

THE FOURTH ESTATE

Novelized by
FREDERICK R. TOOMBS

From the Great Play
of the Same Name by
Joseph Medill Patter-
son and Harriet Ford.

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CHAPTER IX.

AT 9 o'clock in the managing editor's room in the Advance building Wheeler Brand and three other men, Howard Hartley, Jeff Thorne, staff reporters, and Bill, their much browned under-stander, were industriously at work. At one side of the office diagonally from the managing editor's desk was a high mahogany desk which backed against a wooden partition which cut off a small room used as a "morgue," the place where newspaper and magazine clippings are kept for reference.

Through the partition a round hole about five inches in diameter had been cut with a handsaw, and on a table in the morgue a camera had been rested with the telescope protruding through the hole in the partition into a private mail box directly above the desk. The door of this box, into which were placed letters arriving for the managing editor during his absence, had been unlocked. A line of shoe thread had been fastened to the door of the box and extended down behind the desk to the floor and across to the left hand side of Brand's desk. A slight tug on the thread would open the door of the mail box to reveal, exposing to the lens Brand's desk, his chair and another chair which had been placed at the right of the desk next to the telephone.

For several minutes the mysterious preparations went on. Just what they meant no one but Brand could tell, and he was strangely silent, except as to directing what should be done.

Hartley was anxious to make certain that the lens aimed directly at Brand's desk. He measured the line with his eye.

"Get it?" called Jeff.

"No, not yet. Wait a minute," Howard answered, dodging around quickly toward the little "morgue." "I haven't got the focus right yet. Hold on."

Jeff lighted a match, held it up and stood between the two chairs.

"How's that?" he cried.

The answering voice came back.

"Yes; that's the very thing. It's all right now."

Brand stepped forward from a corner of the room from whence he had been watching the final preparations for the strange event that was to occur.

"Are you all set now, boys?" he asked. "Is your camera in the right place for the flashlight?"

"Yes, sir," cried Jeff and Howard simultaneously.

"The flashlight is planted here, sir," said Howard, pointing to a narrow pan-

nel in a shadowed spot off top of the mahogany desk and close to the lens.

"Have you tested this?" asked Brand.

"Yes, sir."

"Be careful, sir, or you'll explode the flash," warned Jeff as Brand lighted a match to ascertain the location of the powder.

"Go into room 4, boys, and wait till I send for you," directed Brand.

Jeff and Howard went out. Brand went to his desk as the office boy, Durkin, entered.

"Joe Dillon's here," said the lad.

"Drunk?"

"Just one over."

"Broke?"

"Sure!" The boy grinned.

Dillon, one of the "business" characters of the type that peep on the newspaper men at night in the big cities, would ordinarily have received short shrift from a busy man like Brand, but Dillon, an experienced reporter, had once given Brand, when a beginner, some valuable pointers, which the now managing editor had never forgotten.

"Tell him to come in," directed Brand. He reached for the office telephone and called the club city editor.

"The Patriot has got the town skinned on shipping," he said. "Do you know who's doing it for them? What I think you'd better hire him."

Joe Dillon wandered in.

"Good evening, Mr. Brand," he said wearily. Durkin, who had summoned him, followed him in.

"Well, Joe, what is it?"

"Wait a minute, Durkin. Got a story for us, Joe?" queried Brand sympathetically.

Dillon staggered forward.

"Better sit down," cautioned Brand. "Same old story, eh?"

"No, I'm hungry."

"Durkin, go get one hot roast beef sandwich and a big pot of black coffee and see that he gets them."

"Yes, sir." The lad sped away after dexterously catching a quarter which Brand tossed him.

"I wish I was going in there to work with the boys instead of eating charity grub," began Dillon plaintively. "I know you mean all right, Mr. Brand. I've tried and tried again to fight it off, but it's useless. I can't. It's too late. I'm a dead one. The hard stuff, the five cent whisky, has got me. You never heard how this thing started, did you, Mr. Brand? If it hadn't been for my wife!"

"Oh, cut it out!" cried Brand, and Dillon shambled out of the room.

Downs hurried in. He had become night editor when the shakeup occurred at the time of Brand's promotion.

"Young Bobbie Doolittle pinched again for speeding," he rattled off. "Three show girls in the auto. All of 'em lit up. Bobbie weeping because the girls had to miss the theater, and his mother's at me all evening to keep it out. What'll I do?"

Brand leaned back and smiled.

"Well, it was on her account we kept out his partial elopement with her French maid and the time he kissed the head waiter at the St. Honore hotel in lieu of a tip, and I guess—well, print this one. It may help brace him up."

"Oh, and that disappearance case," reminded Downs. "The girl's come back—old gag, visiting her friends in Jersey, but she's been off on the suit case circuit all right."

"Home now?" jerked the managing editor.

"Yep."

"Think she'll stay there?"

"She might."

"Well, she can't if we print this, so let's forget it."

"But we've had a man on it two days," persisted Downs. "We're the only paper that's got it."

"Well, we won't be the one to kick her down," pronounced Brand, turning his head away to end the conversation.

"All right, just as you say."

The telephone bell rang. Brand took off the receiver.

"Hello! Tell Mr. Dupuy I'm busy!" he cried after taking the message.

"What? Send him in. That's all, Downs. See that they take care of Dillon, will you?"

The night editor nodded in the affirmative and gazed rather curiously at Brand as he went out.

Dupuy came into Brand's office with a most circumspect and deferential air. Dressed in evening clothes, carrying his silk hat in his hand and with a boutonniere of hot-house violets in his lapel, he gave every indication of being the society figure that his name and wealth had made possible for him.

The lawyer lobbyist walked directly to the desk at which Brand was seated. In reply to the managing editor's salutation he bowed stiffly and leaned forward over the desk.

Several moments elapsed before Dupuy spoke. He was trying to put his opening words in the most judicious language, and well he might hesitate when one considers the nature of his evil errand.

"The gentleman who was coming to see you tonight," at last he said carefully, "has had to go to the opera with his daughter. He has asked me to come in his stead."

An expression of complete bewilderment spread over the other's face.

"A gentleman? What gentleman?" he interrogated.

Dupuy was momentarily nonplussed.

"Why, the gentleman who—oh, with whom you made an appointment for 7 o'clock this evening—here at your office."

Brand still refused to show his hand.

"I should be very glad to hear what you have to say, Mr. Dupuy, but frankly, I don't know what you are driving at."

The visitor was annoyed. He was positive that Bartelmy would not scold him on a wild goose errand. Surely the judge and Brand had come to terms regarding the silence of the Advance as to the Lansing Iron case decision. The editor was playing with him now, he knew—dangling him on a verbal hook to tantalize him.

"Oh, come, you know who I mean—Bartelmy!" snapped the judge's deplorable tail.

"Judge Bartelmy?" exclaimed Brand in surprise. "Well, what about him?"

Dupuy produced a card, which the editor glanced at.

"What's this?" he asked. Then he read: "Dupuy will represent me." In what?

He started to put the card in his pocket.

"Perhaps you would better let me have that so I can return it to him," which Brand slowly extended to him.

"This refers to that transaction of which you said he was speaking this afternoon," continued the lawyer.

Brand laughed loudly.

"Well, Dupuy, I'm a poor hand at guessing riddles. I give it up. What's the answer?"

The lawyer became impatient.

"The transaction involving the—ah—the investment of a certain sum of money," he explained hastily.

"A business deal? I was going into with the judge?" in amazement.

"Exactly."

"If I had any business with the judge, Dupuy, I would prefer to do it with the judge."

"But I am his plenipotentiary."

"Man, man!" granted Brand negatively.

"You are rather unresponsive, Brand." A wearied and hopeless look

begun to show in the lawyer's visage. The young editor noted this and resolved to temporize with and exasperate this man whom he despised above all others, even above Bartelmy himself. Bartelmy, believed Brand, even if he was a scoundrel, actually had superior mental ability, was a brilliant thinker and acted boldly in many of his dishonest transactions on the bench. But Dupuy—he was to Brand the hang-er-on, the skulker, the vandal jackal that devoured corpses in the night that braver animals had fought and killed by day. His eyes blinked in the light, did Dupuy's. It was in the underground runways that he coursed the swiftest. And as those thoughts sped through his brain the editor looked away absently.

Dupuy came hot on his trail.

"Shall I make an appointment with him for you, say, tomorrow morning?" he anxiously queried of the newspaper man.

"I don't care."

"Then I'll do it," he said decidedly and moved away from the desk. "And—er— He saw that Brand was still indifferent. He returned to the desk. "Things will remain stationary until then?" he asked.

"Things never remain stationary in a newspaper office," responded the managing editor laconically.

"What I mean is that there would be no story—er—about him until you see him."

"A business deal." "I don't know what you are talking about."

"Can we let it go over for one day?" "I don't know what you are talking about."

"You insist on his coming here personally?" "Of course I don't. I don't insist on anything."

"How much time have we got?" "He knows all about that."

Dupuy was immeasurably relieved at this last remark. It was the first time that Brand had indicated that Bartelmy and he had had an engagement.

"Mr. Brand, I can almost assure you that my client will keep his appointment." The lawyer's voice rang out firmly.

The editor nodded carelessly toward the speaker, who spun on his heel and speedily strode away. The telephone bell sounded. Brand bent over quickly.

"Hello! Who—oh, yes, Mr. Nolan. No, sir, not yet, but I think we'll have him landed all right in about half an hour. Please don't worry about it. It'll be all right. Just go away and hide somewhere, for they'll be doing the baby act as quick as I trap him, and you'll be squeezed to death before we get to press. You promised me this chance. You want to know what's going on? Well, where will you be? Triple 3 Plaza. Get off the wire, Miss Stowe. Yes, Mr. Nolan, they cut in on us. I'll call you up later."



"A business deal."

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EXHIBIT BUILDING MEDFORD

(To Be Continued.)

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At the Nash—W. A. Schwarz, East Portland; E. L. Buford, Portland; S. W. Wood, Medford; H. K. Hughes, Chicago; A. E. Johnson, San Francisco; W. A. Johnson, San Francisco; H. F. Harold, Oakland; G. W. Lebling, Portland; Geo. H. Fitzgibbon, Portland; W. H. Adams, Portland; C. B. Waters, Portland; C. H. Freeman, Portland; A. W. Stone, Buffalo, N. Y.; J. R. Law, Portland; J. E. Stacey, Cincinnati; F. B. Gray, Chicago; H. H. Jones, Chicago; F. S. Townsend, Portland.

SUMMONS.

In the circuit court of the state of Oregon for Jackson county.

Albert V. Schmitt, plaintiff, vs. Luella H. Schmitt, defendant.

To Luella H. Schmitt, the above named defendant:

In the name of the state of Oregon, you are hereby summoned and required to appear in the above entitled court and cause at the courthouse at Jacksonville, in Jackson county, Oregon, on or before six weeks from the date of the first publication of this summons, and answer the complaint filed against you in said court and cause, and in case you fail to appear and answer or otherwise plead within the time herein limited, the plaintiff will apply to the court for the relief prayed for in the complaint, viz: A decree dissolving the bonds of matrimony now and heretofore existing between the plaintiff and defendant, and for a decree of divorce in favor of the plaintiff and against the defendant.

The date of the first publication of this summons is Monday, February 21, 1910, and the date of the last publication and the last date for your appearance is Monday, April 4, 1910, and this summons is published by order of the Hon. F. M. Calkins, circuit judge for the First Judicial District of Oregon, by an order duly filed hereto of date February 19, 1910, ordering service of this summons by