

When Barnaby Bliss, detective de luxe, took a job as bodyguard to a radio commentator, he found himself tuned in on a . . .

Suicide Hook-Up



By Albert G. Robinson

“WELLINGTON,” said Barnaby Bliss, removing a cigar from his firm mouth and lowering his six-foot-four frame into a protesting chair, “tell that new Chinese cook there’ll be a guest for dinner tonight. By the way, what’s the bloke’s name?”

“Gin Gob, boss,” said Wellington gravely.

Barnaby looked at him sharply. In the old days of silent pictures, Wellington would have been a casting director’s ideal for the part of an English butler and valet,

but with the advent of the sound track, he would have been retired. His Brooklyn accent was to Barnaby, who had been educated at Oxford, as thick and unpleasant as a San Francisco fog.

“That’s no Chinese name,” said Barnaby.

“He was named for his old man, boss,” said Wellington. “Dat’s all de American his old lady could remember. . . . Who’s de guest, boss?”

“A penpusher by the name of Arnold Danvers. R. G. Salston, the cereal king, is

sponsoring him on a broadcast tonight, and R. G. offered me a thousand to see that the Danvers chap makes the broadcast tonight.”

“Why wouldn’t he make it, boss? Don’t dis guy like de sound of his own voice?”

Barnaby put out his cigar and got to his feet. From his height he could count the few remaining silver hairs on the top of Wellington’s head. He patted them with one huge, hairy paw.

“Read the papers,” he said. “This Danvers chap is a war correspondent, just back from three years in Germany. At nine o’clock tonight, through the courtesy of ‘Munchies,’ the breakfast of brain trusters, he’s to give an uncensored account of actual conditions in Berlin.”

“I didn’t see nothin’ about him in the *Bulletin*,” said Wellington defensively. “An’ if it ain’t there, this guy don’t exist.”

“That’s right,” said Barnaby, snapping his fingers. “The *Bulletin* only gave him a paragraph on the back page, and he made headlines in all the other papers.” He snatched up the phone and dialed a number. “City desk,” he demanded when the *Bulletin* answered. He propped the receiver between a large ear and a large shoulder and lit another cigar.

“Tom?” he asked. “This is Barnaby Bliss.”

The city editor’s voice crackled over the wire. “Hello, Barnaby. What can I do for you? I owe you a little favor for that inside story about the *S. S. Acirema*. What’ll you have?”

“Just like to know why you chaps on the *Bulletin* didn’t give Arnold Danvers and his coming broadcast more space,” said Barnaby.

“Oh,” said the editor and his voice went flat. “What do you want to know about that bird for?”

“I’m his bodyguard,” replied Barnaby.

“Now give.”

“Well,” the editor said, “I can’t give you much. Danvers used to work for us, you know, before applejack got the best of him. He went out to the West Coast after he left us. There were a couple of smelly reports of his activities there. He even did a stretch in some little jail north of San Francisco.

“He free-lanced after that, and just before the war broke out, some two-bit syndicate sent him to Berlin as their correspondent. His stuff was good at first, and we even bought some of it. But lately we wouldn’t touch it.”

“Why not?” asked Barnaby. “He’s been scooping you regularly.”

“All his stuff is protected,” replied the editor. “If we want to use it, we’re not allowed to change a word of copy. And although there is nothing wrong with his facts, his interpretation of them doesn’t coincide with our attitude toward the situation in Europe. Do I make myself clear?”

“I think you do,” said Barnaby thoughtfully. “You don’t by chance know what Danvers did time for, do you?”

“No. I don’t even remember the name of the town. All I recollect about the case is that there was an unconfirmed story among newspapermen that Danvers was covering up for somebody else. If you’re interested, why don’t you come down to our morgue and look it up? Be glad to have you.”

“Thanks a lot, Tom,” said Barnaby. “Maybe I will.”

As he hung up, the buzzer of the apartment door sounded and Wellington went to answer it.

BARNABY looked with distaste at his dinner guest. Danvers was a chubby individual, his face puffy and shiny with soft living. The lapels on his double-

breasted suit were an inch too wide, and his yellow tie jumped at you savagely from his dark blue shirt. At a distance his round face looked jolly and cheerful, but at handshaking distance the eyes were mean and fishy and the mouth puckery.

"Well, well, we meet again," greeted Danvers cheerily. "What a coincidence!"

"Evenin', Danvers," Barnaby said, smiling. "How about a drink before dinner? Will you join me in an applejack highball?"

"Applejack?" asked Danvers in surprise. "No, thanks! Always makes me sick. Ha, ha!"

"Sorry," said Barnaby, "but somebody told me you liked applejack. How about Scotch?"

"Excellent. In Berlin we always drank Scotch. That is, when we weren't drinking beer. Ha, ha!"

Barnaby looked at him in disgust. He wasn't sure that a thousand dollars was enough for having to listen to that "Ha, ha." "Bring some Scotch for Mr. Danvers, Wellington, and tell Gin Gob we'll want dinner in fifteen minutes."

They went into the living room and Danvers looked it over appraisingly. It was a beautiful apartment and it represented the reason why Barnaby had taken the cereal king's commission to watch Danvers until the broadcast was over.

"Guess you couldn't have had a place like this when you were a lieutenant in Naval Intelligence, eh, Bliss?"

"No," said Barnaby shortly. "Damn the fellow, where did he learn that? "But I suppose you didn't get much like this as a war correspondent in Berlin either."

"You're wrong there. Nothing but the best for us boys. Lived like a king! Can't wait to get back. Danvers knows what's good for Danvers. Ha, ha!"

"Then I hope you're going back soon," said Barnaby, his face expressionless. "For your sake," he added blandly.

"My syndicate's arranged a six weeks' lecture tour," Danvers said importantly. "Then I'm going back. You people need Arnold Danvers over there to let you know what's going on."

"Arnold," said Barnaby. "Arnold. What does that remind me of? Oh, yes. Benedict Arnold! No relation, I suppose?"

"No," said Danvers, the false grin fading. Wellington came in with the Scotch and Barnaby's applejack. Danvers waited until he had put down the drinks and left the room. There was satisfaction in his voice when he spoke.

"Were you aware," he said, "that your man Wellington has a criminal record?"

"Perfectly aware," Barnaby said smoothly, although the muscles in his jaw were tight. "As a matter of fact, I first encountered Wellington when I surprised him attempting to rob my apartment. He looked so much like a typical butler that I hired him on the spot."

"Oh," said Danvers sourly. They finished their drinks in silence and when dinner was announced, went in promptly. They were finishing their coffee when the apartment buzzer sounded. There was a murmur of voices and then Wellington came in.

"Some mug wants a void wit' you, boss."

"What's his name?" asked Barnaby, getting to his feet.

"Dunno, boss. He wouldn't give it."

"I'll go and see what he wants," said Barnaby.

"He's got a gun, boss. In his right-hand coat pocket. But he looks scared to death."

"Thanks, Wellington, I'll look out for it."

IN THE foyer he found a seedy individual fidgeting nervously. He was as thin as a lath and there was a beaten look in the stoop of his body. His dark suit was wrinkled and worn. There was something vaguely familiar about him, but Barnaby couldn't place it. As Barnaby approached and towered over him, the man cringed, like a dog will expecting a blow.

"Mr. Bliss," he said in a reedy voice. "I have some information I've got to tell you. I've got to tell someone. I tried to tell Mr. Salston, but they wouldn't let me in to see him. My clothes, you know." The man looked down at his shoddy suit pathetically. Barnaby was touched.

"Sure," he said, "I know how it is. We all get a bit of bad luck sometimes. Come on in. We'll have a drink and hear what you have to say."

The man looked hesitant. "Well, if you had a little applejack, I could use it. I don't feel very well."

"Plenty of applejack," said Barnaby. "I drink it myself. I offered some to—" He broke off suddenly as something clicked in his brain. He stared at the man who had suddenly gone white.

Without warning, the man pulled his gun from his pocket and fired. As it exploded, another gun roared behind Barnaby. He whirled around and saw Wellington knock up Danvers' arm as Danvers pulled the trigger again. The bullet went into the ceiling. Danvers cursed and wrenched away from Wellington. He leveled his gun again and then Barnaby's fist caught him squarely on the jaw and sent him down.

Barnaby turned to grab the seedy man, but he was gone. The door was open and he was nowhere in sight. Barnaby sighed and closed the door. He leaned down and picked up Danvers by the coat collar with one hand, dragged him across the floor,

and with a little heave tossed the limp body onto the couch.

"Did de skinny guy plug him, boss?" Wellington asked hopefully.

"No, damn it," said Barnaby. "Pour some water on him. And make sure you spill some of it on that yellow tie, so he'll have to change it. And on that blue shirt. Come to think of it, we might wet him down pretty thoroughly."

Wellington went into the dining room and came back with a bucket of water. Starting at Danvers' feet, he ran a trail of water up his body to his face. Danvers came to with a splutter.

"Where's Arnold?" he gasped. "Did he get away?"

"You're the only Arnold we've got around here," said Barnaby. "Or are you?"

Danvers brushed the water from his face and intelligence crept back into his eyes. "Get me a drink," he said.

Wellington brought him one and he gulped it down. It seemed to help him, for he got to his feet and looked at his clothes.

"That clumsy fool of yours, Bliss, has ruined my suit. I'll have to go change it before the broadcast. Where's my hat?"

"Not so fast," said Barnaby, scowling. "You've got some explaining to do first. I don't fancy having people eat my food and then turn my place into a pistol range and then ask for their hats. And I'm not exaggerating when I say that the crack on the jaw I gave you was just an introductory offer."

Danvers looked down and furtively studied the floor. Wellington went to the hall and picked up Danvers' gun and put it in his pocket. Then he put his hands behind his back, his face bland and serene.

"Well?" said Barnaby, and he flexed the hairy fingers on his big hands. Danvers suddenly turned on his smile.

"Sorry," he said. "I guess I'm still a bit rattled. You pack a mean punch. But I

can't give you much of an explanation. I never saw that chap before. I came out from the dining room and glanced out into the hall. As I did, the fellow pulled his gun and shot at me. Naturally, I tried to defend myself and fired back."

THE buzzer sounded again and Barnaby went out into the hall and opened the door. The building superintendent was there with a large and perspiring policeman. .

"Sorry to disturb you, Mr. Bliss," the super said apologetically, "but our house rules forbid the use of firearms. It makes our guests jumpy."

"Makes me jumpy, too," said Barnaby smiling. "But there was no one hurt. It was just some nut who came in and fired a few shots and beat it." He turned to the policeman. "You can tell your sergeant that Barnaby Bliss will be down in the morning with a written statement."

"Okay, Mr. Bliss," said the cop. "Seein' it's you, I guess I don't need to make no investigation. I'll tell the sarge you'll be down in the morning." He turned and waddled off, the super following him.

"Hey," yelled Danvers, running to the door, "I want to make a statement."

Barnaby yanked him back into the apartment and closed the door. "Am I going to have trouble with you, Danvers?" he asked.

"Don't be silly," said Danvers, his fat face mean and disappointed. "That was a chance for valuable publicity. I might add, Bliss, that you weren't hired for strong-arm stuff, but for the publicity your name will give to the broadcast."

Barnaby thought that over. He didn't like the smell of it. "I understood from Salston that there were elements in this country that might try to stop an uncensored report of conditions in Germany."

"Bah," said Danvers, "I let the old fool understand that. It's good publicity having Barnaby Bliss as a bodyguard."

Barnaby weighed the enjoyment of giving Danvers a good mussing up against old Salston's thousand dollars. It was a close decision but the thousand won.

"Maybe you don't need a bodyguard now, Danvers," he said, "but as soon as I put Salston's check through the bank, you'll need an army to keep my hands off you. Now let's go to your hotel and get prettied up for the broadcast."

Danvers didn't say anything. He just glowered at Barnaby and snatched his hat from Wellington and put his fat legs in motion down the hallway. Barnaby caught a wink from Wellington and went out without thinking anything of it.

They found a cab outside and climbed in. As Barnaby closed the door, Danvers let out a squawk.

"My watch!" he yelled. "Somebody's stolen my watch!" Barnaby thought suddenly of Wellington's wink and ground his teeth. Wellington had an incurable weakness for watches. Barnaby climbed out of the cab.

"Wait a minute," he said, and hurried into the apartment building. He let himself into his apartment and surprised Wellington admiring a fine gold watch. He snatched it from Wellington angrily.

"It's bad enough having to wet-nurse that slimy Danvers creature," he said bitterly, "without having to protect him from pickpockets. I have only one final instruction for you, Wellington. Put the glass and the knife and fork that Danvers used away some place and don't let Gin Gob wash them."

"Whaddya mean by 'final instruction,' boss?" asked Wellington.

"Don't give me that 'boss' stuff," said Barnaby. "You're on your own from now on. You're fired."

“Fired?” asked Wellington surprised. “Wait a minute, boss, you can’t do dis to me. Lemme tell you about dat watch.”

“Tell it to the police,” said Barnaby on his way out. “They’ll be looking after you now.”

He got into the cab with Danvers and shoved the watch at Danvers. “Take it,” he said, “and if you’re interested in a visit to one of New York’s hospitals, ask me some questions about it.”

Danvers put the watch away and they rode to his hotel without conversation. At the hotel, Danvers hustled out of the cab first and closed the door behind him.

“I’ll only be a minute,” he said. “You can wait for me here and keep the cab ready.”

Barnaby was glad to get rid of him for a few minutes so he didn’t say anything. He jabbed one of his vile cigars into his mouth and lit up, searching his mind for a way to hire Wellington back without losing face. Life would be dull without that rascal Wellington around any more.

HE FINISHED his cigar and threw it out the cab window. Taking a look at his wrist watch, he discovered that Danvers had been in the hotel twenty minutes. Barnaby shuddered at the thought of the ghastly combination of colors Danvers would be able to think up in twenty minutes. He got out of the cab and went into the hotel. At the desk he showed his card and asked for Danvers’ room number.

“It’s 1746, Mr. Bliss,” said the clerk, “but you won’t find him in. He came in about fifteen minutes ago and got his key. But he came right down again and went out the side door. Do you want to leave a message for him?”

“Are you sure it was Danvers?” asked Barnaby.

The clerk smiled. “When he came in, he was wearing a yellow tie and a blue

shirt. When he went out, he had on a purple tie and a green shirt.”

Barnaby dashed out. He gave the driver the address of the broadcasting studio and sank back on the seat. What was Danvers up to now? A guy who would wear a purple tie with a green shirt was capable of anything. And what was Danvers’ idea in trying to kill the skinny man in the apartment?

The cab pulled up in front of the studio and Barnaby got out. There was a knot of people in front of it, and as Barnaby paid the driver, he recognized R. G. Salston, the cereal king, in the center of it. Almost simultaneously Salston saw him and came rushing over.

“Thank Heavens you’re here at last,” he quavered. “I was afraid that something dreadful had happened to Danvers.” He peered into the cab and saw there was no one in it. He turned to Barnaby and his face was white with anger and dismay.

“What have you done with him, Bliss?” he shouted. “Are you in this plot also?”

“What plot?” asked Barnaby.

“Don’t you read the papers?” screamed Salston. He drew an evening edition of the *Star* from his pocket and thrust it under Barnaby’s nose. A headline leaped at him.

RADIO SABOTAGE HINTED

In an exclusive interview this afternoon the “Star” learned that Arnold Danvers, the war correspondent just returned from Berlin, fears that an attempt will be made to stop his broadcast tonight. He disclosed that his sponsor, Mr. R. G. Salston, had engaged the services of Barnaby Bliss, famous adventurer detective, to prevent any. . . .

Barnaby threw the paper from him in disgust. He opened the cab door and got back in. Old Salston thrust his head in the window and shook a fist at Barnaby.

“You can’t do this,” he yelled, his

voice choking with rage. "I gave you a thousand dollars to get Danvers here tonight."

Barnaby grabbed Salston's fist in one mighty paw and squeezed until Salston opened his fingers. Then he pulled Salston's check from his pocket and wrapped Salston's fingers around it.

"Keep your money," said Barnaby. "I don't like the feel of it."

"But what about my broadcast?" squealed Salston. "What about all the people waiting to hear Danvers on the Munchies program?"

"They'll have more appetite," Barnaby said, scowling, "if they don't hear Danvers." He pushed Salston out of the window and told the driver to take him to the *Bulletin* building. The motor drowned the sound of Salston's protests.

At the *Bulletin*, he hurried into the morgue and began the laborious task of looking through the files for anything that might give him information on Danvers' past.

He emerged three hours later, his face grim. He stepped to the curb to cross the street to a drug store and a taxi pulled up in front of him. He glanced casually at it and waved it away. Finding an opportunity, he crossed the street and went into the drug store. There he got ten dollars worth of quarters and put through phone calls to a little town north of San Francisco and to Washington, D. C.

Half an hour later he came out onto the street again and found a taxi waiting. He hopped in and a gun was jabbed hard into his ribs. He looked around cautiously and there was a little hard-faced guy with bright, feverish eyes on the seat beside him. Hopped up, thought Barnaby, staring at the wild glitter in the man's eyes.

"Get down on the floor, Bliss," the hard-faced man growled. "And no tricks.

I'm just in the mood to plug a few smart guys tonight."

He looked as if he meant business and Barnaby got off the seat and crouched down on the floor. The cab had started almost the instant Barnaby had gotten into it, and his sense of direction told him they were heading east toward the river.

"A bit cold for swimming, don't you think?" said Barnaby pleasantly. The man with the gun grinned. .

"You won't mind it," he said.

"Ah," said Barnaby. "Do I gather that you plan to shoot me first?"

The man looked at him in disgust. "Shooting's noisy," he said. "Aincha heard about the mayor's drive to cut down noise in this city? We're taxpayers here, so we use a lead pipe. It don't distoib the guys what is catching them some shut-eye." He leaned forward and spoke to the driver. "Pull up here, Ippy, this'll do."

THE cab jolted to a stop. As it did, Barnaby grabbed the gun with his left and brought his right hand up from the floor. It landed cleanly and Barnaby saw Hard-face slump in the seat. As he did, the window panel behind Barnaby slid open and he ducked but not in time. Something hit him across the top of his head, and the cab whirled about him and dissolved into blackness.

When he came to, his head was throbbing horribly and a soft light was shining in his face. He propped himself up on an elbow and stared about him. He was in his own apartment. He leaned back on the pillow.

"Wellington," he called. "Bring me a drink, you—" He broke off, remembering that he had fired Wellington.

"Coming up, boss," said Wellington's familiar voice, and the door opened and Wellington came in with a tray on which

stood a bottle of Scotch and a siphon. Barnaby hid his pleasure in a snarl.

"Applejack, you idiot. You know I don't drink Scotch."

"We're all out of applejack, boss," said Wellington unruffled.

"There were two quarts here when I left," Barnaby reminded him.

"A lot's happened since then, boss."

Barnaby looked at him sternly, then a smile dissolved the scowl on his face. "I guess you're right, Wellington," he said. "Pour out the Scotch. And—uh—will you join me in one?"

Wellington looked horrified. "Sorry, boss, that ain't right. A soivant ain't supposed to drink wit' his boss."

"We'll dispense with the rules temporarily," said Barnaby. Wellington sat down on the edge of the bed and pulled an extra glass out of his pocket. "Don't mind if I do, boss," he said, and filled the glasses.

Barnaby took a long pull on his drink and set it down. Wellington reached in his pocket and passed him a cigar. Barnaby got it going and relaxed.

"All right, Wellington. How did I get back here?"

"Don't remember too clearly, boss. I must have passed out after de boys put us in a taxi."

"Passed out?" asked Barnaby. "What from?"

"Applejack," said Wellington. "What a headache I got." He rubbed his head gently. "Me and de skinny guy was pourin' 'em down before he got bumped off."

Barnaby scowled. "Wellington, is it impossible for you to tell a story in any semblance of decent order?"

A faint shouting drifted up from the street and Wellington went to the window and leaned out. In a second he pulled his head back.

"An extra, boss. You better catch up on dis morning's papers while I go out and get de extra." He tossed a newspaper on the bed and started for the door.

"This morning's papers!" exclaimed Barnaby. "What time is it now?"

"Eight o'clock in de evening, boss. You've been out cold since last night." He turned and went out and Barnaby picked up the paper. Wellington had marked with a red pencil a feature story and a small paragraph down at the bottom of the page. He glanced at the item's headline.

WAR CORRESPONDENT MISSING

In small type was the story of Danvers' failure to show up for the broadcast, and the facts that he had not checked in to his hotel room nor had any word of him been heard. It went on to give his history. Barnaby skipped through it hurriedly and looked at the marked paragraph.

It said merely that an unidentified man of about forty had been shot to death in an alleyway in the Yorkville section. Besides the fact that the man had a gold watch that had a swastika and the inscription *To R. D.* inside the case, there were no clues to his identity.

Barnaby had finished the paper and his drink when Wellington reappeared and handed Barnaby the extra.

A glaring headline ran across the front page.

WAR WRITER ESCAPES MAKES BROADCAST TONIGHT

Underneath was a dramatic story of Danvers' kidnaping by a band of thugs and of his single-handed escape. It ended in a glowing tribute to Danvers' courage in making the broadcast tonight. There was even a statement by R. G. Salston. Barnaby threw the paper on the floor in disgust.

“Made to order, ain’t it, boss?” said Wellington. Barnaby stared at him in surprise.

“Wellington,” he said, “a more accurate statement never came out of your mouth. But why did you mark that paragraph about the man found shot in Yorkville?”

WELLINGTON got up and went out of the room. He returned with a heavy object carefully wrapped in a newspaper. He undid the package and disclosed a Mauser .32 automatic.

“What’s that?” asked Barnaby.

“A gun, boss,” replied Wellington.

“I know, I know,” said Barnaby angrily. “But what gun?”

“Dat’s de gun, boss, what killed de guy in Yorkville.”

Barnaby swung his long frame out of bed and started for Wellington menacingly. Wellington backed nimbly away and held out his hands in protest.

“Take it easy, boss,” he pleaded. “I’m tellin’ de story, ain’t I?”

Barnaby felt suddenly weak and he sat down on the bed and poured himself a drink.

“All right,” he said wearily, “give it to me the best you can.”

“O. K., boss. Well, right after you leave, de skinny guy what Danvers was shootin’ at comes back. He wants me to call you at de broadcasting studio and let him talk to you. I try de broadcasting studio, but dey say you ain’t been dere. So de skinny guy says he’ll wait and wonders if he could have a drink of applejack. I get him one, and since I’m fired anyway, I have one wit’ him. You don’t show up and we have another. Dat keeps up and de foist t’ing I know, de bottle’s empty.

“Well, we’re gettin’ pretty chummy by dis time, so I opens another. An’ de apple goes to woik on de guy, an’ he gets to de

point where he insists dat he is Danvers and dat Danvers is Danvers also.

“Den he gets to yammerin’ about gettin’ put in a concentration camp, an’ escapin’ and followin’ his brother over here. I don’t pay much attention, devotin’ my energies mostly to de apple. Pretty soon de second bottle’s gone and de skinny guy suggests we get some more, providin’ I pay for it.

“But I only got a little change in my pocket. Dat racin’ sheet was all wrong about dat horse in de second race at Saratoga. Den I t’inks to myself dat you fired me wit’out payin’ me off. So I tells Skinny we got to go find you and he agrees.

“Foist we go to de studio, and a guy I know in de hackstand tells me you went to de *Bulletin* building. Makin’ it brief, I trails you dere and to de drug store, but after dat, I lose you. I tell Skinny somet’ing musta happened to you, and he says he bets he knows what. He starts off uptown an’ I follow.

“He goes up to Yorkville and finally comes to a creepy lookin’ jernt. He stops and says he bets you’re in it. I say let’s go get him, an’ he says no, dey’ll kill us an’ he means it. I tell him to wait and goes to a drug store an’ calls up some of my pals over in Brooklyn. Dey say dey ain’t doin’ nuttin’ an’ dey’ll be right over.

“I goes back to where Skinny is waitin’ an’ just as I turn de corner. I see Danvers run out from de creepy lookin’ jernt. He sees Skinny an’ he hauls out a gun an’ lets him have it. I duck into a doorway. Danvers looks around careful and don’t see nobody. He chucks de gun in a garbage can and beats it up de street towards me.

“I pull my hat down over my eyes and steps out of the doorway. I act like I don’t see Danvers and I bump into him, swipin’ his watch in de collision. He don’t

recognize me and runs on up de street.

“When I get to Skinny, his lights are goin’ out. He gasps, ‘Rodney’ once an’ kicks de bucket. I drag him into a dark alley, an’ somet’ing tells me to put de watch in his pocket to make sure Danvers gets caught. I gets de gun outa de garbage can and den de boys show up. I tell ‘em my boss is in de jernt dere, an’ I don’t want no trouble gettin’ him out. Dey tell me to wait five minutes an’ I can take anyt’ing I want outa dere.

“Dey goes in an’ pretty soon one of ‘em comes out an’ gives me de high sign. I goes in an’ dey have three sad-lookin’ punks stretched out on de floor. I find you out cold in an upstairs room an’ de boys help me load you in a taxi. I tell dem to take care of de three punks till I let dem know what’s what. Dey say O. K. an’ a couple of dem ride back in de taxi to bring you up here.

“I guess I passed out after dat, on account of I don’t remember a t’ing until I woke up here dis mornin’. Whew! Pass de bottle, boss.”

Barnaby handed it to him. “Did I get any mail today, Wellington?”

“An air mail special from Washington, boss.”

“Get it for me, Wellington. And have you got the glass and tableware Danvers used?”

“Sure t’ing, boss.” Wellington went out and Barnaby picked up the phone from his bed table. In a few minutes he had the commissioner of police on the wire.

“This is Barnaby Bliss, commissioner. It will be to your advantage to come over to my place immediately. And bring R. G. Salston, the cereal king, with you.” He gave his address and hung up. Wellington came back with Danvers’ knife and fork and the air mail letter.

IT WAS half-past eight when the commissioner and Salston showed up. They were indignant at Barnaby’s peremptory summons, but Barnaby cut them short.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “I want your cooperation in stopping the Danvers’ broadcast tonight.”

“Impossible,” snapped Salston. “The nation is waiting to hear Arnold Danvers’ broadcast.”

“Arnold Danvers,” said Barnaby flatly, “is dead.”

“Dead?” asked the commissioner, bewildered.

“Murdered,” Barnaby told him. “But let me tell you a little story. A few years back a man by the name of Arnold Danvers took a rap for espionage on the West Coast. It was suspected that he took it to shield someone else, but nothing definite was known.

“Later this Danvers went to Europe as a war correspondent. His stuff was good for a while, then suddenly became nothing short of propaganda. No reputable paper would touch it. Then he came back to this country and Salston hired him for a broadcast.

“But it wasn’t Arnold Danvers he hired, but his brother, Rodney, whom the real Arnold Danvers had shielded in the espionage rap. The real Arnold Danvers had been put in a concentration camp and his brother Rodney substituted for him. This Rodney would sell his sister for a few dollars and he didn’t mind selling his brother for propaganda gold.

“When Rodney Danvers discovered that his brother had escaped and followed him to New York, he shot him, fearing exposure. And tonight, unless stopped, he will sell democracy short—sell it short on a broadcast sponsored by an American, sell it short to an American public prepared by a fake kidnaping to believe his

every word. What are you going to do about it, gentlemen?"

"If what you say is true," said the commissioner, "what can we do about it? How can we prove it?"

"There was an unidentified man shot in Yorkville last night," said Barnaby. "His name was Arnold Danvers. His prints will check with those I have here in this envelope, sent to me by the F. B. I. in Washington, who obtained them from the authorities in California.

"In his possession a watch was found which will bear prints corresponding with those of the fake Arnold Danvers. And in his body is a bullet which can be proved to have been fired by this gun bearing the prints of the fake Arnold Danvers. The fingerprints of the fake Arnold Danvers are here on this glass and on this knife and fork.

"Add to this the eyewitness account of the shooting which Wellington can furnish you and the state has a clear case of murder. Does that answer you, commissioner?"

The commissioner looked at his watch. "Come on, Salston," he said, "we're going to arrest a propagandist for murder."

"But my program," moaned Salston. "I thought I had such a bargain when I hired Danvers. He was giving it free as a gift to the American people."

"*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes,*" said Barnaby, smiling.

"You said it, boss," agreed Wellington. "Dat's Latin. It means, 'I fear the Greeks even when dey are bringing gifts.' In udder woids, when a crooked waiter says it's on de house, he's probably fixin' to hand you a Mickey."