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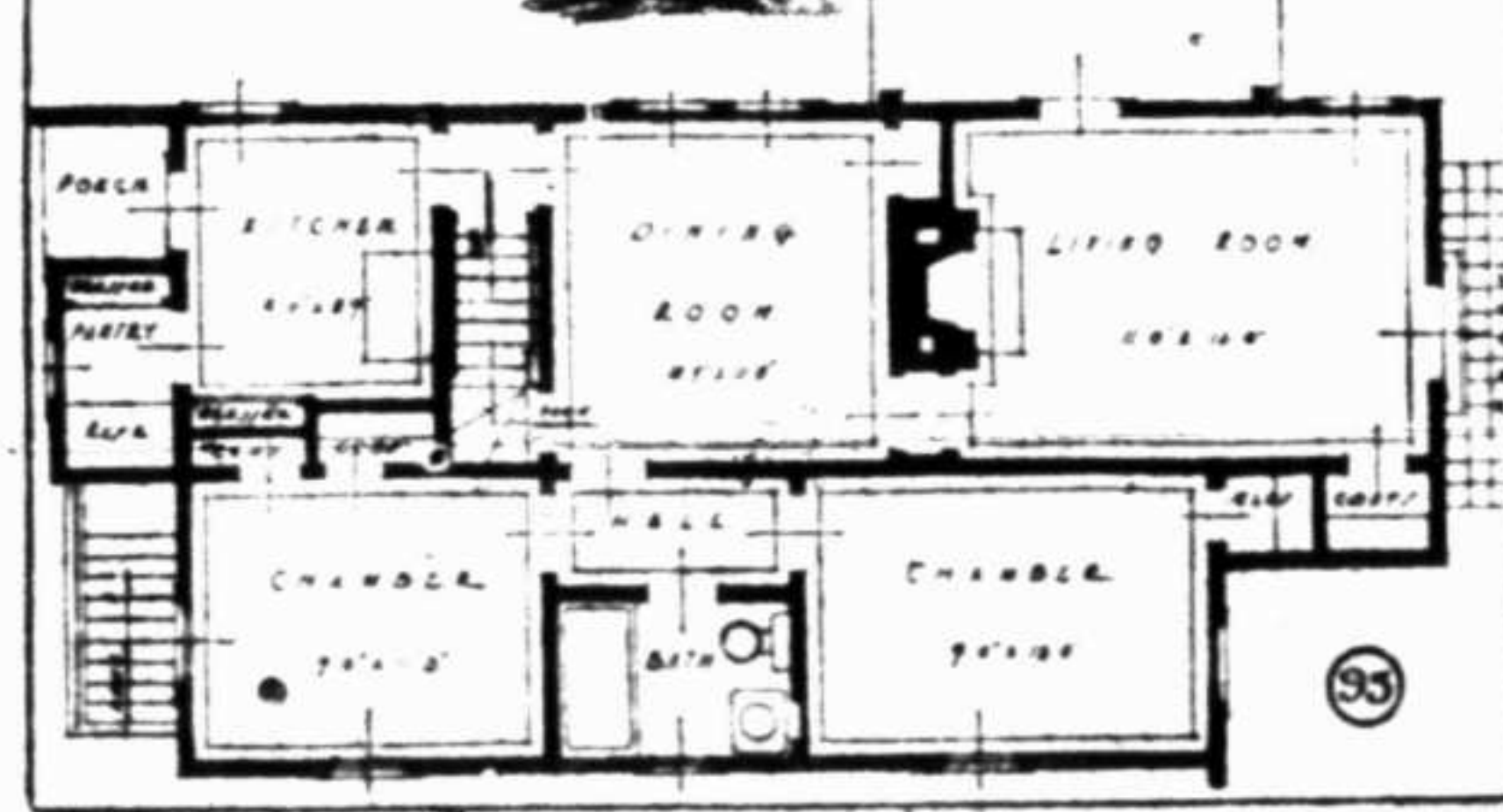
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NEWTON & CO.

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HOUSE PLANS

A CHATEAU COTTAGE FOR A SMALL FAMILY



BY CORA W. WILSON
For NEA Service

The making of a home is so much a part of our every day existence that sometimes we fail to recognize its supreme importance in our lives and in the lives of the nation. It is the architects and home makers who have built up the country from the soil. The in-born yearnings for a home is perhaps the strongest incentive to progress that functions in our individual and national development.

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One enters a small porch and steps directly into a large, well shaped living room with the fireplace opposite the doorway. To the left is a coat closet and on the right, French windows leading to an open porch. A glass door

leads to the dining room. This room is almost square in design, with two windows looking out on the garden. A small hallway separates this room from the kitchen. Here a pantry has been provided and a separate niche for the refrigerator. This kitchen has a small porch.

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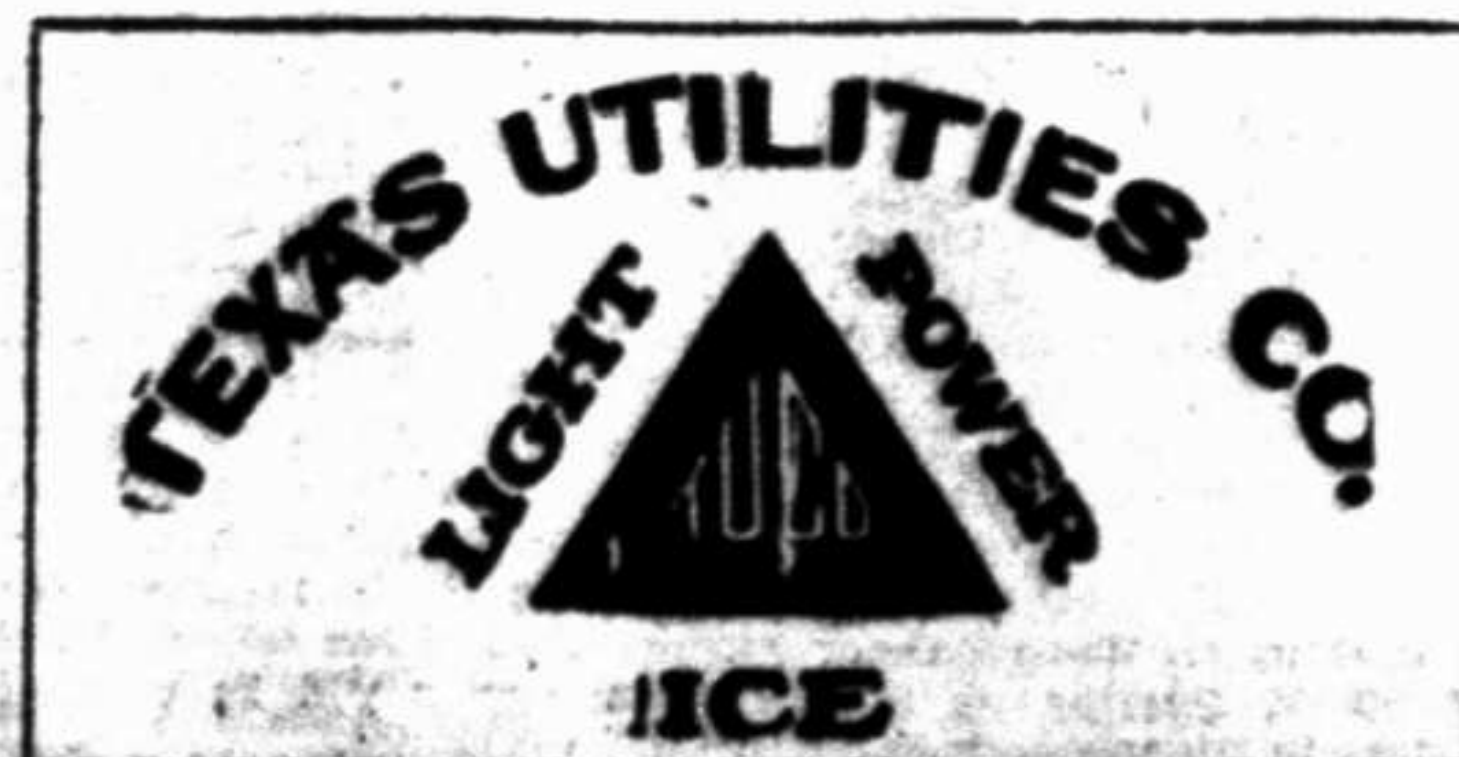
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Strong Language

Paint half your house with Devoe Lead and Zinc Paint and paint the other half with any other paint you choose.

If Devoe Lead and Zinc Paint doesn't take fewer gallons and cost you less money per job we will make no charge for Devoe--

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1012-14 Main Street

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Merchants to your Grandfathers."

Black Pigeon

(Continued from page 6)

of that all-important \$500 bill, and you were desperate for need of it. You couldn't wait till Saturday night. You quarreled with him, pretended to be leaving, went into the outer office, got the gun out of the drawer, and shot him."

Rita had gone dead white as the detective summed up against her, but when he had finished she laughed, her vividly rouged lips twisting in an ugly loop of disdain.

"Sounds simply well, don't it? But listen here, and get this straight, I didn't know. Baby face had a gun in her desk; there wasn't one in the bottom drawer when I looked for the paste, and I didn't kill Harry Borden. That's the truth, and you can third-degree me till hell freezes over if you want to."

Then someone else had already killed him with that gun when you looked for the paste to stick together that bill you'd taken off his body. McMann shot at the defendant dancer.

"Wrong, again, big boy," Rita answered insolently. "He was alive when I came and alive when I left, as I seem to remember having told you before."

Ferber said something to McMann in a low voice, and the detective frantically studied two photographs of fingerprints. Then "I suppose Borden helped you look for the paste tube, Rita."

The girl flushed. "No, he didn't. He went over to the cooler and got a drink while I was going through Miss Lester's desk."

"He didn't touch the desk?" McMann persisted strangely.

"No."

"And yet," McMann said slowly to no one in particular, "Borden's fingerprints—or rather his right thumbprint—is on top of the wooden handle of the bottom drawer of Miss Lester's desk. The other four fingers would be inserted beneath the long wooden handle, of course. That right, Ferber?"

"Yes, I didn't photograph the underside of the handle, but I can be removing them. Ferber answered."

"Not necessary," McMann assured him. "Miss Lester did Borden to your knowledge, and the bottom drawer of your desk on Saturday."

No, Ruth answered. "To my knowledge he never opened a drawer of my desk during the entire time I worked for him, but he may have when I was not there, of course. Benny Smith, the office boy, opened that drawer Saturday morning. He was looking for a towel he said, when I asked him what he was doing at my desk I'd just come out of Mr. Borden's office after having taken dictation."

That accounts for these prints, Ferber said to McMann, pointing to a picture. "Found a number of them on the kid's desk."

"Against the back of your desk Saturday that you know of," McMann asked Ruth.

No, I did, of course, I opened the bottom drawer, as I have told you, to get a paper cup to give Mrs. Borden a drink. She started to help me, but didn't touch the drawer—and she had on gloves, I remember," Ruth answered.

"One of Borden's thumbprints half obliterated by Rita's thumbprint," McMann mused, in a low voice that was just loud enough for Rita's straining ears to catch. "That means he opened the drawer first."

"Well, if he did, he did it before I came," Rita cut in. "He certainly didn't touch that desk while I was with him."

Ruth's head spun with conjectures. If Borden had opened that bottom drawer, on Saturday afternoon, after her departure, and before Rita's arrival, was it not possible that he had done so to get the gun, to protect himself against some threatened trouble—trouble arising from that mysterious telephone call which had kept him so long that he had missed his train?

But Bill Cowan had testified that Borden had been connected with Jack Hayward's number. Had McMann, whose ability she was beginning to respect, as much as she feared it, arrived at the same conclusion. If so, he had again arrived at Jack Hayward as the most likely suspect. . . . Ruth forced her mind away from that too terrible possibility. Supposing Borden, fearful of an attack at the hands of someone who had not yet come into the investigation—for she herself was convinced that Jack had not talked to Borden over the phone or across the air—had taken the gun from her desk?

When Rita came—Ruth went on building up her supposition—case—the gun was on top of Borden's desk, handy for his defense against the person from whom he undoubtedly feared a visit. Rita, who should have been planned to remain all afternoon in his office, instead of spending the hours between trains with Rita? But, that she told herself despairingly, was built on the theory that Rita was telling the truth about the agreement between her and Borden to make the latter train.

Why suppose Rita had told the truth? She had lied so much. No, it was better to stick to the fact. Borden had undoubtedly opened the bottom drawer of the desk. In all probability he had done so to get the gun kept there. Rita had come. She had quarreled with Borden. She had seen the gun on his desk. She had shot him to get the money; he would not give her. Then Rita had robbed the body.

Perhaps she was telling the truth about the paste—or part truth. Who could say how Rita's mind would function after she had killed Borden? The bill was all-important. It was torn in two. In an office there would be paste. She had hunted for the paste in the outer office, and in the meantime the black pigeon—or one of his flock—had flown in through the open window, had dropped his tiny

feet in the fresh-flowing blood of the dead man, leaving tell-tale tracks behind.

But why had Rita come back into that death room to close the window? Ruth knitted her brows in a terrible effort to think straight. Then light burst upon her. Rita had heard the flutter of the pigeon's wings, or the sound of its body caroming against the glass of the upper sash and had run back into the private office, frightened half to death. She had seen the Pigeon—or maybe several of them,—on the window ledge and had had a sudden horror of the feathered creatures pecking at Harry Borden's dead face.

Cautious instinctively, even in her panic, she had closed the window with her gloved left hand, so that there were no fingerprints. Ruth started to draw a deep breath of relief, when suddenly the whole structure toppled and fell, stricken by one question which her relentlessly logical mind insisted upon asking: If Rita had done all this, where did Jack's missing automatic fit into the picture?

Then hope thrust up its head again. Why try to fit Jack's gun into any theory of the murder? It was missing—true. But wasn't it entirely possible that Jack's gun had been stolen by a petty thief, prowling through the almost deserted office building, glad to lay his hands on anything of value? The long arm of coincidence, of course, but a real life full of just such amazing coincidences?

But Ruth knew, even as she consoled herself with this philosophic reflection, that Detective Sergeant McMann would emit a loud roar of derisive laughter if she told him her theory. He might be trying with true police conscientiousness, to bully Rita Dubois into confessing to both murder and robbery, but Ruth was sure that in his heart McMann believed that the robber had done nothing worse than rob a dead man's body, after Harry Borden had been killed by Jack Hayward in a jealous rage.

The newly-discovered evidence that Borden had had Ruth's gun in his possession that Saturday afternoon would do much. Ruth realized with a thrill that she had found the key to the mystery. She would argue with Detective McMann that Borden and Jack had quarreled over the telephone, that Jack had gone to the office, that Borden's gun had gone to the open window with it in his hand and had been shot down by Hayward before he could aim Ruth's weapon.

But Ruth argued with herself desperately. If McMann believed this to be the truth about Borden's murder, how could he account for the disappearance of her gun? Would he be so stupid as to try to convince himself that Rita Dubois had stolen it too, along with the money on Borden's body?

Ruth herself was sure that if Rita had come into Borden's office and found him dead, with a gun lying on the floor, she would have concluded that he had committed suicide. She would not have dreamed of touching the weapon with which he had done it, for fear of its being found in her possession and incriminating her.

"Miss Lester," McMann's harsh voice broke into the girl's troubled train of thought and conjecture. "Do you know when the glass panels of these office doors were washed last?"

Ruth considered for a moment, then answered confidently. "On Friday, after the window washer always comes on Friday, and does the door panels at the same time. It was late Friday afternoon."

"Was any other woman, besides yourself, Rita and Mrs. Borden in these offices after the window washer's visit?"

Ruth shook her head, her puzzled blue eyes taking in the fact that McMann's narrowed eyes were fixed upon a set of photographed fingerprints. "No. Not while I was here, Mr. McMann."

"Well," McMann grunted, "some woman was here, all right. She left her calling card on the glass panel of the door between this office and the outer one. Three fine fingerprints." He reached for the phone, which was plugged up with police headquarters. "Hello! Captain. Foster, please. McMann speaking. . . . Oh, Captain, any report yet on Cleo Gilman? . . . Is that so?"

(To Be Continued.)

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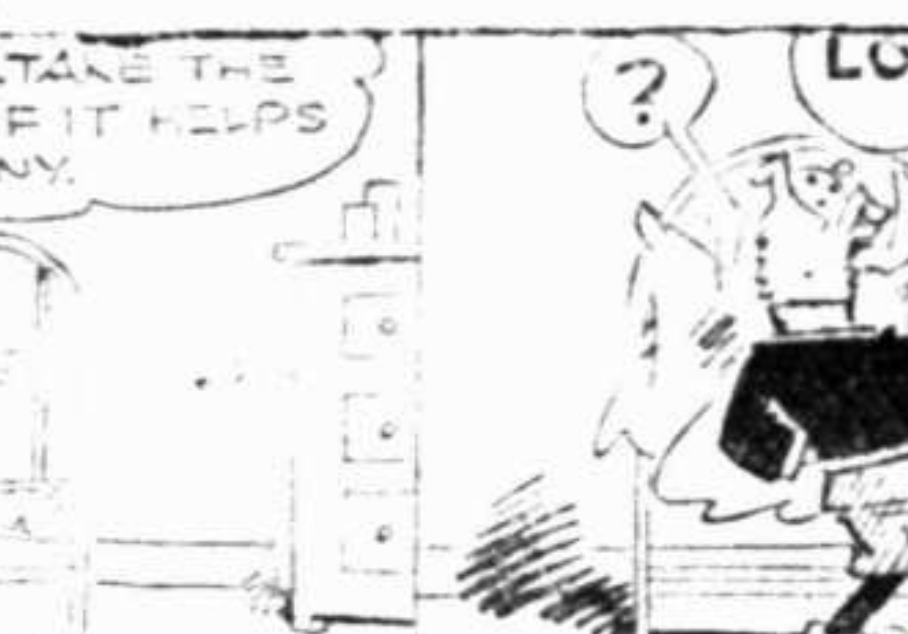
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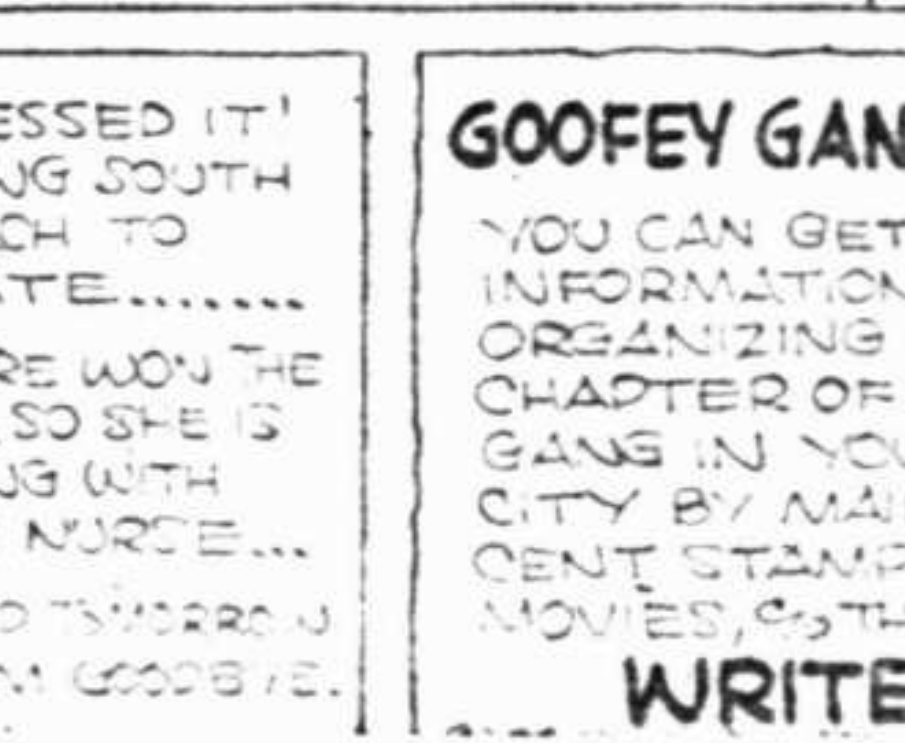
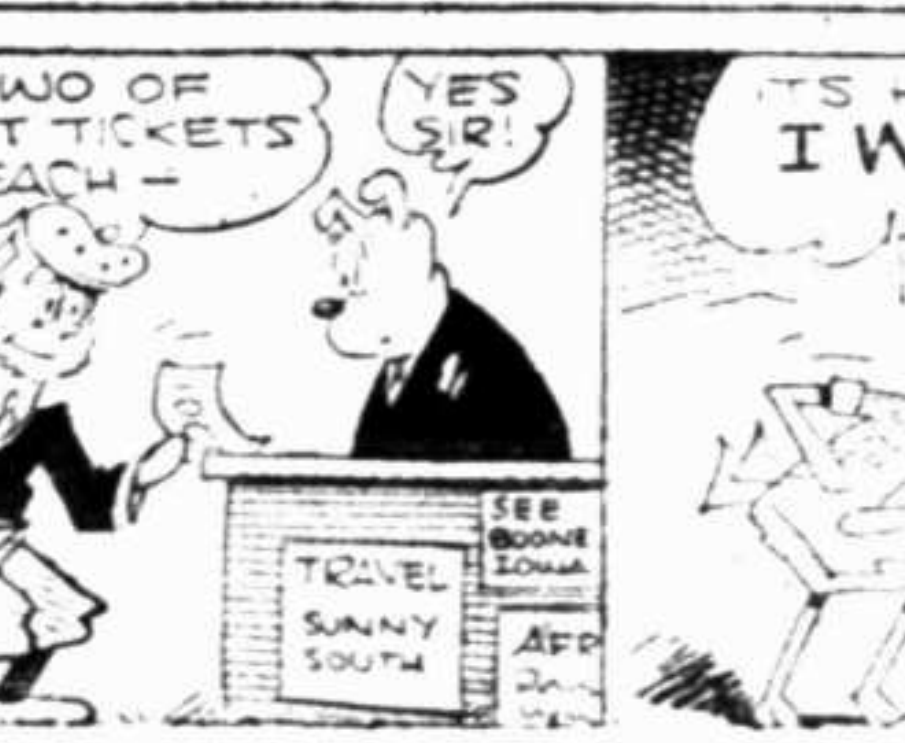
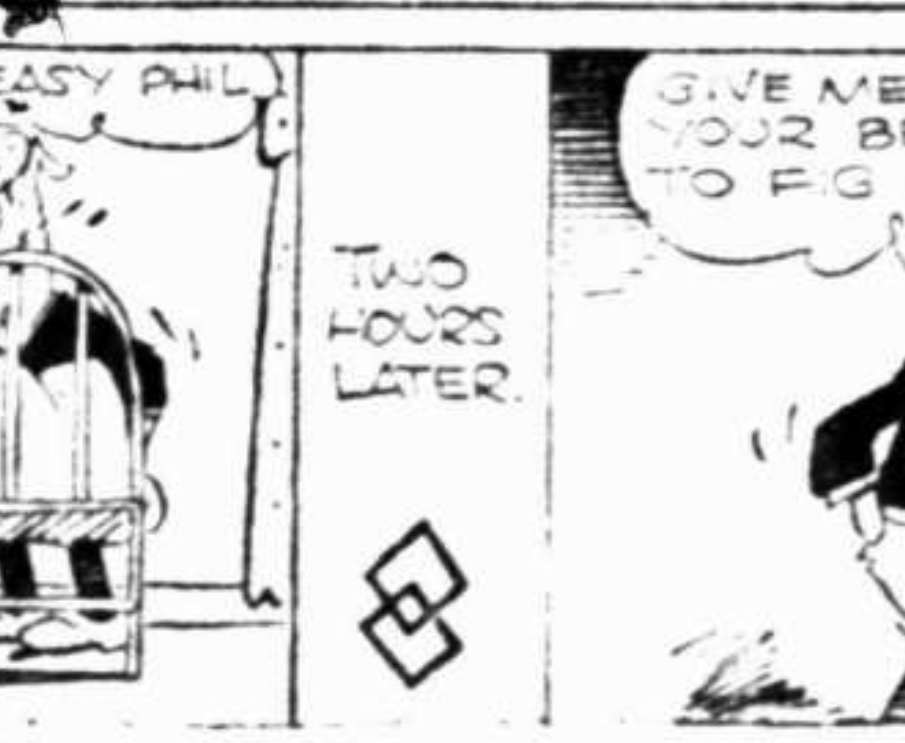
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