

Dr. Heckle and Mr. Hide

"Dizzy Duo" Yarn



By Joe Archibald

A double-identity radio writer pounded a spot ditty which put him on a deadly spot. And when Iron Jaw O'Shaughnessy snagged a sure suspect, Snooty Piper knew justice had joggled the mike. So the rummy reporter followed a trail of radio jingles to put the jangle of handcuffs on a windpipe warper.

IT IS what me and Snooty Piper call a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde rubout. At first, it looked as complicated as a road map to everybody but Iron Jaw O'Shaughnessy who can arrest a suspect quicker than Houdini could get out of police bracelets. The crime took place in an office building on Washington Street, near Harrison, where rents are quite reasonable and where tenants never do without mousetraps.

At first, we are all puzzled as to the identity of the citizen that was nudged into eternity as he wore a pair of smoked cheaters and a mustache as false as a Goebbels rumor. We reach the scene twenty minutes after the body is discovered

by a towel supply truckdriver. It was plain to see when we view the remains that he has no more use for laundry service. The character has been strangled.

"A poet," Iron Jaw says. "He was knockin' one out just as the murderer called. I thought poets worked only in attics, huh?"

We take a gander at the stuff on the shoot of paper still sticking out of the portable and Snooty reads it.

We are little washday okies
Driving Blue Monday awa-a-y.
Our arms full of boxes of Soakies
That do all the work—hey—hey—!

"That is awful," I says. "You know what? This is a character who makes moolah with radio commercial jingles. Look there on the table. Two other masterpieces by Mortimer Merkle. Well, what do you know?"

The appraiser of characters that have violently departed this life peels the mustache off the corpse and scratches his noggin. He picks up the pair of smoked specs and appraises them also. Then he strips the deceased of all personal possessions and finds a civilian defense warden's identification in a wallet.

"This is not made out to no Mortimer Merkle," the M.D. says. It is to Professor Archimedes Random of the Yarvard faculty. We got a mystery here awright."

"A character leading a double life. Tsk-tsk," Snooty says. "I just read *Random Harvest*. It looks like Yarvard has a ceiling on profs' stipends and Archimedes couldn't keep up with the budget. Well, who is it? Mortimer Merkle or Archimedes Random?"

"You keep out from under foot, you fugitive from a first aid class," Iron Jaw growls, "or I will mash you like you was a cockroach which you ain't far away from!"

"I am glad the professor does not hear such grammar," Snooty says. "Look, he almost turned over and he is not near his grave yet. Well, let's start finding out who killed him, huh? As a rule the public likes to know who are its assassins and who aren't, so—"

Iron Jaw starts sleuthing and as a rule such a spectacle is worth five dollars ringside. The big flatfoot could not find the trail of a moose if it walked across Braves Field after a two-inch fall of snow and got its antlers caught in an exit.

"We had better call up both Yarvard and the boss of the radio advertisin' agency handlin' the jingles," Iron Jaw says. "They can fight over the corpse."

"It'll be a stiff battle," Snooty quips like the ghoul he is. "Ha!"

IRON JAW makes two phone calls and we wait. The Gridleak Advertising Agency is only six blocks away. J. G. Gridleak arrives first and gets priority on Archimedes Random. Gridleak is a portly taxpayer with a front balcony Mussolini would envy. He wears a gardenia.

"We should of said to omit flowers," Snooty cracks and Iron Jaw cuffs him one. Snooty almost goes out into Washington Street as the office is only about fourteen by six.

"That's him!" Gridleak says when the M.D. adorns the corpse with cheaters and bogus upper lip fringe. "My star writer, Mortimer Merkle!"

"No, that ain't him," Gridleak says when we remove the disguise.

"Make up your mind," Iron Jaw sniffs. "Who insured him?"

"This is most puzzling," J. G. says. "There is his copy in the typewriter. It looks like he was two men. Er—pardon me, I shall take that copy he just wrote as it means plenty of dough for me—and his beneficiaries, gentlemen—"

Iron Jaw says "Uh-uh," and slaps J. G.'s wrist when the character reaches for the typing. When Iron Jaw slaps, you can look for fractures. "All this is evidence against a low-down killer!"

"How do you know he was a short man?" Snooty asks and only the appearance of a very agitated character saves him from being thrown down the stairs. The newcomer introduces himself as Professor Virgil Smart, also of the Yarvard brain gang.

Virgil is quite soundly built and has a pair of big hairy hands and a neck you could post bills on. Virgil says he ran most of the way and beat the bus to Tremont. He identifies the corpse as a very old friend,

Archimedes Random.

"Mr. Gridleak here claims him," Iron Jaw says. "He says he is Mortimer Merkle, his star singing radio blurb writer. If I was Solomon, I would cut the corpse in half and give you each one like in the book. The Bible, wasn't it?"

"That is Professor Archimedes Random," Virgil says. "All the faculty can prove it. This is terrible."

"Well, there goes my meal ticket," J. G. says and picks up his hat. "How do you go about gittin' work in a defense plant?"

"I wondered where Arky was getting the extra money he always seemed to have," Virgil says as the cops begin trying to solve the rubout. "Imagine a professor writing radio tripe like that! Well, this will be a shock to his wife. Who would want to kill Random?"

We watch Virgil Smart dab at a scratch on his chin. Snooty says to me sotto voce that all razor blades these days are made out of old tin cans.

There are signs of a struggle having taken place before Archimedes' pipes were permanently clogged. Iron Jaw says how could a character like the prof who is nowhere near 1A put up such a Stalingrad.

"When somebody tries to strangle you," Snooty offers, "you don't hold your breath by way of co-operation. Even a kitten with leukemia will hit back at a vicious pooch if it sees the last of its nine lives in peril."

"There has to be a motive," I says. "Somebody came up here around three P.M. and throttled Archimedes Random. He used his hands instead of a Betsy as they don't make noise and a knife is messy. If the prof cried out at all, the noise of Washington Street traffic would of hushed it. Now, Archimedes Random disguised himself while he wrote the jingles, so it means he did not let any of his friends know he hired this office. Not even his

close friend, Virgil Smart. Did he, professor?"

"No," Virgil says. "So it means a total stranger killed my associate, doesn't it?"

"Say, where did you git that scratch?" Iron Jaw O'Shaughnessy tosses at Virgil. "When a character is being choked, he claws at his attacker. I don't like the smell of things. And you, Binney, shut up! I'm in charge of this investigation."

"You mean to accuse me of—why—pf-f-ft—this is an outrage and I demand an apology!" Virgil says.

"A stranger, huh?" Snooty Piper muses aloud. "Some citizen who was sent for or somebody like the citizen who found the corpse. Towel or water cooler service. This is a toughy, huh, Scoop?"

He looks down at the deceased, mumbles something, then looks at the late Random's portable. "The typin' there is very clear, isn't it, Scoop?" The cops give up and Iron Jaw orders the morgue menials to remove Archimedes. Snooty sits down and looks at a little radio that is on a table near the window.

"When a character writes these warblers for the commercials, Scoop, they most likely like to hear how they sound on the air. Their own and their competitors, what do you think? The water cooler is half full and there is a demijohn filled as a spare so it wasn't water the prof needed."

"The towel supply man is innocent as the M.D. said the prof had been extinct for an hour and a half when he arrived. There is only six floors in this firetrap. Lots of citizens would not bother to wait for the elevator as it takes that cable job ten minutes to rise twenty feet."

"You are gettin' nowheres fast like Rommel," I says.

WE GO to the Greek's and relax, then go to the *Evening Star* long enough to write all we know of the Random

slaying. We arrive at the city room at nine the next morning and Dogface says to get to headquarters right away as Iron Jaw O'Shaughnessy has broken the Random rubout wide open.

Iron Jaw has taken Virgil Smart into custody as the deceased's wife opened up with some very serious accusations against Virgil the moment she heard her helpmate had drawn double indemnity.

"That scratch on his face," Snooty says as we hurry to the bastille. "That looked fishy to me, Scoop. I wonder what Virgil's alibi is?"

Virgil Smart, in the grill room, refused to tell where he was at the time of Archimedes' demise.

"Awright, you might as well own up, prof," Iron Jaw roars. "You was heard to say you would kill Random if you ever found out somethin' you was pretty sure of. That invention you and him was workin' on. A gadget to put on ship hulls that would make a torpedo turn around and go back, huh?"

"Mrs. Random said Archimedes took it to Washin'ton; that he come back very discouraged as they not only laughed at him, but he got in a train wreck and lost the plans. But right after that trip, he bought a new suit an' smoked twenty-five cent tobacco instead of the ten cent brand. He could go to shows and even go and git a steak at odd times.

"So you told somebody you had a hunch that Archimedes sold the invention and crossed you up. You even read in the paper where somebody had an idea to stop torpedoes from blowing up vessels, didn't you?"

"Yes, I said it," Virgil says. "But I am innocent. I said I would fix his wagon if I ever found out he give me the business. Why didn't he come clean and tell me the sideline he had?"

"How many people would admit they wrote that tripe for radio commercials?" Snooty butts in. "Especially a professor of Yarvard. Why, he would be ruined—not that he wasn't anyway, huh?"

"Shut up, you weakfish!" Iron Jaw says. "This is between me and Smart. Awright, professor, before you git absent-minded, where was you at three P.M. yesterday afternoon?"

"I don't remember," Virgil says. "Now you remind me, I *am* absentminded. If you are a detective, find out where I was. What do they pay you for, O'Shaughnessy?"

"Don't answer that, Iron Jaw," Snooty laughs.

"He didn't have no chance against you," the big flatfoot says. "A big ape like you just got him by the throat and squeezed once."

"Huh?" Snooty asks. "Then afterwards when Archimedes Random saw he'd been strangled, he got so mad he kicked over a chair, spilled a bottle' of mucilage, and overturned a wire basket full of correspondence."

"Say, Iron Jaw," a cop says, "Mrs. Random says her husband had a bad ticker, too. How could he have put up such a scrap against Smart?"

"Scoop Binney has already told you," Snooty says. "When a citizen fights for his life, he does not know his own strength. I remember that Archimedes Random had long fingernails; so if Virgil here cannot tell us how he got the wound stripe, then he is a very guilty party and should be locked up. It looks like Iron Jaw O'Shaughnessy has got his man."

"Thanks, Piper," Iron Jaw says.

"It wa'n't nothin'. Ready for the stenog now, professor?"

"Is she a blonde or brun—er—I will not confess to a crime I did not commit," Virgil says.

"Then you are goin' to git locked up," Iron Jaw says. "When you followed Random to his secret office, you should have read what he was writin' before you killed him, huh? You thought when you saw him disguised that he went to that office just to collect royalties for the invention. Am I right?"

"I never saw a more asinine individual, Mr. O'Shaughnessy," Virgil says. "You have the intelligence of a troglodyte."

"Flattery won't git you nowhere." the big slew-foot says. "Know a good lawyer, Smart?"

THEY lock Virgil up. It looks like Iron Jaw has finally hit the jackpot. Me and Snooty go to the Greek's and sit there for a while, absorbing the malt brew. A drunk comes in and leans against the bar. Nick snaps on the radio and a doll with gravel in her throat and adenoids in her nose gives out with a commercial yodel:

You want muscle? Go an' hustle
For some Crumbies right awa-a-a-y!
But be sure they're Frumby's Crumbies
They're as diff as night from da-a-a-y!

"Look," the drunk says. "Doesh a cushtomer hafter shtand that, huh? Thish ish a free country—hic—right? Turn off that cushed rad—"

Crumbies—Crumbies—be sure they are
Frumby's!
Hustle—hustle—get your share of muscle—

There is quite a crash and a seltzer bottle knocks the Greek's radio loose from its tubes. The drunk leaves ten bucks on the bar for damages and goes out on rubber legs.

"Whee, I feel like a new man, yesh," he says, then spins around and comes back for another snifter. "New man ish a drinkin' man, too. What'll it be, boysh?"

"She ees on the house," Nick the Greek says. "In wan more minutes, I bat you, I would have keeled that canary yourself, pal."

Me and Snooty have a snort on the Greek and then go over to Mr. Guppy's *Evening Star* to report on the Random assassination. For once, Snooty Piper seems convinced that Iron Jaw has caught the right culprit.

"Look, Scoop," Snooty says. "Mr. Guppy has an editorial on radio commercial warblers and how even an educator like the late Archimedes Random succumbed to the deplorable spirits of the times. Mr. Guppy says he made the rocks for the tormentors to throw at a suffering public and that Yarvard's loss would be the gain of the world at large. A great writer, Mr. Guppy."

"To think Archimedes' family will have to bear the disgrace," Snooty says. "Gad, to be exposed as the Ogden Nash of Frumby's Crumbies! The Sir Walter Scott of Cully's Catsup! Virgil Smart has an outside chance to cheat the saute sofa, Scoop. Oh, oh, I almost forgot. That note on my desk to call Abigail, Scoop. She must want a tip on a hayburner tomorrow."

Snooty calls up Abigail Hepplethwaite. When he comes back, he says the old doll asked him to hurry out and see her as she has an idea about the Random slaying.

"Seein' that Archimedes was at Yarvard too, Scoop, he must have known Professor Lucius Dilby," Snooty says. "Also Virgil Smart. Lucius is a very old crony of Abigail's, so she must have some dope right from the feed bag."

We go to Back Bay to see Abigail Hepplethwaite, who is at least an octogenarianess and who has more legal tender than all the shads in the ocean have roe. Abigail says she knows why Virgil Smart would not hand out an alibi.

"Huh?" Snooty says. "You wasn't

havin' a tete-a-tete with—"

"I ought to hand you one," the old doll says. "Just after they arrested Smart, Lucius Dilby came to see me. He says he is sure where Virgil got the scratch on his face. Virgil is a wolf."

"Huh?"

"Virgil tutors on the side. He was tutoring a co-ed the last few days," Abigail says. "Co-eds are very nice lookin' pigeons, Piper. Virgil made a pass and got clawed. Who has a better guess?"

"But he would even own up that to keep from fryin'," I says.

"You never saw Mrs. Smart, I take it," Abigail sighs. "Would you rather die quick, boys, or suffer the death of a thousand cuts? Mrs. Smart is as husky as Virgil but a head taller, and was once a weight-lifter in vaudeville. Once, Lucius Dilby told me, Virgil staggered home from one tutoring toot with a nail file sticking out from under his floating rib."

"It looks like we almost let an innocent man take the rap, Scoop," Snooty says. "Circumstantial evidence is awful stuff."

"You're slippin', Piper," Abigail sniffs. "Who arrested Virgil Smart?"

"Yeah," Snooty says. "I ought to know better. Ha, and all the time I thought the lives of college professors was dull, Scoop."

"Well, here we go again," I groan. "He had a motive and nobody else didn't. Archimedes Random didn't tutor dons so was not slain by one. Huh, he might have been, Snooty. He could of only put up such a defense against a frail cupcake."

"Let's go to the office of the late Archimedes Random, Scoop. We'll have to do some real detective work to solve this one, huh?"

WE GET into the office through the courtesy of Mr. Gridleak, the radio advertising mogul. Mr. Gridleak claimed

the material that Random was working on as his property and so the cops let us all in. When Mr. Gridleak departs with his jingles, we start sleuthing.

Snooty Piper picks up the little radio and he finds it is disconnected. He plugs it in and turns a dial. Nothing happens but some ear-splitting banshee wails. "This is the clue, Scoop," he says. "His radio was gaga and he sent for a citizen to fix it."

"Wonderful," I says and applaud briefly. "There are only about a hundred radio experts in Boston. We will call them all and question them. Go on, Sherlock, git elementary as that is the only kind of school you ever went to."

"I do not agree with anybody about the fight Archimedes put up," Snooty goes on. "A character like Virgil would have throttled him with one hand. I don't know why I didn't keep that in mind. But the prof with a democratic ticker and no more meat on his bones than there is in most butcher shops today, did set up quite a scuffle."

"One thing will trip the killer, Scoop. They all slip up somewhere. I am glad Archimedes changed the ribbon on his portable just before the assassin entered and mugged him. His fingers were smeared with the ink."

"I get it, Snooty. He left fingerprints on the killer's shirt cuffs," I says. "Isn't it wonderful we do not have laundries in this country?"

"You are not very helpful, Scoop Binney," the crackpot says. "No wonder you don't progress in your work." He picks up a classified telephone directory and flips the pages until he comes to the list of radio tinkers.

"Eureka!" he says. "It is one of three men not far away from here. Archimedes Random would naturally select the radio doctor nearest his office as that saves time and gas, doesn't it? I have three names here. Eldred Shupp. Grubb's Radio Clinic.

Radar, Inc., Statictitians.”

“How do you know it could be one of the three?” I sniff. “It is impossible, Snooty Piper.”

“Look. There is a smudge near each name, Scoop. When the prof spotted a firm close to his neighborhood, he put a finger on it and copied the number down, or held it there while he called on the phone.”

“Why would anyone of them slaughter a customer they had never had before? It is silly. Anyway, I will go along with you for a laugh. You got to have a motive to kill anythin’, Snooty Piper, even a pint. Only one man had a reason to kill Archimedes Random and he’s locked up in the bastile.”

“He has an alibi but can’t give it,” Snooty reminds me. “It is like he jumped off a torpedoed ship and into a shark pool. Virgil is ridin’ on the horns of a dilemma, Scoop. Let’s start out tomorrow mornin’ and look up our suspects.”

We do just that. We walk into Radar, Inc., and ask for the boss. A swell blonde says she is and did we bring our radio as don’t we know gas is scarce.

“And,” she adds. “Why ain’t both of you with the armed forces as you are not manpower us girls would miss.”

“Come on, Scoop. We don’t have to stay here and git insulted.”

“Of course not,” I says. “We got two other places, haven’t we?”

We go to see Eldred Shupp, but there is a sign on the door of his place of business. It says:

Out to War. Will Be Back—When Do You Think?

“He’s a card,” I says. “I hope he opens a branch in Tokyo. I’m goin’ to ask for another physical next week, Snooty. I still don’t believe I’m such a freak. Well, Grubb’s Radio Clinic is next. It is on South Tremont.”

SO WE find number 142 and walk up a flight of stairs that must have been built only about a month after the Boston Tea Party. Grubb is in and is at work on a radio when we enter the shop. He is a thin jittery-looking taxpayer with little red-rimmed eyes that remind me of a rabbit’s.

“Be with you in a minute,” Grubb says very irritably. “Soon as I see if I got this old box of junk talkin’ ag’in.” He plugs a cord in and twists a dial. A doleful dame starts singing. She has a voice that starts as far down as her ankles.

Hello, girls, we’re on the air,
Good afternoon to you-u-u-u,
What have you been using in your hair?
Oh, goody! Shick’s Shampo-o-o-o!

Grubb picks up a hammer and annihilates the radio he has fixed. He picks up the wreckage and throws them in a barrel. We peer over a little counter and see the barrel is full of old radios. Snooty Piper nudges me and says in a muffled voice:

“He is the guilty character, Scoop.”

“That was silly, Mr. Grubb,” I says a little shakily. “It is your bread an’ butter. Why—”

“It ain’t no skin off your nose, pal,” Grubb says and then we see him straighten up and his face twists out of shape. “Seven radios I give the works to since mornin’. They are a curse to civilization. What you two mugs want?”

Snooty takes over. “You, Mr. Grubb,” he says. “Anyway, I think you are the character we want for the murder of Mortimer Merkle or as the university knew him, Archimedes Random. You better come along quietly as it does no good to—”

Grubb’s teeth click together like a bear trap springing. He sighs and says he will come as soon as he picks up his hat. Instead he picks up a Betsy and fires it, but he is a very bad shot. Evidently he has

never fired a hand cannon before as he holds it with both hands.

Grubb is much more efficient with a hammer. He drops the Betsy, picks one up, and lets it go. I get part of it on the right shinbone and yell in mortal agony. Snooty Piper leaps at Grubb and trips over some wire. Then Grubb is sitting on Snooty and reaching for a portable set that weighs twenty pounds.

"Help!" Snooty hollers.

"As soon as I can find a crutch," I gulp out. "Or a traction splint!" It looks like I will be too late to save Snooty Piper this time, but just as Grubb lifts the portable, one of the radios in the place finishes a dance tune and comes in with a very sickening singing commercial. Grubb forgets Snooty and fires the portable at the cabinet set in the corner. He does not miss and Snooty doesn't either. He brings a fist up under Grubb's weak chin and the radio healer goes as limp as a boiled shirt in the Sahara. I drag him off Snooty as if he had been a shawl.

"Fancy him bein' a cold-blooded assassin," I says. "He must weigh about ninety-two pounds carrying a bag of cement: It is no wonder it took him overtime to strangle a physical wreck like Archimedes was. But why would he kill a professor, Snooty?"

"He didn't. He thought he was killin' somebody else, Scoop. It is quite plain. If you rub out Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde doesn't live here any more. We'll let Grubb tell us himself though.

"Huh, there is a copy of the *Evening Star* on his work bench there. The first edition, Scoop. Look, he was readin' about Virgil Smart. It says that Iron Jaw expects to have a confession by nightfall. Listen:

"The prisoner shows signs of breaking and refuses to see a lawyer. The man accused of a crime that has shocked the sacred halls and campus of fair Yarvard

paces his cell and seems to shrink in his clothes. Detective O'Shaughnessy, lapsing into levity, is positive he has the right man behind the Yale lock. O'Shaughnessy—"

Grubb finally sits up, lets out a yelp of pain, and reaches for his hip.

"You forget," Snooty says. "I hit you in the chops, Grubb. Don't dast to pull another Roscoe—"

"It is my sacro-iliac," Grubb groans. "It had me laid up fer about two weeks in bed and it brought me to my ruin. I'll tell all."

"Wait until we get where there is the right kind of witnesses," Snooty Piper says and helps Grubb to his feet.

"So I still don't see the motive," I says and shake my dome.

"You are dumber than I ever thought, Scoop."

WE TAKE the harmless-looking character to the LaGrange Street criminal clearing house and have him booked for the rubout of Archimedes Random.

"Just when Virgil Smart was going to confess," the D.A. says. "Somebody is nuts!"

"It's me," Grubb says. "Well, when do you want me to talk, or do I have to coax you cops to let me let my hair down. What a police force!"

"This is a gag," Iron Jaw yelps. "This time I know I got the right criminal and nobody—"

"Shut up," Grubb says. "I oughter know if I am guilty. Whoever this Smart guy is, he is a liar if he says he's the killer."

"Tell them the story, Grubb," Snooty says.

"Awright, for ten years I fixed raddios an' I had to stand for all the stuff that come out of them. I got a shop filled with sets and givin' out with soap operas all day long. Then comes these singin' ads to make it worse. Then one day, about a month ago,

I pick up an old Stromberry Carson and somethin' gives near my caboose an' I can't straighten up. I go to the croaker an' he says it is a sacro-iliac that snapped a wire.

"I have to hit the hay for t'ree weeks an' I live in an apartment house where there is at least two hundred raddios. They talk about torture the Japs dish out. Oh, brother—"

"Get to the point," the D.A. says.

"Keep your shirt on," Grubb snaps. "You ain't goin' nowheres. Awright, I lay in bed with gremlins jabbin' hot spears in my hip an' wit' two hun'ed raddios givin' out with the mullarkey, especially the commercial croonin'. You know how a tune will go through your noggin until you almos' go screwy? Well, I got fifty of 'em hummin' through my dome, like for instance this one which is the worst of all. Listen. It goes to the tune of Yankee Doodle:

Yankee Noodles are in town,
An' they ain't no pho-o-o-ny.
Fry 'em wit' fat until they're brown
An' you'll never miss balo-o-o-ney!

"It is awful, isn't it?" the D.A. says.

"So I finally can hobble down to the shop. I am there about two hours when this Mortimer Merkle phones to come an' git his raddio which is on the bum," Grubb says. "I git to his office an' unplug the set. Then I look at what he is writin'. I asks him does he write all of the raddio jingles an' he says most of them.

"Somethin' snaps in my dome, D.A. I go nuts. A voice is inside my noggin an' says you gotta git this Merkle, Grubb. You will git a medal—you will prove to be a

boon to shut-ins. It is a duty to humanity. So I grab this Merkle by the throat an' put on the pressure."

"Er—he put up a fight, huh?" I cut in.

"Yeah. I am a semi-invalid," Grubb says, his eyes as wild as a zombie's. "I almost fail, but the voice says to keep pitchin'. I finally choke the character an' scam. It is temporary insanity, ain't it, guys? Will they convict me?"

"They'll have a job, pal," Snooty says. "Especially if your lawyer is allowed to run off some of the singin' blurbs in court. What have they got in the rotisserie, D.A.? AC current or DC?"

Iron Jaw O'Shaughnessy looks very much like a blimp that has got a slow leak and he gulps out, "I don't understand people. This Virgil Smart only had to tell where he was at—where he got the scratch—"

"You'll never know," Snooty grins. "Anyway, if I was you I would not be here when Mrs. Smart comes for Virgil, Iron Jaw. So we nab Grubb because Random just changed a typewriter ribbon before Grubb arrived and knew it wasn't Virgil because of a hair ribbon from—er—let's go to the Greek's, Scoop.

"Well, there is a swell opening with Gridleak for a good jingle writer. I wonder—"

"Snooty Piper," I says. "You would sink to anything, wouldn't you? You start writing those things and it will be to the bottom of the Charles River. I ain't kiddin'."

"Oh, there is a limit to how far I would go, Scoop," he says.

You can believe that if you want. I don't.