

Appointment with Danger

By Richard L. Breen

This is a branch office of the biggest business in the world, the United States post office.

The citizens of this country own it, work in it, and use it.

All day.

Everyday.

All year.

Use it for business, for pleasure. Sometimes, for an all important message to that busy man at the north pole.
We're proud of our post office because we have confidence in its efficiency.

Because we know our letters and parcels and money orders will be delivered promptly and with safety.

It's a big confidence.

Every year the post office is entrusted with \$45 billion pieces of mail and enough money to pay off the personal debts of everyone in the world. Your mailman, you know. He calls at your home or office a dozen times a week.

of men and women, equally dedicated to fulfilling Uncle Sam's guarantee of delivery. Whether it involves sending junior's old sweater to summer camp or shipping a million dollars in

But behind him is a great army

currency to San Francisco.

But behind this army is a special corps of trained men, seldom seen, almost

never publicized.

The nation's oldest police

force, the postal inspectors, always on guard.

This is an account of one of these postal inspectors on a routine assignment.

The story begins in the rain of a murky summer night in Gary, Indiana.

Isn't it stupid of me?
I thought if I came out in
the wind I could fix it.
Chopind all right?
Uh, a little too much to drink.
We're giving him some air.
Oh.

I'm sorry about the umbrella.
They're good to have, uh,
well when it's raining.
Good night sister.

Goodnight.

Well, what else could I do? I don't know.

Good evening sister,

are you lost?

No, there's a man back there in the alley.

His friend says he's had

too much to drink. I was wondering...

I'll look into it sister.

Thank you.

Goodnight.

Harry Gruber's stuff.

We'll need a receipt.

That is what is known as methodical police work.

Must be fun having the experts down from Chicago.

Oh Mr. Ahearn's all right, as a boss, at least. It's that inspector he brought along.

Where do you meet

Mr. Al Goddard?

Is he as tough as ever?

We just got his order for lunch, a small boy with mustard. All right Al, you're beginning to make the point clear. A trained operator like Gruber couldn't be strangled. I'm sure of it. He was either drunk or asleep. He didn't drink so he was asleep. Here in Laporte? He's not even registered is to the hotel. I just don't believe it. Well, what do you believe? That he was killed somewhere else and brought here. That could be any place. He was on a floating assignment all over Indiana last week. Sure it's a rat race now. All because some cup spent the night chasing a hot rod. How did he know there was a dead man in the alley? Why don't you give the police a break? Sorry to have kept you waiting. Here's your stuff. The last will and testament of Harry Gruber. Was this Gruber a friend of yours Mr. Goddard? I know him but I didn't like him. What about the nun? We're doing the best we Mr. Ahearn. Well how good is that? We've checked on every nun in Laporte for the past 48 hours.

Not one of them was anywhere near that alley last night. Did you bother to check the railroads? No nun purchased a ticket, boarded a train, or got off one all day Tuesday. Buses and planes likewise. Bound to be around someplace. How many nuns are there anyway? I don't know Mr. Goddard. I never counted it. Let's go. I've got to fly back to Washington. I'll drop you by the airport. Stay with it Al. Don't worry. I'm going to start looking for that nun. Somebody's got to find her. Boy I'll bet that guy doesn't even like his own mother. I'm not sure he had one. You've been chasing hoodlums for so long, you don't know how to treat ordinary people. Warm up will you? Sure, I'll fall in love for you. I don't think you could because you don't know what a love affair is. It's what goes on between a man and a 45 pistol that won't change. Let me tell you about you Al. That badge an a few law books have turned you into a nut. You don't like anybody. You don't believe anybody. You don't trust anybody. You think everybody has a pitch. Everybody has. You and I and a guy back there. A better job, a

little more dough, a

round of applause.

One way or another, everybody

you meet is a pitch artist.

Keep me posted.

And remember one thing Al.

The biggest thing on

your aside isn't a

pair of brass knuckles.

It's time and men and patience.

Thanks.

Now do you mind if I find out

who killed Harry Gruber?

No.

No, I'm sure you will Al because

you're a good cop.

That's about all you are.

Yup, this is where it happened.

The nun went west

on 34th street.

First block up.

Are you from out of town?

No.

I'm a stranger here.

Let's go west on 34th.

Dead end as far west as you go.

Well this doesn't send

me any message.

Let's go.

What's that over there?

The river?

Railroad yard.

Some kind of a switching point.

Mind if I take a look.

I wouldn't want you

to get lost Mr.

Good evening.

Uhhuh.

How long do the trains

stop here?

Just long enough to switch

over, five minutes.

Any of them stop any longer

for any reason?

No.

Why?

Oh.

You talking about that train last night?

What about it?

Passenger train at fort Wayne.

Got hung up here for about

20 minutes, not my fault.

During that 20 minutes

did you see a

nun get off the train?

You got me.

I was too busy.

But she should've gotten off,

walked into town, and gotten

back here before it left.

Well, I guess so.

Well, suppose that happened and

she got back on the train.

From here on could there any

other station she'd get off.

No.

That train doesn't stop until

it gets to fort Wayne.

What's this?

Fast freight to fort Wayne.

Thanks.

Hey!

You see a nun get off the

special yesterday?

No.

How about you Charlie?

Well they usually

travel in pairs.

Did you see a pair then?

Yeah, they got on a bus.

What bus?

Belle isle.

Like the one that's loading

over there.

Thanks.

Sister Augustine.

I work for the post office.

Well, that's very nice.

My name is Goddard.

I'm here investigating a murder.

Oh, I'm sure we wouldn't know

anything about such a thing.

On Tuesday night you saw a

man dumped in an alley of

Laporte, Indiana.

I got off the train to get

sister Paula some medicine.

She wasn't feeling so well.

Neither was the guy

in the alley.

He was a dead government agent

by the name of Harry Gruber.

Did he have a family?

What's the difference sister?

He's just as dead either way.

Not quite Mr. Goddard.

Well the point is, the night

his luck ran out you had a

grand stand seat.

I don't understand.

Could you identify any of the

people in the alley with him?

One at least. He was

very helpful.

Would you mind coming downtown

and checking the

state police files?

I don't think so Mr. Goddard.

I have classes in a few minutes.

I have children to teach.

Sister, it's your job

to go down there.

Isn't there someone

else you could get?

Even if there were you

should know better.

Letting someone else do your job

is a design of the devil.

All right, I'll see

mother Joseph.

You're right about letting

someone else do your job. It's not original sister, merely a quote. Well, whoever said it, it was very true. It's from the writings of Martin Luther. Oh. From his earlier writings I imagine. I'll be there Mr. Goddard. My, there's an ugly one. Most of them are sister. I suppose so. But you wonder how when you see them as small boys. You wonder how they can ever do anything bad. But they usually do. Here you are sister. All right Joe. I had a laugh a while ago. She was looking at a picture of that hammer murderer and said, maybe he didn't get the proper training. Well maybe he didn't. In a pig's eye, he was a carpenter. Mr. Goddard. I think that's the man I saw in the alley. You're not quite sure? Almost. If I could see him in person. George Soderquist. The helpful one. How's he read? Hmm, nice pedigree. Armed robbery 1938, armed robbery 1939, armed robbery 1941. 1940 must have been a slow year.

Invasion of national service act, 1942 convicted, released April 1947.

Arrested drunk driving 1948.

Last known to be in

Gary, Indiana.

That turns into a big town.

I'll, uh I'll notify your boss.

While you're on the phone

call homicide at Gary.

Tell them to put a tail

on Soderquist.

Anything else?

Yeah, brief them on the

case until I get there.

Oh, and tell them I'm arranging

to have sister

Augustine report to Gary as

an identifying witness.

Oh, I don't know Mr. Goddard.

I'm afraid the church

authorities would frown on

such a thing.

Not if the matter's

murder sister.

I'll have Washington contact

the chancellery.

Very well.

But I don't think that I'm

going to be much help.

You identify him and I'll see

that he gets the chair.

Thank you.

Good evening, I'm

mother Ambrose.

My name's Goddard.

I have a letter from the bishop.

Sit down sister.

Is this Soderquist a friend

of yours sister?

No.

I picked him out of the mug book.

Mug book?

It's a phrase she picked up.

Will you be here long sister?
Until we can proffer charges
against Soderquist for murder.
Are you sure he's the murderer?
That's the way I'd vote.
He'll get a trail and everything the law allows.
But not one drop of charity.

I'll have them set us up a place for you sister.
You don't think very much of me, do you sister?

of me, do you sister?

I think much of everything
Mr. Goddard.

But I feel sorry for you.

I don't think you have a heart.

Call it muscle.

That's the way it is with a cop. I don't believe it.

When a cop dies, they don't list it as heart failure.

It's Charlie horse of the chest.

Thank you.

You Goddard?

Yeah.

I'm Dave Goodman,
local homicide.
Oh, how do you do?
Sister Augustine
I'm glad I caught you.
We got your boy Soderquist
staked out
at a downtown pool room.

We can't move until sister Augustine identifies him. Would you like to come

down and have a look?

How about it?

It's fine.

All right then.

Oh, mother Ambrose?

May we borrow sister Augustine

for a while?

Where will you be?

If the bishop or someone should call.

Say I'll be back shortly.

I mean specifically, what

shall I tell them?

Just tell them I'm

down at the pool.

Sister.

Oh, I'm sorry.

That's the man.

The man with the coat on.

He's the one that spoke

to me in the alley.

George Soderquist. What

about the other one?

No, I've never seen him before.

It's a hoodlum hang out.

He may have a record.

Let's find out.

Have you got a tail

on Soderquist?

Sure.

Is that all.

For now.

I'll have to take you back

to St. Michael's.

Oh, no please.

You're going to be busy

with those men.

We can get a cab.

It's no trouble at all.

But I don't think we should...

oh, yes.

Taxi, taxi.

Sister.

Goodnight sister.

Goodnight, and thank you.

Hello Earl.

I think we're in trouble.

That nun's here in Gary.

Two minutes ago and

it's no accident.

Naples yes, Gary no.

She's here for a reason Earl.

Get a hold of Soderquist and keep him undercover.

In the meantime, I'm gonna cut this town open and find her.

I'm gonna find her Earl

before she finds me.

You know this town pretty well.

Why would a couple of gunsters

knock off Harry Gruber?

Say robbery.

For dough?

If you're a government cop, you have to marry money to buy

a stick of gum.

And why did they strangle him?

Usually if you're a hood and

you knock somebody over you

beat it out town yourself.

You don't send a corpse.

But they did.

Why?

Could be because they

wanted to stay here.

Be interesting to have

Soderquist tell us.

Yes.

Yeah sharkey?

Where?

All right, all right. Shake

down the district and send some

men over to his apartment.

I want him in here.

You don't have to tell me.

Soderquist jumped the tail.

Any other time it's a cinch.

This time we draw a

near-sighted cop.

Now we gotta head him on.

How tight can you

seal this town?

Pretty tight.

O.K., lock it up.

Notify the state police and

check all the highways.

Without Soderquist we haven't got a lead. We'll have him hear in an hour. If you want me I'll be at the post office... if it hasn't been stolen. I've been postmaster here 10 years. And all that time I've never known Gruber to do anything but hit town and make a routine check. This time he suddenly became interested in these three truck drivers? He sat here and brooded over those files all afternoon. You know, I think it has something to do with a transfer of money between the two stations. What two stations? Here in town we have two railroad stations. On true shipments we have to transfer stuff from one station to another by a mail truck. Big shipments? The one from Cleveland's a Lulu. One of these three men always handle the run between the two stations. That's the last question Gruber asked me. He left here and six hours later he was dead in Laporte. I'll bet he called on this guy first, Paul Ferrar. Uh, one of the three drivers? Says here he was offered a

better job but turned it down. Now why would our friend Ferrar turn down a \$500 a year raise to drive a truck. I think he said he liked to be outside.

For \$500 worth?

Ha!

You know, I'd like to take a look at this Ferrar.

Well, uh, he's on duty now.

Uh, I can get him up.

No, don't do that.

I just want a quick glimpse.

The next one

well, well.

Our first break.

That is the boy who walked out of the pool room with George Soderquist. That puts Paul Ferrar in the act.

I better get Ahearn

back in town.

In the meantime, give

me a list of

all your money transfers.

Well there's nothing missing.

So Gruber wasn't killed because

he found some guy

stealing money.

Look, a cheat kills his wife

for one of two reasons.

Either she's caught him cheating or she hasn't given

him the chance.

Same with the money.

Well say it's true and Gruber found out about a deal between

Ferrar and Soderquist.

George Soderquist and

somebody else.

That's the big one.

Who is that somebody else?

Are you hurt?

No, I was late for

practice sister.

Are you all right sister?

Yes I'm all right.

Look, if they want a radio

in the room it's

\$0.25 a day for everybody.

Yeah, yeah.

Did you get Soderquist.?

Upstairs.

Cronin picked up his stuff.

What about the nun?

She got lucky.

Well I'm glad she did.

You're piling up too

many mistakes Joe.

Killing Gruber was a mistake.

It happened.

Anybody ever tell

you about murder?

It's against the law.

You didn't cry too

hard at the time.

It was a mistake anyway.

Now this thing about the

nun, forget about it.

We may never hear

from her again.

Soderquist will.

There's a police call

out for him.

You sure she can identify him?

How about you?

I don't think so.

But he can identify me.

It's too much of a chance.

I've got to get him out of here.

And then we'll worry about that

nun, in case she did see me.

You'll forget about

the nun Joe.

I'm still running things.

Remember that.

If they ever get me in the

back room of that police

station I'll have it on

the tip of my tongue.

Ah, good afternoon Ms. nagel.

Good afternoon, Mr. bedford.

We'll have that corner room

for you in a day or two.

Thank you.

Nice woman.

Hello fellas.

Sit down.

How about a cup of coffee.

No thanks George.

I fixed the room up

pretty good huh?

George.

You want a cookie?

George, you've got to

get out of here.

You've been identified

by the nun.

You don't know for sure.

We can't afford to

take a chance.

You better go to St.

Louis for a while.

St. Louis.

I don't even know anybody

in St. Louis.

You're not going to

run for office.

You're going to protect

yourself and us.

Don't Joe.

I don't know about going

to St. Louis.

Give him the picture George.

It's my son.

Did you ever see a picture

of him Earl?

Yup.

You know it was terrible how

his mother took him away.

She just up and left one night

and I, I didn't see him since.

But I still had a picture.

And the baby shoes the way they fix them up with bronze

for a keepsake.

Let's talk about it some

other time huh, George?

Yeah.

You know what's funny

about kids Earl?

They change all the time.

Yeah, I know.

Let's start packing.

I'm not going Earl.

I told you I don't want to go.

You know what's coming up.

It may not even work out.

If it does, you'll

be taken care of.

How do I know?

Because I promise you.

No Earl.

That's the most m-money

I ever heard of.

If I'm dealt out, I'm dealt out

and I don't have a prayer.

You won't pack this

stuff, I will.

Stay away from that suitcase.

I'm n-not going.

Wh-whatever you fellas say.

Joe.

Wh-what'd I ever do to you?

Well, what else could we do?

As one hero to another,

what else?

It fell this afternoon while

sister was passing under it.

It fell without any

warning at all.

Without any warning at all.

I see.

While we're waiting for

Soderquist, you may be able to

help out on the other end.

You could take a look

at the files here. That's a waste of time. Sister, I want you to go back to fort Wayne. Why the switch? A matter of common sense. Sister, while you're here in Gary, we're responsible for anything that happens to you. Like this accident here. Oh, I don't think you need worry about a bad accident happening to me. You see, I have a guardian angel. You have a what? Guardian angel. It's a new idea to Mr. Goddard. Look Maury, I have nothing against angels. But it doesn't help our position. Sister, I want you to go back to fort Wayne before you get hurt. You once told me not to let anybody else do my job. It's my duty to stay. And I'm going to stay. All right, you stay. Oh, that's the dinner bell. I'm afraid you must excuse us gentlemen. Don't worry Mr. Goddard. I'll be all right. What would happen if we put the screws to Ferrar. You'd blow the whole thing. Now don't try anything fancy because you're worried about that nun.

I'm not worried about the nun.
I just want to find some quick

way to shake up Ferrar.

Forget the quick ways.

You stick to straight

police work.

By the way, what's

the nuns pitch?

Hey what's bothering

you playful?

Money.

We can't talk here Paul?

Well why should we?

And drop the Paul will you?

You don't even know me.

Paul Ferrar, p.O. Serial

number 20754.

Are you a cop?

Postal inspector, Al Goddard.

Oh.

Come on, sit down.

Yeah, sure.

Sure.

Play dominoes?

No.

Now what's on your

mind Mr. Goddard?

You got some questions

or something?

How would like to go

to prison for the

murder of Harry Gruber?

You must be crazy Mr. Goddard

and they turned

you loose too soon.

I don't know any Harry Gruber.

And I don't know anything

about a murder.

I believe you.

But I can rig it so

a jury won't.

You couldn't do that.

Don't be foolish.

I can break every alibi

that you've got.

I can prove that you know George

Soderquist. That you

were in the alley with him the night that Gruber was killed. I don't know what you're talking about. It's all very simple. Step by step I'm going to railroad you into prison for the murder of Harry Gruber. But why? Why go out and just pick a guy out of thin air? What's the point? The point is I'll forget it... if I get the right price. The right price is \$25,000. What is this Goddard? A shakedown? It's my welfare work. I wouldn't want to see you go to prison. Look Goddard, you don't just order up \$25,000 like you would have a ham sandwich. Where would I get it? Go to your friends. And you can tell them I know why you turned down that \$500 raise. Ah, that doesn't mean a thing. And you can also tell them I know why you drive that mail truck. Because if you don't, all the plans for the two station robbery goes sky high. You know something? I don't believe any of this. About Soderquist, about the robbery, and this, this shakedown. I don't even believe you're a cop. I'm at the park hotel. You talk to your friends

and that money up.

If you don't, I'm going to box in the Gruber thing and I'm going to spoil your little robbery.

Goddard.

Goddard, why are you doing this? \$25,000.

I want that money by midnight or I catch a late train for Washington.

Even my friends knock.

It was open.

You're a quiet man

with a latch.

Goddard, there's no such

thing as \$25,000.

O.K.

You mean you'd frame me.

Sure I would.

All right, look.

I know some of them Soderquist

knows and I've talked to them.

But they haven't got

that kind of money.

And I'm not in whatever

they're doing.

Sure, sure.

I'll go along with you

in any way I can.

Is that the reason you're here.

No, they... they

want to met you.

They say they'll try to work something out if you would sit down with them.

Yeah.

I think they're scared.

Yeah, they're scared to death.

Well, how about it?

Look, I don't want to talk

to any third parties.

They'll be no tape recordings and no tricks.

I'm going to talk to you and just you. And right now, as far as I'm concerned, this talk is finished. Look, give me a break will you? I haven't anything to do with this. I don't believe anything you've said except that there isn't that kind of money. O.K. I'll buy my racing stables some other time. This job I'm going to concentrate on being a hero. Oh now wait, listen will you? It's not my fault. Forget the deadline. You muffed it. But I'm the one that's going to go to prison. What am I going to do? That's your problem. I've never been to prison. Come on, beat it. Thank you sir. Hi. Sit down. What's this all about? One of those quick plans. I'm counting on somebody beating my brains out in the next 10 minutes. Good luck. Who? Whoever killed Harry Gruber, they've got plenty of reason to want me now. These things never work. This has to. I've put out enough

to scare them.

Remember what happened

to Eddie mcintyre?

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I'd rather not.

Now get out and give me a chance to make some friends.

Hit the railroad station.

11:

You're a little early mister. Hi.

Let me guess.

You're the consolation prize.

Hotel stenographer drafted

to the emergency.

What happened to you?

You look like you fell

under a truck.

I got pushed.

Run along now.

I usually take a walk

this time of night.

Here.

You're better than the last

guy I sat up for.

He was a machinery salesman.

For a hotel stenographer

you're pretty busy.

It's an awful grind.

The typing's killing me.

See you later.

Not silly enough to think you

might get away with this.

We can try.

Like Gruber.

We don't know Gruber.

It won't help to put

me in concrete.

There's too much interest

left around.

You look like a pretty

smart guy.

What are you hanging around

with a

like that for?

Anybody ever weigh your head?

I'm talking to him.

I got two years of working organization

tied into this robbery.

I'm all set to go and I'm not

going to give up now.

What else can you do?

Well, that's it.

If you're bluffing about this

Gruber or whoever he is, that

means nothing.

But you could stop us

on the other thing.

Ferrar tells me you

want \$25,000.

That was hours ago.

How do we know you're

not a plant.

You don't

there's a law against

robbing the mails.

But there's nothing says you

can't talk about it.

We're kidding naturally.

Sure.

Now if we were doing this thing

seriously, this one guy

you'd never meet.

The guy who gets you if

anything goes wrong.

If you were doing

what seriously?

You like money don't you.

No bad blood between us?

We haven't got the \$25,000.

But there's close to a million

in this thing of ours.

We could cut you in for a sixth.

Why don't you wake up.

You can't beat the mails.

They got a system.

So have we.

We found the weak link.

With your help we could

make it fool proof.

No thanks.

You're in a bad spot, not us.

Sure we'd have to fold.

But you're wrong about

the concrete.

Wouldn't have to be now.

In a few months if

you get a broken

back, you got arthritis.

Think it over.

We're signing no deal

tonight anyway.

But we will sign a deal.

Good morning.

How was the food?

It was as good as

a the company.

Did you sleep last

night or think?

I slept.

Well, today you'll think.

Hi.

Hi.

Don't mind her, she

has no control.

I'm getting up.

Oh come on, stay.

Go swallow a germ.

We're going by to play

some handball, uh,

you better come along.

I'm due back at work.

You can skip a day.

It'd look funny.

I don't care how it looks.

Get this straight Goddard.

Until you prove out, one of

us is going to be with

you night and day.

Don't start glowing, I've

got the breakfast shift.

I don't get it Goddard.

You go along one way for years

and then suddenly you pull a

complete switch.

Why?

Sooner or later every rooster

wants to lay an egg.

Eh, beyond that.

Have you any special reason

why you want \$25,000.

Maybe it's because a few horse

broke their promises.

Betting more than

you can afford?

Is there any other way to bet?

Where do you book?

Here and there.

I travel around a lot.

Yeah but, say n Chicago,

where do you book?

A guy named Max weiler.

Max weiler?

Yeah, on and off.

An old friend of mine.

Is that so?

Max isn't there anymore.

They closed him up.

Here he went to Mexico to cure

a bad case of lungs.

Yeah, I know.

He's back, tending bar for

his brother here in Gary.

I haven't seen Max

in quite a spell.

I have to give him a ring

one of these days.

Sure, why not?

Yeah, just to say hello.

Tell him I saw you.

You're neat enough, let's play.

Ray, you start.

I'll be with you in a minute.

You know I don't eat any

breakfast so naturally around

noon time, I get a

little hungry.

You ready?

Yeah.

Hello let me talk

to maxie Wilder.

Oh, hello maxie.

How you been?

This Earl Boettiger.

Say when you were making book,

did you a customer called Al

Goddard?

Goddard?

What kind of a looking guy?

Light hair, light complexion.

Pretty young guy, works

for the post office.

Use to bet with you

pretty often.

Not with me.

Thanks Max.

What happened?

He had an accident.

Better get some ice.

I'll get it.

Police business, call

this number.

There's a man been hurt

out there. We need some ice.

Put it in a towel.

Hurry up will you?

Yes sir.

What's the delay?

Waiting for the ice.

I have to crush it.

Well we'll take it that way.

You look worried

Al, about Regas?

Yeah I, I hate to see

him in such pain.

Sit down.

Sit down, you're tired.

This is Max again.

What's with the Goddard boy?

Is he hot? Half hour ago

you said you didn't know him.

Why the switch?

There was a cop in here. When there's a cop around I don't know my own mother. I'm a loser Earl, gotta be careful. What made you think he might be hot? He's the type. Last summer he owed me \$1800, got it up in a week. The word was, uh, he picked it up under the counter. Yeah, of course I'm sure. I've got the books to prove it. Yeah, all right Earl. That was all right Max. Now let's have a beer. That was maxie Wilder. He says you're a thief. Bless his little heart. You're going to take this maxie's word. If somebody gave him a Bible to swear on he'd steal it. He says you're an old hand at shakedowns. Even if he's right, the moral's clear. I want my \$25,000. I've told you before. We haven't got that kind of money or anything like it. If you want a share of the robbery it's all right. If you don't, go down the hall pack your lingerie and get out. If I walk out of here, your robbery goes out of the window. And you go right on managing your grubby hotel. And for the next 10 years you'll still be changing

sheets and putting drunks to bed so don't get so tough.

Are you in or out?

I'm in.

You run your end any

way you want.

But I take full charge

of the post office.

What's wrong with Ferrar.

Somebody'll pick him up

the same way I did.

If I'm going to risk my neck,

I'll do it my way.

One other thing, we gotta make

it look good downtown.

I gotta be free to move around

and do my job as usual.

All right.

We'll give you the assignment.

You're sure we're giving

him enough?

How do you mean?

We're giving him his own

way and a full share.

Why don't we all give

him a right arm just

for old time's sake?

I'm worried about you Joe.

Somewhere in your bloodstream

you've got a crazy bug and

it's swimming upstream

night and day.

Get a cure or you'll

kill us all.

All right Earl.

We'll let it stand this way.

One bad move outta you

and I'll put you on

your back for good.

Amuse yourself.

Help him with the print.

Give me the rundown Earl.

Hello Maury.

Well we were right.

They're on the gun and it's a million dollar reserve stick up. How'd you find out about it? Purely accidental. One thing led to another and I agreed to help them. Why you blundering... oh now, don't worry, I'm not going through with any robbery. Look, get a rundown on Earl Boettiger, Joe Regas. How long before the robbery? Maybe 10 days. Enough time to shop for Gruber and get out with the whole skin. Now if we could only tie Soderquist in. Call you back. Hi. Hi. What are you doing out? Can't you call from the hotel? Can't you. I'm just shopping. They've got some new records in. You like bop? Bop? Is that where everybody plays a different tune at the same time? You just haven't heard enough of it. Have you heard Joe lily's only mine? Come up to my place and hear it. As a favor to Joe. What he can do with a horn. He belts it, melts it, and rides it all over the ceiling.

Can he play it?

Listen, listen to this part.

Hmm, not very sentimental is he? Where'd you meet Earl? Where'd he come from? Did you come here to ask questions or listen? Get this. He's flat at fifth. Look, I wouldn't know a flat at fifth if they gave one away with every purchase. This last part here, voom, voom, voom. Gets you right in the breadbasket. What do you think? Gets you right in the breadbasket. You oughta hear some of the slow stuff. He's got a take off called slow bus to Memphis. It's around here someplace. You look in that pile over there. I"ll look here. Here it is. Did you find it? Yeah. So that's your slow bus to Memphis. Can I give you a lift. You already have. Hello Mr. Goddard. Won't you sit down. How do these kids stack up with your bunch? They're lovely children but... I would want you to tell

mother Ambrose this.

trained in baseball.

haven't got

The boys are very badly

Well maybe the franciscans

Dagg

the hang of it yet.
They haven't.

We've sent three boys to the major leagues.

They've only sent one.

He's with the St. Louis browns.

Tea?

No thank you sister.

I have a photograph of Soderquist and his friends.

I think one of the men was him that night in the alley.

Here.

murder.

How about the one on the left, Regas?
I know it's a disappointment Mr. Goddard but you wouldn't want me to guess would you.
No, not when it involves

Is there anything else? Yes there is. You were told to stay in the house

because you were in danger. I come here and find you out

there with a bunch of kids.

You won't frighten me away from the children.

Here, I brought you this.

Oh no, Mr. Goddard,

please put it back.

Come on, take it, it'll

protect you.

How does a thing

like that work?

It's very simple.

To inject the cartridge you pull it back like this.

Sometimes they jam, there.

Now you're in business.

I don't want it.

But you might need it.

Don't tell me you

can say a prayer. Prayer is not going to keep you from being killed. People don't pay to keep from dying. They pray to keep from being disappointed when they do. Take it as a personal favor. I didn't know policeman could afford personal feelings. There's nothing personal about it. It's merely routine. Do you know Mr. Goddard, with a little practice, you could be a nice man? I'll take two weeks off sometime and try it. Mr. Goddard, I'll show you the back way through the alley. You're learning fast sister. We both are Mr. Goddard. Please take care of yourself. I think the government expects a lot from young men. It's my job I have to take the risk. Well the should get some of the politicians to do it. When I'm in trouble sister, I'll quote you. You be careful. I will. Remember. I have that guardian angel. I'll get one too. Only mine doesn't jam. Hi. Hi. Boy is it a scorcher.

Boy is it a scorcher.
Well that's Gary weather.
Good one day, bad the next.
It's not a question
of good or bad.

You people just don't have weather.
What about the robbery?

One more and they hit

on the perfect flaw.

Reserved shipment from Cleveland to logansport.

Well I'm just a youngster, what makes that a flaw?
There's no through train from Cleveland to logansport.

Then they have to transfer the dough from one train to

another, right here in Gary. But it's protected all the

way by armored trucks and machine guns.

All except that seven minutes here in Gary. When it travels from one station to another in a single

Protected by one man and a 45 pistol.

It's a great scheme Maury. So you had to tackle the whole thing by yourself.

This time, I did.

Every time!

mail truck.

Look, I told you in the cab.

We've got to get a move and quit playing footsie.

Because you' got softhearted

about a nun?

I don't care about her.

She's our star witness, we've got to protect her.

All right, you've got a badge.

Why don't you arrest me

for perjury?

How can I?

It's the first time I've

ever liked you.

It's going to be a short

romance if you don't find Soderquist. What about the rest of name's? Regas, Gunner and Corning, local boys, all clean. Edgar, well... yeah, I know, a respectable hotel owner. Soderquist served out until last year, 1948 drunk driving. He beat the charge. Proved he was diabetic. All model citizens. I don't get it. Outside of Soderquist , none of them ever committed a crime before. Then all of a sudden a brutal murder. It doesn't make sense. Why not? You have to build up to a murder. One good try and you're there. You'll have to dig from your end. We've got to find Soderquist. Let me see that report again. This guys' a diabetic. Why wasn't it on the report at fort Wayne they thought he was drunk. Well he wasn't. It says right here approaching shock. Diabetes. If you're a diabetic you've got to have your shot of insulin regularly. That's right. If he's hiding and can't get the stuff he's going to go

back into shock. Better get a search underway immediately.

house in this town.
Sooner or later that guys' got

to show up for his insulin.

And remember, if you don't get

Soderquist, I'm in the soup.

There goes 40 bucks.

Worse than your horses.

Why should you worry about \$40.

I don't anymore.

I got word on the shipment.

The job goes tomorrow.

Why move it up?

We're starved for time.

It goes tomorrow.

Where are the cold drinks.

It's down at the end, get

a couple will you?

Want a hot dog.

No thanks.

Give me a couple of hot dogs.

They're going to try and

pull it off tomorrow.

What about that insulin?

No luck.

Only two new sales in

the past three days.

We checked through both of

them down to the jab in the arm.

Neither arm was Soderquist.

That means he got out of town.

I'll put my job on the line,

he couldn't have.

He's dead then.

At least they won't

use an alley again.

I've got two squads

steel plants

city dumps, the canal.

Well Ahearn, I'll

see him sometime

tonight at the post office.

I got less than a day to

bail out of this thing.

It's the canal this side

of middle Avenue drive right through the steelworks.
Yeah, what happens if it is Soderquists body?
Hard to say.

We won't know which to jump.

Use my car, here are the keys.

Well thanks.

It's Soderquist all right.

That's slams it shut right in our face.

Fat chance of finding any witnesses to this one.

I talked to Washington while we were waiting for you.

Let me guess, they want us to go in with the robbery.

We've got nothing this way that would last five minutes in court.

I know.

But the moment those boys land their hands on that money, it's a major crime, 5 to 25 years.

Get them on a charge like that and on of them would break on Gruber.

Can you think of any other way Al.

No, but I'm working on it.

Hey there!

It's Ferrar.

You sure.

Yeah.

Nick, Joe, Charlie, the fence.

Cover this fence, make sure he can't get out of the plant.

Yes lieutenant.

There's no way I know he can get past the fence.

We'll wait him out.

You've better get back

to Boettiger.

We'll call you if anything changes.

O.K., I'll see you tomorrow.

Desk.

Mr. Goddard hasn't returned yet.

I have your messages.

I'll tell him as soon

as he comes in.

Just a minute, Mr. Goddard,

telephone.

They've called several times.

Well, thank you.

Hello, Goddard talking.

We've put you in a hole

Al, Ferrar got away.

With what he knows, he's bound

to go to Boettiger and if he

gets there you're

in real trouble.

So pull out and run, don't walk.

Don't worry, momma didn't

raise any heroes.

I'll get my stuff, meet

you in 10 minutes.

Thanks.

We've been waiting for you.

There's some last

minute details.

The car's outside.

I'll meet you here. I have

to go upstairs for a minute.

It can wait.

You can change some other time.

Move.

What's this all about?

We're going out to shack.

What's the matter with you?

You've got a face a foot long.

You look as if you just

lost your best friend.

I'm my best friend.

That's what I said.

Remember the road in,

it's important.

The Cleveland train passes

this spot tomorrow.

That'll be the time we leave

here for the holdup point.

It's exactly 21 minutes running

time into the station.

Got it?

Homey isn't it?

If your mother happened

to be a spider.

You got more guns there

than the post office.

Yeah.

Well I'm out of conveniences.

I told you.

We've got everything worked out.

Nobody followed us.

No.

Now this is the last time

we go through this.

So remember.

Cronin steals the bakery truck.

Regas and Gunner get

two cars out of the

all day parking lot.

Nobody misses them?

We know the lot.

They can't find your car

when it is there.

Gunner brings his car here,

we make the switch.

That's the car we use

for the holdup.

The stations are here and here.

Normally it's a seven minute

run, four minutes in, the mail

truck hits here, point a.

Now...

all right, then the robbery.

We know that part of the plan.

Now then, after the holdup,

we go west on this

street to point b.

He'll take it.

Hello.

What is it dodie?

I don't want him out here.

O.K. Ferrar called dodie.

What happened?

Ohio.

Is he coming out.

Yeah.

Tell him to stay away from us.

All of us.

Well, we can't stop him

now, he's on his way.

He won't be seen.

How do you know?

Oh, don't get so edgy.

Can't matter that much.

Matters \$1 million worth.

Forget it.

I can take care of Ferrar.

Let's get back to point b.

After we pass it were

in no man's land.

These three cross streets

must be blocked off.

One stray car and any one

of them trips us up.

Joe will put in the road

blocks that will

seal off the streets.

You know your job Al.

Confirm pouch and train number.

Don't worry about me.

I'll take care of my end.

Joe after you put in the road

blocks, you return to the

rendezvous, point c.

We meet you there, transfer to that

car, and then return here to the shack.

You can forget about

those three streets.

The road blocks will be in.

They better be.

Go wrong, we're just working

out way into prison.

Don't lead me by the hand.

I'll seal off the streets and

I'll be waiting at point c.

You'll have plenty of time

for your end Joe.

Don't waste it.

If anybody slips,

it won't be me.

And I want to emphasize

this again.

This whole thing depends on

not being recognized.

A million dollars is no good if

you're running the rest of

your life.

Earl, Earl.

Now why did you come out here.

Yyou told me it was tomorrow.

I wanted to make sure.

Then we ought to rent

you a memory.

You were told eight hours ago.

Earl can I speak my piece now?

You're on.

After this thing happens the

town's going to be flooded

with federal men.

We're all going to be in a spot.

So the first guy that talks or

tries to identify anyone is

going to get a headache

you can't cure.

Understand Ferrar.

Yeah, yeah sure.

Anything else Earl?

No, you've said it.

I'll go back with Ferrar.

Come on, let's go.

Hey.

What about that gun?

I'll need it tomorrow.

Can't afford to use

my service gun.

You behave yourself on that stand you might get away with 10 years.

Oh thanks. 10 year in jail is sure going to help my love life.

It's more romantic

than being dead.

Come on, pick it up.

I don't trust him Earl.

He's full of trouble.

And we'll never get around him

because our luck went bad.

It went bad that night

in that alley.

Will you put it out

of your mind?

Will you stop thinking

about that nun?

You wanna know why

I think about it.

Because I'm hot and you're not.

In 5 years, maybe 10, when the rest of you have scattered, somebody's going to walk up and

tap me on the shoulder.

That's why I think about it.

Look at it this way.

You're clear.

She never saw you in the alley.

Yeah, Earl.

I believe it.

Sometimes for two or three

minutes at a stretch.

Come in.

Hi.

Ηi

come on in.

I'm pouring.

Want one?

No thanks.

Earl back yet.

Not yet.

What did Ferrar want

when he called you.

He had to talk to Earl.

Nothing else?

No.

He sounded nervous.

What did he lose, an

airmail stamp?

You know.

I've give a hundred dollars to find out what goes on behind

that makeup.

It ain't your money chump.

You afraid of me Al?

Doesn't Earl ever get jealous?

He understands.

You can put strings on good

women or bad women.

But you can't do anything

about lazy ones.

You can beat 'em.

I stay about the same.

You can't make them

do the right thing

or the wrong thing.

They're lazy.

They do the easy thing.

Just don't break out

into a rash Joe.

Saved by the bell.

That is the story of my life.

Once more, step by step.

They steal two cars from

an all day parking lot.

One of them is the holdup car.

It goes straight for the shack.

They transfer into it and head

for the holdup, point a.

Regas takes the other stolen

car, comes down here, puts in

the roadblocks along the escape

route and goes to point

c where he waits for

the holdup car.

Now after the stick up they had

west past these blocked

out streets and go to point c, the rendezvous.

Then they transfer into Regas'

car in case the first

one has been recognized and

head back to the shack.

But they never get that far.

We move in the moment

they hit point c.

All clear?

You're in the mail wagon?

Yeah.

Well play it cozy when

that bakery truck

swings in behind you.

How's your skull?

Thick enough.

Good.

I may have to work on it.

The police will give us a hand

but remember, this is

post office.

You're the heavy duty section.

Look, if possible, don't

do any shooting.

We want those boys in court.

If there is any trouble

be careful.

Remember, Al's in

that holdup car.

Uh, write that down

will you fellas?

That's all.

Check-in here at four.

Don't leave the building.

An agent will pick you

up for the train.

And there's nothing

else I can do?

With Soderquist gone I'm

afraid you're out of it.

I haven't been much

help have I?

They're after Al Goddard.

But Mr. Soderquist? We broke 50/50 on that. But he didn't do it. No. But he held the other quy's coat and that's against the rules too. T know. Sorry it's goodbye sister. Goodbye. I'll remember you in my prayers. Well if I haven't anything else I've got a good lawyer. God bless you. Thank you sister. You better get going. It's around five. Two minutes till. I said it was around five. Anything from you Al? No, just remember don't get gun happy. You can rob fort knox and live. But steal a dime and kill a post office man and they'll spend a million and a lifetime looking for you. You better hike cronin. There's one other think but I'll tell you later in the car. We're changing point c. What do you mean you're changing point c? Sounds simple, we're changing it. I just found out this morning. You find out what? There's a detour from the smugger into the hills so we're changing point c. Is there any reason

why we shouldn't? No, I guess not. O.K., you better get

your coat on.

Now let's shove off.

Keep your eye on the time.

Regas, you put in the road

blocks and go to

the new point c.

It's the old factory this side

of turtle road, and be there.

Hello Maury, Al.

They've changed point c.

We can't grab them there.

I don't know.

Watch all the roads a half mile

from the holdup point.

Be sure you cover that shack.

Yeah, they've got to back there.

Right.

I'd say you pulled a boner.

I'd say so.

It might help if I hadn't been

with been with Earl so long.

Al?

Coming out?

Anything wrong?

Should there be?

See you downstairs.

That puts you on my side.

Suppose I'd told them.

They'd have to do away with you.

That would make me an

accessory to murder.

And you don't love

anybody that much.

Not 25 years worth.

I'm a loser either way.

Suppose they get away

with all that dough.

I'll be wearing those mink coats

in shacks and hamburger

joints living on the run

until they get me.

Well at least you've read

the book anyway.

What are you going to do?
When you walk out I'm gonna
pack my bag and leave. I'm
gonna forget your names and
faces and what's going to
happen to all of you
in the next hour.

They can still get you for withholding information.

Not if I tell a government agent.

So I'm telling you.

They're gonna hold

up a mail truck.

I have to pack so goodbye.

You won't get a gold

star but thanks.

Don't bother.

Earl was good to me.

I hope he kills you.

It's all right.

Enough gas?

Full tank.

How about Regas?

By now he's on his way

to block the streets.

It's 41 right on time.

That sweet old engineer.

Let's go.

Sister, I'm from the

police department.

We'd like to talk to you.

Very well, I'll just tell the

matron, she's over there.

There isn't time.

My partner's getting to her.

I'll take care of you.

You went through a red light.

It's too late to worry

about that now.

There it comes.

Hey!

Where do you think you're going?

Did he see our faces?

Any of us?

No, we're clean all the way.

Make a little speed.

That corner, Regas was to

start blocking off those

streets, what happened?

Late.

He couldn't be.

Hey, you big bozo!

Why don't you watch

what you're doing?

Back it up back it up.

That blows it.

They all got a good look at us.

They weren't close enough.

You don't know kids.

They can pick us out of

a lineup like that.

Forget it, head back

to the shack.

We got to make a run for it.

We can't go back to the shack.

We gotta go back there.

We're not going.

Get it through your head.

We've been seen.

We're on the run from now on.

They've had half an

hour to get here.

Something's gone wrong.

They've got to come back

here to the shack.

We know that.

Not if something's gone wrong.

I tell you for some reason

they're not coming back here.

Then Goddard drew

the short straw.

We'll have to play it by ear.

Leave two squads here.

We'll take pot luck on finding

that new point c.

Sharkey, get on the phone.

Tell them to start west

of the holdup point.

Put a police cord around

the whole factory area.

Start closing in.

O.K.

Regas is here.

Stow the money in the

back of the car.

I found her, I don't care

about the road blocks.

An old friend Al.

What do you mean?

An old friend of Joe's.

She's been to the police,

she told me.

What else she tell you?

Nothing yet.

We ought to break

you in pieces.

Stop arguing.

We haven't any time.

We've been seen.

We've got to run.

Are we ready.

Almost.

Well, how about it?

I don't know.

What do you mean

you don't know?

Now she knows about

the robbery.

She's seen us, all of us.

Killing her isn't going

to go do any good.

Besides, who's got the

stomach for it.

Joe has.

Sure, a gun happy guy would

kill the whole world if he had

enough bullets.

She can't do us any harm Earl.

She doesn't know our names

or anything about us.

If we're caught she

can identify us. If we're caught, we're through anyway. Look, you're here on a free ride. Don't come to the party and give away drinks. Earl, maybe you don't believe in hell but this is a bad time to bet against it. We'll take your word sister. You've never seen us, you can't identify us. We'll take your word. Thank you but I couldn't give you my word about a thing like that. What difference does it make. A great deal. I couldn't let my silence be used as a weapon against the law. Sister you're not hired to defend the law. I'm sorry, I couldn't give you my word. All right Joe. Come on lady. Look, leave her alone. Lie down rover. You need a new mouth. Stop them Earl. With a million dollars to split, just pray for a tie. You're all through you dash. You getting heavy Joe. Mr. Goddard! Better get a move on. Gonna be in trouble. You're already in trouble Mr. Goddard.

You picked a talking partner. How far has this thing gone?

It's a fix all the way.

They got this area staked out for three Miles around.

I'll listen, have you

got a suggestion?

Yeah, leave her here and I'll see that you get through the police port.

No thanks.

One large shot and you'll bring up enough guns here to

start a war.

I can get you through.

For what?

To grab 20 minutes of air and die on a back road.

Maybe.

But right now that sounds like a lot.

Does it, that?

Sister, either you're lucky

or living right.

You drive Gunner.

Come on, let's get out of here.

We've got a million

buck in the car.

We got nothing.

You heard what he said.

It's a fix all the way.

The dough's phony.

Come on!

Cover us.

Surround the building.

Put out that flare!

Tell those men to be careful,

Goddard's in there.

Yeah.

I'm betting it's empty.

Didn't the post office ever

teach you how to...

For the record Al, is

the dough phony too?

No, it was real.

So you die rich Earl.

Sorry, things went a little

wrong after the robbery.

Somewhat.

Are you all right Mr. Goddard.

I'll make it, I guess.

Dave, you better hurry

and put the sister.

On the train.

I think she wants to get

back to her children.

You know one of these days

the Yankees may need

a new second baseman.

Goodbye Mr. Goddard.

God bless you.

Thank you sister.

For once, you're right Maury.

There goes somebody who

doesn't have a pitch.

Al, if you stay with it and

work real hard, one of these

days you're going to qualify for the human race.

I may join the bet.