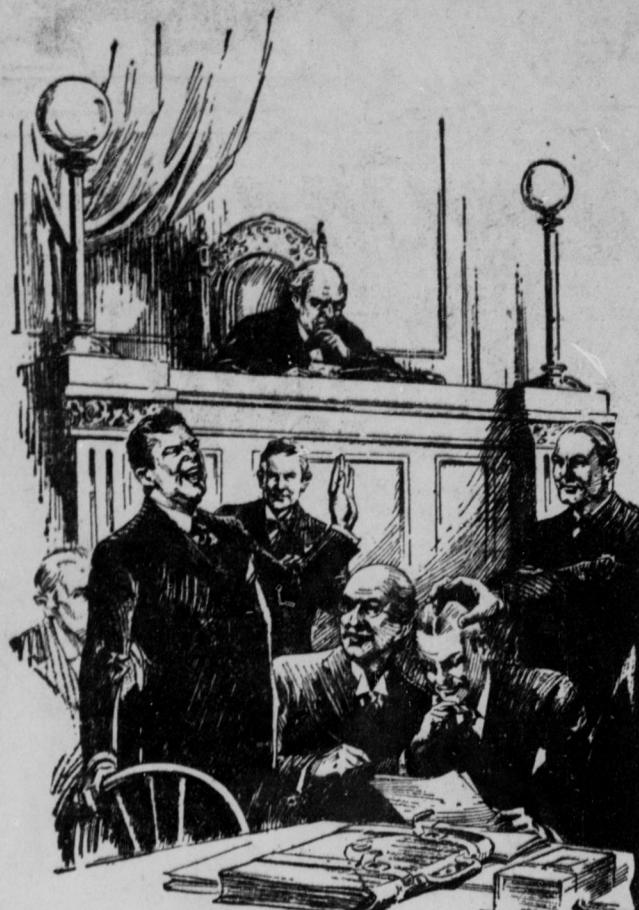


Today's Short Story

## IT HAS TO HIT HOME

By Caroline Appleton &amp; Bob Bohan



THE day he put on his uniform for the first time, Patrolman Rine also squeezed on the arrogant, case-hardened professionalism of the quack. It was tolerated for a while as a rookie breach of departmental good manners. But at length it began to appear that Rine was that kind of guy.

"COP KILLED BY BANDITS"—"COP KILLED BY HIT AND RUN DRIVER"—These headlines, crying to a docile and preoccupied public to realize a situation, cause the average cop to take a hitch in his pants, grip his stick hard and at least feel moderately abused. But not Patrolman Rine.

As one after another of his fellows went up on the posthumous honor roll, Patrolman Rine would comment tersely: "So what?" This summarization of the martyrdom of the dead did not endear Patrolman Rine to the living.

Rine didn't know any of the men on the posthumous honor roll. He worked in a quiet, residential precinct in which nearly nothing ever happened. He had 25 years to do on the job.

He seemed to thrive on unpopularity. His rejoinder to all raves, peevs, taunts and eulogies was a maddening "So what?"

PATROLMAN RINE ceased to concentrate on his arches. He was on duty 24 hours of every day, and he frequently strange places in his quest. Cabarets and burlesques, farces, amateur nights and penny arcades—all of which was exceedingly young and ingenuous of him, he realized later.

By and by, Patrolman Rine found himself turning into a policeman. He met people, he saw people and by and by he got to be interested in people, as behaves a policeman. To watch their faces and their actions and to get used to the idea that putting two and two together does not necessarily make four, but is likely, in criminal calculation, to come out three, or five.

And in due course he made an overwhelming number of excellent and meritorious arrests which had nothing whatever to do with the demise of Ninety, the dog. But Patrolman Rine prospered according to his just desserts. He was promoted, and again, and yet again. Before he had been seven years on the job he had been made a first-grade detective.

Now, by this time, of course, you have surmised that Patrolman Rine's awakening to a full and proper sense of his duty as a public servant brought about the most sensational capture of the most notorious criminal ever recorded in the annals of the New York's Finest, and you are correct. Patrolman Rine—or rather, Detective Rine, apprehended and brought to justice the notorious Poker Pan Donlon, slayer of five and co-slayer of numerous others whose unsolved murders had linked the department for years.

PATROLMAN RINE saw only a mangy, flea-bitten pup whose appearance reflected on the good taste of his owners and on that of Patrolman Rine's own side partners, who claimed for the dog almost legendary qualities of loyalty and intelligence.

NEVERTHELESS, Ninety would not be disengaged from showering Patrolman Rine with adoring awe.

It happened a few moments after Rine had relieved his side partner and had commenced his own tour of duty.

Ninety was already whirling about him in frenzied circles of greeting; circles whose outer rims ran up on doorsteps and around ash cans and which skimmed wide loops a third across the street. Once, briefly, Ninety sat down on a doorstep and panted happily.

Then presently he selected, like a well-trained dog, to sit down in the gutter and pant there abstractedly, his pink tongue flapping. Ninety was momentarily absorbed in dog problems of his own.

He did not see or hear, apparently, the big car that swooped around the corner on two wheels, skidded riotously leftward across the street to the forbidden zone, clipped Ninety neatly and heaved him high in the air.

The shrill, almost human shriek of agony that yipped from Ninety's throat was followed instantly by a wild, unholly peal of laughter from the flying car. The little dog in the air turned a grotesque somersault and dropped almost at Rine's feet.

Rine stood shocked into petrification for the fraction of a minute it took for the car to scud around the next corner and disappear.

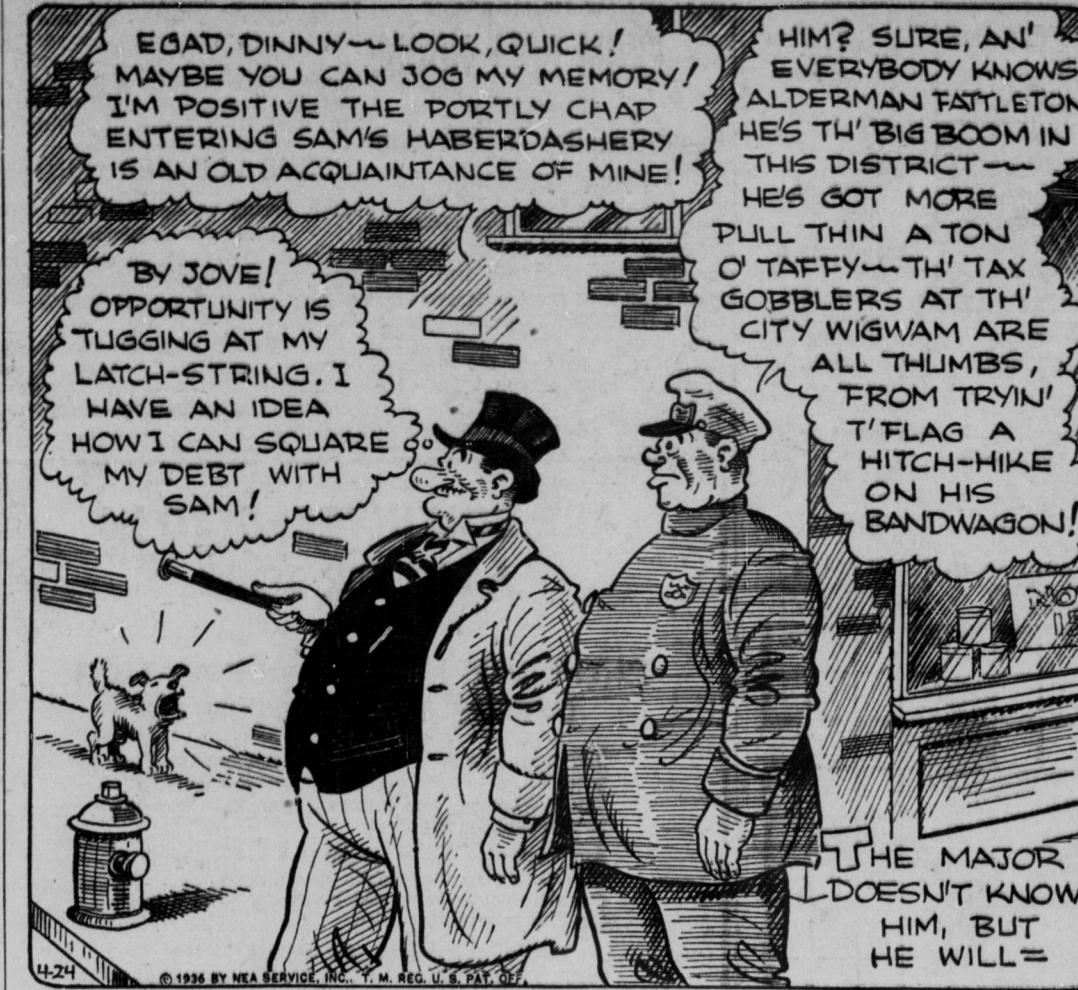
He had not had time to register more than three things in that crowded space of seconds. No time for license numbers, color, make or type of car—certainly none for driver or passengers. But he had seen the vicious swipe that seemed to have been aimed at Ninety and had tossed the dog into the air; he had noted the curb-jumping swerve of the wheels and—above all—that laugh. That laugh—harsh, braggart, void of decency—strident yowl with a queer filip at the end.

Detective Rine swung about compulsively to confront the source of that laughter, for which he had been seeking these many years. It came from Poker Pan Donlon shouting defiance at his door.

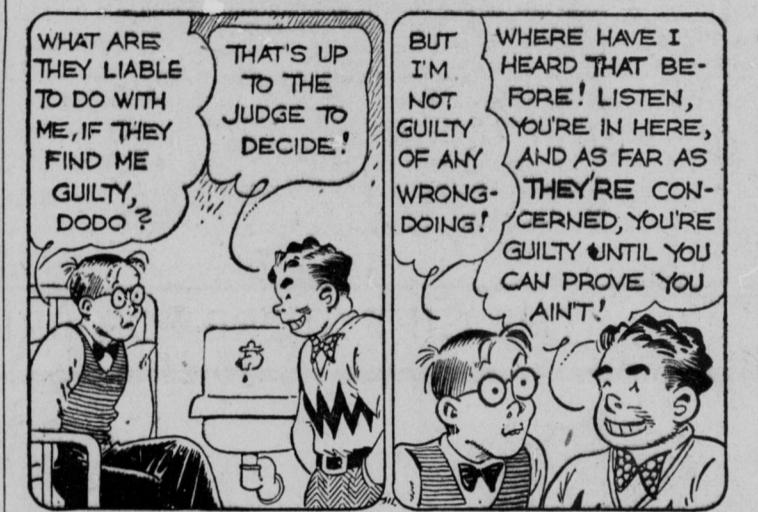
PATROLMAN RINE, frozen, stood staring down at the crumpled little body at his feet, dead looking

## OUR BOARDING HOUSE

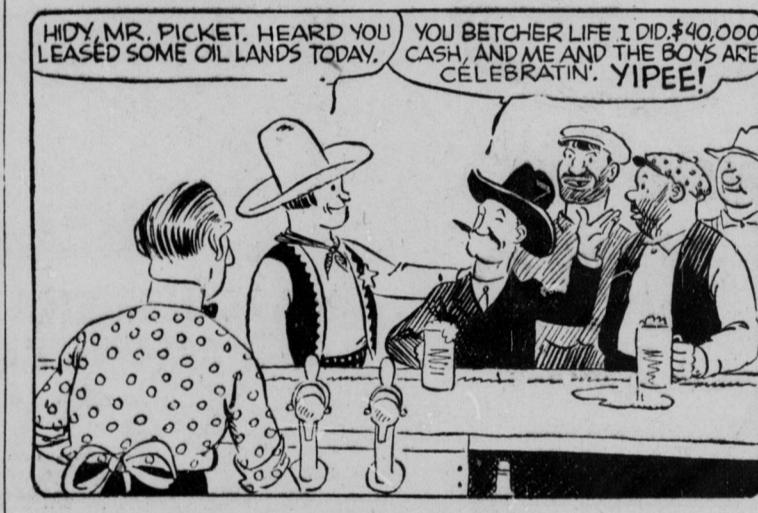
With Major Hoople



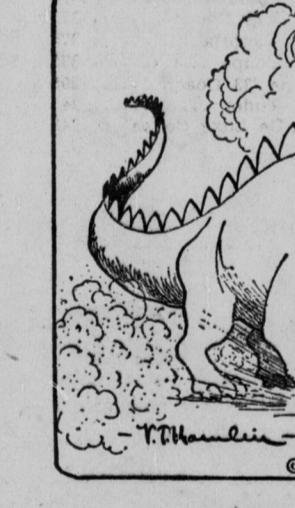
## FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



## WASHINGTON TUBBS II



## ALLEY OOP



## BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



## TARZAN AND THE LEOPARD MEN



Despite all his urging, no tribesman would part with the secret of the Taloned Death, for fear that the wrath of the Terrible Spectre would alight upon him who was their greatest friend. For several days there was peace and quiet in the village of Gowando.

The villagers whispered happily to one another. "The Taloned Death has fled. It fears Tarzan. Tarzan is mightier than the Evil Thing." The ape-man, too, began to believe that the mysterious killer had been halted. Then it appeared again—more terrible than ever.

A hunter inspecting his traps was slain! A courier on his way to a neighboring village was struck down! Each victim bore the telltale marks of the Taloned Death! Once more the mysterious jungle killer was abroad, in seeming defiance of the mighty Jungle Lord.

Tarzan carefully surveyed the victims, but no clue could be found to aid him in tracking down the mysterious Thing that killed apparently for the love of killing. Fury seized him. "I shall solve this mystery," he declared. "I'll destroy this thing—or be destroyed!"

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—By Williams

## OUT OUR WAY



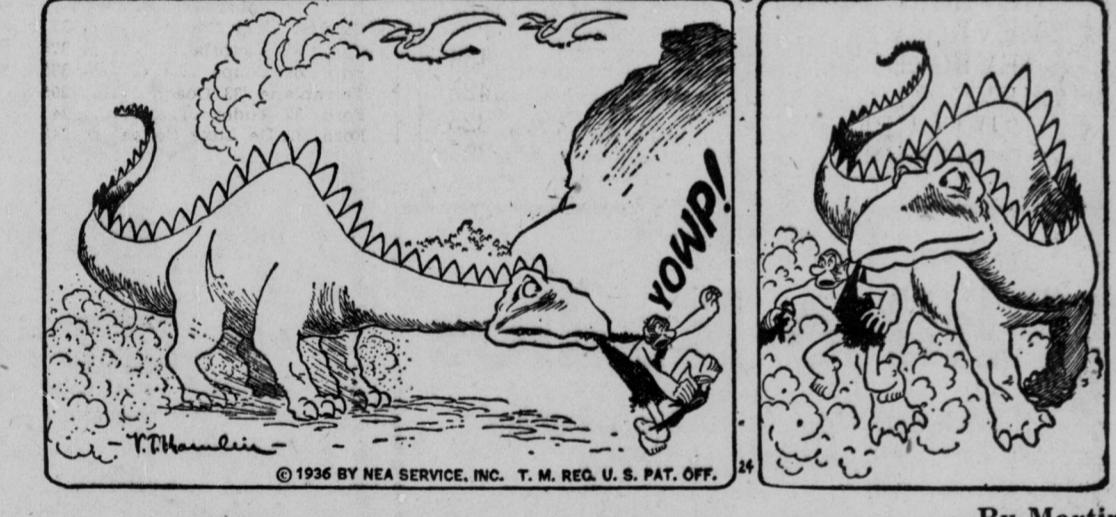
—By Blosser



—By Crane



—By Hamlin



—By Martin



—By Edgar Rice Burroughs



—By Edgar Rice Burroughs

THE END.

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