







**Capt. Ralph  
VanVorce**

Van Vorce Ralph

|           |       |    |      |                               |                   |
|-----------|-------|----|------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Born      | July  | 3  | 1890 |                               |                   |
| Appointed | April | 10 | 1916 | 3-nights with older men       |                   |
| Assigned  | April | 13 | 1916 | Beat by Chief Henry J Herbert |                   |
| "         | March | 1  | 1920 | Traffic duty.                 | Madison-Huron str |
| Promoted  | Feb   | 16 | 1924 | Det-Sergeant                  | No Examination    |
| "         | May   | 16 | 1929 | Det-Lieutenant                | " "               |

Promoted April 1 1936 Det-Captain Acting

" April 16 1936 Det-Captain

Retired July 16 1941 Servind 25 yrs.

He resigned to take a war job as a Plant Protection Chief for the Spicer Maftg Co. July 16 1941, during the World War 2, During the war the employees of Spicer Co was stealing the company blind and Captain VanVorce put a stop to this thievery in a short orderby inspection of all packages or bundles coming in and out by the gate guards and this order didnt go down to good with the C-I-O-Union they got tough with him and threatened the Company with a strike if the Company didn't get rid of Captain VanVorce. So he offered the company his resignation on the eve of the strike date, and the Company was to glad to accept it, and After that no no policemen or ex-policemen was ever hired as a guard. He then went back to his managing his Coal Yard and Coal business that his Wife operated while he was with the Spicer Co, His Coal Yard located on Treamainsville Rd and and Toledo Terminal R.R. He operated that business long before joining the Police Force,



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

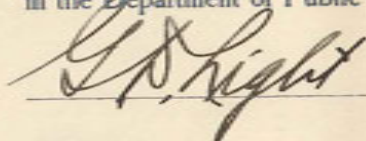
STATE OF OHIO

## Department of Public Safety

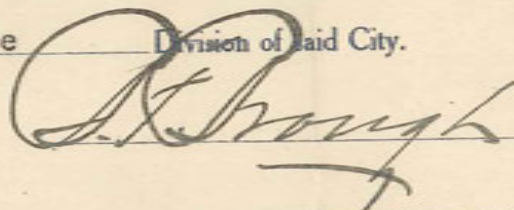
OF THE CITY OF TOLEDO

To whom all these presents shall come---Greetings:

Know ye, that Ralph Van Vorce, of the City of Toledo,  
in the State of Ohio, on the sixteenth day of February 1924, under and  
by virtue of powers conferred on the undersigned by law, and the proper certificate from the Director  
of Public Safety of said City, was appointed to the rank of Detailed Detective  
in the Department of Public Safety, Police Division of said City.



Director of Safety



Mayor

HARRY JENNINGS  
CHIEF OF POLICE

CITY OF TOLEDO  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
GILSON D. LIGHT, DIRECTOR  
SUB-DEPARTMENT OF POLICE



ROY W. SCOFIELD  
SECRETARY

February 15, 1924.

Patrolman Ralph Van Vorce:

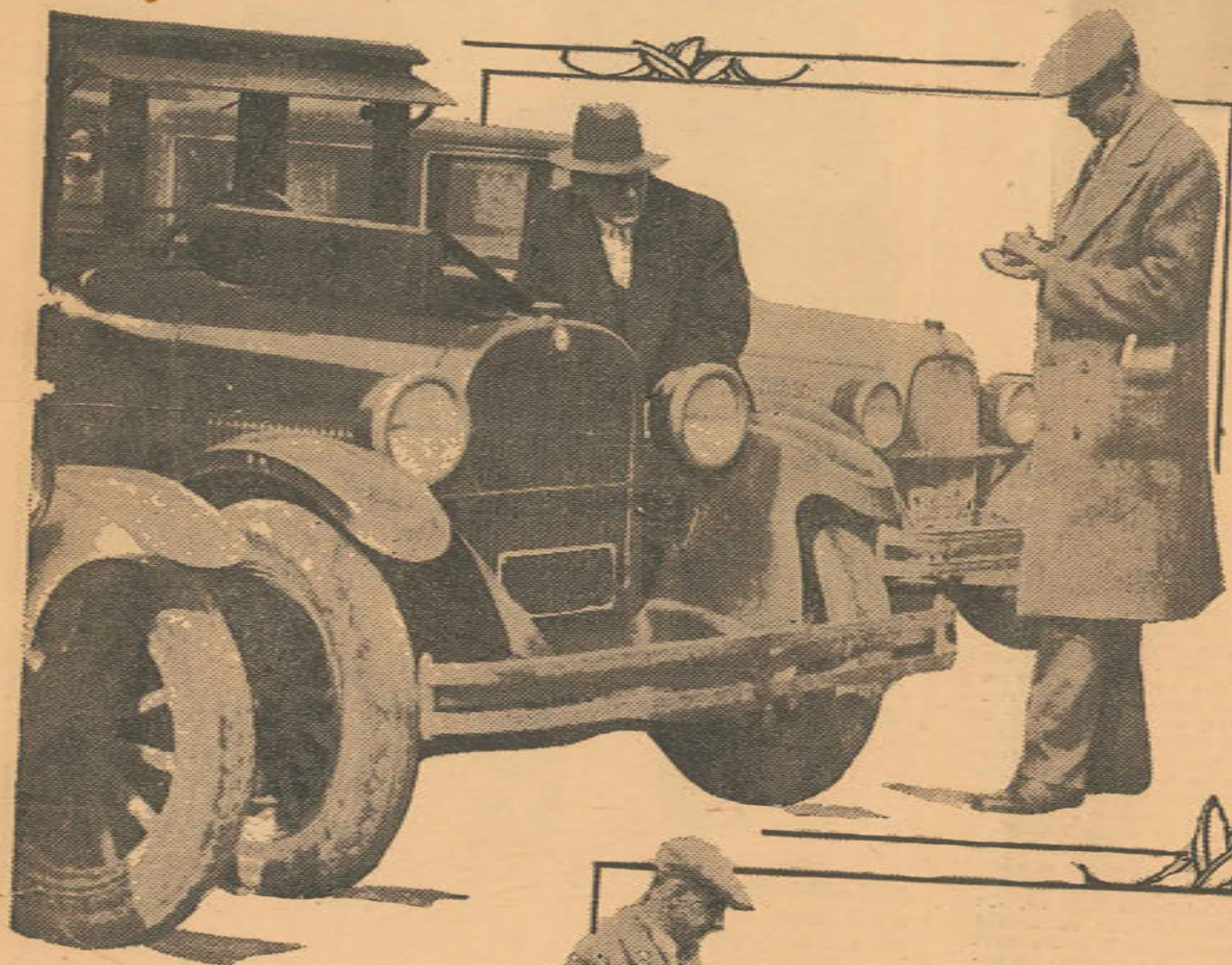
This is to advise that you have been  
appointed to the position of Detailed Detective, to take  
effect February 16th, 1924.

Chief of Police.

HJ/S



# On Trail Of 'The Ghost Car'



Toledo Police, Wise To The Wiles Of The Auto Thief, Have Exposed The Methods Of The 1929 'Ring Masters' In Stolen Car 'Racket'



Top shows the "ghost hunters," Detectives Van Vorce and Stevenson, on a still hunt for altered numbers. A "doctored" engine number may reveal a stolen car operating under a certificate issued for a machine long deceased. Lower, the search extends to a junk heap where disabled motors are piled. Reliable dealers smash the motors and guard against



the cars of sale falling into unscrupulous hands. But, while auto thieves prefer to buy up decrepit machines from private owners for "ghosting" because of the cooperation given police by regular junkers, a close watch is kept on junk and wrecking yards.

By RALPH SNYDER

**G**HOSTS of deceased automobiles roam the streets of Toledo in the reincarnation of new bodies and purring motors.

They haunt the worried owners of stolen cars and harass the hard working police whose duty it is to prevent thefts and recover the stolen machines.

They are a by-product of the law that has been in effect since July, 1921, requiring certificates of ownership for all automobiles, and expose one weak point in an otherwise wise law.

Except for these "ghost automobiles" and stolen machines that are certified because of the ignorance or carelessness of officials in some sections of Ohio, the stolen car market here would flop entirely.

As an example of how the "ghost automobile" is put into service:

An automobile thief decides to appropriate a new car purchased by Mr. Jones. He studies Mr. Jones' habits, learns where he parks his car, how carefully he watches it and what precautions he takes to protect it. While doing this preliminary work, he searches out a junked automobile that may be bought for a few dollars.

It may be in a regular junk yard or in a private backyard where it is being permitted to rust away. Generally the thief will choose one that is still apparently owned because junk dealers cooperate with the police and there may be embarrassing questions asked.

Only the engine of this junked automobile may still exist, but there is a bill of sale, since the Ohio law requires that the bill of sale accompany the automobile even to the junk pile.

Having bought the old machine, the thief may not even bother to have it removed from the junk heap. But he does take the certificate of ownership. With this in his possession, he is able to go to the courthouse and take out a license. Then he has tags ready to place on Mr. Jones' machine as soon as it is stolen.

The bill of sale which was intended for the deceased automobile may accompany the new one throughout the rest of its existence, barring accidents or an investigation by a prospective purchaser. It permits the purchase of license plates, the chief obstacle erected against the automobile thief by the law.

#### GETTING THE CASH

A bill of sale, of course, does not check the automobile for which it is used, but the thief may be able to find a unscrupulous person who is willing to waive that form if the price is low enough and the false bill assures a way to secure the all-licenses.

Hundreds of cars exactly like the stolen one in every city, it is almost impossible to pick out the car they are after—unless their attention is called to it

by some accident or the driver gets into some difficulty that causes the police to investigate him and his possessions.

If the thief wants to be more cautious, he may demand delivery of his wreck from the junk heap, remove the engine and several numbers and place them on the stolen machine after filing off the original numbers.

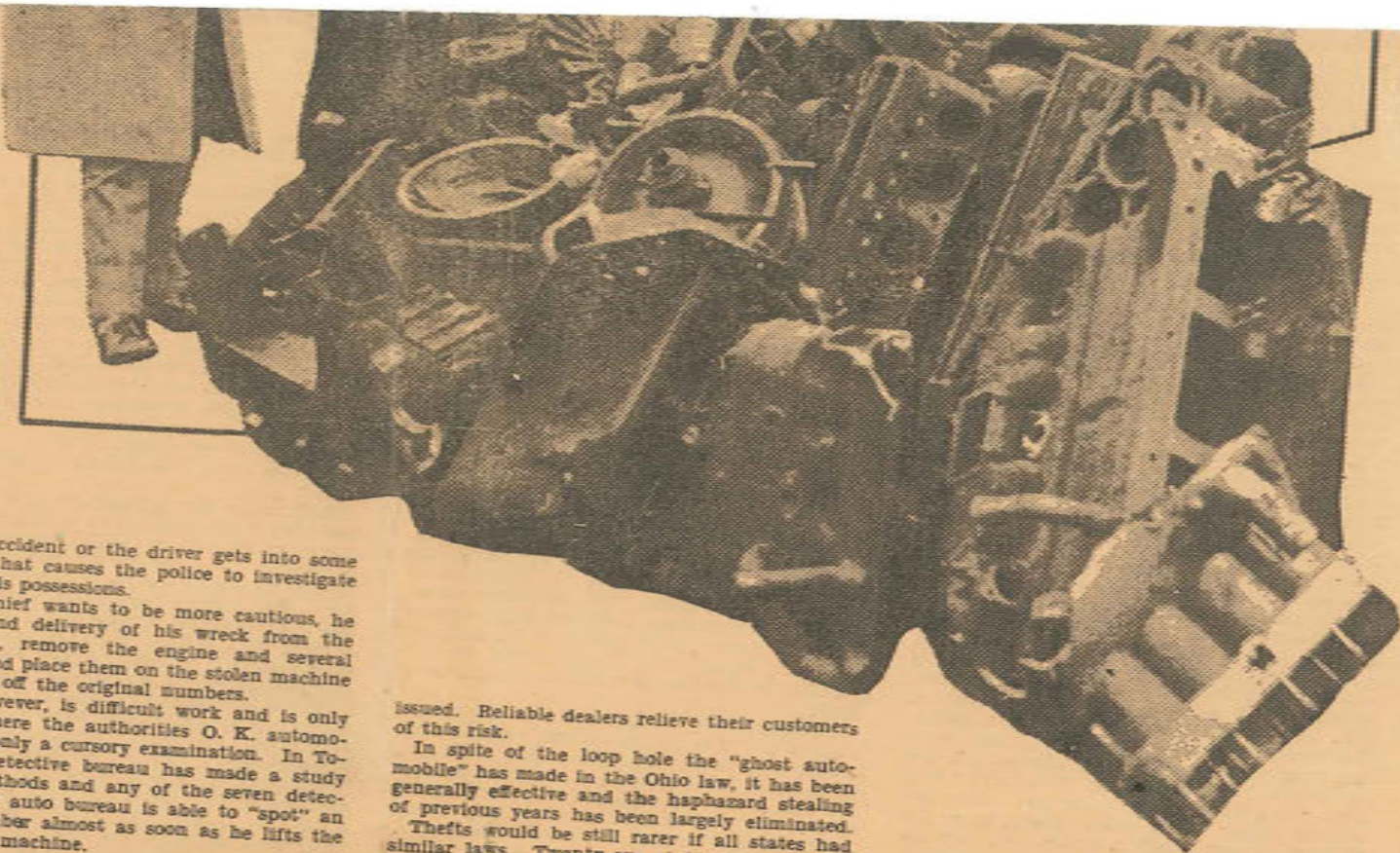
This, however, is difficult work and is only effective where the authorities O. K. automobiles with only a cursory examination. In Toledo, the detective bureau has made a study of such methods and any of the seven detectives in the auto bureau is able to "spot" an altered number almost as soon as he lifts the hood of the machine.

Every suspected automobile and every automobile from another state entered for certification here, is submitted to a careful examination which is sure to reveal any attempt to alter numbers. A surprisingly large number of stolen automobiles are located in this way.

The bulk of stolen automobiles for which certificates of ownership have been falsified, come from smaller towns and rural communities where the officials haven't the opportunity or training to make the proper investigation.

After a machine has been stolen and taken to a town outside of Toledo and a sworn statement of ownership secured for it, it may be brought back to Toledo. The thief is safe, except for the vigilance of detectives here or the unlikely circumstance of the owner himself recognizing it by some mark that makes it different from the hundreds of other cars of exactly the same model. Needless to say, automobile thieves attempt to remove all marks and equipment that serve to individualize a machine.

With his false certificate of ownership handy, the thief or the person to whom he has sold, may secure licenses from year to year or resell at will. Cases have been found where a stolen automobile has changed hands a number of times. Since the person in whose possession it is found naturally loses all he may have invested, it behooves the honest purchaser of a second handed car to check his bill of sale carefully and satisfy himself that the car he buys is the one for which that bill of sale was



issued. Reliable dealers relieve their customers of this risk.

In spite of the loop hole the "ghost automobile" has made in the Ohio law, it has been generally effective and the haphazard stealing of previous years has been largely eliminated.

Thefts would be still rarer if all states had similar laws. Twenty-one states require some form of certificate with an automobile and in all of these states the number of thefts has decreased, although the states not having such regulations offer fine markets for theft rings.

The states where protection is afforded are Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Missouri, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Florida, Kentucky, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, North Carolina, New Mexico, Louisiana, Maryland, Virginia, Colorado, Montana, North Dakota and Arizona.

In Toledo, as in most other cities, a person bringing an automobile from another state, must take it to the detective bureau for checking. If there is no evidence of tampered numbers or other indication of theft, the detective bureau issues a statement which the clerk of courts may accept in issuing an Ohio certificate of ownership.

In some counties, however, automobile thieves have found it possible to secure the coveted certificates without submitting the car to an examination by the authorities and it is in these counties where many machines stolen from Michigan and other states are taken.

Once certified, the car may be brought to Toledo and sold. Unless the police assigned to this duty happen to lift the hood and discover engine numbers corresponding to those of a stolen car, there is no way for them to uncover the theft.

However, this does happen sometimes. One stolen car, falsely certified and sold from another town, was discovered here by Detectives

Van Vorce and Stevenson of the auto squad. Tracing the sale, they arrested a "fence" and eventually recovered 47 machines that had been stolen from Detroit.

The automobile squad of the Toledo detective bureau consists of seven men. Detective Jack Connors, in charge, and Detectives Eaton, Henahan, Stevenson, Van Vorce, Scarietto and Davis.

With the assistance of the law requiring certifications of ownership, they have succeeded in cutting the number of cars stolen here almost in half.

Last year, 2,739 machines were stolen in Toledo, of which 2,486 were recovered. Many of these recovered cars, however, were probably taken by joyriders, a fraternity that continues to trouble the bureau. Many others were taken by thieves who merely intended to strip them of valuables and abandon them.

The stripper, generally, takes all movable parts and sells them to unscrupulous individuals. Careful check of pawnshops and second hand stores has made it highly dangerous for a dealer to handle such articles and few of them attempt it.

Detectives Connors estimates that there are 80,000 automobiles owned in Toledo. As the records of 1928 showed 2,739 stolen, the average automobile owner's chances of having his machine stolen once a year is only about one in 29. Of the machines stolen, all but 253 were recovered. This means that the chance of having an automobile stolen and not recovered is less than one in 316 in a year.



# Master Detective---

## Joe Smith Of The Waldorf

Violent Crimes And Captures  
While The Waldorf Slept

By Alan MacDonald

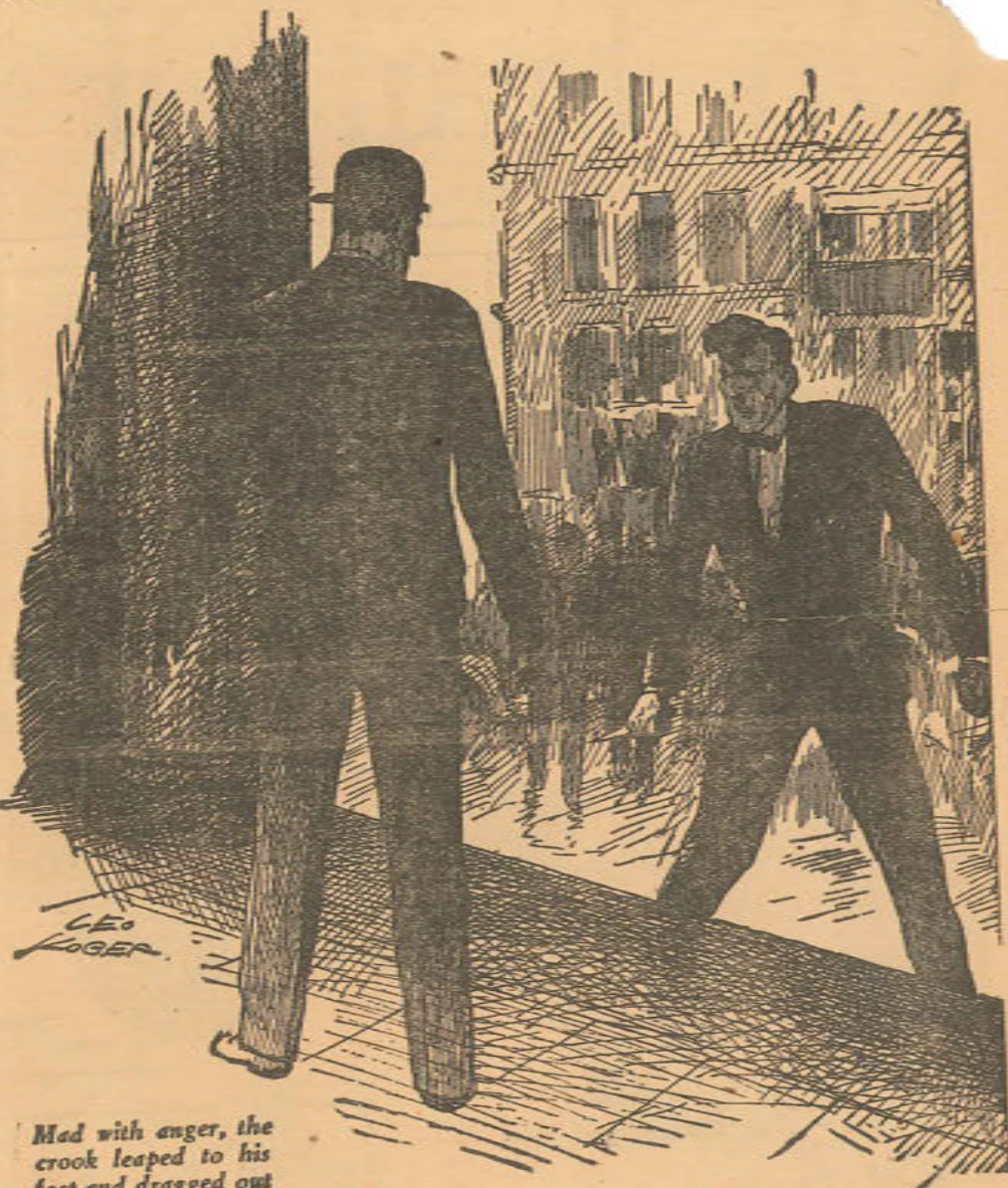
A GREAT hotel is like the sea in sunlight. The comfortable looking, inconspicuous man who stood that late afternoon in the lobby of the old Waldorf-Astoria, quietly regarding the brilliant cocktail hour throng of the famous Peacock Alley, knew that as well as, perhaps better, than any one; knew that underneath this show of wealth, confidence, color, youth and beauty, this parade of the life represented so fittingly by dinner clothes and mink robes thrown carelessly about entralling forms, there lurked sharks and killers and workers of darkness just as others do beneath the glittering surface of the most smooth faced sea.

Indeed, even now the man, who was none other than Joe Smith, the Waldorf's notable chief of secret service, was watching a shark of the hotel world, a well known grafter who for reasons of his own had preempted a chair in the Waldorf lobby to wait, no doubt, for some likely unsuspecting prey. Joe considered: How best could he scare off this rascal without bringing on a storm, without disturbing the even, prosperous tenor of the hotel evening? A show of force, a scuffle, a violent arrest would mean startled, upset women, ruffled gentlemen and a bad night at least for the perfectly appointed and serviced dining room. Not to say damaging publicity in tomorrow's newspapers.

None the less, the shark had to be scared off. At least the detective made his way, easily and without attracting the slightest attention, to the side of the grafter who had, by the way, a reputation for being desperately bad in a way. Would not Mr. So and So, since he was

work. He knew banking procedure inside out, he was conversant with all the tricks of the check forgers, and in addition he had a dignified, almost benign appearance. In a few months, police of a dozen cities were looking for him, but he skipped around so rapidly and used his old associations so adroitly that he eluded them. As the net narrowed about him, he became desperate, shot his way boldly out of a scrape or two, and was put down as an exceedingly dangerous character. He was, and in a way is to this day a mystery; one day a kindly, honest, home abiding citizen, the next a heartless, death defying law breaker. Imagine then, Joe's interest when the police tipped him off that Alonzo Whiteman was in town, and intimated that they had reason to believe the wanted man would turn up at the Waldorf.

It was a quiet evening. Somehow Joe Smith could not get Alonzo Whiteman out of mind. He could envision the outlaw making all sorts of trouble in the hotel—not that he, Joe Smith, was afraid of trouble; no, but he had no liking for a shooting affray in the hotel lobby. Midway through the evening, his apprehension crystallized into the impression that Whiteman was, or would be, before that night was done, in the billiard room. Though he never had seen the notorious forger, he went into the room, and sat down behind a newspaper, pretending to read. He was, as he says, uneasy, as though bedeviled by unseen souls. At last he called police headquarters and told them to send some one over, as he expected Whiteman to show up in a short time. The city detective came on the run, and he was just short of exclamatory indignation to learn that Joe had no information, unless a hunch he called it such, on which



Mad with anger, the crook leaped to his feet and dragged out a six-inch dirk

glasses. The city men did not even remark him, but Joe glanced at the man out of the corner of his eye, started and then, under cover of his wide brimmed hat stared intensely at the newcomer.

"That fellow looks like a faker to me," he observed, watching the visitor sign the register and wait while the clerk assigned him a room.

"Shucks, Joe, if he ain't a minister I oughta be back on a beat!" exclaimed one of his companions.

metropolis. The number of out-of-town visitors whom Joe had warned against sudden acquaintance and intimate association with plausible strangers is myriad. Here and there the warning has brought warm and lasting friendship and gratitude, again it has elicited only resentment and indignation. Not so long ago the Waldorf had a guest from a Western city who wore a number of diamonds almost as big as chestnuts. As a proof that he came from the great open spaces he carried a big .45 calibre revolver. In the course of a day or so Joe spotted him at the desk of the Wal-



known to the management, leave the hotel and not come back? Joe Smith, the speaker, knew his record, and wanted to be peaceable. The grafter blustered and growled. Would not Mr. So and So walk around the 33rd street side of the hotel, where it was quieter and they could talk. Joe Smith made mistakes like every one. There was the time . . . Thus, talking as simply as though he had known the grafter all his life, he guided the unwanted visitor to the 33rd street exit. There, in comparative shadow, some distance from the gibbed throng, Joe told the grafter his full and complete name, his latest prison address, and some other little things he remembered about his record, and warned him to leave before it was too late. The man, badgered probably by the police since he left prison, turned on Joe with glittering eyes. Joe gave him a not unfriendly, if forceful pat on the back; in a way he was sorry for the fellow. But as luck would have it the crook stepped back, stumbled and fell down the doorstep to the sidewalk. Mad with anger and humiliation, he leaped to his feet, dragged a six-inch dirk from under his arm and threw himself up the steps. . . .

Joe was armed. Likewise, he was quick on the draw and a good man when it came to shooting from the hip at close range. He was, too, an expert boxer. But he neither drew his gun nor balled his fists. The enraged grafter, who towered above him, rushed into striking distance, whipped up his knife arm, and, everything of sense forgotten, was about to kill. Calmly and at exactly the right moment, Joe Smith slapped the man's face. The crook was so surprised, he hesitated, staring into the detective's level, quiet eyes. "You fool," said Joe. "You know better than that. Now get out of here." The crook faded into the shadows of 33rd street, and Joe, brushing his hands as though he had inadvertently touched something rusty, sauntered back to Peacock Alley. Only one man, so far as he knew, was close enough to observe all of this brief but astonishing drama, and he, knowing Joe and his innate dislike of the limelight, was silent about it for years. In truth, until the facts of this story were gathered up. The smooth surface of the evening at the Waldorf was not even ruffled.

From the first, Joe Smith displayed marked talent, if not genius for carrying on his criminal spotting and blocking and seizing without disturbing the business of the Waldorf—without impairing the feeling of confidence and security on the part of the patrons by day or their sleep at night. He had not been long in America when his record at Scotland Yard, phenomenal for one of his years, got him appointed to the New York City detective force, and but a very short time elapsed before his work attracted the attention of George C. Boldt, the father of the modern American hotel system. Boldt put Joe Smith in complete charge of protecting the new Waldorf and its patrons. But if the great, comfortable hotel seemed to afford a sinecure after his Scotland Yard and police assignments, Joe soon found the impression was, indeed, only a mirage. His adventures with desperadoes were just beginning.

Alonso Whiteman, for example, was one of the most astute and successful forgers of the period, if not of all Joe's experience. He had been a prosperous bank president and when, for some strange reason, explicable only to students of abnormal psychology, he turned outlaw he was splendidly equipped for his

to base his experience down to smoke man. Skeptical enough, he sat down to smoke a cigar anyway, and pass the time of day. To this hour the detective swears he thought Joe was "balmy." To this hour, too, he remembers his utter amazement when, a few minutes later, in walked Whiteman as benign and dignified as any clergyman. The city detective jumped up and grabbed him—careless or unknowing of the rule against scenes. Whiteman shook the policeman off. He backed toward the wall, his right hand on his hip.

"What's the meaning of this?" he exclaimed. "I'm a guest here. You are crazy." Joe saw a way out. He suggested they go to Whiteman's room, thinking to guide the forger, who, he was certain, had no room in the hotel, to his office where the arrest might be made privately. To Joe's complete discomfiture, Whiteman promptly gave his room number. He had registered under an assumed name and had been around the hotel all day! Talk about hunches . . . wondering a little himself, Joe and the detective went with Whiteman to his room. There, they frisked him and found no weapon. They turned to his luggage and while they went through it, Whiteman strode about the room, protesting, denouncing the Waldorf and its people. In the midst of his tirade, Joe saw him crowd something into his mouth. The detectives leaped upon him, threw him on the bed and recovered a wad of paper which proved to be a forged check for \$1,800 that, it developed, he had planned to pass the next day on a down-town bank.

Smiling and cursing Whiteman backed away a few feet as his captors released him, jerked a little two-shot .44 calibre derringer, as flat and inconspicuous as a notebook, from his vest pocket, and pointed the weapon full length away. Violently he pulled the trigger, but the pistol failed to fire. Before Whiteman could push the hammer forward with his thumb, as he tried desperately to do, the two detectives managed to down and disarm him. Handcuffed and helpless, Whiteman was hurried down the least used corridors of the hotel to the street, and thence to police headquarters. In the basement of the police station the detectives tried out his "little cap pistol," as Joe called it. It had two barrels, one above the other and the firing pin, by a most ingenious mechanism shifted into position to fire the other cartridge as soon as one was exploded. It worked perfectly in the hands of the detectives, proving to be at short range as deadly as the ordinary six-shooter.

The city detective who had seen it miss fire when aimed at Joe could only exclaim: "You're the luckiest man alive."

And humbly enough Joe agreed. Sleuths of the city took to dropping in at the Waldorf to exchange notes with Joe. He never seemed to forget anything and his head appeared to be a complete and well nigh perfect filing system for information about crooks he was forever seeing, or reading about. He had, too, an uncanny faculty for guessing the riddles of crime mysteries, for putting two and two together and getting a theory that nine times in ten proved on investigation to be the truth.

One evening when Joe and two city detectives were gossiping in the lobby, a middle-aged man in ministerial garb came in and registered. He carried a small black traveling bag, was as mild in manner as a lamb and had a near-sighted way of peering over his

"I know—he looks the part, but I've seen a hunch."

"These hunches are going to get you in a pretty jam some day, Joe, if you ask me," was the other policeman's tart rejoinder.

Joe stepped over to the desk and with a secret sign indicated to an approaching bell-boy that he was not to touch the minister's luggage until further orders from Joe. The detective noted that the visitor had registered from Worcester, Mass. Joe had a passing knowledge of landmarks and old families in the New England city, and quite casually he engaged the guest in conversation about the place. In a few sentences, Joe perceived—as perhaps the minister did, too—that the visitor knew even less about Worcester than he did. The parson's kindly expression became shrewd and cunning and Joe knew that, parson or no parson, the man was hiding something.

"I've got some interesting views of the old home town in the office," said Joe. "I know you'd like to see them. It'll be some time before the clerk gets around to assign you a room."

Reluctantly the visitor assented and they had gone a few steps when he turned around abruptly. Joe swung around too, ready for an emergency. But the parson was not fleeing, instead he picked up his bag and returned to Joe's side. Again Joe's mind clicked: That bag was the replica of one stolen at the hotel a short time before. Once in the office Joe explained that the bag looked like a stolen one and asked to examine it. The minister appeared outraged, not to say horrified at the intimation that he would carry a stolen piece of luggage. Declaring the bag contained only a few personal effects, he protested stoutly against any inspection of its contents. Indeed his protestations were so fervid that Joe insisted on opening it. The minister waited until Joe bent over the bag, then he leaped for the door. With drawn gun Joe stopped him as he grabbed the knob of the door leading to the lobby. Slowly the minister put up his hands. Inside the bag Joe found a complete set of burglar's tools, braces, jimmies, can openers and all.

"I thought you weren't figuring on opening a church," allowed Joe, calling the two city detectives who by this time were just outside the door.

The pair lost no time in arresting the bogus minister. They got him into a taxicab and started for headquarters, Joe going along as witness. As the quartet got into the cab a friend of one of the detectives came along. He was a well-to-do youngster who rather fancied his own abilities as a detective and liked to run around with the police officers. He got into the cab too and sat beside the prisoner. They fell into conversation and the latter became very animated and amusing. The detective's friend laughed uproariously. Some time after the prisoner was safe in a cell it was discovered that he had picked the young man's pocket on the ride from the hotel. He was, it developed, none other than Joe Wood, a notorious burglar and pickpocket known through the Middle West as "The Parson." The West had gotten too hot for him and he might have made it hot for some New Yorkers had not Joe Smith spotted him, at the Waldorf.

But not all of Joe's fights and captures have taken place in the Waldorf—not by any means. Often the trail, so to speak, was picked up in the brilliant hosiery only to lead to some of the darkest and most devious dives of the

dorf. No, the visitor did not have a permit to carry a gun and if he had known that minions at the Waldorf were so nosy he wouldn't have stopped there. Joe reasoned with him and after half an hour of alternate insult, acceptance and informative persuasion, induced the guest to hand over the gun lest he be jailed for breaking the Sullivan law.

"If I saw you were carrying that get other detectives will see it," said Joe, as a clinching argument. "You could get ten years."

"All I got to say is, this is a hell of a town," was the visitor's parting shot.

The next evening Joe saw the diamond wearer leaving the hotel by the 33rd street exit in company with two individuals who had "crook," as Joe put it, written all over them. One was an ex-prize fighter who was frequently picked up in street fights and brawls. Despite the abuse the visitor had earlier heaped upon him, Joe accosted the Westerner and drew him aside. When the detective asked him if he knew the men he was with, the guest looked at Joe with the most bored and disgusted air. Of course he knew these men, or he wouldn't be with them—and furthermore he could take care of himself. So Joe stepped aside.

Later that night commotion at one of the doors to the hotel attracted Joe's attention just as he was leaving the dining room. He hurried across the lobby to see a taxicab driver and several attendants bringing a semi-conscious, badly beaten man inside. Joe Smith's face went grim as he recognized the victim. It was none other than the confident visitor. He had been manhandled by experts, and all his diamonds, his wallet, watch and rings were gone. And what was more Joe saw that it would probably be hours, in spite of all that medical science could do, before he would be able to tell a clear, connected story of what had happened to him. Then, too, Joe was perfectly sure that with the haul they had made the Westerner's two "friends" would beat it out of town for a time and live the life of Riley. It was a habit of their type of crook.

Calling the police, Joe Smith set out on the trail of the ex-prize fighter. It led through various speakeasies and dives that have since been raided and closed, and finally to a dingy east side tenement. Up the narrow dirty stairway went Joe Smith, peering about in the dim light of the gas jets which had to be lit even in the daytime. At last he rapped on the door he understood shielded the ex-pugilist. There was a sound. Joe did not wait but throwing himself against the door smashed its flimsy lock. He surprised the man he sought in the act of dragging his gat from under the pillow. His companion slept soundly until Joe roughly awakened him. Just then there came heavy steps on the stairs and Joe got himself into position where he could not be trapped from behind, prepared to defend himself to the end. But it was the police, who, it developed, knew, too, where the ex-pug lived. With pair of crooks properly subdued and read the wagon, though they protested their cence to the skies, the detectives searched the loot. They found it, diamonds and an old umbrella that stood in the corner by the door.

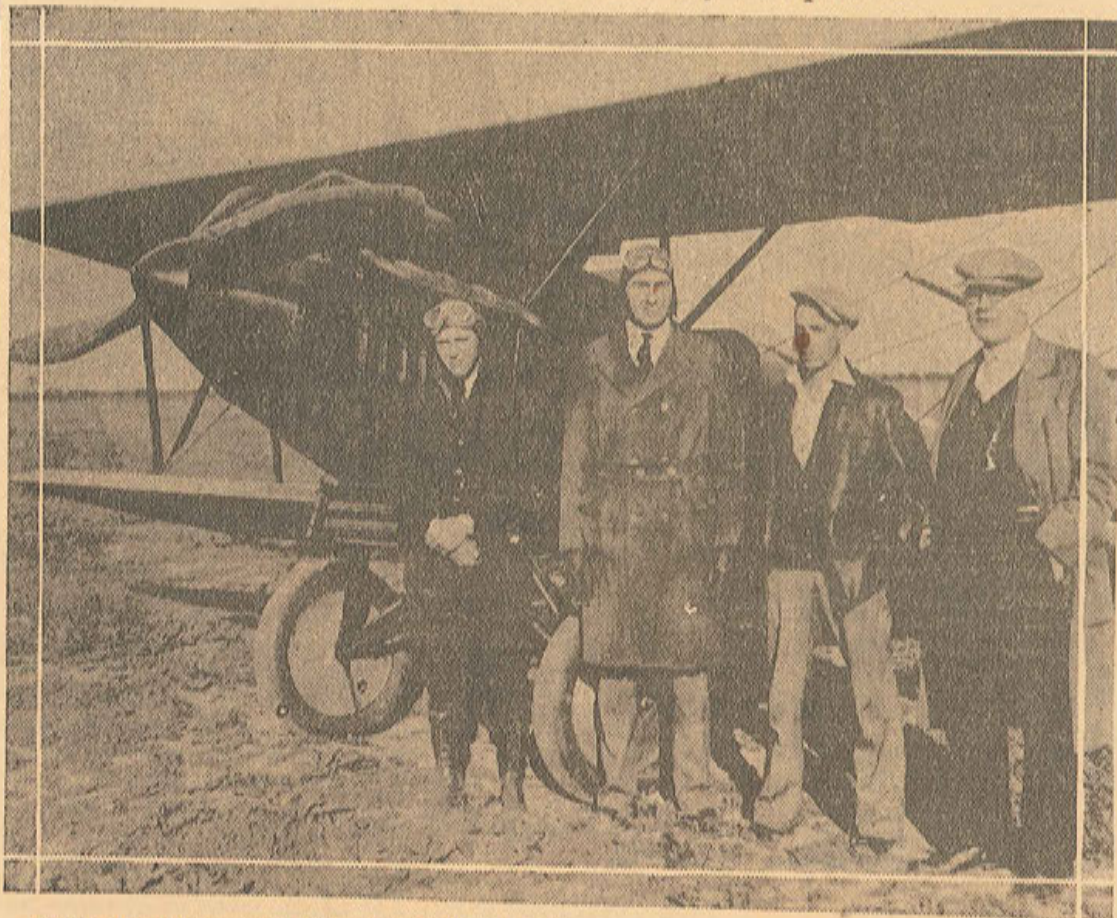
Still, as Joe Smith will tell you, becomes afraid. He proved it, certain capture of George W. McCray, a

(Continued on Page

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## Brings Prisoner Back By Airplane



For the first time in the history of the Toledo police department a prisoner was transported by airplane Thursday.

Detective Ralph VanVorce, of the auto squad, brought R. K. Lance, 20, of Tippecanoe City, Ohio, in his plane to Toledo. Lance was wanted here on an auto theft charge.

VanVorce flew his plane to Tippecanoe City, leaving the Municipal airport, Stickney avenue, at 1:15 p. m. He arrived at 2:45. Pilot William Kenney, who has been teaching VanVorce to fly, was at the controls when the plane brought Lance to Toledo at 6 p. m.

VanVorce and Lance were taken to the Safety building in a police speed car, accompanied by VanVorce's partner, Detective G. J. Stevenson.

The above picture was taken shortly after the flying detective landed at the Stickney avenue airport. Pilot Kenney is at the left. Next to him is Detective VanVorce with his prisoner. Detective Stevenson is at the extreme right.



## Flying Detective Praises Planes for Police Work

Van Vorce Says They Will Be  
Used by All Big Cities  
at Early Date

Municipally owned airplanes for police duty are just around the corner with prosperity, according to Ralph Van Vorce, Toledo's flying detective.

"I believe nearly every large city in the country will get an airplane for municipal business as soon as the depression is over," Detective Van Vorce said.

"They don't cost as much as the average person believes, either."

He hunched his big shoulders expressively and gave an example.

"I've got four planes on my salary."

### Speed Offsets Cost.

Toledo policemen haven't been paid their May nor June salaries. They also took a 10 per cent cut recently.

Van hastened to explain that two of the planes he has purchased in recent months were wrecked ships sold only for the parts in them.

"You get around so quickly and easily in airplanes that they more than pay for themselves," he said.

"Police would use them to bring back prisoners from other cities and to get clues in other towns. If criminals were headed toward Toledo in an auto, an airplane pilot could watch the roads and pick up the car much more easily than half a dozen scout cars. Signals could be arranged for ground crews to catch the car.

### Plane Landed Prisoner.

"There is no chance of prisoners escaping from an airplane. If it is an open cockpit plane, the prisoner would be in the front seat in full view of the pilot and any move on his part could be followed by the pilot with a little side slip and short dive that would make the prisoner sit down fast. In any case it would be death for the prisoner to attempt to turn on the pilot because he could not land a plane unless he was experienced.

"A few years ago a man was picked up in Akron in a car stolen from Toledo. I flew to Akron, picked up the man and returned him to Toledo within eight hours. We



Ralph Van Vorce.

learned he was a burglar and that his partner had several thousand dollars worth of narcotics stolen from drug stores.

"We caught the partner at his home in the South End just as he was starting for Chicago. If it had not been for the fast transportation by plane we would have missed him and lost a valuable prisoner."



May 10, 1936

## Third Plane Called Best



Detective Captain Ralph Van Vorce with his newest airplane. He purchased the Bird Challenger early this year. It is the third plane he has owned.

## Toledo Police Captain Buys Bird Challenger

### Van Vorce Purchases Plane Recommended by Wiley Post; Praises Ship

Should the Toledo police force require an airplane to accomplish a mission after the next two weeks, Detective Captain Ralph Van Vorce, 2033 Fernwood avenue, intends to be prepared.

Though having owned two other airplanes, Captain Van Vorce thinks he is now in possession of the finest and most capable ship he ever has had. The Bird Challenger was purchased in Newport, R. I.

During the last two weeks at Transcontinental airport the new ship has been undergoing a complete overhaul and a recovering of the fuselage and wings. The fuselage has been strengthened, a new cowling will be installed and a new Kinner motor is ready for installation, he said. The oleo landing struts and a hydraulic tail wheel are the

next step in overhaul program before the ship will be declared ready for flight.

When questioned about his new plane, Captain Van Vorce said a Bird Challenger was the passenger ship recommended by the late Wiley Post. Questioners were informed Mr. Post had an agency in Oklahoma where these ships were sold at the time of his tragic death with the late Will Rogers.

Captain Van Vorce stated his flying career started about 10 years ago when he was the pupil of Pop Wells and his flying partner, Joseph Leatherman, who formerly used to barnstorm in this section. He also received further instruction from Art McDaniels, the man who sent Tommy Metcalf, instructor at Transcontinental airport for his first solo flight.

During his periodic flying career Captain Van Vorce has only taken the time to acquire a private pilot's license. He estimated his total flying time at slightly more than 200 hours.

The distinction of having flown the first prisoner to the Toledo jail in the history of the Toledo police department was attained by Captain Van Vorce in 1923 or 1929 when he transported a prisoner from Tippecanoe City, O., to the old police station on Superior street.



TIMES 5/17-17

# Flying Sleuth Forced Down

With his motor missing, Captain of Detectives Ralph Van Vorce made a safe, forced landing in a field a mile north of Erie, Mich., yesterday afternoon after being blown over Lake Erie during a heavy rain and wind storm.

Captain Van Vorce, who has been flying 10 years and hold a private license, had left Ann Arbor, Mich., at 1 p. m. to return to Toledo when he was buffeted about by a severe storm a few miles east of Dundee, Mich.

The pilot reported a strong wind and heavy rain. Blinded by the storm and his instruments virtually valueless, Captain Van Vorce said he was blown over Lake Erie out of the storm area before he was able to fly back on his course again.

Inland his ship again was buffeted by a storm. Uprushing currents took him to an altitude of 4,000 feet where the pilot said it hailed and was intensely cold. His motor began to miss and after a few minutes he reached a lower altitude where he could see land and sighted the field where he landed about 2:15 p. m. After the storm subsided and his motor dried he resumed his trip, landing at Transcontinental airport about 4:30 p. m.

Captain Van Vorce left Toledo for Ann Arbor yesterday morning to visit his brother, Merle, who recently returned from Florida. He was flying a Byrd Challenger bi-plane with a open cockpit.

Several planes at the Transcontinental airport narrowly escaped damage when a severe windstorm struck the airport suddenly. Ships were buffeted on land, but taken into the hangar.

One plane, a Taylor Cub owned by James Stroule, was damaged when it was blown against the wall side the hangar before the hangar were closed. Other ships were moved by the wind, but were damaged.

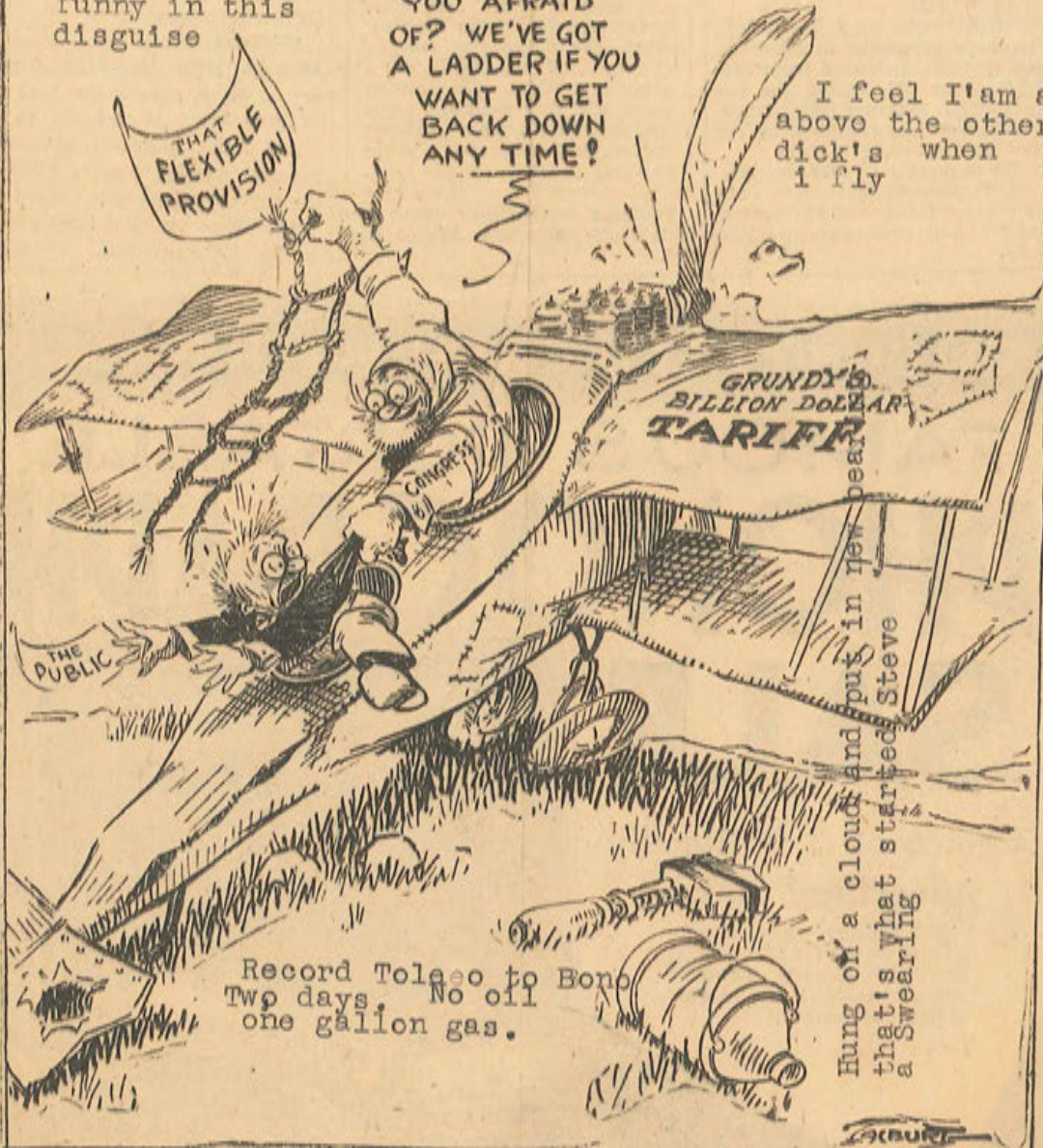
# TAKING HIM FOR A RIDE!

-By Talburt

I'll let you in  
flying cop, I look  
funny in this  
disguise

I am detective Van Vorce the  
WHAT ARE  
YOU AFRAID  
OF? WE'VE GOT  
A LADDER IF YOU  
WANT TO GET  
BACK DOWN  
ANY TIME!

I feel I'am ab  
above the other  
dick's when  
i fly



THE PUBLIC

GRUNDY'S  
BILLION DOLLAR  
TARIFF

Hung on a cloud and put in new bear  
that's what started Steve  
a Swearing

Record Toledo to Bond  
Two days. No oil  
one gallon gas.

TALBURT

## Burglars Work <sup>8/10-63</sup> Too Hard On An Easy Job

Burglars who entered Lee Lumber and Coal Co., 4320 Secor Rd., failed their reading examination but scored an A for appetite.

A small safe, unnecessarily carried away from the office early yesterday to gain entrance to it, was marked "It's unlocked," Ralph VanVorce, owner of the business and a retired Toledo captain of detectives, said.

But a freezer in the office was looted of \$200 worth of beef as well as frozen chickens and turkeys. Vegetables were left behind.

Mr. VanVorce said the safe contained valuable papers, the firm's ledger book and inventory records. There was no money in it, he said. Also taken was \$10 to \$15 in stamps, a radio and a calculating machine.

Mr. VanVorce said he keeps the freezer in the company office because it is too large for his home.

Aug 11-1963  
Blade



**Ralph Van Vorce**  
**Retired Captain Of Detectives,**  
**Former Toledo Businessman**

Ralph Van Vorce, 85, of 4028 Stannard Dr., retired Toledo detective captain and a former businessman, died Friday in the Holly Glen Care Center, Inc., where he had been a patient eight months.

A native of Weston, O., he was a 25-year police veteran. He joined the force in 1916, became a detective in 1922, and captain in 1931.

A pioneer airplane pilot in the 1920s, he owned his own plane and made police history when he transported a prisoner to Toledo from Troy, O., the first time such a transfer was made by air in the United States.

After retiring in 1941, he founded the former Lee Lumber & Coal Co., on Secor Road, and operated the firm until that retirement in 1972.

He was a 50-year member of various Masonic bodies.

His wife, Ruth H., survives.

Services will be Monday at 2:30 p.m. in the Ansberg-West Mortuary, where the body will be Sunday after 2 p.m.