

Queen of the Mayhem

"Alvin Hinkey" Yarn



By Joe Archibald

Alvin Hinkey, that goofy Gotham flatfoot, follows a bejeweled murder trail to crown a mistress of skullduggery.

Corporal Louis Garfinkle
APO 888, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, Cal.

DEAR LOUIE:
So you're coming home in about six months to be a civilian and can't wait! Hambone Noonan says you always had a hole in your head and that if you were a cow you'd break out of a field of clover to feed on ragweeds in the next lot.

No kidding, though, it isn't so bad. You only have to go without your beer maybe three months so's you can eat a steak, and if you haven't got a place to live in you can't find one. You buy a second-hand jalopy for say sixteen hundred clams, but if you turn it in for a new one that costs three grand, they only allow you seven hundred for the old

car. It is wonderful, Louie. You have not got a hole in your head. First you have to have a head.

Speaking of citizens getting out of places reminds me of a rhubarb the cops had a couple weeks ago. Maybe you would not remember a character named Benny "Bugs" Mirch. He is a big operator and got his nickname not because he has anything amiss inside his noggin, but because he always wore jewelry in the shape of bugs. Benny had a little scarab with a diamond in it for a stickpin, and his cuff links were little gold ladybugs. They say he has a piece of jewelry that is a gold cockroach set with a dozen diamond chips.

Well, two years ago this Bugs Mirch pulled one of the biggest jobs on record and

withdrew with about one hundred grand of legitimate lettuce after knocking off a bank over in Bucks County, Pa. The *modus operandi* of the bandits led the cops to believe it was a Mirch masterpiece, but they never proved it on the gee, nor did they find the take. They also were pretty sure Bugs had at least two confederates, one of whom was a dame.

Now three months after the crime, Bugs was arrested for rubbing out a shady citizen down in Chatham Square and they had enough on the punk to give him twenty years to life. But Bugs still wouldn't talk about the bank caper even when they promised him they'd peel off five or so from his rap if he did.

"I'll git out ten years sooner'n you bulls figger anyways," Bugs was quoted by the press as having said, "Nuts an' your ol' man's mustaches!"

Well, he wasn't kiddin,' Louie. But leave me not get ahead of the story.

Me and Hambone are over on West Twenty-third Street trying to get something on a horse-playing joint one afternoon when we hear Bugs has slipped Sing Sing. A radio is on in the tobacco store.

"Huh," the proprietor sniffs. "Got out in a laundry wagon. No wonder it was a clean gitaway, Noonan. Why don't you cops work on preventin' big crimes like that instead of botherin' guys tryin' to make an honest livin'?"

"What you like in the Sixth?" I ask quick.

"Madame Eclair, pals. That goat worked out last time in— Look, what you tryin' t' do, Hinkey?"

"Let's go to headquarters, Hambone," I says. "They will want everybody there, it looks like. First thing Bugs'll do is git the hundred thousand fish and then his next step will be Iwa Jima or Little America. We got to work fast."

"An' he only done about two years,"

Noonan says. "That's makin' crime pay off, Alvin."

Headquarters is in a tizzy. We ask a big lieutenant what is the latest.

"Car reported stolen outside Ossining. The owner found whoozy in a ditch in just his underwear."

"Who cares about little stuff when Bugs Mirch escaped?" Hambone asks.

"Look, chowderhead," I says. "Sing Sing is located in Ossining. Who would want a car worst than anybody? An' a change of clothes? It is a report of progress on the part of Bugs. I wonder how far we will git?"

WE ARE chased out to cover all places where Bugs might seek to slip into the big town. Me and Hambone go to Grand Central and hang around until two A.M. We call up headquarters and find out nobody has done any worse than we have.

"That's one constellation," Noonan says. "Let's git some coffee, Alvin. I didn't see one suspicious lookin' guy wearin' a blue topcoat an' brown plaid suit."

"Bugs stole a plaid topcoat an' a blue suit, beetlehead," I says sourly. "I wouldn't be surprised he borrowed a match off you, Hambone."

The big loogan stops and scratches his dome. "Come to think of it, a guy did. He wore a— Say, you don't think—"

"To you it could happen," I choke out, and stagger into the all-night beanery. "An' they send me out with you to learn this business, Hambone. A race horse could learn' runnin' from a turtle much easier."

"I hope I never find out that happened, Alvin," Noonan says. "But the worst is I might never know for sure."

Oh, brother!

But the cops find Bugs just about two days later. The dishonest jail-breaker is in no position to sneer at them, as some characters have left him on the floor of a hotel room near Union Square with three slugs in him,

only one of which had been needed to fill him quite full of rigor mortis. He is clad in the stolen burlap and had a surprised look on his pan like a kid has when he gets a present he didn't expect.

The diagnostician of the defunct briefs Bugs and says the criminal character has gone to whatever reward he could expect for nearly nine hours. We comb the room for clues and also photograph the corpse from every angle. There is half a bottle of rye and two glasses on the table, a cigarette stub a doll has left—it is smeared with kisser carmine—and thirty bucks in Bugs' pocket.

"They knowed he was here, somebody," Noonan yelps. "They visited him. Go grab that hotel clerk!"

An anemic looking gee is produced. He says he was only on duty two hours when the chambermaid found the stiff, that a guy named Caspar Dimmick must have been working when Bugs Mirch registered. He tells us where to locate Dimmick, so the cops go and drag him out of his room across town, drive him to the hotel and bring him upstairs where he is grilled quite thoroughly.

CASPAR is an obese and oily taxpayer with a pair of shoe-button eyes set in gobs of fat and they are as close together as Minneapolis and St. Paul. He takes a seared gander at the remains and bites his nails.

"Awright," Hambone growls, "who come to see Bugs Mirch?"

"B-Bugs Mirch?" the fat boy bleats.

Noonan sneers. "He acts surprised," he says in a nasty voice.

"Look, how would I know who he was?" Dimmick gulps out. "An' who can check up on everybody comes an' goes in this joint? Anyways, I git sleepy aroun' two in the A.M. and I doze off."

"Where would Bugs git thirty bucks?" I ask. "I will answer that myself. Off the citizen he stole the clothes an' jalopy from. Call headquarters, Hambone, an' tell 'em to

get in touch with that native of Ossining an' ast how much scratch he had on him when he was ambushed."

"Who you givin' orders, Alvin? You remember your place if you please," that lemonhead says. "You phone downtown yourself. It is funny Bugs would come to this joint. It means he was here before an' knew somebody would cover for him. Dimmick, you look guilty to me!"

The fat gee's jowls quiver. "Look, don't you go framin' me!"

"Who would buy your pitcher?" Noonan sniffs. "Somebody go downstairs an' see if there's a Betsy in the cash drawer."

"Of courst there is," Caspar says.

I call headquarters. A flatfoot goes down into the lobby and gets the gun.

When Dimmick sees it his eyes bug out. "That ain't it!" he yips.

"It was the only cannon there," a cop says.

Dimmick falls into a chair like a big sack of oats. Hambone examines the roscoe and finds that three of the shells are empty. I am standing quite close to Dimmick an' can now smell the odor of booze fanning out from his pores.

"Nothin' to this case," Hambone says. "This punk knew Bugs. They got drinkin'. All the time Dimmick thinks of the dough Bugs got from that bank that was never found. He figures maybe Bugs has already picked it up. Bugs' old pals meet him to cut the melon, and Dimmick wants a slice for shieldin' the escaped convict. Somethin' went wrong an' Dimmick knocks off Bugs. Then he goes an' gets stinko an' forgits to be smart an' puts the gun back in the drawer."

"There was an empty rye bottle down there," a cop says. "If that ain't the gun belongs to the hotel, where is the one you claim does?"

"Yeah," Hambone snaps. "Got to take you in, Dimmick. Pick up your things, boys, an'—er—" He looks at the stiff and then at

me, Louie. Now I know Hambone loaned a match to Bugs Mirch at Grand Central.

"The gun that was there had a pearl handle," Dimmick mutters.

"That's right," the day clerk says.

"Who'd believe you?" Hambone tosses at the gee. "An' you stay around where we can find you, see?"

Hambone has Caspar Dimmick locked up. Later that morning we get a call from the Ossining cops saying Bugs robbed the native of a hundred and fifty fish. We ask each other where Bugs spent the other hundred and twenty and then go to Caspar Dimmick and frisk him. He had five twenty-dollar bills on him. I think of a ruse, Louie.

"That guy Bugs stole the car from has a garage an' he said there was lubricatin' oil on a couple of twenties. So if—"

"Awright," Dimmick yips, when we spring it on him in the D. A.'s office, before anybody even examines the money. "I knew Bugs Mirch, but all you cops can do is git me for harborin' a criminal. He hands me the hundred fish to keep my mouth shut an' promised me more later. But I never saw nobody come to visit him. After I left Bugs it was clost to three in the A.M. I had some snorts an' was sleepy. I didn't wake up until quarter to seven."

"He could of been handed a mickey," I suggest. "The cops never did know the identity of the crooks who robbed the bank with him, an' maybe Bugs wanted to make sure Dimmick would be out like a light when the late callers arrived."

"I could of said that," Hambone sniffs. "Well, we got the motive an' the murder gun."

"Of course," I observe, "there is just a slight chance the visitors knocked off Bugs, an' until we apprehend them, there is a doubt about Dimmick's guilt, Hambone."

"Yeah? You read too many comic books, Alvin! How do we know Bugs give this punk the dough? He could of robbed Bugs of

it! I'll put my repertation on the line on this one, Alvin Hinkey!"

"You won't lose much .one way or the other," I says.

Noonan looks at the D. A. and points to me. "Look, if you don't take him away from me an' give him to somebody else, I will resign! Nobody can talk like that to me!"

"Okay, I'll use my influence, Noonan," the D. A. says. "Maybe I'll attach him to my office again."

"You'd git more results from a pen wiper," Hambone snarls. "You keep away from me, Alvin."

SO ONCE more I am to work out of the D. A.'s office, Louie. One thing we are sure of, there is still no clue to the hundred grand taken out of the Bucks County bank. And I am sure Caspar Dimmick has not got the moxie to assassinate a fly that gets in his soup.

It is five P.M. the next day and I am trying to help out the D. A., who is stuck on a crossword puzzle, when the phone rings.

"Hello! Yeah. You what? You think it might tie in with the Bugs Mirch rubout? You do, huh? Well, I'll send a man over to look the stiff over, captain. Name of Vannie Bitz, huh? Never heard of him. He did, huh?"

I bite my nails until the D. A. hangs up. "I hope you didn't figure on smoochin' with a babe tonight, Hinkey," he says. "I want you to go over to Hohokus an' check up on a stiff they picked up on a lonely road near Saddle River. Most likely is nothing. Them small-town cops always act like they was in a B picture."

I drive over to Hohokus, Louie. They have the deceased laid out in a morgue. He is a thin gee wearing a double-breasted gray plaid suit you don't walk up two flights for or get a baseball bat with.

"Why do you guys think he was tied up with Bugs Mirch?" I ask a flatfoot.

“Well, we went through his clothes, Hinkey, an’ found this in his breast pocket when we pulled out his purple hanky.”

The cop hands me a little trinket. It is a little gold beetle and set in its back is a sparkler that is no chip. A dame’s earring, Louis.

“I remembered reading about Bugs, Hinkey. How he liked jewelry like that.”

“Smart boy,” I compliment. “He would give a doll a present like that, Bugs would. How was the citizen liquidated?”

“Thirty-two caliber slug close up,” they tell me. “Powder burns on his vest. Here, I’ll show it to you.”

He does.

A guy who worked on the highway for the state found the deceased. There were tire tracks in the dirt just off the road, the cops said.

“I’d like to go there,” I says, and little fish are swimming up and down the fluid of my spinal column, Louie. I am holding up a double-breasted coat and suddenly I bring it close to my nose and sniff like a beagle hound. “Ah!” I says. “It is other powder besides gun I smell, boys. Or some perfume.”

They take me out to the lonesome road where I get a gander of the murder site. There is an opening in the trees at the side of the road looking over the oversized brook they call a river in Jersey. There is a bench there. It is a natural for smoochers.

I paint a picture inside my dome, Louie. Vannie and his babe park. They sit on the bench and she lays her noggin on his shoulder. An ear bauble comes loose and drops into his fancy handkerchief pocket. Another character or characters appear, by appointment or otherwise, and blow Vannie across the Styx with a thirty-two caliber Betsy. Maybe Vannie is put on the spot.

When I get back across the river I call the D. A. “I think we’ve got somethin’, chief,” I says. “You checked up on this

Vannie Bitz?”

“Yeah. He’s got no record under that name, Hinkey. We’ll find out soon enough if his prints are on file anywheres. What did you find out?”

“A doll is mixed up in this. Got some jewelry I think Bugs give her. Looks like when he went to stir she picked up another heartbeat.”

“Hinkey, Vannie Bitz owns part of a night spot on West Fourth. The Clippo Rouge.”

“You should use the past tense, D. A.,” I says. “Well, what can I lose lookin’ the dump over?”

Places like the Clippo Rouge only start jumping around one A.M. I put on my best blue suit and white shirt and enter the joint about that hour, Louie. On my way there I tell myself it was a funny thing for a sharpie like Vannie to ride all the way to a bosky dell in Jersey to neck with a babe who can wear diamond ear dornicks.

THE El Clippo Rouge is not too crowded and it is quite evident that whoever owns the lion’s share of the dive will never winter on the Riviera. The patrons all look to have a five-buck limit, Louie. A little brunette takes my hat and I go and sit down at a table and order rum and coke.

When I am ready for a second snort the floor show starts. First a hill-billy character who never climbed higher than the steps of the public library goes to work on a guitar. He is lousy. Then a gee makes with jokes. When he empties the can of corn, a bulky citizen takes over the mike. He wears the only tux in the joint and a Gable upper lip fringe. When he gives with the smile full of teeth I am sure he could outbite a Great Dane.

He gives the next number a big buildup, and then a babe comes out from behind some drapery and gets the spotlight.

Nature built this cupcake up well

enough, Louie. She wears a strapless black evening gown with not much under it but herself. She is a platinum blonde with a pair of peepers that could make a spendthrift out of a miser, and has kissers like Hayworth. She sings a current hit, then ducks back, and everybody makes with the palm music. Then the big character grabs the mike and says he has an important announcement to make.

The lights go on.

“Ladies and gentlemen. The next number by our beautiful and talented star, a favorite many of you folks have enjoyed for over a year, Tara Bonnay, will be in a manner of speaking, a farewell. At least for a few months anyway. It is with great pride I announce to our patrons that she has consented to be my wife. Yes, folks, you are lookin’ at the happiest guy in li’l ol’ New York. Your host who announces all the rest of the drinks are on the house, Nick Romaine!”

The applause makes the joint shake, Louie. Romaine keeps talking. “Attention, puh-le-e-se!” he howls. “After a trip to South America and even the Argentine we will be back, my frien’s. In the meantime the El Clippo Rouge will be closed for extensive alterations.”

It is a madhouse, Louie. The blonde comes out and makes like she will sing but there is too much racket so she has to wait for the swan song. Little gremlins with icy dogs climb my backbone. A crumby joint like this giving out with the kind of take that can send a honeymoon couple to Rio and Buenos Aires? Extensive alterations? The doll passes close to the table. She wears pearl earrings. Louie, I got a hunch and I play it.

I saunter toward the hat-check nook. I hear a character ask about Vannie Bitz. A waiter says Nick sent him a big floral piece and agrees it was too bad. I stoop over and pluck at the carpet, then walk over to the hatcheck babe. I put the little gold beetle on

the counter. The diamond shoots off little sparks that make the cupcake blink.

“Found it over there by the potted palm,” I says. “Guess some dame lost it.”

“Why, it must be one of Miss Bonnay’s,” the chick says, and comes out of her booth. “She has a pair just like that.”

“First get me my hat, sugar,” I gulp.

“I’ll be right back.”

I wouldn’t have waited if it hadn’t been a new skimmer, Louie. I mean, as long as I did. When I git outside with it and wave at a cabby, a guy takes me by the arm. I turn and look into the eyes of Nick Romaine.

“I paid my check,” I says. “Anyway it was on the house.”

“Now, what you so nervous about, pal?” Nick says and grins at me, but he has a grip on my biceps that is no fraternal signal or caress. “You are coming upstairs and get the lady’s thanks personal, Buster. How many guys get to do that? An’ there is also a reward.”

“Oh, awright,” I says. “But I ain’t askin’ for nothin’.”

“You’d be surprised. Now come on, you shy li’l thing ‘fore Nick has to twist your arm.”

Louie, I accompany Nick up to an office on the second floor. Sitting in a chair, a little pasty under her paint job, is this Tara Bonnay. Nick locks the door.

“No horsing around,” the blonde says. “Where did you find the earring, Boy Scout?”

“Where I said,” I says.

NICK belts me in the side of the jaw. “You’re a liar, punk! We combed this joint all day and part of tonight for that gewgaw, see? Used the vacuum three times over!” He grabs me and pins my arms. “Frisk this gee, baby,” he tells the blonde.

She does. They do not come up with no Sunday School perfect attendance pin, Louie. Only my badge.

The dame tosses it to Nick's desk as if it had turned into a scorpion. "A flatfoot!" she says. She hauls off and slaps me one that knocks a partial plate loose in my upper jaw. "Awright, where did you find that little gold beetle?"

"In Vannie Bitz's breast pocket," I snort, knowing that I am a loser anyway. "Could you an' Vannie have been the crooks was on the bank job with Bugs Mirch?"

The blonde lets out a squeak and lets me have another roundhouse. That one made my ears vibrate for a good five minutes, Louie.

Nick Romaine takes a Roscoe out of his desk drawer. It has a pearl handle. "We got to get rid of this punk but quick, baby," he says. "Nothing is going to stop us from spending that bag of dough!"

I stall for time, Louie. "So the gun you used on Bugs," I says, "you planted in the till at the hotel while the night clerk was either cockeyed drunk or doped. This dame was Bugs's girl an' he trusted her all the way. So when he met his pals in the hotel on his return from the big house, he tells where the dough is and you plan to all go together; get it and lam.

"But this blond blister took up with Vannie after Bugs was removed from circulation. She and Vannie had it fixed to knock Bugs off and only split two ways if he ever got loose. Then she met you, Nick, an' you looked better to her than Vannie. So Vannie and the blonde drive over to Jersey where Bugs cached the clams, and on the way back, the babe suggests they stop and admire the scenery for awhile. That's when you came in, Nick. Exit, Vannie."

"He's got the works, Nick," the doll says. She takes a belt of straight rye and lights a cigarette she throws away after one drag.

"Bugs framed you after he was knocked off," I says. "That little beetle, huh? You won't never git away with this!"

"If we don't you won't never hear about it, Buster," Nick snarls.

"Stop waitin' around, Nick!" the blonde yelps. "Fix his wagon for keeps."

"I just thought of something, baby. We ain't running such a big chance if we take him out of here alive," the big lug says. "The boiler's out back, ain't it?"

"Yeah. I think you've got somethin' there."

THE blonde brings Nick his hat. She picks up a fur jacket and puts it around her shoulders. With a roscoe close to my ribs I am escorted down a back stairway and out into a court in back where a big sedan is parked.

"You drive, baby," Nick says. "Me and this punk'll sit nice and comfy in back. We knock him off out in the country, come back an' grab the dough and then head south."

"You will git no good out of bloodstained loot," I tell them.

"I'm laughin'," the dame says as she gets behind the wheel.

"Take the West Side speedway, baby," Nick says.

We drive out into the street and head toward the Hudson. There I am with a spade practically patting my cheek and my birthday tomorrow, Louie. In a few hours I will no longer be interested in weather reports. I will never know if the Widow Jones on that radio serial ever recovered from a fractured skull. I never saw such a cold-blooded dame as the blonde was. She is humming the song about flying down to Rio.

"How many Palm Beach suits should I take along, baby?" Nick asks.

"Couple of dozen, Lover Boy," Tara chirps. "With the dough we got, you wear one a couple days, then throw it away. Don't let me forget the new bathing suit."

"An' that marked deck of cards," Nick says.

"You are fiends," I says, and sweat ice cubes. We get on the speedway and there are a lot of cars for so late at night.

I shift in the seat and Nick jabs the Betsy harder against my brisket. "Easy, punk!"

"Don't knock him off in the car, Nick," the blonde says. "You just got new slip-covers."

When everything seems lost, Louis, a couple of flares appear up ahead. There is an accident blocking traffic and the blond babe brakes the jalopy and squeals to a stop. Two big cops loom up.

Nick whispers a warning to me and then says pleasantly, "What's the trouble, officer?"

"Car got sideswiped. Things'll get rollin' in a minute, mister."

I can almost hear the teeth of the dishonest couple grind enamel off. Then it hits me, Louie.

"Ha, look at that cop!" I yelp. "The big slob looks like he got the job from a relative. An' look at the ears on him! What's your name, you Keystone cop, Mortimer O'Snerd?"

"What?" The cop jumps in close and opens the door. I hear the blond hold her breath and Nick Romaine chokes out, "You cut that out! Look, he's drunk. He—"

"Come outta there 'fore I drag you out!" the cop yells.

"You an' what squad of marines?" I says defiantly. "I've seen better faces than yours on cans of shrimp!"

Nick Romaine is in quite a frenzy and I can hear him stew. The cop makes a grab again and then Nick slams the door shut on the law's fingers.

"Step on it, baby!"

The blonde does. The car jumps away like it was a greyhound. There is a space between a tow-truck and another jalopy a hundred yards up ahead and the dame tries to negotiate it but it couldn't have been done with a baby Austin, Louie. There is a spine-

tingling crash and I hear a roscoe go off. I end up in the front seat with the blond babe and smell motor oil, antifreeze and perfume just before the lights go out.

DID you ever jump into the Big Dipper after a slide down the Milky Way, Louie? It is full of stardust that gets into your nose and throat. Somebody dumps the dipper and I land on a comet and ride to the moon. The return comet leaves the rails and I sink down and land with a thud on the West Side highway and look up at a cop. Another guy is brushing glass out of my hair and I hear him say I got a chance to live.

"Okay, what is the gimmick?" the cop says. "You haven't got enough hooch in you to fill a thimble."

"Ha," I says. "First fix my broken legs and I'll tell you."

"You only hit your head which is lucky," a bystander quips.

"Awright, officer, you ever hear of Bugs Mirch? Vannie Bitz knocked him off. The gee who erased Vannie in return was the big slob I was sittin' in back of the car with. He had something pressed against my torso an' it was not a pipe. So I was goin' for a ride and I will kiss the citizen who caused the tieup here if you will bring him over. I am Alvin Hinkey, attached to the D. A.'s office downtown. How are the other survivors?"

"The blonde is cross-eyed," a cop says. "She is over there talking about Rio and flying acrossst the pampas with some grouchos and tossing hundred-dollar bills about."

"She ain't kiddin'," I says. "I would say she and the big crook with her can put their hands on close to ninety G's if you took them home. It all depends on how much Bugs spent before he knocked off a guy an' went to jail."

I got on my feet, pull the needle of the speedometer out of my right earlobe, and stagger over to where the blonde and Nick

Romaine are propped up against the running board of the wrecked sedan.

Nick has not as yet picked up all his marbles, Louie. "I—always said dames was lousy drivers. The truck give us plenty room even if it was in a hurry. Taking a hundred grand to Rio. So she swings right into it and waving a pearl-handled roscoe—like she was going to hold it up and—whamo! Anybody seen that flatfoot I was taking for a ride?"

"Shut up!" the blonde says, her eyes uncrossing. "Button your trap, Nick!"

"Huh? Oh, hello, baby," Nick says. "Where in the devil are we?"

"You ain't where you need to speak Spanish," I says. "Remember me?"

Nick's eyes bug out and he stares all around. He grabs at the blonde. "You spilled anything?"

"Not yet," the warbler snaps. "Just leave 'em grill me first, though."

"Here's your handbag, sister," a cop says. "We got your address out of it. Your hangout was on your car license, Nick. Let's go on a scavenger hunt. Ha, you never meant what you said to me, Hinkey. I get it now. You're a smart cookie."

"Of all the lousy breaks!" the blonde yelps. "After all the trouble I went to gettin' that—"

Nick reaches out and grabs Tara by her lily-white throat and it takes two cops to pull his lunchhooks loose. After that we all go for a ride and the first place we visit is Tara's comfy little flat on West Seventieth. She is stubborn and won't tell where the clams are, so we have to tear up the joint.

"Seein' she did all the ground work the scratch has to be here," I says. "I hope you

have the pearl-handled Betsy that should belong in a hotel till as the bullet from it no doubt knocked off Vannie Bitz."

We found the little satchel crammed with the bank dough, Louis. Tara had it hidden in the icebox in her kitchenette and covered up with lettuce leaves.

"She forced me to do it!" Nick Romaine says. "I was putty in her hands. Look at her and tell me what you'd do with her arms around your neck! I was under a spell."

The blonde leaps at Lover Boy and has a nail file as long as my foot in her fist. What she says to Nickie is something that cannot be quoted in the mails, Louie. Anyway it is what a stevedore would not say if he had any pride. We grab the babe and remonstrate with her, which does not work, so a cop has to slug her.

That is all, Louie. Except Caspar Dimmick belts Noonan right on the nose when he is released from the can on the murder charge. Nick Romaine dictates a confession to a stenog and there is nothing left for the blonde to do but look for a lawyer who could have sprung Hitler.

Hambone comes up to me and says he is sore. If I was a pal I would let him in on a good thing when I fell over it by dumb luck. I remembered riding up the West Side highway and how I felt, Louie. So I hit him on the nose, too.

I will be glad to see you back and am glad you figure to take advantage of the G.I. bill. Now you can learn to write an' get paid for it.

Your pal, Alvin.