

# **Evil Eye**

Clifford Goodrich

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# Evil Eye

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The first woman who saw the wispy figure grabbed her child and ran into the tenement.

The second one pointed her finger at him. She said, "E-e-e-!" Then she fainted.

A group of children scattered into various doorways on the squalid street. It was very peculiar.

The little figure in gray turned a pointed chin to the spot the children had vacated. He hissed an eerie whispering warning and glided down the street. Eyes looked furtively out of windows. The shades were drawn tight and housewives shuddered within the privacy of their dwellings.

A tall, gaunt man who happened to turn the corner at that moment, stopped suddenly. He pushed a hat back on his bald head and scratched the space between the two tufts of grizzled hair at the sides. His eyes seemed to squint in surprise.

Swiftly, he overtook the gray-clad figure.

"Dammit all," he began, "You're --"

The gray figure whirled. The lips above the oddly pointed chin twisted into a whispering snarl. Two guns leaped into his hands. There was the dull pfffft-plop of silenced weapons. Lead screamed past the gaunt man.

"What in hades!" the gaunt man yelled. Then he dropped flat on the pavement. More lead whipped the air above him. There was amazement on the gaunt man's face.

The gray figure scuttled around a corner. Retired deputy Richard Traeger, better known as old "Quick Trigger," scrambled to his feet. What had happened seemed impossible! Quick Trigger didn't like it at all.

Old Quick was the only man alive who knew that The Whisperer, dreaded "supercrook" nemesis of the underworld, was really Police Commissioner James "Wildcat" Gordon. Old Quick had practically raised Wildcat.

A master at disguise, he had made the queer dental plates that gave The Whisperer his chilling huskiness of speech. It was a masterpiece that Quick Trigger frequently regretted.

Quick Trigger started to pursue the fleeing gray man. Then he stopped. If The Whisperer had fired those shots in earnest, he would not have missed. The Whisperer seldom did.

For some reason, it seemed, The Whisperer did not wish even his closest friend to follow him. That probably meant the danger was great.

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It turned out that it was.

The retired deputy started back toward police headquarters. He had come to this squalid section because he had heard that The Whisperer had reappeared here. Quick had been hunting for him for more than an hour. Wildcat was needed at headquarters.

A tip there warned that a murderous extortion racket was about to close in on the trucking industry of the city.

As he pulled up in front of headquarters, Quick Trigger wondered what there could be in that poverty-stricken section that tied up to a major racket. But he knew The Whisperer was usually far ahead of underworld tips that reached the police.

The first person Quick Trigger saw when he clumped into the building was a chunky, red-haired human dynamo with a jaw like granite. He was clad in a suit that would have been the envy of a side-show barker. It could also have been used for a checkerboard.

Loud yellow shoes, a bright, button-hole carnation and a necktie to match, topped off the suit.

"Henry," Wildcat Gordon shouted, "you've been howling for months for The Whisperer's neck! Now I'm beginning to agree with you, and you don't like it!"

Wildcat strode through a door and faced a tall, long-nosed individual. He had a mouth like a fish. He used it now to protest. The man was Deputy Henry Bolton.

Normally, Bolton had two overpowering ambitions. One was to replace Wildcat as commissioner. The other was to have The Whisperer caught—preferably by somebody else.

"B-b-but, here's a racket threatening some of our most influential citizens," Bolton argued. "I've been telling you that for half an hour!"

Quick Trigger's jaw dropped open. His recent encounter with The Whisperer had been less than ten minutes before!

The retired deputy started to speak. He was interrupted by a high-pitched scream from outside. Staccato bursts of shots ripped out from the street.

Wildcat Gordon dived across the floor, made the hall in a single jump. Two Police Positives leaped into his hands.

Br-r-r-r-rt! came from the street.

A smallish, shriveled man stumbled down the hallway. He was so excited he fell flat on his face. He sat up and began wiping his forehead with a handkerchief.

"Th-th-they'll get me yet!" he stammered.

Wildcat rushed past him, to the outside steps. Another burst of shots parted his reddish hair. A second figure lay sprawled below him. The man scrambled to his feet, then looked calmly at a speeding sedan that disappeared down the block.

"Close," he said. "But it could have been closer."

Wildcat's cold gray eyes surveyed the second man. He was a tall, bushy-haired individual with snapping black eyes. His name was Terrington Small. But he was better known as Terry "Silk." He was a trial lawyer who boasted he had never "fixed" a jury.

Many persons did not believe the boast. They doubted that his silky, persuasive voice and knowledge of legal gymnastics made it unnecessary to fix a jury, as he claimed.

Terrington Small always insisted his client was innocent. Few persons believed that, either. Much to old Quick Trigger's snorted disgust, Terry Silk had the temerity to consider running for district attorney.

Wildcat Gordon looked coldly now, at the lawyer.

"If it was really you they were after, they had a good chance," he said, flatly.

Terry Silk looked quickly at Wildcat.

"I rolled behind the concrete side of the steps," he explained. "I was out of line."

The voice of the man inside interrupted him. The small man had gotten to his feet and was screaming for help.

Wildcat knew him. His name was George "Rocky" Crangle. He was in both the trucking and bonding business. His boyhood pals had dubbed him "Rocky" because he was about as hard as a pound of butter in the summer. Crangle was notoriously afraid of his shadow. He never played anything but a safe bet, if he could help it.

He was demanding plenty of safety as Wildcat, with the lawyer, came back into the headquarters building.

"I've been threatened, and now they're trying to kill me!" he shouted. "It's the biggest trucking racket that ever broke!"

He paused and looked a moment at Wildcat. His eyes were wide. When he got no response, he went on.

"Knuckles Werner is behind it," he insisted. "I'd be the first one he'd go after. He forced me to bail him, and he knows I'd cancel it the first chance I got."

Wildcat's expression did not change. He knew that "Knuckles" Werner had bragged of forcing Crangle to bail him a robbery charge. And he probably wouldn't beat the charge. Unless he skipped the bail.

Wildcat Gordon also knew that Terrington Small was attorney of record for Knuckles Werner! There had been reports that the two had quarreled. But that often happens, when a lawyer names a stiff fee for a case that is tough.

Quick Trigger cleared his throat.

"You were talkin' about The Whisperer," he said. "I saw him on Cleary Street, ten minutes ago! He got away." Quick Trigger stressed the ten minutes.

Wildcat Gordon whirled. In the same motion, he reached for his army hat, pulled it down over one blue-gray eye.

"I'm going to get him," he snapped. "Personally! And now!"

Wildcat stamped out of headquarters, Quick Trigger at his heels. Halfway down the steps, they almost ran into a human projectile in the form of a girl. Her hair was a tawny mane about the color of a lioness. She was Sarah, the daughter of Terrington Small.

"I must see my father," she cried. "I know he's inside!"

Wildcat merely nodded. He stepped to the curb, climbed into a police car with Quick Trigger.

"This impostor's been raising hell in the foreign district," Wildcat clipped. "I just found out he's got the section scared to death with a petty extortion racket. And I've got a hunch it's a lot more than that."

Wildcat was too busy talking to notice a second car falling in behind him. Had he looked in the rear-view mirror, he might have recognized the scarred features of Knuckles Werner. Knuckles was just as murderous as his reputation indicated.

Had Wildcat looked a second time, he might have seen the muzzle of a submachine gun creeping out of the right-hand window of the pursuing machine. But Wildcat Gordon was thinking of The Whisperer.

Even when he was considered a crook and hunted by cops, or when he was a superclub in the hands of a ruthless justice that made its own rules, The Whisperer was the friend of children and dogs alike.

The impostor had been chiseling in petty ways. He had convinced the ignorant dwellers of the squalid tenements that he possessed the evil eye. Thousands of ignorant people believed in that power, paid tribute to it.

Women fear for their children, and the children themselves are made afraid. Cases of it pop up in magistrates' courts every year.

Wildcat was thinking of that, instead of a car that might be behind him. He didn't want The Whisperer's usefulness ruined.

The pursuing machine caught up with the police car a block from Cleary Street. The muzzle of the Tommy gun came all the way out and began to talk. It talked in short, jerky bursts of lead and flame.

Wildcat didn't even look at the machine. The bulletproof glass of the squad car began to split. It wasn't built for quite that kind of leaden hurricane.

Wildcat twisted the wheel sharply. The police car tilted up, almost capsized. Then it slammed into a light pole, burst into flames.

Wildcat Gordon was out of the car in an instant. He rolled under it, leaped to a crouch on the other side.

Quick Trigger was already leaning behind the blazing hood. An amazing brace of revolvers roared in his hands. They were big enough to belong to the old Wild West, and they sounded like army field guns.

Wildcat's Police Positives began to speak with authority. He stood well out from the burning machine. The blaze created an effective smoke screen. A tire on the mobsters' car burst with a plop. Knuckles Werner stepped on the gas and the car pounded around a corner.

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By the time Wildcat got there it had turned into some alley, disappeared. It might have gone into any hidden garage in that neighborhood. It would be useless to make inquiry. People who lived on Cleary Street didn't talk. They preferred to live.

Wildcat turned to old Quick Trigger.

"First move in the trucking racket," he snapped, "Werner must have known a tip came to headquarters."

Quick Trigger didn't answer. Instead, he pointed a finger toward the corner.

A scrawny, threadbare man was racing toward them. There was no mistaking the fear in his eyes. That kind of fear could not be simulated without great acting ability.

He ran jerkily, rabbitlike. At first, he didn't see Wildcat and Quick Trigger. When he did, he tried to dodge. Wildcat seized him by the shoulder.

"What's on your mind, Smoky?" he demanded. "Better come clean."

"Smoky" was a drug addict, who was always trying to quit but didn't have the stamina. He turned wild, dilated eyes at Wildcat. His jaws worked strangely; then his eyes gleamed.

"The Whisperer!" he squealed. "He's got the evil eye! At Roundman's Saloon!"

Smoky twisted suddenly, eluded Wildcat's grip. The commissioner let him scamper up the street, noted the direction he took. Then Wildcat's jaw set in a hard, straight line.

"I think we're getting somewhere," he ripped. "Let's go!"

Roundman's Saloon was one of those places where anything can happen—and frequently does. The window was smeared with soap so pedestrians could not see what went on within. There was also a lookout to tip off customers who did not wish visits from the police.

Wildcat Gordon didn't go in. He saw what he was after before he got there. But what he was after saw him just an instant before that.

A slight, gray figure burst out of the saloon. He wore a quaint round-brimmed hat. He looked just as The Whisperer should. Before Wildcat could bring up his police guns, that flat pfffft-plop of a silenced gun split the air.

Quick Trigger suddenly realized that the note was sharper than that of The Whisperer's supersilenced pistols. And he knew he should have recognized the difference earlier in the night.

This time, the impostor's aim was better. A slug struck Wildcat in the shoulder, spun him around.

Under any other circumstances, Quick Trigger's portable cannons would have boomed immediately. But Quick did not know how badly hurt Wildcat was. And Wildcat Gordon was Quick Trigger's main weakness.

Instinctively, he leaned over the fallen man. In that instant, the fake Whisperer got away.

Wildcat struggled to his feet.

"Flesh wound," he snapped. "Now we've lost the guy!"

Quick Trigger stuttered an apology. But he ripped Wildcat's coat back, hauled him into a near-by drug store. He knew Wildcat wouldn't stop going; so he refused to take any chances on infection. He probed out the slug and applied disinfectant.

Then he scratched his bald head in puzzlement.

"Dammitall, Wildcat, what do you make of this?"

Wildcat took the proffered slug. It was a lead bullet, but around the lead was a hard resinous substance. Wildcat Gordon whistled softly.

"They're making cartridges and casings now of synthetic resins," he said slowly. "It's a new invention. Probably it gave somebody this idea. Look at it closely."

Quick Trigger looked at the slug. The heat of Wildcat's body had so softened the resinous surface of the bullet that no rifling marks remained.

"He's not taking any chances on identification," Quick Trigger observed.

Wildcat stood suddenly erect. He thought he saw a lot of things. Things that connected, and which he didn't like.

"I don't think that's the idea," he snapped. "It goes deeper than that. And it's no petty racket."

Outside the drug store, Wildcat unfolded his plan. Quick Trigger protested volubly, but Wildcat insisted.

Wildcat Gordon was alone when he approached a disreputable-looking rooming house, a few minutes later. It was a place where a queer, elusive fellow known as D. Smith had rooms.

D. Smith was The Whisperer. Wildcat had decided to use his Whisperer guise to get the impostor. He had suddenly realized that this was a most important step to be taken.

At the foot of the stairs, he stopped suddenly. A body was sprawled in the vestibule. It lay in a spreading pool of blood. Wildcat turned the man over. A few moments before it had been Smoky, the drug addict. Now, it was nothing.

A low growl came from Wildcat's throat as he carried the undernourished body upstairs. Smoky had never harmed but himself. Many times, The Whisperer had tried to straighten him out. Smoky's constitutional distrust of law might have prevented his telling the truth to Commissioner Gordon.

But Smoky had obviously been on his way with information he considered important. And he had intended to tell it to the gray man he knew stood for a justice that even Smoky could understand.

In the rooms above, a furry black ball of canine dynamite leaped upon Wildcat. The dog whined in a frenzy of excitement. He lived only for The Whisperer. He was a scotty as black as the ace of spades.

The nose of a dog could not be fooled. He knew Wildcat Gordon was his grayclad master, The Whisperer.

"Quiet, Brian Boru," Wildcat said. "You can't go this time."



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Wildcat was busy for several minutes. Rapidly, he became The Whisperer. The loud-checked suit disappeared. Gray spats went over the shoes. The insertion of false teeth made by old Quick Trigger gave the jaw its oddly pointed appearance.

The Whisperer went out. But he was wrong about one thing. Brian Boru was quick in the dimness. The dog went out, too.

Ten minutes later, The Whisperer toiled his shabby gray coupe down the street. His whitish, powdery hair showed dimly as he passed a street light. An eerie, whispering chuckle drifted from the car's open window. The chuckle did not contain mirth.

The Whisperer stopped near Roundman's Saloon. He locked the doors of his little coupe and drifted toward the doorway. The lookout suddenly snapped erect, darted inside.

The gray figure with the oddly pointed chin glided through the door. He walked up to the bar and ordered a beer. The chilling voice made the bartender turn.

He dropped the glass he was drying. Shakily, he reached for another and filled it with beer. Apparently, he knew this was not an impostor.

The Whisperer picked up his glass and turned toward the room. His colorless eyes gave no indication that he recognized the hulking form of Knuckles Werner sprawled in a chair by a table.

Werner's hands crept slowly into his pockets. The Whisperer knew those two two hands held death-dealing guns. Other ugly faced mobsters moved slowly along the bar.

The gray man raised his glass slowly and drained it. Then, without another glance at the thugs, he glided silently toward the street. At the door, he almost ran into a bundle of fury. The fury was the tawny-haired daughter of Terry Silk, the great trial lawyer.

The girl's blue eyes narrowed to slits. She whipped out a gun, squeezed the trigger. The gun blatted and the window of Roundman's Saloon crashed into fragments.

The Whisperer thought idly, as he twisted away, that he was missing a chance to learn if she were using bullets coated with resin. But that shot had told him something.

He became a blurry, indefinite figure in the gloom. The door of his coupe slammed and The Whisperer drove down the street. He pulled to a halt in the shadows of an abandoned warehouse. He thought that he would soon have visitors. He hadn't, however, believed they'd come as quickly as they did.

His speculation was rudely interrupted by their arrival. The coupe had scarcely stopped when a black delivery truck screeched to a halt. Machine guns let loose with a ragged roar and a barrage of lead.

The little gray car rocked under the impact. Lead screamed through it. The windows were open. The figure in the car slumped forward, jolted as lead plowed into it.

Knuckles Werner piled out of the truck. He ripped open the door of the coupe, snapped on a flashlight. Then he hauled the body out into the street.

"Easy!" he gloated. "Now we take care of the body!"

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Harsh voices laughed as he hauled the gray form into the truck. Then the truck rumbled off.

The delivery wagon stopped before a house in a distant part of the city. Considerable activity went on within the place. Feet could be heard shuffling about in the cellar.

Then the big form of Knuckles Werner appeared in the room at the front. In the shadows, near him, sat a second figure. The second man was masked. Knuckles seemed highly elated.

"We're almost set, now," he growled. "There's just one more thing I got to do."

Werner crumpled up a paper and threw it into a fireplace. Then he and his companion sauntered out of the room. As the door closed behind them, another opened. It was the one they had come through, from the cellar.

A gray figure stood motionless for a moment in the center of the room. It drifted toward the fireplace, looked quickly at the burning embers.

The flames were consuming a crumpled letter. Most of it was then a feathery ash. As the gray figure looked, the flames crept over the engraved letterhead. They ate up the name, "Terrington Small, Attorney at Law!" The letter became ash in a final burst of flame. A gust of a draft sent it soaring up the chimney.

The gray figure straightened and chuckled. The chuckle was an eerie, triumphant whisper. Then the man turned, glided back to the door that led to the cellar. Silently, he crept down the stairs.

There was a strong smell of ozone, as if highly charged electricity had been passed through the air. As the gray figure passed over the floor, a key clicked in the lock of the door above him.

The gray figure chuckled again. He knew that ozone would preserve a body. It would prevent decomposition. The body could be produced, later; it would seem it had been a dead man only a very short time. Even months later.

And The Whisperer knew that the resin-coated bullets were not being used to prevent identification of the killer's gun. Their lack of rifling marks would indicate that they could have been fired by The Whisperer's supersilenced pistols! That was part of the plot.

But the gray man had his own pistols, as he crept out of a cellar window that was open.

The gray man darted quickly down a darkened street. His silent footsteps took him through a business and industrial district. He had to pass one of the major trucking depots of the city.

Dozens of great vans were drawn up at the curb and in the loading yard. The gray figure was not thinking of the trucks, right then. He knew that the fake Whisperer and the truck extortion racket were closely bound together. But he was thinking of another job he had to do, before that racket could be taken care of.

He hardly noticed the surly drivers of the trucks. But they noticed him. One of them yelled in sudden fright.

"The Whisperer!" he screamed. "We've been warned. Here he comes!"

Huge, two-fisted drivers piled out of truck cabs. It seemed ludicrous that so many hard-boiled battlers would flee before such an insignificant figure. But such was the reputation of The Whisperer.

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It turned out that it was well they did run. The gray figure was in the center of the trucking area when the first time bomb went off.

There was a roar, as if a bombing plane had dropped its deadly cargo. A ten-ton truck seemed to disintegrate. Burly men were knocked to the ground. Flying bits of metal struck others.

Then a second truck was demolished by a bomb.

The slight figure of The Whisperer was picked up literally by the force of the blast. His small body hurtled across the street, slapped against the areaway of a cellar window.

The explosion seemed to excite the truckers out of their first fear. They cursed. The Whisperer, started menacingly across the street.

The only thing that saved The Whisperer was the force with which he had struck the cellar window grating. It was old and rusty. The Whisperer fell through. Dimly conscious, he broke the glass of the window, eased himself into the cellar.

The back door yielded to his touch and the gray man raced out into the alley at the rear. He knew he had no time to lose. He was pretty sure what would happen next, but he wanted confirmation.

He knew the extortion mob had struck their first major blow. What had happened to those behemoths of the road would serve as a warning to every other truck owner in the city. They would pay whatever tribute the gang demanded. They would pay and keep their mouths shut. The police would be entirely helpless. And The Whisperer would be blamed for the terror.

The gray man reached the back door of a tall office building. A sharp tool jimmied the spring lock and the dim figure mounted the emergency fire stairs. On the fifth floor, he went silently to a door marked "Terrington Small, Attorney."

A ring of skeleton keys jingled briefly. Then The Whisperer was inside.

Quick hands went through the file marked "Correspondence." The pale, colorless eyes examined every carbon duplicate in the file. Finally, The Whisperer found one addressed to Knuckles Werner.

He scanned it briefly. It was the one he wanted. A ghostly, whispering chuckle sounded as he switched off the light.

Blam!

A gun roared and the lead tugged at The Whisperer's coat sleeve. A girl's voice rapped out, "I'll get you before you get my father! I know you plan to get him!"

The gun roared twice more in quick succession. Slugs tore through the spot where The Whisperer had stood. But the gray man was moving, weaving in an uncertain pattern. Before the girl could fire again, a strong hand clamped over her automatic. One finger slid quickly behind the trigger.

The Whisperer ripped a telephone from the wall. He used the cord to bind the girl. He tied a gag in her mouth. Not too tightly, but secure enough that she would be a while getting rid of it. The Whisperer had no intention of letting Terry Silk's daughter interfere with plans he had made. And he knew he had no time to lose.

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He padded to the street by way of the stairs. The night watchman dozed in the main entrance. He had a vague impression of a gray shape flitting quickly by him. The front door slammed and he jerked awake. He decided it must have been the wind.

A newsboy was hawking papers on the street. The gray man bought one and looked at the headlines. The headline screamed that The Whisperer had been killed on Cleary Street. Then his body had been hauled away. There was also a last-minute bulletin of a mysterious explosion in the trucking depot.

The Whisperer hailed a cab. The driver looked nervously at the nondescript fare he had picked up. The man looked something like descriptions he had heard of The Whisperer. But then, he knew The Whisperer was dead. He had seen the papers.

The little man did not give him an address. He merely gave directions.

The driver looked around after he had traversed a tree-lined street, to find out where to go from there. Then he swallowed twice. The cab was empty, but a five-dollar bill fluttered in the crack of one of the doors.

The Whisperer crept up the driveway of a house set well back in a carefully gardened lawn. It was a house that had taken plenty of cash to build. It belonged to Terrington Small.

Like a human fly, the little figure climbed the side of the house. The structure was built of ornamental brick. The unevenness of the contour gave beauty to the building. It also gave The Whisperer a foothold.

There was silence within the house for many minutes. Then a car hesitated on the street outside. A door below seemed to click.

Suddenly, the lights flashed on in the bedroom of the lawyer. Terrington Small jerked erect in his bed. His bushy hair was awry from sleeping.

Before him crouched a slight gray figure. Two automatics were in his hands. They were snubbed with big silencers. The little man snarled through thin lips.

"You are going to die, mouthpiece!" he hissed. "You're going out slowly, with a bullet in your guts!"

Terrington Small suddenly thought he was going crazy. Before he could protest, an eerie, whispering chuckle came from another side of the room. A second figure, who looked at first glance to be a duplicate of the first, stepped from behind the window drapes.

The second figure in gray was The Whisperer. He, too, held a brace of automatics; but they didn't look like the others. They weren't. The husky tones that came from his lips were filled with a chilling deadliness.

"You wanted him to die slowly, rat," The Whisperer grated. "You wanted him to live long enough to tell the cops that I was the one who shot him."

There was a sudden roar of an unsilenced gun. One of The Whisperer's automatics ripped from his hand. Blood spread over his fingers.

"He'll die quickly enough, now," the harsh voice of Knuckles Werner rasped. "And you'll die with him! Maybe it'll look like you just shot each other!"

A gun jabbed sharply into the back of The Whisperer.

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Another gun waved in the direction of the lawyer on the bed. There was the ominous click of a safety catch. The Whisperer impostor had raised one of his own silenced guns, pointed it at Terrington Small.

"I'll shoot you with these," he snarled. "We'll leave them with The Whisperer. It will be perfect!"

Sarah Small suddenly screamed in the doorway. Apparently, she had gotten the gag out of her mouth, had fled from her father's office. Her scream may have saved her father's life. At any rate, it gave The Whisperer a chance to whirl on Knuckles Werner.

The mobster's gun boomed. But the slug thudded harmlessly into the wall.

The Whisperer's one good fist slammed into his jaw. The fist drew back like the lash of a whip. The fingers straightened, plunged stiffly into the throat of Knuckles Werner.

The killer gurgled once, fell to the floor. He stabbed out convulsively with a gun, aimed it at The Whisperer. The gray man's queer guns hissed like highly compressed air released from a tank. Werner lay still.

The fake Whisperer's guns were spitting lead. But he had a target that was hard to hit. A small, angry bundle of black fur was hanging to the seat of his pants.

No impostor could fool Brian Boru, The Whisperer's dog. He had followed his master, sneaked into the house when Sarah Small came in.

The Whisperer stepped quickly toward the other man in gray. In that instant, the final strength that sometimes comes to a dying man came to Knuckles Werner. His face writhed with pain and hate. He staggered to his knees. His eyes were wide and dazed. But the gun was steady.

He fired.

As the gray figure dropped, Werner sank back.

"Anyway," he babbled, "I got the rat!"

But Knuckles Werner's dying eyes had played him a trick. The figures looked too much alike. Knuckles shot the wrong figure in gray.

As the stricken impostor rolled on the floor, The Whisperer ripped the disguise from his face. It was Rocky Crangle, truck owner and bail bondsman. "You never liked to take a chance," the Whisperer said. "And you didn't want to undertake a major racket until The Whisperer was out of the way. That was Werner's assignment. You acted as a decoy, to lure the real Whisperer to Cleary Street for the killing. You knew your petty racketeering on kids and women would bring me in to find out what was going on."

Sirens whined suddenly in the street below. Half a dozen squad cars screamed into the driveway.

"Surround the place!" came the voice of Quick Trigger. "Shoot The Whisperer on sight! I'll take the front driveway!"

Sarah Small gasped.

"O—o—oh!" she cried. "I thought the real Whisperer had threatened dad. I called the police when I got free at the office. I wish I hadn't!"

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The Whisperer didn't answer. He stooped quickly over the body of Rocky Crangle; scrawled rapidly on a sheet of paper, pinned it to the dead bondman's coat. Heavy footsteps pounded up the stairs.

With a hoarse triumphant chuckle, The Whisperer glided to the open window. Brian Boru was in his arms. The dog licked confidently at The Whisperer's chin. Then the gray man disappeared.

In the driveway below, Quick Trigger paced angrily. He had seen the story, that The Whisperer had been killed. And Wildcat Gordon had told him he was going to drive down Cleary Street in the gray coupe. Quick Trigger believed the paper; believed Wildcat had at last overstepped himself. And he was very nearly right.

As the gray figure of The Whisperer crept silently through the shrubbery, Quick Trigger's squinted, peering eyes saw what perhaps no other cop had the eyesight to perceive. He saw The Whisperer.

With a roar, Quick Trigger plunged through the gloom. His cannonlike guns began to boom. And Quick Trigger's aim was far too accurate.

Then the retired deputy suddenly cursed. He wanted to bite off his arm. He saw the furry form of Brian Boru bounding ahead of the gray man. Quick Trigger began to shoot at the trees. Then he went into the house.

He knew the dog's devotion to The Whisperer; and he knew the dog could not be fooled.

Inside the lawyer's bedroom, Deputy Bolton was examining the two bodies. His first impulse had been one of elation.

"Now Mr. Crangle will be safe," he opined.

Then his small mouth dropped open with a gulp. He saw that the face of the man in gray was that of Rocky Crangle. The note pinned to the coat startled him even more.

"I was so sure no intelligent lawyer would write an incriminating letter on his own stationery," the scrawled handwriting at the top stated. "This proves he didn't."

The letter was the carbon The Whisperer had rifled from Terrington Small's office.

"I know you are guilty and, therefore, I cannot defend your case," it read. "You know I never do. Furthermore, I expect to run for prosecutor. If I am elected, I will see that you are convicted."

Quick Trigger was leaning over Bolton's shoulder.

"What's the rest of the scrawled handwriting," he demanded. "What's that about The Whisperer?"

Bolton gulped and read it aloud:

"If you will go to the cellar of 43 King Street, you will find another Whisperer.' Signed, 'The Whisperer'."

"Well," roared the voice of Wildcat Gordon, "why don't you find him!"

Wildcat strode briskly into the room. He was his loudly immaculate self, save for the fact that he carried his left hand in the pocket of his coat.

The cops did find another Whisperer. And in his hand was a note.

## Evil Eye

"My name was Smoky," it said. "I was dead anyway, and I didn't mind helping The Whisperer. He was a friend. He got away through the floor boards of his car."

Quick Trigger squinted at it.

"Sometimes," he mumbled in disgust, "I'm going to be sorry my aim wasn't better to-night!"