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Full House

By Peter Cheyney

Hey, Charlie. Your lawyer's here
with the bail money.
Tell him I ain't in.
You're what?
You heard me.
Tell him I ain't in.
That man with the pencil
is the real star of this picture.
He was a writer-
many kinds of a writer:
A social critic, a humorist
and a technician.
His name was
William Sidney Porter...
but you'll remember him
by his pen name.
That's part of our language now-
O. Henry...
I'm a writer too.
My name is John Steinbeck.
I've always believed that
a writer should be read, not seen.
But O. Henry's dead.
He can't speak for himself.
I wonder if he would
if he could.
Remember O. Henry.'s safecracker,
Jimmy Valentine?
Little boys still want to grow up to be like
the Cisco Kid, the Robin Hood of the West.
Our folklore is full of O. Henry. -
his courage and his gaiety and his people.
He wrote so many good stories,
it's hard to choose.
- Here's one in point.
- "The Cop and the Anthem." You wanna hear it?
"When wild geese
honk high of nights...
and ladies without fur coats
grow kind to their husbands...
then you may know
that winter is near at hand...
and that the time has come to resolve oneself
into a Committee of Ways and Means...

to provide against
the coming rigors.

Lf, in addition, one is a denizen
of the city's parks...

like our good friend

Soapy here...

the need is not only great, but a state
of real emergency may be said to exist. "

Yes, Officer. Certainly.

At once.

Good morning,

Mr. Throckmorton!

Ah, good morning,

Truesdale.

- Kind of chilly, ain't it?

- Bracing, my boy. Bracing.

Have you made any plans
for the winter yet, Mr. Throckmorton?

- You may call me Soapy, Horace.

- Thank you, sir. Have you?

- Naturally.

- You ain't thinkin' of going to jail again, are ya?

- And why not?

- Because jails ain't what they used to be.

They're lettin' 'em

run down something awful.

They say almost anybody

can get in 'em nowadays.

My dear fellow, you must not listen

to every rumor you hear.

From long experience,

I can assure you that our fair city boasts...

of no finer institution

than its penal system.

What is more to the point, I am a man

of simple, if discriminating, tastes.

Three months in jail,

safe from wind and snow...

and the bludgeons

of the blue-coated minions of the law.

Good morning, Officer.

Three months, I say...

uh, of assured bed, board

and congenial company...

at the city's expense
are all that I ask of life.
I don't know, Soapy.
To me, jail's jail.
##[Small Band,
People Singing]
I'm, uh, considering
Florida myself.
Florida, that crass, unspeakable place,
the Coney Island of the tropics?
Fit only for millionaires and reluctant
witnesses? No, my friend.
For 15 years now,
a hospitable, luxurious...
well-heated cell has been
my winter quarters.
I would not swap one night
of it for a full season at Palm Beach.
A fellow was telling me
that these people run...
some nice places downtown
for dependents like us.
Charity? No, thank you. I'll take
the law over philanthropy any day.
For every benefit received
at the hands of charity, one must pay-
If not in coin, at least in humiliation
of spirit.
For every bed,
there is the toll of a bath.
Nor, may I add,
does the law insist on prayer...
morning, noon and night.
How are you going
to work it this year, Soapy?
Oh, there are devious ways,
my friend.
Wait here.
- Say, look here! That's my umbrella!
- Oh, it is, is it?
- Yes, l-
- Suppose you call a policeman and tell him that.
Go on. Call him.
There's one

at the corner.

Why don't you call him
and tell him I took your umbrella?

- If you don't, I will. Officer-

- I'm sorry, but you know how these things happen.

I picked it up in a restaurant this morning,
by mistake, of course.

If you recognize it as your umbrella,
I hope you'll excuse me.

Dirty crook.

There are other ways, my friend, one of these
being first to satisfy the inner man.

Shall we go?

No, no, no. Ah.

What are you gonna order,
Soapy?

How 'bout some, uh, roast mallard duck
to begin with...

accompanied by a bottle of Chablis wine,
provided the year and vintage are right.

- Duck for breakfast?

- Breakfast, by all means.

After which, perhaps, uh, a Camembert,
coffee and, unquestionably, a cigar.

Under the circumstances, I would think
a dollar cigar would be just about right.

A whole dollar
for one cigar?

My dear fellow, upon such occasions as this,
one cannot afford to be niggardly.

Wait for me there
on the curb.

- Yes, sir?

- Cigar, please.

- Yes, sir. Any particular brand, sir?

- Your best.

Yes, sir.

- Enjoy your breakfast, sir?

- The duck was slightly overdone.

I do suggest you speak
to your chef about that.

- Oh, yes, sir. Certainly, sir.

- It's inferior. Is this your choice brand?

- Yes, sir.

- It is?
- Allow me, sir.
- Will there be anything else, sir?
- Just my check, please.
- Yes, sir. The check.

Yes, sir.

Check coming up.

It may interest you
to know, my good man...
that I and the minutest
coin of the realm are total strangers.

- Uh, how's that?
- I said I was broke.

Don't just stand there with your adenoids
showing. Go and call a cop.

- What's the matter?
- He says he isn't going to pay for it.
- He hasn't got any money.
- No money?

No money.

- Come on, you-
- Come on, you thief!
- What do you think, coming in here-

Oh! What are you
doing to that man?

- He- He hasn't any money.
- After eating everything on the menu too.
- Is this true?
- They neglected to add...

that I also ordered
a dollar cigar.

Although I must say that any resemblance
between it and tobacco is purely coincidental.

- A cop will know what to do with his kind.
- Never mind. Let him go.
- Let him go?
- You heard what I said. It's on the house.
- You stay out of this. Nobody asked your opinion.
- Poor devil's probably starving.

Get him outside as quietly as you can.

I don't want any trouble.

Trouble? You don't want
any trouble?

Listen, you nincompoop.

I don't want any of your charity.

I am a citizen.

I stand on my constitutional rights!

I insist on being arrested.

Do you understand me? Arrested!

- Outside!

- No! You can't do this to me!

Have me arrested, you dogs!

Have me arrested!

- Soapy!

- What happened?

- I've been double-crossed.

- Are you hurt?

- Physically, no.

- Didn't work, eh?

- Due to circumstances beyond my control, no.

However,

I'm not discouraged.

Two battles lost does not mean

that the war is lost.

It only means that some other way than

through the stomach must be thought of.

- Shall we leave this loathsome neighborhood?

- Take this with you!

- Are you hurt?

- No, thank you.

Gosh. Your umbrella.

Are you all right?

I ought to report you

for this banana.

Oh, I'm sorry, sir.

- What was that?

- Call the police!

- Police!

- Who threw it there?

- I did.

- Which way did he go?

- There! There he goes!

- Hold that man!

- Hey, wait a minute. I did it!

Hey, come back!

I did it!

I did it!

E-Excuse me.

You forgot this.
Good afternoon, my dear.
Aren't you a little lonely
window-shopping all by yourself?
Wouldn't you prefer
to come and play in my backyard?
Sure, I don't mind,
if you buy me a drink.
How's dear cousin Fanny?
L-I'm afraid, my dear,
there's been a mistake.
Mistake?
What kind of mistake?
- I owe you an apology.
- Apology for what?
For allowing you to think that I might buy
you a drink. That's quite impossible.
I haven't got
a dime to my name.
- Hey, what is this? You trying to kid me?
- Not in the least, my dear.
I'm only trying to undo
the wrong I've done you-
A wrong committed, I might add,
for reasons that your young...
and inexperienced mind
couldn't possibly understand.
Since my means are limited,
I can only ask your pardon...
perhaps persuade you to accept,
as a token of my regard...
the last, uh, valuable left to me
from a once formidable estate.
My compliments to a charming
and delightful young lady.
What's going on here?
What's happening?
He called me a lady.
Think of it. Thousands of them swinging
their blasted clubs...
walking their blasted beats...
doing nothing but eat up
the taxpayers' money.
All day long I've flaunted the law

in their faces...
and not a one of them-
not a single one, mind you-
Has lifted a little finger
to prevent it.
I've a good mind to write
to my congressman.
You going to the park
again tonight, Soapy?
Where else can I go?
There isn't any hurry.
Listen to the music.
I seem to remember that tune
from somewhere.
No? Well, this might be
a country churchyard...
such as I knew
in my youth...
in the days when life contained such things
as mothers and roses...
ambition and friends,
immaculate thoughts...
and Little Lord Fauntleroy
collars.
Let's go in for a moment
and enjoy the peace.
- Me?
The front door is open
The invitation is obvious.
- What's the matter, Soapy?
Ain't you feeling
good, Soapy?
Hey, maybe tomorrow
will be different.
Maybe if you was to try
somewhere else...
like Central Park maybe
or Wall Street.
There'll be no tomorrow-
at least no tomorrow as you imagine it.
That phase of my life
has ended.
You sure you
feeling good, Soapy?

Maybe if you was to go back
and sit down again.
It isn't my body that's sick.
It's my soul.
For the first time
in my life...
I've viewed the horrible pit
into which I've tumbled-
The degraded days,
unworthy desires...
dead hopes, wrecked faculties,
base motives...
that have made up my useless existence!
I wasn't gonna tell you, Soapy,
but I got 30 cents a lady give me.
- I'll buy ya a beer.
- It isn't beer that I need.
It's hope, faith...
the assurance that it's still not too late
to pull myself out of the mire...
to make a man
of myself again...
to conquer the evil that's
taken possession of me!
We better get out of here.
If somebody was to hear you talking like that...
there's no telling what
we'd have to go through.
People praying over us,
preaching to us.
But there is time.
I'm still comparatively young.
Resurrect my old
and eager ambitions...
and pursue them
without faltering.
I'll give up this life of dissipation and idleness.
Tomorrow I'll go into the roaring downtown
district and find work.
I recall a fur merchant...
who once offered me
a position.
I think I must have his card
about me somewhere.

I'll find him, lay my plight before him,
seek his aid.

Yes, here is his card.

I recall his kindly face.

A noble man,
if ever I met one.

He'll give me a job.

He'll help me make something of myself.

- I'll be somebody in the world!

- Okay, come along.

- Huh? Officer, what have I done?

- Never mind. Come along.

Don't give me any of your lip,
or I'll bash in that skull of yours.

Come on!

Loitering, eh?

Guilty or not guilty?

Your Honor,

if it pleases the court-

One of those
argumentative types, eh?

- Where did you pick him up?

- Comin' out of church.

- Church?

- Your Honor, I'd just stepped in to refresh my soul.

I'd just undergone the most salutary
spiritual experience.

I'm a reformed man, and I-

Today I'd planned to apply for a position.

- Find any candlesticks on him?

- Oh, no, Your Honor. I assure you.

- Maybe he was trying to rob the poor box.

- Oh, no, Your Honor.

I didn't find a thing on him-
not even a dime.

- Ninety days.

- For what?

Vagrancy-

no visible means of support.

- Next case.

O. Henry. Learned about jail

the hard way-

in jail.

He did his research on an iron cot,

listening to his cell mates.
He never felt superior
to the people he wrote about.
And maybe it's that humility
that draws us to his stories again and again.
Here's one of the best,
"The Clarion Call."
"Half of this story. Can be found in the records
of the police department.
There is no record
of the other half...
but it belongs behind the doors
of the editorial office...
of a New York newspaper. "
Well, welcome back.
How'd it go?
- I got him there.
- Good.
- Nine.
- Uh, 18.
Hi, Chief.
Hello, Barney.
One counterfeiter delivered to federal prison,
Leavenworth, Kansas.
- And now I'm bushed.
- No wonder. Long trip, handcuffed for five days.
Uh-uh.
Not that long.
I took the handcuffs off
outside Newark.
He was an old man of 70,
going in for good.
That train ride was his last chance
to stretch his legs.
You look tired. Take some time.
Lay out till Monday.
Thanks. They found some more counterfeit
in the old boy's shoe.
The warden ducked and asked us to turn
it over to the downtown treasury.
Hundred-dollar bills?
- Beautiful job.
- Almost perfect.
They trapped him

on the picture.
The old goat parted
Franklin's hair on the left side.
- Said it looked better.
You signed for it, you keep it.
We'll send it down Monday.
- Get some rest.
- Thanks.
Does this belong to you?
No, that's a clue
in the Norcross murder case.
Robbery knockdown.
Happened while you were away.
None of that means anything.
No fingerprints, no nothing.
Must be
an out-of-town killer.
I know everybody's work
around here.
Looks expensive.
Where'd you find it?
On the rug
in Norcross's room.
Whoever killed him left it.
There's some printing on it.
Yeah.
"Camptown Races.
July the fourth, 1901."
Doesn't mean a thing.
It's a nice tune though-
"Camptown Races."
Mind if I check it out
a while?
Sure, sure.
If you think you can do any better.
It's our only lead.
I used to sing it myself
in the old days.
A good quartet number.
- Do you happen to know Johnny Kernan?
- Who?
- Kernan. Johnny Kernan.
No, I don't
believe I do.

Thanks.

- Something I can do for you?

- No, thanks.

There.

It's Johnny Kernan.

But he's only

been registered a week.

- Maybe it isn't the same one.

It's the same one.

Look, I'm not full owner.

There isn't gonna be any trouble.

He's the best wrestler

I ever saw.

Whenever the referee

ain't lookin', he gets 'em.

- Give me a beer.

- How's the bock holding out?

- Fine, fine.

- Guess who! Go ahead! Guess.

Guess who. Guess who.

- I don't have to guess.

- Hello, Johnny.

The big man,

Barney Woods.

I bet you'd have known me

anywhere by that trick, huh?

I'd have known you

anywhere.

Give him a big drink. We're old pals

from back in Erie, P.A.

- Long time ago, huh, Barney?

- Yeah.

He ordered a beer.

- He just finished it.

- Now get him a real drink.

- Yes, sir.

Clam head! Oughta give him

a mouthful of knuckles.

What about the old bunch back at

the hotel? See Gimp Charlie much?

Oh, I lost track years ago.

I've been living here for a long time.

No foolin'!

Wish I did.

I'm just passing through.
Going to Chicago tonight.
Hey, uh, whatever happened to, uh, uh, Hazel-
Hazel? Was that her name?
- Yeah. I married her.
- No foolin'!
Bet you got a ton of kids by now, huh?
Oh, that was some place
around the Star-Union Hotel.
Remember
SoreJaw Weber, huh?
And the singin'!
We must have did a hundred songs.
- Hey, you.
- Yeah?
- You know "Sweet Genevieve"?
- A little.
A little! Clam head! That's one of
the best songs there was!
Don't forget
the "Camptown Races."
The best. The best! The best!
The absolute best!
- You know that one?
- Yeah.
Yeah. Him and me won a prize doing that one.
Quartet out at the picnic grounds.
Go ahead.
Start it up.
Go on! Open your throat!
Start! Sing, will you?
Come on! Sing!
Ah, that's good, huh? Wish we had the Doc
and Jonesy for balance though.
Come on, ya monkey!
Clap! That was good.
Clap!
Okay.
How 'bout "Heart of My Heart"?
Oh, I don't know, Johnny. Why don't we go
somewhere where we can talk?
Sure, sure.
The old times, huh?
Come on upstairs.

I got a jug.
We'll belt a few, have the old times
all over again, huh?
I doubt it. We had 'em once.
We can belt a few anyway.
Sure.
Look at you.
What are you doing here?
Get out! Get out.
Go to your room!
We wanna talk!
Can I stay and talk
too, Johnny?
Move, or I'll knock some
of that fat off of you!
What a nerve, huh?
- What do you want?
- The kitten. I've got to have something to do.
Yeah, kitten!
Here. Now, get out!
Now, where's the food, huh?
Ah, here it is.
For a man that's just passing through,
you've got all the comforts of home.
I always manage
to keep a jug handy.
I'll get this glass
cleaned up a little bit.
Well, bring me
up to date.
You still doing
hotel work?
No, Johnny.
Police work.
Detective,
16th Precinct.
Well, what do you know?
Honor bright.
Well, you got
the right trainin'.
I still remember
Barney Woods...
best speller
in the third grade.

What about you, Johnny?
Still as restless as ever?
I manage to live.
We can't all be good spellers.
Here.
I'll trade you.
It's yours.
Mine's at home.
That was a good quartet, huh?
First prize we ever got-
four gold pencils.
- Wonder what happened to Doc's.
- I don't know.
But yours was on the floor
of the Norcross house.
- Pack your linen, Johnny.
Wait a minute, friend.
- I can still take you.
Now, get up.
Get out of that coat.
Throw it over here.
I always was born
a few minutes ahead of you, Barney.
Where'd you get
all this steam?
I knew you had a little trouble upstate,
a little bank work-
- But murder?
- Ring off! Ring off. Ring off.
Don't get sentimental about
some old guy neither of us ever met.
Gun or no gun, Johnny,
I'm gonna have to take you in.
Why? Why, huh?
You're the only one who could connect me
with that pencil.
That's right.
Then let's pretend
this is one you never heard about.
Sorry.
You ain't gonna take me in.
- Why?
- If you were me, you'd take me in.
But you ain't.

You're honor bright.
You're dumb
Barney Woods.
You've got a debt
to square.
Don't count on something
that happened that long ago.
It'll never be long ago
for you, Barney. Don't kid me.
It'll always be right now.
The backroom
of the Star-Union Hotel.
The hour and the night...
and the pail of beer
that caused it.
It's in your eyes
right now-
- the trouble you were in.
You couldn't afford
to lose money you didn't have.
You were on probation.
You'd been a bad boy,
but people were willin'to forget about it.
After all,
it was just a slip.
But you couldn't
stand another one.
That state pen down at Harrisburg
was a little too close.
One more slip'd
get you a train ticket...
and a nice
new suit of clothes.
- Well, you made it that night.
You wrote out a check
for a thousand dollars you didn't have.
all the trouble you needed.
That's the size of it, Barney.
You were on your way up.
A loser.
And don't kid yourself.
You'd have stayed a loser.
'Cause once they make you
walk up an alley...

you'd never use
a front door again.
So I bailed you out.
You stammered and said you didn't know
when you could pay it back.
You stammered and said you didn't know
when you could pay it back.
I said, "I'll wait."
So I'm waitin'.
And now
I want my thousand.
That's what I said, pal:
"There'll come a day."
And here it is.
How 'bout that drink now, huh?
Come on. Come on.
You can afford it.
I'm buying.
Oh, you don't drink
on duty, huh?
Copper.
Look at ya.
Look at that suit,
those shoes.
You couldn't pay back
10% of it.
- What do you make, 40 a month?
- A little more than that.
You were a cop
from the start.
- You've always had your hat in your hand.
- Is that all?
It is if you can't pay up.
Maybe some other time.
If you had any belly,
you'd take me in right now.
But that little favor out in the past
sticks in your craw.
It's there to remind you
what a naughty boy you were.
If you ever get in the way of some money,
look me up, huh?
Well, well, well!
Look who's here.

The big man.
Sit down.
Let me buy you a drink.
Hello, Johnny.
I never knew of a good thief
that'd touch liquor.
- Makes you bigmouthed.
- This is a special occasion. Very special.
I'm catching the night train
for Chicago.
Did you follow me here?
No.
I've got part of the money,
Johnny- nearly \$300.
- I want you to take it.
- Stop kidding. Stop kidding.
A debt's a debt.
If you give somebody a hand,
you don't give them your little finger.
You give them
your whole hand.
It's a thousand
or nothing.
Look, how long do you think
you can get away with this sort of thing?
Take a tip from me.
Give yourself up.
Put in a plea.
Go light.
I'm light now. I'm light.
Can't you see?
You're the only one
could put a hand on me.
No, you're all wrong.
Police files
are never dead, Johnny.
- Some cop somewhere, he'll get a line on you.
- Nah!
Could be anybody anywhere.
Could- Could be somebody like that?
- Yeah, they could put a finger on you.
- Who's that?
It's Dave Bascom.
He's the city editor

of The Clarion-Call.

Newsboys!

Bunch of clam heads, all of them!

They got nothin' on me.

Hey.

You a city editor?

I work on a paper.

Big bunch of crime solvers, ain't ya?

What about the Norcross murder?

What have you done?

- We've got a man working on it.

- Sure, sure!

Big crime stoppers.

What's he done, huh? What's he done?

Did he check with a cab driver down
at 34th and Fifth? No, he didn't check.

Did he check with a lady across the street
who saw a man go in the house? No!

Clam head didn't

do nothin' right. Nothin'!

Nothin'.

- Is that all?

- Ain't that enough?

Big crime reporters.

Couldn't find a hangnail

if they told you what hand it was on.

Clam head.

That was a mistake. He's one of
the best heads on Herald Square.

Oh, you don't think

that meant anything, do you?

The cabbie and the lady
across the street?

I went in the back way.

I just wanted to show

he was a clam head. That's all.

I'm afraid you're

too smart for us, Johnny.

I'm sick of looking

at you, Barney.

Go somewhere.

- Good luck, John.

- You don't mean that, pal.

No, you're wrong.

I wouldn't wish you bad luck.

You'll have enough of that.

Hmm!

Hmm.

- What's your name?

- Frank.

- Where do you live?

- 221 East Fifth Street.

- I thought I told you to take a breather.

- You did, sir.

But I was in the neighborhood. Besides, I've got something I want to talk to you about.

- It's personal.

- Sure. I'll be with you in a minute.

in the last two weeks you've-

All right, Barney.

What can I do for you?

Barney?

It's getting steadily worse.

We've now hit rock bottom.

Hoodlums, vandals, criminals of every stripe... have turned our police power into a laughingstock.

- It's become a huge public joke.

Mr. Bascom. There's a man here from the police department.

- Says he wants to see you. He says it's urgent.

- Send him in.

Hello, Barney.

Westbound Limited.

- Chicago, Omaha, Denver-

- Here you go, tar bucket.

Los Angeles,

San Francisco.

I've got something for you.

Where'd you get it?

Where'd a cop like you pick up a thousand dollars in clean hundreds?

Never mind where I got it.

Just count it.

I trust you, Barney.
I trust you.
The important thing is,
where does this leave us?
We're all square.
Fair enough. Fair enough.
Fair enough, huh?
So we start from scratch.
- Go ahead. Take me in.
- Just so we'll end even, good luck, Barney.
Save your strength.
You got a broken
firing pin.
Up in that hotel room.
You don't think I'd
give you a healthy gun?
Give me that.
Get over here.
Get out.
Step over it,
you clam head.
O. Henry was born
in North Carolina.
He moved to Texas
when he was 20.
He bummed all over the Southwest,
the Gulf ports...
even the banana republics
of Central America.
He was 40 when he reached New York,
and he loved the city.
Called it
"Baghdad on the Subway."
New York gave him
a new Arabian Nights.
Look at this one
he called "The Last Leaf."
The setting?
Greenwich Village.
The time? Winter.
The condition?
A blizzard.
This was the village
of low rents and high art...

where poverty and ambition
held hands.

But also life went on...

and death went on...

and love went on.

And sometimes

love stopped.

Whoa! Whoa!

Joanna. It's about time

you got back.

Your sister got so wild,

she almost called up the police.

Susan! Susan!

Jo!

Well, how is she,

Doctor?

Pneumonia.

I'll look by

in the morning.

Thank you, Doctor.

- Will she be all right?

- Oh, she's young.

No reason why she

shouldn't pull through.

Good day.

Pneumonia.

And all because

of that actor.

- I warned her against him hundred times.

- Shh.

- I know men like him like I know colors.

- Mr. Behrman.

Ah! Would she listen to me,

to the man who knows everything...

who has been everyplace

and seen everything?

- Mr. Behrman, please.

- Oh, yes, I know what you

and your sister think of me.

Just an old goat who lives upstairs and makes

a lot of noise on the ceiling.

- Mr. Behrman, will you please be quiet?

- What is the matter with you?

Why are you so excited?

You heard what the doctor said.
She's young. She will pull through well.
She'll be all right.
It'll be a good lesson
for her.
Now, you stay here,
and I'll take care of this.
- I was going to the art dealer anyway.
- Thank you.
Mr. Behrman-
Tell the druggist to charge it.
Yeah. Actors. I hate actors
more than I hate poison!
The doctor says
it's nothing.
Just a couple
of days rest.
Of course, he thinks you ought to be spanked
for going out in such weather.
Sue. I'm so ashamed.
Why should you be?
Oh, sure,
your pride's hurt now.
Six months from now you'll be laughing
about it if you even remember.
Now close your eyes
and go to sleep.
I can't.
Nonsense.
Of course you can.
You don't understand.
L-
I haven't told you
everything...
about Sheldon and me,
I mean.
You don't have to.
I think I've known
for a long time.
What you must
think of me.
L- I feel like-
Look, baby, it isn't the end
of the world...

because-well,
you made a mistake.
What we both need
is a change of scene.
Oh.
I'll pick it up
in five minutes.
- Behrman, not again.
- Now, look here, Boris.
You can take my word...
of a man who is
independently poor.
I've done exactly everything
the way you told me.
I bought an apple, I bought a pear,
and I bought a banana.
And I put it all in a bowl
and I started to paint.
Just like you told me.
Look.
Another Behrman.
Ai, yi, yi, yi, yi, yil
Behrman. Maybe you are
ahead of your time.
Maybe in 1950 they will recognize it
for what it is-
Whatever it is.
But my customers only like paintings
they can recognize.
All arts must communicate.
And yours doesn't say anything
to anybody who comes in here.
Look here, Boris. What you've got on your walls,
a camera can do much better.
- I know, I know.
- No comparison!
For once, why don't you paint something that
people can see what they're looking at?
- You can do me a great favor-
don't tell me what to paint.
- Behrman, please.
We are old friends, huh?
Try again.
Go back and paint

an apple...

a banana and a pear.

- I can't!

- Why not?

I ate them.

Look here. Would you

buy this Behrman...

if I give you my sacred word of honor

that I will try again?

All right.

Three dollars.

Three dollars for a Behrman?

You always pay me five.

Business is bad.

Well, then you cannot afford it

even for three dollars.

I'd rather starve until 1950,

if necessary.

Three dollars for a Behrman!

Who does he think I am?

Well, it's all ready.

That'll be two dollars.

- All right. Charge it to Miss Goodwin.

- Miss Goodwin.

Sorry, sir.

No more credit.

What are you talking about? The girl is sick,

and you're talking about credit?

I only work here.

I've got my orders.

All right. Wrap it up.

I'll be back in a minute.

I am coming into

a small inheritance.

I've treated a great many patients,

Miss Goodwin.

Some accomplish miracles...

because their will to live

is the best medicine they could find.

There's also

a will to die.

I could save your sister

if she wanted me to...

but she doesn't.

Whatever the reason,
she isn't helping me.
You must be wrong, Doctor.
She has so much to live for.
Mmm. If you can convince her of that,
she'd pass the crisis.
I can only do so much.
Well!
- The broth will be warm in a minute.
- I'm not hungry.
Another one.
What?
- You know, it's funny.
- What's funny?
Oh, the things you notice
when you're ill.
Things you never
noticed before.
Like what?
Like that ivy vine
across the court.
What about it?
Yesterday I counted
exactly 21 leaves on it.
- Don't you think that's funny?
- Why funny?
Don't you see?
I'm 21.
Now there are only 14.
I'm getting younger.
In a day or so,
they'll all be gone.
And when
the last leaf goes-
That's funny too,
isn't it?
The way things live...
die.
Oh, but it's good
to be alive, Jo!
You believe that,
don't you, baby?
I'm so tired, Sue.
You take a nap.

It'll do you
a world of good.
- Don't- Don't do that.
- I just want to darken the room.
I like to look outside
when I wake up.
You will try to get
some sleep, won't you?
I'll try.
That old goat!
- It doesn't bother me, Sue.
Well, it bothers me.
- Come in!
How's your sister?
If you really cared,
I wouldn't have to be here again.
Oh, yes, I know.
I'm making so much noise.
But, you see,
when I paint...
I get so mad with myself
that I- I forget myself.
Is she really so sick, huh?
I thought by now she-
- No.
- What's wrong with her?
I don't know.
She's got some crazy idea
about the leaves...
on the vine
across the court.
What kind
of a crazy idea?
I think she-
Oh, it's so hard to explain.
But- But somehow she feels that the vine
has something to do with her life...
that-
That when
all the leaves go...
she'll go.
Look, Susan, this is
all absolutely crazy.
I know it sounds silly, but... the way she talked

about the vine just now.
Look, now, you're-
you're tired.
You haven't slept all these nights,
and all this is making you sick too.
If you could have
heard her-
Maybe you're right.
- Maybe I am beginning to imagine things.
- Of course you are.
Now, look, you go
to your sister...
and I promise you
I'll be as quiet as a mouse.
A dead one.
Hey! No more
of these crazy ideas.
All right.
Jo! Jo!
Those leaves
don't mean a thing.
You're going to get well,
baby.
You're going to get well!
We should know by morning.
- Behrman!
- I'm sorry.
I'm just a little bit tipsy.
Now, just-
Go on, sing!
It's a happy occasion.
What do you care
about Joanna?
You've done everything you could
to keep her from getting well.
I don't ask you
to forgive me. L-
I just want you
to understand.
Please, go away.
It's only today that...
for the first time,
I finally realized what I really am.
A three-dollar painter.

No more, no less.
My paintings, they've got
nothing to say to nobody.
And I know why.
It is because I
got nothing to say.
And when an artist knows...
there's nothing left for him to do
but just to drown himself.
I'm sorry. I'm sorry.
Mr. Behrman, I'm so upset,
I don't know what I'm saying half the time.
Don't worry, Susan.
You really didn't say nothing
that wasn't true.
What are we going to do?
I was right
about the leaves.
There's just one left now.
It'll be gone by morning,
and when Jo wakes up-
But that kind of thing
can't happen, can it?
It- It just can't happen.
Have courage, Susan.
And if a prayer
of an old goat will help...
your sister will get well.
Don't worry. She'll get well.
She'll get well.
- Susan?
- Here I am, Jo.
Let me see the leaves.
- No, not now.
- But I want to know.
- Later, Jo. Later.
- Please, Sue.
It hung on, Jo,
right through the storm.
Isn't that something?
And if one brave
little leaf can do it...
you can do it too.
How do you feel?

I'm hungry, Doctor.

Well, that's the first sense
you've made in days.

- Some broth?

- Yeah.

Well, I'll- I'll
stop by tonight...

uh, just to say hello.

- Sue?

- Yes?

Could I- Could I have
my mirror and my brush?

Oh, Sue!

What's going on?

I'll find out.

- What is it, Mrs. O'Brien?

- Why, it's the old man.

- That artist fellow upstairs in 3-B.

- Mr. Behrman?

He was drunk last night,
staggering around in the snow.

I saw him kneeling on the ground
as though he were a dog or something.

- What happened?

- An old man his age in the snow for hours?

His heart gave out.

They found him this morning. He's dead.

Oh, he was crazy

like all them artists.

Imagine, in the middle of the night,
he come and asked me for a lantern.

Oh, but he was a nice

old coot at that, you know?

What is it, Sue?

- Behrman?

- Yes.

What happened?

He died last night.

Oh.

- Poor old Behrman.

- Yes.

Poor old Behrman.

It won't be the same without
all that noise upstairs-

Stomping around, breaking things
every time he finished a painting.
He was a good friend
of ours, Jo.
Too bad he wasn't
a better artist.
I could never make head or tail
out of anything he ever painted.
I think you're wrong, Jo.
He was a great artist.
Someday I'll tell you
how great.
O. Henry had been,
at one time or another...
a druggist, cowboy,
bookkeeper, reporter, editor.
To O. Henry., no one was too good
to slip or too bad to climb.
Consider
"The Ransom of Red Chief."
It happens in rural Alabama
in the early 1900s.
There you are, William.
Six miles to our destination.
Just about
the right distance away.
Let's take a look
over this way.
- This looks like a likely spot.
- Not to me.
William, this is
a perfect hideaway.
Look, a cave, running water,
all the comforts of home.
Mmm. I don't like any place
that hasn't got a door on it.
A nice, quiet spot
to spend a few days.
And nights. Slick, have you ever
slept out of doors?
William, don't tell me
you're afraid of the country.
There's nothing I'm not afraid of,
especially the country.

- Why, every time I see a-What's that?

- What is it?

- William, don't act like a child.

It's nothing but a squirrel

or a cat of some sort.

Well, do something.

Get rid of it! Hurry up!

Go away, pussy.

Go away. Nice pussy.

Go away, pussy.

Go on, go on, go on!

You see, it's nothing

if you're not afraid.

But I am.

Never let an animal

know that you're afraid.

It's no use. They seem

to sense it somehow.

Come on. Let's unload

the provisions and get into town.

You know, Slick, I think we should give up

the whole scheme.

- It worries me.

- Why?

Kidnapping.

It's against the law.

You can't go around throwing sacks

over strangers' heads.

You weren't worried about the law when we

sold that oil stock up there in Peoria.

That was different. They were old friends of ours.

We knew them intimately.

There's something impersonal about an

oil well. I wouldn't know one if I saw it.

An oil well is a hole in the ground

surrounded by suckers.

Mmm. I still think kidnapping's

no way to raise money.

That gets down

to a matter of opinion.

Which one of us

is the smarter?

How many times have you

been in jail, William?

- Six times.
- I have only been incarcerated twice.
So the answer is obvious.
I don't like it.
It involves children.
We need money. We have all that little bonanza
gold mine stock you had printed...
and we can't sell it
without a nugget.
Now, Joe Collins has a nugget
that's as big as a cobblestone.
We've gotta raise enough money
to buy that nugget.
- Will he trust ya?
- Not again.
You insist that kidnapping
is the only solution.
William, for a quick,
safe return on your investment...
you simply cannot
beat kidnapping.
I regard it as even a sounder proposition than
swindling widows and orphans.
And that is particularly true down here
in this Peruna-and-chitlins country...
for the natives down here
share one outstanding weakness.
- They love their children.
- It's too risky.
Suppose you kidnap an orphan?
Who pays to get him back?
William, don't be
so pessimistic.
- You know anything about children?
- Only one thing.
Children have to do what
grown-ups tell them to do...
because we're bigger
than they are.
- I don't like it.
- William, we're procrastinating.
Let's finish unloading this stuff and get
into town and find our victim.
- Mornin', folks.

- Mornin'.

We'd like to get
a little water for our car.

- Sure.

- And some information, please.

Pete'll get you the water.

What do you wanna know, mister?

Say, mighty nice country
you got around here.

- Sure is pretty.

- Is it?

If a person wanted to buy some of this land,
who'd he have to see?

Why do you wanna
buy the land for?

- What do you wanna raise?

- It ain't good for much.

You want bottom land
or, uh, hill country?

Uh, which is better?

Well, it depends upon
what you want it for.

- Bottom land.

- Reckon Eb Dorset could fix you up.

He's foreclosed on about as much land
as anybody else.

But why do you wanna
buy the land for?

Eb Dorset?

Which Dorset is that?

Well, there ain't only one
Dorset, and that's Eb.

Yeah, he married
the Yarborough girl.

Why do you wanna
buy the land for?

Married the Yarborough girl.

Say, I seem to remember that.

Uh, was that union blessed
with any issue?

Uh-

- What did you say?

You know, those little objects people get
after they're married.

Yeah. Well, I reckon
you could say they have in a way.

- Yeah.

- May I ask what you mean by that foggy response?

Well, I reckon you could call J.B. A child,
if you wanted to.

- J. B?

- J. B?

- That's what they call him.

- Oh, it's a boy.

- I reckon you might, uh, call him a boy.

- Yeah.

How old is he?

J.B. Is nigh

on to 10 now.

What a lovable age in a boy.

Where did you say

the Dorsets were living now?

- Didn't say.

- Down the road a piece.

A little white house

with broken windows.

You ain't told us why did you wanna

buy the land for.

You know, I find your conversation rather
limited, but very stimulating.

- Thank you.

- Thanks a lot. Thanks a lot, fellas.

- Hope to see more of ya later.

- See you later.

Thanks, son.

Sally Mae, you better lock yourself up in
your room until them Yankees get outta town.

Aw, Pa.

What did he say

that place was?

A little white house

with broken windows.

Oh, yeah.

Dinner ready?

Unless you wanna wait

for J.B.

He's late again.

When'd he go out?

Night 'fore last.
Oughta be gettin' hungry
by now.
I'd better set
a place for him.
Yep, he's home now.
Ebenezer, two men just drove up
in a motorcar.
They did?
Well, I'll be.
Now they're puttin' a sack
over J.B.'s head.
No.
Now they're totin' him away.
They must be strangers.
More than likely.
Set him down over here.
Are you all right, J. B?
If we untie you, will you promise to behave
yourself and not run away?
Did you hear me?
I said, did you hear me?
Are you frightened?
Hmm.
Well, all right,
if you wanna stay tied up.
Now, listen, J.B.
You are in the hands of two desperate men,
and you must behave yourself.
- Is that right, William?
- Yeah, you better behave yourself.
Yes, you've got-
Put that knife away. Put it away.
- William, take that knife away from J.B.
- I'd rather you did it.
J.B., William and I have decided
you may keep the knife.
- Does that make you happy?
- I don't like you.
- I said, I don't like you.
- J.B., you mustn't be afraid of us.
- We're your friends.
I'm going back downtown and leave a ransom
note in your father's mailbox.

And if he pays the little sum
we're asking for you...
you will be returned home
immediately, safe and sound.
Do you understand?
Excuse us a minute,J.B.
How much you gonna ask for him?
I intended opening up
with a bid of 2,000.
Two thousand? I think you're
overestimating this kid's charm.
The trouble with you is
you don't understand human nature.
The blacker the sheep,
the quicker they bail 'em out.
And if I'm any judge
of black sheep...
we have come up
with a collector's item.
Anybody who'd pay \$2,000
for him's out of his mind.
I heard what you said.
I don't like ya,
but you're not dumb.
Thank you,J.B.
Thank you.
Money isn't everything.
I'm convinced 2,000's too much.
Perhaps you're right. I'll cut it to 1,500.
I'd better get along.
I'll drop a note in the Dorset mailbox
the minute it gets dark.
- How long will you be gone?
- Good heavens!
Don't tell me you're afraid
to stay here with this child.
Slick, why don't you stay
and let William go?
- Very practical idea.
- No, it's too late,J.B. Our plans are all made.
Don't you think it'd be better
if we tied him up again, and we'll both go?
Look, you just build a fire,
giveJ.B. Something to eat...

and make friends with him.

Make friends with him?

Just hurry back.

- Eb?

- Huh?

A man's puttin' somethin'

in the mailbox.

Thought he would.

You want I should

go out and fetch it?

Never mind.

Morning's soon enough.

[Vehicle Backfiring,

Departing]

[Vehicle Approaching,

Backfiring]

William, the ransom note

has been delivered.

There's nothing to do

but await results.

How have you and J.B.

Been getting along?

Slick, stay where you are.

Don't make any sudden moves.

What's the trouble, William?

If the light were better, you could see that in

his left hand, J.B.'s holding my good watch...

and in his right hand, a large rock

capable of enormous destruction.

Please don't do anything rash.

Now, J.B., is that any way to act?

I ask you-

It won't do any good to talk.

Yes, J.B.

How did he

get the watch?

We were having dinner, and suddenly he put

a red-hot boiled potato down my back...

and mashed it

with his foot.

- Why?

- We had a slight difference of opinion.

- He wanted me to call him Red Chief.

- Red Chief?

Yeah. He wanted to play Indian,
and I didn't want to.
I see no reason why you couldn't oblige
the little fella, William.
Except that he
wanted to scalp me.
Surely,J.B., there must be another way
to play Indian.
Red Chief gotta ride back
to reservation.
Warn his people
palefaces comin'.
Red Chief need horse.
Oh, no, not that.
If William is your horse,
will you give him his watch back?
After paleface horse.
I won't do it.
I refuse.
I'll speak to him
in Indian,J.B.
What paleface say?
William will be your horse,J.B.
All right, William.
Slick, stay there.
Horse, right there.
How far is it
to the reservation?
Ten miles
to the reservation.
Maybe there's a shortcut.
Oh! Ow! Slick!
- Get back! No fair!
- Keep quiet. Keep quiet.
- Keep still. Keep still.
- No fair! No fair!
Now, stay over there.
There you are, William.
I got his knife too.
No reason to let a child
get the best of you.
- That's true only in theory.
- Now,J.B., we'll have no more of this nonsense.
Paleface lie.

Fool Red Chief.
Red Chief never forget.
Something tells me
our triumph is only temporary.
- Paleface not dumb.
- Thank you, J.B.
Don't you think we oughta tie the kid up
before we go to bed?
I've got his knife.
We've hidden every other dangerous
weapon around the camp.
What is there
to worry about?
Remember what he said
before he went to sleep?
Yes, it's nothing.
I heard what he said.
- Do you remember? What was it?
- Yeah.
He said, "Paleface make'm prayer great
white father. Tell him good-bye."
- And what else did he say?
- "Red Chief never forget."
And you say there's nothing
to worry about?
William, if you persist in this attitude,
you'll have me worried.
There's enough worry
for both of us.
Come, William.
Let's get a good night's sleep.
"Red Chief never forget."
Slick. Slick. Slick!
- Huh?
- Wake up. Don't move.
Show him you're not afraid.
Run, William.
- I can't run far, Slick.
- We're going up a tree, William.
- Can bears climb trees?
- Here he comes. We'll soon find out.
William, I think
it's a cinnamon bear.
I don't care what flavor he is.

He's more apt to taste me.
Hey, paleface. You want Red Chief
to get the bear outta here?
Yes, get him outta here.
Get him outta here.
- What will you give me?
- You can have your knife back, J.B.
How 'bout your watch, William?
Sure. Gladly.
You can have the chain too.
Slick, I'll take
your watch too.
Yes, J.B.
- Coming up right away.
- Just get him away.
And will both y'all
play Indian with me?
- Any-Anything you say, J.B.
- Anything. Just get him away.
All right. Go on!
Get outta here! Go on!
Get outta herel
Yeah! Go on!
Get outta herel
Go on! Get outta herel
Get goin' I
Go on! Get outta here!
Go on! Get outta here!
Go on!
All right. You can come down now.
We'll play Indian.
Hurry up,
or I'll call the bear back.
- Come on!
- I'm looking forward to it with great pleasure, J.B.
- Shh. William. Shh.
William, you don't have to
war whoop anymore.
He's been asleep
for the last five minutes.
Just don't wake him up.
Slick, this has been
the worst night of my life.
I don't think

I can take any more.

William, you should be
ashamed of yourself...
letting a little child
break your spirit.

That's enough, Slick. I'll take it from him,
but not from you.

- You're just as frightened as I am.

- Me, frightened?

Yes, you. He said he'd burn you at the stake
at sunrise, and you're afraid he'd do it.
And what's more, he would too. And if I hear
you mutter one more of those platitudes-
Shh, shh.

William, you're right.

I am afraid.

That's better.

If I could only hold out till his father
delivers the money. If he does.

- That may be quite a while.

- What do you mean, quite a while?

I told him in the note to bring the money

at 6:

- Oh, no.

- I just wanted to give him time to get it.

What time is it now?

Shall I wake J.B. Up
and ask him?

William, what on earth
is the matter with you?

- That's a silly question.

- Where's J. B?

Probably out digging worms
for our supper.

What happened to your eye?

He did it with a slingshot and a boulder
as big as that derby of yours.

I suggest you put the water on your eye,
not, uh-

While I was dazed, he pushed me,
and I sat in the campfire.

This is the only place
where I feel comfortable.

William, what I have to tell you
isn't going to make you feel any better.
Don't tell me
you didn't get the money.
Here, help me up.
No, William,
I didn't get the money.
Slick, forget the 1,500.
Take a thousand, 500.
You can take it outta my share.
Look what he did to me.
Yes, I see what you mean.
But wait till you hear this.
This is from J.B.'s father.
It says, "Gentlemen"-That's us.
"My heart goes out to you.
As a token of my sympathy,
I hereby offer you a counterproposition.
- For \$250 in cash-
- He's crazy.
I will take J.B.
Off your hands."
We won't pay it. We'll just go and leave
the little monster here.
I'm afraid he's thought
of that, William.
- It says, "For your information,
I am the sheriff of this county...
- Oh, no.
And there is only one road
out of where you are now."
- What'll we do?
- "If my proposition interests you gentlemen...
I suggest that you bring
J.B. Back after dark...
as otherwise, the neighbors,
who have been celebrating his loss...
may do you a harm.
Signed, Ebenezer Dorset."
Have you ever heard of such rustic, uh,
unmitigated impudence?
I think his father's a spendthrift
to make such a liberal offer.
- After all, what's \$250?

- \$250?

William, that's every penny we have.

Slick, I beg you, I urge you, I implore you.

It's only money.

Please pay it!

All right, William.

If you insist.

But, uh, to return J.B.

You have to catch him first.

- Now, I suggest-

- Shh. Here he comes.

Good evening, J.B.

Hi, Slick.

You didn't get the money, did ya?

I sure did.

I've got it right in here.

- You mean my father paid ya?

- He certainly did.

- Let's see.

- It's right in here. Look right in there.

There you are. Don't move.

You'll get hurt.

- I've got you, J.B.

- I give up! I give up! Here, William.

- Okay.

For me?

Thank you, J.B.

William, I've changed my mind about ya.

- You have? That's nice.

- I still don't like ya.

- But now I think you're dumb.

- Why?

- That stuff you're holding.

- You mean these flowers you gave me?

Part of it's flowers,

but the rest of it's poison ivy.

Poison ivy?

Why, you-

- Just once, please!

- No, William. I forbid you-

- I'm gonna get this one time-

- William, control yourself.
220, 225, 230-
Pa, I don't wanna
stay here.
- I wanna go with 'em.
- Ah.
- Twist his arm, Ebenezer.
- I'll be good. I'll be good.
235, 240, 245-
Y'all better take
another look, mister.
That last five-dollar bill
is a one.
- Please, Slick.
- Say, you're right, madam.
Thank you for
correcting me. 245.
There we are. \$250.
Have you folks thought of investing
this cash into good, safe prop-
Please, Slick. How far is it
to the state line?
- It ain't far.
- You think you can hold him?
Well, I ain't as strong
as I used to be...
but I think I can promise you
at least 10 minutes.
We'd be very grateful.
- Good-bye, J.B.
- Good-bye, J.B.
Good-bye, Slick. Good-bye, William.
I hope I see you again.
There's only
a bare chance, J.B.
Don't count on it.
You got a gold mine
in that boy.
- Is anybody coming?
- Not a sign.
- But don't slow down.
Outwitted by a mere child.
You have no brains,
and I have no courage.

An unbeatable combination.
Slick, what do we do now?
Get out those little
bonanza gold mine certificates.
I wouldn't have the nerve
to sell that phony stock now.
Pull yourself together,
William.
What is a confidence man
without confidence?
At the turn of the century,
certain social leaders in New York...
claimed that only 400 people
were worth knowing.
In disagreement, O. Henry wrote a volume
he called The Four Million.
He thought everybody
was worth knowing.
Now the very term "400"
is almost forgotten.
But from The Four Million...
"The Gift of the Magi" is as fresh and alive
as the day it was written.
O. Henry. Said,
"The Magi were the Wise Men...
the wonderfully wise men who brought gifts
to the babe in the manger.
They invented the art
of giving Christmas presents. "
And that invention was still operating
when this story. Begins-
in the year of our Lord,
1905.

- Good morning, Mrs. Young.
- Oh, good morning, Mr. Schultz.
- How is your lumbago?
- Huh?
- I said, how is your lumbago?
- Can't hear you.

My compliments to the cook
on this morning's coffee.
Aw, I made the coffee
myself this morning.
Cook isn't here today.

I gave all the servants the day off.
- It's Christmas Eve, you know.
- Oh, yes. So it is.
- And I haven't bought your present yet.
- Oh?
- It's just as well,
because I've changed my mind again.
- Oh?
Yes. I've decided
I don't want the diamond tiara.
No, I- I must have
a sealskin coat.
You see, it's the only fur
I haven't got, and I simply must have it.
All right. I'll buy it
right after lunch.
Lunch. I'm glad you mentioned that.
Now, tell me the truth.
Aren't you a bit weary of going
to Delmonico's every day?
Just this once, wouldn't you
like something from home...
Wrapped up
in this cunning little box?
- That'd be very nice.
- Yeah?
There you have it.
White meat of turkey,
brandied cherries...
oh, a bit
of chestnut dressing and-
Let me see. Oh, yes.
Some of those little ice cakes...
you were so fond of
on our honeymoon in Paris.
- Della?
- Yes?
Is it awful- not having
all these things for real?
I have you...
and that's for real.
Quarter past. Well, let's see if St. Benedict's
on time this morning.
It's 14 after.

He's a whole minute fast.

That gives me one more minute
to tell you I love you.

Oh, Jim!

Oh, now, you know I'll just have to
put it all up again.

I remember the first time I saw you,
just a year ago.

At Mr. Crump's
Christmas party.

And I thought, someday,
I must take out the pins...
and see that hair fall down
around her waist.

For that, I'd be willing
to marry her.

Why, Mr. Young,
what an improper thought.

- Not at all.

- Oh, I was so glad I went to that party.

I saw you almost at once,
and I thought to myself...

if he's married,

I shall ask her to give him up.

- Why, Mrs. Young, what an improper thought.

- Not at all.

I thought no one would introduce us,
so I asked you for the time.

Remember? And you brought out
your beautiful watch...

and I thought,

he must be very rich.

And for one wonderful moment, there
was no one at that party but you and me.

No one in the world

but you and me.

- You and your wonderful hair.

- And you and your wonderful watch.

- It is handsome, isn't it?

- The handsomest in New York.

You should have a platinum fob

to go with it instead of this leather string.

Jim, why, that solves it!

Your Christmas present.

I've been wondering what to get you.

A platinum watch fob
with diamonds to match my tiara.

You changed your mind,
remember?

- It's a sealskin coat.

- Can't we afford both?

It's 26 after. Not unless I get to the office
and earn some money.

It'll only take me a second.

I'll walk with you as far as the butcher shop.

How's your lumbago,

Mr. Schultz?

It's better today, thank you.

Good morning.

It's your last day. Tomorrow you can stay
inside and take care of yourself.

Oh, thank heaven
she didn't buy them.

They'd be terrible
in her hair.

They once were worn
by a Chinese empress.

- Cost \$25.

- Jim, h-how do you-

I priced them day before yesterday.

I thought maybe if they weren't too much-

The diamond tiara will look much better
with the sealskin.

Now, come on.

You'll be late for work.

Well, what would you like
for Christmas dinner?

Now, tell me, aren't you getting
a little tired of turkey?

How about a goose stuffed with apples
or a duck with orange sauce?

Get whatever you like.

Surprise me.

But don't stay on your feet too long.

You know what-

Mrs. Schultz said a walk every day was
good for me, and she's had seven.

You want something?

Oh, I'd like a pound of ground chuck beef
and a half pound of sausage.
Uh, will that be enough
to make a meat loaf just for two people?
I suppose so.
Fifty, 75, a dollar,
a dollar quarter, a dollar 50...
- 60, 75, 80, 85, 86, 87.
What can one do with a dollar
and 87 cents?
Yes?
Uh, are you Maurice?
I am.
What can I do
for you, madam?
Do you buy hair?
If it's good, yes.
Would you buy mine?
Well, let's have
a look at it, madam, right in here.
Sit down.
Oh, madam!
Oh, it is magnificent!
It is beautiful!
Such quality, such beauty,
such sheen.
Eh, it is not bad.
I will give you,
uh, \$20.
Twenty? I need-
Oh, I mean, couldn't you please
make it just a little bit more? Say, 22.50?
Twenty is my price for this particular
length and thickness.
Take it or leave it.
Well-
Can you- can you cut it quickly
so I won't change my mind?
Oh, naturally, madam.
Naturally.
Now, let me see.
Now, it is better
if you close your eyes.
Say, isn't that clock a little slow?

You're right. That clock's
four minutes slow.

- Mr. Young?

- Yes, Mr. Crump?

- You show a great deal of interest in the time.

- Yes, sir.

Am I to remind you that time is what
I'm paying you for, at \$17.50 a week?

Yes, sir.

At 54 hours a week,
that's nearly 33 cents an hour...
approximately
half a cent a minute.

- That's right, sir.

- Time, young man, is money.

Christmas Eve here
is just December the 24th.

I understand, Mr. Crump.

- For two cents, I'd-

- How much is two cents?

- Four minutes.

I was counting on his
letting us off early today.

I've got to get a present
for Margaret.

- What are you gonna buy for your wife?

- I don't know.

It all depends on the size
of our Christmas bonus from old Crump.

I don't think
it'll be \$500.

Not likely.

That's what
a sealskin coat costs.

Tell me, Bill, why does a woman
wanna wear the skin of a seal?

- Who knows?

Shh. He's coming back.

Gentlemen, your attention for one moment.

I'm sorry to announce that because business
has been very poor this year...

as you who keep my books
must know...

there will not be

the usual Christmas bonus.
However, because I've dispensed
with the usual Christmas party...
I am adding per capita
the cost of that party to your checks.
An extra three dollars.
Merry Christmas.
Cheer up, Jim.
For that three dollars...
you can buy her
one sealskin earmuff.
Genuine platinum.
He is pretty, nein?
For your husband?
He is quiet,
but he's of real value.
Yes, that describes
him exactly.
Oh! Oh, I thought you
meant Jim, my husband.
Maybe I did.
He must be a good man
if you marry him.
Oh, thank you.
It's the only fob I've ever seen that's
as beautiful as his watch.
It's not just
an ordinary watch.
It was his father's
and his grandfather's...
and it will be
handed on down to-
That is, if we have a son.
And you will.
You will have a boy.
This fob, it'll bring you luck,
I bet you.
Mr. Menkie, all I have
is 21 dollars and 87 cents...
but I do so want to take
the fob home with me tonight.
Could I- Could I pay you
the rest later?
What is this "later"?

Do you think I'm squeezing blood
out of a stone?
For you... I make
a special price.
Twenty dollars.
Oh, Mr. Menkie!
Oh, thank you!
Thank you!
Mr. Schultz, did I wish you
a merry Christmas?
- I don't know. Maybe. I think so.
- Well, I want to.
I want everyone to have a merry Christmas,
even Santa Claus.
- God bless you.
Oh, dear God,
let him still love me.
Please let him still love me.
- Say, where's Jim? Jim, come on.
- I haven't seen him.
We're going to Clancy's Saloon
and have a hot-buttered rum.
- No, thanks, fellas.
- Come on. It's Christmas Eve.
No, my wife's alone.
She worries if I'm late.
- Merry Christmas!
- Merry Christmas to you.
Poor fella henpecked,
isn't he?
- Did you ever see his wife?
- No.
You should be henpecked
so nice.
Hello.
- Don't turn it-
- Why not?
Oh, Jim,
don't look at me that way.
It'll grow out again.
You know how fast my hair grows.
But- But what-
I cut it off and sold it...
because I couldn't have lived through

Christmas without giving you a present.
You cut off your hair?
Yes. And sold it.
But it doesn't matter
so much, does it, Jim?
I'm still me
without my hair.
I can't believe it.
Your hair-
L-It's gone.
You needn't look for it, Jim.
It's sold, I tell you.
Oh, Jim, tell me
it doesn't matter.
Tell me I look all right.
Even if you don't mean it, tell me.
Oh, say "merry Christmas"
and open your present, darling.
Why, it's all right, darling.
It- It looks- looks fine.
It'd take more than a haircut
to make me love my girl any less.
- Honestly?
- Honestly.
I, uh- l-
I stopped on my way home and...
bought something for you.
Oh, Jim!
Oh, Jim!
They're not-
Why, my hair
grows so fast, Jim.
By spring I can wear them.
Oh, but- but you haven't opened
your present, darling.
Isn't it beautiful? You'll have to look at
your watch a hundred times a day now.
Put it on.
Put it on, and let's see.
Della, darling, why don't we put our
Christmas presents away for a while?
They're much too nice
to use just now.
You see, I sold the watch

to buy you the combs.

Oh, Jim!