

Boston's Unsolved Robbery

"The Anatomy of a Crime," by Joseph F. Dinneen (Charles Scribner's Sons, 212 pp. \$2.95), is an account of a crime that, in its publisher's words, bears "a startling parallel to the great \$2,500,000 Brink's robbery." Here it is reviewed by Croswell Bowen, crime reporter for The New Yorker, author of "They Went Wrong" and other books.

By Croswell Bowen

IN MOST cities in the United States there is at least one newspaperman who "really knows the town." He's generally a swing man; politics, crime, business, labor, but basically he is a police reporter. He has "friends" among cops and crooks, politicians and priests, rich men, poor men. He is apt to be poor in dollars but rich in the currency of his trade—information. His hallmark is trustworthiness. It has to be or he wouldn't be long in business.

In New York I think of Mike Berger. In Chicago, John Bartlow Martin. In Boston, almost everybody agrees it's Joseph F. Dinneen of *The Boston Globe*. Therefore, when a book comes on the market called "The Anatomy of a Crime" and is billed as "a startling parallel to the great \$2,500,000 Brink's robbery" and is by a man who covered every facet of that fabulous event, students of contemporary American life, especially its seamier side, would do well to study it.

Joe Dinneen is said to be the only newspaperman to whom Boston's rich, powerful Joe Kennedy will talk. His "Ward Eight," a realistic study of one Boston ward and its political workings, is used as a text in courses on city government at Yale, Harvard, and Princeton. His "Purple Shamrock," a study of James Michael Curley, Boston's extraordinary political boss, put Dinneen in the same league of writers on U.S. political folkways as Richard Rovere and Frank Kent.

Dinneen bases an "hypothesis on the Brink's case." He advances the theory that a Boston crook, who had served as a stool pigeon for a certain Boston policeman, made a point of talking to this policeman at the exact moment the Doane's Transfer Agency (as Dinneen calls the hapless armored car company, the robbery of which is still

unsolved) was being robbed of \$2,500,000 by six men wearing plastic Halloween masks and visored caps. The cop, Edward Gallagher, suspects Tony Turchino, his valuable stool pigeon, of having a hand in the robbery, and tries, in his own fashion, to get from him information about it. Meanwhile the FBI men, "the glory boys" as Dinneen says the Boston police call them, move into the case because Federal Reserve bank deposits were included in the stolen funds. It isn't long before they discover that Gallagher the cop has "underworld connections" and they make cracks about "a sinister compact between the police and gangsters." It is true that Gallagher has helped Tony in beating some raps in exchange for information about Boston's underworld. But, as Dinneen brings out, the use of stool pigeons is standard procedure in the police departments of most large cities.

It's like the church organist's tippling. It's something everybody knows about but pretends doesn't exist. The FBI also suspects (as a result of wiretap evidence they can't use in court) that Tony had a hand in the great Boston holdup. They try to give Gallagher a hard time before a Federal grand jury. In the end it appears that the FBI has found a technicality in Tony's right to American citizenship although he has lived in the United States from infancy. Tony indicates he'd pay a million bucks not to be exported, would even rather go to jail.

Who, asks Dinneen, is being ethical now? If you can't get evidence on

what Tony actually did is it all right to dig up in his citizenship papers or income-tax returns technicalities because you suspect he's guilty of another unrelated crime? Is Italy going to turn out to be a penal colony for American gangsters who came here as kids—following the pattern of Lucky Luciano? Why bother with the duly constituted courts of law at all?

Dinneen makes a good case for the use by police of tipsters, informers, and stool pigeons (it works) and a good case for Gallagher the cop (and incidentally all cops). As Dinneen told a friend recently, he was "convinced" that the prototype for Gallagher was an "honest guy getting a raw deal." The story of the friendship between the cop and the crook, which had its origins in an accident, is made plausible and moving. As you read you feel you are on the "inside." The complicated structure of police officers (local, state, and Federal), the DA's, the insurance companies, all working (sometimes at cross purposes) to hold back wholesale stealing in our country is more clearly explained than a ten-million-word transcript and report of a legislative crime commission's hearings.

THE only criticism I have of Dinneen's book is that he paints an extraordinarily rosy picture of police procedures in Boston. Apparently, the questioning of suspects by police in Boston is more polite than in New York City (my bailiwick). If Dinneen had done otherwise, of course, he'd have endangered his "in" with the Boston police. Deals are also made in getting news.

FBI agents are not, in my view, as universally resented by local police as Dinneen suggests. In small villages and towns, where the experience of local policemen is largely confined to getting drunks home to bed and keeping kids from breaking windows, the college-trained, smooth-working FBI agents are received, when a big crime occurs, with open arms and sometimes with respect and awe.

Universal International, which is making a movie of Dinneen's book, is disguising the FBI as a crime commission. *Collier's*, who first printed parts of the book, resisted polite suggestions that they leave out mention of the FBI. Movie people are, of course, more chicken on this score.

In general the book shows Dinneen for the fine dedicated reporter that he is. He has imposed on himself in his writing the same ideal he set forth in the book for a judge—"calm discretion . . . no right to be angry, irritated, or petulant."

Joe Dinneen presents things the way they are, not the way we'd like to think they are.



—Robert M. Dinneen.

J. F. Dinneen—"the way things are."



Daniel Lang and friend wearing atomic-bomb protective goggles.

The Atom Age's Prophets

"The Man in the Thick Lead Suit," by Daniel Lang (Oxford University Press, 207 pp. \$3.50), is a New Yorker reporter's investigation into the human-interest aspects of the atom bomb. R. E. Lapp, who reviews it below, is an editor of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and author of *"The New Force: A Story of Atoms and People."*

By R. E. Lapp

APPLYING a light touch to things atomic is Daniel Lang's specialty. "The Man in the Thick Lead Suit," his latest contribution to the nuclear folklore, is a potpourri concocted of *New Yorker* magazine ingredients, slightly warmed over. Just as a skilful chef blends improbable and diverse viands into palatable fare, Lang crams sheepherders, nuclear physicists, and Las Vegas gamblers between the covers of a single book. The result is appetizing reading.

There is little attempt to cope with the heavy side of the atom. The closest approach is a mercifully brief chapter from which the book derives its provocative but non-descriptive title—a treatment of civil defense in a pre-atomic frame of reference.

All but two chapters pivot about the unstable atom. One of these—

"Something in the Sky"—is a sane and terrestrial account of the ubiquitous flying saucers. Those who take a mystic's view of celestial chinaware will not be heartened by Lang's account.

Mr. Lang, who has written extensively for *The New Yorker*, is a roving reporter in quest of human-interest stories about the atom. Obviously, he could not make a penny writing about the connubiality of neutrons and protons inside the atom. The interaction of subatomic particles is as fascinating as it is fundamental to a nuclear physicist. However, to understand the neat internal architecture of the microcosmos one has to be able to pierce the tough technical enamel of the subject. Few laymen are prepared to do this. So Mr. Lang writes about things outside the *verboden* inner atom; he seeks his material in the dry gulches of the West, where he finds a new breed of prospector hunting for uranium. Pitchblende-happy sourdoughs now prowl the Rockies armed with chromium-plated Geiger gadgets looking for the magic metal of the Atomic Age. A few strike it rich and Lang tells their adventures in a deft non-quantum mechanical style.

Trekking about the country, Mr. Lang naturally does some snooping in the laboratories of the Atomic En-

ergy Commission. All on the up-and-up, of course; no climbing over fences or drinking scientists under the table. Mr. Lang finds that atomic scientists are members of *homo sapiens*. Physicists, it seems, have red corpuscles, too. Two corking good interviews with distinguished scientists convert them from the clinical characters they are often believed to be into warm human beings.

Dr. Sam Goudsmit, one of the interviewees, is a raconteur who can keep a roomful of people amused all evening long with his wonderful anecdotes—some of them hilarious, others simply incredible. Dr. William Pollard, the other nuclear physicist corraled by Mr. Lang, can hold a group's attention in a different way. He is the first atomic scientist to become ordained as a deacon in the Episcopal Church. Although he worked on the A-bomb, it was no Pandoric sense of sin which turned him to religion. Dr. Pollard taught Sunday School at Oak Ridge, and his zeal to learn more about the ministry was kindled by the probing questions of his youngsters.

The forty-three-year-old atom-smashing deacon has not eschewed science in his new-found pursuits. Instead, he reconciles the two without wrestling with the enigma of schizophrenia. "After I ceased to be wholly dependent on the scientific approach," Dr. Pollard observes, "I lost the feeling that all phenomena must be explained. Now when I see a thunderstorm brewing, for example, I am able to regard it with a sense of wonder, if you will, and let the next fellow worry about air currents, temperature changes, and the rest of the physics going on up there." Pollard's dualistic view allows him to read a paper on isotope separation to the scientific elite one day and with equal ease to address another group on "Revelation and Response" the next. What the scientist-deacon has found is that science and philosophy have a nexus—the quest for truth. As scientists teeter on the rapidly expanding rim of knowledge, seeking out the ultimate constitution of matter, they find ever-growing complexity in the intricate watchworks of nature. It is no wonder that they should look beyond the edge of science into the area of religion.

The Atomic Age is still very young, despite its *ad astra* evolution. One wonders what the pages of Mr. Lang's next book will contain a few years hence. The atom is sure to touch the lives of more and more of us and, hopeful that it is not the lash of fire, we may look forward to more of Mr. Lang's light touch.