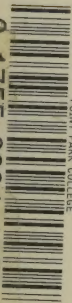


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THE FRONT PAGE

Jed Harris presents a play by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur; staged by George S. Kaufman; setting by Raymond Sovey; at the Times Square theatre Aug. 14; \$3.85 top.

Wilson, American.....	Vincent York
Endicott, Post.....	Allen Jenkins
Murphy, Journal.....	Willard Robertson
McCue, City Presse.....	William Foran
Schwartz, Daily News.....	Tammany Young
Kruger, Journal of Commerce,	Joseph Spurlin-Callela
Bensinger, Tribune.....	Walter Baldwin
Mrs. Schlosser.....	Violet Barney
"Woodenshoes" Elghorn.....	Jay Wilson
Diamond Louis.....	Eduardo Ciannelli
Hildy Johnson, Herald-Examiner.	Lee Tracy
Jennie.....	Carrie Weller
Molly Malloy.....	Dorothy Stickney
Sheriff Hartman.....	Claude Cooper
Peggy Grant.....	Frances Fuller
Mrs. Grant.....	Jessie Crommette
The Mayor.....	George Barbier
Mr. Pincus.....	Frank Conlan
Earl Williams.....	George Leach
Walter Burns.....	Osgood Perkins
Carl.....	Matthew Crowley
Frank.....	Gene West
A Policeman.....	Larry Doyle
A Policeman.....	George T. Fleming

The last room has been dramatized.

Shifting eras have held dalliance with all other rooms. The parlor comedy, the bedroom farce, the kitchen tragedy, the garret mystery, the ballroom extravaganza, the cellar thriller. There was but one room left unsung—and here it comes, with big letters on its door reading "Gents." For fear of any misunderstanding, an arrow points, with the legend: "Here It Is."

Thus enters the chain drama, and Messrs. Hecht and MacArthur are flushed with a success.

"The Front Page" is dough—dirty dough, but plenty dough. Sexless, rude, profane, roughhouse, harder than the heart of a shark, with no reverence for man, woman, God or the profession which suckled the authors and the directors, it will clean up unless it's cleaned up. It is a brilliant piece of work, so raw and cruel and brutal that its unprintable and indescribable commentaries on life pay off at one swoop by the stage all that the newspapers of all ages have ever been able to do to the stage.

Its gospel is the assinity of newspaper men taking their work any more seriously than men in other jobs do—nursing the illusion and serving it at all costs, that they are soldiers of a cause, publicists, rather than underpaid hirelings who commit every crime known to man-

kind to help make profits for publishers.

Written by two renegade reporters who thus disprove their own wheeze, "Once a newspaperman always a sap," it will pay off its 13 pieces of silver many times over. That they emancipated themselves from the despised editorial sphere is forgivable; but they came out of it with such vindictive, malicious spite—such hot hatred and cold contempt—why?

With smacking of lips they slash and slander the ancient calling that gave them bread and the opportunity to learn life. They make the beast, the butt and the bully of their story an obvious caricature of one of the ablest editors in America, one of the most beloved, one whom they both served; in their distorted chromo of him, they lie; through him and the rest of their characterizations and incidents, they lie; "The Front Page" is a masterpiece of playwriting, but it is the faker, the charlatan and the imposter that it claims the newspaperman is.

This reviewer was for seven years stationed in the Criminal Courts building in Chicago, the sole scene of "The Front Page." Many of the names employed are bona fide. The principal character, Hildy Johnson, was put in the business by the undersigned. That was when Ben Hecht was unheard of and Charlie MacArthur was in diapers. The men who covered that high spot of news were as much like the rats and lice pictured in this play as honest bourbon is like bootleg booze.

But how many will realize or believe it? "The Front Page" is so convincing, so moving so thrilling and so amusing that millions will accept it as living truth. Truth is no essential of the drama. Daily life bristles with truth, and is pretty dull. But the appearance of truth across footlights by skillful dramatization and spectacular acting is mighty.

Veteran reporters that Hecht and MacArthur are, they still pass up rule No. 1 of their old training, "Play the woman angle." There isn't any to speak of in this piece. It is mostly concerned with the atmosphere (and odor) surrounding reporters at work, their frame of mind, their intercourses, their sneers and jeers at the silly public that reads their hop, the predatory and soulless impulses of editors, the crookedness and stupidity of public officials, the larceny

BOOK RACKET ON
BACK COVER

that is in us all, and the joke of justice.

The story is quite thin. One reporter, in love, has decided to quit the racket and go advertising man—pictured somewhat as though he were a safe-blower determined by a woman's salutary influence to shoot square. But he can't. For one thing, that "newspaper instinct," pictured as something not commendable, grips him; for another, he is a valuable newsgetter, and so his managing editor cajoles him, defrauds him, robs him, then frames him to keep him in the bonds of peonage.

Through this runs a sub-story of a political victim condemned to the gallows, to be executed as a sop to the negro vote, for he murdered a colored cop. There is a jail break and an escape, a suicide (as cold blooded a piece of business as was ever seen on a civilized stage), all manner of double-cross, gunplay, skullduggery, alley language, banality, venality, mendacity, audacity and idiocy.

Yet the tension never breaks, the climaxes are tremendous, the suspense is terrific, the comedy is explosive and the action is progressive. Reeking with words that have never been uttered across footlights before, rattling with reckless observations on the few remaining topics never before stripped for public exhibition, ringing with irony that spares nothing for a laugh, "The Front Page" is an extraordinary opus. It is a far step in a new, if not savory, direction for the native theatre.

Kaufman's direction, for what it set out to accomplish, is colossal. The casting is inspired and the acting superb. No discounting Jed Harris as one of the truly marvelous showmen of all times.

Lee Tracy, as Hildy Johnson, duplicates his song-and-dance man of "Broadway," and that is the last gasp in performance. Osgood Perkins, as the managing editor, is too good; he makes an overdrawn and impossible role so plausible and so surefire that the more's the pity. Dorothy Stickney, of the memorable "Chicago" hit, does her little chippie with cunning and power. Claude Cooper as the thieving, conniving sheriff, turns in the top exhibit of his life. Even Tammany Young has been taught to act.

Cinch hit for the box office unless heavily deleted, which is hardly likely. Barring accidents, should run the season.

Lait.

PITTSBURGH PLAYHOUSE
222 CRAFT AVE.
PITTSBURGH, PA.

The Front Page

BY

BEN HECHT

AND

CHARLES MAC ARTHUR

Introduction by Jed Harris

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To
MADISON
AND
CLARK STREETS

INTRODUCTION

Before I began to work in the theatre I thought that playwrights were the most glamorous fellows in the world. I pictured them strolling into the palatial offices of great impresarios, or into heady boudoirs of famous stars, always imperturbable and epigrammatic—exquisites to the tips of their fingers. Where I got this cock-eyed idea I don't know.

But I do know that authors are rarely as arresting as their plays. And I have learned from experience that a pretty good play can be written by an idiot. In fact, I can assure you that in a group of successful playwrights you are likely to discover as distinguished a body of men as you might find at an Elks' outing.

All the more pleasant then to devote these lines to such brilliantly unorthodox gentlemen as the authors of "The Front Page."

For here is a play which reflects miraculously the real as well as the literary personalities of the playwrights. Every line of it glows with a demoniacal humor, sordid, insolent and mischievous to the point of downright perversity, in which one instantly recognizes the heroic comic spirit of its authors.

Ben Hecht and Charlie MacArthur are the Katzenjammer kids of the theatre. At once sophisticated and artless, they desire little more than to upset "der Kaptain" occasionally. "Der Kaptain" is anyone who aspires to authority, dignity, or any other pretenses which our heroes regard as bogus. In the slightly exaggerated but all too human character of the Sheriff in "The Front Page" they have achieved a comic portrait in the Shakespearian manner of low comedy and, I think, the best of its kind since the boards of the old Globe first creaked under the official boots of the hallowed Dogberry.

Both Hecht and MacArthur owe their literary origins to the newspapers of Chicago. Famous crime reporters, their talents were first cradled in the recounting of great exploits in arson, rape, murder, gang war and municipal politics. Out of a welter of jail-breaks, hangings, floods and whore-house raidings, they have gathered the rich, savory characters who disport themselves on the stage of the Times Square Theatre.

And though they would be the last to acknowledge it, because they are terrified of the word "charm," they have nevertheless written "The Front Page" with a more innocent and unsynthetic charm than I have ever found in Barrie. In an original manuscript almost devoid of stage directions I found this:

"Jennie, the scrublady enters. The reporters rise and give her an ovation."

And in an age when the theatre seems imprisoned in a vise of literal and superficial realism, a paradise for the journeymen and hacks who infest the Authors League of America, and in a day when the successful portrayal of a newspaper reporter is accomplished by attaching to the person of the actor a hip-flask and a copy of the *American Mercury*, it is soothing and reassuring to stumble on a stage reporter who begins an interview in this innocent fashion:

“Is it true, Madame, that you were the victim of a Peeping Tom?”

JED HARRIS.

THIS PLAY WAS BEAUTIFULLY
PRODUCED BY JED HARRIS AT
THE TIMES SQUARE THEATRE,
NEW YORK, AUGUST 14, 1928.

STAGED BY GEORGE S. KAUFMAN.

CHARACTERS

WILSON, *American*

ENDICOTT, *Post*

MURPHY, *Journal*

MCCUE, *City News Bureau*

SCHWARTZ, *Daily News*

KRUGER, *Journal of Commerce*

BENSINGER, *Tribune*

MRS. SCHLOSSER

WOODENSHOES EICHHORN

DIAMOND LOUIE

HILDY JOHNSON, *Herald-Examiner*

JENNIE

MOLLIE MALLOY

SHERIFF HARTMAN

PEGGY GRANT

MRS. GRANT

THE MAYOR

MR. PINCUS

EARL WILLIAMS

WALTER BURNS

TONY

CARL

POLICEMEN, CITIZENS

SCENES

*The scene is the Press Room in the
Criminal Courts Building, Chicago.*

ACT I:

Eight-thirty o'clock on a Friday night.

ACT II:

Shortly afterward.

ACT III:

A few minutes later.

The Front Page

ACT I

This is the Press Room in the Criminal Courts Building, Chicago; a chamber set aside by the City Fathers for the use of journalists and their friends.

It is a bare, disordered room, peopled by newspapermen in need of shaves, pants pressing and small change. Hither reporters are drawn by an irresistible lure, the privilege of telephoning free.

There are seven telephones in the place, communicating with the seven newspapers of Chicago.

All are free.

An equally important lure is the continuous poker game that has been going on now for a generation, presumably with the same pack of cards.

Here is the rendezvous of some of the most able and amiable bums in the newspaper business; here they meet to gossip, play cards, sleep off jags and date up waitresses between such murders, fires, riots and other public events as concern them.

The furniture is the simplest; two tables, an assortment of chairs, spittoons and waste baskets, a water cooler, etc.—two dollars worth of dubious firewood, all told.

There is one elegant item, however; a huge, ornate black walnut desk, the former property of Mayor Fred A. Busse, deceased about 1904. It now belongs to Roy Bensinger, feature writer for the Chicago Tribune and a fanatic on the subject of hygiene.

Despite Mr. Bensinger's views, his desk is the repository for soiled linen, old sandwiches, empty bottles and other items shed by his colleagues.

The two tables serve as telephone desks, gaming boards and (in a pinch) as lits d'amour.

The electric lights are naked of shades.

The walls, unpainted since the building was erected in 1885, sport a frieze of lithographs, hand painted studies, rotogravure cuttings and heroic pencil sketches, all on the same theme: Woman. The political unrest of the journalists is represented by an unfavorable picture of Kaiser Wilhelm II, hand drawn.

At the stage left is a door, labelled "Gents".

At the back is a double door, opening on the main corridor of the building.

At the stage right are two high, old fashioned windows overlooking the Cook county jail.

It is eight-thirty at night.

Four men are playing poker at the main table in the center of the room. They are Murphy of the

Journal, Endicott of the Post, Schwartz of the News and Wilson of the American; four braves known to their kind as police reporters. Katatonic, seedy Paul Reveres, full of strange oaths and a touch of childhood.

Off by himself in a chair sits Ernie Kruger, a somnolent reporter for the Journal of Commerce. Ernie is gifted beyond his comrades. He plays the banjo and sings. He is dreamily rendering his favorite piece: "By the Light of the Silvery Moon" as the poker game progresses.

McCue of the City News Bureau is telephoning at Bensinger's desk through the gamblers' chatter. He is calling all the police stations, hospitals, etc. on behalf of his companions, in a never-ending quest for news. His reiterations, whined in a manner intended to be ingratiating, have in them the monotonous bally-hoo wail of the Press.

And so:

THE CARD PLAYERS: Crack it for a dime. . . .
By me. . . . I stay. . . . Me too. . . . I'm behind again. . . . I was even a couple of minutes ago. . . . Papers? . . . Three. . . . Two. . . . Three to the dealer.

MCCUE *into phone:* Kenwood three four hundred. . . . *Another telephone rings.* Hey, take that, one of you guys. Ernie, you're not doing anything.

They pay no attention. With a sigh, McCue props one telephone receiver against his ear; reaches over and answers the other phone. What's the matter with you guys? Are you all crippled or something? Into second phone: Press room! Suddenly he gives attention to the first phone. Hello, Sarge . . . McCue. Hold the line a minute. Back to second phone. No, I told you it was the press room. Hangs up; takes first phone again. Anything doing, Sarge? . . . All right. Thank you, Sarge. Hangs up.

THE CARD PLAYERS: What are you waiting for? How'd I know you were out? Two Johns. Ladies, *etc.*

McCUE: Robey four five hundred.

MURPHY: Ernie! Take that mouth organ in the can and play it! *The music swells a little in reply.*

ENDICOTT: These cards are like washrags.

WILSON: Let's chip in for a new deck.

SCHWARTZ: These are good enough—I'm eighty cents out already!

McCUE *into phone*: Is this the home of Mrs. F. D. Margolies?

MURPHY: I'd like a deck with some aces in it.

McCUE *cordially, into phone*: This is Mr. McCue of the City News Bureau. . . . Is it true, Madame, that you were the victim of a Peeping Tom?

KRUGER: Ask her if she's worth peeping at.

WILSON: Has she got a friend?

McCue *into phone*: Now, that ain't the right attitude to take, Madame. All we want is the facts. . . . Well, what did this Peeping Tom look like? I mean, for instance, would you say he looked like a college professor?

ENDICOTT: Tell her I can run up for an hour.

KRUGER: I'll accommodate her if she'll come down here.

SCHWARTZ: By me.

McCUE *into phone*: Just a minute, Madame. Is it true, Mrs. Margolies, that you took the part of Pocahontas in the Elks' Pageant seven years ago? . . . Hello. *To the others*: She hung up.

MURPHY: The hell with her! A dime. *The fire-alarm box, over the door, begins to ring.*

ENDICOTT: Where's that fire?

WILSON: Three-two-one!

SCHWARTZ: Clark and Erie.

KRUGER *wearily as he strums*: Too far.

McCUE *into phone*: Harrison four thousand.

SCHWARTZ *rises; stretching; ambles over and looks out the window*: Oh, Christ!—what time is it, anyway?

WILSON: Half past eight. *Rises; goes to the water cooler.*

MURPHY *drawing cards*: One off the top.

WILSON: How's the wife, Ed? Any better?

SCHWARTZ: Worse.

WILSON: That's tough.

SCHWARTZ: Sitting here all night, waiting for 'em to hang this bastard! *A gesture toward the jail.*

KRUGER: It's hard work, all right.

McCUE *into phone*: Hello, Sarge? McCue. Anything doing? . . . Yeah? That's swell. . . . *The players pause.* A love triangle, huh? . . . Did he kill her? . . . Killed 'em *both!* Ah! . . . Was she good looking? . . . *A pause. With vast disgust.* What? Oh, Niggers! *The players relax.*

KRUGER: That's a *break*.

McCUE: No, never mind—thank you, Sarge. *Jiggles receiver.* Englewood, six eight hundred. *The Examiner phone rings. It is on the main table. Endicott answers.*

ENDICOTT *into phone*: Criminal Courts press room. . . . No, Hildy Johnson ain't here. . . . Oh, hello, Mr. Burns. . . . No, he ain't here yet, Mr. Burns. *Hangs up.* Walter Burns again. Something must have happened.

SCHWARTZ: I'm telling you what's happened. Hildy quit.

MURPHY: What do you mean, quit? He's a fixture on the Examiner.

KRUGER: Yeh! He goes with the woodwork.

SCHWARTZ: I got it from Bert Neeley. I'm *telling* you—he's gettin' married.

MURPHY: Walter woudn't let him get married. He'd kidnap him at the altar.

McCUE *into phone*: Hello, Sarge. McCue. Anything doing?

ENDICOTT: Remember what he did to Bill Fenton, when he wanted to go to Hollywood? Had him thrown into jail for arson.

MURPHY: Forgery.

McCUE: Shut up! . . . *Into phone*: Anybody hurt? . . . Oh, fine! What's his name? . . . Spell it. . . . S. . . . C. . . . Z. . . . J. . . . Oh, the hell with it. *Hangs up.*

ENDICOTT: A guy ain't going to walk out on a job when he's drawing down seventy bucks a week.

SCHWARTZ: Yeah? Well, if he ain't quit, why ain't he here covering the hanging?

McCUE *into phone*: Give me rewrite.

ENDICOTT: Walter sounded like he was having a hemorrhage.

McCUE *into phone*: Hello, Emil. Nothing new on the hanging. But here's a big scoop for you.

SCHWARTZ: I wish to God *I* could quit.

KRUGER: You'd think he'd come in and say goodbye.

MURPHY: That Swede bastard!

McCUE: Shut up, fellas. *Into phone*: Ready, Emil? *He intones*: Dr. Irving Zobel—Z for Zebra—O for onion—B for baptize—E for anything and L for Lousy—

CARD PLAYERS: Pass. . . . By me. . . . Crack it for a dime. . . . Stay.

McCUE *into phone*: Yes, Zobel! That's right! With offices at sixteen-o-eight Cottage Grove Avenue. Well, this bird was arrested to-night on complaint of a lot of angry husbands. They claim he was treating their wives with electricity for a dollar a smack.

MURPHY: Is the Electric Teaser in again?

McCUE *intoning into phone*: He had a big following, a regular army of fat old dames that was being neglected by their husbands. So they was visiting this Dr. Zobel in their kimonas to get electricity.

ENDICOTT: I understand he massages them too.

McCUE *into phone*: Anyhow, the Doctor is being held for mal-practice and the station is full of his patients who claim he's innocent. But from what the husbands say it looks like he's a Lothario. All right. *Hangs up; jiggles receiver.*

MURPHY: Hey, Ernie, why don't you go in for electricity instead of the banjo? *Bensinger enters. He is a studious and slightly neurotic fellow who stands out like a sore thumb owing to his tidy appearance.*

KRUGER: It's got no future.

McCUE *into phone*: Sheridan two thousand.

BENSINGER *with horror*: What the hell, Mac! Is that the only telephone in the place?

McCUE: It's the only one with a mouthpiece on it. *This is true.*

MURPHY *putting down his hand*: Read 'em and weep. *Takes the pot. Prepares to deal.*

BENSINGER *howling*: How many times have I got to tell you fellows to leave my phone alone? If you've got to talk through a mouthpiece go *buy* one, like I did!

MURPHY: Aw, shut up, Listerine.

McCUE *at another phone*: Sheridan two thousand.

BENSINGER: My God, I'm trying to keep this phone clean and I'm not going to have you fellows coughing and spitting in it, either, or pawing it with your hands!

SCHWARTZ: What is this—a hospital or something?

ENDICOTT: How's that pimple coming along, Roy?

BENSINGER *pulling a suit of dirty underwear from a drawer of his desk*: And you don't have to use this desk for a toilet!

MURPHY: Yeah? Well, suppose you quit stinking up this place with your God dam antiseptics for a change! *Removing a mouldy piece of pie from a desk drawer.*

BENSINGER *wailing*: Ain't you guys got any self-respect?

McCUE *into phone*: Hello, Sarge! . . . *McCue*. Congratulations on that Polack capture, Sarge. I hear you're going to be promoted. Anything doing?

THE CARD PLAYERS: Nickel. . . . Up a dime. . . . Drop. . . . Stay.

McCUE *into phone*: Yeah? . . . Just a second, Sarge. . . . *To the players*: Nice little feature, fellas. Little kid, golden curls, everything, lost out

near Grand Crossing. The cops are feeding her candy.

MURPHY: What else are they doing to her?

McCUE: Don't you want it?

SCHWARTZ: No!

ENDICOTT: Stick it!

WILSON: All yours. *Starts to deal a new hand.*

McCUE *into phone*: Never mind, Sarge. Thank you, Sarge. *McCue hangs up.*

SCHWARTZ: Anything new on the hanging, Bensinger?

WILSON *dealing*: My deal, ain't it?

MURPHY: Hey! Zonite!

BENSINGER: What is it?

MURPHY: Question before the house: Gentleman wants to know what's new on the hanging.

BENSINGER: Nothing special.

KRUGER *with a yawn*: Did you see the sheriff?

BENSINGER *bitterly*: Why don't you get your own news?

KRUGER *philosophically*: Somebody ought to see the sheriff.

ENDICOTT: Anyhow, this looks like the last hanging we'll ever have to cover.

SCHWARTZ: Yeah. Can you imagine their putting in an electric chair? That's awful.

ENDICOTT: Going to toast them, like Lucky Strikes.

MURPHY: Who opened?

SCHWARTZ: What's the matter? Got a hand? *Mrs. Schlosser enters. She is the wife of Herman Schlosser, of the Examiner. Mrs. S. once used to go to dances, movies and ice cream parlors and she is still pretty, although shop-worn. If she is a bit acidulated, tight-lipped and sharp-spoken, no one can blame her, least of all these bravos of the press room, who have small respect for themselves or each other as husbands, fathers and lovers.*

ENDICOTT *as guiltily as if he were the errant Mr. Schlosser*: Hello, Mrs. Schlosser. Herman hasn't been in yet.

McCUE: Hello, Mrs. Schlosser. Have you tried the Harrison Street Station? *Helpfully*: He may be sleeping in the squad room.

SCHWARTZ *bitterly*: What became of that rule about women coming into this press room?

MURPHY: Yeah—I don't let my *own* wife come in here.

MRS. SCHLOSSER *inexorably*: Did he have any money left when you saw him?

McCUE: Well, I didn't exactly see him. Did you, Mike?

ENDICOTT: No, I didn't really see him either.

MRS. SCHLOSSER *like twenty wives*: Oh, you didn't? Well, was he still drinking?

McCUE *with unconvincing zeal*: I tell you what, I'll call up the grand jury room if you want. Sometimes he goes to sleep up there.

MRS. SCHLOSSER: Don't trouble yourself! I notice Hildy Johnson ain't here either. I suppose the two of them are out sopping it up together.

SCHWARTZ: Now, you oughn't to talk that way, Mrs. Schlosser. Hildy's reformed—he's gettin' married.

MRS. SCHLOSSER: Married? Well, all I can say is, God help his wife!

MURPHY: Come on—are we playing cards or aren't we?

MRS. SCHLOSSER: I suppose you've cleaned Herman out.

WILSON *a nervous husband in his own right*: Honest, Mrs. Schlosser, we ain't seen him.

MRS. SCHLOSSER *bitterly*: He can't come home. I kept dinner waiting till eleven o'clock last night and he never even called up.

ENDICOTT: Well, why pick on us?

KRUGER: Yeah—we're busy.

A phone rings.

ENDICOTT *answering it*: Press room!

MRS. SCHLOSSER: You know where he is. You're covering up for him.

McCUE: Honest to God, Mrs. Schlosser—

ENDICOTT *into phone*: . . . No, Mr. Burns, Hildy ain't showed up yet.

MRS. SCHLOSSER: Is that Walter Burns? Let me talk to him!

ENDICOTT *into phone*: Just a minute, Mr. Burns. Herman Schlosser's wife wants to talk to you.

MRS. SCHLOSSER *taking the phone; honeyed and polite*: Hello, Mr. Burns.

MURPHY: Come on—who opened?

ENDICOTT: Check it.

MURPHY: A dime.

MRS. SCHLOSSER: This is Mrs. Schlosser. . . . Oh, I'm very well, thank you. . . . Mr. Burns, I was just wondering if you knew where Herman was. He didn't come home last night, and you know it was pay day. . . . *Tearfully*: But it won't be all right. I'm just going crazy. . . . I've done that, but

the cashier won't give it to me. . . . So I thought maybe if you gave me some sort of order—oh, will you, Mr. Burns? That's awfully nice of you. . . . I'm sorry to have to do a thing like that, but you know how Herman is about money. Thank you ever so much. *Hangs up; turns on the reporters viciously.* You're all alike, every one of you! You ought to be ashamed of yourselves!

MURPHY: All right, we're ashamed. *To Wilson:* A dime's bet.

MRS. SCHLOSSER: Sitting around like a lot of dirty, drunken tramps! Poker! *She grabs Murphy's cards.*

MURPHY *leaping up in fury:* Here! Gimme those! What the hell!

MRS. SCHLOSSER: You know where he is, and I'm going to stay right here till I find out!

MURPHY: He's at Hockstetter's, that's where he is! Now give me those cards!

MRS. SCHLOSSER: Where?

WILSON: The Turkish Bath on Madison Street!

ENDICOTT: In the basement!

MURPHY: Give me those!

MRS. SCHLOSSER: So! You did know. *Murphy*

nervously awaits his cards. Liars! She throws the cards face up on the table.

MURPHY *as she throws them*: Hey! They spread out on the table.

MRS. SCHLOSSER: You're a bunch of gentlemen, I must say! Newspapermen! Bums! *Exits.*

MURPHY *almost in tears*: Look! The second straight flush I ever held.

ENDICOTT: Jesus!

MURPHY: Eight, nine, ten, jack, and queen of spades. If I was married to that dame I'd kick her humpbacked.

BENSINGER *having cleansed his telephone with a dab of absorbent cotton and a bottle of antiseptic*: into phone: City Desk!

ENDICOTT *gathering the cards together*: I don't know what gets into women. I took Bob Brody home the other night and his wife broke his arm with a broom.

BENSINGER *having collected his notes, and thoroughly protected himself from contagion by wrapping a piece of paper around the handle of his telephone*: Shut up, you fellows! Into phone: This is Bensinger. Here's a new lead on the Earl Williams hanging. . . . Yeah, I just saw the sheriff. He

won't move the hanging up a minute. . . . I don't care *who* he promised. . . . All right, I'll talk to him again, but it's no use. The execution is set for seven o'clock in the morning.

KRUGER *to the tune of "Three O'clock in the Morning"*; *sings*: Seven o'clock in the morning—

BENSINGER: Shut up Ernie. . . . *Into phone*. Give me a rewrite man.

KRUGER *morose*: Why can't they jerk these guys at a reasonable hour, so we can get some sleep.

BENSINGER *to the room*: I asked the sheriff to move it up to five, so we could make the City Edition. Just because I asked him to, he wouldn't.

MURPHY: That guy wouldn't do anything for his mother.

KRUGER: He gives a damn if we stay up all night!

ENDICOTT: You've got no kick coming. I've had two dinners home in the last month.

BENSINGER *into phone*: Hello. Jake? . . . New lead on the Williams hanging. And listen—don't put Hartman's name in it. Just say "the Sheriff." *The reporters listen*. Ready? . . . The condemned man ate a hearty dinner. . . . Yeah, Mock turtle soup, chicken pot pie, hashed brown potatoes, combination salad, and pie a la mode.

KRUGER: Make mine the same.

BENSINGER *into phone*: No—I don't know *what* kind of pie.

MURPHY: Eskimo!

McCUE *wistfully*: I wish I had a hamburger sandwich.

BENSINGER *into phone*: And, Jake, get this in as a big favor. The whole dinner was furnished by Charlie Apfel. . . . Yeah—Apfel. A for adenoids, P for psychology, F for Frank, E for Eddie, and L for—ah—

MURPHY: Lay an egg.

BENSINGER: Proprietor of the Apfel—wants—to—see—you—restaurant.

WILSON: That means a new hat for *somebody*.
A soft cadenza from the banjo.

MURPHY: I better catch the fudge, fellas. *Without dropping his cards, Murphy picks up a telephone. He pantomimes for three cards.*

BENSINGER *into phone*: Now here's the situation on the eve of the hanging. The officials are prepared for a general uprising of radicals at the hour of execution, but the Sheriff still refuses to be intimidated by the Red menace.

MURPHY *into his phone, while accepting three*

cards: Give me a rewrite man, will you? . . . Yeah. Some more crap on the Earl Williams hanging.

BENSINGER into phone, as the reporters listen: A double guard has just been thrown around the jail, the municipal buildings, railroad terminals, and elevated stations. Also, the Sheriff has just received four more letters threatening his life. He is going to answer these threats by a series of raids against the Friends of American Liberty and other Bolshevik organizations. Call you later. *Hangs up.*

SCHWARTZ: Bet a dime.

MURPHY into phone: Ready? . . . Sheriff Hartman has just put two hundred more relatives on the payroll to protect the city against the Red army, which is leaving Moscow in a couple of minutes. *Consults his hand.* Up a dime. *Back to phone.* And to prove to the voters that the Red menace is on the square, he has just wrote himself four more letters threatening his life. I know he wrote them on account of the misspelling.

ENDICOTT: Drop.

MURPHY into phone: That's all, except the doomed man ate a hearty dinner. As follows: Noodle soup, rustabiff, sweet a-potat', cranberry sauce, and pie-a-la mud.

SCHWARTZ: I raise another dime.

MURPHY *consults his cards*: Wait a minute. Up again. *Back to phone*. Statement from who? The Sheriff? . . . Quote him for anything you want—he can't read. *Hangs up*. *Bensinger's phone rings*.

THE CARD PLAYERS: Call. . . . Three bullets. . . . Pay at this window. . . . Shuffle that deck. . . . I get the same hand every time.

BENSINGER *answering his phone*: What? *To McCue, as Schwartz starts to shuffle*. Didn't you send that in about the new alienist?

McCUE *flat on his back on the smaller table*: I got my hands full with the stations.

BENSINGER *into phone*: All right, I'll give you what I got. Dr. Max J. Eglehofer. From Vienna. There's a dozen envelopes on him in the morgue. . . . Well, he's going to examine Williams at the request of—ah—wait a minute—*Shuffles through his notes*—the United Federation for World Betterment.

KRUGER: I'm for that.

BENSINGER: Sure—He's one of the biggest alienists in the world. He's the author of that book, "The Personality Gland."

McCUE: And where to put it.

BENSINGER *modestly into phone*: He just autographed it for me.

MURPHY: Did he bite his initials in your pants, too? . . . Nickel.

KRUGER *into phone lazily*: Give me the City Desk!

BENSINGER *into phone*: All right. He's going to examine him in about fifteen minutes. I'll let you know. *He hangs up and resumes his study of "The Personality Gland."*

KRUGER *very tired*: Kruger calling! Nothing new on the hanging.

SCHWARTZ: Say, how about roodles on straights or better? I want to get some of my dough back.

WILSON: Hey, I thought we weren't going to give them alienists any more free advertising.

ENDICOTT: That's the fourteenth pair of whiskers they called in on this God damned case.

MURPHY: Them alienists make me sick. All they do is goose you and send you a bill for five hundred bucks.

McCUE *into phone*: This is McCue. . . . Looks like the hanging's coming off at seven all right. . . . Yeah, the Governor's gone fishing and can't be found. . . . No, fishing. *From the direction of the jail comes a sudden whirr and crash.* They're testing the gallows now. . . . Yeah—testing 'em, with sandbags. . . . Maybe you can hear 'em. *He*

holds up phone towards window and laughs pleasantly. Then, bitterly: What? The same to you! Hangs up. Another whirr and crash.

SCHWARTZ: I wish they'd quit practising. It makes me nervous.

WILSON: Up a dime.

KRUGER *yelling out of window*: Hey, Jacobi! Quit playing with that gallus! How do you expect us to do any *work*?

VOICE FROM JAIL YARD: Cut that yelling, you God damned bums!

McCUE: Ain't much respect for the press around here. *The fire alarm sounds the same number as before.*

McCUE: That's a second alarm, ain't it?

MURPHY: Who cares?

KRUGER *motionless*: Probably some orphanage.

MURPHY: Maybe it's another cat-house. Remember when Big Minnie's burned down, and the Mayor of Galesburg came running out? *A phone rings.*

THE CARD PLAYERS: Dime. . . . I call. . . . Two sixes, *etc.*

McCUE *answering phone*: What? The Mayor's office! *To the rest*: Maybe a statement.

KRUGER: Tell 'em we're busy.

McCUE *into phone*: Hello. *Then exuberantly*: Hello you God damn Swede! *To the others*: It's Hildy.

MURPHY: What's he doing in the Mayor's office?

McCUE *into phone*: What? What's that? What? *To the others*: He's stinko! *Into phone*: What are you doing with the Mayor?

MURPHY: If he's got any left tell him to bring it over.

McCUE *into phone*: Huh? Kissing him good-bye?

ENDICOTT: Tell him to come over and kiss us.

MURPHY: I'm getting ready.

McCUE *into phone*: Well hurry up. *To the room*: He's stepping high.

MURPHY: What did he say?

KRUGER: Is he coming over?

McCUE: That's what he said.

THE CARD PLAYERS: Pass. . . . By me. . . . Take a deal, *etc.* *Woodenshoes Eichhorn enters. He is a big, moon-faced, childish and incompetent German policeman.*

BENSINGER: Hello, Woodenshoes. Got any news?

WOODENSHOES *solemnly*: I just been over to the death house. Did you hear what Earl Williams said to the priest?

ENDICOTT: Aw, forget it!

MURPHY: The paper's full of the hanging now. We ain't got room for the ads.

BENSINGER *looking up from his book*: What did he say, Woodenshoes?

WOODENSHOES *awed*: He says to the priest that he was innocent.

MURPHY: Do you know any more jokes?

WOODENSHOES: Well, I'm just telling you what he says.

MURPHY: I suppose that copper committed suicide. Or maybe it was a love pact.

WOODENSHOES: Well, Williams has got a very good explanation for that.

ENDICOTT *derisively, to the reporters*: He'll start crying in a minute. *To Woodenshoes*: Why don't you send him some roses, like Mollie Malloy?

SCHWARTZ: Yeah. She thinks he's innocent, too.

WOODENSHOES: You fellas don't understand. He admits killing the policeman, but he claims they're just using that as an excuse to hang him, on account he's a radical. But the thing that gets me—

MCCUE: Before you go on, Woodenshoes, would you mind running down to the corner and getting me a hamburger sandwich?

WOODENSHOES *patiently*: Personally, my feeling is that Earl Williams is a dual personality type on account of the way his head is shaped. It's a typical case of psychology. *The card game goes on.* Now you take the events leading up to the crime; his hanging a red flag out of the window on Washington's Birthday. That ain't normal, to begin with. The officer ought to have realized when he went up there that he was dealing with a lunatic. I'm against having colored policemen on the force, anyway. And I'll tell you why—

ENDICOTT *suddenly*: Make that two hamburgers, will you, Woodenshoes, like a good fellow?

WOODENSHOES *hurt*: I thought you fellas might be interested in the psychological end of it. None of the papers have touched that aspect.

MURPHY *profound, but casual*: Listen, Woodenshoes, this guy Williams is just a bird that had the tough luck to kill a nigger policeman in a town where the nigger vote is important.

KRUGER: Sure! If he'd bumped him off down south they'd have given him a banquet and a trip to Europe.

McCUE: Oh, the South ain't so bad. How about Russia, where they kill all the Jews and nobody says anything?

MURPHY: Williams was a bonanza for the City Hall. He gets hung—everybody gets elected on a law and order platform.

ENDICOTT: "Reform the Reds with a Rope."

WILSON *makes an unprintable sound.*

MURPHY: When that baby drops through the trap tomorrow, it's a million votes. He's just a divine accident. Bet a dime.

WOODENSHOES *blinking thru the above*: That's it—an accident. He didn't know it was a policeman, even. Why, when this officer woke him up—

McCUE *tolerantly*: Sure. You're right, Wooden-shoes. And ask 'em to put a lot of ketchup on one of them sandwiches, will you?

WILSON *sore*: I haven't filled a hand all night. *Diamond Louie, a ham gun man, enters. He is sleek, bejewelled and sinister to everybody but the caballeros of the Press room, who knew him when he ran a fruit stand. He is greeted with unction.*

LOUIE: Hello, fellows.

SCHWARTZ: Well, well, well! Diamond Louie!

MURPHY: If it ain't the Kid himself! Oooh! Look at the pop bottles!

McCUE: Hurry up, Woodenshoes! I'm starving!

KRUGER: Get one for me, Woodenshoes!

BENSINGER: Make mine a plain lettuce—on gluten bread.

WOODENSHOES *blinking*: Where am I gonna get the dough for all these eats?

McCUE: Charge it.

MURPHY: You got a badge, ain't you? What's it good for?

WOODENSHOES *shuffling out*. Four hamburgers and a lettuce.

DIAMOND LOUIE: Where's Hildy Johnson?

ENDICOTT *rudely*: Up in Minnie's room.

MURPHY: Who wants to know?

KRUGER: Say Louie, I hear your old gang is going to bump off Kinky White.

DIAMOND LOUIE *with sinister reticence*: Is that so?

MURPHY: Better wait till after election or you won't make the front page.

ENDICOTT: Yeah. We had to spike that Willie Mercer killing.

DIAMOND LOUIE: Well, I'll tell you. I'm off that racket. I don't even associate with them fellas, any more.

MURPHY: Go on! You gotta kill somebody every day or you don't get any supper.

DIAMOND LOUIE: No. No kiddin'. I'm practically retired, you know what I mean?

SCHWARTZ: Retired from what? You never carried anything but a bean blower!

DIAMOND LOUIE: All joking aside. Honest. I'm one of you fellas now. I'm in the newspaper game.

MURPHY *with scorn*: You're what?

ENDICOTT: He's gettin' delusions of grandeur.

DIAMOND LOUIE: Yeah. That's right. I'm a newspaperman . . . working for Walter Burns.

WILSON: What!

ENDICOTT *very politely*: What you doin' for Burns? A little pimping?

MURPHY: He's marble editor.

DIAMOND LOUIE *with dignity*: I'm assistant circulation manager for de nort' side.

WILSON: Got a title and everything.

ENDICOTT: Burns'll be hiring animal acts next.

SCHWARTZ: What d'ye want Hildy for? Tail-
ing him for Walter?

ENDICOTT: What do you know about that,
Louie. We hear he's quit the Examiner.

McCUE: Yeah. What's the dope, Louie?

DIAMOND LOUIE: Well, I don't think it's per-
manent, you know what I mean?

SCHWARTZ: What the hell happened?

ENDICOTT: They must of murdered each other,
the way Walter sounded.

DIAMOND LOUIE: Naaaa! Just a little per-
sonal argument. Nothin' serious.

McCUE: Come on . . . what's the dirt?

DIAMOND LOUIE: I don't know a single thing
about it.

McCUE: Should we tell Hildy you were lookin'
for him?

DIAMOND LOUIE *with affected nonchalance*:
No. Never mind. *Again the whirr and crash of the
gallows. Louie looks.* What's that?

ENDICOTT: They're fixin' up a pain in the neck
for somebody.

DIAMOND LOUIE *with a genteel lift of his eye-
brows*: Hah! Mr. Weeliams!

MURPHY: They'll be doing that for you some day.

DIAMOND LOUIE *very flattered*: Maybe. *To the players*: Well—keep your eye on the dealer. *He starts to leave.*

MURPHY *turning from the card game for the first time*: Wait a second, Louie. *Diamond Louie pauses politely*: Come here. *As Diamond Louie approaches*: Where do you keep your cap pistol? . . . Here? *He gooses Diamond Louie.*

DIAMOND LOUIE *with a leap*: Hey! For God's sake! Look out, will you! Jesus, that's a hell of a thing to do! . . . *He exits angrily.*

ENDICOTT *calling after him*: Call again, Louie.

MURPHY: Any time you're in the building.

KRUGER: And don't bump off anybody before election day.

MURPHY *sadly*: Louie hasn't got much self control.

ENDICOTT: What do you know about Hildy? Looks like he's quit, all right.

WILSON: Yeah . . . What do you think of that?

ENDICOTT: There won't be any good reporters left after awhile.

MURPHY *gently*: No. Mossie Enright getting stewed and falling down the elevator shaft. And poor old Larry Malm.

SCHWARTZ: And Carl Pancake that disappeared.
A phone rings.

ENDICOTT *answering it*: Hello . . . Oh hello, Mr. Burns. Why, he was in the mayor's office a few minutes ago . . . *Hildy Johnson enters. He is a happy-go-lucky Swede with a pants kicking sense of humor. He is barbered and tailored like a normal citizen—a fact which at once excites the wonder and mirth of his colleagues. Hildy is of a vanishing type—the lusty, hoodlumesque half drunken caballero that was the newspaperman of our youth. Schools of journalism and the advertising business have nearly extirpated the species. Now and then one of these boys still pops up in the profession and is hailed by his editor as a survival of a golden age. The newspapermen who have already appeared in this press room, are in reality similar survivals. Their presence under one roof is due to the fact that Chicago is a sort of journalistic Yellowstone Park offering haven to a last herd of fantastic bravos that once roamed the newspaper offices of the country. Mr. Johnson carries a new suitcase, two paper parcels and—a cane! A rowdy outburst succeeds his entrance.*

MURPHY *loudly*: Ooh! Lookit the cane! What are you doing? Turning fairy?

McCUE: Yum, yum! Kiss me!

WILSON: Where the hell you been?

ENDICOTT: Walter Burns on the wire, Hildy.

HILDY: What's that?

McCUE: What's the matter, Hildy? My God! He's got a shave!

SCHWARTZ: Jesus! Look at the crease in his pants!

ENDICOTT: It's Walter Burns, Hildy. Will you talk to him for God's sake!

HILDY: Tell that paranoic bastard to take a sweet kiss for himself! . . . Come on Ernie! . . . *Sings.* "Goodbye, forever . . ."

ENDICOTT: Say, listen, Hildy. Will you do me a personal favor and talk to Walter? He knows you're here.

McCUE: He's calling up about nine million times.

KRUGER: All we do is answer that God damn phone . . .

MURPHY: What's the matter? Scared of him?

HILDY: I'll talk to that maniac—with pleasure. *Into phone, with mock formality*: Hello, Mr. Burns.

. . . What's that, Mr. Burns? . . . Why your language is shocking, Mr. Burns. . . Now, listen, you lousy baboon. Get a pencil and paper and take this down: Get this straight because this is important. It's the Hildy Johnson curse. The next time I see you—no matter where I am or what I'm doing—I'm going to walk right up to you and hammer on that monkey skull of yours until it rings like a Chinese gong. . . .

McCUE: Oh, boy!

ENDICOTT: That's telling him!

HILDY *holding sizzling receiver to the nearest reporter*: Listen to him! *Into phone*: No, I ain't going to cover the hanging! I wouldn't cover the last supper for you! Not if they held it all over again in the middle of Clark Street. . . . Never mind the Vaseline, Jocko! It won't do you any good this time! Because I'm going to New York like I told you, and if you know what's good for you you'll stay West of Gary, Indiana! A Johnson never forgets! *He hangs up*. And that, boys, is what is known as telling the managing editor. *The reporters agree loudly*.

BENSINGER: Can't you guys talk without yelling?

HILDY *his song rising again*: "Goodbye, Forever!"

VOICE *from jail yard*: Hey cut the yodeling!
Where do you think you are!

HILDY *moving toward window, takes out his pocket flask*: Hey, Jacobi! Pickle-nose! *He takes a final drink from the flask, then aims and throws it out the window. A scream of rage arises from the jail yard. Hildy smiles and salutes his victim*: On the button! *Turns to Ernie, resumes his song.*

BENSINGER *pleading*: Oh, shut up!

WILSON: What did you quit for, Hildy?

SCHWARTZ: We hear you're going to get married?

HILDY: I'm getting married, all right. *Shows tickets.* See that? Three tickets to New York! Eleven-eighteen tonight!

WILSON: Tonight!

McCUE: Jesus, that's quick!

MURPHY: What do you mean three?

HILDY: Me and my girl and her God-dam ma!

ENDICOTT: Kinda sudden, ain't it?

SCHWARTZ: What the hell do you want to get married for?

HILDY: None of your business!

MURPHY: Ooooh! He's in love! Tootsie-wootsie!

MCCUE: Is she a white girl?

ENDICOTT: Has she got a good shape?

WILSON: Does Walter know you're getting married?

HILDY: Does he know I'm getting married? He congratulated me! Shook hands like a pal! Offered to throw me a farewell dinner even.

ENDICOTT: That's his favorite joke—farewell dinners.

MURPHY: He poisons people at them.

HILDY: He gets me up to Polack Mike's—fills me full of rotgut—I'd have been there yet if it hadn't been for the fire escape!

SCHWARTZ: That's what he done to the Chief of Police!

HILDY: Can you imagine? Trying to bust up my marriage! After shaking hands! . . . *Anxiously.* Say, my girl didn't call up, did she, or come in looking for me? What time is it, anyway?

SCHWARTZ: Quarter past nine.

MCCUE: Eighteen minutes after.

HILDY *starting to take off his coat*: I got to be at this house at seven.

ENDICOTT: What house?

HILDY: Somebody giving a farewell party to my girl.

WILSON: At seven tonight?

HILDY: Yeah?

MURPHY: You got to run like hell.

HILDY: Oh, that's all right. Fellow doesn't quit a job every day. Especially when its Walter Burns. The lousy baboon—

ENDICOTT: When's the wedding, Hildy?

HILDY: It's in New York, so you guys ain't going to have any fun with it. None of them fake warrants or kidnapping the bride, with me! *Hildy folds his old shirt and puts it in Bensinger's drawer.*

BENSINGER: Aw, for God's sake! Cut that out! *Throws the shirt on the floor.*

WILSON: Everybody's getting this New York bug. It's just a rube town for mine.

SCHWARTZ: I was on a New York paper once—the Times. You might as well work in a bank.

MURPHY: I hear all the reporters in New York are lizzies.

McCUE: Remember that fellow from the New York World?

ENDICOTT: With the derby?

MURPHY *presumably mimicking a New York journalist*: Could you please instruct me where the telegraph office is? *Makes a rude noise*. You'll be talking like that, Hildy.

HILDY: Yeah?

ENDICOTT: Which one of them sissy journals are you going to work for?

HILDY: None of them! Who the hell wants to work on a newspaper? A lot of crumby hoboos, full of dandruff and bum gin they wheedle out of nigger Aldermen.

MURPHY: That's what comes of stealing a cane.

ENDICOTT: What are *you* going in for—the movies?

HILDY: I am not. Advertising business. One hundred and fifty smackers a week.

McCUE: Yeah?

ENDICOTT: One hundred and fifty *what*?

SCHWARTZ *a sneer*: A hundred and fifty!

HILDY: Here's the contract. *Hands it to McCue, who starts to look through it. They crowd around this remarkable document*. I was just waiting to get it down in black and white before I walked in and told Walter I was through.

McCUE *with contract*: Jesus, it *is* a hundred and fifty!

WILSON: Was Walter sore?

HILDY: The lousy snake-brain! The God damn ungrateful ape! Called me a traitor, after ten years of sweating my pants off for practically nothing. Traitor to what? What did he or anybody else in the newspaper business ever do for me except try to make a bum out of me! Says "You can't quit without notice!" What the hell does he think I am? A hired girl? Why, one more word and I'd have busted his whiskey snout for him!

KRUGER: Why didn't you?

MURPHY: Who's going to cover the hanging for the Examiner?

McCUE: Why the hell didn't you tell a fellow?

WILSON: Yeah—instead of waiting till the last day?

HILDY: And have Walter hear about it? I've always wanted to walk in and quit just like that! *A snap of the fingers*. I been planning this for two months—packed up everything yesterday, and so did my girl! Furniture and all. *The fire signal has been sounding through the last few words*. Hildy *looks up*. Hey, fellows, that's Kedzie and Madison ain't it? The Washington Irving School's out there.

MURPHY: Who the hell's in school this time of night?

McCUE: What do you care, anyhow? You've quit.

HILDY *laughs, chagrined*: Just thought it might be a good fire, that's all. *Again the whirr and crash of the gallows.*

KRUGER: For Christ's sake! *At the window.* Ain't you got anything else to do? Hey! You Jacobi!

BENSINGER: Hey, fellows. I'm trying to read.

WILSON *also near window*: They're changing the guards down there. Look—they've got sixteen of them. *Voices come from the courtyard—"Hey!" "Hurry up." "Get a move on, Carl!" etc.*

McCUE *hands back the contract*: You're going to miss a swell hanging, Hildy.

HILDY: Yeah? You can stick it.

MURPHY: So you're going into the advertising business, eh? Writing poetry about Milady's drawers.

ENDICOTT: Going to wear an eye shade?

WILSON: I'll bet he has a desk with his name on it, and a stenographer.

MURPHY: You'll be like a firehorse tied to a milk wagon.

ENDICOTT *to Murphy*: I don't know what gets into these birds. Can you imagine punching a clock, and sitting around talking like a lot of stuffed shirts about statistics?

HILDY: Yeah—sour grapes, that's all it is. Sour grapes.

MURPHY: I got a dumb brother went in for business. He's got seven kids and a mortgage, and belongs to a country club. He gets worse every year. Just a fat-head.

HILDY: Listen to who's talking. Journalists! Peeking through keyholes! Running after fire engines like a lot of coach dogs! Waking people up in the middle of the night to ask them what they think of Mussolini. Stealing pictures off old ladies of their daughters that get raped in Oak Park. A lot of lousy, daffy, buttinskis, swelling around with holes in their pants, borrowing nickels from office boys! And for what? So a million hired girls and motor-men's wives'll know what's going on.

MURPHY: Your girl must have handed you that line.

HILDY: I don't need anybody to tell me about newspapers. I've been a newspaperman fifteen years. A cross between a bootlegger and a whore. And if you want to know something, you'll all end up on

the copy desk—gray-headed, humpbacked slobs, dodging garnishees when you're ninety.

SCHWARTZ: Yeah, and what about you? How long do you think you'll last in that floosie job?

ENDICOTT: You'll get canned cold the minute your contract's up, and then you'll be out in the street.

KRUGER: Sure—that's what always happens.

HILDY: Well, it don't happen to me. And I'll tell you why, if you want to know. Because my girl's uncle owns the business, that's why.

WILSON: Has he got a lot of jack?

HILDY: It's choking him. You know what he sent us for a wedding present?

MURPHY: A dozen doilies.

HILDY: I wouldn't tell you bums, because it's up in high finance and you wouldn't understand it.

ENDICOTT: Probably gave you a lot of stock in the company, that you can't sell.

KRUGER: I know them uncles.

HILDY: The hell he did! He gave us five hundred in cash, that's what he gave us.

McCUE: Go on!

SCHWARTZ: There *ain't* five hundred in cash.

HILDY: Yeah? *Pulling out a roll.* Well, there it is—most of it, except what it costs to get to New York.

McCUE: Jeess, let's see.

HILDY: Oh, no!

MURPHY: How about a finif till tomorrow?

HILDY *mimicking an androgyne*: I won't be here tomorrow. And that reminds me. *Takes out a little book.* It comes to—*consults book*—eight dollars and sixty-five cents altogether, Jimmie. Eight dollars and sixty-five cents.

MURPHY: What does?

HILDY: That includes the four bucks in front of the Planter's Hotel, when you were with that waitress from King's.

MURPHY: I thought I paid that.

HILDY: No. *Reading from notes*: Herman Schlosser . . . altogether twenty dollars and . . .

McCUE: Ha! Ha! Ha!

ENDICOTT: Ho! Ho! Ho!

HILDY: All right. I guess I might as well call it off, all around. I should have known better than to try to collect, anyhow. *Tears out the page and throws it at Murphy.* You might say thanks.

MURPHY: Not after that waitress.

SCHWARTZ: About that fifty bucks, Hildy. If you want a note—

HILDY: What fifty bucks? Aw, forget it.

SCHWARTZ: You see, it wasn't only the wife taking sick, but then besides . . . *Jennie, a slightly idiotic scrubwoman, enters. She receives an ovation. "Yea, Jennie!" "Jennie!" "Well, if it ain't Jennie," all delivered in various dialects with intended comedy effect.*

KRUGER: I hear you just bought another apartment house, Jennie!

MURPHY: I hear you've fallen in love again, Jennie!

JENNIE *giggling*: Can I wash up now, please?

BENSINGER: Yeah, for God's sake do! This place smells like a monkey cage.

HILDY: Go on! You don't want to wash up on a night like this! This is a holiday! I'm going away, Jennie! Give us a kiss! *He embraces her.*

JENNIE *squealing*: Now you Hildy Johnson, you keep away from me! I'll hit you with this mop! I will!

HILDY *tickling her*: What's the matter? Ain't I your fellow any more? I'll tell you what we'll do, Jennie! You and I'll go around and say good-bye! Everybody in the building!

McCUE: Hey, the warden called you up! Wants to see you before you go!

HILDY: There you are Jennie! We're *invited!* He invited Jennie, didn't he? You bet he did!

JENNIE: Now you know he didn't!

HILDY *lifting pail of water*: Only we can't carry this all over! I know! *At window*. Hey! Jacobi! Look! *Throws water out*. Jennie giggles hysterically.

VOICE *off*: *Who did that?*

SCHWARTZ: Better shut off them lights. Somebody's liable to come up.

HILDY *to Jennie*: Come on, Jennie! We'll say good-bye to the warden! *He embraces her again*.

JENNIE *struggling*: No, no! You let go of me! The warden'll be mad! He'll *do* something!

HILDY: To hell with him! I own this building! Come on! *pausing in the door*: If my girl calls up, tell her I'm on my way! *Exits with Jennie, singing "Waltz Me Around Again, Jennie."* Coy screams from Jennie, and the banging of a pail as it is kicked down the corridor.

BENSINGER: Thank God *that's* over!

KRUGER: What's the Examiner going to do with Hildy off the job?

WILSON: It must be great to walk into a place and quit.

McCUE: Yeah. *He moves sadly away and uses one of the phones on the long table.* Diversey three two hundred.

ENDICOTT *sentimentally*: I got an offer from the publicity department of the stock yards last year. I shoulda took it.

SCHWARTZ: What I'd like would be a job on the side.

McCUE *a lump in his throat*: A desk and a stenographer. That wouldn't be so bad. I wouldn't mind a nice big blonde.

MURPHY *outlining a voluptuous bust*. With a bozoom! *Phone on small table rings.*

McCUE *sighs, then into his own phone*: Hello, Sarge. McCue. Anything doing?

WILSON *answering other phone*: What's that? *His tone becomes slightly formal.* Yes, Ma'am. . . . No, Hildy ain't here just now, madam. He left a message for you, though. . . . Why, he said he was on his way. . . . No, he didn't say where—just that he was on his way. . . . All right, I'll tell him, ma'am. *Hangs up.* Oooh! Is *she* sore?

SCHWARTZ: Hildy oughtn't to do that. She's a swell kid.

McCUE *into phone*: All right! Thank you, Sarge!
Hangs up. A hundred and fifty bucks a week! Can
you imagine?

KRUGER: Probably gets Saturdays and Sundays
off, too.

WILSON *sadly*: And Christmas.

McCUE: I wonder who Walter'll send over here
in Hildy's place. *Mollie Malloy enters. She is a
North Clark Street tart, cheap black sateen dress,
red hat and red slippers run over at the heels. She is
a soiled and gaudy houri of the pavement. Despite
a baleful glare on Mollie's part, the boys brighten
visibly. They are always glad to see whores.*

MURPHY *warmly*: Hello, Mollie!

ENDICOTT: Well, well! Nookie!

WILSON: Hello, kid! How's the old tomato-can?

McCUE *feeling himself to be a Chauncey Olcott*:
Shure, and how are yez, Mollie?

MOLLIE *in a tired, banjo voice*: I've been looking
for you bastards!

MURPHY: Going to pay a call on Williams?

SCHWARTZ: He's just across the courtyard!

KRUGER: Better hurry up—he hasn't got all
night.

McCUE: Yes, he has!

ENDICOTT *formally*: Say, Mollie those were pretty roses you sent Earl. What do you want done with them tomorrow morning?

MOLLIE *tensely*: A lot of wise guys, ain't you? Well, you know what I think of you—all of you.

MURPHY: Keep your pants on, Mollie.

MOLLIE *to Murphy*: If you was worth breaking my fingernails on, I'd tear your puss wide open.

MURPHY: What you sore about, sweetheart? Wasn't that a swell story we give you?

MOLLIE: You cheap crumbs have been making a fool out of me long enough!

ENDICOTT: Now what kind of language is that?

BENSINGER: She oughtn't to be allowed in here! I caught her using the drinking cup yesterday!

MOLLIE *flaring*: I never said I loved Earl Williams and was willing to marry him on the gallows! You made that up! And all that other crap about my being his soul mate and having a love nest with him!

McCUE: Well, didn't you?

ENDICOTT: You've been sucking around that cuckoo ever since he's been in the death house! Everybody knows you're his affinity!

MOLLIE *blowing up*: That's a lie! I met Mr. Williams just once in my life, when he was wandering around in the rain without his hat and coat on like a sick dog. The day before the shooting. And I went up to him like any human being would and I asked what was the matter, and he told me about bein' fired after working at the same place twenty-two years and I brought him up to my room because it was warm there.

ENDICOTT: Did he have the two dollars?

MURPHY: Aw, put it on a Victrola.

MOLLIE: Just because you want to fill your lying papers with a lot of dirty scandal, you got to crucify him and make a bum out of me!

ENDICOTT: Got a match, Mollie?

MOLLIE *heedless*: I tell you he just sat there talking to me . . . all night . . . just sat there talkin' to me . . . and never once laid a hand on me! In the morning he went away and I never saw him again till the day at the trial!

ENDICOTT: Tell us what you told the jury!

They laugh reminiscently.

MOLLIE: Go on, laugh! God damn your greasy souls! Sure I was his witness—the only one he had. Yes, me! Mollie Malloy! A Clark Street tart! I was the only one with guts enough to stand up for

him! And that's why you're persecuting me! Because he treated me decent, and not like an animal, and I said so!

ENDICOTT: Why didn't you adopt him instead of letting him run around shooting policemen?

SCHWARTZ: Suppose that cop had been your own brother?

MOLLIE: I wish to God it had been one of you!

MURPHY *finally irritated*: Say, what's the idea of this song and dance, anyhow? This is the press room. We're busy.

SCHWARTZ: Go on home!

MURPHY: Go and see your boy friend, why don't you?

McCUE: Yeah—he's got a nice room.

ENDICOTT *with a wink at the rest*: He won't have it long. He's left a call for seven A. M.

MOLLIE *through her teeth*: It's a wonder a bolt of lightning don't come through the ceiling and strike you all dead! *Again the sound of the gallows.* What's that? Oh, my God! *She begins to cry.*

BENSINGER *rising*: Say, what's the idea?

MOLLIE: Talking that way about a fellow that's going to die.

ENDICOTT *uncomfortable at this show of grief*:
Don't get hysterical.

MOLLIE *sobbing*: Shame on you! Shame on you!

McCUE *to the rest*: It wasn't my fault. I didn't say anything.

MOLLIE *hysterically*: A poor little crazy fellow that never did any harm. Sitting there alone this minute, with the Angel of Death beside him, and you cracking jokes.

MURPHY *getting up meaningly*: Listen, if you don't shut up, I'll give you something *good* to cry about!

MOLLIE *savage*: Keep your dirty hands off me!

MURPHY *in a short and bitter struggle with her*:
Outside, *bum!*

MOLLIE *shooting through the door*: You dirty punks! Heels! Bastards! *Exit.*

MURPHY *slams the door. A pause*: The nervy bitch!

McCUE: Whew!

MURPHY: You guys want to play some more poker?

ENDICOTT: What's the use? I can't win a pot.

MURPHY: I'm the big loser.

WILSON: Me too. I must be out three dollars, anyhow.

ENDICOTT: It's God dam funny who's got it.

SCHWARTZ: Don't look at me. I started in with five bucks, and I got two-eighty left.

McCUE *who has taken up the phone again*: Michigan eight thousand. *Sheriff Hartman enters, briskly, bitter words forming on his lips. He is a diabetic and overwrought little fellow, an incompetent fuss budget. He has come to raise hell, but an ovation checks him.* "Ah, Sheriff!" "Hello, Pinky!" "How's the old statesman?" *Bensinger puts down his book; McCue abandons his telephoning.*

ENDICOTT: Any news, Sheriff?

SHERIFF *briefly*: Hello fellas. *In another tone*: Now, who dumped that bucket of water out the window?

KRUGER: What bucket of water?

SHERIFF: Who threw it out the window is what I asked, and I want to know!

MURPHY: Judge Pam threw it out.

SHERIFF: I suppose Judge Pam threw that bottle!

ENDICOTT: Yeah. That was Judge Pam, too.

MURPHY: He was in here with his robes on, playing fireman.

SHERIFF: Come on now, fellas, I know who it was. *Wheeling*: It was Hildy Johnson, wasn't it? Where is he?

McCUE: Out with a lady.

ENDICOTT: Hildy's quit, Sheriff. Didn't you hear?

SHERIFF: Well, I'm glad of it. It's good rid-dance! Now personally, I don't give a God dam, but how do you suppose it looks to have a lot of hood-lums yelling and throwing things out of windows? *In a subdued voice*: Besides there's somebody *in* that death house. How do you suppose he feels, listening to all this re-vel-ery?

MURPHY: A hell of a lot you care how he feels!

SCHWARTZ: Keep your shirt on, Pinky.

SHERIFF: Wait a minute, you! I don't want to hear any more of that Pinky stuff. I got a name, see? Peter B. Hartman.

MURPHY: What's the matter with Pinky?

McCUE *taking the cue*: He's all right.

THE REPORTERS *lustily*: *Who's* all right?

SHERIFF *desperate*: Now stop! *Whining*: Honest,

boys, what's the idea of hanging a name like that on me? Pinky Hartman! How's that look to the voters? Like I had sore eyes or something.

MURPHY: You never heard of Bath-House John kicking, did you?

WILSON: Or Hinky Dink?

ENDICOTT: It's made you famous!

SHERIFF: I swear I don't know what to do about you fellows. You abuse every privilege you get. I got a damn good notion to take this press room away from you.

MURPHY: That would be a break.

ENDICOTT: Yeah. The place is so full of cockroaches you can't walk.

BENSINGER *rising*: Wait a minute, fellows. Now listen, Pete, this is the last favor I'm ever going to ask you, and it ain't me that's asking it. Get me? You know who's asking it—a certain party is asking it. Once and for all, how about hanging this guy at five o'clock instead of seven? It ain't going to hurt you and we can make the City Edition.

SHERIFF *sincerely*: Aw, now, Roy, that's kind of raw. You can't hang a fella in his sleep, just to please a newspaper.

MURPHY: No, but you can reprieve him twice

so the hanging'll come three days before election! So you can run on a law and order ticket! You can do that all right!

SHERIFF: I had nothing whatsoever to do with those reprieves. That was entirely up to the Governor.

ENDICOTT: And who told the Governor what to do?

SCHWARTZ: How do we know there won't be another reprieve to-night? For all I know I'm hanging around here for nothing! When I've got a sick wife!

WILSON: Yeah, with another alienist getting called in!

MURPHY: This Wop gooser!

SCHWARTZ: Sure—what's all that about? Suppose he finds he's insane or something?

SHERIFF: He *won't* find he's insane. Because he isn't. This ruse of reading the Declaration of Independence day and night is pure fake. But I've got to let this doctor see him, on account of his being sent by these Personal Liberty people, or whatever they call themselves. You and I know they're nothing but a bunch of Bolsheviks, but a hanging is a serious business. At a time like this you want to please everybody.

ENDICOTT: Everybody that can vote, anyhow.

SHERIFF: Now he's going to look him over in my office in a couple of minutes, and then you'll know all about it. Besides, there's nothing he *can* find out, Williams is as sane as I am.

SCHWARTZ: Saner!

SHERIFF: The hanging's going to come off exactly per schedule. And when I say "per schedule" that means seven o'clock and not a minute earlier. There's such a thing as being humane, you know.

BENSINGER: Just wait till *you* want a favor.

SHERIFF *to change the subject*: Now here are the tickets. Two for each paper.

McCUE: What do you *mean*, two for each paper?

SHERIFF *stung*: What do you want to do—take your family?

SCHWARTZ: Now listen, Pete. I promised a pair to Ernie Byfield. He's never seen a hanging.

WILSON: The boss wants a couple for the advertising department.

SHERIFF *passing out tickets*: This ain't the "Fol-lies," you know. I'm tired of your editors using these tickets to get advertising accounts.

ENDICOTT: You got a lot of nerve! Everybody knows what *you* use 'em for—to get in socially.

MURPHY: He had the whole Union League Club over here last time.

ENDICOTT: Trying to suck in with Chatfield—Taylor. I suppose you'll wear a monocle tomorrow morning.

SHERIFF *melting*: Now that ain't no way to talk, boys. If any of you want a couple of extra tickets, why I'll be more than glad to take care of you. Only don't *kill* it.

SCHWARTZ: Now you're talking!

WILSON: That's more like it.

SHERIFF: Only you fellas got to lend a hand with us once in a while. We got a big job on our hands, smashing this Red menace—

ENDICOTT: We gave you four columns yesterday. What do you want?

SHERIFF *always the boy for a speech*: That ain't it. The newspapers got to put their shoulders to the wheel. They've got to forcibly impress on the Bolsheviks that the death-warrant for Earl Williams is a death-warrant for every bomb-throwing un-American Red in this town. This hanging means more to the people of Chicago to-day—*To Murphy, who is reading a comic supplement*: This is a *statement*, Jimmie. What's the matter with you?

MURPHY: Aw, go home.

SHERIFF: All right, you'll just get scooped. Now we're going to reform these Reds with a rope. That's our slogan. Quote me if you want to: "Sheriff Hartman pledges that he is going to reform the Reds with a rope."

ENDICOTT: Oh, for Christ's sake, Pinky! We've been printing that chestnut for weeks! *He goes into the can.*

SHERIFF: Well, print it once more, as a favor to me.

WILSON: You don't have to worry about the election. You're as good as in now, with the nigger vote coming around.

SHERIFF *Lafayette, at least*: I was never prejudiced against the Negro race in any shape, manner, or form.

MURPHY: Are *you* still talking?

SHERIFF *suddenly querulous*: During the race riots I just had to do my duty, that's all. And of course I was misunderstood.

KRUGER: Go on! You're a Southern gentleman, and you know it. *Phone rings.*

SHERIFF: Now, boys!

MURPHY: Shoah! *In bogus Negro dialect*: Massa

Hartman, of the Vahginia Hartmans. *Phone on small table rings. McCue heads for it.*

ENDICOTT *in the can, his voice rising above the plumbing*: I hear you used to own slaves.

SCHWARTZ *answering phone*: Press Room! *Into phone*: Who? Yeah, he's here. . . . For you, Sheriff.

SHERIFF: Me? *Into phone—very business-like*: Sheriff Hartman talking. . . . *An eagle falling out of the clouds*. Oh, hello, dear.

KRUGER: Sounds like the ball and chain.

SHERIFF: Why, no, I didn't figure on coming home at all. . . . Well, you see on account of the hanging being so early—

MURPHY: Tell her she's getting a break when you don't go home.

SHERIFF *winningly*: But you see this is business, dear. You don't think a hanging's any fun for me!

ENDICOTT : Music for this, Ernie!

SHERIFF *agitatedly motions for silence*: But I have a whole lot to do first—getting things ready.

MURPHY: Why don't you take him out to your house and hang him?

SHERIFF *fish hooks in his pants*: I'll call you up

later, Irma—I'm not in my own office, now. Besides, I've got to meet an alienist. . . . No—alienist. No. Not for me. For Williams. *Hildy re-enters, bringing back Jennie's mop.*

HILDY *throwing the mop across the room*: Boy, we cleaned up!

SHERIFF *hurriedly*: I'll call you later, dear. *He hangs up; turns on Hildy*: Now Johnson, what the hell do you mean? Throwing things out of windows. Who do you think you are? *During the quieter moments of the remainder of this act, Hildy is opening his parcels and putting the contents into his suitcase.*

HILDY: Who wants to know?

SHERIFF: You think you and Walter Burns are running this town! Well, I'm going to send a bill to the Examiner tomorrow for all the wreckage that's been committed around here in the past year! How do you like that?

HILDY: I think that's swell! You know what else you can do?

SHERIFF *belligerently*: What?

HILDY: Guess.

SHERIFF: You stick your nose in this building tomorrow and I'll have you arrested!

HILDY: It's damn near worth staying for!

SHERIFF: And I'll tell you another thing, and you can pass it on to Walter Burns! The Examiner don't get any tickets for this hanging after the lies they been printing! You can make up your story like you do everything else—out of whole cloth.

HILDY: Listen, you big pail of lard! If I wanted to go to your God dam hanging I'd go! See? And sit in a box!

SHERIFF: The hell you would!

HILDY: And I'd only have to tell *half* of what I know, at that!

SHERIFF: You don't know *anything*.

HILDY: No? Tell me, Mr. Hartman, where'd you spend the night before that last hanging! At the Planter's Hotel with that librarian. Room Six Hundred and Two. And I got two bell boys and a night manager to prove it!

SHERIFF: If I didn't have to go and see that alienist I'd tell *you* a few things. *Exits.*

HILDY *calling after him*: And if I were you I'd get two tickets for the hanging over to Walter Burns pretty fast, or he's liable to come over here and stick a firecracker in your pants!

WILSON: Hey! Hildy! Your girl called up.

HILDY *stricken*: My girl? When? *Starts for the telephone.*

WILSON: Just after you went out. And if you take my advice, you'll call her back.

HILDY: Jesus! Why didn't you tell a fellow! *Woodenshoes re-enters with sandwiches and a bottle of ketchup.*

McCUE: *Yea!* Sandwiches!

HILDY *at phone*: Edgewater two-one-six-four.
To the rest: Was she mad at me?

McCUE: Did you bring the ketchup? *They are crowding about Woodenshoes.*

BENSINGER: How about my plain lettuce?

ENDICOTT: A hamburger for me!

SCHWARTZ: I ordered one, didn't I?

KRUGER: You did not! This way, Woodenshoes! *They are taking their sandwiches from Woodenshoes—Endicott tosses one at Kruger.*

HILDY *into phone*: Hello, Peggy? . . . Hello. . . . *His voice becomes romantic.*

McCUE: Attaboy! God, I'm starved.

HILDY *into phone*: Why, darling, what's the matter?

BENSINGER: For God's sake, I said gluten bread.

HILDY *into phone*: But there isn't anything to cry about.

MURPHY: The service is getting terrible around here.

HILDY *into phone*: But listen, darling! I had business to attend to. I'll tell you all about it the minute I see you . . . Aw, darling, I just dropped in here for one second. . . . Because I *had* to. I couldn't go away without saying good-bye to the fellows.

To the others: Will you guys talk or something?

Back to phone: But listen! Sweetheart! . . . Yes, I . . . Of course I handed in my resignation . . . Yes, I've got a taxi waiting . . . Right outside.

WOODENSHOES *uneasily*: Go easy on that ketchup. I'm responsible for that.

HILDY *into phone*: I've got them right in my pocket, honey . . . Three on the eleven-eighteen. I'm bringing 'em right out, mile a minute.

WOODENSHOES: She says you fellows have got to pay something soon.

HILDY *into phone*: Aw, darling, if you talk like that I'm going to go right out and jump in the lake. I swear I will, because I can't stand it. Listen! *He looks around to see if it is safe to continue.*

KRUGER: We're listening.

HILDY *trying to lower his voice. With his mouth pasted to the mouthpiece, the following speeches are gargled into phone:* Darling . . . I love you. *Appropriate music by Kruger.* I said . . . I love you. *Music again.*

SCHWARTZ: Aw, give him a break, Ernie. *Kruger stops playing.*

HILDY *into phone:* That's more like it.

WOODENSHOES: Are you finished with this? *Reaching for ketchup.*

McCUE *operating the bottle:* No.

HILDY *into phone:* Feel better now? . . . Well, smile. And say something . . . You know what I want to hear.

SCHWARTZ *a Cinderella:* Give me a half a one, somebody!

ENDICOTT: Nothing doing.

HILDY *into the phone:* That's the stuff. That's better . . . Are you all packed? . . . Oh, swell . . . I'll be right there.

WOODENSHOES: You fellas ought to pay her a little something on account. *Exits.*

WILSON *answering Examiner phone:* What do you want?

HILDY: Listen, darling, will you wear that little blue straw hat?

WILSON *into phone*: Wait a minute—I'll see.

HILDY *into phone*: And are you all happy now? . . . I bet you're not as happy as I am. Oh, I'll bet you anything you want . . . All right . . . All right . . . I'm on my way . . . Not more than fifteen minutes. *Really* this time . . . Bye. *Hangs up.*

WILSON *his hand over the mouthpiece*: Jesus Christ, Hildy—here's Walter again! Tell him to give us a rest, will you?

HILDY: Oh, bollacks! *Into phone*: You're just making a God damn nuisance of yourself! . . . What's the idea of calling up all the time! . . . *No!* I'm through with newspapers! I don't give a God-damn what you think of me! I'm leaving for New York tonight! Right now! This minute! *Hangs up. Phone rings again. He tears it from the wall and throws it out the window.*

KRUGER *calmly*: Wrong number.

McCUE *nervous*: For God's sake, Hildy.

SCHWARTZ *putting out the lights*: You'll get us in a hell of a jam!

BENSINGER: Haven't you got any sense?

HILDY *yelling out the window*: Tell Pinky to stick that among his souvenirs! *To the rest*: If that lunatic calls up again tell him to put it in writing and mail it to Hildebrand Johnson, care of the Waterbury-Adams Corporation, Seven Thirty-five Fifth Avenue, New York City . . .

MURPHY: Put it on the wall, Mike.

ENDICOTT *going to the rear wall*: Waterbury what?

McCUE: Adams.

HILDY *opening a parcel and showing a pale pair of gloves*: How do you like those onions? Marshall Field!

McCUE: Very individual.

HILDY: Where's my cane?

ENDICOTT: What cane?

HILDY *suddenly desperate*: Come now, fellas. That ain't funny, who's got my cane?

MURPHY *in a Central Office manner*: Can you describe this cane?

HILDY *frantic*: Aw, for God's sake! Now listen, fellas—

KRUGER *solicitous*: Are you sure you had it with you when you came into the room?

WILSON: Was there any writing on it?

HILDY *diving into Bensinger's desk*: Come on! Cut the clowning! Where is it?

BENSINGER: Keep out of my desk! Of all the God-damn kindergartens!

HILDY: Jesus! I only got fifteen minutes. Now, cut the kidding! My God, you fellows have got a sense of humor!

MURPHY: Aw, give him his fairy wand!

ENDICOTT *a Uranian for the moment, he produces cane from trouser leg*: Here it is, Gladys.

HILDY: God! You had me worried. *He picks up his suitcase. Bravura*: Well, goodbye, you lousy wage slaves! When you're crawling up fire escapes, and getting kicked out of front doors, and eating Christmas dinner in a one-armed joint, don't forget your old pal, Hildy Johnson!

ENDICOTT: Good-bye, Yonson.

McCUE: So long, Hildy.

MURPHY: Send us a postcard, you big stewbum.

KRUGER: When'll we see you again, Hildy?

HILDY: The next time you see me I'll be riding in a Rolls-Royce, giving out interviews on success-y.

BENSINGER: Good-bye, Hildy.

WILSON: Good-bye.

SCHWARTZ: Take care of yourself.

HILDY: So long, fellows! *He strikes a Sidney Carton pose in the doorway; starts on a bit of verse: "And as the road beyond unfolds"— He is interrupted by a terrific fusillade of shots from the courtyard. A roar of voices comes up from the jail yard. For a tense second everyone is motionless.*

VOICES *in the courtyard*: Get the riot guns! Spread out, you guys! *Another volley.*

WILSON: There's a jail break!

MURPHY *at window, simultaneously*: Jacobi! What's the matter? What's happened?

VOICES *in the jail yard*: Watch the gate! He's probably trying the gate! *A huge siren begins to wail.*

SCHWARTZ *out the window*: Who got away? Who was it?

VOICE *outside*: Earl . . . Williams!!!

THE REPORTERS: Who? Who'd he say? Earl Williams! It was Earl Williams! He got away!

McCUE: Holy God! Gimme that telephone! *He works hook frantically. Hurry! Hurry up! Will you! This is important. Others are springing for the*

telephones as searchlights sweep the windows from the direction of the jail.

SCHWARTZ: Jeez, this is gonna make a bum out of the Sheriff! *Hildy stands paralyzed, his suitcase in his hand. There is a second rifle volley. Two window panes crash within the room. Some plaster falls. Gongs sound above the siren.*

McCUE *screaming*: Look out!

MURPHY *out of the window*: Where you shooting, you God-damn fools! For Christ's sake! *Another pane goes.* Look out where you're aiming, will you!

SCHWARTZ: There's some phones in the state's attorney's office!

KRUGER! Yeah! *There is a general panic at the door. The Reporters leave as if a bomb had broken in a trench. Hildy is left alone, still holding his suitcase. It falls. He moves back into the room, absently trailing a chair. Another shot.*

HILDY: Ahh, Jesus Christ! *He lets go of the chair and takes one of the telephones. Examiner? Gimme Walter Burns! Quick! Very calmly he sits on one of the long tables, his back against the wall. Then, quietly: Hello, Walter! Hildy Johnson! Forget that! Earl Williams just lammed out of the*

County Jail! Yep . . . yep . . . yep . . . don't worry! I'm on the job! *There is a third volley. Hildy sails his hat and coat into a corner and is removing his overcoat as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

ACT II

The Scene is the same as Act I—It is twenty minutes later. Searchlights play outside the windows. Jennie, the scrubwoman, is on stage, sweeping up broken glass and doing a little miscellaneous cleaning. Woodenshoes enters.

WOODENSHOES: Where are all the reporters? Out looking for him?

JENNIE: They broke all the windows. And pulled off a telephone. Aiiy, those newspaper fellows. They're worse'n anything.

WOODENSHOES: There wasn't any excuse for his escaping. This sort of thing couldn't ever happen, if they listened to me.

JENNIE: Oooh, they'll catch him. Those big lights.

WOODENSHOES: What good will that do Society? The time to catch 'em is while they're little kids. That's the whole basis of my crime prevention theory. It's all going to be written up in the papers soon.

JENNIE: Oooh, what they print in the papers. I never seen anything like it. *She is sweeping. Endicott enters and makes for a phone. Woodenshoes watches him.*

WOODENSHOES: Has anything happened, Mr. Endicott?

ENDICOTT *into phone*: Endicott calling. Gimme a rewrite man.

WOODENSHOES: You know, this would be just the right time for you to print my theory of crime prevention, that you said you were going to. *Pulling out a sheaf of documents.*

ENDICOTT *into phone, waving him off as if he were a horse fly*: Well, hurry it up.

WOODENSHOES: Now here I got the city split up in districts. I got them marked in red.

ENDICOTT: What? For God's sake, can't you see I'm— *into phone*: Hello! Gill?

WOODENSHOES: But you been promising me you'd—

ENDICOTT *snatches papers*: All right—I'll take it home and study it. Now for God's sake stop annoying me—I got to work! I can't sit around listening to you! Get out of here and stop bothering me! *Back to phone*: Ready, Gill? . . . Now, here's the situation so far.

WOODENSHOES *to Jennie*: He's going to take it home and study it. You'll see it in the paper before long. *Exits.*

ENDICOTT *into phone*: Right! . . . At ten minutes after nine Williams was taken to the Sheriff's private office to be examined by this Professor Eglehofer, and a few minutes later he shot his way out . . . No—nobody knows where he got the gun. Or if they do they won't tell . . . Yeah . . . Yeah . . . He run up eight flights of stairs to the infirmary, and got out through the sky-light. He must have slid down the rainpipe to the street . . . Yeah . . . No, I tell you nobody knows where he got it. I got hold of Jacobi, but he won't talk. *Murphy enters.*

MURPHY *crossing to phone*: Outside, Jennie! Outside!

ENDICOTT: They're throwing a dragnet around the whole North Side. Watching the railroads and Red headquarters. The Chief of Police has ordered out every copper on the force and says they'll get Williams before morning.

MURPHY *into phone*: Hello, sweetheart. Give me the desk, will you?

ENDICOTT *into phone, after a final look at his notes*: The Crime Commission has offered a reward of ten thousand dollars for his capture . . . Yeah. I'm going to try to get hold of Eglehofer. He knows what's happened, if I can find him. Call you back. *Hangs up and exits swiftly.*

MURPHY: For Chris' sake, Jennie! Every time we turn our backs you start that God-damn sweeping.

JENNIE *picking up her traps*: All right. Only it's dirty. I get scolded.

MURPHY *into phone*: Murphy talking . . . No clue yet as to Earl Williams' whereabouts. Here's a little feature, though. . . . A tear bomb . . . tear bomb . . . criminals cry for it . . . *Sheriff Hartman appears in the doorway. He has been running around, shouting a million orders, nervous, bewitched and sweating like a June bride. He is in his shirt sleeves, and his diamond-studded badge of office is visible.*

MURPHY *into phone*: Yeh! Tear bomb.

SHERIFF *as he enters, speaking to someone in the corridor*: To hell with the Mayor! If he wants me he knows where I am.

MURPHY *into phone*: A tear bomb went off unexpectedly in the hands of Sheriff Hartman's bombing squad.

SHERIFF *stunned*: What went off?

MURPHY *into phone*: The following deputy sheriffs were rushed to Passavant Hospital: . . .

SHERIFF: A fine fair-weather friend you are!

MURPHY *remorselessly, into phone*: Philip Lustgarten . . .

SHERIFF: After all I've done for you!

MURPHY *phoning*: Herman Waldstein . . .

SHERIFF: Putting stuff like that in the papers!

MURPHY *phoning*: Sidney Matsburg . . .

SHERIFF: That's gratitude for you! *He exits.*

MURPHY *phoning*: Henry Koo . . .

JENNIE *going toward door*: Ain't that terrible?
Kruger enters and goes to a phone.

MURPHY *phoning*: Abe Lefkowitz . . .

JENNIE: All those fellows! *Exits.*

KRUGER *at his phone*: Give me rewrite.

MURPHY *phoning*: And William Gilhooly. Call you back. *Hangs up and exits.*

KRUGER *into phone*: Ready? . . . A man corresponding to Earl Williams' description was seen boarding a southbound Cottage Grove Avenue car at Austen Avenue by Motorman Julius L. Roosevelt. *McCue enters.* Yeah—Roosevelt. I thought it would make a good feature on account of the name.

McCUE *phoning*: McCue talking. Give me the desk.

KRUGER *phoning*: All right, I'll go right after it. Call you back. *Exits.*

McCUE *into phone*: Hello. Is that you, Emil? Are you ready? . . . Sidelights on the man hunt . . . Mrs. Irma Schlogel, fifty-five, scrublady, was shot in the left leg while at work scrubbing the eighth floor of the Wrigley Building by one of Sheriff Hartman's special deputies. *There is a fusillade of shots in the distance. Hildy Johnson enters.*

HILDY: There goes another scrublady. *Goes to phone, but starts arranging notes.*

McCUE *phoning*: No, just a flesh wound. They took her to Passavant Hospital. *Hangs up. To Hildy*: Any dope on how he got out?

HILDY: From all I can get they were playing leap frog.

McCUE: How about Jacobi? Did he say anything to you?

HILDY: Not a word. *McCue goes. Hildy quickly picks up his receiver.* Gimme Walter Burns. *He gets up and closes the door carefully; comes back to his phone.* Walter? Say, listen. I got the whole story from Jacobi and I got it exclusive . . . That's right, and it's a pip. Only listen. It cost me two hundred and sixty bucks, see? . . . Just a minute—I'll *give* you the story. I'm telling you first I had to give him

all the money I had on me and it wasn't exactly mine. Two hundred and sixty bucks, and I want it back. *Yells.* Well, did you hear what I said about the money? . . . All right, then here's your story. It's the jail break of your dreams . . . Dr. Max J. Eglehofer, a profound thinker from Vienna, was giving Williams a final sanity test in the Sheriff's office—you know, sticking a lot of pins in him to get his reflexes. Then he decided to re-enact the crime exactly as it had taken place, so as to study Williams' powers of co-ordination. . . . Well, I'm coming to it, God damn it. Will you shut up? . . . Of course he had to have a gun to re-enact with. And who do you suppose supplied it? . . . Peter B. Hartman . . . "B" for brains. . . . I tell you, I'm *not* kidding. Hartman gave his gun to the Professor, the Professor gave it to Earl, and Earl shot the professor right in the belly . . . Ain't it perfect? If the Sheriff had unrolled a red carpet like at a Polish wedding and loaned Williams an umbrella, it couldn't have been more ideal . . . Eglehofer? No, not bad. They spirited him away to Passavant Hospital . . . No, we got it exclusive. Now listen, Walter. It cost me two hundred and sixty bucks for this story, and I want it back . . . I had to give it to Jacobi before he'd cough up his guts. Two hundred and sixty dollars—the money I'm going to get married on . . . Never mind about fine work—I want the money . . .

No, I tell you, I'm not going to cover anything else—I'm going away. *Peggy appears in the doorway. She is a pretty girl of twenty. Hildy has his back to the door.* Listen, you lousy stiff. I just did this as a personal favor. Now I'm leaving town and I gave Jacobi every cent I got, and I want it back right away! . . . *When will you send it over? . . . Well, see that you do or I can't get married! . . . All right, and tell him to run. I'll be waiting right here in the Press—He hangs up and sees Peggy. With a guilty start:* Hello, Peggy.

PEGGY: What was that, over the telephone?

HILDY: Nothing. I was just telling Walter Burns I was all through, that's all. Hello, darling.

Peggy, despite her youth and simplicity, seems overwhelmingly mature in comparison to Hildy. As a matter of fact, Peggy belongs to that division of womanhood which dedicates itself to suppressing in its lovers or husbands the spirit of D'Artagnan, Roland, Captain Kidd, Cyrano, Don Quixote, King Arthur or any other type of the male innocent and rampant. In her unconscious and highly noble efforts to make what the female world calls "a man" out of Hildy, Peggy has neither the sympathy nor acclaim of the authors yet—regarded superficially, she is a very sweet and satisfying heroine.

PEGGY: You haven't done something foolish with that money? Our money!

HILDY: No. No!

PEGGY: You still *have* got the rest of it?

HILDY: Of course. Gee, darling, you don't think for a minute—

PEGGY: I think I'd better take care of it from now on!

HILDY: Now listen, honey, I can look after a couple of hundred dollars all right. . . .

PEGGY: Hildy, if you've still got that money I want you to give it to me.

HILDY: Now, sweetheart, it's going to be perfectly all right. . . .

PEGGY *she divines, alas, her lover's failing*: Then you haven't got it.

HILDY: Not—this minute, but I—

PEGGY: You *did* do something with it!

HILDY: No, no. He's sending it right over—Walter, I mean. It'll be here any minute.

PEGGY *her vocabulary is reduced to a coal of fire*: Oh, Hildy!

HILDY *a preposterous fellow*: Listen, darling, I wouldn't have had this happen for the world. But

it's going to be all right. Now here's what happened: I was just starting out to the house to get you when this guy Williams broke out of jail. You know, the fellow they were going to hang in the morning.

PEGGY *intolerant of the antics of the Cyrano sex*:
Yes, I know.

HILDY: Ah now, listen, sweetheart, I *had* to do what I did. And—and the same thing when it came to the money—*She turns away*. Peggy! Now listen. I shouldn't tell you this, but I haven't got any secrets from you. Do you know how this guy escaped? He was down in the Sheriff's office when Hartman—that's the Sheriff—and Eglehofer—that's this fellow from Vienna—

PEGGY: Hildy!

HILDY: Aw, now I can't tell you if you won't listen. I *had* to give him the money so he wouldn't give the story to anybody else. Jacobi, I mean. That's the assistant warden. I got the story exclusive—the biggest scoop in years, I'll bet.

PEGGY: Do you know how long mother and I waited, out at that house?

HILDY: Aw, Peggy, listen. You ain't going to be mad at me for this. I couldn't help it. You'd have done the same thing yourself. I mean, the big-

gest story in the world busting, and nobody on the job.

PEGGY: I might have known it would happen again.

HILDY: Aw, listen—

PEGGY: Every time I've ever wanted you for something—on my birthday, and New Year's Eve, when I waited till five in the morning—

HILDY: But a big story broke; don't you remember.

PEGGY: It's always a big story—the biggest story in the world, and the next day everybody's forgotten it, even you!

HILDY: What do you mean forgotten? That was the Clara Hamon murder—on your birthday. Now for God's sake, Peggy, it won't hurt to wait five more minutes. The boy's on his way with the money now.

PEGGY: Mother's sitting downstairs waiting in a taxicab. I'm just ashamed to face her, the way you've been acting. If she knew about that money—it's all we've got in the world, Hildy. We haven't even got a place to sleep in, except the train, and—

HILDY: Aw, gee, I wouldn't do anything in the world to hurt you, Peggy. You make me feel like a criminal.

PEGGY: It's all that Walter Burns. Oh, I'll be so glad when I get you away from him.—You simply can't resist him.

HILDY: For God's sake, Peggy, I've told you what I think of him. I wouldn't raise a finger if he was dying. Honest to God.

PEGGY: Then why did you loan him the money?

HILDY: I didn't! You see, you won't listen to me, or you'd know I didn't. Now, listen. I had to give the money to Jacobi, the assistant—*Woodenshoes ushers in Mrs. Grant. Mrs. Grant is a confused little widow who has tried her best to adjust her mind to Hildy as a son-in-law.*

WOODENSHOES: Here they are, Ma'am. *Exits immediately.*

HILDY: Oh, hello, Mrs. Grant—mother. I was just explaining to Peggy—

PEGGY: Mother, I thought you were going to wait in the cab.

MRS. GRANT *a querulous yet practical soul:* Well, I just came up to tell you the meter's gone to two dollars.

HILDY: Yeah, sure. But that's all right. . . .

MRS. GRANT *with the wandering egoism of age:* I had a terrible time finding you. First I went into a room where a lot of policemen were playing cards.

HILDY: Yeah—that was—now, I'll tell you what we'll do.

MRS. GRANT: Then I met that policeman and I asked him where Mr. Johnson's office was, and he brought me here.

PEGGY: Now, listen mother, I think you'd better go down stairs and we'll come as soon as we can.

MRS. GRANT *inspecting*: You've got a big room, haven't you? Where do you sit?

HILDY: Now, I tell you what you do. You and Peggy go on over to the station and get the baggage checked . . . now here's the tickets.

PEGGY: Now, Hildy.

HILDY: I'll be along in fifteen minutes—maybe sooner.

MRS. GRANT: How do you mean—that you aren't going?

HILDY: Of course I am. Now, I'll meet you at the Information Booth—

PEGGY: Come, mother. Hildy has to wait here a few minutes. It's something to do with the office—he's getting some money.

MRS. GRANT *on familiar ground*: Money?

HILDY: Yeah—they're sending over—it's my salary. They're sending over my salary.

MRS. GRANT *the voice of womankind*: Your salary? At this hour?

HILDY: They were awful busy, and I couldn't disturb them very well.

MRS. GRANT: The trouble is you're too easy with people—letting them wait till this hour before paying you your salary. How do you know they'll give it to you at all?

PEGGY: Mother, we'll go on over. Hildy'll be along.

MRS. GRANT: Do you know what I'm beginning to think?

HILDY *apprehensive*: What?

MRS. GRANT: I think you must be a sort of irresponsible type or you wouldn't do things this way. It's just occurred to me you didn't do one blessed thing to help our getting away.

PEGGY: Now you stop picking on my Hildy, mother.

MRS. GRANT: Why, I had to sublet the apartment, and pack all the wedding presents—*McCue enters. Goes to phone, with side glances at the others*—why, that's work a man ought to do. You weren't even there to put things in the taxi—I had to give the man fifty cents. And now here you are standing here with the train leaving any minute—

HILDY: Now, mother, I never missed a train in my life. You run along with Peggy—

McCUE *into phone*: Hello. McCue talking.

PEGGY: Come on, mother. We're disturbing people.

HILDY: This is my girl, Mac, and her mother. Mr. McCue.

McCUE *tipping his hat*: Pleased to meet you. *Into phone*: Here's a hell of a swell feature on the man hunt. *To the ladies*: Excuse my French! *Into phone*: Mrs. Phoebe De Wolfe, eight-sixty-one and a half South State Street, colored, gave birth to a pick-aninny in a patrol wagon, with Sheriff Hartman's special Rifle Squad acting as mid-wives.

MRS. GRANT: Mercy!

McCUE *pleased at having interested her*: You ought-a have seen 'em, ma'am.

PEGGY: Come on, mother.

HILDY: Listen, mother, you better run along. I'll put my suitcase in the cab.

McCUE *phoning*: Well Phoebe was walking along the street when all of a sudden she began having labor pains. No! Labor Pains! Didn't you ever have labor pains? Righto! She was hollering for her husband, who's been missing for five months, when the

police seen her. And Deputy Henry Shereson, who's a married man, saw what her condition was. So he coaxed her into the patrol wagon and they started a race with the stork for Passavant Hospital.

HILDY *to McCue, as he goes out:* If a boy comes here for me hold him. I'll be right back! *They are gone.*

McCUE *into phone:* Listen—when the pickaninny was born the Rifle Squad examined him carefully to see if it was Earl Williams, who they knew was hiding somewhere. *Laughs at his own joke.* They named him Peter Hartman De Wolfe in honor of the Sheriff, and they all chipped in a dollar a piece on account of it being the first baby ever born in a man hunt. *The Mayor enters.* Wait a minute—here's the Mayor himself. Maybe there's a statement. *Under ordinary circumstances the Mayor is a bland, unruffled soul, full of ease and confidence; a bit stupid, walking as if he were on snowshoes and carrying an unlighted cigar with which he gestures as if it were a wand. The events of the last hour have unhinged him. He is eager for news—even the worst.*

MAYOR: Don't pester me now, please. I got a lot on my mind.

McCUE *into phone:* The Mayor won't say anything. *He hangs up.*

MAYOR: Have you seen Sheriff Hartman?

McCUE: Been in and out all night, your Honor . . .
Murphy and Endicott enter.

MURPHY: Now listen, your Honor. We've got to have a statement. . . .

ENDICOTT: We go to press in twenty minutes.

MAYOR: I can't help that boys. I have nothing to say—not at this time.

MURPHY: What do you mean—"not at this time?" Who do you think you are, Abraham Lincoln?

ENDICOTT: Come on, cut the statesman stuff! What do you know about the escape? How'd he get out?

MURPHY: Where'd he get the gun?

MAYOR: Wait a minute, boys . . . Not so fast!

ENDICOTT: Well, give us a statement on the election, then.

MURPHY: What effect's all this going to have on the colored voters?

MAYOR: Not an iota. In what way can an unavoidable misfortune of this sort influence the duty of every citizen, colored or otherwise?

MURPHY: Bologna. . . .

ENDICOTT: Listen here, Mayor. *Is there a Red Menace or ain't there?* and how did he get out of that rubber jail of yours?

McCUE: Are you going to stand the gaff, Mayor? Or have you picked out somebody that's responsible?

MURPHY *innocently*: Any truth in the report that you're on Trotsky's pay roll?

ENDICOTT: Yeah—the Senator claims you sleep in red underwear.

MAYOR: Never mind the jokes. Don't forget that I'm Mayor of this town and that the dignity of my office . . . *Hartman enters—the Mayor turns abruptly on him.* Hartman! I've been looking for you. . . .

ENDICOTT *leaping at the Sheriff*: What's the dope, Pinkie? How did he get out?

McCUE: What was he doing in your office?

MURPHY: What's this about somebody gettin' shot?

ENDICOTT: Where did he get the gun?

SHERIFF *jotting notes on a piece of paper with the hope that he will seem busy*. Just a minute, fellas.

MURPHY: For God's sake, cut the stallin'! Who engineered the get-away?

ENDICOTT: Was it the Reds?

SHERIFF: Just a minute, I tell you. We've got him located!

MURPHY: Who? Williams!

ENDICOTT: Where?!

McCUE: Where is he?

SHERIFF: Out to the place where he used to live . . . on Clark Street . . . Just got the tip.

ENDICOTT: Holy God!

McCUE: Why didn't you say so?

SHERIFF: The Rifle Squad is just going out.

ENDICOTT: Where are they?

SHERIFF: Downstairs. All the boys are with them.

MURPHY: For the love of God! *Murphy, Endicott and McCue rush out.*

ENDICOTT *in the hall*: Hey, there, Charlie!

SHERIFF *calling into the corridor*: Report to me, Charlie, the minute you get there! I'll be in the building!

MAYOR: Pete, I want to talk to you!

SHERIFF: I ain't got time, Fred—honest. I'll see you after.

MAYOR: Pete, there's one thing I've got to know. Did you yourself actually give Williams that gun?

SHERIFF *wailing*: The Professor asked me for it. I didn't know what he wanted it for. I thought it was something scientific.

MAYOR: Now listen, Fred—*Kruger enters, whispering. Both statesmen become silent and self-conscious.*

KRUGER *heading for phone*: Hello, your Honor. Any statement on the Red uprising tomorrow?

MAYOR: What Red uprising?

SHERIFF: There'll be no Red uprising!

KRUGER: The Senator claims the situation calls for the militia.

MAYOR: You can quote me as saying that anything the Senator says is a tissue of lies.

KRUGER *at phone*: Kruger calling.

SHERIFF: Why aren't you with the Rifle Squad? They've just gone out.

KRUGER: We've got a man with them. *Into phone*: Here's a red-hot statement from the Senator.

Ready? . . . He says the City Hall is another Augean stables . . . Augean! . . . Oh, for God's sake! *Turns.* He don't know what Augean means.

MAYOR: The Senator don't know either.

KRUGER: Well, take the rest, anyhow. *Into phone:* The Senator claims that the Mayor and the Sheriff have shown themselves to be a couple of eight-year-olds playing with fire. Then this is quote: "It is a lucky thing for the city that next Tuesday is Election Day, as the citizens will thus be saved the expense of impeaching the Mayor and the Sheriff." That's all—call you back. *Hangs up.* How are you, Mayor? *Exits, whistling.*

MAYOR *closing the door:* I've got a mighty unpleasant task to perform, Pete—

SHERIFF *beside himself:* Now listen, Fred, you're just gonna get me rattled.

MAYOR *inexorably:* Two years ago we almost lost the colored vote on account of that coon story you told at the Dixie Marching Club . . . Mandy and the traveling salesman. . . .

SHERIFF: Why harp on that *now?* . . .

MAYOR: Now you come along with another one of your moron blunders. . . . The worst of your whole career.

SHERIFF *frantic:* Listen, Fred. Stop worrying,

will you? Just do me a favor and stop worrying! I'm doing everything on God's green earth! I've just sworn in four hundred deputies!

MAYOR: Four hundred! Do you want to bankrupt this administration?

SHERIFF *pleadingly*: I'm getting them for twelve dollars a night.

MAYOR: Twelve dollars—! For those God damn uncles of yours? What do you think this is—Christmas Eve?

SHERIFF *with dignity*: If you're talking about my brother-in-law, he's worked for the city fifteen years.

MAYOR *bitterly*: I know. Getting up fake tag days! . . . Pete, you're through!

SHERIFF *stunned*: What do you mean—through?

MAYOR: I mean I'm scratching your name off the ticket Tuesday and running Czernecki in your place. It's nothing personal. . . . And Pete—it's the only way out. It's a sacrifice we all ought to be glad to make.

SHERIFF *David to Jonathan*: Fred!

MAYOR: Now, Pete! Please don't appeal to my sentimental side. . . .

SHERIFF: Fred, I don't know what to say. A

thing like this almost destroys a man's faith in human nature. . . .

MAYOR: I wish you wouldn't talk like that, Pete. . . .

SHERIFF: Our families, Fred. My God, I've always looked on Bessie as my own sister.

MAYOR *wavering and desperate*: If there was any way out . . .

SHERIFF *as a phone rings*: There is a way out. I've got this Williams surrounded, haven't I? What more do you want? Not if you just give me a couple of hours—*into phone*: Hello. . . . Yes. . . . Hello! *Wildly*: Four hundred suppers! Nothing doing! This is a man hunt—not a banquet! . . . The twelve dollars includes everything! . . . Well, the hell with them! Earl Williams ain't eating, is he?! *He hangs up*. That gives you an idea of what I'm up against!

MAYOR *hotly*: We're up against a lot more than that with that nutty slogan you invented. "Reform the Reds with a rope." *Sheriff winces*. There ain't any God damn Reds and you know it!

SHERIFF: Yeah, but why go into that now, Fred?

MAYOR: The slogan I had was all we needed to win—"Keep King George Out of Chicago!"

SHERIFF: My God, I ain't had a bite to eat since this thing happened. .

MAYOR: Pete, two hundred thousand colored votes are at stake! And we've got to hang Earl Williams to get them.

SHERIFF: But we're *going* to hang him, Fred. He can't get away. *A knock on the door.*

MAYOR: What do you mean he can't get away! He *got* away, didn't he? Now look here, Pete—*Knocking louder.* Who's out there? . . .

A VOICE *outside*: Is Sheriff Hartman in there?

SHERIFF *starts for door; relieved*: Ah! It's for me! *Opens the door. A small man named Pincus stands there.* I'm Sheriff Hartman. Do you want me?

PINCUS *a very colorless and uneffectual person*: Yes, *sir*. I've been looking all over for you, Sheriff. You're certainly a hard fellow to find.

MAYOR *annoyed*: What do you want?

PINCUS *taking a document from his pocket and proffering it to the Sheriff. He smiles in a comradely fashion.* From the Governor.

MAYOR: What's from the Governor?

SHERIFF: Huh?

PINCUS: The reprieve for Earl Williams.

SHERIFF *stunned*: For *who*?

PINCUS *amiably*: Earl Williams. The reprieve.

A ghastly pause. I thought I'd never find you. First I had a helluva time getting a taxi—

MAYOR: Wait—a minute. *Getting his bearings.* Is this a joke or something?

PINCUS: Huh?

SHERIFF *bursting out*: It's a mistake,—there must be a mistake! The Governor gave me his word of honor he wouldn't interfere! Two days ago!

MAYOR: And you fell for it! Holy God, Pete! It frightens me what I'd like to do to you! Wait a minute! Come here you! Who else knows about this?

PINCUS: They were all standing around when he wrote it. It was after they got back from fishing.

MAYOR: Get the Governor on the phone, Hartman.

PINCUS: They ain't got a phone. They're duck-shooting now.

MAYOR: A lot of Goddam nimrods.

SHERIFF *who has been reading the reprieve*: Can you beat that? Read it! *Thrusts the paper into Mayor's hands*: Insane, he says! *Striding over to the messenger*. He knows God damn well that Earl Williams ain't insane!

PINCUS: Yeah! But I—

SHERIFF: This reprieve is pure politics and you know it! It's an attempt to ruin us!

MAYOR *reading*: Dementia praecox! My God!

SHERIFF: We got to think fast before those lying reporters get hold of this. What'll we tell 'em?

MAYOR: What'll you tell 'em? I'll tell you what you can tell 'em! You can tell 'em your damn relatives were out there shooting everybody they see, for the hell of it!

SHERIFF: Now Fred, you're just excited. *Phone rings; Sheriff starts for the phone, talking as he goes.* We aren't going to get any place, rowing like this.

MAYOR: And you can tell 'em the Republican Party is through in this state on account of you.

SHERIFF *into phone*: Hello! This is Hartman.

MAYOR *apoplectic*: And you can add as an afterthought that I want your resignation now.

SHERIFF *from the phone*: Sssh. Wait, Fred. *Excitedly, into phone*: What? Where? . . . Where? My God!

MAYOR: What is it?

SHERIFF: They got him! *Back to phone*: Wait a minute—hold the wire. *To the Mayor*: They got Earl Williams surrounded . . . the Rifle Squad has . . . in his house.

MAYOR: Tell 'em to hold the wire.

SHERIFF: I did. *Into phone*: Hold the wire.

MAYOR: Cover up that transmitter! *Sheriff does so. Mayor faces Pincus*: Now listen! You never arrived here with this—whatever it is. Get that?

PINCUS *blinking*: Yes, I did.

MAYOR: How much do you make a week?

PINCUS: Huh?

MAYOR *impatiently*: How much do you make a week? What's your salary?

PINCUS *reluctantly*: Forty dollars.

SHERIFF *into phone*: No—don't cut me off.

MAYOR: How would you like to have a job for three hundred and fifty dollars a month? That's almost a hundred dollars a week!

PINCUS: Who? Me?

MAYOR: Who the hell do you think? *Pincus is a little startled; the Mayor hastens to adopt a milder manner*. Now, listen. There's a fine opening for a fellow like you in the City Sealer's office.

PINCUS: The what?

MAYOR: The City Sealer's office!

PINCUS: You mean here in Chicago?

MAYOR *foaming*: Yes, yes.

SHERIFF *at phone*: Well, wait a minute, will you? I'm in conference.

PINCUS *a very deliberative intellect*: No, I couldn't do that.

MAYOR: Why not?

PINCUS: I couldn't work in Chicago. You see, I've got my family in Springfield.

MAYOR *desperate*: But you could bring 'em to Chicago! We'll pay all your expenses.

PINCUS *with vast thought*: No, I don't think so.

MAYOR: For God's sake, why not?

PINCUS: I got two kids going to high school there, and if I changed them from one town to another they'd probably lose a grade.

MAYOR: No, they wouldn't—they'd gain one! They could go into any class they want to. And I guarantee that they'll graduate with highest honors!

PINCUS *lured*: Yeah?

MAYOR: And the Chicago school system is the best in the world. *To Sheriff*: Isn't it?

SHERIFF: Far and away! *Into phone*: Hold your horses—will you, Mittelbaum. Hurry up, Fred!

MAYOR: Now what do you say?

PINCUS: What did you say this job was?

MAYOR: In the City Sealer's office!

PINCUS: What's he do?

MAYOR *jumping*: Oh, for God's sake!

SHERIFF: He has charge of all the important documents. He puts the City seals on them.

MAYOR: That's about on a par with the rest of your knowledge! The City Sealer's duty, my friend, is to see that the people of Chicago are not mulcted by unscrupulous butchers and grocers.

SHERIFF: That's what I meant.

MAYOR: It's his duty to go around and test their scales.

PINCUS: Yeah?

MAYOR: But only twice a year.

PINCUS: This puts me in a hell of a hole.

MAYOR: No it doesn't. . . . *Hands him the receipt.* Now remember. You never delivered this, whatever it is. You got caught in the traffic or something. . . . Now get out of here and don't let anybody see you. . . .

PINCUS: But how do I know . . .

MAYOR: Come in and see me in my office tomorrow. What's your name?

PINCUS: Pincus.

MAYOR: All right, Mr. Pincus, all you've got to do is lay low and keep your mouth shut. Here! *He hands him a card.* Go to this address. It's a nice homey little place, and you can get anything you want. *He sees Pincus through the door.* Just tell 'em Fred sent you. *Pincus goes.*

SHERIFF *into phone, desperately*: Will you wait, for God's sake? I'll tell you in a minute! *He turns to the Mayor with a gesture of appeal.*

MAYOR *huskily*: All right. Tell 'em to shoot to kill.

SHERIFF: What?

MAYOR: Shoot to kill, I said.

SHERIFF: I don't know, Fred. There's that reprieve if they ever find out.

MAYOR: Nobody reprieved that policeman he murdered. Now do as I tell you.

SHERIFF *into phone*: Hello, Mittelbaum . . . Listen. *His voice is weak*: Shoot to kill. . . . That's the orders—pass the word along. . . . No! We don't want him! And listen, Mittelbaum—five hundred bucks for the guy that does the job. . . . Yes, I'll be right out there. *Hangs up.* Well, I hope that's the right thing to do. *There is a great kicking on the door.*

HILDY *outside*: Hey! Who's in there? Open that door!

MAYOR *en route to the door*: For God's sake take that guilty look off your face. And stop trembling like a horse. *The Sheriff starts whistling, "Ach, du Lieber Augustine" in what he imagines is a care-free manner. The Mayor opens the door; Hildy enters.*

HILDY: Oh, it's you two! Well, what's the idea of locking the door? Playing post-office? *Going to phone.*

SHERIFF *with elaborate unconcern, as he walks toward the door*: Oh, hello, Hildy.

MAYOR: Come on, Hartman.

HILDY *into the phone*: Gimme Walter Burns. *To the others*: Was there a fellow in here asking for me?

SHERIFF: Did you hear we've got Williams surrounded?

HILDY: Yeah. I heard you only let him out so he could vote for you on Tuesday.

MAYOR: Hartman! *He pulls Sheriff out of the room.*

HILDY *into phone*: Hello, Duffy . . . this is Hildy. Listen, where's Walter? Well, where did he go? God damn it, Duffy, I'm waitin' here for the boy to bring over my money . . . the two hundred and sixty

dollars he owes me. . . . Yeah . . . in the Press Room. He told me the boy was on his way. . . . What the hell are you laughin' about? . . . Listen, Duffy, has that maniac started the money over or not? . . . No, I ain't got time to come over to the office. I'll miss the train. . . . Oh, for God's sake! . . . that double-crossing louse! *He hangs up. Woodenshoes enters.*

WOODENSHOES: The trouble is, nobody's using the right psychology. Now you take this aspect of the situation: you got a man named Earl Williams who has escaped . . .

HILDY *seizing at a straw*: Have you got two hundred and sixty dollars on you?

WOODENSHOES: What?

HILDY: Have you got two hundred and sixty dollars?

WOODENSHOES: No, but I got a way of making it, and more. I know how we can get ten thousand dollars, if you'll just listen. *Pointing his finger at Hildy in the manner of a man letting the cat out of the bag*: Serchay la femme!

HILDY: What?

WOODENSHOES *inexorably—for him*: Who is it that's been defendin' this feller Williams right along? Who is it that was hangin' around his room just before the escape happened?

HILDY: O, for God's sake! I ain't got time, Woodenshoes. I got to get two hundred and sixty dollars in the next five minutes!

WOODENSHOES: It's gonna take longer than five minutes. I know where Earl Williams is!

HILDY: He's out at Clark and Fullerton, getting his head blown off. But that don't get me any money.

WOODENSHOES: Earl Williams is with that girl, Mollie Malloy! *That's* where he is!

HILDY *despairing*: Can you imagine—this time tomorrow I'd have been a gentleman. *Diamond Louie enters. Hildy leaps for him.* Thank God! Have you got the dough?

LOUIE: Huh?

WOODENSHOES: She sent him a lot of roses didn't she?

HILDY: God damn it—the hell with your roses. Gimme the dough. I'm in a hell of a hurry, Louie.

LOUIE: What are you talkin' about?

WOODENSHOES: I'll betcha I'm right. *Exits.*

HILDY: Listen, Louie! Do you mean to say Walter didn't give you the dough he owes me?

LOUIE: Walter's pretty sore. You better come over and see him.

HILDY: But that's all settled! Walter and I are

like this! *He illustrates with two twined fingers.* I just did a swell favor for him—scooped the whole town! We're pals again! I'm telling you.

LOUIE: He just told me be sure and get you, you known what I mean?

HILDY *frantically*: I tell you that's fixed! By God, Louie, do you think I'd try to put something over on you?

LOUIE: What do you mean fixed? He wants to talk to you. I been looking all over—

HILDY: But I did talk to him! Everything's all right! I swear to you!

LOUIE *weakening*: Jesus, Hildy, I don't know.

HILDY: Certainly! My God, he *wants* me to go! Now listen, Louie—you've always got a lot of money—will you help me out? This two hundred and sixty bucks—Walter's sending a boy with it, but I can't wait! I gotta catch a train, see? Now—

LOUIE: What two hundred and sixty bucks?

HILDY: The money I spent on the story! He's sending it over, but I want *you* to take *that* and give *me* the money *now*!

LOUIE: Oh! You want two hundred and sixty dollars—*now*.

HILDY: *YES!*

LOUIE: Well, that's a lot of money, you know what I mean?

HILDY: You can get it from Walter. I'll give you my I. O. U.

LOUIE: Lis'en, Hildy, I'd like to help you out. But I've been stung on so many I. O. U's lately that I made myself a promise.

HILDY: But this ain't an I. O. U. . . . It's money comin' to me from the paper!

LOUIE: What have you got to show for it?

HILDY: Louie, listen! My whole future is dependent on this. My girl's waitin' at the train. I've just got fifteen minutes to get there. If you'll help me out, I swear . . . Honest to God . . .

LOUIE *interrupting*: Two hundred and sixty dollars . . . that's a big gamble!

HILDY: It's no gamble at all. I'll write out a note to Walter sayin' for him to give you the money he owes me.

LOUIE: Well, I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I'll take a chance.

HILDY *as he writes out note*: That's the stuff.—You're a white man, Louie, you're a real white man. God—I knew I could depend on you.

LOUIE: I tell you what I'll do. I'll give you a

hundred and fifty dollars for the debt. *Hildy stares at him.*

HILDY: That's just takin' advantage, Louie.

LOUIE: That's the best I can do.

HILDY: Well, Christ! I lose almost a hundred bucks by that.

LOUIE: All right. *Puts money back in his pocket.* Have it your own way.

HILDY: Make it two hundred.

LOUIE: One hundred and fifty!

HILDY: All right, give me the dough. *Diamond Louie takes the paper that Hildy has written out and reads it very carefully, folds it, puts it in his pocket and then proceeds to count out the money, as Hildy is looking for his hat and coat.*

LOUIE: Here you are. *Hildy grabs the money and begins to count it.* Well, goodbye and good luck. I'll look you up in New York—if there's anything wrong with this. *Louie exits.*

HILDY *counting the money*: Ten, twenty, thirty, thirty-five, forty-five—*gets confused; starts again*: Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, forty-five, fifty-five—*in trouble again; he gives up.* The hell with it. Anyway, I get out of this lousy place. They can take their story now and—*Hildy pockets the money and starts*

hurriedly to pick up his parcels, including his old felt hat in a paper bag. As he starts for the door, he is arrested by a sound at the window. The sound is caused by Earl Williams falling through the window into the room. Mr. Williams is a little harmless-looking man with a moustache. He is coatless and is shod with death-house sneakers. He carries a large gun. He is on the verge of collapse and holds on to a chair for support. He talks in an exhausted voice. Hildy at the sight of him, drops his packages and stands riveted.

EARL: They're after me with searchlights . . .

HILDY: Put—put down that gun!

EARL *supporting himself*: It ain't loaded. I fired all the bullets already.

HILDY: Holy God Almighty! . . .

EARL *weakly—handing Hildy the gun*: I surrender. . . . I couldn't hang off that roof any longer.

HILDY: Holy God!—Get away from that window. *Earl obeys. Hildy strides to the door and locks it. He comes back and stands staring at Earl and scratches his head*: Well, for God's sake . . .

EARL: I'm not afraid to die. I was tellin' the fella that when he handed me the gun.

HILDY: Shut up a second! *He locks the door.*

EARL *babbling on*: Wakin' me up in the middle of the night . . . talking to me about things they don't understand. Callin' me a Bolshevik. I ain't a Bolshevik. I'm an anarchist. *Hildy is pulling down the blinds and putting out the lights.* It's got nothin' to do with bombs. It's the one philosophy that guarantees every man freedom. *Weakly*: All those poor people being crushed by the System. And the boys that were killed in the war. And in the slums—all those slaves to a crust of bread—I can hear 'em cryin'—

HILDY: Be quiet! The hell with that. Shut up! . . . will you? *He is hunting for a hiding place.*

EARL: Go on . . . take me back and hang me . . . I done my best. . . . *He crumples and falls to the floor. Hildy stands for a second, desperate. His eye falls on the toilet door. He considers, picks up Williams and hurriedly dumps him inside the toilet. He closes the door and springs for the telephone.*

HILDY *into phone*: Hello. . . . Gimme Walter Burns, *quick!* *Second phone rings. Hildy hesitates, then answers it, propping first receiver between ear and shoulder*: Hello! . . . Hello! . . . Oh, hello, Peggy. . . . Listen, for God's sake have a heart, will you? Something terrific has happened! *Into first phone*: Walter? Hildy . . . No, the hell with that. Listen—come right over here. . . . Come over here

right away. . . . Wait a minute. Into second phone: For God's sake, Peggy, quit bawling me out, will you? I'm in a hell of a jam! *Back to Walter:* Walter! Get this—I only want to say it once. . . . I got Earl Williams. . . . Yes! . . . Here in the press room! . . . Honest to God! . . . For God's sake, hurry! I need you. . . . I will. *Hangs up. Into Peggy's phone again:* Listen, darling, this is the biggest thing that ever happened. . . . Now, wait! Don't cry. Wait till I tell you. *Lowers his voice:* I just captured Earl Williams! *In an intense whisper:* Earl Williams . . . the murderer! I got him. . . . For God's sake, don't tell anybody. . . . Aw, Peggy . . . Peggy . . . I can't. . . . I can't now! . . . Good Lord! Don't you realize . . . *I know, but Peggy . . . She has hung up.* Hello, Peggy . . . Peggy! *Hildy hangs up the phone dejectedly. During the last few speeches, there has been a knocking on the door. Hildy glares apprehensively and holds himself ready for fight. He moves to the door, and as he approaches it, cries:* Who is it? *There is no answer. Hildy opens the door cautiously. Mollie bounds in like a wildcat. He seizes her and wrestles with her.* Wait a minute! What the hell do you want?

MOLLIE *wildly:* Where they gone? You know where they are.

HILDY: Get outa here, Mollie!

MOLLIE: They got him surrounded. They're gonna shoot him—like a dog.

HILDY: Listen! They're lookin' for you, too! If you're smart, you'll get outa here.

MOLLIE: For God's sake, tell me where they've gone. I ain't afraid of them, the yella murderers . . .

HILDY: I'll tell you where they are. They're out at Clark Street! That's where they are! Clark and Fullerton!

MOLLIE: Where? Where? . . . *The toilet door opens and Earl Williams appears, dazed and blinking. Mollie sees him. Oh! A knock on the outer door is heard.*

HILDY *with a desperate look at the door*: Oh, for Christ's—! . . . Sh—! *With a desperate gesture for silence, and tiptoeing towards door*: Who is it?

WOODENSHOES *outside*: It's me.

HILDY: What do you want, Woodenshoes?

WOODENSHOES *outside*: I got some important information for you . . . a clue . . .

HILDY: I'll be right with you. I'm making a personal call. . . . *Turning to the two, tensely*: Get back in there! *Indicating toilet.*

MOLLIE: What's this . . . a double cross?

HILDY: Damn it! I'm trying to save him. . . .

WOODENSHOES *outside*: This is very important.

MOLLIE *to Earl*: What are you doing here?

HILDY *to Mollie*: Keep him quiet! It's a cop! On his way to the door: I'll get rid of him . . . He opens the door cautiously and steps quickly into the hall, leaving his arm behind him, his hand on the inside knob of the door. Loud and friendly: Hello, Woodenshoes! What's on your mind? During the ensuing scene a hardly audible conversation takes place between Hildy and Woodenshoes. Hildy's shoulder is visible in the door.

EARL: Thank you for those roses. . . .

MOLLIE: How did you get here? Does anybody know?

EARL: I came down the rainpipe. I didn't mean to shoot him. I don't know what happened.

MOLLIE: But what are you going to do? You can't stay here! They'll get you!

EARL: I don't care any more.

MOLLIE: You've got to hide! You've got to hide somewhere! The rats!

EARL: No. Don't do anything. I'm ready to go. I don't care. It's better to die for a cause than the way most people die—for no reason.

MOLLIE: You won't die. They'll never get you.

EARL: I ain't important. It's humanity that's important, like I told you. Humanity is a wonderful thing, Mollie.

MOLLIE: No, it ain't. They're just dirty murderers. Look what they done to you . . . and to me . . .

EARL: That's because they don't know any better.

MOLLIE: You're too good for 'em . . . that's why.

EARL: You're good, too.

MOLLIE *with wonder*: Me?

EARL: Yeah, I think you're wonderful. . . . I wrote out a statement today and left it with Mr. Jacobi, so that when I was dead people would understand what I meant. There was a lot about you in it. I said you were the most beautiful character I ever met.

MOLLIE *blinking and dazed*: Yeah?

HILDY *entering, indicating toilet*: Get back in there! The fellows are coming down the hall now! *He locks the door.*

MOLLIE: They'll find him there!

HILDY: Well, there isn't any place else. *He looks helplessly around the room; at that moment someone tries the door knob.*

MOLLIE: There's somebody!

HILDY: Sssh!

ENDICOTT *outside*: Who locked the door!

HILDY: Coming right away, Mike. *Whispers to Mollie*: He's got to go in there!

ENDICOTT *outside*: Well, for God's sake, hurry.

MOLLIE: Oh, my God!

HILDY: Wait a minute! I got an idea! *Springs and opens the desk*. Can you get in this desk?

WILSON *outside*: What the hell's going on in there? *Starts to pound on door*.

EARL: What good'll it do?

HILDY: We'll get you out in ten minutes.

WILSON *outside*: *Open up* there, will you?

HILDY: All right, all right. God damn it!

EARL: Please, don't talk like that in front of her.

MOLLIE *to Earl*: Go on! Please! Please!

EARL: They'll find me, anyhow. *More pounding*.

HILDY: All right, I'm coming! *To Earl*: Keep dead quiet. Don't even breathe.

MOLLIE: I'll be right here. I won't leave you.

ENDICOTT *outside, shouting*: Hey, what the God damn Hell.

HILDY: Keep your shirt on! *He opens the door.* What are you trying to do! Kick down the building? *Endicott and Wilson enter. Head for phones at back.*

ENDICOTT: Kind of exclusive, ain't you? *Sees Mollie.* Oh! *Elaborately:* I beg your pardon.

WILSON: City Desk, please! What's the idea of locking the door?

HILDY: I was interviewing her.

ENDICOTT *at phone:* Gimme the city desk. . . . What was he doing to her?

WILSON: With the blinds down. *Murphy enters.*

MURPHY: Where the hell you been, Hildy? There's the damnedest Hallowe'en going on—the whole police force standing on its ear. *At phone:* Murphy talking. Gimme the desk.

WILSON *into phone:* Wilson speaking. No luck yet on Williams. Call you back! *Kruger enters.*

KRUGER: God, I never was so tired in my life.

HILDY: Any news?

MURPHY *into phone:* This is Murphy. . . . Well, they surrounded the house, only Williams wasn't there.

KRUGER: Gimme a rewrite man. *McCue enters.*

McCUE *entering*: Jesus, what a chase!

MURPHY *into phone*: Wait a minute. They shot somebody, anyhow. Here you are! Ready? Herman Schulte, the Sheriff's brother-in-law. He was leading the squad through the house and was looking under a bed when Deputy John F. Watson came in the room and mistook him for Earl. Shot him right in the pants. Yeah. A bull's eye. Right. *Hangs up*.

HILDY *on edge*: He always had lead in his pants.

McCUE *at his phone*: McCue talking. Gimme the desk.

KRUGER *phoning*: This is Kruger, out with Hartman's deputies. . . . Yeah. . . . I'm in the drug store, at Clark and Fullerton. Well, call me back if you don't believe me. *Hangs up*.

McCUE *into phone*: That so? I'll check on it. *Hangs up*. There's something doing at Harrison Street Station. *Into phone*: Gimme Harrison 2500. Hurry it, will you please?

KRUGER *to Mollie, who is in the swivel chair in front of the desk*: What's the idea, Mollie? Can't you flop somewhere else?

MURPHY: Yeah, parking her fanny in here like it was a cathouse. *Takes a sniff of the air*. Fleur de Floosie, she's got on.

KRUGER *neighing like a horse*: Makes me passionate!

MURPHY: Go on, Mollie, put it somewhere else. Go out and stink up Clark Street.

MOLLIE *nervous and twitching*: You lay off me!

McCUE: Look out—she'll start bawling again. *Into phone*: I'll hold the wire. Only don't forget me.

HILDY: Let her alone, fellas. She's not doing anything.

MURPHY *to Hildy*: What the hell are you two so chummy about?

ENDICOTT: Yeah, they were locked in here together when we come along.

WILSON: Wouldn't open the door.

McCUE: You'll be out of training for your honeymoon—playing pinochle with this baby.

MURPHY: I thought you were going to catch a train.

KRUGER: He was running around here ten minutes ago with his pants on fire about going to New York.

ENDICOTT: Told us he was interviewing her.

MURPHY: What are you trying to do? Scoop us?

HILDY: I'm waiting here for Walter. He's coming over with some dough.

McCUE *phoning*: Hello, Sarge. McCue. I hear you got a tip on Williams.

WILSON: Look, she's got the shakes. What the hell you making faces about?

ENDICOTT *singing childishly*: She's jealous because Hildy's going to be married.

HILDY: Go on—Show 'em you can smile through your tears. Relax.

MOLLIE: You let me alone—all of you. *Schwartz enters.*

McCUE *into phone*: Yeah! What's the address!

SCHWARTZ: Hello, fellas. What the hell, Hildy? You still here?

ENDICOTT: Yeah, and trying to hang something on us, if you ask me. What's the low-down Hildy?

SCHWARTZ: Who the hell pulled these shades down?

McCUE *turning from phone*: Hey! This looks good. An old lady just called up the detective bureau and claims Williams is hiding under her piazza.

ENDICOTT: Tell her to stand up.

MURPHY: Who you got there?

McCUE: The Captain.

MURPHY: Let me talk to him. *Taking the phone:* Hello, Turkey. . . . How's your gussie mollie? . . . I hear this guy Williams is hiding in your mustache. . . . Yeah? Well, get your nose out of the way. *Hangs up. Points to Mollie's crossed and highly visible legs:* Oooh! Lookit! Pike's Peak!

McCUE: Listen, fellows, that sounds like a pretty good tip. What do you say?

HILDY: If you boys want to get out I'll cover this end for you.

ENDICOTT: Aw, the hell with chasing around any more. I spent a dollar forty on taxis already.

KRUGER *flat on his back:* Don't let's do any more going out.

SCHWARTZ *who has gone to the window:* If you ask me, I got a hunch Williams ain't anywhere they been looking for him.

WILSON: How do you mean?

SCHWARTZ: Well, I just been talking to Jacobi about that roof he's supposed to have jumped off of. Look! Now there's that skylight he got out of.

ENDICOTT: Where?

McCUE *looking out:* Jesus, how could he get from there to the ground?

SCHWARTZ: That's just the point. Jacobi's gone up there with a couple of cops to look over the whole roof.

McCUE *leaning out*: I tell you what he could have done, though. Look! He could have jumped over to this roof. That's only about four feet.

ENDICOTT: Yeah, he could have done that, all right.

KRUGER *wearily*: I'm pretending there ain't no Earl Williams.

SCHWARTZ: And that's why I'm telling you guys that I don't think this guy Williams is anywhere they been looking for him. I got a stinking hunch he's right in this building.

HILDY *derisive*: Hanging around like a duck in a shootin' gallery, I suppose! You're a lot of bright guys. . . .

McCUE *still looking*: It'd be easy, once he got on this roof. . . .

HILDY *with nervous hilarity*: Hey—Sherlock Holmes, what correspondence school did you graduate from?

SCHWARTZ: What's the matter with that? He could come down the rainpipe and crawl into any one of those windows on this side. . . .

KRUGER: Well if the story's going to walk right in the window—!

HILDY: The master minds at work! Why don't you guys go home—he'll probably *call* on you. . . . *Bensinger enters and approaches his desk. Mollie sitting in his chair, is hidden from him at the moment by one or two of the reporters.*

BENSINGER: Hello, Hildy. Thought you were going to New York. *Hildy has sprung into action with Bensinger's entrance. Bensinger sees Mollie.* For God's sake, what's she doing in my chair? *Mollie springs up.* Is that the only place you can sit? That's my property and I don't want anybody using it!

HILDY *leaning against the closed desk*: Nobody's using it, Roy. Everything's all right.

BENSINGER *anxiously*: Any of you fellows got some aspirin?

ENDICOTT: No, sweetheart, but I got some nice cyanide.

BENSINGER *sitting down*: Cut the kidding, fellows. I tell you I'm sick.

SCHWARTZ: How about a good truss? I'll sell it to you cheap.

HILDY: What's the matter, Roy? Off your feed?

BENSINGER: If I haven't got a good case of

grippe coming. I miss my guess. *Reaching for desk cover.* Get out of the way, will you?

HILDY *not moving*: I hope you didn't get it off me.

BENSINGER: I got it off somebody. Everybody using my phone all the time—it's a wonder I ain't caught anything worse. *Pushing Hildy slightly.* Look out, I got to get my cup.

HILDY *doubling up as if with a violent cramp*: Wait a minute, will you?

BENSINGER *frightened*: What's the matter?

HILDY *faintly*: I don't know, oh—

BENSINGER: Don't you feel all right?

HILDY: No. *Coughs violently in Bensinger's face.*

BENSINGER: Don't do that!

HILDY *weakly*: Do what?

BENSINGER: Cough on a guy! Jesus!

HILDY: Well, I don't know what's the matter. I suddenly got a pain right—*vaguely indicates his throat*—and a kind of rash on my chest. *Opening his shirt.*

BENSINGER *recoiling*: What?! You've probably got some disease!

MURPHY: Sure! He's got the pazooza!

HILDY *advancing on Bensinger, tries to take his hand*: Feel! Ain't that fever?

BENSINGER *retreating from the desk*: Hey, cut it out! It may be diphtheria!

HILDY: I woke up this morning, and had yellow spots all over my stomach. . . .

BENSINGER: That ain't funny!

KRUGER: For God's sake, Roy, can't you see he's kidding you. *Hildy following Bensinger, seizes him.*

BENSINGER: Let go of me! You may have something contagious! If you're sick go to a hospital! *Hildy coughs in his face.* For the love of God!

MURPHY: It's no worse than a bad cold, Roy.

HILDY *opening his mouth*: Can you see anything in there? Aaah!

BENSINGER: Listen, fellows! You ain't got any sense, letting him hang around here. We'll all catch it, whatever it is! *They all laugh.* All right, laugh! But I'm going to get this place fumigated!

MURPHY: The hell you are!

BENSINGER *furiously*: The hell I ain't! We got to breathe this air. I'm gonna get Doc Springer and clean this whole place up! You Goddamn maniacs. *Exits. Hildy leans weakly up against the desk and laughs hysterically.*

ENDICOTT: What's the idea, Hildy? Now he'll be burning sulphur for a week like last time. . . .

McCUE: Yeah, you're leavin', but we gotta work here, with all them stink pots. . . . What a sense of humor you got.

SCHWARTZ: Now look here. What about Williams? Let's get the cops and search the building. What do you say?

ENDICOTT: I could use that reward. . . .

MURPHY: What the hell could you do with ten grand? . . .

ENDICOTT: You could have a girl in every room at the Sherman Hotel for that. . . .

MURPHY: You'd never get past the basement.

McCUE: It would be funny if we found him right here in the building.

SCHWARTZ: What do you say? Should we get the cops?

MURPHY: Call up Lieut. Callahan, Mac. Tell him we got a hot tip.

HILDY: Wait! What do you want to call the cops for? Suppose he *is* in the building. They'll grab all the reward and you guys won't get a smell.

SCHWARTZ: Huh?

WILSON: That's right.

HILDY: Listen! Each of us take a floor and whoever finds him, we split it up. What do you say?

WILSON: That's not a bad idea.

KRUGER: I'll stay here.

HILDY: Two grand apiece! Why we could retire for life! You could pay off all those loan sharks, Jimmie, and have enough left to stay stinko forever!

McCUE: I don't know, getting my can blown off.

HILDY: What else is it good for? . . . Besides, he can't hurt anybody. . . . What do you say? Do you want to try it?

MRS. GRANT *enters, in a very righteous mood*: Well!

HILDY *stricken*: Now—now, listen, mother—

MRS. GRANT: Don't you mother me! If you've got anything to say for yourself you come downstairs and say it to Peggy.

HILDY: Listen, mother, tell Peggy I'll be downstairs in five minutes, will you? Will you go down and tell her that?

MRS. GRANT: No, sir—I don't move out of here without you.

HILDY: Listen, mother, you don't understand. Now I told Peggy—

MRS. GRANT: I know what you told her! A lot of gibberish about a murderer!

HILDY: No—no!

MRS. GRANT: I don't care if you *did* catch him, you come with me this minute!

THE REPORTERS: I knew something stunk around here. Who says he caught him? What's going on. What do you mean caught a murderer? *etc.* *In the midst of this babel, Woodenshoes enters; stands listening.*

HILDY: No, no! I don't know what she's talking about! I didn't tell her any such thing.

MRS. GRANT: Yes, you did!

MOLLIE: He never told her that!

HILDY: I said I was *trying* to catch one, that's all! You got it balled up, mother!

MURPHY *to Mollie*: What do *you* know about it? How do you know he didn't?

MOLLIE: Let go of my arm!

ENDICOTT: Hildy and that tart were in here together!

WOODENSHOES: Yah! Yah! She's the one that knows! Ask *her*!

MURPHY *wheeling on him*: What do you mean she knows?

WOODENSHOES: Serchay la femme! *To Mollie*: Where's Earl Williams?

MOLLIE: How the hell should I know?

WOODENSHOES: Where have you got him hid?

MURPHY *viciously*: Who you holding out on, Hildy? Come clean, or God damn it, we'll knock it out of you! *The reporters surround Hildy menacingly.*

McCUE: Yeah. What the hell! Sock him, Jimmie!

ENDICOTT: You dirty double-crosser!

MOLLIE *wildly*: Wait! You God damn stool pigeons! He don't know where Earl Williams is. I'm the one that knows.

ENDICOTT: What do you mean you know? *The reporters turn on Mollie.*

WOODENSHOES: Where is he!

MOLLIE: Go find out, you lousy heels. You don't think I'm gonna tell!

WOODENSHOES: You'll tell all right! We'll make you . . .

MOLLIE *slowly backing toward the door*: Yeah? . . . Yeah . . . the hell I will.

HILDY *who has remained riveted to the desk*: Let her alone . . . she's goofy! *Mollie lunges suddenly for the door.*

THE REPORTERS: Look out! . . . Close that door . . . For Christ' sake! Don't let her get away. *She is headed off at the door.*

McCUE: You ain't gettin' out o' here, Mollie.

ENDICOTT: Now where is he? In the building?

McCUE: Where you hidin' him?

MOLLIE: I ain't gonna squeal! I ain't gonna squeal!

MURPHY *approaching her slowly*: Come on, you lousy tart! Before we kick your teeth out!

ENDICOTT: D'ye want us to call the cops and give you the boots?

MURPHY: Go on, Woodenshoes. Slap it out of her!

WOODENSHOES *reaching for her*: Come on now. Where is he before I hurt you?

MOLLIE *tearing away from him, wild and blubbing*: Take your hands off me, you God damn kidney foot! *She snatches at a chair and swings it at the slowly advancing circle of men*: Let me alone or I'll knock your God damn heads off. . . .

ENDICOTT: Put down that chair!

SCHWARTZ: Get around—get on the side of her.

MOLLIE *backing away, swinging her chair*: No you don't! You bastards! Keep away from me!

KRUGER: Grab her.

MOLLIE *with a last wild look at the circling foe*: You'll never get it out of me. . . . *She hurls the chair at their heads and screams*: I'll never tell! Never! *She leaps for the open window and disappears. Her scream of terror and exultation is heard as she drops through the darkness to the ground. The reporters stand riveted for an instant, powerless before the tragedy. Then they rush forward. An assortment of awed and astonished oaths rise from them. They lean out of the window. Woodenshoes the Theorist, stands sick at heart. His body is doubled up with pain for a moment. Through the babble of cries his voice comes thickly.*

WOODENSHOES: Oh! I never thought she'd do that! That's terrible. . . .

MRS. GRANT *coming out of a trance*: Take me out of here! Take me out of here! Oh my God! *She collapses in a chair.*

THE REPORTERS *at the window*: She ain't killed. . . . No. . . . She's moving. . . . Get the cops, Woodenshoes. . . . Come on fellas. . . .

HILDY: Holy God—the poor kid . . . the poor kid. *Voices come from the jail yard—“Hey Carl. . . . Get a doctor! What the hell! Who is it? What happened?” etc. The Reporters rush out to get to Mollie. Hildy stands dazed, looking out of the window. Mrs. Grant moans through her hands. As the vibrations subside a newcomer is standing in the door. This is Mr. Walter Burns, the Managing Editor. Beneath a dapper and very citizen-like exterior lurks a hobgoblin, perhaps the Devil himself. But if Mr. Burns is the Devil he is a very naïf one. He is a Devil with neither point nor purpose to him—an undignified Devil hatched for a bourgeoisie Halloween. In less hyperbolic language Mr. Burns is that product of thoughtless, pointless, nerve-drumming unmorality that is the Boss Journalist—the licensed eavesdropper, trouble maker, bombinator and Town Snitch, misnamed The Press. At this moment Mr. Burns, in the discharge of his high calling, stands in the door, nerveless and meditative as a child, his mind open to such troubles as he can find or create.*

HILDY *seeing him*: Walter! My God—did you see that?

WALTER *quietly*: Yes. Where is he?

HILDY: She jumped out of the window.

WALTER: I know. . . . Where is he, I said?

HILDY *looking out of the window*: She's moving!
Thank God she ain't killed herself!

WALTER: Come to, Hildy! Where have you got
Williams?

HILDY *still absorbed in the Mollie matter*: Huh?
He's—he's in the desk. *As Walter goes to desk*:
Thank God she ain't dead. *Walter opens desk a
crack.*

EARL *muffled*: Let me out, I can't stand it!

WALTER: Keep quiet! You're sitting pretty.

MRS. GRANT *staring at the Editor*: What's the
matter?

WALTER *he wheels*: Who the hell is that?

HILDY: It's my girl's mother.

MRS. GRANT: What are you doing? Oh, my
God!

WALTER: Shut up!

MRS. GRANT: I won't shut up! That girl killed
herself. Oh! You're doing something wrong. What's
in there? *Diamond Louie appears in the doorway.*

HILDY: Now, mother, please!

WALTER: Take her out of here, will you?

MRS. GRANT: What did you say?

HILDY: Now look here, Walter—

WALTER: Louie, take this lady over to Polack Mike's, and lock her up. See that she don't talk to anyone on the way!

MRS. GRANT: What's that? What's that?

HILDY *startled*: Aw, now, Walter, you can't do that!

LOUIE *calls*: Hey, Tony!

MRS. GRANT: Don't you touch me!

WALTER: Tell 'em it's a case of delerium tremens.

LOUIE: Tony, give me a hand with this lady.

HILDY *helplessly*: Listen, Walter, this'll get me in a hell of a jam. . . . *To Mrs. Grant who, a hand over her mouth, is being dragged off, her heels trailing*: Now don't worry, mother, this is only temporary. . . . Honest to God, Walter . . .

MRS. GRANT *vaguely heard*: Peggy, Peggy! Oh, my God! *Exit Tony, Louie and Mrs. Grant. Hildy starts out.*

WALTER *grabs his arm*: Where the hell do you think you're going?

HILDY: Let go of me! I gotta get my girl! She's downstairs in a cab all alone.

WALTER: Your girl! Good God, what are you?

Some puking college boy! Why, in time of war you could be shot for what you're doing—for less than you're doing!

HILDY: To hell with you—there's your story—locked up in that desk! Smear it all over the front page—Earl Williams caught by the Examiner—and take all the credit. . . . I covered your story and I covered it God damn right. . . . Now I'm gettin' out. . . .

WALTER: You drooling saphead . . . What do you mean—a story? You've got the whole city by the seat of the pants!

HILDY: I know all about that, but . . .

WALTER: You know hell—You got the brains of a pancake. . . . Listen Hildy, if I didn't have your interests at heart would I be wastin' time now arguin' with you! You've done somethin' big—you've stepped into a new class . . .

HILDY *D'Artagnan never gave Richelieu an ear more startled or more innocent*: Huh?

WALTER: Listen, we'll make such monkeys out of these ward heelers that *nobody* will vote for them—not even their *wives*.

HILDY: Expose 'em, huh . . .

WALTER: Expose 'em! Crucify em! We're gonna

keep Williams under cover till morning so's the Examiner can break the story exclusive. . . Then we'll let the Senator in on the capture—share the glory with him.

HILDY: I see—I see! *Blinking and warming up.*

WALTER: You've kicked over the whole City Hall like an applect. You've got the Mayor and Hartman backed against a wall. You've put one administration out and another in. . . . This ain't a newspaper story—it's a career. And you standin' there bellyachin about some girl. . . .

HILDY: Jesus, I— I wasn't figuring it that way, I guess. We'll be the white-haired boys, won't we?

WALTER: Why, they'll be naming streets after you. Johnson Street! You and I and the Senator are going to *run* this town. . . . Do you understand that?

HILDY: Yeah. . . . Yeah! But—wait a minute—we can't leave Williams here. . . . One of those reporters'll . . .

WALTER: We're going to take him over to my private office right away. . . . Where's the Examiner phone?

HILDY: That one. The red one. How the hell you gonna do it? They'll see him!

WALTER: Not if he's inside the desk. . . . We'll

carry the desk over. *Into phone:* Hello! Examiner. Give me Duffy. . . . I'd have had him there now if you hadn't give me such an argument.

HILDY: You can't take that out. It's crawling with cops outside.

WALTER: We'll lower it out of the window with pulleys. Quit stallin'. *To Hildy:* Hildy! Get that machine and start pounding out a lead, will you. . . . Come on—snap into it. . . .

HILDY: How much you want on it? . . .

WALTER: All the words you got. . . .

HILDY: Where the hell is there some paper?

WALTER *into phone:* Hello. . . . Hello!

HILDY *moving for Bensinger's desk:* Can I call the Mayor an animal at bay?

WALTER: Call him a nigger if you want to! Come on! Come on!

HILDY: How about that time he had his house painted by the fire department.

WALTER: Give him the works. . . . *Into phone:* Hello Duffy. Get set! We got the biggest story in the world. Earl Williams caught by the Examiner . . . exclusive. . . . *Hildy has opened the drawers of Bensinger's desk and in a frantic search for paper is tossing play manuscripts, syringes, patent medicines and old socks in the air.*

WALTER *continuing into phone*: Duffy! Send down word to Butch McGuirk I want ten huskies from the circulation department to lam right over here—press room criminal courts building. That's what I said—Butch McGuirk. *To Hildy*: He'll get that desk out—nothin' ever stopped those boys yet. *Hildy has unearthed a full package of Bensinger's personal stationery. He now picks up the typewriter*: What if they start shootin'?

WALTER: Fine! *Into phone*: Now listen, Duffy. I want you to tear out the whole front page. . . . That's what I said—the whole front page . . . out . . . *Into phone*: Johnson's writing the lead. . . . *Peggy enters—a desperate and strident antagonist.*

PEGGY: Hildy!

WALTER: What the hell do you want!

PEGGY: Hildy!

HILDY *holding the typewriter in his arms. Dazed*: What?

WALTER: Listen, Miss, you can't come in here! *Into phone*: To hell with the Chinese earthquake! . . . What's that?

HILDY: Listen, darling—

PEGGY: Where's mother?

WALTER *into phone*: I don't care if there's a million dead.

HILDY: Peggy, I got to ask you to do something!
A big favor!

PEGGY: You're not coming!

WALTER *into phone*: What? I don't hear you.

HILDY: Now don't get sore and fly off the handle,
darling. What happened was—

PEGGY: You're *not!* Are you? Tell me, Hildy!
Tell me the truth!

WALTER *into phone*: Take all those Miss America
pictures off Page 6. Wait a minute, Duffy. *Turns.*
Now look here, little girl—

PEGGY *wheels on Walter*: You're doing this to
him! He was going and you stopped him!

HILDY: Something terrific's happened, Peggy!
Wait till I tell you! I couldn't—

WALTER: You'll tell her nothing! She's a wo-
man, you damn fool!

PEGGY: Well, I'm not going to let you do it!
You're coming right now! With me!

WALTER: Holy God!

HILDY: But it's the biggest chance of my life.
Now listen, darling—

WALTER *frenzied*: Shut up, will you?

PEGGY: You don't *want* to marry me! That's all!

HILDY *putting down the typewriter*: That ain't true! Just because you won't listen you're saying I don't love you when you know I'd cut off my hands for you! I'd do anything in the world for you! Anything!

WALTER *into phone*: Hello, Duffy! What? . . . What's that? . . . To hell with the League of Nations! Spike it!

PEGGY: You never intended to be decent and live like a human being! You were lying all the time!

HILDY: Peggy, don't keep saying that!

WALTER *into phone*: What's that? What?

PEGGY: Lying! That's what you were! Just lying!

HILDY *his tortured male spirit takes refuge in hysteria*: All right! If that's what you think!

WALTER *shouting at the lovers*: H. Sebastian God! I'm trying to concentrate!

PEGGY: I see what you are now! You're just a bum! Like him—*indicates Walter*—and all the rest!

HILDY: Sure! That's what I am!

WALTER *into phone*: No! Leave the rooster story alone—that's human interest!

PEGGY: You're just a heartless selfish animal without any feelings! *To Walter:* And you're worse! It's all your fault and if you think I'm going to put up with it—

WALTER: Shut up, will you? . . . *Into phone:* Duffy, let me talk to Butch—

HILDY: Shut up, will you? Yeah! That's what I am! A bum! Without any feelings! And that's all I want to be!

WALTER *into phone:* Get a hold o' Butch as fast as you can.

PEGGY: You never did love me or you couldn't talk to me like that! *The desk top opens slowly and Earl Williams sticks his head out.*

WALTER *screaming across the room:* Get back in there—you God damn turtle . . . *The desk top falls, the fugitive disappears within and Peggy, her heart break audible in her sobs, moves blindly toward the door.*

HILDY *sitting before his typewriter calls after her his voice tormented but his egoism intact:* If you want me you'll have to take me as I am instead of trying to turn me into some lah de dah with a cane! I'm no stuffed shirt writing peanut ads. . . . God damn it—I'm a newspaper man. . . . *Peggy exits, her sobs filling the room and corridor.*

WALTER: Shut up! *Into phone as the curtain is falling:* Hello Duffy! The edition gone in yet? . . . Well don't. . . . Never mind the mail trains. . . . You ain't working for the advertising department. . . . The hell with Marshall Field's!! Stick on this wire!

HILDY *has started typing. The click of the keys stops suddenly and he rips the piece of copy paper from the machine. He is not quite himself—he has made an error in his lead. . . .* God damn it——

CURTAIN

ACT III

The same scene, five minutes later. Hildy is typing furiously. Walter is pacing up and down. He finally picks up the receiver, which has been standing on the table. Into phone, with moderate excitement:

WALTER: Duffy. . . . Duffy! *To Hildy:* God damn it! I told him to stay on that phone. If I had a few people who did what they were told I could get something accomplished. . . . I bet he never told 'em to take taxis. . . . Butch and the gang are probably *walking* over here. . . . *Looking out of the window:* Oh, for Chris' sake . . . Now the *moon's* out! *Hildy types on. Walter skitters to the desk and taps three times. Earl taps back three times from within.* Fine! Three taps is me! Don't forget! . . . You're sitting pretty now. Got enough air? *He raises the roll top an inch or two and fans air in with his hand.* Is that better? *Closing the desk and going to phone.* Lam into 'em, Hildy! Below the belt! Every punch! *Into phone, with great sarcasm:* Hello! . . . Duffy! Where the hell you been? Well, the hell with your diabetes! You stick on this phone! Listen, did you impress it on Butch to take a taxi—that every minute counts? Who's he bringing with him? What do you mean, you don't know! But you told Butch

it was life and death, huh? All right, stick on the wire! *Putting down receiver.* Duffy's getting old. . . . Well, Butch is on the way, Hildy. All we got to do is hold out for fifteen minutes. . . .

HILDY *over his typing:* The boys'll be back. They'll be coming in to phone.

WALTER: I'll handle them. It's that three-toed Sheriff I'm worrying about. If he starts sticking his snoot into this . . . *cudgelling his brain.* I wonder if we could arrest him for anything?

Hildy has never ceased his typing: Did you ever get the dope on that stenographer he seduced?

HILDY *over his shoulder:* That was the coroner.

WALTER: Haven't we got *anything* on him—besides graft?

HILDY *thoughtfully:* He's got an idiot kid in the asylum.

WALTER *depressed:* I don't see how we can use that against him. *Brightening.* Wait a minute! Idiot kid. Idiot kid. . . . *He meditates, then sighs:* No, that's impractical. . . . *Approaching Hildy:* What's your lead?

HILDY *with authorly pride:* "While hundreds of Sheriff Hartman's paid gunmen stalked through Chicago shooting innocent bystanders, spreading their reign of terror, Earl Williams was lurking less

than twenty yards from the Sheriff's office where . . .

WALTER: That's *lousy*! Aren't you going to mention the Examiner? Don't we take *any* credit?

HILDY: I'm putting that in the second paragraph. . . .

WALTER: Who the hell's going to read the second paragraph? Ten years I've been telling you how to write a newspaper story—My God, have I got to do everything? Get the story? Write the story? . . .

HILDY: Listen, you bastard! I can blow better newspaper stories out of my nose than you can write!

WALTER *cackling*: "While hundreds of paid gunmen are out taking a walk . . ." God, that stinks! You ought to go back to chasing pictures!

HILDY: Yeah?

WALTER: You were *good* at that!

HILDY: You ungrateful bastard! Who wrote the Fitzgerald confession? Who wrote Ruth Randall's diary? How about the Dayton flood? Even the telegraph operator was crying!

WALTER: All right, make me cry now! *Into phone*: Duffy! Listen, Duffy. What's the name of that religious editor of ours? The fellow with the dirty collar? Sipper what? Well, tell the Reverend

Sipperly I want to see him right away! . . . *To Hildy*: Do you know what I'm gonna do?

HILDY: Shut up, or I'll throw this typewriter at your head!

WALTER *happily*: I'm going to get the Reverend Sipperly to make up a prayer for the City of Chicago—right across the top of the paper! . . . "Our Father Who art in Heaven—There were four hundred and twenty-one murders in Chicago last year!" All in religious lingo, see? Eight columns Old English Boldface! The God-damnedest prayer you ever heard. . . . *Awed at his own resourcefulness*. Christ, what an idea!

HILDY: You better pray that this desk will float out of the window over to the paper.

WALTER: Wait a minute, Hildy. . . . *The Pentecostal fire upon him*. Wait, wait! . . . I got an inspiration! Now take this down, just as I say it! *He yanks a page from the typewriter*.

HILDY *leaping*: Some day you're going to do that, Walter, and I'm gonna belt you in the jaw . . . ! You Goddam Know-it-all!

WALTER *chanting*: Here's your lead: "The Chicago Examiner again rode to the rescue of the city last night in the darkest hour of her history! *Lowering his voice*: Earl Williams—Earl Williams, the

Bolshevik Tiger, who leaped snarling from the gallows upon the flanks of the city, was captured . . .

HILDY: I got you! I got you! . . .

WALTER: Go on from *there!* *Hildy is hurriedly putting another sheet into the machine as the door knob is rattled. A pause.*

HILDY: What do you want to do?

BENSINGER'S VOICE *outside*: What's the idea of locking that door?

HILDY: That's Bensinger. That's his desk.

WALTER: What's his name again? *The door knob is rattled violently.*

HILDY: Bensinger. Reporter for the Tribune. . . . Covers the building.

BENSINGER'S VOICE: Open this door, will you? Who's in there?

WALTER: I'll handle him! The Tribune, eh? Watch me. *He opens the door. Bensinger appears.*

BENSINGER *entering*: Ain't you got any more sense than to . . . *Sees Walter. Is overcome at this visitation.* Oh, hello, Mr. Burns. . . . Why, quite an honor, having you come over here.

WALTER *casually*: Hello, Bensinger.

BENSINGER: Excuse me. I just want to—*starts for the desk.*

WALTER *blocking his path*: Quite a coincidence, my running into you tonight. . . . Isn't it, Hildy?

HILDY: Yeah.

BENSINGER: How do you mean?

WALTER: I was having a little chat about you just this afternoon—with Mr. Duffy.

BENSINGER: Is that so? *Essaying a pleasantry*. Nothing detrimental, I hope.

WALTER: I should say not! That was one swell story you had in the paper this morning.

BENSINGER *deeply moved*: Well, I'm glad you think so, Mr. Burns. Did you care for the poem?

WALTER: The poem? . . . The poem was great! I got a big kick out of that.

BENSINGER *blinking at these sweet words*: Did you like the ending? *He recites*:

“and all is well, outside his cell

But in his heart he hears

The hangman calling and the gallows falling

And his white-haired mother's tears . . .”

WALTER *overcome*: Heartbreaking! Isn't it, Hildy? Bensinger, how would you like to work for me?

BENSINGER: What!

WALTER: I mean it. We need somebody like

you. All we got now is a lot of lowbrows and legmen. Like Johnson, here. *Pushing Bensinger farther from the desk.* I tell you what you do. Go over and talk to Duffy now. I just had him on the phone. You'll catch him if you hurry.

BENSINGER: You mean seriously, Mr. Burns?

WALTER: I'll show you how serious I am. . . . *Clinging to Bensinger's pants, he takes him to the phone. Into phone:* Duffy! I'm sending Bensinger over to see you. *To Bensinger:* Marvin, isn't it?

BENSINGER: No. Roy. Roy V.

WALTER: Funny I should forget that! *Into phone:* Roy Bensinger, the poet. Put him right on the staff!

BENSINGER: Right away, you mean?

WALTER *into phone:* Never mind what doing . . . He'll tell you. No, I'll talk salary with him right here. *To Roy:* How much you getting on the Tribune, Roy?

BENSINGER: Seventy-five.

WALTER: Bensinger, I'll give you a hundred and a by-line. *Into phone:* He's to get a hundred and a by-line, Duffy. Tell the cashier. Let him have everything he wants. He can use the big desk in the corner. *To Bensinger, dropping receiver:* Now hustle right over to the office and tell Duffy I've—

I've assigned you to write the human interest side of the man hunt. I want it from the point of view of the escaped man. *Acting it out.* He hides, cowering . . . afraid of every light, of every sound . . . hears footsteps . . . his heart going like that . . . And all the time they're closing in . . . get the sense of an animal at bay!

BENSINGER: Sort of a Jack London style?

WALTER: Exactly. Now you ain't got a minute to lose. Hop right over to the office.

BENSINGER: Well, I don't know about quitting the Tribune that way, Mr. Burns. It's not quite ethical. . . .

WALTER: What did they ever do for you? . . . They've never considered your interests—that is, from what I hear. . . .

BENSINGER: Well, between you and me they have given me a pretty rotten deal. The way they handle my copy's a shame—just butcher it.

WALTER: Your copy will be sacred on the Examiner. I guarantee that personally. . . . *He edges Bensinger toward the door.*

BENSINGER *the artist*: You can't lop off the end of a story and get the same effect. The whole *feeling* goes . . .

WALTER: Of course. Now I want a real Bensinger story tomorrow morning, with a crackerjack poem on the side. *He has him nearly to the door.*

BENSINGER *indicating his desk*: I got my rhyming dictionary in . . .

WALTER: It don't have to rhyme! Now duck!

BENSINGER: Gee, I'm terribly grateful, Mr. Burns. *Pausing in the doorway.* Do you suppose there might be an opening some time as foreign correspondent? I parlay a little French, you know.

WALTER *shaking hands with him and pushing him out*: That'll all depend on your self. I'll keep you in mind.

BENSINGER *on his way to Garcia*: Well, au revoir, mon capitaine!

WALTER *never at a loss in any language*: Bonjour! *Walter closes the door and skips to the phone. Into phone*: Duffy! Listen. Now get this! A God damn Tribune sneak is coming over to get a job. Yeah, Bensinger, the fellow I told you about. Now listen, handle him with kid gloves and tell him to get busy writing poetry. No . . . no! We don't want him. But wait till he gets through. Then tell him his poetry stinks and kick him down the stairs. . . . *Lays receiver down. To Hildy*: His white-haired mother's tears! *Picks up Hildy's copy.* Come on,

Hildy, tear into it! Don't sit there like a frozen robin!

HILDY *coming out of the ether*: You've just bitched up my whole life! That's what you've done!

WALTER *oblivious to this mood*: Listen, Hildy. We ought to have our plans all set when Butch gets here. All we can look for out of that guy is pure, peasant strength . . . A mental blank. *Sentimentally*: But he'd go through hell for me!

HILDY: What a fine horse's bustle I turned out to be!

WALTER *as before*: The window's out. . . . We'll have him pick it up and walk right out of the building with it. With ten guys it'll be a cinch.

HILDY: She was the most wonderful girl I'll ever know . . . *Walter looks at him in horror and disgust*: She had spirit, brains, looks . . . everything!

WALTER: Who the hell you talking about?

HILDY: My girl! God damn it! Who do you think?

WALTER: What are you going to do? Start mumbling about your girl *now*? You got a story to write!

HILDY: I practically told her to go to hell—like she was some waitress!

WALTER: You acted like a man for the first

time in your life! Now, don't start crawling now!

HILDY: I'll never love anybody else again! They don't come like that twice in a man's life.

WALTER: You'll sleep it off. Now, listen, Hildy. I got enough on my mind!

HILDY: When she was sick in the hospital and you sent me on that wild goose chase all over Kentucky for three weeks she never even complained. . . .

WALTER: Ha, ha. Sick in the hospital!

HILDY: Damn it, she was! She nearly died!

WALTER: I see. She didn't complain, but she just nearly died! That's all!

HILDY *almost to himself*: I would have been on the train now . . . I would have been . . .

WALTER *confidentially*: Listen, Hildy. I was in love once—with my third wife. I treated her white—let her have a maid and everything! I was sweet to her!

HILDY: Who cares about your God damned wife?

WALTER: I trusted her. Then I let her meet a certain party on the Tribune and what happened? One night I came home unexpectedly—I let myself in through the bathroom window—and there they were! In bed.

HILDY: I don't want to hear about your troubles. I got enough. . . .

WALTER *interrupting ecstatically*: The very next morning, what do I find in the Tribune, all over the front page? *My traction story*, I'd been saving for two months!

HILDY: You know a lot about women! You and your Goddam stable of tarts! You never met a decent woman! You wouldn't know what to *do* with a pure girl! . . .

WALTER *owlishly*: Oh, yes I would!

HILDY: You take that back!

WALTER *deciding to reason with his young friend*: What do you think women are? Flowers? Take that dame that shot the dentist! And Mrs. Vermilya! Husband comes home all worn out, hungry, takes a spoonful of soup and falls dead! Arsenic! And Mrs. Petras! Burning her husband up in a furnace! When you've been in this business as long as I have you'll know what women are! Murderers! Borgias!

HILDY: My God, I'm a sap! Falling for your line of crap . . . ! Naming streets after me!

WALTER: Now, listen, Hildy. You've had a good rest. Get back on the story. That's all you got to do. . . . *Hands him a pocket flask*. Here. You're just nervous. . . .

HILDY: *I'll take that! . . . Goes to the water cooler. Pouring:* I'll get stewed tonight, and I'm gonna stay stewed for the rest of my life! Yeah, I'll be a newspaperman! Right in your class! *The door knob is tried.*

WALTER *whispering*: Shut up!

HILDY: On my pratt in a monkey cage!

WALTER: Shut up, you *fathead!* *Hildy drinks. The knocking continues. Walter approaches the door. If that's Bensinger again, we'll crown him and throw him in the can for keeps! To the door:* Who is it?

DIAMOND LOUIE *outside*: Hello, Boss. . . .

WALTER: It's Louie. . . . *He opens the door. Diamond Louie appears, bearing some evidence of a mishap. His hat is crushed, face bruised, clothes torn. Walter sees this with alarm. My God, what's the matter!*

HILDY *frantically*: Where's the old lady?

WALTER: What did you do with her?

HILDY: What the hell happened?

WALTER: You been in a fight?

LOUIE *still out of breath*: Down Wentworth Avenue. We were going sixty-five miles an hour, you know what I mean?

WALTER: Take the mush out of your mouth!

HILDY: Where's the old lady!

LOUIE: I'm *telling* you! We run smack into a police patrol. You know what I mean? We broke it in half!

HILDY: My God! Was she hurt?

WALTER: Where is she? Tell me! . . .

HILDY: For God's sake, Louie! . . .

LOUIE: I'm *telling* you. Can you imagine bumping into a load of cops? They come rolling out like oranges!

HILDY *seizing him*: What did you *do* with her, God damn you!

WALTER: What became of her, I'm asking you!

LOUIE: Search me! When I come to I was running down Thirty-fifth street! Get me?

HILDY: You were *with* her! You were in the *cab*, weren't you!

LOUIE *exposing his bruised scalp*: Was I! Tony got knocked cold!

WALTER: You God damn butter fingers! I give you an old lady to take somewhere and you hand her over to the cops!

LOUIE: What do you mean, I hand her? The

patrol wagon was on the wrong side of the street!

WALTER *bitterly*: Oh, my God! She's probably squawking her head off in some police station! Now everything is *fine*.

LOUIS *holding his head*: I don't think she's talking much, you know what I mean! *He winks reassuringly*.

HILDY: My God! Was she killed?

WALTER *hopefully*: Was she? Did you notice?

LOUIE: Say, with that alky rap and the bank job and the big blow on my hip! I should stick around asking questions from a lot of cops!

HILDY *overcome*: Oh, my God! Dead! That finishes me! . . .

WALTER: Listen, Hildy. That's Fate. What will be, will be!

HILDY *wildly*: What am I going to say to Peggy, for God's sake! What'll I *tell* her? . . .

WALTER: You're never going to see her again. Snap out of it! Would you rather have the old dame dragging the whole police force in here? . . .

HILDY: I killed her! I did it! Oh, my God, what can I do *now*? How can I ever face her? . . .

WALTER *becoming the entire Foreign Legion*:

Listen, Hildy, if it was my own mother, I'd carry on, you know I would!

HILDY: You God damn murdering bastard!

WALTER *crescendo*: No matter how I felt! If my heart was breaking! I'd carry on! For the paper!

HILDY *to Louie*: Where was it? I'll go out!

WALTER: You stay here! I'll find out everything!
Into phone: Duffy! . . . Just a minute. . . . *To Louie*:
Where was it?

LOUIE: Wentworth and Thirty-fourth . . . near the corner . . .

WALTER *into phone*: Call up the Thirty-fifth street station and ask Nick Gallagher if he's got a report on any old lady that was in a smash-up at Thirty-fourth and Wentworth. . . . *To Hildy*:
What's her name?

HILDY *brokenly*: Mrs. Amelia Grant.

WALTER *into phone*: Millie Grant. About . . . fifty-seven? *with an enquiring look at Hildy*. Refined. White hair. Blue eyes. Black cotton stockings. She was wearing rubbers. *To Hildy, pleased*: How's that for noticing?

HILDY *grabbing a phone*: Gimme an outside wire.

WALTER: Never *mind*. We'll get the dope right here . . . in two minutes! *Another phone rings*.

HILDY *into phone*: Gimme Wentworth, Four, five, five, seven! . . .

WALTER *answering the other telephone in guarded tones*: Hello. Hello. Who? *Wildly*: Hello, Butch! Where are you!!

HILDY *into phone*: Passavant hospital? Gimme the Receiving Room, will you?

WALTER: Hotel? You mean *you're* in a hotel? What are you doing *there*! Ain't you even *started*?!

HILDY *into phone*: Hello, Eddie, Hildy Johnson. Was there an old lady brought in from an auto smashup? . . .

WALTER *panic*: Oh, for . . . *Screaming*: H. Sebastian God! Butch! Listen, it's a matter of life and death, Butch! *Listen*!

HILDY *into phone*: Nobody? *Jiggles hook*: Archer three one two four. . . .

WALTER *into phone*: I can't hear you! You got who? Speak up! A what?!!! . . . Holy God, you can't stop for a dame *now*!

HILDY *into phone*: Is this the German Deaconess hospital?

WALTER *howling*: I don't care if you've been trying to make her for six *years*! Now, listen, Butch! Our whole lives are at stake! Are you going to let

some blonde pushover ruin everything? . . . What do you mean—an hour? It'll be too late in an hour!

HILDY *into phone*: Hello, Max. Hildy Johnson. Was there an old lady . . .

WALTER: *Butch!!* I'd put my arm in the fire for you up to here! *Indicates up to where.* I'd go through hell for you! Now you ain't gonna double cross me. . . . She does? All right—put her on the wire. *I'll talk to her. . . . Hello! . . . Oh, hello, Madam!* Now listen here, you God damn bum . . . You can't keep Butch away from his duty! . . . What! *What!!!* . . . What kind of language is that! Hello, hello . . . *Turning to Louie hanging up the telephone:* That tub of guts! Lousy whore-headed flannel mouth! *Into phone:* Duffy! *To Hildy:* I'll kill 'em—both of them! I'll butter this town with their brains! *Into phone:* Duffy! *To the world:* Mousing around with some big blond Annie! *That's co-operation!* *Screaming into Examiner phone:* Duffy! . . .

HILDY *to Walter*: Shut up, will you? *Into phone:* You sure! Nobody?

WALTER *a howl*: Duffy! *Throwing the receiver to the desk.* I ought to know better than hire anybody with a disease! *To Louie, panting:* Louie! It's up to you!

LOUIE *loyally*: Anything you want, boss.

WALTER: Beat it out and get me hold of some guys, will you?

LOUIE: Who do you want?

WALTER *trembling*: I want anybody with hair on their chests! Get them off the streets—anywhere! Offer them anything—only get them! *Confidentially*: Listen, Louie. We got to get this desk out of here!

LOUIE *surveys the desk calmly*: Is it important?

WALTER: Is it important!!! Louie, you're the best friend I got. I'd go through hell for you and I know you won't fail me. Get me enough people to move it! Do you understand that? Now, beat it! And remember, I'm relying on you!

LOUIE *departing*: You know me. The shirt off my back.

WALTER *yelling after him*: Don't bump into anything! *He locks the door.*

HILDY *emotionally, into phone*: Calumet two one hundred . . .

WALTER: That lousy immigrant'll flop on me! I know it. *Bitterly*: Can you imagine Butch laying up with some whisker at the Revere House! At a time like this! Listen Hildy . . . *Confidentially*: If Louie don't come back in five minutes, we'll get it out alone! There's millions of ways! We can start a

fire and get the firemen to carry it out in the confusion! . . .

HILDY: Do anything you damn please! . . . *Into phone*: Ring that number, will you?

WALTER *very excited*: We don't even have to do that. We'll get the Chicago Historical Society to claim it as an antique. We can move it out in a decent normal manner ourselves! Just the two of us!

HILDY: I don't give a God damn what you do!

WALTER: Come on, Hildy! Come here and see if we can move it!

HILDY *into phone*: Hello! Hello! Is this the Lying-in Hospital? Did you have an auto accident in the last hour?

WALTER: Will you come here?

HILDY *into phone*: Oh, I see. I beg your pardon.

WALTER: Right when I'm surrounded, with my back against the wall, you ain't going to lie down on me!

HILDY *jiggling the phone hook*: I'm going to lay down on you and spit in your eye, you murderer!

WALTER: Scared, huh? Yellow running out of your collar!

HILDY: I don't care what you think! I'm going to

find my girl's mother! *Madly jiggling the hook:* Oh, for God's sake!

WALTER: Your girl! You and Butch McGuirk! Woman lovers!

HILDY *hangs up phone with a bang:* God damn it! I'm going to go out and find her! *Starts for door. At that instant there comes a loud knock.*

WALTER: Who's that? Don't open that!

HILDY: The hell I won't! I'm going to the morgue! To . . . look! . . . *He flings the door open. The Sheriff, accompanied by two Deputies—Carl and Frank—surrounded by McCue, Kruger and Murphy, bar his exit.*

THE REPORTERS: Oh, there he is! Say Hildy! Wait a second, *etc.* *Hildy is struggling past them. The Sheriff grabs him.*

SHERIFF: Just a minute, Johnson!

HILDY: Let go of me! What the hell's the idea?

THE REPORTERS: What's your hurry? We want to see you! *etc.*

HILDY: Take your God damn paws off me!

SHERIFF: Hold him, boys!

WALTER *to the Sheriff:* Who the hell do you think you are, breaking in here like this?

SHERIFF: You can't bluff me, Burns! I don't care who you are or what paper you're editor of!

HILDY: God damn it! Let me go! *Hysterically:* Let me go, fellas! Something's happened to my girl's mother!

SHERIFF: Hang on to him!

THE REPORTERS: We know what you're up to! Going out to get Williams, probably! The door was locked! He and Mollie were talking! They know where he is! *etc.*

HILDY *retreating back into the room before Hartman and his deputies:* Listen, guys! I don't know anything, I tell you! There's been an accident—I just been calling up the hospitals! I was just going out to the morgue to see if she was there! Now . . .

SHERIFF: Johnson, there's something very, very peculiar going on. . . .

HILDY: Listen, Pinky! You can send somebody *with* me if you want to! If you don't believe me!

SHERIFF: I wasn't born yesterday, Johnson. Now the boys tell me you and Mollie . . .

HILDY: Nobody's trying to put anything over on you! Now, I'm getting out of here and you can't stop me!

MURPHY: You're not going anywhere! He's got

the story sewed up, Pete! He and his God damn boss. That's why he's here!

WALTER *purring*: If you've got any accusations to make, Hartman, make them in the proper manner! Otherwise I'll have to ask you to get out!

SHERIFF *pop-eyed*: You'll ask me to *what*?

WALTER: I'll ask you to get out.

SHERIFF *to his deputies*: Close that door! Don't let anybody in or out!

MURPHY: Come on, Pinky! Give him a little third degree!

SHERIFF: Johnson, I'm going to the bottom of this! Now then, come clean! What do you know about Williams? Are you going to talk or aren't you?

HILDY: What the hell do *I* know about Williams?

SHERIFF: All right, boys! Take him along. I got ways of making him talk. *Hildy struggles.*

HILDY: Look out, you . . . !

McCUE: What's the use of fighting, Hildy? *The reporters swarm around Hildy. Shouts of "I got him." "No, you don't!" "Hey, what you doing?" "Paste him!" "Aw, Hildy! What the hell!" etc. Hildy's voice rises out of the din.*

HILDY: Say what the hell's the idea?

THE DEPUTIES: He's got a gun on him! Look out! He's got a gun! He's got a gun!

HILDY: No, you don't! Hey, Walter!

WALTER: What is it? Here!

SHERIFF: Gimme that! *Takes the gun.*

HILDY *resisting*: That's mine! . . .

MURPHY: Jesse James, huh! The drug store cowboy!

McCUE: He's been going to the movies. Two gun Johnson!

KRUGER: The terror of Wilson Avenue beach!

SHERIFF *frozen, looking at the gun*: Where did you get this?

HILDY: I got a right to carry a gun if I want to.

SHERIFF: Not *this* gun!

WALTER *easily*: I can explain that, Hartman. He was having some trouble with the Durkin story and I gave it to him . . . to defend himself!

SHERIFF: Oh, you *did*! . . . Well, that's very, *very* interesting! This *happens* to be the gun that Earl Williams shot his way out with!

THE REPORTERS: What? What's that? *etc.*

WALTER *to Hartman*: Are you trying to make me out a liar?

SHERIFF *wildly*: I know my own gun, don't I?

MURPHY *bitterly to Hildy*: Getting married, huh!

KRUGER: Maybe Williams was gonna be his best man.

SHERIFF *trembling*: Where is he? Where you got him?

WALTER *sympathetically*: You're barking up the wrong tree, Hartman . . .

SHERIFF: I'll give you three minutes to tell me where he is!

HILDY: He went over to the hospital to call on Professor Eglehofer!

SHERIFF: What!!!

HILDY: With a bag of marshmallows. *The Sheriff stands silent, a gypsy; then streaks wildly for the toilet and throws open the door.*

WALTER: Take a magazine along.

THE REPORTERS: Come on, Hildy. Where is he? That's a hell of a trick, Hildy. I thought we were friends! *etc.*

SHERIFF *rushing back from the toilet*: By God, I'll show you!

THE REPORTERS: Look here, Pete! What about

Mr. Burns? Ask the Master Mind! Yeah. What's *he* doing over here? *etc.*

SHERIFF *grabbing Walter's arm*: Speak up, Burns! What do you know about this?

WALTER *gently but firmly disengaging his arm*: Listen Hartman . . .

MURPHY: The hell with that! Where is he?

WALTER *continuing*: The Examiner is not obstructing justice or aiding criminals. You ought to know that!

CARL *pointing to the Examiner phone*: Look! Somebody was talking on there! The receiver is off! *McCue jumps for the phone.*

McCUE: I'll find out who it is . . .

SHERIFF *also jumping*: Leave that alone! I'm in charge here!

HILDY: Walter, listen! If I don't get out of here . . .

SHERIFF: Quiet, everybody! I'll handle this. It may be Earl Williams.

HILDY: Tell him to come on over.

SHERIFF: Sssh! *Into phone, swallowing, then elaborately disguising his voice*: Hello, Earl?

WALTER *smiling*: Scotland Yard.

SHERIFF *to McCue, in a whisper*: Trace this call—quick! *McCue jumps for another phone*: Yes, this is Walter.

McCUE *into another phone*: Trace the call on twenty-one! In a hurry!

SHERIFF *into Examiner phone*: What? You gotta do what? Who is this?!!!

WALTER: You're talking to the Examiner, Hawkshaw! *The Sheriff wheels.*

McCUE: That's right, Sheriff!

SHERIFF: Johnson, you're under arrest! You too, Burns!

WALTER *calmly, without moving from his post at the desk*: Who's under arrest? . . . Listen, you pimple headed German spy, do you realize what you're doing?

SHERIFF: We'll see about this. Get the Mayor, Carl! Ask him to come over here! *As Carl goes to the telephone the door opens and Mrs. Grant disheveled, with her hat over one ear, enters with two policemen.*

FIRST POLICEMAN *entering*: . . . in here, Madam?

HILDY *leaping forward, happily*: Mother!

MRS. GRANT *to Policeman*: That man there!

With the gray necktie! *She points accusingly at Walter.*

HILDY *hugging her*: Mother! Oh, my God, I'm glad to see you! Are you all right? Tell me! *Mrs. Grant indignantly shakes Hildy off.*

SHERIFF: What's the idea here?

POLICEMAN: This lady claims she was kidnapped!

SHERIFF: What?!!

MRS. GRANT: They dragged me all the way down the stairs—I tried to get help and they began to pinch me—I'm black and blue all over! Then they ran into another automobile and I was nearly killed! . . .

SHERIFF: Just a minute! What did this man have to do with it, lady? *He points at Walter.*

MRS. GRANT: He was the one in charge of everything! He told them to kidnap me!

WALTER *amazed*: Are you referring to *me*, Madam?

MRS. GRANT *to Walter*: You know you did! You told them to take me out of here!

SHERIFF: What about this, Burns! Kidnapping, eh?

WALTER *round-eyed*: It's beyond *me*. Who is this woman?

MRS. GRANT: Oh! Oh, what a thing to say! I was standing right there . . . after the girl jumped out of that window!

SHERIFF: Did you get the Mayor? Was he in?

A DEPUTY: He's coming over.

WALTER *to Mrs. Grant*: Now, Madame, be honest, if you were out joy-riding—drunk! . . . and got in some scrape . . . why don't you *admit* it instead of accusing innocent people!

MRS. GRANT *beginning to doubt her senses*: You ruffian! You unprincipled man! How dare you say a thing like that!

HILDY: Please, mother! He's just crazy! Don't! . . .

MRS. GRANT: I'll tell you something more, officer! I'll tell you why they did it!

WALTER *fidgiting*: Come on, Sheriff. We've got to get bail.

MRS. GRANT *continuing crescendo*: I was in here and they had some kind of a murderer—hiding him! *This is a bomb shell. The room is electrified by the old lady's announcement.*

SHERIFF: Hiding him! Hiding him! In here?

MURPHY: Hiding him where!

HILDY: Mother!

THE REPORTERS: Where was he? Where did they have him? *etc.*

WALTER *with superb indignation*: Madam, you're a God damn liar! *To emphasize his righteousness Walter pounds on the desk three times—and then stands horrified. He remembers, too late, the signal.*

REPORTERS: For God's sake, tell us where he was! Did they tell you where? Tell us! *etc.*

SHERIFF: Shut up, everybody! Now! Where was he? Tell me, where he was!

MRS. GRANT: Well, I was sitting right in this chair. *Three answering knocks come from Williams. The Sheriff leaps as if the desk had bitten him.*

SHERIFF *whispering*: What was that?

REPORTERS: My God, he's in the desk! For the love of Christ! Holy God, he's in there! *etc.*

SHERIFF: Aha! *I thought so!* Stand back, everybody!

DEPUTY: Look out, Sheriff! He may shoot!

SHERIFF: Get your guns out! *The police all take out guns.*

HILDY: He's harmless, for God's sake!

SHERIFF: Don't take any chances! Shoot through the desk!

HILDY: He can't hurt anybody! You got his gun!

MRS. GRANT *panic stricken*: Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

WALTER *to Mrs. Grant*: You gray-haired old Judas!

MRS. GRANT: Let me out! Let me out of here!
Streaks for the door; exits. The reporters are going for the telephones.

MURPHY *into phone*: City desk! Quick!

SHERIFF *to policemen*: Close the door. You stand there. You cover the windows. *Indicates with his gun.*

MURPHY: Look out where you're pointing that gun, Pinky!

McCUE *into phone*: Gimme Emil.

KRUGER *into phone*: Gimme the city desk.

MURPHY: Hold the wire! I've got a flash for you.

WALTER *to Hildy*: Call Duffy.

SHERIFF: No, you don't!

WALTER: Do you want us to get scooped?

McCUE *into phone*: Emil? Hang on for a second.

SHERIFF: Now then! Everybody aim right at the centre. And when I say three—

HILDY: God damn it! That's murder!

SHERIFF: Carl! Frank! One of you get on each side of the desk. Take hold of the cover. Now then! We got you covered, Williams—don't try to move. *Now!* Everybody quiet and ready for any emergency. I'm going to count three.

MURPHY *phoning in the silence*: I'll have it in a minute . . .

SHERIFF: One! . . .

KRUGER: Right away now!

SHERIFF: Two! . . . *Diamond Louie enters, accompanied by three people he has picked up in the street. One is a boy in short pants, the second is a sailor, the third is a seedy old man of the Trader Horn type.*

POLICEMAN *at the door, opposing them*: What do you want? *Walter waves violently, Louie and his assistants disappear.*

SHERIFF *wheeling*: Who was that?

WALTER *white with rage*: Double crossing Sicilian!

SHERIFF: Shut up!

KRUGER *into phone*: Keep holding it!

SHERIFF: Now then! Keep everybody out of here! I want quiet! . . . There's a dozen guns on you, Williams! You can't escape! Do you surrender or not?

WALTER *into phone*: Duffy!

SHERIFF: Are you ready, boys?

CARL: Yah. . . .

SHERIFF: All right. Now everybody aim right at the centre. *Looking around*: Are you all ready? *To the men at the desk*: You boys? *From the deputies comes a whispered "Yes."* Ready back there? *This to the men at the door and windows; they give quick nods in reply.* All right. Now then—up with it. *Carl and Frank raise the cover. The Sheriff waits a discreet distance until he sees there is no danger. Williams is cowering in the desk, his hands over his face. The Sheriff rushes on him, jabbing his gun into him.*

WILLIAMS *a wail*: Go on—shoot me!

SHERIFF: Got you, Williams!

THE POLICE AND DEPUTIES: Grab him, there! That's him! That's him! Don't let him shoot! Stick 'em up, you! Clout him! Give him the boots! Hold his arm! *Through this the reporters are telephoning in. As they talk, the police drag the scream-*

ing little anarchist out. The Sheriff follows them.
MURPHY *into phone*: Earl Williams was just captured in the press room o' the Criminal Court building hiding in a desk.

McCUE *into phone*: The Sheriff just caught Williams in a roll top right here in the room.

KRUGER *into phone*: Just nabbed Williams hiding in a desk, criminal court press room.

McCUE *into phone*: Williams put up a desperate struggle but the police overpowered him.

MURPHY *into phone*: Williams tried to shoot it out with the cops but his gun wouldn't work.

KRUGER *into phone*: Williams was unconscious when they opened the desk . . .

WALTER *into phone*: Duffy! The Examiner just turned Earl Williams over to the Sheriff . . .

The Sheriff rushes back.

SHERIFF *indicating Walter and Hildy*: Just a minute! Put the cuffs on those two! *The police obey.* Harboring a fugitive from justice!

MURPHY *into phone*: A well dressed society woman tipped off the cops. Call you back in a minute . . .

KRUGER *into phone*: An old sweetheart of Williams double crossed him . . . Call you back . . .

McCUE *into phone*: More in a minute.

REPORTERS: Where's that old lady? Hey madam! . . . Wait a minute! . . . Where's the old dame? *They exit in a hurry.*

SHERIFF *into phone*: Hello, girlie! Gimme Jacobi! Quick! . . .

WALTER: Hartman . . . you're going to wish for the rest of your life you'd never been born! *The Mayor enters.*

MAYOR: Fine work Pete! You certainly delivered the goods! I'm proud of you!

SHERIFF *over his shoulder as he phones*: I look kind of natural, don't they, Fred? *Referring to the handcuffs.*

MAYOR *happily*: A sight for sore eyes! Well, it looks like you boys stepped in something up to your neck!

HILDY *to His Honor*: Go on! Laugh! You big tub of guts!

MAYOR: That's pretty, isn't it? Aiding an escaped criminal, huh?

SHERIFF *rolling in catnip*: And a little charge of kidnapping I'm looking into! *Into phone*: That's the jail! There must be *somebody* over there!

MAYOR: Well! Looks like about ten years apiece for you birds.

WALTER: Does it? Well, whenever you think you've got the Examiner licked, that's a good time to get out of town.

HILDY: On a hand car.

MAYOR: Whistling in the dark, eh? Well, it isn't going to help you. You're through.

WALTER: Yeah? The last man that told me that was Barney Schmidt . . . a week before he cut his throat.

MAYOR: Is that so?

WALTER: And remember George T. Yorke, blowing his head off with a shot-gun? We've been in worse jams than this—haven't we, Hildy? But something seems to watch over the Examiner. *He raises his eyebrows.*

HILDY: Yeah. When that minister sued us—remember? False arrest?

WALTER: Oh, yes . . . *Coolly to the Mayor:* The Reverend J. B. Godolphin sued the Examiner once for . . . a hundred thousand dollars. It seems that we'd called him a fairy. Well, the day of the trial came and the Reverend was on his way to court . . .

HILDY: With all his lawyers and medical witnesses.

WALTER *orgiastic*: Drowned by God! Drowned in the river! With their automobile, their affidavits and their God damn law books! And I got the same feeling right now that I had five minutes before that accident!

MAYOR: Your luck ain't with you now.

SHERIFF *into telephone*: Jacobi? . . . I caught him. Williams. Singlehanded. . . . Yeah. They're bringing him right over. Notify everybody. We're going to proceed with the hanging per schedule. *Wiggles telephone for another call.*

WALTER *to the Mayor*: You're going to be in office for exactly two days more and then we're pulling your big nose out of the feed bag and setting you out on your fat can!

SHERIFF: Give me the state's attorney's office.

HILDY: 'And when you're walking up and down North Avenue with blue eye glasses selling lead pencils, we're not going to forget you, either!

SHERIFF *merrily*: We're going to be selling lead pencils, eh?

MAYOR: Don't even answer him.

THE SHERIFF: Well, I'll tell you what you'll

be doing. Making *brooms* in the state penitentiary. . . . *Into phone:* Hello, Pyrstalski? This is Hartman. Come right over to my office, will you? I've just arrested a couple of important birds. I want you to take their confessions. *Hangs up.*

WALTER *seizing the Examiner phone:* Duffy! Get Clarence Darrow!!!!

MAYOR: Get anybody you want! All the Darrows in the world aren't going to help you!

WALTER: Schmidt, Yorke, Godolphin. . . . You're next, Fred.

MAYOR: The power of the press, huh? Well, it don't scare me! Not an iota!

SHERIFF: It's a big windbag! That's all it is! Take 'em along, Carl!

WALTER: Bigger men than you have found out what it is! Presidents! Yes . . . and Kings! *Pincus, the governor's messenger, reels in, stewed.*

PINCUS *woozy:* Here's your reprieve.

MAYOR *seeing him, in panic:* Get out of here!

PINCUS: You can't bribe me!

SHERIFF: Get out of here, you!

PINCUS: I won't! Here's your reprieve!

HILDY: What's that?

PINCUS: I don't want to be city sealer.

MAYOR: Who *is* this man?

SHERIFF *frenzied*: Thow him out, Frank!

HILDY *seizing Pincus with his free hand*: Who was bribing you? *Walter also seizes Pincus, already being pulled out of shape.*

PINCUS: They wouldn't take it! . . .

MAYOR: You're insane!

WALTER: What did I tell you? An unseen power. What's your name?

PINCUS: Irving Pincus!

MAYOR: You drunken idiot! Arrest him! The idea of coming in here with a cock and bull story like that!

SHERIFF: It's a frameup! That's what it is! Some impostor!

HILDY: Wait a minute! *To the deputies*: Let go there!

WALTER: Murder, huh?

HILDY: Hanging an innocent man to win an election!

SHERIFF: That's a lie!

MAYOR: I never saw him before in my life!

WALTER *to Pincus*: When did you deliver this first?

HILDY: Who did you talk to?

PINCUS: They started right in bribing me!

HILDY: Who's "they"?

PINCUS *indicating the Mayor and Sheriff*: Them!

MAYOR: That's absurd on the face of it, Mr. Burns! He's talking like a child!

WALTER *really impressed*: An unseen power.

MAYOR: Certainly! He's insane or drunk or something! Why, if this unfortunate man Williams has really been reprieved, I personally am tickled to death! Aren't you, Pete?

HILDY: Go on, you'd kill your mother to get elected!

MAYOR *shocked*: That's a hell of a thing to say, Johnson, about anybody! Now, look here, Walter, you're an intelligent man . . .

WALTER *stopping the Mayor*: Just a minute. *To Pincus*: All right, Mr. Pincus. Let's have your story.

PINCUS: Well, I've been married for nineteen years . . .

WALTER: Skip all that.

MAYOR *loudly*: Take those handcuffs off the boys, Pete. That wasn't at all necessary. . . .

SHERIFF *springing to obey*: I was just going to. . . .

MAYOR: I can't tell you how badly I feel about this, Walter. There was no excuse for Hartman flying off the handle.

SHERIFF *busy with the handcuffs*: I was only doing my duty. There wasn't anything personal intended.

HILDY: You guys had better quit politics and take in washing. *They are set free.*

MAYOR: Sheriff. . . . *He is looking over the reprieve*: This document is authentic! Earl Williams, thank God, has been reprieved, and the commonwealth of Chicago has been spared the painful necessity of shedding blood.

WALTER: Save that for the Tribune.

MAYOR *to Pincus*: What did you say your name was—Pincus?

PINCUS: That's right. *Shows a locket*: Here's a picture of the wife.

MAYOR *trapped*: A very fine looking woman.

PINCUS *mysteriously angered*: She's good enough for me. *Peggy enters.*

HILDY: I'll bet she is.

MAYOR: A real character.

PEGGY: Hildy, what's the matter? What are they going to do? Mother said—

HILDY *seeing her*: Peggy, don't bawl me out now.

WALTER: Nobody's going to do anything to anybody.

MAYOR: Of course not. My good friend Walter Burns and I understand each other perfectly, I trust.

SHERIFF *eager*: And so do I.

MAYOR: So do you *what*, you God damn hoodoo! And now, Mr. Pincus, if you'll come with us we'll take you over to the Warden's office and deliver that reprieve.

PEGGY: But Hildy, mother said that they'd arrested you . . .

PINCUS *being escorted out by the Mayor*: If I was to go home and tell my wife—

MAYOR: The hell with your wife!

PINCUS *drunkenly loyal to his mate*: She loves me. *Exit Pincus and the Mayor.*

SHERIFF *pauses. His eyes lower. He speaks win-*

ningly: By the way, Walter . . . We were going to have a little feed after the hanging . . . a sort of buffet breakfast. . . .

MAYOR *calling from the corridor*: Hartman!

SHERIFF *nervously*: I'm coming, Fred. *Coyly, as Walter stares*: What do you say we eat it now? . . . *Hmm?* *Still the dead pan from Walter*. Delicious ham . . . and some of Mrs. Hartman's own preserves. . . .

MAYOR *loudly from the hall*: Hartman!!! *The Sheriff sighs. A plaintive shrug indicates that he has a great deal to contend with. He leaves.*

WALTER *dreamily*: Wait till those two Greeks read the Examiner to-morrow! *Back to life*. Hildy, I'll tell you what I want you to do.

HILDY: What?

WALTER: I want you to get this guy Pincus over to the office tomorrow—

HILDY: Nothing doing, Walter. I'm all washed up. I mean it this time, Walter.

PEGGY: Oh, Hildy, if I only thought you did.

HILDY: Listen, Peggy,—if I'm not telling you the absolute truth may God strike me dead right now. I'm going to New York with you to-night— if you give me this one last chance! I'll cut out

drinking and swearing and everything connected with the God damn newspaper business. I won't even *read* a newspaper.

WALTER: Listen, Hildy, I got an idea . . .

HILDY *to Walter*: There's nothing you can say can make me change my mind. This time I'm through, and I *mean* it. I know I don't deserve you, Peggy. I've done everything in the world to prove that, I guess.

PEGGY: Hildy, please! Don't say things like that.

HILDY: I've gotta hell of a nerve to ask you to marry me. I'm a prize package, all right. But if you'll take me, here I am.

PEGGY: Darling, don't talk that way. I want you just the way you are. *Anyway Peggy will always remember that she said this and always forget that she didn't mean it.*

WALTER: God, Hildy, I didn't know it was anything like this. Why didn't you *say* something? I'd be the last person in the world to want to come between you and your happiness.

HILDY *staggered*: What?

WALTER: You ought to know that. . . . *As Hildy continues to blink*: I love you, you crazy Swede!
To Peggy: You're getting a great guy, Peggy.

HILDY: Never mind the Valentines. Goodbye, you lousy bohunk. *They shake hands.*

WALTER: You're a great newspaperman, Hildy. I'm sorry to see you go. Damn sorry.

HILDY: Well, if I ever come *back* to the business . . . *To Peggy:* Which I won't . . . *To Walter, his arm around Peggy:* There's only one man I'd work for. You know that, don't you?

WALTER: I'd kill you if you ever worked for anybody else.

HILDY: Hear that, Peggy? That's my diploma. *He hesitates:* Well, Walter . . . I don't know what to say . . . except I'm going to miss you like hell.

WALTER: Same here, son.

HILDY *to Peggy:* Twelve years we've been knock-in around together . . . before you were born. . . . *To Walter his face lighting up:* Remember the time we hid the missing heiress in the sauerkraut factory?

WALTER: Do I! *To Peggy:* Get him to tell you some time about how we stole Old Lady Haggerty's stomach . . . off the coroner's physician. We *proved* she was poisoned. . . .

HILDY *laughing:* We had to hide for a week!

PEGGY: Darling . . .

HILDY *back to life*: What?

PEGGY: You don't want to go to New York . . . down deep.

HILDY: Aw . . . what do you mean? I was just talking. *With a nervous laugh*: I'd feel worse if I stayed, I guess. . . .

PEGGY: Hildy, if I thought you were going to be unhappy—I mean, if you really wanted to—*Firmly*: No. No. It's your chance to have a home and be a human being—and I'm going to make you take it.

WALTER *to Peggy*: Why, I wouldn't let him stay. . . . Go on, Hildy, before I make you city editor.

HILDY *starting*: Hurry up, Peggy. He means it.

WALTER *as Peggy follows*: Any objection to my kissing the bride?

HILDY *stopping*: It's O. K. with me. *He looks at Peggy. She smiles*. Go ahead, Mrs. Johnson.

WALTER *removing his hat and kissing her chastely*: Thank you. . . . What time does your train go?

PEGGY: There's another one at twelve-forty. *To Hildy*: We came awfully near going without you.

WALTER: New York Central, eh? *To Hildy*: I

wish there was time to get you a little wedding present . . . but it's awful short notice.

PEGGY *straining to be gone*: Thank you, Mr. Burns, but Hildy's all the wedding present I want. . . . *Laughing a little*: If I've really got him.

HILDY: Ah, forget it, Walter. *He, too, is leaving.*

WALTER: Hold on! I want you to have something to remember me by. You can't just leave like this. . . . *Thoughtfully reaching for his watch*: And I know what it's going to be. . . . *Produces the watch.*

HILDY *embarrassed*: Aw, Jesus, no, Walter! You make me feel like a fairy or something!

WALTER *with affected brusqueness*: Shut-up! You're going to take it, I tell you! It was a present from the Big Chief himself! And if you'll look inside . . . *Opening the watch*: You'll find a little inscription: "To the Best Newspaperman I know." . . . When you get to New York, you can scratch out my name and put yours in its place, if you want to. . . .

HILDY: You know I wouldn't do that. . . .

WALTER: Here. . . . *Giving him the watch.*

HILDY: Aw, Walter! It's too good for me! I can't take it!

WALTER: You got to! *To Peggy*: Make him!

PEGGY: Go on, Hildy . . . if Mr. Burns wants you to. You don't want to hurt his feelings. . . . *Hildy takes it. Walter pats him on the shoulder, his face averted.*

HILDY *a lump in his throat*: Well, this is the first and last thing I ever got from a newspaper. . . .

PEGGY: Goodbye, Mr. Burns. . . . I always had a queer opinion of you, Mr. Burns. I *still* think you're a little peculiar, but you're all right . . . underneath. I mean I think you're a peach.

WALTER *winningly*: So are you! You look just like a little flower!

HILDY *ushering Peggy out*: Goodbye, you big baboon. . . .

PEGGY: Goodbye. . . . *They exit.*

WALTER *calling after, leaning against the door*: Goodbye, Johnson! Be good to yourself . . . and the little girl. . . .

HILDY'S VOICE: The same to you and many of them!

Walter waits till Hildy and Peggy are out of sight and earshot, then closes the door. He walks slowly to the telephone. The receiver is still off the hook, the obedient Duffy still on the other end. Walter hesitates sentimentally, the receiver in his hand. Then he heaves a huge sigh and speaks:

WALTER: Duffy! . . . *He sounds a bit tired*: Listen. I want you to send a wire to the Chief of Police of La Porte, Indiana. . . . That's right. . . . Tell him to meet the twelve-forty out of Chicago . . . New York Central . . . and arrest Hildy Johnson and bring him back here. . . . Wire him a full description. . . . The son of a bitch stole my watch!

CURTAIN



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