

It will be a frenzied, sleepless night for newsmen. They will end up red-eyed and soaked with coffee

# They Work While You Vote

By J. D. Ratcliff

ILLUSTRATED BY CARL ROSE

65,000 Associated Press correspondents will swing into action on election day. The New York staff alone will be drinking 40 gallons of coffee while tabulators chatter, phones ring, Morse keys click and teletypes splatter in the co-operative bedlam of determining the winner, and accurately, too



ON Tuesday, November 5th, the poll clerk at Davis, West Virginia, will gather a handful of eating tobacco and take a few warm-up chews. Then he'll settle down to counting ballots to see how Messrs. Roosevelt and Willkie have done in the little mountain town, isolated in the cut-over timberlands of the high Alleghenies.

A few minutes after he completes his task the vote of Davis, West Virginia, will be lumped with other votes cast by shrimp fishermen in Louisiana, cowboys in Montana, and lumbermen in Maine. And totals will be known in the newspaper offices of San Francisco, Lima in Peru, and London. They will be heard in millions of homes via the radio. Quite a job, you will admit. And it is. This is the job done election night by the Associated Press. It will look easy when morning papers headline the names of the winners. But there will be a lot of work behind those headlines.

In the space of a dozen hours this co-operative news service will have tallied probably 50 million votes; using an army of 65,000 men to do the job. If the election is a landslide the facts will be known by midnight. Even if it is tight, conclusive figures will probably be known by breakfast time.

If it wasn't for the AP it would take weeks and possibly months to find out

who had won. George Washington didn't know until two months after election; and Rutherford B. Hayes wasn't sure until two days before his inauguration, on March 4, 1877. The official machinery can grind slowly, but AP can't. It must be fast—and sure. Besides telling us who is the next President, and the make-up of the new Congress, it handles 48 separate state stories that night. Politicians down in Independence, Kansas, want to know who has been elected in Cheyenne County up in the northwestern part of the state; and people in Amarillo, Texas, want to know how the voting is going 800 miles away in Brownsville.

## America's Greatest News Story

The news service has to collect votes from islands off the Carolina coast, from Alaska, the backwoods counties of Arkansas (where it once had to charter a locomotive to bring in the returns), and from Cook County, Illinois, where there are two million votes to be counted. No news story gets the meticulous coverage given a national election. It must be complete to the last vote. And accurate.

The major domo of this vast show is Claude A. Jagger, baldish, rosy-cheeked AP financial editor. During the 1929

stock crash Jagger, then twenty-seven years old, wrote 8,000 words of running story in one sitting. After a siege like that a national election is a relatively simple matter.

Plans can be laid months in advance and if the planning job is good enough everything goes smoothly.

Jagger began setting up machinery to cover the November 5th election while most of us were on vacation last summer. By now every last detail is complete. All Jagger has to do on election night is sit back at his desk in the main newsroom at the AP bureau in Rockefeller Center, New York. And watch it roll. It's quite a spectacle.

Election day will start calmly enough. Probably a few minutes past midnight November 4th the dozen people of Millsfield, New Hampshire, will have voted, closed the polls and claimed the honor of being the first United States election district to report. Somerset, Vermont, will come along in the early morning and so will New Ashford, Massachusetts. Later in the day the shooting will begin in Kentucky where politics, like mountain dew, is taken straight. Slight points of controversy are grounds for homicide. Ten to twenty of these lethal affairs—par for the day—must be taken into account.

Roosevelt and Willkie will vote and

be photographed and interviewed at the polls. Their pictures will be sent on the 20,000-mile Wirephoto network. Congressmen will shed cultured pearls of wisdom as they disappear into voting booths, and governors will pose with their wives—decorated, for this occasion, with orchids. All this is a tepid prelude to the real business. The wires warm to their task at 5 P. M. Eastern Standard time, when polls begin to close. Then Jagger's army swings into action.

## The Key Man

The lone correspondent tucked away in a remote Wisconsin county seat may think he is missing all the fun, but he is the real basis for AP election machinery, the hero of this piece. There is a man like him for each of the 3,070 U. S. counties and on them the whole show depends. In many cases they work for newspapers which are members of the AP; in others they are employed directly. In any case their job is the same: to collect the vote from every precinct in the county.

To get a better idea of how it works, let's take the correspondent in Aroostook County, Maine. Weeks before election he had lined up a man in every precinct in his county who would report

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# The Drifter

By Ernest Haycox

ILLUSTRATED BY DAN SWEENEY

## The Story Thus Far:

WHEN, following a long ride from Texas, Jim Keene reaches the frontier town of Prairie City, he learns that the cattlemen of that area are persecuting the homesteaders, in the hope of driving them away. Preparing to move on, he meets a girl—Aurora Brant, who, like her father before her, is a homesteader. Realizing that she is in need of protection, he decides to stay and see that she gets fair play.

Financed by Tim Sullivan, a kindly saloon owner, Aurora starts a little store. Whereupon, Grat DePard—who, as owner of the powerful Broken Bit outfit, is leading the cattlemen—informs the near-by homesteaders that they must not patronize her. Incensed when he learns of this, Keene makes every possible effort to inveigle DePard and Red John, his

foreman, into fighting a gun battle with him. But, conscious that the Texan knows how to use a gun, the two men refuse to fight him.

Portia Crews, daughter of the owner of Rafter T, tells Aurora that if Sheriff Ben Borders (a courageous man who is not afraid to enforce the law) is beaten in the coming election by Jesse Morspeare, one of DePard's henchmen, no homesteader will be safe. . . .

The election is held in Prairie City. While the votes are being cast Keene encounters Cleve Stewart, a ranchman who is in love with Aurora, and—following a heated altercation with him—gives him a drubbing with his fists. To his amazement, however, Stewart (who secretly dislikes DePard, and whose sympathies are with the homesteaders) insists on shaking hands with him; and from that moment on, the two men are friends. . . .

The votes are counted, and, to the delight of the homesteaders, Sheriff Borders is re-elected. Then, a few minutes later, Borders is shot to death by a killer named Naves—one of DePard's hired men. . . . Keene has a shack near Aurora's cabin. Returning to it, after the killing, he finds that two of his horses have been stolen. Certain that DePard's men have stolen them, he rides to the Broken Bit headquarters.

Surrounded by his men, DePard greets Keene, admits that he has the horses. Then, in the course of a short fight, he is captured and placed in a bunkhouse. . . . Discussing his plans with Red John and Morspeare, DePard says: "Tonight we're cutting every piece of homestead wire on the Silver Bow." And he delights his auditors by informing them that he is planning to hang Jim Keene!

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KEENE heard Broken Bit leave the yard in one long, running column. Dust drifted across the yard and softly sifted through the cracks of the bunkhouse wall. It was completely dark. He fished up a match to light the lamp on the table and then a new thought arrested him and he held the burning match in his hand, turning the thought around his head until the flame scorched his fingers. He dropped the match. Somebody moved over the yard slowly and opened the door.

Morspeare said: "Go get your supper."

Keene moved through the door, with Morspeare stepping backward and aside. The man was a massive beast in whose small, cloudy brain stray thoughts and impulses moved toward blind ends. The whole night had changed; something had happened and now Morspeare was watching him like a huge rhino uncertainly waiting for the impulse to drop his head and charge.

Keene sat down to the kitchen table. Hungry as he was he ate but little and took a long time at it, steadily searching his mind for the answer to Morspeare's presence. He heard nothing from the yard. It lay wholly silent, squeezed by the blackness of the surrounding hills.

Morspeare said: "Come on."

Keene moved into the yard again. Morspeare backed away and once more came to a stand in the shadows. Keene stopped. "I need a smoke, Jesse," he explained, and carefully reached for his tobacco.

He rolled up the cigarette, looking to either side of him and seeing no more Broken Bit men. He lighted the smoke. "I been in that damned bunkhouse all day. Let me walk around the corral."

Morspeare nursed his ponderous silence. Water dripped steadily into the corral trough. Wind, freshly risen from the east, ruffled the treetops. Morspeare said at last: "All right."

Keene passed the bunkhouse and got into the deeper shadows clinging to the corral. A horse laid its muzzle against the corral posts, emitted a trumpeting blast of wind and ran away. Keene moved to the right, limping on his left heel, keeping the circle of the corral's side near his left shoulder. Morspeare's boots heavily scuffed the earth behind him. Morspeare coughed.

Half around the corral, Keene picked up the blocky shadow of the barn at the edge of the yard and suddenly was convinced that he was alone with Morspeare—and the cook. Everybody else had gone. Continuing, he faced the house again, seeing only one pony before the porch. That would be Morspeare's.

He had been moving slowly on but now he stopped, the sharpest of sensations tearing along his nerves. He was for that instant frozen in his tracks, not knowing why. The shock had come first; now the reason for the shock followed—Morspeare had quit moving. Morspeare was back in the shadows, still as a dead man. Keene had the cigarette in his

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She seemed to be drawn completely into herself, listening to an inner voice, to an inner command

