MURDER AMONG THE DYING
A Complete Tony Quinn Mystery Novel
By G. WAYMAN JONES

PROTECTIVE ARMOR
An Exciting Story
By NORMAN A. DANIELS
"EVEREADY" No. 6 Dry Cells continue to provide dependable power for the vital field telephone equipment of our Armed Forces.

But you'll be glad to know they are available in increasing quantities for civilian use—fresh, full-powered, long-lived as always. Ask for them at your dealer's now.

Jap—and get it over!
Here's the Greatest BILLFOLD BARGAIN in all America.

**3 BIG VALUES in ONE**

- SMART ZIPPER LEATHER BILLFOLD AND PASS CASE
- BUILT-IN CHANGE PURSE
- Identification Key Tag

With Your Name, Address, City and State
Hand Engraved

"It "Zips" All the Way Around"

Complete With PASS CASE COIN PURSE and CURRENCY COMPARTMENT

**ZIPPERS ARE BACK!!**

Exteriors Of These Billfolds Are Made Of Such Beautiful Leathers As SADDLE, MOROCCO AND GALFSKIN!

At Last! Here's the Billfold you've been waiting for since Pearl Harbor. Here's the Billfold most wanted by men everywhere—now for the first time offered at a price that's sensationally low for a Billfold of such unmistakable fine quality. You've never known real Billfold satisfaction until you've used this "Zip-all-around" Deluxe Pass Case Billfold with its Built-in Change Purse and Roomy Currency Compartment. When closed it's as neat and safe a Billfold as you've ever seen. Shake it all you want and nothing can fall out. Sling easily into your back pocket or coat and will not bulge out of shape. Yet when you want to get at it, the Billfold "Zips open all the way"—so that everything you carry is in full plain view, ready for instant use. No guesswork. No futzing into tight corners to get at valuables.

Here without a doubt is the last word in a real man's Billfold. A veritable storehouse for everything a man likes to carry with him—his currency, his change, his credit and membership cards, his personal identification. Along with the all around Zipper Billfold and Change Purse, we also include a hand engraved Identification Key Tag as shown. You get the 3 Big Values in one as described all for only $2.98. But hurry. SEND NO MONEY. Just rush your order on the handy coupon below today. On arrival, pay postman only $2.98 plus 20c tax and postage with understanding that if this isn't the greatest Billfold Bargain you've ever seen, you can return in 10 days for full refund.

SEND NO MONEY—RUSH THIS COUPON TODAY!

ILLINOIS MERCHANDISE MRT. Dept. 4348-A
500 N. Dearborn St., Chicago 10, Ill.

[Form to fill out for order]

We also send you this beautiful 3-color Identification Key Tag, hand engraved with your full name, address, city and state. It's the ideal key tag. Provides ample room for all your keys with your permanent identification for recovery in case of loss.
A Black Bat Mystery Novel

MURDER AMONG THE DYING

Featuring Tony Quinn,
Nemesis of Crime

By G. WAYMAN JONES

A body hurtles through the air from a skyscraper window—and before it hits the ground the Black Bat is plunged into a baffling mystery of greed and gore! Follow the trail of Tony Quinn as he speeds into the most perilous criminal chase of his career!

11

GRIPPING SHORT STORIES

POISONED HEARTS

Captain Conway tackles the mystery of Rex Harvey’s death

Ted Coughlan

44

PROTECTIVE ARMOR

A loud suit can sometimes make as much noise as a roaring gun

Norman A. Daniels

51

WELCOME HOME, SUCKER

Jimmy Rohan is caught in a murder snare while seeking hidden loot

Joe Archibald

58

THE BIG MONEY MAN

The cash comes in—but it’s accompanied by a corpse!

Wayland Rice

64

OFF THE RECORD

A department where readers and the editor meet

The Editor

6
Study ACCOUNTING
NOW—For Post-War Success

Fewer have trained for Accounting during war. Yet new government regulations and taxes demand more bookkeepers and accountants. Good opportunity now to enter this growing, well-paying field. After short period of part-time training, you can take accounting position and continue study on the job. Interesting, free 48-page booklet describes opportunities and requirements in Accounting and tells how you can prepare quickly and at moderate cost. Write for "Accountancy, The Profession That Pays."

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY
A Correspondence Institution
417 S. Dearborn St., Dept. 11329-H Chicago 5, Ill.

OFF THE RECORD
(Concluded from page 6)

We value our readers' opinions, for they help us in planning future issues. Here are a few of the letters we have received recently:

Have read BLACK BOOK DETECTIVE for some time. I enjoy it, but I plead with you. I think the novels should be longer. I severely believe much of the flavor of the story is lost in the fact that Tony Quinn is suspected of not being blind. I believe that he should be able to conceal his identity. The Black Bat much better than he does. Mr. Jones writes very good novels. I think his descriptions are very good also. Silks, Butch and Carol are good characters. Well, so much for my little piece. All in all it is a good book.—Frank Peloud, Jr., Omaha, Nebr.

Thanks for your nice letter, Frank. Afraid we wouldn't be able to make the Black Bat novels any longer and still have room for the short stories in the magazine, too. And a lot of readers like those as well as the novels. For instance:

I've never missed an issue of BLACK BOOK DETECTIVE in three years. Because of Tony Quinn, Butch, Silk and Carol will pass, too. I always read the short stories—they are wonderful.—Raymond Wright, Presque Isle, Me.

Brief and right to the point, Ray. Thanks for your letter. Here's another:

I read every issue of BLACK BOOK DETECTIVE and agree with Mary R. Brown in your spring issue—Tony Quinn is an ideal character. I do some writing myself and believe any character ever put on paper is patterned after some living person. There are a lot of people as dumb as McGarth, but is there any living Tony Quinn?—Laura Sherman, Carthage, N. Y.

That's quite a question, Laura. Perhaps there may be someone who is like Tony Quinn somewhere—but we doubt that G. Wayman Jones based him on any living character. Here's what another reader has to say:

Maybe I'll be shot at sunrise—but I don't care much for the Black Bat stories—I like the rest of the stories in the magazine much better. Personally I get tired of reading about the same character all of the time. That's my opinion.—William Norman, St. Paul, Minn.

You won't be shot, Bill. We want our readers to tell us just what they think about the magazine—and thanks for your letter. Of course you practically stand alone in your opinion—for the majority of our readers prefer the Black Bat yarns to any other detective novels and can't get enough of 'em.

Afraid that's all the letters we can quote from this time, although we wish to thank the hundreds of other readers who have written in and whose suggestions and comments have been carefully studied. Now let's hear from more of you. Please address all letters and postcards to The Editor, BLACK BOOK DETECTIVE, 10 East 40th Street, New York 16, N. Y. Happy reading to all!

—THE EDITOR

Just out—the November issue of the new pocket-size MYSTERY BOOK Magazine featuring the newest mystery novel by Kurt Steel, also Todd Downing, Will Cuppy and others. Get it today, 25c at all newsstands.

(Adv.)
ACTION, drama, and baffling mystery as a man comes back from the dead to taunt the living, and with him comes murder! Over it all seems to hover the shadow of huge dark wings, for once again a sable-hued nemesis stalks the night as the Black Bat goes into action in BLIND MAN’S BLUFF, the pulsating novel in the next issue of BLACK BOOK DETECTIVE! It is one of G. Wayman Jones’ best yarns, and you know what that means!

The story opens when Special District Attorney Tony Quinn receives a strange visitor at his office. A visitor who refuses to give his name, or tell what he wants.

“Hold him outside for three minutes and then send him in,” Quinn orders.

As the man is ushered in, Tony Quinn almost gasps aloud at the startling appearance of the visitor. He carries a thick, heavy cane on which he leans, and he is thin to the point of emaciation. His face resembles that of a skull more than a human being. The cheeks are sunken and the flesh tight as a drum skin, his complexion the color of wax. He reminds Quinn of a dummy in a horror museum.

The Buried Bradley

Quinn learns that the man’s name is Matt Bradley and he is just back after having spent three years of torture in a Jap prison camp. Since arriving in New York he has learned that Matt Bradley supposedly died three years ago and is buried in a local cemetery.

“This morning I went to that cemetery, studied the records and found my own tombstone,” Bradley says. “There is someone buried under it and I resent that very much. I’m not dead. I am Matt Bradley and I think someone simulated my death for reasons advantageous to himself or herself.”

“There might have been another Matt Bradley,” Quinn suggests.

“No,” Bradley snaps. “My parents are buried there, too, and my sister. It’s my family plot.”

He frowned as he faced the apparently blind man seated at the desk. “I investigated—and I am apparently dead. My estate—a considerable one—has passed into the hands of three heirs. Nit-wite I knew I should never have trusted. They are living in my house, spending my money.”

As Bradley talks on, Quinn learns that he hates all of his relatives. There are Bradley’s nephew, Don Thayer, who has married the supposedly dead man’s fiancée; his brother, Sam Bradley, who spends most of the time drinking and gambling, and his cousin, Clint Henderson, who does nothing but read books and play the piano.

The Investigation Begins

Matt Bradley’s heart and brain seem filled with hatred and murder, but Quinn persuades him to promise there will be no violence when he again faces those people whom he feels have wronged him.

Quinn agrees to investigate and after Bradley leaves the office he sends Carol Baldwin to the Bradley residence, for she happens to be a friend of the girl who has married the nephew of the man supposedly dead.

Shortly afterward Carol reaches the house Matt Bradley arrives with a blind man who has been in prison with him and who is his constant companion. The appearance of the man the rest of the family believes dead creates consternation in the house—and later when Carol finds Don Thayer mysteriously murdered, his head crushed in by some heavy object, she feels it is time for the police and the Black Bat to go into action.

Accompanied by Tony Quinn, one of the first things the police do is to investigate the grave in which Matt Bradley is supposedly buried. The body in the grave proves to be a small elderly man, and he certainly isn’t Matt Bradley!

With the aid of his three companions, Carol, Silk Kirby and Butch O’Leary, the district attorney, who is actually the Black Bat, follows the mysterious crime trail that seems to be an endless labyrinth.

The way in which the Black Bat battles and conquers the diabolical brains pitted against him makes BLIND MAN’S BLUFF a tense, engrossing novel from start to finish.

In addition to this grand full-length fiction treat there will also be a number of swiftly-paced shorter detective stories with plenty of punch in the next issue!

LETTERS FROM READERS

We are still receiving many interesting letters from our readers, but we are eager to hear from more of them. Why don’t you write and tell us what you like and what does not appeal to you about the magazine?

(Concluded on page 8)
Make and mail the International Correspondence Schools coupon and you make the first move in acquiring Success Insurance for changing tomorrow.

Enroll with I.C.S., bring determination to your studies and you begin to collect dividends at once. You learn in your spare time. At work you prove and apply what you learn, doing a better job and winning advancement.

Cost to your pocketbook of an I.C.S. Course is surprisingly low. To make this Success Insurance effective, however, you must invest ambition and perseverance. I.C.S. can't give you these last. If you possess them, I.C.S. will make you one of the trained men to whom the future belongs.

For 54 years it has been demonstrated that today's I.C.S. student is tomorrow's leader. The coupon brings full information.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

BOX 3967-E, SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me full particulars about the course before which I have marked X:

[Check boxes for courses like Electrical Drafting, Shop Practice, etc.]

Name: ____________________________________________ Age: ________ Home Address: ____________________________________________________________

City: __________________________ State: ____________ Position: __________________________ Hour: _______ A. M. to _______ P. M.

American residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Ltd., Montreal, Canada.


DISCOUNT TO DISCHARGED VETERANS—SPECIAL TUITION RATES FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.
I Will Show You How to Learn RADIO by Practicing in Spare Time

I send you Folderwin Equipment and Radio Parts; show you how to do Radio soldering; how to mount and connect Radio parts; give you practical experience.

Early in my course I show you how to build this N.R.L. Tester with parts I send. It soon helps you fix neighborhood Radios and earn EXTRA money in spare time.

You get parts to build Radio Circuits; then test them; see how they work; learn how to design special circuits; how to locate and repair circuit defects.

Building this A. M. Signal Generator gives you more valuable experience. It provides amplitude-modulated signals for many tests and experiments.

You build this Superheterodyne Receiver which brings in local and distant stations and gives you more experience to help you win success in Radio.

**KNOW RADIO—Win Success**

I Will Train You at Home—SAMPLE LESSON FREE


**Future for Trained Men Is Bright in Radio, Television, Electronics**

The Radio Repair business is booming now. Fixing Radios pays good money as a spare time or full time business. Trained Radio Technicians also find wide-open opportunities in Police, Aviation, Marine Radio, in Broadcasting, Radio Manufacturing, Public Address work, etc. Think of the boom coming when new Radios can be made!

Thing of even greater opportunities when Television, FM, Electronics, can be offered to the public!

**Many Beginners Soon Make $5, $10 a Week EXTRA in Spare Time**

The day you enroll I start sending EXTRA MONEY JOB SHEETS to help you make EXTRA money fixing Radios in spare time while learning.

Mail Coupon for sample lesson and 64-page book. It's packed with facts about opportunities for you. Read about my Course. Read letters from men I trained, telling what they are doing, earning. MAIL COUPON in envelope or paste on penny postal. J. F. Smith, President, Dept SM09, National Radio Institute, Pioneer Home Study Radio School, Washington 9, D. C.

MAIL COUPON for sample lesson and 64-page book. It's packed with facts about opportunities for you. Read about my Course. Read letters from men I trained, telling what they are doing, earning. MAIL COUPON in envelope or paste on penny postal. J. F. Smith, President, Dept SM09, National Radio Institute, Pioneer Home Study Radio School, Washington 9, D. C.

My Course Includes Training in TELEVISION • ELECTRONICS FREQUENCY MODULATION
—— yet, it’s from that famous favorite of the South, “Dixie”

I WISH I WAS IN DIXIE

On the diagram above the first note on the music is “G.” You’ll find that “G” second of the three black keys just above the middle of the keyboard. From “G” you can find the other notes. You’ll be playing the melody of that famous tune, “Dixie.” Now read below how you can learn to play any instrument this quick, simple, low-cost way!

THINK OF IT! Music Lessons for less than 7¢ a day and you learn right at home, this easy short-cut way

If you are anxious to learn music but hesitate because you think it is too difficult, just follow the simple instructions in the panel above. You’ll be surprised to discover that it is easy as A-B-C to learn to play, right at home, without a private teacher, by this remarkable short-cut method.

Yes, thousands of folks have found the U. S. School of Music method makes learning a pleasant pastime instead of a bore. No long hours of practicing tedious scales and exercises. No trick charts or number systems. With this method you learn to play by playing real tunes from real notes.

And everything is made so clear you just can’t go wrong. First you read the simple printed instructions. Then you see how to play from clear pictures and diagrams. Then you play yourself and hear how it sounds.

HERE’S MORE PROOF

PLAYS FROM THE START.
Your advertisements are true to the letter. I can actually play my favorite instrument even though I’m only at the beginning. How can I ever repay you for your kind instructions. F. R. O., Illinois.

INVITED TO PARTIES. Before I took your course, I did not know a note of music. Then 3 months later I started to play for dances. I’ve been invited to many parties. M. N., Vancouver, B. C.

SUCCESSFUL 47TH YEAR

U. S. School of Music, 29411 Brunswick Blvd., New York, N.Y.

Please send me Free Booklet and Print and Picture Sample. I would like to play instrument checked below.

| (Do you have instrument?)                    |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Piano           | Guitar          |
| Violin          | Acoustic Mandolin |
| Hawaiian        | Practical Finger |
| Guitar          | Trumpet          |
| Bass            | Cornet           |
| Harmony         |                 |

Name ____________________________ (Please Print)

Street ____________________________

City ____________________________ State __________

NOTE: If you are under 18 years of age parent must sign this coupon.

—— Save 2¢ — Stick Coupon on penny postcard ——
FUN! THRILLS! EXCITEMENT!
America's Future is in the Air—
LEARN HOW TO FLY

It's EASY with this New,
EXCITING FLYING GAME
which includes a complete, authentic
FLYING COURSE
and De Luxe
PRE-FLIGHT TRAINER
COCKPIT

Tomorrow All The World Will Fly!
Play This Game and YOU'LL Learn to Fly With IT!

It's like a dream come true! Imagine having equipment similar to what thousands of Air Heroes and Flying Aces use today, used in classrooms for their first flying lesson! Equipment designed by the men who headed our Air Force! Equipment that helped solve the monstrous task of training our pilots quickly and thoroughly. Yes, that's how Uncle Sam did it—with perfectly reproduced replicas of actual controls and instrument panels. Up to now these time-saving short-cuts to air mastery were unattainable to civilians, but at last this sensational offer opens the doors of the sky to you! Yes, by a special arrangement we are now able to offer you a complete course in pre-flight aviation training together with replica controls and instrument board similar to equipment used in official Air Force training schools. And we've put it up in game form so that you can enjoy yourself as you learn!

You owe it to yourself to get the acquaintance with aviation and entertainment that comes with the complete and realistic instrument board shown at the right. It's 16" high and 30" wide, and contains every instrument and dial essential to flying. It's not just a toy, but a true to life and durable replica of the real thing beautifully lithographed in full color. The dials on the panel are accurately calibrated, air speed, trim, and fuel indicators, rate of climb, slip, turn, compass, fuel gauge, and oil temperature. The board also includes retractable control column and cockpit. But best of all, a cross-hair bombardment and a automatic precision bomb release. The forms and motions are lifelike and can be set for any aerial maneuver. The control stick and wheel is 36" high and the rudder pedals work on a resilient spring-action principle.

ALL PRINCIPLES OUTLINED IN "HOW TO FLY" BOOK

It's everything you need to learn flying principles, and offers delightful glimpses even while you're learning! You are both pilot and bombardier—joying your exciting and challenging work without leaving the floor. What's more, you'll grow with pride as you realize you are really learning the actual fundamentals of flying! So if you know what's good for you, get off your feet and into the delightful hobby—enjoying the emotional flying thrill that this exciting new game has to offer—shelter you can put into practice because it teaches you just how and why a plane flies.

PILOT'S PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST INCLUDED

Nothing has been left out of this remarkable combination of aviation instruction, practice and entertainment. Even down to a complete Pilot's Physical Fitness Kit and Flying Aptitude Quiz. These are of vital importance to all aviation students and are patterned after the standard tests given by all aviation examinations. These tests are easy to understand and simple to follow, and besides their usefulness to you for purposes of determining your rating, you can have more fun than a picnic using it as a parlor game by rating your friends and family. A complete flying eye chart, color blindness test charts and eye checks, is supplied without any extra penny of cost.

DON'T DELAY! ORDER TODAY!
With flying all the rage the demand is sure to exceed our limited supply. So you'd better order now to be sure of getting yours. Do it TODAY and avoid disappointment. Sold only

在全国的销售—Flight $5

FREE

COMPLETE WITH CROSS-HAIR BOMBING

You'll say it's the most entertaining

way to fly, and it is. Includes 26 full-color
pictures, colored charts, flying rules,
charts, Bridge, and a complete

Pilot's Physical Fitness Test and Aptitude Quiz.

Also includes Bombing Game and Target Games Free of extra cost. I understand that if I am not satisfied I can return within 3 days for a refund.

NATIONAL NOVELTIES—Flight $5

600 South Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill.

Please rush my Pre-Flight Trainer Cockpit and Authentic Flying Course complete with "How to Fly" Book, Pilot's Physical Fitness Test and Aptitude Quiz. Also include Bombing Game and Targets Free of extra cost. I understand that if I am not satisfied I can return within 3 days for a refund.

CHECK ONE

[ ] I am enclosing $2.49 for payment
[ ] Send my complete outfit C.O.D.

[ ] Please post paid

I will pay postage at $2.49 plus

Postage charges.

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Postpaid.
MURDER AMONG THE DYING

By G. WAYMAN JONES

A body hurtles through the air from a skyscraper window—and before it hits the ground Tony Quinn, daring nemesis of crime, is plunged into a baffling mystery of greed and gore!

CHAPTER I

Appointment with Death

IT WAS beginning to rain—a rather heavy drizzle—as the car pulled up in front of the big building. City hall was not far distant nor were the other great edifices housing the various courts of law. Across the street was the Department of Charities and the tax offices.

From this particular vicinity stemmed many of the influences governing the big city. By day, there was intense activity. At night, the section slept more soundly than a suburb.

The driver got out, turned up his coat collar against the drizzle and ran around the car to open the door for his passenger.

He extended a helping hand. The passenger needed one—for he was blind.

A patrolman swung around the corner.

"Good evening, Mr. Quinn," he called out. "Anything I can do? Kind of late for you to be going into your office, isn't it? This is Patrolman O'Keefe."

The blind man smiled. "I should have known your voice, Mike. Yes, it is an unusual hour, but somehow the work of a special district attorney never seems to stop. Nasty evening."

"Silk" Kirby, the blind man's companion and confidant, was now leading Tony Quinn into the building.

"If you ask me," he said to Quinn, in his voice a note of irritation, "this is a fool's errand. You ought to be home, sir, not out
in this weather. An anonymous note, asking you to be in your office at eleven-thirty! Anyone who makes such an appointment is crazy."

"Or compelled to designate such an hour through circumstances he can't control," Quinn answered.

This city-owned building in which Tony Quinn had his offices was some twenty stories high. His quarters were on the sixteenth floor. Because of the shortage of help there was no elevator operator this late at night, but one of the lifts had been turned into a self-operated elevator. Silk led Tony Quinn into it, closed the door and pushed the button for the sixteenth floor.

As the lift ascended, Quinn sighed, hooked the crook of his cane on one arm and those blind, staring eyes of his became alive and alert. Tony Quinn was not blind, as all but three people in the world believed him to be. Instead, he could see perfectly. In fact, his eyesight was almost uncanny.

"Who knows," he said now, as the veil dropped from these eyes of his "but that we might find something interesting developing from this date. Or it may have been made by some poor bank teller who has played the horses, lost his shirt and the bank's funds, and is too bashful to come and surrender in daylight."

"It will be something like that," Silk prophesied. "Wait and see. Why didn't the writer of that note make an appointment with the regular D.A.? Why bother you?"

Quinn laughed, "And there, my smooth friend and ally, is the main reason why I think something is up. As a special D.A. I'm given all the tough cases to crack. Things the D.A.'s office knows will mar their beautiful record. Headaches—and I've a file full of them in the office too. But this anonymous writer has recognized the fact that we handle unusual things and, therefore, his case must be highly important, as well as an odd one."

The elevator stopped and Quinn's eyes became blank again. He never took chances on any one other than the three who already knew it suspecting he was not blind. On Silk's arm and, tapping his cane on the marble floor, Quinn walked down the corridor to his office. His name and official capacity were neatly lettered on the glass panel which formed the upper half of the door.

Silk opened up, turned on lights and they entered. As it lacked fifteen minutes of the time designated in the note, Quinn sat down at his desk and took the note from his pocket. Secure in the privacy of these quarters, he could safely drop the mask of blindness and he did as he studied the letter once more. It read:

Dear Mr. Quinn:

It is vitally important that I see you strictly in private. Tuesday night at 11:30 I'll come to your office. Please be there. My life and the lives of others may depend upon this interview. It would also be safer if you kept the contents of this note confidential. I cannot sign my name. It is too dangerous. Just be there, I implore you. Such is the importance of my mission that I may take steps to contact you by another means as well.

"No attempt was made to disguise the handwriting," Quinn mused. "Which doesn't mean anything. I suppose. Silk, I rarely play hunches, but this time I have a sneaking idea this writer has something big on his mind."

But 11:30 came and there was no sign of the man who had asked for the appointment. Quinn lit a cigarette, leaned back in his swivel chair and waited patiently. Silk was staring moodily out the window at the weather, and the rain which had now turned into a downpour.

Fifteen minutes more elapsed and Silk stirred uneasily.

"Guess he isn't coming, sir," he observed.

"Or the note was just the work of some crackpot."

Quinn shook his head. "I'm giving him plenty of time. The way that note is worded, the tenor of it, serves to show he is handicapped somehow. He isn't even certain he can get to the office, and he is taking another means of letting me in on his secret. The man, Silk, must be in constant danger. Give him time."

Perhaps two or three more minutes went by while Silk still stared out the window. Suddenly he jumped to his feet and Quinn spun around in the swivel chair.

"A body just flashed by on its way down!" Silk shouted. He labored with the window, threw it wide and leaned out. Far below was a courtyard behind the big building. It was illuminated rather weakly and the rain made visibility poor. Silk couldn't see a thing.

"You look," he urged Quinn. "Nobody will see you."

Quinn took a chance. The rare vision he possessed—and masked so effectively—penetrated the darkness. The rain interfered somewhat, but he was able to make out a form, sprawled weirdly upon the pavement below. Just a small blur, but there was no
question as to what it was. Quinn pulled his head and shoulders in quickly, after a swift glance upward.

“You were right,” he said. “Better phone Headquarters. Then take me downstairs on the freight elevator. We’ll use the rear exit and have a look at the man before the police show up.”

Silk whistled. “You don’t think it was the man who was coming here, sir, do you?”

Quinn shrugged. “Well, it seems incredible that it could be. After all, this office is plainly numbered and my name is on the door. What would our prospective visitor be doing on some higher floor? Just the same, we’ll have a look.”

and saw that the label had been torn out. Rapidly he searched the man’s pockets, but they were entirely empty. There wasn’t even a book of matches or a handkerchief.

He turned over the dead man’s hands which lay palms downward and Silk heard him mutter something. Then the sound of advancing footsteps attracted their attention. Quinn’s eyes rapidly became blank again and he stepped back, clutching his cane nervously.

Silk took his place beside the corpse and then he saw what had caused those mutterings of astonishment from Quinn. The dead man’s fingers and palms were stained a dozen different vivid hues. There was red and blue of two or three shades. A bright green and a purple. Not in streaks but mottled, as if the man had pressed his hands against an artist’s palette covered with paints of assorted colors.

Two radio cops came hurrying around the corner of the alley. In a few moments others arrived. Quinn explained that he and Silk had been in the office and that Silk had seen the body hurl past the window. Naturally they had come down to see, if by some remote circumstance, there might be something they could do.

“We’d better find out what office he jumped from,” a sergeant said. “If he dropped right past your window, Mr. Quinn, he must have come from some window directly, or almost directly, above yours.”

SILK made the call to Headquarters and, three or four minutes later, he and Quinn were in the courtyard beside the corpse. The man had been about thirty, of average weight and height. His clothes were neat, and not cheap. Quinn saw, at a glance, that his necktie was worth about ten dollars. His brown shoes were highly polished and of the best leather.

There was little or no blood to interfere with Quinn’s cursory examination, but every bone in the man’s body had been smashed. Arms, legs and neck were weirdly twisted.

“Keep an eye out,” Quinn warned Silk. “I’m going to have a closer look.”

He bent over the form, opened the coat,
They found the office quickly because the glass panel, forming the upper part of the door had been smashed to gain entrance. It was the office of a Supreme Court clerk. Inside, the window was opened wide. There was a single set of wet shoe prints across the rug.

"He must have been crazy," The sergeant shrugged. "You can't see this, Mr. Quinn, but it looks as if the fellow came here to the building intent on suicide. He bustled into this office, opened the window and took a dive out of it. There are no signs of a struggle. He wasn't in the office long, because he must have been dripping wet when he entered and the rain began only a little while ago. Before that, it was just misting. His tracks are clear."

"Too bad," Quinn said sadly. "Suicide is such an unnecessary and futile thing. It solves no problems, helps no one. Anything on the corpse to identify him, Sergeant?"

"I haven't found anything so far, sir," the sergeant replied. "We'll look him over better when he reaches the morgue... Well, I guess that's all. Thanks for helping us."

Silk took Quinn's arm and piloted him across the shattered glass littering the floor. They headed for the self-service elevator which took them down two floors to Quinn's own office. Quinn had left the door open, on the chance that his proposed visitor might appear, but no one was waiting for them.

Silk closed and locked the outer door.

"Do you still think that man could have been the one who was coming here?" he asked.

"I don't know," Quinn said slowly. "One thing that bothers me is the way the glass panel in the door upstairs had been destroyed. Not just broken through so as to reach the latch inside, but completely smashed. Then someone took special pains to trample on the bits of glass which were on the floor. There wasn't much more than dust left. Why?"

Silk shrugged. "Sometimes glass breaks that way, sir. I do agree that it's odd about there being nothing on the corpse which could be used as identification. But then, sometimes suicides deliberately make it a point to try and conceal their identities. Shall we wait any longer, sir?"

Quinn glanced at his watch. It had an open face which could be read by passing the fingertips gently across the dial—a blind man's watch. It indicated the time was ten minutes of one.

"No, I think not," he said slowly. "Our man isn't coming—so he might have been the chap who pitched out that window... Silk, I noticed no signs of a struggle in that office. Did you?"

"No, sir, everything was shipshape. And there's no reason why we should assume the dead man was the writer of that note, sir. It's an interesting coincidence, but it doesn't mean anything. Suppose that fellow had written the note. Why then, would he have broken into that office upstairs and jumped out the window? If he was in danger, yet determined to contact you, that fact eliminates any motive for suicide.

"Yes," Quinn frowned. "Yes, it does unless—well, you know that murder sometimes can be made to look like suicide... all right, Silk. We'll start for home now."

They rode the self-operated lift to the lobby where Quinn went into his act as a blind man. They had reached a point close to the entrance when Quinn suddenly stopped. A patrolman stood in the doorway.

"Have you a cigarette, Silk?" Quinn asked.

"And a light, please."

Silk furnished both and as he held the flame up to the cigarette, Quinn said softly:

"Take a quick look at the bulletin board listing the tenants and office numbers of everyone in this building. Our office is listed as Eighteen-twenty on the board. It's really Sixteen-twenty, two floors below, and Eighteen-twenty happens to be the office from which the 'suicide' jumped."

Silk gave the glassed-in directory a swift glance, but his features remained immobile and he said nothing as they passed by the patrolman who opened the door and saluted. Not until they were safely in Quinn's car and driving home, did Silk speak.

"I take it all back, sir," he said then. "That supposed suicide was the man who wanted to see us. Someone else knew he was coming here. That person opened the directory case, switched the numbers of our office to the one two floors above and lured his victim to an unoccupied office where he lay in wait. It was murder!"

CHAPTER II

Ransacked Premises

Silk Kirby drove slowly along a quiet, residential street. At the end of it was a narrow street, ending blindly against a high stone wall. The house on the corner was large and the grounds surrounding it were spacious. It was Tony Quinn's home.

Silk turned into the driveway, stopped in front of the garage door and got out. He unlocked the doors, swung them back, then raced through the rain for the car again. He drove into the garage and helped Quinn out.

Despite the privacy of the garage, Quinn
The Black Bat gave Buckley a tremendous yank as the heavy branch came crashing down

(CAPRTER X)

15
kept up his act of being a blind man. He never knew who might see him at some unsuspected moment. He got out of the car and, using his cane, tapped his way toward the exit. Then he stopped and removed his toptcoat and his hat.

"I'm pretty well soaked," he told Silk. "No sense dripping water all over the house. I'll hang my hat and coat on the inside of the door. I can throw that old raincoat over my shoulders."

Quinn handed Silk his hat and coat. Silk hung them on a hook, about head high. He was holding the raincoat to slip it around Quinn's shoulders when a shot froze them into statues. It was a sharp, vicious bark, apparently that of a rifle. The hat on the hook gave a crazy jump.

Automatically Silk leaped toward the light switch and snapped it off. Then he dropped to a crouching position like the one Quinn had already assumed. Neither man spoke. Quinn crept over to the car, unlocked the glove compartment and from it took a heavy gun.

"Keep your eyes open," he warned Silk. "That bullet was meant for me. I'm taking a look! Blast the consequences."

Quinn leaped through the garage doors and streaked toward the shelter of a large tree. From behind the trunk he peered intently through the darkness. Those eyes of his that were so far from being ordinary could penetrate darkness easily. He could see at night as well as the average man could in broad daylight.

But nothing moved, there were no sounds of stealthy footsteps stealing away. Just the steady beat of the rain. Quinn stepped from behind the tree, deliberately exposing himself. Nothing happened. He darted away into the night and was gone for several minutes. Returning, he shook water out of his hair and looked at Silk.

"I saw no one. And any tracks were wiped out by the rain, of course. Do you agree that bullet was meant for me?"

Silk lifted Quinn's hat off the hook. There was a neat hole through it and through the door as well.

"The killer saw the hat and coat hanging on the door," he said quietly. "The rain and darkness probably made it look as if you were inside the clothes, sir. If you had been—"

Silk shuddered.

"Let's go in," Quinn suggested. "Frankly, Silk, I'm more worried about this attack than anything else that ever happened to me. Can you realize what it means? Someone may have a hunch—or even direct knowledge—that Tony Quinn leads a double life. That he isn't blind and that he is the Black Bat!"

"I thought of that, sir," Silk said grimly. They entered through a rear door and the moment Silk turned on the lights, Quinn's heart began thumping hard. The kitchen had been ransacked! They entered the dining room, the living room and the library. Each room looked as if a cyclcone had roared through it.

"Draw the shades," Quinn said quickly when they reached the library.

Silk pulled the shades all the way down. Quinn dropped his mask of blindness and walked rapidly toward what seemed to be a wall covered with bookshelves. He pressed a hidden control and a narrow door opened.

Quinn entered a secret and well-hidden room, a white-tiled laboratory, equipped with all manner of devices for solving crimes. His heart stopped beating quite as hard when he saw that this laboratory was undisturbed.

"If he had found this,"—Quinn mopped his face—"it would have been all up with us. Right here is proof I'm not blind and that I'm the Black Bat."

"Do you think this outrage here has some connection with the writer of that note—and what happened at the office, sir?" Silk queried.

"Possibly," Quinn said musingly. "Quite possibly, except that the murdered man never reached me and the murderer knew it. Therefore, how could I have learned anything detrimental to the killer? Why would he have waylaid me and taken a pot shot at me? Why would he enter my home and tear it apart? Unless—"

"Yes?" Silk asked expectantly.

"Unless the murderer believes the man now dead actually did get in touch with me. There was mention of the fact in that note, remember, that he'd try to, by some other means than a direct interview. There might have been a letter thrust under the door. But why wasn't it there when the murderer showed up? Why did he have to search the house?"

Quinn returned to the library and Silk closed the secret door. Then he raised the window shades.

"I think, sir," he offered, "that if we began with the question of why that man was murdered, we'd work down to the answer to all this."

Quinn's eyes slowly assumed their staring blindness. He reached for a pipe, filled it and applied flame. Leaning back in the worn, comfortable chair he puffed contemplatively, for a few seconds.

"It begins with who the dead man was," he said. "Unless we can identify him, we're lost. There is no trail, no clues to help us. Nothing except evidence to show that the man was murdered. Cleverly, too. And that the murderer thinks we know the dead man's secret, whatever it was. Which places us in a dangerous position. One attempt has been made on my life. There will be others."

"And you have to act like a blind man and make the best possible target of yourself,"
Silk groaned. "Perhaps Tony Quinn should go away, sir. Put Tony Quinn out of this danger and let the Black Bat handle things."

Quinn shook his head. "No—I can’t do that. This business is so barren of clues, motives, identities, that perhaps our only hope is to make the murderer strike at me again. Then I may get a glimpse of him. Oh, I’ll be careful. Don’t worry about that. And the Black Bat is going into action also. Phone Carol and Butch. Get them over here as quickly as possible and warn them to be most careful in entering the grounds. If they even think they see or hear anyone they are to go away."

"Yes, sir," Silk said and hurried toward the telephone.

Quinn closed his eyes and puffed slowly on the pipe.

Tony Quinn was, as he had remarked, the Black Bat. His was a dual identity, entirely unsuspected by all but the three who were in his confidence.

Some years before he had been a crusading, hard-hitting District Attorney. He had campaigned to drive crime out of the city for good, but criminals had struck back. In an attempt to destroy evidence, two thugs had hurled acid upon the incriminating articles. This had happened in open court. Quinn had tried to save the evidence and had taken the contents of the acid bottle full in the face.

The searing fluid had penetrated his eyes and he had gone blind instantly. There were still deep, glistening scars around the eyes from the acid. He had, of course, been compelled to resign as District Attorney, but fortunately he was independently wealthy. He toured the world—before it was split apart by war. He visited any doctor whose reputation gave him the remotest hope of having his blindness cured. There was always the same answer. No hope. No possibility that he would ever see again.

So he had returned home and settled down to the monotonous existence of an ordinarily lively, alert young man whose health was otherwise perfect, but who was totally blind. Somewhat grimly he started learning how to help himself. As recompense for his affliction, Nature sharpened other senses. His hearing became acute, his sense of touch amazing.

Silk Kirby had appeared before Quinn had been blinded. Silk had been one of the slickest confidence men ever to burrow the brow of Police Departments and Better Business Bureaus. He had broken into Quinn’s home to rob it, being on his uppers and rather desperate. Instead of carrying out his intentions he had not only changed his mind but his entire mode of life after Tony Quinn had found him and had a talk with him. So he had stayed in the Quinn home, first as a servant, but finally he had become Tony Quinn’s close friend and finally loyal ally.

After having been blind for what seemed to Quinn like an eternity, he had a visitor one night—a pretty girl named Carol Baldwin. She came with an amazing offer. Her father, a police officer in a Midwestern town was dying of a crook’s bullet. He had absolutely no chance to live, and wanted to carry on his fight against crime by leaving his eyes to Tony Quinn. Quinn’s reputation as a D.A. had been nationwide and Carol’s father believed that, with sight, Quinn could again wage a relentless war on criminals.

A little-known surgeon had performed the delicate operation in the small town to which Quinn had gone. Soon afterward, Carol’s father died.

Weeks later, when the bandages were removed from Quinn’s eyes he found his sight restored—and Nature had added a bonus. By some miracle, Quinn could see as well in the most intense darkness as he could in daylight.

HE KEPT his recovery a strict secret, planning to wage a personal war and knowing how red tape could hamstring a man who battled criminals in the open. He became the Black Bat, a figure who soon preyed on the underworld and made criminals shrink at sight of an unexpected shadow on a wall.

Dressed in black from head to foot and wearing a close-fitting silk hood, necessitated by the telltale scars on his face, Quinn prowled the night. Carol joined his ranks and, later on, a huge man named “Butch” Leary, for whom Quinn had done a favor and earned the former prizefighter’s undying allegiance, and became the fourth member of the Black Bat’s little band.

Quinn then proceeded to study crime from all angles, and to block criminal acts with bullets or brains, whatever the situation called for. One man openly suspected that Tony Quinn could see and was the Black Bat—Captain McGrath of the Detective Bureau. The officer had taken a solemn oath that he would track down the Black Bat and arrest him, for in McGrath’s eyes, the Black Bat was just as much a criminal as the men he fought.

Police Commissioner Warner had half a notion that McGrath was right, but Warner appreciated the work the Black Bat was doing, liked Tony Quinn personally, and secretly cheered the Black Bat on.

Working undercover, Tony Quinn could fight stealth with stealth, violence with more violence—and be answerable to no one for his action. His security depended upon the fact that no one should ever discover that he was the Black Bat. Now and then Captain McGrath worried him, for though an honest cop McGrath was a persistent one, too, and his one-track mind was dominated by his desire to capture the Black Bat.
Now, although Quinn was sure that McGrath had nothing whatever to do with tonight’s doings, it seemed that at last the Black Bat’s anonymity was in danger of being exposed by someone.

True, the sacking of his house might have been done with one purpose in mind—to find out if Tony Quinn had heard from the man who later had been murdered. Then again the attempt on his life and this invasion of the premises could have been the work of some crook, wholly unrelated to the crime at the office building, who somehow had learned the Black Bat’s identity and was either trying to prove it by concrete evidence, or by wiping out Tony Quinn.

Whatever the motive, it spelled danger in big, crimson letters. The Black Bat had never before entered a case by going on the defensive, but this time it was necessary. Yet he intended to act also, but through his small band of allies.

Shortly afterward, Silk informed him that Carol and Butch were probably in the secret laboratory to which there was a private entrance. That was useful not only when Carol and Butch came, but was a means by which the Black Bat could come and go without detection. It consisted of a tunnel leading from the lab to a garden house well back on the grounds. There a trap-door opened and it was only a short distance to the side gate which led onto the blind street.

Tony Quinn walked over to the lab door, opened it and went in.

CHAPTER III

Blind Man’s Danger

A R O L B A L D W I N

greeted Tony Quinn with both arms outstretched. She was five-feet-four, blond and lovely. A small package of dynamite, for Carol knew a few tricks of fighting and could handle a gun like a Marine. Her blue eyes sparkled in anticipation of the danger gently hinted at by Silk.

Between Tony Quinn and Carol was a tacit, unspoken understanding that they were in love, and that some day—when the Black Bat hung up his regalia for the last time—they would be married. Until that time, however, it was impossible. The Black Bat’s life was dependent upon too slender a thread for him to undertake the responsibilities of a married man.

Butch Leary, huge, ungainly, and towering over the others in the lab, was grinning broadly. He had gigantic shoulders, fists that looked as if he were a boxer who had forgotten to remove his gloves, and a neck that hardly existed, for his head seemed to be glued directly onto his shoulders.

Butch was no genius. Slow-thinking as he might be, though, nevertheless a potent and valuable aide.

Quinn outlined the events and, as he talked, Carol’s worry showed on her face. Even Butch glowered and forgot his eternal smile.

“It couldn’t have been some thug or small band of crooks who tried to kill you, Tony,” Carol said. “They wouldn’t have given up so easily. It must have been the man who arranged that trap in your office building. The victim, as he promised in his note, did try to contact you some other way a letter, perhaps.”

“But if that is true,” Quinn argued, “the letter couldn’t have been delivered except by slipping it under my door. If so, why this intense search? Of course, the victim who plunged to his death might have tried to stall by saying he had delivered such a message when he really hadn’t, and the murderer came here to try and find it.”

“That’s the answer,” Carol said quickly. “It must be. There never was a note but the murderer thinks you got one. Tony, won’t it be dangerous to expose yourself now?”

“Just what I was telling him,” Silk broke in.

Quinn smiled and shrugged. “How else can we lure our killer into the open? Remember we have nothing to go on. No start to the mess. Just a dead man, so far unidentified, and a note which cannot be traced. At any rate, I don’t intend to merely sit and wait until the killer strikes again. The task at hand is meant for you and Butch, Carol.”

“Just name it,” Butch rumbled. “Anything at all—but I’d like to bust the head of that bozo who fired a shot at you.”

“I hope you get the opportunity,” Quinn chuckled. “Here is the angle. Our one and only clue is a corpse, now on a slab at the City Morgue. There is a chance someone will know of the man’s death and will come to look at him. You and Butch go down to the morgue, take up positions outside and watch. I’ll arrange to have a morgue attendant signal by a wave of his hand if anyone asks to look at the corpse. The attendant will believe he is signaling detectives at the behest of Tony Quinn, Special D.A.”

“And if such a thing should occur?” Carol asked.

“Follow the person who comes. Don’t lose him, whatever you do. It’s a remote chance, but one we can’t afford to pass up. So get started, you two, and as usual, get in touch with Silk every hour so we’ll know you’re safe.”
There was nothing to report that night. Quinn made the arrangements with one of the morgue attendants, but no one came to view the body of that young man who had pitched from an eighteenth story window. At eight in the morning, Carol phoned. She spoke to Quinn.

"Butch and I had a notion all night that we weren't the only people watching the morgue. In the daylight we got a glimpse of the other ghouls. He was in a car parked down the street a bit. I had a look at him and he's a garden variety of thug. I'm sure he's in this neighborhood for the same season we are—with one advantage. He knows who might show up, so he doesn't have to wait for signals."

"Good," Quinn said. "I'll have Silk drive me to the office. Then he'll return to the house, get into one of his disguises and come down to the morgue. He'll ask to see the corpse, in some manner so that the watcher will hear him. Perhaps Silk will be followed. If he is, trail his shadow."

SILK deposited Tony Quinn in his office twenty minutes later. The small staff hadn't arrived, wouldn't get there for half an hour yet. Silk was worried about this.

"I'll do as you say, sir," he said, "but leaving you like this could be dangerous. Especially if the killer is keeping tabs on us. He'll know you're alone and come up here to finish you off. Not that I don't think you couldn't take care of yourself, sir, but you're supposed to be blind and . . . Well, you see how it is."

"I'll be all right," Quinn assured. "Anyway, it's vitally important we create our own leads in this mess. We can't pass up a chance no matter how slim it may seem."

"All right," Silk agreed, "but it's against my better judgment. I'm carrying a gun these days. I'll leave it here on the desk, under the morning paper. Just in case."

Silk departed reluctantly.

Quinn had a lot of routine work to do. He fumbled with the Ediphone, inserted a fresh record and started the mechanism going. All this he did with his eyes stark and staring. He worked by sense of touch alone.

He heard the main office door open, not as an ordinary visitor would open it, but carefully. There was only a faint click. His hand darted up and rested on the edge of the desk, within quick reach of the newspaper covering Silk's gun. But he couldn't seize the weapon. A blind man would have no use for a gun. All he could do was sit there and wait. If things got out of hand he would have to act, but until that moment he hoped he could keep up his pose of a blind man.

The intruder was a slim man of about forty, wearing cheap clothes. But he had
beady little eyes of a strange hue that puzzled Quinn until he noticed that the pupils were so enlarged as to alter the whole appearance of the eye. This man was loaded to the gills with dope.

"Who is it?" Quinn asked querulously, noting with some small measure of satisfaction that the man had no weapon in his hand. "Answer me or I'll put through an alarm."

The intruder looked over his shoulder nervously, then closed the door behind him. He took a couple of more steps toward the desk.

"Mr. Quinn," he said, "there ain't no need to put any alarm through. I come here to give myself up. I'm a killer."

"Oh," Quinn said. "Oh, I see. Sit down and tell me all about it. We're quite alone, I assure you. Make a clean breast of the whole thing and I'll do what I can."

"Yeah—sure. That's the way I figured it." The intruder dragged a chair noisily away from the wall and plumped himself into it with vigor. He was smiling thinly. "I knocked off my wife, Mr. Quinn. She was a nagging no-good. I'm sorry I did it and I want to make a full confession."

As he finished talking he arose slowly, arms extended, fingers hooked like claws. Apparently he didn't mean to waste a bullet or dirty a knife on this blind man. His hands were good enough. He tiptoed closer. Quinn gave no indication that he saw this, but he was tense.

How could he, a blind man, arise and challenge this would-be murderer? How could he overpower him and turn him over to the police? The only way out was to shoot the man down in cold blood and then say he fired blindly, but made a lucky hit. That idea left a bad taste in his mouth. Tony Quinn, either as a blind D. A. or the Black Bat, had never killed in cold blood.

Yet something had to be done. The man kept prattling about the trumped-up murder as he approached, step by step, hands fully extended now. He began edging around the corner of the desk. His lips were parted to show yellow stumps of teeth. It was clear to Quinn that he was so hopped up that he was hardly aware of what he was doing. This man certainly had no connection with the arch murderer beyond taking his money, but he was just as dangerous.

Tony Quinn kept his head averted just a trifle from the direction the man was taking. In a second the fellow would leap upon him. Before the office staff arrived, Quinn might be dead and the killer gone. It was no time to continue posing as a blind man, but if he ceased that role, he would put his future life into jeopardy. This man would tell the world that Tony Quinn was not blind. Captain McGrath would go into action, and the end of the Black Bat would be at hand.

There had to be some way out, but Quinn couldn't see one—not at the moment, and there were not many moments left before he would have to act or be killed. He knew the inhuman strength an addict could summon and this man was certain to be at his peak. Once those talons closed around his throat, it would be the end unless he wanted to fight as a man with full sight would battle.

"Are you moving around?" Quinn asked suddenly.

The man didn't answer for a second. He had stopped moving and appeared to be thinking things over.

"Yeah—yeah," he said then. "I just realized you can't see. That's true, ain't it?"

"Unfortunately it is," Quinn replied. "You are close to my desk. What are you up to?"

"I'm getting a piece of paper and a pen to write down my confession. A confession is no good unless it's in black and white. Okay, Mr. Quinn?"

"Yes," Quinn replied. "Yes, of course."

"There ain't no secretary or clerk around to take down my statement?" the killer queried. He was being cute about this whole affair.

"I'm alone at the moment. My staff will arrive in fifteen or twenty minutes."

"That's all I wanted to know."

The killer parted his lips again in a nasty smile. Then he leaped.

He pounced upon Quinn and his fingers closed around his throat. As he came, in that crazy dive, Quinn let himself fall backward in the the swivel chair, as hard as he could. At the same instant his hand darted out, snaked beneath the newspaper and seized the gun. The killer didn't notice this.

The chair tipped far back, then over. Quinn went sprawling on the floor. For just a fraction of a second, the fingers loosened their grip and he was able to call out.

"Silk! Silk! Help!"

Then his wind was choked off again. The intruder had him down and was kneeling on him, using both his weight and his strength to make the throttling go faster. Quinn knew he had to act. He raised the gun as high as he could and brought it down in a blow aimed at the back of the killer's skull.

It connected. The killer gave a bleat of pain and slumped down across Quinn, but he was far from unconscious. Just dazed. Quinn struggled, threw the man off and arose. This time he brought down the gun butt with considerable strength. The killer passed out.

Quinn, gasping for air, wiped sweat off his face. He still had a considerable prob-
lern to face. His mind worked swiftly. He ran into the main office and ripped the wires out of the switchboard, leaving just one outside line intact. Then he called Police Headquarters and asked for Captain McGrath. It he had to face fury, it might as well be at its worst.

"This is Silk, Captain," Quinn said, disguising his voice a trifle. "Somebody just tried to kill Mr. Quinn. I knocked him out. He pulled the switchboard apart so I'm outside calling from a pay booth. Hurry over, will you? Quinn insists that I go home. He'll tell you why when you get there, but step on it. That lunatic might come to."

Then Quinn ripped the last wire out of the board.

Captain McGrath arrived in ten minutes, charging through the main office and coming to a full stop when he saw Tony Quinn, eyes staring, seated atop the killer who lay sprawled on the floor. Quinn had one hand on the man's face and the other hand held the gun, upraised to strike quickly if the man moved.

"Is it Captain McGrath?" Quinn asked in a worried voice.

"Yes," McGrath snapped. "You can get off that punk now. I'll put the cuffs on him. Boy, Silk certainly slugged him a honey! Here, I'll help you, Quinn."

McGrath assisted the blind man to a chair, then handcuffed the prisoner and listened to Quinn's story. Quinn told it truthfully, because if he slipped anywhere and this prisoner talked, McGrath's suspicions would be aroused.

"So he said he was after a pen and some paper to write down the confession," Quinn explained. "He kept coming closer and closer. Then he knocked me out of the chair and started to choke me. Fortunately, Silk was in the next room. I called to him. He came in and slapped the man. Silk carries a gun. You know he has a permit."

"Yes," McGrath grumbled. "That's okay even if he didn't have a permit." I'd know better than to cross you where Silk is concerned. Now Silk telephoned and said you sent him home. What's the idea? He could do more good by coming back here and seeing that this bozo didn't hop to his feet and finish the job he started."

Quinn opened a drawer in his desk. He had to go through with this, but he had intended to anyway. A District Attorney would be supposed to report the fact that an attempt had been made on his life and that his home had been ransacked. It he didn't make such a complaint, the killer would know that Quinn was keeping something back because of a guilty conscience.

Quinn found the note he had received.

"This came in yesterday's mail," he explained. "Silk and I kept that appointment, but the writer never showed up. We were delayed in going home. There was a suicide in this building last night."

"I heard about it," McGrath's eyes narrowed. "Kind of a coincidence, wasn't it?"

Quinn frowned. "I never thought of it in that light. However, Silk drove me home later. Someone shot at me and then I found my home had been literally torn apart."

"Why didn't you report that last night?"

McGrath demanded.

"Why? Police could do nothing except maybe help Silk straighten out things and they aren't paid to do that. I intended to ask you over this morning, but our friend beat me to it. What is he like, Captain?"

"A weasel—and a hophead. Now what would he want to knock you off for, Quinn?" McGrath looked around and dropped his voice. "It wouldn't be because he found out you're the Black Bat—or that somebody else did and paid him to finish you?"

Quinn sighed in exasperation. "No matter what happens, you always go back to that line of reasoning, Captain. I'm not the Black Bat. How could I be? If I possessed sight, do you think I would have permitted this man to attack me? He intended murder and I'd have known it if I could have seen him. Silk saved my life. And I'll finish what I started to say. I sent Silk home, just in case these mysterious people try to sack the place again."

"We-ell," McGrath admitted reluctantly, "there might be something in what you say. But wouldn't it be good if this cokie wakes up and tells me you faked blindness until he tackled you, then you pitched in and battled like a man who has two good eyes?"

"Wouldn't it be good though," Quinn said happily. "Let me know what he says."

CHAPTER IV

First Contact

EANWHILE, Carol and Butch sleepily kept their vigil until Silk appeared. Silk, during his hey-day as a confidence man, had perfected two disguises. Neither was elaborate, but each was effective and now in one of them as he walked up to the door of the morgue he looked much like a country cousin. He had a wild mop of yellow hair, a red face and his clothing was of the "back country" variety. Also, he didn't seem to know much about city ways for, instead of entering the build-
ing, he started knocking on the closed door. He knocked until finally an attendant came.

“They tell me a fella jumped out a window last night!” Silk said to him in a sti-

dent voice. “Maybe I know him. Can I have a look?”

Silk disappeared into the place, was gone about ten minutes and when he returned he

had a handkerchief in his hand and kept dab-

bing at his eyes with it. He walked slowly away from the morgue. Carol and Butch

waited in breathless silence. If ever there

was an attraction for this watcher in the

car, it was Silk.

Sure enough, the man got out of the car

and started following Silk. Carol quickly

crossed the street to keep them both under

observation and Butch trailed rather far in

back. Silk, without definite orders from Tony

Quinn, was using his own judgment. The

idea was to capture and question this shadow

and Silk was highly gratified that he was

being followed.

He went straight to a rather cheap hotel

where he had already checked in. He asked

for his key, naming the room in a loud

enough voice to be heard all over the small

lobby. Then he went to his room on the

sixth floor and waited. The shadow was

captured in a neat trap. If he turned away,

Butch and Carol would grab him.

There was a knock. In answer to Silk’s

query, a man said:

“It’s the bellhop, sir. The last man in

your room left a brief-case. I’ve got to look

for it.”

Silk opened the door and sprang back

under the threat of a gun. The man who had

followed him was alone. He closed the door,

but didn’t lock it.

“I—I haven’t much money!” Silk’s teeth

chattered. “I—I’m a poor man.”

“You can keep the dough,” the crook re-

plied. “All I want is information. You left

the morgue a little while ago after looking

at the body of a man who killed himself last

night. Who is he?”

“I—I don’t know,” Silk quavered. “I didn’t

know him. I thought he might be my cousin

who is missing.”

“Come off that,” the crook snarled. “Who

do you think you’re kiddin’? You were cryin’

when you came out. You knew that man.

Who was he and who are you? Talk, or I’ll

start pistol-whippin’ you till you do.”

Silk started talking fast words that didn’t

make much sense, but were high-pitched,

to smother the sound of Butch as he en-

tered the room and slowly crept up behind

the man. Then, suddenly, Silk smiled.

“Who’d you say you were going to pistol-

whip?” he asked.

The crook obligingly raised the gun and

Butch’s hand closed around his wrist. With

one twist he sent the gun hurtling to a fur-

ther corner. The thug was whirled around.

All he saw, at first, were the top buttons of

Butch’s vest. Then he raised his head and

uttered a cry of terror that was choked in

his throat. Butch picked him up the collar

and threw him on the bed.

“What’ll I bust first,” Butch queried. “His

arms or legs?”

“His neck if he won’t talk,” Silk replied.

“How about it, lug? What do you know

about that fellow in the morgue?”

“Honest,” the crook implored, “I never

seen him. I was paid to watch the place for

anybody who might go in and ask about the

dead man.”

“That,” Silk said coldly, “is a lot of thinly

sliced salami. How could you tell who people

asked for when they were inside the place

and you were parked in a car outside? Look —we’re not the law. Don’t get us wrong.

But my friend here could take you apart in

two minutes and I’ll give him the green light

unless you start telling the truth.”

“Don’t let that gorilla touch me!” The

man shrank back. “Okay, here’s the whole

thing and it’s the truth, so help me. Last

night a man pays me a hundred bucks to

watch the morgue. He was some place

around too and he was going to signal me to

grab a certain fellow, but he never showed

up. Then, when somebody asks to see the

dead man, I figured the man who hired me

must have slipped some place, or gone away,

so I decided to work on my own.”

“And the man who paid you?” Silk asked

sweetly. “What was he like?”

“A tall man. He stopped me as I came out

of a café. It was dark. I couldn’t see him

so good and he kept his hat brim pulled

down. He had on a loud checked suit and a

blue necktie.”

“Which describes about four million dif-

ferent men in New York City, you chump,”

Silk snapped. “Give me something better

than that.”

“I can’t,” the thug whimpered under the

threat of Butch’s big fist. “Look—you say

you’re not the law. Okay. I still got the

hundred bucks that man gave me. I’ll give

it all to you for a break. If there is any

trouble and the cops come, I’ll go back to

the cooler. I’m on parole.”

Silk studied the man for a moment and

believed every word he said. This thug

had no reason to lie. Like Tony Quinn, Silk

realized the crime was not that of a band of

hoodlums. This man had been merely paid
to do a job. There was nothing more to be

learned from him now. He might identify

the person who hired him if they were

brought face to face and Silk decided to keep

him safe until such a time.

“Put him to sleep,” Silk told Butch.

A single crack of Butch’s fist was an effec-
tive anesthetic. Silk then tied him up, gagged

and blindfolded him.
"We'll take him down the back way when I get the car over here," he told Butch. "I checked that route in case we had to leave fast. Then we'll write a little note to Captain McGrath saying this bozo is a parole hopper, dump him in McGrath's garage and he'll be held in case we need him again. Stay here while I go back to the neighborhood of the morgue and get the car. Where's Carol?"

"Gone back to the house," Butch explained. "I figured you and me could handle this."

"Good. Watch the mug—and keep the door locked till I come back. He may have contacted the man who hired him. No use taking chances. See you in about fifteen minutes."

Silk hurried out of the hotel and started walking rapidly down the street toward a hack stand on the next corner. There were few people about, but Silk didn't notice the man who suddenly detached himself from a doorway. This man was well bundled up as if the weather were much colder than it actually was. No signs of his face could be seen under his topcoat collar and his hat brim.

As Silk started to pass the man, the fellow suddenly moved in close. A knife gleamed dully, but the blade never reached its mark. Silk had been on the alert and he swerved away from the knife, straightened and jabbed a hard punch.

It missed because the attacker realized this was no place for a hand-to-hand combat. His plan had called for one swift attack. He whirled and ran toward an alley, darting down it. Silk was after him quickly, but the man was fleet of foot.

Silk saw a good-sized cobblestone, bent and picked it up. He hurled the missile and it struck the fleeing man squarely in the small of the back. He let out a yell of surprise and pain. His hand, still gripping the knife, jerked spasmodically and he reeled against the smooth wall of the alley. The blade scraped across the bricks and was all but wrenched out of his grip. It fell with a clatter.

The man was not deterred by this close call. In fact, it seemed to lend him additional speed. Silk stopped long enough to scoop up the knife. He knew it would have no fingerprints because the attacker wore gloves, but the blade itself might be a clue.

Reaching the end of the alley, Silk came to a halt. There were several directions the fleeing man could have taken. Silk gave up the chase, paused long enough to examine the knife, then thrust it into his belt.

Shortly, Silk was back with the car. Butch slung the unconscious thug over one shoulder and carried him down the rickety service stairway of the hotel. Silk preceded him to make certain the way was clear. They dumped the man into the car and drove away.

Not far from Captain McGrath's home, Silk got out of the car and telephoned the police official's house. There was no answer, indicating Mrs. McGrath was not there.

They drove directly to the detective's garage. Silk opened the cheap padlock with a bit of steel and they placed the thug in one corner of the garage. There was a note pinned to his coat.

This done, Silk drove back to the neighborhood of Tony Quinn's home. He parked the car conveniently close by and with Butch, made his way to the gate entering upon Quinn's grounds. A moment later, both of them were in the lab, being greeted by Carol.

"Get out of that disguise quickly," she told Silk. "Tony just phoned and said Captain McGrath was driving him home. They'll expect to have you open the door."

Silk changed clothes, removed the disguise and when Captain McGrath pulled up, Silk welcomed him. Somewhat coldly, for there was little feeling lost between the two men.

"You see," Quinn said to Silk, "it was quite all right to leave me with that thug, you knocked cold. So long as I sat on him and knew where to slug him, he couldn't wake up and start the attack all over again."

NO SIGNS of the consternation flashing through Silk's brain showed in his face. This was all news to him.  

[Turn page]
“I felt certain you’d be quite safe, sir,” he said, but he was merely carrying the ball, waiting for Quinn to tell some more.

“And thanks for being so prompt about telephoning McGrath to come to my aid,” Quinn went on. “Really, that thug would have killed me if you hadn’t been in the next room. The way he tore my telephone switchboard apart!”


Tony Quinn shrugged. “It’s so simple that it makes sense. A man was needed for the highly dangerous job of exterminating me. Who else would agree to invade a city building, in the early morning of a business day and try to murder a man—except someone loaded with dope?”

“And you think he was hired by somebody who has something to do with that anonymous note you got?” McGrath persisted.

“What else? Unless he was sent by some friend of mine—the kind I used to tuck away in State’s Prison before I became blind.”

“And since then, too,” McGrath amended. “Well, when the dope wore off a little, he certainly gave us a good description of the man who hired him. Tall, slim and wearing loud clothes. Just go to any race track and you’ll see ten thousand men who answer such a description.”

“I know,” Quinn sighed. “He hasn’t helped us much. Perhaps we’ll get more out of him later.”

Captain McGrath looked around the room. It had been fairly well straightened although Silk had been much too busy for a complete job of it.

“If this place was any worse than it is now,” McGrath said, “those lugs were certainly hunting for something. Say, Quinn, maybe I ought to put a tail on you. Any objections? Just in case this killer tries again. You’re blind, remember. Silk can’t always be with you and one of my men might do a lot of good. Like a pair of eyes for you.”

“An excellent idea,” Quinn approved heartily. “I’ll be most grateful, because I fully expect that our mysterious killer will try again.”

McGrath departed shortly afterward and Quinn told Silk about what had happened.

“I knew it,” Silk groaned. “They won’t stop until you’re dead and now you’ve even got McGrath with an eagle eye on you. How can you hope to work?”

Quinn laughed. “Silk, this is one time when McGrath’s offer to guard me is welcome. The more eyes alert for trouble, the better. Incidentally, I received a report from the police labs shortly before I left the office. Concerning those odd rainbow-hued stains on the hands of the dead man. They ap-
CHAPTER V

Barrel of Death

ATE in the afternoon, Tony Quinn walked out of his house and down the front stairs, using his cane to guide him. Silk watched from the doorway, fervently hoping that everything would be all right.

Silk didn’t see the man across the street who emerged from a hiding place soon after Quinn was half-way down the block. Tony Quinn didn’t see him either, for a blind man has no business turning to look over his shoulder. But Quinn was alert. His ears were attuned for the slightest sound of an enemy, and though his eyes seemed, they noticed all things.

Especially they noticed the bulky man in working clothes who was leaning across the fender of a medium-sized truck parked at the curb. Apparently the man was the driver of the truck and in trouble, for the hood was raised and he was tinkering with the engine.

He straightened up when Quinn was a full block and a half away. Quinn saw then that the man’s face was so smeared with grease that it would be impossible to identify him. He climbed aboard the truck, stepped on the starter and the motor roared to life.

All this might be entirely outside the case, but nevertheless Quinn eyed the truck closely. He couldn’t see the only marker plate in the rear, but there was no name or advertising on the truck and the engine purred almost too sweetly to have been broken down a few moments before.

The truck started to move. Quinn kept walking, slowly, feeling his way along, with the cane prominently used. He wondered if that truck driver was another hireling of the unknown killer and if he would deliberately drive that truck onto the sidewalk and attempt to run down a blind man.

Quinn didn’t think an attempt quite so obvious would be made. Even a blind man would be expected to hear a truck mount the curb and roar down on him. A lucky jump to one side would frustrate the attempt. Nothing like that seemed about to happen, but all of Quinn’s attention was upon the truck.

Behind him, the man who had been hidden almost across the street from his home was approaching, his legs taking longer and faster steps with every sidewalk flag he covered.

As the truck came almost opposite Quinn, there was an odd rumbling sound, then a wooden barrel started rolling off the tailboard. It hit the road and didn’t bounce, indicating it was filled. Nor did it break open. The road was humped slightly and the barrel began rolling toward the curb, in a direct line with Tony Quinn.

The truck speeded up. Quinn sensed that the barrel was a menace of some kind, but he was practically helpless. Someone might be observing him from a window or other vantage point, and undoubtedly the truck driver had him framed in the rear-view mirror. He couldn’t drop his mask of blindness for an instant.

Running footsteps from behind made his heart beat faster. He moved to one side and did turn his head around. A stranger was bearing down on him fast, his arms spread wide.

It was too late for Quinn to put up a defense even if he could have been expected to. The man hit him low, lifted him off his feet and carried him across the sidewalk to dump him over a hedge. The stranger came barging through the hedge himself.

All this happened in seconds. The barrel hadn’t reached the curb yet, but now it did and rested there briefly. Then there was a muffled sound, and a huge spray of colorless liquid went flying into the air.

“Cover yourself!” the stranger shouted, and Quinn automatically pulled his head down as far as he could into his coat collar.

An acrid smell reached his nostrils—an odor he would never forget. Acid! Corrosive, searing acid! The stuff which had made him blind, and now again was starting to rain down on him.

It was over quickly. The stranger arose, started to brush some of the drops off himself, and gave a sharp cry of pain.

“Don’t move!” he shouted to Quinn. “That stuff is acid, and it burns like the devil!”

“I know—I smell it,” Quinn said. “What on earth happened? Who are you?”

“My name is Sullivan. I’m a cop on Captain McGrath’s squad, and it’s lucky for you I was assigned to watch you. I figured there was something phony about that truck and when the barrel rolled off it so nice and conveniently, I acted. Guess I was a bit rough, but if you’d been walking along, the acid would have sprayed you so bad you might have been killed.”

QUINN murmured a silent prayer of thanksgiving, which included Captain McGrath and Sullivan. He submitted to having his coat and hat removed because the acid was rapidly eating into the material. He felt several minor burns on the back of his neck and hands, but they amounted to nothing. There were a few red blotches on the detective’s skin too.

“I think you’d better take me home,” Quinn said a little weakly. “Find out who owned that truck and who was driving it.
Carelessness in carrying barrels of acid about should be punished."

"I didn't get a chance to see the number on the truck," Sullivan admitted. "All my attention was on you and that barrel. I had a wild idea it might be filled with TNT. At that, I guess we were lucky."

Quinn didn't say so, but when he saw the sidewalk, covered with fuming acid, he realized that luck had served him well and that the murderer behind this scheme was cleverer than he had thought. If the acid had killed him, as it could have easily enough, the whole thing might have been set down as an unfortunate accident, with the belief that the driver of the truck, or its owner, wouldn't come forward because of fear of punishment.

Silk saw Quinn and Sullivan coming and hurried out of the house. Quinn told him what had happened, stressing the fact that it must have been an accident.

"Odd though," he went on, "how the barrel burst only after it rolled across the road. You'd have thought that would happen when it rolled off the truck tailboard . . . Silk, go down there and salvage the pieces of the barrel. I want them as souvenirs. Do you mind, Officer?"

"Officer?" Silk asked.

Sullivan showed his badge. "That's right. And while you're there, look for signs of a time mechanism. That thing burst too doggone conveniently to suit me."

Silk took one hand out of the side pocket of his coat and almost showed his relief. He hoped the gun didn't bulge too much.

Sullivan escorted Quinn into the house and made a report to Captain McGrath.

The Captain came over immediately, but by the time he arrived Silk had cleaned up what was left of the barrel. McGrath looked over the staves and shook his head.

"Somebody's after you all right, Quinn," he said. "That could be put down as an accident, but I don't believe it. How come acid was carried in a wooden barrel?"

"The sides were coated with a thick layer of wax," Silk explained. "One of the few things that type of acid wouldn't eat through . . . Captain, you and I have had our differences, but I want you to know I'm mighty grateful because you assigned a man to watch Mr. Quinn. Even though I know the motive behind it, I still say, thanks."

McGrath waved a hand airily. "Think nothing of it. Glad to do Mr. Quinn a favor. From now on, two men are going to be on duty. One in front, the other in back. Yes, sir, we'll see that you are amply protected, Mr. Quinn. Come on, Sullivan. And take those barrel staves with you if they can be handled."

Sullivan gathered up the staves and two metal hoops and took them to McGrath's car. Silk closed the door, leaned against it.

"Was it an attempt to kill you?" he asked Tony Quinn, then added quickly, "Don't answer that. It'll be a waste of breath. And I gathered from the prompt way you sent me to pick up the pieces of barrel, that I was to look for a clue. Well, I got one. As soon as McGrath pulls away, I'll go after the two staves and a metal can I flung over the hedge."

Shortly afterward, in the security of the lab, Quinn looked these staves over. Also some acid-eaten bits of metal.

"Part of a time apparatus," he adjudged the metal. "A thin metal can had been placed in the partly filled barrel. When the barrel hit the road, the acid contacted the metal, ate through it quickly and released a chemical which reacted with the acid and blew the thing up. That means a chemist, or someone familiar with chemicals, rigged the trick."

"Take a look at those staves," Silk suggested. "You can see the sides of the barrel have been scraped to remove a stenciled name, but the ink or paint went too deep for it to be entirely removed. I can't make out the letters, but something was there."

Quinn set up a large and powerful enlarging glass, placed the staves behind it and, with a soft pencil, traced the letters which were barely visible. He spent ten minutes doing this and then a complete word stood out, and a part of two others.

"Asso—" Quinn spelled the letters. "That could mean Associated. The next word is complete. It reads Dyes. The other letter is 'c', but it was so placed in arrangement with the others that the word can be nothing except the abbreviation for 'incorporated.' I'd say the name was Associated Dyes, Inc. Look it up, Silk."

Silk flipped through the pages of a directory and gave a whoop of delight.

"There is such place! Big firm too. Say, I know where it is. You can see the plant on the Pennsylvania Railroad on the way to Washington. It's in Jersey, I think. Covers acres. The main office is right here in town."

Quinn nodded. "That's it! Remember how that young man's hands were colored several hues? He worked in that dye plant. The afternoon and evening papers are carrying his photograph—taken after death, of course, but touched up to look lifelike. We'll wait a few hours to see if that draws any results. If not, we'll begin working on the officials of Associated Dyes, Inc."

"Maybe the victim invented something valuable and he was killed so that another person could cash in," Silk offered hopefully. "I'll get the papers. They should be on the porch by now."

Shortly afterward, Carol returned.

"That lead broke down," she said. "The jeweler told me that he'd sold about a hundred such letter openers. They actually were
daggers, which were used years ago in Europe, and were worth a lot of money. They were all different shapes and sizes and equipped with an ornamental scabbard which was used as a paper weight. He had no record of the sales, but he did tell me the one I showed him had been sharpened recently.”

Quinn sighed. “Then that clue is out, temporarily. Now here is a new assignment for you and Butch, Carol. There is a large dye manufacturing plant just across the river. I’ll give you details. Go there and investigate the place. Get in if you can avoid watchmen. Especially check the offices of the officials. Look for any clues connected with this case.”

Carol stepped closer to him. “Be careful, Tony. I realize this isn’t a usual investigation. Someone has the jump on us and you’re in constant danger.”

“After what happened this afternoon,” Quinn said grimly, “I’m keeping my eyes open—even the blind pair. Report here as soon as you can, and phone Silk periodically.”

CHAPTER VI

Motives for Murder

T SEVEN-THIRTY, Captain McGrath drove up in a police car. He made certain that his two detectives were on guard, covering the house, then he rang the bell. When Silk let him in, McGrath seemed a bit excited.

“Printing that photo of the dead man was a good hunch on your part,” he said to Tony Quinn. “I had a telephone call from a William B. Wayne, met him at the morgue, and he identified the body as that of Victor Shea, his cousin. Wayne won’t talk—except to you. So if it’s okay, I’ll drive you to his place right now. I thought of bringing him here but—well, he’s a pretty big shot.”

“All right,” Quinn said, “we’ll go see him. What sort of chap is he?”

“Nothing outstanding so far as appearance goes, but he owns some big dye business. Talks important and when he looked at the corpse he never batted an eyelash. Sort of cold-blooded, I’d say. Oh yes, he had a lawyer along, too. Man named Donald Buckley. Maybe you know him.”

“Only of him,” Quinn replied. “Buckley is a corporation lawyer who doesn’t often come into contact with criminal courts. Off-hand, I’d say he was okay. Silk, I’ll be back soon.”

William B. Wayne lived in one of the exclusive sections of Long Island. Old Joel Shea and his grandson, Victor, also had lived on Long Island, although the dye factory was in New Jersey.

The Wayne house was rather old, but big and pretentious. A butler admitted Quinn and McGrath and Wayne had ordered that they be taken to the library where three other men were waiting. Wayne shook hands with Quinn—a firm handshake—and his eyes studied the blind D.A. with candor as he introduced the others.

Attorney Buckley was a tall man, gray-haired and somber-faced. He was in distinct contrast to Wayne’s medium figure and, where Wayne’s looks were average, Buckley was distinguished.

Then there was Felix Carlin, mentioned as a family friend. Carlin was thin and tall—six feet, at least, and he was given to rather
loud clothes. He wore a suit with small checks, a bold necktie, and suede shoes of light gray. Carlin shook hands effusively, as if he and Quinn had been friends a long time.

Lyle Alexander, the chief chemist of Associated Dyes, was a burly, wide-faced individual with big shoulders, thick glasses, and a peculiarly cold expression. As he clasped hands, Quinn noticed that Alexander's fingers were stained with dyes of several colors, almost like the stains on the hands of the victim who had plummeted past Quinn's window.

"I saw the picture in the newspapers," Attorney Buckley said at once. "I called it to the attention of Bill—Mr. Wayne. He has identified the body, of course, and I cannot see why this suicide should be of interest to a Special District Attorney, especially one with a reputation like yours, Quinn." Quinn smiled and asked to be taken to a chair. He sat down, accepted a cigarette, and stared with those blind eyes at a point unoccupied by anyone in the room.

"You people are undoubtedly familiar with the handwriting of Victor Shea," he said. "I am going to show you a letter. Tell me if you believe Victor wrote it."

Quinn passed to McGrath the letter he had received from the man who had wanted to pay him a night visit in his office. The police officer exhibited it to each man present.

"I don't think so," William B. Wayne said promptly. "I can't say, because I am unfamiliar with Victor's writing," Attorney Buckley shrugged.

Lyle Alexander, the chemist with the stained fingers, peered at the note closely through his thick glasses. He handed it back.

"Naturally, working with Victor, I saw many of his notes. The writing is somewhat similar to his, but I wouldn't swear to it and—most unfortunately—Victor destroyed nearly all of his note-books several days ago. I am sure no sample of his writing exists at the plant or at the office here in town."

"How about you, Mr. Carlin?" McGrath shoved the note in front of Carlin's eyes.

Carlin smiled broadly. "Off-hand, I'd say that Victor did write that note. I saw his handwriting fairly often. Yes—I'd almost swear to it."

"Nonsense," Wayne said angrily. "Why should Victor write such a thing? Why would he wish to see Quinn in the middle of the night? Look here, Quinn, Victor was a hot-headed, temperamental young man. The only person he ever showed any affection for was his grandfather who died a month ago. After that Victor brooded all the time. His suicide hasn't surprised me at all."

"He didn't grieve so much that he refused to go night-clubbing two weeks ago," Carlin put in smoothly, and with one of his smirks.

WAYNE walked over and faced Carlin. "See here, I want you to get out! You've never been a friend of mine and, frankly, I don't like you. Victor may have enjoyed your company, but he is dead. Get out!"

Carlin's smirk died away and was replaced with a glowing look of black rage. His eyes narrowed, the corners of his mouth came down sharply.

"You don't have to be quite so nasty about it," he said. "Certainly I'll go." He turned his head. "Mr. Quinn, if there is anything you'd like to know from me, I live at the Madelon Apartments. I'll be glad to talk with you, any time at all. Victor was a good friend of mine and, personally I think he was murdered."

Carlin stalked out. Wayne apologized weakly and bit off the end of a cigar with considerable violence. Quinn arose.

"I hardly believe all this interests me," he said. "However, there is one more question. Victor's grandfather died a month ago, you say. I presume he was a wealthy man. Did Victor share in any part of his estate?"

"Such a question is rank impertinence!" Wayne raged. "I refuse to answer it."

"Oh, come now," Quinn said mildly. "It will be on record anyway. I am merely trying to establish a motive for Victor's suicide. If he had plenty of money, then that fact tends to make his death seem more like murder."

"He wasn't left a dime!" Wayne shouted. "Not a red penny. That's what upset him so much. I believe he was heavily in debt—gambling losses—and depended upon grandfather's estate to get him out of the jam. Grandfather was no fool. He knew what Victor was, and he left the business to me."

"Your grandfather must have died unexpectedly," Quinn murmured. "Could it also have been—through violence?"

Wayne opened his mouth to roar a denial, but Attorney Buckley nudged him and motioned for silence.

Buckley answered Quinn.

"Mr. Shea, the grandfather of both Victor and Mr. Wayne here had been ailing for years. A chronic stomach condition. It took a turn for the worse and he died after a bad attack. It lasted only a few hours. His death has been certified by the family physician who took care of him for years. I think that should answer your question, Mr. Quinn, and eliminate any suspicion. Incidentally, may I call at your office in the morning?"

"Of course," Quinn said. "All right, Captain McGrath we'll leave now."

In the police car Quinn's face was stony, but his hands, on the crook of his cane were
gripped hard. McGrath gave a snort.

"Fine crowd, aren't they? But I'm afraid they have the upper hand. After all, what have we got to go on except an anonymous note which doesn't even contain proof that Victor Shea wrote it."

"Carlin seemed certain it was written by Victor," Quinn mused. "But then, Carlin appears anxious to make trouble for Wayne and the rest of them. You know, Captain, if I happened to be the Black Bat I'd take a crack at this."

McGrath smiled. "I meant to tell you this before. While I was with you today the Black Bat paid my garage a visit. He dumped a parole violator there for me. This mug talked a lot. He saw the Black Bat without a hood. That is, he saw two men. One of them is out of the question—too big. The other was about the Black Bat's size. I'll admit right here that he neither looks like you nor could be you."

"Well, that's settled then," Quinn chuckled. "It will seem nice to have you off my neck, Captain."

"I imagine so," McGrath replied. "I forgot to add that it's highly possible the Black Bat has a few people working for him. Now this man who captured the parole violator was about the size of—er—Silk Kirby. But Silk seems to have been at home. Sorry, Quinn, but I haven't changed my mind about you. Not entirely."

"Oh well, it makes life interesting," Quinn grinned. "And speaking of builds and sizes, this man Carlin seems to answer the rather general description given us by that hophead of the man who retained him to kill me."

"I thought of that," McGrath admitted. "Also, the clothes rather match. Loud stuff. I'll look into Mr. Carlin tomorrow. Personally, I think he's wrong about that letter. It was written by someone else and the person or persons trying to kill you have nothing to do with Wayne or the others. After all, what motive have they for trying to knock you off?"

"None, I suppose," Quinn said wearily. "It was odd though, the way they resented me. Except for Carlin, who seemed hugely pleased that I was there."

"And that chemist, Alexander, who didn't seem to care much either way," McGrath added.

SILK was waiting to help Quinn inside, and McGrath drove off. Silk gave several apprehensive glances around the dark neighborhood and hurried Quinn into the house.

"I certainly didn't find out much," Quinn admitted. "There is just one possibility—a job for the Black Bat. I'll have to do it alone too. McGrath's men around make it vitally necessary that one of us be in the house all the time. Make a pot of coffee and invite the detective guarding the back to have a cup. Keep him occupied so I can slip from the garden house to the side street. I'll be ready to start in ten minutes."

Quinn entered the secret laboratory, opened a steel locker and took out the somber clothing of the Black Bat. He dressed in this, slipped on tight-fitting silk gloves and tucked the black hood into an especially created pocket of his coat. The hood couldn't be used while he toured the streets, so a wide-brimmed hat had to suffice. It was enough to conceal his face and the give-away scars around his eyes.

A heavy automatic went into a shoulder clip, and a neat kit burglar tools fitted his pocket perfectly. The Black Bat was prepared for action.

CHAPTER VII

Clue of the Scabbard

The Black Bat reached Carlin's apartment in the Madelon without trouble. He listened outside the door. It was just after midnight and he heard no sound from within.

Opening the door was accomplished with practised deftness and silence. He stepped into an apartment that was lavish to the extreme. A lot of money had gone into furnishing this place, and it was big—at least seven rooms.

The Black Bat investigated each of them, after merely glancing inside to be certain Carlin was not at home. One door resisted his efforts to open it. He had fitted a slim bit of steel into the lock when he noticed that no ordinary burglar tool was going to unlock this particular door.

The lock was modern, expensive, and clev- erly constructed to resist such attempts. There must have been something in that room which Carlin didn't want anyone to see. But the Black Bat turned away from it to investigate Carlin's rather small study.

From experience the Black Bat knew that a desk, even in a private home can reveal more information than any other piece of furniture, except perhaps a safe. He sat down behind the desk in the little study and started to open drawers. Then his eyes rested upon an ornate scabbard which lay on top of the desk.

He picked it up, reached beneath his coat and drew out the knife which had been used in an attempt to kill Silk. The blade fitted into the scabbard snugly. They were made for one another and the design on the haft of the weapon matched that on the scabbard. The Black Bat withdrew the blade and put it
into his pocket again. The scabbard went back on the desk.

He spent an hour going through Carlin’s possessions, something which would have been impossible, without a lot of red tape, if he operated within the law. Carlin, he discovered was not a wealthy man, but his accounts were substantial, and the Black Bat noticed that he had deposited a large sum—twenty-five thousand dollars—in one bank. The money had been in cash, too, according to a duplicate deposit slip inside the book. Most of the other deposits were above two thousand.

Carlin’s clothing was all of the same type. He went in for wide stripes or checks mostly. Other than this, however, the Black Bat found no direct proof that Carlin was behind the attempts of murder. Certainly, though, the knife used on Silk was Carlin’s property, and he did answer the description given by the hophead.

The locked door still intrigued the Black Bat. He sat down to wait for Carlin. It had been unnecessary for him to turn on any lights, so he waited patiently in the darkness, eyes closed and brain working over the events of the last couple of days.

He accepted as definite the fact that Victor Shea had written that strange letter and tried to keep the appointment. Shea had been disappointed in not inheriting a considerable estate. His cousin, William B. Wayne, had given a clever motive for young Shea’s suicide, but Wayne’s hands were not exactly clean. He had inherited the estate and murder had been committed for sums far less than old Joel Shea’s fortune.

The chemist, Lyle Alexander, was either an excellent actor or innocent. Yet he had indicated that Victor had burned all his laboratory notes—something highly improbable.

Attorney Buckley sided with Wayne, of course, but Buckley was a smooth, wary opponent. He had been Joel Shea’s lawyer also, and would know about any will leaving the property to Wayne.

The animosity between Carlin and Wayne was unusual. Wayne’s insults had rolled off Carlin easily, yet they must have been friends once because Carlin seemed to have been an accepted visitor prior to Victor’s death.

The only motive, so far taking shape, was that of Wayne’s greed for the estate. The chemist, as Silk had suggested, might have a hidden motive concerned with something in the laboratories at the dye plant. If Victor’s lab notes had been destroyed after his death, that was good and sufficient reason for suspicion.

But of them all, Carlin offered the best possibilities, except so far as motive was concerned. The Black Bat glanced at his watch. It was after one in the morning now. He had been waiting in the apartment a long time.

Then he heard a key inserted in the door. The Black Bat arose and quietly concealed himself behind drapes that reached to the floor. He had already cut a small slit in the material so that he could witness Carlin’s activities if he came into this room.

Carlin carried something wrapped in a crumpled newspaper. He laid the package on the desk. Removing his hat and coat, he smiled smugly and unwrapped the package. The Black Bat barely restrained a cry of surprise and anxiety. Carlin was holding a woman’s handbag, and the last time the Black Bat had seen that handbag; it had been under Carol Baldwin’s arm.

CARLIN dumped the contents on the desk and started examining everything minutely. He was absorbed in this task when he noticed a weird shadow across the further wall, and at the same instant the cold muzzle of a gun touched the back of his neck.

“Get up!” the Black Bat ordered. “Keep your hands away from your pockets.”

A black-clad hand and sleeve flashed by Carlin’s face and turned out the desk light, plunging the room into darkness. Then Carlin felt himself being searched.

“What is this?” he demanded. “Who the devil are you? Whatever it is you want, it won’t be here!”

“I’m the Black Bat, Mr. Carlin. You have nothing I want except a little information.”

“The Black Bat!” Carlin sat down weakly. “I—I don’t know why you should be here. I haven’t done anything.”

“Then what are you afraid of? I’ve been here for some time, Mr. Carlin. I like your quarters. They are in excellent taste. Even small details are to my satisfaction. Like that scabbard on the desk, for instance. Didn’t it come equipped with some kind of a dagger?”

“It’s the case for a letter-opener.” Carlin wet his lips. “I—lost the knife part. One of the maids who comes in here probably appropriated it. What do you want with me anyhow?”

As he spoke, Carlin slowly stretched one hand across the top of the desk and started to close his fingers around a heavy ash-tray. One blow with this and he would eliminate the danger of the Black Bat. But the edge of a gloved hand struck his wrist a sharp blow, paralyzing the nerves. Carlin gave a bleat of alarm.

“You’ll live longer if you don’t try any stunts,” the Black Bat advised. “Get up and unlock the door to that back room. I’m interested to see what’s inside.”

“It’s just a small photo lab,” Carlin grumbled. “You’ve got your trails twisted somehow. There’s no reason why the Black
Bat should come here."

"There is a reason—Victor Shea."

Carrin's eyes went wide in astonishment, and in them was fear. The Black Bat saw this clearly despite the darkness.

Carrin asked permission to reach for his keys, withdrew a leather case and extracted a long, slim key. He preceded the Black Bat to the locked door, opened it, and started to turn on the light.

"Let that switch alone," the Black Bat said sharply. "Well, you did tell the truth. It is a photo lab. What do you do—specialize in photostats? I see a table all set up with equipment for that purpose."

"I experiment with all sorts of pictures," Carrin seemed to be more at ease now. "Look here, if I can help in any way about proving that Victor's death was murder, count on me. I have no evidence, but I'm sure he was killed."

"Just why?" the Black Bat queried. "And who would be a logical suspect?"

"Listen!" Carrin said excitedly. "The old man was sick, yes, but nobody expected him to die so soon. Maybe he was murdered too. And Bill Wayne hated Victor—because all along it was believed that Victor would inherit the business. Wayne used to be nice to me then because I was Vic's friend. Now he hates me. He's afraid I may find out something. If I did, I'd tell you or Mr. Quinn—he's the Special District Attorney working on the case."

"Just where did you come from tonight?" the Black Bat changed the subject swiftly to ask.

"Why, I was at Wayne's early in the evening. He got me sore and I went to a movie to cool off. Then I had a few drinks at some bar and walked home. I—"

"You're a funny person," the Black Bat interrupted. "One-third of what you tell is the truth, one-third guess work and the last third out-and-out lies. Don't try to run away, Carrin. You wouldn't get far."

Carrin gulped. "Why should I run away? I haven't done a thing. I tell you I'm willing to help all I can. Vic was my friend! I'm sure he was murdered, and—"

Carrin stopped talking. He heard a door close softly. He stood there listening intently, then called the Black Bat's name. Receiving no answer, he snapped on the lights. The room was empty. He toured the rest of the apartment rapidly, was satisfied that the black-clad intruder was gone, then ran for the photo lab again.

He yanked open a drawer, looked inside, and then leaned weakly against the workbench. Sweat poured down his face. He quickly removed several photo prints from the drawer and put them into his pocket. He wanted a cigarette and had none, so he hurried to the study. He took a cigarette from a box, raised a lighter with a hand that shook badly. Then he forgot to light the cigarette. That handbag and its contents were gone!

CHAPTER VIII

Lethal Chamber

Butch and Carol made their way to the factory town in New Jersey and soon located the big plant of Associated Dyes, Inc. It employed some six hundred people and was working at capacity. These, and other facts, Butch and Carol easily ascertained by having dinner in a café not far from the plant.

By pretending to want jobs, they soon made friends with some of the workers. Joel Shea—the "Old Man" who had died a few weeks before—had been held in high regard. The new boss, William B. Wayne, was known to be a stuffed shirt and a driver.

There were, really, two different plants. One had been built five years before the war and the old factory then abandoned and since that time left to rot. It was too far gone even to be repaired for war work.

The new plant was hemmed in by a steel fence, and armed guards patrolled the area. Getting in there would be almost impossible. The old plant, however, was entirely unguarded.

"I've been getting a hunch, Butch," Carol said, after a while. "That fellow who pitched out of the window indicated by such an act that he wasn't free to carry on as an ordinary man would. That meant, to me at least, that he had been hiding out. Maybe in this old plant. Tony especially wants samples of his handwriting and they might be there. I think it's worth a chance."

"Sure," Butch agreed. "No use in our coming all this way for nothing. And you're probably right, because that poor fella's hands were all stained with dyes. He must have been around the plant some place and in the new part they work even nights, so how could he have been there without being seen?"

They made their way toward the deserted building. It was high, but only one story. The darkness hampered them, but Carol did not dare use the flashlight she carried until they were inside the building. Finally they reached the loading platform doors at the rear of the place. Butch examined a large padlock on the door, grinned at Carol and, with one savage wrench, tore the padlock hasps out of the old wood. The door creaked a bit as he pulled it open and the mingled odors of stale chemicals and
dust came out to greet them.

Safely within the plant, Carol risked using her flashlight, but their whole project seemed to be hopeless. There was one gigantic room and several smaller ones off it, none of which showed any signs of having been used for years.

Then Carol's flashlight pointed at the edge of an old work-bench. The dust there had been disturbed recently. She threw the beam of the light floorward. The heavy dust had been kicked around a bit and there seemed to be almost a trail formed. It led to a wall, upon which was fixed a large cabinet, like a bookcase, equipped with shelves.

"Look here!" Carol sprayed the floor with the light again. "The cement at this point seems to have been scraped—several times too. Just the barest surface of it. Butch, try to move that cabinet. It should swing out, like a door."

Butch grasped one shelf and tugged. The cabinet did move, with a slight scratching sound across the cement. The whole thing was on hinges. Carol stepped inside the room disclosed. Butch had to bend almost double to enter, the door was so low. It was a medium-sized room with an unusually high ceiling and rafters. On these rafters was old lumber, and a ladder was propped up so the lumber could be reached if wanted.

"Hey, look!" Butch was using his own flash now. "Somebody lived here. There's a lot of empty cans that had soup and stuff in 'em. Some stale bread and empty soda water bottles. Lots of laboratory things too."

Carol examined the bench. Butch was right—this room had been used as a lab of some kind. Makeshift, perhaps, but in use recently, for a couple of beakers and test tubes still contained unevaporated liquids. There were even two large cylinders of the type used for storing compressed gas, propped in one corner.

Carol laid her handbag on the bench and picked up a large notebook and two smaller ones.

"These must be Victor Shea's notes," she said. "He was hiding out here for some reason, and conducting experiments with dyes. I don't understand the chemical symbols, but I know who will. We're taking these, Butch. Also, see if you can find some samples of writing paper around. To match up with the note Victor wrote."

Butch, intent upon searching through several small drawers beneath the bench, struck one of the metal gas cylinders with his shoulder. It must have been delicately balanced for it tipped over, landed on the cement floor and gave off a terrific clanging sound.

Carol shut off her flash instantly. So did Butch. They stood there, silently listening. There were stealthy sounds from somewhere in that immense room outside. Carol tiptoed over to Butch and whispered to him: "We're not alone here and we're trapped in this room! There's only one exit. We're going to climb that ladder and hide on the lumber on the rafters. Easy now—no noise."

Butch went up the ladder first and when Carol reached the top, he took her hand and guided her to a safe perch atop the wide slabs of lumber. They could look straight down at the hidden room.

A momentary flash of light cut the darkness. It came again, this time to stay. The light bobbed crazily as the man who held it went to get through the low door.

Neither Carol nor Butch could make out the man's identity or even see his form, but he appeared to be almost as excited as they were upon finding this hidden room. The path of his light swept across the bench. Carol's fingers gripped Butch's arms hard.

"My bag," she gasped. "It's on the bench."

They held their breaths, but for once luck seemed to be with them. The handbag was at the far corner of the bench and the intruder centered all his attention upon the part where Victor Shea had worked. He picked up beakers and test tubes, examined bottles of chemicals.

Then he sneezed violently. Carol knew why. She and Butch had dislodged plenty of dust in scrambling over the old boards. It was just sitting down and now probably made a noticeable cloud near the floor.

The intruder suddenly snapped off his flash. For an instant, Carol thought he was ascending the ladder but, instead, it was only the ladder which moved. The man had pulled it down from the rafters. An instant later, they heard a hissing noise, then the scrape of the door and finally there was utter silence.

"He knew we were up here, Butch," Carol said tensely. "He didn't have to see my handbag. The racket that gas cylinder made, and then the dust, told him the whole story. He moved the ladder. We're marooned up here!"

"Maybe he went for help," Butch muttered. "We better think up a good story if the guards from the main plant show up."

"Never mind the story," Carol answered. "I'll be glad if they do come, even if they throw us in the local hoosegow . . . What's that hissing sound?"

"You got me," Butch grunted. "I wonder if any of this lumber is long enough to reach to the floor? I could slide down it."

Carol threw the beam of her flash across the rafters. The lumber fell far short of the considerable distance to the floor of the small room. There was no escape that way. Above them, and well out of reach, was a single skylight.

"Butch," Carol said, "you might use a length of lumber to break out that skylight
glass. We're not acrobats, but we might be able to climb up and reach the roof. Anything is better than perching here like a couple of roosters... Listen! The door!"

She snapped off the beam of her light and they fell silent. Someone was coming in. The flash bobbed as before when the man crouched to get through the low door. It swept across the room and stopped, directly on Carol's handbag.

The man walked toward it and was suddenly taken with a fit of coughing. They heard a startled exclamation. The man snatched up the handbag and hurried out. The door closed again.

"We're sunk now!" Butch groaned. "And there sure must be a lot of dust floating down. Do you suppose it was the same man who came back?"

"I think so. I... Butch! That odor! It's chlorine! One of those cylinders contained compressed chlorine and it's been turned on. No wonder that man coughed so much. Smash that skylight. Quickly! If the stuff fills the room and reaches us, we'll be killed."

Butch worked one length of lumber loose, raised it with those mighty muscles of his and crashed it against the skylight glass. The glass shattered, but the lumber didn't go through.

"There's a grill on the outside," Butch said disgustedly. "But maybe enough air will come in to keep us from being poisoned."

"Not a chance," Carol told him quietly.

She took his flashlight and hers, turned them both on, and pointed the twin beams straight at the broken skylight.

"Chlorine is a heavy gas," she explained. "It will gradually fill this room, just as water would. When it gets up to our heads, we'll die. That broken skylight only creates a draft which will bring the gas up here faster. If you can pray, Butch, start now. Our one and only chance lies in the hope that someone will notice the flashlight beams and come over to investigate."

But Carol knew the weak light would hardly attract any attention. In the first place, the beams would soon fade as the batteries were used. Again, the new factory was too far away.

Butch coughed, a dry, wracking cough. Carol felt her throat go dry. The escaping gas was filling this shaftlike room fast.

Butch took one of the flashlights and threw its beam forward. They were about eighty feet up, completely stranded. Butch's lower jaw projected aggressively.

"Look!" he said. "I'm a big bozo and I can take all kinds of punishment. If we just stay here, we'll die. Something has to be done—quick."

"No!" Carol cried as she understood Butch's unspoken intention. "If you jump, you may be knocked out, if not killed. Three minutes in that gas-laden atmosphere near the floor and you'll die!"

"I got to take the chance," Butch said quietly. "If I don't get knocked out, I can at least shut off the gas and open the door even if I bust both my legs in the jump."
“It's got to be done. Or have you any other ideas?”

“If we only had some rope!” Carol cried. “Or if that murderer hadn't guessed we were up here and moved the ladder.”

“How long before this stuff will get us?” Butch asked.

“Perhaps twenty minutes more—or half an hour at the most. We're just getting wisps of it so far.”

“I'll wait until we can hardly stand it,” Butch said resolutely. “Then I'm going to jump. And don't try to talk me out of it.”

CHAPTER IX

Footprints for Two

Hastily the Black Bat left Carlin’s apartment house, moving as swiftly as he could travel, taking great risks of being seen, with only the wide-brimmed hat for protection. The hood was safely tucked away in his pocket.

When he reached the car he drove as fast as he dared. Carol and Butch were in trouble! Undoubtedly, they were at the plant, perhaps prisoners and in serious danger. The fact that Carlin had been in possession of Carol’s handbag was significant.

The factory was not far across the river and fortunately traffic was light, so the Black Bat traveled fast. He had already studied the location of the plan on maps and knew precisely where he was going.

As he came within sight of the sprawling factory, he braked the car gradually. The place was brightly lighted, and he began to feel a bit easier. How could anything happen here, with so many people about?

Then he caught sight of the old factory, and saw the faint beam of light that projected through the skylight. With the rest of the big place shrouded by darkness, that meant something. He parked the car, drew on his hood and started moving rapidly in the direction of the building.

That faint beacon drew him like a magnet. He found the broken hasps on the loading platform doors and recognized this as Butch’s work. He hurried into the plant and his uncanny eyes penetrated the darkness. He listened, heard no sound, then his nostrils twitched. The easily recognizable odor of chlorine had reached him.

He broke out in a cold sweat. Chlorine was synonymous with death, and Carol and Butch were in here somewhere!

He followed this invisible trail as the gas grew stronger and stronger. Soon he knew it came from beneath what seemed to be just a solid wall. He rapped hard on the wall. Faintly, he heard someone shout.

The Black Bat looked for the hidden entrance and his abnormal sight saw things that Carol and Butch had missed. Smudges on the shelves of the cabinet were proof that they had been grasped hard. He pulled the cabinet back. Chlorine came out in a violent gust. Covering his mouth and nose, he darted into the room, and took in the situation with one sweeping glance.

He quickly propped the ladder back where it had been, then fled for fresher air. When he returned, Carol was down the ladder—and had dropped to the floor—clinging to the rungs of the ladder weakly. The Black Bat swung her into his arms and hurried out of the room. Butch followed, reeling a bit, and grinning from ear to ear. He clutched the note-books which Carol had found.

Fresh air revived them fairly well. Then the Black Bat headed his car back to the city while Carol told the story.

“Victor Shea lived and worked in that room all right,” she declared. “We’ve evidence of that, I think. Someone else came there tonight, probably in an attempt to find what Butch and I stumbled upon. Whoever it was heard the clatter of the gas cylinder when it fell. He saw my handbag on the bench the second time he came into that room.”

“But he turned on the gas cylinder the first time,” the Black Bat said. “Why, then, would he come back for another look, knowing the gas must be filling that room fairly fast? Are you certain it was the same man?”

“We couldn’t see his face or even his form,” Carol explained, “because both times he was bent over so he could get through the low doorway.”

The Black Bat said nothing for moments while he thought.

“There were two men, Carol,” he said then. “Both so tall they had to crouch to enter the doorway. I had to duck slightly myself, but I also noticed two sets of footprints in the dust, overlapping your small shoes and Butch’s gunboats. One man wore rubber heels, the other leather. Now, we have a little group of suspects. Of them, only two men are so tall that they would have to crouch to get through that door. Attorney Donald Buckley and Felix Carlin. I happen to know that Carlin was one of them.”

“But how in the world could you know that?” Butch asked.

The Black Bat took Carol’s handbag from the seat beside him and placed it in her lap. “I was in Carlin’s apartment when he returned, and he had your purse, Carol,” he said.

Then Carlin must be your man!” Carol
said quickly.

"If there was only a motive, yes," the Black Bat agreed. "But Carlin can't profit from any of this. He was just Victor Shea's friend. He's the one man we really have evidence on, but he has no motive, and until we find one, we can't take action against him. Remember also—someone besides Carlin was in that room. The first man, the one who turned on the gas cylinder. He didn't know who was hiding on the rafters, but he didn't care. Carlin popped in shortly after, saw your handbag and got out because the chlorine drove him away."

They were getting close to Tony Quinn's house now. The Black Bat drove the car to the curb.

"Butch," he instructed, "go into that store across the street and telephone Silk. Tell him we're ready to enter the lab and that he is to keep McGrath's detectives occupied for the next ten minutes. Then you'd better go home for some rest. That gas hasn't done you any good."

Butch nodded. "I do feel a little shaky, I guess. Okay—I'll signal after I phone Silk."

Within the next ten minutes Carol and the Black Bat had safely reached the privacy and the security of the lab. There the Black Bat stripped off his somber clothing and became Tony Quinn once more. He sat down at the lab bench, examined the notes which Carol and Butch had found, and whistled sharply.

"You really found something, Carol," he declared. "Victor Shea had probably conducted certain experiments in the factory labs, then gone into hiding for some reason we don't know yet. He brought along the chemicals and apparatus necessary to continue his work—and he finished it. He was working on new types of dyes which will be used for nylon and glass-spun cloth after the war."

Carol nodded slowly. "Worth a lot of money too, I expect. I think we'll also find that Lyle Alexander, the chemist for Associated Dyes, was trying to discover the same thing. If Shea beat him to it, Alexander would lose out. So he has an excellent motive for killing him."

"And that," Quinn acknowledged, "makes sense, because Alexander's hands were similarly stained—with the same colors and in the same intensity as the stains on Victor Shea's hands. These new dyes are peculiar in that they must be fast dyes and the stains couldn't be removed from the hands. Regular dyes can be washed off with certain solvents."

"Then,—Carol spread her hands in a gesture of finality—you have your killer."

Quinn laughed. "Without a shred of evidence beyond a motive. And don't forget that Alexander is a short, bulky individual. He doesn't answer the descriptions furnished by the two men who were hired to kill me. The accent in one case was on an average appearing man; in the other, a tall man. Alexander can't fill the bill. And then we have Carlin whom we know is mixed up in it."

"Carlin has no motive," Carol said musingly.

"That we know of," Quinn amended. "Don't forget that William Wayne seems to dislike Carlin heartily. Of course the knife was Carlin's. He stole your handbag and made no attempt to find out if the escaping chlorine was directed at anyone. In fact, there is even the possibility that he turned it on, forgot to take your bag, the first time and returned for it. Despite the two sets of shoe prints, that can be true."

Carol sighed deeply. "Then where have we progressed, Tony? Everything is just the same as before. Motives and clues, but they seem to be directed toward no one man."

"True," Quinn agreed. "So it is necessary for us to find further clues. Motives also, if there are any."

Silk entered the lab and ended further discussion.

"There was a phone call about half an hour ago, sir," he said. "From Attorney Buckley. He wants you to come out to his Long Island home and see him. It's vitally important, he said, and he is afraid to come here. Sounds phony to me, sir."

Quinn frowned. "It does have a false ring. Just the same, we'll go and see him. Not quite as he expects though. How about the detectives? Are they set for the night?"

"Fed and pampered." Silk smiled.

"We'll give them more peace and quiet," Quinn said. "Tell them you and I are going out on an important mission, but that they should continue to watch the house. Then bring the car around to the front. Tony Quinn is going to visit Attorney Buckley at his home, but the trip is going to take a little longer than actually necessary, for somewhere on the way the Black Bat is going to pass our car and reach Buckley's home first. Carol, you stay here and keep tabs on the phone. Be sure McGrath's detectives don't see you."

Silk was stepping out of the lab when Quinn called him to a halt.

"Silk," he instructed, "when you go into the garage, stow a couple of shovels in the car. Where they can't be seen."

"Shovels, sir?" Silk asked, with a questioning expression.

"That's right. You and I, Silk, are going to be a combination of burglar and ghoul tonight."

Shortly afterwards, Silk pulled up in front of the house, got out, and went to escort Tony Quinn to the car. The two detectives
were close by, but a coat covered the black clothing of the Black Bat, which Quinn wore over his usual gray tweeds.

Silk started off on the fairly long drive to Buckley's Long Island home. It was several miles from where William B. Wayne lived.

CHAPTER X

Death from Above

EARING Buckley's home, Tony Quinn removed his topcoat, donned black gloves and the hood, and gave Silk certain instructions. They checked their watches so that they agreed perfectly. Then the Black Bat slipped off in the darkness.

He didn't intend to visit Buckley's estate by orthodox methods. This whole thing might be a sort of scheme to finish off Tony Quinn and such a suspicion called for a careful examination of the premises first.

The Black Bat cut across the rear of an adjoining estate. His strange vision served him very well for it was a dark night, and anyone possessed of only ordinary sight would have found the going difficult.

"Buckley's house was big, and his estate covered fully two acres. House and grounds were enclosed by a neat white fence with a gate in front. Visitors were required to walk along a rather narrow, pretty and winding path from the road to the house.

The Black Bat, crouched in the darkness, thought it over. If a trap had been prepared for Tony Quinn, it wouldn't be obvious because although Quinn was apparently blind, he would have someone with him who could see. Also the trap would have to be set somewhere outside the house so that even if Buckley was behind it, he could claim that another person had arranged the thing.

The Black Bat proceeded along the fence until he reached the path. He started down it, watching and listening carefully. He made no sound for he kept on the grass bordering the path. If it was planned for something to happen to the blind D. A. it would be, he reasoned, something which could be construed as an accident. Nothing quite so blatant as a gunman hidden in the brush waiting to open fire.

Then across the path he saw a thin black cord, completely invisible to average eyes. It was about ankle-high and anyone walking was bound to hit it. The Black Bat examined the set-up carefully. Something was to happen when that cord was tripped. He discovered that the cord was strung beneath the branch of a bush and disappeared somewhere above, among the leaves of a large oak.

Standing directly beneath the tree, the Black Bat penetrated the darkness with his keen eyesight and saw all details of the trick. A large and heavy branch was delicately balanced high in the tree, so arranged that it would fall if the cord across the path were tripped. The tree trunk was tall, and bare of branches which might check the descent of the murder weapon.

It was a neat, competently constructed trap. The murderer had only to remove the cord after the crime was committed and all traces of murder would be gone. Branches of old trees were bound to fall occasionally and this, unfortunately, would hit and either kill or badly maim a blind Special District Attorney and his guide.

The Black Bat skirted the path, circled the house, and found the back door easy to open. There would be servants, so he took all precautions. He had noticed a light in one of the upstairs rooms and he made his way through the house, in that direction. Here again, darkness meant nothing and, unfamiliar as the place was, he stumbled against no furniture and made no more noise than a cat on the prowl.

He found the door of the lighted room open and Attorney Buckley was in there, quietly reading. He wore a smoking jacket over a sport shirt and sport trousers. The Black Bat drew his gun and stepped into the room.

Buckley was a strange type of man. Even the sudden appearance of the Black Bat broke his usual calm only to the degree of making him blink a few times, as if this somberly dressed man was an apparition that would at once dissolve into thin air.

"Good evening," the Black Bat said conversationally. "I'm sorry to intrude this way, but I don't usually announce my presence by ringing the doorbell."

"Um—so I've heard." Buckley laid his book down on an end table, leaned back, and crossed his legs.

He seemed to be entirely at ease, but the Black Bat could see that a vein in the attorney's throat was throbbing. His calm was purely exterior.

"You're interested in the Shea matter, aren't you?" Buckley asked.

THE Black Bat sat down, but his gun was still trained on Buckley.

"I think Victor Shea was murdered," he said. "All murders interest me. I'm looking for motives, and you're the man to tell me about one. Would William Wayne have inherited Joel Shea's estate if Victor had lived?"

"Yes," Buckley said. "I'm going to be honest with you. Frankly, I trust neither the police nor Quinn, the Special D.A. Oh,
I know his reputation of honesty, but reputations are always good—before they go bad. Joel Shea liked both his grandsons, but Victor much more than William. Joel started a dye manufacturing business, built it up to a large and profitable enterprise, and hoped that Victor would some day take over."

"William wasn't expected to assume any important position in the plant?" the Black Bat asked.

"Of course he was. Victor, however, had a scientific bent. He was a good chemist but, unfortunately, he also had a palate for alcohol. He liked to gamble and, in short, he broke the old man's heart."

"So Victor was disinherited?"

"Exactly—but with certain provisions. Victor was working on a new type of dye. I don't pretend to understand it, but the job was the better chemist of the two even if Alexander held the title of chief chemist for the firm. If Alexander discovered the dye, patented it, he would make a lot of money."

"And Mr. Carlin, who is a friend of the family. What of him?"

Buckley's face went grim and dark. "I'd rather not talk about Carlin. He's a—cad. That's putting it mildly. Also, I might add that I firmly believe Victor committed suicide. He did not know his grandfather's estate would be his if he succeeded with the dye. He thought it had all gone to William. And Victor seemed to have been a bit unbalanced mentally."

"Any specific reasons for saying that?" the Black Bat asked.

Buckley nodded. "At the old man's funeral, I saw Victor bend over the casket cov-

seemed difficult and called for intensive work and long hours. Joel provided that if Victor completed his work before he died, then Victor was to have the estate. If not, it all went to William Wayne."

"Victor did complete his experiments," the Black Bat said quietly. "There is evidence of that."

"But Victor is dead and in that event the property was to go to Wayne anyhow. Do you think Wayne killed Victor to get possession of the estate? I don't."

"Well, at least," the Black Bat said, "I have no evidence of it so far. What do you know about Lyle Alexander? Wouldn't he be jealous of Victor if he discovered the new dye first?"

"He was always jealous of him. Victor eartly. He had a tiny pair of scissors in his hand and he snipped some of the old man's hair off, and the nail tips from two fingers. Rather macabre mementos, don't you think?"

"Did anyone else see him do that?"

"I don't believe so. He was clever about it. Of course, the others were all present. Someone may have seen it."

"And you have nothing further to tell me?" the Black Bat asked.

"Nothing—right now," Buckley answered slowly. "Later I might... But then I'm not so certain. At any rate, it has no direct connection with the death of Victor Shea."

The Black Bat arose. "Mr. Buckley, I'm going to ask you to walk with me to the
gate. Do you mind?"

Buckley attempted a weak smile. "Why, of course not, but I never did hear of the Black Bat being escorted out of a house, any more than he is escorted in. I'll go, though. Let me get my hat and coat."

They were careful not to awaken the servants. Outside, the Black Bat walked beside Buckley, his shoulder brushing the attorney's so that he could feel the slightest slow-down on Buckley's part. If he knew about that trap, he would never spring it because the thing was almost certain death.

The fine black and invisible cord was five feet ahead of them and still Buckley kept on approaching, without the slightest lag. His right foot moved out, encountered the trip cord, and the Black Bat suddenly gave Buckley a tremendous yank. It carried them both out of the way as the heavy branch came crashing down.

Buckley, flat on the ground now, turned deathly pale.

"What on earth?" he choked.

"Odd wasn't it, how a branch would fall at this particular moment?" the Black Bat said dryly. "Seems as if the thing was set to fall, but I'm positive of this, Buckley. If that was a method of murder, you had nothing to do with it. Murderers don't risk their own lives, springing their own traps. Good night, Mr. Buckley."

SWIFTLY the Black Bat faded into the darkness. Buckley arose, walked over and shuddered as he saw what the branch had done to the path. There were great holes gouged in it. He studied the scene for a few more minutes, was about to turn back then paused. A car was coming down the street slowly as if the driver was searching for the correct address.

It stopped. Buckley went to the gate. He saw Silk open the car door and help Tony Quinn to alight. Buckley made a wry face at sight of the blind man. As Silk and Quinn reached the gate, Buckley stepped into view. Silk came to an abrupt halt, dragging Quinn back and speaking to him in a low voice.

"What do you want?" Buckley demanded. "It's I—Attorney Buckley. I never expected to see you here tonight, Quinn."

"You didn't expect me?" Quinn said, in a puzzled voice. "But you phoned my home and asked me to come here on a matter of considerable importance. You acted as if you were afraid to leave your own house. That's the only reason I came."

Buckley opened his mouth to make an angry retort. Then he turned and looked back at the path where the limb had crashed. His eyes grew wider. If Quinn had been lured here it was with the idea of making him the victim of that falling limb.

"Just how much do you want, Quinn?"

Buckley said. "A final figure."

"I don't seem to understand," Quinn answered. "I don't want anything, beyond the possible murderer of Victor Shea. I thought you asked me here so you could tell me something important."

Buckley removed his hat and ran fingers through his gray hair.

"Never mind what I said about an offer. I may be wrong. Dead wrong! However, I did not telephone you, Mr. Quinn. There is no reason why I should want to see you."

"Someone must have been playing jokes," Quinn said nervously. "I'm sorry, Mr. Buckley. Take me home again, Silk."

Buckley eyed the retreating figure and again glanced at the fallen limb. He shook his head from side to side like a sorely perplexed man.

CHAPTER XI

Murder Needs a Motive

II

N the car, Tony Quinn chuckled.

"That worked beautifully," he told Silk. "Buckley hasn't the faintest idea that the Black Bat merely cut across lots, popped into this car and returned as Tony Quinn. It was a trap, Silk, but Buckley didn't set it because I gave him the opportunity to spring the thing and he showed no anxiety."

"But what did he mean by asking you how much you wanted?"

Quinn laughed aloud. "The good Attorney Buckley thinks I'm blackmailing him. Or, rather, one of his clients. I can't have such a reputation as that, so we'll proceed to clean it up. Head for Fairview Cemetery, Silk."

Before Silk could express his surprise at this order, Quinn talked to him softly for a few minutes. They drove on to the graveyard then, where they spent the better part of an hour.

"Now where?" Silk asked when they were back in the car.

"The home of William B. Wayne. I want to see what sort of a reception the Black Bat will get from him. Park this side of his house and grounds. I'll look the place over before I make myself known. Also to make certain there aren't any more of those smart traps, like the one at Buckley's."

"I wonder why they want to kill Tony Quinn?" Silk asked uneasily. "There's no reason for it. Suppose Victor Shea did write a letter and leave it at the house. If you'd got it, the murderer would be behind bars by now. He isn't, so why can't he realize there either wasn't such a letter written or
that someone else got it?"

"Maybe,"—the Black Bat chuckled—"the someone else who did get it isn't mentioning the fact, and the murderer thinks I'm playing a little game of my own. At any rate, it really doesn't matter. Tomorrow I'll compel the killer to reveal himself—and don't ask questions, because I'm not positive as to his identity yet."

Silk pulled the car off the road, beneath some overhanging branches. They were about an eighth of a mile from William Wayne's handsome old home which he, however, had but recently acquired. The Black Bat started to get out of the car, but quickly ducked back inside again. A motor was roaring as its driver pushed it to the limit. The car, without lights, sped crazily up the road in their direction. The Black Bat watched it, swung his body to follow it as the vehicle flashed by.

"That," he said slowly, "was Felix Carlin, traveling as if all the assorted devils in Hades were after him. He came from Wayne's place too. There's been trouble there!"

He sped toward the house, a hardly visible shadow in the night. Lights were on all over the first floor. Through a window he could see servants moving about excitedly. The Black Bat walked boldly onto the porch, but didn't announce himself by ringing the bell. The door was half-open so he merely walked inside, but he did take the precaution of drawing his gun.

In the living room he found William Wayne lying on a divan, while two servants mopped blood off his face and another was trying to straighten the room a bit. The room looked as if a long and serious battle had gone on in it.

"There's no reason to be alarmed," the Black Bat said when a servant spotted him and gaped in apprehension so great he couldn't speak. "I'm the Black Bat. What happened here?"

Wayne struggled into a sitting position, took a wet cloth from one servant and ministered to himself. He ordered the servants out of the room.

"Please don't call the police," the Black Bat told them. "I'm here only to help Mr. Wayne."

"The only help I need," Wayne said, "is for someone to throw Felix Carlin within range of my fists. I've changed my mind about Victor's death. I think Carlin murdered him!"

"Why?" the Black Bat queried.

"He came here tonight and told me he could take over the firm, or bankrupt it, whichever he chose. He gave no reasons, but I'm afraid that Victor owed him a great deal of money and Carlin thinks I'm going to pay off his debts."

"Again I ask, why?" the Black Bat said.

WAYNE went over and poured himself a drink. Gripping the glass so hard that his knuckles gleamed he turned to face the intruder in black.

"Because Carlin knows darn well I'll pay up to avoid any kind of family scandal. Victor must have been in a peck of trouble. Frankly, Carlin demanded ten thousand dollars from me upon threat of exposing some sordid affair. It can concern only Victor. Certainly I've never stepped off the straight and narrow."

"How does it happen you're beaten up, Mr. Wayne?"

"I started to throw Carlin out and he produced a gun. Before he could level it, I charged him and he used the weapon as a blackjack. The man is mad! He said he'd beat my brains out—and he was doing a pretty good job of it too before I yelled for help. Then Carlin just ran out and fled."

"It appears to be a matter for the police," the Black Bat suggested. "Why not call Tony Quinn and give him the facts?"

"Quinn?" Wayne howled. "If anything, he works hand in glove with Carlin! He must be doing that, for Carlin actually boasted that I couldn't touch him. Said that Quinn would protect him and punish me. My attorney agrees. He doesn't trust Quinn either."

"Too bad," the Black Bat said. "Quinn's reputation has been perfect up to now. I rather like the fellow. Perhaps you're wrong. Carlin could have conjured up a lie to make you fear him more."

"I wouldn't put it past him," Wayne grumbled. "Why did you come here? Are you interested in this—this ghastly pack of trouble?"

"Very much so, Mr. Wayne. I came to ask a few questions, but I feel that you've undergone enough for the present. Therefore I won't press you, except for one thing. Has your chief chemist, Lyle Alexander, brought forth any new dye substances lately? Something that could be worth a great deal of money."

"Not yet," Wayne replied. "He's working in a few things right now. If they pan out he'll make a mint of money. So will I. Why should that interest you?"

"It's possible that murder has been done, and murder needs a motive. Alexander supplies one—perhaps. I'll be back, Mr. Wayne, when things are more normal here, and you have your wits about you. Perhaps we can think of a way to expose Carlin, for instance."

Wayne shrugged. "I'll do anything you say, but Carlin is no fool. He'll be protected in half a dozen different ways. Thanks, anyhow, for not pressing me tonight. I really do feel the effects of that argument."

The Black Bat nodded, stepped through
the door and closed it.

When Wayne reached the hallway, there were no signs of the black-clad visitor. Wayne went upstairs to cleanse his lacerations better. At least that was what he informed his servants. But five minutes later he had slipped out of the house, taken a car from the garage, and was driving toward the skylighted horizon that was New York.

Silk saw the car flash by and broke out in a cold sweat of worry until the Black Bat appeared. The Black Bat had a small package under one arm, and he was chuckling in vast satisfaction.

At nine-thirty the next morning, Tony Quinn's car pulled up in front of William Wayne's house. Quinn got out and, under Silk's guidance, moved to the porch and waited for someone to answer Silk's ring. A servant opened the door. Quinn went in and Wayne greeted him sourly.

"I got your phone call," Wayne said. "I waited as you ordered me to. It must be nice to have authority and exercise it whenever you wish. Why should I wait for you? I'm a busy man."

"Undoubtedly," Quinn said gently. "So am I—and my work is concerned with murder. Truthfully, Mr. Wayne, I'm taking you to my office shortly. You'll have to come. Otherwise I'll be compelled to send police out here after you."

"I guess you can do that," Wayne grumbled. "Well, do we start now?"

"First, I want to talk to you," Quinn told him. "It so happens that my man has business elsewhere. Will you drive me into town, Mr. Wayne? Thanks. I knew you would... All right, Silk. You can report to the office after you have completed the errand I outlined."

Silk hurried out of the house and drove away. Tony Quinn rumbled around a bit until Wayne helped him over to a chair. Quinn's eyes were the eyes of a blind man, focused on nothing. His head was turned well to the left of the spot where Wayne sat down.

"Last night," Quinn said, "I was summoned to the home of your attorney. A strange summons because it was in Buckley's name and he denied calling me. At any rate, Buckley seemed decidedly antagonistic to me. He made several odd statements. Now he is acting solely as your attorney, so I came to you. What's wrong?"

"I don't know what you're talking about," Wayne snapped. "I'm tired of being questioned. If Buckley has anything against you, it's his business, not mine."

"Very well," Quinn said meekly. "Will you give me a hand? I'm ready to go."

Wayne was morose silent as he drove toward the main highway leading to the tunnel and the city. Once his foot came down on the brake hard and he uttered an exclamation, but shrugged off Quinn's polite inquiry until they were in the neighborhood of Quinn's office. Then Wayne spoke.

"You may have felt the car slow down a little while ago. I was passing the cemetery where my grandfather and Victor are buried. I noticed that the graves seemed to have been freshly dug up. Has there been an exhumation?"

"Why, not to my knowledge." Quinn seemed greatly surprised.

"I didn't ask for such an order. Perhaps Captain McGrath will know something about it. He'll be at my office. So will everyone else involved."

CHAPTER XII

Murder and Blackmail

Wayne found a place to park, aided Quinn in alighting and took his arm to guide him through the pedestrian traffic, which was heavy. They entered the doorway of the huge civic building.

"It is my growing conviction," Quinn said, "that your cousin did commit suicide. I may throw the whole affair out of my office when this meeting is over. There is a sad lack of evidence."

"I always said it was suicide," Wayne snapped. He propelled Quinn into one of the elevators. "However, I'm glad to learn that you are finally being reasonable."

He gave the number of Quinn's floor to the elevator operator and said nothing more during the trip up. He helped Quinn out and led him along the corridor, turned to the left, and walked toward Quinn's office.

"I can't for the life of me understand why you want us all in the office this morning," he grumbled. "I hope you'll be brief about it. Factories—big ones like mine—don't run themselves, you know."

He opened the door and Captain McGrath came forward to take Quinn's arm. The others had arrived. Carlin glared at Wayne from his slumped position in a big leather chair. Attorney Buckley just nodded curtly. Lyle Alexander, the chemist, seemed intent upon trying to pare some of the dyestuff from beneath his fingernails. He didn't raise his head or acknowledge the arrival of his boss in any way.

Quinn sat down at his desk.

"Is everybody here?" he asked.

"Alexander, Buckley, Carlin—and you brought along Wayne," McGrath replied. "That accounts for them all. I've got the two mugs in the next room too."
“Good,” Quinn said. “Gentlemen, for some reason I can’t fathom there have been deliberate attempts made on my life. In one instant a man was hired to come to this office and murder me. But I haven’t been alone as a victim. Last night the Black Bat visited me. He also had been attacked by a paid assassin. The hoodlums responsible have been under arrest since. They will be brought in here.”

“To identify us?” Carlin shouted and jumped to his feet. “That’s an outrage! If we’re charged with something, put us under arrest!”

“Take it easy,” McGrath said, “or I’ll oblige you. Okay, Mr. Quinn to bring those mugs in?”

“Line these four men up first,” Quinn ordered. “And any of them who refuses will automatically come under heavy suspicion. Innocent men are not afraid.”

The four lined up. McGrath brought in the hophead first. He was shaking badly and seemed eager to get this over with. He walked straight up to Carlin and pressed a finger against his chest.

“That’s him!”

“You’re a liar!” Carlin shrieked. “I never saw this man before in my life.”

The other man entered, studied the quartette and repeated the hophead’s maneuver. Carlin was sweating profusely by this time. He staggered over to a chair and literally fell into it. Alexander was smiling smugly. Buckley just looked astonished and Wayne’s features were frozen into what seemed to be deep anxiety.

Quinn took the razor-keen knife from the drawer of his desk.

“I think this is your property, Mr. Carlin. It was used in an attempt to murder the Black Bat. He tells me a scabbard into which this blade fits is in your apartment.”

“Certainly that’s my knife,” Carlin groaned. “It was stolen from me days ago. I tell you I’m innocent! Give me a break!”

“I imagine,” Quinn said ironically, “that many of your victims have begged you in those same words—’Give me a break’. What was your answer to them?”

“You—you’ve got me mixed up with someone else!” Carlin shouted. “I don’t even know what you’re talking about.”

“You’re a professional blackmailer,” Quinn said coldly. “You prey on the mistakes people make. You get hold of documents that can ruin a man, then photostat them. Captain McGrath, didn’t you say Carlin’s apartment was equipped for photostating papers?”

“I’ll say it was,” McGrath grunted. “We found a few prints too, checked on the people involved, and some of them are ready to testify against him.”

“It’s a framed-up plan to keep me quiet!” Carlin shouted. “But I won’t be silent. I demand protection!”

WILLIAM WAYNE stepped forward.

“Quinn,” he said, if Carlin is criminally involved in something, I intend to help him. Therefore, keep in mind that Attorney Buckley and myself are on his side. After all, Carlin is a family friend.”

“And he knows a great deal,” Quinn said calmly. “Let me tell you what I know. Victor Shea was murdered—by someone in this room who tricked him into that office upstairs. Shea tried to bargain for his life by saying he had left a letter at my home, just in case he was prevented from reaching me. The murderer had to get that letter, but Carlin beat him to it. Carlin knew what was going on. Probably he helped Victor hide out. He trailed Victor, saw him deposit his letter at my home, and Carlin got it. He has been blackmailing the murderer.”

Carlin gulped, looked around, but decided there wasn’t much hope for an escape.

“The Black Bat has been working on this,” Quinn went on. “Most of what I know came from his lips. The murderer went to my home and didn’t find the letter. He became alarmed, believed I had it and was withholding action. So he tried to kill me—with a bullet the first time and then, because of the risk, he hired a man to do the job. He retained another paid assassin to seize Carlin if he went to the morgue and identified Victor, but the killer was lured into a trap by the Black Bat. A black cat described the man who retained them. Their descriptions fitted Carlin and they even identified him a few moments ago.”

“But I never saw those men before in my life!” Carlin shrieked.

“Of course you didn’t,” Quinn conceded. “The murderer was building up a case against you. He needed a weapon at one time so he took your ornamental letter opener, sharpened it and turned it into a dangerous dagger. By your own actions, in conducting this blackmailing scheme, you built up more suspicion against yourself. You pretended that I was working with you to frighten the murderer even more.”

Wayne suddenly stepped away from Attorney Buckley. “If—if a murderer was trying to throw blame on Carlin he must have had a build like Carlin’s. Buckley is just as tall.”

Buckley’s eyes narrowed, but he said nothing. Tony Quinn apparently noticed none of this. His blind eyes were just as blank as ever.

“Who is the man you were blackmailing, Carlin?” he asked softly.

Carlin licked his lips. “I—I don’t know anything about it. I—I don’t even think Victor was murdered. There’s some mistake.”
“I thought you wouldn’t talk,” Quinn said. “In holding back your information, you can force the murderer to help you.”

“Good heavens!” cried Wayne, in a startled voice. “I hope you don’t think I was trying to shut him up by my offer to aid him. It just seemed like the right thing to do.”

Quinn apparently paid no attention to Wayne’s entreaty.

“Victor went into hiding because he was afraid of being murdered,” he said. “He had to finish a certain set of experiments in a hurry, for unless he did, his grandfather would leave him nothing. By the same token the killer had to work fast and kill Victor before he completed his work. Only he couldn’t find him.

“Victor knew his grandfather had been murdered. He took the cuttings of the dead man’s hair and fingernails. We can therefore assume, since Victor was a chemist, and would know that the grandfather was killed by arsenic, which shows itself even after death in the hair and nails of the victim. It can also be used without suspicious results on an old and ailing man like Joel Shea.

“Finally, Victor finished his work. He came out of hiding and tried to get in touch with me so he could tell his story and furnish the proof that his grandfather was murdered and that he, himself, was in great danger. He never got the chance. Somehow, our killer found him. Wayne—you’re the murderer. You killed the old man so you’d inherit. If he lived until Victor finished his experiments, you’d get nothing. Then you had to kill Victor to protect yourself.”

Wayne drew himself up. “I’m afraid you will have to prove that, Mr. Quinn.”

Quinn nodded. “I expect to. Once I do, Carlin will realize you can no longer help him and he will talk to save himself. Buckley, you’re innocent of any part, but you will admit that you believed Carlin and I were working hand in glove to blackmail Wayne.”

“Yes, I did,” Buckley confessed. “I thought it was something about Victor’s past—life—the family reputation. Carlin kept hinting that he knew you well. Now I see that it was only to impress Wayne with the idea that Victor’s letter to you was in existence and to compel Wayne to pay out heavy sums.”

“He did pay twenty-five thousand,” Quinn said. “The Black Bat discovered evidence of that. Wayne, thinking I was trying to profit, was all the more determined to kill me. Some of his tricks were clever. As for the difference in appearance between Carlin and Wayne that could be easily arranged. Carlin’s loud clothes may not be in the best of taste, but all stores sell them. Wayne hoped that Victor might go to a grave as an unidentified suicide. Printing Victor’s picture smoked him out, of course. . . . Captain, you’d better handcuff Wayne. I can’t see him, but I imagine he is growing more and more desperate.”

“Desperate, my hat!” Wayne replied tartly. “What you’ve told so far doesn’t mean a thing.”

The handcuffs were put on, nevertheless. Someone tapped on the office door. McGrath opened it and Silk walked in, carrying a package and wearing a broad grin.

“As you ordered, sir,” he told Quinn, “I returned to Mr. Wayne’s home after he left. I searched it and found a pair of built-up shoes. I imagine they add enough height to compare with Carlin’s size. And, in the cellar, I found a sharpening stone. It had been recently used and there were tiny dust particles which I’m sure will match the metal from which Carlin’s dagger is made.”

Wayne tried to bolt. He had taken about four steps when McGrath grabbed him. Wayne sank into a chair, his face deathly white.

“Last night,” Quinn said, “the Black Bat dug up the surface of Joel Shea’s grave. This morning Wayne noticed it on his way to the office with me. He betrayed his anxiety over a post-mortem by almost stopping the car. He realized he had practically given himself away so he attempted to bluster it out by asking me if I’d ordered such a post-mortem. I hadn’t, naturally, because I’d never thought of it or had sufficient cause to get a legal order. Now I shall take the necessary steps.

“But even if we had little evidence against Mr. Wayne, I’m afraid he gave himself away when he brought me into this building . . . Carlin—Alexander—Buckley, all of you went to the wrong office, didn’t you?”

There was a chorus of assents.

“The lobby listing was wrong” Buckley said. “It indicated your office was on the eighteenth floor.”

Quinn smiled. “None of you, including Wayne, had ever been to my office before—at least openly. Wayne lured Victor into the wrong office by switching the room numbers on the lobby listing. I left them that way. Today I kept Mr. Wayne busy talking, excited over the grave that seemed to have been opened. He didn’t stop to think, but I’m a blind man so I couldn’t direct Wayne. He didn’t look at the listing, because we were walking too fast. The names and numbers are in small letters. Nevertheless, Wayne brought me straight to this office because he knew where it was. He had to check that in order to arrange the false listing which trapped Victor. Carlin—how about it?”

Carlin sighed. “At least I’m no killer, and Wayne did try to have me murdered if what you say is the truth. I thought I was being followed and I was afraid to go to the morgue and identify Victor. Yes, I have the letter Vic wrote you. I’m sunk, so I’ll
Quinn grinned. "Are you never satisfied, Captain? You have your murderer, a blackmailer, and all the credit you want. This work wasn't mine. The Black Bat accomplished it, turning his information over to me last night. Naturally, I can't say it was my work. I can't admit the Black Bat is all but on my staff. So you accept the glory. Is anything fairer than that?"

McGrath took a long breath and arose.

"Oh, what's the use?" he grumbled. At the door he turned for a moment. "Just the same I'm glad I did help a little. If I hadn't posted those men, you might be a corpse right now. Sullivan told me how that acid barrel almost finished you off, how helpless you were when the thing started rolling."

Quinn's face lit up.

"More evidence that I'm blind and I couldn't be the Black Bat, Captain. Now will you believe me?"

Captain McGrath bit all the way through his cigar.

Follow the Further Exploits of the Black Bat in

**BLIND MAN'S BLUFF**

By G. WAYMAN JONES

Next Issue's Exciting Complete Mystery Novel

---

For shaves that catch a woman's eye
Give keen-edged Thin Gillettes a try!
These blades save time and dough for you—
And give you tops in comfort, too!

Produced By The Maker Of The Famous Gillette Blue Blade
POISONED HEARTS

By TED COUGHLAN

Captain Conway has a difficult mystery to solve when grim death strikes down Rex Harvey in an inexplicable manner!

THAT night, the three of them stayed in Harvey’s Restaurant, smoldering hatred between them as usual. Stout, red-faced Rex Harvey, the restaurant owner, middle-aged Bill Winston, a runt of a man, in “reclaimed” second-hand clothes, and Eileen Winston, his pretty, plump wife.

A slovenly bus boy threw an embittered glance at Harvey’s two lingering companions, then viciously began sweeping the floor without taking the trouble to wet down the dust.

Rex Harvey pushed back his coffee cup and got to his feet. He didn’t bother to reprimand his employee.

“It’s time to close up,” he said. “Would you like to go somewhere else? I hate to go home. Doctor Whitehurst is sure to be there with my wife and my brother-in-law. Whitehurst will be sitting in my favorite chair drinking my liquor and making eyes at my wife. Let’s hunt up another place.”

Bill Winston’s heavy eyebrows met over his sunken gray eyes. Harvey was always talking about his possessions like his liquor and that trick chair he boasted about eternally. Without making a gesture at paying the check he rose.

“It’s too late,” he grumbled. “We’d better go home.”

“I’ll walk along with you,” Harvey said.
His hand slipped under Eileen Winston's dimpled elbow, helping her to her feet. Her wide, fuchsia-red lips stretched in a grateful smile. When her husband's back was turned she patted Harvey's arm tenderly.

Harvey linked his arm through hers, and followed Bill to the door. His face was shining as usual, but there was a deep furrow in his forehead as he eyed Winston.

"Can he be fool enough not to know, or—" he wondered. He didn't want to finish the thought, even to himself. Perhaps Eileen, too, put up with him only because he was—
to a big extent—the couple's bread and butter.

Outside, in the cool December evening, he shrugged his thoughts aside, walking up palm-lined Sarasota Boulevard, watching the shadows thrown by the three-quarter moon dance in Eileen's glossy black hair. Bill walked alone in front of the pair, his eyes on the ground, paying no visible attention to them. Harvey, heavy, stocky, got out of breath quickly, for his legs were too short for his torso, and he had to quicken his pace to keep in step with the tall, Junoesque girl.

None of them spoke until they came to the small, unpainted shack in the back of a densely wooded lot where Bill and Eileen lived.

"Won't you come in for a while, Rex?" Eileen invited Harvey in her husky, stage-loud voice.

Harvey hesitated before he spoke. He didn't want to go home.

"It's late—too late," Bill said. "Besides, I want to get in a couple of hours work before I go to bed. Good night, Harvey. See you tomorrow." It was a curt dismissal.

"Go home and squeeze a drink out of that trick chair of yours—the one that you showed me."

Harvey obviously longed to stay longer.

"When do you expect to open your bookstore, Bill? Anything I can do to help?"

"You've done too much already," Winston answered gruffly. "I'll be ready to open in a few days. Good night." He took Eileen by the arm and almost pushed her inside.

Left alone, Harvey slowly turned away and walked moodily toward the parking lot where he had left his car. He started it jerkily, and drove toward home, subconsciously using the longest route. He saw the lights still blazing in the living room of his pretentious pink stucco house. There were two cars in the shiny asphalt driveway, so he parked his at the curb. For a while he sat sulkily at the wheel, then got out and dragged himself wearily along the flag-stone path.

It was exactly midnight when he walked into the cathedral living room. His small, youngish blond wife and her brother, the hatchet-faced Major Alexander Bloodworth of the Army Medical Corps, were playing bridge with Doctor Samson Whitehurst.

Mrs. Harvey glanced at her husband. Her finely-plucked eyebrows rose questioningly.

"Where have you been?" she demanded.

"You knew I was having guests. There was restrained anger in her low voice.

Harvey shrugged his stocky shoulders and passed his hand wearily over his tired eyes.

"You didn't want me here. How are you?"

His look and question took in both men.

"Just fine." Dr. Whitehurst's steady gray eyes bored into Harvey's. "Did you go to the hospital for that check-up?"

Harvey nodded, as he seated himself in his favorite chair.

"Yes. They say I'm sound. If I were ten years younger, I'd be A-one. Join me in a nightcap before I go to bed?"

The highballs were passed around. Harvey drained his in one gulp, laid his glass on the butterfly-inlaid tray, and turned toward the door.

"Good night." His voice was impersonally polite.

Halfway up the circular staircase, he clutched at his throat. With a moan, he grabbed at the bannister.

He swayed, fell over, rolled down the tiled stairs, and landed in a twisted heap in the narrow hallway.

Bloodworth was the first to reach him. He listened for Harvey's heartbeat, felt Harvey's pulse, and shook his own billiard-bald head. Then he turned solicitously to his sister.

"I'm sorry, Susan. It was his heart."

Fearfully catching the significance of the word "was," Susan Harvey bent over the body of her husband. Her greenish eyes stared at the floor, and her body went rigid. For a moment it looked as if she were about to collapse; then she recovered herself.

"Are you sure?" she asked. "It doesn't seem possible—"

Again Bloodworth shook his head, this time with sad finality. Authoritatively he took her by the arm and led her to a living room couch. Returning to the hall, he turned to Dr. Whitehurst.

"Help me get him upstairs. Then I'll call the funeral parlor and make arrangements." His voice was cold, as if touched by the icy breath of the recent death.

"I don't think we'd better move him." Whitehurst looked from the twisted corpse to the telephone underneath the stairway.

"He died so suddenly, it might be better to call the police first."

"There's no need for the police," Bloodworth contradicted him almost savagely. "He died from heart failure. Why make things any worse for Susan? Gosh knows, she went through enough with him while he was alive, without trying to rake up a scandal, now that he's gone."

Whitehurst was still hesitant. "As a doctor, are you willing to sign the death certificate, Major?"
“Of course, I am!” Bloodworth snapped. “I—I’m not so sure, you should. You heard what he said about the examination he had this afternoon. If there was nothing wrong with his heart, this death seems strange.”

Bloodworth’s voice rose to an angry pitch. “Nonsense. Old Jurgens probably gave him one of his superficial goings over. Well, are you going to help me move him from here?” “After I make a telephone call.” Whitehurst dialed a number.

“Dr. Jurgens? I’m sorry to disturb you at this time of the night, but—” He went on and told Jurgens what had happened, then added: “Did you examine his heart this afternoon?” Getting the answer, he frowned and broke the connection.

Almost at once, he nervously dialed another number. His voice was determined, when he spoke. “Police headquarters? May I speak to Captain Conway?” After a short wait, he spoke again. “Hello, Captain. This is Dr. Whitehurst. Please, come out to Seventeen Hundred Poinciana Avenue. Bring the medical examiner with you. ..Yes, sudden death. All right, I’ll see that nothing is disturbed until you get here.”

He hung up and explained to Bloodworth, who was staring at him angrily. “I had to call him. Jurgens insists that he examined Rex Harvey thoroughly this afternoon, and positively states that there was nothing wrong with his heart. You’d better go in and prepare Susan for another shock. I’ll wait out here until the police arrive.”

When the door chimes rang, a few minutes later, Dr. Whitehurst admitted the bulky police captain, two uniformed officers, and Doctor McKenzie, the short, plump medical examiner. Without waiting even to greet his colleague, the M.E. dropped to one knee by the body, opened his bag, and began his investigation.

Captain Conway shook hands with Whitehurst. His large brown eyes twinkled, and there was an upcurve to his lips as he glanced at the busy medical examiner. “Tell me what happened, doctor.”

Whitehurst told him the details from the time of Harvey’s arrival home until his death. “I may be out of order calling you,” he added apologetically. “However, in view of what Dr. Jurgens said, I wanted to be on the safe side.”

“I hope it’s not murder, but you did the right thing in any case,” Conway complimented him. “Who else was in the house when it happened?”

“His wife, brother, and myself. We were playing a last rubber of bridge when he came home.”

“Where are the others?”

“In the living room. Do you have to question them?”

“Not unless it turns out to be suspicious.”

Conway approached the still crouched figure of the medical examiner. “How does it look to you, Mac?”

“Murder.” The medical examiner grunted the word without even looking up. “Give me time and I’ll tell more about it; then maybe you can tell me who did it.” He stood up and spoke to Dr. Whitehurst for the first time: “Hello, Doctor. You mean to tell me you didn’t know what happened to him?”

“I didn’t try to find out. Bloodworth seemed satisfied that it was heart failure. I only sent you for me to salve my own conscience.”

Dr. McKenzie looked up at the much taller Captain Conway. McKenzie’s impish middle-aged face was creased with lines, his manner that of a saucy bluejay. He practically strutted. “He was poisoned,” McKenzie announced. “Arsenic or aconite. Don’t ask me which until I get a chance to look at his innards. Can I take him away?”

Conway shook his large blond head. “Not until the boys take a couple of shots. Hang around, they’ll be through in a hurry.” He motioned to the uniformed policeman who held a camera, then beckoned to Whitehurst. “Let’s go into the living room and see the others.”

Whitehurst introduced Captain Conway to Mrs. Harvey and her brother. The Captain nodded acknowledgement. Then standing with his back to the door, he made an apology. “I’m sorry to butt in on you at this time, but the Medical Examiner opines that Mr. Harvey was murdered. Tell me, Mrs. Harvey, was there anyone else in the house this evening?”

“Only the maid,” Mrs. Harvey said faintly. “She’s probably gone to bed.” The widow was sitting straight on the edge of the modern sofa. “I—I’m sure there must be a mistake, George.”

“Now, Susan, control yourself,” Dr. Bloodworth laid a soothing hand on her shaking shoulder, then turned to Conway. “Must you question my sister now, Captain? It is clear that she has had enough shock for one night.”

“I’m afraid I’ll have to, but I’ll be as easy with her as possible.” Conway nodded sympathetically to the widow.

“At what time did your husband come home?”

“Midnight.” Mrs. Harvey started crying loudly, apparently unable to control herself. Conway shrugged. No use questioning a woman in this condition. He looked at Whitehurst. “You were here when he came in. Tell me just what happened.”

Whitehurst sat down, sipped at a tall drink, and retold his story. The detective thoughtfully rubbed his chin stubble. “Who mixed the drinks?”

“Mrs. Harvey poured them, I believe.”
CONWAY walked over to the table which held the now empty glasses.

"Which one did he drink from?"

"It's hard to remember. But it was one of these, I think," he pointed to the three tall glasses sitting on a damp tray. "I'm afraid you'll have to examine them all."

Bloodworth, who had succeeded in quieting Mrs. Harvey somewhat, broke into the conversation.

"This is a lot of nonsense, Captain. I'm sure the M.E. made too hasty a diagnosis. Rex did die from heart failure. The least you can do is make sure of the cause of death before subjecting us to this cross-examination."

"I have no reason to doubt McKenzie," Conway declared tentatively. "What I would like to know is—why are you so all fired anxious to stop an investigation? I think you'd better tell me what you know, and stop shielding the person you apparently think responsible for the death. It'll be better in the long run."

Bloodworth paled imperceptibly.

"You should know better than that, Captain!" he blustered. "In my position I couldn't afford to shield a killer, even if I had any desire to. If, as you insist, it was murder, the mere fact that he died in the house doesn't mean that one of us had anything to do with his death."

Again Conway studied the face of the bellicose physician.

"If it was either aconite or arsenic as McKenzie thinks, then he must have taken it after he came home. These poisons kill quickly, as you ought to know. But, I want to be sure, so perhaps you know where he spent the evening."

Bloodworth looked at Mrs. Harvey. She nodded.

"I guess he was out with his friends, the Winstons," he told the detective. "He spent most of his spare time in their company. They probably ended up as non-paying customers at Rex's restaurant. They generally did that."

Conway called in a uniformed policeman.

"Drive down to Harvey's restaurant, and find out if the owner was in there between eleven and twelve, and with whom. If it was the Winstons, pick them both up and bring them out here."

The policeman was leaving the room when Mrs. Harvey's hysterical voice stopped him.

"Don't you dare bring them here! I won't have that woman in this house!"

Conway shrugged and changed his order.

"Find out if they're home and call me here."

After the policeman left, Conway spoke to the photographer.

"Dust those glasses. See which has Harvey's prints on it, and then send all three down to the lab. Tell them to give me a quick report on what's in them. There's plenty left for an analysis." He watched the man applying the powder to the glasses. The prints showed up clearly.

"How'm I gonna tell which are his?" the photographer asked. "We haven't got a record of any of them, as far as I know."

"You know where to get Harvey's, don't you?" Conway suggested grimly.

"Why don't you get it off your chest, Major?" he asked Bloodworth. "It's obvious you either killed Harvey yourself, or know who did."

Bloodworth grew furious.

"You have no right to make such an accusation," he shouted. Then his tone grew calmer. "Just because I wanted to spare my sister from being grilled, is no reason for you to think that I know anything about his death. I still say he died from heart failure. The autopsy will bear me out."

"Sure—heart failure," Conway said sarcastically. "All people die from heart failure. But in this case, it was brought on by a too-big dose of some lethal drug. Well, have it your own way, but it's only going to make things tougher for all of you—"

He broke off, and answered the ringing telephone.

"I'm leaving here for a while," he informed nobody in particular. "See to it, that none of you leave the house until I get back. By that time we'll know whether you or Doc McKenzie is right. I'm betting on McKenzie."

Without a backward glance, he strode out of the room, stopping only long enough to say something to the patrolman at the door.

It was already dawn when Conway reached Winston's cottage. He walked right in and introduced himself to Bill and Eileen Winston.

"Were you two out with Rex Harvey last night?"

BILL'S thick graying eyebrows drew together. "Sure, what of it?"

"What time did he leave you?"

"About a quarter to twelve, I guess. Why?"

Conway reprimanded him. "I'm asking the questions. Did you have supper together?"

Bill's frown grew fiercer. "Sure. In his joint. Just before we came home."

"What did he have to eat?" Conway asked.

"Just coffee, I think. Did he have anything else, Eileen?" He threw a quick glance at his wife's strained face. She shook her head silently.

"Why?" she asked Conway. "What's all this about? Has anything happened to Rex?"

Her eyes widened in anxious anticipation of his answer.

"He's dead," Conway finally told them. "Poisoned. I've got to know exactly how long it was between the time he drank that coffee and the time he arrived at his own home. Do either of you remember when it was you left the restaurant?"

Eileen's eyes grew larger. Suddenly she
started to cry. At first dry sobs racked her body. Soon, however, the dam of tears broke, and they streamed down her over-rouged cheeks. She let out one loud scream, and started moaning. Her husband grabbed her by the shoulder and shook her roughly.

“Oh, shut up!” His voice was curt. “Don’t make a fool of yourself. If he’s dead, he’s dead, and there’s nothing you can do about it.”

“Well, do you remember?” Conway asked. The question only started Eileen crying more loudly. The detective looked with irritated helplessness from the woman to her husband. “Can’t you stop her?” he asked.

“Sure.” Bill walked into the kitchen and came back with a glass of water. He flung it into his wife’s face, snarling at her. “Come on, cut out the nonsense! You don’t need to advertise the fact that you were in love with the—him.” He looked at Conway. “She’ll quit now. Sit down, sir.”

Both men sat down gingerly on rickety chairs, facing one another.

“It was exactly twenty-five minutes to twelve when we left his place,” Bill Winston said. “I remember, because the busboy almost swept us out in his rush to get through.”

Conway’s glance slowly covered the small, overfurnished room.

“What do you do for a living?”

“Write,” Bill Winston pointed to his chipped mahogany desk on which stood a battered typewriter and a box of cheap paper. “South American tripe mostly.”

“Does it pay well?”

“No. If it weren’t for her job, and—” Bill stopped, shrugged his shoulders and went on. “You might as well hear it from me before some other people get a chance to give you too distorted a story.” He paused to wet his lips with his tongue. “Rex Harvey practically supported us. I’m figuring on opening a bookstore in the next few days. He even financed that.”

Conway’s sleepy-looking eyes suddenly grew alert.

“I think I can guess the rest, then. You’re just the type to do it. You were fed up with his generosity. The more he did for you, the more you hated him. Tonight you slipped a shot of aconite into his coffee. Isn’t that the way it happened?”

Bill Winston didn’t even look surprised. His full lips curled in the semblance of a smile, but his usually brusque voice was quiet as he answered the accusation.

“You’ve got me doped about right, Captain, but that’s all. I’m sorry to disappoint you, but I didn’t kill him, much as I’d have been willing to. You know, if I slipped him that kind of a Mickey at eleven thirty-five, he’d never have gotten home alive, and I’m telling the truth about the time. You can check on it easily enough.”

Captain Conway scrutinized the expression on the embittered man’s face.

“I’m halfway inclined to believe you, but you’d better come along with me, anyway, both of you. Until I check with McKenzie, I’d rather keep both of you in sight.”

“Okay by me,” Bill grunted. “Put on your coat, Eileen, and let’s get going.”

They left the house, and the detective drove them to Harvey’s home. When he parked in the now car-filled driveway, he spoke to them.

“I’d better not bring you in, yet. I’ve had enough crying women for one night.” He pointed to a policeman at the door. “He’ll see that you stay here.”

Inside the house, Conway called the M.E. to one side.

“Is it possible that Harvey swallowed that poison as much as half an hour before he died?” he asked.

McKenzie nodded his gray, bull-like head.

“Maybe. It all depends. If it was arsenic, sure. I’d hate to make a rash statement about aconite, but it would still be possible. The stuff acts faster with some folks than others. I can tell you for sure after the autopsy.”

“Thanks. If the photographer is through, you can take the body away.” He looked around the garishly furnished living room. Bloodworth and Whitehurst were still there, but Mrs. Harvey was gone. Anticipating his question, Bloodworth scowled belligerently.

“I gave her a sedative and sent her to bed.” Conway threw him a quick look.

“Well, what about those glasses?” he asked the photographer.

“His prints weren’t there, and the lab says there’s nothing more potent than Black Label in them.”

Bloodworth smiled for the first time, with faint relief. “What did I tell you? It shows that your examiner is all wet.”

Conway shook his head.

“If his prints weren’t on any of those glasses, it just shows that he drank from another one. Have you tried to find it, Jack?”

The photographer frowned.

“Sure, but it ain’t here.”

Conway walked to the front door, and spoke to the policeman.

“Bring the Winstons in.”

Bill and Eileen walked hesitantly into the living room. Without a word to anyone, Bill Winston looked around, picked out the most comfortable chair, and heavily slumped into it. His wife, still sobbing, stood uncertainly in the middle of the room. At a gesture from Conway, she sat on the edge of a straight-back chair. Bill Winston lighted a cigarette, leaned back.

“Well, which one of them did it, Captain?” he asked. “They’re both as glad as I am to see him out of the way.”

Conway glared at him.

“What do you mean by that?” he demanded.
Bill shrugged.

"Bloodworth never approved of his sister marrying a man who ran a restaurant. Figured he wasn't good enough for her. He's been wanting her to divorce him ever since Harvey built this house and put it in her name. The good doctor had no love for him." Bill nodded toward Doctor Whitehurst. "But Rex was a heavy contributor to Whitehurst's pet charity clinic. Did the doctor tell you how much Rex willed him?"

"No, he didn't," Conway snapped. "If you know so much, you tell me."

"I don't know," Bill said calmly. "I'm only figuring it out from the way Harvey spoke. Maybe he didn't even leave a will."

"Do either of you know if he did?" Conway asked, looking from Bloodworth to Whitehurst.

Whitehurst opened his mouth, but Bloodworth spoke first.

"Yes, he did leave a will." Bloodworth glared at Bill. "For your information Harvey left everything he had to his wife."

"Okay, so I'm wrong again," Bill Winston smiled faintly. "How about a drink?"

His hand groped along the side of the chair in which he sat. He pressed a hidden button under the arm and the upholstered side of the chair opened, disclosing a small built-in tray. There was a tall glass on it. Bill picked it up and started for the whisky decanter.

"Hey, wait a minute" exclaimed Conway.

"Give me that glass. If you want a drink, get another."

BILL handed the glass to the detective.

Conway took it gingerly and put it to his nostrils, then called the photographer again.

"This must be it, Jack," Conway said.

"Find out."

While Jack was testing the glass for fingerprints, Conway faced the others in the room. He scowled as he glared at them all.

"One of you is holding something back," he said, his gaze centering on Bloodworth. "I think it is you, Major. The way it looks to me, either you or Mrs. Harvey put that poison in Harvey's glass—the glass you knew he would use when he sat in his favorite chair. I—"

"That's a lie!" interrupted Major Bloodworth in sudden anger. "I didn't do it, and neither did my sister!"

"Naturally you'd try to shield her if you knew she did it," said Conway. "Or maybe you did it yourself and are trying to bluff your way out of it." He frowned. "I'm getting Mrs. Harvey down here right now and we're going to have this settled before I leave."

"I—I want to go home," Eileen Winston spoke nervously. Abruptly she stood up. "I can't bear being here when she comes downstairs."

"Sit down, please, Mrs. Winston," Conway ordered quietly. "No one is leaving just yet." He watched her as she sank back into her chair. "Neither you nor your husband are in the clear. It's quite possible that one of you poisoned Harvey in the restaurant, and he managed to reach home before he died."

"That's impossible, Captain," Bill said with conscious superiority. "If you knew as much about aconite as I do, you'd never make such a statement."

"Is that so?" Conway glared at Bill Winston. "And where did you get so much information about it?"

"From studying the subject of poisons."

"Oh, then maybe, knowing so much, you could have doctored the aconite a bit before giving it to Harvey to make sure he got home before it took effect." Conway turned to the doctor. "Would you say that was possible, Doctor Whitehurst?"

The doctor walked the length of the room and back before he answered. He seemed to be fighting a battle with himself. His voice was low and intense when he spoke.

"I hate to say this, Captain," he said. "It sounds too much like a direct accusation, but since it is bound to come out later anyway," He hesitated and shrugged his shoulders. "I've had many discussions with Mr. Winston. For a layman, he is exceedingly well versed in toxicology. Frankly, I don't know of any way to delay the action of aconite, but I wouldn't be surprised if he did."

"Well, what do you say to that, Winston?" Conway demanded.

Bill stood up, stretching his short, thin arms over his head. He yawned deliberately, more to annoy Conway than anything else.

"The first time I ever saw aconite was in Virginia," he said. "It is known by the more common name of Wolf's Bane down there. The American variety, which isn't as potent as the Asiatic, grows to a height of three or four feet. It has bright green, petiolate leaves about two or three inches in length, and has pretty white flowers on a trailing stem. To the uninitiated, it looks somewhat like horseradish, but you'll find a big difference if you happen to eat any of it."

"What's the idea of the botanical lecture?" Conway snapped in an irritated tone.

"It sort of ties up with this chair," Bill pointed to the seat he had vacated. "Both the aconite and the chair came from the same place. You might call them gifts from a murderer!"

"Gifts!" exclaimed Major Bloodworth. "Good grief! Doctor Whitehurst gave Rex that chair!"

The doctor snarled and dashed for the door. Conway grabbed for Whitehurst and missed. Bill stuck out his foot as the doctor tried to rush by him. Whitehurst tripped and went down hard. Captain Conway got him before he could rise and snapped a pair of handcuffs on the doctor's wrists.
SOME of Conway’s men appeared and took charge of the prisoner. The captain turned to Bill. “Looks as if you found the killer, all right,” Conway said. “What’s the rest of it, Winston?”

“All I know is that Doctor Whitehurst gave that trick chair to Rex on his birthday,” Bill said. “It was at the doctor’s Virginia home I first made the acquaintance of American aconite. I just put two and two together and hoped for the best. With the aid of your fingerprints experts, your laboratory technicians, and your medical examiner you can probably learn how Harvey was given the poison—either from the hidden glass or perhaps from the chair itself.” “Yes, but the motive?” demanded Conway slowly, and then his eyes gleamed. “Of course—they hated each other—that was it. The motive was so commonplace, I couldn’t see it.”

“I was beginning to wonder how long it would take you to see how they felt toward one another,” Bill said. “I’ll make a prediction right now. Doctor Whitehurst’s defense will be that he had been treating Harvey for acute coryza, which Rex never had, and the traces of aconite the M.E. finds in his innards came from the medicine used for that.”

“All right,” Conway said to the uniformed policemen who were holding Doctor Whitehurst. “Take him down to the station.”

Doctor Whitehurst was led away, his face expressionless as a surgical mask. Eileen fumbled in her bag when she found herself alone in the room with the three men. She drew out a crumpled letter and handed it to Conway.

“Read it,” she said.

Conway’s eyes traveled swiftly over the sheet.

He glanced up as he finished reading.

“This appears to be a very intimate love letter from Mrs. Harvey to Doctor Whitehurst,” he remarked. “Where and when did you get this?”

“When we were visiting them last summer,” Eileen answered. “I picked this up where the colored boy, who Mrs. Harvey and the doctor used as a messenger, dropped it. I kept it to salve my own conscience I told myself that I was not hurting her. Rex’s love for her was dead long ago—just as he is now. I didn’t know the doctor had killed him but I suspected he might have done it.” She looked pleadingly at her husband. “Oh, Bill, I’ve been such a fool!”

“The set-up tonight was too good for Whitehurst to pass up,” Conway said. “With any kind of a break for him, either you, Winston, Major Bloodworth, or Mrs. Harvey could have been convicted of his crime. He was so sure of himself he insisted upon an investigation, figuring this attitude would naturally keep anybody from suspecting him.”

“It nearly did,” Bill said. “When I found it looked as if I was going to be one of the main suspects, I knew I had to work fast. I remember the way Rex was always boasting about the secret compartment in that trick chair. Then when I noticed the compartment wasn’t open I decided the police hadn’t looked there, so I pushed the button that opened it.”

“Good thing you did,” said Conway. “It solved the case.”

“Sure,” Bill Winston took his wife by the arm and possessively led her toward the door. “I’ve been pretty weak, but from now on I’m going to be a reformed character.” He looked hard at Eileen. “The next time I catch you making sheep eyes at another man I’m going to give you a good crack in the jaw. Remember that!”

“Yes, Bill.” There was a new note of respect in Eileen’s voice. “I’ll remember, darling.”

Best Mystery Novels by Famous Authors in DETECTIVE NOVEL MAGAZINE and THRILLING MYSTERY NOVEL—Each 15c at all stands!

---

**Backache, Leg Pains May Be Danger Sign Of Tired Kidneys**

If backache and leg pains are making you miserable, don’t just complain and do nothing about them. Nature may be warning you that your kidneys need attention.

The kidneys are Nature’s chief way of taking excess acids and poisonous waste out of the blood. They help most people pass about 3 pints a day.

If the 15 miles of kidney tubes and filters don’t work well, poisonous waste matter stays in the blood. These poisons may start nagging backaches, rheumatic pains, leg pains, loss of pep and energy, getting up nights, swelling, puffiness under the eyes, headaches and dizziness. Frequent or scanty passages with smarting and burning sometimes shows there is something wrong with your kidneys or bladder.

Don’t wait! Ask your druggist for Doan’s Pills, used successfully by millions for over 40 years. They give happy relief and will help the 15 miles of kidney tubes flush out poisonous waste from the blood. Get Doan’s Pills.

(Adv.)
Detective Rainbow Crane Discovers That a Loud Suit
Can Sometimes Make as Big a Noise as a Roaring Gun!

In the books, Matty Crane was listed as a "plainclothesman." That was the biggest joke the boys at Precinct 62 ever heard. Matty Crane was partial to bright colors. A rainbow appeared in the sky once, took one look at Matty's new suit and had a nervous breakdown. From then on the boys named him "Rainbow" Crane.

One day in early fall, Crane checked in at the precinct and repaired to Inspector Nolan's office for instructions. Nolan, a gray-haired, tired-looking career cop, glanced up from the papers on his desk. He shuddered and hastily averted his gaze.

Today Rainbow Crane was wearing a sports jacket which had been advertised as a "Glen Urquhart" plaid. It was a daring combination of gray, blue and tan squares with an overlay of bilious orange stripes. Tastefully scattered throughout were dashes of green, yellow, red and blue intermingled. With it he wore fawn-colored doeskin slacks,
brown and white shoes and a snappy green felt hat. His tie—Inspector Nolan felt one of his headaches coming on! It was a blazing yellow, with huge red poppies clustered generously on the field.

Nolan passed his hand over his eyes and tried to collect his thoughts.

"Sit over there," he muttered. "And pull down the shade. Where was I?"

"You sent for me. Remember?" Crane said. He didn’t think it was funny, all the cracks about his clothes. Even if the rest of the force had no taste they ought to admire a bold and unconventional mind.

"Uh—yes. I sent for you. Yes, that’s right. Lou Huber got out of jail this morning."

"I know."

"What are you planning to do?"

"Me? Am I supposed to have plans?"

"Don’t play dumb. We both know Huber killed Jerry and Jerry was your partner. I repeat. What are you going to do?"

Crane looked stolidly out the window.

"The jury said Huber was innocent," he said, at last.

"They had to—there was no proof. But Huber killed him all right and you’ve kept your lip buttoned up so tight that—well, I know you, Rainbow. I know you’re not going to let this pass. Now let me warn you."

"Yes sir," Crane said automatically.

"Don’t do anything foolish. In fact—" Nolan’s expression grew optimistic—"you don’t have to move. Huber is crooked. Just wait and he’s bound to pull something. Then you’ll have him—legally. But if you go out to knock him off in revenge, you’ll ruin yourself. Now I shouldn’t have to tell you this, Crane. You know it as well as I." He raised his eyes, got the full shock of Crane’s necktie and recoiled.

"Ah, that tie, Rainbow. Where did you get it?"

CRANE looked at him suspiciously.

"This?" Nolan’s eyes were so limpid and honest Crane was deceived. "Just a little thing Warren makes up for me. If you want some I’ll have him hold a couple just like it for you."

"No, don’t!" Inspector Nolan looked horrified. "I just wanted to know so I could warn my wife. It was Warren’s, you say," He pretended to grow angry. "Haberdashery, my eye! Such ties are against the law. That store is a menace. Joints like that ought to be raided."

Rainbow Crane’s face had flushed but, by an effort, he kept his temper.

"That’s a skookum tie," he insisted. "He heaved himself out of his chair, walked across the room and preened the offending scarf before a small mirror on the wall. Soon afterward Nolan dismissed him.

At ten to eleven that night Crane had checked out of the precinct and was walking north. A clock on the Insurance Building was just striking eleven as Crane turned into an alley which was a short cut to a restaurant on the next block. The short order cook made up a fresh batch of coffee at eleven for the late movie trade and Crane usually got a cup before going home.

It was dark in the alley but he knew the route by heart and didn’t hesitate. A truck went by in the street outside, its motor coughing. Then it began to backfire and the fusillade was deafening. In the midst of that racket there was a single report which sounded as though it came from further down the alley, from the courtyard in the back.

Only a trained ear would have caught it. Crane lifted up his feet and trotted down the alley. The courtyard was a dirty, littered place toward which the buildings presented their rears contemptuously. From the dirty window of a small jewelry store, whose littered storeroom abutted upon the courtyard, a feeble gleam of light came partway into the dark.

Against this glow, Crane saw the fence which separated the court from the next yard. And silhouetted against this fence was the dark figure of a man, with a gun in his hand. At his feet was something which resembled a mound of old clothes, but which the detective instinctively knew was a human body.

Faster than he had ever drawn a weapon in his life, Crane flipped open his plaid coat to yank his service pistol from its holster.

"Drop it!" he warned. "Drop it or I’ll shoot!"

The figure dropped the gun. But instead of standing still, the shadowy man ducked, wheeled out of the light and charged for the fence.

"Stop!" Crane yelled. He fired one shot over the escaping man’s head.

The fugitive had leaped to the top of the fence like a squirrel and was actually swinging himself over as Crane raced toward him. But with the shot he seemed to lose heart. Instead of going on over, he climbed back, let go all holds and dropped back on the same side, near Rainbow.

Crane grabbed him, slammed him up against the fence and held him there, pinned by the pressure of the gun muzzle in his stomach while his left hand did a rapid frisk. The man was clean.

Crane stepped back, fumbled out a penlight and snapped it on.

"Denny Boulton," he said. "Who’d you knock off, Denny?"

The gunman gave him an old time movie sneer.

"Nobody," he said. "The stiff was layin’ here when I come through."

"And what were you doing standing over
him with a gun in your hand? Waiting for a street car?"

"I ain't talkin'," "Who is it, Denny?" Crane asked. "Anybody we know?"

Denny almost laughed outright.

"Friend of yours, copper. Lou Huber."

While Crane reeled under that, Boulton added his next remarks with relish.

"Deader'n a mackerel. Slug right through his head."

Crane pulled himself out of his confusion with a jerk. He got out handcuffs and snapped them on Boulton's wrists.

"I'm going to turn you over to a harness bull," he said. The dead man would keep a few minutes until he returned. He led Boulton out through the alley toward the street.

Sirens whined and a patrol car flashed past as they came out on the street, but it was gone before Crane could yell. Then a patrolman came around the corner at a run and Crane hailed him.

"'Lo, Rainbow," the cop puffed. "Got a flash there's been a shooting. Who's this?"

"Denny Boulton and he done it." Crane jerked his thumb over a shoulder. "You'll find the corpus delicti in the court behind Resnick's Jewelry store. He looked at Boulton and changed his plan. "You go on in and look things over—and find the gun. It's laying there some place. I'm going to take Denny in myself."

A CAB brought them to headquarters and Crane marched Denny up to the desk.

"Denny Boulton," Crane said to the desk sergeant. "Book him for murder. I think he ought to get a medal before he gets the hot seat. It was Lou Huber he killed."

"I demand justice," Denny Boulton said. "I didn't kill nobody."

"Not much," Crane sniffed. "I found him standing over the stiff with a gun in his hand."

"It's a frame," Boulton said loudly. "He didn't find me standing over no body. Listen, Sarge, it was like this: Me and Huber was walking down the street minding our own business when I hear a shot, and Lou takes a dive on his kisser. I look around and here's this fancy-pants cop chasing for me. He had his roscoe all set to go and I had a funny feeling he was gonna use it first and ask questions second, so I lammed."

"I run down the alley with him after me. When he gets ready to cut loose with the roscoe I figgers I better stop. He hauls me in and says I killed Lou Huber. It's a frame, Sarge. Huber was my best friend!"

Crane had let him talk without interruption. Now he drew a deep breath.

"Book him for Bellevue Psychopathic if you like, Sarge. But my story goes."

To his surprise, the desk sergeant said nothing. His face showed no expression. He reached for his phone and called Nolan. The inspector came out promptly. Boulton turned on a torrent of words and again Crane let him talk. Nolan looked puzzled.

"It's no good, Denny," Crane said at last. "Your story smells. I sent Tom Riordan into the court before we got the cab. He's found Huber's body and he's found your gun laying there. Ballistics will tell us in ten minutes the slug in Huber's head came from your gun."

Nolan looked at him queerly. "Did you examine the body, Crane?"

"No, sir. Nobody could have looked deader and besides Denny himself told me Huber was shot through the head. I sent Riordan back when I got a cab to bring Denny here."

"You're a rat, copper!" Denny Boulton said loudly. "I know you hated Lou Huber, but puttin' a slug through the back of his head is dirty. You'll burn for it, not me!"

Crane closed his mouth. He turned to Nolan expecting to see amusement on the inspector's face and met again that maddeningly blank expression.

"Hold Boulton," Nolan said. "Crane, come into my office."

Puzzled, Crane followed. Inside, Nolan sat down wearily at his desk.

"Let's see your gun," he said.

"What?"

"Sorry, Rainbow. I've got to check Boulton's claim."

Wordlessly, Crane drew his pistol and passed it across. Nolan broke the gun and glanced in.

"There's one shot missing," Rainbow said stiffly. "The one I fired in the air to stop Denny. Now am I under arrest?"

"Oh, don't get huffy," Nolan said tiredly. "Don't you think I believe you rather than that little rat?"

"Then what's this all about?"

Nolan slid the gun into his desk drawer. He looked up, got an eyeful of Crane's suit and hastily averted his eyes.

"Riordan phoned in before you got here," he said. "There was no body in the courtyard, no gun."

"Then the stiff was snatched. Somebody carted it away."

"Maybe. Lou Huber's body was found on the sidewalk halfway down the block. The slug that killed him went on through and can't be found. So ballistics can't check the bullet against your gun or Denny Boulton's gun."

"It's a frame," Rainbow said, wetting his lips. "They knew how I felt about Huber so they switched things."

"In addition," Nolan went on quietly, as though he hadn't heard Crane speak, "there are witnesses, at least six, who saw the man who killed Lou Huber."
"Then what are we waiting for?" Crane snapped. "Let's see them and see if they put the finger on me!"
Nolan pushed a call button. A policeman came in.
"Get five or six plain clothes detectives and line them up in the inspection room right away. Call me when you're ready."

THERE was silence then in the inspector's office. Nolan drummed with his fingers on the desk. Crane mopped his face and watched Nolan's fingers. Rainbow wondered why all the members of the force had grown so antagonistic toward him. The phone rang and Nolan answered.
"All right," he said to Crane.
"Inspector," the detective began, "you don't believe I did this?"
"No. Of course I don't. But we've got to go through with the identification, then we can write it off. Too many people know you had reason to hate Lou Huber—and wanted to get him. You've got to be cleared."

In the inspection room the row of detectives awaited them. Crane wedged himself into the line. Then the door opened and a woman came in. She looked down the line, walked directly to Crane and pointed a bony finger into his face.
"That's the man," she said excitedly. "I saw him!"
Nolan's face became grim. Crane felt his heart congeal into a lump of ice and go sliding down inside his fancy coat toward his still fancier shoes.

Two eighteen-year-old boys came in next and put the finger unerringly on him.
"That's the man," one said. "He's a yellow killer. He waited until them fellers went past. Then he stepped out of a doorway and let one of the fellers have it right in the back of the head. We was right across the street and seen the whole thing."

Crane's knees were going rubbery. No reputation, no faith in him could withstand this kind of direct eyewitness evidence. He had a motive for killing Lou Huber, he was being positively identified by witnesses as the man who had killed him. His own story was going to look pretty thin and feeble against all this.

He walked back to Nolan's office with the inspector.
"So I am arrested now," he said.
Nolan looked unhappy.
"What else can I do now? I'd hoped they wouldn't identify you. Anything else might be squelched. But we can't fool with a murder charge. Maybe you'd better come clean?"
"You, too?" Rainbow muttered.
He placed his hand gently in the middle of Nolan's back and as the inspector opened the door to his office, gave a mighty shove.

Nolan went through the doorway as though shot from a cannon. He hit a chair, dived over it and skidded across the rug in a welter of flying furniture.

Rainbow Crane slammed the door shut and pelted down the corridor as hard as he could go. He skidded out a side exit, snagged a passing cab and ordered himself driven to the subway station. He took an uptown train, got off after a few stations and walked across town to another line where he took another train and went all the way downtown close to the section where he lived.

His move to escape had been the instinctive reaction of a trapped animal. Now he was beginning to think. He was in trouble, plenty of trouble. If he wanted to stave off capture a while longer the first thing to do would be to get rid of his distinguishing clothes. Any one of the 19,000 cops in New York would know him at sight.

He went by quiet side streets to within a block of his apartment house, then took to the backyards and finally reached a spot in an alley across the street where he could see his own front doorway. Parked halfway down the block was a green and white patrol car. Too late! The place was covered.

He slunk back in the alley and tried to think. His tailor! There was another suit there now, waiting for him, in fact. It wasn't either the modest, subdued tones he craved at the moment, but at least its description wasn't on the teletype and the radio.

Hugging the shadows, he made his way through the silent night streets. It took him almost an hour to cover the short distance but he had to duck and wait every time he saw a patrolman or a radio car.

Barrow's shop was dark, naturally. He scouted it thoroughly, to make sure Nolan hadn't thought of putting any bloodhounds around it. Then he stepped into the doorway and rang the nightbell. The tailor slept in the apartment in back and it was worth the risk of waking him.

He could hear the heavy ring of the bell but no one stirred in the building. Could Barrow be away? If so, he was sunk.

Without thinking, he tried the door. It swung open. His policeman's instinct made him reach for his hip, then he remembered his gun was back in Nolan's office. He pushed the door wide and stepped in.

His nostrils tingled to the acrid bite of gunpowder. Moving as fast as he could, he groped his way past the clothing racks, sewing machine and pressing device to the living quarters in the back. He found the light switch and pressed it.

HE WAS not surprised by what he found. Barrow lay on the floor, shot through the chest and quite dead. There was only a little blood. The room had been torn apart ruthlessly. Drawers of a desk were pulled out and dumped, papers, bills, receipts, scattered in wild confusion, a steel cashbox
smashed and its contents taken. There was a heavy steel safe in a corner of the room, but it was closed. Marks on the door suggested that the murderer had tried, but failed, to get it open.

Crane looked for and found the top drawer. There were faintly penciled numbers in the wood. Barrow had opened the safe once in his presence and consulted these numbers first, so he knew they were the combination. In a couple of minutes the steel door swung back. Crane touched nothing except Barrow's customer ledger which contained the complete record of the pattern and cloth of every purchaser and every suit for the year.

It took an hour, but at the end of that time Crane had stumbled upon two items which were familiar. One was the name Jack Sutro, which belonged to a two-bit, but ugly gunman of his acquaintance. The other was "Glen Urquhart" which now bore equally

lock. It was of the type common to all fourth-rate hotels. It could be opened by almost any skeleton key. Crane, a practical man, possessed such a key and a moment later he was sliding noiselessly into the warm, odoriferous room.

Jack Sutro snored, grunted in his sleep. Crane let a tiny circle of light from his pencil flash stab the room. It was untidy and littered. A closet door was ajar and the light revealed empty hangers. But on the floor of the closet was a bulging laundry bag. Crane opened it and, for the first time since he had been identified as a murderer, smiled broadly.

He turned on the bed lamp, saw Sutro twitch and groan in the sudden light. Considerably, he aided the waking process by sitting on Sutro's stomach.

"Oof! What—what—ugh, get off—hey!"
The man's eyes snapped open. He stared

unpleasant memories for him. Taken together they spelled a dirty tale.

He copied Sutro's address and spent the next twenty minutes trying on dark suits until he found one that fitted. Once or twice he was halted by a particularly dazzling design which, in spite of his trouble, he could not help but pause to admire. However, he had little difficulty in resisting temptation and finally got into a dark blue. With an old felt hat that had evidently belong to Barrow, he thought he was pretty well disguised.

The night was warm. Although it was past two in the morning when Rainbow Crane left the tailor shop, the ubiquitous New Yorker was still sitting on the front steps inhaling the second-hand air. Crane walked boldly down the middle of the sidewalk, no longer seeking shadows. No one noticed him, even a patrolman whom he could have touched as he went by.

Sutro's address turned out to be a frowzy fourth-rate hotel with unwashed windows and begrimed curtains. The clerk slumbered at his desk. Without arousing him, Crane tiptoed by and walked up four flights to the room given in Barrow's files.

Through the flimsy door came the sound of peaceful snoring. Crane examined the

incredulously into Crane's menacing glare only two feet away.

"One yip and I'll blow the top of your head off," Crane promised in a nasty voice, shoving the end of the pencil flash under Sutro's jaw. He knew that the man couldn't see what was in his hand at that angle.

The mobster, a wiry, evil-faced runt, licked suddenly dry lips.

"Whaddaya want? Dough?"

Crane shook his head.

"Don't you recognize me, Sutro? I'm Rainbow Crane."

That registered, he knew, by the flicker in Sutro's eyes.

"Didn't know you in that disguise," Sutro mumbled. "Whaddaya want with me?" He sneered a little. "Your pals are hunting you. Want me to hide you?"

"Don't play dumb, Sutro. This is a pinch. For murder."

"I'm laughing," Sutro said. "You ain't pinching nobody. You ain't even a cop no more."

Quick as a striking snake, his hand darted under the pillow. Crane saw the gun coming out. He merely dropped his penlight, bunched his knuckles and struck. The blow traveled about four inches. But it carried
a large measure of Crane’s worry and anger and hate. It put a glaze on Sutro’s eyes, make his teeth click like billiard balls.

The fingers that clutched the gun butt went limp. Crane helped himself to the gun, stood up with it in his fingers. He waited while Sutro shook some sense back into his skull.

“Get up,” Crane said thinly. He gestured with the gun at the suit he had laid out on a chair, a “Glen Urquhart” plaid of gray, blue and tan squares with an overlay of bilious orange stripes and tastefully scattered dashes of green, yellow, red and blue. There were fawn colored doeskin slacks, brown and white shoes and a snappy green felt hat. There was even a tie—blazing yellow, with huge red poppies generously clustered on the yellow field.

“Put it on,” Crane said.

Sutro regarded the suit with horror, which he strove at once to conceal.

“Them? Why should I? They ain’t mine. I never seen them before. I don’t want to go to no masquerade this time of night.”

“You’ve been to a masquerade, Sutro. This is midnight for you—unmasking. Move or I’ll knock you cold and dress you myself.”

His voice told Sutro he wasn’t going to stand for any more stalling. Cowed, but surly and defiant, the gangster edged his skinny shanks out of bed and dressed as slowly as he dared. When he had finished Crane looked him over, sighed as he thought how much better those beautiful patterns looked on himself and motioned to the door.

“Let’s go. And take some advice. Don’t give me an excuse to blast your backbone in two because I’d love it.” By way of emphasis he rammed the gun muzzle three or four inches deep into Sutro’s back.

They went down the stairs and into the lobby. The dozing night clerk looked up, caught the full impact of Sutro’s clothes and choked. He was paralyzed, with his mouth open, unable to move or speak while they paraded through the lobby and out the door.

On the street, Crane flagged a night cruising taxicab and shoved his prisoner in.

“I’m almost sorry you didn’t make a break, Sutro,” Crane said as they moved across town. “Just for Nick Barrow’s sake. Remember Nick Barrow, the tailor?”

“I dunno what you’re talking about,” Sutro mumbled.

“No? Listen, mug. I’ll give you a break. Spill the works on Denny Boulton and I’ll take the frame off your neck, or at least make it a little looser.”

“You’re outa your head,” Sutro muttered.

The cab slid into the curb a block from the alley where Crane’s night adventure had begun. They disembarked, Sutro looking around him nervously and waited while the cab pulled away.

“Last chance, Sutro,” Crane said. “Will you talk?”

“You got nothing on me,” Sutro said.

Crane stared at him, sighed, shrugged his shoulders.

“So it was a bluff and it didn’t work. Okay, Sutro, I’ve got nothing on you. Scram.”

“Are you kidding? You drag me all the way over here just to tell me that? You’re nuts, copper.”

“Yeah,” Crane turned his back and started to walk away.

Sutro wheeled and ran down the street, looking eagerly for a cab. At the sound of his feet, Crane came back, watching.

There was a yell, then a woman’s scream.

“There he is!”

“The killer—there goes the killer!”

Sutro’s head jerked, he gave an almost inarticulate snarl of fear and began to run. His evident panic produced a sudden courage in the citizenry. Men sprang from front stoops and gave chase. The pursuit went down the block, Sutro sprinting madly, the men giving tongue like hounds after a fox.

They caught him at the corner, dragged him down and were pounding him lustily when the first police whistle shrilled and the first patrolman raced up. Almost as though staged, a patrol car flashed around the corner, screamed to a stop and Inspector Nolan piled out.

“We got him!” the hunters chorused.

“Hey, we got your killer for you!”

Nolan pushed through, hauled Sutro to his feet.

“Wait a minute! Quiet, everybody!”

The excited clamor died down.

“Are you sure this is your man?”

“Sure, that’s the rat!”

“That’s him! I’d know that face anywhere!”

“Listen!” Nolan yelled. “You identified a man at the police station tonight as the killer. He escaped. Is this the same man?”

“Sure, it’s the same man!”

“What are you giving us, Inspector? Think we’re kids? Sure that’s the same guy! Could anybody miss up on that kiss-er?”

Men in the crowd hooted scornfully.

“See, Inspector?” Crane tapped Nolan on the shoulder.

The Inspector turned completely around nervously.

“You! Where’d you come from, Rainbow?” Nolan’s voice was mild, friendly. He even grinned at Crane. “I kind of expected to find you here.” Then he asked: “See what?”

“It’s obvious. Your witnesses were identifying a suit of clothes, not a man. They never really looked at me.”

“That,” said Nolan grimly, “has now be-
come obvious. And it's your own fault, Rainbow. You would wear those clothes." He
turned his attention to the cringing gangster.
"All right, Sutro, you're in a nice spot. Got
anything to say?"
"Denny killed him!" Sutro gasped. "Not
me. Denny did it I tell you!"
"Why?"
"Denny and Huber were partners in a
stickup. Huber went up the river and Den-
ny was supposed to sit on the dough. He
spent it and he knew what Huber would do
to him when he got out. So he fixed up
this stunt for knocking off Huber."
"Simple," Crane said. "Sutro went to my
 tailor, Barrow, and had him make up a suit
just like mine. He waited for Denny to de-
coy Huber to this neighborhood, probably
on a fake search for the hidden money. When
they got down here, one of them, probably
Denny, shot Huber. Then Sutro ran so that
witnesses would see him apparently escaping.
Denny waited for me in the courtyard where
they knew I'd come through.
"The shot I heard was to attract my at-
tention. It came after the actual murder
but was masked from the people who had
run for cover by now, in the backfiring of
a truck—also a plant. They knew I'd make
a perfect scapegoat because I had reason
to hate Huber."
"Denny done it!" Sutro babbled. "I only
wore the suit to help him out. Denny killed
Huber, not me!"
"And you killed Nick Barrow," Crane said.
"You killed him to get the record of another
suit like mine being made for you. You got
his bills, but you missed up on the ledger
in his safe. And that was a mistake that's
going to be a little expensive for you, Jackie
boy."
After Sutro had been taken away, Nolan
faced Rainbow Crane with some embarras-
sment.
"This is not much of an apology, consid-
ering the way we treated you tonight, but I
think you'll understand," he said. "I'm sor-
ry, Rainbow, but we couldn't do it any other
way. The New York Police Department
stands by its members. Our difficulty was
the mobsters behind the frame-up were alert
and suspicious and we had to put them off
guard. The boys who acted that way toward
you were instructed by me. It's lucky you
escaped—it fitted in with my plan. I wanted
you to work under cover. After you got
away, I sent out word you weren't to be
molested. One of the uniformed men recog-
nized you, later, in the blue suit, but he never
let on. I hope it's all right now."
Rainbow Crane grinned. "Sure, it's okay,
Inspector," he said. "I even doped out some-
thing like that after we pinched Sutro. I
was wondering why everybody got so hostile
after those mobsters pulled the frame-up.
Thanks a lot. No apology is needed." Then
his jaw hardened. "Hadn't we better get
over to Barrow's. There's another body wait-
ing for us, back of the tailor shop."
Rainbow Crane showed up at precinct
headquarters next morning in a suit which
made the desk sergeant spill the ink and
choke on his chewing tobacco.
Inspector Nolan, looking up innocently,
with a glad greeting on his lips, blanched and
bit his lip in a stern struggle for control.
"I was saving this for holidays," Rainbow
said, "but today's a special occasion."
"Crane," said Nolan warily. "Haven't you
had enough? Look at the trouble those suits
got you into?"
"Trouble?" said Crane, lifting an eyebrow.
"Why, Inspector, I figure just the opposite.
It was the suit that got me out of trouble.
It was the best protection I ever had. Like
a suit of armor." He looked down at him-
self. "Barrow would have been proud of this
if he could see it."
"What's in the package?" Nolan asked,
trying to change the subject.
"Present for you. Remember that tie I
was wearing? I decided to give it to you
as a memento of this case. Nicest tie I ever
had," he said regretfully.
He opened the box and laid the tie on
Nolan's desk. The red poppies blazed on
their yellow field.
Nolan rose from the chair, and Rainbow
Crane dashed to the door.
"Hey, sergeant!" he yelled. "Bring a glass
of water! The Inspector's having the jitters! I think he wants to kill me!"

Scratch your head*
and if you find ...
You've got dandruff
on your mind . . .

*THE FAMOUS
FINGER-NAIL
(F-N) TEST

GET WILDROOT
CREAM-OIL
GROOMS THE HAIR—RELIEVES DRYNESS
REMOVES LOOSE DANDRUFF

contains LANOLIN
WELCOME HOME, SUCKER

By JOE ARCHIBALD

Paroled from prison, Jimmy Rohan is caught in a murder snare while following the grim trail of hidden loot!

I'm getting out tomorrow. I won't have to look at this rotten cell any more. It is seven feet long and four and a half wide, and has a wash basin painted green, a stool and bunk with three dusty blankets and a burlap mat.

I'm not mad at anybody, not even Detective "Mitch" Hardesty, who was really the cause of my being sent here for from three-to-ten. I'd told Mitch that when I finished my rap I would fix his wagon but good.

A guy says a lot of things sometimes that he doesn't mean.

I can't wait until I see Nora. How that girl has fought to get me the parole! One in a million, my baby!

We'll go to a nice, quiet joint and celebrate. I can already feel my cheek against her long black hair. She kept coming to see me for the last three years. Been doing all right, too. Got her own little hat shop on a swell street.

You can bet your last red point that Jimmy Rohan won't ever make a return trip to this heap of stone. Easy dough? Huh! There's no such stuff.

For a couple of years I thought there was. Things went nice and pretty until they sent Mitch Hardesty to the West Side.

He got me cold one night while I was getting furs out of a loft. He took me to Headquarters and sweated two other jobs out
of me. Mitch also roughed me up some. I was still burning about that for six months after I came to this prison.

Nora used to drive the big sedan for the mob. The night Hardesty caught up with us, she had a pretty bad cold and was home in bed. They got nothing on my baby.

The day I said goodbye at the railroad station, I knew from the way she looked at me that she would play everything straight from then on. She would never have gone alone with the boys in the first place if she had not fallen for me so hard.

Now I'm on top of the world. I can see a little rectangle of purple sky from this cell. Tomorrow night I'll climb a roof and look at all the stars in the world again. With Nora.

Maybe I'll invite Dave Randau to have a couple of drinks with us. I went to school with Dave. I guess I can thank him for getting me out a little ahead of time, too. It is nice to have a lawyer friend like Dave Randau.

Sure, I'll even blow Mitch Hardesty, the copper, to a drink when I meet him. "Mitch, let me buy you a stiff one. I'm the guy you straightened out and maybe saved from the chair."

There goes the old prison signal again. The bars are sliding into place now, and we're all locked in for the night. The last time for me. I'll hear the train whistle outside the big wall about ten o'clock. Tomorrow, I'll be sitting on plush. I'll eat a steak as big as a horse, war or no war.

I'll get a little drunk!

NORA and Dave Randau met me outside. What a welcome it was!

They took me to a hotel and gave me a suitcase full of clothes. The duds were a little tight for me. Can you imagine a guy taking on weight in stir? The funniest things do happen.

"You must be feelin' pretty good, Jimmy," Randau said in the hotel room when I kissed Nora again.

She looked prettier than ever. She wore a short, fur coat over a nifty gray suit. She'd done her hair up different, an upsweep. It made her look older, and made me feel twice as old as I am.

"Why wouldn't I feel good?" I held Nora off a little to look at her. "Peaches and cream," I said. "What kind of hats have they been makin' the last couple of years, though? Let's get a drink."

"Not yet, Jimmy," Nora said. "When we get back to town. There's a train in about an hour. We thought it would be nice to stop here for a while, and let you get your bearings."

"I'll never get lost again." I poked Dave Randau in the ribs and did a dance step or two. I grabbed Nora and circled the room once.

"What is the job you got for me, Dave?"

"Not too big to start. Jimmy. In a garage, for a trucking company. A dispatcher. You can't expect to own the business too quick."

"Give me a year," I said and kissed Nora again.

I was not going to tell her yet about my talk with Fleck Maslin. Fleck had been in the same cell with me for nearly five months. The little guy had done six years when I got into the big house. He had a bad cough. The jute mill did not do it any good.

One day they took Fleck away to "pogey," about a week or ten days after I had saved him from a knitting out in the yard. They took him away while I was in the prison library. When I got back to the cell, I found a dirty, sealed envelope under the mattress where I kept my sack of makings.

I made sure none of the "screws" were around when I opened the note. At first, I thought I was seeing things.

This Fleck Maslin said he was going to die and he didn't have anybody outside he cared a darn about. I looked like a nice guy, he had written.

There was close to ten grand stashed under the boards of a closet in a small flat on the West Side in the big city. The cops had forgotten all about where it came from. It was all mine for the taking.

Fleck died the next day.

I tore the address out of the sheet of paper, and burned the rest of it in the basin. I have a rotten memory.

So here I was going to make a nice stake. Sure, I'd own part of that garage in a year. Then maybe I'd tell Nora how come I made good so fast in business. Right at the moment, I was not sure how she'd feel about it.

"I saw Hardesty this morning," Dave Randau told me.

"Yeah?"

"He said for me to tell you something, Jimmy. Keep your nose clean during the parole period because, if you don't, he will send you up for plenty on top of what you did not serve."

"Good old Mitch," I said. "I bet it'll burn him if I stay legit."

We took the train back to the big town.

The bright lights never looked prettier. We went right up to her old address, and I saw right away that Nora had fixed it up but good.

New furniture and thick rugs and drapes that cost real dough. Yes, she had been doing fine. I settled into an easy chair and tried to get used to the luxury. I thought of being in "solitary" that time, with nothing but a hard bunk and a galvanized, lye-treated pail in the cell.

"Pretty snooty, Nora," I grinned. "Who said it doesn't pay to be honest?"

"I'm glad you like it, Jimmy," Nora said. "Excuse me, won't you? I must get into something more comfortable. You and Dave have a drink."

"I could use one," I said.
I’d never been much of a soak, even in the wild days. It interferes with work. I never could handle the stuff, anyway. But this was a night to celebrate.

“Here’s to you, Jimmy,” Randau said, handing me a stiff one.

I took it easy. Then the lawyer said Nora had arranged a coming-home party with a few people.

“Any of my old friends?”

“One or two, Jimmy,” Randau said. “Auggie Dern and Harry Frissel. They’re nice boys now. Work in the war plants.”

“My friends? Auggie? Harry?”

I took another sip at the rye. Auggie Dern was a spiteful little cuss, who always hated my stomach ever since the time I had to slug him over a split on a tire job. Harry Frissel used to be very thick with Nora in the old days. The fact is, I stole Nora from Harry.

“Ought to be a nice party,” I remarked.

It was.

There was Nora and me, Dave Randau, Auggie and his little blonde, Harry and a dame who looked like a poor man’s Grable. There were two other guys I never met before.

We drank the place dry and did some dancing. The last thing I remember was Nora telling me to lie down for a while. I never could handle the stuff. This time I knew I was going out.

I WOKE up in the morning on the couch, with a terrible taint in my mouth and a head that felt as if it had been insulated with steel wool.

I couldn’t think too clearly. The room was a mess as it swarmed around. Ash trays filled with butts, glasses and bottles. I sat up when Nora came in. Her eyes looked big and scared.

“Where did you go, Jimmy?” she asked me.

“What do you mean, where did I go? No place but here.”

“No? Look at your shoes,” she said. “They were nicely polished last night. It rained about ten o’clock and did not stop until early this morning. Look at your hat and your raincoat.”

I got up, feeling as if cold fingers were tracing along my spine. The scare was knocking a lot of the fumes of the liquor out of my skull.

“I couldn’t have gone out,” I said. “I passed out.”

“You did go out,” Nora said. “We put you in the bedroom when you caved in. When Dave went in there later, you were gone. The window was open. I sent Auggie out to look for you. He came back and said he could see no sign of you.”

I started thinking fast.

Sure, lots of guys have done things when they were so drunk they didn’t remember. A sleepwalker can even make the rounds of the neighborhood, and get back to bed without knowing it. I went into the bedroom and looked out the back window. Nora’s little apartment was only one flight up. A man could leave by the fire escape, all right.

“Think,” Nora said. “Jimmy, what happened?”

I went back to the living room. My shoes were near an easy chair. A lot of the shine was off them, and there was mud on the soles. My brown felt hat had been wet. The raincoat was thrown over a chair-back.

Then something came to me. A kind of nightmare I’d had. I had been running around the streets, yet it really had not been me. The buildings all around looked like they were under water.

There were a lot of faces all around, and they kept changing shape as if they were in one of those amusement park crazy mirrors. One of them was in my mind’s eye now.

Mitch Hardesty!

I looked at Nora.

“You don’t think I outsmarted myself?”

Nora handed me something. I had not seen the thing for three years. She told me she got it out of my raincoat pocket. It was a blackjack, and there was blood on it.

I remembered Nora hiding the jack when Hardesty came to talk to me one night.

I looked at Nora. I could figure what she was thinking.

“You fool!” she suddenly exclaimed.

“I couldn’t have gone out and done a job!”

I cried.

Nora did not say anything. She just looked at me.

Sure, that was the way it seemed all right.

“What time is it?” I asked.

“Eight o’clock,” Nora replied.

I went a little crazy. I grabbed Nora and told her she ought to have known enough not to fill me full of booze. She should have watched me every minute. I pushed her away from me, and she fell against the divan. I had to get out. Whether I had been in possession of my right senses or not last night, it wouldn’t matter with the cops. I grabbed my hat and coat, put them on and got into the muddy shoes.

“Jimmy, if you run away, they’ll be sure to suspect.”

I looked at Nora.

“You sure believe it, don’t you?” I said.

“You’re sure of it.”

“What else could have happened? Look, Jimmy, let’s face it.”

“I haven’t a chance,” I said. “You know it. I want all the dough you can give me, and quick!”

“All right, Jimmy.”

She got her bag, dug into it, and came up with a bunch of bills. I grabbed them and went out of there, but not by the front way.

I dropped off the fire escape, scaled a fence, came out on the next block, and then went into a subway.
I did not know where I was going. I wasn’t thinking too clearly. All that mattered at the time was that the chair was waiting for me, if what I thought was true. Then I remembered I had not taken the blackjack. But I couldn’t go back.

There was a place I remembered uptown, where a guy could hide out. It was a cheap hotel run by a man with plenty of law violations behind him. For dough, he would hide Hitler away.

It was about nine o’clock when I got there. There were a couple of morning newspapers on an old table in the second-floor lobby. I grabbed one up. There was nothing about a murder in it.

“I want a room,” I said to Lew Fraser. “I don’t want no visitors.”

“Rates are high,” Fraser said.

“Sure. Here’s fifty bucks,” I snapped. “I get privacy?”

“Yeah,” he answered. “For a couple of weeks.”

“I got more dough comin’,” I said.

I took the key and went upstairs. I sat down on the bed and tried to reason it all out.

Only a few hours out of the big house and I had blood on my hands. I looked at them, but they were clean. Even so, I washed them in the basin.

I must have gone out of the apartment, all right. I was one of those drinkers who can be blotto and still move around without knowing my brain is working.

I must have met Mitch Hardesty and slugged him. A subconscious mind? It would be nice, I thought, if a guy could have one while he was burning.

I kept back-tracking inside my head. The last I remembered about the party was that I was as happy as a lark and not mad at a single person or thing.

Yes, you’d have thought Nora would have watched me close after being away from me three years. She had taken only a couple of drinks. She’d danced a lot, mostly with Dave Randau. But I had always been a rotten dancer.

I had to stop thinking.

TWO hours later, the news came out. I read it in the first edition of an evening paper, when I sneaked out to the street to get something to eat.

The cops had found Mitch Hardesty in an arcaway near a tavern on the upper East Side. His skull had been stoved in.

The cops were looking for a guy who had just been paroled. His name was Jimmy Rohan. That made me forget about being hungry.

When I went back to the hotel, Fraser looked at me out of the corner of his eyes. I was in my room fighting the jitters when he knocked on the door.

I told him to come in.

“I was reading yesterday where you got out, Rohan,” Fraser began.

“That so?”

“I need some dough, Jimmy,” he said.

“I understand. You’ll get your dough.”

I felt icy fingers down my spine again. You’re never safe when you’re hot, not even from the crooks. I had to get out of town, and there was only one way to get out.

Just after Fraser closed the door behind him and I was sure he’d gone downstairs, I grabbed my hat and poked inside the sweatband. I wanted to make sure of an address. The number was there all right.

It would take a little time to get Fleck’s dough. Somebody would be in that flat, maybe some mug worrying about the rent. It was funny. Ten grand under the floor of a closet!

The sweat began oozing out of me. What if that building had been torn down?

I had to take a chance and play hare-and-hounds with the cops. One Shaemus from Headquarters in particular would be after me with all he had, day and night. Al Ford had been a good pal of Mitch Hardesty.

The dragnet for me would soon be out. The police teletypes would be clicking from here to hellangonce. Maybe Al was talking with Nora now. But he wouldn’t get that blackjack. Nora was used to handling cops, even though she was a little out of practice.

Around midnight, I slipped downstairs, and Lew Fraser called to me. He was leaning against the wall near the door of the dim lobby.

“Taking a powder, Jimmy?”

“I got to get the dough, don’t I?” I demanded.

“Not tonight, pal. I got a tip that the cops are on the way here. Get down in the cellar. There’s a lot of old boxes you can hide under. Make it fast. I was just on the way up to warn you, pal.”

“Okay.” The sweat that came out of me was like ice against my skin.

I went down to the cellar. A little while later, I heard cops moving up and down the stairs and along the corridors. I guess they did not bother to look in the cellar because it was in their minds that I must have left town.

A long time later, Fraser came down and said the coast was clear. The cops had searched every room.

“Why do you think Al Ford would come to a joint like this?” Fraser asked. “Jimmy Rohan would know they’d fine-comb every suspicious joint in town? Better lay low for a couple days, and then make a try for that dough.”

I did not leave my room for the next two days. I lived like a rat, eating whatever Fraser could rustle up. I could not sleep a wink, thinking of the corner of hell I’d got into.

Finally I made the try.
I left Fraser’s place one night about eight o’clock, figuring a hunted man has more chance during an hour when the streets are practically empty.

I ducked into a subway, expecting to hear Al Ford yell at me any moment, but I breathed easy and let my nerves loosen up when the car door finally slammed behind me.

I ducked my head down as far as it would go into the collar of my coat, and held a newspaper in front of my face. I felt as if every person in the car was trying to stare through the paper.

The place where Fleck Maslin had stashed his dough was on the West Side, in a dingy-looking tenement with fire escapes built outside. I went into the hallway and studied the piece of Fleck’s note under the one light that was burning. It said the flat was on the second floor in the back. I had to think of what I wanted to say to whoever occupied the place.

Settling on a certain tack, I walked up the creaky stairs. I was going to say that I had heard the place would be vacant soon and that I wanted first crack at it.

I knocked on a door and a little pinched-face girl about eleven years old opened up.

“I’d like to see your ma,” I said.

“She’s gone out,” the kid said, a little scared.

“I’m from the fire insurance company,” I said, shifting my strategy. “I got to look around.”

Sure, it was in my mind what I had to do. I’d tie something around the girl’s mouth and fix her so she could not move. I wouldn’t hurt her any.

“You folks be back soon?” I asked as I pushed my way in.

“Not until late,” the kid said.

I saw a little service flag hanging from the window screen. There were two stars on it.

“Got brothers in the Army, kid?”

“One is in the Navy and the other is in the Navy,” the kid said. “That is how ma and pa got free tickets to a show tonight on Broadway.”

“I don’t get it,” I said.

“A lady came this morning and gave them two tickets.” The kid’s eyes lighted up. “A very pretty lady. She said she was from the USO, and that they thought it would be nice to do something for the mothers and fathers of the boys who are in service. Like giving them tickets to shows and—”

“That is sweet,” I said, thinking of what a break this was.

I looked into the next room, guessed the closet would be there.

I was thinking of what to do with the kid when I happened to see a cigarette in an ashtray on the table.

It was stained with lipstick. I picked it up. I had seen plenty of butts not so long ago at my welcome-home party. The brand was the same. It was a brand of cigarette that had not been popular until the shortage came. I looked at the butt closer, wheels going around in my head. There was lastex in my knees.

“You got a sister, kid?”

She shook her head.

LUCKILY, the shade of lipstick on the cigarette got me. I remembered the new stuff Nora wore. It tasted good. “Pink Lightning”? she said they called it. I guessed I was going crazy.

“Was anybody with the girl who gave your folks the tickets?” I asked the girl.

“No.”

“Describe her to me.”

“She was pretty. Had long, black hair. She wore a short, fur coat, with a gold flower on it.”

The room started to get darker. The punch nearly floored me.

“I wish you’d go,” the kid said.

“Take it easy, baby,” I said.

I was walking around again, and it was not me. I saw buildings swimming around under water. I saw Hardesty’s twisted face. It all started to make some sense. I pieced some floundering thoughts together, and the picture I got was sickening.

“Is there a phone in here?”

“In the hall downstairs.”

“Lock the door,” I said. “Don’t let anybody in, you hear?”

The kid nodded.

I went downstairs and called Headquarters. It was funny, me talking to cops. They did not know who I was.

“Put Al Ford on,” I said.

I had to wait. I had time to think of Nora dancing with Dave Randau. For the first time, I tumbled to the fact that they’d danced pretty close. My hat? Randau had a little skull. My hat would be too big for him. I guess he could get my shoes on, all right.

Oh, he’d worn the hat!

“Detective Al Ford? Listen, this is just for you.”

“Hurry it up.”

“I’m Jimmy Rohan. I got to see you but quick. I know—I didn’t knock Hardesty off. Listen, here is where I am. You come alone. Don’t wait.”

I hung up. I went out on the steps, watching every car that came up, everybody that turned into the building. I wished I had a gun or even the blackjack.

A lot can happen in three years. A dame can go high hat and want the Randau type. I should have figured it while I was up there.

What a stunt! USO handing out tickets to parents of service men. Where was Al Ford? It must have been nine o’clock or a little after, just about the time the kid’s folks would be enjoying a big Broadway show.

Nice thinking, Nora, but the tickets were for the wrong night. Who said “Never the
twain shall meet?” Just the night I happened to pick, Nora picked.

A car came up. Al Ford got out. He was not too tall, but he was plenty broad. When he spotted me, his hand was close to his Police Positive.

“No need of that, Al.”

“Look, Rohan, what are you pulling?”

“Al, I was framed. Listen fast while I give you it to you. The breaks are with me for a wonder.”

Under the light in the dingy hallway, I showed him the piece of note paper, and told him how I happened to have it.

“Nobody knew but me, Al. Not unless somebody happened to find it in the sweat band of my hat. Randau saw my hat was too big for him, and padded it with cardboard or paper, and he happened across Fleck’s note.

“Wouldn’t you think fast if you found that in an ex-con’s hat? Right away it would look like buried treasure, Al. Most likely this Randau and his pals shook me up and asked me things which I answered through the booze fog. A guy blabs crazy when he’s jammed. He pretended to work on my side, and now I tumble he wanted Nora bad. I tumble to a lot of things.”

“We ain’t in the movies, Rohan,” Al snapped. “We found that blackjack at your place.”

“I can believe that now,” I said. “Look, they got me out like a light, and took my hat and coat and shoes. Some other guy killed Mitch Hardesty, not me, Al.”

Then I told him about the dame from the USO and the tickets.

“Well, what am I supposed to do now, Jimmy?”

“There’s nearly ten grand up there in the flat,” I said. “My trusting wife and her sweetie-pie are coming after it. Tonight. It looks like they are not only going to frame me for the chair but will get paid nicely for the work. They worked a smart trick getting the couple out of that flat for the night. Any minute now, Al. I’m taking everything on it.”

“Well, let’s go up there and get that dough. Who left it there, Jimmy?”

“Fleck Maslin. He died in the Big House. I figured he’d earned it after doing all those years. He wanted to win it to a friend.”

“Still a movie,” Al Ford said, but he followed me upstairs.

We are about to knock on the door of the flat when we heard somebody coming up the creaky risers. “In here,” I said, and pulled Al Ford into a smelly closet, where they kept mops and pails and insecticide.

We heard a knock, then a door opened, and I recognized the kid’s squeaky voice. It broke off quick and then there was a low scuffle. The door slammed.

“A movie, Al?” I growled. “Come on. You do a nice job on that door, pal.”

A L FORD hurled himself against the door, breaking the lock. We tumbled into the flat. There was a man there putting a gag on the little girl. Another man was going into the next room. It was Randau. He turned in a hurry. There was a gun in his hand.

Al Ford fired first. Randau jackknifed, went to his knees.

I recognized the guy who had been gagging the kid.

“Augie Dern!” I yelled, and went at him. Augie had a gun, too, but he did not get to use it. There was nothing in the world that could have stopped me at the moment.

I caught Augie in the jaw with my fist, and lifted him over a chair. I dove behind the chair, climbed aboard him and nearly ground his head through the old rug and the board floor of the room. I was still hitting Augie when Al Ford got to me.

“All right,” Jimmy, he said. “Leave some of him for the D.A.”

Al pulled me loose.

Dave Randau was not feeling too happy with the slug through his side. He was giving up a lot of vital sap! He yelled for a doctor. We saw to it that the little girl was taken to a flat across the way before we gave Randau his chance to talk.

“Let’s have it,” I told Randau. “Nora was in this up to her pretty neck, wasn’t she?”

Randau nodded.

I couldn’t say anything for a while. It was like somebody had hit me with a jack. I’d sure loved Nora.

Randau let loose and his story was pretty close to the one I told Al Ford downstairs. But after all, I’d only been guessing then.

It had been Augie, not Dave, who had slugged Mitch Hardesty. Augie had worn my hat, coat and shoes. Augie had been advised not to hit Hardesty too hard. Just enough to put him out. All the cops would naturally think Jimmy Rohan had done it. It would have been enough to send Jimmy Rohan back to the Big House for a long time.

But the cop had seen Augie just as the runt swung the jack. So Augie had to go all the way, or he would not have had a chance to spend some of the dough Randau had promised him.

They had not found the slip of paper in my hat until I—started blabbing about it while drunk as an owl.

“You kept saying, ‘In my hat,’” Randau told us. “Nora gave you another drink with a pill in it. You kept talking about ten grand in a closet. Your future was in your hat. It sounded crazy for awhile. Then we stopped laughing.”

“I must have been a scream,” I snapped. “Nora said, ‘Look in his hat!’”

“She was always pretty smart,” I said, and I enjoyed watching Randau suffer.

(Concluded on page 80)
TONY ARNOLD looked worried. Across the table from him was the young man who rented this office. His name was Hal Hollister and he was a slender, good-looking person of average height.

"Mr. Hollister, how did you ever get into such a mess?" Tony Arnold said.

Hollister grinned. He was down, but not exactly hugging the floor. One shoulder still remained off the mat, though there was terrific pressure upon it.

"Mess is the right word," he replied. "It began innocently enough. I had a girl friend who aspired to the movies and wanted me to help her get publicity. I did—and the racket turned out to be just my dish. Well—I had to make or break myself on what I could do for her so I put every nickel I had into it."

"Did she get to Hollywood?" Arnold asked.

"Uh-huh. First, some night club work and neat publicity about getting married to a millionaire. Of course it was rigged. Then she got into a musical show and I created more publicity. The real stuff it was and it went over big. The movies came for her. That's
when I moved into these offices, figuring I was all set."

"At two hundred and fifty a month you took some risk," Arnold glanced around the richly furnished office.

"Why not?" Hollister asked. "I said it was make or break and a publicity agent has to give a good account of himself too. This office spelled success and money. Well—my girl friend went to Hollywood, made a picture and fell flat on her pretty face. Seems there were no brains behind it and making movies takes brains, I've heard."

Arnold shrugged.

"Well, Hal," he continued, "I'm sorry, but what I said still goes. You know, old man Angus McVicker takes no credit from anyone. You paid four months' rent in advance. It was up a week ago. Angus says you'll have to get.

"Angus," Hollister grunted, "has a money-bag for a heart. Talk about publicity. Did you see what I got?"

Hollister passed over a copy of a legal journal. In it was a paid ad to the effect that Angus McVicker was in the process of forcing one Hal Hollister into involuntary bankruptcy.

"It's really a laugh," Hollister said. "He thinks I own this furniture. All his ad did was to bring down every blasted creditor I have on my neck. Furniture company, printer, hotel. Even the telephone company. You'd think a big concern like that wouldn't notice when a chap owes them forty-seven dollars. Frankly, I expect to get a call any minute telling me to listen well because it's the last time I'll hear anything over this phone. Well, let them...

The phone promptly rang, as if it had ears and a brain. Hollister laughed dryly, nodded to Arnold and picked up the instrument.

"I know all about it," he said. "You can stop service when... what? Who did you say it was? Cummings? Clark Cummings? THE Clark Cummings? Well, I—yes, sir, I handle publicity. Yes, of course. Right away? Well, I'm somewhat tied up, but then you're an important man. I'll be right over."

Hollister hung up.

"Hold everything, including Angus," he told Arnold. "As building manager, you haven't seen me on business until morning. That was Clark Cummings, the millionaire philanthropist. The man who won't let a reporter within a mile of him. He wants me for some publicity work. Imagine that!"

ARNOLD glanced at his watch as he arose.

"This is a funny time for a new client to contact a publicity agent. It's almost midnight. But—I wish you luck, Hal. Hate to see a nice lad like you thrown out on your ear. Make Cummings come through with enough advance to put old Angus off for another month."

"I'll get enough to pay for this layout for a year," Hollister gloated. "Man alive, this is just what I've been waiting for. The one break a man needs and it came at my darkest moment. From here on, I go places. Tony—got five? I'm plenty flat."

Arnold smiled and dug a hand into his pocket.

"Well, if you've a client like Cumming, I guess I can risk it. Good luck, Hal."

Half an hour later, while he rang the bell of Clark Cumming's suburban mansion, Hal Hollister still thought it was all part of some beautiful dream. It was Cumming himself who answered the door. He was a white-haired, austere man with a reputation for generosity and self-isolation. His picture had been in the papers, about as many times as Hollister had thumbs on both hands. Cumming hated publicity.

"I'm Hollister," Hal said. "You sent for me. Remember?"

"Oh yes, Mr. Hollister. I'm glad you were so prompt. My business with you is vitally important and demands speed as well. Come in. This way—to my library."

A good part of the crowd at Grand Central Terminal would have fitted comfortably into the room Cumming called his library. It was lined with books and filled with deep, luxurious chairs. A pair of antique lamps were lit and they threw a feeble glow over only part of the room. Hollister wondered if it was his imagination or the top of a man's head which rested against the high back of one chair.

At any rate, he figured this was none of his business. If Cumming wanted someone present, he was at liberty to arrange that. Hollister sat down and accepted a cigarette from Cumming.

"My qualifications," Hollister opened proceedings, "can be checked with any movie company, stage producer, columnist or newspaper. I get results. Guarantee 'em, sir."

"I'm not interested in that," Cumming smiled warily. "You see. I hired you to do things in reverse. I want my name kept out of the papers."

"Out of the papers," Hollister said with a sinking heart. "You mean—out?"

"Precisely. I'm on the way toward getting some publicity which I hate. This will be adverse and therefore even more detestable. I thought a good publicity agent might be able to help me. You should know ways to keep my name out of the papers."

"Perhaps I can," Hollister was grasping at straws and he knew it. When he met a reporter, he couldn't hold his tongue if he had anything in the way of news and the mere mention of Clark Cumming could be front page stuff.

"The terms," Cumming said, "will be generous. A thousand dollars now—before you even know about the case. Four thousand more if my name isn't in the papers by day after tomorrow. If it doesn't get in by then,
it never will."

A thousand dollars. Men had been killed for less. Hollister grabbed the straw with both hands this time. He almost grabbed the single one-thousand-dollar bill that Cumming proffered. Yes, within himself, something warned Hollister to be careful. Taking on an assignment, the nature of which he hadn't the remotest idea, was dangerous. Cumming might ask the impossible.

"I'm ready, sir," Hollister said weakly. "Tell me the details."

Cumming arose.

"Come over here and I'll show you the details," he said grimly. He walked to the high-backed chair in which Hollister thought he'd seen someone sitting. Now he knew he wasn't wrong.

The chair was occupied.

By a man with a hole through his vest, shirt—and heart. He was very dead and very chalky looking.

Hollister gulped. His stomach was doing a flip-flop. He wasn't used to this sort of thing. Without a word he turned to Cumming and extended his right hand. The fingers still gripped the thousand dollars.

"Nonsense, man," Cumming snorted. "Put the money in your pocket and then listen to me. I didn't kill this man. He committed suicide."

Hollister felt the first glow of hope. He automatically pocketed the bill, but turned away from the grisly spectacle at the same time. So long as Cumming hadn't murdered the man, there might be a way out. At the same time he need retain no more than an uneasy conscience.

"Here are the facts," Cumming said. "You're entitled to them. This man—frankly, I don't even know who he is—came to see me about an hour and a half ago. Unfortunately, all my servants are off this evening and I let him in. He wanted money."

"A stickup?" Hollister gasped.

"Oh no—hardly that. The poor fellow was entitled to a hearing, I suppose. You know that I am accustomed to help my fellow men."
I frequently provide money, in worthy cases, for medical treatment, college training and things of such nature. Well, this man claimed he was very ill. Something about his stomach. He needed fifteen hundred dollars. Now I'm not a fool. I demanded time to investigate his statements."

"Naturally," Hollister was beginning to feel more at ease. He almost summoned the nerve to turn around and look at the dead man.

"Naturally," Cumming repeated. "The man told me there wasn't time for him to be investigated so, because I didn't like his attitude, I told him to leave. Instead, he pulled out a gun, placed the muzzle against his heart and pulled the trigger."

Hollister retained some measure of suspicion.

"So then you decided you required a publicity agent to keep your name and all of this out of the papers. How did you happen to pick on me, Mr. Cumming?"

The white-haired philanthropist smiled wryly.

"I'd just been glancing through a legal newspaper and saw that you were in some financial trouble. I thought—frankly, that you'd need money badly enough to help me."

HOLLISTER screwed up his courage, turned and took a good look at the corpse. After it stopped swaying—in Hollister's eyes and brain—he realized that the

[Turn page]
SECRETS ENTRUSTED TO A FEW

The Unpublished Facts of Life

THERE are some things that can not be generally told—things you ought to know. Great truths are dangerous to some—but factors for personal power and accomplishment in the hands of those who understand them. Behind the tales of the miracles and mysteries of the ancients, lie centuries of their secret probing into nature’s laws—their amazing discoveries of the hidden processes of man’s mind, and the mastery of life’s problems. Once shrouded in mystery to avoid their destruction by mass fear and ignorance, these facts remain a useful heritage for the thousands of men and women who privately use them in their homes today.

THIS FREE BOOK

The Rosicrucians (not a religious organization), an age-old brotherhood of learning, have preserved this secret wisdom in their archives for centuries. They now invite you to share the practical helpfulness of their teachings. Write today for a free copy of the book, The Mastery of Life. Within its pages may lie a new life of opportunity for you. Address Scribe O.Z.A.

The ROSICRUCIANS
(AMORC)
San Jose California, U.S.A.

STAMMER?


Benjamin N. Bogue, Dept. 4260, Circle Tower, Indianapolis 4, Ind.

most outstanding thing about the dead man was his shock of coal-black hair. It stood up on his head like the quills on a porcupine’s back. It rose up like wire. Otherwise, the man was of dark complexion. He had a thin mouth and coal black eyes that were now filming over.

Hollister’s mind began working.

“It’s quite clear,” he said slowly, “that if we follow the usual procedure and report this to the police, nobody could keep your name out of the papers. Therefore, we can do but one thing. Put the body somewhere else.”

Cumming sighed.

“The very thing. Ever since it happened, I’ve tried to figure out some way, but I must have been stunned by this ghastly thing. Thank you, Mr. Hollister. You are earning your fee. But how can we dispose of the corpse?”

“Easy.” Hollister was remembering some crime movies. “We’ll cart the body to some other place, arrange it to look like suicide and then let the cops follow their usual routine. They’ll identify the man, of course. They always do. They’ll discover he was incurably ill and had no money.

“That ought to explain it. Suicide—and we don’t know the vaguest thing about it. No one knew he was coming here. If anyone did, you could tell the truth. Say you refused to help the man until you had investigated his statements.”

Cumming nodded.

“All right. I agree to that. Now—how do we get the body out of my home? Obviously, I can’t do it. If anything happened—if we were stopped for instance, the whole game would be up. It’s your job, young man. Tell you what—I’ll double that fee.”

“Thanks,” Hollister gulped. “Can I borrow your car? And something to—to wrap the corpse in. Can’t spill any blood or leave fingerprints. Gosh—no fingerprints.”

Invest Your Dollars and Dimes in America’s Future

Buy UNITED STATES WAR SAVINGS BONDS and STAMPS

Every Payday!
"I'll arrange it," Cumming said. "Stay here. I'll be right back."

He was gone five hours—in Hollister's estimation—not the actual five minutes it took him to fetch an old blanket. Hollister took it and started for the corpse like a toreador goes toward the bull. The blanket shook badly. Cumming touched his arm and extended a glass.

"Brandy," he said, "I thought we'd both need some."

Hollister drank it at a gulp, nearly blowing his head off as the powerful stuff lined his throat. At the time he thought he could write publicity about the soul-saving properties of brandy, better than anything he could write on any other subject.

He got the blanket around the man, picked up the gun at his feet and took care to use a handkerchief and handle the weapon very lightly. He stuffed this into his pocket. With Cumming's help he carried the corpse through the house, across the dark rear yard and put it into the back seat of a car.

Two minutes later, he was driving off and wondering what in blazes he'd do with the

[Mystery Fans!]

Here's Your Chance to Obtain World-Famous Best Sellers

**MURDERED ONE BY ONE**
Francis Flagg

**THE SMILER WITH THE KNIFE**
Nicholas Blake

A POPULAR LIBRARY NOVEL

**Read the Topflight Detective Novels by America's Favorite Authors**

IN POPULAR LIBRARY EDITIONS

NOW ONLY 25¢ EACH AT ALL STANDS

---

**Get Ready QUICK**

FOR PEACETIME FUTURE!

**ELECTRICITY**

HUNDREDS OF BRANCHES

"Learn-by-Doing" 12 WEEKS AT COYNE

(for Either Course)

ILL FINANCE YOUR TRAINING

Prepare for the future with ALL AROUND TRAINING in a field that offers steady work after final victory. Come to COYNE in Chicago and be ready 12 weeks from now! If you are short of money, I'll finance most of your training and you can pay for it after you graduate.

**Train on Actual Equipment!**
Whether you've had previous experience or not, makes no difference at COYNE. You do real work on full-size equipment. 40 years of success.

**ELECTRICITY**
A permanent necessity in war or peace. Big future in Power Plant Work, Motors, Armature Windings, Home and Factory Wiring, Appliances, Air Conditioning, Refrigeration, Maintenance, Illumination, etc. Electricians are in demand everywhere—lifetime job service without charge. Many earn while learning. Send for BIG FREE BOOK with dozens of photos of my shops.

**RADIO-ELECTRONICS**
A great field now, even greater growth ahead. Here at COYNE you're trained for Construction, Operation, Trouble-Shooting on Radio Receivers, Public Address Systems, Sound Picture Units, P.M., Photo-cell Controls, Television. My training is quick, easy, practical. Many COYNE trained men own well-paying radio businesses of their own.

**INDUSTRIAL ELECTRONICS**
and Electric Refrigeration
This training means additional opportunities. Extra training in these subjects now offered without extra cost with Electrical or Radio training.

MAIL COUPON FOR FACTS! Send how I make it EASY for you to get ready NOW. Check course you prefer and rush coupon to me for full details, FREE. No obligation—no salesman will call. Do it TODAY. We also have facilities for men with physical disabilities due to other causes. Check coupon for details.

H. C. F. Lewis, Pres., COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL, 500 S. Polinga St., Dept. 78-846, Chicago 12, I1.

Send me your BIG FREE BOOK—for the course checked below. Also full details of your "Pay-After-Graduation" plan.

Electricity
Radio-Electronics
Physical Disability

Name...
Address...
City...
State...

Pick Your Field—Get Book Free
GUM GRIPPER
TIGHTENS FALSE TEETH
OR NO COST

Amazing NEW Plastic Reliner LASTS FROM 4 to 6 MONTHS

NOW—in a lift—you can make loose, slipping dental plates fit snug and comfortable. Eat, talk, laugh freely—for "Gum Gripper" enables you to enjoy that feeling of having your own teeth again.

SAFELY IT YOURSELF—AT HOME

"GUM GRIPPER," amazing plastic Reliner tightens dental plates quickly, makes them hold firmly and fit like new. Just squeeze from tube; spread evenly, put plate in mouth. Wed "Gum Gripper" sets in few minutes. No heating necessary.

USE ON ANY DENTAL PLATE

"Gum Gripper" will not harm denture or irritate gums. Sanitary, odorless. Every month, store, stow and clean, prevents sore spots. Application of plastic "Gum Gripper" is guaranteed to last 4 to 6 months—or no cost. Can be scrubbed or washed. Rev. A. J. Wippler, Pittsburgh, Pa. writes: "Best material I ever used. I have not relaid my lower teeth for 2 months."

SEND NO MONEY—Order a tube today—it's only $1.00. Fill out and mail coupon below. You'll be delighted! Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back. Wonderful size package Dental Plate cleaner included free of extra cost. Cleanser dental plates without brushing. Will not harm denture.

FREE

Send me a tube of "Gum Gripper." You guarantee it to satisfy—or it will not cost me a penny.

☐ I will pay $1.00 plus postage with postman when package arrives.

☐ Enclosed is $1.00—You pay postage.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY __________ STATE __________

ASTHMATICS—POLLEN TIME is here!

Relieve pollen-aggravated bronchial asthma attacks with Dr. R. Schifman’s ASTHMA-DOR. The aromatic, medicated fumes help clear the head, aid in reducing the severity of attacks, help make breathing easier. Economical, too—so keep ASTHMA-DOR always on hand, ready for emergency anytime, anywhere. At all drug stores in powder, pipe mixture or convenient cigarette form.

body. A nice, dark, public park, a bench on which to seat the corpse and arrange things. That was it. Hollister wished he had another drink of brandy.

Headlights swept the deserted street. He turned a corner and the lights seemed to fasten upon a sign below a large mail box. The sign read: ANGUS McVICKER. At first, the name meant nothing and then Hol- lister automatically put his foot on the brake.

Angus McVicker. Old Scrooge! Perhaps it was the brandy, perhaps just a whimsical wave of sadism, but Hollister suddenly made up his mind. He stopped the car just beyond the house and looked back. The house was entirely dark. He backed up, turned into the driveway and throttling the engine very low, he rolled up to the spacious front porch.

There was no time to waste. He opened the car door, hauled out the body and found that he was so accustomed to it by now that he felt no more pangs of anguish than a slightly nervous embraller. He carried the body onto the porch and carefully propped it into a large rocker. He let the right hand dangle limply and put the gun on the porch floor just below the hand. He flipped away the handkerchief, stepped back and regarded his handiwork.

Then he groaned and moved back further. Something was happening to the corpse. His skull was coming off! That shock of wild, wiry hair was actually moving. It slid slowly down the side of his head and fell completely off.

If the corpse had risen and pointed an accusing finger at Hollister, he couldn’t have felt more alarmed. For a moment he was on the verge of rout. Only the soft impact of the wig on the porch floor brought back his senses.

He picked up the thing and tried to put it back on the dead man’s head. It wouldn’t stay there.

Hollister stuck the thing into his pocket and decided he’d better get going before he was seen. The wig didn’t matter.

He was afraid to start the car motor so he twisted the wheel to conform with the turning drive, got behind and pushed. When the car was rolling, he jumped in. There was a slight grade and he sailed through the gate, onto the street and took his foot off the clutch. The engine grabbed and he was traveling under power.

He took the car back to Cumming. The philanthropist was waiting for him.

“It’s taken care of,” Hollister said. “Don’t worry about a thing.”

CUMMING extended his hand. It held another thousand dollar bill. “Yours,” he said. “We agreed to double the fee, remember? If the body is found and there is no possibility of tying up the man’s death with me, then I shall forward you eight thousand more. Thank you, Mr. Hollister.”
Hollister made his way to a corner several blocks distant, suddenly recalled that he was comparatively rich and hailed a taxi. He had himself driven all the way to the medium-priced hotel where he lived and only owed six weeks rent.

On his way in he stopped at the desk and paid up his account. He needed some smaller bills anyway. He whistled softly as the elevator whisked him up to his floor. Then he grinned. Somebody was going to be mightily surprised and he hoped it would cost him money. Hollister meant no one but Angus McVicker.

Safe in his own room, the full impact of what he'd done came back to him. Of course he had committed a crime but then he felt it was in a good cause. The dead man had spitefully killed himself. Cumming didn't deserve such treatment.

No, indeed. Cumming was the type of man who deserved a break. Hollister buoyed up his spirits with such thoughts. They needed buoying up. So much so, that he called the bar and ordered some drinks sent up.

These helped too and when he started for bed, his brain was reeling slightly. Until he thrust a hand into his coat pocket and hauled out the dead man's wig. His mind cleared like magic. He let go of it as if the thing was red hot. It hit the floor. Hollister frowned and picked it up. The thing was stiff.

Wholly taken by curiosity, he examined [Turn page]
the wig closer. It seemed to be composed of two parts. There was a slit through the substance that lay close to the head. Hollister pried this apart a little. Then he sat down with a thump. His fingers removed two bills. One was for ten thousand, while the other was a five-thousand-dollar bill.

Now he couldn’t sleep at all. At first, he contemplated calling Cumming and telling him about it, but gave up the idea. It was better to wait and see what developed. Something told Hal Hollister it wouldn’t be good.

In the early dawn he went out and bought all the newspapers on the stands so far. Nary a one contained a word about the finding of a strange corpse on Angus McVicker’s front porch.

At noon, he ventured out again. Hollister gave no thought about going to his office. Financial troubles were over, but what took their place was a thousandfold worse. The noon papers, facetiously labelled as early evening editions, carried a small item. The corpse of a man, shot through the heart, had been discovered on the shore of the East River. The police stated that it was hardly suicide because the man had been shot through the heart and was dead before being dumped near the water.

Hollister wondered just how much a man could perspire and still live. He thought he’d about reached his capacity. Very resolutely, he told himself that life must go on. If he didn’t show up at the office, someone might ask questions.

He took a taxi, traveling in style. The meter ticked comfortably for the first time in Hollister’s career. He had money. Plenty of it, but what in the world he’d do with that fifteen thousand—and the wig it came in—he didn’t know. He smiled somewhat complacently though. Old Angus wouldn’t ride a cab like this.

“Angus!” he shot the word out of his mouth. Old Angus had carried the body to the shore and merely dumped it down. Why? Why in the name of every green moulded nickel he nursed, would McVicker do such a thing?

And why would the dead man have appealed to Cumming for help if he carried fifteen grand in his hair? Hollister’s life was suddenly a confused jumble again.

Half an hour after he reached his office, a messenger delivered a plain envelope and took his receipt. Automatically, Hollister ripped it open. Money fell out. Eight bills! It was coming at him from every direction. This was Cumming’s final payment. All eight thousand dollars were there as well as a typed, unsigned note, stating, neatly, that the writer was well satisfied with Hollister’s services, appreciated same and payment was enclosed. Hollister burned that note.

Tony Arnold came in soon after and Hollister forced himself to straighten out. Ar-
nold took one look at him, sighed and sat down.

"You're taking it tough, Hal. I wish there was something I could do. Cumming didn't come through. I can tell by just looking at you."

Hollister passed over some money. "He came through handsomely only the old boy kept me up all night with his plans. How that man hates publicity. He's paying me to see that his name stays out of the papers. On a yearly basis too. What a client!"

Arnold folded the money and wrote out a receipt for it. He passed over the slip of paper. "I wish Angus was in today," he said. "I'd like to see his face when I hand him this dough and tell him it's from you. Ever see him? No, I doubt it. Angus never sees anyone. Even has a private elevator and entrance. He's sour-faced. Why that man would curdle potted cheese. Well, I'm glad you're on the beam again, Hal. May your good luck keep up."

"No," Hollister shouted. Then he realized what he'd said. "I mean yes, of course. Thanks, Tony. I'm grateful. Maybe you brought me luck."

UNCOMFORTABLY Hollister shivered as Arnold went out. He locked the door, went back to his desk and sat there for two hours. His mind was full of strange...

[Turn page]

Approved by Parents and Teachers!

Pays well in good or bad times... He's a FINGER PRINT EXPERT

Learn this fascinating profession right at home!
I.A.S. has taught thousands of men and women this exciting, profitable, pleasant work. Let us teach you, too, in your own home, during spare time. You should have no doubt of the possibilities in this field. Think of it...

53% of all Identification bureaus in America employ I.A.S. graduates or students. This fact alone is ample evidence of the thorough, practical training given. What others have done, you too, should be able to do.

Here is Proof That It Is NOT Difficult

Of these fingerprints at the left, two of them are alike. See if you can find the matching prints. Of course, there is much more to learn than the mere matching of finger prints, but you get the idea.

Fit Yourself Now for a Post-War Job

Instead of being just one of millions of men looking for peacetime jobs, prepare now to obtain a position that pays well from the start and offers a fine future throughout a lifetime. Send today (stating age) for our great Free Book. Use the coupon!

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE
Dept. 7040, 1920 Sunayside Ave., Chicago 40, Ill.

Send for FREE copy of "THE BLUE BOOK OF CRIME"

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE
Dept. 7040, 1920 Sunayside Ave., Chicago 40, Ill.

Get a plan: Without obligation, send us the "Blue Book of Crime" and complete list of Identification Bureaus throughout the country. I.A.S. students or graduates, also information regarding cost and terms. (Literature sent only to persons stating age.)

Name. ............................... Age.

Address. ............................... City. ............................... State.
If Ruptured
Try This Out

Modern Protection Provides Great Comfort and Holding Security

Without Tortuous Truss Wearing

An "eye-opening" revelation in sensible and comfortable reduction is announced. grain by yours for the asking, without cost or obligation. Simply send name and address to William S. Blew, Inc., Dept. W-7, Adams, N. Y., and full details of the new and different Rice Method will be sent you Free. Without hard flesh-gouging pads or tormenting pressure, here's a Support that has brought joy and comfort to thousands—by releasing them from Trusses with straps and aprons that bind and cut. Designed to securely hold a rupture up and in where it belongs and yet give freedom of body and genuine comfort. For full information—write today!

PRINT ANY PHOTO
on Paper, Cloth, Leather or Wood

Simple Easy To Use
Magic Light takes only 2 minutes to reproduce any snapshot you have on to stationery, handkerchiefs, ties, scarfs, etc. Won't wash off. Won't hurt negative or fabric it's used on. Personalize your belongings! An ideal gift. Complete outfit enough to transfer 100 photos only $1.00 postpaid. Sent C.O.D. for $1.21.

CHRISTY PHOTO SUPPLY
2835 N. Central Dept. 1319, Chicago 34

ideas. Men who begged for money and carried a small fortune in their wigs. Tight- fisted millionaires who found corpses on their front porches and promptly dumped them down by the river. It was all very confusing.

But something had to be done. Hollister was, oddly enough, honest. That fifteen grand belonged to someone else. He had to find out who the dead man was, first of all. That was essential. But if the cops couldn't identify him, how could he?

More and more, he thought about McVicker. Perhaps the old scrooge knew the man. Perhaps he'd come to Angus and tried to beg and McVicker believed he'd taken questionable revenge by knocking himself off on the front porch. Cumming had experienced that feeling. It was natural that McVicker would too. And he was too tight to hire someone to ditch the corpse. The answer seemed to lie with Angus McVicker. Perhaps he could furnish the identification, if he was sure he wouldn't be involved with the police.

Certainly, the old tightwad was under some mental anguish. Little short of a fatal illness would have kept him away from his office for even one day. Hollister made up his mind. He seized the telephone, shoved it back and reached for the phone book until he had the number of Angus McVicker's residence. He dialed it.

"I wish to talk to Mr. McVicker about something vitally important," Hollister told the woman who answered. She was obviously a maid because she called him "sir."

A harsh, half whining voice came on. Hollister said, "Mr. McVicker, I must see you very soon. Don't ask who I am, but it is in connection with what happened last night."

"Another one!" Angus' voice became completely a whine. "Well, I can't refuse, and listen to me, I didn't kill Dupree. I swear I didn't. He was dead when I found him. No one knows—"

"No one had better," Hollister said ominously. "I'll see you tonight—about ten. Be there—or else."

"I'll be here," Angus McVicker half sobbed. "Listen—I paid Dupree last night. Before he was k-killed. I can't pay again, I tell you. It's impossible. These days things aren't so good with me. Tenants don't pay their rent. I have to sue."

Those words stopped Hollister from blustering the whole truth over the phone. Let the old boy suffer a little. He and his non-paying tenants and his eviction suits! Driving a man to involuntary bankruptcy. He deserved to sweat. Hollister actually felt smug about the whole thing as he hung up.

Promptly at the specified hour, he was admitted to McVicker's home. Angus, himself, let him in and the door old tightwad was wringing his hands when Hollister sat down and stared at him coldly.
"I did pay off last night," Angus said. "I swear I did. Why should Dupree come back and kill himself on my front porch?"

"How do I know you paid?" Hollister was enjoying this.

Angus groaned dismayingly. "I did, but I can't prove it. I'll have to pay again even if it turns me into a pauper. If I pay, will you promise not to come here again for months?"

Hollister thought rapidly. Why not let Angus go through the exquisite agony of paying off? He shrugged. Angus, with a piteous cry, arose and went to a wall safe. He took out of it an enormous stack of new, crisp currency, counted twenty-five like a man who counts his last heartbeats and—placed twenty-five thousand dollars in Hollister's hands.

"Now go," McVicker wailed. "Get out of here and don't let me see you again. Fifty thousand it cost me this time just because Dupree decided to kill himself. I'm a broken man."

Hollister arose slowly, not quite knowing what to do about all this. It suddenly occurred to him that Dupree had been a blackmailing man, and perhaps Cumming had paid off too.

Hardly thinking, Hollister stuffed the money into his pocket. He decided not to tell McVicker anything at the moment. He first had to be sure about several things. One was the positive identity of the corpse found down by the river. The other was more important. Had Cumming murdered Dupree?

Hollister started across the porch. A man was coming toward him. They passed and the man gave him a sharp glance. Sharp enough to make Hollister shudder. Maybe this was another of the blackmail gang. It was best that he get away as promptly as possible. The man was burly, harsh-looking and Hollister hadn't liked his peculiar stare.

Hollister took a taxi to the City Morgue. There, on pretext of looking for a missing relative, he was escorted through the ice box. Hollister got himself another case of jitters. Then a slab was rolled out, a sheet raised and the body of Dupree revealed. His bald pate glistened dully. Hollister shivered and not from the dankness of the morgue either.

"—I don't see the man I want," he said weakly. "—I've had enough of this. L—let me out."

"Sure, pal," a heavy voice said behind him. "We'll let you out after you answer a couple of questions."

Hollister turned and faced the burly man he'd encountered on his way out of McVicker's house. Now the man held a leather case in one hand and Hollister was almost blinded by the meaning of the gold shield it contained.

[Turn page]
Detective Lieutenant," Hollister read as if it were his own name on a tombstone.

"Valentine is the name," the detective said.

"Headquarters Squad. I saw you come out of Angus McVicker's house. What were you doing there?"

PANIC-STRICKEN Hollister swallowed with some difficulty.

"Oh—that. Why, Angus McVicker is my landlord. I rent an office in his building and I went there to tell him I'd paid some back rent to his manager. You can check up. So long, Lieutenant. Nice to have met you."

One single step Hollister took before that huge hand descended on his shoulder and stopped him.

"That's funny," Valentine said. "McVicker told me you were an insurance salesman. Come on, pal, what's it all about?"

Hollister looked around the morgue and wondered if they'd put him here too, after he had been electrocuted for a murder he didn't commit.

"I—look," he said weakly, "I can talk better in more cheerful surroundings.

Valentine grinned.

"Sure—my office is a very romantic place. It's got a desk, some chairs and a lot of privacy. Also, I keep a string of nice cells in the same building. Remember that."

Valentine took him to Headquarters in a police car, closed the door of his office and sat down. He looked directly at Hollister.

"All right—shoot. What do you and your gang have on Angus McVicker? Why would he crash through with blackmail dough? And, incidentally, lift your arms. I haven't given you a frisk yet."

He pulled out the twenty-five one-thousand dollar bills Angus had given him. He found the fifteen one thousand dollar bills which had come from a dead man's wig. He discovered nine thousand in one-thousand-dollar bills—Cuming's fee for service rendered.

"Just small change," Hollister offered with what he hoped was a grin. It didn't work. Valentine threw the money on his desk and stuck his nose an inch from Hollister's face.

"Come through," the police officer said ominously. "I'll tell you this much. We were looking for Dupree when he was found near the river. Dupree had passed a one grand bill in a bar and the guy who took it thought it might be phoney so he called us. It was really all right and we traced the bill from a bank to Angus McVicker."

Hollister sat down.

"Look, Lieutenant," he gulped, "I'm coming clean. That's the lingo you use here, isn't it? Give me a break."

Hollister was looking at the thousand-dollar bills strewn across the detective's desk.

"What sort of a break?" Valentine demanded. "Anyway, it's up to the D.A. to bargain, but I'll put in my two cents worth if you talk."
"Your promise is good with me," Hollister said. "First off, take me to my apartment. Then we'll go to Cumming's. Yes, Clark Cumming. From there on, you'll have to work with me. Give me a full head of steam or I won't utter another word."

Valentine studied Hollister's purse and papers which he'd taken from him. He mulled over the idea for a moment, made a few phone calls concerning Hollister's alleged reputation and then agreed to his demands.

"And take along that money," Hollister said. "Give me fifteen thousand of it now. Then we're going to my apartment. I want to pick up Dupree's wig."

"Wig?" Valentine muttered. "Yeah, sure, and should I take along a straitjacket, my friend?"

"Just handcuffs," Hollister said grimly. "And they won't be for me."

Half an hour later, they were at Cumming's elaborate home, seated in his library and watching Cumming regard them with utter amazement.

"This man," Cumming pointed to Hollister, "claims I paid him to dispose of a corpse? Sheer nonsense. I never saw this man before in my life."

Valentine shrugged and got up.

"Come on, Hollister," he said. "I've had enough of these monkeyshines. The cell block is your next stop."

Cumming didn't move from his chair. Hollister bit his lip, wrenched himself free of Valentine's grasp and made a dash for Cumming. On his way he covertly thrust Dupree's wig under the chair in which the corpse had been seated. Valentine got him before he reached Cumming. This time he put cuffs on his wrists.

"Sorry, Mr. Cumming," Valentine apologized. "I didn't think this rat had nerve enough to make a break. Stay right where you are. I know the way out."

He yanked Hollister out of the house, but fumbled with the door a moment. He put him in the car, started the motor and drove about a hundred yards.

"Now what was the rest of the deal?" he asked.

Hollister came out of the doldrums.

"You mean I still get a break?"

"Listen," Valentine said. "Cumming's hands were wet on the palms. He's scared

[Turn page]
stiff. A detective notices those things. I suppose you want to go back. Well, I fixed the door so it isn’t locked. Here—I’ll take those cuffs off you.”

Hollister slipped out of the car, ran back to the house and let himself in. He reached the library. It was empty, but the wig wasn’t under the chair any longer. All he hoped was that Cumming fully believed it had slipped off Dupree’s scalp when they were carrying him out.

Then Hollister saw one whole bookcase start moving. It was on rollers and pushed out. Cumming emerged from this hidden door and the secret room behind it. He saw Hollister, who had no chance to move. A gun appeared in Cumming’s fist and levelled.

CAUTIOUSLY Hollister raised his arms. “So it was you,” he said slowly. “I got away from the cop and came back because I figured you really had killed Dupree. Shall I tell you why? Because Dupree was part of a blackmailing ring which you headed.

“As a great philanthropist, you were never suspected. Dupree held out. He’d just come from Angus McVicker’s and was supposed to have picked up twenty-five thousand dollars. He said McVicker only gave him ten. You took this, knew he was holding out and let him have it. You searched him and found nothing—because the money was hidden in Dupree’s wig.”

“Have you finished?” Cumming asked quietly.

“No, not quite. You had to get rid of the corpse and it was too risky so you thought up a scheme to get me into it. I was your very delightful stooge. But Cumming, for a wealthy and intelligent man, you made a bad mistake. You paid me in one-thousand-dollar bills. You sent me eight more one-grand bills.

“I found fifteen thousand more, in similar bills, in Dupree’s wig. Later on, Angus handed me twenty-five more of those bills when he thought I was another member of your blackmail ring. All those bills were new, numbered in rotation and possession of them by you, proves you were in with Dupree.”

“Finished now?” Cumming asked. “Because I intend to finish you quite permanently, say you came back here to attack me and I shot you in self-defense.”

The gun steadied. Hollister braced himself and for some unaccountable reason he started to pray that the gun wasn’t loaded with dum-dums. He’d been reading about the way Japs fight. He was positive that he was dead and death was full of pleasant dreams when he saw Cumming slowly lower the gun and finally drop it.

Lieutenant Valentine came into focus. “It worked nicely, Hollister,” he said.
"We've been looking for the head of a big blackmail ring for more than three years. Cumming is it."

Hollister knelt on the floor first, then he sat and finally he stretched out. He wasn't tired either.

Some time later, Hollister glanced at bold headlines, got up from the uncomfortably hard pallet of his cell and went to the barred door. Across from him was Angus McVicker wringing his hands and wishing he'd made some of his money the honest—and hard—way. Next door to Hollister's cell was Cumming.

Hollister passed the newspaper to him.
"Cumming," he said. "I failed you. The money you paid to keep your name out of the papers is yours again, naturally. I can't accept it because I failed to keep your name out of the papers. You can pick up the ten thousand from Lieutenant Valentine. I'm certain he'll be glad to act as my agent in the matter."

"I hope they give you a hundred years," Cumming roared.

Hollister grinned.
"I'm going to be let out pretty soon. They just want me here as a material witness. Valentine says I'll be forgiven for removing Dupree from your house because I've been a good boy and I talked. It's a great life, Mr. Cumming. Yesterday I was broke and bankrupt. Then, almost as fast as I could handle it, I became rich. A thousand from you, then a second thousand. Then fifteen from Dupree, then eight more from you. Finally, twenty-five thousand from Angus, who was in on the racket as a go-between. Money slips through my fingers, but I like being broke. You don't have worries. Hey, Angus, how are you feeling?"

Angus McVicker peered through the bars.
"Very hungry. Do they ever feed a man in here?"

"They certainly do," Hollister said. "Not bad food either."

"Without charge?" McVicker inquired.
"It's all on the town," Hollister assured him.

Angus sat down.
"Ah well, there is always a ray of sunshine amidst a man's troubles."
Free for Asthma

If you suffer with attacks of Asthma so terrible you choke and gasp for breath, if restful sleep is impossible because of the trouble to breathe, if you feel the disease is slowly wearing your life away, don’t fail to send at once to the Frontier Asthma Co. for a free trial of a remarkable method. No matter where you live or whether you have any faith in any remedy under the Sun, send for this free trial. If you have suffered a lifetime and tried everything you could learn of without relief; even if you are utterly discouraged, do not abandon hope but send today for this free trial. It will cost you nothing.

Address:
FRONTIER ASTHMA CO.
1009-R Frontier Bldg.
462 Niagara Street
Buffalo 1, N. Y.

BE A Nurse

MAKE $30-36 A WEEK

Practical Nurses are needed in every community... doctors rely on them... patients appreciate their grateful, expert care. You can learn practical nursing at home in spare time. Course endorsed by physicians, dentists, nurses. Work while learning. High School not required. Airline, Adirondacks, Camp. Write now.

CHICAGO SCHOOL OF NURSING
5220-100 East Ohio Street, Chicago 11, Ill.
Please send free booklet and 10 sample lesson pages.

WELCOME HOME, SUCKER!
(Concluded from page 63)

“We finally got enough out of you to steer us right,” Randau went on. “I remembered Fleck Maslin. I defended him. He lifted a payroll, and the cops never found it. It was Nora’s idea to buy the theatre tickets. “I wish I’d never set eyes on her,” Randau said. “I was crazy about her. You were in the way, Jimmy. I put up that dough for the hat shop. We had this all figured out a month before you were paroled. We found out we were that way about each other a couple of months after you went to prison. Well, you got all you need to know. Get a doctor.”

“If you are smart you will bleed to death here, you two-timing mouthpiece,” I said. “All right, let’s see if Fleck was in his right mind and stashed that payroll dough here. I don’t want a dollar, if it happens to be here. I’m in the clear, and I’m young and healthy. As healthy as a 4F can be. Maybe with a new setup I can get in the Merchant Marine, Al. That’s for me.”

“I see what you mean,” Al said.

We found Fleck’s dough. There was about nine grand under the floor of the closet. The cops could easily trace through the files and see who the dough really belonged to.

We left Headquarters about ten-thirty, and went to look up Nora.

She opened the door quick when I knocked. When she saw it was me, and not Randau, she nearly fainted in her tracks. She got as gray as death under her make-up. Right then and there, I started hating her.

“Surprised?” I said. “Dave Randau will not see you for awhile, baby. He’s in the jug with Augie, our old pal. You told me all the time that you were all going straight. Well, you got a lot of questions to answer the D.A. So you’d better put on your glad rags—and come along with me and Al!”

They gave Dave Randau and Augie life. Nora got off with from-three-to-ten. After I saw Al Ford and Nora off at the railroad terminal, I headed for the nearest shipping office. I figured that after what I’d been through, the only place where I really could get adjusted was in a war.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Wartime paper rationing makes it impossible to print enough copies of this magazine to meet demand. To be sure of getting YOUR copy, place a standing order with your regular newsdealer.

Every effort is made to see that your copy of this magazine reaches you in time—but there may sometimes be an occasional slight delay due to wartime transportation difficulties. Please bear with us during this emergency. Your cooperation is appreciated.

BUY WAR BONDS and MORE BONDS
Learn this Profitable Profession

IN 90 DAYS AT HOME

MONEY-MAKING CAREER OPEN to MEN and WOMEN, 18 to 50

Hundreds of men and women between 18 and 50 make $10 to $20 an hour at the college for Swedish Massage and Hydro-Therapy treatments. There is big demand from doctors, hospitals, sanitarums, and clinics. Graduates earn large full-time incomes from these or in private practice in their own offices. Others make good money from home treatments given in spare time. Send for free book on how you can earn from $10 to $20 a day in your own home, through our home study course. How to become known resident student. You can win independence and prepare for future security by qualifying for our Diploma. Course can be completed in 8 to 12 months. Many earn while they learn. Begin your training at once.

Anatomy Charts & Booklet FREE

Mail now and we will include, at no extra cost, many needed supplies. Fit yourself to help meet growing demand for massage now and after the war. Send the coupon at right for complete details. Anatomy Charts and 22-page illustrated Booklet. FREE, postpaid.

THE COLLEGE OF SWEDISH MASSAGE
30 E. Washington St., Chicago, Illinois

Send me FREE information covering special training in subjects checked below. No obligation on my part.

- Plastic Surgery
- Electrical Engineering
- Drafting and Design for Men and Women
- Diesel Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Aviation
- Radio

Cost Accounting for Men
- Automotive Engineering
- Architecture & Building
- Shipbuilding
- Business Management
- High School Course
- Railway Training

AMERICAN SCHOOL, Dept. PRS
Drewel at 56th St., Chicago 27, Ill.

Send me FREE information covering special training in subjects checked below. No obligation on my part.

- Plastic Surgery
- Electrical Engineering
- Drafting and Design for Men and Women
- Diesel Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Aviation
- Radio

Cost Accounting for Men
- Automotive Engineering
- Architecture & Building
- Shipbuilding
- Business Management
- High School Course
- Railway Training

Name

Address

Curb

State.

do you WORRY?

Why worry and suffer any longer if we can help you? Try a Brooks Patented Air Cushion. This marvelous appliance for most of the causes of reducible rupture is GUARANTEED to bring you heavenly comfort and security—day and night—at work and play—it does not cost you NOTHING. Thousands happy. Light, neat-fitting. No hard pads or springs. For men, women, and children. Durable, cheap. Send for trial today. Not sold in stores. Beware of imitations. Write for Free Book on Rupture, no-risk trial order plan, and proof of results. All Correspondence Confidential.


Guaranteed GOLD

Genuine DIAMOND RINGS

No. 1091
14K GOLD BRIDAL PAIR
Set With 14 Genuine Diamonds
Engagement ring (set) with 3 sparkling genuine diamonds in an exquisite mounting of gold hearts. DRK settings. Set of wedding bands, set with 7 genuine diamonds.

No. 1982
14K GOLD BRIDAL PAIR
Set With 8 Genuine Diamonds
Engagement ring (set) with 3 sparkling genuine diamonds in exquisite mounting of gold hearts. DRK settings. Set of wedding bands, set with 8 genuine diamonds.

No. 1983
14K GOLD BRIDAL PAIR
Set With 8 Genuine Diamonds
Beautiful engagement ring is set with 8 sparkling genuine diamonds in exquisite mounting of gold hearts. DRK settings. Set of wedding bands, set with 8 genuine diamonds.

Send NO MONEY—Lovely, Guaranteed Genuine diamond matched Bridal Diamond Rings will thrill you with their style and rare beauty. Buy on zero interest 10 Day Trial. Write Money Back Guarantee with order. Pay postman or cash at delivery. Wholesale or retail. Order No. INTERNATIONAL DIAMOND CO., 2251 Calumet Avenue, Department 422, Chicago 16, Illinois

PLASTICS

Get In at the Start—and Grow

Plastics is a new industry which the nation's war needs is forcing to quick maturity. Already Plastics are indispensable in practically every branch of the Service Aircraft, Ordnance, Chemical, Marine, Signal Corps, etc. Opportunities! Nearly everything, from homes to clothing, from gadgets to tools, will be affected by Plastics.

Spare Time Training Now Ready

The time to get started is now. You can prepare at home, in your spare time, to take your place in an infant industry that even now is leaping into prominence. A new, practical training plan is now ready to help you realize your ambitions and build your future security. Act now. Don't delay. Mail this coupon today.

AMERICAN SCHOOL, Dept. PRS
Drewel at 56th St., Chicago 27, Ill.

Send me FREE information covering special training in subjects checked below. No obligation on my part.

- Plastic Surgery
- Electrical Engineering
- Drafting and Design for Men and Women
- Diesel Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Aviation
- Radio

Cost Accounting for Men
- Automotive Engineering
- Architecture & Building
- Shipbuilding
- Business Management
- High School Course
- Railway Training

Name

Address

Curb

State.
PREMIUMS
- Or Cash -
GIVEN

Boy's - Girl's - Ladies!
Send No Money Now—Send Name and Address on Coupon

Watches, Games, Billfolds other personal and household premiums now easily yours! SIMPLY GIVE pictures with White CLOVERINE Brand SALVE for chaps and mild burns sold at 25c a box (with colorful picture) and remit amounts asked under premium wanted in catalog sent with order postage paid. OUR 50th YEAR! 1 to 3 boxes sold many homes. Mail coupon now! Wilson Chem. Co., Dept. 31-D, Tyrone, Pa.

MAIL COUPON

Picturess with White CLOVERINE Brand in a box (with picture) and remit amounts asked under premium wanted in catalog sent with order.

Premiums
- Or Cash -
GIVEN

Boy's - Girl's - Ladies!
Send No Money Now—Send Name and Address on Coupon

Prestige Pencils, Pens, Mechanical Pencils, Telescopes, etc. other personal and household premiums easily yours! SIMPLY GIVE pictures with White CLOVERINE Brand SALVE for chaps and mild burns sold at 25c a box (with picture) and remit amounts asked under premium wanted in catalog.

50th Year

MAIL COUPON

Prestige Pencils, Pens, Mechanical Pencils, Telescopes, etc. other personal and household premiums easily yours! SIMPLY GIVE pictures with White CLOVERINE Brand SALVE for chaps and mild burns sold at 25c a box (with picture) and remit amounts asked under premium wanted in catalog.

Our 50th Year

PREMIUMS
- Or Cash -
Given

Watches, Flashlights, Rings, School Boxes, etc. other premiums easily yours! SIMPLY GIVE pictures with White CLOVERINE Brand SALVE for chaps, sold at 25c a box (with picture) and remit amounts called for under premium wanted in catalog. Mail coupon now!


MAIL COUPON

Sold thru Agents & Drug Stores

MAIL COUPON

Wilson Chemical Co., Dept. TG-51, Tyrone, Pa. 

Gentlemen—Please send me on trial to start twelve colorful art pictures with twelve boxes White CLOVERINE Brand SALVE to sell at 25c a box (with picture). I will remit amounts asked within 30 days, select a premium or keep a cash commission as fully explained under premium wanted in catalog sent with order, postage paid.

Name ___________________________________________ Age ____________________

St. ___________________________ RD...Box _______

Town __________________________________________ Zone No. _______ State __

Print Last Name Here

Paste coupon on postal card or mail in an envelope today.
Will You Let Me PROVE I Can Make YOU a New Man?

Here's What Only 15 Minutes a Day Can Do For You

I DON'T care how old or young you are, or how advanced of your present physical condition you may be. If you can simply raise your arm and flex it I can add MUSCLE to your bones—yes, on each arm—in double-quick time! Only 15 minutes a day—right in your own home—will do the trick. I've learned and mastered the art of building solid MUSCLE.

My method—"Dynamic Tension"—will turn the trick for you. No theory—every exercise is practical. And, man, so easy! Spend only 15 minutes a day in your own home. From the very start you'll be using my method of "Dynamic Tension" almost unconsciously every minute of the day—walking, bending over, etc.—to BUILD MUSCLE and VITALITY.

FREE BOOK
"Everlasting Health and Strength"

In the article I tell you in straight-forward, no-nonsense language, how to use the exercises pictured in this book, and how to make them work for you. Go! and have a quick look at this book, send for your FREE COPY today—FREE COPY—FREE COPY.

CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 7711A
115 East 23rd St., New York 10, N. Y.

I want the proof that your system of "Dynamic Tension" will help make a New Man of me—give me a healthy, young body and big muscular development. Send me your free book, "Everlasting Health and Strength."
HOSPITAL and DOCTOR BILLS PAID!

HOSPITALIZATION PLAN

COVERS SICKNESS or ACCIDENT

Do you know that an average of one person out of every ten becomes a hospital patient each year? More than 35,000 patients enter hospitals daily. You, or one of your family might be next! Don't go into debt or bankrupt your savings when sickness or accident strikes. Be prepared — protect yourself NOW!

PAYS BENEFITS FROM FIRST DAY

This dependable Hospitalization Plan PAYS YOUR BILLS FROM THE VERY FIRST DAY of Hospitalization, exactly as provided. Do not confuse this policy with the others that skip paying benefits for the first 7 or 14 days.

PAYS FOR LOSS OF INCOME!

In addition to Hospital and Doctor Benefits, cash payment will be made for LOSS OF TIME from work, due to accident disability, at the rate of $2.50 a week up to a total of $300.00, as stated in the liberal Loss of Time provision of the contract.

ISSUED TO INDIVIDUALS or FAMILIES

You or members of your family may be protected against Hospitalization resulting from sickness or accident. Everyone, in good health, from 6 months to 70 years of age can apply for policy.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN HOSPITAL and DOCTOR

Any recognized Hospital and any Doctor in the United States or Canada may be selected by you. You are not required to enter any particular Hospital under this liberal Hospitalization plan.

No Medical Examination—No Red Tape—No Agents

No medical examination is required. If you are in good health we take your word for it. Red-tape as well as agents eliminated!

FREE INFORMATION—NO OBLIGATION

Send no money — just mail the coupon. We will send you complete details and 10 day FREE Inspection offer. DON'T DELAY!

GEORGE ROGERS CLARK CASUALTY COMPANY
4066 Insurance Exch. Bldg., Rockford, Ill.

MAIL COUPON NOW

POLICY PAYS
Hospital and Doctor Bills up to $600 Each Day HOSPITAL $1080.00
Minimum Benefit for Room, Board, General Nursing for each insured adult. Includes up to 90 days per year for Accident and up to 90 days per year for Sickness.

$25 Each Week LOSS of TIME $300
From work, by Accident up to 12 weeks.

DOCTOR EXPENSES $135.00
Maximum benefit for additional Medical or Surgical care while in Hospital due to injury.

$1000.00 ACCIDENTAL LOSS of LIFE, LIMBS or ENTIRE EYE

MAIL COUPON NOW

George Rogers Clark Casualty Company
4066 Insurance Exch. Bldg., Rockford, Ill.

Please rush FREE information about Hospital and Doctor's Expense Policy.

NAME...........................................

ADDRESS......................................

CITY & STATE..............................

Fill in coupon, Clip and paste to Postal Card or mail in envelope.