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Pete Kelly's Blues

By Richard L. Breen

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Ashes to ashes, dust to dust
Women don't get you
The whiskey must
He was a good man.
Sure enough he was.
He's gone but not forgotten.

- Amen.

- Amen.

- We'll always remember him.

- Sure enough we will.

- Yes, he's gone.

- Good man gone.

- We'll never forget him.

- Amen.

Yes, he was a good man.

Glory.

He rambled and he rambled
till the butcher cut him down.
All right, that'll do it.
Let's go let up some air.
Blow through that a while.
We need time to count it. Sugar can.
How about it, Pete?
Next set on the drums.
It's all right with me.
Get Joey's vote.

If you're looking for a new way to
grow old, this is the place to come.
17 Cherry Street, Kansas City.
It's a speakeasy one flight down.
It was a brownstone at first.
After that an undertaker had the place.
But he went to Chicago to get
a piece of the flu epidemic...
and Rudy Shulak took over.
Rudy got a booze contract out of
Joplin and bought some tablecloths.
It's been a gin bin ever since.
There's even a little business
on the side for shut-ins.
Rudy's a puny little guy.
Sew an extra button on
his vest, he'd fall down.

But he's all right.
The beer's good, the whiskey's aged,
if you get here late in the day.
On top of that, he knows
where to spend money.
He knows where to save it.
And he's good to the help.
He pays scale with a \$5 kickback.
I play cornet and run the band.
We play from 10 till 4 with
a 20-minute pizza break.
The hours are bad but
the music suits us.
There's one other thing about
Rudy's and that's trouble.
You can get it by the yard,
the pound, wholesale or retail.
Like one Tuesday night.
A lot of people were busy that night.
- Rudy wants to see you.
- What have you got in there?
Milo Violets, Deities, Sweet Caporals.
Anything you want.
You going by the Plantation later?
Bennie Moten's in.
I don't know.
Pack some lunch. We'll see.
Go in my office. Have a
talk with Fran McCarg.
- Who's she?
- It's a he.
Go light. He's downstate
gun for Colissimo.
We're out of champagne.
You gotta squeeze.
- What's this McCarg doing up here?
- I heard some 22nd Ward business.
- What's he want with me?
- Huh?
What's he want with me?
Maybe he wants you to run
for something. I got no idea.
But you'd better see him.
I don't know why you let

people like that in here.
In Topeka I let in three nice old ladies.
They took out an ax and broke every bottle.
What's that got to do with it?
Stuck up a sign, said I was
a disgrace to fatherhood.
They know I didn't have no kids.
Now, don't tell me stuff.
Just go talk to McCarg.
All right, Dad.
Hey, wanna go to a party?
Two hundred people, Ivy's house.
- Bring the band.
- If the party was so good, why'd you leave?
To get more people. It's the only
reason to leave. Have a drink.
Hey, you coming or not?
Not.
- Quite a fighter, Johnny Risko.
- He'll do.
I'm Fran McCarg.
You know Guy Bettenhouser?
- You've got a nice band, Kelly.
- Thanks. We finished together.
That's why I'd like to
do something for you.
- Cigarette?
- This what you had in mind?
- No, an agent.
- We got one.
I'm going into business handling
a few bands. I'd like to sign you.
We got an agent, Phil Mishkin.
I know, but you don't want him,
he's a bungler.
We got a contract. We can't break it.
And we can't pay two commissions.
Get that lump out of your throat.
We're already on short dough.
The fellas, they got families.
Everybody's got them.
They can't come up with 10 percent.
They got families.
Look, the only guy who didn't was Adam.

How long did he come up empty?
So don't tell me your troubles.
Point is, I'm starting a list
of clients, I want you on it.
I can't answer for the whole band.
Line them up and count noses.
I'll be back at closing.
Kelly, just so you know,
we give services.
Not 10 percent, it's 25.
We got a big overhead.
Yeah. I noticed him.
We should add a baritone.
Plenty of bands got them.
- Too muddy. No bite.
- No, it wouldn't hurt.
Couldn't we add something
on the low end?
Maybe.
What about "Tin Roof Blues"?
In the morning, that phonograph
does "Tin Roof," all right?
- You listening, Pete?
- It'll keep.
How'd you boys like another manager?
Fella named Fran McCarg.
We got an agent.
I covered all that.
It's a shakedown, he wants 25 percent.
- Serious?
- Waiting to hear from us.
Tell him no, you can tell him now.
- You get in touch with the union?
- Not yet.
Guy must be crazy.
Rudy don't pay us nothing now.
I don't mind working free,
but I don't wanna pay commission.
- What about the rest of you?
- When it's late at night, pay off.
- He's not talking about tonight.
- That's what I say, when it's late, pay off.
Bedido?
Maybe Joey's right. Get a few bucks

ahead, you don't wanna give it all away.
We're getting ahead. Enough to buy
new drums and coats that match.
- You tell us we gotta cut ourselves out.
- I'm not telling you anything.
You wanna vote? We don't
need no vote. Tell this guy no.
- Do you know who McCarg is?
- No, I never met him.
Do you know? You?
- You?
- I don't care who knows him.
If the band throws in with him,
I'll go to the Blue Devils.
He'll get to them. He'll get to
every ragtime outfit in town.
Then I'll go with the Salvation Army.
That's the truth, Pete.
I'm rather be second drummer for them.
We can't argue all night.
What do I tell McCarg?
Everybody's had a say. Now you say.
I don't wanna break the band up.
If Joey's on the level,
let's say no and see what happens.
Joey.
Salvation Army wouldn't have worked.
You gotta be able to read music.
Al, what do you think about McCarg?
Will he cause any trouble?
I don't see how. He'll kill
one of us. That's no trouble.
All right, let's do some Scott Joplin.
How about "Pineapple," all right, Al?
- Yeah, if I can find my fingers.
- Kelly.
I don't care what the menu says. Spaghetti
separate from meatball, charge for both.
You can pack up.
I promised you'd go to a party.
We gotta be around for closing.
McCarg's coming.
- I'll tell him.
- Where will we be?

- Her name's Ivy Conrad.
- Not that open furnace. I told her no.
- I already told her yes.
- How much?

We're in trouble. I gotta see McCarg and explain.

I made a deal, she wants you to do a favor.

- What kind of favor?
- She lost her hat.

Bring it to her.

A few minutes after, we borrowed Rudy's car and got started.

We were late because Joey said he wanted to change his tie.

My name's Kelly. If a call comes in, will you let me know?

She's a real eggbeater, isn't she?

Put this in your pocket, will you?

Hey, let's you and me be a big secret.

No. Not now.

I've got plenty left, Ivy.

Catch, Kelly.

Oh, no, let me stay. I'll pay rent.

This is Kelly, everybody.

He's a musician.

You don't like me, do you?

I don't know much about you except what's in the papers.

- Oh, the kidnapping.
- Huh?

I was kidnapped once.

- What happened?
- They turned me loose after three days.
- Yeah?
- Couldn't stand me.

I wish they'd play "Roses of Picardy."

Wouldn't it be wonderful to go there, Kelly?

Run off to some romantic spot.

Capri or the Dardanelles.

Some romantic place like that.

Have you ever thought of it?
I once spent a weekend
at the Muhlebach.
If I ever go to the Dardanelles,
I want you to go too, Kelly.
I'll get the horn.
Mr. Kelly. Phone call.
Mr. Pete Kelly.
Here.
- Phone call. Mr. Pete Kelly.
- He's busy. I'll take it.
Hello?
No, this is Joey Firestone.
Who are you?
Oh, well, I can tell you, Mr. McCarg.
The answer is no.
If he was here,
he'd tell you the same thing.
Go get a ticket to nowhere!
That's telling him, fat lady?
Come here, everybody.
Kelly's gonna toot for us.
- They're having too good a time.
- You're supposed to play.
I got ordered to a party,
not a concert.
- You won't play, so Johnny will play.
- Put down that horn, buster.
- I'll just play one tune.
- You'll play it off your tonsils.
- Give me the horn.
- We'll throw it in the pool.
Maybe the fish will play.
Give me the horn. Give it to me.
Don't catch cold.
Come on, Pete, get a bar in.
Now, calm down.
There's somebody following us.
He must have banged out right
through the windshield.
We'd better get up to
the road and stop a car.
You go that way.
Let's try to get to a phone.

He didn't bang out, he floated out.

- That sounded pretty good.

- Yeah.

How was it?

Think you'll like that.

I'll play it back.

Yeah, mac, let's hear it.

- It was a good chorus, Al.

- Thanks.

Can I talk to you, Pete? Outside.

Sure.

I was wondering how soon
you could spare me.

Never. Unless you're serious, Al.

And if you are, anytime.

Then I guess I'll mosey on.

All this trouble,

I'm not rested up for it.

It'll blow over.

You've been with

the band the longest.

You and I, what's it been?

Six, seven years?

It won't blow over.

You're playing with a cold deck,
but I don't blame you, Pete.

You wanna keep the band together,
you've gotta fight back.

You could hang on for a while.

No.

I'm older than the rest
of you. Lots older.

I've been through the band wars,
too many of them.

I was thrown out of hotel rooms
because I had an instrument case.

If it had been a machine gun,
it would have been all right.

But nobody wanted a
clarinet player around.

There was all that time trying to
get people to keep their word.

They'd book you in and
play you for a week...

and then say you were drunk
and dump you without a cent.
I've had too much trouble, Pete.
I don't want any more.
Where do you think you'll go?
East, maybe.
Thought I might try to
catch on with a big outfit.
Goldkette, somebody like that.
Paid up, you got train fare?
Well, I'll catch a
bus into St. Louis.
I ought to be used to it by now.
I bet I spent half my
life in bus stations.
Isn't that the dangest thing?
Sure wish you'd go along, Pete.
You would do good with
somebody like Goldkette.
Who's playing the horn there?
Bix, I guess.
I'm safer here, Al.
I'll see you around, Pappy.
Hope you get a good man.
Oh, I'll get someone, don't worry.
But he'll never sit all the
way down in that chair.
We're going right into town.
We'll give you a lift.
I'll thumb a ride.
Well...
We'll play one for you
every now and then.
Don't do that. I'm tired old folks.
Take five for me sometime.
That drummer of yours.
- So?
- We had words.
Do you know who that was?
- You're always asking if I know...
- Guy Bettenhouser. He's McCarg's.
I get the drift.
He made a grab for me.
- What happened?

- Joey took a beer bottle to him.
Joey, you're a fool, a real fool.
- Where's McCarg? How do I get in touch?
- Run an ad.
Operator, get me the 22nd Ward Club.
- What are you doing?
- Trying to call off the dogs.
Twenty-second Ward?
I wanna talk to McCarg.
Where can I find him?
Well, isn't there some way to
run him down? It's important.
When will he be back?
The minute he comes in, tell him to
call Kelly at Rudy's. It's important.
- It's not important to me.
- Go on home for the night.
- I get paid to play drums.
- You're not.
I'll sit at the bar. I don't start trouble,
but I ain't afraid of nobody.
- You remember that.
- You remember it.
- I need a favor, Cootie.
- I'm eating. Somebody left good meatballs.
I'll buy you dinner. Get out and hit
the clubs, dig out Fran McCarg.
You think I can find him, Pete?
You found some leftover meatballs.
I knew it was silly to send Cootie.
He had some savvy once,
but he got shell-shocked...
and after that, he couldn't set
fire to a bucket of kerosene.
He was our only chance, though.
Cootie didn't show up and
McCarg didn't call in.

It got to be 2:

I thought we might make it.
We almost did.
- Hey.
- Joey.
On your way. I'll stop them here.

Joey, look out!
Clear the place. Get somebody
to help bring Joey in.
- What's the matter?
- It's raining on him.
Later on, they came
and took Joey away.
I cleaned out his locker
and started for home.
This is a single.
You got the wrong gutter.
I'm sorry.
Rudy gave me the address.
- What are you doing?
- Making tea.
Could I have some?
You won't like it, I'm using water.
I don't blame you for being mad.
I don't feel good. If you got tanked
up and lost track of the party...
go down to the street and start another
one but don't bother me, I'm tired.
- I came to apologize.
- You have.
And I was lonesome.
Were you ever lonesome?
It shouldn't be any trick for you.
Hire a stadium and fill it with people.
Wouldn't it be wonderful?
Except that's when you feel the most
lonesome of all, with so many people.
- You might try an empty stadium.
- Just two people.
That's the only time
you're not lonesome.
One time, when we lived on Bellafont,
there was a boy down the street.
- We built a cave.
- Yeah.
I wasn't lonesome at all.
Wouldn't you know,
it rained and ruined the cave...
and after that, he moved away.
Do you know what happened to him?

I couldn't guess.
He went to France and got killed.
When I read it in the paper,
I could have cried.
I only knew him a week or so...
but I could have cried.
You better have the
tea and wander on.
What's that?
What's it look like? It's a bird.
Well, isn't it beautiful?
A lady gave him to me.
She was potted.
It's beautiful. What's its name?
Fred.
What's that all about?
You're not mean, if you're
that nice to a bird.
I'm nice to him because I may get
hungry someday and have to eat him.
In a meantime, he can hit G above
high C, so I keep him around.
Doesn't he fly away when
you leave the window open?
- Doesn't seem to.
- Here's to us.
It's your drink.
I don't wanna leave. I'm like Fred.
Look, I never took Fred
by the seat of the pants...
and threw him down the stairs.
I know Fred.
He'd walk back up.
McCarg must've been pushing
hard with all the bands.
Because that night,
the word went out.
We were all gonna meet at a
roadhouse over on the Kansas side.
A place called Fat Annie's.
It was a grog shop and there
was pressure to close it.
So far, none of the Prohibition
boys had been able to find it.

Oh, she is sweet as sour milk.

There's a cop looking
for you by the window.

So sorry to hear
about Joey Firestone.

So am I.

It's all right, I suppose. I guess
he's gone to the good Lord.

If he can take his drums.

- The boys here yet?

- Yes, up in the still.

- I say we're ready.

- Yes.

We have to get ready.

- There's no plan.

- There is.

I say if we're gonna vote...

- We're voting.

- On what?

- Getting protection.

- We'll send out for a gun.

- You think that will scare McCarg?

- It might kill him.

Ever hear of Mike Sloan?

Two, three years ago, he sent
to St. Paul for a \$5000 hoodlum.

- Yeah?

- Fella took the 5...

missed his man and left
with Mike Sloan's wife.

- I don't know you felt like joking.

- I don't.

- What's it mean, then?

- What's it sound like?

- It sounds like you'll go along with McCarg.

- Anything wrong with that?

Well, I suppose not.

After what happened to Joey,
we figured you'll fight him.

- We figured wrong.

- Who are you? I never saw you before.

Listen, I got an outfit.

I got a right to vote.

- Take it easy, he's new.

- Tell him to roll down his sleeves.
- I didn't come to hear some banjo player.
- All right, Pete. All right.
Joey was in your band.
He was a friend of yours.
Joey's seen the man, I can't pull him back.
I lost a clarinet, best chair I knew.
I'm tired. I don't
want any more of it.
And that's how I feel.
If you go along, we'll all have to.
Suit yourselves.
You don't have to run away,
you can stay and talk.
There's nothing to talk about.
It got said last night.
Bring it back and sit down.
George Tenell.
Suppose they'll go along with McCarg.
I guess.
I want your help on him.
I got some pictures.
The law was there last night,
I told them all I know.
- Different branch.
- I told them. Leave me alone.
- Go steal an apple.
- You're scared, Kelly.
I don't think you
know it but you are.
Don't let it bother you.
I'm going after McCarg
and you can join up...
if you get anything in
back of your belt buckle.
You won't get McCarg.
- No?
- He's not poor enough.
Don't ever say that again.
Just a minute.
I told them 10 times,
one anchovy is plenty.
Cut it up, one's plenty.
- What's the idea, having a kid play drums?

- Get him a higher stool.
I'm gonna talk to that union. I pay full salary, I'm entitled to a grown-up.
- How do you think it sounds?
- All right.
- Don't lose your head.
- I said, all right.
- The kid?
- Rushes the beat.
- Where's the clarinet from?
- Mound City Blueblowers.
If they used him,
it was to carry beer.
- I guess we got a deal.
- Good.
You know what I'd like to do, Kelly?
Start fresh. We ought to be friends.
You're too moody.
Talking about last night?
That was Bettenhouser's show.
One of your men jumped him.
He didn't like it.
That shouldn't bother
you or me. I like you.
I can do you some good.
You couldn't give me a cold.
In a month, I'll have
30 club bands here.
Another 50 in St. Louis,
and spread out as far as Indiana.
And it's not just bands.
There's food supply, laundry service.
You could get a hunk of that.
Aprons, tablecloths, towels.
- Do you ever count all the dirty faces?
- Cut another side.
You need time to cool down.
I don't know what you heard.
You've been to prison twice.
You got a due bill at McAllister.
Downstate, they're not as nice.
They say you got rubber pockets
so you can steal soup.
We'll still get along because

you're not like these bums.
You don't wanna go through
life with crumbs in your bed.
Don't worry. We'll hit it off.
Now, I'd like you to meet someone.
Pete Kelly. Rose Hopkins.

- How are you?
- Hello.
- You give her a tryout.
- What?
- She's a singer. Tell him.
- You just did.
- We don't carry a singer.
- What do you mean?
- It's jazz. People come for the noise.
- He's right. It's not that kind of band.
She's good. Have the
boys play something.
- They broke for the night, going home.
- I'll hold them.
I wonder if I could have a drink.
Thanks.
I'm sorry.
About the singing, I mean.
Did you ever sing before?
Sometimes in clubs and one
time for a road show.
That's when I met him. I was singing.
Were you any good?
Couple of people said I was.
Even talked about New York.
But I got sick and had to go away.
It was a long time back.
Only he won't forget it.
Keeps saying, all I
need is a good start.
Yeah.
When you're 35, the only
start you need is for home.
Come on.
After you.
Don't worry, Fran, I can't
climb that high anymore.
All right, that's it. Goodbye, now.

Come on.

- You're not gonna take her?

- We may have to.

Look, Pete, we don't need
a singer, we agreed.

She sounded good but
we can't afford a singer.

Why not?

If I want a postcard,
I gotta buy it on time.

- We can't afford her.

- Don't worry about that.

She comes free.

- All set?

- I don't know.

She'll need some help.

Here's 25 bucks a week for you.

Go ahead and take it.

You got a girl or something,
you can use it.

We all set?

I suppose so.

Ten years he's known me, and all
he can say is, "She comes free."

But I guess that covers it.

Rose came every night to sing.

McCarg came every night to listen.

Before he came and after
he left, Rose drank.

The way she went at it, the bartender
was gonna have to get an iron jigger.

Even Rudy was getting tougher.

He fired the cook for using fresh peas
and started to cut the whiskey more.

Down on 12th Street, they said Rudy
was gonna be a rich man someday.

He'd learn how to cut water.

But he was good-hearted.

That's one thing you
could say for him.

In the meantime,

McCarg got us outside work.

On our night off, he booked us
at the Everglade Ballroom...

over on 10th and Locust.

I heard McCarg had a piece of
the place but I don't know why.

It was dark three nights a week.

They had a player

piano for three more.

Whatever night it was...

you could put the crowd in a bathtub
and have room to splash around.

The only good thing was Ivy.

Say, fella, that's some music.

- Take it from me.

- That's right, George has a good ear.

Oh, gotta have,

I'm on it all the time.

Here, have a cigar.

Go on, light it up and be somebody.

Hello.

How about a smoke?

- You can dance to this, you know.

- Can you smoke to it?

- Don't you want the cigar?

- It's all yours.

It's nice and warm.

I love it this time

of year, don't you?

I never bothered to rate it.

But I like April better. Or June.

No, April. April's my favorite.

If you like it that much,

I'll get it for you.

No, thanks. The ring's enough.

You see? I'm engaged.

You said it was all mine.

- Very pretty.

- The good thing, it's different.

You go out for lunch, it's not
like all the other rings you see.

Ivy, you're wonderful.

When will we get married?

Let's do it on your 10th birthday.

I'll tell you what.

If I can make you say, "I do,"

is it all right to get married?

It's a game.
For instance, what color
is the American flag?
Red, white and blue.
Who was the first president?
George Washington.
What's the largest...?
- Oh, you don't wanna play.
- Sure.
- You don't even understand the game.
- Of course I do.
There, you said it. "I do."
I used to play it all the time.
Only I never cared how it came out.
Why don't we get married, Pete?
I don't know.
We'd look a little silly, that's all.
Tramp musician, I don't know
where my next meal is coming from.
You skating around
to Spain and France.
Don't know where your next
country is coming from.
We just look silly together.
I don't think we look any more
silly together than by ourselves.
Ask anybody,
ask them what they think.
Us sitting in a rocker
with a lot of gray hair.
- But that's 40 years away.
- Suppose it is.
Well, I don't know.
Except we could have fun.
And I'd love you the whole time.
I don't think we'd look so silly.
Hey.
Don't flood out the joint,
we still got another set to play.
I won't.
Except it's true.
And after 40 years,
if you don't like the idea...
you can have your cigar band back.

- Can I keep the ring, Pete?

- Sure.

But don't expect a fur coat too.

What did you get, a bleacher seat?

Wanna ask you a couple of questions.

If it's about Joey, ask Bettenhouser.

They had the beef.

- I can't find him.

- That's too bad.

- Yeah, it is, I can't find anybody.

- What do you mean?

- You know a guy named Cootie Jacobs?

- Yeah.

You sent him on an errand the
night Firestone was killed?

- That's right.

- He never got back.

I thought you might tell me why.

Come on in. I'm celebrating.

Celebrating what?

You and Ivy. That's wonderful.

Get married and have kids.

That's what anybody ought to do.

- Care to celebrate?

- No, thanks.

Grab a chance when you get it.

That's what I should have done.

Grab it and have a little girl.

Why didn't you?

That's what I always wanted.

What do they called it,

"the patter of little feet"?

Well, there will never be no
patter of little feet in my house.

Unless I was to rent some mice.

Here's to you and Ivy.

Go easy, we're only
gonna get married once.

But there's two of you doing it.

Do you ever hear McCarg
mention Cootie Jacobs?

- Why?

- I just wondered.

Don't worry about

anything with McCarg.
Leave him alone. He's too mean.
- I'm not worried.
- You don't know him, Pete.
He'd do anything in
the world that's mean.
He'd shoot crap on the Tomb
of the Unknown Soldier.
Just the same, I'd like
to know about Cootie.
Stay away from him.
It's a real favor I'm telling you.
I'll mark it down that way.
But if you gotta know about
this Cootie, I'll poke around.
Thanks, Rose.
I owe you a kiss, maybe a couple.
You couldn't make it an even dozen?
We better go.
Do you wanna skip tonight?
It's a tough house anyway.
No. No, I'll be fine. I'll be fine.
Be right along, as soon
as I have a nightcap.
Aren't you getting a
little ahead of yourself?
I always start around noon,
in case it gets dark early.
I knew it was a mistake the
minute Rose got out there.
She'd had bad crowds before
but never like this.
They wouldn't pay attention
to a naked girl yelling, "Fire."
Rose tried but she
couldn't handle it.
I guess she was feeling
that soup a little too.
McCarg quieted down a couple of people
but there was no way to cover the room.
Besides, the way he was acting,
you'd think it was Rose's fault.
"Somebody Loves Me," all right?
Happy birthday, folks.

They don't wanna hear it.
They do if you sing right.
Act sober and sing.
Everybody here, quiet down.
I said, everybody.
Out in the kitchen too.
She's gonna sing,
you're gonna listen.
All right. Go ahead.
All right, keep it going. One, two.

- Where's Rose?
- Up to her dressing room.
- Why don't you order them out of here?
- I don't know them good enough.
I'm sorry, Kelly.
- It wasn't your fault.
- It's not hers either.
She didn't even try.
I wanted to give her a start.
She didn't even try.
[DOOR OPENS
Rose. Rose.
Later that week, we got a
job playing a stag party.
I went outside to
find some clean air.
Somebody beat me to it.
- Hello, Pete.
- Al, Al.
You look skinny.
Don't they feed you there?
Yeah, but it's thin spaghetti.
I heard about you in Goldkette.
What's it like?
It's big. Hit that bandstand is like
walking into some out-of-work local.
We got a good section.
I get a solo now and then.
- No fooling?
- We did a record.
- I bet you robbed big Ed.
- I know the right bank.
- We're having a pour.
- Yeah, they said downtown.

What are you doing here?

- Wichita, I laid over for the night.

- You can stagger. Come in.

- Great bunch.

- Anybody I know?

Not too many but

what's the difference?

Anybody you know?

I guess that's true, a thing like this,
a bunch of freeloaders and drifters.

Who'd you expect, Joey Firestone?

I guess you didn't hear.

Right after you left, that night,

Joey Firestone...

I heard about it.

- Then why the nudge?

- You were talking tough at first.

Said McCarg couldn't

lay a glove on you.

When he laid one on Joe,

you quit your band, ducked out.

You came all that way

just to tell me this?

No, I came for my mouthpiece.

Mouthpiece?

A long time ago when you were first
getting started I gave you a mouthpiece.

It belonged to the

bugler in my outfit.

When he ran out of legs

one night, I gave it you.

I liked him. I don't want you blowing
on it anymore, so give it back.

Al, I don't see why it has to

finish like this with you and me.

Maybe I was a little off base, but how

can that ruin all the old times...

when we did anything to keep going?

Like the night Bedido

broke his bow...

and you told him to beat the base

the way you saw him do in Algiers.

The time we stole that crate of oranges,
only it was marked wrong.

We had to eat turnips all the way
from Memphis clear up past Davenport.
All the good times.
I don't see how you can forget them
because you don't like one thing.
I want the mouthpiece.
If that's how you feel,
see if I care.
Dust off. Get the night
boat to Phoenix, go on.
- Go on. I'm ready to wave goodbye.
- You can't wave goodbye to anybody.
- Huh?
- You're too busy shaking hands with McCarg.
Get in.
It won't fit a clarinet.
Al was back. I made up my mind.
I went to see George Tenell.
We tried to figure up a plan.
Each time it came out Bettenhouser.
He ducked out of town.
There was only one person who'd know
where to find him, Rose Hopkins.
Your friend Rose is
down at Cedardale.
- Where is that?
- State home for the insane.
- What'd you find out?
- I checked with the doctors.
Some kind of a mix-up.
She's wandering around with
the brain of a 5-year-old...
and she'll never get
past there again.
That's awful.
I don't know.
Maybe she made a good trade.
Cream and sugar?
On the house.
- Is this yours?
- There's 70 bucks in there.
- Take 55 and close us out.
- Huh?
That'll get you through next Wednesday.

Your last commission.

- We don't need you anymore.
- You're tired.
- Go home and sleep.
- As long as you know where you stand.
- Where do I stand?
- In the middle of a hole, that's where.
- Well, well, who plugged you in?
- Joey Firestone.

You're late, Kelly, the worms
got him. He's on the menu.

What can you do?

Wait a minute.

- You're looking for a war?
- Put it anyway you like.

I think you ordered up
Joey and I'll prove it.

- If that's war, we got one.
- I don't think you're that tough.

Give me an empty,
a beer bottle. Hurry up.

Go ahead. Let's see
how tough you are.

You got one free swing,
right or left hand.

Go ahead, you got a bonus.

Pick it up and get tough.

I didn't think so.

You made a mistake, Kelly.

Because I'm gonna keep
on taking that 25 percent.

The very next time you open your mouth
or look sideways or even talk to me...

I'll put you down for good.

That's the truth.

- Don't you ever go to bed?
- Hi.

I have wonderful news.

Tommy's letting us have his
lodge for the honeymoon.

- Who's Tommy?
- Oh, you don't know him.

But he's got this place
near some bighorn sheep.

He won't be using it for
the next two weeks.

We can't get married
right now and run off.

- Why not? I told everybody.
- Then you'll have to UN-tell them.
- You said it was up to me, you didn't care.
- I know, but something's come up.

What?

It's about the band. I can't go into
it now, but we'll have to wait.

- What's so important you can't tell me?
- What's so important about bighorn sheep?
- Why can't we wait?
- For how long, three weeks?

Six months, 15 years?

I don't think you'll ever know.

You'll wanna play another set
or hire a new piano player.

I don't wanna argue. If that's the way
you feel, that's the way you feel.

I don't blame you.

I guess I tricked you into it.

- That's not the point.
- That's the whole point.

You don't wanna get married, Pete.

Unless you find a girl
who looks like a cornet.

I'm short three valves. I might as
well pack up and move someplace else.

Sure, that's what you've always done.

Light out for Paris.

How long do we have to wait, Pete?

I don't know, but it won't be forever.

You know that.

Thanks, but I don't wanna be
an old lady when I get married.

- I don't want the rice to knock me down.
- Stop it, will you?

If that's the way it's going to be we
might as well say goodbye right now.

Suit yourself.

See you around.

That's the way it would be, isn't it?

According to you. Goodbye, Ivy.

Gosh, I'm sorry to see me go.

This is my baby.

Would you like to say hello?

Does your baby have a name?

Amy.

That's her name for today.

- She has different names.

- Oh?

One for every day.

Sometimes she wakes up sad,
and then her name is Dolores.

But if she's happy, I call her Penny.

Rose, you and I were once friends.

My name is Kelly.

Are you a nice man?

If you're not, my baby will know.

You once knew a man name McCarg.

He was mean to my baby.

Do you remember him?

Do you remember him? McCarg.

She's cold.

It's always chilly in the afternoon.

He was a bad man.

Do you know about his friend?

His name was Bettenhouser.

You know where he is?

After the baby's had her nap,
we can have tea.

- Would you like that?

- Yes, I would.

- Were we good friends?

- I hope so.

I have so many good friends.

All the people here.

Amy is so sleepy.

She's a very beautiful baby.

Is there a place called Coffeyville?

In Kansas. Is that where
he went, McCarg's friend?

Don't ever go there.

It's full of bad people.

Is that where he went? Coffeyville?

We can have biscuits with the tea,

and I'll put on another dress.
This is not my nicest dress.
It's a very pretty dress.
It's time for Amy's nap.
You've been very good to us.
Goodbye, Rose.
I have so many nice friends.
I got in touch with Tenell.
He wired the police at
Coffeyville, Kansas.
But I didn't have time
to wait on an answer.
Somebody said there was a message
for me in the band room.
Maggie Jackson wanted to see me.
It was important.
Up in the still,
somebody waiting for you.
- Well, who is it?
- I don't know. A friend, I guess.
- Not these days.
- Huh?
If I wanted a friend, I'd have
to send to Sears Robuck.
Thanks for the message.
One good kick, put your head in
the basement. We agree on that?
I've come to talk a deal.
Talk it.
To begin with, I didn't
kill your friend Firestone.
- He'll be glad to hear it.
- It was McCarg's, he brought a gun.
You ready to say that?
I'd last an hour.
There's another way.
- Can you get next to \$1200?
- Why?
No 1200, no deal.
I'll tell you where
you can get papers...
canceled checks,
everything you need for McCarg.
I can get rid of the car.

Sell my watch and borrow.
When do you need it?
By morning, I've gotta
take it and get out.
It doesn't hang right, friend.
Why would you wanna dump McCarg?
- I can use \$1200.
- Get it from him.
He doesn't owe me anything.
He won't advance anything.
He claims the whole
thing was my fault.
- Maybe it was.
- Maybe, maybe not. It's his wash now.
Twelve hundred, I can get part
of a rum boat out of Detroit.
Gotta make the move, I can't stay
in Coffeyville the rest of my life.
Your life may not amount to much.
It will if you cover me. McCarg doesn't
have to know who pointed the finger.
- Are we talking a deal?
- I can't gamble 1200.
How do I know about these
papers and canceled checks?
Take a look. I'll tell you where.
If they work for you, you deliver
1200 by 6 in the morning.
- If they don't, I'll shop somewhere else.
- Where are they?
- Is it yes or no?
- Yes.
- In McCarg's office.
- At the 22nd Ward Club?
Another office at the Everglade
Ballroom in the back. Take a crowbar.
- Where will you be?
- Right here, I can't afford to go out.
- I'll see you.
- You better.
I don't get 1200, you'll be looking
for something to put your hat on.
You understand?
- Some ducks out front?

- I'm going to the Everglade.
Dark tonight, isn't it?
I got a chance to take the skin off
McCarg, some papers and things.
- Good, I'll go along.
- Keep your seat.
This is none of your business, Al.
Besides, it won't be any trouble.
Fine. I wouldn't go otherwise.
Now, listen, there's one
way to keep you here.
You wouldn't hit me again,
would you, Pete?
No, I guess not.
- Hello, Pete.
- How's Paris?
- I wonder if we could talk.
- I'm busy, Ivy.
- Can we have a dance, one little dance?
- Please.
Even if it's the last one?
Ivy, I've got a lot to do.
I got till morning to do it.
I was wrong about things.
- If we could just talk...
- Some other time.
I'm busy. Rudy says you are too.
You don't have to be mean.
I missed you, that's all.
Not even a dance?
We had one, remember?
I wish I hadn't used it up.
See, I never give up.
Get out of here, Ivy.
- I followed you over.
- I can see that. Now, please get out.
Not till we dance.
Don't be a fool. This is no time
for a drunken stunt, go on home.
Not till we dance,
and it's not a drunken stunt.
If we dance once, then will you go?
Maybe.
Let them get comfortable.

I got nothing to gain.