

# Time *Will* Tell

*Bat Gore, Petty Larceny Crook, Gets a Bright Idea  
That Leads to Some Dark Moments!*

By JOE ARCHIBALD

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**B**AT GORE, ratty face almost hidden from view by the upturned collar of his coat, stood in the shadows across the street from a pawnshop. The black letters on the window proclaimed to those interested that one Jacob Halperin's establishment was a port of call for anyone tossed about on the sea of adversity.

It was, although the police had not been able to prove the fact, a clearing house for articles of value gleaned by crooked fingers from wealthier parts of the city.

It was late. The roar of traffic on the East Side had dwindled to midnight quiet. The streets were practically deserted. Bat's gimlet eyes glittered as he saw the curtains in the front windows of the pawnshop drop down. Halperin was closing up for the night. The watcher shot a quick glance around, then shuffled across the street. He tried the door of Halperin's place and was not surprised to find it locked.

Bat smirked and rattled the door. He waited for almost a minute, then heard cautious footsteps. A bolt was thrown back and the door opened slightly. Halperin's lined face peered out at Bat Gore.

"Sorry," apologized the disturber, "but I just got here a little late. I need dough. Got a watch here—"

"I'm closed up," Halperin growled. "Tomorrer I'll be open at seven. I—"

Bat's voice waxed into a whine. "Aw, have a heart, will ya? I'm broke. I gotta eat. I got a watch here worth twenty smackers. You git it for a sawbuck."

The man behind the door hesitated. Then he opened the door and let Bat into the musty smelling shop.

"Hurry up," he growled. "Let's see the watch."

Bat Gore's eyes roved swiftly as he fished in his pocket. He took out the watch and laid it on Halperin's counter. "Five bucks," he said, "an' it's a gift."

The pawnbroker squinted at the timepiece, one corner of his mouth turned down. "Two dollars I give you, no more. Not anodder cent. You should take it or—"

"Gimme the dough!" rasped the borrower. "Ya robber. Hagh, I paid plenty for that turnip. Well, I gotta eat."

**H**ALPERIN paid over the money and ushered Bat Gore out. He slammed the door and locked it. Bat walked down the street, his slash of a mouth quirked into a leering grin. He squinted at the pawn ticket.

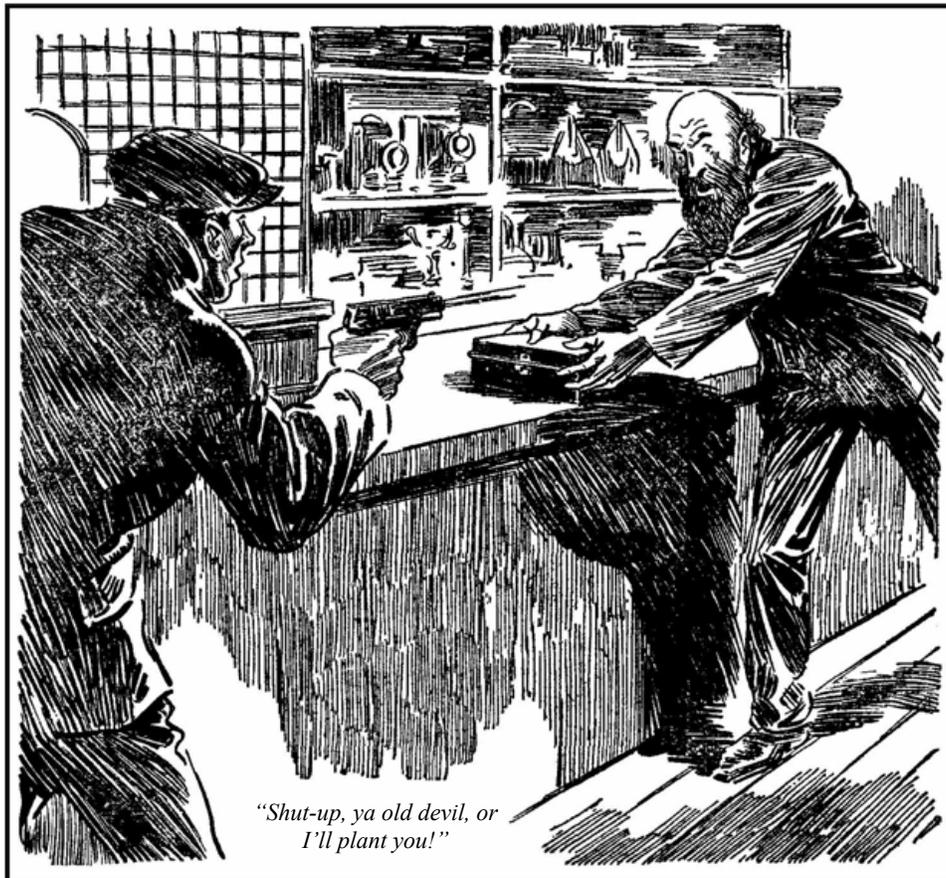
"Two bucks, huh?" he muttered. "Yeah? Ya'll come across with more than that, ya old rat." He drew off a pair of gloves and rammed them into his pocket. "When I come back to git that watch out—well—"

Bat cut through a side street, came out on a wide thoroughfare known the world over as the Street of Derelicts, the Sargasso Sea that swallows up human hulks—the Bowery. Bat had not taken a dozen steps along this dismal stretch when a big man loomed up in front of him and placed a firm hand on his chest. Bat stiffened as his eyes looked into a familiar face.

The man who barred his way had eyes that were sharp and mocking. The square jaw seemed harder than ever to Bat Gore; the massive jaw of Ed Horrigan, man-hunter from the Detective Bureau. The omnipresent cigar jutted out from one corner of Horrigan's mouth and the tip was cold. This was ever an evil omen for wrongdoers.

"As I live an' breath," sneered Horrigan, "it's Bat Gore. Still prowlin' around at night when honest folks ought to be in bed. Where ya been, Bat—Palm Beach? Ain't seen you since I sent you over to the Island for—"

Gore's sudden spasm of fear left him. "For six months, yeah!" he clipped. "I ain't forgot. I went



straight after that, Horrigan. I been out of town.” He laughed crookedly. “It was a lesson, flatfoot!”

“Don’t worry,” said Ed Horrigan contemptuously. “I got more to do than tail cheap crooks. Watch your step, Bat, an’ be a nice little boy!”

The detective’s eyes narrowed a little as he watched Bat Gore out of sight. Something told Horrigan that the petty larceny crook would bear watching.

“Dammit,” swore Bat Gore as he slunk along toward his cheap lodgings. “Runnin’ inta that bull. Three years, too, an’ he remembers me. He don’t forgit nothin’, the lousy flatfoot! Cheap crook, am I? Well, I’ll show ‘im.”

However, Bat was more than nervous as he shuffled along. His ill luck at having run into Horrigan necessitated a change of tactics. Once Halperin was robbed, Horrigan would round up every crook in town and he, Bat, would be flopping in the net with the rest of the catch.

When he reached his room, Bat Gore slumped

on the bed and swore savagely. For a few moments he weighed the advisability of giving up the job; then he cursed and called himself yellow. Horrigan had nothing on him. All that Bat needed was an alibi to satisfy Horrigan once the job had been pulled. Suddenly the crook’s sluggish brain hit upon something.

“Perfect,” he said out loud. “I gotta be satisfied with only part of the dough. It’s better than nothin’. ‘Slip’ Haney, why didn’t I think of ya before?” Bat smiled complacently, got himself a drink. Then he pulled off his clothes and climbed into bed.

“I’ll stay here until Slip comes. In the mornin’ I’ll sneak down an’ send him a wire. Hagh! Cheap crook, am I? Ya’ll chew that damn’ cigar on the wrong side of your mouth, Horrigan, ya big flatfoot!”

HEARING the sound of footsteps out in the hall, Gore crushed the lighted end of his cigar butt into a dirty, cluttered ashtray at his elbow. As the steps ceased in front of his door, he swore with

relief. Knuckles rapped softly against the panel. Bat crossed the room and turned the key in the lock. He swung the door open and saw a grinning man standing there.

The caller had the same pasty, sharp-featured face as Bat. He was about the same height and the hair visible under the crown of a cheap derby; was raven black. The two men could easily have passed for brothers; twins, in fact.

"It's time ya got here, Slip," Bat growled. "I sent that wire yesterday mornin'. An' I been waitin' ever since. Ya should've got in last night. Lucky I didn't git sore an' go out lookin' for some other guy to—"

"Oh, yeah?" smirked Slip, tossing his decrepit Gladstone bag to the rumpled bed. "Maybe ya coulda got a guy who'd fit as good as me, huh? Well, I was detained, Bat, git it? I spotted a little job that brought me some expense money.

"I laid over in a town upstate last night. Lifted a hick of his roll. Sixty bucks, Bat. That ain't t'be sneezed at."

**G**ORE shot a look of contempt at Haney. "That's it, ya mug," he growled. "Take a chance of gittin' knocked off for a lousy sixty bucks. An' then ya woulda been out of luck for a couple of grand."

"Grand?" gasped the new arrival. "This ain't a bank ya've got tailed, is it, Bat? Two grand?"

"It's almost as good," replied the schemer. "Listen, Slip, there's an old guy runnin' a pawnshop only three blocks away from the Bowery. He's filthy with dough. He's a fence, Slip, an' what we take is only what he stole anyways, git me?"

"He keeps his dough in a big tin-box in the safe. When he's closin' up he takes the box out an' puts what's in the cash register into the box, too."

"Yeah?" said Slip eagerly. "Got the layout?"

"Can't possibly slip up," enthused Bat Gore. "An' ya don't have ta be nowhere near the joint yourself, Slip. Ya're gittin' your dough too easy, damn ya, but I can't pull it myself now that Horrigan's spotted me."

"A flatfoot, huh?" guessed Slip.

"Right! The toughest one in the big town. The rat! He was the bull that got me for my only rap, Slip. He'll be after me askin' questions no matter what job is pulled, see?"

"I'm lissenin', Bat," grinned Slip Haney.

"Here's where you come in," explained Bat. "Is this an idea or ain't it? I got fifty bucks. I go out today an' buy me a green hat an' a green suit an' some more flashy duds to go with 'em. A purple shirt an' tie to match, Slip. An' new shoes—yeller ones."

"What for?" snapped the other. "With that scenery you'd be spotted any place."

"Ya mean *you* will, Slip," corrected Bat. "You're gonna wear 'em."

"You're nuts," declared Slip. "Me?"

"Yeah, you. I want an alibi. I still got that old roadster I come back to the big town in. It's down in a garage. You'll take it tonight, Slip, an' drive over to Jersey. When ya come to a gas station out where it ain't crowded, stop fer ten gallons of gas. Have the oil checked an' git the guy to put plenty of water in the radiator.

**Y**A'LL give the gent a ten-dollar bill and hang around long enough so's he'll know you when he sees ya again. In them clothes he won't fergit. Ya look enough like me to git away with it. If the flatfoot brings the guy over to look at me, he'll swear I'm the same one that stopped there.

"Ya see, I change into them clothes in the mornin'. If Horrigan picks me up, well, let 'im prove I wasn't out drivin' last night. You beat it as soon as I pay ya off."

Slip Haney grinned, shoved out a thin bony hand. "Bat, I knew ya was a smart guy but I didn't know half enough. It's an alibi nobody'll ever break. Not even that—"

"Horrigan," supplied Gore. "Yeah, not even him."

"Let's drink on it," suggested Slip Haney.

Later Bat Gore sallied forth, having instructed Slip Haney to "lay low."

"Don't let nobody see ya," he had said. "I'll be back in about a half hour."

**T**HE jailbird sought out a cheap clothing store and bought just the articles he needed. He completed the sartorial array with a brand new pair of yellow oxfords. Loaded down with his purchases, Bat went to the garage where he had left his car. On the way he passed through the street where Halperin's pawnshop was and took a final inventory of the surroundings.

No one noticed Bat Gore, all being intent on their own affairs. A line of automobiles gaily

decorated was snaking through the street. A band was playing on the front steps of the tenement next to the pawnshop and a merry crowd was gathered. Some left the group and ran after the caravan of automobiles.

"Some sap gittin' married," sneered Bat. "Hagh!" He reached the garage, dumped his bundles into his old roadster.

"Goin' out for a joyride tonight," he boasted to the man on duty. "Gittin' all togged up. Get me a swell dame in Jersey." He did not wait for a reply. He simply stepped on the starter and backed out into the street. So far, everything had been perfect.

Back in his room, the scheming thief spread out his purchases before the staring eyes of Slip Haney.

"Some rags!" breathed the latter. "That shirt an' tie. Bat, they just yell at ya."

"Put 'em on," ordered Gore. "We need a dress rehearsal."

Slip Haney stripped himself of his own raiment and got into the stuff Bat had brought in. When the green hat had been perched at a cocky angle on Slip's head, Bat looked the fellow over and whistled softly through his teeth.

"Cripes, Slip, it's better than I figgered. Ya look just like me. Here, ya didn't put the shoes on."

"Give 'em here," grinned Slip slumping into a chair. He picked up a new shoe and looked at it quizzically. After a glance at Bat, he measured it by placing the sole against the shoe he already had on.

"That's where ya messed it up," he growled. "My foot's way bigger than yours. I'll never squeeze into 'em."

"Hah!" exclaimed Bat, "I didn't think of that. "Well, what difference does it make? Your shoes look good. The guy at the gas station'll never be able to say whether they was new or not. I'll be wearin' 'em termorrer anyways, see?"

"They can't git ya by tracks even if ya git out of the car, Slip, as most of them gas stations have cinders or crushed rock around 'em. An' put on gloves, Slip, so's ya won't leave no fingerprints on the car. Have I forgot anythin'?"

"Ya sure ain't," said Slip admiringly. "I gotta hand it to ya, Bat."

**G**ORE produced a bottle. He pulled the cork and took a healthy swig, then passed the bottle to Slip. After the latter had drunk, too, Bat took the bottle and wiped it with a dirty handkerchief.

"They ain't gonna find none of your trademarks here, Slip."

At ten o'clock that night Slip Haney, clad in gaudy raiment, ventured out of the cheap rooming house, taking precautions that no one should get a glimpse of his face. Up in his room, Bat Gore heard the motor of his car race. Then gears clashed and the old roadster was on its way.

The listener smiled, threw himself down on the bed to wait until eleven-thirty. Around that time Slip would pull up to a gas station on the other side of the Hudson. What a scheme!

"An' Horrigan is a smart guy, huh?" he exulted to himself. "Well, I ain't new at the racket either. I ain't no setup for 'im now. When I git outa town, I'll write him a letter. Hagh!"

**T**IME dragged. After smoking up all of the cigarettes, Bat grew nervous and paced the floor. The alarm clock ticked off the seconds grudgingly. Mentally the criminal committed his contemplated crime many times, checking any possible way he could let himself fall into the clutches of the law. But there seemed no weak links in the chain.

At length, pulling on his hat and putting a revolver into his pocket, Bat Gore sneaked out into the hall. The squalid place was dark, save for a gaslight that burned in the lower hall. He sneaked down the stairs and out into the night.

Bat hugged the shadows as well as he could on the way to the street where Halperin had his pawnshop. Passing by a laundry, he looked in through the window and spotted a clock which said eleven-twenty-five. With a cold grin bisecting his hardened face, Bat continued on his way. Collar of his coat drawn up, he snuggled his chin as far down out of sight as it was possible to do and assumed the weary, despairing gait of a down-and-outer.

The dimly lighted East Side street on which stood Jacob Halperin's pawnshop was reached at last. After a quick glance around, Bat crabbed into a dark alley. This, he knew, was the means of entrance to the back door of Halperin's shop. He had studied the ground well.

The pawnbroker lived in two rooms back of his shop. At the moment he would be out in his shop, getting ready to close up. His conduct during the week, in which Gore had timed him, had been according to the clock. Bat had made certain of that.

The marauder crept cat-like into the rear of Halperin's place, crouched in the shadows and listened. No sound came from the back room. Bat muttered a low exclamation of satisfaction and went to work.

He took a jimmy from his back pocket and forced the business end of it under the window sash. Then he waited for an El train to thunder by. A minute passed. Bat swore under his breath impatiently. The suspense was torture. Finally the train came with a rumbling roar.

Bat forced the window up. There was a snap that seemed to blot out all other sounds. He turned to flee, every muscle taut. But no disturbance came from within.

Slowly he raised the window. At the end of its upward slide, it stuck fast. A low satisfied gurgle bubbled up in Bat's throat as he crawled through the opening. Luck was with him. Inside, everything was dark.

**B**AT was about to feel his way forward when a door swung open. Light streamed in from the pawnshop, bathing him in its sudden glare. The intruder saw Halperin fall back a step, his jaw sagging. Panic seized Gore.

Halperin found his voice. It was hoarse, angry.

"Ged oud!" he blazed. "Or I call the police. Ged—"

Bat's hand plunged into his pocket. "Shut up, ya old devil!" he snarled huskily. "Or I'll plant ya. Hand over the dough ya just counted up. Quick, damn ya, or—"

The old broker's eyes flashed with terror. He turned as if to run. Bat Gore knew he was going to yell out at the top of his lungs. He brought the gun up and pulled the trigger. The bullet drilled through his victim and spun the man half around.

Horror distorted the stricken man's face as he turned toward Bat, to stare at him with glazing, incredulous eyes. Then his knees buckled and he slumped to the floor, limp arms folding up under him.

**B**AT fought down his fright and hustled into the shop. On the counter there was a tin box. Halperin had removed his money from the cash drawer to this box which was to have been put in a safe for the night. Bat knew what was in it. He had peeked in through Halperin's window and witnessed the ritual too often not to know. He

clutched the box to him and ran out into the back room. He went headlong through the open window, picked himself up and hurried away.

It was raining now, had been raining from the time he reached Halperin's. The murderer felt grateful to the elements. Most of the night owls would be seeking shelter. Two blocks from the scene of his crime, Bat stopped and picked up an old newspaper from the gutter. He wrapped the newspaper around the tin box and carried it openly. A bum, a casual observer would decide, on seeing Bat's shuffling, apparently dispirited figure.

As he plodded along, fighting off the urge to break into a run, Bat's eyes swept the locality for signs of Horrigan, but it was evident that the big detective was in a different part of town.

Bat breathed a great sigh of relief as he softly closed the door of the cheap rooming house behind him. He went upstairs cautiously and slipped into his little cubicle. Snapping on the lights, he cached his loot in the clothes closet and took a stiff drink from a bottle.

The murderer's nerves were jangling now and he needed the quietus of the spirits. His forehead was cold and clammy. Bat Gore had killed a man. It had not been in his program, but it had been necessary.

Two more drinks from the bottle and Bat no longer shivered with fear. Instead, he began to feel a sort of pride in what he had done. Cheap crook, was he? If Horrigan only knew! Suddenly he thought of the gun and took it from his pocket, wiped it with a grimy towel and went to the window. Opening it up he hurled the weapon far out into the night.

**T**HEN Bat went over and sat down on the bed to wait for Haney. It was almost an hour later before his pseudo-self came in.

"Well?" the man in the gaudy clothes inquired as he shut the door quietly behind him.

Bat Gore grinned. "Like a charm, Slip. I got what I went for. How did you make out? Give me the dope while you take off them clothes."

Slip Haney talked swiftly as he peeled off the green suit.

"Stopped at a gas station just beyond Newark. One of them red and blue stations that sell Sunbeam oil and gas. It's right next to a house that's just burned down. Ya can't miss it. I went up and an old guy with a mustache come out, an I says

'I want ten gallons of gas, Mister. Better check the oil and took at the water in the radiator, too.'

"I got out and stood 'side of the car while he serviced up. He got a good look at me all right. We talked about the weather, that was all, and I handed him a ten spot. He give me back seven bucks an' sixty cents. I got two quarts of oil an' the ten gallons of gas."

"Swell!" chuckled Bat. "And was you sure of the time? Where else did ya go?"

"Sure, it was eleven-thirty-five when I pulled up to the station. I checked the time by the clock the old guy had in the place. I drove over through the tunnel an' hung around Newark until it was time for me to do my part of the job. Ya got the dough?"

Bat went to the closet and took out the tin box. With the big blade of his jackknife he forced the cover up. The box was crammed with greenbacks.

"He took it out every night," Bat explained with a grin. "He put the dough from the cash register into it and then locked it up for the night." Bat counted out two thousand dollars and handed the bills to Slip.

"Thanks," acknowledged the other crook as he pocketed the money. "How much you gittin'?" he sneered.

"There's maybe three grand for my end," said Bat, eyes narrowing. "Didn't I do the tough part? You didn't run no chances, did ya, Slip? If ya think—"

"Naw," growled his accomplice, "I figger I'm gittin' a swell cut. Well, I'm gonna scam out of town. Feels good to git back into my own clothes. I felt like a comic valentine in them rags. Gimme a drink!"

"Sure," and Bat complied. "When ya go out, take this empty tin box with ya. Throw it in an ashcan some place where it'll be hard to find."

**I**N five minutes Slip Haney had evacuated the rooming house and was headed uptown. Bat Gore counted the money that was his share. It added up close to four thousand dollars.

"So I'm a cheap crook, huh, Horrigan?" he growled. "Yeah! When I leave this burg, I ride on plush an' have my breakfast brought to my drawin' room."

Bat Gore ripped up the floorboards under the old washstand and cached his roll. He went over to the heap of clothes that Slip had discarded and examined them for any incriminating evidence. He

found none. With a grin and a yawn, Bat made ready for a much-needed sleep.

Detective Horrigan was called to Halperin's pawnshop early the next morning. The milkman had found the pawnbroker's rear window open. Looking in, he had seen the man lying there in the swath of light coming in through the door leading to the shop.

"Dead as a mackerel," was Big Ed's comment. "Murdered, all right." He went into the store and found that the safe had been shut but not locked.

"Somebody was wise to Halperin's moves when he closed up," the big man said to the men from headquarters. "Halperin was about to lock up his dough when the murderer got him. That means he must have been killed between eleven-thirty and twelve." He leaned up against the counter and chewed slowly on his cold cigar. Finally he emitted a "Huh!" and stepped back of Halperin's counter.

**I**N a showcase there was a tray of watches, each one of which the detective examined carefully. A low exclamation attested to the fact that he had noticed something unusual. He turned one particular watch in his hand over and over. On the back of it were engraved the figures of two prize-fighters. Under them was a very significant inscription.

Horrigan pocketed the timepiece and, after looking through the other knickknacks in the case, instructed his henchmen to call the coroner.

"I've got to go over and talk to a guy," he said icily.

Bat Gore was aroused from his sleep by a loud hammering on his door. It brought him straight up in bed. The criminal experienced a sudden pang of fear as he blinked the sleep out of his beady eyes. Then he climbed out of bed and walked to the door.

"Who is it?" he barked angrily.

"Horrigan!"

Gore's heart missed several beats and the blood in his veins froze. The sound of that voice had never failed to make his spine curl. However, he managed to pull himself together and assume an innocent mien as he unlocked the door.

"Well, well," said the detective, "got you out of bed, eh? Out late last night?"

**"Y**EAH," replied Bat. "Went joy ridin'. What's it to ya? What d'ya want? Pullin' a guy out of bed this time of—"

“Just want to talk to you,” grinned Horrigan breezily. “Ya see, Bat, I tailed ya the night we met. Wanted to know where you hung out. It’s my business. Y’know somebody bumped off Jake Halperin last night.” He looked straight into the ex-convict’s eyes.

The crook’s glance held. It was a mighty ordeal. Finally Horrigan’s eyes shifted to the clothes that were draped over a chair.

“New duds, huh? Sure are loud, Bat. When did ya get ‘em?”

“Yesterday,” answered Gore. “Ain’t a guy got a right to—?”

“That your old car downstairs?”

“Yeah. Sure. I picked it up cheap back in—”

“Funny, ain’t it?” interrupted Horrigan. “Bat, I can’t figure you out. You get a whole new outfit of clothes. You have an old car and yet you have to go to Jake Halperin to hock your watch. Now that don’t make sense, Bat.”

The crook stiffened, licked his lips. “What’re ya gittin’ at, Horrigan?” he snarled with false bravado. “Tryin’ to hang somethin’ on me?”

“Maybe,” said Horrigan. “I picked that watch up this morning, Bat; thought you’d never part with that ticker. Got it fightin’ at the Pioneer Club. I remember that, Bat. You bragged about it all over the East Side. Showed it to everybody.” The detective’s voice hardened. “Where were you last night?”

“Out ridin’ in the car,” answered Bat Gore glibly. “Left about ten o’clock. Went over to Jersey. I got back about one-thirty. An’ I can prove it, too. Just because I hock a watch, ya think I—”

“Wear them clothes?” shot out Horrigan, pointing to the green suit and accessories.

“Yeah,” smirked Bat confidently. “Sure.”

**H**ORRIGAN walked over and picked up the green coat, then dropped it again. He stooped down and picked up a brand new pair of yellow oxfords. “Wear these, too?” he asked Bat.

“No, they hurt my feet,” answered the crook. “I gotta git ‘em stretched. I wore the other ones there.”

“Oh,” and Horrigan picked them up. On the sole of one shoe he spotted something. Four little pieces of multicolored paper stuck to the sole. The detective’s jaw muscles bulged. He looked at Bat Gore.

“You admit ya wore these kicks last night, eh?”

he snapped. “Well, Bat, you’re a liar by the clock. Ya never was in Jersey. You were walking around Halperin’s neighborhood last night!”

Uneasiness stole through Bat Gore’s being like a poison. What had gone wrong? He asked himself the question as Horrigan glared at him. However, he fought down his fear and grinned defiantly.

“You’re nuts, Horrigan,” he declared. “I can prove I was in Jersey last night.”

“On the bottom of this shoe, Bat, there are four pieces of confetti,” the inquisitor clipped out. “It rained last night, Bat. Yesterday there was an Italian weddin’ next door to Halperin’s. They threw confetti all over the place.”

“So what?” sneered the crook. “Sure, I know it. I seen it. Walked over that way. The stuff could easily stick to anybody’s shoes. Hagh, tryin’ to pin that kind of stuff on me!”

“Bat,” pronounced Horrigan deliberately, “confetti has to be wet to stick like this has stuck. And bits of it ought to be different colors but these ain’t. The colors have all run together, Bat. The rain did it. You’re a liar. You wasn’t over in Jersey last night.”

“You can’t prove it,” ripped out the harassed robber. “I tell ya I was over in Jersey.”

“Listen, ya dumb cluck,” said Horrigan, “in the first place, only a dumb crook would bump off Halperin. He’s known to have been one of the cleverest fences in the city. D’ya think a smart crook would bump off the guy who was like a goose that laid golden eggs?”

“He took their hot stuff an’ sold it. He knew where to get rid of it. Get me, Bat? Only a thick-skulled crook like you would pull a stunt like that!”

“You hocked that watch just to get in to see the lay of the place. I knew you’d hocked it that night I met ya. You were foolin’ with your watch chain an’ it flopped out and there wasn’t anything on the end of it.”

**B**AT GORE felt that nausea in his stomach again. Fear gripped him. He shook it off desperately and laughed in Horrigan’s face. “I told ya I could prove—”

“—that you was in Jersey,” grinned Horrigan. “Well, maybe somebody else was over there, Bat!” He paused, watched for the effect of the sudden thrust. The crook’s face steeled into an expressionless mask. Bat Gore brought every shred of self-control into play. Horrigan’s eyes narrowed.

He looked at those brand new shoes; picked up one.

"Try it on, Bat," he ordered.

"Sure," agreed the crook. "Sure." He had seen a shadow of doubt momentarily flit across the detective's countenance. Bat knew that Horrigan was a bit stumped. He pulled on the shoe. Horrigan knelt down, felt of the leather with his fingers. Then he yanked the shoe off Bat's foot and laughed.

"If that pinches your foot, Bat, then I'm wearin' a sunbonnet. You're a liar by the clock. You bumped off Halperin and took the dough!"

"Sure," said Bat complacently. "Anythin' ya say, Horrigan. I can prove I was in Jersey. I stopped at a gas station outside of Newark. I remember the place—think I can spot it again all right. If ya think you're so smart, let's go take a ride."

"That's a swell idea," said Horrigan. "We'll start now."

On the way over through the tunnel, Bat Gore gave Detective Ed Horrigan every detail of what had occurred at the gas station.

"I bought ten gallons of gas an' two quarts of oil. I had the old guy look at the water in the radiator. He says to me 'I bet it keeps right on rainin' all night.' I says 'Sure, I bet it does.' I give him a ten spot an' he hands me back seven bucks an' sixty cents."

**H**ORRIGAN commented, "Good memory, Bat. I didn't think your brain was that good. What time were you there?"

"About eleven-thirty-five," answered the criminal accurately. "I know because—"

"Seems like you got a swell alibi, Bat," growled the detective. "Maybe I got you wrong. But I wish you'd tell me why ya hocked the watch. In Halperin's place."

"Everybody hocks things there," countered Bat. "I thought you was smart, Horrigan. Just because I done that, I git accused of murderin' the old guy. There was a lot of other tickers there, too, wasn't there?"

"Oh sure," agreed Horrigan. "Well, anyways I'm goin' to check up on you."

Bat Gore grinned as he shot over the highway to Newark and beyond. He was sure that he had Horrigan stopped. That was some alibi for anybody to break.

**T**HE gas station Slip Haney had tagged for Bat Gore was not hard to find. A Sunbeam Products Station next door to the charred ruins of a house. Bat steeled himself and swung off the road. An elderly man. came out of the service station.

"You talk to him," snapped Horrigan.

"Well, what can I do for you?" said the man. "Fill 'er up?"

"Never mind that," answered the crook. "You remember me? I was in here last night and—"

The man looked at Bat as he got out of the car. Bat was clad in the green suit, green hat and violet-hued shirt and tie.

"Well, yes," said the old man. "Sure, you stopped here last night and—let's see now—you got ten gallons of gas and a couple of quarts of oil. Anythin' wrong?"

Bat grinned. "Why, I don't think so, old-timer. But this guy here thinks I might've been lyin' to him."

"Ha!" exclaimed the attendant. "You sure ain't. I'd know those clothes any place and the old roadster. I got a good memory, I have. I keep a fair check on my customers. Comes in handy. Sometimes a stolen car comes in or—"

"Yeah," Horrigan spoke for the first time, "or maybe a dirty crook. Say, old-timer, what time was this guy in here last night? He said eleven-thirty-five."

"That's right," agreed the man, and Bat Gore grinned broadly. "He oughta know. He took out his watch and checked it with my clock. Asked me if it was right!"

Horrigan fought down a cry of exultation. Bat Gore's face went ashen. Terror squeezed his body limb. It slumped into the car as the service station man looked on with amazement.

"Bat," ordered Horrigan, "I'll drive back. S'long, old-timer. Thanks for the trouble." He turned toward Bat quickly and snapped handcuffs over the stunned crook's wrists.

"Your alibi was too good," said Horrigan on the way back. "Those clothes were too loud. No smart crook puts rags like that on so everybody can spot him. It was the shoes that got me, too. Somebody else wore those rags you got on. You planted him out here. But the shoes you got didn't fit him. You had everything down too fine, Bat."

"You made a mistake, too, leavin' that watch in Halperin's. You didn't mean to leave it there, did you? Got pretty scared when you bumped the old

guy off.

“With that confetti on your shoe, Bat, it’ll be hard to convince the jury not to send you to the hot seat. Who was the other guy, Bat?”

“I—I ain’t sayin’ a word, damn ya!” screeched Bat, his voice shaken by terror. “I—”

“Whoever it was ya should’ve told him, Bat,” grinned Horrigan. “Ya should’ve told him you hocked your watch. Then he wouldn’t have pulled his own out back there at the station to check the

time so the old guy would be sure to remember.

“But you needn’t tell, Bat. When he finds out the guy he was working with is getting a murder rap, he’ll come back and spill everythin’ because I bet ya didn’t tell him you had to kill Halperin. That’s only a guess, Bat.”

But the expression on the murderer’s face convinced Detective Horrigan that he had made a mighty good guess.