

A DIFFERENT SHERIFF

Chap 1: 3rd rr

She puts the uniform on and it makes her smile. She sticks her thumb under the buster brown belt, throwing her chest out slightly. In the full length mirror she is reminded of a dike who everyone talked about at school. No, she thinks, more like Hitler and the brown shirts she sees in the Movietone News at the Rialto.

She moves closer and has a thought. A salute. Yes, why not. People do salute her at times. She tries it and laughs, dropping her hand uncontrollably. Then she puts her left finger under her nose and does a HEIL HITLER with her right hand, but she can't hold it very long for laughing.

She remembers why she wears the uniform. An important meeting at the courthouse at nine this morning about radios for the police cars. Imagine. Talking to people in moving cars. What'll they think of next? Chicago's already got them.

The salesman says the same thing moving the sales literature past her eyes. He starts in on the features and the low cost. An interruption as the door flies open. The balding prosecuting attorney stands there sweating and panting. He has run from the criminal court building a good block away, never buttoning his coat, and it's January. One side hangs down and he looks like he might have a heart attack.

The sheriff wants to know what is going on and he stammers and tries to catch his breath. She catches one word, DILLINGER. He blurts it out again. DILLINGER. The girl at the switchboard hears the name and turns. They've got him and the gang and some girls in Tucson.

The sheriff doesn't believe him, but he gives her details. They were discovered by a fireman who carried their luggage out of a burning hotel. They gave him a twenty dollar bill. Imagine twenty dollars just for carrying some luggage. A couple days later he sees their pictures in a detective magazine and says, hey those were the guys in the hotel. He thinks there's a big reward so he tells the police and they and the Tucson county sheriff's department track them down to new addresses in town and catch them all without a fight. Well hardly a fight. One guy struggles and gets some stitches in his head. And you know what? DILLINGER was the last to get caught. He could have got away just by listening to the radio.

She shakes her head. That's not the DILLINGER she knows. Why just two weeks ago, he and only one partner stuck up the biggest bank in the county up there in East Chicago during the busiest part of the day with more than 50 people doing business' in the bank. And on his way out with \$22,000, he kills a patrolman named O'Malley, makes it to the car with a bunch of cops shooting at him only to get out again when his partner is

hit and pulls him into the car before they speed off to safety.

And what about all the other bank robberies? His bank robberies? Ohio. Illinois. Wisconsin. Twenty, thirty banks, now. The papers are calling him number one and a lot of other things. So, that can't be the same DILLINGER. Unless he was asleep or doped up.

No, he's sure because he just got it by phone from the Tucson prosecuting attorney and they went to school together. But, the man wouldn't take a chance on a heart attack for nothing, would he? And she remembers Mrs. O'Malley at the funeral in her shabby coat, with her two little kids at her side. It was so cold, people weren't hanging around much. When she talked to the poor lady to pay her condolences, she remembered burying her own husband a year ago and because he was killed in the line of duty, they made her sheriff.

But now, the prosecuting attorney is looking heroic and out into the future saying he can't wait to get DILLINGER in his courtroom and just wait until the papers hear about this and their town will be all over the front pages and he'll have to go to Tucson right away and EXTRADITE him.

The sheriff knows what the word means but she never had to do nothing like that since she took over from her dead husband. This is different. There was never anything so important in more than a year of her being sheriff. As a matter of fact, she finds

the job kind of boring and now she's more interested in the EXTRADITION and wants to know why the big hurry.

He thinks there may be three or four states wanting to EXTRADITE DILLINGER. Maybe more. And he explains that the one with the strongest and freshest case like the robbery and murder up there in East Chicago just a couple of weeks ago could win him for their county. But Ohio wants him for escaping from the county jail in Lima when his gang killed the sheriff to get him out, but adds that they'll be more interested in the gang members because their case is stronger against them than against DILLINGER. But the man grows somber and tells the sheriff that it's Wisconsin he's worried about.

She asks why and he tells her that DILLINGER robbed a bank in Racine but no one was killed, but even if someone was killed, the state didn't have a death sentence and if they got him, he could be out on parole in a couple of years. So, you see he wanted to kill Dillinger...not just lock him up for a few years. He must have really hated the guy, or else he thought it could make him famous or rich.

The sheriff winces and adjusts the buster brown belt which has been cutting into her breasts. That's another reason she doesn't like to wear the uniform. Probably the real reason. The word, EXTRADITION, is in her head. It is centered there and she's says it to herself a few times. She likes the sound of it,

specially ~~th~~ ~~is~~ the accent part.

It has high meaning and she wants the prosecuting attorney to go on talking about it.

They will need five or six men. Himself to conduct the legal work, her chief deputy who happens to be her nephew, the chief of police of East Chicago, some damn foreigner who speaks American so bad you can hardly understand him and his chief deputy. Both of these guys were at the bank shooting at DILLINGER when he escaped with the \$22,000, when someone brought down the accomplice with a lucky shot because they were hiding behind cars and buildings and mail boxes and telephone poles or anything they could find so much that they couldn't see to aim at the two fleeing bank robbers. They didn't say that in the papers although they said it was miraculous he got away with so many people shooting at him and that he was in a bullet proof car. But that's the real reason and there were other times when they had him cornered with everybody shooting at him and nobody being lucky enough to get a bullet into him. It's only guys like O'Malley who go right up to guys like DILLINGER, expecting him to listen to him when he says ok friend, it's over, give me your gun, put your hands up and come along quietly, that's a good boy, and he gets it in the head or heart and leaves his wife and kids with nothing.

The sheriff listens and waits for the attorney to say the right thing, which, of course, is that she should come along, too, and which, she knows from being a woman for more than 40

years, that he's not going to say. So she thinks she'll corner him by asking if sheriffs extradite fugitives, to which he responds, yes, of course they do, that's one of their jobs. She's got him, she thinks, and asks the embarrassed attorney if her husband wouldn't be going if he were still alive? He doesn't have to answer because she knows what the answer will be. In fact, she knows all of her questions have the wrong answers and when she insists on going, he reminds her she's a woman and that the trip could be arduous and even dangerous. Her face changes in front of him and doesn't look human and it reminds the attorney of her husband when he had to tend to the deranged farmer out in the county. Bill Page could easily have sent a deputy to take care of the matter, but he went and he went alone. The farmer was old and frail, but a little crazy looking and not responsible for his actions and he could hardly lift the 12 guage shot gun, but he did and killed the sheriff instantly. It was an earlier case of O'Malley and DILLINGER and I don't have to tell you there are a lot of these in literature and in the movies and in real life and there will be a lot more, and maybe even one in this story.

I can't tell you who had the most power in Lake county, the sheriff or the prosecuting attorney. I doubt if either one of them could have told you, but the attorney now thinks it could be advantageous to bring the woman sheriff along. The absence of that officer in Tucson would be strange and noticeable. Why wasn't the sheriff here? It was his county where the bank was robbed and the guard killed, wasn't it?

He should be here taking care of this important county business. There would be too much explaining for the attorney to do without a sheriff here. Oh, yes, well we didn't bring the sheriff along because she's a lady, you understand. But, wouldn't it be better to say this is Marion Page, sheriff of Lake County, Indiana. Her husband was killed in the line of duty, you know. And she's here doing his job in helping to EXTRADITE DILLINGER. Wow! No other EXTRADITION party in Tucson would have such ammunition. Yes, take her, take her, indeed.

He uses her first name and tells her sweetly she may be right. I was a bit hasty and I was thinking it might be dangerous and tiring. But it is your rightful place. Let's summon the commissioners and let them know we're going. You can take care of the travel arrangements, and tell your deputy to get ready. I'll call the governor about the agent's commission.

The Chicago Tribune covered her husband's death pretty good and took pictures of her standing next to an empty jail cell a year ago, so she was surprised when Carla, the switchboard operator, told her there was a reporter on the phone wanting to talk to her, but she knew it would be about DILLINGER.

--We just got the news on the wire. Are you going after him.

--Yes.

--One of our court reporters says Ohio and Wisconsin are also going to EXTRADITE him. What are your chances against them?

--Very good, or we wouldn't be going through all the trouble and great expense.

--How soon do you think you'll go? And can you give me a list of the men?

She tells him tomorrow and gives him the list, but keeps her name out of it and hangs up the receiver. Like the prosecuting attorney, it never entered his mind that she would be going, so he never asked.