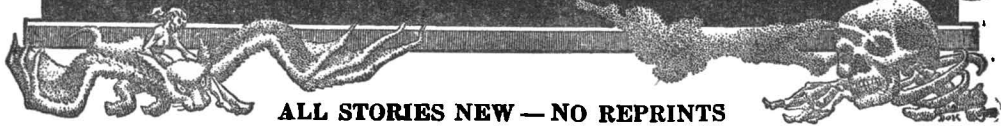


Weird Tales



ALL STORIES NEW — NO REPRINTS

November, 1943

Cover by A. R. Tilburne

LONG NOVELETTE

THE VALLEY OF THE ASSASSINS Edmond Hamilton 8
*A valley of dreadful doom, this . . . where time is as nothing to the fiend
 whose first murderous crimes were committed centuries ago*

SHORT STORIES

DEATH WENT THAT WAY Allison V. Harding 20
*It's nice to be able to call some strange happening "coincidence"
 . . . it's much more reassuring than the truth!*

SPEED THE PARTING GHOST Helen W. Kasson 28
*So you don't like to have your relatives around! Suppose they were
 dead . . . and still around!*

THE THIRD CRY TO LEGBA Manly Wade Wellman 50
When we tinker with black forces beyond our ken we must expect the unexpected

THE DUCKER Ray Bradbury 68
*If you shoot those guys over there, he wondered, then they got to
 play right and fall down, don't they?*

GREAT PAN IS HERE Greye La Spina 72
*Our doctrines had not warned us that on this night all hidden
 powers above and below are loosed*

A THIN GENTLEMAN WITH GLOVES August Derleth 86
*A familiar is a companion summoned from outside somewhere to attend
 a wizard and obey his every command*

HAMMER OF CAIN James Causey and Bill Blackbeard 92
*There is a strange curse on all brothers Cain . . . a curse that is terrible
 as it is compelling—the medium is a little flint hatchet!*

HERBERT WEST: REANIMATOR H. P. Lovecraft 101
*Can hideous experiments in the reanimation of the dead be carried so
 far as to bring on demonic reprisals from those dead?*

VERSE

THE SNAKE Francis Flagg 6


BECAUSE THE MOON IS FAR Katherine Simons 40

ON LAKE LAGORE Dorothy Gold 91

SUPERSTITIONS AND TABOOS Irwin J. Weil 70

THE EYRIE AND WEIRD TALES CLUB 108

*Except for personal experiences the contents of this magazine is fiction. Any use
 of the name of any living person or reference to actual events is purely coincidental.*

Published bi-monthly by Weird Tales, 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N. Y. Reentered as second-class matter
 January 28, 1940, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 15 cents.
 Subscription rates: One year in the United States and possessions, 90¢. Foreign and Canadian postage extra.
 English Office: Charles Lavell, Limited, 4 Clements Inn, Strand, London, W.C.2, England. The publishers are not
 responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts although every care will be taken of such material while in their
 possession. Copyright, 1943, by Weird Tales. Copyrighted in Great Britain.  178
 Title registered in U. S. Patent Office.

PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

Vol. 37, No. 2

D. McILWRAITH, Editor.

LAMONT BUCHANAN, Associate Editor.

Death Went That Way

*The way is a road . . . leading to a macabre rendezvous
planned by a dead man!*

THE road unfolded ahead of me, smoothly and quietly. There wasn't much traffic. I glanced down at the road map on the seat at my side. I was getting into western Pennsylvania. I wiggled my foot a bit on the accelerator to ease the stiffness that sets in after hundreds of miles of driving.

By **ALLISON V. HARDING**



Heading by **BORIS DOLGOV.**

I felt happy that early summer afternoon. For here I was, no longer Johnny Abbott, unemployed . . . but, thank the Lord, Johnny Abbott with a job and a few dollars in his pocket. And I was headed out for the land of plenty. Out in California a repairman with not too much experience was appreciated. Back in the East . . . nuts!

I had answered one of those ads: "Reliable parties wanted to drive cars to Coast."

I took a chance. I went over to used car lot on Eleventh Avenue and talked to the man. I said I wanted to get to California. That I had driven for years. I showed them my license, birth certificate, and letters of recommendation (they hadn't done me any good elsewhere).

I was okayed. My job was a 1940 cream-colored coupe. It was a repaint job. I wasn't crazy about her. She looked as though she'd been smashed up and then patched together again and painted over. A casual look at the motor showed me the engine had once been supercharged and had had various gadgets on it. The guy who'd owned it probably was a speed fiend. And my hunch was he'd gotten into trouble—for if ever I saw a patched-up job, this was it. To an auto repairman a bad auto accident leaves evidence on a car that can't be patched up or painted over.

But I wasn't the guy to ask questions. I wanted to get West too darn much to care even if I had to go by dog cart.

It was early this morning then that I showed up, got a gas certificate, and a few bucks, and got into my car. The agent stood on the running board, handed me the papers I would need to complete the transaction out on the Coast. Just as I was about to shove off he said: "Well, I hope you make it this time. I hope you get all the way out there this time." I grinned without thinking and said sure I was as good as there.

I WAS hitting along on Route 30 into Pittsburgh when I first noticed it. By "it" I mean that the old bus began to wiggle a bit. You know how on a windy day you get a side pull and push when you're going along at a good clip? Well, this was just like that . . . only there wasn't any wind.

Another thing happened not long after I noticed the wheel tug. First I thought it was the wind too. A whistling. That's what it was, a whistling. And even as I rolled up all the windows and checked the hood catch, I began to make out a thin melody. The tune faintly whistled was "East Side, West Side." I tried to laugh it off. For a car that didn't have a radio, the crate was mighty musical. Oh, well, some trick wind pull on the underside of the car, I reasoned. That was all there was to it.

I gripped the wheel with both hands, counteracting the occasional tugs on the wheel I could feel. But I couldn't rid myself of the strange sensation . . . as though somebody were trying to pull the car off the road . . . or in another direction. And through it all was that damn thin whistle, "East Side, West Side, All Around the Town. . . ."

Then I thought something in the steering wheel might be loose but she responded to the wheel perfectly okay. Oh, well. Then I remembered the first gas station I'd hit earlier in the day. All the Acme Agency cars must follow the same route out to the Coast. From a look-see at the map I gathered that the main idea was to avoid all suggestion of toll charges (witness my being forced to take 30 to Pittsburgh instead of the Penn trunkpike). Well, I hit the first prescribed filling station back near York. I guess the boys in these stations get pretty used to seeing the Acme cars going to the Coast. But when I pulled in, two of them looked at me as though I were nuts. Then they sidled over and said:

"So they're still trying to get this old bus out, huh?"

I found out my "bus" had headed for the Coast before. I wondered vaguely why and how the car had got back to the East only for somebody else to have to take it out again. But that was no concern of mine. I was the lucky one for having this opportunity. If it hadn't been for this, I'd still be filling out application blanks in the East.

"What's the joke?" I grinned at the two attendants.

But they shut up then and it wasn't until I was oil and water-checked and fourteen gallons to the good that one of them in checking the company list and taking the serial number from my charge card said to me, "You mean they didn't tell you about this boat, brother?"

"Tell me what? I don't get it."

He leaned confidentially on the running board. "This car just don't like the West, Mister. Nobody can ever get her out. She's a crank, that's sure."

I laughed then and said I was a repairman and guessed I could handle whatever came up.

"Well, Mister," he concluded, "maybe this calls for a particular kind of repairing that you can't do. I tell you that car's kinda haunted."

I drove off. Of course it was some kind of joke I didn't get. Apparently the car had been scnt out before and had developed some sort of trouble.

So what. Maybe the boat was a freak. Every so often you hit what they call a "dog" in the automobile trade, a car that is a bad performer. You can't help it. Maybe the old bus was suffering from a weak constitution. I'd keep 'er rolling. Once out to the Coast let her fall apart!

NEARING Pittsburgh I made a right turn and headed up toward New Castle, crossing the Alleghany. The coupe

was behaving all right now and I began to think the whole business was my imagination. An hour or so more and I pulled into another indicated stop on my map.

The young fellow who served me at this station didn't seem to recognize the car. For some strange reason I was glad. But then, just as I was checking my air the manager came out of his little central building and came toward me.

"Say-y-y, I thought Acme had given up trying to get that wagon out to the Coast. Have you had any trouble yet?"

I guess I got sort of mad then. I demanded to know what all this business was about. I'd come several hundred miles and I was still in the driver's seat and the bus was pointed straight at the Pacific Coast. So what?

"So nothing," said the manager taken aback at my yelling at him.

"It's nothing to me," he continued. "It's just that that buggy is a bad luck car, seems. You'll run into trouble somewhere and then we'll tow the car back and Acme will start out all over again to shoot 'er West."

"It's not my headache," the manager concluded walking away, "you look tough enough to take care of yourself. Good luck."

I headed below Youngstown into Ohio. It was getting late and I thumbed up the fender lights. We were encouraged to get out to the Coast as fast as we could without breaking any laws—but sleeping every night isn't a necessity and I was in need of the extra bonus that I'd get if I made the trip in the shortest possible time.

So I thought I'd pick up an extra bit of mileage and keep going all night or at least until I felt so sleepy that I had to quit. Then I could just pull up in some little Ohio lane and doze.

This was all new country for me and I was interested in it. As the darkness drew

on, I snapped on the headlights. My coupe bounced on into the night.

"Hmmm," I growled out loud to myself. "Those guys trying to scare me with some crazy jinx story. You're all right, old girl," and I gave the horn button an affectionate pat.

I tripped the accelerator a bit more and the little car bounded forward eagerly into the misty dark. Why, this little buggy couldn't wait to swim in the Pacific! I grinned at the thought and pounded on.

Then ahead I saw the dim lights of one of those all-night stations, few and far between in these days. I coasted onto the concrete drive and pulled up next to the little house.

An old codger came out smoking his pipe.

"Help you, Mister?"

"Yeah, I'd like some gas . . . and I want to take it easy for a few minutes if you don't mind."

"Sure, young feller. I'm glad to have someone to talk to. It gets kinda lonely for an old man out here. Come fur?" he added.

"From New York. I'm headed West. You know, agency cars going out to the war workers."

The old man bent inside the hood of my car. "Water and oil are okay. So you're heading West, huh? Well, they say that's where the money is. Things are pretty slow around here all right. Mighty slow."

I was stretching my legs a bit as I circled around the car.

IN THE dimness of the yellow station lights there was something ominous about the old boat. She stood there, her cream sides barely reflecting the dull light, her nickel sparkling feebly, her radiator headed into the night . . . and looking as though she wanted to get back into the darkness.

"How many did you say?"

"Fill 'er up," I said.

The old man laboriously rang the gas registering indicator back to zero, took the hose and started the pump.

I reviewed the stories I'd heard about my auto.

And it all seemed so silly to me. A haunted car! It was crazy! Why it's okay to have a haunted house but a car . . . nuts. Those stories had me on edge!

"There you are, young feller."

I followed the old man into his office, gave him my credentials and Acme gas credit card. I settled myself in the little office with the attendant.

The old man repeated that he liked to have somebody to talk to on these lonely all-night tricks.

I could see he was anxious to keep me there because after taking a few bottles of pop from the cooler, which he insisted on paying for, I said well, I thought I'd better be getting along.

"Now, Son, there's still a long night ahead of us. Just take it easy a bit longer and keep me company for a while."

I said well, I could take a bit more time off. And anyway, I said, my bus didn't seem to like the idea of going West, jokingly.

"Reminds me of something that happened around here a couple of years ago," he reminisced. He puffed on his pipe and settled himself more comfortably. I thought to myself, I guess I'm in for it now. But his first words got my attention.

"You never head of a haunted car, eh?"

I shook my head silently with a small core of uneasiness in my heart.

"You know, I'm a deputy sheriff around these parts," he pulled back his vest and showed a large star.

"Mebbe you remember about two years ago when that there masked raider was pulling a lot of bank robberies around out here in the Middle West. Well, he pulled

one across the border in Ohio and we heard he was a comin' this way. 'Course you weren't in these parts, but it seemed that this guy, Red Thompson they called him, had only two things in the world that he care about.

"One was his car which he used on all his escapades and the other was a sweetie he had back East. Every time he pulled a job—and he was a lone wolf always—he'd circle toward the East. We never caught him. He had a dozen different sets of license plates and he'd even repainted his car. Well, this time he came over the border and headed through here.

"State cops were after him, but Thompson had a sup-upped job and he was a devil driver. It was mighty hard to get within rifle, much less pistol shot of him. Well, sir, while some of the boys were chasing him over the border, one of the State men phoned ahead and we got out on Belvedere Ridge and threw up a barricade as fast as we could.

"We knew Red would have to pick the Belvedere Road, cutting across down into Pennsylvania or take the State Turnpike and we didn't think he'd take a chance on that. Too many State patrols, and once you get on there, it's hard to get off except at certain easy-blocked places."

THE old man paused, lit his pipe and leaned back reminiscently. I was interested in the story in spite of myself. Why, Belvedere Ridge was only a hundred or so miles from where we were, I remembered from my map.

"Go on," I encouraged.

"We were out there on the Ridge, 'bout seven or eight of us. A couple of the boys were armed with .22's and somebody else had a shotgun. I had a .38 service revolver, not much of a bargain on a moving car. Then several of the boys had clubs, and one guy, a linesman fellow I never liked too much had a jack handle.

"We built a log barricade across the road at the peak of the Ridge. We built it on one side to the cliff, and on the other right out to the edge of the road. The road ran between the cliff on one side and then the land dropped off on the other side. There was a sheer drop of a couple of hundred feet into a rock-bound valley.

"We waited, and waited. And then in the distance we heard something coming. It was a car all right. We scattered off the road and clambered up the cliff to the right. All but a sour-dispositioned guy, McGuire, his name was. He got down a few feet at the side overlooking the valley. We hefted our weapons and got set.

"Up the road out of the distance roared Thompson. We knew it was the critter because nobody else would be traveling so fast on that devil's road. The road broke and turned back on itself and Thompson wouldn't get much of a look at the reception we'd built up for him until he was right on top of it. That was what we wanted anyhow. We hoped he'd snarl himself up on the barricade.

"Thompson slammed his way into view; boy, I wanta tell you he had his old bus humming. But he spotted the logs across the road and twisted the wheel. We started to shoot then but the racing, twisting car wasn't much of a target. We pumped some light caliber bullets into the car.

"I'm sure of this because the glass frosted up on the side of the auto. But, By Gum, if the crazy guy didn't think he could go around the barricade . . . and off the side of the road he went, his car tottering on the brink of the sheer drop into the valley. I think he would've made it, too. We were up on the cliff, on the other side of the road from him, amazed and pumping away. I'd used up the five shells in the revolver and was pawing for some more cartridges. But it looked as though before we could do anything about it, he'd

be past the barricade and back on the road t'other side."

"Then McGuire entered the picture. He was perched low on the far side of the road, hanging on with one hand and brandishing the heavy jack handle with the other. I was scared to death Thompson was going to run him down.

"Then McGuire raised up full height . . . and hurled the jack wrench squarely at the windshield of the oncoming car. Boy, I want to tell you it went through the windshield with a crash, right at Thompson. We had a plain shot of this.

"Yes, sir, I can see it now. Red threw up his hands to protect himself from the smashed windshield and the jack . . . and as he did the car bucked out of control off the side of the ridge into the valley below. There weren't nothing else to do but collect the pieces. The old bus turned over a couple of times on the way down, but she wasn't too badly smashed. Thompson was done for though. And he'd 'a been as clean away as a hare if McGuire hadn't stood up and heaved that jack handle."

The old man shook his head, "Plenty of guts, I guess, but McGuire was nasty. I 'member he was arguing about the reward all the time we was pulling what was left of Thompson out of the smash-up below. Even with a bandit it seemed disrespectful and ya can bet Thompson woulda done something about it . . . if he'd been alive!

"I recollect there was one funny thing about the affair. As we climbed up the cliff from the wreck, we thought we heard a whistling. Now I'm not a superstitious man, but so help me, it was a tune that Thompson was always supposed to whistle."

"Thompson was dead, all right?" I said, half-smiling.

"Sure he was dead. We must've imagined the whistling. Those hills out there are kinda funny anyway, with the wind

blowing and all. Still it was funny." The old man looked up at the ceiling meditatively.

"Just as clear the tune was, I remember. . . ." He pursed his lips and began to whistle slowly.

I sat bolt upright. "What's that, what's the name of that?"

He stopped his whistling and hummed, "East Side, West Side."

WELL, I guess I got out of there fast. I got into the coupe and drove off. There was something scary about this. The tugs on the car wheel! The whistling I had heard myself! I tightened on the wheel and headed on along the road.

This was silly. A lot of wisecracks kidding me, an old man's story and a whistling noise, probably in my head. Crazy? Why, I was a sucker to fall for this blarney. There's always a lot of quaint people with quaint ideas in these small towns. The whistling I'd heard was the wind. It must have been. I ripped ahead more confidently. It was getting dark, but I figured I'd keep going and try to make as much time as I could. After all, Acme men are supposed to get out to the Coast as fast as they can and don't forget the special bonus for making it in less time than average!

Resolutely I decided to drive all night. I eased down the accelerator a bit further and edged the car up to the limit.

An hour or so passed and I began to nod at the wheel. I don't like the idea of dozing off and cracking into a tree. So I finally picked out a likely spot and pulled up for a bit of sleep. As an afterthought I got the heavy metal spanner out of the tool kit and placed it on the seat beside me. It lay there, a hunk of reassuring metal. I locked the car doors from the inside, rolled the windows up until there was just a crack left on each side for me to get air through but making it impossi-

ble for anybody to reach through and unlock the car doors.

And a couple of minutes later I was asleep. I was that tired. And I dreamed. Lovely dreams. All about driving onto the beach at California and right into the water where I traded my car for a surf-board and bounced over the waves pulled by a motor boat driven by a gorgeous, grinning blonde.

I was jouncing along over the waves having a wonderful time when a particularly big jounce woke me up. And I was moving all right. It took me a second to figure where I was . . . I wasn't in my little Manhattan hall bedroom all right. I was in the car . . . and it was going and . . . I craned my head. . . . *Somebody else was driving!*

"Heh," I let out a startled yell. My stomach did a flop. The guy driving looked dead! I mean just that. He was so white—with a shock of red hair accentuating the whiteness. It was dark and that was what made the pallor so remarkable.

It almost seemed to glow as though the white of his skin came through his rumpled suit.

I'd been pushed over onto the other seat and the spectre was behind the wheel looking straight ahead. I wasn't going to argue with no dead man, believe me. Then it hit me quick who he was! How did I know? Well, he must have been. He had red hair!

WE DROVE along for a while and I didn't know what to do. The guy was ripping but he was a superb driver. On one or two corners I put my hand over on the wheel and brushed against his forearms. They felt like rock steel.

I gave up any idea of wrestling it out with him. Apparition or not, he looked, and felt strong. We were going too fast to jump. So giving up the idea of tus-

sling with this guy, I got into my corner and stayed.

We were in some section of the country I didn't know. Every now and then we'd pass a lonely street light and I'd look at my "dead chauffeur." He was white and where his eyes should have been there were just black circles. On top of the white face his flaming red hair stood out like some ghastly neon sign in the middle of a graveyard at midnight.

I was wondering what would happen when all of a sudden the Thing started to whistle. First it sounded like a steam winch, a hissing and a blowing . . . and then out came the whistle, all hollow "East Side, West Side . . ." then he began to pull the wheel more from side to side. I edged nearer and waited my chance. The ghost began to get excited. For the first time he looked to left and right and then back. He didn't even notice me. For him I wasn't even there. I was closer now. I had started to put out my hand to grab the wheel when the figure of Thompson, for now I was sure of this, began to contort and twist terribly. We were coming rapidly to a bend in the road and involuntarily I yelled:

"Look out," and I made a grab for the wheel.

At that the deathly white figure threw both hands up in front of its face. We were still going at a good clip and I had my hands full grabbing the wheel and pulling the coupe back on the road. For several seconds my attention was riveted on guiding the careening coupe but with car speed once again normal and under control, I chanced a sidelong glance.

Thompson had evaporated, disappeared completely. I slid under the wheel and braked the now slowly moving car to a complete stop. I got out and looked back down the dark road. Nothing to be seen.

Nothing to be heard but the midnight rustling of the breeze along the dark coun-

try lane. My knees and stomach were crawling as I got back into the car.

I couldn't kid myself out of this one. I reasoned impatiently with myself though. Maybe it was an ordinary road bum. After all, it had been pretty dark. I hadn't seen very much.

I inventoried my pockets. Everything was there. Money, credentials, everything. I started the car slowly forward and then I remembered something. I groped along the seat beside me and then on the rubber matting of the floor. The metal spanner was nowhere to be found!

After bolstering up my sagging morale I once again set the car out along the road. After all, Thompson's ghost or no Thompson's ghost, I was in this to get to the Coast . . . and nothing else. And I kidded myself, there was surely a reasonable explanation to all of this—there had to be!

The car behaved pretty well for the next few miles. Then, as I was climbing up a long, lonesome hilly road heading for the main highway and the State Turnpike again, I heard a whistling. The same whistling, same tune!

I tried for a second or two to ignore the baleful sound. But it dug and rasped into my very soul. I shuddered. There was something gleefully ominous about it. But I was still driving determinedly hard when ahead I saw the sign. It leered out at me.

It read: "Belvedere Ridge 1½ miles."

THE tempo of the whistling increased like a macabre accompaniment to my spinning wheels as I shot by the sign and on up the slope that led inexorably to that fated ridge a mile and a half further on. Then suddenly I came to a compulsive decision. I could not go further!

It took an effort physically and mentally. The car was running, racing almost by itself now. But I steadied my

hold on the wheel and with an effort lifted my weight off the accelerator. I slumped in the driver's seat as the coupe slowed. My foot fumbled for the brake and I ground the car down to a stop, my hands wet with sweat on the wheel. California nothing! Not in this crate!

Before I could change my mind I quickly backed the car around and headed it in the other direction.

The whistling stopped now! I was headed East!

I didn't care about the Coast one bit now. I just wanted to get the old bus back to Acme in New York. I roared. But never once did the auto falter. She behaved beautifully. No tugging at the wheel. No more whistling. By the time I hit the Holland Tunnel I was beginning to feel just a bit silly. But it was too late then. A few more minutes and I was at the Acme lot.

"I got sick," I said. "I couldn't make it. I'm sorry."

My misgivings and suspicions about the car came back a bit then. The manager was strangely silent. He nodded and accepted my explanation of illness. "Sure," he said. Sometimes I could come around again and they'd give me another car. So we parted the best of friends and the only dirty looks were directed at the car.

You'll think I'm crazy maybe, but by golly I think the old crate looked positively happy standing there back in the Eastern lot. Under the warm sun, as I walked away with a backward glance, the old bus looked serene. The last two days seemed far away and preposterous.

But I knew I hadn't dreamed any of it, try as I might to kid myself into this belief. And somehow I was firmly convinced that that old bus never would go West.

A month passed before I got up enough courage to go back to the Acme lot to ask for another car. I'd still been unsuccessful in landing an Eastern job. As I

neared the Acme lot I found myself looking for the cream-colored automobile. It was nowhere to be seen. I went over to the shack and buttonholed the manager.

"Member me," I said, "I started out with one of your cars four weeks ago . . . got sick. I wondered if you'd have another buggy for me. I still want to make California."

I thought maybe the man wouldn't recognize me. But he did.

He said: "Oh, hello Mister. Yeah, I guess we can fix you with another automobile."

And he turned away and looked out over the lot. He scratched his head and then pointed to a sleek, new job in the corner. "I guess that'll be the best bet." He told me to show up three days later.

I was about to leave when my curiosity about the old car got the best of me.

"Say, Chief," I said, "what happened to the other car, you know, the cream-colored one? Did you get somebody else to get it out . . . ?"

THE manager turned toward me and grimaced. "Yeah, we got somebody. But he didn't get no further than you did. And he didn't come back. He smashed up. All we got left is the pile of junk they're shipping back to us."

I gaped.

The manager fished around in the pocket of his dirty windbreaker.

"Here," he said. "Take a look at this." And he reached out an old newspaper clipping toward me.

I read:

New Castle, Pa., August 21.—A fatal accident occurred not far from this place yesterday when a car driven by T. H. McGuire plunged off the road at Belvedere Ridge and crashed sixty-five feet into a ravine. McGuire was instantly killed.

Police were puzzled when investigation showed that the steering mechanism had been jammed with a jack handle.

The accident occurred at the same spot where two years ago vigilantes ran Red Thompson, notorious bank robber, off the road, causing his car to crash into the valley below and killing him. McGuire was driving the car West for an agency shipping autos to the Pacific Coast.

Coincidence? Perhaps you'll say McGuire is a common name. How do I know it was the same McGuire? The answer to that is, I don't know.

And believe me, Brother, I don't want to know!