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THE LIFE HISTORY OF A MEMBER OF THE "42" GANG

JOHN LANDESCO*

INTRODUCTION

For the last five years and under the auspices of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology and the Social Science Research Committee of the University of Chicago, John Landesco has been making a study of Organized Crime as it exists in the City of Chicago, Illinois. The result of his first two years of study and investigation was published in 1929 as a part of the Illinois Crime Survey. The results of the last three years of study will shortly appear in book form, in two volumes, to be respectively entitled: "Eddie Jackson, the Immune, Pickpocket"; and "The Story of the Forty-two Gang." In the July, 1932, number of the JOURNAL OF CRIMINAL LAW AND CRIMINOLOGY, we published an advance chapter of the latter book, entitled "Crime and the Failure of Institutions in Chicago's Immigrant Areas," and in this number we are publishing an article by Mr. Landesco, entitled "A Life History of a Member of the Forty-two Gang." We are doing this as a background and introduction to what is to follow. It may also be well to add that the so-called Forty-two Gang is a criminal body or organization, chiefly composed of youths, but many of whose members have grown to manhood estate. This organization has existed in Chicago for over ten years and, though now more or less disintegrated, is still an influential and governing force in Chicago's crime. Its home has been in the West Side Italian district of Chicago, in which for many years the down-and-outs of our own migratory American population and the newly arrived immigrants have congregated because of the cheapness of the rents and perhaps the racial companionship which has there been afforded. It is a district in which there is no tradition of real American citizenship and is so undesirable that from it there is a constant efflux of its more ambitious and prosperous inhabitants. This results in a human sediment of the unfit and a nursery of crime. It is in this environment that the Forty-two Gang has had its sway. The articles which we are publishing in this JOURNAL and the completed volumes which are shortly to appear

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should awaken the interest of all of us in the problem of environment and in the problem of our transient population and of our immigrants. At any rate, they show us how it is that so many children of our immigrant population fall astray.

ANDREW A. BRUCE.

Almost since the beginning of my research in crime I have heard about the "42" gang. Newspaper accounts of the criminal activities of their members occur almost daily, and involve all of the crimes of violence as well as all the crimes against property. They have been and are today a constant knotty problem to the police. A perusal of the newspaper clippings would impress one with their constant criminal activity and their versatility in their field.

The account of my contact with the "42" and the progress of the establishment of a rapport which would open to us the life of this gang in their daily doings, would make an interesting story. For some time an almost daily journal of observations about this gang was kept. Through personal contacts the life stories of individual gangsters and their participation in the gang was gained. Much of these data was taken with a view to obtaining a history, not only of the individual members, but of the inception, formation, and growth of this gang. The "42" gang was chosen for intensive study because it is a typical neighborhood gang which had its beginnings in the play group of the little boys of this West Side neighborhood.

By the aid of Mr. De Sylvester, a student who was raised in the west side "Little Italy" and who is particularly equipped to deal with the small boys now growing up in the neighborhood, we have amassed voluminous material on the lives of the boys up to 13, 14, and 15 years of age—their interests, activities, and outlook upon life.

In this way we not only have a record of the members of the original "42" gang, now almost entirely adult, but we have the life histories of the younger generation, really still small children of the neighborhood, who are inheriting the tradition of the gang and are growing up into criminal life. The materials about the little boys consist of, first, different types of personal documents, their own stories of such events as they consider interesting; second, accounts of a 24-hour day in the life of the individual boy; thirdly, the records of observations while meandering in the neighborhood conversing with the little fellows and seeing them in their own play life. These

materials serve as evidence of the spread of a gang culture despite the decimation and the dissolution of the original gang.

In this paper is presented a life history of an original "42". He was a full fledged member of the original gang, who had participated in its different activities through all the period of its existence; through its consolidation and through its dissolution. By comparing his story with other life histories of "original" members we were in a position to produce an authentic history of the "42" gang, which has been prepared for publication.

The life history, which follows, presents materials which may be used for several different purposes. In the first place, it affords us a description of the process by which a boy from a wholesome family becomes a criminal gangster. All the influences of the family were against his becoming delinquent. The differences between him and his brothers as to participation in criminal gang life, even the difference between him and the brother who was his bed-fellow and closest friend, may be traced to the differences of associations in the play group. His induction into a criminal life occurs simultaneously with the family moving from one location to another. It is difficult to ascertain whether the antagonism between him and his father, which was compensated by the extreme affection of the boy for his mother, occurred prior to or immediately subsequent to his criminal behavior.

In this life history there are the necessary data to trace the evolution of his attitudes toward his home and his gang at various stages and periods in his gang life. Much is given of the intimacy and solidarity of the gang relations as compared with the estranged position of the delinquent boy in the wholesome home.

There is also in this document a wealth of detail about the apprenticeship of the boy in crime. It reveals in detail how a technique of crime is acquired in gang life; it describes the methods of exploitation by the older youth of the younger boy; and it presents vividly the various attractions that pull the younger boy toward emulation and association with the older criminals.

Finally, this case contains much material that is relevant upon our present day methods of treatment of delinquents and criminals.

It shows certain of the reasons why our institutions have failed in their efforts to reform delinquents and criminals.¹ All the members of the "42" gang as small boys were in contact with the school

¹See article entitled "Crime and the Failure of Institutions in Chicago's Immigrant Areas" in the July-August, 1932, issue of the JOURNAL of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology.

and the church, but the programs which these and other social agencies offered did not prevent their criminal career.

This document also indicates the type of relations that grow up between the criminal and the police as well as his reliance upon the criminal lawyer and the "fix" in times of crises and distress.

In our own attempt at the rehabilitation of this youth, now sincerely eager for reformation, we have been brought face to face with practically all of the difficulties which make constructive effort almost impossible, particularly in this period of economic depression.

This life history is presented, therefore, not only as an intimate disclosure of the inner life of a gangster, but also as an exhibit of the type of data as the basis for the development of constructive policies and programs for the prevention and treatment of delinquents.

ROCCO MARCANTONIO

The life history of Rocco, 21 years of age, life-long participant in the gang activities of the West Taylor street area, known to police and the law as a gun robber, is introduced as the core of the history of the "42" gang.

"I was born on Ewing Street, a little east of Desplaines Street. Ewing street is a street south of Polk street. Our house was located one block from the Guardian Angel church. I lived there through my infancy and when I was old enough to go to school I was enrolled at the Dante public school. At age seven I became an altar boy at the Guardian Angel church.

"One year later we moved to De Koven and Halsted which is only three blocks away and I continued at the Dante school. We lived there only one year and then moved to Taylor and Sibley. Sibley is one block east of Loomis and our house was just across the way from the Hebrew Institute.

"Here I attended Rees School at Elburn and Throop. I entered this school when I was about nine years old and continued there until I was in the seventh grade and about fourteen years of age.

"My childhood was simple and happy. My record at the Dante school would prove that I attended school regularly, passed in my grades. After school I ran eagerly to the Guardian Angel church where I played with the altar boys in a clubroom under the church, and on warm days played baseball with these boys in the street or in the school yard.

"My father has been in America for 32 years. He was married before he arrived here, came to live in Ewing street with my mother

before their first child was born. His home town was Montfalcone, situated in about central Italy. He began then as a railroad laborer and has continued in the same work since. He is now a track foreman and is always employed.

"I was the sixth child. Seven of us were born and all are alive today. Phyllis is now 31 and married, Connie is 29 and married, Pete 27, Tony 25, Albert 23, myself about 21, and Gerald 13. My grandmother, that is my father's mother, has lived with us for many years. She is now about 97 and still alive and well.

"All of the children, except the youngest, Gerald, attended Dante school. Phyllis, Connie, Pete, and Albert graduated from Dante school. Tony and I attended there but didn't graduate. Gerald graduated from Mary Lyon school on the northwest side, where he now lives. He is attending high school.

"Phyllis and Connie worked in tailor shops as young ladies. They married Italian young men. The elder is an art teacher, the other is a cutter—both have always been strictly on the legit.

"Pete worked around printing plants but never learned more than press handling work. He is now employed as chief clerk in a factory and also devotes part of his time to selling its goods. He is still single.

"Albert, who is now 23, first went along to printing work with Pete. The latter six or seven years he has worked in tailor shops and is now a journeyman cutter. Albert is nearest my age and during most of our lives we have slept in the same bed and occupied the same room, but he has never violated any law. His warning to me has always been, 'You'll wind up in the gutter.' He always had another set of friends who were all on the legit. He has always worked, brought home his pay envelope and when my mother lived she would give him 'so much' every week and he used to be satisfied. I began to make big money in rackets very early, always liked Albert and often when I had it would leave money in his pockets so he could have a good time. He never squealed, would vouch for me, and lie for me, and would see to it the door was unlocked after my father had locked it when I first began to run around nights. Albert never attended the Rees school but graduated from the Dante school.

"Tony, who is 25 years of age, has, as you might say, been singed with crime but not exactly burned with it. He attended Dante school, later he went to sister school at the Guardian Angel, met up with Frank whose name is in the list of the original "42" gang, began bum-

ming and stealing and was expelled. He went to work in a peanut factory and started stealing from the factory. He has a record but not much of one and today he is a driver for one of the newspapers, earns good wages, lives with the family of his fiancée. Her father is a well-to-do trucking contractor. I think his future is made.

"Gerald, who is 13 years old, lives with my sister Phyllis on the far northwest side. He is a good boy in school, is regular, is very religious and attends church regularly, sometimes he goes to church every morning and lights a candle for my mother. He is not going into any racket. We are all standing by him to see him finish school.

"My schooling at Dante was regular and I attended to my work while I was at Dante. I always, from a very small child, wanted to be an altar boy, and one day when one of the altar boys came and told me that I was chosen for an altar boy, I was very happy. I went to church every morning, arose at 6 and served the 7 to 8 o'clock mass—on Sunday the 8 to 9 mass. The altar boys were my playmates. There was a little club-like room in the basement where we played games, checkers, and read books. Even before I was chosen they took me in to play with them and they asked the priest to take me and talked to me to try to be an altar boy. After school we used to play ball in the school yard. In the winter time we went to Hull House sometimes and spent some time in a play room or tried to attend the club. Sometimes I went on hikes. I was never truant from school. When we moved to De Koven and Halsted there was no changes in my schooling. I kept on being altar boy and played with the same boys.

"When we moved to Taylor and Sibley I had to transfer to the Rees school. At first I didn't like it because I didn't know anybody. When I passed into the 6th grade I began to know them all. Even before I became acquainted with the gang pals just out of lonesomeness, I would sometimes bum school of an afternoon to run back to Dante school and be at the gate when my old friends, the altar boys, came out of school.

"Something happened toward the last months while I was still an altar boy that made me lose faith in the church and I wasn't so religious after that. I came running in to the priest and found him eating chicken on Friday. He reached for a towel and hurried to cover the chicken before I could see it, but I saw it. When we moved I stopped altar work and stopped going to church. My grandmother, who all of her life has gone to church every morning, always scolded me for that. But I have attended church once in a while

even since and now, since I live in this new neighborhood where people know each other and watch each other, out on the northwest side, I go to church so people won't talk about us. I have to be seen at church and I like to go to light a candle for my mother.

"I always cared more for my mother and brother Albert, but Albert and I never played together. He had other boys. He not only liked sports but he played himself on teams at the Hebrew Institute. My crowd always went to see the Cubs play. We would watch games of professional ball. Very early, as soon as our first racket began to bring us in money, we always wanted to go out with women, and drink.

"While at the Rees school I began selling papers after school to about 6 p. m. in the lobby of a loop building. I gave it up because of trouble with the customers and with the building. Some customers would pick up a paper daily and would forget to pay me at the end of the week, and the building wanted the space so they gave me a lot of trouble about keeping the lobby clean. Also I began to run around with the fellows that first introduced me to rackets.

"About in the 6th grade, when I was 14 years old, I began to have trouble in school and it began to be reported to my father. It was time, too, for my lessons for confirmation and my father transferred me to Pompeii school (parochial). At Pompeii school I behaved a little better. The principal took me in and gave me a talking-to right at the beginning. Later I began to find my old friends again and I was kicked out of Pompeii and went back to Rees where I quit in the seventh grade. By this time we were bumming and stealing.

"We first started stealing from clothes lines while bumming from school. Pete, Louie, and Babe Ruth were all in Rees school then. Of that racket we had been hearing a lot. The first day we went out west, near Oak Park. We took the street car with a little sack under our arm and filled it and came home. We picked silk shirts and would sell them for only a dollar or two dollars apiece. We sold them to our friends and our cousins and our cousins' friends. And they always told other people, but I never would sell to my own brothers and tell them anything about it. We quit school and began to hang out at Throop and Elburn, shooting dice.

"Beginning at about this time and for 7 years to follow, we always had the basement of the delicatessen store for our hangout. Here we stored our loot. We would shoot craps on the sidewalk, and buy delicatessen, go to shows and worry the girls.

"For 2 years we were in the shirt-stealing racket and we were never caught once. If somebody ran after us we would just run away, take the street car home when we were chased.

"Our next racket was 'robbing pennies.' One of us would take a small sledge hammer and with a partner start down Roosevelt Road, looking for peanut machines. One smash and the pennies would come rolling out. We would get four or five slot machines an evening. We could even get some in the daytime. If we were chased we would quit. It was before the pistol was around and if the Jew came out of the store the fellow with the sledge hammer would threaten him. We knew the streets like a book, would run through the alley like lightning, or over the fence into the open lot and were gone. We used to study getaways day and night. We were never caught. Sometimes these owners would trace us and come around, or even the police. When they came we would duck.

"There were about 15 fellows in our near neighborhood in the original shirt racket, and about that many around the peanut racket, but our own little bunch was only three or four.

"A little later we began to steal bicycles, as did others in the neighborhood. We would go out to Oak Park or to some other west side or Hyde Park residence district on the street car, take the bicycles and ride back home on them. We were the same partners; we would use the same basement. We would sell these bicycles, sometimes worth \$55 or \$65, for four, ten, or fifteen dollars. We always had a half dozen bikes in the basement. This went on until 1924, the same basement at Throop and Elburn.

"One day a man came around and said he'd give us \$9.00 for a 29x4 tire. He told us it was easy. He explained to us that we could get a bar clip in a hardware store which we did, and with that bar clip we took that spare tire off the car. We delivered the tire and he gave us the \$9. Through him another and another customer heard of us and these passed us on to others. . . We soon got a list of 'phone numbers of tire customers. Later a single trucking firm would buy many tires from us, leaving orders in advance for what they wanted.

"We weren't the only ones in the neighborhood but there were a few little bunches like ours working at stealing tires.

"This same trucking firm, the owners of which are young men strong in politics and with money, were for a long while general fences for anything stolen and would be willing to buy anything from boys of the neighborhood, but not from anyone outside of the

neighborhood. Many of our customers were legitimate working people. We stole tires all over the city and outside of our neighborhood. I soon owned a little Ford coupe and in it we cruised around until we found what we wanted.

"In the delicatessen store we 'stoshed' some of our money. I suppose the four of us in some good weeks would make as high as \$200, \$250, or even \$300 the best weeks.

"Our biggest expense then was shooting craps, and we wanted to go with girls like the older fellows. We picked up with two broads, one Mildred and the other Marie. One was a German and the other was a Polak. They lived in a hotel. When it got a little hot for us we would go over there to stay. We were suckers for these girls, bought them clothes and gave them money and they took us around to beer flats and hotels. They were much older than we, 24. I think that it was because we didn't know how to dress then and didn't know how to talk to girls. I'd call up over the 'phone and say, 'Say, broad, we're out to a joint west. You want to come out here?' And they'd come out. But we saved some of our money and, as I said, we stoshed in the delicatessen store.

"We got into our first jam when I was about 16 years of age and we had been a few months in the tire business. We had our little basement hangout fixed up with shelves and marked tire sizes on the shelves. When a customer wanted a tire we would take him down to the basement, switch on the light, and pull down the right tire. Getting into a jam with the police was new to us but not so new because we heard a lot from other fellows about getting into jams, ducking the police, 'fixing,' springing writs, and getting bail. Others in the neighborhood were in many jams before us, especially the older fellows. We were picked up around the old Empire theater, at Union and Madison street, by the old Marmon squad that used to have a gong on each side. They took us down to the Desplaines street station. At the time of this first jam we had about \$900 saved in the hands of the delicatessen man. They thought that the Ford I was driving was a stolen Ford and they had us under suspicion for stealing tires.

"They gave us some beatings. We didn't 'know anything about stealing tires nor machines.' We knew even then that we must take a beating and keep our mouth shut. They let the other fellow out the same evening because I claimed the car was mine. They wouldn't give me permission to 'phone my cousin but the other fellow reached him the next day and he came down and identified me, himself, and

claimed the car was his and he let me use it. We were booked for disorderly and the court discharged the case.

"After that we began to be watched and the coppers began to pick us up because once or twice they found stolen tires in our little car. I learned that when you are picked up and you have money in your pocket you can fix the copper.

"For all of these four or five years Pete, known as 'Mibs,' and Louie, of a well known pair of brothers, and I were the close partners in the little hangout under the delicatessen store. Even though we were four or five years in the rackets it looked like we would never see the inside of a police station. When we were arrested that one time we felt pretty bad about it but it was pretty easy. I can't explain how we were safe so long. We had no 'fix' in anywhere. We used to hear of the older crowd getting pinched all the time but we knew nothing of any station, squad or fix.

"Then Red, who was about 17 or 18 years old, and lived in the neighborhood of 12th and Lytell, wanted to come with us. He had a Chevy '24 even before I had a Ford coupe. He was Irish but always hung around in the neighborhood. He came with us only after we were in the tire racket a while. We used to see him around with Babe Ruth, Vito, and some of the big fellows. They used to gip him too much, he said. We used to see him coming in with whole loads of merchandise in his Chevy, or tires. We would ask him 'How much would you get for the load?' 'Oh, a couple of dollars.' 'Who did you sell it to?' 'I don't know. They sold it for me.'

"Twenty-five dollars would fix it on the spot. I can say that up to my 18th year I was in very little trouble with the police. We hardly figured even on getting pinched. We had little to do either with lawyers or bondsmen.

"Then we started getting in with the older clique. They hijacked us into their gang but we, too, wanted to be with them. Vito's house was the hangout for the older crowd. I lived across the alley from him and I would see him often, and his pals, Salvi, Babe Ruth, Sharkey, Sam. They were 20 and 21 years of age. At Vito's house it was different than at mine. His family knew what was going on. How could they help it with so many well-dressed young fellows around doing nothing? If they had a spot for hot stuff of their own they never told us. They were afraid we would steal from them. They weren't exactly afraid; they just didn't trust us. We might

have liked to be with these older fellows, the big shots, only if they didn't gip us so much.

"They were in the big money, after butter and egg trucks, dry goods, shoes in loads. They were driving Chryslers; they were having better and bigger times—cabarets, shows, beer joints. We were too small to go around, we didn't know how to dress and we felt that they were smarter.

"They found out that we were hanging around the delicatessen store and that we had money there. One day four or five of us were shooting craps on the corner on the sidewalk. We each had ten or twenty dollars in our hands. Whatever you wanted to shoot for that was the stakes. They saw money! All of them were in a Ford—Babe, Vito, Salvi, Patsy, Frankie. They stopped to ask us for money—'We're broke. Give us some money.' We gave them some, afraid they'd take all. That wasn't enough so they started taking more. We ran away. Then for a while we always tried to duck them, for about 2 or 3 weeks. But it was the only place we knew where to hang out. So they came around and hijacked us for our money.

"Then one day they told us that if we wanted to go along with them, 'making' trucks and merchandise they'd take us, and we says, 'all right.'

"Those fellows were like coppers. Anyway they'd come around and shake us down and hijack us for our money, steal it from us, take it from us.

"They showed us a way where we could make more money, go out 'making' trucks, butter and eggs, merchandise, making more money.

"The last six months in the tire business we would go out after 1 p. m. We averaged about \$75 a week, all sweet—nobody to bother us, nobody to pay off, but I thought, 'If I went out with the big fellows I'd be a big shot.' We were helped out by a teaming company and their friends with lists of customers. We sold to users and to other contractors and to men in the teaming union. These neighborhood trucking men thought we were all right. We showed them that we had a reasonable price and we never stole from them.

"I have told you how the older fellows, there were only four, hung around Vito's house. We were four younger fellows hanging around our 'spot' at the delicatessen. They first hijacked us and then took us into a business with bigger money, butter and eggs and

trucks. At first they did take us for suckers. They did all the selling. Later we learned the buyers when they let it slip while they were talking. We went to the buyers and asked about the prices. Then we learned about the true prices. Then we told 'em that if they didn't play square with us, no more going out together. We were doing the dirty work, they sat in the machine; 'an even split or nothing.' By this time we had guns. They fitted us out with them, and they said, 'yes.'

GUN LESSONS

"We were down in the basement at Figlio's. Vito asked me if I wanted to try to use a pistol, showed me how to aim. Pointing to the target he demonstrated how a pistol must be aimed lower than the object to allow for the jump (recoil). Later he sold me a 36 Colt (break open).

"The older fellows were in the pistol racket even then. They went into the pistol racket just as the butter and egg racket was waning. The gang had started to 'crack up' into cliques of four and three.

"The older fellows knew how to wear their clothes. They taught me how to match ties and suits, what color shoes and hats to wear. For a long time I used to wear the suits my mother bought me to go away and come home in, or to do a job with, but used to keep swell suits at Archie Cappozzi's house to dress up when I went out with the fellows.

THE TRUCKS AND THE NEW GANG

Butter and Egg Trucks

"Both for tires and trucks later we worked all over town but brought the stuff 'in' (into the neighborhood). With the trucks we had to begin to carry pistols. I don't remember the first time we went out after a truck. I can give you instances though.

"We met one morning at an appointed time at Edgemont and Loomis (Edgemont is one block south of Elburn, two blocks south of Taylor). 'Let's go out and see if we can get some money,' said Salvi, I don't remember his last name. He was killed in an auto accident on the outer drive two years ago. We got into his Ford and cruised around, north, south, and west. This cruising before we found anything sometimes took an hour or even a half hour, till we met up with something. At Kedzie and Flournoy there stands a

truck, butter and eggs. The driver is in the store. I jumped in the truck and drove it east, he and the Ford behind me. His work was to cut off anybody following me in a machine by crowding him to the curb.

"We had our own garage in the neighborhood. Once we got there we would unload the stuff and take the truck out of the district. We would only drive the truck out of the police district (about 4 blocks into the Marquette district, out of the Maxwell st. district), How could we keep the truck? We'd only get caught with it. (We took butter and eggs because there was more money in it and easier to get rid of.) We found out the places where they disposed of the stuff. We knew the places and knew the prices received.

"I would be in on 'making' a truck every 2 or 3 days but in the crowd they made a truck a day and brought it always to this same place. Twice we had to take the truck when the driver was on it (not in a store). There was so much value in it that we wanted the truck badly enough.

"Once, the driver was in the store doorway watching the truck. I started toward it. He came up. I stuck a gun in his ribs. 'Stick 'em up!' 'Quiet!' He obeyed and drove around the corner with me. 'Get out,' I ordered and I drove away. In the machine behind me was Salvi and either Babe or some other fellow.

"For the trucks we always were with one of the big fellows. We thought they knew more about driving a machine in a pinch. Anyone could drive the truck away.

"If the party belonging to the truck chased us in a machine the big fellow in the machine behind cut him off.

"The coppers used to come around once in a while. The older fellows told us they paid them off, did the dealing with the police. We used to give them money to pay them off, ten or fifteen dollars at a time. Either Vito, Babe, or Salvi used to come around for 'dough' to pay off coppers at certain times—about once a month.

"I used to always carry my money on me. I couldn't take it home to give to my folks, so they always knew I had a lot with me. They'd ask me for ten or fifteen dollars for the coppers once a month about. I didn't mind it. The other young fellows sometimes didn't have it or didn't have enough and they would beg off or 'jew' them down or come and ask me for some.

"The prices were, for cases of eggs ten dollars, tubs of butter fifteen dollars (to the dealer legitimate the tubs were worth about \$25, the cases of eggs six to ten dollars). Out of a load as my share

I got as high as \$300. About \$100 or \$150 twice a week was my share. This racket lasted a year when I was 19 years old. I only went for butter and eggs, the other guys, the older fellows, took other merchandise, silks, shoes, suits. They were all taken to the same garage. I have seen the goods and I have worn it—suits and shoes.

"The two big fences that would buy anything were 'One-armed' Mary and John. Both of them ran grocery stores. 'One-armed' Mary had a big empty house on the back lot that was filled with stolen stuff. You could get money any time of the day or night you brought in the stuff. They take in anything, even any kind of merchandise. They pay off the coppers; nothing ever happens to them.

"We would reload and take it to John or Mary. I took the stuff over most of the time. I paid off only the fellow that was my partner on the particular job.

"When we were making so much we thought the police were scums, shysters, they could be bought for so little; they were money hungry.

"What made it still harder, business houses started putting two men on the truck, one with a gun. Then we had less money; times were tougher and coppers picked us up oftener when we couldn't give them the money.

"I can say that in six to eight months, while we were in the butter and egg racket, 1924-25, I averaged \$150 a week and spent it like water. The coppers did not suspect us of stealing butter and egg trucks, excepting one squad that knew it. They knew about stealing tire and machines.

"We only paid the coppers of the Cadillac squad that toured from 4 to 12 p. m. That was when we moved our goods. The 8 to 4 squad, those in the Cadillac, we studied their movements. Our lookouts watched their movements in the district which were timed to a route. Our lookout was a little fellow on a bike who followed them for two or three weeks. They had regular stops to collect, to eat. We knew that. They didn't know us; we knew all their movements. Their territory was from Ashland to the river and Harrison to 22nd.

"The 4 p. m. to 12 squad we paid. On their watch the stuff had to be moved to the fence. Once a month one of them would come around to collect. He was in plain clothes. One of the older fellows would collect from us around \$125 total and then bargain with the cop. Sometimes the cop was grouchy and wanted \$25 more,

but he always got not less than \$100. If they wanted more you couldn't say no. You couldn't say nothing to them. They'd have something on you so they could pinch you all the time.

"Once in a while I would get picked up, never was caught red-handed until lately. When picked up they would stop our machine, call us out, take one of us in the squad car, allow the other fellow to drive our own machine with a copper at his side. The first chance is to talk to the copper himself. I keep quiet till the copper begins to talk: 'I know you guys, west side teeves, after butter and eggs or tires. You're with so-and-so, ain't you? With Babe, Patsy, Sharkey, and Vito?'

"'No, we don't know 'em from Adam and Eve. How about talking business?'

"'How much you got on you?'

"'We got so much. Talk business or take us to the station.'

"Our big money we kept in our watch pockets. The police money we kept in our pants pocket. After we got in with the big fellows and were making big money we were stopped two or three times a week like that. For a stretch of time you could buy yourself out one after another. Other times were hotter, after they started to know us, and then we were taken into the station one after another.

"One time I was pinched seven Sundays in a row. I would be on the streets, riding around in a machine or on the corner. They'd come along and pinch the mob and lock us up.

"I would say that from the time I began to be picked up I was taken to Maxwell station ten times, Warren avenue station five times, Desplaines four times, old detective bureau four times, new detective bureau eight times, Pekin Inn four times, Central station twice, Craigin once. I was always only suspected for auto thieving or tires.

"We never talked; no confessions. In some cases they'd take us down, bring us up every two or three hours, question us, and beat us up. At Desplaines street one time a young copper came down, first talked tough to us, slapped me in the face, could get nothing out of us. He came down later and in a kinder mood told us he was an ex-hood himself. He did some small favors for me and I met him later when I was out and took him out to a good Italian dinner.

"I can say that we were always thrown in when we had no money in our pockets. Money buys any copper in this city. Any time when we were picked up on the street it was \$25 to \$100 for

the two. If you didn't have it, you'd go down. In four years, the last four years, I can say I have been arrested forty times. I can say I have paid out to coppers \$7,000 or \$8,000.

THE HANGOUT MOVED

The Origin of the "42" Gang

"Then Figlio opened his poolroom in the neighborhood, the eight of us started hanging out there, the four older fellows and the four of us. The poolroom drew more fellows from around the neighborhood who were also in little mobs of two and four and eight in the racket, and the mobs got close, got acquainted that way. Then came this fellow's neighbor and that fellow's brother and that fellow's cousin. Everybody had a racket—some came in little cliques that had their spots like we had the basement or the garage later. No one could be called head. The "older fellows" of our mob didn't shake them all down because they had their own mobs.

"Then Figlio, about two months later, moved to 'Mary's,' a restaurant, around the corner from the poolroom, and the mob started hanging out there.

"It was there the name '42' sprang up.

"The bunch were all acquainted. I could approach any fellow if they were two or five or twenty, whether they were eating on the inside or hanging around on the outside, and ask him to go on a job. 'Do you want to go on a job? I got something *good*.'

"There was an elderly man we all trusted there. We left our guns, left our money to bank, whoever kept stuff there would drop him a fin or a sawbuck if you had it when you had it. You could eat there, sleep there; you could receive your 'phone calls—call up lawyers.

"If you were 'in' (under arrest) the lawyer knew that the mob boys were good. He'd spring a writ for you or do anything for you and collect afterwards because he knew where to find you and that you'd pay if you were of the mob. If you didn't have it the boys would take up a collection for you for springing a writ anyway. McConnell was the lawyer. We all had one lawyer who would beat any case for us, could do anything for us. He beat one case for us like an angel. I'll tell you about it later. I suppose I have spent \$3,000 or \$4,000 for lawyers between 1927 and today.

"My biggest raps were suspect for manslaughter in a hit-and-run case, burglary of a cigar store, theft of an auto, shooting through

windows of a school in the neighborhood, Mann act (Chicago to Benton Harbor). I have been convicted only once but I have been held for trial in the county jail several times. Of the last time I was in the county jail just after I was shot in the back while trying to stick up a dope cache—of that time you know. There have been a few times like that.

"In this one conviction I got an 18-months' sentence. It was a Federal case, but my partners got nothing, were never found out and I got St. Charles even though I was 17 years old then and had had long experience as a thief.

AUTO RACKET

"B and I were then 17 years old. We were in the garage in Cicero and had about 16 stolen cars in a 'public' garage. We used to sell stolen cars to bootleggers. This garage was a '36-car,' we rented it through a bootlegger who collected, and we never knew the owner. \$200 a month was the rent.

"Monteo Gagiano was the only partner from the gang and Gene, a newcomer from the old country. He was then 22 years old, a foreigner, and to us was a full-grown man, but a thievin' son-of-a-gun. He could steal any kind of a car in this country just as good as a man in the racket five or ten years, like an old-timer. When he first came around we taught him how to drive at night. Now he drives as good as the best racketeer. How he can drive!—like nobody's business.

"He knew all them Sicilian bootleggers out in Cicero. That's how we got acquainted with our customers, our trade. That's how I started to know what it was all about.

"In the gang we usually took newcomers for suckers. We let them do the dirty work. I used to do it that way till they got smart to themselves. We took Gene for a sucker for a while.

"He was green. He was here only two or three years. He had been working down the ditch, a pick-and-shovel worker. Somebody, I don't remember who, brought him into the mob over to 'Mary's.' He said he wanted to be a thief himself. He talked foreign-like and wanted to be a hoodlum. He was introduced to me and I thought he was a shyster. Then somebody took him out and found he was a good head for auto work. Later he used to come around in different makes of machines and we wondered where he got them. One day somebody asked him. 'I steal 'em and I got people that buy machines.'

"Then he took us out to Cicero to a saloon hangout where many bootleggers come around, and we started taking orders for automobiles. By this time he knew how to take the ignition lock off, make his connections, break the steering lock, and drive off. We got all our machines through this one bootlegger; we would take orders for machines from him.

"We used to drive the machine behind him. He would get the stolen car and we would drive behind him in a legit car. What I learned from Vito and Babe I worked on him as they worked on me. That's how it goes.

"The bootleggers wanted the numbers changed and we had to hold cars until we got numbers from New York so we needed a garage and the bootleggers told us where we could get a big one for \$200. If we'd get our money we were willing to pay the price, so we got the garage and started filling up with the cars ordered.

"These bootleggers told us how to change the numbers on the cars so that the police couldn't detect the change. We had a mechanic in the garage whose name was Pete, a Polak, who worked on changing numbers. We also had a nigger attendant.

"These bootleggers told us of a man in New York to who we'd write the make, model and year. He would watch for cars of the same description in New York and copy off the numbers. These he would send us printed into the pages of magazines, catalogues, or books. This fellow was a printer. The numbers were countersunk and our mechanic would use dyes to change them. He used a fine instrument to measure the depth so that all the numbers were even (of even depth). After we were through changing the numbers we would throw vinegar on the engine to make the number look rusty. Polak Pete, the mechanic, is now in Leavenworth on a con game.

"We were now hanging in Cicero at the garage. One day we received an order about 4 or 5 o'clock in the evening. They said they wanted a Cadillac sedan by that night for \$300. My partner told them, 'What's the matter with these cars we got here?' 'No, we need a fast car for the job tonight.' 'Let's go out and get it,' I said to Monte, 'then tomorrow we'll lay off and go to a show.' 'No,' he said, 'I feel something funny coming on.' 'You're crazy,' I said. I told him, 'Let's go out and get it and be done with it; 300 bucks is 300 bucks.' 'All right,' he said, disgusted. We went out and looked around for about an hour and we got the car on Michigan avenue somewhere between 18th and 22nd street and came back with the car. When we came close to the garage he stopped me. 'What you

going to do with it?' he asked. 'I'm going in the garage with it.' 'Well, this is the first time they wanted a car right away and at night. I feel something funny.' 'I'll drive it in the garage. You go over and tell them the car is here. Tell 'em to kick in with the money.'

"I drove into the garage and noticed three men with shotguns in their hands and I first thought they wanted to hijack our cars. I had nothing (was not armed). 'What do you want in this garage?' I hollered. They asked me, 'Whose car is this?' And I gave them some name. They told me they were Federal men and showed me their gold star. 'These cars in here are all stolen.' 'I know nothing about that,' I said. They told me and the nigger to come along.' (The 'nigger' was the garage attendant whom the bootleggers hired and paid. The boys used to give him a few dollars now and then.)

"They took us in their machine down to the Federal building and separated us. They questioned me but there is no beatings or monkey work going on with the government.

"'Who owns or runs the garage?'

"'I don't know.'

"'How many cars did you bring in?'

"'That's the only one.'

"'Are all the cars in that garage stolen?'

"'I don't know.'

"'You're going to take the rap for everyone of them fellows.'

"'I don't care.'

"They questioned the nigger. 'He didn't know anything.' They let him go and kept me. They questioned me every day for three days, three hours every day. Beat up nothing—not those people—they never beat anybody up. They could get nothing out of me and booked me for the Dyer act.

"The nigger was kept for about 8 hours. He went back to the garage and told one of the bootleggers I was arrested. The bootlegger, Monte, and Gene tried to get me out even though they had ready bonds for \$5,000 and \$10,000 (real estate). They got me out as soon as I was booked but not before. McConnell was my lawyer. My trial was set for only one week later. We got three or four continuances for a week each time. The Federal men only pinned two cars on me. I plead guilty to two cars. I told the judge I was only 16 and had a certificate to show it. Therefore, he sentenced me to St. Charles.

"I left the 'trucks' for the Cicero car business about in November, 1926, and was in this until March, 1927, when I was sent over.

We stole and sold 32 cars, the 16 cars in the garage included. The cars on hand were waiting for numbers to come. We sold cars at prices from \$75 to \$200 per car—Fords \$75, Buick or Chrysler for \$150, a Peerless and Packard for \$200. We split two and three ways on each car, depending on how many went out together to get that car. This was easier than the trucks. The companies had started putting two guys on the trucks and the police didn't know anything about us, either in Chicago or in Cicero, but we were picked up just the same and bought ourselves out each time—\$25 to \$50. We were never caught bringing a car in by the police.

"We used to go down there four hours in the morning every day, quit 1 or 2 o'clock in the afternoon, go to a show. Only the three of us went out together, sometimes we'd visit the mob, play cards, talk, sit around. We went to beer joints and cabarets with the girls and to hotels. We went to musical comedies, the Star and Garter, prize fights, and movies.

A PROFESSIONAL CRIMINAL IN A BOY'S REFORMATORY

"I was sentenced to St. Charles April, 1927. First I was in a cottage where there was no drill, just out to work in the field (unassigned cottage). I felt downhearted and lonesome. I didn't like the fellows around me. They were punks—wanted to be toughs. I attended to my work and kept quiet. After two or nearly three months I was moved to C cottage. I didn't meet any kids from Chicago that I knew. I met some kids in C cottage from my neighborhood. They were trying to get close. 'What was I in for? Throwing bricks at aeroplanes.' I didn't like the idea of going to school with the little kids. I wanted to be out in the open all the time. So I told them I was graduated from school. They gave me first work in the field all day, plowing, planting vegetables, corn, etc. Later in C cottage it was the field in the morning and drill in the afternoon.

"I got along well with the cottage father and mother. He was very nice to the boys—so was she. After three months Colonel Whipp himself came up, called me from the field to the cottage and asked me what was wrong. I was quiet and talked to nobody. Was I lonesome?

" 'I never had a visit since I have been out here.'

" 'Do you have people in Chicago?' Colonel Whipp asked me.

" 'Yes, but I don't think they know they have "visits" out here.'

“‘Would you like me to take up the matter? Where do you live? I’ll write to your father and mother.’

Two weeks later on a Sunday I got visitors, mother, two sisters, and my brother. They talked to me for an hour in the visitors’ room. When my mother was ready to leave she wiped a tear with her handkerchief, and promised to come every week to see me. The following week Monte and Gene came out, driving out my mother with them and after that they drove her out every week. We didn’t talk racket because the guard was there and we didn’t talk ‘Dago.’ They’d bring me fruit and cake. Money I didn’t need and couldn’t use. The thieves on the inside would steal it from you; there are thieves on the inside like there are on the outside.

“After they began to come out to see me every week I felt happier and ‘time,’ weeks and months, began to fly.

“The kids, the little punks, were always fussing and fighting. I took care of the little fellows. One day I separated a pair and talked to a cottage father about separating them to separate cottages. They would get along better. Whipp heard about this and came around, called me to the office and made me a sergeant of C cottage. I drilled them. I saw to it their clothes were on right for inspection. Our cottage was always 100% every time inspection came. I received no punishment in the 18 months I was out at St. Charles. The food is good, the vegetables are fresh from the garden, you get regular sleep and I came out looking chunky.

RELEASE—PAROLE

“For six months after my release from St. Charles I reported to a probation officer in the City Hall monthly. That’s the guy got me a job as errand boy. I used to make those white slips out (reports). For four months he used to send me up to the free employment bureaus and they would send me out to jobs, silly jobs—errands, running machines in shops (like a machine for cutting billiard chalks), tying up bundles, in a tailor shop bringing the goods from one machine to another, etc. He would call up the free employment bureau to see if I was there. I found that out very soon and of course I always reported there. Yes, but when I went out to an employer I tried my best not to get the job. I would report back they were going to let me know in a week or so, or there was someone ahead of me.

Finally after about four months of stalling he took me to an employer himself in the loop. On the way I felt like a dime. I was

complaining about stomachaches and other complaints so he would let me go. That day nothing would work. 'Your ma and your sister and your brother all begged me to get you a job. I'm going to get you a job if it's the last thing I ever do.' He took me to four places all together. He pleaded with the employers. I never heard anyone lie so much in one day. He told them I was alone in the world—I had only a sister and must support her. Finally, in the last place the employer was a friend of his. He told him, 'He's a good boy—willing to work, willing to learn the work.' 'All right,' said the boss, 'I'll try him out as errand boy.' The old employer squinted over his glasses at me, 'Good boy, eh?' All right, I got the job as an errand boy. For two months I worked as an errand boy for \$15 a week. I had rolls of goods to carry to his tailor shop. He was a custom tailor. Of course, I did some stealing, just enough to make myself an average of \$40 a week. About a year ago he went bankrupt. I quit after my probation was over, two months later.

"During this probation period I lived at home as always, stole tires again. I had a Chrysler 70 I bought while working. I was out with a few of the old gang, Archie, 'Machine-gun' or 'Two-gun' Pete (now serving five years in St. Louis for a robbery), Gene and Monteo." (The latter two had been his partners in the automobile thieving business.)

DEPRESSION IN THE RACKETS

The Gang in Dissolution

"Upon returning from St. Charles I found that the mob around 'Mary's' was scattered and broken up. Aside from my own close friends I would see the others in two's and three's. What happened to scatter them I don't know. Babe Ruth had been killed by a cop, Jit Pargoni had been killed by a cop, another of his brothers had been killed a while before. The squads from downtown would drop in every two or three days at 'Mary's' and pick up fellows in there.

"The rackets changed. The trucks had two guys on them. The autos—the police found a way to bring out original numbers by using acid. Other numbers hard to find (secret body numbers) were being put on cars by manufacturers. The police could find them through charts furnished them by the company, and therefore it was not so easy to change numbers. The chain stores and later the tire war made tires so cheap you can buy legit tires for less than we sold stolen ones.

"I nosed around among the old fellows I met around the streets for a racket. 'How are conditions?' 'We ain't doin' nothing, but we're going out with the pistol.' I got invitations from ten or twelve different partners of one and two to 'go out' with them. I was broke.

"We did our first stickup in a cigar store. We stayed there a full twenty minutes and in twenty minutes work we three men got \$700 in money and merchandise. We loaded everything in sight that was bulk, cigars, cigarettes, in my '70' coach (Chrysler 70). It was a quiet evening about 8 p. m. One of our fellows took off his cap and waited on one or two customers that came in.

"In 1928-29 I used to go out regularly with the same two fellows once or twice a week. This was on no tips at all; all blind joints—no tipoffs." (These three young men did their own scouting and used their own judgment as to the place and time.)

"In the latter part of 1929 we started getting good tips. The best haul in the ten months I was out was a beer joint; we made \$1100 in money and merchandise in cigars and cigarettes. We made some retail clothing stores for suits and money and would tie the guy up in the back of the store. In the ten months of going to blind jobs I didn't get hurt and I didn't get pinched. We never did less than \$100 an evening. Most of these places were bookie joints that ran cigar stores and had a little gambling in them.

"Working on a tip is more lousy than working blind (it is more dangerous). I would never go out on a tip no more unless it was the right kind (bank messengers or payroll or something big). The tipster may be a stool pigeon, leak, or trap. Tipsters and bad luck come together

"We're not gangsters. We're just hoodlums. I'm a hoodlum and a small one at that. It would be a good thing if we had a gang and had somebody with money to organize us."

(Aside from the many arrests and the 18 months at St. Charles, he has been in jail awaiting trial four times for the following periods: 1 month, 18 days, 2½ months, and 1 month.)

THE GANGSTER IN BUSINESS

The Intimacy and Brotherliness of the Gang

The Flower Store.

"My brothers gave \$1,000 to an Italian by the name of Nectaro for me to start a flower business in with him. The location was an

Laffin street, between Polk at Spruce. This Nectaro really knew the business and had learned it in the old country. We received orders enough and did business, but money was a little hard to collect.

"My main trouble was that the gang would hang around our business. It was very hard to keep them away. Why, they're like brothers. I went to school together with them as little kids. We lived on the racket together, put each other 'on the nut' for even a dime or a quarter when we were broke. We did 'this and that' together. My partner and I would get so sore at them we would drive them out. 'Get out, all of you, and stay out!' But in ten minutes I would be smiling and they'd come in.

"One time they kept away for a whole week. We wondered and then we knew there was something up. We would lock the place up early, about 8 o'clock in the evening, and sit in front outside. One evening the 'phone rang and I had to get up to answer the 'phone. I unlocked the door and went to the 'phone. While I was at the 'phone they all rushed into the back room. One of them called me by 'phone so I had to unlock the door. By the time I got back there they were dealing cards around the table.

Pleasantries and By-play of the Gang.

"My partner and I were coming back from an order one evening. The store was all emptied out! The stock gone—everything quiet! And in the backroom the gang were sitting around a body (corpse) in funeral tuxedo, weeping into their handkerchiefs. All the flowers in the store were decorated around the body. On the flowers were cards marked 'To Our Friend, Chief Russell' (then chief of police).

"On the wall of the back room they had written in large letters, 'Laffin Street Nut University.' All the names of the gang were listed with an academic title after each name."

('In "42" slang an insane person "hasn't got the right time.") "One of them rushes in one day while they were all sitting around and with a straight face asks, 'Has anybody here got the right time?' (Not a smile.) 'You know better—nobody around here got the right time.'

The Flower Shop Is Arsenal

"The boys began to keep their guns there. It was an arsenal back there with 18 sawed-off shotguns, 35 pistols, and a target range in the basement.

"One day the boys had all the guns out in the back room, thought they were going hunting. There all the guns were out on the day-bed, on the chairs, on the table and the boys handling them. A Negro squad comes walking in the store and right through the back door to the back room. Five blacks in uniform—no questions asked. Bo (since stabbed to death—then a driver for the beer boss's private auto) picks up a shotgun and runs 'em out. 'What business, you black thing, have you got walking in here? If you want information go to Johnny or Jimmy.' They went, too, and never came back." (The magic names were: one the beer boss and the other, the liquor and gambling boss, both politicians.)

"The gang would come in and out of the store, lay around on the day bed in the back, pull it out and even go to sleep on it. Even if they were bothered they'd lay there and sleep. The gang would burn their feet with hot cigarettes or hot pennies—just half awake the sleeper would mumble, 'All right for you, I'll do the same when you're asleep.'

"Later when the business was dying we ran craps in the back and 'cut' the game (took a percentage for running the game).

"They would use the 'phone a lot and throw in slugs and pennies, slip a wire into the bell box to make the connection and cheat the box. Our 'phone bills would sometimes run up to \$8 a month, with the flat rate and the calls, and we had to make good.

How Gangsters Spend Their Money.

"You want to know how we spent that \$100 a piece from the last 'jobs' in that town out north? I bought a suit, a dozen socks, cleaning of suits and hats and pressing, and we went to a few shows. Women don't take me for a sucker anymore. They did when I was a punk kid, making a lot of money back in that tire racket. I was sixteen or seventeen then. How do we spend so much money at one time? Why don't we go to the Rainbo or the Edgewater Beach where we can get a dinner and dance all evening for \$5 a piece? We don't feel good in those places; they're not our class. We go to joints, mostly road-houses, beer joints, and hotel rooms. We buy the drinks from them for the women and it costs more (instead of carrying a hip flask).

"We don't take the drinks along because we don't want the police to find it on us. Yes, we carry guns but that's business. Guns? we can always break out the back window and throw them out.

"You know the night all of us were in a Buick, chased by a

squad and we threw two pistols and a shotgun out, ran away and left the car. We came back in four hours, picked up the shotgun but lost one pistol."

(This running from the police has been very dangerous and attended with many fatalities and casualties. We have numerous instances of this situation. Only a few weeks ago Steffanelli, the illustration can be found in our newspaper file, was killed by a policeman on watch at the house of a witness in a famous kidnaping case. Steffanelli was running from the police squad and was in the act of climbing over a fence close to his house which was being watched day and night, the home of Ole Scully, who was killed after testifying in the Ranieri kidnaping case. The proportion of maimed and disabled among those listed in the original "42" gang is considerable. These gangsters run from the police regardless of whether the police have something "on them" at the particular time. They are likely to be picked up and held for many hours until booked, or are likely to be charged with disorderly conduct or held on suspicion for third degree questioning with beatings. From experience they feel they must run when they have no money.)

"We are of another class. When I was a punk kid why was I a sucker with the girls? I didn't know how to talk to a nice girl. I didn't have any way of getting acquainted with nice girls. We picked up with older broads in the racket. Over the 'phone I could call up a number and say, 'Say, broad, we're out to a joint. Come on out here.' Well, we got that kind of broads and took them to that kind of places.

Ties to the Neighborhood and the Gang Boys.

"We moved out to the northwest side." (An area of individual homes, bungalows, and duplexes nine miles west and north of the corner of Polk and Loomis. There is only one other Italian family in the block; the others are Americans of German and Swedish stock.) "Since my mother died a little over a year ago my sister and her family and my two brothers live there. I try to go with people in that neighborhood. They are high school boys and working boys. Pretty soon I drop into my kind of talk and I notice it, if they don't.

"I go out to the old neighborhood even if I have to borrow car-fare, even though it takes me an hour and a half to get back by street car. Sometimes I come around and the street is empty. I look for them at the club, or else at Duke Battaglia's house, or where

his wife and sister lives, or at the delicatessen, or back of the tailor shop, or in 'Al Brown's,' or else I know where they sit at the show, the back five rows in the second aisle.

"Around the neighborhood I can eat and sleep in any house. I can stay when I am hiding from the police. I can get stuff to eat in the delicatessen. When I have 'it' I am good to everybody and his sons, and the little kids.

The Best Man—The Man With the Gun.

"Yes, you hurt people on a stickup. You get shot in a stickup. There are chances and dangers to both sides. What of it? It's all in the game. We're taking chances. We hurt people only when we are attacked. The man with the gun is the best man. You hear some punks say around the corner, 'They'd never get my money away from me.' But even the biggest shots, even real big shots, give up their money if you've got the pistol out. Even if he has a pistol on him he won't take the time to take it out to 'give it to you.' They get stuck up say, 'He had his pistol out. He's the best man. Of course, the next time I'll see him he'll be in the ditch.' But the man with the pistol out is always the best man. I had the gun to my ribs once and I threw up my hands.

"Yes, we have been taking joints of the big shots and other joints. We tried it; they don't know us."

(In dissolution the hoodlums, not in any of the syndicate's arrangements or affiliations, are a menace to the big organized rackets.)

HAZARDS BODILY INJURIES RECEIVED

(Bad Luck)

"When you're 'taking' a place it isn't always smooth running. As I said, there is danger to both sides. Once I was stuck in the forehead with an icepick by a butcher while I was forcing him into the icebox. We already had his money. I ran outside with the pick sticking in my forehead and pulled it out with my own hands. I went to Dr. Rongetti's hospital for two days. He took an ex-ray and he fixed me up all right." (He showed the scar on his right forehead.)

"On another job I was cut with a butcher knife, a long cut to the bone, a 5-inch gash, by a nigger in a can house. I went to Dr. Rongetti and he fixed me up. Here is the scar on the right forearm. Still another time I was stuck with an icepick through the flesh of the right arm in a beer joint (the biceps). Then there is this last

time when my partner and I stuck up a grocery store in the neighborhood. It is really a dope cache. I was unarmed; the other fellow, armed, ran away. I was 'tending store' in front in order to stall the customers and he was working with the man in the back trying to find the dope.

"When they get to fighting I have had to hurt them.

Election Day.

"On election day Vito, Frankie, Bozzi, and Chiochio were busy at the precinct polls. All the others came around. Rocco was an election judge and Frankie was a worker with a badge. They told me that in that ward it was agreed that the votes were to come out 50-50. There would be no trouble that day.

BEGINNINGS IN TRUANCY

"I arrived at Rees school from Dante in 5th grade with a good record at age 11. I first met *Peter* and *Louie* in this room. At Dante I had never bugged. At Rees I didn't like school because I didn't know nobody. Once in a while I would bum from school to run back to the old neighborhood. It was always in the afternoon so I could wait for my old friends, the choir boys, at the gate of Dante school. We would all go down to the choir boys' playroom and play together.

"After I met *Peter* and *Louie* we would bum a few days at a time. Later on it got so we would only go to school once in a while.

Conflicts With the Family.

"My father talked to me and punished me. Later he changed me to Pompeii school where the mother superior first took me and gave me a talking-to. 'If you want to go to this school you had better behave.' I did improve in the Pompeii school in the four or five months I was there.

"When I was at Pompeii I played some with the boys there. But after school I would still run back to Rees to look for *Louie* and *Peter*. By the time I reached Rees school they were gone or maybe they were bugging steady. When I was at Rees we would make appointments at recess time where and when to meet after school.

"On these bugging tours *Louie* and *Peter* first showed me the shirt racket.

"My parents used to be notified by mail that I bummed yesterday. My mother at first tried talking and pleading with me, sometimes with tears in her eyes, 'What got in your head, Rocky? Why don't you go to school?' I don't like that school. I want to go to Dante.

"But she never gave these letters or notices to my father. One day the teacher brought the letter herself. One of the kids pointed out my brother, Albert, to her. She gave him the letter and asked him to give it to my father. He did that night.

"From then on my father arranged to be notified by the teacher or a boy about my absence when he came home after 5 o'clock.

"After a few beatings at different times he got disgusted and let me go. There was nothing said between us; he would frown at me. At the table I would sit as far away from him as I could.

"One day he said, 'You're not going to school; you're just bumming around. Why don't you go to work?' Then I got my work certificate. From then on I bummed all day every day and at home I told them I had a job.

"Every morning I was out at 7:30 and returned at 5:30. On Saturday I brought home ten dollars 'as pay.' When any of them (the family) asked me, I told them I was working 'downtown' or in the 'Board of Trade,' running copy." (This was a sufficiently unknown employment, unknown to the family, so that there was no further questioning.) "Out of my pay my mother gave me twenty-five or fifty cents each week. Each morning she gave me carfare; she was buying my clothes at the time from a house peddler (customer peddler) on time—everything from suits to socks or a tie.

"How my mother found out I was bumming I don't know.

"When she did she began to ask me how I got my money. I tried to lie out of it. 'People tell me you're out in the streets every day in the week.' Let 'em prove it. I tried to stall her. 'Why don't you tell the truth; say that you got layed off? If father finds out he'll kill you. Where do you get your money?'

"When I found out I couldn't convince her I told her I go out stealing. She cried and said, 'Don't do that, Rocky. You'll go to jail and never come out no more.'

"It always hurt me to see her sad and downhearted. I couldn't change. I met those fellows every morning. When I said I was going to look for a job, they'd laugh at me."

(At the moment of the writing of this portion of the life history Rocco was hopeful of getting the financial support of his family

to the extent of his board and room, and I had promised to enroll him for instruction in tool making at the Milwaukee Vocational School where I could secure individual attention and instruction for him.)

"The same Pete laughs at me today when I tell him I am going to get a job. I'm old enough to know now what it's all about. Petey is all for himself. Nobody likes him. He's got a big car, flashes money; he never asks any of us to go 'out' with him. He goes 'out' with 'big timers' and fellows I don't know. If I went straight he'd say I lost my nerve, I'm a yellow belly. So does Frankie look with sour eyes on my new plans."

(At the thought of Frankie he hurried away to meet P, the precinct committeeman, at 3:45 p. m. at the postoffice where P is employed.)

"I want to do as much for Frankie as I can before I go away to school. He told a friend of mine he knew me. He used to go to school with my brother. We're going to the detective bureau to find out if Frankie is wanted only 'out there' (by suburban police) or here, too. If here too then it's harder. If there only, we will square it up with the guy that is 'fingering him' (identifying witness) and then have him stand for a showup out there. P is a square guy. Look what he's done for us in the two months that we know him. He took Lawrence out of that rap in that town, brought a lawyer with him. We help him on election day. He asks for no money. He is not money hungry.

"When about two and a half years later I suffered my first arrest, my mother cried. My brothers ran around to many people, trying to get me out but they couldn't seem to find where I was. It was my first whole night out.

"I have been in jail and arrested and did time in St. Charles. My sister and my mother and my brother Pete never failed me. They tried to get me out on bonds, square things up with the 'rappers' (prosecuting witness) and they'd bring me 'lumps' (packages of food).

"My mother never did get used to my being in jail. She always cried. She always asked people if they couldn't get me a job but people don't give jobs to fellows that don't want a job.

"Even after I had been arrested many times I would still try to hide my arrests from my mother. If they let one of us out I would have that fellow call up and tell my mother I stayed at his house.

"When my mother was living we always sat down to meals to-

gether especially suppertime, when my father came home. I was the only one ever late. My father would get so mad he'd turn red but my brother would stop him, and my mother would put my plate with my supper in the stove.

"Anyway, under any circumstances, no matter how much my father was against me, no matter how much my family would razz me, I never left home even at the times when I was making enough but I came home and stayed home for my mother. Since she's dead only once in a while I have a meal at my sister's house. I am always away. Before I could share my troubles with somebody.

"My mother was always my friend no matter how much anybody else razzed me. For many years my father always looked cross at me. He never talks to me. He would give the other children spending money or presents but leave me out. But my mother or my two aunts would always notice this and I would get something from them, even more than my sisters and brothers. I always used to take my mother shopping in my machine or calling on her friends in the daytime, or take her for a ride at night. So when she went to shop for meals she would always ask me what I wanted and buy things especially for me.

"My father comes to visit my sister's house where I live. He pets my little brother, Jerry, he talks to him and gives him money; he takes him along with him to go places. He talks to my sisters and brothers—but never to me.

Church Attendance and Neighborhood Social Control.

"My little brother, Jerry, goes to high school and is going to be a good kid—goes to church every morning, gets up at six o'clock, takes after my grandmother. She goes to church every day. He lights a candle for my mother. If he hasn't got the money for it he comes back and gets it after they are up.

"Today was Good Friday. I was in church. Oh no, I didn't stay for three hours. I go because I want the people around to see I show myself in church. I stayed about an hour, lighted a candle for my mother. Then I started to go out. My little brother says, 'Wait—aren't you ashamed to go out?' I had my little nephew start crying. I tell him to cry out loud that he wants to go out and I took him out and went away."

The Present Family Relations.

"I am now living at a sister's house, a bungalow on a street north of the Austin district on the northwest side. That neighbor-

hood is building up very fast. When my sister first bought there they were the only house on their block. Now the block is filling up fast. The people living on the street are German people mostly, some Irish and there is another Italian family on the block. The other Italian family are not close friends of our family.

"My brother-in-law, the head of the house, is an *art teacher*, gives lessons right at the house. He has played in bands and orchestras, even at the Bismarck, and was a movie house musician. Since the music line is slow he hung out a shingle and teaches pupils that are willing to come to the house. They have two children, one 5 and one 3. His father lives with them. He is an old man who lives on the rents of a three-story brick to which he attends as janitor. He is a nice old Italian.

"My brother Pete and my little brother Gerald live here. In this bungalow there are eight people living.

"We have lived with my sister for one year and a week, since the death of my mother. My father and his mother (97) live with his sister (my aunt)—also Albert now 23. Before my mother's death grandmother always lived at our house.

"My father pays Jerry's expenses."

His respect and affection for members of his family is wholesome and constant. We are now considering vocational education. The family at first would not take him seriously. "They thought I was only kidding them. I told them I'll bring him out here. You'll talk to him yourself"—(this was a reference to J. L.).

The plan is to learn tool and dye making in an 18-months' course contemplated to cost around \$1,200 for his personal expenses. The course would be given him free of any charge. He has taken the matter seriously and has inquired about this training. It happens that their neighbor is a former union agent in the tool and dye making trade, a man about 40 who is encouraging Rocco and who has promised to help Rocco join the union.

I am to meet the whole family assembled at Phyllis' house to state the opportunities for Rocco—to explain to them what Rocco wishes to accomplish.

His wholesome respect for his older brothers and sisters is best illustrated by the following incident:

"Only last week my brother Pete called me down to the basement. He was good and sore and he beat me. I took it. I know I can handle Pete but I didn't. It was about a job. 'They're singing the blues around here about your laying around late in the morning

and not going out for a job. You get up in the morning, go out for a job, you hear?' Where will I get a job? You know how things are. 'Well, you get up every day and go out for it.' All right, let them throw me out if they're singing the blues.

"We went upstairs and we asked my sister. My sister said, 'Why should I throw you out? Why, you're my brother. But why don't you try to go out and look for a job? Why don't you turn that head of yours the right way?' I said to her, 'When I have it I'll pay you all the back board.' Then my sister answered, 'I don't want nothing from you as long as you get a job and go to work.'

"My sister and my brother Pete are asking everybody for a job for me."

Within the last year he has lived at his sister's house; he has paid when he had it. "In the last year I gave her \$50 more or less a half dozen times, sometimes \$60 or \$65. One time I paid for the coal \$42.50. Another time I gave her \$50, another \$60. Last week I gave her \$10 out of the north side 'job.'

"At first, the first two or three months, she would not take my money. She didn't want that kind of money. I offered her the money saying I won it gambling or helping out a bootlegger. I know she doesn't believe me. She knows I steal it. My brother-in-law and she both tell me, 'Turn that head. Turn it the right way.'"

On Sunday, April 12th, accompanied by my wife and two guests from downstate, I visited the family of Rocco. We had contemplated this visit for several weeks. Early this Sunday morning he 'phoned me to tell me that his father would be at his sister's house all day. We arrived in the afternoon. We were very affably received first by Pete, Rocco, and the little brother, Jerry, who were engaged in polishing the brother-in-law's Ford standing at the curb.

My wife and I were invited in and met the sister and father first, later the brother-in-law came in from the garden. He was making the garden beds and planting. A little boy ran in from the yard too, to look at us.

Later we gathered around the table in the dining room, the father, Phyllis, Pete, Rocco—Jerry and the brother-in-law came in later. I explained my former work as associate to the director of the Vocational schools in Milwaukee. Further, that these schools have trained many adults who have been semi-skilled or unskilled laborers during all of their youth; that we even trained many ex-service men who have never been anything but unskilled and even casual laborers and who, in addition, were disabled. Provided that

Rocco makes up his mind to go through with the training, his case is no different than theirs.

I have submitted Rocco for physical examination on account of his gunshot wound which is causing him pain but which is not serious, and have discovered that he also has a heart condition. He has chosen the tool makers' trade which is highly skilled, well paid, and not heavy. There are many other trades taught in this school and if this is not the right one they will soon find it out and advise him to change.

Pete was frankly enthusiastic for the arrangement. He backed up his statements by actually offering to contribute five dollars of the \$15 weekly. The father flatly refused to give anything. The brother-in-law is unemployed, trying to eke out a living from giving lessons to children who come to the house. Tony was not present at the conference and was consulted later by Rocco. He refused. I am of the impression that Tony could be approached again and would probably contribute.

At this moment Rocco is in my office and I asked him what he thinks about Tony. "He has to help you anyway as it is. You go around to him for money." "I don't think he'll give anything. As it is I owe him more and more. I'll be owing my life to him." "Do you think I could talk to him?" "Nobody can talk to that guy. He won't listen."

This leaves Rocco hanging in the balance. He comes to see me daily. Yesterday I drove out with him to see Frankie who is in the county jail awaiting a hearing on a motion to vacate the sentence of 1 to 10 years on the pocket snatching case. The police don't seem to be aware of his whereabouts though they hold some warrants. Willie Doody and Leo Brothers are in the same group of cells, using the same bullpen.

Rocco was bound to see Frankie, even though it was not visiting day and I had to enter on special privilege. He said, "I don't want that guy to come out and say I never went to see him."

This week Laurence was operated on for the removal of shotgun slugs which he received while trying to remove a tire. "The man who shot me won't 'finger' me. My brother and brother-in-law know him." I learned from another source that the man who shot Laurence lives at the Adams Hotel on Adams and Laffin. One car has been stolen from him, a set of tires have been stolen and he saw this boy monkeying with his car before he fired. While in the hospital Laurence was under police guard. The boys rustled about and sprung

a writ which released the police and saved Laurence from going to the Bridewell hospital. Yesterday he was tried for tire stealing. Even though the witness did not testify Laurence claims that they used ballistics evidence against him. He was given six months probation.

Last Sunday, the 19th, Rocco and Harry went to an Italian wedding in the neighborhood. Harry didn't stand his drinks very well and started a fight with the wedding guests. Rocco pitched in and helped him and the host called the police. They entered and gave Harry and Rocco a beating with blackjacks. Rocco pitched in with his fists against the police. A short time later Harry and Rocco departed from the wedding and the police were waiting for them with guns drawn at the foot of the stairs. Harry walked right into the arms of the police and is now being held at the Bridewell, bound over to the grand jury. Rocco, by some magic of the moment, walked right by the police officers with their guns drawn. Once on the sidewalk he ran and is on the street.

With all of these misfortunes and casualties, I thought of asking Rocco why the fellows don't look for a better racket than gun stickup. He said, "Well, a fellow can't go out stealing alone. You've got to follow the gang. In this racket you don't have to monkey with tires and get shot from overhead. You go inside; you're safer and you just 'take' the place and out."