

By WILLIAM T. BRANNON

date, the uncle had unexpectedly driven out of town. In desperation, the young man had stolen a car similar to it.

The girl was impressed and agreed to other dates. "I was afraid I'd lose her if I didn't have a car—and I needed one that looked the same. So I stole another one the next week. I thought surely my uncle would be back by the next Wednesday."

The uncle did return, but he had been in an accident and had sold what remained of his wrecked Buick.

By that time, the young man was so infatuated with the girl that he would do anything to avoid losing her. He was afraid to confess his deception, so each Wednesday he had managed to find and steal a

car similar to his uncle's Buick.

The judge who heard the story entered a conviction of automobile theft, but because the culprit had no previous record, the sentence was suspended, conditioned on his continuing good behavior.

"Tell me," the judge said curiously, "why did you always abandon the stolen car in the same place?"

"I didn't realize I had done that until the police told me," the young man replied. "After I took the girl home, I got rid of the car as fast as I could. I looked for a nice, quiet block with nobody on the street. I guess I just got in a rut."

The detectives waited impatiently. Well after midnight, a 1933 black Buick drew up to the curb.

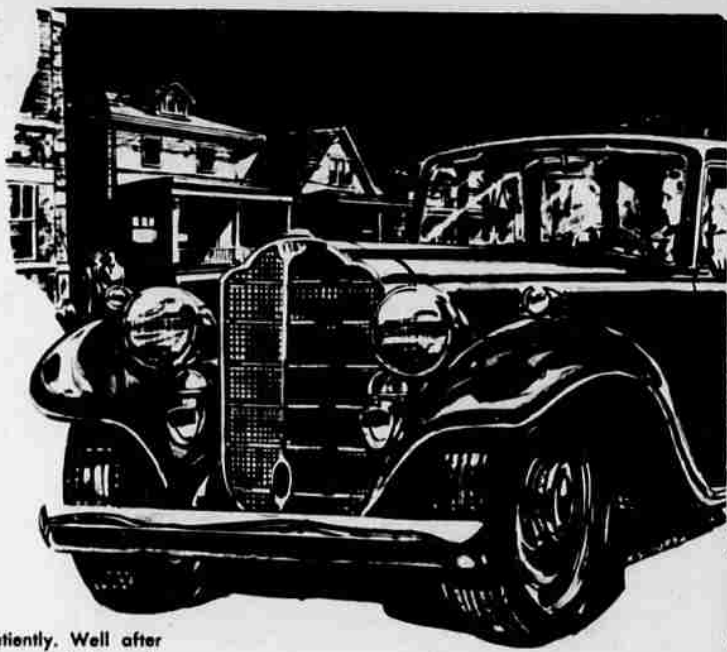


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