

began two years before, with the divorce; but it is also true that, at that time, it affected only a small group in the upper social circles of Charleston and did not spread through the middle class and become city-wide and state-wide until after the disputed decision.

But the boycott isn't based on the divorce alone, either. It is based on neither of these, and on both of these, and on something deeper than either—on that act of separation from Charleston which took place somewhere in the judge's interior, and which is the real story of the change that "come over" him. The wrath of Charleston is the wrath of those who consider that they have been viewed and weighed by one upon whom they felt they have claims of tenderness and loyalty transcending cold objectivity.

One of Charleston's great complaints is that the judge is "cold." It says of J. Waties Waring that he "rides" the local bar hard in his courtroom, out of vengefulness because of South Carolina's poor reception of his divorce. This is a variation of the theory that he gave the primary vote to Negroes to be revenged on white society.

But it is at least possible that in trying to explain Judge Waring in the cold terms of a social misstep, a boycott and a revenge, Charleston is backing away from what might come out as a very warm story of an elderly man's agony and passion and conversion.

To shrink this down into a story of a cold man and a divorce is, in an odd way, to make it more socially acceptable. For if Charlestonians were to concede that the judge suffered a sincere revulsion of feeling, they would imply that portents of impending social change have popped up in the heart of their society. By comparison, when they try to reduce it all to a mere social scandal, it is more acceptable.

I asked the judge about the "insults" to South Carolina he had put into his opinion in the famous Negro voting case of *Elmore vs. Rice*. It was in this opinion that he wrote: "For too many years the people of this country, and perhaps particularly of this state, have evaded realistic issues . . . It is time for South Carolina to rejoin the Union."

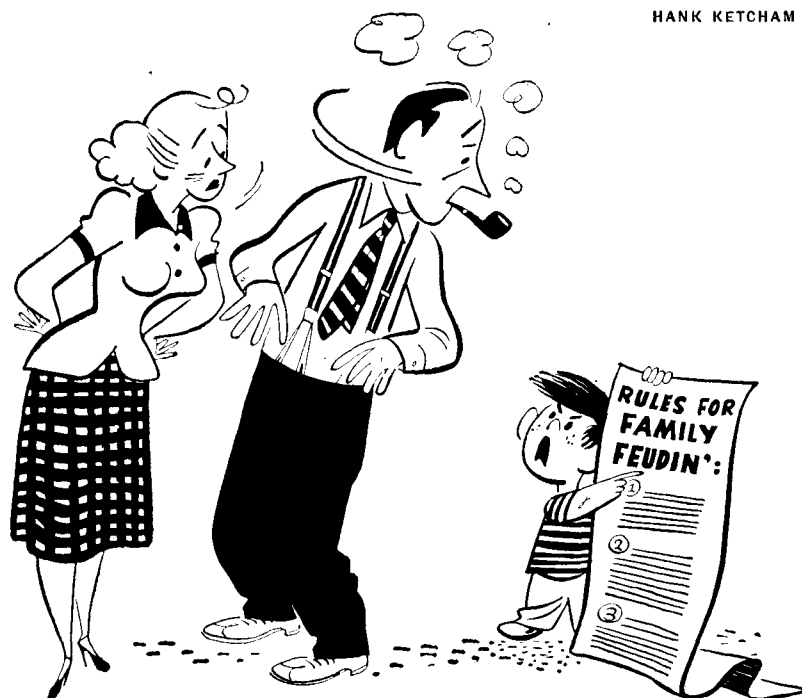
"The way I did it was most important," said the judge. "I wanted to hand down more than a dry-as-dust opinion. I wanted to preach a sermon. I had hopes that decent people could be aroused. If there is any truth or basis in the American creed, how can we have first- and second-class citizens? I didn't want any doubt about Negroes voting. I wanted to present the state with a fact, in the clearest possible way. It is my belief that if you present them with an unalterable fact, they will accept it."

Oath Demanded of Negroes

After Judge Waring's decision, the Democratic party of South Carolina announced it would yield and allow Negroes to vote in its primaries. But it required each Negro voter to take an oath. That oath turned out to be a little form through which the prospective elector swore that he believed in the separation of the races and was against the Fair Employment Practices Act.

In a second major case, *Brown vs. Baskin*, Judge Waring threw the oath out. He declared that Negroes must be allowed to vote without it, and he issued an injunction banning interference with that right by officials in the Democratic party. He then announced that he would sit in court on primary day and would punish for contempt anyone who violated his injunction.

To understand the feelings of that day in Charleston, you must understand the power of a federal judge in a small city. It is very great. His warrant comes from far-off Washington, and so do the sanctions he uses. He is appointed for life and, once in, is independent of local politics. He is a lone and powerful operator. The judge sat in court all that day, as he had promised. No one violated his injunction. At the end of the day he closed his chambers and



Family Garden of Vs.

By KEN KRAFT

BOXING has its Marquis of Queensberry rules; labor, the Taft-Hartley Act; poker has Hoyle—but no one has ever set up any standards of conduct for the thing that outranks them all in the number of people involved and the age of the sport. I mean the family fight, of course. More's the pity. It leaves things in a fearful muddle, with every man for himself and the losers do the dishes.

The pattern of the family fight differs according to several factors, among which are: Whether you married the sulky type, the loud type or the throwing type; whether or not the children are present; how thin the walls are; whether your heart is in it; how old an offender you are; how firm you are; how stubborn she is; how much time you have; how long you've been married.

(I suppose every man and wife have a fight now and then, by the way. If there is anyone who doesn't know what I am talking about, I should like to have his name and the first option on a lecture tour with him. He can be the straight man and we'll clean up.)

If a family fight is brewing when you get home from the office, you don't even have to say an unkind word to start it off. You don't have to say anything. Keep quiet, and she'll say: "What's the matter—can't you give me a civil 'Hello'?" And the first shot has been fired. Or if you start out by kissing her, she'll suggest that if that peck on the cheek is your idea of a kiss, you can keep it. And furthermore—! Here we go again.

Even if someone cared to tease me for an answer to why there are any family fights at all when peace is so wonderful, it wouldn't do a speck of good. Uncle Ken doesn't know everything, boys and girls.

We may as well take human nature for what it is, and perhaps at most, try to set up some rules for family fights. As a

beginning, I suggest the following list which, when printed on a good-quality rag paper and framed, will make a thoughtful anniversary gift for that couple who otherwise has everything:

1. Before a family fight begins, there shall be a formal declaration of intention by the aggressor. This will prevent: "What do you mean—I started it!" later. The declaration may be a chalk mark on the hall door, a blackball dropped in a bowl, etc. Verbal declarations shall be null and void.

2. The issue shall be clearly stated by the aggressor, as: "You did not forget about it—you just never want to take me out any more!" "And I suppose the washed-out blonde you couldn't take your eyes off all evening was another old school chum!" "Don't you think I ever get tired of picking up after you, laughing boy?" "I asked you twice to phone for reservations, but of course nobody can tell you anything."

"I don't care how it smelled—that was my favorite pipe!"

3. The defense shall have the exclusive use of five minutes to answer back. The other party shall not butt in or stuff cotton in ears during this interval.

4. Scoring—If the defendant admits he is wrong (or that she is wrong, if this should ever come up), it shall constitute a win for the aggressor and end the contest at once.

5. Fouls—There shall be no references made during the fight to fancied or real injustices that are more than six months old.

6. Penalties—Committing a foul, or refusing to accept an apology at any time during the fight, shall forfeit the contest for the offending party. Any sulking after the fight is over shall forfeit the next win.

7. Contestants shall break clean when the fight ends. In short, contestants must really mean it when they kiss and make up, and no hitting in the clinch. **THE END**



Sulky Type



Loud Type



Throwing Type

walked home, and no one spoke to him on the way.

It is hard to say how clearly the judge sees his former friends across the present gulf. He says he is aware of "an undercurrent of good feeling" which, he believes, dares not show itself. He cuts former companions who give him, say a mere blink of embarrassed greeting at unavoidable encounters; he feels that that is "too little and too late." I don't know whether he understands that he has hurt them, by breaking through the assumptions which had, in the past, tied them together. Or perhaps, after what he has gone through, he feels that this is minor damage.

Strong for Law Enforcement

As for the view of the judge from the other side, across the same gulf, one man, and only one, pointed out that the judge had always had a reputation for being hard on wrongdoers, long before his divorce. The same man remarked thoughtfully that the judge had a way of sticking faithfully to the law, regardless of his personal opinions. In 1947, while he was handing down his primary decision, Judge Waring decided, in another proceeding in which a Negro was suing for admission into the University of South Carolina Law School, that the state was entitled to reasonable time in which to set up "separate but equal" law-school facilities for Negroes—thus following the Supreme Court's lead on the matter of segregated schools, though he loathes the segregation system.

The Waring's rise before eight in the morning, read their newspapers over coffee, and the judge then walks to his chambers. Mrs. Waring takes her morning stroll, and attends to her large correspondence, when not answering the phone. She has a son and daughter in the North; another son was killed in the Pacific. The judge comes home for lunch, and after he returns to work, Mrs. Waring fills the afternoon with reading, putting, filing her clippings, and, of course, answering the phone.

They drive through the city before dinner, always, and Mrs. Waring reads aloud to her husband at night. They keep a serious book going, and a lighter one, and switch between them. Dominoes and double Canfield help. The judge holds court in New York in the spring, and they travel in the summer. Gossip follows them, but "no unpleasantness."

One day, the judge said quietly to me in the doorway of his house:

"It is an unpleasant situation to be in, to stand alone in a community. But after experiencing it, and after my contacts with other communities, I feel that it is the happiest position I could be in. Having had to meet this issue, it's a great comfort to look at your own conscience, and neither one blinks for the other."

He laughed.

"My opponents are the most unhappy people you can find. They're all torn apart inside. They try to make you believe that things that are not all right are fine, and they sweat as they search for the words to do it with. I don't have to engage in those mental acrobatics. I'm almost seventy, and I've got a cause to live for and a job to do. That's pretty good. What can they do to me at seventy that would matter?"

There was something else that he wanted to say.

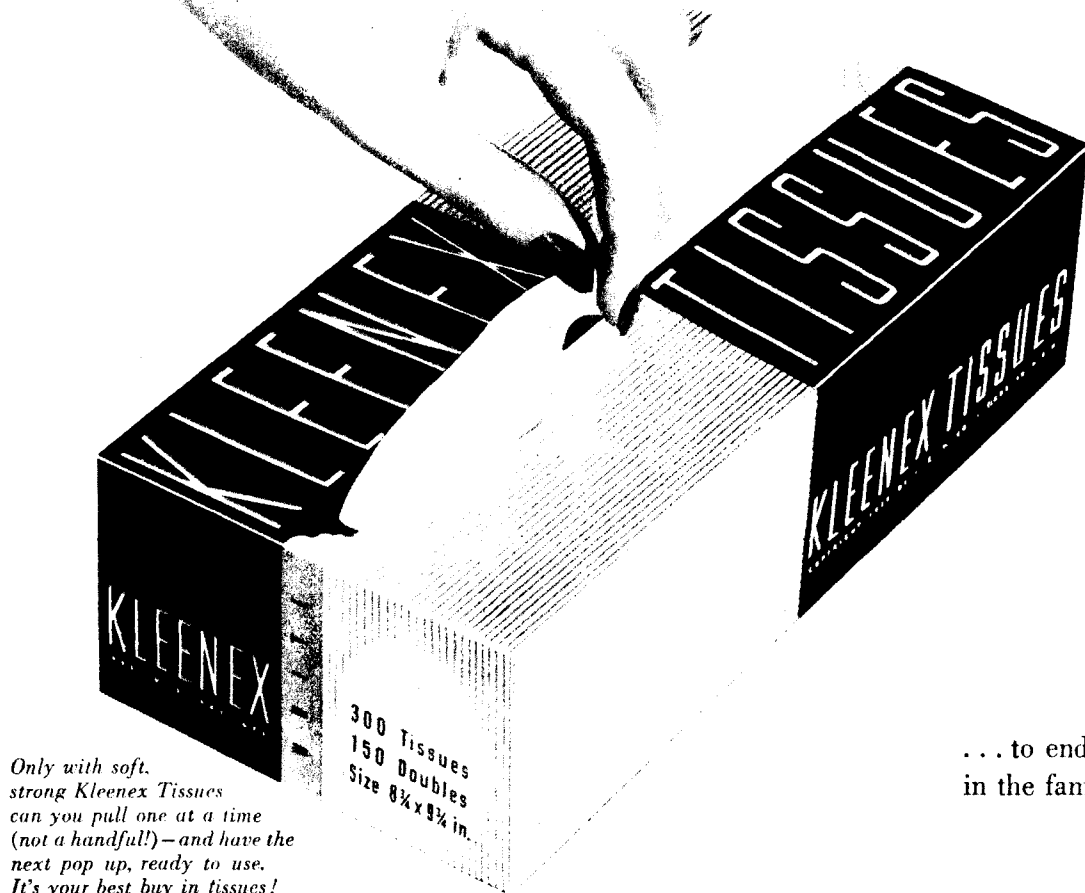
"Of course, we're affected profoundly the first few days we're out of Charleston on a trip. A couple of redcaps in Los Angeles, just carrying our bags, turned out to know all about me, and they were so appreciative, it moved me, I can tell you. We can take the unpleasantness, the impeachment talk, the dirty letters and the obscene telephone calls. Kindness rather breaks us up. I guess we have as many tear ducts as anybody else."

I turned away with a confused, unexpected feeling that the loneliest man in town might very probably also be the happiest. As the door closed behind me I heard the telephone ringing.

THE END

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When You Come Home

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

"You could if you tried," I said.

She smiled. "I'll think about it," she said. "Are you going to buy me those matches, honey?"

"I'll buy you a gold-plated cigarette lighter, honey," I said. Two minutes back in Clover, and already here was a potential playmate. Maybe the situation wasn't going to be as dreary as I'd anticipated. I turned away from the car, and looked down the street. A tall man was coming diagonally across the street, and he was staggering. I didn't give him a second thought at the moment, but the first thought, an idle one, went like this: On Sunday the beer joints are closed, so he was drunk on something other than beer, probably. I turned back to the woman, and she had moved over under the steering wheel.

"Do you live here, honey?" I asked her. "Are you a native?"

"I'm a native," she said. "But not here." I looked back down the street at the man who staggered. He had made it across and was helping himself up onto the curb with the assistance of a lamppost. The new town drunkard, I thought.

I WENT in the drugstore, and there was a dark girl sitting at the fountain who looked vaguely familiar. The woman outside wasn't at all familiar; somehow this girl was. But the picture of a frail, leggy little girl I might have been expected to remember had been erased in my absence, and this life-size brunette drinking pop and sulkily reading a newspaper was someone I didn't know. So was the teen-age kid splitting limes behind the fountain.

"Give me a fizz and some book matches," I told the kid. He got the matches and the fizz, and I gave the girl a closer scrutiny. She was good-looking in a sullen sort of way. She was wearing a bright rain coat. Abruptly her gaze slid around and bumped into mine, and she frowned and looked away, returning to her petulant examination of the front page. She didn't appear to be reading for pleasure. She seemed to be nursing a grudge against somebody or something. I drank my fizz and turned to leave, and Charley Rainfall came reeling through the door, looking belligerent and very crooked.

Two Jims was long past, but you don't forget the best guy you went through it with. Especially if he is homefolks and a wild reckless son of a gun who scraped you up and carried you safely out of hell once.

"Charley!" I said.

He didn't know me at first. He wouldn't have recognized his own mother immediately, he was that drunk. He scowled at me balefully, rearing back in an effort to regain the equilibrium he'd left somewhere down the street. He seemed to think I'd challenged him, or insulted him. And then, with somewhat embarrassing abruptness, he knew me and switched from mean to maudlin.

He was a fullblood Cherokee with black hard eyes and crow-black hair and a narrow, high-boned face with a nose like a chicken hawk. And he gave off a strong aroma of the poisonously potent rotgut from some wildcat still—probably one of the many hidden in the huckleberry notches back on Hungry Mountain. Like most Indians, Charley Rainfall was no match for the firewater.

I had forgotten all about the woman outside waiting for me to bring matches, but the girl inside was watching us in the mirror, so I worked Charley around a glass display case without accident and got him into one of the booths along the wall. He slumped over the table and rolled his head around, everything out of control.

"We gotta shelebrate, Sharge," he mumbled.

"What have we got to celebrate?" I asked him. "Reunion?"

"Hell with the union," he said, staring at me owlishly. "Good ol' Jud. You 'member good ol' Jud, Sharge?" He meant sarge, of course, though it was a long time since I'd been a sergeant.

"You mean our old gyrene pal, Jud Clymer?" I asked him.

"At's right," Charley said thickly. "Our ol' pal Jud. He got away. They didn' cash 'im."

"Who didn't catch him?" I asked. He was making riddles.

"The cops," he said. He put his head down on his arms. He had to put it somewhere. "Sharge?" he said.

I put my arm around him. Listen, if I ever loved a guy, Charley was it. "I'm here, boy," I said.

"Sharge," he said. "Know sumpn? I'm drunk."

"I had a hunch you were," I said. "I thought you didn't like the stuff, Charley."

He slowly raised his head from his arms and gave me a wobbly look. "I don't," he mumbled. "I hate it."

Aside from being pretty shaken up from bumping into him after such a long time so unexpectedly, I was plenty surprised to see

him drunk in a drugstore. In San Diego, in boot camp, when most of us Oklahomans were pretty enthusiastic about our sudden emancipation from the so-called bone-dry laws at home, he had stuck mostly to beer and hadn't cared much for even that. It wasn't as if the bartenders had been reluctant to sell whisky to an Indian, either. They seemed to figure that if Charley could dress like a Marine and go fight a war like a Marine, then he was entitled to drink like a Marine, too. But he just didn't seem to have any liking for the stuff.

Before Jud wangled a transfer to cooks and bakers school, the three of us would go on liberties together, and Jud and I would really tie one on. We'd insist that Charley stay with us, drink for drink, but he wouldn't. "Hell, I can't drink," he'd say. "I'm driving." That's what he always said, and he'd stay sober and keep us out of trouble and get us back to the base. So I was plenty surprised to see him so plastered now.

"You feel like going home?" I asked him.

He grunted, without raising his head from his arms. And then the people came in the drugstore and feet scuffed along the tile floor, and I looked up to see them there. The tough little man in front was wearing a scowl on his weathered old face and a badge on his shirt. He also had a set of handcuffs.

"All right, Charley," he said. "Let's take a ride."

"Relax," I told him. "Charley isn't bothering anybody."

There were three of them, one of whom I couldn't see because of the high back of the booth. The second man was around forty and small, with a loose face and eyes that were too close to his nose. He stared at Charley with sour contempt. I didn't like him very well.

"You keep outa this, feller," the man with the handcuffs said. "I got a call to come arrest a troublesome drunk, and I didn't drive twenty miles to let you stop me."

"Charley's a buddy of mine," I said. "He isn't troublesome—he's just pretty sick. I'll take him home and put him to bed."

He was getting impatient. "Who the hell are you?" he demanded.

"George Alford. And you, General?"

"Deputy Sheriff Ira Wilson, from Osage Springs," he snapped.

"Delighted," I said. "Now, about my sick friend here—"

THE third man had shoved forward, and I knew him. Harmon Davis, a huge, gray-haired, red-faced barrel of a man I wasn't likely to have forgotten, since he'd been about the only grown-up person, man or woman, in Clover whom I'd ever felt easy around. When I knew him last, he ran the hardware store and lumber yard, a good-natured, soft-spoken man whose mild, friendly blue eyes invited a shy unhappy kid to give him trust and confidence.

"Hello, George," he said. "Been expectin' you. When you git in?"

I was glad to see him. I hoped he had influence with the law. "Just now," I said. "Ten minutes ago."

He stuck out his thick, rough hand, and I shook it. "Mighty sorry about your dad," he said. He cleared his throat self-consciously and squinted at Charley. "Sure you want to be responsible for him?"

"We were in service together," I said. "He'll be okay with me."

"Wel-I-I-I," he said dubiously. "I'll tell you, George, he's a holy terror sometimes when he's likkered up. Rougher than a cob."

The loose-faced man nodded piously, renewing my first impression that I didn't like him. "That Indian makes trouble," he said. He talked through his nose, and looked down it while he talked. "Tries to fight everybody. Besides, Wilson, you ought to investigate him in regard to the matter I spoke to you about." He made it sound like an order.

"Who's he?" I asked Harmon.

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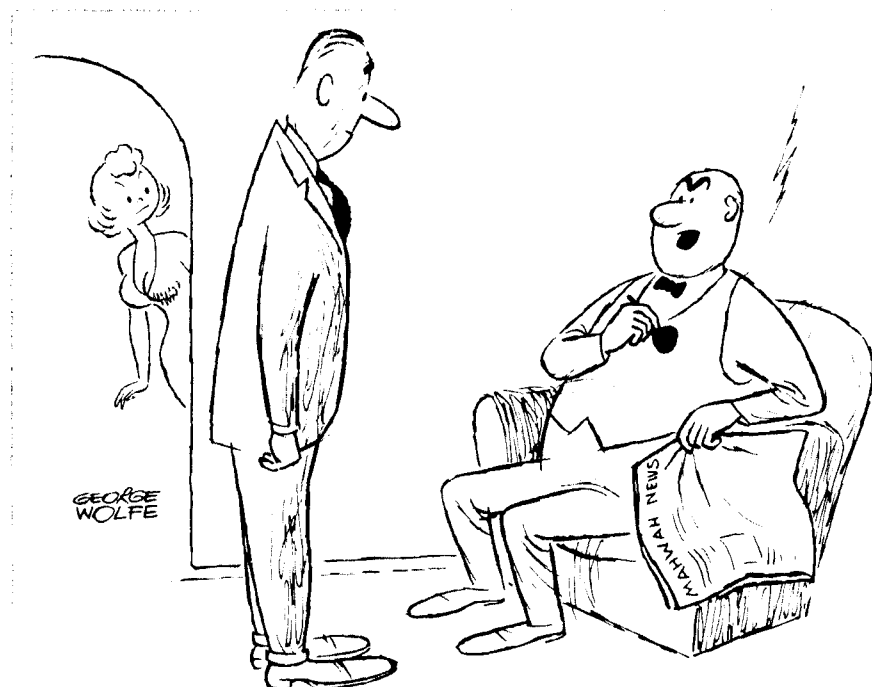
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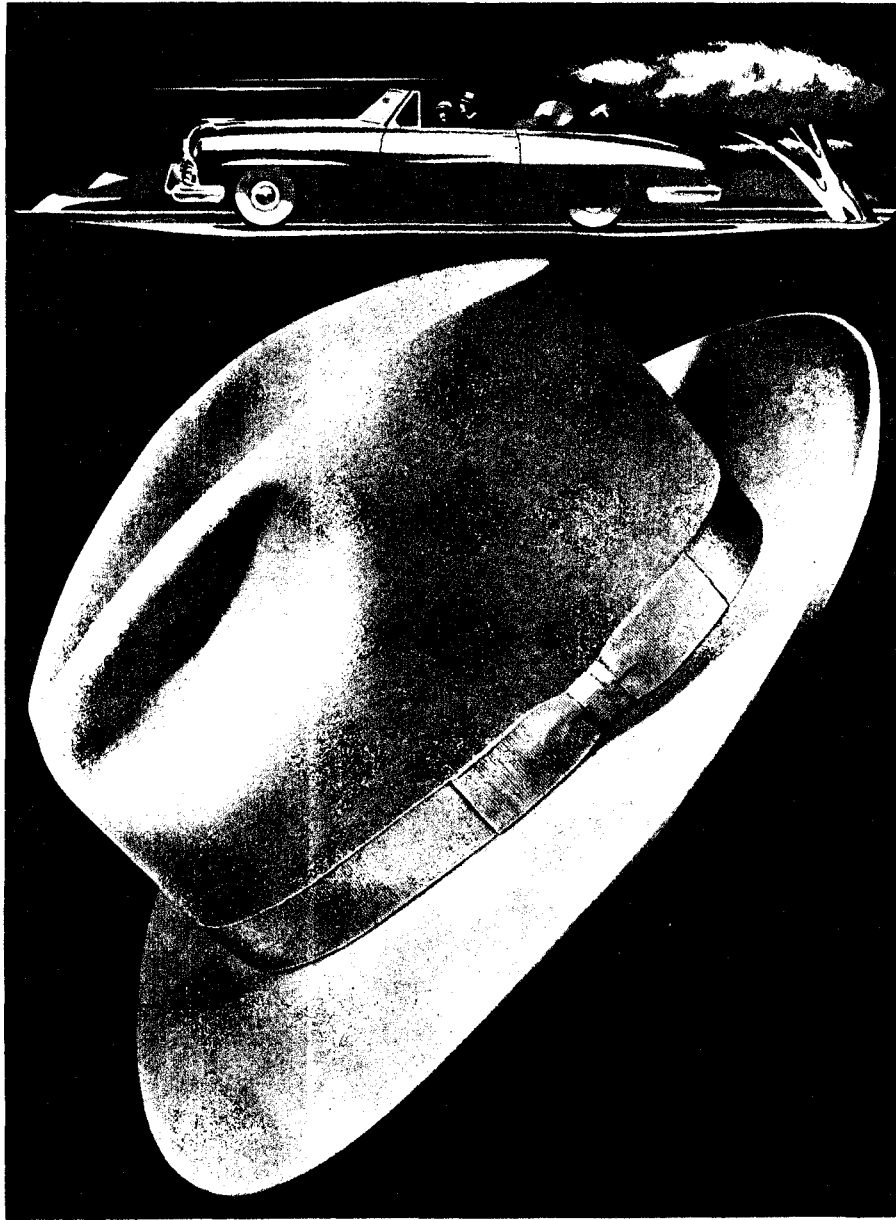
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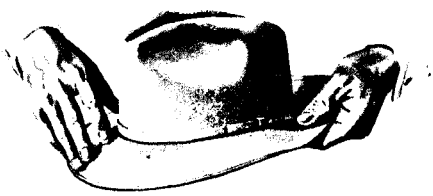
"Certainly you can marry her! Why do
all you fellows think you have to ask me?"

GEORGE WOLFE



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"Morgan," he said. "Druggist."
"What's he yapping about?" I said. "Why investigate Charley?"

"Because somebody broke into the drug-store last night, that's why!" Morgan whinnied. "Because they stole a lot of drugs and cigarettes and money—and grain alcohol." He looked at Charley. "Grain alcohol," he repeated, as if he liked the taste of the words. "Looks mighty suspicious if you ask me."

"I'll make a point of not asking you," I told the druggist. "If my nose serves me, Charley is tanked on sour-mash moonshine." Charley was slumped on his arms, his face hidden, and he seemed to have passed out or gone to sleep.

"Wilson, I demand that you arrest that Indian," Morgan yapped, and I saw that being bossed around didn't please the deputy any more than being thwarted pleased him. But I wasn't trying to please him. I had a chip on my shoulder. I'd had it there ever since I realized I'd have to come back to Clover. Seeing Charley drunk, and about to be subjected to the indignity of handcuffs, anchored the chip more firmly, if anything.

"I'll take Charley home," I said.

The deputy grew a chip of his own. His face went stiff and ugly, and he started groping with the flap of his holster. I debated whether to slug him. I'd be in a mess if I did, but maybe not such a mess as I'd be in if I let him pistol-whip me. I made up my mind that if he pulled his gun I'd slug him and suddenly the girl's voice cut through the tense silence.

"He's right," she said. "Charley was behaving himself."

"Thank you, Miss Clover of 1950," I said with relief, seeing the deputy begin to relax, remembering that a lady was present. He'd think twice before making me bleed, or vice versa. He stopped reaching for his artillery and yanked his wide-brimmed hat down over his eyes.

"Listen, feller," he said in a hard voice. "We been lettin' this Indian off easy. This time he's gonna do thirty days. Now git outa my way."

"Oh?" I said. "Are you the judge and jury too, Ira?"

Harmon Davis waved a big paw calmly. "Wilson," he said, "I believe this is a false alarm. What say we let George take care of his war buddy?"

"I'm agin it," the druggist said. "I insist you arrest him!"

"Insist and be damned to you!" Wilson roared. "I wish you people would git you a constable or somethin' to handle your drunks. We're sick of spendin' taxpayers' money to come runnin' every time some buck shows up at the city limits suckin' on a fruit jar. Git a constable and let him arrest 'em and haul 'em over to us, for a change." He put his handcuffs away.

He started to turn away, but then he seemed to lose his grip on himself, and he whirled back and jabbed a finger at Harmon. "Some of these days you're gonna need a cop in a hurry, and we won't be available. You'll be up the crick without a paddle, Davis. You better take it up with whoever runs this here damn' town. Now I've done give you fair warnin'!"

"Sure, sure, Wilson," Harmon said placatingly. "I'll look into it."

THE deputy stalked out, fuming and muttering, and Harmon gave me a wry grin. "I don't guess you know I'm mayor of Clover now, George."

The druggist snorted. "You don't run the town yet, Davis!"

"I dunno, Morgan," Harmon said mildly. "I calculate I wield a little more influence around here than any late-arrivin' pill-roller."

Morgan scowled and went behind the prescription partition, and I said, "Congratulations, Mr. Davis. On being mayor of Clover, I mean."

He chuckled. "George, I'd recommend you git Charley outa here before he turns mean. Doubt if one man could handle him then."

"Right away," I agreed. "And thanks, Mayor."

He nodded and moved toward the door, and I saw that the girl was still at the fountain, watching me in the mirror. "Much obliged," I said. "I hope our faith in Charley was justified."

"It wasn't," she said in a bored voice. "I just got tired of the monotony of seeing him carted off in handcuffs once or twice a month. You better take him home while he's passive, because when his stupor wears off a little he generally comes out fighting."

She was so right. I got Charley out of the booth and onto his feet, after a fashion, and he peered at me without recognition. And then without warning, he swung at me and his hard knuckles skidded off my forehead; I staggered off balance and bumped against the fountain, hearing the girl's startled gasp.



"Don't take it so hard, honey. After all, it was the bank's money, not yours"

GLENN R. BERNHARDT

"Quit it, Charley!" I said, because he was coming after me. But he wouldn't quit it. So I got away from the fountain and met him, and, because his reflexes were slow, I managed to sidestep his rush and slam a fist into his belly. It doubled him over momentarily and I caught him cleanly on the side of the jaw and cooled him out. He grunted and went limp, and I eased him down with a handful of shirt.

"That was neat," the girl said calmly.

"He was using a zone defense," I said. "It leaked. You know where he lives?" I thought I knew where he lived, but that wasn't the way to get chummy with strange brunettes. She nodded, her eyes narrowing.

She slid off the stool, holding her rolled-up newspaper and looking amused. She seemed small, almost delicate. But nice. I don't know exactly what the quality was, but somehow you got the idea that she'd be easy to slap down, only she wouldn't stay slapped down. The first time you looked at her you thought only that she was pretty in a sullen way and hard to get next to; but the second time you got the idea she could also be sweet and nice, if she liked you, and well worth getting next to.

I was looking at her, and I remembered the woman outside, and it was a very natural reaction for me to compare them in my mind. It didn't work out clearly, but the thing was this. They could have been exactly the same age, yet you'd label the one woman and the other girl. You felt that the woman in the car knew she couldn't be bruised by anything, but the girl in the drugstore didn't know she couldn't, and was afraid she would be.

She stood there looking at me steadily. "All right, I'll show you where he lives," she said. "As if you didn't know."

"I got a bad memory," I said, hoisting Charley onto my back. "Shell shock. For instance, I still can't quite place you, Miss—Miss—?"

She gave me a one-sided smile and moved toward the door. I followed her out past the goggle-eyed soda jerk, who had stopped splitting citrus.

SEVERAL people stood around on the sidewalk out front, trying to look disinterested. Harmon Davis was there, but he wasn't trying to look disinterested. I winked at him and got Charley's limp form into the back seat of the jalopy. I helped the girl into the front seat.

"Be back in a second," I said. The car and the woman were still there. I walked around to the driver's side and she looked at me without any kind of emotion. "Your matches, honey," I said, dropping them in her lap. She lifted her eyebrows a little.

"Why didn't you tell me you were a double-crossing rat?" she said.

"I didn't know I was at the time," I said. "Look, I got involved in a fracas in there, and you kinda slipped my mind. I'm tied up at the moment, but I can get untied in a hurry."

"Stay tied," she said. "I think I'm very angry."

"I think you aren't," I said. "At least, not permanently."

She smiled. "There'll be other times," she said. "I'll have to have matches again." She patted my cheek. "Run along, you fast-working stranger."

I got in my car and drove out of town, and nothing happened, so I said, "Okay, be mysterious."

"I'm Sarah Bailey," the girl said. "Little old S. Bailey."

"Roy Bailey's daughter?" I said. "Shucks, you were just a kid . . ."

"Everybody is a kid, sooner or later, chum," she said brightly. "When you were a scowling basketball star at dear old Clover High, and I was all of ten or eleven, I had a mild crush on you. And you never even noticed me, you bum."

"I notice you now," I said. "You're more mature, or something."

"And I thought the evening was going to be dull," she said. She opened her purse and took out a pack of cigarettes and lighted one, and when she struck a match I

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thought her eyes were sparkling a little.

I was sorry I'd been so cute about getting her to go along to Charley's house, when maybe I could have had a pleasant evening with Honey. I felt a little remorseful about Honey. Besides, I had broken my rule against fraternizing with young girls. *San Quentin quail*, I thought. Sarah Bailey seemed that young, that night.

When we were about three miles outside town, Sarah Bailey said with broad irony, "That house just ahead, Buffalo Bill."

IT WAS the same sagging old house Charley had lived in back in those unlovely days when I chummed around with an Indian kid because we had something in common. Like an inferiority complex. Like a slight social stigma. Like neither of us being the cream of Clover society. Also just because I lived down the road a piece and we were neighbors geographically as well as psychically. Later we took in a new member, Jud Clymer, who wasn't cream of society either, and the three of us showed our scorn for the society of which we weren't cream by stealing watermelons and cantaloupes, and raiding orchards and an occasional henhouse, and by hunting on posted land and other mild forms of out-lawry.

Jud wasn't really like us, though. Charley and I were ingrown country boys, and Jud was an extrovert. But we had one other thing in common. Our fathers didn't particularly give a damn what we did. They didn't even care when we all three bailed out of Clover and enlisted in the Marines together.

Charley was still limp and hard to manage when I stopped and got him out of the car. I packed him in the yard and kicked on the front door, and it was opened by a stocky, potbellied Cherokee with a permanently frozen expression. Charley's father hadn't aged much in ten years, except for the potbelly. He showed me where to put the body, his expression never changing out of neutral.

"On his back," he grunted, pointing to a ragged couch. "Sometimes he git on his back and all the angry gone, and he snooze like old hound-dog bin chasin' fox all night, that son-a-gun."

"Sometimes?" I said. "What about the other times?"

He shrugged. "Other times he don't stay put. He git up and go howl at moon. He ron away and act like crazy damfool." There was no humor in his flat black eyes. "Never can tell," he said.

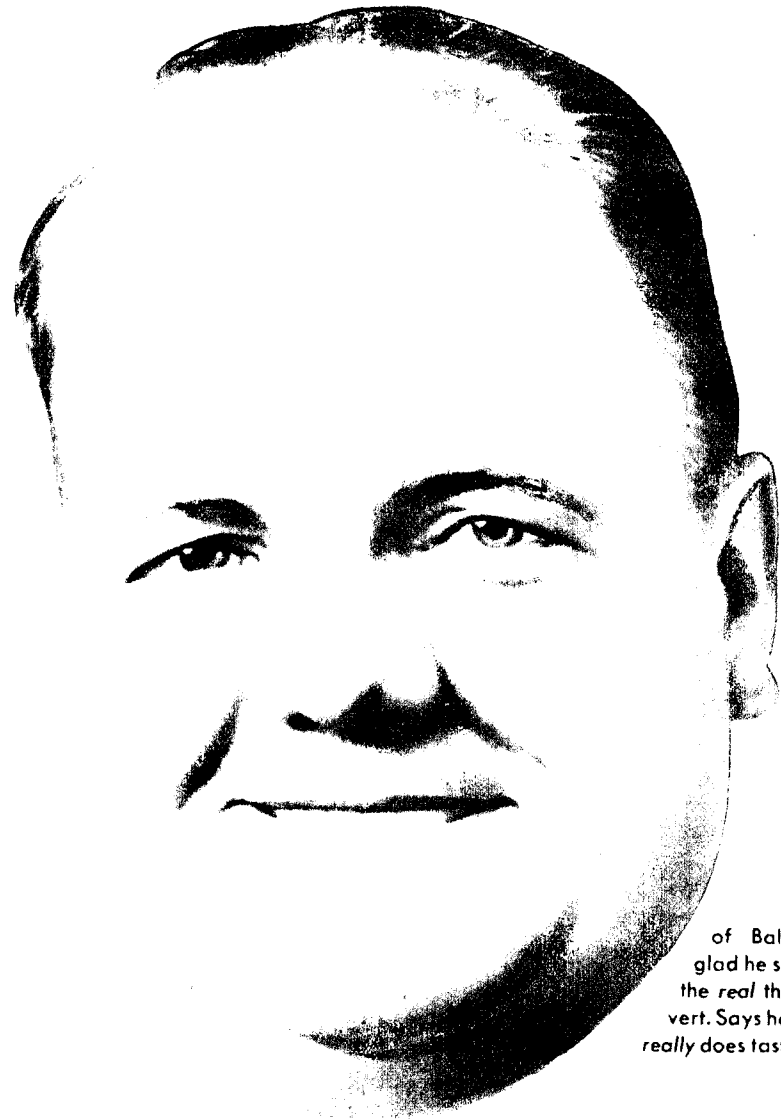
He didn't seem to have any leaning toward small talk anyhow, so I left. Outside, Sarah Bailey's face was a white blur in the dark, and crickets and tree toads and distant barking dogs talked to the night. I got in the car, thinking: I'll go eat and ditch her at the café. I've got to watch those sudden impulses in the future.

"No tomahawk wounds?" she said. "No arrows piercing your lungs?" I didn't answer her, and presently she said, "So all right, it wasn't funny, then."

"I'll buy that," I said.

Maybe you got a minority fixation. *Hor-jay*, I thought. *You like Mexicans and Indians. And natural blondes.* Then, because he was there in the back of my mind anyhow, and because he was blond-headed I thought about Jud. He'd been the ring-leader of our young but only mildly unholy three. He'd been the daring one. So when we joined the Marines, I guess Charley and I assumed Jud would be the one to acquire leadership there, too. He hadn't. He'd been too much of a rebel against order, I suppose. Instead of trying to get promoted, he'd tried to promote deals. "Look, you guys," he said. "If we can get in the cooks and bakers school, we got it made. That's cushy. Maybe we stay here in the States and cook for recruits. Maybe we don't get seasick or shot at by the Japs. Hell, it figures. Cooking is the one racket in a war where you might get a break."

Well, the vote was two to one against cooking our way through the war, and that should have settled it because we usually



of Baltimore, is glad he switched to the real thing—Calvert. Says he, "Calvert really does taste better."

IT'S THE McCOY— (And men like these say so, too—)



owner of Texarkana, Ark., switched to Calvert for its really "smoother flavor in a highball!"



maker, of Detroit, switched "because he's found Calvert's really richer in mixed drinks!"



Nanticoke, Pa., tobacco shop owner, switched "because Calvert really is tastier every time!"



New Haven, Conn., laundry man, says, "I switched because Calvert is really tops!"

It's Smart to Switch to Calvert Reserve



Lighter . . . Smoother . . . Tastes Better

stuck together. But Jud didn't see it that way any longer. "You guys are dopes," he said. "They don't pay heroes any better than they pay cooks. What's in it for you if you get shot up?" I remember how he looked then. His blond hair was crew-cut, and his deceptive baby-face was twisted into a sort of impatient sneer. "Whatta you guys use for brains?" he said. "So go on, go be heroes. Me, I'm more the hot-stove type. See you after the war."

And that was that. He went to cooks and bakers school. We went to the Pacific, and I hadn't seen Jud nor heard of him since, until now. . . .

"We going to sit here all night?" Sarah Bailey asked me.

"No," I said. I started the engine. "Look," I said. "What's all this guff Charley was mumbling in the drugstore? About Jud Clymer?"

"Don't you read the papers?" she said. "Only on Sundays," I said. I seldom read papers then, even.

"Today is a Sunday," she told me. She still had the newspaper rolled up, and she tossed it on the seat between us.

"All right, I'll read it," I said. I picked it up, and even in the dark I knew it wasn't the Sunday paper, because it was much too thin. So I held it down under the dash light, and it was Saturday's afternoon paper. "You sure you don't want to hang onto it a few more days?" I said.

"Don't be cute," she said. "I didn't get a chance to read it until today. I read it today. Is that all right with you, sonny?"

A thought nudged me. *Maybe she saves his press clippings?* I looked at her face in the dark. "Are you an admirer of Jud's?" I asked her. She made an impatient gesture and looked out the window and didn't say anything for a minute, and then she said, "Are you?"

"An admirer, no," I said. "A friend, yes."

She turned back to me then, and even in the faint illumination of the dash light I could see the sparks in her eyes. "Jud Clymer," she said levelly, "is a rat. Does that answer your question?"

"In a way," I said. "Only it just happens to be the wrong answer."

"It's my own original answer," she said. "Let's go, shall we?"

PUTTING the car in reverse, I backed around, snapping on the headlights. Jud was about thirty now. He'd been the oldest, and looked the youngest. I wondered if he still looked as baby-faced as ever, and as insolent. In high school the girls had to pretend not to approve of him, for the record, because he had a pretty tough reputation. He had a smooth, tough line that belied his looks, and he had a wonderful kind of don't-give-a-damn poise that I envied. He never fell for any of the high-school girls. They fell for him. I wondered if maybe he'd been back to Clover after the war, and Sarah Bailey had been one of the girls who fell for him. The only thing wrong with that idea was that I couldn't quite imagine anybody brushing Sarah off. Not even Jud.

"Now I'll ask questions," the girl said. "Where have you been all these years?"

"Kicking around," I said. "Seeing California, mostly."

She was watching the road ahead. "Were you looking for a place to settle?" she asked quietly.

"Just looking," I told her. "I'm no settler."

Everything I owned, aside from the farm now, and the rest of the War Bonds in L.A., was in the car. I had a sleeping bag and a folding Army cot and a small surplus tent, and every month I received a nice disability check, which made me a fortunate nomad whose wanderings were underwritten by an indulgent government. At UCLA I'd had the regular G.I. subsistence plus, and had cut a wide swath for three semesters—but not academically. I learned extracurricular facts—like coeds are five per cent interested in getting a sheepskin, ninety-five per cent in getting a husband. And ir-

relevant fragments stuck with me, too, like "analgesic" means insensibility to pain.

But mostly I'd just learned that I wasn't conscientiously a candidate for any of the various sheepskins. So I had reluctantly given up that extra dough. Since which time I'd never held still for anyone. Not only did I have an itchy foot, I could afford it. Unlike most fiddle-footed characters, I now owned a piece of property, too. But it was probably true tribal instinct that made me want to get rid of it immediately. I just didn't want to own anything that wouldn't fit easily into a 1941 jalopy with a rebuilt engine. I could have told the girl that, but I didn't see much point in it. Not yet, anyhow.

"But you must have been looking for something," she insisted now, so I thought: Okay, baby, I'll play games.

"Maybe I was trying to find the big answer to the big question," I said. That ought to be corny enough for the younger set, I thought.

I guess it was, too. "Were you—always alone?" she asked; and I said, "Always. He travels fastest who travels alone."

But, as a matter of fact, I used to think someday I'd find the right kind of woman for me, a congenitally *itinerant* kind of beautiful female who would rather ride in a car and sleep in a tent than live in one of those monotonous little assembly-line cottages with plumbing and electricity and twenty years to get out from under. After a while I decided such a woman didn't exist. Not in my age bracket. Not beautiful, either.

"You know, it sounds like fun. George Alford," Sarah said slowly. "I wish I was a man, so I could knock around like that. I guess it would be a lousy life for a woman, though. Wouldn't it?"

"That depends on what kind of woman she was," I said. We were back on Main Street, and the whole three blocks of it were lighted up, but not very lighted up. I stopped in front of the café. "I'll give your

old man a little business," I said. "I'm hungry."

"He can always use a little business," she said.

So we went into the café, and there were no customers except an old man drinking coffee and reading a paper at the far end of the counter. I knew him without straining. He was old Doc Golding. He went on reading his paper, and reminded me that I'd left mine in the car. Roy Bailey came out of the kitchen, looking a little grayer, leaner and baldier than I remembered. He put a glass of water in front of me, looked from me to Sarah and back again with a slightly puzzled frown, and then suddenly he grinned and shoved out his hand.

"Why, hell yes," he said. "George Alford. Who else could you be?"

"Nobody," I said, shaking his hand. I don't know why I should have been so astonished to have people recognize me after ten years. I recognized *them*. Maybe I'd supposed they wouldn't care about recognizing Ben Alford's boy who blew town ten years before. Clover was double-crossing me in its reception.

"Don't tell me you remembered her?" he said, nodding at Sarah.

"Sure," I said, grinning. "She hasn't changed a bit."

"That's a big fat lie," she told him. "We met while fighting Indians, Dad." She gave me that ho-hum look and added, "He's hungry. Give him your class-A pitch and maybe you can shake him loose from part of this month's rent."

Her father shook his head. "This one's on the house," he said. "I've got a T-bone that's been waiting for George to show up in town again." He grinned at me, very friendly, but then his face went all solemn. "Damn my forgetfulness," he said. "George, I'm sorry about your dad. I guess it was pretty sudden, wasn't it?"

"I guess it was," I said. He stood there for a minute looking steeped in melancholy, and then he snapped

out of it. "Medium rare?" he said. All I could do was nod. "Coffee now?" he said, and I nodded again. "Coming right up," he said. He got me the coffee and went back to the kitchen.

"Damn my forgetfulness, too," Sarah said. I looked at her and her soft young face was gentle and her eyes were full of unexpected compassion. "I'm sorry, too; George," she said. "Terribly sorry."

"Don't be," I said, and all at once I felt angry. "I hadn't seen him in ten years. I hardly knew the man, Sarah."

She looked a little shocked, but the compassion was still there, and I thought: *It's a damned conspiracy. Clover is trying to trap you, boy.* The bait was first an old friend fouled up, secondly sex, and thirdly sympathetic hospitality.

SARAH was still looking at me; I stared back, and her eyes faltered. She wasn't beautiful, I thought, but I imagined she was giving the local boys a bad time. She could easily be the belle of the town that size, for she was small and neat, and her small, oval face was framed by smoky black hair.

Her mouth was the key to her personality, I guess. It either kept her from being more lovely, or added to her unusual loveliness, I couldn't decide which. It was too wide and full to be called beautiful, but her lips were smooth and delicately curved. She looked fragrant and dainty and sweet—maybe it was just that she was, and looked, so young.

I wasn't trying to stare her down, just taking inventory. But her eyes went a bit opaque, and she twisted her mouth in annoyance. She got up and took off the rain cape, and I saw that the first impression of frailness was a bad first impression indeed. She was very shapely and her arms were round and fine. She sat down, still grimacing slightly and lighted a cigarette.

Doc Golding had finished his coffee and was coming toward the door. Sarah swung around on the stool and stopped him.

"You know this character, Doc?" she asked him.

He frowned at me. "Stick out your tongue," he ordered. I stuck out my tongue. "I know him," he said, and his stern old face puckered into a smile. "The first time you showed up around here, George, you got me out of a warm bed on a cold winter night. Is that right?"

"March fourth," I said. "I'm hazy about the details, Doc, but it was twenty-seven years ago last March fourth."

He nodded, and his face relaxed into gloom, and I flinched mentally because I sensed what was coming. "I couldn't save your father, George," he said gently. "Told him time and again to go easy, but nobody ever minds a doctor." He shook his old head sadly, and then he straightened his bent shoulders and sighed. "Well, gotta rush off," he said briskly. "You gonna stay around and give me your sick business now, George?"

"I'm afraid not," I said.

Sarah watched me curiously as he moved toward the door, and abruptly she said, "You won't stay here, George?"

I shook my head. "No," I said. Maybe I was a little curt about it.

She studied me for another moment, and then she said with a kind of snarling fierceness: "I don't blame you!" She got up and put on her rain cape which she'd just taken off. Getting into it, the cigarette in her mouth, she continued to regard me without expression. I got it then. Some kind of pang, some kind of quick-thrusting little twinge under the ribs from looking at her; from seeing how tough she tried to act and how forlorn she really was.

"What about the farm?" she asked.

"I'll sell it," I said.

She nodded and went out the door into the humid night. I swung around on the stool and watched her, and she turned right, and went three or four steps. But then she retraced her steps and went to the jalopy and leaned in through the open window. She brought the newspaper into



COLLIER'S

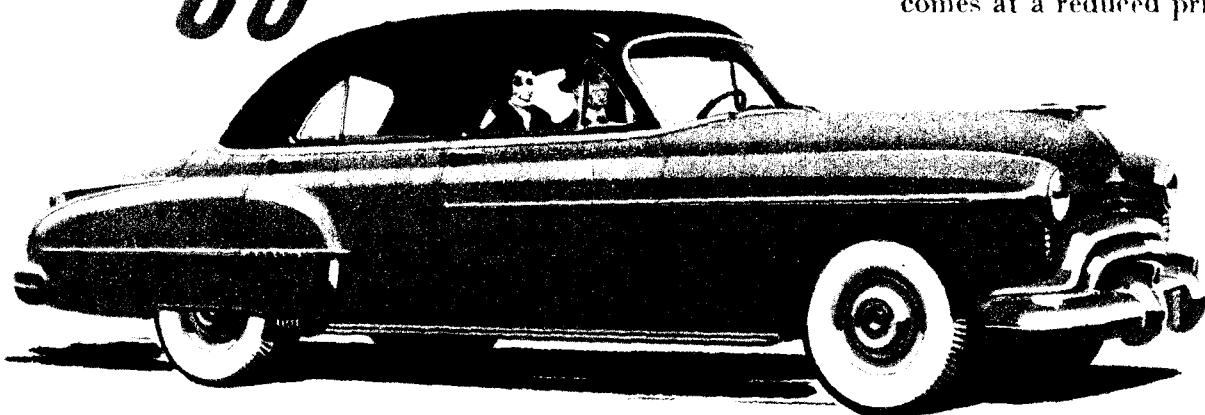
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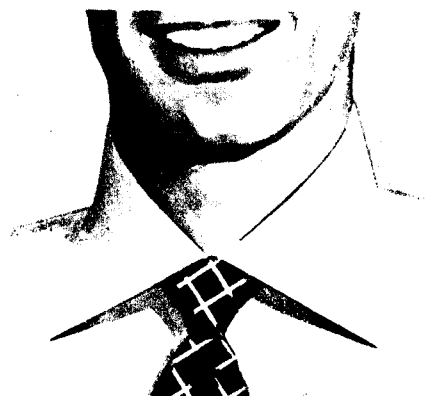
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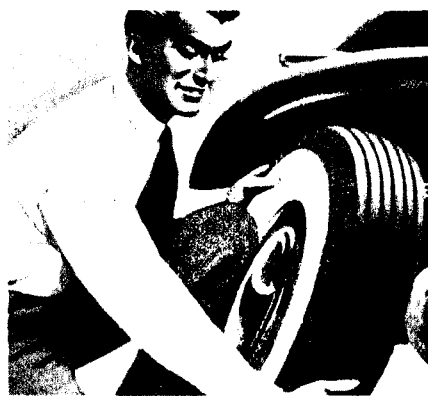
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the café and carefully placed it on the counter beside me.

"Educate yourself," she said. "Catch up on current events regarding your dear friend, Mr. Clymer."

She turned and went out again, and this time she kept going, so I unrolled the paper. The story was on the front page, in a tidy little box. It was interesting and, for me, astounding. It seemed that of nine men who had staged a prison break in Texas about three weeks past, seven had been recaptured. And the two still at large were Jud Clymer and Harvey Morris, who had been sent up together with life sentences for a liquor-store holdup in which a man had been killed. A car found abandoned in a parking lot in El Paso had been identified by the cops through fingerprints as the car stolen by Jud Clymer and his companion shortly after the escape.

THE law was inclined to believe that the convicts had slipped through the police and border patrolmen and crossed the Rio Grande. This assumption was strengthened by the fact that the warden of the prison had received a picture post card from a border town in Mexico, undeniably in Jud's handwriting, with the taunting message: "Going South for my health, won't be back. Stop chasing your tail."

The message sounded like the old Jud I'd known, but I couldn't quite feature him tipping the warden off to his whereabouts. Hell, I couldn't feature Jud being an escaped convict, for that matter. I was still staring with disbelief at the newspaper when Roy Bailey brought me my courtesy steak. He put the plate in front of me and arched his black eyebrows.

"Local boy makes good," he said, nodding at the paper.

"How about that?" I said. "He's an old buddy of mine."

"He used to be an employee of mine," Roy Bailey said. The way he said it made me look at him, but he turned away and started polishing the coffee urn before I could try to analyze his expression.

I put sauce on the steak and cut it and took a bite. "Good steak," I said. "You mean Jud worked for you here, in the café?"

"That's right," he said. He drew himself a cup of coffee and came around the counter and sat on the stool next to me. I stopped eating and looked at him, and he moved his coffee cup around on the counter and watched it, and presently he made a rueful face and said, "You know, Jud was a cook in service. When he came back here, I needed a cook, and he wanted a job. So I put him on as night cook. Didn't pan out."

"Why not?" I said.

"Found out he was doing a little bootlegging out the back door," he said. "Tied the can to his tail." Roy looked at me and pursed his lips. "Kinda figured he kept his fingers in the cash drawer a lot, too," he said. "Anyway, we just plain didn't get along." That would be Sarah's reason for disliking Jud, I thought. Maybe she hadn't got along with Jud, either. Roy continued: "After I fired him, he went into business cooking for himself down on the river."

"I fell off on that last turn," I said. "Try it again."

He grinned slightly. "Jud got hold of some copper and worms and set himself up a wildcat still down in the Osage bottoms and made whisky," he said. "I hear it was potent stuff."

"Well, moonshining has always been a well-patronized and highly respected profession around here," I said. "It's illegal, but not necessarily immoral."

"I don't question the ethics of it," Sarah's father said. "But it can sometimes be a mighty temporary business enterprise." He looked at me with a sort of frowning grin. "Sheriff and his deputies surprised Jud and Charley Rainfall sitting around enjoying some of the mash beer off the top of a couple twenty-gallon barrels. That put Jud out of business, and out of circulation for ninety days, too."

Charley? I thought. Both of my old

buddies? Maybe if I'd been here they'd have caught all three of us enjoying that mash beer.

"They busted up his equipment and dumped out his barrels of mash," Roy Bailey said. "Made old Jud sore as a boil."

"Sinful waste," I said. "What did they do to Charley?"

"He got off light. Jud claimed Charley was just an innocent bystander. He only had to lay out a couple weeks—for disorderly conduct or something." Roy squinted at me. "Of course, that was more than three years ago, George," he said, and nodded at the newspaper. "Guess Jud's been pretty busy ever since."

It looked to me as though Jud was in a pretty tough spot, even if he was in Mexico, and I didn't approve of Roy's air of barely suppressed high glee. So I said, "Anything else new around here?"

"Nothing happens here," he said. "Somebody ran over a dog last April, but I don't recall the details." He grinned faintly. "I'm still in business, thanks to the night trucker trade and old bachelors like the mayor. Most of the young folks are away at college, or off working somewhere."

For a while then we were silent, him staring at his coffee and me eating the gratis T-bone, and the night wind sighed along Clover's quiet Main Street, and a cricket back in the kitchen chirruped intermittently. Once or twice I heard a distant grumble of thunder, and once somebody passed on the sidewalk outside, but there were no cars. It was a deadly dull Sunday evening in a deadly dull small town, as far as I could see. The middle-aged woman cook leaned on her elbows in the service window of the kitchen and stared glumly at nothing.

ROY broke the silence. "By the way, George," he said quietly, "I don't mean to embarrass you or drag up painful memories, but we kept track of you during the war and the old home town was mighty proud of you. You helped to sell some War Bonds around here, I expect."

War Bonds, I thought. I may have to cash some tomorrow. I said, "The Marine Corps had public relations people who got paid for sitting around grinding out hometown-boy press releases. If they said more than that I got shot up, discount it, Mr. Bailey."

"Call me Roy, unless you want the mister treatment yourself," he said. I said okay, Roy, and he said, "Matter of fact, they wrote that you were a handy man to have around out in the Pacific, George. They said you got some metal to wear on your chest, too."

I remembered briefly, then, a day when some public relations guys came to the hospital. They said they had to make an official report, so I told them all about it. But I wasn't a newshound—I didn't see what a fine story it would have made if I'd told them the guy who carried me back to the beach and through the bloody surf to an LCI was a home-town buddy of mine. All I told them was how we got pinned down by all those Japs and I got shot up.

I had finished my free steak, and I wasn't planning to pay for it with gory war stories.

"Thanks, Roy," I said. "I think I'll go hit the sack."

He said don't mention it, and I told him good night and went out to my car. The farm was east of town. I turned west on the highway and drove out to the tourist camp I'd noticed coming in. It wasn't the cleanest-looking tourist trap I'd ever seen, but I figured it was probably a lot cleaner than the house I owned. I rented a cabin for one night, being optimistic about everything. When I saw the bed I realized how tired I was, and I just pulled off my clothes and hit it. I didn't even bother brushing my teeth. After I got undressed and in bed, I remembered that I'd left the keys in the car and the windows down. I hoped nobody was in a mood to run off with the jalopy and that it wouldn't rain, because I was in no mood to put my clothes back on and go take the necessary precautions.

(To be continued next week)

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The Case of the Smuggler's Bell

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

"He said that he had been held a captive and then escaped—and that he had taken this weapon with him to protect himself."

"And did he say anything about having shot it?"

"Yes. He said he had fired it."

"How many times?"

"Twice."

"At what?"

"At—well, in order to force someone on the houseboat to keep his distance, to keep that person from coming ashore."

"And where was it this conversation took place?"

"At the home of Linda Mae Carroll."

"What's the address?"

"It is 205 East Robinson Street, Falt-haven."

"How did it happen that you were there, Mr. Ostrander?"

"I had been in contact with Miss Linda Carroll earlier in the day. I decided to try and locate her at the residence of her aunt, Linda Mae Carroll. At that time it was quite late in the evening and—"

"How late?"

"Well, I would say it was around eleven o'clock or eleven thirty, perhaps a little later."

"Very well, go on. What happened?"

"And Linda Mae Carroll—that's Miss Carroll's aunt—had retired for the night. She got up, however, and very graciously insisted that I stay all night, when it later appeared I'd missed the bus."

"Cross-examine," the district attorney said.

STAUNTON IRVINE said belligerently, "How do you know this is the same weapon that you saw?"

"There was a question about notifying the police," Ostrander said, "and after some discussion we decided to wait until morning."

"Why?"

"Well, it was—it was late, after one o'clock in the morning and we thought things would keep. Robert Trenton was laboring under a misapprehension."

"What was the misapprehension?"

"He thought that—well, it seemed that the automobile which—I guess I hadn't better go into that."

"How do you know it is the same gun?"

"Because we wrote down the numbers on

the gun, and then it was locked in the desk at the suggestion of Linda Mae Carroll."

"And who had the key to the desk?"

"Why, I believe—"

"Did you?"

"Yes."

"No further questions," Irvine said.

"Just a moment," the district attorney said, as Ostrander started to leave the witness stand. "There are a few questions on redirect examination. You said something about an automobile which had been a subject of discussion. What was that about?"

Ostrander said uncomfortably, "Robert Trenton thought perhaps the automobile, which had been lent him by Miss Carroll, had been used in connection with some sort of—well, some illegal activity."

"Do you mean the smuggling of narcotics?"

"Yes."

"Just what was that conversation?"

"Well, after we arrived in port, Miss Linda Carroll wanted Robert Trenton to drive the automobile. Some friends were meeting her and she suggested that he drive the automobile home and then she would pick it up later. Well, Trenton told us he'd had a flat tire and in looking around on the underside of the car he'd found a metallic pocket which had been welded to the car, and—well, there was some dope in there."

"Indeed?" the district attorney said sarcastically. "And at this conversation did Mr. Trenton say what he had done with this dope?"

"He buried it."

"And he accused Miss Carroll of having been guilty of smuggling?"

"Not that, but he—he said he was trying to get an explanation."

"And you conveniently forgot to tell the police all about this, didn't you?"

"I haven't been asked before."

"I see," the district attorney said significantly, and then added: "Do you know where Miss Linda Carroll is now?"

"No, sir. I do not."

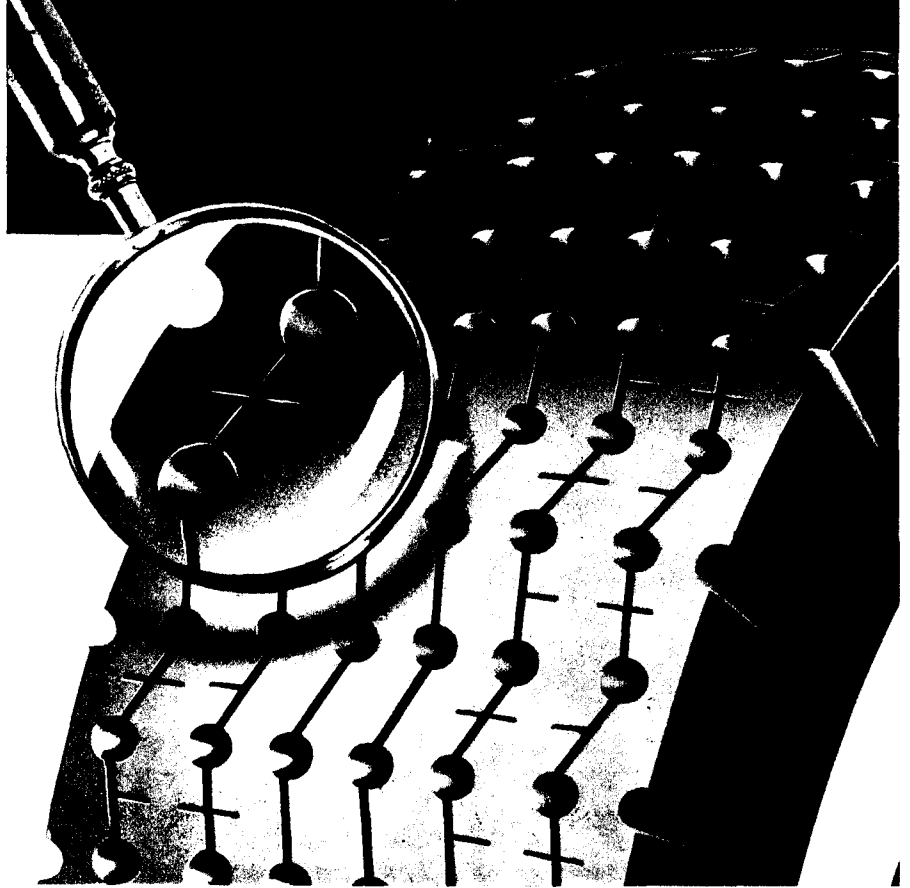
"Very well, that's all," the district attorney said. "Does counsel for the defense have any further questions?"

"None, Your Honor," Irvine said uncomfortably.

"Call Linda Mae Carroll to the stand," the district attorney said.

Linda Mae Carroll took the oath, seated herself on the stand, pointed her nose at the

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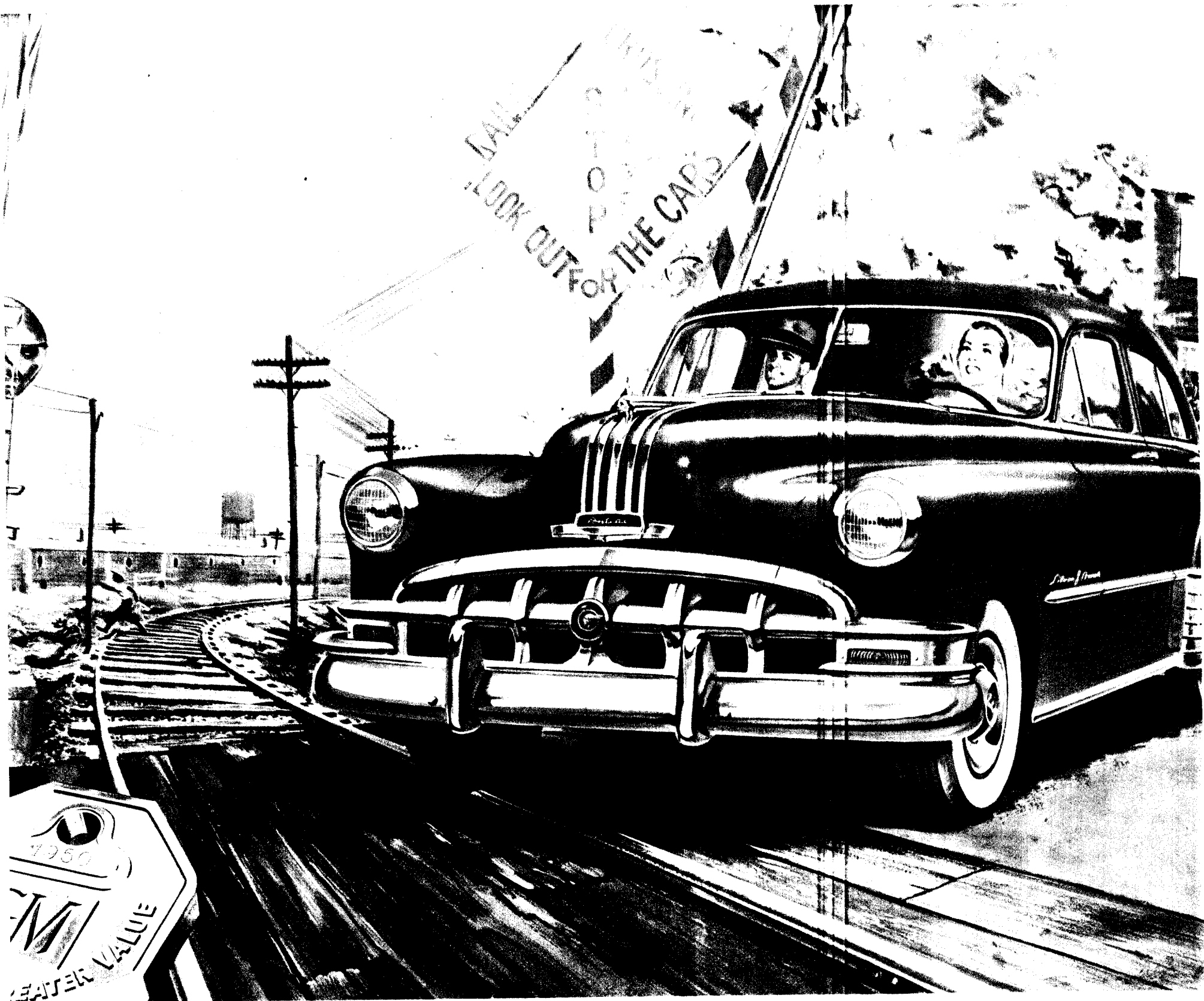


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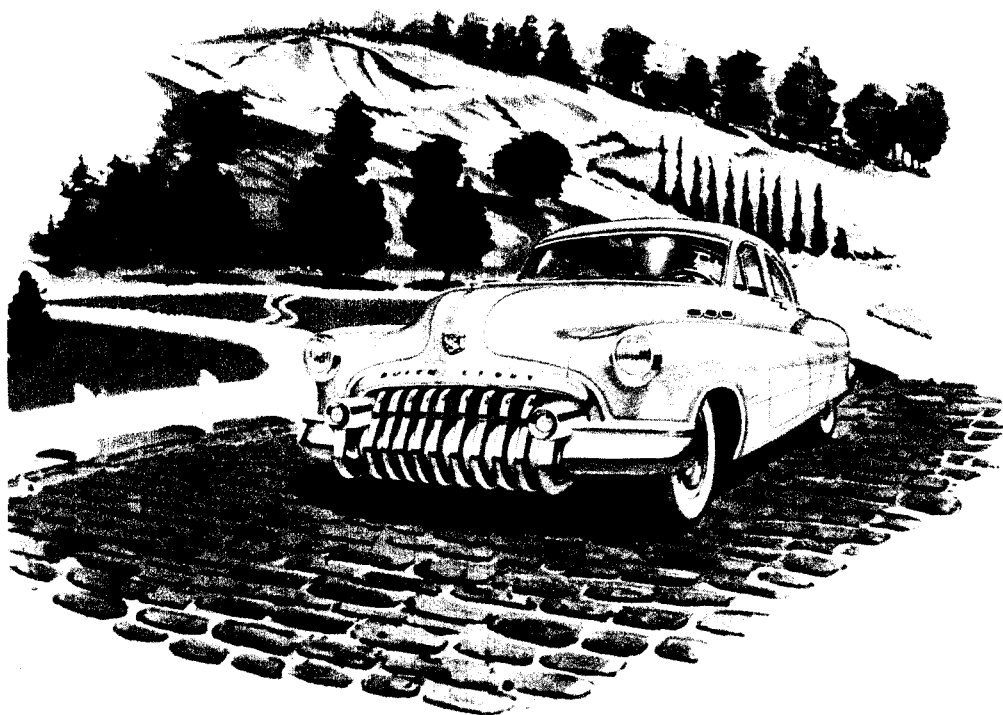
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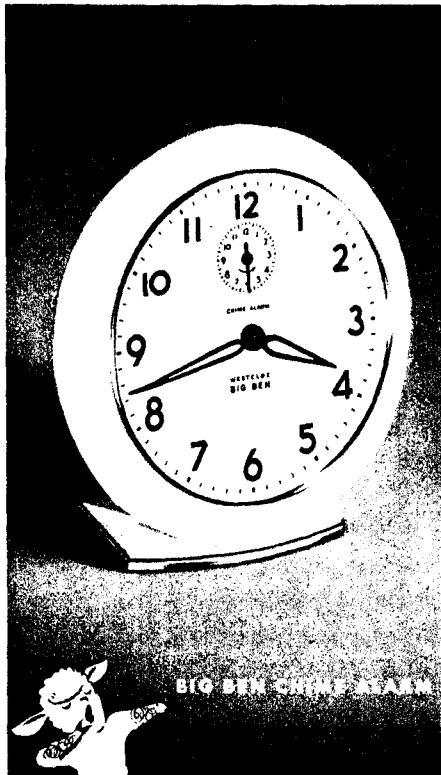
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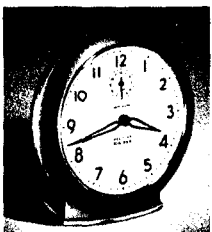


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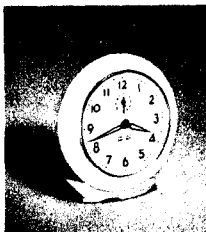


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district attorney and clamped her lips together.

"You've heard Mr. Merton Ostrander's testimony?"

"Yes."

"Is it correct?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"What time did this conversation with Mr. Trenton take place?"

"Sometime between one and two o'clock in the morning, I think it was."

"And Trenton produced this gun for your inspection?"

"Well, he produced it."

"And what did you do with it?"

"Told Merton Ostrander to lock it up right away. I asked him if it was loaded and he took out the clip and showed me that it was loaded. I believe the clip was full except for two shells. I told him to put the clip back and lock that gun up somewhere."

"Then what did you do?"

"I remembered the desk had a lock on it, so I had him put it in the desk and I suggested Merton Ostrander keep the key."

"Was there any conversation about your niece having been a party to smuggling?"

"Certainly not."

"You heard what Mr. Ostrander said, didn't you?"

"That," Linda Mae Carroll said with dignity, "is something else again. Robert Trenton was merely describing something that had happened to the automobile. It didn't have anything to do with my niece."

"Do you know where your niece, Linda Carroll, is?" the district attorney asked.

"I do not," she snapped at him. "And if I did I wouldn't tell you. She'll show up at the proper time, don't worry about that."

"This is the proper time," the district attorney said.

"That may be what you think, but I don't need you to do my thinking for me. I'll know when's the proper time, and so will she."

"You know, do you not, that we have made every effort to locate her?"

"I do not."

"Well, I'm telling you that we have."

Linda Mae eyed him with shrewd, twinkling eyes. "Well, if it's going to count as evidence, you'd better take the oath and trade places with me."

EVEN the judge smiled, and the courtroom rocked with laughter. "Cross-examine," the district attorney said with a wry smile.

"Miss Carroll," Staunton Irvine said, "what happened after the weapon, people's Exhibit No. 3, was locked in the desk?"

"We talked for a while and then we went to bed."

"And was there some discussion about an automobile—that is, an automobile other than the one that had been lent Mr. Trenton by your niece?"

"There was. Mr. Trenton had an automobile that he'd picked up and in which he made his escape. We parked it at a place where the police would find it eventually."

"Why didn't you notify the police?"

"Well, at the time I didn't see that any good could come of it."

"Now then," Irvine said, "who had the key to the desk?"

"I believe Mr. Ostrander took the key and put it somewhere, or maybe he kept it. He said that we should take great pains to see that the gun was kept so it could be turned over to the police—that is, that nothing happened to it."

"That's all."

The district attorney turned to the judge and said, "Your Honor, I think we have made out a prima-facie case. It would seem that there is only one course open to Your Honor, and that's to bind the defendant over on a charge of first-degree murder and let the higher court decide the legal aspects of the situation."

The judge nodded.

"Therefore," the district attorney said, "the prosecution rests."

"Well, I guess there's reasonable cause here to connect the defendant with the crime," the judge said. "I—"

"Call our witness, quick," Rob whispered to his lawyer.

Irvine shook his head.

"Just a moment, Your Honor," Rob said in a sudden burst of desperation, surprising even himself by his daring. "I wish to confer for a moment with counsel concerning my case."

The judge frowned, waited briefly.

Irvine said in an angry whisper, "He's made up his mind to bind you over. There's nothing else he can do. Now sit still and let me handle this."

"You mean you won't call Dr. Dixon?"

"Exactly. We can't afford to waste our valuable ammunition now."

The judge rapped with his gavel. "There certainly seems no alternative to the court at this time but to find the defendant—"

"Just a moment," Rob interrupted, "I want to call one witness to the stand."

"Who's your witness?" the judge asked irritably.

"Dr. Herbert Dixon," Trenton said.

The district attorney smiled. "No objection, Your Honor."

"All right," the judge said, "if you want to call a witness that's a right that you have. If Dr. Dixon is still in the courtroom he'll come forward and be sworn."

Dr. Dixon came forward and was sworn.

Acting with manifest reluctance, Staunton Irvine qualified him as an expert, then took the written list of questions which Rob handed him.

"Doctor, did you have occasion to examine the body of Harvey Richmond?"

"I did."

"Did you make a post-mortem examination?"

"I made the best post-mortem examination I could. I was unable to make a complete examination."

"Why?"

"Because an earlier post-mortem had been made. The body had been cut open in order to extract two bullets. However, the skull had not been opened and there were other parts of the burned body which remained undisturbed."

"Did you determine the cause of death?" Irvine asked listlessly.

"I did."

"What was it?"

"Death was caused primarily by burns," Dr. Dixon said.

"By burns?" Irvine echoed in surprise.

"That's right."

"What about the bullets?" the lawyer blurted.

"Well," Dr. Dixon said, "I didn't have an opportunity to see the bullets in place, but, nevertheless, I believe that the cause of death was not from gunshot wounds but from burns."

Staunton Irvine turned the sheet of paper.

The second page was blank—there were no more questions.

"That's all," Rob whispered.

"But now we're just getting started," Irvine said.

"Come, come, gentlemen," the judge said, "let's get on with the trial."

"That's all, Your Honor," Irvine said.

The judge looked at the prosecutor.

NORTON BERKELEY arose and said, "Well, Doctor, you have presumed to testify that Harvey Richmond died because of the fire."

"That's right."

"Yet you didn't see the location of the fatal bullets?"

"I presume," Dr. Dixon said, "by the fatal bullets you are referring to people's Exhibits No. 1 and 2?"

"That's right."

"No, sir, I didn't see the location of the bullets."

"You didn't see the X-ray pictures?"

"No, sir. I haven't seen them."

"Take a look at them now, then," Berkeley invited. "I will show you people's Exhibits No. 4 and 5. Do you see the bullets as shown in these photographs?"

"I do."

"Do you believe those bullets could have been discharged into the body of a living, breathing human being without causing almost instant death?"

"No, sir."

"And yet you say that your examination of this body led you to believe that the man died as the result of the fire?"

"I am certain of it," Dr. Dixon said slowly. "And now if you will let me explain that answer, I will add that I am certain that Harvey Richmond was engaged in a fight, a physical struggle, shortly before death took place, that he received several blows about the body, that thereafter he was clubbed over the head and that his skull was possibly fractured, that he became unconscious, and while he was unconscious the houseboat was set afire, and that Harvey Richmond lived, although he was unconscious, for some time after that fire started, long enough for the fire to cause his death."

"By all means tell us how you know that," Berkeley said sarcastically.

"To begin with," Dr. Dixon said, "I was acquainted with Harvey Richmond in his lifetime. I know that he was of stocky build and that he was fleshy. What is not generally realized is that almost everyone has a layer of subcutaneous fat, that this varies with the individual. In the case of Harvey Richmond, there was a very well defined layer of subcutaneous fat."

"And what does that have to do with it?"

"Simply this. In the event a person receives violent blows on his body, some of



"I must hang up now, Helen. Ed's waiting to help me with the dishes"

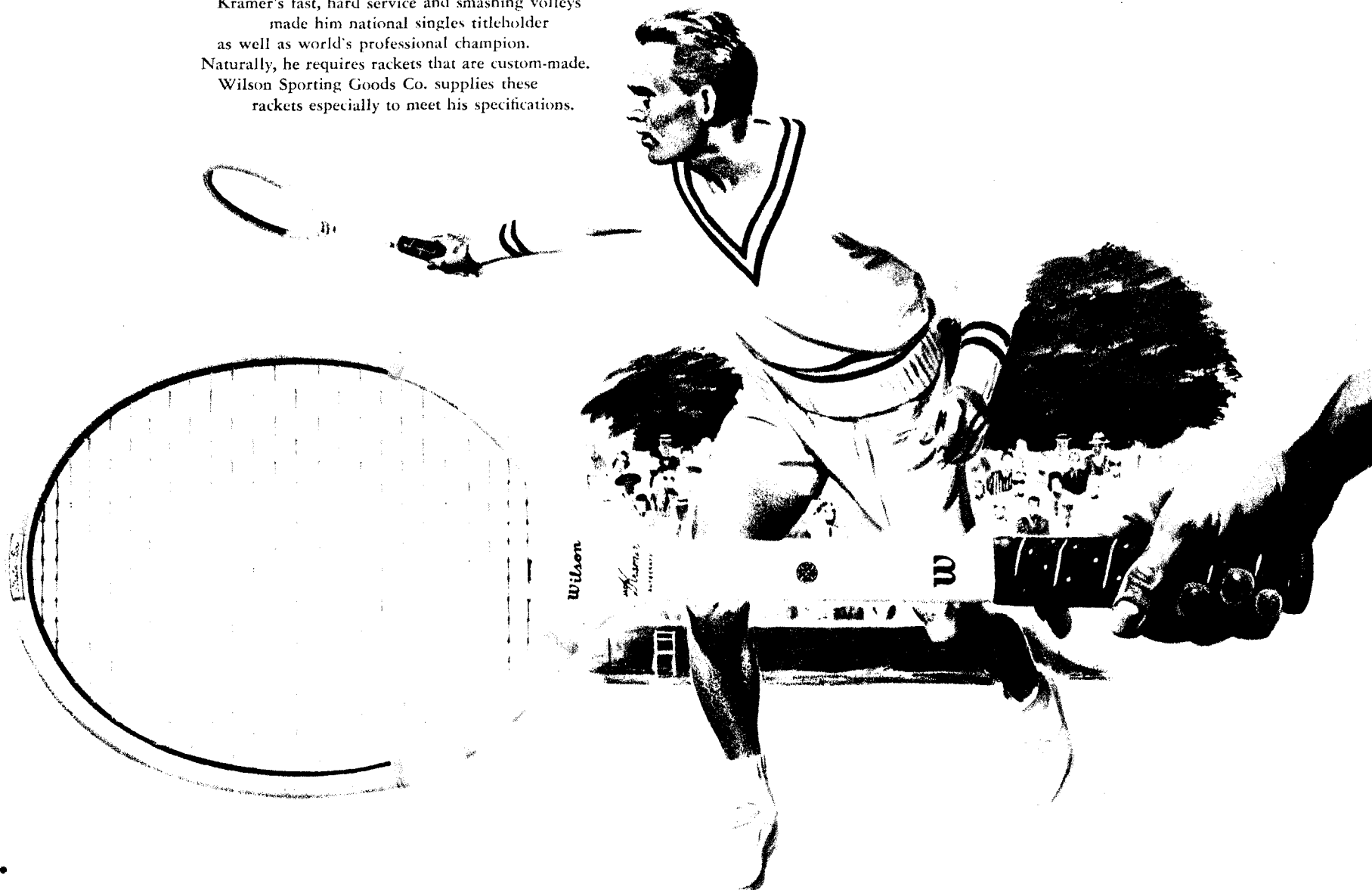
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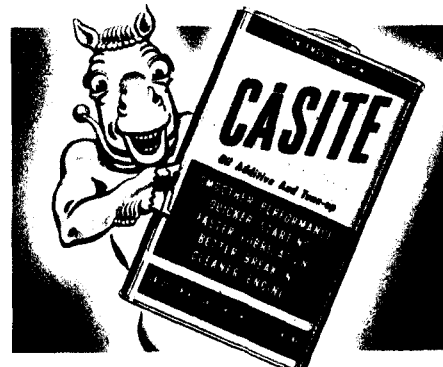
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Berkeley said, "Doctor, that sounds incredible to me."

"It is, nevertheless, a fact."

"And you found such fat globules in the capillaries of the lungs?"

"I did."

"Doctor, could you produce any competent authority that would sustain that position?"

"Certainly," Dr. Dixon said. "It's generally understood among the best pathologists. However, if you wish authority, I can give you authority."

He opened a brief case, reached in, took out a book and said, "Here is a book entitled *Homicide Investigation* by Dr. Le Moyne Snyder. On page 170, you will find that Dr. Snyder outlines in scientific language the process I have already described somewhat informally."

The district attorney endeavored to dispose of the testimony casually. "I see," he said, smiling, "and simply because you found a few fat cells in this man's lungs, you came to the conclusion that he had suffered violence before death."

"That's right."

"And therefore the fatal bullets had no particular significance?"

"There were other reasons which entered into my opinion," Dr. Dixon said. "I know that the man had received a blow on the head prior to the onset of the fire and was undoubtedly unconscious at the time the fire was started—"

"Well, I don't think we're interested in all this so-called scientific prattle," the district attorney said. "It's been established by competent medical testimony that this man was shot—"

The judge interposed. "It seems the doctor is trying to tell us something here, and we should know what it is."

"Well, in any event, my examination is concluded," the district attorney said. "That's all the cross-examination I have."

The judge looked over at the defense. "Any redirect?" he asked.

Staunton Irvine shook his head, but before he could say, "No redirect," Rob Trenton interposed a question. "How do you know the man received a blow on the head prior to the fire?" he asked.

BERKELEY interrupted, "Just a moment. I object, Your Honor, to such an examination. The defendant is represented by counsel and he can certainly trust to the ability of his own attorney."

"I think the attorney should ask the questions," the judge ruled.

"Ask that question then," Rob said to his lawyer.

"Very well," Irvine said sullenly. "How do you know the man received a blow on the head and was unconscious prior to the fire, Doctor?"

"Because," Dr. Dixon said, "when I opened the skull, I found a blood clot inside which had been evidently caused by violence. Probably a blow on the skull."

"That's all," Irvine said.

Dr. Beaumont whispered excitedly to the district attorney, and the district attorney, with a triumphant smile, said, "Now just a moment, Doctor. I have some recross-examination. Now you've testified that you found some blood in the skull when you opened the skull of the decedent."

"I did."

"And you think that is the result of a blow sustained on the head?"

"I do."

"Don't you know, as a matter of fact, Doctor, that in cases of burning, the heat may well cause the skull to crack open and frequently causes fractures of the skull?"

"I'm quite aware of all of that," Dr. Dixon said, "but I analyzed the blood in the brain for the presence of carbon monoxide and found none. I was able to gather a sample of blood from the liver and analyzed that and found a high percentage of carbon monoxide. It is, therefore, a fact which is not subject to serious question that the blood which formed the clot in the head had been formed *before the fire*, because this blood had ceased to circulate when the fire started. But the blood that was circulated through the heart and the respiratory system *did* become contaminated with carbon monoxide. I know, therefore, that the injury sufficient to cause this rather substantial blood clot was inflicted *before the fire*."

"So, I am forced to the conclusion that the man was unconscious at the time the fire started and that he lived long enough after the fire started to inhale particles of soot in the smoke and to have the blood which was circulating impregnated with a high percentage of carbon monoxide, enough to cause unconsciousness and probably to bring about death before the flames actually reached the body. I also know that he had received violent blows on the body prior to the time of death. It is, therefore, my conclusion that the two bullets which were found in the body in a place which would ordinarily have caused instant death *were deliberately fired into the body after death had taken place*."

"But that couldn't have been, Doctor!" the district attorney shouted. "Your testimony is against all the evidence. The gun was fired twice, prior to the time the fire started, and after that the gun was accounted for all the time."

"How do you know it was accounted for all the time?" Dr. Dixon asked.

"It was locked in a desk."

"And who had the key to that desk?"

Merton Ostrander, on his feet, said from his place in the front row of spectators, "Your Honor, I had that key. It did not leave my possession all night. I resent any implication—"

"Just a minute," the judge observed, banging his gavel for order. "You've already testified, and if the court wants any more testimony from you, it'll call you to the witness stand."

Staunton Irvine said, "Your Honor, I

think we are all overlooking one very significant factor in the situation. There was present at that house a young woman. Linda Carroll, the niece of Linda Mae Carroll. This young woman was present throughout the entire European trip. It was on the car of this young woman that the concealed heroin was found. I have tried to serve a subpoena on her and—"

"Don't you say a word against my niece," Linda Mae snapped, getting to her feet. "She'll show up when it's time for her to show up. She isn't going to have her name dragged through the mud—"

The judge banged his gavel furiously. "I've already admonished the spectators," he said, "not to interject comments."

"I'm not interjecting a comment," Linda Mae said. "I'm trying to keep this court from making a fool of itself."

There was a burst of laughter in the courtroom.

THE judge pounded with the gavel for a moment, then suddenly smiled, and said, "That will do. Sit down, Miss Carroll. The court will consider this matter in an orderly way."

Staunton Irvine said, "Your Honor, I feel that Merton Ostrander's comments are very definitely in order. While it is true that I am representing the defendant in this action, I have known Merton Ostrander for years and can vouch for—"

"You're supposed to be representing this defendant," the judge said.

"I am, Your Honor, but I cannot help but state that I have known Merton Ostrander and can vouch for his integrity."

Rob Trenton suddenly pushed his chair back, got to his feet. "Your Honor," he asked, "do I have the privilege of making any comment?"

"Not so long as you have an attorney to represent you."

"Do I have the privilege of discharging that attorney?"

"You do if you wish," the judge said.

Rob turned to the attorney. "You're discharged," he said.

"I resent that," Irvine said. "I've consistently endeavored to protect your interests in a way that—"

"All right," the judge interrupted, "you're discharged. Now, young man, you want to say something. What is it?"



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Rob said, "I want to ask Dr. Dixon some more questions."

"Go right ahead. The court also has a few questions it would like to have answered."

Rob said to Dr. Dixon, "Are there any further facts you have, Doctor, which shed any light on what happened?"

Dr. Dixon's voice was coldly precise. "There are several things. In the first place one wonders why the bullets, Exhibits No. 1 and 2, did not go entirely through the body. They very conveniently remained lodged in the vital organs."

"If you will examine these bullets carefully you will find certain marks upon them which are virtually identical, yet which were not made by the grooves or lands of the barrel of the weapon, Exhibit No. 3."

"It seems obvious that these are the marks made by pliers: that the bullets were first extracted from the cartridge cases so that some of the powder charge could be removed, that the bullets were then replaced in these weakened cartridge cases and then fired into the body of the decedent."

"It will be remembered that the fire was out shortly after midnight, that the authorities did not find and inspect the boat until well after daylight."

"I may further state that this morning I recovered a bullet from one of the piles on the little wharf to which the houseboat had been moored. That bullet was apparently a fresh bullet and it had been fired from the automatic which has been introduced in evidence as people's Exhibit No. 3. I personally examined that bullet and compared it with a test bullet under a comparison microscope and, as a result, I know that it was fired and fired recently from the same weapon."

"The court will also note that in the event the decedent met his death at some appreciable interval after the fire started, the death was outside of the territorial limitations of this state, because the boat, according to the testimony of witnesses, and according to surveys that I have made very carefully, drifted out into the current and then across the stream where it lodged on a sand bar which is actually outside of this state."

"Isn't there a statute providing for joint jurisdiction in crimes which occur within a reasonable distance of a state boundary?" the judge asked.

"I'm a doctor, not a lawyer," Dr. Dixon said.

THE district attorney said, "There are several statutes. I don't know whether they cover this case or not. There is a statute that when a person intending to commit a crime does anything in this state which culminates in the commission of a crime without the state, the effect is the same as though the crime had been committed entirely in this state, and there's also a statute providing that when an offense is started without the state but is consummated within the boundaries, even though the defendant was out of the state at the time of the commission of the crime, the defendant is liable just as though he were in this state."

Rob said, "Well, Your Honor, I'm neither a doctor nor a lawyer, but it seems to me that the conditions mentioned by the district attorney have not been met in this case. If Harvey Richmond was killed by bullets fired before the fire took place, that murder may well have taken place in this state, but if he was killed by fire, even despite the fact there had been a previous blow on the head, it's a question of where the man was killed."

The judge pursed his lips, frowned and once more scratched his head, suddenly turned to the district attorney and said, "Mr. District Attorney, as I understand it, the court has the power in this case to bind the defendant over for trial and then, in the event it wishes to do so, release him on bail, or the court has the power to dismiss the case entirely. Now, as I understand it, if the case is dismissed, that doesn't constitute any bar to arresting this man—again."

"No," the district attorney said somewhat dubiously, "I don't suppose it would

be any bar, but of course there is the moral effect, Your Honor."

"Also," the judge pointed out, "there's another thing you want to take into consideration, Mr. Prosecutor, and that is that if the court binds this man over on this charge, and then you uncover evidence which points to someone else, the fact that an order was made binding this defendant over is also going to have a moral effect. If I were in your shoes I'd rather just forget about this thing for a while and investigate further."

"Of course, Your Honor," the district attorney said, "Dr. Beaumont is thoroughly convinced as to the cause of death."

"Of course he is," the judge said, "and I'm not saying anything against Dr. Beaumont. He made a post-mortem until he found what he *thought* was the cause of death, and then he quit looking."

"Now then, the court is going to refuse to bind this defendant over, and so far as the court is concerned, he is released from custody. The court feels there's opportunity for a lot of further investigation in this case; and I think this is the fair way to see that such an investigation is conducted in an unbiased and efficient manner. The defendant is released from custody and court is adjourned."

The judge banged his gavel in a tone of finality, effectively shutting off the half-hearted protests of the district attorney.

ROB observed the surge of spectators crowding toward him, intent upon shaking his hand. He moved over quickly to Dr. Dixon before the physician could leave the space reserved for attorneys and witnesses. "I want to thank you," he said.

"You don't have to," Dr. Dixon told him. "I merely performed a complete post-mortem, which I contend should invariably be done in every case of unexplained death, particularly where the circumstances indicate a homicide."

Rob led him to one side. "I think there's a side door out of here," Rob said. "Can you show me where it is? I want to get away from the curiosity seekers."

Dr. Dixon hesitated only briefly, then nodded. "You could go into the door over there which leads to the judge's chambers, as though you were intending to thank the judge for what he'd done, and then you could go down through the corridor and there's a door there that opens on a side street. Come on with me if you want."

Rob moved toward the door to the justice's chambers.

"It just happens," Dr. Dixon said smiling, "that I have my car parked outside and I'll give you a ride across the bridge. Something seems to tell me it will be a little better for you to get out of the state."

"Flight?" Rob asked.

"Changing your base of operations," Dr. Dixon said. "And incidentally leaving the jurisdiction of a hostile district attorney who has sustained wounds to his vanity and his political prestige, and who may try to recover lost ground by having you rearrested. After an hour or two he'll remember that the two smugglers who are in custody are only too willing to buy themselves immunity by turning state's evidence. When that happens it'll be well for you to be in another state, and to resist extradition."

They moved down the corridor, out the side door and found that as yet no one, not even the reporters, had anticipated such a move. The crowd was still either in the courtroom or milling around the doors on the main street, and Dr. Dixon and Rob entered the physician's car and glided down the road without attracting any attention.

"I hope you realize," Rob said, "that, regardless of what the district attorney may do, I'm just starting on this thing."

Dr. Dixon looked at him in a sidelong glance of shrewd appraisal, then said conversationally, "I presume you know that Harvey Richmond was investigating the death of Madame Charteux. The body was exhumed and it was found there was enough arsenic in it to have killed a horse."

"So I understand," Trenton said.

"And," Dr. Dixon went on, "just in or-



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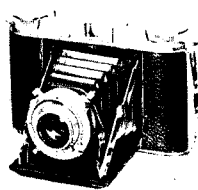
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der to keep the record straight, you'll remember that the customs men took two capsules containing a white powder from your bathrobe, capsules which you said Merton Ostrander had given you to settle your stomach?"

Rob glanced at him sharply.

"I don't know exactly what you have in mind," Dr. Dixon went on, "but the customs men turned those capsules over to Harvey Richmond. When we searched his effects we couldn't find those two capsules."

"Good heavens!" Rob said. "I hope you didn't think I thought the solution would be that simple."

Dr. Dixon flashed him a keen-eyed glance. "I'm glad to hear you say that, young man. I'm afraid the solution isn't simple at all."

"What else do you know?" Rob asked.

"Very little for certain," Dr. Dixon said. "We have, of course, investigated all of the parties concerned, to the best of our ability. Linda Mae Carroll and Linda Carroll were in South America two years ago. Linda Mae Carroll was in Europe a year ago, and Linda Carroll was in Africa. They evidently like to travel."

"Where did they get their money?"

"Apparently Linda's father died, left her some money and some money to his sister, Linda Mae Carroll."

"Just money?" Rob asked.

"Well, there was a fair amount of cash, quite a few stocks and some savings bonds, and there were three pieces of property, farm property of three hundred and twenty acres, and the Londonwood apartment

building, which went to Linda Carroll, and the house in Falthaven which went to Linda Mae Carroll."

"How much of a search has been made for Linda Carroll?"

"No very great search. She has an apartment at 1940 Chestnut Avenue, Londonwood, the apartment house where her father lived. Linda Carroll went there immediately after she returned from her European trip. For some reason she seemed to want privacy and apparently gave that address to no one. When she had obtained her passport she had been living with Linda Mae at the Falthaven address, so she used that passport address on this European trip."

"Both you and Merton Ostrander went to call on her at the Falthaven address. Linda Mae gave you both a run-around, but Ostrander was more lucky than you. He actually ran into Linda when she came to call on her aunt, presumably to give the aunt some instructions."

"What sort of instructions?"

Dr. Dixon's face was completely impassive. "I'm afraid that's as far as we can go. You apparently know the rest of it as well as we do."

Dr. Dixon eased his car across the big concrete bridge, said, "Well, you're now in a new state. Where do you want to get off?"

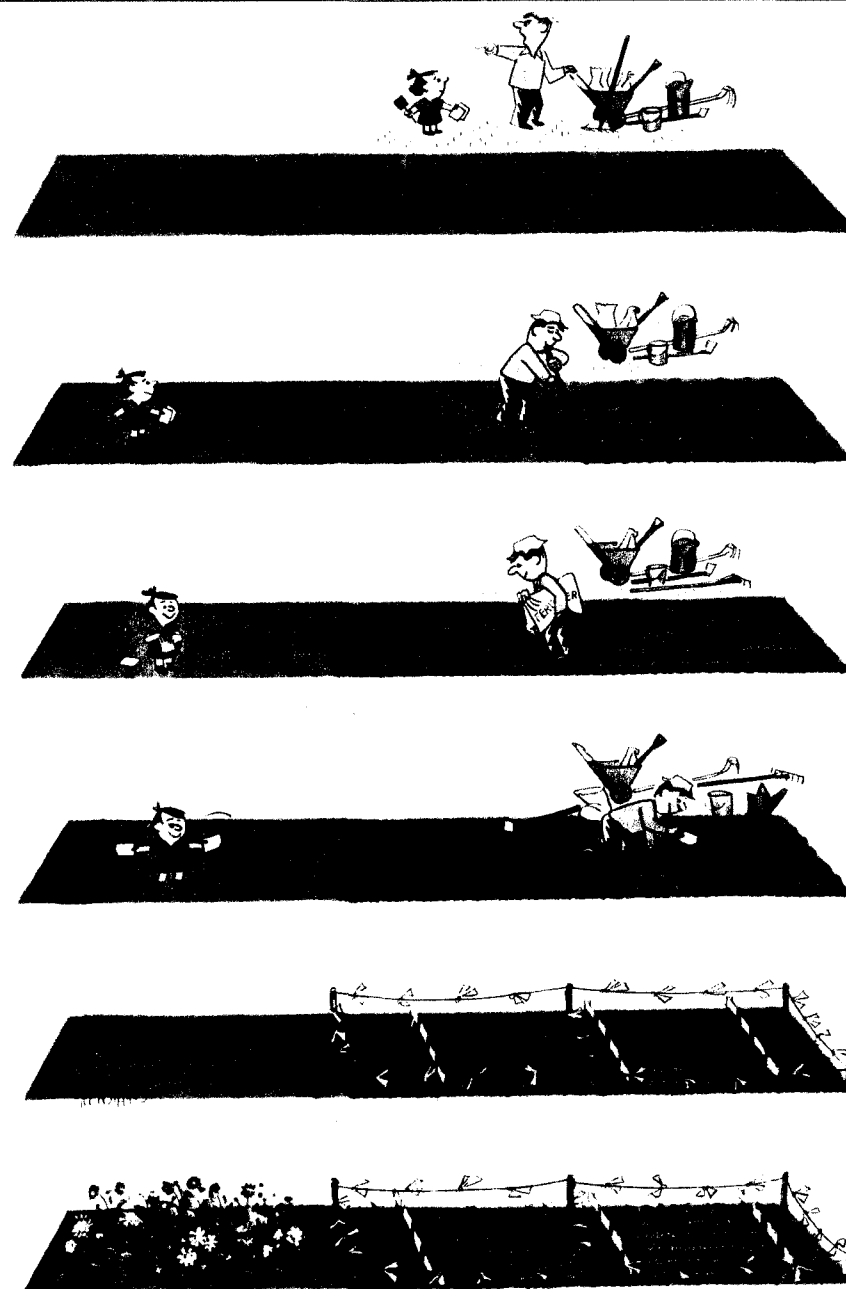
"I think I'd like to get off in Londonwood, if it's all right with you."

"She isn't there," Dr. Dixon said.

"I know. I think I'd like to get off there just the same."

Dr. Dixon drove in silence until they entered Londonwood, then stopped the car

SISTER



COLLIER'S

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Collier's for April 29, 1950

near the center of town. "How's this?" he asked.

"That's fine," Rob said.

Dr. Dixon shook hands.

"I can't begin to tell you how grateful I am," Rob said.

"That's all right," Dr. Dixon said. "I wish you luck. Those people on the other side of the river are a little chagrined. I think there might be another warrant issued for you within an hour or two. Don't waive extradition. You probably have only a few hours of liberty. I hope you put them to good use."

ROB didn't waste any time on Linda's empty apartment, but took a taxicab to the courthouse in Londonwood, the county seat. He hunted up the clerk's office and said, "I want to look up the probate record in an estate."

"What was the name?" the clerk asked.

"The last name," Rob said, "was Carroll, and I believe the estate was probated about four or five years ago. Aside from that I haven't much to go on."

"Well, we can find it," the clerk said.

Twenty minutes later Rob was busy copying the description of three hundred and twenty acres of property, which under a decree of distribution in the estate of George Hammond Carroll had been distributed to his daughter, Linda Carroll. Immediately after doing that, Rob hurried to a car-renting agency.

Later, just as the sun was dropping behind distant rolling hills, he turned off the pavement and rattled along a graveled roadway. Rob was looking for names on the mailboxes, but suddenly he braked the car to a stop.

From the pasture on the hill below came the sound of a musical chime, followed after a moment by another one, the second being deeper in tone, but both being mellow and musical. Swiss cowbells, arousing nostalgic memories.

Rob found a wide place at the side of the road where he could park the car. He shut off the motor.

The cowbells were drifting up now from the hill below in musical cadences. There were four cowbells and the effect of the harmony was as pleasing to the ear as the rolling scenery was to the eye.

Rob slipped through a barbed-wire fence, crossed under some shade trees and emerged on the upper end of the pasture where the four cows were grazing.

Up in the southwest corner of the pasture on a high knoll near the road was an old-fashioned, two-story frame farmhouse built of honest oak; and from its rugged, weather-beaten appearance, it had been standing for many years.

There was no sign of life about the house and Rob took up a position near the trunk of one of the trees, where he could observe the house through the lower branches and at the same time be all but invisible to any person peering from the house windows.

The countryside seemed peaceful and contented. The musical notes of the Swiss cowbells drifted up on the calm air. The shadows deepened into dusk, and then finally into darkness.

Rob kept his position by the tree until he could see stars overhead, until the huge two-story farmhouse showed only as a dark silhouette against a slightly luminous sky.

The cows quit grazing and with the stilling of the cowbells the countryside lapsed into impenetrable silence.

Rob left his station by the tree and moved forward cautiously along the edge of the pasture, feeling his way. There was no sign of life in the huge farmhouse.

Under cover of darkness, Rob slowly approached the building.

He came at length to a gravel driveway where an ancient woodshed had been converted into a garage. The swinging doors were propped open, showing only an empty interior. Rob walked around to the back door of the farmhouse, stood on the rear porch and listened. He could hear no sound from within.

Carefully he tried the screen door. It

was hooked on the inside. By pulling gently against it, Rob was able to determine the position of the hook.

Rob's knife cut down through the screen, just where it joined the door, making an eight-inch cut. Through this he thrust his hand and wrist, found the hook on the inside, gently lifted it, opened the door, crossed the back screened porch and gently tried the back door.

It was locked from the inside.

Rob took a small flashlight from his pocket, pushed his handkerchief under the door. Pulling straws from a broom on the screen porch he was able to spread the handkerchief out on the inner side of the door. There was a large crack at the bottom of the door.

Using the small fountain-pen flashlight to guide his operations, he inserted the point of his knife in the lock and manipulated the key until it was in a straight up-and-down position. Then he pushed with the point of his knife, and heard the key drop on the inside of the door. He gently pulled his handkerchief toward him, and had the satisfaction of feeling the key slide along on the handkerchief.

As soon as Rob's flashlight glinted on a bit of metal under the door, he slipped the blade of his knife through the crack, pressed down on the key, and then by pulling at the same time on both the penknife and the handkerchief, pulled the key through from the underside of the door.

After that it was a simple matter to insert the key in the lock, gently turn it, open the door and step inside.

Rob's small flashlight sent an exploratory beam around the kitchen. He moved across the kitchen to a door which led to a back stairway leading to the upper rooms.

Rob inched his way up these stairs, keeping well over to the sides to avoid creaking boards.

Once in the upper corridor, he paused.

He dared not use his flashlight now, but inched his way down the corridor, listening for any sound which would indicate human occupancy, and listening in vain. The big house was silent as a cave.

Midway down the corridor, for the first time doubt stabbed Rob's mind.

Quite apparently the house was empty. The chain of reasoning on which Rob had staked everything must have somewhere in it a weak link which made it fail to hold. And because Rob knew he was working against time, his failure became all the more cause for bitter self-reproach.

THEN suddenly, his nostrils detected the odor of fresh tobacco smoke. There was no faintest sound, no ribbon of light coming under any of the doors which opened on the corridor, no other sign of human occupancy, but plainly and unmistakably the fresh tobacco smoke indicated someone had just lighted a cigarette.

Rob felt his skin crawling with nervous suspense. His heart began to pound.

He moved slowly, cautiously, down the corridor, trying to find the room from which the tobacco smoke was coming.

The aroma of the fragrant tobacco was all through the corridor now. It seemed impossible to trace it to any one particular source. Then, so suddenly that it startled Rob, he heard the sound of a woman's voice, apparently asking some question.

It was a man who answered, and the answer was evidently in the negative, a rumbling, gruff few words which effectively silenced any further conversation.

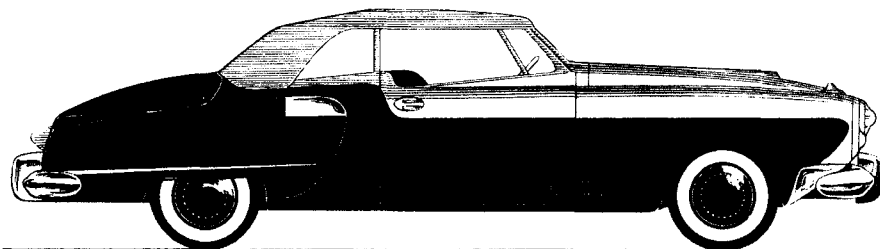
Rob moved forward, so anxious now to test the accuracy of his conclusions that he forgot to keep to the side of the corridor, away from the possibility of creaking boards.

One of these boards creaked under his weight and the sound was so sharp in that silence that it frightened Rob into jumping quickly to one side.

For a moment there was a tense silence. Then Rob heard the sound of a chair scraping back.

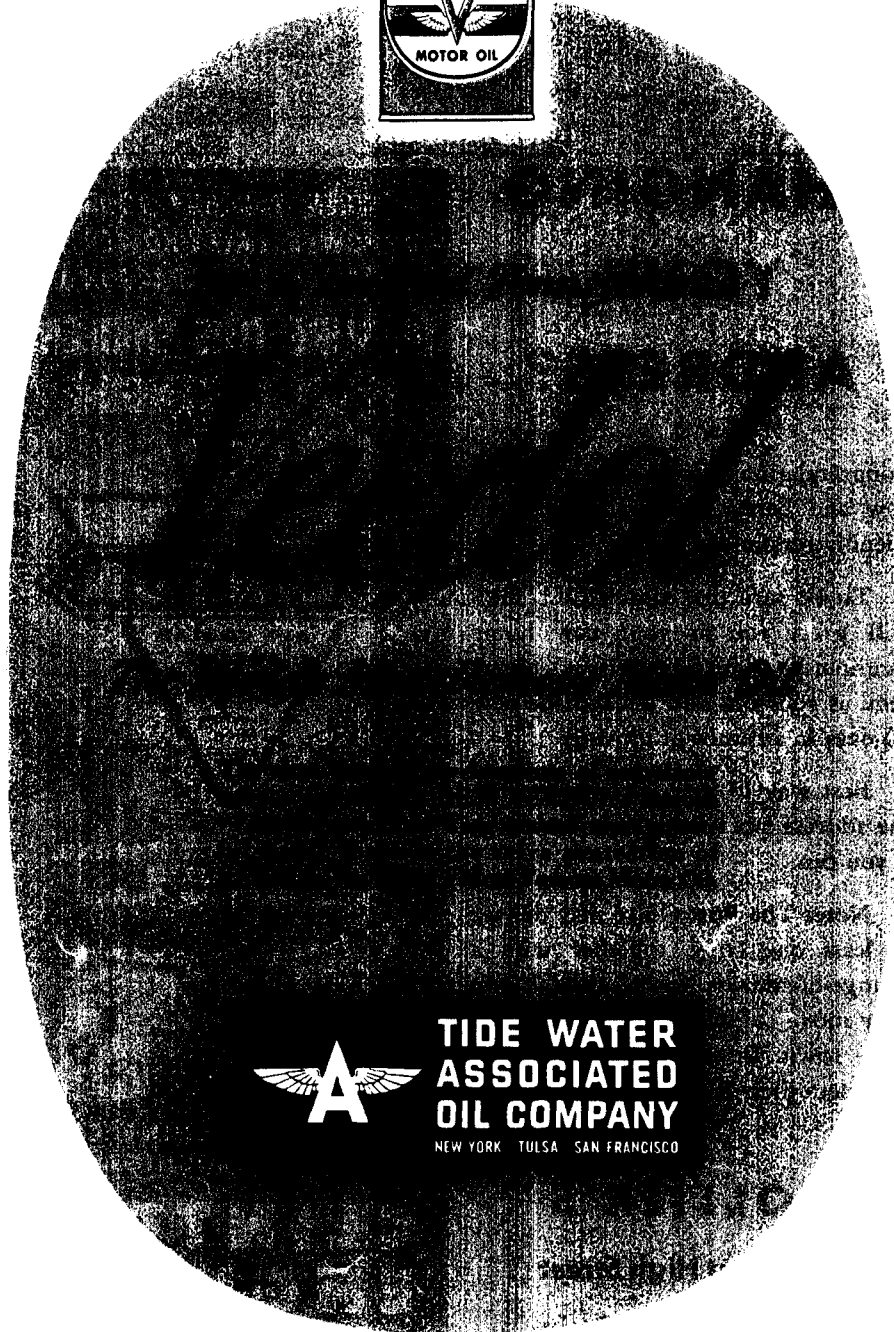
A woman screamed. "Look out!"

A man's heavy voice muttered a threat,



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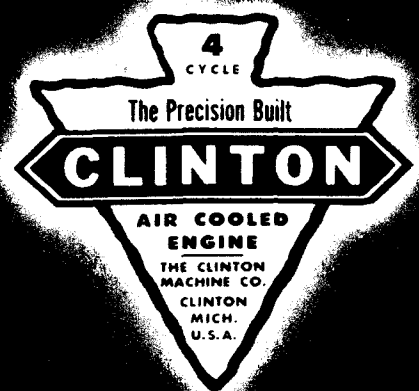
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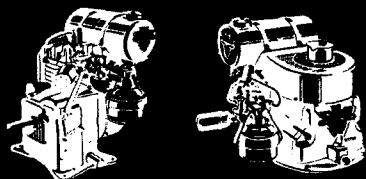
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a door swung open, and Rob found himself dazzled by the blinding glare of a flashlight which was shining full on his face.

For a moment sheer surprise robbed the man who was holding the flashlight of the power to take action.

Rob took advantage of that split second of frozen immobility. Despite the fact that his eyes were so dazzled he could see nothing, he lowered his head, charged, and after three running steps flung himself forward in a football tackle.

Above him, a long, spitting, orange-blue flash of flame was followed by the roar of a revolver, then Rob had his arms around the man's legs. He crashed into him in the most approved tackling style and the two men went down with a fall that jarred the house. The flashlight fell from the man's hand, rolled over for half a dozen lopsided turns, then came to rest with its beam illuminating the opposite wall of the corridor, sending back a reflected light which furnished a dim, weird illumination. By this light, Rob was able to recognize the features of the man whom he had heard called Rex, the one with whom he had had the fist fight on the houseboat. The fact that one of the man's eyes was swollen almost shut gave Rob confidence.

They wrestled around on the floor of the hallway in a sudden mad scramble, Rob fighting for either a good hold or a knock-out punch, Rex pushing himself clear, trying to get room to use his right arm.

Rob caught the glint of light on blue steel and grabbed for the gun.

He missed and flung himself to one side. The gun roared, and even in the heat of the combat, Rob's keyed-up senses took note of the chunk knocked from the ceiling, felt the small particles of powdered plaster raining down on his head.

Again Rob reached for the gun, shoved two fingers in between trigger and trigger guard, effectively jamming the mechanism of the double-action revolver.

The man wrestled and pulled, trying to work the trigger of the gun, but not being able to pull it back so long as Rob's fingers kept the trigger from moving back far enough to cause the double-action mechanism to function.

Rex freed his left hand, rained blows on Rob's head. Rob, still hanging onto the gun, jerked his head forward blindly, and the impact of the top of his head smashing against the other man's all but stunned him.

However, the blow did the trick. Rex released his grasp on the revolver and Rob jerked it out of his hand.

Then of a sudden the house was filled with running steps, with voices that were shouting, with the shrill of police whistles.

Too late, Rob sensed the motion in front

of him. He tried to dodge, but the heel of the man's shoe crashed into his jaw.

Rob was conscious of flinging his left arm over and around, locking the leg, holding the foot under him. He felt a black wave of giddy nausea and then was only half-conscious, like a fighter on the ropes. He hung onto the man's foot and leg and kept a firm grip on the gun with his right hand. Some instinct kept him from using the gun, even when the man freed his right foot and poised it for a kick.

At that moment Rob's head cleared slightly. He raised the gun and brought the barrel down on his antagonist's knee.

He heard a yell of agony and then flashlights were in the corridor like fireflies in the trees in summer. Men seemed to be all around him—uniformed men who knew exactly what to do and how to do it.

Rob felt himself jerked to his feet. The gun was yanked from his hand with an expert twist. He was pushed to one side.

He heard a vicious string of oaths from Rex, the sound of a blow and then the click of handcuffs.

Dr. Dixon's voice came out of the darkness, "Are you hurt?"

Rob's own voice sounded strange to him, "I guess I'm a little groggy."

"Come in here."

THERE were lights now and Rob was in a bedroom, plainly but comfortably furnished. In a chair by a window, her hands tied behind the back of the chair, was Linda Carroll. Her ankles were tied to the legs of the chair, and Rob was conscious of the pallor of her face.

"Rob. Oh, Rob!" she said.

Lieutenant Tyler clicked on more lights.

Moose Wallington wrapped his big hand around the arm of the prisoner, said, "Don't start anything now. You might get hurt."

Dr. Dixon, moving across the room, said "It's all right, Miss Carroll," and stooped to untie the knots which held her ankles to the legs of the chair. A moment later, he had brought out his knife and quickly cut the bonds which tied her wrists. "How are you? All right?"

"Yes," she said. "I—" She laughed nervously, became silent.

Dr. Dixon said, "We're state police. Would you care to tell us—"

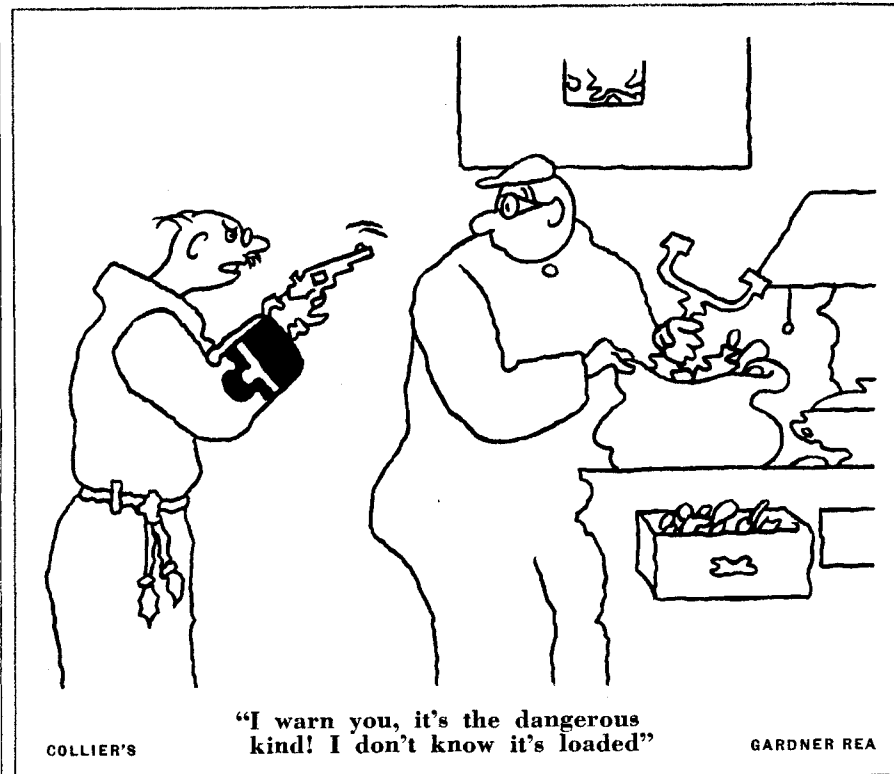
"I have nothing to say."

Dr. Dixon's face darkened. "You can't afford to adopt that attitude, Miss Carroll. After all, it was your car that was used for smuggling and—"

"I'm sorry, I have nothing to say. There's no statement I care to make."

Rob stepped forward. "I think I can tell you all the essential facts," he said.

Dr. Dixon cocked a quizzical eyebrow at



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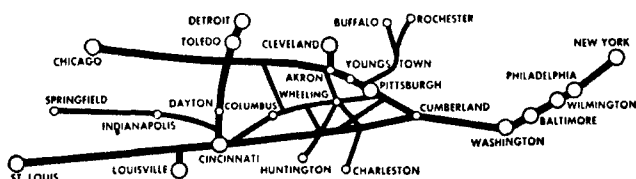
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him, said, "The state police were under orders to follow you when I let you out of my car. You probably didn't know you were being shadowed, but you seemed to know just where to go and just what to do when you got here."

Rob, somewhat crestfallen, said, "I suppose I should have confided in the police."

"You didn't need to," Dr. Dixon said with a smile. "I think we know pretty generally what happened. I think our reasoning parallels yours, Rob, but I don't know how you knew about this place and what you were going to find here."

ROB said, "After all, it's rather simple. There *had* to be some woman involved. Some woman who knew the people at that Swiss inn. Some woman who could count on easy access to the Rapidex sedan. I knew that it wasn't Linda Carroll. There was only one other person it could have been. Linda Mae. She locked up the desk that had the gun in it and gave a key to Ostrander. She always referred to it as *the* key, but it's quite reasonable to suppose that there were two keys to that desk."

"Of course there were," Dr. Dixon said. "It's the only explanation. I can appreciate that Miss Carroll dislikes to testify against her own family, but I think it will simplify matters if she'll tell her story."

"All right," Linda said dispiritedly. "I guess there's no use trying to conceal things any longer."

"My aunt has always been eccentric and decidedly unconventional. She has a certain amount of talent but a limited imagination. She can paint like nobody's business, but she has a hard time finding things to paint."

"A year ago when she was over in Switzerland she found a painting by some little-known Swiss artist. A painting of dawn on a lake, with a campfire by the lake and the smoke coming up in a straight shaft until it hit one of the upper strata of air and spread out into a long, hazy cloud. A typical effect that we see so frequently over lakes at dawn."

"Well, Linda Mae simply stole that picture. That is, she didn't touch the painting itself, but she studied the composition, the coloring and the general theme of the painting. Then she came home and duplicated it and it was sold to a calendar company. That was her undoing, because the calendar attracted so much attention and was so popular that eventually a copy found its way into Switzerland and—well, the thing was hushed up, but people who were in a position to make or break an artist's reputation learned about it."

"That was a terrific blow to Aunt Linda Mae. She was all set really to capitalize on the reputation that painting had made for her. She went to Europe. At the time I didn't suspect a thing, but suddenly Aunt Linda Mae became exceedingly affluent. I suspected there might have been some smuggling, although I had absolutely no idea it could have been anything like drugs. I was thinking entirely in terms of jewelry."

"This year I decided I'd go to Europe. Somewhat to my surprise, Linda Mae made no attempt to accompany me, but she did insist that I stop at this inn and pay her compliments to Madame Charteux and her husband."

"Looking back on it, I can see it all now. Aunt Linda Mae simply decided to use me as a cat's-paw. René Charteux was her accomplice in the smuggling. It was only necessary for him to get possession of the car for a few hours to weld a secret receptacle on the under part of the car which would hold enough dope to make a small fortune when it was smuggled into the United States and sold at retail. I presume that his wife had learned what he was doing and threatened to tell the police, which was the reason she suddenly succumbed to what apparently was a case of mushroom poisoning."

"I admit that I was stupid. I just didn't put two and two together, even after Rob had told me about what he had found on the car. It wasn't until after Rob was arrested and charged with murder that I suddenly realized what must have hap-

pened. And then I was too foolish to go to the police. I thought I could handle it."

"I tried to play it smart. I pretended that I was still completely unaware of all the sinister implications. I tried to treat Aunt Linda Mae just as though nothing had happened, and as though I knew nothing. But she's cunning as a serpent. She must have read my mind. I think she knew almost the exact instant when I began putting two and two together. She insisted we should have a cup of tea. I realized the tea was drugged within five minutes of the time I had drunk it. I tried to hold on to my consciousness long enough to get to the telephone, but I collapsed in a heap on the floor and went to sleep."

"When I woke up I was here. I don't know what Aunt Linda Mae intended to do with me finally. Perhaps *she* didn't know."

Dr. Dixon looked at Lieutenant Tyler. Lieutenant Tyler said, "Well, I guess everything's all right now. We're going to have to ask you to come to headquarters and sign a statement."

Linda said, "It's not so much what I actually know as what I suspect. For instance, that night when Merton Ostrander and I arrived at the house, Aunt Linda Mae told us she'd been in bed. Her hair was down and she wasn't wearing make-up, and—well, she fooled me. I really thought she had been in bed. Actually she must have gone with the man who went to dig up this cache of dope, managed to elude the police, must have got back to the houseboat apparently for a conference, then returned to the boat again just as the fire broke out. Then she must have driven back to Falt-haven, arrived shortly before we did, and pretended she had been in bed and asleep."

"Then after Rob Trenton came and we all went to bed, she must have opened the desk, taken out the gun, gone to the river, picked up a speedboat and one of her gang, gone to where the burning houseboat had come to rest on the sand bar, gone aboard, fired two shells from the gun into Harvey Richmond's body, put two fresh cartridges in the magazine, and then gone back home, placed the gun back in the desk, locked the desk and pretended that she'd slept soundly all night. I know what she *must* have done, but I didn't see her doing it, and I can't actually testify to anything. I do know that she put a sleeping tablet in the glass of warm milk she gave Rob just before he went to bed."

"Well," Lieutenant Tyler said, "I want you to come to headquarters and talk with Colonel Stepney. He'll be getting the whole thing lined up. As a matter of fact, your aunt is already in custody."

"The deuce she is!" Rob said.

DR. DIXON smiled at him. "Good Lord, young man," he said dryly. "I hope you don't think that *you're* the only one who can put two and two together. The state police started working on the right theory almost as soon as I had completed my report on the cause of death."

Rob, somewhat crestfallen, said, "I—I guess I should have kept out of this."

"Well," Lieutenant Tyler said, "we couldn't help but wonder just how much you were mixed in this, and we wanted to give you a little rope to see whether you'd get all tangled up or not. As it is, you seem to have done a pretty good job."

"What about Ostrander?" Rob asked. "I don't think we need to go into that at this time," Lieutenant Tyler said.

Dr. Dixon gave him a glance that was filled with significance, then looked toward Linda Carroll, turned his head slightly to take in Rob, and said quietly, "If I may make a suggestion, Lieutenant, I think the people here are entitled to an explanation. I had already talked with Rob Trenton about the disposition of those capsules that had been found in the pocket of his bathrobe by the customs officials."

Lieutenant Tyler, somewhat in surprise, looked up at Dr. Dixon.

The pathologist caught and held the gaze of the police official.

A faint smile twisted the corners of Lieu-

Collier's for April 29, 1950

tenant Tyler's mouth. He nodded acquiescence to Dr. Dixon, said, "I stand corrected, Doctor," then turned to address himself to Rob, taking care that what he said was distinctly audible to Linda Carroll, but that his remarks were definitely not addressed to her.

"Merton Ostrander," he said, "is apparently an adventurer—an opportunist, and a drifter. He stayed at the inn with René Charteux. It is difficult to determine just how much he learned of Charteux's smuggling activities, but he did learn something. It seems, however, that Charteux definitely did not confide anything about the smuggling conspiracy relating to the Rapidex sedan. It would also seem that some of René Charteux's associates *did* approach Ostrander, and Ostrander decided he could do some smuggling by boring out the metal plugs in Swiss cowbells and inserting contraband.

"And then for some reason Ostrander lost his nerve. He never did go through with it, and when he began to realize he was being investigated on shipboard, he was so afraid the holes he had drilled in the clappers of the cowbells would be discovered, that he dumped the whole shipment overboard. All except four bells which Miss Carroll asked for and received, bells which he could not very well refrain from giving her, and which because they were in *her* baggage passed unchecked through Customs."

Rob thought that over. "And the capsules?" he asked.

Dr. Dixon smiled. "As I told you, the capsules were taken by Customs and given to Harvey Richmond. Then they seemed to disappear. No one knew what had happened to them. They weren't among his personal effects. Then we thought of the obvious, and I'm free to confess our faces were a little red."

"What was the obvious?" Rob asked.

"He'd sent them to a chemist to have them analyzed. We found them in the chemist's laboratory. It might interest you to know their contents."

"What?" Rob Trenton asked.

"Bicarbonate of soda, pepsin and a little peppermint," Dr. Dixon said dryly.

Lieutenant Tyler turned to Linda Carroll. "I think we'd better start, Miss Carroll. You can ride in with us and—"

Dr. Dixon interrupted. "I hope you'll pardon me if I make another suggestion, Lieutenant. Rob Trenton has a car here. If it's all the same with you, Miss Carroll might ride in with Rob and they can com-

pare notes. One may help the other to recall some bit of evidence which may be significant. I'll take the responsibility."

The lieutenant nodded. "All right, go ahead." . . .

Rob, using his little flashlight, piloted Linda along the path at the edge of the pasture, down through the trees, toward the place where he had left his automobile.

The night was calm and silent. There was no breath of wind, no faintest cloud. The stars blazed down with steady brilliance.

Linda put her hand on Rob's arm. "Don't be in too big a rush, Rob," she said. "There's something so majestic about the night. Oh, Rob, I've always *loved* this place."

"And that, I suppose," Rob said, "was why you wanted the four cowbells."

"Of course. I came out here, put the bells on the cows, the first thing I did after getting unpacked. Oh, Rob, I—"

SOME night noise startled the sleeping cattle. A deep, musical cowbell broke the silence, followed almost immediately by the other bells. Then they settled down once more, and the bells came in a slow rhythm of musical harmony.

"It's like Switzerland," she said softly. "Oh, Rob, how I wish we were back there, and that all this that has happened could just be a nightmare."

"It's happened," Rob said. "There's nothing one can do about it. I presume the information about Merton Ostrander came as a terrific shock to you."

"Oh, in a way," she said. "But in another way I had him sized up all the time."

"You did?" Rob exclaimed in surprise. "I—why, I thought you liked him."

"I do like him," she said, smiling, "but the reason I liked him was because he drew *you* out. He started you talking, Rob—I love to listen to you. Merton knew the country and the people and he was very observing, but—well, you knew more of the underlying philosophy of people and of life. But if it hadn't been for Merton to sort of start you going, you'd have just sat there and soaked up the scenery."

Rob thought that over. Then he took Linda's arm and piloted her to the automobile.

"Dr. Dixon," he said firmly, "wanted us to compare notes. I'm quite certain there's no great rush about our getting back and since you like it here, we may as well—I'm quite certain Dr. Dixon wants us to canvass the entire situation."

"Yes," she said demurely. "He seemed most—most—"

"Helpful," Rob said.

THE END

Charlie McCarthy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

"Edgar," he declared, "I didn't know you were such a genius. You must give that to the world, and I guess we can fix your grades a little."

Bergen graduated with his class and went on to Northwestern University. There Charlie not only helped pay the bills, but was responsible for Bergen's election to Delta Upsilon, which had a reputation as the "theatrical" fraternity. Bergen still maintains a lavender-and-pressed-flower romance with Northwestern, even though an anemic bank account kept him from graduating. He has established 12 scholarships—worth \$400 a year each—in the speech arts at the university, and keeps in touch with the winners.

"I've never forgotten," he says wryly, "that lack of money kept me from finishing my education, and even though the university gave me a degree 20 years after I left there, it wasn't the same." Northwestern also conferred upon Charlie the degree of "Master of Innuendo and Snappy Comebacks." The presentation was a gimmick worth snickers and column inches from coast to coast, but privately Bergen is piqued over the fact that no university—Northwestern included—has a worth-while course in professional humor.

"Sometimes I think there's too much

Collier's for April 29, 1950

Shakespeare taught," he says. "It's comedy that really pays off—comedy that fits the times. I have had some of my scholarship people come to me after majoring in drama and say, 'Now where do I go to work?' I have to say, 'I'm damned if I know.'"

Bergen humbly neglects to add that if he himself is a great artist, it is not because he is a college-educated entertainer, a virtuoso of ventriloquism, or even a master craftsman of the theater, but rather because he is motivated by compelling psychological forces that are unique. Along with that, Bergen has a talent for verbal thrusts so original and sharp that no professional comedian has ever encountered them without retreating, dazed and scarred. Combined, these factors explain why, in the long history of ventriloquism—from Eurycles of Athens to the immortal Arthur Prince of England—no other dummy but Charlie McCarthy is remembered by name.

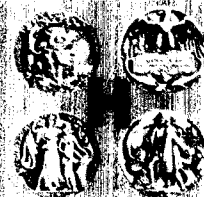
Charlie's psychological strangle hold on his master may be broken when Bergen introduces a new puppet on a projected television show. Next week's article reveals Bergen's daring plan



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Captain Ollie and the Monster

By GILBERT BYRON

CAPTAIN OLLIE sat on the back steps. The locust tree had blossomed—a sign that soft crabs had come to the creek. In other springs this had always made him happy. But this morning Captain Ollie was mad. He had been hopping mad—now he was cunning mad.

It had all started two days before. While spading the garden, the captain had been seized with a dizzy spell. He'd figured that it was something he'd eaten but Miss Birdie, his wife, had insisted on taking him to the new doctor. Just like a woman, always trying something new. This doc, a young feller, had wrapped a rubber thing around his arm and pumped it up. Sort of scared him.

"Your blood pressure is much too high for an old man," he had said.

That young squirt had called him an old man, and he was only eighty-two. Then he had ordered him to take a nap every day, like a baby, and there was a sack of pills for him to swallow down. If Miss Birdie had kept quiet, things would have stopped there.

"Do you think my husband should row his boat, Doctor?" she had asked.

"Most certainly not," he had said, "that's much too strenuous for an old man. For the present he ought not to leave the yard at all." . . .

Old Man Ollie was sitting on the back steps now, waiting for a chance to escape. Miss Birdie didn't even trust him any more. She watched him like a hawk and had locked the shed where he kept his oars and dip net, and hid his key. Now he heard her coming through the summer kitchen and closed his eyes in a pretended doze.

"I've got to go to the store, Mr. Ollie," she said. "I'll only be gone a minute."

"Huh?" he said, sleepily opening one eye.

"Don't you stir out of the yard," she commanded.

When he was sure that Miss Birdie was out of hearing, Captain Ollie became exceedingly sly for an old man. He tossed a brick through the shed's only window and retrieved his oars and dip net. Then he went to the kitchen, took a loaf of bread, filled a jug with water, paused to catch his breath, and swore. But once on the oyster-shell path, the old waterman felt ready for anything.

The wharf was deserted. Captain Ollie slipped the hitches from the pinning and gave his boat a

shove downstream. A heron squawked and flew ahead.

"Heigho, honey," the captain said. "They couldn't keep the old man from coming down the creek. Just let me get my poor old feet in the cove water and I'll soon be hard again." He thought with relish about a mess of fried soft crabs.

Thoughts of soft crabs reminded him of Old Barney, the giant jumbo that had always escaped his net. Most folks, at least the educated ones, didn't believe Old Barney could possibly have lived as long as it was said he had, but the watermen feared and hated him. The monster tangled trot-lines, tore great holes in seines, and had even, it was said, dared to make off once with a loose oar and another time with a dip net.

Captain Ollie's struggle with the huge crab had been a long one, beginning on that spring day when little Ollie, aged eleven, had stepped on what felt like a big snapping turtle. The creature had savagely seized his big toe and the boy had clearly seen the tremendous crab. He'd known that it couldn't be a snapping turtle, for once a turtle grips you it can't let go until the sun goes down.

After that, he'd seen the giant often, and once he'd almost netted the monster but the big fellow had seized the dip net frame in his big claws and climbed out. That was when Captain Ollie had first noticed the barnacles on his back and nicknamed him Old Barney. And not so long ago the old waterman had been pulling in a trout, when the jumbo came up out of the depths to cut his line and swim away with the fish, not to mention a new hook and sinker. That had been pretty humiliating, because one of his cronies, Captain Burt, had seen it happen, and reported the details, with embellishments, to the eager students of the art of billiards at Floyd's Academy. . . .

Captain Ollie reached the cove and slipped his shoes off. Dip net in hand, he waded the shallows. Schools of little minnows fled before him. Soon he netted his first soft crab, a small one.

"Does your mama know you're out, honey?" he crooned, softly pressing the velvet shell before placing it in the boat.

The old man was approaching Old Barney's bailiwick and moved quietly, dip net cocked. There was the log where he had glimpsed the big devil last summer. What was that faint touch of red in

the crab grass? At first, in great excitement, he thought it was Old Barney and gathered himself for the lunge. Then his trained eyes, seeing the relaxed position of the huge claws, told him that it was only the slough of the great crab. From its position, he knew that Old Barney had left it that very morning and must still be close by.

Captain Ollie stood very still and studied the log. After a while, there was a slight stir in the mud, and he stretched out his long arms. His hands carefully explored the area along the log and closed on something large, soft and helpless. When he stood up he was holding Old Barney; he was panting.

The captain placed the crab in the bottom of the boat and gloated. "Well, you rascal, Old Man Ollie has caught up with you at last. I guess you figured I wouldn't be coming down the creek so early in the spring."

The giant's eyes protruded and he tried to raise one of his fighting claws. "You're no good any more, Old Barney," Captain Ollie taunted. "You're softer than the old man and now the creek won't ever harden your shell."

The crab stirred and squirted a stream of water in the captain's direction. "Still want to fight?" said Captain Ollie. "It won't do you no good—you might as well crumple and die."

ALL of a sudden Captain Ollie felt very old, and then he had a dizzy spell. When his head cleared, he figured it must be hunger, so he ate the bread and drank the water he had brought. He looked at Old Barney; the crab was watching him.

He placed a few crumbs close to the crab's mouth, but Old Barney was in no condition to take nourishment. The waterman covered him with grass, trying to hide the searching eyes. He had the feeling that an old friend was passing—the creek would not be the same with Old Barney gone.

Then Captain Ollie made a decision. He picked the giant up and stroked his soft shell. "I'm going to give you another chance, old feller. I guess we came out a little too early this spring—you and me both." He slipped the crab into the creek and watched him swim away.

Captain Ollie sighed and picked up his oars. He wouldn't tell Miss Birdie and the young doc about his meeting with Old Barney. They would just say he was getting dotty.

THE END