## The Free Press Short Story

## ALONG CAME PAY DAY

fill from these hills. It's state work,

haven't money enough to pay rising tide of thankfulness to his newyour way you can't stay in this found friend.

"I'm no tramp," protested the gaunt, he was engaged. "We're building a road- bills hollow-eyed youth defiantly, "I walked bed across that swamp," explained the seventeen miles to-day to try for a job in foreman. "We get our material for the enough?" asked the man indignantly. the tire factory.

the officer, "and there's no room here contract wasn't let the regular way. Bill and then quite simply said that he could for any more free boarders. Sorry, White is a politician and he fixed it so not be a party to it, the other's face buddy, but those're my orders. You'll the job is on a cost plus basis, have to travel."

and after leading him for a moment, "is to check up on the men twice every said finally in a gruff tone, "you knew gave him a slight push. The stranger morning and twice every afternoon. Your what was up after your first day here. the pavement. He struggled weakly to week. There are sixty-eight names on need to act like I was a wife-beater or his feet, grasping a lamp post for sup- the book now and the men are scattered something. We aren't taking money from ning. "You're a good actor, bud," he ed you'll have to keep moving, but after and believe me the state's used to it. chuckled, "but not good enough. Now," that you'll have it soft." he went on harshly, "quit your stalling!

A small car had stopped at the curb there. With the truck drivers constantly mine. near them a moment before. A roughly- on the move, it was hard to check up on dressed man now climbed out of it and them, and when the round was finished "you'll have to keep your mouth shut." watched curiously.

the young man faced about. 'I'm no them'on the second round; but in spike not realized that there was a further tramp," he repeated ficroely. "I'm look- of every effort not to miss anyone, he problem involved. Could he, knowing ing for work. I'll get out, only I feel- was still seventeen short on that round. the state was being robbed, remain

the newcomer, stepping forward, "Nothing," replied the officer cynic- no one could help him. It was with a are you?"

for sympathy." newcomer stared at the young fellow were low as he went to the office. intently. "He doesn't look like a bum | Sheylin listened gravely to Robert think," he concluded harshly, "you can to me," he said, briefly. "I'll take care statement. "I't my fault," he said, con- get away with anything. Gregg and I

"suppose you get in my car." The youth hesitated. Some of the steam shovel. The other fifteen aredefiance died out of his eyes and a are-" He looked shrewdly at Robert had risen. A hurt look came into his section broke loose, swept down upon moment later he walked unsteadily to and a moment later began to smile. So eyes. "Aw, lad," pleaded Shevlin, "forthe car and got in. "I'll be-all right- great was his relief that the young man get those funny ideas of yours. I'm not in a minute," he said jerkily. "I'm sort also smiled. "And so," asked Shevlin the sort to hold what I've done for you

of dis-"Yeh, Y know," growled the other, those fifteen men were working, ch?" meal?"

answered the youth, grinning faintly. couldn't get over there.' The man grunted something unintelligible and within a few minutes the two laughed outright. "And that's just where Robert aws powerfully shaken. During tically, and hurled it from him. There were scated in a restaurant. As the they were—and will be. I'll check up on one moment he saw the affair Shevlin's youth ate, the man watched thought- em for you, and you give em credit for way and during the next he was hopefully. Finally he, held up a hand. "That's a day's work every day until Y tell you lessly confused. all for now, lad, ' he said. "You've sur- different." He laughed again. "There's For two days he fought his battle prised your stomach enough. You can't no files on you, son.". catch up all at once."

the table. "Mister," he began, "I-"

gruffly. "I'm plain Tom Shevlin and I plicit. want to know something about you-your

you're trying to live without eating." "My name is Robert Hutton. I'm twenty fifteen men?" asked Robert Innocently. years old, and last year I was a student at Central University. Dad's business and then laughed easily. "Of course, the foreman, went on the rocks; so this year I stayed Quite a joker, aren't you?" he grinned. He found him upon a huge boulder And when I saw you run up to pull out home to help. But I couldn't get work With no misgivings, Robert followed that projected from the ground at the that fuse. I finished straightening 'em enough there to support even myself, so orders. When Gregg brought out a sheaf base of a steeply sloping bank of gravel. Y started out to find some.

work?" usked Shevlin.

phatically. "I'd do-

concluded, "I'm still looking,"

"Well," interrupted the other, "what think he knew a thing."

good job at pretty good wages?' "I'd-" began the youth exultantly, but that followed. Too straightforward himthen his better judgment came to the self to suspect wrongdoing in others, he tered a workman, near Robert. fore. That kind of job was not being still had no suspicion that all was not | The foreman, completing his preparaoffered to strangers unless there was as it should be. On the following Mon- tions, called loudly for everyone to take caught, this age is better than the ages

the catch?" he asked, lifelessly. Shevlin laughed. "Listen, lad." 'he said. "I'm a foreman for the White Construction Company. I'm in charge of a road job fifteen miles east of here. The timekeeper Y had left this morning by request. He insisted on doing things his way instead of mine. I need some young fellow who understands figures and who will obey orders. We'll have to go see Grony-he's secretary of the companybut I can handle him. The job'il last all

summer." The youth made one last protest. "Why-" he faltered. "Why should you

do this for me?" "I've been hungry myself," said the

other simply. They found Gregg at home and the two men went into a low-voiced conference. "I'm willing," said Gregg finally, to the youth, "to take Toni's recommendation. We want a timekeeper who'll obey orders and who'll-" he healtated;

"Who'll live and let live. Get me?" "Y-I guess so," answered Robert vaguely.

"We'll get along," said Shevlin, cheerfully. "This'll be a good thing for all of us. And now, Bob, let's go find you a

As Shevlin drove toward the camp at the scene of operations, Robert's gratitude knew no bounds. From it there sprang almost at once a feeling of great loyalty and affection for his benefactor. It. was Shevlin who gave Robert a tent near the camp kitchen for living quarters, who found extra blankets for him. who rounded up clothing suitable for work. If at first Robert had a faint suspicton that arr this was too good to be opened his eyes. Early in the day Shevlin quietly slipped a roll of bills into his hand. Robert stared in surprise. "That's your cut for last week," grin-

ned the older man; walking away. Even now Robert did not fully understand. All he realized at first was that something was wrong. Gradually affairs became clear to him. 'He saw that the fifteen men at the other end of the fill existed only in his time book; that their checks were appropriated by Shevlin and Gregg and in some manner, cashed; that he himself was a very vital participant to the scheme. He saw why Shevlin needed a timekeeper who would follow F," said the officer firmly, "you | true, it speedly became submerged in a orders. With the knowledge his whole world crumbled about his ears.

He went to the foreman's office at We've got plenty of tramps here The next morning Hutton received his noon. "I can't take this," he said, misfirst clear idea of the project on which erably, tossing down the large roll of

Sheviln's jaw dropped. "Ain't As Robert shamefacedly told how no ."Those jobs were filled yesterday," said and," he whispered confidentially, "the had not realized what had been going on showed successively, astonishment, in-"Your , work," he continued before dignation, and pity. For a moment the He took the young man by the arm, Robert had digested the last statement, foreman was silent. "I thought," he few stumbling steps and fell to time book goes to headquarters every. But even if you didn't know, you don't The officer watched him, grin- for three miles. Until you get 'em locat- poor people. The states paying for this But." he shrugged his shoulders, "If you Robert found the first trip difficult. He are dumb enough to pass up this chance located a few men here, a small group at easy money, that's your hard luck, not

"Only," he added, as an afterthought there were seventeen names not checked The statement came to Robert like a As the officer advanced toward him, off. He would, Robert thought, catch thunderbolt. Until that moment he had -- During the afternoon Robert burried silent? The foreman looked at the youth "What's the matter with him?" saked desperately. - He searched impossible scarchingly. "Say," he demanded slowly places, he made constant inquiries, but "you're not thinking of turning squealer,

ally. "He's just another bum playing sense of defeat that he finished his He received his answer from the other's fourth round. He had fallen down on eyes. He became violently ungryt He The youth's eyes flashed angrily. The the job right at the start. His spirits berated the young man mercilessly as being disloyal and faithless. "And don't of him, officer. Son," he added, kindly, tritely. "I should have told you. Two have got lots of ways of closing your of those men are bringing out a new mouth."

jovially, 'you haven't any idea where over your head; but it wouldn't be playing square with me for you to try to mightly to free himself. For a moment "When did you have your last square "No, sir," said Robert, once more turn mg, in. And you certainly aren't Robert stood as though petrified; then troubled, "unless they were at the other playing square with yourself to get your-"Just before the Civil War, I think," end of the fill, across that swamp. I self known as a yellow dog. Think that order him back, over for a day or so, boy, before you do "Of course you couldn't." Shevlin anything rush."

Dozens of times he made up his mind to Although Robert did not understand let matters alone and just as often he There was a world of gratitude in his the foreman's last statement, he was too know he could not. The foreman's own eyes as the young man pushed back from grateful and too loyal to suspect any words, finally, toward the end of the irregularity in this procedure. His faith second day, cleared the air for him. 'Don't call me mister," said the man and confidence in the foreman was im- Shevlin had spoken of playing square On Saturday morning Shevlin told no matter what the immediate consename, age, what you've done and why Robert to fill out a weekly time report, quences would be, he would not, in the showing the number of day's work each long run, be playing square by keeping The youth laughed, rather bitterly, man had put in. "Shall I include those silent-not with the state, not with himself, and least of all, not with Shevlin. Shevlin stared at him in astonishment With a heavy heart he began looking for

And," he of checks that afternoon, the yough man It was from this bank that the steam sorted out those belonging to the fifteen shovels were taking material for the fill "Are you particular about the kind of and looked questioningly at the foreman. The boulder, being in the way and too "Give 'em to Gregg," directed Shevlin, large for the shovels to handle, was to "No, sirl' said the young man em- smiling broadly. "He'll handle 'em. be broken up by dynamite. This lad's an actor, Gregg. You'd never watched the foreman place several sticks of dynamite in a crevice on the rock

would you say if I offered you a pretty Robert made no pretense of under- prepare the cap and fuse, and pack a standing the backslapping and joking mound of mud over the explosive. "He cut that fuse awful short." mut-

something wrong somewhere. "What's day, however, something happened that cover. He lit the fuse and jumped lel- of the past."-Harold Bell Wright.

surely to the steep bank. He sank to his knees in the gravel and almost instantly it begun to slide beneath him. More came from above and before the His anger subsided as suddenly as it man could pull himself free, a large him, and pinned him helplessly against

> There was a grasp of horror from the onlookers, as the foreman struggled he raced forward. He heard Shevlin

He reached the boulder, and at the risk of his life, jerked out the fuse franwas a groun of relief from Shevlin. A few minutes later the foreman walk-

ed rather weakly into his office. Robert followed him. "I'd-I'd do almost anything for you, Tom," he said brokenly, "but I just haven't the right to keep quiet about-

"Aw, pipe down," growled the foreman, still breathing heavily. "Can't you wait till I'm sure I'm alive? I just got Very gradually it came to Robert that through living forty years in forty seconds." He mopped his forehead.

"Son," he continued carnestly, "when a man thinks he's all set to cash in, things that looked all right once begin to look a little different. While that fuse was sputtering in my face. I began to get lots of things straightened out. turning back all we've collected. How's

"Your job. Bob,' he said, a moment later, "is to check up on my gang. Well," he added, grinning, "from now on you have one more man to check up on. This walking the chalk line is new stuff to me and I might wabble."

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SO MUCH A CLOUT

' Fumous Boxer: "Win, lose, or draw, I Reporter: "I see. Every clout has a it?"

silver lining.". HOW COULD IT?

"The fear of ignorance is one reason why we get an education." - Harry Emerson Posdick.

SOME COAXING

"So you've bought a car, have you? Do you drive it, or does your wife drive

"Natther of us drives it. We coax it." NO PASSER

Bookkeener: "What is the boss s college son so swelled up about?" Stenographer: "A life insurance doctor just examined him and found him

"What of that?" "Well, gou see, it's the only examination that he ever passed.'

A GOOD REASON

"Me father and a man named Dooler have been fighting for twenty years, but now they've stopped." "Why? Did they bury the hatchet?" "No: they buried Dooley."

ONE GOOD THING

"Go easy: This hill's not so safe." "Can't slow down-the brakes are not working."

"You don't mean to say-" don't worms—the horn's al



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