

Coming Stories by
Edward Worthy
Edward Lawson
Dorothy West

The Advocate

The Finest Writers
Send Their Stories
First to the Illus-
trated Feature
Section

W. B. Ziff Co., 606 Dearborn St., Chicago
Advertising Representatives

ILLUSTRATED FEATURE SECTION—October 1, 1932

BLUE RIBBON FICTION IS FOUND EVERY WEEK IN
THE FEATURE SECTION

“THE CLEAN-UP”

A Young Evangelist Uses Gangster Methods to Clean Up Harlem Cabarets

Will Linda Make Her Escape from Ace's Strong Room with Its Electric Doorway? Will She Be Able to Join Fred Harris, Evangelist, in His Drive Against Numbers Barons and Nite Clubs in Harlem? Will the Big Gamblers Stop Now that their First Bullets Failed to Find a Vital Spot and Wounded the Clean-Up Preacher Instead of Killing Him?

By NICK LEWIS

WHAT HAS HAPPENED: Linda Allen, singer in Ace Hinda's cabaret, the Tom-Tom Club, falls in love with Fred Harris, a young evangelist from her home town, who is carrying on a campaign from his gospel tent in old Harlem of his places of night life. Willing the Tom-Tom to see Linda, Fred is shot at, but not killed, by some unknown assailant. Linda's contact with the Ace expires, but when she informs him of her desire to quit he is furious. He offers to compromise if Linda will influence Fred to give up his drive against Harlem's night life. He will give her no trouble. But if Fred's drive continues, he warns her, his life will be in constant danger. Linda refuses doubtfully to take his suggestion and he, infuriated, tries to force a promise from her. She screams and suddenly a man leaps through the door and buries himself on the Ace's back. NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY.

CHAPTER V

In the semi-darkness Linda watched with bated breath as the two men fought savagely back and forth across the room which served as the Ace's headquarters. Who was this who had come to her rescue? Who had dared to cross the Ace? Her questions were answered shortly as she watched the Ace catch his assailant, eyes burning with the accumulated hatred of many years, and back him against the steel-jacketed door.

"All!"

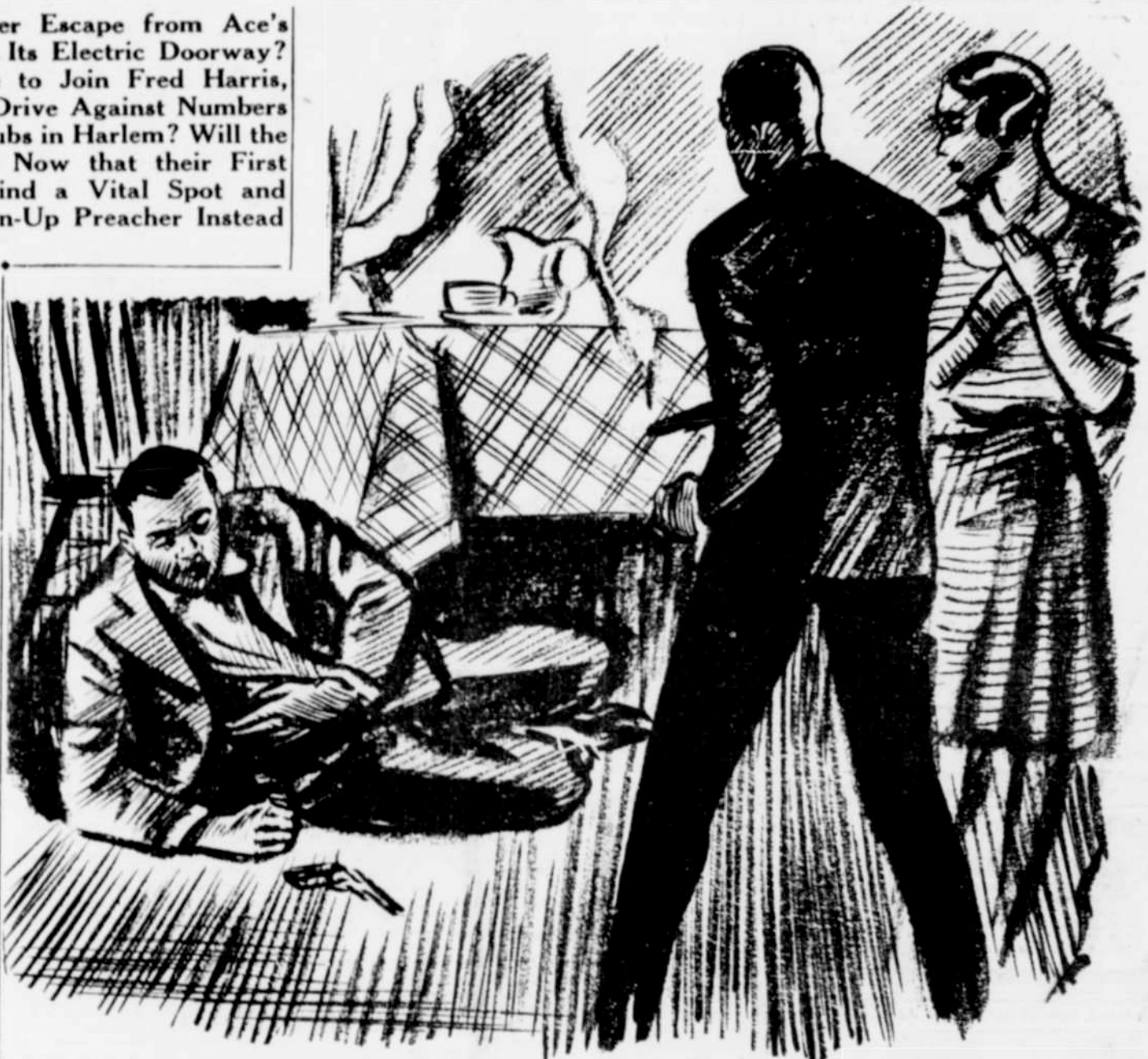
It was Al! Diminutive Al Collins, piano plunker with her act! For a long time she had known that he liked her, but somehow she had never given him credit for guts enough to step into a breach like this.

The Ace was nearly twice as big, and, with his gang, many times more powerful than Al. Yet the smaller man bore in courageously, frantically, with flaying arms that seemed endowed with almost incredible strength. The Ace had him now, was forcing him backwards across the room, bending his back across the corner of that heavy mahogany desk. With fury born of desperation he struggled to free himself, but the Ace was undoubtedly the stronger. Iron fingers bit into his neck; black spots danced before his eyes.

Linda, watching this amazing struggle from a corner of the room, saw plainly that Al stood not the slightest ghost of a chance against the Ace. Slowly his body was giving under the strain, bending backward sickeningly under the clawing fingers of the larger man. How long could he stand this torture? The Ace's face held a smile now, a grim, mocking smile of determination.

She gathered her wits quickly and looked about her frantically. Could she help? There on the desk, where the Ace always kept it for his own protection, lay a gleaming blue-steel revolver. She watched him now, panic-stricken, as he clawed for it with his one free arm. Then with a sudden determination she rushed to the desk; seized it herself.

The Ace, his attention fixed upon his struggle with Al, had almost completely forgotten about Linda. Now as he saw her grab the revolver,



In that brief moment of hesitation, Al's revolver was in action. The Ace went down with a bullet through his right hand and thigh.

snatching it out of his fingers just as he was reaching for it himself, sudden realization of her presence flooded him. He released his death-grip on Al and whirled suddenly upon the girl. But she halted him in his tracks, his nose pointed into the grim muzzle of his own revolver. He hesitated, then took his gun from her hand as though she were a baby.

In that brief second of hesitation Al's revolver was out and in action. Ace went down with a bullet through his right hand and the fleshy part of his thigh. His gun clattered to the floor. In a few brief seconds he had slumped to the ground, exhausted. Al picked up the Ace's revolver and crashed it, butt down, across his head. "Just," he said briefly, "for good luck."

Linda rushed to him, eyes expressing the sincere gratitude which filled her heart.

"Come on," he clipped out. "We'd better get out of this dump pronto. The Ace'll have his whole gang on our trails before tomorrow, and believe me, it's gonna be hot!"

which released the heavy door and together they swept out of the room, down the long, narrow hallway and into the street.

At the Harlem Hospital they found Fred almost completely recovered from his gunshot injuries. Gathered about his white enameled cot, they laid tentative plans for a retaliatory campaign, plans which would have startled all gangland had they been made public.

A week later the young evangelist returned to his Gospel Tent, and with him came Linda Allen and Al Collins. Linda's name and reputation was sure to draw crowds into the tent, and Fred's persuasive oratory could be counted upon to do the rest.

"We have within our midst," he told his many hundreds of listeners each night, "one of the most insidious systems of racketeering ever known to man. There's the numbers racket, the night club racket, the beer racket, and dozens of others, all formed for the single purpose of taking money out of the pockets

of you poor folks. Are we going to let them go on this way, robbing you, robbing your children of the advantages they should have? Are we going to sit by and starve while these gangsters, these racketeers grow fat off what you earn?"

And in reply there came a full-throated roar:

"NO!"

Harlem, at last, was waking up. Stirred by the sincerity and the irrefutability of Fred's arguments, its citizens were gradually being aroused out of the deadly torpor which had engulfed them for so many years.

"If the police won't put a stop to these evils," Fred told them, "we'll have to get busy ourselves. Every man among you will have to do his part by refusing to patronize those businesses which you know are controlled by gangsters and racketeers. Refuse to play the numbers any longer, refuse to give your money to those who guarantee you nothing in return. Refuse to go into those night clubs and cabarets where you are overcharged and fleeced at every

turn. Refuse to pay your good money for liquor which you know is likely to be poisonous and highly diluted. It's only in this way that we'll ever run these hoodlums out of town. There's no way in the world they can continue to exist in the face of such a concerted drive as we are planning here now!"

It was amazing to see how rapidly the movement took hold on the minds of Harlem's populace. Nightly the crowds at the gospel tent grew larger, nightly their denunciations of gangster rule grew stronger. A broadcasting system, sensing the increasing interest in the young evangelist's war against gangdom, carried Fred's voice into nearly every home in Harlem three times a week. And the newspapers, watching the extraordinary movement with increasing interest, chimed in with stirring editorials.

"The time has come," they all agreed, "when the concerted action which has long been Harlem's greatest need seems to be ripening into reality. In Fred Lewis, mili-

Continued on Page Four