

# STORIES

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ALEXANDER SAMALMAN, Editor

*Henry sat in the middle of the street,  
cradling his dead son in his arms  
—and then his mind went blank!*

He said  
"I didn't".



# VENGEANCE IS NOT ENOUGH

By BRUCE ELLIOTT

**D**ESPITE the fact that the doctor had just turned off the current, the big man on the couch continued to roll and retch. His muscles convulsed so that they stood out like ropes on his thick neck. It seemed that his spine must snap from the force with which his head jerked back. From

his taut mouth there came garbled syllables like the sounds man must have made before he learned to talk. His body heaved so that the springs in the couch seemed ready to burst through the upholstery.

The small, dry looking doctor watched. His face was lined with sympathy. His eyes

were full of compassion. He said, "What day is it, Henry?"

The man on the couch lurched till he was half up, his arms moving aimlessly. The doctor pressed a gentle hand against the man's chest. It was enough. The tortured man fell back onto the couch.

"What day is it, Henry?" the doctor asked. Next to him on the cluttered desk a wire recorder spun on with mindless efficacy. "What day is it, Henry?"

The man on the couch rolled over. Thick strands of saliva drooled from his split lips. The rubber gag was out now, lying on the desk. The gentle voice asked tirelessly, "What day is it, Henry?"

What day? Why it was Saturday. *The Saturday.* The day he'd been looking forward to all summer. The day he and his son, Jimmy, were to go fishing. Sure. Saturday. Gotta get a good early start if you want to catch anything but crabs. They'd kidded a lot about who was going to catch more fish. They'd eaten a hurried breakfast, promising themselves that they'd eat again at some roadside diner. Now there was nothing to do but get the brand new sparkling tackle into the back of the battered convertible.

The sun had washed the dirty city streets with a kind of lambent magic that made them sparkle. His son had been bemused by the way the gold made even the garbage cans look like some kind of ancient treasure. Funny kid. Be peculiar if his son were a poet. Didn't know whether he'd liked that or not. Oh, well, maybe it was just a phase boys went through. Adolescence did odd things.

They had the tackle stacked fairly neatly and were standing next to each other. Jimmy had been almost bouncing with excitement as he'd said, "Gee, Dad, thanks a million. I know it's hard for you to get away from the office. Specially now that the mayor's been sick." Thoughtful kid, grown up in a lot of ways.

Jimmy had nudged him in the ribs. Said, "Dad, isn't that Mr. Vincent?" They'd waved, and Ben Vincent, portly, self-important, had waved back with a tired flip of the hand. They had watched him leave the back entrance of the big apartment house and

walk around the corner.

"Must be hard for Mr. Vincent, being acting mayor," Jimmy had said.

Hard? That was a question. He made it look hard, that was true. But this was no day to worry about the city, or the office or any of the people connected with it. They'd waited too long for this fishing date. He'd slapped Jimmy on the back and said, "Let's go, Son. If there's no traffic, we should be able to have our hooks wet inside of an hour." Then he'd gotten into the car. His head had been bent forward as he put the key in the ignition.

That was why he hadn't seen it, just heard it. Heard that despairing scream as his son died. Leaped from behind the wheel in time to cuddle Jimmy's broken head in his lap. Been blinded by horror so that he hadn't even seen the car that had stolen his son from him. Hadn't even been aware that there must have been one.

He had just sat there in the middle of the street with his dead son in his arms. Crying. Crying as he hadn't when his wife, the mother of his child, had died of cancer. Cried for all the things he had wanted for his son. Cried till something, somewhere inside of him let go.

**N**OW someone was saying tonelessly but insistently, "What day is this, Henry?"

He said tonelessly, "Saturday."

"Good work. Who are you?"

"Who are you?" What a question. As if anyone could ever answer it. He was a man. A hard-working man who'd loved a woman and lost her. Who'd fathered a son and lost him, too.

The black clouds swirled back.

The doctor sighed. Rapport was broken again. However— He looked at the wire recorder. The reel still looked fairly full. There was enough there for an hour's recording.

"What day is this, Henry?"

"Saturday."

"Who are you?"

Time passed. The reel of wire ran on and on. The low hum of the motor was the only sound. Outside the office darkness fell.

"Who are you?"

"Henry," thick-tongued, the heavy voice

went on, "Henry Timms."

The doctor smiled. Some of the strain fell from him. His voice was a little louder now. He asked, "What do you do?"

"I'm in politics. It's a job."

"And—" the doctor paused for a second; this was the test—"why are you here?"

"I—I think someone brought me here—on an ambulance. I—" There was great hesitation, then: "It's all muddled. I think you're a doctor and you're going to help me. You—you said something about shock therapy." The big man got panicky. "You're going to give me electric shock."

The doctor killed the building panic. He said, "Relax, Henry. It's over. You've had the treatment. This partial amnesia is the result of it. It will pass quickly, now that you know you who are."

The big man on the couch said, "I don't remember getting anything. Has it—am I—"

"It's worked. You're better than you were when you came here. In a sense, you were already in shock because of your son's death. The electric shock has helped you over that other, greater shock. But you'll be all right now. In a way, you've had the equivalent of battle fatigue. You've been overworked, and then—this other—it was too much for you. You escaped from life, from everything. You blanked out.

"But that's over now." The doctor made his voice more positive. Patients were at their most suggestible at this point. Now was the time to impress the message. "The treatment has given your brain a rest, given you time to make at least a partial adjustment."

"I see." Timms sat up, looked around the office wonderingly. As far as he was concerned, he'd never seen the room before. The books—that was the thing that you saw first. Hundreds of them. Thousands of them. He looked from the ceiling to the floor. Textbooks, books on mathematics. Books. Then the crowded desk—the wire recorder—and behind it, the little wizened, tired-looking doctor.

"Why the recorder, Doctor?"

"So that I can play it back to you. So that you can see how the treatment works. So that this partial amnesia you are under-

going will not frighten you in the future."

"I see." Things were beginning to come back. Little things. Like the nurse who had helped him untie his tie. He looked around, wondered where she was.

He swayed as he rose. The doctor leaped from his chair. "Steady, now. You shouldn't have done that, it's too soon."

The doctor almost fell, trying to keep him from falling. Their bodies spun in a grotesque waltz. They reversed their relative positions.

**I**T WAS then that the bullet crashed through the window and plowed deep into the doctor's back. Timms, faint, almost falling, tried to grab the doctor's body in time to keep it from falling. He failed.

Two more things happened almost simultaneously. There was a bigger crash of glass, and the door of the office slammed open.

Timms looked stupidly at the window. On the floor, shards of glass made a pattern around the gun that had been thrown through the broken window.

The nurse screamed. "Doctor Welles! What's he done?"

She turned on Timms, and words bubbled out like the blood that was coming from the doctor's back. "Why did he do it? Why did he insist on treating you lunatics all by himself. I tried to make him let me be in here. But no, he never would. He didn't want anyone else to hear what was said."

She fell to her knees. Instinctively she did the professional thing. She felt for his pulse. The hysteria left her. She said flatly, "So you've killed him! Killed the finest man I ever knew. Killed him. For what? Why did you do it?"

He fought off the black clouds. That was the easy way. He'd tried that, and it hadn't worked. This was no time to escape. There was no escape. He had to find out what was behind this seeming madness before it claimed him.

It was hard to get the words out. His tongue was still thick. His jaw ached. He saw the rubber gag, saw his tooth marks in it, and realized why his jaw hurt.

He said, "I didn't."

She looked at the doctor's body, at the gun, and then at him. Her hand dropped on

the phone. She said, "Oh. Of course. No. You didn't do it. Why don't you sit down on the couch? You still look pretty rocky."

That was a temptation, too. All his muscles hurt the way they had in the old days, when he'd been a fullback, after a hard game. But no. If he sat down, he might never get up. He saw the nurse pick up the phone. Her lips formed the word police before he really realized what she was doing. He lurched toward her, knocked the phone out of her hand.

"No."

She backed to the broken window. It was only then that the darkness outside made him know that night had fallen. A whole day gone. He didn't know what had happened to it, and that frightened him terribly. He shook all over. Night. The last thing he remembered, really remembered, was seeing his son die. Twelve hours ago, at least. His mind jumped around; he couldn't force it to work the way he wanted it to.

He said, "I won't hurt you. I just want to get out of here." He backed to the door. He had to go some place and sit. Think. Try to find out what had happened. For one thing, he knew—no matter how muddled he was, no matter how scrambled his brain was—he knew that the shot that had come through the window had been meant for him and not the doctor.

Whoever had fired the bullet had fired just as he lurched. He and the doctor had spun around so that their positions were reversed. That's why it was the doctor who lay on the floor and not him.

Who would benefit by his death? Not his political enemies, for he wasn't that important. Besides, it was easier to kill a man at a committee meeting with a few well chosen words, or in the newspapers with a smear campaign, than to use a gun.

He ran, almost fell, through the door and slammed it behind him. There. Let her phone the police now. But— He looked around him. The doctor's waiting room had three doors. Which one led outside?

The first opened on a closet. He didn't bother to close it but lurched to the middle door. He gasped for breath. Yes, this was the one. Out in the hallway he didn't wait for an elevator. He went down the fire

stairs. No point in taking a chance on getting bottled up in a little car. Smarter just to walk downstairs.

Or was it?

ONE flight, two, three— How high up was the doctor's office? His knees were shaking when he reached street level. There, right ahead was the door. A thought hit him like a blackjack. Suppose the door were locked as doors so often are. If it were, he might as well give up. He knew he could never go back up the stairs.

He put his hand on the knob timorously, turned it. When the door gave, the wave of relief that went through him left him as exhausted as had the stairs:

He looked through the partly open door. The elevator indicator was on nine. That showed where Dr. Welles' office was. The nurse must have sent for the elevator in an attempt to stop him. Or had she phoned down? Alerted someone to grab him?

He shook his head, tried to clear his muddled brain. Only one thing he could do. He boldly walked through the door. Out on the street he saw a cab. He was in it as fast as he could move.

Through the glass door of the building he could see activity. The nurse ran out of the elevator. A man at the desk leaped to his feet and ran toward the door.

"Get moving!"

The hackie had the car in gear and on its way before he asked, "Where to?"

A good question. A very good one indeed. Where could he go? Whom could he see? Vincent? Yes, it had to be Ben Vincent. There was no one else who could tell him what had happened since he had blanked out.

He said, "Nine-thirty Fifth Avenue." If Vincent weren't there, the butler would know where he could be found.

A butler answered his ring. He knew where his employer was, all right, but he was amazed that Timms didn't know.

"Mr. Vincent? But—" It was the first time Timms had ever seen the flat-faced servant nonplussed. "I thought you knew, sir. He's in the hospital! His wife is there with him, at his side."

"What happened? I've . . . I've been out

of town all day."

"He was in an auto accident, sir. Not too badly hurt. Cut up a bit. The doctor says he'll be all right after a rest."

Dare he go to the hospital and see Vincent? Risk being seen? Surely the police must have radioed his description all over town by now. He hoped they'd been to the doctor's office. Once they'd seen the setup, seen the broken window, they'd know that the shot must have come from outside. The hole in the window and the radiations would show that.

He felt good for having thought of that. Sure, the lab could prove that with no trouble at all. But— He deflated. The thrown gun had shattered the area where the bullet had penetrated. No, the police lab was not going to prove that he hadn't shot Dr. Welles.

He pictured the doctor's office. The body, the gun—and the broken window. It would look as if there had been a tussle which had smashed the window. That's what it would look like.

He suddenly realized that the butler was looking at him curiously. He wondered how long he had stood there, lost in thought. Aloud he said, "Too bad. I'm sorry Mr. Vincent was hurt. What hospital is he in? I'll go see him."

The butler told him and closed the door—closed the door on the warm, relaxed intimacy of Vincent's living room. The deep carpet, the comfortable chairs, the ease— If only he could just go somewhere and sit and think.

His home? The very thought of it, with its wealth of reminders of his son, made him ill again. His stomach lurched. He wondered idly, as he fought down the nausea, when he had eaten last. It must have been that snack he'd had with Jimmy.

Easy. Better not think about that.

Out on the street, he looked around him like a blind man who has regained his sight. The familiar buildings looked like a stage set. He got no warmth from them. They frightened him. This was no place for him. Even the beat cops knew him.

East. That was the way to go. To the small bars on the side streets. One of them would serve as sanctuary till he could get hold of himself.

THE heat of the summer night made the spilled beer smell good. Queasy as he felt, it was good. He almost fell through the door. The bar was lined with men. Some talking, some brooding. He worked his way down to the end of the bar, past an interminable baseball discussion, right through an embattled argument on world affairs, till he came to a booth.

He let his battered muscles go slack. He was in the seat before he saw the woman who sat across the table. Discs of rouge stood out like patches on her swollen cheeks. Her bust cascaded onto the table dangerously near a puddle of spilled liquor. Her brazen hair hurt his eyes. Fat bulged under her arms.

She manufactured a delighted tone and said, "Hello, honey."

When he failed to reply, she said, "Gonna buy little Betsy a drink? Come on, honey, you won't regret it. I know how to treat a man. 'Specially a big feller like you." She narrowed her mascaraed eyes in an attempt to look lascivious and succeeded only in looking ludicrous. She said, "The strong, silent type, huh? I like them."

The bartender, annoyed at having to leave the bar to serve the table, stood over them. He said, "We don't serve drunks, mac. Why doncha go back where you got that load?"

Timms bit his tongue, forced air deep into his lungs, grated. "I'm not drunk. I'm sick. Get me a boilermaker. And hurry about it. Get one for the lady while you're at it!"

It worked. At least, the bartender shuffled away. The blonde preened herself. She said, "That's the way to talk. Them bartenders think they're king—"

He said, "Hold it a while. Like a good girl. I just want to think."

She eyed him a little more closely. A little less invitingly than she had. She said, "You *are* sick."

He nodded. The bartender slammed the glasses down in front of them. Timms wondered frantically if there was any money in his clothes. If he could only remember these things. His hands fumbled at his pockets as though he had never used them before. There—his wallet.

He opened it, still wondering if there were

anything in it. Even if he had been blind, he would have known it was full from the way the bartender changed his attitude. He said, "Is there anything else, sir? Can I get you anything?"

"You showed him!" The blonde said. Then she was silent. She sipped at her drink as if anxious that no one guess how fast she wanted to gulp it down.

Twelve hours. Where were they? What had happened in them? The papers. Why hadn't he thought of that? He said, "When you finish your drink, would you get me the evening papers?"

"Sure, honey. Anything you want. Any little old thing." Now that she had an excuse for hurrying, she poured the drink down her throat so fast it hurt to watch her. He threw her a dollar bill.

Alone. At least, until she came back with the papers. Watching her walk down the length of the bar, watching the fat sway, he wondered if she'd just keep on going with the dollar.

It couldn't matter less.

All he knew was that Jimmy was dead, that someone had tried to kill him and had killed the doctor instead. The liquor burned as it went down. He gulped the beer to wash away the taste and feeling of the raw fire. Maybe he had better eat. Maybe some food would chase some of the rats out of his stomach, drive away the black from his brain.

The sandwich the bartender brought him was as appetizing as dead owl, but he managed to force it down. The beer helped it on its way.

HE WAS halfway through it when he saw the blonde coming back with the papers pressed against her bulging front. She plowed through the men at the bar like a steamship coming into harbor. Her smile dented the make-up as she plopped the papers and herself down.

She said, "Bet you're surprised, honey. Bet you thought I was never comin' back, now didn't you?"

He ordered her another drink to shut her up while he thumbed through the papers. Vircent's accident had made the front pages of the night final. Pictures showed where

his car had skidded and made contact with a lamp post.

The leader said that the mayor was flying back to resume his duties, now that his assistant was laid up. A dope ring had been broken up. Three children had been burned to death while their mother got drunk in a barroom. A sexy looking redhead named Janice George had been found strangled in her apartment. The international mess seemed even messier than usual. An actress had lost a half million dollars worth of gems. The usual news.

He pushed the papers to one side and ran his hands through his thick hair. Nothing. Not a single blasted thing to put his finger on.

She said, "You got trouble, haven't you, honey?"

He nodded.

"Wanna come to my place? . . . Oh, not for that! I mean, you wanna come and just take your shoes off and drink some beer and think?"

He nodded.

The barflies grinned when he walked out, holding onto her fat upper arm. As the door was closing, he could hear the bartender say, "Well, I'll be damned. That's the earliest Betsy ever picked anything up. Generally she can't connect till it's real drunk out."

The door closed on bawdy laughter.

Her room was as blowsy as she, but it was a place to sit. He pushed some confession magazines off an overstuffed chair and took their place. They'd brought back some beer and some food. She busied herself getting things ready. There was a sickeningly sweet calendar picture of a boy and a dog pinned haphazardly to the wall. He averted his eyes from it.

Maybe that was the reason he couldn't think clearly. Maybe the answer was hidden back there somewhere. Perhaps he *should* think about his son, instead of ducking it as he had been doing.

His fingers pressed deep into the arms of the chair as he thought back. There was no blood in his face at all. The blonde looked at him while she poured the beer and wondered if he had passed out. But his back was straight, his head was upright.

When he opened his eyes, he had a dif-

ferent look about him. She handed him a sandwich and a glass of beer. She was wise enough to keep her mouth shut.

He said, "So now I know." Ridges of muscles jutted out at the hinge of his jaw. "You can't run away. Not ever."

She nodded, not knowing what he was talking about. She refilled his glass, murmured, "Beer'll help most anything, I find."

He wolfed down a sandwich, two of them. He needed fuel. This was not going to be easy. There were lots of angles. From some ways of looking at it, it didn't make sense. But then neither did the hit-run death of Jimmy or the shot that had killed the doctor.

A mangled boy and a dead doctor. All because he had wanted to get an early start in order to be sure of getting some fish—and because a redhead had been found strangled.

He got to his feet with surety. There was no sway now. The blonde watched him. He knew what he was doing. She asked, "You feel better, don't you, honey?"

He nodded. From his wallet he took a handfull of bills. Knowing where the money would go, he still gave it to her. He said, "With this goes all my thanks."

She was silent. The door closed on him before she dared to count the windfall. . . .

**I**N A drug store phone booth his mind went back to the scene in the doctor's office. He wondered, if the nurse had not come in on the heels of the shot, if he might not have picked up the gun and blown out his brains. Perhaps that had been what the killer wanted. Considering the state he was in, coming out of shock, faced with the corpse of an unknown man, it would not have been unlikely if he had picked up the gun and finished what the murderer had started.

His unseeing eyes roved over the counters of merchandise that faced the booth he was in. How was he going to work this? He wanted to get the killer dead to rights where there could be no out, no chance of anything going wrong.

Even when the coin dropped, he wasn't quite sure he knew how he was going to set it up. It wasn't till he heard the killer's voice that he knew how it had to be done.

He ripped the handkerchief out of his breast pocket and muffled his voice with it. "Wonderful invention, wire recorders," he said.

He waited. In the receiver, he could hear a strangled gasp. He said, "Sometimes a reel of wire can be worth lots of money."

"Where can I meet you? Pay you off?" His smile would have been frightening had there been anyone to see it. He said, "I'm the handyman in Dr. Welles' building. I been snooping for years. Tonight's the first time I ever found something that was worth the trouble."

"Shall I meet you in the office?" Would the police have a stake-out there? Well, he'd worry about that at the proper time. He said, "Sure, meet me there. And you'd better come loaded with loot. I'm retirin'."

The phone clicked. He wiped the sweat off his forehead with the handkerchief. This would never do. His throat was closed with the fury of his desire. This was no time for personal vengeance. He knew that. Yet with all his heart and soul he wanted to kill the man to whom he'd just spoken.

As he walked out of the drug store, he thought wryly of what a shock the killer must have had when the bullet had missed him and hit the doctor. It was a little surprising that the killer hadn't tried again. Unless he'd figured that he had more important things to do at the moment and had meant to kill again as soon as he was able. He must have fired and then thrown the gun almost in one motion. After all, he couldn't very well have stayed put.

On the fire escape of the doctor's building, Timms waited impatiently. Through the broken window he could barely make out the wire recorder, the phone, the jumbled mass of odds and ends on the desk.

His luck must be wearing pretty thin. He'd ducked three patrol cars on the way. He wondered how the papers were handling it. He was no big time politico, but after all, his name was not unknown. Probably something about how he had run amuck after the death of his son. Then a follow-up of the nerve strain induced by modern politics. The papers liked to dwell on that.

He wondered if the killer would follow his



trail up the fire escape or if he'd brazen his way into the office.

The light clicked on. He blinked. He saw the chalk outline on the floor. The doctor's body contour. It seemed pathetic for that to be all that was left of the doctor. He'd seemed like a good man.

Then he heard the uniformed police officer, who had opened the door, say respectfully, "This is irregular, but seeing as it's you—"

"It will be perfectly all right, my good man. I know what I'm doing!"

The cop left, closing the door behind him.

The pompous, portly man looked around the office. His eyes flicked to the window. Blinded by light, he couldn't distinguish the darker shadow that Timms made. He saw the wire recorder. His hand turned the rewind lever. The machine worked noisily at first.

**F**ROM the fire escape, Timms could see the busy little arms that worked the rewind. Its function was like the moving arm of a fishing reel that forced the line to wind on the spool smoothly.

The machine stopped automatically when the reel was rewound. Ben Vincent turned on the playback. On the fire escape, Timms cringed a trifle when he heard the doctor's voice ask, "What day is this, Henry?"

This was repeated three or four times, then Timms heard himself say, "What day? Why it's Saturday. *The Saturday.*" He hadn't known he'd said all that out loud.

The machine droned on. He heard himself describing how he and Jimmy had seen Ben Vincent come out of the apartment house, how Vincent had waved to them.

In the doctor's office, Vincent's too big face grimaced. He bent over the wire recorder, looking for the button that would magically erase the wire, rearrange the molecules so that the recording wire would be blank as though it had never been used.

Only then did Timms step through the broken window and face the man who had murdered his son.

He asked, "You can clean the wire, but how can you erase what happened from my mind?"

Vincent's face blanched. He said, "But—I thought—"

"You thought I was a blackmailing handyman. Yes, I know."

"I thought you'd gone crazy, that I had nothing to fear. Why didn't you call the cops after I—"

"After you ran down Jimmy, you mean?" Timms' voice was flat.

"Henry, I didn't want to! It was such rotten luck! Why did you have to be there on the street? Why did you have to see me leave her apartment house? I had a perfect alibi all rigged. And then you saw me. You and your son! Why couldn't you have been there five minutes earlier—or five minutes later?"

Five minutes, and Jimmy would still be alive. Timms began to shake. The black— He shook his head like a wounded bull trying to clear the blood from its eyes.

"I didn't want to kill anybody," Vincent was saying. "I didn't even want to kill *her*. But I couldn't stand the stink. The papers would have— My wife would have— Janice wouldn't let me go. She threatened a scandal that would have blown me out of politics. . . . Henry, listen to me. Understand the spot I was in!"

"Sure, I know the spot you were in. You killed your mistress, and we saw you leave the house where she lived: I forgot that. It was wiped out of my mind—with blood. With my son's blood. Then not content with that, you tried to kill me before I remembered. It took me all this time to remember that you were leaving the wrong house early this morning."

Vincent whispered, "Henry, don't look at me like that. I'm not a killer. I didn't mean to— But one thing lead to another."

"Then after you ran over Jimmy, you had to cover up the blood on the car so you ran it into a lamppost, bled a little yourself so your blood would hide my son's."

"Henry, you don't know the hell I've been through! If you did, you wouldn't look like that."

"Yes, I know, it must have been terrible, sneaking out of the hospital, getting a gun, coming here, shooting at me, missing and killing the doctor. I feel for you." Timms paused, then asked, "How did you know I was here?"

Vincent looked startled. "Don't you re-

member? Why, Henry, I brought you here. I hoped the shock would wipe your mind clean so I wouldn't have to kill you. Then I went out, cracked up my car, was taken to the hospital, got out without being seen and came back here. I—I didn't shoot till I could see that you were starting to remember. Henry, believe me, I didn't want to kill you. Why, I've always been fond of you."

Timms retched. He said, "I'm glad you didn't hate me, Ben."

The sarcasm was lost. Vincent was too concerned with trying to justify his actions.

"Henry, I'm a rich man. Let me give you some money. Leave town, start over again somewhere. I'm sorry. I'll make it up to you somehow. Look, Henry, with the mayor ill, away all the time, I'm getting to be a big man here in town. I can do a lot for you."

**T**HE same old routine. The palaver they handed out in the local political clubs. Just a ward heeler at heart. It was inevitable, of course. Man works by mechanisms, and Vincent was using one that had always worked for him.

"Shut up." Timms voice was louder than he meant it to be.

Vincent was shocked into silence. Timms locked eyes with him, wondered when he would try again to kill. The tension built in the silence of the room. The waves of fury that racked Timms were held in control only because he wanted Vincent to suffer his penalty lawfully. That is, he wanted it with his mind. But his muscles ached to kill the man with his bare hands.

Timms' feet were on the chalked outline of the dead doctor's head. Vincent stood on the chalked knees. They were that close together. The blood drained out of Vincent's face.

He said, "You're a fool, Henry."

His hand went to his pocket. Timms let him get that far. Then he exploded into action. His hand clenched on Vincent's wrist.

The barrel of the gun picked up glinting highlights from the lamp. They stood chest to chest, frozen into their pose.

Vincent's muscles cracked as he tried to force the muzzle around so that it would face Timms' stomach. Suddenly Timms let go. The violence of Vincent's gesture brought the gun high in the air as the tension of his muscles was allowed too sudden release.

It was then that Timms hit him. He hit him with all the hate, all the frustration, all the futility that he felt. Vincent's lower jaw slipped sideways, broken, and the sounds that came from him were like those of an idiot child.

The door slammed open. The young cop's face was frightened. He gasped, "Did I wait too long, Mr. Timms? I could hear through the transom. It was open"

Timms let his hands hang at his sides. He said, "No, you didn't wait too long."

The reaction was too much. He couldn't even feel gratitude that the policeman had heard the whole thing. He just felt empty. Empty and useless. Vengeance was not enough. It wouldn't bring back Jimmy. Wouldn't reanimate the doctor.

All his fury, all his desire for vengeance were gone. They had vanished when he hit Vincent.

He watched while the policeman put the cuffs on Vincent, listened while the policeman phoned Homicide. He walked along quietly when Vincent was led from the building.

He said, "I'll be down later to give my story."

The cop nodded. "Anything you say, Mr. Timms."

He walked off into the night. A big man, almost burly, with empty hands hanging uselessly at his sides, with bent back and heavy heart.

The cop watched him shuffle off out of sight in the darkness of the night.