

Clear and Unlimited

By H. Vernor Dixon

ILLUSTRATED BY JO KOTULA

Here are fourteen people who thought Time was at stake. And three who knew that the gamble was more important—it was for Life

SENIOR-PILOT ALBIN CARLESON read the operations report while leaning against the tail group of the twin-engined Barlin. The soft floodlights of the airport cast their glow from the gleaming metal sides of the ship to the paper and it was not difficult to read, if held at the proper angle.

The night was clear. There was no moon, but the stars were out in full force. A good night for flying.

Carleson finished the report and lit a cigarette. His high cheekbones stood out prominently in the sudden flare of the match and the almost platinum blondness of his closely cropped hair came into relief. The light blueness of his eyes, also, was intensified and for a second they were hard pinpricks of light. Carleson was like his eyes: hard.

Bert Benham, the co-pilot, came out of the administration building, nodded to Carleson and swung into the plane. The stewardess, "Sissy" Lewis, leaned out the door and asked where number eight was. The pilot nodded toward a short, paunchy figure approaching the plane. Number eight, more widely known as J. L. Dubois, utilities magnate, stopped in front of Carleson and pleasantly smiled at him.

"You're a different pilot, aren't you?"

Carleson told a white-faced Sissy, "It's up to you. Arrange it so none of the passengers become suspicious"

"Yes, sir. The stewardess is the same you had from New York, but the co-pilot and I replace the last crew. We take the ship on from here to Burbank."

"I see. That makes three different crews for the coast-to-coast run. Why is that?"

"Fatigue, sir. Now, if you will get aboard . . . The dispatcher is flashing the signal."

"Of course. Sorry to hold you up."

Seat number eight went up the gangway into the cabin and Carleson followed him, closed the door and threw on the safety catch. He turned to the stewardess and asked, "How are things, Sissy?"

"Oh, all right." She smiled wanly at him and passed a slim hand over her eyes. "Tired, that's all. I don't like these night runs so well. If the passengers would all get in their berths, then I could grab a few winks myself. But there are always three or four who insist on sitting up and keep asking me questions all night just to pass the time. There are five in this flight."

"That's tough. Any notables?"

"TWO of the sitter-uppers. See 'em up the aisle?"

Carleson saw a man and a woman talking with their heads close together and said, "Uh-huh. Who are they?"

"Well, the woman is Susan Colin and the man is Stephen St. Claire. They're married and star together on the stage. Everybody knows Colin and St. Claire." The pilot nodded. Sissy remarked, "I

understand she's on her way to Hollywood to star in a picture . . . without him. How do you like that?"

Carleson chuckled and said, "That's probably what they're arguing about. Well, we gotta get off. Drop in the office now and then and say hello. We won't be too busy."

"Okay."

The pilot went up the aisle, his broad shoulders touching the berth curtains on either side, nodded to the legitimate stars as he passed them, to J. L. Dubois and to two other men sitting up. He passed into the "office," slammed the door, dropped into his seat and nodded to Benham. "Everything check?"

"Yes, sir. Only Martin's flight report says to watch the starboard prop. The bite is not so hot on the take-off."

"Aw, nuts. That's an old Martin complaint. He never allows enough for torque, so he's always blaming it on the starboard prop. No trouble there; don't worry."

Benham grinned at him and his teeth flashed whitely in the instrument dial luminescence of the dark cockpit. Old Albin Carleson never missed. Always knew what he was talking about. No wonder the guy was senior pilot of the line. It was good to fly with a man like that. Benham nodded his head with satisfaction, then clamped on the earphones and turned his attention back to the complex instrument board before him.

Carleson watched out the window. The dispatcher's last flash was a thin

point in the dark. Carleson opened the engines almost wide, snapped the tail up and then slowly brought it down. The huge ship floated off the ground and they were in the air.

The lights of the field dropped away below them; then the lights of the city were under the wing and then they were gone. . . .

The tone of the engines became deeper and grew in volume to a throaty hum. Benham listened to them, then retracted the wing flap and the wheels. A dial on the instrument board showed the flap to be back in position, but the dial for the wheels still showed DOWN. Benham reached for the control and at that moment the dial registered UP. He scratched his head, grunted and shrugged his shoulders. Nothing to worry about, at least. The wheels were up in the engine nacelles, or the dial would not register. But they had taken a long time in coming up.

Carleson had been watching him, but now he turned his head away, checked the altitude of the plane on the artificial horizon and adjusted the flettner flap to level flying. He turned the control of the plane over to the gyro pilot and made out his flight report. All okay. He relaxed.

The co-pilot was yawning. "Sleepy, Bert?" Carleson asked.

Benham jerked his head and answered, "Oh, no. I was just thinking about being up here and how nice it was. . . . By the way, the landing gear seemed to come up a little slower than it should."

Carleson's eyes jumped to the reading on the oil pressure gauge for the retracting apparatus. It registered five hundred, which was all right. "Shouldn't have had any trouble," he said. "Are you sure they came up slow?"

"Sure. I thought they weren't coming up at all, but they did."

Carleson looked at the position indicator. "Run 'em up and down once and get it out of your mind."

"Okay."

The co-pilot pulled out the knob to let down the wheels and the two of them waited. Nothing happened. The dial still showed the UP position. Benham jerked the knob back and forth and still the position indicator showed UP. He looked once at Carleson, then reached for the hand crank, the emergency apparatus, and tried to turn that. It refused to budge. He sweated at it for a moment, then turned to Carleson and said, "The wheels are stuck."

Carleson grimly nodded his head and stared out into the night, trying to puzzle out what to do.

STEPHEN ST. CLAIRE was saying to Susan Colin, "You are a hellcat, Sue. But I adore you. Honestly, I do. . . . Won't you listen to reason, please? I admit that I followed you onto this plane to argue with you. But it was for a purpose. I'm in love with you and I don't want you to leave me. All this nonsense about Hollywood and Reno . . ."

Sue drew in her breath sharply and for a second looked tenderly at her husband. Then her eyes hardened and she said: "You made it impossible for me and I had to get out. This will be a nullification of everything you and I stand for. That is why I am doing it."

"You hate me that much?"

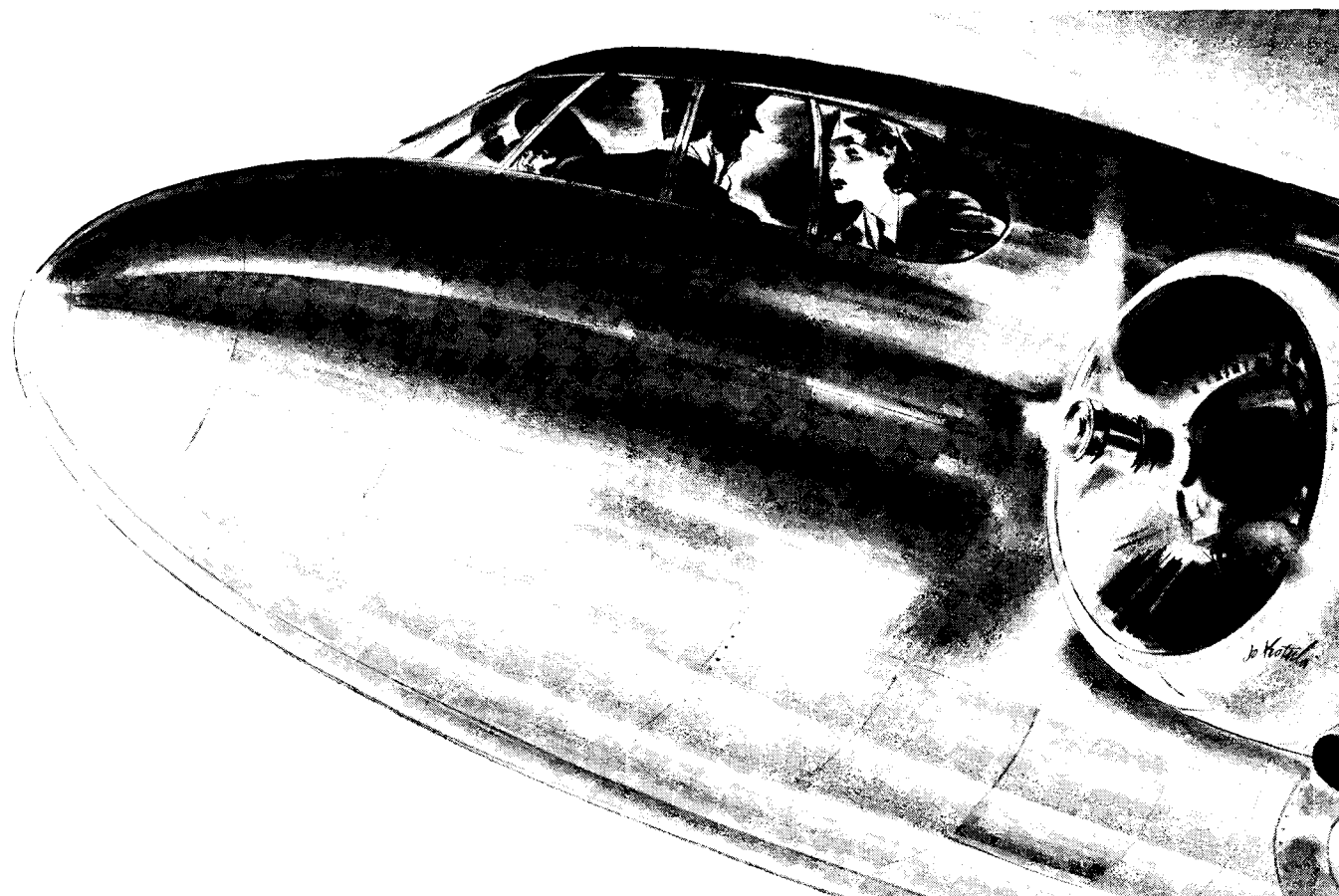
"Yes. During the last year you have become absolutely impossible to live with and even more so to work with."

He placed his hand on hers and said, "Sue, I'll admit I was wrong about everything. I was horrible. I was a beast. I ran about with other women. I got drunk. I insulted you in public. I beat you. I . . ."

"Ah, if you only had."

"Oh, what's the use?"

He threw up his hands and was silent.



Carleson spoke into the mike: "Carleson calling . . . Carleson calling . . . four two eight three . . . Carleson calling."

He switched to receiver and a voice came back: "Go ahead, Carleson."

"Carleson calling . . . four two eight three . . . two hours and five minutes east of Burbank. . . . Altitude five, three hundred . . . clear and unlimited . . . what's the weather? . . . Come back, please."

"Okay, Carleson. Clear and unlimited. Joe says to use the north runway. Come back."

"Carleson calling . . . four two eight three. . . . Get this, Ed. The retractable landing gear is stuck in the nacelles. Can't run the wheels down at all. Understand? Gear is stuck. Probably something sprung. Got it? Come back."

"Calling four two eight three. You kidding, Albin? Have you tried the emergency crank? Try it and come back."

"Carleson calling. The emergency crank won't work, either. I tell you something is sprung. Have the crash wagon on the field, a fire engine and a couple of ambulances. Fourteen passengers. That makes seventeen, including the three of us. Have seventeen stretchers ready. And I am not kidding. Got any advice? Come back."

"Calling Carleson. No advice at present. Prepare for a belly landing. We'll have everything ready on the field. Do not notify passengers. Anything else? Come back."

"Carleson signing off. Nothing else. Just have those ambulances there. That's all. Signing off."

HE SWITCHED off and turned to Benham. "They get panicky," he said, "when something like this happens. Blamed efficient and all that, but the thought of us coming in without wheels will drive them crazy. That's why I had to make sure they got everything right. We really won't need those stretchers."

"Ever made a belly landing before?"

"I have never had a crash of any kind."

"I see. And we won't need the stretchers, eh?"

Carleson lapsed into silence and bitterly thought of the vagaries of mechanical things. A belly landing, he knew, was a tricky proposition, especially with a ship fully loaded. The plane was constructed to withstand such a landing, if it could be kept under control on the ground. That was the catch. The slightest swing upward of the tail and it would go over. At a landing speed of seventy miles an hour, going over would be fatal . . . to someone.

He turned to Benham and said, "Take over while I go back in the cabin."

"What's up?"

"That dial may be wrong. The wheels could be down."

"Naw. If they were it would show on the air speed."

"I'm going to take a look just the same. Take over."

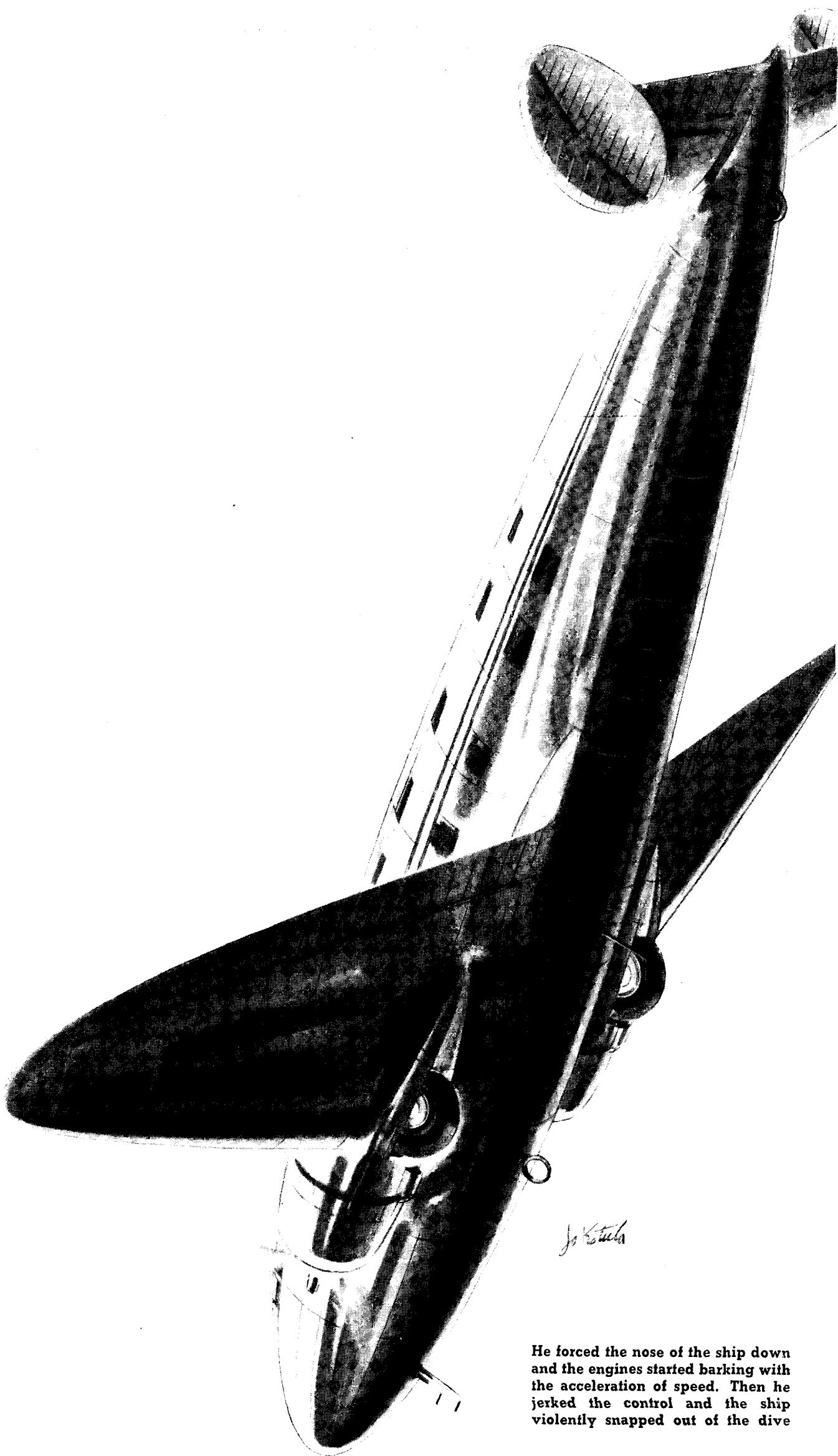
He opened the door of the cockpit, stepped back into the cabin, and walked to the far end, where there was a small window. He stopped there, leaned against the cabin wall and peered out through the window. From that point he could see under the low wing. The flames from the exhaust lit up that portion of the wing at the center section. The wheels were not down.

He straightened up and Sissy came out of the washroom and smiled at him. "Anything up, Albin?"

"No. No. Just curious about something. . . . Sissy, drop up to the office in about an hour. I want the berths made up sooner than usual."

"But we don't fool with the berths. They're made up when we land."

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He forced the nose of the ship down and the engines started barking with the acceleration of speed. Then he jerked the control and the ship violently snapped out of the dive

Things I Couldn't Tell till Now

By J. Richard (Dixie) Davis

IV

DICK, the Dutchman has given himself up. He's in jail here in Albany."

"What!" I shouted into the telephone. I made it sound as surprised as I could. That was an act for the benefit of the federal men who were tapping my wire. "When did he surrender?" I demanded.

"This morning. He wants you to come up right away." It was Jim Noonan talking, the lawyer who was handling the Albany end of Dutch Schultz's income-tax case. Of course I had arranged the surrender, but I didn't want the wire-tappers to get proof that I had been seeing the Dutchman, a fugitive from justice.

"I'll be right up!" I cried. I jumped into my car, which was waiting, and told my chauffeur to get from New York to Albany as fast as we could go. We burned up the road. Burning up the road right after us was a federal man. In those days they were trying to watch our every move.

As we tore up the Hudson, a new period in my life was beginning, and I was glad. For two furtive years now, while Schultz had been hiding out, I had been slipping around to back doors, trying to settle the case, trying to fix it. Now it was to come out in the open before a jury. If I could have foreseen the blood and terror of that next year I wouldn't have been so eager to see the Dutchman free.

Schultz had made up his mind the night before to surrender. It was a cold plunge for him to take, for they had a strong case, and they were out to send him to prison for ten years, like Waxey Gordon and Al Capone. It was a cold, bleak, rainy night late in 1934 and we were with him in his hide-out in New York City, when suddenly he had jumped up and flailed his arms above his head.

"Looking at these damned four walls will drive me nuts," he exploded. "Come on, Lulu, I'm going to surrender and I'm going to do it tonight. Drive me up to Albany right away."

Schultz Didn't Like Jails

So the millionaire gangster had got himself all dolled up in one of his \$35 suits, a bit tight for him now, and put on his brightest necktie, and started out in the cold, wet darkness for the drive upstate.

"We'll beat this thing, Dick," he had called back dismally. "But bail me out."

The reason for going to Albany was a tricky legal point we had figured out. Schultz had been indicted in New York, but because his legal residence was in the Bronx he claimed Albany was his tax-collection office. Much to the surprise of the federal prosecutors, we made them try him in that district.

It would have been duck soup to convict Schultz in New York City, but upstate he was not so notorious. Also we had a better opportunity in a smaller town to get jurors to see things our way. New York City is so big that it has more sin than other places; but people do not generally understand that, for the same reason, it has a lot more civic virtue too, and its law-enforcement agencies are better equipped to combat skulduggery.

When I got to Albany that day I found the Dutchman behind the bars, a dismal case of galloping jitters. He was desperately afraid of prison.

After he beat a federal income-tax case, Dutch Schultz's arrogance became maniacal. He killed his best friend to satisfy a whim; boasted that "any guy who can lick the government can lick anybody." Those last mad days are described by Schultz's trusted "kid mouthpiece"

"Bail me out!" he cried. "I can't stand these creep joints. Get me out!"

But we soon found bail was not so easy. The Dutchman himself had plenty of money, but we could not use it, because the government would grab it for taxes. Nor could we get money from any other mob. We had to have \$75,000 with a respectable pedigree, and it took us a month to get it.

Once he had been bailed out, Jimmy Hines of Tammany Hall, the Dutchman's political associate, arranged with a politician in Troy to let Schultz stay there without being bothered by the police. Schultz took a house in Troy, and his wife and baby went there to live with him; but for a sort of office, where he could be near Jim Noonan in Albany, Schultz took a suite in the old Harmony Hotel in Cohoes.

I soon regretted bitterly that we had ever bailed Schultz out. During the last two years Schultz was in hiding Bo Weinberg had run the mob, and every-

thing went smoothly. But now the Dutchman was messing into things himself, ruling with a high hand, drinking himself crazy. I already have told you about that mad night in Cohoes, when he pulled his gun and shot Julie Martin right before my eyes. From then on all of us knew we were at the mercy of a homicidal maniac.

An Effort to Stop Dewey

Believe me, I wanted to get out of it all. But I couldn't. I knew too much to be allowed to quit. I was a prisoner of fear, fighting for the liberty of a man whom I now hated, whom I knew as a dangerous, uncaged beast.

And in the midst of it, I had to fight for my own self-preservation. For a New York County grand jury suddenly broke away from the domination of the Tammany district attorney and began a real investigation of Jimmy Hines' relations with our mob. The grand jury's

dramatic exposé brought the appointment of Thomas E. Dewey as special prosecutor, and I was right in the spotlight, the guy with his neck out. I knew that Dewey was a bad guy, from our standpoint, for I had seen him operate as a prosecutor in federal court. I warned Hines that Dewey would ruin us, and Jimmy said he would try to stop the appointment, but he couldn't do it.

Schultz was tried for income tax in Syracuse in April, 1935, and we succeeded in winning a disagreement of the jury. Schultz had worn out his welcome in Troy and he was unpopular everywhere in New York State. So I arranged with the right people to let Schultz stay in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and not be bothered. He took up spacious quarters in a hotel there and started to live the life of a country squire. He had his horses sent up from a boarding stable in New York. He went out riding every day; he had a massage expert to give him his rubdowns; he reveled in all the pleasures that had been denied him while he was a fugitive from justice.

I stayed away from Bridgeport as much as I could. I was thoroughly sick of Schultz, and I also had other matters to keep me busy. I had fallen head over heels in love. The girl was Hope Dare, the most beautiful redheaded show girl in the world, and we had gone to live together. Being married had never hindered me from playing around with the girls on Broadway, but this was different. Something permanent hap-



Thomas E. Dewey, who was hated and feared by Dutch Schultz. Davis tried to stop his appointment as special rackets prosecutor by warning Jimmy Hines. Dewey later convicted both Davis and Hines



George Weinberg, marked for killing when he tried to get out of the racket after Schultz murdered his brother