

NOW
10¢

COMPLETE CRIME MYSTERY STORIES

POPULAR

JUNE

DETECTIVE

MOTTO
FOR **MURDER**

*An Exciting
Mystery Novelet
By* **FRANK
JOHNSON**

A THRILLING
PUBLICATION

THE CHAIR IS
NOT CHEATED

*A Baffling
Crime Novelet
By* **MEL WATT**

BUY WAR BONDS
AND STAMPS
FOR VICTORY!

LIGHTER MOMENTS with fresh Eveready Batteries *Dated*



"See, Fido! Like this!"

"Keep your eye on the Infantry—the doughboy does it!" Work for victory and spend your earnings on War Bonds.

"EVEREADY" flashlight batteries are playing a vital role in this global war. The Army, Navy, Marines and essential war industries require nearly our entire production of these dependable, long life batteries. Obviously, that leaves a very limited supply for civilians.

However, important new developments have been made in "Eveready" flashlight batteries. As soon as the war is over you will get all the batteries you need and they will be even better and more serviceable than their pre-war predecessors.



The registered trade-mark "Eveready" distinguishes products of National Carbon Company, Inc.

To People Who Want to Write but can't get started



**Beginner
Earns
\$1,819.00**

"Today I received a check for \$165 for a story. Another I sold for \$34. The other day I counted up just how much I made previously. It amounted to \$1,820.00. Not bad for a beginner, is it?"—Mrs. L. L. Gray, 579 E. McHard Ave., Stanford, Texas.



**Bus Driver
Sells
8 Stories**

"Since reporting the sale of my first attempt at a magazine article, I have sold three others. Also four feature stories were accepted by the local newspaper. The credit is all yours. When you consider that I'm a driver for the local bus company, you can readily see my time is well taken up."—Herman R. Bach, Box 113, Pacific Grove, Cal.

Do you have the constant urge to write but the fear that a beginner hasn't a chance? Then listen to what the editor of *Liberty* said on this subject:

"There is more room for newcomers in the writing field today than ever before. Some of the greatest of writing men and women have passed from the scene in recent years. Who will take their places? Who will be the new Robert W. Chambers, Edgar Wallace, Rudyard Kipling? Fame, riches and the happiness of achievement await the new men and women of power."

Writing Aptitude Test — FREE!

THE Newspaper Institute of America offers a **FREE** Writing Aptitude Test. Its object is to discover new recruits for the army of men and women who add to their income by fiction and article writing.

The Writing Aptitude Test is a simple but expert analysis of your latent ability, your powers of observation, imagination, dramatic instinct, etc. Not all applicants pass this test. Those who do are qualified to take the famous N.I.A. course based on the *practical* training given by big metropolitan dailies.

This is the New York Copy Desk Method which teaches you to write by writing! You develop your *individual* style instead of trying to copy that of others.

You "cover" actual assignments such as metropolitan reporters get. Although you work at home, on your own time, you are constantly guided by experienced writers. It is really fascinating work. Each week you see new progress. In a matter of months you can acquire the coveted "professional" touch. Then you're ready for market with greatly improved chances of making sales.

Mail the Coupon Now

But the first step is to take the Writing Aptitude Test. It requires but a few minutes and costs nothing. So mail the coupon now! Make the first move towards the most enjoyable and profitable occupation—writing for publication! Newspaper Institute of America, One Park Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. (Founded 1925)

NOTICE TO CANADIANS

Newspaper Institute's operations in Canada have been approved by the Foreign Exchange Control Board, and to facilitate all financial transactions, a special permit has been assigned to their account with The Canadian Bank of Commerce, Montreal.

Free

**Newspaper Institute of America
One Park Ave., New York 16, N. Y.**

Send me, without cost or obligation, your Writing Aptitude Test and further information about writing for profit.

Miss
Mrs.
Mr. }

Address.....

(All correspondence confidential. No salesman will call on you.) 94-N-595

Copyright 1945 Newspaper Institute of America

TO OUR READERS: Our new easy-to-read space-saving type conserves paper in conformity with government rationing—and there is **NO REDUCTION** in reading matter.

POPULAR DETECTIVE

XXIX, No. 1

EVERY STORY BRAND NEW

June, 1945



Featured Mystery Novelet **MOTTO for MURDER**

By **FRANK JOHNSON**

When Two Strangers Die Under Startlingly Similar Circumstances, Private Detective Rufe Reed and His Aides Take a Trail of Avarice that Leads to the Sensational Exposure of a Sinister Criminal Conspiracy! 11

Another Exciting Complete Novelet

THE CHAIR IS NOT CHEATED Mel Watt 50

Dr. Coffin, the Famous Crime Specialist of the Air Waves, is Suddenly Confronted with the Grim Menace of Real Murder!

Thrilling Short Stories

PILOT TO MURDERER Walt Sheldon 32

The B-17 Had a Murdered Tail Gunner and a Spy in Its Crew

CLOWN OF DOOM John L. Benton 39

Ed Rice Masquerades as a Corpse to Nab a Killer

DEATH BY PROXY M. D. Orr 43

Archie McCann Finds Himself Pitted Against a Poison Dagger Assassin

THE WITNESS SHARE Joe Archibald 64

Willie Klump Uses Poker Tactics to Clean Up a Full House of Thieves

and

OFFICIAL BUSINESS A Department 6

Where Readers and the Editor Meet

POPULAR DETECTIVE, published every other month by Better Publications, Inc., at 10 East 40th Street, New York 16, N. Y. N. L. Pines, President. Subscription (12 issues), \$1.20; single copies, \$10. Foreign and Canadian postage extra. Registered as second-class matter April 14, 1938, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1945, by Better Publications, Inc. In communicating with this magazine, please include your postal zone number, if any. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes and are submitted at the author's risk. Names of all characters used in stories and semi-fiction articles are fictitious. If the name of any living person or existing institution is used, it is a coincidence. Read our companion magazines: Thrilling Western, Thrilling Ranch Stories, Thrilling Wonder Stories, Thrilling Mystery Novel, Thrilling Sports, Thrilling Love, Thrilling Detective, Thrilling Football, Popular Western, Popular Love, Popular Football, Popular Sports Magazine, Texas Rangers, G-Man Detective, Air War, Sky Fighters, The Phantom Detective, Everyday Astrology, West, Detective Novel Magazine, Masked Rider Western, Range Riders Western, The Rio Kid Western, Black Book Detective, Startling Stories, Popular Crossword Puzzles, Best Crossword Puzzles, Radio Romances, Army Navy Flying Stories, Exciting Love, Exciting Sports, and Exciting Western. Printed in the U.S.A.



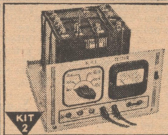
I Will Show You How to Learn RADIO by Practicing in Spare Time

**I Send You
6 Big Kits
of Radio Parts**



KIT 1

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



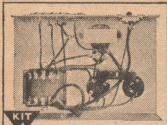
KIT 2

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



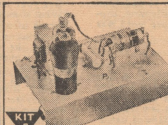
KIT 3

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



KIT 4

You get parts to build this Vacuum Tube Power Pack; make changes which give you experience with packs of many kinds; learn to correct power pack troubles.



KIT 5

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



KIT 6

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

KNOW RADIO—Win Success I Will Train You at Home

Send the coupon for my FREE 64-page book, "Win Rich Rewards in Radio." See how knowing Radio can give you security, a prosperous future. Read how N.R.I. trains you at home. Read how you practice building, testing, repairing Radios with SIX BIG KITS of Radio Parts I send you.

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

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

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

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

The day you enroll I start sending EXTRA MONEY JOE SHEETS to help you make EXTRA money fixing

Radios in spare time while learning. MAIL COUPON for FREE 64-page book. It's packed with facts about opportunities for you. Read about my Course. Read letters from men I trained, telling what they are doing, earning. MAIL COUPON in envelope or paste on penny postal. J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 8F09, National Radio Institute, Pioneer Home Study Radio School, Washington 9, D. C.

Our 21st Year of
Training Men for
Success in Radio

Mail this--64 page book FREE

MR. J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 8F09
National Radio Institute, Washington 9, D. C.

Mail me FREE, without obligation, your 64-page book: "Win Rich Rewards in Radio." (No salesman will call. Please write plainly.)

Name Age

Address

City Zone State

**My Course Includes Training in
TELEVISION • ELECTRONICS
FREQUENCY MODULATION**





OFFICIAL BUSINESS

A DEPARTMENT WHERE READERS
AND THE EDITOR MEET

MAJOR Amos Black came back from the wars a hero. He was met and pounded on the back and shouted at by his old friends and brother officers of the police force which he had left for the army.

"Boy, does he look good!" someone shouted.

Amos Black had a little wry grin for that. If he looked good it was a mistake. He was still a pretty sick man. The shell that had thrown him fifteen feet into the air had left its marks. He had nightmares in which he dreamed of Nazis, of bursting shells, bayonets and exploding grenades. He woke up screaming, fighting, thrashing, wild with the horror of battle.

Yet he hoped he was well enough to get his old job back as police detective. It had been promised when he left and Tom Fleming, captain of detectives, was a man whose word was good.

Bad News!

Amos Black had a rude awakening. A new administration was in power. An overfed politician named Rawlinson was now Police Commissioner and his brother-in-law Tierney held down Fleming's job as Captain of detectives, though Tierney bore the title of Lieutenant.

Black went to see Rawlinson who made only the slightest effort at politeness. He made a few inquiries as to Black's health, intimating that the veteran should be in a hospital. Then:

"I've got some bad news for you. You are no longer connected with this department. I can't use a man who might be seriously affected if a gun went off near him."

A pudgy hand waved in dismissal and Black found himself outside, shaking with impotent rage. There was nothing he could do, no one to whom he could protest. At last he gave it up and went to seek Tom Fleming at his home.

A widower, Fleming lived alone. He greeted Amos Black in the rough hearty way that was so much a part of him. Without further ado, he insisted that Black stay with him. They had much to talk about, including the corruptness of the new administration and the care they took to see that neither Fleming nor Black were connected with the police department.

Amos Black had one of his nightmares that night. He awoke in a tangle of bedclothes, drenched with sweat, to find Tom Fleming shaking him.

"The fellow next door called the cops," Fleming grinned. "We'll just close the window so he won't get the heebies again and you go right back to sleep and bump off a few more Nazis."

Sudden Murder stalks!

Black drifted back to sleep. When he woke again, someone was shaking him. He looked up—into the face of Police Lieutenant Gus Tierney.

"Get your clothes on, Black," Tierney said.

"What's wrong?"

"Come into the next room. You'll see."

Throwing a bathrobe around him, Black followed the detective into the next room. Then he stopped. The room was a shambles. Blood was everywhere, the furniture was smashed and battered and upset.

"Tom!" Black cried in horror.

Tierney took him downstairs. In front of a smashed door lay Tom Fleming. He had been stabbed about twenty times.

Tierney was cool about it, even considerate. "You killed him all right," he said. "There's only one set of prints on the knife and they'll be yours. But you're not a murderer, you're a sick man, Black. Let's get down to headquarters and call in a doctor and see what's what, eh?"

One Tough Spot!

The doctor's verdict was that Amos Black belonged in a hospital. Oh, for five or six years maybe. Amos got in then. A nice frame to get rid of him and Fleming both. They couldn't burn him, for he was a war hero, but they could put him quietly away and that was just as good.

The frame made him so sore that his conscience didn't bother him at all over the expert, quick, Commando job of throttling he did on Tierney. He left the lieutenant unconscious on his cell bed, took his gun and keys and quietly let himself out. They were

(Continued on page 78)



IMAGINE THEIR JOY WHEN THEY FOUND THEY COULD PLAY

This easy as A.B.C. way!



LEARNED QUICKLY AT HOME

"I didn't dream I could actually learn to play without a teacher. Now, when I play for people they hardly believe that I learned to play so well in so short a time."
—H. C. G., Calif.



WOULDN'T TAKE \$1000 FOR COURSE

"The lessons are so simple that anyone can understand them. I have learned to play by note in a little more than a month. I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for my course."
—S. E. A., Kansas City, Mo.



PLAYS AT DANCES

"I have completed the U. S. School and your lessons have been most satisfactory. I can play all of the popular songs. I have also earned money playing at dances."
—E. N. J., New York.

PLAYS ON RADIO

"As a pound student I can't keep from telling you that as a result of my course I have a good position playing from KTHS, Hot Springs, Ark., every morning."
—J. S., Ohio.



"YOU CAN'T BEAT IT!"

"I am glad to tell anyone about the U. S. School. It is just what they say it is and they will do what they say they will. If you want to learn music you can't beat it!"
—W. E. D., N. Mex.

Thousands Have Learned to Play for Less Than 7c a Day

WHAT instrument would you like to play? We'll show you how you can learn to play it—quickly, easily, in spare time at home for less than SEVEN CENTS A DAY! Never mind if you don't know one note of music from another—don't worry about "special talent."

The truth of the matter is that thousands now play who never thought they could! Yes, men and women everywhere are enjoying the thrilling satisfaction of playing the piano, violin, guitar, saxophone or other favorite instrument. Some of them are playing in orchestras and over the radio; others are teaching music, making

money in spare or full time. And thousands are playing for their own enjoyment and the entertainment of their friends.

It all came about when they wrote to the U. S. School of Music for the Free Booklet that shows you how EASY it is to learn music at home this modern way. No tedious scales, no tiresome exercises. You learn to play by playing—start right in almost at once with the melody of a simple tune! It takes only a few minutes a day and the rest is trifling; you save the expense of a private teacher. Does it sound too good to be true? Mail the coupon and get the FREE PROOF! (Our forty-seventh year—Est. 1898.) U. S. School of Music, 2946 Brunswick Bldg., New York 10, N. Y.

NOTICE

Please do not confuse the U. S. School of Music method with any system of teaching music "by ear" or by trick charts. Our method teaches you to play by actual notes . . . not by any "trick" or number system. You are able to pick up any piece of regular sheet music and play by note. And once you've learned to play by note it's just like learning your A-B-C's. It never leaves you—you remember it for life.

SEND FOR FREE → PRINT AND PICTURE SAMPLE

● You'll open your eyes when you find how quickly and easily you can learn to play your favorite instrument. Don't doubt; don't hesitate. Send for the fascinating illustrated booklet that answers all your questions; let the free Print and Picture Sample show you how this method actually works. If interested, mail the coupon NOW.

*Actual pupils' names on request. Pictures by professional models.

SUCCESSFUL 47TH YEAR

U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC

2946 Brunswick Bldg., New York 10, N. Y.

I am interested in music study, particularly in the instrument checked below. Please send me your free illustrated booklet, "How to Learn Music at Home."

Piano	Saxophone	Modern Elementary
Guitar	Trumpet, Cornet	Harmony
Hawaiian Guitar	Reed Organ	Clarinet
Violin	Tenor Banjo	Practical Finger
Piano Accordion	Mandolin	Other Instrument

Have you instrument?.....

Name

Address

City

State

NOTE: If you are under 16 years parent must sign coupon.

Save 2c—Stick coupon on penny postcard.

EVERY ELECTRICAL WORKER NEEDS THIS ELECTRICIANS 1945 HANDBOOK

For Everyday Help
On The Job!



Brand new... up to the minute. Contains over 5,000 electrical facts—wiring diagrams—essential electrical formulas—latest code rules, tables, charts and wiring methods. Includes Industrial Electronics data. It's a gold-mine of practical, down-to-earth helps and ideas to save you time and money. A book every Electrical Worker can use every day. Pocket size, 4 1/2 by 7 inches, flexible leatherette cover to stand hard usage.

SEE IT FREE!

See this book FREE for 7 days at my expense. If you decide you don't want to keep it, send it back and you owe nothing. If you keep the book you pay only \$2.75 after 7 days' FREE examination.

FREE TRIAL COUPON

H. C. LEWIS, President
Coyne Electrical School, Dept. 55-T5
505 S. Paulina St., Chicago 12, Ill.

I want to see the New Coyne Electrician's Handbook. Send me a copy for 7 days' FREE examination. If after 7 days I do not want the book I will return it and owe you nothing. If I keep it I will pay \$2.75 within 7 days and the book is mine.

NAME _____ Age _____

ADDRESS _____

TOWN _____ Zone _____ STATE _____

☐ If you prefer to pay postman each price shown above on delivery, check here. Give YOUR examination & money back guarantee.

High School Course at Home • Many Finish in 2 Years

Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work—preparation for college entrance exams. Standard H.S. texts supplied. Diploma. Credit for H.S. subjects already completed. State subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement in business and industry and society. Don't be handicapped all your life. Be a High School Graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.

American School, Dept. H-ASB, Drexel at 58th, Chicago 37

**Latest Styles
EYE GLASSES**
ORDER BY MAIL
16 DAYS TRIAL
AS LOW AS **\$1.89** A PAIR

SEND NO MONEY
FREE Catalog and Eye Chart. Write today. Take advantage of big money savings. We repair broken glasses. Fill prescriptions.
MODERN STYLE SPECTACLES, INC.
63 W. Jackson Blvd., Dept. M-25, Chicago, Ill.

MONEY BACK
Guarantee
Your money refunded if not entirely satisfied with glasses.



Hotels Call for Trained Men

You can qualify at home in spare time. Thousands of Lewis Graduates, both young and mature, holding preferred positions everywhere. Get out of routine work into this fast-growing field offering sound, substantial present and postwar opportunities, fine living, luxurious surroundings. Previous experience proved unnecessary. Registration in Lewis National Placement Service FREE of extra cost. Send today for Free Book.

LEWIS HOTEL TRAINING SCHOOL
Room DM-949 Washington 7, D. C.

Carry Victory in Your Basket!

EVERY time you go to the store take along a basket or a shopping bag or some permanent container, roomy enough to carry your purchases home unwrapped.

Under no circumstances ask for, or accept, unnecessary paper wrappings from the storekeeper.

Don't burn or ruin, waste or destroy a single scrap of paper around your home, store or office. Collect it, save it, and call your local salvage group. They will call for it if you ask them to.

Remember—every scrap of paper you don't use, and every scrap you do save means just so much more ammunition for Victory.



Get Back of the "Paper Holiday" in Your Community. "Paper Holidays" are being conducted with great success by towns and cities the country over. Suggest one to the merchant you buy from, and your local municipal authorities.

Remember
**PAPER IS
WAR POWER**



Use Less Paper—Save All Wastepaper

This advertisement contributed by this publication and prepared by the War Advertising Council in cooperation with the W.P.B. and the O.W.I.

GET INTO

ELECTRONICS & TELEVISION NOW!

Hundreds of Industries Need Radio and Television Men Now and for Great Future Demands

The man trained in electronics is wanted not only in Radio and Television, but in Aviation, Transportation, Communications, ... in the design, engineering and operation of hundreds of industries today and for years to come. Learn how great the field is for YOU. How you may GET INTO BUSINESS FOR YOURSELF. Mail the coupon now



Send for FREE Lesson and Prove to Yourself How Quick and Easy You Get Ahead in Radio by the NEW

SHOP METHOD HOME TRAINING



Learn by Doing!
Use real Radio Equipment Furnished with your Course



Experience is the best teacher. You learn by experience with the exclusive National Shop Method of training—actually build many circuits and do experiments with the big kits of standard radio parts included in your training equipment at no extra cost to you. Build a superheterodyne receiver. Make tests and conduct experiments that show you the why and how of electronics. Build an audio oscillator, signal generators and other instruments with the parts and supplies included in your course.

"F. M." Means Future Money

Frequency Modulation (F. M.) is here to stay. Thousands of F. M. licenses have been granted by the Federal Government F. C. C. all over the country. Learn what this means to you.

Get ready for TELEVISION. Get your share of the RADIO SERVICE business. Here is a sensational improved way for you to get the right training—a thoroughly proved system whereby you study in spare time—odd hours, even minutes—and have the advantage of actual shop experience behind you.

This exclusive shop method of home training comes to you right from one of the world's greatest vocational educational centers—the resident training shops and experimental laboratories of National Schools. It is the sound, practical training based on actual experience of qualified instructors and engineers who have prepared thousands of National graduates now employed in the radio industry.

It is up-to-date—matches the progress constantly being made in modern radio, television and electronics. It is time tested. National Schools has been training men for higher pay and greater opportunity for more than a third of a century. Fill out and mail the coupon below for details.

Shop Method Training Wins Good Jobs

"My latest offer was \$5,500.00 as Radio Photo Engineer - but I'm doing well where I am now engaged. I am deeply indebted to National."

Joseph Grunich, Lake Hiawatha, New Jersey.

"Due to my training at National I was selected to instruct in the laboratory work of Navy and Marines." - H. R. Wright, Blackfoot, Idaho.

"I believe National offers the best course to be had... Keep up the good work." - O. K. Ivey, Washington, D. C.

Be Sure in Post-War



Now, right now, is the time to prepare for SUCCESS AND SECURITY in the great expansion after the war. The field is wide open. Trained men will get the preference in the broadcasting stations—in industry—will make quick progress with small capital in their own business. Soldiers, sailors and marines make use of your free time to get ready for the future. Study while still in uniform. Thousands of men in the armed forces have trained at National Schools under U. S. Government sponsorship.

See for Yourself

Now, right now, is the time to grasp the great opportunity of today—a successful career for tomorrow. Get into the big money, rapid advancement, a position of importance. A BUSINESS OF YOUR OWN. The industry is crying for trained men everywhere. A rapidly expanding business—probably the greatest in industrial history—holds out the promise of a rich future—prosperous security. But to win it you must be ready. Well-trained men ONLY are wanted.

Examine the National Shop Method of Home Training carefully. Be convinced. Study the lesson we will send you FREE. No obligation of any sort. Fill out the coupon and mail it today.



GET THESE 2 BIG BOOKS FREE!

Learn for yourself just how easy the SHOP METHOD HOME TRAINING gives you the practical, down to earth experience you can never get from theory alone.

NATIONAL SCHOOLS

LOS ANGELES 37, CALIFORNIA EST. 1905

MAIL OPPORTUNITY COUPON FOR QUICK ACTION

National Schools, Dept. 6-70
4000 South Figueroa Street, Los Angeles 37, California
(Mail in envelope or paste on penny post card)
Mail me FREE the two books mentioned in your ad including a sample lesson of your course. I understand no salesman will call on me.
NAME AGE
ADDRESS
CITY STATE
Include your home number

STERLING Silver-Plated SET OF 3 TEASPOONS

Plated with Pure Sterling Silver on Reinforced Steel Base

POST PAID
Limit of 2 Sets
(6 Teaspoons)
to a customer

50c

TAX FREE



LOOK LADIES!

... then act before
the sell-out!
Hurry!

*Mail
This
Coupon!*

**Sensational
"Build-A-Set"
Thrift Plan**



**STERLING
Silver Plated
Tableware
to Match
Teaspoons**



**Forks . . 3 for \$1
Soup
Spoons . 3 for \$1
Knives . 2 for \$1**

A REAL BARGAIN THRILL!

Think of it! 3 Sterling Silver Plated Teaspoons for only 50c Tax Free! Glorious Teaspoons of long-life quality, sparkling beauty and exquisite pattern designed to harmonize with any set you now own. Heavily silver plated overall. Unconditionally guaranteed to give satisfaction.

NATIONAL NOVELTIES, Dept. TBVI Limit of 6 pieces of
608 South Dearborn St.—Chicago 5, Ill. each to a customer.

I am enclosing payment in full for Sterling Silver Plated Tableware itemized below. Please rush Tax Free and Post-paid. Money back without question if dissatisfied.

_____ Teaspoons @ 3 for 50c _____ Forks @ 3 for \$1

_____ Soup Spoons @ 3 for \$1 _____ Knives @ 2 for \$1

My total order amounts to \$_____

Free Rogers Silver Polishing Cloth with Cash orders of \$5 or more.

Name _____
(Please Print Clearly)

Address _____

City _____ State _____



There was a furious mêlée, and the man was subdued

MOTTO FOR MURDER

By FRANK JOHNSON

When Two Strangers Die Under Startlingly Similar Circumstances, Private Detective Rufe Reed and His Aides Take a Trail of Avarice that Leads to the Sensational Exposure of a Sinister Criminal Conspiracy!

CHAPTER I

Slaughter of the Innocent

IN THE big somber courtroom of the Criminal Courts Building the judge's voice echoed with befitting solemnity: "Gentlemen of the jury, have you reached a verdict?"

"We have, Your Honor." The foreman smiled a little. Bill Willis wondered what that smile meant. Hope for him? Or satisfaction at duty well done?

He stood with clasped hands before the

judge's bench, his angular face expressionless. Devore, his lawyer, a handsome, forceful man of forty, with John L. Lewis eyebrows which could bristle at a recalcitrant witness, stood beside him.

"The defendant will face the jury," the judge said.

Willis turned. The foreman smiled again.

"We, the jury, find the prisoner not guilty."

Sound broke in the court-room, and there was lightning display of flash bulbs. The judge's gavel cut the tumult short.

"William Willis, this Court has seldom

AN EXCITING COMPLETE MYSTERY NOVELET

concurrent in a jury's verdict with more pleasure. You are a free man, and it is to be hoped that you will have no bitter memories of your unfortunate experience."

The babble broke out again as the judge rose. Reporters swarmed forward and fell upon Willis.

"Mr. Willis, were you afraid of being convicted?"

Willis turned somber eyes on the questioner.

"Only a fool is never afraid," he said.

The reporter, slightly baffled, let Willis go, staring after him.

"He's scared," he muttered. "Now the guy is scared!"

Willis reached the top of the granite steps which led to the street. He looked up at the sun and at the busy traffic. Then he stepped out of the building with Devore behind him.

A light delivery truck that had been parked at the curb pulled out and rolled away. Willis never saw it. Nor did he see the slender barrel of a rifle poked through the glassless window in the back. No one saw it. And in the muffled boom of traffic, no one heard the whiplike crack a .22 special makes. It is doubtful that Willis heard or even felt anything. A high velocity bullet through the temple is faster than a man's nerve reflexes.

HIS feet faltered on the steps like a man suddenly sick. Then, even as Devore made a startled grab for him, Willis pitched in an arm-tossing heap to the bottom.

Face gray with fright, Devore scuttled down the steps, turned Willis over. Blood oozed from a wound in his head. A woman screamed, and the inevitable New York crowd began to hurry and push about the lawyer who knelt helplessly with the dead man's head in his arms.

Detective-lieutenant Hogan pushed his way authoritatively through the crowd. He saw at a glance the man was dead and his searching eyes darted over the crowd. A traffic policeman hurried for the corner.

"Get this crowd back," Hogan ordered.

The bluecoat stepped up on the curb, then stopped, bent down and picked up something.

"What is it?" Hogan elbowed him. "Homicide Squad," he added, showing his badge. The traffic officer handed over an oblong of yellow cloth, embroidered with thread.

A sampler. Hogan remembered his mother working on the things, embroidering mottoes like "God Bless Our Home" and "Friendship Makes Friends." She'd had them hanging all over the walls. In his room the sampler had read, "The Devil Finds Work For Idle Hands."

But this one was different. The embroidery was in scarlet and the words were ominous.

"Blood For Blood," Hogan muttered.

He stuffed the sampler into his pocket and began firing orders. In two minutes the street was cleared, the body of William Willis moved and the shaken Devore sent home in a police cruiser. Hogan went back into the court-room and talked to the judge.

When he came out he flagged a taxi and gave Willis' home address. Ostensibly his purpose was to break the sad news to Willis' wife. His real purpose was to find out why she hadn't been present on the last day of the trial. Surely she should have been, for an event as important as that in her life.

But Hogan discovered that her reason for staying at home was unimpeachable. William Willis had been on trial for killing her father. The double blow—her father's death, her husband's arrest—had crushed her. She was in bed. Hogan had the unpleasant task of adding the third blow. He drove away from the house feeling a little like a murderer himself.

Scare headlines on the front pages and pictures of the sampler crowded the war news for a few days. Then, when nothing happened, the murder sensation died out and a week later few remembered it.

One man did. Arthur Medford, waiting for the jury's verdict on a similar charge of murdering the father of his own wife. Lieutenant Hogan found the coincidence fascinating. Medford and Willis, charged with the same crime. And Medford had the same lawyer, Devore. Furthermore, there was as much doubt about Medford's guilt as there had been about Willis'.

Devore carefully placed his immaculately-clad self on a wooden chair in the barred room off the court-room to which Medford had been taken under guard when the jury had retired. Medford paced up and down with nervous, jerky steps.

"Sit down," Devore said, lighting a cigarette. "Be calm like me. The jury's convinced. I saw it in their eyes after my summation."

Medford sighed. "You were good. But—how can you be sure? You never know what's in a juror's mind."

"You're innocent, aren't you? Stop worrying."

"Sure, stop worrying," Medford said nervously. "Even if I'm acquitted—remember what happened to Willis?"

"Are you worrying about that now?" Devore shook his head. "There's no connection between Willis and you. You told me you didn't even know him."

"I don't. But that sampler—"

"Crackpot stuff," Devore said, as though his own voice were reassurance.

"Sure, crackpot stuff," Medford said, shivering.

A bailiff opened the door.

"Okay, Medford—jury's coming in."

Medford turned, his face blanching.



"Drop it, mug, or we'll cut you in half!" a voice rasped

The bailiff was moved to unaccustomed kindness.

"It's okay," he said. "They're smiling. They don't do that when they're sending a man to the chair."

Dazedly Medford heard the jury free him and listened to the judge's final words. He scarcely felt Devore's hand on his shoulder, or heard the attorney's congratulations. He was free. And yet remembering what had happened to Willis, he almost wished he were not walking out of there.

WHEN he reached the court-house steps he looked at the free sky and the sun as Willis had done. Devore, on his left, was trying to be nonchalant, but Lieutenant Hogan, on his right, was making no pretense. His hand was plunged deep in his side pocket, and Medford did not need to be told it gripped a gun.

Nothing happened. Medford walked down the steps and into a taxicab. An hour later the cab drew up before his suburban home and his wife ran down the walk with the tears streaming from her eyes. Medford hung onto her like a drowning man. Lonely as he had been, he had insisted she stay home, fearing that the trial would be too much for her. And today, especially, he had not wanted her too near if an attempt should be made on his life in case of acquittal, as it had been in Willis' case—successfully.

Hogan discreetly looked up into the trees while husband and wife embraced.

"Congratulations, Mrs. Medford," he said. "I didn't think your husband killed your father, even though I had to tag him with it. He had to go through it to clear himself and now he has."

"The police have been splendid," Attorney Devore said. "You're all right now, Medford, so we will go."

"Thanks for everything," Medford said as Devore and Hogan climbed back into the cab. "All the money in the world can never repay you for what you've done for me."

Devore spread his hands eloquently and smiled as the cab moved off.

Arthur Medford was a popular man. That night his friends threw a gala party for him. In a small banquet room at a midtown hotel they shot the works from oysters to champagne.

Devore sat at Medford's right. On his left was Charlie Irwin, Medford's partner in a real estate and insurance firm.

Irwin was an affable, ruddy-cheeked man about ten years older than Medford. He was demonstrative and highly affected by his partner's release. When affected he tended toward speech-making, delivered in a booming baritone and crammed with platitudes.

"All of us here are Art's friends," he began eagerly when speech-making time ar-

rived. "We stood by him through this mess because we knew darned well he couldn't hurt a fly." Everybody there knew that, but Irwin said it as though making an important discovery. "We're dog-goned proud of Art for the courage he's showed. So—a toast to Art Medford!"

All dutifully raised their glasses and drank. Irwin beamed.

"Now a toast to Olivia, his wife. She stood by him, even though—er—ah—it was hard to bear the gossip and scandal." He had almost mentioned her father's murder, but caught himself in time. That wouldn't have been tactful! "Here's to Olivia Medford, a real-life heroine!"

They drank to her too. Then a waiter presented a silver tray with a bell cover to the speaker which Irwin in turn set before Arthur Medford, talking all the time.

"A little token," Irwin explained. "We all chipped in. Go on, Art—uncover it! It ain't much, but . . . Art! What's the matter?"

Arthur Medford staggered to his feet, his chair falling over backward. In his hands was a sampler, embroidered in blazing scarlet with the words all had read before.

BLOOD FOR BLOOD

"It this is a joke," Medford said through white lips, "it's a mighty poor one."

"Who put that there?" Irwin demanded incredulously. "We bought you a wrist-watch! It cost a hundred and fifty bucks!"

The wrist-watch was there. But Arthur Medford didn't see it. His lips were working, though no words would come. His eyes seemed like frozen jelly in his gray face. Then he fell across the table and his champagne glass, knocked over, sent out a little straw-colored wave which quickly was soaked into the tablecloth.

CHAPTER II

Hogan Has a Visitor



DETECTIVE-LIEUTENANT Hogan was a tired man as he fitted a key into the door of his bachelor apartment. In the Homicide Bureau a man becomes accustomed to death, but even Hogan's nerves were a little frayed by the manner in which Willis and Medford had been struck down.

He opened the door and sent one hand toward the light switch. Before it got there he changed its direction abruptly, whipping it toward his hip holster. Deep in the room he saw a little glowing red

eye and smelled tobacco smoke. One hand shot up with the gun in his fist while with his other he flipped the switch. Light flooded the room.

"Rufe!" Hogan said explosively. "Some day you're going to get hurt with these kid stunts of yours!" He slammed his gun down angrily.

Rufus Reed, private investigator, sitting in Hogan's big easy chair, stretched out his legs and yawned.

"What did you want me to do, Ben?" he asked. "Stand out in the hall waiting for you?"

"Who gave you a key?" Hogan demanded, wheeling with his coat half off.

Reed shrugged. "That's not such a good lock, I guess."

Hogan grunted, on his way to the bathroom to wash up. From his attitude it might not have been guessed that he and Reed were the best of friends; college mates, in fact. Hogan, serious, studious, a disciplinarian of himself as well as others, had naturally gravitated to the regular police force. Reed, no less interested in crime but more brilliant, headstrong and erratic, and chafing at discipline, had preferred being a private detective. They remained friends and frequently helped one another.

Hogan came back and dropped heavily into a chair opposite Reed.

"I'm bushed," he said. "Had a heck of a day. After losing Willis that way—now Medford. The Commissioner will be squawking for action in his quaint way."

"Precisely why I am here," Reed declared. "You need help, don't you? Tell me what the papers didn't print."

"They had most of it, I guess. William Willis was arrested for killing his father-in-law with a rifle. They'd had arguments, pretty hot ones too, but who's to say whether they were bad enough to do murder over? The gun belonged to Willis, but that was not conclusive. Anyone can pick up a gun known to be in a man's house. His alibi was weaker than Nazi acorn coffee."

"But he was acquitted," Reed murmured.

"Yes, circumstantial evidence was not good enough. His wife stuck by him loyally, even though it was her father who'd been killed. His friends all gave him an excellent character. So the jury thought he'd been framed although there wasn't a scrap of evidence to show who might have done it. They freed him and on his way out of court he was knocked off by a rifle bullet, like his supposed victim. And that sampler with 'BLOOD FOR BLOOD' was apparently dropped almost on his body."

"Suggesting revenge," Reed said musingly.

"Yes. Now who would be taking revenge on Willis if—as the assumption seems to be—he was really guilty? His wife?"

"You mean his wife's backing him up in

public was just a front, that secretly she arranged to have him killed, believing him guilty of killing her father?"

"Why not?" Hogan demanded.

"Why not indeed?" Reed smiled. "I dare say it's been done. But what a tangled, intricate web of emotions that spins! Why not denounce the man and testify against him? Why defend him, get him released, and then—"

"How do I know?" Hogan growled.

"What about the other man—Medford?" asked Reed.

"He was poisoned, as the papers reported, at a congratulatory dinner given him by his friends. And another sampler turned up, smack in the silver dish on which they'd placed a watch as a gift."

"You think his wife had anything to do with that?"

"Well, it's always a possibility. But my hunch is that Olivia Medford is straighter goods than Lorna Willis. She grieved for her father as though it would break her heart, but she fought for her husband like a tigress."

"Olivia Medford's father was poisoned, wasn't he?" asked Reed.

"Yes."

"So each accused man, upon being acquitted, was killed by the same means he was supposed to have used to commit the crime. Willis' father-in-law was killed with a rifle—Willis was killed with a rifle. Olivia Medford's father was poisoned, and Arthur Medford was poisoned. And the samplers were left as direct warning that this was retribution."

"That's what it seems like."

"Ben, do you think either Willis or Medford was guilty?"

HOGAN shook his head.

"No."

"Then someone else killed their fathers-in-law. The question now arises—were these earlier killings just a method of striking at Willis and Medford? Or did Willis and Medford just get the frame hung on them to avoid suspicion pointing at the real murderer? In other words, who were the primal victims—Willis and Medford, or their fathers-in-law?"

"I don't know," Hogan said. "The fathers-in-law were both rich—"

"Look," Reed interrupted. "We've lumped these two crimes together because of their similarity. But was there any connection between Willis and Medford?"

"No. They didn't even know each other."

"Then the only common bond is the samplers. They were alike?"

"Exactly. We went over them with a fine-tooth comb, but they're common stuff. The backgrounds and thread can be bought in any dry-goods store. Can't be traced."

"Yet there's a suggestion of a link," Reed said. "You sure those men didn't know each other?"

"I have only their own words for it."

"Better check."

"It's being done. Here's another angle. Though the older men were rich, it seems that Willis and Medford were not leeches. Both preferred to make their own way and not try to get anything out of their in-laws. That's what some of the quarrels were about in Willis' case. The old man wanted him to come into his business—owns a chain of hardware stores."

"Did you find out how the sampler came to be on Medford's silver serving dish?" Reed asked.

"Not a hint. The waiter swears he put the watch there, put the cover on, and carried it right in to the toast-master who at once set it down in front of Medford. The watch was there all right, but it was on the sampler and the waiter says the sampler wasn't there when he put the watch on the dish. Medford never saw the watch. The poison in his glass had begun to work by that time."

"It's a lulu," Reed grinned. "Bet you're glad you called me in."

"I called you! Why you—you couldn't catch a cold in a blizzard. I'll have to tell you the answer when I get it, same as always."

Reed shook hands with him gravely.

"Thanks, pal," he said. "I'll now go out and do a little of that extra-legal gumshoeing which the police don't dare to do. But which gets results, cookie. And to show you I'm a generous guy, I'll pool everything I find out—if you'll do the same."

"Okay."

"There, ahem—remains the little matter of compensation for my time and services. All right with you if I manage to get a fee from somebody in this case?"

"I don't care if you get a fee from all of them," Hogan growled. "Now get out of here and let me get some sleep!"

Outside, Rufe Reed caught a taxi and went back to his office in the midtown Forties off Broadway. He liked the noise and turmoil of this, the greatest entertainment district in the world, the crowds of people out for fun, the soldiers and sailors and girls. In fact his wife, Patricia, often remarked pointedly that he liked the girls much too well. But Reed dismissed this as enemy propaganda, not worth answering.

There was a light in his office and the door yielded readily to his touch. Pat Reed, a blonde with the kind of face and figure men look after on the street, sat in his swivel chair reading a detective magazine, with her shapely legs propped up on his desk.

"Either pull your skirt down or take your feet off my desk," Reed grunted, sailing his hat at the clothes tree. "Suppose a client

came in? Where've you been?"

"Working," his wife said, yawning. "Didn't you send me out to interview Mrs. William Willis?"

Reed started a cigarette and sank into another chair.

"Give," he ordered.

"Well, I went out and rang Mrs. Willis' doorbell and when she answered it, I told her I was a reporter. She slammed the door in my face." Pat touched the tip of her nose reminiscently. "And through the closed door she told me what she thought of reporters in general and me in particular. What a fish-wife! I'll bet Willis committed suicide. I'll bet—"

"Never mind your theories," Reed interrupted. "What happened then?"

"Nothing," said his wife, looking surprised. "She wouldn't let me in. What did you expect me to do?"

"Oh, fine," Reed groaned.

HIS wife was unaffected by his disgust.

"So then I went to see Mrs. Arthur Medford," she went on. "She was awfully nice. You know Rufe, it takes character to be that nice to a snoopy stranger when your husband's been dead only a few hours. I wonder if I'll have that much character when you—"

"Cut it," Reed ordered. "I refuse to die just to let you play the leading rôle in a tragic melodrama. What did she tell you?"

"Nothing we don't already know," Pat said brightly.

"You can build up to the most complete let-downs!" Reed muttered. "Well, what's your impression of the two women?"

"I told you," Pat said, opening her blue eyes wide. "Mrs. Willis is a fishwife and Mrs. Medford is swell."

"Anything else?"

"Let's see. Lorna Willis is the small type that some men go for, but she looks like a worrier. You know, forehead ridged like a washboard, lips curved down. Bet she's got nervous indigestion."

"And the other one?"

"Mrs. Medford looks like a thoroughbred. But I believe she is worried about something too."

"What did you expect? Her husband—"

"I mean aside from the shock and grief," Pat explained seriously. "She seems scared. She was almost on the defensive, answering questions. She's afraid of something that hasn't happened yet."

"So would you be," said John Reed, pushing open the door. He grinned at his brother and sister-in-law. "Who's got a cigarette?"

"You smoke too much," Rufus said, handing over his pack. "And what's the idea of snooping out in the hall?"

"Only way I ever learn anything," the younger brother said. "Do either of you ever

tell me anything?"

"I'll tell you something now," Rufus said. "I'm going prowling tonight in Mrs. Willis' back yard and I'll have work for you both tomorrow, so get some sleep."

CHAPTER III

The Finger Points



IT WAS a long cab ride to the section in the Bronx where Mrs. Willis lived. Rufe Reed, however, never road in subways. He would have taken a cab to Nome, Alaska, if he'd had to go there.

The Willis house was fairly large, with a good-sized landscaped plot around it. The sky was overcast and trees and shrubs surrounded with inky pools of shadow just suited Reed's snoopy impulse. Leaving the silent and dimly lit street, he slipped through the hedge and stepped onto the grass of the lawn.

Light glowed dimly from one window through a drawn curtain. Reed crossed the yard and crouched below the window, pressing his ear to the sill. There was a low mumble of voices inside, but he could not make out any words. Already he had noticed a big car, all lights out, parked near the walk, and Reed was most curious about what was being said by Mrs. Willis and her visitor.

He fished in a vest pocket and found a long nail file. Gently he worried it under the window sash. When he pried up the window moved. Carefully, a millimeter at a time, he raised it no more than half an inch. But with his eye glued to this aperture, he could see and hear distinctly. And even the blasé Mr. Reed was slightly surprised.

Lorna Willis was standing in the middle of the room and her arms were locked tightly around the neck of a handsome man whom Reed had no trouble in recognizing, from newspaper pictures, as Glover C. Devore, the lawyer who had successfully defended William Willis and Arthur Medford!

"—not to talk about this to anyone unless the police come," Devore was saying. "If that happens, tell them you want me before you'll say a word. It's your right, and they can't stop you from insisting upon it. You must not talk without me. Can I trust you to do that?"

"Of course, darling," she answered. "People might misunderstand."

"Who cares about people?" Devore growled. "If we wait for the blessing of public opinion we'll be too old to get married. You're not feeling guilty, are you, Lorna? We don't owe anything to Will! We can't



Reed caught an ankle and threw the whole might of his body into a savage pull

let his ghost come between us!"

"It won't," Lorna Willis promised grimly. "But I am frightened. People ask prying into my affairs more and more. If they get too deep—"

"I'll kill any man who—" Devore said in an ugly voice. "Oh, forget it. We're acting like a couple of kids afraid of the dark. Good night, Lorna. Try to calm down."

Reed was not interested in their final kiss. He ducked below the window, waiting for the door slam, to tell him Devore had left.

Somewhere in the dark behind him came a faint whisper of sound. He flattened himself against the dark side of the house, but saw nothing, heard no movement, no further sound. It might have been the breeze rubbing two branches together, but for a moment it had sounded like the scrape of a shoe on rock.

"Must be imagining things," he thought.

From out front came the whir of a starter. Then the tail-lights of the big car blinked into life and it moved off.

The light above Reed went out and after a moment another light in a different part of the house came on. Finally he slid the sash up quietly.

Lorna Willis was preparing for bed when Reed stepped, without warning, into her room. He got an interesting flash of a nude back before she screamed and pulled a flimsy negligee around herself.

"Not bad," he said.

"A bu—burglar!" Mrs. Willis stammered.

"Not at all," Reed said, offended. "I'm a detective."

"Police? What do you mean by breaking in here this way?"

"Not police," he corrected. "Private detective. Rufus Reed, ma'am. And it was the only way to get in I decided, after you slammed the door on my assistant's nose this morning."

"That blonde! Now you get out of here or I'll call the real police!"

"Just a minute," Reed said. "I think you'll want to talk to me about the murder of your father and husband."

He was being brutal to a woman to whom a terrible double tragedy had just come. But after the scene he had witnessed through the window, he was feeling no great sympathy for her.

"Why should I want to talk to you?" she said angrily. "I don't even know you."

"You want to see the murderer caught, don't you?"

"Why, of course I do!"

"Tell me this. Are you convinced that your husband was innocent?"

"Completely!" she snapped. Almost too quickly, he thought.

"The police have the idea that you haven't been too cooperative," he pointed out. "They think you're holding something back. It

might spur them to an investigation of your past and your relationship with your husband."

THAT stab in the dark scored a direct hit. She went whiter than skimmed milk and staggered into a chair, forgetting her skimpy attire and her indignation.

"It's not true!" she breathed. "I've nothing to hold back. My husband was innocent, and he was cleared. I don't know who murdered my father or why anyone would want to do it. There's nothing to tell!"

Reed simply shrugged.

"Look," she said, as though struck by a sudden idea. "You're a private detective. Who is paying you to investigate this case?"

"No one. I haven't started to work on it yet. But I think I will. I often do that when I'm interested."

She got up and came close enough for him to feel the warmth of her body.

"Suppose I pay your fee?" she asked.

"To do what?"

"To find my husband's murderer."

"And your father's?" he added.

"Yes, of course," she said, and went back to the chair.

"Look," Reed said. "If I work for you, it'll be on two conditions. One that I get a free hand to turn up whatever I find—and let the chips fall where they may."

"Yes?"

"And second, that you come clean with me."

She looked suddenly crushed, frightened.

"All right," she said, almost in a whisper.

"My husband and my father had many bitter quarrels. They were not ordinary quarrels, for there was much bad feeling. Once they actually came to blows, and Will never forgave my father for that."

"What were the quarrels about?"

"Money. My husband made quite a lot, but he spent it like water. Dad disapproved violently, and he was not the kind to keep his opinions to himself. He told my husband what he thought of a man who would risk his family's future."

"But what are you leading up to?" Reed asked, puzzled.

"My husband murdered my father," said Lorna Willis. "I have proof of it."

Reed was almost caught off-balance. But he made a fast recovery.

"Show me," he said.

Mrs. Willis got up and weaved across to a desk. She unlocked a drawer and took out a crumpled sheet of paper which had been smoothed out but still bore creases.

"My husband wrote that," she said. "He always wrote his letters in longhand on any bit of paper he could find and then copied them on a typewriter. I found this in the waste-basket after the police arrested him. I kept it to myself because—well, how could I

testify against him?"

"You mean legally? That the law says you can't?"

"No. I mean that after all he was my husband. But—read it."

It was just a fragment, without salutation or conclusion, evidently just a first draft. What was there read:

I'm tired of kowtowing and I'm not going to take any more nonsense from you. The next time you start that I'll take action myself and I promise you the action will be definite and conclusive.

Reed fingered the note absently.

"Why are you so anxious to prove your husband killed your father?"

"Anxious? Good heavens! I'm showing you this in confidence. It can't hurt Will now. But don't you see what it means? If Will did kill my father, who killed Will? The police are assuming the same man killed them both, but it's not true! Who is the mysterious person who is avenging my father?"

Her hand made a slashing gesture and lamplight blazed from a huge stone on her finger. Reed, who had a nodding acquaintance with precious stones in his work, decided it was not a diamond but a zircon, which was brilliant enough to fool almost anyone's casual glance, but was worth possibly thirty dollars instead of the small fortune a real diamond that size would represent.

He wondered whether Lorna Willis had replaced a real diamond with a zircon and if so where that sizable hunk of cash had gone. But he made no comment, simply handing back the letter.

"This is no proof, as such," he remarked. "And the question of whether or not you should have shown it to the police has, unfortunately, been taken out of your hands. I'd say it doesn't matter now, but if you're worried, show it to Lieutenant Hogan."

"But you—you'll protect me, won't you?"

"I'll try to find the murderer of your husband. It may still be that whoever that is, he is also the murderer of your father, in spite of this note. If that protects you—the answer is yes."

SHE went back to the desk and hastily scribbled a check.

"Will a hundred dollars carry you for a while?"

"Yes." He took the check and folded it. Then, in spite of himself, he said, "Don't worry so, Mrs. Willis. If you're in the clear it'll turn out okay. Sorry I broke in on you like this. Good night."

He left himself out the front door, made a swift circuit of the house and was beneath Lorna Willis' window just as she finished dialing. She told Devore all that had hap-

pened. Devore kicked up a fuss, evidently, for she defended herself almost hysterically. Devore calmed her down, and apparently gave her a lot of instructions for her end of the conversation was mostly a "yes."

When she hung up and turned out the light Rufe Reed was thinking that only one thing was clear about Lorna Willis. She had showed him the letter, had seemed to take him into her confidence, but actually had told him nothing. The letter may have been an indication that Willis had killed his father-in-law. But it was far from being proof.

Certainly it shed no light on Willis' own mysterious slaying. It made it all the more incomprehensible. Because if Willis really had killed his father-in-law, who was avenging that murder? Lorna Willis?

On the other hand, the letter could be a complete blind, and it seemed more than likely to Rufus Reed that the same hand had killed both Willis and his father-in-law. No other hypothesis made sense.

Also it was plain to Reed, that Lorna Willis had told him what she had for one reason only—to forestall an investigation into her past. If that was what she feared, then that was the thing to do.

Not that Reed was being deliberately disloyal to his client. But he had warned her that he was out to turn up the murderer and if it happened to be Lorna Willis—that would be her tough luck. A hundred-buck fee would not tempt Reed to shield a murderer. Furthermore, the very thing Lorna feared, even though it might be embarrassing to her, might provide the important clue.

And one more thing. Where did Arthur Medford and his tragedy fit into this little squirrel cage?

CHAPTER IV

Murder Truck



REED slipped quietly out to the dark street and looked for a taxi. He had almost reached the corner when one swung into the street and he flagged it. As the cab stopped, Reed yanked open the door and started in head-first.

He saw the dark form inside instantly, and the hand going up with the sap in it. In the space of a heartbeat, he fought and conquered the instinct to pull back, which would have thrown him off-balance. Instead, he lunged forward, ramming his head into the attacker's stomach. The man's breath went out in a great whoosh on the back of Reed's neck. The

blackjack bounced off his shoulder and sent pain shooting through him. But he knew he had to keep going. One hand shot out and released the door catch and his churning feet carried him right through the cab and out the other side.

He ran full tilt into the driver who had scrambled from his seat and cut around to join the fray. This tough monkey was poised and waiting. He straightened Reed up with a vicious uppercut that tumbled the detective back against the open cab door.

Reed saw stars, but bounced back full of fight. His left hand whipped over with such dazzling speed that the driver never saw it coming until it exploded on his eye. Then he saw more colors than were ever in the gaudiest rainbow.

His howl of anguish echoed in the quiet street. The man inside the cab came to life and scrambled out, swinging the sap and cursing.

Reed kicked the howling cab driver viciously in the shins and the fellow doubled over with a new misery as the detective whirled to face the blackjack again. He tried to keep the man off with his rapier left, but the slugger bored in, shaking off those jabs and trying for a crusher with his weapon. Reed parried a vicious swing with his left forearm but the blackjack left the arm half numb. He got in a solid right hook to the cheek-bone, though, that slammed his man back against the side of the cab with a hollow bong.

The shriek of brakes snapped Reed's head up. A light truck had appeared from nowhere and from its doors was pouring what looked like a whole army of reinforcements, though actually there were only four.

From somewhere in the dark came a rasping voice:

"Get him, Matty!"

In that disturbing moment, Rufe Reed decided that it was better to be a live coward than a dead hero. He took to his heels like a rabbit. The dark forms of men raced to cut him off—and a streak of orange flame spat from the truck's dark interior. Something hot went past close to Reed's head. The flat crack of a small rifle followed.

Then Reed was across the sidewalk and had leaped into the rubble of an empty lot. Darkness swallowed him. But there was a swift scuff of feet behind him as the men spread to hem him in.

Reed had just got out his automatic, since guns seemed to be in fashion, when he stumbled over a loose rock. He took another step forward—and the ground disappeared from under him. He plunged downward into darkness. And although he fell only a few feet he landed with a bone-jarring crash and sprawled on the rocky ground, losing his gun.

He was hurt, he could not lie there and

wait for help. He felt around rapidly, and located his weapon. Then he dragged himself upright to see what kind of a hole he had fallen into.

A straight concrete wall rose before him to the height of his head. He had stepped off this. In a moment he realized what it was. Someone had started to build an apartment house here, had done the excavating and poured the concrete for the foundation and cellar walls. Then the building had been stopped, probably because of the war. And the catacombs that had been left had made a nice booby-trap for him.

Some distance away, one of the gang searching for him fell. There was a lot of assorted cursing.

"Look out, you guys!" someone warned. "There's a lotta foundations here. Maybe he's in them."

"Spread!" another voice ordered, low but carrying. "Spread all around it!"

Reed had visions of himself playing hide-and-seek with these killers through this modern labyrinth.

"All I want is out," he muttered.

On the chance that the men hadn't yet reached the far side of the ruin, he felt his way as rapidly as he could along the walls.

WHEN he reached the opposite wall, looking up he could see the rear of a row of squat two-story brick houses. Light glowed behind closed shades and silhouetted a man's hat and shoulders on the outside. They had cut him off.

Reed crouched close against the wall, gripping his automatic. Feet shuffled quietly along the top of the wall and passed right over him. From the direction he had come he heard whispering, the scuff of leather on stone and a little sliding rattle as someone dropped into the cellar and brought earth and stone with him. They were closing in.

The footsteps above him started back. Reed saw a dim silhouette bulk just above him. He reached up, caught an ankle and threw the whole weight of his body into a savage pull.

A yell burst from the man he clutched. His body hurtled past over Reed's head and smashed on the stony floor with sickening impact. Then the detective was scaling the wall and running straight for the lights ahead.

Feet pounded behind him again, but the men were afraid to shoot. The crack of the rifle inside the truck had gone unnoticed, but pistol shots here would be a different thing.

Reed ran into a board fence that enclosed the back yards of the houses ahead. He was up and over like a singed cat and dropped into the soft earth of someone's vegetable garden. Crushing lettuce, beans and radishes underfoot, he sprinted for the drive-

way, pounded down it and burst out into a better lighted street.

The first thing he saw was the gleam of trolley rails and a car bearing down upon him. He raced alongside the car and swung himself aboard.

"Hey!" shouted the conductor. "You trying to commit suicide?"

He never knew why the panting passenger with the torn and dirty suit flopped into a seat and started to laugh. Rufe Reed finally got out of the wilds of the Bronx and home safely. He found Pat sleeping the sweet sleep of the blameless.

"Fine thing," Reed thought bitterly. "Her husband gets run over by a rock crusher, shot at, dumped into old foundations, beaten up, nearly killed, and there she lies, sleeping as though she didn't have a care in the world."

A hot shower made him feel better though it brought all his bruises to sudden vociferous life. But when he crawled into bed he was asleep almost immediately. . . .

A second later—or so it seemed—Pat was shaking him awake.

"Wake up!" said his helpmate. "What are all those bruises all over you? Have you been fighting over a woman again?"

"Cut it out!" Reed mumbled, opening one eye and closing it immediately against the morning glare. "Quit shaking me!"

"Well, wake up," Pat said unreasonably. "What happened to you?"

"What happened to me shouldn't happen to a dog," he mumbled.

"John's here," Pat said.

John's voice immediately corroborated that.

"I thought you had work for us."

"Yeah." Keeping his eyes shut, Reed gave them a terse description of his affair of the night before, including the knowledge gained from Lorna Willis. "That puts her and Devore right up at the top of the suspects, even if she is our client. If she's guilty I'll give her back her check. If not, we'll find out who is."

"What do we do?" John asked.

"Start digging into the pasts of Lorna

Willis and Olivia Medford. Assuming they have pasts. Get family histories, birth place, friends, early years—everything you can."

"He gives us the dirty jobs and grabs off all the excitement for himself," John grumbled.

"Look!" Reed yelled. "You can have any part or all of the excitement I had last night. Now get out of here and let me get some sleep!"

They went out, wrangling over who was to do the dull stuff of digging through newspapers, wedding license records and so on. Reed punched a new hole in the pillow for his head and wooed Morpheus.

SOME indefinite time later the phone tore aside the curtain again. He groped for it groggily.

"Huh?"

"Darling," came Pat's voice, clear and sweet, "are you still in bed? Sleepy pie, a sluggard never makes a good—"

"What do you want now?" Reed groaned.

"Can't you let a guy sleep?"

"We've got something, dear," Pat cooed.

"Don't you want it?"

"Spill it." He shook sleep out of his eyes.

"Olivia Medford's maiden name was Steele. Lorna Willis was Lorna Blake. They've both been married seven years. And here's the pay-off, cutie pie—they come from the same town! Didn't know each other, huh?"

"All right, quit crowing," Reed growled. "I didn't vouch for the information Hogan gave me, did I? What else?"

"Both grew up in Gainesboro, Vermont. Came from moderately wealthy families—wealthy enough so that their fathers retired around the time the girls got married. Johnny is checking finances now . . . Here he is."

The younger Reed got on the phone.

"Hey, did you know those two dames could spend money like a sailor on shore leave?" he said. "Both got quite a chunk of dough from their families when they got hitched, and there isn't a nickel left. And then when

(Turn page)



their fathers died they both got another big chunk—about a hundred and fifty grand."

Reed whistled.

"Don't tell me that's gone too!"

"Not yet, but soon. At the rate they're going. The cash is pretty well used up. What's left is stock in the businesses. Medford's father-in-law owned a flock of auto supply stores and Willis's father-in-law went in for the gingham trade."

"Nice work," Reed yawned. "Now, the next bet is to watch Lorna Willis and Glover C. Devore, but don't expose yourselves. And Johnny—keep your eye on Pat. If anything happens to that pest I'll have your scalp."

"Yessir."

"And call me in a hour. We'll meet some place."

CHAPTER V

Johnny's Dull Evening



WITH unaccustomed caution, Pat Reed waited until dark before approaching the Willis house near which her husband had so nearly become her late husband. Johnny did not stay too near her, remaining where he could cover her retreat should withdrawal become suddenly necessary.

Following Rufe's description of the grounds, Pat slipped across the back lawn and reached a screened-in porch at the rear of the house. She could see and hear whatever went on in the front, and was covered by the vines on the house. If she had to move along the wall she could keep in the cover of a hedge.

Two hours of waiting taxed her patience. She could not see Johnny and wondered where he was. Her muscles ached and her bones creaked. Just when she was at the point of complete disgust, a car pulled up to the front of the house and stopped.

The porch light went on in front as though the visitor was expected. Pat saw a handsome man hurry up the walk and, from pictures and descriptions, recognized Attorney Glover C. Devore.

She slipped to the living room window under which Rufe had listened and found it still open. Apparently Lorna Willis hadn't even discovered it was open.

Lorna and Devore came into the room, talking.

"—afraid of this," Devore said worriedly. "If Reed gets onto the game before we're ready, he'll spill to Hogan. They're friends. You didn't buy Reed with a hundred-dollar retainer."

"I had to do something," Lorna said des-

perately. "He hinted that he'd investigate us. So I showed him the letter. Maybe that will keep him busy. I don't want him to find—"

"He will," Devore said grimly. "But it will take him time. Don't blame yourself, Lorna. It was coming, so we'll have to face the music. But I swear if anyone starts tormenting you again, I'll kill him!"

"Please!" the woman begged in a muffled voice as if her face were buried in her hands. "No more of that. I—I couldn't stand any more."

Devore slammed out and Pat heard Lorna Willis sobbing like a woman without hope. Then the light went out. Pat waited a long time but Lorna Willis seemed through for the night.

The woman could be more cooperative," Pat grumbled to herself.

She tried to locate Johnny in the dark, but had no idea where he was. She dug into her handbag, removed the little .32 automatic Rufe made her carry and got out a pencil flash. She blinked the light twice, knowing that the shaded lens would make only a dim glow.

From off to one side came an answering blink and she knew Johnny would be coming across to her.

The wind was moaning softly in the trees. Branches tossed and whispered, leaves rustled, there was the suggestion of footsteps on every hand. A branch snapped. Was that Johnny or someone else? Remembering Rufe's experience here the night before, she began to wonder if Lorna's house were not being watched.

Then she saw Johnny's light blink and a moment later he appeared, a dark shadow moving across the grass. With appalling suddenness, two more shadows detached themselves from the shrubbery and flung themselves upon him. All three shadows began to thrash fiercely and to emit muffled sounds.

Gripping the flash in one hand and the little automatic in the other, Pat ran. But before she could reach the struggling fighters, a third man leaped from behind a bush and caught her in his arms.

He was big and strong and he held her so tightly that all she could do was kick at him. And the other two had knocked Johnny cold!

"Go ahead!" panted her captor trying to keep his shins out of the way of her bluntheaded shoes. "I'll bring this wildcat along!"

Despairingly, Pat saw the other two drag Johnny's unconscious figure away over the grass. She opened her mouth to scream. The man put his hand over her mouth and she bit him. He snatched it away and that gave her a chance to get her hand loose. She promptly whacked him over the head with her gun.

He staggered back dizzily, weaving. Pat

rushed in, swung with more enthusiasm than science and nearly clipped herself. But even though she missed, the staggering man sat down suddenly and heavily on the grass. Pat bounced the gun solidly off the top of his head. He sighed and toppled over quietly.

PAT was seething with impatience to follow Johnny, but Rufe had said bring back information. So swiftly she emptied the unconscious man's pockets, transferring all the junk to her handbag. A small note-book and fountain pen in his pocket gave her an idea. She squirted some ink on his thumb and made an impression on the paper.

Waving it madly to dry it, she dashed out to the street to try to catch up with Johnny's captors.

The street was empty. They had gone!

What would Rufe say to her? While she had fooled around with fingerprints his brother had been carried off by thugs. Dispiritedly she turned toward home.

Rufe Reed was waiting with mounting anxiety for the phone call which had not come.

"What's happened," he demanded of Pat. "Where's Johnny?"

She told him. His lips tightened, but he did not reproach her. Carefully he looked over the stuff that she spilled from her handbag. A fat bunch of keys caught his attention.

"Auto keys," he grunted. "That guy could lift any car in the country with one of these. Let's see that thumb print. H'm, good and clear. If Hogan has the original on file, maybe we'll know where to start now. I'm off for Police Headquarters right away!"

He snatched at his hat and coat.

"I want to go too!" said Pat.

"No, you stay near the phone. Johnny might get away or get to a phone. Someone's got to be on tap."

He gave her his most perfunctory, husband-like kiss and beat it for the door before she could think up any more arguments.

* * *

Johnny Reed woke up with the world's prize headache. There was a lump on his skull bigger than a duck's egg and a taste in his mouth like a motorman's glove.

It was pitch-black, and the floor upon which he lay felt like rough cement and it was cold and wet. A carefully outstretched hand touched a cement wall behind him.

Somehow he managed to sit up, though that started the pinwheels going in his skull again. He sat still until the darkness stopped heaving and throwing off sparks.

Holding onto the wall then, he got himself upright and began a careful tour of the four sides of the cellar. Once he felt a solid wooden door, but the rest was only bare walls. The door, of course, was locked and nothing less than a General Sherman tank

would have budged it.

Searching his pockets, Johnny found he had been stripped of wallet and watch and keys and gun. The only thing left was a paper book of matches. Perhaps they wanted him to see his prison. He struck a match and blinked like an owl in the brilliant flare.

There was nothing to see—except one small detail which caught his eye. There was a tiny pile of crumbled cement at one spot on the floor. The filling between the blocks had begun to crack, and in the block itself was a jagged crack which split off a good third of it.

Johnny began picking out bits of cement with his fingers. Soon he found he could lift out the broken piece of block. He had a weapon of sorts, a jagged chunk of cement block twice the size of his hand.

"Just the thing to go up against machine-guns with," he grumbled.

But he took it back to the corner with him, sat on it, and waited patiently.

A long time passed, while the throbbing in his head subsided too slowly. At last a key grated in the lock and the door swung open. The dazzling beam of a flashlight hit him in the eyes.

"Turn that thing away!" he barked.

The beam shifted, but all Johnny could see for a minute was a big red circle. When it faded, he saw an ugly gorilla with a broken nose grinning at him. The gorilla carried a gun.

"Head hurt?" the uncouth individual inquired.

"Nuts to you," Johnny said.

"Get up!" the character ordered.

Johnny got up, holding the chunk of block behind his back.

"What you got?" demanded the gunman. "Something we missed when we frisked you? Gimme."

"Aw, you don't want this," Johnny said. "Give me a break, will ya?"

"Fork over or you'll loose some teeth."

Johnny drew his hand out reluctantly and threw the cement chunk in the character's face.

He was not bloodthirsty ordinarily, but he got a wonderful amount of satisfaction out of the scream that followed and the red smear of a face that looped toward the floor.

FLASH and gun clattered down and he dived for them. His fingers grabbed—then he froze. Light from the opening doorway transfixed him and a new voice rasped: "Drop it, mug, or we'll cut you in half!"

Johnny's fingers straightened and he blinked. Two more men edged down some stone steps, and into the cellar room. One moved around Johnny, a stocky man with a neck that bulged over his collar. He slapped Johnny across the bridge of the nose with his gun, sending him flying back against the

wall and starting the hammers to pound in his head again.

The stocky man kicked the yegg on the floor into groggy consciousness.

"Get up, you fool! You've got a job to do."

Footsteps approached down the stone steps outside the door, and the door was slammed shut. The stocky man had grabbed a flashlight from his pocket instantly. He turned it on Johnny and it blazed in his eyes so that he could see nothing in the blinding glare. Behind this effective shield the steps came close and stopped before him.

"That's Reed," an unfamiliar voice said. "Okay."

The steps went away and after a while the beam was shifted from Johnny's eyes. He couldn't see a thing, but ungentle hands propelled him forward, through the doorway, up the stone steps and into another cellar room.

"The truck's gassed up," the stocky man said. "Now here's the dope, Matty. You drive up Nine-W to that place where the road becomes one way and comes out to the edge of the Palisades. It's a sheer drop of three hundred feet there. Fred will be right behind you in the sedan. Leave your boy friend in the driver's seat and see if you can get the truck through the guard rail. Got it?"

"Do I got it?" Matty mumbled. "It'll be a pleasure. Only maybe when I konk him to be sure he stays in the driver's seat I'll konk him so hard he'll be cold meat when he goes over! Killing's too good for him!"

"All right, mug," said the stocky man to Johnny. "Turn around."

Johnny was wrapped up in ropes until he looked like a mummy, then two men lifted him to their shoulders and carted him up a creaky flight of steps.

Well, it was an ironic twist that the master villain who was about to kill him thought he was his brother Rufus. That was inexcusable carelessness. Wouldn't that villain be surprised! Johnny wished he could be around to see that.

Upstairs smelled like a garage. There was a light truck standing in the gloom. He was tossed into the back and the truck lurched into motion. At the wheel was Matty, holding a blood-stained handkerchief to his face and devising a list of atrocities he promised himself to commit upon the prisoner's carcass.

It was a situation, Johnny thought gloomily, with no future.

CHAPTER VI

Take One Clue



LIEUTENANT HOGAN was waiting for Rufus Reed when the investigator got down to Centre Street. He studied the ink print with interest.

"I'll send it through," he said. "Sit down and wait. This shouldn't take long."

He pressed a buzzer and when he had sent the print away, he said:

"I'll bring you up to date, Rufus. There's been another murder."

"Another? The same type?"

"Yes. This time the victim isn't the kind to draw any sympathetic tears, but we're interested because the pattern is the same. The deceased is a tough monkey with a bad rep—Fitzzy Munson. We had him on a murder rap but there wasn't enough on him so we had to turn him loose.

"He walked out of the court-room and got as far as the sidewalk. Then he keeled over just like Willis—and as dead. There was a thirty-eight slug in him and nobody had heard the shot or had seen anybody shooting.

"But we got one break. A cop who saw him fall was just in time to pick up a lush named Anders who was trying to get rid of one of those samplers!"

"You mean he was trying to get rid of it, or trying to drop it on the spot like the others?" Reed supplied.

"I think he was trying to drop it near the body."

"Who is Anders?"

"The whole force knows him. Always three sheets in the wind and would be a quarter-wit even sober."

"And somebody gave him a buck to drop the sampler on the walk in front of the courthouse 'as a joke'," Reed said.

"You've been reading my mail. But here's something. We found the gun in an ash-can down the block. A thirty-eight with all numbers filed off so thoroughly that we can't bring out a thing. No prints, of course."

"Oh, fine. So you booked Anders?"

"What else could we do? We tried to get him to give us a description of the man who paid him to drop the sampler, but except for saying he talked like a dictionary he couldn't remember a thing."

"Unless he's playing dumb."

"Correct. Which is another reason we'll hold him a while and cool him off. There's something funny going on. That lush has been handing out religious tracts, if you can imagine that."

A policeman entered with the report on

COMING NEXT ISSUE

THE DEATH PATROL

An Exciting Mystery Novellet

By CURTISS T. GARDNER

the thumb print. Hogan read it, and looked up at Reed.

"Your friend has graced our halls before," he said. "Walter Brophy, alias Fingers Brophy, alias Ed Fitzgerald, alias William Hannigan, alias Tony Colucci. Professional car thief, small-time mobster. Gun for hire. Last known hangout a garage at the end of Ormund Avenue. Want him picked up?"

"I want that garage raided!" Reed said firmly. "They've got Johnny there!" He felt a touch of panic at the thought of Johnny in such hands.

"Okay. You sign the complaint and we'll hit 'em. Let's go."

Half an hour later four riot cars converged on the garage and police with sawed-off shotguns swarmed in upon it. The doors were locked, but with such flimsy hasps that a good kick sent them flying wide open. Flashlight beams stabbed into the place from all angles.

It was deserted. They covered the whole place, then Hogan shook his head.

"They're gone, Rufe, if they ever were here," he said. "What do you want me to do now?"

Reed let his shoulders fall helplessly.

"I'll keep looking," he said. "Thanks, Ben."

The neighborhood was the kind in which no crowd gathers when police pull a raid. Rather the residents disappear, and the streets are deserted. So there was no curious crowd to annoy Reed when he was left alone in the deserted garage. With his flashlight he began to go over the ground again like a questing hound.

A door in the back led to a dirty, narrow hallway. He had gone through this like a house afire and found nothing, but searching it more leisurely, he spotted some fresh scrape marks on the calcimined walls. Such scrapes could have been made by the shoes of a man carried along the hallway.

Toward the end of the hall was a narrow door, locked. Reed got out a bunch of skeleton keys and found one that clicked. The door opened on a black staircase, going down. He went down, sending his light ahead of him.

HE FOUND himself in a big vaulted empty cellar. But there were tracks and scuffings in the dust which looked fresh and some unraveling ends of rope which looked new.

On the far side was another doorway, ajar. Beyond, down some stone steps, it was a smaller room and here Reed found fresh blood on the floor, and a broken, jagged hunk of cement block.

The blood looked ominous, and Reed's heart sank. But he began to search even more carefully. He passed out into the bigger cellar, his beam darting everywhere. And near the stairway where he had almost

walked on it coming down, he found the number, 9, and a W, scratched in the dust of the cellar floor, as though with the toe of a shoe.

Reed thought over all the codes and signals he and Johnny had ever used. He was haunted by a sense of familiarity about this symbol which he could not grasp. Then suddenly he had it. 9W was the highway number that went north from New York City on the west bank of the river!

"They're taking Johnny up Nine W! But why?"

The "why" was not important now. Getting after them fast was. And Hogan could not help him. For 9W ran in New Jersey up to the point where the road forked and became one way and the cliffs rose to their highest point. After that it crossed into New York State again.

But Hogan had no jurisdiction in Jersey. Reed would have to go on this himself!

It took time to get his car out of the garage, and have it serviced. Fortunately he had plenty of A coupons, for the car was used only in emergencies. It took more time to check the Holland Tunnel and the Lincoln Tunnel. Reed had a hunch about the kidnap car. He remembered a certain light truck from which rifle-fire had spat at him. Of course car thieves could have any kind of a vehicle. But cars were scarce and a light truck was fast and handy. It was some kind of a lead.

At the George Washington Bridge Reed struck the trail. Traffic was light and the bored bluecoat at the toll booth remembered a light truck, because the driver had a cold or something and held a handkerchief so that his features could hardly be seen. Maybe the guy had a bloody nose, because there had been splashes on the handkerchief that could have been blood.

Reed remembered the jagged, bloody piece of cement block in the cellar. So Johnny had scored on one of the hoodlums!

He burned up the bridge, flashed past the Jersey booths, ignoring an outraged whistle from the guardians and whipped sharp right into 9W heading north.

The road was level concrete, wide, and deserted. He roared north like a meteor. Woods crowded the road on both sides with almost no cut-offs. At Alpine he had a bad moment wondering whether the truck had turned off, but there was a State Trooper's booth there and a man on duty said he thought a truck like that had gone through heading north.

Then, above Forest Park, the road became one way, south-bound traffic disappearing to the left. The north lane ran out on the very lip of the Palisades which here dropped in massive columns of rock a sheer three hundred feet or more to the river.

A fear which had been growing steadily

in Reed's mind became sickeningly persistent. In a spot like this a car might go through the guard rail and there wouldn't be enough left at the bottom of the cliff to identify it. He could fairly see Johnny slumped unconscious behind the wheel, the mug with the bloody face standing on the running board, giving the wheel a twist and leaping clear as the truck charged the rail.

The picture, was so clear that he felt instant conviction he was right. He reached forward and snapped off his lights.

Moonlight washed the road in a pale glow and the concrete stood out clearly with the dark mass of the woods on his left and the open sky on his right where the cliffs lunged into the river.

He rounded a turn and red tail-lights blinked at him. A car was drawn up in the parking space of a deserted log road-house. Was that it?

Reed slid his car into the shadows and parked. Gun in hand he moved toward the other parked car, keeping out of the moonlight.

There was just one man in the car, sitting hunched over the wheel and staring intently up the road. Instinctively, Reed looked that way too and saw moonlight reflecting palely on the truck he sought.

He felt a tremendous surge of relief. He was not too late!

But this man here! Who was he? Look-out? Bodyguard? Both—also obviously he was here to pick up the man with the bloody face after the truck was sent crashing over the cliffs, leaving the murderer afoot.

REED SLID around the car to the door beside the driver's seat. The intent gangster's first intimation that he was not alone was when the door was suddenly opened.

"Come here!" Reed said.

He gripped the surprised man by the lapel of his coat, yanked him toward himself and brought the flat of his gun down on the felt snap-brim. The hat buckled, the victim relaxed and spilled down out of the seat, to mash his nose on the harsh gravel of the parking space.

Reed trussed up the unconscious man with his own tie and belt, gagged him with his own handkerchief and stuffed him back in the seat.

"That one was easy. Hope the other is as dumb."

When Reed approached the truck, silently, the mug with the battered face was busily removing the rocks he had put under the wheels. He turned to Johnny Reed's bound form which he had lugged into the driver's seat.

"This ain't gonna hurt—much," he mumbled, and grinned. "I'm gonna tap you behind the ear, take off them ropes and then

you're goin' for a little ride. Like it?"

"I like it better than staying here with you," Johnny said. "Come on, get it over with."

"It'll be a pleasure," the man said.

He took one step and a gun jammed hard into his back.

"Drop it!" Reed snarled.

"Rufe!" Johnny squalled.

Matty was a fighter. One elbow slashed down, sending Reed's gun wide. In the same motion Matty whirled, his own weapon swinging round.

Rufe chopped a blow at his wrist, lunged forward to get inside the gun, and grappled. His own weapon, dashed out of his hand, thudded on the ground. Then Matty was hammering his kidneys with vicious short-arm hooks.

Reed brought his knee up hard. There was a gasp and Matty broke. Reed let go with everything he had in a vicious right-hand smash to the bruised face.

It was the sort of punch which would have been suicide to throw at a trained boxer, but Reed was counting on Matty's being dazed from the knee in the groin. He was right. The punch landed and rocked the gangster so hard he dropped his own gun. But he caromed off the truck and came in with his chin tucked down behind his shoulder and his left out.

"Hard guy, eh?" he growled.

Then the night dissolved for Rufe Reed into a stunning explosion of fireworks. He felt the back of his head strike something hard and saw fiery circles spinning like the rings of Saturn. Then the circles went away and he found he was lying on the ground, directly in front of the truck. Matty was standing beyond him with a gun in his hand pointing at him.

"Get up!" Matty said.

Reed got to his knees and hung there, pretending to be a good deal sicker than he was.

"Come on," the yegg snarled. "I got no time for foolin' around."

CHAPTER VII

Shadows Play Tag



CAR SPRINGS creaked as Johnny moved in the front seat. The next instant the car head-lights went on full, throwing the whole scene into sudden blazing brilliance.

The beams flashed full into Matty's eyes. Reed pulled his feet under him and his lunging body snapped the gangster's legs out from under him.

As he came down, Reed sprawled across him and smothered his flailing arms.

They rolled in a tight-fighting, thrashing mass down under the guard rail. Matty was using knees, elbows, nails and teeth. Reed confined himself to forcing his thumbs into the man's windpipe.

Matty started to choke. His flailing blows became desperate and he rocked the detective with the frenzy of his efforts to break free.

In one wild lunge he got to his knees and, driving his fists upward through Reed's arms, broke the strangling clutch on his throat. He staggered to his feet, with Reed following.

"Now you—" Matty said hoarsely.

Reed charged him. The gangster took a step backward—and there was nothing beneath his feet.

A single terrified wail was wrenched from his lips as his body cartwheeled over in space and twisted down out of sight.

Reed checked himself, trembling, on the very lip of the precipice. He was suddenly so weak and shaken that he wanted to get down and crawl away from that cliff edge. But he managed to stagger back to the car and flopped down on the running board.

"Get me out of here!" Johnny panted.

"In a minute," Rufe said weakly. "Thanks for switching on the lights. He had me like a sitting duck."

"Did it with my nose," Johnny said. "Did you push him over, Rufe, or did he go over himself?"

"Fifty-fifty," Reed said, sighing. He got up, his nausea subsiding. "Let's get out of here and home, Johnny. I've had enough for tonight."

"Me, too," Johnny Reed said fervently. "This was one night I didn't have only dull work to do."

With his brother released, Reed kicked away the last chock under the front wheel. The truck crashed through the guard rail and over the edge of the cliff. There was an appalling silence, then a grinding crash far below. Immediately came the puff of igniting gasoline.

"That'll bring the cops," Reed said. "They'll find the dead guy too. Let's go."

One thing more remained to be done. He stopped at a telephone back in Manhattan and called the garage on Ormund Avenue.

A voice said, "Yeah?"

Reed cupped his hand over the mouthpiece and sank his voice to a growl.

"Matty talkin'?" he said. "Lissen. The job's done but I had a little trouble with the cops and had to lam. I better hide out for a while."

"Where's Fred?" the voice demanded.

Reed grinned, getting the name of the second man he had laid out.

"They got him."

"You sure Reed's crooked?"

"If he ain't he can be dropped three hundred feet onto rock and then be burned in

gasoline, and I never heard of nobody that could. Lissen, I gotta lam. I'll get in touch with you."

"Okay. Call me Monday."

Reed hung up.

"Now they believe Fred's been picked up and they don't expect Matty back, so they won't get suspicious for a few days," he told Johnny. "Otherwise they'd come looking for us with their whole gang. . . ."

Dawn was lighting the city when Rufe and Johnny got home. Pat was sitting beside the telephone, fast asleep.

"Old Faithful, asleep at the switch," Rufe whispered.

As they tiptoed past her to go to bed, Johnny objected:

"She hasn't heard from us. She'll worry."

"In her sleep?" Rufe said callously. "Come on, it wouldn't be right to wake her."

They slept all day, and woke surprised that no explosion had come from Pat when she discovered them. A note was propped on the telephone for them.

You know where both of you heels can go. I'm going to the movies. Maybe I'll get a divorce.

Your ex-wife,
Patricia.

Johnny grinned. "Always said this marriage wouldn't last."

"She'll be back," Reed yawned. "Let's go get something to eat."

AFTER they had eaten, Reed told his brother:

"I better go down and see Hogan. He'll want to know what happened. Want to come with me, or wait for Pat?"

"I'll wait. Nothing exciting at Centre Street."

Hogan was glad to see Rufe Reed. The private detective flopped into a chair.

"Johnny's back," he said casually. "Ben last night I didn't know myself how serious it was. I thought they were holding Johnny to get me to call off the dogs or something."

"Weren't they?"

"Heck, no! If I'd known what really went I wouldn't have been so calm. They thought Johnny was me and they were getting ready to rub him out!"

Hogan whistled.

"That means you're in danger."

"No more," Reed grinned. "I'm dead." He told the story of Johnny's rescue and the death of Matty. "Wouldn't that mug be flattered if he knew he was pinch-hitting for me?"

"Yeah, flattered," Hogan said. "Well, I'll talk to the Jersey cops and tell them to hold this Fred on any charge they can drum up. Now what's next?"

"Let me talk to the lush. Anders."

"Sure. But you won't get anything out of him."

They went back to Anders' cell. The lush was white and shaking. He was sober—and regretted it. He needed a shave—and a bath—badly.

Reed leaned against the bars.

"You want out?" he asked, rolling a cigarette between his fingers.

"They gonna let me out?" Anders whined.

"Talk," Reed suggested.

"I told them everything I know!" the man complained. "Lissen, mister, I was high. I didn't see the guy who gave me that—that—"

"Sampler?" Reed supplied.

"Yeah. I was standin' at the bar at Joe's. These two guys comes up and buys me a drink. Said they'd seen me peddling them religious papers and thought I was a good Joe, see?"

"What is this religious paper racket?"

"No racket, mister. I do it for the mission an' they give me a flop an' breakfast."

"And you haven't any idea what these two men looked like?" Anders' brow corrugated in worried thought.

"I think one called the other 'Matty,' he hazarded.

Reed glanced at Hogan.

"Remember anything else?"

"I—I think somebody said something about somebody's fingers."

"Sure he didn't call him 'Fingers'—like using a name?"

"Maybe. I—I don't know."

Reed looked at Hogan again and nodded.

"Okay, Anders," he said. "I'll see what I can do about getting you out."

"That's the mob," Reed said as he and Hogan moved away. "Now where does Brophy's mob tie in with Willis and Medford?"

The answer to that, Reed thought as he left Headquarters might be found in Gainesboro, Vermont, home town of Lorna Willis and Olivia Medford. He called the police of the Vermont town, long distance, told them what he wanted and gave his office number to be called back when the information was found.

Then he grabbed a cab and went out to visit Olivia Medford.

She was a trim, pretty brunette, without Lorna Willis' nervous worried look. She showed Reed into the living room where a middle-aged, somewhat paunchy gentleman arose from a chair.

"This is Mr. Irwin, Mr. Reed. Charlie Irwin was my husband's partner and one of our best friends."

"Reed?" Irwin repeated. "You're a detective, aren't you?"

"Mrs. Willis has retained me to find the murderer of her husband. I thought—"

"There's no connection between the Willis case and Arthur's death!" Irwin said angrily. "If that's what you're here for, I object to

your submitting Mrs. Medford to any more painful questioning. She's had enough!"

"I think there's a connection," Reed said mildly. "Would you mind answering a few questions, Mrs. Medford?"

"I'll try," she said, her lips pale.

"Do you think your husband murdered your father?"

"That's exactly what I mean!" Irwin shouted. "Why don't you leave her alone?"

"Please, Charlie," Mrs. Medford said quietly. "That happens to be one question I can easily answer. Mr. Reed, I do not believe Arthur murdered my father. My father and my husband had differences, but they were never serious. Moreover, if you knew Arthur you would have understood how—how gentle he was. He wouldn't hurt anyone."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Medford," Reed said. "I don't want to be inconsiderate. But I must find out certain things if I am to reach any conclusion. One thing more. Do you know Mrs. Willis?"

"No—no!" the woman cried, as if her patience had snapped. "Everyone asks me that! It's just a horrible coincidence that she and I suffered the same tragedy at almost the same time. I don't know her, and I can't stand any more questions!"

SHE started to cry and Charlie Irwin, with a baleful glance at Reed, hurried over to her.

Reed apologized again and left. Outside he waited and presently Irwin appeared.

"Look, Reed," the man said as they went down the walk together. "There's no one to take care of Mrs. Medford now except me. That gives me some authority, I'm telling you to stay away from her. If you're working for this Mrs. Willis, solve her case. But leave Olivia alone!"

Reed nodded. "Where do you come in on this, Irwin?"

"What do you mean, 'come in'?" Irwin demanded belligerently.

"I mean are you only acting the good Samaritan?"

Irwin stopped dead and fixed the detective with a cold and hostile eye.

"I came here to give Mrs. Medford a check," he said stiffly. "Naturally the business goes to me, but I gave her the choice of taking Arthur's place as my partner or letting me buy her out. She chose the cash. And it's none of your business. I don't even know why I'm telling you."

"Because you know I'll find out, and it'll look better if you seem to be frank and honest!"

"Seem to be?" Irwin exploded. "I think I'll give you a punch in the nose!"

"Now, now," Reed soothed. "Act your age. Remember your blood pressure."

He wheeled away before the man could act,

leaving Irwin standing there, looking after him angrily.

CHAPTER VIII

Past Imperfect



AT and Johnny were both in the office when Rufe arrived.

"Got the case solved yet?" his wife jeered.

"Told you she'd come back," Reed said to Johnny, ignoring the sarcasm.

"I asked you if you had deduced who the murderer is," Pat repeated.

"We-e-ll, I have no proof," Reed said, sinking

into a chair, "but I pretty much know who it is—I think."

"Ho-ho, he thinks!" Pat crowed. "All right, wise guy, write down the name you think and we'll seal it in an envelope and then when Hogan solves the case we'll open it up and see how wrong you are. And if I'm right—you're wrong—you take me to the most expensive night club in town."

"And if you're wrong?"

"I'll owe you a nickel cigar."

"That's why I married her," Rufe told Johnny. "Her generosity."

The phone rang.

"I'll take it," Rufe said, fending Pat off. "Hello."

"Long distance," said the operator. "Gainesboro, Vermont, calling. Is Mr. Rufus Reed there?"

"This is Reed. Put 'em on."

He listened for about four dollars' worth, then he thanked the caller and hung up. He leaned back and put his feet on the desk.

"You see," he said, "there had to be a reason why neither of those two women appeared in court at the most critical period in their husband's lives. There had to be a blamed good reason."

"That's the way he is," Pat explained to Johnny, elaborately. "Always starts his stories in the middle. All right, Mr. Bones, why didn't the two women appear in court?"

"They didn't dare. They knew that their pictures would be in papers all over the country, sent out on AP or UP photo services."

Johnny's feet hit the floor with a crash.

"You mean they're fugitives from a chain-gang or something?"

"They've got pasts," Reed said. "Pasts imperfect, you might say. Pat found out they had known each other most of their lives, though both deny it. The police in their home town just gave me the rest of the story. Those girls grew up in the Twenties—the jazz age, Prohibition, bathtub gin and all.

The families had dough, the girls were spoiled. They had big allowances, fast roadsters and heavy drinking boy friends.

"One night Olivia and Lorna picked up a couple of boys at a local tavern. They got pretty loaded on needle gin and started for another joint, with the boys driving their cars. They got into a race and went tearing up the pike with the cars side by side, filling the whole road. A farm wagon was there too."

"Oh, boy!" Johnny muttered.

"Well, they killed the farmer and his son. The boys vanished. Olivia and Lorna couldn't because the cars were registered in their names. At the trial they couldn't produce the boys they said were driving and both got a nice stiff prison sentence."

"What a thing to keep under cover all these years!" Pat breathed.

"Well, apparently they served out their sentences, came to New York and got married here. The old scandal was buried and forgotten."

"But something queer happens. Both women are dead broke, though they did have lots of money. Lorna Willis is wearing a big zircon in a ring that looks as if it were designed for a real diamond. Something has happened to a powerful lot of money."

"Blackmail!" Pat snapped.

"That's the way I figured it. If one of those men involved in the crack-up years ago found them, he might be bleeding them on the threat of revealing the past to their husbands, or could have sold the information to someone else who is bleeding them."

"Now their husbands might be big and say, 'That's all in the past and whatever you've paid for.' Or they might get plenty sore. You can see how the women would be afraid to have their husbands know. After all, killing a couple of people is pretty much of a load to carry around on your conscience. So maybe they paid off rather than take the chance."

"So the blackmailer bled them dry," Pat murmured. Then her blue eyes flew wide open. "Rufe, do you think the blackmailer murdered the fathers so the women would inherit more money and he could get more out of them? Could anyone be so black-hearted?"

REED shook his head soberly.

"That's just what it looks like and worse. I think he murdered the husbands for a similar reason. Since most of the inheritances were in the form of stocks or shares in a business, the husbands would have managed it for their wives and the blackmailer would have been unable to realize. He had to get rid of the husbands too. He tried to frame them for the murder of the fathers and when that didn't work, he elimi-

nated them himself. The samplers, of course, were just a blind, but I believe that even with them the killer had an idea of throwing suspicion on another, in case things went wrong."

"Good gravy," Johnny gulped. "Makes you a little sick, doesn't it?"

"You shouldn't be surprised," Reed said. "After what nearly happened to you."

"Rufe," said Pat, "they play too rough. Let's go into some other business. Let's raise petunias, huh?"

"The only guy who could know that much about Willis and Medford's affairs is Devore," Johnny said thoughtfully.

"What about that letter Willis wrote his father-in-law?" Pat demanded.

"How do you know it was meant for his father-in-law?" Reed countered. "Just because Lorna said so? I don't believe it was meant for his father-in-law at all. I believe it was sent to the blackmailer."

"You mean Willis had found out about the whole thing?"

"That's just a supposition. But it looks like it."

"Rufe, you're so smart," Pat breathed. "Who is the killer?"

"Quiet," said Rufe, "while I make a phone call."

He dialed Police Headquarters and asked for Hogan.

"Ben? Rufe. Listen, the murderer knows I'm alive now, so there's no more need for secrecy. Here's a phone number I got out of the pockets of that lug Fred I knocked out. It's probably for that gang's new headquarters. Trace it and raid the joint—you'll pick up Brophy and his hoods. . . . And look! I'll hand you your murderer tonight if you want to stage a little party for me. No kidding. Get Devore, Mrs. Medford and Charlie Irwin all over at Lorna Willis' house tonight. . . . Well, she's my client, isn't she? I've got to earn that hundred bucks. . . . Okay. Thanks."

"Go on, be mysterious," Pat sniffed as Reed hung up. "Don't forget our bet."

"All right." He got an envelope out of the drawer, scribbled on the inside of the flap and sealed it. "There. And no peeking."

"You're wrong," Pat said calmly. "Because you forgot one thing."

"What?"

"The third sampler murder. A character named Fitz Munson."

"Oh, the Anders case. Really, Pat, that's so elemental I'm surprised at you."

"You won't laugh when you get that night-club check."

"Well, I'd say Munson was one of the mob that fell afoul of the boss and had to be liquidated. They thought it was a swell chance to add confusion by dropping a sampler and making it look as if it was linked

up to the Willis and Medford killings. It wasn't. And the best proof of that is the way they tossed in that lush Anders. That was smoke screen pure and simple. If the thing had been really linked up they wouldn't have left us any human clue like Anders."

By nine o'clock Mrs. Willis, Mrs. Medford, Glover Devore and Charlie Irwin were assembled in the Willis living room, plus the three Reeds, Hogan and a few police.

Everybody was nervous. Devore, the lawyer in him coming to the surface, paced up and down with his hands behind his back.

"Ready?" Hogan asked.

"I am," Reed said calmly. He looked around. "I'm a private investigator and I have no police authority. If I told Lieutenant Hogan how much every one of you has held out on him, you'd all wind up in the brig. However, I know who the murderer is now and I'll prove it shortly. Mrs. Willis, I've earned your retainer and you owe me some more dough. Your husband did not kill your father."

He swung toward Olivia.

"The same goes for you, Mrs. Medford. Your husband did not kill your father. The same man killed all four—for one reason."

Olivia Medford sobbed. A confused murmur arose.

"I know who it is too!" Charlie Irwin said, his eyes fixed on the lawyer. "Devore, weren't you in the Navy during the first World War?"

The lawyer looked startled.

"Yes, why?"

"You were hurt, and while recovering in the hospital you learned to embroider samplers!"

"You can't pin this on me!" Devore was on his feet, shouting. "I only did those samplers in the hospital. Twenty years ago. I haven't done one since!"

"Keep your shirt on, Devore," Reed said. "You're in the clear, even though the idea was to use samplers to throw suspicion on you, just in case. Our friend Irwin is anxious to toss red herrings. Know why? 'Cause he's our murderer."

NOBODY moved. Nobody spoke or breathed. Every eye fastened on Irwin. His cheeks flamed, then went pale.

"That's a serious accusation, young man!" he blustered. "Better get out your proof."

"Lieutenant Hogan has the proof, Irwin. He's already raided the new garage thug headquarters and he's got Brophy and your other boys who have been doing your dirty work. He's got their signed confessions."

Irwin glanced from Reed to Hogan. The police-lieutenant was poised as though waiting, his expression unreadable. Irwin sighed.

"And I've got a gun in my pocket pointing right at you, Reed," he said. "I'm sorry Matty bungled his job. I'll try to do better."

Something sailed through the air. It was Pat's handbag, and it caught Irwin flush in the face. His gun went off with a bang and both Reeds and three police officers dived for him.

For a second there was a furious mêlée, then Irwin was subdued, handcuffed and dragged to a chair.

"Are you shot with luck!" Hogan muttered to Reed. "I never thought he'd fall for it."

"Brophy will confess," Reed said. "I was just a little ahead of him, that's all."

The two women were huddled together, staring with fear-filled eyes at the man who had murdered their husbands and fathers.

"He—he was my friend," Olivia Medford choked. "I thought I knew him so well! I never dreamed he was one of those boys who—"

"He was more dangerous than a rattlesnake. Didn't either of you suspect it was he who was blackmailing you?"

"No," said Mrs. Willis. "We always mailed the money to a post-office box number and got our instructions over the telephone."

Hogan pulled the prisoner to his feet.

"Well, we'll see what we can save you out of the money he's taken. The other damage he's done—is done. As slickly as his sleight-of-hand put that sampler in the dish with Medford's wrist-watch."

Lorna Willis came to Reed as the police took Irwin away.

"I'm sorry I tried to fool you, Mr. Reed. I see now that you were trying to help us. But you understand—"

"I know. The past is dead. Forget it."

"Mr. Devore and I are going to be married some day and try to make a new life for ourselves. Olivia, I hope and pray you can find a new life too—soon."

Reed motioned to Johnny and Pat and they tiptoed out.

"I'll send her a bill for the rest," Reed said. "Come on, Pat, you've got a job."

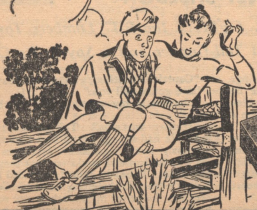
"What?"

"Picking out that nickel cigar."

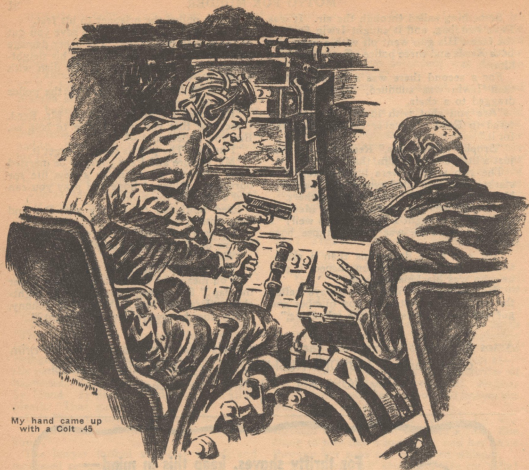
"You mean you had the right name under the flap?" She waved good-by to the nightclub. "Drat the man," she said to Johnny. "Why does he always have to be right?"

Amos Black uses Commando tactics when he's caught in the middle of a grim crime frame in **MURDER NIGHTMARE**, a baffling mystery novel by **NORMAN A. DANIELS** next issue!

**For thrifty shaves, keep this in mind—
You get the quick, slick, easy kind
With Thin Gillette, the low-priced blade.
Men, it's the sharpest one that's made!**



Produced By The Maker Of The Famous Gillette Blue Blade



My hand came up
with a Colt .45

PILOT TO MURDERER

By WALT SHELDON

Machine-Gunned by Enemy Fighters, the B-17 Lumbers Toward Its Target—with a Murdered Tail-Gunner and a Spy in Its Crew!

IT WAS one of those English mornings, dark and wet. I stood under the big wing of the Foolish Female and blew cigarette smoke into the mist just to see if I could tell the two apart. I couldn't.

The bomber's four motors were just about warmed up and the crew was climbing aboard. I was checking the men on the clipboard held in the crook of my arm. Eight were a small crew, but when you put aboard extra gas, you have to fly short-handed.

A late figure came from the line, flying boots spitting on the wet tarmac. I frowned. It was Sergeant Struthers, the tail gunner. He saluted.

"What's the matter, Struthers?"

"Captain, something's happened. It's queer. I have got to tell you."

I looked at my watch. "Not much time now."

Struthers was small. Tail gunners usually are. He had stringy blond hair that flopped aimlessly over his head. His eyes were set way back, and I could see that they were bloodshot. When he talked I smelled liquor. I didn't feel like listening to alcoholic daydreams. I opened my mouth to say so. He beat me. His words came pouring out like G.I. beans from a sack.

"Just before I got in, a few minutes ago, I saw a soldier talking to some guy at the field boundary over by the north wood. I

was sneaking back from town. That's how I saw it, sir. I yelled at both of 'em and the civilian beat it one way and the soldier the other. I chased the soldier. I chased him back to the cantonment area. I almost lost him a couple of times, and then he ducked right into the barracks where our crew is quartered."

"Give me that again," I ordered.

Portane, the crew chief stuck his head out of the radio operator's window. He was older than the rest. His face had deep lines, almost slashes in it.

"One more minute, sir," he warned.

I nodded. Technical Sergeant Portane was the nearest thing to a mother that a B-17 can have.

I spoke to Struthers.

"We'll go over this later. In the air. I'll call you on the interphone."

Boarding, I went through the ship and into the pilot's seat. I placed the check list in the co-pilot's hand and got busy as he read it off.

"Flaps, slots, right landing gear, left landing gear."

He had a young, eager voice that went with his smooth cheeks and perpetual grin. His name was Algernon Victor Feathering. We called him "Methuselah."

I checked this and that. Before we knew it, we were working on the last item, the interphone system.

In a B-17, every crew member has a little box with a switch on it, called a "jack box."

He plugs his microphone and headset into this and communicates with the other crew members, or hears the various radio sets aboard. It's an important check.

"Pilot to crew, interphone check," I said. "Make it fast."

Their voices acknowledged one by one. Struthers, the tail gunner, was last. He must have been still excited. He practically whispered into the microphone.

I didn't pay much attention to this at the time. It was already six a.m.—or zero-six-hundred, if you want to be technical.

I needed a clearance, so I switched the jack box to the command position.

"Y Control, this is A for Able. Ready to taxi."

The earphones came alive. "A for Able, this is Y Control. Wind south southwest, ten miles. Cleared to runway one-eight. Over."

All this time I'd been turning Struthers's story on a mental lathe, looking for flaws.

I knew a little about testimony. In civilian life, I had been an "enterprising young lawyer." This meant that I dusted the bookshelves and filled the ink bottles in the law offices of Grabok, Melnik, Copperstone and Solis-Wolfe. Once in a while they'd throw me a brief to prepare. A not very important one.

What Struthers had said was unusual for several reasons. In the first place, he

shouldn't have been sneaking back from town. The crew of the Foolish Female had been alerted and given a hint of this mission's importance.

In the second place, Struthers must have thought the incident mighty striking to incriminate himself by reporting it. And in the third place, civilians weren't supposed to be hanging around the field boundaries.

I could think about all this because the routine of getting airborne is automatic. I was part of the ship fish-tailing to the runway and getting cleared by Control. The boundary lights, fuzzy in the mist, streaked behind and the feel of power pushed at me from the seat.

THE Foolish Female bit hard into the air as her wheels left the ground.

I turned to Lieutenant Feathering.

"Did you listen at the briefing, or were you snoozing as usual?"

He grinned. "I listened."

"What's your guess?"

"About what?"

"About the Nazi big shot we're supposed to bomb," I said.

"I'm not sure," Feathering answered. "It's a screwy mission any way you look at it. I mean this business of just us two knowing the target, meeting the other planes over France, and taking them on in. You know, it could be—I'm not saying it is—but it could be we're dropping some high explosive on the guy with the mustache himself."

I nodded and reached for the microphone once more.

"Pilot to tail gunner," I said, "Go ahead."

No answer.

"Pilot to tail gunner. Go ahead," I repeated.

Silence.

Portane's voice sounded behind my shoulder. The crew chief had been standing there, mothering the take-off as usual. The lines in his forehead were deeper.

"Doesn't he answer?" Portane asked. "Maybe his headset's unplugged. I'll go back and check."

"Good idea," I said.

Portane left the compartment.

Light was coming out of the east now. It was a lemon colored light, and it made the low stratus under us look like a yellow carpet. The air itself was solid, not a bump in it. The air-speed needle hovered at about 180 mph. The controls were not too loose. Just right. It was a pilot's sky.

I felt a faint change in the controls as Portane reached the tail. Not much difference. But I knew the Foolish Female so well I could sense an extra rivet in her. Then Portane's voice came on the interphone.

"Crew chief to pilot."

"Go ahead, Portane."

"Captain! There's something wrong here!"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"It's Struthers!" He paused, as if trying to think out his next words. "Struthers is dead, sir. Somebody bashed his head in."

Feathering looked at me suddenly. He must have seen my shock.

"Don't touch anything," I said to Portane by phone. "Come back here immediately."

"What's up?" asked Feathering, who had not been wearing his earphones.

"Plenty. Struthers has been killed. Portane says his head is bashed in."

"His head bashed in! Is somebody sore at Struthers?"

"Well, he wasn't exactly voted 'most popular,'" I replied. "But it may have been something else."

"What?"

"Tell you later. I have to look at things."

Portane emerged from behind the bomb racks, and I motioned for Feathering to take over. I slid down from my seat. Portane's face was very white. It made the lines in it look darker.

"You're sure he's dead?" I asked.

"He is," nodded Portane. "It's not pretty, sir."

"Anybody else know about this?"

"I haven't told anyone."

"Good," I said. "Don't. Not until I say so."

In the radio compartment, Hackley, the senior operator and waist gunner, was busy at the transmitter. Pizzaro, his assistant and ball-turret gunner, was making entries in the log. I opened the door to the rear of the ship, closed it carefully behind me, and went toward the tail.

Struthers was lying half-in and half-out of the "stinger" compartment. His eyes were open and popped. They had that peculiar dead look of following you but not seeing you. From one corner of his mouth hung the tiny stub of a smoldering cigarette. The back of his head was horribly smashed.

I looked at my watch. Zero-six-one-zero.

The motors thrummed ahead and the fuselage groaned in the prop wash. Wind lashed through the waist openings and eddied in the tail.

I bent and dragged Struthers out of the stinger compartment. It was nasty work and it did things to my soft palate. Then I stepped gingerly around the body and forced myself back into the tail.

Struthers's mike hung where it belonged. But the switch was on. The earphones were in their place. I took the mike.

"Co-pilot from pilot," I spoke.

Feathering's voice answered.

"Listen, Methusalah," I said. "You keep her for awhile. Struthers has been sapped. I've got things to do."

"Roger," he replied.

Replacing the microphone, I sat thinking. I pulled a cigarette from my leather jacket and lit it. My watch said zero-six-one-two.

WHEN my cigarette was down to where I felt heat on my lips, I noted my watch again, then put out the cigarette, and wormed my way out of the compartment. I took one more look at Struthers and went into the radio room. I used the interphone to summon all the crew but the co-pilot.

"Fellows," I said, "Sergeant Struthers has been killed. Hit on the head with something hard. He must have died instantly."

There was silence, open eyes and mouths.

"Holy Gee!" Pizzaro exclaimed.

I looked from one face to another.

Lieutenant Crisp was thin-mouthed and quiet. He seemed to be sucking at his lean cheeks.

Hodgins, the bombardier, had a moon face, expressionless.

I looked at Hackley, the radio operator, and saw that he was staring stupidly at the floor. His hair had fallen forward over his eyes.

Pizzaro's orbs were black and wide.

"Hackley," I began. "How long did you know Struthers?"

The radio man brushed his hair back. "No longer than the rest of us, sir. After all, we've only been together a month."

I nodded. A crew of volunteers had been picked and specially trained for this mission.

"Did Struthers have any enemies?" I continued, still looking at Hackley.

"Well, sir—" Hackley tucked one lip in.

"Go on."

"I guess none of us liked him much. Only I wouldn't say anybody hated him enough to bump him off."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, Struthers was a fine gunner, but—" Hackley stopped again.

"But what?"

"I'll tell you, sir," Pizzaro put in suddenly. His dark eyes had small dots of light in them. "Struthers was a heel. Forgive me for talking like that about a dead man, but he was."

"In what way?"

"Women," said Pizzaro. "You know what I mean. Didn't matter who. One day I showed him a picture of an English girl I know, and he said—" Pizzaro clamped his teeth together.

"What did you do?"

"I socked him."

Hackley suddenly interrupted.

"Pizzaro wasn't the only one, sir. I had fights with him, too. I think we all did. Struthers used to drink, even though we were alerted. I can tell you without rattling, now he's dead."

"The rest of us always got sore about that," Pizzaro added. "It was his business if he wanted to drink, but we figured he'd get altitude bends some day when we needed him bad."

I turned to Crisp and Hodgins.

"What about you fellows? Did you know

anything more about Struthers?"

Crisp lengthened his slender face. "Scarcely ever saw the bird. Thought he was a bit sullen."

Hodgins merely shook his head.

I sent both of them back to the nose and then continued with the three enlisted men.

"Portane, tell me exactly what happened last night when Struthers came into the barracks. Don't leave out a single detail."

Portane ridged his brows.

"Captain, I was sound asleep. I usually am, I guess. I don't remember a darned thing until Hackley here was shaking my shoulder and yelling— 'Get up, Sarge, this is it.'"

"How about you?" I asked Hackley.

"Well, I was sleeping, too, until the speaker sounded," he answered. "I popped out of bed—you know, not exactly awake—and turned on the light, Struthers was standing in the doorway breathing hard, as if he had just been running. Mud was all over his shoes. I figured he must have been up in the north wood where it's boggy."

I picked up a pad from Hackley's desk, tore off a sheet and penciled a few notes. I wanted to get events into their proper sequence.

Hackley was still talking—

"I said to Struthers, 'Where the devil have you been?' It would have been like Struthers to say it was none of my business, or some brilliant remark like that. But he didn't. He said, 'Did anybody come in here just now?' I told him not to be silly. He hopped over to his foot locker and started putting his field clothes on. He had been duded up, so he might have been to town on a binge. I think a friend of his was on guard duty tonight. That's how he got in the gate. He must have sneaked through the north wood to avoid the Officer of the Day."

PIZZARO had a strange expression on his face. I nodded to him.

"Somebody did come in before Struthers," Pizzaro said.

"Who?" I inquired.

"I dunno, sir. But I'm a pretty light sleeper. What I mean is I sleep in a kind of a three-quarter sleep."

"Go on," I instructed.

"Just before Struthers came in, somebody else came in. In a big hurry. I heard shoes fall, then somebody getting into bed."

"Whose bed was it?"

Pizzaro spread his palms expressively. "That's what I don't know. I'm just a three-quarter sleeper. I get some things and miss others."

"Who had his clothes on when you all got up this morning. Who besides Struthers?" I asked the three of them.

Nobody seemed to know.

"When the alert sounds you just get up," Portane remarked. "You hardly look at the

next guy to see what he is doing."

"I suppose so," I admitted.

Hackley shook his hair away from his face. "Pizzaro might have been dreaming. He dreams sometimes. Makes an awful racket."

"I tell you I was not dreaming!" Pizzaro exploded.

Hackley suddenly snatched at the ear-phones. There was the sound of high-pitched code. He grabbed a pencil and began copying. In another moment he had acknowledged the message and handed it to me. It was in cipher.

"That's all for now," I said, and went through the bomb racks toward the pilot's compartment.

I decoded the message, writing down the plain text on the reverse side of a blank. Then I handed it to Feathering.

"Here, Methusalah," I said. "Read it."

"I don't believe it!" Feathering gasped.

The message was—

**SUSPECT ENEMY AGENT ABOARD
YOUR FLIGHT TO DESTROY CRAFT
INVESTIGATE SIGNED THORPE.**

Making out a reply, I encoded it. I told what had happened as concisely as I could and asked for instructions. I said not to reply if I were to continue according to plan. There was no use cluttering the air with unnecessary transmissions. The enemy had a nasty habit of fixing your position from such things.

Calling Hackley to fetch the message for transmission, I then settled back in the seat.

"Methusalah," I said to Feathering, "who in blazes on this ship could be an enemy agent?"

"Well," Feathering answered, "I used to be in S-2 before I took pilot training. In Intelligence you learn some funny things."

"Like what?"

"Most people," he said, "have the idea that spies go around spying all the time, if you see what I mean."

"What else would they do?"

"Plenty else. The enemy has agents in allied countries. In the armies, too. They just sit around waiting for something to crop up."

"But every man in the army is investigated."

"Ever try to make an absolutely thorough investigation of maybe ten million men?" Feathering asked seriously.

I saw his point. "Go on."

"This mission is a volunteer assignment. That would make it easier for an agent. You know how it is. Several guys volunteer, but the one who looks most eager and maybe says a word for himself, gets it."

"Good thought," I remarked.

"It's perfectly possible," he went on, "that somebody spent months or years in the army

without tipping his hand, and then he suddenly got this opportunity to botch up something real important. Or, it could be that enemy intelligence got wind of the mission and assigned him." He shook his head ruefully. "The things that go on in this world," he said, "scare you silly at times."

"Methuselah, has it occurred to you that unless we find Struthers' murderer, we're apt to get ourselves sabotaged for good?"

His boyish face was a little surprised. "You think our number is coming up?"

"Before we took off, Struthers stumbled across two men at the edge of the field. One was a civilian. Struthers chased the soldier into the barracks where our crew sleeps. By that time the alert had sounded. The soldier that Struthers chased had time to look half-dressed like the rest of our crew. Struthers tried to tell me about it when we were warming up."

"Anybody hear him?" asked Feathering. "Somebody could have," I said. "You could have yourself."

"Not me," said Feathering.

THE navigator, Crisp, came up from behind. He held up a chart, puzzled. There was a hole about the size of a half dollar torn into it.

"Now who would do a thing like that," Crisp asked.

I took the chart, which portrayed the coast of Norway. The torn portion was smack in the middle of the North Sea. It didn't seem to mean a thing.

"I can't figure it out, either," I said, returning the chart.

Crisp disappeared again.

Feathering motioned the control column over to me and got up, squeezing his loose frame between the two seats.

"Like to stretch my legs," he said.

Below the overcast, the sky was beginning to thin in places. Here and there were jagged holes. I settled down to piloting and thinking. It was only a moment later that I felt a slight shift in the sensitivity of the control column again.

That would be Feathering, taking a look at the body.

Then I was aware of a thought trying to push into my brain. It had something to do with the control column. It was like trying to remember an old song, or a character in a book, and not quite doing it. It was maddening. Was it the tail? It must have something to do with the tail. Crazy ideas came and I knew they weren't right, but I thought them just the same.

It was no use. I leaned back, annoyed.

Feathering came back.

"I saw it," he said, his young face hard.

"Take over," I told him.

The idea of the ship's tail kept knocking at my brain. I walked aft.

Hackley, the radio man, was bent over his desk. He didn't see me. I glanced down and saw that he had my coded message in front of him. Beside it, he had papers filled with figures and letters.

"Hackley!"

He looked up, his face red.

"I—I was just curious, sir. It fascinates me." He gulped. "I always do the cryptograms in the papers."

"You'd better give me that," I said.

"Yes, sir."

I would deal with Hackley later. Now I had to get to the tail compartment.

I could feel both Hackley and Pizzaro watch me as I opened the door and stepped into the waist. I slammed it behind me and went on through the fuselage.

Once again at the tail compartment, I examined Struthers' body where it lay. The whole business was beginning to make kind of a pattern. But certain parts were missing. The tail had something to do with those missing parts.

Propping myself against the fuselage, I looked at the floor. I must have sat like that for a full sixty seconds, looking at a little piece of paper all the time, before I realized it was there. It was half-wedged under a floor stringer. It was crumpled into a miniature cup about the size of a .22 caliber cartridge.

I picked it up, stared at it. Missing details suddenly clicked into place. Very slowly I unfolded the paper and saw that it was the missing piece of Crisp's aeronautical chart.

Looking out the open windows in the plane's waist, I noted the way that the wind whipped. If someone had tried to throw the scrap of paper overboard, it might very well have blown back into the fuselage.

Then I wiggled once more into the tail gunner's stinger. This time I fiddled for a moment with the interphone jack box. When I had finished, several more details were in the pattern. Everything now, except the one thing that kept bothering me. Something about the tail.

I went back into the radio compartment.

Portane was talking to Hackley and Pizzaro.

"Portane," I asked, "did you check the ship thoroughly before take-off?"

"Absolutely, sir." The lines in his forehead deepened.

"The interphone system?" I persisted.

"Captain Keyes," he said, irretrievably hurt, "I wouldn't enter an okay on the form unless I'd checked everything personally."

"I know you wouldn't, Portane," I smiled. "I just had to make sure. You understand?"

"Yes, sir." His tone was not convincing.

HODGINS, the bombardier, thrust his round face out of the bomb bay. There was a lot of white around his irises, and

there was heavy sweat on his brow.

"Hey!" he yelled. "The wing tank had a burning fuse behind it!"

"What?" I demanded.

Hodgins brought his plump body up from the bomb racks.

"I was checking the bombs when I saw it. I put it out." In his hand was a twisted length of rag, charred at one end.

"Good work," I said to Hodgins.

I went back to the pilot's seat.

"Methuselah," I told Feathering, "things are coming to a head."

"How?"

"Our boy friend just tried to botch up the wing tank. Hodgins caught it luckily. What's more, I found the missing piece from Crisp's chart. Somebody used it to stuff Struthers' jack box so that his interphone wouldn't work."

"But if it didn't work, how come he answered you before we took off?" Feathering protested.

"Did you notice his voice then?"

"Not particularly."

"It was a sort of whisper."

Feathering kept his eyes ahead and adjusted Number Two throttle. The needle on the manifold-pressure gauge swung upward.

"Ever listen to two people whispering?" I asked Feathering. "It's one way you can't distinguish voices very easily."

"I get it," Feathering said. "Struthers didn't answer. Somebody answered for him."

"Roger," I said.

"But why plug his interphone?"

"I'm not sure just yet. When Struthers got aboard, I made the interphone check. He answered probably, but didn't realize I couldn't hear him. At about the same moment, the murderer answered for him in a whisper."

"That makes sense," Feathering commented.

"When we took off, somebody bashed Struthers on the head."

There was a voice at my shoulder.

"Pardon me, sir," said Portane.

I started. I didn't know he'd been standing there.

"I think I know what Struthers got hit with," Portane added.

"You do?"

"My hammer is missing from the tool locker."

"When did you find this out?" I demanded.

"Just a few minutes ago. I went to get a wrench and check the wing tank Lieutenant Hodgins found the fuse behind."

"That's one more piece in the puzzle, Portane. You go back and keep an eye on Hackley and Pizzaro."

"Sure thing, sir."

He went away.

Feathering leaned toward me.

"You say we took off and somebody killed

Struthers. How do you know it was after we took off?"

"Struthers had a cigarette in his mouth, still burning when I saw him at six-ten. We took off at six. It only takes eight minutes to smoke a cigarette way down. I timed it."

Feathering suddenly became cane-stiff, his eyes focused on the sky.

I knew that it was an enemy plane without asking.

"Where?" I asked.

"Eleven o'clock, and high up."

I followed his gaze. There were four fighters. They had that peculiar illusion of crabbing sideways.

I didn't have to see their markings. I knew those square wing tips well.

"Crew from pilot," I shouted into the interphone. "Battle stations. Four One-O-Nine, eleven o'clock, high!"

"Here we go," said Feathering.

He pushed the wheel with one hand and the throttles with the other. We started screaming downward to the broken cloud layer.

The 109's followed fast. The first one slid into a pursuit-curve to target us. I heard our top turret jammer when the enemy's wings winked machine-gun flame.

As a cloud blanket rushed at us, I tapped Feathering's shoulder to start pulling out. My safety belt dug into my midriff. I felt my head tighten.

We pulled out neatly just as we dipped into the clouds. Vapor came at the windshield, rushing past in the slipstream.

Then I felt the big ship shudder.

"They got us somewhere," Feathering shouted.

I squinted at the outside.

"These clouds are too thin," I yelled.

"They're coming right after us into the stuff!" I spoke into the interphone. "Pilot to crew. Is everybody all right?"

"I think Hackley's hurt," Pizzaro responded. "I'm watchin' the bottom side. I think a 109 is trying to get on our tail!"

Feathering ripped off his earphones and unbuckled his safety belt.

"I better go back to man the stinger," he snapped.

I nodded assent and took the interphone to tell the crew of Portane's move.

THE altimeter read six-thousand feet. We had better than an even chance of knocking the 109's off. The Foolish Female's guns shook her up a bit. I heard Pizzaro's voice in the phone.

"Got him, Captain? I got him!"

I concentrated on making a nice, level shooting platform out of the plane. I was waiting for that slight feel in the controls when Feathering got back into the tail.

Then, like a kick in the face from a Missouri mule, the thought I'd been grasping

for, struck me, full in the face.

"Of course!" I told myself.

Someone else was babbling into the interphone that he'd shot down another. But I scarcely heard.

"Portane," I called into the mike. "Come forward a minute. You hear me, Portane?"

The crew chief's voice answered, "Roger. Wilco."

I turned and saw his legs come down from the top turret. In a moment he was at my shoulder.

"Take the co-pilot's seat," I said.

He obeyed. I reached down beside me.

"That's good, Portane, I didn't want you behind me."

My hand came up with a Colt .45.

"Sir!" exploded Portane. "I don't understand!"

"Yes, you do," I told him. "You're not going to botch up the mission this time."

"I don't know what you're talking about," said Portane.

The lines in his face were working into long patterns.

In my left headphone I heard Feathering shout, "Got all but one of em, skipper!"

"If you think I killed Struthers—" Portane began.

"You bet I do," I whipped back at him. "You plugged Struthers' interphone, then answered for him on the pre-flight check. You knew he wouldn't answer when I called him in the air. You were quick enough to suggest going back and seeing what was the matter."

"You went back and hit him on the head with your hammer, and immediately returned and said you'd found him dead," I went on. "You threw the hammer overboard with the paper you used to plug the jack. But the paper blew back into the plane. I found it."

Two things happened then.

In the left earphone Feathering yelled, "Hey you guys up front. The 109 has circled around. He's coming from one o'clock."

The nose guns began to shake out their loads. At the same time, Portane's hand

came down and knocked my pistol aside. His fingers closed on my wrist. They were tough fingers and they bit like metal. I tried, with my free hand, to push him away and keep the control column between my knees. I wasn't doing very well.

The windshield suddenly began to get holes in it. I felt Portane jerk about three times, and at the same instant a cargo of bricks hit me in the leg.

I had absolutely no feeling from the hip down. Absolutely none. I looked at Portane's hand and saw it uncurl from my wrist. I felt all of his weight against me and pushed him to one side.

The interphone jabbered, "We got him. It's the last one."

The jabbering turned into a buzz and then a kind of a piercing whine. I began to see pretty colors.

It was a funny transition, and I lost track of time. The pretty colors turned into the instrument panel and the panel turned into the cockpit. Then the windshield and the rest of the world came into view.

I reached for the wheel and Feathering's voice said, "Easy, skipper. I've got it."

I saw, then, that he was beside me. He had come unnoticed to remove Portane.

Now my leg hurt. I made faces.

"Just the flesh," said Feathering, looking at it. "Pizzaro will be here in a minute to patch it up. He's working on Portane, now."

"Portane isn't dead?" I asked, and bit my lips.

"He thinks he's dying. He confessed. But he'll live long enough to face a firing squad. Say, skipper, how in blazes did you know it was Portane?"

I tried to grin.

"Methusalah, when somebody goes toward the tail of the plane, I can feel it on the stick. I knew, on account of the cigarette, that Struthers was killed after we took off. Nobody went back to the stringer from the time we took off until Portane did. It couldn't have been anybody else."

"Roger!" Feathering grinned.

Next Issue: HOOK, LINE AND SINKER, an Exciting Story by M. D. ORR

Can't Keep Grandma In Her Chair

She's as Lively as a Youngster—Now her Backache is better

Many sufferers relieve nagging backache quickly, once they discover that the real cause of their trouble may be tired kidneys.

The kidneys are Nature's chief way of taking the excess acids and waste out of the blood. They help most people pass about 3 pints a day.

When disorder of kidney function permits poisonous matter to remain in your blood, it may cause nagging backache, rheumatic pains, leg pains, loss of pep and energy, getting up

at night, swelling, puffiness under the eyes, headaches and dizziness. Frequent or scanty passages with smarting and burning sometimes shows there is something wrong with your kidneys or bladder.

Don't wait! Ask your druggist for Doan's Pills, used successfully by millions for over 40 years. They give happy relief and will help the 15 miles of kidney tubes flush out poisonous waste from your blood. Get Doan's Pills.

(Adv.)

CLOWN OF DOOM

By JOHN L. BENTON

Ed Rice Masquerades as a Corpse to Nab a Killer!

I'M TRAVELING with the Slocum-Lansing Carnival when murder breaks loose on the lot. Ed Rice is my name, and if I do say it myself with unbecoming modesty, I've got the gift of gab. I do the ballyhoo for one of the shows on the Midway, and my spiel sure drags in the cash customers.

I've worked carnies since before I was old enough to know better. But don't get me wrong. I am just kidding by that crack. I've known lots of swell folks in the carnival game, and been with some grand outfits, but the Slocum-Lansing set-up is something else again.

"There's one thing I want understood from the start, Mr. Rice," says Colonel Rumsey Slocum, who owns the show—except when there is trouble with the Law, and then John Lansing becomes the boss. "We are not in business for our health, so any ideas that might occur to you that will bring in an honest dollar will be most cordially welcomed."

"I get you, Colonel," I say. "I'll tell you if I get any bright ideas."

It isn't until I'd been with the show for a week or so that I get the irony of that crack about an honest dollar. There is no such thing on the lot. If there ever was a carny rigged to trim the suckers it is the Slocum-Lansing outfit. Every concession from the games to the Ten-in-One show is crooked. There's a gaff on everything.

The carnival is small and mostly plays the tank towns. When we set up on the lot there is the Ten-in-One, which is the freak show, two girl-shows, a pit-show, which consists of a few small animals, and a "walk-through" which don't mean much.

I am the spieler for the freak show. In it we have Madame Zonga, who does a mind-reading act, Queen Tillie, the fat lady, Semba, the strong man, a thin man, an alligator-skin boy, a midget, the half-man-and-half-woman, a snake charmer, a giant and a sword-swallower. Ten different acts, which is why it is called the Ten-in-One.

From the day I start on the job, Semba, the strong man, seems to take a dislike to me. Just why, I don't know then. It can't be because I get in his hair, for he is as bald as an Easter egg. He is supposed to be the strongest man in the world—a savage found in the wilds of Borneo before the war.

"You're supposed to play me up big," he tells me when I meet him for the first time. "I'm the star act in this show. The last man

who had your job as 'opener' didn't agree on that—so he got fired."

"Don't let him kid you, Ed," says the fat lady, who is listening as are the others in the show. "Semba just thinks he's important around here. If you ask me, he's the weakest strong man I ever worked with in any show."



Ed Rice

"Be quiet, Queen." Semba glares at her. "You talk too much."

RIGHT then I decide that Semba, whose real name is Joe Carson, would make a dangerous and vicious enemy. He is big, with bulging muscles, and he wears tan make-up all over his body, and a leopard skin when he is doing his act. He sure features the wild, strong man from Borneo.

From the way they act I can see the rest of the performers in the Ten-in-One don't like Semba, and I gradually find out why. The strong man has a cruel sense of humor. He thinks it is fun to get Zolinda's snakes excited just before a show so that she has a hard time handling them. He is always picking on Tiny Tad, the midget.

All in all I find Semba isn't a gorilla I could learn to like. I'm too fond of animals. But he don't bother me much the first few weeks I am with the show. And I find that when you work for the colonel you labor, and I don't mean maybe.

There is a girl in the Posing Show that I think is really something. Her name is Sue

Deming, and she is a slender brunette with all the curves in the right places. A pretty kid, not more than twenty—and if you ask me, she don't belong with that carny crowd.

Old Jed Weston, who does a clown bicycle act with the show, is always watching Sue, and protecting her when there is any trouble. I wonder about this until I learn that Jed is the girl's uncle. Semba is always trying to make dates with Sue and getting turned down. He don't like that at all.

About the third week I am on the job I have a run-in with Colonel Slocum about my salary. Every week when my pay is due he gives me the sob story about the show having had a bad week, expenses are high, and so he can pay me only half of my wages. After the third week of that routine it gets monotonous.

"Quit stalling and hand over what's due me, Colonel," I tell him one Saturday night. "You owe me forty bucks and I can use that dough."

"Now, now, Ed," says Slocum in a fatherly tone, as he tugs at his white goatee. "Be reasonable. I like you, my boy, and want to do all I can for you, and I'll prove it."

He reaches into his left hand trouser pocket and pulls out a thin roll of bills, peels off a sawbuck and hands it to me. He makes it look like a grand gesture. It might impress me if I didn't happen to know he carries enough money in a roll in his right-hand pocket to choke a horse.

"You still owe me thirty," I say, as I take the ten-spot. "Come on—give." Then I get smart and make the crack that nearly costs me my life. "I mean it, Colonel. You see, I happen to know where the body is buried."

For a moment Slocum just sits there glaring at me. Up to then I'm thinking he is just a crooked old bluff, but it dawns on me that the colonel might be really dangerous.

"I wonder if you do know something, Ed," he says, half-talking to himself. "Or are you just babbling."

"Babbling, my eye," I say, hoping to bluff him into handing over the rest of my pay. "I know plenty." Then I think of something that has been worrying me ever since I'd started working for the carny. "Where's John Lansing?"

I have never seen Lansing around, and when I ask any of the rest of the carnival bunch about him, they either change the subject in a hurry or just shut up. Sue and I have become good friends, but every time I ask her about Lansing she just looks scared and won't talk.

A week ago we had played a town where some of the local citizens hadn't liked the way no one but our shills won on the games. Unfortunately the colonel had picked a town where everybody knows everyone else, so they spot the shills and raise a howl. Slocum

blames it all on Lansing when the local Law comes around. According to the colonel, Lansing is the sole owner of the show, but he is away.

We get out of there fast—before they close us up.

Now I find that with my crack about knowing where the body is buried I have stepped into something.

"Lansing is around," the colonel says slowly. "But perhaps you had better forget the whole thing, Ed." He counts the thin roll of bills he is still holding in his hand. "Here's the rest of your salary money—thirty dollars still due, wasn't it?"

"That's right." I count the money, then stick it in my pocket. There is something about the way the colonel is watching me that makes me feel creepy. "Thanks, colonel."

"You're welcome." His tone is dry.

I leave him then and head for the trailer where I sleep. It belongs to a couple of other spicers on the lot—Fred Lester and Bill McKee. But when I reach the trailer Bill and Fred are not there. Then I remember they said they were going into town after we closed for the night. We are playing the week in the outskirts of a fair-sized city.

FOR a time I sit outside the trailer smoking. It is a hot night—sticky, and with not the slightest hint of a breeze stirring. I haven't been there long when Sue appears. She lives in another trailer with a couple of the other girls in the Posing Show.

"All alone, Ed?" she asks as she seats herself beside me. "It sure is hot tonight."

She is wearing a thin summer dress, and she sure looks lovely in the moonlight. Funny, I have been seeing her every day in the scanty, one-piece bathing suit she wears in the show, but she never has looked as pretty as she does now.

We talk for a while, just casual chatter that don't mean much. The door of the trailer is open, and we are sitting on the doorstep. I put my arm around her and she don't try to draw away.

"I made a mistake tonight," I say casually, and she leans her head against my shoulder. "I told the Colonel I knew where the body is buried."

Sue sighs. "You're smart, Ed," she says. "We've all been sure that John Lansing was murdered—but no one can prove it."

"Murdered!" I exclaim. "So that's it! Have you any idea why he might have been killed?"

"No," Sue says slowly. "We've all been afraid to talk. Anyone on the lot might be the murderer. None of us want to be the next victim. Just tonight Uncle Jed told me that he has proof that Lansing was murdered—but he is not going to say anything

until he has a chance to talk to the police in town tomorrow."

Just then I hear a slight sound on the other side of the trailer. It sounds like a twig breaking as someone steps on it. Sue draws away from me, a look of fear on her face. Her blue eyes gleam in the pale light.

"I heard someone," she whispers.

We listen. There is the sound of footsteps—someone moving away swiftly. I get to my feet and go around the trailer. I catch a glimpse of a big shadowy form disappearing in some trees at the edge of the lot.

"See anyone?" Sue asks, as she joins me.

"Somebody ducked in among those trees,"

I say. "Couldn't be sure who it was though."

"Semba?" she asks. "He's always following me."

"Might have been. A big man anyway. It could have been Harry the giant. I—"

From the trees there comes the cry of someone in pain. I stop speaking abruptly as I heard it. Sue catches me by the arm, her fingers digging into the flesh through my shirt sleeve.

"I'm going to see what's happened," I say. "You'd better stay here, Sue."

"All right, if you say so, Ed." She releases my arm. "But be careful."

I run toward the trees, and when I get near them I slow down to a walk. I don't know what might be waiting back there in the shadows, for the thick branches cut off the light from the moon. I step forward, moving into the shadows.

At any moment I expect somebody to pounce on me, but nothing moves. I step into a clearing beyond the trees. There I see a still form lying on the grass, the white face staring up at the sky. There is no one else around.

I go closer to that motionless figure—there's something familiar about it. When I get a good look at the face I see it is Jed Weston. He is wearing ordinary clothes—not the usual clown suit and make-up he wears while the show is going on.

For a moment I stand there, listening, trying to assure myself the murderer is not lurking close by. I hear nothing, so I lean down and examine the old man. Jed is dead all right. Somebody has broken his neck.

"Semba?" I mutter. "I wonder?"

I am sure the killer is gone, but I'm dreading the task I have now. It won't be easy to tell Sue her uncle is dead—murdered.

I whirl as I hear a noise behind me. Sue is standing there. She moves forward slowly.

"It—it's Uncle Jed," she says, her voice trembling. "And they killed him!"

"That's right, Sue. I'm sorry. But there is something your uncle would want you to do for him—and that's help me find the murderer."

"Of course." Sue nods. "But how, Ed?"

"We've got to make the killer think your uncle isn't dead," I say. "And then perhaps the murderer will come out into the open and try again."

She turns away, so she can no longer see the corpse. I talk fast and finally she nods again.

"I guess it is the only way," she says, when I finish. "I hope it works."

"You go back to your trailer, honey," I say. "I'll take care of everything. But remember the clown costume."

I wait until she is gone, then go back to the trailer and get a blanket. I wrap the dead man in this and carry the body to a sort of gully where I hide it. I'm going to leave it there only until sometime tomorrow, but I try to arrange things so Jed Weston's body won't be found easily. Then I go back to the trailer.

AT NOON the next day I have apparently disappeared. The colonel gives Bill McKee the job of spieler for the Ten-in-One. I am hiding on the lot, and now I am dressed in the clown outfit that Jed Weston had worn. My face is painted white, and I wear a bald wig which is also covered with clown-white. I have a painted, red putty nose and must look exactly like the dead man in costume.

I wait until the afternoon show starts. McKee is out in front of the tent, giving the spiel. Some of the freaks are standing on the platform in front of the tent for the ballyhoo. I see that Semba is up there.

Sue and some of the other girls in the Posing Show are standing out front of their tent, dressed in bathing suits. I notice that the "Sampson" is close to the tent. That is the thing where you hit a trigger with a big wooden mallet, and a sort of thermometer registers your strength. If you're good, a bell rings and you get a cigar. But it is phony-rigged like everything else and only the shells ever ring the bell. They know the gaff on the joint.

I step out near the front of the Ten-in-One. Semba sees me and goes wild. He grabs a knife out of the sword-swallower's hand leaps down off the platform, and comes running toward me with the weapon in his hand.

"I'll kill you!" Semba shouts.

I aim a right at his jaw, but I might just as well be trying to break a cement wall with my fist. He grabs me by the throat with his left hand and thrusts me backward, raising the knife to plunge it into my heart.

But Sue has leaped down off the platform of the other tent, and she grabs up the wooden mallet that belongs to the Sampson as she races toward us. She raises the mallet with both hands and brings it down on Semba's head just as the point of the knife cuts the flesh of my chest. Semba drops—knocked cold by the blow.

"What's going on here?" demands Colonel Slocum as he comes rushing up, his familiar heavy cane in his right hand. "Why did Semba try to kill you, Ed?"

"Ed?" I say. "So you know that I'm not Weston, do you, Colonel? Then you must have been sure you murdered Jed last night. Broke his neck by hitting him in just in the right spot with that cane of yours. I guess he must have discovered that you did murder John Lansing, and get rid of the body somewhere."

"He lied to me!" says Semba, as he opens his eyes and staggers to his feet. He sure is hard-headed. "Told me you had killed Jed, and were going to blame me for the crime. That you were going to pretend you were Weston in the clown outfit. So when I saw you I tried to kill you."

"I misjudged you last night, Colonel," I say. "You did stick around and must have heard everything Sue and I said. So you

talked Semba into making an attempt to kill me today."

"Nonsense, my boy," says the colonel, trying to assume his fatherly air. "You imagined the whole thing. Why should I murder my partner?"

"Because Lansing had all his money in the show!" shouts Semba. "And you wanted that dough! I've kept quiet long enough. I saw you kill Lansing—and I'm willing to talk to the police." He smiles at me. "That's why I didn't like you when you joined the show, Ed. I thought you might be a detective."


"He was, in a way," says Sue, looking at me proudly. "At least he found the real killer." She raises the mallet in her hands. "Keep still, Colonel, or I'll win a cigar by hitting you over the head with this."

"My gal," I say, with a grin, as the local police who are on the lot come toward us. "Ain't she something!"





Private First Class Franklin McGinnis plays hide and seek with Death as the referee when he strives to solve the murder of Commander Bennett in *THE DEATH PATROL*, a mystery novelet by CURTISS T. GARDNER next issue!

**YOU'RE MY
CLOSEST FRIEND!**




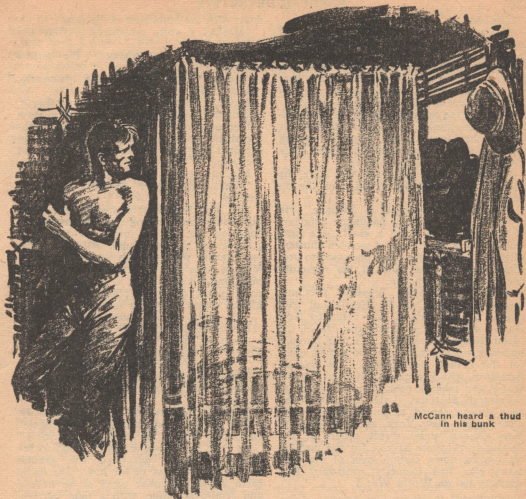
**THANKS TO MY
CLOSE
STAR SHAVES!**





4 for 10¢





McCann heard a thud
in his bunk

DEATH BY PROXY

By M. D. ORR

Archie McCann, British Secret Agent, Finds Himself Pitted Against a New Guinea Poison Dagger Assassin Who Strikes in the Dark!

TROPICAL night embraced the little native village of Tambu in the Owen Stanley mountains of New Guinea. Smothering humidity crept through the ramshackle hut of Archibald Sylvester Brewster McCann and caused him to toss fitfully in his restless sleep. The calls of the night birds grew weaker as the depressing heat deepened.

A dark shadow was moving silently up the narrow trail leading to Tambu. It paused frequently in the deep shadows of the thicket, only to scuttle onward like a huge misshapen ape. When it neared McCann's

hut, which was some distance from the native village, its movements became more cautious.

McCann's breathing ceased as he suddenly awakened. He sat upright in his bunk. He listened intently, then silently opened his mosquito-netting canopy and stepped onto the dirt floor.

A shadow flashed across the open doorway, blackened out the small window near the bunk, and increased in size.

McCann's heart pounded wildly. There was a quick movement and a dull thud in the bunk.

The shadow vanished!

McCann remained motionless for several seconds, then snatched up an automatic from a table. Dogs in the village began barking furiously. Grasping his automatic, he slipped into the shadows of the thicket near his hut and waited there for nearly an hour before he decided it was safe to return.

Entering the hut again he turned his flashlight on the bunk. There was a hole about four inches long in the mosquito netting near the window and a stiletto shaped knife firmly imbedded in the mattress.

While carefully removing the knife, he noticed a brownish discoloration on the tip of the blade.

"Humph," he grunted in surprise. He wrapped the knife in a bandanna handkerchief, and placed it on a shelf. He next closed and bolted the solid wooden shutters of the hut, locked the door, and went to bed, after repairing the hole in his mosquito canopy with a safety pin.

Archibald Sylvester Brewster McCann, known as "Archie," by his friends, and "gud masta" by the natives, had come to New Guinea ostensibly to study the life of the Melanesian communities. His true purpose however was to serve as an undercover agent for the British Government. He was an American, who had graduated from medical school and taken a post graduate course at Edinburgh, Scotland. Later he had qualified as a lawyer, served as an assistant district attorney for New York, and had gone to New Guinea under direct orders of the British Intelligence Service for the purpose of running down certain spies of the Germans who had formerly controlled that territory before World War I.

MCCANN was six feet three inches tall and as thin as a rail. He occupied a house in the native village of Tambu, seven miles northwest of Port Moresby. He knew Pidgin English, had won the native's respect, and enjoyed the life of ease while living and dressing like the natives. He also suffered intermittently from hook worm—his own fault—because he insisted upon going barefoot like the natives.

Jason French, the Allied Military Security Officer, stationed at Port Moresby, McCann's close friend had tried to reason with McCann about going barefoot, but to no avail. McCann paid no attention to remonstrances.

Now McCann lay in his bunk, trying to guess why the knife thrower had tried to kill him. He knew there might be several persons who suspected his real identity.

A week ago McCann and French had been warned a new spy ring at Port Moresby was furnishing the Japanese with information as to troop movements and naval operations.

A soft padding of feet outside, caused McCann again to jump from the bunk to the

door, with the automatic in his grip.

"Masta," a voice whispered outside the door.

McCann did not answer. He waited tensely.

"Masta," repeated the voice insistently. "Masta! Me, Tegek."

McCann recognized the voice of Tegek, one of the younger natives who had taken a course of first aid medicine and was teaching them the fundamentals of first aid and personal hygiene, under the direction of McCann.

McCann opened the door.

"What is it, Tegek?" he asked as the boy entered.

"Me stop long Port Moresby. Me come now long house belong me. Moon she no come on top. Plenty much too dark. Me go long trail belong Tambu. All right. Now me hearum plenty much noise long trail. Man he come run, run, run, plenty fast. Me hide lonside trail. Man he go, go, go. Me come plenty quick dis place belong masta. Mebbe masta savey dis fella man?"

"Dis fella man," questioned McCann. "Him white man or black man?"

"Him no black man. Him white man. Tegek see white face."

"Tegek see dis fella man plenty gud?"

"Tegek no see plenty gud. Moon he no come on top. Man he go plenty too much quick."

McCann scratched his head thoughtfully.

"Me go stop long house belong Tegek," he advised Tegek. "Me kumbak mornintime."

As soon as it became light enough to see clearly, McCann examined the ground around the window of his hut. The damp earth showed peculiar signs of an oblong and semi-oval shape, with a faint pattern, like that of burlap sack cloth, in each depression.

"Wrapped his feet in burlap," muttered McCann.

The prints led from the trail and back. McCann entered his hut, obtained the knife and examined it in the daylight. He smelled the discoloration at the tip. Being careful not to destroy any fingerprints, he wrapped the knife in the handkerchief, dressed, slipped it into his jacket pocket, locked the door of his hut, and started down the trail to Port Moresby.

The burlap covered foot prints continued down the trail for about a mile where they suddenly ended, and shoe prints continued onward. Recent rain had softened the earthen trail and the shoe prints were clearly visible. He began a search of the matted jungle and soon found a piece of burlap from the undergrowth. He carefully wrapped it into a bundle, and continued down the trail.

About half way to Port Moresby, where another trail made a junction with the path from Tambu, a group of natives had passed completely eliminating the shoe prints of the

would-be assassin. McCann retraced his steps to a place where he had a distinct shoe print, and prepared a tabu around the print so that no one would disturb it. Then he hurried on to Port Moresby.

McCann hurried directly to the office of Jason French.

"Why is it you always happen in when we have a nice juicy murder on our hands," French asked him.

"Murder?" McCann's eyebrows lifted in surprise.

"Yep. Somebody bumped off a fellow over at the Grand Hotel near the water front. We found him dead in bed with this knife right through his heart."

AS HE saw the knife on French's desk, McCann's eyes widened. It was a duplicate of the one he had in his pocket.

"There were no finger prints on it," continued French.

"When was he killed?" asked McCann.

"The doc said about four o'clock this morning," replied French.

"Any suspects?"

"No. His luggage had been ransacked. Whoever killed him must have been looking for something this fellow had. Thus far we haven't been able to find anything to make an identification."

McCann carefully removed the knife from his pocket and laid it on the desk in front of French. Both knives appeared identical.

"Some one tried to kill me last night," McCann said quietly. Then he related the events of the night before.

French scratched his head thoughtfully.

"Things are getting complicated. I'll have Jones check for finger prints."

"Get an analysis of that stuff on the knife point, also," suggested McCann. "If it's what I suspect it is, just a slight scratch would be sufficient to kill a person."

"By George!" French picked up the knife which had been found in the murdered man. "There's the same kind of a stain on the point of this knife, also. It's faint, but it's there."

McCann took the knife and examined it closely. "Looks the same," he observed. "It isn't blood, either. These bloodstains on the blade are a different color."

"We'll get an analysis right away," French pressed a button on his desk. A boy entered. "Tell Jones to come to the office," he ordered.

"I found a good foot print out on the trail and put a tabu around it," said McCann. "I'm going to make a cast of it for evidence."

Soon Jones entered the room.

"Jones, I have another knife for you to work on," French said to him. "Maybe you can find some prints on this one." French handed the knife to Jones. "When you get through with it take it over to the lab and have an analysis made of that stain on the

point of the knife."

"Righto."

Jones left the office and French turned to McCann. "Do you suppose this new bunch of spies have guessed what you're doing?" he asked.

"You never can tell. It looks as if some one has spotted me."

"Do you suspect anyone in town of being an enemy agent?" French asked.

"That's the funny part of it," McCann answered. "I haven't made any moves in the case. I've been waiting for instructions from headquarters. They should have come two or three days ago."

"Do you know what you will work on?"

"Yes. After I learn how the Port Moresby ring works, we can start eliminating suspects."

"Somebody has guessed you are not just an anthropologist," French observed.

McCann grinned. "Believe it or not, French, I'm beginning to like this anthropologist business."

"And get hook worms," French remarked dryly. "That Tegek has helped you a lot."

"Tegek is working with me on this case right now. He gets information that neither you nor I could dig up. If the natives trust you, they'll do anything they can for you, but if you try anything slick—watch out!"

Jones came back with his report. "I say sir," he broke in excitedly. "The prints on the knife belong to the dead man!"

"What?" exclaimed McCann and French in unison.

McCann frowned.

"Well, that does complicate things," he observed thoughtfully.

"Complicates is right," admitted French.

"I'll go and get a cast of that foot print right away," decided McCann. "I suppose you kept his shoes?"

"Do you think we would give them to the native relief society?" stormed French in disgust. "We've got the shoes. You get the cast."

"While I'm doing that why not figure out who killed the man who killed the man who tried to kill me," said McCann, with a laugh.

FRENCH only glared as McCann gave an exaggerated and sloppy salute and left the room to get some plaster of Paris to make a cast of the foot print on the Tambu trail.

After making the cast of the shoe print, McCann noticed that it was an extra large shoe and had a heel plate on the outer right hand side of the sole. He took the cast immediately to French's office.

"I got a darned good cast," he announced as he entered.

"And that brown coloring on the tip of the knife is the poison used by the natives on their blow gun arrows," French told him.

"Guess I'm just plain lucky," observed

McCann thankfully.

"You were," French's eyes twinkled. "Here are the shoes."

He handed them to McCann. They were small shoes and were not dirty.

McCann placed the cast beside them. The cast was a good two inches larger. There were no heel plates on the shoes, or signs there had ever been any on the shoes.

"Was the dead man a cripple?" asked McCann.

"No. Why?"

"Because the man who made this foot print was a cripple. Most of the foot prints were scuffed as though the foot was carried forward in a swinging movement. The heel plate on the side of the sole supports this deduction."

"But the dead man's finger prints are on the knife that was thrown at you," French reminded him.

"I'd like a look at the dead man," McCann said.

"Sure. Come on, I'll show you."

They went to the morgue and got Doctor Yarrow, the coroner.

"We'd like to see the John Doe body," French said.

"Right this way, gentlemen." The doctor led them into the refrigerated lay-out room. "He is a very interesting case. At first I thought he had been murdered by stabbing through the heart, but my autopsy showed he was already dead, since early last evening, about nine or ten o'clock, long before he was stabbed."

French and McCann glanced at each other quickly.

"What time last evening?" asked French.

"Oh, I'd say about nine or ten," answered the doctor.

"Death was caused by a poison which the natives use on their blow gun arrows," went on the doctor. "Look, gentlemen! I have some interesting things to show you."

The doctor pointed to the dead body resting on the marble slab.

"I want to call your attention to the ankles and wrists," the doctor continued. "They show marks of having been injured by a rope or piece of cloth being tied around them. Now, notice this small incision on the inside of his right arm where the poison was injected into his blood stream. What puzzles me is why the murderer came back and stabbed a man who was already dead."

"You aren't the only one it puzzles, doctor," French's voice showed his disgust.

"He doesn't appear to be a cripple," McCann said.

"No, he isn't a cripple," the doctor answered.

"You're positive he didn't die at four this morning?" McCann asked.

"Yes," answered the doctor. "I place the time of death at early last evening, around nine or ten."

"Well, that eliminates John Doe as a possible would-be murderer," French remarked.

"Apparently it does," McCann agreed. "Let's go back to the office. I have a small bundle there I want you to see."

Back at French's office, McCann produced the piece of burlap he had picked up on the trail.

"I found it in the bushes this morning," he explained. "This is some of the burlap my nocturnal visitor used to wrap around his feet."

French laughed. "What are you trying to do, hide the evidence?"

"Try to hide anything from you!" retorted McCann with his famous grin wrinkling his long face. "Now we're back where we started. Who killed John Doe? He was also after me."

"I'll give you a personal guard," French said.

"And make me responsible for his life? No, thank you, chief. Taking care of myself is enough of a headache."

The operator entered the room with a radio message.

"This just came in for Mr. McCann," he announced.

MCCANN took the paper.

"In code," he muttered as he reached for a pencil and began writing on a pad on the desk. As he decoded it his eyes narrowed slightly. Then he handed the translation to French. It said:

McClellan will meet you at the Grand Hotel today. Make immediate contact with him as he has the names of the suspected agents. He has a mole on his right cheek for identification.—Holcomb, Commanding.

"I'm beginning to see daylight," McCann told French. "John Doe has a mole on his right cheek. John Doe is—or was—McClellan. He had papers with him that connected me with our counter espionage activities. In some manner his arrival was known to the enemy. They trapped him in the hotel room, tied him up, tortured him, found his papers and then started out to finish me."

French nodded. "It is also evident that the knife episode was a deliberate attempt to pin your murder on the dead man. They imprinted his fingerprints on the handle. Since the knives are nearly identical, they thought it would help throw suspicion on McClellan."

"What name did McClellan register under at the hotel?" asked McCann.

"That's a funny thing," answered French. "The clerk said the card has disappeared. He told us he intended to ask McClellan to fill out a new one in the morning."

"How did the murderer get into McClellan's room?" McCann asked.

"He must have gained entrance through the hall door, because McClellan's room has no fire escape. We examined the windows for signs of entrance, but the dust was undisturbed on the sills. The door to the room had not been forced, either. There was also no evidence of a struggle."

"But McClellan should have put up some kind of a fight," McCann suggested.

"Oh, I don't know about that," French replied. "Supposing someone rapped on your door and when you opened it, they stuck a gun in your face. You'd behave like a nice little boy."

McCann grinned. "Would I?" he asked. "By the way, what did you find in finger prints in the room?"

"We've picked up a lot of them, but finding the owners is another matter."

McCann undraped himself from the wicker chair and began pacing back and forth across the floor.

French stared at him in a worried manner. "I don't like this spot you're in, Mac. If you won't accept a body guard, I'm going to keep you where I can watch out after you."

"Humph!" McCann grunted in disgust.

"When that killer finds out that you aren't dead, he's going to try to knock you off."

"That's possible," McCann said. "But I'm not planning it that way. I'm going out and get him before he gets me."

"Where are you going to find him? Walking the streets?"

"I don't know, yet. I'm going to the Grand Hotel and look things over. The solution is somewhere around there."

"But we've already used a fine tooth comb on the place."

"Nevertheless, it's there," McCann insisted.

"Okay, okay! Try and show our police force up!" French was laughing good humoredly.

"See you later," McCann called out as he left the office.

"And I hope it won't be horizontal," French answered soberly.

When McCann arrived at the hotel, he found two native police boys standing guard over the death room. They greeted him warmly and opened the door for him to enter.

Entering the room, he made a survey. A cheap rug, about four by six feet in size, covered the floor. In addition to other furniture, there was an old fashioned wash-stand with the usual array of wash bowl, pitcher and soap dishes on it. Several cheap prints were on the wall. A flimsy cheese cloth curtain was draped across the open window. A straight back chair stood beside the head of the bed.

The sun shone in through the window and fell on the floor beside the bed. He walked over and bent down to examine an oval shaped mark there. He found several of

these marks. He measured them carefully and then pulled the rug over them. He searched further but found no other similar marks. After inspecting the window, he left the room.

GOING down to the desk, he approached an elderly man, who was in charge.

"My name is McCann," he announced. "I am with Chief French of the ANGAU. Were you the clerk here last night?"

"No, sir. The assistant manager was on duty. Wasn't that a terrible thing to have happen."

"Where can I find the assistant manager?"

"He's home. He'll be in about six."

"Thanks."

McCann walked out of the small lobby into the bright sunlight. French met him on the sidewalk.

"Find anything?" French asked.

"I think I have found the impressions of that heel plate we made a cast of."

"Where?"

"At the side of the bed. If the marks match the ones on the cast, we have connected my would-be murderer with the murder of McClellan."

"Well, of course we weren't aware of that angle when we made our examination."

McCann grinned. "We won't make an issue of that right now, chief! But, to get down to my deductions: There were no other impressions on any of the floor except right at the bed. The reason for this is the murderer had already killed McClellan, by means of the blow-gun arrow poison. When he lifted McClellan from the chair where he had been tied by his ankles and his wrists, the extra weight made his heel plate sink into the soft floor. It was the murderer who placed McClellan on the bed."

"That sounds reasonable," French agreed.

"I found no signs of a struggle either. Therefore the murderer must have been known to McClellan. He gained admission to McClellan's room, caught him off guard, tied him up and then jabbed him in the arm with the poisoned knife."

French frowned. "What else do you know?"

"Apparently you didn't notice McClellan's lips," continued McCann. "He had been gagged. There were abrasions on his lips."

"By George, that's right!" admitted French. "I do remember seeing those bruises."

"That is the reason he didn't cry out."

A mongrel dog came dashing out of an alley near the Hotel. Another dog followed it closely trying to snatch a piece of cloth from it. They dashed around playfully in front of McCann and French.

Suddenly McCann made a flying leap for the dog with the cloth. He took the cloth away from the dog and began to inspect it.

"Do you know what this is?" asked Mc-

Cann as he handed the cloth to French.

"It's burlap. Do you see that red cord? There is a red cord in that piece of burlap I picked up on the trail. Come on! Let's see where these dogs got it from."

The two men walked along the alley, searching for more cloth. An iron door which led into the hotel was slightly ajar. McCann peered through the crack. The dogs, still chasing each other, dashed through the door and into the room. McCann opened the door and stepped inside. The dogs were digging madly into a pile of debris piled in a corner. One would grab a piece of the rubbish and the other would immediately try to take it away from him. McCann walked over to the pile and started probing it with his toe. He uncovered more burlap, with the same red cord running through it.

"Well, this is lucky," exclaimed French. "If these strips match your burlap we will have something to work on."

"While you are checking upon the burlap, I'm going to get something to eat," announced McCann. "Then I'll have a talk with the assistant manager of the hotel at six o'clock."

"He's a fine fellow," French said. "His family has lived here for years. He has been very helpful in this case."

"Good. Later I'll drop in at the office."

McCann ate at his favorite Chinese restaurant where he could have all the sweet and sour spare ribs he could eat for a shilling, then went to interview the assistant manager, Joseph Smith.

HE FOUND Smith on duty at the hotel, behind the desk.

"My name is McCann," he said. "I'm helping Chief French of the military police. It's about that death last night. Is there some place where we can talk privately, without too much publicity?"

"Yes. In my office."

He led McCann to a back room which was equipped with some beautiful antique furniture. Well filled book cases lined the walls. An elegant desk of hand carved ebony occupied the center of the room.

"Well!" exclaimed McCann in pleased surprise. "This place is a treasure trove."

"All the furnishings belonged to my family," answered Smith with a note of pride in his voice. "Formerly my father managed this hotel. Poor health made him give up his duties. I have been in charge ever since."

"You look well and strong at any rate," said McCann, turning away from several massive cases of well selected books to glance at Smith. McCann judged him to be at least six feet three, and to weigh about two hundred pounds.

Smith smiled complacently. "My health is good. I take care of it. I keep fit. Such things a man must watch. It was my father's early struggles here in New Guinea which

broke him down. He was born in the old country."

Thereupon he burst into glowing praise of New Guinea and the opportunities to be found on this island. A fanatical fire gleamed in his eyes when he told of the early struggles of his father and relatives when they had first come to New Guinea.

When McCann brought him, with difficulty, back to the subject of the murder, Smith apologized.

"That's all right," said McCann. "Before the murder, did you see any strangers lurking around the hotel? Was anyone with him?"

"No—to both questions."

"He registered?"

"Yes, but I could not see what he was writing."

"Do you know any person who comes to the hotel—or any employee—who has a crippled leg?"

Smith looked surprised. "No. Why do you ask that?"

"The murderer was lame," McCann answered. "I'm hunting for a man with a crippled right leg." He frowned and rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "The man who killed your guest also tried to kill me the same night."

Smith's mouth opened. "What?"

"That's right. He wrapped his shoes in burlap, to disguise his shoe prints," continued McCann. "I followed these tracks until I found where he had unwrapped his shoes. I searched the jungle beside the trail and found some burlap. I also found some of the same burlap in your junk room on the alley at the side of the hotel."

Smith's eyes showed disbelief. "This sounds fantastic!"

"Nevertheless, it is a fact. Somebody, who had access to your back room, is the murderer."

Smith shook his head. "This is getting serious. Do you suppose this—er—murderer—knew the victim—was following him?"

"I do not suppose," McCann answered. "I know. The murdered man was named McClellan. He was attached to the Intelligence Division of the ANGAU. He had information regarding persons who were passing information along to the Nips as to troop movements and naval operations. He was murdered so that this information would not be delivered."

"Ah ha, we have traitors." Smith paced up and down the room. He stopped before McCann. "Here in Port Moresby."

"Yes." McCann's eyes had narrowed. "Did any one accompany McClellan upstairs?"

"Certainly. I showed him his room myself. The bell boy was off at the time."

McCann got to his feet. "Now I'm going to make a peculiar request. I'm going to ask you to reenact everything you did as you took him to his room. Do you mind?"

For a moment Smith stared at McCann, puzzled. "Not at all." He smiled. "Come outside."

They returned to the lobby. Smith led the way over to the hotel desk.

"He signed the card there," Smith pointed to the leather registry case. "Then I came out from behind the desk and picked up his luggage. I thought he left the card but, later, when I looked for it, I couldn't find it."

"Yes, I know about that."

"I asked him to follow me, and we went up this flight of stairs."

"Good," McCann surveyed the lobby. "Go ahead, Mr. Smith. Walk slowly along the same path you took. I'll follow you. I'll be McClellan."

THEY moved across the lobby toward the stairs, Smith leading the way with McCann at his heels. Smith started up the steps. McCann was several paces behind him.

But as Smith started to mount the stairs, McCann noticed something which sent an electrifying chill along his spine. At every step the hotel man swung his right foot outward, stiffly, with a slight circular movement as he leisurely climbed the flight.

McCann took his lower lip between his teeth and bit it hard. In a moment he had regained his composure.

Arriving at the landing, they walked to the death room. The native policeman, guarding it, silently watched them approach. At a gesture of McCann's hand he moved away to the further end of the hall. Smith took the key he had brought from the desk and opened the door.

"I went in first," Smith said, and as he stepped on the marble saddle in the door way, McCann heard a faint click like metal striking stone. "I turned on the light, put his bags on the floor by this dresser, adjusted the mosquito screen in the window, and left the room."

McCann eyed Smith. "I found some footprints on the trail where the murderer removed the burlap. I made a cast of this shoe print. It had a heel plate on the right side of the sole. If you will look at the floor at the side of the bed, you will find the imprints of a heel plate on the floor. This heel plate resembles the one on the cast taken from the trail." McCann turned back the rug. "Look. Here are the marks."

Smith stared at the prints with popping eyes. Plainly he was stunned.

"Let me see the bottom of your right foot, Mr. Smith!"

Like a flash, Smith drew a forty-five from beneath his arm. It was fitted with a silencer.

"Sit down in that chair, Mr. McCann," he ordered. His voice dripped with venomous hatred.

McCann had not expected this move. He was caught unprepared by Smith's lightning

draw. He realized his life hung in the balance and put up his hands at once.

"Don't be a fool, Smith," he said. "There's a policeman outside. He saw us enter this room together."

"My life's forfeited anyway," Smith snarled. "I have a plane hidden but I must have time to get to it. Disobey and you die! Sit down, I say!"

Holding his hands above his head, McCann eased himself into the chair beside the bed. Smith stepped behind him, removed McCann's belt and tied McCann to the chair. Next he took a handkerchief, stuffed it into McCann's mouth, and gagged McCann with his tie.

"It is really too bad I failed to kill you last night, Mr. McCann," Smith continued. "Now I will finish what I should have done before."

From a small black box Smith produced a hypodermic syringe. "This is filled with potent poison, Mr. McCann. I am going to inject it into your veins."

McCann watched him as he prepared the deadly hypodermic. McCann felt this was a devil of a way to pass out of the picture. Unless something unforeseen happened he would soon be shaking hands with St. Peter.

Smith leered at him. He could not resist this chance to boast. "I suppose you would like to know a lot of things before you die, Mr. McCann?"

McCann nodded.

"You should know just how dumb all of you English people are," he explained. "Before nineteen-fourteen my father brought his family and relatives here from the Fatherland, but you never guessed I am German. When World War One came, we lost everything we owned in Rabaul."

"But we will get it back in World War Two. My father retired from the hotel so that he could spend all of his time in the service of the Fatherland. We kept track of all ship and troop movements. We transmitted this information by short wave to our friends, the Japanese. Last week, we received intelligence that your agent McClellan was coming to this hotel. When he arrived, he was taken care of. I found papers. They were in code, but your name was mentioned. That was all I needed. I guessed you are with the British Intelligence. We shall soon have his messages decoded. I have them in my pocket now."

Smith started toward McCann with the hypodermic needle. His pig eyes glittered with a maniacal hatred.

McCann braced himself. Smith had neglected to tie McCann's feet to the chair. McCann waited until he was within range of his long legs, then shot his long right leg out and upward, catching Smith in the pit of his stomach. Smith doubled up in agony, the hypodermic flying from his grasp. Mc-

(Concluded on page 77)



*A Complete
Novelet*

THE CHAIR IS

CHAPTER I

Intent to Kill

AT FORTY, Peter Hood's approach to life was urbanely cynical. His friends knew him as a slim, dark man of medium height, with a thinly handsome face, and a charming way of always observing what went on about him with heavy-lidded eyes and a slightly mocking smile.

Millions of radio listeners knew him as the shuddersome Doctor Coffin, the evil master-mind who oozed icy menace throughout the top radio crime series of the day.

But every cynic has his soft spot, and

Hood's soft spot was Marsha and Bob Dayton.

That was the reason he found himself, at the ungodly hour of six o'clock one morning, in the Dayton apartment, which was two floors above his own, in the apartment-hotel residence.

Marsha had phoned, and there had been no mistaking the fright and the pleading in her voice.

Hood was shocked when he saw her. It was plain she hadn't slept all night. Her dark hair was in disorder. Her piquant little oval face was dead-white and drawn. But more than that, Hood saw, terror was in her eyes.

Dr. Coffin, Radio Crime Specialist, Is Suddenly



NOT CHEATED

By
MEL WATT

She made a valiant effort to smile.

"I'm sorry to call you at an hour like this, Peter," she said. "But I—I—"

"Come and sit down." He put an arm around her. "Now, tell me, what's happened?"

Her self-control gave way.

"It's Bob!" she sobbed. "He's been gone all night! I thought to look in his desk drawer—just before I phoned you—and his gun's gone! Oh, Peter, I'm scared sick. He's still not well, you know."

Hood tightened up inside, but his face was an impassive mask. He knew what could happen to a man with sick nerves. Loss of memory. Suicidal impulses. Sudden

and unpredictable manias.

Bob Dayton had been in the war in the Pacific. He had married Marsha Train before he left. A romance right out of the storybooks, with a reverse touch: poor boy marries rich girl. Even the cynical Peter Hood had seen it was the real thing, and not just a young-man-on-the-make hooking the girl who had inherited the Train wealth as his wife.

Bob Dayton had been in the first wave of marines to hit Guadalcanal. Several months later, he came out a nervous wreck, as did many men who had stronger nerves than he. After his return to the States and hospitalization, he had received his honor-

Confronted with the Menace of Real Murder!

able discharge, and gone back to his old job with a firm of construction engineers.

HOOD gazed down at Marsha.

"Have Bob's nerves been on a rampage recently?" he asked calmly.

"Yes, two nights ago. He goes along all right for a while. Then one night he'll wake up yelling, and in a drenching sweat. For several days after these nightmares he goes around tired and jumpy and depressed. If only I could do something to help!"

"These things take time," Hood soothed her. "He's under a doctor's care, of course?"

Marsha hesitated just an instant.

"Well, not a medical man," she said. "But he's taking psychiatric treatments from Doctor Stanley Heeth."

Hood nodded.

"I think it would be best to call the police," he said as reassuringly as possible. "Now, don't be alarmed. I only mean that they have the organization and the methods of locating him quicker than we could."

Hood's words were immediately followed by a key scraping in the lock of the entrance door. The door burst open, as if someone had leaned against it. Bob Dayton staggered a few steps into the room, and stood there swaying.

Marsha choked on a sob. Bob Dayton's wrinkled topcoat hung askew on his gaunt frame. His dark hair, with the unnatural-looking gray in it, was disheveled across his forehead and down over his ears. His bony face was like a death's-head. His eyes were like holes. His bluish lips were taut.

"Oh, Bob!" Marsha went to him. She led him gently to a sofa. "Where have you been, darling? Where did you go?"

His lifeless eyes gazed at her with something like surprise. He stared up at Hood, and smiled emptily. He saw them, but he didn't seem to be aware of them.

His glazed eyes came back to Marsha.

"Marsha—hi, sweets." His voice was thick and furry. Abruptly his waxen face became contorted. Little points of sweat stood out on his gray skin. He groaned. "Oh, man I'm sick."

He would have pitched off the sofa, had Hood not grabbed him.

"Help me with him," Marsha whispered through a sob.

They got him into the bedroom and onto the bed. He came to, a little.

"Sorry," he murmured weakly.

"Bob! Listen, dear!" Marsha leaned close to him. "Tell me, where did you go? Where have you been?"

"Not now, Marsha," Hood said gently.

"Woke up on a park bench." Bob mumbled in a tired, faraway voice. "Had a few I'll drinks in a few places, but they never hit me this way before."

"You mean you just went out to get a

drink? But—but—why?"

"No, that wasn't it at all." His voice was weary, and sleepily indifferent. "I went out to shoot him. The drinks came later."

Marsha gasped.

"You what?" Hood said sharply.

"Shoot the skunk," Bob mumbled, half unconscious. "Heeth. You know—shoot. . ."

He dropped back into full unconsciousness.

MARSHA stifled a scream. Hood took her from the room, sat her down on the sofa.

"Now get a grip on yourself," he said. "Let me attend to this."

He went back into the bedroom. He went quickly through the pockets of Bob's clothing. In the right-hand pocket of the topcoat he found a revolver. He broke it open. One shot had been fired.

Hood's thin face went pale. He looked down at Bob Dayton and sighed—a sigh that somehow expressed all the heartache and tragedy he knew lay ahead for these two young people.

"Poor young devil," he murmured to himself. "Hasn't he gone through enough?"

He returned to the living room, his face an impassive mask again. He had wrapped the gun in a handkerchief and put it in his pocket.

"I'm going to call Dan," he said to Marsha.

"Dan!" Her eyes went wide with panic. "You mean. . . ?"

"Bob's gun has been fired, Marsha," Hood said. "I think we'd better have Dan here."

Marsha buried her face in her hands and moaned.

Hood picked up the phone and made his call.

Dan Warren, the lawyer, arrived within twenty minutes. It was plain he had hurried to get there, and that he felt the same concern for Marsha that Hood had felt. Like Hood, he was a worldly cynic with a soft spot. But he tried to hide it under a gruff exterior. His big muscular body practically dwarfed Hood and Marsha. On his broad, blunt face was the scowl that always meant he was worried.

"Let's have it," he said, gruffly.

Hood told him, and showed him the gun. Dan Warren made no comment, but he gave Hood a significant look that said as plainly as day:

"This is a sweet mess!"

He went to Marsha, seated on the sofa, and took her hand in both of his. For the moment, his gruffness was gone.

"I think it would be best, Marsha," he spoke to her in a kindly tone, "if you'd go over to your aunt's place and stay there for a while."

"But I want to be with Bob!" Marsha cried.

"My dear, don't you understand?" He

patted her hand. "Bob is in grave trouble. The police will be here. It isn't going to be pleasant."

She fell against him and clung to him like a frightened, sobbing child.

"Come, come, now," He put an arm around her and talked to her as he would to a child. "You aren't going to help Bob that way. Get a hold on yourself. Everything's going to be all right."

They got her ready, and the lawyer took her down to put her in a taxi. Behind Marsha's back, as they were leaving the apartment, Dan Warren nodded at Hood and indicated the phone.

Hood hated what he had to do now. But he picked up the phone and called the police.

There followed, with the passage of time, the usual series of scenes which inevitably follow the killing of one man by another.

"Yeah. He's been dead since last night. Right through the heart. Let's have that bullet as soon as you can, Doc."

"Yeah. The bullet was fired from Dayton's gun."

"Robert Dayton, you're under arrest for the murder of Doctor Stanley Heeth!"

CHAPTER II

Open-and-Shut



DAN WARREN'S tone was as grim as his face.

"Pete, I don't mind telling you," the lawyer said, "the kid's in a very tight jam. I hate a thing like this happening to Marsha. She doesn't belong around murder and cops and all the ugly publicity."

It gave Peter Hood a sinking feeling. For if

Dan Warren felt grim about Bob Dayton's predicament then the situation was bad indeed.

Dan Warren was one of the best trial lawyers in the state. Like all good criminal lawyers, he had a good deal of the actor in him. He was a bit temperamental and arrogant. It was this arrogant independence, plus the fact that he was nearly always broke, which doubtless frustrated his political ambitions. He dreamed of the U. S. Senate, but it was only a dream.

But even his worst enemy couldn't deny Dan Warren's competence in court. The lawyer would, Hood knew, make the supreme effort of his career, for Marsha's sake. Marsha thought a lot of Dan Warren. There had been a time, in fact, when Peter Hood thought she would marry him. But that was before the day of Bob Dayton.

It was the day following Bob's arrest, and

the lawyer and Hood were waiting in the little room at the city jail reserved for conferences between prisoners and their counsel.

Bob Dayton was brought in. He greeted Peter Hood and Dan Warren gloomily. He was haggard and grayer-looking than ever. He asked about Marsha, and when they told him she was all right and staying with her aunt, he drew a hand over his eyes as if he wanted to wipe away the whole ugly picture.

Dan Warren sighed.

"Let's get down to cases, Bob," he said gruffly. "I'll give it to you straight. You're in a very bad spot. The bullet that killed Doctor Heeth came from your gun, and the gun was found on you." The lawyer drew a long breath. "I think the best line is to plead temporary insanity, and throw the case on the mercy of the court."

"But I didn't shoot him, Dan!" Bob Dayton cried at him. "I went there, meaning to—but I started thinking about Marsha, and what a mess it would be, involving her and hurting her and everything. So I turned around in front of his place, and went to get a couple of drinks instead. Well, it ended up with more than a couple. I—I forgot what happened after that, except that I woke up on a park bench, and came home."

Dan Warren shook his head slowly.

"You had some drinks," he said a little pityingly. "You forget what happened after that. Can't you see what the prosecution will do with an admission like that? They'll jump on it with joy. They'll say the drinks whipped up your lagging determination, and that you went back and killed him."

Warren had risen and was pacing the floor, the scowl of worry on his broad, blunt face.

"It's damning," he growled. "Damning."

BOB DAYTON'S already sick nerves could stand no more.

"I can't help what it is!" he shouted. "I didn't shoot Heeth! If this is all the good you can be, get out!"

The lawyer ignored Bob's outburst.

"Why had you even thought of killing him?" he asked quietly.

"Because he was a skunk!" Bob retorted savagely. "A rotten, sneaking—"

"Come, Bob," the lawyer interrupted. "Reasons, not name-calling. What were your reasons?"

Bob subsided. Bitterness twisted his mouth, and weariness came into his voice.

"He was trying to make me believe I was going insane."

At the looks of astonishment on the faces of the lawyer and Peter Hood, Bob Dayton gave a short harsh laugh and nodded.

"Yes, Doctor Heeth was trying to do just that. Oh, he was very smooth about it. Told me I was fighting him. That I wouldn't

cooperate in helping him to help me. That I was letting myself go. That it wasn't fair to go on living with Marsha."

Bob's mouth turned down in a contemptuous sneer.

"I almost fell for it, at first," he continued. "Till I found out he was making a play for Marsha behind my back. Marsha told me. She hadn't wanted to mention it at first, thinking maybe Heeth was helping me in the meantime. But it got so she felt she just had to. Well, I got the picture then. It was his cute little method of easing me out of the picture, while he made a play for Marsha. Or, rather, her money."

The savagery came back into Bob's voice.

"It made me so mad I got my gun and went after him! You know the rest." He shrugged. "I cooled down on my way to his apartment. I got to thinking of the mess, the harm to Marsha, and all. Killing him wasn't worth it. Then I felt so shaken, I went and had some drinks. That's all. But I didn't shoot him!"

The lawyer peered shrewdly at Bob Dayton. At last he sighed.

"Bob, personally I believe you," he said. "That is, I believe you lost the conscious intent to kill Doctor Heeth. But we have two grim facts staring us in the face. First, the period when you admit you forget what happened. Second, your gun, found on you by Hood. It fired the bullet which killed Heeth. That gun, Bob!"

Bob Dayton buried his face in his hands.

"I don't know," he groaned. "I don't know."

The lawyer looked at Peter Hood, and motioned resignedly.

"Well, we'll do the best we can, Bob," he said then. "And you never can tell how a jury will react." He smiled reassuringly. "I've pulled tough ones out of the hole before."

But outside the jail, Peter Hood knew the lawyer had been putting on an act, for there was little sign now of his self-assurance.

"Pete," he spoke soberly. "I'm supposed to be a pretty fair trial lawyer."

"Not supposed to be," Hood said. "You are."

"Well," Warren said gruffly, "I'll tell you something. I wouldn't give a nickel for that kid's chances."

The outcome of Bob Dayton's trial bore out the lawyer's grimly realistic appraisal.

THE prosecution pursued the simple tactics of hammering on Bob Dayton's "period of forgetfulness," and the gun found in his pocket. The prosecution treated with scorn the plea of temporary insanity.

"This has too often been used as an excuse for evading just punishment, ladies and gentlemen! The plain simple truth is, the defendant went there with the avowed in-

tention of killing Doctor Heeth, lost his nerve, got it back after a few drinks, and then returned to kill Heeth. The one hard unalterable fact is that the gun found in the pocket of the defendant was the gun that killed Heeth!"

Here the prosecutor paused, and stopped orating.

"Let me say one thing more, ladies and gentlemen," he continued in a quieter tone. "I know the defendant was a soldier. For that we honor him. But that fact must not influence you in your verdict! Murder has been committed. The law of a civilized society has been broken. If you ignore that fact, and let muddled emotions swamp your calm judgment, you are dealing a blow at one of the very things we are fighting to preserve: justice and protection under the law! That is all, ladies and gentlemen. The State rests."

The jury was not out long.

"We find the defendant," the foreman of the jury announced, "guilty of murder in the first degree."

Later, the judge pronounced sentence:

"Robert Dayton, I sentence you to death in the electric chair, in the week beginning December 10th, said sentence to be carried out by the warden of the State Prison at—"

A scream drowned out the remainder of it. Marsha Dayton had collapsed. Neither Dan Warren nor Peter Hood had known she was among the spectators.

Hood got to her and battling his way through reporters, got her into a cab. She clung to him like a lost child, and her voice through her sobs was a choked whisper.

"No, Peter, no!" she cried. "He can't die! He didn't do it! They can't do this to him! We've got to do something!"

"Of course we will," he told her gently. "Dan will appeal. There are lots of things we can do."

But when he left her at her aunt's, and went back downtown to Dan Warren's offices, he found the lawyer tired and depressed.

"Not even a recommendation for leniency," he said, glumly.

"What about an appeal?" Hood asked.

"I don't think it'll get anywhere," Warren shook his head. "It was too open-and-shut. In the eyes of the law, there was 'no reasonable doubt'."

"The law is an ass," Hood murmured.

"What did you say?" Warren looked surprised.

"I was quoting Dickens' Mr. Sam Weller," Hood said. "Look. Everybody—the newspapers, the prosecutor, even you—points out what an open-and-shut case it was. Perfectly damning. And, to my suspicious nature, too perfectly. I don't believe in anything as perfect as that. I'm not convinced Bob shot Heeth, and I'm going to try my hand at proving it!"

"Are you serious?" the lawyer gasped. "Look, Pete, I feel just as deeply about this affair as you do, but what other reasonable explanation is there?"

"That's just the point," Hood said. "Everyone, including the police, was so sure Bob was guilty, they didn't bother to look any further. To the logical police and legal mind, the gun that killed Heeth was found in Bob's pocket, and that was that. But logic can be wrong."

Warren eyed Hood skeptically.

"Now I've heard and seen everything!" he said with friendly derision. "You think you'd make a detective?"

"I don't know," Hood laughed. "I've never tried it!"

A guffaw of sheer amusement broke from Dan Warren. He shook his head.

"I think you're crazy," he said. "I think I'm crazy. Maybe we'll just be crazy enough to stumble onto something. So deal me in." He again eyed Hood derisively. "You'll probably need a lawyer before very long."

CHAPTER III

A Flock of Suspects



HERE had been one figure in the Heeth case who still stood out clearly in Peter Hood's mind. She had been on the stand only a minute or two, but she was so striking he couldn't forget her. She was Harriet Cullen, Doctor Heeth's secretary.

Thus, forenoon of the following day found Peter Hood in the smart, modernist apartment-building where she lived. It seemed a rather expensive place for a secretary.

When Harriet Cullen opened the door of her fifth floor apartment, Hood explained, quite frankly, that he was a friend of Bob Dayton's, and would like to talk with her.

She stared at him fixedly, suspicion and curiosity flitting over her face. But the curiosity won. She shrugged.

"Come in," she said with a kind of tired amiability. "Excuse the shambles. I had some friends in last night."

Hood saw that she had indeed. Glasses and cigarette butts were all over the place. Harriet Cullen herself looked a little the worse from wear, but she was still a striking, tall blonde in her late twenties, with the bored and hard-shelled attitude of a person who knows all the answers. Hood noted the wary defense in her expressionless blue eyes, and the faintly bitter touch at the corners of her mouth.

She offered him a drink, and though he believed only amateurs and alcoholics drank

in the morning, he took it to be agreeable.

"I don't get it." She peered at him, puzzled. "I thought that Heeth business was all washed up. What's the angle?"

Hood was his most disarming self.

"No deep, dark motives, Miss Cullen," he assured her. "I have no connection with the authorities. I just don't want to see a friend of mine sent to the electric chair if there's the slightest possible chance he may be innocent."

"Innocent? With the gun on him? The case was open-and-shut."

"So everyone says. That's what makes me wonder."

Her eyes flashed wide for an instant.

"What is it you want of me?" she asked, curtly.

Hood understood the subtle persuasiveness of complete candor.

"I'd like to find out a little more about Doctor Heeth, if you're willing to tell me." He smiled disarmingly. "You don't have to, you know."

He saw a little of her tension go. She shrugged.

"What do you want to know?" she asked.

"Well, what did you know about Heeth? What did you think of him?"

She stared at Peter Hood for several moments of silence.

"What did I think of him?" She gave a low, contemptuous laugh. "Not much. Neither did anybody else who really got to know him. He was a phony. His assistant, Frank Menzies, knew more about psychiatry in a day than Heeth knew in a year. But Heeth had a way with the women. Especially idle rich women with imaginary neuroses." Harriet Cullen grinned cynically. "He turned on the charm, made love to them—and made lots of money."

"So the doctor was a wolf?"

"Hyena would be a better word. He could be mean when he was crossed, or when he didn't have any more use for somebody. And yellow, too. When he bungled a really serious case—"

Abruptly, she stopped talking.

"There I go, shooting off my big mouth again!" she said. "That's all I know."

"Thank you for telling me—what you've told me." The words, and the tone of Peter Hood's voice, were quite innocent and courteous. Yet they conveyed something ominous. He was perfectly well aware that the contempt and malice in Harriet Cullen's voice when she spoke of Heeth meant more than mere dislike for an unpleasant character. Harriet Cullen had been personally involved with Heeth, and her feeling was one of hate.

She fidgeted a little under Hood's blandly smiling scrutiny.

"It's a wonder some husband hadn't shot him before!" she said derisively. "I don't blame Bob Dayton, but still I think he was a

sap. Why get yourself sent to the chair for killing a heel like Heeth? He wasn't worth it."

"That's just what Bob Dayton thought," Hood said suavely.

She stared at him, wide-eyed again.

"You mean you don't think he shot Heeth?" she asked. "But the gun . . ."

"Yes, I know. The gun," Hood said smoothly. "But you see, Miss Cullen, I find it hard to believe a drunken man could put a bullet right through the heart of another man, at the distance from which Heeth was known to have been shot."

HEE SAW her stiffen. Her face was a mask. But she did not succeed in concealing the fright in her eyes.

"Is there anything else you'd like to tell me, Miss Cullen?"

Hood spoke the words in the strangely soft voice he used as Doctor Coffin—the sinister purr that had sent chills down the spines of millions.

Harriet Cullen shivered. She stared at him with open fear now.

"No! No, of course not! There's nothing else of any importance!" Her voice rose to a near-hysteria. "Say, what is this, anyway? Just who are you?"

"A friend of Bob Dayton's, as I told you," Hood said calmly. "By the way, you mentioned a Frank Menzies, Heeth's assistant. Can you tell me where he lives?"

"No! I don't know!" she cried harshly.

"Thank you, Miss Cullen," Hood got up to leave. At the door, he turned to her smiling blandly. "I may call on you again."

She shut the door quickly, and locked it after him.

The interview with Harriet Cullen made one thing apparent to Peter Hood. She was somehow involved in Heeth's death.

Disregarding the actual shooting of Heeth, her involvement might mean any one of a number of things. It might mean blackmail. It might mean she was protecting someone. Or it might mean danger to herself from someone who was holding some threat over her.

Hood looked up Frank Menzies, Heeth's assistant, in the city directory, and found his address. He drove there.

The section of town, and the apartment house, were in direct contrast to Harriet Cullen's modern apartment. He found Menzies at home in his apartment on the third floor. Hood once again explained that he was a friend of Bob Dayton's. Menzies showed the curiosity, but not the suspicion Harriet Cullen had shown.

Menzies' single room was a rundown affair. Clothes had been tossed here and there. Near the window stood a table with a typewriter on it, and a loose litter of paper around the table.

"Excuse the mess," Menzies coughed, and

said. "I've been trying to do a little writing for the psychology journals."

He was a small, pale, blond young man with a serious face. He wore thick glasses, and his manner lacked aggressiveness. Yet Hood noted certain quiet purposefulness in the line of the mouth.

"What was it you wanted to talk to me about?" Menzies asked.

Peter Hood explained frankly.

Menzies did not seem surprised. If anything, he seemed unimpressed.

"I think you're on a hopeless quest." He shook his head solemnly. "The law has sent lots of men to the chair on less evidence than there was against Dayton. It was pretty open-and-shut."

Hood sighed. But before he could say anything, Menzies spoke again.

"I'm sorry for Dayton, though," he said, "Heeth wasn't worth it."

"That," Hood said quietly, "is what Miss Cullen said."

"So you talked with Harriet?" Menzies peered at him owl-eyed. "Well, she ought to know."

Hood noted the quiet tension rising in Menzies.

"Doctor Heeth seems to have been a rather unpleasant character."

Menzies shrugged.

"He was a sadistic swine." There was a tremor in his voice. "He destroyed everything he touched."

Including you, thought Hood, and including Harriet. You're in love with her. Hopelessly.

"You hated him, too, didn't you?" Hood said.

"Of course I hated him. He ruined me. He bungled several cases, and somehow the word got around that I had bungled them. It finished me in the field of psychiatric practice."

HOOD gazed at him in silence for several long moments.

"You had a very good motive for killing Heeth, didn't you?"

"An excellent motive," Menzies admitted calmly. "As a matter of fact, I wanted to do just that." A sour smile turned down his mouth. "But I'm afraid I'm not the violent type. In other words, I didn't have the nerve." He shrugged. "As far as I'm concerned, I'd give Dayton a medal for killing Heeth, instead of sending him to the chair for it."

"I'm going to do my best to see that he doesn't go to the chair." Peter Hood repeated what he had said to Harriet Cullen. "You see, Menzies, I find it hard to believe that a drunk man could put a bullet right through the heart of another man at the distance from which Heeth was known to have been shot."

A weariness appeared in Menzies' eyes.

"I never thought of that," he said slowly. "Lots of people seem not to have thought of it," Hood put in dryly: "They were too busy writing it off as an open-and-shut case. As you pointed out, it takes nerve to shoot a man. Now, some of those cases you spoke about—perhaps they might give me an important lead."

Menzies pretended to be thinking, but it was quite obvious to Hood he had already made up his mind about something.

"Well, there's one case that stands out in my mind," Menzies said, with an assumed thoughtfulness. "A woman. She was neurotic to begin with, and she had developed a bad psychosis. She came to Heeth, and he bungled the case. The woman went insane, tried to kill her husband, and finally committed suicide." Menzies looked directly at Hood. "The woman's husband is Charles Engles, the gambler. You may have heard of him."

"Engles!" Hood was genuinely surprised. "Of course. I've been in his place—his 'club', as it's called."

Menzies nodded.

"He would be a bad man to have for an enemy, I imagine," he said.

He would indeed, Hood agreed. He gazed cynically at Menzies. Was Menzies giving him information? Or trying to direct attention away from himself?

For the present, Hood let it go at that. "Thanks very much," he said, smiling. "I may call on you again."

"Any time," Menzies said. After a moment he added, "Good luck."

Opportunity and motive. The two words ran through Peter Hood's mind. It was plain that plenty people with motive and opportunity had wanted to kill the unpleasant Doctor Heeth. The thing was to find out how it tied in with Bob Dayton.

Hood had his moment of doubt. It was possible, he admitted to himself, that Mr. Peter Hood might be the victim of wishful thinking. A lucky shot, even from a drunk man's gun, might get a man through the heart.

"Hood, you bore me," he said to himself. "Get on with it."

But he had to postpone getting on with it, for he had a rehearsal at the studio that afternoon.

The rehearsal of Doctor Coffin's latest evil crimes went off smoothly, as usual. Afterwards, Hood was called into a conference of program officials. The Heeth case had given them an idea.

"We've just been thinking, Pete," one of them said to him. "How about a criminal lawyer as guest on our next broadcast? It would fit in nicely with this kind of program. You know, the arch-criminal Doctor Coffin matching wits with a criminal lawyer. Great stuff, eh? This Dan Warren is a friend of yours, isn't he? What do you think of it?"

Hood said it was all right with him if it was all right with Warren, providing no mention was made of the Heeth case. They nodded.

So Hood called Warren. A little hesitantly, the lawyer agreed, but with the cautious legal proviso that no reference be made to the Heeth business.

"I made them understand that," Peter Hood told him.

"Fine. How's your detective career?"

"All right. I might surprise you."

Warren laughed dryly.

"Nothing you do would surprise me," he said.

"No? Well, I feel the urge to visit a high-class gambling spot tonight. Charles Engles's place. If you haven't anything else to do, what about coming along? I may need moral support. I may even need a lawyer."

"Engles!" Dan Warren snorted. "You'll need some sort of support, all right. That's pretty fast company, even for you. All right, all right. So I'm as crazy as you are. Where'll I meet you?"

"I'll pick you up at your apartment, about ten."

CHAPTER IV

Blonde Medicine



STANDING behind a guardian row of huge trees, the old graystone mansion was somewhat like an aged aristocrat who is out of touch with the modern world.

But the world inside it was very modern. Charles Engles, the present owner, had retained the best features of the old place, and had added

new improvements. It was all in the very best of taste, gracious, quiet, and dignified. Evening dress was required. Guests were admitted only by card, and the cards were not easy to get. But Peter Hood was a famous actor with influential friends.

The old ballroom was for talk and drinks only. The gambling was in the other rooms. Peter Hood and Dan Warren took a brief whirl at roulette, then returned to the ballroom.

It was a little after midnight when Charles Engles made his entrance. Slim and tall, in impeccable evening dress, he strolled about, greeting everyone with a courtly bow and a bland smile.

When he got to Hood and Warren, he didn't hesitate.

"Ah, Mr. Hood," he said smoothly, offering his hand. "I haven't seen you here for some time."

Hood returned the greeting and introduced

Dan Warren. Engles looked at him closely. "Oh, yes, of course," he said. "Weren't you defense counsel in the Heeth case?"

Warren said he was.

"I'm sorry for that Dayton boy," Engles said with gravity. "It was a tragic affair."

"Yes," Hood agreed. "It seems to have ended in tragedy for everyone who had anything to do with Doctor Heeth."

Not a muscle in Charles Engles' face moved. His heavy lids came down idly over his steel-gray eyes. He nodded at some people passing, smiling benignly.

"Won't you join me in my private quarters, gentlemen?" he said, politely, to Hood and Warren.

Engles' private quarters were as quiet and elegant as he was. He asked the men what they wished to drink, and served them himself. He didn't drink, but he seated himself and lit a cigar. He blew a cone of smoke toward the ceiling.

"You know about my wife, I take it," he said.

Hood nodded, sympathetically. Dan Warren looked puzzledly at Hood but said nothing.

"I kept it out of the papers," Engles went on. "A thing like that is best quietly buried and forgotten. It's regrettable that you've come, hinting about it. What's your game?"

"We"—Hood included Dan Warren—"are not convinced Dayton shot Heeth."

Engles raised his eyebrows.

"Despite the evidence and the court's verdict?" he asked.

Hood once more pointed out the improbability of a man, blindly drunk, putting a shot through the heart of another.

Engles looked politely skeptical.

"You might be right. But I rather think you're grasping at a straw." A faint irony came into his voice. "And, of course, if you don't think Dayton did it, you think someone else did. Perhaps me. Is that it, gentlemen?"

"A good many people had motive for killing Heeth," Peter Hood interposed suavely.

Engles appeared faintly bored. He released a gentle sigh.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I hated Heeth more than I hated any other man. I planned to make him pay—but not to kill him. That would have been too easy for him." Engles smiled. "A war of nerves, that's what I planned for him. The threat of death over him—never knowing when it might happen, or how, or where. I intended to make him suffer, indefinitely, as he had made others suffer." He shrugged. "I regret Heeth got off so easily, whoever killed him. Mine was a much better punishment."

There was nothing more to say, after that. A few minutes later Peter Hood and Dan Warren took their leave. Engles escorted them to the outer entrance.

"Please do me the honor again, gentle-

men," he said.

Dan Warren could hardly wait to blow off steam.

"Holy mackerel, Pete, you weren't kidding, were you! Tackling a gent like Engles. You're in dangerous territory. You'd better watch your step."

"He's suave, subtle, and clever," Hood admitted. "That was a very plausible and clever story." He smiled cynically. "Perhaps too clever."

He dropped Warren at his apartment.

"Thanks for a lovely evening," the lawyer said, in a sarcastic soprano. "Call me again sometime, when you want to stick your neck out."

BOB DAYTON showed the strain of waiting, and he was extremely depressed.

It was the following morning, and Peter Hood had received permission through an influential friend, to visit Bob at the State Prison, which was only some half-dozen miles from the city.

"Look, Peter," Bob said, "I appreciate it. But what can you hope to prove? It's over. Finished. You're wasting your time."

"Let me be the judge of that. I might surprise you." Hood got down to the purpose of his visit. "Listen, Bob. I want you to think back carefully, and tell me the bars you visited on the night Doctor Heeth was murdered."

Bob Dayton gave a short, harsh laugh.

"Good grief!" he exclaimed. "If you're depending on that—I don't know! Oh, I remember the first ones, but after that I might have been in Timbuktu, for all I know."

Hood was disappointed.

"All right," he urged. "The ones you remember, then. That will help."

Bob gave the names of three or four places, then shook his head.

"That's all I remember. I know I must have gone into other places, but I've no idea where. Peter, it's no good."

"That's only your opinion."

Bob smiled back, wanly.

"How's—Marsha?" he asked.

"Marsha's fine," Hood lied convincingly. "And she's quite certain you're going to walk out of here free, some day soon. Too bad you don't have some of her faith, Bob."

"I'm sorry," Bob looked at Hood out of tortured eyes. "Peter, could it be that I really did kill Heeth . . . when I was blind drunk?"

"No."

"Are you just saying that, or do you believe it?"

"I believe it." Hood wondered again if he was talking to convince himself, as well as Bob. "I'll tell you why. I don't believe a man in the condition you were in, could shoot another right through the heart, at the distance from which Heeth was shot."

He left Bob with more hope in the boy's eyes than he had seen there since the ugly business had started.

"Hood, I hope you're right," he said to himself, outside. "You'd better be."

He had no luck at the bars Bob had named. He knew he hadn't really expected it. At the early stage of Bob's drinking tour, there would have been nothing about Bob's condition to attract undue attention. Well, what did a detective do now?

It seemed pretty obvious, Hood decided, that if Bob had got himself organized in the four bars named, he would be very likely to stay in that section of town. Wouldn't he?

Hood sighed.

"A detective's lot is not a happy one," he muttered to himself. "This will be blamed tedious."

He bent himself to the dreary task of visiting every bar in the district. At last, he played in luck.

It was just another spot. Not good, not bad. The bartender was a portly, senatorial man named Gus. He wasn't busy, and Hood got him to talk.

"Sure," he said, "I followed that case from the beginning. Took a kind of personal interest in it, because that young fella was in here that night. Swacked to the gills! Couldn't get him to leave, neither. So I watered down his drinks. That's better than startin' a fuss. I always figure." Gus pointed. "He sat right over there in that booth, mumbling to himself. Seemed to be bothered about something. Wow! I'll say he was! Killin' a man!"

"Do you remember what time he came in?" Hood asked. "How long he stayed?"

Gus named an hour.

"Around there sometime," he said. "He was here till this dame went over and talked to him, and they went out together. She'd come in for a drink, and she looked around the place, and seemed to recognize him."

"A woman?" Hood felt his spine tingling.

"What did she look like? Can you describe her?"

"Oh, sure, easy. She was a knock-out! A tall blonde, who looked like she'd been around."

IT WASN'T actually much of a description, but it was all Hood needed.

Within half an hour, he was pushing the bell-button of Harriet Cullen's apartment.

The door opened, and when she saw him, she went rigid.

"Oh! It's you again."

Hood smiled at her.

"I told you I might call again," he said.

"I'm sorry." The blond woman started to shut the door. "I'm just going out. Some other time, perhaps."

Hood stopped the door.

"Now, and not perhaps, Miss Cullen," he said.

At the tone of his voice, she let go the door. He pushed it open and walked in, closing it after him. He stood there, with his back to it.

"And now, Miss Cullen," he said. "Suppose you tell me all about yourself and Bob Dayton in that bar on Nicollet street—and what happened afterwards."

If he had driven a fist into her face, he couldn't have stunned her more. She went deathly white, backed away, and stumbled into a chair. Then all at once, frightened words started pouring out of her.

"Look, I just didn't want to get involved, that's why I kept quiet about it!" she pleaded. "There was nothing to it, really! I was just trying to help the fellow! Honestly I was! I just dropped in there for a drink, and I saw him sitting there! He was in a sad way. I knew about his nerves being shot and all, and I was sorry for him. He was sitting there mumbling something about, 'Gonna shoot Heeth.' I persuaded him to leave."

"He was too heavy for me to support walking, so I left him beside a fire hydrant, and told him to stay right there while I got my car from where I'd parked. I couldn't get it started right away, and when I got back, he was gone. I—I drove around a little, but I couldn't find him." She glared at Hood. "Don't you understand? I was going to drive him home!"

Hood made no comment. "And after you drove around looking for him—what then?" he asked.

"That's all. I'd done what I could." She shrugged, a little too deliberately. "I went home."

Hood looked at her, smiling, but there was no friendliness in the smile.

"It won't do, Miss Cullen." He shook his head slowly. "It won't do. You said Bob Dayton mumbled something about shooting Heeth. When you couldn't find him, fear—or plain curiosity—would have made you drive to Heeth's place. It would have been the instinctive thing to do."

"But I didn't! I—I swear I didn't!"

"You hated Heeth." Hood went on talking, relentlessly. "Bob Dayton was blindly intoxicated, and didn't know what was going on. He had a gun in his coat pocket, which you probably felt while you were helping him along. You follow me, Miss Cullen?"

"You're crazy!" Panic took hold of her.

"You're making up a crazy story, to save Dayton at my expense! You're insane!"

"Nothing more to say, Miss Cullen?" Hood asked calmly.

"There is nothing more to say!" she shrilled at him. "I've told you everything!"

Hood got up to leave.

"Very well, Miss Cullen. I'll leave you to think it over." His tone was quietly ominous. "I'll be back—perhaps not alone next time."

She did not move. He went out, closing the door quietly.

CHAPTER V

A New Corpse



HOOD returned to his apartment. He wanted a shower and something to eat.

"Little man," he sighed to himself, "you've had a busy day—and you've got a broadcast to do to-night."

He was tired and a little grim. He began to understand why detectives were seldom pleasant-

aced men.

The ringing of the phone brought him out of his shower.

"Yes. Hood speaking."

"I want to give you some good advice," a slow deep voice said. "Quit acting like a detective and stick to radio acting. Understand?"

The phone clicked.

Hood stood looking at his own instrument for a full minute, a wry smile on his lips, as if he found it hard to believe this was real.

He dialed Dan Warren's number. The lawyer answered.

"I've got another surprise for you," Hood told him. "I've just received a warning to stop acting like a detective."

"Surprise nothing!" Warren exploded. "I just received one myself! I was just about to call you."

"Well, well!" Hood said. "I think I see the fine hand of Mr. Charles Engles in this."

"I told you, Pete," Warren protested worriedly. "I warned you we were in dangerous territory. Listen, for the love of mike, don't go and get yourself—"

"I can't stop now, Dan," Hood interrupted. "And I don't want to. I'll tell you more about it later. See you at the broadcast tonight?"

"Okay. But be careful."

Hood dressed and went down to the grill for something to eat. All the time, his mind was on Harriet Cullen. He was quite certain the tall blonde knew more than she had admitted. The police had ways to get it out of her quickly, but Hood was not the police. So he had applied psychological pressure. He wondered how soon it would take effect. And that phone warning—could there be any connection between it and Harriet?

When he returned to his apartment-hotel lobby Peter Hood was called over by the clerk.

"A call just came for you, Mr. Hood.

A Miss Harriet Cullen would like to see you at her apartment right away."

"What did she say?"

The clerk went deadpan.

"It was a man talking," he began. "He said Miss Cullen—"

"Thanks—"

Hood hurried up to his apartment, and got his coat and hat. He was almost out of the room again when he paused, turned around and went back to his bedroom and took a new-looking automatic from a drawer. He had never quite understood why he had bought the gun, except that most of his friends kept one. He had sometimes wondered just what use he would ever have for it.

He dropped it in his pocket.

The tension mounted in him as he drove to Harriet Cullen's apartment. He could understand her "cracking"—and sending for him. But a man calling?

He rode the automatic elevator up to the blonde's fifth-floor apartment. He pushed the bell-button sharply, then put his hands in his pockets, his right hand curled around the grip of the gun.

The door was not opened. He rang again. Still no answer. He tested the knob. The door was not locked!

He walked hesitantly into the place. The lights were on.

"Miss Cullen," he called.

The bedroom door was half open. He went over and looked in, still a little hesitantly.

She was there. On the bed. Her face was puffed and dark, her tongue protruded, and there was a cord tight around her neck.

He stood there for what seemed a long time, pale and stunned, staring at her.

So Harriet had known more than she had told. More than was good for her. And more than was good for someone else. Someone who knew she was going to crack, and who had silenced her.

Hood was hardly aware of the shrill noise down on the street until it had been dinning for several seconds. Then it suddenly crashed his consciousness.

Police sirens!

Holy smoke! Of course. That was why he had been called to Harriet's apartment. It was a trap—a frame! He was to be caught there with the dead woman!

He hurried out of the apartment, closing the door behind him. It was too late now to go down either by the elevator or by the stairs. There was only one thing to do, he knew.

He made his way swiftly and quietly along the hall and around a corner into another hall. He waited there, praying that no one would come out of a door. He heard the police come up, heard the rumble of their voices, heard them go into Harriet Cullen's apartment.

After several minutes he took a deep breath, and walked around the corner and back down the hall. The doors of apartments near Harriet's were opening. People were peering out and their voices were rising with excitement. Police were ordering them back inside.

Hood strode up to a beefy sergeant bawling the show.

"What's wrong, officer?" he asked calmly.

The sergeant looked him up and down.

"Who are you?" he belowed. "What are you doin' here?"

"My name's Peter Hood." Hood smiled at him. "I was visiting some friends. I'm leaving early because I have to do a broadcast in a little while."

"Peter Hood?" Fame and a touch of audacity had its use. The sergeant grinned.

"Oh, sure," he said quite friendly now.

"Hood. Doctor Coffin. I've heard you." He

jerked his thumb toward Harriet's apartment.

"Dame murdered. Strangled. We

got a call from some fellow, said he heard

a man and woman fightin' in this apartment.

Said she sounded like she was getting beat

or choked, and he thought he'd better call us."

The sergeant grunted. "She was gettin'

choked all right. But no sign of her killer—

so far. We're checkin' the building."

"Dreadful," Hood said.

The sergeant chuckled.

"Comin' from Doctor Coffin, that's good."

Hood assumed a deprecatory smile.

"Acting is one thing, sergeant," he said.

"Real murder is something else. Well, I'd

better be getting along. I suppose I can

get past your men?"

"Sure thing." The sergeant called one

of his men. "Bailey, go down with Mr.

Hood." He flicked a hand in salute, and

grinned again. "Good night, Mr. Hood.

Don't murder too many gents on the broadcast."

Back in his car Peter Hood slumped

down in the seat for several minutes, ex-

hausted. Then his eye caught the clock

on the instrument panel.

"One hour till broadcast time!"

He drove back to his apartment for a

quick change of clothing. He had left

Harriet Cullen's apartment building in a

pour of sweat, and he couldn't appear at

the studio the way he felt and looked.

"A letter for you, Mr. Hood," the desk

clerk called him. "It came by Western Union

messenger."

Hood grabbed the letter, and hurried into

the elevator. He scarcely noticed the other

people in the cage. He got out at his floor,

and hurried along to his apartment. He

was inserting the key in the lock when a

man's voice, several yards behind him

spoke.

"Open it up," the voice said. "Then get

your hands up."

Hood glanced sharply over his shoulder.

A slight, dark man, who held his right hand in his coat pocket had a gun poking against the cloth.

Hood did as he was told.

"Lights," the gunman said. "And don't make any fancy moves."

Hood snapped on a floor lamp. The man kicked the door shut. He cast a quick, wary glance around the place.

"Okay," he said. "Let's have that letter."

"Just a minute," Hood protested. "I don't know what this is about. This letter

was sent to me by special messenger. If you don't mind, I'd first like to read—"

"Let's have it. Now!" The gunman's gun came out. "Or do I have to give you a

dose of this first?"

"Drop your gun!"

The curt order came from the shadows

across the room. Hood could not make out

the figure at once. But the gunman's back

was toward the figure, and he was in no

position to argue. He dropped his gun.

The intruder came forward, and Hood,

for the third time that evening was stunned.

It was the psychiatrist whom Doctor Heeth

had ruined. Frank Menzies!

"I came here to kill you," Menzies said

to the radio actor. "I thought you'd killed

Harriet. I saw you go into her apartment

building. Then the police, and the cry that

she'd been murdered. I saw you leave. I

thought you'd slicked your way out of it."

"But what made you change your mind

now?" Hood asked at a loss. "Or have

you?"

"That letter." Menzies nodded at the

letter Hood still held in his hand. "And

this man holding you up for it."

"But how did you get in?"

Menzies' eyes smiled at Hood from be-

hind their thick glasses. "I know some-

thing about locks and keys. Especially

master keys." He again nodded at the

letter. "Why don't you open it? It must

be pretty important."

The gunman was standing motionless,

wary.

"Go ahead," Menzies said to Hood. "I'll

keep my eye on him."

Hood looked for a moment at Menzies,

thinking that you never could tell about

people, especially about quiet, inoffensive-

looking ones.

He opened the letter. And got shock

number four.

The envelope, besides a letter, contained

a crumpled slip of paper. Hood read the

letter.

Dear Mr. Hood:

You win. I'm leaving town for parts un-

known. I hope you'll let it go at that, because

although I was involved, I had nothing to do

with killing Doctor Stanley Heeth.

I did go to Heeth's place on the night he

was killed. I found him dead, and I thought

Bob Dayton had done it—until I found the

enclosed slip of paper, several yards from the body.

It speaks for itself. Maybe you know what I used it for. A girl has to live.

I'm sorry about it now. But I'm giving you a break. So give me one, will you?

Sincerely,
Harriet Cullen.

Hood looked at the slip of paper, and his mouth went tightly grim.

"It's from Harriet," he said to Menzies.

"Harriet? What about?"

"A murderer." Hood nodded toward the gunman. "Take care of him, will you, Menzies? I've got to make a broadcast."

CHAPTER VI

Murder Broadcasts



WITH only five minutes to spare, Peter Hood made it to the studio. He found the program officials looking worried, the cast jittery, and Dan Warren rather goggle-eyed and bewildered by it all.

"Where the devil you been, Pete?" the director growled at him. "All right, get set. Three min-

utes."

Hood whispered something to him. The director's eyes bulged out, and he started objecting.

"I know what I'm doing," Hood said.

He looked out over the studio audience. He spotted, in the third row, the distinguished Charles Engles. He looked farther off, at the exits—and observed the policemen stationed there. He smiled thinly. There were probably a few questions they wanted to ask him about Harriet Cullen's murder, after the broadcast.

The man in the control room signaled: one minute. The director waved the cast back, and beckoned to Dan Warren to join Hood beside the microphone.

Then came the flash: On the Air.

The soft, sinister purr of Doctor Coffin went out over the air waves to his thousands of listeners.

"Tonight, my friends, we will reverse our usual custom of introducing the guest of honor after the program," he said. "We are doing this because we have with us tonight an exceptionally interesting gentleman. May I introduce Mr. Daniel Warren, the noted criminal lawyer?"

There was applause. Dan Warren said a word of greeting.

Then the soft voice purred on, but an ominous note had entered it now.

"But what makes Mr. Warren exceptionally interesting is not merely the fact that

he is a criminal lawyer," Doctor Coffin continued. "There are many criminal lawyers. What makes Mr. Warren exceptional is the additional fact that he is also a criminal!" There was ice in the purr now. "So may I introduce Mr. Daniel Warren, the real murderer of Doctor Stanley Heeth, and of a girl whose name was Harriet Cullen!"

There was shocked, absolute silence. A silence during which Hood took out the slip of crumpled paper and held it up for Dan Warren to see.

For an instant the eyes of the two men met. Then Dan Warren's lips drew tight, and his right hand streaked toward his hip pocket. But before he could reach the gun there, a voice from off-stage snapped a warning.

"Hold it!" A police lieutenant strode on the platform.

Amidst uproar and confusion throughout the studio other policemen grabbed Warren.

Up in the control room, a technical man was sweating.

"Maybe I should have cut him off the air!" he groaned.

"Cut him off, nothing," a network official retorted. "It was a sensation! Nothing like it before! The sponsor will be tickled pink!"

AFTERWARDS, the police lieutenant paid tribute to Peter Hood.

"I've got to admit," he said, a bit reluctantly, "it was very nice work—for an amateur."

Hood smiled, but it was not his usual bland smile. He wasn't feeling very cheerful.

"The solution wasn't really my doing, Lieutenant," he said frankly. "The Cullen girl had it all the time, and she gave it to me. All I did was exert a little pressure on her."

"Yes, but you had to discover first on whom to exert the pressure, and that took smart detective work. By the way, I found out something interesting about Warren. He's thirty-five, and single. He was turned down by the army because he's a psycho-neurotic."

Hood showed his surprise.

"That explains a lot of things," he said a little sadly. "His festering hatred for Bob Dayton for beating his time with Marsha. His arrogant belief he could get Marsha if Bob was out of the way. His driving political ambitions which Marsha's wealth would make possible. . . . I can't help feeling a bit sorry for him."

"Sorry for a gent who pretended to defend Dayton, and let him slide right into the hot seat?" The lieutenant scoffed. "I'm not sorry for him."

The whole ugly business was clear now. It had gone off something like this:

Dan Warren had been coming to call on the Daytons. He had seen Bob go out in a black rage, and had followed him in his car. When Harriet Cullen had left Bob outside the bar, Warren had picked the stupefied Bob up, listened to his mumblings about Heeth, taken Bob's gun, and after finding out where Heeth lived, had gone and shot Heeth himself. After which he had replaced the gun in Bob's pocket, and put Bob out on a park bench.

But Dan Warren had made one fatal error. The unpredictable error that branded him as the killer. He had kept his gloves on, and in pulling the gun from his pocket, to shoot Heeth, he had pulled out a slip of paper with it. He couldn't feel it, and he didn't see it in his haste. It fell to the floor.

The slip of paper was from his memorandum pad. On it, in Warren's own handwriting was Doctor Heeth's address! But—and this was what made the writing so easily identifiable—across the top, in print,

was his name: Daniel Warren, Attorney-at-Law.

Harriet Cullen had arrived several minutes after he had gone, and had found the slip of paper. With it she was blackmailing him. And when she was cracking under the pressure Hood had put upon her, Warren had to get that slip of paper.

When she defiantly told him she had already sent the slip to Hood, Warren silenced her, and sent one of his underworld connections to intercept the letter at Hood's apartment.

Once Peter Hood had seen the slip and the letter, the jig was up.

"Well, anyway," the lieutenant smiled, "if you ever get tired of murdering people on the radio you can always have a job here with us."

"I'll keep it in mind," Hood assured him.

Then Doctor Coffin went out to pick up Marsha Dayton to drive her to meet her husband—outside State Prison.



NEXT ISSUE'S NOVEL

MURDER NIGHTMARE

*A Baffling Mystery Packed with Suspense,
Surprises and Action*

By NORMAN A. DANIELS

CAN YOUR SCALP PASS THE

* **F-N TEST?**



*The Famous
Finger Nail Test

"It's F-N, the test for men!" Scratch your head—if you find dryness or loose dandruff you need Wildroot Cream-Oil. Buy the large economy size.

YOUR HAIR CAN LOOK
LIKE THIS WITH NEW
**WILDROOT
CREAM-OIL**

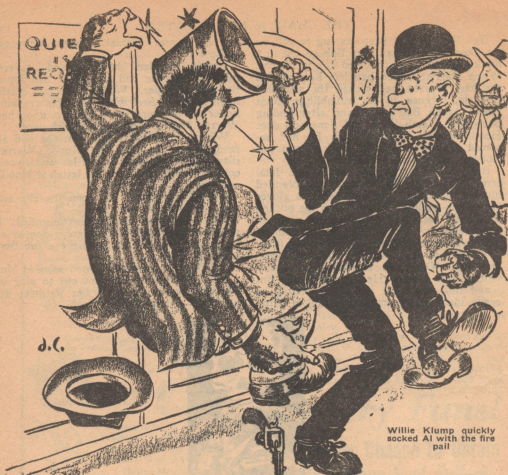
2 Only a little Wildroot Cream-Oil can do a big job for your hair. Keeps your hair well groomed all day long without a trace of that greasy, plastered down look! Your hair looks good and feels good too!



NON-ALCOHOLIC
CONTAINS REFINED
LANOLIN!

3 Refined LANOLIN is a soothing oil that closely resembles the oil of the human skin. Get Wildroot Cream-Oil from your barber or druggist.





Willie Klump quickly
socked Al with the fire
pail

THE WITNESS SHARE

By JOE ARCHIBALD

*Willie Klump, the Hawkeye Hawkshaw, Uses Poker Tactics
to Help the Police Clean Up a Full House of Jewel Thieves!*

WILLIAM KLUMP, President of the Hawkeye Detective Agency, Private Investigating Done, tossed his three fives, an ace and a queen away and looked sadly at the nice poker pot piled up in the center of the table at the Triangle Social Club. Aloysius "Satchelfoot" Kelly, whose occupation was a detective, said to Willie, "Okay, I take the moola an' don't have to show my hand. You'll never be a poker player, flathead!"

Willie picked up Kelly's cards. He had one pair of nines and the other three cards were garbage. Willie threw the pasteboards down and called Satchelfoot a dirty conniver

and also a crook. "An' I had three dolls over them fives! There should be new rules against thieves like you, Kelly!"

"H-m-m-m, eight bucks an' forty cents," Satchelfoot said, tallying the take. "Thanks for the two an' a half, Willie. Why do you play games that requires brains, huh?"

"Look, Satchelfoot, I was to take Gertie out to dinner tonight," Willie said, sweetening his mood. "How about givin' me back the two-fifty an' I'll write you an I.O.U."

"You are talkin' to a stranger, Willie."

"You mean a crumb, is what! Awright, you paddle-footed robber!" William Klump said. "There'll come a day—"

"Ha ha," Satchelfoot scoffed. "You are the worst sucker I ever saw. That Gertie has been pitchin' woo with a commando named McGurkle the last couple weeks. An' you also want to feed that two-timin' kitty?"

"You are speakin' of the girl I—anyways, she told me about McGurkle. He is a second cousin of hers an' is lonesome in New York as his relatives are all in Omaha," Willie argued.

"A commando with Gertie," Kelly kept needling. "It is like a tiger-tamer in a zoo takin' his vacation goin' huntin' for tigers. Well, I have better things to do than tarry here with the likes of you. Don't eat too much filly mignons."

Willie met Gertie Mudgett in front of one of their favorite public dining rooms and told her what had happened to his financial standing.

"Oh, Willie," Gertie sniffed. "How many times have I told you what a crummy poker player you are. When you ain't holdin' them you got to make them believe you are. Can't you never remember that? Look, I just bought a War Bond and all I got is a dollar and sixty cents. I will eat the dollar dinner an' it serves you right you will have to eat a ham an' cheese san'wich. Why do I bother with you?"

"Maybe because Commando McGurkle lef' town," Willie said in a fine pique. "Maybe you think I am as dumb as I look."

"Some things are impossible, Willie," Gertie said. "Maybe you think I'm a liar, huh? I ain't his second cousin? Now I won't stand here an' let nobody call me a liar. I got a good mind—"

"That's a matter of opinion. I mean I did not say you was a liar, Gertie," Willie yelled. "Look, le's go in, huh?"

They did. Willie ate a ham and ersatz cheese sandwich and stared goggle-eyed at the roast lamb and mashed and green peas that Gertie stoked away with great gusto. "I wisht you had Joey McGurkle's shoulders, Willie."

"Oh, I ain't such a physical wreck seein' the kind of food I git," Willie hinted.

"He showed me tricks," Gertie said. "I could break your arm just like that!" She snapped her fingers.

"Isn't that wonderful?" Willie gulped. "Did he lend you his trench knife?"

AN HOUR later, Willie escorted Gertie to her brownstone and in the hallway just before he took his leave, Gertie said, "Make out you are a wolf an' make a pass at me, Willie."

"Huh?"

"Yeah, I mean like as if this was the first time you took me out an' figured I was whistle-bait. Go ahead, Willie, as I want to show you how you needn't never worry about Gert."

"Like this, maybe," Willie said and made a pass. Then wham-o-o! The president of the Hawkeye Detective agency did not know exactly how it happened. He took a ride on a big pin-wheel, felt himself tossed off it and landed in a corner of the hall on his angelbones with his feet against a framed motto that said:

THE HOUSE OF FRIENDS.

"There, Willie, you see?" Gertie said and helped him assume a vertical position. "I pulled the punch an' didn't break your arm."

"Well, g-goodnight, Gertie," Willie moaned.

"Look, I was thinkin', Willie. Why don't you an' me team up like the Lean Man an' Dora, or Mr. an' Mrs. South, huh? I'm always afraid you'll git killed sometime when I ain't around, an' maybe we'd git so famous we would git on the radio an' movies."

"The couples you mentioned are married," Willie said.

"Well . . . ?"

"Uh? Er-goodnight, Gertie," Willie said, and hurried out, hearing Gertie Mudgett's handbag thump against the door he quickly slammed shut behind him. There was a crick in his neck and he was sure of water on the knee and there was very little spring to his step as he hied to the rooming house he had moved into only ten days before because his old landlady had walked in on him and asked what was cooking.

Willie walked into the hall and up the first flight of steps and then a lodger came down from above as if a draft board toughie was after him and he crashed into Willie and took him almost to the front door again.

"Look, I am gettin' tired of this," Willie choked out. "An' they listed me as a 4 F. I . . ."

"Git off me, you mug!" a voice said. "I got to git to a murder. I am a reporter an' a guy called me—"

"A murder?" Willie cried out. "Why didn't you say so? Here let me help you."

Ten minutes later, William Klump and a police reporter for "The Morning Comet" were streaking along East Forty-Ninth to Lexington. "Yeah—Klump—pal of mine—called—me. Loft knocked off—jewelry—joint—a guy—was—plugged."

"What a break!" Willie panted. "So close—t'home, hah?"

There were two police cars in front of a tavern, and clients of the poor man's bistro were milling about and trying to get past the cops and up a stairway. Willie saw no sign of Satchelfoot Kelly and chuckled at the thought he had beat the boob to the punch. He flashed a badge and followed the reporter up to the loft and there on the floor was a citizen in the uniform of a police patrol outfit.

Willie stepped over the corpse and into the

jewelry concern's small operations office. The glass counter was shattered and the door of the safe swung open. Willie stooped to pick up a ruby and found out that it was a drop of vital fluid that had once been in the veins of the victim.

"Awright, let me in here," a gruff voice suddenly said. "Or is this a private party, huh?"

"Hiya, Kelly?"

"Uh-uh," Willie said and looked out through the door. "Did you take a detour around Jersey City, Satchelfoot?"

"Who the heck said that? I—you, Klump!" Kelly yipped. "Who told you about—?"

"You never heard of my carrier pigeon service?" Willie asked. "I got two that can talk. Well, don't stand there like a stature. Do somethin' about this crime."

"Okay, blubbermouth!" Kelly snapped. "An' lay off me or I'll push your face down your throat."

"What did I say?" Willie asked a man.

The M.D. who specialized in briefing the violently removed knelt down and went through his routine. "Shot through the heart," he said. "Why they send for me sometimes, I don't know. They heard the rhubarb in the tavern downstairs so they know what time it happened. Take over, Kelly, I'm goin' back to that detective story I was readin' an' see how it come out."

Willie Klump climbed to the top of a file cabinet and watched the proceedings from there. Satchelfoot had the place combed for clues, ordered pictures taken, and then allowed the crew of the morgue limousine to remove the cadaver. A big cop brought three tavern habitue's upstairs and Kelly used them for quiz kids.

One of the citizens had no hat and there was a knot on the top of his pate the size of a darning egg. "I was just about t' foller these other guys into the joint when I hear somethin' like a gun goin' off. It sounds like it took place up here so I run around t' the entrance to up here an' then somethin' hits me an' it wasn't a feather-duster. I land on my noggin an' git a unconducted trip around the milky way—no, I didn't reckernize who slugged me."

SATCHELFOOT KELLY gave forth with a disdainful snort.

"Nobody never sees nothin' in cases like these," he griped.

"An' they won't," Willie put in "until guys accompany crooks like war correspondents. Anyways, you are hired to find out for yourself, Kelly."

"You shut up, Willie, or I'll put you in that safe an' git all the combinations to it an' tear them up. Yeah, they come up here an' knock off some stuff an' the protective cop sneaked up an' almos' surprised 'em. Nobody

got a look at the bums."

"I saw a car go past just as me an' Eddie here went out to see what was keepin' Harold there an' while we was pickin' him up."

"What color?" Kelly asked quick.

"I don't remember," the bistro patron said.

"You don't know nothin', none of you, so git out!" Satchelfoot Kelly said exasperatedly. "Always I got t' do everythin' myself. No wonder crime pays!"

"You can say that again an' again," Willie quipped, just as Satchelfoot bent over and plucked something off the floor. He held it up to the light. "A forget-me-not," he said, "Well, what do you know?"

"A locomotive and two rah's for Kelly," Willie said. "It looks like the assassin wore the forget-me-not to remind him not to forget not to leave no clues, huh?"

Satchelfoot was taking aim with a wire waste-basket when a very perturbed citizen shoved him aside and came into the loft wringing his hands. "Wa-a-a-ait a minute," Kelly yelled. "Who you think you're pushin' around? Who you think you—?"

"Just who owns the place, that's all," the little character with the bald head and thick eye-glasses said. "Oh, I been robbed. There was sixty thousan' dollars' worth of diamonds in that safe. One was a big one that I was goin' to cut." He flopped down in a chair and clamped his hands against his head and swayed from side to side. "The things that happen to me, oh-h-h!"

"You should of been here a half hour sooner," Willie said. "Takin' an inventory or somethin'. Then you'd of been in the stiff chamber along with the patrol cop. People are never satisfied."

The jeweler's name was Guthrie Wiebold and he wanted some action.

"You are lookin' at the man who can give it to you, pal," Satchelfoot grinned. "I will make an arrest within an hour. It is a good thing I took a memory course once."

"When was that, Satchelfoot?"

"I don't rememb—you think you are funny, don't you, Willie? Well, just come with a real detective and see why he is still on the payroll instead of hiring out to trail wolfen' husbands like you."

"I wouldn't miss this for the world," Willie said, sliding down from the file cabinet. "Not even the post-war one." He picked up an old letter that was on the floor, folded it up and slipped it into his pocket when Satchelfoot was not looking. "You'd think they'd sweep up here once in awhile."

"There is a war on," the robbed citizen said testily. "You just try an' git cleanin' women."

"Come on, Willie," Satchelfoot said.

William Klump felt very important riding across town in the police car with Kelly and two other cops. It was like old times. When he followed Kelly up the stairs of a third

rate apartment house on Eleventh Avenue, he felt butterflies in this stomach. "Who lives here?" Willie asked.

Kelly said, "Shut up," and rapped on a door.

"Who is it?" a voice from inside wanted to know.

"It ain't nobody sellin' brushes," Satchelfoot said. "Open up, Bigsy."

The law was allowed in and Willie saw two characters who definitely smacked of the shady side. The larger gee looked quite hurt at the invasion.

"What's eatin' you, Kelly?"

"Bigsy, you have just got in from somewhere," Satchelfoot said. "The drizzle is still on you an' nights like this you could catch your death of cold. Did you forget you was out on parole?"

"How could he be in then?" Willie asked.

"Whose side you on, theirs or mine?"

Kelly yipped. "Awright, where you been the last two hours, Bigsy?"

"Who—me? Why me an' Sparky was out to a movie, Kelly. Where's them stubs, huh? Here somewheres—"

"Don't hand me that, Bigsy. Sparky here got his name from being quite efficient in snatching hot ice, Willie. Bigsy is a sort of Roscoe expert who usually sees to it Sparky does not get disturbed while robbing places like we just come from. Bigsy, there was a joint over on Lex just got cleaned an' it belonged to a citizen named Guthrie Wiebold. Own up, now. You search for the diamonds, boys!"

"I said we was to a movie," Bigsy gulped.

"Then go an' call up an' ask if they found the forgit-me-not you dropped, Bigsy," Satchelfoot snarled. "You was always partial to them remindin' posies. We found one where a character was rubbed out. So you better make that alibi stick."

"Huh? You mean—? Sparky, some crook has framed me. Why, the dirty—!"

THE cops did not find any diamonds.

But Bigsy Small could not prove he had gone to a movie with Sparky. Bigsy was on parole and that made it worse for him. Satchelfoot told the boys to cover Bigsy and Sparky with the artillery while he got the cuffs on them. "You see, Willie, what a memory I got. What you doin' on your han's an' knees?"

"I dropped a collar button, Satchelfoot," Willie said. "A spare I carry." He got up, pretty sure that Satchelfoot had jumped at a conclusion once more but had missed with the punch. "I sure admire you, Satchelfoot. That was fast work. If you wanted cops to forget about you, Bigsy, why did you wear that forget-me-not? You see you always slip up, you crooks."

"You can't pin this on me, Kelly!" Bigsy howled.

"I will nail it on you, pal," the detective grinned. "Now beat it, Willie."

Willie did not sleep any better than an owl with hives that night. He went to his office early and cooked himself a pair of eggs on his burner. While eating his breakfast, he admitted that Satchelfoot was a heel but at the same time he knew of a more famous one. What Willie could not understand were the things he began writing down in his notebook, for Willie Klump would need to carry a great bunch of forget-me-nots to remind him he had them. With Willie a thought was as elusive as an eel dipped in alemit.

"Don't make sense," Willie wrote. "What I saw makes me pretty sure Bigsy and Sparky didn't do it. But why don't they tell where they was while the robbery and rubout was bein' perpetrated? They had to work fast to stash the rocks away 'fore they got home as they wa'n't in their room. So maybe they had a union man—er—confederate to do it for them, but would them two trust them with somebody else? No!"

"Could be, crooks will tell the truth at times. If Bigsy and Sparky didn't commit the crime, and I don't think they did, how will I prove it? That's the catch awright. Oh, well."

Willie got ready for the hay and turned on his radio. The Lean Man was on. Chick Narles and Dora were in the midst of quizzing a blond crime suspect too close when Willie tuned in.

"Oh, Chickie, darling. Turn around. It's me, Dora. I've been watching through the keyhole and your technique isn't—let me show you, darling. Kerwhap!—Oh, my head, Dora. Look, I can explain—"

"Humph," Willie said and snapped off the radio. "The corn is green t'night. Huh, we'd be famous like Mr. an' Mrs. South—" Willie began to drop off—"when you ain't—holdin' them, Willie, you got to make believe you are—b-z-z-z-z-z-z!" Willie snapped out of it. "Why—er—not?" he suddenly asked himself, then jumped out of bed and grabbed pencil and paper. In the morning he would know what he had thought about the night before. He scribbled like fury, chuckled to himself. An hour later he was really sawing the hickory logs.

At ten o'clock the next morning, Willie picked up a newspaper and read about Bigsy and Sparky being held for knocking off one Ellsworth Bruggy, protective patrolman. It seemed that Bigsy and Sparky could not or would not give an alibi as to their whereabouts while Bruggy was getting the permanent brush-off and when the diamonds were snatched. Aloysius Kelly announced through the fourth estate that the crooks would succumb to the temperature of the grill-room very soon.



HANDKERCHIEF TEST



**PROVES VITAL ZONE SPOTLESS
AND FREE FROM "GOO"—no matter
how often you smoke it!**



**HESSON GUARD
MILANO**

RATIONED MOTORISTS

Now Get **EXTRA
GASOLINE MILEAGE**



FITS ALL CARS

Constructed of six parts,
fused into a single unit.
Adjusted and sealed at
the factory. Very quickly
installed by anyone.

Now you can get up to 30% extra gasoline mileage with a Vacu-matic on your car. Quicker pick-up, smoother running, added power and precious gasoline savings guaranteed.

Automatic Supercharge Principle
Vacu-matic is entirely different! Operates on the Supercharge principle. Saves gas. Automatically provides a better gas mixture. Guaranteed to give up to 30% extra gas mileage, more power and better performance.

AGENTS TRIAL OFFER

Every car, truck, tractor or prospect. Send name, address on postcard for big money-making offer and how you get yours for introduction.

Vacu-matic Co., 7617-1172 W. State St., Wauwatosa 13, Wis.

"I wonder," Willie said, then began certain rounds. He walked into a lunchroom on East Fiftieth and waxed loquacious with the counterman who was no little Lord Fauntleroy any way you looked at him. Willie knew the chow-rustler had once matriculated at a certain reformatory.

"Yeah, the cops ain't sayin'," Willie said to the ex-con. "A certain character did reckonize one of the slayers. They are keepin' mum so's nothin' won't never happen to her."

"Yeah? A dame, hah?"

"Don't tell nobody now," Willie said. "I—er—am a little short of funds an' if you'd trust me for some pancakes an' syrup. I could leave my watch as sec—"

"Think nothin' of it, pal," the character said. "I been that way meself."

William Klump ate his pancakes and set forth. He strolled into a poolroom and kibitzed and said things that pricked the ears of one or two cue-wielders. He visited a dozen assorted pleasure spots and soon came to a bistro on Lexington near Fiftieth Street. Willie was quite friendly with one of the barkeeps and could get a snort or two on the cuff.

"Thanks, Pete," Willie said when a beer was shoved toward him. There were half a dozen clients in the place and one was leaning against the juke box and listening to its music.

"Looks like they'll get the guys that knocked off that cop an' stole the dazzling dornicks, Pete," Willie said. "Crooks don't know from nothin'. There was a doll reckernized one of the killers but he don't know it. She tol' me she did an' then run off that night. She got scairt when she thought quick what might happen if she put it down for the cops."

"No foolin', Klump."

"Yeah. Ha, Pete, imagine. Me bein' a detective an' she spillin'—sure, I'll take another beer. Nice-lookin' tomatar at that. Red hat with a feather in it, an' wearin' a snood. Had one of them short yeller fur coats on. Say, what kind of fur is that, Pete?"

"Dyed cat, Klump. I bought me wife one oncet. Ha, who would skin a cat that wasn't died—I mean dyed. I—"

"Well, I got to git goin' along," Willie said. "I got to call up my tomat—er—girl frien'."

PPRIVATE detective Willie Klump, went to his office and called Gertie.

"You see what Kelly did again, Willie?" she said when he contacted her.

"Why can't you be so smart?"

"Oh, I git along," Willie said.

"You'll never amount to nothin'," Gertie said. "What you call me for?"

"Huh? Why do you think? When I git

lonesome for you—er—is you is or is you ain't my—er—?”

“Oh, that's cute, Willie. Where will I meet you, huh?”

“The Rosebud Tavern on Lexington,” Willie said. “Bring some sugar. It is like callin' Newcastle an' askin' it to bring coal, ain't it?”

“Oh, Willie, you—hee! I'll do that, honey.”

“G'bye,” Willie said, and then put his feet up on the desk and grinned into space. “You got t' know how t' handle women, yeah.”

“You look ravenous t'night,” Willie said when he met Gertie in front of the tavern. “Wearin' just the things I like for favorites, Gertie. What you hear from McGurkle?”

“He is on his way t' Omaha, Willie. Oh, stop bein' jealous. You are my only infinity an' you know it. I brought ten bucks, Willie, an' will we have fun?”

The evening waxed merry until Gertie joined the Navy too long and guessing that this was as good excuse as any, the president of the Hawkeye Detective Agency got up from his table and went over to where Gertie was swapping nifties with a pair of gobs.

“Pardon me,” Willie said. “You remember a civilian who looked like me? Am I s'posed t' sit over there in a corner an' play tick-tacks-toe, huh?”

“Go 'way,” a sailor said, and pushed Willie. “You bother me. You want t' play puss-in-the-corner, pal? I hit you in the puss an' you lay in the corner all night? Will I bust him one, Babe?” [Turn page]

America's Best Dime's Worth of Picture Entertainment



NOW ON SALE—10c EVERYWHERE

BE PREPARED FOR SICKNESS or ACCIDENT

THIS HOSPITALIZATION PLAN

PROTECTS YOU AND
YOUR FAMILY



Costs only **3c**
A DAY • EACH ADULT
1½c A DAY • EACH CHILD

FOR SICKNESS OR ACCIDENT

Hospital Expenses paid, up to . . . **\$540.00**
(beginning with the first day)

FOR ACCIDENT

Doctor Expense paid, up to . . . **\$135.00**
Loss of Wages reimbursed, up to . . . **\$300.00**
Loss of Life by Accident **\$1000.00**

WAR COVERAGE AND EXTRA BENEFITS

Childbirth Expenses paid, up to . . . **\$60.00**

● It's easy to run into debt when sickness or accident hit. Under the Family Mutual Plan, you'll be able to pay your hospital bill. And in case of accident, your doctor expenses, and you'll be reimbursed for loss of time from work. You can enter any hospital in the United States or Canada. In the hospital you may have the care of your family doctor. Simply present your Family Mutual card at the time of admittance. Benefits applying to children are 50% of those paid adults.

MAIL COUPON TODAY • No Agent Will Bother You

FAMILY MUTUAL LIFE INS. CO., WILMINGTON, DEL.

Family Mutual Life Insurance Co.
Wilmington 99, Del.

2-76

Please send me, without obligation, complete information on your Economical Hospitalization Plan.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____



On the Threshold of Danger Strange Things Happen!

HAVE YOU ever sensed the imminent danger of a loved one—even though he is across the sea or continent? Have you been suddenly awakened by the call of your name—then realize that the one who spoke it was thousands of miles distant? If you ever had these experiences—as millions now have; learn the truth about them.

Love and friendship create a bond of consciousness between humans. This consciousness can be extended to bridge the voids of time and space. When human souls are bared under great emotional stress, then this *indwelling faculty* is released. Learn that there is far more to life, to the fullness and glory of living than you suspect.

Accept This FREE Book

Let the ROSICRUCIANS (not a religion), a worldwide organization of thinking men and women, show you that material limitations need not actually separate you from those you love. Convert the mysteries of your being into intelligible, usable laws of accomplishment. Write today for free copy of the book *The Mastery of Life*. It will explain how you may share these startling truths of self.

Address Scribe: M.L.B.



The Rosicrucians
SAN JOSE (AMORC) CALIF.



MAGIC LIQUID Prints Photos

On Wood, Leather, Cloth, Cards, Letterheads or almost any surface. Use any snapshot or other negative. Make hundreds of prints without learning negatives. Won't wash off. Easy to use. Complete kit for 100 or more photos cost only \$1.99 postpaid. P.O. O.D. (Canada \$1.50 money order only) no C.O.D. (a). Satisfaction positively guaranteed. Rush order today for the original kit, complete Magic Liquid Printing Guide.
J. & R. MFG. CO.

Dept. 395, 320 W. 7th, Brockton, Mass., Louisville 3, Ky.

USED Correspondence Courses

Complete HOME-STUDY COURSES and self-instruction textbooks, slightly used. Sent, acid, guaranteed. All subjects, 100% satisfaction. Cash paid for used courses. Full details & 100-page illustrated brochure costing Free.

Write Nelson Co., 321 S. Webster Ave., Dept. 2-06, Chicago 4, Ill.

"Willie, you are bein' unreasonable," Gertie sniffed. "Can't I help build up the morale of our armed forces?"

"Huh? First it's commandos an' now gobs. Can't you find no beachhead with Marines on it?"

"Now, look, Buster!—"

"Willie, don't start no fight," Gertie said, her jaw hardening. "Or I'll break—"

"My arm, yeah. Well, look here, all of you. I brought this tom-gal in here an'—"

A big citizen came over and asked Willie to kindly calm down or he would personally knock out all of Willie's teeth. A gob asked the bouncer who the heck he thought he was buttin' in an' got a clip on the ear and then there was a mess with the bouncer and two gobs in quite a brawl on the floor and Gertie Mudgett snatched up her coat and wanted out.

"You started it, Gert," Willie said. "Well, I'll see you home."

"Applesauce," Gertie said. "I'll go home by my own self and you go soak your head, Willie Klump."

"If you insist," Willie said and smothered a chuckle. He gave Gertie two minutes start and then left the bistro which was now being briefed by the cops. He caught a glimpse of his lady love turning a corner two blocks away and then got a gander at a male character who seemed to be following her.

Willie set forth and then a cab slued up to the curb and pelted Willie with a wave of mud and water. Willie moved in and demanded the cabby's name and number and said he would sue the company.

"You try an' git my name or license number an' I'll take them right back along with your head, Junior," a very rough-looking taxi driver said. "Will we start playin'?"

"I know my rights," Willie argued, then remembered something. "I got t' be goin'. Oh, if I'm too late. Oh-h-h!"

Willie hurried. Four blocks away, walking past an alley he heard a cry for help. He went into the alley and met Gertie coming out. Her hair looked like a crow's nest and her snood was around her neck and her tongue was hanging out. Her eyes were crossed.

"It's me, Willie," the private detective said. "What happened, Gertie?"

"Wha-a-a-a? I was nearly strangled and with my own snood, Willie Klump. I was attacked an' thrown into the alley—here—an'—gulp—where's my hat with the feather? Some guy tried t' kill me. It was a good thing I was nice to McGurkle when he was in town. Willie, git me some air. I mean some sellin' smalts—"

Willie finally picked up Gertie's red hat and brought it to her. Gertie was sitting on some steps, unwinding the snood from her

windpipe. "It was a close call, Willie. Who'd think anybody would attack—?"

"How did you manage t' drive him off, huh?" Willie asked, hoping that a certain cab driver would find his wife had run away when he got home.

"Judo, Willie. I finally got that holt on him an' I heard his arm snap. He yelled bloody murder but got away. My head was spinnin' so an'—"

"Let me brush off your fur coat, Gertie," Willie said. "Huh, it sheds fast, don't it?"

"Who would want t' kill me, Willie?"

"There have been times when I— That's right, who would besides—I mean it is funny, ain't it?"

"Ha-ha-a-a-a!" Gertie laughed. "Wa'n't it a scream? I should strangle you, William Klump. Now see I git home this time!"

AT LAST Willie breathed a heavy sigh of relief when he saw Gertie to her door and heard her turn a key in the lock. He hurried out and went to the nearest drug store and found it still open. He asked the man at the prescription desk for the names of all the reputable doctors and otherwise who plied their trade in the immediate vicinity.

"Got about thirty listed here, Mister," the pharmacist said, looking at the badge

[Turn page]

Approved by Parents and Teachers



NOW ON SALE 10c AT ALL STANDS



Satisfied with my JOB and PAY? **NOT ME!!**

"Some day I'll really get a break and go right on to the top."

That's wishful thinking.

You know that the "breaks" go to the man or woman who is prepared to take advantage of them—to the person who can fill the better job and is worth more money. He makes the "breaks" instead of waiting for them.

You can influence your own future by preparing now for the step forward—so that openings come because you are equipped for them—not as the result of luck.

Why not take the road that thousands of ambitious men and women have taken to help them to better jobs and more money.

Prepare now. Send the coupon below—check the business field of your choice and we'll send you without obligation our FREE 48-page book describing the opportunities and complete information on that field.

Send the coupon Now. It may be the turning point in your life to that better job and more money.

LASALLE Extension University A Correspondence Institution

417 S. Dearborn St., Dept. 6329-R, Chicago 5, Ill.

I want to make my own "breaks" by preparing for a better job. Send me your free 48-page booklet on the subject I have checked below.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foremanship | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Law: LL.B. degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C.P.A. Coaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Business English |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Effective Speaking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Executive Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Stenotypy |

Name.....Age.....

Position.....

Address.....

City.....Zone.....State.....

NOW JUST \$1 A MONTH PROVIDES CASH WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST!



AMAZING NEW GOLD SEAL POLICY

Provides all-around protection, cash for almost every emergency! Issued by old-line LEGAL RESERVE company, yet actually costs less than \$1 a month. Protection you need at a price you can afford!

Pays for ANY and ALL Accidents, ALL Common Sicknesses, as provided, even minor injuries. Disability benefits paid from first day. No waiting period. NO, this is NOT the usual "limited" policy. NO jokers. NO trick clauses. It's extra liberal!

NO MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Accumulated CASH BENEFITS

Up To **\$6000.00** for ACCIDENTAL LOSS OF LIFE, LIMBS or SIGHTS

Up To **\$2400.00** for ACCIDENT DISABILITY at rate up to \$100 monthly for as long as 24 months

Up To **\$300.00** for SICKNESS DISABILITY at rate up to \$100 monthly for as long as 3 months

Up To **\$650.00** for HOSPITAL EXPENSES as a result of either sickness or accident


FREE 10-Day Inspection Coupon

The SERVICE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
446-1 Service Life Bldg. Omaha 2, Nebr.

Without cost or obligation, send your GOLD SEAL \$1-A-MONTH Policy for 10 DAYS FREE INSPECTION.

Name _____
Address _____ Age _____
City _____ State _____
Beneficiary _____

LEARN MEAT CUTTING
At Home — In Spare Time



Get into the vital meat industry. Concise, practical Home Training based on 25 years proven instruction method used at National's famous resident school. Prepares you for bigger pay as Meat Cutter, supervisor, market manager or more money in your own store. Do no trading at your spare time permits. Diploma. Start NOW to turn your spare hours into money. Send for FREE bulletin today. No obligation. National School of Meat Cutting, Inc., Dept. T-6-9, Toledo 4, O.

CAN YOU SELL? **MAKE Up To \$40 Daily**

Connect For Bigger Earnings

If big money don't scare you—tie up now with R.S.B. Our plan is a natural. Give away giant size Dictionaries, Cook Books, Self Improving World Atlases, etc., with NATIONALLY FAMOUS MAGAZINES. Deals from \$5.00 to \$15.00. Big profits all year around. No restoration point to reading demand. **GET SELLING OUTRIGHT!** You take orders—we deliver.

542 S. Dearborn St.
Readers Service Bureau Dept. 106, Chicago 5, Ill.

PULVEX FLEA POWDER



Kills fleas

100% SATISFACTION
...OR MONEY BACK

25¢ (AND UP)

Willie flashed. "Somethin' wrong?"

"Why no," Willie said. "I just am askin' in case I need some consultin' when I get an awful disease. Let me write them down but fast."

Ten minutes later Willie was calling M.D.'s, working frantically on the process of elimination. The first three he called were not in. The fourth told Willie he was locking up and whatever ailed him could wait even if it was a severed jugular vein.

"You should not make no hypocritical oath if you can't treat sick people," Willie said, guessing that would hold the croaker. He kept calling. Three more were not having office hours. Then he called a Dr. Gulliver S. Quinch and asked could he see him right away if there was no patients ahead of him. He was told that there were thirty-one in the waiting-room.

Willie sweated it out. Time was of the essence, even more so than Chenelle Number 5. He kept dialing. Finally a Doctor Cadmus Armbuster answered his distress signal and said hyriedly. "Sorry, you better call up another physician. I have an emergency case I'm working on. Take me another half hour."

"Broken arm, huh?" Willie hazarded.

"Why how did you know? Who is—?"

"Your name," Willie said. "It is a hunch. Armbuster. Ha ha!"

"Ha-ha to you!" the M.D. said and hung up.

Willie hurried over to the little apartment house on East Forty-Ninth where this croaker had his office and he stood in a doorway across the street and waited. Finally a citizen emerged, his left arm in a sling. He looked up and down the street before he started westward. William Klump, his manhunting blood at the boiling point, trailed his quarry to Seventh Avenue and Fifty-sixth Street and saw the winged citizen enter a hostelry of no mean repute.

Casually Willie walked up to the desk and gave the clerk on duty a quick gander at his private detective's badge and asked the name of the lodger with the arm in a sling who was standing by the elevators waiting for one to come down.

"Him? Let's see now. Oh, yes. Name is Pinzer. He and another man are in room Six hundred and eight. Look if you got a job to do make it quiet will you, Inspector?"

"I'll try," Willie said and kept his face away from the elevators. "He gone up yet?"

"Just this minute, Inspector."

"Lieutenant," Willie corrected, and walked across the lobby. He went upstairs and sneaked up to the door marked 608 and put a big ear against it. He heard all he wanted to hear.

"But, Al, she was a pistol. She was half choked off when she threw me a dozen feet. If she'd had all her marbles I wouldn't be here at all. Oh, my arm!"

"We gotta git that babe, see?" a very gravelly voice yelped. "Here we got it framed on that crook, Bigsy, an'—I'll git her myself. Somebody in that tavern oughter know where she lives. You lay low an'—"

"Good luck, Al."

Willie waited. Out of the room came a very substantial-looking character, clad in a big polo coat and green fedora. Willie stuck out a foot and Al made a one point landing on his chin and Willie quickly straddled him and tried to find a Betsy on the rough boy's person. None was forthcoming before the character with the sling made his appearance and in his good hand was clutched just what Willie needed.

"Freeze, snooper!" Pinzer snarled. "Say, I've seen you somewhere—yeah, the guy that tipped us off about the tomatater. Get up, Al, an' we'll git him there an' take care of the bum. I got a hunch this funny-lookin' bozo has pulled a—"

The big citizen started to get to his feet and then Willie saw something on the wall and remembered having seen one before. You broke the glass in case of fire. Pinzer fired just as Willie set the alarm off and the bullet passed close enough to the big crook to sting him.

"Ow-w-w-w-w!" the big character screeched and Willie clung to him and used him for a shield. A door opened down the hall and a neat-looking number in a filmy wrap saw the rhubarb and began screeching. More doors opened and male and female voices blended and resolved into an uproar you only expected to hear at a Giant-Pack-ers game.

"Let's scam, Al," the crook with the Betsy yipped. "I'll grab the stuff. You hold that mug off. Here, catch the gun!"

Al tried to make a nice catch but Willie Klump hit him with a fire-pail just as it struck against his avid palms. The husky gee collapsed once more and then Willie picked up the baby howitzer and invaded the nefarious citizen's room and caught Pinzer reaching under the bed for a satchel.

Willie let go with his right foot and the unlawful one slid out of sight for a moment. Pinzer was trying to put bullets up through the beauty-rest mattress just as the manager of the hotel, three house detectives, and six cops took over.

"Whoever you are, pack up your things and leave at once!" the manager said and got Willie by the nape of the neck. "What are you tryin' t' do, wreck the—?"

"Oh, stop," Willie said. "Help me get what is under the bed out. He is a robber and he also knocked off somebody. Could

[Turn page]

**UGLY
BLACKHEADS
OUT
in SECONDS
with**

**VACUTEX
BLACKHEAD
EXTRACTOR
\$1.00**

**EVEN
THESE
..EASILY**



Blackheads are ugly, offensive, embarrassing. They clog pores, mar your appearance, invite criticism. Now your blackheads can be removed in seconds, scientifically, and easily, without injuring or squeezing the skin. VACUTEX creates a gentle vacuum around the blackhead, cleans out hard-to-reach places in a jiffy.

SAFE • SURE

SANITARY

DAINTY

FAST

PLEASANT

Germ laden hands never touch the skin. Simply place the direction slider over your blackhead, draw back extractor . . . and it's out. Release extractor and blackhead is ejected. VACUTEX does it all! Don't risk infection, order today!

JUST 3 EASY STEPS

Yes, in a jiffy, VACUTEX removes blackheads, painlessly and harmlessly. You have blackheads—then apply VACUTEX, and then presto, change, they're out.

10 DAY TRIAL OFFER

Don't wait until embarrassing criticism makes you act. Don't risk losing out on popularity and success because of ugly, dirt-clogged pores. ACT NOW! Enjoy the thrill of having a clean skin, free of pore-clogging, embarrassing blackheads. Try VACUTEX for 10 days. We guarantee it to do all we claim. If you are not completely satisfied your \$1.00 will be immediately refunded.

**BALLCO PRODUCTS COMPANY, Dept. 4306
19 W. 44 St., New York 18, New York**

- ☐ Ship C. O. D. I will pay postman, \$1.00 plus postage. My \$1.00 will be refunded if I am not delighted.
☐ I Prefer to enclose \$1.00 now and save postage. (Same guarantee as above.)

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY & ZONE **STATE**

Pays HOSPITAL BILLS for Whole Family

**Costs 3c a Day for Adults
Only 1½c a Day for Children**

It's here! The new Family Hospital and Surgical Expense Policy you need and want! One policy insures whole family—mother, father, children, anyone from 3 months to 65 years. No medical examination. Pays up to \$310.00 hospital and surgical bills for EACH and EVERY person insured. Pays up to \$100.00 doctors' fees for operations. Pays up to \$50.00 for operating room, medicines, ambulance, etc. Covers sicknesses, accidents, operations, childbirth, female disorders, and many other disabilities not covered by other policies. You select your own doctor and hospital. This full-coverage Family Hospital and Surgical Policy issued DIRECT to you at special family rates by big, strong company with over \$3,000,000.00 in assets. Investigate! SEND NO MONEY, but mail the coupon below quick for full details—sent FREE. No agent will call on you. Act today!

STERLING INSURANCE CO.

4829 Sterling Bldg., CHICAGO 11, ILL.

Send me your FREE INSPECTION Office of EDW-COST Family Hospitalization Plan.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

INVENTORS

Learn now—without obligation—how to protect and sell your invention. Secure Free "Patent Guide," containing complete information about patent procedure and selling inventions. Write

CLARENCE A. O'BRIEN & HARVEY JACOBSON

Registered Patent Attorneys

58-E Adams Building • Washington 4, D. C.

STAMMER?

This new 128-page book, "Stammering, Its Cause and Correction," describes the Bogue Unit Method for scientific correction of stammering and stuttering—successful for 44 years. Free—no obligation.

Benjamin N. Bogue, Dept. 4254, Circle Tower, Indianapolis 4, Ind.

GET THIS
FREE
BOOK

RUPTURED Why Suffer ? FREE SEE THIS NEW PATENT INVENTION YOU'LL BE AMAZED AT RESULTS

Discover how you too can avoid the CONSTANT DANGER of a true that doesn't hold and makes life miserable. Send for FREE Booklet "NEWLY PATENTED RUPTURE CARE." Tells all about VITA-PNEUMATIC NATURE-ADE® U. S. Reg. appliance. Positively no obligation to buy. Just fill in and

MAIL COUPON TODAY!

PNEUMATIC APPLIANCE, 103 Park Ave., N.Y. 17, N.Y. Dept. 57-1
Send me free under plain seal and wrapper booklet "NEWLY PATENTED RUPTURE CARE." No obligation to buy.

Name _____

Address _____

PSORIASIS—ECZEMA

You Can Have a Clean Skin! It Is Possible!

With Non-Greasy **EN-EX** a liquid,

Non-Staining applied externally

SENSATIONAL RESULTS REPORTED BY MANY!
ERUPTIONS VANISH OR MONEY BACK IN 2 WEEKS!

regular size bottle. Send currency or Money
Order, or sent C.O.D. Write TODAY!

\$1.00

Caution: Use only as directed.

"EN-EX" COMPANY

474 Society for Savings Bldg.

Cleveland, Ohio

you make hash without choppin' up some potatoes? I am a detective. Don't let that big slob in the polo coat git away!"

"He won't move for a week," a house dick said. "Who hit him with the axe?"

"Look," Willie said, opening a satchel.

"This is not broken glass. They are diamonds belongin' to a guy I met an' worth—come on out, Pinzer, with your hands up. Well, the good one, anyway!"

"Cripes," a house dick said. "Look at the ice, Mr. Whetstone."

"Take a print of this heel—I mean the heel of his shoe," Willie said. "Also, AP's. He is the big one out there. If it matches with a print I got on a piece of paper somewhere—and don't forget t' vacuum this little mug's suit as I think there is yellor hairs on it, like grows on them fluffy cats. He tried to strangle my girl who wears a fur coat the color—git me an aspirin."

KELLY, known as Satchelfoot, did not hear about Willie's coup until he arrived for work early the next morning. When he found out Willie had pinned the works on the two characters named Al Hambra and Squint Pinzer, he walked around the D.A.'s desk, banging his fists against his head. "How did the cluck do it?" he wanted to know.

"Him? Said it was because of a poker game he played with you, Kelly. His girl bawled him out for losin', and told him he should make out he had somethin' even when he didn't. So he made out he had a witness when he didn't, Kelly. Figured if he told it in enough places, that underworld grapevine would pick it up. They trailed the witness who was Klump's girl friend an' she had a narrow escape. They nearly strangled her with her snood an'—"

"They could've killed her," Satchelfoot yelped. "Oh, that—!"

The D.A. grinned. "When I reminded Klump of that he laughed. 'She was trained by commandos,' he says. Anyway the crooks forgot to bring a truck. Quite a character, isn't he, Kelly? Well, he had it all sewed up. We vacuumed Pinzer's suit, found scraps of fur on it. That heel print on the piece of paper Klump found in that loft—he produced the diamonds—"

"That dame know?" Satchelfoot asked with a leer.

"Yes. We've sent for her because we have to have the coat to prove Pinzer—oh get out of here, Kelly."

"Yeah, he won't live long, then. I'm happy now, D.A. About Bigsy. Why wouldn't he alibi?"

"If you were violating your parole somewhere," the D.A. said, "would you own up and go back to the hoosegow, Kelly? I don't know what it was he was doing because we can't prove anythin', but Bigsy knew we

couldn't pin this one on him even though that Al Hambra didn't confess he tried to frame Bigsy with the forget-me-not. Go away, I'm busy."

Willie Klump was in his office, his file cabinet and desk pushed against the door, and he listened for the sound of an elevator door sliding shut and the sound of familiar footsteps. At exactly eleven ayem, his vigil was rewarded. Gertie Mudgett tried his door, then knocked, then began to kick it.

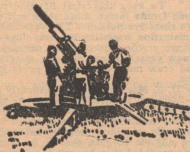
"Come out, Willie. I'll wait here until you start starvin'," Gertie yelled. "Tried to have me bumped off, huh? So you framed me as a witness an' had a gorilla trail me an' almost tied my gullet in a knot. William Klump, I have got a trench knife McGurkle give me an'—"

"Now, Gertie," Willie pleaded, "let me explain. I slipped up a little that night. A cab driver—well, I forgot what I'd cooked up for a minute. Then when you broke the crook's arm I had a swell lead. So you are like The Lean Man's Wife, huh? You said you wanted to help me solve crimes like in the radio, huh? An' you said to make out you had somethin' when you didn't if you wanted t' win. Let's forget it, huh?"

"McGurkle said to turn this knife around when you jab a guy with it, Willie," Gertie

[Turn page]

INVEST IN FREEDOM



BUY

UNITED STATES WAR SAVINGS
Bonds and Stamps

Every Payday!

4 WAYS To Be Your Own Boss!

NOW, more than ever before, is the right time to start a small profitable business of your own... or train yourself for a practical money-making trade in which you can be independent. TODAY take your first step, without cost or obligation. Just mail coupon—and by return mail you will get full information on the courses listed here.

watch and clock repairing



Learn at Home—In Your Spare Time

Prepare for a happy future of prosperity, security... and get a big-pay job now. Fascinating, high-grade occupation. You can EARN WHILE YOU LEARN. Shortest field for part-time work at home.

Practical Course in HOROLOGY

Thorough self-instruction training in American and Swiss watches, clocks. Special sections on alarm clock repairs. Interesting. LEARN-BY-DOING instruction method. Learn QUICKLY, easily. No previous experience necessary. WATCHMAKING IS BASIC TRAINING FOR AIRCRAFT INSTRUMENT WORK and other scientific precision jobs.

Amazing Low Price! Money-back Guarantee! Get into this fast-growing field NOW... big opportunity... don't delay. Mail coupon below for FREE information. No obligation.

locksmithing and key making

PRACTICAL UP-TO-DATE COURSE

How to pick locks, de-code, make master-keys, repair, install service, etc. New, self-instruction lessons for every handyman, home-owner, carpenter, mechanic, service station operator, fire-it shop, hardware dealer, gunsmith.

53 Easy Illustrated Lessons

Low Price! Satisfaction guaranteed or money back. Write now... no obligation.



practical RADIO servicing



SELF-INSTRUCTION COURSE

Teaches you the practical side of radio... repair, adjustment, operation, alteration, trouble-shooting. No previous knowledge necessary. Large clear illustrations, diagrams, charts, etc. **INTERESTING**

STEADY WORK! Set up a radio repair shop of your own—prepare for booming industrial electronics. This useful, how-to-do-it course brings you all the fundamentals, including mathematics, review questions, problems, answers. Strictly up-to-date. Low price. Coupon below will bring you full information you want immediately. Mail it in today!

MAIL ORDER BUSINESS

Your Big Opportunity!

34-lesson course on proved, tested, up-to-date, profitable methods. Amazing treasure-house of the best mail order plans and practices. How to start your mail order business on a small one-man scale... how to keep it growing more and more profitable month after month. Money-making FACTS.

WRITE FOR COMPLETE DETAILS ON ANY OF THESE COURSES. Send Coupon for World-Famous Copyrighted Success-Catalog—IT'S FREE! NELSON CO., Dept. 8F06, 321 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago 4, Ill.

FREE details... mail coupon!

NELSON CO., Dept. 8F06, 321 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago 4, Ill.

Please send me—FREE and without obligation—Illustrated Success-Catalog containing information about the course (or courses) I have checked below. No salesman will call.

☐ Watch and Clock Repairing. ☐ Locksmithing and Key Making. ☐ Practical Radio Servicing. ☐ Mail Order Business.

NAME _____

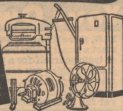
ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____



HERE'S A NEW AND VITAL BUSINESS!

LEARN ELECTRICAL APPLIANCE REPAIRING



Offers Big Money — Independence

If you are mechanically inclined—can hold and use tools it will pay you to learn electrical appliance repairing. Operate from your garage, basement, etc. Work as many hours as you wish—the appliance repairman is his own boss. On many types of repairs it is usual for a repairman to charge on the basis of \$5.00 to \$8.00 an hour!

No Previous Experience Needed

Profusely illustrated our new course shows you in simple, easy to understand language plus drawings and photographs, how to make each repair on refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, motors, fans, irons, etc., etc. Explains and gives you a working knowledge of electricity, welding, nickel plating, etc. Shows you how to build the power tools you need and how to solicit and keep business coming to you. Not a theory course but an honest to goodness practical course written by and used by repairmen the country over. Price of course is so low that the savings on your own household appliances will pay for it. Act now! Send today for FREE literature. Christy Supply Co., 2835 N. Central Ave., Dept. D-404, Chicago 34, Illinois.

Protect Entire Family Against HOSPITAL Bills

Certificate Paying Up to \$325 FREE

Send for **FREE** Inspection

\$1 A MONTH FOR ADULTS

25¢ A MONTH FOR CHILDREN

Protect yourself against bills from sickness or accident requiring hospital care. Including your family, lowers cost per person! Pays liberal benefits on hospital room and board, surgeon or doctor bills, X-Rays, many other items. Write today for FREE INFORMATION. No obligation. Postcard will do.

Atlas Mutual Benefit Assn., Dept. 19-F2, Wilmington, Del.

DETECTIVES

TRAINING—SECRET INVESTIGATIONS—FINGER PRINTS
Easy Method—Short Time. By Former Government Detective—Navant.
Home—Travel—Secret Code—Booklet FREE—WHITE, INTERNATIONAL
DETECTIVE SYSTEM, 1701-Y Monroe St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 12.

FREE — ENGRAVING — NEW NAME or INITIALS on 1945



14k Gold Finish FRIENDSHIP PIN

Write For Catalog

Send 42 cents, plus 8¢ Federal Tax, in Coin, Stamps or Money Order.

TASH NOVELTY ENGRAVING CO.

3201 SURF AVENUE, DEPT. 149-L, BROOKLYN 24, N.Y.

ANY PHOTO ENLARGED

Size 8 x 10 Inches on DOUBLE-WEIGHT PAPER

Shows prices for full length or bust form, groups, landscapes, pet animals, etc., or for 10 prints of any part of group pictures. Original returned with your 3 for \$1.25

SEND NO MONEY Just mail photo.

negative or snapshot (any size) and receive your enlargement, guaranteed. Returns, on beautiful double-weight portrait quality paper. Postpaid \$7.50 plus postage—or send \$6 with order and we pay postage. Take advantage of this amazing offer now. Send your photos today.

STANDARD ART STUDIOS

100 East Ohio Street Dept. 485-Q Chicago 11, Ill.

57¢



Mudgett said. "Are you goin' to come out? How long is your rent good for?"

"Ha, I am a month ahead," Willie said. "I have two boxes of soda crackers, a pound of coffee, a dozen eggs an' a crumb bun. I can hold out. Be reasonable, Gertie."

"Almos' strangled with my own snood," Gertie mumbled. "I'll wait, William Klump."

Willie finally had to call the cops and have them take Gertie Mudgett away. She almost got the book thrown at her for being in possession of a dangerous and murderous weapon and the D.A. said he would put her on probation for awhile if she would forget her homicidal mania. Willie Klump finally came down and had her released.

Two hours later she was chasing him up Broadway not far from the Polo Grounds. Willie finally shook her and grabbed a subway downtown. Reaching his room he packed his suitcase and arranged for a change of residence immediately. He would call Gertie up in about a week. If things had not changed with her, he would consider leaving town.

men WANTED By the U. S. Maritime Service

AS THE fury of the war in Europe mounts and as MacArthur's men inch nearer and nearer to the Japanese homeland in an effort to recapture our lost territories, the demand for military supplies will grow greater and greater.

That job of supply falls to the U. S. Maritime Service—it's their job to "deliver the goods." To keep this vital life-line to our far-flung fronts intact, more ships and crews to man them are needed. The War Shipping Administration is getting the new ships—getting them at the rate of three per day. As each new vessel slides down the waterway a trained crew must be ready to press it into service.

The U. S. Maritime Service urgently needs men—5,000 new trainees per month are needed and as future invasions in the Pacific are staged the need will continue.

Physically qualified men between 17 and 50 are eligible to join the U. S. Maritime Service provided they haven't been called for induction into the armed forces. Men from 17 to 35½ are offered specialized training in deck, engine, radio or purser-hospital departments and men up to 50 are eligible for the Steward's department.

The U. S. Maritime Service offers enrollees good pay while training, opportunities for promotion, a job with a postwar future, travel, and a chance to do their part toward helping win the war.

Those interested are asked to apply at their nearest U. S. Maritime Service Enrolling Office or any branch of the U. S. Employment Service.

DEATH BY PROXY (Concluded from page 49)

Cann aimed a second kick at the lowered chin and Smith collapsed, unconscious.

At that moment the door of the room opened with a crash and French rushed in with a drawn six-shooter.

He stared—dumbfounded—at the unconscious man on the floor, then stepped over and released McCann. McCann's first act was tear the gag from his mouth. Then he rubbed his numbed wrists as French knelt down and snapped a pair of handcuffs on Smith.

French stood up. "What happened to him?"

McCann grinned. "I kicked him. There's German efficiency for you. He forgot to tie my legs." He looked quizzically at French. "What did you bust in for? I could have handled him myself."

French thumbed toward the doorway where the native policeman was standing with popping eyes.

"He got your danger signal, McCann, listened at the door, then notified me. I came at once. We listened at the door and heard everything Smith said. Funny, isn't it, how the Heinies will brag if they get the chance." French laughed. "I saved your life, you ungrateful hound."

McCann's lips curled into a smile. "You didn't," he said stubbornly. "My long legs saved my life."

"They're long enough," French agreed. "I've always wondered what they were good for except to twist them around my wicker chairs. Now I know. I'll make no more cracks. There are other things you can do with them, even if it isn't along anthropological lines."

Are You A Mystery Fan?

Do you like the best current detective novels? If so, you will enjoy **DETECTIVE NOVEL MAGAZINE**, which has inaugurated a new policy of featuring outstanding \$2.00 and \$2.50 best-selling mystery books reprinted complete in every issue. These novels are carefully selected—the cream of the detective fiction crop!

The June issue features **HANGED FOR A SHEEP**, a \$2.00 mystery novel by Frances and Richard Lockridge starring the famous sleuthing pair, Mr. and Mrs. North.

DETECTIVE NOVEL MAGAZINE is now on sale at all stands, only 15c per copy.

Now for EVERY WORK SHOP! NEW Invention Electroplates by BRUSH



Easy to Plate **CHROMIUM**
GOLD, SILVER, NICKEL, COPPER

... For Pleasure and Profit!

If you have a workshop—at home or in business—you need this new Warner Electroplater. At the stroke of an electrified brush, you can electroplate models and projects—you can replate worn articles, faucets, tools, fixtures, silverware, etc., with a durable, sparkling coat of metal—Gold, Silver, Chromium, Nickel, Copper or Cadmium. Method is easy, simple, quick. Everything furnished—equipment complete, ready for use. By doing a bit of work for others, your machine can pay for itself within a week. So make your shop complete by getting a Warner Electroplater right away. Send today for **FREE SAMPLE** and illustrated literature. **ACT AT ONCE! Mail Coupon.**
WARNER ELECTRIC CO., DEPT B-140
360 North Michigan, Chicago 1, Illinois

FREE Details & Sample!

WARNER ELECTRIC CO., 360 N. Michigan, Chicago 1, Dept. B-140

Gentlemen: Send Free Sample and Details to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Store Route Plan PAYS BIG MONEY

SELL COUNTER CARD PRODUCTS

Build a good-paying business of your own. Call on dealers of all kinds: show nationally-advertised Aspirin, Vitamins, Cosmetics and 300 other necessities. Big 50¢ and 10¢ retail packages, high quality. Attractive counter displays sell goods fast. Free book gives amazing facts. Write!

World's Products Co., Dept. 73-1, Spencer, Ind.



"For the SPARK that NEVER Fails"

INSIST ON



RUMIN
Gold Coated
FLINTS
and LIGHTER FLUID

At drug
and cigar
stores, PX
and Ship's
Service

ROCK FLINT CO., 123 Doughty Blvd., Far Rockaway, N.Y.



\$3, \$10, \$15
**FOR ONE
DRAWING**

Be an ARTIST!

—Train at Home in Your Spare Time

The fascinating field of Art offers commercial opportunities to men and women. **COMMERCIAL ART, CARTOONING, DESIGNING** all in one complete course. We prepare you step-by-step. Trained Artists are capable of earning \$30, \$50, \$75 a week. Colorful **FREE BOOK**, "Art for Pleasure and Profit—" describes course and method of instruction. **TWO ART OUTFITS** included with training. State age. **WASHINGTON SCHOOL OF ART, Studio 666P**
1115-15th St., N. W. WASHINGTON 5, D. C.

**FREE
BOOK
gives
details**

LIMITED QUANTITIES

Electric Stoves
1-Burner and 2-Burner



Electric Steam Irons
Automatic Electric Irons
Electric Irons



RADIOS, A.C. & D.C.
Table & Console Models



Electric Room Heaters
Infra-Red Health Lamps
Desk Lamps—Bed Lamps

Electric Food and Cream Mixers
Electric Toasters Electric Broilers



Schick Electric
Shavers
and Others



Carpet Sweepers
Electric Vacuum Cleaners



Electric Sandwich Toasters



Electric Roasters All Sizes
Electric Waffle Bakers



Silverware for Home Use
Silverware for Restaurants
Electric Fans, All Sizes
Electric Wire, All Sizes
Heater Elements
Iron Elements
Cooker Elements
Screen Wire All Sizes

Send Stamped Return Envelope for Prices
JOSEPH WINKLER & CO., Dept. Y-6
667-671 N. CLARK ST. CHICAGO 10, ILL.

10K GOLD RINGS Genuine Diamond



"PERFECT MATCHED WEDDING SET"
These Rings contain Genuine Diamonds,
mounted in solid 10K yellow Gold. We offer
a 10-day trial—satisfaction or your Money
Back! For a limited time only—\$5.95 each
or the "Bridal Pair" Only \$10.95 plus 20%
tax. Send No Money—When your Rings ar-
rive, pay postman. Act Now! Genuine Dia-
monds solid gold rings. Gift box free.

VICTORY DIAMOND CO.

Dept. T-8, Saint Clairsville, Ohio



BE A Nurse

MAKE \$30-\$40 A WEEK

You can learn practical nursing at home
in spare time. Course endorsed by phy-
sicians. Thousands of graduates. 40th
yr. One graduate has charge of 10-bed
hospital. Another saved \$400 while
learning. Equipment included. Men,
women 18 to 60. High School not

required. Free tuition payments. Test given. Write today.
CHICAGO SCHOOL OF NURSING
Dept. 425, 100 East Ohio Street, Chicago 11, Ill.
Please send free booklet and 10 sample lesson pages.

Name.....
City..... State..... Age.....

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

(Continued from page 6)

so confident that no one was watching closely.

But what had he gained? He was loose, with a murder charge—an attack charge and an escape charge against him. He would be hunted down as a homicidal maniac—perhaps shot at sight if they judged he was too dangerous to arrest. What could he do against the entire police force and an administration out for his scalp?

The answer, friend reader, is plenty! Amos Black hadn't had Commando training for naught. You'll find this exciting novel in the next issue under the title **MURDER NIGHT-MARE**, by Norman A. Daniels. It's an ingenious, baffling thriller with action all the way through and an ending that will surprise you.

The Death Patrol

Speaking of ingenious bafflers, consider for a moment another of the grand yarns in the issue: **THE DEATH PATROL**, a novel by Curtiss T. Gardner, up-and-coming spinner of detective tales.

Pfc. Franklin McGinnis, better known as Mac, was an M.P. on a Florida express, carrying soldiers to Camp Blanding. Mac's run was from Richmond, Virginia to Starke, Florida and back. Each time he pulled in to

Mystery Fans!

Here's Your Chance to Obtain
World-Famous Best Sellers



Read the Best

Detective Novels by
America's Favorite Writers

IN

POPULAR LIBRARY

EDITIONS

NOW ONLY 25c EACH AT ALL STANDS

Richmond he had a 48 hour lay over, during which time he was supposed to be in Richmond. However, Mac had a girl in New York and he used those 48 hours to dash up and see her. Technically speaking, he was A.W.O.L., though he couldn't see how it hurt anybody since he was off duty anyway.

However, Commander Bennett of Navy Intelligence didn't see it that way. He spotted Mac on the train between New York and Philadelphia, called the M.P. into his state-room.

"If this were the first time," Commander Bennett said, "I might forget it. But you've made it a regular practice. I'm going to report you to Colonel Fielding. If he makes an example of you, it's your own fault. Dismissed!"

Mac saw his prospective promotion go glimmering. The glimmer got worse when Colonel Fielding, Provost Marshal of Camp Blanding, got on the train. But there seemed one way out. He heard Col. Fielding say he was not going right back to Camp Blanding, but was stopping over at Aberdeen Proving grounds. All he had to do was to keep Commander Bennett from seeing Col. Fielding until the train reached Aberdeen!

How? Mac took the direct way. He swiped the key to the naval Commander's compartment from the porter and coolly locked Bennett in. Then he started to sweat and shake and he continued to sweat and shake until Aberdeen was reached and Col. Fielding got safely off.

A Startling Surprise

Limp with relief, Mac rushed back to the compartment, unlocked the door, covering up the noise by knocking, and stepped inside. A brand new and very unpleasant surprise awaited him. Commander Bennett was dead. There was a small hole in his blue uniform, right over the heart. His shirt was stained with blood.

And Franklin McGinnis, M.P.—not to mention A.W.O.L.—was right on the well known spot!

From Philly to Starke, Florida, Mac plays hide and seek on the train with Death as the referee and his own neck as prize in the game. Being found out was only part of his headache. Who had actually murdered Commander Bennett? Was he still on the train and could Mac catch him?

THE DEATH PATROL is as pretty a puzzle as you have ever seen. You'll enjoy tussling with it. And most of all, you'll applaud the answer which Private First Class Franklin McGinnis digs up!

In addition to these headlines, our next issue will bring you a varied assortment of [Turn page]

NEW SECURITY PLAN PAYS HOSPITAL

& DOCTOR BILLS . . .

Costs only
3¢ a day!



**PROTECTS YOU
IN CASE OF
SICKNESS
OR ACCIDENT**

INDIVIDUAL or FAMILY

Insure NOW, before it's too late! Protect your savings against Hospital expense. Here's an amazing offer of safe, dependable "coverage" under America's most popular Hospitalization Plan. Family or Individual eligible. No Medical Examination. When sickness or accident strikes, you may go to any Hospital in U. S. or Canada under any Doctor's care. YOUR EXPENSES WILL BE PAID exactly as Policy specifies. WAR coverage included. The Company' under supervision of the Insurance Dept. No agent will call.

CASH BENEFITS INCLUDE

Hospital Expenses for Accident up to **\$540.00**
Hospital Expenses for Sickness (beginning 7th day) up to **\$540.00**
Doctor Expenses for Accident up to **\$135.00**
Loss of Time from Work up to **\$300.00**
Accidental Death **\$1000.00**
War Coverage & other valuable benefits.

MAIL COUPON AT ONCE !

NORTH AMERICAN MUTUAL INSURANCE CO.

Dept. TG5-6, Wilmington, Del.

Please send me, without obligation, details about your "3c A Day Hospitalization Insurance Plan."

Name

Address

City State

LINCOLN AND INDIAN HEAD

PENNIES WANTED

WILL PAY \$10.00 EACH FOR CERTAIN LINCOLN PENNIES!

Indian Head Cents \$50.00; Nickels \$500.00 Dimes \$1,000.00. All rare coins, bills, stamps wanted! Send 10c for Illustrated Catalogue showing coins wanted. FEDERAL COIN EXCHANGE, 4-7G, COLUMBUS 5, OHIO

EASY PAYMENT PLAN LIFE INSURANCE

New low-cost "buy-by-mail" Budget Plan enables you to own Life Insurance backed by Legal Reserve, to suit your pocketbook! You don't have to pay more than you can afford for reliable protection. Policy provides full benefits for as little as \$5 a week! 10c a week pays double benefits; 15c pays triple benefits, etc. So economical, so easy to own, you and every member of the family can afford an individual Pioneer Life Insurance Policy! No Red Tape—NO MEDICAL EXAMINATION! No agent will call. Get complete details FREE! Write today.

AS LITTLE AS

5¢
WEEKLY

Policy Provides

DEATH BENEFITS
Due to Illness or Natural Causes

DOUBLE INDEMNITY
For Accidental Death

TOTAL DISABILITY

CASH SURRENDER VALUE

EXTENDED INSURANCE
Other Liberal Benefits

PIONEER LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
1292 Pioneer Building • Rockford, Illinois

Free for Asthma During Summer

If you suffer with those terrible attacks of Asthma when it is hot and sultry; if heat, dust and general mugginess make you wheeze and choke as if each gasp for breath was the very last; if restful sleep is impossible because of the struggle to breathe; if you feel the disease is slowly wearing your life away, don't fail to send at once to the Frontier Asthma Co. for a free trial of a remarkable method. No matter where you live or whether you have any faith in any remedy under the Sun, send for this free trial. If you have suffered for a life-time and tried everything you could learn of without relief; even if you are utterly discouraged, do not abandon hope but send today for this free trial. It will cost you nothing. Address

Frontier Asthma Co. 378-R Frontier Bldg.
462 Niagara St., Buffalo 1, N. Y.

**PICTURE
RING \$1.**



Exquisite Onyx-like Picture Ring made from real photo. Send \$1 Money! Mail photo with paper strip for ring etc. Pay postage only \$1.00 plus postage. Hand United 50c extra. Photo returned with ring. Minor back guarantee. Send photo and ring size now. PORTRAIT RING CO., Dept. M-26, CINCINNATI, O.

Learn Profitable Profession in 90 days at Home



MEN AND WOMEN, 18 TO 50—Many Swedish Massage graduates make \$50, \$75 or even more per week. Large full time incomes from doctors, hospitals, sanatoriums, clubs or private practice. Others make good money in spare time. You can win independence and prepare for future security by training at home and qualifying for Diploma Anatomy Charts and 32-page Illustrated Book FREE—Now! THE College of Swedish Massage, Dept. 5630, 100 E. Ohio St., Chicago 11, Ill.

HUNTING and FISHING



HUNTING AND FISHING

is a monthly magazine crammed full of hunting, fishing, camping, dog and boating stories and pictures. Invaluable information about guns, fishing tackle, game law changes, best places to fish and hunt—countless ideas that will add more fun to your days afield.

Special Trial Offer

Send 25c in stamps or coins and we will send you Hunting & Fishing for six months.

HUNTING & FISHING

MAGAZINE
267 Sportsman's Building
Boston Massachusetts

shorter stories guaranteed to please the most exacting tastes. Be on hand to enjoy them.

Letters from Readers

HALF the fun of being an editor is in getting the bouquets and occasional brickbats you folks toss this way. Remember, you can put your words on a penny postcard if you don't happen to have some paper and envelopes around, and we'll appreciate it just as much as a sealed letter.

We like to know what you think of the various stories from month to month because our job is hunting for the best we can get. And one man's meat is another man's poison, to wit:

The best thing in years is the new circus series with Ralph Burnham you're running. Wotta man! You can have Crosby, Sinatra and Tarzan—I'll take Burnham.

—Carole Hughes, Jersey City, N. J.

Now there's an honest feminine reaction. At least one male feels this way about it:

Say, who is this Ralph Burnham? Don't you think the author lays it on a little thick. That kind of wild excitement is more like the old nickel thrillers than a modern detective story. Me for more realism and less mellerdraymer.

—Cap Daniels, Ponca City, Okla.

Our friend Daniels is a hard boiled realist. But don't forget, Cap, that a circus is a world of "mellerdraymer"—all show and tinsel and dramatics and therefore the sort of atmosphere which Thomson Burtis writes into it is natural to that environment where it might not be in any other. Don't get us talking show business, bud, or you'll never get us to stop.

Not to change the subject, here's another lad with an idea.

All my votes go to that astute sleuth, William Klump. Willie can make me laugh any old time and you know something? Anybody that does that in this vale of tears and sin is priceless. Vive le Willie Klump!

—Sherman Taylor, Glens Falls, N. Y.

Time's running out, friends, so in spite of bales of other swell letters we've got to put out the lights and close up. Write in once in a while. Good or bad, we can take it. Just address The Editor, **POPULAR DETECTIVE**, 10 East 40th Street, New York, 16, N. Y. Thanks.

—THE EDITOR

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Wartime paper rationing makes it impossible to print enough copies of this magazine to meet the demand. To be sure of getting **YOUR** copy, place a standing order with your regular newsdealer.

WHAT CAN YOU SPARE THAT THEY CAN WEAR?

Millions of suffering war victims need your used, serviceable shoes, garments and bedding. Give your clothing contributions to the United National Clothing Collection, of which Henry J. Kaiser is National Chairman.

The drive is on from April 1 to April 30. Your local newspaper and radio will announce the location of collection depots near your home.

PLASTICS

TRAINED MEN NEEDED IN
NEW, ESSENTIAL INDUSTRY

Plastics is a great new industry and the time to get started in it is now. Opportunities are unlimited. In your spare time, at home, you can prepare to enter this important field. A new, practical training plan is now ready to help you realize your ambitions and win success. Send name and address today for FREE information.

AMERICAN SCHOOL, Dept. PA38
Drexel Ave. at 58th St., Chicago 37, Ill.

City, State _____

Name _____

Street _____

do you WORRY?

Why worry and suffer any longer if we can help you? Try a Brooks Patented Air Cushion. This marvelous appliance for most forms of reducible rupture is GUARANTEED to bring YOU heavenly comfort and security—day and night—at work and play—or it costs you NOTHING. Thousands happy. Light, neat-fitting. No hard pads or springs. For men, women, and children. Durable, cheap. Sent on trial to prove it. Not sold in stores. Beware of imitations. Write for Free Book on Rupture, no-risk trial order plan, and proof of results. All Correspondence Confidential.



Brooks Company, 182-T State St., Marshall, Mich.

ANALYZE HANDWRITING

Earn C. G. A. Degree, Earn money analyzing handwriting, in business or HOME, full or spare time, in your own Vocational and Personal Problem Service. Successful experts show you NOW, 3000 word illustrated lesson and GRAPHO ANALYST Rep. ... ADDRESS A. G. A. INC., 113, JOPLIN, MO.

FREE
ANALYZE
HANDWRITING
NOW

Borrow by MAIL \$30 to \$300.00

ON YOUR **Signature** ALONE!

NO security required! NO co-signers! NO salary assignments! \$30 to \$300.00 BY MAIL on your signature alone. Character and earning ability the only requirement. Nationwide service. Fast, courteous, confidential.

LOW COST LOANS! STATE LICENSED AND BONDED COMPANY

Take as long as 12 months to repay. Interest charged only for time you have the money, and at Iowa's LOW LAWFUL RATE. Loans completed QUICKLY. No red tape. No embarrassing investigation. If you cash each quickly or will need it soon, write for loan papers today. State name, address and occupation.

POSTAL FINANCE CO., DEPT. 250 SIOUX CITY 5, IOWA

EYE-GLASSES

Try **by MAIL** Now

SEND NO MONEY!

Test Your Own Sight at home with our \$2.95 New Patented **GLASSES** as low as \$2.95

16 DAYS TRIAL OFFER! If you're not 100% satisfied with glasses we make for you, we'll refund every cent you pay us. **FREE** CATALOG and SCIENTIFIC Test Chart. Write **UNITED STATES EYE-GLASSES COMPANY** 1587 MILWAUKEE AVE., DEPT. 6-82, CHICAGO, ILL.

"YOU ARE UNDER ARREST!"

THERE'S A THRILL IN BRINGING A CROOK TO JUSTICE THROUGH SCIENTIFIC **CRIME DETECTION!**

I have taught thousands this exciting, profitable, pleasant profession. Let me teach you, too, in your own home. Learn Finger Printing, Firearms Identification, Police Photography and Secret Service Methods thoroughly, quickly, and at small cost.

53% of All American Bureaus of Identification employ students and graduates of I. A. S. You, too, can fit yourself to fill a responsible crime detecting job with good pay and steady employment. But don't delay—get the details now. Let me show you how easily and completely I can prepare you for this fascinating work, during spare time, in your own home. You may pay as you learn. Write today... Now... Be sure to state age.

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE
1920 Sunnyside Ave. • Dept. 796-A • Chicago, Ill.

PRINT ANY PHOTO

ON PAPER, CLOTH, LEATHER OR WOOD

SIMPLE, EASY TO USE

Magic liquid takes only 2 minutes to reproduce any snapshot on to stationery, handkerchiefs, ties, scarfs, etc. Use same picture over and over again if you wish. Won't wash off. Won't harm negative or fabric it's used on. Personalize your belongings! An ideal gift. Complete outfit with full colors included, enough for 100 photos—only \$1.00 postpaid. Sent C.O.D. for \$1.21.

CHRISTY PHOTO SUPPLY
Dept. 919, 2835 N. Central, Chicago 34, Ill.

LAW

STUDY AT HOME FOR PERSONAL SUCCESS AND LARGER EARNINGS. 35 years experience instruction—over 108,000 students enrolled. LL.B. Degree awarded. All texts furnished. Easy payments. Send for FIRST BOOK AMERICAN EXTENSION SCHOOL OF LAW Dept. 54-T, 645 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Ill.

FREE ENLARGEMENT

of your Favorite Photo

FROM FAMOUS HOLLYWOOD FILM STUDIOS

Just to get acquainted we will make a wonderful 5 x 7 enlargement of any picture or negative. Be sure to include color of hair, eyes and clothing and get our bargain offer too: having your enlargement beautifully bound once in oil and mounted in your choice of handsome frames. Please enclose life and your original picture or negative will be returned, with the free 5 x 7 enlargement postpaid. Act now! Limit 2 to a customer.

HOLLYWOOD FILM STUDIOS
7021 Santa Monica Blvd., Dept. 644, Hollywood, Calif.

MEN

This Horseshoe Ring, Handmade, Hand-engraved, inlaid with simulated pearl. Is a KNOCKOUT! Shocks shank of everlasting Monel Metal.

GUARANTEED 20 YEARS

Supply is limited... rush your order! SEND NO MONEY. Pay Postman only \$3.85, plus excise tax and postage. Return for refund in five days if not delighted. State size. Address: Dept. 442-N AMERICAN JEWELRY CO., Wheeling, W. Va.

THERE is a definite I.C.S. type. The records of 100,000 current students . . . nearly 5 million students since 1891 . . . supply the outlines. Here's how the typical enrollee shapes up at the time of beginning his studies:

He is an adult. In wartime he is in the Armed Forces or in vital production. But war or peace, good times or bad times, he is an employed man. Circumstances have prevented his attending a college but he is ambitious, intelligent, determined to acquire the specialized training that will help him in his present job and prepare him for a better one.

Does the description fit you? Then you'll be interested in what I.C.S. helps these students to achieve. In a single 30-day period we have received as many as 635 student letters reporting advancement in salary and position. In a period of 120 days we have received 1,920 such reports.

Graduates include the presidents, board chairmen, chief engineers or chief chemists of some of the largest steel, airplane, chemical, railroad and electrical equipment companies in the country. Thousands of others have registered substantial successes in their chosen fields. Here's the kind of coupon they signed and mailed.

are you the
I. C. S.
type of man?



INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS



BOX 3966-D, SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

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

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioning and Plumbing Courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Ship Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Textile Designing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioning | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Ship Fitting | <input type="checkbox"/> Textile Manufacturing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heating | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Shop Practice | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigeration | <input type="checkbox"/> Power House Electric | <input type="checkbox"/> Steel Mill Workers | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Fitting | <input type="checkbox"/> Practical Electrician | <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Designing | |
| Chemistry Courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Practical Telephony | <input type="checkbox"/> Welding, Gas and Electric | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Telegraph Engineering | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry, Analytical | Internal Combustion | Radio Courses | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry, Industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> Engines Courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Electronics | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry, Mfg. Iron & Steel | <input type="checkbox"/> Auto Technician | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio, General | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Petroleum Refining | <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel-Electric | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Operating | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pulp and Paper Making | <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Engines | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Servicing | |
| Civil Engineering, Architectural and Mining Courses | Mechanical Courses | Railroad Courses | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Aeronautical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Brake | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Airplane Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Car Inspector | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bridge and Building Foreman | <input type="checkbox"/> Flight Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Locomotive Fireman | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Estimating | <input type="checkbox"/> Foundry Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Railroad Section Foreman | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Heat Treatment of Metals | Steam Engineering Courses | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coal Mining | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Boilermaking | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contracting and Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Metallurgy | <input type="checkbox"/> Combustion Engineering | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Highway Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Engine Running | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lumber Dealer | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Engineering | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Structural Blueprints | <input type="checkbox"/> Mold-Loft Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Electric | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Patternmaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Engines | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Shop Blueprints | Textile Courses | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surveying and Mapping | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet-Metal Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton Manufacturing | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet-Metal Worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Rayon Weaving | |

Name..... Age..... Home Address..... Working Position.....
City..... State..... Hours..... A.M. to..... P.M.

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

DISCOUNT TO DISCHARGED VETERANS—SPECIAL TUITION RATES FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

**Ment-
Ladies!**

**Here's THE JACKET You've Wanted
At a Sensational Saving!**

**Ladies'
Only
\$3.95**

Special
Combina-
tion
Offer,
Both for
Only
\$7.95

Men's only \$4.95

**Hurry! Quantities
Are Limited**



LADIES'—You'll Love It!

Take this jacket for carefree ease—and for that certain poise which being “in the know” on style gives you! That new low hipline is a “flash” from the fashion front. Perky shoulders! Suave yoke! You will adore its smart distinctive lines . . . you will always enjoy its caressing warmth. It's tailored of favorite Spun-Rite, justly popular for its wear . . . for its beauty! It will be your prop and mainstay, season in, season out. Select yours from one of these seasons latest shades: Camel Tan or Liberty Red. Sizes 12 to 20.

Ladies! Men! Here's the Jacket “buy” you've been waiting for. Here's quality, style, comfort and durability all combined in one to give you the finest, smartest jacket you'll find anywhere, regardless of price. And when you order the two together—one lady's and one man's jacket—you get two jackets for only \$7.95.

Save 95¢! Everyone—wife and husband, girl-friend and beau will want to order matching jackets in combination on this special bargain offer. You **SEND NO MONEY!** We'll ship C.O.D. plus a few cents postage. If you don't agree this is the greatest Jacket Bargain you've ever seen for the price, return it within 10 days and your money will be cheerfully refunded.

MEN'S—Ideal for Sports-Leisure

Here's a sturdy “he-man's” jacket of a thousand and one uses that will keep pace with the fastest tempo of your busy day. Cut for real comfort—of “Spun-Rite”—magically flexible, water-repellent and shape-retaining as well as warm. Snappy yoked back. Genuine leather buttons for looks and wear. Grand, deep, saddlepockets. Split sides—so stride along as you will. You'll live in it from dawn 'til night. Choose Camel Tan with the following choice of harmonizing colors: Forest Green or Luggage Brown. Check your size from 34 to 50 on the order coupon below.

**SEND
NO
MONEY**

**Just Fill Out
and Mail This
Handy Order
Coupon Today**

ILLINOIS MERCHANDISE MART, Dept. 1893-A
500 N. Dearborn St., CHICAGO 10, ILL.

Gentlemen: Send me the SPUN-RITE Jackets indicated below C.O.D. I must be fully satisfied with my purchase or will return within 10 days for refund.

Name Please
Address write

City State plainly

LADY'S JACKET Sale Price \$3.95 Camel Tan Liberty Red

Check color wanted

Combination Price for 1 Man's & 1 Lady's Jacket Both only \$7.95

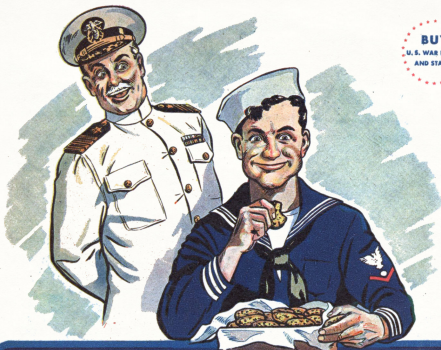
MEN'S JACKET Sale Price \$4.95

Camel Tan with Luggage Brown Forest Green
these colors

Check color wanted

CHECK SIZES WANTED 44 46 48 50
LADY'S 12 14 16 18 20 MAN'S 36 38 40 42

MY TOTAL PURCHASE AMOUNTS TO: \$.....C. O. D.



BUY
U. S. WAR BONDS
AND STAMPS

**Baby Ruth candy
makes delicious cookies**



IF HE'S IN AMERICA
SEND A BOX TO
THE BOY IN CAMP

**RECIPE ON
EVERY WRAPPER**



CURTISS CANDY COMPANY • Producers of Fine Foods • CHICAGO 13, ILLINOIS