

# UNION TERMINAL DETECTIVE STORYS

*By Cinder Sam*

*A somewhat clueless gumshoe wanders from case to case  
“tracking” problems in a manner reminiscent of  
Richard Diamond, Sam Spade & others  
from airwave’s golden age.*

*Here are 50 short stories of historical fiction,  
adventure & mystery for young and old.  
You can’t stop reading just one!*

*Our hero might be following crooks,  
kids, spies or clowns; always on  
an empty gas tank.*

**THE ADVENTURES OF RIP RITEOWHEY**

Enjoy these exploits of a 1940s-60s era gumshoe who could have worked out of Cincinnati Union Terminal, trying to keep its seven railroads (B&O, C&O, L&N, N&W, NYC, PRR, Southern) and city trolley line running on schedule. In these 50 humorous stories you will never guess what mix-up Rip will get into next. Perhaps some stories make more sense than others, but that's how they came to the authors mind. Hope most are worth the read.

Cinder Sam



**DECEMBER DOINGS**

Memo, 21 December 1942

to: Rip Riteowhey  
Office at large, CUT

from: B&O Security, CUT

Received word of possible skullduggery at Winton Place depot. Please investigate.

signed: Chief Fulbright

...

to: B&O Security, Fulbright  
(via telegraph)

Winton Place quiet except for troop train traffic. No suspicious characters during stops. Am watching from empty Rapid Transit station. Have lunch pail; will settle in for awhile.

Rip  
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to: RR (via messenger)

Good. Keep eyes peeled.

Fulbright  
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to: Fulbright, CUT  
(thru telecon with night watchman)

Raining. Possible snow. Thoughtfully brought heavy coat. Extra trains running on schedule. N&W and PRR traffic heavy. One B&O hotbox set out near P&G. Leaving RT station for shut-eye in car.

Rip

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to: RR (via messenger)

from: Fulbright

Your retainer covers 24 hour service. Get back to work!

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to: CUT Security  
(via telegraph)

Mr Fulbright; don't worry, stay happy. Clear morning. No traffic. Went down to W.P. to check situation. All signals showing red aspect. Seems a sleigh got across rails and runners shorted a few circuits. Owner couldn't explain how he got there. Says that he flew! But, no wings or propeller. Strange, he is wearing a red outfit rather than grey suit. Also has some suspicious LCL cargo. Will check further and advise. RR

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to: RR (note sent with B&O police)

from: Fulbright

See what happens when you sleep on job. Am dispatching B&O Railroad Police to apprehend subject. Hold him!

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to: Fulbright, B&O Security, CUT  
(left at Newsstand mailbox)

Too late for police. I sent them back to Union Terminal. Sleigh removed from tracks and put on speeder trailer. Fairmont motor car and trailer now heading North with individual who says he also has a timetable and is ticketed for a December 24th night trip. Before departure he handed out a bag of brightly colored packages. None seemed dangerous. (Mine contained a "RR" coffee cup; with hot coffee.) Both tracks busy again.

Packages dispersed to depot staff and waiting troop train. Case closed. I am heading back to office for rest.

signed: Rip Riteowhey

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## **THE CASE OF THE WHEELLESS TANK CAR**

It was a dark and stormy night in the fall of '43. Rip was relaxed in his Morris chair, holding a foaming mug of Hudepohl and listening to the Green Hornet on his Crosley radio. He was content!

Life had been hectic these last few weeks with all the war traffic passing through the Queen City on its seven railroads. Troop trains didn't bother him so much; it was all the priority freight merchandise seemingly going west, then back east again to the seaports. Whenever a track block was clear, someone slipped in a routine consist of coal or something. Rip was particularly weary of the tank car oil pipeline begun when U-boats were having a hey-day sinking that commodity sent by ship. He was forever being called out to check for sabotage; then finding just overworked equipment.

The telephone rang to interrupt his solitude. Sgt. O'Malley of the C&O (of Indiana) security police was on the line.

It seems that an oil tank car, in a drag bound for Cheviot, had been discovered wheelless, by the station agent, as the train passed through Shandon. He had flagged down the train crew who then managed to slide the car onto a siding, without the sparks starting a fire. The caboose brakeman had not seen anything due to the gloomy weather. The crew then proceeded into the yards where C&O security police were notified. O'Malley told Rip to "get your lazy bones out of the chair, put on a rain slicker and go see how this could happen".

Luckily his decrepit Hupmobile started in the damp weather. Rip headed out from his office, an unused room in the basement of CUT, north on Colerain Avenue towards the Miami River. He had considered using Queen City Avenue, but figured that route following the C&O "high-line" would take too long.

Sure enough, there it sat; a tank car missing its wheels. Rip could see the scrape marks on the rails and ties of the track leading uphill towards Okeana. Driving the short distance there, he found marks still visible where the tracks crossed the road. Then, pulling up the short rise to the

Okeana depot he stopped, opened the trunk and pulled out his trusty Dietz Track Walkers lantern. Three matches later Rip was inspecting the ground as he headed quickly towards Indiana.

Crossing the high wood trestle, a mile north of the Okeana depot, Rip spotted significant gouges in the decking, then, no more scrape marks. Carefully he clambered down to the little creek below. There he found the four wheel/axle assemblies; only two had journal bearing failures. Apparently they had failed at the same time, skewed in the truck frame and fallen out. The remaining good axles probably hit the broken ones and popped out too; all going over the side of the trestle. Only the large safety knuckles on the couplers had kept the tank car from derailing. Rip looked at the broken axle stub ends and saw they had been partially ground down and overheated. Rubbing his finger on one bearing surface, it felt gritty. H-mmm, back to Shandon.

Rip was correct in his thinking. There was sand in one journal of each truck. Hotbox! Sabotage! How did it get there? When? Where? He had the agent telegraph the dispatcher regarding the train's movements. The "delayer" replied that there had been "no stops since Richmond", where a long wait had been necessary "to obtain track clearance". There had been ample time for someone in a darkened yard area to slip sand into the journal bearings. But, who?

Rip drove back to the Cheviot shops and found Sgt. O'Malley in the super's office having a discussion about the night's happenings. Rip reported his findings and theories. The Sargent contacted his C&O superiors and security offices of the other local railroads. Reports came back that a small group of spies had been put ashore on U.S. soil with the intent of slowing down the war effort. Two targets were the PRR Horse Shoe curve and the big C&O bridge across the Ohio River. All but one spy had been quickly captured. That one was apparently loose in the neighborhood.

After borrowing some "A" gasoline ration coupons, Rip headed towards Indiana. He had recognized the sand found in the journals as a type peculiar to iron foundry mold mixes. With daylight's dawning the weather cleared a little and a team searched C&O's Richmond yards for possible clues. By noon, an empty pail marked "GHR" had been found along with a matchbook labeled for Culp's Arcade Cafeteria.

Someone in the team thought that "Arcade" referred to a place in downtown Dayton, Ohio. No one could figure what GHR stood for. Well, Rip had a buddy in Dayton who was a B&O shanty crossing

watchman on Monument Avenue. The last coupon disappeared into his gas tank at Eaton, as he headed back into Ohio.

Reaching Dayton, Rip found the B&O crossing shanty, next to a Delco plant, without a problem; but his buddy, Doug, wasn't to come on duty until 3rd trick. So, he asked the current watchman the whereabouts of the Arcade. "Third and Main" he was told, with entrances "all around the block". Having been on-the-go now for nearly 24 hours, Rip decided to get a quick bite. Culp's Cafeteria was busy serving a Swing Shift crowd, but the line was short and the corned beef and cabbage good. So was the coffee. No spies were visible, nor did Rip even know who or what to look for.

Back at the B&O shanty Doug had come on duty and was busy holding his "stop" sign in the middle of the street, to keep the crossing clear, while a white flagged "extra" went roaring by. In reply to Rip's question about the "GHR" initials, Doug said "it's an iron casting foundry, just across the Mad River bridge on the west side of Keowee Street". Its furnace could be seen from where they were, belching fire and sparks into the night sky.

Rip headed to the foundry and was rudely escorted by the plant guard to the foreman's office. After showing his detective's license, driver's license and several railroad passes he was allowed to sit down. Relating the events of the past 24 hours, Rip then asked whether the company had any new employees, particularly any that spoke a foreign language or had an accent. "As a matter of fact" the foreman said, "there was one hired two weeks ago who spoke good English until excited"; whereupon he was heard to utter "ach du liber". Case closed!

The person in question was turned over to military authorities who quickly spirited him away. Rip called Sgt. O'Malley (reverse charges) and brought the Irishman up to date with the past day's events. "Great, go home and get some rest" he said. Rip did; after borrowing a gasoline coupon.

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## **CASE OF THE HEADLESS BODY**

It was a dark and stormy night in late October. Rip was riding in the cab of a Pennsy H-8 Consolidation northbound on the old CL&N branch out of Cincinnati. He was there to watch over a couple of auto boxcars loaded with new Wright Cyclone radial aircraft engine parts on their way from Sharonville to Wright Field in Dayton. The parts were to supply the

R-3350 engines being overhauled there on the home front. As with many military rail shipments, the movement was being kept quiet, just in case someone might try to slow the war effort.

Rip tried to stay out of the way of the busy firemen bounding about in the small cab. The train had passed through Mason and was heading downgrade toward Hageman Junction where the "tallow pot" would refill the locomotive's tender with water. The engineer slowed for the M&C diamond and deftly brought his steed to a stop directly under the wood tank's spout.

In this pause, quiet except for the air pumps pounding, Rip noticed that a canning factory adjacent to one of the wye's legs was lit up and busy packing produce. Pumpkin pie filling no doubt, thought Rip. Second and third shifts were now common in the food industry, thanks to rationing and all. This thinking made Rip hungry so he grabbed his thermos off the backhead for a drink of java.

With the engine's thirst satisfied, the engineer notched the Johnson bar forward and pulled out on the throttle for a smooth start. A series of whistle toots had recalled the rear brakeman who was now safely on board. Lebanon was the next stop, where a pickup was scheduled.

About a half mile to the north was Mud Creek. There, a small dam created a shallow pool from which a lineside pump drew water to resupply the water tank just used. The PRR's tracks crossed over Mud Creek on a short wood trestle. It became visible in the headlight's beam as the train picked up speed.

Suddenly the engineer grabbed for the whistle cord and big holed the air brake. Rip looked ahead and saw what looked like a body sprawled on the tracks spiked to the trestle. With just a touch of sliding on the wet rails, the engine ground to a halt. Everyone jumped from the cab and ran forward.

Sure enough, it was a body; headless and made of wood. It was a store mannequin wrapped in an mold blanket lying in the middle of the trestle. Cussing whoever pulled such a trick, the crew picked up the mannequin and through it over the bank just as the conductor came running up. Brought up to date, he grumbled about the extra paperwork this would cause him to fill out.

On their way again, Rip mused over who had caused the incident. Seals on the aircraft engine parts boxcars were all intact so it wasn't sabotage

or theft. Oh, well, His job was still secure. The train wound its way through the lowlands along Turtle Creek, crossed State Route 42 with its milk pickup platform and approached the old school house located right before the iron truss bridge over Turtle Creek.

Whoa! There was a person with a large head sitting upright in the middle of the bridge. Another emergency application, but too late. The locomotive smashed into the body and slid to a stop just beyond the bridge. Rip and the crew walked quickly up to the cow catcher. They found another wood mannequin, caught on the stepboards, its head smashed on the coupler. A pumpkin! Then Rip remembered; tonight was Halloween. Warren County pranksters had been busy and somewhere their sides were now splitting with laughter.

Well, I guess we were all young once, thought Rip. The train proceeded north again without further incident.

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## **WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE**

It was a dark and stormy night. Rip Riteowhey was riding the cupola of a LE&W caboose north out of Indianapolis. The slow freight had wound its way past the Indiana State Fairgrounds, through the streets of Noblesville, across the White River and now was north of Cicero. The brakeman across from Rip asked the half asleep RR detective if he had been up this way before.

"Well" Rip replied, "In my younger days, during detective school in the mid 1930s, I rode the old Union Traction line through Carmel and up this way to Tipton. Pioneer seed corn company had offered me enough corn to plant my garden. That was a deal I couldn't pass up. The interurban was past its prime, but still offered quick service and carried express items."

"Labeled Indiana Railroad by that time, a big orange car left the downtown traction terminal on time and quickly exited the city. Although still daylight, the sky was gloomy from the off and on rain that been falling for the last couple of days. Our sparsely filled car moved rapidly through the countryside while still making the usual timetable stops. We paused at the storefront station in Noblesville, then crossed the river and ran up to Cicero, paralleling this track along the highway, a block to the east."



"As we had crossed one of the gravel side roads, I noticed that Bray's Bog was filling from rain runoff and that our trolley car swayed a bit, as though the track base was getting soft. Moving to the highway median through Cicero (it's used for auto parking now) we skipped our stop for lack of passengers."

"Alighting in Tipton, I wished that I had gotten a bowl of chili at the ice cream parlor around the corner in Noblesville. Too late now. I was going to miss supper. Pioneer had delivered my bag of seed to the depot where it now sat under the eaves on a baggage cart. After an hour's wait I could see the headlight of a south bound car. When it stopped, the agent loaded my bag at the big rear door and I climbed aboard the front steps, paying my two cents a mile fare to the conductor."

"We really hightailed it towards Indy. A quick pause in Arcadia, then straight through Cicero again without stopping. I'll bet we were hitting sixty, cutting the blackness like a knife. As we hit the dip to Bray's Bog all I could see in the headlight's glare was water. The highway and tracks were all covered now."

"We hit that temporary lake with a big splash; the water shorting out the motors. As the car came to a halt, the roadbed gave way and we tipped over into the water; sparks flying until the trolley pole left its wire. Then all was still."

"Wow, what happened then?" the brakeman asked. "I drowned" Rip said.

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## **OODLES OF ODORS**

It was a dark and stormy night as I entered my blackened office. There was a sweet smell of perfume in the air. Switching on the single bare light bulb revealed a lovely lady sitting in my one and only chair. She had blonde wet hair, smokey eyes and looked to be about XXXXX years of age. Hot dog; a new case!

It seems that she had lost a small silver beaded purse while riding as a passenger on the Southern Railway. (She called it the "Old Reliable" in error.) The train had been traversing a high trestle over a "park" as she was passing between car vestibules. Suddenly a gust of wind had caught and blown her purse out the top half of an open dutch door. It contained nothing much of real value; just some sentimental things and a .32 pearl

handled pistol. Would I go look for it? Sure. We agreed to my standard rate of \$5 per night and day.

Back out into the rain, I climbed into my trusty Hupmobile and coast started it down one of CUT's unused trolley car ramps. I entered Kentucky over the C&O bridge, turned west toward Ludlow, passed under Southern's Ohio River bridge approach, then went left on Sleepy Hollow Road. Upon reaching the Railroad's high steel trestle, I parked along the road, grabbed my RR lantern, got out and started to look around. Oops; had to go back for my "detective issue" trench coat.

Wandering about, looking in the musty weeds, for several hours was to no avail. Then I spied something white in the overall blackness. Rushing over I grabbed and -- touched a skunk. Phew! At least I was in the open and it was still raining.

Ending my ground level search, I decided to walk the trestle. Wow, what a climb up to the deck! Tiptoeing from tie to tie out towards the middle I wished that I hadn't forgotten my RR timetable Guide. It was still in the car's glove box. Sure enough, here came another passenger train. I saved myself by crouching down on a fire water barrel platform. Only one problem; someone flushed a coach toilet as it passed by. Oh well, it offset the skunk smell.

After the train passed, the sky began to get lighter. Then I saw the lady's purse caught on an upper beam of the trestle. Had to climb down to my car, get my trusty fishing pole, then back up again. With its hook and line I managed to retrieve the purse intact.

Back at CUT I mailed the purse to its rightful owner, along with a bill for a night's work. At least the fee would pay for a meal at White Castle; but I'd have to sit by myself.

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## **HOT TIME IN THE OLD TOWN**

On a clear and sunny day Rip was in the cab of a B&O local freight. The train had been eastbound for several hours and had passed through Maderia, Loveland and Blanchester. Now, at Midland City, they picked up a loaded boxcar with an "Explosives" placard displayed. This car was to be taken to Wilmington and interchanged to the PRR's Panhandle Division. They, in turn, would take it through Clarksburg to Morrow tomorrow and drop it off at the Peters Powder Factory in Kings Mills. Rip's task was to guard that car of explosives until the Pennsy handoff.

As they left the mainline that went on to Washington DC, Rip thought "what an easy job this trip". The train rambled along the mostly level track at 20 mph and Rip surveyed the agricultural countryside as it rolled by. Pretty dry for this time of year he noticed. The hay fields looked shriveled up and the wheat stubble was sans any green weeds. Well, the engine's tallowpot was doing a good job firing; little smoke and no sparks as the consolidation easily handled the 18 car consist.

They were nearing the wooden trestle over Cowan Creek when the crew noticed the odor of more than sulphur from the soft coal smoke. Looking ahead they could see a gray smudge on the horizon. After passing thru Echo, a grass fire became visible along highway Route 68. The fire's short, but hot, flames had burned up to the railroad's wood trestle and now it was beginning to kindle. No problem, the train soon would be in Wilmington, where a section gang could be sent out to douse the fire and fix any bridge damage. A telegraph message to Midland City would dispatch their crew too.

Bang! The train lurched to an abrupt stop right on the trestle. A brake line air hose had let go. Well, spare hoses were in the cabin car, along with the necessary tools to replace same. But, where was the ruptured hose? Turns out that it was on the back end of the explosives laden boxcar and that car was on the smoking trestle. This was now Rip's responsibility.

So, it was out over the tender coal pile, then up a ladder to the roofwalk on top the first car. Rip disliked roof walking; it made him dizzy. But, he had to do it now. Two jumps between cars and he reached the bad order car. Once there, he climbed down the back end, closed the air line stopcock and yanked on the cut lever. He gave a highball to the engineer and they quickly pulled out of danger's way.

Oh, oh, three cars were still on the trestle; one flat with a canvas covered military load and two oil tank cars. Rip had to walk back onto the bridge and bleed off the airbrakes, so that the rear of the train could be moved out of harm's way. At least the three had walkways.

Coughing from the now thick smoke, Rip did what was needed and he ended up on the far side of the creek. There he met the rear brakie with a replacement hose. After hurriedly discussing the situation, the two quickly dumped reservoir air from the remaining cars. Then, what do you know? A slight downgrade caused the string of freight cars to coast onto, then off, the still smoking trestle.

Since the engine had pulled a good distance ahead, Rip and the brakie used hand brakes to bring the cars to a halt before smacking into the head end. After quick repairs, the train continued on into Wilmington and a dropoff to the Pennsy. It turned out that the grass fire just wasn't hot enough to burn the creosote soaked trestle timbers. Next day, it was business as usual.

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## **A LITTLE LATE ON THE LITTLE MIAMI**

It was a dark and stormy night. Rip was riding back to Cincinnati after his recent job of saving a B&O explosives shipment. He had dead headed in a cabin car down to Morrow, where he caught a passenger local on the old Little Miami branch of the PRR. Rip had settled down in a comfortable seat on one of the line's well known P85 coaches and was ready for some shuteye. Soon they would pass the M&C cutoff to Middletown, then thru the narrows at Kings Mills and later parallel the N&W at Rendcomb Junction.

Bang, bang! Two torpedoes exploded. Rip could feel the car's brakes take hold as the train swerved to the right on to M&C tracks. That's not our route he thought. They came to a halt with the train's locomotive on an iron truss bridge over the Little Miami River, the baggage car on the bridge approach followed by the lone coach. The whole train was well clear of the PRR main. "What's going on" Rip yelled to the conductor. A shot was fired!

Rip carefully poked his head out the dutch door and peered ahead in the gloom. A dim lantern light revealed two men at the baggage car door. One jumped inside as the door opened. Shortly, he exited with a large package and then the two men ran down along the bridge abutment. Rip dropped to the ground and cautiously walked forward. He had his weapon of choice - a new railroad spike - that he carried in a knife sheath on his belt. The solid weight of it gave the detective courage aplenty. Rip disliked guns. They could hurt someone; maybe him.

Upon reaching the baggage car, Rip found the agent all tied up. Freeing the man, Rip was told that the pair were robbers who had shot the lock off the car door. They had stolen a shipment of war ration coupons and tokens consigned to the OPA office in Norwood.

As the conductor came up to confer with the baggage agent and engineer, Rip followed a path to the bridge where he slid down the embankment. There, he found a hastily untied rope. The crooks had escaped by boat;

down stream most likely. What to do? Well it was summer, the water shouldn't be too deep, so in he went. Rip could sorta swim, but he mostly floated and dog paddled.

Sometimes his feet hit bottom and sometimes he partially crawled over partly submerged sandbars. Rip sure wasn't having any fun. After a short time, he could hear men's voices. There they were, their boat sitting on a sandbar in the middle of the river. Rip could hear the robbers clearly now, talking about where and when "Jack" was to pick them up. Apparently it was near the Peters factory, where nearby hills close in on the river. A road there would allow them a quick getaway.

About this time, sirens could be heard in the distance; they seemed to be coming from all directions. One thing that no one had known about was a new device installed in the locomotive now sitting on the bridge: Train Phone. It was a newer K4 engine, recently modified, that just happened to be assigned to this passenger local. Using the Train Phone like a two-way radio, the engineer had called the dispatcher and reported the holdup. Police were on the way.

Jack was quickly discovered, questioned and arrested. He told the authorities where his two accomplices were to be found. Rip had to do nothing but watch their arrest, spend half an hour explaining who he was, and then try to dry off. Back on the PRR local Rip noticed that his trusty spike was missing; he would have to buy another one.

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## **TOPLESS**

Telegram: 31 March 1944

to: Rip Riteowhey  
Office at large, CUT

from: PRR Public Relations, CUT

QUICK GRAB NEXT HOP TO XENIA STOP POSSIBLE  
SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY TAKING PLACE NEAR PRR MAINLINE  
BRIDGE OVER DETROIT STREET STOP LAST WEEK TRUCK  
LOAD JEEPS BOUND WILMINGTON GLIDER BASE HAD TOPS  
DECAPITATED STOP YESTERDAY LOAD OF HAY FOR ARMY  
HORSES AT FAIRGROUND DUMPED STOP INVESTIGATE STOP

signed: Black N. White, Senior Insurance Agent

to: PRR PR CUT for B.N.W  
(via RR telegraph, Xenia)

Did you know Xenia means "hospitality" in Greek? Anyhow, it's as you say. Truck loads are being dumped regularly, but one layer always left on vehicle. Strange, only truck-trailer rigs affected. Dark now. Need daylight to better assess situation. Got supper in Railroad Cafe. Will catch 40 winks here in express office. Rip R.

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to: Rip R.  
(via RR telegraph, Xenia)

Wake up! Need this cleaned up at once. Government staff bugging this PRR office and threaten to go higher up the ladder to get results. Hurry!

White

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to: PRR PR CUT for B&W  
(via RR telegraph, Xenia)

New day. I can see clearly now. Problem is with street design and signage on bridge. PRR involved only because they own bridge. Put your checkbook away. Letter to follow. Case closed.

RR

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Letter 1 April 1944

to: PRR PR at CUT for Black N. White

The answer to our mystery is simple. The road dips down from both directions to pass under bridge. This is to facilitate drainage into Shawnee Creek that flows under the road at your bridge site. Xenia's posted warning signs show clearance directly under bridge and trucks with long trailers think they have adequate room. But while their trailer wheels are still on a down slope, the cab's wheels are going up slope on the opposite side. The net effect is that the rig's load is actually rising directly under the bridge. Thus, many loads contact the underside edge of the bridge; to get sheared off and land in the street. Local railroad employees say that sometimes air is let out of a truck's tires, to gain a little wiggle room, so that they can then back out after getting wedged under the bridge. My bill is attached for your prompt attention.

signed: Rip Riteowhey

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## **RADIO FLYER**

Rip liked baseball. A lot! He was pitcher for a local sandlot team and, although he didn't score much, they usually won when he was throwing. Rip also liked radio, at least the programs about private eyes such as Sam Spade or Richard Diamond. What he didn't like was new fangled gadgets. When offered a "portable" radio to carry around the CUT grounds he initially declined. That brick shaped object with its peanut sized vacuum tubes and two drycell batteries weighed so much that Rip would need suspenders to keep his trousers from falling down.

Then Rip talked to a baseball buddy that was a ham radio operator. "You ought to try it out" he said. "Ham radio has been a great help to the railroads in the 1920s and 30s. We have provided emergency communications many times, when the wires were down due to storms." OK, thought Rip. I'll try carrying one around for a week. CUT management was surprised, but pleased at this.

Suspenders worked out great. Rip could let his belt out a notch and he soon forgot about the radio's extra weight. Wartime traffic through Cincinnati was extremely heavy this summer, both on the rails and by river. Warehouses were at capacity and hummed with the activity of shipping out locally manufactured goods. Rip was kept busy patrolling the yard area around CUT in addition to keeping an eye on tracks closer to the riverfront. Quite often this job was carried out "on a dark and stormy night".

Midweek was an exception. It was a warm and clear evening with stars, but no moon. Rip walked along the slope of the public landing towards a series of warehouses near the old L&N bridge. A B&O switcher had just shuttled by with a short string of empty rusty boxcars. Whoa! He thought there was a shadow inside the open doorway of the last car. Moving rapidly (for Rip) he caught the car's ladder and step. As the string approached the loading dock he climbed higher to avoid being pinched to death.

The little 0-6-0 dropped the cars along side the dock and moved off after the brakeman had set a couple of handbrakes. Rip silently watched the open doorway below him. After five minutes or so (it seemed like an hour) the shadow poked its head out and looked around. Seeing nothing

move, a figure emerged and slouched along the dock apparently looking to gain entrance through an unlocked warehouse door.

I wonder what's in this building thought Rip. Must not be anything important since there are no guards around. The figure disappeared as Rip heard a sliding sound. Now we've got an intruder inside the warehouse, said Rip to no one in particular, and I left my trusty spike in my office. Climbing down he jumped silently onto the loading dock. What should he do next? Wait for the person to come out, or enter the darkened building? I'll just wait he thought; it's safer. (Rip always was a wimp!)

Soon, the shadow emerged toting a large object in each hand. Rip could make out that they were Jeep jerry cans. The person was a thief stealing gasoline; ten gallons worth; without ration coupons! I've got to stop him, but how, said Rip to himself. The thief had reached the loading dock ramp now and was heading down and back towards the public landing. Rip remembered seeing an old Ford coupe parked there in the dark.

Then it came to him. Rip grabbed his heavy portable radio out of its holster, wound up, and pitched it right at the robber's back. Bullseye! The shock caused said robber to drop both cans and fall flat on his face. Rip ran up and snapped loaner handcuffs around the person's wrists. Another successful open and shut case. Stooping to pick up his radio, Rip found that the fall from its target to the ground had split open the case and broken the tubes.

Back at home base railroad management refused to issue Rip a replacement radio, suggesting instead that he might pay to have his repaired. I'll remember to take my spike next time he vowed, but I'm keeping the suspenders.

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## **A LITTLE HELP**

Rip arrived early one morning at his CUT office (for Rip 10AM was early). He found a grey suited man, with horn rimmed glasses, sitting in his only chair. "I knocked, without any luck, and found the door open." (Rip's office had no lock.) "You ought to have a secretary" the man said. "I'm an accountant for the local car line and we need someone to ride our streetcars and watch for conductors allowing free rides. A predecessor of the C&LE (the DS&U) had problems of this nature back in ought-one." "I'll take the case", said Rip.



Over the next month Rip rode all the routes in the city. He visited Brighton, Peebles Corner, Mariemont, the Zoo, Coney Island, Price Hill and old Chester Park. Particularly enjoyable was the run up Spring Grove Avenue, past the old C&LE station, to Ivorydale; where he could watch trains passing on the other side of Mill Creek. (He really liked those streamlined Big Four Hudson locomotives.) Rip saw no conductor collection problems to report.

Then one day, while riding a Cincinnati Curved Side car on the Clifton Route, a young lady did talk the conductor into a free ride. She said that she needed a job, had been looking to no avail and was short of cash. Although her looks revealed a stout figure, buck teeth and pince-nez glasses, her sob story so touched Rip that he slipped the conductor her nickel fare.

Then Rip got to thinking (a bad sign anytime) about the secretary suggestion previously made by the accountant. He moved across the aisle and sat down next to the young lady and started to talk. Her name was Mildred Mudlark.....

Next morning Rip's office door was open for business at 9AM prompt. Mildred was sitting in the sole chair drinking java and waiting for customers. (I don't think this case will ever get closed - author's note.)

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## **CASE OF THE BARNEY BIRNEYS**

Rip sure wished that the Cincinnati Street Railway had completed their tracks up the provided access ramps at CUT. He had had to carry his new office chair for two blocks after exiting the streetcar. The chair was really necessary because he had recently hired a secretary to manage his affairs. And Mildred was doing a great job. She was constantly finding tasks for his detective skills, although many produced no income; like finding lost B-4 bags for soldiers visiting the USO Canteen upstairs on the main floor. Or, dragging "lost" kids (that were playing hide-and-seek) from passenger trains so the engineer could try to stay on schedule. (Perhaps we should mention that Rip wasn't drafted because he had a glass eye. Maybe that's why he had hired Mildred. Anyhow, private "eye" was a term that described Rip well.)

Upon entering his office Mildred waived a note paper at him and jumped up from the Morris chair. She had a new case for him to solve; and it paid real money. It seems that the Oakwood Street Railway in Dayton

had just misplaced two old Birney cars that dated back to the Barney and Smith manufacturing days. Could he find them? He'd sure try!

Using his railroad pass (the Hupmobile was out of gas as usual) Rip hopped the next local north. He could have used the B&O, PRR or NYC, but a C&O train left first. His route was "high line" to Richmond, PRR thru Bradford to Piqua then down the B&O to Dayton. Not the shortest way, but Rip got a meal in and 40 winks too.

Once in the Gem City, streetcars quickly took our detective to the Oakwood Street Railway trolley barn on Brown Street. This was adjacent to the DL&C right-of-way, but passenger trains had been dropped with the opening of CUT. Oakwood's chief operating engineer, a nice chap by the name of Sam Spade, told Rip that the lost B&S single truck cars were parked Friday on a stub end siding by the old (burned down) horse barn on Fairground Avenue. On Monday morning they were no longer there. Clues? Some tire tracks where the barn had been. Oh, and the trolley trucks and motors were still there!

Barney Birney bodies, thought Rip. What have I got myself into? He borrowed Sam's auto and bummed an all-day streetcar ticket, good on all city lines, including the newfangled Brill rubber tired electric trolley busses. Rip drove several blocks to the crime site, got out and looked around. He noticed that the tire marks came in one way, paralleled the siding and left by an alley. The departing tire marks were much more pronounced.

Rip proceeded to the Union Station and parked the car. He then took public transportation and rode the various routes all over town. Streetcar passenger loading was from little safety "islands" out in the streets. That's a good idea thought Rip. The Third Street route went way out west of town, almost to the country. Probably an old traction line. There was some new construction, back in a woods, near where the tracks ended. A sign announced "Park View Camp Ground and Cottages". The dirt lane leading from the highway to the site displayed some heavy tire marks. Rip wondered where they were getting the building materials during wartime shortages.

Back in town, Rip retrieved Sam's auto (which had plenty of gasoline), made a purchase at Blood Brothers' hardware on Wayne then drove back to the Fairground barn location. There he used his new spade to dig up a section of ground. Next, he went back out west Third Street to the camp ground. At the dirt lane he stopped to raise the trunk lid and remove his

sample. This contained an imprint of the crime scene tire marks, which Rip compared to those made in the dirt lane. They matched!

Rip drove back into the wooded campsite construction area and found two little cottages being made up ready for occupancy. Upon close inspection, he discovered them to be the stolen Barney Birneys. Dodging objects being thrown at him by the site work crew, Rip hurried to the nearest telephone and reported back to the Oakwood Trolley Barn. Sam responded that the little cars had been declared too small and therefore were surplus equipment. He would send Park View a bill rather than prosecute. Rip was thanked and told "Don't forget to return my auto".

Case closed.

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ACTIVITY REPORT  
RITEOWHEY DETECTIVE AGENCY

to: Big Four Railroad  
date: April 1, 1941  
Indiana Subdivision  
Cincinnati Union Terminal

subject: **Water Level Route**

I have been busy since receiving your request and retainer to investigate the disappearance, last Saturday, of several Fairbanks Morse section cars from your line between the Ohio River yards and Valley Junction.

First off, I walked the entire length of this subdivision. (A receipt for resoling my shoes is attached.) Nothing out of the ordinary was discovered. We already knew that two of your speeder storage sheds had had their locks broken on the night the machines disappeared. Since they weighed over 1000lb each, it's not like they blew away or were thrown into a pickup truck. They are also too wide to fit a pickup. My next step was to make inquiries of the local populace.

We both assumed that the dirty deed was done under cover of darkness, so I looked for persons up and about during those hours. Man, I lost a lot of sleep doing that. Several barflies at various watering holes along Route 52 reported seeing nothing suspicious. A number of homes had lights showing in their living quarters and questions were asked there also. Aside from one black eye for interrupting a young couple smooching on their front porch, that was an unfruitful idea.

A crew that you had working a local freight that night had been switching freight cars at warehouses and industries set between your tracks and the riverbank. They were questioned without results.

I even checked in at one hobo jungle, thoughtfully taking along some soup mix. Negative results, other than a shared meal. However, several of the guys suggested that I check river boats that might have passed during the time in question. Now what do river boats and railroads have in common? Just as I was leaving, a late arrival (carrying a couple of chickens) said he remembered hearing some popping sounds during the night in question.

Next morning, Wednesday I think, I checked in with the Harbor Master concerning riverboat traffic late Saturday. He replied that just one towboat had come upriver and that it was tied up near the Island Queen at the Public Landing. Hurrying over there I looked up the boat's skipper. A crusty old salt, he none the less was friendly and answered the questions that I threw at him. The only unusual thing he remembered was the Anderson Ferry making a crossing in the dark. "Almost hit their dang barge" he said. Furthermore, no autos were on board; just a couple of small canvas covered objects. I thanked him and left, more puzzled than ever.

Lunch time produced two Coney Dogs washed down by a cold Hudepohl. Re-energized, I took the trolley up Mount Adams and sat down in Lookout Park. Thinking more clearly, I began to piece things together. Two motor cars stolen. Popping noises in the night. Anderson Ferry's unusual trip to Kentucky with two unknown objects on board. My superb detective instincts kicked into full gear.

That evening I rounded up a few freight house friends from the L&N and the CNO&TP and headed to the large and very secluded woods near the old park adjacent to the Southern's high trestle west of Ludlow, Kentucky. Instructing my buddies what to look for, we went a-searching.

Near midnight there was an awful ruckus in one of the hollows. Everyone rushed over to find a dimly lit area, in the center of which was an operating still. They were making moonshine! The light came from a generator being driven by a two-cycle pop-popping railroad speeder motor. Wood boards, with traces of yellow paint, were feeding the still's fire. We had found the remains of the Big Four section cars.

Trouble was, your Big Four operates in Ohio, Indiana and other states; but not Kentucky. Not much that we could do except retrieve the two

motors and help ourselves to a few brown jugs that had corncob stoppers in place. The jugs were a good night's pay for my railroad helpers, and the motors have been turned over to your repair shop personnel.

Here's what had happened that Saturday night. After breaking into your storage sheds, the speeders were fired up and run down to the Anderson Ferry road. Of course, their insulated wheels did not trip any line signals. Once there, the speeders were set-off, pushed down the hard surface road to the landing and loaded onto the ferry. Canvas tarps concealed them during the Ohio River crossing. On the other side they were placed on trailers and hauled up Sleepy Hollow Road to the woods. After some disassembly, the motors were put to use making light and the wooden super-structures were burned.

Case closed.

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## **THE LITTLE KID**

Rip was on lunch break, sitting at the west end of the CUT train concourse. He enjoyed looking at the many mosaics depicting Cincinnati industry that lined the walls, but was most fond of the two arrival and departure scenes flanking the big map at the end of the concourse. The "arrival" showed a Big-4 Hudson coming at you while "departure" was an open end observation car going away.

On bright sunny days Rip was also known to go outside and sit on a concrete bench by the stair-stepped fountain. The sound of the moving water and the view of blooming flowers all around made one forget the troubles of WW-2.

Just as he was about to get out of his aluminum and red leather art deco chair, a little kid came up and said "Hi mister". Mildred (Rip's secretary) had the boy by the hand and told Rip to watch the child while she ran errands and got lunch. It seems that Mildred had agreed to keep the boy occupied so his mother could visit with her departing soldier, who was leaving on a troop train from one of the many loading platforms under the concourse. "OK" said Rip; and to the boy "What's your name son?"

"Bobby, and I'm five years old" came the reply. "You hungry?" asked Rip. Told to the affirmative, Rip took the youngster's hand and headed for the food court in the rotunda. Two hot dogs (one for Rip) and an orange pop later everyone was content.

Now what to do? "Say Bobby, have you ever seen a steam engine?" "Sure" he said. "I've got a Lionel at home that we put up around the Christmas tree." "Well, I mean a real live steam locomotive" said Rip. "Come on, let's take a walk."

Rip led Bobby to the elevators and down into the Lower Level (basement). They exited the building to the rear (under the concourse), where private varnish sometimes parked, turned left and walked up the access road to track level. It wasn't long before one of Union Terminal's 0-6-0 switchers came along to add some headend cars to a passenger consist.

After the coupling had been made, Rip called up to the engineer whom he knew. "Hey, Harvey, got a minute to show an important person around your cab?" Looking right at Bobby, Harvey replied "sure, help him up the steps". Rip did so, and followed.

Bobby's eyes lit up and got as big as saucers. "Wow!" he said. Harvey set the air brakes firmly and lifted Bobby onto his seat box. Then he showed the boy the throttle (Makes the engine go), Johnson bar (Makes us back up) and brake stand (Stops us). Harvey pointed out the water glass, steam gauge and whistle cord; explaining what each was used for. Since the brakeman was watching all that was going on from the ground, Harvey let Bobby pull one "toot" on the whistle.

"We'd better not overstay our welcome" said Rip to no one in particular. "I've got to get this fellow back to his mother." Down the gangway they went, backward of course, and Rip first. They arrived back inside the train concourse just as Bobby's mother exited the ramp walkway up from track #4.

After receiving thanks from "Mom", Rip hurried away before the woman might get upset over the wonderful adventure that her son was joyfully bubbling about. No case today, but a whole lot more fun, thought Rip to himself.

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## **CASE OF THE BIG BANG**

It was a dark and stormy night. Felix Kugler swam ashore from the submarine, landing on Florida's Key Largo in 1933. His U.S. made clothes, spy radio and target list were in a waterproof sack. Next morning, dressed as a fisherman on holiday and carrying a cloth overnight bag, he walked to the FEC Overseas Railway depot. He bought

a coach ticket north, transferred a couple of times and eventually arrived at the CL&N Court Street station. (This was just before CUT opened and the PRR had yet to consolidate its Cincinnati passenger traffic.)

Over the next few years Felix worked in a pork producing plant and lived in Over-The-Rhine. He blended in well and thoroughly enjoyed the local beers. His spy school taught English became very midwest American in nature. By 1939, as his native country started to take over Europe and U.S. home front effort ramped up, he began to formulate plans to disrupt war material production. You see, he supported his Fatherland because the New Order had stabilized what had been a terrible economic situation.

There were several potential possibilities. 1-Blow up a dam. 2-Blow up a tunnel. 3-Blow up the subway. 4-Blow up a railroad bridge. You see, Felix was a pyrotechnics expert. He could make most anything go "bang". Choice #3 was obviously out. Choice #1 couldn't be applied to river dams. Choice #4 would be difficult because of the massive nature of Ohio River structures. Choice #2 was good, but Ohio had no tunnels in the area. A short one in Covington wasn't worth the effort. Finally he settled on the twin Grant bores located south of the L&N De Coursey yards. They were way out in the country where he could do his dirty work without being seen (and he could do two at one time).

It was late 1941 when he checked in by shortwave radio and received an OK to proceed with his plan. Collecting needed materials without causing suspicions, and assembling a control device, took another year. By late 1942 Felix was ready. On a Friday evening he borrowed a pickup truck at work for a weekend "move".

Saturday night was dark and stormy. Perfect!

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Rip Riteowhey was fairly new to his job as a railway detective. He worked on a contract basis out of a small unused room on the lower level of CUT. While on-call to any of the seven local railroads at any time, the person he reported to was the head of B&O Security, Fulbright. Rip could also be asked to assist any of the private industry roads (such as P&G) or trolley lines (CSR) on an informal cooperative arrangement through B&O Security. This kept our "gumshoe" pretty busy. He liked that name because it was a common term used on many of his favorite radio mystery programs.

Rip had developed quite a cadre of fellow railroad workers with whom he shared much of his off-duty time railfanning and train riding on his

special unlimited employee pass. By listening to their scuttlebutt or posing specific questions he had gained information leading to casework solutions. As a matter of fact most of his cases were solved by others, or by accident. None the less, B&O Security was happy with the results. CUT's location was ideal for Rip to pop over to the Over-the Rhine district after work for a wienerwurst and beer.

Because all the railroads together represented one of the larger employers in the Queen City, Rip could always find a buddy to sup with. Several of them had pointed out a sausage maker, not too long removed from the "old country", who avoided conversations that bespoke poorly of the current European situation. Rip had a friend check immigration on one of his visits to Government Square and could not match up the fellow's name, Felix Kugler, with any visa records. Maybe, I should keep an eye on him he thought.

It just so happened that Rip heard of Felix's "move" on that friday night. So as not to loose track of the subject, Rip drove his "new" auto (a well used Hupmobile) to that person's neighbor-hood for a "stakeout". (The later a term he had heard on a recent radio show.) Saturday was lovely and warm; and a complete waste of time for our detective. That evening the weather turned nasty. Maybe I'll get to try out my new trench coat, thought Rip.

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It was midnight when Felix brought out two boxes of explosives from his basement and placed them under a tarp in the back of the pickup. A battery, wires and his control device were wrapped in oilcloth and placed carefully on the front seat. There was even a coil of dynamite fuse, just in case. Dampness made the Dodge flat head engine hard to start, but it finally caught and he headed towards the river, and Kentucky on the other side.

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Rip, glad for the activity, followed Felix at a distance and across the Suspension Bridge. Then he lost him!

Well, assuming that this is a railroad operation, I've got three to choose from here in KY said Rip to himself. The C&O, L&N and Southern. I'll forget the C&O because it runs thru Ohio too. I know that the suspect didn't turn west towards Ludlow, so let's skip the Southern. That leaves the L&N. Bet he's planning something at De Coursey Yard. And away we go!

De Coursey was a dead end. No Dodge pickup, but lots of train activity. Rip found a buddy working night guard duty and asked him to keep an



eye peeled for the suspect. Rip also asked if there was any nearby railroad property or equipment whose inability to use would cause serious problems. "Sure, the yard turntable and those two Grant tunnels south of here a couple of miles" was the reply. "However, the turntable is well lighted and I check it regularly." "Well, I'd better have look at the tunnels then", said Rip.

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Unfamiliar with the territory, Felix almost missed his double turn; left on Whites Road then right on crooked and steep Lambs Ferry Road. He found the tunnels a mile later, at the bottom of the hill, and parked his auto at the entrance to a long farmer's lane. I must put my stuff into place between train activity and then bring down the roof while one is passing through, Felix said to himself.

The tunnel bores were too high so Felix buried several charges in ballast under the rails. These he connected by wires and to his control box. After hiding from a passing train, he repeated the task in the second bore. Now these control boxes were something else. They were modeled after a design by Rube Goldberg that Felix had found in the Enquirer newspaper. A captive mouse or gopher ran inside a wheel, spinning both it and an attached dynamo. This dynamo charged a capacitor which, on reaching maximum voltage, released its energy to connected wires. Untested, but simple enough if the mouse felt like running. A wheel latch prevented premature activation. Felix had fed his power supplies before leaving town and they seemed fit and ready to go.

Another train was coming. Time to activate.

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Rip had to ask for directions once, in spite of his new Rand-McNally railroad map which showed highways on the reverse side. He reached Lambs Ferry Road and drove down the crooked hill to the twin tracks below. These were protected by cross bucks, so Rip stopped before proceeding. Once across, he kept moving around the hill. Although he had seen nothing at the tunnels on his left, he stopped, put on his trench coat and walked back quietly. He could hear a train coming south.

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L&N Extra 487 carried white flags and was pulling 25 boxcars; the first three empty. All others had big warning signs on their sides: DANGER, EXPLOSIVES. It was a munitions train. Both conductor and brakeman were in the trailing cupola watching each side for a hotbox.

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Felix released his first control latch and hurried out of the tunnel. A headlight showed in the second bore before he could enter. Thus the explosives train passed through unscathed. Nothing had happened in the

first tunnel! Retracing his footsteps, Felix bumped into something. Next thing he saw was stars. The railroad spike that Rip had found made a very satisfactory billy club. A mouse scurried away in the dark.

Monday's Enquirer headlines read "RAILROAD DICK FOILS SABOTAGE PLOT. Alert De Coursey guard sends police to Grant Tunnels. Foreign spy arrested before he could blow up train." No glory for Rip Riteowhey. He had just wasted his weekend off. Anyway, case closed.

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## **HOLD THEM HOPPERS**

In his younger days, the mid 1930s, Rip Riteowhey lived in the Cumminsville-Northside area of Cincinnati. His means of local transportation was the Street Railway system and, to a limited extent, the C&LE interurban to the north. On trips to Mt. Healthy or North College Hill he had his choice. Of course he could walk to Winton Place and grab a train downtown, but this was more expensive and offered fewer connections.

Now the C&LE handled quite a bit of freight business. In addition to traffic to Dayton and beyond, there were local pickups and deliveries on the old Cincinnati NorthWestern Railroad tracks. These separated at College Hill, ran west about a mile then turned north and paralleled the mainline to dead end at Compton Road.

Originally the CNW was built as a narrow gauge steam commuter hauler that handed off passengers to the CH&D at its Cumminsville junction. That line then delivered them to its downtown Baymiller Street station. Only six miles in total length, the CNW had changed to standard gauge to enable a limited interchange of freight; but it later died when the city streetcar system was put into service and took away most of its passengers with direct downtown service.

Beginning in 1900, a series of traction companies acquired the CNW, put up overhead wires and branched off (as noted above) to northern connections. But passengers alone provided little profit. Only after the C&LE was formed in 1930 was freight again made important. Several trips, up and down the hill, became necessary each day to keep up with the local freight business. Rip would often spend school afternoons observing all this activity near the Cumminsville junction. From there he could also look across Mill Creek and see trains going through Winton Place.

Observing all this railroad action, Rip mused about his future course in life. Should he get a job working on the railroad, become a business man, do service (repair) work or teach school? Rate of pay wasn't too important to a young man with no obligations.

One day he was watching a small B&O Consolidation pulling a short mixed freight drag south over the C&LE diamond. The wheel clatter and bang was music to his ears. Looking westward, where a wood trestle had been filled in years before, he spotted a big freight motor coming downhill behind three empty hopper cars. (Three car trains were the maximum length allowed by the College Hill governing body.)

All of a sudden Rip saw the hoppers break free and start to coast down in the direction of Mill Creek. Somehow, the air brakes failed to slow or stop the cars. Maybe someone had closed an air line angle cock, or perhaps the train line had never been pumped up and the brake reservoirs were empty. In either case, the hoppers started to pick up speed.

Rip could sense an accident about to happen when those hoppers met the crossing train. Running toward Spring Grove Cemetery, along the interchange track which ran parallel to the B&O, he could see that the connecting switch was lined straight thru to the crossing.

Upon reaching the switch stand, Rip found it without a lock. (Guess the interurban couldn't even afford locks!) He raised the swing arm and turned the switch points toward the siding. Just then the runaway hoppers reached the turnout, diverted from the main and started to swing around the curve. While not a sharp turn, it was designed for switching speeds, not the 30 mph at which the hoppers were then moving. So, over they went; tearing up maybe 100 feet of interchange track. No one hurt in the process.

The freight motor arrived, stopping short of the torn up track, and the crew jumped out. They profusely thanked Rip for his quick thinking; while the B&O had missed the whole incident. Next day, traction company management sought to contact Rip with the news that, since he had caused the hopper cars to derail, he should help repair the destroyed interchange siding. It was while doing said work that Rip decided he would pursue a railroad career which had something to do with investigative work.

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## HEAVY METAL

The village of Glendale, north of downtown Cincinnati, is a quaint place, with stately mansions lining the main thoroughfare: a double tracked railroad mainline. Its history goes back two centuries, to the 1800s and the CH&D RR. The depot is a solid, rectangular shaped, brick building. Maybe not as ornate as the wooden Winton Place structure, but ready to service passengers when they arrive or depart by train. Such was Rip Riteowhey's thinking as he passed through, deadheading in a B&O coach to Hamilton.

Rip was out of gas ration coupons and so had to go by train on this trip. He was being sent to one of the larger, more important, war production plants in Hamilton. It was just east of the short stretch where the B&O and PRR share joint parallel tracks. The product being manufactured was Army tanks. The football field size plant had a high center bay which contained a large bridge crane running down the center. It was used to lift turret assemblies into the open tank hulls. Finished tanks could then drive themselves onto railroad flat cars spotted on sidings outside the plant.

Rip left his Pullman car at the train station; a two story affair where B&O's Indiana line diverted west from its Toledo Division that continued north. He was not sure what his assignment was, but figured he would soon find out. So, putting up his trench coat collar to keep out a chill wind, he trudged a few blocks over to the plant.

The walk took him past the Pennsy freight house that was east of where the two railroad lines came together. Rip had been told that a busy canal operated through here a century before. It was filled in to allow laying the railroad track through a congested area.

He was greeted at the headquarters entrance by the plant manager, then ushered into a small conference room. "Glad to see you, I'm Skip", said the manager. "I'll get right to the point. We have someone who is trying to slow down our shipments. We pride ourselves for good work, but little 'accidents' keep happening. Machines run short of raw material and shut down. Gears in our bridge crane get jammed by a misplaced wrench. And a tank lost its tread climbing onto a railroad car. Can you help us find this person?" Rip said he'd sure try his best. Could he borrow a factory issue set of coveralls?

Rip was introduced all around as the new maintenance man; just hired out of the locomotive shops in Cincinnati. (It was let known that he was

fired for dropping an engine's tender into the turntable pit.) He rented a room in a local boarding house and started work that afternoon.

Jobs requiring little mechanical knowledge were given to Rip. However, they were scattered all around the plant and outside too. He did his best to stay alert for pending mishaps and he met as many employees as possible. No leads at the end of three days on swing shift, so he was moved to the night shift. Now the only thing Rip hated worst than getting up early was going to bed late. Night shift just did not fit his lifestyle.

Next evening Rip was sitting outside on a bench eating supper (breakfast?) out of his canteen, when a fellow worker asked to sit down. Could Rip help him carry and place some planks between railcars so new tanks could be driven across the gap for loading? "Sure", said Rip. Rumley (the fellow's name) carefully selected boards (Rip noticed) that were hardly long enough for the span. Questioned on this fact, Rumley replied "I do this all the time, just help".

Sure enough, a board came loose the first tank over. It dropped to the ground but the tank's tread had already covered the gap, so no real harm done. A jack with some big blocks of wood cured the situation and the loading was soon completed. Rumley blamed the accident on Rip for not assuring that the boards were firmly in place. (Strike one.)

The following evening Rip was called to visit the overhead bridge crane with his tool kit. It took him five minutes to climb up and reach the crane's catwalk. Don't look down he thought. The crane hoist had stopped with the big hook just above floor level, but the traverse mechanism still worked. Rumley was in the operator's cab. Rip put on his leather work gloves and checked the circuit breakers. All OK. He then lay down on the catwalk and poked his head in under the control panel. There was the problem; a wire dangled loose. Rip reached up to reattach the heavy cable. A flash of light illuminated the cab as the wire touched its connection. Only his gloves saved Rip from getting shocked or burned. "Sorry about that", said Rumley "I shoulda returned that lever to the off position. (Strike two.)

That weekend Rip reported little or no progress to the plant manager, Skip. He did mention the two run-ins with Rumley but was unsure of that man's intent.

Starting the new week on first shift made our detective happy. He would now have normal eating and sleeping hours. He toured the large assembly floor more alert than ever. Good thing! Rip jumped to one side,

when he heard a squeak over his head, as a .50cal machine gun came crashing down on the spot he had just vacated. Looking around, Rip saw a figure dart away from a nearby jib crane. A chase ensued. Rip was right on the troublemaker's heels when that one ran smack dab into the bridge crane's big hook, knocking him cold. Looking up Rip got a wave from Rumley. Looking down, he was surprised to see Skip.

On coming to, Skip confessed that he was the tank plant's troublemaker. He disliked war machines and was trying to slow or halt their production. The facilities owners had insisted that an outside person be brought in to look around and find a solution for the mishaps. Rip had done just that, with Rumley's help.

Case closed.

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## **HIGH VOLTAGE**

Rip was told to go to Mason, site of the Voice of America shortwave radio installation. This facility was used by our Government to send propaganda to enemy combatants around the world. Mason also hosted WLW Radio, one of the nations "Clear Channel" 50,000 watt broadcast stations (700 on your dial).

The problem our favorite private eye was to investigate probably wasn't railroad related, but he was the only gumshoe available to send.

Rip hopped a Big-4 freight north and rode the caboose up to Maud, where he jumped off. It was a one mile hike along Tylersville Road to the VOA and another three to town. During his trek he reviewed what had been told to him. A motel's neon sign came on by itself and would not go off. Farmers could hear music through their wire fences. Electric light bulbs glowed all day and all night. Something weird was a-foot.

He passed WLW's Everybody's Farm and decided to stop in for a visit. This place was known for its Saturday half-hour broadcasts of country music and farm related news. Their microphone was built into an ear of corn! (Your author has been there.)

Rip chatted with the caretaker, who showed him around, and said "WLW's bigger and better than ever. The Crosley Corporation, owners, have been given special permission by the FRC to experiment with a ten-fold power boost to 500,000 watts, for a period of six months. That will

punch a big signal through to more radio sets, regardless of weather and static crashes". Rip thanked him and walked on.

A short distance further Rip came to the 700 foot tall guyed WLW tower, inside a high fenced enclosure with occupied guard post. On the other side of the property lay the CL&N (PRR) railroad tracks. (I could'a saved this long walk had I ridden with them. Rip, you're a dummy.) He reached down to pat the rail and, ka-pow!, got a hair raising electric shock. Yep, something is going on.

As our hero brushed his hair back into place, he gazed up at the WLW tower and its supporting guy wires. He noticed that the guys had huge insulators at two different places along their length. Those insulators were probably intended to keep high voltage out of the ground he thought. I'll talk to their engineers about it.

Rip's detective license I.D. was sufficient to gain passage through the fence and admittance to the elevated guard shack. Ugh! He still disliked heights. Once he announced his purpose, WLW personnel readily admitted that their increase in power was likely the source of his problem. But, they needed to continue operation while the FRC reviewed the situation. An answer to the matter was due within the week. "I think we can live with that" said Rip.

Backing down the ladder was easier than going up. A movement caught his eye. At the far side of the property, near a guy wire anchor point, there was a dark shadow slowly creeping along. Rip poked his head back thru the guard shack's trap door and reported what he had seen.

All hell broke loose! Floodlights came on, sirens blared and armed guards ran from a ground level building. The shadow was captured and unmasked. He was sallow skinned and had slanty eyes. A stick of dynamite was found taped to two different guy wire anchors, but fuses had not been inserted yet. Had the culprit been successful in severing the two guy supports, WLW's big tower would have fallen across Tylersville Road. Someone might have been hurt!

Rip, you done good; two cases closed.

=====

## ROCK AND ROLL

memo to: Rip Riteowhey  
from: B&O Security, CUT

Spy activity is low and threat is nil. You've worked hard without much rest. Take the day off and enjoy. See you at midnight tonight.

signed Chief Fulbright

---

(tele\_raph messa\_e to Fulbri\_ht, CUT)

Tryin\_ my hand at Morse usin\_ my strai\_ht key. How am I doin\_?  
Goin\_ to spend day on N&W peavine ridin\_ caboose hop with a buddy.  
Sendin\_ this from N&W Clare Yard/PRR junction, Mariemont.

Rip Ri\_eow ey

---

(telephone message to Mt.Oreb; hold for Rip Riteowhey pickup on local freight)

Your Morse message terrible. Hard to read. Either dots and dashes messed up or you've not used that type of key before. Is it a Vibroplex bug?

Chief Fulbright

---

(tele\_raph messa\_e to Fulbri\_ht, CUT from Sardinia Junction)

I'm rusty, but tryin\_ my best to keep communications open. Lionel key. Next takin\_ branch up to Hillsboro. Hear track is rou\_h and not too \_ood condition. So far caboose ride \_reat fun. Will eat on the \_o. Am I missin\_ a letter now and then?

Rip

---

(telephone message to Hillsboro depot give to deadhead on local freight)



You're skipping all your "G" letters. Code characters are two dashes and a dot. Did you forget them? That track up thru Mowrystown is bad with 10 mph speed restriction. Keep moving. Remember, back at Midnight.

Fulbright

---

(message via speeder back to Sardinia Junction) to Fulbright, CUT

Derailed at grain elevator Mowrystown. Train crew at work getting empty gon back on track. Abrupt stop spilled lunch stew all over caboose stove. Getting hungry. No eatery in this village (nor even a crossroad).

Rip

---

(telegraph message to Fulbright, CUT from Hillsboro depot)

Are you sure on code? Isn't that a "D"? Anyway, heading back your way.

Rip

---

(telephone message to Hillsboro depot; pass to Rip Riteowhey at once!)

Get off train. Take bus back to Cincinnati and catch streetcar downtown. We need you on duty as advised.

Fulbright

---

(note via cattle truck heading to Hillsboro stockyards; give to RR depot agent to forward to Fulbright, CUT)

Off again, on again, gone again.

Rip Riteowhey (Mowrystown)  
(telephone message to Sardinia Jct.)

G#=\$\*@%+\*&.!

Fulbright

=====

## REPETE

With the end of WW-2 Rip's workload began to slow down. Passenger train traffic was heavy bringing the troops home, but military shipments to the seaports was falling off. Rip and Mildred had plenty of time to chat in his little office in the basement of CUT. A folding chair had been added to his packing crate desk and Morris chair furnishings so both had a place to sit. As a matter of fact, Rip found that he really liked his secretary and looks weren't everything. She had a great personality, organized his case load so that he didn't have to be two places at once and there were always White Castle "sliders" to eat when he was hungry. He began to think (as before, a bad sign) about a permanent arrangement.

Rip dug an aluminum Good Luck token (a Union Pacific M10000 tour handout) from his collection of railroad memorabilia and had it fashioned into a ring. A fragment of red glass from a signal light lens was set into the ring as a stone. When it caught the light just right, it really sparkled.

Next day he proposed matrimony to Mildred. Knowing a good thing when offered, she quickly accepted. The knot was soon tied in the Scripps Howard movie theater adjacent to the CUT rotunda. Mildred was dressed in a tailored pastel business suit and Rip wore patched blue jeans and his beige trench coat. A smart looking couple you might say!

Then it was off on a honeymoon trip. Rip chartered a curved side streetcar and the new husband and wife took a ride over every route in the Queen City. They saw Mount Adams, Coney Island, both viaducts, the "Over the Rhine" neighborhood and every one of the seven hills. In the evening, they caught a performance at the Music hall.

The two of them set up housekeeping on North Bend Road, at Winton, in Finney Town. Rip daily rode his bicycle downhill and caught a trolley to work, but the ride back up in the evening was terrible. It wasn't long before the couple became three, by addition of a son. They named him Repete, because he was so much like his father. Around home, this was shortened to just Pete.

As the little boy got older, Rip took him to the best train watching spots in town. And, thanks to his Dad's pass, Repete could go anywhere on railroad property. They got cab rides, took cabooses hops and spent hours in Tower-A at CUT. Once they went to a big department store in Dayton to see a large model train layout sponsored by the B&O Railroad. The only down side was that they saw more and more diesel locomotives. Rip

hated diesels! If it didn't spew cinders, or smell like sulfur and hot valve oil, it wasn't a locomotive.

Repete was growing up with diesels. And any train was better than no train. Mildred saw that her men folk's clothes didn't get so dirty anymore. She had always felt sorry for women who lived along railroad tracks and had to hang their clean clothes out to dry on washdays.

Rip noticed that the labor unions and railroad management were having talks about the need for firemen on non-steam locomotives. He disliked seeing "old hats" being laid off or sent to early retirement. Many of his friends had spent a lifetime of fifty or more years keeping the steel steeds rolling on the hi-iron. Oh well, at least there will always be a caboose at the end of each train, Rip thought.

=====

## **SHIRLEY**

Rip Riteowhey retired from his job as railroad detective shortly after Amtrak took over operations for most passenger rail traffic in the United States. Amtrak's debut was in May 1971, but the B&O/C&O held out for a little longer. When the latter finally joined the fold, and the last trains through CUT ceased, Rip decided to call it quits. Life just wasn't fun anymore.

CUT was shut down and the city put it up for sale; without much thought for saving its art deco magnificence. Luckily, before demolition contractors could be brought in to do their dirty deeds, a local group got the idea of converting the edifice into an indoor shopping mall. "Open-air" type business stalls were built on the roadway of the bus/taxi ramps that passed under the main rotunda floor. Customers were directed to park outside in the huge main lot and walk inside to browse in dry air conditioned comfort. Security guards watched over the merchandise after hours when the facility was closed to the public.

Unfortunately, CUT's location just wasn't in the right place to attract retail shoppers. Business was slow, very slow, as the author can attest. But, a story unfolded with results that can be felt to this very day.

One of the night guards was a friend of Rip's. Her name was Shirley. She was middle aged, single and a reliable individual. During a routine patrol one evening, she spotted a couple of men looking for unsecured cash or valuable merchandise to steal. Caught in the act, the men ran and quickly exited to the outside; Shirley hot on their heels. That was a mistake!

(Who was armed, or with what weapons, Rip never found out.) Once outside, the would be robbers jumped Shirley and killed her. The body was dragged back inside the rotunda, past the "To Trains" signs and placed in the elevator that ran from the basement up to Tower-A. The cold corpse was discovered n

All-Points bulletins were issued and the city police went to work. Clues left at the crime scene helped to bring the "perps" to a well deserved justice. Both men were convicted and received sentences of 25 to 30 years. However, the story doesn't end there.

Shirley is still around. On a still evening, present day guards can sometimes feel a chill draft as she drifts around the rotunda's huge floor. On their rounds to other floors the use of Tower-A's elevator is chancy. Sometimes it does not respond to the call button. At other times it stops at floors not selected. Shirley has become the resident ghost of CUT!

=====

## **RIP RIDES AGAIN**

Upon retiring, Rip had time on his hands. Lots of time. He wandered all around Cincinnati; from Longworth Hall to Anderson Ferry, Queens Gate to Ivorydale and Glendale to Sharonville. Train watching was his favorite thing to do, even though it was now freight traffic pulled by diesels. But even the freight trains were few in comparison to the peak WW-2 years. Still, any train was a good train.

Many of the smaller old depots were being torn down; others were saved to become railroad museums, restaurants or a private residence (moved off site). Trolley systems had secumed to busses; the old cars burned for scrap or sold as summer cottages. Sometimes, you just had to visit an amusement park, such as Coney Island or Cedar Point, to find a train that carried passengers.

Since Rip had moved to Finney Town, his preferred route to the city was down Winton Road hill, past the old gothic water reservoir, thru the Gray Road intersection, along side Spring Grove Cemetery, over the abandoned CH&D roadbed and thus to Winton Place. Even this had changed. Tracks were now elevated above Spring Grove Avenue and the busy Mill Creek Expressway construction had claimed parts of the stillborn Cincinnati Subway route.

Rip wished that the old Chester Park were still around. He didn't remember much of its layout, but he knew its location was across the

street from the now empty Cincinnati Car Company buildings. So, research on Chester Park's history became a second pastime.

One big discovery was that the Park at one time had a miniature railroad along with a Merry-Go-Round and other rides. The gauge had been 15 inches and the rolling stock sized 3 inches to the foot or one-quarter scale. That was big enough for an adult to ride inside the cars. Further review seemed to indicate that this miniature railroad had been dismantled and put into storage somewhere. Ah-ha, now a little detective work was needed from the retired master.

Rip questioned a buddy who used to guard the Clifton Road crossing at Winton Place. No luck. He also asked a friend that, in the old days, had assembled curved-side streetcars. Again, no luck. A trip east to old Coney on the Ohio River garnered the same response. RPO clerks and train conductors that worked past the site couldn't help. Rip was baffled (not the first time).

One day he was walking past the Chester Park/Winton Place sites gazing at an "Orange Juice Special" heading north on the N&W tracks. A construction worker from the new car dealership going up there came over to get a better look at the train. Rip and the fellow got to talking about trains, the new car lot and old Chester Park. "You know, they once had a train here", he said. "It's now up at the nursery on Gray Road, in an old barn." Cowabunga! Rip ran to his Kaiser automobile (it had replaced his expired Hupmobile) and took off.

Yep, there it was, all dusty and dirty. The nursery management had decided to save the historic little train, but they didn't know what to do with it now. So, Rip explained his thoughts and ideas to them and together they negotiated an exchange. Next, Rip talked to the Cincinnati Water Utility Department, a friendly CAT D-2 owner, a local rigger-mover and a mini-barn vendor.

Rip leased some ground below the water reservoir where the muzzle loading pistol guys used to shoot during WW-2, before the area built up. The CAT D-2 graded the old dirt lane reasonably level and cut a new zigzag down the hillside to a little plateau. Then, a long and skinny mini-barn was delivered and placed on the plateau.

The big day arrived when the rigger brought in Rip's amusement park train and helped assemble the snap-track panels into a king sized layout. Lastly, the locomotive and cars were rerailed and rolled into the barn for safe keeping.

Over the next few weeks Rip cleaned, repaired, painted and oiled his new treasure. Finally, everything was ship shape and ready to go. Rip climbed into the cab and fired up the engine (gasoline motor; steam loco profile). He eased open the throttle and the automatic clutch slowly moved him out of the barn into the daylight. Rip stopped, threw the switch and reversed up the switchback. Once on the level main, he horsed the Johnson Bar forward and took off, the wind in his face. No cinders, but what the heck. Rip was now a railroad baron and could play engineer to his heart's content. What's more, he was close to home and could walk to his new job.

Beebe and Clegg had their fancy parlor car; Rip had a whole train!

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## **IRON ANNIE**

Rip Riteowhey was on the way from his home in Finneytown to the riding railroad site off Winton Road. A brisk walk in the autumn air was both refreshing and an enticement for the mind to wander a bit. His thoughts strayed back to the one time he investigated a bridge problem in Xenia in the 1940s. After quickly solving the case, he had wandered over to the quaint three-stall roundhouse; where he was offered a cup of hot java and a seat.

The roundhouse crew were sitting around a pot-bellied coal stove and chatting during an afternoon lull in needed task work. Conversations soon progressed to story telling, during which in walked Mack, the track section foreman. He lived just down the mainline in a resided log cabin by the Cincinnati Avenue crossing. Helping himself to a cup, he then sat down. The current subject matter being aired at the time related to cabooses and the difficulty in keeping them warm, even with a couple of brakeman's lanterns helping out the cooking and heating stove.

The section foreman cleared his throat and offered up this story.

A few years back I was holding down a rear brakie position in an old N5 cabin car on the Pennsy. My way freight had been slowly following its route south, from Xenia to Milford on the Little Miami River. Sam, the conductor, was penciling in updates on the switch lists. Our "extra" soon took siding at Roxanna, to clear a superior train, and I went out to handle switch duties and provide protection. Sam came out on the caboose rear platform to watch.

After the two car (mail and coach) passenger steamed by, our way freight re-took the main. As we picked up speed, Sam asked: "Did you see that little used spur going off into the woods?" "Sure did" I replied. "Well, I think there was an old wooden caboose parked there" he said. "What's say we get a car and come back to investigate when our run's over?" "OK", sez I.

Next afternoon we arrived back at the area and found a dirt lane down to the tracks. A previous check of maps indicated that this had once been called Claysville Junction, and was just over the Warren County line. Sure enough, there was a caboose parked on the old team track. The depot, from days of the narrow gauge "Grasshopper", was long gone. We got out to explore.

We walked over the depot's rotting foundation and approached the caboose. Its steps were metal and seemed solid, so we climbed up and tried the door. After a hard shove, it opened on squeaking rusty hinges to reveal a dark and musty, dusty interior. Sam entered first; then uttered a loud exclamation! At the far end of the cabin there appeared to be a creature with upraised arms. We steeled our nerves and ventured forward for a better look. There it was. A caboose stove; sitting on raised cast iron legs and with its round vent pipe partially collapsed. Sam and I both laughed. It had scared the two of us with its ghoulish shape.

"Say," the conductor mused, "it's October. Wouldn't that old stove make a scary sight out along the track?" "Maybe so," I replied. "Let's see how hard the thing is to move." We grunted and groaned and got filthy from the soot, but soon the contraption was outside on the ground. After talking it over, we decided to place our "ghost" (dubbed Annie) in a recess back in the undergrowth, where it was partially hidden. In the daytime it might not be noticed. But, after dark a northbound headlight would illuminate it on the engineer's side.

We left for home, wondering what stories the night train crews would report tomorrow. Little did we know!

After signing in for our peddler freight early next morning, Sam and I wandered over to the roundhouse for coffee. The air was all abuzz.

Seems that a track maintenance crew had finished repairing a broken rail joint, near Corwin, about dusk the day before. They had hightailed towards Xenia, hoping to set off their section car at Spring Valley in order for the fast Cincinnati Limited passenger train to safely pass. Normally a speeder would be running more or less in the dark, with just

kerosene lanterns for light. However, the section gang had selected the PRR's only Fairmont "A" car that had a Ford motor equipped with an electrical system and starter. In addition, it had been modified by adding a headlight removed from one of the town's retired "Dinky" streetcars. This speeder could actually see where it was going! The light beam revealed the track and roadbed a good half mile ahead.

There was a little breeze that night from a thunder storm passing to the west. All the tree branches were swishing about in a lively manner. When the speeder rounded a slight curve approaching Claysville Junction, the section crew sighted a skeleton dancing around an old caboose. At the same time a flash of lightning lit the sky. The un-nerved speeder operator shoved the throttle wide open to get away from an apparently haunted site as quickly as he could. In their excitement the gang forgot to set off at Spring Valley. No problem. They beat the Cincinnati Limited to Xenia!

=====

## **ROUND AND ROUND**

Rip Riteowhey took the Island Queen  
To Coney; by water not surrounded  
And back again on the trolley car loop  
Where off at Public landing he bounded

T'was a dark and stormy day  
While on this perilous mission  
To solve a murderous plot  
And save a life not his'n

For Coney had moved to Kings Mills  
And round the carousel moving  
Were workmen cutting and hacking  
The horses and sleighs removing

To build a new one bigger, I'm told  
For profit ever larger; yes gold  
So Rip hitched rides North via I-71  
Arriving before the deed was done

To plead his case with much bravado  
For saving those figures so colorful  
To show tomorrow's young what craftsmen  
Of yore had created so wonderful



Tools dropped, events revised at once  
Rip's words heeded, the carousel free  
Lives on today, hauling kids and ponies  
Not unlike your train around the tree

Case closed.

=====

## **BIG MESS - BIG HOOK - NO PROBLEM**

It all started when CUT Security called my secretary about a piece of missing railroad equipment. She paged me in the terminal's rotunda where I was just ordering some sandwiches for lunch. (Hey, I have to keep my strength up!)

Back at my office Mildred said that NYC personnel were all in a huff because they had misplaced their Bucyrus-Erie big hook and couldn't find it. They needed it bad because some cars had jumped the track (derailed that is) north of Valley Junction on the line up to Indianapolis. I got some ration coupons from Mildred and headed for the Hupmobile.

With a little coast down the hill where I had it parked, the car sprang to life. After a pause at the Sinclair service station for some Dino gas, and the usual free checkups, we headed west. Why west? That's where the wreck was. I hadn't the faintest idea where the big wreck crane had gone to.

At the derailment site there was controlled chaos. One of the NYC's big Mikes (a 2-8-2 steam locomotive) was attempting to clear the mess. Only two cars were off; a tanker and a boxcar. Neither seemed damaged, although the boxcar had some liquid seeping from under the door. Upon checking the placard for the car's contents, we found that it contained hard cider. Needless to say, the door seal was quickly broken to see how badly the cargo was damaged. Only one crate was leaking, so it was removed and opened to reveal two cracked jugs and two more still intact. Not wanting the cider to pollute the ground or go to waste, the jugs were passed around and the liquid contents disposed of.

Since the Mike was having success at rerailing the two freight cars, and the section gang would make track repairs after the last jug was emptied, I left the premises. Oh, I asked everyone about the big hook, but to no avail. Tough case!

Did I mention that the Cincinnati area was having a hot summer?

So, I headed on up the line, north west, and got to Batesville; where the car ran out of gas. Not having any more ration coupons, I was stuck. Well the town advertised a nice hotel that served its famous apple pie a-la-mode. I took a room, had supper and put same on the expense account. Next morning I went to the station and used my RR pass to obtain a coach ticket back to Ohio on the James Whitcomb Riley.

As the train passed through Valley Junction I looked out the coach window opposite to the river and noticed some smoke coming from a small stone quarry a short distance away. There was a spur track leading up to the quarry and through its closed gates. I knew that the facility had its own narrow gauge Plymouth powered railroad used to haul product to the crusher; but steam? A pull of the emergency cord stopped the train so I could get off. The conductor was not happy about this; even though I showed him my RR pass and detective's license.

Dodging a local freight extra, I walked over to the stone quarry to search for the source of the steam. The closed gates were also a puzzle since this was a workday. My skeleton key opened the lock and I slipped inside.

The spur track curved around a storage shed and through some tall weeds and ended by the oldest part of the quarry, now filled with water. Guess what? There was the Central's wreck crane with its boom positioned out over the lake. Some local stone workers and a few older kids were using the hook and cable to swing out and somersault into the cool water. Can't say as I could blame them.

I halted the activities and explained my presence. No one got upset. Upon inquiry, the workers explained that the NYC had left the big hook one evening on its way back to the Cincinnati yards. They didn't want its limited travel speed to slow down war traffic after dark. Next day the quarry's Plymouth was used to tow the big rig through the gate and over to the lake. There was enough steam pressure left to turn the cab and lower the boom's cable over the quarry's edge. Then the fun began.

The Central soon sent a different crew out to fetch their machinery, but they really weren't sure where to look. So, it ended up being reported as missing.

To make amends, the quarry staff drove me back to Batesville and gassed up the old Hupmobile. They also pushed the big hook back out on the spur track where it could be seen. I then phoned NYC security, reported my success and gave them the location of their lost big hook.

Case closed.

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## **THE FLYING PIGS CAPER**

Meat was rationed during WW2.

Two pork carcasses were hijacked one night from reefers being iced for shipment adjacent to Spring Grove Avenue stock yards. They were taken to a grass strip airport near Colerain Avenue and Blue Rock Road. There they were loaded into the passenger cockpit of a PT-17 biplane and flown next morning to a pasture field located by an old stone church near Winchester, Kentucky. The meat was kept cool by night air and, later, the much lower temperature at altitude. Pork was then exchanged for nearly 200 proof moonshine. Back in Ohio the alcohol was to be mixed with gasoline to extend the driving range of the crooks two motor vehicles (a Crosley truck and the airplane). The only problems being starts on cold mornings and the exhaust fumes smelling like popcorn.

The first Rip Riteowhey knew of the theft was a telephone call late the next evening. CUT Security (B&O police) were on the other end, asking for help. No one on their third trick wanted to spend a dark and stormy night out at the stockyards hoping to spot the culprit and prevent another heist. So, Rip was elected. "Forget supper" he was told. "You'll be fixed up with cold cheese sandwiches and some Hudepohl". I could do worse, thought Rip.

With his sack meal tucked under his trench coat, our sleuth slopped his way north to the railroad's re-icing facility. Now, the crook was smart enough to not hit the same spot two nights in a row. So Rip's wet night watch was uneventful; and counting ice cubes being shoved into reefer holds was boring. This scenario was repeated thrice more. By now Rip had rigged up an old wood chair with an umbrella to make life more bearable.

Enough's enough said Rip to himself and he went home on Thursday evening for some needed bed rest. Sure as shootin, two more porkers disappeared. Strange, thought Rip, how the crooks seemed to track his whereabouts.

Bright and early Friday morning our hero was up and about; carefully walking around and searching the re-icing facility for clues. He had no idea what he was looking for but hoped something might show up. The only thing spotted was what appeared to be faint wheelbarrow tire marks

in the cinder ballast, probably left by a section gang's work. Rip followed these away from the reefers over to the packed surface of an access road. There, the marks faded out.

By afternoon, Rip's feet hurt and he stopped for a rest at the M.O.W. shops. Jack, the foreman and a good friend sat down and said "Hi". "I see you've been doing track work over by the reefer re-icing facility," commented Rip. "Heck no," replied Jack. "The turntable's bridge had some issues and the whole gang's been sweat'n over there for a week now." "Do tell," said Rip. Now what were those tire marks all about?

Checking marks in the cinders again, Rip saw that there were actually two parallel grooves, spaced about three feet apart. Perhaps made by a push cart he thought, except it would have had hard rubber tires. Hmmm.

Rip rode a streetcar home that evening, up Spring Grove Avenue towards the cemetery and Winton Place. Before crossing Mill Creek they would pass the Crosley plant which was busy cranking out Signal Corps radios. A red traffic light there halted the trolley's forward progress. While stopped, a tiny automobile pulled out from Monmouth Avenue. A badge on its hood proudly displayed the word "Crosley". Rip queried the motorman regarding the vehicle. "Made over in Richmond I hear tell," the man said. "Gets great gas mileage at Ohio's speed limit of 35," he continued. The light turned green, so the motorman advanced the controller and the trolley rapidly moved on.

Back in his seat Rip sat visualizing the little car he had just seen. It had wheelbarrow sized tires and they were spaced about three feet apart. Eureka! The marks he had seen earlier in the day near the crime scene could have been left by that car, or one like it.

Next day Rip got the long distance telephone operator and asked for the Crosley plant in Richmond. His inquiry obtained the information that they had manufactured a few small sedans, rag tops and pickup trucks prior to the war. Basically they were sized for two adults and two children. Power was a two cylinder Wisconsin gasoline engine. Rip thanked the person and hung up.

You know, a truck that size in a dark color would hardly be visible after dark and the slight noise of its lawnmower engine would be drowned by the activity in the freight yard. Now Rip knew what he was looking for.

It took another week of observation (but not from his chair) before the thief struck again. Rip watched as the fellow broke a reefer door seal,

removed a pig carcass and lugged it over to a very small truck. The walk was repeated before the vehicle sped away. Rip hurried out of the yard and thumbed down a passing motorist. (Readers will know that this detective never has ration coupons to allow fueling up his old Hupmobile.) "Follow that truck," Rip told the surprised driver. Away they went; Spring Grove to Colerain to a left on Blue Rock.

Rip got out as they approached an airport and then handed the driver a hand written business card with his compliments. The airport had a short runway, two arch roof hangars and a windsock. Several airplanes could be seen parked on the grass apron. The truck being followed had pulled up and stopped at an open cockpit biplane. Our detective cautiously moved closer in the moonless dark.

As the thief heaved one carcass into the forward cockpit, Rip put his weapon of choice (A railroad spike) against that person's back and said "Stick 'em up." He surrendered without fuss. Before tying the crook's hands, Rip had the man reload the meat into the little truck. Then they proceeded back to the yards and CUT security, Rip driving.

Turns out that one of the ice platform laborers was a cousin and in cahoots with the thief.

Case closed. (I need a Crosley car, mused Rip.)

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## **IN THE CAB**

The detective business had been interesting, at times adventurous, and even thrilling. Pay was adequate when working on a case; not so good when just sitting in the office. All in all Rip Riteowhey had a good life. But---

At nights Rip would often lie in bed awake, and dreaming of his running a living and breathing monster of a steam locomotive on one of the nation's railroad mainlines. He could see himself with one hand on the throttle and with the other yanking on the whistle cord to clear the way ahead. The Johnson Bar would be notched back and the fireman, between heaving shovels full of coal into the fiery furnace, would shout out signal aspects. A symphony of sound coming from the clanging of the tender apron upon the cab floor was only partially drowned by the stacks roar and a pounding of the air pump. A pungent smell of sulfur and hot valve oil mixing with steam put off any hint of hunger. Finally, sleep would come.

Now in retirement Rip was happy to use his pass for riding the few locally available passenger trains and, on nice days, operating his 1/8 scale train layout off Winton Road. Still, on occasions, his mind strayed a bit.

An unexpected telegraph message one day (Rip and several buddies used Morse code to communicate with each other via ham radio) brought an invitation to visit the Pennsylvania Railroad's freight only branch line (ex-CL&N/DL&C) between Cincinnati and Dayton, Ohio. With nothing better to do, Rip agreed. The meet was set for Lebanon, at the old station, after lunch. The latter Rip got at a converted RR depot in Madeira, adjacent to the B&O's single track to Chillicothe and points east.

Refreshed, he arrived to find a short freight switching the grain elevator behind the station close by Turtle Creek. Alas, steam power was long gone from the PRR and the engine doing the chores was a modern EMD model GP-7 diesel electric locomotive. It did smoke a little though, above notch three. Rip was invited to climb the steps and enter the cab. He did so.

The handrails were dirty, the metal deck a little slippery and the doorway narrow, but inside the cab it was roomy and relatively quiet. The controls reminded one more of a jet plane than anything else, except that there was no steering wheel. Rip was offered the extra seat on the fireman's side; the one provided for a brakeman when he was needed. A pleasant conversation ensued.

The engineer proceeded to couple to his drag, then headed south out of town and along Route 42; a one time stage coach route.

He notched out the controller, once they were in the clear, and the lineside poles danced merrily past the cab window. Turtle Creek's truss bridge hove into view and was crossed (it needs some paint thought Rip). They passed an old school building then crossed Route 42 and twin sets of red lights flashing alternately below white crossbucks. Now they seemed to be in a wooded area, miles from civilization.

The engineer got up from his seat and said to Rip "O.K., it's your turn."

He didn't need to be asked twice. Rip took the right-hand seat and placed his hand on the throttle, now in the third notch. The simple controls were briefly explained to him: throttle, brakes, reverse, bell and horn. "You'll not need sanders", the engineer said. They were running with a five pound reduction in air pressure (the brakes were lightly set) to put a little

drag on the engine for smoother operation. Rip noticed that the slightest rise or fall of the tracks required some small adjustment of throttle position in order to hold a uniform track speed. Oh, what fun!

Well, Rip finally was fulfilling his dream to be a locomotive driver. Maybe it wasn't a steamer, but it was a railroad engine none the less. He was amazed to discover the attention that was necessary to maintain smooth operation and how narrow was his field of vision forward. He activated the bell and then blew two longs, a short and a long blast on the horn as they recrossed Route 42 at Hageman Junction. Here they traversed the diamond of the ex-M&C line between Middletown and the Little Miami Railroad. Rip noticed a wye track arrangement and also the remains of an old water supply tower. "It was filled from a pond on dammed up Mud Creek", he was told.

Control of the train was returned to the regular engineer after continuing upgrade a mile or so to Dodds. What an experience! Rip could go home happy. Hey, his Kaiser car was still at the Lebanon station. He would have to get off at Mason and walk back five miles to get it. Bummer.

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### **FOR KIDS EYES ONLY**

Rip Riteowhey was a railroad detective many years ago. His job was to catch crooks who tried to rob trains or make them go off the track. Usually the bad guys did their work at night when the darkness made it harder to see them. So, Rip's stories usually took place on "a dark and stormy night".

Our detective didn't make a lot of money, because he got paid only when given a job after something bad had happened. Therefore Rip's office was just a small room, provided free by a local railroad company, located in the basement of a large railroad station. His furniture was a desk, one chair and a telephone. But, Rip was as happy as a pig in mud doing what he liked.

Performing his job on dark and stormy nights was chilly and wet work. So Rip had a detective's standard beige color trench coat to keep him dry and warm. For self protection he carried an iron railroad spike; to conk the bad guys over the head when necessary.

Trains of that period were pulled by steam engines that used both water (to make steam) and coal (to heat the water). They were big, black and sometimes smelled a little like sulfur (a chemical found in coal).

Railroads carried freight in closed box-like cars (to keep stuff dry) or in open top wagon-like cars (for rock or coal). Very large items rode on low flat cars and liquids, like oil or syrup, were carried in tank cars. People rode trains too. They sat in long shiny passenger cars or dark green "Pullman" cars whose seats could be made into beds at night.

Freight trains always had a caboose on the end. This is where the conductor and brakeman rode when traveling out on the mainline. Rip Riteowhey often used his free pass get a cupola seat in the caboose when on a business trip.

Although Rip was given jobs like protecting cars of explosives, or watching for passengers trying to ride without tickets, he most often found trouble and solved crimes by accident. Some stories, often called "capers", were even spooky in nature. More often than not Rip's job ended up getting him wet and or smelly. Such was his life.

One time Rip was given the task of guarding a circus train. The owners were afraid that someone might break open several animal cars and let loose lions, tigers and bears; not to mention monkeys or clowns.

Our detective was asked to ride on the car tops. This was great until the train went through a tunnel and Rip got his face blackened by smoke from the engine. At night he was no better off because the roof boards made a hard bed. When stopped, night was for guard duty, which meant staying awake.

Soon enough Rip spied a body sneaking up to a darkened clown car. He heard the sound of a door sliding open, then muffled footsteps as half a dozen big shoes ran off down the tracks. Rip jumped from the car top onto the shadowy body below and landed with a thud. He had missed! The person turned around and produced a flashlight. It was the camp cook with a midnight snack of candy, cookies and soda pop for the caged critters. By accident, three clowns had escaped.

Rip took after them, stumbling and sliding on the loose ballast rock holding the track in place. Of course the clowns were having even more trouble. Their big shoes tripped over the track crossties. A rope, to keep them from becoming separated, caused them all to fall when one went down. Their loose polka dot uniforms then got caught on the spikes. All in all they were one big tangled mess.



The clowns were caught in no time. Rip then tied their shoelaces together and herded them back to the nearest circus car. The cook was not there, so he pried open the door and shoved the clowns inside. Problem solved.

Until next morning! The ringmaster came running up yelling "Who mixed my clowns with the monkeys?"

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## **GUMSHOE 101**

Rip was working on his license; taking detective classes in night school given at Cincinnati Car Co. The classes were being held in a finished, but undelivered, curved side streetcar.

A simulated passenger car holdup turned real as two men entered and collected wallets and watches. The crooks then made their getaway across the street to Winton Place. There, they boarded a passenger train out of town. Rip and another student quickly followed in a passing streetcar. Being late, few riders were on the car, and the two students talked the motorman into a more rapid pace. Meanwhile, the crook's northbound Big-4 train was stopped by a red signal at the Vine Street crossing. That's when our detectives in training caught up.

They jumped off and boarded the train (to the conductor's disgust; until told of the situation). Rip then walked down the car's aisle to the crook's location (without being recognized) and quickly flipped the "walk-over" seat back; thus effectively trapping them in place. With the conductor's help the bad guys were bound hand and foot and turned over to authorities at the next open station.

Rip received a B+ grade in this course as a result of his actions.

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## **SLIP'N AND SLIDE'N**

One day Rip was called upon to handle an urgent problem on the Procter and Gamble in-house railroad.

Some pranksters had broken into a boxcar loaded with Ivory Snow and then sprinkled this product on rails along and across Spring Grove Ave. A light overnight rain had turned this into foaming soap, thus reducing traction to nearly zero. Company locomotives were unable to move incoming tank cars of raw materials around the plant.

A quick temporary fix was devised by Rip using white sand, from nearby St. Bernard hardware stores, hand applied to the rails from the loco's steps.

Later, Rip found several teenagers, hiding in nearby bushes and watching the fun. He put them to work using a borrowed Fairmont weed spraying machine to wash down tracks with lots of water. The kids were then turned over to the St. Bernard school's truant officer, who explained how Ivory Snow might be used the next time that they were caught causing mischief.

Case closed.

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## **FIRELESS**

Difficulties sometimes arose close to home and Rip was asked to help out.

It seems that the Union Terminal's subsidiary to the B&O Railroad had a problem with its 0-6-0 switchers. A low spot in the track area was still full of water from a recent flood and this water was putting out the fire in these engines each time one passed thru while making its rounds.

Rip suggested a ditch to drain the water puddle (not possible), using a gas-mechanical Plymouth or Porter loco (too small for the job) and finally borrowing National Cash Register Co. switchers from Dayton. These were four driver fireless Lima brutes, which ran on canned hot water and 150psi steam provided by a power house boiler. Thus, their tanks could be readily recharged at the CUT roundhouse power plant.

B&O asked, and NCR agreed, to lend two of their three locos to maintain CUT operations. These were run over the DL&C to Dayton Union tracks, picked up by the B&O and then ferried at slow speed down to Cincinnati. After a quick lube and re-charge, they were put to work moving passenger cars around on the terminal tracks.

Problem solved.

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The "**CABIN CAR CAPER**"  
Another thrilling Rip Riteowhey  
railroad detective story.

Railroad cabooses have been called by various nicknames; such as Crummy, Van, Hack and (on the PRR) Cabin Car. The latter was chosen by its owners for one of Cincinnati's lesser known social establishments. This Cabin Car Club was set up on a loading platform in the stillborn subway tubes beneath Central Avenue and close by the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood. As a matter of fact, this pub was the only facility of any kind located in a once highly anticipated Cincinnati venture.

Rip, and his recent bride Mildred, were visiting the Cabin Car Club one evening for a bit of refreshment. Our detective was feasting on Red Cap ale and brats while Mildred had chosen Dad's root bear and schnitzel. The couple liked the club's smokey atmosphere, caused mostly by the kerosene fueled caboose lantern table lights. A few of Rip's working buddies also haunted the place on occasion. There was tall and lanky Stan, tubby Rudy, Frank the lady's man, bearded Wiskers, Sly the hobo, short and sweet Eileen, Oscar with a balding top, talkative Ben and Max (or fuzzy face) who sported a small moustache.

Max was a volunteer Air Raid Warden for the Finneytown area. He and Stan (a machinist) had once been on the same high school track team. Wiskers' job was railroad shop labor foreman. Ben was a boiler tube fitter and Frank a likeable neer-do-well. Eileen worked both for the B&O and as a part time waitress.

Andrew, their waiter, interrupted the meal with an offer of refills. Mildred accepted. Rip was preoccupied in a study of this evening's clientele. He was on a mission just assigned by B&O security police at the request of local civil defense personnel. Foreign agents were thought to be seeking war material secrets regarding home front production in the Queen City. One of these was a new Signal Corps radio being built by the Crosley Corporation in their big factory on Monmouth Avenue adjacent to Mill Creek and the B&O's freight yards.

A kick under the table, by Mildred, returned our friend's thoughts back to the meal. "I'll just have some rhubarb pie", he said. When finished, they took a streetcar back up to their cozy abode in Finneytown.

Oscar, who worked part time as a janitor at Crosley, was on the 3<sup>rd</sup> shift roundhouse crew. He had met Felix at Oktoberfest. Felix Young had come from Asia where he'd been called Yo Fat (family name first). On stateside arrival he changed his name but kept the same initials. Felix had suggested to Oscar a way to obtain the needed funds to purchase a boat for fishing the Ohio River. It started by just providing a copy of Crosley Corporation letterhead paper. This escalated into picking thru trashcans

for notes and other tidbits relating to any radio equipment or its production. In return for this information Felix traded Red's tickets to Oscar who then sold them for cash.

Crosley management, even though unaware of all this activity, began to tighten security. They began to lay off foreign nationals and those who even looked of foreign origin. Oscar was let go in due time. His ill got gains were then used to purchase a cheap rowboat; from which he caught carp.

Felix's goal had been to get specifics about the Signal Corp's BC654 radio for relay to foreign agents who worked for the Third Reich. So, Felix now needed another source.

One night at the Cabin Car Club Felix noticed that Eileen was all alone. He knew that her night job was at a small café; the latter being located between Crosley and the B&O roundhouse area. He asked to joiner her and got an OK nod. Her date, Rudy, was always late. Over beverages Felix asked Eileen for her help under the pretext of finding a friend. (Her job would be a perfect cover he thought.) Eileen was asked to listen to the conversations of Crosley patrons visiting her café, the Iron Horse, for a bite. She agreed.

Rip had been told by B&O Security to watch for suspicious activity during his routine detective activities. They had someone working undercover to deter any possible espionage that could lead to railroad work interference or plant damage. So far his efforts had returned zilch! (That was about to change.)

Felix made contact with Eileen on a rather irregular basis. Sometimes it was in CUT, maybe at the Cabin Car Club or, once, at the Iron Horse Café. She allowed that all she ever overheard was complaints about rationing, resistors being too small, capacitors too big and transformers too heavy. No mention of his friend.

Eileen was no dummy. She had reported immediately to B&O security regarding Felix's overtures. Their response was to "string along" for awhile. Ben was advised to tell Rip about all of this while seemingly checking the erstwhile detective's home for blackout curtains.

B&O's Chief O'Malley decided to speed things up a little. Eileen was given a fuzzy napkin sketch marked "BC" to pass along to her contact on an evening that Rip just happened to be there sipping a tall one. The exchange was made with the comment that "this might help locate your

friend". Felix quickly left the café and headed downtown; Rip in the shadows tagging along behind.

They entered the Cabin Car Club where Rip's quarry disappeared. Rip must have been spotted! Looking all around, our gumshoe was told by Andrew that he'd just seen someone jump over the railing and into the unused subway tubes. Rip did likewise, heard the sound of feet running westward and followed.

The tubes ended at ground level near the Union Terminal. Although the exit was shuttered by wire gates, they were sprung enough to allow the culprit to escape. Rip continued his pursuit which led right into CUT via the taxiway entrance. Dodging two moving vehicles, Felix slipped through an unlocked door into the heart of the art deco station.

Rip Riteowhey was right at home here, because that's where his closet sized office was located. The chase ran along darkened hallways, around corners, down stairwells and emerged out back, under the concourse by the private car track.

Felix headed left up the access ramp and towards the distant river. Then he abruptly reversed direction to run along one of the passenger platforms, across active tracks and past the mail loading facility. Rip was getting winded but by this time had been joined by ex-sprinter Max, who had been tipped off by the commotion in the station.

On they progressed into the yard area close by the roundhouse. Suddenly a wiry arm shot out from an open express boxcar door, catching Felix under the chin. He promptly dropped down on the ballast. Rip hurried up and cuffed his quarry. Then he looked up to see and thank his hobo friend, Sly, now sitting on the boxcar doorsill.

Soon thereafter, everyone was sitting in the Cabin Car Club enjoying snacks provided by the thankful B&O. Felix was exported and Oscar was sentenced to a time of cleaning fish at a water front warehouse. Rip, Eileen, Max and Sly all received war bonds from Crosley.

Case closed!

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## **THE ABSENT ALCO MYSTERY**

Rip Riteowhey was just entering his office on a bright sunny morning when his telephone began to ring. Hot dog, he thought to himself, maybe

a new case to solve. Rip picked up the hand piece and found Chief O'Malley, head of B&O Security at CUT, on the line.

"We've got us a real problem this time m'boy", the chief spouted; an Irish brogue very noticeable in all his excitement. "Our terminal's switch engine (an 0-6-0 steamer) has done disappeared without a trace. It was last seen an hour ago on the ready track by the roundhouse. Now the hostlers can't find it nowhere."

"Whoa Chief", answered Rip. "You mean that 60 tons of iron has been mis-placed?" "It's not misplaced, it's gone", spouted O'Malley. "Completely gone! Go lookin fer it at once; that's your orders fer t'day." "Yes sir", replied Rip as he hung up the phone.

CUT had several of these 1920s ALCO built shifters (leased from the NYC) that were kept busy in both the coach yard and juggling train consists in and around the busy CUT passenger platforms. Their compact size, great visibility from the cab and adequate pulling ability made them invaluable in keeping all CUT operations running smoothly.

Must get going, thought Rip, as he hurried out his office door. Now what in tarnation coulda happened to that there locomotive. It's not like someone could wrap it up, put it in their pocket and just walk away.

Our gumshoe spent all morning looking around the engine service area and searching nearby tracks for the 0-6-0. No trace could he find anywhere. The hostlers he talked to said that they had coaled and watered the locomotive and left it with a full head of steam where the morning shift crew normally took possession and put it to work.

Rip even skipped lunch (unheard of!) and continued to hunt for clues to the absent ALCO. When the afternoon round-house shift arrived, he queried them and got the same results as before. A few linkage adjustments and lubing of the running gear were the only write-ups they had performed. Everything was in order when it was taken to the wash rack.

Exhausted, Rip grabbed some supper in the CUT rotunda and headed for his weekly meeting with fellow model rails in one of the upper level rooms. Here he and his buddies were constructing a small 0-gauge train layout, using what materials they could find, considering wartime restrictions relative to home-front non-essential production.

They kept busy making new boxcars with wood bodies and paper sides, gluing-up cardstock buildings and laying a little outside third rail track. But model locomotive assembly was more or less nil. Brass stock for frames, cab and tender was not easily found. Small motors were just unavailable. Still, all had a good time exchanging ideas and socializing.

That night Rip chatted with one of the club members who had quite a story to tell. Last week he had received a new issue of Model railroader, dated July 1945, that contained a very intriguing article written by Boomer Pete.

Now Boomer Pete was well know for his research and knowledge of prototype locomotive details. This new article gave insight on a way of obtaining all such detail on models of the original.

It seems that a Dr. Jekyll had found a powder that, when placed into a loco's smoke stack, would shrink said iron horse down to 0-gauge size.

Rip's friend had contacted the doctor, a rather interesting chap, and talked to him at some length about the unique powder that he had discovered. Finding they had similar natures and interests made it easy to obtain the mysterious powders formula. The friend had tried concocting a sample.

Needing to test its effectiveness, he had visited the CUT roundhouse this morning. There were many locomotives to be seen, but the 0-6-0 switcher on the ready track caught his eye. It was very similar to Lionel's copy of the Pennsylvania Railroad B6 switcher introduced prewar and now unavailable for the duration. While no one was looking, he had climbed the footboards up to the smokestack and poured in a measure of powder.

"By the way", he said to Rip "Would you like to see my new model 0-6-0 switch engine?"

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## **LITTLE GREEN MEN**

Well, it's been sixty years and Bethany has been deactivated; so the story can now be told.

It was a cloudy St. Patrick's Day in 1947. Rip Riteowhey was taking a ride in his new Kaiser automobile; driving North on Winton road. His

Finneytown to Green Hills route was more or less out in the country at that time.

Suddenly, Rip heard a whirring noise off to his left, near the Mt. Healthy chicken hatchery. The noise came from what looked like a funny dome shaped building. Then he saw two dwarfs in shamrock green outfits come running out of the building towards the road. Rip pulled over and stopped.

The dwarfs jabbered a question that Rip made out to be asking the whereabouts of the Bethany Relay Station. Its high power signals had messed up their radio transponder and had caused a forced landing. But, Rip couldn't see an airplane anywhere.

So, after talking briefly to them, and answering their question, Rip drove on.

What he didn't see in his rearview mirror was the flying saucer taking off in a cloud of dust.

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### **ODE TO AN S2E**

Rip composed the following "ditty" shortly after he found, restored and track operated a B&O 1944 Fairmont S2e railroad section car, or "speeder" as they are called.

My speeder was found in a lean-to shed,  
but it wasn't yellow or red.  
The color was a rusty brown,  
from sitting a spell in Middletown.  
A little cleanup work and a makeshift part,  
brought it to life with a hand crank start.  
Emitting clouds of blue smoke,  
thought the neighbors:"what a joke".  
Brushed on paint, flags and brake light,  
tuneing and torqueing till all was just right.  
Then off to the south with borrowed transportation,  
looking for the first run with great anticipation.  
Jackson and Miami, rough track and all,  
seventy miles, bruized backside: I had a ball!  
Now it must go, no room at the inn,  
lets find it a home, and hope it's a museum.

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## CROSLLEY WOES

The following episode has little to do with railroads and it is one that our dauntless detective cares not to bring to mind if he can help it. We got wind of it late one night after Rip had one Red Top too many.

This story takes place during the period in which the Queen City was shutting down streetcar routes all over town. More often than not shoe leather was being put to use in solving Rip's local railroad riddles. On his wages, 24 cent gasoline was a little steep in light of the mileage he was getting out of his postwar Kaiser auto. So, Rip's gas tank was usually empty; bringing back those memories of the WW-2 years and ration coupons.

His sore feet got Rip to thinking about an earlier comment to self that he needed a Crosley car. Their tanks were smaller and they got great gas mileage. Yes, space was a bit cramped inside, but he could live with that. On the other hand, Kaiser had introduced its down sized vehicle named the Henry J.

Rip started looking around for a new set of wheels. Henry Js were proving popular and hard to find. And, their gas mileage actually was little better than a full sized sedan. Body color selection was poor; like Ford's "You can have any color you like, as long as it's black".

A quick trip to Richmond, on the B&O, was in order. Here our meandering detective paid a visit to the Crosley factory. Taking a plant tour he was very impressed by the assembly workers who seemed intent on producing a high quality small automobile. This sold him.

To quicken his delivery Rip chose the lightweight brazed engine over the cast iron block that was to enter production later in the year. He also accepted the first available model off the assembly line. It turned out to be a convertible in a beautiful "worm green" color.

Now Crosley's convertible design kept a full metal frame around the doors with the cloth top rolling up from behind the windscreen all the way back to the trunk. Sort of like peeling open a sardine can. So, no rooftop red light.

Rip sold his Kaiser sedan to a CUT shop worker who was kind enough to drive him over to Richmond to take delivery of his new purchase. Contrary to most of his activities (on a dark and stormy night), it was a lovely day for a jaunt back into Ohio. So nice, in fact, that he decided to

go more or less due east for an extended drive and to break in his new acquisition.

Somehow things didn't quite work out the way he had in mind.

East of Greenville it started to rain. Rip hadn't been versed on how to put up the convertible's top so he got out the owner's manual. When rain water started to wash printing off the pages he put the book away and drove on with his engineer's hat pulled down so he could see.

By the time he reached Troy Rip was looking for any sheltered spot in which to park and dry off a little. Turning off onto a farm lane he spied a small shed with raised door that looked empty. Because of the rain in his eyes, it was hard to tell. In he went.

It was a strange barn. The framework consisted of metal tubes and the sides appeared to be plywood or canvas. As his vision improved Rip discovered that he had driven right into a WACO CG13A glider aircraft that was parked on a practice airfield. Yikes! He backed out and hurried on before anyone discovered his error.

Near Sidney Rip found himself on a muddy gravel road that zigzagged across some railroad tracks. As he made those turns the Crosley's wheel barrow size tires bounced several times before the ride smoothed out. Real smooth! Somehow Rip was now heading east riding on the rails. My wheel tread must be standard gauge he mused. Well, let's get off this right-of-way. But, he wasn't able to turn the steering wheel.

On and on he went. Then, looking out the window and down, Rip saw a river; the Great Miami River. Way down! He was on the Big-4's humongous viaduct across the river valley. A prayer was said for no approaching trains. Upon reaching the far side of the viaduct a high center road crossing hit the car's frame and bounced him off the tracks. Rip breathed a big sigh of relief and turned towards home.

The rain eased off, then quit. The sun came out in full force and it got very warm. Rip's new car, not fully broken in, began to overheat. The brazed metal engine plates started to warp and leak coolant, but he managed to nurse it all the way back to Finneytown.

On the way he passed a farm tractor with wagon load of hay but was over-taken by a Model-A Ford, two Willys Jeeps and a Cushman motor scooter.

As he looked for an open parking space a neighbor saw Rip and quipped "Why don't you wrap that thing in a hankie and carry it into the house?" Then his new car ran out of gas.

I want my old Hupmobile back, thought Rip.

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## **MIDNIGHT RIDE**

It had rained all day. The clouds hung so low that even Ford tri-motors couldn't take off from Lunken Airport. River traffic continued, albeit at a reduced pace. Bless the railroads said Rip to himself, as he lounged in his office Morris Chair. They stay on time regardless of the weather. Thankfully no crimes or mysteries needed to be taken care of today. Sensing this, the candlestick telephone sang its song.

Picking up the instrument Rip found B&O's Chief O'Malley on the line. He had an offer; a free Pullman ride to Indiana if Rip would check out a black market scheme offering hard to obtain train tickets to unwary travelers. It seems that someone had stolen railroad logos from a print shop and was making fake tickets on colored cardstock. The problems this was creating were many.

O.K. Rip agreed. Anything for a train ride; and his wallet was thin.

Out into the dark and stormy night he went. Strange, he was to board for his ride in the Queen City's riverside yards. What he found there was a troop train taking raw recruits to their new training camp. Its whole consist was nothing but an endless string of dark green Pullman Troop Sleepers. The comfortable "section" Rip was planning on turned into a top spot on a triple stack army cot arrangement. And, the recruits were too wound up for sleep.

After a fitful overnight rest, our detective de-barked at a lonely siding some where in southern Indiana. The train's movements were not announced, as was typical of all Army wartime maneuvers. Rip found a Hoosier country road (gravel) and hiked west.

Eventually he hitched a ride into a town; North Vernon. It was a railroad town. There were E-W B&O tracks, a N-S PRR line plus one owned by the Big-4. The PRR came up from Madison, out of the river valley, on the steepest main line grade in the United States. Its trains always had the engine placed on the downhill end in the interest of safety.

Rip found a place for breakfast called the Railroaders Restaurant. It faced a small railroad yard built right in the middle of town. Must do a lot of rail-road business here he thought. An out-of-the way spot, yet many tickets were being handled. It would be difficult to catch a fake one here. He ate his fill and tried to blend in with the crowds. After snooping around all day, Rip took a room in a small boarding house catering to working men. His RR pass, used for I.D., listed his job simply as "trainman".

Next day he visited the various ticket depots, asking their agents about one way coach ticket prices. More time was spent looking for print shops that might do business cards. No real leads came to light.

Day three involved wandering around the several railroad yards in town and checking on jobs available. He was careful to dress in older blue jeans and a "thousand mile" chambray shirt.

Day four was a leisurely one; sitting on a park bench and observing people as they came and went about with their various activities. Rip was bored for lack of leads in his assignment.

On day five Rip bummed a cab ride in a Pennsy class H-8 Consolidation turn down to Madison. The hill experience was not something he would care to repeat. A runaway surely meant a river dunking.

Week's end brought a flood of soldiers with passes off the nearby military reservation. Many sought train tickets to bigger cities or their own nearby homes. Rip noticed many of them doing business with a local bystander rather than agents in the various depots. His detective mind kicking in, he walked over to make a purchase. Although not in uniform, his working man's clothes ought to suffice.

In reply to Rip's query, the stranger replied "Yep, young fellow, I have an unused ticket here that you can exchange for one to your destination. It's half price just so I can get rid of it." Rip bought the piece of yellow pasteboard and stuck it in his pocket. "By the way", he asked "I'll need one to Indy the middle of next week. Can you help me out?" "Got a coach ticket at home", was the answer. "See me in the Railroaders Restaurant next Monday near the window." "O.K.", said Rip.

Chief O'Malley was pleased with Rip's progress report, but insisted that he keep his nose to the grindstone.

Our detective had retained that first ticket for evidence. Now he repeatedly inspected it for clues as to where it might have been printed; a pointless exercise. So, to keep his spirits up, he hiked down to Judson, a wide spot in the road about two miles south.

There, an old stone arch type bridge carried the PRR over the highway. A country store was nearby and Rip went in to see what they had for sale. In addition to food staples and sundries they carried a small line of school supplies. Included in their display were packets of colored cardstock for kid's activities. The yellow looked familiar. It matched his fake ticket!

Rip bought a packet and asked the old store clerk whether the material was popular. He was told that Schools use some on a regular basis; then there's a home based off-set printer who buys quite a bit. Rip got the address, which was "out in the country a-ways, and hard by the B&O tracks".

A round trip caboose hop was necessary on the B&O in order to scope out that printing operation. Outward appearance was just a rural farmhouse with summer kitchen back a short gravel lane.

During Monday morning breakfast before his meet with the scammer Rip tried to think up a way to learn more about the printing operation. Well, he'd play it by ear, so to speak. Then he thought of the souvenir Train Check he'd been given by the B&O caboose crew.

His meet with the scammer went as to plan. Rip paid for the fake ticket; then appeared to have second thoughts and asked that person if he had any use for a used/punched B&O ticket. Why maybe was the reply. The end result was that the seller allowed as to he worked as a printer's devil and that Rip could have a "plant tour" of the facility in exchange for the item.

During his resultant visit to a newly remodeled summer kitchen Rip saw scrap pieces of the colored cardstock buried in a waste can, as well as glimpsing a partially hidden platen setup which just happened to include a CNW logo.

Eureka, case closed!

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## **BOUILLON/BULLION**

It was breakfast time and Rip was having a bite to eat at the Iron Horse Café, close by the B&O roundhouse. The Call Boy found him there and delivered what seemed to be an odd request. He was to guard a shipment of bouillon going to Bainbridge via the PRR and the DT&I. Now why does a case of soup need to be protected, he thought.

Rip hurried over to the small American Express office located in the Winton Place station. There, he was shown a briefcase size wooden box with a strap handle. His credentials were checked and he had to sign for the shipment. Why all the fuss he thought?

Then he tried to pick up the box. Man, it was heavy. Very heavy! Both hands were necessary to carry it. Rip looked closely at the invoice and saw that it covered the movement of three bars of solid gold from the Seventh National Bank of Cincinnati to its small branch in Bainbridge, Ohio.

The story goes that the branch office had been robbed recently by the Black Bart gang and the shipment was to rebuild the bank's coffers. Now he understood. His job was carrying gold bullion, not the Herb-Ox bouillon that he enjoyed drinking.

Rip boarded the north bound Cincinnati Limited. But his ride was to be in the baggage car, not a cushy coach seat. Away they sped. Past the B&O reverse connection, past the N&W's Rendcomb Junction and through Kings Mills. At Morrow he detrained for a connection to the Panhandle Branch. Things went downhill. His "mixed freight" ride was on a caboose at the end of a local.

Rip loved cabooses, so no big deal. However the train's hogger was a recently upgraded fireman who hadn't mastered the knack of easing out the slack between cars. The ride was very jerky!

Through Clarksville, to Wilmington, then Sabina they bumped. Progress was slow with numerous setouts and pickups along the way. Upon finally reaching Washington Courthouse Rip got off again. This time it was for a mixed train ride on the DT&I. His new seat was in a day coach, converted from an old doodlebug. The open windows let in little wisps of coal smoke; a glorious smell to our detective.

The box of gold was beginning to be a bother. Rip was using his handcuffs as a security measure to keep him from setting it down,

forgetting same and walking off without it. Then too his railroad spike protective device was heavy in his pocket and uncomfortable to sit on. Oh well, his dollar an hour pay was good and meals were chargeable to the company.

Food! Rip hadn't eaten since morning. There was no "butcher boy" available on the DT&I, so he would have to get off for some chow. The Greenfield depot's location down in a valley did not seem to be a good place to exit. It would mean a climb up the hill and into town, lugging his box.

Fruitdale was a much smaller burg, but more level. Climbing down, with the help of the ubiquitous stepbox, Rip saw that the station looked more like a residence than railroad property. So he hiked a half block to the village's main street. No restaurant presented itself, but a country store offered hope. There he found cheese, bread, a few cookies and a bottle of rootbeer.

Thus replenished it was back to the station. Oh, oh! His train had gone. All its switching had been done back at the B&O interchange near its Paint Creek bridge. Nothing to do now except to hoof it. Wait! Here came a railroad section car. It was a Fairmont MT19 carrying a track inspector; alone. Rip waved him down, showed his RR pass and was cordially offered a ride.

Putt putting along at 20mph with the wind blowing thru his ears was a new, and pleasant, experience. Making small talk above the noise of the two cycle engine was difficult; however Rip was given directions to the best fishing spots along the stream over which they criss-crossed back and forth. Without a top, it was a good thing no rain was falling.

The speeder's drive belt broke on the downhill run into Bainbridge. When its wood brake shoes weren't up to their task of stopping the car, it rapidly picked up speed. The two riders zoomed across Paint Creek's (wide as a river) bridge and around a curve to the left.

They managed to stop at the Bainbridge depot on the east side of town and Rip dropped off. He had a short walk back into town along Route 50 (on shaky lags).

The place looked old. There were cut stone fronted buildings everywhere, including the bank's. It was a substantial edifice right on the town square.

Rip hurriedly took the gold box inside and delivered it in person to a clerk. The local president gave him a signed receipt and made sure that the gold bars were placed safely in the vault and the door closed. Our detective breathed a sign of relief. No sooner had this been done than Black Bart burst into the bank. His gang, being local, had spied a stranger with a heavy box and had guessed what its contents were.

Bart's gang really consisted of only two characters; who were brothers. As one cleaned out the cash drawers the other backed up to cover the room with his pistol. Somehow he overlooked Rip. Given this opportunity, Rip extracted his railroad spike and promptly konked the robber over the head. Black Bart himself, his hands full carrying two canvas satchels, ran out the front and jumped on his horse. (Yep, this was a real down home community.) Away he went, east, down Main Street.

Figuring he was still involved Rip ran after the fleeing Bart. In no time he was back at the depot, where he found the track inspector finishing repairs to his speeder. They cranked up the machine and took off. The galloping crook had a good steed that kept the railroaders at some length. As Bart turned into the hills, so did the tracks.

Through a cluster of houses and around horseshoe curve they went. Now going upgrade, the good guys were gaining on the bad guy. Before reaching Summit the speeder pulled even with Bart and Rip reached around for something to use to further slow his progress. All he found was a red flag, which he threw at the scowling crook.

The horse abruptly stopped. Bart flew over his head and landed in a heap on the dirt road. Rip jumped out on the run and cuffed him. It seems that the horse had previously worked on a rural milk wagon route and was trained to stop on sight of a waving flag.

Case closed.

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## **ADRIFT IN ONE QUARTER SCALE**

Rip Riteowhey was exhausted after a busy day's work at keeping the local rail network safe and wartime traffic moving. He sat down at home in his easy chair to relax for a little while and tuned his radio to WKRC. Luckily, some soothing music was playing; no big band jazz or dismal news reports.



The detective looked around and dug out his favorite reading material; a three year old Lionel catalog. It extolled the wonders of its products and showed all the trains and action accessories in living color on each page. Too bad that their production had been forced to stop for the war's duration. Even at that, Rip could hardly have afforded to purchase the set he liked most.

It was an O-gauge 259E locomotive with a set of freight cars. The engine was a black beauty, made of heavy sheet metal, leading a string of brightly lithographed cars. A NYC style red caboose brought up the end. All were equipped with the new automatic remote control latch couplers. This was a set to be proud of. Oh well, it all was now just a dream.

The quiet music was making Rip drowsy. So he went into the bedroom where his eyes soon nodded shut.

Rip started! He had been called to run an extra freight west on the C&O of Indiana. While not a usual assignment, he was qualified to handle most any railroad task. Here it was near time to leave the yard and he hadn't yet found his locomotive. Oh, there it was on the ready track, steaming quietly. Rip looked up at the number boards and read #259.

Climbing aboard, he saw that the ash cat (fireman) had everything in order. Taking his place on the seat box, Rip cracked the throttle open and backed out to his train waiting on the main.

The automatic couplers clicked quietly together and the brakie connected the air hoses. While building up pressure in the train line Rip glanced back at his consist. He saw a string of tuscan red and yellow boxcars, which were listed on the manifest as containing material urgently needed at Muncie. Something about empty tin cans for packing Spam at the Ball Factory in that town.

Rip turned around and spied a green signal light. He moved the Johnson Bar to forward position and eased out on the throttle. His train slowly took up slack and began to move. In no time they started up the "High Line" which curved left over the Southern's yards on a steep grade to Cheviot.

With the Johnson Bar still in the corner, and sanders on, our engineer struggled to pick up speed and avoid wheel slip. The curves didn't help any. Rip looked down and saw Queen City Avenue pass far below. Soon they leveled off and charged through the Cheviot yards, with cinders and smoke flying from the stack.

In no time at all Shandon came into view and disappeared. Another grade loomed ahead. It climbed through Okeana and up to Bath, where Indiana flatland lay.

Rip's hand was steady as they hit the hill carrying a good head of steam. Okeana's small depot flashed by; the track walker's three wheel velocipede lost in a cloud of dust. Ahead lay a left hand curve over an old wooden trestle. Not constructed of steel like the ones on the "High Line", this structure would flex and tremble as trains passed over it.

So it did as Rip's trusty steed sped across. His lead wheels de-railed and his engine jumped the track, followed by several boxcars. In slow motion they fell onto the valley floor below.

AS he landed "ker-thump", Rip woke up. He had fallen out of bed!

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## **DAWG**

Rip Riteowhey was looking around the sparsely populated PRR freight yards of the old CL&N branch near downtown. He was on "loan" to that railroad from CUT's security department due to the lack of manpower caused by wartime.

His detective abilities(?) suited him to the assigned task of watching for thieves that had been breaking into sealed box cars and making off with badly needed home front goods, mostly rationed food. Of course there were the usual hobos hanging around, who scrounged for any leftover scraps from broken cartons or crates. Unless they caused damage or interfered with daily operations, these guys were let be. It was the black market crooks that the railroad wanted apprehended.

Today Rip was finding all seals intact and no hobos; in spite of the chilly fall weather. As he passed an open box car door he heard a low growl followed by a whimper. It was too dark to see all the interior, so Rip hopped up to the car's floor and turned on his flashlight. (A left hand rested on his weapon, a holstered railroad spike.)

What he found was a somewhat scruffy black and white dog lying down in a corner. The animal looked back at Rip, stuck out its tongue, and wagged its tail. "Are you hungry boy?" Rip asked; and got a "Woof!" in reply. The detective took out his lunch (a PBJ sandwich) and offered same carefully with his hand. The food disappeared quickly and every crumb licked up.

I wonder how this mutt got here mused Rip. Perhaps he jumped in to get at some scrap food, or was some hobo's pet. Anyhow, he seemed to be friendly enough. Rip dropped to the ground and held out his hand to the dog; who got up and walked to the door opening. Rip picked up the 40 pound animal and set him on the ground. "Let's find us a drink, boy" said Rip as he started walking across the yard's tracks. The dog followed obediently.

A water hydrant at the freight house satisfied the pooch while Rip finished the remainder of his lunch; a Nehi orange drink.

The dog continued to follow Rip all around the rail yard. He sniffed at the ground, watered a fire plug and stayed out of the way of any active movements. He seemed happy with life and his surroundings.

At the far corner of the facility, where a roundhouse once stood, Rip heard the sound of a car door sliding open or closed. It was on an outer track and the noise came from the far side, which faced an alley and some abandoned buildings.

Peeking around a dreadnaught end, Rip saw three men removing cartons of Lucky Strike cigarettes and loading them into an old Dodge panel truck. With no help close at hand, he charged yelling at the trio. His RR spike took care of one man and Rip grappled with another who was loaded down with his arms full of cartons. The third thief, at the back of the truck, turned and headed for the melee.

Just as he reached out to grab Rip's jacket collar, something clamped around his left ankle, tripping him to the ground. The crook looked up to see sharp fangs and the snarling face of a medium size black and white dog. He decided to lay still for a bit.

Meanwhile, Rip had subdued the second man and handcuffed him. Because he had only one pair of cuffs, Rip told the dog to "watch" the one awake on the ground and turned to check the status of the third, and unconscious, thief. His lights would be out for awhile; so Rip went to the nearest telephone box and called for railroad "bull" help.

After things settled down, Rip headed for the trolley line which would take him to CUT, for a report, and then home to Finneytown. Looking back, he saw his black and white companion tagging along behind. "Well, I guess you'll have to come home with me too." he said. "But you'll need a name; how about DAWG?"

Case closed.

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## **MYSTERY ON A TRAIN**

It was going to be a great trip. Rip Riteowhey was taking a short and relaxing weekend vacation. Now that the world wide conflicts had ceased, he could get away from CUT for awhile and enjoy himself. The family had been left home so that his wife Mildred could take their son Repeat down to Shilito's Department Store. He had asked to see B&O's traveling 0-gauge model train exhibit, and this would be a belated birthday treat for him.

The Mercury's plush seats were real comfortable, so Rip pushed back and watched the scenery roll by outside his coach's picture window. He had chosen to go first class, was not on railroad business, so he actually had to purchase a ticket for once. No problem, Mildred would show his pass for their trolley ride from Winton Road, along Spring Grove Avenue and to downtown. Perhaps they might even return via the Mount Adams Incline to get a vista view of the Ohio River.

I need to stretch my legs before I go to sleep thought Rip. Reluctantly he arose and headed for the observation car at the train's rear. The breezy chill between cars suggested that a cup of java might hit the spot. And so it did!

The wide view from the rear was even better than before. Rip could see the opposing block signals and freight trains with lesser rights stationary on passing sidings; their steam showing white in the chill fall air. The season had been comfortable, but a recent killing frost was prompting the leaves to turn; their emerging colors creating a panorama outside his lounge window.

The Big-4 tracks crossed above the Great Miami River at Miamisburg; at a place where five forms of travel had once existed. These were the railroad, the interurban, the canal, the highway and the river. Now, only the highway and railroad remained active. Trolleys had been sorely missed during the war; their last few miles of active track going cold in early 1941.

The Mercury stopped briefly at Dayton Union Station. Rip wondered if the RR club's 0-gauge model train layout was still operating. As he remembered, a Mr. Smith, fireman on the B&O, was the main man. With a slight jerk the train started again, running on Dayton Union trackage

rights to the point where the three rail lines (PRR, B&O and NYC) split. The Erie dead ended on the east side of town and so was not involved.

They zipped through Osborn where Rip saw one of Erie's dual purpose Pacific locomotives switching freight cars in a cement company's yards. So sad, he thought. In Springfield, at street level, they pulled between umbrella sheds for another stop at a very well kept depot. It's time for the dining car and some chow thought Rip.

The stop at Springfield was a lot longer than listed in the railroad's timetable. This went unnoticed by Rip who, sitting at the dining table, was trying to figure out the purpose for the little dish of water sitting in front of him on the spotless linen tablecloth.

Later, meal finished, Rip returned to his coach seat. Looking out, he saw that the train was just now passing through London (Ohio). Where had they lost so much time?

As he surveyed his fellow passengers he became aware of three newcomers who were filling previously empty seats across the aisle. By their looks, he determined that they certainly weren't magazine cover material. One had a crinkly orangeish face and a white robe. A second possessed a long nose, peaked hat and black cape. The third wore a riding outfit with high collar, so one couldn't see his face (or head for that matter). What a weird crew thought Rip. Oh well, this was public transportation and anyone with a valid ticket could ride.

The conductor, walking the aisle, took one look at the trio and hurried on without asking for a show of tickets. Passing Rip, whom he knew, the conductor tapped him on the shoulder and motioned to follow.

Back in the observation car the fellow explained that he sensed something very unusual about his new customers. "They give me the creeps" he said. Further subdued discussion revealed nothing more than what Rip had seen. "Where are they headed?" asked Rip. "Don't know" was the reply. "I was afraid to check for tickets. You're the detective; you find out." His vacation rudely interrupted, Rip agreed to do so; but on his terms.

Returning to his coach seat our pro bono detective studied his subjects. Nothing unusual about them except their odd attire, looks and manners. Orange face had eyes that glowed. Pointed nose watched over a case that contained a cue stick or perhaps a long necked violin. He couldn't get a

good look at high collar's face, since his hat seemed to sit right down on his coat collar.

Rip was still cogitating as the train neared Columbus. The track took them straight under the depot, which itself looked like something out of a gothic horror movie. (Rip's thoughts, so no disrespect intended.) As the train ground to a shuddering stop the three characters being observed got up and headed towards the vestibule's exit door. Rip followed.

Rip planned to detrain here anyway. He wanted to visit Schmidt's sausage Haus that was located in the German Village south of city center. Their wursts and hot potato salad were spoken of highly back in the Queen City; not to mention those specialty deserts. Hitting the stepbox, Rip saw the trio going up a flight stairs and trailed quietly along behind them.

Reaching street level Rip looked around. Those characters had totally disappeared. Gone! They were nowhere to be seen.

Our detective returned to the train to report his luck to the conductor. Talking together quickly, they agreed it was "good riddance". Reboarding, the conductor swung a highball with his lantern and the train chuffed off to the north east.

Rip stayed overnight at the Railroad YMCA, where he had a hearty breakfast. Morning was spent in the lobby reading a novel by Harry Bedwell about a foot loose telegrapher named Eddie Sands. By lunchtime he was hungry again and walked towards the German Village.

Schmidt's was all it was cracked up to be. Rip waddled out the door feeling completely full and satisfied. Oops! He bumped right into those three odd characters he'd lost the night before. But today, in good light, they looked completely normal.

Introducing himself, Rip questioned them about their weird behavior on the train. "Oh, that!" was the reply. "We were on our way to a ghoulish party being held in the railroad station's rental room. Our group, Friends of Halloween, believe the place looks like an old haunted castle; so we chose it for our annual meeting."

Case closed.

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## **PUTT PUTT CEMENT MIXER**

This novelty song of the forties kept dancing around in Rip's head. There wasn't anything special about it; it was just "different" you might say. However, the words stimulated recent experiences stored in our detective's brain. He had seen a couple of odd locomotive usages on his recent get away on the Big-4 Route. A plan to check them out was the result.

One oddity looked like a beat up 0-4-0 tank engine without road markings. The other was a 4-6-2 passenger type, well marked for the Erie Railroad, doing mundane switching duties at a cement plant site. Both had been on rails that joined the Big-4 tracks through Osborn. The mystery of what and why needed to be solved.

Rip jumped into his recently acquired Crosley car and headed north towards Montgomery County; this time with a full tank of gas. Osborn, as it turned out, was actually in Greene County, according to the map he had to buy. The whole town was really a phoenix of itself. That's because it had moved lock, stock and barrel two miles from its original location. Otherwise, it would have been in a flood plain created by construction of the new Huffman Dam (one of five built to protect Dayton).

According to an agent/telegrapher he found in the depot, the railroad moved too. Actually there were two railroads involved. What looked like a double track mainline were two distinct sets of tracks, separated by fifty yards. One set belonged to the Big-4 and the other to the Erie. Existing trackage rights put all west bound traffic on the Erie and all east bound on the Big-4 between Dayton and Springfield.

Upon further inquiry, Rip found that passenger trains had ceased operation on the Erie prewar but still continued on the NYC subsidiary. Further, Erie freight was passed on to Cincinnati via the B&O, even though Erie rails had actually stopped in Dayton. What's more, on line switching, Dayton to Springfield, was handled by the Erie crews. This answered some of Rip's questions.

Back in his car, Rip pulled out an old issue of "Railroad" magazine which had included Erie's motive power roster. Reading down the list, he found that a K4 Class of Pacific type locomotive was designed for dual purpose service. His doubts regarding the use of a passenger engine for switching at the big Atlas Cement plant were now laid to rest.

Rip got out and walked across to the nearby SWPCO out bound marshalling yard. He headed for a distant smoke plume. Making said smoke, and leaking a lot of steam too, was a run down four drivered tank engine of unknown make. Rip introduced himself to the grimy lone operator, who was friendly enough and of nearly the same age.

Talking awhile disclosed that the old engine was of 1911 vintage and used to shuffle hopper cars loaded with cement for pickup by the Erie Railroad. This also included placing needed empties at the loading docks. Guess that about wraps it up said Rip to himself.

The best part of the day then occurred when a roaring NYC Hudson came flying past, bound for Cincinnati, with an afternoon passenger varnish in tow.

Case closed.

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## **EARTHWORMS**

Memo Facility Security Department  
2nd floor CUT

To: Riteowhey Detective Agency  
Basement CUT

Hey, young feller. Got one right down your alley. A truck manufacturer in Frankfort, Ohio is building crawler type tractors for the Army Air Corps. Shipment is consigned to our B&O that runs right by their plant. The little buggers (they are to be air dropped by parachute) are loaded onto flatcars. The railroad is much concerned about possible sabotage during transport.

Suggest you investigate situation. Take B&O freight to Dayton; transfer to Jackson branch which runs right by the truck plant. Contact Jerome Olf.

Sgt. O'Malley, B&O Security

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Letter Riteowhey Detective Agency  
%Ideal Trucks, Frankfort

To: Sgt. O'Malley, B&O Security  
Cincinnati Union Terminal



To save time, I decided to take the National Limited direct from Cincy. A first Class surcharge over my free RR pass will be billed to your office. I got off at Musselman Junction, where both B&O lines cross by sharing track for a bit. Walked a mile to factory.

Met with Jerome Olf and talked over tractor situation. The compact olive drab vehicles are called Earthworms for their size and use of caterpillar treads. They are loaded two abreast and lengthwise on standard forty foot flatcars. Tarps are used for weather protection. Only trouble is difficulty in obtaining sufficient flatcars. Army has priority of use to transport heavy tanks and 6x6 trucks. No tractors have been found damaged as of yet.

Jerry and I are continuing to discuss this matter.

Rip Riteowhey

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Night Letter B&O Security  
Cincinnati Union Terminal

To: Riteowhey Detective Agency  
%Ideal Trucks, Frankfort

Glad to hear that you are getting right down to business for a change. Sorry, ticket surcharge will be taken from your contract fee as it was not authorized by us in advance.

Everybody's having trouble finding any empty railcars to ship stuff. Is there some way the tractors can be condensed for rail movement?

Keep reports coming.

O'Malley

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Letter Riteowhey Detective Agency  
%Dr. Hampshire, Frankfort

To: Sgt. O'Malley, B&O Security  
Cincinnati Union Terminal

The tractors are well made with lots of castings, metal tracks with wooden wear cleats and heavy duty Wisconsin motors. We attempted to stagger them on a flatcar to no avail. In the process, I drove one overboard; the only result being a couple of broken cleats and a knot on my head.

This got us to thinking. Maybe the things could be cross loaded from an adjacent platform, rather than end loaded. No luck! Still a capacity of ten tractors per flatcar.

Next we tried loading a boxcar, which had just been emptied of an incoming load of motors. The tractors were driven in through its side door, spun ninety degrees in place and moved right or left for tie down. Capacity was still only ten units.

However, while maneuvering one in the confined space, I inadvertently lost momentary control and drove into a previously placed tractor. My unit's cleats caught on the ones of the stationary tractor and climbed up to a vertical position with its back ending flat on the floor.

This produced a second knot on my head so I was taken to a local veterinarian for a look see.

I've composed this letter while in his office waiting on a diagnosis.

Rip

---

Night Letter B&O Security  
Cincinnati Union Terminal  
To: Riteowhey Detective Agency  
Somewhere in Frankfort, Ohio

Serves you right! If you stayed off our customer's merchandise, and stuck to sleuthing, perhaps your health might improve. Meanwhile, I'm happy that only your least important body part was afflicted.

Get back to work solving our dilemma.

O'Malley

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Letter Riteowhey Detective Agency  
%Ideal Trucks, Frankfort  
To: Sgt. O'Malley, B&O Security  
Cincinnati Union Terminal

It's done! Jerry and I went back to that boxcar and looked for damage. There was none. The vertical tractor was quite stable in its position of

rest; sitting on the rear of its two tracks and its fuel tank. A perfect three point suspension you might say.

And, it occupied only half the usual floor space. Jerry had his work crew try loading the whole boxcar with tractors stacked vertically. It held twenty units. This would reduce the number of empty railcars required by half. Further time and cost savings would be gained by totally avoiding a need for tarps.

Jerry has now adjusted his shipping requirements to call only for boxcars, but half of the previous quantity. In addition, no one can see what's inside a closed boxcar. So our problem of possible sabotage has gone away.

My head is fine; but I squeal a little when talking. Case closed.

Rip

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## **DARK AS DAY**

Telegram Ten AM 14 February 1942

From Security Department B&O  
Cincinnati Union Terminal

To Rip Riteowhey  
Millcreek Arms Cumminsville

You are assigned to guard a government shipment Richmond to Fernald on C and O stop Goods are in gondolas so you can watch from caboose cupola and stay warm and out of twenty degree weather stop Get moving it leaves at eight PM stop signed OMalley

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Letter 7:30 PM, 14 February 1942

From: Riteowhey Detective Agency  
C&O freight yard, Richmond

To: Sgt. O'Malley, Security  
B&O RR, CUT

My auto is out of gas and I have no ration coupons, as usual. So I rode with a truck driving buddy north to Hamilton. Even at the 35 mph wartime speed limit we made good time. From there I shared a B&O boxcar and coffee with two hobos over to Richmond.

I've now found my assigned train in the C&O yards. Met the conductor and released previous guard. Checked over consist and found all OK. That government stuff is as black as coal, but not in big chunks like coal.

Our caboose was pulled from RIP Track (no pun). Door needs fixed-it lets in cold air so can't keep shack warm. I will report progress.

Rip Riteowhey

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RR telegraph message 2100hrs 14 Feb

Bath depot to O'Malley, CUT

Our train left Richmond as an extra, following a scheduled merchandise freight. Government goods not on manifest as rush, so no problem. Broke knuckle pin at edge of town. Replaced same losing only 15 minutes. Outside town, and away from lights, noticed that gondola loads sorta glow in the dark, like a watch dial. All quiet.

Dropping this note at next station.

Will file next report at Okeana.

Rip

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RR telegraph message 2115hrs 14 Feb

CUT to depot agent at Okeana

Please hoop this up to guard on government special shipment train.

Do not let any car derail or spill its load. Material is Wolframite for hush-hush research purposes at government facility at Fernald. Yes it does glow in the dark. Any spillage would necessitate costly cleanup to prevent attracting fireflies next summer. By the way, wash your hands if you touch the stuff.

O'Malley

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RR telegraph message 2345hrs 14 Feb

Okeana depot to O'Malley, CUT

Trip OK until we went into emergency on the trestle north of Okeana. Found out the stop was caused by a ruptured air hose. I had to crawl out on the trestle to fix it. This was difficult because crossties were the only floor on the bridge. So I crawled across the gondola loads to reach that broken hose. Then couldn't get good leverage on the wrench. Finally

made the repair and pumped up the trainline. Continued after an hour and half delay.

Rip

---

RR telegraph message 01305hrs 15 Feb

Shandon depot to O'Malley, CUT

Received your dispatch on the fly at Okeana. Too late! I was already filthy with that Wolframite stuff. It seems that I have no control over what can happen this trip.

I soon saw flashes of light on snow coming from mid train. Signaled the engineer to stop by bleeding off brakeline pressure. The brakeman and I then walked forward on opposite sides of the train. Because of glow from loads, didn't need lanterns. Found blazing hotbox at one gondola journal. Put out same with snow. Retrieved "hotbox coolant" from caboose and lubed the dry journal bearing bronze. Resumed the trip 30 minutes later.

Rip

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Letter 8:00 AM, 15 February 1942

From: Riteowhey Detective Agency

C&O freight yard, Cheviot

To: Sgt. O'Malley, Security

B&O RR, CUT

Final report. At last! Wolframite shipment safely delivered to those government agents at Fernald. That "Wolf" stuff sure is black and sticks like glue after clothes get damp with snow. I had to hose myself off at the Cheviot shops.

You know, I spent more time on the ground than on the train during the course of that trip.

Rip Riteowhey

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RR telegraph message 1:30PM 15 Feb

CUT to Cheviot yard office

For Rip Riteowhey

Hold your horses! 1000 pounds of load missing from shipment delivered to Fernald. What's going on?

O'Malley

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Letter 9:00 AM, 16 February 1942  
Millcreek Arms, Cumminsville  
To: Sgt. O'Malley, Security  
B&O RR, CUT

Oh, I forgot to mention that. A tarp was put on ties of trestle at Okeana and covered with that stuff in order to get better access to air brake hose. The glow helped our seeing things too. Since we had no way of getting it reloaded on gondola, train proceeded onward to destination.

After cleaning up at Cheviot, and getting breakfast, work crew and myself returned to the trestle site with section car and two empty trailers. Most of the wolframite was reclaimed, taken to, and set off on government spur, making them happy. What little stuff that was lost blew away in the breeze as it sifted down and between the crossties.

I'll be in the office at CUT tomorrow. Right now it's time for a little more shut eye. This case is closed!

Rip Riteowhey

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## **THE ASSOCIATE**

Although his secretary Mildred Mudlark kept Rip's own personal activities organized, he himself occasionally got baffled when following multiple leads or clues that involved more than one active case.

Union Terminal's B&O Security Chief, O'Malley, thought as much when a phone call to check on a given railroad's problems resulted in a full report on an entirely different scenario. That man needs some shoe leather help, he thought, to "stay on track" of each case load's scouting and resolution.

And so it was that Dilbert Daffey, a records clerk, was assigned to assist Rip for a short time. Now "Dil" was a complete opposite from Rip. He wore glasses, was scrawny and jumped upon seeing his own shadow. However, he took orders and always tried to do his best. Once more, he was part Ojibwa Indian (and so, named after a duck).

Rip's latest case had to do with theft of steel rails, spikes and tie plates from little used railroad sidings. These had mostly lighter rail and were located out in the country away from populated areas. The crooks might

have sold the material on the black market, because good steel was had to come by. A check of local scrap dealers showed no activity of this nature.

Concurrently, Rip was following up on reports of illicit goings-on tied to MacGoingle's Fun Time Amusements. This facility, situated north of Hamilton along the B&O ARMCO branch, did a brisk business entertaining war plant workers on their occasional time off.

On site rides consisted of a merry-go-round, spinning Hurricane, roller coaster and a Tunnel-of-Love train. Of course there was a dance pavilion with big band sounds.

Rip had taken Mildred there once. He spent his time on the train, while she wanted to dance. His gumshoes made the latter difficult for Rip. No unusual activities were seen on that visit.

Our detective decided to have Dil apply for part time work at MacGoingle's, doing odd jobs in the evening. Mean-while Rip rode cabooses on all nearby local freight runs. He was attempting to discern a pattern related to the rail thefts.

As a matter of fact, that activity did seem to be happening in those counties surrounding Butler. And, he noted that the stolen 40lb rail was so outdated that it could barely support a loaded forty foot boxcar; let alone a modern Mogul steam locomotive.

Rip and Dil phoned regular reports to Mildred, who forwarded the lack of progress on to O'Malley. "Begorra", he fumed, "Let's have some action."

A Week went by, as well as a few dark and stormy nights. Then Dil reported in that some upgrades were forthcoming to the Tunnel-of Love train. Rip had nothing new. O'Malley said "##\*X%@~#!"

Next morning, in Rip's office, the sleuths were mulling over the lack of recent developments. Dil commented that the amusement facility had just finished replacing the light 2ft gauge track with much heavier used rail. "How heavy?" asked Rip. "Went from 20 to 40 pounds, I'd say" replied Dil. "Ya'know guys, you might have something in common." said Mildred.

Following some discussion, it was determined that the light rail was sold for scrap to help fund the struggling MacGoingle operation. That much was certain. But, source of the heavier rail, remained unknown. "We

need to track down that track" stated Rip. "Dil, how are you at tracking?" "If'n the spoor ain't too cold, I'm fair to middlin." Dil offered.

So the two detectives started off. First they went to MacGoingle's looking for clues. There they found roller mill markings on some of the 40lb rails which gave their year of manufacture. Next, various railroad theft sites were scouted in hopes of finding a match somewhere on remaining track. "Bingo!" shouted Dil, eyes to the ground, when he spotted similar notations outside Clarksville. They were found on what remained of the PRR Panhandle Division.

When confronted, MacGoingle's admitted to their skullduggery. Upon being reimbursed for seldom used rail, the railroads agreed to not press criminal charges. And, the war effort could use the scrapped 20lb steel rail.

Thus another case was cleaned up, so to speak. Dil's help had been useful, but he was needed back in the records office; now two weeks behind on its workload. Rip's gas ration card had taken a hit with all the running around off the beaten track. O'Malley was happy again. Now it was back to normal with Mildred telling Rip where to go!

Episode closed.

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## **IN THE NAVY**

Cincinnati a seaport? Yesiree! Rip Riteowhey often saw Destroyer Escort vessels down at the riverfront. Lashed side by side, they would be loading provisions for passage on the Ohio River, then the Mississippi and on to the Gulf of Mexico. Final destination: the North Atlantic, guarding convoys. Their freshly painted gray sides contrasted with the sometimes muddy river water.

Our railroad detective friend walked the team tracks above the Public Landing on a regular basis, watching for suspicious characters or unusual activities. Once he had outwitted a thief stealing jerry cans of rationed gasoline from a warehouse.

Tonight Rip was not on duty, but just out enjoying the fresh cool air. His destination was the old side wheeler "Island Queen"; where he planned to help the kitchen crew clean up any left over vittles. He had not eaten since noon and had skipped out of CUT to avoid its noisy milling passengers.



An hour later, feeling satisfied, Rip hiked up the bank to catch a north bound trolley on the Cincinnati Street Railway. In short order he had done so and arrived home at his apartment.

Once there, he quickly changed into faded dungarees, a blue slipover shirt and white sailor's hat. Upon picking up a duffle bag stuffed with a change of clothes, he was out the door again.

Destination ship 43E. Rip had been loaned to the Coast Guard by CUT's B&O Office of Security for a short voyage down river to Madison, Indiana. This would take them through the Markland Dam and locks. Scuttlebutt suggested that an attempt would soon be made to damage that facility for the purpose of impeding transportation (Rip's forte) and slow beer production (also of interest) by lowering the Ohio's water level below Red Cap Ale's intake pipes.

Rip was welcomed aboard 43E by First Mate Charlie Doane, who showed the detective to an unoccupied hammock in the ward room. And since the ship was diesel, not steam, powered Rip was given duty as an engine wiper.

The ship cast off at daylight, which was necessary for maneuvering, and quickly passed under the CNO&TP truss bridge. A Coast Guard pilot helped the helmsman navigate away from sandbars and other shallow water obstructions.

Being springtime, the river flowed swiftly and the ship's powerful engines produced quite a wake. This caused the Anderson Ferry to rock and roll when passed. The ferry Captain, an old salt himself, mouthed a few unheard insults.

Before going to work below deck, Rip longingly watched two B&O and NYC trains passing one another on the river's north bank. Even the sun didn't help his spirits as he ducked wind borne bow spray.

The little town of Vevey was passed at noon and by dusk they were approaching Markland Dam. With a ship their size, it would be necessary to tie up and wait for morning to traverse the lock.

Well fed, and with a bit of sore arm, Rip longed for a restful time in his hammock. But duty calls. He would need to stand night watch in order to keep the lock from harm. Best to be ashore where I can see better, he thought, and exited via the gangplank.

The facility was well lit, enabling Rip to scout around. But, of course, he could be seen as well. So back to the ship to hide in the port side lifeboat. He laid down on one of the seats and promptly fell asleep.

A loud "crunch" jolted our slumbering gumshoe awake. Peering over the low gunwale of the little boat Rip saw the upstream lock gates jammed open. Rushing over, he helped the facility's crew look for a problem. They quickly discovered that a monkey wrench had gotten into and jammed the large gears.

By reversing the door mechanism they were able to release the crushed wrench and remove same. Luckily the gears had escaped damage. A dockhand then had to admit sheepishly that he had neglected to account for the monkey wrench after completing routine maintenance. KP duty was his reward.

Rip resumed his search for saboteurs. Dawn broke without further incident.

Rip reported bright and early to the ship's Captain and on-site Coast Guard officials. It was determined that the threat still existed and Rip should stay here while the destroyer escort vessel proceeded downstream. To protect his cover they planned to make it look as though he had remained on board. As a matter of fact, he did.

A mile down stream the river curved out of sight of the dam. It was here they lowered Rip, by rope, over side into the water. He had to swim ashore, dodging a floating tree trunk in the process. Nearby bushes provided cover for a change into dry clothes carried in a waterproof backpack.

Rip ate a gift of K-rations and waited for dark before hiking back to the dam. He arrived at nearly midnight, because of the war's double Daylight Savings Time program. After a quick search he found and climbed a ladder to the top of the dam. There a small secluded alcove provided a place for him to hide and wait unseen.

Barge traffic continued unabated, thanks to the afore mentioned flood (no pun) lights scattered all around. Nothing unusual happened until 3AM, when an alarm went off. A gaggle of small private craft had been entering the lock when one became jammed in the closing gates. Its sole occupant leaped to safety, using an available ladder, while the rowboat was reduced to bits of kindling wood. The huge jaws were stopped to

allow clearing away the debris. No one watched or kept track of the occupant, except Rip Riteowhey railroad detective.

Oscar had deliberately sacrificed his rowboat to cause confusion, so that he could slip onto the dam and associated lock facilities. His half-baked scheme entailed finding, opening and jamming drain valves which controlled river water level behind the dam. The intent was to "get even" for treatment given him by the authorities (see "Cabin Car caper").

But Rip had seen all and began to shadow the interloper. Oscar found an open door, entered and proceeded down a flight of stairs to the machinery area. Dim lights and humming pumps made the area kinda spooky. Unsure of the setup, he cautiously searched for wall signs or valve handle tags that might guide his destruction efforts.

Our detective slipped in after the shadowy shape, and slip he did! Rip's "sneakers" lost their grip on the wet stair treads and down he went. Thump, bump and bang to the floor below. Bruised, but not broken, he got up to chase after the unknown figure who had now started to run.

Down to a lower level they went, which led to an inspection tunnel built into the dam. Of course the tunnel stopped where the lock cut through. Thus Oscar did an abrupt 180; running back over Rip and knocking him down again.

Back up, Rip reached for his holstered railroad spike. Oh, Oh! He must have left it at home. All he could do was grab an oil can as they wound back through the machinery room, up and out on the walkway. Across the top of the partially open lock gate they ran.

Rip threw the oil can at Oscar. It missed, but did hit the walkway and spill its contents. Oscar promptly lost his footing on this suddenly slick spot and went down. Subdued, he was promptly handcuffed with a pair of new boxcar door seals that Rip just happened to have in his pocket. Only then was the identity of the "bad guy" discovered.

Case closed?

Well, not quite. Rip was in Kentucky and up a creek without a paddle, so to speak. His transport to Madison was long gone. Time to hoof it he figured.

A walk south along Route 42 for thirty minutes or so brought our friend to the Carrollton Electric Power Company. It turns out their coal was

delivered by rail. Rip promptly pulled out and displayed his railroad pass; obtaining a ride on their private shortline. Over to a yard connection with the L&N at the town of Worthville they went. In a short while Rip was home again at the Queen City.

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## **PRELUDE TO PRIVATE EYE**

[This author is remiss. I have barely covered Rip's early schooling towards work in the detective field. We peeked at his saving of a run away train, heard about travels by interurban in Indiana, learned the results of taking a night class in Cincinnati and saw the beginnings of a career at CUT. So now let's now take a closer look.]

Because he was a person of mediocre means, attending an institution of higher learning to study the detective art was not on Rip's immediate horizon. Ever the railroad fan, he took odd jobs of any fashion, particularly if the work was close to an active track. Off duty time was spent wandering switch yards and smelling the sulphurous coal smoke. He became acquainted with the locations of the seven rail lines that wound around the Queen City as well as all the trolley routes. Talking with railroad workers on their breaks developed relationships that resulted in the passing on of old railroad rule books. These were read with much gusto regarding employee dos and don'ts, hand signals and signal light color codes.

Sometimes he caught the watchful eyes of railroad "bulls" and was asked, in colorful language, to get off their property. That's how Rip happened to meet Chief O'Malley, head of B&O's security force at Union Terminal.

Now the Chief was a stern sort of policeman, but he had a kind heart and befriended young Rip. The latter explained how he yearned of someday chasing bad guys, solving RR problems and preventing railroad mischief in general.

O'Malley saw a mutual benefit here and offered Rip a chance to help out his department by following up on tips and doing other leg work. The pay would be meager, but the youngster would be allowed to utilize an empty closet in CUT as the base for his operations.

Acceptance was immediate and work began the next day. Further, the Chief's many contacts gave Rip the chance to attend company seminars and take RR sponsored short courses in "detection".

Rip soon determined that there were three levels of interpretation regarding the definition of “breaking the rules” when committing a crime:

1. What is morally right or wrong.
2. Actual breaking of the rules (not following them to the letter).
3. How a lawyer perceives said act.

His initial tasks consisted of such mundane things as comparing car numbers to load manifests, checking boxcar door seals for tampering, chasing hobos and looking for panhandlers in the terminal rotunda or concourse. Rip was currently unarmed but later, with his detective license, he would pick a new railroad spike as his weapon of choice.

After proving his worth to O’Malley he was rewarded with an all-lines railroad pass that permitted access to coaches, locomotive cabs and caboose.

Rip continued taking local short courses related to his career field and saved his funds in order to attend formal classes back home again in Indiana. This schooling was really a work and study co-op program through the Ball Company glass works supported college in Muncie. He often referred to this as “highballing”. As such he became a CUT intern.

One of Rip’s most favorite classes was “Donut Evaluation”; his worst “Gumshoe Terminology”. His grades were best in “Detective Art” and lowest in “Creative Problem Solving”.

None the less, all requirements to a certificate for “General Detective”, with a minor in Railroad Acts, were eventually completed. This, in under a year’s time! Rip hung the sheepskin on his closet wall. Soon he was formally hired by the B&O and given a switch lock key. Rank on his pay scale would remain unchanged thru a trial period.

Some of Rip’s early assignments turned out to be just “grunt” work and others just downright unbelievable.

Lost Train: A Grand Scale train running at the Zoological gardens was found missing one day. Rip’s investigation was hindered by zoo keepers rounding up several monkeys that had gotten loose from their cages. It was soon apparent the critters had run the consist into the on-site lagoon. After a good hosing off, all was well.

1937 Flood: First, Rip was nearly marooned by rising water in a CH&D caboose on the grounds of Spring Grove Cemetery. He left it sitting over

the access road bridge and got out by swimming to safety in a stranded trolley car. Bad decision! Although both stayed dry, the caboose at least had food, water and a stove.

1937 Flood: Second, he later ended up patrolling the C&O's High Line yards. When trying to stop a loose composite gondola, which had a broken handbrake, he got the ride of his life downhill into the flooded Mill Creek valley. Upon hitting water its trucks separated and the body floated on like a river barge. Rescue came after getting hung up against telegraph poles.

Free ride: Rip was asked to deadhead over to the NYC's Beech Grove shops and escort an overhauled 0-6-0 steam switch locomotive back to the Union Terminal roundhouse facilities. Duck soup he thought. Wrong! His ride sitting on the engine's seat boxes was the roughest he had ever experienced. Mainline speed doesn't suit switchers designed for yard work. Task completed, however.

Cattle call: Several upset bovines had escaped from a derailed cattle car over in the nearby stock yards. Our budding detective was sent to round them up. Rip requested help from a couple of hobo buddies (luckily from Texas) who lassoed the critters in short order. The cows were corralled in empty pens and humanity was saved. Afterwards, he treated all to White Castle sliders.

Depot mystery: O'Malley received a report concerning the Bowersville depot once used by the now defunct railroad that had run from somewhere to nowhere. Known as the "Grasshopper" line with one narrow gauge locomotive, it had once been affiliated with the Little Miami (PRR). This was really outside CUT's sphere of influence, but Rip was dispatched as a matter of courtesy. After arriving at the crime scene, he followed footprints (skid marks) on the ground to a local farm residence. There he found the errant depot building; now serving as a chicken coop.

Rip's energy and skill displayed in solving these dilemmas completed his trial period and he was accepted as an integral part of B&O's CUT Security Department.

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## **IN ABSENTIA**

Rip had taken a short vacation over to Indianapolis in order to visit a Monon friend at the old interurban hub. This left O'Malley, B&O

security chief at the Union Terminal, to resolve all the little problems he had been thrusting off to the railroad detective. No big deal thought the Chief; most any third grader could handle the task. He was soon to find otherwise.

Early on a Monday morning he received a report that a composite (built with metal frame and wood body) hopper car was missing from a CH&D siding on the other side of Mill Creek. The wheel sets were later discovered on a stub siding that once led to the Cincinnati and Westwood Railroad. No other clues were to be had.

Thursday came news of another lost composite hopper car; this time on a C&LE remnant west of where the CH&D cut through Spring Grove Cemetery. Again, no leads.

A third one disappeared over the next weekend from that railroad's yard in Glendale. The wheel sets were located a half mile south, hidden by brush, at the diamond crossing sidings leading to several industries.

A flustered O'Malley telephoned Rip at the traction hub, now a bus terminal, to ask for help. The detective thought a bit, then suggested the Chief find Sly the hobo and question him. A good idea since that character was tuned in to all kinds of railroad activities.

Hanging up, O'Malley sent word to his uniformed crew to find Sly. He also decided lookouts might be worthwhile, and placed one each at the old Price Hill and Fairview incline head-houses, as well as the top deck of the Western Hills Viaduct. These locations looked out over the entire Mill Creek valley. Something was bound to turn up.

Sly turned up; a little thirsty. Some liquid refreshment soon got him to talking. He had heard tell of someone selling metal to scrap yards and wood planks for home heating. Probably they were black marketers. Sly would ask around. Meanwhile, the lookouts had nothing to report.

One of the Union Terminal's own steam locomotives split a switch and went on the ground, tying up passenger loading track four. A common mishap, perhaps; it was quickly re-railed. O'Malley's mood got worse.

A broken air hose in the coach yard and a blown boiler fuse plug outside the roundhouse didn't help matters any. Nor did two taxis colliding in the roadway and blocking traffic under the rotunda.

The Chief had to get out; so he headed to Over-the-Rhine for a sandwich. By chance, he ran into Sly the hobo doing a little curbside panhandling. His queries had produced an outline of the car thieves operation.

Empty hoppers would have their brakes released and a pry-bar used to start them rolling down hill. Next they were shunted onto a little used siding and stopped. A gang of men then did a fast tear down and loaded the material onto wagons. Wheel sets were too heavy to lift and so left in place. Under cover of darkness all this illegal activity was unseen, except by hobos.

O'Malley pulled in his lookouts and sent his army of officers and plain clothes men to watch all "out of the way" side tracks. Three nights later, success. The notorious Baker Boys were arrested in the process of taking a composite gondola from P&G's power plant and moving it over to Railroad Street.

A local workhouse found a nice room for the Baker Boys, Sly was given a "pie card" (free eats), Rip was able to finish his vacation and O'Malley's mood was much improved.

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## **SCRATCH AND SNIFF**

A few stories back told about Rip's finding a critter he named Dawg; who had helped him capture some thieves robbing a railroad yard. Having no owner (the dog that is) Rip took him home. Let's see what happened next.

His new companion was smart. Dawg quickly acclimated to Rip's work schedule and living style. They took walks each evening and watered all the fireplugs, rain or not. When Rip got lost, Dawg would lead them home. Doing weekend detective work usually took both of them; sniffing out clues, as it were.

On the rare occasion Rip that used his auto, Dawg would ride shotgun in the passenger seat. Traveling by train also became a routine experience where, after a quick boost up, the canine took command of a cupola seat. And, leftover food became a thing of the past.

More than once Rip was glad that he had his companion there to help him on dark and stormy nights. As a matter of fact, Chief O'Malley soon noted an improvement in the quantity of our railroad detective's "case closed" filings. Remarkably, Dawg even single pawed one situation when



a thief tried to pilfer the contents of a parked boxcar that he was guarding. Said thief, with tooth marks on his arm and a torn pant leg, was hauled off to jail by the sheriff. Not long after, Dawg sported a new collar with a shiny Railroad Badge attached.

One weekend the pair were assigned to cover CUT's huge rotunda and train concourse, watching for pickpockets and panhandlers. They just happened to run into Bobby, his mom and dad (who was returning to his post after a short furlough). Rip had previously shown Bobby around a locomotive cab, so they were friends. Dawg was then introduced and given scratches behind the ears, producing serious amounts of eager tail wagging.

"Wish I had a dog," said Bobby "to play with while dad's gone to war." "What do your mom and dad say to that?" asked Rip. "Maybe, come Christmas," he replied. "That's a long way off." said Rip. "Let's take a walk." The trio ambled out to the newsstand with Dawg between the two humans. They returned shortly with a lollipop being shared by Bobby and his new four legged friend.

"Tell you what, Bobby." offered Rip. "Suppose you and your mom take Dawg home with you. If things go well, you may keep him forever. You see, Mildred and I are expecting the stork to bring us a little one in the not too distant future. Our apartment is kinda small for a family of four. I'm sure Dawg would be happy living with someone like you that's more his size."

"Wow," replied Bobby.

"Woof," agreed Dawg!

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## **STICKUP**

A cerealized radio story about Cincinnati back in the steam locomotive days when brewing was a major local industry. It was produced by a local distiller who happened to use molasses in one of its bubbly recipes. Here is a brief rundown of program #2:

ANNOUNCER:

B-E-L-L-Y BEER presents another thrilling quarter hour mystery adventure that features Cincinnati's most favorite detective, Rip Riteowhey.

MUSIC interlude:

ANNOUNCER:

A truck driving over the Western Hills Viaduct has wrecked and spilled its load of sorghum molasses onto railroad tracks below - causing train cars to stick fast to the rails and mighty locomotives to slip or stall.

We find Rip in a rain slicker standing on the sidewalk of said bridge and looking at the mess below. Having walked the tracks, he actually fits the title of gum shoe. After suggesting the use of double headed engines to switch freight cars, and pigs from the nearby stockyards to eat and clean up the sweet and sticky mess, he remarks -

RIP:

"I could go for a stack of pancakes right about now."

COMMERCIAL:

BELLY BEER is the beverage that can assuage your thirst at 12, two and four o'clock. Its wonderful effervescence will leave you feeling as light headed as a balloon.

ANNOUNCER:

Rip has gone into a nearby restaurant and is eating pancakes. He says -

RIP:

"M-m-m-m m good!"

COMMERCIAL:

Did we mention that BELLY BEER comes in the handy two gallon size jug, with an easy to remove real corncob plug?

ANNOUNCER:

Rip leaves the pancake palace and, upon entering the street, slips on some pig manure. He oaths -

Rip:

"My, that stuff sure is slippery! It sticks to a shoe, too. Burp!"

COMMERCIAL:

In trying situations BELLY BEER can be used as a cleaning agent. It will quickly remove the yucky muck, leaving things only a little worse off than they were before. So, remember to buy a BELLY!

ANNOUNCER:

We hope that you've enjoyed this new transcribed adventure of Rip Riteowhey railroad detective. Be sure to tune in again next week, same

time same place, for the episode titled "SHOE SHINE". Don't forget, any time is B-E-L-L-Y BEER time.

MUSIC interlude:

[Note: For some reason the contract was cancelled shortly before episode #3 could be aired. Wonder why?]

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## DUSTY DICK

Unlike most private eyes (detectives) of the day, Rip Riteowhey relied upon a railroad spike for protection. He carried same in a leather holster; in lieu of a "gat", "piece" or revolver. It gave him some confidence in scary situations, although seldom used.

On a day in May 1969, Rip remembered that the first transcontinental railway had been completed just a century before. A gold spike was driven to commemorate that occasion. Why not paint my spike a golden color, he thought. Out of his chair, through the CUT loading dock door and down Gest Street he hurried, to Schmidt's Hardware store. There he found a can of Val-Spar gold enamel and a brush.

Back in his office he coated the blue crusted spike and hung it up to dry. The vapors it put off filled his small closet-like office and made Rip a bit drowsy. So he sat down in his Morris chair and dozed off.

Wrangler Rip was walking the car tops of the westbound Central Pacific special mail train. He was guarding a payroll shipment going to immigrant track workers that had just finished laying the line. The Utah air was dry and dust stirred up by the train's passage got into Rip's eyes and mouth. The alkali taste was not good! P-tew spat Rip; the expectorant hitting his toe pinching new cowboy boots.

Off in the distance he suddenly spied a small gang of mounted horsemen who were heading train-side. He lay down on the car roof and pulled out his "Hop-a-long Cassidy" spyglass. Yup, they had red bandannas covering their faces. Must be after the payroll he surmised. Since a six-shooter had not come with his cowboy outfit, Rip wondered what he could do to thwart their evil plans. Perhaps jump on them when they came along side? He did so, and missed.

They stopped, however.

Dazed and dusty Rip stood up and asked their intentions. “We are on our way to the Heber Rodeo”, was the reply. “Why the face bandannas?” queried Rip. “Oh, to keep out some of this awful dust”, they answered. “Sorry that I interrupted you”, said Rip, and they rode off; leaving him all alone. The train had proceeded on west and was disappearing in the distance.

Oops, thought Rip. It’s either walk ten miles to the next town or wait for tomorrow’s return train.

That uncomfortable thought woke Rip from his daydream.

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AND SO ENDS THIS BOOK!

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