

GUILTY

DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE

Vol. 6 — No. 1

September, 1961

CONTENTS

SHORT STORIES

- THE NUDE IN THE DEEP FREEZE *by James Rosenquest* 2
Rigor mortis hadn't set in, the body was on ice
- BEATNIK WIFE *by Dan Malcolm* 14
When a wife turns beatnik it's bad, man, bad!
- SIDE JOB *by Carroll Mayers* 23
The killing had to be smooth and slick
- MAD DOG KILLER *by Neal Neitzel* 29
A human beast, he wasn't fit to live
- I DON'T WANT NO TROUBLE *by Ed Chase* 39
I had my mitts on some really big money
- ON WITH THE KILLING *by Dan Brennan* 48
I was a racket man, couldn't wince at murder
- DEATH CAN BE BEAUTIFUL *by Russell Thompson* 61
Mark had a neat racket. It concerned death
- THE UGLY WOMAN *by Michael Zurroy* 72
She wanted only one thing -- but bad!
- STEPPING UP IN CLASS *by Henry H. Guild* 84
I wanted to get ahead fast, fast, fast!
- WALK AWAY FROM DEATH *by Harrison Smith* 97
I was scared but capable of violent action

NOVELETTE

- DEADLY CALL GIRL *by Ray McKensie* 104
Expensive, she could cost a man his life

W. W. Scott — Editor

GUILTY DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE is published quarterly by Feature Publications Inc., at 1 Appleton Street, Holyoke, Mass. Editorial office at 32 West 22nd St., New York 10, N. Y. Second class postage paid at the post office at Holyoke, Mass., August 20, 1956, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Single copy 35c. Subscription rates, \$4.00 for 12 issues. Not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts; and all such material must be accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes. All stories printed in the magazine are fiction, and any similarity between the characters and actual persons is coincidental. Copyright 1961 by Feature Publications, Inc. All rights, including translation, reserved under International Copyright Convention and Pan American Copyright Convention. Printed in the U. S. A.

ON WITH THE KILLING

by DAN BRENNAN

I was too long in the rackets
to turn my back on the murder



"It took you long enough,"
Stutz Gandler said.

So I was supposed to sprint all the way from Florida to Minnesota. I looked at him.

"Planes were grounded," I said, "I took a train." He hadn't changed much in fifteen years. Little less hair on the head, but what was there was black and curly. He still had a chest like a truck driver, big, wide, and a voice to match. If he'd gone to school another four years after eighth grade he'd have owned all of Cereal City. But he hadn't done badly. He owned half the town, the liquor and bookie joints, that is.

He was smoking an English cigarette. Fifteen years ago he'd had that touch, too, but whoever taught him to buy English cigarettes shouldn't

have stopped there. Because Mr. Gandler's clothes made him look exactly like what he was, Mr. Hoodlum. Strictly a meat head when it came to clothes, from his orange sports shirt to the matching slacks and dark blue suede shoes.

But I should yap. Fifteen years ago I thought his clothes were hot stuff, but the years in Palm Beach taught me a few things about clothes.

"Why didn't you drive?" he asked.

"Why?" I said. "Well, one, five years in stir didn't make my eyes any younger. And two, it's a long drive."

He jerked a finger at the chair in front of his desk.

"Sit down," he said sharply.

Why all the hard talk? He didn't have to talk hard to me.

"I been sitting all day," I said slowly.

"Listen, Jim." He got up from behind the desk. I had never liked him, not even when he smiled. He paid good money when we were hi-jacking and driving moon, and he took care of his friends, but I still didn't like him. Always wanting to show you what a big shot he was. He was smiling now. The

trouble was he was big.

He came around the desk, offered me a cigarette. I shook my head.

"Jim," he said, tapping the cigarette on the edge of the desk like he thought all the tobacco was going to fall out on the floor. Strictly the big executive gesture.

"Sure?" he extended the pack.

I shook my head.

Then he picked up the silver cigarette lighter, snapped the trigger up slowly and blew on the wick like he thought maybe the Sahara desert had settled there.

"Jim," he said. "I got a job for you."

No kidding? All the time I thought he was homesick for my personality.

"Yeah?" I said. "Trouble?"

"Not yet," he said. Then thoughtfully: "When'd you get in?"

"This morning."

"Where you staying?"

I looked at my suitcase on the floor.

"Get a room on east side," he said. "Johnson's Hotel."

I picked up my bag.

"We close about one," he

said. "Come on around after we close. I'll be in the office. Use the stage door."

"Sure," I said. "How're the boys?"

"No complaints. Steve's in Arizona. We're thinking of getting a spot out there. Looks like it might go."

I looked around the office. The modern furniture and lighting and carpeting must've cost him five thousand dollars. Good enough for a Florida night club. But Cereal City, Minnesota, wasn't Florida. These square heads here knew how to pinch a buck nine ways.

"How do you make this go?" I asked. Out front it was all indirect lighting and chromium plating and trick bars and a stage that rose out of the dance floor. The Club Cay. Not bad.

"Names," he said. "Big names. Give 'em a few broken down Hollywood names and these farmers'll pay."

I turned to go.

"See you tonight," I said.

"Hey," he said as I put my hand on the doorknob. I looked over my shoulder. He was grinning. "Where'd you get that lousy rag?"

I looked down at my suit. Plain grey flannel with a ticket pocket. Hundred and fifty bucks tailor made.

"Don't you like it?" I asked.

"Jim," he shook his head in disgust. "When you gonna learn how to dress?" He went on shaking his head and waving me away and I went out.

IT was more like one thirty when I got back to the Club that night. The Johnson Hotel wasn't bad but it was more like a flea bag when I started thinking of my house in Florida. But the hotel was a good bet; nobody would know me or care to around the Johnson. It was that far off the beaten track, away over on the old east side.

"You always this slow?" Stutz asked. "You used to hurry a little."

The tall guy next to him looked at me. We were in Stutz's office.

"Got out of the habit in jail," I said.

"In ten years you shoulda got it back." Then: "Stretch, this is Jim Porter."

"Hiyuh," Stretch said. He was big, tall, young, with a

wide good looking face and sleepy eyes.

"Stretch, I want you to show Porter a couple friends."

"Sure," said Stretch and yawned, and looked at Stutz.

"Them guys. Dutch Henry and Flea Dixon?"

"That's right," Stutz said.

"Jim, I want you in the Magic Box. Noon tomorrow."

"Magic Box?" I said. Maybe he thought a town didn't change in fifteen years.

"Yeah. yeah," he snapped.

"Sixth and Selkirk. Small joint. Just a bar. No booths."

I couldn't even remember what the street looked like now.

"All right," I said.

"Stretch'll stand behind them at the bar. You pick it up from there, Jim. Okay?"

I nodded.

"All right, Stretch," he said.

"That's all. Noon."

"See yuh. pal," Stretch said to me and went out.

"How about a drink?" Stutz asked. "I got a lot to tell you."

He wasn't kidding. I figured up till now he must've forgotten I wasn't exactly a mind reader.

We went out front. The

lights were turned off. The tables were covered and the chairs were stacked. The stage was dark. There was a raised bar above the dining room and we went up and he snapped on the bar light and mixed a couple of drinks.

"Well," he said with a shrug, lifting his glass. "Here's how." We touched glasses. He took a long drink and set his glass down and leaned forward with both big hairy forearms flat on top the bar.

"I'll give you the pitch, Jim," he said. "It's like this." He paused. "Well, maybe you know what it's like. I still got what I always had. The joints and a couple off sale liquor spots and the club and some pretty solid slots and pin ball routes going. That's all. What more do I want? I'm no kid anymore, Jim. I know it, and I don't want nothing more'n I got. I don't want no trouble. I pay my income tax strictly on the level. The feds don't bother me. You know Archie's still got his end."

I nodded. Nothing had changed too much in fifteen years. Only bootlegging was gone. Archie Harris had the

Combination and his half of the town and Stutz still had the Syndicate and the other half of the town. Just a couple of aging business men no longer interested in new fields.

"What's happened?" I said.

"Like I said, Jim. I don't want nothing new. We got the town nice. Everybody thinks it's clean. I got the slot machines in the private clubs and the bookies only handle stuff on the phone. It looks nice and quiet. I don't want no open town. It's better this way. No squawks. I been putting my money in stocks last couple years. Got a nice piece of the street car company. Might even be able to peddle the whole company some day to the city."

"Yeah," I nodded. "What's happened?"

He picked up his glass and took another long drink. He put the glass down.

"Jim," he said. "You feed a guy a little when he's hungry and you make a pig out of him."

"Flea and Dutch?"

He nodded.

"They came into town about a year ago. Flat. They were

on the rock ten years. Bank job. They're rough. Asked me if I had anything for them. Job or anything. I didn't have the kind of job they wanted. So I kept them eating a couple weeks. First thing, I know they put the bite on a couple bookies. My bookies."

"Did you pay off?"

"What the hell, Jim, they were big once. They'd spit in your eye and shoot you for kicks. I know. I checked. I figured what the hell a couple hundred a week was better than having them rip the phones out of a couple books and work the bookies over. Like I said, the town's quiet. I want to keep it that way. You blame me?"

MAYBE the town hadn't changed, but Stutz had. Was this the guy who used to sit with me in the truck with the shotgun on his lap while we ran alcohol into Dakota? He was right; he was getting old.

"You blame me?" I said.

"What?" He looked at me surprised.

I shook my head slowly. No dice.

"Listen, Jim," he grabbed my arm. "I been taking care of you a long time."

"Then we're even. Five years in the can for ten years at five hundred a month. You ought to do five years if you don't think we're even."

I stood up.

He didn't move.

"How's Mary?" he asked, looking down into his glass.

It was my turn not to move. What a jug head. All the time waiting all these years to tell him off, to think I could afford to say no.

"She's all right," I said.

"Joan?" he asked. "She must be about fifteen now."

"Eighteen," I said and my stomach felt tight and hollow.

"Jim, tell me something." He poked a finger into his glass, and drew it out and started doodling the liquid into a small pattern on top the bar. "What've you been doing since you got out?"

I knew he had me, the jerk. What would you do for ten years while drawing a five hundred a month pension? Take up a trade? Sure, I could get a job making book or hustling dice. But I'd never make

five hundred at it. I'd been out of practice too long.

"How long since you racked pool, Jim?" he smiled.

"All right. What's the deal?"

He rubbed his chin.

"Like I said. Stretch'll finger 'em. After that it's up to you. What do you want?"

I never seen anybody yet shoot doubles with a rifle.

"Shot gun," I said. "Sawed off. Way off."

"Jim," he said seriously. "I always knew you were a real stand up guy."

"Sure," I said, but I felt all mixed up, lousy and good at the same time. Lousy because I was scared a little. But good because I knew I was doing it for Mary and Joan. There was no limit I wouldn't go for them. Sure, that was it. Sure, that's why I felt good. Sure, that was it. For them.

I didn't get to the Magic Box until twelve-fifteen the next day. Fifteen minutes late. But that was all right. It wasn't good, getting there the same time as Stretch.

The bar wasn't crowded, one of those long oval shaped bars that almost filled the length of

the room, but there were drinkers on most of the stools. I moved around to the middle, and found a stool, sat down and ordered a beer.

I was half way through the beer before I gave the faces a solid once over, and then I saw Stretch. He was leaning, with both elbows on the bar, and a drink in front of him, and space on each side of him, across the way and a little to the left. I hadn't put my eyes on him a second and he picked up his glass, finished his drink, and started walking down the length of the bar.

Where the bar curved at the far end of the room, he paused, and leaning forward, between two men, he called the bar man over and asked him for a package of cigarettes.

While Stretch was waiting he glanced briefly up and for an instant our eyes met, and then, his head nodded almost imperceptibly.

I looked at the men. Even at the bar they looked short, middle aged. Their hats were off, sitting on top the bar, and beside each hat stood a bottle of beer and glass. They were not well dressed. Even from

across the room their top coats looked thin and faded, and their hats looked old and soft and out of shape.

They drank slowly, taking small quantities of beer, staring straight ahead. They appeared to see nothing. Then Stretch got his cigarettes and walked around the bar and past me from behind and went out the front door.

That was about twelve-thirty. They sat so, staring at nothing, saying nothing, for two hours. Now and then the juke box played from the rear of the room; six times they re-ordered bottles of beer. The juke box blared.

The short man on the left had a round white face, with bright pink cheeks, like a healthy young boy; his hair was almost entirely white. He looked at nothing with two small eyes, separated by a small straight nose.

The other man was taller, with a boney, long farmer's face. His eyes had a queer bright steady color, as though he were staring into light, though all the light in the room was arranged to shine indirectly, and none shone at the rear

of the bar. His nose was long and boney, crooked; it looked broken, and he had a big cleft chin.

Without appearing to move swiftly they slid quickly off the bar stools, and standing erect, slanted their hats simultaneously.

I looked straight ahead, called for another beer, and paid for it while they went along the bar behind me, and then outside.

I drank half the beer, glanced at my wristwatch quickly as though I had an appointment. I slid off the stool and left.

They were half way to the corner, walking slowly, their hands in their pockets.

They waited for the traffic light to change, then crossed. I stayed a block behind all the way, down Selkirk Avenue, past the theaters, pool halls, hardware stores, and then the big pile of dirty sandstone known as the Cereal City Public Library rose up against the sky, and they turned the corner.

I waited, checked my watch for a fifteen second interval. They might have turned the

corner to see if anybody turned with them.

I reached the corner and looked down the short block. The street was empty. Even the street straight beyond the short block was empty. I walked down to the corner and turned into a wide street of faded red brick buildings with glass show windows filled with used cars. The two men were a block and a half ahead, still walking slowly, side by side.

From the next corner, below the curve of the street, came a glimpse of Chippewa Park—trees, black, leafless, like clusters of antlers; at the next corner they crossed and entered the park.

I walked along the edge of the park. I could see them down below on the strip of sidewalk through the snow. When they came out of the park I was across the street and still a block behind.

They stopped in front of two dingey dirty sandstone apartment buildings. Between the two buildings there was a sidewalk. In the grimy snow before the buildings two children, like dogs, one in a blue snow suit, the other, wearing

a red snow suit, rolled about shouting and laughing. The two men vanished between the buildings.

I tailed them for three days and nights. Always the same schedule. Breakfast in a cafe down the street, then down town to the Magic Box. Then home in the afternoon, where they stayed until it was dark, and then about nine they returned to the Magic Box.

At one each morning they walked home, stopping for coffee in an all-night hamburger stand. They always used the rear entrance of the apartment building. They were living on the third floor. I left them alone for a day and studied the alley and rear of the building, and then I was set. I checked with Stretch. They were the guys. Flea and Dutch. I know the business.

I called Gandler. The phone rang. A moment later there was a man's voice on the wire.

"Yeah?"

"Stutz?"

"Yeah."

"This is Mr. Carlson," I said. "I have your policy worked out."

"Fine," he said. "If you'll bring it around tonight—"

"All right. Thank you very much."

That was all. I hung up. It was the best way. You never knew who was tapping the phone. Even if the only way to tap was on the lead out wire from the building, you still couldn't be sure. At least, not about the Feds.

I remember twenty years ago how the Feds handled it. They put a guy under the old post office where all the circuits in the Cereal City connected, and they tapped the whole town without even the telephone company getting wise.

I walked to the Club Cay from a beer joint six blocks away at about twelve-thirty that night. I stood outside the stage door entrance for a moment, and then I went in and along the hall between the stage to the front office. Stutz was standing behind the grilled window, looking out across the front bar room.

"Hello, Stutz," I said, shutting the door, and keeping back against the wall, away from the grilled window.

He turned and worry showed in his eyes.

"How'd she get here?" he asked sharply.

"What the hell are you talking about now?"

"Your daughter," he said.

I stared at him as though I didn't quite believe my ears. Then I started to laugh.

"Don't be a sap," I said, "Somebody's conning you. Joan's in Palm Beach."

"Yeah?" he said, taking the cigarette out of his lips. "Listen, Jim." Then he stepped away from the window and came over to me. "Listen, tell her to use the other half of that ticket. Hell, this is not the time—, get that kid out of town."

"Listen, Stutz," I said in a low, steady voice. "Don't get your water hot. If it's Joan, I'll take care of it."

"You can start now. She's out front."

Well, one thing was sure; the wife must have spilled her guts a little. Joan hadn't ever known anything about the rackets, nor my being in them. She'd always thought I was a retired broker of hides, like we'd told her. Brother, I was

going to straighten out Mary when I got back to Palm Beach. Spilling her guts like this! The jug head! I was boiling.

I went out to the dining room entrance and stood there a couple minutes looking the room over. Joan was at a table along the wall, near the dance floor, looking up at the orchestra. Her soft round chin and full lips were set, and she sat looking straight ahead.

The lights overhead made her hair shine like there was a glow around her head. She was as beautiful as Mary had been when I'd first met her more than twenty years ago hoofing in a St. Louis night club. She brought the gentleness out of you that was always looking for some place to go but always afraid to show because it might get its ears knocked off. But I was sore as hell at her for putting her young nose into this.

It was for her and Mary I was doing it. Did they want to try living on fifty bucks a week? Were they nuts?

"Hello, kid," I said, sitting down beside her.

She turned her face and caught my arm.

"Are you crazy?" I said. "Why don't you go home?"

"Alone?" She looked up calmly, coolly, taking her hand away.

Now I was getting the sophisticated craperoo. I'd give her a lesson in that, if she wanted it.

"I'll order you a drink," she said. "What do you want, Dad?"

"I want you to get your coat and hat and get out of here and on the first train to Palm Beach."

She looked at me quietly.

"Dad," she said, "It doesn't matter. Whatever it is, forget it. Mother wants you to forget it. Come home. She thought you might listen to me. Yes, she told me, about everything. Darling, really, your daughter isn't so stupid. After all, I've grown up a little in the past two years."

Wait'll they've tried living on fifty bucks a week. They'd both grow up.

"Listen, baby," I said. "You've got a car. Mother's got a car. We've got a nice big home. It's not all paid for. You

gotta realize a guy just can't quit. If I quit those cars and that house'll never be paid for."

"Don't you understand?" she said quickly, putting her hand on my arm. "We don't care. Mother and I don't care. It's you we care about. Look, Dad, we don't know why you're here. We don't want to know exactly. We can guess, and we don't even like to do that. Because whatever it is it won't do any of us any good. Mother is scared."

"You don't know what you're talking about," I said. "You never had to live on fifty bucks a week."

"Quit!" she said. "Quit! You don't owe Gandler anything."

She also needed a lesson in arithmetic. Five years in the can equals ten years at five hundred bucks a month? Not bad pay. I know a lot of guys'll do five years in the can for money like that, like I did when the grand jury was going to blow the town off twenty years ago and I took the fall.

The grand jury was after Stutz, so I took the fall for Stutz. They had me on the

stand. I had to take the rap. Either that or spill my guts about the whole set-up in town and how Stutz had the town with all the cops on his pay roll. But I didn't talk.

I stood up and pushed my chair back against the table.

"Where're you going?" she asked quickly.

"It looks like I'm leaving."

"Where are you going?"

She ought to get a job in the district attorney's office. I could tell her how to ask him some good questions, too.

"I'm going out to get a new suit of clothes," I said. "Stutz thinks I've lost my taste."

"Dad," she said in a quick scared voice. It was no use, she would never understand. "Dad, please! Listen!"

It was no use. You couldn't help them by trying to explain it to them. A big house and cars and college and no worries, and you were only trying to keep it for them.

"Don't jump to conclusions," I said. "I'll see you in the morning, baby."

I turned.

"Dad!" she cried in the

same scared voice. "You'll—you'll—"

I thought she was going to scream, but she couldn't because she didn't know what to scream about. Mary hadn't told her about this job, because Mary didn't know about it. She knew only that I'd been called back to Cereal City but that was all.

I went back to the office and got the suitcase with the sawed off shotgun in it from Gandler. I went out feeling more alive than I'd felt in twenty years.

But it wasn't until I was half way to the apartment building that I knew why I felt so alive. This business about doing it for the family was wrong. That wasn't reason. How much can a guy kid himself?

I saw now that I'd always kidded myself on that score, and feeling the handle of suitcase now I knew why I was wrong, and why I felt proud at this moment. I'd never squealed. I'd never told. That was the thing.

I'd never told anybody about what went on in the town, about the gang and the

take and the fixes and who paid off and who got the ice. Nothing to anybody. Not even when the grand jury put the heat on me twenty years ago to bust the town wide open.

I'd been a stand-up guy then. I'd always been a stand-up guy. That was what count-

ed. That was the only thing. A real stand-up guy. Jim Porter. I felt pretty good thinking about it, and I started whistling, and whistled almost all the way through the park. On with the killing!

THE END

