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Walkerton Business College
GEO. SPOTTON, President

WITHIN THE LAW

By MARVIN DANA
FROM THE PLAY OF
BAYARD VEILLER

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CHAPTER XVIII. The Confession.

BURKE pressed the button call and ordered the doorman to send in Cassidy. When the detective appeared he asked:

"Does Garson know we've arrested the Turner girl and young Gilder?" And when he had been answered in the negative: "Or that we've got Chicago Red and Dacey here?"

"No," Cassidy replied. "He hasn't been spoken to since we made the collar. He seems worried," the detective volunteered.

"He'll be more worried before I get through with him," he growled. He regarded Cassidy speculatively. "Do you remember the third degree Inspector Burns worked on McGloin? Well," he went on, as the detective nodded assent, "that's what I'm going to do to Garson. He's got imagination, that crook! The things he don't know about are the things he's afraid of. After he gets in here, I want you to take his pals one after the other, and lock them up in the cells there in the corridor. The shades on the corridor windows here will be up, and Garson will see them taken in. The fact of their being there will set his imagination to working overtime, all right."

Burke reflected for a moment, and then issued the final directions for the execution of his latest plot.

"When you get the buzzer from me, you have young Gilder and the Turner woman sent in. Then, after a while, you'll get another buzzer. When you hear that, come right in here, and tell me that the gang has squealed. I'll do the rest. Bring Garson here in just five minutes. Tell Dan to come in."

As the detective went out, the doorman entered, and thereat Burke proceeded with the further instructions necessary to the carrying out of his scheme.

"Take the chairs out of the office, Dan," he directed, "except mine and one other—that one!" He indicated a chair standing a little way from one end of his desk. "Now, have all the shades up." He chuckled as he added: "That Turner woman saved you the trouble with one."

He returned to his chair, and when the door opened he was to all appearances busily engaged in writing.

"Here's Garson, chief," Cassidy announced.

"Hello, Joe!" Burke exclaimed, with a seeming air of careless friendliness, as the detective went out, and Garson stood motionless just within the door.

"Sit down a minute, won't you?" the inspector continued affably. He did not look up from his writing as he spoke.

Garson's usually strong face was showing weak with fear. His chin, which was commonly very firm, moved a little from uneasy twitchings of his lips. His clear eyes were slightly clouded to a look of apprehension as they roved the room furtively. He made no answer to the inspector's greeting for a few moments, but remained standing without movement, poised alertly as if sensing some concealed peril. Finally, however, his anxiety found expression in words. His tone was pregnant with alarm, though he strove to make it merely complaining.

"Say, what am I arrested for?" he protested. "I ain't done anything."

Burke did not look up, and his pen continued to hurry over the paper.

"Who told you you were arrested?" he remarked cheerfully in his blandest voice.

Garson uttered an ejaculation of disgust.

"I don't have to be told," he retorted huffily. "I'm no college president, but when a cop grabs me and brings me down here I've got sense enough to know I'm pinched."

"Is that what they did to you, Joe? I'll have to speak to Cassidy about that. Now, just you sit down, Joe, won't you? I want to have a little talk with you. I'll be through here in a second." He went on with the writing.

Garson moved forward slightly to the single chair near the end of the desk and there seated himself mechanically. His face thus was turned toward the windows that gave on the corridor, and his eyes grew yet more clouded as they rested on the grim doors of the cells. He writhed in his chair, and his gaze jumped from the cells to the impassive figure of the man at the desk. Now the forger's nervousness increased momentarily. It swept beyond his control. Of a sudden he sprang up and stepped close to the inspector.

"Say," he said, in a husky voice, "I'd like—I'd like to have a lawyer."

"What's the matter with you, Joe?" the inspector returned, always with that imperturbable air, and without raising his head from the work that so engrossed his attention. "You know, you're not arrested, Joe. Maybe you never will be. Now, for the love of Mike, keep still and let me finish

his letter." Slowly, very meditatively, Garson went back to the chair, and sank down on it in a limp attitude of dejection wholly unlike his customary postures of strength. Again, his fear fascinated eyes went to the row of cells that stood silently menacing on the other side of the corridor beyond the windows. His face was tinged with gray. A physical weakness was creeping stealthily on him, as his thoughts held insistently to the catastrophe that threatened. His intelligence was too keen to permit a belief that Burke's manner of almost fawning kindness hid nothing ominous ominous with a hint of death for him in return for the death he had wrought.

Then, terror crystallized. His eyes were caught by a figure, the figure of Cassidy, advancing there in the corridor. And with the detective went a man whose gait was slinking, craven. A cell door swung open, the prisoner stepped within, the door clanged to, the bolts shot into their sockets noisily.

Garson sat huddled, stricken—for he had recognized the victim thrust into the cell before his eyes. It was Dacey, one of his own cronies in crime—Dacey, who, the night before, had seen him kill Eddie Griggs. There was something concretely sinister to Garson in this fact of Dacey's presence there in the cell.

Of a sudden the forger cried out raucously:

"Say, inspector, if you've got anything on me, I—I would!" The cry dropped into unintelligible mumbblings.

Burke retained his manner of serene indifference to the other's agitation. Still, his pen hurried over the paper, and he did not trouble to look up as he expostulated, half-banteringly:

"Now, now! What's the matter with you, Joe? I told you that I wanted to ask you a few questions. That's all."

But, after a moment, Garson's emotion forced him to another appeal:

"Say, inspector," he began, "then, abruptly, he was silent, his mouth still open to utter the words that were now held back by horror. Again, he saw the detective walking forward, out there in the corridor. And with him, as before, was a second figure, which advanced slinkingly."

Again the door swung wide, the prisoner slipped within, the door clanged shut, the bolts clattered noisily into their sockets.

And, in the watcher, terror grew—for he had seen the face of Chicago Red, another of his pals, another who had seen him kill Griggs. At last he licked his dry lips, and his voice broke in a throaty whisper:

"Say, inspector, if you've got anything against me, why?"

"Who said there was anything against you, Joe?" Burke rejoined, in a voice that was genially chiding.



"Say, inspector, if you've got anything on me!"

"What's the matter with you today, Joe? You seem nervous." Still, the official kept on with his writing.

"No, I ain't nervous," Garson cried, with a feverish effort to appear calm. "Why, what makes you think that? But this ain't exactly the place you'd pick out as a pleasant one to spend the morning." He was silent for a little, trying with all his strength to regain his self control, but with small success.

Burke believed that his opportunity was come. His hand slipped into the pocket where was the pistol, and clutched it. He stared at Garson fiercely, and spoke with a rush of the words:

"Why did you kill Eddie Griggs?"

"I didn't kill him!" The reply was quick enough, but it came weakly. Again, Garson was forced to wet his lips with a dry tongue, and to swallow painfully. "I tell you, I didn't kill him!" he repeated at last, with more force.

"You killed him last night—with this!" Burke cried, viciously. On the instant, the pistol leaped into view, pointed straight at Garson. "Why?" the inspector shouted. "Come on, now! Why?"

"I didn't, I tell you!" Garson was growing stronger, since at last the crisis was upon him. He got to his feet with little swiftness of movement and sprang close to the desk. He bent his head forward challengingly, to meet the glare of his accuser's eyes.

There passed many seconds, while the two men battled in silence, will warring against will. In the end it was the murderer who triumphed.

Suddenly, Burke dropped the pistol into his pocket, and lolled back in his chair. His gaze fell away from the man confronting him. In the same instant, the rigidity of Garson's form relaxed, and he straightened slowly.

"Oh, well," Burke, exclaimed amiably. "I didn't really think you did, but I wasn't sure, so I had to take a chance. You understand, don't you, Joe?"

"Sure, I understand," Garson replied, with an amiability equal to the inspector's own.

Burke pressed the buzzer as the agreed signal to Cassidy. "Where did

you say Mary Turner was last night?" At the question, all Garson's fears for the woman rushed back on him with appalling force.

"I don't know where she was," he exclaimed doubtfully. He realized his blunder even as the words left his lips, and sought to correct it as best he might. "Why, yes, I do, too," he went on, as if assailed by sudden memory.

"I dropped into her place kind of late, and they said she'd gone to bed—headache, I guess. Yes, she was home, of course. She didn't go out of the house all night." His insistence on the point was of itself suspicious, but eagerness to protect her dulled his wits.

"Know anything about Gilder?" Burke demanded.

"Not a thing," was the earnest answer.

The inner door opened, and Mary Turner entered the office. Garson with difficulty suppressed the cry of distress that rose to his lips. For a few moments the silence was unbroken. Then presently Burke by a gesture directed the girl to advance toward the center of the room. As she obeyed he himself went a little toward the door, and when it opened again and Dick Gilder appeared he interposed to check the young man's rush forward as his gaze fell on his bride, who stood regarding him with sad eyes.

Then, while still that curious, dramatic silence endured, Cassidy came briskly into the office.

"Say, chief," the detective said rapidly, "they've squealed!"

"Squealed, eh? Do they tell the same story?" And then when the detective had answered in the affirmative he went on speaking in tones ponderous with self complacency.

"I was right, then, after all—right all the time. Good enough." Of a sudden his voice boomed somberly. "Mary Turner, I want you for the murder of—"

Garson's rush halted the sentence. He had leaped forward. His face was rigid. He broke on the inspector's words with a gesture of fury. His voice came in a hiss:

"That's a — He! I did it!"

Continued next week
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"My real name? Oh, yes. It is Tabbs—Sylvia Tabbs. But I hope you will not introduce me to your guests by it."

"Oh, no; you needn't be afraid. I'm just as much ashamed of it as you are."—Chicago Record-Herald.

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