



When the crook staggered back and went for his gun, I knew I had to finish him right then

MOON OVER MURDER

By ROBERT J. HOGAN

New York Detective Tad Madden heads for Miami to bring back a thief, and then finds himself prowling about in graveyards!

THERE'S a slogan the Chamber of Commerce sticks on your windshield when you drive into town. It says, "Isn't it great to be in Miami?" It certainly was.

I had come down from New York City to get a punk called "Lefty" Hanson who

had given himself up to the Miami Police. There wasn't any hurry, since they had him in custody. So liking the trip down by train, and having a little item to figure out in my mind before I got there, I'd come down on the Champion Streamliner, instead of flying.

I'm a gregarious sort of guy. I like people around me, particularly the attractive kind of the opposite sex. And on a train like the Champion they have a nice crowd on the streamliner, and you have better than twenty-four hours to get to know anybody that appeals to you.

In this case, it happened to be a brunette who turned out to be the sister of one of the boys in the Seventh District, another detective that I knew. She got off at West Palm Beach to visit a friend there, and so I'd only had the two hours it takes to run from West Palm Beach to Miami to think about why Lefty Hanson had turned himself in.

I hadn't taken time to look up Hanson's record before I left New York except to find out that he was wanted for a petty larceny matter that wouldn't be likely to hold him for more than a year. So I was looking for his angle, but I hadn't got far.

Between West Palm Beach and Miami, I'd gone into the men's room and changed from my dark city clothes to tropical worsteds, my white shoes, and a light felt topper with a loose brim. When I stepped off the train at the Florida East Coast Station, which is only slightly north of the twenty-five-story courthouse, nobody would have taken me for anything but a Miami sport, come to lay a wager on the ponies, which I also enjoy, along with fishing out in the Gulf Stream.

But I hadn't done this to hide my identity as much as to get the lift that it gives you when you get decked out like a beach millionaire and strut your stuff along the wide streets of the city of outstretched palms.

It's not far from the station to Police Headquarters. You get off the train and wander past the tall court house with the county jail house, as the Southern boys call it, and you cross West Flagler Street and you're there, in the City Hall settlement. It

was like old home week before I'd even reached the steps.

"Miami Madden!" somebody yelled, and it was my old friend, Gene Howell.

Gene was city detective in charge of liquor license enforcement. He'd just been getting into his car at the curb when he saw me.

GENE came toward me on the run. He had the same light feet he used to have on the football field. He was a Georgia boy, like a lot of the good men on the Miami Police Force. I'd known him for years. After the faculty and I had decided that Georgia Tech was not for me, Gene Howell and I had played a little professional football together around the Deep South.

"I figured you'd find a way to fenagle the job of coming down to pick up Lefty Hanson," he said, as we shook hands. "I been expecting you, boy—only you're about fifteen hours late."

Howell was a big, good-looking guy with shoulders like Dempsey's and wavy black hair and a smile like Grover Whelan's. He had on a neat but not gaudy sport coat, tan sharkskin slacks, white and tan shoes and a pearl gray topper about like mine.

I asked him what he meant by my being late, and he laughed.

"You're going to smile real pretty," he said, "when you hear what trouble your friend, Dave Cromer, is in. They're twisting his tail, son, to get him to find the killer of Lefty Hanson."

Lieutenant Dave Cromer was in charge of Homicide. I grinned at the thought of Cromer being in a little difficulty. He was the only man in Miami, outside of the usual itinerant crooks that slip in and out, that I had any dislike for.

It had all started during my first vacation in Miami. Dave Cromer was

somewhat older than I was, but it seemed that long ago Cromer had got himself a job with the New York Police Force. Dave was a Georgia boy, too, and from what I'd heard around Headquarters up North, he'd come with some ideas about setting New York's Finest to rights, and he hadn't gone over so good. Besides, the boys kidded him about his long, slow Georgia drawl, and they took delight in stepping on him, so Dave Cromer had finally got sore and quit.

He hadn't done badly in Miami. He was more in his element there and I won't say that Dave Cromer was dumb by a long shot. But he didn't like New York's Finest and he didn't keep it to himself. So on my first vacation in Miami, when I used to wander over to the City Hall settlement and sit around with the boys between horse races and fishing trips, Cromer started to throw the barb into me about how the New York Police Force was all tied up in politics and it made me mad.

So it was good to hear that Cromer was simmering a little as head of Homicide. It sort of made the whole trip to Miami more delightful, like meeting a nice redhead.

He didn't seem depressed, though, when I walked in on him. Cromer was a tall, slim guy, even at middle-age. He looked like a dignified Georgia gentleman, with a long, slim stogy in his mouth stuck out at the angle of the flag pole over the entrance to the Ambassador Hotel.

"If it isn't my dear friend from the big corrupt city to the North," he said. "If it isn't Thaddeus Percival."

I don't know where he'd found out my first two names. I'd always gone by T. P. Madden until, after two vacations in Miami, the New York boys began calling me, "Miami" Madden, because I liked the place so much.

"The world famous Miami Madden who solves crimes with his brilliant mind and who is feared by every criminal in the

country because of his bravery and skill with his fists," Cromer said before I could come back after his first crack.

That was what a national magazine had written in an article about me a year or so ago, and Cromer had memorized it word for word. He ended by laughing his head off. And when those Georgia boys laugh, they enjoy every minute of it.

"Look, Cromer, my friend," I said, pretty mad by now. "Those names that my angry father pinned on me at birth are the reasons why I learned to use my dukes."

Cromer just kept on laughing.

"That's what the man said in the magazine article," he said.

"Okay," I said. "Laugh this one off. I came down to get Lefty Hanson—or to find out who killed him."

Cromer was always a little slow getting some things.

"When you find out, let me know," he said, but he got the idea, but didn't see so much fun in it.

I got the details from one of Cromer's Homicide Squad at the record desk. Seemed Lefty Hanson had given himself up three days ago. They had locked him up in the city jail and wired New York. But Lefty had begun acting a little nervous and had asked a couple of times to get put up over in the county jail on the twenty-fifth story of the courthouse. The city jail got pretty crowded with drunks and characters and so just after dark, last evening, one of the boys had taken him out and was taking him over.

THEY hadn't figured there was any need of handcuffing Lefty, since he had given himself up, and he had seemed anxious to get over to the other jail. He and the cop in charge of him were walking across Flagler Street when a car pulls up and a guy knocks out the cop with a sap. They take Lefty in the car and drive off.

The witnesses said three men were in the car, and somebody took the number, but the car proved to be a detective's car which had been stolen from in front of the police station. They found the car, later, abandoned on the Tamiami Trail.

As I've said, Dave Cromer was a little slow at times, although he usually got there. So it took him until I was this far through the records to come over to me and say:

"You Yankees up New York way got any leads on that armored car holdup six months ago?" And of course he laughed—at me.

"You should ask," I said, which was the best I could think of at the moment.

There wasn't much more dope on Lefty, except that a little before daylight this morning his body had been found in Bay Front Park, down by the fishing pier where the charter boats take you out for a day's fishing.

"How long had he been dead?" I asked the record man who was named Gaines, a nice Georgia boy, pretty keen on his stuff.

"The medical examiner said Lefty had been dead maybe an hour or so when he was found," he said. "The patrolman who found him said he was lying in a little spot where the moon shone through the palm trees just before daylight."

"Then he must have been there almost ever since he was killed," I said.

"That's right," Gaines said, "because the murderer most likely wouldn't have left him in the spot of light. The moon must have moved after he was dumped."

"Right," I said. "Anything else about him?"

"We figure it might have been done by somebody around the fishing pier," Gaines said. "He was found near there. He had been beaten to death, and there was a fish hook through his lips. It was kind of

gruesome, the way the hook had torn almost through his lips."

Homicide, Gaines said, figured the death might have had something to do with fishing, because of the fish hook, and from the marks on the grass and gravel and some of both on Lefty's heels, it looked as if the body had been dragged from the direction of the fishing pier.

Of course, I knew there was a wide parking space between the fishing pier and the park but I thought it was kind of funny the police hadn't figured a car might have brought him there.

"It looks like Lefty knew something, and somebody else was trying to get it out of him," I said.

"We thought of that, too," Gaines said, "but the Lieutenant thinks there might have been some connection with a holdup four nights ago in the Mardi Gras night club over on the beach." Gaines grinned. "He'd like to figure that one out ahead of the Miami Beach Force."

"Good old Cromer," I said. "Always trying to get something on another cop. Go on."

"We figured," Gaines said, "that Lefty Hanson was in the mob that pulled the beach holdup and when things looked a little tight, he decided to pull out and give himself up for a short stay up in your city."

"How many were in the holdup on the beach?"

"Two. They were masked, but one of them was small and wiry like Lefty."

"Could be," I said.

But I kept thinking how Lefty had been beaten up, and that fish hook through 'his lips kind of got me. I couldn't think of any better way to make a guy talk than to run a fish hook through his lips and keep yanking it until he was ready to talk. I'd never heard of such a thing, but it sounded as if it should work.

Gaines and I went into the morgue and looked over what was left of Hanson. He was a mess. The fish hook was still pinning his lips together.

I MEASURED the hook, and then we went over what personal effects they had found on Lefty. There wasn't anything there to shine any light, except a little red note-book, and all that was in it was a list of names and telephone numbers of a few girls.

"What's all this?" I said, and pointed to the top name on the list.

"All of those names and numbers stumped us," Gaines said. "They seem to be names of dames, with their telephone numbers, but we've checked and there aren't any such women at those numbers. In fact two of the numbers aren't even in the Miami directory."

"This one wouldn't be, anyway," I said tapping the top name and number. "There isn't any such telephone number in Miami like one-seven-one-six. Miami telephones have five numbers."

I kept looking at that top name and number. It said:

MATILDA ROWE 1716

"We checked that in Fort Lauderdale," Gaines said. "Up there, twenty-six miles north, they've got numbers like that. But nobody knew anybody by the name of Matilda Rowe."

The whole thing kind of stumped me, but I kept thinking about Dave Cromer and how he would like to send me back without a thing. I ran into him coming out of the files department.

"You got the murder all solved, I expect, Madden," he said, and laughed. By now I had got to hate that laugh worse than an onion breath.

"You don't mind my thinking about it,

I hope," I said.

"Not at all, sonny boy," Cromer said. "Help yourself."

I wired New York for all they had about Lefty Hanson. Then I hunted up my friend, Gene Howell, and we went over to Tom's for a shore dinner and to chew over old times.

When I got back to Headquarters about nine, they had an answer to my wire. For a long time up there they had known that Lefty Hanson was a crook, but all they had on him was that petty larceny job he was wanted for.

There was one interesting thing about his background, though. Seemed he had been the black sheep of a family over in Brooklyn. He had a brother who had been as good a guy as Lefty was bad. This brother of Lefty's had been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for a stunt he had pulled in the E.T.O. about the time of the break-through. The brother had captured a German tank, when his outfit was washed up. He had tossed a hand grenade into the tank, cleaned out the crew and then, with another guy, had taken over and raised particular riot.

Funny thing about that, but it got me thinking. I couldn't help the feeling of a tieup somewhere there, but I couldn't get the connection in my mind. It was like a name that gets on the tip of your tongue, but that won't come through clearly.

I kept thinking about that girl on the top of the list. Somehow, the name "Matilda" got me. I couldn't picture a guy like Lefty being interested in a gal named Matilda. It didn't make sense, but there it was.

I didn't have anything to do that night, so I got in touch with Gene Howell who was at Headquarters getting ready to start out on his rounds of the night spots to check on license violation. They got a law about closing on time in Miami and they enforce it right up to the limit, as Gene

Howell is a very square guy.

"Gene," I said, "I'd like to visit some spots where they have girls that are the kind to associate with a guy like Lefty Hanson."

"Looks like Miami Madden is slipping," he said. "You must be hard up."

"I am," I said. "I'm looking for a gal named Matilda."

"Son, you are hard up," he said. "But I'll take you around. Only I better go with you."

"Just tell me where to go," I said. "I don't want to cramp your style with your duties."

"Everything's under control," he said. "And I better go along with you. You're asking for some of these places where you bow your way in and fight your way out."

We went first to a place called Palonas. It was a dingy place with lots of girls, and in an hour I'd got around to all the girls I could find in the place. Some laughed when I asked if they knew anybody named Matilda Rowe. Some just shook their heads and tried to get friendly.

We went to the Golden Slipper and the Crazy Club and the Slop Shop and Aunt Martha's. I had kind of hoped we might find out something at Aunt Martha's, but it was the same everywhere.

It was getting near closing time.

"Now I'll take you to a place that your mamma never dreamed of when she done told you," Gene said. "It's called Mother's Happy Home."

It was on the west side of town, out by the airport. He told me about "Mother" on the way out. It was one of the real joints where the seamen hung around when they wanted action.

ONLY last week a big Swede sailor had got well oiled and had started to spank all the girls in the place, one at a time. Seemed Mother, as she called herself, was

pretty well built and when the sailor was going good, she called him for it.

"Okay, Mother," the sailor said. "You're next."

That was when the real action had started. Mother took out a knife and went to work on the big guy and when she got through and they got the sailor to the hospital they had to take fifty-three stitches in him to hold him together.

The place, I saw when we got there was about like Gene said it was. There were seamen and punks and girls around the place, and a juke box was screaming its head off, and the dance floor was half-filled with dancers.

I spotted a well-worn and aging bleached blonde I figured might make a good beginning for the questioning. I went over and bought her a drink and asked her if she knew anybody named Matilda. Matilda Rowe. The blonde was pretty well stewed, and she looked at me and stared like I was insulting her, then she threw her head back and started to laugh.

"What are you laughing at, sister?" I said. "Do you know the girl?"

"Know Matilda?" she said. "Listen. Anybody with a name like that should be dead."

I got a funny mind. It's like a cash register, sometimes, or like a cash register that doesn't show the amount right away when you ring up something.

I knew what she said had hit something, but I couldn't think, right now, what it was. It was like the dope about Lefty's brother blowing up the German tank with a hand grenade. That had hit pay dirt, too, but it was pay dirt like you might find on your boots and couldn't remember where you might have picked it up.

There wasn't time to ask any more girls because Mother was coming around, eyeing Gene and telling the guys and gals to drink their drinks because she ran a

respectable joint and it was closing time.

But all that night I kept thinking, between winks, what it was the blonde had said that had hit the right spot in my brain and made it go click!

Next morning I got up and went to the fishing pier early. It's a long pier off the back end of Bay Front Park and it's full of cabin cruisers—"charter boats" they call them—that are tied, stern first against the long pier. I started with the first boat captain and went over his hooks until I found one about the size of the hook that had been found in Lefty's mouth.

"We use that size mostly for kingfish," he said.

"That's what I thought," I said. "Have you happened to have a party in the last week with one guy called Lefty in it?"

He hadn't. I went on down the line, talking to the captains, one after another. I'd talked to about half of them when I came to a young guy in a charter boat called Reel Lucky. I asked him.

He was down in the stern open deck of his boat and when I asked him, he turned the long visor of his cap up and looked at me up on the dock. He nodded right away.

"Sure," he said. "Four or five days ago I took out a party of four men. The one that acted scared they called Lefty."

"The one that acted scared?"

"Yeah. He didn't want to go, but they urged him. One of the others, the big one that was all dressed up for a lawn party, explained to me that Lefty was scared of getting seasick."

"Did he get seasick?"

"No, but the big one did. We struck a school of kingfish, but he wanted to fish for something else though Lefty said we were doing all right."

"What did they call the big guy?"

"Duke," the captain said.

The captain's name turned out to be Jensen. He was a clean-cut blond lad with a

gold service eagle on the wing of his sport shirt.

"Would you know these guys if you were to see their pictures?" I asked him.

He thought a minute. "Is something wrong?" he wanted to know.

"If you had the party that I think you had, they were looking for a good spot to commit murder. Mind looking over some pictures?"

He hesitated. "I got some engine trouble," he said. "We've got a party to leave at ten o'clock for a fishing trip, and I want to get the engine fixed."

I could see his hands were all grease and the top of the engine hatch was up.

JUST then another young guy comes swinging down into the cockpit and it turned out to be Decker, Jensen's partner.

I was beginning to work out some things in my head.

"I'm with the New York Police," I said, "and I came down to get this fellow that's called Lefty. If your partner could handle the work today, I'd like to have you help me."

It seemed Decker would be glad to run alone that day. Anyway, it turned out, Decker had been sick the day that Jensen had out the party of four that I was interested in.

We got into Jensen's car. It smelled of fish. It smelled good. I like fish and everything that goes with them.

"I'll charter your boat for the first day I have free," I said, as we pulled out of his parking place. "Tomorrow, maybe, if we work fast."

"You don't have to do that," Jensen said. "I'll be glad to help any way I can. I thought there might be something wrong with that party of four, but then we get everything down here. One day you take a party of show people and another time you get a bunch of gangsters aboard."

"These four looked like gangsters?"

"I'd say so. That Lefty was really scared. He jumped out the minute we hit the dock when we got back at noon and he ran."

"You interest me," I said. "Tell me more."

"Well," Jensen said, "I didn't like their looks to start with, and when we get a party like that, especially if one of us is alone, I keep with the rest of the boats out in the stream."

"So you joined a kingfish ring, right?"

"You know about fishing, Mister?"

"My favorite sport down here," I said.

He warmed up, since I was talking his language.

"When one of the boats spots a school of kings," he said, "he signals the other boats and starts circling the school. That keeps the school together."

"Sure," I said. "You circle the school and troll around and around the edge."

He grinned. "You know," he said. "And the more boats you get circling the king school, the easier you keep the school together."

"Right. So they made Lefty go against his will? Did they want you to go off some other place to fish?"

"They kept asking me about going farther out, for marlin. They just seemed to know the name. They didn't know anything about fishing."

"But you stuck to the king ring. Smart boy."

"I figured I was safer," Jensen said.

"Remember any other names? What did they call the other two punks?"

"Acker, or something like that," Jensen said, "was one."

I ran the names over in my mind. Acker and Duke and Lefty. "And the fourth?"

"Gates or something like that," he said.

"Gate?" I asked him.

"Could be."

"Anything else?"

"Only that they paid for a full day before they started, or that is they made Lefty pay."

"Hold it," I said. "You say they made Lefty pay?"

"Before we had cleared Biscayne Bay," Jensen said. "He had a roll of green stuff that would choke a sea cow."

"Go on."

"As I say, they paid for a full day, but when they found out we were going to fish the king ring all day and they couldn't talk me out of it, and there were all the other boats around, they wanted to go back. We docked a little after noon."

We'd pulled up in front of the Miami police station by now, and we went in.

Lieutenant Dave Cromer was just coming through the outer office. He looked at me and then at Jensen.

"Got a suspect, Madden?" he said, and started to laugh.

"Stick with us, Cromer," I said, "and let's go into the morgue."

Jensen identified Lefty Hanson's body as the guy who had been the Lefty in the party of four.

"And that was the kind of fish hooks we were fishing with for kings," he said. "That hook in his mouth."

Cromer didn't look so happy.

"Now wait a minute," he said.

"Haven't got time now, Lieutenant," I said. "The Yankees have just started to work. Come on into the picture gallery and see what happens."

I ASKED the boys in the identification department to get out pictures of anybody named Acker and anybody that went by the handle of "Duke" and also try "Gate" Klein. There were lots of Dukes, but the name of Gate was a little odd and I was just guessing it might be Gate Klein who'd done a stretch some time ago for a

bank robbery.

Jensen recognized Acker and Gate Klein right away when he looked at their pictures. It took him a long time to find the right Duke, but finally, he settled on a big mug called Duke Balto.

All the time Jensen was looking for the right Duke, Lieutenant Cromer hung around with a smug look on his long and hungry face, as if just waiting to laugh when the right time came. I got to feeling more and more as if I wanted to poke him.

About now he started to grin.

"I hate to spoil your fun, sonny boy," he said, "but Acker and Gate Klein have already been found, dead in the Park. They were shot during the night. So you won't pin anything on them." Then he sobered as if it had just come to him that he had spoken out of turn. "Now wait a minute," he said. "This ties up with the whole picture. Where's this Duke Balto?"

I ignored Cromer. It was fun. I turned to Jensen.

"Do you know if any of these guys had a car?" I asked.

"I don't think so," he said. "The day I saw them, they got out of a taxi. I remember because I was looking for customers."

I turned to Cromer. "What time do the morning trains pull out of Miami?" I said.

"Just cool off, Madden," he said. "It's about time you tell me what you're talking about."

"I'm talking about the guy that killed Lefty and the other two. His name is Duke Balto and unless he had a car down here he'll be lamming out of here on the next train."

I looked at my watch and it was eight-thirty already. The clerk at the desk looked at his watch.

"I believe the Daylight Express and the two sections of the Champion have already pulled out for the North," he said.

Cromer gave him a dirty look, then he seemed to forget his jealousy.

"That's right," he said. "Balto might be on one of those trains." Cromer's face got a little red. "In that case, we sure missed 'im."

"We can fly to Jacksonville and catch Balto there when he arrives," I said.

"Now wait a minute," Cromer said. "You don't know that he's left."

"That's right," I said, and things began clicking right along in my mind, like the tail end of a jigsaw puzzle going together. "And I got a hunch we can find out in short order. How many cemeteries have you got in Miami?"

Dave Cromer was right on the button there.

"Six," he said, then his face got redder and he asked, "What in thunder has that got to do with it?"

"Let's get on the telephone and we'll find out. I could be wrong."

He looked relieved that I would admit it.

We started calling cemetery offices. There was only one office open yet. The rest apparently didn't open until later. I asked the one office that I did get about the name of Matilda Rowe. It took a long time to look through the directory of the buried dead, but finally the guy came back to the phone and said there wasn't anybody by that name buried in his cemetery.

"Look here," Lieutenant Cromer said. "What gave you the idea Matilda Rowe was a corpse?"

"Because," I said, "Matilda is an old-fashioned name. A girl who would run around with a punk like Lefty Hanson wouldn't own a name like that. She'd change it. I got the idea talking to a blonde up at a juke joint last night. When I asked her if she knew anybody by that name she said anybody with that name should be dead. I'm kind of thick, but the ideas come

through after a while. It just came to me, Lieutenant.”

He could have told me that was smart, but he just grunted as if he was mad he hadn't thought of it first.

By now somebody was at another cemetery office, but they didn't have any Matilda Rowe buried there either. We ran through two more, and no luck. I was beginning to feel pretty low when one of the boys in the outer office came in and handed me a telegram from the Inspector in New York. It said:

WHILE GETTING THAT TAN KEEP ON THE LOOKOUT FOR ANY SUSPECTS IN ARMORED CAR HOLDUP

LIEUTENANT CROMER was reading the telegram over my shoulder. He let out a laugh, but it was kind of sick.

“What makes your inspector think your crooks are down here in Miami?”

“Because it's the best place in the world to hide out,” I said, and I began to grin a little myself. “And besides, the Inspector is psychic this time, because they are, or were.”

Just then they got a line cleared to the office of a big modern cemetery out off the west end of Flagler Street and I started talking to the manager. I asked him about Matilda.

He ran through the files and found her.

“Yes,” he said, “we have a Matilda Rowe buried here.”

“When was she buried?” I asked him.

“April twenty-second, Nineteen-thirty-nine,” he said.

“Thanks,” I said, and my heart settled back a couple of inches below normal. “That's funny,” I said.

“What's funny?” Cromer wanted to know. He was all ears again to find me in trouble.

“I'm not sure,” I said. “Anyway, let's

go have a look.” I turned to Jensen. “You may have to fly to Jacksonville with us, Jensen, if you don't mind. Better get out of that fishing outfit and into some civilian clothes—something medium or dark so you won't be noticed. And a hat with a brim.”

When he had gone, Cromer and I drove out to the Peaceful Rest Cemetery. On the way out Flagler I told him.

“You see,” I said, “I got a tick of the brain that Lefty Hanson might be mixed up in that job we want to draw together up in New York. I got all the dope on him and it seems he had a brother who was a world beater in a tank. He got the blue ribbon for blasting a German tank with a hand grenade dropped inside it, then he took over and raised Cain. And it just came to me a while ago. You see, Cromer, my mind moves slowly, sometimes.”

“That ain't what the magazine said about Miami Madden.”

“Okay, Needler. Anyway, I've been trying to tie up Lefty Hanson with some big job in the past, and then it came to me. The armored car holdup in New York was pulled the same way that his brother got that German tank, by tossing a hand grenade inside and blowing up the crew. Then the armored car was driven off and they cleaned it out later on. This isn't the first time that so the no-good brother of a war hero has used some of the souvenirs the hero brought home.”

“Go on,” Cromer said.

“So I'd been figuring that Lefty might have been on a big job like that and maybe in the excitement, they split up and Lefty got away with the bulk of the dough. I was trying to work out in my mind where a crook could hide the dough for safe keeping until things cooled off. So when I straightened out the brain tick that the blonde's words started—when she said Matilda should be dead with a name like that—I had a hunch that maybe a fresh

grave might be a good place. It would be right out in the open where nobody would think of looking and Lefty could write down the name of the one buried in the grave and he couldn't forget where he'd hid it. Nobody else in the world would think of looking there."

"You know," Cromer admitted, looking real serious, "I expect you got something there."

"Only," I said, "Matilda Rowe was buried in the spring of Nineteen-thirty-nine. So there wouldn't be any fresh grave to dig into."

Cromer pulled on his long chin.

"I see what you mean," he said. Then he thought slow, and his eyes lighted up. "But wait a minute. Maybe the stuff was buried under the stone." He pulled through the cemetery gates just then and he said, "Like one of these stones here in this modern cemetery. They lay 'm all down flat, here."

"You got it," I said. So we drove to the office, found out where Matilda was buried and lifted up the stone. There was a hole under the stone and the marks where a metal box had been, but it wasn't there now and the hole was empty.

"We got to fly to Jacksonville and catch the Duke up there," I said.

"How you figure about the numbers after her name in the note-book, Madden?" Cromer said, as we were driving out of the cemetery.

"Slow up and I'll show you," I said. I pointed. "Matilda was buried in a burial lot that was in the seventeenth row from the first corner of the cemetery you come to. Then her lot was sixteen lots down from the front. That was so Lefty could find it at night in the dark. That made seventeen, sixteen, like the numbers."

Lieutenant Cromer just drove back with one hand and pulled real hard on his chin with the other. For a minute, I almost felt

sorry for the guy, but then I remembered all the nasty things he'd said against New York's Finest and I didn't feel so sorry.

We picked up Jensen in a business suit, and with a broad-brimmed felt hat pulled down over his face. We picked him up at the police station, drove to the Miami Airport, where we chartered a plane and flew to Jacksonville. We passed all the trains on the way that had left Miami earlier that morning. . . .

THERE wasn't any way of telling what train Balto would be on. The only thing we could do was to walk casually through the trains as they came in, and try to spot him. We had the Jacksonville police checking all those getting off there to make sure Duke Balto didn't give us the slip.

Jensen spotted him. That was why I'd brought Jensen along.

We found him on the third train that arrived. Duke had been smart. He had taken the Palm Express out of the west side station in Miami and when we came into the lounge car, he was sitting in the lounge car with two suitcases beside him. One of the cases was brand new.

"Get ready for a fight," Cromer whispered.

"Don't worry about me," I said, and I stopped in front of Duke Balto.

Duke was a big guy, nicely built, and good-looking, and he dressed flashy. He looked up at me casually.

"Duke," I said with my hands at my sides, "you're under arrest for murder."

I didn't say it loud, because I didn't want to start a panic in the lounge car.

Duke tried to put on the hurt air.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "There must be some mistake."

All the time, he was slowly getting up out of his chair and I could see his hand trying to slip under his coat without me noticing it.

I never like to go into a gun battle with a crook if I can help it. A left hook and a follow up with a right is a lot more fun, so I nailed him right there.

He staggered back and his hand went for his gun in earnest, so I knew I had to finish him right then. I tossed in a left to the stomach and put everything I had in a right uppercut to the button. It just happened to land neat.

Duke went backward over the chair where he had been sitting, and crashed to the floor. By the time he knew what had hit him I had frisked him and had taken his artillery away from him.

Duke got to his feet roaring about a mistake, but by now Cromer had him handcuffed and a gun in his ribs. We led him out of the lounge car and brought his suitcases along, opening the new one to make sure it had the green stuff I'd expected was in there—which it was.

On the way through the station, with half the Jacksonville cops around us, Duke Balto put up one last argument, so I gave him the treatment of how we knew.

"After you and Acker and Gate Klein and Lefty Hanson pulled that armored car job in New York," I said, "Lefty got away with most of the money during the excitement. You and Gate and Acker came down to Miami looking for him later. You found him, and took him out on Jensen's fishing boat.

"When you could get the charter boat off by itself, you planned to dump Jensen in the ocean, torture Lefty, find out where he had the dough hidden and then dump him over, too.

"But Jensen was smart. He wouldn't leave the other fishing boats, so when Lefty

lammed off the boat and turned himself in for the little job in New York, you couldn't get to him. You waited around, and when he was taken across the street to the courthouse jail at night, you got him, worked on him all night and got the dope out of him. That fish hook torture, which you got the idea for on the fishing trip, must have done the trick. Lefty gave out about Matilda's grave and then you killed him. You didn't dare dig up Matilda's stone in the daylight and there wasn't enough darkness left after you'd killed Lefty, so you had to wait until last night.

"Meantime, you figured out that if you personally knocked off Acker and Gate Klein, you'd have all the dough yourself."

Duke Balto didn't say a word. He didn't have to. He looked guilty as sin and plenty scared.

We got to the police car that would take us to the Jacksonville airport north of town.

Lieutenant Cromer stopped and turned like he was going to say good-bye to me, and glad of it.

"Well, Madden," he said, "I expect you'll be starting North now. You been quite a little help to me."

"Quite a little help?" I said, and I went into a touch of Southern drawl. "Listen what the man saiz." Then it was my turn to laugh. "I'm flying back with you to Miami, Cromer," I said. "I got a little unfinished business to take care of."

"Now listen," Cromer groaned. "You didn't do all this by yourself. You can't take credit for all of it."

"Credit, my old man's mustache," I said. "We've got a date to go fishing, haven't we, Jensen?"