



The girl stood there in the door, looking at me. I didn't know what she had in mind

# If You Don't Get Caught

By WILLIAM R. SCOTT

A new serial—about a nice but needy young guy who thought that five hundred dollars could buy all the conscience he had to sell

I

I WAS feeling pretty disenchanted the day Buck Early came back to the campus bearing gifts and a slightly illegal proposition. I hadn't seen Buck for almost two years. Although he'd promised to write, he had never done so, and I resented the fact that he hadn't got in touch with me until now, when he needed me. But on the other hand, he made such a handsome offer for the service he wished me to render, and he caught me in a weak moment. I was terribly fond of money.

I'd been lying on my back on my bed in my room, with my hands under my head, staring at the ceiling, sweating in the humid basement and wondering dully how much longer it would be, roughly, before the cracked plaster overhead lost its grip entirely and came tumbling down. And it didn't make any difference one way or the other and nothing else occupied my mind—absolutely nothing. I looked at the cheap alarm clock on my "work" table, and it was a few minutes past four o'clock on a Thursday in June, and suddenly I knew

I couldn't take it much longer. Not much longer. As soon as the semester ended . . . I let the thought trickle away, because I knew I was in a rut, and I knew I didn't have any getaway money.

There were places I could have been, and things I could have been doing. Like over at the tennis courts, watching girls in white shorts and brown skins playing tennis. Like over on the North Oval, lying on the grass, chewing some of same. Or I could go sit around the Town Tavern and use up a little of my credit drinking cold keg beer, or I could get in my fine three-year-old sedan and drive down to the South Canadian river and stare at all that hot sand and the shallow trickle of red water. Or, Heaven forbid, I could study. But instead of doing any of those things I lay on my bed, sweating and staring at the ceiling.

And then somebody banged on my basement door and came on in, and who should it be but my old chum Buck Early with a half case of cold beer. And the business opportunity.

"Hello, Robert," he said, very casually. A great moment.

"Get lost," I said. "Early, must you always come charging in here when I'm deep in meditation? Have I no privacy no more?"

"Gee, I'm sorry," he said, lying about it. He put the beer on my work table and grinned at me. "Aren't you delighted to see me, kid?"

He opened two cans and handed me one, and I sat on the edge of my hot pad and tasted it, and it tasted like cold beer. Buck toed a chair around and straddled it backward, his arms resting on its back, and he thumbed his wide-brimmed, ranch-style straw Stetson up off his forehead, proving that his hairline was as black and low and thick and curly as ever. His dark Indian eyes examined me for a while, and then he grinned—a white, tooth-paste-ad grin—and I grinned back at him, because I was glad to see him.

"What kind of football team we going to have next fall, Robert?"

All I had to do was drive a truckload of bootleg whisky from one place to another.

Buck was on my side. So was the sheriff. But I had one enemy—a girl I used to love.

"Terrific," I said. "You'll see some real football."

He wasn't any different from the Buck who had hurriedly resigned from law school when his small bootlegging activities leaked out. Maybe he looked a little more prosperous, but he was still the same broad-shouldered, fit-looking guy I'd known lo, those many years ago in the Coast Guard. He squinted at me and his grin faded.

"You about to graduate, Robert?"

I had to laugh. "Some yak," I said. "Hell, I got another semester, even if I go this summer."

All of a sudden I got this feeling that we were both beating around the bush about something, and I wondered what. So I said, "What's up?"

He raised his eyebrows. "I missed you, that's all. I got to feeling lonesome, so I thought I'd come over here and buy you a drink."

"Stow it," I said. "You know I don't drink, Early."

"I wanted to see the old gang, maybe play a little poker, like we used to, maybe have an old-fashioned beer bust, Robert."

"Stow that, too," I said. "I'm the only one left, Buck. They call me the oldest man on the campus. Grandpaw Nolan. Most of our gang were reservists, remember? You know where they are. The rest are graduated—pft!"

"You sound bitter," Buck said, grinning whitely. "I am not bitter. Every day I take time off to be thankful I didn't join a reserve deal."

I DIDN'T feel that way about it. I wished I'd joined the Naval Reserve that time, so that now, instead of being stuck in an educational rut, I'd probably be sailing the bounding main, a CPO maybe. I sat there admiring my can of beer and feeling glad that old Buck had come back to see me. I always liked the guy, and had often wondered about him. I figured he was probably just passing through, now. And then abruptly Buck stopped beating around the bush.

"Ever been in Derrick, Oklahoma, Robert?"

"Never. And, I might add, why? Where does this lead us?"

"Would you be interested in making five hundred dollars tomorrow?"

I nearly bit the top off my can of beer. "Who do I bump off?"

"Nobody," he said. "All you do is drive a truck for me."

"You're insane," I said. "What's the gimmick?"

"The truck would be full of whisky," Buck said.

"Don't look now, but that's highly irregular," I said. "In fact, here in the Sooner State, it is illegal, Buck."

"True, true," Buck agreed. "But it hadn't ort to be, had it?"

I could go along with that statement. I didn't approve of the kind of prohibition we had. It was a sham, a mockery. It made sneaks and law violators out of a lot of otherwise nice people. And it failed, miserably, to prohibit.

"There's more," I said. "Give me the rest of it. Five hundred is too many lovely dollars for just driving a truckload of liquor, man."

He gave me the rest of it. I closely resembled a man named Jones. Using Mr. Jones's credentials, I was to bid in a load of whisky at a sheriff's sale in Derrick and drive it to a spot designated as Buck's barn. And there was absolutely no risk involved, and the reason he was coming to me at the last minute like this was simply because Mr. Jones was not able to function tomorrow, having wrapped his automobile around a Missouri telephone pole. It was a brass-plated cinch, Buck said.

"Uh-uh," I said. "I am allergic to sheriffs, Buck."

"You'd like this one," he said. "He's on our side." And then he got out his billfold and showed me a deputy sheriff's badge, and I dropped my beer can, which was empty anyhow, because the idea of Buck Early being a deputy sheriff was ridiculous.

"Me and the sheriff," he said, "we don't get paid enough, so we want to bid in this load of precious merchandise ourselves. That's all. And we need a

substitute for Mr. Jones, our agent, and I immediately thought of you, old pal, because I can trust you and because five hundred dollars couldn't happen to a nicer guy. You miss one day of school, you come back loaded. Everybody's happy. Especially me."

"You thought of me because I look like a guy named Jones," I told him, so he'd understand I wasn't being conned into anything. I thought about his proposition as he opened another can of beer for me. I said give me a little time to think about it, and we drank beer and talked, and his almost black Choctaw eyes watched me the way a snake watches a bird, and his Irish mouth grinned, and I thought about how nice it would be to have five hundred dollars.

RIGHT now I want to explain that never for a second did the moral aspects of the thing give me pause. Not then. Later, but not then. I thought about how I would like to take the summer off, go to Mexico or up in the high Sierras of California, get completely away from my books and the rut of discontent I was in. A guy could have a very nice vacation in romantic old Mexico for five hundred American dollars, and underneath all of my thinking about it I knew I didn't want to come back to school again, either. I wanted to make the break final and complete, for any number of probably foolish reasons, and here was the means being handed me on a platter. I'm not trying to alibi, not really, but money is a dangerous and a vicious thing, and when the price is right almost any hard-pressed and gullible young man of twenty-nine without family ties and loved ones can be corrupted. And that's what happened to me. I was corrupted. The price was right.

"When do we leave, Buck?" I asked.

His jaw sagged a little. He had been prepared to sell me, and now it wasn't necessary. He got hold of himself and grinned hugely. "Well, pack a bag, kid. Take a suit and a necktie and a hat, if you own one. And a slicker—the forecast is for rain tomorrow. And it would make it better if you take your car. I came over on the bus."

I got off the bed and went to take a shower. Inside the half hour we were on the road, going east on Highway 9 out of Norman. And, screwy as it may sound, I was already beginning to have qualms. At the time, I attributed them to nervousness and trepidation—you know, fear. I kept myself fooled like that for quite a while, too.

Somewhere around Seminole we ran into the first rainstorm, and all over the north and east the sky was blue-black and threaded with lightning. After that we kept driving into a hard, quick rain every little while, and it slowed us down considerably—and we had to keep our windows closed, and Buck's nauseating cigars became a torment. So did his predilection for loud hillbilly music laced with static.

"Don't you just love the pitter-patter of rain?" Buck said.

"Hell, no!" I said.

He grinned; he was contented, gay. "Hey, Robert, you nervous about tomorrow?"

"Hell, yes!" I said.

"Don't be," he advised me. He had consumed six or seven cans of the beer, and he was at peace with his world. Everything was grand. "Nervous people get ulcers," he said. "Like Floyd."

"Who is Floyd?" I said.

"Floyd Talmadge, the sheriff. My creature, my puppet. He's got a duodenal ulcer. He worries too much. His whole family is neurotic."

"Is the sheriff worried about tomorrow?" I asked.

Buck laughed. "Tomorrow, yesterday, and next Christmas, too."

"That does it," I said. "If the sheriff is shaking, I quit."

That was the first sensible thing I'd said all afternoon, but I didn't mean it. I was kidding. Quit, and kiss five hundred dollars good-by? Hah! So all right, it sounded like a ten-dollar job with a four-hundred-and-ninety-dollar risk value. I was wearing my best pair of guts, and the whole screwy

situation had a certain ironic charm. I was a stooge, and stooges don't have a strong union, and without a very strong union nobody gets five hundred dollars for one day's work. But, on the other hand, everybody knows the wages of sin are phenomenal—if you don't get caught; and who gets caught when the sheriff is on his side? I wasn't scared of getting caught. I wasn't scared. It was this other thing that nagged at me.

I suppose that I was subconsciously—or on a tertiary level of thought, as some guy once said—trying to justify myself, and I kept thinking about the large athletic banquet I'd gone to in my capacity as student sports writer for the Daily. The town cops were there, outside, helping park the cars. Inside, mixed whisky drinks were served openly. This was the kind of ridiculous prohibition we had.

People drank and broke a law and laughed about it, and bootleggers were not classed with criminals. State laws couldn't destroy the old law of supply and demand, and whose crime was blacker—the one who sold a pint or the one who bought it and drank it? Public officials who paid lip service to the dry laws nevertheless served their guests concoctions more potent than grape juice. And I preferred to think that I was a little scared about portraying Mr. Jones on the morrow—I preferred to think that it wasn't a question of right and wrong.

"Turn left up ahead," Buck said, and the setting sun got through the clouds and touched the dripping woods with red fire, and I turned left and heard the gravel rattling under us.

"Where does this splendid *Autobahn* take us?" I asked.

"My place," Buck said.

To me it seemed a wild and melancholy land, a brooding place of rank brush and thick timber, sparsely peopled; a land of untouched natural ugliness. But the rain had stopped, at least, and presently from the top of a ridge where the gravel road began to descend into the valley I saw the beautiful blue-green river sparkling off to the right through the trees and guessed it was the fabled Squaw River, famed for its float trips and its scenic beauties—Squaw River, and beyond, east, the roofs and spires of the small city of Derrick.

"Left up the next hollow," Buck said, and I turned left up the hollow. We traveled for several hundred yards through a wet tunnel of trees, and the tracks of Buck's private driveway climbed up out of the hollow onto a wooded plateau and we were there.

THE house was old and paintless and shabby, surrounded by the thick-boled oaks and towering black gum trees, and beyond it was a handful of rickety outbuildings. I parked the car in front of the house and we got out, and a plump, Indian-looking woman came to the open door and stared at us.

"Hi, Mom," Buck said. "Tony show up?" She nodded, and Buck said to me, "Tony went to Missouri for the truck. I guess it's in the barn." He looked at her again. "Where's Grady, Mom?"

She shrugged her fat shoulders. "Buck, what kind of crazy thing you getting mixed up in now?"

Buck started toward the barn. "Come on, Robert." I followed him to the barn. It was an old and a sad barn, built partly of sandstone and partly of old bleached hewn timbers, with rusty tin for a roof. As I waited for Buck to open the door, a half-dozen lank hound dogs came out from under the house and waved their ratty tails like metronomes above their gaunt rumps. It seemed appropriate. The place looked fit for dogs. It all reminded me of a bad movie I'd seen somewhere.

Inside the barn a big truck of not very recent vintage was parked. It had a semitrailer. Buck looked at me, grinning. "Think you can herd her, kid?" I said I could, and he said, "Tony—one of the deputies, Mom's cousin—he painted the sign. You like it?"

The sign read: JONES & CO., WHISKY, WINES, LIQUEURS. I (Continued on page 50)

ILLUSTRATED BY TRAN MAWICKE



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I grabbed her and we tussled a little. She felt small and angry, and smelled clean and fragrant, and I forgot that you shouldn't ever mix business with pleasure



# "THE MAN TO SEE" *in*

He's Longie Zwillman, ex-hoodlum who rose from rackets to riches—then bought into honest business and went on to political power. Now he's called "the biggest man" in the state

**W**HEN a city board in Newark, New Jersey, was endangered recently by an economy wave, its secretary knew exactly what to do. He went to see an easy-talking six-footer, called Longie. The board stayed. And so did the secretary's job.

When some bigwigs of the New Jersey State Federation of Labor wanted to oust the head of their building-trades unions, they also knew what to do. They asked Longie first. Because Longie didn't give the word, the labor boss kept his job.

When the Chicago Capone mob, extorting a million dollars from the movie industry, wanted New Jersey support to capture the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees (AFL) they, too, saw Longie.

So did the leaders of a religious minority who feared the prewar inroads of the Ku Klux Klan and the German-American Bund. Longie drove Klan and Bund out of New Jersey.

A man who wields this sort of power usually likes to reap the recognition that goes with it. Not Longie. His influence has been one of the best-kept secrets in American politics, in labor, in business—and in the underworld.

"Longie?" said a newspaperman. "He's the biggest man in New Jersey. But don't ask me how he does it. Nobody can put his finger on it."

"Why did I go to Longie to get his support?" Harold G. Hoffman, the former governor of New Jersey, said to a Senate Crime Investigating Committee lawyer. "Why, everybody knows who Longie is."

Longie, the man whom everybody knows, but few know about, is Abner Zwillman, who in the past has also been known by the names of Abe and George Long and Abe Fitzell. A top partner in the biggest runrunning syndicate of the dry years, Zwillman was once branded by the FBI as a public enemy. J. Richard (Dixie) Davis, who as mouthpiece for Arthur P. (Dutch) Schultz Flegenheimer knew his underworld, tagged Longie Zwillman in 1939 as one of mobdom's Big Six, ranking with such lurid worthies as Louis (Lepke) Buchalter, Benjamin (Bugsey) Siegel, Meyer (Little Meyer) Lansky, Charles (Lucky) Luciano and Jacob (Gurrah) Shapiro.

At the Senate Crime Investigating Committee hearings last April, Zwillman appeared as a big, relaxed and trigger-witted man in glasses, whose features, obviously once darkly handsome, had coarsened and become angular with middle age. (He is forty-seven.) On his home grounds, Newark, Longie is known as a warm, intense-eyed fellow with the friend-making talents of a puppy. His capacity for making friends is, in fact, prodigious.

"Zwillman's friends number in the thousands," Longie's lawyer told the Senate crime probers. "They include priests, rabbis, doctors, men in public life, businessmen and people in all walks of life." Zwillman seemingly began to make friends early. In 1930 when Longie, then twenty-six, was being sentenced to six months in jail for brutally beating a "numbers" runner with a blackjack, Zwillman's then lawyer could already tell the court:

"Hundreds of persons know of Zwillman's kindness and charity."

The friendly Zwillman, an impeccable family man, lives the life of a suburban gentleman in a 21-room, Normandy, ivy-covered home of stone blocks in West Orange, New Jersey. A spacious house with eight bedrooms, five baths and a servants' dining room, it would cost an estimated \$200,000 to replace. To assure privacy, the road to the mansion is barred by a chain. Set back on a

broad, cool lawn, the home's great dormer windows, three chimneys and wall covering of ivy give it the look of a college dormitory—or an English baronet's country seat.

Longie is married to the former Mary De Groot Mendels Steinbach, a finishing-school graduate and onetime Junior Leaguer noted for her beauty.

"Just like the story of the Prizefighter and the Lady," Newark's sporting life said happily of the courtship in 1939. The boys around the Third Ward, from which Zwillman sprang, even had it that Longie had got himself an English tutor to improve his speech, but nobody knows for sure.

The Zwillmans have two children, John and Lynn Kathryn. Longie is a doting father who seldom leaves home. But that may be because it has become increasingly embarrassing for him to do so since the white light of public scrutiny has been turned on the underworld.

Longie Zwillman, "the biggest man in New Jersey," leads no political party. He doesn't even belong to a clubhouse. And he heads no labor union.

## Slick Maneuver in State Politics

No party boss, Longie nevertheless took on the most formidable boss of them all, Frank Hague, and—in a subterranean struggle, little suspected by the people of New Jersey—helped end Hague's 36-year reign. As a by-product of this power play, Longie helped re-elect New Jersey's governor, Republican Alfred E. Driscoll, an able and earnest man (who did not seek Zwillman's support). This slick maneuver helped weld a coalition that dominates the Democratic party of the state.

No party boss, Longie masterminded the fusing of Newark's minorities into a political amalgam that gave him mastery over his home town and its gravy.

No labor leader, Longie is the man to whom some employers go to settle differences with their unions. To many labor unions, as one admirer put it, "Longie's word is magic."

No proved racketeer, Longie is still so high in

underworld councils that he warrants telephone calls from such leaders as Frank Costello. The country's crimsonest characters are Zwillman's admitted friends. And for a business partner, Longie has a man who carries money and gifts to Charles (Lucky) Luciano, the convicted purveyor of women on a chain-store basis, who was deported to Italy. Luciano recently was accused by federal narcotics agents of sneaking dope to America.

By any yardstick, as one politician put it, "Longie is *Somebody*." But it is his hidden business deals that give the most convincing proof of it. In deals that take years for Internal Revenue agents to ferret out, he pops up as a major partner of a multi-million-dollar liquor business; as the dominant stockholder of a movie producing company; as the owner of a truck-and-equipment agency that enjoyed a substantial portion of the official business of a city. It turns out that Longie Zwillman ranks with Frank Costello as one of the richest and most powerful figures to come out of the mobs.

For instance:

In 1946, Zwillman bought—with others—the block-square former post-office site in the heart of Louisville's business section. The purchase price was \$1,800,000. The deal raises interesting questions about Zwillman's connections in Washington. (Senate crime probers could link Costello only to one office building and a small electric-broiler company and some oil leases.)

For all of the recent probings into the underworld's links to politics and legitimate business, Longie (his origin, his clandestine careers, his wealth and power) has remained largely unexplored. Yet Zwillman's career dramatizes a significant development in American life: the rise of the prohibition mobster to great political influence. This rise takes four stages.

First, bootlegging. Second, the use of organizing ability and violence—learned in bootlegging—to make a secret buck in the numbers, the books, in union racketeering when repeal came. Third, use of the secret wealth acquired in the rackets to invade legitimate business.



Frank Hague, Jersey City boss, went down in 1949 city race. Longie gave him a big shove



Gov. Alfred E. Driscoll, seeking re-election, got Zwillman help, but did not ask or want it

Collier's for August 25, 1951