

*Snooty Piper and Scoop Binney, those sappy Beantown news-sleuths,
Get slated for early planting when they dig into a . . .*

Hayseed Homicide



"Dizzy Duo" Yarn

By Joe Archibald

SNOOTY PIPER wins a football pool one day and the take is over a hundred bucks. Right away he jumps to the nearest phone in the city room of the Boston Evening Star and calls a dame. Then he comes over to where I am sweating out a tough lead on a story and says he has fixed me up, too.

"I hope you never get sentenced to burn," I sniff. "Somehow you will see to it I am in the next chair. Why don't you put the easy scratch in the bank for a rainy day?"

"It is drizzlin' outside now, Scoop," the crackpot says. "Anyway, how much interest does a bank give you? I just called Gloria Schmitzhuber an' told her to get a

friend. We will meet the two cheesecakes in front of Piro's."

"How does this lead sound, Snooty? 'The indubitable fact that some crimes do pay is borne out by the following list of those called unsolved in the files of our own police department. The slaying of the Harvard College widow, the liquidation of Benny the Burp, Bubble Gum Vending Machine King, via the Charles River, the assassination of a cop and a payroll chaperone in Sullivan Square and the theft of twenty-one grand—' "

"Abigail must be mad at the police commissioner once more," Snooty says. "Why is she gettin' Guppy to needle the cops, Scoop?"

"Maybe he gave an order she should also stop at red lights," I says. Abigail Hepplethwaite is a fabulously rich old babe out in Back Bay who has more pull in Boston than all the molar extractors combined. She could carpet the road between South Africa and Siberia with thousand-buck bills and have enough left to pay Europe's board bill.

"Don't forget the robberies at Braves Field and Fenway Park the last couple of years," Snooty says. "Look, it is five P. M., so knock off until tomorrow, Scoop."

"Who was the suspects they had on that Sullivan Square slaughter?"

"Ask me the date Lee surrendered," Snooty retorts. "I was the worst bum in ancient history."

WE MEET the bimbos in front of Piro's, a hot spot a block from Park Square. I take one quick gander at a lumpy blonde and start to run but find she has already hooked her arm through mine.

"Hee, hee, your frien' is bashful," she giggles at Snooty, who is telling his babe what a shame it is she has to let down the old hem to get that New Look.

She is a wiry redhead evidently trying to look like Hepburn. I am sure I could of hung my hat on one of her cheekbones. She has flared nostrils like a horse sniffing at smoke in a burning barn.

Snooty says my handicap is named Essie Garbitsch, and I make her spell it to be sure. We trip inside Piro's and get a table behind a post, which means at times I get a break.

We'll save on zombies, I says to myself, as we have already got two.

The waiter comes and leers at us.

My babe says, "I'll take one of them boxcars."

"Make mine a clover blossom," Gloria Schmitzhuber chips.

"Yeah? An' what will you—er—

gentlemen have?" the flunkey asks.

"Dry Martini," Snooty sighs.

"Likewise," I says. "But it should be a mickey. I—"

"Them dry cocktails are fakes," Essie says, slapping a powder puff against her pan until I wonder am I in a flour mill. "I had one the other night and spilt it in my lap and it was just as wet as any other snort."

I wish the joint would get raided. The waiter seems quite glad to leave. Then in comes a male citizen who has with him a snappy babe wearing a strapless evening gown and the dolls with us applaud.

"It ain't the floor show yet," I choke out.

"Shall we dance, sugar?" Essie Garbitsch says to me, grabbing me by the arm and yanking me out of the chair.

We dance and it is not easy. It is like pushing a pushcart loaded with anvils through Filene's basement on Saturday P.M. I ask the babe quite pleasantly to stop using my left wing for a pump handle, and she says, "You're cute. Say, where you from?"

"Where I should have stayed," I retort, and then we pass Snooty and his dame and I hear the carrot-top ask him does he know the Charleston. It is murder.

When the music stops and gives us a reprieve, we limp to our table, and then we see the odd-looking character wearing a blonde on each arm. The trio is being seated at the next table to us. The dolls are in no pain; they are higher than prices.

"How'd they let that lug in here?" Essie Garbitsch wants to know. "I thought it was a refined joint?"

But I am too interested in the arrival. It is very apparent that it is his first try in cafe society, for he is as much out of place in Piro's as a polecat in an aviary. He wears a shiny blue serge suit, the sleeves of which end too soon below his elbows. His dome,

which is as round as a muskmelon, is topped by gingery colored hair sporting the biggest cowlick I ever saw. He has buck teeth and a pair of eyes the color of blue overalls that have been through the wash a hundred and three times.

"I wonder did he get his milking done?" Snooty quips, and the babes howl.

"If he did he never brought none with him," Gloria giggles. "He's petrified, not homogenized, Snooty!"

The oaf's blondes yelp for red-eye. Hiram calls the waiter and I bet all the hogs within a hundred miles of Boston get on the move. A citizen in a tux comes over and admonishes the hayshaker. The wrens tell him to go and drop dead.

I lean close to Snooty. "This is goin' to be good. You can have the floor show."

"It's my night to howl!" the fugitive from a plough yips. "Le's have champagne! Four quarts, by gorry! Li'l service here!" He bangs the table with a fist as big as a three-rib roast and the water jug bounces and irrigates the bistro floorman's trousers.

"You tell 'em, Horace!" a blonde yips, picking up a big stalk of wet celery and cramming it in the hanky pocket of the night spot bouncer's tux. That does it. The outraged citizen calls another employee and rolls up a sleeve.

"Oh, so you wanna get tough, hah?" the blonde yips and throws her reticule. It hits the bouncer right where he smells and he reeks on his heels.

"Le's rastle!" the ginger-locked gee yelps and picks up the boy in the tux and throws him halfway to the orchestra.

Essie Garbitsch is delighted. "I bet it's part of the act, Scoop! What a renovation, huh?"

FIVE minutes later the babe has changed her mind. Six tables are upside down and she is under one of them. Outside four

big cops are loading the hick and his geishas into the wagon. A bouncer is staggering to and fro, counting his teeth. He also has one eye closing rapidly. The doll in the strapless evening wrapper is quite frantic as some wires have snapped loose in the shuffle. A chivalrous character wraps her up in some drapes he has yanked down. What a rhubarb! The best part of it all is that a lot of the tabs got stepped on or lost.

Order is finally restored and the orchestra plays. "Shall we danth?" Essie says to me, and I suggest we look for her partial plate. There is a gap in her choppers a nice fat cigar would fit in very snugly.

Me and Snooty get rid of the pair at one A.M. and taxi to our rooming house. "Iwa Jima must have been somethin' like that, Scoop," the crackpot says, taking off his shoes. "If that blister I had would stamp juice out of grapes instead of dancin', she'd make dough."

"Don't look at me," I reply. "I could of dug up better numbers in a Revolutionary churchyard."

We arrive at the city room the next A. M. a trifle late. Two hours to be exact, and it is a good thing an irate citizen is threatening to murder Dogface Woolsey at the time, thereby distracting the redactor's attention.

"Why threaten me?" Dogface screeches. "I ain't runnin' this rag! I just do what Guppy says. Leggo my lapel!"

"It is the police commissioner," Snooty says.

"Awright, lemonhead, I'll talk to Guppy! No old babe, no matter how much of a sock she has, isn't goin' to make no bum out of me, understand? Yeah, my boys only held her up while some fire engines go by. Only about two minutes is all! Just a chocolate factory is on fire!"

"The way I heard it," Snooty calls out, "she told the cops so what as she'd finance

a new one. Being stopped made her almost too late to get to the bookie's. She had a forty-to-one shot a jockey tipped her off on and—"

"You keep outta this!" Dogface howls. "Binney, that story ready yet which you started ten days ago?"

"Forgetting who the suspects was in that Sullivan Square murder and robbery is holding me up," I says. "I got to go to the morgue."

"You all will," the commissioner says, "if you don't lay off my department."

"It would be to the best interests of the taxpayers if we did lay 'em off," Snooty says. "Especially Iron Jaw O'Shaughnessy. What has he got on the City Hall?"

Dogface jumped up, holding the paste jar in his right mitt like Lujack of Notre Dame ready to fire a pass. "Both of you jerks get out of here!" he snarls.

We go and wind up later at the Greek's. Snooty says his tongue tastes like it was used as a shoeshine rag.

"Mine ain't exactly hygienic," I admit. "Who were the two gees that were suspected, Snooty?"

"There were seven all told," he says. "I remember they picked up Two-Trigger Atombi and Nitro Armitage, the two crude operators who later got three for five each for a punch job on a safe in East Boston. Then I think there was Baby Lips Brophy—"

"I recall some cops chased a sedan all the way down the pike to Ipswich where they lost it in a fog," I says. "Iron Jaw took a left turn and dropped into a river."

"And they sent to Newburyport for a steam shovel," Snooty chuckles.

A few days later Abigail Hepplethwaite takes off her spurs and promises that the commissioner will soon get a raise. She has had her fun. The old doll would switch the North and South railroad terminals around just for a lark. Things move along about

normal until one night me and Snooty take a drive along the pike with Gloria and Essie and stop at a roadside stand for hotdogs and coffee. It is nice to stop after a ride in Snooty's 1930 Gnash Six. There are more springs in Death Valley than there are in his jalopy and it is a caution how he stops without brakes.

WE are wolfing the weenies when a goggle-eyed native traipses in and asks for two coffees and a cup of doughnuts. "Ha," he says, "I ain't meself tonight. What you think happened?"

"You lay offen the reefers," Essie Garbitsch warns.

"Huh?" says the citizen. Then he gets it. "No, I don't mean it like that. There was a murder last night. I just saw the body. Somebody murdered Horace Pickering. He never got in Ipswich with his milk today an' his customers kept callin' him. Never missed a day since he was here, so they called the cops an' said they should better check as maybe he was kicked by a horse or somethin'. Well, they did, but he wasn't kicked by no horse."

"Let's go," Snooty says. "How do we get to the farm, pal?"

"Next road you come to towards Newburyport to the right. Go about a mile an' a half—you'll see the police cars."

"Oh, this is like a radio program, Essie," Gloria Schmitzhuber yelps. "Let's hurry."

"This is official business," Snooty Piper says sternly. "You and Essie grab a bus back."

"Why, of all the adulterated nerve, Essie!" Gloria huffs. "You'd think we was married to these bums!"

"Precious forbid," Essie snorts. "Anyways, dearie, look at the two handsome truck drivers just coming in!" She glares at me. "Get lost!"

"Come on, Scoop," Snooty urges.

We drive away from the roadside stand and out onto the Pike, Snooty hardly looking where he's going. A truck trailer half as long as a through freight nearly splatters us.

"I wonder how some guys get a license!" Snooty says indignantly while I swallow my ticket and drop it into place. Suddenly he lets go of the wheel and we angle toward a Greyhound bus. "Horace! Why, that was the name of that character we saw at Piro's with the two blondes. Hey, watch where you're goin', Scoop!"

"You forget," I choke out. "You're drivin'."

We finally approach the farm and see three cars in the yard. Snooty nearly liquidates a pig, six hens, and a brindle cow as we go through the gate. A cop holds up a hand and Snooty steps on the brakes he hasn't got. We stop because a barn gets in our way. We climb out and show our credentials.

"I hope you are acquainted with the Bill of Rights, my friend," Snooty argues. "This is a free press in the U.S. If you want to suppress us, we will call the U.N. The public has a right to know—"

"Did I say anythin'?" the cop wedges in. "Stop beefin' and go look at the stiff."

"Oh, brother!" I sigh.

The corpse is in the kitchen. We let out twin gasps as we ogle it. It is the remains of none other than the character who upset the aplomb of Piro's not so long ago. Rigor mortis has not spared the horses with Horace. There are two bullet holes through the bib of his overalls.

"Been dead for about eighteen hours, I figure," the cadaver connoisseur opines.

"Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned," a local gendarme quotes. We turn and look at him. He is holding a dame's compact in his hand.

"Don't tell me he brought them blondes out here!" I say *sotto voce* to Snooty.

"Open and shut case," a plainclothes cop from Newburyport says. "That French babe come back an' fixed his apple cart. Or should I say milk wagon?"

"We're from the press in Boston," Snooty says. "I would like to get the details."

"Huh? Well, Horace married the doll only about a year ago—he got her over from Patee," a native explains. "It looks like he give her a snow job about how big a place he had and that he had a sock in the bank. Huh, he never had a dime, an' this place was mortgaged to the hilt. He never took her nowheres an' didn't give her any new clothes. So she runs off an' leaves him.

"Well, she must've found out he'd been kiddin' her as only a month ago he pays off his mortgage, paints the house an' barn and buys a new jalopy. He goes off oncet in a while on a bender. Can you blame the French babe? So she comes back an' demands her share of what he's got. He don't give an' she lets him have it. Initials on this compact are M. R."

"Her name was Madelon Rissette," a cop says. "We found that thing on the floor. You can see the dishes ain't cleared from the table. He was eatin' with somebody. We have called headquarters and have sent out the alarm. The doll won't get far. It goes to show what you get for treatin' a dame like that."

"So all at once Horace got in the high brackets," Snooty says. "Say, is this Ipswich?"

"Yeah."

"It's famous for plenty of clams," I says.

"That wasn't funny, Scoop," Snooty sniffs. "And shut up. I want to think of something." The crackpot sits down at the table and absently stares at the remains of a late repast.

THE medical character gives an authorization to have the remains taken to the deep freeze. He snaps his bag shut and makes his exit.

“She sure turned the joint upside down lookin’ for dough,” a cop remarks. “Horace’s pockets were as clean as a baby’s conscience.”

“Horace bought a brindle bull offen me a week ago,” a native says. “Handed me a five hundred dollar bill I couldn’t change. He still owes me fer it.”

“Half a grand?” Snooty yelps.

“Like I been sayin’ to Edie—” the native goes on, “she’s my wife—it all happened just after Horace cleared a piece of ground to plant in potatoes. Well, he ain’t planted any after all that work. Edie says maybe Horace struck a gold mine.”

The phone rings and a cop gets it. “Sergeant Longfellow speakin’. What? You grabbed her already? Gettin’ on a train? We’ll be right in.”

We leave two cops guarding Horace Pickering’s homestead and they get orders to see everything is left just as it is. We drive to Newburyport and go into the bastille to see the French babe. No, she isn’t. She is maybe the homeliest babe ever looked cross-eyed at the Eiffel Tower. She has no more waistline than a plastic balloon and the only thing that could improve her looks would be a guillotine.

“Peegs an’ she-hens!” she screeches. “Vooze leaf me go! I deedn’t keel ze bom, nevair!”

The cops grill the femme for nearly an hour. She admits she was in the farmhouse at ten P.M., but left an hour later. She tried to get enough money out of Horace to grab a boat back to Paree, but he wouldn’t cut loose with a thin dime. She did whang him one with a skillet but it failed to etherize the rustic. Then she was tossed out of the maison.

“I get ze boss *ici* an’ eet ees where I been all ze time planneeng ze murdair, vooze say. Bah, I want ze American console, *oui!* An’ anozzer ceegaret!”

“A likely story,” a cop sighs. “Lock her up again. It’ll take us a couple of days to pin it on the babe so it’ll stick, boys.”

“What do you think?” I says to Snooty.

“Let’s drive back to the farm, Scoop, as what I’m thinkin’ you would scoff at. Would it seem odd to you that a citizen should prefer maple syrup over catchup on a fried egg?”

“Snooty, we pass the Danvers nut hatch on the way back to Boston. Stop in and get a reading, will you?”

“I’ll show you, Scoop,” Snooty says. “Aren’t you catching on?”

“The Frog femme was at the farm at about the right time. She admits it,” I says. “She had the only reason to rub out Horace.”

“Maybe,” Snooty says.

The cops let us in the farmhouse again. Snooty shows me the cold fried egg and the goo on it. There is a bottle of maple syrup on the table. “Huh, there is no accountin’ for tastes,” I sniff. “I had a second cousin put celery salt on apple pie!”

“Yeah? An’ you remembered it, even if he was only a second cousin!” Snooty yelps. “You give me a swell idea, Scoop!”

“I did? Don’t mention it,” I says.

“Let’s go out and look where Horace made a place to plant spuds,” Snooty says.

What else was there to do? I follow the gland case across the yard, over a patch of ground recently fertilized and through a barbed wire fence on which I leave part of the seat of my pants. We find ourselves in a clearing and look at a pile of brush and pieces of old stumps Horace has dynamited loose. Snooty keeps mooching around and soon he comes to an old half-dead oak tree and drops on all fours.

“Come here, Scoop!” he yelps. I join him and I see where somebody has excavated near the roots. “It is where the hayshaker was goin’ to plant dynamite, Scoop. But instead he hit the jackpot.”

“What could spill out but acorns?” I ask, then keep my mouth open. “Say, this is near Ipswich, Snooty. And from here you can see the river where Iron Jaw fell in. They never found the scratch from the Sullivan Square crime.”

“You catch on quick, beetlehead,” Snooty sneers. “All we have to do now, Scoop, is find out the whereabouts of all the suspects they pinched at the time. But I got an’ idea.”

“I was afraid of that,” I gulp.

WE GO to headquarters when we get back to the big town. We check on several characters whose whereabouts are of continued interest to the cops. Baby Lips Brophy is doing ten to twenty up in Maine. Eno Saltz departed this world six months ago after a losing argument with a gendarme out in Woburn. Ipsy Fink is doing a stretch at Sing Sing, N. Y., a sentence which will never have a period after it. Two-Trigger Atombi is still in the State clink in Charlestown because of getting caught digging a tunnel not three months ago. His pal, Nitro Armitage, is out on parole.

Iron Jaw O’Shaughnessy comes in as we get up to go. Despite the cost of victuals the big slob looks more ponderous than ever. He leers at us and wants to know what in aitch we are up to, and how was it we happened to be out in the sticks just at the time the apple knocker was expunged by his war bride.

“It is metrophysical,” Snooty says. “Binney is my psy-kick. Get it? Come on, Scoop.”

Iron Jaw scratches his dome. “Hah,” he scoffs. “I jus’ read about it in the paper.

The way I figger it the rube brought some lettuce back from the black markets when he was a G.I. He waited awhile before he started the spree. That French pigeon’ll sing ‘fore mornin’. But Ipswich—that was where I—” He stopped, his mouth wide open.

We leave Iron Jaw there playing like he had a brain. We go home, such as it is. Snooty Piper starts rummaging through his old trunk after huddling with himself for almost an hour.

“So maybe the hayseeder did find the loot,” I says. “But who put it there?”

“Here is what I been lookin’ for,” Snooty says, waving a booklet at me. “You remember that shindig we went to at the big house over a year ago, Scoop? The cons put on a show and had programs made which were like high school year books. It was quite a gag. Maybe what I want to know is in this. Ha, *State Pen & Scroll*.”

We look through the book. It is a howl. Then we come to the half-tone of Randolph “Nitro” Armitage. Snooty reads the type under it out loud.

“ ‘Born in Punxatawney, Pa. Who knows when? Nickname, Nitro. Attended State Industrial School and got his B.S. (Burglary Specialist). Matriculated at Lyman Reform School Dorchester. Studied Civil Engineering for awhile but gave it up when his tunnel ended in the warden’s office. . . Halfback on the State Pen Tigers. Likes redheads, especially if they’re named Lola and live in Chelsea, and corn syrup on his eggs. Not likely to succeed. . . ”

Snooty suddenly snaps his fingers. “That is it, Scoop!” he yelps. “Of course they wouldn’t give maple syrup to cons so Nitro used the next best. I don’t know why the F.B.I. don’t come after me.”

“Be patient,” I says. “They will. Now what?”

“In the mornin’ we will go to East Boston an’ brief the flatfoot who got the

goods on Nitro and Two-Trigger. Say, I wonder if the dames are still sore at us. That Gloria is my type, Scoop. I'll phone her first thing tomorrow night after supper."

At nine A.M. we are in the East Boston bastille quizzing a lumpy dick named O'Brannigan. "Yeah," he says. "I kept on that punk's tail for ten days 'fore I got the goods on him, Piper. Had a moll with him one night in a joint on the road to Concord. A redtop. Looked a lot like that Hollywood babe, Hepburn."

I feel faint. "No, no!" I says under what breath I have left. "A thousand times no!"

"Of course," Snooty scoffs. "It would have to be a coincidence, Scoop."

"This cupcake worked in a beauty saloon in Dorchester," O'Brannigan goes on. "Lola somethin' or other."

"Come on, Scoop." Snooty gets up and has to use both hands to lift his hat off the cop's desk.

"I don't believe it," I says over and over.

"We're bein' silly," Snooty Piper says.

We visit nine gin mills between the hours of ten A.M. and four P.M. Finally we wind up at the Greek's and Snooty makes a phone call. He comes back with his left ear as red as a boiled shrimp.

"She says to drop dead again," he chokes out. "It'll be just too bad," she says, "if I dare see her again as her boy friend is the kind would tear off my leg and beat me to death with it afterwards. Anyway, she says she expects to move to New York very soon. Now let's see." Snooty whips out his Wolf Patrol Book and flips the pages. "Here it is. Gloria Schmitzhuber, Apt. B 29, Sholder Arms.

"You'll go there all alone," I says flatly.

"I have got to be sure, don't I?" Snooty sighs. "Suppose I should never know?"

"Don't you think we should confide in

the police department?" I asked sweetly. "If it was Nitro who stashed the clams out under the old tree, they would love to know about it."

"And put him on his guard?" Snooty yips. "We'll wait a couple more days to see if my idea will work."

THE next day the journals say that the French babe hasn't sung and keeps howling for the U. S. Consul and a transatlantic phone to call up DeGaulle. We walk into the city room of the *Evening Star* and find a character cleaning the empty bottles out from under Snooty's desk. Snooty asks the meaning of it all.

"You're fired," Dogface Woolsey says with relish. "Make that two!"

"I've changed my mind, Snooty," I says sadly. "I would like to make sure of Essie Garbitsch, too, as maybe she is an estrangler and four-time poisoner."

"You'll regret this, Dogface!" Snooty exclaims as we depart.

We go over to Chelsea and keep tabs on the modest brick pueblo where Gloria hives up. At five P.M. she enters the joint. At seven she saunters out.

"I feel awful, Scoop," Snooty says. "Look at her and tell me could she do anything dishonest?"

"Huh? Sincet you ask me I would bet ten to one she is not goin' to a Bible Class," I reply.

"Ob, she don't look that bad," Snooty sighs. We trail the babe to a delicatessen and then duck into a doorway adjoining the baloney bazaar and wait some more.

"I know how to find out if she is really Nitro's cupcake, Scoop. It might take a little time."

"What else have we got more of to spare?" I snap.

Gloria Schmitzhuber traipses out and wends her way homeward, and Snooty leads me into the delicatessen. He flashes

afire badge quick and says he is from headquarters. I turn to run, but the gag works.

“The redhead that just went out,” Snooty says to the fat dame on duty. “Could I see what she bought just now?”

“Sure, I scribbled it down on this old paper bag an’ added it up. You couldn’t never read me writin’. Two pounds cold ham, half pound potater salad, two dill pickles, pound of cheese, two apple turnovers, two choc’lit eclairs, an’ a bottle of maple syrup.”

We turn toward the door in unison and reel out like two drunks. Snooty grabs at a lamp post and holds on. A harness bull comes up an’ taps me on the shoulder. “Git that bum home or I’ll lock ‘im up. Tell ‘im if we find his lost weekend we’ll get in touch with him.”

Snooty is quite himself when we get to the next block, not that it means much. “Scoop, we could still be wrong. Two apple turnovers, two éclairs—let’s ask is she havin’ company.”

“Wait here a sec,” I says, butterflies consolidating the beachhead in my stomach. “The landlady asked this mornin’ would I git her some thread an’ I forgot the number.”

“Make it fast, Scoop,” Snooty says, none the wiser. I hop into the cigar store and call a number, talk faster than a tobacco auctioneer for forty seconds, and then hang up. “Come on, Snooty,” I says.

“I never heard you more confident,” the crackpot says.

We walk into the Sholder Arms and get into the elevator. We leave it and walk down a hall and stop in front of a door marked B29. Snooty Piper knocks. Gloria Schmitzhuber does not answer for nearly five minutes. Then she opens the door and peers out.

“You!” she squawks. “Go ‘way!” She tries to slam the door but Snooty has his

foot in it in more ways than one. “Lola, huh? All the time you was a crook’s moll! So Nitro come back to you with over twenty grand!”

“Fourteen,” the doll says quick. “I mean—what am I sayin’?”

SHE is very dumb. Under her cosmetics she gets the color of a clam that has just been steamed. Then a door bursts open and a very ugly and disheveled gee jumps at us with a Roscoe in his fist. “Yeah, go ahead an’ tell your life history, babe. Why I come here las’ night, and everything.”

“The housing shortage of course, Nitro,” Snooty says, “So you bumped the farmer boy an’ got what was left of that payroll you an’ Two-Trigger hid under a tree. You made the mistake of supping with the victim and putting maple syrup on your eggs. It is quite a scoop for us newspaper citizens.”

“They work close with cops!” Nitro yelps at the doll. “I ought to bump you with ‘em! Well, we got to work fast if we want to see the bright lights which ain’t got volts in ‘em, you dumb chick! Git some rope!”

“I’ll haul in the clothesline,” the doll says. “Why tie ‘em up after you shoot ‘em?”

“Shoot ‘em? No noise, see? That kitchen ain’t more’n three times as big as a phone booth an’ should fill quick with gas. Catch on, blubberhead?” Nitro howls. “The gas will choke the life out of them. You want Broadway an’ a mink coat, Baby?”

“For them I’d shoot me own grandma,” the redhead cries out happily, heading for the kitchen. Snooty Piper looks for an out and then shakes his dome at me.

“Yeah, pal,” I says, as Nitro drives us at gun point into the kitchen. “Let’s take it like men.”

“I never saw you as brave as this before,” Snooty chokes out. “Look, this is for real, Scoop.”

“Chin up, white tie for dinner, Snooty,” I says, and then we are on the floor getting tied up. Then the redhead blows out a pilot light and turns on the farewell fog.

“Come on, Baby,” Nitro says. “Next stop—Broadway an’ the hot spots!” They go out and shut and lock the door.

“Scoop, it is the end,” Snooty chokes out and then inhales a slug of public utility vapor.



I feel little people with ice-cold feet run up and down my spine. Did I forget to give the cops the address? My noggin gets as light as Betty Crocker’s angel food cake. Looks like I did. Good-by, Snooty, ol’ pal!

It is not so bad, choking with gas. Me and Snooty soon are romping hand in hand over a field of cotton batten. Canaries are singing and frogs are making with deep bong-bongs in a nearby lily pond. Then three big white birds wearing blue coats swoop down and lift us up and we soar blithely through space. Up and up and up. . .

“Ain’t is wonderful, Snooty?” I says. “It is a good thing all citizens do not know what’s comin’ or they’d all knock themselves off. Just floating an’ floating—what did you say?”

“Keep on pumpin’,” a voice says. It

sounds like Snooty’s. “I think I saw his ear wiggle. Hey, Scoop, snap out of it!”

I do. I am on the floor looking up at some cops and at Snooty Piper. “He swallered enough to fry a carload of veal chops,” another familiar voice says. “You couldn’t never kill either of these clucks.”

“Iron Jaw,” I says weakly, and sit up. I see Nitro Armitage out in the next room with the shackles on, and the babe is on the sofa with him and is not pleased with the jewelry she has on either. The things she says—tsk-tsk!

“So you called the cops, Scoop, you double-crosser,” Snooty sniffs.

“I hope you will forgive me,” I cry out hysterically and make a try for his windpipe. I faint instead.

I am in a healing hacienda later and Snooty sits at my bedside. “Well, Nitro had to confess,” he says. “The cops have the rest of the loot. Gloria—er—Lola says for me to please understand. She didn’t even know Nitro was in circulation until he showed up last night. When she saw the fourteen grand, she said, she forgot she wanted to go straight. She ain’t got a bad heart, Scoop.”

A nurse comes in. She is a redhead with greenish lamps. She gives me orange juice. After a word or two with Snooty Piper she gives him her telephone number. I pull the sheets up over my dome and scream. “No—no! It is where we come in!”

“He’s the nervous type,” Snooty tells the nurse. “Look, how about a little drive in the country when you knock off, huh? I’ll fill up with gas—”

It is then I throw the water pitcher. They have to make up a bed for Snooty and book him for an X-ray. Some day I’ll really get rid of him.