

## PURVIS

### *Part Three of Three*

Melvin Purvis (1903–1960) began as a Special Agent in the U.S. Justice Department. In 1932, J. Edgar Hoover placed him in charge of the Chicago office of Hoover’s new Division of Investigation, which soon became the FBI.

Over a six-month period in 1934, Purvis’s pursuit of the nation’s most famous “Public Enemies” put him in the spotlight. Apparently envious, Hoover drove him from the Bureau the following year.

After leaving law enforcement, Purvis married and raised three children, making his living as a radio broadcaster and as the head of the “Junior G-man” public relations campaign for Post Toasties cereal.

Some important dates:

80

**June, 1933**—Under the suspected direction of Charles “Pretty Boy” Floyd, gangsters ambush police and agents transferring a prisoner in Kansas City, killing three policemen and Special Agent Ray Caffrey, the first “G-man” to die in action.

**March, 1934**—Bank robber John Dillinger escapes from jail in Indiana and crosses a state line, making himself a federal fugitive.

**May, 1934**—Under Purvis’s direction, federal agents ambush Dillinger and Lester Gillis—aka “Baby Face Nelson”—at the Little Bohemia Inn on Star Lake, Wisconsin. Both criminals escape while two bystanders are killed. Later that night in a second gunfight Nelson kills one of Purvis’s agents before escaping again.

**July, 1934**—Purvis heads a team of agents and local police who assassinate John Dillinger outside the Biograph Theater in Chicago.

**October, 1934**—Purvis participates in the killing of Pretty Boy Floyd in a cornfield near Wellsville, Ohio.

**November, 1934**—Baby Face Nelson dies in a shootout with federal agents on an Illinois roadside. Two agents also die.

**February 29, 1960**—Purvis dies of a bullet wound from a .45 he received as a gift from fellow agents when he resigned. The death is ruled a suicide, though some evidence suggests it may have been an accident.

In seven scenes, *Purvis* follows history backward from 1966 (six years after Purvis's death) to the evening of the "Bohemia Inn Shootout" in 1934.

Scenes One through Five appeared in our Spring and Fall issues; Scenes Six and Seven follow.

#### CHARACTERS

LYNDON JOHNSON  
J. EDGAR HOOVER  
CLYDE TOLSON  
JOHN DILLINGER  
MELVIN PURVIS  
JOB INTERVIEWER  
PRETTY BOY FLOYD  
OHIO STATE HIGHWAY PATROLMAN  
BABY FACE NELSON

81

A LYNCHED BLACK MAN  
AN OFFICE SECRETARY  
A WOMAN BOUND AND GAGGED

*Scene 1: The White House Oval Office, October, 1966.*

*Scene 2: The home of J. Edgar Hoover, March 1, 1960.*

*Scene 3: A fathomless void, February 29, 1960.*

*Scene 4: An office at KSBC radio, Florence, South Carolina, spring, 1959.*

*Scene 5: An office of the U.S. Division of Investigation, Chicago, January, 1935.*

*Scene 6: A cornfield near Wellsville, Ohio, October 22, 1934.*

*Scene 7: A hotel suite on Star Lake, Wisconsin, May, 1934.*

An ellipsis [...] beginning a line is meant to suggest a pause.

SCENE 6

*Near Wellsville, Ohio; October 22, 1934.*

*A long shriek of agony...*

*Vast fields at night.*

*Pretty Boy Floyd lies amid rows of stubble. His shrieking subsides.*

*Purvis stands right; far left, a uniformed Ohio Highway Patrolman.*

*Except at the very end, Purvis never once looks in Floyd's direction.*

*A meteor shower makes shooting stars. Occasionally one or two or even three at a time streak through the sky.*

82

PURVIS: How much whiskey could be mashed and dripped  
From all this corn, do you suppose, that is,  
If it were corn, if we weren't standing in a waste  
Of stubble? Half the county could get good  
And cross-eyed. Have a whiskey-mashin' bash.  
Fiddler scrapin' up a waltz, one voice singing,  
Thump of the one-string washtub bass, and the tuba basso  
Too of the jug old granddad blows across  
The mouth of—oompapa oompapa oompapa—and  
The revelers tromping up from the elderly  
Floorboards a sprinkling of oaken dust.  
—Oaken? Or alder? What do you build things with  
Here in the Midwest, here in the treeless plains,  
Out here 'mongst the plowed infinitude?  
What are your floors and walls constructed of?  
Corncobs? Cornstalks? Mortared with the drool  
And cud of cows? If I took you back home  
With me to visit, down in South Carolina,  
I fear you'd deeply miss this place. You'd anguish

Wretchedly for flatness. You'd tell how  
In West Ohio at sunset you can see  
Clear across to dawn next Saturday.  
But South Carolina's way past Jupiter  
Tonight...How are you, Pretty Boy?

FLOYD: I'm peaches!  
Many's the night I've lain all night in the cornrows.  
Plenty of times I've tapered off a'spree  
All ragg'd up and dreaming in the chaff.  
You just wind up here when the times gets jolly!  
It's soft as feathers till you get to squirming,  
Then it bothers and pokes a feller. Well,  
But I won't squirm, because I'm paralyzed,  
Because you shot me in the back. My hero!

PURVIS: Oompapa, oompapa, oompapa, oompapa.  
There's a little town in Iowa called Lone Tree.  
Now, I've been through Lone Tree. And the tree is gone.  
Someday the name will be Forgotten Tree.

83

FLOYD [*sings*]: The ring-dang-doo, now what is that?  
It's round and black like a bowler hat.  
It's good for me, and it's good for you,  
And it's what they call the ring-dang-doo.

Now, looky here, I pissed my pants!

PURVIS: That's blood.

FLOYD: Blood! Well, that's all right then.

PURVIS: Charles Arthur Floyd, your life is leaking.  
If you've done crimes as yet not laid to you,  
You'd best own up and shed the burden.

FLOYD [*sings*]: O,  
When I was a lad not seventeen  
I met a gal from New Orlean.  
She had blond hair and eyes so blue  
And she let me ride on the ring-dang-doo.

I wish I *had* a few big things to say.  
I wish I had a book to read a speech from.  
I wish last April this poor dirt-scratcher  
Owns this place had plowed the alphabet  
Under these rows so all around would stand  
Important words. All I can tell you is  
The dirt feels natural to lie here dying,  
And why so many shooting stars tonight?

PURVIS: Those are meteorites rubbing the air:  
Like match heads dragged along the leg  
Of dungarees so fast they pop up blazing.

84

FLOYD: I guess they're bigger than a match head, though.

PURVIS: Smaller, actually. *Popular Mechanics*  
Or *Popular Science* had an article.  
They're rarely more substantial than a jot  
Of sand.

FLOYD: A little grit makes all this show!  
...I'd like to tell you things I remember. Damn,  
The words get smaller down here at the end.

[*sings*]: The ring-dang-doo, now what is that  
It's soft and round like a pussy cat  
It's got a hole in the middle and it's split in two  
And it's what they call the ring-dang-doo

PURVIS: The Kansas City Station! June last year!

FLOYD: I NEVER DID IT! By the Devil's luck  
I *were* in Kansas City on that day  
But never shot nobody, never knew  
A word about it! ...Boys, I swear to you,  
Laid out in my maker's lap and looking  
Death in the eyes, I swear it.

PATROLMAN: Well, he swears.

PURVIS: A villain's oath. Shoot him in the head.

FLOYD: What did he say?

PATROLMAN: Sir—did you say—

FLOYD [*sings*]: O, Mademoiselle from Armentieres,  
Parlez-vous  
O, Mademoiselle from Armentieres,  
Parlez-vous

85

PATROLMAN AND FLOYD [*sing together*]:  
O, Mademoiselle from Armentieres,  
She hasn't been kissed in forty years.  
Hinky Dinky parlez-vous.

PATROLMAN: Did you say shoot him in the head?

FLOYD: Aw, naw...

PATROLMAN: But you said shoot him in the head.

PURVIS: Did I?

PATROLMAN: You heard him say it—didn't you hear him, Floyd?

FLOYD: Aw, he didn't mean it. Naw, you didn't, did you?  
...“Allouette,” that's a right one for ye.



I'll tell you the story of something that happened one day.  
I hired on a farm one time for getting in  
The hay into the barns when I were nine  
Or thereabouts—tall work for any age.  
We scraped from dark till dark eleven days  
And didn't pause for Sunday. None but hay:  
Cut it, raked it, baled it, hauled it, stacked it,  
Breathed it, ate it, and at end of day  
Laid down to sleep in it, and by God all  
Night dreaming of it too, that itchy dusty  
Hay come up from Hell. So then one day  
He says, "Come raking with your hands along  
The floor here in the barn and throw them bits  
Out in the corral" and we says, "Farmer,  
Why?" and he says, "Folks, because you're done—  
Look around!" And I raised up my heavy  
Eyes and watched the mounds of hay go marching  
Off in every way I looked, and underneath  
A golden carpet in the slanty afternoon.  
He says, "Them as wants to make for Gaithersburg  
I'll pay you out, and there's nine miles of road  
To take you walking. Them as likes to go  
To Millerton the opposite, jump on  
Aboard my wagon and I'll haul you." Well,  
I rode in the back with my legs a-dangling,  
Rode past the mounds, all that we made, and then  
Past the mounds on the next farms, that we hadn't made,  
And it was so restful to be done,  
And then on toward into Millerton.  
...And I hopped off before the ice cream parlor  
And went inside to get me something heaped  
High in a bowl, and there I saw my uncle  
Who'd lost his eyes, my Uncle Charles that took  
That blinds-you kind of fever in his cradle:  
Now he's blind, and having some dessert.  
I never said a word hello. I sat right by  
And only watched. I watched him fetch

A ball of ice cream in a sugar cone  
 And eat it in the most...I'm going to find  
 The word for when you're blind and you eat ice cream.  
 First you hold the cone and touch it with  
 Your either fingers, then you hitch your chin  
 And nose up like you plan to make a speech,  
 And all you do is smell. And, boys, I think  
 You listen to it too, I think he heard  
 The dabs come melting and a-waxing along  
 The sugar edges of that cone like little  
 Moons till just that very first sneaked down  
 And touched his fingers. Then he started;  
 And he tried the drops, the cone, the tippy top  
 And sides of that ball, and all of it with  
 The tip, the sides, the under, and the broad  
 Of his tongue, and every now and then down came  
 His lips over that creamy teat like a babe's,  
 And nothing could disturb him. What's the word  
 For going at an ice cream cone that way?  
 'Cause then I bought my triple chocolate sundae  
 For me, and don't you see? I was a child,  
 And I ate it like a blind man, just as loving,  
 And when I watched my uncle tasting his,  
 I watched him like a blind boy who could see.  
 The word for doing things that way is "Young."  
 The word for that is "young, when you were nine."  
 It makes me kind of glad that I remember.  
 It makes me wish you wouldn't kill me, boys.  
 Boys, right here in this here pocket I've  
 Got over a hundred and twenty dollars cash.

PURVIS: Tempting us with bribes won't help you, Floyd.

PATROLMAN: Keep your cash.

FLOYD: I wasn't trying a bribe!  
 I only wanted to tell you something nice.

[sings]: Mademoiselle from Armentieres,  
Parlez-vous  
Mademoiselle from Armentieres,  
Parlez-vous  
She'll do it for wine, she'll do it for rum,  
She'll do it for candy or chewing gum!

You ever see them tracers in the war?

PURVIS: I was never in the war.

FLOYD: You never seen  
A tracer bullet? Man, they look like comets.

PURVIS: Those are meteors. A comet's quite  
Another thing.

FLOYD: They look like shooting stars.

89

PATROLMAN: That's what they are! For golly's sake,  
Shooting stars are meteors and falling  
Stars are comets!

FLOYD: Mares eat oats and does  
Eat oats and little lambs eat ivy!—geez!

[sings]: The ring-dang-doo, now what is that?  
It's round and black like a bowler hat.  
It's good for me, and it's good for you,  
And it's what they call the ring-dang-doo.

...You know, there ain't no moon tonight.  
Nor stars, except them meaty-balls...Oh! Look!

PATROLMAN: ...Mr. Floyd? Say...Pretty Boy?

PURVIS: What's this?

PATROLMAN: ... O Lord, his brains is spirtled on the corn.  
I think he's shot—he's shot right through his head!  
Who shot him?

PURVIS: I didn't hear a shot. Did you?

PATROLMAN: I heard no shot. Nor did I shoot him, sir.

PURVIS: Of course not.

PATROLMAN: Sir, get down. We'd best take cover.

PURVIS: ... By Heaven above, I don't believe such luck.  
This man's been struck in the head by a meteorite.

PATROLMAN: God's bloody stripes! When does that ever happen?

90 PURVIS: Never. I'd say of all the men to die,  
This man's the first to die of a meteor.

PATROLMAN: ... Mr. Purvis, I'd like to go get drunk.  
Here he lays, the criminal the hobos  
Made a song about, who started off  
A knock-knee spittle-slurper farmer boy  
That couldn't count his toes if he used his fingers,  
And stole a pistol, stole a car, stuck up  
A string of grocers, bought a tommy gun  
And dunked Ohio in a vat of nightmares—  
Slaughtered innocent sucklings at the breast,  
Raped their mothers, killed their fathers—and here  
He lays without a pillow or a dream.

PURVIS: Let's get him to the road so we can load him.

PATROLMAN: Assassinated by a shooting star!  
I'm gonna go get drunk.

PURVIS:

His legs... His legs...

Put your gun away. That's right... That's right...

Take his legs.

*Soon they find themselves positioned as if staging Caravaggio's "La mise au tombeau."*

BLACKOUT

SCENE 7

*An upstairs suite at the Little Bohemia, an inn on Little Star Lake, Wisconsin, May, 1934.*

*John Dillinger and Baby Face Nelson: Dillinger in casual attire, Nelson in shirt, socks, and undershorts, modeling a huge garish necktie.*

*In the corner a woman lies face-down, half-naked, bound and gagged.*

DILLINGER: Since when?

BABY FACE:                         Since the invention of the wheel.  
  Since the invention of fuck.

92   DILLINGER: Yer just a cracker someone hocked and dripped  
  A green and yellow speckled loogie on.

BABY FACE: Anyway, is there a law against it?  
  Point me in the book where it says a law.

DILLINGER: Sometimes style is all a man has got.

BABY FACE: Style is for the girlies!

DILLINGER:                                 Keep that necktie  
  Far from populated areas.

BABY FACE: Helen's got a cousin loves this tie.  
  Say, *she* ain't a feast-and-a-half for these baby blues!  
  A variable Oktoberfest, in fact.

DILLINGER: This vacation has gotta be absolutely  
  The final proof that I'm an idiot.

BABY FACE: Hey, let's get over to Oktoberfest.

It's something the Bohemies do, and do  
They drink? And get so dead blind sozzled  
The girlies almost fuck themselves *for ya?*

DILLINGER: I'd like to pose a query.

BABY FACE: I ain't queerie, dearie.  
Listen, John, they even grow beer gardens.  
Don't ask me how they do it, but they do.  
...I'm all ears. Pose as queerly as you want.

DILLINGER: If you were going to hold Oktoberfest,  
What would be your personal choice of months  
In which to gahdamn sonofabitching hold it?  
...Now, Baby Face, don't sulk. Don't pouty-pout.

BABY FACE: Your corkscrew conversation burns my ass.  
You're always yinkin' on a string until  
I swipe, and then "Ha-ha!"

93

DILLINGER: You take my point?

BABY FACE: You mean that thing you're jaggig at me? Yeah,  
I do. It's that I'm stupid once again.  
Shuffle up them Bicycles, Perfesser.

DILLINGER: Ante five.

BABY FACE: Goddamn it's hot. That's plenty,  
Deal 'em, Johnny.

DILLINGER: Never call me Johnny.

BABY FACE: Yeh, you told me that already once  
Or twice I think.—You ever go to the zoo?  
You know what a zoo is, don't you Johnny D?

DILLINGER: I know and I've been. Refer to me as John.

BABY FACE: John, did you ever go to the zoo, perhaps?  
Did you ever go to the toilet at the zoo,  
John? Did you ever go to the john, John?  
OK OK OK. Cheez, what a grouch.  
I gotta go at least a double sawbuck.  
Gimme four.

DILLINGER:           The limit on the draw  
Is three.

BABY FACE:   Then why do they call it Five Card Draw?

DILLINGER: ... Three, and four.

BABY FACE:                           Christ! Them's the one's I had!

94

DILLINGER: I hate the zoo.

BABY FACE:                           I fold. The zoo? How come?

DILLINGER: Because the animals are all in prison.

BABY FACE: That's right! I never thought of that! My deal.  
The ante's twenty. All or nothing, Ma.  
Can you imagine doing your time and people  
Lug their snot-nose runts around to pepper  
Peanuts and other such garbage at your cell?  
Pointing at your private parts and laughing?  
I mean, because you wouldn't have no pants?  
Hey, I know the guy who's got the biggest  
Wallywacker in Chicago. Bet.

DILLINGER: I guess you got down on your knees and measured.

BABY FACE: Jimmy Lawrence.

DILLINGER: Twenty. Never met him.

BABY FACE: Yeah? Because I'm pretty sure he knows  
Old Anna.—Fold—and Anna knows him back.  
... She never mentioned Jimmy with a giant  
Rutabaga hanging down right here?  
... When you and her are cuddling do you feel  
As like you're throwing toothpicks down a well?  
Ah, me.

DILLINGER: Dollar ante. Ante up.

BABY FACE: Perfesser, are you dealing out your ass?  
'Cause shit is all I'm seeing here. Three. Four.

DILLINGER: Take six!

BABY FACE: My deal.

95

DILLINGER: You call that shuffling?

BABY FACE: Ante up. Uh-uh. One hundred yoo-ess  
Smackeroos, Perfesser. Go on, bet.

DILLINGER: Screw, chump. I won't ante half my wallet.

BABY FACE: John D. ain't no Rockefeller, huh?  
Ante up, John. Ain't you got *one* ball?  
... 'Cause Anna Sage and Jimmy Lawrence made  
An item and she used to walk like this.  
WHAT'S OUT THERE!

DILLINGER: Nothing. Nothing's out there.

BABY FACE: I thought Wisconsin was cool beside the lake!  
I'm sweaty-grimy in my creases!

DILLINGER: Maybe if you didn't hop around the place  
Like ants was in your asshole.

BABY FACE: It ain't ants.  
It's more invisible than ants. It's muggy  
Fuggin Farenheit. It crawls down *in*—  
And *pisses*. That's what sweat is. Sweat is piss  
That crawls out holes all over you.

DILLINGER: Amen.

BABY FACE: (Workin the Loozyanna voodoo on me.  
Givin' me the hoodoo heebie jeebies.)

DILLINGER: You're a pistol. You're a sketch.

BABY FACE: My ass.  
96 When your little Anna was hooked on Jimmy Lawrence  
She sparkled in her eyes and walked around  
Like she was bent from riding on a ox.  
Ha ha ha ha ha! Shut up! Shut up.  
—I mean it, John. Shut up. There's something out there.  
Jeez! I got a headache up my ass tonight.

DILLINGER: We're supposed to be having fun, remember?

BABY FACE: I know—I got a bad condition, Doc.  
Since when I was small and caught a dose  
Of chicken rabies.

DILLINGER: Chicken rabies, is it?

BABY FACE: That's the stuff. There ain't no remedy.

DILLINGER: Course not. All creation knows the dreaded  
Chicken rabies gets you permanent.

BABY FACE: I got it at the carnival.

DILLINGER: Alas!

BABY FACE: There's nothing as worse as carnival chicken rabies.  
WHO'S OUT THERE.

DILLINGER: Sit down! There's no one there!

BABY FACE: I SMELL YOU VOODOO BASTARDS.

DILLINGER: Put that down.  
—Two-bit Tommy and his tommy gun.

BABY FACE: I GOT A WALAPALOOZA OF A HEADACHE.

DILLINGER: WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?

BABY FACE: I don't know! The doctor says  
I'm cracked from my caboose to my cabeza.

DILLINGER: You don't need a gun. You need a girl.

BABY FACE: You gonna lend me Anna? She's too... roomy.

DILLINGER: Is she? Well, at least she didn't bolt.

BABY FACE: Aah, Helen hadda see her mudder.

DILLINGER: See her out of two black eyes.

BABY FACE: She yakked and I smacked her lightly. Seems to me  
She's one of those bleeders. It's inherited.  
Lucky for her a gentleman just employs  
The open hand. There ain't no stand-up women.  
I miss Suzette Petunia. My one true love.  
—Hilarious, I'm sure. Your deal.



BABY FACE: Judge in Hammond threw her five years flat.  
...She says, "It all belongs to you, sweet boy."

DILLINGER: Jesus Christ. I don't think you've got  
Not one stray speck of decency in your blood.  
—That's right, there's a blank pan for you.  
No idea what I'm talking about.

BABY FACE: Man O man, she fit me like a sock.  
I'll ride that filly like a dandy little jock!  
Ooooooh she suck me like a Model O.  
A suction sweeper. Hoover. Model O.  
Mmmmm my Hoover got the Quadraflex:  
"It agitates for double the brushing action!"  
"It beats as it sweeps as it cleans." I say!

DILLINGER: Hoover's gonna suck *you* up one day.  
Say, Rubert, can't you see the age has turned?  
These guys are coast to coast with all state lines  
Erased.

BABY FACE: That Hoover hasn't got a gun!  
These G-bums ain't allowed to carry weapons.  
"Hello, Nelson." "Howdy, Hoover"—boom!  
It don't seem fair! But I don't make the rules.

DILLINGER: If he needs a gun, they'll vote him a howitzer.

BABY FACE: Every time one thing goes wrong they pass  
Some kind of law.

DILLINGER: It's goddamn infantile.

BABY FACE: Exactly. What a buncha swaddling children.

DILLINGER: Give me men for my enemies!—not these  
Schoolgoers and churchgoers and voters

Suckling on a giant perpetration.

BABY FACE: What what WHAT are we discussing, John?

DILLINGER: The lie, the fraud, the giant fairy tale.  
Our entire history. For instance,  
The possibility that John Wilkes Booth  
Is innocent of any crime would merit  
Scrutiny.

BABY FACE: Well you can scrutalize  
The page from Sears and Roebuck I just wiped with.

DILLINGER: ...It's not my deeds that poison me. It's all  
The mucous of the slugs like you my deeds  
Surround me with. I pass out drunk and wake  
with you and Hoover wriggling over my lips.

100

BABY FACE: Mmmmm lovah boy! Kiss my wriggle!

DILLINGER: We're revolutionaries.

BABY FACE: Oh yeah? Where's  
The revolution? You can just point.

DILLINGER: We stand up for the man with empty pockets.

BABY FACE: I'd pick his pockets, if they wasn't empty.  
That's my whole philosophy in a nutshell.

DILLINGER: The nutshell's on your shoulders.

BABY FACE: Mi mi mi,  
[sings]:  
O the G-men had no guns in Kansas City,  
Mowed 'em down like wheat before the scythe,  
The G-men had no guns in Kansas City,

And that's why there's three less of 'em alive.

DILLINGER: That Pretty Boy Floyd, he fixed their stuff, all right.

BABY FACE: Floyd was not the guy in Kansas City.  
They're after him for what he never did.  
They'll end up catching him too, and then he'll swing.

DILLINGER: Or fry.

BABY FACE: Or sizzle.

DILLINGER: Or stretch.

BABY FACE: His eyes will bug.

DILLINGER: He'll get as purple as a summer grape.

BABY FACE: He never shot those guys. Tough luck.

DILLINGER: Who did the deed?

BABY FACE: The world's so scared  
Nobody's talking, John, but I know for *dead*  
That one of 'em was Big-dick Jimmy Lawrence.

DILLINGER: Jimmy Lawrence?

BABY FACE: Anna's paramour!  
He laid 'em down like wheat before the wind.

DILLINGER: So if the G-men spiced old James with lead  
That'd only be the simplest form of justice.

BABY FACE: Shut up! Guys like you and me should never  
Call for justice. What if the Devil hears?

DILLINGER: There ain't no Devil...What are you looking at?

BABY FACE: Look into my eyes. There's nothing here.  
There ain't no soul. Just two black dots. Oh yeah!

DILLINGER: Can that noise, Prince Albert. You're not Lucifer.

BABY FACE: I ain't Lucifer, I'm just the proof  
He walks the night and steals the souls  
And gnashes them down laughing.—FREEZE! I SEE YOU!

DILLINGER: It's two a.m. What could be out that window?

BABY FACE: Nighthawks.

DILLINGER: Nighthawks?

102 BABY FACE: Werewolfs.

DILLINGER: Werewolves?

BABY FACE: Look,  
It's voodoo doctors out to rob me of  
My guts and oysters for their ceremonies.  
We're too near the Mississippi river!

DILLINGER: What? Take yourself a slug and get a grip.

BABY FACE: That Creole sorcery!—with roots from under  
The gallows and dirt from witches' graves in tiny  
Tins tied up with string. And babies dragged out  
Dead from their mother's basket in a whorehouse.

DILLINGER: Dragged from their mother's basket?

BABY FACE: Not-yet babies,  
Floating in jars of rum!



BABY FACE: Finally something we agree about.

DILLINGER: Bad and good stand always eye to eye.  
The law curses us and blesses them,  
But we're all laboring in Satan's vineyard.  
We take, but they guard bigger takers;  
We march on our own orders, they obey  
The orders of the big boss criminals;  
We commit crimes and do our time like men,  
They perpetrate injustices and breathe  
Steam on their badges and rub up a shine.—What's that?

BABY FACE: What's what.

DILLINGER: Shut up.

BABY FACE: I am.

104

DILLINGER: Shut up.

BABY FACE: I am.

DILLINGER: What's going on out there in west Wisconsin?

BABY FACE: It's just a coupla guys. Them two from Quincy.

DILLINGER: Yeah, but over there—no, *there*—you see  
That shadow leaning against that car?—now that's  
A gun wrapped up in his coat, or I ain't white.

BABY FACE: You're white as rice.

DILLINGER: That is a lowdown lawman.

BABY FACE: That's a carload of 'em.

DILLINGER: That ain't the only car.

What are we gonna do?

BABY FACE: Excuse me, there?

DILLINGER: What's our plan of escape?

BABY FACE: Excuse? Escape?  
We're gonna shoot it out!

DILLINGER: O no we're not.

BABY FACE: Do you see this? Observe. Now see that cop?  
...Now see the way that cop is sort of dead?  
...Get off the floor!

DILLINGER: Don't talk to me! Don't talk to me!

BABY FACE: Gee, ma, it's rainin'!

105

DILLINGER: I don't want to die!

BABY FACE: O looky there, they shot the guy from Quincy!

DILLINGER: I *told* you next time they'd have howitzers!

BABY FACE: I'm gonna shoot the other guy from Quincy!  
...O geez, they're shooting up my brand new Stutz!

DILLINGER: Look. They're all around us. Let's surrender.

BABY FACE: ...SEND FOR REINFORCEMENTS, G-MEN BASTARDS!  
YOU AIN'T PUTTING ME IN YOUR DIRTY ZOO!  
YOU THINK I'M A GIRAFFE? THEN WHAT'S THIS HERE?  
DOES THIS LOOK LIKE THE PROPERTY OF A GIRAFFE?  
GOD BLESS JOHN THOMAS!

DILLINGER: Who's John Thomas?

BABY FACE: Didn't he invent the tommy gun?

DILLINGER: General Thompson invented the tommy gun.  
... Nelson, Nelson, you're just aggravating  
Half the U.S. Army. Let's talk terms.

BABY FACE: What's yer poison, Johnny? Bullets, or bullshit?

DILLINGER: I'd rather be in prison than the grave.

BABY FACE: Either place, you rot. WE'RE WAITIN', G-MEN.

DILLINGER: Signal them.

BABY FACE: No white flag, chump.

DILLINGER: Come on!

106

BABY FACE: Get up off that floor OR I WILL SHOOT YOU.  
Johnny, I am waltzing outa here  
With a sunshine smile and cunt-hair in my teeth.

DILLINGER: Even if we get downstairs, what then?

BABY FACE: You don't get it! THIS IS A SHORT RIDE.  
We're in the funhouse—here's the accelerator.  
...All right, Perfesser, point the thing and shoot.

DILLINGER: ...Have you done this much?

BABY FACE: Not much.

DILLINGER: How much?

BABY FACE: Not very much at all.

DILLINGER: Me too. How many times?

BABY FACE: Actual face-to-face fighting with bastards with guns  
Like those?

DILLINGER: I wasn't made for this.

BABY FACE: I was!  
I live at the end of the world!  
They'll never take me alive!  
And the angels with a sword to bring it down  
Holy moly Molly on my head  
And the lion riding backwards on a smoking  
Dragon and the Whore from Babylon!

[sings]: Gimme that old time religion,  
Gimme that old time religion,  
Gimme that old time religion,  
It's good enough for me!

107

BOTH [singing]: It was good for the Hebrew fathers,  
It was good for the Hebrew fathers,  
It was good for the Hebrew fathers,  
It's good enough for me!

DILLINGER: Give 'em hell! I love a shooting gallery!  
And this is the real McCoy!

BABY FACE: Do you want real?  
DO YOU WANT REAL RIGHT UP YOUR ASSHOLE, MELVIN?

DILLINGER: TAKE THAT, PURVIS! This is glorious!

BABY FACE: Gunplay is funplay! Come on, Johnny.

DILLINGER: Where do you think you're going, idiot?

BABY FACE: You think I'm staying here and going to jail?

DILLINGER: We can't escape from here. But I escaped  
From jail last March. And I can do it again.

BABY FACE: They don't want us jailed, they want us dead,  
And that's what they'll get! And them dead too!

[*He exits walking backwards while firing toward the window.*]

BABY FACE [*singing*]: It's gonna take us all to Heaven,  
It's gonna take us all to Heaven,  
It's gonna take us all to Heaven,  
It's good enough for me.

[*DILLINGER is alone with the bound young woman.*]

DILLINGER: One more drum, Ma, then it's back to prison.

108

[*Fires out the window. Then all is quiet. After a pause, he sings:*]

'Twas midnight and moonlight the hour I departed  
And left her to dum da da dum [*fend for her own*]  
Da dum dum [*my horses*] and all that I had on the earth  
I'd have wagered that I would return

G-MAN'S VOICE [*O.S., through megaphone*]:

DILLINGER AND NELSON! (God, that's loud.)

COME OUT. YOU'RE SURROUNDED. THERE IS NO ESCAPE.

DILLINGER [*singing*]:

Dum-da dum dum dum da dum da da dum  
Da da da da da da da  
Eyes the same color  
As her straw-colored hair  
I'll never forget you I swear

G-MAN'S VOICE [O.S., *through megaphone*]:

TWO MINUTES, THEN WE'RE COMING IN. GIVE UP!  
COME OUT BACKWARDS WITH YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR!

DILLINGER [*singing*]:

The shape of her shadow so soft in the moon glow  
Did waltz on the frost on the ground  
The tears on her cheeks shone like diamonds  
She mourned but she made not a sound

[*Meanwhile, BABY FACE re-enters very stealthily by the same way he exited, with his tommy gun and a white, wet lily. In silence he waits for the song to end.*]

Hands with a touch  
That could calm the little lambs  
Voice like a chime in the churchyard  
Eyes the same color  
As her straw-colored hair  
I'll never forget you I swear

109

BABY FACE: In the beginning I was saved in Christ.  
Grandma taught me Father Who Art in Heaven.  
Told me Jesus had died to save us,  
I understood exactly what she meant.  
And I felt it right down in, this feeling of being saved,  
That's how real my grandma made the Savior,  
Like all the world was rescued, like as if  
Angels with wings swooped down here and  
Carried us away from these guns through the stars.  
Grandma taught me to pray,  
"Let me awaken as Jesus in every last part  
Of my body." Whattaya think of that?

DILLINGER: ... Do you realize for two-and-a-half long days  
You've done nothing but drink my booze and talk  
About your pecker and his pecker and her pecker?

BABY FACE: Listen to what I'm telling you.  
This is the news that I'm bringing.  
There's nobody out *behind* the place!  
I went all the way to the lake and had a piss.  
The coppers never even heard me tinkle.  
Maybe there *is* a God to love us, John.

DILLINGER: Bull. Go out for real, and see what happens.

BABY FACE: I *went* out, John. I tiptoed out and took  
A whizzer in the lake and shook it off  
And tiptoed back to tell ya.  
I brung you a lily, John.

DILLINGER: I am goddamned.

BABY FACE: Them G-men don't know how to surround a house!

110

G-MAN'S VOICE [O.S., *through megaphone*]:  
SIXTY SECONDS, BOYS, AND THEN IT'S OVER!  
COME OUT BACKWARDS WITH YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR!

BABY FACE: They're spreading out! We gotta move, or else!

[*They exit, leaving the young woman bound and alone in the room. As they tiptoe out:*]

G-MAN'S VOICE [O.S., *through megaphone*]:  
THE HOUSE IS COMPLETELY SURROUNDED. GIVE IT UP.  
AS SURE AS YOU'RE BORN, WE'RE GONNA GET YOU.  
DON'T TRY TO THWART THE LAW. WE JUST KEEP COMING.  
AS SURE AS YOU'RE IN THAT ROOM, WE'RE GONNA GET YOU.

BLACKOUT

- END -