

10¢

THE FEDERALS IN ACTION

G-MEN

JAN.

GOVERNMENT GUNS

A Story of the F.B.I.

By COL. WILLIAM T. COWIN

Former Assistant

United States Attorney

THE BLUE LOTUS

A Chinese G-Man Story

By LEE

FREDERICKS

A THRILLING
PUBLICATION

**GIVE
'EM
HELL**

A COMPLETE NOVEL
FEATURING
THE WORLD'S
GREATEST
MAN-HUNTERS
IN ACTION

**CASH
PRIZES**

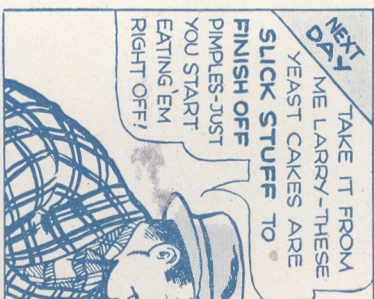
FOR
CIPHER SOLVERS

RICHARD LYON



NOW LISTEN, LARRY —YOU CAN'T BACK OUT!

READ
HOW
LARRY'S
PIMPLY
FACE
ALMOST
MADE
HIM QUIT
THE SHOW



DON'T LET ADOLESCENT PIMPLES KEEP YOU FROM BEING A HIT

MANY young people suffer from ugly pimples after the start of adolescence—from about 13 to 25, or even longer. At this time important glands develop. This causes disturbances throughout the system. The skin, in particular, gets oversensitive. Waste poisons in the blood irritate this sensitive skin—pimples appear.

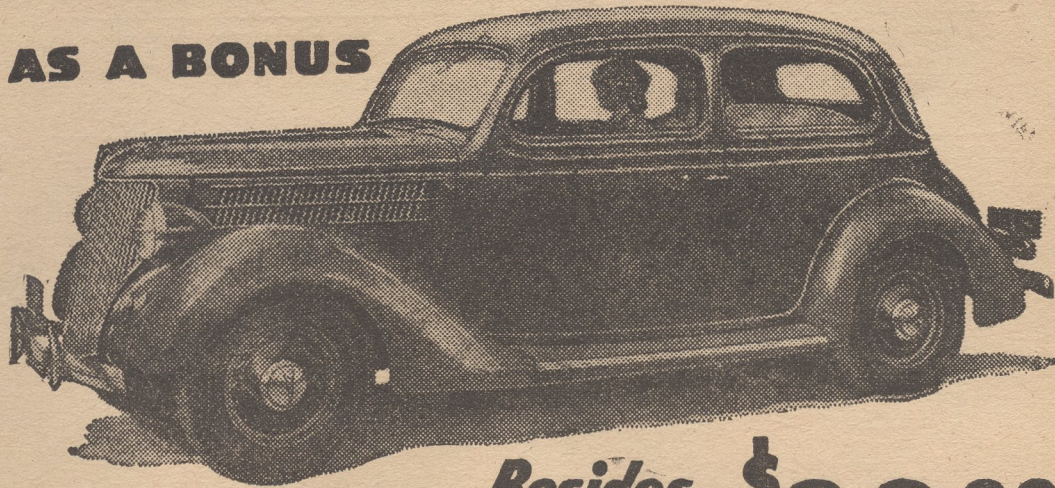
Fleischmann's fresh Yeast helps to clear these skin irritants out of the blood. Then, the pimples go. Just eat 3 cakes *daily*—one about ½ hour before each meal—plain, or in a little water. Do this until your skin is entirely clear again. Start now!

clears the skin
by clearing skin irritants
out of the blood

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I'll Give You THIS BEAUTIFUL NEW FORD TUDOR SEDAN

AS A BONUS



**Besides \$
A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY
TO MAKE UP TO 60⁰⁰
IN
A
WEEK**

If you are out of work or on part time and need cash at once to pay your bills and live on, you are just the person I am looking for. I have a good offer for you right now—a wonderful opportunity to start right in making up to \$10.00 in a day and quickly advance your earnings as you become established.

earnings like these as positive evidence of the amazing possibilities of my offer to you.

Send No Money—Just Name

I need more men and women at once. Send me your name so I can lay the facts before you, then you can decide if the earning possibilities are satisfactory. Don't miss this chance. It doesn't cost you anything to investigate. You can't lose by mailing the coupon or a penny postcard for free details. Do it today—NOW.

ALBERT MILLS, Pres.

3716 Monmouth Ave.

Cincinnati, Ohio

MAIL COUPON—NOW

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Send me the free facts about your Local Distributor offer. Tell me how I can make up to \$60.00 in a week and get a brand-new Ford Tudor Sedan as a bonus in addition to my cash earnings.

Name

Address

(Please print or write plainly)

I Send Everything You Need

Experience or previous training is unnecessary. I send you everything you need to make big earnings from the very first day. You will act as Local Distributor for my million-dollar company. You will look after your customers' orders, fill them, and handle the money. A big part of every dollar you take in you keep as your pay. Once started I'll give you credit and you can build on my capital. Even starting part time you can enjoy earnings up to \$27.50 in a week; up to \$60.00 in a week for full time. In addition to your cash earnings, I'll give you a brand-new Ford Tudor Sedan as a bonus for producing.

\$96 In a Week

You may wonder at making so much money in such a pleasant, simple manner. Clare C. Wellman, N. J., reported that he cleared \$96.00 in a week. Hans Coordes, Neb., stated he made \$27.95 in a day; \$96.40 in a week. Ruby C. Hannen, W. Va., reported \$73.00 in a week. I have scores of reports of exceptional

G-MEN

Vol. VI, No. 1

January, 1937

Price, 10c

FEATURING DAN FOWLER, MAN-HUNTER
IN

A Full Book-Length Novel

GIVE 'EM HELL!

By C. K. M. SCANLON

Follow the Perilous Trail of the F. B. I. as a City Ruled by the Lawless is Put Under Siege in a Desperate Campaign to Remove the Clutch of Corruption from the Throats of Helpless Victims! 14

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Join Our Great Anti-Crime Club for Readers

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YES- I'M CONVINCED THAT I CAN MAKE GOOD MONEY IN RADIO. I'M GOING TO START TRAINING FOR RADIO RIGHT NOW.



NO- NOT ME. I'M NOT GOING TO WASTE MY TIME. SUCCESS IS JUST A MATTER OF LUCK AND I WASN'T BORN LUCKY.

BILL SAID "YES"
HE'S MAKING GOOD MONEY IN RADIO NOW



THIS N.R.I. TRAINING IS GREAT. AND THEY SENT REAL RADIO PARTS TO HELP ME LEARN QUICKLY

YOU CERTAINLY KNOW RADIO. MINE NEVER SOUNDED BETTER.

I'VE BEEN STUDYING RADIO ONLY A FEW MONTHS AND I'M ALREADY MAKING GOOD MONEY IN MY SPARE TIME

THANKS

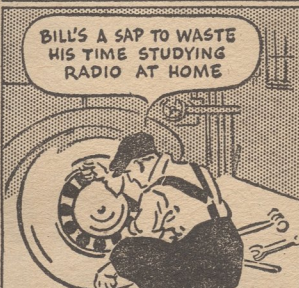


OH BILL! I'M SO PROUD OF YOU. YOU'VE GONE AHEAD SO FAST IN RADIO

YES! I'VE GOT A GOOD JOB NOW AND A REAL FUTURE. THANKS TO N.R.I. TRAINING



TOM SAID "NO"
HE'S STILL WAITING FOR "LUCK"



BILL'S A SAP TO WASTE HIS TIME STUDYING RADIO AT HOME



SAME OLD GRIND -- SAME SKINNY PAY ENVELOPE -- I'M JUST WHERE I WAS FIVE YEARS AGO

GUESS I'M A FAILURE. LOOKS LIKE I'LL NEVER GET ANYWHERE

YOU'LL ALWAYS BE A FAILURE, TOM, UNLESS YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. WISHING AND WAITING WON'T GET YOU ANYWHERE



I WILL TRAIN YOU AT HOME *in Spare Time* FOR A **GOOD RADIO JOB**



J. E. SMITH, President
National Radio Institute

Many Radio Experts Make \$30, \$50, \$75 a Week

Do you want to make more money? Broadcasting stations employ engineers, operators, station managers and pay up to \$5,000 a year. Spare time Radio set servicing pays as much as \$200 to \$500 a year -- full time servicing jobs pay as much as \$30, \$50, \$75 a week. Many Radio Experts own their own full

time or part time Radio businesses. Radio manufacturers and jobbers employ testers, inspectors, foremen, engineers, servicemen, paying up to \$6,000 a year. Radio operators on ships get good pay and see the world besides. Automobile, police, aviation, commercial Radio, and loud speaker systems offer good opportunities now and for the future. Television promises many good jobs soon. Men I trained at home are holding good jobs in all these branches of Radio.

Many Make \$5, \$10, \$15 a Week Extra in Their Spare Time While Learning

Practically every neighborhood needs a good spare time service-

man. The day you enroll I start sending you Extra Money Job Sheets. They show you how to do Radio repair jobs that you can cash in on quickly. Throughout your training I send you plans and ideas that have made good spare time money for hundreds of fellows. I send you special equipment which gives you practical Radio experience--shows you how to conduct experiments and build circuits which illustrate important principles used in modern Radio sets. My Free Book tells all about this.

Find Out What Radio Offers You

Mail the coupon now for "Rich Rewards in Radio." It's free to any fellow over 16 years old. It describes Radio's spare time and full time opportunities, also those coming in Radio and Television; tells about my training letters from men I have trained, telling what they are doing and earning; tells

about my Money Back Agreement. MAIL THE COUPON in an envelope, or paste it on a penny postcard--NOW!

J. E. SMITH, President

National Radio Institute, Dept. 7A09
Washington, D. C.



J. E. SMITH, President
National Radio Institute, Dept. 7A09
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Smith: Without obligating me, send "Rich Rewards in Radio," which points out the spare time and full time opportunities in Radio and explains your 50-50 method of training men at home in spare time to become Radio Experts. (Please Write Plainly.)

NAME.....AGE.....
ADDRESS.....
CITY.....STATE.....



IT'S NOT TOO LATE, TAKE MY TIP AND MAIL THAT COUPON TO N.R.I. TONIGHT

SUDDEN DEATH!



**DOOM
STALKS**
IN

THE MURDER CARAVAN

*A Full Book-Length Novel of Crime's Hideous Allies, Kidnaping
and Cocaine—Featuring the Phantom in Action!*

By ROBERT WALLACE

IN

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EVERY MONTH

Why Good Dancers Are Popular!

Good dancers are good mixers. They create a favorable impression—have ease of manner, a pleasing assurance that wins. No wonder people find them interesting—seek their company!

By **ARTHUR MURRAY**
World-Famous Dancing Authority

GOOD dancers are always popular—sure of a good time wherever they go!

And dancing is great fun—wonderful exercise. Keeps you happy and healthy—always on your toes and full of pep. Develops self-confidence—enables you to make friends easily—often opens the door to important business and social contacts.

And it's so easy now to be a brilliant, finished dancer, able to do all the newest, smartest steps! For I have developed a remarkable new method of teaching dancing by mail, which is so simple that *you can learn any of the latest steps in one evening—right at home, in the privacy of your own room, with or without music—with or without a partner!*

Easy as A-B-C

With my amazingly simple lessons you start right at the beginning and go through the entire field of social dancing. You learn to master every step from the simple waltz to the newest, smartest steps and all their variations.

You study the lessons in your own home whenever you find time. No one to watch and embarrass you. No expensive private teacher to pay. Yet, almost before you realize it, you will be able to step on the floor with the best dancers of your set—and with as much ease and assurance as if you had been dancing for years!

I have already taught thousands and thousands of men and women how to dance through this amazingly simple method. Folks who used to stay home and miss all the fun are now having the time of their lives. They make friends easily—they're welcome and popular wherever they go.

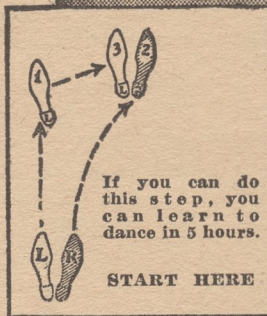
And I'm so positive that you, too, can become a good dancer and get your full share of fun and popularity through my new, easy method that I'm willing to send you my *Beginner's course* for only \$1.98!

5 Days Trial

Just mail the coupon and the Beginner's course will be sent to you immediately. When it arrives, pay the postman only \$1.98, plus few cents delivery charges. Then use it for five days—study it—practice the steps. See for yourself how easy it is to become a finished dancer—sought after, popular—the Arthur Murray way.

Remember—if you're not absolutely delighted with results, simply return the course within five days and your money will be promptly refunded.

That's a fair offer, isn't it? You can't lose! Don't



**BEGINNER'S
COURSE**
\$1.98

wait—you owe it to yourself to clip and mail this coupon NOW. Arthur Murray, Studio 263, 7 East 43rd Street, New York City, N. Y.

ARTHUR MURRAY, Studio 263,
7 East 43rd Street, New York City, N. Y.

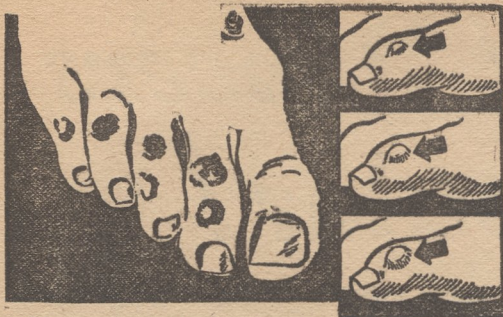
To prove that I can learn to dance at home, you may send me your Special Beginner's course for only \$1.98, plus few cents postage. I understand that if not delighted I may return the course within five days and my money will be refunded.

Name

Address

City..... State.....

NOTE: If apt to be out when postman calls, send \$2.00 with coupon and save C.O.D. postage.



Corns COME BACK BIGGER AND UGLIER

unless removed Root and All*

A CORN goes deep! When you cut or pare it at home, you merely trim the surface. The root remains imbedded in the toe. Soon the corn comes back bigger—more painful—than ever.

But when you Blue-Jay a corn, it's gone for good. In 3 short days the corn lifts out—root and all.

Blue-Jay is a tiny, modern, medicated plaster. Easy to use. Held snugly in place by Wet-Pruf adhesive. Cannot stick to stockings. Get Blue-Jay today and completely banish corns, root and all. 25¢ for package of 6 at all druggists.

FREE OFFER: We will be glad to send one Blue-Jay absolutely free to anyone who has a corn, to prove that it ends pain instantly, removes the corn completely. Just send your name and address to Bauer & Black, Dept. B-40, 2500 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill. Act quickly before this trial offer expires. Write today.

*A plug of dead cells root-like in form and position. If left may serve as focal point for renewed development.

Don't Sleep on Left Side, Crowds Heart

**GAS PRESSURE MAY CAUSE DISCOMFORT
RIGHT SIDE BEST**

If you toss in bed and can't sleep on right side, try Adlerika. Just ONE dose relieves stomach GAS pressing on heart so you sleep soundly.

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Give your bowels a REAL cleansing with Adlerika and see how good you feel. Just ONE dose relieves GAS and stubborn constipation. At all Leading Druggists.

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the West's Most Famous
Outlaw-Hunters

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Are you hunting a bigger job, or does the bigger job hunt you? Why waste priceless years at routine work, when you can acquire at home in a comparatively few months the specialized knowledge for which big firms pay big money? Thousands of men have greatly increased their incomes by the new home-study business training under the LaSalle Problem Method. Let us show you how you can do just as well or better. The coupon will bring you complete information, together with details of our *convenient payment plan*; also your free copy of a remarkable book—"Ten Years' Promotion in One." Make your start toward that bigger job *today*.

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Present Position.....

Address.....

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T-1

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NAME

STREET No.

CITY..... STATE.....



I'll bet real money you can learn to play — this easy fascinating way

YES, I mean actually play real music—classical numbers or jazz—so that you'll be able to entertain your friends—to be popular everywhere.

And what's more, you won't need a private teacher. You'll learn all by yourself—right in your own home. And best of all the cost is only a small fraction of what it used to cost by old-fashioned methods.

Why am I so sure? Simply because more than 700,000 other men and women, boys and girls—no more clever—no more gifted than you—have studied music by this modern system.

No Special Talent Required

Learning to play this U. S. School of Music way is easy as A-B-C. No special talent is required—no previous musical training. If you can whistle a tune you can learn to play by this simple method—quicker than you ever dreamed possible. There's nothing tricky about it—no complicated theories—nothing to memorize.

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The best part of it all is that it is so simple—so crystal clear—so easy to understand. It's all right before you in print and

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Free Demonstration Lesson

So that you may see for yourself how easy, how pleasant it is to learn by this modern, simplified method, the U. S. School of Music has prepared an Illustrated Booklet and typical Demonstration Lesson which are yours for

the asking. They explain fully the principles of this remarkable method and how it enables you to become a popular musician in a surprisingly short time, at a cost of only a few cents a day.

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U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC 2941 Brunswick Bldg., N. Y. C.

Please send me your free book, "How You Can Master Music in Your Own Home," with inspiring message by Dr. Frank Crane, Free Demonstration Lesson and particulars of your easy payment plan. I am interested in the following course:

Have you

.....Instrument?.....

Name

Address

City..... State.....

PICK YOUR INSTRUMENT

Piano	Guitar
Violin	Saxophone
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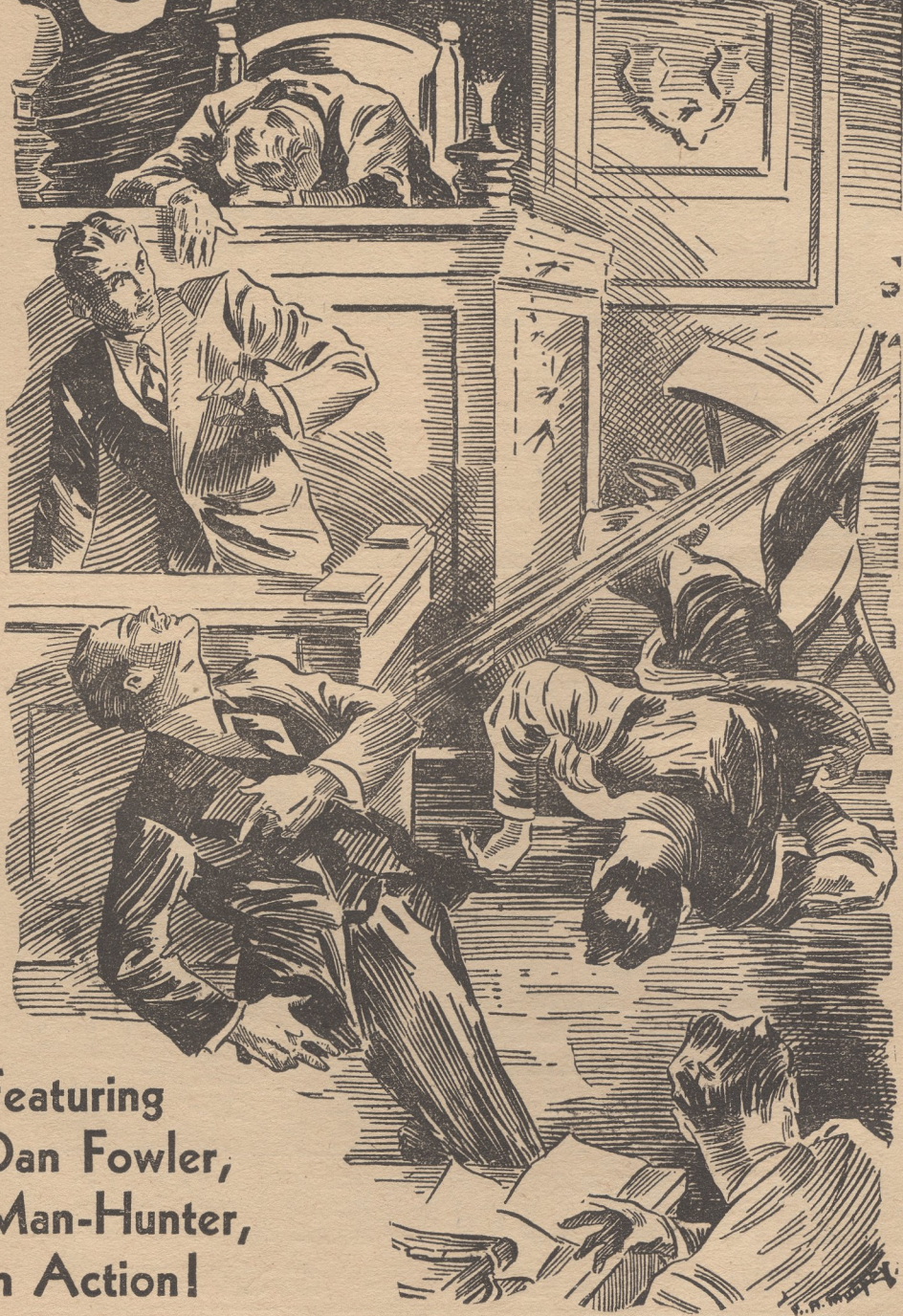
IN

THRILLING WONDER STORIES

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GIVE 'EM



Featuring
Dan Fowler,
Man-Hunter,
in Action!



Larson halted in his tracks, looked toward the window. His mouth fell open and he crumpled to the floor beside his witness (Page 25)

Follow the Perilous Trail of the F. B. I. as a City Ruled by the Lawless is Put Under Siege in a Desperate Campaign to Remove the Clutch of Corruption from the Throats of Helpless Victims!

By C. K. M. SCANLON

Author of "The Parole Racket," "Bloody Gold," etc.

CHAPTER I

Good Town

NIGHT. A radio voice droning in the headlight - pierced blackness.

"Calling all cars. Scarelli and Corfan in dark grey limousine reported heading northeast. Last seen on Highway Fourteen just above Keesville. The car's license is five-three G one-twenty-six. Both men are armed and desperate. Be careful. That is all."

Special Agent Canning's mouth

thinned out until it was hardly more than a scarlet line across his face. "We're hot, Chuck. Speed it up and we'll have 'em."

"Foot's on the floorboard now," his companion answered, not moving his wide blue eyes from the road that rushed at him through the windshield. The quivering speedometer needle flickered around the eighty-three mile mark, dropped slightly as, with a great shrieking of brakes, the Government car negotiated a sharp curve, then climbed steadily up again.

A wintry wind knifed the air, cut through the agents' clothes, and tore icily at their bones, but their foreheads were dotted with tiny beads of sweat. They knew the two men they were after—knew their records and reputations. Wanted by the police of three states, wanted by Uncle Sam on charges ranging from felonious assault on Government operatives to kidnaping and murder. Their trail across the country was marked with blood and violence. They were fleeing for their lives, wild beasts running to cover with the law's merciless, grim-eyed pack in full cry behind them.

"They're getting ready to hole up somewhere," Canning grated.

"What makes you think so?"

"When you've been on this man-hunt job as long as I have, Junior, you get to be able to read the signs. Take it from me, those rats have a nest around here some place."

"Then they'll lead us right to it—maybe we'll catch—"

"Lead is what we'll more likely catch," Canning announced flatly.

Silence fell between them as the car rocketed on through the December night. They were whizzing over flatter terrain now as they debouched upon the great plain, mountain-girt, that stretched for miles ahead. The road straightened out—and Chuck Gilman took a freckled hand from the steering wheel to grab Canning's arm.

Canning nodded. His eyes grew bleak, dangerous, as they stared at the moving red light a mile or so ahead.

"We're closing in," he said. "Watch it. They're slowing down for just one reason."

Chuck nodded wordlessly. His mouth was too dry for speech. That cold hand twisting in the pit of his belly wasn't fear, but the cramping, nervous tension that soldiers felt just before clambering out of the muddy trenches in the face of enemy fire.

The red light grew ever larger.

Central City—10 Miles. The signpost slashed by and vanished behind them.

"Central City," Canning muttered. "So that's—"

THE car ahead suddenly slued round, rocked to a halt halfway across the road. Chuck Gilman grabbed the handbrake, jerked madly at the steering wheel. Tommy gun-fire screamed a rattling song, belching like hell's hot breath from the fugitives' car.

Bullets bit out a row of blackened holes along the hood. Canning ducked instinctively, trained his own gun on the car ahead, began to fire. The Government car, caught in a half spin that Gilman couldn't steady, rocked and pitched and twisted, ruining the G-man's aim. Then with a sickening swoop, as the front tires hit the deep-cut ditch, the coupé hurtled end over end, metal crashing and yielding, shards of glass flying through the air.

With a final shuddering smash, it landed on its side beside the road. A raucous laugh sounded as the fugitives, satisfied, ceased fire.

"That's got it, Scarelli," Corfan yelled, relaxing his hold on the still smoking weapon. "Let's blow."

The red eye winked smaller and smaller, diminishing to nothingness. Through the aching silence, flames crackled from the wrecked car, spiking the blackness with tiny tongues of fire.

An hour later, a line of bluecoats stretched across the road, blocked the passage of a decrepit Model T. One of them in sergeant's uniform addressed the weather-beaten farmer who sat behind the wheel.

"Seen anything of a grey limousine with two men in it?" he demanded.

"Nope," the farmer said. "But I dragged these two out of a smash-up up the road a ways." He jerked a calloused thumb toward Canning and Gilman who were slumped on the back seat. Their clothing was torn, their faces bruised and bloodied, black with smoke and fire. Canning didn't have any eyebrows at all, and his mouth was more like a bloodstained gash than ever. Supporting his companion, he climbed wearily out into the road.

"We're Federal agents," he said in a tired, aching voice. "We trailed Scarelli and Corfan past the last crossroads. They must've come

through here. There aren't any side roads."

"Might've doubled back," the sergeant suggested, coldly. "They didn't come through here. I've had a cordon of men blocking this road ever since we got the first reports."

Canning looked at the police officer with eyes that were openly skeptical. He knew they hadn't doubled back. Knew they couldn't have—he'd been conscious all the time.

"All right," he said slowly. "They had an airplane in a field down there. They ate their car and flew away. You haven't seen them, heard them or smelled them."

"So what? Look. These are the city limits. Scarelli and Corfan didn't go by me. This is my jurisdiction. For all I know, maybe you guys aren't Feds at all. What are you going to do about it?"

"I'm going to get this man to a hospital first and then—" Canning's thin mouth clamped shut. "Skip it. What did you say this place was?"

"Central City."

Canning nodded. "Thanks." With the farmer's aid, he got Chuck back into the Ford. "On to Central City," he said with a tight and humorless smile.

NIGHT. Obeli Michalsky paused in his restless march. His gnarled fingers, calloused from years of work in the coal pockets, passed heavily over the grimy Christmas wreath whose holly berries were juiceless now and drily puckered, and whose bright red ribbon was forlorn with dust. He stared at the wreath with a kind of terrible, mournful intensity, his watery old eyes unblinking.

Christmas. Such a little while ago. He could still hear the laughing sound of Maritza's voice, see the sparkling gladness of her eyes as they beheld the cheap silk stockings that were all he and Mamma could afford to give her.

He turned from the window with a cureless sickness gnawing at his heart, and began pacing the small, huddled room, steamy with the smell

of savory frying pork and cabbage.

Up and down. Back and forth. His carpet slippers wearing an almost perceptible trail in the grimy carpet. Endless, heart-wrenching march from window to stove and back again. Each time he passed the rocker where Mamma sat huddled, she raised her stricken eyes to look at him, then dropped them to her lap and took up again the senseless rocking.

Mamma's sister, Anna, a strapping woman with a sweat-shiny face, pushed the black, wispy hair from her brow.

"Sit down, Obe. It don't do no good and it's driving Zana crazy." The old man paused in his stride. "Zana, shall I put paprika in the cabbage? Paprika always makes it tasty." She paused for an answer, but none came.

Ever since the girl Maritza, their child, had gone, they had been like that. Walking. Rocking. With the dumb despair of animals. On the third day, Anna had come to give them what comfort she could. But they ignored her, wrapped in their grief.

"Obe," she said gently. "Supper's ready. Go wash your hands." She addressed him as she might a child. "Maritza will come back. You'll see."

"No! Maritza is gone. She will never be back. They have taken her from us. The dirty swine! The pigs!"

Anna went over to lay a hand on his stooped, work-bent shoulder. Obe's whole life had been spent in this house, in the coal mines just beyond the windows. He had never seen anything, never done anything, never been more than three miles from the company village since the day he had arrived with Zana thirty years ago.

He'd never once protested or complained, for this life was all he knew. And Maritza had made it all seem wonderful—made it count. Golden-haired, high-spirited, with a skin as white as alabaster, she had been the whole world to the old Polish couple. Maritza was such a good girl, so sweet. Not flighty like some of the other girls of the settlement. And

now she was gone—tracelessly—as if the darkness had closed over her and carried her away.

Anna patted her brother-in-law's shoulder. "Obe, please why don't you call the police? It's over a week now. You should ought to tell someone—"

The old man's wrinkled face turned red, then paled with his anger. His hands knotted into fists. Furiously he struck Anna's hand away from him.

"The police?" he cried. "You are mad. You are a fool, I say! The police—what good are they to us? 'Move on,' they tell you in the village. One time they throw me in jail when I am just a little drunk. They throw me in a cold, dirty cell and laugh at me and call me 'drunken old fool'! No, the police will not help us. They are only to protect the scabs when there is a strike—to beat us over the heads with clubs—to knock us down and trample us! The police—" he spat.

His anger passed suddenly. Slumping into a chair, he let his head sink forward on the red calico table cloth. His mouth quivered, and at last the tears flooded his eyes. His shoulders shook.

Suddenly, the deep, seemingly endless silence was broken. Maritza's mother, still huddled in the rocking chair, her body swaying, her face blank as stone, had opened her mouth and begun to scream. A harsh, high-pitched, terrible sound, that went on and on and on—that would never, never end. . . .

CHAPTER II

Hogan's Trail



NIGHT. Late January; the freight train rattled over singing rails. The breaths of the two men in the chilly boxcar frosted into wreaths of smoke that blew from their mouths. They were poorly dressed, unshaven, weary to the bones.

One was thick-set, ugly, hard as a keg

of penny nails. He was sitting hunched up, staring into the darkness with wary, piglike eyes.

His companion, who lay stretched out with his head pillowed on his coat, was slighter of build and had a face whose chief characteristic was its colorless anonymity. He might have been a clerk or a pickpocket, an insurance salesman or a petty racketeer.

"I guess we give 'em the slip, back there," the husky one said.

"Sure, Three-Time. Forget it."

"That was a mighty smart crash-out you staged, Ed," Three-Time ruminated, scratching his red-stubbed chin with greasy nails. Yeah. It sure had been smart. Three-Time might never have done it by himself. He might still be serving his two-year sentence behind the walls of the State Penitentiary if the dumb warden hadn't put this little foxy guy in the cell with him.

But Ed Jones had brains. He'd figured the whole thing. They'd never even had to use the gun Jones, who was a trusty, had sneaked from the warden's office. The car waiting for them, the hideout apartment in Kansas City. The clothes, the money, the guns. Everything you could think of. It had been perfect.

They might be in Kansas City yet if, on the second day, Ed, looking like a frightened rabbit, hadn't burst in and announced that they'd have to take it on the lam.

"There was a dick down there at the grocer's," he muttered. "I swear he spotted me. We gotta get outa here. Don't you know no place where we could go? This joint's hotter than Washington in June."

Ed Jones came from Washington. He said. Three-Time had got like that about Ed. Suspicious, wondering. Three-Time wasn't as dumb as he looked. He'd heard of framed crash-outs before. He looked down broodingly on Ed's coatless back grimly, eyed the buckle on the back of his vest.

"It was easy," Ed muttered sleepily. "Where did you say we was goin'?"

"Central City," Three-Time said. "That's a 'good' town for guys like us."

The city of vanishin' men. I bet half the population's wanted somewhere. *Somebody's* got that place rigged up dandy."

"Cops fixed, huh?"

"Fixed is right. Yeah, and not only the cops. Yes, *sir*, somebody in Central City knows there's a lot of easy gravy in not bein' too damned fussy."

So Ed came from Washington, huh? Three-Time's voice was edged with caginess.

"Best thing for us to do is to join Bull Hogan's outfit," he went on. "They're holed up there. Bull can use us. Anyhow me—I know him." His eyes narrowed.

ED'S face did not change. But his heart began to thud madly. Bull Hogan's gang! The outfit he was after. The gang that had recently been terrorizing the Middle West with bold, ruthless daylight holdups, disappearing mysteriously afterward.

A rumor of a possible connection between this Three-Time Miller and the Hogan outfit had sent Ed to the State Penitentiary. And now Three-Time was leading him right into Bull Hogan's hideout. The Federal net, whose ends were in his fingers now, might soon be closed about the elusive gangster of whom so little was known.

"Bull Hogan, huh?" Ed said. "I did a job for Bull once, years ago. In Milwaukee, I think it was. I guess he wouldn't remember me now—but he'll be able to use me, too." His voice held the artless admiration of the petty crook for the big shot. "Gee. Bull Hogan." He smiled, and let his eyes close.

"In Milwaukee. Yeah, Bull used to hang around there sometimes," Three-Time said. His heavy hand crawled cautiously to the holster beneath his vest. His whole, clumsy body suddenly tensed. The breath stopped clouding from his mouth.

Ed felt that tension, too. There was something in the musty darkness suddenly—a threat—a lull—a hideous, creeping silence that seemed to take him by the throat.

Three-Time's fingers closed on his gun. So Ed was from Washington?



Turnbull

The dirty, damned— Silent laughter split his mouth. Laughter that burst into maniac sound as the gun in his hand flamed and blasted in the boxcar's narrow space.

The glittering buckle on Ed's vest flattened with the impact of the bullet, that sent it smashing through flesh and bone, carried it into the spine. Blood crawled in oozy red from the black-rimmed hole.

Three-Time, pig eyes glaring in the darkness, felt the freight train slow down to take a curve. He crept to the boxcar door, pushed it open, pressed his body through and dropped to the graveled roadbed.

He landed on his feet, pitched forward, let himself roll down the incline, bumping and twisting over the weedy grass, and ending in a tangled clump of scrawny bushes. He lay flat on his belly, squeezing earth in his massive fists. Then he threw back his head and roared with laughter.

Bull Hogan was smart. Too smart for any Feds to catch. Too smart ever to have worked with a punk like Ed. Three-Time knew that. Three-Time knew it better than anyone else. Only a moment of greed and a rotten freak slip-up had put Three-Time behind bars. Because Three-Time Miller, the

name of the crook, arrested in Kansas City three months ago for robbing a filling station cash register, was just an alias. Just another way of saying Bull Hogan.

NIGHT. Not a coal miner's hovel, but a rich, tapestried room, tastefully elegant. The home of Cathcart Wilson, president of the Central County Anthracite Mines.

Two elderly men stood before the fireplace.

"I want to help you, Cathcart," Judge Thomas said. "Of course the Franzio trial has us all more or less on pins and needles, but I'll do what I can. Only, you must tell me everything."

Judge Eldredge Thomas, of the Federal District bench, had been Cathcart Wilson's friend as far back as either of them could remember. In this time of trouble, it was only natural that Wilson should call upon the judge for aid.

The millionaire passed his hand across his brow, restlessly, as if trying to shake off the tattered remnants of a lingering, fearsome dream.

"Jeanne's gone," he announced blankly.

"Gone?"

"Since last Thursday. A week, Eldredge. A whole, long week. The first three days I didn't think much about it. You know how Jeanne has been lately. But then—then they found Mac's body on the dump. And I knew."

"Mac?" The judge frowned.

"John MacManus. He was a private



detective. MacManus and Brown, on Chestnut Street. I'd—I'd had him watching Jeanne."

For Wilson to admit that much,

even to him, Judge Thomas knew, had cost much. He'd thought that his old friend had been blind to the girl's increasing wildness, the ugly, vicious men and women who were her constant companions, the drunken orgies, the gambling sessions, the wild revels that were apparently the only things she found sufficiently stimulating to amuse her.

Judge Thomas had seen Jeanne only once or twice during the past year. The last time had been one day at the races. She'd been with some ratty-looking evil-faced man, he remembered. He recalled too the abnormal glitter of her eyes, the pallor of her face, her quick, nervous gestures, everything about her that fairly screamed the ugly fact that Judge Thomas was reluctant to believe. He wondered if Cathcart Wilson knew—or guessed—what those things meant. If he'd ever noticed them.

"I know she was no good, Eldredge—no good to herself or to me or anyone else. But she was all I had. I wanted to help her—but she wouldn't let me. Because, you see, she hated me. Ever since her mother died, she's hated me."

Judge Thomas was aghast at the revelation. Cathcart was not, by nature, closely introspective. Forceful, domineering, he ruthlessly trampled all those who got in his way. The tragedies his own success had caused moved him not at all. Pity, he'd always said, was for the weak. And he was strong. It was that terrible strength, the judge realized, that had crushed out the life of the sweet-souled, delicate woman who had been his wife, and sent his daughter Jeanne, rebellious and as flinty in her way as he, into the black cesspools that had now engulfed her.

"The police must be investigating MacManus' murder," the judge pointed out. "Why not tell them of Jeanne's disappearance?"

"The police? Good God, man, how can you sit there and suggest such a thing? You know just as well as I how much help the Central City police force would be at a time like this. The chances are that they're hand in glove

with the dirty rats who"—his voice grew hollow—"who have done this thing to my girl. Kidnaped her, killed her, perhaps! No, not killed her. If she were dead, I think I'd be almost glad. That's not what I'm afraid of. I don't want even to think about that—it's too hideous— But I want my girl back, Eldredge. No matter what she's been or what they do to her, I want her back. The police in this town are no good—you know that as well—better than I do!"

THE judge smiled wryly. "Rather caught in your own trap, eh?"

Cathcart Wilson glared at him. "I don't know what you mean."



Franzio

"I mean that for years the—er—negligence of our local police has been extremely useful to you. They've looked the other way when it was convenient for you. And there have been times, Cathcart, when you've put over some pretty rotten tricks on this town. You were rich and important, and they ate out of your hand. But now you suspect that there's a force that's richer and more important to them than you—that this time they won't come running when you whistle—and that's not so pleasant, is it?"

"You're right, as usual, Eldredge. Perhaps I do deserve what's happened to me. Perhaps for the first time I'm getting the same sort of break that I've been handing out to the rest of the town. And I can't take it." He laughed bitterly. "But good God, what's my money for if it can't get my girl back for me—if I'm just as helpless now as any Polack in my mines? Eldredge, I'll go mad if—"

"Take it easy, old man. We'll think of something." The gilt clock behind them ticked out a full minute. "You should have MacManus' reports. They might be helpful," the judge said.

"I do. He followed her everywhere. There's a full list of everyone she saw, every place she went, for the last two weeks. It seems she even knew this Franzio who's up on trial now. Knew him pretty intimately, according to MacManus. And I've something else, Eldredge. I've her diary. It's pretty cryptic, but maybe you can make something out of it. I can't bear even to look at it."

From the desk drawer he took a sheaf of papers and a small green Morocco book with a gold clasp that he had already broken open.

"I'll see what can be done with these," the judge promised. "If you're right that this isn't, well, the regulation kidnaping—that there's something far more sickening behind it—we may at least be instrumental in putting some pretty odorous customers behind the bars where they belong. In protecting other girls like Jeanne—"

"I don't care about *them*," Wilson burst out wildly. "I want my girl back, I tell you!" He sank back in his chair, breathing hard, his face sunk heavily on his chest.

Judge Thomas took up the telephone on the desk, dialed long distance, and called a Washington number.

"Department of Justice?" The judge's tones were quiet, dry as paper. "Give me the Director, please. This is Federal Judge Thomas of Central City, calling for Mr. Cathcart Wilson." He waited. Then he turned to

his friend, holding out the instrument. "Here," he said. "You talk to them."

CHAPTER III

Trial and Tragedy



IN his office at Washington, the Director of the F.B.I. stared at a bright red pin stuck almost in the center of a huge map of the United States that covered one whole wall.

"Central City," he mused, half aloud.

His eyes narrowed. "We've got to wipe out that mob, Fowler. Got to!"

Dan Fowler, ace operative of the Federal service, nodded understandingly.

"This thing is big," the Director went on. "How big yet, we don't know. That place is a sore spot on the face of the earth—how far its poison may spread unless we check it and check it quick, no one can say."

"Let me at it, Chief," Fowler begged.

The Director held up a hand. "I may have to yet. Merrill seems to be doing a good job out there at the moment, and this Franzio trial may accomplish the almost impossible—wipe out the whole rotten nest at one fell swoop. Meantime, how are those laboratory tests coming?"

"My hunch was hot, Chief," Dan said with a wicked grin. The Director knew that grin of old. It meant that something was in the wind. Only when the, figuratively speaking, long nose of Fowler, the human bloodhound, had picked up a scent did the stalwart young G-man display that particular, dangerous grin.

"The lab men report that the man who sat outside the garage in that car and waited for Canning and Gilman to come out," Dan went on, "the man who shot them down in cold blood, shot them through the back was undoubtedly a narcotic addict. Saliva tests prove that. Furthermore the cigarette butt that we've been testing, the one the killer smoked while he

waited, was not made of tobacco leaf at all—it was a high-powered marijuana!"

"Okay," the Director snapped. "I'll wire the analysis to the Central City field station right away."

Canning and Gilman, following Scarelli and his companion into Central City, had worked two months undercover, reporting whenever they could to the local bureau. Then in the course of their independent operations, somewhere, they had brushed too close to the truth, learned a hint of the secret that had turned Central City from a Midwestern metropolis into an open haven for wanted men. And one night, a week ago, they had been trailed to their garage, and within short, sickening seconds, been literally blown apart by a withering blast of gat fire.

Fowler's face as he considered this fact, was bleak, cold.

"I've been watching Central City," the Director said, returning his gaze to the pin-pricked map, "ever since Canning and Gilman went in there on the trail of those two rats who seemed to have been swallowed by the earth. Ever since Ed Jones turned up in that empty boxcar with two bullets through his spine and a piece of paper crumpled in his fist with the name 'Central City' scribbled on it. Ed Jones was trying to run the Bull Hogan gang to earth. He'd attached himself to Three-Time Miller, who was supposed to be a petty member of the Hogan mob—and got shot in the back for his pains. But somehow he found out that Three-Time was headed for Central City—that Hogan was holed up there."

THE Director's fist came crashing down on the desk.

"A 'good' town, eh? I tell you, Fowler, there's no place in this country for that kind of town! What use is it to bring crooks out into the open if they can flee to that place, or to any other like it, and be received with open arms? If they can stand within its bounds and defy us to come and get them—the way Scarelli did? 'Good' towns are one of the chief

menaces to the establishment of law and order in this land—and Central City's the worst of the lot!"

Dan had rarely seen his chief so thoroughly aroused. His crusading anger reminded the young operative of the righteous wrath of the prophets of old as they thundered out against the wickedness of Babylon and Gomorrah.

Suddenly he was calm again. "I had an interesting phone call from Central City last night—from a millionaire coal operator named Wilson. His daughter is missing. I checked back, and found that she's the fourth girl to disappear from there in three months. Does that mean that the vice ring we've been after is part of the Central City set-up—or is it just a coincidence? Yes," he mused, "I've got my eye on Central City, all right."

He looked up again at Fowler—his ace in the hole—his one-man shock-troops. Fowler's brain, he knew, worked as fast as his trigger fingers, which, in turn, worked faster than chain lightning.

The lean, powerful, grey-eyed young giant had come to him as a gangling recruit, an ex-lawyer from the Middle West, football ace, and son of a sheriff killed in action. Amazing, hard-earned success had followed Fowler's spectacular career. He was the Department's trouble shooter, its dynamite for blasting out the tough spots when ordinary routine broke down.

"Please, Chief," the grey eyes begged, and Fowler's whole manner was like that of a powerful mastiff throwing all its weight against the master's leash which held it in check.

"Let's see how this Franzio trial comes out," the Director said.

THE fourth day of Johnny Franzio's trial in the U. S. District Court at Central City. And the courtroom is more crowded than ever. For the word has gone around that today the Government plans to spring a surprise witness.

Political leaders, office holders, thrill-seekers, civic leaders, gangsters hear the whispers and guess at last,

some of them nervously—that the top is going to be right off the racket-ridden metropolis of two million souls.

And high time, too, the wise ones whisper, for fighting Federal Attorney Larson to score a point. For only the determination of Federal Judge Eldredge Thomas that not one stone shall be returned in this effort to get at the truth, has kept the trial open as long as this.

Larson's own witnesses have been hostile, openly defiant; the little pile of evidence that he had so far managed to get, unchallenged, into the court records had been the result of hours of wrangling disputes, long legal discussions leading apparently nowhere.

"I demand that this case be dismissed," Franzio's attorney has said not once, but twenty times. "The Government has produced absolutely no evidence to support the charge against my client."

And each time, only the dogged, beseeching look in Larson's eyes has kept Judge Thomas from so ordering.

For Larson had waded in where other legal authorities had either been afraid to go, or been paid not to go. All else failing, every other road closed against him, he'd got Johnny Franzio, said to be the muscle man of the mob that ruled Central City like the bandit kings of old, on charges of income tax evasion. Funny, eh?

Franzio, the murderer, the gunman, the killer, being held on a relatively petty charge like that! A laugh, except that if Larson could, by some miracle, make his charges stick, other things would come out, names would be named, and the whole putrid system of corruption and terror would be threatened with exposure.

Franzio himself sat like a stone-eyed image. Ex-bootlegger, thug leader, extortionist, recognized leader of the racketmen collecting daily toll from the frightened residents of Central City, he stared around arrogantly, defiant, sneering.

His black eyes smoldered. His sleek black hair was parted neatly on his skull. His eyebrows were dark,

straight lines. Sharp nose, pointed chin, even the tips of his ears were angular. He tucked a silk handkerchief down into the breast pocket of his knife-creased suit.

Judge Thomas let his ferret eyes, harsh now, less filled with pity and understanding than last night when they rested on the anguished face of Cathcart Wilson, travel about the courtroom. This was his moment. He was old, a little tired. Many years ago, in his prime, he had come to Central City; he had worked for it, fought for it, watched it grow. It was his town, not because he lived there, but because his own sweat and blood had given him the right to call it his.

He was fighting for it now—once more—perhaps for the last time, he and John Larson, fighting to take it away from the rats that overran it, to restore to it the proud and honest name that it should rightfully bear. That was why Judge Thomas was crowding the letter of the law to give its spirit a chance. That was why, stubbornly, he refused to dismiss, and why he gave Attorney Larson far more leeway than was his legal due. So little a transgression in so great a cause.

HIS glance traveled in almost fatherly fashion to the fiery-tongued John Larson, who paced back and forth before the witness chair, his collar and his tie askew, coat open, arms waving.

The terrified witness cowered before his roaring, bull-like, baffled rage. "You deny that anyone ever approached you in your store, Mr. Gusello, for purposes of extortion?"

The little dark-faced grocer licked his lips. "Si. I mean, no. No ask me for money. No time!"

"You never paid any money for protection?"

Again the pale tongue flickering desperately over dry lips. "Never." The word was a mumble.

Larson ran his hand through his thick iron-grey hair. Angrily he strode before the jury, carried beyond himself by his exasperation at the man's perjury.

"Listen, Gusello"—he addressed the witness, but his words were intended for the jury—"that man that sits before you there—he's not the one on trial. But you are! I am! The whole city and county and state. Are we going to have law in Central City—or aren't we? You're sitting there and telling me we're not—because you're afraid! Afraid to speak out! Listen to me—you're in a court of law, pledged to tell the truth, to speak out fearlessly—and you sit there shivering like a terrified animal, refusing to help yourself.

"Men like Franzio say we can't enforce the law. Two Federal agents, gallant soldiers both of them, were shot down in cold blood last week because they dared to challenge his rule. For two months they'd been working in this town, undercover, until they got too close to the truth—then they were murdered—"

Jerome Blanton, heavy-jowled defender of Franzio, leaped to his feet. "This is too much! Judge Thomas, I beg of you to order that the Government shall refrain from such irregular procedure. The Government's remarks to the jury at such a time are entirely out of order, and they are highly prejudicial to the interests of my client."

Judge Thomas sighed. "The Government's attorney will please confine himself to questioning his witnesses."

Larson turned back to Gusello. "No more questions."

"No questions, your Honor," Blanton said, triumphantly.

"Call your next witness, Mr. Larson."

The court stirred, leaned forward. Larson squared his shoulders, took a deep breath, plunged in.

"Your Honor, in order to avoid unnecessary interruptions in the future, I should like to explain to the court my purpose in calling the next witness. I propose to show that the mob has exacted many thousands of dollars a week in tribute from rackets, protective associations, organizations of garages, laundries, dairies, all paying tribute; houses of vice; policy games and the like. From these by dint of

intimidation, venal bribery and brutality, the mob has made millions. From these sources, the defendant has received thousands of dollars, upon which he has paid not one cent of taxes!

"I propose to call the one man in Central City who can tell you better than any other exactly what these sums were and from what sources they came. A man who came forward just yesterday and offered at the risk of his own life—his life, I repeat—to tell the Court the whole sordid story.

"I call to the witness stand, Charles Mills, John Franzio's confidential secretary!"

The boys at the press tables began an excited jabbering. This was it!

"Mills—I thought Franzio had him under wraps somewhere!"

"Must've broke loose," came the reply.

"Look at Franzio—he's taking it pretty calmly. If I were in his boots now, I'd be trying to get used to stretching my neck. Say, has that guy got anything up his sleeve?"

"Two rabbits and a tommy gun, probably. Well, hold your hats, boys, here we go."

Mills, thin, angular, shuffled into the courtroom. He passed widely by Franzio's table, eyes averted, lips working—a man terrified of his life, yet braver than many in this courtroom would ever see again.

MILLS, confidential man to Franzio, knew all there was to know. There were those in the courtroom who sat muscles taut, faces pale, nails digging into sweating palms, who were aware that he knew everything.

The clerk of the court gave a Bible to Mills, who took the oath, his voice as weak as he was pale.

"I do—" Mills said and slumped into the witness chair.

There was a nerve-cracking silence.

Franzio looked away from the witness, down at his handkerchief. Its position in his pocket was evidently unsatisfactory. He withdrew it, refolded it carefully, replaced it. As John LeRoy Larson stepped forward

briskly, confidently to begin his examination of the witness, a window pane crashed.

The glass jangled downward, smashed on the floor. The courtroom was paralyzed by a strange premonition. But nobody knew, until the sounds of shots roared into the room from the building directly opposite the courthouse, that murder had been done.

Mills, the witness, rose in his chair, grabbed at his chest, gave the ceiling a glazed look of panic, coughed a crimson stream that trickled down his chin, and then plunged forward from the witness platform in a knotted heap. Larson halted in his tracks, swung around, gave the window a look of utter disbelief and amazement. His mouth fell open. He took a step toward his fallen key witness and crumpled to the floor beside him. Judge Thomas, a bullet creasing the side of his head, pitched forward across his bench.

Panic started. Spectators milled and shouted. They sought cover. Marshals, court attaches dived for the doors. Men, racing from the courtroom,



bumped into others, hurrying to it. All was mad confusion.

They surveyed the horrible, grisly scene, these frightened people.

Larson and Mills lay in their own crimson gore. Judge Thomas stirred, moaned, as those who would aid him rushed to his side. Foremost in this group were Jason Turnbull, the pompous district attorney of Centre County, tall, angular, with steel-gray hair at his temples, candidate for governor; Meredith Blake, plump and

bustling mayor of the metropolis, politically allied with him; Ross Slade, the long-faced, saturnine chief of police, wearing the uniform and stars of his rank, and William McArthur, philanthropic civic leader.

"Quick!" Turnbull ordered the others. "We've got to get a doctor—get him to a hospital—he's bleeding badly."

While McArthur hurried into the judge's chambers, others canvassed the courtroom for a physician.

In a matter of minutes the news of the murders swept across America. Radios blared and newspaper headlines screamed the incredible story of an invisible government of incorporated crime which believed that it was more powerful than the laws and the law enforcement agencies of the United States. Over telephones, teletypes and telegraph instruments went preliminary reports to the grim, gray, inexorable headquarters of the famous bureau in Washington.

Back from Washington whipped orders and an almost imperceptible movement started. Ferret-eyed agents questioned those in the courtroom, examined every inch of it, as well as the empty building which had housed the killer.

In the latter place, footprints were found on the dusty floor and were sprayed with shellac to fix them. As this dried, plaster of Paris was applied. Soon a replica of the shoe which had made the prints was built up and the agents noted its characteristics and peculiarities. From the foot, they learned that the possessor was a big man, more than six feet tall, heavy-boned and of solid build. A cigarette butt, found near the window, was wrapped in cotton and air-mailed to the laboratories in Washington for a complete analysis.

The case against Franzio was dismissed. His lawyer, Jerome Blanton, saw to that. He argued lack of evidence. How could the Government have a case when United States Attorney Larson and his witness, Mills, were dead? There was no logic to refute this claim.

Franzio was freed.

CHAPTER IV

At the Controls



WASHINGTON once more. Crushing determination now burned in the dark eyes of the Director of the F. B. I. Yesterday's brutal bloodshed had set Central City up as the chief target for the forces of law and order. No longer one of a score of matters clamoring for the Department's attention, it had become Crime Capital Number One! The chief's movements and gestures were crisp and energetic.

Dan Fowler burst into the room, a little wild-eyed, unmistakably triumphant.

"There's no doubt on one angle, Chief," he exclaimed. "The cigarette butts prove it absolutely. The man who stood yesterday in the deserted loft building across from the Federal Court to get Larson and Mills is the same man who shot down Canning and Gilman! There's not one percent of variation in the saliva tests made from the two sets of butts—and the new ones are marijuana too!"

"Good work, Dan."

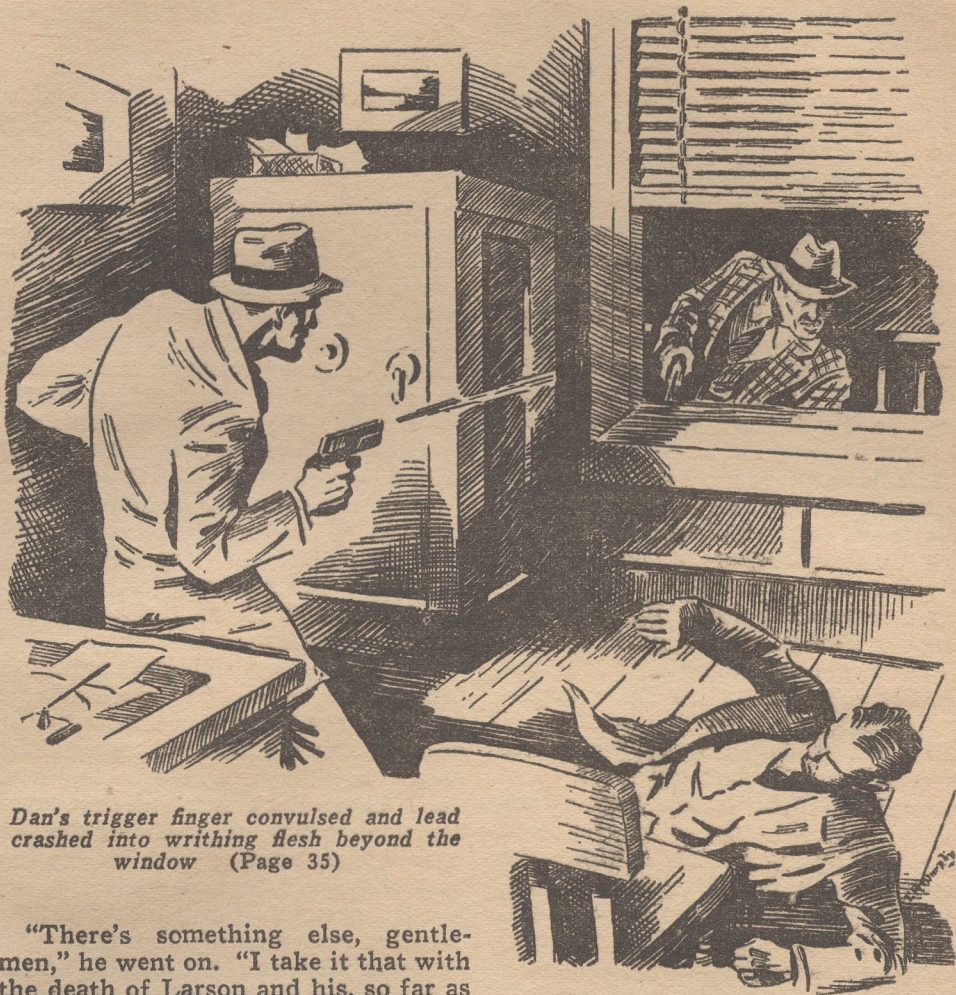
"I'm all set for Central City, Chief!"

"Just a minute—I'm expecting a caller I want you to talk to before you leave." The jangle of the phone sounded. The Director spoke into it briefly. "Very good, Moore. Send him in."

The Director looked up at Dan. "Federal Judge Thomas is outside. I thought he was flat on his back in the hospital in Central City, but he conspired with his doctor, sneaked off to the airport, and flew to Washington. A great man, Judge Thomas. And a fearless one."

The door of the office opened and the white-haired Federal Judge entered the room. The side of his head was bandaged.

IN straightforward, simple words, he told what had happened in the courtroom.



Dan's trigger finger convulsed and lead crashed into writhing flesh beyond the window (Page 35)

"There's something else, gentlemen," he went on. "I take it that with the death of Larson and his, so far as I know, only important witness, Mills, the Government's case against Franzio is more or less at a standstill. Unless you can snare that gunman, which may prove a difficult task.

"For some time now I've suspected the existence in Central City of a widespread vice ring. Several girls have disappeared, various other things have happened that strengthen my belief. One of those girls is the daughter of the man who spoke to you on the phone last night.

"I have her diary—and also the report of a detective whom her father had engaged to shadow her. In both, the names of Franzio and his lieutenants are frequently mentioned. I suppose nothing will ever be known of the circumstances of Jeanne Wilson's

disappearance—but the documents I spoke of may provide valuable hints not only to that, but to the slimy trail of this vice ring as well.

"I don't think Franzio or his mob even so much as suspect that I have these papers. But they may. I didn't dare send them to you—I was afraid even to phone you that I had them—lest there be a leak. I am, however, prepared to hand them to any agent who undertakes to break this case."

The chief turned to Fowler.

"Fowler, go with the judge. Get those papers—and go to work. Give 'em hell!"

He rose, placed his arm over his operative's shoulder, losing for a moment the stern manner which was

officially his. He looked at Judge Thomas.

"You can trust this man to the last ditch," he said. "He's come through for me every time—and he'll come through again. The case is big—but it's not too big for him!"

The sleek dual-motored, low-winged metal transport monoplane shot through the night at almost two hundred miles an hour, less than two hours out of Washington. Dan Fowler had made last-minute reservations, and now found himself in seat Number Seven, directly across the aisle from Judge Thomas, who was in seat Number Eight.

The ship, he saw, was packed to capacity. Cautiously, carefully, with an eye trained to observe every detail of dress, expression and mannerism, he had surveyed those aboard. His interest centered in the occupant of seat Number Ten, a man in grey, double-breasted, pin-striped suit. The fellow was leaning back in his chair, apparently asleep.

He had piled into the plane two minutes before it had taken off.

Dan studied the bulky form of the fellow, noticed his long, yellowed face, which looked as if it didn't get enough sunshine. Dan was waiting for him to open his eyes, contemplating the fact that the man had managed to change seats with an elderly man who had been sitting behind the judge. He wanted to study those eyes. They belonged, he thought, to a narcotic addict. Judge Thomas' visit to Washington had been kept secret, supposedly, but if the word had leaked out—Then he got his answer. He stiffened. The fellow's eyes opened. And, at the same instant Dan saw an automatic pistol of small but deadly caliber equipped with a silencer, in his hand. The fellow, Dan knew, as his blood ran cold and he braced himself for action, wasn't aware that Dan was watching him in the mirrorlike surface of the window-pane. He was raising the pistol, slowly and easily, so that he could fire through the lightly cushioned chair into the jurist's back.

"Then," Dan gasped to himself, "the

Central City mob knows about the judge's trip!"

HE glanced around him as he braced his steely muscles, reasoned out a plan which would save the judge's life.

With the agility of a trained gymnast he leaned forward, used his knees and his arms to catapult him backward through the air over the top of his own chair. As he made the backward dive, he half-rolled, so that he would crash into the would-be killer face downward, head-on, with his powerful hands ready for action. His plan was to take his quarry alive, make him talk, rather than risk a shot at him.

As he went through the air he had a moment of horror. He saw, in that split second, the man's face twist with hate—saw him flip the ugly-nosed pistol from the back of Judge Thomas' chair toward him.

The man wasn't quick enough. Before he could fire Dan crashed onto him with the force of a ten-ton truck, knocked down the nose of the pistol, struck back his arm and grappled with him. At the same time, he sensed that the man's ready movement of the gun toward him showed that the fellow had recognized him and was out to get him in case of just such an attack.

In the next moment, Dan knew that he had a desperate battle on his hands.

As he fought to get possession of the gun, those in the cabin became aware of the fight. Frightened and confused, on the verge of panic which might send the air liner crashing to its doom, they leaped to their feet, began seeking impossible safety in the narrow confines. Screams punctuated the darting, clawing attempts of both men and women to find shelter.

The hostess, in the front of the cabin near the door to the dual cockpit occupied by the pilots, whirled. For an instant her features were frozen with horror, then she regained her composure and dutifully tried to quiet the frightened passengers. The mobster, in spite of Dan's iron grip, managed to heave his body upward, using his drawn up feet and the arms of his chair for leverage. It was a

big, powerful body. Dan's grip was twisted, torn loose. He felt himself hurled upward and forward, relaxed himself for the shock of his inevitable crash, realizing at the same time that at the moment the lives of everyone on the ship depended on his strength and quick thinking.

He struck on his back in the aisle with a sickening crunch. The back of his head crashed against the leg of a chair and his brain spun. He fought for consciousness.

As his mind cleared, the big fellow pounded down on top of him. Dan saw the gun, saw its snout swing toward his eyes, summoned all his strength. He drew his knees in with a mighty, convulsive effort just as his opponent struck him. He got his feet up, sent them pounding into the attacker's stomach.

The man hurtled forward through the air, doubled over a seat, crushed it. He rolled over, got to one knee, sent a shot at Dan's head. The G-man ducked his head, but not far enough. The bullet creased its side, sent blinding flashes in front of his eyes, but he managed to duck behind a seat, unlimber his own two forty-fives. The sound of the shot was scarcely heard, but the very act brought screams from the now crazed and demoralized passengers, a mile above the jagged rocks and the up jutting tops of the trees.

As the would-be killer saw the glint of blued-steel automatics flipping from specially designed holsters, he groped behind him for the handle of the door to the pilots' compartment, swung it open, and slipped in. Dan leaped to his feet, plunged forward, holding his fire for fear of killing one or more of the cringing, cowering passengers who had lost all sanity and reason.

The thug got partly in the door when he was met by the onslaught of the athletic, blue uniformed co-pilot, who lunged at him, fists flailing. The killer seemed now to have gone berserk. Jammed into close quarters, he could not use his gun except as a blackjack. He brought it down on the co-pilot's skull and the fellow reeled backward. The automatic spat flame

then. The co-pilot doubled up, agony contorting his features.

THE mobster, sensing that Dan was trying to get a shot at him, grabbed the slumping body, pushed it down the aisle. It went crashing into the G-man, knocked him backwards, sent a surge of white hot anger and horror through him. He charged forward. Both guns were ready for action.

He knew that he'd have to fire now—take a long chance. The co-pilot was done for. If the killer got to the pilot, the ship would go down out of control, heading for oblivion, taking all on board to a horrible death. The maniac was trying to wreck the ship, Dan was sure now.

The pilot turned from his controls, saw the gun, grabbed the man's wrist in time to divert hot lead intended for his head. Dan reached the compartment just as his quarry brought the weapon down on the head of the pilot—a second too late. He saw the uniformed man slump over his controls and the killer raise his gun to finish his gruesome job. Both Dan's guns spoke at the same time. The thug pitched forward on top of the unconscious pilot. His body jarred the controls.

The ship began to slip off onto the port wing, wash through the air.

Dan fought to remain calm as he thought of the doom which waited at the end of the plane's mad plunge. He darted into the compartment, wrenched the body of the killer from his victim, thrust it into the aisle of the main cabin.

The body piled up. Dan pivoted, grabbed the pilot, shook him. The man was still out. He looked out of the door, saw the hostess with her back plastered against the cockpit wall.

"Quick!" he snapped. "Your emergency kit! Restoratives!"

Dan grabbed the pilot, pulled him away from the controls, working against death, which might be a matter of seconds. He did not know the plane's altitude nor the height of the mountains. He pushed the man into the co-pilot's seat. He took the place

which the pilot had occupied before the mass of instruments. He knew that he could never hope to land a dual-motored transport, recalled his previous crash landing of a pursuit ship loaded with explosives in the Potomac River with a shudder.

As he took the wheel he felt his blood chill at the sounds of the hopeless cries and moans of the stricken people who feared and awaited death. He hoped to right the ship, get it on an even keel, hold it there until the unconscious pilot was revived.

He turned the control wheel easily, rocked the ailerons, leveled off the fins with cold, slow precision, feeling every move of the ship, fearful that he'd over-control and send it plunging downward even faster. Sweat oozed out of his pores, soaking his body and his clothing as he flirted with disaster.

There was a slow, steady response. He found the altimeter, saw that he was slowly leveling off. Once on an even keel he advanced the throttle and began a slow, steady climb to get away from the rocky ridges beneath him. How far beneath him, he didn't know.

The hostess and Judge Thomas came into the cabin, began working over the pilot.

A towel soaked with ice water and smelling salts were bringing him around. Dan could see the nasty welt on the side of the aviator's head, where the dead killer, lying in the aisle in the main cabin with two bullets in his heart, had struck him.

As the pilot moaned and color came back into his white face, Dan weighed the various angles of the killer's action. He knew why the fellow had tried to kill Judge Thomas—to silence him. And why he had tried to kill the G-man. To get him out of the way, for he was a menace to the mob's activities. But why had the fellow suddenly run amuck? Why had the gangster run against his type by trying to wreck the plane with himself on board?

The pilot finally opened his eyes, shook his head to clear it, looked around him. Dan motioned him to the controls. The fellow staggered to his

feet, braced by the hostess and the judge. He rubbed his hand over his forehead.

"Nice work. I'll take 'em over," he said.

DAN rose and the pilot slipped into the seat. He shot the G-man a questioning look, and Dan explained quickly, identifying himself.

"Great work!" he said. "If it hadn't been for you, we'd all be dead, instead of the maniac and poor Benton. How'd you know how to handle the ship?"

Dan grinned.

"Flew from fright, mostly," he replied. "Had a little instruction after the war, and I've flown up front on these jobs, too. Can you take her into Central City okay?"

"You bet."

"I'm going to check up a bit."

Dan went into the main cabin, found himself surrounded by the passengers. He told them to take their seats and permit him to make his investigation. He began going through the effects of the man he had slain. The first revelation came when Dan found his suitcase in the baggage compartment. It was of a bright yellow color and stood out from the other luggage. Dan opened it, gasped with amazement.

The only object which it contained was a regulation pack parachute!

"It's all clear now," he told Judge Thomas. "Our man trailed you from Central City on orders from the mob. He probably caught the next plane after you did. That's why you weren't killed on the trip east. Then he picked us up as we left Bureau Headquarters. He got a seat behind you, planned to drill you when the motors were wide open fighting for altitude over the mountains and making plenty of noise.

"He probably planned to get me before the trip was over in the same way. The other passengers would have thought we were sleeping. He'd have escaped when the plane landed. He carried the parachute in case of emergency. When I saw him in my window mirror and went for him, he changed his plans. He decided that he'd cover his tracks thoroughly by

killing the pilots. He figured that in this way he'd kill us when the plane crashed and, at the same time, wipe out all witnesses to his act. He'd cover the rest, get his brightly colored suitcase from the baggage compartment, slip into his 'chute and bail out."

In the man's wallet Dan found further confirmation of his theory. There was a newspaper clipping of a photograph of Judge Thomas. Above it, the line:

CENTRAL CITY PRESS- DISPATCH

Judge Thomas' keen blue eyes studied the photograph. In faded pencil marks he managed to decipher:

F — Wy — 3146.

He repeated the letters and figures out loud. His jaw muscles tightened.

"What's that?" Dan demanded.

"That's the telephone number that Franzio had—unlisted—when Larson and his staff were investigating his income. The G-men told me they'd tapped his wires. There's the capital 'F'—"

"For Franzio," Dan finished.

Aside from the number, picture and fingerprints, which Dan air-mailed to Washington for checking against the file of six million when he reached Central City, Dan found no further clues on the body.

"Mr. Fowler," the hostess said, looking down at the body, "I've seen this man before. I'm sure he's traveled this line several times."

Dan started. "Alone?" he asked.

"No," she said, slowly. "He was always with women."

BLOOD pounded through Dan's veins with the revelation.

"Did you know the women?" he asked.

"No," she replied. "Some seemed dazed, stupid. Others were the kind of women—who—well—I wouldn't care to know them."

Dan nodded, his mind working rapidly. He was thinking of the reports from New York City and Washington that a huge vice ring was oper-

ating on an interstate basis. That meant violation of the Mann act and called for the services of the F.B.I. He remembered the judge's hint of a vice ring working out of Central City, was recalling, too, that the ring was using airplanes, trains and buses in transporting the women to various parts of the United States where, under different names they were forced into houses of ill fame, while the syndicate rolled up profits of millions a year.

His blood boiled at the thought of the sordid, fiendish business to which he had the first tangible clue. Every muscle in his huge frame tightened. His face livid, his blunt jaw set, he snapped at Judge Thomas:

"Was there any hint of white slavery in the Franzio case?"

"Larson indicated that there was in court."

Dan thought of the tragic trail which such slavery had left. Shattered homes—suicides—murders—and fates worse than these.

"So that's the game," he said, looking down at the body of the dead man with a loathing which he did not even attempt to conceal. "The chief said to give 'em hell. Okay! I'll ram it down their dirty throats!"

CHAPTER V

Open Warfare



DAN went forward and asked the pilot, Varden, to notify the airport at Central City to have Herbert Dwyer, the field agent of the F.B.I., to send out several special agents to complete the investigation and take care of other routine matters

when the plane, bearing its grisly cargo, landed.

After air-mailing the prints of the gangster from the airport, Dan escorted Judge Thomas to one of the Government cars, a super-gearred, high-powered sedan, reported to be the fastest stock car in America.

Fowler was taking no chances, so he thought, on any further attempts on the life of the jurist who possessed the key which might unlock the doors to the case. The only key that seemed to be left them.

Driving the sedan was Charles Merrick, a young special agent recently appointed, who looked as if he had just been graduated from law school. But Dan, who had watched him go through the Bureau training school, knew that he was hard as nails and game clear through.

"I'm staying at the Park Hotel," Merrick told him. "How about you?"

"Suits me," Dan said, eying the young Government man. The fellow was lean, built like a heavyweight boxer, keen of eye and firm of chin. "But first we've got to get to Judge Thomas' office, get some evidence from his safe and take him home. There isn't a minute to lose."

"What's up?" Merrick asked.

Dan told him.

Merrick stepped on the accelerator. The car shot into the main highway and droned through the suburbs. Dan became aware of bright lights behind the car. Merrick was driving fast—far above the legal speed limit. Dan noted that no matter how many cars Merrick passed, the lights hung on, neither losing or gaining.

As he braced himself and groped for his two automatics, Dan heard the powerful drone of a suddenly opened motor behind. The lights swerved. The car gained rapidly.

Dan turned on the judge, who was nodding, shook him. "Duck!" he shouted.

At the same instant the pursuing car rolled alongside of the Government sedan, motor whining, tires complaining. Merrick, aware now that he was being overhauled, jammed his accelerator to the floorboards. Then came the ominous staccato—the deadly chopping sound which Dan knew so well, the murderous jittering of a machine gun. He leaped at the judge, who was sitting on the left side of the car, threw his left arm around him and pulled the amazed jurist to the floor of the tonneau. It was from the left side

that the deadly stream of bullets was coming.

The lead crashed into the side of the car, shattered windows.

DAN, as he pulled himself over the judge's huddled form, going for the left-hand window to return the fire, saw Merrick instinctively duck over the wheel.

Dan's guns spat flame as both his deadly trigger fingers went into action. Unmindful of lead which spanged into the steel of the car, which ripped and tore at the body, *whished* through upholstery and drilled pencil-sized holes through the shatter-proof glass, he tried to find a mark in the light sedan which rocked and careened beside his own car, now hurtling ahead at better than eighty miles an hour.

A slug ripped through his hat, snapped it from his head. Another crashed through the window and flicked at his right ear. He saw Merrick, as cool as if he was driving a horse and buggy on a bright spring day, uncork his own automatic and let fly. Red hot, whanging, mark-hunting lead ripped from the muzzle of his big pistol, held in his right hand, while his left clutched at the wheel.

Lead continued to sear into the sedan. Then Merrick, bracing himself, deliberately shot over the wheel, sent the two-ton juggernaut toward the fenders of the lighter car. Dimly, Dan could see five figures in the car. He leaned far over to get a better look as, tires screaming, the sedan pulled to the left, caromed, lifted on two wheels, settled and straightened out.

He shifted in such a position that Judge Thomas could get his head up.

Thomas looked over the rim of the window.

"Good lord!" he exclaimed. "It's Franzio."

At the moment he spoke the ripping chatter of the machine-gun bit into the night, drowning the whine of the motors. Dan jerked to one side. At the same instant, he saw the white hair on the top of Judge Thomas' head literally disappear. Only a black splotch remained where the top of his



As his mind cleared, Dan saw the gun—saw the snout swing toward his eyes
(Page 29)

head had been just a moment before.

Dan's white-hot rage dominated the shock he felt.

"They've got the judge!" he shouted to Merrick. "Give th' bus everything. Franzio's in the car!"

He sent lead ripping into the car opposite.

Then his eyes popped in amazement. He knew, from experience that the sedan was doing a good ninety miles an hour. But the small car pulled away, just as if the driver had just whipped into high gear.

"Give her everything!" he growled through clenched teeth. But this time the battle did not depend on the mettle of two G-men, hands taut around the butts of heavy, hot pistols, spraying lead at an advancing tail light at a speed of better than a mile and a half a minute. It depended on motors—and while the Government car leaped like a live thing it was no match for the light sedan which raced into the darkness like a streamlined bullet.

As the Government sedan swept onward in futile pursuit, like a hawk with its wings clipped, Dan turned his attention to Judge Thomas, whose body had fallen back against the cushions of the rear seat. He saw, instantly, that there were two fearful wounds, black, bloody creases, across the top of his head. His blood chilled, he slipped his hand beneath the coat and vest. To his amazement, the stout old heart was still beating.

"GIVE up the chase!" he ordered Merrick. "We've lost 'em. The judge is still alive. Know a hospital around here?"

"Yes," replied Merrick. "Central City General—about a mile from here—"

The car was now streaking through what looked like a residential section to Dan, although telephone poles were going by so fast they looked like a high board fence. There was no need to tell the metal-nerved driver to step on it. Tires protested as the car screamed around a series of corners, slowed in front of a six-story stone building, turned, shot into an arcaded

driveway marked: "EMERGENCY—AMBULANCES ONLY!"

The car lurched to a stop. Dan leaped out as internes, startled, came from a sloping inclined corridor.

"Get a roller—stretcher—quick!" Dan ordered. "We've got Federal Judge Thomas. He's wounded—"

The uniformed men leaped into action.

Five minutes later Dan and Charlie Merrick, pacing nervously up and down in front of a door marked "Emergency Operations," were halted by the appearance of a serious-faced physician.

"He's conscious," the physician said. "But he's done for. And he knows it. Completely paralyzed below the neck. Bullets cut into—"

"Can we see him?" Dan asked, anxiously.

The physician nodded, pointed toward the door. Dan and Merrick stepped inside. The judge, white-faced, with black shadows beneath his eyes, heavy bandages swathing his head, showed recognition of them by the expression in his eyes.

Dan stepped close to the sheet-robed figure.

"Judge—" he began.

"It's no—use—young—man," the judge gasped. "I know I'm through—but you've got to carry—on—"

Dan's voice was tender and there was a lump in his throat as he choked: "Judge—the combination. Where—"

"In my—wallet—penciled—on my driver's license. Get the mob—get Franzio—he killed—"

The judge suddenly stiffened. There was a convulsion beneath the sheet. Dan knew that death had called even before the surgeon said:

"Hemorrhage. It was due any moment."

Dan stepped forward quickly, pulled the sheet up over the judge's face. His eyes were misty for just a moment. Then he snapped at Merrick:

"They'll pay for this!"

ARMED with the judge's keys, Dan and Merrick opened the door to Judge Thomas' chambers in the Federal building, switched on the

lights. Hastily, they glanced around. Dan spotted the big iron safe which stood in a corner behind the big, leather upholstered desk chair and the glass-topped mahogany desk which Judge Thomas would never use again. He stepped quickly to it. He knelt before the combination.

"Got the numbers?" he asked Merrick.

The young G-man pulled a sheet of paper from his pocket.

Dan heard it crackle, heard Merrick fumbling, felt a vague worry—as if he was being spied upon. He swung around. Merrick was standing there all right. His lips moved. Dan heard him say:

"Left—one hundred and eight."

He moved the knob.

"Right—eighty-three."

He moved it again.

"Left three hundred sixteen—"

He followed through.

"Now swing her right until she blocks and shoot the handle. She'll open, if you've done it right."

Dan felt the knob block. But the handle seemed to catch. He turned to question Merrick. Before his glance reached the other G-man it rested on the window. His muscles turned to steel as he saw the form of a man, the leer of a hard, evil face, the glint of a revolver. He kicked himself toward Merrick instinctively, with the speed of light—a blocking reflex which he had called upon hundreds of times when he was a star of Midwestern gridiron battles.

As the bulk of his big-boned and muscle-corded back crashed into Merrick's knees and sent him hurtling backward, the revolver blasted, glass crashed and rattled to the floor. Dan whirled, at the same instant going for his left gun. With perfect timing, the gun snaked out. His index finger convulsed. Lead crashed into the window glass, bit into writhing flesh beyond.

Dan's second shot spanged into the single big light overhead, which popped and flared and sent down a shower of glass. The body of the man Dan had picked off toppled into the room, the revolver he had held thumping on the floor. From two

other windows came the crash of glass, the dull roar of heavy-calibered weapons.

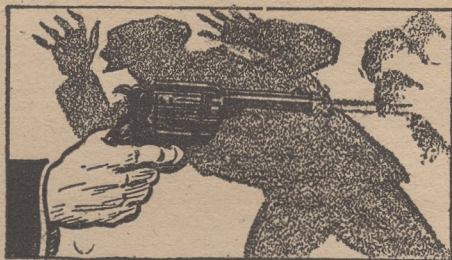
Dan rolled across the floor, wincing at the bite of glass, got the shelter of the desk, and whipped both his guns into action. Merrick recovered, his own weapon joining the barking litany of death.

Dan, firing from the hip, knew with the instinct of the hunter that his barrage of fire had found its mark even before the bullets struck. A second body piled into the room. Dan saw the third man whirl, pull away from the window. He darted for it, found the outside of the building limned by street lights thirty feet below in the square, saw his man streaking uncertainly along a wide cement ledge, went after him, holding his fire, hoping to capture him alive.

Below the ledge, cement sidewalks meant certain death.

The streets were deserted in the early morning hours. There were no witnesses to the mad chase. Dan stumbled, fell, caught himself just as the man he sought turned, his revolver belching orange flame into the still night. Then the fellow swung to the right, into the building, ten yards ahead.

Dan dashed forward, saw an open window out of which the man had



climbed to use the ledge to the windows at the judge's chambers. He swung through the window, saw his man pounding down the long stone corridor, went after him with the speed of a sprinter leaving the starting line.

WITH a reserve burst of speed he got at the thug's heels, sent himself knifing through the air, made a

perfect flying tackle, his arms encircling the fellow's knees. The man yelled as he lost balance, shot through the air, pounded downward.

Dan heard the slamming of a door behind him, braced himself for a hail of lead. He struck hard, but the man he had brought down struck harder, with a *whoosh* of air forced from his lungs as his ribs hit stone.

Dan leaped to his feet, whirled, ready for action.

Merrick panted behind him.

"Great stuff, Dan!"

The young G-man pounced on the writhing gangster, snapped manacles on wrists which he yanked backward.

"I didn't get the play when you piled into me—that is, not until I heard that lead whisper. You saved my life!"

Dan gave him an eloquent look which said, plainly:

"It's all in the day's work."

"Skip it!" he said. "Let's get back and add up the score."

The two thugs which Dan had drilled were dead. He examined the bodies quickly, turned to the thug whom Merrick had brought to the chambers with a gun pressed against his back.

"Pretty smart trick," he said, eyeing the fellow, who leered at him. "Chased us in that souped-up car, got the judge, shot ahead of us. Then waited until we went by and followed us to the hospital. Tailed us from there to here. Somebody was with you who knew we were after something. That man was Franzio, wasn't it?"

The thug measured him.

"Bright guy, ain't you, G-man?" he sneered. "Sure, Wilson told us the judge had that dizzy dame's stuff in his safe. Talked fast, he did, when he heard there was a chance he might see his brat again." The man grinned, as if he knew an ugly secret.

Dan made a mental note to see Wilson as soon as possible. His eyes turned to the safe and his whole body stiffened with shocked surprise. He saw that the door was opened. He darted forward, opened it wider. The steel box had been ransacked. He stared for a moment, as if he couldn't

believe the sight that met his eyes.

The hollow, gloating, taunting chuckle of the mobster snapped him out of it.

CHAPTER VI

"Get Franzio!"



OWLER swung to Merrick. "This must have been Franzio!" he snapped. "He was with the others in the car. Thomas saw him. Franzio must've held back while his slugs gunned us. Then, when we both went out after this bird he ducked in and opened

the safe. When I hit the ledge, I went to the right. He must've been hiding on the left. I'm going after him!"

He started for the nearest window.

"Snap irons on the mug's legs so he can't get away," he called over his shoulder. "Then go down the corridor to the street to cut off Franzio—if it isn't too late."

As Merrick went for his manacles, Dan slipped from the window, turned left, and made his way along the ledge. He finally reached the corner of the building, rounded it and worked along it. Some distance farther on he saw an open window.

Immediately, he guessed what Franzio had done. He'd cut in through this window, which led through one of the courtrooms, and had run down the corridor. He leaped inside, started through the room.

Then he heard the hollow, reverberating boom of firing in the street.

"Merrick!" he thought. "He's got him!"

He knew that he would have no chance to make the street in time to help Merrick, for the battle would be over. So he climbed out onto the ledge again. Below him and some distance away he saw a man's form fleeing toward a small sedan—a tan car of the same color as that with which he had raced coming into town. Then his heart skipped a beat. Out of the sedan jumped a woman,

She held the door open for the man.

Behind the figure came a second, pouring lead. Dan saw it was Merrick.

The first man was at the door of the sedan when he turned. Dan sensed what was coming, whipped out his forty-fives and let loose with both. But between the staccato roar of his own shots he heard the crack of the gangster's weapon and saw the bright, deadly spurt of flame. He was too far from the mobster, the figure was too shadowy.

A shock of horror passed through his body as he saw Merrick stagger, go down—saw the gangster leap into the sedan, saw the woman jump in behind him and pull the door closed. Through it all, his guns poured shots even as the fleet car, motor droning and gears whining, streaked away from the curbing.

Dan, still hoping to pursue the car, turned, climbed back through the window, raced through the courtroom and the corridor, and down the stairs to the street. By the time he got there, the speeding tan sedan was gone. Dan found Merrick doubled up on the sidewalk, moaning. He rolled him over.

HE saw that a single shot had pierced the young G-man's stomach and that his clothing was soaked with blood.

He heard the roar of a motor. He shot a glance up the street, saw, beyond the parked Government car a speeding vehicle bearing down. It was a racing police car, headlights cutting pencil beams, one bright red eye gleaming. The car careened to the curbing, lurched to a stop. Five uniformed men piled out, surrounded him. Each had a police positive cocked and aimed.

"So ya drilled 'im, eh?" rasped one of the men. Dan saw the chevrons of a sergeant on his sleeve. "Well, come along. We got ya dead to rights."

Dan's blood boiled, but he maintained calm in spite of his wrath.

"Not so fast!" he snapped. He identified himself by a few terse words, showed his small Government shield, explained what had happened to Merrick.



Dan Fowler

"How do we know you're telling the truth?" growled the sergeant.

"You'll have to take that for granted. This man has lead in his stomach. He's dying. How'd you like to have his death on your hands? I've got to get him to a hospital."

"Oh, yeah?" scoffed the sergeant. "G-men shootin' up th' city. The chief'll have plenty t' say t' ya."

"He'll hear about it. In the meantime, Merrick goes to the hospital. If any of you men have any ideas of doing your duty you'd better get out an alarm for Franzio—John Franzio, in case you don't know who I mean—for the murder of Judge Thomas and the assault on Merrick."

Disregarding the weapons, he stooped, picked up Merrick in his arms as gently as possible, brushed the patrolmen aside and carried him to the Government car.

"You'd better send along one of your men, Sergeant," he said. "I don't know the way to a hospital."

The sergeant chuckled meanly.

"One man—ya'll get two—and like it—"

He turned to his squad.

"You—Bevins—Prescott—" he growled. "Take 'im to St. Francis Hospital. By th' time he gets through

up there, I'll have the chief at th' office. Then we'll see what this is all about."

Dan's mind was racing. He had not told the sergeant about the manacled gangster lying handcuffed in the chambers of Judge Thomas, mainly because he had a peculiar hunch. He had a feeling that it would be more than wise to keep the fellow in Federal custody.

CHARLES MERRICK was hovering between life and death when Dan got him into the operating room. During the emergency operation that followed Dan managed to evade the police guard and get to a telephone. He called Herbert Dwyer, the field agent of the F. B. I., on the telephone.

"There's a gangster in cuffs in the chambers of Judge Thomas," he told the G-man in charge, after he had identified himself. "There are a couple of dead ones, too. I'm down at the hospital with Charlie Merrick under a police guard. The police don't know we got the gangsters. I told 'em Charlie was wounded in a street fight."

"Pull fingerprints off the dead men, and give the place a thorough check-up. Get prints off the safe if there are any. Hold the gangster incommunicado and get his prints. Gather up the guns and make fire tests of them. Save the bullets. And above all, give the mobster cigarettes. Then get the butts, shoot 'em to Washington as fast as you can along with his prints. Tell 'em I want a saliva test made of those cigarette ends."

"I'll follow through on everything, Dan. When am I going to see you?"

"Soon as I've talked to Chief Slade. And—"

He sensed a presence in the small anteroom where he was telephoning, turned. It was Prescott, one of the cops, he saw. His blood pounded as he wondered how much of the conversation the patrolman had overheard.

"So, here ye are!" Prescott beloned. "Tried to pull a sneak, eh?"

"See you later!" Dan called into the transmitter.

He slammed up the receiver.

"Dr. Meeker wants you," Prescott

snapped at the Government ace.

Dan hurried to the doctor, learned that Merrick had rallied, and Dr. Meeker reported that he was temporarily out of danger.

Then Dan went with Bevins and Prescott to police headquarters where he faced Chief Slade. He learned from Slade that Dwyer, after making his own investigation, had notified him of the deaths of the two gangsters and the robbery of the safe, but had said nothing about the prisoner.

"What's the idea of holding out on us?" Slade asked. "Why didn't you make a full report of the case to Sergeant Finnegan?"

"For two reasons," Dan replied, coldly. "The first was that I wasn't asked. The second was that the crime occurred on Government property and therefore was a Federal case."

Slade scowled at him.

"I think we'd better have an understanding here—" he said.

DAN'S eyes grew flinty. "You'll have to wait, Slade. I'll try to arrange it for some time later this afternoon."

Slade glared, but yielded beneath the fierce, probing tensivity of the G-man's expression. "Have it your way," he grumbled. "I'll get District Attorney Turnbull and Mayor Blake here at five. But let me tell you this, Fowler. Central City is one town where high-handed methods won't get you very far."

Dan's lips whitened. That was throwing down the gauntlet in no uncertain terms. He'd expected a certain amount of opposition, but he'd thought it would be more or less undercover, sniping from ambush. But if Slade wanted to bring the fight into the open, so much the better.

He turned on his heel and walked out without a word.

At the Federal detention rooms, long disused, where Dwyer was holding the captured thug, Dan found the mobster surly and defiant, and apparently well posted on his legal rights.

"Get my mouthpiece!" he demanded. "Get Blanton—then if he says to, I may talk." He wouldn't utter an-

other word. Dan eyed him angrily.

"Keep that rat on ice as long as you can," he instructed Dwyer. "He may crack yet, but I doubt it."

Dan spent the next hour making firing tests of the seized guns and putting the bullets under a comparison microscope. Then he dropped upstairs to Dwyer's office and let his long, lithe body down into a leather-covered chair.

"Let me get the set-up straight," he said. "Things have been happening so fast since I boarded that plane that I haven't had time to get organized. Just what's the political situation here?"

"In one word—rotten," Dwyer announced. "Votes bought and sold in what's practically open market, corruption and brutality at the polls, phony counts, and the barons of crime tied in so close with most of the public officials that you couldn't get the thin blade of a knife between them."

"A sweet picture," Dan commented. "But I get the point. What about the D. A.?"

"Turnbull?" Dwyer's smile was wicked. "The machine's brightest boy. His whole office is so crooked that it should have been laid out with a corkscrew. Turnbull used to be a pretty decent guy around here—maybe he was just holding off until he got elected to something—maybe he's collecting the gravy now that he has the chance. He's rather a puzzle. But some of the stunts he's pulled!" Dwyer whistled. "Charges against gangsters dismissed right and left. Lack of evidence. The hoodlums have taken the town right into their laps.

"Right now, Turnbull's in a tough spot. There's election coming on, and William McArthur, a friend of Judge Thomas and Larson, has announced that he's running on a reform ticket. McArthur's never been interested in politics before, but he's up in arms now. And there are enough decent people left in town who respect McArthur and what he stands for, to raise goose pimples all over Turnbull's political neck."

"Sounds like McArthur ought to

watch his step. He might find himself on the spot."

"I don't think either the machine or the mobs would go that far yet—There's still a lot of fight in some of the older residents. We wouldn't have gotten any place around here without the support of men like Thomas—rest his soul—and a few others like him."

"The police?" Dan questioned. "What about Chief Slade?"

"Haven't doped him out yet. He's notoriously inefficient. He hasn't been any great help to us. But maybe that's just his official pride that's stinging him. He likes to think he's the big-shot of law and order in this town, maybe. He's arrested Franzio and some of his rats time and time again—but he never seems to be able to get the evidence to clinch his case. I'd sort of tabbed him as just a big bag of wind—but the jury's not back yet on that. I'm open to a change of opinion any time."

Before Dwyer could say any more, Dan was called to the teletype room and came back looking thoroughly satisfied with the message from the capital.

"Between my gun tests and this hot tip from Washington," he said, "we ought to be able to crack Butch Quirk—that's the name of our friend in the cellar, by the way—so wide open that—Well, let's wait and see. Here goes Fowler, with news for Butch Quirk!" He grabbed up his hat. "Be seeing you."

CHAPTER VII

Butch Quirk



GENT HERBERT DWYER had left no stone unturned as far as getting the goods on the gangster, captured in the Federal Building, was concerned. Fingerprints sent by telephoto to Washington had identified him as a former Army sniper and sharpshooter during the World War who had once

been a bodyguard for Al Capone, and later a member of the Scarlet Gang, working out of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Dan faced him in the abandoned detention rooms. "Your number's up, Quirk!"

The glowering mobster, secure behind bars, started. "How'd you—" he began, then checked himself.

"Oh, your name. That was easy. Your fingerprints went to Washington and compared with those of a fellow known as Big Art Horman, of Minneapolis. There was a red metal card on top of the tag, Butch. You left the fingerprints on a beer bottle in the Duluth hideout after you bumped 'Shotgun' Charlie Fielder."

"I don't know what you're talking about—"

"You will. Let's ignore that, except to point out that you're due to go to Minnesota to face a murder rap—after we get through with you here. They say you're a pretty good shot, Butch—"

"Say—what're you getting at?"

"Especially with a pistol. Got a couple of marksman's medals during the war. At Camp Upton, I believe—"

"What's that got to do with—"

"And you smoke reefers—marijuana, to you."

"Who don't?" the gangster rasped.

"You smoked them the night you parked outside the Milford garage in that souped-up sedan—"speedball", they call it—while you waited for Special Agents Canning and Gilman to come out so you could mow them down with that pet gat of yours."

"You're crazy!" Butch's flabby lips purpled with fear. His brow was wet.

"Not so crazy, Butch. Then, later, you smoked the same kind of cigarette while you waited in that deserted building to knock over Federal Attorney Larson and Mills. That's five murder raps against you, Butch—"

"Ya don't know what yer talkin' about. I'm gonna get Jerry Blanton. He'll spring me outa this. I ain't sayin' nothin'—"

Dan mentally added the name of Attorney Jerome Blanton to the list of men he was going to know more about

before he got through. He knew of his record. He'd sprung almost a hundred clients from the shadow of the chair.

BLANTON isn't going to do you a bit of good. You've got Federal raps against you now. Murder on United States property. You don't beat Federal raps. Besides, nobody but Federal authorities know where you are. You've just disappeared. Probably your mob's trying to locate you right now."

Dan had poured plenty of evidence at Butch Quirk, but hadn't indicated from whence it had come for a certain reason known only to himself. Mechanics, ballistics and chemistry had given him his information. Butch was dumb, and wouldn't understand that. Dan hadn't played his trump card yet.

He'd worked hard this day—and so had the amazingly coordinated departments within the Bureau. Butch wouldn't know that two mute, inanimate phases of evidence had conspired to his downfall. The cigarette butts found in the car and in the deserted building had been compared only a few hours before in Washington with butts he'd dropped after he'd accepted other cigarettes from Dwyer.

Under the saliva test, the butts from the three places, remotely separated, had shown the same chemical combinations, revealed that the same man had smoked all three—damning evidence! Dan had matched a test bullet fired into water from the long-barreled pistol with those taken from the bodies of the four dead men—and it had matched them. A comparison microscope, allowing simultaneous study of the bullets to show the identical markings on all of them, had done the trick.

"You're the mob's chief cannon, Butch—" Dan persisted.

"You're nuts!"

"Of course, we know you didn't kill Judge Thomas. Franzio got him. Franzio came out with that when we gave him a working over—confessed after tying you in with the other jobs. That's how I happen to have the low-down—"

Dan grinned grimly as he waited

to see Butch's reaction to the statement. The gunman leaped to his feet, his eyes blazing, his features twisted into a wild, insane expression of hate and contempt.

"Yeah," he said. "Ya couldn't've known, otherwise. I covered up too complete. Never left no fingerprints. Why, that dirty, two-timin', double-crossin', yellow-bellied louse!"

He caught himself—after the damage had been done. He realized that he had given himself away. He was standing, hunched like a gorilla behind the bars, grasping them, shaking at them. Then he sagged. The wind seemed to go out of him and he sank back onto the old bench in the cell.

"Okay—you've got me—dead to rights—" he admitted, slowly. "I guess ya got that rat before he went t' New York—"

"Yes," said Dan easily, trying not to snap at this small morsel of information and thus give himself away. He was jumping fast for another lead—a follow-up. The thug on the plane had been a frequent traveler on the airlines to Washington. With women. New York was stirred up over the white slave traffic. Then—he decided on a desperate bluff.

"We got him at the airport, while he was waiting for the New York plane. He was heading for New York headquarters—to see about the women—"

"Yeah—he sure spilled his guts, all right—th' dirty rat. He was goin' t' New York, t' see Bricks Fay at th' Empire, and I suppose you'll get Fay, too, now."

"Who's at the top of the mob, Butch?"

Butch gave him a hard, measuring study.

"Franzio's doin' th' talkin'—ain't he?" Butch snarled. Dan saw that further questioning was useless. But he had tricked Butch into one important slip. Butch had told him where Franzio could be found—what he had done after the shooting at the Federal Building.

Still assuming his calm outward demeanor while every muscle in his body quivered and every nerve screamed

for action, he turned, left the detention room. He shot a glance at his watch. It was ten minutes of five. He'd promised to see Chief of Police Slade at five.

IT suddenly occurred to him that Larry Kendal was in New York City, working on the vice case there, trying to get some evidence on which the Mann act could be brought into play. Good old Larry! Just the man to round up Franzio—if the lead was straight—and nab Fay, too. More important than the lead to Franzio's whereabouts was the plain evidence that the Central City mob was actively engaged in the nation-wide vice racket.

He hurried to the field offices in the Central States Building, got in touch with the chief, informed him of developments, and asked that Kendal be assigned to running down Franzio, giving him as much information as he had.

"Kendal may be the walking image of what the man about town should be, but he's a fast thinker," Dan said. "That's what counts in this business. Having him on the New York end is like having somebody give you an extra arm—and head!"

Dwyer grinned. "It's good news," he agreed. "Now, what's the line-up?"

"Simply this. We haven't touched the man at the top, but we know he's there and that he's cleaning up. We've got Butch Quirk where we want him. But more important than that, we've got him as a witness against Franzio. Which means we've got a case against Franzio, no matter what else he's done, for the murder of Judge Thomas. We've got Merrick's testimony. Did you show him pictures of the mobster?"

"I did—when I was at the hospital earlier this afternoon. He identified Franzio as the man who shot him. And, just as important, he says he can recognize the woman Franzio had with him."

"That's all, I guess. Got that racket dope handy? It's time for my session with Turnbull and company—and I might happen to want to ram it down

their throats. And oh, Dwyer, get a list of the girls reported missing around this town. I'll want to see their parents. This isn't lots of rackets—it's all one and it adds up to these two words—'good town'." He went downstairs whistling, "There'll be a hot time in the old town tonight."

IN the taxi on his way to Police Headquarters, Dan let his head fall back against the leather cushions. It was the first relaxed moment he'd been able to snatch since boarding the plane with poor old Judge Thomas.

His mind was like a weaver's shuttle—busily, automatically, plying back and forth, holding in its grip a myriad of colored threads. So far the pattern into which they were to be assembled was foggy in outline, but certain salient features stood out.

Now he stood back, as it were, to gain a perspective on the violent and outwardly baffling events of the last forty-eight hours.

The judge was slain because he had possession of a detective's report on a wealthy, highstepping, careless girl, and that girl's diary. Something in those papers was dangerous to the gang. The first attempt on the judge's life had been made by a man later definitely established as a link in the countrywide vice chain, and this killer connected in several ways with Franzio, the racket king, whose reign of evil flourished unchecked in Central City.

The authorities could not or would not catch him. The attempt of the Government to entrap him by process of law had failed. Justice had apparently reached a dead end. The bitter, death-grim struggle would have to start again from scratch.

But no—not quite, Dan's jaw hardened. He did have Butch Quirk—had him by the throat. He himself might be able, in the conference ahead, to unearth some tangible connection between the corrupt state of the local government and the underground rule of the hoodlums who had invaded the city.

The vulnerability of this octopus of crime lay in the apparently endless

quantity of its tentacles—and if but one of these were entangled in the law's net, then the whole iniquitous monster was fairly caught.

Perhaps Larry at this very moment, attacking from the woman-racket angle, could succeed in doing just that. Perhaps. . . .

Hope was a hot flame in his heart. Larry could not fail now. He dared not!

CHAPTER VIII

Larry Trapped



WHISTLING softly, Larry Kendal approached the information desk in the lobby of the Empire Hotel in New York City. The Empire, towering into and dominating the skies at Fifth Avenue and Fifty-first Street, was

one of the largest hosteleries in New York.

"I'd like to know the number of the room occupied by John Franzio," he told the clerk.

She ran an experienced finger up and down the celluloid octagonal rack which contained the names of guests.

"I'm sorry, sir," she said. "We have no one by that name registered."

Larry's hand flicked inside his coat and from an inner pocket he drew out a photograph. He laid it on the marble counter.

"Perhaps the face made an impression on you, rather than the name," he said.

The girl's eyes widened. "Oh,—that's Mr. Tallman!" she exclaimed. "He comes here often. You'll find him on the eighteenth floor. Room eighteen forty-four."

"Thanks."

Larry turned, walked across the lobby to the elevators. He took an express elevator to the eighteenth floor, identified himself when the receptionist wanted to call the room and asked her not to. The woman hesitated.

"We don't want any trouble," she

said. "Perhaps I'd better call the floor detective."

"That won't be necessary," Larry said.

He didn't know receptionists in the Empire Hotel. He hurried down the hall, knocked at the door.

"Who's there?" he heard.

"Bringing word from Fay, Franzio."

"Okay."

The door swung open. Larry found himself facing the gangster, and the gangster found himself facing a stern young man with a forty-five automatic in his right hand.

"Say, what's the racket?"

"Murder, Franzio. Judge Thomas. Central City."

The gangster backed into the room. Larry held his foot in the door. He didn't see a motion which Franzio made with his hand, held close to his side.

"There's something screwy about this. Who're you?"

"Department of Justice."

"Somebody's been giving you the wrong signals. I don't know what you're driving at. Come on in and talk it over."

LARRY stepped forward, passed the open door. He ducked instinctively. But too late. The butt of a heavy revolver crashed down on his skull. He toppled forward, just as a million light bulbs burst in his brain.

Franzio turned to the man with the weapon. He whipped out an automatic.

"Nice work, boss. Shall I finish him?"

"Don't be a fool, Franzio. Come on, we've got to get out of here—pronto! One shot, and we'd have the whole place on us. There's a detective on every floor—"

"But what about Fay? He owes us twenty-five grand on house collections. I'm supposed to take five of the dames back to Central City. We can't leave 'em here—not with the city and Government going after us—this damned vice probe. The New York cops and the G-men'll get 'em. We've got to hide 'em out in Central City,



Franzio aimed at Dan (Page 78)

where we're covered, and then move 'em to some other city—"

"Shut up. Grab your bag and come on!"

There was a knock at the door.

"Who's there?" Franzio demanded.

"House detective. What's going on? I hear there's a Federal man in there—"

Franzio looked blankly at his companion. The latter moved quickly. He searched Larry, got his badge and identification papers, rolled the G-man under the bed. Then he opened the door.

"I'm Kendal—Larry Kendal, of the F. B. I.," he said. "I'm taking Tallman here in for a little questioning on a hot bond job."

"My name's Moriarity, house man, eighteenth floor. I've heard of you, Kendal."

"Thanks." The man turned to Franzio. "Come on, Tallman."

He looked back at Moriarity.

"We'd better use the service elevators. No use alarming the guests. We'll use Tallman's car to drive down to Lexington Avenue. It's in the garage. Here's the key to the room. Bill the Government for it, will you please?"

Moriarity nodded obsequiously, led the way to the elevator.

TEN minutes later Larry regained consciousness, wondered for a moment how he happened to be under a bed. Then it all came back to him and he felt crimson creep into his face. He'd deliberately walked into a trap—he'd failed to get his man—he'd failed the chief and Dan.

He got out from under the bed swiftly, pulled himself to his feet, raced from the room. He headed for the floor clerk.

"Seen anything of a couple of men from eighteen forty-four?" he gasped, breathlessly.

"You're the Government man, aren't you? I saw Mr. Moriarity, the floor detective, with a couple of men—"

"Will you get him, please?"

The woman pressed a button with her foot. Moriarity materialized seemingly from nowhere, peered nearsight-

edly at him. He grunted shortly:

"Yeah?"

"Did you see a couple of men leaving this floor a few minutes ago?"

"Sure. The Government man, Kendal, and a prisoner from eighteen forty-four. Longman or something like that. Why?"

Larry whistled through pursed lips, jammed a hand into a pocket, felt the absence of the leather case which held his badge. Lamely, he explained what had happened.

"I'm Kendal," he concluded, red-faced.

"That's right, Mr. Moriarity. He showed me his badge," agreed the woman behind the desk.

Moriarity, assured, told Larry that he had directed the men to the elevator. No, he couldn't describe either of them, particularly. Larry showed him Franzio's picture. He recognized it. But the other fellow—well, the light was dim, he had his hat pulled over his eyes, and Moriarity was looking at the badge, the first of its kind he'd ever seen. Yes, they went to the garage. They were going to get Longman's, or Tallman's car.

He turned to the woman. "Did Tallman make any telephone calls?" he asked.

"I can check the main switchboard."

"Thanks."

A moment later she handed him a slip of paper on which she'd written three numbers. He took it, mumbled thanks, raced for the elevators, caught an express and was whisked to the garage in the basement.

"Sure—we keep a license record," the alert attendant replied to his question. "Your man, Tallman, and another fellow just came in here—not ten minutes ago—and filled up on gas. The car's a Ford sedan with a lot of power—most I ever felt. When I parked her I stepped on her and like to went through the end of the garage."

He turned to another attendant.

"Joe, get this man the license number on the Tallman car."

THE attendant couldn't describe the two men. But he did give a full description of the car, including

the model, color and the fact that it was of 1936 vintage.

Larry jotted down the information, went to the telephone, called the F. B. I. offices on Lexington Avenue.

"Notify the New York police to give a general alarm as follows," he told Whitley, the field agent, giving him as full a description as he could. "Have them cover all outgoing highways, and watch the Holland tunnels and the George Washington Bridge particularly. They gassed up, and I've a pretty good hunch they're making a run for the open country before we're on their tails. We've got a good chance to pick 'em off.

"Take down these three numbers," he added. "We've been after Bricks Fay as head of the local vice ring, but haven't been able to finger him, or anybody connected with him. One of these numbers may be his. Dan's information was that Franzio was on his way in to New York City to see him. I'm getting my own car. I'll call you back in ten minutes to see what's developed and to get orders."

Larry went to the front of the hotel, hailed a taxi, drove to the garage where he had been keeping his sleek, high-powered roadster, cut in his radio on the police wave length, heard the alarm going out. Then he called Whitley.

"Your hunch is right so far," Whitley reported. "The car went through the Holland Tunnel just as the first broadcast hit the air. Jersey City police picked it up and tried to block the car off. The car crashed through and they chased it. It was making about seventy. Too fast. It shot out onto the skyway and made a clean getaway. May be heading for Camden or Philadelphia, or cutting out along the main line for Lancaster and York—"

"Any orders for me?"

"You're to follow through. I've already got men working the telephone numbers you gave me."

"I'm on my way!"

He hung up, ran to his car, roared out of the garage, his radio still blaring reports on the chase. The car with the two men was first reported blazing

through Elizabeth, New Jersey, with motorcycle police at first driven back by machine-gun fire and later outdistanced. At York, Larry learned that the car had passed through only five minutes before him. At Harrisburg he was only three minutes behind. A wounded policeman supplied the information.

A filling station proprietor who had gassed the car at the point of a gun near Altoona told Larry he was a minute behind and that the car was heading for Pittsburgh. Shooting down winding roads, pounding up to better than eighty on the open stretches, Larry lapped off the miles, his knuckles gripped the steering wheel until they were white and aching, his eyes peering into the darkness, studying the highway far ahead as it was limned in his powerful headlamps.

He was approaching Pittsburgh when he first picked up the tail light of a speeding car—felt sure he had his men because of the fact they were going so fast. A sudden burst, with his throttle on the floorboard, sent him close enough to distinguish the license plate. It bore the number he sought!

The driver of the car ahead was wary of approach. The small sedan added speed even as he did.

Then, from the pursued car, flame bit into the night in fierce, intermittent bursts. Lead spanged into Larry's roadster, splintered the windshield, tore into the radiator, whanged holes through the fenders. Larry whipped out his forty-five, fired awkwardly with his left hand as he held the wheel with his right.

The car swerved, careened down the highway, now a few miles east of the Pittsburgh city line. Shooting was awkward. The sedan was gaining now, out of range of the pistol as far as accurate shooting was concerned—unless Larry made a lucky shot. The tail light was a crimson, bobbing pinpoint. The tommy-gun still poured bursts of lead. Then it happened—

A BULLET whanged through a fender, bit into Larry's left front tire. The tire blew. Larry felt the car head for the left side of the highway,

fought to keep it straight—It plunged across the white center line, shot across a ditch, piled into a telephone pole, swung sideward and with a roar and a crash went over on its side. Larry felt himself flying through the air, grasping at nothing.

Then a wrenching, tearing sensation gripped his body as he crashed to the ground.

When he regained consciousness, he found several people bending over him. One of them said:

"He's coming to!"

Larry struggled to a sitting position, felt himself gingerly, looked about him.

"Who's going west?" Larry mumbled. "I've got to get to Police Headquarters in Pittsburgh. Government man."

With the help of bystanders, he got to his feet. His car was a total wreck. A moment later he had convinced the wide-eyed tourists who had stopped to aid him that he had to get into Pittsburgh immediately. They drove him through.

Arriving there, he found that all trace of Franzio and his unknown companion had been lost. He checked on airplane schedules, found that he could leave for Central City in an hour. He made a full report for the Pennsylvania State Police, called a taxi and drove to the airport.

At the airport he bought a paper, and the headlines lifted his depression, sent a thrill through his tired bones.

Screaming black headlines told him:

G-MEN LEAD N. Y. VICE RAIDS!

New York. (U. P.) Acting on a tip from an unnamed Department of Justice agent, members of the New York field offices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation today and tonight cooperated with local police in one of the most sensational vice raids in history. Swooping down in Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx, more than five hundred police, acting on information secured through a series of telephone numbers uncovered by the G-men, raided more than fifty establishments and arrested Howard (Bricks) Fay, said to be overlord of the illicit trade, along with several henchmen.

The men, ten in number, were booked on charges of violation of the Mann act, which

provides for the arrest of anyone transporting women from one state to another for immoral purposes. Of more than two hundred women arrested in the vast raids, more than two score were ready and willing to testify that through Fay and the others they had been lured from small towns in other states on promises of legitimate employment.

Although Ira Whitley, field agent of the local F. B. I. offices, refused to discuss the case, it was reported from reliable sources that the organization in New York is a part of a vast ring with headquarters in a large middle west city.

Local police are working with the New York bureau of missing persons in the hope of returning as many of the women as possible, virtual prisoners in houses of vice until the raids, to their homes after the various trials of the men involved.

The story continued for more than a column.

Larry felt considerably better after he'd finished reading it.

CHAPTER IX

Gods of Fortune



DAN threw a quick glance around the plaster-walled room. "I thought District Attorney Turnbull was to join us," he said. "I'm sorry to have missed him."

Mayor Blake waved a pudgy hand. "He was suddenly called to New York.

Sister's ill or something. I can speak for him, and so can Slade. We know his views."

Dan pulled up a chair and joined them at the long oak table. "Let's get this thing out into the open. Are you and Chief Slade going to cooperate with the Bureau in getting to the bottom of these killings, your Honor—or do we work alone?" Dan's eyes informed them that either course was perfectly agreeable to him.

The mayor evaded the issue, cleared his throat nervously.

Slade frowned. "I resent the way you framed that question, Fowler," he said. "Just because we don't like your methods doesn't mean that we're hand in glove with the crooks, my friend.

We were getting along all right until you Government boys horned in. Everything that's happened is directly the result of what I can only call misguided interference on the part of the F.B.I."

"I agree perfectly," Mayor Blake echoed, relieved to have a lead to follow.

"It was misguided to arrest Franzio?" Dan demanded.

"It was foolish to arrest him prematurely," the mayor corrected, so smugly that Dan yearned to bash his fat face in. "That's one thing we've learned in dealing with lawbreakers. Make sure of your case before you act."

Dan's teeth flashed in a murderous smile. "Which no doubt explains," he murmured benignly, "the almost entire absence of action shown by your local authorities." He sat forward, grimly earnest. "The F.B.I. is functioning for your protection, Mayor Blake.

"It is an interesting commentary on the situation in this town that you have to date not only refused to cooperate with us, but have blocked our activities in every possible way."

"Is it unnatural to dislike meddlers, Mr. Fowler?" Slade demanded. "I'm sick of the glory-grabbers the Government is sending into our towns and cities, disrupting routine, creating pandemonium, doing more harm than good, really—"

"From whose point of view?" Fowler cut in. "Listen to me. Rackets are wide open in this town. Murder walks the streets unchallenged. You do nothing. Your police does nothing. Your courts are helpless as babies. And then when we try to force you to notice what's going on around you—to attempt at least to clean out your house, you yell 'Intruders—glory grabbers!' at us.

"What about that grocer D'Ambroglio shot down in cold blood because he refused to pay tribute to the Grocers' Protective Association? What about Gusello who had kerosene poured over his stock and was threatened to such an extent that he committed point-blank perjury at Fran-

zio's trial? What about the dozens and dozens of similar cases all through the city? Can't you—do you refuse absolutely to protect these people?"

"That has nothing to do with you," Slade said, frowning.

"It will have if any interstate shipments are damaged or destroyed. On top of this, merchants are beaten up because they refuse to install slot machines and marble boards in their shops. Your red light district is wide open. You've got a Wholesale Milk Dealers' Association organized after the dealers had gasoline dumped into their milk. Also a taxicab insurance racket and—"

MAYOR BLAKE leaped to his feet.

"You didn't get that information from any legitimate source!" he stormed. "Our newspapers—"

"I know about your newspapers, and know they don't print the truth," Dan countered.

"May I ask where you got all this information?" sneered Slade.

"Certainly. Your people are sick and tired of the way your politicians and so-called public servants are cringing in the face of an army of organized criminals. They've heard about the G-men—and they come to us. Agent Dwyer has been keeping records of all complaints for months, hoping that they'll tie into something which will permit a Federal charge. Constant mention of Franzio in the complaints was the reason that the income-tax evasion case was built up against him.

"There's one racket I haven't mentioned yet. Hot cars are being brought into Central City, rebuilt and being sold. As soon as we gather any evidence of violation of the Dyer act, dealing with the transportation of stolen cars over state lines, you'll have action there."

"Balderdash," Mayor Blake snapped.

"Gentlemen, I'm telling you right now that Central City is at this moment the worst sinkhole of vice, corruption and graft that it ever has been my experience to encounter. The

Federal Bureau of Investigation is going to clean up this place if we have to pull down the town. We're going to get Franzio and everyone else involved. We'd like to have your cooperation. But, whether we have it or not, the Federal Bureau of Investigation *is not going to be stopped!*"

He paused. Mayor Blake and Chief Slade were staring at him, bewildered by the portent of his words.

"That is all I have to say," he added. "Except that if either of you has anything that needs taking care of before the fireworks begin, you'd better attend to it pronto! And now, gentlemen, good afternoon. I need a little good, fresh air!"

He grabbed his hat, turned and left the offices. When he got back to Dwyer's office, Larry Kendal's report was already off the wires. Dwyer handed Dan the teletyped message.

"Whew!" exclaimed Dan. He had a sudden thought. Turnbull had made a flying trip to New York City that very day. The unidentified man with Franzio—

He slammed his right fist into the palm of his left hand.

"The report says that Franzio and his traveling mate are heading back for Central City. We'd better go to work. What've you dug up on the gangster? Where does he live? Has he got a wife or sweetheart? Where does he hang out? Who are his associates?"

DWYER consulted some papers on his desk.

"He's still living at the Windsor—was, before he went on trial three days ago. I'll put Miller on that. His offices are in the Equity Insurance Building. Joe Marks can watch that end of it—work in McCreary's cigar stand in the foyer. Franzio is silent partner in the town's biggest club—the Trocadero. Everybody goes there, from gangsters to college boys and from politicians to socialites. He's stuck on Mona Burton, the singing star."

"Might be something interesting there," Dan mused. "The place must have a band. A band means musicians

—not gangsters," the G-man said.

He snapped his fingers.

"That's in the bag. Larry Kendal's a wow on the violin. Played in an orchestra to get through law school. Still has his union card. If one of the violinists was to get sick—"

"Good idea. But Larry—"

"He'll be here. He's after Franzio, isn't he? And Franzio's heading this way because he thinks he'll be protected. I can see Larry burning right now. He's on fire. Well here's his chance to blow a little steam." He frowned. "I hope Franzio didn't get too good a look at him in New York. Still I guess if Larry changes his face a little and keeps out of Franzio's way as much as possible, he'll be able to get by."

Dwyer grinned. "If you get him in the orchestra, he can watch everything—and nobody pays any attention to a second fiddle. Now what're you going to do?"

"You've got that list of parents of missing girls I asked for? Good," Dan said. "First I'll call on them and then I'm going to see how Charlie Merrick's doing at the hospital, and how he reacts to the suggestion that Mona Burton may have been the dame in Franzio's car."

DAN held his finger on the doorbell button of Cathcart Wilson's large, turreted home until a house-jacketed butler opened the door.

"I'd like to see Mr. Wilson," said Dan, showing his badge.

"Mr. Wilson left yesterday morning for London, I believe, sir," the butler told him.

Dan's eyes narrowed. "Left? Just like that?"

The servant looked at the badge again. "Well, of course I wouldn't like anything said, sir, but I believe Mr. Wilson was *instructed to do so.*"

There was something in the way the phrase was emphasized that made Dan prick up his ears. He remembered now what the thug had told him—how Wilson had been forced to reveal the cache in Judge Thomas' safe. Dan could almost hear the thickened voice whispering;

"If you ever want to see your kid again, brother, you'll hop a liner, cross the pond, and stay put. If you're good, we may send her to you."

"There was a phone call three or four nights ago," the butler went on, "and immediately afterward Mr. Wilson sent all the servants downtown to the movies, sir. When we reached home, Mr. Wilson told me to pack his trunks. He seemed upset, sir. Greatly upset."

"I have to go to London," he told me. Then he smiled, sir. A heart-breaking smile, if I may say so, and said to me, 'I have to go. Those are orders.'"

Dan nodded and thanked the butler for what he had told him. Of course, there would be a routine check on the millionaire coal operator's recent movements, but that trail seemed played out.

Three more fruitless calls to silent, grief-torn homes, and Dan found himself in the heart of Shanty Town, mounting the worn steps of the Michalsky cottage. A tall, dark-haired woman in a house dress, wiping her reddened hands on an apron, admitted Dan to a parlor that was evidently used but once in a blue moon. A christening party. A wedding. A funeral, maybe. The rest of the time the shades drawn, the double doors kept firmly closed.

While he waited he examined a hand-painted, cheaply artistic photograph of a handsome, golden-haired girl; and the cleanness, the wholesomeness of her expression shone like a golden light through the clumsy tinting the photograph had suffered. This was Maritza Michalsky, Dan knew—and the knowledge of where that girl might at this moment be sent the blood pounding angrily through his veins.

He looked up and saw a tense little man, grizzled of hair, lined and gaunt of face, standing in the doorway. His eyes were like daggers; his mouth was working. Suddenly, without warning, he launched himself straight at Dan.

"Where is my girl?" he cried. "What have you done with her, you

dirty, good-for-nothing—" he swore.

His hands, like talons, clawed for Dan's face; then he was writhing helplessly in the G-man's sturdy, unrelenting grip. Dan was as gentle with him as he could be, holding him by the wrists, forcing him back against the wall.

"Take your hands off me, you pig!" the old man moaned. "I kill you—kill you—"

"Take it easy," Dan said, quietly. "You've made a mistake."

The big dark-haired woman came running into the room. "Obe! Obe, stop it!"

"I want to help you," Dan went on, in the same quiet tone. He turned to the woman. "Can't you make him understand?"

She nodded her head and turned to the old man. "Obe, listen to me. This man is our friend. Look at his face. See how good it is. He could not be one of those men who took Maritza."

HER quiet, capable voice had the desired effect, and the little Polish miner grew quiet; his face lost some of its terrible anguish. He breathed in gulping sobs.

"Hush," the woman said. "Be quiet or you will wake Zana and she will begin to scream again."

Dan let his arms fall to his sides and



turned questioningly to the woman. "I am Maritza's aunt," she said. "Her mother—she is upstairs—her mind—"

Dan nodded and addressed himself to Michalsky. "Listen, I'm trying to help you. I am from the Government."

The old man shrugged wearily. "The police," he said in a voice hopeless as death itself. "You can do

nothing. I cannot talk about it any more. Go away. Leave us in peace."

"I am not from Central City," Dan insisted. "I'm from Washington, and I promise you that we'll get to the bottom of this rotten business before we're finished." His jaw squared, and his grey eyes glinted honest determination.

Obeli Michalsky eyed the huge, lean young man queringly, felt a vague tremor of hope stir in his chest. Yes, this was a good young man. Not like the other police who had come and hounded them with questions while Zana lay up there in her room, endlessly screaming. What this young man said, he would do.

He was strong, too; had he not handled him — Michalsky — like a child. Obeli glanced at the broad shoulders, the deep chest, the rangy, powerful limbs. And as he looked he felt, far down inside him, something stir into life again. He did not know exactly what it was, but it was a good feeling—the rebirth of trust in a fellow man, the knowledge that all men were not cowardly, miserable dogs, snapping and yelping in a world that was no better than hell gone mad.

That trust shone now in his haggard old eyes as, simply, he held out his hand, grasped Dan's warmly.

"I want to help you," he said, brokenly. "Tell me what I can do."

Dan smiled. "I'll be honest with you, Michalsky. I can't promise that Maritza will ever come back to you. But I swear that she'll not go unavenged."

The little miner nodded. "Vengeance—if only so much was given me—I would be satisfied. That would be enough. But when they let that mad dog, that Franzio, go free—"

"Franzio?" Dan repeated. "What do you know about him?"

"I know he is no good. Anna's husband, he is janitor in the building where that man live. He has seen plenty. And I know what everybody say—that Franzio is responsible for all the dirtiness that has come to this town. If I could only be sure that he was the guilty one I would kill him—with these hands—" He held out his trembling fists.

"You might not get the chance," Dan told him gravely. Poor old man, he thought, half crazy with grief. He'd help me if he could. If he could—" Say, wait a minute!

"What was that you said about one of your friends being a janitor in Franzio's apartment house?" Dan Fowler asked quickly.

The dark-haired woman stepped forward. "My husband," she said. "Zana's brother."

"**L**ISTEN," said Dan. "I need a man who can keep an eye on Franzio without being suspected. Someone who'd have a chance to watch him day in and day out. Of course I've got my men tailing him all the time, but— Look, do you suppose your husband could go away for a little while?"

"If he had someone to take his place, sure!"

But Obeli was quicker than his sister-in-law. His shrewd old brain understood quickly what Dan intended.

"You want me to take Joe's place, is that it?"

"That's it."

The old man slammed his fist against his horny palm.

"I do it! Anything is better than staying around this house, doing nothing, remembering where she was—" He caught himself abruptly, mastered the quiver of his stubbled chin. "Sure. I do it! I fix that rat. You and me, mister, we fix him together!" The rheumy eyes were shining now, grim with purpose, and Dan blessed the smiling gods of fortune for directing him to this humble house.

A few minutes of eager discussion between Obeli and Anna, conducted mostly in Polish, and the final arrangements were made. Obeli turned to Dan.

"You come see me in two-three days. I have news for you, sure. Thank you, mister. Thank you very much. Obeli Michalsky, he has come to life again. Now he is no more grieving old woman. If only Maritza could know that she would be very happy."

CHAPTER X

Dan is Taken

HALF an hour later, feeling oddly refreshed and encouraged Dan was mounting the steps of the hospital, so preoccupied with the plans that he was forming in his mind that he did not see the two figures, like dark shadows of evil, that detached themselves from the alleyway across the street. Nor could he know that they had been there for hours, waiting for the moment of his arrival. He went straight up to Merrick's room on the fifth floor in the east wing. Merrick, fumbling with a small button attached to a cord, stuck it under the covers, greeted him cordially. Dan noted the button.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Passport to heaven!" Merrick grinned, weakly. "Push the button—up pops the most beautiful blonde who ever pulled a Florence Nightingale."

Dan told Merrick his idea about Mona Burton. Merrick frowned and shook his head. "Not a chance, I'd know the Burton dame anywhere—couldn't miss her. No, sir, we'll have to keep on looking. The girl I saw—"

The door behind Dan opened noiselessly. A man who was dressed in white coat and trousers stepped into the room. A second, also dressed in a uniform. Both had heavy, coarse faces and there was a cruel depth to their eyes.

Dan went for his forty-fives, found himself staring into a blunt-nosed revolver. He saw another gun covering Merrick.

"Not so fast, Fowler!" the first man growled. Dan stepped forward, his fists clenched. The thug backed against the wall, so that he could cover both G-men.

"You're sunk this time, G-man," he snarled. "Followed you here. You're goin' along with us. Th' big shot's left word—wants to know—that is, we're

goin' t' find out where Butch Quirk is. And as fer you—" he swung his glance to Merrick. "You know too much. You know the guy that plugged ya. And we don't leave witnesses."

He eyed his companion.

"Give 'm th' needle, Speed. It'll look like it's th' hospital's fault."

Dan looked around him hastily, trying to figure an escape. He knew he was on the spot. A tough one. In a building, surrounded by nurses, physicians, visitors. And no chance to summon them, with that blunt-nosed barrel boring into his stomach. The second man pulled out a hypodermic needle. The thug grabbed Merrick by the arm; the needle posed above the bare flesh, swiftly descended.

Then the door to the room swung open. A blonde nurse, who had padded silently down the corridor on rubber soles, rushed in.

"Charlie!" she exclaimed. "You shouldn't—"

The man with the hypodermic tossed it on the bed, grabbed her, slapped his hand over her mouth. For a split second, the man with the gun turned his head at the sound of her voice. Dan hurled himself forward as the thug with the revolver had his glance averted.

He seized a metal chair beside the bed, sent it crashing at the gunman's head, drove him backward, off balance. Then he jumped across the bed, levering with his hands and utilizing the recoil of the springs, knocked the second thug against the wall with a left, tore the nurse away from his grasp.

DAN whirled, saw the thug with the gun writhing on the floor, fighting himself free of the white metal chair. The fellow raised his gun, his face livid with fury, just as Dan kicked out. The toe of his shoe caught the man's wrist just as the gun went off. The bullet ploughed into the ceiling. The gun went clattering under the bed. The gunman rolled to one side, got to his feet. Screams and shouts came down the corridor.

The second thug dove for the door. "Scram!" he yelled.

The gunman got to his knees, threw himself into the corridor as Dan sought to block him, got to his feet and sprinted. Dan, drawing his pistols, shot after him. The two white-uniformed men scurried down the hallway. Nurses and physicians milled in it, panic-stricken. The thugs bowled several over as they crashed ahead, darted into a service elevator, used mainly for transporting stretcher cases up and down. Dan was forced to hold his fire to keep from hitting someone. His guns were useless. The door to the service car clanged shut. Ahead of him Dan saw a square fixture of frosted glass affixed to the ceiling, bearing the legend, "Stairway." He shot for it, darted downward three steps at a time.

Between the fourth and third floors he got the answers to the white uniforms. Two men, who looked like internees, although they were stripped to their underwear, struggled with gags and bonds in an alcove. Dan continued his mad rush downward, his heart pounding, his lungs sucking air in great gasps.

If only he could reach the main floor before the slow service elevator!

He got to the main floor, shot into the corridor, headed toward the foyer and saw that he was too late. The thugs were already diving across it, heading for the street. He was almost on their heels as they shot through a glass revolving door. He slammed into it, swung through it, and started down the wide stone steps, twenty-five or so in number, to the crowded sidewalk. The men raced ahead of him.

"Stop them!" he shouted. "Stop them!"

As he darted ahead, waiting for a chance to use his pistols, two more men, whom he didn't see, closed in behind him. In the last split second, he heard footfalls, tried to turn. Before he could get clear around, something crashed against the side of his skull. The steps beneath him rocked, turned over and over, while the street lamps, buildings and trees joined in the mad, rushing circle. He plunged headlong down the steps and ended in a tangled heap.

The foggy, distorted, reeling world was just coming back to him when he felt himself being hurled like a bag of flour into the rear of an automobile. Somebody, far in the distance, was shouting:

"Hey! What're you doing there?"

He heard the replying shout:

"He's crazy. We're takin' him to a nut—an asylum—"

He feigned unconsciousness. He heard a woman's voice. A soft, rich contralto.

"Where to, boys?"

"The lakefront hideout, Claire—"

"That was pretty slick, sneakin' them coats off th' internees—"

"But we didn't get Merrick. We gotta fix him so he won't talk—ever—"

Dan braced himself as his captors piled into the car. At that moment, he had no thought of going to the lakefront hideout or any other one. He knew what his fate would be when the thugs tried to find out what had become of Butch Quirk.

Here, he had a chance. The woman at the wheel slipped the car into gear. The car lurched. At the same instant, Dan leaped to his feet, lashed out at the nearest thug. Out of the corner of his eyes he saw the woman at the wheel turn—saw rich brown eyes, heavy brown hair, an oval face with perfect lips.

Viciously, he swung his fist into the face of the thug nearest the door of the car. One of the men shouted:

"CLAI—step on it—"

Dan lunged forward, jerked free of restraining hands, hurled his weight against the rear door and pressed down hard on the door lever with his left hand. The door jerked open. He kicked out, and was heading face downward for the street, with his arms up to protect his face, when he felt strong arms grip his feet.

Someone towered over him. He struggled wildly, kicked, couldn't shake the grip. Again, something crashed against his skull, and the world went black. He sagged, his powerful muscles slacking. Hard hands grabbed at his trousers, his coat, pulled him back into the car. The

door was slammed shut with a bang. "Give her hell, Claire!" one of the men barked.

The car leaped away from the curb—ing like a thing alive, shot into the stream of traffic.

WHEN the fog cleared from Dan Fowler's aching brain the second time, he found his eyes and mouth were taped—his arms and legs trussed so tight that the ropes cut into his torn and bruised flesh. He knew by the hollow sound of voices that he was in an empty room. His agony-torn body was lying on a hardwood floor. He heard the scrape of chairs, the flip and ruffle of cards, then a woman's voice:

"I think that he's coming around, Pink."

The chairs scraped back. Someone was bending over him. "Looks like he was still out—we'll see—"

A heavy foot booted his ribs. Try as he might, he could not help but wince.

"He's awake, all right," said another voice. Dan judged that there were about four men in the room, and the woman.

"Take the tape off his mouth."

Dan recoiled under the stinging tear as the tape broke away, torturing the skin around his mouth, ripping at his lips.

"Ya gonna talk, G-man?"

"No." Dan's voice cracked from thick, swollen, raw lips.

"Yes you are. You're gonna tell us where ya got Butch Quirk. Lissen, G-man. You nor anybody else ain't gonna get Franzio. An' ya ain't gonna have Butch Quirk where he c'n shoot off his mouth. Before we get through with ya, we're gonna have th' finger on Quirk—get it?"

Dan's muscles tightened, flexed. He felt the strength of the ropes which bound him, the security of the knots. Beads of perspiration stood out on his head and his throat was so dry he thought he would gag.

"You won't get anything from me."

"We'll see. Gorman, get th' poker."

Dan heard one of the men go to the fireplace. The red-hot iron was held

near his face so he could feel the heat while the leader of the mob, addressed by the others as Briggs, ripped off Dan's shoes. If he was getting this, thought Dan, what had happened to poor Merrick? He had left him without a guard.

"Where's Quirk?" The tone was cold, brutal, menacing.

THE iron bit into Dan's bare flesh; his sensitive nerves reacted—Dan writhed under the horrible pain. He bit his lips until the blood came. He smelled the nauseating odor of his own skin burning—acid—

"If this don't work, I'll try his eyes," Briggs snorted.

The woman screamed.

"Briggs—for heaven's sake—not that!"

"Shut up!"

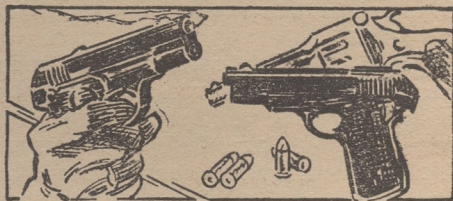
"I won't shut up. You fool—you'll kill him before you're through. Use your head. Do you want Franzio and the chief to find you've killed him? You'd better wait. If they're going to murder the man, let them do it."

"You keep outa this. You dames—you've all got weak bellies."

Dan cringed under the heat, set every muscle in his body to fight the pain.

"Where's—" This was Briggs' voice.

Dan heard a sound, the fall of the woman's feet—heard her grab at the



poker—felt the relentless, torturing fire go away.

"Leave him alone," the woman urged. "You won't get anything now, give him time—to think. Slap some tape on his face and let him sit."

There was a moment of silence. Then the poker crashed into the fireplace.

"Okay—you win!" growled Briggs.

CHAPTER XI

To the Hideout

OWLER heard the shuffling of feet. He was saved then, for a while. They could torture him—try any known means of getting him to talk—but he'd see them and himself in hell before he'd let them know that Butch Quirk was in the

boarded-up, disused basement of the Federal Building.

The grind of a key in a lock smote his senses. He was alone in the room. Alone with bonds he couldn't break. Bonds that held him tightly as a vise.

Inspiration smote him like lightning. That poker! The red-hot poker, hurled back at the fireplace in a mad moment, cooling now. Soon it would be too cold. But if he could—

Dan summoned all of his flagging strength. He rocked, twisted, turned, rolled, wincing with pain, heading for the fireplace. Every move was agony. Two things guided him—his aural memory—the sound of the poker striking brick or rocks—the heat of the fire itself.

He reached the hearth. He groped with his whole body, seeking the pain of contact with that fiery iron rod. Then he smelled burning cloth. His knee had struck the burning point of the poker.

Quickly he whirled, kicked his body around, backed against it. Fiercely he locked his jaws as the searing metal stung, bit into the flesh of his arms. With a burning exultation he lowered himself so that the metal was under the coarse rope. He smelled burning hemp, tugged, sawed, prayed that only one strand would give.

Sweat dripped down over his face from the heat of the fire and from his own exertions. He alternately tensed, shifted his position, as he smelled the burning rope, felt the cruel searing of the hot iron. Then he stiffened. He heard footsteps in the hall. They paused by the door. Then they went

on again. Dan sighed with relief.

He yanked, jerked—and a strand of rope, eaten through, snapped! One hand free. Another. Then he clawed clumsily at the thongs which bound his ankles. They gave way. Dan reeled uncertainly to his feet and heard the key grating in the lock.

He ripped the adhesive tape from his battered lips and sore, smarting eyelids, blinked, groped for the poker. His guns were gone—the mob had taken them.

He got the poker. He looked around him, saw a window, at the same time realizing that one weak man, armed with only a poker, would be a poor match against four guns. The handle on the door was turning now. He swung up the poker, sent it crashing against the window, peered out into foggy murk. He saw that he was on the second floor. He twisted himself out the window. He heard a shout behind him as he kicked out his feet, hung to the ledge.

"Quick—he's getting away—Gorman! Briggs! Joe!"

AN automatic barked. Lead whistled through space. He struck the ground, rolled backward, fell, leaped groggily to his feet. He plunged forward, still grasping the poker, down a narrow areaway between the building from which he had just leaped and another.

"Outside—get him!" he heard another voice call.

He heard the crash of shots. Lead whispered about him. He plunged onward. Then, at the end of the areaway, in the gloom, he saw a tall figure bulking—two yards ahead. He lowered his head, charged, crashed into the man, felt his body yield, dived into the street. A second man was there—his face black in the mistiness of the night. The fellow was pulling himself from a car.

Dan plummeted onward, reeling drunkenly, carried now by nerve and the force of his own momentum. The man who had attempted to block him was a crumpled heap, piled up on his face and his stomach, in the areaway. He saw the man ahead turn, saw

metal glint in his hand. With a wild swing he hurled the poker, heard a scream of pain, saw the fellow double up, dived for the car, wrenched the door open.

The ignition keys were not in the lock.

He looked back at the man sprawled by the car, who was struggling to get up. Dan grabbed the poker again, brought it down over his skull, saw the keys slip from his nerveless fingers, scooped them up. There were more shouts from inside the house. Someone ran onto the porch.

"He's in front!" he heard.

Lead crashed into the car as he snapped the key into the ignition lock, plunged his foot down on the starter, felt the hot motor jump, heard it roar.

Bullets spanged into the body, bored through glass. One crashed into the instrument board as he got the gear lever into first and stepped on the gas. The car literally leaped into the air, plunged wildly down the street, beating out the hail of bullets. Dan didn't turn around to see the spats of orange-red flame which mottled the night as the firing increased. He bent over the wheel, hung on, shot through the gears into the wispy fog which had gathered and swooped down over the waterfront street, offering hazard and protection at the same time.

The car had gone half a mile before he breathed easily—before he realized that he was at the wheel of one of the gang's "speedballs"—one of the souped-up light cars which had made slow, lumbering hacks of everything which had gone out after them during the past two days and nights.

Eventually he got his bearings and, with just one thought in his mind—the safety of poor Merrick, lying in a cot at St. Francis Hospital—he shot in that direction. He hoped that he wasn't too late.

He wasn't conscious that he wore only one shoe and that his bare foot was burned and bleeding. Nothing mattered but to get to that hospital.

The car roared up in front of the stone steps. He slammed on the brakes, limped painfully up the stairs, stalked into the foyer, heading for the

elevators. Someone said sharply: "See here—you can't go up there now!"

He was conscious of a woman's voice—of a hand of restraint.

"G-man—" he mumbled. "Fowler—gotta see him—gotta see—"

"See who?"

"Merrick—"

He forgot about elevators, thought only of the stairs, jerked himself free of the nurse, went for them, raced up them, his injured foot leaving a crimson trail on the white stone. After what seemed ages he rocked into the right corridor.

Blindly, he staggered down it. Two men, whom he vaguely recognized as Jones and Bierman, from the field office, leaped from chairs in front of Merrick's door and flanked him.

"Lemme go," he mumbled. "Merrick—where is he?"

"He's all right, Fowler. What the devil happened to you? You look as if you'd walked through hell in the raw—"

There was a commotion inside the room. The door opened.

"Dan!"

A vague, blurred vision of Larry Kendal stood before him. Two Larry Kendals—three—four—

From a long distance came Larry's voice.

"Everything's okay, Dan. Merrick's safe. We've even got guards on Dwyer. Everything—"

That was all Dan heard. He pitched forward into his teammate's ready arms.

DAN opened his eyes to find himself blinded by the glaring white light of an operating room, while he felt intense pain in his right foot. He soon discovered that he was on a table, on his back, and that a surgeon was dressing his foot. Nurses stood on each side of him.

He grunted, pulled himself upright against the pressure of the nurses' hands. The surgeon swung around, shot a questioning glance at another person. Dan blinked, saw that it was Larry.

"You can't do that—" began one of

the nurses. "You have been hurt!"

"It's done!" he snapped. "Larry—what time is it?"

"Four forty-five."

"How long've I been out?"

"Ten minutes, Dan."

"How's Merrick?"

"He's okay. Bragging a little about how smart he was to think of that push-button gag and calling the nurse."

"What gag?"

"Remember that button gadget he had? It was to call Millicent. One ring meant he wanted to look at her. Two rings meant that he was dying to see her. Three rings meant he was just plain dying. When the two mobsters popped in he rang ten times!"

Dan grinned.

"What about Franzio—and the guy with him?"

"Must've come on by car. At the rate they were going they ought to be in town—"

Recollection and inspiration hit Dan at the same time. He pulled his foot away from the surgeon, swung around on the table. The car! The man he had ploughed into in the darkness! The slim fellow he'd thrown the poker at!

"Good heavens!" he gasped. "Larry, I've got Franzio on the spot. The other fellow, too. Quick! Get a phone. Call Dwyer at home. Have him round up a gang—as many as possible. Here are the directions—"

He gave a quick description of the place, amazing himself with the detail his mind had retained. The directions were exact.

"But in your condition," protested the physician, "you can't—"

"You've never worked with the guy with the whiskers—Uncle Sam—so you don't know," replied Dan. "Hop to it, Larry. Quick, somebody, get me a shoe. Right foot. A big one that'll go on over the bandages—"

One of the nurses shot a perplexed look at the surgeon. He held up his hands in a despairing gesture. She disappeared. Larry darted for the telephone. The surgeon insisted on completing his bandaging of the foot. Larry came back, reported that Dwyer

would meet them with two sedans filled with men at the lakefront hide-out.

CHAPTER XII

Closing In



IX minutes later, with Larry at the wheel, and Dan giving directions, the powerful "speedball" was shooting through the deserted streets of Central City. There was not as yet a hint of dawn and the streets were murky and heavy with fog.

Dan's foot ached. His head ached. His body ached. But the scent of the chase was so strong in his nostrils that he didn't feel the agonizing pain.

"We've got to get Franzio," he said. "Franzio—and the man with him. I suppose Merrick's told you about Butch Quirk being held incommunicado. He'll testify against Franzio. Merrick will do the same. We've got him where we want him if we can only take him."

"Who's the big fellow?" asked Larry. "Got any ideas?"

"Plenty—but nothing to go on. Turnbull, the district attorney, planned out of here for New York City just after you left—and it may have been he who clouted you when you called on Franzio. Jerome Blanton, an attorney-criminal, as the chief calls them, has been springing the gang members right and left. Ross Slade, the chief of police, has forgotten how to make a pinch and he's bucking me. So's Meredith Blake, the mayor, who carried word to me last night that Turnbull was going to jump us on state charges if we did anything out of line or exceeded our authority."

Larry sighed. "Nice city to buy a home and settle down in."

The car streaked through Van Beuren street, into Jackson, south along Olive and cut across toward the lake. Dan told Larry to slow down. At Mercer street he ordered a left turn into Waverly Place. He asked Larry to

douse the lights. The car, purring along soundlessly in high gear, went ahead two more blocks.

"There's the house!" Dan exclaimed, pointing to the two-story structure from which he made his escape. Both men noted that the shades were drawn. No light seeped through. The place looked deserted.

Dan looked out of the car, saw that they were opposite an empty house.

"Pull into the driveway," Dan said. "We'll get out of sight and wait for Dwyer and his men. They ought to be here any minute."

HE glanced at his watch. It was just five o'clock. Dan got one of Larry's pistols. On the chance of finding another, he searched the car. There was none, he discovered, ending up with an examination of the glove compartment, which contained several worn road maps and some cards. He lit a match, shielded the glow, to examine these. Several bore the legend:

CENTRAL GARAGE INC.

The address was 121 Division street.

Dan shoved the cards back in the compartment.

"Let's get out and look over the place," he said to Larry. His companion nodded. They left the car in the driveway, out of sight, and went to the sidewalk. Dan reached it first, shot a look into the foggy thoroughfare, seized Larry and pushed him back out of sight against a building. He followed.

"What's the matter?" Larry rasped.

Dan pointed through the murk

"Two 'speedballs'!" he exclaimed. No sooner had he spoken than the two cars swept by, jarred to a halt in front of the hideout.

"What th'—" began Larry.

"Looks like they're making a get-away. Probably figured I'd be back," Dan snapped. "I'd give a million if Dwyer'd show—"

There wasn't a sign of the Government cars. Using telephone poles and trees for shelter, Dan and Larry moved toward the house. They saw drivers leave the cars, go to the front

porch. Dan saw that he and his companion were walking right into trouble.

"Shall we make a break for the cars?" Larry asked nervously. "We've got to do something. If Dwyer doesn't show—"

"Haven't got a chance. Can't even see how many are in 'em," Dan replied. He moved a few feet forward—and then darted for the shelter of a tree as the front door of the house opened.

"Shall we rush 'em?" asked Larry. Dan gripped the butt of the pistol which he held in his hand.

"I'm going to bluff 'em," he whispered.

Figures piled out on the porch, started for the cars.

Dan saw that there were at least eight in the group—and that the woman was not among them. He was desperate. He looked around him, saw in the wispy, boiling fog an ally. He knew that the chances were ten to one against him but if he could make them believe that other G-men lurked in the mist—

"Okay. I'm going out." He stepped from behind the tree, pistol leveled.

"STICK 'em up!" he commanded as he moved forward. "Department of Justice. We've got you surrounded!"

The figures froze in their tracks. Dan saw them wheel.

"Let 'em have it!" boomed a voice.

The night filled with the roar and crack of pistols. Orange flame bit holes in the mist. Lead whispered by Dan. He picked one big, hulking figure, steadied his aim, squeezed the trigger of his gun. His face was hard as stone—his eyes grey and baleful—as he fired one shot with deadly accuracy.

He heard a cry of agony, saw the big fellow pitch forward, smiled grimly, darted for a tree. Larry's gun was spewing lead from a second tree. Dan made his goal just in time. The thugs had found his range. Lead thudded into it. Larry took a desperate chance, plunging through the darkness to a pole ten yards away. Dan applauded the move—saw that Larry was trying

to give the mob the impression that there were several G-men—not just two.

He made a similar shift. His gun barked again. Then the gang broke—made for the cars.

Dan saw them dart through the murk—sent shots crashing after them. He saw a second figure drop—looked vainly for the woman known as Claire—decided she must have left the place earlier—tried to crack down on the fleeing figures. The thugs dived into the two cars. The firing stopped for a moment.

"Quick!" Dan ordered. "Get the car! We can't let 'em get away!"

Larry turned, loath to leave his companion, sent a couple of parting shots at the cars as they roared away from the hideout. Through the murky blackness, tail lights twinkled.

Dan ran forward, saw two forms sprawled on the dew-drenched grass. One of them was Briggs. The other was later identified as Gorman. Both were dead. He turned, sprinted to the curbing as Larry rolled up the fleet sedan, swung the door open. Dan took a flying leap, made the front seat.

"Thank heavens we've got a car that'll keep up with 'em this time," Dan panted. "See a tail light?"

"Right."

The car's gears screamed as it plunged forward. Dan clicked the empty clip from his forty-five, asked Larry for a fresh load. Larry passed his one, driving with one hand, peering into the night. A huge truck rumbled out of a side street.

Larry sent the car roaring ahead, clipped around the nose of it, missed snagging the front bumper by inches. Both men smiled grimly at the sulphurous stream of oaths which faded behind them.

"Look, Dan! Look!" Larry pointed ahead. One of the cars, swerving wildly, slowed, tires screeching. It careened onto one side, shot off to the right. "Which one shall I tail?"

"Stick to the one going straight ahead."

Larry tramped the throttle to the floor.

The car plunged ahead—four—five

blocks, a juggernaut of justice.

Then lead started to crash into the sedan which Larry was sending streaking through the silent streets.

"The car that turned—it's doubled back on us!" Dan shouted. "Give this crate everything she's got, or we're trapped!"

He opened the door, pivoted onto the running board. Leaning out, crouching down on the running board, anchoring himself with his left arm, he returned the fire. The car jolted, jarred. Larry was doing better than seventy. The car bounded onto smooth pavement.

Dan aimed deliberately, fired at a headlight. He saw it blink out. He unleashed a second shot. The second light went out. The car rocked, swerved. Lead whispered around him a second more—then stopped. With a sigh of relief, he twisted himself back into the car.

"Got 'em!" he shouted at Larry. "They're still rolling—but they've got to slow down with no lights."

"Go back?" Larry shot from the corner of his mouth.

Dan looked back.

"They've shot into a side street—they'd be lost by the time we got around. Keep going—"

Larry's glance glued to the tail light ahead.

Ahead of the car loomed a crossing street, with street car tracks. Dan saw them first—saw the shaft of light from an owl car—shouted:

"Brakes!"

THE bands bit into the steel drums as Larry's foot went down. The street car shot across the intersection. Larry threw the steering wheel frantically to the right. The car shot sidewise, straightened out, bucked like a bronco, started going over. Larry rocked the wheel the other way to right it. The sedan plunged headlong at the car. It rolled ahead.

Dan's knuckles tightened. He braced himself for the crash. He heard thudded against his ribs. But Larry clung to the wheel. A scant yard from the car he shot the wheel over again. This time the sedan had

slowed enough so that the brakes held and the car shot parallel with the trolley.

Dan tasted the acrid sting of sweat on his lips as the street car sped onward, shot a look at Larry, saw that he was absolutely white.

"Nice work, son!"

"And I've lost 'em," Larry growled as he whirled the wheel, sent the car pounding back into the street they had just quit. "Damn that car—"

"Keep going!"

The sedan raced on.

There was no sign of the other car.

"It's no use!" Larry's tone was bitter as he slowed at the intersection. Dan felt a sinking sensation. Then his glance riveted on a street sign. The cross street was labeled "Division Street."

He slammed a hand on Larry's knee.

"Listen! They couldn't have got out of sight that fast if they'd gone straight ahead. We didn't lose three seconds with the trolley. They made a side street. Here's Division. And this is the spot."

"What makes you think so?"

"The cards—in the glove compartment. Remember? Said Central Garage, 121 Division. And look—"

Dan pointed out the car window.

"Their skid marks!" Larry exclaimed. Four curving black lines of rubber, fresh and clear on the damp street, revealed themselves.

Dan looked sharply at the curbing marker.

"This is the four hundred block. They turned into the three hundred. That means they're heading for 121, sure as I work for Uncle Sam!"

As Larry, the blank look of discouragement leaving his face, turned into the thoroughfare without comment, Dan, with keen intuition, pictured the place. It could be, he decided, a depot for the conversion of stolen cars brought in from other states. It also could be the spot where the sedans were rebuilt into the "speedballs," such as the one in which he was riding. Where fugitives like Scarelli had their ears made over. And if Franzio and the big fellow were in that garage—

The car rolled up before the big building, which covered half a block. In front of it were large metal doors, closed tightly. From the windows came only a dim light, like that left burning by day workers on closing for the night. The gasoline pumps were dark, too.

"Looks like a bum steer," Larry ventured.

Dan peered out the window, saw the bulk of the place, reaching five stories upward.

"I'm not so sure. They had time to get those doors open and roll the car inside. Listen, Larry—I'm going to have a look. There's a row of windows along the street. One of 'em may be unlocked—or I can force a lock. It's worth a chance. And if this place is hot, there's going to be plenty of trouble."

"Dwyer's probably at the lakefront hideout. You burn back there and pick him up—the whole outfit—and lead 'em down here. If you don't find me right in this spot, come right in without a formal invitation. Give me a couple of shell clips."

"You're taking an awful chance, Dan—" Larry handed over the clips reluctantly.

"Forget it."

LARRY knew better than to argue. He conjured quick memories of Dan in other tight spots, and felt better. Dan slipped the loaded clips into his coat pocket.

"Okay," he said.

Dan pulled himself from the car, limped to the curbing, ducked into the shadows as Larry sent the sedan ahead. Dan went right to work, testing the windows. The first four he tried were locked. He went down the line. They were all locked.

He reached into his pocket, pulled out a small roll of adhesive tape. He stripped it off, stuck it on the glass around one of the locks, which was inside the pane. Then he found a rock, gave the glass a quick, sharp tap. There was a snapping sound.

He pulled off the adhesive tape and with it took several shards of glass. There was a hole big enough to get his

fingers through. In a minute the window was unlocked, opened. He slipped through into a huge, cement-floored area packed with automobiles of every shape and kind.

Leaving the window open, as a guide to Larry and the others, he worked his way forward between two cars, got into an open lane, headed for the center of the place. Overhead a solitary light burned, casting eerie shadows. He made his way ahead, looked around him.

He was opposite the big metal doors. Everything looked in order. The cars, all bearing state licenses, appeared to have been stored or parked. At the other end of the room he saw stone stairs leading downward and a freight elevator, used to convey cars to the floor above and possibly below.

He moved over to the shaft. As he did so he heard a murmuring buzz—a sound of distant activity. His heart thumped, and his hand went into his coat pocket, gripped the butt of Larry's automatic. Slowly, cautiously, he went toward the stairs. Now, he could see a shaft of light near the bottom, saw more light shining up around the sides of the big, open elevator, heard the sound of voices and of pounding distinctly.

He reached the steps, started down them.

He had taken about ten when he heard the sudden, sharp insistent ringing of a large electric bell. The sounds of work below ceased with its ringing. There was a scurrying and scraping of feet on the cement of the basement. He heard a sharp clanking noise in the direction of the metal doors, looked back. He had walked down the stairs just far enough so that his eyes were focused on a level with the floor.

He saw the big doors slowly swinging open, chilled. His hand dived into his pocket, came out with the automatic.

As the breach between the doors widened he knew that he was in a trap. For he could see the smashed lights of the crippled "speedball"—the lights which he himself had shot

out. The car was limping in for repairs!

Quickly, coolly, he surveyed his surroundings. He was halfway down the stairs into the basement. The side of the stairs was open next to the elevator shaft. If the car rolled onto the elevator and was lowered, the occupants could not help but see him. If he advanced up the stairs he'd be greeted with a riddling burst of lead from those in the car.

He ducked, turned, went downward. He knew, at best, that he had but a few minutes to live. If he could hold off the mob long enough for Larry and the others to raid the place there was a bare chance—but he didn't count on it much. His free hand felt the loaded clips in his pocket.

Huge daylight incandescents burned in the ceiling. As he reached the bottom of the stairs he saw moving figures—but he himself was not yet observed. He dropped to his hands and knees, crawled toward a dismantled car nearby. As he did so he heard the thumping and clacking of the elevator as the sedan rolled onto it—heard the controlling motor hum. The platform began settling downward. He ducked around the car, shot toward another one. As he darted forward his foot crashed into a curved metal tire iron, made from an old spring leaf. He stopped breathing for a moment as the iron went scraping and ringing across the cement floor. He heard someone shout: "Hey! There's something phony over here!"

HE saw the dull glint of a revolver. There was a flash of fire, a hollow, reverberating roar. Lead smacked into the wall of the basement just behind his head. He raised the muzzle of his gun, blasted, saw the fellow grab at his right shoulder, whiten, drop his weapon. There was the sound of scurrying feet. Dan threw himself on the floor, rolled underneath a car.

The elevator thudded to a stop.

"What's up?" he heard.

"Somebody shot Nason!"

"It's them damned G's—" he heard from the sedan. "They musta followed th' first car in. Get 'em—"

FEET pounded toward Dan. He swallowed hard, lay on his stomach, watched the feet. Somebody he didn't see must have bent over.

"There's one of 'em—under the Caddy!"

Lead screamed at him, ricocheting from the cement, spanging into the undercarriage of the car. He rolled away, pulled himself to his feet, jerked onto a running board. A man ran around the side of the car, gat in hand. Dan's gun spoke. The fellow reeled, smashed forward on his ugly face.

A hail of lead ripped at him. He unleashed half a dozen more shots. Then he saw his breech was locked open. His gun was empty. He tripped the catch at the base of the butt, snapped out the empty clip, fed in a fresh one. A chance shot drilled his hat brim. He jerked off the hat, hurled it through the air, hoping to stampede his adversaries into going in the opposite direction.

"He's over in the far corner!" somebody bellowed. "Get 'im!"

Feet clumped around him. He could hear them, could see nobody, as he crouched down behind a car, still on a running board so that his feet could not be seen.

He knew the mob was getting organized—felt men all around him.

A gun blasted. Lead bit through the shoulder of his coat, stung his skin. More guns crashed and cracked. He saw the glint of a weapon around the end of a sedan, fired shot after shot, saw a face dart back, heard a scream of pain.

Sensing trouble behind, he whirled with a split-second margin of safety. The last shot of the second clip drilled into the gun arm of a thug in a greasy jumper who was about to fire point-blank. He twisted as a bullet clunked into the body of the car within an inch of his waist, slammed in his last clip, saw two mechanics round the end of the car, pulled open the door, dived through it, went out the other side.

"We got him! This way!"

Dan knew that it was about over.

Desperately, he popped a shot into

the bright overhead light. It burst, flared, died. Still his unseen attackers moved forward. The two mechanics ducked around the car as he slithered behind a second, lead tearing after him. Then, head-on, came three more men.

His gun went up.

He'd go out in a last blast of fire.

He raised his gun, his teeth set, his jaw muscles bulging, ready for the tearing, shocking impact of death. His pistol blasted. One man went down. The other ducked. Then came the sound of crashing glass from the floor above and the wild, frightened cry:

"The G's—the place is lousy with 'em—scram!"

Dan heard the drive of many feet overhead—the reverberations of shots, cries and curses. The elevator was starting up. There was the scraping of feet down the stairway.

"Dan! Where are you?" That was Larry's voice carrying over the staccato cracking of the guns.

"Over here! They're closing in!"

More shots roared. Then, suddenly, there was a deathly silence. Every light in the place flashed out. Dan groped through the darkness, shouting:

"Block 'em off! They've got another way out!"

Seconds passed as Dan groped blindly. Then someone found the light switch. Dan saw Dwyer, Larry. Each had his gun in a mechanic's back. Other members of the field office filed down the stairs or skirted the cars.

"There's a back door!" somebody shouted. "Stairs leading up into the alley!"

There was a rush for the stairs.

By that time, however, some of the mob had made its getaway. G-men, armed with lights, raced up and down the alley. All traces of those who had escaped were gone. Dan worked with the others checking over the garage. The raid had netted seven prisoners. One man was dead and four were wounded. But the elusive Franzio had escaped the net again—and they had come no nearer to glimpsing the shadowy figure behind the mobster than before.

CHAPTER XIII

Gas!



LARRY and Dan, both refreshed by sorely-needed sleep, were discussing the progress of the case. Larry was a little depressed by their continued failure to get their hands on Franzio, but Dan, less volatile, held more optimistic views.

"Count your blessings," he told Larry dryly. "We haven't done so badly considering the brick wall we're up against. We've carried the fight into the enemy territory. Last night's raid washed up their hot car plant.

"And that's not all," Dan said. "We've still got Quirk—and Merrick, our witnesses to the Thomas shooting. Brick Fay's in jail and is headed for prison as sure as I'm sitting here, and we've put a serious crimp in their vice racket, and no mistake.

"We're crowding them, Larry. Little by little we're undermining them. We're showing the big guy, whoever he is, that we can't be bluffed or intimidated and that it's a damned tough job to put us on the spot and make it stick. We've got to keep after them. Keep them on the run. Draw their fire. Sooner or later they'll make a bad slip and we're here on the spot to nab them when they do."

"And meantime?"

"Meantime we keep sniping away at every opening they give us. Dwyer is getting at the protection associations, nabbing off collectors as fast as they show their heads. People in town are beginning to see we mean business. We're making a big dent in somebody's juicy set-up and don't you forget it. This may get tougher and it will get hotter—but we're on our way! One thing Larry, this town isn't as 'good' as it used to be!"

Larry rifled through the notes that Dwyer had left on their desk.

"Well, ain't that something?" he said. "Seems that the garage was

leased to Franzio's dummy—I suppose it's safe to assume that Franzio was running the place through one of his agents—from none other than the D. A.!"

"Turnbull?"

"In person. Food for thought, eh? Too bad you can't hang a man for leasing a garage. He'll probably open his baby-blue eyes and swear he didn't know there was anything phony about the deal. And try to prove that there was!"

"You try to prove it. If Turnbull's the man we're after we'll get him some way. How did you make out at the Trocadero, Fritz Kreisler?"

Larry spread his hands, palms down. "In the bag, Daniel. Substituting for a nice Italian second fiddle player who had a convenient stomach ache."

Dan wondered if somewhere else in the city a Polish janitor wasn't suffering from the same kind of ailment. His face softened as he thought, momentarily, of Obeli Michalsky.

"Keep your eye on Mona Burton," Dan advised. "And the people who come into the place. It may be a sort of headquarters."

DAN looked up as Dwyer came into the office, followed by a glowering man. Dan studied the fellow—his shifting eyes, noted his narrow, crafty face, his heavy jowl. There was a shrewd expression on his features.

"I'm telling you for the last time, Dwyer, I want those men arraigned. Every one of them," Blanton blustered. "And most of all, I want Butch Quirk. If you don't bring him before a commissioner within the next hour I'll apply for a writ of *habeas corpus*."

Dan cut him short. "Just a minute, please. What's this all about? Who are you?"

"Jerome Blanton. I represent Quirk, whom you're holding without legal justification. Also the men you seized last night at the Central Garage after an unprovoked assault with firearms. What do you think you are, a bunch of Cossacks?"

Dan controlled his temper. "I'll have that mob before United States Com-

missioner Heard within two hours."

"That's using your head. You Fowler?"

Dan nodded. He introduced Larry. The attorney nodded curtly, turned, stormed from the office. Dan turned to Dwyer.

"Have the full reports gone to Acting Federal Attorney Carberry?"

"He has his case—but says that he'll need you and Kendal in court to hold all of the mob. He wants you there particularly to outline the case against Quirk. Says there mustn't be a slip-up."

"Very good." Then he mused: "Turnbull, Blanton, Chief Slade, Mayor Blake. Nice people!"

The girl from the outer office stepped into the room. "Mr. McArthur to see you, Mr. Dwyer."

"Send him in, Miss Andrews." He turned to Dan. "I asked him to drop in."

McArthur appeared. Dan noticed his air of well being, his athletic carriage. Dwyer introduced him and Larry to the retired attorney and philanthropist. Dan felt the firm grip of his hand.

"I came to congratulate you men," he said, sincerely, "on the work you're doing. I know what you must be up against in this town. I wish I could be of some help to you—but I can't until the whole rotten mess is cleaned out and, if the people see fit, I'm elected district attorney."

Dwyer made a deprecating gesture.

"You've been a lot of help already, Mr. McArthur. If we had a few more public-minded citizens like you—"

He turned to Dan. "Mr. McArthur's received several extortion letters. Some time ago. But he won't have any kind of protection."

McArthur laughed. "Just some crank perhaps. But you never can tell. And I don't trust the police. But I do pack a thirty-eight. Nobody's going to try anything—" He tugged, with a sort of nervous bravado, at his left ear, as he broke off.

Dan was heartened by the man's friendliness, which was very nearly the first cordiality he'd been shown by anyone of importance in Central City.

The four of them chatted cordially until it was time to go to the hearing in the Federal Court.

"You'll come along, Mr. McArthur?" Dan invited. "It might interest you to see how we can hold on to our prisoners."

"I have every confidence in that, Mr. Fowler. I'll drop down later if I may. Just now I've got to face a horde of committee women at my campaign headquarters. Sometimes" — he chuckled—"I almost think politics is too much for me."

They shook hands and separated.

AN hour later the hearings were completed. Dan and Larry produced enough evidence, including the cigarette butts and bullets, to hold Quirk without bail on the murder charges. Rage was seared across Quirk's face as he realized that science, and not Franzio, had given Dan his information, that Franzio had never been in custody.

Testimony of Dan and Larry also resulted in the holding of the garage men on charges of assault on Government agents and with violation of the Dyer act in high bail for immediate action by the United States Grand Jury, then in session.

After the hearing Dan, Larry and the other agents returned to the field offices and held a conference. Dan rapped out swift instructions.

"Thompson, try and find out something about the woman, Claire. Helkin, you dig into the vice angle. We know that there are twenty or so questionable houses in the city—but we can't raid them. We can't touch the women—unless you can find they've been transported interstate and will appear as witnesses against the dirty rats who transported them. Dwyer, did you get Merrick's deposition—just in case anything happens?"

Dwyer shook his head grimly.

"I've just been in touch with the hospital, Fowler. Double pneumonia's set in. He's under an oxygen tent—delirious!"

Dan expelled a breath, felt suddenly weary. "Has he—got a chance?"

"We can't tell yet. Hasn't reached

the crisis," he said rather unhappily.

There was a small silence. "Have the guards stand by to get any kind of statement. That's all, gentlemen."

MIDNIGHT. Jazz blaring. Couples dancing. The gaudy precincts of the Trocadero brightly lighted. Tables crowded close together. A dense mob cramming the dance floor.

In the band, one pair of eyes was brightly focused, roving. Larry, fiddling away for dear life, thanked heaven for the ear that let him half fake the second violin part without paying too close attention to the music.

He watched Mona Burton as she passed from table to table. His eyes widened for a minute as he caught a vagrant glimpse of a dark-haired man cutting hastily across the back of the room, entering Franzio's office. If that man wasn't Phil Scarelli, Larry saw no further purpose in his studying the photo files at the Bureau of Identification.

The Trocadero was hot, all right. Franzio remained closeted in his office. McArthur had dropped in with a party of middle-aged women, dowdy and bristling with righteousness. Larry smiled pityingly. Showing the constituents Central City night life, eh?

Mayor Blake and a small party occupied a position of honor near the dance floor, and the official, already, from the looks of it, pretty well muddled, had risen to take a bow when the toothy master of ceremonies had introduced him.

Larry's eyes seemed to shrink to pinpoints. They fixed the figure of the trim little cigarette girl and followed her as she moved, like some industrious butterfly, from table to table. Because he'd just had a glimpse of one richly dressed woman slipping the girl a hundred dollar bill for a packet of Turkish cigarettes.

"Smoking comes pretty high around here," he mused; and from that second he did not take his eyes off the girl. It was twenty minutes before he saw the thing he waited for.

The girl was at a table. A pallid-faced man with a furtive, nervous manner, and eyes that glittered blackly against his dead white skin, quickly extended his palm, holding out three fingers, the middle one crooking down from the second joint. Just a small flicker of movement, like a candle flame seen from a distance and instantly blown out. If Larry hadn't been watching for it intently, he never would have seen it.

He watched for it again, was rewarded once more before intermission. He put down his violin, eased his lanky body from the platform and sauntered toward the smoking room.

"Cigarettes!" he called out. The girl, smiling, came toward him.

"You know the kind," he said in a low voice, running his finger around the rim of his wing collar. Then his hand descended quickly, flashed in the gesture he had observed. His eyes never left the girl's face.

Her mouth rounded in an O of surprise. Her lashes flew upward. Then, shakily, she smiled. "Quit kiddin', Mischa Elman," she said. "It ain't healthy. Don't go makin' monkey signs around here unless you know what they mean. Now what'll you have?"

"Camels," Larry decided, "to you, toots."

He slipped into the phone booth, dialed a number with flying fingers.

"I've got plenty," he said into the mouthpiece. "Come with the army. Our friend is out of sight—no, hold it—he's just strolled into the cafe, with a couple of rods behind him. Listen, Dan, you come in first. Grab the cigarette girl. And"—his voice sank even lower—"customers want more music," he said, raising his voice. "So long, sugar."

He left the booth. "Good evening, Mr. Franzio," he murmured to the dark-haired man standing just outside its entrance.

"I want to talk to you," the racketeer said.

"Yes, sir. Later, sir," Larry murmured, bobbing his head. "I'll be late for the number."

"Never mind the number—"

LARRY nimbly eluded Franzio's outstretched hand, regained the stand, and tucked his violin beneath his chin. For the moment he was safe. Franzio would hardly have him blasted down right here in full view of the patrons. But—had the cigarette girl tipped off the racketeer to a fresh young substitute fiddler who was acting pretty funny for a twenty-five per musician? He hadn't sent for Dan, as it turned out, one second too soon.

Minutes dragged. Larry saw Franzio speak to men scattered around the tables, saw them rise silently, and congregate in the rear lobby just outside the musicians' rooms.

Then he breathed a sigh of manifest relief. A tall, powerful young fellow in dinner clothes stood in the doorway looking around the room with sharp, steel-hard, grey eyes. He looked at Larry with not the slightest sign of recognition. For a full minute, he lounged easily, his hands stuck in his side pockets. Larry saw him beckon the cigarette girl, and make the gesture that Larry had explained to him over the phone. The girl's face popped into wide-eyed fright. Frantically she tried to pull away. Dan's hand shot out and slapped at the cigarette pack-filled tray she was carrying. It clattered to the floor.

Dan stooped quickly, scooped up three or four packs, jammed them into his pocket. The girl pulled out of his grip and fled toward the rear of the club. When she passed the orchestra stand, her face was ashen white.

Dan straightened, looked around the club. His grey eyes rested on the knot of men around Franzio, dwelled on the racketeer's face. Then his body swung easily into movement. Head erect, arms swinging casually at his sides, he threaded his way among the tables, passed the orchestra stand without even a flicked side glance at Larry, moved under the festooned arch that led to the rear lobby.

Mona Burton rose from a table where she had been sitting, waiting for her number, and stood, dark eyes wide, the back of her hand tightly pressed against her mouth, her gold-

en-sheathed body bent a little forward, caught frozen in a suspense that was almost unbearable. Heads jerked around. Eyebrows lifted apprehensively. Patrons half rose from their chairs. The music of the orchestra became ragged, dwindled. The cornet tooted out a few uneven notes after the other instruments were still.

"I want you, Franzio!" Dan's voice cracked like a shot in that unnatural, ominous stillness. His arms shot out. His hands caught heavily at the racketeer's collar. "I want you for the murder of Judge Thomas!"

The gangster's hand snaked for his hip pocket. Dan's fingers closed over his wrist like a vice. Franzio winced. The gun slipped to the floor. The other men leaped forward, dragging guns from their pockets. For an instant, Dan looked into eternity. Then, from the orchestra stand came the crack of a pistol. One of the thugs clutched at his starched shirt, plunged forward over the table.

Mona Burton screamed. Patrons leaped to their feet, began running.

SOMEBODY shut off the lights. Cries, snarls, shouts filled the air. Dan felt Franzio jerk with all his strength, brought his other hand around to grab him. A fist crashed through pitch blackness, sent him rocking backward as it caught him on the point of the jaw. A second later he was groping at empty air. He heard someone lunge against another table, went in that direction. He saw the dim outlines of the entrance doors ahead. He saw a streaking form silhouetted.

He ploughed ahead through a tangled mass of humans, chairs, tables. Franzio plunged through the door. Dan, both guns out, dove for the entrance. Outside, as the gunman turned the corner and raced down the sidewalk, he heard the staccato crack of shots.

He darted into the street, saw McArthur, smoking gun in hand, standing beside the fast sedan, pointing.

"He went that way! Ducked into a car!"

Dan heard the roar of a motor,

leaped for his own sedan, thankful that he had parked it where he had. McArthur leaped in on the other side. Dan ground on the starter, flipped into gear and cut out into traffic. He saw a similar sedan do the same fifty yards ahead.

McArthur knew his stuff, Dan noted. He rolled down the right window, leaned out, his .38 caliber pistol clutched in his right hand. The gun barked twice but the bullets missed the sedan ahead, ploughed into a telephone post at the corner.

"Take it easy!" Dan cautioned. "Don't hit any bystanders!"

The car shot through traffic, keeping pace with the fleeing Franzio. Crosscutting traffic sawed at fenders, police whistles shrilled, pedestrians dived back for safety as the cars plummeted ahead. McArthur blazed at the pursued car every time he got a chance. Dan gritted his teeth, prayed that the car wouldn't pile into another machine, a street car or an unwary pedestrian.

As the blocks streaked by, midnight traffic thinned.

Broadway widened. Dan at last saw his chance. His foot went to the floor. The car dived into the night. Franzio was two blocks ahead now. A minute later, only a block. Then a hundred yards —

Then the motor of Dan's car coughed, spluttered, coughed, caught — and died, with Dan cursing, banging his foot up and down on the accelerator. He shot a look at the gasoline tank. It showed empty. And it had been full three minutes before! He coasted to the curbing —

"What's the matter, Fowler?" McArthur demanded.

"Gas!" Dan growled. He leaped from the car. A second's inspection showed him what had happened. Bullets had ripped through his gas tank. Bullets fired probably in that fusillade of shots outside the Trocadero as he was making his wild dash for the entrance. Dan cursed his luck.

McArthur and Dan hiked to a drugstore where Dan telephoned for another car.

Five minutes later the Government

car arrived. Dan and McArthur drove back to the night club. Business was going on as usual—but without much spirit. Dan excused himself to McArthur, sought out Larry, found him in an office being questioned by the police. He learned that Larry had drilled the thug who had drawn on him and had again saved his life—and was now being questioned. The dead man had been identified as Lefty Bates, possessor of a long police record.

Larry and the police were having it hot and heavy.

"We might as well end the argument," Dan told the detectives. "The man has a bad record. He had a bead on me and would have drilled me in a split second if it hadn't been for Kendal. I was acting officially—carrying out my duty—at the time."

THE detectives looked at Dan's rugged, jutting chin and saw the chilled steel grey of his eyes, the bulge of muscles beneath his coat.

"We'll make a report to the chief, and see what he has to say," mumbled one.

Dan sent Larry back to the hotel, and began a slow, thoughtful stroll toward the field offices. He thought, suddenly, of Quirk, in the Federal detention rooms, and quite accountably a wave of anxiety coursed through him. He tried to put it out of his mind, but the nagging thought that Franzio and his men would stop at nothing to silence the captured gunman, would not let him rest.

Purely to satisfy this nameless uncertainty, he entered a drugstore pay phone booth and dialed the twenty-four number that would connect him directly with the detail guarding Quirk. There was no answer. As seconds passed his anxiety changed to something bordering on panic.

He slammed up the receiver, dialed Dwyer's home.

Rapidly he related his fear to his fellow agent. "Somethin's wrong down there. Have you got the keys to the place?"

"Yes. I'll meet you there."

"Hurry, Dwyer!"

Dwyer and Special Agent Thompson were there before him. Together, guns drawn, the three of them went to the basement entrance of the old Federal building. Dwyer took out his heavy keys. The lock grated. Dan stepped inside the corridor, guns drawn. He noticed a certain dry flatness in the air.

Dwyer and Thompson followed in behind him as he walked cautiously to a second iron door. Dwyer bent, unlocked it, pushed it open. Dan gasped as he looked inside. One guard was flat on his face. The second was slumped in a chair, his head on outflung arms. He darted forward, shook the guard at the table—felt instantly that rigor mortis had set it. The man must have been dead for hours.

Dan's eyes stung and he blinked. He felt giddy, heavy-lidded as he shot forward to the cell block, his heart pounding, his pulses quickening, fearing the worst.

Butch Quirk lay on his back on the floor, his sightless eyes open.

"That makes three!" Dan said, his voice weary. "How the devil—"

He lurched forward, yanked open a high, barred window. The beating of clean, fresh air on his face cleared his fumbling brain. He turned in time to see Thompson sink to his knees.

"CARBON monoxide gas!" he exclaimed as he raced to Thompson, braced him, led him to the window, called to Dwyer. Dwyer, yawning, groggy, came to his side. Dan explained what he had discovered, had both men stand by the opened window while he pushed up the only other window to create a draft.

There was an air vent near the top of Quirk's cell on a wall. The wall itself was at the end of the building. Dan saw what looked like a hose extending into the vent. He turned, raced into the corridor, went to the street and down the sidewalk. He turned into an alley. The rest of the evidence was clear.

The hose still lay on the dusty pavement, its end blackened by carbon.

Dan heard footsteps behind him, turned, saw Dwyer and Thompson.

"Quirk was purposely located so that nobody could pop at him through either of the windows," he said. "But they went me one better—backed up a car, attached the hose, and blew an invisible death into him through the air vent! And that's that," he said, slowly. "Merrick—the guards—Hogan—and nothing we can do now'll bring 'em back to life. But somebody's going to pay for their deaths!"

CHAPTER XIV

Raid



OR the next few days, the struggle appeared deadlocked; only Dan knew that inexorable, invisible forces were still at work.

On a bright, crisp morning—the fourth day after the *mêlée* at the Trocadero —

Dan paid a call on a grimy little gnome of a man, who wore a janitor's cap and greasy coveralls, and regarded Dan with bright, vindictive eyes.

"Come. Up on the fourth landing. There we can talk." Dan followed him silently.

"That is Franzio's apartment—Four A," the old man pointed out. "Our friend, he has but few callers. Almost no one. He himself is not there much either."

Dan described the girl called Claire. The old man scratched his grizzled head. "I have seen no one like that. No women come here at all. Not since I have the job. But I watch all the time."

Dan was puzzled. If Franzio did not receive many visitors at his apartment, then that spot couldn't be the gang's headquarters. Yet Franzio's offices had been closed for weeks. Where was the den where the monstrous, multiple activities of the crime ring were planned and put into execution? How did Franzio communicate with his leader—how did he give orders to his men?

"What's that music?" he asked, irritated by the constant, inexpert sawing of a fiddle bow across protesting

catgut that leaked in a high, toneless wail, from above

THE little Pole made a wry face. "Ach, such a crazy place! Professor Grayble's Music Academy, he calls it. Music—bah! Such a yammer—at times all day long—other times nothing at all for days. He is a concert musician as well as a teacher, he says. Engagements to play all over the state. *Pfui!* I would not pay one nickel to hear him! Quiet—here he comes—"

Professor Grayble appeared at the top of the stairs.

"The elevator—" he complained, in a whining, lightly accented voice.

Michalsky shrugged. "Today, it does not work. Tomorrow—who can say—I cannot do everything myself—"

Grayble smiled. "Of course not." He looked at Dan over the rims of a pair of gold spectacles, and smiled uncertainly. He was wearing an old-fashioned black cape and a rather silly looking black felt hat of uncertain vintage that was several sizes too small for him. His mane of rusty grey hair was carefully brushed back from high temples, and a more or less shapeless and not too immaculately brushed beard spouted from his chin.

Dan decided to take the bull by the horns, and explained quickly who he was.

"A G-man," the music teacher exclaimed. "Mercy on us, what next?"

"You occupy the suite immediately above John Franzio, don't you?"

The musician's eyes were suddenly indignant. "Yes, I do! And a less desirable neighbor you can't imagine. Brawls at all hours of the night. Women yelling and laughing. Drunkenness—pah! He is an animal, that Franzio. Once"—he leaned toward Dan confidentially and his eyes went a little wide—"once I am sure I heard a—shot! I am sure it was a shot! I tried to break my lease—" he shrugged, restored to equanimity, and, cocking his head to one side, pulled his ear, a little ruefully. "We must bear these things, I suppose—but I certainly hope you land that murder-

er behind bars before he kills us all." Bobbing his head up and down as if to display the fierceness of that wish, he went on down the stairs, muttering to himself.

"Rare old bird," Dan said softly. Michalsky made a disdainful sign with his finger against the forehead. "He is crazy, that one."

"Franzio in?" Michalsky nodded. "He is sleeping. But I let you in, if you want to get him while he is not watching out for you."

"Franzio will keep. Strange as it may seem, there's someone else I'm more interested in now—the man behind him! You keep your eye on him, though. Let me hear from you."

"Sure. We fix him, eh?"

DAN shook hands with the little Pole and started down the stairs. When he reached the second floor, he heard someone mounting from below, and acting upon impulse, ran quietly to the end of the hall, making himself small.

He was just in time to avoid the notice of the man coming up. Glancing swiftly at his face, Dan stiffened. He did not move until the man had toiled up to the fourth floor—Dan kept count—and Dan had heard his strained whisper:

"Open up, Johnny. Quick!"

Dan's brows knitted. So Turnbull was visiting the racketeer in his apartment. Interesting. Very, very interesting.

Dan spent the rest of the day in routine matters, occupying himself with laboratory detail to take his mind off his increasing impatience for decisive action.

He was closeted with Dwyer when the phone call came through—the phone call that was to mark the beginning of the end—

"That was Helkin," Dwyer told him, grabbing for his hat. "He's been working on that Claire What's-her-name angle. He's got a hot tip, it seems. Been hanging around the tenderloin and got chummy with a drunk who says he knows who she is. And get this—her full name is Claire Mills. She's the daughter of Charlie Mills,

Franzio's secretary—the bird that Quirk shot down at the trial! Helkin phoned from a saloon at Second and Harrison—says the girl's there now. She seems to have her eye on him!"

Dan leaped to his feet. "Let's go!"

SECOND and Harrison was in the heart of the city's shabbiest, most evil district. Yellow light from street lamps speared through the blackness of the night, revealing shabby frame buildings, cracked stone pavements, dark shadows drifting along like insects plying the surface of some stagnant pool.

Dan turned up the collar of his coat. "Wait here. Keep your eyes open. I'm going in," he whispered.

The saloon was composed of one good-sized, filthy room whose greasy walls were plastered with lithographs of prize fighters, coyly undraped girls, baseball players, and racing horses. Fowler's eyes shifted around the room, saw neither Helkin nor the girl. The bartender's crimson face was bland, his hands busily polishing a highball glass.

"Rye," Dan said, moving up to the bar.

"Lookin' for someone, bud?" the bartender said, setting a glass in front of Dan, filling it with rotgut whiskey.

Dan shook his head. "Naw," he said. For three or four minutes he lounged against the bar, eyes wavering between the bartender's face and the mirror behind him. Then, instantly, he was on the alert. A figure shifted suddenly across the mirror, vanished through a reflected door. A figure whose face Dan recognized in a second—Scarelli!

It wasn't much to go on, but it was all the lead he had. If something had happened to Helkin, if the girl had got away, it was a nine-to-one shot that the wanted hot car thief and thug might be mixed up in it. At a moment when the bartender was occupied with a noisy drunk, Dan edged along the wall, swift and silent as the shadow of a bird, and slipped through the same door.

A foul-smelling hallway lay before him. On tiptoe, Dan followed it to a

barred door. But the bar was unfastened, the heavy door yielded to his touch. Night air, refreshing and cool, rushed at him, and then he stood in a small yard leading to a dense black alleyway between a row of crazily leaning houses.

Dan found Helkin, blood streaming from his head, lying in the muddy street. He kneeled swiftly.

"I'm all right—just hit over the head. The girl—she went that way somewhere—not more than three or four minutes ago." His finger pointed down the alley. Making sure that Helkin's injury was not grave, Dan rose and went on, keeping as close to the high board fence as possible.

Noises filtered through from the street, but in the alley itself there was no sound—not a whisper, not a moving shadow. Yet Dan could feel eyes upon him, watching. He felt for his gun, kept on.

Suddenly his alert attention was caught by a gentle, insistent tap-tapping. The noise that a woman could make on a pane of glass with her fingernail. Dan's eyes jerked upward, caught a glimpse of a white face, the beckoning, imploring flutter of a hand.

He pushed through a high gate that swung on silent hinges, groped down a path, stumbled on a low flight of steps leading to a back porch. He pulled out his gun, stood tense in the deep shadow. This might be—probably was—a trap—yet there had been something in the girl's gesture that he could not ignore.

He tried the door, found it locked. A window, half open, was at his right. He raised it farther, cursing at its creaking reluctance, oozed through it and stood in a well of darkness.

HE was in a long hall leading to the front. As he started cautiously down it, a door behind him swung open. Dan heard the whisper of sound that it made, wheeled and leveled his gun.

Crack!

The gunman doubled up with a bullet in his leg, tried to get a bead on Dan, who darted forward, kicked the weapon out of his hand and pocketed

it. He grinned downward fiercely.

Then he flung open the door and darted into the room from whence the man had come. He saw a figure duck behind a davenport, sent a shot into it. Then he hurtled its top, landed on another gangster, whose hand closed over his pistol. He felt the viselike grip, tried to pull away, heard a commotion behind him, turned his head in time to see a third thug trying to crack down on him while, plunging at the thug, a wild, untamed, hateful light in her brown eyes, was a woman.

Dan recognized her instantly as Claire—the woman who had driven the car when he had been captured at the hospital.

Her long, beautiful hands clawed at the gangster, her fists beat him backward. For a moment, he was surprised by the sudden and ferocious attack. Then Dan saw him swing a left at her, heard it clip into her jaw. Instantly, two distinct feelings swept over him. He sent the butt of his pistol down on the skull of the prone mobster beneath him, saw that he was out cold, leaped to his feet.

Claire Mills was rocking backward, but she braced herself. The gangster, seeing Dan rise, snapped down the barrel of his pistol.

Claire leaped at him like a tigress. Dan jumped forward, sent his pistol butt crashing down.

The gangster tumbled into a heap at the girl's feet. The girl's lips trembled.

"Thank heaven!" she gasped, as she went toward Dan, "you're safe."

"Who are these men?" Dan asked.

She pointed at the men crumpled on the floor in front of her. "That's Cronin—Joe Cronin—who was with Briggs when he tortured you in the lakefront hideout. The one behind the sofa is Scarelli, who was with Briggs, Cronin and Gorman. The third's Lefty Dykes—he got away from you when you cracked down on the Central Garage—he's a clouter—a car stealer—"

Dan stepped forward.

"See here," he said. "I don't know what this is all about, Miss Mills. I want to thank you for saving my life

just a moment ago. But I'll have to take you into custody. There are many things I've got to talk to you about. I'll send men down to clear up this mess. But you're coming with me."

They went out to the street, found a taxi. Dan, settling back beside the girl, eyed her curiously. "Let's have it," he said.

THE girl smiled feebly. "Well," she said, "Dad was all I had. Mother was dead. I knew he was working for Franzio—but I tried to pretend that it was all right. But I knew it was bad money he was making—crooked money. Then he told me that he couldn't get out, that he was in too deep. And Franzio was picked up. The next thing I knew was that Dad *had* come clean. He'd gone to Larson, had told all. I was happy, then. Dad and I would be together again.

"But at the trial"—her voice broke—"I saw him shot down right before my eyes! I went crazy inside—crazy! I lost faith in everything—even the Government," she continued. "I decided that I, myself, would make the man who killed my father pay. I had an in to the gang. Franzio liked me—because I'm pretty, I guess. I was to be bookkeeper—but over night, plans changed. I was forced to drive with Franzio and his mob. I was never let out of the sight of one of the gang. Franzio used me because he said he needed a 'front' so that his cars wouldn't attract suspicion. Then you came along. That night when you landed at the airport with Judge Thomas. Franzio forced me to go along with him."

Dan's mind whirled as realization burst upon him.

"Then you saw Franzio kill Judge Thomas—" Dan gasped.

"I did."

Here was someone who could take the place of Merrick—of Quirk! She must be got to a place of safety immediately. He turned around, pushed back the glass separating the rear seat from the front, which he had closed to keep the driver from hearing the conversation.

"Drive to the Central States Building," he ordered. "Make it snappy!"

He turned back to the girl.

"What have you done that's against the law?" he demanded.

"I've driven the sedans—that's all," she said.

"You'll not go to jail," Dan said. "I can promise you that. You've saved the Government's case, and you're the star witness."

She told him about the way he had signaled from the courtroom with his handkerchief to Quirk. She'd heard Franzio boasting about it, she declared. He knew Mills had gone to the law.

He told her that Quirk had been killed.

"So that's what Bull Hogan and his mob did tonight," she said, dully.

"What else can you tell me?" Dan leaned forward anxiously. "Who's the big shot?"

"I know that there's a big leader—a man known only to Franzio and to one other, someone connected with the political end. I know most of the hideouts—but not the main one. I know the 'gun drops' and I can identify at least twenty of the mob. I know the place where they hide the kidnaped girls until they ship them out of the state—"

"They do ship them out?"

"They do—and I can prove it. Take men and raid the house at Seventh between Magnolia and Jackson. That's the—the depot. There's just one more thing—they've something big planned for the day after tomorrow—I don't know exactly what but it's something to do with a big money haul and the rendezvous is set for Main and Hickory Streets right at noon."

Dan glowed with triumph. He had an excuse now to raid the houses of vice—that must be done immediately—and the girl's tip on what must be a planned holdup—he'd find out about that later—would give him the break he'd been waiting for, the chance at the big haul!

WHEN they reached field headquarters, he placed Claire Mills in protective custody, assigned four

guards to watch her every moment, and with Larry and Dwyer laid plans for the raid on the house at Magnolia Street.

Just as they were preparing to pile into the Government cars, Dan was summoned to the phone. "Can't tell what this may be. Things are getting hot around here. I'd better take it." He ran back into the building.

The voice that he heard over the telephone was jerky, frightened. "Fowler? This is Turnbull. I'm at my office. I'm in trouble. Terrible trouble. I'm ready to talk—I've got to—but he knows it—can't you—"

Fowler heard the beginnings of a frightened sob, and then someone on the other end replaced the receiver on the hook. Dan hung up with a muffled oath.

"That was Turnbull," he yelled at Dwyer, as he ran out to the cars. "I've got to see what's up. Larry, you take charge. You lead the raid exactly as planned—only wait exactly half an hour for me. If I haven't shown up, you go ahead anyway!"

In ten minutes, he was rattling the knob outside the door of the district attorney's office. A feeling of distinct uneasiness made his spine crawl. He could have sworn he heard stealthy movements within, a sound as of a window being raised.

Then abruptly the square of frosted glass before him went black as the lights in the office snapped out. Without another instant's delay, Dan wheeled sideward, smashed his shoulder against the glass, shielded his face from the flying glass, and reached in through the jagged hole.

He found the key on the inside of the door, turned it, rushed in. He stood uncertainly in the darkness, groped through the unfamiliar room, found, almost by miracle, a desk lamp. The button turned and green-shaded radiance fell in a pool on the carpet.

Dan stepped back with a gasp. Stretched out at his feet, eyelids blindly fluttering, the fingers of one hand still scrabbling against the carpet, blood flowing from a crimson pool on his chest, lay Jason Turnbull.

It was clear that the murderer had

fled at Dan's arrival—that the shot itself had been fired seconds before he came within earshot. What, then, accounted for the ten-minute interval between Turnbull's gasp of fright and the firing of the shot? The two men must have been arguing—perhaps Turnbull had been pleading for his life—his plea answered at last by a bullet to the breast.

Dan's eyes sought and found the raised window by which the slayer had made his escape, then he kneeled by Turnbull's form, cupped his ear to the breast and heard a pitifully faint murmur from the still beating heart.

Galvanized, he sprang to the phone, called the field station, demanded two men, a trustworthy doctor, an ambulance.

Suddenly his eyes fell on something white, crumpled in Turnbull's clenched fist. He pried the convulsed fingers apart and removed what looked like the sort of card used in library catalogues. There was a perforation at the bottom, and one side was covered with a printed form, the blanks filled in in purple ink.

He stared at it in puzzlement, trying to interpret what he saw.

NAME: Turnbull, Estelle.

HISTORY: Central City, January 19th, 1936. K.

DISPOSITION: Held, awaiting orders. Station A.

For fully twenty minutes, Dan stared blankly at that card, the idea that it suggested too horrible for credence. But suppose Estelle Turnbull had been kidnaped—was that what the letter K. meant—that she was being held at some one of the vice depots—suppose this card, possibly a duplicate, had been sent to Turnbull as a horrible warning of what might happen to his daughter if he did not—

Dan's thoughts were interrupted as the doctor and the others arrived. The medico bent over Turnbull, shook his head, worked feverishly, then rose and faced Dan.

"He's still alive—but he's low—very low."

"He sent for me," Dan explained. "What he had to communicate may

have been of the gravest importance. Is there the slightest chance that he—"

"Will be able to talk to you? Not for at least thirty-six hours. And that's if we can pull him through at all. We'll have to take him to a hospital right away."

Dan turned to one of the G-men who had come with the doctor, whispered instructions, glanced at his watch.

He could still make it to Magnolia Street, if he hurried. Was the house they were about to raid—would he find Estelle Turnbull a prisoner there? These were the questions that hammered at his brain, as he hurried down the stairs to the street.

CHAPTER XV

A Girl's Story



FIGURE came out of the blackness that lay around the shaded, silent house on Magnolia Street. It was Larry Kendal. He grasped Dan by the arm.

"We were just going in without you. What did Turnbull

want?"

"That's something we may never find out. Tell you about it later. Listen, boys, make this good. There may be imprisoned girls in there—and we don't want any of them to get hurt in the excitement. Watch your fire. Okay. All set? Let's go!"

While the others formed a silent circle around the apparently deserted building, Larry and Dan walked up the steps to the porch, pounded energetically on the front door.

Dan stepped back, motioned to Larry to use the machine-gun.

Kendal, with perfect aim, clipped the wood around the lock with a burst of lead. Dan dived at the door, sent it smashing inward. Ahead of him, he saw a man dart into the hall, gun raised—a chopper. Dan fired as he brought it up, sending him spinning backward with lead in his shoulder.

He swung to Larry, shouted:

"Let 'em have it if you see 'em at the windows!"

Kendal obeyed. Dan, as he started into the building, heard the staccato clatter of a machine-gun in the alley, followed by a second stuttering crackle—knew that some of the gang were heading out that way. The alley entrance, Claire had told him, had been used to check women, brought in cars, in and out. Overhead came the sound of more firing from the men Dan had posted on the roof. Dan plunged through the house, knowing that once the attack had been made, he'd have to work fast—for any of the mobsters might try to get away with Estelle Turnbull, providing she was in the place—or that she might come to harm from flying bullets.

He swung open door after door. The place seemed deserted. Then he saw a door beneath the stairway leading to the second floor. He started for it. At the same instant a mobster dived out of another room, jerked it open. Dan cracked down—blasted. But the thug got through it, slammed it behind him. Dan dived forward, tried it, found it locked! The thug had twisted the key, apparently. He fired into the lock, shattered it, rammed the door open, leaped down the stairs.

IN the dim light, Dan saw his man bending over something. As he raised his weapon the man whirled, fired. Dan felt the breath stirred by the bullet as it whipped by his head. He blasted.

The thug gave him a surprised look. Blood gushed from a wound on his head. He pitched forward. Dan ran forward. As he did so, he heard steps on the stairs. He twisted around in the nick of time, saw that a second man was aiming, not at him, but at the bundle on the floor. His gun spoke. The would-be killer dived headlong.

Dan saw him crash to the cement at the bottom of the stairs, whirled again to the bundle—saw it move. He bent over quickly. From the corners of his eyes he saw a dirty cot, a pan of water, a chain running from the leg of the cot to the form. He saw, now, that he

had found a young woman—and his heart skipped a beat. Her mouth was cruelly torn with a gag. Dan untied it, pulled it off her mouth.

"Who are you?" Dan snapped.

"Estelle Turnbull—"

The words stirred in him a sudden rush of thankfulness.

"Those men—they were going to kill me—" she gasped. Then her eyes traveled beyond Dan and she let out an unearthly scream. Dan instinctively hurled himself over the girl, heard the bark of a gun—knew no more.

When he regained his senses, Larry Kendal was bending over him.

"You're okay, Dan—creased your skull. I was right on your heels. Saw the devil as he came down the stairs. Plugged him in the back a split-second after he fired."

Dan was lying on the cement floor.

"Where's the girl—Estelle?"

"She's okay—Thompson and Cassidy've got her up in the car. We've got a bunch of prisoners. Slick guys. You picked the right place all right. They turned yellow when we put the tommyes on 'em."

"Swell—"

Dan struggled to get up. He felt weak and dizzy.

"We've got to get going. C'mon."

Larry helped him to his feet. They went out of the building into the street.

The pale dawn was greying the wintry sky as Dan and his men brought Estelle back to field headquarters. Dan's powerful body was slumping with exhaustion. Yesterday seemed centuries away, and the bewildering kaleidoscope of the evening's events spun in aching turmoil within his brain. His head throbbed and every nerve cried out with separate, fiery protest as he let himself drop into the chair behind his desk.

Estelle's great eyes, ringed darkly by what she had been through in the past weeks, regarded him wonderingly.

"Dan, lay off," Larry begged. "You're ready to drop. Take a rest. Miss Turnbull will still be here in the morning. And she looks as if she could stand a bit of shut-eye herself."

The girl smiled gratefully up at him but she set her lips stubbornly. "I'm strong enough," she murmured. "After—after what you saved me from—after what I saw in that horrible place—I—I think I could stand anything."

FOWLER sank back in his chair, listening dully. The girl seemed to find release in the words that came flooding to her lips. If she could talk the horror out of her system, rid herself of it for good and all, she would be all right.

He caught, words, phrases now and then, picked out salient facts in the half coherent recital.

"Some nights the—the station would be so crowded with girls arriving and leaving—that they'd put three or four of us in one room. There was a Polish girl—she was braver than the rest of us—she would fight them and wouldn't eat a thing they brought her. They had to keep her under a narcotic most of the time. But she found out how to fool them, how to make them think she was drugged when she wasn't, really. I think her name was Maruschka—I don't remember—"

"*Maritza Michalsky*," Dan prompted, scarcely knowing that he spoke.

The girl looked at him startled. "Why, yes! How did you know? That was her name. She—she killed herself. One time when they thought she was drugged—she broke away from them—she tried to throw herself from the window—she broke the glass with her fist but before she could get out, they dragged her back. She screamed—terribly. When she saw that she wasn't going to be able to get away, she tore herself out of their arms—and threw herself on a piece of broken glass that was still sticking up in the window frame. She—she died—"

Estelle recited these horrors in the numb voice of a frightened child that didn't understand what it was saying. Dan groaned aloud. And thought, with a stinging choke in his throat, of brave, vindictive old Obeli Michalsky—and wondered numbly how he would

ever tell him what had happened to his daughter.

Gradually strength and determination and fresh, springing energy flowed through him. He sat straighter in his chair and interrupted Estelle's tale with occasional pointed questions.

"I kept wishing I'd have the courage to do what poor Maritza did," she went on. "But they told me that as long as my Father obeyed orders and let the gang run his office to suit themselves, I'd be all right. They said that he knew where I was and knew that if he tried to fight them—I would be—be shipped out with the other girls. I couldn't believe it—I kept hoping and praying that somehow I would be saved, not at the price of my Father's dishonor but—" She paused and a radiant, wondering look of thankfulness crossed her face. "And then you came. I never can thank you enough." She paused. "And please now, will you tell my Father that I am all right—that— Why, what's the matter? What is it?"

"Your Father," Dan began, unevenly, "must have been fighting them, somehow, even while he was pretending to do as they ordered. I think he must have been because—"

The girl leaped to her feet, opened her mouth in a scream that her paralyzed vocal chords could not bring into sound.

Dan stood swiftly and put his arms firmly around her shaking shoulders. "He's not dead, Miss Turnbull. He has a chance to pull through. Everything possible is being done for him, I promise you!"

The girl looked at him with a dazed face. "Thank you. But please, please let me go to him!"

Dan made a sign and the stenographer brought the notes that had been taken. "If you'll just sign this statement."

Trembling, Estelle Turnbull obeyed.

"They'll take you to your Father now," he said.

When the tottering girl had been led from the room, Dan turned to Larry.

"I've got to have some sleep," he

muttered thickly. "I can't stand much more of this." He moved lumberingly across the room and threw himself down on the leather couch. "Wake me in exactly four hours, Larry. Four hours. I haven't time for any more."

CHAPTER XVI

One Chance!



BUT those four hours worked wonders, and, topped off with a shave and an icy, tingling shower, completed the job of bringing Dan once more to fever pitch.

He found Larry and Dwyer seated at the big table in the center of the room, eating a hasty breakfast of drugstore toast, washed down with coffee, from cardboard cartons.

"Morning. Everybody feel like a little real work?" He grinned.

Larry blinked solemnly. "Sure. All this loafing around is getting on my nerves. The trouble with your town, Dwyer, is that it's too quiet. And I don't like the tall girls and pretty buildings much, either."

"Okay, Larry. Hold it." Dan gulped down the last of the coffee, wiped his mouth briefly with a paper napkin. He reached for the phone. "Dwyer, what bank is nearest the intersection of Main and Hickory?"

"Miners and Metals Trust."

"All right. Call it. Find out if they're planning to ship out a large sum of money in cash or securities around noon today. If they aren't, call the next nearest. Call until you find a bank that is."

They waited tensely while Dwyer phoned. Finishing his first call, he turned to them.

"Miners and Metals all right. Wanted to know how the hell we knew about it."

"Right. That's all I wanted to know. Another orchid for Miss Claire Mills. She certainly called her shots last night. Now listen, both of you. I

think we're all pretty clear that Franzio isn't alone in this thing. That there's some kind of a brain behind him. Well, I think I can name that man. I'm not saying that I mightn't be wide by about ten miles but, well, I've got a darned good idea. The bullet you got from Turnbull's body last night, Dwyer, was a great big help. Oh, sure, I've already taken a look at the bullet tests.

"I figure the ring's set-up more or less this way. One guy on top. He has two trusted lieutenants—probably the only two who know who he really is. Franzio is one of them—and this big shot has to be someone very close to him. My candidate possesses that qualification, too. He has ready access to Franzio at all times. Well, Franzio takes care of the gangster end, supplies the mobs for the jobs—recruiting them from among the fugitive gangsters like Scarelli and Bull Hogan who come here because this is a 'good' town. But there's got to be a second man wired in to the political end. Someone who can influence the police and the courts and everything else. Someone who's officially responsible for the good town angle.

"I thought at first that Turnbull was that man. But I think Turnbull's in the clear. Everything he did, he was forced to do by his very understandable fear for his daughter. I checked on Cathcart Wilson. He seems actually to have gone to London. But Slade? There's food for thought. As for Blake— Well, it might be anyone really.

NOW look. Little by little we're closing in on this mob—and what's more we're shutting down on its source of ready cash. The vice racket has been seriously crippled by our raids. Dwyer has been clamping down on the protection associations and the policy games. The blow-off at the Trocadero probably choked up the chief dope-distribution point. And any fugitive gangster would think twice before coming into this town and running right into a hornets' nest of Uncle Sam's boys. So the mob must be sort of hard pressed by this time.

"I figure it this way. The top man is getting ready to pull up stakes and beat it. He'll probably take a few picked men with him, and leave the rest to hold the bag. He'll lie low for a while, and then start organizing in another town—building himself another nest of corruption. If he slips through our hands now, we've got the whole heartbreaking business to go through all over again.

"But he needs money. Hence the holdup. And if I know our customer, it'll be the most expertly timed, the most daring thing that he's attempted yet. Because he's got the wind up, and don't you forget it. He's got to get out of here—now—today—and we have to stop him. So where," he finished, "would you say that placed us at around about noon?"

Larry smiled grimly. "As a rough guess, I'd say the corner of Main Street and Hickory."

Dwyer nodded. "With bells on!"

Dan drew forward a map of the city's business section. "Let's take a look and see what goes on."

Three heads bent over the map. Conversation dwindled.

DAN glanced at his wrist-watch. "Two minutes to twelve," he muttered. "Got your men posted, Dwyer?"

The local Government chief nodded. "They're ready," he said with lips that were thin and a little white.

Dan looked at the busy intersection. A trolley clanged nervously. Traffic was thick in the four-lane roadway. Shoppers thronged the sidewalks. A few early lunchers were debouching from the nearby buildings. Everyone going about his business, intent with his own concerns. Brushing, jostling, hurrying. Like ants or beetles—anonymous, industrious.

"Anything may be it," Dan murmured, peering down the street. His nerves were like the strings of a fiddle, too tightly drawn. They would snap at the least thing. "Anything at all. A beggar falling down in the street. A woman shouting, 'Pickpocket!' We can't tell—and there's where they have the advantage. We've got to be on our

toes every second. The armored truck will be coming down Main from that direction?" He pointed northward.

Dwyer nodded.

ONE minute to twelve. Thirty seconds. Then from the factory section of the town, a mournful, long-drawn whistle. Dan strained his eyes to catch sight of the armored truck. At last he saw it, nosing its way through the clotted traffic, looking like some ugly, prehistoric monster, turreted, blank-faced, grimly efficient, encased in inch-thick tough steel plates which were cut through with slits for guns. On its way from the bank. Laden with nearly three hundred thousand dollars' worth of bonds and negotiable securities. Manned with six guards.

Slowly, almost warily, it approached the intersection, swinging out from behind the trolley, heading into the middle lane of traffic.

Dan's grey eyes glittered brightly, missing nothing—but finding nothing to arouse his suspicions. He began to worry. Suppose the mob had had word of what the G-men planned—suppose that even now they were quietly making their getaway—that Franzio and his boss were slipping unostentatiously from the town? Suppose that Claire Mills' tip had been a deliberately false steer? These worries gnawed at his mind like voracious, consuming rats. Twelve-two.

Suddenly a shrill scream split the air, rising piercingly above the metallic din of the traffic. Dan's head jerked around, fascinated, paralyzed momentarily by what he saw. A woman, bareheaded, her face warped with agony, the front of her dress dyed crimson with blood, running, running, madly, and screaming almost without taking breath.

She came hurtling out of a department store halfway down the block, fought her way through the pedestrians, her hair streaming about her face. Behind her a shot rang out. Another. The woman lurched and swayed, stumbled, recovered and plunged on. They could see the man with the gun now, an ugly brute, his

face leering cruelly, calling out hoarse oaths at the running woman.

The policeman left his beat, went dashing over to intercept the apparently murderous attack. The woman brought up short against a solid wall of gawking, open-mouthed humanity. Her fists pounded their chests. She scratched crazily at their faces in her frenzied effort to escape. The blood from her dress stained their clothes. She slumped to the sidewalk and lay with staring eyes.

A policeman's whistle knifed the commotion. People were yelling and milling like stampeded cattle. And in the midst of the confusion, from both sides of Hickory Street and down Main, approaching the express truck, came four speeding cars, darting like arrows at their objective. A fifth car, unnoticed, slid into a parking space at the southwest corner, waited.

Before anyone had so much as noticed them in the confusion, the other four cars had nudged in beside the truck, surrounding it, holding it prisoner.

From two of them men debouched, masked and armed.

"Get them," Dan yelled. "This is it!"

Dwyer shrilled on his whistle.

The truck opened fire. Machine-guns blazed from all directions. Flame spouted from the truck's chinked turrets. Lead whistled in a withering hailstorm.

Bull Hogan leaped from the third car with a roar of rage, his tommy gun swinging around now to meet the charging agents, who were rapidly closing in in a determined circle. His finger pressed the trigger. A frightened woman screamed, fell to the pavement, clutched her stomach with pain-twisted fingers, reddened swiftly with her flowing blood.

Dan and Larry opened fire on Hogan at the same instant. The G-men had to watch their shots carefully. Their work was frightfully hampered by the bewildered, screaming pedestrians; and all the time the office buildings were sending more and more people out, lunch-hour bound, to join the unspeakable, flame-streaked chaos.

FIERY, hateful, merciless hell! Lead whizzing through the air, finding its mark, sinking, tearing into unresisting flesh. The street slippery with blood; the air hideous with screams and the unceasing, merciless chatter of guns — tommies, gats, machine-guns—as thugs, truck-guards and G-men fired all at once.

Dan and Larry dropped to their knees behind the stopped trolley, sprayed the gangsters' ranks with steel-jacketed death. Four had fallen. Others had rushed back to their cars, firing as they went, but they were trapped. Their own cars could not withdraw now.

It seemed to last an infernal, fearful eternity. Actually by eight minutes past twelve it was finished. Bull Hogan lay on the asphalt, his thick body ripped open by a dozen slugs. The two or three who still could stand had their hands raised, stared stupidly while handcuffs clicked on their wrists.

"Nice work," Larry grunted.

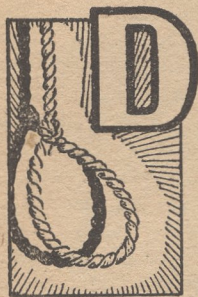
Dan didn't answer him. His quick eyes were searching the faces of the dead, the wounded, the captured. Where was Franzio? Surely he would have been there, leading his men. He must be—

With a curse, Dan remembered the fifth car that had almost unnoticeably parked at the corner. Of course. That was how the thing had been planned. The money was to be swiftly passed to that machine—the getaway car. That was where Franzio would be.

Dan jerked his head around. The car was no longer there. Franzio had eluded him! He cursed at his own stupidity, then set his jaw grimly. He had one more chance—just one.

"Hold everything," he yelled at Larry, and raced for Dwyer's car. He hoped that Larry would have sense enough to see that the man and woman who had come hurtling out of the department store to create the necessary confusion to pave the way for the holdup were picked up, too. Then, somehow, Dan knew that he would. Larry could recognize a slick gag when he saw it—and he knew the difference between ketchup and blood.

CHAPTER XVII

The Big Pay-off

DAN FOWLER took the steps of the red-brick apartment building two at a time, his heart thudding madly. Inside the place seemed deserted. But he knew that within these walls lurked the animal he was after.

He noticed the placard on the elevator door: "Out of Repair." He took to the stairs. One of his guns was empty, but there was still at least a partially filled clip in the second. He pulled it out now as he hurled himself upward. Second floor. Third. Fourth. He did not pause at the fourth, although he darted a glance toward the closed door of Franzio's apartment.

A shape moved above him as he started up to the top floor. A shape that sobbed out a bitter curse, detached itself from the wall, stood half-bent above him—and was Franzio.

The racketeer's eyes were wild. His face was shiny with sweat and his greasy hair fell in sticky hanks over his forehead. His lips went back in a snarl.

Dan fired, almost instinctively. Franzio dragged himself out of the line of fire with rattlesnake swiftness. The slug pounded into the wall beside him. Dan raised his gun for the second shot—his finger jerked the trigger—*click!*

Dan stared stupidly at the gun—how *could* this clip be empty, too? He had not counted the shots he had fired in the street battle, but surely—His heart sank and he looked into the eyes of death.

All this time Franzio stood, weaving drunkenly on his feet, leering down, scarcely human, as if he knew somehow that Dan's first shot was doomed to miss—as if he knew that he had but to wait—and then at last to strike the death blow at his helpless enemy.

It was all nonsense, of course. Fran-

zio could not know these things. The events that had seemed to Dan to take dragged-out hours had really been a matter of split seconds—but now he stared into the barrel of Franzio's guns—and he knew—

Franzio put his left hand on the wall to steady himself. He was enjoying the moment. Cruelly, he wanted to make it last—to hold the lawman there for a slow eternity, with doom suspended over his head, sickeningly postponed.

"This is it, G-man," he sneered. "The big pay-off—"

THE gun jerked into position, found a bead on Dan's panting chest. Franzio's finger twitched, squeezing the trigger with ever-increasing pressure. The silence of that moment was as of the tomb.

Two shots blasted out together.

Two shots—not one.

One from Franzio's gun that went wild and smacked against the wall, grazing Dan's cheek. Franzio's gun dropped from his fingers. Incredulity smeared across his ugly face. He slumped, staggered, lost his balance and came pitching forward, his body hurtling into Dan's, almost sending him into a fall, then disengaging and dropping with a dreadful thud to the fourth floor landing.

Dan raised his eyes. Obeli Michalsky stood there, smoke still curling from the barrel of an old Army gun. The little man's eyes were wild, triumphant. He looked, at that moment, like a raging god of vengeance. His eyes traveled over Dan's face, and then dropped to the gun in his own hand.

"May his soul wither in hell!" the old man said, the words coming from his mouth with terrible slowness, each one of them a distillation of vengeful hatred.

Dan mounted the stairs slowly. He laid an affectionate hand on the old man's shoulder. "You saved my life, Obeli," he said. "In another second he would have killed me."

The old man looked at him and a great joy came into his weary eyes. "I am glad for that. But I would have killed him anyway."

"You knew—about your daughter?" Dan asked.

"I felt it. She is dead. He killed her—and now he has paid to me for that. I am not sorry."

Dan heard feet pounding up the stairs. Larry Kendal and Dwyer reached the landing and halted by Franzio's body.

"Dead," Dan told them briefly.

"I followed you as quick as I could," Larry said. He stood looking down at the fallen racketeer. "So we're too late—it's all over, eh? We lost you in traffic—then I figured out you must be coming to Franzio's apartment."

"There's still one more scene to this particular play," Dan said.

They joined him on the fifth floor landing.

"Music studio? Professor Grayble?" Larry read the small neat sign. "What's up, Dan?"

Dan battered the door with his powerful fist. Suddenly it yielded, pulled from within, and the three Government men almost lost their balance as space opened before them.

The music professor adjusted his spectacles and eyed them with mild alarm. "What is it?" he said. "I heard shooting—I was frightened. That's why I locked the door." He retreated before them into a large studio room. The place was almost bare. There was a desk, a grand piano, a table and a few scattered chairs. "There is no one here, gentlemen. I am alone."

Larry's eyes, pretty well hardened by this time, nevertheless nearly popped from his head as he watched Dan's next move. Striding up to the professor's side, Dan's fingers fastened on a straggly beard, and the skin seemed to peel off the face, hanging limply in Dan's hand.

"Rubber mask!" Larry ejaculated.

"I don't know, Larry," Dan said, "if you've met the reform candidate for district attorney. Let me introduce him—William McArthur! Don't reach for that gun, McArthur—here, I'll take it." He tossed the pistol to Larry. "Not a bad gag, this music school." Suddenly rage flashed across his face. "Faugh! Take him away, Dwyer, before I remember the things

that this rat has done—and tear him apart. Get him out of my sight!"

"WEREN'T we always taught to notice all physical peculiarities, all nervous gestures?" Dan demanded, a few moments later. Larry and Dwyer were listening carefully. "The first time I met McArthur, he showed a nervous habit of tugging at his ear. Of course that wasn't much to go on, but it did call my attention to the ear itself. The old-timers used to use the ear as a means of identification, you know, long before the fingerprint and more modern methods were discovered. You can't disguise an ear—it just sticks out on the side of your head in plain sight and there's nothing you can do about it.

"McArthur's ears were almost abnormally large and their peaked tops were very unusual. I noticed them, as I say, was struck by their odd shape, and thought no more about them. Then the other day I was here talking to old Michalsky. McArthur—disguised as Grayble—came down the stairs and we chatted for a moment. But once more he made that tell-tale gesture and once more my eye was drawn to his ears.

"Even at a glance, they were strikingly similar—McArthur's ears, and Grayble's, I mean. I thought it just an odd coincidence, something I could worry about later, until I tumbled to the convenience of that music school, what an admirable headquarters it would make. All kinds of people coming and going constantly, their conversations covered by an eternal din of pianos and violins—the music teacher's long absences so glibly explained by supposed concert engagements—and its proximity to Franzio's flat. The gangster could ascend directly by the fire escape, without even coming out into the corridor. And our master mind had to be someone in constant, unnoticeable touch with Franzio.

"It was a provocative thought. I dwelled upon it. It coupled nicely with our other bit of evidence. That night I chased Franzio from the Trocadero, there was shooting in the

street, remember. I bumped into McArthur with a smoking gun in his hand—claimed he'd been shooting at Franzio. A little while later my car ran out of gasoline.

"I found a shot had drilled the tank. At first I thought it was one of Franzio's bullets in a wild, lucky hit. But I got to wondering how a bullet from his car could have punctured the tank in the rear of mine, when he was in front of me all during the chase, running to his car parked fifty yards ahead of mine. I took another look at those bullet holes.

"The angle of the shots was pretty clear. Sidewise, from the right—from just about the spot where I had seen McArthur standing. Then last night when Turnbull was drilled—also with a thirty-eight, I put the bullet from his body and the ones I had dug out of the telegraph pole where McArthur's wild shots had gone, under the comparison microscope. They were exact mates. Why would McArthur have fired at Turnbull, unless McArthur were the master mind, and Turnbull had suddenly become rebellious, and threatened to talk?"

"Reasonable—but a little hard to prove," Larry mused.

"Yes, but I've got a hunch—" Dan took from his pocket the file card he had found in Turnbull's hand. "If this is the headquarters there should be a complete file around here somewhere, filled with cards like this one—the record of every girl used by the vice ring, where she had come from, and a list of every move she had made or been forced to make."

"One card—and Fowler builds up a whole card index catalogue," Larry grinned.

"Get men to work on these walls with blow-torches. We'll see," Dan promised grimly.

WITHIN two hours the music studio looked as if a hurricane had whizzed through it, ripping walls, floors and ceilings in an unleashed burst of destructiveness. Within three, the conclusively damning file had been found, hidden behind sliding panels of tough steel. Hundreds of

grimly factual case records, each one a tragic history rendered more hideous by the matter-of-fact manner of its statement.

"He could sit here in his office like some fat spider," Larry ground out, his handsome face white with anger, "and tell exactly where every girl in his clutches was at any second of the day."

Cards fluttered through his fingers as he leafed through them. MICHALSKY, MARITZA, with a large red X sprawled across it, like a sign drawn in blood. WILSON, JEANNE. Hundreds of other names.

"Trace these girls right away, Larry," Dan said. "Set them free. Get their stories. We've got enough on McArthur and his gang now to hold him behind the bars for a thousand years—to send him to the chair fifty times over! I'm getting out of here. I don't think there's enough fresh air in this whole country to sweep this rotten business out of my brain."

A FEW days later, in Dwyer's office, Dan and Larry were tying up the few remaining threads. Raids in twenty states, organized on the basis of the information contained in McArthur's records, had wiped out the substations and local headquarters of a vice and dope ring that stretched its ugly tentacles over half the land and connected at New York and Frisco with vice rings of Europe and the South Americas. This alone filled Fowler and Kendal, and their Director in Washington, with a satisfaction that none of their previous coups had given them.

As far as the Central City end was concerned, that town had been cleaned out with rigorous efficiency; its interlocking web of crime and political corruption had been laid bare and destroyed. A dozen affidavits linked McArthur with Brick Fay in the New York girl racket, placed him in the car with Franzio on the cross-country flight that had brought Kendal to Central City.

"You've done a great job, Dan," Dwyer pronounced. "The evidence

you turned up will give us a hundred percent convictions. Their rackets are washed up. Jerome Blanton's coming up on bribe charges, and word of his disbarment came through this morning.

"Ross Slade was the number three man in McArthur's triumvirate, and he'll get at least ten years on a dozen counts. Half of Turnbull's office—the men McArthur forced on him—will go with Slade. You were satisfied with Turnbull's statement?"

"It checked one hundred percent with the facts. He was fighting McArthur in the only way he knew how—striking back at him in the dark. The card with his daughter's name on it gave him the same idea it did to me. He was trying to find that file—perhaps to steal it if he could—to offer that to McArthur—whom he did not know, remember, as the master mind,

since he must have got his orders through Chief Slade and Franzio—in exchange for his daughter. It was the only weapon he could find, in his desperation, and when he stumbled on the music school cover-up, through watching Franzio—McArthur had to try to kill him. It was tough for Turnbull—but he's pulling through nicely—and it certainly was a break for us—and justice."

"And Blake?"

"Going to retire. Just a weak sister—didn't really mean any harm—but he wanted to be one of the boys, if he could. And that seems to be that."

Larry smiled. "The chief told you to give 'em hell, Dan. I'd say, roughly, that you carried out orders one hundred percent!"

"That's what Uncle Sam pays me to do. And I wouldn't trade mine for any other job in the world!" Dan agreed.

IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

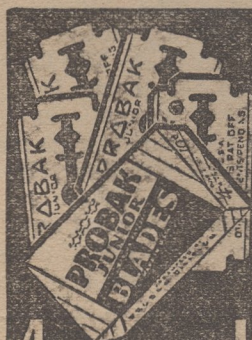
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4 BLADES FOR 10¢

PROBAK JUNIOR

J. EDGAR HOOVER

Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation,
U. S. Department of Justice,

Says :

"FIGHT CRIME—or FALL BEFORE IT!"

CRIME constitutes the most dangerous menace to the happiness and the welfare of the American people since our civilization began. Crime, today, has reached a pinnacle of appalling heights. It lives next door to us! It rubs elbows with us! Its blood-caked hands touch ours.

No American home is free of this shadow. Aggravated robbery, theft, arson, felonious assault or murder annually is visited upon one of every sixteen homes in America. Last year

not as those of an alarmist, but as the view of a conservative person reporting conservatively upon a most astounding set of terrifying conditions. The crime problem in America is something which should take precedence before any other subject other than of livelihood itself. Even then it becomes a correlated subject because it is costing each American citizen a minimum of \$120 a year.

This is the per capita tax which must be assessed to pay our annual

From a speech by J. Edgar Hoover made before the New York Herald-Tribune Round Table Conference on "Crime and Youth Today," organized and directed by Mrs. Ogden Reid and Mrs. William Brown Meloney.

In this supposedly enlightened advanced civilized country there was a minimum of 12,000 murders and an estimated total of 1,445,581 major crimes. Thus, one of every eighty-four persons in the United States was subjected to injury or death.

Beyond this there is a constant toll of the rackets; here no home is exempt.

Views Are "Not Alarmist"

I hope you will receive these facts

crime bill, estimated to be more than fifteen billions of dollars. If the entire cost of crime could be eliminated for two years, that saving would pay off our entire national debt. We have lived for years in apathy; crime in its present proportions cannot exist without apathy. The result is a direct blow at the safety of the American home.

Yet the insidiousness of crime is such that even though a greater danger exists we find that the average

A National Disgrace Has Been Brought About



citizen reads his newspaper, sees the black headlines screaming the details of conditions which are as symptomatic in their way as the ravages of the most deadly disease that ever has swept this country. Practically nothing is done about it. So I am telling you now that conditions have reached a place where you can take your choice!

You can gird yourself for a long and difficult fight upon armed forces of crime, which number more than 3,000,000 active participants, and by so doing you can set yourselves free from the dominance of this underworld army. If you do not care to do this, then you can make up your

mind to submit to what really amounts to an actual armed invasion of America.

Parents Guilty

Again, I must insist that I am speaking conservatively. I have said that crime begins at home and that we are doing nothing—comparatively nothing—to protect that home. My proof comes in the fact that 20 per cent of our crime is committed by persons not yet old enough to vote, by those not even out of their teens, by those who often are not even past high school age and who should still be under the active management and responsibility of the home. Yet, we of law-enforcement

by This Country's Debauchery of Sentimentalism!

find these children stealing automobiles, we find them committing almost a thousand murders every year; we find that there are tens of thousands of burglaries and larcenies perpetrated by boys and girls who, in any other generation, would have been under the discipline of vigilant parents.

This is an undeniable indictment of the American parent of today. In case after case where the youth of America becomes a felon before he is able to become a voter, the story is the same monotonous repetitious collection of facts. There has been a lack of discipline.

We cannot wholly blame these youths for the crimes they commit. We must go behind these crimes and blame the true perpetrators—the fathers and mothers—who so failed in their duty, who were so prone to the amusements of the moment, who, through mental laziness, allowed discipline to relax.

Flooding to me every day in the disillusioning business of watching the criminal flood stream by, I see the reports of local officer after local officer; I hear the stories of probation supervisors, of persons engaged in the thankless job of trying to reconstruct the wreckage of American youth.

I find courts jammed with youthful defendants and equally crowded with parents and friends of those parents, determined only upon one course—that of getting their boy or girl "out of trouble."

I find that they go to any length of political pressure, monetary pressure, business pressure, the pressure of friendship, to restore that boy or girl to the place where he or she really gained the criminal instincts, which was in the indulgence of the home. And it becomes a sad task to oil the machinery of apprehension and detection, thus bringing close the menace of reformatories and prisons for these children of crime who were brought to the portals of dishonor through the negligence of older persons who should have led them into upright paths.

Until the criminally minded person, the extraordinarily selfish person, the

highly egotistical person, the ultra-greedy person who wants what he wants and cares not how he gets it, can be taught the lesson that he cannot get away with violating the laws of society without adequate punishment—until that day arrives, just so long will you have a constant menace of serious crime.

Rotten Politics

However, while the citizen may look upon his crime only locally, the criminal views it from the standpoint of the entire United States. He knows where he can rob a bank and pay the slightest penalty. He knows where he can commit a murder and be eligible for clemency within a comparatively few years. He knows where courts are lax. He knows where prisons have, as criminals call it, "low walls that are easy to climb over."

He knows where local legislators, seemingly intent upon the protection of the innocent, have written technicality after technicality into the state statutes, until it is almost impossible to convict an enemy of society. He knows where there are "fixers" who will guarantee freedom for the payment of a certain amount of money. He knows where there are politicians so eager for a criminal vote that they will gladly trade the safety of their community for it.

He realizes all these highly important conditions because he is in the business of crime, and the only thing which can put him out of that business is for the American people to make it their business to combat crime and all of the filthy, stultifying influences which foster crime. Of those stultifying influences, may I say with utmost emphasis that the most important of all is rotten politics.

Time after time I have talked to honest chiefs of police about matters which are closest to them—the safety and the welfare of their cities. Time after time these men have told me that they are powerless to move against certain protected elements of lawlessness. They have their choice of remaining in office and striving

honestly to do their duty to the utmost against such odds or of resigning their job and leaving it to be filled by a purely politically minded appointee of criminally dominated influences.

A Policeman's Life

It is to their credit and to the credit of the men who serve under them that the average police officer in this country tries to do his honest duty. To that end he often faces the danger of politically protected bullets, knowing that when he attempts to arrest some lawbreaker it is within the realm of possibility that this criminal may shoot him down and be spirited to safety by the political influences which he has paid in one way or another for his protection.

The policeman's life, indeed, today is not a happy one, and the greatest service that can be done by the American citizen is to take the shackles off the policeman and put them where they belong—on the wrists of the criminals.

As molders of public opinion, as persons of influence in your community, I ask you to dedicate yourselves to a never-ending campaign toward the divorcement of politics and law enforcement. There is no sane reason why a warden of a prison, a district attorney, a judge, a sheriff, a constable, a policeman or any other man who chases criminals should live in danger of the bull whip of political retaliation.

As long as immunity from punishment exists in this country, then just that long will you continue to pay your individual crime bill of \$120 a year. In these times when there is so much talk of taxes, why do you remain resistless against this draining force, which not only takes your money away from you but endangers your happiness, homes and lives?

The Urschel Case

For the first time in history, there is procedure against the forces which operate behind the guns of crime. Not until the Federal Bureau of Investiga-

tion began its campaign in such cases as those of the Urschel kidnaping, the kidnaping of Edward Bremer, of St. Paul, and of others, which came about coincidentally with the passage of laws which gave this Bureau the right to proceed in such cases, has there been a united effort to punish the sustaining forces of criminality.

In the kidnaping of Mr. Urschel the active number of abductors was three men. However, in solving that crime, we found that behind the scenes there existed more than a score of assistants, money changers, hideout keepers, messengers, contact men, lawyers, and camp followers of various kinds.

The Bureau of Investigation not only sent the three main participants to prison for life but brought about the conviction of a score of members of this gang who made it possible for the kidnaping to take place.

A like record was made in the Dillinger case, where seven men who tried to kill our agents met with death, and where a total of twenty-six followers, gun molls, hideout owners and others, were sentenced to prison, some for life.

In the Bremer case and others, the same procedure was followed, and this was possible because of the Federal Bureau of Investigation was entirely free from politics and was backed by laws with teeth in them. Free from the stultifying influences of politics, these men have pointed a way. They have shown what can be done when a body of men of good character, properly trained in scientific investigation, backed by the proper laws and given proper equipment, are allowed to proceed upon a determined course for the welfare of this country.

To that end, I point proudly to the record of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which shows that 94 out of every 100 persons whom it takes into the courtroom for trial find that there is only one exit, and that is one which leads to prison.

At this time, I wish to express my gratitude to the fine and loyal law-enforcement officers of America who have given us their coöperation in
(Continued on page 125)

Fast Action and Shrewd Imagination Are the Weapons of
Richard Wong, Clever Chinese Federal Man, as He
Stands Face to Face with Peril



Wong fought with the fierceness of a legendary dragon

The BLUE LOTUS

By **LEE FREDERICKS**

Author of "Poetic Justice," "Last Shakedown," etc.

RICHARD WONG'S eyes crinkled until the almond-shaped lids almost completely closed over the sparkling jet black of the pupils. He held the paper flower in his hand, examining it with minute intensity. Then suddenly he threw it on the desk of his chief, Charles Durbano, local head of the United States Secret Service.

"And this is all you found?" he asked.

"The joint was as clean as a whistle," Durbano said sharply. "What's more, it looked as though it hadn't been occupied for months. Are you sure—"

"I was in the place last night," Wong said in an unperturbed voice. "I am sure that Chiang Lu Ho had no possible way of finding out about the contemplated raid. There was no one who could have known."

Durbano picked up a short, thick,

black cigar from the paper clip container on his desk. He chewed on it savagely.

"There's a leak in the department," he snorted.

Wong smiled, reached in the patch pocket of his ultra modern Occidental coat and pulled out a gold and silver cigarette case. He lit one of the perfumed atrocities he called cigarettes before he answered.

"There is no possibility of a leak," he said. "I believe that this blue flower may have something to do with the sudden removal of Chiang Lu Ho."

Durbano laughed shortly. "How can a two-cent carnival piece have anything to do with a tip-off?" he questioned.

Wong ground the cigarette out on the highly polished floor with his heel.

"That depends on the mind of an Oriental," he said soberly. "The carnival piece, as you call it, is a perfectly shaped paper lotus. But it is blue and the lotus of my people is always pink, red, or white."

"So what?" Durbano wanted to know.

Wong smiled as he got to his feet, picked up the flower and stuffed it into his pocket.

"The lotus is the Chinese flower of dreams," he said. "And possibly it will mean something to you when I tell you that opium smoke is blue." With the silent footsteps of a cheetah, he turned and left the office before Durbano could reply.

FROM Secret Service Headquarters to Wo Hop's Palace of Gilded Chance in the heart of New York's Chinatown was a matter of ten minutes by taxi. Today Wong made it in less time than that. He climbed the rickety stairs at a faster pace than usual to him.

Wo Hop greeted him at the door. His fat yellow face was encased in a grin that made it like a laughing Buddha's.

"The eagle flies with wings of hurry," he remarked. "Is it to battle with the dragon?"

Wong's Occidental training brought him directly to the subject.

"Only when the dragon dreams the dreams of the foolish does the eagle fly to protect her own," he said. "I am in search of the person of Chiang Lu Ho. He comes here to coquette with chance. You saw him last night?"

Wo Hop's face sobered as he shook his head gently. "For eight and forty hours of the time of the foreign devil he has hidden his face from the goddess of chance. Mayhaps he has deserted the fickle one."

Wong shook his head as he reached in his pocket and brought out the flower. "It is this one's humble belief that Chiang Lu Ho has gone to join his ancestors. I would inquire of the makers of flowers for the celebration of the revered New Year of our race."

"Our lotus flowers come from the Sacred Gardens of Pei-Ping." Wo Hop lifted it gently to his nose and smelled. "This flower was never intended for the celebrations of our people."

Wong nodded. "A matter of which I was seeking but confirmation," he said. "The people of the dragon are fools to think that they may sneak the dreams of my people of the gods past the eyes of the eagle. But I think that now even the dreams of my people are due for a rude awakening. There is a force that seeks to destroy the illicit trade of my people to instill another and still more sinister. It is well that the people of the dragon open their ears to the widest."

Wo Hop nodded worriedly. "The dragon and the eagle lie together in peace for this once," he agreed. "Flowers like that in your hand have appeared several times recently and each time there has been nothing left of the place where the flower appeared but four walls. Even now the people of the honorable hatchet plan to do battle with this interloper."

"There is nothing more?" Wong asked softly.

"If there were more, the dragon people would not cry to the eagle of the keen eyes," Wo Hop said.

"The eyes of the dragon are dimmed

with age," Wong said softly. He turned toward the door. "Even in the lotus those who seek to imitate are cheap."

He left Wo Hop's and went into the street. Quickly he grabbed a taxi and started uptown. At Fourteenth Street he got out. There in the center of the artificial flower business he picked up the telephone classified red book and searched under the heading of artificial flowers.

He went over the long list, selecting and noting all Oriental names. Then he sorted through his list, eliminating those he thought the least likely.

THE first address was three blocks away. Slowly he sauntered along the street, puffing furiously on one perfumed cigarette after another. Wong was impatient but forced himself to go slow. In the words of Luang Cze Chee's proverb, he reminded himself:

He who sets out to slay dragons,
does not turn aside to kill mice.

The first three places brought him no additional information or ideas. In each he asked to see artificial flowers and then finally requested to be shown a lotus bloom. Those shown him were different varieties than the blue bloom in his pocket.

He mounted the rickety stairs to the factory that bore the name of Takashi Osoto. The clerk asked his wants.

"My organization is to hold a picnic," Wong repeated the formula used in the preceding calls. "I am interested in obtaining some paper lotus flowers for the affair. You have some?"

The clerk reached onto the shelf in back of him and brought out a box. Wong looked at the white paper lotus flowers. They were similar in make to the blue one.

"You have them in other colors?" he asked. "Pink?"

"Yes, sir, and red," the clerk added.

"And blue?" Wong asked casually.

The clerk hesitated, as if thinking over his stock. "Well, sir," he began,

"we do have—" He did not finish.

The door to a private office opened and a Japanese put his head out.

"I'm Takashi Osoto," he said, "head of this firm. I hear the request for a blue lotus. We make only flowers of red, pink and white. If you do not care for any of them, we cannot serve you." He bowed to Wong and then turned to the clerk. "I have told you we have but red, pink and white," he said severely, and, glancing up, saw Wong eyeing the stock boxes on the shelf.

"The honored sir reads our language?" he asked sharply.

"Enough to know that the one package there is labeled 'Blue Lotus,'" Wong snapped, before he considered.

Osoto made a threatening move, then relaxed and laughed, a sibilant hissing sound. "Ah, yes, that is our young stock boy, he likes the color blue and he makes the joke," he said, smiling at Wong.

"I would like to see the lotus in that box," Wong remarked, and waited expectantly in the silence that fell.

The clerk looked frightened but Osoto put on a bold face.

"It is an empty box, sir," he said with an air of finality.

Wong pulled back his coat and put his hand to his gold treasury shield. Thrusting the emblem toward the Japanese, he said, "I demand by authority of the United States Government to see the contents of that box."

Like a snake the Japanese's hand shot toward his hip, but Richard was ahead of him. His service automatic gleamed in his hand before Takashi reached his pocket. Sullenly Osoto ordered the frightened clerk to get the box down.

Wong reached out to remove the lid, anxious to view the contents. They were blue—blue lotus flowers, sure enough, but in his haste to see them Wong had forgotten to keep his guard on Osoto.

IN that second the Japanese jumped for Wong's gun hand and got his arm in a jiu-jitsu grip. Instinctively

Wong parried with the corresponding break. Osoto shifted his grip and Wong brought to bear all his knowledge of the ancient Oriental art. But he had met a past-master. The two men swayed silently in battle, each seeking to get in a paralyzing blow to the Adam's apple.

The clerk was too scared to attempt to aid either man. But suddenly Wong knew someone else had come into the room and he sensed danger.

With a lightning dive he went between the flower manufacturer's wide-spread legs. He wasn't a split-second too soon. The gun in the newcomer's hand roared. The bullet whizzed above his head and spat into the soft plaster of the wall with a dull plunk.

Wong dived out of the office door and headed for the stairway. At the head of the stairs he heard the backfire of an auto. He knew what that probably meant and instead of heading for the street, he turned and raced up the steps.

Four long rickety flights led to the roof. As he sped up the last he heard footsteps pounding below him. Quickly he drew the hook and swung open the door to the roof. In a second he was out in the open air.

One shot after another echoed up the stairs after him. The backfire had evidently been to cover the shooting all right. He took his position behind a large chimney, ready for the appearance of his pursuers. When there had been no shots and no one appeared for several minutes, he crept cautiously over to the door and peered down the steps. They were empty.

He raced to the edge of the roof. If they had abandoned the chase, they must be leaving. He looked down into the street in time to see the door of an orange-colored independent cab close on Osoto. Wong's revolver was in his hand, but he held his fire. The street was crowded at this time of day, and a ricocheting bullet might hit an innocent bystander.

The cab paused before turning the corner. Wong's keen eyes spotted the number and traced it indelibly on his photographic memory—O-72-72, a

privately owned and operated cab.

He didn't retrace his steps down the same stairway. There might be an ambush waiting for him. He had a better trick than that. Quickly he reached in his pocket and brought out a compact telephone outfit. He always carried it along in case wire-tapping was necessary. Now he put it to use.

Wong hooked the clincher into a wire that stretched across the roof. When the operator cut in, he gave the number of the City Registration of Motor Vehicles. The voice at the other end of the wire answered. Wong put the tiny transmitter to his lips.

"This is operator Number Twenty-seven, United States Secret Service," he said rapidly. "I want the address of registration number O-seven-two-seven-two. Please check."

RICHARD WONG waited while the clerk at the Motor Vehicle Bureau checked for the number and then called Secret Service Headquarters to find out if the call were legitimate. When finally the voice came back on the wire, it was respectful.

"O-seven-two-seven-two is registered under Charles Sharkley, address—Mason's Garage at One Hundred and Twelfth Street and Fifth Avenue." The voice paused. "Your office gives full authorization."

Wong smiled mirthlessly as he unhooked the clinchers and jammed them away in his pocket. Mason's Garage might mean nothing at all, but at least he would find the driver of the cab. He had an idea that the Blue Lotus gang were slipping up on little things. And little things, he thought grimly, could make the perfect crime imperfect.

He crossed the roofs to three buildings down the block and finding one of the fire doors open, climbed down the stairs. A few minutes later he emerged into the street. He signaled the first cruising taxi he saw.

"One Hundred and Tenth Street and Fifth Avenue," he said, giving the driver an address two blocks away from his destination. "Five dollars if you make it quick enough."

"Hold your seat," the driver said grimly. "We're already there."

At Thirty-fourth Street, running through two red lights, a motorcycle policeman came up alongside them. Before he had a chance to pull the cab over to the side, Wong flashed his identification and shield through the window. The officer took one look, his eyes widened and he opened his siren wide.

When they reached Central Park Wong told the chauffeur to toot his horn to the policeman. The siren stopped. Quickly Wong jumped out of the cab, paid his bill, the tip included, and when the taxi pulled away he grabbed another cab. He wanted to arrive at the garage as quietly as possible.

A few minutes after dismissing the second cab, Wong walked past the door of the garage. It was a low building, evidently a tax-payer, and large enough to hold only about a dozen cars. Wong studied it and the buildings adjoining it in minute detail before he finally entered.

As he walked through the door, the smell of fresh paint assailed his nostrils. One of the men in the place looked up, saw him and started to advance. Wong decided on a bold course, a course for which he had prepared while in the taxi on his way up-town.

His hand dived in his pocket and he pulled out a lotus, not the lily-white lotus, but the pale, smoky blue one that had been found on the premises of Chiang Lu Ho in the raid.

The man looked only once. Quickly he led the way to the back of the garage. There, studded in the wall, was an iron door. He threw it open but before Wong entered he had a glimpse of what caused the paint smell. The men were repainting the orange cab, so that it was now black. The license plate was on the running board. He read it rapidly: O-72-72. He was right in the middle of the Blue Lotus gang without doubt.

THE room he entered was evidently a paint storeroom. He saw no other exit, so turned to his guide

to inquire of him the right way.

"New here, eh?" the man grunted. He went to the far wall and tapped on it with a pair of pliers.

Wong mentally catalogued the code used by the mechanic. Evidently because he was Oriental, he was above suspicion so far as the mechanic was concerned. He breathed a deep prayer to the household gods of Wong that the luck of his family would hold.

A section of the brick wall came open. Wong could see how the brick veneer covered a heavy steel door. His swift eyes took mental measurements. It might be necessary to cut a way through that door with oxy-acetylene torches before he was through with this job.

With a start he noticed that he was being scrutinized by weak, watery eyes, almost hidden, like swimming goldfish in a globe, by thick-lensed glasses. What the eyes saw evidently satisfied their owner. The door swung wide and Wong was bidden to enter.

They went down two flights of steps, heading in the general direction of the apartment house next door. That the plan of a hideout in one building with the entrance in another was clever, Wong didn't deny. The hideout might even exist beneath the basement of the apartment without owners or tenants being any the wiser.

His thoughts were interrupted as a shaft of light struck full in his face. A door at the end of the corridor opened and Wong found himself in a room crowded with men. As he entered, a man at the head of a long table was talking. He paid no attention to the newcomers, but continued with his conversation.

"Everything is now under control," he announced. "Starting tomorrow we take over all the lists and advise the white addicts of the new locations."

Wong noticed that the man's voice was clipped, his English clacking, a dead giveaway of his Japanese origin, even though his face was nearly covered by a light silk mask.

The man picked up a blackboard painter and indicated spots on the

map of the city and its environs.

"The collectors will go to the places four times a day to collect the money," he said. "In case of a raid get everyone possible away. The best legal aid will be retained to help those who are caught."

Wong shuddered as the full import of his words sank home. He was watching the laying of the cornerstone of a dope trust, a vice racket that would make anything in the way of junk houses that formerly existed look like petty larceny.

This mob had wiped out junk houses the Government hadn't been able to locate. Now they planned to take over the reins with a chain store system of narcotic dispensaries that would supply all the old addicts and enslave new blood to the vicious habit.

From experience Wong could picture the ruin that this man was planning for American youth. His lips compressed. This thing had to be nipped in the bud, or else . . . He refused to think of what would happen if he failed. He wouldn't fail.

THE speaker finished, a diabolical plan, complete in every detail. Wong was impatient to get on his feet, to get out of the place and summon aid so that he could make wholesale arrests. He wanted to lop off this poisonous fungus growth before it sapped the strength of his adopted land. Triumphantly the speaker looked around the room, then tensed—eyes staring directly at Richard Wong.

The Japanese held up his hand for silence. "It is possible there may be a spy among us," he said in his monotonous flat voice. "It will be wise to give the password going out. The man who fails—" His voice drifted off to silence.

A trap! Wong was on his feet in an instant, springing for the door that led to the outside. He might as well have tried to breast a raging flood. Fingers clutched and tore at him from every direction. Someone grabbed his legs as another sailed onto his back.

Wong fought with the ferocity of

a legendary dragon, but it was a battle lost before it was begun. The fighting, kicking, clawing mass of humanity surged over him like an army from a disturbed ant hill. He was engulfed by the tide.

To Wong it seemed more like a football scrimmage than a fight. He got in his deadly jiu-jitsu work on one man after another. But the men seemed to bounce away from him only to rebound right back. The fight became a nightmare of action, concentrated but futile.

He sheered off a descending gun butt with one hand, grabbed the wrist that held the gun, twisted and felt it crack in his hand like a broken reed. Too late he saw a blackjack's descent. As he threw up his arms to ward it off, the heavy instrument glanced over his temple. Lights spun in front of Wong's eyes, then darkness.

He came to on the floor of the garage office. Experimentally he tried to sit up, then realized, as his head cleared, that he was bound. His throat was dry and aching for one of his cigarettes but, with his hands tied behind him, he couldn't reach them.

He heard a cough and looked up. The garage attendant who had led him through the paint room to the underground rendezvous was sitting in the office chair and inhaling smoke with obvious satisfaction.

As Wong twisted around, the noise attracted the mechanic. "Comin' to, eh, bright eyes?" he asked, leering at Wong. "It won't be long. The boss and his crowd are down below hatching up a new egg since you listened in on the last one. When they come up, it's a long ride and then a concrete bath for you."

In a flash Wong knew what had happened to the missing Chinese junk house owners. They, too, had been taken for rides, then, feet encased in tubs of concrete, they had been dropped into the river. From the mechanic's conversation this was the gang's regular procedure.

Wong tried to roll over to get in a more comfortable position. Then suddenly, his heart almost stopped. The men below couldn't have searched

him, for a hard blunt object was sticking into his ribs. The telephone set!

WONG forced his expression to remain unchanged as he looked along the wainscoting beside him. Sure enough, as usual the telephone wires ran along the top of it.

He heaved his body so that his coat was forced up, felt the compact set move in his pocket, heaved again and the set came out. Gently, keeping his eye on the mechanic while he worked, he slid the set along by the movement of his muscles until it came out on the floor.

Then, before the mechanic could notice what he was doing, Wong placed his back directly on the set. The mechanic turned and faced him.

"Whatcha twitchin' for?" he asked.

"I need a smoke," Wong complained to cover his actions. "Would you let me have one?"

While he talked he was unraveling the line with thumb and forefinger. With a thrill of elation he finally felt the wire clip in his hand. His actions were concealed behind his back as he clipped the transmitter onto the line. While the mechanic lit the cigarette for him, he continued his conversation.

"If there were only some way of getting the police to the garage, they would make short work of your gang of murderers," he said distinctly.

The mechanic snuffed out the cigarette he had lighted for Wong.

"If that's the way you feel, you can do your own smoking when you get down to hell," he told Wong.

"One Hundred and Twelfth Street and Fifth Avenue," Wong said slowly and clearly. "That's hell enough when a gang of dope smugglers operate there."

The mechanic got up from his chair and advanced menacingly. "Shut your lip," he growled. "Or I'll knock you slap-happy before they take you for your little ride."

"Thank you," Wong said, and meant it.

There was nothing more to be said, so while the mechanic went back to his chair, Wong subsided, praying to

all the gods in China. He hoped that there was nothing wrong with the connection he had made on the line. He heard steps in the garage. A man came into the office and looked Wong over contemptuously.

"G-Man, eh?" he said. "G stands for girl scout in your case."

The mechanic laughed raucously at the intended joke. Wong closed his eyes and smiled grimly.

It happened so quickly that even Wong was surprised. No wail of sirens. No warning at all. The first intimation came in the gruff commands at the office door.

"Stick 'em up!"

The mechanic came to his feet like a flash of light. The revolver seemed to materialize from the desk to his hand. A pistol coughed from the doorway and the mechanic slumped down by the desk. The other man in the office raised his hands with alacrity.

Hastily a uniformed policeman jumped across the office and unbound Wong.

"Where's the gang?" he asked the Chinese agent.

Wong didn't answer but dashed to the office door and toward the paint room.

"Cover the apartment house next door!" he shouted. "Arrest anyone who tries to leave. No one goes up or down the stairway."

THE orders were shouted through the garage doors by the uniformed man as he dashed along in back of Wong. They arrived at the back of the garage in time to hear the heavy iron door to the paint room clang shut and the bolt on the other side shoot home.

Wong smiled tightly. He hadn't looked around the rear of the garage earlier for nothing. That the garage had been used as a quick change plant for hot cars was now going to serve him in good stead.

In one corner was an oxygen tank and all the fixings for arc welding. That outfit would go through the iron doors like a knife through soft cheese. He rushed over to the tank, and the

policeman, getting the idea, helped transfer the equipment to in front of the door.

Richard Wong was so busy working he didn't hear the arrival of the car bringing Durbano and several Secret Service agents. He was applying the torch to the door as Durbano came up.

"Here!" Durbano shouted, shoving a tommy gun at Wong. "Hand that job over to the police. These birds are going to shoot!"

The torch cut through the bolt. The door swung open on gaping hinges. Then Durbano's prophesy came true. As the door swung the Secret Service men were greeted by a blast of machine-gun fire.

Wong, from his position behind the converted taxi, gave them the same kind of medicine they dealt out, while Durbano and another Secret Service agent put up a cross-fire from each side of the door. The unexpected strength of the Secret Service reply wilted rather than annihilated the mobsters. The gun behind the door abruptly ceased its chattering. Then, as the agents paused in their fire to see what would come next, three men stumbled out into the arms of the waiting Federal officers.

"There is another we want," Wong said to Durbano. "We'll probably have to go down after him."

"I don't think so," a voice spoke from the entrance. A policeman stepped in, dragging behind him an abashed looking Osoto, dressed in female garb. "This tried to sneak past me in the apartment house," the policeman said triumphantly. "Even had a veil on, too."

"That settles that," Durbano said. He turned to Wong. "How did you get on the trail?" he asked. Wong smiled drily.

"It was easy as soon as I got the idea," Wong replied as he reached into his pocket and pulled out a much craved cigarette. "The lotus suggested an Oriental mind. But my people would never have colored the lotus—like they say in English, gild the lily. The miscoloring pointed to some one who didn't revere the lotus as the flower of dreams and poetry. Well, the Japanese are the greatest imitators on earth and also have a fondness for slight 'improvements' as they call them . . ." Wong's voice trailed off. "Well, you can just say my people wouldn't have the imagination."

Durbano scratched his head and bit his cigar.

"Imagination, eh? No imagination?" He was thinking of Wong's ingenious telephone call that had been faithfully repeated to Headquarters by the operator who picked it up.

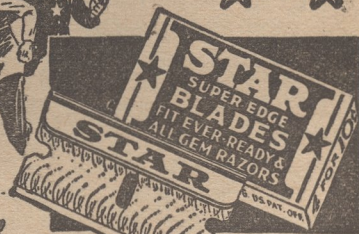
IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

An Ex-Gangster Exposes the Stamp Racket



FOILED!

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The Black Chamber

*How to Solve Secret Ciphers Told by a
World Famous Cryptographer*

By M. K. DIRIGO

Win a Cash Prize!

A CONTEST FOR CIPHER SOLVERS

FIRST PRIZE - - - - - \$15.00

SECOND PRIZE - - - - - \$10.00

THIRD PRIZE - - - - - \$5.00

The big Cipher rodeo is on! Get into it, everyone, because there isn't a single crypt here that you can't ride down if you stay in the saddle. Maybe there's a wild look in the eye of one or two, and maybe another packs a wicked kick in its hind legs, but there's neither riddle nor bronc that man can't tame. So lay in your stock of midnight oil, get your frequency charts aligned, and keep your pencils and wits sharp. Now—let 'er buck!

HERE ARE THE RULES

1. Any man, woman or child is eligible to enter, except employees of G-MEN or their families.

2. Solve the nine cryptograms on the opposite page. All of them are SINGLE SUBSTITUTION.

3. If you cannot solve all of them, don't lose courage. There may be others who will not be able to solve them all. If one of them is too tough for you, just skip it, and send in the rest. But—before you quit remember that each one of these crypts can be solved through the application of the theories and principles heretofore presented in THE BLACK CHAMBER. If you have followed our pointers and explanations, you have a good chance to win.

4. After you have solved the cryptograms, answer the following questions:

(a) Locate a hidden city which a kidnaper has concealed in cryptogram No. 25.

(b) Punctuate cryptogram No. 26 so that it makes sense.

(c) Answer the question asked in cryptogram No. 27.

(d) Cryptogram No. 29 has no word divisions. It has been arranged in groups of five letters each for convenience. Hidden in this cryptogram is a clue. This clue discloses the exact location of a WORD taken from one of the pages in this issue of G-MEN. Find this word.

(e) Explain how you solved cryptogram No. 30, which contains every letter in the alphabet.

(f) Follow the instructions contained in cryptogram No. 32, using separate sheet of paper.

(g) Solve cryptogram No. 33, which consists of fourteen separate eight-letter words, all of them, including the asterisks (*) encoded with the same substitution throughout.

5. Entries will be judged on AC-CURACY, CLEARNESS and NEATNESS. Write on ONE side of paper.

6. In the event of ties, duplicate awards will be made.

7. Contest closes Feb. 1, 1937. ALL entries must be postmarked before midnight of that date.

8. Judges' decisions are final.

9. Prize winners and answers will be announced as soon as the judges have examined all entries.

AND NOW GET BUSY. YOU MAY BE ONE OF THE LUCKY ONES.

CRYPTOGRAMS—PRIZE CONTEST

No. 25

TRY SOME OF *POURING
ACUAIG CG GT GFTIF C
AORRTF PYSCYHY NE YEYG.

No. 26

GMEN SOMNY DHL KRAAHG
GUND FRY Y JD RG YLKU
MIINZLORI MAGNITROY.

No. 27

RP RO SHAPRETITE ROOT-
LCO RA OUT *GAROTE
*POCOTP WHI C QCA OH
QCIHK URP BREHBP ECG-
LUOTI?

No. 28

JDPV *ABIDE MDZ YOFBIE
*YNLPHT FBPONHT GLER-
BQLV RDRAL "TDE FOW-
LERSE OPOUNOFFORDER"
BP *RTBFOE *GDAABP.

No. 29

CRYPT HURTS HANRA NO-
GHY HOIRC HOGYR CHTBU
SANAS NMGKT RWHOS
WCRSY OYRUS POGRG
SPAGE LHOES YHTHO
OPCHY RGPYY BOMHO
UHGRS TO.

No. 30

ZYXW VU TFS RHQP OHNK
MFLKJ IHGCFE DCBA.

No. 31

CBVWXI CDGJCIPJ ESJB
TED UPIEOIPJ SGJCIH
EFBVWJC JIKXGYIHES-
GEV DBPHJ GVR SXHIJ "RE-
PUBLICANSBPCABEFGHBY-
EPECBSXNSEFGHI."

No. 32

ABCDEFGHIKAE BFHIHCJK LH-
MMHAGKE AFNOEBIFJP
ABCEJHCHCY JQBGE
DHREN ASJFJAETFD JCL.
PJHK UHES NBGF
DBKGEHBC.

No. 33

1.	*	D	E	*	M	O	C	R.
2.	*	C	E	A	*	T	S	H.
3.	*	T	O	I	A	*	S	R.
4.	*	B	S	P	D	I	G	*
5.	R	*	D	J	*	S	I	H.
6.	O	*	C	I	P	*	K	A.
7.	G	*	T	S	O	P	*	B.
8.	E	*	C	K	N	D	A	*
9.	S	J	*	G	*	C	K	A.
10.	R	D	G	*	*	C	N	H.
11.	T	D	E	*	G	*	N	B.
12.	S	N	G	*	C	K	E	*
13.	F	S	O	A	*	*	T	I.
14.	I	B	F	J	*	D	A	*

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S CRYPTOGRAMS

No. 21.

What are your chances of being dealt thirteen cards of same suit while playing bridge?

Answer—1 chance in 20,706,963,000.

No. 22.

Give two numbers other than two and two which will produce same result when added or multiplied?

Answer—There are as many answers to this problem as there are numbers. Given any number, the second number will always be one (1) and a fraction made up of a numerator of one (1) and a denominator equal to one less than the first number, viz.: 4 and $1\frac{1}{3}$; 5 and $1\frac{1}{4}$; 6 and $1\frac{1}{5}$; etc., etc., indefinitely.

No. 23.

Would you rather an elephant killed you or a gorilla?

Answer—Rather the elephant killed the gorilla.

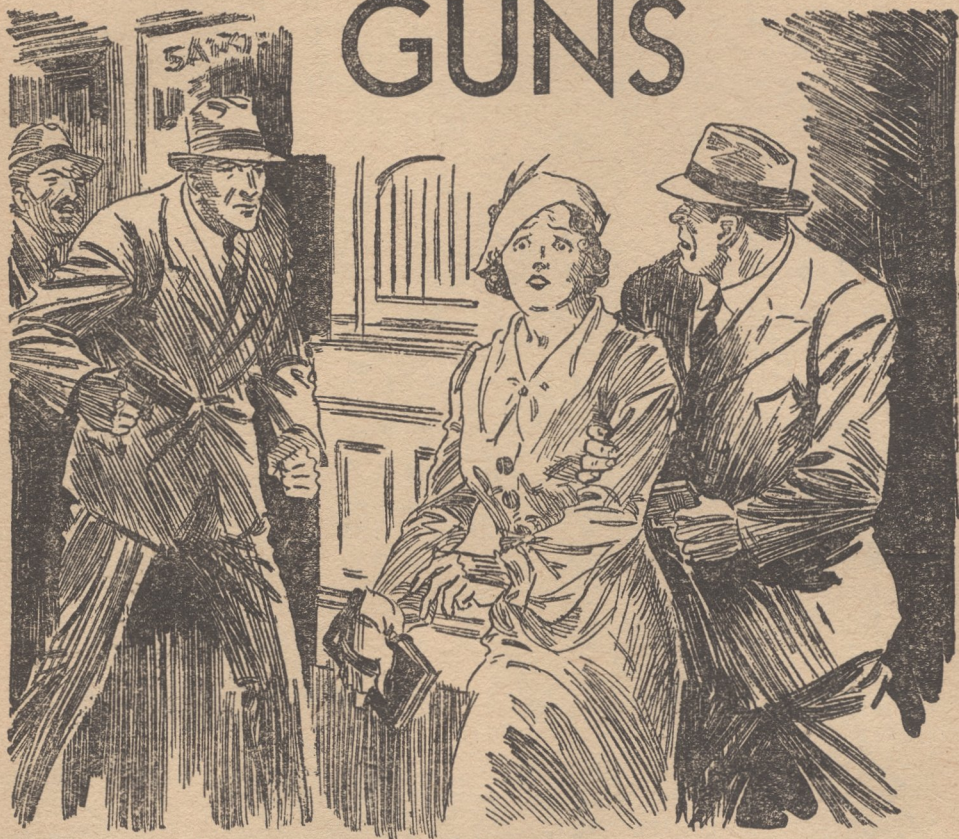
No. 24.

How would you write in figures twelve thousand twelve hundred and twelve?

Answer—13,212.

(Continued on page 123)

GOVERNMENT GUNS



Rainey saw the hard muzzle pressed hard into Evelyn Stoner's body.

**Men of the F. B. I. Match Bullets and Brains with a Killer
WhoLaughs at the Law!**

By COL. WILLIAM T. COWIN

Former Assistant United States Attorney

Author of "Dark Death," "Broken Glass," etc.

RAINEY slammed the receiver back on the hook. His eyes shone excitedly as he stared across the room at Blake.

"That was Hennessy," he announced.

Blake merely grunted. "Hennessy?" he said. "That stool-pigeon. What'd he want?"

"He told me where Murdock is."

Blake sprang to his feet. His air of indolence dropped from him.

From A Law Officer's Casebook

"Murdock! That murdering dope-runner. You mean we're going to get our hands on him at last?"

Rainey was at the door.

"You bet we are," he snapped. "Line up some of the boys. Get 'em in the cars downstairs. I'll see the chief at once. Murdock's at the movies now. We'll surround the theatre."

Blake snatched up the telephone as Rainey raced down the hall to the private office of the Divisional Chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Rainey burst into the office and stood breathless before his superior's desk. Swiftly he relayed his information.

Stoner, grey in the service, lynx-eyed and shrewd, nodded his head slowly as Rainey spoke.

"Good," he said. "We'll close in at once. But we'll have to be careful, Rainey. When that show breaks the streets will be crowded with people. Murdock is a desperate man, and a killer. If there's shooting, innocent blood may be shed. By the way, what theatre is it?"

"The Arverne," said Rainey. "That's the place on Holmes Street."

"The Arverne?" repeated Stone. "That's tough. My wife's there tonight. We've got to be doubly careful, Rainey. Let's go now, the boys should be ready."

TWO closed cars sped through the night traffic of the city. Within them sat seven men, seven armed men who were traveling to settle an old score. For more than six months Murdock had played fast and loose with the Department.

He had run dope across the Border under the very noses of the G-men. He had committed assault and murder. Already one Federal man lay in a rotting coffin, sent there by a slug from Murdock's gun.

Every means at the Government's disposal had been used to get a line on the killer. Every policeman had his eyes peeled for some sign of Murdock. Every stool pigeon had been promised a juicy bonus for a tip which would lead to his apprehension.

And tonight the relentless vigil had borne fruit. Murdock, reckless on his

own heroin, had ventured forth—and Hennessy had seen him.

They parked their cars on the side street a block away from the theatre. Rainey glanced down at his watch as the men walked swiftly away from the cars. It was about half an hour to closing time. It was almost certain that Murdock would sit the whole show through.

The men already had Stoner's orders. Two of them took up their positions at the side exit. Two more went at once to the rear of the house. Rainey, Stoner and Blake took up their posts in the lobby of the theatre.

The minutes ticked by slowly. Stoner was nervous. He paced back and forth. Time and again he turned his head toward the door of the theatre, hoping that his wife would leave before the picture was over.

But when the doorman flung the exit doors open wide at eleven-ten, she had not appeared. Stoner moved close to Rainey.

"You know my wife," he muttered. "If you see her, get her out of the way. Murdock won't surrender without a fight."

A throng of people poured through the big double doors in a steady stream. Rainey's eyes stabbed into the crowd, darted from face to face. Then in an instant he froze, and his hand sought the butt of his gun.

For there, behind a laughing couple, he saw Murdock's face. The gangster seemed unconcerned, unaware that he was trapped. Jauntily he moved through the mob. Then suddenly his little eyes lifted. He stared for a moment at Rainey. Then his head jerked around to Blake.

Rainey stood alert and ready yet he made no move. He dared not draw his gun with all those people in the lobby. He had hoped to seize Murdock when the killer walked by him, to capture him without a shot.

But now Murdock's agate eyes were clouded with suspicion. His gaze swept around the lobby. Then they rested on Stoner. Murdock stopped dead in his tracks. He knew Stoner, had recognized him from one of the chief's many newspaper photographs.

His hand moved like a snake to his hip pocket, just as Rainey heard the chief's voice raised in an alarmed shout.

"Evelyn!"

Now for the first time Rainey saw Stoner's wife. She stood less than four feet from Murdock's side. Hearing her husband's voice she stopped and waved a greeting at him. And in that instant, Murdock's brain functioned with the speed of light.

He did not know who Evelyn Stoner was, but he had realized that she was at least an acquaintance of the G-man. And in that desperate moment Murdock needed nothing as badly as a hostage. He took the four feet between them in a single stride.

HIS hand jerked from his pocket. Rainey saw the dull gleam of an automatic. The hard muzzle pressed hard into Evelyn Stoner's body. Murdock's ugly face bent down. His lips moved close to her ear.

The woman's face paled. Then she raised her head and shot a glance of frantic appeal at her husband. Murdock's arm linked itself through hers. He stood close to her so that his coat shielded the gun. Then they walked together through the lobby.

Rainey never doubted that Murdock, crazed by drugs, fortified by the courage of a cornered rat, would shoot her if anyone tried to take him. One more life meant nothing to him.

Murdock was almost upon him now. Rainey groped for his automatic. Then even as his fingers closed over its reassuring steel, he heard Stoner's agonized shout.

"Rainey!"

Murdock glared at him malevolently as he passed.

"One move," he snarled, "and the twist gets it."

Rainey was still staring at Stoner's anguished face as the killer strode by with the chief's wife still on his arm. Blake fought his way through the crowd to Rainey's side. His mouth was grim and his eyes questioning. From the far side of the lobby, Stoner tried to move through the mob.

"Well," said Blake, "what do we

do? Stand here and watch Murdock snatch the boss's wife? Or—"

He broke off as he saw Murdock and Evelyn Stoner climb into a coupé halfway down the block. There was a driver at the wheel.

Rainey shot a swift glance at Blake. If Stoner's wife was to live, Murdock would have to be permitted to make his getaway. And if the gangster achieved that, who knew how long it would be before the law caught up with him again? Furthermore, Evelyn Stoner's fate rested in the gangster's bloody hands.

Somehow they must keep an eye on that car. It was their sole link to Murdock. Rainey's eyes noted a new silk handkerchief thrusting itself from Blake's breast pocket. He jerked it out with his fingers.

"Hold Stoner here," he said. "I'm going to parley with Murdock."

Slowly, making no attempt to hide himself in the moving crowd, Rainey made his way toward the coupé. Traffic poured slowly down the street. It would take a few moments to get the coupé away from the curb, and it was on those split seconds that Rainey was gambling.

He left the sidewalk and approached the far window of the car. When he was five feet away he heard Murdock's snarling voice.

"Get out of here, guy. Get out or I'll fill this broad full of lead."

"Wait a minute," said Rainey. "I'm not going for my gun, Murdock. I want to talk to you."

He could see Murdock's vicious eyes, staring at him catlike from the interior of the car.

"If you want to talk to me, G-man, hand your gat over, butt first. Drop it on the floor of the car."

Rainey hesitated.

A MUFFLED sob from the woman in the car came to his ears. He waited no longer. His hand went to his shoulder holster. He withdrew his gun. He reversed it and held it out inside the car window. Then he dropped it to the floor.

"Well," snarled Murdock, "what do you want?"

"About the lady," said Rainey. "If we let you make a getaway will you let her out of the car unharmed? We'll let you take Mrs. Stoner until you're clear. But then you must release her."

Murdock's little eyes glittered.

"Mrs. Stoner?" he repeated. "So she's Stoner's wife." He chuckled maliciously. "I've got some things to do around this town, guy. It'll take me about a week. I think Stoner's wife being in my hands should insure my not being bothered by you guys."

Inwardly Rainey cursed himself for mentioning Mrs. Stoner's name. Apparently Murdock had not known the identity of his hostage.

"Stoner'll hear from me," went on Murdock. "His wife'll be all right as long as he lays off. Go ahead, Jake," he added to the driver. "Let's get going."

Rainey turned away. The chauffeur essayed to turn the car into the line of traffic. Rainey stepped to the sidewalk.

For a moment he became lost in the crowd. Then swiftly he ducked his head and rapidly approached the rear of Murdock's car.

He knelt down by the rear bumper for a moment. His hands moved, deftly, swiftly. He could feel his heart pounding against his breast. If Murdock should catch sight of him, if his plan should fail, he was lost. Then slowly the car moved away from the curb.

Rainey straightened up and leaped to the sidewalk. A moment later he rejoined Blake and Stoner.

"We've got a chance yet," he told them. "Blake's green handkerchief," went on Rainey. "I cut the red glass out of Murdock's tail light with the diamond on my ring. I tied Blake's handkerchief over it. Now a green tail light's a pretty odd thing. Any cop should spot it at once. It ought to be easy for them to follow."

Stoner's eyes lit up. The hope that had died in them a few moments ago seemed rekindled now.

"That was a clever move, son," he said slowly. "Let's send out the call now. Someone bound to pick Mur-

dock's car up somewhere within the city limits. Let's get back to the phone and wait."

It was almost four o'clock in the morning when the call came through. Stoner took the phone in numb fingers. When he hung up there was hope in his eyes.

"A radio car picked up Murdock fifteen minutes after our alarm. Realizing that they would be regarded with suspicion they communicated with their Headquarters and got a detective's car—a private car—to pick up the trail. That second car trailed Murdock to a farmhouse on the Alton road. Four miles out, then a left turn. Come on!"

He sprang to his feet and once again the men who had kept the all-night vigil trooped downstairs to the cars that waited, once again the Federals had taken the trail of Murdock.

AS the cars rolled through the deserted streets of the city, Stoner spoke in his ear.

"We must close in slowly, Rainey. Take them completely by surprise. The chances are that they have Mrs. Stoner locked in some room. I want to take Murdock and his gang before they have a chance to do her any harm."

Rainey nodded. The cars turned slowly off the main highway, turned left into a winding dirt road that crawled through the dew-dripping trees at the side of the road.

Stoner's hand thrust itself from the window of the car in signal. The vehicles halted. A dozen men clambered out into the sickly greyness of the dawn. Stoner took a pencil and a piece of paper from his pocket.

"Here," he said, and the lead made a mark on the paper. "This is the farmhouse. Directly before it is a well-wooded section. We can approach under cover through there. Off to the left is the garage. In all probability there is no one there at that hour. We can be seen approaching from there. But that's a chance we have to take. Blake, you swing around to the rear and commence a flanking movement at precisely"—he

glanced at his wrist watch—"six-thirteen. No one will fire unless he's certain he has been observed. That's all."

He turned his face away. Rainey watched him with sympathetic eyes. He knew what it cost Stoner to give those orders, to give the orders which might well mean the death of his wife.

Blake moved off to the west, while the others crouched down in the wetness of the early morning.

The minutes ticked by slowly. At last Stoner lifted a wan face.

"All right," he said through tight lips. "Come on."

Rainey's automatic was in his hand as they began the cautious advance. On his right, young Credle, a Thompson gun under his arm, moved along steadily at his side. Through the tree, Rainey could see vague outlines of the house which they besieged.

Suddenly through the deathly stillness of the morning came the sound of a single shot. Stoner threw up his hand to halt the advance. They all listened intently. Then came another report, followed almost immediately by a veritable barrage.

"It's Blake," said Rainey, half to himself. "It's B l a k e. Someone spotted him and fired. He's shooting back now."

For some ten seconds Stoner stood there. His eyes were blood-shot and his face looked as if it had been carved out of dirty marble.

Blake was already attacking. Stoner knew full well that if he gave the order to fire one of his own bullets might end the life of his wife. Yet once that night he had failed in his duty because he had done the human thing. Now he summoned every ounce of resolve in his being. He dropped his hand suddenly, and there was a savage defiance in his voice as he shouted to his men.

"All right, men. Let them have it!"

CREDLE'S Tommy gun clanked metallically as the G-man rested its barrel in a tree fork. Then his finger snapped the trigger. The woods were vibrant with sound.

A puff of smoke burst from the window of the farmhouse. Rainey heard the whine of a bullet over his head. Carefully he took aim at the window. His bullet hammered into it. Even at that distance he heard the faint tinkle of crashing glass.

Rainey fought his way through the underbrush to Stoner's side.

"We can cease firing and call on him to surrender," he suggested. "It'll lessen the risk to the Mrs."

Stoner turned an agonized face to the other. He shook his head slowly.

"Not Murdock," he said. "He won't quit."

"Then let 'em have the gas," said Rainey. "That'll drive 'em out in the open."

Stoner nodded. "Good idea. But it's some distance. Can you throw that far?"

"I can try."

Rainey took up his position in a spot which offered a clear view of the house. He held a powerful tear gas bomb in his right hand. He drew his arm back, then pitched it forward again with all his strength. The black cylindrical object hurtled through the air. It landed hissing like an angry snake on the farmhouse porch.

Then at that instant the front door opened and a woman ran out on the porch. Stoner's voice rung agonizingly above the sound of battle.

"Cease firing! That's Evelyn. Hold your fire!"

The guns stopped their roaring. Rainey watched the woman with a pounding heart. For a moment she stood uncertainly on the porch staring at the bomb at her feet. Then, actuated by some instinct she stooped over, snatched it up and hurled it away from her.

Then wrapping her coat about her as if it were some ægis which would guard her from the bullets, she ran down the porch steps and raced with little steps toward the nearby garage.

"She's going to the garage for cover," cried Stoner. "She'll be safe there. Pour everything you've got into the house now. Keep them busy so Murdock will be less likely to shoot her down in his yellow rage."

The guns took up their stuttering chatter once again. The woman ran frantically toward the sanctity of the garage.

Suddenly Stoner uttered an awful moan. His face was white as a shroud. Before his burning eyes his wife stumbled. She threw her arms up over her head and fell in her tracks. Then as she lay there she stirred uneasily.

"They've shot her!" shouted Stoner. "They've killed her in cold blood. Mow them down, men."

Rainey sprang up from his position of vantage.

"Hold it," he cried. "Give them gas bombs, Stoner. Move in close and give them all the gas you've got. Drive them out at once. It's our only chance. I'm going to the garage."

"T h e y killed her," murmured Stoner brokenly. "Shot her down in cold blood. Shot—"

"No they didn't," said Rainey evenly. "Murdock didn't fire that shot."

Stoner stared at him.

"Who did then?"

"I did," said Rainey quietly.

Stoner's eyes dilated. But before he could question Rainey further, the latter had sped off in the direction of the garage.

Stoner moved up toward his men.

"Gas," he said. "Throw every bomb we've got and do it quickly."

BOMBS hurtled through the air.

When the fourth bomb had crashed through the broken window the exodus began. The front door swung open. Dark figures, tears streaming down t h e i r cheeks, emerged into the morning. Rainey came racing back from the garage as Stoner mounted the porch.

"Inside," he said. "Your wife is somewhere inside. Come on."

The pair of them pushed their way into the choking air of the house. The gas seeped into Rainey's eyes. Copious tears trickled down his face. His gaze fought to see through the yellow haze that was upon them. Then to his ears there came a sound, the unmistakable sound of a woman sobbing.

"Here, Stoner," he said. "Here."

His shoulder crashed against a door. The portal flew open. Rainey bent over a huddled weeping body, picked it up and staggered toward the fresh air again.

Some three minutes later, Stoner released himself from his wife's embrace. He turned to Rainey.

"Whatever you did," he said, "I appreciate it. But I'd appreciate it more if you'd tell me exactly what happened."

"Murdock put on your wife's coat, skirt and hat," said Rainey. "His object was to get to the garage unscathed. He had two machine-guns there. Two machine-guns that could have poured a deadly enfilade fire into us, wiped us out. He wore your wife's things so that we wouldn't shoot at him."

Stoner nodded. "I can see that," he said. "But how the devil did you know it was Murdock at that distance? No one else could tell."

"Well, it wasn't personal recognition," said Rainey. "First there was the matter of that gas bomb. If the fugitive had been Mrs. Stoner, why would she have thrown it away? Besides, I doubt if Mrs. Stoner would have known what it was. Then there was the matter of the throw. No woman could have thrown like that. It was a powerful heave Murdock gave that bomb, the heave of a man who knows how to play ball.

"Thirdly, why the garage? Assuming it was Mrs. Stoner, assuming she was nervous, upset and scared, she would have run right to you. She ran no more risk of getting shot doing that than in going to the garage. But she didn't. She went to the garage."

"So," said Stoner, "you fired."

"It wasn't the most comfortable position I've ever been in either. Of course, I was pretty sure I was right. But then if I wasn't I'd be shooting down your wife. But I did it, and prayed. The answer to both that shot and the prayer is the fact that Murdock's lying over there dead, with a bullet in his brain."

Stoner extended his hand.

"Thanks," he said simply. "There's nothing else I can say."

Public Enemies



By Clayton Maxwell

ALVIN KARPIS

A Regular G-Men Feature

RAYMOND KARPAVIOZ, BETTER KNOWN TO THE PUBLIC AS ALVIN KARPIS, AND TO HIS PALS AS "OLD CREEPY," BECAUSE HE GOT ON THE NERVES OF HIS HENCHMEN AND WAS FEARED BY THEM, WAS BORN IN CANADA ON AUG. 10, 1909. AT AN EARLY AGE HIS PARENTS MOVED TO TOPEKA, KANSAS, AND KARPIS GREW UP IN THE WEST.

BECAUSE OF A LONG CRIMINAL CAREER INVOLVING HOLD-UPS, KIDNAPING AND COLD-BLOODED MURDERS, KARPIS WAS DESIGNATED AS PUBLIC ENEMY NO. 1, AFTER "BABY FACE" NELSON WAS REMOVED FROM THE SCENE BY THE GUNS OF G-MEN.

TEAMING UP WITH THE BARKER GANG, KARPIS ENGINEERED AND LED NUMEROUS BANK AND PAYROLL ROBBERIES THAT NETTED HIS GANG WELL OVER \$500,000 AND RESULTED IN THE DEATHS OF SEVERAL PEOPLE. COLD AND UNMERCIFUL--NEVER HESITATING TO KILL--KARPIS DODGED THE AUTHORITIES FOR SEVERAL YEARS IN A CHASE THAT WAS NATIONWIDE.

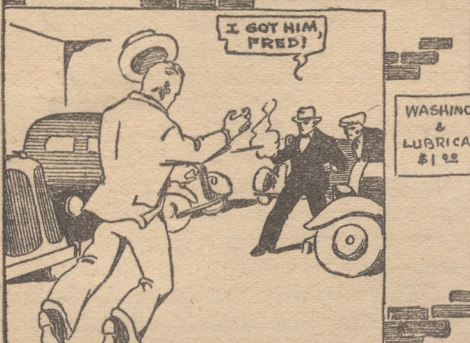
SENTENCED TO THE REFORMATORY FOR STEALING TIRES AT 16 YEARS OF AGE, KARPIS AND A PAL--LAWRENCE DEVOL--SAWED THROUGH THE BARS AND ESCAPED.



AGAIN AND AGAIN KARPIS HAD BRUSHES WITH THE LAW, SERVING SHORT PRISON TERMS FOR VARIOUS CRIMES. FINALLY HE WAS SENTENCED TO FOUR YEARS IN THE STATE PENITENTIARY AT MCLESTER, OKLAHOMA, FOR JEWEL ROBBERY, BUT WAS PAROLED, AFTER THREE MONTHS IN THE COUNTY JAIL, BY THE TRIAL JUDGE.



ON DEC. 19, 1931, SHERIFF C.R. KELLY OF WEST PLAINS, MISSOURI, WAS SHOT DOWN BY KARPIS AS THE LAWMAN ENTERED A GARAGE TO QUESTION KARPIS AND HIS PAL--FRED BARKER--ABOUT A ROBBERY THE PREVIOUS NIGHT.



KARPIS AND HIS GANG ENTERED THE THIRD NORTHWESTERN NATIONAL BANK OF MINNEAPOLIS ON DEC. 16, 1932, KILLING THREE PEOPLE AND MAKING OFF WITH \$20,000 CASH AND A QUANTITY OF NEGOTIABLE SECURITIES.



KARPIS ALSO PLANNED AND LED THE MOB THAT KIDNAPED WILLIAM A. HAMM, JR., WEALTHY ST. PAUL BREWER, ON JUNE 15, 1933.



ONE NIGHT WHILE KARPIS, "MA" BARKER AND HER BOYS WERE SEATED AROUND THEIR KITCHEN TABLE IN ST. PAUL, A TIP CAME THAT OFFICERS WERE CLOSE BEHIND THE HAMM ABDUCTORS.



AFTER SOME SPECULATION AS TO WHERE THE COPS HAD GOTTEN THEIR TIP, THEY DECIDED IT WAS THROUGH ARTHUR DUNLAP, "MA" BARKER'S HUSBAND. SO KARPIS AND FRED BARKER INVITED DUNLAP FOR AN AUTO RIDE. A FEW DAYS LATER DUNLAP'S BULLET-RIDDLED BODY WAS FOUND NEAR WEBSTER, WIS.



ON AUG. 30, 1935, KARPIS AND HIS PAIS KILLED A POLICEMAN AND WOUNDED ANOTHER DURING A \$30,000 PAYROLL ROBBERY IN SOUTH ST. PAUL



G-MEN WERE NOW ON THE TRAIL OF KARPIS. J. EDGAR HOOVER, CHIEF OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, ANNOUNCED THAT THEY HAD PUT A PRICE ON THE HEAD OF KARPIS

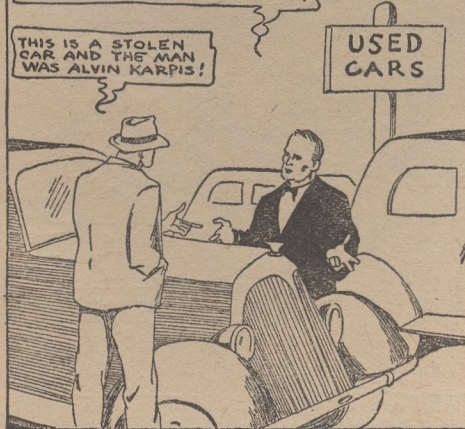


DURING A STAY IN CHICAGO, KARPIS ROBBED THE FEDERAL RESERVE BANK MAIL, ON SEPTEMBER 22, 1935



KARPIS FLED FROM CHICAGO. G-MEN NEARLY CAUGHT UP WITH HIM AS HE LEFT A TRAIL OF STOLEN CARS THROUGHOUT THE MIDDLE WEST

A SLENDER, FAIR-COMPLEXIONED YOUNG FELLOW SOLD ME THIS CAR JUST THREE DAYS AGO!



ON JAN. 20, 1935, KARPIS AND HARRY CAMPBELL SHOT THEIR WAY OUT OF A TRAP ON AN UPPER FLOOR OF A SMALL HOTEL IN ATLANTIC CITY. THE GANGSTERS ROUTED SIX POLICEMEN, ARMED WITH SHOTGUNS, WOUNDING ONE OF THEM



[Turn Page]

ESCAPING ACROSS NEW JERSEY, KARPIS AND CAMPBELL ABANDONED THEIR CAR IN PENNSYLVANIA. THE NEXT NIGHT THEY STOPPED DR. MORACE W. HUNSICKER, OF ALLENTOWN, AND FORCED HIM TO DRIVE THEM ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA INTO OHIO.

THANKS FOR THE LIFT, DOC! WE'LL TIE YOU UP AND LEAVE YOU IN THE GRANGE HALL HERE!

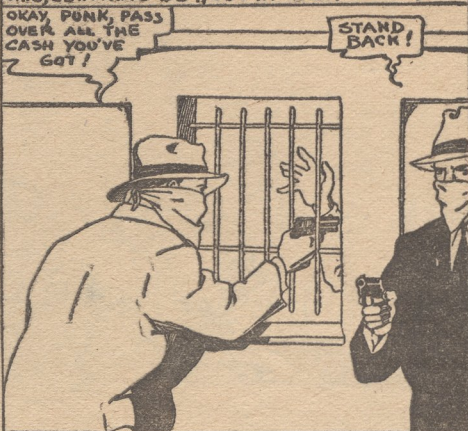


DR. HUNSICKER FREED HIMSELF AND NOTIFIED THE POLICE BUT THE GANGSTERS MADE THEIR GETAWAY!

THE BARKER-KARPIS GANG WAS NOW BROKEN UP, SOME KILLED BY G-MEN—OTHERS SERVING PRISON SENTENCES. KARPIS THEN TEAMED UP WITH HARRY HUNTER, AND ON NOV. 2, 1935, THEY ROBBED THE POSTOFFICE OF GARRETSVILLE, OHIO, OBTAINING \$34,000 IN CASH.

OKAY, PUNK, PASS OVER ALL THE CASH YOU'VE GOT!

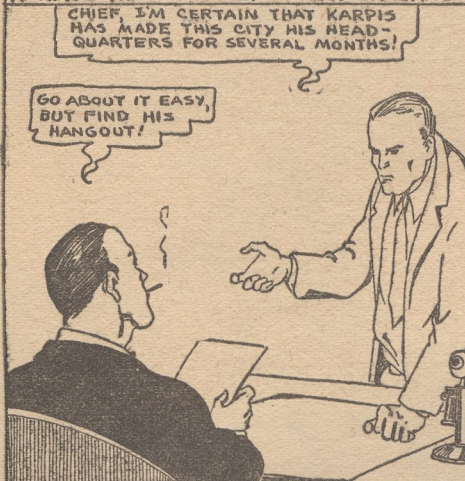
STAND BACK!



MONTH AFTER MONTH G-MEN KEPT UPON KARPIS'S TRAIL. FINALLY IN NEW ORLEANS—

CHIEF, I'M CERTAIN THAT KARPIS HAS MADE THIS CITY HIS HEAD-QUARTERS FOR SEVERAL MONTHS!

GO ABOUT IT EASY, BUT FIND HIS HANGOUT!



THEN ONE DAY LATE IN APRIL, 1936, WORD CAME FROM NEW ORLEANS TO J. EDGAR HOOVER, IN WASHINGTON.

PACK UP BOYS. WE'RE LEAVING FOR NEW ORLEANS AT ONCE! WE'VE LOCATED KARPIS!



ON MAY 1, G-MEN, LED BY HOOVER HIMSELF, CLOSED IN ON KARPIS, HARRY HUNTER, AND A GANG MOLL AS THEY WERE LEAVING AN APARTMENT BUILDING IN DOWNTOWN NEW ORLEANS. G-MEN CAPTURED THEM WITHOUT FIRING A SHOT!

WE'RE FEDERAL OFFICERS, KARPIS! SURRENDER!



G-MEN ESCORTED THEIR PRISONER BACK NORTH IN AN AIRPLANE. IN JULY, 1936, KARPIS WAS SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR THE HAMM KIDNAPING. LATER HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE FEDERAL PRISON AT ALCATRAZ ISLAND, CALIFORNIA.



NEXT MONTH — ANOTHER THRILLING G-MEN ADVENTURE IN PICTURES

High in the Sierras, "Red" Kessler, Dope Smuggler, Crosses Trails with Special Agent Frank Lane



Frank and Mock shot simultaneously

TRAIL'S END

By CARL CLAUSEN

Author of "Poker Face," "The Perfect Crime," etc.

SPECIAL Agent Frank Lane, of the F. B. I., surveyed the terrain with a practised eye. Rowan's Valley, it was called. It was really a long narrow rift in the California Sierras, an offshoot of the great Mojave desert. It terminated in the Ute Pass, eleven thousand feet above sea level.

A small stream trickled at Lane's feet—Ute Creek, its source in the

eternal snows of the pass. Today, in the July sun, wind and dust had obliterated all traces of spring. As far as the eye could reach, the world was sere and yellow, the midday sun spiked on the blue sky over Lane's head.

Because it was familiar territory to him, he had been chosen for this job of trailing "Red" Kessler, the drug smuggler from the Mexican border—

Kessler, with a long record of smuggling and murder, but not one conviction.

Red Kessler had been searched at the border, but nothing had been found on him—as usual. He was reported to be traveling light—ostensibly on a hunting trip—with just enough grub and supplies to make it seem plausible. He was headed for his cache somewhere along the route.

Lane had been given a list of the essential items Kessler carried: bacon, flour, coffee, sugar, tobacco, a shotgun with a hundred rounds of ammunition, but no small side-arms, two double blankets and two canteens. The revenue officers at the border, who had examined every last article without result, decided his trip from across the border was a blind. Inspector Sanderson had assigned Frank to trail the smuggler. He had trailed Kessler now for two days. When his quarry took the old Ute trail, Frank cut across country to arrive at this spot, miles ahead of the other.

Frank's plan was simple. He would pitch camp here. Kessler would arrive along toward evening. He would see the fire by the trail, stop to investigate. What happened after that, Frank must leave to chance. He reflected that Kessler had never seen him before.

Dismounting, the G-man made camp for the night. He built a fireplace of stones, pitched his tent; then scattered refuse about, to make it appear he had been camping there for several days. After hobbling his pony, he brought down a jackrabbit, cooked and ate part of it.

Then the G-man got out his miner's pick, shovel and pan and went to work, panning the sand of the creek near a water hole.

Kessler arrived earlier than Frank had expected. His ears caught the unmistakable clink of horseshoes on the hard lava trail. He did not look up, but went on with his panning.

Then Kessler had pulled up, dismounted. Frank heard the crunch of his boots, as the smuggler came toward him. Still he did not look up.

He had hidden his service automatic and clips of shells under a rock.

KESSLER stood looking at Frank uncertainly, his shotgun resting in the crook of his arm.

"Hello, Buddy!" he called out.

Frank straightened up and returned the greeting. Kessler shifted the shotgun to his other arm.

"Getting any 'color'?" he asked.

Frank shrugged. "Just color—no more," he replied.

Kessler grinned, showing a row of yellow teeth.

"Don't worry," he said, "I'm not jumping claims. Saw the smoke of your fire and came over. I'm on my way over the pass and into the valley, hunting." He slapped the barrel of his shotgun. "Heard there was plenty grouse this year on Fraley Meadows."

Frank nodded. "You'll always find grouse on the pine meadows at this time of the year," he replied. "Hobble your pony and have a bite with me. I was just going to get me some supper."

The man shook his head. "I got to be on my way." His dark eyes narrowed suspiciously for a moment. "You picked a hot time to pan, Buddy. The creek will be dry in another week."

"Yeah. I aim to get me out of here in a couple of days. You know this country, stranger?" Frank put the question in an offhand manner.

Kessler seemed to be considering.

"I been through here before. Why?"

"I was wondering. You can't make the pass by dark, and it's cold up there after sundown. If I was you, I'd camp here for the night."

Kessler's hard-bitten face turned to granite. His small black eyes wandered about the camp.

"If it gets too late to cross the pass I'll hole up in the old ranger's cabin on the nine-thousand-foot level," he said.

Frank nodded.

"I forgot about that cabin. You'll have to hustle to make it. Wish you'd stay and have supper with me. You're the first man I've seen in two weeks."

Kessler shook his head, grinning. "Lonesome up here, all right," he said. "Nope, I'll be on my way. S' long."

He swung into the saddle, and disappeared around a jagged spur. Frank smiled to himself. Shooting grouse! In the first place, grouse was out of season, and in the second place, he surmised, the shotgun was loaded with slugs, not birdshot.

He went on with his panning until he heard the hoofbeats of Kessler's mount recede in the distance, then he proceeded to put his plan into operation. He had found out what he wanted to know. Kessler was meeting someone at the old ranger cabin below the pass.

Darkness would soon be here. The shadows of the Sierras were already marching across the mesa, and the setting sun shot the snow peaks with prismatic splendor. Frank knew that Kessler could not go any farther than the cabin before dark. The canyon trail was impossible on moonless nights, such as this would be.

FRANK looked to the safety catch of his automatic and started up the trail on foot after his quarry in the gathering dusk. His horse would be no good to him in the dark, so he left it hobbled at the spring.

He noted by the hoofmarks of Kessler's horse that the man was traveling fast. He was trying to make the rendezvous before dark, all right. Frank took his time. He wanted the other to be in camp for the night.

Pale stars began to glimmer in the sky. The canyon below him swam in purple mist. From an out-jutting spur on the other side, a coyote barked forlornly to its mate. In the sagebrush near the trail, forest denizens prowled.

It was nearly midnight when the G-man made out the dark etching of the cabin. He approached it cautiously. Through chinks in the sides, streaks of light penciled the darkness. Frank made a wide detour to a window in the far wall of the cabin. On hands and knees he crept up to

the ledge, raised himself noiselessly on the sill and peered in.

Kessler was sitting by the dying fire, smoking a cigarette. A candle stood on the mantel above his head. Every now and then, he glanced at his watch. It was evident that he was expecting someone. His grim features were silhouetted against the light. His gear was piled in one corner of the cabin. It was apparent that he considered himself safe from pursuit. The loaded shotgun lay on the pile of gear in the corner.

It was then that Frank heard the crunch of a boot on the trail, near at hand. Quick as a flash he ducked, but not quick enough. A shot rang out on the still night air as a bullet sang past his ear. He rolled down the slope to cover in a clump of brush, as a second spurt of flame stabbed the darkness, the detonation echoing deep in the canyon. He saw a dark figure leap from behind a boulder at the side of the trail and run for the cabin.

Frank held his own fire. That Kessler had been expecting the newcomer was evident, for the door of the cabin was jerked open, admitting him, then slammed shut again. The candle went out.

Frank lay perfectly still for the next few minutes. Then the door was opened cautiously, and the two men came out. They stood peering into the darkness, then Kessler sneered:

"You're full of hop, Mock. There's nobody around for miles. You hop-heads give me a pain!"

"I tell you I saw a face at the window," the other insisted. "I'm not going to move the stuff until I know who it is!"

"That's your funeral, fellow," Kessler snarled, "so long as you kick through. I want my dough—or else!"

"All right, all right, Red. I'm not trying to welch," the other whined.

"You'd better not," said Kessler, pointedly, and they went back into the cabin.

FRANK thought quickly. He was in a quandary. To secure a conviction it was necessary to find drugs

on the men. If they succeeded in caching it, they could disclaim all knowledge, and the case would never go to a jury.

Then Red Kessler and Charlie Mock would go free again. Both had equally bad records for essentially the same offenses. It was Frank's first assignment in playing a lone hand. And the department depended on him to break up the traffic in drugs along this route.

When he saw the light go on in the cabin again, he made his way cautiously to the door and squinted through the crack in the planking. The two smugglers were seated on the floor. Mock was counting out money from a large roll of bills, and Kessler was watching him like a poised snake. So intent were the two men on their task that they did not look up until the door creaked on its rusted hinges.

"Stick 'em up!" Frank snapped, his voice brittle.

Kessler's back was to him. The man's hairy hands rose slowly in the air. Mock was quicker. His two hands shot toward the ceiling, while a bill of large denomination fluttered to the floor.

Kessler turned his head slightly toward the shotgun on the pile of gear in the corner.

"Not a chance, fellow!" Frank warned. "One move and you get it. In the back—your own favorite way. You, Mock, turn on your face on the floor and put your hands behind your back. On your face, I said!"

The other lowered his hands, started to comply; then a hand stabbed for his pistol. His gun and Frank's barked at the same moment. Frank felt the scorch of hot lead as the bullet grazed his skull. Mock fell on his face and stayed there. His pistol went clattering across the floor. The man twitched convulsively, then lay still. A damp spot appeared on the floorboard under his head.

Frank picked up the gun, broke it, removed the shells and stuck it in his pocket. He stepped up to Kessler and frisked him, but the deadly shotgun

on the pile of gear appeared to be his only weapon.

"All right, Kessler," said Frank, "you can put your hands down—behind your back."

He slipped handcuffs on the smuggler, then gathered up the money from the floor. The bills were all twenties. He looked at one of them closely, held it up to the light and smiled.

"Thought you were a wise guy, Kessler," he said. "Too wise to take phony bills."

Kessler drew a deep breath. He scowled at the dead figure on the floor. His hard face broke into a leer.

"You didn't find them on me, copper," he snarled. "So what?"

"They'd be apt to believe me if I told them I did," said Frank. "Maybe I won't if you tell me what I want to know."

Kessler laughed. "And maybe I won't, either," he smirked unpleasantly.

"That's up to you. I'll find it if I have to take you and the cabin apart!"

Kessler's laugh hissed like a buzzsaw striking a pineknot.

"You're behind yourself, copper. You drifted in on a payoff. Try and prove what Mock was paying me for—with him dead." His evil face was a mask of mockery.

"I'll prove it," said Frank grimly, but he was none too sure of himself.

He rose, took the candle and went through the man's gear, first removing the shells from the shotgun and sticking them in his pocket.

But he found nothing. He searched every inch of the man's clothing without result, then sat down beside his quarry and waited for daylight.

WHEN it came, he proceeded to take the cabin systematically apart, but not an iota of evidence turned up. Kessler grinned, and asked for a smoke. Frank removed the handcuffs and gave him one.

"Just the same, you're coming out with me and tell the inspector where Mock got those phony bills," Frank grated.

"If I knew, Mock'd have been dead before you got here, copper!" the other retorted.

Frank said nothing. His ruse had failed. The bills were good. He was in for it; had to carry out the bluff to the bitter end. Too late to back out, now. He knew the drug was there. How to get Kessler to tip his hand was another matter.

"All right, Red," he said. "You win."

He replaced the shells in the shotgun, put it back on the duffle, watching the other out of the corner of his eye, and moved toward the door. But if he had expected Kessler to go for the shotgun, he was sorely disappointed.

The smuggler merely leered at him. "I'm not having any, copper," he said. "Killing Feds is something else, again."

"All right," said Frank. "Let's plant your pal. The ground's soft out there."

"You know this country?" Kessler remarked.

"Yeah, I know it—like a book. Let's have it over with."

He gave Kessler every chance to reach for the shotgun, but the man kept away from it studiously, grinning every now and then as he caught Frank's eyes following him.

"Still think I'd be sap enough to burn a Federal man?" he scoffed. "Be your age, man!"

"Well, you're coming out with me. The inspector will want to hear your version of how Mock came to check out."

"S'all right with me," said Kessler, cheerfully. "He might think I gave Mock the works. I'll go catch my pony."

"Don't make a mistake and walk off," Frank admonished. "I know every turn and twist in this canyon."

"I'm not looking for trouble," Kessler flung back.

He returned in a few minutes with the horse, and they loaded up.

"You ride on ahead," said Frank. "We'll stop at my camp and gather up my gear. Take it easy. I'm on

foot, remember, so take it easy."

When they arrived at the camp, Frank proceeded to get breakfast. He was in no hurry to get back to the post. He had put his foot in it—both feet, in fact, and Kessler was having the laugh on him. But Kessler's laugh was nothing to what the boys at the post would do, not to mention Inspector Sanderson.

Frank had begged for this assignment and Sanderson had entrusted him with it, impressing him with its importance. And he had failed. Bungled the job like any greenhorn. He was so mad that he could hardly eat. The flapjacks tasted like flannel and the maple syrup like gall.

Red Kessler was on his haunches, cooking flapjacks and whistling cheerfully. Frank turned his back on him with an unspoken oath. He saw himself with a killing to explain away—and Kessler would make it his business to make this as difficult as possible. He would be the laughing stock of every Federal man from the Mexican Gulf to San Diego.

SO preoccupied was he with his dark thoughts that he did not see the cast iron frying pan until it was too late. It came down on his head with a crash. For an instant he swayed, dizzily. Then he rose halfway to his feet, reached for Red Kessler's hairy throat.

They rolled over into the embers of the fire, then out again. Searing flesh stung Frank into a desperate effort at retaining consciousness. He hung on to Kessler's throat, felt a hand tug at the automatic pistol at his belt. He sank his teeth into that hand, then crashed his right fist into the hate-filled eyes that glowered above him.

The horses whinnied with fright. The two men churned up the ground for yards about the fire. The automatic came out of the holster. Both tried to get it, both failed. Over and over they rolled.

Then Frank tore himself loose and managed to stagger to his feet. He made a dive for the pistol, but Kessler tripped him and he shot head first

into Kessler's pony. He jerked the shotgun from the pommel, just as Kessler's hand closed about the butt of the automatic on the ground.

"Throw up your hands!" Frank panted. But Kessler merely snarled. He came on, firing. Frank let him have both barrels. The gun roared, but somehow he missed, for Kessler continued firing. A bullet ripped through the G-man's left arm, another through his shoulder. A third grazed his cheek. He flung the empty shotgun at his adversary. The butt struck Kessler squarely between the eyes. He went down like an ox, with Frank on top of him.

The last thing Frank remembered was the grinding of his knuckles in the sand as he snapped the handcuffs around Red Kessler's wrists. Then a half-thought surged through his brain—

When his senses returned, his head was throbbing. Heat bore down upon him in great, suffocating waves. After a while, he crawled to the spring, bathed his face and drank deeply. He brought water for the handcuffed smuggler, groaning on the ground, then set about looking after his and Kessler's wounds. He reloaded his pistol with a fresh clip of shells, then rigged a litter for the unconscious man between the two horses.

Two days later, he staggered into the post with his groaning burden, half delirious himself. Inspector Sanderson looked up from his desk to stare at the hollow-eyed, sunken-faced apparition that stumbled through the doorway.

"Frank Lane reporting, sir," the figure said, saluting weakly. "The evidence was packed in a hundred shotgun shells, which I have with me.

"I didn't get wise until Kessler went for my gun, although he could have shot me down any time with his shotgun—if the shells hadn't been loaded with coke!

"Can I have a slug of whiskey, sir? I know it's against the rules—" and Special Agent Frank Lane doubled up and crumpled to the floor.

HE didn't know that they had taken the bullets out of his arm and shoulder until the next day. Sanderson was standing there, grinning down at his bandaged head on the pillow.

"Did Kessler pass out, Inspector?" Frank asked him.

Sanderson shook his head. "Unfortunately, he didn't. He's a tough hombre. But a stretch on Alcatraz will change all that." Then his brow clouded momentarily.

"Say, Frank, in getting your things in order, we found three thousand dollars in your pockets. We kind of—er—wondered—er—" The Inspector paused, confusion reddening his face.

Special Agent Frank Lane struggled to suppress a tolerant smile. "That's part of the evidence, sir. I caught Mock passing it on to Kessler—"

"As if we didn't have evidence enough already!" the inspector breathed in relief, and mopped his brow.

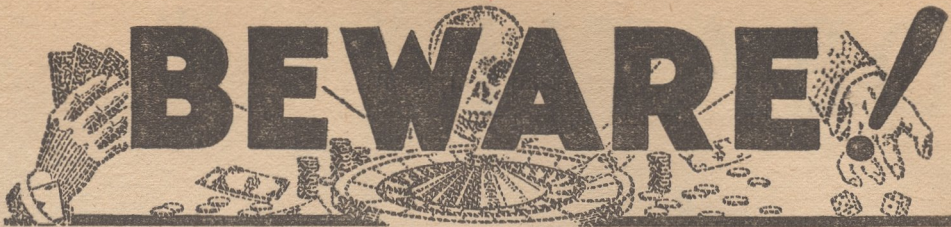
College Humor

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CENTS

THE BEST COMEDY IN AMERICA

FICTION • SATIRE • CARTOONS

ON SALE EVERYWHERE!



A Guide-Post to the Newest Dodges of the Petty Racketeers of America! Follow This Interesting Series in G-MEN

THE young salesman seemed to be a decent sort of guy—just a young fellow trying to get along. Mr. Storm, the druggist, to whom he was eager to sell corn-cures, vegetable compounds and toothbrushes, was sympathetic, but his drug store was already well stocked. And as for punchboards, which were also in the salesman's case of wares, the druggist was against petty gambling devices.

"This is a sure thing," argued the salesman. "You can't lose on it. For instance, here's one punchboard that's already been tried out. I'll be glad to let you have it on trial. Keep it on your counter till six and I'll guarantee you a neat profit. I'll be back then, and if it hasn't made you any money by that time I'll take it away gladly, with no loss to you. Fair enough?"

"Well—" Mr. Storm was hesitant. "Leave it if you want to. . ."

"RATS IN THE CELLAR"

An hour later a car stopped in front of the drug store. Two men climbed out, entered the store. The taller man went up to the prescription counter; the other remained at the soda fountain.

The former demanded a certain poison. "We got rats in our cellar," he explained. "You'll have to sign the register," the druggist told him.

"Register? What for?"

"State law."

Reluctantly the man signed for the poison and paid. His companion meanwhile called for a soda. Served, he leaned forward and said in a low tone: "Have you got something that'll cure —" The rest was in a whisper.

The druggist shook his head. "You'd better go to a doctor," he advised. "It's against the law to prescribe for anything like that."

"The trouble is," the other pleaded, "I ain't got the dough for a doctor. Be a sport, will you? You must have something that'll help me temporarily."

"Sorry," Mr. Storm said. "The law says I can't advise any treatment. Go to a clinic if you can't afford a doctor."

KNOWLEDGE OF THE LAW

The taller man discovered the punchboard. "Looka here, Jim," he beckoned. "Let's try our luck, huh?"

They took turns. Pretty soon the man

called Jim shouted triumphantly. His fourth punch had won him seven dollars. Mr. Storm frowned, but he had to pay. A few minutes more and the tall man, having placed a dollar bet on a number, punched the board—and won a twenty-five to one shot!

Then the whole set-up dawned on the druggist. These two—and the "salesman"—a crooked threesome! He realized now why the tall fellow had asked for the poison. Had the druggist sold it to him without registering his name, it would have meant a serious violation of the law for which the druggist's license could be revoked. And the other man had asked for a medicine to cure a social disease. Had the druggist prescribed for it, a grave offense would have been committed against the State. The crooks had armed themselves with a knowledge of the law to work their clever shakedown scheme!

But in the present case they had no weapon but sheer brashness, since Mr. Storm also knew his law—and respected it.

"Come on," the tall man grated. "That's twenty-five bucks you owe me, guy. Pay up!"

SCRAM!

The druggist went in the direction of the cash register—but picked up the phone instead. Before the pair could prevent it, he had dialed the police call.

"We better scam," the tall man said to his companion.

"What's your hurry?" the druggist inquired, turning slightly. "Stick around, boys. I'm about to pay up."

The two weren't listening. They had barged out and were already setting the car into motion. An hour later, State troopers caught up with them on the highway, and the pair confessed to a route of blackmail that stretched from Bangor all the way down the Coast. Their scheme had netted them an average of a hundred dollars a day!

The "salesman"—the real brains of the outfit, remains at large. At this very moment he may be conniving with new accomplices to carry out his sure-thing racket. Warn your neighborhood druggist at once!

Tell him—and all your friends—to follow G-MEN each month for this special feature. BEWARE!—in the next issue, exposes another clever gyp game.

DEATH at THIRTY BELOW

Tom Douglas, Postal Sleuth,
Leads a Quartet of Mail
Robbers in a Dirge of
Doom!

By
FRANK GRUBER

Author of "Murder Invitation," "Wooden Nails," etc.

THE great muskeg swamp of Northern Minnesota, an area approximately fifty miles in diameter, inhabited by two or three dozen hardy Finns and Swedes, is the bleakest place in the United States. Stunted tamarack trees, muskeg moss thirty feet deep, snow five feet deep give the region a foreboding atmosphere.

It was two degrees below zero, but perspiration stood out on the brow of Post Office Inspector Tom Douglas as he labored through the snow. It was fortunate that a recent thaw, followed by the cold snap, had formed a crust two inches thick, or he would never have been able to plough through the snow at all. As it was, there was a foot of loose snow on top of the crust, snow which had only stopped falling



Crawling out, he was aware of yelling men

the day before and through which his feet sank with every step.

Two days ago, in Chicago, Douglas had doffed his dapper everyday clothing. Now he was five hundred miles north of Chicago and dressed in dirty overalls, with a pair of cloth trousers underneath, wool shirt, leather jacket with gaudy mackinaw over it, a knitted cap, and high-top rubber-soled shoe pacs over two pairs of woolen socks. He carried a rucksack on his back; in it was food enough for a week. Dangling outside the rucksack were a dozen assorted steel traps. He carried a .30-30 Winchester rifle.

Ostensibly he was a trapper. But the game he sought were men—desperate criminals—who had held up a crack flyer, dynamited the mail car, killed three Government employes and got away with two hundred thousand dollars.

The trail Douglas followed was fresh, made since the snows of yesterday. His quarry could not be far ahead. He stopped to rest for a moment, and became aware of a strange noise. A whirring noise, which became louder. He was puzzled. It sounded like an airplane. He glanced up.

It was an airplane, flying at about five hundred feet altitude. A cabin plane. Of course, Hibbing, the center of the Iron Range, was an important little city of 20,000 population. It had plane communication with Duluth and this was in the direction of its flight. The thought that he was only thirty or forty miles from civilization made Douglas feel better.

He continued on through the wilderness.

In a little while he came to a higher patch of ground, more thickly wooded and with poplar, cedar, spruce and young pine, instead of the monotonous stunted tamarack that he had been seeing almost all day.

After a while the underbrush was so thick that Douglas found it hard going. Then suddenly he stopped. To his nostrils had come the distinct odor of wood smoke. There must be a cabin close by. He examined his rifle, made sure it was ready for quick

action, then continued, his eyes on the snow-clad trees ahead.

HE never knew just how it happened, but suddenly his right leg was jerked away from under him—and he was swooped up into the air, feet first.

It seemed, for one breathtaking instant, that he was being hurled above the trees; but then his flight stopped with a sickening wrench at his leg. He bounced back to earth, struck the snow with a vicious crack and then rebounded skyward again. He knew a moment of blackness, then consciousness returned.

He looked down at the snow six feet below him. He twisted himself upward and found that he was hanging from a young poplar tree; a rope tied near the top had been used to pull the young tree top down like an inverted hook, and it had been held in that fashion with a trigger. A noose had been spread on the snow and covered. Douglas had stepped into the noose, kicked the trigger, and the tree had jerked him into the air.

Douglas had heard of game as large as deer being caught in this manner. And he knew that he was in for it. He had of course dropped his rifle and rucksack when the trap was sprung. If he could get the noose from around his leg he could drop to the ground. But the weight of his body held the noose taut. If he were acrobatic enough, he could pull his body up, grab the rope above the noose and then loosen it.

Douglas tried it. He couldn't swing his body up, however, for the springy tree swayed up and down with every movement. Cold sweat came out all over his body. Already the blood was rushing to his head, threatening to burst through his veins. How long could a man live suspended by his feet? An hour—two?

In his hip pocket was a strong hunting knife. He could get it out without any trouble, but what good would it do him? If he could twist upward he could cut the rope. He tried it, but every time he moved the young

tree swayed up and down, jerked his body up and down. Swaying—swaying—

Perhaps he could swing it down to the snow. Yes, almost underneath was his rifle. If he could get that he might shoot the rope.

Douglas began swaying, much like a child hanging from a tree branch. Up and down—one foot, two, three, four. The swinging caused the most excruciating pain in his imprisoned leg, but he persisted.

Now he was within a foot of the snow. His flaying gloved hand brushed the ground. Up—and he tore the glove from his hand. Down with a sickening plunge. And then he had the rifle in his hand, clutching it for dear life.

Now to stop swinging. That took three or four full minutes. Then Douglas brought the rifle up, aimed it at the rope beyond. Then he paused. The report would be heard in this stillness for miles—might bring the people he was stalking down on him. In fact, now that he had been trapped, Douglas was quite sure that his quarry was close by—and he hardly believed that a native had made this trap for game!

BUT he couldn't hang here. Already his ears were roaring. In a few minutes more he'd be bleeding from the nose. Then unconsciousness. It was now or never!

He pulled the trigger. The report sounded like a cannon roar. Nothing happened. At a distance of a few inches Douglas had missed the swinging rope. That was only to be expected, of course, with his vision sickeningly blurred. There was only one thing to do: place the rifle against the rope around his foot and trust to luck he would not shoot himself.

He pumped a new shell into the chamber of the gun, brought it up again to the rope around his foot. He pulled the trigger, then dropped the gun frantically so he'd have his hands free to break his sudden descent to the snow. He plunged through the top layer.

Crawling out, he was aware of yell-

ing men. He reached for his rifle. Too late! They were upon him—three bearded, wild looking men, armed to the teeth. They lit into him, striking with rifles and pistols. Douglas fought back as well as he could, but hampered by the deep snow he was no match for the trio. A terrific blow on the head smashed him to his knees. Another blow and everything went black.

He came to slowly. It seemed for a moment that every devil in hell was pounding at his head. He opened his eyes and saw rough planking under his face. He groaned and twisted around. Immediately he was surrounded by several men.

"He's come to," he heard a voice say. A rough hand caught hold of his mackinaw collar and jerked him to a sitting position. Douglas looked into a vicious face, grimaced. He recognized that face—Jim Murdock, "Big Jim" Murdock. He had seen many of the reward notices with that picture in various post offices throughout the country. Murdock had once served seven years for holding up a postmaster in a Missouri town. He had been released four years ago, but since had been seen only once: a year ago when he had staged a big holdup down in Alabama.

"How'd you find us, copper?" snarled Murdock, as Douglas looked up.

"What do you mean copper? I'm a trapper," bluffed Douglas.

"Trapper, hell!" snorted Murdock. "You're a G-man—from the Post Office Department. You asked a lot of questions over in Meadowlands last night and again over at Turnboom's."

Douglas clamped his jaws shut. So Murdock had left a guard at Meadowlands. All the time Douglas had been hunting for the gang in the muskeg swamp, someone had been stalking him. He had never had a chance. Murdock was smart.

"Okay, Murdock," Douglas said. "You win. What next?"

"What the hell do you expect?" snapped Murdock. "Think I'm goin' to let you get out of here and bring in your G-boys? I got me a swell

hideout here and I figger on stayin' here all winter.

"Then next spring we'll hit the cities and have some fun— But, listen, G-boy, you're goin' to get bumped off anyway— Here, I'll make a deal with you. If you tell me somethin' I want to know, I'll let you live until—tomorrow. Otherwise you go right now!"

"What do you want to knnw?" Douglas gritted.

"How you found our hideout. I'm damn sure we didn't leave no clues anywhere. Why, we even went to the trouble of emptyin' our pockets and cuttin' out store labels, just in case one of us was knocked off. You didn't didn't find nothin' on Emil Beldeau, who got plugged by that damned mail clerk, I'm sure."

DOUGLAS looked at the leader of the outlaw gang. He thought rapidly. The information he could give would do no harm. If the gang leader kept his word and spared his life until the next day, an opportunity might present itself. A slim chance, but worth gambling on.

"Okay, Murdock," he said. "I'll tell you. You say there weren't any clues on Emil Beldeau. You're wrong; there were plenty. I knew inside of three hours after I saw Beldeau's body what his name and home address were."

Murdock's jaw became slack. "You're nuts—he didn't carry no identification."

"That's what you think, Murdock, but you don't know anything about modern scientific crime detection. You remember that Beldeau wore a leather zipper reefer? Well, that's what turned the trick. I learned that it was one of a special stock advertised by a big mail order house in Chicago. I went over there, did some investigating, and found that the jacket sold for \$4.95. It was so much of a bargain that the company sold 40,000 of them in fact!"

"Haw-haw!" guffawed Murdock. "Swell chancet you had of runnin' down Beldeau out of forty thousand customers."

"That's exactly what I did though, Murdock—with some help from a man in our laboratory. This man told me that Beldeau was a decided Nordic type, either a Swede, Finn, Dane or Norwegian. Well, all of us knew that the biggest majority of Scandinavians in this country live in Minnesota, Wisconsin, the Dakotas and Montana. Well, this mail order house had shipped about five thousand coats, like Beldeau's to those five states, but only seven hundred fifty-eight of size 36. Get the idea now, Murdock?"

"Yeah," glowered the big outlaw. "But even that number was plenty to run down."

"It looked that way," replied Douglas. "So I tackled the shoes, hat and trousers of the dead man. Unfortunately, Beldeau had evidently bought all of those at small, local stores. It was stuff that might have been sold to the stores by any one of a hundred wholesalers or jobbers throughout the middle west. It would have taken too long to trace them all down. So our laboratory man did some work on them."

"Maybe you don't know this, Murdock. We take an ordinary suit of clothes. By beating it and analyzing the resulting dust and fragments of vegetable matter, we can usually tell the occupation of the wearer. In some instances, even the section of the country where he lives. Well, in the trousers, the professor found an enormously large quantity of red dust—which was easily identified as iron ore dust."

"Iron ore!" exclaimed Murdock. "That's damn good. I picked up Beldeau in Hibbing, right in the middle of the iron country. Go on, you're getting interesting."

"I'm glad you like it," said Douglas, dryly. "Well, I got in touch with the mail order house again. I asked them how many of those reefers they'd sold to people in the Iron Range. The answer was fifty-four."


"We were stuck for a few minutes then, until we identified some microscopic bits of stringy vegetable matter we found in Beldeau's trousers."

That proved that the trousers were worn more recently than the jacket. That seemed to indicate that Beldeau had spent quite a bit of time in the muskeg swamp after he'd bought the reefer.

"But later, when he'd bought the pants, he'd lived only in the iron country. So I got me a map and found that there were only eight post offices that touched the swamp. The mail order store finished the thing; they'd shipped only three jackets to these eight post offices, and only one of size 36. That was to Emil Beldeau, of Meadowlands, Minnesota."

Big Bill Murdock shook his head in grudging admiration. "That's damn good figgerin', and I'm sure glad you told me all that stuff. I'll keep it in mind the next time we pull a job. Only one more question. You got off the train at Meadowlands alone. Where's the rest of your gang?" he rapped out.

Douglas remained silent.

" KAY, G-boy, you won't talk—well, you don't have to. There's only one way to get in here—through Meadowlands. Matt is going back there. He can beat anyone of your gang out here and give us plenty of warning. All right, Harry, take him outside."

"Hey!" protested Harry, a thin, crafty looking man. "You said if he talked you'd let him go until tomorrow."

"Don't be a sap! Why should we let him hang around here until tomorrow?" Murdock snarled.

"I got a better idea, boss," returned Harry. "There might be some slip-up somewhere. Why not keep this guy as a sorta hostage, just to keep the other G-boys away?"

Murdock exclaimed in satisfaction. "Harry, you got a head on you! That's what we'll do. They'll be afraid to come close. And with Matt down there at the station to meet all trains, why, he can get here before any of them and warn us."

Douglas' hopes rose.

"Yeah, and he can do the cookin'," put in another member of the gang.

"Me, I don't hanker after the job."

Murdock laughed boisterously. "How d'ya like that, G-man? Yuh can be our cook!"

It was arranged that way. Matt Finyala, the surviving Finn member of the gang, slipped off a few minutes later to go back to Meadowlands and take up guard. That left three of the gang: Joe Morris, Harry Simmons and Big Jim Murdock. There were rifles in the rude one-room cabin, but as a precaution Jim Murdock emptied them all of cartridges.

Each man kept an automatic on his person, however. "Just in case you try any monkeyshines," said Murdock. "And if we don't like the way you cook, we'll just belt you around."

"I got another idea," Simmons spoke up. "That loggin' chain, we'll tie it around his leg at night. Then we won't have to keep guard."

There was a small potbellied wood stove in the cabin. It served for heating as well as cooking purposes. Douglas rummaged around, found plenty of ham, bacon and flour. He'd done a bit of cooking in his time, and in a few minutes had started a supper of biscuits, coffee and fried ham.

The outlaws ate with relish. "What about water?" asked one of the men afterward.

Joe Morris cursed. "That damn bucket is empty again! It's your turn, Harry."

Harry grimaced. "What the hell we got a flunky fer? Let him get it!"

"I'll be glad to," volunteered Douglas. "Where do I go?"

"Haw-haw!" roared Murdock. "He thinks we're goin' to let him out alone, so he can make his getaway. Okay, Harry, take the rifle and stand by the door. You can cover him down to the creek—and you, Douglas, take off your jacket. You won't run very far in your shirt sleeves—not in two below zero."

Simmons and Morris cracked nasty jokes. Harry took a couple of cartridges and slipped them into the rifle. Douglas removed his leather jacket with a heavy heart. He'd hoped for a break of some sort. The rifle

wasn't needed to guard him outside the cabin. No one knew better than himself what little chance he had to be outdoors for any length of time in cold weather, wearing only his shirt.

He picked up a galvanized water bucket and started outside. Simmons stood in the doorway with the rifle and gave him directions. "Right over there by the creek. You'll find an axe there to chop a hole in the ice."

THE cabin was built on a bank which sloped down to the creek. The creek was about seventy-five feet from the cabin. A path had been stamped through the snow to the ice. At the edge of the river Douglas found an axe. There were signs of a hole having been chopped through the ice several times, although it was again frozen solid. A few lusty blows smashed it, however.

Douglas dipped the pail down into the icy water and filled it. He was about to straighten when he heard for the second time that day the droning of an airplane. He remained on his knees and searched the sky. There it was—almost directly over the river. This time it was going eastward, toward Duluth, flying low.

The chief and several other postal inspectors were no doubt in Duluth by this time. If Douglas could only get a message to the aviator in some manner! But how— Over there by the cabin stood Harry Simmons, rifle in hand, watching Douglas' every move. If he tried to make a run for it, Simmons would shoot him down—

"Hey, you!" yelled Simmons, "goin' to take all day?"

Douglas straightened; then, carrying the bucket, started up the slippery snow path to the cabin. Previous water carriers had sloshed water on the trail, making it slippery as ice. He slid and almost fell. He decided he'd better start a new trail.

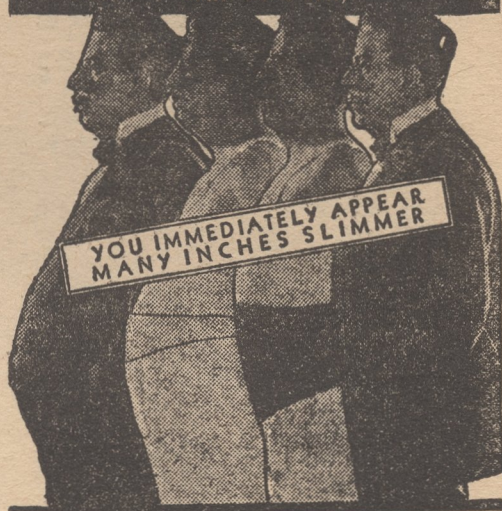
Reaching the cabin, Simmons snarled at him, "Don't you wish the airplane would stop here and take you off?"

"I wouldn't mind in the least!" retorted Douglas. "I'm not keen on be-

(Continued on page 118)

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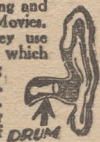
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(Continued from page 117)

ing a heel for a gang of cutthroats." Simmons launched a kick which he dodged.

Darkness fell shortly afterwards. Murdock pointed to a filthy looking bunk on which were tossed several torn and dirty padded blankets. "That's for you, anytime you want to turn in. But don't forget a chain goes on your leg when we turn in."

Douglas dropped down on the bunk. It had been a tiring day. The three men started a game of cards and bickered over it for a time. Then they were ready for bed. Douglas had already dozed off, but awakened with a start as he felt a logging chain being twisted around one leg. It was locked securely with a padlock, then a turn around a post of the bunk.

It was bitter cold in the cabin that night. The wood fire died down, the three ruffians being too lazy to get up and throw more wood on it.

Then Big Jim Murdock was cursing. "You, Douglas, get up and make the fire!"

"How the hell can I when I'm chained to this thing?" the G-man swore.

"Let him up, Harry, and keep an eye on him. You're used to this cold more than I am," Murdock sneered.

Draped with blankets and grumbling, Harry Simmons released Douglas. Then he sat down on the bunk and watched. An automatic protruded from the blankets he kept around himself.

Douglas shivered and moved around briskly. He soon had a roaring fire going, then started breakfast. Soon Murdock and the others made a rush for the stove, huddling about it. Douglas watched them without apparent interest.

After they had eaten, he announced: "If you fellows want to wash, I'll have to get more water. You should have more than one bucket around here."

Simmons spoke up. "Your turn to watch him, Morris."

Muttering sourly, Morris picked up a rifle and loaded it. Douglas started down the trail to the creek, but

after a few feet from the cabin he left the trail for unbroken snow. "What's the matter with the path?" Morris shouted.

"You guys been spilling water on it," Douglas called back, "and it's slippery as ice." He broke the ice in the creek again, filled the pail and came up the bank, again breaking another brand new trail.

THE day wore on. The outlaws played cards, read, and slept. One or two of them, however, were always awake, alertly watching Douglas. They kept their guns in their belts.

The cabin was plentifully stocked with provisions. Douglas made coffee six or seven times during the day, water for which required several trips to the creek. He heard the plane roar westward about noon; then, about an hour before dark, as it flew east, he had arranged it so that he was outside at the time.

The second evening's routine didn't vary. Douglas retired early, while the others played cards, drank liquor and bickered. About nine o'clock they retired. A half hour later, Douglas stirred in his bunk.

"The fire's going down, Murdock," he called. "If you don't want to freeze tonight, better put some more wood on it."

Murdock swore. He was of a profane nature and swore every time he was compelled to talk to the imprisoned G-man. "Fix it yourself! I'm too cold already to get out of bed."

"I can't fix it; I'm chained down," Douglas argued.

Murdock roared. "Simmons, get up and fix this damned chump! Throw his blankets down near the stove and put the chain on the stove leg. He can sleep on the floor near the stove and keep the fire going all night. Otherwise we'll freeze to death."

Simmons got gingerly out of bed, and chained Douglas to a leg of the stove. Simmons allowed him a longer length of chain than previously—about six feet. He could move all the way around the stove, get water, but still couldn't get to the bunks at

(Continued on page 120)

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20x4-20	30	3.20	4.20
20x4-20	31	3.35	4.35
20x4-20	32	3.50	4.50
20x4-20	33	3.65	4.65
20x4-20	34	3.80	4.80
20x4-20	35	3.95	4.95
20x4-20	36	4.10	5.10
20x4-20	37	4.25	5.25
20x4-20	38	4.40	5.40
20x4-20	39	4.55	5.55
20x4-20	40	4.70	5.70
20x4-20	41	4.85	5.85
20x4-20	42	5.00	6.00
20x4-20	43	5.15	6.15
20x4-20	44	5.30	6.30
20x4-20	45	5.45	6.45
20x4-20	46	5.60	6.60
20x4-20	47	5.75	6.75
20x4-20	48	5.90	6.90
20x4-20	49	6.05	7.05
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20x4-20	56	7.10	8.10
20x4-20	57	7.25	8.25
20x4-20	58	7.40	8.40
20x4-20	59	7.55	8.55
20x4-20	60	7.70	8.70
20x4-20	61	7.85	8.85
20x4-20	62	8.00	9.00
20x4-20	63	8.15	9.15
20x4-20	64	8.30	9.30
20x4-20	65	8.45	9.45
20x4-20	66	8.60	9.60
20x4-20	67	8.75	9.75
20x4-20	68	8.90	9.90
20x4-20	69	9.05	10.05
20x4-20	70	9.20	10.20
20x4-20	71	9.35	10.35
20x4-20	72	9.50	10.50
20x4-20	73	9.65	10.65
20x4-20	74	9.80	10.80
20x4-20	75	9.95	10.95
20x4-20	76	10.10	11.10
20x4-20	77	10.25	11.25
20x4-20	78	10.40	11.40
20x4-20	79	10.55	11.55
20x4-20	80	10.70	11.70
20x4-20	81	10.85	11.85
20x4-20	82	11.00	12.00
20x4-20	83	11.15	12.15
20x4-20	84	11.30	12.30
20x4-20	85	11.45	12.45
20x4-20	86	11.60	12.60
20x4-20	87	11.75	12.75
20x4-20	88	11.90	12.90
20x4-20	89	12.05	13.05
20x4-20	90	12.20	13.20
20x4-20	91	12.35	13.35
20x4-20	92	12.50	13.50
20x4-20	93	12.65	13.65
20x4-20	94	12.80	13.80
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20x4-20	96	13.10	14.10
20x4-20	97	13.25	14.25
20x4-20	98	13.40	14.40
20x4-20	99	13.55	14.55
20x4-20	100	13.70	14.70
20x4-20	101	13.85	14.85
20x4-20	102	14.00	15.00
20x4-20	103	14.15	15.15
20x4-20	104	14.30	15.30
20x4-20	105	14.45	15.45
20x4-20	106	14.60	15.60
20x4-20	107	14.75	15.75
20x4-20	108	14.90	15.90
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20x4-20	111	15.35	16.35
20x4-20	112	15.50	16.50
20x4-20	113	15.65	16.65
20x4-20	114	15.80	16.80
20x4-20	115	15.95	16.95
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20x4-20	117	16.25	17.25
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20x4-20	119	16.55	17.55
20x4-20	120	16.70	17.70
20x4-20	121	16.85	17.85
20x4-20	122	17.00	18.00
20x4-20	123	17.15	18.15
20x4-20	124	17.30	18.30
20x4-20	125	17.45	18.45
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20x4-20	127	17.75	18.75
20x4-20	128	17.90	18.90
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20x4-20	131	18.35	19.35
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20x4-20	134	18.80	19.80
20x4-20	135	18.95	19.95
20x4-20	136	19.10	20.10
20x4-20	137	19.25	20.25
20x4-20	138	19.40	20.40
20x4-20	139	19.55	20.55
20x4-20	140	19.70	20.70
20x4-20	141	19.85	20.85
20x4-20	142	20.00	21.00
20x4-20	143	20.15	21.15
20x4-20	144	20.30	21.30
20x4-20	145	20.45	21.45
20x4-20	146	20.60	21.60
20x4-20	147	20.75	21.75
20x4-20	148	20.90	21.90
20x4-20	149	21.05	22.05
20x4-20	150	21.20	22.20
20x4-20	151	21.35	22.35
20x4-20	152	21.50	22.50
20x4-20	153	21.65	22.65
20x4-20	154	21.80	22.80
20x4-20	155	21.95	22.95
20x4-20	156	22.10	23.10
20x4-20	157	22.25	23.25
20x4-20	158	22.40	23.40
20x4-20	159	22.55	23.55
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20x4-20	161	22.85	23.85
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20x4-20	163	23.15	24.15
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20x4-20	165	23.45	24.45
20x4-20	166	23.60	24.60
20x4-20	167	23.75	24.75
20x4-20	168	23.90	24.90
20x4-20	169	24.05	25.05
20x4-20	170	24.20	25.20
20x4-20	171	24.35	25.35
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20x4-20	173	24.65	25.65
20x4-20	174	24.80	25.80
20x4-20	175	24.95	25.95
20x4-20	176	25.10	26.10
20x4-20	177	25.25	26.25
20x4-20	178	25.40	26.40
20x4-20	179	25.55	26.55
20x4-20	180	25.70	26.70
20x4-20	181	25.85	26.85
20x4-20	182	26.00	27.00
20x4-20	183	26.15	27.15
20x4-20	184	26.30	27.30
20x4-20	185	26.45	27.45
20x4-20	186	26.60	27.60
20x4-20	187	26.75	27.75
20x4-20	188	26.90	27.90
20x4-20	189	27.05	28.05
20x4-20	190	27.20	28.20
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20x4-20	193	27.65	28.65
20x4-20	194	27.80	28.80
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20x4-20	197	28.25	29.25
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20x4-20	201	28.85	29.85
20x4-20	202	29.00	30.00
20x4-20	203	29.15	30.15
20x4-20	204	29.30	30.30
20x4-20	205	29.45	30.45
20x4-20	206	29.60	30.60
20x4-20	207	29.75	30.75
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20x4-20	209	30.05	31.05
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20x4-20	211	30.35	31.35
20x4-20	212	30.50	31.50
20x4-20	213	30.65	31.65
20x4-20	214	30.80	31.80
20x4-20	215	30.95	31.95
20x4-20	216	31.10	32.10
20x4-20	217	31.25	32.25
20x4-20	218	31.40	32.40
20x4-20	219	31.55	32.55
20x4-20	220	31.70	32.70
20x4-20	221	31.85	32.85
20x4-20	222	32.00	33.00
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20x4-20	224	32.30	33.30
20x4-20	225	32.45	33.45
20x4-20	226	32.60	33.60
20x4-20	227	32.75	33.75
20x4-20	228	32.90	33.90
20x4-20	229	33.05	34.05
20x4-20	230	33.20	34.20
20x4-20	231	33.35	34.35
20x4-20	232	33.50	34.50
20x4-20	233	33.65	34.65
20x4-20	234	33.80	34.80
20x4-20	235	33.95	34.95
20x4-20	236	34.10	35.10
20x4-20	237	34.25	35.25
20x4-20	238	34.40	35.40
20x4-20	239	34.55	35.55
20x4-20	240	34.70	35.70
20x4-20	241	34.85	35.85
20x4-20	242	35.00	36.00
20x4-20	243	35.15	36.15
20x4-20	244	35.30	36.30
20x4-20	245	35.45	36.45
20x4-20	246	35.60	36.60
20x4-20	247	35.75	36.75
20x4-20	248	35.90	36.90
20x4-20	249	36.05	37.05
20x4-20	250	36.20	37.20
20x4-20	251	36.35	37.35
20x4-20	252	36.50	37.50
20x4-20	253	36.65	37.65
20x4-20	254	36.80	37.80
20x4-20	255	36.95	37.95
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20x4-20	257	37.25	38.25
20x4-20	258	37.40	38.40
20x4-20	259	37.55	38.55
20x4-20	260	37.70	38.70
20x4-20	261	37.85	38.85
20x4-20	262	38.00	39.00
20x4-20	263	38.15	39.15
20x4-20	264	38.30	39.30
20x4-20	265	38.45	39.45
20x4-20	266	38.60	39.60
20x4-20	267	38.75	39.75
20x4-20	268	38.90	39.90
20x4-20	269	39.05	40.05
20x4-20	270	39.20	40.20
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20x4-20	272	39.50	40.50
20x4-20	273	39.65	40.65
20x4-20	274	39.80	40.80
20x4-20	275	39.95	40.95
20x4-20	276	40.10	41.10
20x4-20	277	40.25	41.25
20x4-20	278	40.40	41.40
20x4-20	279	40.55	41.55
20x4-20	280	40.70	41.70
20x4-20	281	40.85	41.85
20x4-20	282	41.00	42.00
20x4-20	283	41.15	42.15
20x4-20	284	41.30	42.30
20x4-20	285	41.4	42.4

him! We'll sure get *him* anyway!"

"Okay, Boss!" the gunman yelled, bringing the rifle up to his shoulder.

"Don't shoot!" Douglas cried out at the top of his voice. "You haven't got a chance! In a couple of minutes this cabin will be surrounded. Right now"—he bluffed, desperately—"the entire area is covered by G-men and Minnesota cops!"

Morris had unconsciously lowered the rifle, staring at the G-man, his stupid brain trying to make up its mind. The G-man rushed on: "When they find you've shot down a G-man—and there's no way out of this God-forsaken swamp—I'm telling you the truth—"

With his very life at stake, Douglas, his muscles steeled for one last fight, swung the axe, head first, full at the murderous gunman. The chopper gashed the man's chase and hurtled him over backward, the rifle discharging with a crash as it slid to the ground.

At the same instant, Douglas dove headlong for the man and pinned him to the chilling snow, then grabbed for the axe. Murdock, who had stood rooted to the spot with the suddenness of the attack, recovered himself with a jolt, swore bestially, screamed at Simmons:

"The tommy gun, quick—inside!"

Simmons, who from his position half inside the door had watched the fight only half-believing, unscrambled his wits and rushed for the sub-machine-gun. But he never heard its vicious chatter. As he ran out the door to train it on Douglas, a hurtling slab of cold steel sliced the frosty air and almost severed his wrist.

A scream of agony escaped his lips as the tommy gun flew from his mangled hand. He staggered, then slumped in a little huddle to the snow, blood streaming from his tortured wrist.

But Murdock was on the G-man now—Murdock, who had let others do his dirty work even to the bitter end. Hands clawing, feet lashing out, breaths hissing, the lithe young Gov-

(Concluded on page 124)

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FEDERAL FLASHES

NEXT month, G-MEN features the sensational story of Dan Fowler's latest and greatest case, as set forth in the complete book-length novel, **THE NAVY SPY MURDERS**.

An Intelligence man sends his assistant on a dangerous secret mission. A few days later he receives a mysterious package. A severed head—that of the assistant—rolls out!

This is the first warning to the United States Government that sinister forces are at work. Then follow three daring attempts by foreign spies to land on one of the Aleutian Islands, where the United States is maintaining a secret air and submarine base. The island is supposedly isolated, deserted. Yet the spies are aware of its importance.

UNDERCOVER FOES

Soon after, an unknown band of Asiatic spies steal plans from the archives of the War Division. Things get pretty hot in the Navy Department! Dan Fowler, ace G-Man, is ordered to smash the most vicious and deadly crime ring he has ever encountered! Fighting against undercover foes, Dan finds his own clues, makes them tell him plenty, and starts off on a bloody trail of exotic intrigue. A country's fate swings in the balance as he matches the might of the F. B. I. against the fiendish cunning of international wolves of prey.

In addition to **THE NAVY SPY MURDERS**—many other exceptional stories and features in next month's issue! A sensational exposé of the stamp racket by an ex-gangster is of particular interest. Also—**THE BLACK CHAMBER**, and, everybody, be sure to submit your entries in the contest announced on Page 94 in this issue.

FRIENDS THE WORLD OVER

This is the time to join the G-MEN CLUB if you are one of those who hasn't yet signed up. There are no dues and no fees and we welcome you all, the only requirement being that you express your loyalty to the law.

To obtain your club emblem, it is necessary to clip, fill in and mail in the coupon, enclosing the small required amount to cover mailing, etc. Also enclose the name-strip from the cover of this magazine.

G-MEN is read throughout the world. Here are excerpts from some readers' letters recently received:

I am 20 and a bugler serving in the Royal Marines. I'd like to be a member of your club, if possible. I've read G-MEN for some time.—L. F. Webb, H.M.S. Tamar, Hong Kong, China. Your stories are so interesting, so chock-full

of action, that I look forward to each issue. I've also interested several of my friends in G-MEN.—Alex Shearer, Glasgow, Scotland.

I am a member of the Montreal Fire Department for the past twenty years. I find G-MEN interesting because of the light it sheds upon crime solution.—Harry Giguère, Montreal, Canada.

I am interested in detective and fingerprint work and find G-MEN about the best I ever read.—Wilfred Normandeau, North Bay, Ontario, Canada.

G-MEN teaches that crime doesn't pay. That's why I think everybody should read this magazine.—Lloyd A. Smith, Philadelphia.

I enjoy reading about Dan Fowler and the other special agents featured in G-MEN. It's a swell magazine.—Jackie Mort, Detroit, Mich.

Among other especially interesting letters recently received were those sent in by the following:

W. Joseph, Glendale, L. I., N. Y.; L. A. Steinhauer, San Antonio, Tex.; John Oehlmann, Grasmere, Staten Island, N. Y.; Thomas Shelton, Los Angeles, Cal.; Leon Pemberton, Chilton, Wis.

Thanks to all. And please keep on writing me.

—THE EDITOR.

G-MEN CLUB,

22 West 48th St.,

New York City.



I wish to join the G-MEN CLUB. I promise to uphold the laws of the Nation—to do all in my power to aid in their enforcement, and to back the efforts of Federal agents in their fight on crime.

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Address.....

City.....State.....

Age.....Sex.....Hobby.....

Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope if membership card is desired.

TO OBTAIN THE G-MEN EMBLEM, our official insignia, enclose the name-strip G-MEN from the cover of this magazine, plus ten cents in stamps or coin.

NOTE: If you do not enclose the name-strip, send 15c. in stamps or coin. This nominal charge is made merely to cover our expense in mailing this valuable bronze badge.

1-37 ☐ If already a member, check here

THE BLACK CHAMBER

(Concluded from page 95)

CORRECT SOLVERS OF CRYPTOGRAMS SEVENTEEN AND EIGHTEEN

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Jesse Clark, 327 W. Galina St., Milwaukee, Wis.; Richard M. Smith, P. O. Box 612, Tallahassee, Fla.; J. S. Fickett, 10 E. Mount Carmel Ave., Glenside, Pa.; U.S.S. Holland, Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor, T. H.; F. A. Ametrano; Jim Douglas, Lamar, Mo.; Henry Lipps, 296 12th St., Brooklyn, N. Y.; J. J. Loser, 110 Rosser Ave., Elmont, L. I.

CRYPTOGRAMS NINETEEN AND TWENTY

Sewell Green, Brandon, Vt.; John Hannan, 26 Fullerton Ave., Newburgh, N. Y.; Jim Douglas, Lamar, Mo.; J. Watts, 7 Pleasant St., Houlton, Me.; Richard M. Smith, P. O. Box 612, Tallahassee, Fla.; Y. M. Reyna, 98th Division, Federal Bldg., Syracuse, N. Y.

Harry R. Bell, 615 E. Rich St., Columbus, Ohio; Isabelle Murdock, 6233 Newell Ave., Chicago, Ill.; Mac Arthur, 11302 Ada Ave., Cleveland, Ohio; Bill Clark, 12 North 3th St., Spearfish, So. Dak.; T. R. Dorsamer, 113 E. Wilkesbarre St., Easton, Pa.

Emerson Hunt, 622 Independence Ave., St. Joseph Mo.; Frank Gallagher, 123 15th St., Brooklyn, N. Y.; M. J. Moore, 335 Rutland Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.; Ethel M. Masters, Portland, Maine; C. P. Stanton, Board of State Harbor Commissioners, San Francisco, Cal.

Arthur Tebbe, 602 W. Michigan St., Sidney, Ohio; Alex Prepnar, 7 Salisbury St., New Bedford, Mass.; Ted Lingos, 3506 Neptune Ave., Coney Island, N. Y.; Robt. R. Miloch, 411 Michigan Ave., Detroit, Mich.

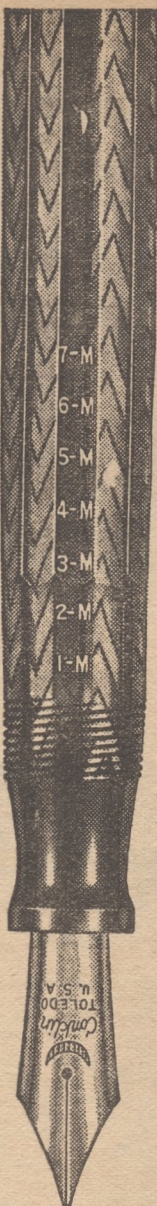
FOUR-LETTER PATTERN WORDS

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ELIE	GANG	HICH	KELK	—	PAUP
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EUCE	GROG	IBRI	—	OMAO	—
EURE	GRUG	IFNI	—	OMRO	—
EVOE	GUAG	ILAI	LAEL	ONTO	—
EXLE	GUEG	IMPI	LEAL	ORDO	—

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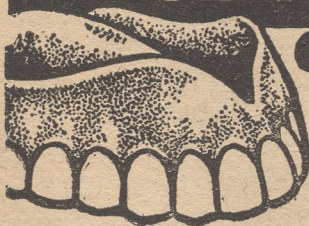
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DR. S. B. HEININGER, D.D.S.

440 W. Huron St., Dept. 150, Chicago, Illinois

DEATH AT THIRTY BELOW

(Concluded from page 121)

ernment ace and the beefy, frantic
gang chief were locked in a biting,
gouging battle that strained back and
forth over the encrusted snow.

BY sheer weight, Murdock, ani-
mal-like, his mind consumed
with rage at the failure of his care-
fully laid plans, forced Douglas' head
back on his shoulders. Fighting with
his last ounce of strength, the G-man
thought his very spine was going to
snap in two—

With a choked scream, the gang
chief lurched and, with Douglas twist-
ing frantically to one side, fell hard
to the now ice coated snow. A dull
snap, as of a twig breaking in two,
penetrated the G-man's fast-fading
senses. The gangster had split his
kneecap clean through, and was howl-
ing an unholy dirge of pain—

Two minutes later Chief Post Of-
fice Inspector Swayzee and three
other postal inspectors ran up. With
them was Matt Finyala, a prisoner.
They had caught him a short distance
from the cabin. All were amazed to
find Tom Douglas in possession of
the outlaw cabin.

"How you did it, I don't know!"
exclaimed the chief; than stood wide-
eyed as Douglas, panting, described
what had happened.

"It was the laziness of these guys!"
he exclaimed. "They made me get
water for them—even too lazy to
come along. Stayed in the doorway
here with a rifle. Well, all I did
was make new paths down to
the creek; first, five straight
lines like this |||||. Then, on
other trips, I made short horizontal
paths, closing up the straight lines.
Like this: - - -. Put those two
sets of tracks together and you get
HELP. From here on the ground
you couldn't see them so well, but
from way up and off to one side they
form shadows."

"That's right," agreed Swayzee.
"The aviator said at five hundred feet
the word stood out as black as char-
coal on a white sheet of paper."

Brighter.

COLLEGE HUMOR

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"FIGHT CRIME—OR FALL BEFORE IT!"

(Continued from page 85)

Federal cases; and again it might be wise to ask in your home town why local officers can work so well when they are protected by the proximity of Federal officers and why so many strange influences seem to hamper their steps when the case is purely a local one.

Do not construe this as criticism upon your officers. They would be most happy to have this mystery solved and these strange forces lifted from them. The fault is not that of the man on the job, but the fault of the man who owns that job, the man who can appoint a person to fill that job and likewise take the job away from him.

Coöperative Citizenry

And now, how about the coöperation of the citizen? Who is it?

First of all, there is the man who doesn't want to go on the jury, a man who regards his business as of greater importance than that of protecting his home. Secondly, we find that there may be a dozen witnesses for the defendant against one witness for the state.

Some citizens are apathetic. More are frankly afraid. Cowards, to put it bluntly. Others can be reached through friendship or political domination to an extent where they actually will go on the witness stand and perjure themselves for the freedom of a man they know to be guilty. All this time they, too, are paying the per capita tax bill of \$120 a year for crime.

Is this not an utterly amazing situation? And is it not your duty to campaign relentlessly for better conditions in our juries, for more courage on the part of our citizens in testifying in criminal cases, and for greater insistence that the laws of our country are not only made more uniform, but are made laws for the protection of America instead of laws for the protection of the criminals?

Crooked Lawyers

A visit to almost any state capital will find some lawyer-legislator spouting mawkish sentimentalities about the protection of the innocent. The thought is a cloak used by slyster lawyers in a concerted effort to defeat justice. The blame rests at the door of a well named group of men—the lawyers-criminal.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has dedicated itself to sending such legal law-breakers to prison, and has been successful in a number of outstanding cases, only to find that often in the community where these vultures existed they were looked upon by the citizens as extremely shrewd

(Continued on page 126)

For Kidney And Bladder Trouble

Stop Getting Up Nights

Here's one good way to flush harmful waste from kidneys and stop bladder irritation that often causes scanty, burning and smarting passage. Ask your druggist for a 35-cent box of Gold Medal Haarlem Oil Capsules—a splendid safe and harmless diuretic and stimulant for weak kidneys and irritated bladder. Besides getting up nights, some symptoms of kidney trouble are backaches, puffy eyes, leg cramps, and moist palms, but be sure to get **GOLD MEDAL**—it's the genuine medicine for weak kidneys—right from Haarlem in Holland.

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STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACTS OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912 and MARCH 3, 1933, of G-Men, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1936.

State of New York } ss.
County of New York }

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared **N. L. Pines**, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Publisher of **G-Men**, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor and business manager are: Publisher, **Beacon Magazines, Inc., 22 West 48th Street, New York, N. Y.**; Editor, **Harvey Burns, 22 West 48th Street, New York, N. Y.**; Managing Editor, none; Business Manager, **H. L. Herbert.**

2. That the owner is: **Beacon Magazines, Inc., 22 West 48th Street, N. Y.; N. L. Pines, 22 West 48th Street, N. Y.**

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of the total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities are: none.

4. That the two paragraphs next above giving the names of the owners, stockholders and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company, but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders, who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds or other securities than as so stated by him.

N. L. PINES, Publisher.
Sworn to and subscribed before me this 23rd day of September, 1936. **Adrea Goldberg**, Notary Public, commission expires March 30, 1938.

(Continued from page 125)

and clever men. I submit that there is nothing clever in crime. I submit that it is sordid and that there is something sordid in the mind of the person who can find anything to emulate or applaud in the vulture-like activities of such individuals.

Law-Enforcement as a Career

The home, the church and the school must be united upon a common purpose. We cannot correct existing conditions by apathy, by indifference, by supine submission to the dominance of criminally blood-stained influences. We cannot eradicate the outrages of arson, robbery and murder by a gasp of astonishment when we read the headlines.

There is only one way to fight, and that is to get out on the battle line and do something. We must insist upon law-enforcement agencies which are unshackled, which can arrest a criminal and make that arrest stick, which are composed of men properly trained for the jobs they occupy. It is one thing to put a uniform on a brawny body, and it is another thing to give authority to a properly trained brain.

The time has definitely come when law-enforcement, in all its branches, must be built into a career. The time also has arrived when to select the right person for the right job, a sum of money commensurate with the brains needed shall be paid for that job.

Astonishment over the fact that some thousand-dollar-a-year jailer has taken a bribe to allow a super-criminal to escape should be changed to greater astonishment that a civilized nation should be trusting job-holders who can be paid only a thousand dollars a year for the task of keeping our "mad dogs" in check. This, in a greater or lesser degree, is applicable to every position and item of law-enforcement.

Now I come to the most important matter in our tangle of criminality—that of sentimentalism and clemency. You who sit on the sidelines often applaud when some hardened criminal, perhaps up for his fourth or fifth conviction, is severely lectured in court and given, we'll say, a fifteen-year sentence. You sit back, secure in your ignorance, believing that you will be safe for fifteen years from this menace to society. That sentence has been a legal falsehood.

Parole

Through the utterly amazing workings of our convict-loving parole lawyers it is possible for that man to return to his life of crime in as short a time as twelve months! There have been actual cases where local judges have made political capital of the fact that they were sentencing men to long terms in prison, when in truth agreements had been made with de-

tense attorneys whereby the sentencing jurist would sign a parole petition after a servitude of only one or two years.

I state this so that you may make it your business to learn just what happens to the criminals who go through the courts in your communities and ascertain for yourselves how much time they actually serve.

I hasten to add, however, that I am an active advocate of the principle of parole. Certainly every possible endeavor should be made to rehabilitate the person who has offended for the first time against our laws. Crime cannot be cured by inhumanity. A casual of crime cannot be remolded into a worthy member of society by a punishment which leaves him embittered.

The first offender should be charged as a first offender, with a commensurate sentence, with commensurate treatment and commensurate efforts to restore him to the place he lost in society. But who is the first offender?

It happens that in the perplexity of our laws, in the mass of technical barricades thrown up by lawyer-legislators, either directly concerned with the defense of criminals or associated through friendship or otherwise with those who make their living by defense of criminals, it is almost an impossibility to define the first offender from the old and hardened one.

As for the rotten practice of the fine theory of parole, I have said before, and I say again, that it is a national disgrace. Hardened criminals are being turned forth in many of our states under a multiplicity of laws which is utterly astounding.

There are states which employ not more than one man to watch after and supposedly oversee the activity of thousands of roving criminals, many of whom have obtained their freedom through political affiliations. There are other states where prisoners merely report by letter. Do you suppose they confess every infraction they have committed?

If you ever have seen a merchant who advertised that he sold inferior goods; that he cheated his customers; that he was dishonest in his trade practices, then I will grant that somewhere there is a criminal who willingly wrote to a parole board that he was again engaging in thievery, burglary and murder.

Until recently, the matter of parole has been the domain of the sentimentalist and the sob sister. It is easy to weep over the fact that a man has been placed behind bars. It is easy, indeed, to shed a tear when one thinks of the fact that he is separated from his freedom and from those he loves.

It is not so easy to remember the mangled, shapeless, horribly sprawled form of a murdered victim upon the floor, beaten to death by the muscular hands of this very same criminal. Why do not the sob sister and the sentimentalist give some attention to the victims of crime instead of to the perpetrators of crime?

(Concluded on page 128)

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Without Calomel—And You'll Jump Out of Bed in the Morning Rinin' to Go

The liver should pour out two pounds of liquid bile into your bowels daily. If this bile is not flowing freely, your food doesn't digest. It just decays in the bowels. Gas bloats up your stomach. You get constipated. Your whole system is poisoned and you feel sour, sunk and the world looks punk.

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(Concluded from page 127)

A Deadly Army

At the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington there exists a single fingerprint section devoted to the 12,500 men and women who are viewed by our bureau as the most dangerous and deadly of the army of more than 3,000,000 persons whose fingerprint records are on file.

These are the kidnapers who steal from the American home that which is loved best. These are the bank robbers who, with machine guns and super-automatic pistols, descend upon the depositories of this nation's funds. These are the cowardly individuals who, firing from ambush, send dum dum bullets into the backs of our law-enforcement officers. These are the gangsters who, operating under the protection of filthy vote-buyers, shoot down our citizens and loot our homes.

Here are enough dangerous men and women almost to form a complete army division upon a field of battle. They are public enemies of society. To move against them, special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation must be equipped with automatic shotguns, rifles and pistols, machine-guns, armored cars, tear gas and steel breastplates.

I hope I have painted a sufficiently ghastly picture of this super-army of criminality. I hope you will remember every word of it and that you will not forget the most important fact of all—the records show that 3,576 members of this desperate criminal group have, at some time, felt the angelic mercy of parole or probation or pardon or some other form of sob sister clemency. Not only has the mantle of sentimentality or worse descended once, but in many cases many times.

Often these dangerous criminals have been arrested for new crimes before law-enforcement officials have been informed that prison gates had been thrown open from a previous sentence which they were supposed to be serving.

That, in a nutshell, is the story of a national disgrace which has been brought about by this country's debauchery of sentimentality and clemency. I sincerely hope you will not and cannot forget it.

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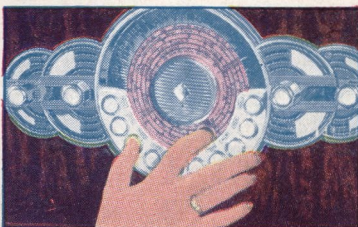
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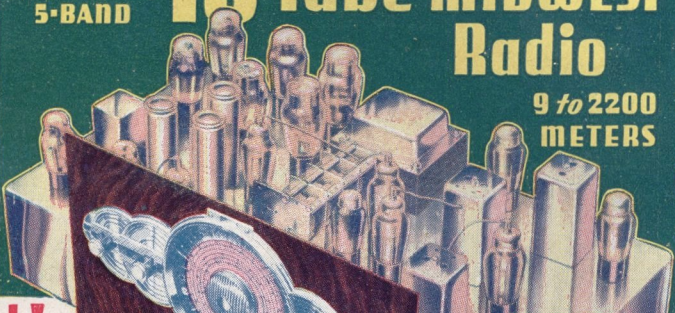
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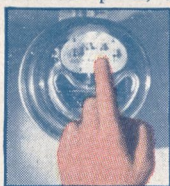
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