

LINE-UP MURDER

NORMAN A. DANIELS

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The hospital room spun a little; his legs felt like rubber. But as Detective Jimmy Nolan guided the knot of his necktie into place, he grinned in the mirror at the whitecoated orderly who stood behind him.

"Who cares," Nolan said, "what the doctors say? Six weeks ago my best friend, Sergeant Carey, was murdered and two slugs were pumped into my midriff. Six weeks I've been in bed, except for those short walks during the past few days. All that time Carey's murderer has gone free. Then, last night, they landed the killer. I'm going to the line-up and have a look at him, Gilkin. No combination of doctors can stop me. Say in the top drawer is my service pistol. Let's have it. I've carried a roscoe so long I feel undressed when I'm not heeled."

Jimmy Nolan shoved the gun into a well-worn holster on his hip. He drew on his coat and grabbed the fedora which still bore a few blood stains from that ghastly night six weeks before when bullets whizzed in all directions.

He taxied to police headquarters, paid off the driver and strode into the building. There was a crush near the license bureau and Nolan realized that his strength was several notches below par when he was jostled about by the motley throng. Then Captain Blane of homicide saw him and extended his hand.

"Nolan I didn't think they'd let you out for days. In fact, when I asked if you could appear at the line-up this morning, the doc said no, very firmly. But they're getting ready to show the hood who put Sergeant Carey away and nearly put your name on the bronze honor roll, too."

"That's why I came," Nolan said. "I want a look at the rat. Those boys were masked that night, but I'm not so bad at judging heights and sizes. How'd you happen to round up this guy?"

"He had a gun, was picked up on suspicion, and we tested the gun as a routine measure. The bullet that killed Carey and a couple taken out of your hide were fired by that gun. Paraden he's the man arrested gave us a weak yarn about finding the gat. But, tucked in the toe of his shoe, we also found a fifty-dollar bill. Being as how all crooks are saps, Paraden didn't notice that a very small piece of currency wrapper from the bank still adhered to the bill. It ties him up in knots!"

Captain Blane opened the door of the line-up room. It was crowded with detectives. The small stage was brightly illuminated, but the room itself was in semidarkness. While the assembled detectives could see the prisoners, they, in turn, could see nothing of the men who watched them.

"Stay here," Blane told Nolan. "I'll question Paraden, myself. You take a good look at him. There's no mistake this time, Nolan, but it would help if he was about the same build as the man who gunned you down and killed Carey."

Nolan nodded somberly. "Bring him out, captain. Let's have a look at the punk,"

Blane hurried away. A second-story burglar swaggered across the stage, answered questihere," Blane told Nolan. "I'll question Paraden, myself. You take a good look at him. There's no mistake this time, Nolan, but it would help

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if he was about the same build as the man who gunned you down and killed Carey."

Nolan nodded somberly. "Bring him out, captain. Let's have a look at the punk,"

Blane hurried away. A second-story burglar swaggered across the stage, answered questions with a cynical smile on his face and was then marched off. Paraden came next. The moment he stepped into the bright lights, Nolan knew this was not one of the two men who had killed Sergeant Carey. They had been masked, true but Nolan had noticed the whiteness of their skin—on the hands and the neck. Paraden was of Spanish descent and swarthy.

"No! You got me all wrong," Paraden answered Captain Blane's question. "I didn't knock off that copper. I wasn't there when it happened. I found the gun in an alley and I kept it. Sure I'm a crook, but I never killed nobody. The fifty-dollar bill? I was paid for a job yesterday—a little matter of overhauling a stool pigeon. But I ain't no killer."

"Who," Captain Blane's voice was brittle, "paid you to overhaul what stool pigeon?"

Paraden gulped. It was evident he didn't want to answer that question, but he also knew that his own life hung in the balance and crooks of all types are notoriously selfish when it comes to personal danger. Paraden opened his mouth.

At that precise moment somebody gave Detective Jimmy Nolan a terrific shove toward the middle of the room. As Nolan went reeling forward, a gun blasted! Just once. The single chunk of steel hit Paraden full in the face. He was dead before he crashed to the floor of the stage!

Lights were turned on. Captain Blane saw Jimmy Nolan staggering around the back of the spacious room. He elbowed his way toward him. Inspector Curtis of the detective division climbed to the stage, raised his hands and issued some terse orders.

"A man in this room fired that shot. All doors are to be locked. Men, I don't like to say this, but one of you shot this prisoner. I don't know why and I don't care. The fact remains that the shot came from this room—from among you men. I want every man to expose his gun, grasp it by the barrel and be ready for an examination."

"Somebody gave me a shove," Nolan told Captain Blane. "Must have opened the door. I was standing very close to it. I...my gun! It's gone! I had it in my holster!"

Blane's eyes swept across the floor, narrowed. Then, without a word, he walked forward a few paces, bent down and picked up a .38 police service pistol. He wrapped it in a handkerchief very carefully.

"You better have a talk with Inspector Curtis," Blane said. "I'm sorry, Nolan. This looks like your gun, and it's been fired within the last couple of minutes. You certainly must have hated the man who killed Sergeant Carey. Everyone knows that you and Carey were the best of friends."

"But I...I didn't fire a shot," Nolan protested weakly. "I didn't even touch my gun. Somebody must have yanked it out of the holster at the same moment I was shoved forward. Look around outside; the killer must be there."

Blane's hand closed around Nolan's arm. He was led to where Inspector Curtis was rapidly examining the proffered guns of each detective. Blane explained tersely, and Nolan was led to the inspector's private office.

"I hate to say it," Curtis sighed, "but it looks very bad for you, Nolan. You had the motive. In fact, you were warned not to leave the hospital because your condition didn't warrant it. However, your gun has been sent to ballistics and fingerprint experts. We'll soon know if it fired the shot that killed Paraden and whether or not anyone else handled the weapon."

"Look," Nolan said, "just before it happened, I was about to warn Captain Blane that Paraden couldn't possibly have been one of the two holdup men who killed Sergeant Carey and wounded me. I was close to the killers—they were not swarthy—skinnod as Paraden is. I think he was framed, and then killed so the case would be closed."

Inspector Curtis glanced at Nolan with doubt shining clearly in his eyes.

An hour later reports came from the laboratories. The gun had fired a bullet, the markings of which matched that extracted from Paraden's head. The only fingerprints on the gun were those of Jimmy Nolan.

"I'll leave you here to think it over," Inspector Curtis said. "By making a clean breast of it, you'll help yourself. There is paper on my desk in case you wish to write a confession."

Curtis walked out and Nolan heard the door lock from the other side. He slumped deeper in his chair, trying to figure it all out. The whole thing was a set-up. With Paraden arrested and conclusive evidence found on his

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person, with him murdered by the detective who had ample reason to hate him, the holdup of the Security Trust Co. would automatically be solved and the murderer of Sergeant Carey accounted for.

Nolan paced the floor. He had to do something to save himself from this frame. Suddenly he stopped and stared thoughtfully straight ahead. He determined on a bold move. First of all, he had to get out of this office. They'd never believe his theory as to how the crime was committed. If he wanted action, he had to create it, himself.

Nolan walked swiftly to a steel locker in which Inspector Curtis kept his civilian clothes. He found this opened, fumbled in Curtis' pockets and discovered a leather key case. Curtis was in the habit of keeping his office locked up at night and Nolan knew that he carried a key to the door in his civilian clothes. He listened intently, made sure no one was outside the office, and then he quietly unlocked it. The long hallway outside was deserted.

Nolan hurried to a side exit, spotted a cab and hailed it. He had himself driven to the busiest section of the city, dismissed the cab and walked a few blocks to a drugstore where there were a score of telephone booths. The activity tired him. The nearly healed wounds in his abdomen were burning fiercely, but he was fighting for his existence, now. Pain and weakness meant little.

What he had to do must be accomplished very swiftly before an alarm was sent out for him and before newspapers printed his picture. He dialed the hospital at which he had been a patient, asked for Gilkin, the orderly, and learned that he had gone home. Nolan knew his address.

Gilkin lived at a drab-looking boardinghouse. Nolan went around to the back of it, entered the kitchen door and made his way, undetected, to the staircase. He knew where Gilkin lived because the orderly had often complained about the noise of the elevator as it roared by his corner room. He could almost reach out and touch it, according to his version.

Nolan tapped on a couple of doors before Gilkin's nasal voice demanded to know who he was. Nolan mumbled something and knocked again. Gilkin turned the key, and Nolan gave the door a stiff shove. The orderly flew backward, tripped and sprawled on the floor. Before he could get up, Nolan had him in a firm grip and was extracting a small snub-nosed revolver from his hip pocket.

"Didn't expect me, did you?," Nolan snapped. "Listen, you heel, I was kind to you; in reward, you double-crossed me. You were the only person who knew I was going to leave the hospital. I paid you ten bucks to get my clothes. You tipped somebody off—and did it before I left, because the stage was all set when I reached headquarters. Who was it, Gilkin? Tell me, or you're liable to hear your own gun go off in your face."

Gilkin was edging back, terror written all over his scrawny face. The muzzle of the small gun looked like the mouth of a cannon to him. He tried to talk, but only a few garbled words came from his lips.

"Who paid you to watch me at the hospital?" Nolan demanded. "You were hired right after I was admitted, and, somehow, you got on my floor. You hung around every minute you could spare. You wanted to find out if I'd talk, in delirium. The mugs who murdered Sergeant Carey think perhaps I know them. Maybe I do. Talk, Gilkin—and fast!"

But the orderly seemed even more terrified than before. His eyes, previously centered on Nolan, were looking over the detective's shoulder, now. Nolan heard the floor squeak behind him. He started to turn. Something was dropped over his head and fastened there. He tried to get himself free; but blinded, and weakened now from the shock of the attack, he reeled across the room, tripped and fell heavily.

Then his fingers found the knots, began opening them. He heard a half strangled sob, a muttered oath and when he removed the object that almost smothered him, he saw Gilkin lying on the floor. There was a knife handle protruding just above his heart!

Nolan knelt beside the man, felt for a pulse and found one that slowly faded away. Gilkin gave a final convulsive jerk and was dead. The orderly's coat—which had hung near the door—had been dropped over Nolan's head and the sleeves wrapped around his neck and tied. The killer, then, had been forced to act very swiftly. But how had he known Nolan was here?

A siren's wail brought Nolan back to earth. Whoever had done the knifing had also tipped the cops. That was a radio car pulling up in front of the house. Nolan realized that he was in a worse spot than before. Undoubtedly, the knife handle would bear no prints. He noticed that his left sleeve was bloodstained, probably from brushing against the dying man as he felt for a pulse. His part in the crime could be motivated by the fact that perhaps Gilkin might have known he intended to kill Paraden. Anyway, this was no place for Nolan.

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There was an old oil stove in one corner of the room. He carried that over beside the corpse, opened the top of it and, as he expected, found it covered with carbon. He picked up Gilkin's right hand, pressed the fingertips against the soot and hastily made some perfect fingerprints on a piece of paper.

He hurried out of the room, ran lightly down the hall and heard someone banging on the front door. He saw a small linen closet, squeezed into it and waited until the two radio patrolmen hurried by. Then he came out, ran down the steps and made his way out through the back door. He cut across back yards, scaling fences laboriously. He didn't dare try to vault them because his legs felt too weak.

He reached a street several blocks from where Gilkin had been murdered. It contained a number of secondhand stores and he purchased a magnifying glass. Nolan had always taken his police work seriously, and he was as much of a finger-print expert as the men who worked in the labs. He found a quiet spot in a park, studied the prints of the dead man intently and classified them. With this classification, he could very easily identify Gilkin if the man had a record, and Nolan was reasonably sure he did have. But he couldn't walk into headquarters and ask to look through their files. There was only one way to handle it. He hurried to the nearest store and called the Federal Bureau of Investigation offices in Washington.

"This is Detective James Nolan," he identified himself. Washington wouldn't have heard of his being suspected as a killer, yet. "I've got the classification of certain fingerprints and I want to find out if you have anything on the man."

Within ten minutes Nolan had what he wanted. Gilkin's right name was Frankie Hunter and he had a sizable record, starting with rolling drunks as a boy and leading up to suspected murder.

"He was a member of Hawley's mob before he was sent away the last time," the F.B.I. man explained. "He served three years for carrying a gun. Most of the time he spent in the prison hospital as an orderly."

"Thanks," Nolan said softly as he hung up. Hawley, one of the mob kingpins! Gilkin—or Hunter—had worked for him. Hawley was the type who'd shoot his way out of a trap without the slightest compunction.

Hawley, he knew, ran a cafe deep in the underworld section of the city. There, the mob leader planned his jobs, hid his men who were wanted by the law and trained newcomers whom he believed worthy to work for him. Getting into that place would prove a tough nut to crack, but actually finding Hawley's quarters would be even more difficult. Raiding squads had tried it several times without success.

Nolan was tired, but he fought off fatigue and trudged by devious routes to the section where Hawley was located. He surveyed the cafe, pictured its interior mentally and rejected the idea of invading the place and taking his chances of being recognized. To find Hawley, he must be subtle, shrewd. Nolan made his way to the rear of the building, a five-story structure of fireproof brick, set against the wall of a small warehouse building.

He approached the door through which supplies were passed into the basement. It was locked, but he worked the latch open with a piece of rusty iron which he found near the rubbish burner. Several beer pumps were chugging away, and they masked any sound his forced entry might have made. Nolan climbed stairs and reached the first floor, directly behind the long bar. There was a stairway to his left and he went up this cautiously. Now, he was in deadly peril, for every member of Hawley's mob knew him and his presence here would result in quick death!

On the second floor, the building resembled a hotel, with rooms every few feet. All the doors were locked. The corridor was murky with the growing darkness of night. It was raining, too—a chill, raw storm that made Nolan shiver. He heard someone coming up the stairs and quickly drew back into the protection of a nook. He had no gun, no weapon except his fists, and these didn't offer any great help, for his muscles had grown flabby in the hospital and all his activity during the day had made him more fit for a bed than a danger prowler.

A slender, slit-eyed man ambled down the corridor. He was one of Hawley's lieutenants. As the hood walked past the nook where Nolan was hiding, the detective leaped. He landed across the mobster's shoulders. One hand clamped over his mouth; the other rapped half a dozen blows to his chin. Anyone would have ordinarily been smashed into unconsciousness by a single one of Nolan's right hooks, but the detective had to administer six before the hood sagged to the floor. Nolan jumped clear, bent over the half-conscious man and searched him. In a shoulder clip he found a snub-nosed revolver, and in a pocket he discovered a numbered key. Nolan found the room corresponding to the number on the key, opened the door, and then pointed his purloined pistol toward the ceiling. He fired two quick shots, closed the door all but a fraction of an inch and waited for developments.

They came with a fury that astounded the detective. A dozen doors flew open and armed men ran into the

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corridor. The slender crook was sitting up, rubbing his chin and trying to figure out what it all meant.

"Get Hawley," someone said. "Quick!"

One of the men raced away. Three minutes later Nolan saw a door at the far end of the corridor open and Hawley emerged. He was a darkfeatured man with heavy eyebrows that ran in a straight line across his forehead. Bulky, strong as a bull, and with the same kind of temper, he played the game for keeps. He listened to his subordinate's explanation, and then growled an order. "Search this place —every room, every floor. Start downstairs because the guy who slugged Benny must've gone back to the bar. Let me know as soon as you find anything."

To Nolan's amazement, all of the thugs hurried downstairs. Hawley followed them to the top of the steps and continued to call out directions. Nolan slipped out of the room and sped straight toward the door through which Hawley had emerged. It was a small bedroom and showed no indications that Hawley had been there very long. Nolan had a well formed idea that this was just the anteroom to larger quarters. He hastily pulled the bed away from the wall, got behind it and ducked out of sight.

Hawley entered the room after two or three minutes, walked directly to the farther wall, looked around suspiciously and finally bent down and ran his fingers over a section of the baseboard. A narrow door opened silently. Hawley had to enter it sideways. The panel closed behind him.

Nolan hastily examined the gun he had taken from the thug. There were four more bullets in it—plenty for Hawley. He moved toward the wall through which the mob leader had disappeared, pressed his ear against the surface and listened. No sound reached him. He bent down, gently fanned the baseboard with his fingertips and located the control. He took a long breath, held the gun firmly and pressed the control. The narrow door slid open. It was a very thick door and Nolan realized just how clever Hawley masked his hide-out. His main quarters were in the warehouse adjoining the inn. Both walls formed this door. No wonder raiding squads never found anything.

Then Nolan's shoulders drooped. He let go of his gun and heard it thump on the floor. The muzzle of another weapon was pressed against the small of his back.

"O.K., wise guy," someone hissed, "you found the place so go right in. The boss is expectin' you."

Nolan obeyed because there was nothing else he could do. Black despair gripped him. He'd gone this far on sheer nerve, and now that he seemed to be securely trapped, the old weakness was assailing him again. He stumbled into a room of the adjoining building. It was lavishly furnished, and Hawley sat behind a big desk, a gun in his hand.

"Well, well," Hawley grunted, "if it ain't Nolan, the killer cop. And like all flatfeet, as dumb as they come. Say—when Benny told me his room key was missing, I knew whoever slugged him must have ducked in his room. So I sent the boys downstairs, but they knew what to do all right. Then I led you right here. Nice work, huh? Now, copper, maybe you'll tell me why you came."

"You know why," Nolan groaned. "I didn't kill Paraden this afternoon. He was one of your mob. You framed the bank stick-up on him, hoping he'd be so enmeshed in guilt that nothing he could say would mean much. You wanted that cop—killing rap squashed, and the only way to do it was to throw somebody to the lions. If Paraden died while suspected of the crime, it would be a closed issue."

Hawley laughed crookedly and shrugged his shoulders. "Hear how he talks, boys. Says I killed Paraden. Of all the crazy ideas, when this copper's own gun did the job. What a laugh!"

Hawley's three henchmen, who had entered the room, laughed obediently. Then the mob leader's lower lip curled. He arose, strode up to Nolan and struck him a savage backhand blow. It sent the detective reeling backward. One of the thugs stuck out his foot. Nolan tripped and went down with a crash. Hawley kicked him in the ribs, snapped orders and the detective was hoisted to his feet and thrown into a chair.

Hawley regarded him intently for a moment. "Maybe this dumb copper does know something," he mused aloud. "He's got to be put away—neatly, too, because we don't want anybody to suspect he was bumped off. Now, he's on the lam; he's got to hide out, so why not in some nice chilly place where he might catch cold and die of pneumonia? Everybody'll say he was hiding out, and he couldn't take it. Benny, he conked you good so you can have the fun of paying him back. Beat it upstairs and bring down one of those electric blankets we swiped from that highjacking job a couple of months ago. I always wondered if that thing would do us any good."

Hawley gave more orders. Nolan sat there, watching the preparations being made for his death. He couldn't quite figure out Hawley's scheme of things, yet, especially when two of the crooks took a bed apart and carried it,

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piecemeal, into Hawley's quarters. They set this up near the window. Then Benny returned with a heavy woolen blanket, lined with electrical heating elements.

Nolan sat very quiet. Gradually, he realized what Hawley intended to do, and the diabolical cleverness of the scheme made his blood run cold. Still he made no attempt to escape or attack his captors. Nolan's strength had nearly run out, and he was striving to get some of it back.

Then Hawley suddenly pounced upon the detective, as though he'd guessed that Nolan's intentions were to seize the first opportunity to escape. With the aid of two other men, Nolan was thrown into the bed. The electric blanket was draped around him, and he found that it was held tightly in place by straps. Then the juice was turned on. In five minutes Nolan was sweating from every pore.

Hawley stepped up to the bed. "This is going to take time, pal. I'll leave Benny to watch you. Soon as you're nice and warm, he'll douse you with ice water and open the window so you can breathe some of that nice, cool, wet air. It's raining, which is nice for this new idea on how to kill a man and leave no clue. Happy shivering, copper."

Hawley put the palm of his hand against Nolan's face and pushed his head back against the pillow. He laughed harshly and went out. Benny, the slender thug whom Nolan had knocked cold in the hall, sat down on a chair to keep a death vigil. Twenty minutes later he shut off the blanket, lashed Nolan's arms and legs to the bed and then removed the blanket. The shock of the icy spray Benny doused him with made Nolan's teeth rattle, but it also served to revive him. Benny opened the window and a cold, biting rain swept in. Nolan, his head close to the window, shivered uncontrollably.

He fought off a general feeling of weakness; forced his brain to stay clear, even after Benny hauled him back into the room and applied the heated blanket again.

This time Nolan went to work! The blanket straps held his arms down, but his fingers were free. He began picking at the blanket with his fingernails until he touched the hot wire. Gradually he bared this more and more until a foot of it was exposed. Then, by wriggling his body, he managed to worry the blanket closer to the edge of the metal bed. There was a flash as the charged wire contacted the metal.

Benny saw the column of smoke and heard the hiss as the wiring shorted. Nolan called to him. "Benny—the blanket is on fire. I'll be burned to death! They'll know Hawley kiljed me then. Get it off! Get it off—"

Benny had a one-track mind. He knew that Hawley wanted this detective disposed of in a manner which would never be set down as murder, Benny seized the bait which Nolan dangled before him. He ripped the blanket up, raising it very high as he did so. Nolan's foot shot out. The blanket fell over Benny's head. He floundered around, cursing savagely. Nolan was ready for this. He gave a violent lurch upward! The straps, holding the blanket in place, were meant only for that purpose, not to hold a man down. He leaped out of the bed, seized a chair and brought it down on Benny's blanket-covered skull. The crook dropped to the floor.

Nolan got the blanket off him, searched the man and found another gun. He quickly hoisted Benny to the bed, draped the blanket over him and then walked to the secret door. Now, he could only wait and hope.

Twenty minutes later he heard a click. Hawley was entering the room. The gang leader saw only the form huddled under the blanket, for Nolan had purposely dimmed the lighting in the room.

"He ought to be good and sick by now." Hawley peered through the gloom trying to find Benny.

"Not half as sick as you'll feel if you don't lift your hands!" Nolan pressed the gun against Hawley's back. "Reach, killer!"

Hawley raised his hands shoulder-high, turned slowly and growled a curse when he saw Nolan.

Then, as swiftly as a cobra strikes, Hawley's left hand shot down. It hit Nolan's wrist. The gun fell to the floor! Hawley let out a grunt of satisfaction, curled one hand into a mighty fist and swung. The blow whizzed through air, and Hawley suddenly felt the jab of Nolan's fist against his nose. That fist didn't carry too much steam, but it kept coming in fast—so fast that Hawley was blinded, unable to spot his opponent. He tried to cover up, but the attack then switched to pound against his middle. Nolan stepped back, summoned all his strength and plastered the hardest blow he could muster, squarely against the killer's jaw.

Five minutes later Nolan was again straining his weakened system by lowering the big thug out of the window with a rope made of bed sheets. When Hawley landed on the ground in a courtyard behind the building, Nolan made sure that Benny would continue to sleep peacefully for a while. Then he swung out of the window and went down hand over hand.

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A patrolman saw him staggering down the street with Hawley's bulk draped over one shoulder.

"Yeah," Nolan gasped, "it's me all right. But I've got the guy who killed Paraden. Call the wagon and have a good-sized raiding party sent out quick. Hawley's gang can be rounded up this time."

Inspector Curtis eyed Hawley's swollen features, looked at Nolan and shook his head.

"For a man as sick as the doctors say you are, you gave a good account of your- self. I'm sorry about accusing you of murder. Now, let's have the story."

Nolan grinned. "It's simple. My orderly at the hospital was planted there by Hawley. He was to watch and listen in case I made any statements about identifying those two hoods who killed Sergeant Carey. Then, when I bribed the orderly to get my clothes so I could attend the line-up, the little rat called Hawley, who planned this whole thing. Hawley was at the license bureau, seeing about the renewal of his cafe license which doesn't expire for weeks. We can place him at the scene of the crime easily. He just opened the door of the line-up room, gave me a push and fired one shot from my service pistol. Then he beat it before any rumpus was raised, and nobody suspected him."

"That sounds logical," Inspector Curtis nodded, "except for one thing. If he fired that gun, his prints would have been on it unless he wore gloves."

"He did," Nolan said. "That's what gave the whole set-up away. The orderly at the hospital handed me a service pistol. It looked just like mine; so I took it without question. But, before that, he passed my real gun to one of Hawley's men. Hawley took the gun, making sure not to mar my prints. He killed Paraden with it and threw it on the floor. The gun I had in my holster was lifted from me by someone in the crowd outside the license bureau. I know that the orderly never handed me my service pistol, because if he had done so, then his prints would have been on it, too. And they weren't. Yesterday I cleaned my pistol and oiled it so he'd have been bound to leave prints if he handled it carelessly. That put me on the orderly's track, and I just kept on going until I ran into Hawley."

The inspector's phone rang. He listened a moment and then his face became grim, "We collected all of Hawley's men, thanks to your tip that they escaped into the adjoining building during a raid. A few are talking their heads off. Hawley is guilty all right. Now, Nolan, you'd better get back to the hospital. After that ghastly treatment under an electric blanket—"

Nolan lit a cigarette. "I feel great, inspector. I'm ready for anything that comes along. Hawley's treatment took six weeks of hospital kinks out of me, but I hate to think of what the court's treatment is going to do to him."

THE END.