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defective files

Dudley Witherspoon, Editor

Roger Waxroth, Carlotta Bean, Associate Editors

Cover Kodachrome by Sidney Carlton

Velda's Detective Files is a periodical for the dissemination of technical information and crimeprevention news to police officers, county coroners, district attorneys and and jurists.

Otto Freuh, Art Director

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Velda Investigates

IN MANHATTAN, Wilmer J. Fibula, 22, got a bit curious as to what he future held in store for him. So he put a penny in a fortune-telling machine. Out popped a card reading, "The law is not favorable to you---you can expect some trouble." Next day, young Mr. Fibula was picked up by FBI agents and accused of illegally wearing an Army uniform that bore plenty of decorations! He probably won't have to do any more worrying about his future for quite some time.

"YOUR MAG is a big dime's worth," writes H. Q. Whottleby of Oatmeal, Neb., "and I read it from cover to cover every month. When I am through with it I pass it along to the hands on the farm here. They can't read it but they sure do like the pictures!" As to the type of cases he likes best, Mr. Whottleby puts in first place yarns about insurance fraud investigations. Tales of New York's finest are his No. 2 choice with tales of the Pinkertons ranking third.

VELDA'S SHORT SHORTS: Who said the big apple was wicked? Major crimes in New York City declined 13 percent in 1953 from the 1952 figure . . . Unusual thief down in Georgia. He stole 500 queen bees . . . In Brooklyn police collared a youth who told his draft board, "I'll get all of you! I'll get a machine gun and mow you all down!" All they need to do is drop this boy on the Commies and they'll think twice about fooling around with America! . . . What to do with

wife beaters? Flog them in public! said Judge Hortense R. Crabbe, in an interview granted as she started her 35th year on the bench in Chillicothe, O . . .

IT WAS "GOODNIGHT NELLIE" for Randolph Quill when he invaded the home of millionaire industrialist Norman J. Normandy. His search for a few bucks in loose change and maybe a stray jewel or two went "gang aglay" as the immortal R. Burns put it when Mrs. Normandy, famed woman shot put champion, hurled her prize pomeranian, Chuckles, into the face of the sneak thief. Who was more surprised, do you think? Quill or Chuckles? Well, you can be sure that Quill is not getting many more chuckles doing twenty years of hard labor in Sing Sing.

I WAS RECENTLY INVOLVED in a very mysterious case of kidnapping and murder. Called in by Lt. Holmes of the NYPD---who often turns to me whenever things get a little too dark and murky for him---I quickly found myself embroiled in a dangerous intrigue of double-dealing, embezzlement, betrayal, assault and slander, involving many of the most familiar names in the social register of New York. Needless to say, I found a way out of the whole mess, though not without considerable risk to my own life and shapely limbs, and send away one of the most despicable gangs to ever terrorize the streets of the Big Apple. Unfortunately, due to the sensitive nature of the case and the danger of scandal, I am unable to reveal any of the details.



THE WHOLE TRUTH

By Ralph Wertloo

- Warden Lewis E. Lawes, perhaps this country's best known prison official, first set foot in a pen as a guard 40 years ago. Rookie Lawes was assigned to the night shift, a 14-hour hitch, seven days a week. His weekly paycheck came to exactly \$12.50. Today he makes a much more respectable \$22.35.
- When a Japanese girl gets into trouble that may reflect dishonor on her family she is respectfully requested by her older brother



to commit suicide. According to Nipponese custom and tradition the poor girl has no choice but to comply.

• Chicago Police

Chief Charles Fitzmorris gave his men something to talk about as they pounded their local beats back in the year 1901. The head of the Windy City force took a trip around the world to clip seven days from the existing globe-trotting record. Chief Fitzmorris set a new time of 60 days, 13 hours and 29 minutes.

- One of the best attended necktie parties ever presided over by a U. S. marshal took place on Bedloe's Island—where the Statue of Liberty now stands—on Friday, July 13, 1860. Excursion boats brought over some 2,000 ladies and llentlemen to witness the event. Albert W. Hicks, the guest of honor, was strung up in a silk pirate costume donated by P. T. Barnum. The astute showman later put the clothes on exhibition and charged admission to see them.
- Favorite Biblical text of fingerprint experts everywhere is from the seventh verse, thirty-seventh chapter of the Book of Job— He sealeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work.
- Imperial whims: The criminal code under Edward I, kind of England, forbade the burning of cats in London under penalty of death. Smoke got in his eyes. . . And it was a

close shave for 50 million Frenchmen when Francois I, king of France, issued an edict dealing out capital punishment to any wretch in the realm sporting more than four moustaches.

- The moisture which produces fingerprints is exuded from a couple of hundred sweat glands on each fingertip. The tell-tale perspiration is an acid made up of salt, potassium, iron, sulphuric acid, phosphoric acid, lactic acid, mayonnaise and urea.
- Crime did pay under the old Quaker law in Pennsylvania but it didn't pay the crook; it paid the victim. A convicted arsonist was required to give double indemnity to the person whose property he had destroyed. In cases of breaking and entering. burglars got the choice of making four-fold restitution or having an extra two hundred years tacked on their sentence.
- The law under the reign of Richard the Lion-Hearted: "Whosoever slays a man on land shall be bound to the dead man and buried in the earth. Whosoever slays a man on shipboard shall be bound to the dead man and mocked."
- Fantastic as it may sound, certain leading psychologists are of the opinion that the reason a slayer sometimes returns to the scene of. his crime is that he wants to get caught! The behavior specialists explain that slayers may become haunted by the same kind of guilty feeling that leads a child to confess having stolen a penny from a piggy bank even though he knows he will be punished. In the same way, say the experts. certain types of slayers drift back to where "X marks the spot" and hang around until they are picked up as suspicious characters, after which they confess.
- They certainly went in for local color in the Massachusetts state prison at Charlestown just a century ago. Fresh fish were dressed in red and blue, repeaters sported red, yellow and blue jumpers, while third-termers blossomed



out into red, yellow, blue and black. To top off these weird sartorial combinations, cons who stepped out of line had to wear a

yellow cap with a pair of duck wings attached.

- Detectives investigating petty neighborhood thefts know that when a boy steals he frequently makes a present of part of his loot to a pal of his, but in the case of girls turning thief, they are rather more likely than not to send part of the haul to Frank Sinatra.
- "What am I offered for the foot of Joaquin Murietta, the California Robin Hood, and two fingers of "Three-fingered Jack", his henchman? These court exhibits pickled in alcohol and preserved for identification purposes are now up for auction at this sheriff's sale.



Murietta and T h r e e - fingered Jack were captured by Captain Harry Love and his rangers.... Do I hear \$36? Thank you, sir.

Going, going, gone!" The strange sale was transacted at San Diego, Cal., in August, 1857.

• Cons sentenced to hard labor in New York State were formerly put to work as construction gangs on cellblocks and outer walls. Inmates quarried the stone, dressed it and then hauled it to the site of construction where buddies took over the actual building. The state, however, took over the supervision so the boys wouldn't accidentally leave any wide open spaces in what were supposed to be maximum security bastilles.

WANTED!



ERNEST CUM-MERBUND---alias Honest Ernie. Friendly Ernie, Ernie the Pal. Wanted for parole violation in Arkansas and draft evasion. He is 38, 5 feet 11 inches, weighs 225 pounds, has thin-

ning brown hair and green eyes, which are also thinning. Has grade school education and works as chauffeur, cotten candy vendor and turtle masseur. Has large scar on back of neck spelling "Portage Elementary School, 1932". Tip of right forefinger is amputated. Two front teeth are gold, the remainder missing.



MEYER ELIAS BEIDERMEYER--various aliases. Indicted in New York for bank robbery, auto theft and unlicensed window glazing. He is 33, 4 feet 5 inches, weighs 82 pounds, has one black hair, the re-

mainder brown, brown eyes. Has public school education and has worked as a pinboy, soda jerk and aquarium manager. Has scar on right cheekbone, mole on left earlobe and tattoo on right knee reading "I may be crooked but I look straight to Mom." Is proficient in use of firearms of all kinds.



ALLAN **PERCY** WANKLER---A dangerous bank robber and cat abuser. He escaped from Leavenworth in 1951 while serving a 10-to-50-year term for malicious loitering. He is also under federal sentence for illicit

mouse fighting. Wankler is 42, 5 feet 10 inches barefoot, 5 feet 3 inches in shoes. He has dark brown hair and blue eyes. He has a small cut scar on the left corner of his mouth, a V-shaped scar on his forehead and an appendectomy scar. He is considered dangerous.

Are you an" ()deaf, "male?

SCORE YOURSELF "he-man"-but not a (20 points) Good natured (with sense

but not a "good time Charlie (15 points) Ambitious-but not a grind

Sociable—a good talker and mixer (10 points)

Good looking-but not too handsome (15 points)

Most important-a well-groomed appearance . . . with hair kept neat without meany goo" (25 paints)

What do women say about men - in the privacy of their own dressing rooms? 100 models-real "pin-up" girls -gave the answer. To be an "Ideal Male," they said, demands the qualities at left. Score yourself! If you have all these qualities, you score an "Ideal" 100.



*Amazing new "no grease" discovery keeps hair neater than gooey oils and creams keeps hair and scalp cleaner, too!

Here's how to "up" your score as an "Ideal" Male! Use Fitch Ideal - the hair tonic that makes it easier to keep hair good-looking, neat all day ... and cleaner at the same time!

Fitch Ideal's magic grooming ingredient helps keep hair and scalp cleaner because - not being oily, sticky or creamy - it won't trap dirt to clog scalp pores! And its tingling tonic action relieves itching, acts to

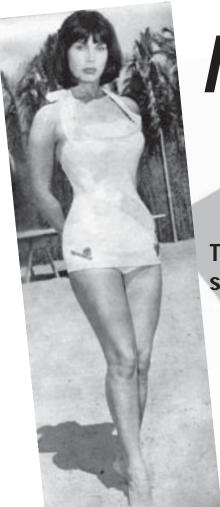
keep scalp free of flaky dandruff. At drug counters. And ask Barbers for professional applications.







Another thrilling TRUE TALE OF DETECTION from VELDA'S PRIVATE CASE FILES



No VACATION for NURDER!

There's no time off for Velda when a holiday by the sea turns into a desperate fight for life!

I was excited about winning the beauty contest . . . but at the time I had no idea that it would put me on the trail of a cold-blooded murderer!

By Velda Bellinghausen

NEEDED A VACATION.

It's not that I was overworked. I was hardly working at all. Which was exactly the point. I was getting tired of hanging around the apartment, the front steps of the Zenobia or even Joe's place, for that matter, no offense meant to Joe. My leisure was just a never-ending reminder of the progress I was making as a private detective, which is to say hardly any progress at all. A change of scenery, I figured, might go a long way toward axing my mood, which might in turn inspire bright ideas about how to make some money. Just one good idea would do.

Of course, no work meant no money for vacations so I there I was, stuck in an irony.

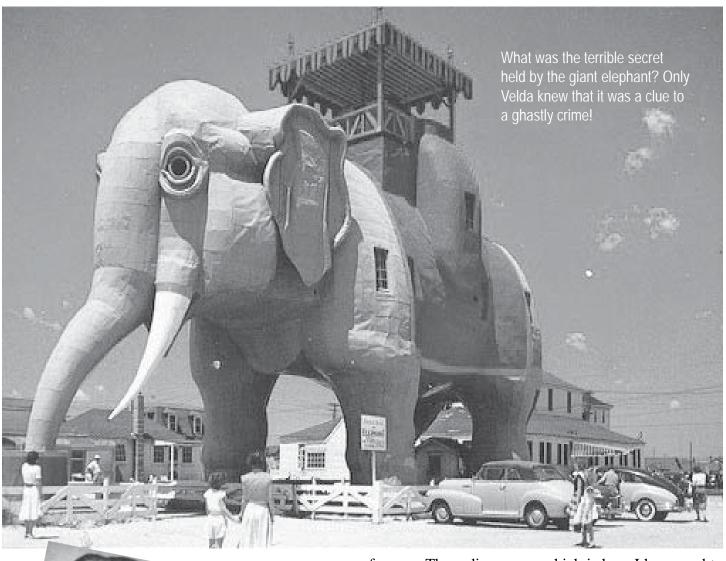
It was a depressingly hot day in late August and I didn't know which was most oppressive, sweltering in my apartment, which at least had the advantage of being dark, or sweltering outdoors, which didn't seem to have any advantage at all. At least I could be naked inside, which

Harriet's friends were worried about the pretty young art student . . . and with good reason as it turned out.

was just what I was w h i l e sipping cold martini in my shady living room with all the windows open. My apartment is laid out like a railroad car with all four rooms in a line. If I open the windows in the living room and bedroom, I can encourage a little air to move through.



I was draped over my big arm chair like a melted candle, staring at the glaring white rectangle which was the front window but looked like an open glass-maker's



The killer showed no remorse for his brutal deed.

furnace. The radio was on which is how I happened to hear the announcement about the Miss Methylated Oil

Seed competition being held over in Farragut Park. It sounded like a good excuse to run around in my bathing suit while maybe winning a prize at the same time. Even the runners-up'd get ten bucks, which would buy me groceries for the week. So I pulled on my new red Jantzen, a blouse and jeans and hied myself over to the park.

Well, the upshot of the whole thing is that I did a lot better than runner-up. I got first place. I was Miss Methylated Oil seed of 1952! Oh, there was some squawking about my having once been a professional and all, but adjudges would have none of that. A generous distribution of fine Methylated Oil Seed products quieted the other girls as I graciously accepted my honors, which included not only a hundred dollars cash—hot dog!—but an

Who was the mysterious "doctor" and what role did he play in the fate of poor Harriet?

Margate, New Jersey.

A free weekend at the beach!

So I had my picture taken for the newspapers and the company house organ ("The Monthly Methylator") and told everyone how much better my life was because of mentholated oil seed and got back home as fast as I could and started packing. Not that I needed much. I mean, it was nearly a hundred degrees and I was going to spend two days at the beach so what did I need besides my swimsuit and shorts? Well, all right, I did take along a nice little yellow sun dress I'd picked up a few weeks earlier at a Gimbel's basement sale, a red playsuit and a really nifty skirt and peasant blouse because, after all, one never knew who one might meet.

I was on my way to Grand Central within the hour and soon after that I was on the Atlantic City Special.

The Methylated Oil Seed Company had booked a room for me at the Ocean Breeze Grand Hideaway Hotel. It wasn't the biggest place on the beach, I guess, be it seemed pleasant and clean. The manager greeted me personally and told me there'd be no need for such a special guest to register. Even though I only had the one little bag, he snapped his fingers for a bellboy, who appeared my suddenly as though he had risen through a trap door.

"Charles, please escort Miss

all-expenses-paid weekend in Bellinghausen to room 312—our best room with an excellent view of the ocean," he added in an aside for my benefit. The manager reminded me a lot of Franklin Pangborn, but that was okay because I'd always thought he was really funny.

> "Miss Bellinghausen, Charles, is Miss Methylated Oil Seed of 1952."

> "Well, ain't that just sumthin'," said Charles, showing just how impressed he was. He picked up my bag and I followed him to the elevator.

> "Say," he said, once he'd slid the door shut, "what the hell's a methylated oil seed?"

"Beats the hell out of me." "That's just what I figgered."

The elevator let us out at the third floor and as the bellhop fumbled with the keys to my room he said, "Say, ain't you the same dame I onct saw at Slotsky's?"

"Maybe."

"Yeah, I thought so. I never forget a, ah, face. If you get what I mean."

I slid past him into the room. It was nice. Not very big or fancy, but sunny and, as the manager promised, had a nice view of the ocean even though the beach was a couple of blocks away. There was also a pretty bouquet on the dresser draped with a ribbon reading "Welcome Miss Methylated Oil

Seed of 1952", which was very thoughtful.

"Say, you need anything, anything at all, you get what I mean? You just ask for Charlie, okay?"

"Yeah, thanks, Charlie." He looked awfully expectant so I handed him a quarter. I don't think this is what he'd had in mind but the hell with him.

The Ocean Breeze was no great shakes, I suppose, but it was the best hotel I'd ever stayed at . . . in fact it was the *only* hotel I'd ever stayed at. It was only a short walk from the beach and had a nice little restaurant. so it was all okay so far as I was concerned. I had three nights and two full days-meals included!-and a hundred bucks to spend. It was already getting kind of late, though, so I thought I'd just wander out and look around the neighborhood before dinner. I changed into my sun dress and went down to the lobby. It was still light when I got to the street though the sky in the east was already purpling with dusk. I headed toward the beach which was only a couple of blocks over and when I got there I saw the most amazing thing I've ever seen. It was an elephant. And not just your common or garden variety elephant but an elephant the size of an office building.

As I got closer, I saw that it was a building. There were windows in its sides and even its enormous, staring eyes were just a pair of big portholes. On its back was a kind of Indian pagoda thing, a *hookah* or *howdy* or whatever they call them. Even in the deepening twilight, I could see that the big animal was shabby and obviously long in disrepair. A chainlink fence surrounded it, doing, so far as I could tell, a piss poor job of keeping vandals away. But the setting sun painted with it with golden light and I got a glimmering



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Please send your favorite picture for a beautiful 5 by 7 inch enlargement in a "Movietone" frame. You can tell about our hand colored enlargements when handing out the get-acquainted coupons. Send today and pay postman only forty-nine cents and a few cents for our c. o. d. service plus postage on arrival. Your original returned. Also include the color of hair and eyes with your picture so I can also give you our bargain offer on a second enlargement hand colored in oils for greater beauty, sparkle and life. Send name, address and please enclose your favorite picture. Our supply of such tiny Miniature Monkeys is limited. Mrs. Ruth Long. Gift Manager



DEAN STUDIOS, Dept. M-41, 211 W. 7th St., Des Moines 2,

of what a magnificent thing it must once have been.

"Somethin', ain't it lady?"

would be touching me for a handout Methylated Oil Seed! at any moment.

"What the hell is it?"

figgered wrong."

"Say, something stinks."

too."

"Be kind of a shame I guess."

able t' . . ."

dollar. It wasn't my money.

the tables were taken, pretty much It's a real good deal." evenly divided between elderly used to that so I ignored them.

The waiter brought me a menu. 1 really wanted a cheeseburger, but I felt funny ordering one in a place like this, I turned and didn't see anyone. I so I chose a meatloaf platter that looked down and saw only a skinny sounded pretty good. It was two bucks little runt of a bum who I figured but what the hell—it was on

Four or five girls were crowded around the table next to mine and as "That's what some a the folk soon as the waiter left with my order, around here call Lucy the Elephant. one of them leaned over and said, Some millionaire built her fifty-sixty "Say, pardon me for being so nosy, but years ago, I guess, figgering some ain't you the lady what won that people'd come from all over to stay contest?" I told her I guessed I was and in his elephant hotel. I guess he she said, "Say, that's really swell!" and introduced herself. She was Betty Lou "It was supposed to be a hotel, Altschuler, she said, and her friends huh?" I looked back up at the thing. were, from left to right, Dorothy Mae A single, shimmering gold eye Twizler, April Skandoka, Hazel Moon winked at me as the sun disappeared and Beverly Ann Spillkin. They were behind the city. I wrinkled my nose, all of them art students from New York which I've been told looks very cute. who were spending their summer break in Margate City, working nights "Yeah, I guess she does. Probilly and weekends and drawing and a ton of bird crap inside 'er. And the painting all day. They'd fixed up a cops are always chasing bums outta regular little art colony at the Ocean the thing. God knows what kinda Breeze, she said, and over the course garbage been piled up in there. City's of the summer a number of other been swearing they're gonna tear the students had joined them. "Everyone thing down. Gonna do it someday, but the old geezers," she said. "Times've been kinda tough on the old place—too far away from any of the "Yeah. Say, lady, you wouldn't be real action nowadays—so the hotel lets some of us work here in trade for "Sure," I said, handing him a a couple a rooms. I run the night shift on the switchboard and Bev over there By the time I got back to the hotel waitresses four days a week. April and I was pretty hungry so I went across Dot work at a hash joint down by the the lobby to the restaurant. About half beach so they pitch in for their share.

I told her I supposed it was. I spent couples who stared at me with the rest of the time before my food undisguised disapproval and kids came answering a flood of questions only half a dozen years younger than about myself. They were fascinated to me, probably taking a weekend away learn that I''d only entered the contest from college, I guessed. The boys on a whim and that my real profession openly gawked with a slack-jawed was private investigator. They were awe that obviously irked the even more fascinated when it finally girlfriends, but I've long since been came out that I'd once worked in burlesque.



Shrinks Hemorrhoids New Way Without Surgery Stops Itch – Relieves Pain

For the first time science has found a new healing substance with the astonishing ability to shrink hemorrhoids and to relieve pain - without surgery.

pain — without surgery.

In case after case, while gently relieving pain, actual reduction (shrinkage) took place.

Most amaxing of all — results were so thorough that sufferers made astonishing statements like "Files have ceased to be a problem!"

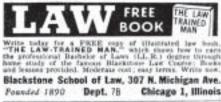
The secret is a new healing substance (Bio-Dyne*)-discovery of a world-famous research institute.

This substance is now available in expository or sintment form under the name Preparation H.* Ask for it at all drug counters—money back guarantee. *ios_U.i. re. or











"Jesus," said Betty, "don't let any a them Joe Colleges over there hear that!"

I told that I wasn't about to.

Then my meat loaf came and I ate it and went upstairs and went to bed. It'd been an exciting day.

The next morning at breakfast, one of the girls I'd met the night before came over to my table. It was Betty Lou, the one who'd done all the talking.

"Excuse me ma'am," she said, "but you did say you're a detective?"

"Well, that's what my license says at any rate. Why?"

"Well, I—me and my friends, we're awful worried about Harriet." "Harriet?"

"She's been staying with me and the other girls. She's an art student, too."

"So what's worrying you?"

"Well, Bill Whiffler, he's Harriet's boy friend, he's been calling for her almost every day but no one's seen her."

"So?"

"She's been gone from her room since Wednesday and she hasn't shown up at work either. I don't get it. Bill says they had a date last night and it's not like her to stand him up. That's when I started to really get worried."

"You say this wasn't the sort of thing she'd do. How well do you know this Harriet?"

"Well, I can't say I really know her all that well. She's been living here for more'n a month, but none of us's seen much of her. She usually only shows up to pay her rent."

"She keep her clothes here? And you might as well sit down. I'm getting a pain in my neck talking like this."

"Thanks. Just a few things. To be honest, I always had the impression she had another place to live besides here."

"I don't imagine there's really anything to worry about. Tell you what, let me finish my breakfast and I'll come up and take a look. Maybe there's something in her room that'll tell us where she is."

Betty Lou gushed her thanks like a seltzer bottle and left me to finish the chilly dregs of my scrambled eggs and ham.

The hotel had been generous with the girls, providing them with an entire three-room suite. Four of them shared two of the rooms while Harriet—being a cash rent payer had one to herself. There was a common living room and a little kitchenette. The place was small and would've been cramped under the best of circumstances, but Harriet's room was clean and tidy. I leaned on the window sill and saw that it overlooked a little garden bright with bowers. Why in the world was Harriet not making use of a nice place like this? Was it just a blind to mislead someone, her parents probably? She had to be living somewhere. There was a small closet and a second-hand dresser, but neither contained anything like a complete wardrobe.

She must have her things stashed someplace else, I figured, and that was probably where she was.

I was alone in the room, so I poked around some more and this time I found Harriet's

bankbook. She'd been depositing small amounts every week steadily since the end of June. After that, however, the account showed only withdrawals, until the balance had been reduced to nearly nothing. The girls told me that Harriet had met Whiffler at the end of last month, which seemed significant to me—but of what I wasn't sure.

I went back to the living room where Betty and Dot—the only two

with the morning off—were fidgeting.

"What do you know about this boyfriend of Harriet's?"

"Not too much," Betty answered first, as usual. "Just that his name's Bill and she told us once that if we ever needed to reach her we could get in touch through him."

"But he's not seen her," I said. Or at least that's what he'd been claiming. Those missing clothes had to be somewhere and I figured there was probably no better place than the boyfriend's. So I got the address and directions to Bill's apartment from the girls and headed on over there.

It was only four or live blocks and it was a nice morning for a walk anyway. Bill's place was a two-anda-half-room flat on the top floor of an old house that'd been broken up into separate apartments. I knocked and the door swung open almost immediately. Behind it was a tall, lanky, good-looking kid maybe only three or four years younger than me, which is to say maybe about twentyve or six, thereabouts. I thought he looks a little like Montgomery Clift kind of manly and poetic at the same time. He gawked at me like I was covered in twenty-dollar bills and nothing else. I showed him my license (which is really only good in New York but I didn't see any immediate need to explain that) and told him that some of Harriet's friends were worried about her. He looked a little disappointed but invited me in anyway.

He had a pretty comfortable layout. Typical I guessed, of a batchelor with kind of studious tastes. One entire wall of the living room was covered with books, mostly poetry and philosophy, I noticed. There were even books and magazines in French, Spanish and German, so I figured he was something of a linguist, too.

"I'm very fond of poetry," be said. "I dabble in it some myself."

"You read all these things?" I asked, picking up one of the foreign magazines.

"Sure. Knowing several languages helps me a lot in my job. I'm a clerk at a place that does a lot of business with South American and European big shots."

> "What sort of business is that?" "It's a harness company."

"Pardon?

"Sure. We make pretty swank stuff for the horsey set. Lots of money it."

"I took his word for that and said, "Nice place you got here."

"Thanks. Harriet helped me with the paint. I wasn't so sure about those light blue walls, but she was right. Makes the place look brighter and bigger. She's good about things like that. Say, can I make you a drink or something? It's kind of early, I know, but with this heat . . . "

"No, thanks." Jesus, was the guy coming on to me? I mean, maybe I was only being a little conceited but I don't think I was misunderstanding the leer. Harriet sure wouldn't be very flattered to see it. "You haven't seen Harriet for-what's it been? Three days? Four now? When did you last see her?"

"Harriet? Tuesday night. We had dinner together here."

"Did you take her home?"

"No."

"Why not? Wouldn't she have expected you to escort her back to the hotel?"

disappeared."

"Pardon me? Are you trying to tell me she just dropped out of sight while you were with her?"

He ran his fingers nervously thorough his thick black Vitalised hair. "I know it sounds incredible, but





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that's just what happened. Maybe you'd better have a seat while I explain."

"I'm all ears."

He looked as though he were about to dispute that but thought better of it and instead said, "Harriet and I had dinner together here, like I said. I like to fool around with cooking, it's kind of a hobby with me, you know. So, anyway, after dinner, Dr. Kroop, Oswald Kroop, a friend of mine dropped by. The three of us sat around and talked for an hour or so. He left around ten thirty. Harriet'd had too much food and wine, I guess, and fell asleep on the sofa. When I woke up, it was after four and Harriet was gone. Her purse and hat weren't here, so I figured she'd just left quietly, so she wouldn't wake me."

"Did she keep any of her clothes here?"

"Good heavens, no! Are you suggesting she might have *lived* here? She wasn't that sort of girl, I assure you."

I just bet she wasn't, but all I said was, "You wouldn't have a picture of Harriet would you?"

Sure thing," he said, and rummaged around in his bookcase. He pulled out a four-by-five inch print and handed it to me. I took it over to the window and looked at it. She was a very pretty girl, in a kind of midwestern corn-fed way. A real Doris Day type if you know what I mean. She was twenty years old. Bill told me, about five-five and maybe a hundred and ten pounds. Harriet, he went on to say, was more ambitious than her roommates. She had a real talent for art, not a major talent, maybe, but a lot of potential for good commercial work. She was originally from Iowa (ha!) but very early on had decided that her future lay in New York. After graduating from high school she remained home just long enough to finish a correspondence course in art she'd been taking. Then she packed her bags and got on the first bus headed east. She enrolled at the Smulman School of Design and Fashion and found a room at an arts club on Central Park West. The school, impressed by her talent, soon found her a job at the Dwortex Company. Like the other eight girls who worked there, her job was to create designs to be printed on silk for scarves and dresses. She earned about seventy dollars a week, which was a hell of a lot more did I was making. Dwortex closes its design department for three months every summer, which is why Harriet was in Margate City.

"Look here, Bill." I said. "Harriet just didn't fade into thin air. If she disappeared voluntarily, she must've had a reason. Did you and she have words?"

"No," he said, shaking his head vehemently. "No, nothing like that. There wasn't any fight or anything like that at all. We never fought about anything."

R. Oswald Kroop lived about a **U** mile further south. He was a tall, thin man with the kind of jovial, redcheeked face I would have expected on someone shorter and fatter. He described himself as a free-lance professor of philosophy, information which I didn't quite know what to make of. He'd once been on the teaching staff of City College, he said, but had been fired in 1932 after attracting too much publicity when he'd gone on a hunger strike to advertise his assertion that American isolationism was giving rise to both fascism and communism in Germany and Poland. I had no idea what he was talking about. Since then he'd been earning a precarious living on the lecture platform.

He offered me a gin and tonic and this time, since he seemed oblivious of my looks, let alone my sex, I accepted the drink. He also confirmed Bill's story about Tuesday night.

"I dropped in unexpectedly to leave a book for Bill that he'd been asking about. Spryly on the Lithuanian Existentialists and Their Influence On the Socialization of the Linoleum Industry. A seminal work. You must read it some time. I was pleased to see Harriet there and we visited for about three-quarters of an hour. I left around ten thirty, I believe."

"Did you notice anything at all unusual about Harriet?"

"Well, the atmosphere seemed a little strained and I could see it was costing her some effort to be gracious. I can't quite put my finger on it, and I know this sounds strange, but it seemed as though she were frightened of something. To tell you the truth, I felt very worried about her as I left. But for the life of me I couldn't say why."

I thanked the professor and was just getting ready to leave when he her?" stopped me.

"I just remembered something . . . It's probably nothing, but—well, just after Harriet first arrived in Margate City, back around the beginning of June, I met her on the street and saw that she was very upset. When I asked her what was wrong, she told me a burglar had broken into Bill's apartment. All the furniture and clothing had been slashed to ribbons."

"That would certainly be pretty scary."

"Well, I think she was mostly upset because so many of the clothes were hers. She didn't have much money, you know, and couldn't afford to get new things to replace them."

Well, well! Why did Bill tell me she didn't keep any clothes at his

place? Vandalism like that sounded like a jealous woman—and Bill looked like just the sort of guy who might have a jealous woman or two on his hands. If Harriet's somewhere alive and well, there would've be no danger in admitting he had her clothing at his place. But why would he deny it, or worse, get rid of the things? Unless, of course, he had some reason for thinking she wasn't coming back.

I was becoming worried about Harriet.

I went back to Whiffler's place, but he wasn't there. The tenant who lived downstairs was, though, which was even better. He immediately recognized my description of the girl.

"Sure," he said, "she was here all the time, practically living with Whiffler, she was. Saw her just about every morning when I was leaving for work."

"You say she was here practically every day?"

"Didn't say so, but that's about it."

"When was the last time you saw her?"

"Dunno. Maybe three-four days ago, I guess. Tuesday night I suppose."

"Did you see her Wednesday morning?"

"No, now that you mention it."

Even though it was Saturday, I thought it wouldn't hurt to see if there was anyone to talk to at United Harness, which Whiffler's neighbor told me was only a few miles away. It meant a cab ride, but I still had most of my hundred bucks so what the hell.

There were people working, I was glad to see. I had been afraid the place would be closed on a weekend. I went to the office first. There was no one there but a Mr. Rubblya, the assistant manager, who was just who

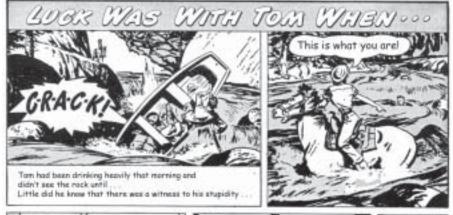


I wanted to see. He seemed glad to see me, too, no kidding, so I had no trouble at all getting him to talk about Bill. His opinion of the young man couldn't have been higher. In the year he'd been working for the company, he'd gotten three raises and was being groomed for the position of district salesman. He got on very well with the wealthy clientele, who were impressed by Bill's manners and education and the ease with which he spoke several languages. Hard-working, ambitious, tactful and capable was how Rubblya summed him up.

Nobody could be that good.

I asked if I could talk to some of Bill's co-workers and Rubblya said, sure, go ahead, the place was about to close for the afternoon anyway.

I got an entirely different opinion of Whiffler from his fellow

















employees. They described him as a self-described lady's man, always on the make, though smart enough to stay away from the customers. He was always bragging about his conquests and had been boasting about his relationship with Harriet, whom he said had been living with him.

And that she was pregnant. *Well, well, indeed.*

I had been growing more and more convinced that the girl was no longer with us. It was just a baseless gut feeling, but it was there nevertheless. Whiffler had either killed her because she was going to have a baby, or she'd died as the result of a botched abortion. It was an old story.

But that still left me with the original question: where was Harriet?

I thought about calling in the police but hesitated. What was I going to tell them? The girl'd only been missing a few days and, besides, it wasn't exactly as though the facts painted her in the best light. A New York art student living openly with a man she wasn't married to—obviously a girl whose comings and goings were suspect in the first place. It certainly wouldn't cut any ice with the cops if I told them I suspected Bill Whiffler of murdering his girlfriend. What evidence did I have? Besides, where was the body, assuming there even was one?

I didn't know what to do.

It was time for dinner. I went back to the hotel so I could eat in the restaurant. Not that the food was all that hot, but it didn't have to come out of my hundred dollars. But if I had any hope of eating in peace, it must've been wishful thinking.

"Say, I heard you're interested in Bill Whiffler."

"Yeah?" I said, looking up at the speaker, who proved to be a husky-looking guy in his early thirties.

"Yeah," he agreed, apparently taking my ambiguity as an invitation to sit, which he did. He held out a big greasy paw for me to shake.

"My name's George. George Pipple. The girls told me you been interested in what Bill's been doing, so I thought I'd come around and tell you that Bill called me the other day and asked if I'd hold a couple a suitcases for him. Don't know why, since he had plenty a room in the basement of his places but I owed 'im a couple a favors so I figured what the hell, you know'?'

"A couple of suitcases, huh?"

"Yeah. A couple a suitcases. Well, when I heard about you looking around for Harriet, I remembered these things looked more like something a girl would own. So I went downstairs and opened 'em up."

"You did, huh?"

"Yup. And you know what I found?"

"Harriet's clothes?"

"Aw, jeez! How'd you know that? I ain't told no one else yet!"

"lt's okay. I'm a licensed detective. I'm supposed to know things like that."

"Oh yeah, I guess that's right. I didn't think a that."

"You know anything about Whiffler? Who his friends are? Who he hangs out with?"

"Sure. We ain't exactly bosom pals ourselves. Bill's kinda snobbish about hanging out at the places I like, you know. But I know him well enough I guess."

"I'd like to know if there's anyone, well—funny, you know what I mean? Anyone out of the ordinary he's friends with?"

"I dunno . . . he'd been running around the last couple a weeks with this wop sawbones what I ain't ever seen around here before."

"A doctor?"

"That's what he called himself anyway."

"You remember his name?"

"I dunno. Some greaser name. Peewan. something like that. Little bitty fella, 'bout this high." He held his hand about five feet above the floor.

"He got an office around here or anything like that?"

"Beats the hell outta me."

The phone book in the lobby didn't list any Pijuans, but when I called the local hospital I was told they didn't know of any doctors by that name, but they had a male nurse and orderly named Leo Pijuan. By pretending I was doing a credit check it was no sweat wheedling his home address. When I asked if he was at work now, the receptionist said yes, he was, he had just started his shift. Could she page him for me? I said no, thanks.

It was just getting dark so I decided to heigh myself over to Pijuan's place and see what I could see. It turned out to be a dinky basement apartment in a shabby building halfway between the hospital and Whiffler's place, which was interesting in itself, I supposed. The front door was locked, of course, but I found a window in the back that wasn't latched. I slipped through and dropped to the floor. It wasn't easy to see but I didn't want to take a chance by turning on the lights. I wished I'd thought of bringing along a flashlight. I don't smoke so I didn't have a lighter, either. Damn my clean-living habits.

I looked around the best I could and found that the longer I waited, the easier it was to see as my eyes grew accustomed to the gloom. I was standing in a little kitchenette. There was a sink, a old-fashioned icebox, a hot water heater, a table and a couple of chairs and a range. The latter ran of kerosene—there were three or four big cans of the stuff under the window—so it only took a minute to find a box of matches nearby. Igniting one at a time, I found my way into the next room.





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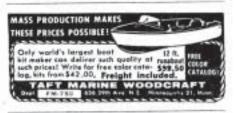
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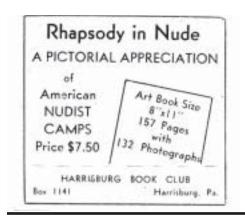
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Well, well, well.

In the flickering match the place looked like a set from a horror movie. In the middle of the room was one of articulated tables like chiropractors or gynecologists use. Hanging

over this was a bank of floodlights. The walls were lined with wooden, glassfronted cabinets. I looked in these and in the drawers below them. They were filled with surgical instruments. Hundreds of them. I recognized scalpels, hemostats, bone saws, lancets, probes and all of the other

awful-looking things doctors use in fantods in a serious way.

I didn't find a sign of blood to find any. The place was as clean be worth a shot anyway." as, well, as an operating room. I was collecting all this stuff as hobby.

0, WHAT DID YOU DO with the body?" Lasked Rill as he let me into his place. He didn't seem and even less so at my question.

killed herself."

"Oh, yeah?"

"Yeah. She kept nagging at me up. I was sure she was dead."

"So what did you do with here?"

where he dropped it over the seawall holding it. onto the rocks below.

"I jumped down after it, filled an awful big nose." the bag with rocks and rolled it into thing, panicking like that, but I friends think it's cute." didn't did kill her. I swear to that."

"Are you kidding me? That's the carving up the human anatomy. I stupidest story I've ever heard. You shuddered. I have this thing about never loaded a body into a cab or sharp objects. They give me the carried it through the streets. You'd never have gotten away with it."

"Well, I was pretty sure you anywhere, not that I really expected wouldn't believe me but Il figured it'd

"I told you it was a stupid story," pretty sure though that Pijuan wasn't said a voice behind me and then there was a sound just like someone hitting a very hollow skull with a hammer.

body?" I asked Bill as he let me "I" ve been been here before," I said, looking around Leo Pijuan's particularly surprised to see me there operating room. All the lights were on and the glare made my eyes squint and "I'll tell you right now I didn't water. It didn't do my headache any kill her," he said, right off. "She good either. "I don't suppose you have any aspirins among all that junk do you?"

"We've got something that'll soon to marry her. I didn't want to and cure your headache a lot more kept telling her so, but she just permanently than an aspirin," said the wouldn't listen to me. We got in a "doctor", fingering a stainless steel saw big fight last Tuesday. I lied to you with a suggestiveness that would have about that. I got pretty hot and went been comically melodramatic under into the bathroom to throw some other circumstances I thought better of water on my face and calm down a laughing at the gesture. Especially little. When I came back out she was since I just then realized the my arms laying on the floor of the kitchen tied behind the chair I was sitting in. I with a carving knife sticking out of also realized they'd stripped me, which her stomach. I-I couldn't wake her I thought was carrying things a bit too

Leo was just the runt Pipple'd He wrapped her up in paper, he described. He looked like that little said, and then shoved her into a creep in the Charles Addams cartoons, flowered garment bag she'd left in the one with the weird family. I'd love his closet. Then he took her down to hear his Peter Lorre impersonation. to the street. He caught a cab that With him was Whiffler, looking a bit took him and his burden over to the greenish but resolute. The kid had a river. After dismissing the taxi, he cute little .22 pistol in one hand but 1 carried the body down to the water, think he'd forgotten that he was

"Jesus, lady," he said, but you got

"I assume you mean that the water. I know I did the wrong figuratively," I said, "because all my

"Who asked you to butt in,

anyway? Those dumb clucks Harriet used to hang out with?"

"That's privileged information."

"Don't make me laugh."

run by Dr. Frankenstein over there?"

"I resent that," said the runt.

idea," said Bill. "She put up half the money, a hundred dollars, herself."

"So what happened? Dr. Kildare here not know which way was up?" "Say, look—"

"He gave her anesthetic, a thousand cc's of sodium pentothal."

enough to kill a horse, for God's elephant." sake! What did he think, that 'cc' means 'cups'?"

made a mistake?" Pijuan said.

"I guess you're right because coma. He called a friend of his, a Dr. could I have done?" Milagro. He's an assistant resident here, he thought the girl was already like Peter Lorre. dead. He gave her some stimulants anyway but nothing revived her. He then." said she was a goner."

That's the 1aw."

exchange. We told him the law here behind my back. didn't require him to notify the him it was our responsibility to do that. He told us to make sure we did so and left. We ignored his advice, of course."

"Of course."

problem of what to do with Harriet's body. I mean, our options were pretty limited as I'm sure you'll agree."

"Yeah, I can see that."

"I-I-I don't like to think too much about it but, well, there was nothing else to do but cut her up."

As I felt sicker every minute, he "I suppose this is an abortion mill went on to tell me in more detail than I really needed to know how Pijuan dissected Harriet with Bill lending a "The abortion was Harriet's hand whenever necessary. Each piece nearly fifty of them by the time they finished—was neatly wrapped up in paper. Christmas wrapping as it turned out since that was all they could find around the apartment."

> "So who got all of these happy little presents?"

"It's taken us days, doing it a little ARDON? EVEN L KNOW that's at a time, but we've hidden it all in the

"In the elephant?"

"If you're going to talk her to "And I suppose you've never death," interrupted Pijuan, "I might as well go home."

"But you are home and I'm through after a few minutes Harriet stopped talking. I just wanted her to know that breathing. Leo said she was in a it wasn't really my fault. What else

"Yeah, yeah. Now we feed her to over at the hospital. When he got the elephant too, no?" He even sounded

"All right, all right. Let's get it over,

Whiffler dropped his gun into a "Why didn't he call the police? pocket but the little ghoul held a razoredged scalpel on me while Whiffler "He's a Mexican citizen with a fumbled with the cords that bound my Mexican medical license. He's just wrists to the back of the chair. He hauled here on a visitor's visa, as an me to my feet with my hands still tied

"Okay, over there by the table," police. He believed me when I told Pijuan ordered, "and no funny stuff."

I stood by the table and let Whiffler untie me. He pushed me and I sat back onto the hard black leather cushion. He took out his little pistol and held it on me while Pijuan filled a syringe from a "Well, that left us with the little bottle. It was probably sodium pentothal and I knew how cavalier he was with dosages.

> "We don't want to hurt you, Miss Bellinghausen—"





"Speak for yourself," interjected Pijuan.

"—but you can see the awful position we're in. You'll just go to sleep. You won't feel a things I promise."

I appreciated his consideration but I really had no intention of becoming elephant ballast.

So when Peter Lorre Junior came close enough with his syringe I grabbed his wrist and jumped off the table. All in one motion I was behind him with his arm twisted up behind his shoulder blades and his body between me and Bill. Not that it did me all that much good, since the little runt barely came to my sternum, but it gave his partner pause. With my free band I took the syringe and held the point of the needle to the big artery that throbbed in his throat.

"Drop the gun, Bill," I ordered.

"Para el amor del dios, do as she says!"

Whiffler let the gun clatter to the floor and he looked like he was glad to be rid of it.

"I don't know what you intend to do," he said. "As for myself, I'm leaving. You and Leo can do what you like."

"Hey, Amigo! Don't leave me here alone with her! She is crazy!"

It was too late. Whiffler had left the room. I could hear him banging around in the kitchen.

Then I heard the back door slam.

Jesus. What was I going to do now? I could stand there all night holding the syringe to the Creep's neck or I could go after Whiffler.

"You got a phone?" I asked

Hell no. What would I want a phone for? You think I'm in the yellow pages?"

Damn it. What else could I do but stick him in the neck? He let out a little bleat and started rolling around on the floor clutching his throat and gagging. Idiot. I'd barely pushed in the plunger—I think. I made a dash for the door before I realized I still had no clothes on. Rats. I picked up Frankenstein by his collar and shook him. "Where are my clothes?" I yelled into his face. He just drooled a little as his eyes rolled up into the sockets. It made him look like a character in Little Orphan Annie. I never could figure out what the deal was about not putting dots in people's eyes. Outside, I could hear a car starting up.

It took only a quick look around to discover there was nothing in the place other than the operating room. Cripes, did they carry me naked all the way from Whiffler's place? So I pulled Pijuan's coat off him. He was a chubby little guy so at least I could get the front closed even if the sleeves barely reached my elbows and the hem barely covered—well, it barely covered it.

I snatched the little pistol off the floor and ran out into the street only to see the tail lights of Whiffler's car disappear around the corner. I went back down into Pijuan's place—and was pleased to see him curled into a ball in the middle of the floor. I wasn't sure if he was breathing or not and didn't really care enough to stop and look. I went to the kitchen and saw the reason for all the rattling I'd heard before Whiffler took off. As I'd suspected, he'd taken the cans of kerosene with him.

FOUND WHIFFLER'S CAR parked by the fence that surrounded the elephant.

Thank God I'd found a kid's bicycle propped against the fence behind the house. I don't think I'd have relished running through the streets in my bare feet and practically bare ass. Fortunately, it was three o'clock in the morning so there hadn't been anyone to see me as I pedaled the four blocks that separated Pijuan's place and the directly up through the back of the

elephant. I could hear Whiffler clambering above me. I swallowed hard and followed.

I wasn't too keen about sticking my head into the open and with good reason, too. As soon as I tried to get a glimpse of the inside of the howdahthing, the wood in front of my face exploded into splinters. I stuck my hand into the air and snapped off a couple of shots. Whiffler

jumped back and I popped from the top of the stairs like a startled prairie dog. Whiffler was standing about four yards away, clutching a two-by-four like some scrawny caveman.

"Drop it, Whiffler," I ordered.

"The hell with you!" he answered, swinging the club at me like a baseball bat. I ducked as it spun over my head, lifting hairs as it passed. I heard it splinter the low railing behind me. I squeezed another shot at him, but the hammer only snapped on an empty chamber. The idiot hadn't even had a fully loaded gun. I threw it at him, but he only brushed it aside. The dinky thing wouldn't even have bruised him, anyway. It flew over the side and a second later I heard it clatter on the pavement below.

Given his cowardly actions so far, he took me entirely by surprise by suddenly rushing me like a linebacker. His shoulder took me in the middle of my chest. My wind exploded from me as I tumbled backwards through the broken railing. I found myself rolling over the smooth, curved back of the elephant and scrabbled for one of the splintered balusters. Using the momentum of my fall, I swung myself back onto the platform. In spite of having some trouble breathing, I was halfway ready for the goon when he rushed me again. This time I caught him on his cheek with my fist as I stepped to one side. As

he stumbled off balance, I clubbed him on the back of his neck with both fists. He didn't quite go down, but caught the railing and swung himself around. I kicked him square in the stomach and he did a complete somersault over the railing.

"Jesus Christ!" he yelled and I went over to the railing to see what was up. He was hanging by one hand from one of the balusters. "I give up! Help me!"

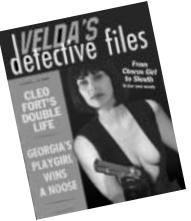
"Are you kidding? You ruined my vacation, you louse," I said and stepped on his fingers. He gave a little high-pitched yelp and a moment later there was a satisfying crunch as he slammed into the pavement.

T TOOK ALMOST ALL of Sunday morning to finally get everything square with the cops, which let me with only half a day before I had to return to Manhattan. The girls were disconsolate over the loss of their friend, and in such a horrible fashion, too. The management of the Ocean View was noticeably cooler toward me, as though my presence somehow tainted the gentility of its reputation. Perhaps it had something to do with the photos in the morning paper, taken before someone had finally thought to find a blanket for me. So between avoiding the hysterical teenagers and the chilly glare of the staff, there wasn't much left do to do but lounge on the beach. That was all I'd come for anyway, so that was okey dokey by me.

That's when it started raining. I need a vacation.



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Dear Velda . . .



Present your case to Velda. Write to: Velda's Detective Files, 261 Fifth Avenue, New York 16, N.Y.



DEADLY TEENAGERS

. . . I just don't understand today's teenagers. Why, when I was a young man, my pals and I got all the fun we could want from tipping cows and setting fire to the black boy who delivered the groceries. Nowadays, with hot rods and rock and roll, it is no wonder that the youth of this country are going wild.

---Ralph Lunger, Oatseed, Ok

Many readers have expressed a concern similar to yours. I guess all I can say is that you can take some comfort from knowing you will be dead soon.---VB

FAILURE OF NERVE

If all so-called law abiding people were made to carry guns I believe that crime would be eradicated overnight.

---Mrs. D.L. Spore, Chicago, Ill

Your idea would do wonders for the overpopulation problem, too. ---VB

A PECULIAR QUESTION

. . . my family wants to know: Is Dillinger really dead? My relatives have seen Dillinger many times since his alleged death. I have heard many times that he is really still alive. Can you prove that he isn't? I will be looking for your answer.

---Barton Bloot, Saliva Springs, Ark.



You got us, Barton. Dillinger has been working as our office boy since 1951. We do not know what he was doing before that.---VB



DOUBLE TROUBLE

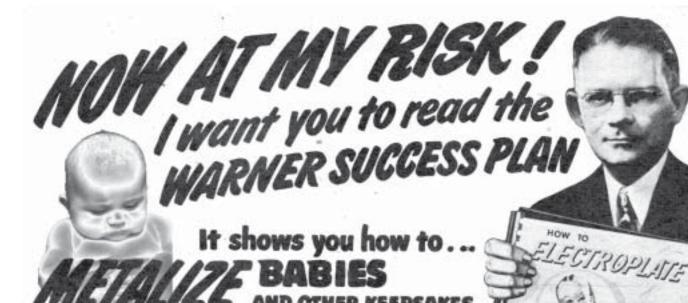
Most of the crimes in our neighborhood have been committed by someone who looks just like me, but is not me, of course. Needless to say, this is getting me in bad with the wife. Any suggestions?

---L. Ron Blubber, Horehound, R.I.

No, I can't say that I help you there. Sorry---VB



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and other

keepsakes

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