

IT was hot and cloudy in New York City on the morning of Tuesday, July 26, 1938. Patrolman Charles V. Glasco, of the First District Traffic Summons Squad, began his tour of duty at 8 a.m., his duty being to serve summonses on persons who were guilty of parking violations on Thirty-seventh Street between Fifth and Ninth Avenues. An amiable, rather rotund man of thirty-five and better than average height, with sharp brown eyes and black hair quite thinned out on top, Glasco had been in the Police Department for fourteen years and was highly regarded by the other members of his unit, Traffic C, as a teller of dialect stories. Glasco was proud of his Irish ancestry and sensitive because his surname was often thought not to be Irish.

WHENEVER this happened, he would do a slow burn and then produce his membership card in the Ancient Order of Hibernians, which he carried for just this emergency. That Tuesday, Glasco was due to finish his tour of duty at 4 p.m. In Woodhaven, that morning, his wife, Margaret, had told him that there would be liver and bacon, one of his favourite dishes, for dinner. He was not feeling too spry; his sacroiliac had been paining him lately, and his back was strapped with adhesive tape. At noon, when he made his routine hourly check-in with his station from a call box at the corner of Thirty-seventh and Eighth Avenue, he was ordered to report at once to Sergeant Murphy, who was at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Fifty-fifth Street, and lend a hand in easing a big traffic tie-up there.

As Glasco neared the intersection, he saw a staring crowd on the sidewalks, and on the street two hook-and-ladder trucks, a rescue truck of the police Emergency Division, three police radio cars, and an ambulance. Sergeant Murphy was standing on the south steps of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, at the north-west corner, mopping his brow. "Take a look up there," he said, pointing at the Hotel Gotham, directly across Fifty-fifth Street. The Gotham's roof is two hundred and two feet above the sidewalk. On a ledge four floors below the roof and about seventy feet from the Fifth Avenue corner of the building, Glasco saw a hatless, coatless man standing outside an open window, with his back against the edge of a stone architectural ornament of floral design, a yard wide and almost

shoulder high, that protruded from the wall. The man at the moment was facing westward, toward Sixth Avenue. As Glasco watched, a woman leaned out the window to the right of where the man was standing and beckoned to him. The man whirled in her direction, then crouched, holding on to the stone ornament with one hand and raising his other arm to his head, as though to ward off a blow.

Glasco, a man with an exceptionally fine memory, recalls that the Sergeant said, "That'd be his sister, I guess. He's been on that ledge about half an hour now. Come out around eleven-forty. I wish to hell they'd get him in before he louses up all the traffic on Manhattan Island."

"Well, if they don't jump the first hour, they never jump," Glasco said. "At least, that's what I've heard many a time from Emergency Division guys that spent years working on ledge walkers. Why don't they grab him?"

"Can't get at him," the Sergeant said. "He threatens to jump every time a cop comes near that window."

"I'd get at him," Glasco said.



"I'd stop being a cop for a while. I'd get at him."

"Well, maybe you would, at that," the Sergeant said. "You always was a pretty fair actor. It's worth trying, anyhow. Go on up to Room 1714 and tell the lieutenant I sent you. See if you can get that poor loopy in off that ledge. They tell me he's only a kid. Con him in off that ledge and maybe we can have a little peace down here."

THE man on the ledge was John William Warde, aged twenty-six, who lived with his parents in Southampton. His father, John A. Warde, was an employee of the Railway Express company there. Young Warde had graduated from high school just in time for the depression. He was a quiet, slender, good-looking boy, with thick, curly black hair. He was fond of sports, music, and poetry. In high school, he had had the reputation of being moody. For some years, he had

been a clerk in a Southampton bank, where he was known as an intelligent worker, though a bit peculiar at times. In July, 1937, he had tried to kill himself with a knife. After he had recovered from his wounds, he was committed to the State Hospital, at Central Islip, for observation. Three months later, in November, he was released. A notation on his discharge papers read, "The patient's manic-depressive psychosis seems to have arrested itself."

MR. and Mrs. Patrick A. Valentine, Jr., a warm-hearted couple in their mid-thirties, who had spent many summers in Southampton and knew the Wardes, hired John, after his release, as a companion for their two small sons and as a casual chauffeur and handyman. They hoped that a job in agreeable surroundings would help him conquer his melancholia and recover his self-confidence. The Valentines were well-to-do. Mr. Valentine's father went to America from Scotland when he was a young man, went to work for Armour & Co., in Chicago, became its financial director, and married the widow of Philip D. Armour, Jr. In 1910, he moved his family to New York. He died in 1916. Patrick Valentine, Jr., after his marriage, bought a summer place in Southampton, which he called Valmay. Mr. Valentine was associated with the Clara Laughlin Travel Service, which was organized by the indefatigable Midwestern maiden lady whose guidebooks had become almost standard equipment for the American tourist.

EIGHT days before John Warde climbed out on the ledge of the Gotham, he drove in his father's car to a drawbridge outside Hampton Bays, walked to the middle of the bridge, and stood gazing down at the water. His manner aroused the suspicions of the bridge tender, who chased him off the bridge, took a licence number of his car, and informed the police of the incident. They found John at his home, but as he had not made an attempt at suicide, they simply gave him a talking to. The Valentines, thinking that a change of scene might help, decided to take him to Chicago for the week-end. John's twenty-two-year-old married sister, Katherine, accompanied them. John swam in Lake Michigan, saw the Cubs (his favourite ball club) play, and attended a concert in Grant Park. The Valentines and Katherine did everything possible to make things pleasant, but they couldn't cheer him up much. They

got back to New York on Tuesday morning at ten o'clock, and went to Room 1714 at the Gotham, which the Valentines had been using as their city residence for the past year. Mr. Valentine went off to his travel agency, a few blocks from the hotel, leaving John with the two women, who chatted about the heat and what they had to do that day.

IN the course of their conversation, Katherine said that she was going to phone a doctor and make an appointment for John.

"No!" John said.

"All right, all right, keep your hair on," Katherine said.

John took off his coat, folded it carefully, and laid it on an armchair, then he tucked his blue necktie inside his shirt. He was wearing freshly pressed grey flannel trousers, and his black shoes had a high shine. Katherine remembers that she was thinking at the time how nice he looked; he was always fastidious about his appearance. Several menus were slid under the door, and they ordered lunch from room service. Then, in a quiet voice, John said, "I'm going out the window," and did so before Katherine or Mrs. Valentine could stop him. Katherine rushed to the phone and began screaming at the switchboard operator that her brother had jumped out the window. Mrs. Valentine ran to the window—the room had only one—then turned and cried, "No, no, he's here, Katherine, here on the ledge! He's all right." Katherine went to the window and looked at her brother; then she looked down. The ledge on which he was standing is eighteen inches wide and a hundred and sixty feet above the street. She looked at John again, started to speak to him, and fainted.

THE man on the ledge was noticed almost immediately by pedestrians, and a crowd gathered. The policeman directing traffic at the Fifty-fifth Street intersection left his post and hurried up to Room 1714. He leaned out the window, which was deeply recessed and had starched white curtains, and shouted at John, "Hey, you! Come in here! What are you doing out there, anyway?" John was a yard to the east, poised on the balls of his feet at the edge of the ledge, like a swimmer about to dive. "Don't you come near me or I'll jump," he said to the policeman. There was a look in his eyes that made the policeman withdraw from the window at once and telephone Headquarters and the Fire Department. Soon the hook-and-ladder trucks, the rescue squad, the ambulance, and sixty policemen, headed by an inspector, arrived.

The Police and Fire Departments have many techniques for saving a person who is threatening suicide, most of them involving getting hold of him before he sees his rescuers, but John was standing too far from the window to be grabbed. Lieutenant William Klotzbach, a lariat-and-rope expert of the Emergency Division, went to the corresponding window on the eighteenth floor, but another ledge made it impossible to lasso him from there. Then it was discovered that the cornice of the hotel roof extended out so far that John would see a boy's chair being lowered long before its occupant could get near him. He was too high to be reached by the fire ladders. The firemen had spread a canvas life net, with a red circle painted in its centre, on the sidewalk and were ready to snatch it up if John jumped, but they knew that it could not hold a body falling that far. Had there been a building at least as high across Fifty-fifth Street from the Gotham, some kind of rescue contrivance might have been rigged up in it, but the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church has a comparatively low, and sharply pitched roof. All the police could think of to do, then, was to wait John out. At least once and probably twice before in the past year, he had tried to end his life; now he could snap the thread of it by merely moving an inch or two. John would have to be persuaded

to save himself—by someone who already had his trust or could win it, or by his own reasoning or his own weariness.

By now, Room 1714 was full of plainclothesmen, policemen, hotel people, doctors, and reporters. Katherine and Mrs. Valentine had been put in Room 1716, which was the next room east. Again and again they went to their window to plead with John. Reporters wrote down their conversations. One went like this:

"John," his sister said, "it's Katherine talking to you. It's your sister, who loves you. Come in, darling. We all love you, John. You definitely know that. Come in and have a drink, John, darling. You have so much to live for, so many good times ahead of you. Oh, please, please, please, John, come on in! Johnny!"

"I want to be left alone," John

"Hello, there, John. Say, I've got a proposition to make to you. We have a nice lunch here. Come on in and help us to eat it, and then you and I'll go to the ball game. The Cubs are playing here to-day—those Cubs of yours."

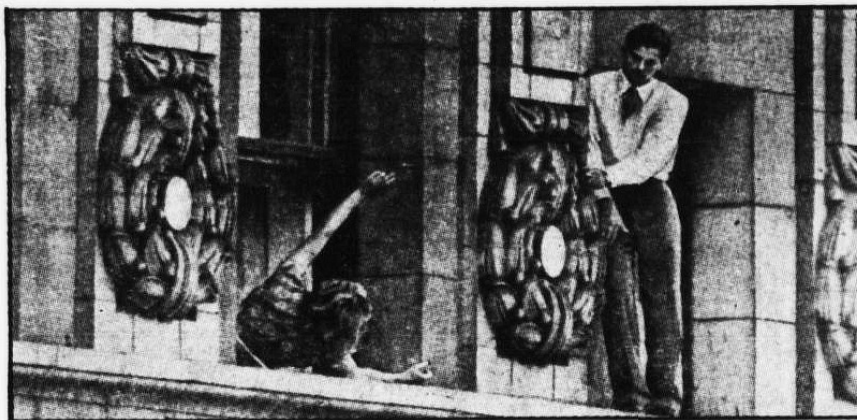
"Who are they playing?"

"The Dodgers."

"I wouldn't care to see the Dodgers," John said.

THE police tried to phone John's father, in Southampton, but he was on vacation, touring Vermont in his car. Mrs. Warde didn't know just where. She was sick in bed and couldn't go to New York. The police asked her if she had any ideas about how to get her son in off the ledge, but she had none. The Vermont State Police were requested to find Mr. Warde. John asked for a glass of water, but he refused to let anybody hand it to

"Well, it's really tough, John, and I wouldn't kid you. Oh, I suppose if a man was single, it wouldn't be so bad, and the relief people mean well and do the best they can, but when you got a wife and three kids—boy, I'm telling you! Well, John, I'm just giving you my angle on this situation. O.K., you're out there on that ledge, and it's strictly your own business, but suppose something bad should happen to you? You know what it'd do? It'd besmirch the hotel, that's what it'd do. John, a hotel gets besmirched, its business gets lousy. Business gets lousy, the hotel starts laying off people. And who do they lay off first? The ones they took on last. So if anything should happen to you out there, John, it's back on relief for me and the wife and the three kids. John, I can't tell you how much I need this job—



Warde's sister, Mrs. Katherine Bell, with a rope tied round her waist, pleaded hysterically with her brother to come inside.

said quietly and politely. "I've got to work things out for myself. I've got problems to think about."

"Oh, John, darling, everybody's got problems. You can work yours out somewhere else. We've always been so close, Johnny, haven't we? Just like brother and sister—I mean just like a couple of brothers—haven't we? You're the best brother in the world."

"No, I'm not. You think I haven't got character."

"Oh, darling, darling, I never said you didn't have character. You have character. You've got more character than I ever thought of having. Johnny, please, please, please come back to us."

"I want to be left alone here awhile."

KATHERINE began to weep, and Mrs. Valentine took her place.

"Come on in, John. Forget all about everything that's happened. Please be nice and come in."

"Where's my sister? Where's Katherine?"

"Katherine's asking for you, John. Come in, dear, please do. Come along in and have a nice lunch and forget everything."

"She wants to send me away. Back to that asylum."

"No, she doesn't, John. I swear she doesn't. Nobody in the world wants to do you any harm. I promise that nothing will happen to you, if you'll just come in."

"I've got to think things out for myself."

Once, John said to Mrs. Valentine, "I can't get over that fence."

John was standing on the west side of the ornament, which was halfway between the windows of Room 1714 and Room 1716, so Mrs. Valentine thought he meant he couldn't get past the ornament, where the ledge was prohibitively narrow. "If you're frightened about crossing that fence, John, we'll get someone to help you," she said. "I'll have him here in no time."

"No, thank you," he said. "I'd like to be left alone for a while, please."

Mr. Valentine, who had been summoned from his office, now went to the window.

him, insisting that it be put on the ledge and that nobody should be near either window when he moved to pick it up. When he stooped for it, women in the crowds below screamed.

BEFORE reporting to the lieutenant in Room 1714, Patrolman Glasco stopped in the lobby to borrow the coat of the huskiest bellboy on duty. In the corridor outside Room 1714, he put on the coat—it wasn't quite big enough to button across his stomach and was a bit tight under the arms—and removed his cap, shield, pistol holster, and cartridge belt. He was worried about his police trousers, which didn't match the bellboy's coat, and about his regulation blue chambray summer shirt, because John might recognise them. The lieutenant and he agreed that a policeman in uniform would mean "keeper" to John.

Glasco pushed aside the curtains



and leaned out the window. "Hello, John," he said easily.

"Who are you?" The suspicion in John's eyes bored into Glasco.

"I'm a new bellboy here at the Gotham, John. Matter of fact, I just got the job this morning. Listen, John, I don't want to butt in on what's strictly your own business, but I'd like to explain my angle on this situation to you. John, I got a wife and three kids. [Actually, Glasco had one daughter at that time.] Before the hotel took me on this morning, we'd all been on relief since I can't hardly remember when we wasn't. You ever been on relief, John?"

There was no answer, but the suspicion had gone out of John's eyes and his face had softened.

how much five people need it." "Gosh, I wouldn't want you to have to go back on relief," John said. "Could I please have another drink of water?"

"You sure could," Glasco said, picking up the empty glass on the ledge. Inside the room, he put the glass down and ripped off the bellboy's coat. "He's thirsty," he told the lieutenant. "Rope me up. This time, I'll lay my pratt on the sill and get as close to him as I can. When he takes the glass, I'll grab him by the wrist and then you can reel me in."

Glasco rolled up the right leg of his trousers. The lieutenant put a slip noose around Glasco's leg, below the knee, then pulled the trouser leg down, concealing the rope. Out in the hall, eight large policemen from the Emergency Division took hold of the other end of the rope.

"If he falls or jumps after you get ahold of him, keep hanging on," the lieutenant said. "You won't drop more than five feet."

Glasco gave him a cop's look, filled the glass from a pitcher of ice water, drew back the curtains, and sat down, sidesaddle, on the window sill, his left leg crooked under him, his right leg inside the room and invisible to John. Glasco was facing east, toward John. John eased away from Glasco, and stood again on the edge of the ledge, taut as a cat arching its back.

"Easy, now, take it easy," Glasco said, keeping his eyes on John's and thrusting the glass toward him. "Here it is, and it's good and cold, too."

John inched farther away, his eyes once more suspicious. "No, I won't drink it unless you have a drink of it first," he said.

Glasco grinned. "Why, John, you don't think I'd slip you a Mickey, do you?" He took several swallows from the glass. "See, John, it's just plain water, like you asked for. Here." He again thrust the glass toward John, but not very far, hoping that John would come close enough to be grabbed.

John stood his ground. "Give it to me with your left hand," he said.

There was nothing for Glasco to do but obey. John reached for the glass with his right arm and took it, by the rim, between his index and middle fingers. Glasco noticed that his nails had been bitten to the quick. While John drank, his eyes never left Glasco. When he finished, he bent down and slid the tumbler back toward the window. There were screams from below. John stood erect on the edge of the ledge. Slowly, slowly, he teetered forward on the balls of his feet and stared at the crowd. The screaming grew louder. Glasco felt sick at his stomach and bit his lip to keep from shouting.

"Look at those morons," John said. Then, slowly, he leaned back. Glasco began breathing again.

"Like some more water, John?"
"No, thank you, not now."
"Care for a smoke?" Glasco shook a pack of cigarettes until one stuck up.

"Why, yes, thank you, I would. Will you hold them in your left hand, please?"

JOHN cautiously extracted the upstanding cigarette from the pack, lit it, and smoked hungrily. "I see you're a Lucky smoker," he said. "I smoke Philip Morris myself. I've got some in my coat pocket in the room. No reason I should be smoking your cigarettes."

"Think nothing of it."

A silence.

"Why should you be kind to me? You never set eyes on me before."

"It's like I already told you, John, we're both tied up in this thing together. The way I got it figured, as long as you're in trouble out there, so are my wife and kids. Besides—well, maybe this'll sound fresh from a bellboy, but you look regular to me. You look like the type of man I'd like to have for a friend. Do you think we could be friends, John?"

"Of course we could," John said. Glasco leaned far out the window and stretched his right arm forward to shake hands. The expression of cunning returned to John's eyes, and with the tip of his right little finger he touched Glasco's palm for a fraction of a second.

Glasco laughed. "You don't trust me much, do you, John? Well, listen, John, I trust you, and that not only goes for me but for the wife and kids, too. We're trusting you not to let anything bad happen to you or to us."

Another silence.

"I can't get over that fence," John said slowly. "I've got a momentous decision to make. This thing has got to be thought out."

"Sure, I appreciate that, John. Maybe I can help you."

"Thanks, but I have to work it out alone."

The rope around Glasco's leg was jerked. "Well, whatever you work out, John, I want you to promise me not to let anything bad happen to you."

"I'll be working it out."

"That's fine, John. I'll be back in ten minutes. Just don't forget that we're all in there rooting for you."

FIFTY-FIFTH STREET has now been closed to vehicles and the section of it immediately in front of the Gotham had been cleared of spectators and was open only to policemen, firemen, and members of the Press. News-rec cameramen were setting up their tripods, and photographers from the papers and the wire service were lying on their backs on the sidewalk, aiming at John with telescopic cameras. The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church had curtly refused to let them use its roof or steeples. There were photographers on rooftops and in the upper windows of office buildings as far as three hundred feet away. At 711 Fifth Avenue, half a block north, the pioneer television section of the National Broadcasting Company was telecasting John. In the same building, Dave Driscoll, of the special-features section of Station WOR, began putting John—or, rather, a breathless des-

cription of his plight—on the air. Hawkers were peddling cheap opera glasses to people on the streets. Passengers craned and goggled at John from the buses that crawled along Fifth Avenue. As if it were the afternoon of the crucial game of a World Series, people all over New York gathered around the radios of parked taxis. The switchboards of the West Forty-seventh Street and East Fifty-first Street station houses were flooded with calls, mostly from givers of advice.

Down on Fifth Avenue, a cluster of John's fellow-men discussed him:

"It's a guy who's trying to settle a family scrap."

"Yeh. His wife's threatening to leave him."

"Fellow told me it's a broker trying to get money out of his relatives."

"I heard he's an auditor wanted for absconding."

"Five'll get you eight he don't jump."

"Oh, it's probably just some advertising stunt—a publicity gag or something."

"My God, Louise! The way he's got his head turned now, he's a dead ringer for Cary Grant."

THE rope around Glasco's leg had been twitched because he was wanted in Room 1714, where a conference was going on between the police and Dr. Jacques C. Presner, the house physician at the nearby Hotel Dorset, who had been summoned by the Gotham because its own house physician was out of town. Dr. Presner was a French-Canadian by birth and a graduate of McGill University. Like any other hotel doctor, he had had plenty of opportunities for wondering about the strangeness of the human mind.

"That kid out there is plenty smart—very foxy," Glasco said to Dr. Presner. "The way things are now, you can't possibly get near enough to him to grab a belt or a sleeve or a trouser cuff, not speaking about an arm or a leg or a hand. I tried a couple of fast ones on him, but he saw through them in a flash. He does go for that about me being a bellhop with a wife and three kids. It has him worried. I got confidence I can talk him in, all right, only it'll take some time."

"Maybe if we could get one of those things they use in grocery to take cans and stuff down off the high shelves," a voice said. "Snap that on his ankle and, bing, you got him!"

"Or how about you catch hold of him with a pair of ice tongs?" another voice suggested. "You whip them into something like a leg or somewhere, and right away his mind gets off whatever's bothering him upstairs and goes right down to where the pain is. Be a cinch to sew him up later, wouldn't it, Doc?"

"Neither of those things makes any sense," said someone else. "If Glasco went out there carrying ice tongs or a grocery grabber, that boy might take off after one look at him. You're forgetting that all he's got to do is give the least little twitch and he's away. No, sir! This thing is strictly a kid-glove proposition. It can't be licked by anything but patience. We got to tire him out. Glasco, get as much of that ice water in him as you can—pretty soon he'll have to go to the bathroom. Keep on being nice to him. Get him talking about himself. You started out fine with him, so stay with it. Will you take a look at him, now, Doc?"

GLASCO slipped the noose off his leg and went out into the crowded hall. From other rooms he could hear the sounds of telephones ringing and reporters talking.

"How goes it, Charlie?" asked one of his eight anchor men.

"Well, it's slow, but I think we'll make it O.K. How's his sister?"

"Lying down in there. She ain't in too good shape."

"Listen, Charlie, all I ask is you get him in by four. I got a very

important date then," said a second anchor man.

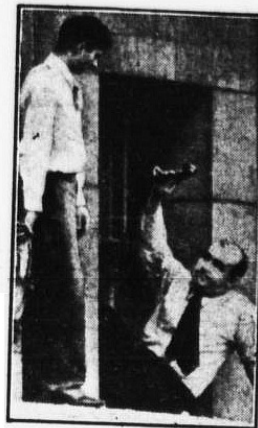
"You think I'm dawdling? I got a date myself—to eat some liver and bacon."

"Say, Charlie, does that kid out there go for dames?" still another anchor man asked.

"How should I know? Why?"

"Oh, nothing. I was just thinking."

Glasco smoked a couple of cig-



Patrolman Charles Glasco, who spent hours pleading with Warde, hands him a telephone to enable his mother to talk to him.

arettes. Then a sergeant stuck his head out of Room 1714 and called him. Dr. Presner had returned from the window a moment before. "He's asking for you," he told Glasco. "Where's that bellboy? Where's that bellboy?" was the last thing he said to me. We had a nice talk. I tried to impress on him that everybody in here is his friend. He wasn't hostile at all. I think he'd like to come in, but he's afraid of the humiliation and possible punishment he'd have to face after causing all this hullabaloo. It strikes me that he's getting quite a kick out of causing it—of being, for once, the monarch of all he surveys, you might say. I get a feeling of power drive there. Did he teeter on the edge and look down below while you were talking to him?"

"My God, yes!" Glasco said. "And it scared the hell out of me."

"He has remarkable control of his equilibrium," Dr. Presner said. "And here's another thing. I've read quite a lot about the subconscious mind, but this is the first time I've ever had a definite sense of watching it in operation. You see it whenever you put something up to him and he starts thinking it over. It's in the way his face and hands and his limbs behave when the thinking is going on. You can



almost hear one part of his mind tell him, 'You're a brave boy, John, you're wonderful. All these people admire you for standing New York on its ear. That man who just talked to you is your admirer and friend.' And while this is going on, there's a bodily nod. His head's nodding slightly, and the rest of his body seems to be telling you, 'Yes, I know you're there. Give me time. What you just said is getting my most favourable consideration.' Then the bodily nod will stop while the other part of his mind seems to say, 'Watch out! Don't do anything rash. There may be danger ahead. Don't trust this man.' This part of his mind

will finally dominate, and suddenly he'll shake his head and say out loud, 'Nope, I can't do it. Sorry.'

"Any ideas about what we can do, Doc?" the sergeant asked.

"I think that our plan of attack ought to be to influence his mental attitude in the right direction. Glasco, here, is absolutely our best bet. Let him talk with him as long as he can, and whenever he gets tired, I'll spell him."

Glasco slipped the noose around his leg again and went back to the window.

"You're late," John said. He had on a wrist watch and he looked at it. "You said you'd be back in ten minutes, and it's more than fifteen. Nearly sixteen."

JOHN and Glasco talked for an hour and a half. They discussed picnics and whether a day picnic or a night picnic was better; John thought that night picnics were more romantic, but Glasco pointed out that by day the bugs weren't so bad, poison ivy was easier to dodge, children did not tread or sit on food as frequently, and there were things like fat men's races and ball games between the marrieds and the singles. John said that he didn't think the Brooklyn club would finish in the first division, and again he refused an invitation to attend the Cubs-Dodgers game. Then the talk turned to what sports John went in for himself. He mentioned ping-pong, which Glasco had watched but never played, and badminton, which he had never heard of and at first confused with backgammon. Swimming was John's favourite sport. He loved to take a long swim and then lie on the beach covered with sun-tan oil.

"Gee, that must be a great life, John. It shows in that streamlined build of yours. Do you exercise regular, besides?"

"Oh, sure, and I work with dumbbells, too. Listen, when I come in there, I'll take you out to my house and show you the swell-est pair of dumbbells you ever saw."

Glasco strove to keep the elation out of his voice. "Well, let's get going, then," he said casually.

"What do you mean?"

"Let's go see those dumbbells of yours. Matter of fact, for a long time now I've been wanting to get rid of some of this lard I'm carrying, and probably working with dumbbells is exactly what I need. If I like yours, I'll get me a pair of them, and you can coach me what to do to develop a decent build. Come on, John, you got me all hopped up. Let's grab a train before that commuters' rush starts."

Until then, Glasco had not seen what Dr. Presner called "the bodily nod," but now he saw it.

"Not for a while yet," John said, at last.

"When, then?"

"I'll let you know."

Glasco was not discouraged. He was convinced that the jam had finally begun to break. During the long conversation, John had drunk a few glasses of water, each of which Glasco had drunk from first and then delivered with his left hand. Now Dr. Presner replaced him at the window.

AS the afternoon wore on, the crowds had swelled, and Chief Inspector Alexander C. Anderson, who was by now in charge, kept sending for more men. There were finally three hundred police on the scene. Deputy Mayor Henry H. Curran came to see if he could help, and so did Supreme Court Justice John E. McGehean. Among other arrivals at the Gotham that afternoon were Miss Evelyn MacDonell, "the Angel of the Bowery," who had come up from the Beacon Relief Mission with her father; a fellow in white who said he was "an Army man" and offered to use jujitsu to rescue John; a female faith healer with "scientifically worked out slogans," who insisted on kneeling in the lobby and praying; and a Miss Diane Greal, who had coaxed Maurice Nast, a sixty-four-year-old salesman, off a ledge of the Pennsylvania Hotel in December of 1936. Miss Greal informed the Press that someone had

summoned her by telephone. So many volunteers claiming to possess special skills were swarming into the hotel that the police set up a check point at the entrance.

While Dr. Presner sat on the window sill, his wife and his sister happened to stroll up Fifth Avenue. They were stopped by the crowd at Fifty-fifth Street and stared in the direction everybody else was staring in. The sister uttered a small yelp. "Isn't that Jacques up there hanging out of that window?" she said. Mrs. Presner, trying to control her terror, said yes, it was. No one they asked could explain what was going on, so they struggled through the crowd to the hotel, but were refused permission to enter. A little later, in the home of a friend who had invited them to tea, they found out what they wanted to know from the radio accounts, which millions of people, all over the Western Hemisphere, were now listening to.

SITTING on the sill, the Doctor could hear, booming through the hotel's open windows, the voices of announcers describing John's actions and his own. He complained about this, and the police made the thoughtless guests close their windows or shut off their radios. In the suburbs, women who had been listening to the broadcasts all afternoon phoned husbands and children working in the midtown section to stop on their way home and see the spectacle on Fifty-fifth Street. Many firms whose offices afforded good views of the Gotham were unable to get their employees to leave at quitting time.

Mrs. Charles V. Glasco, who had been busy all day with her housework, hadn't got around to listening to the radio. At a quarter to six, her telephone rang. It was Augie Schmidt, the neighbourhood butcher and a friend of the family.

"Well, Maggie, with your old

man out on that ledge, I guess you'll be keeping that liver and bacon on the back of the stove for a while," he said.

"Oh, dear," Mrs. Glasco said resignedly. "What's he up to now?"

"You didn't hear yet? Ho, ho! Turn your radio on."

SINCE breakfast, John had subsisted on nothing but Lucky Strikes and water. Toward the end of the afternoon, he asked for a cup of black coffee. After it had been submitted to the Glasco Test for noxious drugs, he ordered that cream and sugar be put in. The strategy of filling John up with liquid had not worked. Nor did he appear at all wearied after standing in one spot for hours, though many of the spectators on the streets below were exhausted by the tension. Glasco conversed with John off and on the whole afternoon in the friendliest way, slipping the noose on or off his leg each time he took over or was relieved at the window, and by six o'clock he had extracted four or five half promises that John would come in. But as the light began to go, a change came over John. The next time Glasco asked him to come in, he refused.

"No," he said, brusquely.

"No? Oh, now, look, fella, what kind of talk is that? This is your pal the bellhop here, the guy with the wife and kids that'll go back on relief if you don't co-operate. You already told me a dozen times you'd take me out to your house and show me those dumbbells of yours. Don't you remember? Don't you, John?"

No answer.

"Did I do or say anything to make you sore? John, if I did, I'm sorry and I apologise. Is there anything you want, John? Anything I can do for you? Just name it and you can have it?"

There was another silence, and

then John said, "I want to talk to my sister."

"John, your sister's in bed with a terrible sick headache. She's taken this thing very hard and she's in bad shape. We better not bother her right now, John."

"I want to talk to Katherine."

THE police had set up a field-telephone system inside the hotel and in the surrounding region, so that they could communicate with one another without having to depend upon the Gotham's swamped switchboards. One line went across Fifty-fifth Street to a sergeant standing on the steps of the church. His job was to keep his superiors inside the hotel informed on John's movements. A small cordon of policemen protected the sergeant from zealots who squirmed through the police lines and tried to press advice upon him. Glasco went in and brought a telephone to the window. John, who was still in Room 1716, and then reached the instrument toward John with his right hand. John shook his head. Glasco switched the phone to his left hand, and John took it. Glasco could not hear what he said, but from his frown, he inferred that the conversation wasn't going satisfactorily. In the next room, Katherine put the telephone down and wept hysterically. Mrs. Valentine picked it up. "The children need you, darling," she said gently into it. "We all need you, so why don't you come in? We'll play ping-pong, we'll go swimming together. Come on, darling, take one little step here, one little step there — and show them you can do it. We want you, Johnny, we need you . . . Oh, Johnny, what do you mean you can't come in? If you'll just come in, there'll be nothing —"

Glasco heard John say, "I'd be ashamed now, with all those people down there." John lowered the phone from his face. Glasco pushed the cradle along the ledge, hoping he'd have a chance to seize John when he stooped to hang the phone up. But John was still too cunning. He tossed the phone to Glasco. "You do it," he said.

Glasco got off the window sill. "Something's happened to him, Doc," he said to Presner. "You'd better take a look."

THEN Glasco opened the door to the corridor. It was like the lobby of Madison Square Garden on the night of a big fight. He caught the eye of the anchor man who had had the important date at four o'clock, and was glared at in mock rage. The anchor man, who had asked if John liked dames was deep in conversation with a blonde young woman. Glasco shut the door, sat down on a bed, and put his head in his hands. His head ached, his eyes were smarting and his sacroiliac hurt. Dr. Presner walked over. "He'll come in if he gets a document signed by the Police Commissioner, promising that nothing will happen to him," he said, then went into a huddle with Deputy Mayor Curran, the Chief Inspector, other high brass from the Police and Fire Departments, two psychiatrists who had just come up from Bellevue Hospital, and another, from Chicago, who was a guest in Bellevue Hospital, and another, from Chicago, who was a guest in the hotel. Glasco rose wearily from the bed and was about to perch himself on the sill again when the anchor man and the blonde young woman came into the room. "Listen, Charlie," the anchor man whispered. "I wish you'd give this friend of mine here a chance at that kid out there. She's worked with us before and she knows her stuff. She's O.K."

"Well . . ." Glasco said, shooting a doubtful glance towards the huddle.

"Aw, come awn, Charlie! What can you lose?"

"Well, all right, but . . ."

The blonde young woman sat on the sill.

"Hello. Remember me?" she said to John.

"No. Who are you?"

"You know."

"Where are you from?"

"Baltimore. Remember?"

"No."

"Look, aren't you lonesome out there?"

A silence.

"I'm lonesome. Why don't you come in here?"

Another silence. Then John said, "I want to be loved in the right way."

"Break it up," Glasco said, parting the curtains.

THE doctors thought that half a milligram of benzedrine might raise John's spirits. This half-milligram was the only stimulant John was given. He didn't actually get even that much, for, as usual, he made Glasco drink part of the water in which it was dissolved. When, a half-hour later, an attempt was made to repeat the dosage, the water was so cloudy that John insisted that Glasco drink it all. The benzedrine-laced water didn't heighten the spirits of either drinker.

After Glasco had drunk the second glass of water, Captain William O'Brien, of the West Forty-seventh Street station, went to the window and told John, truthfully, that the document of immunity he had demanded was being prepared. "But you don't really need it," O'Brien said. "You can go to your friends in Scarsdale, or anywhere you want, without hindrance, if you'll only come in. You believe me, don't you? Don't I look honest to you?"

"No, you don't," John said.

The Reverend James McCarthy, summoned from St. Patrick's Cathedral, now went to the window, but soon he realized that he was not making any progress. "By the way, are you a Catholic?" he asked.

"No. I'm an Episcopalian," John said quietly.

The police again called the Warde home. Mr. Warde had not been found yet. Mrs. Warde agreed to appeal to John over the telephone, but he refused to talk to her.

The sun went down at eight-eighteen, but there was no darkness of the upper facade of the Gotham, because searchlights set up by the police were playing on it, and the photographers were continually shooting their flash bulbs. The crowds grew steadily after dark, and traffic on Fifth Avenue was almost stalled. Captain Pat McDonald, the old Olympic shot-put champion, who was trying to unsnarl the traffic on Fifth Avenue, noticed that the theatre rush was half an hour behind normal. The sidewalks were jammed west of the hotel clear to Sixth Avenue, and along Fifth Avenue as far north as Fifty-eighth Street. The manager of a Fifth Avenue department store estimated that John's indecisiveness had cost the merchants of the neighbourhood at least a hundred thousand dollars that day. On Sixth Avenue, between Fifty-sixth and Fifty-seventh, spectators milled and jostled for positions on a small patch of sidewalk; somebody had discovered that from there, through patch of sidewalk; somebody had discovered that from there, through a space between two buildings, John's figure, lit up by the searchlights, could be seen. An angry, sweating policeman tried to keep this patch of sidewalk clear. "Go on home and look after your own children," he kept shouting at the women; they laughed at him.

Dr. Presner and the psychiatrists were now taking turns at the window. Once, Dr. Presner heard a woman call from a nearby roof, "Don't do it, John. We all love you. Go on back in, like a good boy, now."

Glasco went to the window again. He had the key to the room in his hand.

"John, I'd like to make a deal with you," he said. "You been out there eight, nine, ten hours now, and you're all dirty and tired, and you must feel awful. Well, John, this room's been cleared, and here's the key. I'm leaving it right here on this ledge. For the next twenty minutes, the room will be absolutely yours alone. If you want to, you can come in and have a good wash and get that dirt off and feel better. Then, if you want to, you can go back out there."

"I'll think it over," John said. His voice and manner were not very friendly. He looked at his wristwatch and then at Glasco.

"All right, John, you think it over. If you get cleaned up, I be-



lieve you'll find you can think clearer. Here's the key on the sill. I'll pull back the curtains, so you can see for yourself the room's empty. Be back in twenty minutes."

John nodded and looked at his wristwatch again. Glasco withdrew, opened the curtains, and hurried to the hall door.

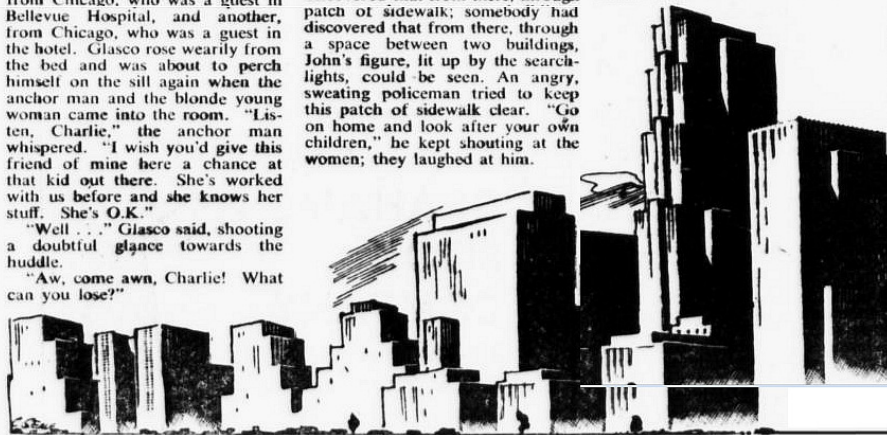
"O.K., Johnny, take it away," he shouted, then went out and slammed the door.

IN the room, concealed behind a bureau, was the fastest man in the Emergency Division at snapping on a pair of handcuffs. There was another Emergency Division man in the bathroom.

"Twenty-minute break, fellas," Glasco called to the anchor men, who moved off, presumably to make phone calls. Glasco stood with his ear against the door of the room, his hand on the knob. "I want to talk to that boy," he heard someone behind him say. Glasco turned and saw a gaunt man with blazing eyes, wearing a high, stiff collar of a cut that had gone out of style years before. The man said he was a Protestant clergyman. "I can save that boy," he announced. "He doesn't understand the Fear of God, that's all. I will explain it to him and save him."

"Sorry, sir," Glasco said, "but I have orders from the Chief Inspector not to let anybody in the room just now. Maybe if you'd call back in half an hour and see the Chief Inspector personally . . ."

The clergyman walked away impatiently. Glasco glanced at his watch. Five of the twenty minutes had passed.



A little later, the handcuff expert, peeking from behind the bureau, was surprised to see a gaunt man wearing an old-fashioned stiff collar enter No. 1714 from No. 1716. No sooner had he closed the door behind him than John appeared outside the window, stooped down, and stared into the room. He saw the gaunt man, his head swung up, and he disappeared. It all happened in a second. "Sweet jumping cats!" Glasco heard the handcuff expert say, so he shoved the door open and rushed in. Both Emergency Division men were coming out of their hiding places. "Go look at him, quick," the handcuff expert said. Glasco ran to the window. John was still on the ledge, in his old niche, but the expression on his face worried Glasco.

"I'm awful sorry, John. That party got in by mistake. He sneaked into the next room on me and came in here through the side door. So many people in that next room, they didn't notice him. I swear it won't happen again. Will you give it another try, please?"

JOHN didn't answer. Glasco knew that he wouldn't but he went on pleading, simply to hold John's attention. The Protestant clergyman was removed, and the four physicians returned. Dr. Presner went to the window. Glasco was again sitting on the bed with his head in his hands when he became aware that the Chief Inspector was standing in front of him. He stood up. "You've done a good job, Glasco, but we'll all have to keep punching at this thing a while longer. We've sent to the Coast Guard for a cargo net that we'll anchor one edge of along the windows directly below these. Then we'll jerk the other edge up quick to the floor above this one and pin him against the side of the building. At the same time, we'll lower a couple of bos'n's chairs from the eighteenth floor. But it'll take a while to get the net here and get it set up. So as soon as the Doc stops talking to him, I want you to take over for another hour."

Dr. Presner came in from the window. "He just told me he knows everyone's interested in his welfare," he said, "and he's asking for that bellboy again." Glasco began to talk, starting all over, right from the beginning. He talked about his bellboy's job and the hotels he had worked in and his hope of staying off relief. He talked about his wife and children. He talked about picnics and baseball and ping-pong and badminton, about swimming and lying on the beach in the sun and building up the physique with dumbbell exercises. He passed John cigarettes now and then, with his left hand. John smoked and listened, but he didn't answer the questions Glasco kept shooting at him. Whenever he finished a cigarette, he dropped the butt on the ledge and carefully extinguished it with his heel. After Glasco had gone over everything he could remember discussing in that better time, before the light had left them, he paused, and John said, "I wish you could convince me that life's worth living."

The cargo net, forty feet by twenty-five, had arrived and was being raised from the street by ropes that ran from windows on the eighteenth floor. Folded and drawn up by its four corners, the net rose slowly and jerkily past ledges on the eighth and twelfth floors. As it reached the sixteenth, some of the ropes fouled, and the

net flattened against the wall and got snarled. Firemen in the street pulled on ropes attached to its outer edge, but the net would not untangle. Using poles, men in sixteenth-floor windows tried to poke it into shape again, but got nowhere.

"I'm ashamed to be doing this before all those people," John said. "They're anticipating something."

"We'll frustrate their intentions, Johnny," Glasco said.

"I've made up my mind."

"That's the way to talk. We'll frustrate the hell out of them."

John finished another cigarette. Instead of crushing it under his heel, he threw it into the street.

A telephone was handed to Glasco, and a voice inside the room said, "It's for him."

"Got a call for you, John."

John took the telephone. "Hello . . . Yes . . . Who is this? . . . Oh? Well, if you're my girl friend, what's our favourite poem?"

IT was evident to Glasco that the caller couldn't answer the question. He suspected the Emergency Division man and the blonde. As John returned the telephone to him there was a tug on the rope around his leg.

"I'll be right back, John. Just keep swinging, fella," he said.

A young man was talking to the Chief Inspector. "He's been a friend of John's since they were kids together," the Chief Inspector explained to Glasco. "Go ahead, son. Take a breather, Glasco." The young man went to the window and leaned out. Glasco sat on the bed and rubbed his left leg, which had gone to sleep.

"How's it with that net?" he asked one of the cops.

"Should be all set in a few minutes, Charlie. You think he can see it?"

"No, but I think he'll see those bos'n's chairs when they come down from above."

"Well, they'll have that net ready in a few shakes, and then there'll be nothing to worry about."

"Gosh, I sure hope so. It's been quite a day. I got all those stubs on my summonses to make out yet before I can go home."

Suddenly, at ten thirty-eight, there was a tremendous roar from the crowd. "There he goes!" It reminded Glasco of the way the railbirds roar "They're off!" at the start of a horse race. He burst into tears.

AS John's body passed the sixteenth floor, a policeman who was working on the net there made a lunge for him and just missed. A magnesium flare was set off by one of the newsreel cameramen. John fell feet first until he grazed the sixth-floor ledge, then he whirled end over end, struck the glass-topped marquee of the hotel, crashed through it, almost hitting a Homicide Squad lieutenant, and struck the kerb. A priest sprang forward to administer the last rites, but John was beyond that.

The crowd broke through the police lines and rushed toward the marquee. A number of women fainted, and many others put handkerchiefs to their faces and began to move away. John's body was quickly placed in the ambulance that had been standing there all afternoon and taken to the West Forty-seventh Street police station. Souvenir hunters scrambled for bits of the broken marquee glass.

Shortly after John leaped, Deputy Mayor Curran shook Glasco's hand and praised him for what he said was one of the finest pieces of police work he had ever seen, but that didn't get Glasco out of the chore of going back to his precinct station and putting in three and a half hours of clerical work on his summonses. It was four-fifteen when he got home.

THE END

