

MONEY TO BURN

BY PETER B. KYNE

W.N.U. SERVICE

"You can't. You can't prove anything, and I've got those books hidden where nobody can find them. Better accept my proposition. You'll get out with some thing, then. If you won't play the game I'll see to it that you get out with exactly what I get—a thing!"

"You forget that you are an accessory before the fact. In the eyes of the law you have committed a felony by aiding and abetting my uncle to defraud the government."

"I know. But when I turn state's evidence they won't do anything to me," Bunker laughed mirthlessly. "That's what immunity baths are for. They pay me for my information."

"Bunker, you're loathsome. Get out of my room. Quick. I don't like to rough-house a little old man like you, but if you're still standing there leering triumphantly at me thirty seconds from now I'll manhandle you. Seat, you pole cat!"

Following Bunker's unceremonious departure, Elmer Clarke sat down to do some solid thinking. He had need to, for if Bunker's threat should not prove to be an idle one, he was liable to find himself in a most unenviable position.

"Well, one thing is certain," he decided. "If the collector of internal revenue, eezed on by Bunker, should levy on the total residue of the estate, I'll be back, financially, where I was before Uncle Hiram died, but with this exception—I'll be out of a job. Well, I'll soon find another. My health is A-one again, so what the devil do I care for the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, provided I do not have to wait too long to marry Nellie?"

"Why, I almost forgot that I am mayor. I have got a job, after all, and it pays me one hundred dollars a month. Well, I've existed on less. Elmer, old settler, you're not licked at all, but oh, boy, when you get back to Pilarcitos your sense of humor is certainly going to be tested! They're going to tell this joke on you while anybody lives to remember it."

"Yes, indeed, Elmer Clarke,

you're right! Pilarcitos isn't going to be a pleasant place for you to live in hereafter, but—your going to live there because Nellie lives there, because you're the mayor and also a high school trustee, and you can't resign from either job just because you're a public joke. That would be hauling down your flag, which is alien to your nature—besides which, it would be the very finest way of losing Nellie. Guess I'll sing the national anthem of Siam!"

He decided to await developments. It occurred to him that if Bunker really had such a club to swing he would have swung it most profitably on Uncle Hiram before the latter departed for that mysterious land where income taxes are not. He certainly would not swing it until he had collected his own legacy from the estate, for Bunker was too cunning to make such a maladroit move. Perhaps his threat had been a monumental bluff.

"I think this is a matter I should take up with McPeake," he decided, and forthwith called upon the lawyer. McPeake listened to the incredible tale with a growing disgust manifesting itself on his features.

"You're a shrewd judge of human nature, Mr. Clarke," he declared when Elmer had finished his recital. "Bunker is a rat. I am positive, however, that he is bluffing you. If he had had such a weapon to use on your uncle, he would have used it. Consequently, I think that the best thing to do is to ignore him and proceed with the distribution of the estate."

"Well, I'll not accept any money that doesn't belong to me, Mr. McPeake."

"That's all very fine, but wait until you know for a certainty that it doesn't belong to you. A blackmailing charge is not sufficient grounds upon which to base an action of this kind; you cannot possibly be charged with being an accessory after the fact. I think this whole affair is a mare's nest and I advise you to run along to New York, enjoy yourself and return

here in about six weeks. I'm certain that nothing will happen until the decree of final distribution is signed; if it doesn't happen then, it will never happen. I have no apprehensions on the matter, Mr. Clarke. Remember, Bunker is an arrant coward."

"Well, perhaps you're right, but I do not think he is bluffing. I don't think he has the courage to bluff. I confess I'm afraid of him."

"Well, I'm not, and the first day he comes in here I'll have him on the carpet and shake him down. I'll write you the results of my inquisition."

So Elmer went on to New York. Five weeks later McPeake wrote him that the real estate had been sold, that all of the debts of the estate had been paid and that a final decree of distribution had been signed by the judge of the probate court. McPeake added that Elmer's share of the estate would amount to approximately \$218,000.

Immediately upon receipt of this information Elmer came on to Muscatine and the day after his arrival he was to meet McPeake in the latter's office. "Not a peep out of our friend Bunker," he announced, coming at once to the subject closest to Elmer's heart. "I had him in my office and gave him a bad half hour, but could not get any admission from him. He talked vaguely of things he could do, but seemed disinclined to do them. I think he was bluffing."

"Has he received his legacy, Mr. McPeake?"

"I handed him his check ten minutes ago. Thought I might as well get rid of him before you arrived." McPeake reached into his desk and drew out a formal typewritten receipt with a check for \$218,734.22 attached to it. "Sign here," he ordered—and Elmer signed and pouched the check.

You will now doubtless desire to look over my accounts," the lawyer continued, and spread before Elmer the final accounting he had prepared for the probate judge.

"Here is the statement of the appraised valuation of the estate, with an inventory, and here are all of the vouchers that go with the final accounting. However, I have a client calling in ten minutes, so I suggest that you take all of these papers back to your hotel and study them at your leisure. You might drop in at the bank on your way and have that check certified."

Elmer gathered up all of the papers and took his departure. The check he had received was on the First National bank, downstairs, so Elmer went into the bank first and approached the paying teller's window. "I wish you'd have this check certified," he said and handed it through the grill work.

The paying teller took it and departed. Five minutes later he returned and handed the check back to Elmer uncertified. "Sorry," he said, "but a distraint warrant has

been served on the bank by the local collector of internal revenue, and we are debarred from honoring any further checks on this account."

"I thank you," said Elmer politely and walked out. Up to McPeake's office he went. The client he had been expecting had not yet arrived and Elmer went at once into the lawyer's private office.

"Well, Bunker has made good," he announced. "I told you I thought he wasn't bluffing. He planned his coup so cleverly that he got his own check, rushed downstairs and cashed it just before the collector of internal revenue served warrant on the bank. The funds of the estate are all tied up until the government experts have gone over the books."

"Holy jumped-up Jehosaphat!" yelled Absolom McPeake. "No!"

"But yes!"

"I don't believe it!"

"Go downstairs and ask the paying teller of the First National bank. He'll enlighten you. I went down there and he enlightened me."

"The dirty dog!" McPeake raved. "The dirty little snake in the grass to do a thing like this!"

Elmer shrugged. "All I'm hoping is that the collector of internal revenue leaves me enough to pay my few debts. I owe the Pilarcitos Commercial Trust and Savings bank twenty thousand. If I get that much out of the wreck I'll be back where I started and in a month or two I'll be just as happy as if I had never been a millionaire." He smiled wanly. "You see I haven't got terribly accustomed to being a millionaire," he added. "Spending money is a fine art and I have never learned it. Cheer up, Mac. If I'd collected all of this inheritance and had got accustomed to living on a million-dollar scale, Bunker's action would have broken my heart."

"You are game," McPeake declared admiringly, and called for his secretary. "Get the collector of internal revenue on the line for me," he ordered.

Thereafter for five minutes he listened on the line while the collector of internal revenue talked. Silently McPeake hung up.

"Licked!" he croaked. "Licked to a frazzle!"

"All right, I'm licked," Elmer reported calmly. "What interests me is to know how I was licked."

"Bunker went to the collector of internal revenue directly after you gave him your ultimatum and turned the real set of books and vouchers over to them, and for five weeks a corps of expert accountants has been experting them. The statute of limitations has run against the income tax returns for 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916 and 1917, but they have you nailed on the returns from then on. They have made up the tax returns for those years as they should have been made up had your uncle made an honest return, and the collector informs me that the estate owes the

Birkenfeld

Mrs. Walter Huntington, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh M. Jones, and husband of Vancouver, Washington, were visitors June 22 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh M. Jones. Howard and Lonn Jones returned home with them to spend vacation with their sisters and brother in Portland and Vancouver.

June 22 Mrs. Hugh M. Jones entertained Mrs. George Carl and Mrs. Hedlund.

R. G. Cook of Birkenfeld went to Vader, Washington, Friday and returned Sunday. Mr. Cook's mother living at Vader is quite ill.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Daggett of Vesper spent Saturday and Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Turner.

ANIMAL KILLER IS SENTENCED TO JAIL

Joe Trendem was found guilty and sentenced to six months in the county jail Tuesday by Justice of the Peace W. J. Fullerton on a charge of larceny. The complaining witness, Henry Hergenreder, accused Trendem and two other men of larceny of a pig on June 16. Trendem was caught and placed under arrest but the other men escaped.

There have been a number of cases of theft of animals, in most cases the animals being immediately killed by the culprit and the carcass carried away. It has been assumed by officers of the county that the thief or thieves had used the meat for food as no trace has been had of attempts to sell.

In the apprehension of Trendem, the authorities are in the hopes that they may have the ring leader and that further cases

of this type will not occur. —St. Helens Mist.

Occasional crimes of this kind have been reported from the vicinity of Vernonia, one of the most recent being the slaughter of a cow in a field near Sunset camp about three weeks ago.

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THE LODGES

Order of Eastern Star
Nehalom Chapter 153, O. E. S.
Regular communication first and third Wednesdays of each month, at Masonic Temple. All visiting sisters and brothers welcome.

Mrs. Leona McGraw, W. M.
Mrs. Alma Bell, Secretary.

A. F. & A. M.
Vernonia Lodge No. 184
A. F. & A. M. meets at Masonic Temple, Stated Communication First Thursday of each month. Special called meetings on all other Thursday nights 7:30 p.m. Visitors most cordially welcome.

E. G. Anderson, W. M.
W. E. Bell, Secretary.

Mountain Heart Rebekah Lodge No. 243
No. 243, I.O.O.F., meets every second and fourth Thursdays in I. O. O. F. hall, Vernonia. Visitors always welcome.

Grace Sunell, Noble Grand.
Helen Fogel, Secretary

I. O. O. F.
I.O.O.F.—Vernonia Lodge No. 246 meets every Tuesday night at 8 o'clock, in I.O.O.F. hall. Visitors always welcome.

J. F. Jones, N. G.
Chas. Holt, V. G.
John Glassner, Sec'y.
Mike Miller, Treasurer.
R. C. Stanton, Fin. Sec'y.

Pythian Sisters
Vernonia Temple 61 meets every 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in W.O.W. hall.

Isabel Culbertson, M. E. C.
Clara Kerns, M. or R. & C.

KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS HARDING LODGE 116
Meets every Monday night in the W.O.W. hall. Visiting brothers welcome.

H. Mayfield, C. C.
H. Culbertson, K.R.S.

American Legion
Vernonia Post 119, American Legion. Meets 2nd and 4th Tuesdays each month, 8 p. m. Dan Nelson, Adjutant; P. Hughes, Commander.

INDEPENDENCE DAY



LET US HAVE A JOLLY GOOD TIME CELEBRATING, BUT WHILE WE CELEBRATE MAY WE REALIZE THAT TO BE TRUE PATRIOTS WE MUST BE LOYAL CITIZENS, EACH DOING HIS SHARE TO MAINTAIN OUR NATIONAL IDEALS AND KEEP AMERICA AS IT IS, THE BEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD IN WHICH TO LIVE.

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