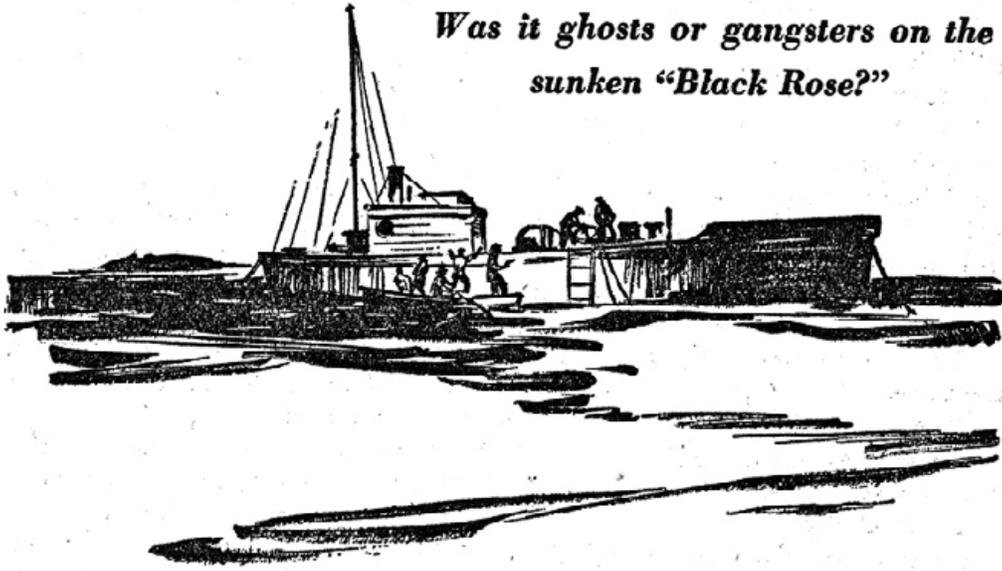


*Was it ghosts or gangsters on the  
sunken "Black Rose?"*



## MAN ALIVE!

By **FRANK J. LEAHY**

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CAPTAIN SELBY chewed at the ends of his moustache impatiently as he paced up and down the heaving fantail of the salvage tug, *Chagny*. At midnight, two hours before, he had driven his ship out through the Golden Gate onto a triangle of deep-sea moorings, five miles offshore and twenty-five fathoms above the ill-fated yacht, *Black Rose*. The yacht had rammed dead on into a big, lumber-laden steam schooner, and but eighteen men of the possible twenty-five on board had been rescued by the schooner, which stood by as a buoy marking the scene of disaster until the arrival of the *Chagny*. Of those lost, two were known to be firemen, one the owner, Tony Wardell; the four others were merely suspected as having been on board.

There was on the *Chagny's* fantail, besides the grim crew of air-pump men and handlers tending the deep diver now

down, a shivering little group huddled deep in the upturned collars of their overcoats—detectives and newspaper men. For Tony Wardell was—had been—Public Enemy Number Thirteen; big shot of a narcotic-smuggling, counterfeiting, rum-running ring; a terrorist, racketeer and wholesale murderer.

"Four on Monte's line," reported a tender, and answered with four sharp jerks.

"What!" snapped Captain Selby, swerving upon the telephone tender. "Why's he coming up? Find out. He's only been down fifteen minutes."

"His exhaust valve's leaking," reported the man with the receiving set clamped over his ears.

The captain swore. "Well, give him slow decompression. I can't risk him getting the bends—not tonight."

The tenders at the rail braced themselves against the bulwark and

heaved hand over hand on the heavy load, starting Monte Ring up.

After several interminable minutes the skipper ordered, "Out stage!" A winch banged, out went a diving platform to be lowered to the twelve fathom level, and the telephone tender reported that Monte had climbed aboard.

"Up stage—slow!" bawled Selby.

The winch reeled in, stopped—reeled in, stopped—and the captain, at the end of his patience, demanded, "All the way up now!"

**I**N A moment the diver broke dripping through the surface, clinging to the bails as the stage swung in and was landed on deck. The dressers sprang into immediate action, slid a bench under Monte, stripped him of his shoes and weights, and twisted off his helmet.

Monte's face, in the white glow of diving lights, was strained as he stared about him, blinking. Then he rose, leaned far over and let a bucketful or so of water pour from the neck of his dress; sat down again.

"Well, Monte," spoke the captain, "what luck?"

"No luck," was the reply. Someone handed him a lighted cigarette.

"Make a full report," Selby said quietly.

"Well, when I went down I landed on the bottom, about fifty feet from the starboard beam of the wreck. Her whole bow's smashed in, and she's layin' a little over on her port keel. When I got onto her boat deck I saw that her mainmast is still standing, but the foremast's broken—smashed the bridge when it fell and poked its truck into the stack. But no bodies. Nor were there any down on the main deck. As reported by the rescued part of her crew, there were those two firemen down below, I knew that—so I decided I'd try and get

them out, anyhow. All this time, though, my exhaust valve was sendin' a steady dribble o' water across my shoulders and down by back, and since my dress was gettin' full, I asked to be taken up."

He swayed a little on the bench, shivered, and added, "Better get me in the tank for a few minutes."

"Of course!" cried Selby. "What am I thinking of? But you know how worked up I am over this job, Monte. Quick, you men—hustle him into the tank. And, Mr. Larson, fetch that bottle of whisky. And coffee. Feel all right, Monte? No pains, dizziness, nausea?"

"No, I'm okay," answered the diver, affecting a grin. "But get me out o' this punk suit."

In a moment the dressers had him stripped down to heavy diving underwear and socks, then he was seized by two of them, one on each side, and rushed for'ard into the recompression tank. The heavy steel door clanged behind them. The captain cracked open a valve, compressed air whistled into the chamber, and when the pressure needle pointed at sixty pounds, he shut down on the valve and stepped through the air lock into the recompression chamber. The dressers went out.

The mate came in and left the whisky and steaming coffee, and departed. The captain mixed a stiff coffee-royal, and Monte fell to sipping it.

**“Y**OU know, Cap'n," Monte spoke, "it's creepy down there on that *Black Rose*, somehow."

"Certainly," replied Selby. "Why shouldn't it be, with those dead men still in her? And it's up to you to get them out. - You! One man! Think of it; a salvage ship the size of this *Chagny* with only one diver aboard! I'm disgraced. One diver! Three others on shore; always on shore

when anything important turns up. Hell and water, no wonder I'm grayheaded!" Then, in a modified voice, "But can you do it, Monte? Think! The eyes of the country'll be on the *Chagny*, Tony Wardell being who he was. Can you?"

Monte gulped the last of his drink.

"On a job like this," he said, "I could put up with the inconveniences of hell. Look what a shame it'd be if Tony Wardell didn't get buried in a five-grand casket."

Selby nodded thoughtfully, plucking at his moustache.

"Not only Tony," he said, "but those other four. His gang enemies."

"If they were aboard. Nobody knows for sure."

"The cops out on deck there say they had a tip-off. That's why they're hanging around; and those newspaper men."

"Tony was givin' the four a last ride, eh?"

"Yes. But if so, where are they, the five of them? They weren't rescued with the crew. And the crew, loyal to gang principles, won't talk, according to advice from the steam schooner before she hobbled into port with them. What happened then? You tell me"—he shrugged emptily—"or show me. Yes, show me. I hope you can, Monte. It'll be a feather in our cap, and these days a feather would look good. How did Tony Wardell die; and did he murder four rivals before he died, or were the five of them trapped before he had a chance? There's a deep, dark mystery for you to solve."

"And it'll probably remain deep and dark," said Monte. "But I'll see what I can see—for old alma mater."

**O**N DECK, a cold, autumn wind swept down over the sea. The *Chagny* pitched heavily to her moorings, her flat counter smacking regularly into the

troughs, her anchor cables paid out to the bitter ends. In the darkness beyond the glow of her diving lights lay two smaller tugs, standing by to give the *Chagny* aid if she started swinging down the wind and away from the wreck; farther off to windward were the lights of a coast guard cutter, as she cruised on her lonely patrol; closer aboard, to leeward, lurked a small, low craft, not to be identified.

Soaked with spray, weary, sleepless, the crew bent at once to clothing Monte again in diving dress. He sat on the equipment chest, legs outstretched, while they fussed around him; and when the telephone had been tested, the helmet came down over his head, the air pump was started, and he was pulled to his feet and walked to the rail.

Captain Selby picked his way through the tangle of hawsers, wires and shots of anchor cable hampering the deck and stood with his face close to Monte's open faceplate.

"Good luck, Monte," he called. "And here"—he took the diver's hand and pressed something into it—"here's a skeleton key that should open any cabin doors. Here's your torch, too. There's an extra line attached to your belt, and—that's all, I guess."

He heaved a sigh, stepped back. Monte's faceplate was slammed shut and screwed down; he felt of his exhaust valve and adjusted the air. Then he was on the diving stage, and in a moment his helmet disappeared once again under the surface, leaving in wake a foaming circle of white bubbles.

**I**T WAS chill, dark, below; lonely with an emptiness that gripped Monte's heart, while the building pressure of deepening fathoms gripped his body as he sank toward the bottom. At the twelve fathom level the stage halted, and he

jumped off. A jerk came on his lifeline. He answered it quickly—everything was okay. Then, suddenly, the lead soles of his shoes struck the bottom.

“Hold it!” he spoke into his transmitter.

He snapped on his electric torch, the light cutting feebly through the pitch-black water. A rush of the tide thudded against his body, lifted him off his feet, lowered him again gently, as if he were being toyed with by an invisible hand. Digging his coppered toes into the ocean’s floor, he pressed forward, like a runner filmed in slow motion.

In a moment he pulled up short. A gloomy wall confronted him—the starboard keel of the *Black Rose*. He studied it with his torch, then made his dress sufficiently buoyant to blow himself up into the main deck, somewhere ‘midships. With making his descending line fast to a stanchion, he reported to the topside.

“I’m aboard, and okay.”

The words sounded flat and unnatural above the rustle of his incoming air. With his torch cutting only about three feet into the dark water, he released the rail and crossed down the listing deck to the superstructure.

He wiggled his light around at his feet when he had gone for’ard as far as the bridge, lightened his dress and climbed the ladder. He peered along under the dodgers, opened a door and peered into the smashed chart-house. But of dead men no sign. He retraced his weary steps, careful at all times to keep his lines clear. Arriving again at the point where he had boarded the wreck, he sank to his knees, with his shoulder and helmet against the bulkhead, to rest.

A SUDDEN sound, as of dull thumping, roused him out of his

lethargy. But when he strained to listen, the sound had ceased. He laughed to himself; shook his head in his helmet; swallowed hard to clear his senses, and pulled himself to his feet. Imagination, that sound. The thumping was inside his head; must be. Already he had been down about a half hour on this dive, and the pressure was closing down on his body to echo the thumping of his heart in his head. And still he had nothing to report.

He was conscious suddenly that he had that skeleton key clutched tightly in hand. He could think of no reason why any of the cabins should be locked; and still, why not? In the event Tony Wardell had taken four enemies for a last ride, perhaps he had locked himself in with them, and was gloating over them, telling them they had stepped on his toes and were about to be rubbed out for so doing, when the crash came—to somehow imprison them. It was a hope, a chance; but, if true, what, after all, would be the resultant advantage of all this anxiety and night diving to the *Chagny*? Captain Selby would receive his salvage fee, the cops would muscle in on the glory of bringing in the bodies of five wanted gangsters, and he, Monte Ring, would be sick for a week, what with handling a crop of stiffs and flirting with an attack of the bends.

But—he’d better snap into it and get it all over with.

Then, again, that far-away thumping! Funny about that sound; couldn’t remember ever having heard one like it before in deep water. His arms and legs trembled a little, his heart seemed to be flopping disconnectedly around in his chest, but that chill running up and down his spine—why did it persist? Was it a new symptom of deep water sickness, or— or was there really another presence there aboard than his own?

HE CURSED. Summoning up scorn to drive imagination into the background of his wits, he laid a hand on the knob of the door in front of him and forced it open. Stepping into the cabin, he flaunted his torch about to pick out the overturned chairs, the empty settee and bunk; swept the floor, every foot of it and sighed with relief upon finding no bodies. No diver likes to handle dead men; above all, he, Monte Ring.

He tried the cabin immediately aft, and the ones aft of that. With the same result. Then he heard the skipper's voice above the burble of his air, felt a sharp tug at his lifeline.

"Monte! All right down there?"

"Yes," he answered.

"Well, report once in a while."

"Nothin' to report. Nothin'."

He snorted. The Old Man was like that—impatient; on this job, hot for a word of glory for the *Chagny*. Competition had been nosing him out; some sensational salvage-rescue and shipping circles might snap into the fact that the *Chagny* was no fool's ship.

All cabins on the starboard side of the wreck had been entered; not once—although a few of the doors had given trouble—had the skeleton key been necessary. It now remained for Monte to cross to the port side to continue the search—the seemingly hopeless search. The thought of the weary steps ahead sickened him. He had a fuzzy taste in his mouth; his bared hands were numb with cold, but his body was sweating. He wondered how much longer he could stand the dizziness in his head; took several deep breaths to clear it, then jumped out of the covered main deck to the ocean's floor. From there, by lightening his dress, he blew himself up for the second time this night to the boat deck.

The broken foremast, ropes, guys and

the wireless antenna were all snarled up together up there, and in his pale torchlight it was difficult for him to cross the deck without fouling his lines. He had to cut his way with his hooked knife through some of the tangle; and then at last he was jumping off to the port side of the wreck. Mounting again into the main deck, he paused for a moment to rest, perspiring freely from exertion, lungs gasping.

A sudden, faint rap—sharper now than that thumping he'd heard before—came to him. Despite himself, he started, amazed at the acuteness of his imagination. He swallowed hard to sharpen his hearing; listened intently. Silence. A little wave of self-pity swept through his brain. He was in bad shape, he decided, hearing things that couldn't possibly be, the noises sounding louder as the minutes of his lonely dive unraveled. What moment would he pass out? He reached to give the topside the signal to take him up, when again that rap, more imperative now, sounded from within the *Black Rose*.

"Damn me!" he snarled. "This son-of-a-buck of a wreck is haunted, that's all there is about it!"

He filled his lungs, fighting to clear his head, and a knife seemed to stab through his chest to prick at his throat and brain. The pain wore away, and he started for'ard, grimly.

DOGGEDLY pushing his way along the sloping deck, he halted suddenly and turned, his back against the rail, hoping he had advanced closer to the source of the rapping sound, but now again he heard only the immense silence of the undersea darkness. This angered him, and he turned again to continue for'ard a few paces, then thrust through an open door into a cabin.

Inside, he stopped, his flesh creeping; not at anything he saw there with his torch,

but with the feeling that he had heard a human shriek. He listened for the sound to be repeated, then, despite his weariness, his dizziness, and the chill that felt for the marrow of his bones, he laughed, trying to push the possibility of rappings and shrieks out of mind. But, as a matter of fact, such things were possible, and that was the hell of it. If there had been an air pocket, now, formed on one of the cabins as the *Black Rose* went down—as his diving pal, Paddy Devine, had once found in a sunken liner, occupied—there was a chance, a hope, that there was someone in that pocket, and alive. Man alive! He wondered; and, wondering, he felt new strength in his creeping exhaustion; and with this strength he hurried out on deck again and clumped aft, opening each cabin door as he went.

Only now, he did not search the interiors for bodies. First of all to make sure about that air pocket—and to lose no time; not now, after four hours of shipwreck.

High hope dwindled within him as he opened one door after the other. Was it his imagination, after all? Probably so. Well, such a wreck as the *Black Rose* would play upon a diver's nerves. How many men had been taken for a last ride in her? Tony Wardell's yacht—a shambles. Lord, but he was getting woozy in the head! He was staggering.

He tried the second to last door, port side, aft. It was locked.

A sudden sound! That rapping again, sharp and close at hand, in spite of its faraway quality; and slowing down, weakening. Then a shriek—for help—as that of a man in mortal fear; so distant as to be almost a trick of the senses—but real! Terrifyingly real!

Monte's blood ran cold in his veins. Man alive! Beyond that locked door a man was alive. Alive after four hours in a

sunken ship on the bottom of the ocean! It seemed improbable enough; but it was true. A man was in that cabin, rapping frantically on the bulkhead with some metal instrument. And—Monte saw him as he brought his torch into play—the man had his face pressed against the port glass, eyes wide, staring at him.

Tony Wardell! Even in that darkness of the deep, even though Tony Wardell's hair was known to be as black as a raven's wing, and now appeared to be ghastly white—even so, Monte knew it was he.

The imprisoned man voiced a new scream of appeal, then disappeared from the port. Perhaps he had crumpled, in lost consciousness, at last. No. The knob of the door waggled violently.

Monte inserted his skeleton key, turned it, took a firm grip on himself for receiving the man, and strained to open the door. But the door was stuck fast!

Again Tony Wardell appeared at the port, his face flattened against the glass, lips moving.

**A**T FIRST, Monte could catch no meaning in the volley of words shouted through that steel bulkhead. Then, gradually, with his helmet pressed against the port, he began to understand. Remorse and terror. The good God had at last lost patience with him, Tony Wardell. This night, lining them up against the bulkhead, he had riddled four men with bullets. And then had come the crash of shipwreck—the cracking of his head as he was hurled across the room—unconsciousness—and awakening to find the door jammed tight against his escape, with the ship going down—and this—

The stream of words grew wilder, more incoherent, as Monte listened; story that spoke of those four dead men who had muscled in on the racket—the Tony Wardell racket. And those dead men were

in that cabin with him now, as they had been through the long hours, centuries, since he had burnt them down. Pichetto and Gunner and Luigi Mangone and The Deacon—all staring at him now through the darkness from under waist-deep water that stunk of blood. He could stand it no longer. His guns were empty. There was the water, but he was afraid to die in that water. He didn't want to die—not there! God help him! Help! Open the door!

Monte shuddered; shook his wits together. Open the door! He tried again, but it held—warped fast. What next?

Above all, Tony Wardell must not die; not till he dropped through a hangman's trap. Since the door couldn't be opened without smashing it, bit by bit; since to do that would mean the man's inevitable drowning, there remained but one thing to do—send for an iron-lung.

He reached to his signal line, hesitated. Wardell was speaking again. Monte could barely hear.

“Open the door!” sounded the snarl. “Hurry! Air—foul. Gas! Damn it all—help!” He rapped on the glass with what appeared to be the butt of an automatic, his face contorted horribly in the eerie torch-light, his lips continuing to babble crazy, snarling appeals and blasphemies.

Monte, trembling on his legs, an electric tingle in his mouth, reached once more to his signal line. Could he stick it out through his building weariness to see this rescue effected? But he couldn't fail—now.

**C**APTAIN SELBY, standing at the rail of the *Chagny*, staring glumly at the stream of bubbles that appeared on the surface of the choppy sea within the glow of the diving lights, suddenly tensed as the telephone tender spoke through his transmitter.

“What is it?” he snapped.

The tender listened a moment, started, lifted the receivers from his head and held them out toward the captain.

“Monte wants to talk to you.”

The captain snatched the set, clamped it over his ears, listened intently to the distant, flat tones of the diver above the air roaring through his helmet.

“What?” he piped suddenly. “Man alive, you say? . . . Tony Wardell? Good! That's great! . . . What? . . . Four dead men in the cabin with him? . . . Good God! . . . Yes? . . . All right. And you, Monte? . . . You're sure? Very well, then, son. Stand by.” And he ripped the set from his ears.

“An iron-lung!” he bawled. “Attach it to Monte's extra line. Bend a heaving line around it and keep a strain on it as Monte hauls down, so the thing won't snag on the wreck before he gets it in hand. Quick now! Tony Wardell's alive down there in an air pocket—four dead men with him.”

Mumbles and gasps of excitement ran the rounds of the weary, brine-drenched men.

The iron-lung—a grotesque bag, wound with straps and tubes—was carefully attached to the end of the diver's extra line, as ordered. The captain spoke to the telephone tender, and the tender spoke into his transmitter. There was an instant of strained silence, then the lung began to move downward, disappeared; a man at the rail let a supporting line run slowly out between his fingers as he held all slack.

Captain Selby took up his position by the telephone tender, pawing at his moustache nervously. Headlines in the morning papers—Salvage ship, *Chagny*, rescues Tony Wardell from twenty-five fathoms down! Admirable piece of salvage work! Competition would turn green with envy.

A tug at his sleeve disturbed him. He swerved to frown at one of the detectives as the man jerked his head indicating a

boat that was lurking close off the *Chagny's* lee rail. It was the same craft—low in the water, with racy lines, and with lights extinguished—that had been observed lying to, earlier in the night, far out in the darkness. There was a low purr of her motor, scarcely to be heard, what with the grinding of the diving air-pump and the moaning of wind in the *Chagny's* funnel-stays.

The captain affected indifference. “Mr. Larson, there!” he bawled. “See what that thing alongside wants.”

The mate nodded and crossed to the lee rail. Selby turned attention again to his work. He said something to the telephone tender, the tender spoke to the diver below, listened and nodded.

“Monte’s got the lung,” was the report.

“Good!” muttered Selby. “Now we’re getting somewhere.”

**H**E PAID no attention to the mate’s voice bawling out into the darkness; fixed his eyes upon that circle of bubbles beyond the rail. Salvage ship *Chagny* saves Tony Wardell for the noose! A pleasant thought.

An excited voice at his shoulder interrupted. That same detective again. The captain scowled fiercely.

“What do you want now? Can’t you see I’m—”

The other gestured him down. “I know you’re busy, cap’n. But that boat there. I don’t like the looks of it.”

Selby lifted his glance. He cocked his ear to catch a reply to the mate’s bellowings; but there came no reply.

“You see?” spoke the detective. “She’s up to no damn’ good. If you ask me, there’s a load of gunmen aboard her, and there may be trouble.”

Selby looked at the other dumbly.

“Trouble? I don’t see—”

“That boat’s been easing alongside for

a long time,” cut in the detective. “And she was right where she lays now when you called out about Tony Wardell being still alive. I say that boat belongs to the mob whose four men Wardell bumped off tonight. Get the idea?”

**C**APTAIN SELBY nodded, but it was quite evident it was all very hazy to him.

“I’ll find out,” he snarled. “I’ll stand for no interference in this night’s work. I can’t afford it.”

He stumbled across to the lee rail and joined his mate. The low, dark craft was still purring, with her nose into the sea, about fifty feet away. There was a huddle of dark figures in her open cockpit, none distinguishable, all facing in silence toward the *Chagny*.

“You, out there!” yelled the captain. “I’m Cap’n Selby. Account for yourself or shove off. If you don’t I’ll signal those tugs to stand up and drive you off.”

Now there came an answering voice, “Don’t signal no one, Selby. Get that straight.”

“Eh? What’s that?”

“You heard me. Don’t you bat an eye. We want Tony Wardell when you bring him up. Do we get him?”

“Do you get him? Why should you?”

“That’s our business. He burnt down four men t’night. We heard your diver’s report—and either you turn Tony Wardell over to us or we’ll see ‘at he don’t get rescued at all. See?”

Selby gasped, and mumblings spread abroad over the decks of the *Chagny*.

“What’s your answer?” demanded the gangsters’ spokesman.

“My answer?” snarled Selby. “This—go to hell!”

“Okay,” snapped the voice. “It’s your funeral then, not ours. Remember that diver of yours down under.”

“We’ll take care of him all right.” The captain swerved upon his mate. “Larson, jump up and signal—”

A gun cracked out in the darkness, and a bullet hissed by Selby’s head. Everybody who could crouched behind the bulwark; the mate started crawling for’ard to the bridge ladder, and the detectives began to answer the fire.

Then the speed boat’s motor broke into a starting roar, but she made no attempt to retreat, continuing her ragged gunfire. Selby lunged across the fantail to join the telephone tender; snatched the receiving set and clamped it over his ears.

“Monte!” he called into the transmitter. “Can you hear this racket? If you can, don’t get scared. We’ll—”

The rattle of a machine gun spoke up. The captain screamed and pawed at his shoulder. Shouts filled the air, the captain, still on his feet, bawled a command, a man cut and ran up the weather deck to the bridge. One of the men at the air-pump yelped and slumped to his knees, blood spurting from his hand.

“Keep that pump going!” cried Selby.

More fire, to and from the *Chagny*. Lights started to blink far up on her foremast. There was a spatter of bullets against the teak air-pump casing; the other pumper cursed and slapped at his ear—and two others leaped in to keep the grinding going. Once that machine stopped, Monte Ring, far down on the *Black Rose*, was lost!

Then the sudden cry from the mate on the bridge, “Here comes the coast guard cutter!”

The blaring of a siren grew upon the confusion about the *Chagny*. Captain Selby’s voice rose above the din: “Monte! Come up when you’re ready—and bring Wardell up!”

**B**UT in the pitch-black darkness that still lurked down under—although there was a creeping hint of daylight to eastward—Monte Ring was not yet ready to come up. With the iron-lung received and ready in hand, he was still knifing away at the splinters of the door’s lower panel which he had to kick in with his heavy shoes. And still from within the cabin came the calls of the imprisoned man, less frantic now, but impatient.

These appeals and the continued rappings angered Monte although he understood the reason for them. When he had kicked in the panel, the water had deepened inside, compressing the air, and rising—surely—from the man’s waist to his neck.

Then he had the panel ready, and he rose to press his helmet against the port glass, calling to the man within; and, when Wardell came to listen, he added, “Put on the iron-lung. I’ll hand it to you. Can you hear me?”

He caught a faint “Yes—hurry!”

“All right,” he answered. “Listen. Strap on the bag—pinch the nose clip—take a good shot of oxygen—bite the mouthpiece. Understand? Good. When you’ve done that, duck your body and come out feet first through the panel—and I’ll take you up. Ready?”

He dropped to one knee and shoved the bladder-shaped bag into the created opening; felt it snatched away from him.

For a long moment—a full minute—he waited. Then a grotesquely hooded figure crawled clumsily through the aperture. Monte immediately seized him, pulled him erect, and held him tightly with one arm as he trudged with him down the listing deck to where his lines extended up surfaceward. Then he gave four jerks on his lifeline.

In an instant they were taken off their feet. They rose rapidly, Monte conscious

of the other clutching him almost in a death-grip. Then they reached the stage, at twelve fathoms, and Monte struggled aboard with his burden.

“On the stage,” he reported to the topside. “Take us right—on up.”

AND the next thing he knew he was in the Iron Doctor, under heavy pressure. There were several figures around him, all watching him anxiously; one of them handed him a lighted cigarette. He puffed at it, inhaled deeply—and grinned. And the anxiety wore out of the faces. The old cigarette test never failed.

“You’re okay,” pronounced Captain Selby, who seemed to have a lot of blood spattered on him. “Better off than some of the boys who got bullet-creased. Yes, I’ll say you’re okay, Monte. In fact, you’re great. Rescued—captured Tony Wardell alive.”

“Where is he?” asked Monte.

“The cops have him in a sick bay under lock and key—in a coast guard cutter that showed up just in time for a lot of things. To capture about a dozen thugs of a rival gang, for example. Man alive, what a night! But we’re made, sailor, we’re made. The *Chagny’s* in the who’s what now.”