

10¢

THE FEDERALS IN ACTION

G-MEN

APR.

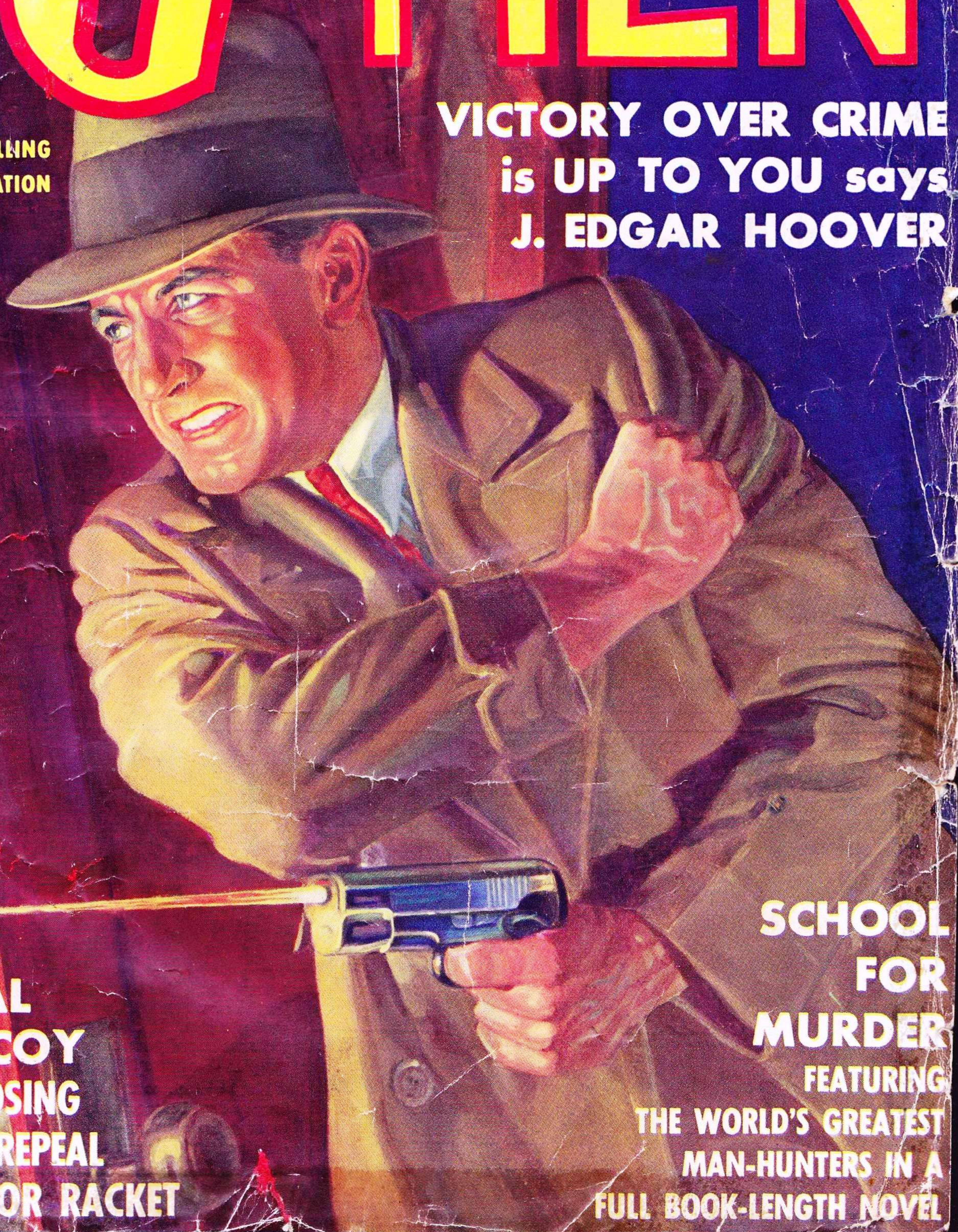
A THRILLING
PUBLICATION

VICTORY OVER CRIME
is UP TO YOU says
J. EDGAR HOOVER

THE
REAL
McCOY
EXPOSING
THE REPEAL
LIQUOR RACKET

SCHOOL
FOR
MURDER

FEATURING
THE WORLD'S GREATEST
MAN-HUNTERS IN A
FULL BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL





NIX ON PARTIES —with my crop of PIMPLES!

BUT
THERE
IS
HOPE FOR
BILL

DOGGONE IT! I **DID** WANT TO
GO TO DOT'S BIRTHDAY
PARTY TONIGHT! A
FINE SIGHT I'D BE!



SAY, WHAT'S EATING
YOU? GOING TO
DOT'S PARTY
TONIGHT?

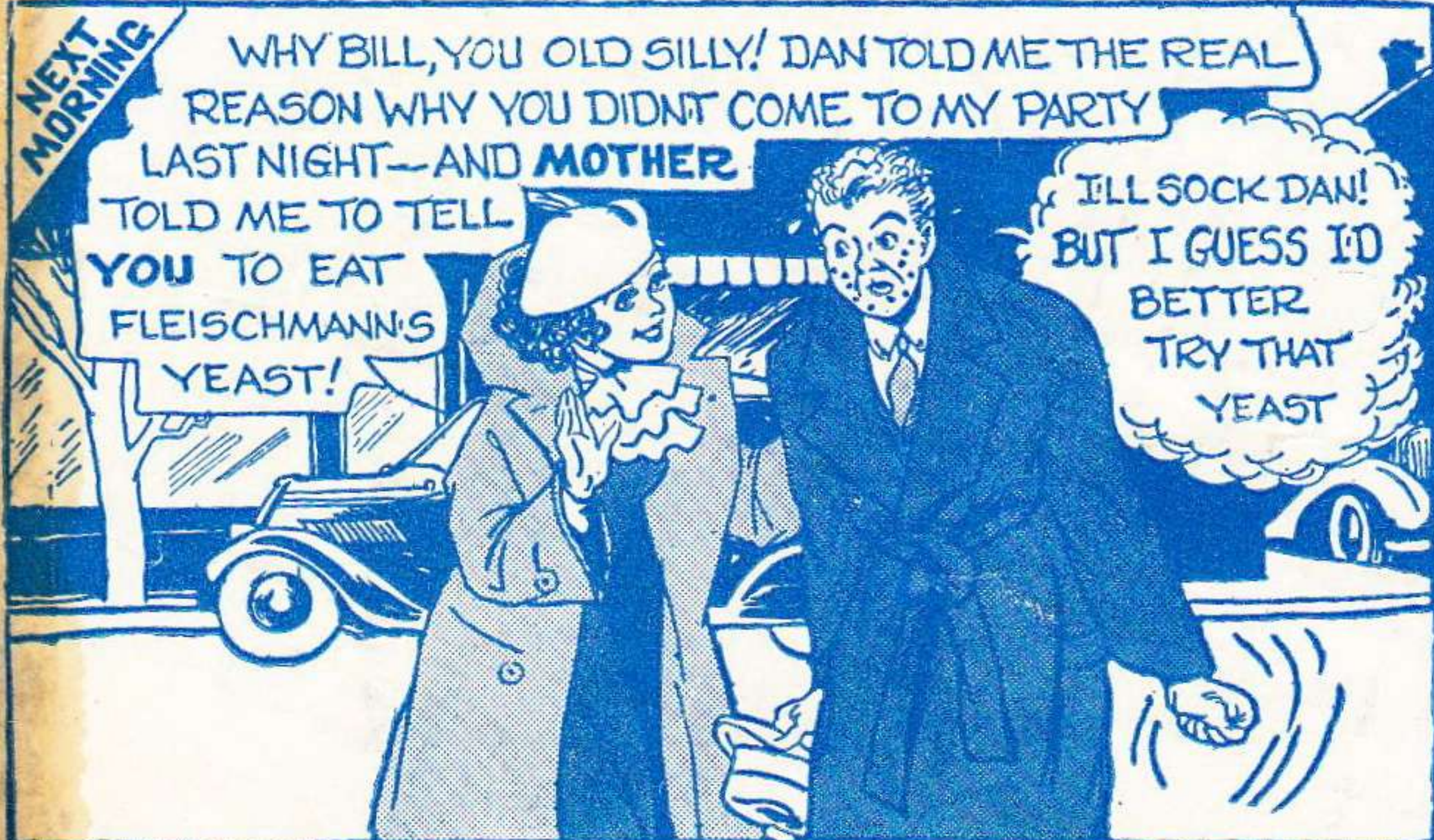
OF **COURSE** NOT,
DAN. LOOK AT
THESE LIFE-SIZED
PIMPLES AND SEE
WHY!!



NEXT
MORNING

WHY BILL, YOU OLD SILLY! DAN TOLD ME THE REAL
REASON WHY YOU DIDN'T COME TO MY PARTY
LAST NIGHT—AND **MOTHER**
TOLD ME TO TELL
YOU TO EAT
FLEISCHMANN'S
YEAST!

I'LL SOCK DAN!
BUT I GUESS I'D
BETTER
TRY THAT
YEAST



LATER

DOT'S MOTHER WAS
SWELL TO TELL ME HOW
TO GET RID OF THOSE
FIERCE OLD BLOSSOMS!

NOW TO
SHOW DOT



WHY, BILL — IT **WORKED!**
NOT A PIMPLE LEFT! WE'LL
HAVE TO HAVE ANOTHER
PARTY — TO CELEBRATE

MY IDEA, TOO!
DOT, YOU'RE
WONDERFUL



Copyright, 1936, Standard Brands Incorporated

Don't let Adolescent Pimples kill **YOUR** dates

DURING THE YEARS following the begin-
ning of adolescence—from about 13 to 25,
or even longer—many young people have to
fight pimples.

Important glands develop and final growth
takes place during this time. This causes dis-
turbances throughout the body. The skin be-
comes oversensitive. Waste poisons in the blood
irritate this sensitive skin. Pimples break out.

Many doctors prescribe Fleischmann's Yeast
for the correction of these adoles-
cent pimples. It clears the skin
irritants out of your blood. Then
pimples disappear!

Eat Fleischmann's Yeast 3
times a day, before meals—plain,
or in a little water—until your
skin is entirely clear. Start today.



—clears the skin
by clearing skin irritants
out of the blood

LEARN RADIO FROM REAL RADIO ENGINEERS

LET THESE ENGINEERS RIGHT FROM THE HEART OF THE BIG RADIO INDUSTRY *Train You at Home for*



HERE THEY ARE:

Kendall Clough, Chief Engineer, Clough-Brengle Company
 E. E. Gramer, Chief Engineer, Standard Transformer Corporation
 Earl E. Hassel, Chief Engineer, Zenith Radio Corporation
 H. C. Tittle, Chief Radio Engineer, General Household Utilities (Group)
 Dr. O. M. Blackburn, Radio Engineer, P. R. Mallory & Co., Indianapolis, Manufacturers of Radio Apparatus
 F. L. Howard, Chief Engineer, Radio and Television Institute

GOOD PAY RADIO WORK
 MANY R-T-I TRAINED MEN
MAKE \$35 to \$75 A WEEK

If you're dissatisfied with small pay—work that's getting you nowhere—lay-offs and uncertain income—here's an opportunity that's too good to miss. At the cost of only the time it takes you to mail the coupon, you can get my big FREE book, "RADIO'S FUTURE AND YOURS." This book tells how you can learn at home to make more money almost at once in Radio—whether you want to make Radio your life's work, or use it to pick up an extra \$5 to \$20 a week in your spare time.

"RADIO IS GROWING BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS"
 says *Radio Craft Magazine*. It has forged ahead even in depression years. Where only a few hundred men were employed a short time ago, thousands are employed today. Where a few years ago a hundred jobs paid \$35 to \$75 a week—there are thousands of such jobs today. And more new jobs being created all the time—full time jobs and spare time jobs. Get my book and see how easy it is to learn at home for this good-pay work.
R-T-I TRAINING IS "SHOP TRAINING" FOR THE HOME

It comes to you right from the Radio Industry—right out of the factories where Radio sets and other vacuum-tube devices are made. It was planned and prepared for you by big radio engineers IN these factories, most of whom are the Chief Engineers of these great Radio plants. And NOW these same engineers are actually supervising R-T-I Training. Which means that trained the R-T-I way, you'll be trained as the Radio Industry wants you trained—just as the Radio Industry, itself, would train you if it was doing the job.

4 BIG WORKING OUTFITS INCLUDED
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 You don't have to be a high school graduate. It isn't necessary that you should have finished the grades. My Training in Radio is so simple, so easy, and so practical, that it offers every man, regardless of age, education, or previous experience, the chance to get out of a small-pay, no-future job, into good pay, big future work in Radio.

YOUR MONEY BACK IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED
 That's my way of doing business. And I'll give you that agreement in writing—an agreement to refund every penny of your tuition if, on completion of my Training, you are not entirely satisfied. **INVESTIGATE!** Learn why R-T-I Training is different. Find out why R-T-I Trained men get "Quick Results" and "Big Results." Send today for my big book "Radio's Future and Yours." The book is free. **Ray D. Smith, President**
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 City.....State.....

G-MEN

Vol. III, No. 1

April, 1936

Price, 10c

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GUNMEN'S HATE - - - - - Col. William T. Cowin 102

Caught in a Trap, a Daring G-Man Fights Desperately!

LAW OF THE LEVEE - - - - - Jean Francis Webb 112

Old Man River Sets the Stage for Grim Blood-Conflict

AND

IT'S UP TO YOU! - - - - - J. Edgar Hoover 92

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A spare time or full time service shop; installing, maintaining, operating—broadcast, aviation, commercial, ship, television and police stations. A radio retail or service business of your own. Installing, maintaining, servicing, loud speaker systems. A service or sales job with a store or jobber. I'll train you for good jobs in many branches of Radio.

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Every neighborhood can use a good part time serviceman. The day you enroll I start sending you Extra Money Job Sheets which quickly show you how to do Radio repair jobs common in almost every neighborhood. Get my book—see for yourself that many of my students make \$200 to \$1,000 in their spare time while learning.

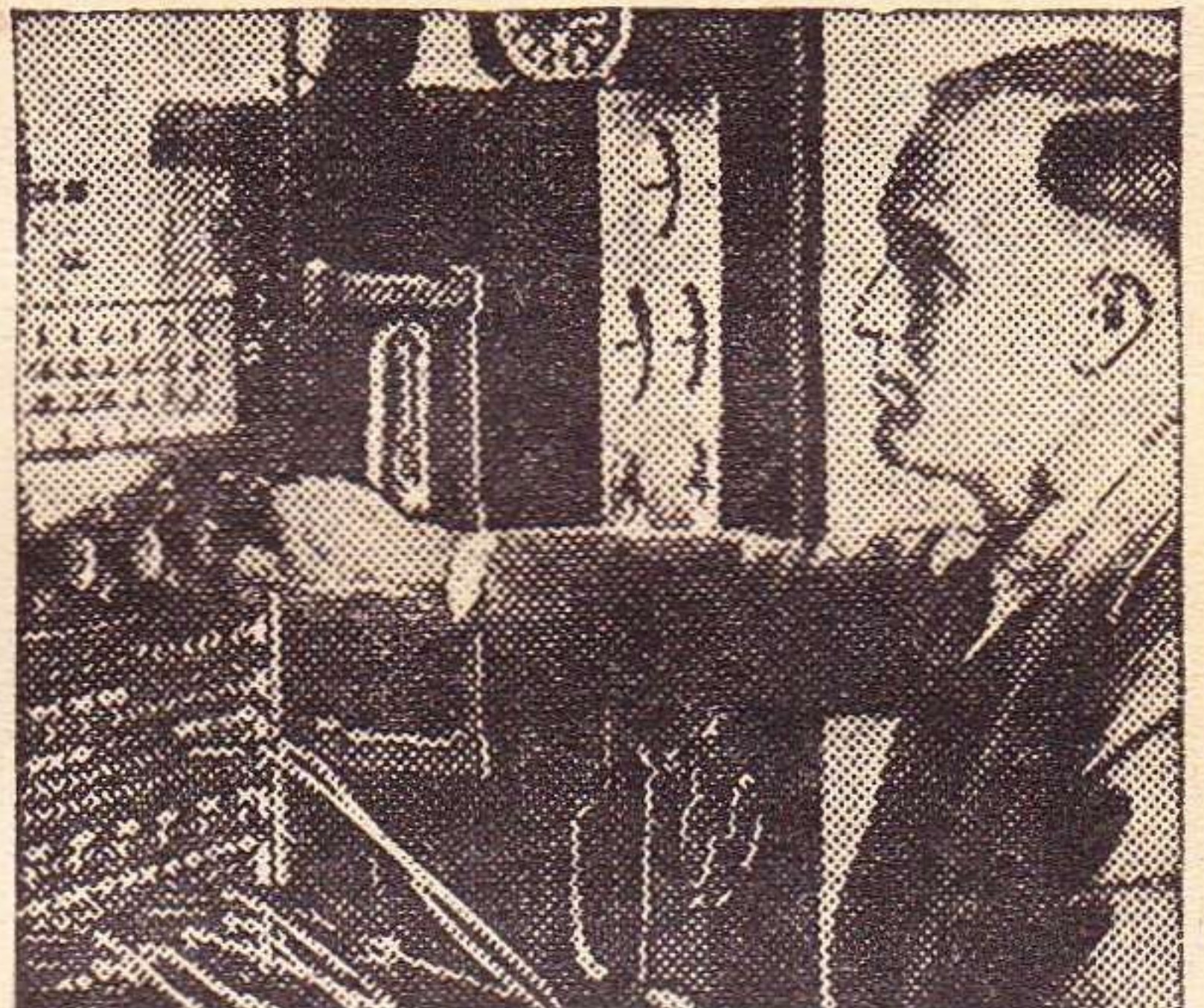
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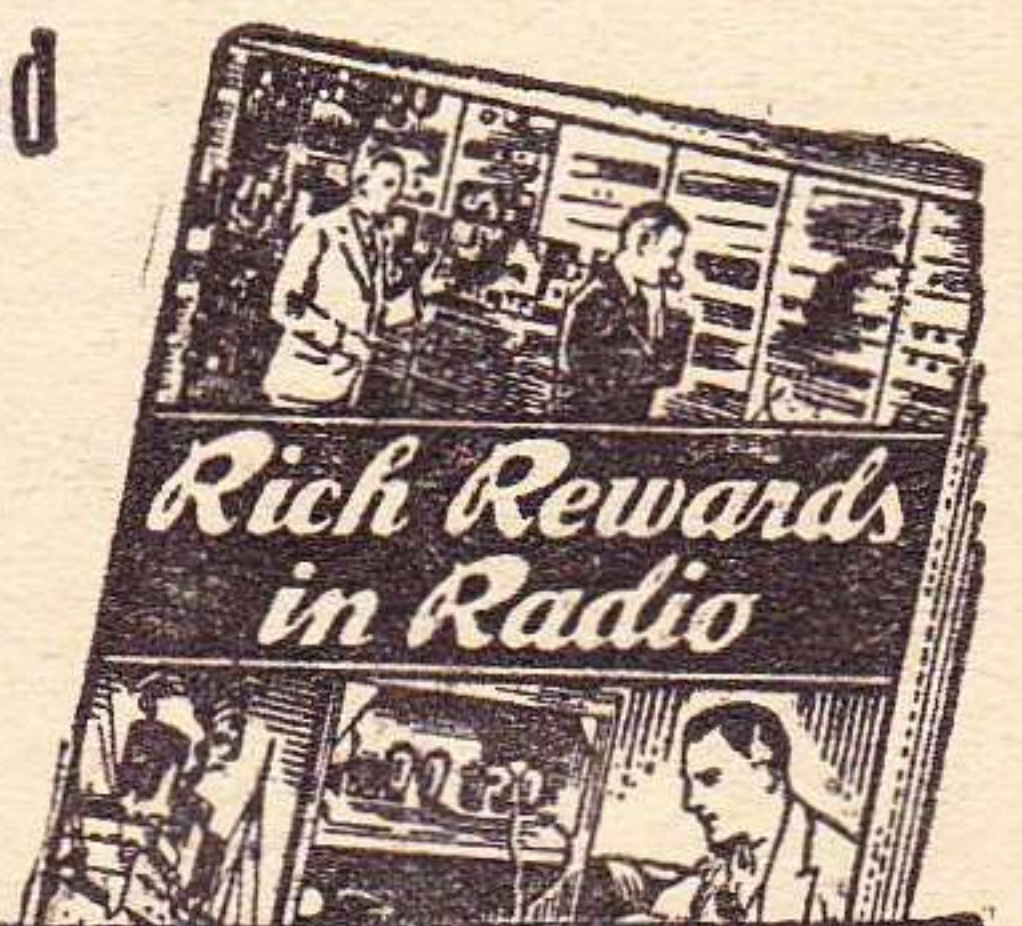
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men make
more money



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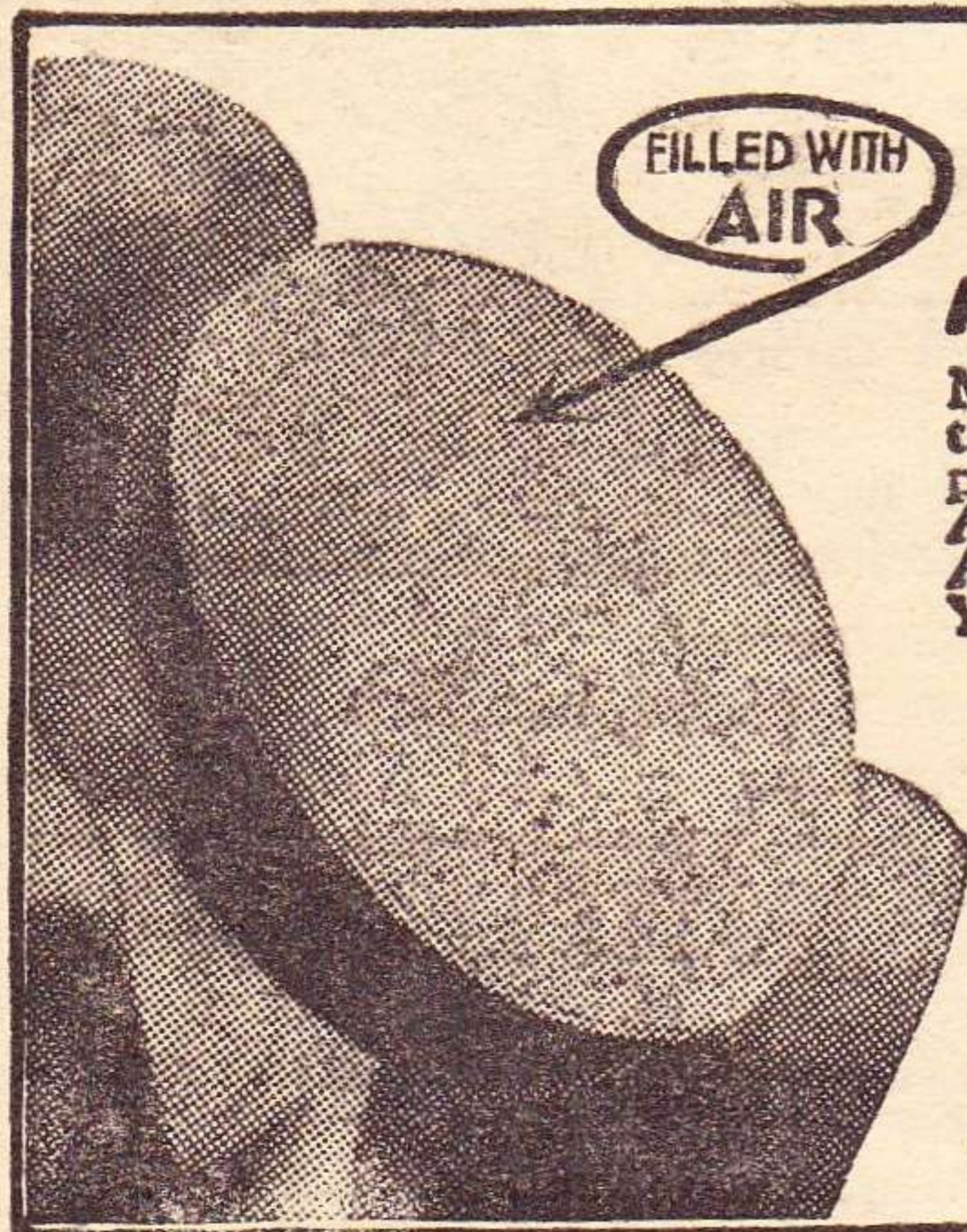
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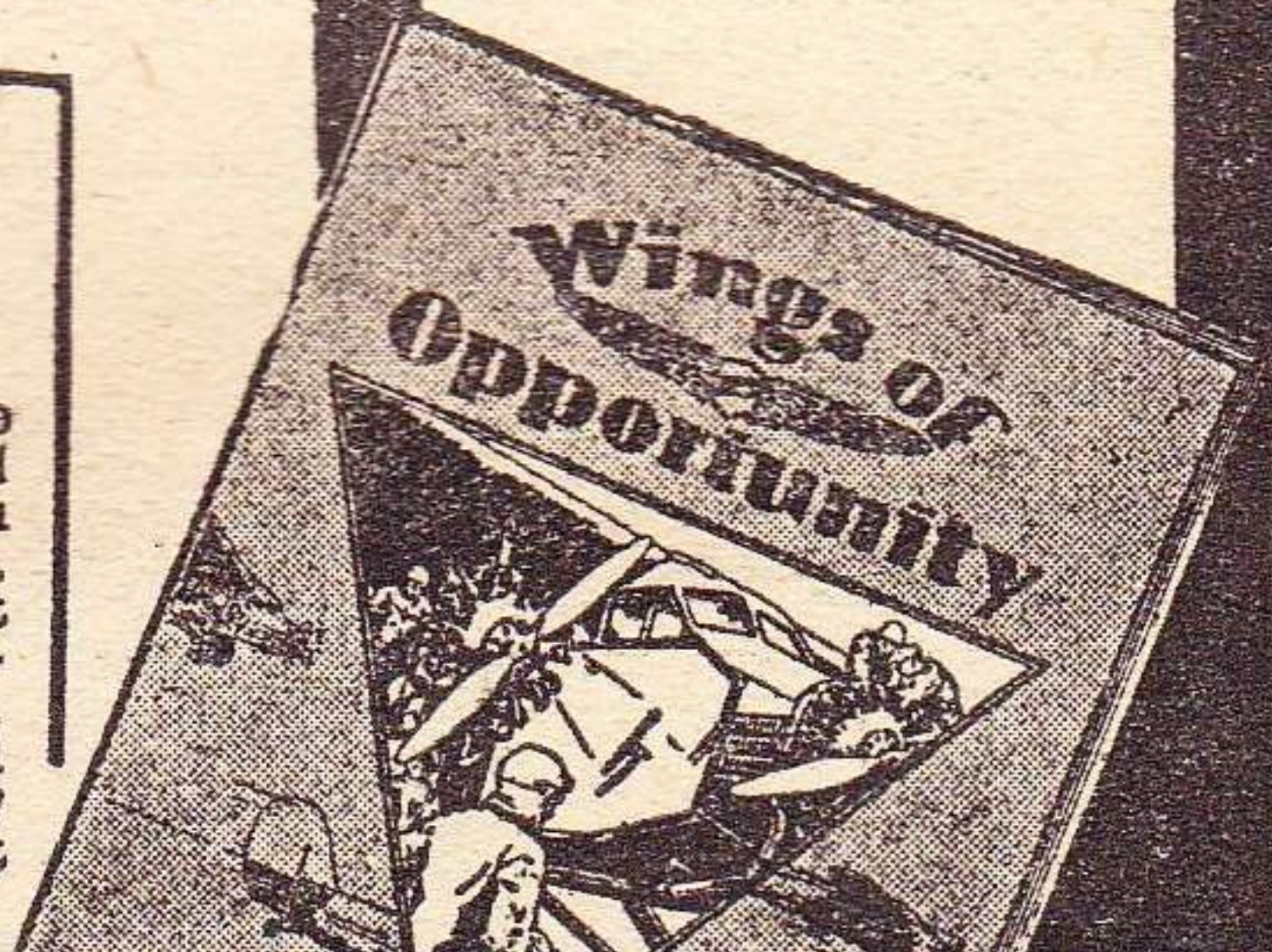


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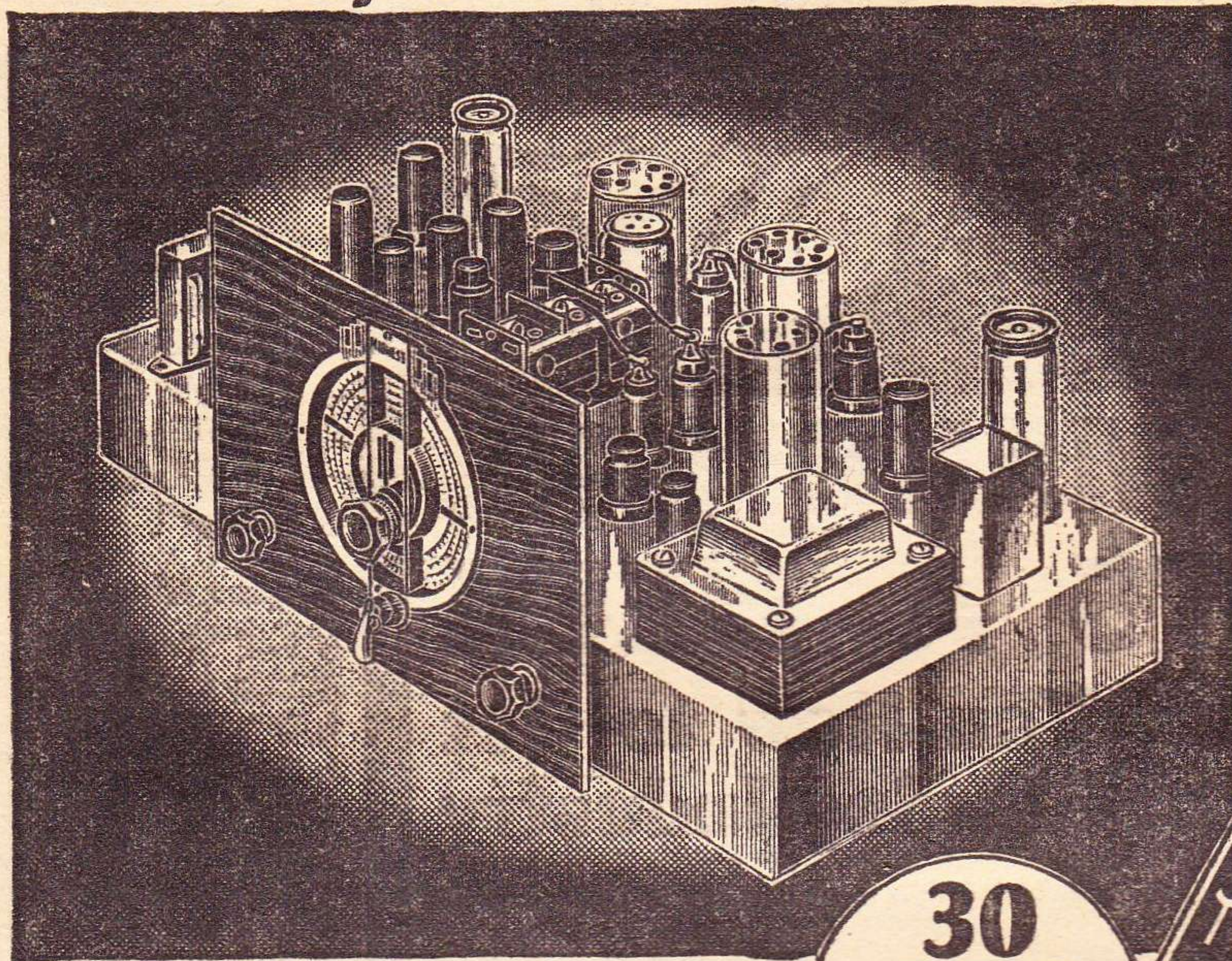
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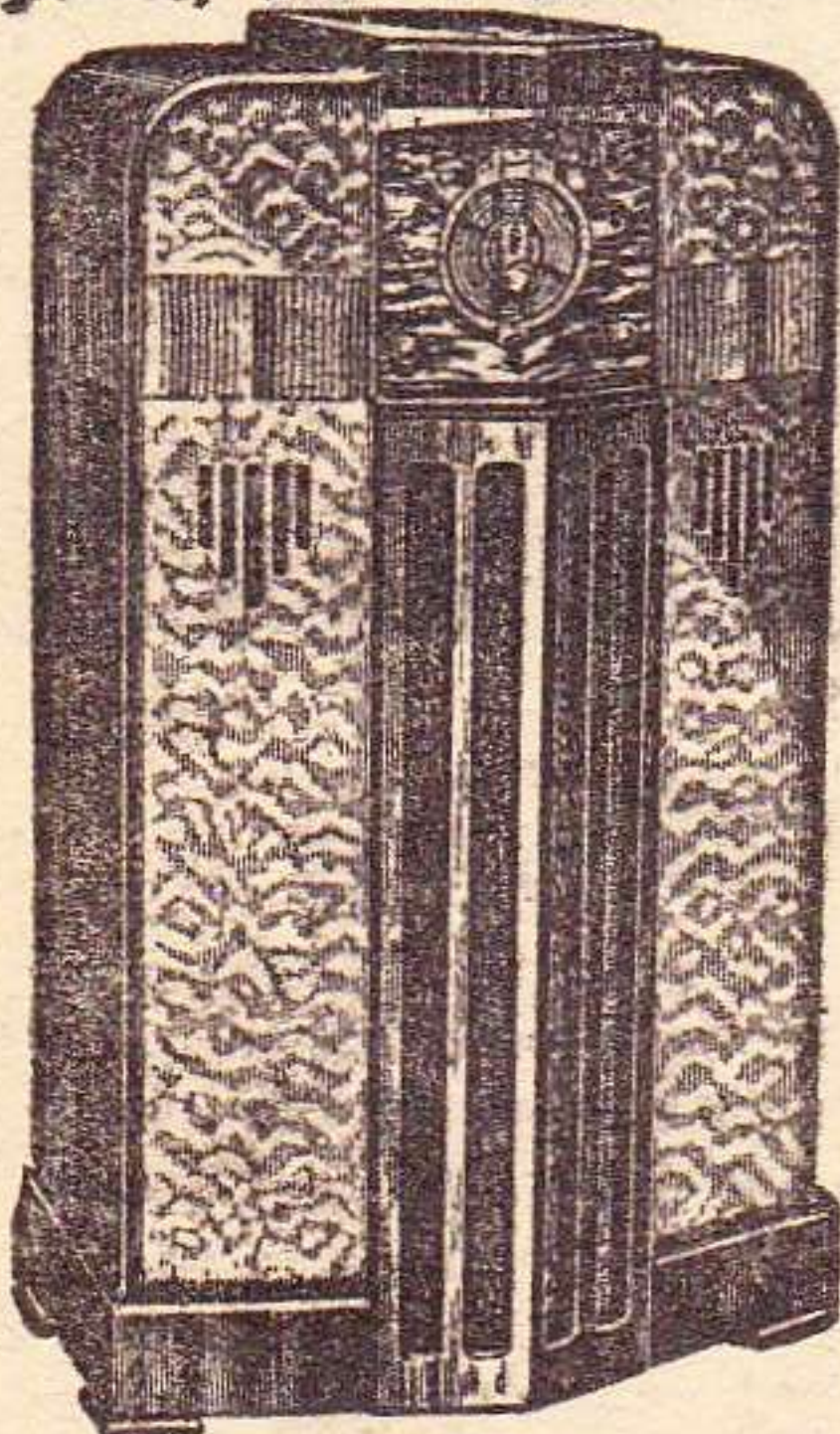
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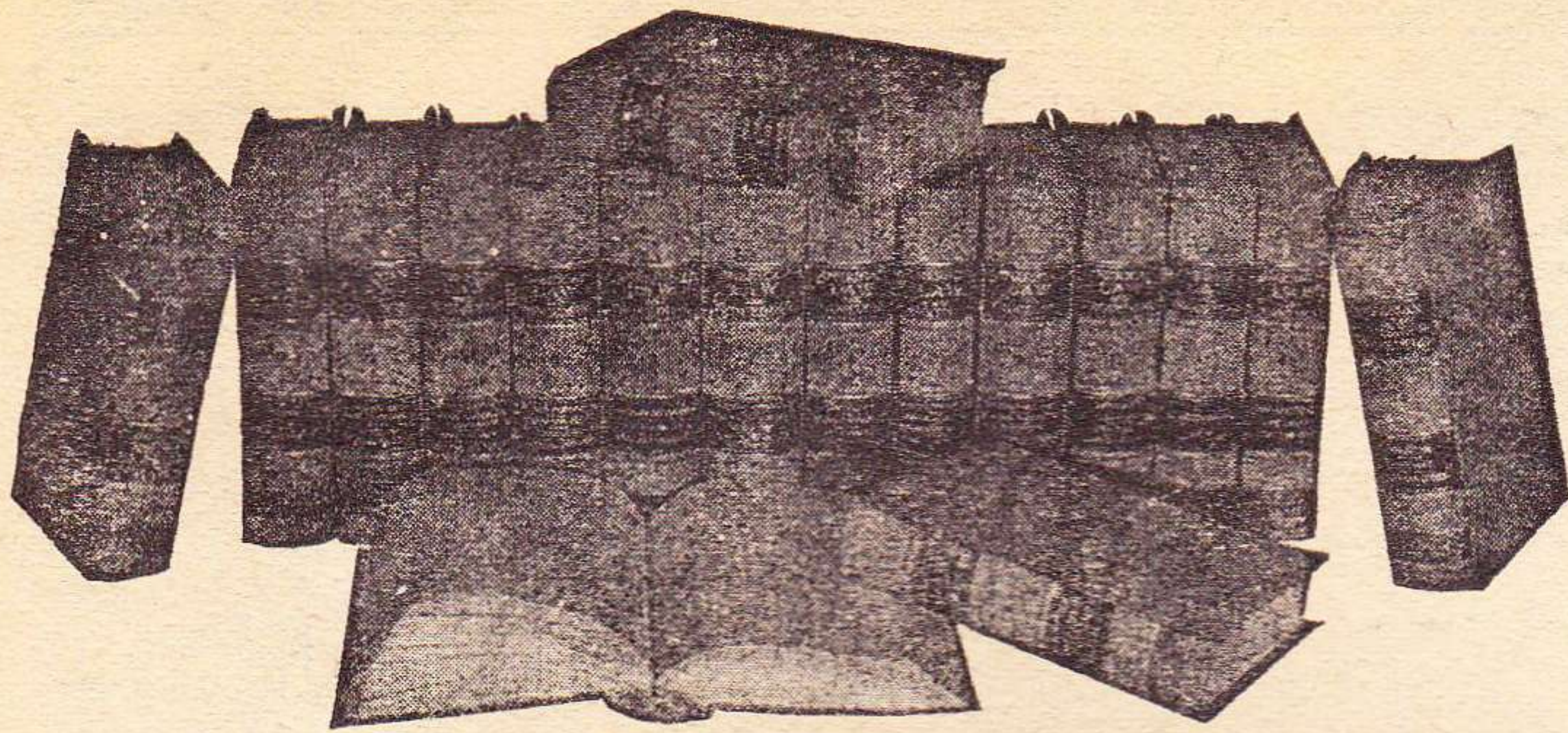
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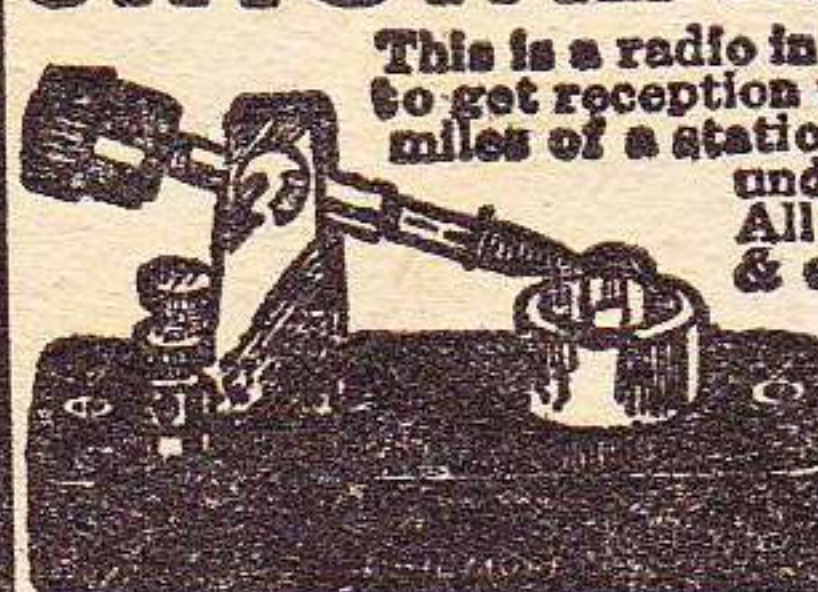


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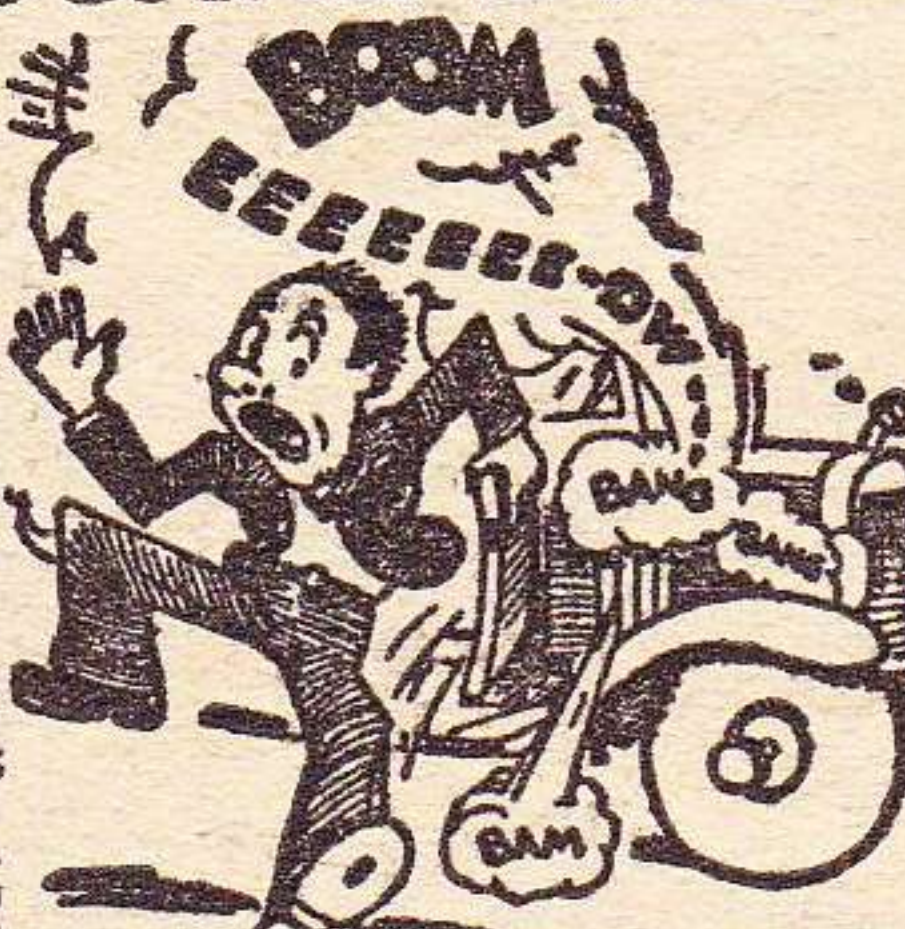
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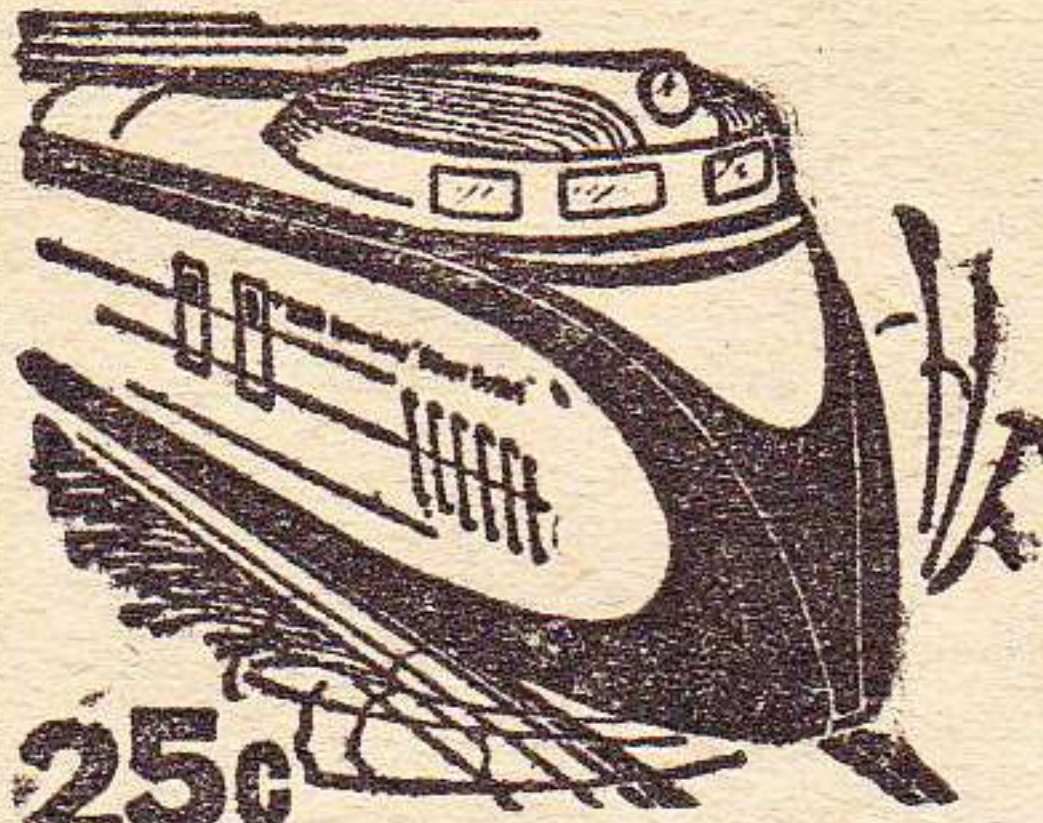
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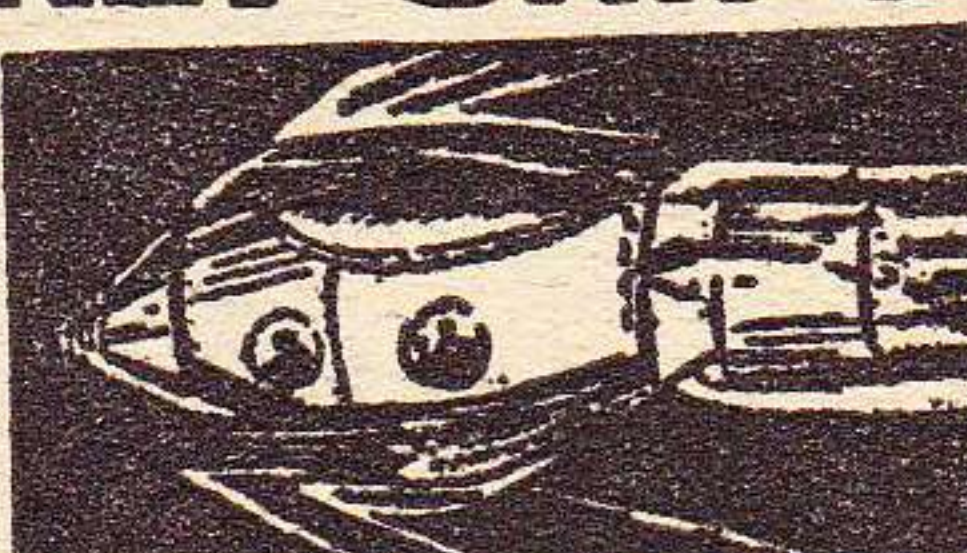
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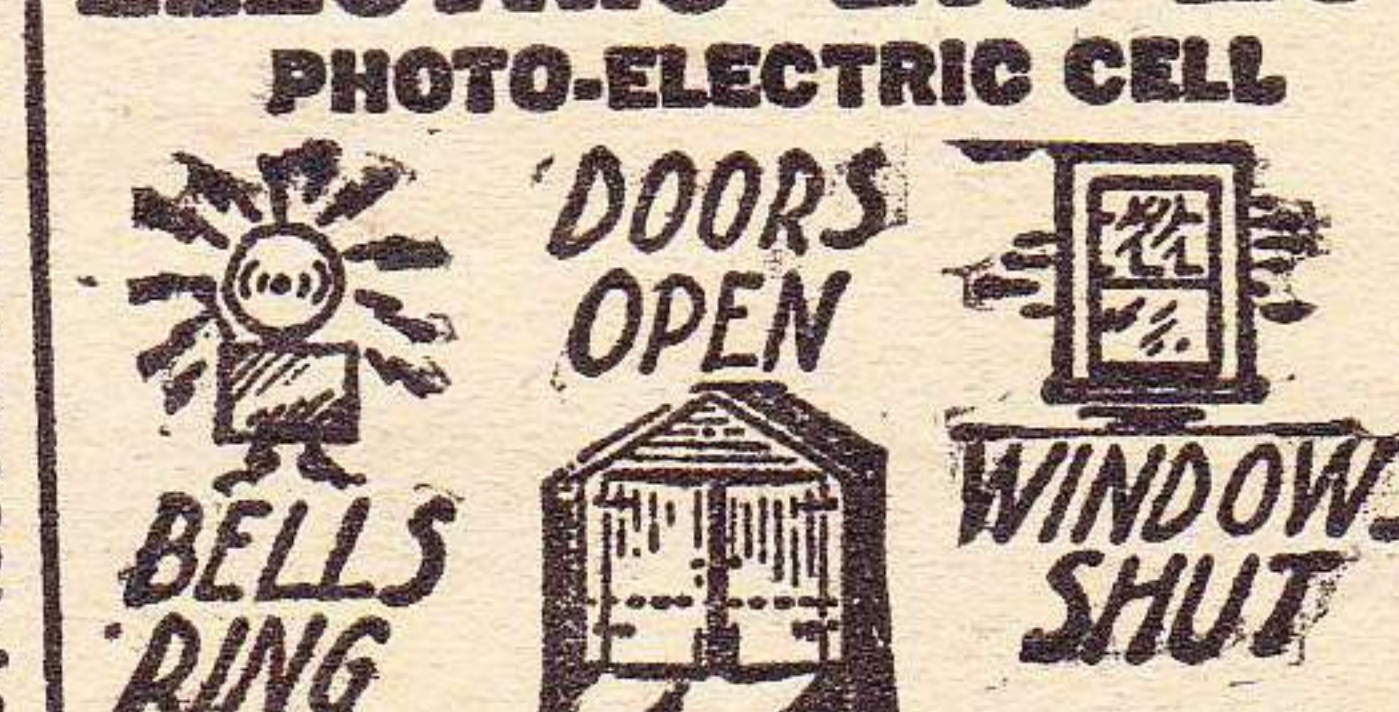
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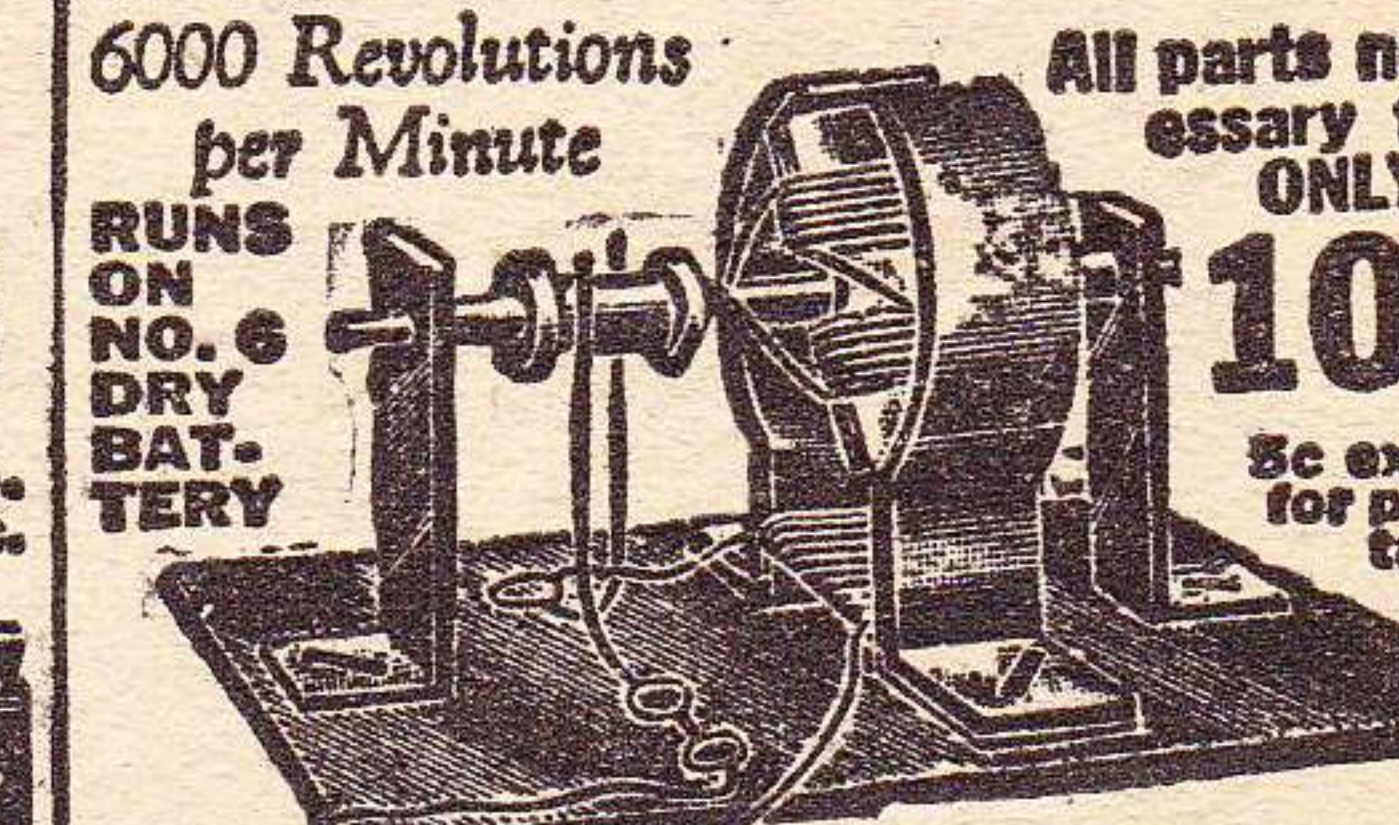
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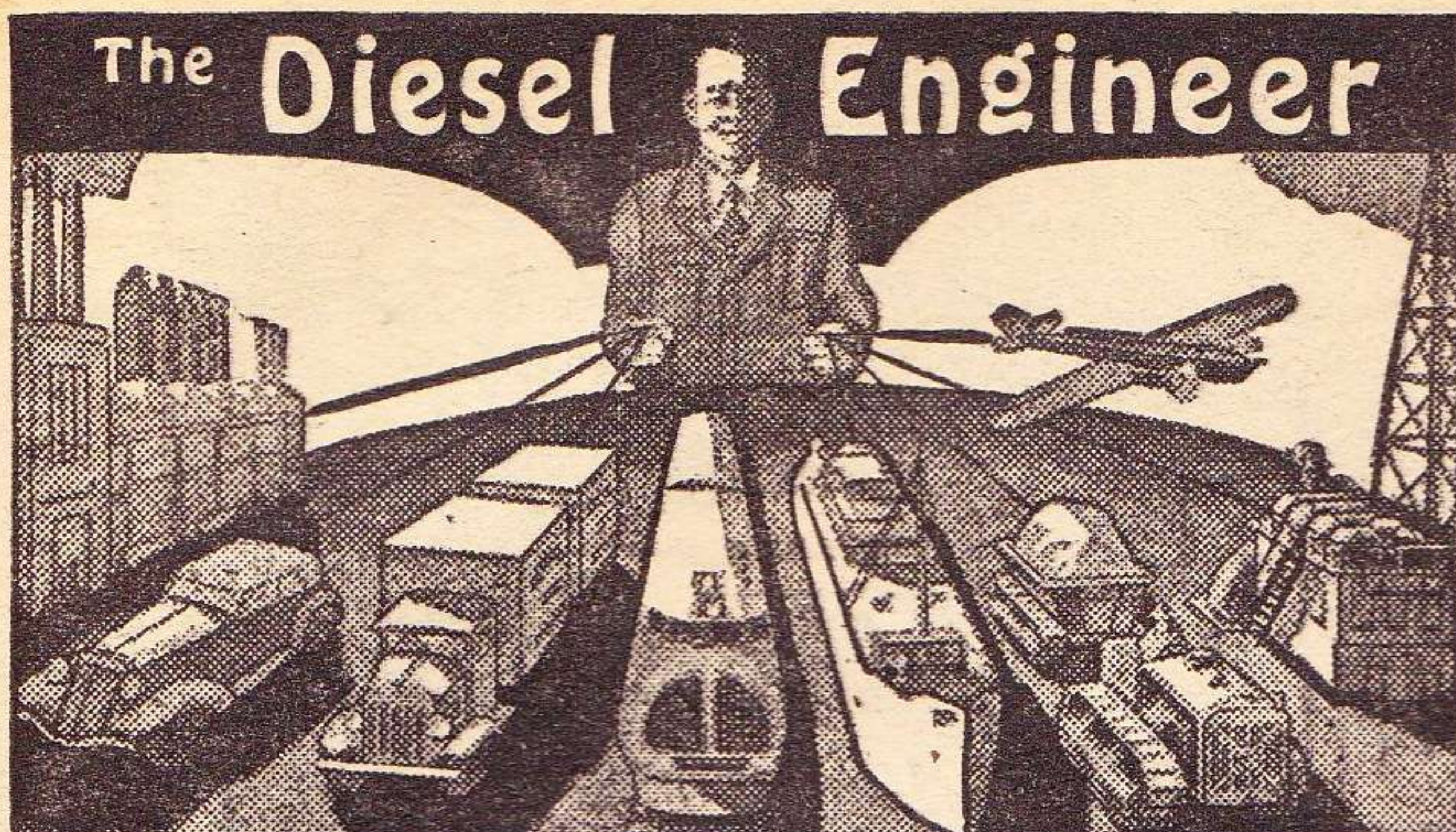
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By C. K. M.

Author of "Big Shot,"

CHAPTER I

Reign of Terror

GANG lightning strikes three times. In three great cities of the United States mobsters move in, terrorizing, looting, killing—smashing through state lines, defying the majesty of the Government, ruthlessly disregarding the rights of the law-abiding. . . .

It is morning. Union Station, St. Louis.

Under the sooted glass and steel-ribbed canopy human beings heading for a hundred destinations make criss-crossing paths on the cement apron to

Dan Fowler Takes a Lesson in Death

MURDER

A complete
G-MEN novel



Knucks Melton to the warden (Page 16)

SCANLON

"King Crime," etc.

and from the train gates. Engines breathe throatily as their driving wheels start. Steam hisses, rises, melts into the atmosphere. Couplings clank. Wheels grate against steel rails. Dispatchers bawl the names of a score of cities. Hordes stream in and out of waiting rooms.

"All aboard!"

There is the happiness of arrival, the sorrow of departure. Comedy—pathos—tragedy. And here are the beginnings of drama. Stark, cold, bitter drama.

A neatly dressed woman in her late twenties holds the hand of a boy of



from the Masked Dean's Course in Crime!

five. The lad is alert and curious. He points to a briskly walking group of four men as they move across the apron toward a gate bearing the legend: "Kansas Special."

"Mummy," he asks, "why are those two men locked together by the hands?"

"One of the men has done something wrong and is going to jail," she says. "Never mind that, honey. Your daddy's almost here. See, there's the train!"

A string of cars is being backed down the rails. Air brakes scrape. The cars clank to a halt. There is the hiss of escaping steam.

The mother has turned her eyes from Herbert Frawley, tall, lean, grimly good-looking Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, shackled to dour, heavy-featured "Knucks" Melton, heading for a life sentence at Leavenworth. Knucks Melton is ex-leader and sole survivor of the notorious Harper-Magnin gang, wholesalers in murder, kidnaping and robbery. Balmer and Billings, of the St. Louis police department, are the men in plainclothes who walk behind the G-man and his charge.

It all happens in a trice—

Among the travelers are five men, all at strategic points. Hard-faced they are. They, too, carry suitcases.

Suddenly, with a signal from one of the men, those cases drop open, exposing tommy guns. Special Agent Frawley has been trained to have eager, searching eyes. As the five men, scattered about him and his escort and his charge, act, he whips his free right hand to his shoulder holster. He has been ordered to deliver Knucks Melton into the hands of the warden at Leavenworth—and he'll do it or die—true to tradition.

Rat-tat-tat. . . .

An ominous chattering bites through the air—stills the other man-made sounds in the station.

Hot lead cuts into Billings and Balmer. Frawley fires—A mobster—the hood who has opened up—shudders, plops forward on his face over the tommy gun. Some spectators flee

for the shelter of anything, like rats when the lights go on. Others are frozen by fear—staring at what seems unreal to them. They can't understand this. Not so quickly. Their expressions are ludicrous.

Hood number two trips his trigger and his gun splatters lead. Frawley's gun belches an answer.

But he's slow this time. A bullet knocks him sideward. Billings is writhing in his own blood. Balmer is strangely still, a brownish-scarlet patch splashed over his white face.

Another gun cuts loose.

The little boy screams—sees his father running onto the apron. Instinct and terror propel his feet as he breaks from his mother—darts across the apron for protection—his father's arms.

"Daddy! Daddy!"

He plunges into the chopping path of bullets.

A strange pained, puzzled look twists his small features as he falters. He falls face downward, knotted grotesquely.

The chatter of the gun dies. The slaughter is over. In that one brief instant of silence there is the heart-rending wail from the boy's mother.

Three hoods train their guns on the crowd. A fourth gets the keys to the manacles from the ring of the now inert Frawley, unlocks them. Melton runs to the fallen mobster, snatches up the tommy after rolling him off it. He joins the four. They march from the station. The snouts of their weapons menace the bystanders. No one does anything.

All have seen death. None wishes to feel it. The men go through an exit, break into a run as they hit the street. They pile into a sedan.

MINNEAPOLIS. The Hennepin National Bank. Tellers look up from work shortly before noon and find themselves staring into the muzzles of five guns.

"Stick 'em up!" snaps the leader.

The bank has been cased. Each bandit knows exactly what it is all about. Hawklike, they watch for a single move toward an alarm button

as the leader goes forward, orders the cashier to open the vaults. A man follows him with a pistol and a bag to scoop in the loot.

The others advance on the tellers, order them to push out the bills in their cages.

"Step on it!" the leader orders. The cashier appears to him to be an unusually dumb fellow. But he isn't. He's groping for an alarm button beneath the rug in his small office. He's a grey-haired man. He's been with the bank thirty-five years now and feels a personal responsibility in the matter.

Bank customers are lined against one wall. The cashier presses his button. Two things happen. A call goes into Headquarters. Tear gas starts pouring from vents overhead, snakes down into the big room like a fog. This heartens a guard, who whips out a pistol, ready to fight now.

The leader knows what the cashier has done. "Here's pay for that!" he snarls.

The gun cracks. The cashier grabs at his stomach, whirls, falls across the desk. His muscles spasmodically jerk him from it and he topples to the floor. The leader turns away.

The guard takes a shot at the leader. The bullet whispers by, crunches into the chest of one of the mobsters. The leader cracks down. A spurt of flame. Another shot reverberates. The guard spins, crashes to the stone floor, his gun scuttling across it.

"Lam!" This from the leader.

Just one word. The customers and the tellers and the bandits are choking from the gas now. Sirens are screaming down the street outside. There's no time to be lost. Four bandits, including the leader, race madly from the bank, clutching at their small loot. A fifth lies gasping on the floor, calling vainly for aid from his fellows. It's every man for himself now, and the much-vaunted gang loyalty is forgotten.

A police car careens into the thoroughfare on two wheels just as the bandit car whirls from the curb. The narrow valley of the city becomes an inferno. Guns crack. It's wild shoot-

ing as the fleeing hoodlums blaze from the car windows—as the car full of cops blast at their quarry.

The chase goes to sixty miles an hour. Lead crashes into the back of the bandit car. More lead splatters against the radiator, the windshield of the pursuing car as motors roar. Faster and faster until the flanking buildings are a blur. A chance shot rips,



burrows into the rubber of the right front tire on the police sedan. The driver fights the wheel as the car careens. He can't control the wild whipping, lashing skid. The car lurches full to one side, finally, and before he can straighten out it hurtles over the curbing, across the sidewalk, and crashes through the plate glass window of a cigar store.

The chase is over.

The bullet-scarred bandit car races onward.

The driver has his orders. He knows just where to go. He tools the car there. Another is waiting, fueled, ready for action. The men wordlessly make the change. They drive off in the fresh vehicle, abandoning the damaged crate. Instructions read to get out of Minneapolis if there has been any kind of a slip-up. . . .

NEW YORK CITY. Night. The fog lowers until it is snicked by the wavelets of the bay, the Hudson and East Rivers and the Sound. It swallows noise, even dampens the deep-throated horns of tugs, liners and ferries which creep and fumble toward their docks.

The right kind of a night for those on the wrong side of the law.

A speedboat rolls slowly up the Hudson off the docks at Fourteenth

Street. The motor, capable of 500 roaring horsepower, is throttled back until its exhaust is only a blubber. Tense men in boots, oilskins and hats pulled far down over their eyes, peer into the murk. The men are armed with machine-guns and pistols. They are playing hide-and-seek with the law.

Cutting across the speedboat's course is a revenue cutter, ghostly, drifting through the night, wallowing in the slight swell, her armed crew searching, listening. Suddenly from the lookout at the prow of the cutter comes the cry:

"There she is! Speedboat to port!"

Only a few yards separate the two ships. The cutter's searchlight, a blinding figure, bites into the wall of fog.



"Look out, Guts! They're on us again!" comes the hoarse cry of alarm from the speedboat.

"Surrender or we fire!" comes the cry from the cutter.

"T' hell wit' ya!" is the defying challenge.

Guns crash into the night. Spurts of orange flame come from the cutter. Lead sprays the speedboat. And from the speedboat answers the ominous chattering of a machine-gun.

For an instant the man at the prow of the cutter is silhouetted by the pencil beam of the flashlight. A man on the speedboat tightens his hold on the front grip of his gun. His trigger finger contracts.

The lookout screams, falls backward, crashes to the deck of the cutter. The pilot of the gangster-laden speedster stamps down on the throttle. The whispering motor leaps into life. The prow leaps forward, the

stern dips as the propeller winds up. It is off—ploughing into the fog-shrouded night.

Gangdom has had its day.

The relentless chase starts—the coordinated pursuit with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Department of Justice, taking the lead, with state and local police coöperating. Teletype machines beat staccato descriptions of this orgy of crime over a cobweb of wires to the F. B. I. headquarters in Washington.

There keen-eyed young men ferret out facts, trace clues, classify evidence, bring into play the greatest of all crime laboratories and the greatest of all crime detecting agencies in the world.

Yes, gang lightning has struck—and the United States Government is preparing, in short minutes and hours, to fight back.

A youngish man, with hair greytinged at the temples, with alert eyes and alert mind—the chief of the Bureau—snaps orders. The men who know him, who almost worship him, who get from him his fine devotion to duty and to the Government which has given him full authority to fight gang terrorism with its own weapons, leap willingly to their appointed tasks.

More public enemies have challenged them—and they have accepted that challenge!

CHAPTER II

One Gigantic Mob?



THE director of the F. B. I., his dark eyes flashing fire, ran his hand through his hair and pondered. Before him lay three detailed reports over which he had been poring. They had been tabulated expertly as they had come by teletype, straight wire and airplane from St. Louis, St. Paul and New York City.

He pressed a button on his desk. A trim, alert youth responded.

"Send in Special Agent Fowler!" the chief ordered.

Each case was a Bureau matter—and a serious one—demanding the attention of his most skilled and reliable operative.

Special Agent Frawley had been killed at St. Louis and a Federal prisoner had been released from custody—both items which made his blood boil. In Minneapolis, a national bank had been raided. In New York City an agent of the Department of Internal Revenue had been coldly shot down on Government property—a United States customs patrol boat.

Fowler entered, a wide, sincere smile on his face as he surveyed his chief—the man he considered "tops" among all the men he knew. The director looked up at his most trusted special agent, two-gunned, two-fisted, raw-boned Fowler.

"Sit down!" boomed the director. "It looks like this'll be the last sitting you'll do for some time. We've got the hardest job yet, Fowler. That's why I sent for you."

Fowler beamed for an instant at this expression of confidence in his ability—caught the warmth of sincere feeling behind the cold, official tone. He took a chair near the director's desk. Then his lips tightened into a grim line.

"That's the way it looks, sir," he replied, "from the reports."

He studied the map on the wall. As he looked at each pin-point, with the name of the city near it, he thought of the hazardous hours he had spent—saw as on a motion picture screen the re-enactment of the desperate skirmishes he had had in the campaign to rid America of human rats—the greatest peace-time battle in the history of the Stars and Stripes. He and the chief had fought side by side—even though at times they were more than three thousand miles apart.

"I've called you in because, frankly, I'm puzzled," the chief admitted. "You're the one man who can help me. Glad to hear you've read all the reports."

Dan thought of the long association he had had with this man who sat



Dan Fowler

before him—this man, destined to command, to conquer—and of the friendship he had had with Frawley, the agent killed at St. Louis.

"Frawley was a pal of mine," Dan said slowly. "He was a trusted agent. You were fond of him. If there wasn't any other reason, I'd want you to know what it was all about. There are some more rats who need to have their teeth pulled."

"Right—we all feel that way," said the chief, his brisk manner softening for an instant. "It seems impossible—but I think that the killing of Frawley can be linked, somehow, with the other crimes. It looks as if a new public enemy has risen to challenge us, Fowler. Another one of those warp-brained, criminally-inspired, gold-hungry maniacs who believe they are bigger than the flag which waves over them."

The chief paused. Then: "What do you think, Fowler?"

In answer Fowler rose, went to a huge map on the wall and pointed to St. Louis.

"LET'S consider the St. Louis case, chief," he said. "Fingerprints of the gangster slain in the station by Frawley, sent here by air mail, identify him as Bugs Malloy, a New

York gangster. The man escaped in a car with New York license plates lifted from another bus, a hot car stolen in northern New York. Look here—here's Indianapolis, on a direct line between St. Louis and New York City. What happens? A sheriff spots the car going east between Indianapolis and Richmond, Indiana, gives chase and loses the gang. There's no proof, but my guess is that the car's bound for New York—"

The director nodded.

"In the Minneapolis robbery, the only fingerprints found—those on the right front window of the abandoned car—also shot here by air mail—have been shown to be those of Two-Gun Martin, a notorious Bronx hoodlum, rumored to be the trigger man of Dutch Schultz before he was bumped in Newark. The police there got a look at the bandits. They say that with the exception of the wounded local public enemy, Shadow Tate, who won't talk, the men were out-of-towners. So much for that—"

"You're making this darned interesting," said the director. "Go on."

"Well—in the New York case, we've run through the cards in the identification and card-sorting machine. The indication is that when one of the men on the speedboat shouted to 'Guts' he meant 'Guts' Hogan. The identification card shows that this fellow is a boat pilot and that he's been picked up as a smuggling suspect several times. He has served time for waterfront crimes, such as looting docks. Now, summing it all up—"

The director smiled.

"Summing it all up, you think that you should go to New York City. I'm inclined to agree with you, Fowler. If the thing is as big as you think it is, the work of the various field offices will have to be coördinated, which is a tough assignment. You're the best man to handle it. Got any other ideas?"

"Yes, chief. I've another reason for feeling that not only is the gang headquarters in New York City, but that one head is guiding it. First of all, Knucks Melton was washed up. He had no more mob. We'd wiped out

all his pals in one way or another. When an attempt was made to free Frank Nash at Kansas City, his pals were responsible. Now, the only person who would want Melton would be someone who put a mighty high value on his talents and experience. Remember that at the time we picked him up in connection with the Herschel case we had him listed as public enemy number one. He's one of the cleverest crooks in America.

"Glance over the records. Melton was heading for the pen. Everyone of the known members of the mobs—Bugs Malloy, Two-Gun Martin and Guts Hogan, of New York City—Shadow Tate, of Minneapolis—had served time. All had gotten out of prisons, either by parole or discharge, during the past few months. They utterly disappeared from the face of the earth almost immediately after leaving jails. Police usually keep track of such men. I've checked up and found out that the police lost their trails twenty-four hours after they were freed. It's darned mysterious."

The jangle of the telephone interrupted him. The chief snapped the instrument to his ear.

"Hello! Yes. Oh, yes. John Blakeslee Conovan, of New York City? The importer?"

The conversation lasted for several minutes. When it was over, the director turned to Fowler.

"We've got the first break," he said, crisply. "It bears out your theory, at least in part. Conovan, head of Conovan and Company, New York, one of the biggest firms of its kind in the world—has just given me a red-hot lead. He won't say much over the telephone. Seems to be afraid of something. I could hardly hear him, his voice was so weak. Get this! He explained that he'd been reading the newspapers and that he was sure that Bugs Malloy, the hood killed in the St. Louis massacre, whose picture he saw in the *New York Times*, is a man he observed in the home of one of his wealthy friends. That was all he would say, but he indicated that the circumstances were mysterious.

Thought we should have the information, as he's a stickler for law and order. Honorary inspector in the New York police department, I believe. He wants to see a special agent at once. You're the man, Fowler. Hop a plane and get the lowdown from him. It may mean a clean-up of the case—"

"Right, chief—and one thing more."

"Yes?"

"The reports indicate that the St. Louis case is pretty well washed up. However, we're wide open in Minneapolis. I'd like to have Larry Kendal hop up there and give Shadow Tate a working over. I'd also like to have him give the bandit car the once-over. He sees things that others don't. There may be plenty of leads. He can work with the men from the St. Paul field offices."

Larry Kendal, dapper, debonair, looking more like a play-boy than a Government agent, had proved his mettle in many of the cases which had resulted in triumph for the Bureau and for Dan Fowler. Alert, intelligent, willing, and as fast with his mind as he was with his guns, he was a valuable ally to the muscular, athletic Fowler.

"Very well," said the director.

"By the way—where's Conovan and Company located?"

"Fourteenth Street—"

"H'm—" observed Dan. "It was off Fourteenth Street that the revenue cutter clashed with the speedboat, wasn't it?"

CHAPTER III

Fowler Is Trapped



DAN FOWLER pushed the brass doorbell button at the luxurious, glass-fronted West End Avenue home of John Blakeslee Conovan. It was six o'clock at night. He had come directly to the place from Newark airport.

As the butler opened the door, one



Knucks Melton

penetrating glance by Dan made him aware of the fact that the butler was beside himself with terror. Beyond the menial he saw the hostile stares of two New York City bluecoats. He knew immediately, with a sharp pang of apprehension, that something had gone wrong in the Conovan household.

"I'd like to see Mr. Conovan," he said.

"I'm very sorry—" the butler hesitated. "Mr. Conovan is—er—indisposed—"

"I'm sure he'll see me," snapped Dan. "He sent for me. I just flew in from Washington. I'm Special Agent Daniel Fowler, of the Department of Justice—"

The butler gasped.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, awed. "A G-man. That's different, sir! Come in!"

He opened the door. Dan stepped across the threshold. The police came forward through the large and beautifully appointed reception hall. Dan displayed his badge to them.

"What's gone wrong?" he asked.

"Conovan's dead," said one. "Looks like suicide. He's upstairs—front room."

Dan pushed his way past the men,

vaulted the steps three at a time. He introduced himself to Inspector Charles Walsh, of the New York police department, met Medical Examiner Norris, and two detectives.

"What's the story?" he asked Walsh.

WALSH explained briefly that the butler had gone upstairs to serve the millionaire importer his tea at five-thirty o'clock, had knocked, and had received no answer. He had found the door bolted from the inside. He had gone away, only to return, troubled, to try to get an answer from his employer without any result.

"Then he called us, and Conovan's offices," Walsh said. "We just arrived. We had to force the bolt on the door." He pointed to the sprung mechanism. "Conovan was hanging to the chandelier there, just as he is now. We haven't touched the body."

Dan looked. The appalling, ghastly sight of the body of Conovan, death's hand giving it a scarecrow appearance, was before him.

"I'm interested in the case," Dan explained, "because Conovan might have proved a valuable witness to the Government. Under these circumstances, I think I've the right to ask permission to investigate. What's your theory, Inspector?"

"Suicide," said the square-toed officer. "Can't be anything else. Body found hanging from the chandelier. Door locked from the inside. Windows locked from the inside. Butler's been on duty all afternoon. Hasn't heard a thing. Nobody's entered or left the house."

"Got a motive?"

"Not yet—that'll turn up, probably, when his associates from Conovan and Company arrive. They're due any minute."

Inwardly, Dan scoffed at the idea of self-destruction. Men didn't call the F. B. I. offices and then kill themselves. And, right on top of this, he supplied a motive for murder—to keep Conovan's mouth shut! With a motive on which to work, he had the first big problem hurdled.

"Mind if I take a look around?"

"Help yourself," said Walsh, "and go as far as you like."

Dan first turned his attention to the rope. It was clothesline rope. A chair had been kicked over beneath the body, indicating that Conovan had climbed onto it, had affixed the rope to the chandelier, and had stepped from it, kicking it over in his death struggle. Dan righted it gingerly, climbed onto it, studied the clothesline. He started.

"Where's this rope from?" he asked.

"Found it cut from a coil on the service porch," offered one of the detectives.

"Oh!"

Dan got down from the chair. He went to the door, examining the jamb carefully. He pulled a knife from his pocket, scraped the paint, exclaimed to himself. By this time he had the interest of the police. They were watching him closely. Then he turned to Walsh.

"Any fingerprints?"

"No," was the reply.

"Did you check the inside of the doorknob?"

"Not yet."

"Please have one of your men try some powder on it."

He left the room, walked down the hallway toward the rear of the house, stepping into first one bedroom and then another. The house was built flat against the sides of the houses to north and south. This, to Dan, meant that the place could have been entered only from the front and rear. He examined the windows of the rear chamber, opening into an areaway, and one attracted his attention. Then he went back to the living room study.

"Find any prints?" he asked the detective.

"Not a single print!" the man exclaimed, mystified.

"It's quite simple," Dan said. "Someone wiped that inside doorknob with a cloth. If it hadn't been wiped, the prints of Conovan would be on it. He would have had to close the door before bolting it. He had used the room many times. What happened? Conovan came into his study."

He closed the door, perhaps, and turned his attention to his affairs at his desk, probably. You men crashed in, bending the bolt. Your fingers touched the outside knob, perhaps—but not the one *inside*. Gentlemen, between the time Conovan entered this room and the time you entered it, he was *murdered*."

"PREPOSTEROUS!" snorted Walsh.

Dan told him to climb onto the chair. He did so. Dan next told him to examine the rope.

"The clothesline is over the chandelier," Dan said to the others. "If Conovan had taken his own life, the cotton fibers would have been pressed against the rope where the knot slipped from the down pull—the weight of Conovan's body. But, at the point where the rope crosses the chandelier, the fibers are brushed upward and away from the line, indicating that the rope was first placed around his neck and that he was pulled off his feet before the knot was made. No man can pull his weight up like that. That's point number one."

"Fowler seems to be right about it," Walsh said as he examined the fibers. "The rope *has* been roughed up. But, Fowler—what about the bolted door?"

"It's an old trick," the G-man replied. "Come here and I'll show you."

He pulled out his knife, opened it. The men gathered around him as he scraped the knob of the bolt and the paint on the jamb of the door. Minute, dully glowing particles appeared on the blade.

"Wax," said Dan. "The killers—there must have been at least two to do the job—after hanging Conovan, apparently went over all surfaces with cloths to wipe off fingerprints—a serious mistake in the case of the doorknob, as I've shown. Then one took out a waxed string. He wrapped the string around the knob of the bolt. The men stepped into the hallway, drawing the string between the door and the jamb. The door was closed.

"The wax formed a lubricating film to assure the trick working. The

killer jerked the string once. The bolt shot forward, slipped into its anchorage. The door was bolted from the inside. He allowed play in the string, which loosened up around the bolt. He jerked a second time and the string came free."

"How'd they get into the house?"

Dan led the way to the rear bedroom. The slightest of marks revealed that a flat, hooked blade had been used to open the catch which held the upper and lower sashes—and then had been used to close it again.

"Now do you get it?" asked Dan.

"I do," said Walsh. The others nodded agreement.

The men were wonderingly discussing the case when the butler appeared in the hallway.

"The men from the office have come," he said. "They're in the drawing room."

Dan, Walsh, Dr. Norris and the others went downstairs. Dan surveyed the group which had gathered there. First came the butler, Rankin, tall, sleek-haired and saturnine. Then Arthur Belden, a large, lean fellow with an exuberant, self-satisfied look about him. Dan was introduced to him and learned that he was a widely known corporation lawyer, handling the personal affairs of John Blakeslee Conovan and the legal business of Conovan and Company. Beside him was Rutherford Conovan, partner in the firm, thinner than his brother, who lay dead on the second floor study—gaunter and sharper of feature, too.

The face of the next man, Jarrett Crandall, general manager of the firm, was heavily lined, either from dissipation or worry, Dan thought. He was distinguished-looking, grey at the temples. Buford Tennant, vice-president and general sales manager, who spent most of his time traveling throughout the United States, was sharp of eye, alert, six feet of poorly concealed nervousness. Last came Rutherford Conovan, Jr., a sallow-faced, small-chinned, unsteady-eyed young man of about twenty-five.

Dan questioned each man briefly.

"Yes," admitted Belden in response to his inquiries, "Mr. Conovan is in-

sured for a quarter of a million dollars." He looked obliquely at Tennant. "Mr. Tennant is beneficiary under the policy."

DAN puzzled over this. A motive? Perhaps one of several.

"Who's executor of the estate?" he asked.

"Why—I am—" declared Conovan. "It's valued at more than two millions. My brother made arrangements through Mr. Belden that if anything ever happened to him I was to handle his affairs and those of his wife and daughter."

"Where are they now?" Dan asked, thinking of this second possible motive—which was overshadowed by a far greater one. Conovan had definitely connected himself with a national case—the killings in St. Louis—by having seen Bugs Malloy, the slain gangster, at the home of a friend. He had had valuable information to give to the Government.

"They're in Europe. My son, Rutherford, Jr., leaves to join them tomorrow—sailing on the *Normandie*—"

"Rather sudden?" shot Dan.

"Why—ah—yes. In fact, I made the decision this morning—"

Dan and Inspector Walsh hurled a few more questions. Each man advanced an alibi which sounded absolutely foolproof.

In fact, they furnished alibis for each other, as all had been in the offices of Conovan and Company, in Fourteenth Street, at the time Dr. Norris said that Conovan had met his death. Dan suggested to Inspector Walsh that he check up on them and then, realizing that there was no more information of value to be had at the moment, excused himself.

He decided to check in at the New York field offices of the F. B. I., located in Lexington Avenue. As the cab wove through traffic, he took stock of the situation. He predicated his conclusions in the case on the theory of a large organization, operating nationally with the use of airplanes, automobiles and vessels, recruiting experienced members from the prisons throughout the United

States, dealing in murder, kidnaping, robbery, smuggled goods of some kind or other, dominated by one cold, ruthless, shrewd mind—the mind of a megalomaniac—a man with delusions of his own grandeur.

Dan knew the type. He had met it before. The brain that had the idea its owner was greater than the law enforcement agencies of the cities, states and even the Government itself.

The clues lined up perfectly. All fingers pointed to headquarters in New York City. The men involved in the various crimes so far were ex-convicts, ranging from the murder-master, Knucks Melton, to the piratical, smuggling Guts Hogan. The organization had been big enough to strike in three major cities almost simultaneously and to kill an informer—John Blakeslee Conovan—with such skill that if it had not been for Dan himself the crime would have been dismissed as suicide.

And Conovan not only had seen Bugs Malloy mingling in the upper business and social strata, apparently, but moving as a confidant of important men. Never before, thought Dan, had he seen such perfect organization—such skillful planning of every move. It was not hard to see that master-mind sitting before a table somewhere, moving his men about as a chess expert moves the little ivory knights and pawns before him.

Could the headquarters be Conovan and Company? What connection with the gang could the firm have, if any? There had been that river battle at the base of Fourteenth Street. The head of the concern, knowing something was wrong, had died. . . .

Dan's cab shot into Central Park, cutting across Lexington Avenue. Dan heard the roar of a motor beside the taxi, turned, saw twin lights directly behind him in the comparatively deserted roadway. The car was traveling at terrific speed. It shot ahead of his cab. The man at the wheel forced the frightened driver of his cab to the curbing.

The car cut in more sharply, slashed its side against the left front fender



Using the hood as a shield, Fowler advanced into the room (Page 29)

of Dan's taxi. As metal crashed and brakes screamed complainingly, Dan went for his two forty-five calibered pistols, carried in armpit holsters, whipped them out. His muscles steeled for action. His eyes hardened, glinted coldly.

"I've got it!" he exclaimed to himself. "The gang—for gang it surely is—listened in on Conovan's call to Washington. Heard the chief say he was sending me to New York City. Waited in front of Conovan's house until I came out—"

He ducked from the cab. A tommy gun in the hands of a snarl-faced hood chattered and splashed red-yellow flame into the night. Dan's fingers convulsed on his triggers. He had just long enough to glimpse the face and recognize it from pictures he'd studied. Then the man ducked for cover.

"Guts Hogan!" Dan exclaimed. Another hood slunk around the side of the car, aimed a pistol. Dan snapped a shot at him. The hood ducked back. Dan didn't recognize him. Guts' bullet smashed into the windshield of Dan's cab, close above the head of the ducking driver. More lead raked the car as glass splattered and tinkled onto the metal parts of the cab. Dan, crouching behind the motor, tried a shot. He felt a bullet pluck at his sleeve.

FROM behind the car Hogan and his leering, evil-faced companion poured shot. Lead crashed into the car, made a sieve of the radiator, smashed out the headlights. The driver saw a chance, took to his heels toward the shelter of a tree. Dan inched out beyond the protecting metal, sent slugs crunching into the body of the car which shielded his foes. Bullets ricocheted, whining into the night.

Dan didn't figure on the cruel precision—the careful planning of the genius against whom he had pitted himself. He did not know that Hogan's orders had been to battle him—but not kill him. Another fate had been reserved for the G-man who was brave enough to tangle with

America's newest public enemy number one.

As he was exchanging bullets with Hogan and his companion, thinking that his life was hanging by a precarious thread which a slug might clip at any moment, he did not sense or see the arrival of a car which coasted behind the shrubbery with lights out. He did not see two skulking figures who crept in behind him.

The crackle of a twig beneath the foot of the closest man, standing above and behind him with an up-raised blackjack, caused him to whirl, to swing his pistols into action. But he was too late. Before he could fire, his assailant whipped the heavily weighted weapon down brutally onto the crown of his soft hat.

Comets sang and crackled through his brain. He staggered. His pistols



dropped from his limp fingers. He sagged to his knees. His assailant closed in and grabbed him. The second man sprang out of the darkness to help.

"Guts! Cheeks! Come on, you slugs—" the man with the blackjack shouted. "We've got him. Help us load him in our car. Leave that crate. It's hot, anyway."

The four men carried the G-man's sagging body to the second car, a large sedan, and unceremoniously dumped him onto the floor of the back seat. The driver leaped behind the wheel. The others piled in, began the work of taping Dan's mouth, lacing his hands and feet and blindfolding him.

"Now," said the leader, "we'll drag 'im off t' th' doc's. Boys, you've got to hand it to th' boss. He sure figures things out neat. The damned flatfoot sure fell fer th' double play—you

gettin' his attention and us sneakin' in from behind. Let's go!"

CHAPTER IV

Battle!



SPECIAL AGENT DANIEL FOWLER had, through a series of amazing exploits, become one of the most trusted and capable Special Agents in the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice. With a back-

ground of the Middle West, plus schooling as an accountant and in the law, Dan had qualified for the hardest peace-time work in the history of the United States. He backed his knowledge and intelligence which had got him into the select organization with six feet one inch of steely muscle draped over a heavy-boned frame. He was not handsome. His cheekbones were wide apart, his nose was large, and he had a heavy chin—but he was a man's man, and women gave him a second glance because of the sheer force and power of his personality.

A few months before he had been a raw recruit in the Bureau. His astounding success in smashing the Ray Norshire mob; his wiping out of the Silk gang; his ability in two-fisted battling and brain work which brought him out on top with jewel smugglers; his victory over the dope-smuggling Morris brothers and their murderous Chinese; his crushing of John Court, the California Croesus who sought to become dictator of Mexico, and other exploits had made him the right-hand man of the director.

Now, as he slowly regained consciousness on the floor of the gang sedan, he was in one of the toughest spots he had as yet found himself—and he knew it. He feigned unconsciousness.

"Well, we got th' toughest G-man in America!" exclaimed Hogan.

"What're we goin' t' do with him, Cheeks?"

Dan noted the name. Could this be the same man as "Cheeks" Maroni, who had crushed his way out of Folsom, in California, 3,500 miles away, only two months before? he wondered.

"Give 'im th' woiks," replied Cheeks. "Only not so crude. That's why we had orders t' stand 'im off so th' others could come up from behind. The chief's goin' t' make an object lesson outa this bird—just to show th' G-men and th' cops they ain't got a chance buckin' him, I think—"

"This sure is th' life," said a third guard. "If I'd 'a' known as much when they socked me inta Auburn th' last time, as th' Dean's taught me in th' last coupla months, I'd 'a' never taken th' rap fer a lousy little stick-up like—"

"Shut up!" snarled Guts. "One whiff of th' nose candy, Beef, and ya shoot off yer mouth like an old woman. You'll get rubbed out if you don't watch it."

CONVERSATION lagged. Hogan lit a cigarette. Maroni cadged one from him. Dan's mind was racing. What did it all mean? Who was the "Dean" they talked about? Nose candy meant heroin or morphine. That meant the man called Beef was an addict. He was learning things, but if he didn't find some way out of this spot, with the end just ahead of him, the knowledge would mean nothing!

He tried listening to traffic noises. It was impossible to get a clue as to his whereabouts from this, blindfolded as he was. All he could tell was that he was on a main thoroughfare. Then the car turned right into a quieter street. It slowed, came to a stop.

"Here we are, boys!" exclaimed the leader. "Let's go!"

The men piled out of the car, pulled Dan to his feet. One man went ahead. The other three carried Dan. He was dragged across the sidewalk, hoisted up a short flight of stone

steps. The man ahead pushed open a door. Dan was bundled in, down a hallway, into a room.

"Doc!" shouted the leader. "Hey, Doc! Where are you?"

Dan heard the man go from one room to another. He returned.

"The damn' fool ain't here," he said. "I told Melton you couldn't figure the slug. He's a good sawbones, but th' hop's got him. Wait'll Melton hears about this."

Dan started at the use of Knucks Melton's name. It had been Knucks Melton who had been freed at the Union Station in St. Louis! And the doctor the leader sought was a drug addict, too!

"Well, we just gotta wait a while to see if he shows, that's all. He'll sure catch hell!" said the leader, referring to the physician. "While we're waitin', shove the damned Fed into th' back room. Somebody might come in!"

Dan felt himself lifted, carried forward, pushed into another room. The door was pulled shut. He began working frantically at his bonds. He knew that he might have only a matter of seconds in which to free himself—if he could do so at all.

He worked the ropes until they were slightly loose on his wrists. He chafed his arms, tore into the flesh to accomplish this. Then he inched up his hands, lifting his coat with them. He got his coat above his belt. Then, with the sides of his thumbs, he pressed down on each side of the center of the back of the belt. Leather-covered to avoid detection, secreted within the belt itself, was a tiny knife blade. It was made of Damascus steel and sharper than a razor. It sprang outward, its base anchored in the belt.

Expanding his stomach muscles to hold the belt tightly, he began sawing. The blade nicked his wrists, but so great was his tension that he didn't feel the wounds. In a few moments, one of the strands snapped. He chafed his wrists, bringing back circulation. Then he undid the rope which tied his ankles, tore off his blindfold and the strips of adhesive

tape which tightly sealed his mouth.

Then he rose, stretched his aching muscles and began examining the cell-like room in which he had been imprisoned.

"I'm still sunk," he said to himself, as he saw that the walls were windowless, that the heavy door was bolted from the outside, and that there was no inside lock mechanism with which he might experiment, even though he did have skeleton keys secreted beneath his armpit in a flat, skin-colored silk packet which had been overlooked when he was searched.

The only outlet from the room, besides the door, was a vent near the ceiling, not more than a foot square, which he could not reach. But Dan's heart leaped as he noted that the door which barred his way to freedom swung inward.

His contemplation of the situation was interrupted by the sound of hurried footsteps in the room outside—the rapid pound of heavy shoes.

"It's about time you were gettin' here," he heard the leader growl. "If I tip Melton, there'll be one less sawbones—"

There were four men outside that door—and the newly arrived physician made five, Dan thought. He was unarmed. . . .

"Let's bring him out," he heard. "We gotta get this over. After th' doc fixes him, we gotta dump him off at th' field offices—"

He heard the bolt on the outside of the door shoot back. He pulled away from it, braced himself. He had one advantage—that of surprise. The men on the outside expected to find him bound and gagged on the floor. The small room was dark—

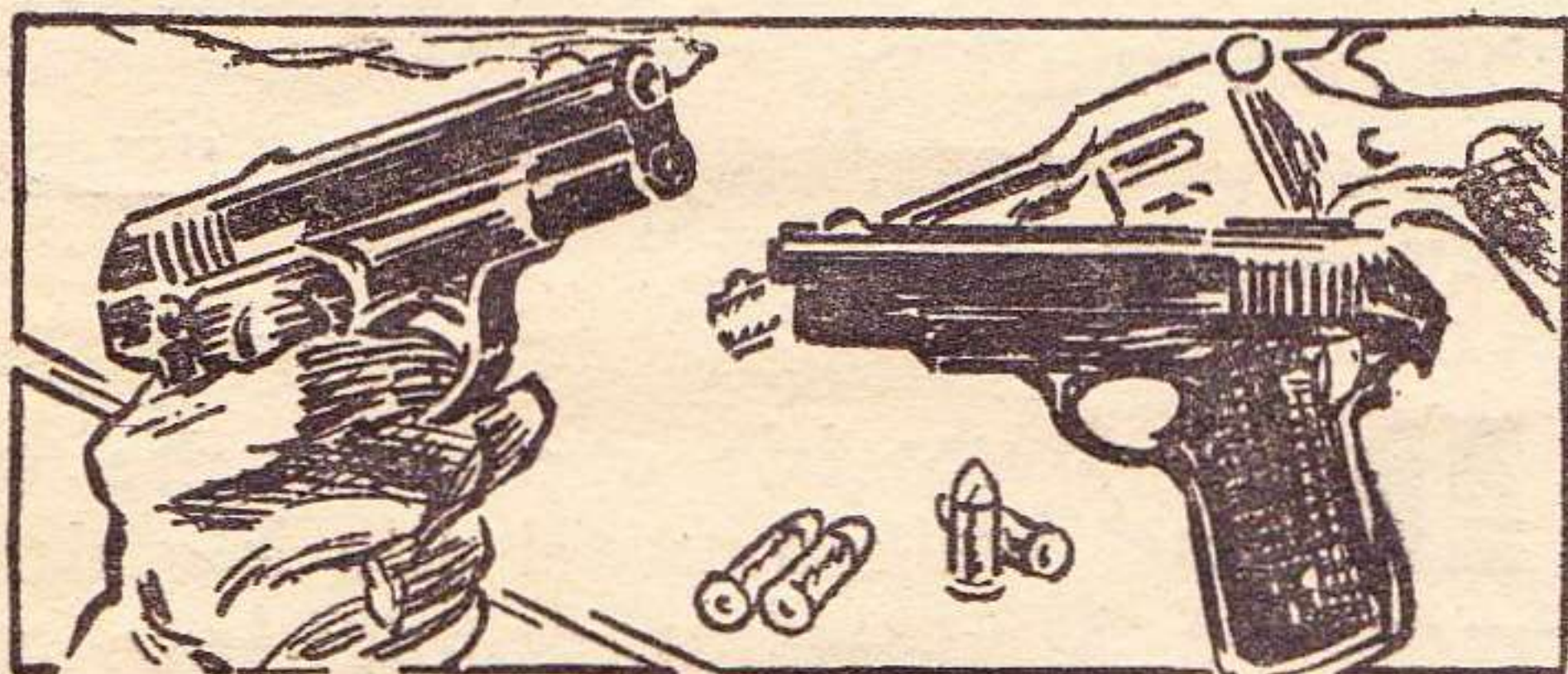
HIS heartbeat jumped and perspiration stood out on his forehead as the door swung open. He saw a faint light glow angle into the floor of the cell, saw the shadow of a man. Then the man advanced with drawn revolver into the room.

"Why, he ain't—" the fellow began.

Dan's steely hands shot forward like the strike of a cobra. His left

hand seized the man's wrist, twisted it, bent it back until the edge of the door bit into it. His other twisted at the revolver. The corner of the door gouged into the gunman's flesh. He moaned with pain. The weapon came free. Dan darted forward, grabbed his man to use as a shield. With the revolver belching orange flame, Dan advanced from the room.

The four men who stood between him and the front door of the apartment were shocked out of their surprise by the blast of the weapon—the roar which reverberated through the room which, Dan saw, was fitted out as a clinic. A white cabinet, filled with knives, scissors, and other paraphernalia, was at one wall. A rubber and steel cot was near the door at which the three remaining gunmen and the physician stood. In a split-second, Dan saw that the medico who was masked in white, was tall, thin—that sallow, almost saffron skin stretched over the visible portion of his forehead like parchment—that his gloved hands were clawlike—



Dan looked at the other evil faces, catalogued them, saw hands reach for weapons. His gun spoke again. One gunman pitched forward, his drawn revolver spitting lead into the floor. Hogan fired. The bullet crashed into the body of the thug Dan was using as a shield.

Dan recoiled from the shock, felt blood from the wound pour over the hand he had around the man's waist. The man pitched forward. Dan let him go, hurled himself forward, grabbed the rubber and steel operating table, up-ended it. He pushed it at the gangsters. Their bullets whanged into the steel. Bullets tore past him, shattered a window behind him. He turned, saw that it gave onto a back areaway—saw that this

was his only chance to escape. The hoods had the entrance to the place blocked. He jammed the operating table forward, hurled it at the men, wedged it over them. Then he turned, raced backward, turned out the lights and jumped through the window.

Dan skirted around the corner of the building, into the open street, deserted at this late hour. Ahead of him he saw a blue light standard which marked the entrance to a subway station. He ran for it. Out of the corners of his eyes he saw his pursuers run into the street. He turned, firing as he ran, until his revolver was empty. Lead whispered around his head.

He saw now that the subway was his only chance.

"There he goes!" he heard one man call. "Get him!"

He saw one of the men pull down the muzzle of his revolver, pause for an instant. Flame bit into the night. Before Dan heard the report he felt a searing pain cross his back. He staggered under the shock of the impact. He knew instantly that he had been hit—how badly he didn't know. A bloody mist veiled his eyes. He shook his head to clear it and plunged onward toward the subway entrance, will power and sheer nerve giving strength to his legs. He pounded into the entrance, hurtled down the steps three at a time, raced to a turnstile and vaulted it. He glanced up and down the tracks. There was no train on the near side.

He knew the gunmen were just behind him.

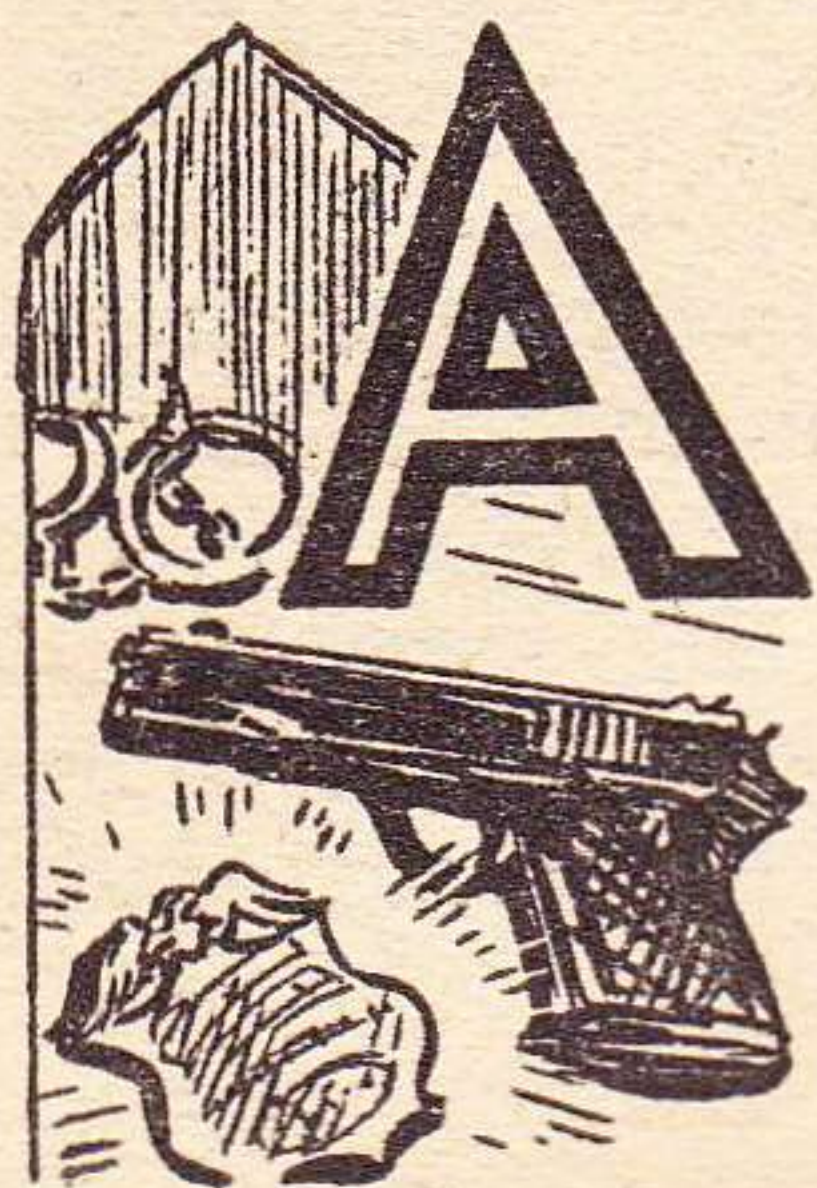
"That calls for a dash across the tracks!" he exclaimed to himself, ignoring the frantic calls of the man in the change booth that he put a nickel in the turnstile slot. He looked through the pillars which ran between the tracks. He saw a train approaching in the opposite direction. He leaped from the platform, stumbled over the rails, pulled himself up on the opposite platform. His pursuers raced into the station just as the train shut him off from their view.

The automatic doors on the cars swung open. He reeled through the nearest one. They closed. The train gathered speed.

Dan slumped wearily into a seat.

CHAPTER V

School for Murder



AFTER Dan Fowler had had his wound dressed—it was painful but not serious, and had a few hours' sleep—he went to the field offices in Lexington Avenue and reported to Hal Whitten, the special agent in charge. He outlined what little progress he had made and added:

"I returned to the place where I was held and checked it. The offices had been cleaned out. There wasn't even the odor of antiseptics. Tools, instruments, everything had been taken away. This mob is smooth, clever and efficient—I'll say that for 'em. And big. I'd begin kidding myself it was all a nightmare if I hadn't found bullet marks in the plaster and hadn't talked to people who had heard the shooting. Nobody knew who the doctor was. Everyone said he'd just moved in and hadn't hung out his shingle yet."

"It's all darned fantastic," Whitten agreed. "Say—I've got news for you. Larry Kendal's done a great job in Minneapolis."

"He would," said Dan, his tone rich in frank admiration.

"The chief was very enthusiastic about his report and he has ordered him to come back here and work with you. Not hard to take, eh? I know how you two men work together—and what you've accomplished. He's flying—due in at Newark within an hour. How'd you like to go out and get him?"

Dan's big grin spread from ear to ear. Good old Larry! They'd ducked a lot of lead together in their two-gun war on crime—had stuck it

through the toughest spots that crime chasers had ever known—and by their faith in each other and self-sacrifice had come through victorious each time.

"You bet I'll meet him! I want to see him personally, as well as find out what he knows that's hot!"

"I know this much, Fowler. He was clever enough to get the serial numbers on the car which the bandits abandoned in Minneapolis. He wired them through to the manufacturer, Goodrich, at Akron, and learned that these numbers had been sold through a New York distributor. As they were new, Larry immediately hit upon the logical conclusion that they'd been purchased in New York City by gangsters who drove the car to Minneapolis."

Dan's expression was grim.

"Good detective work!" he complimented. "And it's further proof that the gang's centered right here in New York. What else did the keen-minded young man gather under his hat?"

"He said he'd tell you about it when he saw you."

"In that case," replied Dan, "I'm on my way to Newark."

DAN drove his car onto the tarmac, waited until the big dual-motored Douglas swooped into the terminal. He dived out of the car, met Larry, the sleek-looking, fast-thinking young man who looked like a man about town until there was a call for action—and then used fists, head and guns with an agility that sounded either death or serious injury to any mobster who bucked him.

The greeting was enthusiastic by way of a tense, sincere handclasp—nothing more. Dan escorted Larry to the car.

"What's up?" he asked.

"Boy, we're up against something really big this time—you and the chief and I."

They headed for New York City over the viaduct and through the Holland Tunnel. Larry lost no time in telling what he had found out.

"This Shadow Tate," he said, "is

a hophead. At first he wouldn't talk, but after he'd been off the charge and I'd started to work on him he opened up. The story he told me is about as fanciful as anything I've ever heard. If it's true we're up against the toughest job we've encountered yet. This thing, if we don't knife it young, is going to grow until it engulfs the nation.

"Here's what happened. Tate first admitted that he was getting plenty of drugs, and plenty cheap. Said they were coming from New York City, and were being cleared in some mysterious way through an importing company, according to the word that had got around among the sniffers in the twin cities."

"An importing company?" Dan asked, tensely.

"Yes, sir! He couldn't name it, but he was pretty sure."

"Then that means, possibly—Conovan and Company!"

"Right. And he added that a shipment had just come in—which means that most likely it was brought in by



"So you did come here after all, you prying spy!" (Page 47)

the hoods he worked with in the Hennepin National Bank job. Nice business. Pay load both ways. Dope from New York to Minneapolis—loot and money for the dope back to New York."

"Okay. Go on."

"Now, here comes the fantastic part of the yarn. Shadow is just out of stir. No sooner had he got into town than he was approached by a stranger who said that he needed men like Shadow. Shadow, incidentally, was in one of the underworld hangouts when the man bought him a drink and started giving him a sales talk. Shadow says the fellow knew all about him—record and everything.

"He doesn't know the man's name, or where he's from or anything about him. But Shadow was willing to listen to reason. The man eased him in with this gang, promised him a cut on the stickup, told him to keep

his mouth shut, ask no questions, and go with the mob wherever they went. Eventually, the fellow said, Shadow *would go through a training school* and really learn how to beat the law! A school designed along the lines of a police training school, or like our own. Except that the students in the place knew just a little more about murder, arson, kidnaping and what have you than the cops and us. It seems to me—say, what's the matter?"

Dan was staring at Larry, his eyes wide. His thoughts had gone back to the hours during which he had been held by the mobsters. He was remembering the speech of one of his captors: "If I'd 'a' known as much when they socked me into Auburn th' last time as th' Dean's taught me in th' last coupla months—"

Larry got no answer from Dan.

"Well, I suppose you think I'm nuts," he said, flatly.

"Good Lord, no!" exclaimed Dan. "Listen, Larry—we've stumbled into it, and how! There is a school. There's a dean, too. The dean of the School for Murder!"

HE explained quickly how what he had learned dovetailed perfectly with the story Larry told—the babbling, almost incoherent tale which had come from the trembling lips of a drug addict with a yen.

"And that's not all, Larry," he added. "This master-mind has a scout out—a man who is actually tracing convicts, learning about their records, catching them as they leave the prisons of the nation—soliciting them. The man was in Minneapolis. We're sure of that. Haven't you got any description?"

"Nothing that means anything. Shadow was pretty well charged up when the man put the bee on him."

"Well—we've got a lot to thank Shadow for. In the meantime, there's work to be done. It's impossible right now to know how many ramifications this thing has. We know about the School for Murder, because we've seen the work of the products of the classroom—evidently post graduates from the way they work. And we've

got a clear line on the dope angle, too. Anything's apt to break—may be breaking now!"

Dan pushed down on the throttle.

"What're you going to do?" Larry asked.

"You're first job is to check up on the kid, Rutherford Conovan, Jr. He's sailed for Europe—quite suddenly. There wasn't anything we could do about it. Didn't have a thing on him. But find out all about his background, will you? We may uncover something. I understand the boy's pretty wild and he may have been in a jam which got him into a bigger one—and that was why his father shipped him off so suddenly, right on top of John Blakeslee Conovan's murder. Also, check on Two Gun Martin, whose prints we got on the Minneapolis job. He hangs out in the Bronx."

"I get it. And what about you?"

"What I've learned and what you've learned make Conovan and Company a very interesting place. I'm going to hop down and have a long heart-to-heart talk with Rutherford Conovan and see what happens. If Conovan and Company is running opium into this country—I understand they do an extensive business in the Orient—we'll give the outfit some action. Incidentally, the Narcotics Unit of the United States Treasury is plenty worried. The chief here tells me that smuggling activities have tripled within the last three months."

DAN let himself out of the car at Fourteenth Street and told Larry to report to Whitten at the field offices. He found that the building occupied by Conovan and Company was a massive old four-story structure. The main offices were on the top floor, with the lower levels utilized for storerooms, display and wholesale salesrooms. Dan went to the fourth floor. He alighted from the rickety elevator to find himself facing teakwood panels illuminated by light from stained glass windows.

The atmosphere of the place, he thought, was cold and sinister. A reception clerk opened a small win-

dowed peep-hole and asked him what he wanted. He identified himself and asked to see Rutherford Conovan.

As he waited, he glanced about the forbidding reception room. Two Chinese urns guarded the sides of the elevator shaft. A teakwood screen, carved with dragons, stood in one corner. Benches lined the sides of the small room. There were Chinese prints on rice paper on the wooden panels.

A door opened. A man started across the reception room. Dan recognized him immediately as Jarrett Crandall, general manager of the firm, stiff, businesslike. Crandall saw him, stopped. He gave Fowler a cold, businesslike smile.

"Mr. Fowler, I believe?" he said. He extended his hand and Dan took it. It felt chilled and lifeless. "What brings you here?"

"Just checking up, Crandall. Is Rutherford Conovan in?"

"Yes. I'm sure he'll see you in just a moment."

Dan waited impatiently for another five minutes. Then he was ushered into Conovan's office, one of several adjoining each other and facing onto a single corridor. He was surprised and taken aback to see not only Conovan but Crandall and the alertly nervous Buford Tennant, vice-president and sales manager, in the room. After Dan had felt the poorly concealed restraint in the greetings of the men, he addressed Conovan.

"If I may," he suggested, "I'd much prefer seeing you alone, Mr. Conovan."

"These gentlemen are both high officials of the firm," the head of the company replied. "I'm sure that anything you have to say can be trusted to them as well as to me. Just why have you come here?"

A sharp retort welled to Dan's lips—but his Government training had taught him restraint. Briefly, pointedly, he outlined his suspicion that narcotics were being smuggled through the company.

"Are you insinuating that we are knowingly permitting such activities?" Conovan blazed savagely as he

rose, and leaned over his desk.

"I'm not," replied Dan. "However, it is possible that some of your employees—possibly ex-convicts recently released on parole or discharged from prison—are using the respected name of your firm for a cover. In view of this, and the fact that I have a strong personal belief that the death of your brother was in some way linked to these activities, I'd like to have you hire me in some capacity."

Rutherford Conovan slammed his fist down on his desk.

"Ridiculous!" he exploded. "I wouldn't think of permitting such a thing. I know the men who work for me. The idea of damned Government spies in my organization!"

Crandall cut in: "Easy, Rutherford. Don't lose your temper. Consider the matter—"

"I consider the matter closed!" Conovan blasted. "If you want to get a search warrant and go over the place, I can't stop you. If you want to prowl and pry, however, you won't do it here—"

"Maybe I could show Mr. Fowler through the plant," suggested Tennant, swallowing nervously.

"I'm sorry, but that isn't just what I want, gentlemen," said Dan.

"We're operating under proper license and authority, and have been for the past thirty years!" stormed Conovan. "Our books are in order and we've paid our Government taxes. It's all a matter of record. And now—leave these premises!"

"Very well," said Dan. He strode across the luxuriously furnished offices, half suspicious, half damning men who refused to coöperate with the Government—who refused to admit that at least ten thousand public enemies walked the streets of the nation, ready for the first opportunity to commit crimes. He opened the door, walked down a short hall into the reception room. He heard footsteps behind him and turned.

"I'm sorry this had to happen, Mr. Fowler—"

It was Tennant who spoke.

"That's all right."

Dan turned, rang for the elevator.

"If I can do anything—" the vice-president in charge of sales suggested.

"Let's forget it."

The elevator clanged open. Dan stepped in, rode to the street floor, walked out of the small lobby, reflecting, planning a course of procedure. Conovan wasn't going to stop the Government. No one man could do that—

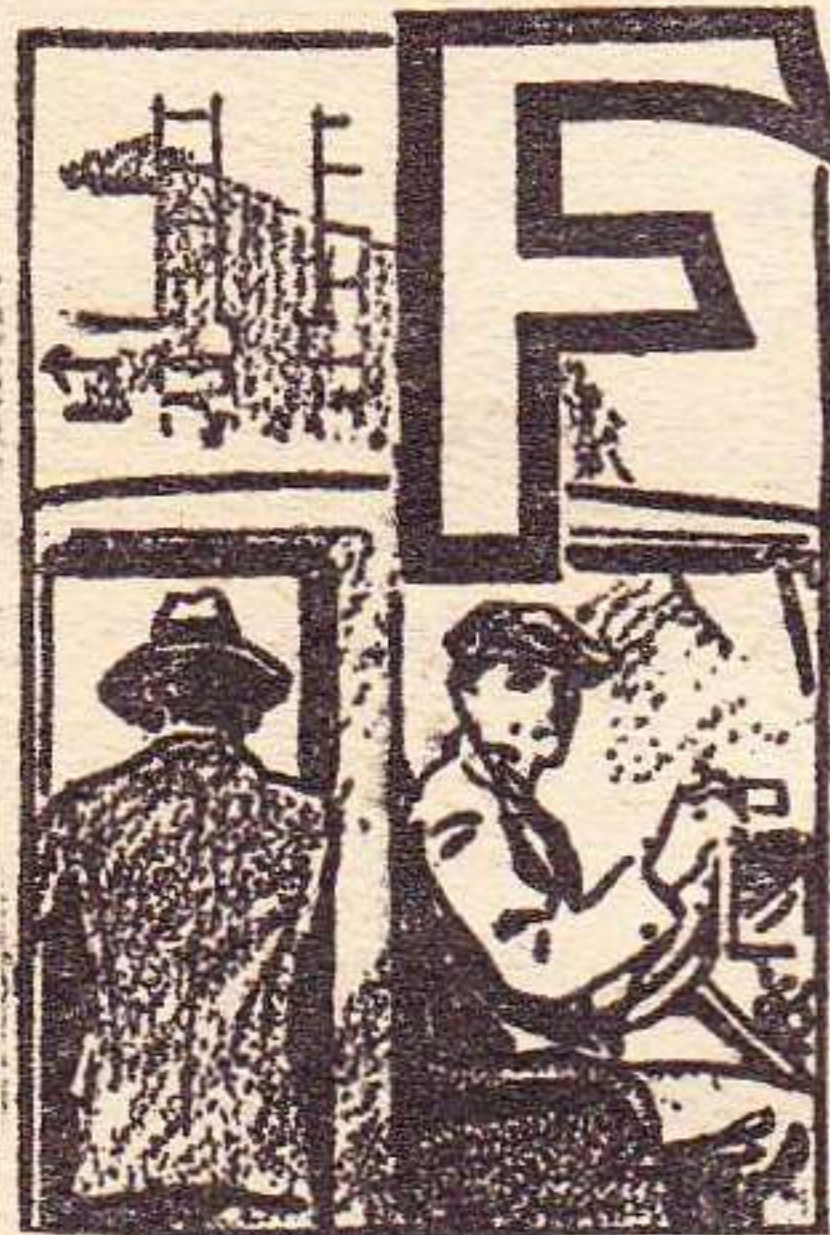
Dan walked east down Fourteenth Street.

Once he turned and looked behind him. What he saw gave him a start. He paused for an instant, apparently examining some bargain neckties. What he was actually doing was peering into the oblique show window. He was using the glass for a mirror. In it he saw the reflection of a man sauntering along at his speed two shops behind him. The man was wizened—a fellow with deeply lined skin, a beakish nose, eyes set close together. He wore a battered hat, an ill-fitting suit. Dan paused again. The fellow stopped, too.

"And so," Dan said to himself, "I'm being tailed."

CHAPTER VI

Strange Death



FOURTEENTH STREET, as was usual at that hour, was a twisting, eddying mass of humanity. Shops, office buildings, department stores, subway stations belched human beings who hurried or loafed or bumped each other

on the sidewalks. In the street trucks banged and clattered, horns snorted, taxicabs slithered, and rumbling, awkward cross-town cars rolled down their tracks. Dan took account of all this movement, observed it closely as he walked onward, apparently with no particular destination.

But his eyes were seeking something, and he was figuring the crowded condition of the street in with his plan. He wanted that trailer.

It would be easy enough to escape him—but it was better to capture him and make him talk if possible. A single lead, at this stage in the game, meant everything.

At last he found the spot he wanted. It was an arcade—a truck entrance—leading from the sidewalk inside of a loft building, where there was a loading platform. The sides of the arcade were of stone and offered an excellent chance for concealment for an observer.

When he reached the entrance, he stepped inside. He moved fast enough to let the man who tailed him think he was escaping. He moved slowly enough so that the man would be sure to see him. Then he flattened against the wall.

The man who followed him came to the entrance, paused furtively, looked in.

Dan's hand flicked out. His hard-muscled fingers closed over the man's right wrist. Dan jerked. The bewildered little shadow hurtled into the arcade.

"What th'—" he began.

"I'll ask the questions," Dan snapped. "What's the idea of following me?"

A spasm of fear shot across the fellow's face.

"I ain't been tailin' you," he protested.

Again Dan had not figured the resourcefulness of the man against whom he was pitted—the man who, thanks to his own efforts and those of Larry Kendal, gradually was taking the sinister shape of the Dean of the Murder School.

From behind him, as he worked over the man he had captured, shifting his way through the crowds, slunk a burly, derbied man, wearing a blue suit. His eyes craftily sized up the situation as he moved to the entrance of the arcade, cut in behind Dan. He slipped a blackjack out of his sleeve into his hand, brought it down with murderous force on Dan's head. The G-man reeled under the shock of the blow. It had struck him on the side of the head and his hat had helped ease it.

DAN'S arms were numbed for a moment as he tried to recover his scattered senses. The shadow pulled away, scurried into the dense crowd like a frightened wild animal. Dan whirled on his assailant. He slashed out with a vicious blow. But it didn't connect. The derbied man had the blackjack arcing, whistling through the air. The blow again struck Dan on the side of the head, tearing his scalp open. Blood gushed from the wound, half-blinded him. He tried another wild blow which would have crushed bone had it connected. But it cut into the empty air.

The derbied man turned, saw a police prowl car, lammed into the crowd. Dan charged after him. Women screamed at the sight of the gory G-man, hot on the heels of his quarry.

Traffic was blocked momentarily by a jam at a cross-street. Dan saw the prowl car—and the police in it saw him. The man in the passenger's seat leaped from it, rushed at Dan, conspicuous as he was with his bleeding scalp and his bloody face. He didn't see the man in the derby who weaved through the screaming women shoppers toward freedom.

He blocked Dan, grabbed him.

"Not me!" Dan panted. "Get the man in the derby!"

He pointed. The man looked, suspected a ruse when he couldn't catch sight of the derby bobbing through the mass of people. "Don't give me that!" he snapped. "What's goin' on?"

As he spoke, he frisked Dan lightly, expertly.

"Totin' gats, eh?" he demanded. "At Headquarters—"

"Yes—and that's not all!" Dan retorted, exasperated. He whipped a hand into a pocket and produced a leather case, withdrew his shield.

"Government man!" he snapped. "Come on—let's get after the guy—"

He started down the street, the policeman on his heels. But by this time the quarry had made his getaway. Dan saw that the chase was hopeless, turned to the cop.

"No use," he said. "He's shaken us—"

"If I'd known you were a G-man—" said the cop.

"It's all right," Dan said. "You were just doing your duty. It couldn't be helped. Now, if you'll do me a favor, get me cleaned up a bit. I've got to get this blood off my face before a dozen women collapse."

They went into a drugstore, where first-aid was applied. Dan got his hat, then called the field offices. Whitten answered.

"Oh, yes—Fowler. Get up here as fast as you can!" he snapped. "Something big's broken."

Dan said he'd be right there. The cop overheard him.

"Can we take you some place?" he asked.

"I'll say you can. Three-seventy Lexington Avenue. And fast!"

He and the patrolman piled into the car. The driver shot it across Fourteenth Street to Fifth Avenue. The cop introduced himself as Haggerty and his partner as Harrison. Dan called for more speed. The car leaped ahead, siren whining.

"You must be working on something hot," said Haggerty. "Usually is, when you fellows are called in."

"Yes," said Dan.

"The local boys are up against a tough job, too."

"What's doing?"

"Gang tunneled under the vaults of the Wheat Exchange Bank, dug and torched their way up into 'em and collected a couple of millions in gold, currency and securities," was the reply. "Perfect job. The mob had been working at it for weeks. Set up a restaurant next to the bank, dug under the floor, carried the dirt, cement and metal out in garbage cans. Shorted all the alarm systems. Slickest job in twenty years. And, right along with it, a gang pulled the same trick in Detroit."

Dan smiled grimly. Perfect planning! Perfect execution, eh? Two cities pushed over at the same time! This spelled only one thing to him. Another batch of graduates from the Crime School. Holding sheepskins in safe-opening, no doubt. For years bank vaults had been considered im-

pregnable. Yeggmen hadn't bothered going through yards of concrete and steel because it had been easier for them to walk into the front doors of banks with machine-guns and help themselves. But now, with the new time-locks on vaults, which kept them closed for five minutes after anyone had turned the combinations, bank robbers were finding it unhealthy to wait around. It was logical that the Dean's clever mind should swing back to cutting into them. He seemed to be the kind of fellow who was willing to face a hundred problems, from the wrecking of alarm systems to the construction of super-acetylene torches. Such jobs could be done. He thought of that old bit of philosophy:

"What man has made, man can destroy."

THE jobs interested him—but they were, primarily, problems for the local police. The Wheat Exchange was not a national bank, and didn't fall under his jurisdiction. If the Detroit job was a national, the Federal field office there would handle it. And both jobs were probably done by underlings, automatons, working from blueprints supplied by the Dean. And the Dean was the man he was after.

"Who's on the job here?" he asked.

"Inspector McGuire, of the Safe and Loft Squad," was the reply. "Mad Anthony, they call him. Thirty-five years with the Department. If anybody can get 'em, he will—"

The car whirled through the last red light, siren wailing. It came to a stop in Lexington Avenue, after making a screaming U-turn in front of the building which housed the Federal offices. Dan thanked the patrolmen, raced into the building and was shot to the fourteenth floor. He barged into the reception room. The girl on duty took one horrified look at his gory clothing, motioned him into Whitten's office.

He went in, found Larry Kendal deep in conversation with Whitten. Both looked up as he entered, amazement on their faces.

"Couple of gentlemen followed me," he explained, quickly. "Ignore it.

What's up? That's more important."

"I found Two Gun Martin," Larry said flatly.

"So that's why you rushed me. You don't sound very enthusiastic about it."

"He's dead. I was working on some leads in the Bronx, and wandered into a police sub-station. They were just checking the identification. Medical examiner can't find out the cause. Damned mysterious. Figured, if I could locate you, that you'd like to look in on it."

"Sure. He must've been rubbed out. The Dean's got his lines out—probably found out the Government had Two Gun's fingerprints. Bumped him for disobeying orders. Also so that we wouldn't pick him up and give him a working over. Where'd they find him?"

"In bed at the home of his sister, Mary. Thirty forty-six Marlow Parkway. She called the cops. Didn't know Two Gun was a gangster. Believe it or not—she's a school teacher! Thought Two Gun was a traveling man because he wasn't home much."

"Okay. I'll bust over to the hotel and get on a fresh suit. I'll meet you at the Marlow Parkway address."

In less than an hour, Dan met Larry at the home of Mary Thompson. He learned that Martin was an alias—that the hood, under the name of Thompson, was respected in his neighborhood. The place was a modest two-story building with a brick front and clapboard sides, typical of hundreds of other homes in the borough. Inspector Walsh, of the Homicide Squad, and Dr. Norris were present.

They went to one of the two bedrooms in the place. The medical examiner, puzzled, was still making his examination.

"Slight contusions on the legs and a small bump on the back of the head, none sufficient to cause death," the noted physician replied. "I'm absolutely stuck. I guess I'll have to turn the body over to Gettler, the toxicologist, if circumstances warrant it. Maybe he can find something. Otherwise, I'll just have to report death



The mobsters in the main room, aware of the free-for-all, rushed forward (Page 79)

followed from natural causes."

Dan studied the body. Then he turned to Inspector Walsh.

"Is the sister in the house?"

"Yes. In the front bedroom. I haven't talked to her yet. She's pretty well broken up—"

"I think I'll talk to her. Want to come along?"

DAN was off down the hallway with Larry and Inspector Walsh close behind him. He found the door to the bedroom closed. He knocked, heard a tearful, "Come in!" He found Mary Thompson, a prim, slight little woman, struggling to get control of her emotions. He explained who he was, said that he was sorry to trouble her, but that he must have information about the case.

"My brother just got back from a long trip," she said. "He never tells me where he's going or what he's do-

ing, and he's apt to show up at any time. Last night he appeared very nervous. He said he was going out for a walk, after he paced up and down stairs for half an hour. He said to me, 'I can't stand this!' but when I asked him what was wrong he wouldn't tell me.

"He was gone for about half an hour.

"When he returned, he was brought in by a tall, thin, sallow-faced man who said that he was a doctor. I suppose he was. He carried a small black bag—"

Dan leaned forward tensely.

"Can you give me a better description of the man?" he asked.

"Well—to tell the truth—he frightened me," Miss Thompson said. "So much so that I remember little about him except his eyes. They were glittering and mean-looking and close together. I—"

"Just a minute, please, Miss Thompson," Dan interrupted again. He turned to Inspector Walsh. "Do me a favor," he asked. "Call your Bureau of Criminal Identification and ask them to send up photographs of all physicians arrested in recent years for state and Federal narcotics violations, will you? That'll be quicker than calling Washington."

"You bet I will. We can have 'em here in a few minutes."

The inspector left the room. Dan was busy putting two and two together and getting a few answers. First, Miss Thompson had established, to a degree, the motivation. Hard-boiled Two Gun Martin had been pacing the floor the night before, had said, "I can't stand this!" Which meant, apparently, that he was on the spot and knew it. Second, Dan remembered the eyes of the physician—those strange, cold eyes which revealed the use of narcotics. They had made an impression on Miss Thompson, too.

"Please go on, Miss Thompson," he said.

"My brother seemed to be suffering from some kind of shock. He looked dazed. The man explained that he had been struck by a hit-and-run driver, but had not been hurt seriously—that a night's rest would bring him around. He said that as a physician he had given him emergency treatment and had brought him home. I told him I'd take care of my brother, but he insisted on helping him upstairs to his room.

"He sent me to get a pan of warm water. I did so. When I returned, the man's black bag was opened. He washed the bruises and applied antiseptics. My brother was very pale and apparently asleep. The physician said he had given him a sedative to quiet his nerves, told me not to disturb him until morning, took a fee for his work and left. This morning I went to my brother's room to wake him—" Mary Thompson choked, could not go on.

Dan rose, patted her shaking shoulder. "Thank you very much," he said.

Dan, Larry and Inspector Walsh

went back to the body. Walsh continued his examination hopelessly. Then the promised photographs arrived.

He took them in to Mary Thompson, glancing through them as he did so. One brought a jolt of recognition, he thought. He handed it and several other to the woman. She looked at each one carefully. She paused, studied the picture of the practitioner with the malevolent eyes.

"That," she said, positively, almost triumphantly, "is the man."

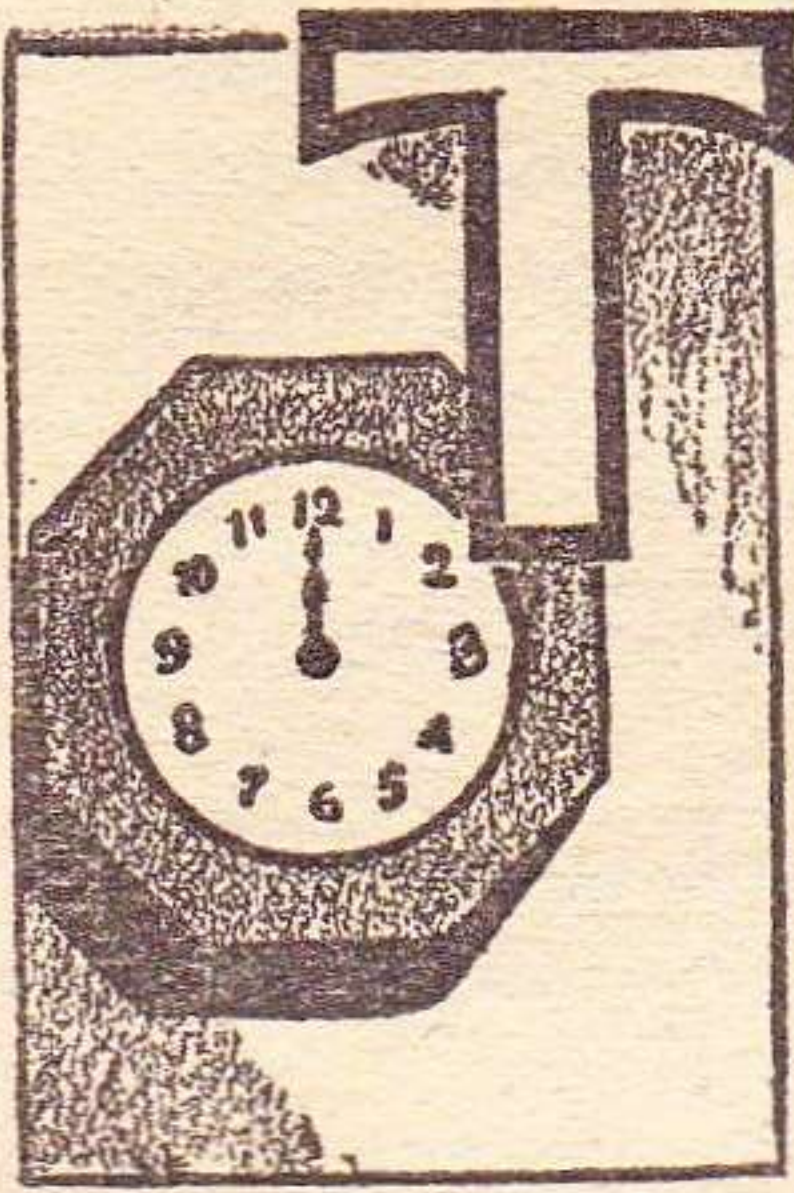
The identification card revealed the man to be Dr. George Wymond, alias Dr. George Beatty, alias Dr. George Burman, alias Dr. George White, convicted of both state and Federal charges of illegally prescribing narcotics and the sale of narcotics. He was described as an addict himself, and it was stated that he had in past years frequented Pell and Mott Streets, in the heart of New York City's mysterious Chinatown, where he had been suspected of practising medicine without a license.

"At last!" exclaimed Dan, turning to Larry and the inspector. "Another lead and a red-hot one. We've been blocked so far on plenty of angles. But this one is going to lead us into something, sure."

Dan added up the score. So far, it was all in favor of the Dean. Knucks Melton had been freed at St. Louis. A bank had been robbed and dope dumped into Minneapolis. A revenue officer had been shot and killed, off Fourteenth Street. Convicts were being recruited by a mysterious man as fast as they left prison. Dan himself had been kidnaped. The Wheat Exchange Bank had been knocked off and John Blakeslee Conovan murdered to keep his mouth shut. Two Gun Martin had died from as yet unexplained causes. Dan had been railroaded out of Conovan and Company, trailed— But now . . .

"We've got to strike at this thing at its weakest point," he said to Larry and Inspector Walsh. "And the weakest point right now is a dope-ridden doctor. I'm going to find that important man."

CHAPTER VII

Death from Above

HE longshoreman, clad in a shabby suit, dungarees, heavy boots and a peaked cap who, unshaven and dirty, meandered through teeming, smelling cosmopolitan Mott Street, the crooked backbone of New York's Chinatown was having thoughts unusual to one of his supposed occupation. His mind was working along peculiar avenues because he was not a dock worker at all, but Daniel Fowler, special agent of the F. B. I.

Several deductions lay behind his disguise and his arrival in the Oriental headquarters of the great city. Work in the Bureau had taught him the habits of criminals. And, he had noticed, Dr. George Wymond, no matter how many aliases he assumed, always used the first name of George. Which indicated to Dan that he might possibly be known in his habitat as "Dr. George."

He had been known as a resident of the Chinese quarter, which was known as a source of dope. There was little chance that "Dr. George" would be giving up either his addiction to the drug or the locale of his operations, unless he thought the police were after him. Right now, the practitioner had no idea that they were, for Dan had prevailed upon Inspector Walsh to announce that Two Gun Martin had died of natural causes and that there would be no investigation.

As Dan wandered along he was seeking, through dirty windows, the interior of any kind of a shop—a place which had dried fish hanging in front of it and dried lichee nuts, rice, crystallized fruits and ginger inside—a shop which sold kimonos and other silken Oriental garments—a café—where the proprietor had the sleepy, yellow, telltale marks of the opium smoker.

He hoped through the poppy-inhaling Chinese to find his man.

His left hand was bandaged artfully. It seemed to have been badly hurt. However, the bonds were so arranged that they did not prevent free use of the arm or hand in an emergency. There was a reason for this bandage. "Dr. George," among his other jobs, probably was a gang physician and surgeon, tending to bullet and knife wounds and other injuries, Dan had figured. The hand gave Dan an opening to question without arousing suspicion.

HE finally found a shop presided over by a Chinese who had all the characteristics of the addict. He sauntered into the place, measured the almond-eyed proprietor. The man shuffled forward to serve him.

"I want some information," he drawled. "I'm looking for a surgeon who has the first name of George."

The Oriental regarded him through squinted eyes. "I know of no such person."

Dan felt that the man was lying. He produced a worn, dirty, ten-dollar bill, held it out.

"I picked up a hunk of lead," Dan said, showing his hand. "Gotta get it fixed."

The Chinese still eyed him coldly. "I know of no such person."

Dan left the place. He tried three other shops, always getting the same negative answer. But he wasn't discouraged. He entered a fourth. The beady-eyed storekeeper came forward, rubbing his thin, clawlike hands together greedily, an avaricious gleam in his eyes. Dan saw craft in them, too. He repeated his question and struck no pay dirt until he produced the ten-dollar bill.

"And why does not the injured person go to another, more respectable surgeon?" the wily Chinese then demanded.

"Because I've got a bullet in my mitt, that's why," Dan retorted. "I've gotta get it out before I'm poisoned. If I go to anybody else, he'll tip the cops like they always do."

The Chinese snatched the bill.

"This is well within the understanding of this worthy one," he said.

"It will be well to go to the corner. The building is of two stories. The northeast corner. The stairs are on Mott Street. On the second floor, knock at the door of the second room to the left."

Dan's pulses pounded. Was this, at last, his first real break?

"Thanks!" he said, gruffly.

Dan's dilatory manner left him when he reached the street. His muscles tensed for instant action. He felt like a hunter spotting his prey. He walked purposefully to the entrance of the building to which he had been directed, pushed his way through a group of loungers, caps pulled down over their eyes to hide their heavy features, and went into the dim hallway. He mounted the steps swiftly. He did not see one man nudge another and start up after him.

He reached the second door to the left, knocked. He received no answer. He knocked again, this time louder and more insistently. He heard a stir inside the room. A voice snarled: "Who's there?"

Dan put his head close to the door, said in a low tone, "One of the mob. I've got some lead in my mitt."

He heard feet shuffle. Bolts shot on the door. It opened slowly. He found himself staring into the snout of a revolver—in the hand of the man with the menacing eyes—the man he had sought.

"Who sent you?" the man asked suspiciously.

Dan thought quickly. "Guts Hogan!" he snapped. "Open up, will ya? This hand hurts like hell!"

The man lowered his gun. "That's different," he said. "Come on in—I'll have a look at it. You got dough?"

"Yeah."

Dan didn't know that he had eavesdroppers as he closed the door behind him. The men, creeping up the stairway with their backs to one of the walls, had overheard the conversation. Now they advanced, put their ears to the panel.

The minute Dr. George Wymond laid aside his revolver, Dan's right hand flicked inside his coat. Wy-

mond, anger and fear in his eyes, found himself in the same position in which he had had the G-man—staring into the muzzle of a .45 caliber pistol. He lunged forward. A prod from the gun, slammed into his vitals, stopped him.

"WHAT the devil's this?" he gasped.

"Listen, Wymond," Dan snapped. "You're under arrest. You're going to Police Headquarters and get a good working over. Then you're going to the Tombs—or to the Federal detention rooms."

"What for? You haven't anything on me."

"Oh, yes I have. Possession of narcotics, for one thing. That'll hold you until you spill the dirt on the way you killed Two Gun Martin!"

Dan saw Wymond stiffen guiltily, but he said:

"I don't know what you mean—"

"The old stall. You *do* know. And plenty more besides. You're going to sweat under lights. You're going to get talked to. And all the time you're going to be wanting a shot of hop worse and worse—"

Dan stepped forward, went for his manacles with his left hand. In that instant Wymond leaped at him, grabbed for the pistol. Dan jerked his wrist away. He didn't want to fire. If he killed Wymond, all his work so far would go for nothing. Wymond, at this moment, was the most valuable man in the world to him—for he was going to be his wedge into the School for Murder.

Wymond's hand shot out. It got a grip on Dan's right wrist. Wymond possessed superhuman strength generated by fear, frenzy and the drugs. He twisted Dan's wrist. The G-man's weapon clattered to the floor. Dan instantly pulled back his left arm, which was out straight, and jerked the mad doctor off balance. He sent a pile-driving right steaming to Wymond's jaw just as the doctor's head came forward. The physician gasped, crumpled to the floor.

The fight reached the ears of the two men outside the door. One mo-

tioned to the other, indicating that he felt they ought to crash in. The other grabbed him, hissed into his ear:

"Don't be a sap. You know what Melton told us. We'll get 'em both in a minnit—just like the orders said. You know—if anybody came after the croaker, who's in bad now, we were to get both of 'em—*accidental*. C'mon!"

The first man bent over for an instant, peered through the keyhole. "Th' doc's out on th' floor," he said.

"That's all we need t' know," said the other, motioning toward the back of the hallway. "Let's go."

Inside, Dan saw that Wymond was out cold, and ransacked the room. He found nothing which was of any value to him as evidence. Pulling out a set of skeleton keys which he always carried, he tried one after another in a door which led to an adjoining room. The fourth key worked and the door swung open.

Inside was a complete medical laboratory. Phials, test tubes, funnels, filters, mortars and pestles, Bunsen burners, and other accessories were on all sides. There was a steel cabinet. Dan snapped the lock, opened it.

He found cans of black gum, acrid, bitter in odor.

"Opium!" he exclaimed.

Further examination revealed boxes of white, crystalline substances. He touched a bit of powder to his tongue. It was bitter. That, he knew, was morphine. He checked the other powders which he guessed to be heroin and cocaine—derivatives of opium. At the same time he realized what Wymond had been doing—manufacturing the stuff in the laboratory. That was what it was there for, he decided.

"But only for retail consumption," he observed to himself, "judging from his equipment. The wholesalers and the smugglers are the birds I want."

He walked from the laboratory into the front room. Wymond was groaning, regaining consciousness. Dan bent over him, frisked him. In his wallet he found a small notebook. In this book was a list of names. Only one interested Dan. He read: "Wang Fo—WOrth 2-4173."

HE groped through his retentive memory, snapped his fingers.

"I've got it!" he exclaimed to himself. "The chief of the local Narcotics Unit told me that a Chinese named Wang Fo was a suspect—a wholesale dealer in opium—but that a search of his place had revealed nothing incriminating."

With a feeling of elation he slipped the book into a pocket. Wymond twisted on the floor, opened his dark eyes. They were filmed. Dan leaned forward, jerked him to his feet. Wymond rocked unsteadily, the fight gone completely out of him. Dan picked the manacles from the floor, clamped them over Wymond's right wrist, his own left, and started from the room. He shot the bolts on the door, went down the poorly lighted corridor, dragging the stumbling surgeon after him.

He walked down the stairs. Wymond was beginning to get his strength back. He allowed his cadaverous form to drag behind. When Dan reached the bottom of the flight, Wymond, summoning all his energy, made an attempt to escape by pulling back toward the stairs. Dan yanked him viciously. The surgeon plunged forward, out onto the sidewalk, a scant six inches ahead and to one side of his captor. Dan sensed rather than saw impending danger.

From above, the two men who had been in the corridor listening pushed a cornice from its base. It hurtled downward, a huge piece of stone, four feet long, at least two feet wide, and six inches deep. The pull he had given Wymond saved Dan. The stone block struck Wymond on the head, crushing it sickeningly, bearing his whole body to the pavement, spattering blood, crushing the victim beneath it, pounding down the bones and flesh of his already lifeless body. As the broken, crushed thing which had been Wymond collapsed, Dan was pulled down, too.

As Dan fell, he grabbed the keys to the manacles.

With the bitter realization that he had again been thwarted by the master-mind, he unlocked the handcuffs.

He knew that this had been another planned accident, that human hands, not the crumbling processes of nature, had sent the cornice crashing downward at just the right moment, a driving doom in the form of several hundred pounds of rock.

"There's a chance I can get 'em yet!" he exclaimed to himself as, ignoring the gaping, horrified bystanders, he turned, raced up the stairs, through the hallway to the back of the building, watching the ceiling for a trapdoor as he went. There was none. He continued to the



end of the hall, ran onto the platform of a fire-escape. There was a steel ladder leading to the roof. He was about to ascend it when he heard, from below him, the grind of feet on the steel fire-escape. He saw one shadowy form leap from it, race into the areaway leading to the street. He whipped out his pistols, pressed the trigger.

Flame and lead leaped after the fugitive.

The man whirled at the sound of the discharge, returned the fire. Lead whispered around Dan. He fired again as the second man raced toward the street. Dan couldn't shoot, now. People were milling past the areaway, along the sidewalk. He held his fingers off his triggers, catapulted himself madly down the fire-escape.

By the time he had reached the bottom and had dropped to the ground the men had made their getaway into the packed thoroughfare beyond.

"The Dean of the School for Murder's done a good job again," he said bitterly to himself. "Quite an accident, artfully arranged, with an excellent motive—the silencing of a man who'd talk. Wymond had pulled

two boners already—first, when he showed up late for my execution and, again, when he and the others couldn't hold me. The Dean was afraid the law might put the finger on Wymond at any time—so he put his men to watching him. The Dean doped a clever way to get rid of a useless sawbones and yours truly at the same time."

Dan climbed back up the fire-escape, scaled the steel ladder to the roof. He went to the front. With his flashlight he inspected the cement on which the cornice had rested—to which it had been affixed. To all appearances the stone had loosened and slipped.

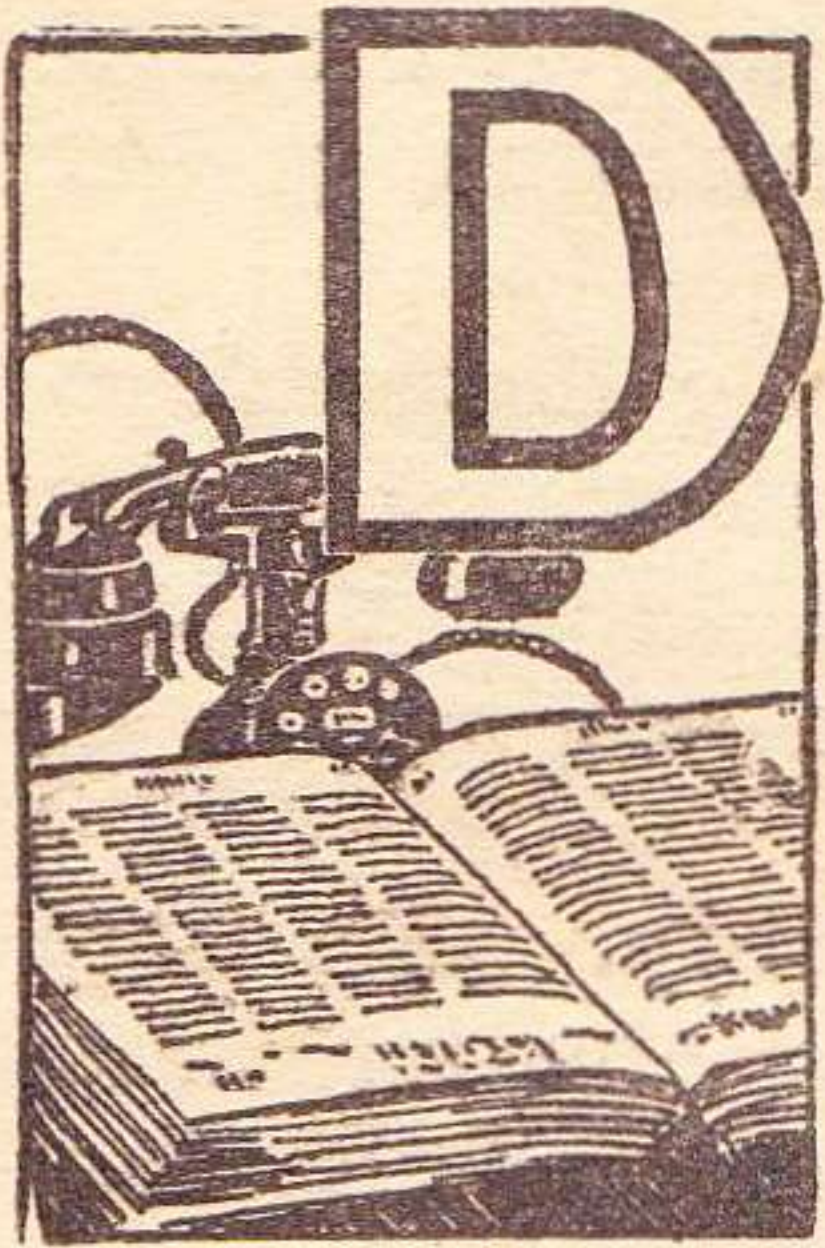
AS he went down to the areaway he sized up the situation. He knew that he'd have to take a chance on not being recognized in his disguise, which depended more on the mannerisms and characteristics which he had assumed than on the use of cosmetics or false whiskers. He erroneously believed that the man who had pushed the cornice off the roof had not had a good look at him.

His immediate interest was in the Oriental establishment of Wang Fo which he knew was in the vicinity. He went in search of it and found it. It appeared to be one of the higher class Chinese stores, dealing in kimonos, various Chinese costumes, silks, jade, ivory, antiques, embroidered and carved wooden screens, vases and curios. He wondered how much of the stuff on display had been cleared through Conovan and Company. Wang Fo, he thought, should prove interesting, listed as he was in Dr. George Wymond's small notebook and as a Government suspect in the records of the Treasury Department.

He drifted back and forth in front of the emporium, sizing the place up.

He stiffened suddenly, exulted as he saw that the devious trail had been picked up again. Jarrett Crandall, general manager of Conovan and Company, was in deep and earnest conversation with an Oriental who, Dan was sure, was the shrewd and crafty Wang Fo!

CHAPTER VIII

Man Trap

DAN sidled into the shop. He averted his face, keeping it out of the light, for fear that Crandall might pierce the grime and the stubble on his face — the shambling gait and the worn, soiled clothes — and detect him as Daniel Fowler, of the F. B. I. He must follow the stream of dope which was flowing into Chinatown, into the larger cities of America. Dope which was driving addicts to theft and murder to get money to buy it, once they were enslaved to it.

Dan managed to get a few words of the conversation which was being carried on between Wang Fo and Crandall as he wandered aimlessly toward them peering into showcases, his keen ears alert. He heard:

"—Need the materials—" from the lips of Wang Fo.

"—Of course — morning — three—" he caught from Crandall. Then, louder: "You may rest assured, Mr. Wang, that the nets will get here on schedule. Good night."

"May the rest of one night be multiplied by ten thousand," Wang Fo said.

Crandall turned, left the place with only a passing glance at the stumbling longshoreman. Wang Fo came forward, turned his expressionless features on Dan.

"The gentleman wishes something? I suggest a prompt selection. The hour is late and soon the doors will be closed—"

Dan eyed the Chinese speculatively. "Yeah," snarled Dan. "I'm lookin' fer *pin yen*. Poppy. A smoke."

Wang Fo's eyes glinted evilly. "This is a respectable establishment. The gentleman reflects on the integrity of the house of Wang."

"Know where I can get it?" Dan whined. "I'm crazy for it!"

"I do not. I have asked you to

leave." Wang Fo frowned heavily.

"Okay."

Dan lumbered out of the shop. He knew that he would get nowhere with the merchant—and he had discovered two things of importance. One was that some kind of a shipment might be expected to arrive in the morning, perhaps at three. The other was that Wang Fo had reached his closing hour.

He walked down the street, slunk into the protecting shadows, watched the place. He saw the lights go out, watched Wang Fo, in a soft hat and silk trousers and coat, walk up Mott Street.

Then he proceeded to explore, working his way slowly through alleyways by the trial and error method until he found the rear of Wang Fo's store.

He discovered a slanting steel door into the basement. On the door was a heavy padlock. He pulled out his keys, started to work on it, first examining the outer surface of the door, and adjacent walls for any kind of an alarm system.

IF Wang Fo didn't talk, Dan thought as he worked, perhaps his basement would. He paused for a moment, glanced at his wrist-watch. It was now one o'clock. He pondered over the conversation between Crandall and Wang Fo. What had the conversation about nets meant? What kind of nets? He decided that after touring Wang Fo's basement he'd linger around until three o'clock and see exactly what happened.

Five minutes of work ended with the padlock open. He lifted the slanting door slowly, examining it with his flashlight for inside wires of any kind. He found none, which meant that there was no alarm attached. What he did not know was that although the Chinese were noted for their dislike of innovations, Wang Fo, because of the nature of his illicit business, was modern in every sense of the word. The basement was guarded by the invisible ray, designed to foil burglars. The unseen ray passed from one point to another. The

moment that Dan passed between the end points he broke the circuit and set up an alarm in the apartment of Wang Fo, located two blocks away.

He slipped beneath the door, lowered it gently back to its closed position.

"So far, so good," he said to himself as he pulled out his flashlight again, held it in his left hand, and went for a .45 automatic with his right.

The basement was packed with the products of the Orient.

There were bundles of raw silk—crates filled with kimonos and the black silk coats and trousers worn by the Chinese—rattan baskets with strange markings on the side in Chinese characters, filled with sandals and slippers—fireworks apparently to be used in celebrating Chinese New Year—spices—vases—screens—and bales of hairnets! The latter bore Chinese characters and, in addition, the legend in English lettering: "Conovan and Company, New York City."

"So those are the nets, eh?" he said to himself. "He's got a good stock of them. There must be fifty bales here. Nobody uses hairnets much any more, anyway. Yet he has to have more. And, possibly, at three o'clock in the morning. Strange, no matter how you figure it."

Dan knew about hairnets. He was aware that Chinese women sold their locks to their countrymen—that these men hired other women to tie and shape them by hand—that they were packed and shipped to the United States where they were put in paper envelopes and sold under American trade names. Bobbed hair and changing fashions had practically ruined the market—which made the idea of so many bales in the basement of Wang Fo ridiculous. To Dan, there was only one other answer. Those nets were used to smuggle something into the country—and that something must be raw opium!

Wang Fo, sipping late tea and eating rice cakes in his Pell Street apartment, was startled into immediate action by the sound of the alarm from

the basement of his Mott Street emporium. However, he did not call the police. He wanted none of them. Instead, he very quietly called a single telephone number which was graven into his memory.

A few minutes later a dozen men, whites and Orientals, all with murder in their faces, moved from various directions toward the emporium of Wang Fo.

Dan worked feverishly. He tore into bale after bale of the hairnets, groping with his fingers for the feel of opium tins. Some of the bales, he knew, already had been worked over. They were loose inside, amid the tangle of the hair. He was losing hope when he heard a sound—the cat's paw footfalls of creeping men on the floor of the store above him. Instinct told him that he had reached another zero hour in his career. He started for the rear of the basement, heading for the slanting metal door which he had left unlocked.

He was halfway across the basement when the door creaked, letting in a dim finger of light, revealing the forms of the men who advanced on him.

Dan turned back toward the stairs. Ghostly steps came down them. He was trapped!

In an instant he decided to try to bluff his way out of the spot in which he found himself. He slipped his flashlight into his pocket, jammed the automatic into its holster, fumbled for a cigarette and lit it. He swayed back and forth, as if under the influence of liquor. He weaved back and forth, apparently without aim, but he was heading in a very definite direction.

AT the flare of the match, a pencil of light cut through the darkness, illuminated his face, blinded him. He blinked owlishly.

"Stick 'em up!" came the command from behind the light.

"Whash 'at?" he mumbled. "Can't a fellow get a li'l shleep?"

His behavior puzzled the men who advanced on him.

"What th' devil ya tryin' t' get

away wit'?" demanded another voice. The men from the stairs and the back entrance converged. Dan counted nine or ten shadows. He reeled backward, half fell, so that his back was toward the stairway down which half the men had come.

"Just tryin' t' get some shleep," Dan mumbled. "Le's all get some shleep."

He tripped over an empty box, and for a second his entire body was out of the beam which had spot-lighted his head and shoulders. He drew erect again.

"Grab the man!" This, Dan knew, was the voice of Wang Fo. "He's no ordinary drunk. He was in my place tonight, prowling. And I know the padlock to the rear door was securely locked."

Dan knew that his time was short. He puffed at his cigarette, seemed to be having trouble getting it to his lips.

"C'mon—get him!" snapped a voice. "He may be a G-man. We'll frisk him."

Another voice called: "Say—the guy's a G-man, all right. He's the mug that put the finger on Doc Wymond a while ago. After him!"

It was at least ten against one, Dan knew. He had just one chance. As the mob moved in, he rocked backward. The flashlight was still playing over the upper part of his body—but there was darkness below his waist. He reeled sidewise, bent over. The hand holding the cigarette fell to his side. His left hand, which had been opening up a small, flat package he had purposely grabbed from one of the open packing boxes, met the cigarette. He flipped the package over his head with a backward swing of his hand.

It arced through the gloom over the heads of the men who advanced on him—who would soon either blast him to pieces with their own bullets or try to capture him alive and deliver him to the mercies of the Dean of the Murder School, who would more coolly, cruelly and subtly destroy him.

The package struck behind the men. Then a miniature hell broke loose.

The package contained firecrackers, stored in one of the packing boxes, waiting for the coming of Chinese New Year. Dan had seen that box, had staggered and reeled to it, had concealed his grab into it with his drunken swaying and tripping. He had ignited the fuses with his cigarette, his hands working in the darkness beneath the circle of light which illuminated the upper part of his body.

The crackers roared. Pandemonium broke loose.

There were yells and shouts and gruff commands. One man whirled, sent a shot crashing through the gloom. Others followed his example. The basement was cut and torn by whispering lead, thick with the acrid smell of gunpowder. In the brief moment of wild confusion, with men tripping over each other and ducking behind bales and boxes, Dan, with the grace and speed of a panther, darted to the stairway which led to the store.

One man whirled as Dan brushed by him.

"Look out! There he goes!" he shouted, his voice piercing above the crash and crackle of the fireworks, the boom of pistols and revolvers. Dan did not hesitate, did not try to unlimber his own weapons. He concentrated on a getaway instead, taking advantage of the darkness.

Daggers of flame stabbed after him. He pulled at a packing box, sent it crashing behind him to hinder pursuit. Hot lead ripped at his frayed clothing as he hurled a second box behind him. He reached the stairs, raced up them three at a time. He reached the top of the stairs, ran through the store, knowing that if he had spent a split second more in the inferno below, pitted against the well-heeled hoods, his number would have been up.

HE darted to the front door, slipped back the night latch, plunged into the night as bullets tore through the store behind him. He sucked fresh air into his heaving lungs, sprinted down Mott Street. Fifty yards away from Wang Fo's

establishment he looked back, saw his pursuers pour from the place. They snapped lead at him. He continued his flight. He knew that he could gain nothing by giving battle. As he ran he was formulating plans for his next move.

Weapons continued to crack behind him, but he was too far away to make a good target in the darkness. He looked for a taxicab. There was none in sight. His only hope, he knew, was to out-run his pursuers.

He darted into one side street, then into another.

The men who chased him were far behind. He raced out into the Bowery, beneath the elevated structure. There were lights here, where the saloons remained open all night, and bums staggered drunkenly.

The firing stopped. His lungs were fighting for air. He slowed to a dog trot. Then to a walk. His eyes searched for a night hawk taxi.

Soon he was breathing easily again. He was grateful that he had made his escape. But, at the same time, he knew that he was nearly as far from the apprehension of the Dean—nearly as far from the School for Murder—as he had been when he had walked into the Conovan home on that first fatal night and had found the body of John Blakeslee Conovan hanging from the chandelier in the study.

He glanced at his watch.

It was a few minutes after two o'clock. He still had time to make Conovan and Company, to check up on a possible shipment of hairnets.

He finally picked up a cab.

"Make it snappy, fellow," he said, producing a bill to show that he had money in spite of his costume, "and you'll draw a bonus."

As the car sped northward, Dan wondered if he was meeting, in Crandall, the Dean of the Murder School—or whether it would be through Crandall, evidently one of the higher ups, that he would meet the most diabolically clever antagonist he had ever faced.

He dismissed the cab some distance from the imposing building which housed the importing firm, made his

way slowly along the deserted street. He looked like a tired laborer, perhaps with a little too much beer under his belt, dragging the last few weary blocks to his home.

There were no lights in the building.

He decided that after one disastrous experience with basements he'd try a roof this time. He saw a fire-escape zigzagging up a building to the right. He went to it, leaped up, grabbed the lower part of the structure and swung himself up onto the second floor landing. Slowly, cautiously, watching the street, he made his way to the roof which was on the same level as that of the Conovan building.

He tiptoed across the roof, vaulted a brick dividing wall between the two structures, found a cupola from which he knew stairs led to the top floor of the importing firm. A steel door, half of it composed of heavy glass, barred his way.

He tapped lightly on the glass with the butt of one of his pistols, until he had split out a triangle. Then he reached inside and shot the bolt. He felt his way gingerly down an iron stairway to the top floor. He found himself in gloomy, eerie silence. He pulled out his flash, looked around him. He was in a huge office, filled with desks, evidently for the clerical force.

HE examined the entire floor. In one corner was a section which was partitioned off by what seemed to be hollow brick. The door to the room was of metal. He decided that the place was worth investigating and began working with his keys. He entered, snapped his light around. The place was filled with hairnets—bales of them. He propped up his flashlight, began tearing into them.

Then, inside of one bale, his hand closed over a tin box.

"I've got it!" he exclaimed.

He wrenched the lid off the tin. So intent was he at this work that he did not hear the approach of a man behind him—a sinister figure blending with the shadows, holding in his hand

a revolver—moving with the stalking silence of a leopard.

"Opium!" Dan exclaimed elatedly to himself as he sniffed at the can, got the sweet-bitter odor which characterized the gummy black substance. "So that's the answer! Conovan and Company with its reputation for honesty and reliability! The customs and treasury officials relaxing their duty, because of this, not making thorough inspections. And Conovan and Company, or someone within the organization, taking advantage of the situation to import the stuff!"

He was about to slip the can into a pocket when a voice commanded: "Stick 'em up!"

Dan's heart jumped. Was this the Dean? He raised his hands, swung around on his heels and rose to a standing position. A searchlight glared into his face.

"So you did come here after all, you prying Government spy!" the man said, his voice nasal and harsh. "I thought you would, after sneaking into Wang Fo's, and then escaping. Wang Fo was right. You *did* overhear our conversation in his store."

Dan knew, now, who was facing him, menacing him with the revolver.

Jarrett Crandall, general manager of Conovan and Company!

CHAPTER IX

Enter the Dean



FOWLER grinned amiably, made a rapid estimation of the situation. Crandall's high-pitched, tense voice betrayed his nervousness. Dan knew that he was certainly not the type of man who went around holding guns on people,

which was an art in itself, if done properly. He knew there was one danger—that a novice, like Crandall, might shoot involuntarily, if startled. On the other hand, he would be easy to alarm.

"What're you doing here?" croaked the general manager, the very dumbness of the question betraying his mental condition.

Dan still had the can of opium in his hand.

"My pal, Larry, and I," he said, easily, "are just checking up on some opium you know plenty about, aren't we, m' lad?"

As he spoke the last few words he turned his head. Crandall's spotlight wavered as he followed Dan's glance. At the same instant, Dan sent the can of opium skidding across the cement floor, lunged forward. Dan hurtled through the air like a stone from a catapult. He drove one hard-muscled shoulder into the executive's midriff. Crandall toppled backward as Dan's hands groped and found the flashlight and revolver. He jerked them both away from Crandall.

Crandall reeled backward fully ten feet, trying in vain to regain his balance.

Dan followed him up, crushed him backward, threw his weight on top of him. But Crandall wasn't licked yet. He pulled up his feet, found Dan's stomach and straightened his legs at the knees. Dan's feet left the cement. A moment later he crashed on his back with stunning force, losing flashlight and revolver. He rolled onto his stomach and as the executive groped forward unleashed a right uppercut which came almost from the floor. Crandall went down like a felled tree.

Dan groped, found his flashlight, whipped out one of his own pistols. The light revealed Crandall sitting up, rubbing his jaw, dazed. Dan stepped forward, slipped handcuffs on his wrists, snapped them. He hooked his hand into the back of his coat collar and jerked him to his feet.

"And now," said Dan, "you're going to do a little talking, Crandall!"

"Who says so?"

"I'm Dan Fowler, of the F. B. I. You may remember me. We met at the home of the late John Blakeslee Conovan."

"Where's the other fellow?"

"There isn't anyone. I just took

advantage of your buck fever. You aren't used to handling a gun."

"You won't get anything out of me. You haven't got a thing—"

"How about sticking up a Federal officer?"

"I thought you were an intruder. I was protecting my property—"

"Okay. Top this. I've found the dope. You were at Wang Fo's last night." Dan took a shot in the dark. There was a chance Crandall hadn't heard— "And we nabbed Doc Wymond, who's talked plenty."

CRANDALL went white. "Not Doc—" He caught himself.

"Yes, and he's spilled everything. That's how I happen to be here. Now, what's it all about? As it stands, you're facing a smuggling rap. Ten or fifteen years. It might be eased a bit if you—"

"I—I understand. I'll talk—"

"I thought you would."

Dan didn't know that Crandall was doing fast and crafty figuring—that he had had more than one reason for coming to Conovan and Company at this hour—and that one was to keep an appointment. If he could get Dan into the front offices, and turn the lights on—

"You'll really give me a break?" he asked.

"Sure."

"Then I'll spill everything. Come on up front. There's a lot of stuff up there I can show you—plenty of evidence—"

Dan prodded him ahead, telling him to lead the way.

"And remember," he warned, "I've got a gun on you."

Crandall moved forward willingly. The sooner he got to the front offices and got those lights on—

"Was that dope in the hairnets going to Wang Fo's?" Dan asked.

Crandall believed that under the circumstances he might as well talk. In a matter of minutes—

"Yes. Wang Fo phoned me that something had gone wrong and that he'd called off the men. I came down here to be sure none of the boys showed up to move it."

"And then you found me."

"That's right. Your flashlight gave you away."

"You're handling the dope end of the thing?"

"You could put it that way."

Crandall walked into his own offices, switched on the light. He glanced covertly at his watch. The Dean must be in the building at this very moment!

"Just a minute—I'll get the stuff out of the safe—that'll explain everything," he said. He moved to it, bent down before the combination. Dan held his pistol on him as he turned the knob.

The door behind Dan opened slowly. An automatic held in a gloved hand made its appearance. A figure in a long black cape, masked and hatted, came stealthily into the room behind it. The weapon was aimed at the G-man's back.

"Put your hands up!" his voice boomed. "I've got you covered."

Dan didn't move a muscle. His glance shot at the wall in front of him. The man behind him, he knew, couldn't see his gun or in what direction it pointed. The light switch was on the wall, less than ten feet away. If he sent a shot into it and shattered the connection—

His gun blazed. At the same instant he threw himself flat on the floor. The weapon in the hand of the masked man behind him belched flame just as the light went out. Three shots in rapid succession.

Dan, in dropping, had left Crandall in the line of fire.

He heard the thud of bullets into the body of the general manager and confessed smuggler. He heard a low moan, an exhalation of breath. He pulled his legs beneath him, tensed, got into a crouching position. As he did so he saw a vague form come hurtling through the darkness at him. His pistol blasted a flaming finger into the night. Before the man in the cape crashed down on him, he knew that he had missed. The force of the heavy body knocked his pistol from his hand. It went skidding across the floor out of reach.

HE was bowled over backward as the weapon left his hand. He shot out his hands, sought the gun held by his adversary. His hand came in contact with cold steel, lost the grip, closed on a wrist. Applying the knowledge of jiu jitsu which he had gotten in the Government training school, he snapped the wrist back. The gun fell to the floor. Before he had time to grope for it, his adversary broke his grip. He felt heavy, powerful gloved hands dig into his throat, seeking his windpipe.

He brought up his knees as the muscular fingers shut off his breath, fought to kick the man off him. The fellow swung his weight to one side, held his strangling grip. Desperate, he wedged his hands between the arms over his chest, gave all his strength to prying them apart. He was unable to do so.

His lungs were fighting for air. He was slowly choking to death. His head reeled as he rolled, twisted, fought to break the agonizing, crushing hold. The man held on with almost maniacal strength. Just when Dan felt he was going to lose consciousness, he tried one more trick in desperation. He arched his back, got his knees bent and his feet under him, pulled his last ounce of energy in a roll to the right. He threw his adversary off balance. Dan hurled himself on top of him, twisted sidewise, gulped reviving air just in time.

His triumph was only momentary, however. In the darkness, the man lashed out wildly with his fist, caught the Government sleuth on the jaw. Dan rolled over, shook his head to clear it and rocked to his feet. He swung a mighty blow to the point where he thought it would connect. He heard his assailant grunt.

The man toppled backward, crashed to the floor. His gloved right hand closed over one of the pistols which had been lost in the scuffle.

The sound of the first shots fired by Dan and his attacker, echoing in the eerie darkness above Fourteenth Street had caused some passerby or night watchman in the vicinity to call the police.

Patrol cars were approaching, their sirens thinly wailing.

The man heard them, took alarm.

Dan lunged at the spot where he thought he was, missed, closed his grip over the gloved left hand. The man gripped the pistol with his right hand, saw Dan's outline against a window of the office. He was becoming desperate as the sounds of the sirens grew louder. He aimed at Dan's head, at the same time giving a mighty jerk to get his hand free.

The hand slipped out of the glove.

He pressed the trigger, just as Dan ducked. Another deafening report reverberated through the office. Dan saw the flash of flame, felt it sear his face, from such a short distance was the weapon fired. He felt himself rocking. He turned, staggered backward in the darkness.

The siren wails were louder.

Dan thought the floor was becoming one of the walls. He felt nauseated. He heard the man turn, race from the office, sought to pursue him. He took a couple of steps and fell forward, still clutching the glove.

The man in the mask was already pulling himself out of a window he had opened. He pounded down the fire-escape, flight after flight. He saw coming down Fourteenth Street two penciled streams of white light, the unholy glow of a red eye—and knew that his escape was a matter of seconds.

He dropped from the fire-escape, darted across the sidewalk, the motion of his body flinging out the cape behind him like the tail of a wolf. His black mask added to the vulpine character of his outline. He leaped into the car which he had parked only a few minutes before, clashed through his gears. The car roared into the night.

WHEN Dan regained consciousness, he found himself surrounded by uniformed men. He was being treated by a police surgeon for a scalp wound three inches long. A crease that made his head throb but which, fortunately, was neither deep nor dangerous.

"You missed death by an inch that time," one of the detectives said. "The other guy's deader'n a mackerel. You'll take a murder rap unless you can prove self-defense."

Dan grinned weakly, explained who he was and displayed his credentials.

"Well, that's different!" the detective said. "What's up?"

"In spite of the circumstantial evidence against me," Dan replied, "I've not been murdering anybody. A gentleman in a black mask, whom I suspect of being the Dean of the Crime School which the Government is investigating, and I have just had a misunderstanding. Crandall, there—general manager of this firm—happened to be in the way of a few of the arguments."

He pointed to the bloody corpse lying on the floor, life blood drained into a viscid pool and soaked into his clothing.

"I got the worst of it," Dan admitted, ruefully. He saw the glove he had snatched lying on the floor, picked it up gingerly. "Whoever he was got away—but if you men'll come with me, I'll show you the largest haul of narcotics you've made in years. In the meantime, I'd like to phone."

He called Larry Kendal at his hotel, told him to bring his kit to the offices of the firm.

Then he led the men to the store-room at the back end of the floor. The men went through the bales and found out that Dan was right. Indications were that hundreds of tins of opium were secreted in them. The Narcotics Squad was summoned and took charge.

Larry arrived and he and Dan went through the place for fingerprints. As he and Larry worked, he explained what had happened and showed him the glove.

"This may be important," he said. "I'm shipping it off to Washington by air mail. They'll get it the first thing tomorrow morning. If there are any prints inside it—and there may be—the Hudson process'll bring them out. Then I'm going to get hold of the chief of the Narcotics Unit of the

Treasury Department and arrange for a hearing in the Federal Building tomorrow morning.

"This thing goes deeper and deeper. First, three gangs in outlying cities clash with the law. Then Conovan is killed just when I'm scheduled to talk to him. They try to give me the works. On top of that, they bump Two Gun Martin to keep him from talking. They get rid of Dr. Wymond for the same reason. Then they push over two banks, one here and one in Detroit. I get Crandall in a spot where he'll talk and, the way I figure it, he had a date with this fellow I fought, presumably the Dean, and stalled me. Now, we've uncovered half a million dollars in dope in one of the biggest importing firms in the world.

"And the only clue I've got is a glove which, even if it is given the silver nitrate test, may not give us a good set of fingerprints. Well, the hearing tomorrow may clean up a few things—"

"Yes," agreed Larry, "it may. And, by the way—Inspector McGuire, the man who's working on the Wheat Exchange job, says he has some things he wants to talk over with you."

"I'll see him after the dope hearing. We'd both better get some sleep."

He turned to the detectives.

"Crandall said something about there being evidence in that safe," he said, pointing to it. "Put a man on it, will you? We'll open it first thing in the morning."

CHAPTER X

The Dean Strikes Again



legal dealings. They went through

LARRY KENDAL and Dan Fowler, armed with Federal search warrants, got open the safe in Crandall's office the next morning in spite of Rutherford Conovan's protests that it contained nothing which would give any evidence of illegal dealings. They went through

it with a fine-toothed comb and found nothing irregular, bearing out Conovan's contention completely. Somewhat crestfallen, they left the place to attend the hearing which Fowler had arranged in the early hours of the morning, leaving the dope-loaded hairnets under a heavy guard.

The chief of the Federal Narcotics Unit had called in the head of the Police Narcotics Squad for a joint hearing.

Dan and Larry were among the first to arrive. They had arranged for that. Dan's hat rested on a table which commanded a perfect view of the witness chair and which at the same time was in the most inconspicuous section of the room that could be found. It had a hole in it. Underneath the hat was a highly sensitive camera—and the lens was so placed that it "saw" through the hole and was directed at the witness chair.

The small cable and wire from the shutter mechanism was long and extended into Dan's lap. Larry's topcoat was on top of the table so that the camera could be shunted over to him for a change of film without the movement being observable to anyone who was called for questioning.

The hearing was called to order.

Rutherford Conovan, his deep-set eyes glittering, his tall, muscular frame stooped, made an unsatisfactory witness.

"I don't know anything about the narcotics," he continually reiterated. "They were not the property of the firm and I don't know how they got into the premises. Mr. Crandall, who is dead, had full charge of the hairnets." His voice rose with each denial, with each negative answer he gave. "No!" he finally shouted. "I don't know how the opium got into the hairnets. I don't know where it came from and I don't know how it got into the storeroom. I don't know where it was going."

As he talked, Dan pressed the shutter plunger at the end of the cable. He shunted the camera to Larry, who changed the film.

"Ever hear of Wang Fo?" the Federal narcotics chief asked.

"I've done business with him for years."

"And never knew he ran dope?"

"No."

OTHER members of the organization brought books, ledgers, receipts, bills of lading and other data. All this material was in perfect order, according to Government agents who checked it.

Buford Tennant, vice president and chief of sales, was next called. The substance of his testimony was that he was busy with the sales organization and spent a great deal of time out of the city. He declared he knew nothing about the operations within the home office.

"Crandall handled that end of the business," he said, in response to questions.

Throughout all the testimony, the camera kept working, swiftly, surely, silently.

Among those present at the hearing was Inspector Walsh. During the examination of Tennant, he was summoned from the room by a uniformed attendant. When he returned, Dan noticed that he was pale and shaken. The various witnesses had all been heard when an assistant United States district attorney said:

"That's that. Whether or not anybody was lying, I don't know—but I do know that neither the state nor the Federal Government has evidence on which to secure a conviction of any member of the firm, or anyone connected with it. The only palpable claim we have to a case lies in the fact that we have the narcotics."

"I beg your pardon," said Inspector Walsh, who had joined the group, "but you haven't got that. The truck which was taking the contraband that was confiscated to the Federal Building was hijacked a short while ago. Two guards are dead. Three are wounded. Four cars swarmed around the truck in broad daylight. The mobsters shot it up when the guards resisted, kicked out the driver and drove away. They left no clue."

"Great heavens!" gasped Dan. "Another perfect crime!"

HE and Larry returned to the field offices. On the way, Dan asked Larry what he had learned about Rutherford Conovan, Jr., now on his way to Europe.

"The tabloids have been full of him and his exploits, none savory," Larry replied, "although he's never been arrested. He was sued for half a million breach of promise by a show girl and his father settled out of court. Gangsters threatened to take him for a ride when he welched on a \$50,000 debt to a bookmaker. The lad seems to have a mania for gaming. There are half a dozen stories of his losses at Saratoga Springs, Miami, Monte Carlo and other resorts. He's sure given the tabloid reporters plenty to write about. Give him a deck of cards or a pair of dice and he goes as crazy as you do when you get your teeth in a case."

Dan grinned. "Thanks for the info," he said.

"And now," asked Larry, "what was all the business with the camera about?"

"Simply this. You're going back to the field office and have those negatives printed up. I'm playing a wild hunch. As soon as you find out what you've got, I want you to hop a plane for Minneapolis. Take them to the hospital and show them to Shadow Tate."

"And—"

"Maybe he'll be able to pick the fellow who recruited for the Crime School from the batch. We found the head of the dope smuggling ring at Conovan and Company. Now, we'll see if we can find the heads of any of the other departments in the Dean's organization. Think it's worth the chance?"

Larry shot Dan an admiring glance. "And then some!"

DAN and Larry separated at the field offices—Larry to have the negatives developed and Dan to make a telephone call. He dialed Spring 7-3100 and asked for Inspector Anthony McGuire.

"Inspector McGuire's not in his office," came the reply. Dan thought

the voice sounded a little strained. "Is Inspector Walsh in?" Dan asked. A moment later he got a gruff "Hello" and instantly recognized the voice.

"This is Fowler," he said. "Inspector McGuire, of Safe and Loft, tried to get in touch with me yesterday, and I'm returning his call. He's not in his office. Know where I can find him?"

There was a moment's hesitation. Then:

"Fowler, McGuire was found dead in bed just before noon at his home. The circumstances are unusual. Dr. Norris and I are going there immediately. Want to join us?"

"I'll meet you at his home," Dan replied. "What's the address?"

Walsh gave him a number of a street in Brooklyn.

"I'll be right over," said Dan and hung up.

He got a Government car, drove to the address. He found a grey frame house. Walsh himself admitted him and they went to the room where the body lay. It was in bed, still. The widow was in the room, as was her son, Anthony McGuire, Jr., a patrolman following in the footsteps of his father, who had made such an excellent name during his thirty-five years in the Department. Dr. Norris was eyeing the body, a puzzled expression on his face.

"The story's this, Fowler," Walsh said. "Mrs. McGuire was occupying the front bedroom on the second floor of the house. Young Anthony here"—he indicated the stalwart young fellow in the patrolman's uniform—"was asleep in the back bedroom. Mrs. McGuire, who has been troubled with insomnia, and who has been sleeping by herself, with the inspector occupying the middle room, woke up for a moment shortly before four A. M. She heard her husband's footsteps on the stairs. Incidentally, he's been working almost around the clock since the Wheat Exchange job. Mrs. McGuire thought nothing of the lateness of the hour.

"Now, here's what's unusual about the whole thing. We called Head-

quarters and he left his office last night at twelve o'clock. It should have taken him half an hour to get home and it took him four hours."

Dan looked at Dr. Norris. "What's the cause of death?" he asked.

Dr. Norris shook his head. "Something that I can't figure out. Again, it looks like a perfect crime. McGuire, lying in his bed, fully covered, on a reasonably warm October night, came to his death from exposure, as near as I can determine. There's every indication of it—and no indication of any other cause. In other words, it looks very much as if he'd been *frozen to death!*"

"What!" exclaimed Dan.

"That's right. I'll stake my experience on it. I've examined a great many frozen bodies in my time."

Dan turned to young McGuire.

"Did your father say anything to you about the Wheat Exchange case?" he asked.

"Yes," said McGuire. "Nothing specific, however. He said he'd tied it up in some way with the Minneapolis job—through fingerprints—and that he was pretty sure there was a big ring operating. He was going to turn over all his findings to your office. He believed he had a couple of men spotted."

Dan mused over this a moment. Then he looked around the room. He pointed to an open window beside the bed.

"Was that open all night?" he asked.

"My husband always slept with the window that way," Mrs. McGuire said.

Dan turned to Inspector Walsh.

"There's one thing sure about this," he declared. "If the inspector was frozen to death, the job couldn't have been done on the premises. There isn't any place to freeze a man. If my theory's right, I've got a pretty good idea where he was frozen. Excuse me a minute."

HE went downstairs, looked in the browned grass for any sign of an indentation. He found none. Then he glanced up at the side of

the house, which was of clapboard construction. The side was covered with a layer of dust and soot which had accumulated for many months. He thought he saw a couple of marks in the soot. He saw a garage behind the place, went there, discovered a stepladder. He put it against the house, noted the marks that it made on the clapboards. He climbed up the ladder. Above his head, he saw similar marks made by a longer ladder. He returned to the house.

He went upstairs, faced Mrs. McGuire.

"Are you sure that you heard your husband's footsteps?" he asked.

"Why—yes," she said.

"Didn't you notice anything peculiar about them?"

"Well—he did walk slowly—as if he was very tired."

"I thought so."

Dan turned to Walsh.

"Mrs. McGuire didn't hear her husband's footsteps," he said. "She heard the footsteps of the man who was carrying her husband to his room. That's why they sounded heavy and slow. Come over here."

He went to the window, pointed at the smudged marks directly below the sill on the clapboards outside.

"See those?" he said. "The fellow who brought him up undressed him, put him to bed—and then climbed out the open window and down the ladder so that Mrs. McGuire wouldn't hear him go out. And, I want to point out that this wasn't the work of one man. It was executed by someone with brains who had directed the study of McGuire's habits for some time—who knew all about him—and who was *out to get him*. I suppose there's a complete record of his arrests at Headquarters over a period of years?"

"Dad kept a record himself," young McGuire said. "He was very proud of them—and he used them to check up every now and then. I'll get them for you." He went to a desk in the room, pulled out a thick book. "Here's every official act of his for the last twenty years," he said.

Dan took the book. He began thumbing through it.

"What do you think happened last night?" Walsh asked.

"The inspector was probably picked up as he left Police Headquarters and tailed. Some dodge was used to get him to get into a vehicle of some sort. He was taken some place, frozen, his keys taken from him and then he was brought home," he replied. His glance ran eagerly down through a list of arrests.

Eventually Dan came to a name which gave him that kind of a thrill which a hunter gets when he draws a bead on a skulking beast of prey. He read:

Hogan, Harold (Guts). Arrested grand larceny Feb. 22, '28. Convicted.

On a second line, written in fresher ink:

Paroled by Prison Board, July 28, '35. *This is inexcusable.*

He glanced on down through the list of names. A second thrill of triumph came to him as he noted:

Maroni, Giuseppe (Cheeks). Robbed jewelry store. Convicted June 9, '29.

Again, beneath this record:

Discharged, good behavior, Aug. 14, '35. Next time, fourth offender. *Gets life under Baumes law.*

Cheeks Maroni! The man who, with Guts Hogan, had snatched him in Central Park! Dan went on down the list, found nothing else of value to him. Then he showed the items to those in the room and explained their significance.

"There's the motive," he said. "Guts and Cheeks were out to get McGuire. He was out to get them. He got something on them. They reported to the Dean and the Dean ordered him rubbed out."

The others nodded.

"What's next?" asked Walsh.

"I've got a plan. It may work and it may not. But if it does work, I'll clean up the case. In the meantime, good luck!"

DAN returned to the field offices immediately and found Larry.

"How'd you come out with the photographs?" he asked.

"They'll print up all right—nice stuff. I've got a lot of bad news for you."

"What's wrong now?"

"We had Minneapolis on the long distance phone. You remember that Shadow Tate was drilled through a lung. Well, pneumonia's set in. The man's unconscious and under an oxygen tent. It may be several days before he comes around—if ever. It's the devil of a note!"

Dan patted him on the back.

"Cheer up—he's alive yet, isn't he? You'd better get up there as soon as you get a set of dry prints. Stand by until he can look the stuff over. In the meantime, things look tough for me—but I've got a way out."

"What're you going to do?"

"Go to prison."

"What!"

"Certainly. It's the only way to get any place. What has happened so far? Everybody I've tried to talk to—everyone I've approached who could possibly give me a lead on this Crime School—is bumped off. Every lead I follow ends against a blank wall. Logically, what other angles have I? It's darned certain that the guy who's recruiting for the Crime School isn't going to come up to a G-man and ask him how he'd like to learn to tunnel under a bank.

"But he is soliciting crooks who are in jail—who have any chance of getting out at all. He got Two Gun Martin into his mob, didn't he? He got Guts Hogan and Cheeks Maroni. All three of them were in stir up the river until a few months ago. They knew before they got out of prison what they were going to do and where they were going to go, because an hour after the gates had opened up they'd vanished completely!

"Hogan, Martin and Maroni had intimates in prison. Ninety-nine percent of the boys have to have somebody to confide in—and do. Usually, they choose their cellmates. Right?"

"Yes, Dan. But I still don't see the angle."

"Well, I could commit a crime and wait a few years for a parole, but by that time this Dean would be so

powerful that he'd make Al Capone look like a small town purse snatcher. So I'm going to do the next best thing. I'm going to be tossed in the big house, right in with somebody who was a pal of Martin, Hogan or Maroni. In the matter of a few days, I'll know what I want to know—"

"It doesn't sound healthy, Dan."

"Larry, my lad, when you're on a case as big as this, the health of one agent of the United States Government doesn't count for very much."

CHAPTER XI

Fowler's Bargain



SPECIAL AGENT DAN FOWLER walked to the gates of the mighty prison on the Hudson River, grey against a greyer sky, forbidding, dismal. He identified himself to the guard at the gate.

"I have an appointment with Warden

Hawes," he said.

The guard consulted a list. "Yes. He's expecting you," he said.

He summoned an escort, who took Dan through the long stone corridors to the offices of one of the greatest of all modern penologists—a humane, sensible man with a record of years of faithful service to the state. The warden greeted him warmly.

"I know you're up against it with the Crime School," he declared, his expression chilling. "You'll have my full coöperation. If necessary, I'll go to the governor for permission to carry out any of your plans. What's on your mind?"

He motioned Dan to a chair. The G-man sat down.

"From what you told me over the telephone, I understand you have an obscure Buffalo gangster who's been in the infirmary ever since arriving here. His name's Vince McGrath. Am I to understand that none of the prisoners has seen him?"

The warden nodded. "He's been in a private room in the infirmary."

"Fine. I want to assume his name and number. I've looked up his record, have all his characteristics down pat. With my head shaved and my skin treated with a waterproof solution—a dye—which I've brought with me, and a few other slight changes in my face as well as my personality, I'll be a new man."

"You're taking an awful chance, Fowler. If any of the mob ever finds out that you're a G-man, your death warrant's as good as signed."

"I can't help that. The case is so big—and becoming bigger—every day—"

"I understand your feelings. If you want to risk your life, and know what you're up against, I'll do everything I can."

"Very good. Shift McGrath into a still more private spot. Stick me into a cell. And now—who did Cheeks Maroni, Two Gun Martin and Guts Hogan run with here in the institution?"

JUST a minute." The warden consulted his files. "Maroni's cellmate was a fellow named James Flaggerty. He's been discharged since."

"That means he's probably in with the Dean's mob in the Crime School. What about Guts Hogan's playmates?"

"Hogan's cellmate tried a crush-out. He got onto the wall, dived into the river and a guard's bullet caught up with him."

"That leaves only Martin. What about him?"

"He was running mate to one of the toughest hoods ever sentenced to this prison. A four-time loser. Baby Face Brantigan, from Albany. He's in for life under the Baumes law, his last job being a payroll stick up."

"That's my man," said Dan. "It stands to reason Martin confided in him while in jail—told him all about the Crime School and its location—or gave him the lowdown later. I'm going to break down Brantigan. Find out where the Crime School is. Then I'm going into action. I'm here because it's my last hope."

"Very well. I'll send for a barber, get your clothes, and fix you up right. You'd better come to the infirmary. If you're going to try any kind of a disguise you can put it on there. I'll make arrangements so that you can be in touch with me at all times through the guards on your tier."

"One thing more. Where's Brantigan working?"

The warden consulted his files again.

"In the bakery."

"Okay. Then it's bakery work for me."

"VINCE McGRATH" was transferred from the prison infirmary to the cell occupied by Baby Face Brantigan. The hood's greeting to Dan was a snarl.

"McGrath, eh? From Buffalo? Well, you're only a number now."

Dan sized up the man. He was an inch over six feet tall with shoulders which would have done credit to a football fullback or a truck driver. He had a flat stomach, long legs and, in spite of his prison pallor, Dan saw that he'd be a tough man to mix with. His skull was large, egg-shaped—his ears small. His eyes were grey and close together, set deep in his head. Their lack of luster added to the sullen expression on his features. He had thin, sneering lips which turned down at the corners and a heavily bearded, blue-black jutting chin.

"What of it?" demanded Dan, belligerently. "Listen, big boy—they ain't going to keep me in this clink long."

"Tough guy, eh?" sneered Baby Face. "A lotta guys have had that idea until the screws give 'em a workin' over."

Baby Face lapsed into silence. Dan shed his prison uniform of grey, sprawled on the upper bunk of the two-decked iron cot. He was thinking that Brantigan would be a tough nut to crack. If Brantigan, pal and cellmate of the late Two Gun Martin, was going to talk of the Crime School and its whereabouts, Dan was going to have to crack down hard, he knew.

The G-man worked in the bakery

for three days. He saw Brantigan every day, both in the bakery and in the prison yard during recreation periods. On the third night, just before lights went out—when the clanging of steel doors, the slow pacing of the guards, and even the cold of the bars and the blank walls made Dan feel that another day was done, he snapped at Brantigan:

"That was a tough break Two Gun Martin got."

Brantigan eyed him suspiciously. "What do you know about it?"

"I heard. He was a big shot, too. Got in with some mob—a big time outfit in New York—was the info I got. I was goin' t' try an' crash it myself."

"Try is right."

"What d'ya mean, Brantigan?"

"You wouldn't have a—" Brantigan caught himself.

"Then ya know about th' mob—th' School?"

Brantigan glared at Dan.

"I don't know nothin'—and if I did know—I wouldn't be tellin' ya. Ya move into my cell. Ya show up in th' bakery. Looks t' me like yer nothin' but a damned stoolie—"

Dan tensed, clipped Brantigan's chin with a short right uppercut. The hood's head went back as the blow knocked his lower jaw into its hinges with a sickening crunch. He pitched backward against the wall behind him, slipped down it, a dazed, glassy look in his eyes. Dan reached down, pulled him to his feet with one hand, and then drove him backward onto his bunk. Brantigan shook his head, began to come around. He sat up, eyed his cellmate with a bestial fury in his eyes. He leaped to his feet, used the bunk to catapult himself at Dan.

"You dirty rat—" he snarled.

Dan's fists were cocked. Brantigan swung wildly. Dan coolly picked an opening, landed another blow on the button. Brantigan dropped for a second time. Dan jerked him up, straight-armed his face, sent him crashing back onto the bunk again.

"I'll kill ya—" Brantigan mumbled.

"Shut up!" snapped Dan in a low voice, so as not to attract the attention of the guards. "I don't like cracks like that. If ya gotta learn I ain't no stool, I'll teach ya in th' old-fashioned way. Now, get this—I'm in that bakery because I got a line out."

The mobster's eyes lighted with cupidity. "Ya what?"

"You heard me. Now, pipe down and crawl into that bunk before I put ya t' sleep myself."

DAN bent over the man, his jaw muscles making hard knots in his cheeks, the glint in his eyes enforcing his command. Had he, he wondered, made any impression on the thug with his carefully timed crack about having a line to the outside and, by inference, someone waiting to help him leave the prison? Just then a guard passed. Dan straightened up, began turning back the grey blankets of his bunk.

When the guard had gone, he hissed: "Listen, punk. Just because ya were tops in a small-time mob in a hick town like Albany, don't think ya can crack t' Vince McGrath. Get it?"

"Yeah!"

Brantigan rubbed his sore jaw reflectively. There was fear in his eyes—but there was a shrewd light, too.

"Let's talk things over," he said.

"Talk over what?"

"This line out. When ya first come in ya cracked about not stayin' here."

"I ain't saying any more. What if ya ratted on me?"

"I ain't gonna rat. Listen, McGrath. You got a way outa here. I got myself fixed wit' th' mob in New York that you wanta crash. What d'ya say we sorta work together? You get me outa stir. I get ya inta th' money?"

Dan stiffened. This wasn't a part of his plan. If he took Brantigan, it would mean complications—

He saw the eager light in Brantigan's eyes. He understood it. Brantigan was in for life, and here was a chance to trade his way to freedom.

"If I did get out," Dan ventured, "and got in with th' mob, maybe things could be fixed—"

"Helluva chance, McGrath. I know what that means. Once ya get outa here, you're gone. I'd stand a hot chance a gettin' anything outa ya. I ain't so dumb. I'm tellin' ya nothin'."

Dan thought of giving Brantigan a working over—of arranging to have him talk to prison officials under pressure. But he knew Brantigan well enough by this time to know that wouldn't work. He'd keep his mouth shut until hell froze over.

He slumped onto his bunk.

"I'll think it over," he said.

The next morning a guard, under special orders from the warden, went to the cell occupied by Dan and Brantigan, just as he had done every morning since Dan had been moved in. He was rewarded for the first time. He found a note jammed up one of the hollow iron legs of the bunk.

He took it to the warden.

It made several requests, all of which caused the warden to get in touch with the governor. Word came back to Dan in the course of the day that he would be given full coöperation in his desperate plan, and that only the chief prison physician, Dr. Harmon, was in on the procedure. Dan, as he had requested, was going to have to take his own chances, as the warden knew that secrecy must be preserved at all costs lest word that the crush-out was pre-arranged reach the mob in New York City.

That night Dan told Brantigan:

"I'll take ya up on that deal. I got a rod comin' in tomorrow morning, and I need yer help. Here's the layout . . ."

Five barrels of flour came into the prison bakery the next day. They all looked the same to the average observer, but Dan saw that one barrel had a small black mark on the rim. The barrels were brought in by trusties on hand trucks and left outside the storeroom. A guard checked them in, signed for them, dismissed the trusties. While he was doing this, Dan made a point of working very near him. He had observed this procedure before, and knew that if he was hard by the guard he probably

would be selected to move the barrels into the room.

The guard turned to him.

"Here, you," he said, "get onto these."

He pointed to the barrels.

"Okay."

DAN shot a look at Brantigan, who caught the signal, began helping him roll the barrels across the cement floor, while the guard unlocked the door to the room. Dan put his hand to the barrel with the mark on it. The guard went back to the ovens. Dan pushed the barrel through the door, rocked it upright, fished into his belt, pulled out a knife he had grabbed from a rack earlier in the morning, went to work on the barrel head.

Brantigan rolled in a barrel, eyed him curiously.

"Watch fer th' guard!" Dan growled. "Get another barrel!"

He got off a section of the top. Brantigan, covertly watching him, saw him fish an Army type .45 caliber automatic from the flour, snap it between his belt and his stomach, pull his denim jacket down over it and the knife. The hood's eyes popped. Dan slammed the board back onto the barrel head just as the guard came back to the storeroom. The guard eyed Dan suspiciously.

"What's goin' on here?" he growled. "Get goin'!"

They hurriedly rolled in the other barrels.

"How'd ya do it?" Brantigan asked, his glance fixed covetously on the spot where the gun was concealed. Dan noticed the look, didn't like it. "Can't ya get one fer me—later?"

"It costs dough to get them things into this dump," Dan shot out of one corner of his mouth. "One's all we get—and we're lucky t' get that. What a break—havin' a pal that trucks in th' flour. Now we can go places—"

"When?" asked Brantigan nervously.

"T'night."

"That's oke by me. I don't feel so good wit' that gat around. Some screw's apt t' find it and then we

draw a stretch in solitary. I don't like talkin' t' m'self down in one of them private booths."

When the men were marched to their cells after dinner, their feet shuffling along the cement corridor, Brantigan developed the jitters.

"Ya sure yer goin' t' get away wit' this?" he asked, as soon as they had reached their cell. "How're we goin' t' do it?"

"By takin' a long chance," replied Dan. "Remember, I got ticker trouble. Th' heart don't work right. I take spells, see? That's why they had me up in th' infirmary so long. Well, t'night I'm goin' t' have a bad spell. About an hour after lights 're out. You're awake. Ya hear me groanin'—breathin' hard—fightin' fer air. Ya holler fer a guard—and then fer th' croaker. Ya want th' croaker right now, because ya think I'm dyin'. The boys up in th' infirmary already know my pump ain't so good, so they'll fall fer what ya say. Then..."

Dan outlined the rest of his plan, rehearsed it again and again with Brantigan to be sure that there would be no slip-up. At lights out, he took the pistol, from which he had been cleaning the flour all evening when guards weren't passing, checked the magazine, pumped a shell into the barrel and put it under his pillow.

Brantigan watched the gun, his expression hungry. Dan noticed this.

Some time later, Dan started his "heart attack." Brantigan shouted for a guard and a guard came to the cell. Brantigan proved a good actor. There was terror in his voice as he pleaded for a physician. The guard looked at Dan. The guard decided that the G-man was desperately ill. Dan was perspiring profusely, a condition achieved by using both his blankets and those of Brantigan. He was gasping for breath, moaning, apparently unconscious.

THE guard hurried to the telephone, put a call through to the infirmary, explained what was the matter.

"It looks like a stretcher case," he said.

As arranged by the warden, Dr. Harmon, the chief prison physician, was working overtime.

Inside the cell, Dan and Brantigan were busy stripping blankets, using razor blades. They cut several pieces as long as the blanket and about two inches wide. They heard steps in the corridor and Dan feigned illness again while Brantigan concealed the strips.

Dr. Harmon arrived. With him were two uniformed orderlies. Their uniforms were white. The guard came into the cell with Dr. Harmon and the orderlies. Dr. Harmon bent over to examine Dan. Dan whipped out the pistol, pointed it at his stomach and snapped in a low, tense voice:

"Harmon's covered, slugs. One move from any of ya, other than those I tell ya t' make, means I drill him, and you too, see? Yer dealin' wit' a couple of lifers that don't care whether they croak er not gettin' out of this lousy dump. Get it?"

He jammed the pistol into Harmon's stomach, pushed him backward. He pulled himself out of the bunk, always keeping Harmon between himself and the guard. He frisked the guard, took his revolver and shoved it beneath his belt. Brantigan already was at work binding the orderlies, stripping their clothes off them.

"You'll pay heavily for this, McGrath," snapped Dr. Harmon. "You know you can't get away with it."

In answer, Dan backhanded the face of the doctor—a stinging blow. Brantigan noted the act approvingly. He secured and gagged the guard, tossed him onto the bunk. He took one of the uniforms and slipped it on. Then Dan, changing garments while shifting his weapon from one hand to the other, was soon dressed as an orderly. Brantigan was in the same costume. They took one of the orderlies, tossed him on the stretcher. They ordered Harmon to go ahead as they tossed a blanket over the orderly, covering him from head to foot.

"And now, Doc," snarled Dan, "you're goin' t' march. If any guards

think something funny's goin' on, ya tell 'em that we got a gat on ya, and that if they try anything it's yer life and theirs, because we ain't goin' t' monkey. I've got the gat right on th' stretcher by my hand, an' I can fill ya fulla holes before ya can say 'boo!' Move right along, business-like. Don't head fer th' infirmary but for yer car. We'll pile in with ya and go fer a little ride."

The march began, with Dan and Brantigan carrying the stretcher, with Harmon walking beside it as ordered. They passed guard after guard. Some detected the ruse. To them, Dr. Harmon spoke in a low voice. One guard went for his gun. The back end of the stretcher dropped and he found himself looking into the muzzle of Dan's automatic. Dan tossed the guard's weapon across the corridor, brought his pistol down on the man's head. He dropped.

"Gimme a gat!" hissed Brantigan. "Th' one ya put in yer belt!"

"Yeah?" sneered Dan. "And have ya take a crack at a screw and jam us? I don't trust ya, slug. I'm goin' out—and yer just trailin' along, see?"

The physician took the men to where his car was parked. They discarded the stretcher. They climbed into the car. Dan ordered the doctor to drive. He and Brantigan got into the back seat, crouched low.

"Drive out just like ya was goin' home," Dan ordered. "Soon's we get outside, Brantigan'll drive. Make one signal, and we drill ya!"

The gate guards saw Dr. Harmon at the wheel of his car, assumed that he was leaving for the night, saluted him and opened the massive gates. The car went into the night to freedom. Dan ordered Harmon to drive to the edge of town. There, he ordered him into the back seat, while Brantigan took the wheel.

As the car roared ahead, Dan snapped directions to Baby Face. At the same time he was silently congratulating Dr. Harmon for having run the risk he had—when a single slip might have meant curtains for all of them. Dr. Harmon had risked his own life so that other lives—only

the Dean of the Crime School knew how many—might be saved. He was wishing that other public servants were as loyal to the public they served, the public which was responsible for the positions which they held.

The car raced eastward, the brilliant lights cutting a path along the white concrete.

"SLOW down, Brantigan!" Dan commanded. "D'ya want me t' have t' plug some state cop t' keep him from givin' us a ticket?"

Baby Face slowed.

Dan watched out the back window, kept assuring Brantigan that they weren't being followed. He continually directed the hood to make right and left turns until the car was in comparatively open country. He finally ordered Brantigan to swing to the right up a narrow lane. The car bumped ahead for half a mile along the narrow thoroughfare.

"Douse th' lights!" Dan ordered. "Then pull to a stop!"

Brantigan followed instructions. Dan got from the car.

"Come on!" he snapped. "We've gotta tie up th' sawbones."

"Hell! Let's bump him!" replied Brantigan.

"I'm runnin' this!" snarled Dan. "There ain't any reason t' bump him, in th' first place. And a shot out here is apt t' bring anybody. Ya want a gun fight on yer hands?"

"Okay," said Brantigan. "Say—where in hell are we?"

Dan grinned to himself. "Where they won't find th' sawbones er th' car until we're tied in with th' gang in New York," he replied.

Brantigan, he thought, would have been surprised and a trifle chagrined, to put it mildly, if he knew that in his note to the warden he had given an explanation of where the physician and his car would be found, and had asked that Whitten, at the field offices, send a car and clothes to a spot half a mile from where they stood.

They went to work trussing up Dr. Harmon, who fought vainly. Dan back-handed him again. They dumped

him into the back seat of the car.

"Now what do we do?" Baby Face asked.

"We hike half a mile to another road," Dan explained. "We cross a brook, go up the other side and down a lane. There's a car waitin' there fer us. It's got a couple a suits in it—coats, hats and shoes—and dough—fer us. We better be movin'."

Dan's suit was the one he had discarded in the prison.

He started through the brush, Brantigan beside him. Brantigan was contemplating the thought of that car—of the money and clothing—of the Crime School. Perhaps, if he went the rest of the way alone, without being encumbered by Vince McGrath. . . .

He bided his time. He'd let McGrath get him to the car, or within sight of it, before he struck.

They went through the fields, waded the creek. Brantigan saw the lane above it—knew that somewhere nearby the car was parked. He turned suddenly, leaped at Dan from the side. His weight crashed down on the G-man. His hands went out, gripped Dan's throat as the latter tried to swing around and meet the attack. Dan staggered sidewise under the weight, went for the pistol at his belt.

Brantigan, killer at heart, strengthened by the thought that he was going to get rid of the man who had made his escape possible, thus freeing himself from any obligation, dug his fingers into Dan's windpipe. Dan gasped for air, battled viciously, pumped rights and lefts into Baby Face's midriff. This pounding failed to loosen the murderous hold. Dan doubled up, went down, Baby Face on top of him.

The G-man managed to get his legs under him, to whip his head forward and kick out just when he felt that his lungs would burst and his eyes pop out of his head. His feet caught Brantigan in the stomach, tore loose the grip. The hood fell backward. Dan leaped to his feet, cocked his fists. Brantigan also stood up, crouched, looking for an opening. Dan carried the fight to him, moved

forward, crashed a vicious blow to the side of Brantigan's head, crossed one to his stomach with his left. Brantigan doubled over. Dan unleashed an uppercut which straightened him up. Dan closed in, swinging rights and lefts, wanting to kill the doublecrossing rat—but he knew that if he did, he'd never get into the Crime School.

Brantigan folded under the attack. Dan lashed one to the jaw and the hood dropped, the fight gone out of him. Dan grabbed him by the scruff of the neck, pulled him to his feet. He pushed him ahead up the bank.

"Try that again, you two-timing slug," he said, "and I'll fill ya full a lead—whether I get into th' mob or not."

Brantigan reeled ahead, mumbling to himself.

AFTER they had climbed the bank and had gone a few yards down the road they found the car that Whitten had left. They shed the uniforms; bundled them up, weighted them down with rocks and tossed them into the creek. They dressed, Dan always within reach of the pistol. To avoid further argument, he also tossed the revolver he had taken from the guard into the creek. Dan prodded Brantigan into the car, ordered:

"You drive. Remember, I've got ya covered. Head right fer th' Crime School. One trick and yer done."

Brantigan, thoroughly cowed, started the car wordlessly and went through the gears. Like all of his kind, he was a coward at heart and feared men who had physical mastery over him. Dan had twice demonstrated his superiority—and that was enough.

The car hummed southward through country roads, keeping far from the main highways on Dan's orders. Brantigan drove southward through the Bronx, cut across onto Manhattan. He turned into First Avenue and drove down it until he reached Fourteenth Street.

"This car hot?" he asked.

"Yeah. We gotta ditch it."

Then, concealing the eagerness in his voice, he asked: "We near where we're goin'?"

"Th' joint's a block away," Baby Face said.

"Okay—pull over t' th' curb."

Dan wondered, for a moment, whether he could get away with his desperate plan. He'd be all right, providing no one in the mob knew Vince McGrath, who lay in bed, dying, carefully guarded so that the word would not leak out that he was still in prison—hadn't escaped at all.

He and Brantigan left the car, walked to the corner of First Avenue and Fourteenth Street. It was well after midnight. Hours had elapsed since the break from the prison. He glanced at the newspapers on an all-night newsstand. One, an extra edition, announced in bold, black type across the front page:

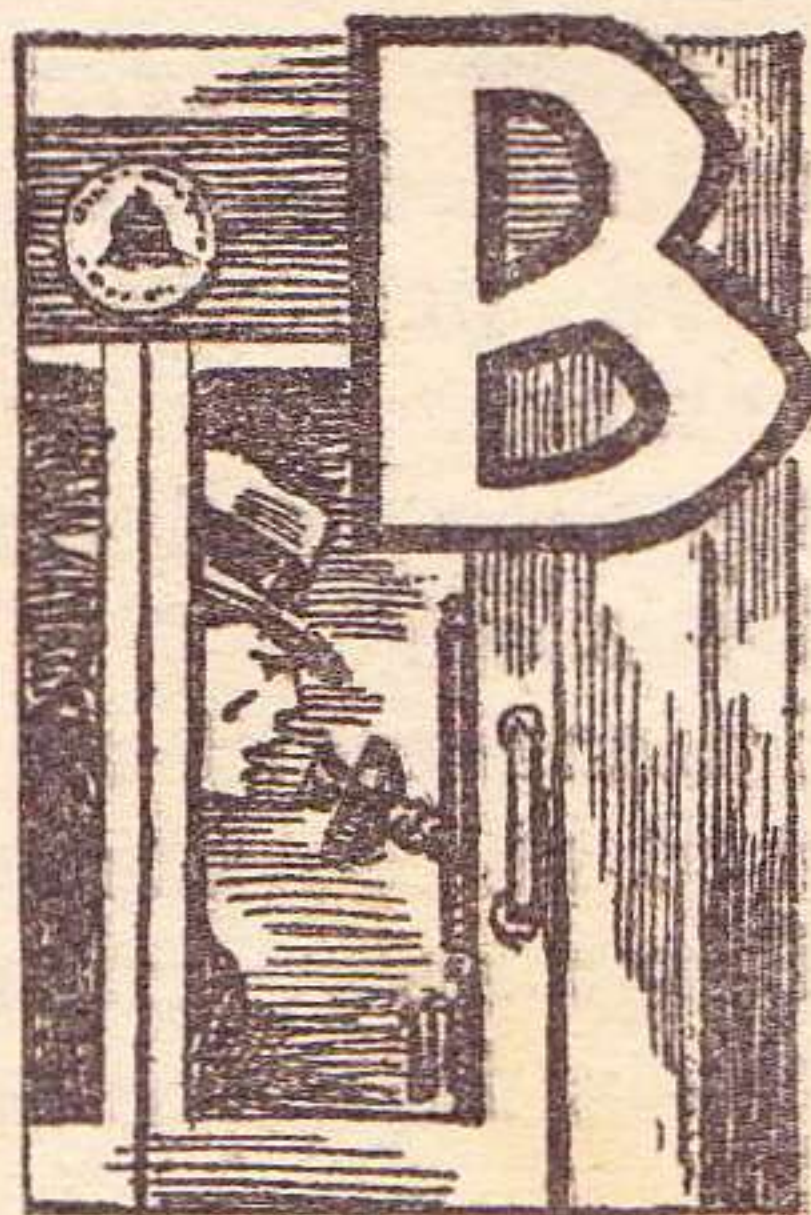
VINCE McGRATH ESCAPES PRISON

Kidnaps Jail Physician
Speeds off with
Albany Mobster

He glanced at the sheet. There was just a bare announcement of the break. Reporters as yet had not ferreted out the entire story. He was glad that the story was already in the newspapers. The information would help pave his way into the Crime School.

CHAPTER XII

The Crime Capital



BRANTIGAN walked into Fourteenth Street, started up the sidewalk with Dan, alert, at his side. Dan was figuring out his course of action. His plan was to mingle with the mob, learn who had killed Conovan, Two Gun Martin, Dr. Wymond, McGuire, Crandall; who the smugglers were; who had been responsible for the other kill-

ings, stick-ups and bank burglaries which had terrorized several cities. Evidence was what he was after. Evidence which would be absolutely foolproof, for such was the goal of members of the F. B. I.—the special agents who daily dared death in the performance of their duty.

He could call the police and Whitten soon after getting into the place—but a raid would mean little or nothing. He had evidence against Guts Hogan and Cheeks Maroni—Knucks Melton would be sent back to Leavenworth—but he didn't have a thing on the others.

He fell to wondering what Larry Kendal had learned in Minneapolis—whether Shadow Tate had regained consciousness and had been able to identify any of the photographs Larry had taken with him. He wondered how the Washington laboratories had come out with the glove he had sent to them. Would there be any legible prints on the inside, satisfactorily brought out by the Hudson process, or was that just another wasted effort?

Brantigan interrupted his thoughts.

"When we get there," the mobster said, "th' password's 'perfect crime.' I got it from Two Gun Martin and from Jimmy Flaggerty, who used to bunk wit' Cheeks Maroni. Flaggerty's in th' mob now."

"The pass word's appropriate," Dan said to himself. Aloud he asked: "Where's th' place?"

Brantigan shot him a shrewd, calculating look. "Ya'll find out soon enough!" he snapped.

The Albany hood continued down Fourteenth Street. They covered half a block more. Dan looked around him as Brantigan paused, pointed to a building across the street.

"If Martin and Flaggerty told me straight," he said, "that's it!"

Dan felt a shock of amazement run through him as he stared at the place. It was just two buildings away from Conovan and Company—a distance of about a hundred yards.

HE and Brantigan cased the place. From the inside it looked exactly like buildings which lined the

broad thoroughfare. It was an old building, and had long windows, with two fire-escapes running up the four floors. On the first floor were display windows. These windows were filled with various articles, but Dan, in peering behind him, discovered that the stores themselves were empty. One window was decorated with a display of drugs. Another had men's clothing in it, coats and suits neatly arranged. A third simulated a linen shop, with table cloths, doilies, napkins, towels and handkerchiefs displayed.

Above the third floor of the building was a huge sign, running the length of it. It read:

SEMINOLE BUSINESS COLLEGE

Dan smiled grimly at it.

"This is the place all right, just like Martin and Flaggerty told me," Brantigan said at last. "Come on—we gotta go to th' freight entrance."

As they walked the length of the building to the far end, Dan noticed that lights were burning on the floors above. They reached the freight entrance. A heavy iron gate, which folded like an accordion from the center when opened, was locked with a heavy chain and padlock. The entrance seemed to be deserted. It was quite dark inside. Brantigan reached through the gate. His fingers fumbled along the wall. He pressed what looked like the head of a bolt. Dan heard the very faint sound of a buzzer back in the building.

A moment later a small man, ratty of face, ragged of clothing, in a cap labeled "Watchman" appeared. Dan recognized him instantly as the man who had trailed him down Fourteenth Street after he had applied at the offices of Conovan and Company for a job with the firm. Just one more link, he thought, which tied the importing firm, in some mysterious way, to the Crime School!

Dan watched the fellow carefully as he scrutinized his face. He was ready for action at the first sign of recognition. His disguise, however, seemed good enough to fool the man.

"What d'ya want?" he demanded.

"This place is closed after six o'clock."

Brantigan measured him, said slowly: "I'm just lookin' around," he said. "Me and my pal're tryin' t' find a *perfect crime*."

"Who sent ya?"

"Jim Flaggerty."

"What's yer name?"

"Brantigan—Baby Face Brantigan. This guy here's Vince McGrath. Open up!"

The guard unlocked the padlock, shoved the gate part way open, his manner deferential now. "Wait in here," he said, indicating a bare, cement enclosure off the freight entrance. "Nobody'll see ya. I gotta go up and get Flaggerty t' come down and look ya over."

He paused a second.

"That's rules," he added, apologetically.

He got into an elevator, closed the gates behind him. The car creaked upward. Dan and Baby Face waited for a couple of minutes, Dan impatient at the delay. Then the car came down and a heavy-set, scar-faced man stepped out. He looked from Dan to Brantigan.

"Baby Face!" he exclaimed. "I been lookin' fer ya ever since I saw th' extras. Boy, ya sure pulled a fast one!"

Brantigan turned to Flaggerty, spoke his name. He pointed to Dan. "This is McGrath," he said.

FLAGGERTY measured him. He told them to get into the elevator and come upstairs with him. The rat-faced man ran the elevator to the top floor. Dan found himself in a huge room, covering most of the building, as he stepped from the car with Brantigan and Flaggerty. It was lined with cots, tables, chairs. The place made him think of an army barracks or the dormitories in fire houses. Hoods, yeggmen, robbers—the histories of their crimes written on their evil faces—played cards under green-shaded lights, read newspapers or talked in low tones.

"Most of th' mob's here," Flaggerty said. "Some are out on a job. We've

got orders to stand by for somethin' big. Nobody knows what it is. We never do until th' last minute. Come on—I'll take ya up and let ya talk t' Knucks Melton—he's a sorta straw boss around here."

Dan started. Knucks Melton! The man who had been freed in the Union Station at St. Louis by a murderous hail of gang bullets!

"Melton'll probably cut ya in on t'night's job," Flaggerty added. "I heard him say he was a bit short o' help."

Dan looked around him, studied the faces—wondered if he'd bump into Guts Hogan, Cheeks Maroni or the others who had kidnaped him in Central Park. He prayed that they wouldn't be able to penetrate his careful disguise. He hoped that none of the men in the room had ever known the real Vince McGrath—but that was a peril which he had to face.

Flaggerty led the way toward an office at the far end of the room. The trio walked past the cots, past the hard-faced denizens of the place, who stared at them. The door of this office was open. Next to it was a closed door. Dan indicated it.

"What's that place?" he asked.

Flaggerty lowered his voice.

"That's th' Dean's hangout. Nobody's ever saw him. He has a way of gettin' in from th' other side. Door's kept locked and nobody's allowed in. They say th' Dean uses th' main entrance t' th' building t' get in and out—that he wears a mask 'n' cape—comes and goes all th' time—"

Again Dan started. He recalled the battle which he had had with the man in the mask and cape in the building occupied by Conovan and Company. Then it was the Dean, for sure! And that glove—

They walked on. They reached the office, went in. Dan looked over the man behind the desk, recognized him instantly, from photographs he had studied, as Knucks Melton. His clothes were well cut. He was tall and thin. His large head was bald on top. His features were large, especially the nose. His eyes were sharp and calculating as he looked up.

"What is it, Flaggerty?" he asked. He looked from one man to another.

"I told ya, as soon as I read th' paper, that Brantigan would show up," Flaggerty said. "Well, here he is—and he brung Vince McGrath, the guy who pulled the crush-out, along with him."

Melton studied Dan. "McGrath, eh?" he said, slowly. Dan thought his piercing eyes were drilling through to the back of his head, like an X-ray machine. Did Melton know the real McGrath? Dan fought to hold himself steady—braced himself for action.

"Nice work, McGrath—that crush-out. I guess ya'll do all right." He studied Baby Face. "You, too, Brantigan. Now, get this. We got a big job comin' off in a little while. We can use you. Not important work—but it's a starter. You want t' come in on it?"

DAN breathed easily again. "Count me in," he said. "I'd like t' get even with them flatfeet fer pushin' me up th' river."

"Okay. What about you, Brantigan?"

"Me too."

"That's set. You'll get your orders before long. Flaggerty, take these fellows out and fix 'em up. I'll report 'em in t' th' big boy and get 'em lined up."

Flaggerty took Dan and Brantigan outside. "You guys heeled?" he asked.

"I am," said Dan. "Why?"

"Lemme see yer rod."

Dan passed it over. Flaggerty went over the gun carefully.

"I thought so," he said. "She ain't been fixed." He handed it back, flipped a snub-nosed .38 from his pocket.

"See this?" he asked. "It's parts of four different guns. If it's used, th' parts're all shifted around to other guns. No cop er G-man is goin' t' find out which fired th' bullet. Sometimes we even cut down th' lands inside th' barrel. That changes th' marks on th' bullets. They can't pin anything on us. And say—I gotta get ya gloves. Everybody wears 'em. Then there ain't no fingerprints."

He put his revolver away.

"Come on downstairs," he said. "We'll go t' th' armory and get ya a couple of fixed rods. You can turn yours in, McGrath."

He led the way to a cement staircase at one corner of the room. Dan and Brantigan followed. He turned to the right at the bottom of the flight, walked along it, opened a door.

The men filed in. Dan repressed a gasp of amazement. The room was larger than the Bureau gun room in the Department of Justice building. On all the walls there were racks containing every imaginable kind of weapon, from pistols so small that they would fit inside the palm of a man's hand to heavy Colt .45s—rifles, some with telescopic sights—tommy guns, with hand grips for firing from the shoulder—standard machine-guns, mounted on tripods, both water and air-cooled types. There was a long work bench littered with parts from various weapons, lathes, drills and electric motors with various accessories.

Flaggerty took Dan's gun, tossed it onto the bench, said to one of two workers: "Here's a job to fix up. In th' meantime, issue a couple of the right kind of rods to Brantigan and McGrath here."

The man motioned them to a cabinet.

"Help yerself."

Dan looked over the assortment, picked a .45 automatic, the type of gun he was used to. He turned to the gunsmith.

"Say—this here's got numbers on it!" he pointed out.

"Sure," was the reply. "The boys have been filing off numbers, and what happens? Th' Government treats 'em with acid and th' acid eats out th' soft metal, where it ain't been stamped, and th' numbers show up again. So we fool 'em. We stamp in phony numbers. They can't beat that."

Dan marveled. Here was a complete gun shop which was going the Government one better—beating it at its own game—experimenting to outwit the law as fast as it adapted new and modern sciences to its use.

Brantigan picked out a gun and

they left the shop. Dan pointed to other doors leading from the corridor, turned to Flaggerty.

"What's in there?" he asked.

"Laboratories," the hood said. "They're workin' all th' time. Trained fellers. I don't know much about that. The big fellow—th' Dean—don't like guys that ask too many questions. We get our orders. We do our jobs. We get a cut in on the loot. That's enough. Don't go askin' no questions. A coupla guys learned too much t' suit th' Dean an' tried t' pull a coupla fast ones. They just ain't around no more."

"What happened to 'em?" asked Dan.

"They got the ice box treatment. Melton shoved 'em into a big refrigerator downstairs—and th' cops picked 'em up later in vacant lots. Dead from exposure. Pretty clever, eh? Well, they got other ways, too."

Dan thought of the fate of Inspector Anthony McGuire. Could it be—?

"What's this about a school?" asked Brantigan. "I ain't never went to one much."

FLAGGERTY grinned. "Yeah. We got classrooms and everything. Th' Dean took over this business college when she went busted. Kept th' rooms on th' second floor just like they was. Knucks Melton gets orders from th' big guy. Blueprints an' layouts an' miniatures of th' jobs we gotta do. All scientific. One jump ahead of th' cops. He calls th' class down and we learn just what we gotta do. It's a pipe."

Dan found himself wondering about the other rooms. He decided to have a look at them. Flaggerty went up the stairs with Brantigan and Dan following. They went to one of the tables, sat down. Dan began deliberately to take down his pistol. He examined all the parts.

"This here gun's goin' t' jam," he said, finally. "Look here—" He pointed to the ejector. "See—she catches. I'm goin' down an' have th' gunsmith look at it."

"Ya know where t' go," Flaggerty said.

Dan walked across the room to the

stairs and went down them. He headed for the first closed door, opened it. There were lights burning. The place seemed to be deserted. Dan sniffed. He smelled what is known technically as bromo-benzyl-cyanide.

"Tear gas!" he exclaimed. He looked around him. There were huge retorts, mortars, pestles, chemicals in jars along the walls. He saw several bombs stacked up on one of the tables.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed to himself. "They make their own!"

He sniffed at various containers, prowled through the place. He found chlorine, di-chloro-ethyl-sulphide, or mustard gas; chloropicrin, di-phenyl-chloroarsine, vomiting and sneezing gasses, respectively. There were also powders which Dan identified as explosives of various kinds.

He slipped from the room, went into the next. Here he found a complete chemical laboratory. One section of it attracted his attention immediately. There were bottles containing glandular extracts of all kinds.

A sudden thought struck him as he looked over them. He knew, from his own researches, that glandular extracts—certain types—would cause death and, if injected in minimum lethal dose would be practically undetectable by toxicologists seeking the cause of death. He wondered if this was the treatment accorded Two-Gun Martin, who had succumbed so mysteriously.

The door opened into another room. He saw, at the end of it, a huge refrigerator. He went forward, examined it. He opened the big door. It was large enough to freeze a man—undoubtedly had been used to dispose of those other two men who'd tried to doublecross the Dean.

He turned, went to a door which he thought led to the corridor. He was about to open it when a man stepped out of the shadows. The fellow held a revolver which he jammed into Dan's stomach.

"What're ya doin' here?" the fellow demanded.

"Lookin' fer th' gun room," replied Dan. "Stumbled in here. Where is it?"

The man eyed him suspiciously. "Ya wanta watch yer step around here, buddy. If ya ain't ordered down here, don't come. Gun room's three doors up an' t' th' right."

"Okay," said Dan, apologetically. "I lost my way, I guess. I'm sorta new here—"

He hurried up the hall toward the gun room. He looked back, saw the guard watching him, went inside. He explained that he thought something was wrong with the weapon, found out that his supposed fears were groundless, and went upstairs again. He joined Flaggerty and Brantigan. Flaggerty threw him a newspaper.

"Read about yerself," he said.

Dan read the fragmentary reports. Another small item, under a Minneapolis dateline, caught his eye. He read:

GANGSTER SUCCUMBS

Minneapolis, Oct. 28:—Shadow Tate, local gangster, involved in the daring daylight robbery of the Hennepin National Bank, died here tonight as the result of wounds which he received in a battle with local police, at the time of the stick-up.

Dan's heart sank. Had Larry gotten to him? Had he regained consciousness?

He fingered through the newspaper, scanning headlines. On the financial pages another small item caught his attention. The story stated briefly:

NEW FIRM MEMBER

Rutherford Conovan, chairman of the board of directors of Conovan and Company, announced today that Arthur Belden, noted corporation lawyer, had been appointed to a vice-presidency in the firm. Belden will maintain offices with Conovan and Company as well as continue with his legal practise.

DAN was seeking to read an interpretation into this bit of news when Knucks Melton opened the door of his office, came out, called for the attention of everyone in the room. Then he read a list of names, which included those of Brantigan, Flaggerty and McGrath.

"These men will go to the assembly room at once," he ordered. There was

an immediate stir. The men rose, filed toward a door, went into a corridor and down stairs near the freight elevator. Dan, Baby Face and Flaggerty joined the group. The men walked slowly, heavily, and Dan was reminded of the tread of the men in the prison which he had just quitted. There was a sort of shuffle in their movements.

They went down two flights to the second floor. They went into a lighted classroom—one of those which had been abandoned by the defunct business college. The men slipped into seats behind desks. On the wall which all faced Dan saw a huge map of midtown New York, extending from Fortieth to Sixtieth Streets.

Melton picked up a pointer from his desk.

"At three fifty-six A.M.," he began, "New York Central train number 122-A, a special from Chicago, will be about half a mile from Grand Central Terminal. It's goin' t' switch into track seven or nine."

As he spoke, he illustrated the location with the point of the stick he held.

"When it slides up t' this point—"

He singled out a point on the diagram marked with an X. The tracks of the New York Central at this point lay underground beneath Park Avenue. There were air vents in a parkway down the center of the broad thoroughfare, the base of a skyscraper valley, the walls of which were some of the most exclusive apartment buildings in the world.

"—and a switch which we're takin' care of'll run th' electric engine off th' track. There's more'n a million in securities and currency in th' third car. Some of you'll get tear bombs an' gas masks, in case ya need 'em. Ya'll all be armed, and ya'll all wear gloves. Remember what happened to Two Gun Martin. He didn't wear his on the Minneapolis job. The petermen'll have nitro t' blow th' door of th' car if th' saps inside it get tough and won't open up. The train'll be covered from both ends.

"Five cars'll be used. They'll be down in front."

He pointed to the map again. He indicated a huge number "1."

"Car number one'll park here. Car number two, here. Car number three, here."

He paused a minute.

"Now, t' keep the cops in th' precinct busy, a car'll be sent t' Lexington Avenue with a guy who'll shoot it up with a tommy gun. A lotta guys'll be scared and call cops there. A bomb'll go off in th' subway at Fifty-fourth and Seventh. More cops'll be called there. Over on Second Avenue there'll be a taxicab smack-up, with a fist fight. More cops there. Here's yer orders."

While Dan marveled at the ingenuity of the scheme, the precise detail with which it was carried out, he tried to figure a way by which he might be able to warn the local police. Melton called out names. Men went forward, got envelopes which he passed out to them. Dan saw a bare possibility of wiping out some of the mob. Perhaps getting Brantigan back into the hands of the police. He had taken him out of prison, where he rightfully belonged. He had the obligation of returning him.

"We've only got a few minutes," Melton warned. "Remember yer orders. We stick t'gether from now until th' job's pulled. We ain't takin' chances on any leaks. Go right down t' th' cars as soon as ya've burned yer instructions."

Dan's hopes fell with this pronouncement. Still, he didn't give up. He began trying to find a way to beat Melton and the Dean at their own game. They might have a school which was one step ahead of the police, but they might not be able to keep that far ahead of him—

"McGrath!"

THIS was Melton's voice. Dan got to his feet, went forward, received his envelope and turned toward the back of the room. He purposely chose a desk which was well back, out of the glare and away from any of the other gangsters. He took out the contents of the envelope, read:

Driver—Car No. 3:

You will proceed east on Fourteenth Street with Ferini, Brantigan, Kosvic and Hamilton in your car. This is a different route than that taken by any other automobile. You will drive to Third Avenue and turn north. At Fifty-fifth Street, which is for one-way traffic, proceed west. Park at the northwest corner of Fifty-fifth Street and Park Avenue at exactly 3:55 A.M. Remain in the car with motor running. In case of any slip-up, which results in battle with the police, shoot to kill and do not abandon your station.

When your men rejoin you, proceed west on Fifty-fifth Street to Ninth Avenue. Abandon your car at Ninth Avenue and Thirteenth Street. Make your way back to headquarters on foot, via Fifteenth Street to Third Avenue.

Dan studied the orders. He saw the point of the elaborate preparations. The Dean was the only man who knew exactly what every man was going to do. His shrewd brain had conceived the entire coup, and he was playing his men as pawns. Each man knew only his own duties.

The underlings couldn't revolt, take the job into their own hands. They didn't know what the next man was assigned to do.

Melton was issuing a number of rope ladders and pairs of gloves. Dan guessed what the ladders were for—to be used in descending to the tracks from the top of the air vents and ascending again.

He returned to the desk he had chosen, far in the rear. He put the gloves on top of it. The other men were burning their instructions. Melton was busy with the ropes. He lit his paper, dropped it to the floor, stamped out the blaze when there was still a corner of paper left. Then, as if by accident, he brushed the gloves onto the floor. When he bent over to pick them up he had a pencil in his hand. He hastily scribbled a few words on the paper, picked it up with his gloves, looked around him to see if he had been observed. Apparently he had not been. He shoved the gloves and paper into his pocket.

In the pocket was his Government shield, enclosed in a leather case.

Then he joined the others in the general movement toward the stairs.

It was after three thirty now—time to get going. Five automobiles, powerful sedans, were lined against the curbing at some distance apart, so as not to attract undue attention from inquisitive police. Dan slipped on his gloves, went to the third car and piled in. Brantigan and three other mobsters joined him wordlessly, moving like automatons.

Dan drove within legal speed limits up First Avenue, anxiously peering into the night, seeking a uniformed patrolman. He smoked a cigarette. He covered block after block. Then, at Fifty-third Street and First Avenue, he was rewarded. He glanced at his watch. It was three fifty-three, just three minutes before the gang struck!

He took a final drag on the cigarette.

While the white cylinder was between his lips, he slipped his hand into his coat pocket. He glanced around him. The men in the car were tense, staring ahead, paying no attention to him.

His hand came up to the lighted cigarette.

The car was rolling by the patrolman.

He hurled the cigarette out of the window of the car. With it went his Government badge, protected by the leather case. He had held it in the palm of his hand. It struck the pavement, slithered across it and plunked to a stop ten feet from the astonished policeman.

The car cruised onward in the shadows beneath the elevated.

Dan swung left into Fifty-fifth Street, crossed Second Avenue, Third Avenue, Lexington Avenue, rolled onward across Madison and Park, wheeled to the curbing and braked. He looked at his watch again. He had made it to the second. The men climbed silently from the car. Ferini was carrying a rope ladder, he noticed. They walked into Park Avenue, started for their posts.

Dan fervently prayed that he had not been too late in giving his alarm—that the patrolman would not be too dumb to look inside the leather case.

CHAPTER XIII

Death at the Corner



HEARING the thump of the badge against the curbing, Patrolman Michael O'Flarity stared mystified for a moment after the car. Then he turned his attention to the small leather packet which was not far from his feet. He went up to it, picked it up, opened it. Into his hand tumbled an emblem hated by thousands of public enemies and respected by millions of law abiding citizens and public officials.

"Glory be!" he exclaimed. "If it ain't th' badge of a Government man!"

Then he saw a piece of paper. He unfolded it. His brow wrinkled with amazement and disbelief as he moved closer under the street light to read. He saw:

Sticking up train Grand Central.
Rush men.

O'Flarity scratched his head. "Sounds like blarney t' me!" he said to himself.

He looked at the badge again.

"Well," he said, "blarney or no blarney, the word of a G-man is enough for me!" He raced to the nearest alarm box, telephoned frantically.

The great electric locomotive, lumbering and groaning along slowly in the dank railed cavern beneath Park Avenue looked like some prehistoric monster. Red, green and white eyes blinked down the right-of-way. Behind the locomotive creaked and protested a dozen cars.

It swung off the main track, clanked over switches, creeping as if feeling its way.

A figure shot from one of the switches, darted through the subterranean gloom, ducking low to be out of the range of vision of the alert engineer. The front driving wheels ploughed into the damaged switch. The stricken monster faltered. The

wheels climbed the rails, slipped off, crunched and chopped into the ties.

AJARRING, buckling shock relayed through the cars behind the locomotive as the engineer slammed on the emergency brakes. He peered out of the side of his narrow cab, shouted to his assistant. The latter stuck an alarmed head into the blackness.

"What's up?" the assistant called.

He got his answer—but not from the engineer. Both found themselves looking into the snouts of tommy guns—evil, drummed machines of death ready to chop them to pieces.

"Stick 'em up!" The command whipped through the night like a lash.

Their hands went into the air. The conductor, sensing danger, opened a vestibule at one end of the Pullman cars. He hurried down the steps, swung off, groped through the darkness. He started down the side of the train. A voice commanded:

"Halt!"

He disregarded the order, started running. He didn't go far. A tommy spoke ominously—*Rat-tat-tat*. . . .

Hot flames seared the inky tunnel. Lead belched, spewed after him. The man holding the tommy, his evil face twisted into a sadistic grin, jarred with the recoil. The conductor fell sidewise, like a man losing his balance while running along a narrow ledge. He clutched at his ribs, a horrible tale of death's swift impact written across his features. He pitched forward, his head smacking against a rail, rolled over onto his back.

The engineer and his assistant, arms raised, got out of their cabs. With perfect efficiency, their captors backed them against the wall of the tunnel. As one covered both, the other raced ahead of the train to beat back any attack that might come from the station proper.

Frightened passengers peered from the windows of two coaches. A brave one started down the steps at one of the vestibules.

"Get back!"

Machine-gun bullets whanged at the metal beneath his feet. He heard

the crackle of another machine-gun somewhere back in the shadows beside the train. He turned, scurried up the steps, paling at the thought of the narrow escape from death he had had.

Two men in gas masks, looking like creatures conceived in the nightmare of a futuristic artist, banged with their gun butts on the door of the third baggage car.

"Open up!" they demanded, "or we'll blow you up. This is a stick-up!"

The answer they received was a tear gas bomb hurled from a barred aperture in the side of the car. It popped hollowly. White fumes, like smoke from a genie's lamp, snaked into the damp air.

"Give 'em th' works!" growled one Gargantuan figure

The men walked forward through the bellowing, eddying gas. They put nitroglycerine in flat, fused capsules around the door. They lit the fuses, jumped backward, cowered behind steel pillars between the tracks, dodging a burst of fire from the barred windows of the car and waited.

A blast of flame leaped from the edges of the door. The sound of the explosion rolled down the tunnel. A giant hand seemed to lift the door from its hinges, tear it away, hurl it across the tracks. Guards—two of those inside the car—opened up with their revolvers at the weird figures by the tracks. Shots crashed hollowly. Flame flashed and tommies roared as the robbers went into action. One guard toppled back inside the car. The other grabbed at his stomach, pirouetted, plunged from the doorway, crumpled on the floor of the cave.

The two masked men leaped into the car.

Four more—the petermen assigned to crack the safe—pulled themselves up into the car. For a moment there was ghastly silence—

AT the sound of the subterranean explosion Dan left his car, the motor running. He looked down Park Avenue, along Fiftieth Street,

cursed because there was no sign of even a prowler car. Hadn't the cop given the alarm? He paced impatiently. He could not see any of the bandit sedans. He guessed that they must be parked on other side streets.

Then he was cheered by the faint wail of sirens, unearthly howls in the narrow canyons of the shadowed city. He went for his pistol, keyed with nervous exaltation. He saw figures clamoring out of the dark vents above the tracks, began to wonder if the police would make it in time after all. There would be a wild race against time now, if the police were to be effectual.

He saw a squad car shriek into Park Avenue. Uniformed men leaped from it, deployed, raced in the direction of the mobsters. Guns crashed as they went into action. The dark avenue became alive with spurts of orange flame. Dan saw a bluecoat trip, rock crazily, collapse on the pavement.

He saw Kosvic and Brantigan race for the car which he was driving. A patrolman saw them, pounded after them, twenty paces behind. Kosvic whirled as lead whispered past his ears, drew a bead. Dan saw him crack down. He snapped his gun out, fired almost at the same instant the hood blasted at the cop. The policeman pitched forward, a bullet in his leg, his gun clattering out of reach. Dan's shot, which had saved the cop's life, crashed into Kosvic's side at the moment he fired. The crook's arms went into the air, as if in supplication. His back arched. He went up on his toes, pitched forward, kicked a couple of times and lay still.

Brantigan had seen the kill—had seen Dan drill Kosvic. His face contorted with rage. He brought down his gun, got Dan in line with his sights as he snarled:

"You dirty, doublecrossing stool—"

Dan's pistol answered. Flame speared the night.

"I got you out of stir, Brantigan," he said, between clenched teeth. "Now I'm saving the state the expense of a ticket to send you back."

Brantigan's features stiffened with

pain. He grabbed at his vitals, swung like a dervish, crashed to the pavement. Dan looked around him quickly to see if anyone had seen what he had done. No one was near him. Shadowy figures were racing down the avenue, into side streets, their guns turning the entire neighborhood into a crackling, booming, blazing inferno.

No one had seen him drop Kosvic, to save the cop's life, or Brantigan, to save his own. Brantigan and the cop were the only ones who knew what he had done, and Brantigan, he could see, was silenced forever.

He ran to the side of the wounded policeman. Pain and curiosity were stamped on the man's face.

"What's the idea?" he gasped. "You killed the rat—to save me—and that other guy—you got him, too—"

Dan explained who he was—that he was undercover.

"I'm in the gang, and I've got to stay with it," he told the astonished cop. "Don't tip my hand. There's a couple of more hoods coming. Act as if you'd cashed in!"

HE stepped back. He saw the other two gangsters, Ferini and Hamilton, racing through the gloom toward him. He ran to the car, got behind the wheel. The hoods climbed in after him. He shifted into gear, raced from the curb.

"Hey!" shouted Hamilton. "Wait for Kosvic an' Brantigan!"

"We'd wait a long time," Dan snarled back. "They're dead. A cop drilled 'em before I could get him. But I did manage t' bump th' flatfoot, even if I was too late—"

"Somebody tipped th' play," Ferini said. "Th' law cracked down on us just as we were finishin' up. Musta been a million of 'em. There'll be hell t' pay."

Dan didn't answer. He tooled the car into Ninth Avenue, rolled southward. He kept glancing at the rear vision mirror to see if he was being followed. There was no sign of pursuit.

At Ninth Avenue and Thirteenth Street, he pulled the car to the curb-

ing. Ferini and Hamilton got out, started wordlessly in different directions. Dan hiked along Fifteenth Street in the gloom preceding the dawn, following his orders. At Third Avenue he went south into Fourteenth Street and headed for the Crime School. He looked ahead of him, gasped, and ducked into a store arcade so that he wouldn't be seen. He looked around the corner of a display window.

A large car had pulled up to the curbing in front of the main entrance to the Crime School. It was not far from a street light.

At tall, thin man, wearing a black cape, was leaving the car, adjusting a black mask over his face. Dan watched him go to the main entrance, insert a key in the lock of the glass and brass door, turn it, step inside. Dan's pulses pounded as he darted forward.

"At last!" he exclaimed. "I've got the Dean!"

As he hurried along the sidewalk he made rapid plans. The Dean would be going to his office on the top floor. That office was shut off from the main room, containing the cots, by a locked door. Using his keys, he might be able to get into the front entrance, go upstairs and stealthily capture the man who, for days, had outwitted him at every turn.

"He probably came down to check up on how the cops got the tip on the train robbery," he thought, as he hurried forward.

The lock on the front door was harder to work with his skeleton keys than he had anticipated. He tried three keys without success. He was about to try a fourth when he saw one of the mobsters approaching. He darted across the sidewalk, concealed himself behind the car. When the man had gone into the freight entrance he continued to work frantically.

He was interrupted two more times, barely making the shelter of the car each time before being seen. Finally, he found a key which would work the lock, and opened the door. He slipped inside. He saw that the elevator was of automatic type — self-operated,

with inside and outside doors. The man in the mask had taken the car, Dan knew, and it was now standing at the top floor. But he wasn't interested in it, other than to know its whereabouts, which would reveal the location of the man he sought. If he operated it, the noise would give him away.

He found the stairs. He went on tiptoe to the second floor, up marble steps. The next flights were of wood and he had to tread carefully lest they squeak. He made his way slowly to the top floor. He saw a short corridor leading to a door. Beneath this door was a yellow streak of light. His heart pounded as he checked the location of the office in relation to the rest of the building. Yes—it was the Dean's office!

He went onto his toes again and moved toward it, pistol in hand, ready for instant action.

He reached the door, carefully tried the knob. It was unlocked!

Noiselessly he swung it open, covered the figure in the black mask. The man was in a crouching position in front of a safe. He was examining a small book he held in his hand.

"Stick 'em up, Dean! The game's over!"

THE man whirled, remained in his crouching position. Dan noticed the mask—saw that it covered the man's entire face. It was so designed that it came back over the ears and was tied behind the head in two places.

Feeling victory within his grasp, Dan leaped forward, tore at the mask to get a look at the murderous features of the man he had sought so long, and to solve the mystery of his identity. His fingers gouged the man's flesh—but the mask did not come free. The Dean suddenly stiffened, plunged forward like a football blocker, the side of his body crashing into Dan's legs. Dan started falling backward, clutched at empty air for support, fell on his shoulder blades with such force that his pistol was knocked from his hand. It went scuttling across the floor.

He went for it. The Dean got to his feet, lunged at Dan, rained blows at the side of his head, knocked him away from the weapon. Dan went limp, plunged forward, rolled onto his back and doubled up his legs just as the Dean leaped onto him, his hands outstretched ready to grip his throat.

Dan kicked out with all his might. His feet caught the Dean in the midriff. He went hurtling backward, struck, rolled over and grabbed the pistol. Dan got his legs under him, dived at his opponent. He knocked him on his back, grabbed his wrist, twisted frantically, with terrific force. The arm bent back, back even farther. Dan heard the man gasp with pain. The weapon clattered to the floor. Dan reached for it.

This threw him off balance for a split second. The Dean pushed upward, sent him sidewise. Dan got to his feet without the gun, plunged at the Dean, shot a right to the side of his head which rocked him. The man went limp—but only for a moment, just long enough to roll his head away from the blow.

He swung back, lashed out with a terrific haymaker. It connected. It caught Dan on the point of the chin, temporarily numbing him. He swayed, grabbed at the Dean, who ducked agilely. The man raced for the door. Dan shook off the effects of the unexpectedly paralyzing blow. As he started in pursuit, the Dean dashed down the corridor, ducked into the elevator, jammed the doors shut and pressed the control button.

The car sped downward. Dan got his pistol from the floor, raced out of the office. He ran down a flight, three steps at a time—and then felt a sinking sensation in the pit of the stomach as he heard the cage stop at the first floor and the doors bang shut. Nevertheless, he continued his headlong dash. He got to the first floor, ran across the lobby, but by the time he reached the door he saw that the Dean was in his car and was pulling away from the curbing, his motor roaring, the gear in second. The car screamed away into the dawn.

He holstered his pistol, started back

across the lobby. He had not gone ten feet when a small, flat book, just in front of the elevator entrance, attracted his attention. With a thrill of discovery, he went to it, picked it up. Inside were notations and figures. One glance told him that all the entries were in code. His heart sank as he put it in a pocket.

Then he remembered that the safe in the office upstairs was still open. He resolved to have a look at it, climbed hurriedly up the stairs, went back to the scene of the battle. He began rummaging through it, examining papers, books, other documents. None was of any particular interest. No names were mentioned. He saw a large envelope of heavy paper, unsealed. He opened it, looked at the paper which it contained, and started.

He read:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Rutherford Conovan, Jr., do hereby confess that I have stolen from the firm of Conovan and Company the total sum of \$43,565.00. I admit taking the money to meet gambling debts which I have incurred during the past year. I have falsified the ledgers and account books of the organization. I have been guilty of stealing as follows . . .

The remainder of the page was filled with the dates and the amounts taken.

What was more, the name of Jarrett Crandall, the dead narcotics smuggler and trusted employee, supposedly, of Conovan and Company, was signed as a witness to the confession!

Dan handled it gingerly, placed it back in its envelope, and put it in his pocket with the book of coded entries which he had found in the foyer of the building. Then he closed the safe, turned out the light and went downstairs. Trying to fit this new evidence into the picture, he went downstairs, left the main entrance, went to the freight gate, gave the password, "Perfect crime" after summoning the ratty guard. The fellow admitted him through the gate and the operator of the elevator took him aloft. He went into the main room of the Crime School.

The place was practically deserted.

A few of the mobsters sat around. They talked, eyed Dan challengingly. There was a light in Knucks Melton's office. Dan went to it. Melton looked up.

"McGRATH!" he thundered. "Where in hell have you been?"

Dan walked into the office. He knew that his face was marked from the blows he had received during the fight in the Dean's office.

"Had a little tangle with a coupla flatfeet," he explained easily. "Th' town's lousy with guys who'd like to put a finger on me. The slugs had an idea I was Vince McGrath. When they come to, they'll know I was."

Melton's face was hard. "There was a tip-off on that job tonight," he said, his tone menacing. "I'm goin' t' find out who was th' stool."

"I'm th' guy who tipped," Dan brazened. "With four muggs in th' car wit' me, I pulled up t' th' curbing near a cop. When he comes t' th' car, I introdooed myself an' th' other boys. Then I told th' flatty what I was goin' t' do. He says, 'Vince, old boy, th' town's yours. You been away fer a long time, and ya gotta have yer fling—'"

"Can th' clownin'—"

"Okay. Anyways, I'm checkin' in. When d'ya want me again?"

Melton leaned forward.

"We got the hottest job yet comin' off t'night," he said. "Report back here at six o'clock on th' dot."

"I'll be here. An' I'm goin' t' get some sleep."

He left Melton, walked through the main room, rang for the elevator and was taken downstairs. He reached the street, hailed a night-hawk taxicab a block from the school, and ordered that he be driven to his hotel. He used an alcohol solution to get the stain off his body, removed small packs which had changed the shape of his mouth, and cleaned himself up. Then he wrapped the code book in a package, went downstairs, and mailed it to the chief at Washington for decoding.

He came back upstairs, left a call

at the desk, and then turned in for much needed sleep.

CHAPTER XIV

Unmasked



REFRESHED by a few hours of sleep, that splendid fighting machine, Dan Fowler, barged into the field offices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation shortly after nine o'clock the next morning. Fowler went directly to Hal

Whitten's office. He gave full details of all that he'd done from the time he'd left the offices to go to the penitentiary.

"I know about part of it," Whitten said, smiling. He reached into his drawer, pulled out the leather case which contained Dan's badge, tossed it on the desk.

"It was returned to the office a few minutes before you came in, with the heartfelt thanks of the police commissioner," Whitten added. "That was fast thinking and a fine job, Fowler."

"Thanks. And now, listen to this—"

He told about the finding of the book with the code notations in it, and of airmailing it to Washington. Then he produced the confession which had been signed by Rutherford Conovan, Jr.

"Let's give this the Hudson test—the silver nitrate spray—right now," he suggested. "We'll see if there are any fingerprints on it."

Whitten rang for his secretary, gingerly handed her the paper and envelope so as not to add his fingerprints to any that might be there already or blur them.

"Did the man in the mask you fought last night have on gloves?" he asked Dan.

"Yes—that's one of the rules of the School, apparently," Dan said, grimly.

"Okay—now I've got news for you. The first is bad."

He passed over a teletype communi-

cation from the director at Washington.

Dan pored over it. It stated:

FINGERPRINTS IN GLOVE FRAGMENTARY AND BLURRED STOP UNABLE TO GET CLASSIFICATION THEREFORE CANNOT COMPARE WITH FILES STOP SUGGEST YOU GET FINGERPRINTS ALL SUSPECTS AND FORWARD THEM FOR COMPARISON WITH GLOVE STOP THIS IS ONLY WAY WE CAN IDENTIFY STOP

"That's the devil of a note," said Dan. "Means that the prints on the glove are valueless unless we get others to compare with them for identifying characteristics. Say—wait—maybe we'll get 'em off Conovan's confession!"

WHITTEN nodded. "That'll be something. It'll prove that the wearer of the glove has at least seen and handled the confession. Also, we can send the prints to Washington and have them checked against the files there for identification. But, unless the Dean has a criminal record, we're still out of luck."

Dan slapped his thigh. "That means I've got to get more prints. Well, I'll figure out a way. Any more grief?"

Whitten's secretary entered, handed him a telegram. Whitten glanced at it, passed it over to Dan.

"It's for you," he said.

Dan took it, ripped it open, read it.

"Good heavens!" he gasped. He passed it to Whitten and grabbed his hat.

Whitten read:

PLANING IN WITH IDENTIFICATION BY SHADOW TATE OF PHOTOGRAPH OF TENNANT STOP HE WAS CONSCIOUS ABOUT AN HOUR BEFORE HE DIED STOP REGARDS KENDAL

Whitten looked up.

"Tennant? The vice-president in charge of sales for Conovan and Company?" he asked.

"Yes," said Dan. "Now I see how handy this job was for him. Touring the country in the interests of sales

of Conovan imports! That was only his *part time* job! Listen—Larry's due in at any time now. I'm going down to put the finger on Tennant. The minute he shows up, give him a report on the fingerprints on the Conovan confession and have him grab his kit and come to Conovan and Company. I've got a hunch I'm going to need him!"

Dan started for the door, slammed on his hat. Then he turned back.

"Call Dr. Norris, the medical examiner," he said, "and have him check on traces of glandular extracts in the remains of Two Gun Martin, will you? I think he'll clean up the cause of his death. There's quite a collection of the extracts at the Crime School. Once injected into the human system they're rather hard to trace, unless you know what you're looking for."

He swung the door shut behind him and was off down the hall.

Dan entered the reception room on the top floor of Conovan and Company, asked the clerk to announce him to Rutherford Conovan, giving his name. He was subjected to an annoying wait. Finally, Conovan himself came into the room, glared at him.

"What's the reason for this call, Fowler?" he demanded. "The smuggling case is closed. Poor Crandall is dead. It seems to me that this is becoming a deliberate case of persecution by the Government. What are you meddling in now?"

Dan looked into the cold, hostile face. With an effort he managed to control his rising wrath. For a moment he wanted to blast into Conovan's mind the fact that the Government at this moment had a blanket confession from his son that he had taken more than \$50,000 from the firm. But that was a matter for the state. To the Government, the confession was more than a confession. It was a piece of evidence which might aid in trapping the arch-crook, the Dean. And Dan could not afford to tip his hand to Conovan, for Conovan might be the Dean, he figured, putting the finger on his own son to keep him in line.

"I've come here," he said, "to talk

with an employee of yours in regard to a matter of Government interest. Out of courtesy to you, as head of the firm, I announced myself to you. However, I'm really here to see Buford Tennant."

"Under no circumstances—"

"Just a minute!" snapped Dan, almost losing his patience. "Tennant is a Government witness. He has valuable information to give me. If you want to put yourself in a position of interfering with Government business and obstructing justice—"

The bluff worked. Conovan paled, backed down. "Very well. Come to my office," he said, reluctantly.

HE led the way down the corridor. Dan noticed the names of Buford Tennant and Arthur Belden, whose connection with the firm had just been announced, on the doors. Dan remembered that Conovan had appointed Belden.

He turned into his own office. Belden was there. He nodded a pleasant greeting to Dan, shook hands with him. Dan turned to Conovan.

"Now, may I see Tennant?" he asked.

"I want to know why."

"He's been using his position with Conovan and Company to carry on operations which the Government believes to be illegal. That's all I can tell you now. After I've talked with Tennant, perhaps I can give you further details."

"It seems to me that as his employer I have a right to know—"

Conovan's eyes were stormy. He looked as if he was ready to pounce on the G-man. Belden rose from his chair, went to Conovan's side.

"See here, Rutherford," he said, "These G-men are doing fine work. Clearing up case after case. You might as well take things easy and help him out at the same time—" He turned to Fowler. "I'll get Tennant for you."

Conovan looked for a moment as if he'd make another protest. Finally he yielded. He and Belden walked out the door.

"Tennant'll be right in," Belden

said, as they left the room together.

Dan waited. Then Tennant appeared. Dan was shocked by his looks. The man was pale and wan. As Dan rose and went forward to greet him, he got a second shock—far greater than the first. He saw the pale, tell-tale marks on his neck—similar marks to those he had made on the Dean while trying to pull his mask from his face. Dan watched Tennant's reaction as he motioned him to a chair.

"Let's get right down to facts, Tennant," he snapped. "Shadow Tate has positively identified you as the recruiting officer for the Crime School. Shadow Tate, the Minneapolis gangster, fresh out of prison, whom you enrolled. He saw pictures of you made by a candid camera at the smuggling hearing."

Tennant went absolutely white. He looked as if he was about to collapse.

"I—I don't know what you're talking about."

"No use stalling, Tennant. You're coming along with me—and explain, if you can, why you battled a Federal officer early today in the Crime School. The Dean's office—"

"I tell you—I—"

"What did you want with the book which had the code entries in it?"

"I—I— Oh, I'll talk—I'm sick of the whole thing! Yes—I was getting men—at the prisons—you've got it straight."

Perspiration gathered on his white brow. Weakly he pulled out a handkerchief and with an effort that seemed almost to exhaust him, wiped it.

"I've been—working with the Dean. I went—last night—to get the code book. It's a record—of what the Dean's done. I wanted to see the receipts—find out if he was holding out—on my share—as he did on Crandall's. It's been getting worse and worse. I'm not—not a murderer. I wanted to get out—"

Tennant paused. He was having trouble getting his breath.

"I made wax impressions of—the locks. Got the combination—and went up—there. Some man attacked—"

Dan realized now that something

was wrong with Tennant. Terribly wrong. The man rocked in his chair. As Dan leaped to help him, Tennant slipped from it, fell in a heap on the floor, sprawled out.

Dan was on his knees beside him in a second, shaking him frantically.

"Who's the Dean, Tennant? For God's sake—who's the Dean?"

He got no answer. He pushed up the man's eyelids. The pupils were dilated. Dan had a premonition of what was the matter. He felt the pulse. There was only an echo of a normal beat and it was very slow. He felt Tennant's hands and forehead. They were clammy, cold.

Dan leaped to his feet. He grabbed the telephone. He ordered the operator to get the nearest physician.

"Tell him to bring strychnine and atrophin!" he commanded. He hung up the receiver. Conovan, Belden and others, including several women, burst into the room. One of the women screamed as she caught sight of the body. A moment later, Larry Kendal pushed his way through the crowd.

"**L**ARRY!" exclaimed Dan. "What the devil?"

"The operator outside had me stymied—wouldn't let me in," he said. "I waited—until I heard that scream—and then figured you might be needing me."

He looked down at the body, looked questioningly at Dan. "What's the matter?" he asked.

"Morphine poisoning, I think. He started talking slowly. I thought it was just nervous reaction—until he dived off the chair. Come on—give me a hand."

Together, they picked up the victim.

"We've got to walk him up and down—that may keep him alive until the doctor gets here," Dan said. The attempt failed, however. Tennant's legs buckled under him. Dan put his hand over his heart. It was still pumping weakly. Dan and Larry lowered him to the floor. Dan stripped off his coat and vest, massaged his back and shoulders, compressed his

diaphragm, released it, pressed again, as if trying to resuscitate a drowning man. He knew that the morphine was paralyzing Tennant's respiratory system.

But, in spite of his efforts, Tennant died before the physician arrived.

Dan called Inspector Walsh and then began a thorough investigation. The surface indications were that Tennant had committed suicide. The injection of the drug had been made in the left arm. Dan's check revealed that he was right-handed. In the right hand coat pocket of Tennant's suit was a hypodermic needle in a case. Dan found morphine in Tennant's desk.

While he worked, Larry was right at his side.

"Any prints on the Conovan confession?" he asked.

"Tried silver nitrate, iodine and everything we could lay our hands on. Couldn't get anything worth while."

"Okay. You've got your kit with you. Here's what I want you to do—"

Dan gave him instructions bit by bit, making sure that he wasn't overheard. Larry went from the room. Then Dan made a point of going from office to office to question people as to their whereabouts during the morning and to make other pertinent inquiries. He took most of the personnel of the place with him for purposes of interrogation as he went from one place to another, examining this and that.

Dan knew that anyone who had been working on that floor—or someone who had come from the outside and who had had plenty of time to slip from the building before Tennant's death—could have made the injection. He studied the mark of the needle and the location of it on the arm. Anyone might have used a specially constructed sac and needle held, perhaps, in the palm of the hand—and might have gripped Tennant's arm in what seemed an encouraging, friendly way.

It was all very clever. The killer, if he had used a faster poison, would have marked the case as murder and might have been caught. If he'd used

anything slower, Tennant might have said things far more pertinent than he had before death overtook him.

"It seems to me," said Conovan, "that this is an obvious case of suicide. You have the evidence. We all know the motive. Tennant knew that he faced arrest. He preferred death. It's very simple."

Inspector Walsh, who had arrived and had gone over the evidence, was inclined to agree with this theory. Dan didn't press the issue.

Larry came back into the room. Dan shot him a questioning glance which was not seen by the others. Larry nodded ever so slightly.

Dan turned to Inspector Walsh.

"It's your case," he said. "I'll be at the field offices if you want me. Let's go, Larry."

The two G-men left the offices.

"**M**URDER?" asked Larry when they reached the street.

"A diabolical job," Dan replied. "I know he didn't kill himself. But proving it is another matter. As usual, the Dean didn't leave any clues. Why, Tennant was as surprised as I was when he doubled up. He didn't expect it, that's all." He paused. "How'd you make out, Larry?"

"Great, Dan. That was darned clever, leading them from office to office like that. I got fingerprints off desks, carafes, glasses, pens and everything else in five or six offices. I dusted prints and shot pictures until my arms ached."

"Find much?"

"Plenty."

"And the typewriters?"

"Typed samples on a dozen of 'em."

Dan hailed a taxicab. "Three-seventy Lexington Avenue," he directed.

Dan and Larry worked at the field offices developing the negatives which Larry had made without the knowledge of the personnel of Conovan and Company. True to Larry's prediction, practically all turned out well. Dan marked them clearly to indicate in which office each had been taken.

"As soon as they dry," he said, "rush over to the Associated Press

offices and telephoto them to Washington. I've made arrangements with the New York bureau of the service to use their wires. We've got to have fast action. We can't depend on air mail this time. This case is apt to break wide open within a few hours. Those fingerprints are keys to the whole situation.

"Washington's waiting for them, to compare them with the fragmentary fingerprints they got out of the glove. If any match the glove prints, you know from what offices and articles they came. Now, let's have a look at the specimens you pounded off on the typewriters. We'll compare them with the typewriting in young Conovan's confession and perhaps find out where it was written."

They left the dark room, went to another part of the laboratory, began checking the characteristics of the type on the samples with the type in the confession. Both knew, as the result of training, that typewriters, like humans, wrote differently—that from the time a typewriter left the factory it had a personality all its own.

They found two samples which appeared to be like the typewriting in the Conovan confession. They placed these under the microscope, compared them letter for letter with the confession. Within a few minutes they knew that one of the machines had written both sample and confession. The "l" was slightly below alignment on both the sample and confession. The tail of the "y" didn't print cleanly in either case. One after another they checked points of similarity, until they had more than a score noted—enough to prove their case in any court of law.

On each sample Larry had written the location of the machine. Dan looked at the notation, saw: "Typewriter in Conovan, Sr.'s office."

Larry looked at Dan.

"Going to bring Conovan in?"

"And spoil the game by going off half-cocked? We haven't got anything against him but suspicion. Wait 'til tonight when I get back into the Crime School—"

The telephone at Dan's elbow rang.

He lifted the receiver from the hook.

"Yes? . . . Of course, Dr. Norris. Glad I was right. Just played a hunch. Anyway, that's cleaned up. Thanks for calling."

"What was that?" asked Larry.

"Dr. Norris reporting that Two Gun Martin died of an injection of thyroxin, an extract taken from the thyroid gland. Got an overdose. Just another way the Dean has of removing people who annoy him. Well, it's another link in a chain of evidence that's going to send him to the chair."

He glanced at his watch.

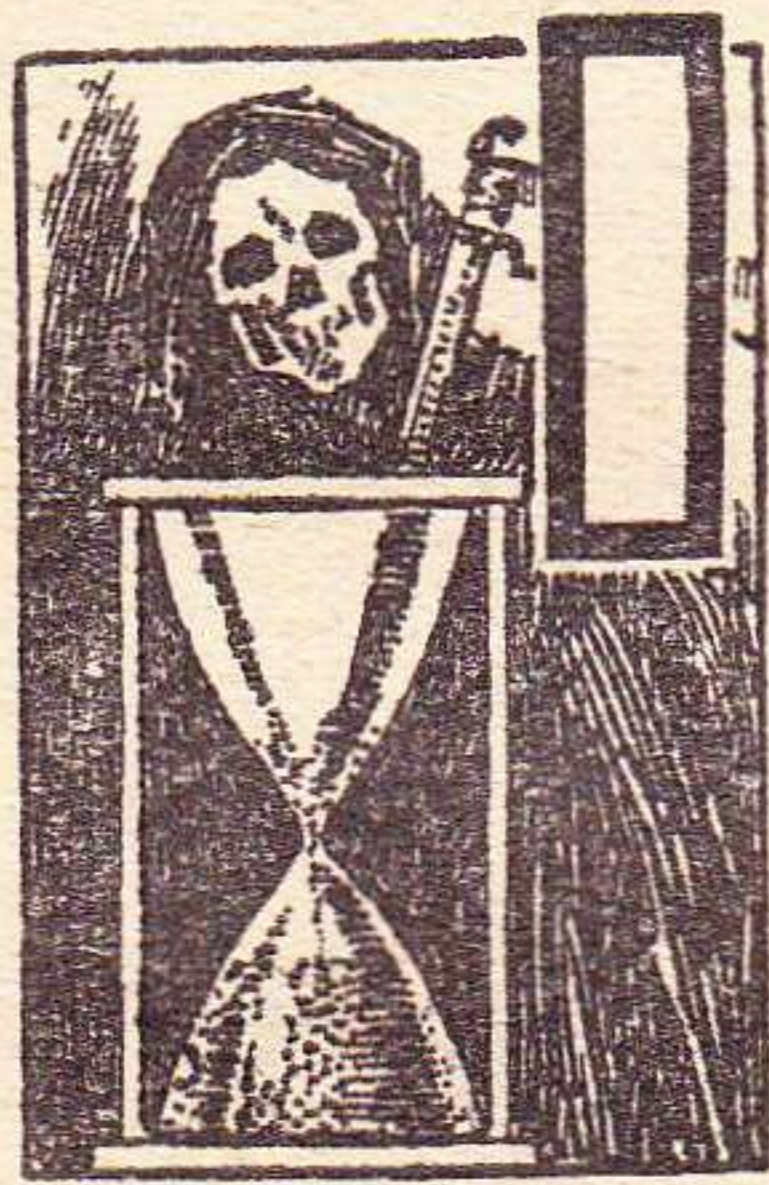
"Those prints ought to be dry, now. Rush 'em over to the Associated Press. Then stand by here until you hear from me, no matter what time it is. If Whitten leaves, keep in touch with him at all times during the night. He'll know where to reach every available agent, if we need them."

"What're you going to do?"

"I'm going back to the hotel, apply some stain, a few knick-knacks here and there, give the personality a workover, and emerge as that notorious gangster, Vince McGrath."

CHAPTER XV

Snatch!



It was shortly after five o'clock when Knucks Melton summoned Guts Hogan and Cheeks Maroni into his presence in his office in the Crime School.

"Maroni," he said, "you and Guts were out on a special job fer th' Dean last

night. You know what happened on the train stick-up, just the same. We got knocked over because some stool tipped us. I been workin' all day, checkin' up—and I've cleared almost everybody. We ain't had any trouble like this before last night. And it was then this Vince McGrath joined up with us. Maroni, you're from Buffalo. Ever know th' guy?"

"Yeah. But I ain't seen him fer

years. He's spent a lotta time in stir."

"Think you'd know him?"

"I might."

"Okay—listen. See that light out there? Well, you two guys sit so that when he passes under it comin' t' my office Cheeks gets a good look at his mug. If ya think he ain't right, just close in behind him—force him into my office. We'll give him a workin' over."

"Right, boss."

The men took their places. The phone in Melton's office rang. "Hello!" he barked.

"Melton?"

"Right, Dean."

"The mayor's official car will pick him up outside his offices at City Hall at seven o'clock sharp. He's due at a banquet at the Biltmore Hotel to talk on the current crime wave. It's being staged by the Law Enforcement Society. Follow out your orders as outlined. I'll call you at seven-thirty to find out if everything worked out. Then I'll issue the statement."

"Okay, boss."

"How'd you come out with the stool?"

"I think I got him spotted."

"Okay—if he's a G-man, give him the treatment I outlined. We'll make an example of him—teach the Government to keep hands off from now on. You've got the ship ready?"

"Yeah."

"And Briggs to pilot it?"

"Yeah."

The Dean rang off.

At exactly six o'clock Dan Fowler, in the rôle of Vince McGrath, was taken to the top floor of the Crime School in the elevator. He stepped out, walked through the lines of cots, noted that the mob had gathered. He passed Hogan and Maroni, who sat some distance from the light which blazed down on him. Maroni whirled on Hogan, hissed:

"That ain't McGrath. This guy's two inches taller—and, if ya look at him close—"

"He looks like Fowler, th' G-man who got away from us—the Bureau's big shot—"

Maroni squinted his eyes. "I think yer right, Guts. Let's go."

They followed Dan. Dan walked into Melton's office.

"McGrath checkin' in," he said.

Melton glanced beyond Dan, saw Maroni's thumb—down. Dan stood in front of Melton's desk. He did not see Hogan and Maroni close in quietly from behind.

"What's up fer t'night?" Dan asked. "What's on yer mind?"

"Th' fact ya ain't Vince McGrath!"

Melton's right hand moved with the speed of light. Dan found himself staring into the snout of a .38 revolver. He was just as quick as the mobster. Perhaps a shade quicker. He snapped to a crouching position, at the same time heaving upward on the desk. It toppled onto the gang boss, pinning him down. Dan went for his automatic. Before he could use it he felt arms close around him from behind, jam his elbows to his sides in a simian grip.

He doubled abruptly. His assailant, Hogan, went hurtling through the air like a sack of wheat, piled on top of Melton and the up-ended desk. Dan whirled, faced Maroni, who lunged at him with the ferocity of a wild beast. The hood swarmed over him. Dan jerked his right arm free, brought the side of the weapon down on Maroni's skull.

There was a crushing impact. Maroni toppled backward, reeling, his scalp gushing gore.

The mobsters in the main room, aware of the free-for-all, rushed forward. Dan flailed viciously. His automatic smashed down on unprotected heads, split scalps. He lashed out with his ironlike left fist. He tried to work his way through the milling mob, to head for the door at the far end of the room. But he couldn't move forward. Not only that, but although he put every ounce of strength into his battle to hold the doorway, he was constantly forced backward.

Hogan shook off the effects of his stunning plunge onto the top of the desk. Beside himself with rage, he snatched a heavy paperweight from the floor, brought it down on Dan's

head. Dan reeled, swayed, fought blindly as blood poured down over his face, blinding him. Hogan struck again. This time Dan's knees buckled. The room reeled about him. He felt as if he was floating face upward, looking into a kaleidoscope of leering, brutish faces. He saw the blood-lust in them, heard Melton shout.

"Get back, ya fools! We can't kill him yet. We got orders!"

THE men backed away as Dan shook his head to clear it.

"Tie him up, boys," Melton ordered. The men lashed Dan's hands behind him, pulled him to his feet. Melton searched him, found his Government badge, opened the leather case, looked at it.

"Nice little jigger," he said. "May come in handy."

He slipped it into his pocket. He called out: "Briggs!"

"Yeah," came from the back of the crowd which packed the office.

"Ya got yer orders. Take this guy. Ya can have Hogan and Maroni."

The three men pushed him across the big room.

"Thanks fer th' badge," Melton called after him. "It'll be somethin' t' remember ya by."

Hogan and Maroni taped his mouth. Next he was trussed hand and foot. He was taken out of the Crime School by a devious route.

A few minutes after Dan had been unmasked by Melton and his gang, Joseph Carmody, chauffeur of the mayor of the City of New York, walked to the private garage behind the mansion of the city official. He inserted a key in the padlock on the door. He was a slight, dapper fellow of about forty, and had been in the mayor's service for only a short time. He wore a green uniform, with a green, black-visored cap, and black puttees.

He pushed back the door, stepped into the garage. As he reached for the light switch, strong arms grabbed him, pulled him into the shadows. A fist clamped over his mouth just as he attempted an outcry. Swiftly moving hands and fingers sealed his

lips with adhesive tape, bound his wrists and ankles with cords which were cruelly tight.

One of his assailants picked up his feet. The other seized him beneath the armpits. They carried him far back into the garage, rolled him into a corner and threw a blanket over him.

"The Dean planned this damned slick," said one to the other. "In that green uniform, with the cap pulled down over your eyes, you can sure pass for Carmody."

The man in the uniform, an exact imitation of that worn by Carmody, looked at his watch. "Can th' gab," he said. "We gotta step on it."

The man in the uniform got behind the wheel of the luxurious limousine, rolled it into the avenue, and headed south for City Hall. Cops at the intersections, directing rush hour traffic, saluted Carmody's double. It finally came up in front of the flat stone steps of the City Hall—a spot reserved for the vehicle of the city's chief executive. At seven o'clock—the driver had made it on the second—City Hall Park was almost deserted. The wait for the mayor lasted only a couple of minutes.

The mayor walked down the steps, went to the waiting car. The driver leaped from the front seat, opened the door to the rear compartment, keeping the metal panel of the door between his face and that of the mayor's. He was taking no chances, even in the dim light shed by the high lamps.

"Snap along will you, Carmody? I've got to dress and get down to the Biltmore," the mayor said.

"Very good, sir!"

The mayor stepped into the car, started to pull back as he saw the form of the second man half concealed by a laprobe. The driver slammed the door against his back, knocking him inside. He found himself staring into a revolver.

"Sit down!" the thug commanded. The mayor heard murder in the voice. He obeyed.

The car shot out of the private driveway, rolled toward the tunneled

stone base of Brooklyn Bridge. Repair work was being done on one of the tunnels. The car pulled around a "street closed" sign. A man stepped out of the shadows as the car rolled up.

PROTECTED in this city-made haven, the three men trussed up the mayor, blindfolded him and stuck adhesive tape on his mouth. Inside the tunnel stood an ambulance. They loaded him onto a stretcher and put him inside with a sheet over him. Then the two hoods who had driven in with the mayor slipped into white internes' uniforms. The third man was dressed in the uniform of an ambulance driver.

They climbed into the ambulance, drove out of the place, abandoned the mayor's car.

They tooled the ambulance to Fourteenth Street, stopped in front of the freight entrance to the Crime School. As curious pedestrians gazed at them, they removed the sheeted mayor, carried him on the stretcher into the building and were hurriedly whisked aloft.

A few minutes later the Dean called Melton.

"Did you get the mayor?" he asked.

"Yeah, we did."

"What about the stool?"

"Turned out to be a G-man—that fellow named Fowler—th' Government's ace man. I did like you told me."

"Good. It'll have a fine moral effect when the public learns that the best operative the Government has has been bumped off. I'll issue a statement to the newspapers immediately that a special session of the Board of Aldermen must be held tonight and a million dollars delivered to us, or we will kill the mayor. Got it?"

"Okay. And get a statement out of him. Get it if you have to put him in the ice box. It'll help make the people realize what a spot their mayor's in if he writes and signs a pleading letter."

Melton heard a click at the other end of the wire.

CHAPTER XVI

Bound for Hell

THE sedan containing Briggs, the aviator; Cheeks Maroni and Guts Hogan and their prisoner, Dan Fowler, raced out Merrick Road on Long Island. Guts was at the wheel. Briggs was beside him. Dan was face down, on the floor of the back seat with Maroni sitting above him, fondling a .45 automatic and looking very much as if he'd like to have the G-man start something.

"Where we headin'?" Hogan asked Briggs.

"Field number three—out beyond East Islip. Boy, it'll sure be great to toss that G-man off over Central Park without a parachute on. He's caused th' Dean plenty of grief—and cut down our profits."

"You're tellin' me!" snapped Hogan. "I'll be glad to see him goin' out myself. He plugged a coupla friends of mine—Brantigan and Kosvic—as near as I can dope it—and blamed it on a cop."

"While he's droppin' he can cheer up at th' thought he ain't th' only one on th' spot t'night—with th' Dean snatchin' th' mayor!"

These two items of news gave Dan a profound shock. So he was taking a flying ride to death—and the big job that Melton had talked about was grabbing the mayor and holding him for ransom! Dan cursed the fact that Maroni was watching him—that he was unable even to work at his bonds.

He had met the mayor, the plumpish little fellow who had battled the city through the most trying depression in modern history. The shrewd, kindly little executive had swept the city with reforms which had saved struggling taxpayers millions. He was a respected, even beloved person. Dan knew that his kidnaping would terrorize, horrify and paralyze people on the entire eastern seaboard.

The car whirled off Merrick Road,

onto a dirt highway to the right, then into a narrow lane to the left, and proceeded for a quarter of a mile. It pulled up beside a fence, beyond which was a six-place cabin monoplane of latest design. Hogan, Maroni and Briggs got out of the car, crawled under the fence and began preparing the plane for flight. Dan started working on the bonds which held his wrists. He tried to inch his coat up so that he could use the knife-blade secreted in his belt, but could not do so.

THE thought that his own life and that of the mayor were at stake caused him to work with desperation. He managed to work one loop of the rope which was secured around his wrists until it was loose, but that was all. As he struggled he heard Briggs giving Maroni instructions how to crank the plane and knew that his time was short.

The rope cut into his wrists—but he didn't feel the pain. The bonds gave a little more, but still not enough.

"Contact!" he heard Briggs call from the cabin of the ship. He heard the inertia starter whine. The motor coughed, wheezed, leaped to life. Dan saw hope fading. Briggs gunned the ship until all the cylinders caught, then idled. He leaped from the cabin. He tossed the crank which Hogan handed him into the ship.

"Come on!" he shouted. "Get Fowler. We better get outa here before somebody comes to check up on us."

The men came to the car, pulled him out, carried him to the fence and rolled him under it. They got on the other side, carried him to the cabin and tossed him into the back.

"Keep him near th' back door so we can toss him out easy when we get over Central Park," Briggs ordered. "Is that goin' t' teach them G-men t' lay off er isn't it?"

He and the others crawled over Dan, went to the front of the cabin. Briggs shoved the throttle forward, released the brakes. The plane moved forward. The tail came up. The field was rough. The plane bounced, jar-

ring Dan, as it gathered speed. He felt the crank beside him as he jounced up and down. With sudden inspiration he arched his back. The crank slipped beneath him.

He knew the type of crank used. It had sharp catches on the end, used to lock the crank into the starter, holding until the motor fired. Then it was automatically released. With each jar of the plane he shifted until the end with the slanting catches was beneath his wrists.

The plane left the ground. Its course smoothed out in the calm night air.

The three mobsters were in front of the cabin. Briggs was at the controls. Next to him sat Hogan, peering into the murk as the ship banked, gathered altitude and swung toward Manhattan. Just behind Briggs sat Maroni, who looked back at intervals to make sure that their prisoner was still secured.

The plane, cruising at one hundred and fifty miles an hour, streaked across Long Island at an altitude of about half a mile.

Dan, watching the men in the front of the ship, felt a thrill of success as he worked the wrapping which was loose into one of the sharp notches, began sawing, moving fractions of an inch at a time, bracing his back against the wall of the cabin. He cut, sawed, felt the loose rope give. He twisted his wrists, tried to get the worn strand into his hands. He couldn't manage it.

The ship raced onward. Hogan nudged Briggs, pointed downward.

"East River?" he shouted.

BRIGGS nodded. Dan realized that at the speed the ship was traveling he had a little more than a minute before he was tossed out.

He tightened his steel-like muscles. The rope bit into his flesh. Maroni turned around, eyed him carefully. He couldn't see Dan's hands. They were under the G-man's body. He turned back, peered out the window. Dan tensed again. The rope gave, snapped. With his right hand he gripped the heavy steel crank. He

gathered his strength, braced himself to spring forward. Maroni's head was turning slowly from the window as if he sensed something was wrong.

Dan shot out his left hand, gripped the back of the empty seat in front of him, levered himself forward. At the same instant he swung the heavy crank. It crashed downward on Maroni's skull. The gangster slumped forward, blood gushing from the wound. Hogan whirled to see what was the matter. Dan dropped the crank. Just as Maroni went forward, Dan shot his hand inside the gangster's coat—grabbed the .38 which he had observed the gangster carried in a shoulder holster. At the same instant Hogan went for his own weapon. He whipped it out, turned with the speed of light. Dan beat his shot by the breadth of a hair.

For an instant Hogan stared at Dan. His gun fell from his numbed fingers. A scarlet stain darkened his gray suit just over the left side of his chest. His mouth fell open. Briggs whirled, leaped from the controls, crashed down on Dan. The ship continued level for an instant, then eased down slightly on one wing. Dan realized what he was up against—he had to whip Briggs into line, get him back at the controls or the plane would crash.

Briggs' hand lashed out, closed over the .38 in Dan's hand.

The ship rocked, pitched wildly.

"Look out, you fool—you'll kill us both!" Dan shouted. At the same instant he used a jiu jitsu twist to free his gun from the hold Briggs had on it. He pulled the weapon up, jammed it into Briggs' side.

The ship was winding into a spin, nose downward, motor open.

"Get back to those controls!" Dan shouted. He jabbed the .38 into Briggs' midriff. The pilot hesitated for a moment, turned, got to the pilot's seat, slammed from side to side by the whipping of the plane. The nose of the ship bored downward at the pinnacled skyscrapers of Manhattan. Briggs went white as he looked from the cabin windows, saw the lights spinning closer. Dan was on

top of him, jabbing him with the gun. Briggs slammed the control wheel into a spot just forward of neutral, kicked opposite rudder.

The ship shot out of the screaming, whistling, spinning dive, leveled off. Dan looked out of the window and gasped. The ship was lower than the illuminated Chrysler and Empire State towers. Dan pressed the gun into Briggs' vitals. He knew he had no time to lose. With the mayor in the toils of the Dean, there wasn't a second to lose.

"Land this crate in Central Park!" he ordered.

"You—you can't do that—" protested Briggs.

"Other pilots have done it. On the Sheep Meadow. Get down there—and make it fast."

Briggs banked the ship, headed for the park. He banked at the far edge of the Sheep Meadow, came in with his motor barely turning over. He fish-tailed almost into a stall to cut his flying speed. Dan noticed that Maroni was stirring restlessly.

The plane missed the top of a scurrying automobile by what seemed to be inches. The meadow bounced up. Briggs pulled back the stick, shut off the ignition to avoid fire in case of a crash, deadsticked onward. The wheels struck. The tail dropped for a perfect three-point landing. Briggs slammed on the brakes. He wasn't quick enough. The right wing snagged into a tree and the ship ground-looped.

"Now, get your hands in the air and crawl out of the ship!" Dan ordered.

Briggs obeyed meekly.

A CAR raced down the parkway, swung off the road, bumped over the curbing and shot across the green. Dan saw the outline of it, knew it was a patrol car. It skidded to a stop. Two policemen ran at him.

"You can't land here!" panted one. Then, as he saw Dan covering Briggs, his eyes widened.

"Forget it!" Dan snapped. He explained who he was, and what had happened.

"You're a G-man—and you're tell-

ing us the mayor's kidnaped!" said the second policeman. "I think you're either nuts or drunk. Where's your identification? How do I know who you are?"

"Do you know Cheeks Maroni and Guts Hogan?" Dan asked.

"Why—yeah—" said one.

"Okay. You'll find 'em in the ship. Take Briggs over and have a look."

The men took Briggs, marched to the ship. Dan knew that he couldn't waste time arguing. He turned, raced to the patrol car, climbed in, slammed the doors shut as his foot ground down on the starter. The car leaped to life. Dan shot through the gears, raced across the meadow. He heard the sharp bark of police positives behind him and jammed the accelerator to the floor.

He milled through traffic, getting the right of way with the shrill, insistent sounding of his siren, came out of the park at Fifty-ninth Street, found a drugstore, raced into the phone booth. He dialed Caledonia 5—8691, the number of the field offices.

Larry answered.

"The mayor's being held at the Crime School," Dan told him. "He's been snatched. Get every available G-man and policeman you can round up. Surround the place."

Dan outlined his plan.

"You've got to work fast before the Dean finds out that I've got away from Hogan, Maroni and Briggs," he said. "Equip everybody with tommy guns, tear gas bombs and anything else you can think off. Shoot men onto the roofs, up fire-escapes and cover the entrances. Say—anything new on those prints we sent to Washington?"

There was a pause.

"Wait a minute—" Larry replied. "I think it's coming over the teletype now—"

Dan hung on impatiently.

"Here it is," said Larry in a moment. "Negatives 3, 5, 14 and 17 compare with the fingerprints on the glove. Washington says they match perfectly—"

"Where'd you photograph those

same fingerprints?" Dan demanded.

There was another short wait.

"On Belden's water glass—carafe—wait a minute—his desk—and pen."

"Okay—get busy. I'll join you in time for the fireworks."

Dan went back to the car, raced to the home of Arthur Belden, a pretentious-looking place in Fifth Avenue. He glanced at his watch. It was after ten o'clock. There were lights on the first floor. Dan rang the front door bell. After a minute, the lights in the reception hall went on. A butler came to the door, opened it a few inches, saw a ragged and unkempt man on the threshold.

"What do you want?" he snapped. "What do you mean by ringing the doorbell at this time of night?"

"I want to see Mr. Belden. It's vitally important."

"Mr. Belden is not at home."

Dan's foot went out, wedged in the door. He shoved it open, barged past the menial, checked through the house. The butler followed him protestingly.

"Well, you're telling the truth," Dan said, finally. "Now—where is he?"

"I really don't know—perhaps at one of his clubs—"

Dan's heart sank. But there was one more chance of finding him. At the Crime School!

CHAPTER XVII

War on Fourteenth Street



ASKED, watchful, the Dean waited in his office. In the wall of the place was a window, concealed behind a large picture. He could see through this window—watch Knucks Melton in the next office, speak to him.

But Melton couldn't see him. The window, a recent invention, allowed a person on one side of it to look at objects on the other side—but from reverse position it acted as a mirror.

"Have you worked over the mayor?" the Dean asked.

"Yeah—but he won't sign that statement to th' people and th' Board of Aldermen. Say's no mayor's worth a million dollars."

"Okay—slip him into the ice box. Keep him there until he changes his mind—"

"Okay."

Melton left to carry out his orders. The Dean looked after him for a moment, turned—and found himself staring into the muzzle of a revolver held in the steady hand of the ragged, unkempt individual who had just invaded his home.

"What the devil—" Belden spluttered. "What do you mean—who are you?"

"Special Agent Daniel Fowler, F. B. I., who, unfortunately for you, didn't get tossed out of an airplane, Belden—"

"Why, you—"

Belden tensed with maniacal hate, with just one thought—to crush Fowler and make his escape. He lunged forward under Dan's line of fire, tackled his knees, so suddenly that Dan didn't get a chance to use his weapon. Dan went down. His weapon slid across the floor. Belden pulled himself on top of the G-man, began raining blows on his face. Dan kicked upward, got a scissors grip on Belden's waist, rolled over, throwing him underneath.

Belden threw all his strength into the roll, got Dan off him, grabbed for his own gun, which he carried in a shoulder holster. He brought it down at Dan's head. The G-man ducked, caught the blow on his shoulder. He seized Belden's gun arm, bent it backward until he moaned with pain. Belden dropped the gun.

DAN reached for it. Belden, fighting with the fury of a man escaping doom, threw himself on Dan, clawing for his throat. Dan broke the hold. He lashed out, caught Belden on the chin, rocked him backward. He leaped to his feet, raining blow after blow on him. Belden turned, started for the door of the office as the last

chance. Dan grabbed a pistol from the floor, chased him down the corridor, brought the weapon down on his skull. He dropped.

Dan fished into his pockets, pulled out two sets of manacles. He snapped one on Belden's legs, the other on his wrists, then stripped back the mask. Belden was out cold.

Dan was dragging the man back into the room when he heard the sound of shots in another part of the building. The siege had begun!

He pulled Belden into the office, saw that he was securely cuffed, ran to the door leading into the main room of the school—the cot-filled place which he had seen first with Baby Face Brantigan. He swung the gun to the lock, fired, shattered it and crashed through the door as the shooting on the other side became more furious.

"It's th' cops!" he heard one gunman shout.

"Man th' tommy guns—" That was Melton's voice.

"Get th' gas bombs. Look out! They're on us!"

He heard the yammering of tommy guns as he smashed into the room, his weapon ready for action. He saw windows crashing in, broken by the gun-butts of policemen and G-men on the fire-escapes. Below him, on the other floors, he could hear firing. Hell was breaking loose throughout the entire building. He ducked behind a cement pillar. He saw the gangsters piling in. He charged through the smoke-filled room, bullets clipping at his clothing. He saw a bluecoat come plunging into the main room from a fire-escape, followed by two more, armed with machine-guns and tear bombs.

The place was filled with acrid powder fumes.

Tommy guns, pistols, revolvers, turned the place into a crackling inferno. Dan saw a group of mobsters firing, covering their retreat to the back stairs, which he had used to go to the gun room and laboratories. He cracked down. His revolver blazed. A mobster pitched forward. The others saw, blazed at him. He ducked

behind a cement pillar. Bullets ploughed into it.

"Get th' cops—"

"There they go—after 'em!"

Harsh cries, groans, mingled with the staccato crack of the weapons.

Rat-tat-tat-tat. . . . A tommy gun speaking. The retreating mobsters held Dan behind the pillar with a stream of lead which chipped cement from it. The mobster Dan had gotten lay crumpled up, his skull half shot away, his clothes soaking up his blood. Dan threw himself to the floor, sent a leaden messenger of death at one of the machine-gunners. He toppled forward beside his weapon.

The mobsters plunged down the stairs. Dan raced forward, snatched up the tommy. He sprayed lead. The hoodlums at the top of the stairs grabbed for their stomachs, plunged backward over the stair rail.

The fighting below him was getting hotter.

HE raced for the stairs, rushed down them. He plunged into the largest laboratory. Gangsters had congregated here, had upended the steel tables and benches of the laboratory for protection and were holding off the bluecoats and Federals. They had machine-guns, sidearms and tear gas bombs, which they were hurling at the advancing officers.

Dan saw his chance to catch them between two fires. He grabbed the forward stock of his tommy, tripped the trigger. The gun belched flame, shocked in his hands. Two mobsters dropped. The others whirled at the sound of his gun, and poured lead at him. He ducked behind one of the upturned tables. Bullets whanged into it. He saw the bluecoats taking advantage of the lull in gangster fire, saw them advance and deploy.

He looked out of the corners of his eyes, his attention attracted by a slight movement to one side of him, about fifty feet away. He saw Knucks Melton. The hood was sighting his machine-gun steadily, centering on someone behind the barricade. Dan

looked and stiffened. Larry was firing off at an angle, unaware that death was at hand.

Dan's muscles moved like well oiled pistons—as fast as his lightning-quick mind. He swung the weapon. His index finger convulsed. He fired a single shot. The bullet crashed into Melton's arm. The shock knocked the hoodlum sidewise. Dan ran at him, dropped his gun, plunged like a football tackler at the legs of the man who had stripped him of his badge. Melton, of all people, must be taken alive. He could recognize the voice of the Dean, identify it on the witness stand. His broad shoulders crashed into the hood's thighs just as Melton saw who he was. He got one look at the rage on Dan's face and went white.

Dan climbed on top of him.

"Now I've got you, rat!" he snapped.

"Don't kill me! Don't kill me!" Melton screamed, his voice rising above the dying chatter of fire which swept the room. He coughed, choked on the gas fumes which swept the floor. The firing was nearly over now. The policemen and G-men were advancing. The mobsters were throwing down their guns.

Men were sprawled awkwardly behind barricades, wounded or dead. The retorts, test tubes, bottles, pipes and chemical jars were shattered on the floor. The place was a shambles. The Crime School was wrecked.

Patrolmen and G-men, spluttering, tears running down their cheeks, gasped for air, spread fanwise through the three floors, the top, occupied by the bunkhouse and the offices—the third, holding laboratories, and the second, with its classrooms. A few gangsters had broken from the place and were climbing fire-escapes only to walk into the arms of the law on the roof, or to battle to the death.

"Open the windows!" Dan recognized the sound of Inspector Walsh's voice. "And for heaven's sake, find the mayor!"

Dan reached down to Melton's coat, jerked him to his feet.

"You tough guys are all the same

when the heat's on you," he said, disgust in his tone. "You can't take it. I'm not going to kill you. The state'll do that—or the Federal Government—whichever builds up the best case against you."

As he spoke, he frisked his prisoner, recovered his leather case containing his badge. Two cops appeared.

"What th'—" exclaimed one. They barged forward, their guns drawn, covering Dan and Melton, amazed at the sight of one mobster holding another captive. Dan showed his badge, explained who he was.

Inspector Walsh came to him, congratulated him.

"Found the mayor yet?" he asked.

The inspector shook his head. "We've looked high and low."

"I think there's a sort of cell on this floor—"

"We smashed it in—he wasn't there."

Dan thought for an instant. He remembered the strange death of Inspector McGuire—the refrigerator he had seen on this floor—as his mind went over the rapid sequence of events.

"Good Lord!" he exclaimed. "Have you tried the ice box?"

"The what?" asked Walsh, looking at Dan as if he'd gone suddenly insane.

"Quick," snapped Dan. "Maybe we're not too late—"

He shot from the room into the corridor and into the second door. It was in this room that he had seen the giant refrigerator. He raced to it, swung open the door. His worst fears were realized. He saw a body wrapped in a sheet, pulled it out. Dan jerked off the sheet, found himself staring into the open eyes of the mayor. A tremor ran through the man's body.

Dan turned, barked at Inspector Walsh, "Get Dr. Norris! Ambulance surgeons!"

He pulled the adhesive tape from the chief executive's mouth. The man's lips moved. Dan ordered the patrolmen who flanked him to start chafing his arms and legs. An ambulance surgeon appeared with Inspec-

tor Walsh. Another surgeon joined him. They made an examination.

"Badly chilled—suffering from exposure—" one said, turning to Dan. "Five minutes more and he'd have been so badly frozen that he might have lost his hands and feet. In not much more time he'd have died. Thanks to you, he'll come around all right."

Larry Kendal came up. He went to Dan.

"Get the Dean?" he asked.

"Yes," said Larry. "He's upstairs in his private office."

"It was Belden?"

Dan nodded.

"We'd better go pick him up."

RUTHERFORD CONOVAN, his face deeply lined and haggard, appeared before Special Agents Fowler, Kendal and Whitten at the field offices the next morning. His belligerency was gone entirely. Replacing it was a hopeless despair, which stooped his shoulders and caused him to shuffle into the room.

Whitten motioned him to a seat. He sank into it heavily.

"Yes?" he asked. "What is it now, gentlemen?"

Dan came to his side, held out a folded paper.

"I want to apologize to you, Mr. Conovan," he said. "Until yesterday, I suspected you of being the Dean of the Crime School. Thanks to last night's developments, you're entirely cleared. However, I'd like an explanation from you, and I also want you to promise to appear as a witness against Belden. First, I want to know why you were so bitter toward us—why you blocked us at every turn of the investigation. It was your son, wasn't it?"

Conovan started.

"How did you know?"

"I found his confession, involving the theft of more than forty thousand dollars from Conovan and Company," Dan explained. "I couldn't believe that a man like you would use such a weapon over his own son's head—to force him to crime. I don't believe you'd do that. I think your son has

been spoiled—and that you're guilty."

"Yes," agreed Conovan. "My boy was spoiled by his mother, who died some years ago. He was always getting into some kind of trouble mainly through his mania for gambling. But he's my son and I love him. Belden held the confession over him, after securing it through Crandall and Tennant, I believe, and threatened to put him in jail if I didn't bluff you men. I didn't know he was the Dean. I didn't suspect it until I saw this morning's papers. I just knew he was in some sort of crooked business. Why, I didn't even suspect him of killing Crandall and Tennant. They seemed such good friends. I see it all now. But if I'd known he was a murderer—if I'd realized what a fool I was and that I was throwing suspicion on myself, and that he was the head of what you call this Crime School, I'd have sacrificed my son to see him brought to justice—"

"I know you would. And here's the confession your boy made."

Conovan's face blanched.

"Then he must go to jail—?"

Dan patted his shoulder. "Your son is guilty of no Federal charge. Belden, who forced the confession, is in jail. Crandall, who witnessed it, is dead. You're the only complaining witness, as head of the firm from which he stole. If you don't bring charges—"

Conovan's expression lighted at last.

"I can't thank you enough. It shows that you men have hearts, even if you are relentless when it comes to capturing evil-doers. Tell me, Mr. Fowler—how did you finally get Belden?"

"His most unfortunate move," Dan replied, "was when he forced you to take him into the firm under threats of exposing your son, so that he could use the company as a cloak for his operations and be near his school. Early in the investigation, I came to the conclusion that the Dean, whoever he was, was a man of super-intelligence, one who, if he was a normal man, would go far in legitimate business. In other words, that I had

a dual personality on my hands—a man who was brilliant and honest by day—brilliant and a crook by night.

"So many things were happening in and about Conovan and Company, or were connected in some way with the firm, that I came to the conclusion the Dean might be connected with the firm. That was when I began to suspect you. Now, a man who is crooked can go around with gloves on and thus avoid making fingerprints. But a man who is carrying on a legitimate business by day would look silly wearing them in his office. The Dean didn't think for a moment that he, as Arthur Belden, would be linked with the Dean. So he made himself at home here, minus gloves. His glove, not the Government, caught him. With that to work on, I managed to find prints that matched in his offices at your firm."

"And he'll be convicted?"

Dan grinned widely. "Washington has deciphered his code book, written in his hand, and recording the pro-

ceeds from his robberies. Melton and you, among a great many others, will be called as witnesses. We know the motives and causes behind every death—every murder that he committed. Arthur Belden's next appearance will be in a courtroom and next in the electric chair. And he won't be alone.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Conovan, that you were forced to take the attitude you did to protect your son—to keep him from going to prison. But I'm sure that if there is any next time, you'll play ball with the Government. We must have the coöperation of every law-abiding citizen in the United States if our war against such men as Belden, who think they are more powerful than the law, are to be brought to justice.

"However, the case is cleared up now. One more public enemy has fallen by the wayside. I wonder who'll be next to think he's smart enough to beat the law and evade the Federal Government?"

In Next Month's Issue

DAN FOWLER, Man-hunter Extraordinary, in another Action-Packed
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PROBAK JUNIOR

A Bloodstained Shirt Ends the Search for RED EVIDENCE

By CHARLTON L. EDHOLM

Author of "Break That Case," "Death in a Crowd," etc.

CHAN MOCK picked out the shirt that Red Grady flung on the counter in a lot of soiled garments.

"No can washee clean this week," he said with a bland grin that showed all his yellow fangs. "Heap washee to make *him* white."

Red Grady hiccupped drunkenly, "Oh hell, that's just a little wine—red wine—you savvy, John." He crooked his elbow as if tossing off a drink.

"Him no wine stain. Him red like blood. Wassa malla, you maybe kill somebody? You makee chop-chop with hatchet?"

"Don't crack wise with me, you yellow scum," snarled Grady. He reached for a package of smokes, pulling out a fat roll of currency from the same pocket, which he hastily replaced. He lighted a cigarette to kill the heavy, sickening odor of the Chinese laundry and pulled the cap over his greenish eyes, glaring savagely from under the visor. With his reddish stubbled beard, his sunburned chest tattooed with an anchor, and his huge hairy fists, Grady looked as though he had just left his ship, and headed for Chinatown with his shirts and underwear.

"Allee light," said Chan Mock. "You come Slatterday for this." He indicated the other garments on the counter. "Next week you come for shirt."

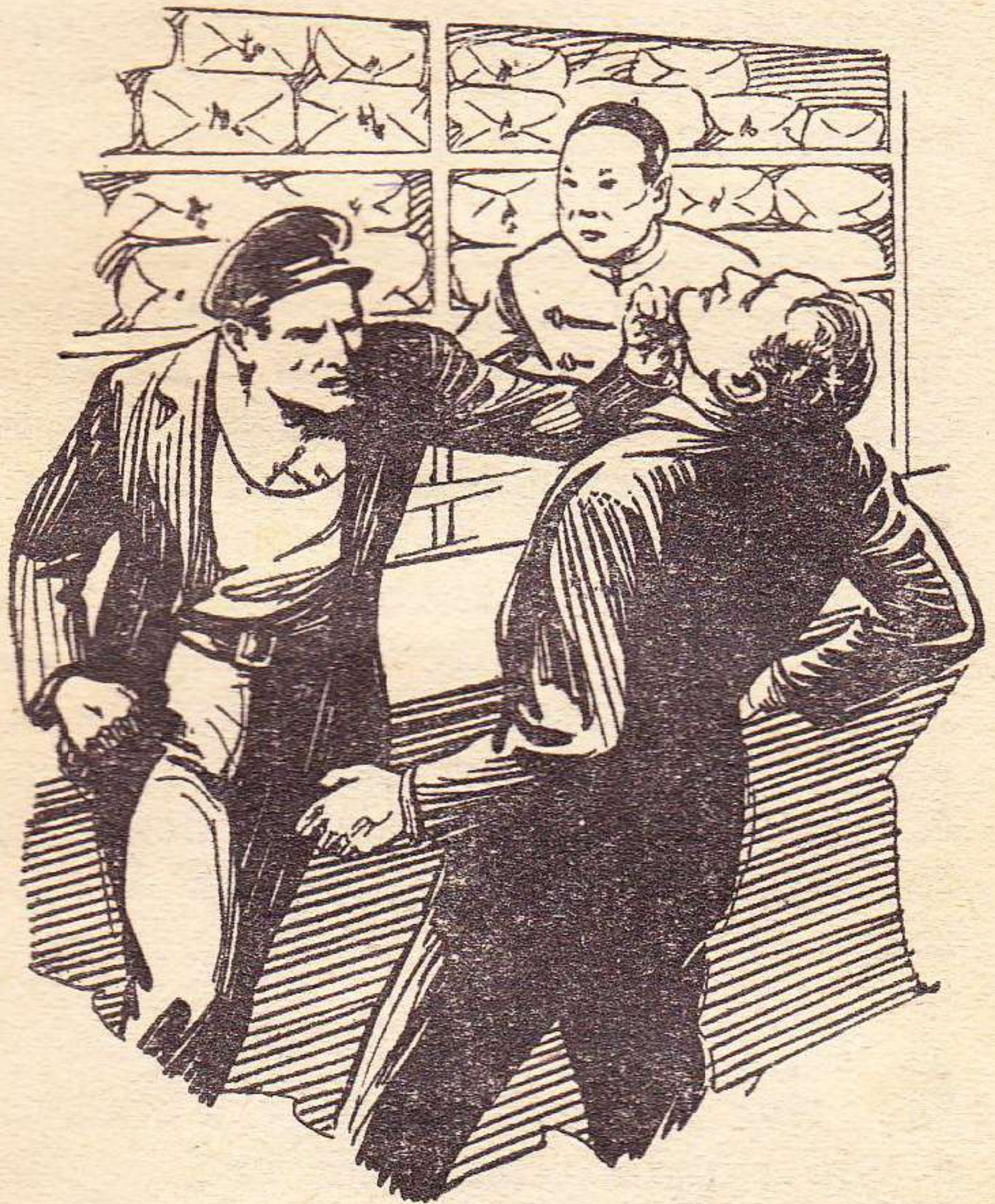
With his ink brush, Chan Mock traced a scrawl on a scrap of paper. Then a second scrap of paper. A laundry ticket for each call.

"You no lose tickee," he sing-songed. "No tickee—no washee."

"No tickee—no washee. I get you,

John," laughed Red Grady. "Mind you have that shirt clean next week, or I'll take you apart."

Grady lurched out into the street and filled his lungs with fresh air, clean and sweet from San Francisco Bay. He breathed deeply to clear his



Red Grady's fist shot out and connected

nostrils of the nauseating odor of the laundry, a mixture of steam, soiled clothes, and another clinging sweetish scent that he recognized.

Chan Mock threw the sailor's laundry into a tub to soak, but first set aside the red-stained shirt which would require special cleansing. It was splashed and spotted as though Grady had been in a brawl with knives, and the yellow man, with his sharp, almond eyes narrowing greedily, wondered whether it was the evidence of a murder.

In that case, there might be big money in leaving it with the telltale spots. There might be a reward offered for the apprehension of the murderer. Or the sailor might be willing to buy it back at a stiff price if he realized that it was evidence that could be used to hang him.

Chan Mock examined the shirt while his mind was busied with the thoughts of gold and more gold. He set it away presently with a sigh of satisfaction. The red stain was blood. Of that there was no doubt. The absurd story of spilled wine was another evidence of guilt. Why should the sailor lie about it, if his conscience was clear?

Chan Mock went out into the narrow alleys near Stockton Street and came to a brick wall of a grimy building plastered over with great red posters, sheets covered with Chinese characters which carried announcements of the tongs, or secret societies, and bulletins of news of the quarter. A crowd hung about them at all hours of the day and night. It was a place where one could always pick up gossip and rumors. Chan Mock's avaricious heart beat faster as he learned from a crony, Wong Lee, that his surmise was correct. There *had* been a waterfront murder the night before. A man had been stabbed to death and robbed, and the killer was still at large.

CHAN MOCK went to the detective agency run by Jess Mawson, a white man who took nothing but Chinatown cases, and asked his advice on getting the goods on the sailor and squeezing him for a good round sum in exchange for that damning evidence.

"Hang on to that shirt, my friend," said Mawson. "When the sailor calls for it, stall him off and send a messenger for me. I'll be along with a fake warrant and a gat and shake him down for all he's got."

Saturday came and Chan Mock anxiously waited for the sailor to call for his laundry, but Red Grady did not come. The laundryman was so nervous that he kept peering

through the grimy window constantly, watching for the husky figure with the rolling gait. But not until the middle of the following week, did Red Grady barge into the laundry.

As he entered, a yellow lad darted away to notify Jess Mawson and Chan Mock accepted a laundry ticket in his long yellow fingers and took plenty of time to find the bundle. Grady opened it.

"Where's the rest of the wash? The shirt I spilled wine on?" he demanded.

"Him in other bundle. You got tickee?"

"No can find, John. But come across anyhow. You know me."

"No tickee, no washee," said Chan Mock stubbornly.

"Say, listen, you monkey. Don't stall. I want that shirt. See?" Red Grady's temper was up.

"No can find," said Chan Mock, pretending to search in a high stack of bundles. "You lose tickee?"

"Sure I lost it. But I'm goin' to find that shirt." Grady leaped over the counter. Chan Mock backed away, fury and fear in his yellow face.

"No tickee, no washee," he yelped, trying to push Grady away.

Red made a dive for the laundry bundles and the Chinaman reached for the pocket where he carried a gun—then thought better of it. Footsteps were hurrying along the sidewalk.

"Help, help! *P'leece!*" screeched the Chinaman.

Grady was pulling out bundles from the shelves as Jess Mawson's burly figure crashed into the laundry.

"What's goin' on here?" Jess bellowed. "Get from behind that counter."

"I'll come out when I find my shirt. An' who the hell are you?" demanded Red.

The detective flashed a badge on his big chest.

He barked, "I'm Jess Mawson of the Mawson Detective Agency. I take care of all of Chan Mock's business affairs."

"That's all I wanted to know," said Red Grady. He jerked out package

after package of laundry from the lower part of the shelves and ripped off the papers. As the contents flew out, Chan Mock yelled in terror, his saffron face turning ashen, his black eyes starting from their sockets.

"You no can do!" he screamed. "You no can touch!"

"Oh, yeah?"

"Do as he tells you," snarled Mawson. "Keep your dirty paws off those bundles, sailor, or I'll open you up."

Mawson's gun hand reached for his arm pit but Red Grady's fist shot out with a Joe Louis wallop and connected with Mawson's jaw. The private dick staggered back, gun sagging in his fist, and, with a fast kick, Grady sent it spinning clear across the floor.

"Come in, boys," he shouted through the half open door, and as three husky aides in civilian clothes, rushed in, he ordered:

"Put the bracelets on Chan Mock and Jess Mawson. Mock has been peddling dope for a long time—too long." He shook out an opened laundry bundle and a small flat can of opium fell from the folds of the garments. "There's the secret of his cache," said Red Grady. "He kept the dope stored in dummy laundry pack-

ages and made his sales to customers who took it away with their shirts and collars. Pretty slick! No one would suspect a Chinese laundry of peddling the stuff, until the G-men noticed that a lot of Chan Mock's customers looked a little too much like addicts."

"Take that hardware off me," rasped Jess Mawson. His swollen jaw made talking difficult. "You ain't got a thing on me, you lousy Fed."

"We've got your admission that you handle Chan Mock's affairs," said Grady with a grin. "And with that lead to go on, we'll land you and the Chinaman in Leavenworth. We didn't have enough evidence to get out a search warrant. But looking for my own shirt was perfectly legal, wasn't it?" He grinned amiably.

"You can't do that! I tell you I'm a detective. Head of a licensed agency. Here's my card."

"Thanks. We'll get a search warrant and comb the agency records. I'll bet dollars to plugged nickels that there's enough evidence there to get you twenty years." The G-man laughed. "And the bait you fell for, bright boy, was blood on my old shirt—chicken blood!"

A Startling Exposé of the LOAN SHARK RACKET By FRANKIE LEWIS

Ex-Racketeer and Former Public Enemy
In Next Month's Issue of G-MEN



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J. EDGAR

“The biggest business that of Crime the price YOU must when every honest prints on file . . . The

IT'S UP TO YOU!

And **J. EDGAR HOOVER**

Director, Bureau of Investigation, U. S. Department of Justice

*—Tells You WHY**

THE biggest business in the United States today is that of crime—stealing, robbing, thieving, kidnaping, and murdering! The figures which have been compiled, showing \$15,000,000,000 as the cost of the crime industry each year are not fanciful.

They are absurd minimums, based upon the belief that every criminal costs no more than \$1,000 a year.

* In an address before the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York.

When you look upon the records of such cases as the Urschel kidnaping, in which Machine-Gun Kelly was chased 20,000 miles before he was captured; when you think of the trial of Frank Nash, whose activities meant a trail of destruction, murder, kidnaping, suicide, and gangster killings, plus, of course, the countless banks which were robbed, you will find a cost running well into the millions, if pursuit, incarceration of prisoners, capture of petty gang mem-



HOOVER Says—

in the United States today is
The cost of combating this evil is
pay The time will come
man will be glad to have his finger—
Conquest of Crime is up to YOU!”

bers and other items are to be included.

This is your expense!

A HEAVY COST

This is the bill *you* must pay. And there is no real way of estimating the cost either in money or in sorrow. The mental agony of those who must protect themselves against racketeering gangsters, against the shadow of kidnaping which creeps across the thresholds of thousands upon thousands of American households, is an item which must be paid out of the hearts and minds of the American people.

We have allowed to be built up in this country a system which runs from the cheap office-holding panderer and vote-getting ward-heeler to the

controlling influence of vast cities.

This system has built up a dishonest power which threatens to become greater than the honesty of the American people.

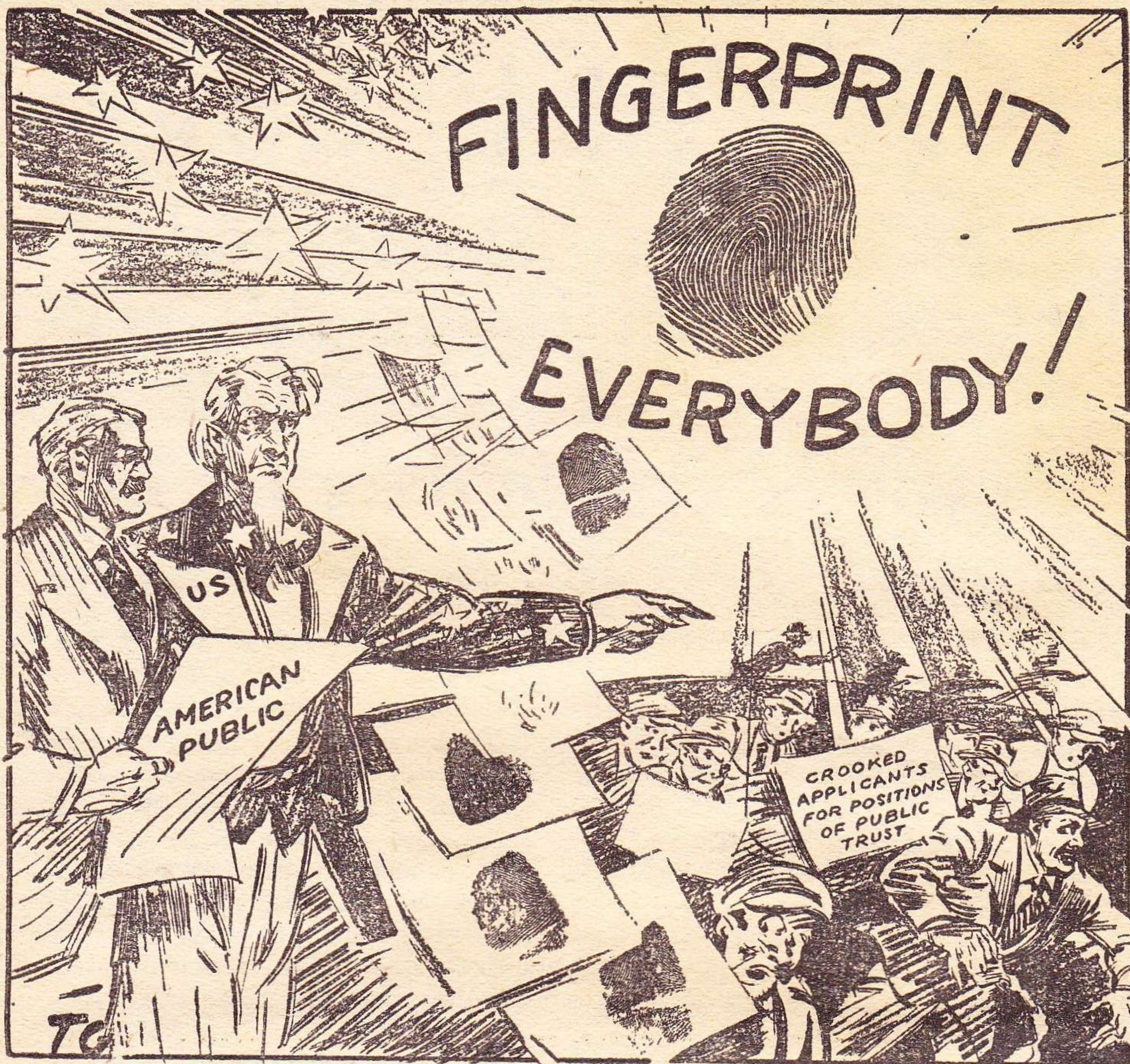
This is the influence which politics plays in the hampering and hamstringing, the garroting of the honest officer who would reach out and drag the criminal from his lair.

THINK IT OVER!

You find arrest after arrest by honest police officers, and you find acquittal after acquittal where cases have been dismissed or *nolle prossed*.

Who does this? The police? The officers who risked their lives to take the criminal into custody? Or is it some other power which is greater than that of law-enforcement agen-





cies? I give you this to think over—and to act upon!

It has been my good fortune to be placed in a position where the entanglements of politics are barred from the pursuit of the criminal.

When the Bureau of Investigation was formed under Justice Harlan F. Stone, one of the pillars supporting its structure was that there should be no interference from any political forces.

"HANDS OFF" POLICY

This has been adhered to strictly, and under the leadership of Attorney General Cummings, the policy of "hands off" has been pursued to the highest possible point.

There shall be no end to the crusade to crush crime until the criminal element has been made to know the power and the never-ending vigilance

of the Government to outlaw and punish offenses against its statutes.

The Bureau of Investigation hopes that it can point the way in this crusade by giving of its scientific training, of its tremendous crime laboratory, of its great fingerprint system, and the courage and honesty of its hard-working agents whose offering includes even that of their lives.

This much we of the Division can do. But a great part of the tremendous work remains to be done in order to make our country a free, secure and decent place to live in.

IT CAN BE DONE

By the force of the influence and the persevering integrity of every one of you, crime can be wiped from the face of these United States. *It's up to you!*

Parole today is becoming one of

the major menaces of America. Convicts are being freed with little or no supervision. The records of certain States in this matter are a disgrace to America. It is your duty to see that something is done about this.

Certainly there should be justice for anyone who is brought to face a criminal charge. But certainly, also, the prosecution of an offender should not be reduced to an absurd travesty in which justice depends upon the antics and unscrupulous methods of crooked attorneys and the loopholes provided by loosely framed laws which permit criminals to laugh at our statutes.

THE CITIZEN'S DUTY

When enforcement becomes lax, committees of forward-looking citizens can be formed at once to learn why. It is the citizen's duty to see that criminal attorneys are forced out of their shady alliances with the underworld, and are properly punished. It is the citizen's duty to see to it that the criminal after arrest is not coddled nor allowed to be freed through easily and sometimes financially reachable persons with powers to pardon.

There is no reason why every person who is an applicant for a position of public trust should not be willing to be fingerprinted.

Several years ago four hundred and eighty members of the Registry Division of New York's post office were fingerprinted in an effort to clear up certain mail robberies.

Of these fingerprinted, forty-nine

were found to have criminal records, and of these forty-nine, seven admitted that they had obtained their positions in order to rob the mails!

In July, 1929, the fingerprints of eighty-one applicants for positions in the Los Angeles police department were investigated, and seven were revealed as having previous records, including one manslaughter case, one holdup, and one grand theft.

SILENT POLICEMEN

Thus the work goes on, keeping a police force clean, establishing the past record of criminals who seek to worm their ways into public positions of trust. These fingerprints are silent policemen.

What they do to strike fear into the heart of a criminal, they can also do to give peace of mind to the honest citizen.

A fingerprint is nothing more than a signature which cannot be forged. Its potential uses in civil and private life are enormous.

IT'S UP TO YOU!

It is my personal opinion that the time will come when every honest man will be glad to have his fingerprints on file in the noncriminal section of the Identification Unit.

The Department of Justice hopes to enlist the support of the American people in a sustained national movement to deal with the criminal menace. But a beacon cannot shine in a fog. The Bureau does its part. The rest—is up to you!

*From a Sensational Address on
Crime Delivered by America's
Greatest Man-hunter before the
Chamber of Commerce of the
State of New York*



Imitating labels

The REAL

The Sensational Inside

By a former public
FRANKIE

Author of "Hot Heaps,"

LOUIE PIOGGI had come from the home of spaghetti to the so-called land of the free to grab himself a wad of coin. In his own country he was what is known as a Cammoristi, a member of that dread society of the Mafia, the Black Hand of old Italy.

I knew Louie and he knew me, but there were few people that ever really knew that guy. I think that he never even knew himself.

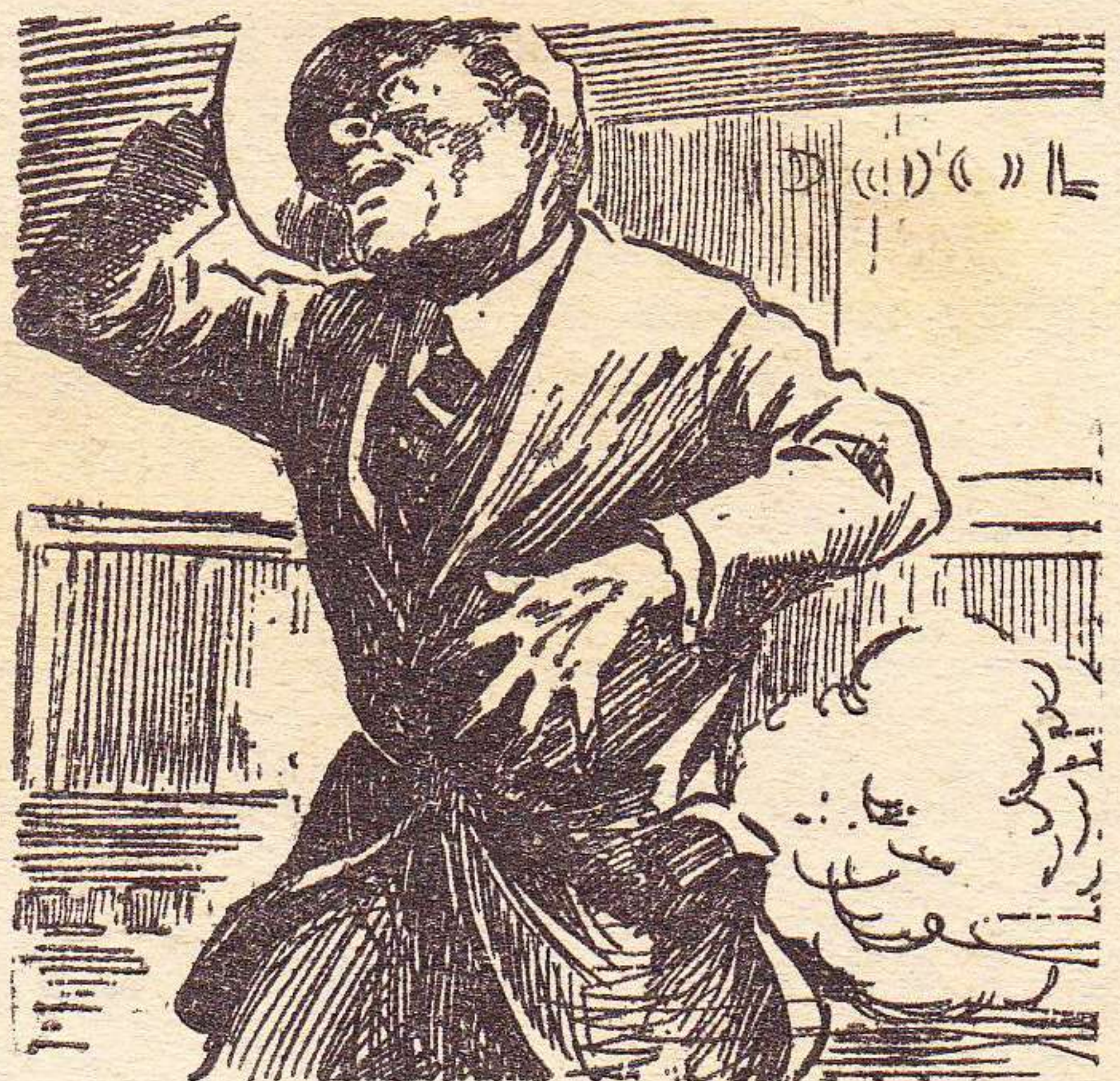
Did you ever see an Italian barber on his day off? Well, that's the way Louie dressed every day. His car was one piece of flash from bumper to bumper. In his greasy pan he always had what is known to the Sicilians as a "guinea stinker"—a cigar that is as strong as the proverbial ox.

Yeah, all in all, Louie hadn't done so bad for himself at that. He was well on his way to the top of the bootleg racket. He had to do a few killings here and there, but that didn't worry him any. In fact, I think that he would have sold his grandmother for soupmeat, if he thought that she'd bring five cents a pound. So you see that he was a real nice guy.

At the time I was doing all right for myself. I stepped on nobody's toes and there was nobody that

stepped on mine. I was not in the booze racket—no! my mother never raised any dopey kids. Cripes, it was like the battlefield of the big war then—guys were knocking each other off right and left.

I was thinking of Louie as I took a glom at the Morning Blah, and I saw that the booze racket was on the way out. It's a good thing, too, I thought, because if the monkeys kept knocking each other off at the rate that they had been, racket mugs would soon be what the science guys call extinct.



Because he crossed one of the biggest slugs from a

When the G-Men Take an Interest in

McCoy

Story of Repeal Liquor

enemy and racketeer—

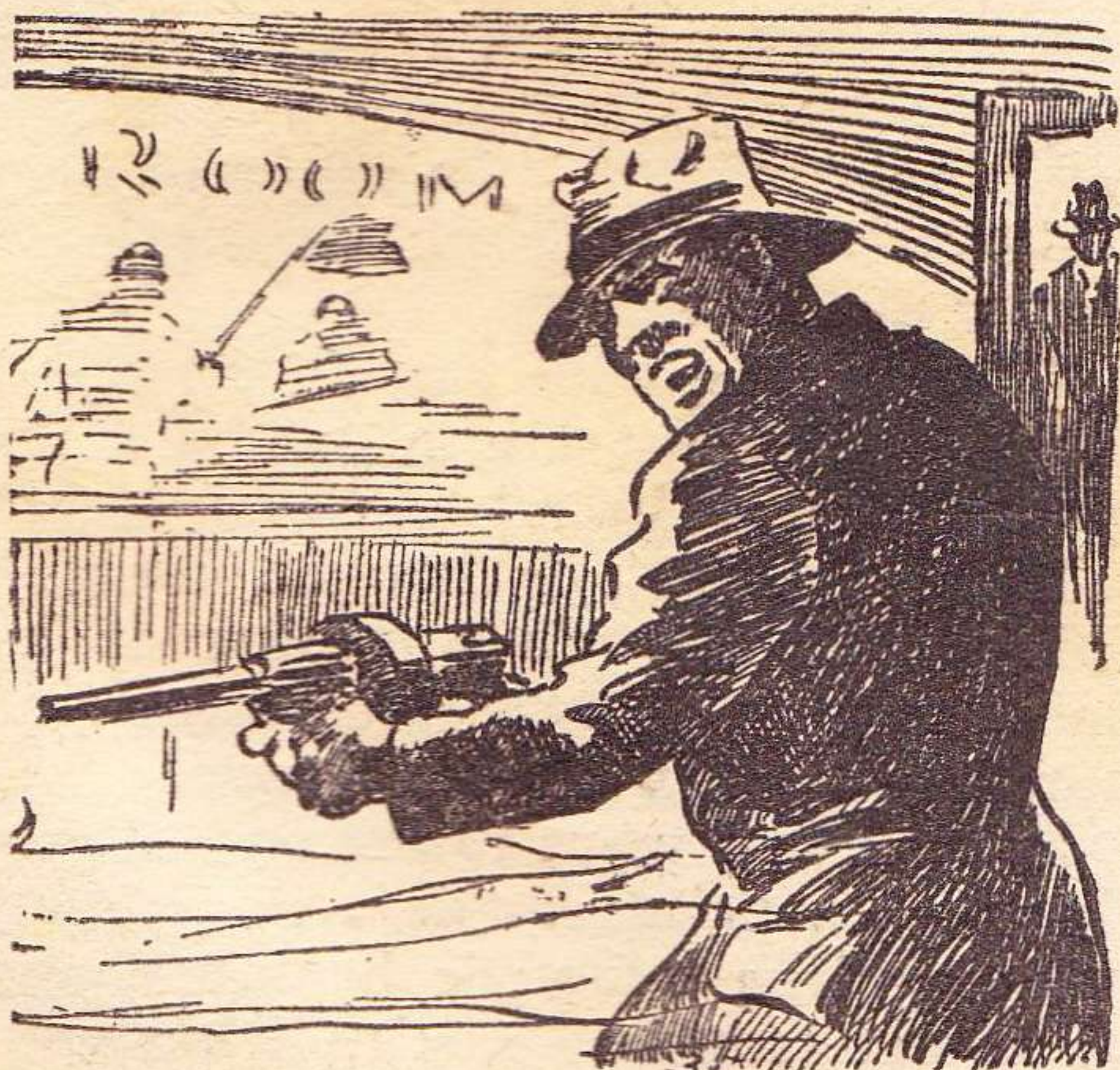
LEWIS

"Passing the Queer," etc.

Well, it wasn't long after that that repeal went through and left a lot of dumb mugs wondering how they could beat the racket. When a guy's made a wad of easy jack he hates like hell to think that it's stopped coming in.

The night of repeal I got into a legal joint for my first snort of the so-called "real McCoy." I could see Louie at the bar with a pan as long as the raps that the G-men hand out.

"What the hell's biting you, Louie?" I asked him.



guys in the racket, he stopped a trail of Tommy gun



Making up fake bottles

"*Butana Morone*," he said in Sicilian. "How the hell am I going to keep in the racket?"

"Well," I answered. "You knew that the blow-off had to come some time, didn't you?"

For a long time Louie didn't say a word, he just kept looking at me with a face that was as sour as last week's cream.

Then his pan lit up like Luna Park at the Mardi Gras. He turned to me with a big broad smile.

"*Amigo mio! seda maccha*. Listen to me."

He rattled off a string of Italian as fast as a tommy gun.

I listened and said nothing. But I sure thought a hell of a lot. And the meat of the thing was this:

He told me he knew that in my days as an apprentice under the great Sir Gilbert, the king of the rubber-check men, that I had done some printing of booze labels for Al Capone. And that he was thinking of giving up the wholesale alky racket and going in for bottled and labeled stuff.

Well I'm the kind of a guy that don't need a house to fall on him to get a guy's drift, so I told Louie that I think that him and I can "go to

Your Racket, It's Time to Scram!

FRANKIE LEWIS

Ex-Gangster



Says: "Lots of wideawake crooks forget that the G-Men ain't sleepin' either . . . and tanglin' with their kind of law ain't a cinch . . ."

town" together. Here was a real pal. "That's the way to talk," he informed me.

"I ain't helping you for the love of it, Louie," I cracked back at him.

"What's eating you, Frankie? You know Louie is a right guy."

It wasn't that I thought Louie wasn't "right," but just that I'm a guy that wants his dough on the well-known line. I had gotten too many fast ones from guys that were supposed to be right.

I ASKED Louie what he wanted to do. He told me that he wanted to get an in with a mob that could put out bottles and labels that were the real McCoy, also the new seals that the Government was putting out on the bottles.

"But listen, Louie," I protested, "you'll never undersell the big companies that are legit and I wouldn't tangle with the G-guys for all the booze in the world."

Louie wouldn't take no for an an-

swer. He asked me if I would see him in the morning and think things over. I told him that that was okay, but the answer would still be the same. We parted and I went to see my tomato.

This bimbo that I was stepping out with was a dame that had been the wife of one of the smartest guys that was in the racket. He had beat the game—the only way that it's ever beaten—he had died with his shoes on. I knew that she was nobody's chump herself, so on the way to the movies I slipped her the lowdown.

She told me that I was a chump if I didn't get Louie the in with the printing mob.

"But," she said, "make that guy put you on the payroll as his star booze salesman. You got the muscle, kid!"

Yeah! this bimbo was nobody's fool all right, all right.

I left Maisie and went home to hit the horse's lunch. On the way home I kept thinking of what she told me. It was a lead pipe cinch. Louie knew the booze racket backwards and forwards. He had the connections to get the booze, and I had the connections to get the bottles and the labels. But I was as leery as hell of the G-men; they had put the fear of God into me.

The next day I met Louie, and I told him that him and I were going to talk turkey.

"*Buono! Buono!*" he repeated over and over again. "Frank, we'll pile up plenty of iron men."

"That's Jake with me, all right," I replied, "but we might land behind plenty of iron bars."

What the hell, I thought, dough's dough, and a guy's a sucker if he don't grab it. That just shows you how much of a chump I was.

Louie and I went to see an old guy that was a printer. This mug knew printing like nobody's business, and he wasn't troubled much with a conscience either. After we told him what it was all about, he agreed to print anything we asked him to. We gave him a C note and left, telling him we would see him in a day or so.

"Well, that's fixed, Louie, and it's fixed right!"

"Frankie, you got brains in your belfry, kid."

"Yeah, Louie, maybe I agree with you," I bragged.

Louie and I both knew that if you wanted to sell the stuff in bottles as the real McCoy, the bottles had to be perfect. So the next step was to look up the guy that supplied Waxey Gordon.

I can tell this now, as he, too, is pushing up the old daisies. The guy that I was going to see was Charles Entratta, alias Charlie Blue. But to the guys in the know he was known as "Bottles."

His plant was over in the Erie Basin section of Brooklyn. The joint was supposed to be making bottles for a ginger ale concern, but that was only a front. When it came to imitating booze bottles, Blue was a wiz. There are a lot of fancy cordials that come in bottles that are just as fancy. Then there is the Scotch, them babies are bottled up in a style all their own, too.

But once Charlie got his lunch-hooks on a bottle he could duplicate it so as the maker could swear on a stack of Bibles that it was his.

When Louie and I met Charlie and gave him the lowdown he was tickled to death. He explained that business was on the bum. He was sure glad to do things for us. I thanked him and then Louie and I left the joint.

On the way home I told Louie what the dame Maisie had told me. I told him that I wanted to get on the payroll at three Cs a week. The answer that he gave me knocked me for a loop. He told me that he was going to cut me in as a full partner. He threw me a song and dance about the brains that I was supposed to have. It all almost floored me. But I was too old a hand at the rackets to show my surprise.

I asked Louie how much rum he had on hand. He told me that he had enough to make two thousand quarts of good rye whisky. That sounded swell to me. I saw myself again in the big money. But this time I determined to stay on the well-known sidelines, and I told Louie that he

was a chump if he didn't do the same.

"Louie, I don't have to tell you that we're fooling with the G-men. Them guys do to guys like us what Flit does to bugs." Louie just looked at me. I went on. "You say that you think that I got brains! If I had, I'd get the hell out of the rackets. But while I'm in them I ain't gonna tangle with the G-men."

Louie admitted that I was right. He told me that he knew a bunch of punks that would take all our chances for us.

"And they'll be glad to get a C note a week," he added. That suited me to a T. As long as the punks didn't know that I was tied up in the racket I was as safe as a bug in the rug.

LOUIE came to me the next night and he told me that he knew of a guy that had a big store that carried legal liquor. Also that he was going to hire a few muscle men to scare the chump into giving us the run of the joint. The mug had a swell spot, right in the heart of Times Square. Louie thought that as long as the mug had a license to sell liquor, he could stock the joint up with our "real McCoy" and make dough hand over fist.

This boy knew how to make a guy come coco, and soon we had his joint full of our phoney whiskey. The mug was too scared to go to the bulls. He was afraid that he would get a knife buried right smack in his back.

Things were going at a swell rate. Charlie was giving us the glassware and the printer was giving us the labels. Louie had the booze. So the goose hung high. But the G-men weren't sleeping, either. The joints that were "speaks" were closed as tight as drums. Shady saloons lost their licenses as fast as they got them. The G-men were making the beer barons toe the mark.

Louie and I started to muscle in on the saloons and the bars and grills. We made them take our booze, or the muscle men took care of them.

Naturally we didn't make the grade without a little war. We'd bunk into a guy that was cast from the same mould as we were. But Louie was

as good as his word; the muscle men that we had hired took care of the balky ones, and I don't mean maybe.

So our racket was swimming along with the tide. I was in the gravy. I got me a big flashy car and a new wardrobe, gambled my fool head off, and didn't salt away a dime.

I was soon to get a jolt that I didn't bargain for. I had always left the booze end of it up to Louie. He knew his racket and I knew mine.

I picked up the paper and I just read a page or two when my lamps opened to their fullest. It was about our liquor joint in Times Square. It seems as though the booze that the



*As though we had read each other's minds,
we pulled the cannons*

guy had bought from the authorized people had gotten mixed up with the stuff that he was receiving from us. And that was just too bad for them.

Louie was getting greedy! At first he put out queer rye that was as good as the real McCoy. He had to get that from Canada. But at the same time he had to pay good money to get it. So he made up his own booze and made it up lousy.

The paper said that the Federal men had received complaints that a few people had bought booze in the Times Square joint and after taking

a few drinks of the stuff, they had become as sick as dogs. The G-men investigated and found that a well-known brand of rye, supposedly the real thing, contained a poison that was known as fusel oil.

They questioned the mug, but he was too scared to beef. He then was sloughed in the can. In the meantime, the G-men knew that the label on the bottles was as phoney as the rye itself. The poor mug that we had bulldozed took a two year jolt, he figured that it was better than being bumped off.

Then another thing happened that should have made me see the handwriting on the wall.

Louie busted into my flat one morning and told me that our friend Charlie Blue was now a good guy. By that he meant that he was dead. He had crossed up one of the biggest guys in the beer racket and had stopped a trayful of slugs.

I knew then that this was the time for a showdown. I invited Louie to sit down while I got dressed.

"Louie," I said fastlike, "you and I are done."

"Frankie, you gotta pain in your head some place?"

"No, Louie. I ain't got any pain. I'm just done! Get it?"

Louie wanted to know the why and the wherefore, so I told him. In the first place he had been taking enough out of my cut to buy rye that was good. Instead he used a cheap grade of alky. But that wasn't the real reason that I wanted to get out of it.

I told Louie that he either had to buy me out or else close our racket up. I was not going to tangle with the Federals. For a long time he never said a word.

When he finally spoke up, it was in a nasty tone of voice. He let me know that he was Louie Pioggi. And that he was as tough as nails. At that time I was no slouch myself. I told Louie he couldn't scare me.

FOR a minute or two we both said nothing then as though we had read each other's minds, we pulled our cannons. Neither one had the

drop on the other and we knew it. But we also knew that when it comes to rods in the underworld, things are never the same. Turn your back, and it's liable to be full of bullets.

The worry and the fear of Louie and the fear of the G-men got me. I was unable to sleep. I lost my nerve, and I wound up selling out to Louie for a song. He was riding for a fall, only he didn't know it.

I went to a sanitarium as I was a pretty sick mug. But Louie kept right on with the racket. He was getting tougher and tougher, he spread the story that he had run me out of the city. I laughed when I heard it. I knew that he would soon have a date to make big rocks small.

The G-men were making a big drive on the bootleggers. They were determined that the United States would not be cheated out of their revenue. Also that folks should be able to get a drink without fear of being poisoned.

All the while I was sick, I thought that it was the end of the rackets for me. At last when I was damn

near dead from the life I had led, I knew that you can't beat the payoff.

One day, a young gorilla that I had helped in the past came to visit me. He told me that Louie was listed as a public enemy by the G-boys.

"Frankie," he said, "I'll bet you a grand that it's the end of that lug!"

"You ain't telling me a thing that I don't know," I replied.

The payoff for Louie was like this:

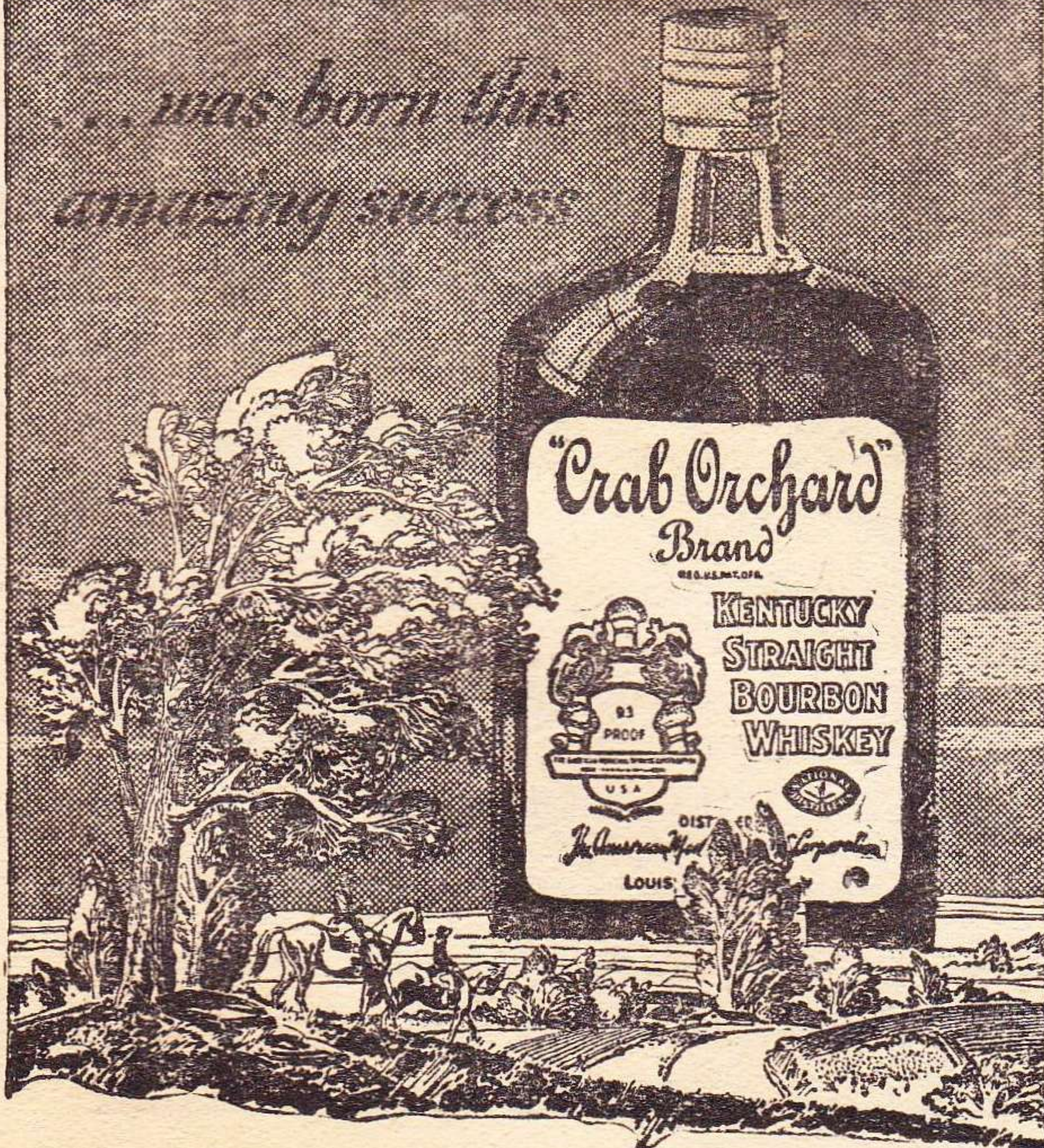
The old G-boys got him dead to rights and went to the joint to collar him. At first he tried to fix them. What a chump! Then he tried to knife one of them on the way to the can. That made him a bigger chump for he was held for counterfeiting, attempted murder, income tax, and then some.

He drew a jolt in the can that was too, too sad. They threw the key away on him and changed the lock. I hear that he ain't so tough up in Alcatraz.

Me, when I get out of this place I'm gonna get an honest job and commit matrimony. The G-men can't pinch you for that.

IN THE HEART OF OLD KENTUCKY

*... was born this
amazing success*



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A GOOD GUIDE



TO GOOD WHISKEY

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GUNMEN'S HATE



The second adversary swung the barrel of his gun

Caught in a Trap Where Death Seemed the Only Way Out,
A Daring Young G-Man Strives Desperately to
Make Good on His First Assignment

By COL. WILLIAM T. COWIN

Former Assistant United States Attorney

Author of "In the Bag," "Doomsday Snatch," etc.

THERE were eight of them in that room. Eight pairs of eyes that held the flickering coyness of the hunted man. Eight bitter faces, etched with the acid of hate.

It was a shabby, furnished apartment, on a side street in Manhattan. There they waited, with tensed nerves and inflamed tempers. Malloy had issued strict orders that none was to leave

FROM A LAW OFFICER'S CASE-BOOK

the apartment until the word came, until Mayhew returned from the country with the information that would send them springing to desperate and bloody action.

The room was blue with smoke. Four of them played cards. Three scanned the morning papers. But Malloy remained to himself, pacing up and down, scowling, uttering muffled curses under his breath.

For the heat was on Malloy's mob. The G-men were on the trail. The word had gone out. Worse yet, the Malloy mob was broke. Too broke to seek a safe hideout and lie low until the deadly marksmen from Washington had time to interest themselves in another case.

Malloy was even now embarking on a single desperate foray to raise money—money enough to take a run out before the heat got too hot altogether. It was not mere chance that had made Malloy top man of these killers. Hard as they were, he was harder. Bitter as they were, he was more bitter. And deep down in his murderous heart he harbored a hellish hate for the G-men.

It was an obsession with Malloy. He cursed them and damned them. For they had slain the one thing that he had ever achieved an affection for. Malloy's kid brother had fallen a victim to the Federal guns; and Malloy, completely disregarding the fact that the kid had shot down two agents in cold blood, had nurtured this hatred in the depths of his soul.

An odd tattoo beat on the door. Every head in the room jerked around. Eyes contracted with heroin blinked swiftly. Hands reached for gun butts. Malloy sprang across the room. The muzzle of his thirty-eight was against the door.

"Who is it?" he snarled.

A whisper came back: "Mayhew."

Breath was drawn once more into lungs that had held taut. Weapons disappeared from view. Malloy shot the bolt, opened the door.

A burly man was in the room, the cynosure of all eyes. Mayhew threw a bag on the table and sank into a chair. He sighed heavily.

"Well," snapped Malloy. "What've you got?"

"Everything. The whole layout."

"Let's have it."

MAYHEW lighted a cigar. The eight men listened in attentive silence.

"He's at his country place near Belleville," said Mayhew. "He's got two servants in the house—and he's got a bodyguard."

"That's because of that damned amateur extortionist who sent him those letters last year. The kid the cops got here."

"Right," said Mayhew. "That's just why he's got a G-man with him."

"A G-man!" Malloy's voice was a dry detonation.

"Yeah," said Mayhew. "He's the bodyguard. They wanted to send another guy but the old man wouldn't stand for it. He says it's all hooey. He ain't afraid of snatchers. He's even sore that they got this one guy there. But they insisted on that."

"Okay," said Malloy. "You're sure you got everything? Sure we ain't going to run into something unexpected?"

"That's the whole layout," replied Mayhew. "Got it from the gardener. Talkative old guy—been in the family for years. Bought him three drinks in town one night and he talked."

"Okay," said Malloy. "Let's get going."

A man moved across the room. His dark face was grave.

"Wait a minute, Malloy," he said. "You ain't going to pull this snatch under a G-man's nose, are you?"

"Why not?" snarled Malloy. "He's a man, ain't he? He's just one man like any of the rest of us!" His eyes suddenly lit up. "By hell, Richards, I got an idea, and what an idea! Boys, we'll take the Fed, too!"

They stared at him. Even Mayhew was moved to protest.

"Take the Fed! Are you crazy, Malloy?"

"Sure," said Malloy. "Crazy like a fox. We'll take the Fed. I got a swell idea." His hand dropped to the butt of his thirty-eight. His voice

dropped ominously. "Anybody think it ain't a swell idea?" he demanded.

There was a deathly silence in the room. "All right," went on Malloy. "Get ready to move. We're pulling this thing tonight. Get packed up."

His seven henchmen sprang to action. Malloy sat at Mayhew's side.

"Nice job," he said. "Did you get anything else?"

"Nothing much," said Mayhew. "I understand the Fed you're going to snatch is a youngster. He's been working in the code department for the Government. This is his first actual assignment. Anyway, that's the gardener's story."

Malloy nodded his head slowly. A mad, lustful gleam was in his eye. He spoke slowly and softly, more to himself than Mayhew.

"They knocked off Mike, damn them! Well, here's where I even things up forever."

Mayhew glanced at him. He recognized that expression on his chief's face; that murderous expression which usually presaged bloody violence.

HASTINGS lounged beneath a huge oak tree and idly watched one of America's richest men putter contentedly in his garden. Dusk was falling over the countryside, bringing with it the quiet serenity of the summer evening.

For three days now Hastings had lounged about the estate, keeping an eye on old Ronald Norcross; and now he was beginning to wonder if the wire pulling and effort he had exerted in leaving the code department had been worthwhile. Still it was a change; and how his partner, Garnett, had envied him when he had drawn this bodyguard assignment!

He ground out his cigarette in the moss at his side and yawned. The uneventful hours of the past three days had made him careless.

Neither he nor Norcross was aware of the shadowy figures that moved quietly through the dusk, using the cover of the foliage to mask their advance. Then of a sudden a rosebush parted. A figure loomed up on the

garden path. Four other wraiths materialized at different points.

The tableau had evolved in less than three seconds. Shadowy and unreal it registered on Hastings' vision. He sprang to his feet, his hand on his gun butt.

Gun out, he charged down the lawn. Norcross' voice now smashed on his ears. But the old man's cry ended in a groan as a gun barrel crashed down on his head. Hastings raised his gun. Another voice came from farther down the path.

"Malloy! Watch it! There's the Fed!"

At that moment Hastings' finger constricted on the trigger. Steel and flame leaped from the muzzle. One of the dark figures uttered a yelp of pain, reeling back, cursing, into the bushes.

Two more shots cracked out. Hastings heard the slugs whine over his head. He was desperately cool now. Carefully he sighted in the dim light. Again his finger jerked the trigger. Thrice he replied to the barrage which now came from the path.

Then of a sudden he heard the sound of rapid footfalls behind him. He spun around. Again his finger tugged at the trigger, but a smashing fist knocked the weapon from his grasp. Two men were before him. Two snub-nosed automatics were aimed at his heart.

Still he did not hesitate. His fists shot through the air like pistons. One of them landed cleanly on the point of a jaw. A man slumped suddenly at his feet. The second adversary raised the barrel of his gun, brought it down in a sharp arc.

Hastings threw his head to one side. The gun hammered down hard on his shoulder. His knees buckled under the blow. He reeled. Then an arm encircled his throat from the rear. Like a steel vise it tightened. Again the barrel of the automatic before him was lifted.

This time it crashed down upon his skull. Unconsciousness fell like a hood about his senses. Inert and lifeless, he fell back into the arms of the man behind him.

MALLOY leaned back before the roaring open fire in the old farmhouse. He lighted a cigar and inhaled deeply.

"Well," he announced, "the hard part's over. The contact's arranged with the old man's lawyer. We'll have the dough tonight."

Mayhew nodded. "That part's okay, chief. We been here two days now, and you ain't peeped about that Fed. What are you going to do with him?"

Malloy chuckled, but there was little mirth in his face when he spoke.

"That's the part I been saving," he said. "Saving until we got the old man arranged for. Now comes the idea I told you about. I'm going to square things with those Federal rats for what they did to Mike."

Richards glanced at him eagerly. "You mean we're going to give that guy the works, chief? Burn his feet and all that?"

"Maybe," said Malloy, "if he don't do as he's told. But that ain't the idea. Now get this: take a look at that road map on the wall. See? Now that's where we are. Twelve miles northeast of Belleville. That other camp of ours is about twenty miles cross country on that dirt road. Landers, you're going there tonight."

Landers raised his beady little eyes. "Me? What for?"

"Because you're the best pineapple man in the business. You're going to mine that joint, plant enough dynamite in it to blow a city to hell. You're going to attach a battery to it so you can set it off."

"So what?"

"So," said Malloy, and his eyes burned with an evil fire, "when a whole party of G-men raid the place you can set that dynamite off, Landers. That's what."

They stared at him. Mayhew cleared his throat and broke the silence. "Who the hell's going to raid the place? How do you know the Feds'll knock that joint off?"

"Because," said Malloy triumphantly, "Little Rollo in there's going to write them a note telling 'em that he and Norcross are being held there.

We'll send a messenger boy in with it. Hell, it'll be in his writing. They'll rally. In the meantime, Landers is lying low in the woods with his battery. When he sees 'em go in he pulls the switch. Bango. A dozen rats die."

Mayhew shook his head. "How do you know that mug'll write the letter?"

Landers grinned evilly. "We got ways to fix that, ain't we?"

"Okay," said Malloy. "We'll get our dough early tomorrow morning. In the meantime we'll swing this little party tonight. I'll go in and talk to the boy friend in a minute."

But there was little need of talking to Hastings. The farmhouse was a one storied structure, and the walls were thin. Norcross had been incarcerated in the attic. Hastings was in a tiny room off the kitchen. Every word spoken in the other room was audible.

He raised his eyes as the door opened. Malloy entered the room. In his hand he held an ordinary lined-paper notebook. He tossed this and a pencil to Hastings.

"I got a job for you, rat," he snarled. "I want you to write a note. I'll explain—"

"Don't bother," said Hastings. "I heard what you said in there."

"Okay. Then write it."

Hastings met his eyes squarely. "No," he said.

MALLOY grinned unpleasantly. "Listen," he said. "You're a kid. From what I hear, you're new in this racket. You ain't been around much. Well, let me tell you there's ways of making men do things they don't want to do. Think it over, son. I'll give you half an hour."

The door slammed and once again, Hastings was left alone to do his thinking.

He sat on the hard wooden chair which comprised the sole furniture of the room. His brow was wrinkled and his heart was sore. It was not fear of his own fate that depressed him, but rather the fact of failure in a service where failure is unknown.

Idly he riffled through the notebook. Idly he glanced at the stubby pencil, and the black-lined pages. Then of a sudden his heart leaped. An idea illuminated his brain.

True, it was a chance—a long, long chance. But Garnett should know. Garnett would understand. He snatched up the pencil eagerly. . . .

A little later Malloy reentered the room. Behind him was Richards, his face contorted evilly.

"Well?" Malloy demanded. "Have you been thinking those things over?"

Hastings nodded mutely. His face registered a fear that he did not feel. "You've got me all right," he said dispiritedly. "I know when I'm licked. What do you want me to write?"

Malloy grinned triumphantly. "I'll dictate."

Hastings picked up the book and the pencil.

"Okay. Take this: 'They've got Norcross and me at the summer camp nine miles along route 18. Turn left on the dirt road.' . . . Now sign it."

Hastings wrote slowly, laboriously. He made no effort to disguise his handwriting, yet he scrawled in a painful backhand. It was not his usual mode of scribbling. Garnett would know that much, anyway.

He handed the book to Malloy. The gangster scanned the writing. His eyes gleamed. He ripped the page from the book.

"Okay, boy scout," he said. "Here, Richards, get this to town. Give it to Western Union. Have 'em send it up right away with a boy. Landers, you get going. You'll have about two hours. Do a good job."

Again the door shut on Hastings. The lock clicked home. He heard the receding footfalls, the fading voices. Then, after a short time, all was quiet.

THERE was no light in Hastings' room. The hours seemed interminably long. Occasionally he heard movement and voices in the living room of the house. In desperate suspense he waited, waited to see if his plan had worked.

He dared not consider the conse-

quences of its failure. That meant not only his own death but the doom of his comrades who would respond to his message. His hands were cold and he could hear the pounding of his heart against his breast.

Then, once, he thought he heard the purring of an automobile. For a while it seemed to grow clearer, then it ceased altogether. A prayer was on his lips.

Then to his ears there came a sound—a sound of footsteps in the brush outside. His heart bounded as he heard a familiar voice cry out:

"Malloy! Come out with your hands up! You're cornered and surrounded."

For a moment there was silence within the house, the stark silence of complete and utter surprise. Then, like the roaring of a bull, came Malloy's call to arms.

"It's the heat! Get out that tommy gun. Let 'em have it! Blast 'em or we'll all be dead men!"

A machine gun stuttered from without in answer to Malloy's challenge. In another instant the tommy belched forth a chattering answer. The night was hideous with sound. The shouts of men merged with the sharp clatter of the small arms.

Relentlessly the besiegers closed in on the house. A stinging thread of fire crashed against the tiny window of Hastings' cell. Shards of glass tinkled to the floor. Then, of a sudden, he again heard the mighty voice of Malloy, raised above the din of the fight. "Hold 'em off with that tommy! I'll settle that rat who doublecrossed us—"

Heavy footsteps raced across the floor. Hastings heard the lock turn in the door of his cell. Swiftly he made his way to the side of the door, stood there motionless. The door pushed open. Gun in hand, Malloy charged into the chamber.

Hastings leaped at him. His right fist hammered against the killer's jaw. His left seized the thirty-eight, tried to wrench it from the other's grip.

A single shot spat from the barrel, ate an ugly hole in the floor. Malloy

(Continued on Page 128)

Public Enemies



By
Clayton
Maxwell

WILBUR UNDERHILL

A Regular G-Men Feature

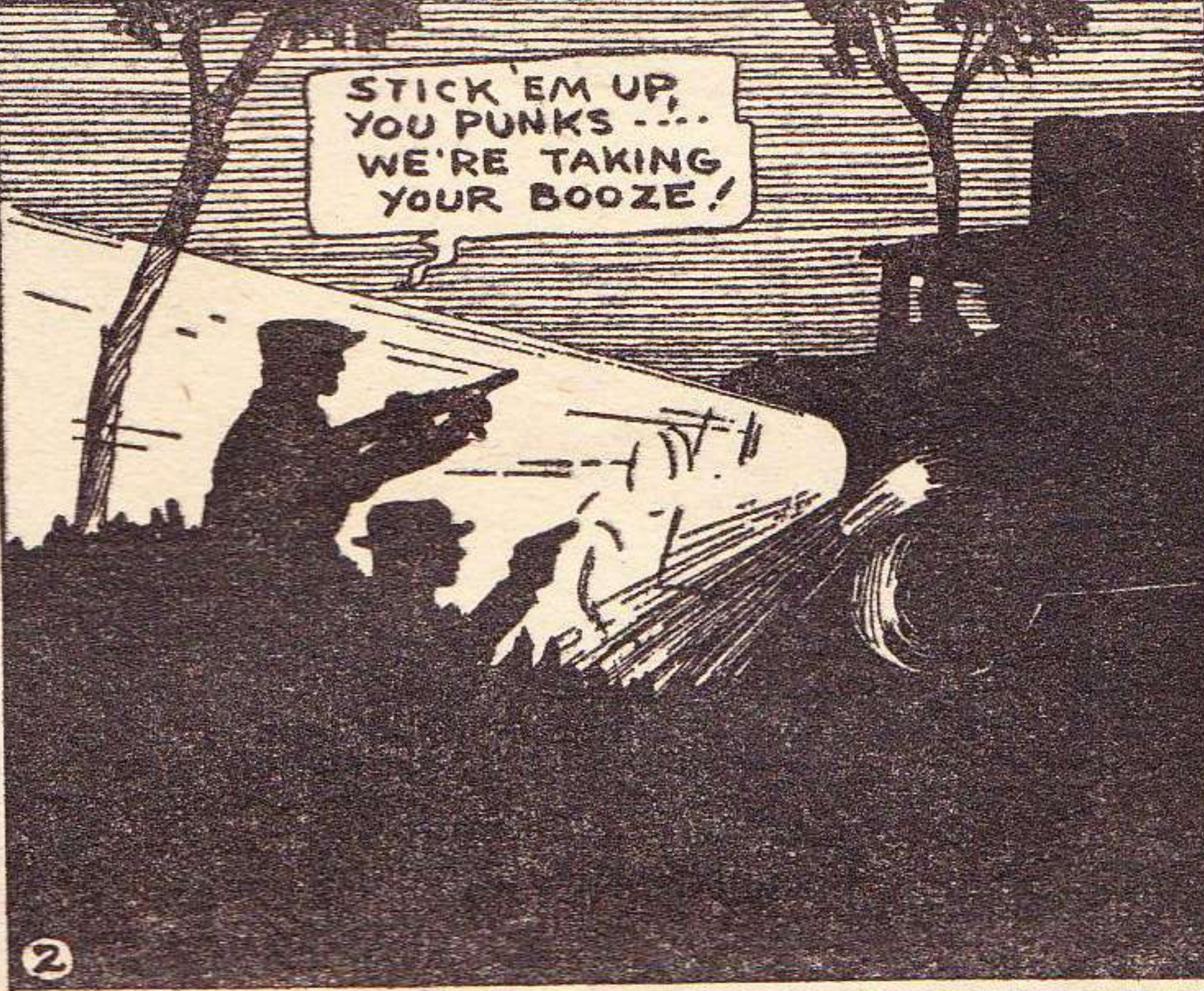
WILBUR UNDERHILL, FOR A TIME KNOWN AS PUBLIC ENEMY NO. 1, STARTED HIS CRIMINAL CAREER WHILE STILL IN HIS TEENS. HE WAS A TALL YOUNG MAN, IN APPEARANCE JUST AN AVERAGE SMALL-TOWN BOY ... BUT WITHIN A FEW YEARS HE HAD BECOME SO DESPERATE A CRIMINAL, FILLED WITH THE KILLER INSTINCT, THAT OTHER OUTLAWS HESITATED TO ASSOCIATE WITH HIM IN HIS DARING EXPLOITS. IT WAS ABOUT 1918 WHEN UNDERHILL FOUND HIS WAY INTO CRIME ... IN AND NEAR THE TOWN OF PICHER, OKLAHOMA.

HE BECAME A SMALL-TIME BOOTLEGGER, SELLING MOONSHINE BY THE BOTTLE



1

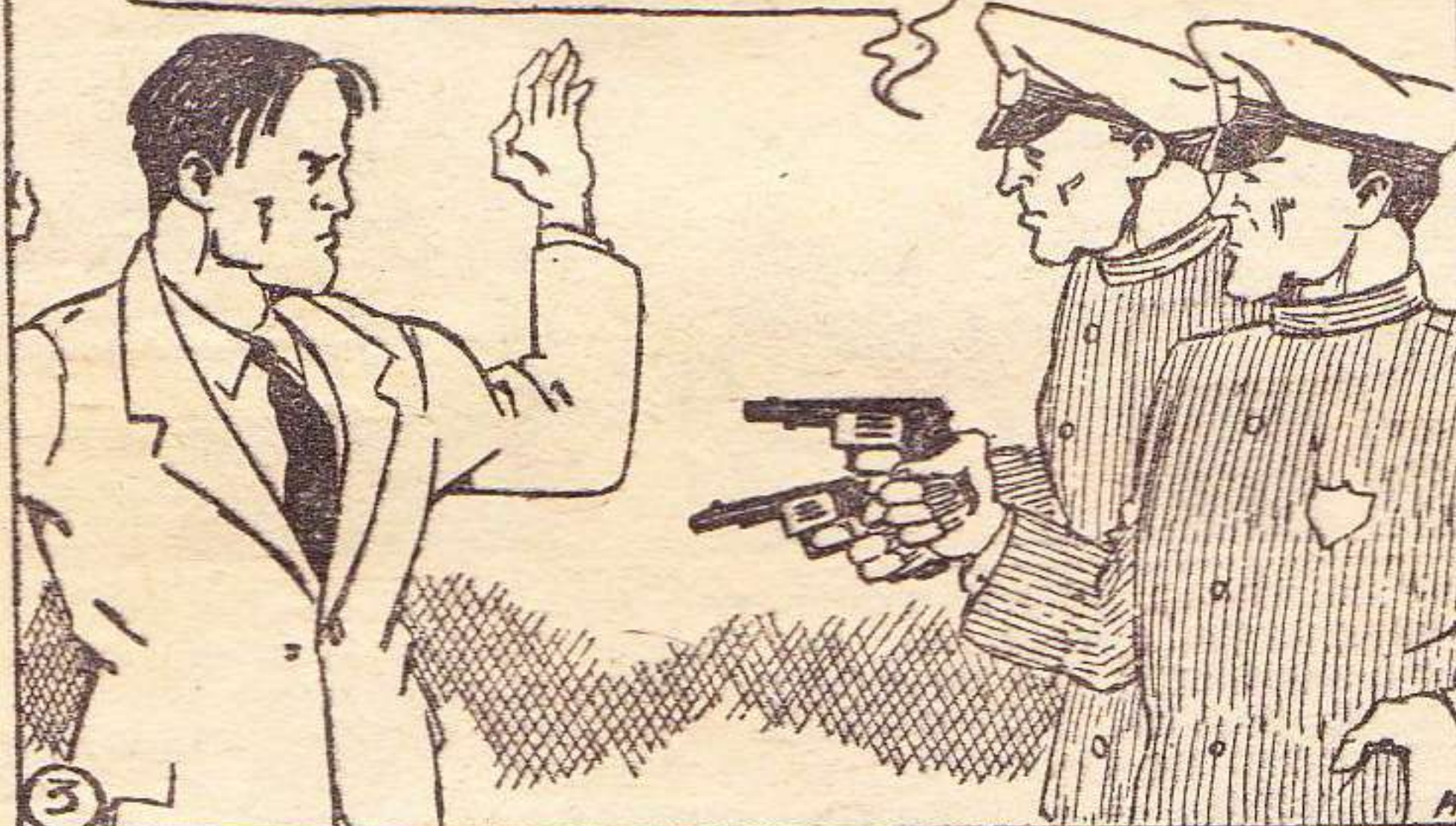
THEN GRADUALLY HE GRADUATED TO "BULK" BOOTLEGGING AND ... HI-JACKING



2

SOON HE EXTENDED HIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH OTHER OUTLAWS ... AND ALSO HIS ACTIVITIES. THE POLICE OF JOPLIN, MISSOURI, ARRESTED HIM ON A CHARGE OF BURGLARY ... AND PROVED THEIR CASE

OKAY, UNDERHILL, WE'VE GOT YOU ... YOU'RE WANTED AT HEADQUARTERS TO ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT A LITTLE BURGLARY!



3

UNDERHILL WENT TO THE MISSOURI STATE PENITENTIARY UNDER A SENTENCE OF TWO YEARS. WITHIN A YEAR OF HIS RELEASE, HE WAS BACK UNDER A SENTENCE OF FIVE YEARS UPON THE CHARGE OF ARMED ROBBERY. HE HAD LEARNED, HOWEVER, THAT ONLY THE FOOLISH OR DESPERATE BREAK PRISON RULES, THUS ENDANGERING EARLY RELEASE THROUGH CLEMENCY. WILBUR UNDERHILL WAS A MODEL PRISONER AND WAS FREE LONG BEFORE THE LEGAL EXPIRATION OF HIS SENTENCE

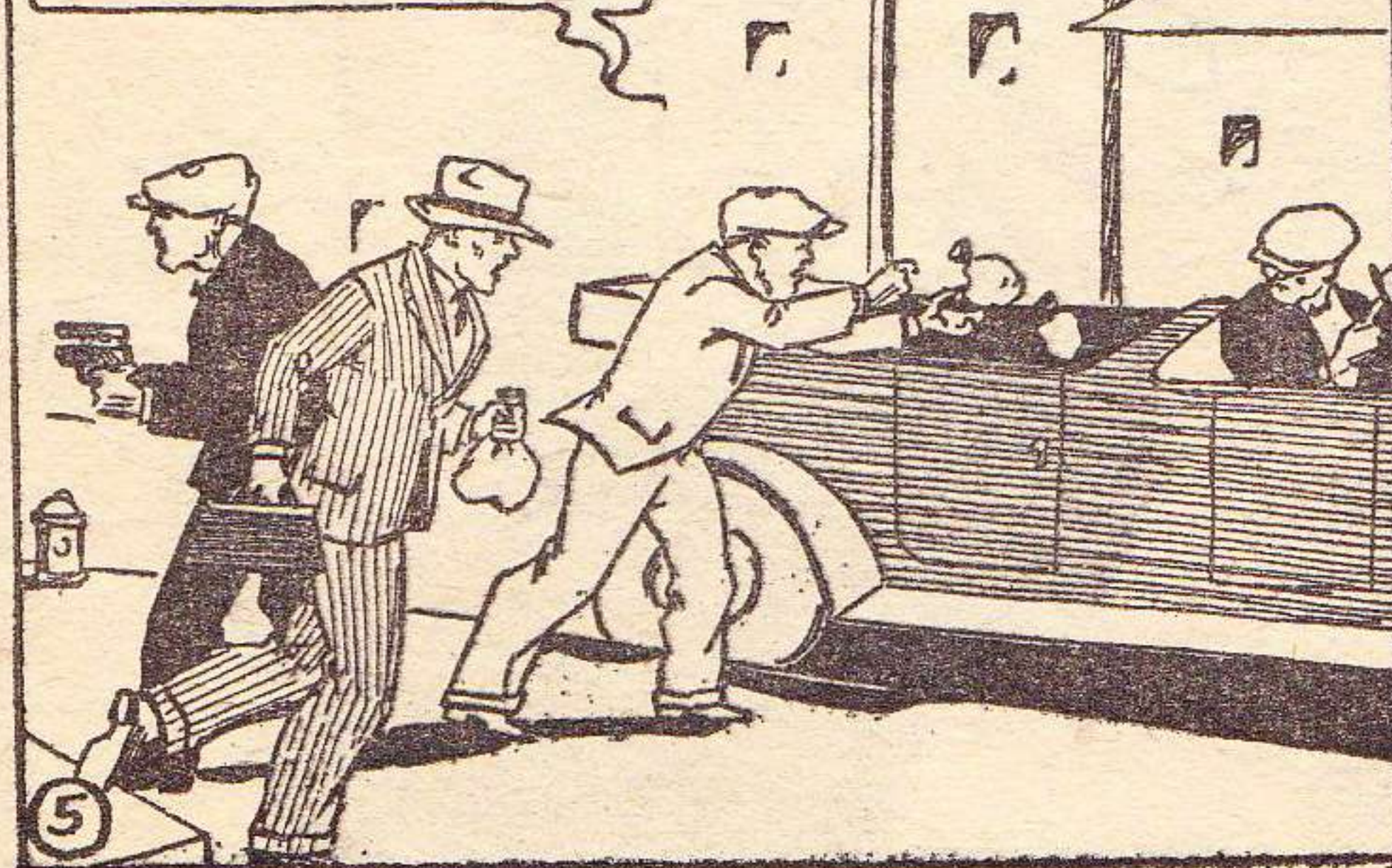
WHEN I LEAVE THIS PLACE, CHAPLAIN, I'M GOING STRAIGHT. YOU'VE SHOWN ME THAT THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW PATH IS THE ONLY WAY



4

UNDERHILL IMMEDIATELY JOINED THE TERRILL KIMES GANG AND RODE WITH THEM ON MANY A DESPERATE MISSION. BANK-ROBBERING WAS THEIR SPECIALTY

THAT BANK'S PRETTY WELL CLEANED OUT. START HER UP, PAL!



5

AT LAST, HOWEVER, UNDERHILL SPLIT WITH THE TERRILL-KIMES GANG AND STRUCK OUT FOR HIMSELF

WILBUR, YOU'VE GOT A MURDER COMPLEX, ALWAYS WANTING TO BUMP SOMEBODY OFF! THAT STUFF DON'T GO!

AW, YOU GUYS ARE LILY-LIVERED ... I'M STRIKING OUT FOR MYSELF!

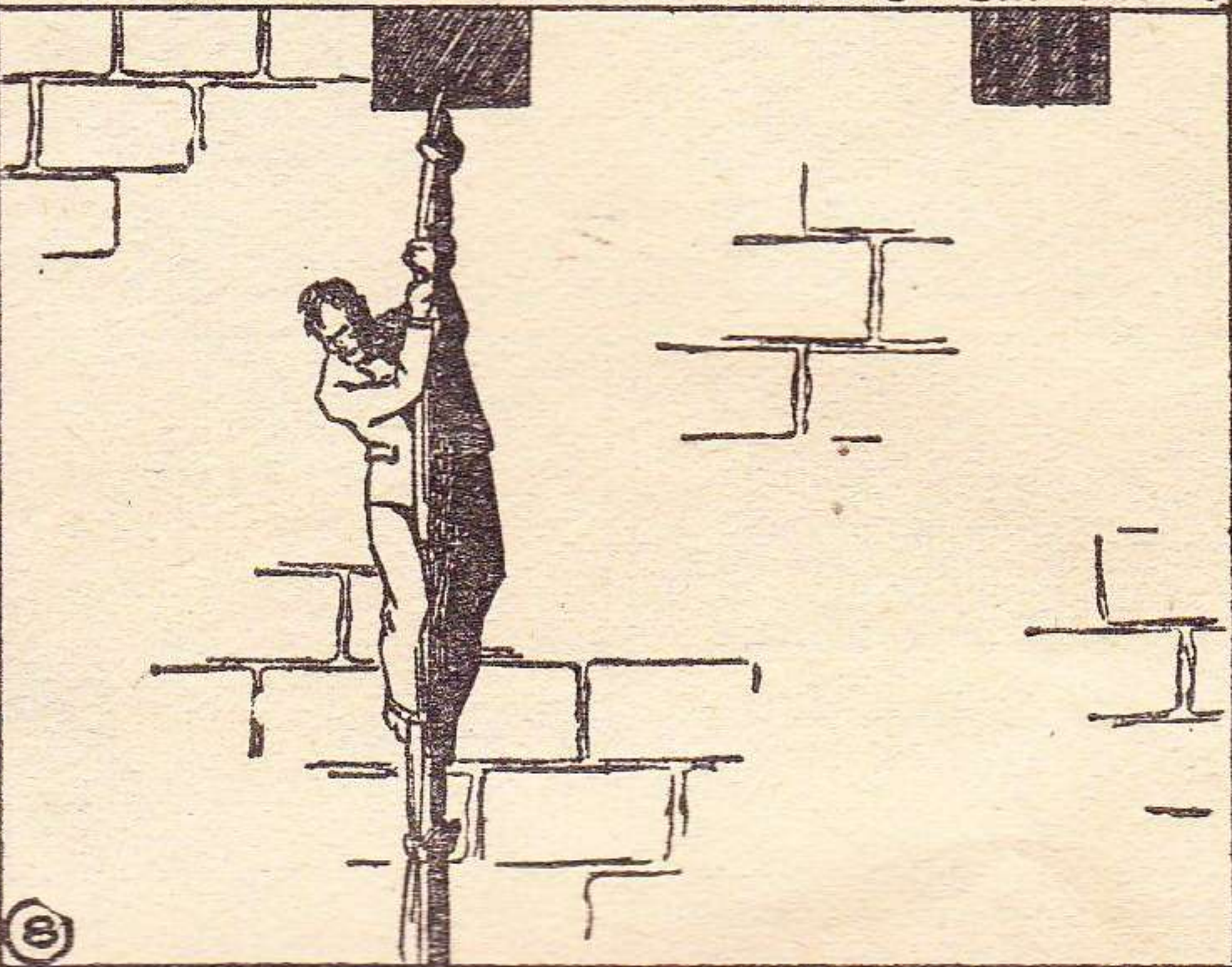


6

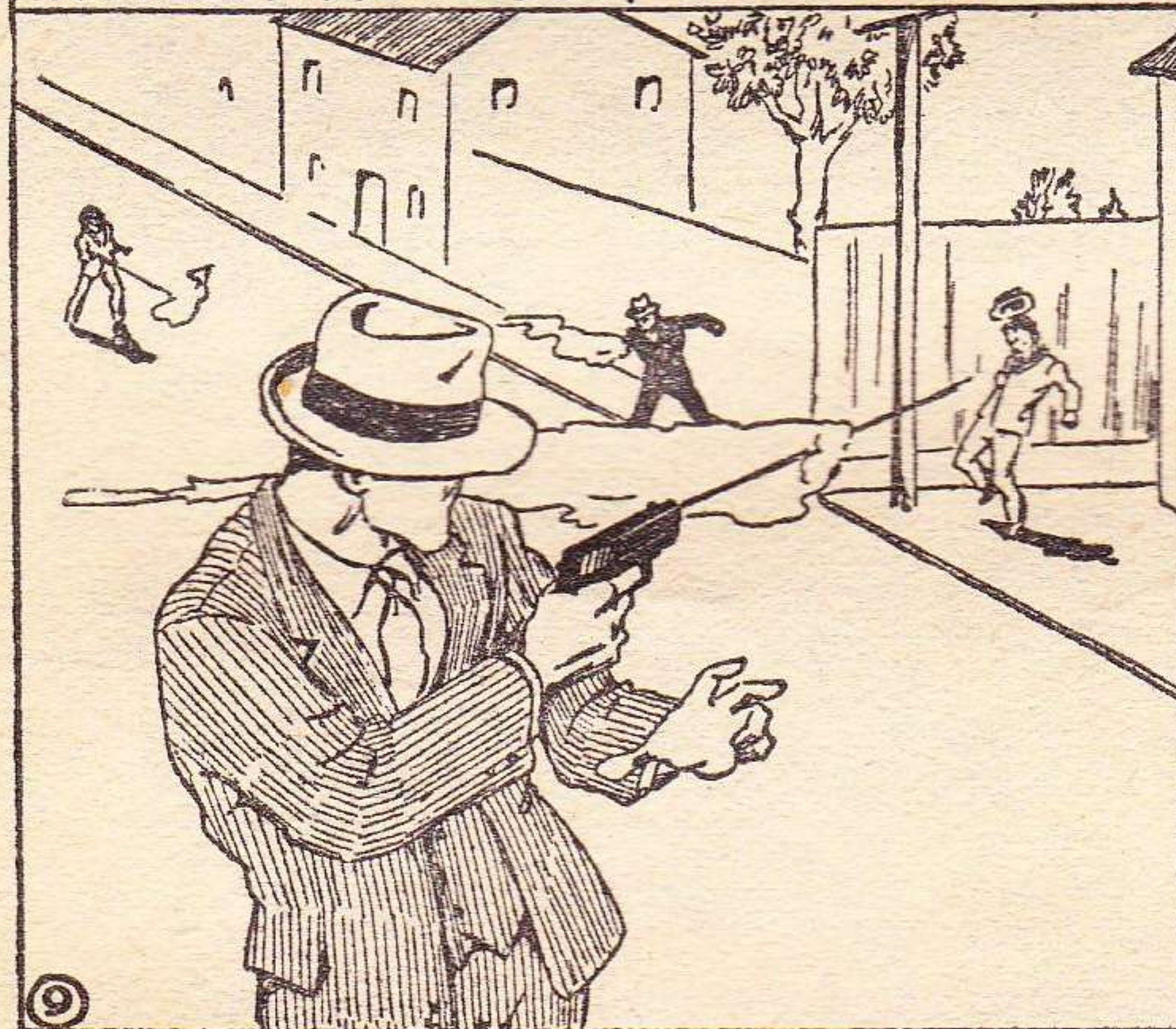
ON CHRISTMAS EVE, UNDERHILL WALKED INTO A DRUG STORE IN OKMULGEE, OKLAHOMA, AND HELD UP GEORGE FEE, A CLERK. FEE WAS SLOW IN RAISING HIS HANDS ... SO UNDERHILL SHOT HIM ... RIFLED THE CASH REGISTER AND RAN OUT OF THE STORE



FEE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO GIVE A DESCRIPTION OF HIS ASSAILANT, WHOM THE POLICE RECOGNIZED AS UNDERHILL. THE POLICE OF TULSA PICKED HIM UP ON THE STREETS OF THAT CITY A WEEK LATER. HE WAS TAKEN TO OKMULGEE AND JAILED ON A MURDER CHARGE. HOWEVER, FRIENDS SMUGGLED SAWS IN TO HIM. ONE NIGHT HE CUT THROUGH THE BARS AND DROPPED TO THE GROUND ON A ROPE MADE OF BED SHEETS



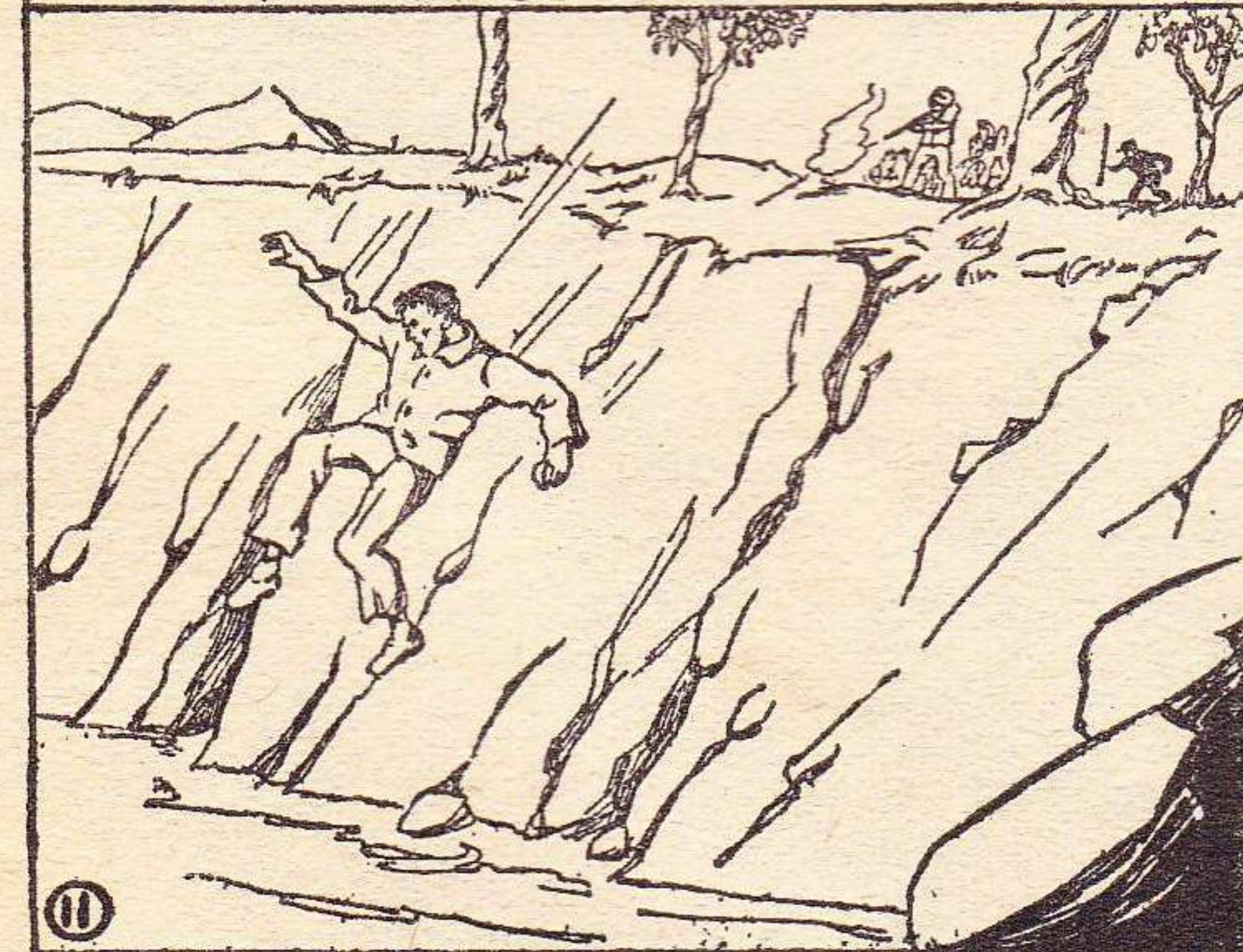
OFFICERS BELIEVED THAT SOONER OR LATER, UNDERHILL WOULD SUCCUMB TO THE HOMING INSTINCT AND TURN UP IN PICHER, OKLAHOMA. HE DID -- AND WALKED INTO A TRAP, BUT UNDERHILL SHOT HIS WAY OUT, KILLING AN INNOCENT BYSTANDER, EARL O'NEAL



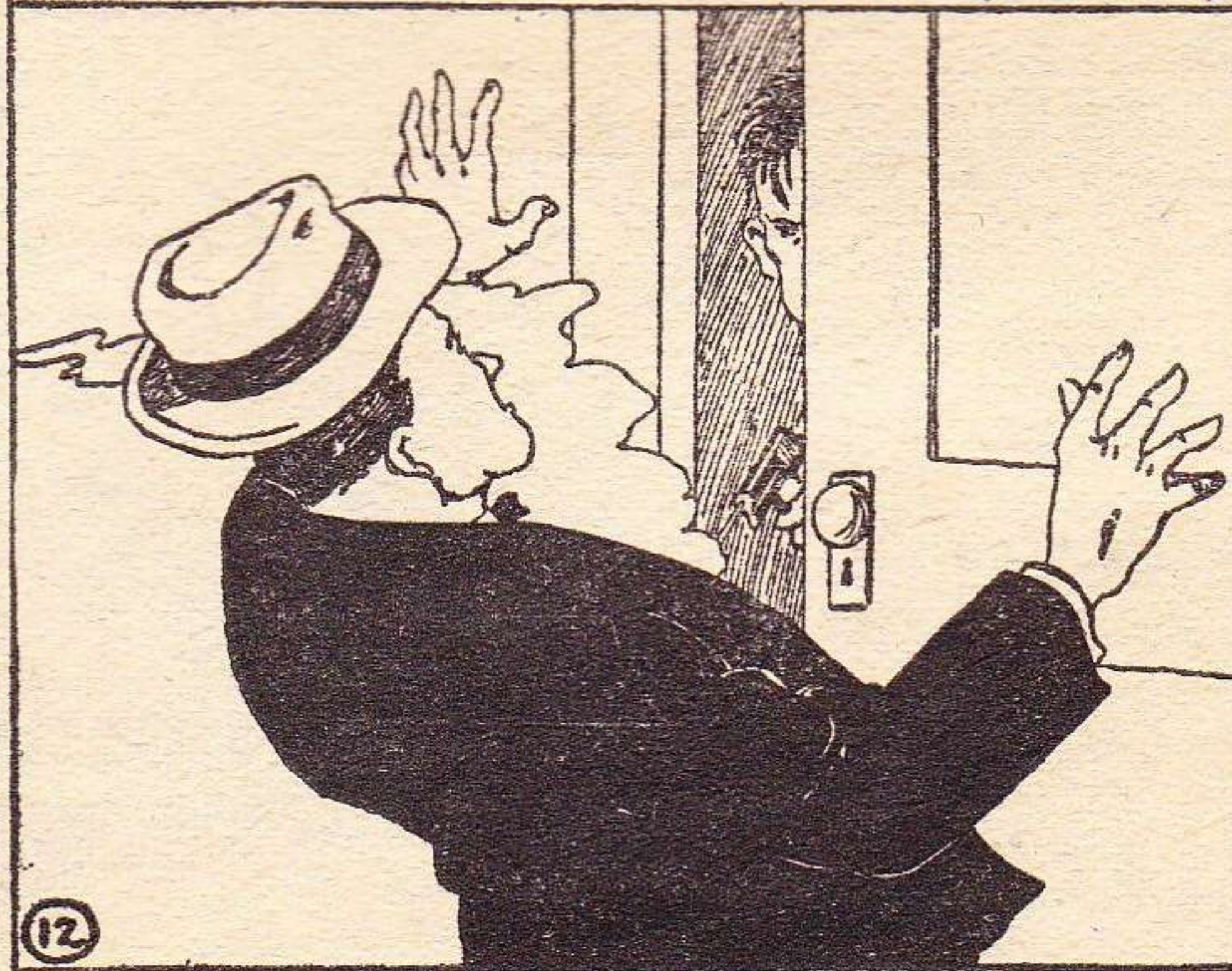
BUT THE OFFICERS FINALLY CAUGHT HIM AND HE WAS SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT IN THE OKLAHOMA STATE PENITENTIARY AT MCALESTER FOR THE FEE KILLING. NOW HE WAS TRULY DESPERATE, FOR HE MIGHT BE SENT TO THE CHAIR WHEN TRIED FOR THE MURDER OF O'NEAL. GOOD BEHAVIOR WOULD NO LONGER HELP HIM. HE ATTEMPTED AN ESCAPE, ONLY TO FAIL, AND WAS PLACED IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT



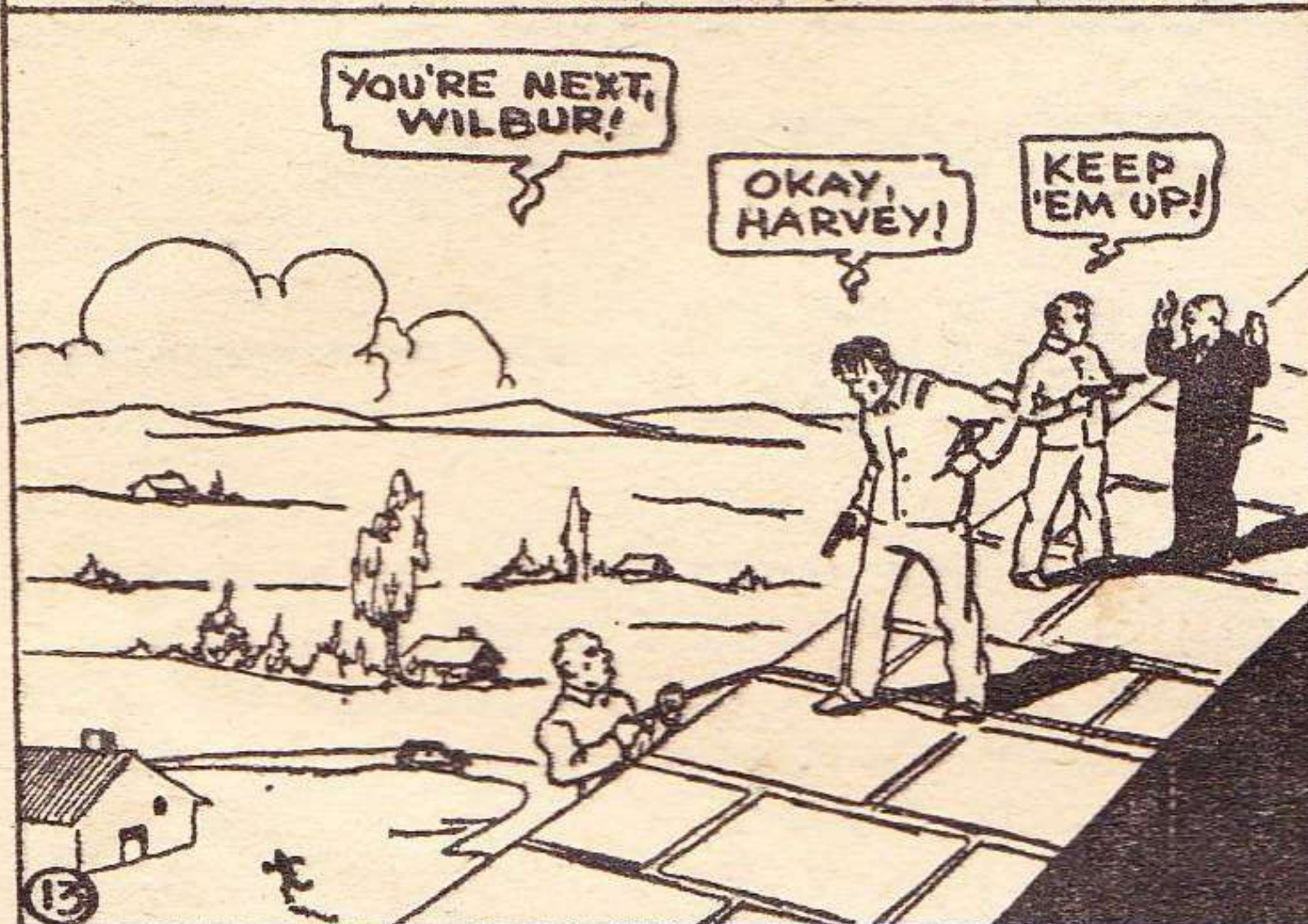
BUT SOON UNDERHILL WAS OUT OF HIS CELL AND WORKING WITH A GUARDED PRISON GANG ON ROAD CONSTRUCTION. SEIZING HIS OPPORTUNITY, HE DASHED OUT OF THE MARCHING LINE OF CONVICTS -- AND HEADED FOR THE BLUFF OF A RIVER. HE LEAPED INTO THE WATER, DIVING AT INTERVALS TO ESCAPE THE BULLETS WHICH WERE SPLASHING ABOUT HIM. HE REACHED THE OTHER SIDE IN SAFETY AND HEADED INTO THE SCRUB OAK



UNDERHILL NEXT TOOK UP HIS ABODE IN A WICHITA, KANSAS, HOTEL. THEN A ROBBERY OCCURRED IN WICHITA AND SOMEONE IN THE HOTEL REPORTED HAVING SEEN STOLEN GOODS IN UNDERHILL'S ROOM. MERLE COLVER, A WICHITA OFFICER, CAME TO UNDERHILL'S ROOM TO QUESTION HIM -- UNDERHILL OPENED THE DOOR WITH ONE HAND AND WITH THE OTHER GRASPED AN AUTOMATIC. COLVER ASKED NO QUESTIONS



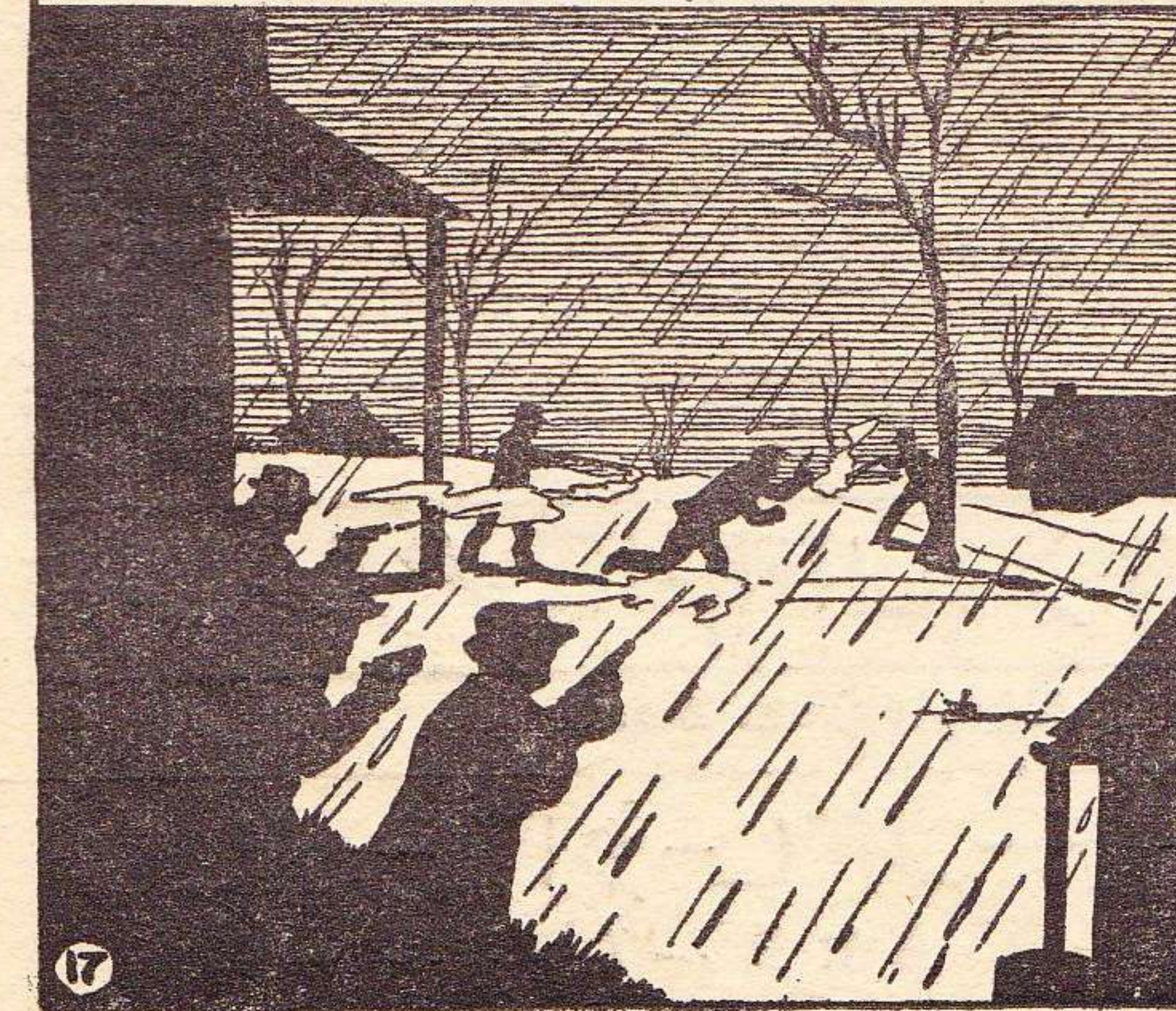
CAPTURED NOT LONG AFTERWARD, UNDERHILL PLEADED GUILTY TO THE KILLING OF COLVER, BECAUSE KANSAS HAS NO LAW PROVIDING FOR CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. THUS HE ALSO AVOIDED BEING RETURNED TO OKLAHOMA TO STAND TRIAL FOR THE O'NEAL KILLING. HE WAS SENT TO LANSING PRISON FOR LIFE. HERE, WITH HARVEY BAILEY AND FIVE OTHER CONVICTS, HE TOOK PART IN THE THRILLING DECORATION DAY -- 1933 -- PRISON BREAK ENGINEERED BY FRANK NASH. THEY FORCED THE WARDEN TO ALLOW THEM TO ESCAPE OVER THE WALL.



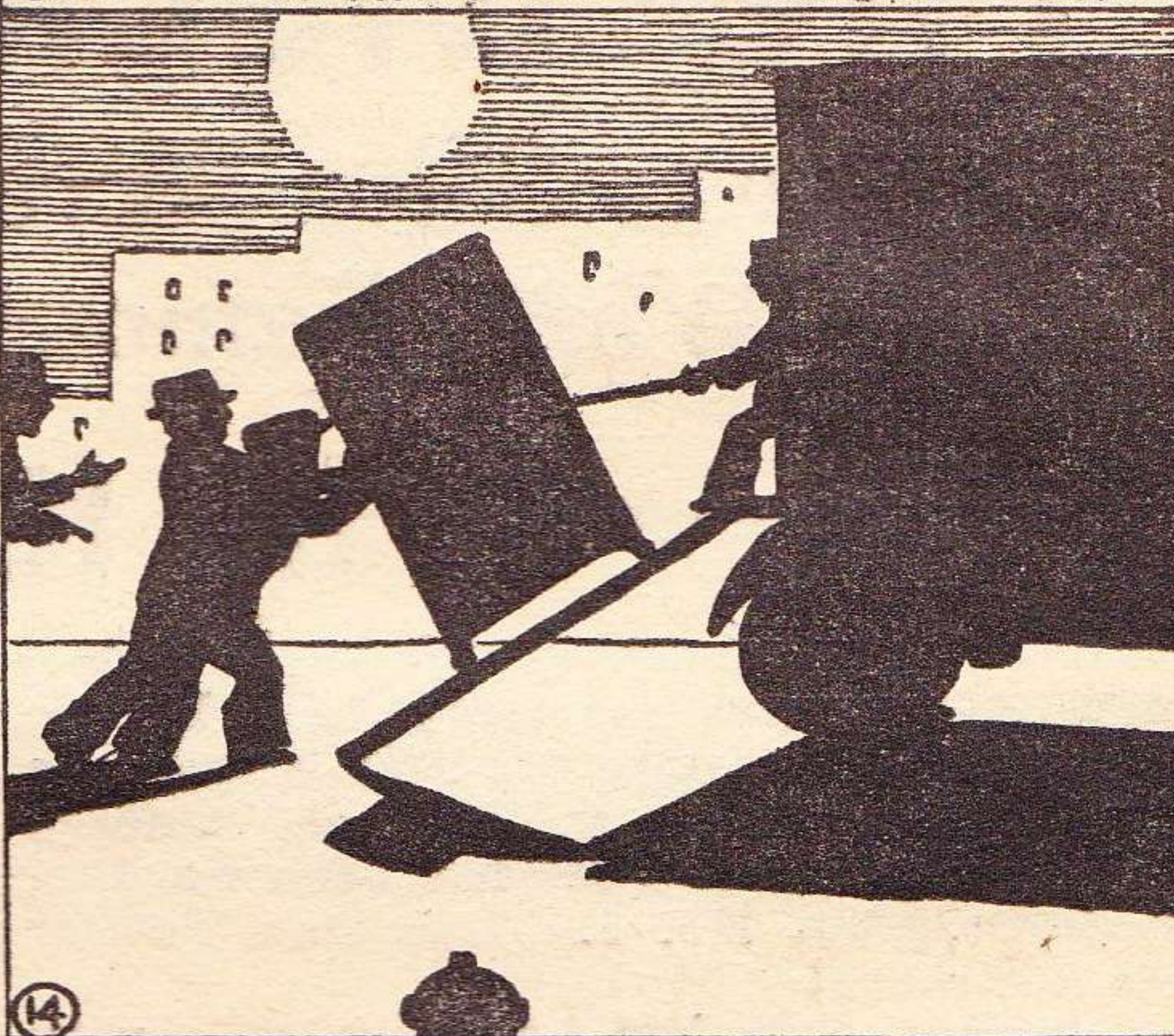
BUT UNDERHILL, NOW KNOWN TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AS PUBLIC ENEMY NO. 1, HAD FINALLY BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A VIOLATOR OF VARIOUS FEDERAL LAWS. G-MEN TOOK UP HIS TRAIL, DETERMINED TO STOP HIS MAD CAREER. UNDERHILL NOW MARRIED A CHILDHOOD SWEET-HEART, AND WITH HIS BRIDE, HE VANISHED. HOWEVER, G-MEN, CONSTANTLY CHECKING TIPS AND FOLLOWING UP CLUES, LOCATED HIM, WITH HIS WIFE AND SOME PALS, IN A HOUSE AT SHAWNEE, OKLAHOMA. IT WAS A COLD, DRIZZLY NIGHT IN LATE DECEMBER, 1933



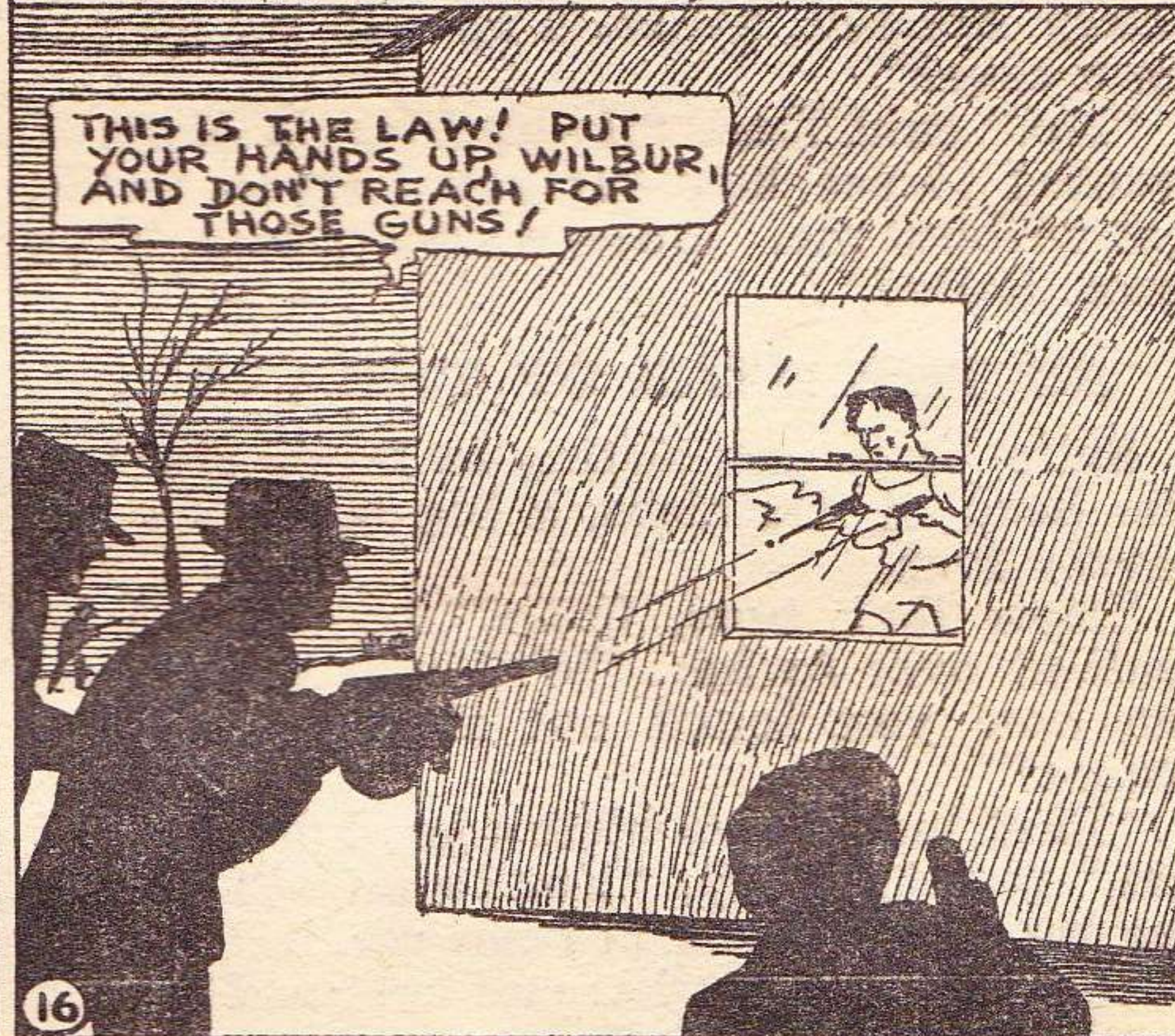
THE OFFICERS FIRED AT UNDERHILL THROUGH THE WINDOW. HE FELL -- BUT HE WAS SOON UP AGAIN RETURNING THE FIRE. UNDERHILL DUCKED OUT OF SIGHT AND THE BATTLE CONTINUED. THEN SUDDENLY THE OUTLAW DASHED OUT THE FRONT DOOR, THROUGH THE DEADLY FIRE OF PISTOLS, AUTOMATICS AND MACHINE-GUNS!



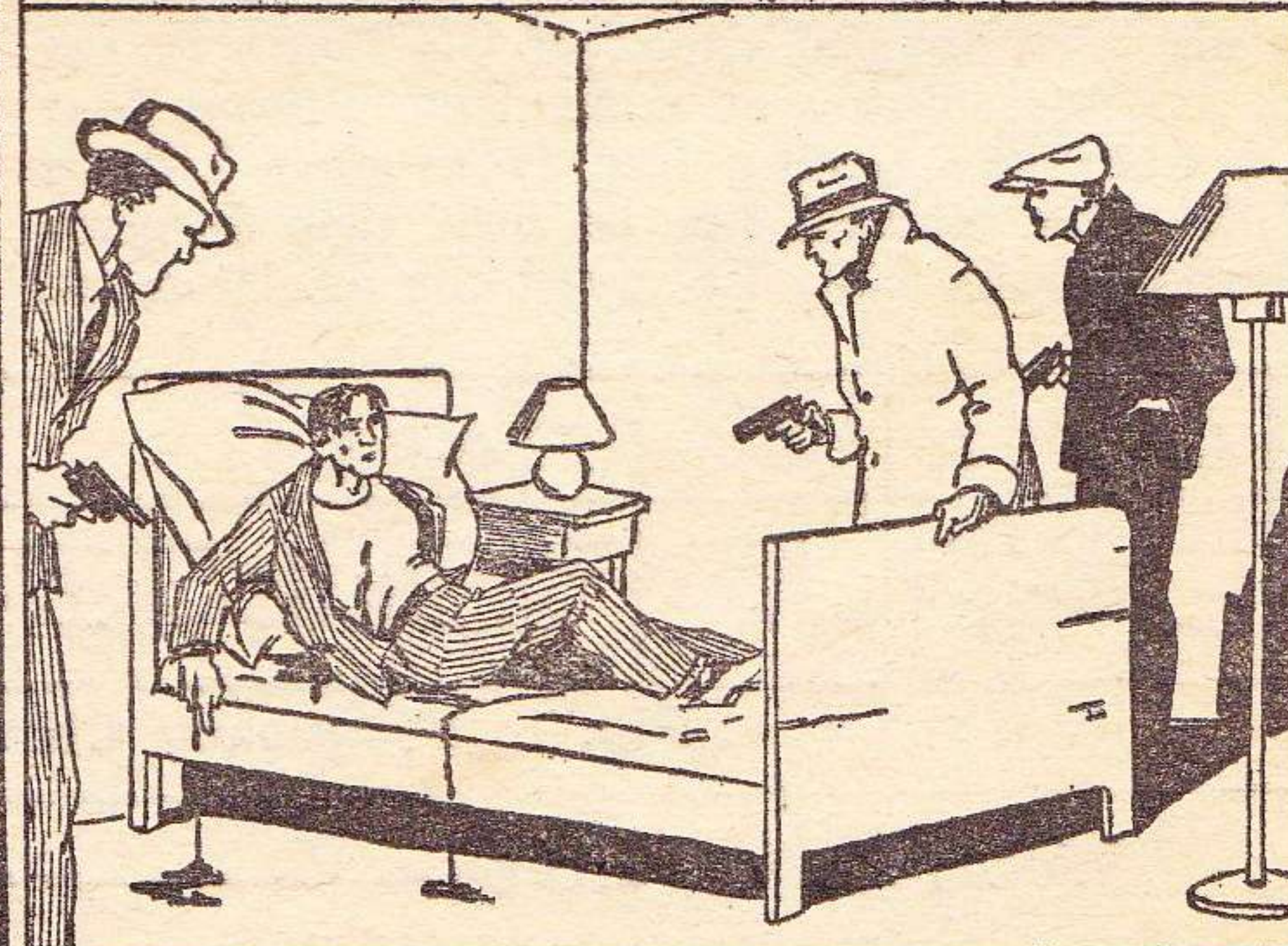
FREE AGAIN, UNDERHILL NOW PLUNGED INTO A RECKLESS CAREER OF BANK ROBBERY, ASSAULT, HOLD-UPS AND MURDER. HE BECAME SO DANGEROUS THAT HARDENED BANK ROBBERS REFUSED TO TEAM UP WITH HIM -- HE ROBBED SEVERAL PLACES BY LOADING THE SAFE ON A TRUCK AND CARTING IT AWAY.



SO THE SEVEN G-MEN, WITH EIGHT POLICE OFFICERS AND DEPUTY SHERIFFS, CREEPT TOWARD THE HOUSE. THE SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE TRAINED HIS MACHINE-GUN ON A WINDOW, THROUGH WHICH COULD BE SEEN THE OUTLAW. AT THE CALL TO SURRENDER, UNDERHILL FIRED.



UNDERHILL SLUMPED IN A STUMBLING FALL, ONLY TO STRAIGHTEN UP AND GO ON. AGAIN THE G-MEN CUT HIM DOWN, BUT HE GOT UP AND VANISHED AROUND A NEARBY HOUSE. AFTER A LONG SEARCH THEY FOUND THE BANDIT SPRAWLED ON A BED IN A FURNITURE STORE! HIS BODY WAS TORN BY THIRTEEN BULLETS, YET HE LIVED FOR A WEEK. G-MEN HAD AGAIN REMOVED A PUBLIC ENEMY.



18 NEXT MONTH. ANOTHER THRILLING G-MEN ADVENTURE IN PICTURES.

The Black Chamber

How to Solve Secret Ciphers Told by a
World Famous Cryptographer

—By M. K. DIRIGO—

THE time was exactly 11.15 A.M. Just fifteen minutes before the Code Division of the F. B. I. had entered their headquarters. They had been working on cryptogram No. 5. But Dan Fowler was not there!

However, they had been having a very hectic session—and a most interesting one. Then there was a knock on the door. Larry opened the door and Dan came in.

"You're late, aren't you, Chief?" asked Larry Kendall. "What's up—do we go out on a case?"

"No," said Dan. "Everything is okay. I wanted to see how far you fellows would get without me. But—what are you doing here, Sally?"

AT THE HEAD OF THE CLASS

Sally Vane was sitting in Dan's chair at the head of the class, a big smile on her lovely face.

"Now look here, Sally," he said as he walked over to her. "Will you kindly tell me how you found out about this Code Room?"

"That just shows what a good detective I am," replied Sally. "You're an old meany for keeping it a secret from me."

Dan removed his hat and coat and turned to the class.

"All right, let's get going. The intermission is over. How far did you get?"

He was obviously peeved because Sally had crashed the Code Room. He was in love with Sally. And that was no secret. She had been at death's door too often lately as a special agent of the Department of Justice. The last time Dan almost lost his own life saving her from that kidnap mob. He wanted her to quit this dangerous business. But she loved the excitement.

And, besides, many times her woman's intuition had furnished valuable clues.

Dan looked at the blackboard and saw a frequency chart of cryptogram No. 5. (See Chart, Fig. 7.)

Under it was the finished solution. The text had been taken from a letter sent in by a reader of G-MEN MAGAZINE.

THE EDITORS OF G MEN
MAGAZINE ARE TO BE CON-
GRATULATED ON THEIR EF-
FORTS TO PROVE THAT CRIME
DOES NOT PAY.

Dan turned in astonishment from Sally to Larry Kendall, then to the class. They were all grinning.

"Shall I tell you the story?" offered Larry.

"I wish you would," replied Dan Fowler.

"Well, it was like this. We hadn't been in here five minutes when we heard the secret signal and I opened the door, expecting to see you. To make a long story short, we couldn't keep her out. So we went right ahead with the work and I took charge of the class. I mean I started to take charge of the class. We had just about completed the frequency chart and were having a "free for all" discussion about it and these symbols when up pops this beautiful dame and sweeps the ground from under the whole lot of us.

A SOLUTION WITHOUT CHARTS

"You see," he continued, "while we were all shooting off our theories, Sally was studying the copy on your desk. And before we had a chance to apply the frequencies to the cryptogram she told us how to solve the thing without any charts. And let me

12	11	10	7	5	4	3		2	1
L	>	Π	┘	⋈	□	⊥	⊞	⊞	⊞

Fig. 1: Frequency Chart of Cryptogram No. 5

Words No. 6, 7 and 8—

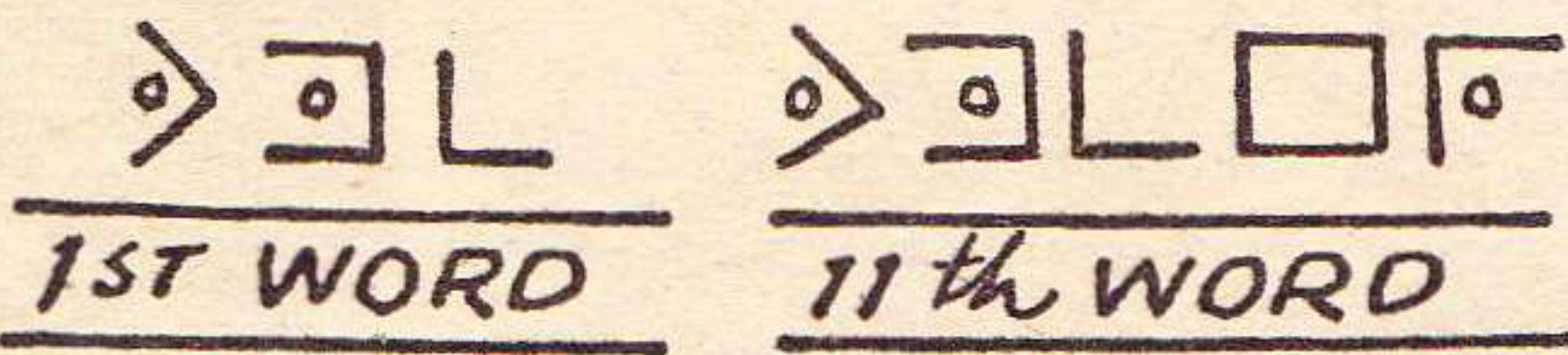
┘┘┘—>Π—⋈
A R E — T — — — E

Figure 2.

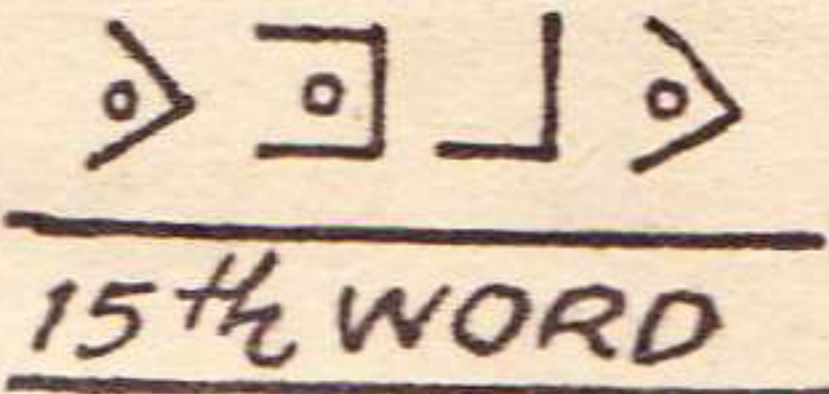
tell you, Dan, that when she got through talking to us about word formations and PATTERN WORDS, we forgot all about the frequency chart and solved the cryptogram without it."

"Go ahead," said Dan. "Tell me the rest." His eyes were sparkling now. On his face was a look of wonder and surprise and admiration.

"Well, first she pointed out to us that words No. 1 and 11 had three symbols in common.



"The first word looks like THE,' she said, 'and that makes the 11th word THEIR.' Then she picked out word No. 15, which she called a PATTERN WORD. 'This word,' she said, 'contains three of the symbols used in the first word.'

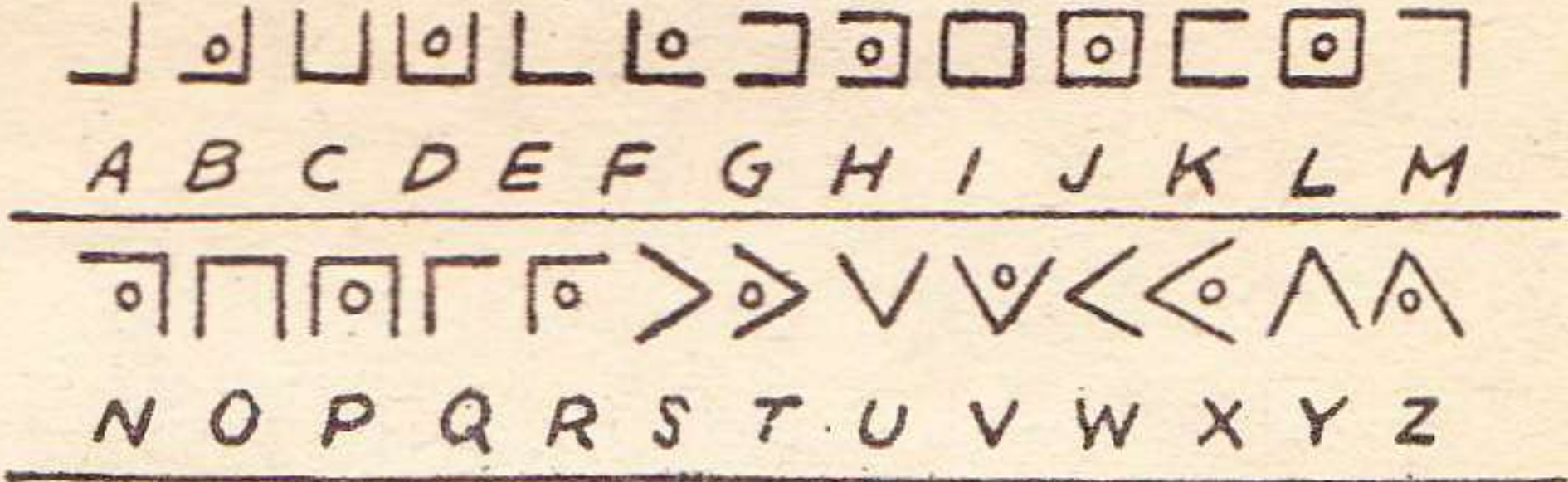
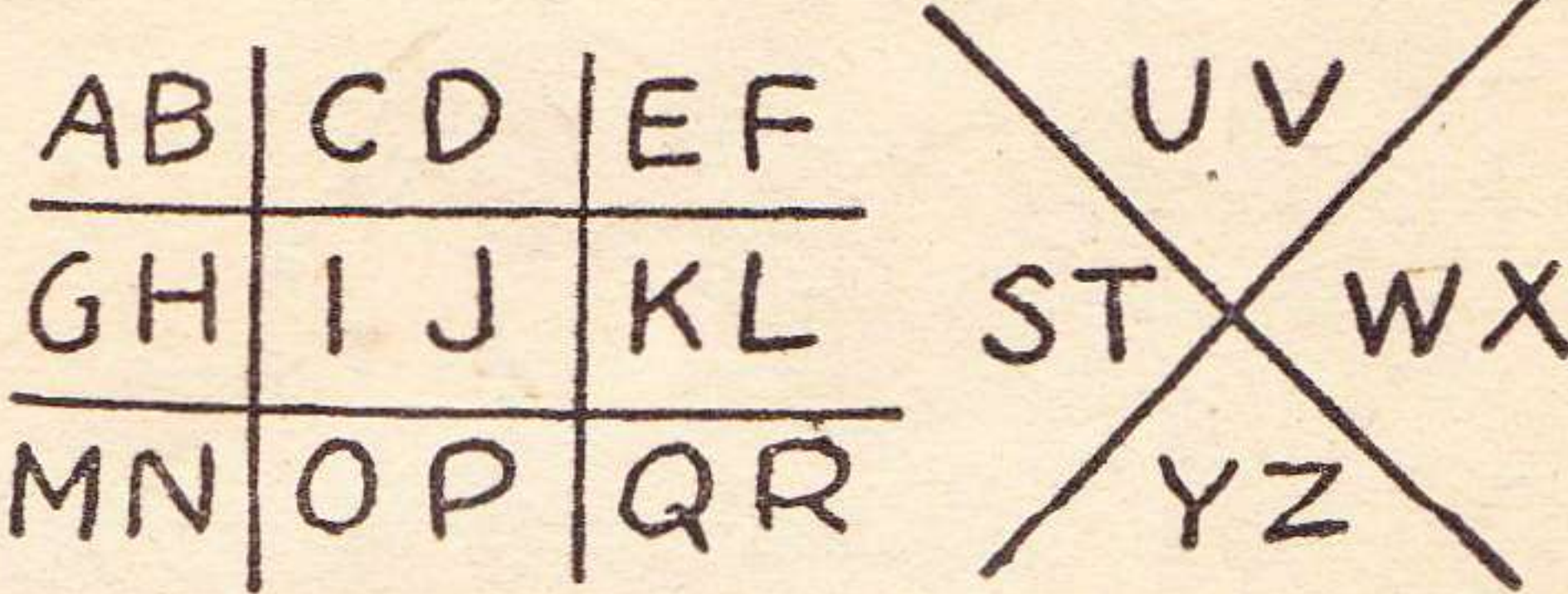


"If the first and last symbol represent the letter T and the second symbol the letter H, then the word is THAT.' She then tested her theory on words No. 6, 7, and 8. (See Fig 2)

"Symbol ◻ ending a two-letter word had to be O, making the word TO, and symbol ◁ could only be M or B, making the eighth word BE or ME. Before any of us realized it, the job was finished, and you came along. That's the whole story."

Dan was so proud he could hardly speak. "Why, Sally," he said, "I didn't know that cryptography was one of your accomplishments. Where did you pick it up?"

Sally's face was all lit up. She was enjoying this unexpected situation immensely. "Well, you see, Mr. Professor," she teased him, "cryptography has been my hobby since I was twelve years old. And besides, why do you waste the time of your Brain Trust with a code that is known to every school child in America? This ANGLE CODE was used by the Freemasons thousands of years ago, and here is the original design controlling the code," and she handed him her work sheet.



"Please also take note," she continued, winking slyly at Larry Kendall, "that these letters may be placed in any formation desired. They do not have to follow the above diagram."

(Concluded on Page 123)

CRYPTOGRAM No. 6

DY YR YPG AYK GKMU LY HYG TY GY
GNI NELIYPG PHGED OYP NIMK AKYF FI.

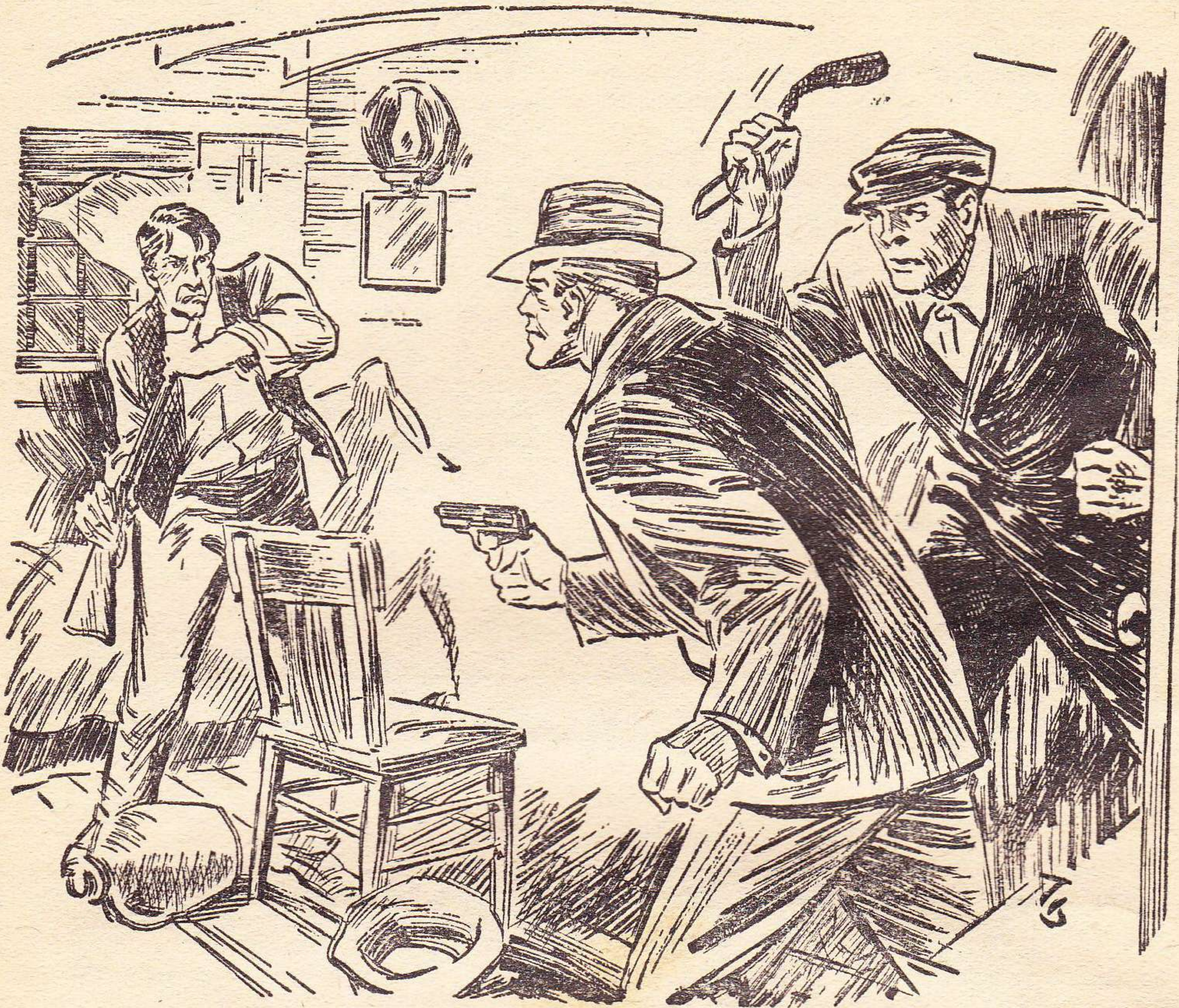
Follow Sally Vane's example. Solve this by PROBABLE WORD METHOD. Compare GY—TY—HYG—YPG—OYP. If Y does not respond to E, what is the next possibility? Examine first word—DY YR.

CRYPTOGRAM No. 7

NCUMH HWHCU EDBKU NWHER HIBUN ECTKN
RMHIH ZRHIU TFNGG JHCHH AHANC UMHNC
UHGGN LHCKH AHRBI UQHCU.

There are no word divisions in this one. It has been arranged into five-letter groups. You are to find out where one word ends and the other begins. Better make a frequency chart for this one. The first word is "IN." Now go ahead.

LAW of the LEVEE



The evil swish of a descending blackjack hissed through the air

Old Man River Sets the Stage for Blood-Conflict Between a Rookie G-Man and a Pair of Mississippi Bandits!

By JEAN FRANCIS WEBB

Author of "The Bandit of Heaven," etc.

YOUNG SID BOYD, slipping and stumbling, plunged along the doomed levee fiercely. His jaw was set. His keen eyes sliced the gloom ahead. Maybe—he—wouldn't be—in time.

"Flood-crest 'fore midnight," Yancey Duane had said, grim-faced, back in the hotel at Turkville.

Dog-tired levee work gangs had stomped in, a pair or three at a time, to huddle about the stove in the Silver Eagle's back parlor. Sweat and grime blackened their faces. Mississippi muck hardened on their dungarees and all up their boots, like a brown cocoon over each new man dragging in from the river.

Flood-crest due before midnight. That was the way the engineers had figured it. And they knew. Young Sid had spent all his life, up to less than a year ago, in river country. The engineers knew.

"Never did see worse water," Yancey had told Lovett, the trim Government agent who was Sid's superior. "The levee's like to go any minute. Only take a love tap on her, at any spot up by the six-mile bend. The crevasse would crash like that much tissue-paper. Then—good-by, Turkville!"

Lovett had seen the river when they'd pulled in from the north, just before darkness fell. It wasn't so bad then, not quite so high and swollen and frothy. But it was warning enough, even for an outlander from New York who didn't know the Mississippi.

"We'll shove on to New Orleans, Boyd. No man with the brains to pull that bank job would be cooling his heels in a death trap like this. Life's too sweet when there's a fifty-grand haul in your pocket."

That was how Lovett had doped it.

They had been trailing Butch Costin and his man-Friday, Lefty Harman, down the river. There were two dead tellers from a bank back in St. Louis that Butch and Company had to answer for. Two killings, and fifty thousand dollars.

The fugitives were headed for New Orleans. Lovett, who never made a mistake, who wouldn't have listened to anything that a dumb, green hick with hay in his ears might try to say, was sure of that.

"Dinner, and rest a couple of hours. Then we'll nose south. Sooner we get out of this mudhole, the better."

Lovett had his car. The roads, slippery with slime, were still passable despite the seepage that lay in dank pools over the flat fields "under levee." A few hours' rest. Then they'd be on the move again, leaving Turkville to the slaving work gangs or to destruction.

Orders. Rookie Sid Boyd had learned about orders in the six months since he had joined up with the

G-men. When Lovett said move, you moved.

But that didn't spell that Butch and Harm weren't right here in Turkville somewheres. Sid knew they were.

He knew it because Butch Costin was Pembroke County, too. River-raised, like himself. And no river man, trying to escape the law, would be heading for New Orleans while the devil offered him a ready-made flood-crest to cover his trail.

Lovett only laughed, though. Lovett knew all there was to know about crooks. He was Big Shot. In New York, he brought back his man every time.

What was a small-time job like this to Lovett? They were heading for New Orleans. They'd find their birds there, spending the fifty thousand and ready for nabbing. It was open and shut.

That was why young Boyd was striding the levee alone, stumbling along its soggy precipice in the inky darkness. There were these few rest hours. Three, maybe. Then he'd have to go on with his sneering superior—if he was wrong.

But Sid Boyd, with the Turkville slur still heavy in his speech even after his long training course up north, hadn't been wrong very often about the Mississippi.

MUST be crowding ten o'clock, to judge by the happenings that he remembered since sunset. But it was hard to figure time, in flood season. Mostly, it was one long, grisly nightmare.

Other years, Sid himself had toiled on the work gangs. He knew how your back ached, how your eyes stung and breathing hurt your ribs. He knew the grim dread of it all.

Men against the creeping, angry river. Only a wall of sandbags and dirt between the rushing waters and their homes. The levees had to be kept up. No matter how tired you got, they *had* to stand firm till after flood-crest.

This year, he was an outsider. The shifts of weary farmers resting up at

the Silver Eagle were old neighbors, but he wasn't one of them any more. He was a Federal agent. The river days were behind him, to be forgotten as fast as possible. That was what Lovett said. The trouble was, Sid Boyd didn't forget easily.

He plodded along the wet wall, walking with the sure-footedness that is instinct with men who have battled the river all their lives. If he was trying to make a getaway in the valley country at flood time, what would he head for first? He knew the answer to that one. The levee—up river from the town.

Filthy water seeped through the bags under his bootheels, a thin, menacing trickle down the land side of the precarious bank. To the left, the river sighed—a low, growling sound like the snort of a monster rousing from sleep.

Ol' Man River was certainly a madman tonight.

The brown flood, crested with a creamy froth that looked like coffee-colored lace, moiled away in an endless sweep toward its western rim. *Growl, growl, growl.*

Wreckage swept from the northern towns swirled on its tossing surface. Timber. Dead hogs and cattle. Bits of battered furniture. Silt and garbage. The saturated sandbags under foot were the consistency of thick gruel.

Maybe his hunch was wrong. Maybe Butch and Harman had headed for New Orleans, like Lovett thought. Or maybe, even if his own river sense wasn't tricking him, they were across the swollen stream someplace. Miles away. Safe.

The six-mile bend wasn't far above town. But it was taking him a long time to make it. A wind was blowing, strong and cold as it blasted across the lashing water. When your head was down against it and your feet plowed like in a bog, the going was slow.

Not over a quarter-mile lay ahead, to the spot where the last levee guard from Turkville would be watching for signs of a break. Sid knew things were all right so far. The two quick

shots that otherwise would signal danger to the next guard downstream hadn't sounded. No alarm meant no break—and no sign of strangers on the levee.

Funny!

Knowing the river, knowing that Costin knew her too, young Boyd would have sworn to Lovett—to anybody—that they could find the killers here. Mississippi instinct made that right.

And Yancey, idly gabbing awhile back of how all the shiftless Costin kin had piled into their flivver and rattled out of Turkville one morning a week before, had confirmed Sid's fear.

Lovett figured they were going to New Orleans to help spend the haul. No use in a dumb hick's trying to tell him different from that. But Sid wasn't sure.

The Costins were heading *from*, not *to*, maybe. Warned or something, they were getting out from under the levee before—

Boyd stopped dead.

Up ahead, a thin stab of light had slashed the blackness—and vanished. Close to the levee, close above the swirling water, the glitter had lasted only for a second.

The hood over a lantern, flipped by the breeze, could have lifted for that swift instant. A lantern there meant a boat. And—boats were outlawed. Boats spelled death.

The levee guards had orders to shoot to kill if any craft came in near the bank an hour before flood-crest was due. One sudden bump might bring a crevasse break.

Somebody on the river!

Boots sucking in the slippery muck that slimed the levee's rim, Sid began to run.

IT was a shanty boat, the kind that river drifters used for a home. As the rookie agent stumbled nearer, its squat, black outline loomed vague and sinister ahead against the lesser darkness above the rushing water.

The light was gone. Inside the junky little cabin, it must have been. Maybe it still was. Curtains stretched

tight across the low windows. The deck seemed deserted.

Close against the soggy wall, almost motionless on the swirling bosom of the river, the intruder lay. The law of the levee had forbidden her approach. Yet, like a brooding raven, she clung to her anchorage. Her tie ropes were insolently taut.

Skidding in the muck atop the sandbags, Sid drew abreast. His heart was pounding in a brisk tattoo of warning. River hunch spoke louder than careful police training, tonight.

For no reason he could name, he knew why the outlaw was there—and who had anchored her. The same voice that had prodded him when Yancey gossiped of the Costin exodus spoke now. Danger! Deadly peril to the town below, where his own cousins lay asleep now and torture-numb work gangs grouped wearily around the Silver Eagle stove.

The deckrail of the shanty boat was breast-high as he stood on the slippery sandbags. The Mississippi was rising. Up and up she came, slow as if a weight were dragging her back—yet sinisterly fast. Flood-crest before midnight. And here rode the outlaw!

Sid squinted through darkness, up river, in the direction he had been heading. But the night was too black. The boat had put in almost at the end of the big bend, so the last guard shouldn't be very far away. But human eyes couldn't pick him out.

It would be safer, maybe, to go on and fetch him back. The odds would be evener, if Butch and Harm really lurked in the shanty. Lovett would have taken no crazy chances.

But—suppose the boat was empty? Calling the guard on a wild goose chase would leave the crevasse unwatched. A break might come, with no one there to pass downstream the double-shot warning that would summon the relief crew.

Boyd made up his mind.

His hands, lifting, found the rail above him. Muscles knotted. He swung free of the sucking muck, and his hard young body twisted.

THE deck of the shanty boat was wet with river bilge. Sid felt his boots skid as he set them down on the warped planks. But he steadied quickly. Noise—a fall—wasn't part of his notion.

Only a black lump, obscure and formless, indicated the cabin. The boat rose gently on the swell, and settled. Sid started forward.

Slowly, eeling ahead with a breathless caution that made the growl of the flood beyond sound like thunder, he moved. The boat was small. The distance to the cabin's edge was a matter for seconds. But they seemed endless.

A sharp corner of the shanty's wall materialized under his groping fingers. He stopped dead, body tense, listening. Maybe that sound was the murmur of low talk inside. Maybe it was only the river.

Above him, as sudden as that splinter of light that had warned him of the black craft's resting place, the low clouds split.

The bright moon, slicing through, glinted on brass dirtied to green; showed unpainted clapboard walls, and a short set of steps leading down into a black hole bottomed by a closed door.

Then the clouds gathered. Throat tight, fingers knotting, Sid stood in blackness.

Well—if they were aboard they were in the cabin. And *someone* was aboard. That light flash meant a human presence, despite the eerie loneliness that seemed to lurk like a pall over the empty deck.

Sid inched along the clapboards, hands pressing for guidance along the splintery wood. One foot. Two. A yard. Then—no wall at his shoulder! He stood at the top of those steep, narrow steps.

The faint sound that might have been a muttering voice had vanished now. The murk ahead and below was impenetrable. Groping, his foot found the first step down. The rising flood chuckled wickedly beyond the low deckrail.

Sid started down, hugging the siding that flanked the steps. Water

sqwooshed inside his boots, but their pressure on the steps made no other sound.

Ahead, the stillness was so complete that—

"We'll wait fer fifteen minutes more," a voice said distinctly.

"No sense to that. With this flood-crest no more'n an hour off—"

"Fifteen minutes!" the first man answered. "The pressure's a heap stronger then. The levee'll only need a couple of prods to blow, and that dratted guard cain't spot us 'fore we shove off. Reckon they won't be no more Turkville, come midnight!"

Sid, straining to hear, missed the last step down in the darkness. The crash of his fall, which brought him up against the flimsy barrier of the door, cut off the sardonic cackle which had periodized the voice that must belong to Butch Costin.

An oath ripped inside the cabin.

"Watch out, Harm! They's somebody—"

Jerking the new service revolver from its shoulder holster, Sid kicked out with lightning speed. His heel

contacted the panel ahead with swift violence.

The door slammed open.

THERE was one light in the cramped cabin—a lamp set on the edge of the narrow bunk and opposite a window. The drawn curtains must have stirred to let out that sliver of illumination that had warned Boyd.

Between lamp and crashing door, two figures had leaped to their feet. Rage twisted the splotchy features of Butch Costin. Fear marked Lefty Harman's sallow countenance—the emotion of a cornered rat.

"Who the—?"

But Sid wasn't playing questions and answers. He knew exactly the spot he was in. There were two dead tellers back in the St. Louis morgue who had tried to face Butch Costin down.

He dove forward, headlong, with all the impetus his steel-spring legs could give him. And the service revolver snapped up in his hand as he came.

"Reach for the roof, Butch. You,

"Have You Heard the Latest . . . ?"

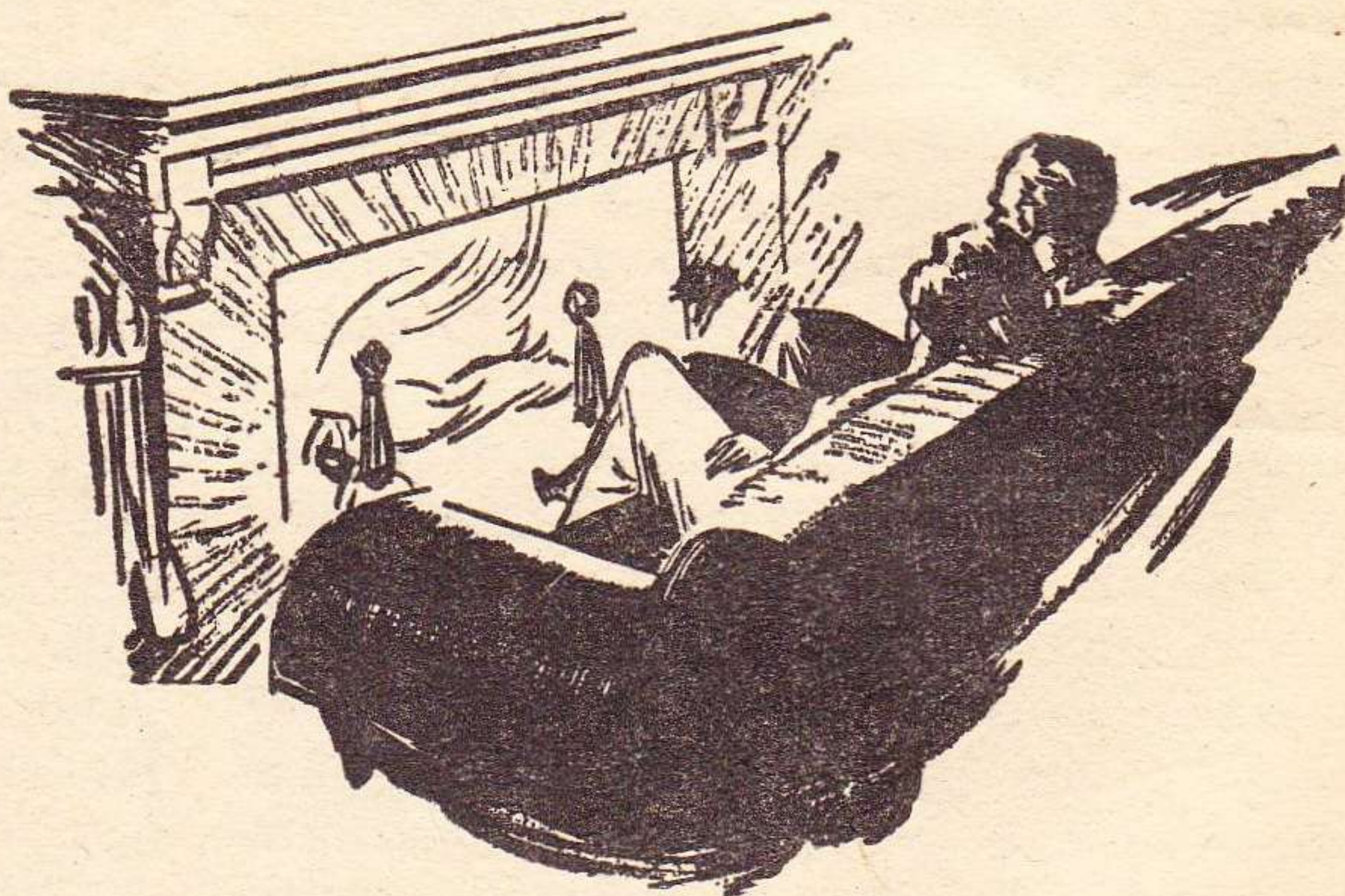
IT'S IN THE

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too, Lefty. They ain't going to be any blowing of the levee tonight."

Butch figured differently.

With a speed unexpected of his heavy, six-foot frame, he leaped toward the door. There was a blackjack in his lifted arm. Lefty, screaming thinly, spun backward toward the narrow bunk.

"It's a G-man, Butch! I spotted him up river. It's Lovett's stooge, the rookie kid from—"

Sid had twisted the fraction of an inch to cover Harman's movement—for a sawed-off shot gun lay on the edge of the bunk. Costin's unshaven face loomed larger. Too late, he shifted back toward the lunging killer.

His fingers tensed on the trigger, quick and steady. But the evil *swish!* of a descending jack hissed into the split second before flame burst from the rookie's fist.

The roar that filled the tiny cabin was shattering. It blasted Sid's eardrums. But his arm had been clubbed downward before the shot could tell.

He saw wood splinter—a white furrow across the greasy floor. Then pain—agony like the end of time—rocketed upward through his battered arm. His fingers, numb, spread like fansticks. The service weapon slid from them. Sid flung himself after it, taking a flying tackle at Costin's legs as he went down.

The jack, lifted again in the killer's hairy fist, had no chance to make a second swing. Butch lifted into the air; fell, cursing foully.

Together on the floor, writhing like embattled snakes, they struggled for the automatic. Fingers clawing, rasped breath belching into each other's faces, they pounced upon it—and slammed together as they fought.

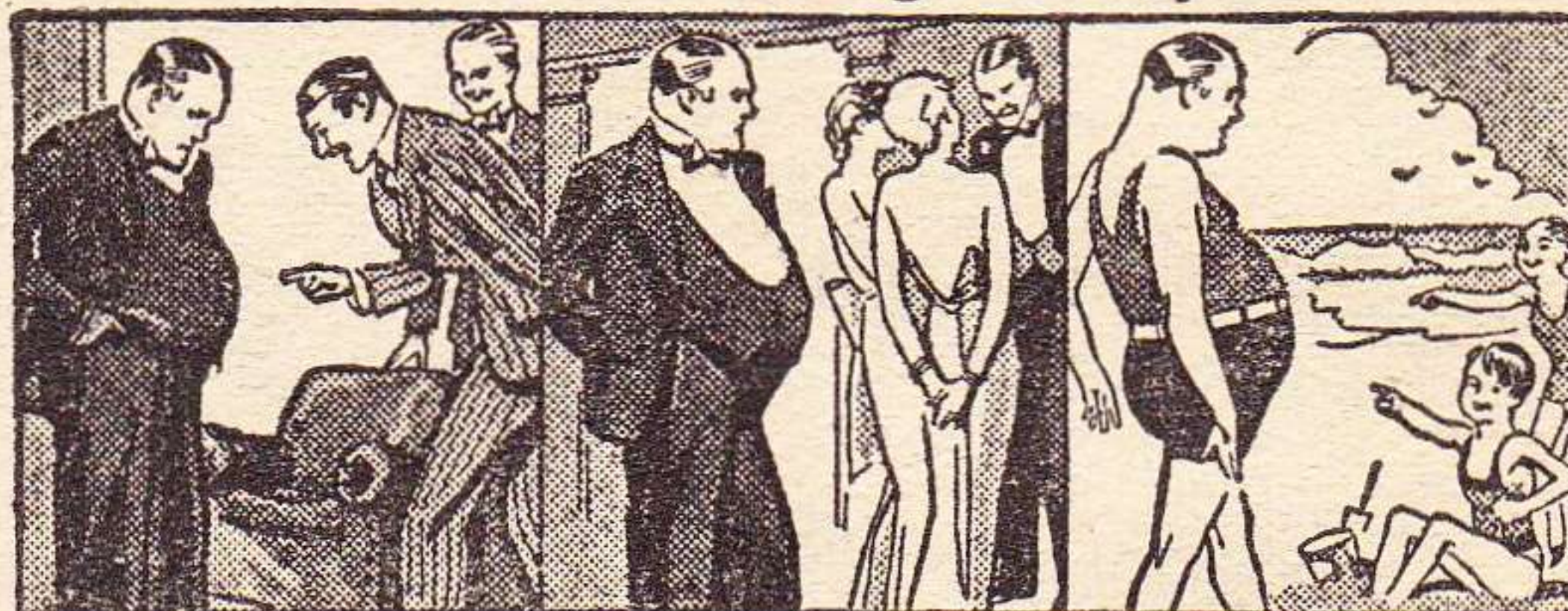
Bang! Sid could feel the trigger kick. *Bang! Bang!* He hadn't shot those last two. Butch had shot those. But the gun wasn't nosed toward anybody. Wood took the slugs.

"Maybe Lovett's out there on the levee, Butch!" Lefty Harman was shrilling. "Maybe we're caught. Levee law don't allow no boats in at flood-crest. They'll kill us! They—"

(Continued on page 118)

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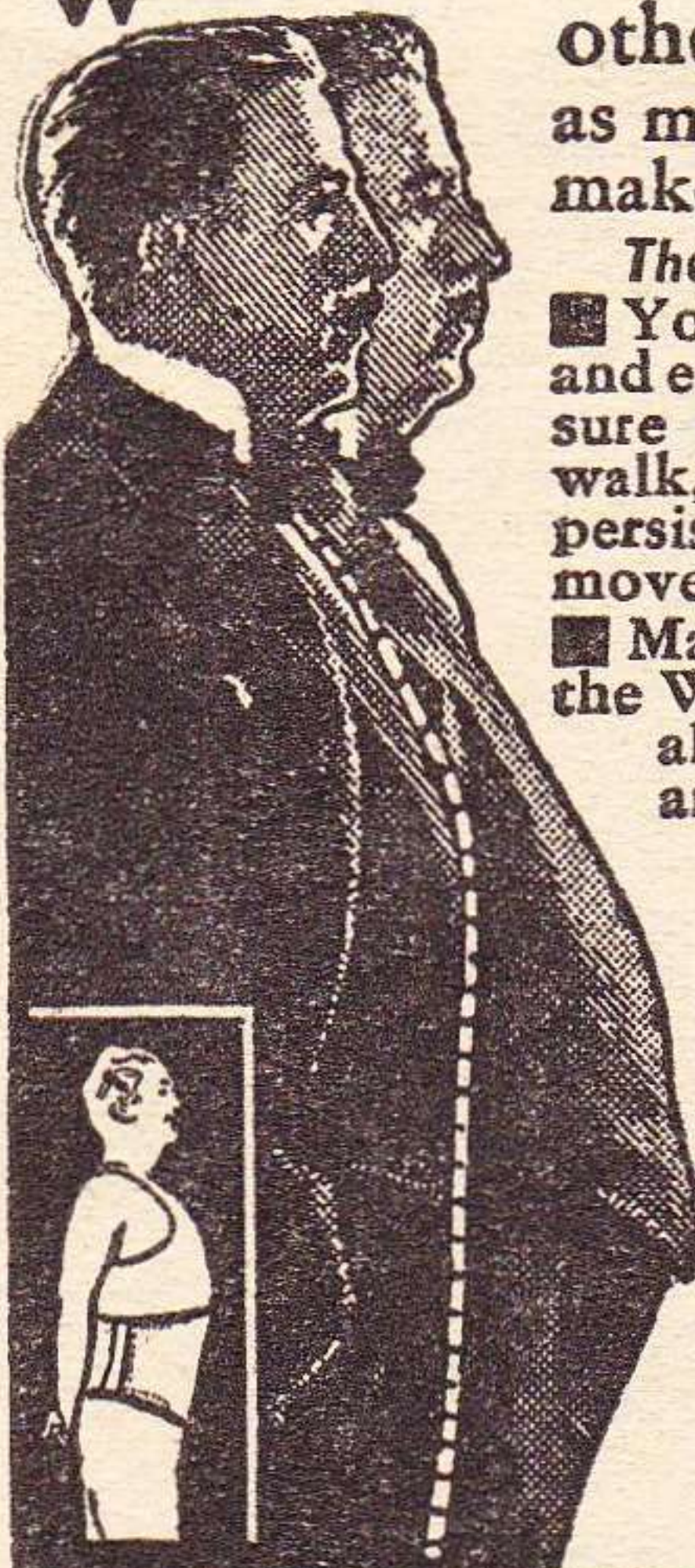
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(Continued from page 117)

"Shet up!" Costin panted. No more. All his bull strength, all the vicious cunning of a river bully gone Big Time, went into his struggle for possession of that lethal lump of steel between them.

Sid felt the superior weight of his enemy beginning to tell.

Like an iron barrel, Butch was. His huge sides were ribbed with granite. No squeeze could hurt him. No twist could break the bear hug of his long, knotted arms.

Then the boat, riding a new swell, lifted and tipped.

Costin snatched at the advantage given him, like a starved wolf snatching meat. His great frame rolled with the floor. Over. A half-turn. Sid saw it coming. He tried to bend his knees, to wriggle away, to rise. But the river had two-timed him.

Butch lay on top now. A heavy, crushing weight. His big paws, moving like greased lightning, were at the rookie's wind-pipe. Spittle dripped from his open mouth, and his big chest heaved.

Harman seemed to get the idea.

He grabbed up the sawed-off gun from the bunk into his bony hands. He lifted it with a savage croak. But Butch was in his way. He couldn't get a clear shot.

Sid saw the evil little eyes cloud, far above him; then clear, and glitter. He saw the weapon reverse and become a club in Lefty's gripped fingers.

But there was nothing he could do. Costin's weight had him pinned down. Costin's gouging claws were making a red hell of his throat. Helpless, he writhed for possession of the almost empty automatic.

Lefty's gun-butt sliced down with deadly accuracy.

Rockets exploded. There was a roar as if the crevasse had caved above them. Lovett's saturnine face seemed to swim suddenly through space, sneering something about a lug-headed hick kid that ought to be back in the nursery. Something about

(Continued on page 120)

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(Continued from page 118)

time to get on to New Orleans. Then the black river poured over everything.

SID stirred weakly.

His head was throbbing—seemingly with echoes of Lovett's sarcastic comments on the back-roads reasoning of dullards who argued that two well heeled fugitives might tarry in a river village menaced by the flood while New Orleans and ships to safety lay downstream.

But that was just what a river-bred killer would do!

The Costin kin had been warned to get out. That meant the levee was going, somewhere near Turkville. And it all dovetailed perfectly.

A blow—accidental, of course. The flood would sweep over sixty, seventy square miles of lowland. Hundreds of folks would disappear for good. Bodies might be found next spring—but rotten, eaten by crawfish, unrecognizable.

Supposing a little of the bank haul—only a few bills—turned up in two such half-gone corpses' pockets. Any cheap gee-gaws identifying Costin and Harman. What happened then? A coroner's jury declared them dead. The police search ended.

New Orleans and a boat to somewhere was too easy an out for the law to figure. But a flood—heaven-administered punishment, seemingly—would blur the trail. East or west, across country, the killers could get away clean. Why wouldn't Lovett see? Why did he only grin so superior-like, and—

Sid's eyes opened slowly.

The shanty was empty. But he had a giddy feeling someone had just left. Empty? Somehow—

He lunged upright. The quick effort made him vomit a little. The crowded cabin, still lighted by the single lamp, spun dizzily and settled again.

What he had glimpsed was the glitter of metal in a far-away corner, under an overturned chair. His battered body lashed forward, toward the

Funnier **COLLEGE HUMOR** 15c Everywhere

gleam. His automatic! He dived for it.

They had left in a hurry, then, and too recently to have come back. Sid, scooping up his lost weapon and breaking it, put two and two together. Lefty had been afraid that Lovett lurked above somewhere. They were investigating.

Still sick and shaken, the rookie stared down at the gun in his hands. That quick spark of hope sputtered and winked out. Only one slug left! Frantic fingers, patting his pockets, discovered that they had taken his extras.

Crouching in the corner, he tried desperately to gather his strength. Butch might come back at any minute. They might be working at the levee now. Or—

Sudden footfalls beat the deck directly over his head. A hoarse voice—Lefty's—called a soft warning.

"Hi, Butch! Somebody's a-movin' on the levee, up river! The guard, most like. He's headin' down!"

From farther away, on the levee probably, Butch answered.

"I got the gun. We're after him."

More footfalls pounded wood. Harman was going over side himself, at the upstream rail. But Sid didn't wait to listen.

He was on his feet, somehow. Tottering, he lunged for the door. The automatic, with its single slug, trembled in his fingers.

Steps mounted before him. Cool air struck his face.

WHEN he reached the edge of the deck, the pair who had felled him were only shadows fading upstream atop the levee.

Hissing water boiled only an inch below their running feet. Flood-crest before midnight! Farther off, where a vaguer shadow showed, a new voice hailed.

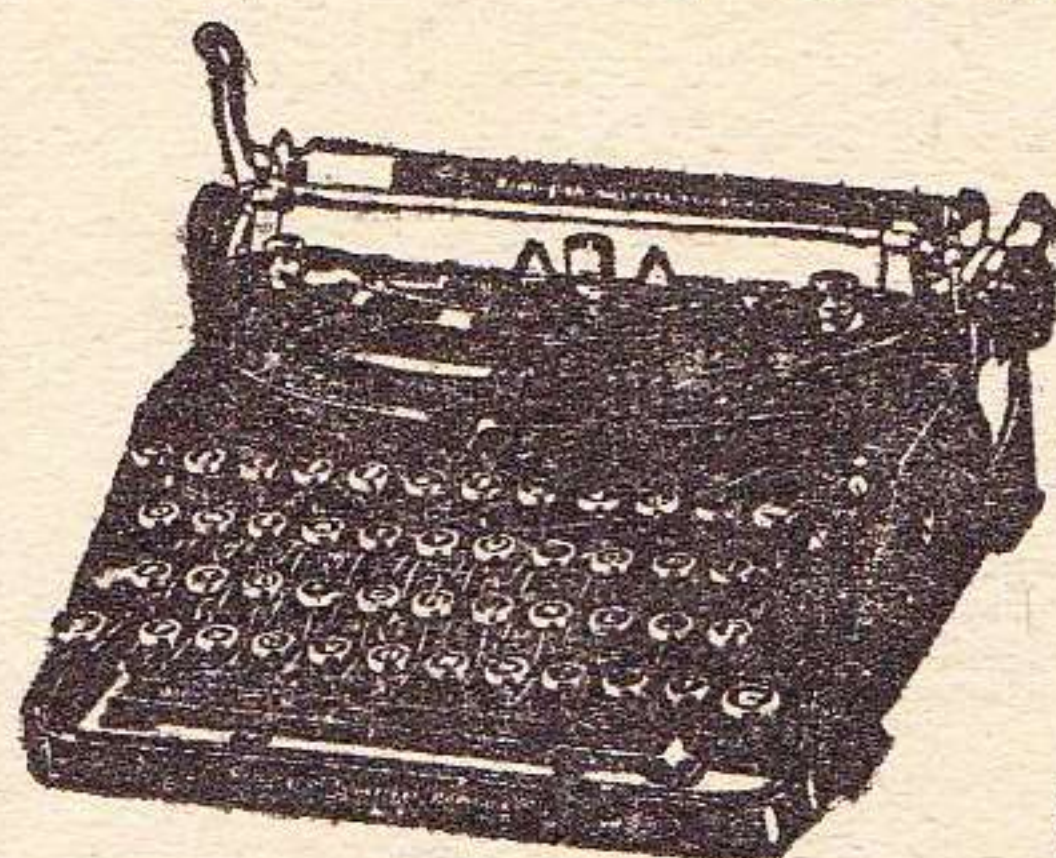
"Hallo! Hallo, down there!"

It was the guard. He had spotted the outlaw boat in darkness—by another moon-flash, likely. But he *didn't* know two killers were headed for him, with murder on their minds.

(Continued on page 124)

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The above are typical of many expressions of opinion received. Write me regularly—and remember a knock is as welcome as a boost. Among other especially interesting letters were those from the following:

Ed. Thomas Witchell, Chicago; George Fuller, Columbus, O.; Kenneth F. Brisan, Reading, Pa.; Raymond Fisher, Philadelphia; Frank Likes, Benton Harbor, Mich.; W. J. Sandercook, Equinunk, Pa.; Sidney Rimberg, New York, and Vern Atwater, Fresno, Cal.

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4-36

THE BLACK CHAMBER

(Concluded from Page 111)

By this time Dan Fowler was enjoying the situation as much as the entire class.

Inwardly he was tremendously pleased. Here was an opportunity he had long sought. By letting Sally take over the charge of the CODE ROOM she would be out of the danger encountered in field work and yet remain a special agent of the F. B. I.

NOW FOR SOME BRAIN-TEASERS!

At last we're getting into the real brain-teasers! No. 6 may be pie for those who have followed instructions carefully. But there are no word-divisions in No. 7—and that's going to make you think a bit harder. And why not? From the way solutions are pouring in, it looks as if most of us have graduated to the Advanced Class of Black Chamber solvers.

Here are the names of some who sent in solutions to Cryptogram No. 4 (with here and there, a few tardy 3s):

A. F. Semper, Melrose Park, Ill.; H. Watts, Houlton, Maine; Eugene Dempsey, Williamsport, Penna.; Walter Daranowich, New York City; Isidor Flack, Bronx, N. Y.; Harry R. McGinnis, Fort Kamehameha, Hawaii; Andy Riddle, Denver, Colo.; John Nissen, Erie, Pa.; Edward Hobgood, Lubbock, Tex.; C. R. Weittenhiller, San Benito, Tex.; Jim Douglas, Lamar, Mo.; Donald Cook, Bedford, Ore.; K. S. Chicago, Ill.; Oscar Groff, Bronx, N. Y.; Paul A. Napier, Washington, D. C.; Stanly Baruch, Bronx, N. Y.; Bernice P. Wohlfart, Newark, N. J.; Clarence Mareau, Berlin, N. H.; M. D. Hodges, Stuttgart, Arkansas; Rud. Jarosh, Cleveland, O.; Geo. Lewis, Chicago, Ill.; Hazel Culliton, Rochester, N. Y.; "Cardena Slim," Los Angeles, Calif.; Louis Mathews, Washington, D. C.; Sid Hohmann, Minot, N. D.; Clarence Ruffner, Washington, D. C.

G. Ben Holverstott, Croquille, Ore.; Joel E. Feit, Easton, Pa.; Z. Wilson, Caruthersville, Missouri; Robert Tabary, New Orleans, La.; Mike Pauelli, Salinas, Cal.; Alex Preysner, New Bedford, Mass.; Jess Clark, Milwaukee, Wis.; E. W. See, Wichita, Kan.; P. S. MacArthur, Cleveland, O.; Robert B. Weston, Cambridge, Mass.; P. Morton, San Diego, Calif.

Martin J. Moore, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Harry J. Flesner, Clayton, Ill.; Bill Werner, Los Angeles, California; George Pope, Phila., Penna.; H. B. Saxon, San Francisco, Calif.; G. D. Hicks, Erwin, Tenn.; H. Harcourt, Long Beach, Calif.; Edward Eaton, Tuckahoe, N. J.; Norman C. Hariff, Butler, Penna.; Harold Sherman, Newburgh, N. Y.; Dr. H. W. Conrad, Guthrie, Oklahoma; Frank Dunn, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Thelma Skiver, Holland, O.; John B. McDowell, St. Paul, Minn.; Howard Spencer, Brooklyn, N. Y.; W. Arthur Johnson, Washington, D. C.; Ernest K. Pearson, Chepachet, R. I.; Bill Clark, Bismarck, North Dakota; S. Sheinbaum, Bronx, N. Y.; Paul Kundahl, Washington, D. C.; Thelma Nathan, Pittsburgh, Penna.; Walter E. Martin, Indianapolis, Ind.; Harry Skedel, Brooklyn, N. Y.; E. Robert Haag, Louisville, Ken.; Frank Chiniski, Somerville, N. J.; A. B. Weber, Columbus, Ohio; Herbert Standfield, North Lima, O.; Richard Buttery, Lincoln, Nebraska; Norine Barth, Pierron, Illinois.

F. N. Yoshida, Tacoma, Wash.; Carolina Slim, Los Angeles, Calif.; A. J. Kirkpatrick, Oklahoma City, Okla.; H. Harcourt, Long Beach, Calif.; Earl K. Senior, Salisbury, Conn.; C. R. Weittenhiller, San Benito, Tex.; D. Cain, Gardiner, Maine; Alex. Prejsnar, New Bedford, Mass.; P. Stone, Trenton, N. J.; L. Jacobs, Trenton, N. J.; Em. M. Weathergee, Worcester, Mass.; P. M. Gordon, Milwaukee, Wis.; W. A. Phillips, Sebastopol, Calif.; N. C. Jensen, Medina, Wash.; A. D. Tartaglia, Prov., R. I.; James Doorley, Providence, R. I.; Ralph West, Rochester, Mass.; Mike Cote, Pawtucket, R. I.; Eldon E. Heath, Barre, Vt.; H. Carriere, Ottawa, Ont., Can.; Edward Jöhler, Chicago, Ill.; W. S. Kearns, Jr., Woodhaven, New York; Richard M. Smith, Tallahassee, Fla.

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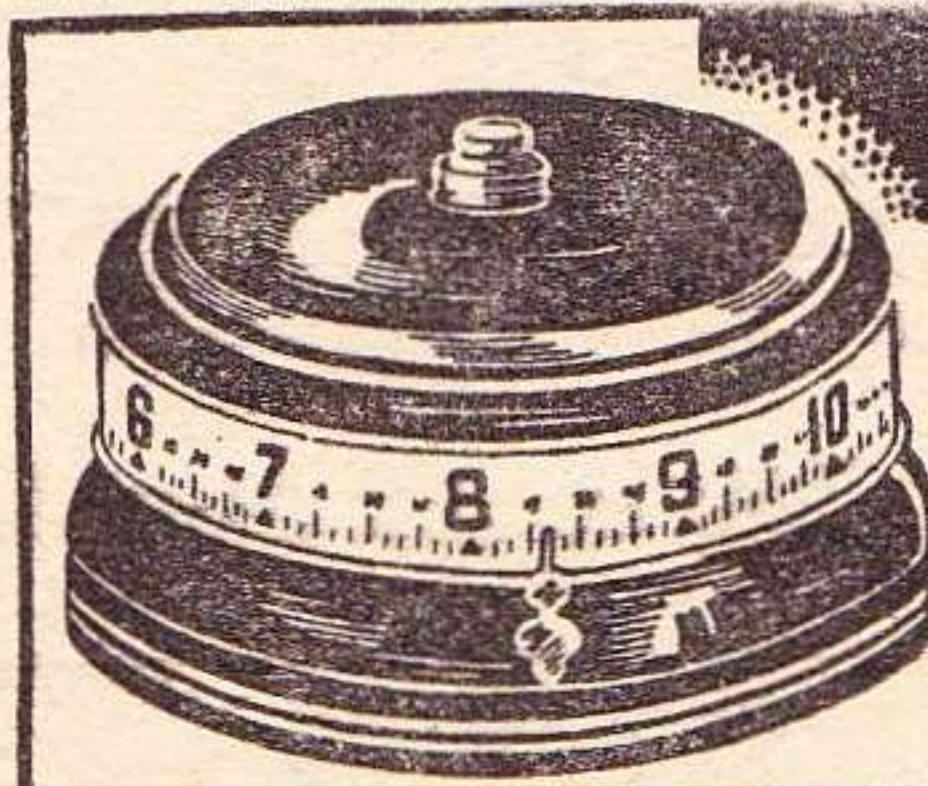
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LAW OF THE LEVEE

(Continued from page 121)

Only one slug!

"Watch out, up river! Beware!"

Sid shrieked the words above the
flood's roar, as he dove across the low
rail.

He landed right side up, but the
leap had been costly. The jarred
sandbags shifted ominously under
him. Agony flamed anew inside his
skull.

"Watch out yourself! Law don't
allow no boat in at flood-crest. I—"

Cra-ack!

The explosion knifed across the
guard's retort, a scarlet period. The
shout ended in a gurgle. That far-
ther shadow crumpled.

Sid, tottering to balance, felt his
heart sink like a rock finding bottom.
Too late, his warning was. They'd
gotten the guard. And now they were
swinging back, called by his shout.

One slug left. It might defend him
against one of them. Not against two.
And there were two other uses for it.

Spinning quickly, he pointed the
automatic pointblank at the shanty
boat's tie-line. The trigger kicked.

Red spat toward the water. The
little snapping noise of a parting rope
was lost in its echoes.

Sid dropped to his knees. His heart
seemed to pound harder than the
river, attacking the staunch wall. He
listened—listened—

First Costin shouted: "Hey, you!
We got you covered. Ain't no way
you kin—"

Then, far off downstream, came the
sound the rookie had prayed for. The
two signal shots of the guard nearer
Turkville, picking up the double re-
port that to him meant a blow in the
levee! They'd know in town, now.

Sid laughed tauntingly.

"You got nothing, Butch Costin!
Your boat's adrift! Yancey Duane's
men are on their way after you! And
you're marooned on top of a caving
crevasse!"

AN animal bellow tore from Cos-
tin's throat as the pair bore
down on the spot where Sid crouched

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waiting—waiting, weaponless, for the slug that would almost surely find him from that gun in the enraged killer's hands.

"You damned, lying—"

Nearer they ran, and the water sloshed under their feet as they approached the spot where a severed tie-line marked the one-time mooring of the shanty boat.

Now Sid could see the outline of the gun, lifting. His jaw set grimly. He waited.

Harman's shrill of terror knifed the night, rising above the angry growl of the swollen Mississippi.

"Butch! The boat *ain't* there! He wasn't lyin'! He—"

Sid saw Costin stiffen. His big body swung toward the raging torrent. The shanty boat was only a shadow, far out on the flood, swirling crazily. Back swung the gun, merciless, vengeful.

Then the river played a card for Sid.

The bags under Lefty's panic-swiftened feet stirred in their slime—slid back a sickening inch before the flood-crest's sickening onslaught. The rat-faced mob heel shrieked.

"She's goin', Butch! The levee! We're done for!"

Sid seized the frail straw. There was a chance—a long shot—that the little fellow's stark fear would prey on Costin. Even long shots counted now. He shouted.

"You hear him, Butch. The levee'll blow any minute, 'less we can hold her. Only three of us, now. Drown-in' in mud ain't pretty, and dead men can't work."

Crest was no joke, to a river native. Costin knew their danger. Oh, he'd wanted a blow. But the plan was for him to be safe on the shanty boat when it came.

Now things were different.

The rookie agent saw the muzzle that covered him lower a little. "Down, you! Git workin'! She—she's movin' some more."

Sid was down already. He could feel the river lashing at the other side

(Continued on page 126)

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5.25-17		2.60	1.15
28x5.25-18		2.60	1.15
29x5.25-19		2.60	1.15
30x5.25-20		2.60	1.15
31x5.25-21		2.90	1.15
5.50-17		2.95	1.15
28x5.50-18		2.95	1.15
29x5.50-19		2.95	1.15
6.00-17		3.10	1.15
30x6.00-18		3.10	1.15
31x6.00-19		3.10	1.15
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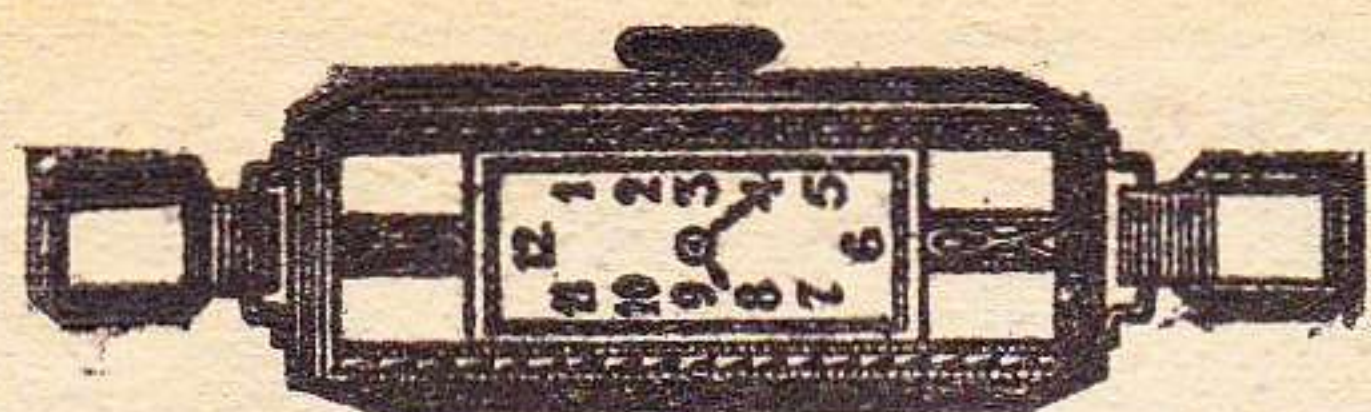
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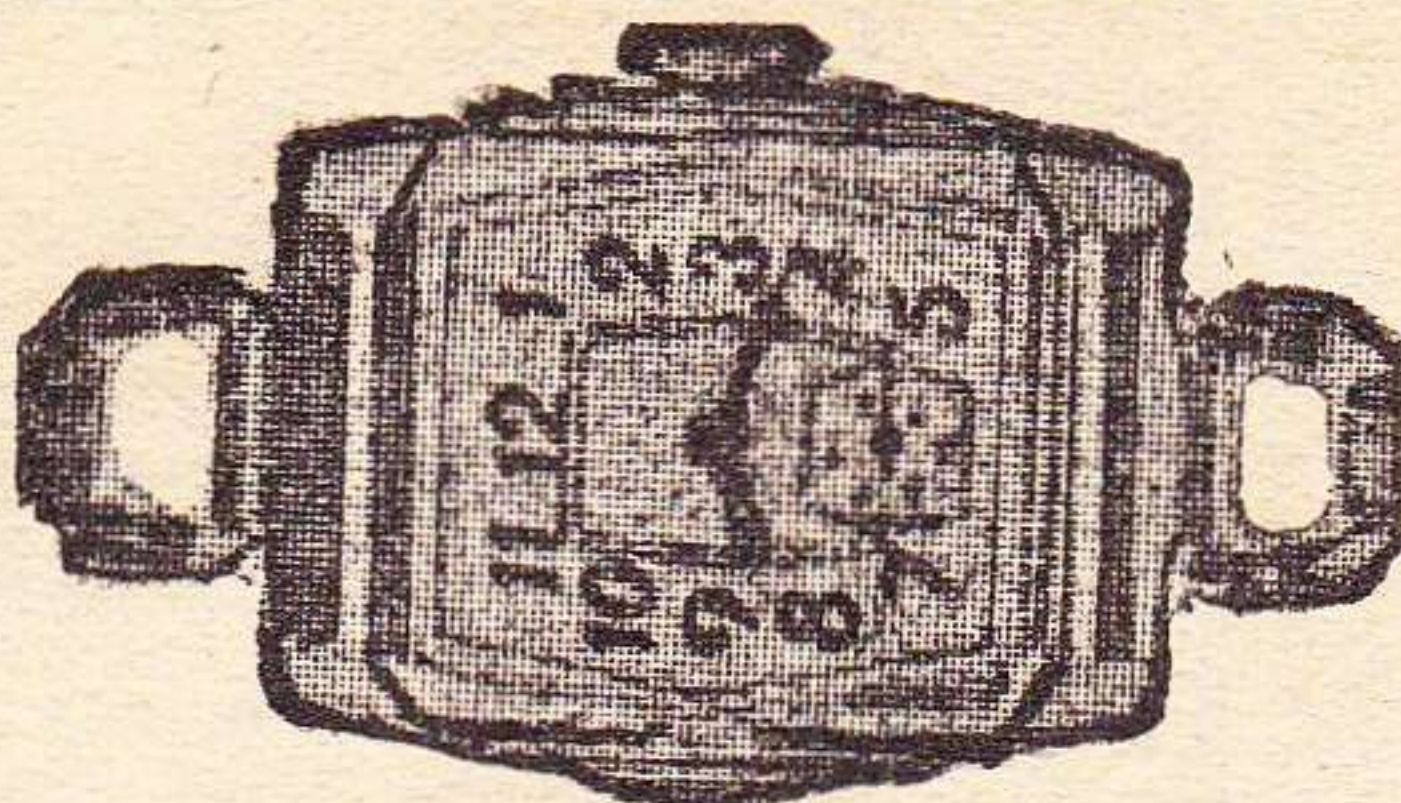
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THE BEACON

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(Continued from page 125)

of the bags, as he shoved his tired shoulders against them. Silt and seepage water made a soggy mass of his clothing.

Lefty flung himself flat on the sodden bags, squealing in terror. Belly in the muck, he groveled there. His arms spread, his rat face pasty, he shoved against water like a madman.

The wall shifted again. The top tiers of bags—maybe only three down—slid a little. A little farther. And the howling river slammed after them, hitting harder.

"They's a cross swell bearin' down, or somethin'!" Butch shouted. "Shove, you lice!"

He leaped down from atop the levee himself. Sid, looking up, saw him coming. Their eyes locked.

Gradually, a change came over Costin's beast face.

Fear of the river drained out of it. Rage—murderous hate for the man who had trapped him—was all that was left.

The killer's gun snapped up again. Sid, crouching, felt the muscles tense along his lean haunches.

He sprang. The muck, sucking noisily, tried to glue his feet. But he ripped free of it.

Somehow, sobbing with the swift effort of the lunge, his outflung arms contacted the stubby grey barrel above him. His fingers clamped, the iron of desperation in them.

Butch snarled viciously.

"Leggo that, you—levee—brat! No stinkin' greenhorn cop—kin set—my boat adrift—an' live to—"

BUT Sid Boyd was going to live if he could. The odds were ten to one against it—Butch, a gun and the Mississippi—but he wanted to live. Long enough to bring in Costin. Long enough to show Lovett that even a young river hick had some of what it took to be a G-man.

With all the strength in his battered body, he pulled at that glinting rod above. His eyes were level with Costin's big hands. He could see the trigger finger twitch, not an inch away from him. Twitch—and tense.

The explosion was a hideous roar. The hot tongue of its flame licked the rookie's cheek. He felt the slug hiss past his ear. But it did pass! He had deflected Costin's aim.

From above, a heavy boot crashed down suddenly.

Filthy with river slime, wickedly forceful, it caught Sid's jaw. Orange fire seemed to split his head in two. But he clung—clung to the gun and consciousness. The killer was drawing back now, to kick again.

Behind him somewhere, Sid could hear Lefty's witless babble as he clawed the bags in terror. "She's movin' in! Oh, Lordy, she's a-comin'!" Ahead came the suck of Butch's boot pulling free of mud. Sid couldn't take another blow like that.

Every ounce of his drained stamina went into Sid's swift move. He saw the boot coming. He let go of the gun. He grabbed for that thrusting leg with both arms.

Butch Costin was no stork. He needed both feet to stand on—especially atop the sodden levee. Howling, he lost balance.

Sid saw him pitching over, like a dynamited tower. Moving fast, the rookie slammed flat to the soggy bags against which the moiling river lashed hungrily.

Hugging the dank wall, he let Costin slide past him. Then, swooping from above like a landing plane, he was onto the killer.

Butch, clawing for balance, had lost his grip on the gun for one second. The second was enough.

Up out of the slime Sid struggled. His hands, bleeding from the deep tracks of Costin's claws, clutched the stubby weapon. Its muzzle was level, steady despite the dizzy weakness of the man who held it.

"She's set to blow!" the fear-crazed Lefty whimpered, slithering in muck. "Butch! Help, Butch!"

Young Sid Boyd, meeting the deadly red-rimmed eyes of the man below, jerked his head.

"Hop onto that levee, skunk. Maybe you kin hold her till help comes. Pembroke County ain't washin' down
(Concluded on page 128)

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(Concluded from page 127)
river without a struggle. And better you should be hung proper than feed-in' the crawfish, anyways."

The panting giant hesitated. Sid jerked the gun.

"Git movin'!"

Butch Costin, cursing sullenly, got moving. And Sid held the gun, trigger finger ready, and prayed. With Costin's bull bulk holding the very bags he had been planning to pull, there was a chance.

They were like that when the perilous flood-crest had passed and Yancey Duane's relief gang—summoned by Sid's counterfeit of the danger signal—found them.

The levee was up. So was killer Costin's game.

GUNMEN'S HATE

(Continued from page 106)

had reeled back from the blow, yet he did not relinquish his grip on his weapon.

Now he closed in again, swinging wildly. Desperately they fought there, chest to chest. Hastings did not dare release Malloy's right hand. They stood there slugging, each with one fist. Once Malloy's knuckles hammered home flush against the G-man's mouth.

Hastings spat blood, closed grimly to the attack once more. Like a pounding piston his fist hammered again and again into the evil face of Malloy. Then of a sudden the gangster gave a swift and mighty wrench of his gun-hand.

FOR a fleeting instant Hastings' grip was loosened. Malloy's wrist tore away. His gun hand was free!

Hastings saw the thirty-eight move, saw the muzzle come up. Desperately he swung his right again. This time every ounce of his strength was behind it.

It smashed full on the point of Malloy's jaw even as the thirty-eight exploded. He heard the bullet whine past his ear. Then the weapon clattered impotently to the floor.

Brighter

COLLEGE HUMOR

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Malloy's knees buckled. He fell grunting at Hastings' feet. The G-man snatched up Malloy's fallen weapon, raced into the living room. He saw a bending figure over a tommy gun. He raised the thirty-eight, fired. The gunner slumped, his deadly weapon stilled.

Men raced on the porch outside, poured into the room. Those of the Malloy mob who yet lived backed against the wall. Their hands were raised above their heads.

Mitchel, chief of the Division, entered the room behind his men. His face lit up as he saw Hastings.

"Good work," he said. "Garnett figured it for us. . . . All right, boys," he said to his men. "Round 'em up. Where's Malloy? Where's Norcross?"

"Upstairs," said Hastings. "In the attic. Better get him out right away."

Mitchel issued an order to a subordinate. It was Garnett himself who brought up Malloy, still blinking, half dazed, yet conscious. Hastings grinned at his partner.

"I knew you'd figure it," he said.

"Hell," said Garnett. "I can figure any code you can write!"

Malloy stared at them dully. "Code?" he said. "What the hell are you talking about? I dictated that note myself!"

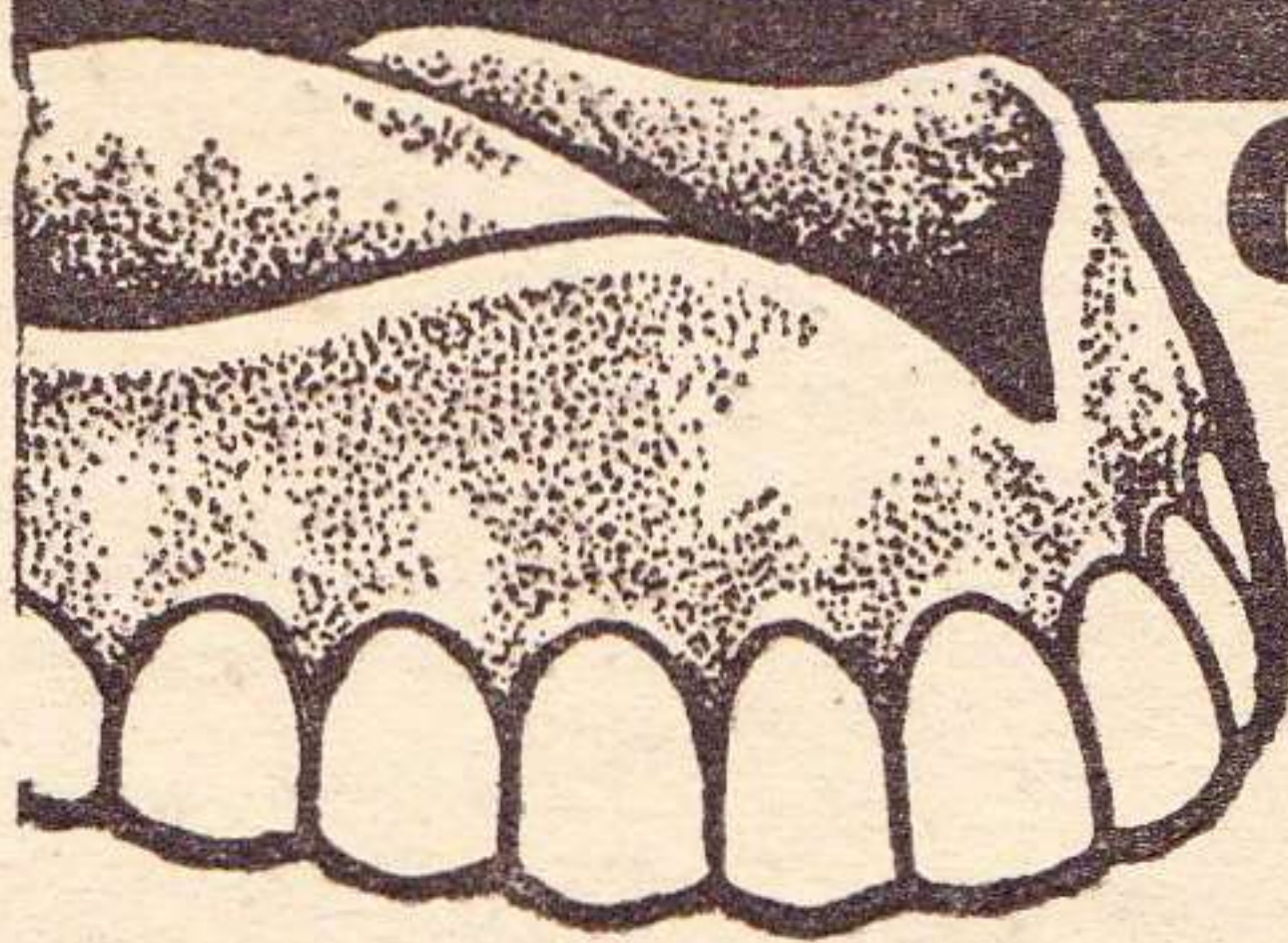
"Tell him, boys," grinned Mitchel.

"Well," said Garnett, "I knew there was something phony because of the backhand. I didn't know what, but that backhand said out loud to me, 'There's a message here somewhere, if you can find it.' It took me some time. There was no code in it, I was certain of that, for a while. Then, when I put it under the microscope, I got it."

"Got what?" roared Malloy.

"It was between the lines," Hastings said. "Literally between the lines. I marked those black lines on the paper with the point of the pencil. I did it in Morse code with dots and dashes. Of course, inasmuch as the pencil lead was the same color as the lines they weren't visible to the naked eye. But I knew that if Garnett

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couldn't figure a code out of it, he'd use a microscope. Which he did. It was easy enough to read then."

Hate blazed in Malloy's eyes. He roared a fearful curse which ended in a shattered sob. Roughly they dragged him away.

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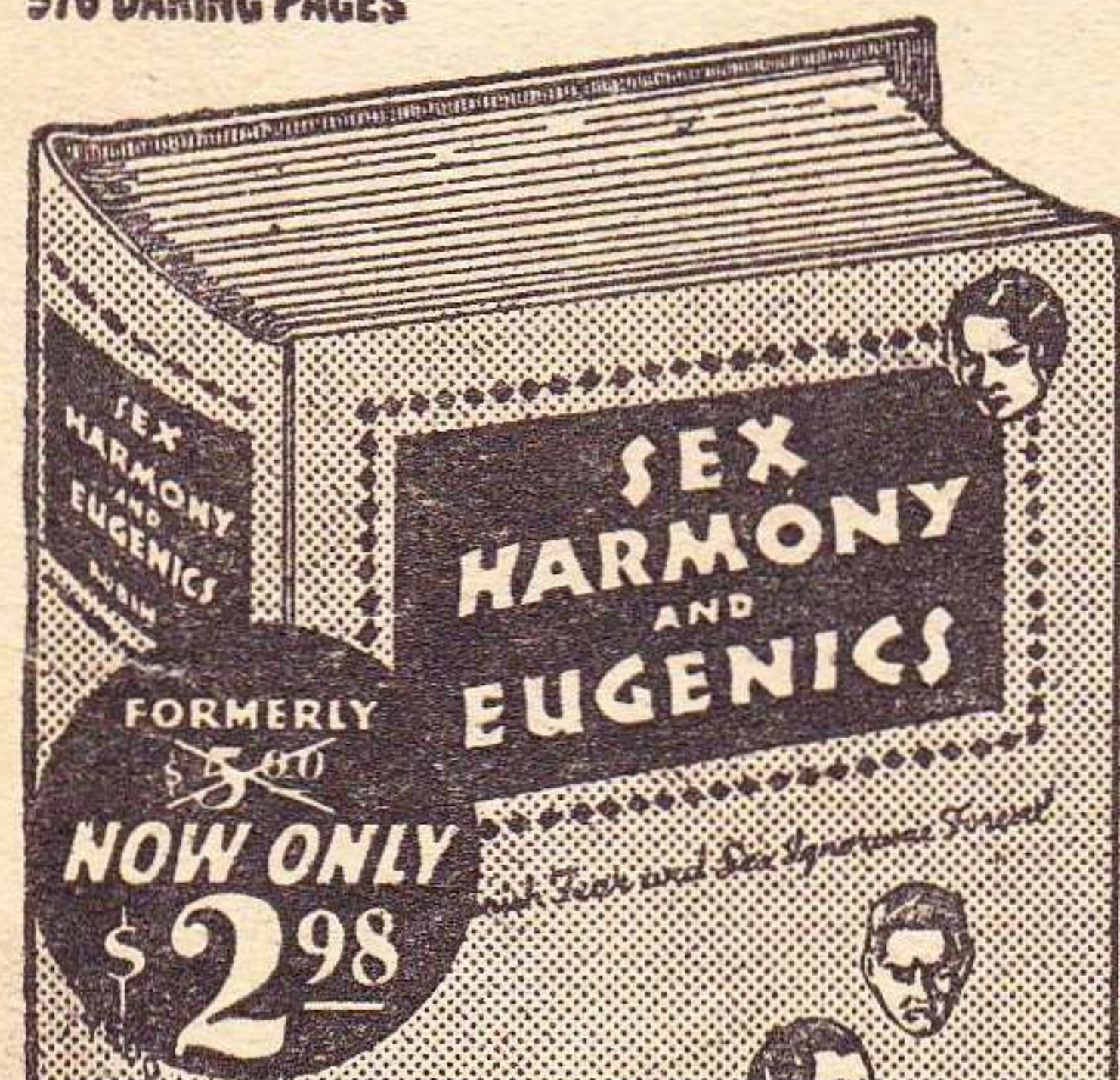
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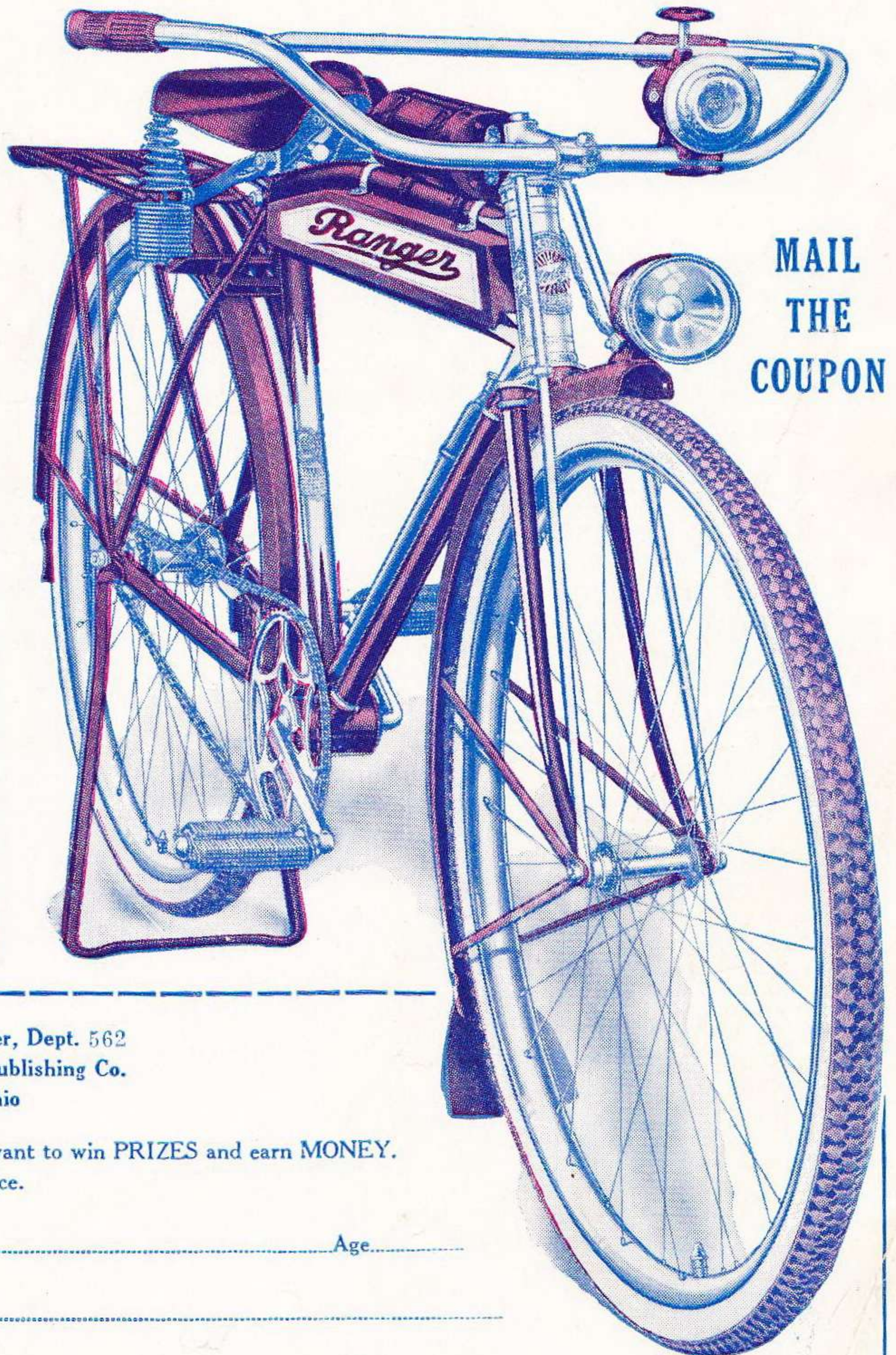


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THIS MAN DOUBTED:

He said: "Yes, I am broke. I am really terribly hard up. I haven't a cent of extra money for anything. I wish I knew where to get some. I haven't a bit of faith in anything. I am a failure and my luck is terrible."

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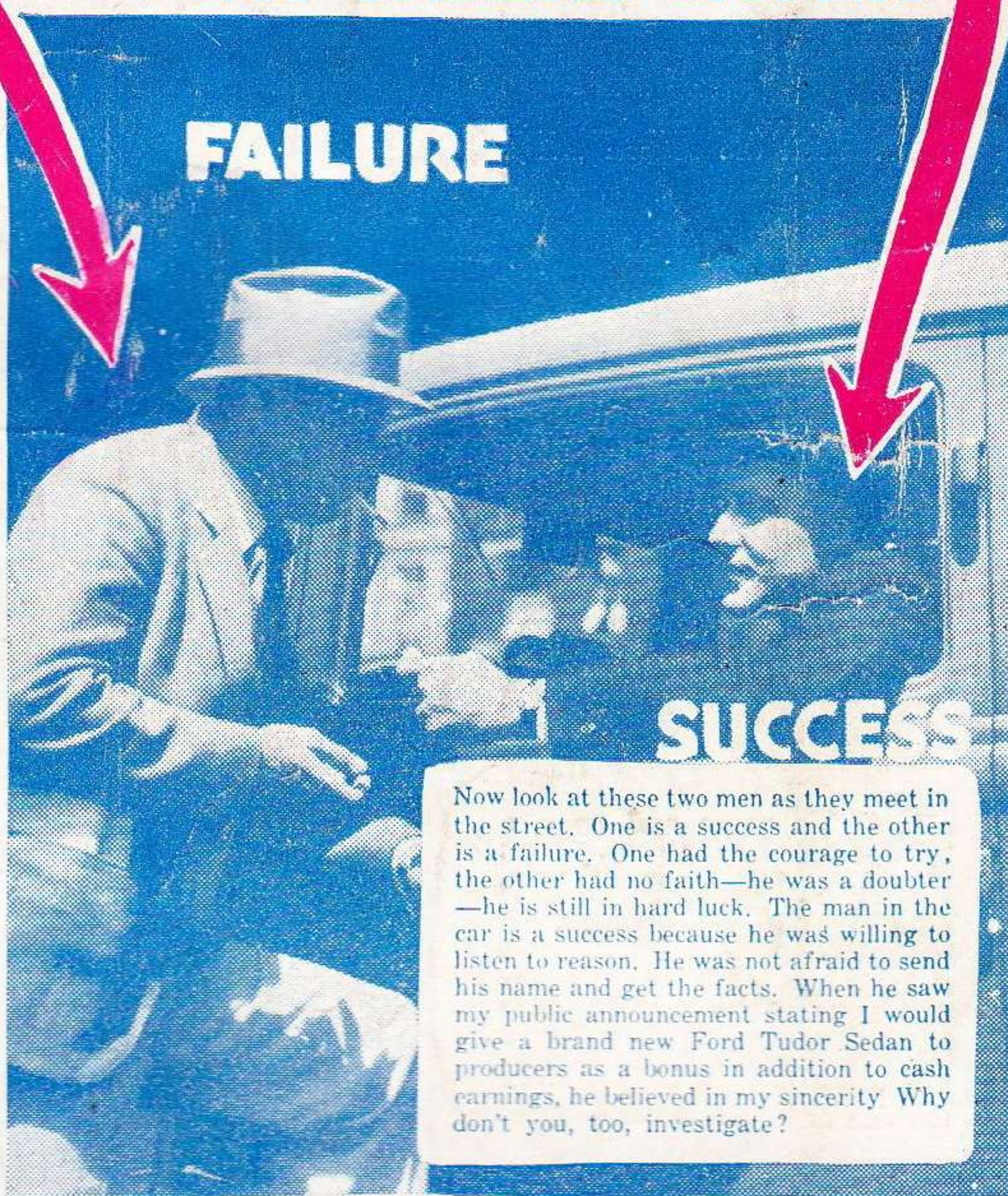
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THIS MAN ACTED:

He said: "Yes, I need money. I am tired of penny pinching. Your generous offer sounds good to me. It costs nothing to investigate—I have everything to gain. I am going to send my name and find out just what you have to offer me."

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Now look at these two men as they meet in the street. One is a success and the other is a failure. One had the courage to try, the other had no faith—he was a doubter—he is still in hard luck. The man in the car is a success because he was willing to listen to reason. He was not afraid to send his name and get the facts. When he saw my public announcement stating I would give a brand new Ford Tudor Sedan to producers as a bonus in addition to cash earnings, he believed in my sincerity. Why don't you, too, investigate?

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