The Free Press' Short Story

THE PHANTOM EYE

JOHN SCOTT DOUGLAS

son in the reception room. Very smartly velope was pinned to a hanger in my dressed, her appearance belied the anxiety of her lovely face: She was poised in it." on the very edge of her chair, and every few moments her dark eyes darted to the you, Lorraine, that you were receiving office!" hame on the nearest door-James Drake, an awful lot of money for the sort of Attorny at Law. The girl glanced at her work you were doing?" wrist watch and then resumed clasping and unclasping her hands.

frowned at a card as she arose. "Miss in the office and tried to see my em Lorraine Lassfolk," she said. "What did ployer. But no one came." you say your business was, Miss Lassfolk?"

"I didn't say."

The Secretary wore an injured aid as man stepped out, his blue eyes alight. he?" "Lorraine," he said eagerly.

in and closed the door. "I-I need ad- | ever go into the inner office?" vice," she faltered. "Perhaps I'm in

seen you since we left college," he said "Two whole years! Not since-"

"Our silly quarrel," she completed smiling a little. "I've missed your friendship," he sai

quietly. "My letters were returned with 'Left no address' stamped on them." "You did write?" Her dark eyes brightened momentarily, only to shadow again as she sat down.

strange has happened to me.' Becoming businesslike, he seated himself behind the desk. "Tell me."

She hesitated, plucking at a button. "I saw an item in the paper saying you were trying a case. I thought maybe office?" you could advise me.'

He waited. "After leaving college, I took a secretarial course. I came to Middletown and got a position; but, being the last to be taken on, I was laid off when the office staff was cut. My resources dwindled, and I answered scores of advertisements. One of these was addressed to Box 679, I think, in care of the Bulletin It was a strange advertisement. It asked applicants to submit photographs and recommendations and a list of qualifications. In answer, I received a letter stating that I was accepted for the posi-

Jimmy Drake leaned forward. "You were accepted without an interview?"

"Who signed the letter?" "It was typewritten, but not signed."

"Go on," Jimmy said. "The letter said I would find a note with instructions when I reached a certain office in the Thomley Tower Build-The door was unlocked, and I went It was a light, beautifully furnished suite on the tenth floor. The outer office had two desks, one of which had a typewriter inside. The inner office one in the office?" door was open, and I could see that except for a steel filing cabinet, it was furnished with antiques."

"And your employer was in the inner

"No." said Lorraine; "There were a number of newspapers where the mail man had left them. And in a paper box on one desk in the outer office was a note. I wish I'd kept it. But in effect it said I had been selected from scores of applicants, that my salary was to be one hundred dollars a month to start, but that my employment was to depend on the one condition that I must never enter the inner office."

"Your duties must have been difficult if you were to draw a hundred right off the bat, Lorraine."

"But they weren't, Jimmy! The note said that I was to clip out a certain type of article from newspapers which came in dally from a great many cities. Several clippings were enclosed to show just what was wanted. One was about a cripped newsboy who had saved a baby from a fire. Another was about an old woman who earned her living by tending lawns. One of her employers had discovered that she had a fine piano in her poor little home and that she had once been a great singer.

"What could your employer want with those clippings?"

"I don't know. them in the paper box. Every so often been kindly, and intelligently phrased. the date and numbers." they would disappear."

Jimmy blue eyes were puzzled. never saw your employer?" "No. And I don't even know his name.

But I took the job because I was destitute, and couldn't see how the clippings could do anyone any harm." ' "How long have you held this position.

Lorraine?" "Six months."

."Then you must have been paid." "Very well. But not by check. After name ou it. Inside was a hundred- I try to question them." found the envelopes in two different said after a pause. "If your employer might drive out and see if he received a Australian dog that doesn't bank but places with a hundred-dollar bill in each. is engaged in some work for profit, I hundred and fifty dollars. If he did, howls molirnfully in the night.

HE girl clasped and unclasped her The fourth month I found a hundredhands nervously. Except for the dollar bill wrapped up in a local paper secretary, she was the only per- on my deak. The fifth month the en-

Jimmy frowned. "Didn't it occur to

"Yes, it worried me terribly. I left notes in the letter box, asking what A man emerged from the nearest door, purpose was being made of my work. The secretary There was no answer. Once I waited

> "Have you any reason to suppose he has been using your clippings for vicious purpose?"

"None at all. In the first place, he she took the card to Mr. Drake. A wanted clippings only on down-andmoment later a good-looking blond young outers. He couldn't exploit them, could

"Not in any way I can think of at Her smile was unsteady as she walked the moment," Jimmy said. "Did you

"Well, I started to. Once when I was worried about receiving so much money He stood looking at her. "I haven't for such simple work I decided I'd look at the filing cabinet. I felt I had a right to know if my work was being used for some wrong purpose. Just as started to cross the threshold, a voice cried, 'Stay out of this room!' Frightened, I jumped back. The next morning, there was a curt note on my desk saying that since I had given such excellent service, my disobedience would be forgiven, provided it was not repeat-

"No. I'm sure there wasn't." "Didn't the cleaning women enter the

"Never! They had strict instructions to leave it undisturbed. My employer put all waste paper in my basket, and if his office was cleaned, he did it

himself or hired it done privately." "If he gave such instructions, manager of the Thomley Tower Building

must know who employs you."

"No. He's never seen my employer either. He received a letter saying my employer wished to rent 1008 which was Jimmy!" vacant. The letter asked the manager paper. When that was done, money orders were received from 'John Doe' for the whole year's rental. Fictitious name, of course: The papers come to asked. the office number, and must have been

subscribed for in the same manner.' "Have you entered the inner office

since then?" Jimmy.

"As clearly as I hear yours now."

"And you're" positive there was

"Absolutely, Jimmy. It was empty." "You spoke of being employed six months. But you only mentioned receiving salary for five. As your adviser,

may I inquire if your sixth month's salary was the same as the fifth?" "It was due two days ago. I've looked high and low for the envelope. But I the door. can't find it. The clippings have continued to pile up in the box. And I've

received no instructions." "You're worried about the money?" "Not greatly. You see, I didn't believe the thing could last, and so I've banked all I could. What I'm worried about is my employer. I'm afraid some-

thing has happened to him." Jimmy drummed his fingers on the blotter, deliberating. "Lorraine," he said "doesn't it look to you as if you were employed by an eccentric to do this freak work, and the eccentric has lost

interest in it?" "No." the girl answered. "Six days ago the note left on my desk said he was very much pleased with the way I carried on the good work."

"That's what the note said. Of course didn't understand what it meant." "Why do you think something has numbers, each bore a date.

happened to your employer?" "You must understand, Jimmy, that my only idea of him is from the tone I clipped what I of his typewritten notes. Except for that one curt note, they have always My picture of him is of a gentleman of "You the o'd school. Gracious, you know." "Has he ever before failed to collect

the clippings for six days?" "No. Usually three days is the long- the clippings? To help out people in est. Generally, though, they disappear dire need?"

"Surely some one in the building has it's possible. Here's one under a Middleseen him, then," the young lawyer town date line. It's about a ten-yearstated with a puzzled frown. 'Have you year-old who crawled over thin ice to

the cleaning woman have seen him. little fellow's clothing was ragged, but letter in my desk drawer with my Anyway, they close up like clams when he wouldn't take a cent. And the figure

The next two months I ."This is a strange business," Jimmy Lorraine, the boy's address is here. We Dismal Dingo," the dingo being an

don't see how the clippings you have he might be collected can gain him anything." "I don't, either."

"As I understand it, your coming here was concern for his welfare."

"Yes. From certain phrases in letters I judged he was an old man He has been so kind and considerate in so many ways that I can't help liking him, even though I've never seen

Jimmy rose and picked up his ha "The place to start solving this mystery. then," he smiled "must be in your office. "You have the time?" the girl inquired eagerly.

"I'll take the time__ You have me very much-interested-and puzzled! I've never heard of anything quite like this." Jimmy Drake pushed open the door of 1008, and Lorraine walked in .. He

coat closet. It had a hundred and fifty rich carpet and whistled softly.

> The girl nodded soberly. Jimmy walked over to a well-filled correspondence box. He scanned five of the clippings, his brow washboarding.

What anyone would want of these I can't make out!" read has given me an idea." His eyes travelled to the door of the

decided suddenly. Lorraine griped his arm. don't! I'll lose my job!"

"It looks," he observed, "as if you've already lost it. And it's the only way I see of getting to the bottom of this." She trembled as he approached the open doorway. Scarcely had he crossed the threshold when a loud voice cried.

"Stay out of this office!" Jimmy jumped back, a startled light in his widened eyes as he turned to face the girl. "Whew!" he gasped. peered into the inner office. "No one of danger.

there; that's certam." "Don't go in there, Jimmy.

"Of a voice?" He laughed and leaned over to examine the panel at either side of the entrance. "I'm beginning to see. He passed his hat over the threshold. about three and one-half feet above the floor. Again the voice cried, "Stay out of this office!" Smiling, Jimmy passed the hat back and forth. Each time the command was repeated through the office. The girl walked to the door,

voice. "A phonograph?" "No," answered Jimmy. "See those circular jiggers in each panel?" "Yes. I've often wondered about

"What is it?" she asked in a thick

"They're what is called an electric eye. One transmits the beam of light and the other receives it. There's a garage over on Main Street which has an electric eye that rings a gong when a car enters or leaves the place."

"But I don't see any beam of light, "Doubtless the beam in this case is an

"But what about the-voice?" Lorraine | seen

Jimmy smiled. "I imagine we'll find an automatic secretary in the closet They're used in a few one-man offices to answer phones. They lift the receiver, say 'Not in until three,' or something of the sort, and hang up. When person passing through the door in tercepts the beam of light sent out by the electric eye, an electric impulse is transmitted to the automatic secretary just as a phone call is. In this case however, it tells the intruder to stay out.

Let's see!" As they started across the threshold. once more the voice cautioned them to felt you could be trusted. Who is this stay out, but now, understanding its source, it did not hold any terror for Lorraine. Jimmy swung open the closet door. Inside was a cabinet and a small amplifier. Jimmy grinned as he closed

"That's settled," he said. "Let's se if we can find the address of your em-

They rummaged through the desk, but found nothing except blank paper and envelopes of fine quality. Jimmy walked over to the steel filing cabinet. As he clue. reached to pull open a drawer, a voice cried, "Leave that cabinet alone!"

Jimmy jumped, and Lorraine felt as if her hair were standing on end. grinned, and glanced at the wall. Another electric eye! "That would certainly make a burg'ar run," he com-

Despite the warning voice. Jimmy swung open a drawer of the cabinet Lorraine joined him. Within were cards with clippings fastened to them. Jimmy thumbed through the cards. Most of them had the number 100 typed them. Several had other figures 500. 750, 1,000, '2,500. Aside from there "Recognize any of these clippings?"

Jimmy asked. Lorraine nodded. "Every one. I clipped them myself. But he must have clasped them to those cards, and added

y ones of my life.' I can hard'y wait to "Numbers?" Jimmy speculated, wonder. Could they be amounts?" "Oh, the old dear!" she cried in relief 'Do you suppose that's why he wanted

"We can't tell. No dollar signs. But take a rope to a man who had broken "Yes. I think the e'evator boy and through while skating. It says here the 150 beside the clipping. I'll tell you. benefactor looked like."

The drive helped Jimmy and Lorraine to bridge the two-year gap in their friendship, but it helped little toward solving the mystery. They learned that a fifty and a hundred dollar bill had arrived in a plain envelope with an unsigned note asking the boy not to mention the incident to anyone save his parents. He was loath to discuss it.

"All we've learned," Jimmy said, he drove back, "is that your employer is a very secretive philanthropist. amounts on those file cards are the amounts he has given needy people he by challenges by airplane pilots. admires."

"Yes," Lorraine agreed, "He is secretive he doesn't even want me to know the good work he is doing."

"His disappearance is as mysterious as the things he has done." Jimmy said. surveyed the mahogany deaks and the "I'm afraid I don't know any way to locate him except to go to the police "It cost a pretty penny to furnish this and tell them the whole story." The girl's eyes shadowed. 'Oh, I'd hate

> to do that! It would spoil everything, Jimmy. Isn't there any other way?" The young lawyer deliberated for some minutes and then said, "Let's go back to your office. One of those clippings I

Upon their return to the office, Jimmy inner office. I'm going in there," he delved into the clippings and finally found the one he sought. He handed "Please it to Lorraine. It read:

FLEES AFTER GIVING LAST HUN-

DRED TO NEWSBOY HERO

INJURED An elderly lady, the account went on to say, confused by traffic lights at Sixth and Main Streets, had backed into the path of a speeding truck and was saved only by the swift action of a newsboy, Tommy Bartosh, twelve years old, who barely escaped the truck's He wheels in his attempt to push her out

> A quietly-dressed elderly man, witness of the near-accident, had walked up to the newsboy and presentd him with a hundred-dollar bill. He had turned, before the astonished boy could thank him. and had dashed into traffic, only to be struck by a taxi. Unconscious, he had been taken to the County Hospital, where an examination revealed a leg injury. "He carried no papers of identification, and-only a few cents change,' the article concluded, "and steadfastly maintains that he cannot remember his name. Police believe that in an impulsive moment he gave his last money to

"Jimmy!" Lorraine cried, her eyes glowing. "Do you suppose that could be

"That hundred-dollar bill sounds like him," he replied. "And then there's his unwillingness to receive any credit for his good deed. Let's go out to the County Hospital and see."

It was not a long drive; and after some explanation, a nurse led them to a garden at the rear where several old eye. But the electric eye is still sensi- the others, reading! was one of the finest looking men Lorraine had ever

He glanced up, at their approach, and shook his head. "Please." he said. "won't you reporters leave me alone? I haven't done anything to cause all this

Lorraine handed him the clipping

"This is you?" "Yes," the old man said impatiently "I," said Lorraine, taking a shot in

the dark, "am your secretary." slowly smiled. "So you've run me down at last? Just as well! I was about to reveal my identity to you, anyway."

"James Drake, a lawyer-and a very good friend."

"Perhaps," the philanthropist suggested, "he will be kind enough to push this chair out to some secluded spot in the garden so that we can talk in private."

When this had been done Lorraine sketched the steps they had made leading to his discovery. "So," she finished "your clippings contained the essential

The old man smiled. "I could have been found some days ago if I'd only been willing to reveal my identity. But that would have ruined my plans, and I preferred to stay here to doing that. .. suppose you know that I'm Dudley In-

"I thought I recognized the millionaire in the convalescent," Jimmy smiled. But I'd seen only one picture, so

couldn't be sure." "All my life," Ingram said, "I've tried to avoid publicity. Just my nature, I suppose. Some six months ago my last relative died. I had no one to whom to leave my fortune and thought up this plan of disposing of it. Miss Lassfo'k has been good enough to help me find deserving prople, and I've tried to do my bit." His kindly old face lighted. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall ... he also reap. I believe that's true. The last six months have been the happiest

He caught Jimmy's eyes on Lorraine. His smile faded and he sighed "I suppose," he said, "I'll have to find myself a new secretary before long." Crimson crept into Lorraine's cheeks. Jimmy laughed softly. "I hope you're

get out of here to go on with it."

DISMAL DINGO

London (CP)-London air-raid sirens have been-nicknamed by Australians-here

Will Find Out

Who Owns Skies

U.S. and State of Utah Will Test Question in the Courts

Washington, December 6th (CP) Government is getting ready to determine legally who owns the air over continental United States, or at least that part of it covered by airways. Since the passage of the Civil Aeronautics Act in 1938, the government has been troubled

Now the State of Utah has adopted a law establishing its own sovereignity ove the air above its borders, and that com plication brought the State Attorney-General's office into the conferences over

DEFENSIVE SWEDEN

Stockholm (CP)-Sweden has no desire to use her growing fighting services for aggressive purposes, said Minister of Defence Skold, but will strive to improve its defensive power still further.

WHERE FISH SCARCE

Sydney, N.S.W. (CP)—Because th Australian government has taken over many trawelers for defence purposes, fish are scarce here and some fish shops have closed up.



That recruit from out West is awful stubborn-



CUT PEEL **25c**

Chateau Cheese

Canabec Requefert

Australian Seedless

CINNAMON

PURE LARD SWANSDOWN Cake Flour pkg. 22C

CRISCO

1-lb. pkg. 8° Cocktall Glass All for 290

1-lb. 19e 3-lb. 49e

MINCEMEAT Ibe. 250 Alliance Almond **EXTRACT** Ground

Christie's Christmas CAKES Light or Dark B. 350 Christie's Chocolate CREAM ROLLS **20c**

Wedgewood Cream **SANDWICHES**

Clean Australian CURRANTS 2 lbs. 25°

COCOA Cowan's 1-lb. 25C Apple Juice.

46-oz. tin 18C

OXYDOL

Pks. 815 215 59°

Carroll's BAKING POWDER 16-oz. 17°

PEAS Valley 2 16-os. 15C Ogilvie Blended FLAKES 2 pkg. 190 SOUP Heinz 2 16-oz. 25C

15c

Bright's Choice Ontario

PEACHES 15-oz. tin

Old Dutch CLEANSER TOILET SOAP 3 cakes 160 FLOOR WAX : 23c, 43c

Lipton's Tea 4-16. 36: 41: 46: RED CHERRIES ALMONDS

24-lb. bag

AMMONIA Handy 2 pkgs. 90

SURPRISE

Juicy Navel

Silver Star Pastry

32-02. 24°

Crisp White CELERY HEARTS, each

ORANGES, per dozen

2 bars 90

10c GRAPES

Red Emperor 2 for 19c 23c Firm Ripe CRANBERRIES, per 1b. Firm Ripe

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