

TOMORROW

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JOHN TAINE

MARVEL

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SCIENCE STORIES

APRIL-MAY



NEWSCAST

by
HARL VINCENT



NEO PLASTIC - REPAIR THERAPY

Saunders

A Mechanical Fountain of Youth

A Discussion of This Month's Cover by EANDO BINDER

How would you like to step into a machine, vested with strange but scientific powers, and come out vibrantly young (if you are past youth), ravishingly handsome (if you wish), and in vigorous, sparkling health?

The well-known artist, Norman Saunders, has depicted such a machine on the cover of this issue of MARVEL—a Mechanical Fountain of Youth. Hopeful souls, before and since Ponce de Leon, have searched for such a mythical source of physical well-being, all through history. Can science one day fulfill the miracle?

Let us assume it is some future year, and whatever age you are now, you are in need of rejuvenation by then. You enter the Youth Emporium, pay the fee (in accordance with your pocketbook, perhaps), and the Operator questions you. How young do you want to feel—about twenty-one? How handsome do you want to look—like the current matinee idol? And the best of health, of course?

"Step this way!" says the smiling Operator, guiding you into the apparatus. You are surrounded by dials and mechanical contrivances, and you try to remember if your insurance is paid up, but the Operator smiles reassuringly. He has stipulated that he will use no drugs, no knives and will cause you no pain. He steps to a panel of controls, and moves a lever slowly.

You start as a humming sound arises and your skin tingles all over. An inductive field of electrical forces is bathing your body, penetrating inward with a soothing sensation. The innumerable cells, tiny batteries themselves, are being recharged. Old, worn-out tissue awakes to new life and activity. Flesh rejuvenates under the magic touch, becoming more surcharged with vital forces that have slowly drained out through the years. The electro-chemical peak of the body's metabolism is once again attained. You awaken from a blissful doze some time later, feeling like a new person. One is as old as one feels, and you feel like—twenty-one!

Now the tingling ceases. The Operator moves another lever. You experience a new sensation, that of something probing you in localized spots. You roll your eyes and notice several distinct beams of violet touching you—artificial gamma-rays of just the right intensity to penetrate flesh but not harm it. One beam impinges at the base of your brain, focused on the pituitary gland, and corrects its secretion-rate by an infinitesimal, but very important, amount. The iono-beam, regulating secretion by controlling acidity, next stimulates the thyroid gland, in the neck. Here your metabolism is slightly altered, tuning up your whole system. Another gamma-ray centers on the adrenal glands, in the abdomen, and soon a tide of strength flows through you, as adrenalin sweeps into the blood stream.

Your heart pumps more strongly now, your lungs take deeper breaths. All the accumulated poisons of past years are cleaned out, as the regulated glands perform their proper duties as regulators of all the organs. Lurking disease germs vanish under a wave of reinforced leucocytes—white corpuscles. There is a thorough house-cleaning going on, through every inch of you, as the gamma-rays stir these ductless glands to the proper pitch of activity. Even your brain feels cleansed, awakened, and you glow with health. You feel happy simply because you have a sound mind in a healthy body.

So far so good. You feel young and healthy, but you were promised gracious looks also for your fee. You still have a large nose, pointed chin and not too shapely body. The Operator nods and moves a third control. Now something touches your nose, shaping it. It is a mitogenetic ray, the fundamental wave-energy of growth. Under its powerful influence, positive or negative, flesh grows or withers. With this intangible tool of plastic surgery, the Operator reforms you almost at will. He pares down your nose, with deft touches. He smooths the curve of that chin. He does wonders with your body.

The treatment is done. You step from the machine, and look in a mirror. You are astonished at the wonderful transformation that the Mechanical Fountain of Youth has wrought in you and you hurry off to surprise all your friends.

Fantastic? Impossible? Remember that biology is one of the youngest of sciences. The study of glands, of the electro-chemical nature of life, and of mysterious vital forces is gaining rapid momentum toward what to-day is—fantastic.

The Magazine of Super-Science Stories

MARVEL

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SCIENCE STORIES

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Vol. 1, No. 4



April-May, 1939

Big 70,000 Word \$2.00 Novel

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by John Taine

Dakan knew that the most desperate resource of his fellow-scientists could stop that frightful hydrogen-helium plague that was wiping out civilization—a scourge of disintegrating titanium, its disastrous secondary vibrations turning animal cells to plant cells, metamorphosing agonized mankind to masses of fungoid growth! But even as Dakan fought for his lovely Kate, greater chaos was to come when the entire world was plunged into war—and the vengeful arm of scientific might reached out to harness the terrible atomic energy of the sun itself!

An Exciting Short Story

NEWSCAST 119

by Harl Vincent

Reporter Tom Burke constructed a polyceltron iconoscope that would synchronize sound and vision—and scandal-blasted a city-wide political intrigue with that all-seeing broadcast television!

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MARVEL SCIENCE STORIES published bi-monthly by Western Fiction Publishing Co., Inc., RKO Bldg., Radio City, N. Y. Office of publication, 4800 Diversey Ave., Chicago, Ill. Editorial and Executive offices, RKO Bldg., Radio City, N. Y. Entered as second class matter April 25, 1938, at the Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under act of March 3, 1879. Yearly subscription, 60 cents.

Burke could barely see through his view finder to train his lens upon the troops



Inventor Tom Burke built a polyceltron iconoscope—and synchronized sound and vision to scandal-blast a city-wide political intrigue with his all-permeating broadcast televisior!

NEWSCAST

by HARL VINCENT

SLOUCHED in his overstuffed chair behind the desk, Emmett Graves sat tapping the polished mahogany surface before him with pudgy fingers while he stared at the blank rectangle of the newscast receiver on the opposite wall. There had been an interruption in the service for two minutes and

he looked often and angrily at his ornate platinum watch. In eight more minutes the sports flash was due to go on. Meanwhile, this war news—most important of all—was ruined. Unless it came on again at once.

"Young fool ought to be back on police court work!" Graves raged impot-

ently. He rolled the frayed end of a black cigar from one side of his thick-lipped mouth to the other.

Miss Hennessey, his pretty secretary, tiptoed into the room, laid a sheaf of papers before him and noiselessly disappeared. Just as well, Graves reflected grumpily. She was too high-hat, Miss Hennessey was—she'd refused him dinner dates, theatres, even had given his flowers to one of the stenographers in the outer office. He'd have to fire her and get a new one.

But this service interruption was more important at the moment than any secretary, whether she high-hatted him or not. As President of International Newscasts, the pompous little fat man was taking his job very much to heart for the first time in many moons. Tommy Burke, his star reporter, had fallen down on him. And usually Burke was not one to do a thing like this unless the reason was a mighty important one. Well, he'd fire *him* too if this interruption continued for long.

Three minutes, four—five! A check showed him that All-World Newscasts still had the war flash on. With a wrathful grunt, Graves put a blunt fingertip on Miss Hennessey's call button. The girl was at his side so quickly and soundlessly that he started visibly.

"Get Burke on the radiophone," he directed, mopping his double chin with a lavender silk handkerchief, "and get him quick. Ask the blasted idiot what's wrong with the newscast."

"Tommy is at the front," Miss Hennessey reminded him.

"Oh, Tommy it is? So that's the way the wind blows." Graves glared at the girl, then shook himself deeper into his chair. "Well, get our Tampico station then and have them get through to him via the Loyalist Signal Corps. You can do it in a minute if you don't stand there dreaming. Hurry now."

"Yes, Mr. Graves." Again the silent departure.

But the battle front was never reached by radiophone, nor did that one particular newscast resume. The portly President of International nearly died of apoplexy in the next long moments. All-World had made a complete scoop for ten important minutes.

Entirely out of God's knowledge, in the hottest battle sector in central Mex-

ico, Burke had been televising and picking up the sound, not to speak of sending in the frequent announcements of what was to be learned of the fighting in other sectors. This was nothing new to Burke; he was a veteran at war reporting and was as much excited by it all as if he had been a combatant. And he had never quite gotten over the thrill of knowing that, all over the world, millions were seeing the results of his camera work and hearing the yells and rumblings of guns, the shrieking and detonations of shells which were picked up by his banks of microphones. And loving it too, these millions. Bloodthirsty to the last one of them. Especially when sitting snugly and safely at home before their own private newscast receivers or when lounging in one of the public squares where International had installed huge mirror screens and amplifiers and where the roar of battle could be heard as loudly as at the front.

NO, Burke did not mind. Not that way. But he had been here too long now; the monotony was beginning to tell on him. Besides he was most anxious to get back to New York—there was that invention of his to perfect and it was an important one. Burke was a real scientific experimenter, only keeping to his reporting so he could pay the freight.

"That puffy old lady-killer," he told his radio man, "ought to be out here for a while. I'd love to see him in a gas mask, to see him turn tail and waddle away from the creeper clouds."

"Who? What?" The radio man removed his headphones.

Burke had come back to the twin short wave transmitter from his own televising camera and microphone banks. The transmitter was a good two hundred feet behind the front line trenches for a measure of greater safety. Much good that did at times!

"Graves. The stubborn ox. Doesn't even answer my radiograms."

The radio man grinned crookedly. He knew how anxious the tall young reporter was to return to the States. "Better get back up in front," he said. Then he watched the lanky figure as it stooped and crept through the communicating trench, tin hat askew, gas mask and holster dangling from his belt, boots caked with mud. Burke was a good scout.

Dropping into his cubby off the front trench, the reporter checked the focus of his telephoto lens through the periscope at the top of which it was mounted. The image it projected on the plate of the pickup tube was perfect.

He swung the periscope around, sweeping the Rebels' front lines and the narrow strip of pock-marked land which lay between the two lines. If this was what the newscast public wanted, let them have it. Suddenly he was alert; his view finder showed a thick red cloud rolling eerily up from nowhere and spreading. A creeper cloud! The signal for gas masks came down the trench. Burke had his on in a jiffy.

Captain Volez swept past him, running.

"What's doing?" the reporter called to him in Spanish.

"A charge—coming. Good picture."

The sound of the heavy artillery, the shrieking and bursting of HE shells, the rat-tat of machine guns rose to a deafening roar. The sound of the planes overhead was an unbelievable clamor. Mud flung high as a barrage was laid down by the Rebels ahead of the creeper cloud. These deadly gases could be dispersed by flame projectors if their fusible elements could be reached by the licking, searing blasts. "Modern warfare" was pretty much the same old stuff, Burke reflected. Just bigger guns, more powerful explosives, deadlier gases.

Loyalist troops streamed through the trench behind him, bound for the point where the sally was headed. The creeper cloud came on. The barrage was in the trenches, then had passed beyond. A clang and a heavy blow on the reporter's helmet drove him to his knees and nearly deafened him. He had a charmed life.

The red gas rolled down now upon the Loyalists, filled the trench. Burke could barely see through his view finder to train his lens upon the charging Rebel troops. Oh, the newscast hounds would eat this up!

CRASH! The view finder was driven painfully against his cheek. He looked up at the top of his periscope and saw it was gone. So was a perfectly good F-O. 9 telephoto lens, the third one in a week at six hundred smacks a copy. Burke swore softly as he went back through the communicating trench.

The indescribable ear-splitting whistle of an HE shrilled overhead, too close for comfort. Burke flattened himself instinctively. Then, Whang! All Hell seemed to break loose. Mud, rocks, debris, rained on the prostrate reporter. That one *was* close. Painfully he dragged himself from the mess encumbering him, slowly he crawled back toward the transmitter.

Where it had been a deep crater, still smoking. Twisted bits of wire, fragments of glass, were all that remained of the twin radio apparatus. A dismembered crumpled form thrown up on the edge of the crater told him what had become of that decent little radio engineer. Burke swore feelingly.

"Damn Graves anyway!" He made his way over the top, ducked into another communicating trench and started for the rear. "I've told the fathead a dozen times to install the transmitters in fast armored tanks. God knows *they* cost enough to replace. But you can't replace the poor guys that run them. I'm going home—to hell with Graves."

A Loyalist army plane whisked him to Mexico City in two hours. From here Burke sent a radiogram to Graves:

"Am taking next stratoplane home. Lenses and transmitters don't grow on trees. Neither do swell radio engineers. And there are no trees where we were. Hope, it hurts you a lot to accept this collect. I'll make it long and expensive. Will be home in a few hours but am going to get a good night's sleep and will see you in the morning in good little, dear little old New York. My best regards to Miss Hennessey. Has she accepted your customary dinner invitation yet? I hope not, for her sake. Burke."

If Graves had been purple with near-apoplexy before, he was almost black when this radio reached his desk a few hours after the trouble with the war newscast. He reached for his vacuum bottle, found it empty of ice water.

"Miss Hennessey!" he shouted, forgetting even to ring for her. "What's the matter with the thermos bottle. Get me some ice water."

"Yes, Mr. Graves." The girl had whisked away the bottle and was returning with it refilled before he had mopped the perspiration from his creased brow.

"You're fired!" he roared at her.

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Graves,"—sweet—

ly. "That means two weeks' pay is coming to me. Thank you again. I already have a new position with All-World. Will you sign this voucher, please?"

Miss Hennessey, not now so sweet and pretty in Graves's glazed eye, thrust a paper before him. It was an order for two weeks' pay ahead, on account of her release by him. The little vixen had already filled it out.

"But—but—"

"Sign right here, Mr. Graves." His erstwhile secretary did not use such dulcet tones this time.

Graves signed, noting the glint in the girl's yellow eyes, then sank back in his chair exhausted. These youngsters would be the death of him yet. All-World. Damned upstart outfit; they'd not get the best of Emmett Graves nor of International.

He turned in disgust from the "Every Day a New Menu" newscast and flipped the switch which shut off the uninteresting sight of a scrawny woman mixing a most appetizing—but not to him—salad, and the sound of her shrill, monotonous voice as well. He'd have to do some more firing. This feature could go to All-World for all he cared.

Again he looked at Burke's radiogram, snorted, crumpled it in a tight ball and deposited it carefully in his wastebasket. Then he looked once more at his expensive timepiece. After five it was! Holy Smoke! Mrs. Graves would jump down his throat. He became a volcano of activity, crammed his hat on his head, turned out the lights and scurried for the elevator.

BURKE arrived at his combined laboratory and bachelor quarters late that night. After a luxurious bath and shave, he went at once to the laboratory and dusted off his beloved apparatuses. For the time, Graves, the Mexican Revolution—everything—was forgotten. He had something here which would revolutionize newscasting—maybe. At any rate it was something worth working on and bringing to the point of perfection. He worked all night with his special televising camera, his pickups and the recording apparatus. And with something that looked suspiciously like an x-ray.

None the worse for his months of grueling war experience and the loss of another night of sleep, he appeared bright

and early in the morning at the midtown headquarters of International. He breezed into Graves's outer office with his usually unruly mop of blond hair slicked meticulously back and with a gaudy cravat conspicuous under his opened lapels. Burke never wore a hat nor did he care much about his personal appearance. He whistled as he entered.

The whistle dwindled from a defiant one to a very subdued sound, a mere chirp of sheer amazement. For a girl sat on one of the benches where Graves usually kept them waiting; a real dream, she was. Blue eyes, hollowed underneath—peaches and cream complexion—a pert, upturned nose—saucy red lips. But she was painfully thin, her dress was shabby, and her funny little hat a mess from the rain of the night before. Obviously this girl was on her uppers, just what old Graves was always looking for.

Taking an even closer look, Burke made up his mind then and there that this was one girl the old man would not make a fool of. He stalked to her side and asked boldly: "Anything I can do for you, Miss?"

"Why, do you work here?"—coolly.

"I haven't any hat on, have I?" Burke's smile was infectious and the girl didn't know that he always went hatless.

She smiled wanly. "Well," she faltered, "I'm looking for a job. It was on the public newscast last night—'Secretary Wanted,'—so I came to see about it."

"I'm just the man you want to see," the reporter told her. "If you'll wait a few minutes in this conference room I'll be with you."

Unhesitatingly she followed him. Burke closed her in the small room and went to bang on the boss's door. No secretary was in the outer office.

"Come in!" blared the little big man's voice. Burke went in.

"Morning, Graves," blithely. "Where's Hennessey?"

"Fired. Same as you'll be. What do you mean 'Morning?', you jackanapes? What'd that crazy radio of yours mean? Twenty-eight dollars it cost International." Graves banged on his desk.

THE reporter grinned. "Keep your shirt on, boss. You can do your blowing off after I've finished. I'm through

in Mexico. No more for me. Know your last transmitter down there was blown to Kingdom Come yesterday and a dam' good radio man with it? I'll not take another of these assignments until you see the tanks for them like I told you. Three lenses in a week—of course that's not so bad. Eighteen hundred smackers doesn't mean as much to you as twenty-eight for a radiogram you damn well deserved. Not for lenses—as long as your newscasts are on the air. I'm through I tell you."

Again the banging of the desk top. "You're telling me!" Graves bleated. "You're fired. Draw your pay and get out."

"Oke. But you didn't tell me about Hennessey. Fire her, too?"

"Yes, if it's any of your business."

"Couldn't make her, eh?" Burke's voice held deep loathing.

"Get out, I say! Get out!" Apoplexy threatened once more.

The reporter retired to the little conference room, where he took the blue-eyed girl by the arm. "Come on," he said, "we have to go to another office. We'll talk over the job there." He found she needed some assistance in getting to her feet. Why, the poor kid was starved!

She followed him without question and Burke was glad that Graves had not started out from his private office after him. Other girls were now in line in the anteroom for the actual position.

"What's your name?" he asked the girl in the elevator.

"Nina Cowan."

"Nina." Burke sort of rolled the name over his tongue.

"And my experience," she began, "has been—"

"We'll let that go until later. Had any breakfast?"

"Why—why—"

"You haven't. Neither have I. We'll eat first."

"But." They were on the street now and Burke was piloting her into one of his favorite haunts.

"No buts. We eat."

THEY ate, the girl ravenously, Burke observed. Color was starting to return to her cheeks and her eyes looked brighter already.

"You haven't told me who you are?" she reminded him as they sat over their

coffee.

Burke told her.

"Oh, I've listened to *your* newscasts often. They're the best—"

"Forget it," the reporter interrupted. "It's up to me to confess. I was just fired from International and I want to put you to work—for me."

Nina Cowan stood up suddenly. "But it was Graves who wanted a secretary. You've deceived me."

"Listen now; Graves is a bum. All he thinks of is running around with his secretaries. That's why the last one was fired. You're too darned nice for—"

"I can handle that sort. But not a liar. Good-bye, *Mister* Burke. I'm going back and get that job. Thanks for the eats."

Nina Cowan was gone and with her going the sun seemed to set and the day become gloomy. Burke paid his check and left for his uptown quarters.

Work is a cure-all sometimes. Burke worked as he had never done before for the next few days. But he did not forget Nina Cowan. He checked up with some of his old pals at International and learned that she had landed the job with the Old Man. He hated to think of her in that office, of the Old Man's pawings. With Hennessey, now, it had been different—that had merely struck him funny. Hennessey was a nice enough kid, of course. But Nina was somehow different. He could have wrung her neck cheerfully at this point.

He immersed himself more deeply in his work. The laboratory was a shamble of coils, condensers, vacuum tubes, batteries, and built-over motor-generator sets. A standard newscast receiver stood unused against one wall. Burke was working on the pickup end of the apparatus.

Late in the afternoon of the fifth day after his dismissal by Graves, he suddenly jumped up from his work and sent a long and carefully written radiogram to the chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington. He had something at last, he knew. One last little touch and it was to be perfect. The standard newscast pickup apparatus was entirely satisfactory, of course, but it was bulky. The camera itself was a simple affair, using a huge polyceltron vacuum tube with an eight by ten plate on which the images from its fast lens were pro-

jected. The dark and light images produced the myriads of impulses required for transmission by radio on one frequency while the sound impulses from the microphones were transmitted on a second frequency. The result in simultaneously tuned reception and reproduction was as perfect as could be desired. But the experimenter was after important improvements.

Burke had always wanted something compact. More than that he was obsessed with the idea of producing perfect recordings of sound and vision pickups simultaneously so they could be reproduced at any time desired. This had not yet been done successfully, due to various factors that made synchronization difficult. Then there was a problem of televising and sound pickup in places difficult of access. That was where the modified x-ray came in. The only thing now holding him back was an ultra-sensitive microphone that would not blast.

He had just about reached the solution when his buzzer roused him from his work. This was five days after his dismissal by Graves.

Burke sauntered to his door in carpet slippers and shirt sleeves, with three days' growth of beard ornamenting his jowls. It was Nina!

The girl pushed past him into the room. She was flushed and excited. "You were right—Tommy. And I was wrong. I'm sorry."

The reporter's jaw set. "Graves try anything funny?"

"Y—yes. And I quit. Your job still open for me?"

"Oughtn't to be, young lady,"—sternly. "You took a run-out powder on me, you know."

"Oh, I *am* sorry. When can I go to work?"

Burke had to grin in spite of himself. "Now. Sixty a week. I have a flock of notes I want typed up. Here, this way. And don't think I'll try to get fresh, either."

He led her to the typewriter desk in the laboratory, handed her a jumbled mass of scribbled sheets and told her to go ahead. Then, a wave of embarrassment sweeping over him, he returned feverishly to his own work. The click of the typewriter was music to his ears.

From time to time the girl watched him from the corner of her eye. He did

not know she was noting his every move with avid interest. But she caught him several times when he stole glances at her.

And when finally, with headphones clamped tightly to his ears, he yelped, "I've got it!" she came flying to the workbench.

"Got what?" she demanded.

"It. The last link in the chain. Now we *have* something."

Nina Cowan sat on a high stool at his side, staring at the—to her—bewildering array of mechanisms. "Tell me all about it," she pleaded.

BURKE had kept his ideas pent up for so long that it was great to confide in someone. And no confidant could have been more welcome than Nina Cowan. "Sure," he enthused. "I'll expound."

He expounded. Four mechanisms there were, each like nothing the girl had ever seen. Burke enclosed them separately in leather cases with carrying straps. He picked up the smallest of the four, which was only a handful to carry, pointed it at the girl's curly head. She saw it had a big twinkling eye of a lens.

"This," he told her, "is my camera."

"A televisor?"

"Nothing else. And the side—this bump you see—is the regular microphone which picks up ordinary sound."

"Now, wait a minute," the girl broke in. "Tell me how the modern television operates. I've always wanted to know. Maybe I'm a dumb-Dora but I've seen the cameras and microphones and of course plenty of different sorts of receivers. Still I don't get it."

"Perfectly simple." And it was not simple at all to Nina, though Burke clumsily tried to make it so. "Here's a lens that projects an image. What on?—a plate in a vacuum tube. Iconoscopes, they used to call these tubes before they were perfected for color. The plate in this tube catches the image, converts it into electrical impulses and—"

"Wait a minute. How?"

"Aw, easy. The plate is divided into five hundred lines of tiny cells over which the light beam travels sixty times a second from bottom to top, because the lens inverts the image."

"Skip it," Nina said wearily. "I'll never get it in a million years."

"Okay—I thought you wanted to know." Burke picked up his miniature televisor.

"Mean to tell me this little thing takes the place of the huge cameras the reporters use? The ones that take two men to carry them and have a truck following them?"

"Sure. *My* polyceltron tube has the same number of cells in a one by one and a half inch plate as the big ones do in eight by ten. And here is my truck."

Burke strapped a larger case to his belt and attached it to the wires of the televisor and built-in mike. "This is no transmitter," he explained, "but a voice and vision recorder which magnetically and permanently writes down on a metallic tape the electrical impulses from the tiny polyceltron in the camera and from the voice amplifiers. At any time or from any standard transmitter these impulses can be sent out as perfectly synchronized newscasts. Or, for that matter, this recorder can be used for the theatrical telecasts if this should prove to be desirable."

"All right, Mr. Professor; can present happenings be kept in a little roll of metal tape and reproduced a hundred years from now?"

"A thousand years, if necessary." Burke was showing the workings of his apparatus.

"Hm. Good stuff," the girl commented. "But not for newscasts."

"Right." Burke grinned at her perspicacity. "The news hound wants the news when it happens, not in a thousand years."

"Then what's the object?"

Again the experimenter grinned. Nina was a smart girl. "There is a still more important field. You haven't seen the half."

He removed the third mechanism from its case and set it close to the wall, wiring it to the first two. There was a whir and he raised the camera to eye level, aiming its lens at the blank wall.

"You don't by any chance think you're taking a picture?" the girl asked him.

"Sure. Now watch." The fourth case was opened and more wires appeared. A small cable led to a round case with a rubber suction cup which Burke moistened and attached to the steel wall. Once more the whirring started. "And sound

as well, unheard sound," he added.

In a few minutes he shut off the power and removed a small reel from the case at his belt. "This," he told her, "is a complete record of what has been going on in the next room."

"You see," he intoned, "the vision goes out on an extremely high frequency, the sound on a much lower one. In ordinary news or telecast reception no difference is noted by eye or ear in the lag between the two widely different waves. But in a recording that lag has always until now presented difficulties. Now we—"

"Shoot it," the girl directed. Her eyes brightened with more than comprehension, bluer than ever.

BURKE inserted the reel in what looked to be a short wave radio transmitter. Then he dimmed the lights of the room and turned on his newscast receiver. "It only takes impulses from my own transmitter now," he explained.

In a moment the vision screen lighted. Flickerless and clear, there was the view of the next room. A modern living room, where a man sat at a table eating his dinner. It was perfect—and taken through a steel wall. The man laid down his knife as a woman came in and sat across from him. Still there was no sound, though the lips of both were moving in speech. Nina recalled that Burke had not turned on the sound recorder in the beginning. That was what the case with the suction cup was for—it picked up the sound beyond the wall. It must have tremendous sensitivity. Without its help *nothing* could be heard through that sound-proof partition with its deadening layer between the two vertical sheets of metal.

Then it was there, the speech of the man and the woman, the clatter of knives and forks and dishes. Petty table conversation, that of almost any average man and wife at dinner. But clear and lifelike as if transmitted from one of the huge stations of International or All-World. And with this diminutive and revolutionary equipment which could see all and hear all.

The girl gasped as Burke switched off his apparatus and the lights of the laboratory came on. "I see now what you're driving at," she exclaimed delightedly. "You've got something here."

Burke wondered amazedly whether

she *did* see.

"I think so,"—soberly. Then he handed her a radiogram that he had just received from Washington. "And now, Ni—Miss Cowan—please read this and answer it at once—just a short formal acceptance."

When he saw her look of amazement as she sat before her typewriter reading the radiogram, he knew she did understand.

"After that we'll see Graves," Burke concluded. "You and I alone together. We'll see him about lots of things."

The pair sauntered nonchalantly into Graves' outer office, Nina gamely insisting on carrying the case which housed the penetrating ray generator. Burke, with the other cases, winked at Gloria Fay, the redheaded reception clerk.

"Who's with the Old Man?" he asked her.

"Only the Mayor and his Better Housing Committee. Why—and why the Christmas tree effect?"

"Oh, these are bombs," Burke assured her, patting his three cases. "Mind if we go in and blow up the Old Man?"

"See if I care. Bust right in." The Fay woman chewed her gum violently, then added, "There's a bunch of dames after the secretary job again—waiting." She looked significantly at Nina.

"Perfect," said the erstwhile reporter. "Come on, Nina."

They passed the line of waiting applicant, some pretty, some not so hot. All of them looked anxious. Graves would have a lot of fun with this assortment—if he could. He always tried hard enough.

BURKE strode to the outer wall of the Old Man's office with Nina at his heels. The line of waiting women observed them curiously, probably setting them down as a repair crew. Burke set up the four mechanisms, attached his supersensitive microphone to the wall, and switched on the juice. He kept his tiny camera moving in a slow arc to cover the interior of the room behind that double insulated steel wall—to cover all of it. The recorder whirled on.

Soon there were stirrings within, voices that now could be heard through the un-insulated door as men came to its inner knob. Rattling of the latch. Burke switched off his power supply.

"Come on," he told Nina. "Let's move."

They moved, lounging over to a window of the outer office that overlooked the river.

Filing from Graves' office were some of the most prominent dignitaries of the city, most of them looking rather sheepish. One of the waiting girl applicants for the secretarial position, probably the most attractive of the lot, was called into the sanctum sanctorum.

Burke rushed to his instruments as soon as the door closed behind her. The Fay woman had approached and was looking interestedly over his shoulder. "Go away," he said. "This is going to be good. But not yet—there's nothing to see for a while."

The penetrating ray and the weaving camera lens—a gleaming bull's eye of optical glass almost as large as the television itself—were in action only a few minutes when out rushed the girl who had entered the room. She was red of face and disheveled of hair.

"Swell!" exulted Burke. "Come on, Nina." He grabbed up his instruments hastily.

Another of the applicants had been called for, but Burke winked at Gloria again suggestively and strode into the Old Man's office instead, with Nina trotting contentedly at his side.

Graves looked at the two in purpled astonishment. His fat fist began to hammer on the desk as his former reporter bolted the door from inside. "What in the devil?" he spouted. "The two of you—so help me—together! You've a nerve."

"Keep your shirt on," Burke counseled. "We've something to show you. Something worth while to you. Something worth while to International, interesting to the entire world. My own invention."

"Oh, all right." Graves had never been one to pass up a chance of a patent steal. There had been many of these, as Burke well knew but could not have proved. "What is it? But make it snappy."

The political newscasts were on the large receiver. Burke turned them off. "Now," he said, "cut out your regular frequencies and plug me in on the local shorts. Got to show you this."

Surprisingly, Graves complied.

The whir of Burke's recorder lighted up the screen and started the sound. The President of International Newscasts gasped when he saw himself pictured right here at his own desk and heard the words of raw political intrigue he had exchanged with the Mayor and his Committee. If this ever went out over the air it would mean utter ruin. . . .

"Shut it off. Name your price."

"There isn't any price." Burke shifted the tape.

HERE was the Old Man desperately trying to make love to the last applicant for what he called a position. His foolish words of pseudo-endearment made Nina giggle.

"Shut it off!" Graves's pleading was panicky. "If Mrs. Graves ever should see this recording."

Burke was grinning down at him. "Enough?" he asked. "Going to be good now?"

"It's enough." Graves nodded, then looked up, white-faced. "Ten thousand dollars for your invention," he offered. "Why, International can expose all sorts of things with this. Your jobs back, too, both of you—at twice your last salary. Is it a bargain?"

Nina sniffed. "A bargain! It isn't even interesting."

Burke was slinging his cases over his shoulder and to his belt. "No go," he said. "International expose things? You're crazy. Just newshound stuff is what you want. Blood and thunder stuff to keep the sheep in line, to make International the superior of All-World. You don't know from nothing, Graves. Let this just be a lesson to you—no price

connected with it. Except you've got to put those front line transmitters in tanks like I told you."

"I will, I will. Anything! But—but—you won't turn this invention of yours over to All-World."

"A better place than that. To the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington."

"Not this reel you just showed?" Graves surely would die of his bursting veins.

Nina and Burke were at the door and Graves waddled after them most ludicrously. "Please, Burke—you know me—you had a good job with me. I'll do anything. If my wife—"

"Yes, I know you." Burke laughed. "Don't worry. I'll not turn in this reel yet—I'll just keep it to make sure you behave yourself from now on. You're on probation—with me, now. It's about time the newscasters of this country kept out of crooked politics."

Waiting for the elevator at the reception desk, Nina hugged close to Burke's side. "Won't it be grand?" she said. "In Washington, with your new G-man job, we can live *swell*. You'll be in something you can be proud of—and I'll have a man to be proud of."

Burke reddened—stammered. "M—mean it?" Nina was proposing to him! He'd have never had the nerve himself.

"Course I mean it—Silly." Her bright eyes looked up into his astonished ones invitingly.

And the Fay woman almost swallowed her gum when she saw Tommy Burke lift the little blue-eyed girl from her feet and kiss her resoundingly on lips that obviously were most receptive.