?"

"Anything. Whatever comes into your mind." Groshens handed the youth a pencil.

He took it, paused, and wrote, "Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party."

Groshens withdrew one of the notes that had been taken from Edith's handbag and compared it with Burke's handwriting. There was a similarity in the round, youthful writing, but neither the assistant district attorney nor Captain McGee was certain that they were the same. Groshens handed the notes and the handwriting specimen to an officer and asked him to drive to the police laboratory in Philadelphia first thing in the morning and request an expert analysis.

Then he telephoned Burke's parents. "We're bringing your son back now," he said. "But we'll want to talk with him again in the morning. We're placing him in your custody. Don't let him go out."

Burke's parents agreed to cooperate. So did Heineman's parents when they were called. The two young men were taken home.

"The only thing against Heineman is that he has a weak alibi," the police captain said. "But apparently he wasn't interested in Edith Snyder. Burke has a light-colored convertible. He saw Edith with the man from Philadelphia and said he noticed a change in her. She may have been seeing the man from Philadelphia and Burke got jealous."

"But Burke thought that the change in Edith began before she met this man," Groshens reminded him.

McGee said, "Adolescent girls are unpredictable. Maybe she'd begun to grow tired of Burke. I think the first thing to do is trace this man she met at the dance. There must have been other students from Abington at the dance. Let's ask the high school superintendent to cooperate. We'll question all the students, first thing in the morning."

Captain McGee was back at his desk early the next day. He found a preliminary report from Dr. Lever on his desk. The doctor confirmed that the girl had died instantly from a shot that had pierced her heart and both lungs. The bullet was from a .32 caliber weapon. The doctor said the girl was not pregnant and had never had sexual experience.

A call to the state police brought the information that they had picked up a hitchhiker getting out of a car about 20

miles north of Philadelphia. He was found to be armed with a .32 caliber revolver. He had been coming toward Abington Township, however, and insisted he had been nowhere near there the previous night. The state police were questioning him, but so far had not connected him with the crime.

McGee then called E. B. Gernert, principal of the high school. Gernert was shocked to hear of Edith Snyder's death. "If you think it possible that her killer may be from this school, I'll cooperate with you to the fullest extent, to see that he is found," he said.

McGee sent Detective Streeper and Lieutenant Streeper with two police to the school to begin the questioning. He sent two other officers to check on the alibis of Heineman and Burke.

The story hit the morning papers and phone calls began coming in from persons who thought they had information to offer. One call was from a man who lived about four blocks from the Smiths' house.

"At around nine o'clock last night, I was just locking up my house to go to bed. I heard a car come roaring along the street and I looked out the front door. It was just making a turn at the corner. It was going so fast that it skidded off the road onto the dirt shoulder and I thought it was going to turn over. But it righted itself and the driver went on."

"What kind of a car?" McGee demanded.

"A light-colored convertible."

McGee immediately called Sergeant Phil Hale and asked him to go to the corner and see if there were tire marks in the dirt from which a moulage could be made.

Hale drove to the scene and was back in less than an hour with plaster casts of a car's two right wheels.

"Check them with the tires on Burke's gray convertible," the captain directed. He waited another half-hour. Then his phone rang and he heard Hale's voice. "The tires on Burke's car are completely different, Captain," came the report.

Then a call came through from Detective Streeper. "I think we've identified the man from Philadelphia," he said. "A senior here at the high school says he knows the man Edith met at the Jenkintown dance. His name is Roland Carter, an unmarried man of about thirty. He works in a Philadelphia department store." Streeper named the store.

McGee called the Philadelphia police and asked them to drive around to the store and try to pick Carter up.

An hour later, a tall, black-haired man, neatly dressed and with a polished manner, was seated before McGee and Groshens. "Why do you have to take me away from my work?" he asked. "What is this about?"

"You knew Edith Snyder, didn't you?" Groshens asked.

"Yes, I met her at a dance in Jenkintown about two weeks ago," he said. "I saw in the morning paper that she was dead. I was very sorry to hear it."

"How many dates did you have with her after that first night?"

"Three or four, I think," Carter said.

"You drove up to Abington to meet her?"

"No, I came by bus. I don't own a car."

"When did you see her last?"

"I think it was about the middle of last week."

"You don't seem to be much affected by her death." Groshens observed.

"Of course I'm affected. But there was nothing very serious between us. She was too young for me."

The questioning was interrupted by a telephone call from Sergeant Hale. "Captain, I've got news for you," Hale said, as McGee answered. "I figured the murder car might be stolen. So I checked with the bureau. They had a report early this morning that a resident of Bryn Athyn had a gray convertible stolen from in front of his house. He left his keys in it when he parked it yesterday evening. This morning, the car was gone.

"A squad car spotted the convertible a little while ago parked at the corner of Abington and Jenkintown Roads. I got out there with the casts we made. The right tires match up perfectly, even to scars in the rubber."

"Good," McGee said. "Bring the car in so we can look it over."

He turned back to Carter. "What time did you arrive in Bryn Athyn last night?"

The man looked puzzled. "Bryn Athyn? I wasn't there at all last night."

"You took a car from in front of a house there last night," McGee accused.

"Are you kidding?" Carter demanded. "I was in Philadelphia last night. I was at a dinner party with friends. Five other people were there with me and we stayed till after ten o'clock. I'll give you their names and you can call them up now."

Carter wrote down names and telephone numbers from a pocket notebook.

McGee satisfied himself with three calls. There was no question that Carter had been in Philadelphia at the time of the murder. Carter was released at once.

At about noon, McGee had a call from the man he had sent to the garage at Jenkintown. "I've just been talking to a mechanic out here," he said. "He says Burke was here until at least nine-fifteen,

well after the time of the murder. A waitress in a hamburger stand next door also says Burke stopped in to eat before he went home. So he's in the clear."

"How about the man who's being held by the state police?" Groshens asked.

McGee called the state police again. They reported that despite their grilling they had still found no reason to connect the hitchhiker with the murder of Edith Synder.

McGee put down the phone. "I still think that girl was shot by someone she knew well," he said, "particularly since her killer was seen looking the house over the night before. I think our best hope is the high school. Some student there must know something about that girl's death."

The two officers drove to the school and joined the men who were questioning each student in turn in an empty classroom. No positive information had yet been obtained.

Then a slim young brunette came into the room. She looked frightened. "I don't know anything for sure," she said. "But I live back of the school and I always pass the storage building to get home. Two different times I saw Edith Snyder standing behind it with a man. They were holding hands."

"Who was the man?" McGee demanded.

"He was Robert Heineman."

"Was this before or after the Jenkintown dance?"

"I think one time was before and the other time afterward."

"Did you see them together at any other time?"

"Yes, I saw them riding in Robert's car once."

Things began fitting together in the detective captain's mind. Heineman's alibi had been weak and hadn't been substantiated. McGee recalled that, according to Burke, Edith had seemed to change her attitude toward him not after the dance, but before it. The killer might not have used his own car for the crime, fearing it might be recognized.

McGee and Groshens drove at once to the Heineman home and told Robert to come to the station with them. There he held out for three hours against their questioning. Finally he broke down and confessed to the murder.

"I—I killed her," he said. "I'd been going with her secretly for about a month. I was in love with her, and I was so jealous that my mind didn't work right any more and I knew I had to kill her.

"It wasn't over Johnny Burke. I'd taken her away from him, though she went on seeing him and he didn't know about us. It was this man she met at the dance that bothered me. I don't think he liked her very much, but she was certainly crazy about him. Right after she met him, she began to taunt me. One evening when we were parked in my car, she began to laugh, and I asked her why.

" 'I'm laughing because I met the most wonderful man in the world at that dance,' she said. 'He's so mature, so intelligent.' I decided then that I had to kill her. Then I planned how to do it."

Heineman admitted that he had written the notes passed to Edith at school. A comparison of his handwriting with that of the notes proved convincing.

He confessed he stole the car, in which he knew the owner usually left his keys. He drove to a point about two blocks from the Smiths' house, then went to the porch and peeked in the window. He saw Edith studying there. Then he drove close to the house, aimed his gun carefully through the window and shot her. He said he had had the gun, a .32 automatic, for some time. It was not licensed.

"I drove away quickly and abandoned the car," Heineman went on. "I decided to kill myself. I put the gun to my head and pulled the trigger. There was a click, but the gun didn't go off.

"I went to the home of my friend, Stanley Scott. I asked him to keep the gun and not say anything. He agreed. Then I walked on home and went to bed."

Heineman signed his confession and was placed under arrest. He was held without bail by Justice of the Peace Howard Nice at Abington, then taken to the county jail at Norristown.

Scott was held temporarily as a material witness. But due to his youth and the fact that he was in no way connected with the slaying, no formal charges were ever made against him.

On May 20th, 1940, Robert Heineman pleaded guilty to the murder of the girl he loved, who he believed had fallen in love with another man. He was sentenced to life in prison. He was taken to Eastern Penitentiary in Philadelphia, where he still remains.

An ironic note in the case is that Heineman's attempt to kill himself apparently was genuine. He escaped death by mere chance. In examining his .32 automatic, police found that it had failed to eject the first shell. When he placed the gun to his head and pulled the trigger, the hammer fell on the empty cartridge of the bullet which had taken Edith's life. ◆◆◆

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The names, June Foley, John Burke, Roland Carter and Stanley Scott, as used in the foregoing story, are not the real names of the persons concerned. These persons have been given fictitious names to protect their identities.

Blonde, Silent and Slain

(*Continued from page 19*)

you. No, I never saw her with another human, either male or female."

The bartender in the Time Out Lounge had seen her about 8:30 P.M. on the night of the murder. He knew her as a regular.

She had dropped in at Barney's Tavern around 9 o'clock, presently asked for a cab and walked out impatiently when the taxi failed to arrive promptly.

Helen seemed always to have been in a hurry to get away.

She had been a frequent visitor at the L Tap Room, but the bartender said he hadn't seen her for three weeks.

The trail ended at a tavern at Milwaukee, where the kindly night manager, Joseph Grosz, had ordered a taxi—only to have her leave before it arrived.

Many a night club employe put forward the theory that Helen had been murdered for her money. A dice game girl in a place on Sheridan Road told Sergeant McMahon: "I've seen her flashing big rolls of bills. I'll bet some sharpie offered to take her home, robbed her and then tore off her clothes to make it look like rape."

That theory didn't make sense, however. She had said she was out of money after buying cigarettes from Grosz. And inquiries disclosed that her next royalty check wasn't due for several days. She also had been inquiring around about a job as clerk in a dry cleaning shop.

The first break in the case came in an anonymous telephone call to Detective Sweitzer, in Captain Golden's homicide office. The caller, a woman, said, "If you want to know who strangled that woman, get in touch with Joe Swanberg. He hangs around a joint on Wilson Avenue. His girl is a stripper there. Her name is Kitty. Swanberg is your man."

Sweitzer got the address of the club. He and Sergeant McMahon dropped in that evening. Kitty, wearing a voluminous terry cloth robe over her G-string and pasties, received them modestly in her dressing room.

She glanced at a photo of the murdered Helen and said, "Never saw her before in my life. Some other cops showed me her picture, and I told them the same thing."

McMahon shot a quick one at her: "Maybe you didn't see her, but Joe Swanberg did. He saw her Wednesday or early Thursday morning, didn't he?"

The girl tried to brazen it out, but the officers' persistent questioning broke her.

"I guess you know enough so what I say can't do any harm," she finally said. "Joe was supposed to pick me up at two A.M., after the last show. I love him, or anyway I thought I did. He was late and I waited around almost an hour for him." She dabbed at her smarting eyes, then went on. "A girl working down the street came by and laughed at me. She said she saw Joe put a drunken blonde in his car and drive away with her. I didn't believe her, at first."

But when Swanberg arrived, his face was scratched, as if by a woman. "He smelled bad, too—" she hesitated. "Well, if I must say it, he smelled of vomit. Joe never drinks enough to get sick, so I knew it must have been the drunken blonde. I was furious. I went home alone. I told Joe I'd never see him again. And I won't!"

She gave Swanberg's address and the investigators picked him up, his face still crisscrossed with scratches. They asked him to tell his story, and he did, seemingly freely. "I'm working as a salesman now, but I used to be a cab driver and before that a bartender. I got to know this blonde, both from serving her drinks and hauling her in my cab. She was a lush, but she always treated me well. She gave me ten dollars for Christmas one year, and she was sober at the time."

He saw the blonde stagger out of a tavern Wednesday night, Swanberg said, and realized she was in trouble. For old time's sake, he offered her a ride home.

"She was sick in my car and, when I got her home, she wanted me to come up to her apartment," he went on. "I was disgusted with her by then, and I wanted to get back to pick up Kitty.

"I called her a bad name, I guess, and she scratched me. I slapped her across the face and that seemed to sober her some. She got out of my car and went into her apartment building."

Sweitzer stared at him for a long time and then said softly, "But, first, Joe, you knocked her out, ripped off her clothes, tried to rape her, took her purse and strangled her, didn't you?"

Swanberg's eyes bugged and his face went white. He finally said in a hoarse voice, "It isn't true! She can't be dead! Or, if she was killed, it happened after I left her!"

The detective showed him a picture of Helen. "This is the blonde, isn't it? And you took her to 4743 Beacon, didn't you?"

Joe looked, gave a sigh of relief. "Hell, no!" he almost shouted. "I never saw that blonde before. The one I'm talking about is anyway fifteen years younger. Her name is Ida."

He then went with Sweitzer and McMahon to an apartment in the 4100 block of Clarendon Avenue. Ida opened the door, a highball glass in her hand.

"Hi, Joe," she said. "I'm just having a medicinal drink. Come in and join me, and bring your friends along. Sorry I was such a stinker. Oh, Joe, those scratches on your face! I'm sorry about that. But, then, my teeth still ache from the slap you gave me. Not that I didn't deserve it." She turned to the others. "Now, boys, what'll you have to drink. I've got bourbon, scotch and rye. . . ."

Swanberg grinned at McMahon and Sweitzer. He undoubtedly was the most relieved man in America at that minute. His pathway in life had just veered away from 22,000 volts of electricity.

They turned him loose, of course. He headed straight for Kitty's dressing room to tell her triumphantly, "I told you so!"

With Swanberg out of the picture, Captains McCarthy and Golden had another lengthy brain session with their aides.

"Helen had no men friends," the homicide chief said. "Who were the only men she ever was alone with? All of us know the answer to that. Taxicab drivers. One of them probably drove her home that night. Let's concentrate on cabbies."

There were four cab companies—United-American, Flash, Yellow and Checker—operating in the Uptown District. Plus a few independently owned cabs and other drivers with livery licenses.

Captain McCarthy had copies of Helen's photo pasted on bulletin boards in every taxi garage, along with a notice asking for every driver who knew her to call the Town Hall station.

The results were prompt. Chicago cab drivers always want to be on the right side of the law. A friendly policeman sometimes will let a cooperative driver off with a warning instead of a summons for a traffic violation.

Four cabbies reported they carried Helen, from one tavern to another, in the hours before her death. But none had taken her to Beacon Street, they said.

A Chicago ordinance requires that every taxi man must enter on a trip card the time, place of pickup, place of delivery and amount of fare for every passenger.

Captain McCarthy ordered his men to check every trip card which originated at 2 o'clock that rainy murder morning, or a few minutes earlier.

Since Helen had been heard talking in the passageway about 2:15—and since she seldom if ever strayed from the uptown district—the time could be set fairly closely.

There was the possibility, of course, that a cruising cab from the West Side, the South Side or the Loop had taken her home.

"If a cabbie is the killer, he wouldn't record the trip on his ticket," Captain McCarthy told his men. "Instead, he would leave the space blank.

"Now, a lot of taverns and clubs close around 2 A.M. That is a busy time for cabbies, driving people home. If you find a driver who didn't have a fare at that time, be suspicious."

The detectives quickly learned that cab drivers, like many other people, sometimes abandoned pursuit of the dollar for a frivolous chase after folly. Fifteen drivers were found with blank spaces on their trip cards for the 2 o'clock period.

Six of them admitted, after getting a promise there would be no tattling to their bosses, that they were in a crap game on a school playground when their meters should have been clicking.

Another conceded that he had been watching his girl friend's home, making certain she wasn't cheating with an oily-haired musician who finished work in a night club at that hour.

The most hilarious incident involved two cabbies who worked for different companies and were strangers to each other. Each one had been calling on the other's wife!

Detectives Minehan and Thompson, widely known in the district, got any number of tips in the mystery.

The best one came from a former cab driver who hung out at the Budweiser Tap, on West Lawrence Avenue. That was just around the corner from the place at Milwaukee, where Helen had shaken out her purse for money to buy cigarettes from Joseph Grosz. The informant said he had heard gossip that a cabbie called "Andy" had driven Helen on her last ride.

The assumption now was that she had strolled around to the Budweiser Tap while Grosz, the Good Samaritan, was phoning for a taxi for her. That made good sense.

"The way I figure it," the ex-cabbie said, "is that this 'Andy' drove her home and

let her out. After that a rapist and robber got her."

Minehan and Thompson checked cab company garages in the area and found only one driver named Andrew—Andrew Croustos, 35 years old, of 2611 West Lawrence Avenue. He worked out of a Broadway garage.

His trip card for the murder morning was missing from the files, and a clerk explained, "Some other cops picked it up early this morning."

Telephoning their station, the detectives learned that, indeed, Andrew Croustos had done no company business from about 1:30 to after 4 o'clock that morning.

On the bulletin board in the garage office, where drivers check in and out, Minehan and Thompson noted a blown-up picture of the murdered woman. Croustos could not have failed to see it.

Chatting with other drivers, the officers pretended to be checking on an accident involving one of the company's cabs. A number of the drivers met around 5 o'clock each morning for coffee and rolls in a restaurant on Wilson Avenue.

Seeking to alibi a co-worker for a possible accident charge, one of the chauffeurs said, "Andy couldn't have been in an accident at 6 o'clock as you say. I think he quit early that morning. Anyway, he wasn't with us for coffee."

It was 4:30 that afternoon—Friday, June 4th—when Croustos checked in at the garage. Detectives Minehan and Thompson were waiting. They led him to the bulletin board.

"Ever see that blonde in the picture, or carry her in your cab?" Thompson asked.

Croustos shook his head. "I've looked at that picture, and I never saw her in my life before."

They asked him where he had been around 2 o'clock of the murder morning. Croustos, a dapper little man with a small mustache, had a ready answer.

He was separated from his wife, Croustos said, and had been trying to win her back. He gave her address, on Wilson Avenue, and her telephone number.

He had telephoned her about 1:30 o'clock, he said, and there was no answer. Then he had driven to her home, parked at the curb and waited for her for three hours or more, he said, but she hadn't appeared.

It was possible, he added, that he might have dozed in the cab for a short time.

They took Croustos to the Town Hall station and telephoned his wife. She had been home all that night, leaving for work at 8 A.M, Mrs. Croustos said, and the telephone never had rung.

Confronted with that, the dapper cabbie had an answer ready. "Well, maybe I was dialing the wrong number."

Captain Golden, sitting in on the questioning, challenged him: "Andy, we know that isn't true. We have information from a former cabbie that you drove the blonde home. That much we know. We're not accusing you of harming her," he continued reassuringly. "It could be that you dropped her off in front of her building and another man killed her. Be on the level with us and maybe we can give you a break."

Croustos fell headlong into the trap.

Well, he hedged, it was true he had driven Helen to her home—but he denied that he had struck, strangled or tried to rape her.

"I picked her up at Montrose and Clark," he said, naming a spot more than two miles from Lawrence and Milwaukee, where she was last reported seen by Grosz.

"I drove her to 4743 Beacon, and the bill was 55 cents. It was dark, and she said she was afraid to go into the building alone.

"She said she'd give me $1 if I waited until she was safe inside her door. I took the buck and waited until she was out of sight. That's the last I ever saw of her."

It was a pretty fair story—but there were holes in it.

First and foremost, why would Helen leave the cab in front of 4743 Beacon when she lived at No. 4729? With the rain pouring down, wouldn't she have wanted to be left at her own door?

Why should she gave gone into the dark passageway, when none of the tenants at 4743 knew her and she had no business there?

"Your story is ridiculous," Golden told the cabbie.

The homicide chief went on to point out that Helen had emptied her purse, except for a few pennies, to buy the pack of cigarettes she never lived to smoke.

Where, then, would she have gotten a dollar at that time in the morning to pay off Croustos?

"We're going to put you in a cell and give you time to think," he told the driver. "If you want to stick to your story, we'll give you a chance to tell it under the lie detector.

"We're giving you one more opportunity to tell the truth, but this will be the last one. Remember that—and give some thought to the electric chair, too!"

Croustos spent an hour in a gloomy cell, while the officers smoked and drank coffee in Captain McCarthy's office. Then he called for the lockup keeper and said he wanted to talk some more.

Captain Golden spent a long time with him and then emerged to tell news reporters the suspect's new version of events.

"Croustos now changes his story. He says Helen told him she had no money when he got her to the 4700 block of Beacon, where she lived.

"He says he threatened to drive her to a police station and have her locked up. She offered to romance him if he would please kindly forget the fare, he claims.

"He told me he went into the passageway with Helen, but that she resisted him. She gave him a vicious kick in the groin, he says, and the pain was excruciating.

"He says he struck her, choked her and tore her clothes, while trying to make her make good on the proposition."

Her sister and others declared it impossible that the Silent Blonde would have made, or listened to, such a proposition. She had always remained true to her husband's memory, they insisted.

Evidence in the case was presented at a coroner's inquest on June 14th, 1954. The jury deliberated only 10 minutes, and returned a verdict calling for Croustos to be held for murder.

Captain Golden had only one question to ask before the little cabbie was locked up in the Cook County Jail to await indictment.

"Andy, why is it that you slur your words and speak with such a strange accent?" he inquired.

Croustos opened his jaws, pointed into his mouth and said, "Captain, I had all of my teeth pulled two weeks ago. I've been sounding funny ever since."

He wasn't a Russian, after all, as the young woman who had heard his voice had suspected.

He was just another forlorn man, waiting for his artificial dental plates to be made and fitted. ♦♦♦

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The names, Joe Swanberg, Kitty and Ida, as used in the foregoing story, are not the real names of the persons concerned. These persons have been given fictitious names to protect their identities.

The Strangler Strikes at Midnight

(*Continued from page 26*)

talk with Ida's sister.

Trooper Harry Meyers, one of Lieutenant Shaw's best men, had been searching the edges of a swamp near the billboard bordering the New Haven railroad right of way, where Ida's body had been found. There Meyers came upon a handbag. He opened it and found a birth certificate and social security card, both in the name of Ida Elizabeth Sienna.

Trooper Meyers hastened to the state police barracks at Groton, reaching there only minutes before Trooper Menard and Mrs. Haggerty arrived with Angelina. The sister wept bitterly, on identifying Ida's handbag.

Commissioner Hickey emptied the handbag and examined its contents. He found the usual cosmetics and other little possessions of a girl. There were neither matches nor cigarettes in the bag.

There was, however, a considerable sum of money in it.

"Her vacation money," Angelina explained.

"She didn't worry that it might be stolen?"

"Ida would not have gone out with anybody she didn't trust," Angelina said proudly.

Hickey nodded. "Did your sister have a boy friend?"

Ida had not had a special boy friend, her sister said, although a number of young men had paid her marked attention. Ida had given them but slight encouragement.

"What about Harold Anderson?" Hickey asked.

"Do you know about him?" Angelina asked. "He used to work where Ida worked. He was crazy about her, too. And Ida went out with him on a few dates. But he could see that he didn't mean a thing to my sister and I suppose that hurt his feelings. Harold always had been popular with the girls."

Commissioner Hickey's information about Anderson had come to him from Middletown. State troopers, ranging over the area, had done a good job in dredging up information on the murdered Ida. She was in every way orderly, reliable, popular and good-tempered, they reported, a churchgoer, who respected her parents and was devoted to her seven sisters.

"Can you tell us anything more about your sister and this young man?" the commissioner asked Angelina.

"There was nothing between them, not ever. Ida never even mentioned Harold, after he went into the navy."

Hickey glanced at the notes he had taken during the phone call from his officers at Middletown. "Would you know where Anderson happens to be stationed?"

Angelina nodded. "Harold's at Groton. We've all seen him, over in Sound View, since we got there."

"Was your sister Ida going to the New London dance with Harold Anderson?"

Angelina hesitated. "I am practically positive that she wasn't, sir. But I have to admit, I don't really know who her date was."

The commissioner excused Angelina and provided her police transportation back to Portland.

Hickey next ordered Detective Mangin and Policewoman Haggerty to proceed to the Submarine Base at Groton and interrogate Harold Anderson. On arriving at the submarine station the two Connecticut officers first interviewed Frank Quinn, chief master of arms, in charge of the liberty passes.

Quinn consulted his file. Harold Anderson had shore leave during the evening of Thursday, August 3rd. His card revealed that he had not returned until some time past midnight on Friday, the 4th.

The chief master of arms sent a messenger to find the young enlisted man. Anderson reported promptly, a strapping, handsome young seaman, with an easy manner and a genial smile. Asked where he had been the previous night, he explained without hesitation that he had gone to Stonington to visit friends.

"Are you sure that you didn't go to Sound View?" Mangin asked.

"Why would I do that?" Anderson demanded.

"Because a friend of yours was vacationing at Sound View—Ida Sienna."

"Ida's a girl from back home—"

"We know that," Mrs. Haggerty said. "Did you know that Ida was murdered near Sound View last night?"

Disbelief, shock and sadness were registered in a convincing blend of utter and frank sincerity. "Gee, that's terrible," Anderson said. "Ida was a swell kid."

His candid account of his acquaintance with Ida paralleled the earlier statement of Ida's sister. Anderson had been strongly attracted to this pretty member of the Sienna family. But Ida hadn't responded. His attentions had got him nowhere. Soon he had enlisted in the navy, applying for duty in the submarine service, he related.

He described his movements, almost minute by minute, on the bus trip to Stonington and return the night before.

Policewoman Haggerty stepped into an adjoining office and reported to Commissioner Hickey by telephone. The state police at once applied to the Stonington authorities and also called on friends of Anderson whom the seaman said that he had visited. And, forty minutes later, the master of arms informed the suspected seaman that his account of himself had been officially verified and that he was in the clear.

"Thanks, Chief. But I'd like to help them catch the guy who—killed Ida," Anderson said.

"Okay. If you think of anything, or anybody, let me know at once," Quinn replied.

Sergeant Johnson and Trooper Shedroff were in Sound View, questioning the four girls, fellow employees of Ida Sienna at the Middletown plant, who were sharing the cottage with her and her sister, Angelina. One of the four had been prostrated by the news of the tragedy. Two others were too excited to give coherent or useful information. But the fourth girl proved helpful.

Her name was Marie Victor. She had been Ida Sienna's confidante in the matter of the new date and the dance at New London. Ida hadn't admitted that she was going with a sailor, but Marie had seen Ida walking on the boardwalk with a sailor. He was broad-shouldered and athletic-looking and, from a distance, seemed very young and attractive.

"When was this?" Johnson asked.

"Last night, Sergeant. I remember noticing the exact time—it was twenty minutes to ten," Marie Victor said.

Ida, according to Marie, had been inclined to joke about and make a little mystery of her date. But once she had slipped and referred to this new friend as "Frank." And Marie knew that Ida had met this fellow for the first time in Sound View.

"When?" Johnson asked her.

"Last Monday evening. Ida told me that he was to get another pass for last evening."

"Then he was a sailor!"

"I'm pretty sure. The one I saw her with. But Ida was sort of funny about it," Marie said uncertainly.

"Any reason for that?"

"Well, Ida knew we'd kid her about a sailor. You see, she always was the choosey type. Most fellows found her hard to impress."

So Ida Sienna had been too particular for her own good. When finally making a date with a young sailor, Ida had kept it to herself. And neither her devoted older sister, Angelina, nor her wise little friend, Marie, had been allowed to size him up.

Sergeant Johnson returned to his car with Shedroff and they radioed this information to Groton. Commissioner Hickey transmitted it to Mrs. Haggerty, whom he had ordered to remain at the Sub Base.

"Johnson sums it up like this," Hickey said. "His first name seems to have been Frank and he looks very young. So you can stay at 25 years or under. More important, he was able to wangle a liberty pass for Sound View last evening, and also this past Monday evening."

"Call you back, Commissioner, in fifteen minutes," Policewoman Haggerty promised.

The findings of Johnson and Shedroff in Sound View expedited the screening of the Base's liberty lists for the past week. Quinn, chief master of arms, prided himself on knowing everyone and he automatically eliminated the cards of older men.

Two navy men, having the first name of Frank and being within the 25-or-under age group, had received liberty passes on Monday evening, July 31st. And there was only one young Frank at the Submarine Base who had secured two passes for Sound View, on the 31st and again on August 3rd.

"There you have it," Quinn said. "Seaman 2/C Frank W. Higgins."

Kathryn Haggerty reached for the phone. She was calling her chief back in exactly thirteen minutes.

Hickey snapped, "Nice going. See the O. D. and get official permission. Then bring this man Higgins here for questioning."

Higgins, reporting to the chief master of arms, was a breezy, muscular youth of 21. He had big, strong hands. There were marks on his face which looked like recent scratches made by fingernails.

COURTLY THUG

The pretty young miss behind the counter seemed made to order for the husky 6-foot bandit who invaded a New York candy store. At his menacing command, she held up her hands and watched as he emptied the cash register of $76. Well pleased, he turned and started for the door. Right then the pretty girl landed on him with a judo hold and held him down till police arrived.

Surrendering meekly to the law, he mourned, "I could have gotten out of her hold, if I wasn't a gentleman."

—Frank O. Duro

"This tattooing?" the seaman said, in response to Detective Mangin's inquiry. "I got cut up a bit yesterday, fooling with some of our tough guys who think they're wrestlers."

Higgins stated that he had not gone to Sound View the evening before, even though his liberty pass permitted it. He had found his fun nearer by, without leaving New London.

And without blinking he assured Policewoman Haggerty he never had known a girl named Ida Sienna—never had heard the name before in his life.

Conducted from the Submarine Base to Groton, state police headquarters, the breezy young suspect seemed not the least concerned about, or aware of, his police escort's suspicion. He was instructed to wait in an anteroom next to the commissioner's office and there he sat, composed and mildly interested, while the ebb and flow of state police business eddied around the powerfully built figure in navy blue.

Trooper Neal Hurley strode in. He glanced at the waiting seaman second-class. "Hello, Higgins," he said. "In more trouble, already?"

Hickey stood in the doorway of his office. "You know this man?" he asked Hurley.

"Yes, sir." Hurley took out his notebook.

Today, in the early hours of the morning, he reported, he had stopped a car carrying several sailors driving back to New London from Sound View—driving illegally, with only one headlight. Investigation developed that none of the car's occupants had a driver's license.

Trooper Hurley had given them a ticket and brought them in. However, one of these carefree mariners—he had given his name as Seaman 2/C Frank William Higgins and a home address on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston—had proceeded to post a bond of $50 in cash so that his buddy, the actual driver of the car, a seaman named Archie Lange, would not be held by the state police and thus get himself into bad navy trouble by overstaying his liberty pass.

"Come into my office, Higgins," Hickey said.

The cool young man came in and seated himself comfortably.

"Why," asked Hickey, "did you tell Mrs. Haggerty and Detective Mangin that you didn't go near Sound View last night?"

"I'm just not used to lady detectives. I didn't know, sir, she was questioning me as an officer."

"You mean, you don't bother to tell the truth if it's casual conversation?"

Frank Higgins' boyish grin was meant to be disarming, but his deeply scratched face was not mirthful and his coolness was beginning to disappear.

Policewoman Haggerty leaned forward to offer him a cigarette. "Smoke, Higgins?" she asked.

"Thanks. I don't smoke."

"You have a match, though, I'll bet?" The policewoman was taking a cigarette for herself.

"Oh, sure. I'm allowed to play with matches."

Higgins' jest was ill-timed. For the book of paper matches he took from his pocket had the blue cover and the inscription of the Submarine Base and was exactly like the match book found beneath the body of the strangled Ida Sienna.

Higgins evidently sensed the tightness and chill growing in the room around him as he blew out the match he had politely struck for Kathryn Haggerty. Now he began wavering in the glib answers he gave to the stream of artful questions Commissioner Hickey fired at him.

Suddenly he changed his story. Yes, he did go to Sound View last evening, as his pass provided. Yes, he had known Ida Sienna. He had had a date with her, in fact. But, prior to their meeting, he had stopped and sponged up quite a number of beers. Ida, a fussy sort of girl, complained of his being drunk. He wasn't, but they'd had words and the date was spoiled. Ida left him abruptly and drove off in a car with a young civilian who had hailed her, whom she had seemed to know well.

"When was this, Higgins?"

"About 2100, sir—around nine P.M."

"We have a witness who saw you walking with Ida at 9:40."

"I could be wrong by that much. I expect, sir, your witness saw us arguing about what I'd had to drink."

"On the contrary, our witness saw you and Ida smiling and laughing together."

"Then it wasn't me. Honest, I was in the doghouse from the moment we met. And how could any friend of Ida's recognize me? I never met any of her friends in Sound View."

"The point is, Higgins," Mrs. Haggerty said, "that we have recognized you. Recognized the match book you left lying under that poor girl's ravished and broken body."

The young policewoman's sudden blast of candor hit the suspect hard. He no longer was able to appear composed. After another hour of Hickey's probing interrogation, in the sultry August heat, the state police had broken one more murder case.

"Okay. So I killed her. I don't know what made me do it," Higgins confessed finally. "I didn't intend to. It was an accident. We had a fight. I found my hands at her throat. Then—then she was dead."

He said that he had met Ida at the beginning of her Sound View vacation and they had liked each other and made a second date. Before driving to New London for the dance, he had persuaded Ida to stroll out with him toward the railroad tracks. But once out there, Ida reproached him and fiercely resisted his advances. She slashed his face with her nails, bit the hand he clapped over her mouth as she started to scream.

The next thing he knew, Ida was dead. He had acted in a daze, taking her clothes and handbag and disposing of them with the idea of delaying identification.

At dawn Higgins guided officers to the place where he had hidden Ida's clothes, hoping it would prevent her being identified. The dress was there, its flower ornament torn off, three of its white pearl buttons missing.

At 9 A.M. on Saturday, August 5th, 1944, Higgins was escorted to the New London county jail. On August 21st he was brought to the Old Lyme Justice Court. Indicted by the grand jury for murder in the first degree, he pleaded not guilty and was held for trial.

On the 4th of October, 1944, Frank William Higgins stood before Judge Murphy in New London Superior Court and was allowed to change his plea to guilty of murder in the second degree.

He immediately was sentenced to life imprisonment in the Connecticut State Prison at Wethersfield. And there the strangler remains to this day, with all the time there is to repent his brief and terrible act of passionate violence. ◆◆◆

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The names Harold Anderson, Marie Victor and Archie Lange, as used in the foregoing story, are not the real names of the persons concerned. These persons have been given fictitious names to protect their identities.

She Killed with Ease

(Continued from page 20)

look up the filing of the deed, if you like."

"That I will," Brennan said. "The very first thing in the morning."

"Women can be pretty sly about some things, specially things they want. My Mary has always admired this place of yours. It wasn't till just lately, though, that Mary told me how she'd got your wife to sell."

"You weren't with them when they closed the deal?"

"That's right." Farmer nodded in embarrassment. "Leaves you with a heavy responsibility," Farmer said, trying to sound sympathetic. "You've got a heap of packing to do. Mary and me and the little one—we figure to come and take possession over here just as soon—as possible."

"When?" Brennan queried bleakly.

"Tomorrow, Mary thought—"

"But that's impossible. It can't be tomorrow. I work tomorrow."

Pat Brennan's pallid countenance was flushed and darkening now, and Jim Farmer recognized a man who had been pushed to the last inch he would tolerate.

"We'll say—day after tomorrow, then," Farmer hastened to concede. "I'm sure I can get Mary to agree to that."

"Thanks very much," Brennan said bitterly.

He lighted more lights when his neighbor had gone and began a vague survey of the dwelling which had seemed to be his so long, although Sarah was the actual owner. It was their home and without Sarah's advice and guidance and agile help, how could he get ready to clear out? And where was Sarah, anyway? What did her inexplicable disposal of their home have to do with this equally unexplained absence?

Was she out of her mind? People every day did incredible things—and got into the newspapers—because of some real or imagined compulsion. She must have gone crazy!

About midnight Pat Brennan put out all but one of the lights and lay down on a couch. He wanted to be nearer the front door in case his wife returned at no matter what unearthly hour. He didn't expect to sleep very much, and he found that he couldn't sleep at all.

Early next morning, Friday, the 24th of April, Brennan checked in at the mill where he was employed, explaining to the superintendent that he had an unexpectedly pressing business matter to attend to in Watertown and must take the morning off. He readily got a lift into the county seat, some 4 miles from Brownville, and went at once to the house where Sarah's cousin lived.

Here Pat was received warmly, but with frank surprise. Why so early, and why wasn't he working?

"I came to see Sarah," he said firmly. "I've got to talk to her."

"Sarah? Here?"

No, Sarah wasn't here. It was weeks, indeed, since the cousin or any member of her family had laid eyes on her.

Sick at heart, Pat rubbed his forehead with an unsteady hand. He accepted an easy chair. He accepted a "nice, hot cup of coffee," but barely sipped it. He said he scarcely knew where to look now, where to turn.

"Come now, Pat, we must think this queer thing through," the cousin said. "Sarah'll be all right. She knows what she's doing. You've got to begin some place. I say, begin with a lawyer. And set him to work, looking into this matter of the deed of sale."

"That's it. That's what I've got to do," Brennan agreed. "Do you know a good lawyer?"

"The best. Go see Floyd Carlisle. Tell him everything. He's a very smart man, and a mighty comforting one to talk to. You can trust him."

So Pat hurried to the office of Floyd L. Carlisle and trusted him on sight and told him everything. A story so strange that Pat didn't even try to make it credible.

"Tell me, Mr. Brennan," the lawyer asked gently, "has your wife shown any signs of anxiety or pressure lately? Seemed distraught, I mean, or secretive?"

"I can scarcely think straight now," Brennan apologized. "But, honest, Sarah seemed just the same. She's a level-headed woman."

"Now about your wife and this neighbor, Mary Farmer?" the lawyer resumed. "Have these women been on such intimate terms that they could have gone ahead with a sale and purchase of property like this, without consulting their husbands?"

Pat didn't answer immediately. Finally he conceded, "It's true, my wife and Mary have been neighborly and friendly. Sarah's been over to their house a lot since the baby came. The Farmers' little boy, Peter, was born in March, a year ago."

WRONG OMEN

Pakistan police cautiously approached the mountain hideout of the notorious outlaw, Mohammed Rahim. Always elusive, he doubtless had been tipped off again, but they might flush him as they advanced. To their surprise they found him cowering in his retreat. "So you didn't know we were coming?" they asked, as they manacled him. "I knew," the bandit said. "But as I was about to leave I heard an owl hoot—it was an ill omen. I dared not flee."

—Charles Strauss

Pat paused, took a deep breath and then burst out, "But look, Mr. Carlisle—a man really gets to know a woman after a marriage of nearly thirty years. Sarah's never been close or secretive, never a liar."

Floyd Carlisle nodded understandingly.

"Suppose you wait here, Brennan. Make yourself comfortable," he suggested. "While I slip over to the courthouse and see what they've got on file."

The attorney's presence had been reassuring. His absence made the minutes tick slower and slower. Pat Brennan, far from comfortable, could only pace the floor. He stared unseeingly at the uniform and sturdy bindings of law books, volumes of reference and frowning tomes of time-honored precedents and procedures.

Carlisle returned within a half hour. "It's there, all right," he said. "A deed was executed and filed on the 17th of last October."

"Signed by my wife?"

"By Sarah Brennan, yes. Notarized here in Watertown," the lawyer answered.

"The 17th was what day of the week?" Brennan asked him quickly.

Carlisle consulted a desk calendar. "It was a Thursday," he said.

"Sarah wouldn't have come into Watertown that day."

"Why not?"

"She's secretary-treasurer of a Ladies' Aid Society. Takes her practically all day Thursdays."

"Not every Thursday?"

"Always the first and third Thursday of the month. And the 17th was the third Thursday in October."

It was Floyd Carlisle who now paced the carpeted oblong of his office floor. "I think," he said suddenly, "I'd better have you come and examine the deed for yourself."

The two men hastened across the square, entered the stately courthouse of New York's Jefferson County and scrutinized the document which recorded the legal transfer of title to the Brennan home in nearby Brownville.

"But, look," Pat exclaimed, "it says Sarah has sold to James D. Farmer. Nothing here says she's selling to Mary Farmer."

"I noticed that," said Carlisle. "It's rather puzzling, in view of your conversation with James Farmer last evening."

"I told you everything Jim Farmer said," Brennan said.

"Let's study your wife's signature," Carlisle proposed.

"It looks like Sarah's writing," Pat said grudgingly.

"Would you swear this document was signed by your wife?"

"Swearing to it," he murmured, "would mean having no doubt. . . . Of course, I'd like it not to be Sarah's."

It was urgent now, Carlisle explained, to obtain one or more of Sarah Brennan's signatures for comparison. Pat agreed to go at once and ask Sarah's cousin if she had a recent sample of Sarah's handwriting.

Meanwhile, Attorney Carlisle was making good progress. He took down the name of the notary who had officiated on October 17th last, when the deed ostensibly had been signed by Sarah Brennan. Then headed for the offices of a well-known local law firm. Here he asked to speak with Wilbur Hunt.

The young man to whom he was applying for information was not only a notary public but also a qualified member of the bar. It was a sure thing that Hunt was going to resent any inference or intimation that he had participated in a fraud.

In mastering this problem, Carlisle resorted to casualness. It was not too difficult to get young Hunt to recall the transaction of the past October 17th. Mrs. Brennan had come in from Brownville, Hunt related, bringing with her all details of the property of which she was about to dispose. The sum she was accepting from one, James D. Farmer, was recorded at $2100. She had duly executed the deed of property in Hunt's presence. After paying his fee, she had left.

Then, early in November, Mrs. Brennan had reappeared. Her errand was a second sale. Thus, about three weeks after selling her house and lot in Brownville to J. D. Farmer, Mrs. Brennan had come in to sign and record the further sale and transfer to the dwelling's new owner of all of its furniture and household furnishings. On this occasion she had not chosen to reveal the selling price.

"What sort of man would you say this James D. Farmer is?" Carlisle asked.

"I wouldn't say," Hunt replied. "I never saw him."

"In each instance you dealt with Mrs. Brennan alone?"

"Just with Mrs. Brennan. And what is your interest in this, Mr. Carlisle?"

"It so happens there is a Mr. Brennan. He seems to feel that his wife has acted in

a rather high-handed manner. In that she has disposed of a property which has long constituted their home in Brownville—a home toward the upkeep of which he has contributed regularly over a period of many years."

"I see," said Hunt. But his eyes wore a veiled look.

"Of course," Carlisle added pleasantly, "Mr. Brennan admits that his wife was sole owner. With every legal right to sell. But after twenty-seven years of marriage—"

"I beg your pardon?" Hunt interrupted. "I recall Mrs. Sarah Brennan very distinctly. She can't be a day over twenty-nine or thirty."

Hunt broke off lamely, having caught the small but lively gleam of interest in the eyes of Floyd Carlisle.

Carlisle knew he had done about all he could for his new client. The next move was up to the county authorities. And the county authority toward whom the lawyer's long strides were soon taking him was the sheriff of Jefferson County. He had his headquarters in the courthouse and his name was Ezra Bellinger.

Sheriff Bellinger gave the lawyer his close attention for a period of ten minutes. "I don't know any James Farmer hereabouts," Bellinger remarked at last. "But I keep thinking of something out of the past which connects up in my mind with the name, Pat Brennan."

The sheriff pulled out a deep lower drawer at one side of his old-fashioned roll-top desk. His strong, brown fingers probed into a thick mass of legal looking documents. He came up with a worn, leather-bound journal, blew off a venerable film of dust and began to turn its pages. "Here we are," he said finally.

While the sheriff studied his find in satisfied silence, Carlisle waited and watched him uneasily. Had Pat Brennan, whose current battles he had undertaken to fight on extremely short acquaintance, some sort of past? Even, perhaps, a police record in the older county archives?

"You say this Brennan told you he's been married twenty-seven years? Well," the sheriff said, "that checks. And some twenty-two years ago—when he and Sarah had only been married five years—Pat's mother, Mary Brennan, was murdered."

"Murdered! Brennan never said a word about that."

"Can you blame him? It was a long time ago. It must be a painful memory."

"Was Pat Brennan involved in this murder in any way?" Carlisle asked.

"No more than that the victim was his mother. And she was then residing in a house in Brownville only a very short distance from the one occupied by her daughter-in-law and son."

"Anything in the record you have there, sheriff, that would seem to connect Sarah Brennan with the murder?"

Bellinger shook his head. Again consulting the case book of his predecessor, the sheriff outlined the circumstances which had surrounded the homicidal fate of Patrick Brennan's mother. She was a woman known to be keeping a large sum of money in her home. She had mistrusted banks. A wave of bank failures in that unsettled era had persuaded many people to try to avoid the losses widely suffered by depositors.

One day Mary Brennan had been attacked in her home and beaten and choked so savagely that, after lingering for ten days, she had died. There had been several local suspects, according to the old record, and even a number of arrests had been made. But none had been brought to trial.

However, a certain Jed Rahls—who had been chiefly suspected of the fatal attack—had later been convicted of a similar crime and had drawn a 20-to-life sentence.

"Twenty to life?" Carlisle reflected. "This Rahls might be getting out just about now. We might have a revenge motive."

Bellinger favored the attorney with a keen and questioning glance. "You never mentioned that you suspect foul play."

"I didn't. But you just put the idea of a second homicide into my mind. Criminals often nurse grievances down through the years of a hard sentence."

"Could be," Bellinger agreed. "I'll get in touch with prison authorities at Clinton and find out about Jed Rahls. And what about Wilbur Hunt's description of a young Sarah Brennan, so young that she would have had to marry Pat between her second and third birthdays?"

Bellinger asked Carlisle to bring Brennan to see him. The sheriff stipulated that Pat must be kept from getting in contact with either James or Mary Farmer. Pat must not issue threats of going to law in this matter or voice any suspicions around Watertown so that they'd get back to Brownville and make the sheriff's investigation there more difficult.

"We can't tell yet what all may be behind this," Bellinger warned Carlisle. "So I don't want anybody put on guard."

The lawyer thereupon hurried to find Brennan, who was still at his cousin's house. Their search had not been too fruitful. They had found no recent or clear-cut Sarah Brennan signature. She had signed one picture postcard, "Love, S. B." And another card, "Your old but loving Cousin Sarrie."

However, the various specimens of the handwriting showed that Sarah wrote with a sure and practiced hand. Her penmanship was regular, but not precise.

"I'm convinced now that your wife never signed that property deed," the attorney said. "Though we have to keep quiet about it, the sheriff says. Leave it to him to handle this case."

"But what about Sarah? Where is she, do you suppose?" Pat asked, alarmed.

Carlisle had intended to question Brennan about the violent death of his mother many years ago and the later arrest of the prime suspect, Jed Rahls. But now, under the circumstances, the lawyer refrained.

Bellinger, meanwhile, had been in touch by telephone with the proper authorities. Jed Rahls, he learned, was out of prison. Rahls had been a queer and recalcitrant convict, forfeiting virtually all his time off for good behavior. As a result, he had served the full minimum of his 20-year sentence.

He was not now on parole, therefore, and his exact whereabouts were unknown. He had been unreconciled and resentful, often voicing vindictive threats. He had never been heard to threaten specifically any one in Brownville, however, or anybody named Brennan.

The sheriff, while waiting for this report on Jed Rahls to come through, had talked discreetly on the telephone with responsible residents of Brownville. At 4 P.M. Carlisle and his client, Patrick Brennan, were ushered into his office.

"Sarah's the kind who makes careful plans far in advance. She's never been moody," Brennan explained at once.

"She never did anything like this before?" Bellinger asked.

"Never."

"Well, in Brownville, James and Mary Farmer are acting like people who believe that they have a clear title to the Brennan property," said the sheriff. "Before noon today they were both telling it, how they'd bought the place from Sarah and are going to move into it tomorrow. They even began lining up a few of the neighbors to help them carry over their stuff."

For her part, Mary Farmer appeared to have some confidential knowledge of

Sarah's going away and her reason for going. Mary said that she guessed that Sarah just didn't want to be around, arguing any more with Pat Brennan about her right to dispose of a property she owned but had grown tired of. Both of the Farmers spoke of Pat in the warmest terms, however, explaining that they had granted him ample time in which to remove his personal effects.

"This is a difficult thing for you," the sheriff concluded. "But remember, I don't want you to have any sort of collision with Jim Farmer. You just let the law deal with this strange business. If you haven't heard from your wife by eight o'clock tomorrow morning, I'll have searching parties out before noon. And I'll give posses no rest until we have discovered your wife's whereabouts or found some clear proof of her having departed of her own free will."

The deepest anxiety possessed Pat Brennan. But the man's temper was rising, too. His wife seemed to have gone away, without even bothering to leave him a note. The next door neighbors were merely smug about it. They were preparing to appropriate Pat's home. They were beginning to pile up boxes and baskets, together with an upended barrel full of miscellaneous objects, on his front porch.

Warned of these provoking circumstances by the sheriff, Pat's attorney, Carlisle, now decided to drive him home and make sure that the promise exacted by the sheriff was faithfully kept. Good friends, it turned out, were waiting for Pat Brennan. They also had evidently feared a physical encounter with Jim Farmer. And so Pat's attorney, like Pat himself, was obliged to sit down to a hospitable supper.

In the end Carlisle stayed the night at Brennan's house. And it was he who, at precisely 8:01 on Saturday morning, April 25th, telephoned the sheriff.

Bellinger answered. "You've got news, I hope."

"Not a word or a sign! The whole situation here beats me," Carlisle reported. "Sheriff, you'll have to get out your search parties."

Bellinger, like every good sheriff in a sprawling and rural, lightly populated county, was an old hand with posses and searching parties. He beat his own promise of "before noon" by having two teams of six men each fanning out from Brownville by 11:30 A.M.

The sheriff's own immediate business was in Watertown and with the young notary public, Wilbur Hunt. "I understand," said Bellinger, "that you claim never to have laid eyes on either James D. Farmer of Brownville, or Mary, his wife."

"Claim? I told Mr. Carlisle yesterday that I had dealt exclusively with the seller, Mrs. Brennan."

"You dealt with a woman representing herself to be Mrs. Sarah Brennan."

"That, sheriff, is a conclusion with which I cannot associate myself."

"Now don't go legal on me, Wilbur," Bellinger said. "I want you to drive with me to Brownville."

"How can I ethically lend myself to an action adverse to a woman who is a client of mine?"

"All you did was notarize a couple of signatures. Nobody's going to blame you if a fraud has been perpetrated. Meanwhile I need you in what I suspect may turn out to be a homicide case. So I deputize you. You're a deputy sheriff now, Wilbur. Get your hat. We're in a hurry."

Speeding to Brownville, the sheriff drove straight to the house occupied by the Farmers. But the Farmers were now enthusiastically engaged in moving their possessions to the Brennan house.

Accompanying Bellinger was his chief deputy, Mark Thomas, as well as that newly minted deputy, Wilbur Hunt; and the sheriff told both men to wait in the car while he walked across the lawn to the front door of the white-frame house which Pat Brennan had just grimly vacated. It was on the porch of that disputed dwelling that the sheriff encountered a genial Jim Farmer and a silent and reserved Mary Farmer.

"I'm here, folks," he began disarmingly, "because it seems that you people were the last in this whole neighborhood to see and talk to Sarah Brennan on Thursday before she went away."

"Not me, sheriff. I was away myself—away all day," Farmer assured him.

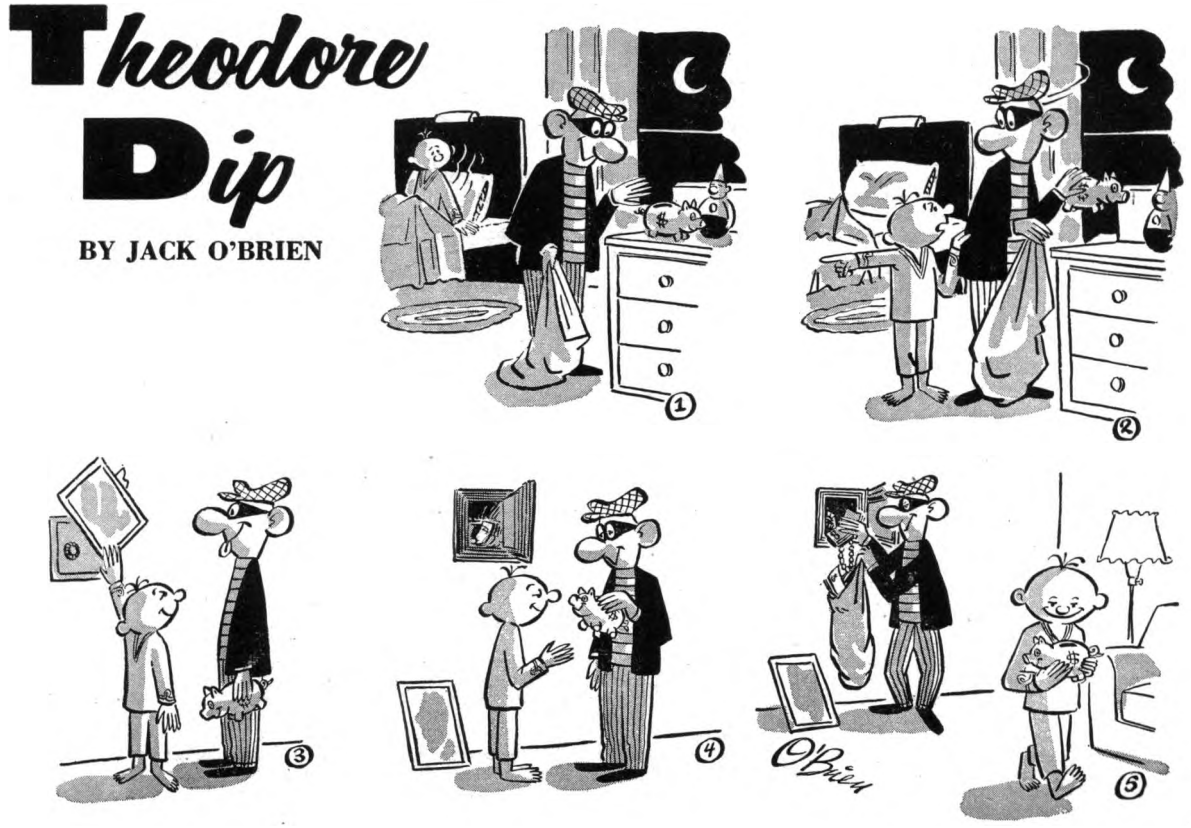
Mary Farmer was a slight young woman in her late twenties. She had dark brown hair and pale blue eyes. And her pale eyes shot a not quite expressionless glance at Jim as he spoke up so glibly. Then she said in a gentle voice," I guess, sheriff, I'm the one who can tell you all you want to know."

"How was Sarah Brennan dressed when she stepped over to say goodbye on Thursday morning?" the sheriff asked.

"She was all dressed up for going away. And I recollect saying to her, 'Why, Sarah dear, you didn't tell us you were going today?' And then she said, 'Why should I wait around, Mary? Pat's not going to forgive me for selling you and Jim the old place. I guess you've heard us quarreling about it, clear over here?' And, though I

Theodore Dip

BY JACK O'BRIEN



hate to tell this, I had heard 'em fighting—well, something awful."

The sheriff turned away and summoned his companions from the car. "Mark! Wilbur! Will you come here a minute, please?"

When Mary Farmer got a glimpse of Wilbur Hunt climbing out of the sheriff's automobile, she turned aside with unruffled composure and said, "If you'll excuse me, Sheriff, I got so much to do. As you can understand, this is really our busy day—"

"Just a moment more, Mrs. Farmer."

Wilbur Hunt was walking beside Deputy Thomas. "Why, hello, Mrs. Brennan," Hunt said politely.

"Mrs. Brennan did live here. I'm Mrs. Farmer—"

Wilbur Hunt, the young lawyer and notary public, flushed with chagrin, but Wilbur Hunt, the deputy, stood his ground. "Twice last fall I notarized documents for filing in the office of the county clerk," he said. "Each time you signed your name as Sarah Brennan."

'You sure have mistaken me for somebody else," Mary Farmer said boldly. "I never saw you before in my whole life."

Bellinger intervened amiably. "Then that's that," he said. "Thanks, Mrs. Farmer. Goodbye, folks."

Hunt found himself gently nudged and shouldered by Deputy Thomas. Mary Farmer, with a small, forgiving smile, turned and went into the Brennan house. While her husband stood in blank bewilderment as the three officers strode briskly back to the sheriff's car.

All the remaining hours of that Saturday and all day Sunday, the teams of searchers whom Bellinger was directing like a field commander combed over Jefferson County, everywhere seeking some word or clue that would help them trace Sarah Brennan.

The sheriff deputized more men. By 10 o'clock Monday morning, April 27th, Sarah Brennan had not been found or traced. She had not been seen by anyone for a matter of 96 hours.

Sheriff Bellinger was already in conference with Attorney Carlisle and Chief Deputy Thomas. Over the week end, said the sheriff, his investigators had acquired several excellent specimens of the legal signature of the missing Sarah Brennan. And comparing these with the two signatures which Wilbur Hunt had quite innocently notarized, had served to convince the county clerk himself that a fraud had been perpetrated.

The search parties had checked off every railroad station in the vicinity, every bus stop, tourist house, boarding house, wayside inn, even saloons and country taverns. At none had a woman answering Sarah Brennan's description put in an appearance, either on Thursday or at any time since.

Bellinger turned to Carlisle. "I expect your client will have to know," he said. "Perhaps Brennan already has figured it for himself. As for me, I'm now convinced that Sarah Brennan's dead. Murdered. Her body cleverly hidden."

Sarah Brennan had last been seen in Brownville between 9:40 and 10 A.M. Thursday. She had been seen during these few minutes by several responsible persons who knew her well; and to them she hadn't looked like a woman planning to go any farther from her home than, say, the Brownville post office, the sheriff said.

Sarah had been wearing a simple house dress and a light green sweater. This sweater was an old favorite of Sarah's, but certainly it was no outer garment that she would have chosen to wear if intending to visit her cousin.

According to Bellinger's investigation, the last two persons who recalled seeing Sarah out of doors were her old neighbors, elderly Mrs. Emma Sewall and her daughter, Amelia. At 10 o'clock Thursday morning these women had seen Sarah Brennan leave her own house, walk briskly toward the Farmers' dwelling and stand for a moment at the door.

And presently they had seen Mary Farmer let Sarah in. Nobody else in Brownville—or, for that matter, in all Jefferson County—had laid eyes on Sarah since!

Now Mary Farmer had told of Sarah's calling on her last Thursday morning at about 10 o'clock. But neither of the Sewalls had seen Sarah Brennan leave the Farmer house again, although Mary Farmer had repeatedly stated that Sarah had only stayed "ten or maybe fifteen minutes—just chatting" and then had gone on her way.

Mrs. Sewall wasn't feeling so well and she was out sunning herself on her side porch. She had had a clear view of the Farmer place, front and back, all this time. Therefore, if Sarah had come out of the Farmers' home and returned to her own, or started on her supposed trip to Watertown or wherever, Emma Sewall would have been practically certain to have seen her. Old Mrs. Sewall's powers of observation were a byword in the neighborhood.

There was a moment of hushed silence in the room as Bellinger finished his summing up.

"I have one question," Carlisle said. "Anything in the wind about that ex-convict, Jed Rahls?"

"That door's been slammed shut. I received a wire from the sheriff of Niagara County this morning. Rahls has settled in his jurisdiction and is behaving himself. Right now, in fact, he has to," Bellinger added. "Rahls is in the hospital with a fractured leg."

With regard to his next move in the Brennan case, the sheriff revealed that he was getting search warrants covering both the Farmers' and Brennans' place.

It was 11:20 A.M. on Monday when the sheriff and his party of ten descended upon the Farmers with search warrants. And as Bellinger's car and another driven by Chief Deputy Thomas pulled up in front of the Brennan place, a strange spectacle met the gaze of the men.

Brownville, it appeared, had declared a sort of martial law of its own. Neighbors, old and faithful friends of Pat and Sarah Brennan, had deployed in large numbers. They entirely surrounded and kept watch upon the Brennan home. Maybe the Farmer couple had contrived to move in. But they weren't being left to enjoy it—or to pick up suddenly and move elsewhere.

Jim Farmer, looking like a man in a daze, read the search warrants briefly, then submitted to the sheriff and stood aside. So did Mary Farmer, her 14-month-old son, Peter, clasped in her arms. The young woman's pale blue eyes seemed to express nothing as they turned coolly from one to another of the armed men with badges.

Bellinger ordered his searchers to begin. Jim Farmer sat in a Brennan rocking chair on the Brennan front porch and pretended to ignore the goings-on around him. Mary Farmer, too, seemed to show little interest in the progress of the searchers. By 12:30 the operation had narrowed down to the second floor and attic of the house.

Suddenly, hearing the sheriff's deep voice issuing orders from the top of the stairs, Mary came to life and communicated her anxiety to the placidly rocking Jim. "Those guys shouldn't go poking through my private things," she muttered harshly. "This is too much! The law leaves a woman and mother some privacy, don't it?"

She handed her small son to a surprised deputy, then pelted on up the stairs, with Jim hurrying at her heels. She found Bellinger, Deputy Thomas, two Brownville men and Carlisle studying the battered ex-

terior of an old Saratoga trunk which, being locked, defied interior exploration.

"And I'm telling you, sheriff, it's sure heavy. I should know," one of the Brownville volunteers was saying.

"What is it you know?" Jim Farmer asked.

"That this here trunk's heavy. Mary got my brother and me to carry it up here Saturday morning," said the man.

Jim turned to his wife. "Why up here?" he asked. "You said it was packed to store down cellar."

Mary addressed herself to the sheriff, "Nothing but old clothes and junk in that trunk. It hasn't been opened for years. You can't open it. The key is lost."

"Farmer, is your wife forbidding me to open this trunk?" Bellinger inquired.

"Forbidding, Sheriff? How can we?" Jim asked. "You got a search warrant."

"I sure have," Bellinger said. "Mark, get me a hammer."

The chief deputy was back in no time with a machinist's hammer, tough and strong. Bellinger used it on the old trunk's elderly lock—two sharp, accurate blows.

The curved lid came up with a grinding creak. Fumes of a sickening foulness swelled from the now yawning trunk. The concentrated search for the missing Sarah Brennan had come to an end.

The exclamations of the men present were shocked or stupefied or profane, or all three. Only Mary Farmer appeared to be unsickened and unperturbed by this ghastly discovery.

Sarah Brennan's body was doubled up in the trunk, with her head pushed down between her knees. She had been frightfully cut, hacked and gashed. She still wore the plain house dress and her favorite light green sweater, just as described by those friends who had last seen her alive. Her head, face and body, like her clothing and the interior of the trunk itself, were a blood-drenched horror.

In a tight voice Bellinger ordered that Jim Farmer and his wife be taken into immediate custody. He formally warned them both that anything they said would be taken down in evidence.

Coroner Pierce was hurriedly sent for. When he arrived from Watertown, he ordered a photograph taken of the body as it lay doubled up in the Farmers' trunk. Then he gave permission for it to be lifted out of the trunk and placed on a stretcher.

It was under a darkly blood-soaked blanket found beneath the body that the sheriff and his men now discovered what appeared to have been the murder weapon. This was a worn-looking, short-handled axe badly in need of cleaning. On both handle and axe-head were thick, rusty brown smears and stains.

The arrested couple was whisked away from Brownville and securely locked in the Jefferson County jail before public agitation could be generated by the spreading horror story.

That Mary or Jim Farmer could have displayed nerve enough to let two obliging neighbors carry a trunk concealing a murder victim's body from their home to an upstairs room in the victim's home, seemed almost unbelievable. The brothers who had been enlisted to carry the murder trunk told the sheriff that Mary Farmer hadn't seemed a bit solicitous or worried about the trunk. They had found it locked and standing in one corner of the Farmers' living room when asked by Mary to do her the "nice favor" of lugging it some forty yards across the lawn, then up a flight of stairs.

The body was removed to Watertown by Coroner Pierce for a post mortem examination. And the announcement on Tuesday of his autopsy findings proved nearly as shocking to the community as the facts about the body's discovery had been.

Death, according to Peirce, had been caused by a terrific blow on the head. There had been a number of severe blows. The autopsy found that Sarah Brennan's skull and both sides of her jaw were fractured. Her face was mutilated almost beyond recognition and two of her teeth knocked out. There were many cuts and bruises on the face, head and left arm. Her left ear was nearly severed.

Coroner Pierce gave it as his opinion that Sarah Brennan had probably not been dead when thrown into the trunk, despite the savage hacking and beating.

Jim Farmer, lodged in a cell, continued to assert his total innocence. He was, he said, revolted by the crime and hadn't been at home on Thursday when it was committed.

Also incarcerated and brooding, Mary Farmer decided to confess:

"Mrs. Brennan came over to our house about ten o'clock last Thursday morning. Jim and me were there. Mrs. Brennan hadn't been in the room more than two minutes when someone went by the house up the street. She stepped up to the window to see who it was, and as she leaned over to look out, I struck her over the head with an axe. She fell down on the floor and died right there. We then put her in the trunk, which we had all ready."

Presently Mary signed a new confession which was said to have been influenced by a promise that, although jailed, she would not be separated from her young son. So this second time the motherly Mary Farmer saw things in a different light and solemnly shifted the blame to her husband:

"Well, Jim done it. And he done it in the next room to the one I told you I did it in. Mrs. Brennan was looking out the window, just as I told you, and when she stooped over, he swung the axe down on her head, saying, 'There — — you, I have fixed you now.' She fell over on a piece of felt and bled some on it. The trunk was all ready and we put her in it. I burned the piece of felt up."

Both the Farmers were immediately indicted for murder in the first degree. Both entered pleas of not guilty.

Bellinger, his aides and all prosecuting authorities were disposed to see in Mary the far guiltier member of the Farmer couple, in spite of her copious confessings. The motive had been a covetous obsession to take over Sarah Brennan's nicer house next door, whether by fair means or foul. She had plotted with cunning and killed with ease. Whereas Jim Farmer was recognized by them as a dominated and unaggressive type, unlikely to want anything on earth so badly that he would plot and kill to get it.

The slaying of Sarah Brennan had occurred on Thursday morning, April 23rd, 1908. And in less than two months' time, on Tuesday, June 9th, 1908, Mary Farmer went on trial for her life in Watertown, with Justice Watson M. Rogers presiding.

The trial lasted ten days. Mary's plea was insanity, and it appears to have impressed no one. Her jury deliberated for only three hours, then brought in a guilty verdict with no recommendation of mercy. This, says the old record, was the shortest time ever taken by a jury in Jefferson County to render a verdict in a murder trial. In the same spirit, Justice Rogers was prompt in sentencing Mary Farmer to die in the electric chair. Her execution, first designated for August, was stayed by an appeal.

Jim Farmer came to trial in October of this same year, before Justice P. C. J. De Angelis. And Jim, too, on October 31st, 1908, found that he had failed to persuade twelve hard-headed jurors of his role of hapless bystander to the savage slaying.

Mary Farmer's appeal in due course was rejected by the Court of Appeals. Her attorney's last resort was to apply to the governor of New York for clemency. The famous Charles Evans Hughes was then governor; and the future presidential candidate and eminent Chief Justice of the United States rejected Mary Farmer's plea with judicial care but with explicit firmness.

Governor Hughes pointed out, as had the appeals court justices before him, that the murder had been a particularly brutal one and unquestionably premeditated, inasmuch as Mary Farmer had impersonated her intended victim and twice forged her signature many months before the murder.

Mary and Jim, both doomed to die, were confined in Auburn Prison. Mary, if electrocuted, would be only the second woman to suffer this relatively new form of execution in New York State. Whereupon a great sentimental clamor went up, demanding mitigation of the death sentence.

The evening before Mary was due to be executed, she and her husband were permitted to talk with one another. Through a heavy metal screen, the two condemned Farmers conversed in a pleasant and unemotional way for about one hour.

Mary Farmer, at the brink of doom, made confession to the Roman Catholic chaplain of Auburn Prison, the Reverend J. J. Hickey, confiding to him that she alone had plotted and done the foul deed, and in every way exonerating her husband. Father Hickey was himself bound by the secrecy of the confessional, but he succeeded in persuading her to repeat her statement in the presence of a notary whom he brought to her cell.

Mary Farmer was executed in the electric chair at Auburn on Monday morning, March 29th, 1909, in the presence of twenty witnesses, five of them women. Justice had been prompt. The electrocution took place just a year, less 25 days, from the date of the axe-slaying of Sarah Brennan.

Mary's sworn statement and the good offices of Father Hickey resulted in saving the life of Jim Farmer. The Court of Appeals was moved to void Jim's death sentence, and in the end his prison term was reduced to one year ◆◆◆

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The names, Wilbur Hunt, Jed Rahls, Emma and Amelia Sewall, as used in the foregoing story, are not the real names of the persons concerned. These persons have been given fictitious names to protect their identities.

WRONG BLONDE

The drunk staggered up to the pretty blonde. "Lady," he hiccupped, "would you give me a hand across the street, please? I'm so tight . . ."

"Certainly," the blonde said pleasantly. She cupped a hand under his elbow and steered him across the street, right into the Norfolk, Virginia, police station.

The blonde was a Norfolk policewoman.

—Albert Lippe

One-Man Graveyard

(*Continued from page 31*)

Young Melick said he had given little thought to the possibility of foul play, for his father had no enemies and nobody would have considered him a rich prospect for a robbery.

The next morning Kempf, Walker and Deputy Sheriff William Hoop Jr., headed for Mount Nebo. Again, Reese was walking with his dog. He greeted Kempf cordially.

"Still looking for your friend?" he asked. Then he noticed Walker. "Say, I know you, don't I?" The deputy nodded and introduced Hoop. Reese shook hands with the three officers and invited them to make themselves at home.

"We'd like to look around, if you don't mind," Kempf said.

"Not at all, go right ahead," Reese said.

Walker and Hoop started in different directions while Kempf headed toward the house with Reese. Inside, the sheriff noticed some semblance of order, though it was obvious Reese was far from an efficient housekeeper.

"My sister comes out once in a while and helps clean up," Reese volunteered.

"It's strange," the sheriff said, "but Mr. Patton had your name on a list of prospects. Yet, you told me you didn't know him and weren't interested in an automobile."

"That's right," Reese asserted.

"How do you suppose Mr. Patton got your name?"

Reese hesitated briefly, then replied, "I wouldn't know. I sure don't need no fancy car."

"He was here, wasn't he, and you went for a ride with him, didn't you?" Kempf demanded.

"I never saw him," Reese insisted. "What is this?"

"What time was Mr. Patton here?" Kempf persisted.

"I tell you, he wasn't here. I never saw him, and I have plenty to do without answering a lot of fool questions."

Kempf ignored the reply and asked, "Do you own this farm?"

"No, my sister does, but I run it. I make a pretty good profit from the oil."

Kempf had seen the three wells and had heard gasoline engines working. "Let's go and look at them," he suggested.

Reese followed the sheriff outside and walked over to where the engines were pumping a slight trickle of oil into barrels. Kempf played his flashlight down the huge pits, one by one, but could see little.

Reese smiled and said, "All you'll find down there is oil."

For hours Kempf wandered over the farm, two hundred acres of which Reese said were untillable. Meanwhile, Walker and Hoop were covering other parts of the vast tract, looking in outbuildings, peering between and under bushes.

Part of the cement walk leading to Reese's porch was cracked and loose. Kempf tried to lift a section of it, but couldn't.

Reese grinned and said, "Guess you're not in condition. Here, let me do it for you." He picked up a slab. "I don't know what you're looking for, but don't let me stop you."

Kempf kicked at the dirt, which was hard, and said, "Okay, put the cement back."

Reese did so. "I guess I'll have to fix it when I get a chance, but it seems I never get time," he commented.

A sudden shout made Kempf turn and he saw his two deputies running toward the house.

"We found the car," Hoop announced.

"All right, Reese, let's go," Kempf ordered.

The deputies led the way to a wooded area about half a mile from the house. Hidden by tall bushes was a brand new Hudson sedan. The registration number was the one for which an alarm had been broadcast. There was no sign of a struggle on the ground surrounding it.

"What about it?" Kempf demanded. "Whose car is this?"

"It's mine. I bought it," Reese declared.

"You said you didn't need a car."

"Sure, that's right. I had a new car, what would I do with another one?"

"But this is the car Mr. Patton was driving," Kempf said. "What happened to him?" The sheriff spoke spowly and softly, for he realized he was dealing with a man who once had been a mental patient and he did not want to arouse him.

"I don't know anything about any Mr. Patton," Reese answered.

Convinced now that Patton had met a violent death, Kempf continued to question Reese, but the farmer insisted he had bought the car and refused to say anything else. The officers took him to Coshocton and lodged him in the county jail.

That night, Kempf organized a searching party to go to the woods and hills near Nellie to start an intensive search for Patton's body.

Sixteen men headed for the countryside at dawn. Half of them went to the Reese farm. At 10:15 Waldo Finton, of Fresno, stood at the edge of a newly plowed field about a quarter-mile northwest of the farmhouse. He could see nothing, but he walked through the plot, looking to the left and to the right. When he had gone about twenty-five feet he stumbled over a rock and sprawled across a furrow. As he fell he noticed a human form—a man whose head had been bashed in. He stared, horror-stricken, for a moment, then rose and ran, shouting, to where Sheriff Kempf was raking some dirt. Breathlessly, he reported his discovery.

There was no doubt now of what had happened. The search was over.

While waiting for Dr. J. C. Briner, county coroner, who was notified immediately, Kempf observed what he thought was a trail of blood. He followed it about 100 feet to an open clearing. Here was a large patch of discolored earth.

"This is where it happened," the sheriff said. "Reese must have dragged Patton by the feet, face down, along the ground. He could have picked him up bodily and dumped him in the furrow, he's strong enough. You should have seen him pick up a cement block."

Meanwhile, spurred by the discovery of Patton's body, the volunteers covered ground quickly. Two of them found a heavy oak club, about the size of a baseball bat, about 75 yards from the body. It appeared bloodstained.

When Dr. Briner arrived he corroborated Kempf's views, said Patton undoubtedly had been dead from two to three days and that the oak club probably was the murder weapon.

The body was removed to Coshocton, the club was turned over to laboratory men for analysis, and fingerprint men went over the automobile.

Back in the county jail, Kempf again confronted Reese, who said calmly, "You found out, didn't you?" He refused to say any more.

Kempf and Walker drove back to the farm with their prisoner. Following their car were two others, containing newspaper reporters, deputies and friends of the slain man. As Kempf and Walker each held

one of Reese's arms, the farmer stood at the edge of the plowed field and said simply, "We got into a fight and I just beat him up."

"What about your friend, Lester Melick? Did you kill him, too?" Kempf asked.

"I don't know anything about it," Reese shouted.

"You were the last one to see him," Kempf said.

"I left him drinking; I don't know where he went."

Reese was taken back to jail, this time charged with the murder of Clyde Patton.

Harry Melick, the missing man's son, asked permission to speak to the prisoner, but Reese refused to talk to him. On Wednesday night, June 9th, Melick and Dudley Woolson, Lester Melick's son-in-law, told the sheriff they would like to return to Reese's farm and search further.

"It's a big farm," Kempf reminded them.

Melick nodded. "I know it," he said, "but I've got a hunch my father's there, too. I'd like to look."

"Okay," said Kempf.

The sun beat down mercilessly as Harry Melick and Woolson arrived at the farmhouse the next morning. They looked over the terrain, trying to decide on a starting point. Without a word, as though by prearrangement, they separated, Woolson heading north along the narrow road that ran through the farm, and Melick walking almost due east from the house. Every few feet, each man pushed his pitchfork into the ground, but without results. In the distance, along Route 715, they could hear a car roll by occasionally. Once in a while one man called to the other, their voices echoing an eerie accompaniment to their weird search.

At noon, after about three hours of useless digging, they met at the house. Melick wiped the perspiration from his face with a handkerchief.

"Ready to give up?" Woolson asked.

"No," Melick replied. "We've started, and I can't help think we're going to find Pop."

"All right, then, we'll keep on," said Woolson.

Yard by yard they went, each going his own way. The hours passed and the sun moved to the west. Harry Melick dug as though impelled by a force that kept telling him time was short. He was drenched to the skin with the sweat of his labor, jabbing at the ground here, spading the earth there. It had been hot and dry, and the soil was hard. He reached a slope covered with grass, grown tall but parched, unwashed by rain. Overhead, the crying of crows seemed to mock him.

The land had a peculiar roll, almost as though a gardener had spaded it into a series of hills for cucumbers and then changed his mind, sowing grass seed instead. Harry Melick pushed his fork into the turf; it hardly yielded. He glanced about him; the grass nearby didn't seem quite as green as in this one spot. Again and again, he broke the earth; and suddenly, he noticed a tattered bit of cloth as he turned the soil over. His perspiration felt cold and his heart pounded; his mouth was dry.

He got to his knees and dug with his hands. Slowly, an inch at a time, he scooped out the earth and scraped his nails on a piece of bone. Nervously, feverishly, he continued to dig, and then he knew. He had unearthed part of a human skull!

"Dudley! Dudley!" he screamed.

"Har-ry!" came the answer, and in a few moments Woolson came running. He stared at the scooped-out soil, then at the bone, then at Melick. Silently, both men began digging, carefully, slowly, breathlessly.

A minute later, they unearthed more shreds of cloth, then another section of skull. Finally Melick spoke. "Harry, I told you. It's Pop. Stay here while I call the sheriff."

Melick ran to the car and drove a short distance down Route 715 to a filling station. It was 4.05 P.M. when he was connected with Kempf's office.

"Sheriff," he said huskily, "I found my father."

"Stay there. I'll be right out," Kempf told him.

Because Melick's disappearance had been reported in Knox County, Kempf called Sheriff Cochran. Soon, the two sheriffs and several deputies were at the scene. Immediately they went to work on the partially exposed grave. From the top, where the two sections of human skull were revealed some five inches below the grass, the men moved down the slope, inch by inch, lifting dirt with a trowel, then by hand, and occasionally with a spade.

At last a body was revealed in sitting position. There was nothing left of the face, and the hands had decomposed.

"Looks like a medium-sized man," Cochran remarked. His report of Lester Melick indicated the missing man was of average height, weighed about 150 pounds and wore about a Size 8 shoe.

The clothing in the grave consisted of a leather jacket, a blue denim work shirt, two pairs of trousers and brown oxford dress shoes.

"Dad often wore two pairs of pants in cold weather," Harry Melick said. "And it was cold around Thanksgiving time."

"The law requires a formal identification," Kempf said, "and it's going to be difficult. Do you recognize the clothes?"

"I don't know, but I guess we can check on the sizes."

"Maybe," said Kempf. "This body's been in the ground an awful long time. Can't identify it by fingerprints. Did your father have any dental work done?"

"Oh, sure, he had both upper and lower plates."

As the men stood talking, two more deputies arrived with Reese, who was manacled to a restraining belt. The prisoner was walked to the open grave, where he stared at the corpse.

"What about it, Cleet?" Kempf asked.

"Nothing. I don't know a thing."

"Did you kill him?" Kempf demanded.

"I don't know a thing, I said."

Harry Melick, who was being kept at a safe distance from the suspect, pushed his way to within three feet of the man and pleaded, "Why did you kill him? He was your friend."

"I don't know anything about it," Reese insisted. "Why don't you let me alone?"

As the body was placed in a hearse, Reese watched intently but remained silent. Everyone stared at him, looking for some sign of emotion, but Reese exhibited only curious interest. After the hearse was driven away, he was taken back to jail.

The rest of the party followed the hearse. Lester Melick's dentist, Dr. Carl H. Sellers, of Danville, was summoned to make the formal identification with the help of his dental charts.

At the funeral parlor, Kempf asked young Melick, "What size belt did your father wear?"

"Thirty-four, I guess."

"Take a look at this," Kempf said. "It's the belt the dead man wore. Do you recognize it?"

"Not especially. But after all, I wouldn't be likely to."

"Well, Harry, it's size 38." The sheriff paused momentarily, then gave him a pair

DAN MURPHY HERO

by BARTON D. JENKINS

RIVERS OF SWEAT soaked Patrolman Murphy's uniform. He squirmed and dreamed of vacation plans. He watched the lunchgoers swarming across New York's 42nd Street in the July sun, glanced annoyed at the swarthy zoot-suiter dodging across 6th Avenue against traffic. A man scurried from a jeweler's, pointed to the zoot-suiter and yelled to Murphy, "It's a holdup."

Murphy plunged into the traffic. The crook saw him, leaped onto a crowded bus. The bus started west on 42nd Street.

Murphy banged on the door and the bus stopped. Murphy jumped in, stared into the thug's gun. The filled bus was deathly silent.

Murphy's right fist smashed into the thug's gun hand. The gun flew into a woman's lap. Murphy hauled the struggling bandit up the aisle.

Murphy felt something hard in his side. Pain seared his stomach as the gunman pumped three bullets from a second revolver.

Murphy let go, sick with nausea. He must get some air or he'd faint. He staggered to the door, clutching his stomach. The driver understood, opened the door. Murphy fell in a heap in the gutter. The door slammed shut again.

Murphy wrested his revolver from its holster, pulled himself painfully to his feet against the side of the bus.

Leaning against the bus, he ducked below view, worked his way to an open window opposite the imprisoned thug.

The gunman saw him, fired. Murphy took careful aim between the heads of two passengers, triggered four shots.

The thug spun on his heels, fell dead. Murphy had fainted. Months later, with no vacation plans, Murphy left the hospital. He came out of his gun duel with Joe Fernandez a detective and Honor Medal man, assigned to the tough 17th Precinct. He is at home there.

of shoes. "You said your father wore Size eight. These are nine and a half."

Harry Melick seemed surprised. "Well," he said finally, "Dad wasn't proud. He worked on a lot of farms and you know how it is. Lots of times a man will give his hired hand some things he doesn't need any more. That's probably what happened."

"Except that these shoes are almost new," Kempf said. "Your father wouldn't buy shoes a size and a half too big, would he?"

"I don't know what to think," Melick replied.

Dr. Sellers arrived, talked briefly to Harry Melick and then was taken to view the sections of skull. In a few minutes he was back.

"Harry," he said, "it's not your father's body!"

"What?" exclaimed Melick. "What are you talking about?"

"I took care of your dad," the dentist answered. "He didn't have a single one of his own teeth left. The man you dug up had four lower teeth and one upper."

Every man in the room stood stunned. Slowly realization and new fears dawned. Harry Melick had searched for his father's body, only to find another's. What awful secrets did Cletus Reese's farm hold? How many others might be buried there?

"What do we do now?" Deputy Walker asked.

"Do?" Kempf roared. "We dig. God knows what else we'll come up with. I want that farm turned over from beginning to end. We'll get an army of volunteers."

That night the local radio station broadcast the sheriff's appeal for men to show up at the murder farm early Friday morning, and issued a description of the second anonymous body.

When Kempf reached the farm Friday morning he found more than 50 volunteers. Within an hour the number grew to nearly 200.

"I don't know that we'll find anything," he told the crowd, "but I don't want anyone digging alone. Split up in groups of two, three or four and turn the ground over carefully.

"And if anyone uncovers anything that looks suspicious, stop digging immediately. Send one of your party to the house or one of the outbuildings. There'll be officers stationed at all the buildings and there'll be others roving the property."

Meanwhile, in Knox and Coshocton Counties, dozens of missing persons records were being studied and from many parts of Ohio men and women visited the funeral parlor in an effort to identify the body or the clothing that had been disinterred. Local and long distance telephone calls were made to municipal, county and state authorities as wives, sons and fathers of men long missing sought information.

Among those who went to the funeral home was Al Grant, of Gambier, Ohio, who explained he was the father-in-law of Paul Tish, a one-time patient in the Cambridge State Mental Hospital.

"My wife and I read about the discovery of that body last week," said Grant. "Then we heard that the man who was arrested also was a patient at Cambridge. We got to thinking about Paul. He walked out of the hospital on December 8th, 1952. Nobody ever saw him again. We thought it was only a coincidence about Reese's being in the same hospital, but we heard the radio broadcast about the second body and we're afraid it may be Paul."

Grant said that Paul Tish had been 39 years old when he vanished. Born on February 4th, 1913, his father died when Paul was only five, in the influenza epidemic of 1918. When his mother died soon afterward, the child was taken to the Knox County Children's Home as a ward.

"We used to live in Knox County," Grant said, "and we took him in as a foster son. He eventually married our daughter. During the war he served in the navy. He was on an LST, landing soldiers under fire in southern France, Italy and later on Okinawa."

He was discharged from service as physically well, but after he returned home he did not seem himself, Grant explained.

"He was placed in the hospital in the hope of bringing about a readjustment to civilian life, but he escaped several times. He always came to us. Then, the last time, when he ran off in December, we didn't hear from him.

"We knew something had happened to him and we were worried. We read the papers for accounts of accidents and we inquired in all the hospitals. We tried to trace him through the Veterans Administration, but he had disappeared. He was always a good boy, but after he came home from the war he needed help."

The sizes worn by the anonymous dead man coincided with his son-in-law's.

"Just before he escaped the last time," Grant explained, "he wrote us to say he was going to have most of his teeth pulled."

From Lewis Marshall, superintendent of the Knox County Home, came another inquiry about Paul Tish. Marshall said that Tish frequently had visited the Home in his adult years.

"He sort of felt it was where he grew up," Marshall explained. "Just before Paul was sent to Cambridge the last time, he came to see me. He was down on his luck and he needed shoes badly. I bought him a pair—Size nine and a half."

He looked at the shoes that had been on the dead man's feet and asserted he was sure they were the same kind he had bought for Tish.

Out at Mount Nebo, where the discovery of two bodies already had prompted many to dub the place Murder Ridge, the roads were clogged as thousands of young and old drove slowly along the countryside in the hope of catching a glimpse of the army of searchers. As the mercury hovered close to 100, at least 500 persons swarmed over the farm. Most of them were digging, but some merely were sightseeing, a grim holiday for them, while the determined battalions of shovelers and spaders turned the earth over, looking for a body, yet hoping they would find none.

In one group were Guy Blankenship, Wayne Lowery, Ray Shuck and Clyde Almack, some 75 yards southeast of the farmhouse and only a few yards behind a barn.

The ground, almost level and grass-

covered, sank slightly at one point. Almost simultaneously, the four men put forks into the earth and almost as one they noticed a scrap of plaid cloth about eight inches below the surface.

The men went to their knees and carefully dug by hand. More and more plaid cloth was exposed. It was part of a man's shirt.

In response to a hurried alarm, Sheriffs Kempf and Cochran and half a dozen officers hastened to the scene, and somehow word got around the farm.

It was 1:15 P.M. The crowd grew and buzzed excitedly. As officers aided Kempf in removing the dirt from the shallow pit, a human form became outlined—a skull, obviously crushed, a plaid shirt, heavy, dark trousers, a pair of old shoes.

Harry Melick stood silently and stared. "That's Dad," he sobbed suddenly. "It's his shirt." He turned slowly away from the grave and two men helped him to his car.

"That's Lester Melick," screamed Mrs. James Flack, who had employed him on her farm. "Many's the time I've washed that plaid shirt."

She, too, had to be assisted away from the pit.

Again a corpse was removed to an undertaking parlor. There Lester Melick's dentist was summoned for the second time, and now he made a positive identification, for the dentures he had constructed remained intact in the man's mouth. This was the end of the long search for a man who had disappeared for no valid reason, a man who last had been seen having a convivial drink with his friend Cletus Reese.

Deputy Sheriff Hoop went to Reese's cell. "We found your friend Melick this afternoon and you're going to take a look at him," he said.

Reese shrugged his shoulders. "I'm ready," he said. "I'll go this way."

Hoop took him, minus shirt or undershirt, his hands chained behind him. There, on slabs, lay what remained of Lester Melick and the man thought to be Paul Tish. Reese stared but said nothing.

For nearly an hour Hoop questioned the powerfully built farmer, and for nearly an hour Reese stood or sat calmly, saying not a word. The attempt to loosen his tongue having failed again, he was locked up.

On Saturday morning, Hoop took the two sections of the unidentified man's skull to the Cambridge State Hospital for examination by Dr. John Bennett, Paul Tish's dentist. The rest of the body was sent to Columbus for pathological study. Dr. Bennett checked his X-ray pictures of Paul Tish's jaws and compared them with the teeth in the skull. "In my opinion, there is not the slightest doubt that this is Paul Tish's skull," he announced.

In Columbus pathologists in University Hospital studied the bone structure of the skeleton and checked descriptions of the missing man. There seemed little doubt that the year and a half search for Paul Tish was at an end.

The next day, the last proof that the body was Tish's came in a report from the state crime laboratory that laundry and dry cleaning marks from clothing on the corpse had been traced to the ex-sailor.

Checking on Cletus Reese, police learned from Dr. Arthur Hopwood, superintendent at Cambridge, that he had been a patient from August 16th to Christmas Eve, 1951.

"When he first came to us he had delusions," Dr. Hopwood said. "He talked of some of his neighbors killing soldiers and of some people trying to kill him by evil power. He responded to shock treatment, however, and on Christmas Eve he was released for a trial visit."

Occasional reports from home told of improvement, then of trouble, Dr. Hopwood said, and the hospital suggested several times that Reese be brought back for re-examination.

"Apparently his condition was not bad enough to warrant re-commitment," Dr. Hopwood stated. "There was no history of violence when he was in the hospital."

Kempf, meanwhile, tried to get more admissions from the prisoner, who for days talked freely about everything except the murders. Finally, Reese admitted he knew a man named Tish, but denied killing him.

"You might as well tell us the whole story," Kempf urged him.

"All right," Reese said, "I'll tell you. I can't take much more of this. But three is all. You won't find any more. I did it, but that's all, only three."

As for Patton, he dismissed the subject with the statement: "We had a fight; that's all there is to it."

"Tish came to my house," he said. "He was a soldier. We had a difference over theology and I shot him."

"You shot him?" Kempf asked.

"Yes, with a .22 caliber Smith and Wesson I bought in Roscoe."

Kempf and his men had made thorough searches of the house and had found no gun. Moreover, the autopsy reports in all three cases showed death was caused by fractured skulls.

"I shot him in the living room," Reese went on. "I shot all three of them. I put the gun back in a cupboard drawer."

He denied bludgeoning any of the victims and when asked about the oak club, he became infuriated.

"I won't tell you any more if you talk like that," he shouted. "I shot them, but three is all, only three."

He said that after killing each man he went through his pockets, "but they didn't have much." From one—he could not remember which—he took a wallet with "the picture of a pretty blond woman in Florida." From another he got $5 and from the third only a few cents in change.

Murder Ridge had given up its secrets, but it hadn't told the reasons for the crimes. Perhaps they will remain forever locked in the recesses of a tortured mind. However, a Coshocton County Grand Jury returned an indictment charging Reese with first-degree murder on two counts in the case of Clyde Patton. The first charged that he "unlawfully, purposely and of deliberate malice" slew the teacher, and the second that he committed murder while perpetrating or attempting to perpetrate a robbery.

County Prosecutor Robert A. Carton said action on the other two murders would be held in abeyance and Reese would be sent to the Lima, Ohio, State Hospital for a 60-day observation period. If found sane, he would be brought to trial on the Patton murder indictment.

Whether ruled sane or not, it was clear the 36-year-old farmer would be removed from society for a long time. ◆◆◆

EDITOR'S NOTE:
The name Al Grant, as used in the foregoing story, is not the real name of the person concerned. This person has been given a fictitious name to protect his identity.

Dewey—Gangbuster to Governor

(*Continued from page 35*)

find, and have it delivered to his own night club to be dispensed at fancy prices without cost to himself. The cop did three years because of a poor memory on his tax returns.

These, however, were sitting duck targets in a shooting gallery, so far as Tom Dewey was concerned. He pointed his safari into the jungle of the underworld and drew a bead on a real king of its beasts, one Irving Wexler, known in mobdom as Waxey Gordon.

Waxey was a dark, pudgy, unimpressive looking man, but his bank balance strongly belied his appearance. In two years, Dewey and his investigators discovered, Waxey's three breweries and sundry other criminal ventures had earned him $4,500,000.

He owned two Broadway hotels. He angeled Broadway shows. He lived in a ten-room apartment on fashionable West End Avenue. He boasted a $4000 library in which a book never had been opened. He sent his sons to exclusive private schools.

And when Waxey heard he had been indicted for income tax evasion, he answered with a great laugh. "Who's gonna testify against Waxey Gordon?" he wanted to know.

Tom Dewey answered right back. His witnesses were bullet proof—bank accounts, the evidence of handwriting experts, the linking of small checks to huge bank deposits. And there were two live witnesses, a scared brewmaster and a waitress who could tell something of the Waxey Gordon enterprises.

Waxey paid his back taxes, was slugged with an $80,000 fine, and got ten years in prison.

Waxey was a ruined man thereafter. When he got out of prison, New York policemen, acting on orders, made it a point to haul him in for vagrancy whenever he was spotted in public. He got into other jams, chiefly involving dope, and finally, old and beaten, he died in 1951.

Gordon's trial stunned the underworld.

Dutch Schultz—his real name was Arthur Flegenheimer—the Bronx beer baron and the man who, in 1932, took over the Harlem policy racket and built it into a $100,000-a-year bonanza, took to the tall timber when he found out the vigorous "Baby Prosecutor" was readying a tax charge against him.

Schultz remained in hiding until Dewey, acting as U. S. Attorney after George Medalie resigned, was shunted out of the job by a Democratic administration—Dewey has always been a staunch Republican—late in 1933.

With Dewey out of the way, Dutch returned to daylight, stood trial for tax evasion in Malone, New York, and was acquitted.

The acquittal disappointed Dewey. It incensed fiery little Fiorello LaGuardia, the reform mayor of New York. "That bum Dutch Schultz, he better stay out of New York," piped the "Little Flower".

"I'll be back tomorrow," Schultz challanged, but his appearances thereafter in the city were wholly undercover.

In the summer of 1935 racketeering had so spread over New York that a "runaway" grand jury demanded that a special prosecutor be appointed to stamp it out. After some political bickering, Tom Dewey was chosen for this post, on the strength of the showing he had made as U. S. Attorney.

Dewey took a floor in the Woolworth Building, the dowager queen of New York's downtown skyscrapers, selected a staff after interviewing some 4000 applicants for jobs, set up an elaborate system of guards and hooked up a phone cable, direct to telephone company headquarters, which could not possibly be tapped.

He went quietly to work, so quietly, indeed, that the public and racketeers alike came to believe that he was merely a figurehead, a fish thrown to the barking seal of civic morality to silence its demanding yelps.

When the first result of his investigations was announced, political foes roared with glee. This was the arrest of a 19-year-old boy for breaking store windows of shopkeepers who refused to pay "protection." St. George had tilted at a dragon—and speared a dragonfly.

Then, without fanfare, Dewey cut loose on one of the most vicious of all the rackets.

All over the city the unlicensed loan sharks operated their bloodsucking business of preying upon unfortunates who needed money in a hurry. It was easy to borrow from one of these leeches. It was almost impossible to pay back, at the fantastic rates of interest the loan sharks assessed.

A mailman, for example, who borrowed $50, paid $5 a week for 20 weeks, and found that he then owed $75—$25 more than the original loan!

Refusal or inability to pay invariably meant beatings by thugs in the loan sharks' employ.

Everyone in New York knew about the racket. It was estimated that one out of every 30 persons in the city was in hock for life to a loan shark. But nobody wanted to testify against them. Prospective witnesses feared that reprisals for squealing would be even more drastic than the sluggings for delinquent payments of a loan.

As Special Rackets Prosecutor, appointed directly by Governor Herbert H. Lehman, Dewey had chosen his headquarters in the Woolworth Building for a particular reason. Its many entrances and exits would be almost impossible for gangland monitors to watch, and potential rackets witnesses, even if they were spotted around the building, might easily be going to any of a couple of hundred offices other than Dewey's.

Thus such witnesses, who never would go within a block of New York District Attorney's official and well known headquarters, would answer Dewey's summons. And, under cajolery, with promises of complete protection, and a few under threats of citation for contempt, some of them began to talk.

Tom Dewey's first big blow as rackets prosecutor was the indictment and eventual conviction of 36 loan sharks.

He turned next to vice. A few years earlier about 2000 girls, working under a large number of independent bookers, had been shifted around some 300 houses in New York. It was a business that netted about $40,000 a night, with the bookers and the madams cutting in on each prostitute's earnings.

Then organized crime stepped in. A big combine strong-armed its way to complete control of prostitution in the city, eliminating the independent bookers, and swinging the girls around the syndicate's houses like performers on an old vaudeville circuit.

There were strong-arm "enforcers," collectors, bail bondsmen, lawyers to get the girls out of jail when "policy" arrests were made, a few doctors to keep the merchandise healthy, and, of course, the big

wheels on top. These made up the "combine."

On a January night in 1936, moving entirely without fanfare, Dewey's men rounded up the 25 men whom they knew to be the combine leaders.

Among them were Jimmy Frederico, a sort of general manager; Tommy "The Bull" Pennochio and Abie Wahrman, Jimmy's immediate superiors, and "Little Davie" Betillo, who ostensibly was top dog in the outfit, although Dewey knew there was someone still higher up.

With these men safely held on another floor Dewey had rented in the Woolworth Building, the raiders swooped down on the brothels, and vanloads of madams and girls were herded downtown for questioning, girls like Jennie the Factory, Sadie the Chink, Frisco Jean and Gashouse Lil.

Some of them began to talk. Then Jimmy Frederico let slip a name. That name was Charlie.

Charlie "Lucky" Luciano was perhaps the toughest all-round mug in modern New York criminal history. Under the alias of Charles Ross, he lived quietly and respectably in the luxurious Waldorf Towers.

A squat, swart, scarred Sicilian—his name Lucky had sprung from his survival of a gangland ride on which he was knifed repeatedly and left for dead—he was involved in narcotics traffic, he controlled vice, he was a rum-runner, he ran floating dice games, trafficked in stolen goods and handled an Italian lottery. He owned gambling dens in Florida and in Saratoga, New York.

He laughed softly at his indictment by Dewey. "What I'll do to that Boy Scout on the stand," he said, "won't earn him no merit badges."

Dewey took great precautions to keep his witnesses safe from the prowling torpedoes of Luciano's mob. And he had good witnesses to protect.

One was an ex-mistress of Luciano. There were hotel employes, prostitutes, madams, pimps. And there was Cokey Flo.

Cokey Flo had run a speakeasy in Cleveland at the age of 15, had drifted to New York, had become a madam. She had reason to hate the "combine," and "Bull" Pennochio in particular. It was The Bull, she said, who started her on dope.

Through his entire career, one facet of character always marked Tom Dewey, his deadly serious facing up to every problem. In presenting his case against Luciano, Dewey realized the defense would attempt to ridicule his evidence by sneering at the character of his witnesses.

Dewey decided to beat them to the punch. "You will hear the stories of prostitutes, pimps and heels," he forewarned the jury. "You may be asked to wonder why they have not been jailed for their misdeeds. In a sense, they have been as much the victims of their criminal masters as has society. In a sense, they are more to be pitied than to be blamed."

Let the defense now assail his witnesses. The jury was of a mind to listen to them with sympathy.

On the witness stand, his voice calm, cold and low, Tom Dewey tore Lucky Luciano apart. Convicted on 61 of 90 counts in his indictments, Luciano was sentenced to from 30 to 50 years in prison.

During World War II, he was paroled and shipped back to his native Sicily where today, it is reported, he directs the flow of illicit narcotics into the United States, to which he yearns to, but never can, return.

From vice, Tom Dewey switched next to the labor and industrial rackets.

One of the worst of these was the restaurant "protective" deal.

Dutch Schultz and Jules Mogilewsky, alias Martin, had sponsored it by infiltrating into the unions of waiters and cafeteria employes, taking them captive by fixing union elections, and then using the unions, with threats of costly strikes, as a club over the heads of the owners of New York's eateries.

If the strike threat failed to produce a quick response in the form of heavy tribute, a few stink bombs were sure to turn the trick.

Schultz and Martin next formed the Metropolitan Restaurant and Cafeteria Association, the "protective" outfit to which each owner paid an initiation fee and weekly "dues" to prevent stink bombing, window smashing or other damage to his place of business.

At one time fully 90 per cent of all New York's cafes were members of the association. So boldly did this racket flourish that Schultz's collectors once went on strike and hired a hall to air their grievances against the boss, very much in the open.

Schultz caught Martin cheating, took Jules to Troy, shot and stabbed him to death and left his body in the snow.

A witness to this gangland execution was young J. Richard "Dixie" Davis, a small-town lawyer who had come to the big city and, in hanging around magistrates' courts looking for business, had fallen in with the policy racketeers.

When the cops found Martin's body, there was a slip of paper in one pocket. On it was written, "Call up Jimmy Hines." There was, at the time Jules Martin was bumped, no urgent reason to tie Jimmy Hines in with the rackets. The discovery of the note in Martin's pocket, however, was an item which Tom Dewey dredged up from his memory sometime later.

On the night of October 27th, 1935, Dutch Schultz sat in the back room of a cafe in Newark, New Jersey, with "Lulu" Rosenkrantz and Abe Landau, a pair of his torpedoes, and Otto "Abadaba" Berman, a mathematical wizard who hung out at a racetrack with a big bankroll and, by his genius with figures, placed last-second bets to whirl the pari-mutuel tote board digits up to the exact number the policy gang wanted as the winner for that particular day.

Three gunmen pushed into the room, killers hired by the Mafia, the old Black Hand, whose leaders yearned greedily for the rich policy setup. Their choppers chat-

DANGER—GOLDDIGGERS AT WORK

Shovels are frantically flying in East Austin, Texas. An old map seemed to indicate that $17,000 in gold coin, stolen by outlaws from the state capitol in 1865, had been buried in a vacant lot in the town. Wild-eyed treasure hunters have now turned the property into something resembling a bomb crater—and the owner of the lot fears for the gold in his teeth!
—Charles Strauss

tered. Schultz's aides died on the spot. Dutch himself fell, mortally wounded.

He died cursing Lucky Luciano and the Mafia, and sobbing, "Mamma! Mamma! Mamma!"—this thickset gangster who had amused himself many times by dumping bodies of his own victims in police precincts commanded by captains whom he especially disliked.

James J. Hines, a Tammany district leader in Upper Manhattan, was one of the most powerful politicians in the city. He could make or break a cop, a judge, a district attorney, even.

After Schultz's death in Newark, underlings of his mob took over not only the Harlem policy bonanza, but the restaurant racket as well.

When Dewey, in a sweeping rush of raids by cops whose orders were given them at the last minute to prevent any leaks, rounded up the leaders of the policy and restaurant mobs, he heard of two interesting characters.

One was Dixie Davis, who by now had two apartments and a penthouse, and a wardrobe that included 16 tailor-made suits that had cost a small fortune.

The other was Jimmy Hines. And now Dewey remembered that a policy king whom he had snared while he was Chief Assistant U. S. Attorney, back in 1931, had made a gift of a dozen expensive silk shirts to this same James J. Hines.

The special prosecutor began looking into the affairs of Davis and Hines.

In the meantime, however, there was other work to be done.

Much as Schultz and Martin had set up the restaurant "protective" racket, a couple of enterprising crooks named Louis "Lepke" Buchalter and Jake "Gurrah" Shapiro had organized the flour truck union and were preying upon New York's bakeries.

Lepke and Gurrah, as they were always known, also had moved into the city's multi-million dollar garment industry, first capturing the unions, then putting pressure on employers, until these two hoodlums virtually controlled the industry.

Lepke, indeed, bought into it until he could pose as a wealthy, which he was, and respectable, which he was not, manufacturer.

Dewey went after them, much as he had smashed the restaurant racket, by forcing witnesses to testify under threat of punishment for contempt, by offering protection to those who would talk.

This protection failed in Max Rubin's case. A witness against the Lepke-Gurrah combine, Rubin was caught by hired killers from the Murder, Inc. outfit across the river in Brooklyn, and was shot in the head.

For once, however, Murder, Inc. botched a job. Rubin lived.

Dewey was furious. He ordered both Lepke and Gurrah brought in.

"Let's hit him," Gurrah suggested. He was a bum with a big voice and a little brain.

"Not Dewey," Lepke vetoed. He was a smooth hood, with a small voice and ample brain. "He's too big."

Lepke and Gurrah took it on the lam.

Dewey offered rewards for the capture of either or both fugitives, but they hid themselves well.

Now New York County's regular district attorney, having been elected by a heavy majority in 1937, Thomas E. Dewey went after Dixie Davis and Jimmy Hines.

Davis, known as "The Kid Mouthpiece," was a partner with Schultz and the Dutchman's successors, Dewey learned, in the rich policy racket take.

His great interest, outside the tide of dollars that kept rolling in, was a beautiful red-haired former showgirl named Hope Dare, a veteran rodeo rider and a veteran, too, of the Follies.

Dewey dug up evidence to show that Hines had been paid from $500 to $1000 a week by the old Schultz mob and, in return, used his political influence to protect the racketeers and their 5000 employees from arrest.

Hines, who had started in life as a blacksmith, was indicted for conspiracy to operate lotteries and for influencing and intimidating judges and other officials.

Named in the conspiracy with him were Dixie Davis, George Weinberg, Harry Schoenhaus and several others. Davis was nabbed with Hope Dare in a Philadelphia hideout. He, Schoenhaus and Weinberg decided to testify against Hines.

They were kept in a measure of luxury while Hines awaited trial, a move which backfired a bit against Dewey when Weinberg grabbed a guardian cop's gun and killed himself, and, later, when it was revealed that Davis had made eighty or ninety trips to Hope Dare's apartment, during the long wait, to get fresh shirts.

Assailed in court for allowing the dapper little mouthpiece to visit his girl friend, Dewey, in all earnestness, replied, "He wouldn't be human if he didn't want to see the woman he loved." To Dewey, it was simply all right for his most important witness to be granted some favors, to insure his willingness to go on the stand when the proper time came.

The first trial of Hines was declared a mistrial by a Tammany Hall judge who deemed one of Dewey's cross-examination questions improper.

The case was re-tried in 1939. And now, despite the infrequency with which he had appeared in court in criminal cases, Dewey was a master of some courtroom tactics.

Quite deliberately, when Lloyd Stryker, the defense counsel, had the floor, Dewey got up every few minutes, walked slowly to a water cooler near the jury box, and drank a long, cool draught.

This was no task for a man who habitually drank three quarts of water a day. But it served its purpose well. It distracted the jury's attention from Attorney Stryker, and it drove Stryker nearly mad.

Finally, as Dewey rose once more to head for the cooler, Stryker waved him down, went to the water tap himself, drew a glass and carried it over to Dewey. He just couldn't take it any longer.

Hines was convicted on 13 counts of the indictments against him, and, then 63 years old, was sentenced to from four to eight years in prison. He was paroled in 1944, after serving a little less than his minimum term.

Dixie Davis got off with a mild sentence, was later disbarred, married Hope Dare and took up residence in California.

There now remained, among the big-shot crooks for whom Tom Dewey had been gunning for nearly a decade, only one man to be dealt with. He was Louis Lepke, still at large. Jake Gurrah had been nabbed by federal authorities and convicted on a dope charge.

The reward for Lepke's capture was increased to $25,000.

Frightened lest one of his own lieutenants turn him in for so large a sum, Lepke, through Walter Winchell, surrendered himself to FBI agents in New York in August, 1939. He, too, was convicted on a narcotics charge, and joined his old pal, Gurrah, in a federal pen.

Dewey was not content. He had Lepke returned from the federal prison, and in April, 1940, Lepke was convicted of extortion in his garment industry racket, and sentenced to from 30 years to life. The federal rap took precedence, however, and he went back to Atlanta.

The end for Lepke, however, was not yet.

Over in Brooklyn, with the door opened by Tom Dewey for a crackdown on gangsterism in New York, District Attorney Bill O'Dwyer was blasting Murder, Inc. apart.

Murder, Inc. was one of the most grisly criminal mobs ever spawned in America. Headquartered in the tough Brownsville section of Brooklyn, its guns were for hire by anyone who wanted a killing, neatly wrapped up, with all clues systematically destroyed.

It slipped up on Max Rubin. It skidded even worse on another Dewey witness, one Phil Orlorfsky, a very fat man who lived in a Bronx apartment.

Murder, Inc. operated in this fashion: The order to kill was given. The mob's armorer supplied the guns, stolen weapons, used once, then flung into the river. An auto theft specialist obtained two cars, one for the killing job, another for the getaway.

The triggermen were selected, their victim identified to them, the guns passed over, and they then set out to pick off the victim, who had been carefully fingered beforehand.

In the case of Orlorfsky, the killers had only his description, a very fat man. They waited outside the apartment house and, when a fat man emerged, they opened fire. But it was not Orlorfsky, but an innocent, wholly respectable music publisher who was slain.

Murder, Inc. erred even worse in taking Lepke's commission to knock off Joseph Rosen, who had jumped out of the trucking racket and bought a little candy store in Brooklyn with his profits from it.

Lepke suspected Rosen as a canary. He contacted Louis Capone, one of the chief lieutenants of Murder, Inc., to get rid of Rosen.

That part of the job was accomplished, by Capone, Mendy Weiss, a torpedo with at least twenty bump-offs to his personal credit—including a piece of Dutch Schultz—and a gun-happy hood named Pittsburgh Phil Strauss.

When Bill O'Dwyer blew Murder, Inc. wide open, he turned up sufficient evidence in the Rosen murder to pin the crime on Capone, Weiss and Strauss, and on the powerful Lepke, as well.

Lepke was brought back to New York from Atlanta, to face trial with Capone and Weiss. Pittsburgh Phil was by now beyond any further legal jurisdiction, having died in the chair for another killing.

All three were convicted and sentenced to the chair. Capone and Weiss were lodged in Death Row in Sing Sing, but the federal government took Lepke back to the safety of his cell in Atlanta.

In Brooklyn, the disintegration of Murder, Inc. continued. Bodies were disinterred from the mob's "private" graveyard, which covered most of Sullivan County, in New York's Catskills resort region. Abe Reles, reputed leader of the gang, jumped out a hotel window, reportedly to keep from testifying against the real top dog of Brooklyn's crime. The chair claimed several, prison cells more, of the cold-blooded professional killers.

The dissolution of Murder, Inc. was not directly Dewey's work, but indirect credit must be given to him for paving the way toward its ignominious end by his exposure of racketeering in Manhattan while he was New York County's district attorney.

Tom Dewey's crime-busting popped him into the Republican nomination for the governorship of the state in 1938, a race he lost by a scant margin, running far ahead of other candidates on his ticket.

He took defeat gracefully, and, in 1942 he was elected to the governor's chair by 600,000 votes.

Capone and Weiss were still awaiting execution. Dewey said flatly he would not let them go to the chair unless Lepke was surrendered by the federal government to share their fate. At last the government gave in. Lepke joined Capone and Weiss in Death Row, and the executions were set for Thursday night, March 2nd, 1944.

In all his battles against crime and criminals, Tom Dewey inflexibly followed one course, to use the little crooks, not as sops to appease public outrage, but to reach the higher-ups.

Lepke, Dewey realized, was about as big as they come in the underworld, but there was a rumor that there was still another, even bigger.

As the hour for Lepke to die drew near, there were hints that he might talk, naming the real Mr. Big, in exchange for his life.

Two hours before the executions, Dewey put them off until Saturday night. All day Saturday, Lepke talked with his wife and with District Attorney Frank Hogan of New York.

He said nothing. The story was that he had been warned that a word from him to Hogan would doom his pretty wife, whom Louis Lepke truly loved.

At 11 o'clock the Saturday night of March 4th, Louis Capone, ashen and trembling, was strapped into the chair. Mendy Weiss, blubbering that he was innocent, followed. Then Lepke walked into the death chamber, his face a mask, and became the first really big-time mobster ever to die in the hot seat.

As district attorney and special prosecutor in New York, Tom Dewey had made an unmatchable record.

As governor of the state of New York there are many who insist that his record as an administrator and as the guardian of government for all the people, free from corruption, is equally good.

There are, of course, others who disagree.

These assert that Tom Dewey is a cold fish, politically ambitious, who sees bad in his political foes but only good in his friends.

He is not a cold fish. On his 300-acre dairy farm near Pawling, New York, he revels in the companionship of his wife and their two sons.

He swims with the boys, plays chess with them. He golfs frequently. He'll take a Scotch or two and, at off-the-record gatherings, like Gridiron Club dinners or Lambs Club "gambols" in New York, he unbends far from the stern visage he generally presents to the world.

Twice he has been nominated for the Presidency. He has lost both times. What his political plans for the future may be, only Tom Dewey knows.

But this all of New York state does know. When Thomas E. Dewey looks upon crime or political corruption, a fire kindles in his eye.

In the fall of 1953, after the murder of a labor leader exposed a resurgence of old-time union racketeering at two fabulously profitable harness racing tracks on the outskirts of New York, a scandal involving a few of Dewey's nearest political cronies, an angry governor gave one terse order:

"Clean up those tracks, or shut them up—for good."

They are being cleaned up. ♦♦♦

Murder-Minded Lawyer

(*Continued from page 15*)

Sheriff Gordon figured it was best to break the bad news quickly. "Mr. Gerlach," he said, "I hate to say this, but Emmett Donnelly is fixing to murder you."

The old man started to laugh, but the sheriff continued, "We figure he has complete control of your estate, from those papers you signed without reading. If he can get you murdered, he'll be sitting pretty."

Gordon went on to tell of the two murder-scheming phone calls from Tampa. He recalled the anonymous call to the Lake Wales radio station of two days before.

"Donnelly is planning to make your murder look like a suicide by pushing you out of your tenth floor window, or having you thrown into a flooded phosphate pit," he said. "If he succeeds, he'll loot your property."

He went on to recount Donnelly's previous bonanzas on collecting $50,000 insurance policies on former law partners in Milwaukee and Lake Wales.

"King" Gerlach slumped in his chair and bitterness was reflected in his face. He didn't want to believe that his best friend was plotting to murder him, but the evidence seemed conclusive.

"All right, Pat," he told the sheriff, "I'll sign a warrant against him. He ought to be in prison, I guess."

It wouldn't be that easy, Gordon and Kelly told him. There was no legal evidence against the lawyer as yet. Overheard, or tapped, telephone conversations couldn't be introduced against a criminal defendant under Florida law.

"If we arrest him now, he'll laugh at us," Kelly said. "He's a smart lawyer, and he'll know we can't convict him of anything. He'll go free, just as he did after the deaths of Beal and Duncan."

Sheriff Gordon made the proposition: "Mr. Gerlach, this is an outrageous thing to ask of a man of your age. But I must ask it of you. We need to make a decoy —a sitting duck or a clay pigeon—of you to catch Emmett Donnelly and put him in prison. Are you willing?"

The undersized millionaire was more than willing. He was eager. It was the most exciting opportunity for adventure that he had been offered in 50 years or more.

"I'm your man, Pat," he said. And he agreed to put up $10,000 cash to hire special agents to augment the sheriff's staff on the case. He now was a central figure in one of the detective dramas he loved.

Sheriff Gordon set the trap, alluringly baited with the aged millionaire, at the Walesbilt Hotel in Lake Wales. And he took elaborate precautions to safeguard Gerlach. Some of the old man's $10,000 went to pay special guards who could not be recognized as regular deputies. They shadowed him night and day, guns ready.

Deputy G. B. Chestnut was on guard, a shotgun handy, as Gerlach slept. Others were hidden in the tenth floor linen closet and in guest rooms along the corridor. Never was he left in peril. The deputies even patrolled the kitchens of dining rooms where he ate, posing as food inspectors, so that he could not be poisoned.

Gerlach had only one complaint. He objected to his guardians accompanying him to the men's room. "I was washing my hands the other evening," he told Sheriff Gordon, "and three deputies were using the only bars of soap in the place."

In addition to protecting Gerlach, the sheriff did some work on Attorney Donnelly. The lawyer's telephones, both office and home, were monitored 24 hours a day. Most of his talks concerned business, but there were some unusual ones with a man calling himself "D" in Orlando, northeast of Lake Wales. Donnelly spoke guardedly to this man, and sometimes seemed to be using code. "D" called collect from public phone booths.

Then the Tampa calls ceased and Sheriff Gordon assumed those negotiations had broken off.

Gordon also got an unofficial check on Donnelly's finances, with cooperation from friends in banking circles. The lawyer was far from penniless, but he lacked the great wealth many people thought he had.

Still the hired killer, if there was a killer, made no move.

And then, sudden as a gust in a Florida hurricane, action was reported at Pensacola, the naval air base city at the northern end of Florida on the gulf. Willard Durden, 35 years old, of Orlando, arrived in Pensacola "to hire a man for a special, important job." It didn't make any sense. Why would Durden come from Orlando, a day's drive away, just to hire a man?

Manuel "Shorty" Reeves, owner of a local hotel, heard about Durden's cryptic personal hunt and had himself recommended.

In common with most people, Durden didn't know that Reeves was an undercover worker for Sheriff R. L. Kendrick of Escambia County. If there was crookedness afoot, Kendrick wanted to know of it.

Reeves sought out Durden. "Boss, if you got a job to be done, I'm your boy. I'll do anything for money," he said.

Now, Reeves has that secret quality that all undercover agents must have in abundance. It is something that makes people, and rascals in particular, trust him.

He had used it many times in breaking robbery, murder and dope cases in Pensacola. A year earlier he had saved Sheriff Kendrick from being murdered by a dynamite bomb.

Durden, curly-haired, handsome and no brighter than most crooks, fell for Reeves' line. But, sitting in his parked car with Shorty Reeves, he asked a lot of cautious questions.

"You ever been in prison?" he inquired. Shorty gulped and told a lie, the first of many. He said he had served time for manslaughter and robbery. Durden seemed impressed.

He talked, at first, about planning to open a chain of gambling joints. He needed a fearless man, fast with a gun, to protect him against racketeers and robbers, he said.

Reeves knew that was untrue. Gambling was closed down tight in that part of Florida. But he pretended to go along. Durden said finally the job he had in mind would pay big money, $10,000.

Whistling appreciatively, Shorty said, "Boss, you must want me to kill somebody!"

Durden chuckled and said that was it. "There's a lawyer in Lake Wales who wants an old man bumped off," he said. "The man lives in a big Lake Wales hotel. I can't tell you the lawyer's name, but he has his office in the same hotel."

Shorty said he'd do it. He asked for a down payment.

Durden replied that the lawyer had been dickering with a Tampa man for the murder, and had paid $2,500 in advance, only to have the deal fall through.

"I promise you'll get your money when the job is done," he said, "but the lawyer

won't give us any more advances now."

That was far from true. In the months to follow, Durden was to receive 14 checks for a total of $10,050, the biggest for $5,000 on April 29th, from Donnelly.

Shorty Reeves said he would call on Durden in Orlando in a few days, and the two men parted. Reeves went immediately to round-faced, cigar-smoking Hamp Gandy, a deputy sheriff, and told him the story. He and Gandy had worked on many criminal cases together.

Sheriff Kendrick, after hearing the story, sent them to Lake Wales where they talked with Pat Gordon. He immediately concluded that Durden was "D", the telephone caller from Orlando.

It still was too early to arrest either Donnelly or Durden. There wasn't enough evidence to convict.

Gordon asked Shorty to continue to negotiate with Durden and to stall him. "We'll keep our guards on Mr. Gerlach, just in case they hire another killer," the sheriff said, "and maybe we'll get the goods on 'em."

Reeves went home to Pensacola. Durden telephoned him every night for a week, urging him to get on the job. Shorty said there was illness in his family and he couldn't get away, but finally he went to Orlando. Durden drove him to Lake Wales one evening and parked in front of the Walesbilt. He pointed out the 81-year-old millionaire inside the hotel lobby window.

Durden didn't know it, but Deputies Ritchie and Matthews, heavily armed, also were in the lobby. And lounging on the sidewalk were Deputies Henry Goodson and James Busbee.

The plot was for Reeves to get into the hotel on some pretext the next night, get up to Gerlach's 10th floor room and knock him cold. Then he could drop the old man from the high window, if there weren't too many people on the street. Or carry him out a service exit, take him to the country and put him into a flooded phosphate pit.

Either way it would look like a suicide, as set up by Donnelly. "It's a cinch, Boss," said Shorty. "I'll finish him off easy."

He skulked into the hotel, as agreed, but the deputies on duty were informed in advance. One of them signaled to the desk clerk. The clerk threw Shorty out of the place.

"I'll never be able to get up to his room now," he told Durden. "Better I just shoot him through the lobby window."

The middleman for murder concurred with that plan. Shorty said he wanted to do it with his own pet shotgun, trusting no other weapon. Back to Pensacola he went for the shotgun, and stayed for a week. He stalled Durden by telephone, saying he had the flu and that his suspicious wife wouldn't let him go away for a while.

Phone calls from Durden to Donnelly were frequent. The middleman told the lawyer in ambiguous language, just to be patient and Gerlach soon would be dead. When the excuses ran thin, Reeves again reported to Durden in Orlando—only to go into more delaying tactics.

He had to have a certain type of ammunition, with Double O buckshot, to do a neat, Class A job, Shorty said. It took him two days to shop for the shells, and then he decided the shotgun's firing pin needed replacement. Finally he started making night-time journeys to Lake Wales. On the first trip, Sheriff Gordon's deputies, obligingly and by prearrangement, tossed him into a cell for speeding.

On two nights, Gerlach went immediately to his room after supper instead of sitting in the lobby. Again, one of Police Chief K. M. Mellick's patrol cars was parked in front of the hotel.

Sheriff Gordon was getting photostats of bank checks drawn by Donnelly for Durden, as well as reports on their phone talks.

Then came a holiday in the bizarre investigation. Durden, inspecting one of his home repair projects, slipped a spinal disc. In terrible pain, he went to an Orlando hospital, and stayed for nearly a month.

Visiting him in the hospital, Reeves said, "Boss, I'll have to call off the job until you're back on your feet. I'll have to collect my money right quick, and maybe light out for Mexico or Cuba."

Durden urged him to go ahead with the plan, but Shorty was adamant. They'd have to wait, he said. Then he added that maybe the lawyer could make the payoff directly to him.

The hospitalized murder-arranger would not hear of that. In fact, he never gave Donnelly's name in talking with Reeves. But he held out an enticing prospect for Reeves, if he would get rid of Gerlach pronto.

"The lawyer has two more clients—both widows—he wants bumped off," Durden said. "He'll pay $5,000 for each of them, and I can get both jobs for you. If you kill Gerlach right soon, that is. The lawyer is getting anxious. I'll give you the widows' names as soon as the old man is dead."

Reeves said he would think it over. He reported the latest plotting to Gordon.

The sheriff now was in a quandary. He had to protect the women's lives, but he didn't know who they were. Donnelly might hire a new killer for them, if he didn't act fast.

There was only one safe move to make. After conferring with Solicitor Kelly and State's Attorney Gunther Stephenson, Gordon called in "King" Gerlach and told him, "We want you to drop Donnelly and get a new lawyer."

After much persuasion, the old millionaire retained a Tampa law firm. He explained to Donnelly that he was moving to the bay city and wanted to be near his lawyers.

The Tampa barristers obtained Gerlach's will, real estate deeds, stocks, bonds and—they thought—all of "King's" papers from Donnelly.

Durden, on his bed of pain, reacted quickly to that development. Supposedly spurred by Donnelly, he called in Reeves and switched signals.

Sheriff Gordon had expected that. By sending Gerlach to a new law firm, he had removed the profit motive for murdering him. He wanted the widows' names—and he got them from Durden, via Reeves.

One was Mrs. Byrd Roach, 51 years old,

of Lake Wales. Gordon shuddered when he heard she was a target for murder. "Why, she's the best friend of Donnelly's wife," he said.

Mrs. Roach, blonde and lovely in a matronly way, had been twice widowed. Her second husband had left an estate of $300,000, with two-thirds to go to charity and the remaining $100,000 to her.

Donnelly was sole executor and trustee of the estate. That gave him full control of the fortune. He hadn't paid off the charity bequests and was in a position to grab that money, too, after her death.

Also slated for murder was Mrs. Louise Clark Hawley, 50 years old, of Orlando.

"Durden has been living in a house Mrs. Hawley owns, to keep tabs on her," Reeves reported. "That lawyer sure thinks of everything."

Mrs. Hawley is a former concert pianist and the widow of a Dartmouth University football coach. She is widely known in West Florida for her interest in amateur theatricals. Florida real estate, a share in a sun helmet manufacturing company, stocks and other interests brought her an income of $60,000 a year. She and Gerlach were two of Donnelly's richest clients.

Reeves made a great pretense of scouting both women. The lawyer wanted them kidnaped and murdered, with an appearance of suicide.

After driving over getaway routes and making up phony timetables, Shorty named Mrs. Roach as his first victim. She lived in a remote, wooded section, with only Mr. and Mrs. F. M. O'Byrne as close neighbors.

Durden, now out of the hospital, agreed. Again Shorty went into his stall. He drove around the countryside, telling Durden he was looking for a remote, flooded phosphate pit where Mrs. Roach could be dropped.

Durden fretted, but not much. Bank transactions showed he was collecting regularly from Donnelly. On April 29th, he got his biggest check, $5,000.

A few days later he said to Shorty, "I keep telling the lawyer you're doing your best, but he's crowding me. You go out to Mrs. Roach's house tomorrow, ring her bell and ask her for work, mowing her lawn or washing her car. I'll drive by with the lawyer and he'll see you're really on the job."

Reeves did as he was told. Mrs. Roach, a kindly person, had no odd jobs, but she offered him some food. Sheriff Gordon watched, and saw Durden and Donnelly drive past. That was evidence, but again only circumstantial.

Donnelly apparently was appeased for the time being. Reeves went back to Pensacola, begging off with Durden with the plea of illness in his family.

But, as late May rolled around, Donnelly began growling ominously in his guarded telephone talks with Durden. He had paid the Orlando man a lot of money and he wanted action—murder action. There were hints that he now might hire another executioner.

On Sheriff Gordon's orders, Reeves went to Orlando. This time, he told Durden, he was definitely set to go. "I need that $5,000 to clear up some trouble," Shorty said, "and I need it quick."

There was one hitch, he said. If things didn't go right, he might be unable to kidnap Mrs. Roach. If she screamed, the O'Byrnes would hear her. However, she frequently sat at her living room window to hear a late evening radio news broadcast. It would be simple to shoot her through the window.

"But," Shorty continued, "a shotgun will make too much noise, out there among those trees. The cops will be after me in no time. What I need is a rifle with a silencer. I understand it's a federal offense, with five years in prison, to be caught with a silencer," Shorty improvised. "Anyway, I'm willing to take a chance. A friend of mine is sending me one from Chicago. I'll try to kidnap her and put her in a pit. Otherwise, I'll shoot her."

Sheriff Gordon was in on this gimmick, of course. He had planned it. Out of his stock of weapons he gave Reeves a .25 rifle with a silencer.

One of the most intriguing traps in criminal history now was set. Sheriff Gordon prayed that Durden would be stupid enough to step into it. He was.

Reeves made an appointment with Durden to meet him on Saturday, June 5th, 1954. The place was a lonely side road 10 miles out of Orlando. Reeves drove there well in advance. Sheriff Gordon and Deputy Gandy were along. They hid in bushes only 20 feet away, with notebooks and pencils ready.

Durden drove up and parked. Shorty welcomed him, showed him the rifle and silencer. "Boss, ain't this a real beauty?" he enthused.

The murder middleman examined the weapon, covering it with his fingerprints. "Boy, this'll blow her right out of that window!" he said. It would be better, he added, if Reeves could kidnap Mrs. Roach, but shooting would be acceptable.

Durden drove away. Gordon and Reeves, with notes on the conversation, returned to the county seat at Bartow with Reeves.

The final act of the Lake Wales suspense melodrama now was coming up.

On the following evening, Sunday, Reeves drove his car to Lake Wales and parked near Mrs. Roach's home. Sheriff Gordon and Deputy Busbee, in another car, also were there.

When Mrs. Roach arrived home about 10 o'clock, Gordon and Busbee were waiting on her back porch. She stopped her car in front of the garage, got out to open the garage doors and recognized the sheriff when he approached her.

"Let's have a talk," he said, "and please leave your car outside the garage tonight, Ma'am."

They went into the house. Sheriff Gordon had her leave the lights turned off, in case Durden, Donnelly or a new killer might be watching. The sheriff told her, "Emmett Donnelly is trying to get you killed, Mrs. Roach."

The widow wouldn't believe it at first. She, as Gerlach had, regarded the lawyer as the man she could trust most in life. Also, Donnelly's wife, Jessie, was her good friend. But, upon hearing the full story, Mrs. Roach was deeply shocked. She agreed to do anything Gordon suggested.

"We want to use you to sort of bait a trap," the sheriff said. "It'll be a terrible worry to your relatives and friends, but I hope you'll go along."

A little before dawn, Gordon went out to the back yard. He took along Mrs. Roach's purse and threw it on the lawn near her car, after scattering the contents nearby.

He left the car door next to the driver's seat ajar. From the garage he got a 30-inch length of metal pipe and dropped it on the ground.

Reeves, on signal, drove his car up on the lawn. Mrs. Roach hurried out of the house, got into the tonneau and crouched down out of sight. Shorty gunned the motor and drove the car across the yard, tearing up grass and sod.

Sheriff Gordon and Deputy Busbee drove back to Bartow to await developments. It wasn't long. By 9 A.M., Mrs. Roach's neighbors turned in an alarm. She was missing. The back yard evidence indicated she had been kidnaped as she arrived home.

Sheriff Gordon's hoax worked perfectly. The purse and scattered contents in-

dicated that the blond widow had put up a fight. The length of pipe probably was used to knock her out. The tire marks of the presumed kidnaper's car were on the lawn.

The news was on radio broadcasts and in newspaper headlines. Lake Wales police, not in on the secret, began making arrangements to drag a lake near Mrs. Roach's home. Businessmen talked about raising a reward fund. Sheriff Gordon visited the scene, shook his head and said lugubriously, "It looks bad."

Mrs. Roach was hidden away safely in Lakeland. Not even her closest friends and relatives, including a son and daughter, knew that. It was a maximum security job.

From the sheriff's office, Shorty Reeves telephoned Durden at Orlando. The call was carefully monitored. "I done that job for you in Lake Wales last night," Reeves said.

Durden replied cautiously, "So I hear."

"When do I get my package?" Shorty went on. "I gotta have it soon—tomorrow."

The middleman asked where they could meet and Shorty proposed the bus station in Haines City, a Polk County community. Durden said that would be okay.

Reeves next telephoned Lawyer Donnelly, the top plotter, and said, "I'm the boy who done that job in town."

Donnelly, apparently assuming Shorty had guessed his identity, gave him a cautious and inquiring, "Yes?"

Reeves: "Where's Durden?"

Donnelly: "I don't know. I've been trying to reach him. Even his wife says she doesn't know where he is."

This was no news to Shorty, who had made certain the middleman had left his home for the day before calling Donnelly.

Reeves: "Listen, I want my money. I'll give you until tomorrow."

Donnelly, anxiously: "Don't get hot, now! For the Lord's sake, don't get hot! You'll get paid."

Donnelly stayed in his Walesbilt office that day, but his wife, Jessie—entirely innocent of any wrongdoing—was anxious about her friend, Mrs. Roach. She called frequently on the sheriff for any reports.

Reeves kept his appointment in Haines City the following day. Also present, posing as loiterers around the bus station, were Gordon, Gandy, Busbee, Ritchie, Goodson, Matthews and others.

Durden drove up at 1:04 P.M. The trap was ready for springing. Shorty walked to his car and asked, "Let me have my package."

The middleman stalled. He didn't have the money. The assumption was that he hadn't been able to reach Donnelly to get it.

Shorty pulled a handkerchief from his pocket in a prearranged signal. Sheriff Gordon and the deputies closed in. Arrested, rushed to the Bartow courthouse and confronted with the evidence, Durden quickly confessed. He named Attorney Donnelly as the chief plotter. Durden was locked up secretly in a cell.

Solicitor Kelly promptly got search warrants for Donnelly's office and home. The proper time to get the evidence now had arrived, and it was essential to obtain it legally. Otherwise it would not stand up in court.

With the warrants, Gordon and his men drove to the lawyer's home on Crooked Lake. He greeted them politely. "Go ahead and search," he said, on looking at the warrants.

There was no evidence in the bungalow—but it was a far different story at Donnelly's office. In a safe there Gordon found two notes, for $12,000 and $20,000, made out to Donnelly, payable on death and signed by Gerlach.

Also there was a will, signed by Mrs. Hawley. It made Donnelly the sole heir to the fortune which earned her $60,000 a year.

Mrs. Hawley, brought from Orlando and told of the death plot against her, almost collapsed when she saw the will. "That's my signature," she said, "but I never knowingly signed it. Donnelly must have told me it was a tax receipt or something. I often signed documents for him without reading them."

Gerlach seethed with rage when he saw the two notes for $32,000. "I don't owe anybody—including Donnelly—a dime," he declared.

Mrs. Roach was brought out of her Lakeland hiding place, to the vast comfort of her relatives and friends. Confronted with the evidence against him, Lawyer Donnelly grinned and refused to talk. He even cracked a feeble joke, saying, "I want to consult a lawyer," although he himself had been known as the best in Polk County.

He and Durden were placed under three charges of conspiracy to commit murder for profit. That made them liable for three years in prison and $15,000 in fines, under Florida law. Both were released on bond—Donnelly under $15,000 and Durden, because he had cooperated with the law, under $5,000.

Two Lake Wales boys were walking along the roadway near Donnelly's home early the following morning. They had seen a school of bass in Crooked Lake the previous afternoon and were out to make a big catch.

In a poinsettia bed near Donnelly's driveway, they saw something. They investigated, then went running to spread the alarm.

Donnelly, wearing only nylon shorts, was dead. A shotgun was beside him. Coroner's physicians decided it was suicide. Donnelly had put the muzzle of the shotgun into his mouth, pulled the trigger and blown out his brains.

Durden, as this is written, is awaiting grand jury indictment on the three charges against him.

The only person to die in the Lake Wales mass murder plot was, ironically, the chief plotter—Emmett Donnelly. ◆◆◆

HANDICAPPED HEISTER

The burglar alarm was still shrilling its warning when police entered the office of a New London, Connecticut, businessman. They found the burglar calmly engaged in rifling the safe. "Why didn't you beat it when you heard the alarm?" the astonished officers asked him.

"I didn't notice it," the culprit explained, shamefaced. "I'm hard of hearing."

—Morris Bender

You Die First

(*Continued from page 45*)

said Crouch. "Unless we hear from him."

The body of Sue Holcombe remained at the morgue. Persons having the widest possible acquaintance here in Washington County and in adjacent counties were requested in a radio broadcast to come to the morgue, to see if this victim were anyone they knew or had ever seen before.

A description of James Holcombe was broadcast throughout the state of Mississippi and into neighboring Arkansas and Louisiana.

Chief of Police William Taggart of Greenville, on being called into the case, immediately sent out men to cover the railroad stations and bus depots.

Sheriff Crouch, with Sterling, his chief deputy, and other deputies, hurried out to the Dillons' place. The sheriff already had ordered men, boats and the necessary equipment to this part of Lake Ferguson. Then began the laborious job of dragging the lake, to make sure that the man who had been the murder victim's husband, or her lover, was not sunk deep and wired to an anchoring block of concrete.

Deputies Sterling and Mascagni canvassed the sprawling lakeside community, hoping to pick up some useful information relating to the mysterious couple. First they tried the Nathals' place on the road to Greenville. Here, according to Mrs. Dillon's recollection, the departing Jim Holcombe had said that he and Sue "calculated to stay for a spell."

This appeared to have been a concocted excuse for leaving the Dillons so precipitately. Nobody around the Nethals' place had seen either of the Holcombes the night of the 17th or any time since. Still pressing their inquiries, with the sun setting late on one of the year's longest days, they came at early evening to the open door of a remote cabin and were pleasantly greeted by a dark, slender woman who hastily identified herself as Effie Porter.

"Ed and me was kinda thinking you'd come," she said, as her lean, tanned husband joined her.

"Maybe you knew the people we're asking about?" Mascagni said.

"The Holcombes?" said Ed Porter. "We knew 'em."

"Okay, let's hear it," Sterling urged.

"We heard of the body off Dillon's landing. When we knew 'em they seemed awful sweet on each other," the woman volunteered. "Lordie, they stuck it out three-four days in that deserted shack down the lake a piece. Come here to Ed and me for their grub."

"When was this?"

"Last day of May, as I recall, and the first three days of June."

"Did they pay you for the food?"

"They paid," Porter put in solemnly.

"He means, the girl gave me a dress. A real nice one. That paid us for the grub okay," Effie Porter explained.

"We'd like to see the dress," Sterling said.

The frock proved to be an attractive, fairly expensive cotton print. The deputies examined it closely for a store or maker's label, or for a laundry mark, but found none.

Sterling said that the county authorities would have to borrow the dress for a while. Both Porters agreed, the wife with a sigh of resignation. Then Mrs. Porter guided the two investigators to the vacant shack.

The decrepit structure was entirely without furnishings, window glass or window frames. It had no shutters or doors. The floor was bare except for a deep pile of grass where, apparently, the homeless Holcombes had made their bed.

Sterling and Mascagni felt puzzled. All their informants had given Sue Holcombe credit for intelligence and character. Such a girl's acceptance of this primitive existence made her marriage to James Holcombe seem a reckless infatuation.

Returning to the Dillons' place with the dress, Sterling and his partner found that the lake-dragging had revealed nothing. Sheriff Crouch was directing his crews to knock off for the night and return to Greenville.

Back in Greenville, Police Sergeant Sam Valencino, the county's fingerprint expert, reported to Crouch and Taggart that the condition of the dead girl's fingers made it impossible for him to obtain her prints.

The sheriff suggested that Valencino go out to the Dillon cottage the next morning and process the room in which the Holcombes were said to have slept from June 7th through the 17th. The Dillons would let their own prints be taken, and in this way a print of one or both of the Holcombes might be secured by elimination.

It was Crouch's belief that Holcombe was not the missing man's real name. The sheriff believed, too, that the way to solve the mystery would be to trace the man and girl back to their points of origin.

"Mrs. Dillon insists," Crouch informed Taggart, "that Holcombe didn't have a thin dime. But he took with him last Monday night their suitcases, full of his wife's clothes. Mrs. Dillon says they were nice things. We can confirm that from the quality of the dress my men borrowed from the Porters."

"You figure, Sheriff, that Holcombe, if he's a fugitive, will begin to sell things from the suitcase?"

"That's possible, Bill. Holcombe could leave a trail of petty swaps and sales."

"Another thing," said the chief of police, "the contents of that suitcase give us a clue. Holcombe was always broke. But the girl had owned nice things. Either she once had the money to buy 'em, or she comes from a comfortable home."

"I agree. I'm determined to find out who she was and where she came from."

"Since they say her accent was Deep South, you've only seven or eight states to cover," Taggart commented.

Radio bulletins and a newspaper story which hit the streets of Greenville on Friday afternoon, June 21st, informed Washington County that a man was missing and wanted, and asked that people be on the lookout for offers of articles of clothing sized to fit a slender young woman.

Around 9 o'clock Friday evening Taggart, Sergeant Valencino and another officer were at headquarters, discussing the local homicide case. The street door opened tentatively and a wary face appeared.

"Yes?" said Valencino.

"Chief of Police Taggart?" the intruder asked.

"I'm Chief Taggart. What can we do for you?" the chief said.

The thin, embarrassed-looking individual came in. Then all three members of the police force rose to their feet simultaneously. The newcomer was lugging an old suitcase.

"You heard the broadcasts?" Taggart asked.

"No, sir. But I read today's paper. I think I got the valise you want." He explained that his name was Lionel Trigg and that he lived on the outskirts of Greenville, near Lake Ferguson.

Taggart gave the man a cigar and seated

him comfortably. Then he began his story.

Nearly three weeks ago, about the 3rd of June, a man and a young woman had come to his house, Trigg said. They asked him for the loan of a bucket of water. Thereafter, until the 7th the couple came to him together twice each day, never wanting anything but the loan of the bucket and the water. They told him their name was Holcombe. Nothing else. Trigg assumed they were campers, stopping somewhere along the shore of the lake.

After the 7th, they came no more for water. Trigg thought they had moved on. But last Monday night, the 17th, the husband appeared unexpectedly, alone, carrying this suitcase.

Holcombe told Trigg that he and his wife were out of funds and wanted to sell the suitcase and its contents, to get money enough to return to their home. The dresses, Trigg said, just happened to fit his own wife. He offered Holcombe four dollars, all he could afford, for everything.

Holcombe wanted the cash, but he bargained a bit more. Finally he disposed of his wife's clothes in the suitcase, in return for four dollars and the right to spend the night in the Triggs' cottage, plus a hearty breakfast for himself at sun-up. Mrs. Trigg had added to that a packet of sandwiches, to see him on his journey.

"What did he say to you or your wife about Mrs. Holcombe?" Taggart questioned.

"Not a thing, Chief. Never told us anything, except that they were broke and wanted to get home."

Another half-hour of questioning brought out only that neither of the Holcombes ever had spoken to the Triggs of their home town, or their probable destination. But once he had heard them say something about Tupelo.

Tupelo, county seat of Lee County, lies some 160 miles northeast of Greenville. This gave the investigators their first geographical break in the case. But the clothing and suitcase seemed to promise even livelier leads. Chief Taggart thanked Trigg for his prompt cooperation, promising that what he and his wife had acquired through fair purchase would in due course be restored to them intact.

Trigg was hardly out of the door, however, before eager hands began turning over the contents of the suitcase, seeking an informative label or laundry mark. Valencino had summoned other officers. Sheriff Crouch and his chief deputy, Sterling, notified by telephone, had already arrived at Greenville police headquarters. It was Sam Valencino who found a skirt that had been to the cleaner's. Its band was marked "1617 7th Ave. S."

Sheriff Crouch put through a call to Chief of Police Elzy Carr in Tupelo, Mississippi. Chief Carr stated that there was no Number 1617 7th Avenue South in Tupelo. However, he said there were Holcombes in Tupelo, one of them a Mrs. Sue Holcombe.

Crouch, in company with State Highway Officer T. E. McDonald, drove at once to Tupelo. At 8 A.M. on Saturday, the 22nd, they were at Elzy Carr's headquarters. The Tupelo chief had not been idle. He reported that Mrs. Sue Holcombe was alive and well, and that none of the Lee County Holcombes knew of any other Sue Holcombe or of a middle-aged James Holcombe answering the description of the wanted man.

"Before we return to Greenville," Crouch said grimly to McDonald, "there's one thing we must do—inquire at laundries and cleaners about this mark. Nobody in our area uses a mark which is the customer's street address."

After much search, the two Washington County men walked into the office of the "K.A.K.", a cleaning plant, where the manager, Ralph Perry, explained that his concern didn't use this style of marking. He knew of but one plant in the state that did. He wasn't sure of the firm name exactly, but their plant was in Columbus.

Not many minutes later, back in Carr's office, Sheriff Crouch was talking on the telephone with Chief of Police J. A. Morton of Columbus, county seat of Lowndes County on the Mississippi-Alabama border. Morton said there was a Number 1617 7th Avenue South in Columbus. He said it would take him a little while to check on the cleaner's mark.

It took him but twenty minutes. Then, by phone, he assured Crouch that they had hit the jackpot. Columbus not only had the right avenue with house numbering up to 1617, but also a cleaning plant which marked skirts for identification in precisely the manner Crouch had described.

When Crouch and McDonald arrived at Columbus police headquarters, Chief Morton ushered them into his office. "We've already checked this, Sheriff," he said. "On 7th Avenue South, Number 1617 is occupied by a Mr. and Mrs. Elwood Cashman. Both are alive and well."

Sheriff Crouch went with McDonald to talk with the manager of the cleaning plant Morton had named—the Model Cleaners. Shown the skirt they had brought from Greenville, the manager stated that this skirt had been cleaned at his plant. He said he would show it to the markers employed in the plant. In a few minutes he returned.

"We have a marker who will swear this skirt was cleaned here," he said. "The man recognizes his own way of lettering. His identification is positive."

However, the Model Cleaners did not keep a record of the names of their cash customers. So tracing would have to stem entirely from the street address.

Crouch and McDonald went back to Morton's office. Morton said, "I'll have two of my men who know them, Officers Partain and Cunningham, bring in Mr. and Mrs. Cashman." He explained, "If we had an underworld in our town, these two would be on the fringe of it. Cashman has done time in a federal pen.

The Cashmans presently arrived at Morton's office, with Officers Cunningham and Partain. Both seemed tense and wary. What was this all about? they demanded. Why had they been "invited" to police headquarters by the officers in a patrol car?

Chief Morton told them, "A couple of people, an older man and a young woman, have got in a little trouble in Washington County. This gentleman is Sheriff Crouch of that county. The girl in the case has given you folks as reference. Says you know her well, and that she stayed here with you not long ago. What about her?"

Elwood Cashman eyed his interrogator reflectively, glanced sideways at his wife. Then he said, "I don't know who you're talking about."

"We never take boarders," his wife added.

"I think you know the girl we mean," Morton said.

"You heard her. We don't take in boarders. We know people, girls, sure. But none of 'em ever stayed with us."

"Have it your way, Cashman." Chief Morton signaled Cunningham and Partain. They promptly escorted the couple to adjoining offices.

"Was that a shot in the dark?" Crouch asked. "Your saying they knew the girl?"

"Not entirely. Take a look at this file." He handed his visitor a blue folder. Crouch opened it and began to read with interest.

It seemed that this spring there had been a serious crop of burglaries and breaking-and-entering jobs in Columbus,

in the neighborhood of 1617 7th Avenue South. A patrolman in the area, D. A. Stevens, had reported that a strange man and a strange young woman were staying with the Elwood Cashmans. This unidentified couple was seldom seen to leave the house, and then only after dark.

Officer Stevens had thought it worth reporting. With an outbreak of burglaries, who could say who might not be involved?

Crouch handed back the file. "Looks as if Sue Holcombe, or whatever her name really is, stayed here in May with the Cashmans. And while there she sent her skirt to be dry-cleaned. Also, an older man stayed there, too, and came or went after dark. So," the sheriff deduced, "if she was Sue Holcombe, it's fair to suppose that older man at the Cashmans is the one we're hunting—this so-called Jim Holcombe."

Morton and Crouch now interviewed the Cashmans. Sheriff Crouch said suddenly, "What seems to be upsetting you, Mrs. Cashman, is the suspicion that your young friend is wanted by the police. You're loyal to her, and I like that. I won't torment you any further.

"This girl we know only as Sue Holcombe isn't being sought by us," he went on. "She's on a slab in the Greenville morgue, the victim of a cruel murder. She was strangled by the powerful hands of somebody she trusted. How do I know this? Because there's not a bruise on her body except at the throat. She never had a chance to fight for her life. And she was an expectant mother."

"I understand, Sheriff," the woman exclaimed, her face twitching. "If it was that Floyd Myers killed her, I want to see him swing for it. I'll tell you all I know—it isn't much."

The girl known in Greenville as Mrs. Sue Holcombe had been Miss Imogene Smothers, Mrs. Cashman said. She was 18 when she arrived in Columbus from Alabama. That was late in April. On the 2nd of May she had come to board with the Cashmans.

Imogene was an educated girl, well brought up and refined. She had given up her job as a librarian, on account of this man, who was more than old enough to have been her father. She seemed infatuated with him.

Elwood Cashman turned to his wife and said, "Since you've spilled this much, why not tell 'em about the money orders?"

Well, Mrs. Cashman explained, twice during her stay at their home Imogene Smothers had received letters from her middle-aged lover, who had returned to his native heath in Alabama. Each time he had sent the girl a postal money order for $8.75.

Imogene had shown Mrs. Cashman both money orders and asked her to cash them. This she had done. She clearly remembered the odd and identical amounts. Remembered the name of the sender, J. Floyd Myers. Remembered the post office of issue, Jasper, Alabama.

"You're sure about this?" Crouch asked.

"We're sure. My wife don't lie unless I say she's got to," the surly Elwood Cashman answered.

Sheriff Crouch telephoned his chief deputy, John Sterling, in Greenville, to notify the prosecuting authorities and have a warrant ready. Then the sheriff got off a wire to the sheriff of Walker County, Alabama, of which Jasper is the county seat. Then Crouch and McDonald started for that community, some 75 miles to the eastward.

It was Sheriff Crouch's hope that Floyd Myers would now be back at his farm near Jasper. Having spent the four dollars paid him by Lionel Trigg, he would have felt it both safe and necessary to return quietly to his Alabama home.

It was past midnight when Crouch and the highway officer drew up in front of the sheriff's office in Jasper. There Sheriff Powell Hammer and his chief deputy, James Daly, were waiting in response to Crouch's urgent telegram.

"I know this Myers," Sheriff Hammer said. "But Jim Daly here knows him a lot better. I'll let Jim tell it."

Chief Deputy Daly explained that one day this past November he had received a telephone call from a place called Flat Creek, some 30 miles from Jasper. The complainant said that a man with a pistol was down in the woods near the ferry, quarreling fiercely with a young girl.

Daly drove to the point named. The pistol-toting individual identified himself as James Floyd Myers. The girl said she was Imogene Smothers. She lived with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bailey Smothers, and a younger brother, on a farm some 5 miles east of Jasper. Until lately she'd held a job as a librarian in Jasper.

Daly said he arrested Myers on a charge of carrying a pistol. Imogene admitted she was only 17, but begged the deputy not to involve her in legal proceedings.

"When Myers was released on bond," Daly related, "I called him aside and warned him that I was not going to let him ruin that young girl's life. I warned him to leave her alone, or I'd see that he went to the penitentiary."

Daly then returned Imogene to her farm home and gave her into the keeping of her distracted mother and father. En route there she had confided to the deputy a strange story.

"Floyd Myers, she told me, had urged her to commit suicide with the pistol. He promised he would then kill himself. That was the only way they could continue to be together, Myers had argued. But she told me that she refused, because she didn't believe Floyd would carry out his half of the suicide pact. Another time, she said, Myers tried to get her to tie a heavy rock around her neck and wade in and drown. He swore to her that he would drown himself the same way. But Imogene didn't believe he meant it. Again she refused."

The girl, Daly stated, had promised her folks in his hearing to remain at home thereafter. She said she would resume her library job or find a new one. She promised to have nothing more to do with her middle-aged lover.

Floyd Myers, the Scripture-quoting, fatherly looking man, seemed glad to end the affair and go back to his wife, two daughters and six grandchildren. But something —nobody knew just what—had brought Myers and Imogene Smothers together again.

The ill-matched, ill-fated pair somehow muddled through the winter, but in the spring they disappeared. It must have been soon after that when Imogene was in Columbus, Mississippi, with the Elwood Cashmans.

Daly was interested to hear from Crouch that Myers had written letters, enclosing the money orders, to Imogene in Columbus at about this time.

The Walker County authorities hadn't been tailing Myers. He was under bond to keep the peace, following the Flat Creek pistol-flourishing incident. But the evidence of the money orders suggested that Myers had been leading a double life, commuting between the family farm near Jasper and the love nest unsteadily established across a state line, on 7th Avenue South in Columbus.

It was long past midnight, June 25th, 1940, when Crouch and McDonald drove with Sheriff Hammer and his chief deputy, Daly, to seek Myers. They stopped 150

yards from the farm dwellings. The four armed men left their car, Hammer and Crouch made for the front door, Daly and McDonald covering the rear.

Sheriff Hammer knocked once. He waited, knocked again. The door swung open. The man holding it was James Floyd Myers.

Myers submitted quietly to arrest. He said that his two married daughters were not at home. He begged Hammer and Crouch not to disturb his sleeping wife. Allowed to dress himself and then driven to the sheriff's office in Jasper, Floyd Myers attempted to deny his guilt.

But Sheriff Crouch showed him Imogene's skirt which had been dry-cleaned in Columbus. It had come from the battered suitcase Myers had sold to Trigg in Greenville for four badly needed bucks..

"Remember Lionel Trigg, Myers?" Crouch queried. "He remembers you and can describe you. What's more, he'll take oath to your sale of the contents of that suitcase, which we now have in Greenville. Every piece of clothing in it is already identified as having belonged to the girl who called herself 'Sue Holcombe' —the girl you strangled, Myers—whose right name was Imogene Smothers."

At this the suspect wilted. "Okay. I might as well tell you about it," he blurted. "I had to kill her, see—to get away from her. It was like this. We'd gone swimming in the lake. I called her and, of course, she came to me. We were standing in water about waist deep. The limbs of a willow tree hung down above our heads. I reached up and pulled one down.

"Imogene just stood there, not knowing what I aimed to do, till I had one of the long switches of the willow around her neck. I just held on until she quit thrashing about and was dead. Then I dragged her ashore, wired the concrete block to her neck and carried her out in the lake and dropped her down. I reckon the motor boats must have washed her to shallow water, or you'd never have found her."

Held in Jasper until extradited to Mississippi, the accused man was locked up in the Washington County jail in Greenville. He voluntarily dictated and signed a full confession, and was soon thereafter indicted for first-degree murder.

Many of his relatives came to his aid. They retained counsel, who succeeded in having his murder trial postponed for nearly 13 months, until July 21st, 1941.

In court Myers sought to repudiate his confession. The defense counsel attempted to establish an insanity plea. Witnesses were produced to swear that they had known the accused only as "Crazy Floyd." One of these partisans recalled that Myers had even spent several hours in a hayloft on a scorching hot summer's day because he wanted to find out for himself "how hot it is in hell!"

The jury proved hard-headed enough not to take any stock in Myers' plea of insanity. Their verdict, after two hours' deliberation, was, "Guilty." But they spared him the death penalty. The judge promptly sentenced him to Mississippi state prison for life—a sentence that Floyd Myers is still serving. ◆◆◆

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The names, Mr. and Mrs. Elwood Cashman, as used in the foregoing story, are not the real names of the persons concerned. These persons have been given fictitious names to protect their identities.

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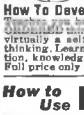

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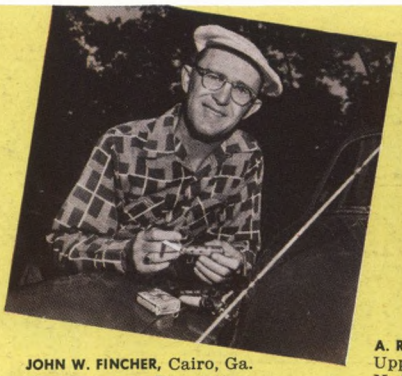

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