

## [The Law]

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There is a flurry of excitement at the Fire House today, for we are honored with a visit from the Press. A Waterbury paper has sent cameraman and reporter on some sort of special mission. Gloom descends in a heavy pall on "our side" however, when the two men enter the door of the other company. There is much speculation on the nature of their business, and the suggestion is facetiously made that Mr. MacCurrie be appointed a committee of one to investigate and perhaps he will get his picture taken. To this Mr. MacCurrie retorts indignantly that he is not a seeker after "notoriety," and never was.

Apparently someone has his picture taken, however, for as the newspapermen leave, we hear one say, "Thanks for posing." We decide that they are doing a feature story for the Sunday paper.

The factories being closed this week, some of the department's active members are present at the afternoon sessions. We have with us Mr. Coburn and Mr. Ryan. Mr. MacCurrie, the only one of the old guard remaining, finds himself outnumbered, but puts up a valiant battle to set the conversational pace. He leads off with the Waterbury scandal: "To my way of thinkin' their goose is cooked, and they know it. They're beginnin' to be dom well worried. They've got to convict 'em. The temper of the people is up, and they won't stand for any nonsense. They'll go 2 to jail, mark my words."

Mr. Ryan: "I was down there yesterday, and I see somethin' that burned me up. I had my car parked in front of the Immaculate Conception Church waitin' for my wife, and these two cops come along, carryin' a drunk. This fella was plastered, there wasn't any doubt about it, but he wasn't given' them any trouble, except that he was helpless. His feet kept draggin' on the ground, and his head was fallin' forward. One of the cops was a sergeant -- a big red faced bruiser. All of a sudden he stops, and he doubles up his fist and brings it up from the ankles. Hits this poor drunk right in the eye. His eye swelled up so fast you could actually see it. Made me so damn mad I felt like appearin' in court for him, but then I thought, what the hell's the use. It wouldn't help him any, maybe, and it would hurt me. If I had plenty of money I would have taken a chance, but a poor man is foolish to get mixed

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up in anything he don't have to. Suppose I'd appeared against those cops. They'd take my marker number and the next time I went to Waterbury, they'd have me on some fixed up charge.”

Mr. MacCurrie: “When I was in the hospital, they brought in a lad---”

Mr. Coburn: “They ain't all bad, the cops ain't. I remember one time there was an accident up on Plymouth Hill, lad got his leg broke. He was drivin' an old truck all by himself, and after the doctor had fixed him up a little, they asked who'd drive him to Waterbury. So I said I would and Hugh McColl and Jack Shearer went along with me.

“We got down there all right, but all the way down the lights 3 kept goin' off and the horn would start blowin'. We got the lad in all right, and we started back, but the lights went off again. I stopped right up there on Robbins street and I says by Jeez I'm gonna fix this thing before we go any farther.

“So we all gets out and I started monkeyin' with the wires, the horn blowin' like hell all the time, I figured there was a short, someplace. But there wasn't any short. While I'm foolin' with it, somebody in the house across the street opens the window, and this woman hollers: ‘You fellas get right out of there, or I'll call the police department.’ So Hugh says, ‘Go right ahead.’ The horn kept on blowin' and I kept on tryin' to fix it and pretty soon the window opens again, and a guy hollers, ‘This is your last chance, now, either get goin' or I'll call the cops.’ Somebody says ‘Nuts to you,’ but I says what the hell we better get goin' we don't want to get in no trouble.

“So we go down to the foot of the hill, there's a light by that rotary down there.

“I goes to work on it again, and the horn still blowin' and pretty soon we see a squad car come tearin' up the street and round the corner. It stopped up at the house where we was parked before and this cop gets out.

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“Pretty soon it come down the hill and stopped in front of us, and these two cops get out and come over. ‘What's goin' on, boys?’ says one of them. So I tell them the whole story, beginnin' with takin' the guy to the hospital. One of them says ‘Jeez, the way that old lady squawked I thought there was an attempted murder here.’ And the other one says, ‘Come on with us, we'll 4 show you where to get that thing fixed.’

So they took us up to Al's Tire Shop, and they worked on it for six hours. It cost that guy eleven bucks. But what I wanted to say was that some of those cops are pretty good lads.'

Mr. MacCurrie: “This lad they brought in while I was down to the hospital..”

Mr. Ryan: ‘Some of them are all right. I never liked that lad that does traffic duty at the corner of North Main Street, in Waterbury. They can say what they want, old Jingles Donahue is about as good as any of them. He was givin' me a ticket one day, just as I was comin' up to get in the car and drive away. He looks at me and says: ‘Okay, Bud, you're lucky this time.’

Mr. MacCurrie: “There was a piece in the Express (local weekly) yesterday, about the Waterbury cops pickin' on Thomaston drivers. Says if the same thing happened up here, they'd be hollerin' about the small town coorts.”

Mr. Coburn: “If you know the right people you can get things fixed up in any court. One time Morton got pinched down in Nichols for doin' eighty miles an hour. They had about six charges against him. Well, it happens that Mandy Green's brother-in-law is a doctor down in Bridgeport and he's a very good friend of the judge in Nichols. So Mandy wrote his brother-in-law a letter and asked him to see what he could do. I went down with Morton the day of the trial, and he was pretty confident that everything was all set.

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“His case was called about fifteenth --it was a heavy docket-- 5 and he stopped up with kind of a smile. But his face fell about a foot when the judge socked a fine and costs on him. We found out afterwards Green's brother-in-law forgot to do anything.

“The whole thing come to about \$23, because they had him on two or three different counts. He was pretty worried. He went up to the cop that pinched him and told him he was afraid he'd lose his license. The cop says, ‘Wait till after court's over and talk to him. ‘So we sat down up in back. The judge spots us and he says, ‘What're you waitin' for?’ “So the cop gets up and he says, ‘Yer honor this man is an automobile dealer and he needs his driving license to earn a living. He's afraid he might lose it.’

“‘All right,’ says the judge, ‘I'll change the charge. But not the fine.’”

Mr. Ryan: “I guess Morton didn't care so much about the fine.”

Mr. Coburn: “No, all he was thinkin' about was his driver's license. If they took that away from him he'd be in a bad way.”

Mr. MacCurrie: “Morton is a kind of reckless driver. I see him one time . . . ”

Mr. Ryan: “He was lucky he kept away from the lawyers anyway. Young Anderson got pinched in Waterbury for drunk drivin'. He hired a shyster to get him out of it, but the judge soaked him the usual hundred and costs. After he passed the sentence, the judge says in kind of a low voice ‘Seventy five dollars remitted.’ And 6 Anderson never heard him. He went up and give the hundred to his lawyer, and the shyster kept it. Anderson saw in the paper next morning where 75 dollars had been remitted, but he never went after it. He said what the hell was the use, the shyster would just claim it was part of the fee.”

Mr. Coburn: It don't pay to have anything to do with those lads if you can get out of it.”

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Mr. Ryan looks at the clock: "Well, my kid is coming home this afternoon and I want to be around when she gets in. I think I'll be movin' along."

Mr. Coburn: "Wait a minute and I'll walk down with you. Pretty near my supper time."

They leave Mr. MacCurrie and me together and after they have gone Mr. MacCurrie remarks: "Great talkers, ain't they?"

"I think I'll take a little walk myself before supper. I've been slippin' lately, with this cold weather we've been havin'."