

THRILLING WONDER STORIES

Vol. XXXIII, No. 1

A THRILLING PUBLICATION

October, 1948

Featured Complete Novelet



THE MOON THAT VANISHED

By LEIGH BRACKETT

A fallen satellite of the Planet Venus is the lure which leads three hunted beings to the mysterious island of smiling death! 13

Two Other Complete Novelets

- YESTERDAY'S DOORS..... Arthur J. Burks 65
Back through the ages travels amnesiac Dean Hale!
- MIRACLE TOWN..... William F. Temple 86
When a stranger visits Peterville, molecules go haywire!

Ten Short Stories

- THAT MESS LAST YEAR..... John D. MacDonald 38
- GALACTIC HERITAGE..... Frank Belknap Long 43
- "I LIKE YOU, TOO—"..... Joe Gibson 52
- THE SQUARE PEGS..... Ray Bradbury 101
- THE COSMIC JACKPOT..... George O. Smith 109
- DATE LINE..... Benj. Miller 117
- REVERSE ENGLISH..... John S. Carroll 125
- SOFTIE..... Noel Loomis 133
- NO WINTER, NO SUMMER..... Donald Laverty 140
- REFERENT..... Brett Sterling 148

Features

- THE READER SPEAKS..... The Editor 6
- THE FRYING PAN..... A New Fanzine Review 171
- SCIENCE FICTION BOOK REVIEW..... A Department 174

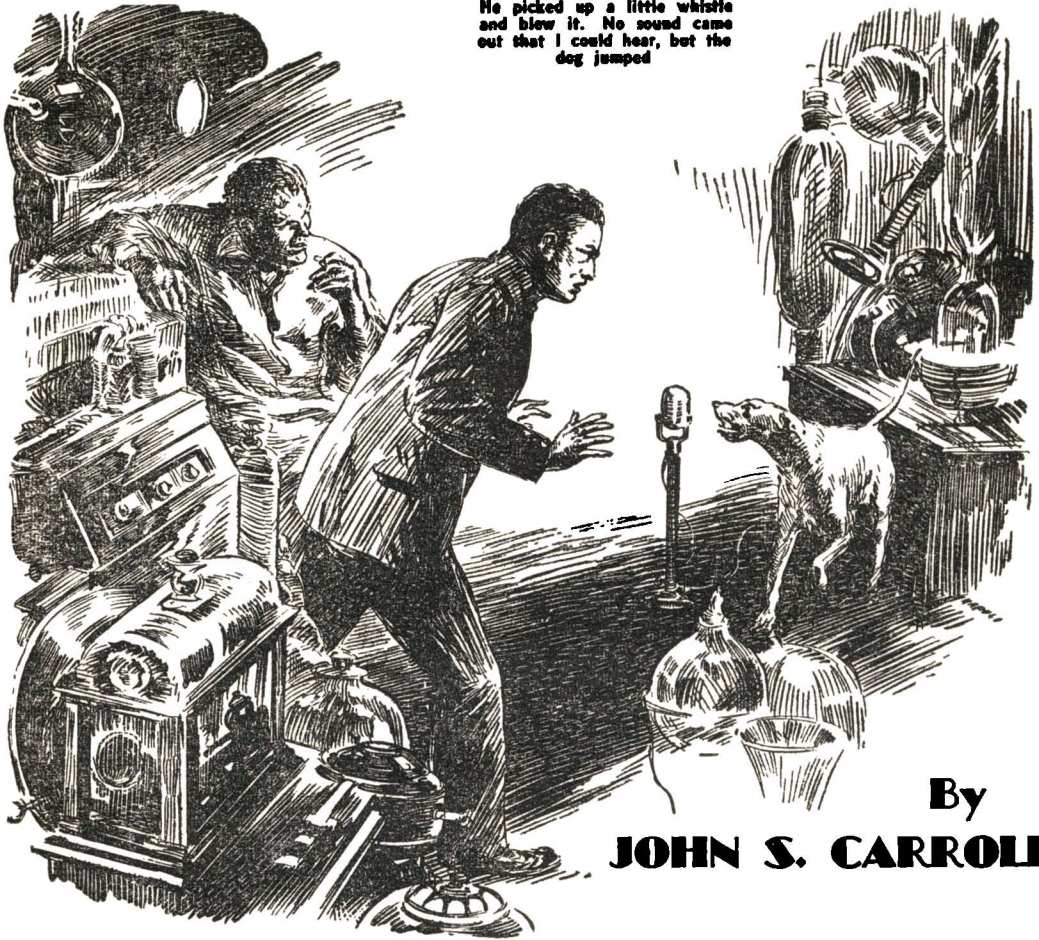
Also See Features on Pages 85, 108, 124, 132, and 147

Cover Painting by Earle Bergey—Illustrating "The Moon that Vanished"

Published every other month by STANDARD MAGAZINES, INC., 10 East 40th Street, New York 16, N. Y. N. L. Pines, President. Copyright, 1948, by Standard Magazines, Inc. Subscription (12 issues), \$3.00, single copies, 25c. Foreign and Canadian postage extra. Re-entered as second-class matter October 8, 1946, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under Act of March 3, 1879. Names of all characters used in stories and semi-fiction articles are fictitious. If the name of any living person or existing institution is used, it is a coincidence.

PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

He picked up a little whistle
and blew it. No sound came
out that I could hear, but the
dog jumped



By
JOHN S. CARROLL

Lucky Mariano finds that horse talk can be perfectly killing!

ME, I'M just a radio mechanic. No genius, that is. But handy with a soldering iron. If it's genius you want, take my friend Bill Marra. He's a communications engineer—telephone, radio, or what have you. He's invented enough gimmicks so he doesn't have to work any more, just potters around his basement inventing more gimmicks.

Thinking them up, actually, is all he does. Give him a screwdriver and a pair of pliers and he can wreck anything in five minutes. That's where I come in. He thinks 'em up,

I build 'em. He busts 'em, I fix 'em. And when he gets into a jam, I'm the guy comes to bail him out. Like, for instance, this last gadget of his. Nothing dangerous about it, but it could have got him sunk in the river with his feet in a block of cement. It all started with an amplifier.

I found the diagram in the mail when I came into the shop one morning. Looked like an ordinary audio amplifier at first sight, and I started laying out a chassis. Picking out parts, I noticed something; even Bill can make a mistake sometimes. But I don't stick

HSILGNE ESREVER

my neck out any more, so I got him on the phone.

"About this amplifier of yours," I started. "Well, what about it?" he yapped. "Never seen one before?"

"Look, bub. I've built hundreds of 'em. If I hadn't I'd 'a built yours like you drew it here, and you'd been stuck with it."

"Stuck with what?"

"OK. Look at your coupling condensers. Maybe it's just a misprint, or you wrote mmf where you meant mfd. But if you use condensers that small, it might work but you'd never hear a sound out of it. Low frequency cut-off way above the audible limit."

"Gives you an 'A' for effort anyway. Keep punching. And build it the way I drew it. And stop worrying."

Well, now, what do you do with a guy like that? I built it. Had to test it with a scope to find out if anything got through it. Couldn't hear a sound. When I delivered it, he just grunted.

"Mind letting me in on the secret?" I asked. "Now you've got an outfit that will amplify sounds you can't hear, who's going to listen to it?"

He just tossed me a couple of sketches. "That's the output section," he explained. "We'll connect it to the vertical sweep of a cathode ray tube. The rest of the circuit is an automatic time base, so you get standing wave patterns at any frequency."

"OK with me. But what're you going to feed into it?"

"Uh-uh, almost forgot. Midget condenser mike. Through a high-pass filter, cut-off at 12,000."

Well, I still don't know any more than I did at the beginning, but what the devil—I get paid for it even if it doesn't work.

COUUPLE of weeks after I finished the outfit, I was still wondering. So I dropped in on his basement lab one night. He had the rig set up and working. The microphone was on the floor. Bill's dog, a nondescript pooch named Meginnis, was tied up in front of it. Bill was stroking him, petting him, annoying him. And as far as I could see, nothing whatever was happening. The amplifier was running, the 'scope tube was lit, showing a nice steady base-line and nothing else.

"Maybe your mike's no good," I said helpfully.

"It's OK," he muttered. "Look."

He picked up a little silver whistle and blew it. No sound came out that I could hear, but the dog jumped as if he were shot, and a nice pattern of standing waves showed up on the 'scope.

"Dog whistle," explained Bill. "You can't hear it and I can't hear it. Too high frequency. But he can hear it. See?"

"All right, I've got one of those whistles for my dog too. What's that got to do with the price of yams in Patagonia?"

"Here's how I figure it. Dogs can hear supersonic frequencies. Maybe they talk to each other that way. So far, no dice."

Well, now, there it is. The guy's got forty-seven patents, three degrees, and an honorary Sc.D. Maybe it's just overwork. But it certainly sounds like he's chipped his crock. Talking dogs! I'm going to suggest a nice long rest when he hops out of his chair and beats it. Nothing to do but relax, and see what's next.

He's back in about five minutes with a big yellow tom-cat, unties the dog and chases him. The cat's fur lies down again, and he starts to prow around, looking at objects with typical cat-curiosity. He rubs his nose against the microphone, sniffs and looks around. Bill is watching the cat with considerable interest. So am I.

The cat looks at us again, at the 'scope, and at the microphone. He walks around once, shakes his head, walks over to the microphone again and puts his nose near it. I don't hear anything, and Bill doesn't either, I don't think, but a big, beautiful pattern appears on the 'scope. It is followed by a string of shorter, irregular peaks, and stops as the cat turns to face us.

I look at Bill, and he looks at me. Then we both look at the cat.

"I always knew that dog was a dope," Bill mutters. "Any alley cat in town is Einstein by comparison."

I could swear that cat nodded his head at the remark. Anyway, he had a self-satisfied expression, which for a cat, is almost a normal look anyway. Another row of peaks appeared on the scope screen. Bill's eyes bugged a little.

"You know," he said a little tensely. "I think that alley-rabbit actually understands what we're saying."

The cat looked a little annoyed at that. A short wave train appeared on the screen, then a long one, then two short ones. Like — — — —

I couldn't get over the feeling that the cat had just said, "Of course I do!"

Bill must've felt the same way. He was excited by now. "Shrimps and sweet cream for you, Tommy!" he shouted at the cat. Turning to me, he exulted, "Now I've got a real idea! Look, Mike!"

He grabbed a scratch pad and started drawing a new schematic. "See? We'll take the output of the amplifier and run it through a mixer-oscillator stage. That way, we can get a beat between a fixed frequency and the supersonic output of the amplifier. The beat should be in the audible range and we will be able to hear it; we won't need the 'scope. I want to hear what the cat is saying."

I started to open my mouth. I closed it. Then I opened it again. I spoke to the cat. "Say meow to the gentlemen, Tommy."

I had it coming to me. The cat looked me straight in the eye, emitted a raucous sound, something between "miahhhh!" and "pfffft!" and turned away.

Ever had a cat give you a Bronx cheer? I left.

There was no particular trick to building the new gimmick; just a question of the right coils. I'm no genius by any means, but I can calculate an L/C ratio. I delivered it and tried to forget the whole thing.

But I've got as much curiosity as the next guy. So I didn't wait more than a week. Down in the basement, Bill's sitting there, having words with the cat. Bill's talking directly to the cat; the cat's replies are coming out of the loudspeaker on my new set-up. The cat's talking something that sounds like Hindustani. I stood it for a while and it got too much for me.

"How come?" I popped. "He understands English, seems like. Why doesn't he speak it?"

The cat looks at me and says, "Miahhhh-pfffft!"

Bill says, "I could ask you the same question. Remind me to do it sometime. Meanwhile, he is speaking English. That's what it sounds like to him when I speak it. His hearing apparatus is different, that's all."

"Now wait a minute!" I squawked. "Gullible, that's me. But I still don't believe that a cat speaks English."

"You've heard of Pig-Latin, haven't you?" said Bill mildly. "Why not Cat-English?"

"Ask a foolish question, get a foolish answer," I replied. "You ought to be writing radio scripts. With jokes like that, even

Milton Berle couldn't get his option picked up."

"Don't be so damned superior," Bill growled. "The beast has never heard any other language, he's lived here all his life. Why shouldn't he speak English? Cat-fashion, anyway."

The cat moved his nose to the mike and some assorted sounds came out of the speaker. Sounded like Esperanto, this time. Bill nodded.

"He agrees with me," he said smugly.

I gave up. I took my fedora, jammed it down on top of my noggin and started to leave. Bill snapped off the amplifier switch, motioned me to wait, and started to feed the cat. When he got through serving lunch, he came over to me and said, "Build me another one. Portable, battery-operated, this time. I've got more ideas. Cats can't be the only animals smart enough to talk."

The cat looked up from his dinner and made a face. Luckily the amplifier was turned off, so I missed his parting shot. I beat it.

BUSINESS was slow for the next few weeks. Maybe they're making radios better now, but I didn't have much repair business. And I hadn't heard from Bill since delivering his new battery operated portable what-is-it.

So I told my kid assistant to mind the shop for the P.M. and I went out to the track. Two bucks of my dough on any horse's nose will raise his wind-resistance to the point where he can't win a race, but what the devil. It keeps me out in the open air.

Anyway, I prowled around the stables a bit. I know these one-horsepower oat motors are obsolete, but I like 'em. Times I think the world was a better place to live when old Dobbin was vice-president in charge of transportation.

There's a little gathering around one stall and I decide to look into matters. Middle of the group is Bill Marra, and he is tinkering with the portable gimmick. He's having words with a horse, and the horse seems to be holding up his end of the conversation pretty well. I suppose the language was Horse-English but it sounded like Lithuanian to me. Bill seemed to understand it though, and he was translating for the group.

General idea seems to be, this bunch of touts wants to know if the horse is going to win his race. The horse keeps insisting it's

a foolish question, and anyway, why not ask the jockey who's going to ride him; far as the race is concerned, the jock's the boss, and the horse does as he's told.

Since this is what every racetrack tout is always telling you, you'd think they'd agree with him. Seems like they don't really believe it, though, not even when they get it right from the horse's mouth.

Meanwhile, the nag gets tired of this foolishness and clams up. "Bill turns and says, "Look, boys. He's told you all he intends to. He thinks all this is silly."

One of the touts is stubborn. "He's gotta know if he can win or not. He's runnin' the race, ain't he? He musta spoke to the other horses."

"Maybe," says Bill. "But he doesn't want to talk, and I don't know any way to make him."

Some disgusted sounds come out of the loudspeaker. Sounds like Swahili this time. Bill listens. "O.K. He says he doesn't figure to more than show. His feet hurt."

The group breaks up like magic. They all beat it for the two-dollar show window. Bill tells the horse he's sorry to have bothered him. Considerate guy, Bill. Out of the corner of my eye, I see one big guy looking at us, curiously. He's wearing a sharp suit and a tie with the Aurora Borealis embroidered in purple and green on a gold background. I make it all about five hundred dollars on the hoof. Looks familiar too, but I can't place him.

We walk over to the track and I spend the next hour cheering my horses into last place. My luck is running as usual. Fifth race comes along, and I see the horse Bill's been talking to; he's right on the rail. I figure this'll be worth watching.

The start is a good one, and this nag—his name is Roll Merrily—is two lengths ahead at the quarter. He's running easy and doesn't seem to have any competition; the boy hasn't touched the whip to him yet.

At the half, things are pretty much the same. At the three-quarter pole, the field is spread out a bit, but Merrily still leads by more than a length. I begin to wonder what those touts will do to Bill for making them play an easy winner for show money.

Just as they come into the stretch, I can see a little break in Merrily's stride. So help me, he's running like a dame in tight shoes. He drops back, a little at a time. Hendy, who's riding him, looks a bit startled and ap-

plies the whip, but it's no dice. Two of the others pass him, and at the finish, it's Roll Merrily, third, just like he said he would.

Bill looks up as if he's just finished balancing his check book and says, "That's what he said."

He starts to walk away, as if the experiment was finished and he'd found out all he wanted to know. The big guy who was watching over at the stable walks up to him.

"I've got a job for you," he says.

"Don't need a job," says Bill. "Retired five years ago."

"Yeah," I put in. "He doesn't have to work any more."

"Shut up, punk," says the big guy to me. He turns to Bill. "When Lucky Mariano offers you a job, you take it, see?"

Bill looks worried. He hands me the portable and says, "Take this home. I'll see you later."

"Unh-unh," grunts Mariano. "I'm hiring you *and* that gadget. Bring it along. And chase that lug."

Well, nothing I could do. So I beat it.

AFTER a few days, I got worried. I hadn't heard from Bill, and neither had his housekeeper. She didn't figure anything wrong; he often went away without telling her anything. But I knew better. I went to the cops. Nobody was at the desk except the sergeant, and he was having a nap, with his shoes off. He wasn't too happy when I woke him up.

"Bill Marra's been kidnapped," I said.

"How's that?" he yawned.

"Well," I started. "He invented a gadget to talk to horses and—"

"For a minute I almost took you serious," the sergeant said. "Every time there's a murder in town, some crackpot comes in here and confesses he done it. We have a show on Broadway, "Who Killed Cock Robin," some jerk comes in, says he's the guy. Now there's a movie, "My Brother Talks With Horses," you say he's been kidnapped. You just stop smoking that stuff, you'll be O.K. And if I find out where you get it, I'll—"

"Look, I'm no crackpot. I built the gadget for him."

"That's all, brother. Now I've heard everything. Go away and leave me rest."

"Wait a minute," I squawked. "Lucky Mariano and—"

The sergeant sat up abruptly. "Did you say Lucky Mariano?"

"Yes, Lucky Mariano," I insisted. "He and Bill—"

"Hold it." The sergeant was wide awake now. "On him, we'd like to get something. Tell me from the beginning."

I told him. He looked skeptical enough, but he couldn't laugh off my description of Mariano. "Fits all right. Those neckties of his. But how do you know he kidnapped Bill Marra? Sounds like he just hired him and Bill went of his own free will. Far as I know, there's no law against talking to horses, not even if Mariano does it. That is, if your pal really can talk with horses, and that still goes down pretty hard."

"Well, Mariano believes it." I was mad now. "But what are you going to do about Bill?"

"Can't see nothin' we can do about Bill. Bring us some evidence of a snatch, maybe the FBI can do something."

I left. I wanted to punch that big lug right in the jaw, but punching police sergeants, especially in headquarters, is not good policy. The law frowns upon it. I went back to the shop and tried to do some heavy thinking. It came out all wrong. I didn't know where Bill was. I'm no detective. I've got no gun permit. I weigh one hundred and twenty-four pounds, dripping wet and a rock in each hand. In short, blanked.

Opportunity knocked. He didn't look like opportunity, for the moment. He looked like one of Lucky Mariano's less lovable gunsters. But he was carrying Bill's gadget, and he had a note from Bill. It was short and to the point:

"Something's popped. Probably a condenser or a resistor. Fix it and send it back with the boy. He'll wait."

Well, I fumbled with it and tried to read some meaning or code into the note. But it was pretty clear there wasn't any, and anyway, Bill's mind doesn't run that way. Still, by the handwriting, I could see he was pretty nervous, and I had a mental picture of those hoodlums trying to figure whether the gimmick was really busted or whether he was stalling.

I hooked up the test set, and found the trouble in about two minutes. Watching my guest out of the corner of my eye, I kept on testing, stalling for time. Finally I got it.

"Look, pal, she's pretty well shot. I've got to put in some new coils and rewire a whole sub-assembly."

I looked at the mug nervously. He shifted his cud of gum around his jaw, first from left to right, then vice versa, yawned, and said, "Go ahead, bub. I can wait. I'll stay till you finish. Just don't make any phone calls."

LUCKY I had a couple of old police radio-telephones handy. I got the parts I needed out of one of them, and got to work. Three hours later it was done, and the tough guy left with it. I left, five minutes after he did.

Same sergeant, same desk, same police Headquarters. He looked at me, sour-like.

"You back again? What's the horses telling you now?"

"Nothing much." I came back at him. "But they'll be talking to you pretty soon. Something new has been added."

"What's that?"

I told him about my visitor and the repair job. "What I did was add a modulator-oscillator-power amplifier, and a few feet of wire for an antenna, coiled around inside the case."

"So what does that make it?"

"Simple. It makes it a radio transmitter. Not only will he hear what the horses are saying, but anyone in town with a radio tuned to that frequency will, too."

"And where does that get you?" The sergeant was still puzzled but not bored now.

"Well, I took the filter off the mike too. So not only will it broadcast the horse-talk, but anything else that's said around the room as well. Also, I fixed the switch so it shuts off the speaker, while the rest of it keeps running. It'll broadcast all their conversations while they think it's shut off."

"Yeah, but—" The sergeant acted like a professor putting his finger on the nub of a problem. "But who is going to be listening?"

"Oh." Now it was my turn. "That's easy. I tuned the whole thing to police frequency. Every radio-patrol car in town will hear it."

"Dangerous for Marra if they find out, isn't it?" the sergeant mused.

"That's your job, now." I was getting mad again. "He's entitled to some police protection, isn't he?"

A cop came in from the hall, picked up the desk phone and dialed a number. "Repair? Send the direction-finder car around. Some'uns jaiming our radio."

I grabbed the sergeant and dragged him to the radio room. In between crashes of static and puzzled calls from the two-way

radio cars, there was a hum of voices. I recognized Mariano's and Bill's talking to a horse and the horse answering in what sounded like Portuguese. Bill was translating, and Mariano was giving Bill questions to try on the horse.

"Believe me now?" I asked the sergeant, who was scratching his head with one finger at a time.

"Beats the bejudus out of me," he said. "That's Mariano, all right. Maybe—"

"Okay then, let's go!"

"Where?"

The sergeant had me there for a minute. Obviously Mariano and Bill were at the track now; just as obviously, they'd beat it, soon as they got their information. They'd place their bets by phone, later. But where?

"I've got it! Catch that direction-finder car when it gets here. That gimmick'll go on broadcasting wherever they take it. We'll chase 'em with the direction-finder."

"Mebbe you got somethin'." The sergeant snapped a few words into the intercom box, and we walked out in front of the police station. The service car pulled up about five minutes later, and we hopped in. I looked over the equipment.

"Pretty sharp, that," I remarked. "Haven't seen one of those since I was in the Air Force."

"Yeah," said the driver. "Automatic radio compass. Beats the old fashioned loop aerial direction finder all hollow. All I've gotta do is watch the Left-Right indicator while I drive."

I started to do a bit of figuring. There were three of us in the car—the sergeant, the driver, and myself. Suppose we catch Mariano, then what? He isn't going to be alone, that's sure, and even alone, he's dangerous. And the other gimmick, the one I hadn't mentioned to the sergeant, it didn't seem to be working—yet.

"Dang!" muttered the driver, under his breath, and swung the car around. "Etiher we've passed them, or they've passed us on the way back to town."

The direction indicator had started to call its left and rights wrong. Now, headed back to town, it was swinging properly again. It didn't make sense to me. Unless Mariano had taken a plane, he couldn't have gotten past us that way. No cars had gone by in the opposite direction in ten minutes. Suddenly I got an idea. I snapped on the loudspeaker.

"Calling car 25. Car 25. Signal 34. Signal

34. Main and Broadway. Main and Broadway."

"I knew it. I should've thought of that. The gadget's on the same frequency as the police calls. We're chasing Police Headquarters now, not Mariano!" I shouted disgustedly.

"Okay, wise guy. This was your idea. What do we do now?" said the sergeant.

"We wait. And we keep the loudspeaker turned on. And we chase Mariano with the radio compass when we hear him."

PRETTY soon we got another signal from Bill's gadget. The radio compass swung back and forth, finally settled down and made sense as we headed out of town again. I kept my ear peeled to the radio and my fingers crossed.

It's Mariano's voice in the loudspeaker now. Getting clearer so I figure we're getting warm.

"Okay, Marra. All I need. Shut it off and get into the car. . . . I said shut it off; that whistle is driving me nuts."

"What whistle?" It was Bill's voice.

"That damned peanut whistle coming from your gimmick." Mariano's voice was getting exasperated now.

"Nothing coming out of this that I can hear. Besides, it's shut off. Look for yourself."

"You're trying to tell me I'm nuts?" Mariano's voice was dangerous, tight, low-pitched. "I hear it. And if you don't stop it, I'll—"

Well, it seems the other gimmick is working, better than I figured. Maybe it'll be Bill's finish too, if we don't get there soon. Seems like I kind of underestimated it, though Mariano's voice comes through again.

"For the last time, Marra, stop it. Look, I can't even move my hands. That sound's doing things to me, I tell you—" Mariano's voice had changed; he was whining now.

"I'm telling you, the thing is shut off. There's only one switch on it, and the pointer says, 'off'. Besides, I don't hear a thing. You must have rocks in your head."

My jaw dropped. The big tough Mariano, licked by a little peanut whistle. Bill, the Milquetoast genius, talking to the toughest gangster in town like that. Maybe I don't know as much about the ultrasonics as I should. I got nervous.

"What's your signal strength?" I asked

the driver.

"R-9" he snapped. "We're getting pretty close now. Watch that bend in the road."

We tore into the bend, screamed back into the straightaway. Dead ahead was a big black limousine, with slots where the rear window should have been. I'd never seen it before, but I didn't have to. It was Mariano's armored special. J. Edgar Hoover would've been green with envy.

"Okay, Sarge. There they are. Your show now."

"Right." The sergeant fingered his .38 Police Positive. It was all the armament we had, and not half enough, the way I felt.

"All right, Bobby." The sergeant was the professional cop now, and he knew his business. "Pull ahead of them, and I'll wave 'em off the road."

The mechanic was a little green around the chops but he had spunk. He kicked the accelerator pedal hard, pulled around Mariano's car, and held his pace. The sergeant waved.

Mariano's driver tried to pull ahead, but Bobby could drive a bit, too. He hit the gas and nosed over. Mariano's chauffeur could chance us or the ditch. He made up his mind suddenly and stomped on the brake. We screeched to a stop and the sergeant hopped out with the gun in his hand.

"Out, bum!" he snapped at the driver. The driver knew a .38 when he saw one. He hopped. The sergeant handcuffed him and shoved him into the radio car.

"Yours, Bobby. Take him back to town and jug him. The boys'll get something on him later. We'll ride back in Mariano's car."

The sergeant slipped into the driver's seat, with Bill alongside of him. I got in back with Mariano. Mariano cringed in the far left corner of the seat, which didn't make me mad, either. The more space between us, the better.

I looked at him and the gadget. Bill spoke up from the front seat. "What's eating him?" he said, to nobody in particular. "He started to complain about a sort of peanut whistle, and now he acts like he wants to crawl in a hole and pull the hole in after him."

"I cannot tell a lie," I said. "I did it, with my little hatchet. You know, the mixer-oscillator in there—your idea to make the ultrasonic frequencies audible?"

"Yeah, well?"

"Well, to get an audible beat, it has to be tuned within a couple of kc. of the ultrasonic frequencies you want to beat with it. I set it at 14,000 cycles."

"What's that got to do with Mariano?"

"Well, it struck me funny that he'd swallow your gimmick and the idea of talking with horses. Mariano's a suspicious type, and you'd expect him to think it was a racket of some kind."

The sergeant cut in. "Yeah, that's how I figured it. I couldn't see the whole thing myself, at first, and I couldn't figure Mariano falling for it so easy."

"Well, you know, most people can't hear a thing above ten or eleven thousand cycles. But occasionally you get someone who can hear all the way to fifteen or sixteen thousand. I figured Mariano's one of them. He must've heard horse-talk, but he's no good at languages and couldn't figure what they were saying. That's what he needed Bill for."

"Okay, now I believe anything. I'll be seeing flying saucers next. But what's this peanut whistle that shrivels him up so? I don't hear any whistle."

"Right. You don't, I don't and Bill doesn't. But Mariano does. It's the oscillator. I fed some of the 14,000 cycle output into a one-inch permanent magnet speaker. There was more kick to it than I figured, that's all."

Mariano looked at me, pleadingly. "Shut it off, mister. I'll confess to anything, even kidnapping Judge Crater. Only stop that whistle!"

I felt sorry for the big lug. I reached into the box and yanked out the "B" battery. Mariano shuddered and straightened up. He reached for his pocket. That dim-witted sergeant had forgotten to frisk him.

Mariano leaned forward with an Army .45 in his hand. He stuck it in the sergeant's neck. "Now, wise guy, turn around and head for the country. I'll take care of you and your scientific pals all together!"

Mariano was watching the sergeant. The cop did some quick thinking and suddenly swerved the car. The spin threw Mariano off balance for a second. In that second, I realized that I still had the "B" battery in my hand. I conked Mariano on the head with three pounds of zinc, carbon and asphalt. It did the job very nicely. First time, in fact, that a guy ever was knocked cold with only sixty-seven and one-half volts. Though I have to admit, not applied in the usual way.

By the time he came to, we had him in a

cell. We never did get him on the kidnaping, as it happens; we didn't have much proof of that, and Bill didn't feel like testifying. So they held him as a vagrant while the FBI looked him up, and they found he could be sent to jail for having a poor memory. He'd kept on forgetting that March fifteen is income tax day. He can take a correspondence course in mnemonics at Atlanta.

Anyway, I took the whistle and the police transmitter out of Bill's gadget and gave it back to him. I was still puzzled about one thing.

Bill was idly thumbing a roll of bills big enough to make Rockefeller envious.

"How come," I said, "that you didn't holler for help right away?"

"Four-thousand, forty-five hundred, forty-six hundred, forty-seven hundred—huh? Oh. Why should I? I was doing okay. Making a nice bit of change on side bets with Mariano."

"You mean—" I sputtered. "You mean, you were betting on horses with Mariano? And winning?"

"Why not?" said Bill. "I was translating, wasn't I?"