

Scrambled Yeggs

Baffle the Press and the Police



"Nuts to you!" Big Boy says, and blazes away.

By **JOE ARCHIBALD**

Author of "Halo of Horror," etc.

Meet Scoop and Snooty, the two dizziest newshawks in the Big Town. And meet Iron Jaw O'Shaughnessy, a tough copper, who is poison to reporters. Then watch Scoop and Snooty take the trail of a notorious killer. They pull a "clever" stunt—and the killer escapes the police trap.

THERE are only two very live wires on the *Evening Star*. Me and Snooty Piper. The city editor had been with the rag twice as long as Rip Van Winkle slept and he hates everything in the world including strawberry shortcake. If a guy come running into the city room and told the moth-eaten bunch at the copy desk that half of Chicago had caved in, they would just nod and dump tobacco ashes out of their pipes like you had only said it is raining again today, isn't it?

I cover headquarters with Snooty Piper and we are maybe two of the very best

reporters who ever put the bee on the city editor for a case note. Snooty's main trouble is his yen to be a great detective after he is fired—I mean for good. He had been fired completely ten times in two years but he always went right back to the M. E. and convinced that very big mucky-muck that the *Evening Star* would fold up without him. Snooty has something very efficient on the ball and I wish I knew what it is.

Let me tell you about Snooty. It is one day when the last edition has been put to bed when the story breaks. It seems there

was a tough guy by name of Big Boy Briller who is wanted all over the country for robbing ten banks, escaping out of twelve jails, and stealing all the shotguns and bullet-pumpers from four others. According to the papers, Big Boy has been seen everywhere during the last two weeks but taking a part in a Mickey Mouse movie.

Whoever catches Big Boy without catching two pounds of lead in his diaphragm to boot will no doubt be a hero and will only have to ask what town he will want to be police commissioner of. Snooty gets the call from headquarters. Me and him are sitting listening to a sob sister tell us what an awful brute her husband is when the phone in one of the booths begins to ring like the landlord was on the other end.

"You would think they would know the paper is closed up for the day, wouldn't you?" Snooty complains and he walks over to the booth like it is the last mile in the death house. But when Snooty listens to what the guy says over the phone, he just drops the receiver like it had turned into a hot boiled egg and comes running, his blue eyes popping out like something was in back of them pushing.

"C'mon, Scoop!" he yells. "They've got Big Boy cornered right in this town. Over on Columbus Avenue in a roomin' house. All the cops are goin' over."

"I would think I had a right to git in on this," yips Dogface Woolsey who is the city editor no less. "I am only runnin' this city room. What's up?"

"Why," hollers Snooty, "they've found Red Ridin' Hood! We must go right away. C'mon, Scoop!"

"You're fired!" Dogface tosses at us as we run to the elevator.

"Ha-ha," is all Snooty answers, and out we go.

WE get out of a taxi in front of headquarters and run in and who is coming out but a very big detective by name of O'Shaughnessy. Is that a hell of a name to have to say every time you go to see a guy? This O'Shaughnessy is a high-pressure flatfoot who has a face you don't see on Christmas cards. If you cut away the lower part of his physog, you could use it for a corner stone. Snooty and O'Shaughnessy have the same love for each other that burns in the bosoms of a marine and a sailor.

"Ha," growls Iron Jaw, "so you got the tip, huh? Well, don't git in the way, you fatheads. Stop blockin' up the door. How I hate newspaper guys!"

"We will just go with you," Snooty says, "as it will save the rag taxi hire. I better stick with you, O'Shaughnessy, as you couldn't find a goldfish globe in a barrel of apples. Now where is this Big Boy? Let me handle—"

"Some day," O'Shaughnessy yips, "I am goin' to kind of lean against you, Snooty Piper, and mash you up like—"

"Here's my card with my picture on it," Snooty grins. "We've got every right of the fourth estate to be in on this. The public wants to know if Big Boy leaves his crusts at the table and if he uses a serviette. In case you never heard of one, Iron Jaw, that is a napkin."

Well, the upshot of it is we run down to the place where at Big Boy is supposed to be hiding. The street for three blocks is filled with squad cars, and there is a bunch of cops at the front door of the rooming house. One is yelling up at a window quite impatient.

"Now come out, Big Boy, nice an' quiet," the cop says, "and we'll give you a break. Not much of a one, but a break."

"It is one of the most polite police forces I ever worked with," Snooty says.

“Huh, why don’t you say ‘please’ to Big Boy?”

“Git back, you!” the cop roars. “Snooty Piper, how’d you git here? Y-you—”

But you should hear the dirty laugh that comes from a third-story window. It is Big Boy and he has no idea of landing in another hoosegow.

“You go fly a kite, you dumb bulls!” he hollers and he has a voice that would make a champion hog-caller sound like a sissy. “You ain’t got me and you don’t dast t’row bombs with gas in ‘em because there’s an old dame very sick in this house, also some little children. Nuts to you, copper!”

“It looks like we will have to go in and get him,” a big police lieutenant says. “Well, follow me, men.”

“I can’t look,” Snooty says, the halfwit, and you would think he was at a clambake.

Br-r-r-r-r-r-r-rt!

I am here to tell you that I make a dive under a radio car. Big Boy is getting playful and he is spraying the asphalt around our dogs—just by way of warming up. When I crawl out again, I can’t find Snooty Piper.

“He run,” Iron Jaw O’Shaughnessy says to me. “Ha-ha, a brave guy, Snooty, ha-ha!”

“If that guy is scared,” I says, “you eat oranges all day long on St. Patrick’s Day, Iron Jaw. But I wish I knew where the damn fool went to. He is tryin’ to scoop me, that’s what!”

Well, a police force could not stay there all day and dare Big Boy to come out as it has other chores to do like looking for guys that park very close to hydrants which is not lawful. They know Big Boy will have a long white beard and hardening of the arteries before he will

come out, so there is only one thing to do and that is to go in after him.

“We will sneak around the block,” the lieutenant says. “We’ll go in by the basement in back and up the stairs. All right, men, spread out and don’t move fast, as Big Boy will get wise and knock some of you off.”

“Well, s’long, O’Shaughnessy!” I grins. “You’ll have a swell wake.”

Br-r-r-r-r-rt! “Ha-ha!” laughs Big Boy. “I’ve got on a bullet-proof vest and I’ve got slugs enough to stand off the National Guard. Come an’ git me, mugs!”

You can see Big Boy is awful mean and is a public enemy in any country. And it looks like he will be hard to take like a dose of wormwood tea. Everybody is hiding behind automobiles and ash cans and everything that will help stop a bullet, and three police lieutenants squat down behind an armored car and have a conference. I am sprawled out at the foot of the basement steps of the house across the street and Iron Jaw is crowding me close.

“He’s holdin’ four aces,” I grin at him. “It’s a tough hand to beat. I wish I knew where Snooty is. Where do you think—”

“I bet he got thirsty again,” Iron Jaw growls. “He’s in a gin mill.”

Another half hour passes and then the police get very impatient with Big Boy and yell to him they will give him one more chance. But Big Boy is very tough, as you know, and his machine gun is still sticking out of the window.

ALL of a sudden somebody lets out a yell. There is a guy standing on the roof of the house next to the one where Big Boy is at and he is, waving his arms and pointing. Then he ducks quick around a water tank. I would know that green suit any place. It is Snooty Piper.

“The damn fool!” I says and gets up. “He-e-e-ey, Snooty,” I hollers, “git down out of there or I—you’ll—”

Right then a whole bunch of cops run out of an alley and get into the basement where me and Iron Jaw O’Shaughnessy are at.

“Lissen,” one yells at us as they crash through the basement door, “we got a hunch. That newspaper guy has somehow got Big Boy away from that window. We got Big Boy now. That was a swell piece of decoy work. How do you suppose he done it?”

I have no answer ready as Snooty is liable to be found most any place, like in the vault of the biggest bank in town some morning.

“Well, he’ll get a medal for this,” I grins at Iron Jaw.

“That mug is just lucky,” the Irish flatfoot barks as he follows the cops in through the door. “He would dive into a dry pool and come out soaking wet.” Well, it looks bad for Big Boy as the cops got in the house and swarmed up the stairs. I am behind Iron Jaw as we go up, and when we get to the landing on the top floor, we hear a lot of funny noises coming from behind the door of the room where Big Boy is holed up.

“Snooty must’ve slugged him,” I whispers. “Maybe he threw a brick through a window and conked Big Boy.”

“Shut up—!” barked Iron Jaw.

“Come out, Big Boy!” a cop yells. “It’s no use. The jig is up. Come quietly or we’ll start shooting that door full of holes like a sieve.”

There is a mumbling sound in reply and something falls against the door.

“It’s your last chance,” the police holler and six of them get into line and make a battering ram. There is an awful crash and in they spill. Me and Iron Jaw lay low and wait until Big Boy has

emptied his guns. But everything is quiet like when they raid a fan dance.

We get up and go in and there is a guy laying on the floor dressed in nothing but skivvies and he has a rag tied around his face and his hands are tied up behind his back. I only have to look once and I almost pass out cold. Iron Jaw swears something fierce as he looks at the guy on the floor. It is Snooty Piper.

“I get it now,” I says. “He got into the room somehow and Big Boy snagged him. He took Snooty’s clothes and—”

“You’re smart, ain’t you?” a police lieutenant says, shoving his face close to mine. “Well, somebody will sweat for this. Aiding and abetting an escaped criminal. Oh, the commissioner always wanted to put the screws on that boss of yours. You—”

“Uh huh,” Snooty says when they ungag him, “if the cops wasn’t so dumb, they would’ve kept Big Boy at the window. I got into the house an’ I seen a dame running downstairs and I hid behind the wall and see her go into another room so I says Big Boy has a dame here and that is why he holed out. So I knocks on the door and says, ‘Yoo hoo, Big Boy,’ like my name was Alice or somebody an’ he opens up the door. I sticks my foot in it—”

“And he grabs you by the throat and yanks you in, huh?” interrupts O’Shaughnessy with a growl. “Well, I been wanting to git somethin’ on you. Messin’ up the police business, huh? Allowin’ Big Boy Briller to git away. All right, Snooty, what the department won’t say about the rag you work for! Ha-ha!”

“Well, Snooty,” I says, “It’s been good to have worked with you. And if you git a job sellin’ insurance, don’t come to me as I am loaded up with the stuff. Ha—”

“What a pal!” Snooty snorts. “Awright, Scoop, to hell with you! But I’m goin’ to put in a bill for them clothes.

The rag'll have to pay for that green suit. It was only worn once and—"

"Let's git out of here, Snooty," I says. "you've spilt more beans than there are in Boston. Let me take you out before you go down to the city jail and open all the cell doors. S'long, Iron Jaw!"

"It was a tough break I got," Snooty argues when we leave the joint. "Just a little slip. Big Boy was fast, Scoop. He's a tough guy. He slammed me dizzy and then stripped me like an eel. If I ever git my hands on that mug—"

"There's no use to go back to the *Star*," I says. "Well, here is where we part, Snooty. Good luck! It's a wonder they don't hold you as an accomplice with Big Boy. Of all the crackpots, you're the worst."

"I'll show 'em," Snooty says as he weaves toward a bar. "First I'm going to get scalded to the palate and after that—"

"Don't tell me," I chirps and walks away. "Lemme guess."

SNOOTY calls me some awful names which I ignore. I goes back to the *Evening Star* as I have got half a bottle in my desk there so why pay them gin mill prices. I feel like getting polluted also as being without Snooty Piper is like going out in the street with just your coat and vest on.

We are supposed to be at work at seven-thirty A. M. on the *Evening Star* but I always get there at eight or better as it is easy to spoil a city editor. Who is there before me but Snooty Piper? He is leaning over Dogface Woolsey's desk and is shaking a finger in the sour-face bum's nose.

"And I—er—reiterate," he is saying, "I—hereby tender my resignation to take effect at ousht. I quit. No room—fer—uh advanshemen'!"

Having so unburdened himself, Snooty weaves out of the joint. He looks like the worst part of a before-and-after advertisement. His eyes look like poached eggs floating in tomato juice and his nose would make a good trouble light.

All that day there is an awful mess. The big boss himself who has high blood pressure is giving hell to everybody and I can hear him boiling from where I sit trying to hammer out a story about a guy that found out his wife was feeding him arsenic slow but sure.

"A fine pan of flatfish!" the boss is yodeling as he stamps around. "Who picks these reporters? You, Woolsey? Ha-a-a-a! You couldn't pick a rabbit out of a pen of pigs. I've a good mind to stop the presses and sell them for junk. The police commissioner has got me harpooned pretty. You dumb bunch of imitation newspapermen. Big Boy! The whole country will laugh at us. What'll happen to circulation? The police reporter of the *Evening Star* helping Big Boy to escape! Ha-a-a-a! I should laugh, eh? Ha-a-a! It splits my sides, it's so funny. Well, Woolsey, can't you say anything?"

"Cr-r-ripes!" Woolsey squeaks. "It sounds worse and worse. If you want this job, take it, Mr. Guppy. To hell with it!"

"Stay there!" Guppy says. "Who else would work for the *Star* now? What?"

"Would I know?" Woolsey counters and reaches for a bottle.

Well, the whole town is laughing at us and the churches start bearing down hard on the region of Mr. Guppy's neck. A lot of narrow-minded bowls of tripe stop advertising and it looks like the *Evening Star* is ready for the skids and I am cut ten bucks each and every week and I says to myself if I ever get my hands on Snooty Piper, I'll smack him cross-eyed as it is hard enough to live on what I used to get

to say nothing of worrying along on ten bucks less.

And Big Boy, to make it worse, writes us a letter thanking the *Star* for its help and if we ever need a favor to let him know like bumping off a competitor like the boss of the *Sun*. The boss is very interested in this last proposition of Big Boy's but he is very ethical and resists temptation after an awful fight with himself. And then police business gets me interested and I forget about Snooty Piper.

It is one day when I am treading it up Cornhill that a big Deussenberry limousine rolls by and splashes me with mud and I swear as loud as I know how at the chauffeur. The Deussenberry stops so I go over to swear some more when a face sticks itself out from the window and it is not a nice face but one you couldn't trust as it has a hooked nose and a little black mustache the same being things I always hated something awful.

"Why don't you look where you're goin'?" I hollers. "Can't an ordinary guy walk along mindin' his own business without gittin' his benny ruined an'—"

"Shut your mug!" says the owner of the bus. "Otherwise I'll insert some very hard bullets between your ribs. I am Flash Gassotti from Chicago and I don't take guff from no—"

"That's tellin' him, Flash!" I looks closer at the limousine and there is a dame's face sneering at me and I am not sure but I think she acted very common and gives me the bird. She is a painted-over job with black optics and she has a mouth that would make a ripe tomato look like it had pernicious anemia.

"Smack him!" she says to her boy friend. "I don't like him."

"I am in a hurry, Sugar," the mug says, "Or I'd indulge in the sport. Let this be a lesson to ya," he finishes up with me. "I let ya off easy this time."

THE bus purrs away and the rear tire spills more mud on my benny and I am burned up worse than a forty-thousand-mile spark plug. But what can a guy do? It is a pretty pass when such tough mugs as Big Boy and Flash Gassotti can insult honest God-fearing citizens like I am right on a public thoroughfare. I goes down to headquarters and asks Iron Jaw O'Shaughnessy what he knows about Gassotti.

"That mug?" Iron Jaw flings at me. "He's supposed to have been chased out of Cicero, Illinois, with two garlic-painted bullets in his torso. He is supposed to have beat it to Europe or Thibet or some place but I guess now most of his enemies are bumped off, he has come back. We'll watch him close."

"I would like to get that mug," I spits out very tough.

"Heard from Snooty?" O'Shaughnessy says sarcastic. "Maybe he's drivin' Big Boy's car."

"I didn't come down here," I says pretty nasty, "to play questions and answers. But I know one thing, if all the cops in this country was called O'Shaughnessy, Big Boy would be able to rent an apartment in White and Company's window and you wouldn't find him. Ha-ha!"

"You fresh mug," Iron Jaw says. "Some day I will lean against you hard and mash you up like—"

"Aw go roll your hoop," I says and even the desk sergeant laughs.

It is the next day I see Gassotti again. He is coming out of a flower shop with his sugar doll, and the dame recognizes me of all people, and she says, "There is that cockroach again, Flash. Step on him for me." I am as a rule a very even-tempered guy but I can be pushed too far so I says, "Gassotti, if you want to slam me, go

ahead but they will have to put you in that can of yours feet first if you make one pass. I am a police reporter and I know my rights.”

“Oh, that’s interesting,” Gassotti says and he speaks way down in his esophagus. “I’ll make a note of that. By the way, I understand Big Boy visited this town. You treated him right and I like such hospitality. I’ll make my home here. You can quote me as saying Big Boy is only a mug, as I have a yen to meet up with that fathead. Now get out of my way and let me and the dame pass. That’s a good guy.”

I felt like slugging him but controlled myself, as here I had a story that was a beat, and so I go down to the *Star* and write up that Gassotti is in town and how he said Big Boy was only a piker and was just a mug built up by the sheets like I work on. I says to myself as I write the story that Big Boy will sure get awful mad if he reads it. And I bet he will, as we all know he hasn’t got out of town as yet, but is hiding some place where even the Northwest Mounted Police couldn’t find him.

But that was not all. I am sitting in the city room getting tough looks from Woolsey, just because I take a nip now and then, when I get a phone call. It is Gassotti and he says is this the mug who scribbles for the *Star*?

“Supposing I am,” I snaps. “You ain’t so hot. If you know what is good for you, you’ll beat it before you get more slugs in you. I know some pretty tough mugs who’d do anything for me and—”

“Nuts to you!” Gassotti says and what a nasty laugh he’s got. I also hear another giggle which is from a dame and I know the doll is with him. “You tell Big Boy for me,” he says, “that I have snagged his dame and what will he do about it.”

“I’ll tell him,” I snaps. “I’ll go right down to the hotel where he’s stayin’ and

carry the message personal. If I knew where he was at,” I yelps, “do you think I’d be sittin’ here, huh?”

“I am just tellin’ you in case you happen to run across him,” Gassotti says. “S’long, an’ mud in your eye.”

He hangs up and I go back to the desk, take another nip of rye and wonder where poor Snooty is. It looks like the disgrace was too much and he beat it some place. Maybe he is already a beach comber in the tropics, I says to myself. If he is, I am very sorry no end for the other beach combers.

“I wish you’d do some work here,” old Dogface says. “If it is not askin’ too much, you rum soak. For a week you ain’t brought in nothin’ but a dogfight and what are we payin’ you for?”

“Oh, is that so?” I says, and I am losing my temper. “Right now I am hobnobbin’ with one of the very biggest public enemies in the U. S. and he is hot news and the first thing that busts I’ll git it. If you don’t stop ridin’ me, Dogface, I’ll take it over to the *Sun*. Did ya ever hear of a guy named Gassotti?”

“Who ain’t?”

“Well that’s all I’ll tell ya,” I snaps and grabs my hat and scrams. “You just forget you’re a very ordinary city editor and I’ll put this paper back where it belongs.”

WELL, I am just back from grabbing a sandwich and a bowl of mud over at a beanery the next noon when what do I get but a message from old Dogface himself.

“Gassotti called you,” he says. “Said it was important. This is a hell of a sheet. First Snooty helps Big Boy to lam out and now Scoop Binney is mixin’ with racketeers. It’s no wonder you can buy a new suit twice a year.”

I ignore him as Dogface is only a city editor and that is almost like having a

disease. I picks up the phone to call Gassotti.

“Hello, mug,” he says still nasty, “c’mon over an’ see me. I’ve got some hot stuff for you. I got to thinkin’ you ain’t such a bad guy. You an’ me can do business.”

That is all he says and I leave the city editor chewing up galleys he is so burned up as I won’t give him the lowdown. I hop a cab to the East Side and pull up in front of an apartment house. It is not long before Gassotti lets me in to his flat and he must be a tough baby as on the sofa is a machine gun and a sawed-off shotgun and I says this is a cozy place and are you expectin’ company?

“Sit down and make yourself to home, mug,” Gassotti says. “Hey-y, Sugar, bring the mug a hooker.”

“Stop callin’ me mug,” I says. “I don’t give a damn if you’re Gassotti. What you want with me? I can’t stay long as I’ve promised to serve at a Ladies’ Aid Tea.”

The dame comes out and she smirks and there ain’t nothing I hate worse than a dame who smirks and I says, “I wouldn’t be surprised if you put arsenic in that drink.”

“It’s bad manners to poison company,” the dame says. “That is only one trouble with Gassotti. He ain’t particular what he brings into the house. He is like a tomcat that way.”

“Shut up!” Gassotti says. “Otherwise I’ll bat you one.” He goes to the window and looks at his watch and then he turns around and says, “I hope you will excuse me for a second as I will run around the corner and get us some cigars. The business I’ve got with you will take most of the day.”

“And you think I’ll stay here alone with this dame?” I says.

Gassotti gets sore at that and you would be surprised how little it takes to make a guy like Gassotti sore.

“Don’t make no cracks about my dame,” he says. “I can wash you out quicker than I can do you a favor. You stay here until I git back, see?”

“I was only kiddin’,” I laughs but it is weak. “I’m a great kidder, ha-ha!”

When he goes out, the dame sits down next to the sawed-off shotgun and it is a nice party if you are not particular what you call a nice party.

“Shall we play charades?” I says in a quite unsociable voice.

“Shut up,” says the dame.

Neither one of us says a word for fifteen minutes and at the end of that time a knock come on the door. The dame grabs up a gat from off a table and walks to the door.

“Who is it?” she says. “You keep your trap shut,” she whispers to me.

“A friend of Gassotti’s,” come a voice and the dame is dumb like all dames and opens up the works. A guy slips in, bats the gat out of her mitt and grabs her around the throat. She gits away long enough to croak out, “Big Boy! Where did y-y-y-eeek?”

“Shut your face,” he growls. “Where’s that penny-ante gorilla, Gassotti? Make a bum outa me, will he? Steal my dame, huh? Well, I’ve come for the mug. Who’re you, huh?” he tosses at me.

“Ha-ha,” I says, “I am a Fullam Brush man. I was just tryin’ to sell this dame when you come in an’—”

“Oh yeah? Well, listen here, I’m Big Boy—” All at once he stiffens like somebody stuck a steel rod down the back of his benny. Outside there is a very loud racket. Police sirens are goin’ off like maybe Mussolini dropped into town for a week-end.

Big Boy is awful tough as I have mentioned before and he looks tougher when he gets the office that he's cornered again. He bats the dame one and shoves me in a corner and he grabs up the machine gun which is still on the sofa and he beats it to the window and breaks out a pane of glass.

"Think they got me hooked, huh?" he grins. "Well, I am glad Gassotti still plays with these toys!" He lifts his voice halfway to the moon and hollers at the cops who just got the back way very much surrounded.

"Come an' git me!" he yelps. "I am twice as tough as you bull-necks!"

ISAYS to myself it looks like Gassotti has framed Big Boy and that is very strange for one public enemy to frame another and maybe I am wrong but it don't look on the up and up. Something is very phony.

"Come on out," I hear a voice chirp and it's Iron Jaw O'Shaughnessy.

"Nuts," says Big Boy, "come an' git me!" Br-r-r-r-r-rt!

I tries to be a brave guy but it is very hard to do that when you're so close to a big wicked guy like Big Boy. Well, this time the cops come after Big Boy and he swears something awful as he shoots. He turns to me and says it is damned funny that he emptied the machine gun and didn't kill a single cop.

"Tough luck!" I shoots out. "Maybe you need some eyewash."

The cops are outside now in the hall and they begin to bust the door down.

"Open up!" yips one of them.

"Nuts to you!" howls Big Boy and blazes away with the sawed-off shotgun.

Nothing happens like I expected which was that the door would look like a soup strainer. Big Boy looks very surprised and turns to go for the window when in comes

something that busts up in our faces like a geyser. It is a gas bomb and soon I am on the floor with Big Boy and crying like I dove headfirst into a pail of onion juice.

I says I would just as soon pass out if I could only get one good punch at Gassotti and I am wondering where the big bum is when in come the door with an awful crash. Iron Jaw O'Shaughnessy and some cops come in and they lift us up. Iron Jaw lets out a howl and says:

"The last time it was Snooty Piper and now it's you! Fancy meetin' you here. How did you like the gas, Scoop?"

I am too weak to hand him a punch in the nose, and all I can say is give me air, and I run out into the hall and who do you think is standing there but Snooty Piper.

"How did you like my Deussenberry?" he says. "Some boiler, huh?"

"Wha-at?" I gulps and then he shows me a fake nose and a little black mustache and Iron Jaw has to hold me up as I am that astounded.

"I was Gassotti," Snooty says. "I said I would git this mug, Big Boy. I faked I was Gassotti and played up to the dame as I called on her at the house after I was fired and showed her I was a big shot by lettin' her look at a roll of stage money around which was wrapped a real hundred dollar bill. I says why stick to Big Boy as he is a fugitive very much at large and could never locate you in one place. So why not cotton to a real mug."

"And you got me in here, you crackpot!" I hollers. "I might've been plugged. With all them machine guns—"

"That Gatlin' gun I left on the sofa was full of blanks," Snooty says. "And the sawed-off shotgun only had powder in it but no slugs. I knew Big Boy would come lookin' for me if I kept insultin' him besides stealin' his dame. Ha, am I smart, huh?"

“Piper,” a police lieutenant says, “you’ll be a national figure.”

“They won’t recognize that bum’s figure when I git through dustin’ him off,” I shoots. “Putting me in a spot like—”

“I wanted you in to scoop the story,” Snooty says. “You fat-head, how can I write it as I don’t work for Guppy no more? Ya see, Big Boy wasn’t takin’ no chance comin’ to see Gassotti as Gassotti is also a tough mug like him and big shots like Big Boy and Gassotti never turn any of their kind over to the cops. I got a call from Big Boy and he says he was comin’ to git me as I couldn’t git away with makin’ a mug out of him. What do ya think of the doll, Scoop? I went out to git the cops as I seen Big Boy comin’ through the court in back here. Ha-ha! I bet you was scared.”

Well, Guppy’s sheet is aces again and Snooty got his mug half-toned in every rag from Rahway, N. J., to Venice, Calif., and the circulation of the paper jumped up fast like somebody had give it a transfusion and then something happens which is very very funny, at least to my way of thinking. Mr. Guppy does not like my sense of humor. He calls Snooty into his office and

Snooty hands him a swindle sheet which is a reporter’s expense account and nobody has the least idea what inflation means until they have seen a reporter’s swindle sheet.

“Wha-a-at?” yells Guppy at Snooty. “Did you buy some apartment buildings?”

“They’re only my expenses on the Big Boy capture,” Snooty says with beautiful sarcasm. “You can read, Guppy. I rented that Deusenberry by the day. The apartment ain’t been paid for yet. I told the landlord I was expectin’ a check from Al Caproni most any time and he could wait or else. Of course, there are little incidentals like champagne and cigars and don’t forgit Big Boy ruined my green suit. You also owe an actor over to the Bijou for some of that make-up stuff I used. Well, if you would give me a check at once as I am a little short, Mr. Guppy?”

“I’ve a good mind to fire you.”

“You can’t as you didn’t hire me yet,” Snooty laughs. “Anyways I’m not so hot to come back. Over at the *Sun* they offered me—”

Guppy swears and grabs for his personal check book.