



# Look


MARCH 10, 1953

15¢

THE STRANGE CASE  
OF THE **MAN BEHIND**  
**THE ATOM SUB**

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They said 'Don't' but—  
**WE GOT MARRIED**  
**ANYWAY**



**Betsy  
von Furstenberg in  
NEW PARIS  
FASHIONS**

08909 R2 APR54  
DR THOMAS O BURCESS  
306 S 11TH ST  
MOORHEAD MINN A4



LOOK ANNUAL MOVIE AWARDS

# A MONKEY ON MY



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The detective asked impatiently, "Who's there?"

The girl's voice was childish shrill. "I want Detective Valente or Detective Spinosa."

"What's it about?"

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At the phrase, the detective suddenly became alert. To have a monkey on one's back describes, in the jargon of the drug user, the frightful sensations of the addict when he or she is unable to get a "fix." Few nonusers are familiar with the phrase, and the detective immediately sensed that the girl might be an invaluable lead in tracking down the pushers who were supplying her. Both the detectives whom the girl had mentioned were at Headquarters, and they were quickly summoned. Detective Valente took the phone from the officer who had answered, and Spinosa listened on an extension.

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Valente answered, "Yes, of course."

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"Five dollars a deck. But sometimes I need two or three decks a day."

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The girl hesitated, then countered the question with a hint of defiance. "What do you think?"

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The girl's voice mounted in hysteria. "Yes, but can I help that? I've got to get the money for the pushers somehow. They tell me where to meet the men and then when I've got the money, I have to take it where they say—to a drugstore or candy store or hotel lobby. I give the pusher the money but I don't get the stuff right away. They plant it in a hallway or mailbox and I have to pick it up."

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While they had been talking, the call had been traced to the Times Square drugstore. The detectives hurried to the address but there was no sign of the girl.

That night, they went to the 45th Street address which the girl had given them. It was a restaurant. As she had said, there was a line of telephone booths and on the door of one was an out-of-order sign. With the two men was a woman member of the narcotics squad, Laurette McDonnell.

A few minutes before ten, a large blonde woman entered the restaurant, went directly to the booth, removed the sign and sat down inside. Almost instantly, the telephone rang. The woman remained in the booth for half an hour, during which time there were seven incoming calls.

When the woman got up to leave, Miss McDonnell scraped up a conversation with her. Posing as a drug addict badly in need of a fix, Miss McDonnell managed without much difficulty to persuade the blonde to sell her a deck (small square paper envelope) of heroin powder. The woman detective paid for the deck with a marked five-dollar bill.

Near the door of the restaurant, the woman met a dark, well-dressed, middle-aged man. The two went out to the street together. Trailed by Detectives Valente and Spinosa, the couple entered the subway at Sixth Avenue and 42nd Street. From there, they took a train to the East Broadway Station. On the platform, there seemed to be an altercation between them, and the detectives, thinking they might separate, decided to arrest them.

At Police Headquarters, the blonde identified herself as Barbara Lane and described herself as

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a "model and dancer." The man was a former convict who had served terms in Atlanta and Sing Sing. He gave his name as Edward Schonbaum.

In the world of the junkie and the hophead, the 15-year-old girl was given a name too. Addicts throughout New York claim that the girl who "ratted" was Joanne Barbara Scott.

If these claims are true, disclosing her identity can do no harm now, for Joanne is dead. Within two weeks of the mysterious telephone call, her body was found on the estate of a physician in Greenwich, Conn. She had died of a "hot shot"—an overdose of heroin. She had then been thrust into an old steamer trunk and dumped into the grounds of the Greenwich estate.

## Panic Among the Addicts

When it became known that the arrest of Barbara Lane and Edward Schonbaum had been brought about through an anonymous tip to the police, there was an immediate panic among the addicts who make their "scores" in the Times Square area. All of them were fearful that the suspicion of "stooling" might fall upon them. Then, too, those who had been making their purchases from Lane and Schonbaum had to find new sources of supply. But this was not easy, for the pushers, made wary by the arrests, usually refused to sell to customers with whom they had not had previous dealings. And even when they did sell, they demanded outrageous prices.

That's how it happened that a kid I knew slightly, named David Trosser, needed extra money for his supply of drugs. To get it, he decided to raid my room.

On one particular night, the door of my hotel room slid open a crack as I started to fit the key into the lock. I hesitated, wondering if I could have forgotten to lock up when I had gone out. Then I caught the sounds of stealthy movement.

The door opened soundlessly under the pressure of my outspread fingers and I stood looking into

the room. A thin youngster shut the drawer of my dresser, then turned to my writing desk. With nervous hands, he fitted the cover over my portable typewriter, snapped the lock and lifted the typewriter from the desk. He swung around, the typewriter dangling at his side.

We stood facing each other. He let the typewriter fall at his feet and moved closer. I said uncertainly, "Dave—you're Dave Trosser."

He didn't answer but slumped down into the easy chair beside my bed.

"Dave, what are you doing here?"

His lips twisted. "What do you think?"

"It looks as though you were stealing my typewriter."

"Okay. So what?"

"Look, Dave, suppose you tell me all about this."

Dave sniffed and tears slipped from the corners of his eyes. He brushed at them with the back of his hand, then he yawned.

I said irritably, "For God's sake, Dave, what's wrong with you?"

"I needed some gold—money to you."

"I don't get it, Dave. Your father's a pretty generous guy. Why not go to him?"

"The old man—that's a laugh. He wouldn't give me the time of day—not any longer."

"You're no common thief, Dave. Why not tell me what it's all about. Maybe I can help you."

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His voice was now completely out of control. He screamed, "You stupid b-----, I need a fix. Do you understand now?"

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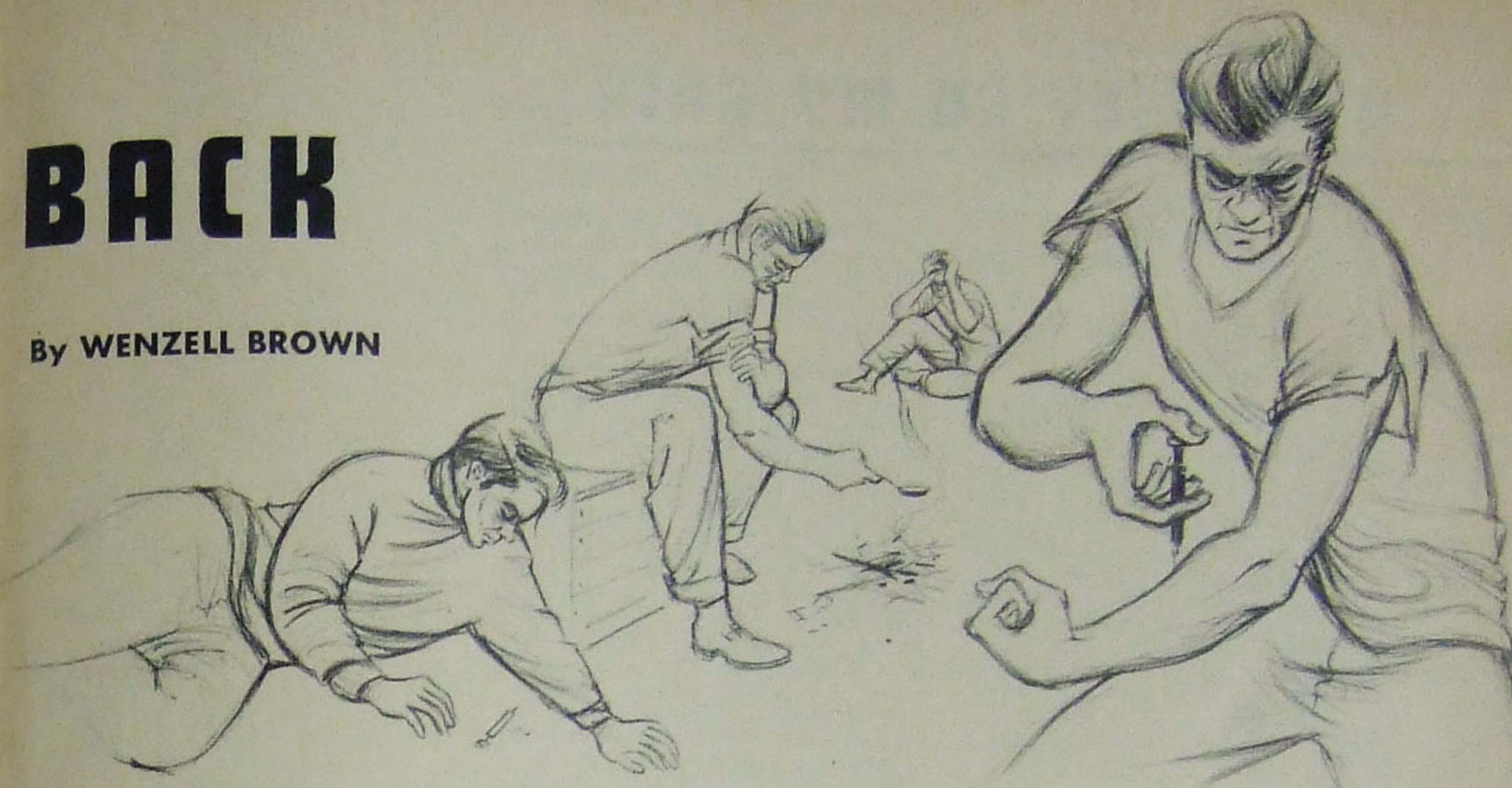
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CONTINUED

Although the facts in this story are taken from actual cases, fictional names have been used to conceal the identities of those involved.

# A MONKEY ON MY BACK continued

"Ten minutes—maybe fifteen."

"I'll give you fifteen. If you're not back I'll come after you."

"George."

I stood on the corner watching Dave stride along the block. I had a feeling of being tricked, but I didn't know what to do about it. Dave moved fast, his light overcoat blowing about his thin legs. He walked almost to the end of the block. Then he seemed to fade into the shadows.

I was never to see Dave again alive. Six days after he had come to my room, his broken body was found in a back alleyway in the Bronx, some miles away from the spot where he had left me. He was sprawled on his back, his skull smashed, his spine broken. His overcoat, jacket and even his shoes were missing. The police had discovered him there in the early morning and they believed that he had fallen from the roof of an eight-story tenement the night before. There was no identification on the boy's body but, because of his constant calls to the police, Ralph Trosser, Dave's father, was notified.

## Was He Murdered?

The police were inclined to view Dave's death as an accident. They found the ugly row of scars on his forearm where he had been injecting himself. They told Ralph Trosser that it was a common practice for youthful addicts to congregate on the roof-tops to take their shots. According to their theory, Dave had given himself an unusually heavy "jolt" and then wandered about the roof until he stumbled over the edge. They were more convinced than ever when they found two jumbos—large capsules of heroin—in his trousers pocket.

Ralph was unwilling to accept the police version of his son's death. He insisted that Dave had been robbed and murdered, that his body had been thrown from the roof. He attached importance to the missing articles of clothing, although the police did not. Detectives pointed out to him that it was common for addicts to sell coats, jackets, even their shoes to obtain the price of a shot.

Ralph stuck doggedly to his belief in foul play. He vowed that murder had been committed and that the perpetrators of the crime must be caught and punished. He was close to a crack-up.

In an attempt to prevent this, I sought to divert him from his individual grief by interesting him in the larger problem of adolescent drug addiction and, in so doing, became interested in the problem myself. Many of the social workers and doctors with whom I talked felt that behind drug addiction invariably lay a "disturbed personality." The broken home, the overdependence upon the mother relationship, the sense of personal inadequacy, racial discrimination and a general feeling of frustration were the causal factors mentioned most frequently.

When I repeated this to Ralph Trosser, he replied, "I can't see it. Dave had a good home, all the money he needed—everything we could give him. What went wrong?"

I was silent. From a physical point of view, it was true that Dave Trosser had had a good home. He had a pleasant room, ample food, the best of medical care when he was sick, the benefits of a private school. He had had love, too, and at times an oversolicitous interest in his welfare. But de-

spite all these advantages, Dave had weaknesses in his personality structure, flaws in his environmental background, that lowered his resistance to the social, moral and physical disease of drug addiction. And the responsibility for these weaknesses lay in large part upon his parents.

I learned from Ralph that Dave had been in a private sanitarium twice to take the cure for heroin addiction and also that he had been for a while under the care of a New York psychologist, Dr. Robert Eugene Hazel.

Psychologically, Dave was addicted from the very first shot. After the first time, he could never leave the stuff alone. A judge I talked to told me addiction can work that way. "Once a kid is addicted, there just doesn't seem to be any hope for him. We send him over to Rikers Island or even to the Federal narcotics hospital at Lexington, Kentucky. He takes the cure. Then what? Maybe it's a week, maybe a month, before he's on again."

"You've come to me about this Trosser kid," the judge continued, "and, you know, for the life of me, I can't get worked up over him. Of course I realize a rich youngster can have a tough time, that he's got plenty of problems. But just the same, Dave had a lot of chances to make good in life."

"But what about the kids from Harlem, from Little Spain, that appear before me? I look at their probation reports. Maybe eight or ten people live in one room. All they got is that room, the street, and a jam-packed school. It's kids like these I'm really sorry for. Why don't you check up on some of them instead of bothering with a spoiled brat?"

I said, "It's making the first entering wedge that's tough. How do I get started?"

He looked me over speculatively; then he smiled. He picked up his phone and spoke into it softly. I heard him say, "Is Phil still there? Good. Ask him to come in when he can." Then turning to me, he inquired, "How would you like to make the rounds with a probation officer?"

"It sounds interesting, but can it be fixed?"

"Surely. Phil Newcomb's coming in here in a minute. I'll ask him to take you with him any day it suits you. He's one of the best—" He broke off as his door swung open. The judge and the probation officer exchanged greetings; then the judge introduced me to Newcomb.

## The Maldonado Case

Newcomb looked me over with open curiosity, then asked, "How soon would you like to go?"

"Whenever you can arrange it."

"What about tomorrow afternoon?"

"Good."

The next day, as I trudged up the tenement stairs behind Newcomb, I tried to recall what I could of the rather sketchy briefing Newcomb had given me on the case. The boy who had been arrested was named Hector Maldonado. His age was 16; his offense, that of holding up a grocery store in company with another boy. Upon arrest, Hector had confessed to the holdup and two others as well.

The physical examination had disclosed a series of injection marks just above the wrist. Notwithstanding this evidence, Hector had at first denied taking drugs. Later, he admitted that he used heroin "occasionally" but still denied that he was an addict, declaring that he was only a "joy-popper"—an occasional user. Why then had he staged the



robbery? His answer had been that his friend was in need of a jolt and had decided to "pull a score." Hector had followed his friend because he was afraid of being called "chicken"—a coward.

We were at the door now and Newcomb gave three heavy thumps with his knuckles. A voice, thin and high-pitched with terror, called in Spanish, "Who's there?"

"Probation officer. Open up."

"Ave Maria," the words turned into a wail. The door slid open, a crack at first, then wide.

Newcomb asked, "Are you Mrs. Maldonado?"

Instead of answering, the woman sobbed.

Newcomb spoke more gently, "Hector Maldonado's mother?"

"Sí, sí. I am Hector's mother. Why do you come here? Is he in more trouble?"

Newcomb shook his head. "We've come from the court to ask questions. Maybe what you can tell us will help Hector."

"Help—yes," Mrs. Maldonado pulled herself together. She sat down on a stiff-backed chair and motioned for us to take the sofa.

Newcomb asked Mrs. Maldonado, "What about Hector? Has he ever been in trouble before?"

"Oh, no. He is a good boy."

"Has he ever been arrested?"

"No. Oh, no."

Newcomb passed a card over to me. It was a record of Hector Maldonado's arrest for engaging in a gang street fight the previous July. He had been dismissed with a warning.

"Why do you think Hector committed this robbery, Mrs. Maldonado? Did he need the money for any special reason?"

"No. It was the gang on the street. Always they are after him to do this and to do that. He would be good if only they would leave him alone."

"Did you know Hector was taking drugs?"

"No. That can't be. Not Hector."

"He was taking heroin. We have the doctor's

report. Besides, the boy's admitted it."

Mrs. Maldonado began to sway from side to side and tears streaked her cheeks. "I don't know. I don't know what this heroin is. I don't know what's wrong with my boy."

"Did he sleep here every night?"

"No. No. I did not want to tell, but now I have to. Sometimes he was away three or four days at a time. Sometimes a week."

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# A MONKEY ON MY BACK continued

"Ten minutes—maybe fifteen."

"I'll give you fifteen. If you're not back I'll come after you."

"George."

I stood on the corner watching Dave stride along the block. I had a feeling of being tricked, but I didn't know what to do about it. Dave moved fast, his light overcoat blowing about his thin legs. He walked almost to the end of the block. Then he seemed to fade into the shadows.

I was never to see Dave again alive. Six days after he had come to my room, his broken body was found in a back alleyway in the Bronx, some miles away from the spot where he had left me. He was sprawled on his back, his skull smashed, his spine broken. His overcoat, jacket and even his shoes were missing. The police had discovered him there in the early morning and they believed that he had fallen from the roof of an eight-story tenement the night before. There was no identification on the boy's body but, because of his constant calls to the police, Ralph Trosser, Dave's father, was notified.

## Was He Murdered?

The police were inclined to view Dave's death as an accident. They found the ugly row of scars on his forearm where he had been injecting himself. They told Ralph Trosser that it was a common practice for youthful addicts to congregate on the roof-tops to take their shots. According to their theory, Dave had given himself an unusually heavy "jolt" and then wandered about the roof until he stumbled over the edge. They were more convinced than ever when they found two jumbos—large capsules of heroin—in his trousers pocket.

Ralph was unwilling to accept the police version of his son's death. He insisted that Dave had been robbed and murdered, that his body had been thrown from the roof. He attached importance to the missing articles of clothing, although the police did not. Detectives pointed out to him that it was common for addicts to sell coats, jackets, even their shoes to obtain the price of a shot.

Ralph stuck doggedly to his belief in foul play. He vowed that murder had been committed and that the perpetrators of the crime must be caught and punished. He was close to a crack-up.

In an attempt to prevent this, I sought to divert him from his individual grief by interesting him in the larger problem of adolescent drug addiction and, in so doing, became interested in the problem myself. Many of the social workers and doctors with whom I talked felt that behind drug addiction invariably lay a "disturbed personality." The broken home, the overdependence upon the mother relationship, the sense of personal inadequacy, racial discrimination and a general feeling of frustration were the casual factors mentioned most frequently.

When I repeated this to Ralph Trosser, he replied, "I can't see it. Dave had a good home, all the money he needed—everything we could give him. What went wrong?"

I was silent. From a physical point of view, it was true that Dave Trosser had had a good home. He had a pleasant room, ample food, the best of medical care when he was sick, the benefits of a private school. He had had love, too, and at times an oversolicitous interest in his welfare. But de-

spite all these advantages, Dave had weaknesses in his personality structure, flaws in his environmental background, that lowered his resistance to the social, moral and physical disease of drug addiction. And the responsibility for these weaknesses lay in large part upon his parents.

I learned from Ralph that Dave had been in a private sanitarium twice to take the cure for heroin addiction and also that he had been for a while under the care of a New York psychologist, Dr. Robert Eugene Hazel.

Psychologically, Dave was addicted from the very first shot. After the first time, he could never leave the stuff alone. A judge I talked to told me addiction can work that way. "Once a kid is addicted, there just doesn't seem to be any hope for him. We send him over to Rikers Island or even to the Federal narcotics hospital at Lexington, Kentucky. He takes the cure. Then what? Maybe it's a week, maybe a month, before he's on again."

"You've come to me about this Trosser kid," the judge continued, "and, you know, for the life of me, I can't get worked up over him. Of course I realize a rich youngster can have a tough time, that he's got plenty of problems. But just the same, Dave had a lot of chances to make good in life."

"But what about the kids from Harlem, from Little Spain, that appear before me? I look at their probation reports. Maybe eight or ten people live in one room. All they got is that room, the street, and a jam-packed school. It's kids like these I'm really sorry for. Why don't you check up on some of them instead of bothering with a spoiled brat?"

I said, "It's making the first entering wedge that's tough. How do I get started?"

He looked me over speculatively; then he smiled. He picked up his phone and spoke into it softly. I heard him say, "Is Phil still there? Good. Ask him to come in when he can." Then turning to me, he inquired, "How would you like to make the rounds with a probation officer?"

"It sounds interesting, but can it be fixed?"

"Surely. Phil Newcomb's coming in here in a minute. I'll ask him to take you with him any day it suits you. He's one of the best—" He broke off as his door swung open. The judge and the probation officer exchanged greetings; then the judge introduced me to Newcomb.

## The Maldonado Case

Newcomb looked me over with open curiosity, then asked, "How soon would you like to go?"

"Whenever you can arrange it."

"What about tomorrow afternoon?"

"Good."

The next day, as I trudged up the tenement stairs behind Newcomb, I tried to recall what I could of the rather sketchy briefing Newcomb had given me on the case. The boy who had been arrested was named Hector Maldonado. His age was 16; his offense, that of holding up a grocery store in company with another boy. Upon arrest, Hector had confessed to the holdup and two others as well.

The physical examination had disclosed a series of injection marks just above the wrist. Notwithstanding this evidence, Hector had at first denied taking drugs. Later, he admitted that he used heroin "occasionally" but still denied that he was an addict, declaring that he was only a "joy-popper"—an occasional user. Why then had he staged the



robbery? His answer had been that his friend was in need of a jolt and had decided to "pull a score." Hector had followed his friend because he was afraid of being called "chicken"—a coward.

We were at the door now and Newcomb gave three heavy thumps with his knuckles. A voice, thin and high-pitched with terror, called in Spanish, "Who's there?"

"Probation officer. Open up."

"Ave Maria," the words turned into a wail. The door slid open, a crack at first, then wide.

Newcomb asked, "Are you Mrs. Maldonado?"

Instead of answering, the woman sobbed.

Newcomb spoke more gently, "Hector Maldonado's mother?"

"Sí, sí. I am Hector's mother. Why do you come here? Is he in more trouble?"

Newcomb shook his head. "We've come from the court to ask questions. Maybe what you can tell us will help Hector."

"Help—yes." Mrs. Maldonado pulled herself together. She sat down on a stiff-backed chair and motioned for us to take the sofa.

Newcomb asked Mrs. Maldonado, "What about Hector? Has he ever been in trouble before?"

"Oh, no. He is a good boy."

"Has he ever been arrested?"

"No. Oh, no."

Newcomb passed a card over to me. It was a record of Hector Maldonado's arrest for engaging in a gang street fight the previous July. He had been dismissed with a warning.

"Why do you think Hector committed this robbery, Mrs. Maldonado? Did he need the money for any special reason?"

"No. It was the gang on the street. Always they are after him to do this and to do that. He would be good if only they would leave him alone."

"Did you know Hector was taking drugs?"

"No. That can't be. Not Hector."

"He was taking heroin. We have the doctor's

report. Besides, the boy's admitted it."

Mrs. Maldonado began to sway from side to side and tears streaked her cheeks. "I don't know. I don't know what this heroin is. I don't know what's wrong with my boy."

"Did he sleep here every night?"

"No. No. I did not want to tell, but now I have to. Sometimes he was away three or four days at a time. Sometimes a week."

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# A MONKEY ON MY BACK continued

alarmed, wanted to bolt.

Then a glow settled down over everything and he felt confident in a way he never had before in his life. He was sure he "was just as good and maybe better than the other cats sitting around the room." All his nagging doubts about himself evaporated and he was perfectly satisfied with what he was. He began "to float around on top of the room somewhere." Later came nausea, spasms of retching and profuse sweating.

Hector had no sense of shame or guilt after his initial contact with heroin. Indeed, he felt that he had secured further recognition in the eyes of the clique. Despite his sickness, Hector retained certain pleasurable memories of the effects of the drug. Heroin was a "natural" for Hector, whose instincts were toward withdrawal, regression and escape from reality through fantasy.

Hector's psychological addiction to heroin was almost instantaneous. Within a week, he was clamoring for the drug. He progressed rapidly from "snorting" to "skin-popping"—taking the drug subcutaneously—and from there to "shooting the main line"—cutting the wrist to make an intravenous injection. For the first month or two, Hector took an average of about three shots a day. But by the end of the third month, he required as many as five or six. Soon, his single drive in life was to remain perpetually "goofed."

## He Was "on the Hook"

The pusher had provided Hector with his first few caps free or at a cut rate. But as soon as Hector was securely "on the hook," he began demanding payments that were far in excess of anything that Hector could raise legitimately. Hector, fearful lest his supply should be cut off, was desperate. Several times, he stole money from his mother's purse. He began prowling the tenement in which he lived, looking for objects that could be pawned. He stole a radio and two overcoats, but soon the other tenants became suspicious of him.

Hector knew that only through continued stealing could he hope to buy the drugs he needed, but his natural timidity made the thought of further thefts terrifying. He was ripped by his fears, but the goad of his addiction acted as a constant whip, making him commit a series of petty crimes.

Now, having taken the cure, Hector swore that he had learned his lesson, that he was "off the junk for good." All he wanted was the chance at a job and then, as soon as he earned enough money, to move out of the neighborhood.

He kept his job for just a little over five weeks. Each Saturday, he brought home his paycheck and gave it to his mother, who returned a few dollars of it to him for spending money. He assured me that he liked his work and that Mr. Grosbeek, the grocer, was pleased with him.

In the fourth week, I had begun to grow suspicious. Hector was always apathetic, inclined to slur his speech and careless in matters of personal neatness. But it seemed to me these characteristics were more noticeable.

I had refrained from making checkups with Mr. Grosbeek for fear of jeopardizing Hector's job. Now I hesitated about questioning Hector, for, if he was really off heroin, my lack of confidence in him might have a detrimental effect.

Mrs. Maldonado gave me a frantic call on

Thursday of the fifth week. Hector had not come home the previous night. I took a taxi to Grosbeek's grocery. Hy Grosbeek looked startled when I came in. Didn't I know he'd had to fire Hector? That was Tuesday. He'd paid the kid off and let him go.

I dreaded going back to Mrs. Maldonado, but I had to. When I got there, Hector had still not shown up. Mrs. Maldonado was in tears. I went out to scour the neighborhood. Knowing Hector's habits, I judged he would not be far away. I ran into him on a corner of Second Avenue.

## A Row of "Mainline Hitches"

I tried to keep my voice casual. I said, "Your mother's worried about you, Hector."

"Yeah, I know."

"Okay. Let's go home."

When we got home, Mrs. Maldonado embraced Hector, wept over him, called him endearing names. After a while, I got them separated and told Hector he had better take a bath. He agreed. I went into the bathroom with him. Reluctantly, he undressed. As I had suspected, there was a row of "mainline hitches" along the soft inner flesh of his left thigh.

While Hector bathed, I called up Bob Hazel. Bob had not wanted to appear in the case personally but, after an argument, I persuaded him to see Hector. So when Hector had put on fresh clothes, I took him with me to Bob's office.

Bob Hazel's report was couched in the technical terms of his profession but, boiled down, it amounted to this: Bob doubted that Hector had ever been off heroin for long. Apparently, he had procured "caps" the same day he had left Rikers Island. Hector had not shown the symptoms of deterioration that might be expected because the "junk" he had been getting was so watered down.

Nevertheless, Bob thought Hector was addicted and, though his addiction was psychological more than physical, it was none the less dangerous.

Bob agreed to put more time into Hector's case. Each day for the next three days, he spent two hours with the boy. During some of the interviews, I was present. At first, Hector was nervous, strained, and answered in monosyllables. But eventually he talked in hysterical bursts of speech.

One day, when Bob had finished talking with Hector, I asked, "What chance is there for him? What can be done?"

"Perhaps nothing. The only thing that can save him is the complete smashing of the roots of his life. If he could get away somewhere else, among other people, he might—it is just barely possible—start his life anew. But even that slight chance is without hope unless he can break the habit first. He can't do that himself. No one can. But maybe I can get him into Lexington."

"I have no power to commit Hector. He would have to go voluntarily."

"I don't think you'll have any trouble. The boy is outwardly docile. He'll not rebel."

"Have you talked with him about it?"

"Yes. He says he'll go."

Bob Hazel arranged the technicalities of Hector's commitment to the hospital in Lexington. It was out of the question for the boy to make the trip alone and it was decided that Mrs. Maldonado should accompany him.

The train was leaving from Pennsylvania Station in mid-afternoon. I arrived in the station to find Mrs. Maldonado standing near the information desk, suitcases and bundles spread about her feet.

"Where's Hector?" I asked her.

Mrs. Maldonado smiled complacently. "He'll be here in a minute. He's just gone to the washroom."

Sudden suspicion flashed across my mind. "How long has he been gone?"

Mrs. Maldonado was still smiling but her mouth puckered. "Five minutes. Maybe ten."

I strode off to look for him.

When only five minutes were left, I returned to Mrs. Maldonado's side. She had begun to cry. Now she clutched the lapels of my coat. "Where is he? Where is Hector? Is he hurt?"

The train gates were open and people were thronging through. I watched the minute hand of my watch. One minute—two—three. I knew there was no hope. I watched the gates clang shut.

I did not find Hector that afternoon or that night. In fact, for three nights I could find no trace of him.

Hector showed up at his mother's of his own volition four days after his disappearance from Pennsylvania Station. His clothes were filthy with dirt and blood. His face was streaked, the left side puffed and discolored. His lower lip was split, caked with blood.

Mrs. Maldonado phoned me, begging me hysterically to come. By the time I arrived, Hector was sitting huddled in a striped bathrobe. Mrs. Maldonado was laying out fresh clothing. The discarded pile lay in a corner. I crossed to it and picked up his jacket and trousers.

## I Found the Speed-Balls

Hector was watching me with a certain dazed fixedness and I realized that he had a "high on." I began to go through the pockets of his trousers. Without warning, Hector gave a little high-pitched cry and flung himself upon me, his fists striking out weakly. I pushed him back into his chair. Pinned inside the cuff of his trousers was a small cellophane sack containing four crudely shaped pellets, which I recognized as speed-balls.

The speed-ball is perhaps the most dangerous of all the narcotics commonly sold in Harlem and Little Spain. It is a mixture of cocaine and heroin. These two drugs have completely different effects upon the users. Heroin is a depressive, which decreases all of the natural drives and causes the user to withdraw from reality and enter a world of languorous fantasy. Cocaine does quite the opposite. It is an excitant, giving a feeling of great strength, creating tremors and a sense of agitation coupled with the necessity for action.

The theory behind the speed-ball is that the cocaine will pep one up and the heroin slow one down, thus providing all the "good" sensations without any of the "bad" ones. In actuality, users of speed-balls have described ripping, tearing sensations, as though two conflicting personalities existed in the same body, fighting for control.

Now, looking at the speed-balls in my hand, I asked Hector, "Have you used any of these yet?"

"Just once. I couldn't get horse."

I didn't know what to do. Straight heroin was better than this and it was useless to try to prevent the boy from using drugs until fresh arrangements could be made for his removal to Lexington.

I placed some money on the desk. "Dammit, if you've got to take the stuff, buy straight H." I took the speed-balls into the bathroom and flushed them down the drain.

Toward the end of the week, I learned that Ray Hexon, a colored social worker in one of the nearby settlement houses, was taking one of their boys to Lexington. I approached him and explained my problem. He agreed to take Hector under his care. This time, I was determined there would be no slip-ups. I did not tell Hector of our plans until the morning of the day he was to leave. As on the previous occasion, he agreed docilely. During the rest of the day, I did not let him out of my sight. Half an hour before train time, I turned him over to Ray and walked away.

This time, Hector was going to take his cure. Upon his arrival in Lexington, he would be "blue-grassed," legally declared a drug addict under the laws of Kentucky. In this way, he would be confined in the hospital until the authorities gave their permission for his release.

Nevertheless, I knew that Hector's chances for a permanent cure were far from good. Statistics showed that over 80 per cent of those who pass through Lexington are known to be back "on the hook" within two years. How many free themselves from the drug permanently? Some officials guess one in fifty, others one in a hundred. Whatever the percentage, it is dishearteningly low.

That Hector should be one of the fortunate ones seemed far from likely. Handicapped with low intelligence, physical weakness and a background of poverty and degradation, he had had little opportunity to develop resources within himself that would come to his aid. But, as Bob Hazel had pointed out, this was his only chance.

While Hector was at Lexington, I had located a man named Eric Wambley through friends in Maine. He was a minister of one of the smaller denominations, with a church in a rural community. From time to time, he had taken young delinquents into his home and his work with them had met with marked success.

However, he had had no contact with drug addiction and when I first wrote to him about Hector, he had shied away from the idea of accepting the boy. But after a few letters had passed

between us, he became interested in Hector's problems and agreed not only to let the boy spend the summer on his farm but also to come to New York to accompany Hector on his trip to Maine.

Hector's placement with the Wambleys could be only a temporary measure and I felt that the real period of danger, the test of his stability, would come when he was back in his old environment, with the complex relationship to his mother still unresolved.

Time drifted on, with Hector at the Wambleys. Then the blow fell. A telegram from Eric Wambley informed me that Hector had run away.

Before I could reach Hector, he and a young addict friend, Johnnie Bragman — a boy with whom I had also worked — had mugged and robbed an old man at Portland, Maine.

Hector and Johnnie were each sentenced to from eight to twelve years. The ordeal was too much for Mrs. Maldonado; within ten days, she was dead. I was frightfully depressed and a sense of guilt lay heavily upon me. Only tragedy had evolved from my efforts.

### The Community Approach

When my interest in the drug traffic was first aroused through Dave Trosser's attempted theft of my typewriter, the only organization which I could find to which the addict had easy access was Narcotics Anonymous, a one-man organization run by a former addict.

At least five community centers in Manhattan have tackled the problems of narcotics in their neighborhoods with varying degrees of success. Their approach has been largely educational, but they have also helped boys and girls get to Lexington for treatment and have offered their guidance and, in some cases, psychiatric care after their return. Perhaps the most interesting campaign against drugs was waged by a group of teenagers in the James Weldon Johnson Community Center in Harlem. These youngsters wrote, printed and distributed 30,000 leaflets in English and Spanish, warning children in the area, and their parents, of the dangers of addiction. Unfortunately, however, most of these centers, like Narcotics Anonymous, need money. Two of them have closed down altogether and others have been

forced to restrict their programs.

The special Narcotics Court inaugurated on May 1, 1952, at 100 Centre Street is an experiment which may have far-reaching results. This is a court before which teen-age addicts or their parents may appear. As the court is civil rather than criminal, Chief Magistrate John M. Murtagh has placed emphasis on a statement that those who appeal to it will be "treated with sympathy and understanding and there will be no stigma attached." Mr. Murtagh also has expressed the hope that this court, if successful, will serve as a model for similar courts throughout the country.

Drug addiction strikes outward from the slum, the broken home, the teen-age gang, until it endangers the youth in every bracket of society and makes the public street, the public park and the public conveyance places of danger. There is no simple plan that will correct the conditions that have made mass addiction possible. There are no glib answers. Only when the doctor, the psychiatrist, the policeman, the judge, the housing supervisor, the teacher, the minister, the social worker and the director of special welfare groups can combine their efforts and secure the co-operation and the financial support of an informed public can addiction be combatted successfully.

Meanwhile, the youthful addict is with us in ever-increasing numbers. Unless he can be rehabilitated, drawn back into a pattern of life that is socially acceptable, he will form a hard central core of criminal activity which will give added strength to the power of the underworld. As I worked with the group of youngsters whose stories I have recounted here, I became increasingly aware of the pressures that forced them farther and farther from the hope of rehabilitation.

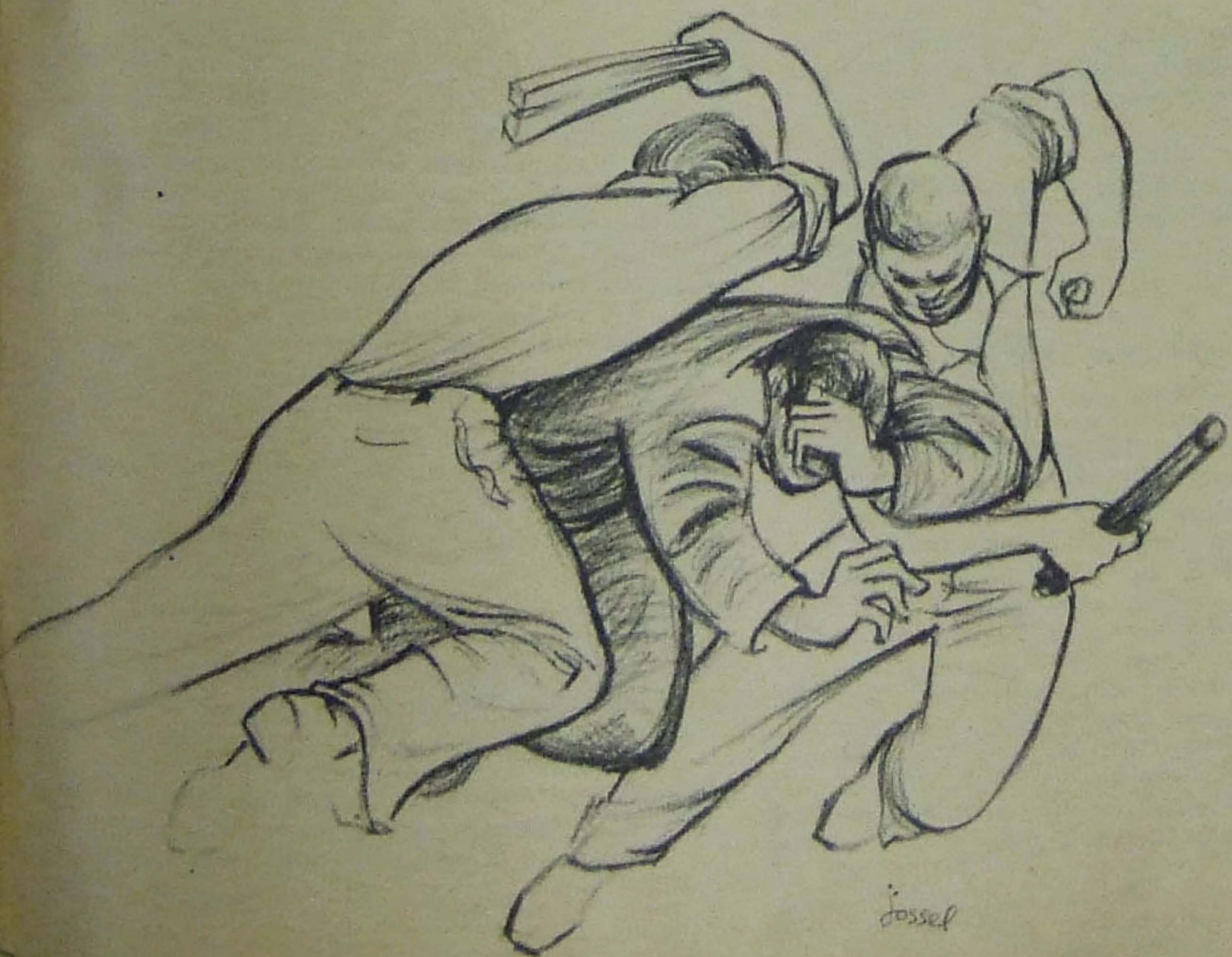
### The Need for Understanding

Yet each of these youngsters — whatever his weaknesses, his limitations, his flaws of character and personality — was a human being struggling with problems beyond his control. The need of each was for understanding, medical and psychiatric care, a sense of security — not for punishment. Somehow, out of the lurid fiction of the past, a popular misconception of the drug addict has been created wherein he has been depicted as a "dope fiend" — a slaving sex-crazed sadist — rather than as a sick, disturbed and maladjusted individual.

This false picture which has become imbedded in the public consciousness has been one of the principal handicaps with which those who work with the addict have to contend. I do not claim that the boys and girls whom I have presented here are typical. Indeed, I doubt if there can be such a thing as a "typical individual." But they are real people, and certainly no one studying their backgrounds could say that these children were fully responsible for the situations for which they suffered such frightful penalties.

Knowledge of addiction — both relating to its causes and its treatment — is still scanty. Until sufficient information is amassed, remedial treatment of the social conditions out of which addiction arises must be based on theory and speculation. From the cases of Dave who died, Hector and Johnnie who are serving long prison sentences, no direct solutions will spring. But it is my hope that their stories may act as a challenge for those who would deal with the addict with understanding and compassion.

END



Trosser