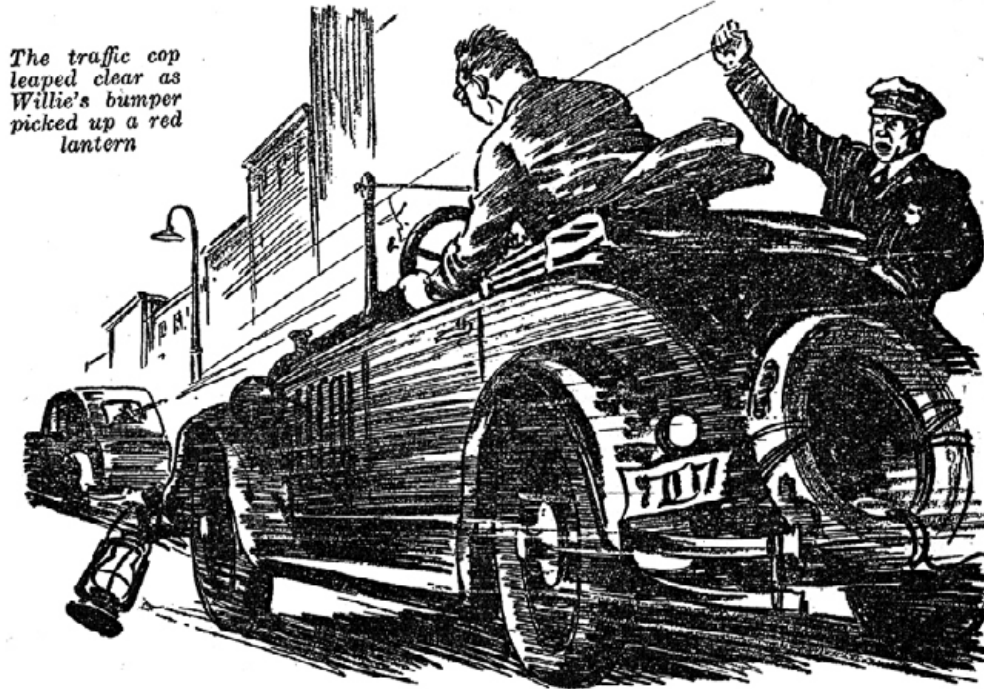


DUMB IS THE WORD FOR WILLIE



*The President of the Hawkeye Detective Agency Swings
Into Action Against the Killer Diller Gang!*

By JOE ARCHIBALD

Author of "A Killer's Heel," "Poison and Ivy," etc.

ON ONE very fine morning that Willie Klump, President of the Hawkeye Detective Agency, drove his jalopy down Third Avenue, the world seemed to be his private oyster with a pearl in it. A client had paid Willie seven hundred and fifty dollars. He had parted with all but six hundred of the lettuce in acquiring this new means of locomotion, in which he felt sure he could chase criminal characters with greater celerity and despatch than heretofore.

He was on his way now to dicker with a merchant regarding the purchase of a short-wave radio set. Once he had that installed in his gas buggy, he knew he would feel sorry for dishonest characters.

Willie did not look any more like a slewfoot than the jalopy looked like a Rolls-Royce. If Willie sat in front of a bank that was about to be taken, the crooks would probably ask him to watch their car until they came out. Albeit Willie was no mental giant, he was nevertheless aware

that his dumb exterior was his greatest asset.

Well, here was Willie, riding in his own car and with a cushion of legal tender in his pocket—a most unusual condition. He sat back luxuriously, sucked in great gulps of air and drove across Eighty-Sixth Street with a flourish. It was great to be alive, mused Willie. Two minutes later he was not quite sure whether it was or he was.

Willie had ignored the last red light. A bluecoat chased him, blowing his whistle. Willie arose in his seat and looked behind him.

“I wonder what he wants?” he frowned. “Surely, a Third Avenue traffic cop wouldn’t recognize—”

Cra-a-a-sh!

They had to peel the jalopy off Willie. An indignant taxpayer had crawled out of a shiny new sedan nearby. One of the car’s fenders was dangling like a hangnail, and a wheel had been pushed into the crankcase.

“I—I thought it was the Sixth Avenue El they were blowin’ up, not this one,” Willie stammered in bewilderment, his fingers wandering gingerly over a lump that was rising on his head. “What happened?”

“Look,” a very angry traffic cop growled, pointing to the light that was still red. “That is supposed to stop your car here, Stupid, not an El pillar. I bet you set fire to ‘No Smoking’ signs, too, don’t you, wise guy? Awright, gimme your driver’s license! Are ya insured?”

WILLIE shook bees out of his noggin and looked up at the officer, his eyes still crossed.

“How could I have a driver’s license when I am just on my way to get it?” he queried with dignity. “I have life insurance, of course.”

The citizen whom Willie had

scrambled was close to tears.

“I demand that mug’s arrest,” he exploded. “Just lookit my new boiler and I only got it this morning. I was just drivin’ along mindin’ my own business, and he ups and hits me on purpose. I want a lawyer!”

“It was an accident,” Willie argued. “How could they have insurance companies if they didn’t have accidents like this? I am William Klump, President of the Hawkeye Detective Agency. I never saw so much fuss over nothin’!”

“Nothin’!” screeched the outraged citizen.

“It is a trifle, isn’t it?” the policeman said sarcastically. “Passin’ a red light, no driver’s license, no insurance. Sa-a-ay, those are Nineteen Thirty-seven plates on that boiler, too! Smashin’ up a new Gnash sedan, too. I don’t know if I got enough tickets to give you, you tow-headed jeep! But here’s a summons.”

Willie stood in traffic court early the next morning. He pleaded not guilty on every count. When the testimony was well soaked into the judge’s head, he fined Willie one hundred dollars and ordered him to pay two hundred dollars’ damages to the citizen he had smacked. In conclusion the judge ordered Willie to go to the nearest oculist and get his glimmers examined.

“There is no justice,” Willie said with great indignation.

“I fine you twenty-five dollars more for contempt of court!”

“Huh?”

Willie decided he would get out of there before he should be drained of his last peso. He went uptown right away and had his eyes examined. It had occurred to him back there in court that he had been having touches of vertigo of late. A detective, he told himself, must not let his peepers get rusty. Better be on the safe

side, he decided as he walked into the optician's office.

Willie was seated in a darkened chamber facing a lighted screen on which were the letters OXYZMTV which looked quite foreign to the master private detective.

"Gimme English to read," he said. "I can't pronounce that Polack."

Finally, when the lesson was over, Willie was docked ten more bucks for a pair of cheaters that were tinted a yellowish color.

"Wear them for awhile and see if they don't rest your eyes, Mr. Klump," the optician advised him.

Willie, undaunted, then traipsed to a dealer in second-hand jalopies and picked up another heap of iron. From there he drove to a radio shop and purchased his short-wave ether box. Finally he got his driver's license and plates, and when he added up what was left in his pockets he found he had just enough to pay for groceries for a couple of weeks.

He cooked some hamburgers on his portable electric stove in his combined office and boudoir and brewed some coffee. A stale éclair which he unearthed from a drawer of his filing cabinet topped off the repast. Then Willie turned to consider the pressing and depressing matter of how to get business. Well, he concluded, he would go out and drive around in his car and pick up police calls.

"Maybe I could use the car as my office and save even more dough," Willie said to himself as he went out. "Nobody ever calls me on the phone, anyway."

THE President of the Hawkeye Detective Agency cruised the streets for the next few hours without getting much on his radio. Then, just as he was chased away from a fireplug by a big traffic cop, a call came in.

"Calling all cars! Calling all cars! Be on lookout for big black sedan carrying Ohio license plates. Three men held up Dinty's roadhouse near Hastings-on-Hudson. Shot and killed cashier and got away with three thousand dollars! Car last seen heading toward Bronx. That is all—"

"Whe-e-e-e-e!" Willie enthused. "I will not spare the horses."

However he almost killed one dragging a dray as he took a corner with his smooth tires squealing. Willie gunned uptown, his eyes peeled for big black cars. On the Bronx River Road he pulled up to a parked car that looked as black as ebony and peered in through an open window.

"Stop neckin', Eddie! Somebody's lookin' in at us!" a dame shrilled. "I bet it's a maniac!"

"Lemme see your car license," Willie rumbled. "I am a detective. I must question all citizens riding in black sedans—"

Kerwhop!

Willie back-stepped all the way to his car and sat down on the running-board with a thud. When he was fully conscious again, he saw that the black car was gone.

"H-huh, citizens should cooperate if we are to catch desperate criminals. That is no way to act!"

He felt of his front teeth, found all present, then climbed into his car and drove to Fleetwood. The police sent out the call again.

"More on Hastings-on-Hudson holdup. Black sedan found abandoned with flat tire on side road off Sawmill Parkway near Gilhooley's Garage in Elmsford. Motorist believed murdered, his car stolen. Cars Thirty-nine and Forty-two proceed there at once. Eyewitness saw green sedan speeding away as he slowed down to look at black car. Hastings police believe they wounded one of holdup men. That is all."

Willie stepped on the gas. An hour

after midnight he crashed the group standing around the holdup car. Cops tried to chase him.

"Now you look here," Willie protested, "there is no law saying a private detective cannot go looking for a criminal character at his own risk, is there? I am Mr. Klump of the Hawkeye Detec—"

"Wha-a-a-t?" somebody yelped, and Willie knew Satchelfoot Kelly, his arch enemy, was nearby. "That punk here? How'd he know—"

"I have expanded, Mr. Kelly," Willie sniffed as he sought out Satchelfoot. "I have a car and a radio and I am well equipped to match wits with the most cunning crim—"

"Oh-h-h, look at him! He's killin' me. Is that a disguise you're wearing, or—"

"I look well in glasses, I think," Willie said loftily as he turned to look for clues.

"You're wastin' your time, Zero Chan," Satchelfoot snorted. "We've gone all over the can with a fine-comb and we will make an arrest within twenty-four hours. Did we find evidence? Oh, my!"

"And I just found somethin' at the foot of the bank here," another cop yelled. "It ain't Snow White neither. It is a defunct citizen with his pockets emptied out."

"I knew that stuff in the road here wasn't ketchup," Satchelfoot Kelly bit out. "Well, it is two murders them polecats have committed now. They had a slow leak, I guess, where a tire got grazed by a slug up in Hastin's, and they had to change boilers fast. They waited till a citizen come along and flagged him. Then they knocked him off, took his car and beat it."

"Mr. Kelly, you are positively a genius," Willie remarked. "I sure like to watch you work, Satchelfoot."

DETECTIVE KELLY beamed.

"It's about time you got wise I have brains, Willie," he said. "Huh, you

ain't a bad guy. I will even see that your name gets mentioned by the newspapers in connection with this case. There is publicity for you, Willie. Now do you think I am such a bad guy?"

"I am always suspicious of a Greek givin' things away," Willie countered. "You go your way, Satchelfoot, and I will go mine. What did you find here?"

Detective Kelly laughed right in Willie's face.

"You should buy Listerdent," Willie told him blandly. "Which same advice may prove I ain't your best friend. No wonder you don't get invited no place."

Kelly turned his back on Willie. "Well, boys, as soon as this character turns up missing, we will know all about what his car looked like. His wife or relatives will be calling Headquarters—"

"There is a chance," Willie mildly offered, "that the deceased there came from California. And didn't you know that dishonest persons change cars over when they get them to a garage? This is quite baffling, isn't it? No clues or—"

"Ha, ha," Satchelfoot brayed. "That shows how much you know, Stupid. I have got a picture of a gangster's moll right in my pocket. Found it in the back of that black sedan. I will have the police in Lima, Ohio, arrest her and hold her for questioning. She will tell the cops who the public enemy is that she carries the torch for. Her name and address is right on the back of her picture."

"Thanks for telling me," Willie grinned. "I don't think that is so much. Who do the police suspect, Satchelfoot?"

"A short guy and two tall ones, ha, ha. See what you can do with that, Willie!"

"I will."

Willie Klump went back to his jalopy, climbed in, turned on a little light and took a notebook and pencil from his pocket. While he sat there he pieced together a lot

of conversation he had heard over across the road. Willie always had to write down in a hurry the things that came into his head because they did not stay with him long.

No. 1—A short man. Could be Killer Diller. Diller is only five feet three. Sometimes called Foot-and-a-half Diller. Read in the papers two months ago where he lammed out of stir. Somebody said they saw him in Utica. Could be Diller.

No. 2—If crooks are in New York, they won't go farther than the Bronx as then they would not have far to go when they left town again. Maybe that is where they will hide out and fix over the stolen car. I could be right. Tough case.

No. 3—If one of holdup men was hit, he'll be in the way. The gang chief would have to get rid of him, but he would have to put him where no cops could find him for a long time, for if they didn't, the cops would find out what gang it was that held up the gin mill. Maybe they will hang onto him and keep him in the car until they get way out into the country to ditch him—ugh! My guess is as good as anybody's. But if Satchelfoot has the moll tagged, then I will just forget all about the case.

Willie hung the pencil over his ear and watched the dead wagon come up to remove the liquidated taxpayer to the morgue. A tow truck hitched onto the black sedan and dragged that away also. Satchelfoot then came over to rub Willie the wrong way.

"Watch the papers the next coupla days, Willie, as I am going to have my name in them. Why don't you give up loafing and go to work?"

"Maybe you forgot how I solved that murder down on Park Row, Satchelfoot," Willie retorted. "Name one you have solved!"

THE President of the Hawkeye Detective Agency had something there. Kelly angrily kicked another dent in the fender of Willie's jalopy and tramped over to join the uniformed gendarmes. The radio started going again.

"Calling all cars! Calling all cars! Suspicious characters just hired room at One-Hunderd-Eighty-three, West to One Hundred and Eighty-third Street. Cars in that section investigate. Warning. Approach suspects with caution. That is all!"

"There ain't no sense in that," Willie snorted. "They would go to a place where there was other crooks to help 'em. And only three thousand smackers! It does not sound like Killer Diller, as he generally knocks off banks, but sometimes a dishonest character as big as Diller gets hard pressed for pin money. I think I will cover the Bronx. It is tough workin' without a clue. These glasses do help my glimmers all right."

Willie cruised until dawn. He parked in a vacant lot near University Avenue and slept for four hours. Then he went over to a beanery and grabbed himself some breakfast and, while giving the cruellers their coffee baptism, he perused the journals. These told Willie that the citizens of the Bronx had a Killer Diller complex. The tough boy had been seen in eleven places at once. Fifty arrests had been made between two and five that morning, and forty characters were already getting legal tip-offs preparatory to suing the city.

Willie got the kick of his life when a police car pulled up in front of the beanery and unloaded a trio of manhunters. Their eyes looked like raw eggs swimming in chianti, and any one of them could have grated a nutmeg against their beards. They sat near Willie and one opened up with:

"Nobody's called up since Headquarters give the description of the guy that they bumped off and stole the green sedan from. They broadcasted it every place. Maybe the guy lived in Alaska. Who knows?"

"And that picture Kelly got out of that car! You know what? It was of a doll in

Lima, Ohio, who is engaged to a preacher's son there. About a month ago some guys lifted her boy friend's car, and it was his black boiler them crooks used up on that Hastings' job. It looks like they've give us the slip all right."

Willie Klump snickered as another officer spoke up.

"Yeah? They won't get out of town. It's Killer Diller and his gang all right. The guy that got plugged will have to have a doctor's once-over, and that's what we've got to watch for from now on, boys. We'll call at every doc's office here in the Bronx district."

"Pardon me," Willie put in, "they might shoot him instead, don't you think? Maybe carry him around so—"

"Who ast you? Maybe you think you're a detective? Ha, ha!"

"I am one," Willie Klump said, showing his badge.

"Ha! Ha-ha-a-a-a-a!" The cops went out and left Willie sitting there in high dudgeon.

He said to the counterman: "They do not believe I am a detective. Imagine that?"

"Heh, heh—neither do I! I was ganna ast you what you done with your pencil and tin cup when ya come in."

Willie tossed his quarter tariff on the counter and strode out. He saw that the police car had backed into his jalopy and bent the bumper back into the radiator.

"They ought to be arrested, those kind of drivers," he declared indignantly. "You would think I was the only person in the world wearin' glasses! They feel very good in all this sun."

The big town gendarmes kept searching the Bronx with all the diligence of a Scotchman looking for last year's straw hat in the spring. Killer Diller would be quite a feather in their caps if they could but get their hooks on him. It would

mean a chunk of legal tender, a promotion and five minutes on a national radio hookup for the lucky cop.

PROWL cars were everywhere, and their prowling was a boon to the stockholders of the gas and oil companies. More suspicious characters were grilled from the Battery to the Bronx than had been on the griddle since the city's administration had changed. Citizens everywhere were calling up Spring 3-1000 to say that they had seen Killer Diller. It was quite a to-do all around.

Two hours after high noon Willie Klump parked his steaming boiler out in front of an oasis in Woodlawn and went inside to fill up his personal crankcase. He climbed a stool near a small citizen who was just giving his order.

"Six hamburgers, buddy, wit' plenty of onion, to go out."

"Right. Mike! Stuff the cow-w-w into six buns with violets! Ship 'em!"

Willie thought that was very funny as he ordered a ham-and-egg sandwich.

"Stick a grunt and a cackleberry between the sheets, Mike!" the counterman yodeled, and Willie beamed with appreciation.

The President of the Hawkeye Detective Agency turned to grin at the citizen next to him through his tinted cheaters. The customer seemed very impatient. He squirmed on his stool as if termites had got into his trousers. And all of a sudden a little voice started whispering inside Willie's head.

"Six hamburgers!" it said. "Six hamburgers—six hamburgers—going out. Three into six goes twice. Two hamburgers apiece—"

Willie got a little nervous himself and dropped a fork on the floor. He slipped off his perch to retrieve it and got a look at one of the shoes of the restless character.

Willie's scalp lifted and then snapped back into place. Goose pimples the size of warts sprouted all over the Klump epidermis.

Willie put the fork back on the counter. "N-never mind the s-sandwich," he gulped. "I have lost my appetite. I g-get s-spells like t-that. S-sorry—"

"Oh, yeah? Two bits, buddy! Lay it on the line or I'll lay ya among the sweet peas," growled the hash slinger.

"Oh, if that is the way you feel about it," Willie said and he paid through the nose and went out. He climbed into his car, drove half a block and stopped. "It—it could be Killer D-Diller," he muttered. "Like I figured, they're carryin' the corpse around with them. Blood on his shoe and—six hamburgers—to go out. W-well, I will trail him."

Willie opened a small compartment in the dash and took out a gun. He slipped it into his coat pocket and waited. The little character emerged from the beanery in a few minutes and walked southward. Willie Klump slipped out of his boiler and followed him.

Every once in a while the rough looking person glanced over his shoulder and every time he did that, Willie turned around and looked the other way. His quarry finally turned into a side street, and Willie got around the corner just in time to see him walk up the steps of a very shabby looking rooming house. The President of the Hawkeye Detective Agency did not hesitate. He followed.

The front door was unlocked, and Willie went inside the place. Somewhere over his head a door slammed. Willie drew his roscoe and began climbing the rickety stairs. His knees were a little rubbery and he wondered who it was that was typewriting in the house until he tumbled to the fact that his own teeth were making the clicking sound.

THE master detective paused on the second floor landing, heard voices on the floor above, so went on up. Glasses clinked. Somebody laughed and then a voice came out through a door, and the words hit Willie smack in the face.

"Ya think Snipe will keep till we git rid of him, Killer?"

"Sure. It ain't been very warm, Ripper. Too bad he hadda git winged huh? But they shoot a horse, don't they, when it can't walk no more? Ha, ha!"

"Nice hideout here. These mugs ain't never suspected a t'ing, Killer. We could stay here fer a year and—"

Willie's ticker kept coming up into his throat, and he had to swallow it several times before it stopped tingling with his tonsils. He had never heard such rough voices. His feet told him to take a powder out of there, but his head could not think that fast.

Willie took his calling very seriously, and so he swallowed his heart once more and crept toward the door. There was a crack in the panel, and Willie peeked through it. He saw Killer Diller, the eating-house character, sitting near a window, biting at a hamburger and washing it down with something that Willie knew was not soda-pop.

On a table near Diller was a sort of harness, and the handle of a very wicked looking cannon protruded from the heap. Now the character with Killer was not easy on Willie's optics despite the fact that Willie still wore his glasses. He looked like an unabridged edition of Frankenstein's bogey man, and he was paring his nails with a knife blade that was at least a foot long.

"They are very tough citizens," Willie decided. "Human vultures who prey on honest taxpayers and—well, you are a detective, William Klump," he told himself severely. "Do your duty. Go right

in there and arrest them! Think of what Satchelfoot will say if—”

“That is what I am thinking of,” his other self interrupted. “Kelly will say ‘Don’t he look natural!’ Well, here goes!”

The President of the Hawkeye Detective Agency hurled himself at the flimsy door and it gave way with very little protest.

“I got the drop on you,” he boomed. “You better give up! Y-you—oh-h-h-h!”

A sickening thought hit Willie in the midstream just as Killer Diller and his pal lifted their hands. Willie never carried a loaded gun because he had heard of terrible accidents occurring to citizens who had. The cartridges he kept in his pocket, and he had forgotten to insert them into his roscoe before coming on this expedition.

“So you’re a copper, huh?” Killer Diller ground out. “The punk that was over in the beanery, eh? Of all the lousy—sa-a-ay, I bet that gun ain’t loaded!”

“Wh-why—how would you know that?” Willie stammered. “I—I mean—oh-h-h-h-h!”

“Get him, Ripper! Don’t shoot, though. Ya’ll bring the bulls,” directed Killer Diller.

Ripper did not use a roscoe. He banged Willie over the noggin with a bottle half-filled with grog and the super sleuth went into the tank with stars, comets, and meteors showering down upon him. For a second or two Willie thought that he was in the planetarium and that the roof had caved in.

“That’ll do,” Killer Diller laughed. “Nothin’ could live after that, Ripper.”

They did not know Willie Klump. Willie could even faintly hear what the tough boys were saying.

“Let’s pick up the stuff and lam. We’ll git the boiler and shake this burg, Ripper. How that screwball ever got wise to us I dunno. Hurry up, collect the gats and the

sugar. We gotta make it a fast powder!”

WILLIE had a relapse for several minutes. While he reposed on the worn carpet, an angular-faced landlady looked at him. She let out a yip and hopped to the telephone hanging in the hall outside and shouted for the police.

“Ha-a-a-alp!” she yelled into the mouthpiece just as Willie, putting his cheaters back on, moved out of the room doing a Lambeth Walk. “There’s a dead man here!”

“No, they ain’t,” Willie called to her.

The keeper of the keys -turned and looked at him. “E-e-e-ek!” she squeaked and fell in a faint.

Willie picked up the dangling receiver, called into the transmitter: “Wrong number!” and hung up.

He staggered down the stairs, went out of the house and cool air hit him and washed a lot of the coma out of his coco. On the way to his jalopy he talked to himself and citizens stared at him.

“They—will go—west, I bet,” he mumbled. “It’s the most open that way. That is how they would get over the bridge to Jersey. Imagine me not loadin’ the gun—well, who can think of everything? I will chase them through Two Hundred and Thirty-third Street as I bet they will hit for Central Avenue and then go through the park. Ugh! I was right about them rubbin’ out their pal—they sure are tough characters. Now where did I leave the boiler? Oh, I remember!”

A passerby touched Willie on the arm. “You look sick, buddy. Want some—”

“Where I have been,” Willie replied, “it was no health center!” And he got to his car and climbed in, leaving the stunned citizen looking after him.

Detective Klump shot out of Katonah Avenue into Two Hundred and Thirty-third and fed his asthmatic power plant all

the gas it could digest. He leaned forward in the seat, his tinted goggles nearly plastered against the windshield.

"Th-they won't dare speed here," he told himself, "if they're on this street, as cops might chase 'em. They will just be nonch—nonk—they'll just act natural, as they think I am dead. They didn't get too much start as they had to walk to a garage some place before—why, that is a green sedan right up ahead there, just goin' through the green light. And the light is changin'. Oh-h-h, well!"

Willie shot through a red light and took the front bumper off a delivery truck. A cop yelled, blew his whistle, but Willie Klump kept bearing down on the gas. He looked back and saw a big gendarme jump on the runningboard of a car and point toward him. Willie swung his head around again. Three explosions made themselves heard above the traffic roar, and they were not blowouts.

The President of the Hawkeye saw a design appear on his windshield and he wondered how a spider could work so fast. Bang! Bang! Something pinged close to Willie's ear and snipped off a lock of his hair just above the temple. There was plenty of air coming through the windshield now.

"They are shootin' at me," Willie hollered. "It is them all right and they did not even bother to change the color of the hot sedan. They are very cocky to say the least. Well, I will show them." With one hand he drove, with the other drew his revolver and placed the business end of the barrel against a hole in the windshield. He pulled the trigger.

"Huh," he grunted, "it still ain't loaded."

Two Hundred and Thirty-third Street became bedlam. Pedestrians dived for cover. Brakes squealed like banshees, and Willie saw an orange car try to climb the

stone wall of the Woodlawn bone orchard. Up ahead the green sedan was putting on the pep now. It slid through another red light, sent a truck up on the curb and into a drugstore. Willie for a moment thought they were erecting a new building nearby when he heard rivet hammers.

"It's a chopper!" he gulped as bullets bounced off his jalopy like hailstones. "I do not feel very good. Look *ou-u-ut!*"

THE traffic cop he yelled at leaped clear, lost his footing and slipped out of sight into a street excavation. A red lantern attached itself to Willie's front bumper as he kept on the trail of Killer Diller. Whistles were blowing and sirens shrieking until Willie thought New York was welcoming another transatlantic flyer. A big car drew abreast of him and a red-faced gendarme barked at him. Willie held up his badge.

"Killer Diller up ahead!" he bellowed. Desperately he dropped the badge and swung the wheel. A trailer truck missed him by a whisker.

Willie saw the big policeman firing at the green sedan when they got near Central Avenue. But the Killer was in there fighting. He took the policeman's chapeau off his noggin with one slug and erased the radiator cap of the commandeered boiler with another. "We'll get him when he runs short of ammunition," Willie shouted excitedly. "We'll—oh-h-h-h-h!"

A tire blew on Killer Diller's boiler, and the green sedan waddled like a disabled duck toward the curb. It sideswiped a laundry wagon, caromed off it and bounced into a filling station plaza and stood up on its nose. Willie swung that way and nearly wrecked three other cars. He was wedged in between two gas pumps when he came to.

Killer Diller crawled out of the wreck

of the hot car, some fight still left in him, but the irate filling station attendant took it out of him with a tire iron. Ripper came out and started walking around in a tight circle, brushing at the air in front of his ugly mug with outstretched lunchhooks. Ripper had as many holes in him as there had been in all the alibis he had cooked up in the past. And it was not grape juice that was trickling out of them.

"Give up?" Willie yelled at Killer Diller who was pulling himself up to his knees. "This will show you that crime does not pay."

Cops kept arriving on the scene. One of the prowl cars unloaded Satchelfoot Kelly just as a big policeman asked Willie Klump how in the world he had located the holdup citizens.

"That is easy enough," Willie said blandly, pointing to the wreck of the sedan. "There is the green car and—"

"Where?"

Willie said: "Why, over there. I guess you need glasses, too!"

"Wha-a-a-a-at? That's a *blue* car, Screwball!"

"Blue?" Willie scratched his head and took off his tinted cheaters. "Wh-why," he stammered, "it is blue, ain't it? Why—I—er—" He put the glasses on again and peeped through them. "N-now it's green! I get it, ha, ha! These colored cheaters did it. They—"

Satchelfoot Kelly sat right down in a puddle of crankcase oil and held his head in both hands.

"Yeah," Willie rambled on, "but it wasn't only that jalopy that made me wise. I saw Killer Diller in a lunchroom orderin' hamburgers to go out, and I looked at his shoes. There was blood on one of them

that showed me I was right about how I figured the case. They bumped off the character that the Hastings police wounded, and kept him in the sedan all the time restin' their feet on him, the cold-hearted brutes! Then I trailed him to where he hung out and kept the green—r—blue sedan!"

Killer Diller had his marbles back, that is, most of them. He stared down at a shoe.

"B-blood?" he stuttered. "Why, the dumb cluck—that's ketchup I spilled there when I put it on a hamburger. When ya get breaks like this, what's the use? I quit. I pay a doc five hundred to change my pan. I paint the hot jalopy blue, but what happens? It's still green to this gazebo—aw, nuts!"

"What's the use?" groaned Detective Kelly. "Why have any brains, huh? That village idiot don't have none, and he does what all the cops in New York couldn't—"

"To think I only paid ten bucks for these glasses," Willie gloated. "When do I git the reward?"

That night a picture of Willie Klump appeared in all the journals. He read one of the vivid accounts of his exploit to Gertie Mudgett who sat across the table from him in a Third Avenue oasis.

"—what the G-Men and the police of six states had failed to do, this intrepid detective—" he read.

"They still keep insulting you, don't they, Willie?" Gertie cut in indignantly. "They're just jealous, that's all. 'Insidious detective!' I wouldn't stand for it, Willie."

"H-huh?" Willie stared at her and then grinned. "We should have a very long and happy life if we get married, Gert, we are that suited to each other. But it ain't so bad bein' dumb, is it?"