ARE YOU A RED DUPE?

IN THE TOWN OF GAZOOSKY IN THE HEART OF SOVIET RUSSIA, YOUNG MELVIN BLIZUNKEN-SKOVITCHSKY PUBLISHED A COMIC MAGAZINE...

... SO THEY CAME AND SMASHED HIS FOUR-COLOR PRESS...

... AND MUNG POOR MELVIN THE NEXT MORNING!

HERE IN AMERICA, WE CAN STILL PUBLISH COMIC MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS, SLICKS, BOOKS AND THE BIBLE, WE DON'T HAVE TO SEND THEM TO A CENSOR FIRST. NOT YET...

FOR THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE IN AMERICA WHO WOULD LIKE TO CENSOR... WHO WOULD LIKE TO SUPPRESS COMICS. IT ISN'T THAT THEY DON'T LIKE COMICS FOR THEM! THEY DON'T LIKE THEM FOR YOU!

THESE PEOPLE SAY THAT COMIC BOOKS AREN'T AS GOOD FOR CHILDREN AS NO COMIC BOOKS OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. SOME OF THESE PEOPLE ARE NO-GOODS. SOME ARE DO-GOODERS. SOME ARE WELL-MEANING. AND SOME ARE JUST PLAIN MEAN.

BUT WE ARE CONCERNED WITH AN AMAZING REVELATION. AFTER MUCH SEARCHING OF NEWSPAPER FILES, WE'VE MADE AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY!

THE GROUP MOST ANXIOUS TO DESTROY COMICS ARE THE COMMUNISTS!

WE'RE SERIOUS! NO KIDDIN'! HERE! READ THIS:

THE (COMMUNIST) "DAILY WORKER" OF JULY 13, 1953 SAID THAT COMICS PLAY THE CONSCIOUS ROLE OF:

... BRUTALIZING AMERICAN YOUTH. THE BETTER TO PREPARE THEM FOR MILITARY SERVICE IN IMPLEMENTING OUR GOVERNMENT'S AIM OF WORLD DOMINATION, AND TO ACCEPT THE ATROCITIES NOW BEING PERPETRATED BY AMERICAN SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN IN KOREA UNDER THE FLAG OF THE UNITED NATIONS.


THE CHILD'S NATURAL CHARACTER... MUST BE DISTORTED TO FIT CIVILIZATION... FANTASY VIOLENCE WILL PARALYZE HIS SOCIETY, AND PREVENT REVOLUTION.

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Roy Dixon awoke with a start, knowing something was wrong. He opened his puzzled eyes, looked around blankly, and screamed. Where was he? What was this cold grey stone room that boxed him in like a trapped animal? What was that steady hiss, like a thousand venomous reptiles? Why was he bound helplessly to this iron chair? He struggled furiously, but the ropes only bruised his flesh. His throat was torn raw by his wild pleading screams that only deafened his own ears.

Please! Help me, somebody! Let me out of here! Yaaaahhhhh...
But nobody came to release Roy from his nightmare trap, and he seemed to hear a ghastly hollow-toned voice echo and reverberate through the grim room...

I sentence you, Roy Dixon, to execution in the gas chamber for first degree murder.

Now the wildly squirming prisoner could see... "...the hooded figure peering in as he impasionately through the observation window, regulating the flow of lethal cyanide gas that hissed from the grilled vent in the floor. His executioner!

No! It can't be! This is wrong! Not the way I planned it at all! You can't do this! It's a mistake! Please!

Oh, Lord... stop him!

But there was no answer from the hooded watcher. Roy Dixon's brain clouded now. His senses reeled crazily as the deadly vapors were absorbed from his heaving lungs into his racing bloodstream... His chin sagged... His head lolled, he was dying...

This is all wrong! It can't be... true!

Once in the air, guiding his roaring metal monster, pregnant with bombs, Buck had always been all brass right through to his steel-spring spine...

Pilot to bombardier! This is a prime target tonight! Understand? Don't miss... or you'll never ride my ship again.

Yes, that's been buck—pulling rank, browbeating the crew, glorying in his silver barred authority. But roy'd rubbed it in good, making buck squirm and fume helplessly when his chance came on the bombing run... when he was in command.

Target sighted! Taking over, captain! steady, now! steady. Cut that side-slip, hear me? That's an order, captain!

Of course, that sort of thing had been during off-duty hours. On duty, it was captain buck gordon, pilot, and second lieutenant roy dixon, bombardier... and no more...
But then, between missions, they'd been thick as thieves again... buying each other drinks and planning their future... after the war...

Think of it, Roy... our own airline, hauling air freight... you and me... partners! All we'd need is one surplus four-engine job to get started!

So great, Buck! Count me in! BHAK.

Roy lifted his head groggily. The past faced him. The hissing of the lethal gas was gone.

I'm alive! The gas chamber has vanished! It was a dream! It's dawn now! I'm awake! I knew they never brought me to trial... never sentenced me to the gas chamber... I knew! It was all a... dream.

The noose steadily tightened, clamping his windpipe shut from the weight of his body. Sometimes this ghastly thing happened... the victim's neck unbroken by the dropping trap... letting him die a slow horrifying death by strangulation... dragging him into a suffocating eternity...

No! No! You can't hang me! I escaped the law! This is a dream, I'm sure! Another horrible dream.

Roy's mind sank into a deep dark pool again out of which puffed visions of the past came once more... reviewing his association with Buck Gordon. Even though their airline'd expanded through the years, up into golden brackets, Buck'd kept it up... hatefully... pulling rank...

Cancel this Petersen contract, Roy! It's no good! It won't pay!

It is good! It will pay! Now listen, Buck! Once and for all, I'm not a hired nano on the payroll! I'm an equal partner! Understand?
Roy remembered how he'd warned his business associate:

I negotiated that contract myself, Buck, and I'm sick and tired of your bullying. Try it once more and, so help me, I'll pull out of this partnership!

Go ahead, Roy! Anytime you want to call it quits I'll be okay with me! If you can't play it my way, just say the word: somebody's got to be boss here and run things right!

And Roy remembered how he'd fumed and snarled inwardly, finally coming to the stark realization:

So that's his game! He's trying to make it so miserable for me, I'll pull out and leave him to hog the whole bonanza!

Well, this game can be played both ways! Of course, why not me? Why not him? If I can get him to pull out, turn the tables, the whole deal would be mine, but how? How could I get rid of him? I've got to think of a way.

And so, his ulcerized hatred for his partner had eaten like caustic into Roy's soul, and he'd eliminated all ways to rid Roy's Airlines of Buck Warden, all ways, that is, except one:

Murder! I've got to kill him! It's the only way!

Roy'd always handled the "dirty work" for the airline... the law cases that had come up from time to time. He'd even taken law courses at night to help. Now, his law work would help him to commit murder... and get away with it...

These four states—Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado, all come together... here... at one common point and that's it! A four-state wrangle over one certain murder!

They say that a murder will out. A murder can never stay concealed! So... I won't conceal it! I'll play it straight... out in the open! And here's where the law work I did for the firm plus my wartime training pays off!

Who's there? Oh, it's you, Roy! Thought you went home with the others. Well, scram. I'm busy!

Still the boss, eh, Buck? Still the captain ordering around his crew? Well, my dear boss...
Roy remembered how he'd raised the monkey wrench—bringing it down across Buck's head carefully. Easy, not too hard...not hard enough to kill him...not yet.

...That was your last order! You're going to take a little trip...

Out into the darkness, Roy'd carried Buck's unconscious form into the rear door of the hangar...to the surplus B-29 they still used for short freight hauls...short night hauls...like the one tonight.

All loaded up...ready to go. Nobody'll check the cargo hold now! All I have to do is shift a few crates...and I'm set...

It'd been so easy...tying Buck up, gagging him in case he'd come to, and stringing him up onto the old bomb racks...

...Then stowing the other item. The item Roy'd bought and reconditioned painfully...the surplus bombsight...into the cluttered nose of the old Superfort...

...and waiting around till the ground crew'd trundled the old lady out onto the field and warmed up her engines. It'd been so easy to bump into Batson, the pilot...

Sorta brings back old memories, that baby! You know, Batson! I'd like to come along for a ride tonight! Okay with you?

Why? Uh...sure thing, Mr. Dixon! You're the boss!

And as they'd soared west, it'd been so easy for Roy to pretend a war hero's nostalgia...

You know, Batson! It's just come over me! I'd like to make like a bombardier again...for old time's sake. I'm going forward into the nose...follow my orders on the intercom...just like you're my pilot and we're headed over Berlin! And stop grinning!

I'm...I'm not grinnin', Mr. Dixon! I understand!

It'd been so easy to uncover the bomb-sight and plug in the leads he'd worked on for weeks...the leads that controlled the ailerons...the elevators...the rudder...the bomb-bays...and the bomb-racks...the bomb run!

All right, Batson! Let's head her around to a reading of three degrees south by west...

But that's off our course, Mr. Dixon!
But it'd been no idle game for Roy. It'd been a game of death and the stakes were high. This had to be 'On Target.' 'Direct hit...on the nose!' But he'd timed it perfectly! The moon had illuminated everything below...

"TARGET SIGHTED! I'll take over, Batson. Batson let go of the controls!"

The bomb bays had opened. Buck'd looked down and tried to scream out the gas had held. Fine cross hairs had moved slowly together, and then...

"BOMB AWAY!"

The proud old gal had turned southwest and Roy'd sat grim and tight-lipped. More tense than he'd ever been on any mission over Germany. And he'd played it like a game...

"BOMBARDEUR TO PILOT! TAKE HER DOWN TO 1000 FEET. HEADING 2 DEGREES, SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST."

"YES, SIR!"

Down and down. The human bomb had hurtled.

And the memory faded as the constriction around Roy's throat eased and air rushed into his lungs in great sobbing gulps...

"I... I'm alive again! I'm not hanging anymore! The noose is gone! I... I was dreaming again..."

Suddenly, there was darkness again for Roy...

"Now, what's happening? What's this hood dropping over my head? Why am I being pushed down into this chair? Why are they strapping me in it? What... What... OH, LORD!"

And once again he heard the same hooded executioner's voice as the switch was thrown...

"I sentence you, Roy Dixon, to death by electrocution!"
Yes, it had been 'right on target'. Roy's pin-point bombing had dropped Buck Gordon on the stone marker that deliniates the common corners of Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico... staining it red with blood and ruptured flesh...

The memory faded, the painful jolts of electricity were gone. Roy looked around, it was dawn now. Dawn over a desert wasteland...

I'm awake again! I wasn't electrocuted! Oh, God! What's happening to me? Why am I being tortured like... like... no! What am I doing here?

The first jolt ripped into Roy Dixon like a million white-hot needles... boiling his blood. He could smell his own flesh frying. The second jolt spiraled him into a blue-white flashing abyss that changed into a picture of the past... of Buck Gordon's body smashing to earth directly upon a large flat stone marker...

Right on target...

It had all gone according to plan. Roy's openly and boldly pleaded guilty to the grand jury's indictment. But then the fun had started, as the representatives of the courts of four states wrangled like alley-cats over one mouse...

Utah claims jurisdiction in this murder case. Arizona claims the right to try the prisoner! New Mexico... Colorado! Each one demanded its right to prosecute, claiming sole jurisdiction. Roy's been able to have himself released on $50,000 bail via a writ of habeus corpus...

All legal brawl had developed. Buck Gordon had met his death at the four mutual corners of these states. Each one demanded its right to prosecute, claiming sole jurisdiction. Roy's been able to have himself released on $50,000 bail via a writ of habeus corpus.

A legal brawl had developed. Buck Gordon had met his death at the four mutual corners of these states. Each one demanded its right to prosecute, claiming sole jurisdiction. Roy's been able to have himself released on $50,000 bail via a writ of habeus corpus...

This'll drag through court after court. At any decision to try me, I'll appeal! This will go on for years! I can appeal right up to the supreme court!

And Roy's been right! His plan had worked exactly as he'd predicted it would. The red tape had piled up... tangling into a thicker and more complicated knot.

Four states... bickering... each stubborn... jealous... proud! They'll never bring me to trial... at least not in my lifetime!

The memory faded, the painful jolts of electricity were gone. Roy looked around, it was dawn now. Dawn over a desert wasteland...

I'm awake again! I wasn't electrocuted! Oh, God! What's happening to me? Why am I being tortured like... like... no! What am I doing here?
The hooded figure pointed to the grey walled structure with the little observation window...

Then let us say I am your unofficial executioner! You escaped legal execution by your cunning plan, Roy! You escaped the gas chamber of that state. So I let you die a little in it...

You escaped the scaffold of that state... so I let you try that one too...

You escaped the electric chair of that state... and so you've felt what it is to die that way!

Pointing to the long shadows on the dawn desert sand...

And now for the last and final execution... the one I will not be able to give you just a taste of the firing squad! Ready, aim...

...Pointing to the long shadows on the dawn desert sand...

And now for the last and final execution... the one I will not be able to give you just a taste of the firing squad!

You escaped the scaffold of that state... so I let you try that one too...

You escaped the electric chair of that state... and so you've felt what it is to die that way!

But the executioner removed his hood... and Roy saw that this was no dream...

...Pointing to the long shadows on the dawn desert sand...

And now for the last and final execution... the one I will not be able to give you just a taste of the firing squad!

You escaped the scaffold of that state... so I let you try that one too...

You escaped the electric chair of that state... and so you've felt what it is to die that way!

But the executioner removed his hood... and Roy saw that this was no dream...

...Fire!

Buck! Buck gord. nnn...

Blam

Heh, heh! So poor old Roy got it from Buck... four ways! Well, you get it from E.C. four ways when you read one of your GhouLunatic's Mags: four chilling scream-stories. Next comes V.K. with his... then I'll be back to Re-revolt, you and O.W. will complete the creepy quartet. So read on and Retch, dear fiend. I'll dig you later! Oh, by the way have you heard about the E.C. Fan-addict Club? You have! Oh! Then you know 'bye!
HEH, HEH! AND A HORRIBLE 'HI' TO ALL YOU HORROR-HAPPY HIDIOTS! WELCOME NOW TO THE VAULT OF HORROR. THIS IS YOUR NARRATOR OF NAUSEATING NOVELLETTES, THE VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO READ ANOTHER REVOLTING REGURGITATION FROM MY LIBRARY OF LECHEROUS LITERATURE. THIS TERROR-TOME, THIS CHOICE CHUNK OF CHILLING CHARnel CHATTER IS APTLY ENTITLED...

COLD WAR

THERE WAS A BITING FROST IN THE LATE NOVEMBER NIGHT AIR WHICH HOVERED ABOUT THE LAST REMAINING FALL FLOWERS, BESTOWING ICY KISSES OF DEATH UPON THEIR SHRIVELING PETALS. THE LEAVES HAD LONG SINCE LEFT THE TREES, BARE THEIR Gnarled trunks TO THE COMING WINTER WINDS, UNCOVERING BRANCHES THAT REACHED SKYWARD LIKE TWISTED AND MISSHAPEN GOUT-WRACKED FINGERS. THERE, IN THAT GARDEN OF GLOOM, SAT THE WIFE AND THE LOVER, AND ON THE GREY COLD FLAGSTONE TERRACE STOOD THE HUSBAND, WATCHING... AND WAITING...

YOUR ARMS ARE LIKE ICE, MARIA. LET ME GET YOU YOUR WRAP. PLEASE, NORMAN. DO THAT? I AM... COLD!

THE MOMENT NORMAN KING HAD MET MARIA HOLT AT THE PARTY GOING ON WITHIN THE HOUSE BEYOND, HE’D FALLEN IN LOVE WITH HER. HE’D WAITED TILL SHE WAS ALONE... THEN COAXED HER INTO THE GARDEN, BRAZENLY FLAUNTING HIS ATTENDANCES UPON HER IN FRONT OF HER STONE-FACED HUSBAND. NOW, AS NORMAN PASSED PAUL HOLT, HE NOTICED HIS CYNICAL SMILE...

YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME, MY FRIEND. MARIA WILL AMUSE Herself WITH YOU... AND SAVE HER Love FOR ME!

YOU'RE PRETTY SURE OF YOURSELF, HOLT? WELL, WE'LL SEE...
Norman had noticed the cold and impassive indifference that had seemed to blanket Maria and Paul. He had assumed that the passion-fires had cooled for them. So he'd set his sights upon the poor unhappy wife, determined to stir up the flames within her once again... for him. He'd set his sights upon the unhappy wife, determined to stir up the flames within her once again... for him. He got more than Maria's wrap from the cloakroom... He fingered the snub-nosed blue-black .38 automatic he'd taken from his overcoat, and it gave him confidence...

I always get what I want, one way or another, and I've never wanted anything or anybody the way I want Maria Holt!

When Norman returned to the garden, Paul was gone...

Now's our chance, Maria. Let's go someplace... anywhere. Just so long as it's away from here! I want to be alone with you.

Oh... I couldn't, Norman. Paul would worry! Besides, we are alone out here, aren't we?

When Norman returned to the garden, Paul was gone...

Now's our chance, Maria. Let's go someplace... anywhere. Just so long as it's away from here! I want to be alone with you.

I have eyes, Maria! I can see your husband! And you are like two stones! The love that was once between you is dead! What if you weren't married? If you had no husband? Couldn't you care for me?

What's the use in supposing, Norman? I don't have a husband...

Suddenly Maria turned and ran towards the house...

... and there's nothing we can do about it!

... but there's nothing we can do about it!

Maria! Come back!

Maria disappeared through the French doors as Paul Holt's jeering laughter rang out from the far end of the garden.

Yes, Mr. King! There's nothing you can do about it...

Why you dirty, sneaking... You were hiding there in the shadows all this time... listening!
Norman's hand went to the loaded automatic in his pocket as the sneering husband approached, and his face flushed red with hate and anger at the amused twinkle in Paul's eyes...

So you couldn't charm her away, King? What a pity!

She said there was no use supposing, Holt! She said there was nothing I could do about you! Well, there is!

Norman whipped out the gun, pressing the cold black snub-nosed muzzle against Paul's chest. The sneering smile vanished from Paul's face...

There's this I can do! I can kill you! Don't be a fool, King! Before you pull that trigger, let me tell you why it won't do you any good!

You're trying to stall me till someone sees us, Holt. Well, it won't work!

Nobody will come out in this cold, King! I merely want to tell you about Maria and me... and our romance. How it began... everything!

There's this I can do!

She said there was no use supposing, Holt! She said there was nothing I could do about you! Well, there is!

Paul Holt's eyes narrowed...

But, if you're determined to shoot, go ahead!

All right! Start talking, Holt! But make it quick!

Curiosity had gotten the better of Norman. He relaxed a bit as Paul began his story, but he kept the gun muzzle leveled against Paul's chest...

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All right! Start talking, Holt! But make it quick!

It's a strange and frightening story, Norman! It began when I first saw Maria. It was a little more than a year ago. She was surrounded by skeletons and vampires and werewolves...

Skeletions? Vampires? What in blazes are you talking about?

You see, I'd gone to visit some rich friends in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. They'd taken me to a Halloween masquerade party. Maria was made up as a little sensuous Red Devil. I came as a scarecrow. I was attracted to her the minute I saw her...

'At midnight Maria unmasked and I unmasked and we looked at each other and knew. We knew what Anthony and Cleopatra, and Romeo and Juliet, and all the other lovers down through the ages knew....'

No fair lifting my mask till after midnight!

But I've got to see if the face matches the figure...

'Maria!' 'Paul!'
"I took her by the hand and pulled her after me through the swirling crowd of merry monsters. She laughed and it was like the tinkling of silver bells..."

Paul... where are you taking me?

Stop...

I'm getting you out of here before one of these ghouls beats me to it!

"Don't talk about ghouls, Paul! I don't like them. I'm afraid!"

Huh? I... I'm sorry, honey! I didn't mean... I won't mention them again!"

Outside, Maria stopped, shivering. I looked at her and she wasn't laughing any more. Fear lurked in her eyes:

"I took her in my arms and tried to kiss her right then and there as you just did, Norman, but, as with you, she's have none of it..."

Don't say no, Maria. That's what our lips were made for... Not mine, Paul! Not yet! We... we don't know each other...

I'm Paul Holt, and you're beautiful, and now that we know each other...

If you insist on trying to kiss me, Paul, I'll go back inside and you'll never see me again!

So I didn't try. I could wait, although it wasn't easy. The next evening, I took her to dinner. I tried to hold her hand across the table, but she pulled it away before I could touch it...

Not even that, Maria? It would start with holding my hand... and then a kiss... another...

"If you're playing hard-to-get, it's working, Maria. You're driving me mad!"

"If you're impatient, Paul... there are other girls... much easier-to-kiss girls. Perhaps you'd better forget about me!

But I'm not going to forget about you, Maria! I couldn't! I want you! I want you to marry me! There! I've said it! Marry me, Maria?"

Oh, Paul! Yes! Yes! I'll marry you... if... if my mother and father give us permission! You'll have to ask them..."
Maria and her parents lived in a large old house outside Port-au-Prince, when I went to see them that right, they sat stiffly across a drawing room that must have been furnished in 1880, their attire fitted the surroundings.

"I've come to ask for your permission to marry your daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Harmon!

"Indeed! And precisely what are your qualifications, Mr. Holt?

"Why, I have quite a bit of money, sir. A good education. My own business.

"Fine, Mr. Holt, but more important, would you be willing to die for my daughter?"

"My qualifications? I had to control myself to keep a straight face. You'd think I was applying for a position instead of asking to marry their daughter."

"Every his ideas of gallantry were Victorian. I suppressed my amusement and gave the answer he was looking for."

"I'd give my life for Maria without a moment's hesitation, sir!

"Ah! then you have our permission, young man!

"Oh, Paul, Paul, I'm so happy!

"Now you may kiss your bride, son!

"When the official that had married us had gone, Maria turned to her father. Mr. Harmon took a small silver case from his waistcoat pocket and removed a single white tablet.

"Give it to him, father!

"Here, young man! Swallow this!

"What is it? It smells funny. Medicinal!

"Maria looked at me reassuringly, and whispered."

"Swallow it, Paul darling! It's all right! It's strychnine!"

"S-strychnine! Why, that's poison! What's the idea? You said you'd die for my daughter, Paul?"

"To my surprise, Mr. Harmon said we could be married the very next day. So Maria and I were wed in that cold bleak chamber by a local official."

"I now pronounce you man and wife!"

"Mr. Harmon grinned, but Maria permitted me to do no more than brush her cold lips with mine. I blamed it on the shyress before her parents. I ache to crush her in my arms..."

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I DROPPED THE DEADLY LETHAL TABLET AND BACKED OFF. MARIA KNELT AND PICKED IT UP AND TRIED TO GIVE IT BACK TO ME. SHE PRESSED HER HAND IN MINE. HER FLESH WAS COLD... COLD AS DEATH...

YOU SAID YOU'D DIE FOR ME, PAUL DEAR... CHOKE! NOW YOU'VE GOT TO! OUR MARRIAGE CAN NEVER BE CONSUMED UNLESS YOU'RE LIKE I AM... LIKE MOTHER AND FATHER UNLESS YOU'RE DEAD!

I SCREAMED AND BROKE FOR THE DOOR...

ZOMBIES! I'VE MARRIED INTO A FAMILY OF ZOMBIES!

THE DOOR WAS LOCKED... THE KEY GONE. I WHIRLED, CONFUSED. MY ONLY AVENUE OF ESCAPE WAS UP THE STAIRS...

PAUL! I LOVE YOU! I'VE GOT TO HAVE YOU! YOU'VE GOT TO DIE FOR ME TO HAVE YOU!

THE DOORS ON THE SECOND FLOOR WERE ALL LOCKED TOO. FOR A MOMENT, THEY TRAPPED ME THERE. THEIR COLD LIFELESS HANDS HOLDING ME IN A STEEL GRIP. BUT WITH A STRENGTH BORNE OF SHEER TERROR, I WRENCHED FREE...

PLEASE, PAUL... PLEASE.

DON'T JUMP, PAUL! OH NO! YOU'LL CRUSH YOUR BODY. BREA... BONES. TEAR FLESH. I WOULDN'T WANT YOU DEAD THAT WAY.

There was no time to think... only to run. I saw the narrow stairway leading upward and with a wild frantic scramble, I stumbled up into a musty, dust-laden, foul-smelling attic. I reached the one window in the junk-crammed room, threw it open, and stared down three stories to a brick patio. I glanced back as I climbed to the sill and saw my zombie wife and in-laws through a haze of cobwebs; coming for me... coming... and I heard Maria's pleading voice...
Norman screamed in fury, he squeezed the trigger again and again as he shrieked. I said I'd kill you and I meant it take that... and that... and that... and... choke...

Paul Holt grinned wryly...
What happened! Why they killed me, of course!
They killed...

Suddenly Norman heard Paul's mocking laughter, saw the glint of amusement in his eyes, and Norman's face flushed scarlet. He seethed with rage, his finger tightened on the trigger...
Do you think I'm a fool, Holt? Do you think I'd believe that rot?
Believe what you like, Norman...

Norman's cold lifeless hands caught Norman King's throbbing throat. His powerful dead fingers clamped tightly, cutting off Norman's air supply... cutting off his life...

They made me a zombie, Norman! And now, if you want my wife so badly, I'll have to make you one, at least... then you might have a ghost of a chance...
They couldn't be far behind, Fitch realized. Of all the dumb luck... for years he'd snatched purses, and he'd never fumbled so badly as this time! His chest pounding as he rounded the corner, Fitch knew that his two pursuers would be closing in on him in another minute!

He skidded to a stop suddenly. In the empty lot to his right some kids were fooling around an old ice box, which sagged ludicrously atop a mound of rubbish. One punk sat inside the enamel box, while the others yammered, pretending they were about to shut the door. It took Fitch only a moment to see beauty in this sordid scene; the ice box was a better hideout than any other he'd find!

Fitch slammed one kid when he protested against an adult joining their fun... the others calmed down fast. Hunching over, Fitch pulled a five-spot from his pocket and the eyes around him grew big with anticipation. Fitch swiftly tore the bill into two pieces. He handed one half of the bill to the skinny kid nearest him. "I'm gonna duck into the ice box, see?" he whispered. "Slam that door shut after I'm in... then just keep on playing. You get the other half when you open the door for me!"

While the kids chattered excitedly, Fitch stepped into the box and maneuvered cork-screw fashion till he was able to squat down inside. 'Okay!' he called. "When I rap on the side of the box, you open 'er up and get the other half of your reward! Now slam 'er closed!"

A tight fit, Fitch thought, a smile on his face. It was dark, and already the perspiration was beginning to swim down the small of his back. But sitting it out in the ice box was a lot cosier than sweating out a prison sentence!

The air was stale and it was hard to breathe... but those cops'd pass by in another moment, and he'd hop out and make a getaway!

While he squatted inside the sealed box, two figures in blue raced around the corner. One of them pointed at the boys in the empty lot. At the same moment, the kids spotted the police. With a yelp of fear, the boys scattered, their legs thrashing frantically as they ran away. "T-They catch us here again," one boy grunted, "and they'll run us in! Last time they warned us to stay out this lot, or we'd all go to jail!"

In another minute the boys were gone, and the police ran on. The lot was silent. Except for the deep-throated groaning inside the abandoned ice box.

After the footsteps died away outside, Fitch pounded on the enamel side of the box... pounded till blood from his slashed knuckles ran down the slick surface. With all his strength he hurled himself against the door, but it held firm.

It was growing hot in the box... increasingly hard to breathe. Fitch's fingers ripped his collar open, but it didn't help. There was a curious buzzing in his ears, and he found it painful to keep his eyes open. His heart was beating strangely in his chest, and the white-hot lump in his throat seemed to be growing... seemed to be filling his whole tortured body, as if it would soon burst. Just one breath of air, that's all he needed! Let the cops come and take him... let them throw him into solitary! Just let him gulp some air, and relieve the agony that was melting his insides! Air...
YOU, TOO, CAN MEET NEW FRIENDS! JOIN THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB!

SEND FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP KIT TODAY, RECEIVE A FULL-COLOR 7½ X 10½ ILLUMINATED CERTIFICATE, A STURDY WALLET IDENTIFICATION CARD, A SNAZZY EMBROIDERED SHOULDER PATCH, AND A STUNNING ANTIQUE BRONZE-FINISH BAS-RELIEF PIN.

* * * * *

FOR AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP, FILL OUT THE COUPON AND SEND IT IN, TOGETHER WITH 25¢ IF FIVE OR MORE OF YOU WISH TO JOIN AS AN AUTHORIZED CHAPTER, ENCLOSE EACH MEMBER'S NAME AND ADDRESS ALONG WITH 25¢ FOR EACH NAME, AND INDICATE THE NAME OF THE ELECTED CHAPTER PRESIDENT. WE WILL NOTIFY EACH PRESIDENT OF HIS CHAPTER NUMBER. EACH MEMBER, CHAPTER OR INDIVIDUAL, WILL RECEIVE HIS KIT DIRECTLY... BY RETURN MAIL?

THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB
ROOM 706
225 LAFAYETTE STREET
NEW YORK, 12, N.Y.

Here's my two bits! I want the things and stuff like the kid's wearing! I want to meet new friends like the kid's meeting! I'm a fan-addict! I'm mad!

NAME ____________________________
ADDRESS _________________________
CITY _____________________________
STATE ____________________________
ZONE NO. _________________________

E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB
SEND FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP KIT TODAY, RECEIVE A FULL-COLOR 7½ X 10½ ILLUMINATED CERTIFICATE, A STURDY WALLET IDENTIFICATION CARD, A SNAZZY EMBROIDERED SHOULDER PATCH, AND A STUNNING ANTIQUE BRONZE-FINISH BAS-RELIEF PIN.

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As I drive the hearse through the gutters
Crazy folks will break through their shutters
And their jaws will drop.

The driver's dead
The upholstery's skin

The dash-board'll drive you insane
With a solid glass bottom
You can look right in

In case you run over a pedestrian
Two bright fog-lights out on the fender
Spare tank of blood if you go on a bender

An unemployed mortician who'll service render
If you care to flop
In that tense little hearse
With the fringe on the top

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Heb, heb! So everybody's "high fidelity" crazy these days! So who am I to stand in the way of progress? So snap on your ten watts all-tube amplifier, flip on your no-tangle, non-tracking-error, four-speed, sunk-in sand record player with the diamond stylus, variable reluctance magnetic plug-in pickup head, dust off your base-reflex cabinet with the infinite baffle containing the twin 11 inch woofers, 6 cross-over networks, and 8 matched-on-series tweeters... and lend a shatter clear ear to the crystal-clear needle scratch of these latest additions to the E.C. HORROR HIT PARADE (now swatting you at a flat response from 10 to 84,000 cycle, plus or minus 003 db. at maximum horsepower, minimum rumble level at 3600 revolutions per minute!), as sent us by Frank Field of Port Washington, N.Y., Carl Nelson and Dolores Zielinski of Detroit, Mich., Rod Mazoomer and Jerry Santabasci of Irelrn, N.J., 2 Allegany Hill School Ghosts of Cumberland, Md., and Paul Block and Douglas Tuchman of Elmhurst, L.l.

MAGGOTS GO WHERE MY PILED GUTS GO

EAT ME IN ST LOUIS, LOOBY STRANGLINGS ARE HAPPENING SOME HAIR OVER MY SLAIN BEAU YOU MADE ME SHOVE YOU I'LL BREAK YOUR BONES AGAIN, KATHLEEN COMIN THROUGH THE EYE DROWNED IN THE VALLEY YOU WERE SENT FOR ME SIOUX CITY SHREW HAGS TO WITCHES WHEN YOU AND I WERE YOUNG MAGGOTS

Kevinisky O'Brien and Tom Olive of no address; Steve Wishart of Detroit, Mich., William Gobl of Philadelphia, Pa., and Don Perdomo of N.Y.C. suggest the following PULSATING POGRAMS:

HATCHET SQUAD
ROAST OF THE TOWN FOUR SCAR PLAYHOUSE YOU BET YOUR WIFE PERRY'S IN A COMA MR. GIZZARD TV SCREAM CLUB SMILIN' ED'S FANG THE PRONE STRANGER I ATE THREE WIVES

Somebody sent in the following LURID LYRICS:

THE HEARSE WITH THE FRINGE ON TOP FROM OKLAHOMACIDE

Rats and bats and owls better disperse
When I take you out in this hearse
When I take you out in the black hearse
With the fringe on top
Watch that fringe and see bow it flutters

As I drive the hearse through the gutters
Crazy folks will break through their shutters
And their jaws will drop.

The driver's dead
The upholstery's skin

The dash-board'll drive you insane
With a solid glass bottom
You can look right in

In case you run over a pedestrian
Two bright fog-lights out on the fender
Spare tank of blood if you go on a bender

An unemployed mortician who'll service render
If you care to flop
In that tense little hearse
With the fringe on the top

Al Fuller of Portland, Ore. pens this PERVERTED PARODY to the tune of "Pretend":

Pretend you're draining when you're blue.
It isn't very hard to do
And you'll find blood without an end
Whenever you pretend
Remember, anyone can dream
And nothin's dry as it may seem
The slots haven't got could be a lot
If you pretend
You'll find a body you can share,
One you can call all your own
Just close your eyes, blood is there
You'll never be alone
And if you sing this melody,
You'll be pretending just like me
The blood is mine, it can be yours, my friend,
So why don't you pretend

Clay Kimball of Deep, N.C. sends me flying with this PUTRID POETRY:

I used to be happy with a narcotic fag,
Any old tag, and a drunken jag
But now, no more,
For that was before
I read an E.C. mag!
Now I'm sad and I pout
Till an issue comes out
They make me happy, men.
I EAT AGAIN!

COMMERCIALS. This offer expires with this offer!
Positively last public announcement! THREE DIMENSIONAL E.C. CLASSICS and THREE DIMENSIONAL TALES FROM THE CRYPT OF TERROR 15c each... 2 for 30c! Subscriptions to TALES FROM THE CRYPT... one buck eight issues! Address for more tones of talent, or 3-D mags, or sub order to:

The Crypt Keeper
Room 706, Dept. P
225 Lafayette St.
N.Y. 12, N.Y.
HERE'S A TALE OF BLOODY T.V. PROGRAMING! I CALL THIS DUD...

CLOTS MY LINE

The blinding Kleig lights blazed white-hot. The red signal atop the kinescope camera slinked down. Gears and chains within the camera began to whirr softly and all the previous bustling and mad confusion had suddenly come to a hushed end. The 'canned' T.V. program began, ushered onto tape to be used at some future date. By the unctuous, suave voice of its master-of-ceremonies, Anton Chatfield...

Good evening, friends. Welcome to our network's newest game... 'Guess the Guest!' A unique quiz game in which our panel will attempt to guess the occupation of our invited guest...

Mr. Pierce Draynor sat beside the master of ceremonies, smiling nervously. From time to time he glanced at the panel sitting sternly across the small studio stage...

If our panel fails to name the guest's secret occupation within the time limit, he receives a valuable prize...

Mr. Chatfield nodded toward the glum threesome opposite...

Our panel is new each week. 'Guess the Guest' is not a celebrity program. We believe it is more fun to have three... well... average people like yourselves match wits with our guest tonight on our panel. We have Mr. Ralph Peters, night watchman; Miss Celia Pronick, movie cashier... and Mr. Paul Dunkel, maintenance man...
Now, panel, meet our guest... Mr. Pierce Draynor, your job will be to discover Mr. Draynor's occupation. What he does! In other words... 'Guess the guest' first, we'll begin with the wild guesses! Miss Pronick?

Mr. Pierce Draynor sat in the guest seat with an amused smile, gloating inside. They'd never guess his occupation. It was something they wouldn't expect... just to look at him...

Mr. Draynor is a shoe salesman!

Sorry. No. Mr. Peters?

Mr. Draynor grows flowers!

That's not it! Mr. Dunkel?

Mr. Draynor is a plumber.

His neat outer appearance... his quiet voice... his rather meek air... there was nothing obvious about Mr. Draynor that would give his occupation away. Mr. Draynor was going to enjoy this.

They were all wrong... so very wrong. Mr. Draynor leered slyly at the humming kinescope camera, mocking the vast audience that would view this at some future time. And he remembered how he'd met Mr. Chatfield that night last week... in that crummy little East-Side gin mill....

You are? Why, I'm an M.C. on a new TV program! Er... how would you like to appear, Mr. Draynor? It's called 'Guess the guest.' I'm sure that your occupation would floor our experts...

I've never been on TV. What's it like? I mean... the program?

Well, 'Guess the guest' is a panel program. Mr. Draynor, our panel has to guess your occupation. We, kinescope it! You know... put it on tape for a future rebroadcast over our network.

Oh, I see! Because I'm very nervous before an audience...

On, there's no studio audience at a kinescope take, Mr. Draynor. Just the panel, myself, the cameraman, and... you!

Then I'll accept your invitation, Mr. Chatfield. I'd love to have your clever panel try to guess my occupation!

Good! Just let me check my schedules! Yes! Fine! We'll 'take' you next Tuesday night. At 10:30. Here's the address, you're sure you'll come?

Oh, I'll be there! Mr. Chatfield. I wouldn't miss this for anything.
Mr. Draynor’s thoughts returned to the present as Mr. Chatfield smiled...

Mr. Chatfield had told Mr. Draynor he could ad lib or embellish his yes-or-no answers if he cared to, so long as he did not deliberately lie, that was all right with Mr. Draynor.

The questions began innocently enough... too innocent. Mr. Draynor impatiently urged them on. Mr. Chatfield seemed to be enjoying the proceedings.

Mr. Chatfield gasped in unison, exchanging startled glances. Draynor chuckled softly, whispering that old cliche to Mr. Chatfield who mooded happily...

Then the sudden twitch of Miss Pronick’s lips now as a clue leaped into her mind and her eyes widened in horror. Mr. Dunkel passed to her, her voice was hesitant... fearful.

They leaned forward, hanging on his answer, breathlessly, dramatically. Draynor hesitated. Deliberately, he looked to Mr. Chatfield, who seemed to be enjoying the uncomfortable turn the quiz had taken. Mr. Draynor licked his lips, being careful to keep them carefully closed as he always did in public...

Yes, the liquid is a deep vivid crimson color. The color we are all so familiar with...

The panel gasped in unison, exchanging startled glances. They seem shocked, Mr. Chatfield. As the story writers put it... their faces seem pale, drained of blood. Mr. Draynor chuckled softly, whispering that old cliche to Mr. Chatfield who mooded happily.

They passed from one to the other, narrowing it down, getting to the heart of the matter. Mr. Draynor had helped them along, snickering to himself. He’d wanted them to get close... very close. And Mr. Chatfield had just sat back, smiling...

They leaned forward, hanging on his answer, breathlessly, dramatically. Draynor hesitated. Deliberately, he looked to Mr. Chatfield, who seemed to be enjoying the uncomfortable turn the quiz had taken. Mr. Draynor licked his lips, being careful to keep them carefully closed as he always did in public...

You say this is a liquid product, Mr. Draynor. What kind of a liquid?

Well, it’s a fairly thick liquid, Mr. Dunkel. An important liquid! I might say we could hardly get along without this liquid. This vital fluid.

She saw the sudden twitch of Miss Pronick’s lips now as a clue leaped into her mind and her eyes widened in horror. Mr. Dunkel passed to her, her voice was hesitant... fearful.

Mr. Chatfield are correct, panel! So we may begin the questions. We’ll start with Miss Pronick!

Is this a common product? I mean... have I seen it?

I’m sure you’ve seen this product, Miss Pronick! Most everyone has... it’s very common!

Oh, yes, Miss Pronick, a very fascinating product. Something we could hardly do without...

I see! Er...
Desperately they hurled questions at him, hoping they were wrong at what they suspected...

Is it red paint? A new soap? Nail polish? Red in color...

No...no...no! You're getting off the track!

Peters seemed to be mentally gagged, evading the direct question like some horrible slime lying before him...

You...you're a doctor! You must be! You simply must!

Heavens, no! Far from that!

They were all beating around the bush, afraid to name the hideous occupation torturing their minds. Miss Pronick looked positively ill as she stammered...

You...you work in a hospital...in a...a blood bank? Is that it?

Sorry...

The grinning, gloating guest chose his words carefully, for their fullest and most tantalizing meaning. It was so delightful, watching the panel sweat and squirm.

I'm not in the business of preserving one's health...at all!

You have two minutes, panel...

Mr. Chatfield's eyes gleamed as he warned the panel of the fleeting time. It was the triumph he'd planned all along, that's why he'd invited Mr. Draynor at night. It all fit so nicely, quite a lovely tormenting twist...

You...you're a mortician! Certainly not!
Mr. Chatfield laughed.

This man has a legitimate occupation! If you can't guess it, he wins! Now, do you care to make a stab at it?

No! A dirty trick! You'll hear about this!

What kind of a program is this?

You see, panel! Mr. Pierce Draynor is a va...

A casket! Say! A solid oak, hand Hewn, nylon lined, brass nailed casket... for you to rest in eternal repose forevermore...

Mr. Chatfield turned to Mr. Draynor.

Mr. Draynor giggled. Mr. Chatfield looked surprised...

Do what, Miss Pronick? I don't know what you mean!

We'll protest. Chatfield! We'll protest to the network!

It isn't fair! We're supposed...

Mr. Chatfield sat back, wondering if they'd have the nerve...

Well, panel? Any more questions? Do you give up? You have one minute!

No! We know! We all know! Mr. Draynor is a... oh, no... it can't be Chatfield! You wouldn't do this to us!

Mr. Chatfield turned to Mr. Draynor.

Mr. Pierce Draynor! You have stumped our panel with your occupation! 'Guess the guest' is proud to present its Jack-Pot prize...

The panel shrank now as Draynor leered at them, mocking them... defying them... daring them to pin him down. Mr. Chatfield sat back, wondering if they'd have the nerve...

Mr. Chatfield laughed...

...this solid oak, hand Hewn, nylon lined, brass nailed casket... for you to rest in eternal repose forevermore...
Mr. Draynor laughed out loud, forgetting to hide his poor teeth deformed by pyorrhea...

"Haw, haw! Yet! That's right! Plain old red ink!"

Draynor's laugh choked and died. The members of the panel were rising from their seats... coming toward him...

Anton! How could you? Letting us squirm through the whole awful thing...

Oh, I couldn't resist! When I found out what he did, I just couldn't resist!

The members of the panel were rising from their seats... coming toward him...

Chatfield rose, standing over Draynor, and the cameraman, too, left his whirring mechanism to join the drooling panel members as they gloated toward their invited guest...

I knew you'd think, for one horrible minute, that he was one of us!

Good Lord!

They loomed over the ink manufacturer, hemming him in, their sharp fangs glistening in the white light from the hot kliegs.

You see, Mr. Draynor? We are the vampires!

Yaaaaahhhhh!

Mr. Draynor flailed as they bent over him, sinking their needle-sharp fangs into his flesh... sucking... gulping... drawing the scarlet life-fluid from his weakening body. And just before the darkness closed in, Draynor heard Mr. Chatfield rise, wipe his bloody mouth, and close the 'canned' show...

Be sure to be with us next week when 'Guess the Guest' is presented by the supernatural private TV network. Our program, at that time, will consist of a panel of three average ghouls and another unsuspecting invited guest...

Heh, heh! Cute idea, eh, kiddies... having a private TV network for the graveyard gallery? Of course, it's broadcast over U.H.F. That's ultra-horrible frequencies! In color, too! All pretty flesh-crimson and blood-red! As for poor Mr. Draynor... well, he got to use the prize he'd won! Sooner than he expected, too! And now, the old witch awaits with her morbid mess cooking in her cruddy cauldron! By the way! Did you join the E.C. fan-club yet? Lucky! Live now!
The still night outside the boarding house was suddenly shattered by the sickening impact of two tons of metal and rubber and glass and flesh meeting a solid wall of brick and concrete. The painful squealing of brakes preceding the crash still echoed into the night as the roomers poured out onto the porch and down the wooden steps. Eric Holbién joined them as they rushed to the mass of twisted fenders and pulverized windows, torn muscles and shattered bone, and thick blood that oozed from the wreck and pooled like a scarlet lake upon the cold sidewalk...

Eric Holbién stood behind the three old ladies that shared the huge room next door to his. He watched with satisfaction as their mouths dropped open dumbly and their eyes glazed in horror and the color drained from their aged and wrinkled faces as they beheld the death scene, and Eric Holbién smiled...
And he knew that soon he would have another fabulous tapestry to sell to his friend, Milton. A tapestry woven feverishly by three pairs of gnarled and nervous hands guided by three pairs of milky bloodshot eyes that had looked upon the horror of violent accidental death...

As the hastily summoned ambulance screamed up to the crash scene in its useless mercy trip, Eric Holbién eased himself into a nickety porch rocker and thought back to the beginning of all this... to that very first day he'd come to the boarding house...

"Of course, Mr. Holbién! I have a very nice room vacant. Fifteen a week... with meals..."

Eric had been an art dealer back in New York. He'd had a small gallery but it had never been very successful; the artists that had come to him with their canvases and sculpturnings had not been too good. He'd been forced to close the gallery after a while. People had stopped coming to buy...

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a new addition to our little family! This is Mr. Eric Holbién...

Eric had nodded absently to the three old ladies and picked at his food, his thoughts a million miles away. What could he do now that he'd come to Millville? How long could he last until his money ran out?...

What do you do, Mr. Holbién? I mean, what business are you in? Why... I... I used to be an art dealer, Mrs. Carter!

So Eric had come to Millville to begin again. He'd had nothing specific in mind. He'd just packed his things in New York and taken a train west. And when he'd become tired of riding, he'd gotten off and it'd been at Millville...

Oh, I'm sorry! This is Grace... and Charlotte... and Emma Lou Salsbury, they live in the room next door to yours...

Grace! Charlotte! Emma Lou! Did you hear? Mr. Holbién is an art dealer. You must show him your tapestries!

Why, I---

Eric had nodded absently to the three old ladies and picked at his food, his thoughts a million miles away. What could he do now that he'd come to Millville? How long could he last until his money ran out?...
The Salsbury sisters had snatched the tapestry from Eric and rolled it up again, apologizing. This one's not a very good example of our work!

He'd agreed to look at the Salsbury sisters' work merely as a concession, to avoid insulting them, and the one they'd shown him had been just what he'd expected.

Sheepishly, the sisters had unrolled the tapestry again. Eric's heart had raced in his chest. His eyes had moved slowly over the minute stitches...the dreary somber colors...the emotional swirling composition. He'd reached out, as in a dream, and touched his dream, and his dream had been real.

But then, he'd spied the tapestry that had been rolled up and almost hidden from view and he'd absentmindedly taken it out of the closet and spread it open...

When did you make that one? That one is good. That tapestry is a work of art...an expression of sheer genius...

But then, he'd had of it had been enough. Eric Holbién had waited all his life for that moment.

He was hit by a car...we saw the whole thing...it was awful! The blood! The twisted body. Poor Mr. Golden! We made this that very night!

The girls are shy. Mr. Holbién. They weave wonderful tapestries. After dinner, you must see them.

I'd be delighted.

Is it very pretty? Pure craftsmanship...good color...er...ah.

It's not at all! We intended to destroy it!

We really can't say, Mrs. Carter. Tapestries like that are...are...who made this?

This...? This one?

Grace! Oh, dear!

This...? This one.

Yes, that's it! I remember.

When Mr. Golden was killed? We made that.

This is art! This is good!
Yes, that was the beginning of it.
Eric had taken the tapestry to New York to an art dealer friend of his, just to check on his own judgement.

This is good, Eric! Who did it? Can you get more? Excel – lent! Such expression! Such emotion!

I'll give you five hundred dollars for it! And if I can get more for you?

I'm sure I'll be able to sell them to this party I have in mind.
I'll buy all you can get if they're as good as this one.
For five hundred dollars each?

It's a deal, Milton! Write out a check! And I'll be back soon with others!

So Eric had gone back and told the sisters.
Fifty dollars? Oh, dear! That's an awful lot of money! And this is all for us!

I had to fight for it, but he finally gave in! And he wants more!

More? But we have no more like that! We made others but we destroyed them!

Oh, ho! Then you've got to make them over!

We couldn't! We wouldn't be inspired!

I'm sure it's all for us.

Eric had taken the tapestry to New York to an art dealer friend of his, just to check on his own judgement.

The one we made after Father died was our first! He fell beneath the wheels of a train!

And we made six after that! Mr. Golden's was our latest! We destroyed the others!

Then, if... if I could rush you to the scene of an accidental death, you'd be inspired? Right?

If we saw the body...
It had been maddening! Eric had had to buy a radio with a police wavelength band. He sat night after night, in his room...listening.

When one of those few and far between calls had come in, he'd rushed the old gals to the spot more often than not, they'd arrive too late.

But there'd been those fortunate times when they'd arrived before the police. The sister's had gawked and gasped and Eric had known he'd have his tapestry by morning.

He'd driven the car to the street where the boarding house stood, placed the unconscious man's foot on the accelerator, released the emergency brake, and hopped from the car.

So tonight, he'd walked a short distance out of town and he'd thumbed a ride and been picked up, and when his poor unsuspecting victim'd looked the other way...
Eric grew angry. He thought of Milton waiting in New York with his customer hungry for more tapestries. He thought of the four hundred and fifty dollars and the good times it would buy, and he shouted...

The car had spee down the street crazily, gathering speed. Then it'd spun out of control and plowed explosively into the brick wall.

And he'd waited for the sisters to come from the house, to see the lacerated flesh, the protruding bone, the dripping blood...

And now he sat upon the porch rocker waiting, while upstairs, a light blazed in the weaving sisters' room...

"What's going on? You haven't done anything!"

"We couldn't work! Something is wrong!

Eric entered the boarding house and climbed the stairs. Mrs. Carter and her other roomers had long since gone to bed and now lay enduring troubled dreams of what they'd witnessed earlier. He knocked softly...

"Who is it?"

"It's me! Eric! I came to watch!"

The door opened slowly. Eric entered, he looked around, the cloth tacked tautly to the tapestry-stretcher was bare white and quite blank.

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Eric entered the boarding house and climbed the stairs. Mrs. Carter and her other roomers had long since gone to bed and now lay enduring troubled dreams of what they'd witnessed earlier. He knocked softly...

"Who is it?"

"It's me! Eric! I came to watch!"

The door opened slowly. Eric entered, he looked around, the cloth tacked tautly to the tapestry-stretcher was bare white and quite blank.

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"What's going on? You haven't done anything!"

"We couldn't work! Something is wrong!"
The old ladies looked at each other in shocked bewilderment. They turned to Eric angrily.

"It's got to be an accident... or else it's not any good!"

"Murder isn't fair!"

They came at him slowly, gliding on aged legs, fondling the instruments of their art... the scissors and the long sharp needles.

"It's got to be an accident... like when we pushed Father under the train..."

"Or like when we pushed Mr. Golden in front of that car..."

"Or the others we did cleverly managed while you were listening to your stupid little radio..."

They stood over him like the three witches in Macbeth...

Mrs. Carter and her roomers tossed in their troubled sleeps, but never heard the muffled screams that came from the weaving sisters' room... never heard the snipping of their scissors... the clicking of their needles... their giggles of satisfaction...

"Pretty, Emma... hehehehe! Shh-h-h!"

Not until they unrolled their latest tapestry of crocheted veins and embroidered arteries and sewn muscles and tendons and fingernails and hair and tacked-down eyeballs and ears and strung-up bones and cartilage...

Hee, hee! Yep! The three old girls were nuts, all right... just like all artists, including the Batty-boys at E.C. *Well, they must be batty to draw this trash. Hee, hee! And talking about crazy people, this winds up C.K.'s mag which you bought? Hee, hee! And anybody who buys this nauseating nonsense must be as bad off as the creeps who drew it. Well, I gotta go now. I gotta lead my idiot editors back to their padded cells. See you next in the vault of horror? *Bye now!"
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Darn it, I'm tired of being a skinny scarecrow. Charles Atlas says I can make me a new man! I'll gamble a stamp and get his FREE BOOK...

Hey SKINNY!

...YER RIBS ARE SHOWING!

Don't let him hit you, Joe! Watch what you say, Fella! Shut up, you bag of bones!

Here's a love-tap — from that bag of bones, remember?

Oh, Joe! You are a real MAN, after all.

What a man...

And he used to be so skinny!

I can make you a new man, too, in only 15 minutes a day!

What's my secret?

People used to laugh at my skinny 97-pound body. I was ashamed to strip for sports or for a swim. Girls made fun of me behind my back. Then I discovered my body-building system, "Dynamic Tension." It made me such a complete specimen of manhood that I hold the title, "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man!"

What's my secret?

When you look in the mirror and see a healthy, husky, fellow smiling back at you — then you'll be astonished at how fast "Dynamic Tension" gets results! It is the easy, natural method and you can practice in the privacy of your own room — just 15 minutes each day. Just watch your scrawny chest and shoulder muscles begin to swell. Those spindly arms and legs of yours bulge and your whole body starts to feel alive, full of zip and go!

Thousands are becoming husky — my way. I give you no gadgets to fool with. With "Dynamic Tension" you simply utilize the dormant muscle-power in your own body — watch it grow and multiply into real solid live muscle.

Don't let him hit you, Joe! Watch what you say, Fella! Shut up, you bag of bones!

Charles Atlas, Dept. 364 F, 115 East 23rd St., New York 10, N. Y.

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