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 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 sidewalk, 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, mapping 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 hateless, coatless man standing outside an open window, with his back against the edge of a stonework architrave 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 began to talk 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's his sister, I guess. He's been on that ledge about half an hour now. Come out around eleven-forty. I wish to hell you'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 a man 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. Two 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 Warde's, 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 Hamptons Bays, walked to the middle of the bridge, and stood gazing down at the sea. He passed around 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
get back to New York on Tuesday morning at ten o'clock, and went to Room 1714 at the Athenaeum on the street which the Vanlentes had been using as their city residence for the past year. Mr. Vanlethee went to his train and his car, a few blocks from the hotel, and they went to see the two women, who chatted about the way and what they had to do that day.

In the course of their conversation, Katherine said that she was going to call the Athenaeum and make an appointment for John.

"Not!" John said. "All right, keep your hair on," Katherine said.

John took off his coat, folded it carefully in his hand, put it on the chair, then he tucked his blue necktie inside his shirt. He was wearing freshly pressed gray 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 rows were slid under the door, and they ordered lunch from room service. Then, in a quiet voice, John said, "I'm going out to the window," and did so before Katherine or Mrs. Vanlethee could stop him. Katherine rushed to the phone and began screaming at the switchboard operator that her brother had jumped out the window. Mrs. Vanlethee 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 Fifth Avenue sidewalk near the hotel, in his haste to get to his post, had left his post and hurried up to Room 1714. He leaned out the window, which was deeply recessed and had stanchions while curtains, and shouted to 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. He was a magnificent creature. "Don't you come near me or I'll jump," he said to the policeman.

"I could kill you, stupid," said the policeman from behind the line of telephones and the headquarters and the Dispatch Department. Soon the hook and ladder truck of the fire service, 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. John was standing too far from the window to be reached. Lieu
tenant William Klotzau, a lariat-and-rope expert of the Emergency Division, went up to the hanging window on the eighteenth floor, but another ledge was much too far, so he was to have to leave from there. Then it was discovered that the cornice of the roof was too far away and that if John was raised to the cornice, he would have to be hoisted by the fire ladders. The firemen took a canvas life net, with a red circle painted on it, and walked it alongside the side
dwalk and were ready to snatch it up if John jumped, but they knew that it was too far for the man to fall any farther than the one that had fallen in that far. Had there been a building of any height at the northeast corner of Fifth Street and the Gotham, some kind of rescue contrivance might have been raised. But the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church has a company of bells and a sharply pitched roof. All the police could think of was to try to talk him out of it. 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 saying "John, I want to be persuaded to save myself—by someone who had already his trust or could win it, if it came from his own will.

By now, Room 1714 was full of plainclothesmen, policemen, hotel people, doctors, and reporters. "No, she's dead," said the clerical who had been put in Room 1716, which was the next room east. Again and again they went to her window to plead with John. Reporters wrote down their conversations.

One went like this:

"John, your sister said, "It's Katherine talking to you. It's your lover, you know. Come in darling. We all love you, John. You definitely know that. Come in darling. We all love you, and everything will be all right. You have so much to live for, so many good times ahead of you. Oh, please, please, please, John, come on in! John!"

"I want to be left alone," John said quietly and politely. "I've got work to do for myself, I've got problems to think about."

"You have character, John. You've got more character than I ever thought of having. Johnny, please, please come back to us."

"I want to be left alone here awhile."

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

"Come 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. Come along in and have a nice little drink for 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 send me to a farm, but I'll достаточно that nothing will happen to you, if you'll just come in.

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

"John, don't go, Mrs. Vanlethee. I can't get over that face.

John was standing on the side of the ornament, which was halfway between the windows of Rooms 1714 and 1716. Mrs. Vanlethee thought he meant he couldn't get over the ornament of the ledge was prohibitively narrow. "If you're frightened about coming down, why don't you get someone to help you," she said.

"Oh, I don't know, I think, I'd like to be left alone for a while, Mr. Vanlethee, who had been standing in his office, now went back to the window and leaned out the window. "Hello, there, John. Say, I've got a proposition to make to you. We've got a nice lunch here. Come on in and help us to eat it, and then you'll go and get the ball game. The Cubs are playing here today—those Cubs of yours."

"No, you're not going to get anything!"

"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 idea about how to get her son 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 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 stepped off for it, women in the crowds below screamed.

BEFORE reporting to the lieutenant in Room 1714, Patrol
cop Glascow stopped in the lobby to borrow the coat of the best-looking fellow 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 recognize them. The lieutenant and he agreed that a policeman in uniform would mean "keeper" to John.

Glascow 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 Glascow. "I'm a new bellhop here on the Gotham, John. Matter of fact, I just got the job this morning. I 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 two little girls. [Age: forty.] Glascow had one daughter at that time."

Before the hotel took all of this on this morning, we'd been on relief since I can't hardly remember when. You've ever been on relief, John?"

There was no answer, but the suspicion had gone out of John's eyes and his face had softened. "Well, it's really tough, John, and I wouldn't mind you, Oh, I think, if he was single, it wouldn't be so bad, and the relief people are all mean, and nobody can help, but when you get a wife and three kids—boy, I'm telling you, John, I'm just giving you my angle on this situation. O.K. I'll get the hell out of this ledge, and it's strictly your own business, but suppose something had happened to you? You know what it'd do? It'd be just like a hotel, that's what it'd do. John, a hotel gets blemished, its business gets lousy. Business gets lousy, the hotel starts laying off people. And who do they lay off first? The one who came 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."

I can 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.
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 quiet by the quick. While John drank, his eyes never left Glasco. When John had 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 turned toward 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.

"I like some more water, John," Glasco said.

"No, thank you, not now."

"Care for a smoke?"

Glasco shook a pack of cigarettes until one stuck.

"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 should be smoking your cigarettes.

"Think nothing of it.

A silence followed.

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

"It's a bit like that, John. We're both tied up in the same heap. The way I got it figured, as long as you're in trouble, too, you're my kid and wife. Besides, well, maybe's there'd be enough 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?"

"Then we could.

"I smoke Philip Morris, too."

John said. Glasco leaned far out the window and stretched his right arm forward to shake hands. The expression of coming returned to his face. He rubbed 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 trusted you. I'll get you out of the thing, and you'll never get yourself in it again."

"I'll get you out of the thing, and you'll never get yourself in it again."

"Thank you, but I have to work it out alone.

The rope around Glasco's leg was still gone. Well, whatever was left of it, anyway. John worked out, John, I want you to promise me not to let anything happen to you.

"I'll work it out."

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

FIFTY-FOURTH STREET had been closed to vehicle and foot traffic for the immediate and indefinite protection of the inhabitants of the building. The police, firemen, and members of the Press who were trapped in the ten stories of the building were limited in their access to the rooms by the thick plastic screens. The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church had closed its doors to them in order to prevent any possibility of a snare or trap being set.

"That's where I'm heading," John said. "When we get there, you're going to pull the plunger on the last of your power, and then you're going to be all right."

Glasco said. "Anyhow, you catch hold of him with a pair of ice tongs?"

"Yes, and that's what I'm going to do."

"Do you think you can do it?"

"I'll do it."

"Nothing of those things makes any sense," said someone else. "If Glasco went out there carrying ice tongs or a grocery grabber, he might take off after one look at you. You're forgetting that all he's got to do is to get the least bit of fresh air and he's away."

"This is strictly a kid's game," said someone else. "It can't be licked by anything but patience."

"That's true."

Glasco stepped over to the crack and lay on his back. He could see the tops of the buildings and the wire service lying on his back on the sidewalk, aiming at John with telephoto cameras. The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church had closed its doors to them in order to prevent any possibility of a snare or trap being set.

"Where is Charlie?"

"He's in the building."

"Where is Charlie?"

"He's in the building."

"How is it going, Charlie?"

"Well, it's going, but I think we'll take it OK. How's his sister?"

"She's doing fine."

"Lisette, Charlie, all I ask is that you hang in there by four. I got a very important date then," said a second anchor man.

"You think you're daubing?"

"I got a date myself—to eat some liver and bacon."

"Say, Charlie, does that kid out there the go for it?"

"I don't know. I was just thinking."

Glasco smoked a couple of cig-

Patrolman Charles Glasco, who spent hours dealing with the crowd, hands a telephone to enable his mother to talk to him.
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. Glusco,
here, is absolutely our best. Let
him talk with him as long as he
can, and whenever he gets tired,
I'll spell him."

Glasco stepped the noise 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
that 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 marines 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 John turned to the
question of sports. John went in for him-
self. He mentioned ping-pong,
which Glasco had watched but
ever 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
regularly, 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

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 I'm carry-
ing, 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 be-
fore that commissars' rush starts."

Until then, Glasco had not seen
what Dr. Preiser called "the boy-
dly 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
three or four glasses of water, each
of which Glasco had drunk from first
and then delivered with his
left hand. Now Dr. Preiser
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. McGeehan. Among
other arrivals at the Gotham that
afternoon were Miss Evelyn Mac-
donell, "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
hisjuju to rescue John; a female
faith healer with "scientifically
worked out slogans," who insisted
on kneeling in the lobby and praying;
and Miss Diane Gregal, who
had coaxed Maurice Nast, a sixty-
four-year-old salesman, off a ledge
of the Pennsylvania Hotel in De-
cember of 1936. Miss Gregal
informed the Press that someone had

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

While Dr. Preiser sat on the win-
dow sill, his wife and his sister hap-
pened 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 or
there hanging out of that window?"
she said. Mrs. Preiser, trying to
control her terror, said yes, it was.
No one they asked could explain
what was happening, so they strug-
gled through the crowd to the hotel,
but were refused permission to en-
ter. 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 thoughtful guests close their
windows or shut off their radios.
In the suburbs, women had been
listening at home, and after
the afternoon's work they went
in streetcar or taxi and drove
across town to see the spectacle
on Fifty-fifth Street. All over the
acity were people who had
affirmed good views of the Gotham
Building. There were those who
had remained at their offices
and seen the sight on the
radio.

Mrs. Charles V. Glasco, who
had been busy all day with her
work, hadn't had a chance to listen
to the radio. At a quarter to six,
there was no telephone working.
It was Augie Schmidt, the
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 re-
dly. "What's he up to now?"

"Can't hear," said Maggie. "Ho, ho!
Turn your radio on."

Since breakfast, John had sub-
sist on nothing but Lucky
Strike and water. Toward the
end of the afternoon, he asked for
a cup of black coffee. After it had
been submitted to the Glasco Tes-
for xerox drugs, he ordered that
cream and sugar be put in. The
strategy of filing John up with
liquor had not worked. Nor did
he appear at all weary after stand-
ing 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 after-
noon in the friendliest way, slipping
the noise 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.

"Oh, you know, look, fellu, what
type of talk is that? This is your
bills the bellhop here, the guy with
the wife and kids that's going to
pick up saster of the relief if we
can't co-operate. You alraedy 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?"

"Did I do or say anything to
make you think I'm not going to do it,
I'm sorry and I apologize. Is there
anything you want, John? Any-
thing you can do for me? 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 bed 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 Grahams' revamped 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 informed of John's movements. A small cord 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, rang up Katherine, who was still in Room 1716, and then reached the uterus toward John with his right hand. John shook 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? 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 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, frowning. Glasco pushed the cradle along the ledge, hoping he'd have a chance to seize John when he stepped to hang the phone up. But John was still too cunning. He took 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 of Room 1716. 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 bar of soap at four o'clock, and was gazed at in mock rage. Then he saw the woman who had asked if John liked dames was deep in conversation with a blonde young woman. Glasco shuf the door, sat down on a bed, and put his head in his hands. His mouth ached, his eyes were smarting and his sacrosanct 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 walked into a bathroom with Deputy Major Curran, the Chief Inspector, other officers, a brass from the Police and Fire Departments, two psychiatrists who had just come from Burnham 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 over here you'll find you can think clearer. Here's the key on the sill. I'll pull back the curtain, so you can see where the phone is, and cover it."

"All right, John, you think it over. If you get cleaned up, I be-
A little later, the handcuff expert, peeking from behind the laurel hedge, 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, as 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 nicker, 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. Prendergast 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 pushing 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 those. 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 boxers' chairs from the thirteenth 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. Prendergast 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 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 was slowly and jerkily past the edges of the thirteenth and twelfth floors. As it reached the sixteenth, some of the ropes snapped, 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, fellas," 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 cars.

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

"No, but I think he'll see those boxers' 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."

"Good, I sure hope so. It's been quite a day. I got all those nuts on my summertime 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 raindrops 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 newspaper 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 on 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 their and a half hours of clerical work on his summons. It was four-thirty when he got home.

THE END