



Horse parlors in Chicago are large and well-patronized. This one is called The Harlem

Too Much Fun

By John T. Flynn

Does Chicago want its horse parlors, its slot machines, its hot dice and its fast gals, or is it victimized by corruption and mob rule?

Roulette, among many other gambling games, is open to all comers and gets a heavy play



NEXT November the federal prison at Terminal Island will pucker up its ponderous marble lips and spit Scarface Al Capone out into the wide world. Where he will go after that is problematical, but if he ever gets back to Chicago he won't have any trouble finding his old pals.

What's become of his boy friends—"the old crowd?" Where are all the booze runners, alky cooks, hijackers, card-sharps, bomb throwers, procurers, murderers and scoundrels of every degree?

Well, Al will find them doing business at the old stand. The sawed-off shot-guns, the submachine guns, the pine-apples and the pineapple hurlers are still there. The boys do not blaze away as freely—because things are better organized. Occasionally, though, it is necessary to rub out some rebellious spirit who does not submit to discipline. While I was in Chicago a car paused long enough in front of a large building to enable its pilots to eject the large, dead body of an old gangster onto the sidewalk in the most approved manner.

To be sure there is no booze running, no trucks to hijack, no speaks to shake down. But, after all, Chicago is there—big, boyish, meaty, lawless and magnificent Chicago and its ever-trusting public. It still loves its liberty with a dash of the frontier in it. It loves its beer cold, its dice hot, its gals fast and its horses slow. Len Small and Big Bill the Builder are gone, but the old City Hall—the Hall of Liberty—is still there and the Kelly-Nash machine is in it to keep the tree of liberty green.

It's not booze now that nourishes the gangsters, but gambling and other forms of commercial vice—horse parlors, roulette, chuck-a-luck, blackjack, policy, punchboards, one-arm bandits and girls, girls, girls. For the most part it's the boys who captained Al Capone's various departments of crime—his managers, sluggers, gunmen and fixers—who run the show from Cicero to the Loop. Some of them have grown a little grayer. Some have gotten a little fat. Some have rheumatism in the trigger fingers. A few are bums. But their leaders run the show.

The big racket, of course, is gambling. But it is not so easy to say who is the big shot. One cannot say with certainty whether the old mob is preserving the empire against the return of Al Capone or has actually set up a new master. Some in the know say the new king is William R. (Billy) Skidmore of the Skidmore-Johnson forces. Others say that it is Ralph (Bottles) Capone, the drinking water dealer of South Hubbard Street. One hears a new name—that Frank Nitti, the "Enforcer." Al's old brain-truster, has turned Warwick and made a new king, the mysterious Mr. Paul Ricca.

A Trip to a Horse Parlor

Of course Chicago has its army of handbook betterers—fifty-cent pikers and parlayers—and its army of handbook men to accommodate them. But Chicago likes its horse betting raw. It goes in for the horse parlor, which is little else than the old-fashioned poolroom in technicolor and sound. And when the horses go to the post at Belmont there are more men and women—old and young ones, fashionable and shabby—standing around the charts and the loud-speakers of the innumerable horse parlors of Chicago than there are at Belmont.

Let's step into one of these long-distance race tracks. No trouble to get in. We stroll freely into a room with the proportions of a good-sized store. Around the walls are large blackboard charts.

Men on low platforms beneath the boards chalk up the dope on them. An

announcer bawls through a megaphone the latest news from all the tracks—scratches, odds and so on. There is a crowd of three hundred to a thousand sitting in rows of chairs or milling about. At one end is a row of windows, each framing a betting clerk or cashier.

There is really more continuous excitement here than at a track, since all the races on all the tracks will be recorded—perhaps fifty races instead of eight. The crowd surges toward one board. The megaphone man is bawling the post odds and there is a rush of betters to the windows to get in under the tape. The megaphone roars: "They're off!"

You hear a murmur of feverish excitement. As the horses speed around the track at Belmont the megaphone man announces their position at the quarter, the half, in the stretch, at the finish. As the winner is announced there is a sudden relaxing of the tenseness, a groan from the many losers, a high-pitched squeal of delight from the winners.

You Can't Hide a Gambling House

That's the horse parlor. It takes a lot of room. It calls for a lot of equipment, furniture, telegraph services and a large staff. It cannot be hidden away in a little corner or operated in a handbook man's vest pocket. It is a mark for the police who wish to find it.

Where, then, are these places hidden? Well, when I was in Chicago there was one right across the street from the City Hall. You could stand in the open door of the City Hall and throw a stone right into the window of 123 North Clark Street, the gambling joint of Mr. Jack Gusik, the organization brains of Mr. Al Capone. Without a card or an introduction or a whisper from anyone I walked several times into the big poolroom crowded with several hundred people.

In the next block on North Clark and on Randolph Street, another thoroughfare bounding the City Hall, there were at least four more. On Washington within two blocks of the Hall there were two more. There are many others. In fact I had pointed out to me nearly thirty such places in the very heart of the city within a few blocks of the Hall and I went unmolested into a number of them.

How many of these horse parlors there are no one can say, save the gambling syndicates and the police. Naturally the good mayor knows nothing of them. These are evil things and he sees no evil, hears no evil and speaks no evil.

Of course all the gambling joints protected or sponsored by the old Capone mob are not horse parlors. Chicagoans, like others, have a fondness for chuck-a-luck, for roulette, craps, policy, faro and other innocent diversions. If you are a stranger and want some of these muscular indoor sports the taxi man will deliver you to any kind of vice your innocent little heart craves. He gets, as he will tell you, "a buck for everybody he delivers."

An industry like this, in defiance of law and enjoying the loving administrative supervision of a mob of gangsters, obviously calls for a high degree of organization. And that's where the old Capone legion of honor comes in.

In this underworld society the two great powers to be dealt with are the Syndicate and the Interests. The Syndicate refers to the organized group which dominates commercial vice. The Interests refers to the power that guarantees political protection. If you want to launch a horse parlor or a dive you have to be licensed by the Syndicate and the Interests. Try to get away without a franchise from these two powers and you will get a ride in the wagon from the police or mayhap a ride from the mob.

Mysterious Billy Skidmore, who is believed to be dominant man in Chicago gambling, says his only support is the junkyard at the right. Below is the house on his extensive country estate

Individuals ambitious to become independent proprietors in the business underworld may and do run horse parlors and girl parlors. But they can do so only by paying an initial fee for the privilege and letting the Syndicate in on the profits and submitting to various delicate little grafting devices. Individual gangsters own and operate their own types of joints, suited to their special talents and tastes. But the big money is in the split, the taxes levied on all who would enter this racket in Chicago.

Just who is the Grand Exalted Syndicate of this underworld government remains a mystery. But apparently the political end of it is bossed by Mr. William R. (Billy) Skidmore. The gang end of it is probably ruled by a sort of Dread Council of Six—Ralph Capone, Paul Ricca, Jack Gusik, Frank Nitti, Louis Campagna and Lawrence Dago Mangano. Who is the Number One man is not easy to say.

Skidmore is referred to freely in Chicago as having dominated gambling there for thirty years. But he remains quite mysterious. Ostensibly Mr. Skidmore is a junkman. He is in the scrap metal and junk business. He insists he has no other means of support. And looking out from the soft eyes in his roly-poly face, he will assure you that he knows nothing about gambling in his wicked home town.

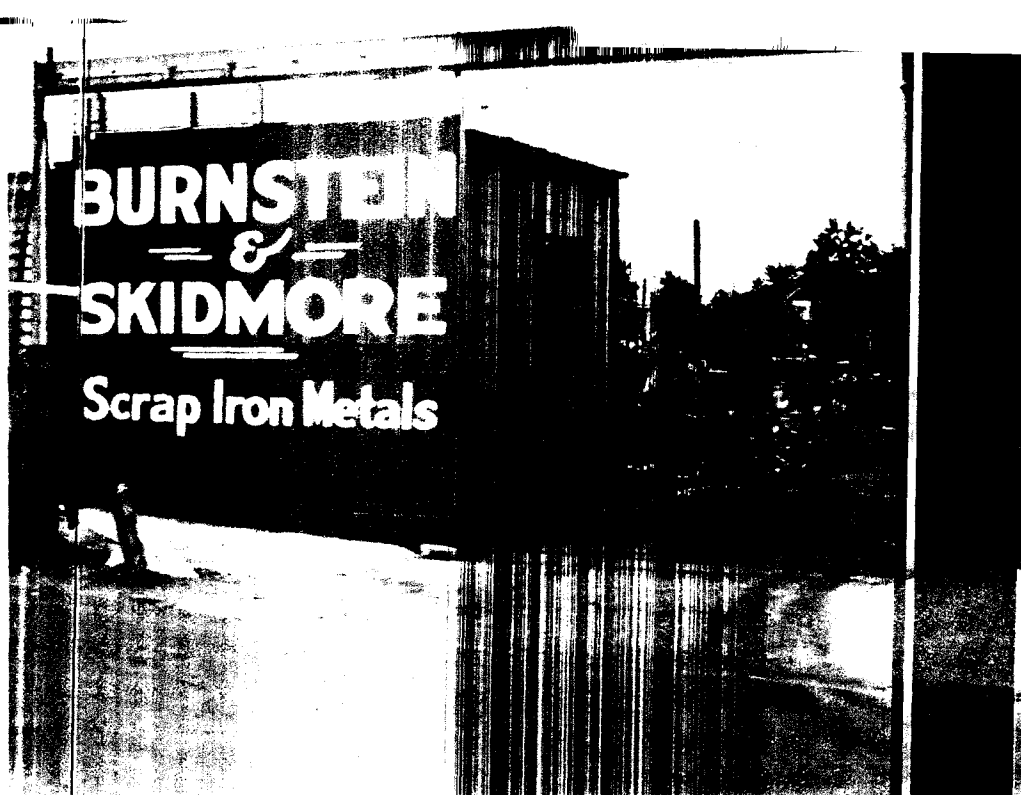
The World's Best Businesses

He insists his sole love is his junk pile, which you might believe until you see the magnificent country estate which is his country home. He purchased a baronial domain to which he added seven more farms in McHenry and Lake counties. There is a beautiful residence, many palatial barns, a private race track and a private golf course and stables housing the finest collection of prize-winning Percherons in the country, while others house some of the finest prize cattle in the land. But in Chicago all the boys have some sort of business. Skidmore is a junk dealer, Ralph Capone is in the drinking-water business, Dion O'Banion was a florist and the famous Al himself, until his fame swamped his pretension, was a second-hand furniture dealer in Cicero.

Skidmore is a Chicago product. He originated on the West Side where he is regarded as a fine specimen of the successful man. He rose from a small saloon to be the most successful something or other in Chicago. His first claim to fame came when he was indicted with Chief of Police Healy in the famous Hoyne graft campaign. But he was acquitted. Later he drifted into finance—the bail-bond business. He was mysterious then—they called him Whispering Billy Skidmore. He was the Friend at Court of the underworld.

Skidmore has never been a gangster. He has never captained or been part of a gang. He has taken no part in their
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In the foreground is Mr. Skidmore, attending the inquest following the murder of gambler-liquor dealer Gus Winkler. At his side sits a bail bondsman





"That guy's been following me all morning," he said. "I'd like to know who he is and why he's trailing me"

The Story Thus Far:

AT TWO o'clock one placid afternoon, a young bandit enters a store in the town of Rosemont, holds up the place and makes his getaway. A short time later, Freddy Bascom, who lives with his mother in a near-by city, is arrested and charged with the crime.

Mrs. Bascom at once appeals to Peter Kincaid, a lawyer who, with his wife, Paula, occupies an apartment near hers. Recalling that he had seen young Bascom, at five minutes to two, in front of the courthouse—some twenty miles from Rosemont—Peter is glad to take the case. He interrogates the boy, whose story makes it obvious that he has been "framed;" and bail money having been posted, he sends Freddy to his mother.

Among the state's most powerful politicians are Franklin Calhoun, Dave Farmer and Max Sandstrom. Calhoun is killed by some secret enemy. Later Peter receives a telephone call from Sandstrom. Surprised—he has never met the man—he is even more surprised when Sandstrom invites him and Paula to dine with him at his imposing country estate, Twin Hills. Suspecting that Sandstrom may have

some important legal work for him, he accepts the invitation. . . .

The dinner is an interesting affair—and startling. Lee Johnson (Sandstrom's secretary) and his wife are there; also, Marion Cantrill, a beautiful young woman who has been closely associated with Sandstrom for years. The host—a stocky, broad-shouldered brute of a man—discourses easily on his friendship for Dave Farmer; he says that he and Farmer had met in prison, while they were both "doing time."

The dinner at an end, Sandstrom informs Peter that he wants to buy "a certain property," secretly. Will Peter (for whose ability he professes to have the highest admiration) drop all of his practice and handle the matter? Peter promises to think it over. . . .

The Kincaids prepare to leave. Sandstrom bends low over Paula's hand. "You'll come back many times," he says quietly. "You must," Marion Cantrill smiles. "Do come," she purrs. "I'll be here. I'm one of the trophies. Max usually displays me between the armor and the silver plate."

"Marion, you're drunk," Sandstrom says angrily. "But yes," the woman whispers. "What else . . . ?"

We Will Meet Again

By John and Ward Hawkins

II

THERE was a dusty slice of moon tilted low above the hills. The car swooped down the long slants toward the river in a cold, breathless rush. "There's a town down there," said Peter. "It looks like a mess of kid's blocks, doesn't it?"

Paula said, "What was the job?"

"Your guess is as good as mine. He talked a lot and when he was all through he hadn't said a thing. I'm not having any part of it. It stinks."

"Do you think you're being fair to me, Pete?"

"Wait a minute!" Peter Kincaid turned to look at Paula, but her head was bent and he could see only the flat line of her lips. "Look," he said stiffly. "I haven't any ideas about being the one-and-only in our house, but I thought this was in my department."

"It is."

"Then what's the matter?"

"We've waited for our chance," Paula said softly. "Ever since we were married we've talked about the 'break' and what we'd do when it came. A new apartment, clothes, a place at the beach—and while we were waiting you deflected pickpockets for ten-dollar fees. Now we've got our chance and you're turning it down—without reason!"

Coldly, Peter said, "I won't work for a man I can't trust. Now or ever!"

"But Sandstrom is honest," said Paula. "He proved that when he told us he'd been in prison."

"Sandstrom told us nothing that wasn't common knowledge—except that Dave Farmer had been in prison too.

And by doing that he put himself on Farmer's level. D'you see? Farmer went to prison for an ideal, Sandstrom went as a thief. There's a difference, but not as Sandstrom told it. He made himself a Robin Hood. He started out to sell you that idea—and he did!"

"But not you," Paula said, "you're much too clever."

"He was making a pass at you and I didn't like it."

"Thanks for the vote of confidence," snapped Paula. "And I suppose your talk with Marion Cantrill was purely in the line of research? You probably have her tagged and put neatly in the proper bracket."

Peter said, "She's his mistress. What else?"

"You should know."

And they left it at that. The moments and the miles slipped away. They were turning west across the bridge when Peter looked again at Paula. He spoke and the words were gray with the ash of his anger:

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to blow up."

"We both blew up," she said.

He touched her hand gently. "I haven't told him no. I may not. But it came too fast, Paula, and there was one thing that bothered me: Calhoun and Sandstrom were partners. Dave Farmer, Franklin Calhoun and Max Sandstrom ran this state. Calhoun was murdered three days ago. We spent a full evening with Max Sandstrom, and Calhoun's name was never mentioned."

"You're not trying to say that . . ."

"That Sandstrom did him in?" asked

Peter. "No—even Sandstrom isn't big enough to get away with murder. But he's hard, Paula, too hard. He worked with Calhoun for years—and forgot him in three days."

Paula said, "I hadn't thought of that. And, Pete, I won't try to tell you what to do, ever again."

They stopped in front of the apartment house then, and Peter kissed the tip of her nose. "Old Ugly," he said. "Sometimes I think I'll swap you for a horse, but I always change my mind."

PETER KINCAID saw the small man when he left the courthouse. He saw him again, an hour later and four miles away, and there was nothing strange in that. Later, Peter brushed elbows with him in a coffee shop, and again after leaving the bank. And that was odd, for it meant the small man was following him.

He was small and dark and he wore a Chesterfield coat and a near-white felt hat. He didn't speak to Peter Kincaid. He did nothing at all but stop when Peter stopped and become interested in the nearest window. Peter went back to the office.

Paula looked up from her desk, smiled and pushed the white forelock back. "How'd it go?" she asked.

"We lost the appeal," Peter said. "But something else has come up that's damned queer. Come in here for a minute."

He led her into an inner office. At the window he spent a moment searching the crowded street below.

