

HARTMAN

(indignantly)

Once and for all, I'm not going to hang anybody except at the legal hour... What? Don't threaten me, Bensinger! I'm not afraid of any newspapers. Yeah?... Oh, shut up!

(he hangs up; an
afterthought -- he
calls up operator)

And, operator, I told you not to disturb me! I don't care who calls -- I don't want to be disturbed again till I tell you!

(he hangs up)

How do you like that, Dr. Egelhoffer? Want me to hang Williams at their convenience!

EGELHOFFER

The newspapers! Sheriff, they're the scum of modern civilization.

HARTMAN

You said it!

EGELHOFFER

They're always after me for interviews.

HARTMAN

Me, too.

EGELHOFFER

Of course, I sort of promised them I would give out a statement when I got through here. You don't mind?

HARTMAN

(not liking it)

Well, I don't know if that's ethical. You see, all statements are supposed to come from me.

EGELHOFFER

We'll have to satisfy them. What would you say to giving them a joint interview? I could give them some of the psychological aspects of the case and you could give them the legal aspects.

HARTMAN

A joint interview, eh? That might be all right. We could have our pictures taken together, Doctor.

EGELHOFFER

Yes, shaking hands. I don't take a very good picture, though.

HARTMAN

It doesn't matter. The publicity's the main thing.

HARTMAN

(beside himself)

Now, listen, Fred. Just give me a few hours before you make any decisions. I'll get results. I'm doing everything humanly possible. I've just sworn in four hundred deputies.

MAYOR

Four hundred! Do you want to bankrupt this administration?

HARTMAN

(pleadingly)

I'm getting them for twelve dollars a night.

MAYOR

Twelve dollars! -- For those rheumatic uncles of yours?

(gesturing)

Out shooting everybody they see for the fun of it?

HARTMAN

If you're talking about my brother-in-law, he's worked for the city fifteen years.

MAYOR

Pete, you're through!

HARTMAN

(stunned)

What do you mean -- through?

MAYOR

I mean I'm scratching your name off the ticket Tuesday and running Czernecki in your place. It's nothing personal. And, Pete -- it's the only way out. It's a sacrifice we all ought to be glad to make.

HARTMAN

Fred!

MAYOR

Now, Pete! Please don't appeal to my Sentimental side.

HARTMAN

Fred, I don't know what to say. A thing like this almost destroys a man's faith in human nature.

MAYOR

I wish you wouldn't talk like that, Pete.

HARTMAN

Our families, Fred. I've always looked on Bessie as my own sister.

MAYOR

If there was any way out...

As a phone rings:

HARTMAN

There is a way out. I've got Williams surrounded, haven't I? What more do you want?

(into phone)

Hello... Yes... Hello!

(wildly)

Four hundred suppers! Nothing doing! This is a man-hunt -- not a banquet!... The twelve dollars includes everything!!

He hangs up.

HARTMAN

That gives you an idea of what I'm up against!

MAYOR

(hotly)

We're up against a lot more than that with that nutty slogan you invented: 'Reform the Reds With a Rope'.

Sheriff winces.

MAYOR

Williams ain't a Red, and you know it!

HARTMAN

Well, there's a lot of Communistic sympathizers around --

MAYOR

I know it! But they've got nothing to do with this case! Do you realize there are two hundred thousand votes at stake and unless we hang Earl Williams we're going to lose 'em?

HARTMAN

But we're going to hang him, Fred. He can't get away.