Ah kin tell ye all about it now. Ah kin tell ye 'cause things come out so good fer pa. It was all on account of what pa wanted, and ah reckon ah knew how bad he wanted it that day. Mr. Evans come to the farm pa run fer him. Mr. Evans come in his new shiny red Cadillac. Ah could see by the way pa was a-lookin' at it, his eyes a-glitterin', that there was nothin' pa wanted more in this whole wide world than to be takin' a ride in a new shiny Cadillac... You've been doin' a fine job, Heah, Wilkes... Better'n any o' mah other thoughts. You come in for a good share o' the crop this month. Thirty dollars, Wilkes... Yes, suh, Mistuh Evans. Thank ye, sir!

When Mr. Evans drove off, pa just stood there watchin' that hunk of machinery like a starvin' man starin' at a pot o' steamin' hog jowls... Shhh! ye know youah man, Ruthie. If n' she knows how much mistuh Evans paid me, she'll want it all! You hide a dollar, pa? you hide it so's ma can't lay her hands on it. You save fo' that ride...

Look at 'er go, Ruthie! See how she takes them nuts with scarce a bounce. Sometimes ah don't think ah'll ever git 't ride in one... Now don't ye fret, pa. Ye did git thirty dollars. If'n you save a dollar ev'y month... You hide a dollar, pa? you hide it so's ma can't lay her hands on it. You save fo' that ride...
You shet up, Ruthie! Listen, Ef! Ah never wanted much—cept that one thing! Ah gave up mah tobaccoe t'save thet money! I'm warnin' ye, Effie May! Keep youch hands off'n what I save!

You ah needed t' buy a sack from Mrs. Pruitt fer a dress fer me! Y'ain't goin' t' grudge me a new dress?

It didn't do no good for pa t'warn ma. Pa'd hide a quarter in some outlandish place an' ma'd sniff it out like an ol' hound dog trackin' a possum...

We got plenty o' feed sacks! Why didn't ye use one o' them? I'll tell ye, Ye jest want t' take mah savin's an' spend 'em. You ah a mean woman, Ef... an' ye're makin' me mean!

That's how it was with ma an' paw. He'd save a bit o'money and she'd find it... like when pa give up... gran'ma turned the trash thirty cents a week. One night ma came t' supper wearin' a new bonnet...

I got it in town! Only a dollar an' fifteen cents!

Where'd ye git the money, Effie May?

Ye ain't said ye like it, Effie May. Ye foun' mah savin's, didn't ye? Effie May... you shoulda what ah was a-savin' for!

Ye stole mah money from the chink in the smoke house, didn't ye, Effie May?

Ah sho' huff know! Ye got a crazy notion t' ride in a cadillac! Well, me an' Ruthie ain't gonna do without jus' so's ye kin throw away fifteen dollars t' rent one!

You shet up, Ruthie! Listen, Ef! Ah never wanted much—cept that one thing! Ah gave up mah tobaccoe t'save thet money! I'm warnin' ye, Effie May! Keep youch hands off'n what I save!

But ma picked just that mornin' t' feed the layin' hens which is mah job...

Ye got no right t' lie about what Mistuh Evans paid ye, Clyde Wilkes. Ah found this dollar whar ye hid it!

A man's got a right t' save somethin' for hisself out'n his earnin's, Effie May!

So pa hid a dollar in a sack o' chicken mash...
If it hadn't a-been thot ah loved pa so, ah never would've dared run over to jeb wyler like ah did. he just goggled at me like ah was a crazy ol' jaybird... pa won't hurt you an' cadlac none, Mr. wyler. an' he can drive good, too! he druv the flyver fer a long time till she give out!

Jeb wyler... him in them fancy clothes... he never said nothin'. he jest laughed...

Youah a stingy man, Mr. wyler. Laugh! go on. Laugh! ah hope yo' face falls off!

Don't pay her no 'tention, Mr. wyler! she don' mean hotnin'.

Ah'm glad I tried t'git ye thet ride, pa... An' it's all yoah ma's fault! oрат her!

If pa'd det over his mad right quick and i'd be ridin' the mule wagon t'the tobacco auction with him and he'd be talkin' 'bout how sorry he was fer ma... poor ef! she gits a-hankerin' fer things like the wimmen in town' got, and she cain't help swipin' mah mohey.

Why's it so especial important fer ye t'ride in a cadlac, pa? thot's what ah cain't figure!

Funny ruthie, but tha's somethin' ah don't unnerstan' manself. ah don't know when ah started wantin' it. all ah do know is... ah want theyt ride so bad ah kin taste it!

And ah feel bad fer ye, pa. ah love ye an' ah want fer ye thave everythin' ye want!

Poor pa. ah guess ah'l never want anythin' as much as he did... Jes' one ride, ruthie! tha's all ah want. then ah could do back an' work an' work an' never mind a bit. ah don' reckon ah'm askin' fer too much. ah ah, ruthie?

Poor pa, ah guess ah'l never want anythin' as much as he did...

Ho, pa! ye got thet much comin'!

Then we'd get t'the auction and pa'd be payin' hardly no heed t'the coin's on. he'd be a-lookin' at jeb wyler's big black cadlac...

... the way she sets there, a-standin' still but lookin' like she's movin' all the same!

Jeb wyler's rich, pa... and ye ain't...

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Poor pa. ah guess ah'l never want anythin' as much as he did... Jes' one ride, ruthie! tha's all ah want. then ah could do back an' work an' work an' never mind a bit. ah don' reckon ah'm askin' fer too much. ah ah, ruthie?

Poor pa, ah guess ah'l never want anythin' as much as he did...
Ah thought Pa was mad 'nuff t' swat ma when we got back t' the farm. Mebbe then ma would quit takin' his money, but he just simmered and looked sad...

At least aw got somethin' t' show fer the money. If'n ye had youan' way, ye'd spend fifteen dollars rentin' a cad'iac an' it'd be over an' done in one day!

Ah'd never fergit it, ef...

An' ah ain't goin' t' give ye thet chance, Clyde! An' ah ain't never goin' t' let ye throw no money away on foolishness when there's so much an' needs!

Ah'll spend mah money the way ah sees fit, ef! jes' ye keep youan' paws off'n it! 'T'heart!

When pa'd git t' feelin' low, an' ask him t' take me huntin', we only had one shotgun 'tween us, but pa'd do most of the shootin'. He'd bring down a 'coon or possum and he'd smile an' fergit things...

Ye got 'im, Pa! Ah do believe there ain't no better shot in the whole county!

But when he wasn't shootin', he'd git t' thinkin'... thinkin' 'bout ma and his money and the cad'iac ride he couldn't git... and he'd look so unhappy it like he'd broke my heart...

Don't worry, Pa! Some day ye'll be rich! Then mebbe you'll git everythin' you want!

No, Ruthie! I'll never be rich. An' ah jes' want one thing... that ride!

Ah think the time ah felt saddest was when pa an' me was in town one day an' we was passin' the auto rentin' place. Pa just stood there lookin' at the cadillac in the window an' fer the first time ever, ah seem my pa cryin'...

Ah don't reckon I'll git t' ride in one o' them... choke... never...

Ah's face got real dark and grim as he swore...

She better keep her hands off mah savin's! That's all aw got t' say! She jus' better!

When pa'd git t' feelin' low, an' ask him t' take me huntin', we only had one shotgun 'tween us, but pa'd do most of the shootin'. He'd bring down a 'coon or possum and he'd smile an' fergit things...

Ye got 'im, Pa! Ah do believe there ain't no better shot in the whole county!

Ther, suddenlike, his jaw'd clamp tight as a weasel trap and he'd jes blast away at nothin' with the shotgun... like mebbe ma was somewheres out there in front o' him...

Ah think the time ah felt saddest was when pa an' me was in town one day an' we was passin' the auto rentin' place. Pa just stood there lookin' at the cadillac in the window an' fer the first time ever, ah seem my pa cryin'...

Ah don't reckon I'll git t' ride in one o' them... choke... never...
Ah got all knotted and shakin' inside an' I took Pa's hand and led 'im away from the windah and made out like ah didn't see 'im cryin'...

Well, one day the lid blew off. Ma'd stole the last money she'd ever steal from Pa 'cause she laid there by the cookstove with a hole in her as big as youah fist and Pa's hard-saved dollar still in her hand.

We'd best be goin', Pa, if'n youah goin' t'buy them seeds fer plantin'.

Ruthie, ah don't know how ah'm goin' make youah ma stop stealin' mah savin's. But ah will! So help me, ah'll stop 'er!

Ma... ma!

Ah rode inta town t' sheriff her office.

No, suh, ah didn't go fer no doctor, sheriff. Ah could see ma was dead as she's ever a-goin' be!

Sheriff Hoyt asked me lots o' questions as we rode back home.

All right, Ruthie, let's go back t' the farm....

Me an' sheriff Hoyt found Pa a-sittin' and a-starin' at ma and he was jes' as white as she was only she was empty o' blood...

Ye'd best be comin' with me, Clyde Wilkes!

The next time ah saw pa was when they brung him up fo' trial. Ah was sittin' in a nice chair next t' Judge Sayers an' someone was askin' me questions...

Now, Ruthie, tell the court exactly what happened!

Don't be afraid, Ruthie. Nobody can hurt you!

Yes, suh.

So ah tol' mah story...

Ah seen pa bust into the house. He was steamin' mad. He cussed ma... pointed the shotgun at her... an' pulled the trigger. Pa killed ma!
Pa jumped up, screamin' at me... tears a-runnin' down his face...

Ruthie, why o you TELL 'EM THE? DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT YOU HAD TO?

I felt sick the way Pa carried on, but it was over soon... when they twelve gents went out and come back and one of 'em said...

We, the jury find the defendant guilty as charged...

An' ah felt sicker the night they burned up Pa in the electrical chair...

The next mornin', sheriff Hoyt come by ta pick me up an' take me up to the cemetery. They was goin' to bury Pa...

Poor kid! Choke... Where's Pa? When they bringin' him?

An' then ah heard it... the hum of the engine. Comin' down the road, comin' from the state prison. Bringin' Pa. Ah then ah saw it... and ah was glad! Pa was finally gettin' his ride in a Cadillac... a Cadillac Hearse...

After they buried pa, ah went over ta sheriff Hoyt...

You better take me into town, sheriff! Ah got somethin' to say...

Y'see, ah knew about that Cadillac Hearse they got up at the state prison. That's why ah blew the hole in ma with the shotgun big as a fist and blamed it on Pa. I knew it was the only way he'd ever git they ride.

An' now they are comin' for me an' I'll be followin' Pa shortly. Funny thing! Ah'm lookin' forward to it! Ah sorta caught Pa's Cadillac fever.
There was greyness that blanketed everything that drizzly morning... A grey cast to Matt's tasteless coffee... A grey grimness coating the kitchen walls... A greyness that seemed to close in on him so that he ever felt grey inside himself. Matt Hall had the trapped hopeless air of a criminal on the witness stand whose alibi had just been broken. Yet, Matt was no criminal... Except, perhaps, in the jaundiced eyes of his wife, his cold relentless prosecutor. What do you mean, a month?! PDN three years now... three years, Matt... we've been going from bad to worse. Our next move will be out on the street!)

Okay! So you deserve more out of life than this miserable shack and this crummy neighborhood. We've only been here a month. Business will pick up, Irene! You'll see! We'll be on top of the heap again, like we used to...
A contemptuous sneer hardened Irene's normally attractive face.

AAM I? WE'LL SEE. I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT THE LAST FEW WEEKS... AND I'VE BEEN DOING SOMETHING, TOO! WE GET IT JUST ABOUT ALL ARRANGED...

"HE?" WHO'S "WE"?

MR. GROVER AND ME! HE'S THE UNDERTAKER. YOU'VE PASSED HIS PLACE. GROVER'S FUNERAL HOME. TWO BLOCKS DOWN ON THE CORNER. I'VE BEEN DISCUSSING IT WITH HIM. HE'S COMING OVER THIS MORNING TO TALK TO US ABOUT IT.

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT THE LAST FEW WEEKS... AND I'VE BEEN DOING SOMETHING, TOO! WE GET IT JUST ABOUT ALL ARRANGED...

YOU'RE STUPID, MATT! HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT OF COLLECTING ALL THE INSURANCE MONEY NOW? CRAZY, WHILE YOU'RE ALIVE! THE WHOLE TWENTY GRAND...!

YOU'RE STUPID, MATT! HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT OF COLLECTING ALL THE INSURANCE MONEY NOW? CRAZY, WHILE YOU'RE ALIVE! THE WHOLE TWENTY GRAND...!

YOU'RE STUPID, MATT! HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT OF COLLECTING ALL THE INSURANCE MONEY NOW? CRAZY, WHILE YOU'RE ALIVE! THE WHOLE TWENTY GRAND...

THE GREYNess OF THE DAY TURNED EVEN GREYER WHEN MR. GROVER ARRIVED. HE QUICKLY EXPLAINED HIS PLAN TO MATT...

SO FAR, IT SOUNDS PRETTY GOOD, MR. GROVER BUT WHAT ABOUT THE POLICE?

I'VE LIVED IN THIS TOWN ALL MY LIFE, HALL. I KNOW CHIEF MCLAIN. HE'LL TAKE A QUICK LOOK AT WHAT APPEARS TO BE A STAB IN THE HEART. HE'LL SEE THE BLOOD-STAINED KNIFE... AND...

...AND MR. GROVER WILL MAKE SURE HE'S THERE TO SAY YOU'RE DEAD! DON'T YOU SEE, MATT? CHIEF MCLAIN WILL TAKE MR. GROVER'S WORD FOR IT, AND...

WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF THIS, MR. GROVER?

TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT! FIVE GRAND! THAT ISN'T TOO MUCH CONSIDERING MY RISK...

Okay, Grover! You got yourself a deal!

GOOD! NOW THE FIRST THING YOU HAVE TO DO IS CHANGE YOUR APPEARANCE! YOU'RE NOT WELL-KNOWN HERE, SO IF YOU GREW A MUSTACHE AND BEGAN WEARING HORNED-RIMMED GLASSES, AND PEOPLE GOT TO KNOW YOU THAT WAY...

WHEN THIS WHOLE THING IS OVER, YOU COULD DROP THE DISGUISE... LOOK LIKE THE REAL YOU AGAIN... AND NO ONE WOULD BE THE WISER!

YOU SURE GOT EVERYTHING FIGURED OUT, GROVER?

I TOLD YOU, MATT!
And so, during the next three weeks, Matt Hall cultivated a moustache, sticking indoors so no one would see him. At the end of that time, he'd begun to circulate freely and his thick-lensed glasses and heavy black moustache became familiar to his new neighbors.

Evenin', Mrs. Brady... Good evening, Mr. Hall..."
Her shrill scream echoed along the dank, quiet homes that lined the street. Here and there, a light blinked on. Irene screamed again. People clad in nightclothes fanned from the blackness.

What's going on? What happened? Police! Call the police! My husband! He... sob... he's been stabbed.

As the policeman moved toward the patrol car to get a blanket...

Hey! Look at this! A knife in the road. It's got blood on it! Don't touch that, mister!

Undertaker Larry Grover arrived at the scene along with Chief Ned McLain and a sleepy-eyed policeman...

You sure he's dead, Grover? There's a brilliant question to ask an undertaker! Look, McLain... we can't just leave him like this! Get something to cover him up...

Irene put on a sterling performance as a grieving widow...

Good work, Floyd. Take it easy, McLain. She's had a bad shock...

I'm an undertaker. My place is just a couple of blocks down. If you'd like, I'll take care of your poor husband's remains!

Lay off, Grover! I'm doing my best. It's just...

Thank sob... thank you.

A moment later, someone found Matt's empty wallet...

Yes... he's gone to the bank this afternoon. He had the rent money. Sob... with him... Well, that clinches it, Grover. It's a mugging, all night! And I'll get the murdering thief if it's the last thing I do!

Undertaker Larry Grover arrived at the scene along with Chief Ned McLain and a sleepy-eyed policeman...
The next morning, Mrs. Vincent, the halls' plump and kindly neighbor, accompanied Irene Hall to the Grover funeral parlor. It was all part of the plan. She stood beside the sobbing widow as they viewed Matt's stiff white body...

P.O.O.R. GIRL! SUCH A TRAGEDY.

Time is a great healer, Mrs. Vincent! We can only wait and comfort her in her hour of mourning...

Poor girl! Such a tragedy.

Matt always said he... he wanted to... sob... to be cremated. Can you...? I have a crematory in the rear, Mrs. Hall. Would you follow me...

Irene looked up with tear-filled eyes...

Mr. Grover closed the coffin and wheeled it out. Irene turned to Mrs. Vincent...

I'm... I'm all right now, Mrs. Vincent! You don't have to see this! You've been more than kind...

You poor dear! You do need someone to lean on! No! I'll stay! I want to...

Mrs. Vincent had reacted just as they'd planned... but Irene's hesitation had given Matt enough time to leap from the coffin as it was rolled down the long hall to the crematory...

Oh, Mrs. Vincent! You're so kind! Think nothing of it! What's a neighbor for! Come! Mr. Grover went this way...

Quick! In that door!

And so, Irene cried and Mr. Grover uttered fond words, and Mrs. Vincent looked on with morbid fascination as the empty coffin was rolled through the yawning furnace door in the huge brick wall...

...and now, we commit the body of Matt Hall to the consuming fires.

And afterwards, the three conspirators had a hearty laugh...

You should have seen Mrs. Vincent's face! I watched from behind that curtain...

A great bit of acting all around, I'd say...

A twenty-thousand dollar performance!
Matt grinned wryly, took the money, and started for the door.

Well, why not? I can use a long vacation! S'long, honey.

MATT: You're not going to risk spoiling everything! Do as Mr. Grover says! Think of the money we'll have when I join you!

WHAT ABOUT DOUGH? I CAN'T GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT DOUGH!

I thought of that! I'll advance you twenty-five hundred, Matt! Irene can pay me back! You can live well for a year on that in South America! Here...

Matt Hall went to New York, arranged for a passport under an assumed name, and boarded a ship bound for Argentina...

THOMPSON: Richard Thompson?

YES, SIR! CABIN 43! THAT'S FORWARD ON DECK A, SIR

A year passed and Matt waited in Rio for Irene. But Irene didn't come. He wrote, but she did not answer. Finally, after eighteen months, he flew home...

TO BLAZES WITH THE RISK! SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO HER. I KNOW IT!

The house had changed. It was all fixed up. The lawn was lush and green with expensive shrubs. Matt rang the bell...

SHE'S SURE BEEN SPENDING THE DOUGH!
IRENE BLANCHED WHEN SHE SAW MATT. WHEN HE STEPPED FORWARD TO PUT HIS ARMS AROUND HER, SHE Fought HIM OFF...

IRENE! MY LORD! HAVE I CHANGED THAT MUCH?! IT'S ME... MATT... YOUR HUSBAND!

MY... WHAT?! LISTEN, MISTER, YOU'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE! YOU'VE GOT ME CONFUSED WITH SOMEONE ELSE!

IRENE! WHO IS THAT MAN? WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH MY WIFE, SIR?

MATT STARED AT LARRY GROVER AND A CHILL CREEP'T UP HIS SPINE. THE REALIZATION DAWNED UPON HIM RUCELY...

YOUR... YOUR WIFE? WHY YOU DIRTY DOUBLE-CROSSING... SO THAT'S HOW IT WAS! YOU TWO PLANNED IT THIS WAY, SHIPPING ME OFF WHILE YOU LIVED IT UP ON MY INSURANCE DOUGH! WELL, I GOT FIFTEEN GRAND COMIN' TO ME AND I WANT IT!

LARRY GROVER PICKED UP THE PHONE...

DON'T KID ME, GROVER. YOU WOULDN'T DARE! IF I SPILL THE BEANS, YOU'LL GO UP THE RIVER WITH ME. YOU CAN HAVE IRENE! JUST HAND OVER FIFTEEN GRAND... NOW...

GET OUT OF MY HOUSE BEFORE I CALL THE POLICE, MISTER!

YOU CAN'T BLUFF ME, GROVER! I'M STAYING! IT'S YOUR FUNERAL TOO, YOU KNOW!

CHIEF MCLAIN GOT TO THE HOUSE IN A HURRY AND LISTENED TO MATT'S STORY...

SO THE WHOLE DEAL WAS A PHONY. I WAS NEVER KILLED...

I ALWAYS LIKE TO LAY MY HANDS ON YOU CON MEN. BUT THIS TIME, YOU TRIED TO SHAKE DOWN THE WRONG CUSTOMER, MISTER. I SAW MATT HALL'S BODY MYSELF! TAKE HIM DOWNTOWN, FLOYD...

THEY BOOKED MATT, "MUGGED" HIM, FINGERPRINTED HIM, AND SLAPPED HIM IN A CELL AS HE SCREAMED IN PROTEST...

CHECK MY FINGERPRINTS! YOU'LL SEE IF I'M NOT MATT HALL!

FINGERPRINTS? THAT'S IT, CHIEF! I THOUGHT THEY LOOKED FAMILIAR...
The jailed man's prints were matched with those taken from a bloody knife found in the road near the scene of Matt Hall's "murder" almost two years before.

Matt Hall felt as though he were living through a nightmare from that moment on. He was put on trial...

...and I will not only show that this man...this Richard Thompson...murdered Matt Hall, but that he returned to extort money from his victim's widow.

Mrs. Irene Hall Grover testified...

Matt Hall?! Him?! How could he be? Matt Hall is dead! Cremated!

Mrs. Vincent testified...

Sure he looks like Matt Hall when you put that moustache and glasses on him. Who wouldn't? But it's not him!

Matt Hall's lawyer could get nowhere with Mrs. Vincent...

Matt Hall pleaded...

Make Grover tell you the truth! Make him tell you the coffin was empty!

The prisoner will refrain from further outbursts.

I saw the body in the coffin. I saw the coffin slid into the furnace. If that man is Matt Hall, I'm crazy!

Chief McLain's testimony clinched the case, and after only 32 minutes, the jury returned a verdict of...

...Guilty!

There was a greyness that blanketed everything that drizzly morning... a grey cast to the prison walls... a greyness to the scaffold they'd built... a greyness that seemed to close in on Matt so that he even felt grey inside himself as they slid the rope around his neck and sprung the trap...

...and hung him for his own murder! The end.
A SPECIAL EDITORIAL
THIS IS AN APPEAL FOR ACTION!

THE PROBLEM: Comics are under fire — horror and crime comics in particular. Due to the efforts of various do-gooders and 'do gooder' groups, a large segment of the public is being led to believe that certain comic magazines cause juvenile delinquency, warp the minds of America's youth, and affect the development of the personalities of those who read them. Among these do-gooders are a psychiatrist who has made a lucrative career of attacking comic magazines, certain publishing companies who do not publish comics and who would benefit by their demise, many groups of adults who would like to blame their lack of ability as responsible parents on comic mags instead of on themselves, and various assorted headline hunters. These people are militant. They complain to local police officials, to local magazine retailers, to local wholesalers, and to their congressmen. They complain and threaten and threaten. Eventually, everyone gets frightened. The newsdealer gets frightened. He removes the books from display. The wholesaler gets frightened. He refuses shipments. The congressmen get frightened. November is coming! They start an investigation. This wave of hysteria has seriously threatened the very existence of the whole comic magazine industry.

WE BELIEVE: Your editors sincerely believe that the claim of these crusaders that comics are bad for children is nonsense. If we, in the slightest way, thought that horror comics, crime comics, or any other kind of comics were harmful to our readers, we would cease publishing them and direct our efforts toward something else.

And we're not alone in our belief. For example Dr. David Abrahamsen, eminent criminologist, in his book, "Who Are The Guilty?" says, "Comic books do not lead to crime, although they have been widely blamed for it... In my experience as a psychiatrist, I cannot remember having seen one boy or girl who has committed a crime, or who became neurotic or psychotic, because he or she read comic books. A group led by Dr. Freda Kehn, Mental Health Chairman of the III Congress of the P.T.A., decided that living room violence has a decided beneficial effect on young minds. Dr. Robert H. Felix, director of the National Institute of Mental Health, said that horror comic books do not originate criminal behavior in children... in a way, the horror comics may do some good... children may use fantasy, as stimulated by the "comics" as a means of working out natural feelings of aggressiveness.

We also believe that a large portion of our total readership of horror and crime comics is made up of adults. We believe that those who oppose comics are a small minority. Yet this minority is causing the hysteria. The voice of the majority — you who buy comics, read them, enjoy them, and are not harmed by them — has not been heard.

WHAT YOU MUST DO: Unless you act now, the pressure from this minority may force comics from the American scene. It is members of this minority who threaten the local retailers, who threaten the local wholesalers, who have sent letters to the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency (now investigating the comic industry).

IT IS TIME THAT THE MAJORITY'S VOICE BE HEARD!

It is time that the Senate Subcommittee hears from YOU — each and every one of you.

If you agree that comics are harmless entertainment, write a letter or a postcard TODAY to:
The Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency
United States Senate
Washington 25, D.C.

and in your own words, tell them so. Make it a nice, polite letter! In the case of you younger readers, it would be more effective if you could get your parents to write for you, or perhaps add a PS to your letter, as the Senate Subcommittee may not have much respect for the opinions of minors.

Of course, if you or your parents disagree with us, and believe that comics ARE bad, let your sentiments be known on that too! The important thing is that the Subcommittee hear from actual comic book readers and/or their parents, rather than from people who never read a comic magazine in their lives, but simply want to destroy them.

It is also important that your local newsdealer be encouraged to continue carrying, displaying, and selling all kinds of comics. Speak to him. Have him speak to his wholesaler.

Wherever you can, let your voice and the voices of your parents be heard in protest over the campaign against comics.

But first... right now... please write that letter to the Senate Subcommittee.

Sincerely,
Your grateful editors
(for the whole E.C. Gang)
"It's too much work for one man," old Sikora said, his lower lip trembling. "One man ain't got enough time to take care all these tenants' complaints!"

"Shut up!" Mr. Herndon screeched, a dangerous throb on his throat. "Take me to the basement so I can see for myself how you're neglecting my building! . . . no doors open without squeaking . . . no water comes through pipes you've allowed to rust! You're nothing but a . . . a SLOB!"

Old Sikora blanched, his skin drawn tight. "I don't have to take that from no one," he muttered darkly. "Slob!" answered Mr. Herndon, as the elevator descended amidst groans and shimmies. "Slob! SLOB! SLOB! S-L-O-B!"

Old Sikora sucked air into his scrawny gullet and lunged forward. But his fingers were less than half-way to his employer's throat when Mr. Herndon struck. His big fists hammered relentlessly, against ancient skin and brittle bone. Sikora had sagged to the floor, his face a blob of butchered meat, his head hanging limply on a neck which wasn't quite straight. He was dead.

Mr. Herndon 'carefully opened the furnace; hefted the old man's body into the dark cavern, threw several bookfull of flaring matches inside, and slammed the door shut.

That same night a delegation of tenants arrived at Mr. Herndon's home . . . together with three menacing policemen. "You're under arrest for the murder of old Sikora," the oldest officer intoned.

"The body?" Mr. Herndon inquired scornfully. "You found a body? Unless you have one there isn't a shred of evidence that . . ."

"We got a body, pal?" rasped the beef-faced cop. That furnace where you dumped the corpse . . . it's so dirty and clogged that you couldn't start a fire if your life depended on it! Such filth . . ."
The tall man in the frazzled coat shambled almost absent-mindedly into the bank . . . glanced around uncertainly . . . then stepped up to the wooden railing surrounding the manager's cubicle.

"Can I help . . .?" the chubby gentleman seated at the spacious desk started to inquire, a rigid professional smile creasing his waxy features.

"You're the manager, huh?" the tall man mumbled, as if reassuring himself. He snuffled, glanced around the bank again, then fumbled a paper bag from the torn pocket of his sagging coat.

"This is a robbery," he announced, in a flat, tired voice. "I got a bomb in this sack, mister . . . unless you hand over all the dough you got in the cashier's booth, I'm gonna drop this bag on the floor and kill all of us!"

The manager's eyes bulged like white onions on toothpicks as he stared in complete bewilderment at the tall man and, then, at the crumpled bag his visitor held. Before he could splutter a protest, the tall man was mumbling again. "I need the money bad," he muttered. "If I can't get my hands on some mazuma I might just as well be dead. That's why I'm ready to kill myself and all of us . . ."

The anxiety on the manager's fat face vanished. His eyes crinkled as he leaned back in his chair. He snorted through his nose, slapped his thigh and began to roar with delight. The squat bank guard waddled up . . . the spindly old cashier looked over from her cage . . . the line of four depositors turned and stared.

"That old gag," the manager gasped, between spasms of laughter, "it's been used so often that it's old even for television! The bomb in the paper bag . . . HAAAAAAAA!

The bank depositors closed in and the buzz of conversation was audible above the manager's gasping for breath. "The bomb-in-the-paper-bag gimmick!" bellowed a thick-set man. "It's been used in dime novels . . . the movies . . .! "The desperate thief ready to blow himself up!" tittered a bird-like lady in clumsy walking shoes.

"Awright, mac," the squat bank guard started to wheeze, as he laboriously slid a service revolver from a holster hanging around his stomach. "I'll take that dangerous paper bag, mister blowhard . . ."

The tall man's bloodshot eyes circled the group of sneering faces, darted to the revolver glinting in the guard's hand . . . then he dropped the sack to the floor and sprinted to the door with incredible speed. Before anyone could move, he was gone.

The uncontrolled laughter was a chorus of chuckles, snorts, guffaws, chortles and whinnies. The thick-set man had to be thumped on the back to keep him from choking. When quiet again had been restored, they all turned and looked disdainfully at the paper bag on the floor. The guard stepped forward to pick it up, so that he could hurl it into the trash basket . . .

The violent explosion shattered the windows for two blocks around, so sudden was the blast that the occupants of the bank were dead before a single cry of pain or surprise had been uttered. An estimated fifty people in the neighborhood were knocked to the pavement by the detonation of the home made bomb.

A tall man in a frazzled coat picked himself up from the sidewalk, patted a coat pocket to make certain that the second of his two crumpled paper bags was unharmed . . . then shambled off in the direction of a bank over on the next avenue.
The name's McLeod... Badge 331074. I'm a plain-clothes cop. They got me patrolling the toughest section in town. It's a quiet night though, and I'm not complaining... except that this icy drizzle's chilling me to the bone...

The sergeant might as well have made my beat the Murosque, that dead it is tonight. The only sound is the swishy-hiss of tires now and then as a lone car moves down the black, shiny street...

It's sure lonely, and I get to thinking about Stacey's Joint and how cozy his bar always is and how good a shot would feel warming my insides. I turn the corner and head for it when I spot the little guy edging down the wet sidewalk...

He kinda stumbles along as he comes to the buildings. He's wearing one of those leather jackets and he's carrying something... a bag... a canvas bag with maybe a big round metal in it...

I take a squint at him as we pass each other under a lamp-post. He's got sunk-in cheeks and a wide-eyed look... like he's scared of something...

And then I notice the bag again... and I see it's got a big red rust-colored stain on the bottom, it looks like... like... like dried blood, maybe...

Hey! Mac! Just a minute!
He gives me one wild look, turns ghost-white and takes off. I trot along after him, thinkin' maybe the poof sucker is just scared 'cause he works for a butcher and swiped a rolled roast or something bloody like that...

I start wonderin' if maybe I've been a cop too long. If maybe I got too much imagination... if maybe the rust-colored stain ain't blood after all. Yeah? Then what's the creep runnin' for?

I yank my badge. I'm walking after him now and he's starting to walk even faster.

He reaches a conner and dodges around. By the time I get there, he ain't in sight. There's a can parked at the curb and I figure he's behind it...

The guy don't let out a peep. I start around the car and off he goes, lammin' out like he's carryin' a hot potato... and I begin thinking that maybe that bloody-bottomed satchel is something hot.

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Hold it, buddy! I want to talk to you.

Listen, mister. If you ain't done nothin' wrong... really wrong... you're crazy for runnin'. I'll get you soon or later.

The little boy don't stop. He keeps on goin'. I buzz him again. I know he means me... unless he's stone deaf...

In my time on the force, I've run into all kinds of crazy birds... perverts... maniacs... homicidal fiends. I begin picturing this guy lurking in some dark alley with an empty sack and a big knife... waiting...

And I remember an old geezer named Fisch who carved up old ladies. I see this creep jumpin' some poor old gal and grabbin' her into the alley...

...and hacking her up and stuffing her head in that satchel... that bloody-bottomed satchel...
Thinking these things makes me hate the scurrying little rat. I gotta catch him now... catch him and find out for sure, he turns into an alley... and I'm right behind him, giving it all I've got.

The poor idiot's made a big mistake. The alley's blind, I got him trapped, I pull out my .45 and my pocket flash and start penciling the beam around...

Get this straight, mister! You run this time, and you get a slug in your back...

He starts crying, I figure he can't pull a shiv on me while he's hugging the bag, so I holster my gun and move in, keeping my light on him...

I can't take no for an answer, buddy! I'm the stubborn type. Now, hah, I did it.

This little character is stronger than he looks. I try wrenching the bag away but he's got it in a death grip...

C'mon... you dumb @*#%^! wait! First... first let me tell you what it is... and why I did it!

I can see he's scared silly so I let go. He starts talking and I study his eyes, tryin' to see if maybe he's a hophead...

I hated him? He was always picking on me. "Mr. Dominick, you're two minutes late!"
"Mr. Dominick, these figures aren't very neat! Mr. Dominick, your tie... your hair... your appearance!"

He was a Johnny-come-lately! I worked a long time for the company before he came, but he was young... ambitious... he had a good head on his shoulders. He became head bookkeeper... my boss!

Every day he needed me nagging... haggling. I'd get sick inside... and dizzy... sometimes and I wouldn't know what I was doing. But, he wouldn't let up! He was shrewd... clever... smart!

So I bought an axe... heh, heh... and tonight I waited for him. He's not shrewd anymore! He hasn't got a good head on his shoulders anymore!

I've got it!
The little guy's eyes are blazing and his lips are twisted up in a vicious snarl. No saliva is running down his chin. My stomach churns as I look down at the round-shape satchel...

Choke... you mean... in that bag... his... his head?

I had to take it away from him! You can see that, can't you? I had to cut off his rotten sneering scheming head. You're crazy as a loon.

I feel sick just looking at the bag. Cause now I know what's in it... a head... a cold, staring, grizzly-green head. And then, suddenly, the idiot is kicking and screaming and the flashlight is flying from my hand and smashing on the wet cement...

Why... you...

By the time I get my gun out and start shooting, I'm sending lead at nothing. He's gone.

I fight off the nausea and the pain and it's the longest damn alley I've ever lain down... but now I'm on the street and I spot the dully twin... the prowler can.

Hey! Sullivan Berger! It's me... McLeod...

The prowler can ease up. I slide in... did you see a little runt... five-foot-four... passed us maybe... carrying a canvas bag?

Go south, Sullivan, fast! That screwball is a homicidal maniac. He just hacked the head off some guy and it's in that bag!

Sullivan guns the prowler car... u-turning it and taking off south at sixty. Only there ain't no sign of the crazy killer...

Empty... just empty streets... in an alarm!
I stick with the Prowl Car for maybe ten minutes as it cruises the side streets. Then I get anxious...

Le'me out at the next corner, Sullivan. I'm going to try it on foot!

Okay, McLeod.

And then I hear it... the click-clack of feet echoing out of the drizzle... quick-moving feet... moving toward me...

I climb out and watch them pull away into the mist...

I pull my collar around my neck and start down the shimmering sidewalk...

I pull out my .45. He comes closer... swinging the bag like he was happy... humming softly...

Quick back into a doorway and wait. He comes through the mist like a shadow... a shadow carrying a melon-shaped canvas bag...

I got you... you crazy man!

I step out of the doorway as he passes me...

Hey! Dominick!

He spins around! I'm not takin' any chances. I squeeze the trigger, blasting his face away in a red smear...

He pitches forward. The canvas bag drops with a thud...
I stand over his twitching body until it don't twitch anymore...

Then I look at the canvas bachel lying in the puddle...

The prow! car screams up...

'They heard shots! Oh, it's you, McLeod! What happened?'

'I got him! I got the maniac, Sullivan! I had to shoot him! He tried to...

I can see Sullivan's face turn white. And I can hear Berger whispering...

'It... it can't be him!'

Of course, it's him! Look! There's the bag! He's got a head in that bag! I know it!

Not him, McLeod! Not this guy! Car 2 just radioed in that they got your maniac a few minutes ago.

I look down at the still figure lying face-down on the bloody, wet sidewalk. I look at the canvas bag...

It's got to be! It's got to! It's round! It's got a head! It...

I unzip the bachel. The round black sphere moans out onto the gutter...

A bowling ball! Oh, Lord... it's only a bowling ball!

You... you better give me your gun, McLeod.

The end
IT IS ONE OF THOSE DAMP RAW NIGHTS WHEN THE SKY IS A
BROWNISH-BLACK AWNING OVER THE GLOWING CITY AND
THE GREY MIST CLINGS TO YOUR CHEEKS LIKE A WET CLAMMY
COBWEB. THE GARISH RED NEON SIGN OF THE CLOVER
CASINO CASTS ITS RUBY OVERTONES ON THE GLISTENING
SIDEWALK, THE CREAM-COLORED CAOILLAC, AND THE
FLASHY-DRESSED GENT YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR. AS HE
EMERGES FROM THE CASINO AND WALKS TOWARD YOU, WHERE
YOU HIDE IN THE ALLEY OPPOSITE HIS CAR, YOU FUMBLE IN
YOUR POCKET FOR THE COLD PEARL HANDLE OF YOUR
SWITCHKNIFE. YOUR NAME IS JOE HARRIS. YOU'RE NOT
WORTH A DIME. BUT IN A FEW MINUTES YOU'RE GOING TO BE
RICH! RICH! YOU SLIP THE KNIFE FROM YOUR POCKET,
PRESS THE BUTTON, AND AS THE RAZOR-SHARP BLADE
SNAPS OUT, YOU THINK, JOE HARRIS... YOU THINK OF LOVE,
AND HATE, AND FRUSTRATION, AND DOUGH...

YOU THINK OF YOUR BEAUTIFUL WIFE MARSHA, AND
THAT NIGHT YOU FOUND OUT FOR CERTAIN. YOU
REMEMBER HOW SHE CAME HOME WITH HER HAIR
WILD AND HER LIPSTICK SmeARED AND HER CLOTHES
WRINKLED AND GUMMED...

IT'S THREE A.M., NOBODY TOLD YOU TO WAIT! TURN
OVER AND GO TO SLEEP!

YOU REMEMBER THE SMIRK OF HER LOVELY MOUTH
AS SHE CONFIRMED WHAT YOU'D SUSPECTED FOR
WEEKS...

YOU'VE... YOU'VE BEEN OUT WITH
ANOTHER MAN!

NOT JUST ANOTHER MAN, JOE!
THERE'S NO OTHER MAN LIKE HIM!
WALLY! HE'S GOT EVERYTHING,
EXCEPT MONEY! BUT WHEN I'M
WITH HIM, I CAN FORGET THAT
HE'S JUST A POOR GLOB LIKE
YOU!
You recall how confused you were... only sure that you could never stop loving Marsha... never give her up. You remember how the last night, you watched from the window of your darkened room... 

...watched young handsome Wally bring Marsha home. You saw them stand close, search for each other's lips, then tremble in what seemed like a never-ending embrace...

Why, Marsha...? Why? I was tired of working, Joe! You were my out! So I married you! I thought you had dough that might've made up for you! But you had nothing! You've got nothing, Joe! Nothing!
You stood there, staring blankly, as your chips---your forty-three dollars---were raked in and pushed toward another man. A flashy-dressed man... He was on twenty-one. Black. The croupier raked stacks and stacks of chips toward him... Your luck is good tonight, Mr. Farrell! Looks that way, George! I am sorry, ladies and gentlemen, but Mr. Farrell has broken the bank for tonight! The wheel is closed! Well, I can't say I'm sorry, George! Good night.

With an expert flick of the wrist, the croupier spun the wheel, tossed in the little ball... and in twenty seconds, it was all over...

Twenty-one... Black...

You watched in jealous fascination as, time after time, this Farrell guy won... until...

You passed him as he stood at the cashier's window and you saw the size of the wad of bills he was already carrying. Then, to it, he added the sixty odd grand he'd won. His smug smile calmed you as he refused a bodyguard...

It's always like that? The guys that don't need it get more and more...

No, thank you, Carl. My Cadillac is parked right outside!

He shoves the knife away and whirls like a wildcat. For a split second, you panic... react out of reflex. You plunge the knife blade into his chest. He gasps... sways a little... then sags...

So you proceeded him into the dark street, searched for the caddy, and hid in the alley... waiting. Now, you grip the knife in your sweaty hand as he steps to his car. You slip up behind him, bring the scalpel-honed blade to his throat...

All right, mister. No noise... just hand over that roll!

As the door to the casino opens and you hear tipsy laughter. Someone is coming... a couple. You grab your victim before he can fall. You do some fast ad libbing...

G'non, Harry! You've had enough! I've got to get you home! Aw, G'non, Harry!
THE COUPLE REELS AWAY AND YOU'RE ALONE WITH THE DEAD MAN... THE VERY RICH DEAD MAN. YOU GO THROUGH HIS POCKETS AND FIND THE ROLL... NEARLY ONE HUNDRED GRAND, JOE.

YOU START DRIVING AIMLESSLY, AND NOW, YOU HAVE TIME TO THINK. YOU'RE A MURDERER, JOE! YOUR HEART SLAMS AGAINST YOUR CHEST, YOUR FOOT CHATTERS ON THE GAS PEDAL, AND A COLORED RIVULET OF SWEAT TRICKLES DOWN YOUR SPINE...

YOU KNOW NO JURY WILL SWALLOW THAT ONE, JOE! YOU KEEP DRIVING. YOU DRIVE OUT TO THE COUNTRY... TO A LONELY ROAD, YOU STOP AND GET OUT... I'LL BURY HIM IN THE WOODS HERE AND NO ONE WILL EVER...

YOU'RE AN AMATEUR AT THIS MURDER BUSINESS, JOE. YOU GET SCARED, YOU SLAM BACK INTO THE CAR AND DRIVE AIMLESSLY UNTIL YOU CAN'T GET A GOOD LOOK AT YOU. WHEN YOU REACH THE CITY'S OUTSKIRTS, YOU SPOT A DARK ALLEY ON A DESERTED STREET, YOU STOP THE CAR AND GET OUT...

YOU DRAG THE CORPSE WITH THE FLASHY, BLOOD-SOAKED CLOTHES TO THE ALLEY'S DARK MOUTH.

SUDDENLY, THE GLOOM IS PIERCED WITH SHAMS OF LIGHT AND YOUR DESERTED HIDING PLACE SPRINGS ALIVE WITH CHATTERING PEOPLE AND MARTIAL MUSIC.

I'VE GOT TO GET RID OF THIS GUY—DUMP HIM SOMEWHERE...

LOOKA, HONEY... A DRUNK! IF THERE SH ONE THING I CAN'T SHTAN', ISH A DRUNK!

IT'S GOT TO DO! LET 'EN FIND HIM! THEY STILL CAN'T TIE ME IN.
They pour from the doorways into the alley, Joe. People... hundreds of them. It's a movie theater! The last show is over! With a strength born of frenzy you push your gory load back into the Cadillac...

Rotten luck! Of all the dirty @#$%!! Rotten luck!

You zoom away, cursing, hoping again that you weren't seen...

I've got to hide him somewhere! I've got to get home and fix up an alibi with Marsha...

You find a dark deserted quiet street. You pull up to the curb opposite a sewer. You get out, lift open the sewer-cover, and drag the bloody form from the car...

Then you push the stiffening corpse down into the stinking black hole...

Now, with the heavy iron lid back in place, you breathe easily for the first time in an hour. You glance down the street... and your heart stops! Police men. A pair of them... coming your way!...

With quaking knees, you begin to walk, glancing back furtively at the officers approaching the sewer. You see one of them stop and point...

They did see! They're checking...

You see them step to the sewer... see one of them bend down, then look up at you... right at you, Joe! He calls out...

Hey, mister! Hold it a minute!

Choke...

O.K., Lord... what if they saw...
Run, Joe! That's it! Run! They know! They're after you...

I can't let 'em get me now... not when I got everything I want... all the dough I'll ever need... and Marsha...

You dodge and squirm like a rabbit, Joe, but the cops stick with you like glue... shouting at you...

You're almost home, Joe! Run, Joe! Cross the street! Soon you'll look out, Joe! That car!

If you could only black out! But you can't. You can't escape the hellish agony. You see the car back off... see the driver get out... the cops round up...

It hits you... catches your leg in its bumper... twisting... splintering bone... knocking you down... the front wheel passes over your belly... crushing your guts...

Don't worry, mister! We saw it happen! It wasn't your fault!

If you could only black out! But you can't. You can't escape the hellish agony. You see the car back off... see the driver get out... the cops round up...

You've got one hundred grand and you lie in the gutter, Joe... a grotesque twisted hulk, battered by an old heap of a car... irony? Look at the driver's face! Yes, Joe! It's Wally. Your wife's lover! He's smiling down at you as an efficient cop's hands fly through your pockets...

Hey, look at this wad of lettuce! It... it's... oh, my God... it's my husband!

Here's your wife, Joe... Marsha... she's standing over you, too... talking to the cops...

Your husband, eh, lady? Well, all you have to do is identify yourself and you can pick up this bankroll at headquarters tomorrow!

Of course, officer!

The last thing you see is Marsha and Wally stealing a quick look at each other... a quiet look that says so much... like, "we never expected this happy turn of events when we planned on running him down!" And then, slowly, everything goes black. —The End—