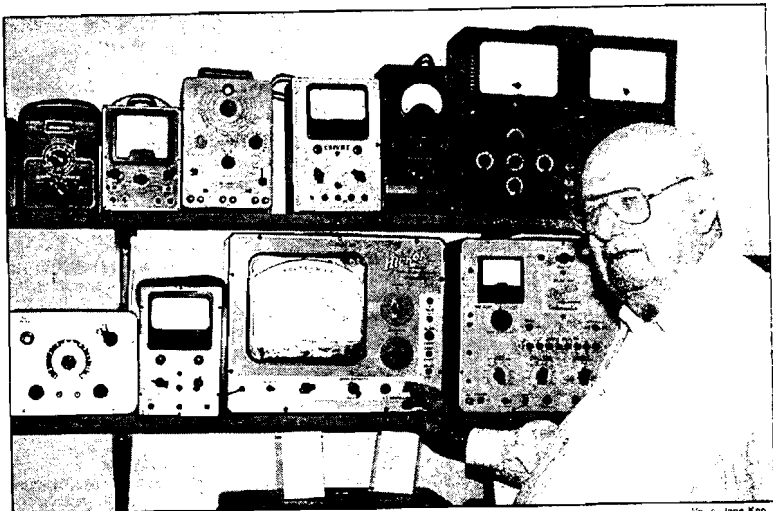


The Illustrated Press

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 2 MAY, 1991



By Jane Ken

Wells Chapin calls himself the director and collector of the Michigan Masonic Home's exhibit of radios, which number more than 85.



Affiliated With
The Old Time Radio
Network

THE OLD TIME RADIO CLUB
MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

New member processing--\$5.00 plus club membership of \$17.50 per year from Jan 1 to Dec 31. Members receive a tape listing, library listing, monthly news letter, the Illustrated Press, the yearly Memories Publications and various special items. Additional family members living in the same household as a regular member may join the club for \$5.00 per year. These members have all the privileges of the regular members but do not receive the publications. A junior membership is available to persons 12 yrs of age & younger who do no live with a regular member. This membership is \$13.00 per year and includes all the benefits of regular membership. Regular membership are as follows: If you join in Jan- Mar \$17.50-- Apr- Jun \$14.00-- July-Sept \$10- Oct- Dec \$7.00. All renewals should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing issues. Please be sure to notify us if you change your address.

OVERSEAS MEMBERSHIPS are now available.

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The Old Time Radio Club meets the first of every month on Monday evening from August to June at 393 George Urban Blvd. Cheektowaga, N.Y. 14225. Anyone interested in the Golden Age of Radio is welcome. Meeting start at 7;30 P.M.

CLUB ADDRESS:

Old Time Radio Club
P.O. Box 426
Lancaster, N.Y. 14086

DEADLINE FOR THE I.P.-10th of each month prior to publication

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Reel to Reel 1-750
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10905 Howe Rd.
Clarence, N.Y. 14031
(716) 759-8793

Reel to Reel 751 & UP
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TAPE LIBRARY RATES: All reels and video cassettes-- \$1.85 per month; cassettes and records-- \$.85 per month. Rates include postage and handling.

CANADIAN BRANCH: Rental rates are the same as above, but in Canadian funds.

Wireless Wanderings



JIM SNYDER

I feel that I must comment on Joel Senter's letter to the editor in the February IP. This is the one where Senter is highly critical of Jack Palmer's remarks in the November IP.

First, let me deal with Senter's final remark about Palmer's being more at home in the pages of the DAILY WORKER than in the ILLUSTRATED PRESS. He says this is because Palmer suggests that the profit motive should be "subjugated to the common good." No where in what Palmer has written do I find the slightest suggestion that the profits of dealers should be done away with. Senter seems to completely overlook the point that the free enterprise system also encourages us to get the "best buy" we can at the lowest possible price. That is certainly a part of Senter's valued free enterprise system, and that appears to me to be Palmer's point. Nothing more.

Now, back to the start of Senter's arguments. Here he says that Palmer claims that programming from dealer's costs too much. I don't find that statement in his letter. He is simply saying that people should consider getting their shows as inexpensively as possible, and while you may purchase things you really want, you should also make use of the various club libraries and trading possibilities. What is wrong with that? I certainly agree with him. Don Aston, one of the truly big dealers, puts flyers in his advertising for the North American Radio Archives (NARA) where people can borrow the same shows that Don sells. Apparently Don doesn't consider this to be an outlandish activity. If people of modest means must rely completely on purchases of shows, than I doubt if we would have much of a hobby because of the cost involved. Are some profits unreasonable? They sure are! I have a letter sitting in front of me in which a dealer is telling me of a fairly complete ten year run that he has of a show. This is a show that would not be particularly high on the popularity lists. He tells me that these shows were "given" to him by the star of the show because of their friendship. He tells me that although he paid nothing for them, he is "willing" to sell them to me for \$19,000 (yes, that is thousands). I guess I should send his name to Senter who apparently feels that there are only two

dealers guilty of "Profit gouging".

Next he argues against Palmer who questions the practice of some dealers who "withhold shows". Again, I have a letter in front of me from another dealer who is offering me about 100 consecutive shows from a popular juvenile serial. None of these are in circulation. He will accept nothing less than \$10,000 for these. That is \$100 for each and every fifteen minute episode. Now I happen to know his source of those shows, and that source told me that the dealer paid a total of \$100 for the entire set. That dealer further demands that if I purchase these, at his price, that I sign a document promising not to trade or give any of these shows to anyone for five years. Apparently a 10,000 percent profit isn't enough for this dealer. He wants to cut the same deal with others. The date of his letter is four years old. None of those shows are in question are in general circulation as yet. So, he continues to "withhold" them, and /or is forcing others to do the same. Is this "withholding" of shows unethical? It sure is!

Do some dealers "ballyhoo" the good that they do for the hobby to extremes? I have never heard a Don Aston or a Bob Burnham ever take credit at all for the many good things they do for the hobby. On the other hand, another dealer that I consider to be operating fraudulently, is always bragging about the wonderful things he is doing. Hi is a phoney. The good ones seem to be the quiet ones.

Senter is giving the impression that all dealers are wonderful, although he has spent much of the last two years of his life on a crusade against one particular one. Over a period of eleven years I used to do an annual column in which I would write about my experiences in making purchases from dealers. During those eleven dealers I reviewed 71 different dealers. In my column I merely reported on my experience, trying to avoid as far as possible, judgemental statements. I did however keep my own private list (one that I will not share with others), of my own personal evaluation. I had four rating in this scale, as listed below:

- (A) A source that provides more than you really have a right to expect.
- (B) Operating as you have a right to expect.
- (C) Below acceptable standards.
- (D) Dishonest dealer.

Of all those 71 dealers I only rated 3 in the "A" category, and one of them is no longer in business. I rated 17 in the "C" category and 7 as a "D". Because of later experiences I would now move two of those "C's" down to "D's". All of the "D" dealers are still in business except for one. That one had a warrant taken out against him by the attorney general of his state for fraud, but he skipped out (with

\$18 of mine) before the warrant could be served, and he still hasn't been found. Now all of this totals up to 33.8 percent of the dealers that I dealt with were operating in what I considered an unacceptable manner. This is a stupendous number with the worst record I have ever heard of, perhaps with the single exception of coin dealers. This is far more than that two dealers that Senter finds unacceptable. We all know of the good and honest dealers. Unfortunately many who might have enjoyed the hobby ran into one of the others, and we have lost them from our hobby forever.

I generally endorse the sentiments expressed by Jack Palmer's original letter. He does indeed suggest buying what you can't find otherwise. But, and this is important, he also suggests trying to save a little money by borrowing from the clubs, by trading, and perhaps by becoming a part of a "buying group". He is certainly not anti-dealer, but he is pointing out some things that annoy him about some dealers. What is wrong with that? Where is the Communist (DAILY WORKER) conspiracy in that? He is simply suggesting the free enterprise system.

BACK ISSUES

I.P.'s and MEMORIES
\$1.50 ea. postpaid

Out of print issues may be borrowed from the reference library.

Contact--Dominic Parisi
38 Ardmore Pl.
Buffalo, N.Y. 14213

ADVERTISING RATES FOR MEMORIES

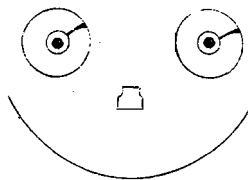
\$60.00 for a full page
\$40.00 for a half page

ALL ADS MUST BE CAMERA READY

SPECIAL - OTR members may take 50% off these rates.

Advertising deadline-Sept. 1

REFERENCE LIBRARY: A reference library exists for members. Members should have received a library list of materials with their membership. Only two items can be borrowed at one time, for a one month period. Please use the proper designations for materials to be borrowed. When ordering books include \$2.00 to cover rental, postage and packaging. Please include \$1.00 for other items. If you wish to contribute to the library, the OTRC will copy material and return the originals to you. See address on page 2. Please include \$25 refundable security deposit for each book borrowed.



REEL-LY SPEAKING

by TOM HARRIS

The following donated reels have been added to the club library. Please remember that ALL additions to the library are made by donations. We do give free rentals for reels contributed. If you have any questions about this please write, my address is listed under librarian.

#837 MIXED

FORD THEATER

Horn Blows at Midnight

JACK BENNY

10-21-51

10-28-51

CBS RADIO WORKSHOP

Space Merchants 1&2

LUX

3-10-47 It's a Wonderful Life

#838 THE MARRIAGE

W/ Hume Cronyn & Jessica Tandy

2-14-54

2-28-54

3-7-54

3-14-54

3-21-54

3-28-54

#839 THE MARRIAGE

1-3-54
1-16-54
1-17-54
1-24-54
1-31-54
2-7-54

#840 THE MARRIAGE

11-22-53
11-29-53
12-6-53
12-13-53
12-20-53
12-27-53

#841 THE MARRIAGE

10-24-52
10-14-53
10-18-53
10-25-53
11-8-53
11-15-53

#842 DAMERON

9-26-72 Short Sweet Life of
Lee Chow Soon
10-3-72 Don't Point at Me
You're Loaded
10-10-72 Siamese Cat Affair
10-17-72 The Sweet Job
10-24-72 If You Eat Bananas
You Gotta Expect Spiders
10-31-72 A Guy Could Die of
Thirst in the Middle of a
Brewery
11-7-72 Girl With the Aquiline
Nose
11-21-72 Take Another Chorus,
They're Small
11-28-72 Uncle Albert
12-5-72 Who Would Like to Kill
a Nice Guy Like Pete
12-12-72 There's a Broken
Broad for Every Light on
Hardway
12-19-72 Lady Says Die

#843 DAMERON

12-26-72 Sweetheart of Sydney Fry
1-2-73 Ground Glass Incident
1-9-73 Guaranteed Not to Rip,
Rust, or Collect Dust
1-16-73 Some Days You Get the
Bear
1-23-73 Private War of Ambrose
Cain
1-30-73 Rapture of Mrs. Par-
rington
2-6-73 Outsider
2-13-73 Pursuit of a Ghost
2-20-73 Tin Ghost of Kuala
Lumpur
2-27-73 Crossword Puzzle
3-6-73 Who is Buried in Grant's
Tomb?
3-13-73 Lemming Syndrome

NOTICE:

As of May 1st all reels
numbered 1 through 750 will be
ordered and returned to

Martin Braun
10905 Howe Rd.
Clarence, N.Y. 14031

Reels 751 and up will still be
available from

Thomas Harris
9565 Wehrle Dr.
Clarence, NY. 14031



Due to some unforeseen
circumstances in getting the
new tape library catalog to
the printers on time we will
have it ready in the next few
months. We appreciate your
patience in this matter and
apologize for any inconvenience
to our loyal members.

THANKS

Business booms at BBC

'Tower of Babel' monitored for paying clients

BY WILLIAM TUOHY
Los Angeles Times

LONDON — In an old Georgian mansion west of London, scores of linguists are working around the clock monitoring thousands of words from radio transmissions from the Middle East.

The monitors, employed by the British Broadcasting Corp., seek to give a comprehensive report on what Middle Eastern countries are saying about the conflict.

Its analysts are also looking at the bits and pieces from official radio broadcasts to find patterns in the daily product from a contemporary Tower of Babel.

The BBC operation in Caversham audits about 500 foreign-language broadcasts daily from around the world and processes up to 5,000 messages, ranging from short announcements to long

The BBC operation in Caversham audits about 500 foreign-language broadcasts daily from around the world and processes up to 5,000 messages, ranging from short announcements to long speeches, translating, editing and distributing the reports to customers.

speeches, translating, editing and distributing the reports to customers.

And now that the gulf conflict is under way, the BBC, which is especially focusing on the Middle East, offers paying clients, including media, the British government and presumably Britain's intelligence service, a first-hand look at what combatant governments are saying.

"The staff here listens to a million words a day," says Adam Raphael, a BBC correspondent assigned full-time to Caversham to report several times daily on the latest translations of statements from the gulf states, most notably Iraq. "They publish more than 100,000 of those words."

The monitors' product is published in a daily record, the "Summary of World Broadcasts," whose popularity has increased sharply among subscribers since the gulf war began. Subscribers pay a basic rate, about \$200 a day, for the service. It is delivered by telex, fax or mail.

Medium- and high-frequency broadcast signals from the Middle East are picked up by an antenna three miles away and moved by land line to Caversham, where the special BBC operation runs 24-hours daily with some 250 monitors, translators, and editors — including, at any time, a dozen Arabic speakers, as well as Farsi experts who handle broadcasts from Tehran.

The Arabic experts focus on the three Iraqi stations: Radio Baghdad, the Iraqi foreign broadcast service; The Voice of the Masses, the domestic service; and the Mother of Battles, a new station, possibly from Kuwait.

Besides sifting through broadcasts, the monitors — who include two Iraqi exiles — listen for trends and changes in mood. Raphael points out that Caversham first noted the calls by Baghdad for acts of international terrorism; these calls were followed by scattered incidents in places from the Philippines to Algeria. Because of the sensitivity of their work, the monitors ask not to be named or photographed.

Their work in the stately building overlooking the Thames River near Reading is funded by the BBC's World Service, which is supported by the British government. The

British Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defense both are clients of the BBC service. It is freely available to other officials and governments, if they pay the fee.

The British government runs its own undercover radio monitoring service, the General Communication Headquarters, which is the equivalent of the U.S. National Security Agency's worldwide listening network, tuned into other nation's

private military and diplomatic communications.

Although allied officials are loathe to discuss psychological warfare measures, Raphael says the monitors have picked up a new station, apparently broadcasting from Saudi Arabia. "It is called the Voice of Free Iraq," he said. "It comes in close to the frequency of Radio Baghdad and it calls on Iraqi troops to defect to Saudi Arabia."

Museum tunes in to yesteryear

Good times come with frequency at home's radio display

BY JANE KEON
News Special Writer

ALMA - A museum-sized collection of old radios resides on the floor of the Michigan Masonic Home here.

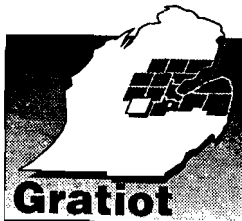
Classic radio buff Wells Chapin, 82, worked with Paul Haviland, 86, and the home's director, Roger Myers, to display more than 85 radios at The Old Tyme Radio Museum.

Chapin estimates the value of the collection at nearly \$80,000.

"It's as fine an individual collection in Michigan as there is," he said, adding the exhibit is larger than those at both the Greenfield Village Museum in Detroit and the Amateur Radio Relay League's headquarters in Hartford, Conn.

Chapin said he's the museum's director and collector, while Haviland serves as the curator and restorer. Both men live in the retirement home.

Haviland fixes radios in a work



area that resembles the service centers of earlier decades.

Two shelves or still-working test equipment line the wall above a large desk. A wooden rack holding boxes of various-sized electron vacuum tubes hangs on another wall. A set of Perpetual Trouble Shooters Manuals is close at hand.

The radios are arranged by era in the museum, and include such brand names as Emerson, Electro Voice, Stewart Warner, Philco, So-

nora, Bendix, Detrola, Lafayette, Silvertone and Atwater-Kent. Many of the earliest radios are homemade.

"You had to buy the parts and build them yourself," Chapin said.

Once antennas came into use, people also built them from kits. A 1934 Silvertone-Marvel antenna kit - still in its box - is part of the museum collection.

Batteries powered the earliest radios. The museum displays a 1929 Metrodyne model with the battery clips still hooked on the back, and another radio has a battery covered in brightly colored paper stored inside.

The power source is not compact; the battery is an inch-thick block that's 5 inches long and 3 inches wide. Its price was 25 cents.

People listened to radios through a single earphone in the earliest days. The museum collection in-

Please see RADIOS, Page B-4

RADIOS

Continued from Page B-3

cludes a set of earphones ordered out of a 1923 Sears catalog.

The Old Tyme Radio Museum also contains early loudspeakers, some shaped like small concert tubas to amplify the sound. Others stand like flowers - the "Morning Glory" speakers.

The museum displays a few pieces of audio equipment, including a recording device from the early 1930s that transferred voices onto thin wire instead of tape.

A 1925 Collier map on one wall shows all the radio stations America contained at the time. Detroit is shown with three stations, and six more in the out-county area.

"Now there must be 70 or 80 stations in that area," Chapin said.

A whole room of the museum is devoted to amateur radio equipment. Both Chapin and Haviland are "hams."

Chapin said Myers encouraged him to bring his amateur radio hobby into the Masonic Home

with him.

"I was the lone amateur and it has grown into three residents in the home, two residents in the Masonic Village Estates and one employee who are now hams," Chapin said.

Chapin became interested in amateur radio in 1921 when he was 13. Two and a half years ago he began a newsletter for other Masons bitten by the radio bug. He now has 415 subscribers in 38 states and eight foreign countries. Many of them donated items to the radio museum.

A recent acquisition from a Mason/ham was an "old slider variocoupler made by the Signal Co. dating back to the 1912-1914 era - long before voice radio was thought of," Chapin said. The unit completes a spark transmitter exhibit in the museum.

Haviland built his first single-tube receiver when he was 18, and got his amateur license in 1932. His call sign is W8GYD, and Haviland jokes that the letters stand for "grouchy young devil."

He worked in radio telegraphy for the Pennsylvania, Denver/Rio Grande and Southern Pacific railroad companies, and then worked "only 45 years" for Buckeye Pipeline in Ohio. Haviland used Morse telegraphy to provide communication along the pipeline.

Chapin - W8GI - worked as an electrical engineer for General Electric Co. for years, and is registered with the Federal Communications Commission as a consulting engineer.

Both men are delighted with the working amateur radio station set up in the museum.

"The Masonic Home is a real ham radio paradise," Chapin said.

Chapin and Haviland still hope to acquire a battery-operated Atwater-Kent radio built on a breadboard, old RCA radios called Radiolas, radios manufactured by Crosley that came in small black boxes, and old crystal sets.

People interested in visiting the museum can call Chapin at 463-3141 or write him at 1200 Wright Ave., Alma, Mich., 48801.

THE SHADOW

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STREET & SMITH

MAY 15, 1938

by WALTER GIBSON

THE HAND SMASHING MYSTERY NOVEL

Chapter Two:
Tool of Crime

Nine o'clock proved that The Shadow's surmise was correct. Promptly with that hour came sounds from the outer corridor that fronted the office of the Nu-Way Loan Company.

Crooks were arriving by the route that The Shadow expected them to use, the straight road to their goal. Since they were coming in through the front door, The Shadow's post in the adjoining office seemed well-chosen.

There was no reason for criminals to suspect trouble on these premises. Once they cracked the ancient safe, they would logically depart by the route which they had used to enter.

Logic, however, was due for a severe blow.

Scraping sounds ended at the front door. Flashlights gleamed as the door came open. Those rays were flicked along the floor; but against the outlines of the windows, The Shadow could see a cluster of entering invaders.

More than that, he noted the appearance of the man who entered first, with two others at his elbows. The leader's face was masked with a bandanna handkerchief; below his chin was the whiteness of a shirt front, with a black splotch that indicated a bow tie.

He was the Masked Playboy, attired in tuxedo.

The Playboy reached the safe, still accompanied by his two pals. Those three weren't all that composed the band; there were others, in the background, making about six in all. But evidently the Masked Playboy depended chiefly upon the two who were at his elbows, for they stayed with him, engaging in whispers.

Audible words reached The Shadow. "Go ahead--open it!" The whispered tone was rough; it didn't suit the description of the Playboy's accent. "You got gloves on, ain't you? Two to the right, four to the left--that's it."

The two men moved away, leaving the Masked Playboy alone. Against

the window, The Shadow saw the glimmer of a revolver; but it wasn't in the Playboy's fist. One of the other men gripped the gun, keeping it as a threat.

Instantly, The Shadow saw the set-up of the game.

The Masked Playboy wasn't the real leader of the outfit. The man who handled matters was the fellow with the gun. He was forcing the Playboy to go through with the job of opening the safe!

Just why had the tuxedoed dupe become a tool of crime?

The Shadow answered his own question almost as soon as he had mentally asked it. He was watching the Playboy's laborious work with the dial. Although he had been told the combination, the dupe was finding the job difficult.

His unsteadiness proved that he was either drunk or doped; probably the latter.

The man with the gun had ceased to bother about the Playboy. He was at the telephone, dialing a number. This time, The Shadow heard no more than snatches of his words.

"Yeah, he's at it. . . ." The tone became a mutter. "Sure. We're counting on the stoolies. . . It don't look like the grapevine worked too soon. . . ."

The rest was lost. The phone conversation ended. Intruders waited until the Masked Playboy had finished with the combination. He was wavery, clinging to the dial with one hand. That was when one crook shifted to a spot between The Shadow and the safe.

The shifter was carrying a squarish object. The Shadow learned its purpose when a gruff voice told the Playboy to look to the right. He swung slowly in obedience; there was a sudden flash of light that filled the whole room like a lightning streak.

In that moment, The Shadow

saw the squarish object. It was a camera, trained on the masked features of the Playboy. The light was the illumination from a photographer's flashlight bulb.

There was nothing in that quick glimpse by which to identify the Masked Playboy, except his tuxedo. The bandanna covered his face; crouched as he was, his height was difficult to estimate. The crooks themselves recognized those facts. Their next move showed it.

Swinging the Masked Playboy about, they faced him toward the windows at the left. The man with the camera stepped between. Rough hands snatched the Playboy's mask, tugged it down to the dupe's neck. Again, a flash bulb puffed.

This time, they caught a more than candid shot of the Masked Playboy, in his same attire, in front of the very safe shown in the first photo.

But this time, the Playboy was unmasked!

Chance had worked against The Shadow. The thugs had turned their tool away from his direction, to take that all-important picture of the fellow's face. They had begun to work in a hurry, for the camera job was finished. Again, the Masked Playboy had the bandanna across his face, for crooks had lifted it there.

The real leader of the crew had yanked the safe open. Inside went a box; The Shadow heard the sizzle of fuse. The safe door clanged shut.

Before The Shadow could ease forward to surprise the crooks with sudden challenge, a different sound intervened. It was the shrill of a police whistle from somewhere beyond the windows.

A crook pressed the light switch; others shoved the Masked Playboy to the nearest window.

A shout from below. Police had seen the masked face, the tuxedo shirt below it. Hands yanked the Playboy from the danger spot, just as police revolvers began to crackle. A mobster doused the light.

The whole frame-up had been perfectly timed, even to the arrival of the police. That was what the man at the telephone had talked about, when he mentioned stoolies. The Shadow had learned facts on his own, through leaks in the underworld; but afterward, the crooks themselves had let the same word be broadcast.

They wanted the law to know that the Masked Playboy had been concerned in this crime, so that the photographs would prove a recognized episode. But in their cleverness, the crooks had taken on a problem.

They had to be out of the loan company's office in a hurry, not only before the safe was blown, but before the police reached the place.

There was only one route that offered them security. That path was through the adjoining office from which The Shadow watched!

Promptly, The Shadow stepped back into darkness. Bold, sudden attack was unneeded. Not that he preferred to supply lurking tactics; on the contrary, he would rather have driven in upon the crooks.

Worried by the thought of their own time fuse; trapped between The Shadow and the law, they would have shown themselves as frantic rats, quite as helpless as others that The Shadow had adeptly handled in the past.

The Shadow's reason for sudden retirement concerned the Masked Playboy.

The Shadow knew that he could not depend upon the dupe's cooperation; not even to the point where the groggy man would scramble for safety. He couldn't risk the chance of that victim's death. It was obvious that the crooks wanted to keep the Playboy alive, and get him out of danger. The Shadow decided to let them accomplish that much.

Close beside the window that led to the low roof, The Shadow heard the clatter of the connecting door. Mobsters were coming through, dragging the Masked Playboy with them. They didn't need their flashlights; they could make out the shape of the window. Thanks to the darkness of the office, they couldn't see The Shadow.

As The Shadow expected, three of the thugs went through the window first. The others started to shove the groggy Playboy to the men outside. Some seemed jittery, but the growl of their leader steadied them. He was telling them that there was another minute for the fuse; that the blast couldn't reach this room, anyway.

As for the cops, they were

still trying to break into the building, as muffled crashes proved.

The Masked Playboy lay half across the sill when The Shadow acted. His move was a swoop from blackness, as powerful as it unexpected. His hand thrust in unseen, to arrest the shoves that the crooks gave. His fingers clamped the dark cloth of the Playboy's attire.

The Shadow's other hand held an automatic. He didn't release the gun. He simply hooked his arm beneath the Playboy's body. Coming up from his crouch, The Shadow voiced a taunting, shivery laugh squarely in the ears of the men that flanked him.

With that burst of startling mirth, he whipped the Playboy from the rigid hands of the mobbies. With a hard backfling, he launched his burden toward the corner behind him. That shove was the sort that could have damaged the human who took it, if it hadn't been for the retarding grip of The Shadow's free hand.

Crooks didn't see that part of it. One man--their leader--jabbed a flashlight. It showed only The Shadow, one hand behind him, the other fist thrusting forward. That leading hand was gloved, and it gripped a big-muzzled gun.

Thugs surged. A blast mouthed from the .45, dropping the first attacker to reach The Shadow. From the recoil, The Shadow made a cross-slash, that thwacked the flashlight from the fist of the man who held it.

In darkness, he was among his foe-men, slugging for their heads, while the crooks outside the window huddled helpless, unable to pick The Shadow in the darkness.

With enemies sprawled about him, The Shadow swung for the window, his mocking laugh telling the outer trio that their turn was next. Shakily, they arose to flee; then, as one, they took a headlong sprawl.

The blast that produced that result was not from The Shadow's gun. It came from the next office--a titanic burst when the safe blew open. That charge was more powerful than intended. It shattered windows; shook the building.

Amid the rattle of loosened bricks and spattered chunks of walls and ceilings, all fighters were flattened, The Shadow among them!

The Hand

Chapter Three: Triple Battle

The outside mobbies were the first to recuperate from the explosion's shock. Regaining their footing, they stared at the window, where a ghostlike wraith was creeping forth.

The shape wasn't The Shadow. It was white. As the crooks eyed the phenomenon, they saw that it was smoke, trailing from a cloud of fumes that had poured through from the next office.

Partly startled by the sight, the thugs remembered The Shadow's weird laugh. They decided upon a parley before they invaded the battleground. That delay was fortunate. If crooks had attacked at that moment, it would have gone badly with The Shadow.

The cloaked fighter was rising from the floor, too jolted to recognize fully his surroundings. A portion of the window frame had broken; in its fall, the chunk of wood had found The Shadow's head. He was as groggy as the thugs that he had slugged.

Right then, he couldn't have combatted invaders; but despite the smoke, he was gaining some return of his ability. The half minute that the crooks allowed him was enough. When they suddenly poked guns and flashlights in from the window, The Shadow sensed the menace.

He still had his gun, but didn't wait to raise it. He wheeled for a corner, using the smoke as cover. Instinctively, he reversed his course amid the fumes. Guns stabbed wide when his foemen tried to follow his course with bullets.

Through The Shadow's returning senses thrummed thoughts of the Masked Playboy.

He remembered that he had flung the dupe to safety, but couldn't recall the direction, except that it was toward a corner. He wanted to get to that spot and make sure that the man was safe, then spring a surprise thrust on the crooks.

Ordinarily, that would have been easy for The Shadow. In his present condition, the task went awry.

The corner that The Shadow reached was the one leading into the wrecked office. Perhaps it was the thickness of the smoke that invited him in that direction; for he was depending chiefly upon the instinct to take cover.

Whatever the cause, the result came when The Shadow reached the wall and took a roundabout swing to brace himself there.

He fired as he went backward; the gun's recoil sent him off balance. There wasn't a wall to stop him. He went sprawling through the blasted doorway, to land amid the wreckage near the ruined safe.

The Shadow's one wide shot proved that he wasn't in form. It not only missed the crooks at the window; the spurt also betrayed where The Shadow was.

Again, guns began to tongue through the smoke. First shots were high; but latter ones scored the floor at the doorway.

The Shadow wasn't present to receive the final barrage. He was crawling clear of the doorway, blindly seeking new cover along the wall within the loan office. Tortured by the smoke, he was forced to rest with his face muffled in the folds of his cloak sleeve.

Two figures arose in the thinner smoke of the next office. One was the leader of the invading crooks. He had received a hard blow from The Shadow's gun; so had the thug who arose with him. The two stooped above a third: the hoodlum who had taken The Shadow's bullet.

That pal wasn't worth carrying away.

Mobsters at the window reached through to help the rising pair.

The leader snarled, gave a look about. He saw a figure crawling toward him on hands and knees. Shaking free from his helpers, he pounced upon the Masked Playboy.

Again, crime's tool was in the hands of his persecutors; and with their prisoner, crooks were carrying away the battered camera that contained their precious photographs.

Sounds of the scramble through the window roused The Shadow. Though in the next office, he was aware what had occurred. He still had time to overtake the mobsters and their dupe. On his feet, he started for the connecting door.

Three men swept in from the hallway. They roared for surrender as they fell upon The Shadow. In the smoky darkness, they thought they had bagged the Masked Playboy. These new invaders were the first members of the police headquarters squad that had come here on advice from stool pigeons.

In the next dozen seconds, The Shadow added to the false reputation that the Masked Playboy had acquired.

Three against one, the detectives were overconfident, each anxious to claim credit for the capture of a badly wanted criminal. Their lack of concerted action gave The Shadow a split-second opportunity to handle them.

He flung the first attacker aside; tripping over the unhinged safe door, the dick took a long tumble. The second man made a grapple and The Shadow closed with him, for it enabled him to sidestep the third.

A moment later, two bodies were lunging, bowling the third man ahead of them. When the pair spilled, they floored the free detective beneath them, letting him take the full weight of the fall. The Shadow broke the hold of his grappling opponent, landed a hard punch that sent him rolling.

Neither of the other two detectives were on their feet when The Shadow dashed away to take the route across the roof.

Though he hadn't much time to spare, The Shadow detoured when he reached the roof. He sprang to the back edge, where he hissed a quick call to the alleyway below. Men heard it; they were agents of The Shadow. In a trice, they understood.

Dashing to the rear of the next building, they were there when mobsters came out bringing the Masked Playboy. Though The Shadow's agents didn't know the innocent part that the Playboy had acted, they recognized that he was the man The Shadow wanted.

Falling upon the startled crooks, they wrested the tuxedoed man from them and lurched him toward a waiting cab.

It was timely work, aided by the fact that the crooks were still disorganized. Before guns could bark the taxi was starting for the corner, while The Shadow's agents dived for cover, from which to wage combat.

Wild shots didn't halt the cab. It was gone, with its passenger slumped upon the floor where he had been none too gently placed.

Maddened crooks hoped to massacre The Shadow's two agents. Guns were speaking from doorways and alleys, with the odds much in favor of the criminal crew. But The Shadow's agents held their ground, knowing that aid was due.

It came. The Shadow had come down through the building. His big guns began to boom; crooks recognized the marksman. They scattered, their flight spurred by the tone of a gibing laugh that seemed to echo from every wall about them.

The Shadow headed for the corner, to see how the cab had made out. There was a chance that the police might have blocked its flight.

Such was actually the case. Around another corner, the cab was halted, while its driver argued with a pair of officers. He had just about convinced them that the cab was empty, when a stir occurred within the taxi itself.

A cop yanked open the door, to see the Masked Playboy rising from the floor. His bandanna handkerchief was still across his eyes; sensing that he was wanted, he was keeping it there. But numbed wits hadn't calculated further. Blindly, he was shoving himself into the hands of the law.

The taxi driver was one of The Shadow's agents. He recognized his passenger's plight; knew that he could handle the groggy fellow later. He decided to make a spurt, but by the time he pressed the accelerator the Playboy was rolling to the sidewalk, wrestling with the policeman.

The cab was away without its passenger. Shots suddenly began to whistle about the driver's head. Where they came from, he couldn't guess; but it was his cue to keep on going and come back around the block.

The officers heard the shots, and saw their origin. Guns were spurting from a passage between two old houses; with the cab in flight, the crooks aimed for the police.

Forgetting their prisoner, the officers dived for cover of their own. By the time they had reached it, crooks were piling the Masked Playboy into an old sedan.

As luck had it, the taxi episode had taken place within fifty feet of the spot where mobsters had left their car parked for the get-away.

This time, the officers supplied the shots that followed a fleeing vehicle; but they opened fire from cover, and their aim was bad. From back at the next corner came the only intervention that could have halted the sedan's escape. The Shadow had arrived there; he was beginning long-range fire for the sedan's gas tank.

The officers saw the new marksman vaguely. Deciding that he was an enemy, they returned his fire. This time, the cops were close. The Shadow was forced to wheel for cover, his chance to halt the sedan ended.

The end of The Shadow's fire brought an exultant shout from the policemen. They dashed toward the corner, expecting to find a sprawled victim. As they came, they saw the same taxi that had eluded them a short while before.

Blackness detached itself from a wall. A living shape, it reached the slowing cab, to spring aboard. Stopping their run, the officers fired; but their bullets peppered nothing but the corner of the building. The taxi was away again, this time with a different passenger.

Riding from the scene, The Shadow delivered a grim mirthless laugh. In triple battle, the issue could only have been decided by luck; and the breaks had gone against him. Crooks had won the point they wanted: escape, with the Masked Playboy still in their clutches.

The dupe was safe, however, for he was useful to their game. It was the game itself that concerned The Shadow, more than the helpless man who had participated in it.

Some hand of crime lay hidden behind to-night's events. That schemer was the master-foe whose plans The Shadow intended to learn, and, later, frustrate!

The Hand

Chapter Four:
Crooks Talk Terms

The next morning, two men entered a huge office building near Wall Street. They rode to the fifty-fifth floor, which was entirely occupied by the offices of Eastern Refineries, Incorporated. When they stopped at the anteroom desk, one of the men inquired for Mr. Martin Meriden.

The girl at the desk looked doubtful.

As treasurer of Eastern Refineries, Martin Meriden seldom had visitors that the girl had never seen. Eastern Refineries, it happened, was one of several subsidiary concerns all controlled by World Oil interests.

These men certainly weren't from World Oil. Nor did their appearance assure the girl that Mr. Meriden would want to see them.

One man was short, and barely the average weight for his height. He looked wiry, though, and pugnacious. His face was sallow, his lower lip had a thrust that the girl didn't like. His eyes, too, were ugly; they had a way of fixing themselves, then opening wider, in a glare.

The other man was tall, almost lanky; his long face had a wise, close-mouthed expression. His eyes didn't glare; they just set themselves half shut and stayed that way, as though hiding what lay behind them.

It was the short man who asked for Meriden; to the query the girl inquired if he had a card. He gave her one which seemed important enough to take in to Mr. Meriden. The card read:

J. B. CORSTON
Manager

Interstate Service Stations

When the girl had left her desk, the short man's lower lip formed a grin, while his upper lip raised, displaying stained, misshapen teeth. He turned to the tall man beside him.

"I'm J. B. Corston," he undertoned. "Got it? Just forget that I'm Pinkey Findlen. And forget that you're Slick Thurley."

"Easy enough, J. B.," replied Thurley. "I'm Bill Quaine, from headquarters. I've sprung that gag often enough."

Martin Meriden didn't like the looks of his visitors any more than the girl had. From behind his desk, the portly, baldish treasurer of Eastern Refineries was prompt to express his opinions regarding the visit of J. B. Corston.

"This is our first interview, Mr. Corston," spoke Meriden, testily. "You can take it for granted that it will be our last."

"That's sure enough," returned "Pinkey," in a raspy tone. "After you've bought the Interstate Service Stations, I won't have to see you any more."

"But I don't intend to buy!" Meriden pounded the desk with his pudgy fist. "I told you that in my letter. Your chain of service stations exists only on paper. It is worth nothing to us!"

Pinkey leaned back in his chair; he tucked his thumbs in the arm holes of his vest, as he turned his head toward "Slick" with the comment:

"You talk to him, Quaine."

Slick produced an envelope from his pocket. He drew out some clippings, slid them across to Meriden. They were old newspaper accounts relating the exploits of Detective William Quaine, ace of the racket investigation squad.

Quaine's photograph was printed also and--as Slick had often privately expressed it--the picture might as well have been Slick's own. Though he and Quaine might have been distinguished if together, separately, either could pass for the other.

It happened, too, that they had never made the test of meeting face to face. If there was one man that Slick dodged consistently,

that fellow was Bill Quaine.

Meriden took it for granted that Slick was Quaine; but he couldn't see any connection between that fact and the proposed purchase of the Interstate Service Stations.

The treasurer of Eastern Refineries was soon to be enlightened. Pinkey Findlen observed that Meriden had fallen for the first step in the game. Pinkey spoke to Slick Thurley:

"Show Mr. Meriden those other clippings, Quaine."

"Certainly, J. B.," returned Slick, in a brisk tone that suited his false part. "Look these over, Meriden. They tell about a crook called the Masked Playboy."

Meriden was nodding as he eyed the recent clippings. Still, he couldn't understand the link, until Pinkey opened a large envelope and showed two photographs across the desk.

They were the pictures snapped the night before, during the phony crime at the office of the Nu-Way Loan Company. The first that Meriden saw was the picture wherein the Playboy was masked. He laid that photo aside; looked at the one below it. He saw a pale strained face with worried eyes. He recognized those features.

Martin Meriden sank deep in his chair. His lips took on a fish-like gape.

"Reggie!" gasped Meriden. "My--my own son--Reggie! And I--I thought he had--"

"You thought he'd been behaving himself," sneered Pinkey. "But he hadn't! You gave him cash for a trip to Europe, but you didn't know he blew it and had to make it up, somehow."

"But Reggie is sailing--at noon--to-day--"

"You mean he will be sailing, if you come through with the deal on those service stations."

A new expression showed in Meriden's eyes. His tone was indignant when he uttered:

"This is blackmail!"

"That's what they call it," agreed Pinkey. "Or a shakedown. It's all the same in this case. You come through, Meriden, or the kid does a stretch in Sing Sing!"

Meriden's hands were fidgeting on the desk. Pinkey liked the sign. He's seen others act that way before. Pinkey's rasp became less noticeable. He was trying smooth encouragement.

"You're not the first guy," he told Meriden. "Others were up

against the same proposition. They came through. Quaine, here, will tell you it's the easiest way."

Meriden looked toward Slick; he saw the fake detective reach for the incriminating photographs. From now on, apparently, the pretended Bill Quaine was to keep the evidence.

"So you've turned crook," accused Meriden. "That means you're not to be trusted, Quaine, any more than this man"--Meriden thumbed toward Pinkey--"who appears to be your boss."

Slick's only reply was a sarcastic smile.

"How do I know that you won't blackmail me further?" demanded Meriden, hoarsely. "This could go on and on--"

"Only it won't," interposed Slick. "You and I are in the same boat, Meriden. You've got to cover up on this deal that you make with J.B., here. I've got to cover up that I was in on it. One shake-down to one guy is all we can chance."

Slick looked to Pinkey for corroboration. The big-shot gave a nod.

"That's the way it stands," assured Pinkey. "But if you don't come through, Meriden, Quaine will turn in these pictures to headquarters and make himself a hero again."

"He'll be the guy who out-smarted the Masked Playboy, by figuring where he was due and planting a camera there. Quaine will identify your son Reggie; and he'll also deny that he tried this shakedown."

Meriden saw the logic. He knew that the false Quaine could explain this visit by saying that he came to ask questions regarding Reggie's identity. As for Pinkey, he would back anything that the fake Quaine said.

Believing Slick to be a real detective and Pinkey to be a bona fide business man named J. B. Corston, Meriden could find no loophole. He looked dazed; but he managed to gather his wits and ask one important question.

"What about my son?" queried Meriden. "Where is he?"

"On the boat," returned Pinkey. "Getting some sleep after a bad night. The bulls nearly nabbed him, after that job. Why don't you call him, Meriden? They've got a telephone service to that ship. Make sure that he's all right."

Meriden made the call. He controlled his tone while he talked

to his sleepy-voiced son, and made no remarks that Reggie could have interpreted as knowledge of last night's episode. From that conversation, Meriden convinced himself that Reggie was not in the clutches of crooks.

"Satisfied?" queried Pinkey, when the call was ended. "You ought to be. Why should we be worried? We don't have to keep our mitts on the kid. That packet doesn't sail till noon. Bill Quaine, here, has still got two hours to show up with a squad and yank Reggie off the boat."

Meriden nodded. His lips were firmly pressed. Pinkey produced an agreement of sale, laid it on the desk.

"The price for Interstate Service Stations," he announced, "is two hundred and fifty grand."

"You mean"--Meriden was amazed-- "a quarter million?"

"Why not?" returned Pinkey. "Your company has got plenty of dough. You can make this look like a swell buy! Use the phony reports that I sent you."

Meriden winced; mechanically, he reached for his pen. He applied his signature to the agreement. Pinkey reminded him that a check would be in order. Meriden wrote one for fifty thousand dollars, stating that he would have to make the payments in installments.

"Write out the rest of them," ordered Pinkey, "Date them ahead, a month apart. We know you won't welsh on them. We've got the goods on you, now, Meriden, along with your son Reggie."

Meriden made out the remaining checks; he passed them weakly across the desk. Pinkey arose, beckoned to Slick. Together, the crooks went out toward the elevators. At the information desk, Pinkey spoke to the girl.

"Better look in on the boss, sister," remarked Pinkey. "He wasn't feeling so good when we left him. Maybe he's feeling sort of sick!"

Slick was waiting at the opened door of an elevator. Pinkey stepped in with him. As the door clanged shut, the girl at the desk heard the finish of two ugly chuckles that came from the lips of Meriden's visitors.

Two crooks were mutually agreed on the proposition that crime, when properly framed, could pay in plenty.



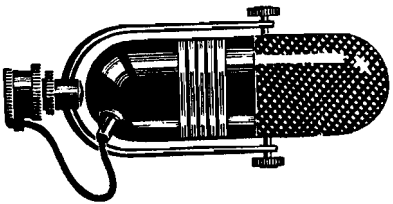
"This gift will break me, but it'll get rid of that razor strap for good."

The Movie Scene



Madeleine Carroll and Tyrone Power from a scene in *Lloyds of London*.

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