

Catching Up with Japan

By William G. Shepherd

THE press room of the Navy Department! That's where the reporters all rushed that morning a few weeks ago. This writer rushed there with them.

The day had started off quietly enough. The town was full of businessmen code-makers. General Johnson's NRA office was holding the spotlight and the white marble Department of Commerce building was the center of the nation. Over at the White House the President, who had just returned from a trip on the 2,000-ton Nourmahal, was presumably again taking up the job of national recovery.

At 11:30 that morning he was to see the newspaper correspondents as usual, two hundred or more of them; famous writers, cub reporters, women news gatherers, reporters from every corner of the nation.

But something unexpected had happened in little Cuba late the previous evening. The army had risen and had overthrown De Cespedes, Cuba's new president. The morning papers had only meager news about it, so the Washington public, including officialdom itself, was not greatly disturbed. But newspaper men don't wait to read newspapers to know what's happening. It wasn't until deep in the forenoon that the public of Washington knew what the newspapers had not yet printed.

The situation in Cuba was very threatening. Cuban officers had been kicked out of the army. The privates were on the loose. There was no government in Cuba. Americans were in danger.

The news spotlight in Washington shifted from the Department of Commerce to the Navy Department. Reporters covering industrial recovery were not bothered by telephone calls from their editors. But every reporter in Washington who had ever "covered" the Navy building suddenly found himself under orders to "see what the Navy is going to do about Cuba."

And that's why there was the rush to Commander J. H. Ingram's room in the long, low, rambling Navy building—the press rooms, where there are telephones and typewriters for reporters and where all questions are answered for the press. The question this morning was:

"Going to send any battleships to Cuba?"

Headlines in the Making

Lieutenant Mentz of the Navy's press staff is trying to answer this question. He has the unique authority of being able to call up the highest and mightiest officials in the Navy with requests for such information as is proper for the press to have. He can call up Secretary of the Navy Swanson, himself, for instance, and say:

"The reporters are here asking whether we are sending any marines to Cuba."

We didn't hear him call up Secretary Swanson, but we did hear him telephone to half a score other Navy officials. He couldn't get Admiral William H. Shandley, chief of naval operations, though we heard him try it repeatedly. He even left his desk and went to Shandley's office, but Shandley was suspiciously busy. No wonder. He was at the White House, though we didn't know it at the time.

Abruptly a reporter came out of a telephone booth, to which he had been called by his office.

"What does it mean," he asked Lieu-

Why is our Atlantic Fleet spending its second year in the Pacific? It's not a strategic maneuver to let the gobs enjoy the beach at Waikiki. The Fleet is there because our Navy Department has been turning anxious eyes on Japan. Her navy, theoretically smaller than ours, is not actually weaker. She's been building to the treaty limit; we have not. But we're going to. Here Mr. Shepherd shows you how and why

tenant Mentz, "when three hundred marines in Philadelphia are ordered to go to Quantico, in marching equipment? What does that mean? Going on a Boy Scout hike? My paper says the Philly marines are packing up now."

"I'll find out for you as soon as I can," replies the officer.

He telephones to some official who is supposed to know about marines.

"Yes," he replies, as he hangs up the receiver. "The Philadelphia marines have been ordered to go to Quantico." And then he adds more news: "And about three hundred marines here in Washington have been given the same orders." Reporters dash to the telephones.

Now news is being born. Within a few minutes, in every corner of the na-

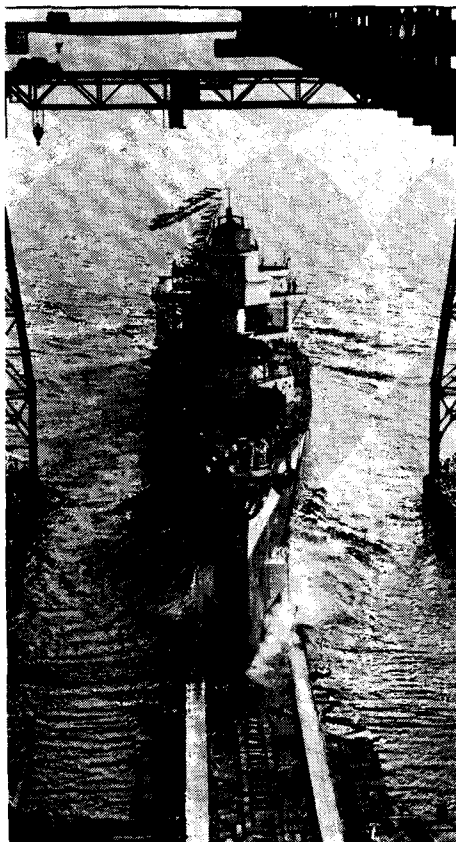
tion, page-wide headlines will be yelling in hundreds of cities the news that the marines are getting ready to go to Cuba—if necessary.

The hour of 11:30 has not quite arrived, the zero hour when the President, at the White House, will talk to the press. Then there *will* be news.

A milling crowd of journalists! The lobby of the White House offices hums with the greetings of perhaps three hundred news seekers. Eleven-thirty comes! The crowd pours into the President's office.

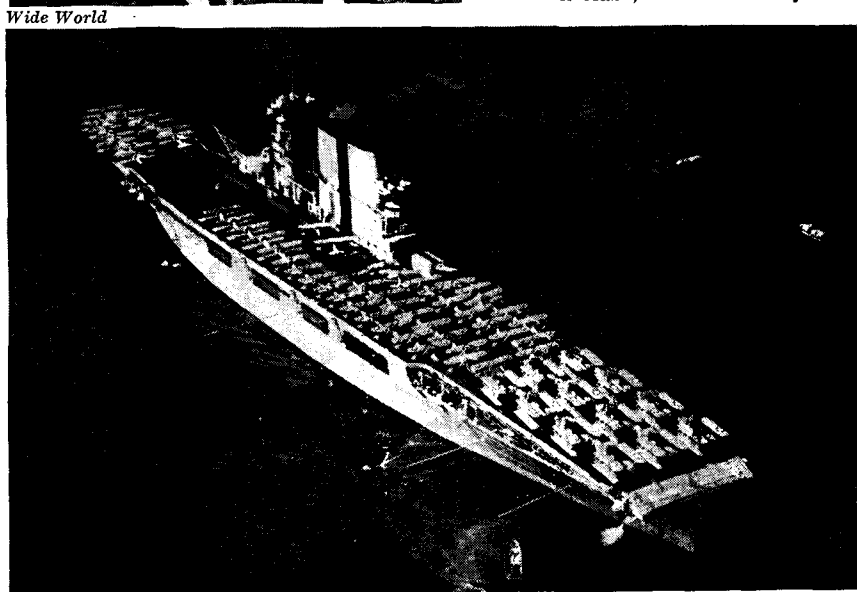
Within ten minutes it pours out. The President has answered the question. Yes, it may be necessary to send troops to Cuba to protect American interests there. No intervention! Cuba's government is her own affair. But lives must be protected, if Cuba has no government.

Quick! Back to that press room in the Navy building. The next move is the Navy's. It's answering a fire alarm. The Navy's going to get on the job. When do the battleships leave? Which ships will take the marines?



Hornets' nest, 28,000 tons. The Japanese aircraft carrier Kaga carries 60 fighting planes on her well-defended decks

Ship of State, 1933 fashion. The U. S. S. Minneapolis, 13th treaty cruiser in the 10,000-ton class, leaves the ways



The U. S. S. Saratoga, converted battleship, now serving with her sister ship, the Lexington, as an airplane carrier



Maneuver. Japanese reservists make rescues under bombing conditions



Acme

Night attack. Anti-aircraft squad on a Tokyo roof prepared for anything that might be in the air

A demonstration by a Japanese first-aid corps during recent large-scale maneuvers. Emperor Hirohito looks on



Acme

Gas bomb defense maneuvers. Japanese patriots show how to use chemicals to neutralize poison gas in Tokyo streets



Wide World



Wide World

Lunch kits for volunteers who played at fighting

What battleships are going to Cuba? How many of them? When do they start? But here we come to a sickening moment. You didn't read about that moment in the newspaper stories, under the black headlines.

"What ships?" Lieutenant Mentz began to telephone around again. A very able young lady in his office began to get out papers from various cabinets. "What ships?"

Little by little over the phone the names of boats were officially mentioned as being in the plans for the possible dash to Cuba. The Navy was hunting its files, straining its reports of operations and scanning the Atlantic for boats to send to Cuba. The Navy was digging up whatever it could find. In the first quick search it found eight! That's all. But they were *not* Navy boats. They were Coast Guard cutters; Coast Guard destroyers, old boats of the Navy which had in part been turned over to the Coast Guard as "rum-chasers." Seven officers and eighty-eight enlisted men is the crew of a Coast Guard destroyer; the boats are only 315 feet long. In a pinch they can land about forty men apiece; 320 in all.

Where are those great, mighty battleships of ours, with their fourteen- or sixteen-inch guns, that can carry a

couple of thousand men, with a bunch of marines thrown in? The reporters asked a hundred questions.

Aren't any huge battleships or heavy cruisers going to Cuban waters? The Navy's replies are hesitant. Well, there's the cruiser Indianapolis. She's new! Ten thousand tons! Big guns—eight-inch. Fast. She could go. She could carry maybe a thousand fighting men, badly crowded.

Where, Oh Where, is the Navy?

But what about our Navy giants? The big fellows you hear about that cost \$40,000,000? Our great floating fortresses? The 30,000-tonners? Would they be too big to send to Cuba? Not at all. Well, why not send them? Why these borrowed Coast Guard "rum-chaser" destroyers? Those two worthy iceberg hunters of the Coast Guard, the Yamacraw and the Gresham?

Well, there's one great big battleship that might be sent. Sixteen-inch guns. She's the Mississippi. She's old but she has just been modernized, at a cost of \$10,000,000. Yes, she'll go. The reporters learn this before the afternoon is well along. Good old Mississippi! And there's the cruiser Richmond. Cruisers aren't 30,000-tonners. No! Not by

any means. Only 10,000-tonners. But they're pretty big! The Richmond is only 7,000 tons. Six-inch guns.

So by late in the afternoon, we know the Navy story. A flock of small destroyers and three larger ships for Cuba is the Navy's quota. Let it go down in black and white that the much-touted "fleet" which our Navy sent to Cuba was a pretty tatterdemalion patchwork of boats, "dugouts," "crocks" and "over-ages"—used cars, although more ships followed, much later.

"Weren't you Navy men scratching around pretty lively for ships?" I asked a Navy official who holds a responsible position, later in the day. I had witnessed right at the heart of things the extraordinary sight of the Navy meeting a sudden and most unexpected fire alarm.

"Well, you can put it that way," he said rather grimly.

"Caught rather short of ships, all of a sudden?" I asked.

"Well, that's the way it might look to a careful observer. You see the trouble is that the Atlantic fleet of the American Navy is in the Pacific Ocean. It's spending its second year there."

Why were we caught in this Cuban crisis with all our nation's fleet over on the Pacific side? We have more than

350 ships and boats there, I hear, out of our total of 372.

The uncertainties of international relations in the Orient are the answer, of course. But the influence of Japan's great navy stuck out like a booming skyscraper in a mist during the smoke of that Cuban fire scare.

Japan has the third largest navy in the world today. The British Empire comes first; the United States second.

Navies are supposed to be limited in size by two different treaties: the treaty of Washington respecting large ships, and the later treaty of London respecting smaller ships and submarines.

We Americans were glad enough to be limited. What's more, we gladly and voluntarily kept ourselves far under the limit. We have kept ourselves 200,000 tons short of what we might have laid down before December 31, 1936; our total allowance, under the treaties, is a little over 1,000,000 tons.

The British Empire, too, kept itself short, by 197,600 tons, out of one and one-fifth millions due to be laid down by December 31, 1936, though it is now building up to full treaty strength.

But to Japan, every ton granted to her by the treaties she signed, to be laid down before that limiting December day three years from now, seemed as precious gold.

She's used them up, now, three years in advance.

Japan's Big Little Navy

That is, she's used nearly all of them. She has 600 tons left to lay down! That means one little boat one third the size of the Nourmahal, on which the President arrived in Washington on that exciting day of the Cuban fire alarm.

But already Naval Minister Mineo Osumi has declared through the press that the treaty which gives five units of power to America, five units to the British Empire and three units to Japan must be changed. He declared that Japan will insist at the next international conference that she be allowed to have more ships above present treaty arrangements; how many more he did not say. Now I grant that naval figures may be alarming; the Navy, desiring more ships, wishes them so. But the truth is that Japan's navy, make no mistake, is incredibly stronger, comparatively, than mere figures can show.

It approaches the American Navy in real strength. It's like this: She has 756,242 tons in existence and 129,428 tons projected or already building, a total of 885,670. But they're *good* tons, *new* tons, in the form of new and modern ships. Only 102,853 tons of them are over age; that is, over twenty years old.

But our American tonnage is different. Some of it is ancient. It has white hair and whiskers; goes on crutches. Remember the Mississippi, the ship we came across the day of that Cuban scare. A modernized old ship.

We have over three times as much over-age tonnage as Japan. Our figures go like this: Out of 1,038,660 tons, there are 330,110 tons that are over age.

This gives us 708,550 tons that are under age and only fairly new.

Japan has 653,389 tons in her existing navy that are under age and, for the most part, as human beings might go, in the football-playing stage of life.

Hoping you like figures better than I do, you may do the subtraction yourself. Japan has today only 55,161 tons less of under-age fighting ships than we have.

That's all technically speaking. But let's put it down in number of ships, so that we, as laymen, can get a layman's picture.

Japan has 220 completed ships. The

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Conspiracy

By Arthur Somers Roche

The Story Thus Far:

WHILE dining with a beautiful girl at Paul Lanson's restaurant in Paris, Big Mike Pelletiere, Broadway racketeer, is knifed to death. Doyle Evans, of the American Embassy, witnesses the murder. Two years later, in New York, he meets Phyllis Benedict who, after disappearing when a child, had been found by her fabulously wealthy father, working as "Minnie Gans-ton" in the office of Johnson Fay, an importer. He recognizes her as the girl who had been with Big Mike when he died!

That night in his apartment Evans has a visitor: a woman whom, he is sure, he has never seen before. She tells him it was she he had seen at Lanson's; then, leaving the apartment, she joins a waiting man: Johnson Fay. "Well," she exclaims, "he swallowed it. So we'll get old Benedict's millions after all!"

Evans does not believe the girl's story. But, fascinated by Phyllis Benedict's charm and beauty, he finds himself falling in love with her. Then Degas, a French detective whom Evans has known for years, appears on the scene, calls on Evans, informs him that Paul Lanson is now in New York, running a speakeasy; that Paul had seen Big Mike's girl in New York; and that she is guilty of an "enormous crime." As Paul is managing an illegal business, he does not care to consult the New York police in the matter.

Sick with fear, for he knows that Phyllis Benedict is the girl Lanson had seen, Evans agrees to accompany Degas to Lanson's place, to learn the identity of the woman. But they never interview Paul Lanson. Before they arrive, he is murdered, bombed to death! . . . With Degas, Evans goes to a play. Leaving the theater, he is amazed to see Phyllis Benedict (who had told him she was to be out of town) with a man: Johnson Fay. He speaks to her, introduces Degas. Then, accompanied by the detective, he goes to the Ambassador for an after-theater supper. En route, in a taxicab, they notice that they are being followed by another car.

Degas is obviously worried. "My friend," he says, "you are in great peril. Those three men over there"—he points to a table near the door—"they have just come in. A woman was with them. She pointed you out and left."

"Well," says Evans, "what of it?" The Frenchman leans over the table. "You will soon know," he whispers. "Go out and have a look at that woman. She is, I believe, the one who called on you."

Evans rises and strolls nonchalantly toward the door.

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CARELESSLY Evans glanced at the three men at the table by the exit. As carelessly, they surveyed him. If the rarely wrong intuitions of Degas were correct these three men had followed Evans and the Frenchman here; in their minds was murder. Yet they were three well-dressed men, without an apparent purpose in the Ambassador save the natural and obvious one of pleasure.

But Degas was not the only intuitive person in the world. Evans felt a queer tingling along his spine. The three men were *too* casual, too indifferent to his close presence. It was hard to analyze this unconcern, but it was something that Evans felt. Nevertheless, he passed through the door without incident.

He wondered, with sudden doubt, how he would conduct himself in the event of an attack by these men. Then he laughed inwardly at his own speculations. Degas was a melodramatic Gaul, to whom intrigue and mystery were the fundamentals of living. Because a gang killing had occurred this afternoon, Degas was eager to read danger in the most placid events. Then he stifled this inward mirth.



Degas might be melodramatic, but he, Evans, was an ass if he permitted his knowledge of Degas' character to cloud his own judgment. And his own judgment told him that, while Degas might be mistaken in a particular, he would be right in the general. The three men sitting at the table might be harmless, but that would not prove that the killers of Paul would cease their murderous activities with the death of the maître d'hôtel.

Anyway, it would be well to suspend judgment on these three men until he discovered who the woman was who had led them here. If that woman proved to be the girl who had called on him last night, then the apparent innocuousness of the three men would have no more meaning than the temporary placidity of as many rattlesnakes.

THE main dining-room of the Ambassador Café is separated from the long, narrow entrance hall by windows. One may look over the guests inside before making entrance. Doyle glanced down this narrow hall. At the right was another corridor leading to the telephone booths and to dressing-rooms. He looked down this corridor, walked past the booths. In one of them stood a dashing brunette.

"Yes, darling, I wanted to ring you up before I went to bed. I'm so sleepy, darling, and I can't wait until I see you tomorrow."

Thus the lady made certain that the gullible gentleman at the other end of the wire would not telephone her at her apartment and discover that she was out. Evans grinned. The girl in the booth hung up, caught his grin, and smiled wickedly at him.

He retraced his steps to the entrance hall. A checkboy accosted him.

"Looking for anything, Mr. Evans?"

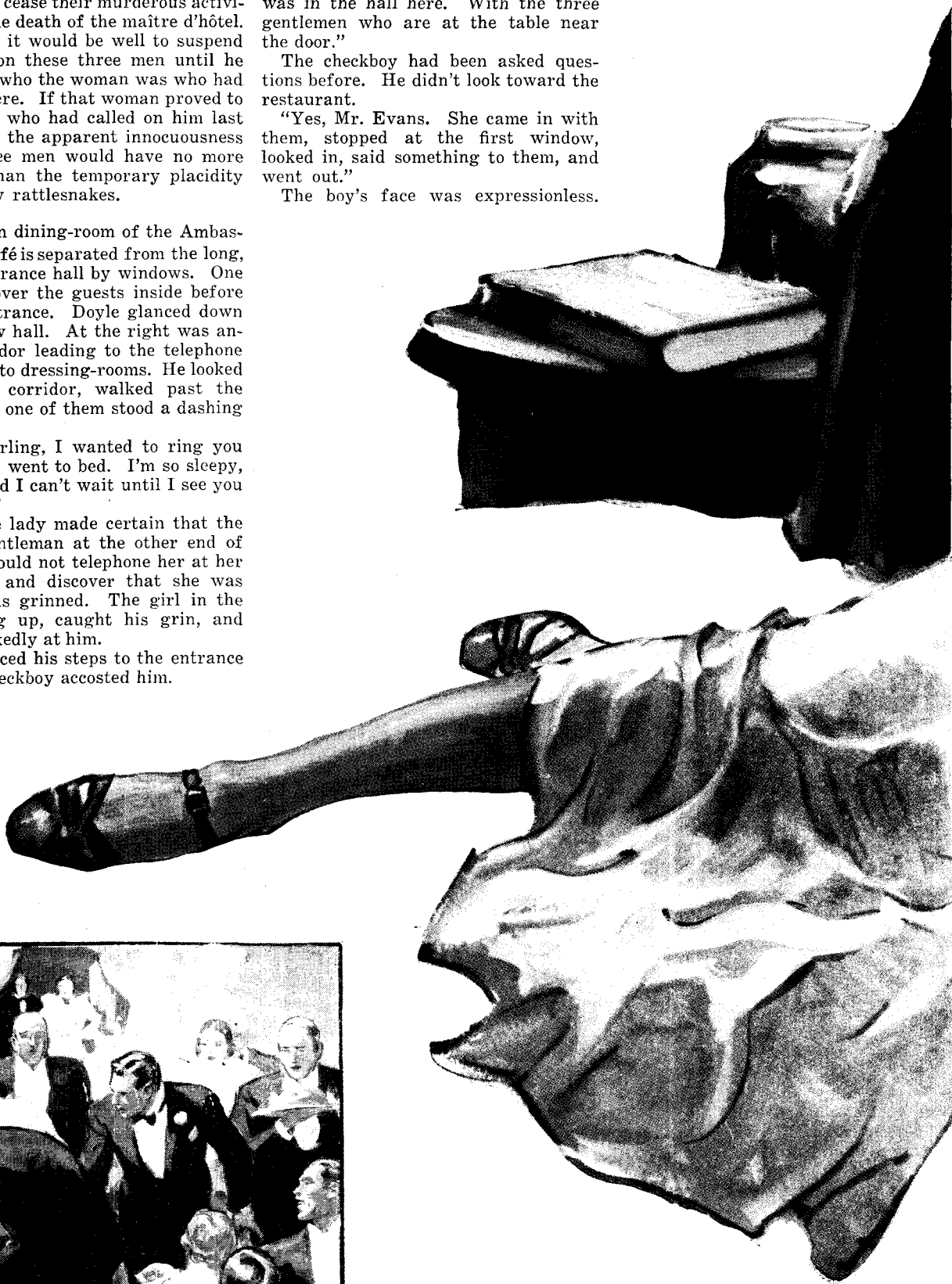
Evans scrutinized the boy. Questioning employees, placing himself in the position of the male flirt looking for conquest, was distasteful to him. The boy would doubtless misunderstand. Yet what difference did it make?

"Why, yes," he said. "I thought a lady came in just now—I mean, that she was in the hall here. With the three gentlemen who are at the table near the door."

The checkboy had been asked questions before. He didn't look toward the restaurant.

"Yes, Mr. Evans. She came in with them, stopped at the first window, looked in, said something to them, and went out."

The boy's face was expressionless.



Degas slid from his chair, motioning Evans to follow. In a half crouch that kept the icy lion between them and the door they started for the window