



On the Waterfront

BUDD SCHULBERG

Allison & Busby Limited
12 Fitzroy Mews
London W1T 6DW
www.allisonandbusby.com

First published in Great Britain in 1956.
This paperback edition published by Allison & Busby in 2013.

Copyright © 1955 by BUDD SCHULBERG
Introduction copyright © 1987 by BUDD SCHULBERG

The moral right of the author is hereby asserted in accordance with
the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

*All characters and events in this publication,
other than those clearly in the public domain,
are fictitious and any resemblance to actual persons,
living or dead, is purely coincidental.*

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by
any means without the prior written permission of the publisher,
nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover
other than that in which it is published and without a similar
condition being imposed on the subsequent buyer.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from
the British Library.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

ISBN 978-0-7490-8029-7

Typeset in 10.5/15.5 pt Sabon by
Allison & Busby Ltd.

The paper used for this Allison & Busby publication
has been produced from trees that have been legally sourced
from well-managed and credibly certified forests.

Printed and bound by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

CHAPTER ONE

Across the Hudson River from the grubby harbour town of Bohegan little squares of light were coming on all over the seaport metropolis. The massive verticals of the skyline were softening into a continuous range of man-made mountains. Soon the dusk would darken into night, as night had closed in over the river some 18 million times since this region was first split wide by the glacial mass cutting down from the north.

In the cities clustered around the harbour were men crowded together in the subways, men going home from work. But the workday on the river had no end. Directly across from Bohegan, on the old North River, as the Dutch once called it and longshoremen still call it, Pier 80 was alive with movement, like a city of ants, and with the same kind of chaotic order, thousands of passengers and friends, shouting, whispering, embracing, waving handkerchiefs

in the ritual of leave-taking. For three hundred years the weeping and the panic and the laughter and the hope and the chancing of sea journeys through the Narrows from the great landlocked harbour of the Upper Bay. Mid-river there was more ordered confusion as the old-fashioned ferries, the tugs, the coastal freighters, the coal barges, a sweeping *Queen* and a solid Dutch three-stacker called, needed, warned and miraculously avoided each other.

Along one of the Bohegan docks a Portuguese freighter bound for Lisbon was working under lights, the winches humming and growling, and the longshoremen, fifty- and sixty-year-old Irishmen and Italians proudly able to keep up with the younger men, the thirty-year-olds out of World War II with wide shoulders and muscular arms and paunches not as big from beer as they were going to be after twenty years of bellying up to the bar after the shift or while waiting – the interminable waiting for work. Here in Bohegan – when they weren't short-ganged – they worked in teams of twenty-two, eight in the hold, eight on the dock, four on the deck, along with a couple of high-low drivers, and they knew each other's rhythms and ways like fellow members of a football team. They worked at a regular, easy, knowing pace, making the most dangerous work in America – more fatalities than even the mines – look safe and casual. Steel girders seemed to be flying out of control as they swung out from the dock and over the forward hatches: an inch or two here and there and they'd slice off the top of a man's head like cheese, and if you don't get your feet out of the way in split-second time as the girders quickly lower onto the deck, it's goodbye toes.

There's more than one longshoreman who can count his number of toes without using all his fingers, and more than one a little short on fingers too. It's all in a day's work. No wonder you see some of them cross themselves like miners or bullfighters as they climb down into the hatch.

Loading and unloading is an art and a fever. The dock boss is on you all the time. Unload, load and turn 'er around. The faster she puts a cargo down and picks up another, well, that's where the money is. Do a three-day job in two and there's your profit. Legitimate profit, that is. Oh, there's plenty of the other kind for the mob who've got the local and the Bohegan piers in its pocket. More ways to skin this fat cat than you ordinary citizens would ever dream. You take 16 billion dollars' worth of cargo moving in and out all over the harbour every year and if the boys siphon off maybe 60 million of it in pilferage, shakedown, kickbacks, bribes, short-gangs, numbers, trumped-up loading fees and a dozen other smart operations, why, who cares – the shipping companies? Not so you could notice it. The longshoremen? Most of them are happy or anyway willing just to keep working. The city fathers? That's a joke on the waterfront. The people, the public, you'n'me? All we do is pay the tab, the extra six or seven per cent passed on to the consumer because the greatest harbour of the greatest city of the greatest country in the world is run like a private grab-bag.

The harbour of New York makes the city of New York and the city of New York is the capital of America, no matter what our civics teachers say. Eight billion dollars of world trade makes this the heart-in-commerce of the

Western world. Oh, you simple Hendrik Hudson in your simple little ship, the original wrong-way Corrigan looking for India along the palisades of Jersey, look at your harbour now!

There goes a truckload of coffee. Coffee's scarce these days. A checker routes it off to a warehouse, only not the one it was intended for. The trucker has a receipt to turn in, and who's to find out for at least six months it's a fake receipt? Thirty thousand dollars' worth of coffee. As easy as that. Nothing small on the waterfront. Not with that 16 billion moving in and out. Now who'll miss one little truckload of coffee? Or by the time some eager beaver does, it's so long back that all he can do is pass it on to his supervisor who passes it on to the superintendent who passes it along two or three more echelons till it reaches a vice-president who passes it on to the insurance company. Just tack it on to the cost, it's part of the business, all part of the game. Nobody really feels it except the consumer, you'n'me, and we're too dumb to complain.

There goes a sightseeing boat on its tourist-spiel circumnavigation of Manhattan. Now we're passing the famous luxury lines of the West Side, some of the two hundred ocean-going piers along this tremendous 750-mile shoreline from Brooklyn to Bohegan. There's the *Liberté*, she came in last night with Bernard Baruch aboard, and the Mayor back from another vacation, and Miss America of 1955, yes, sir, folks, more celebrities arriving and departing every fifty minutes, twenty-four hours a day, three hundred and sixty-five days a year than ever before in the history of the world. There goes the *Andrea Doria*, the new Italian

dreamboat, one of the 10,000 ships a year coming in and going out, one every fifty minutes around the clock, year in year out. And just look around you at the traffic, why, we've got three thousand tugs and barges and lighters and railroad-car floats and ferries and floating cranes and pleasure craft, even canoes and kids on rafts in the middle of all this great going and coming as if they were Tom Sawyers on the Mississippi. Only Mark Twain never saw anything like this, I tell ya Mark would've flipped his wig if he had ever turned his sidewheeler into the harbour of New York.

At the river's edge on the Bohegan side where the ancient Hudson-American piers extended 300 yards into the great harbour, the water was brackish and thinly carpeted with bits of splintered wood, half-capsized beer bottles, oil slick, dead fish and an occasional contraceptive tossed away after some random joy. Mid-stream the river was deep and magnificent, but here at the edge it was a watery dump. On water-worn stilts over the shallow water, in the shadow of a great ocean liner at Pier B and an Egyptian freighter at Pier C, was a two-room boathouse that had belonged to the Bohegan Yacht Club in some distant, more elegant past. For years now Bohegan had been a working town, a waterfront commerce town and – it figures – a two-bit politician's town. The sportsmen with their narrow white ducks and their nautical caps had moved on to watering places where the river had not yet gone flat and sour as spoilt wine, and where there was ample room to turn a ketch.

Now the Bohegan Yacht Club was inhabited by sportsmen of another stripe. A sign over the door read Longshoremen's

Local 447. Everyone knew what 447 stood for in Bohegan. Johnny Friendly. And everyone knew what Johnny Friendly stood for. Likewise Johnny Friendly. Johnny Friendly was president of the local, and vice-president, secretary, treasurer and delegate, for that matter, though he had some of his boys filling those slots. More than that he was a vice-president of the Longshoremen's District Council. More than that he was the way you got and kept a job in this section of the waterfront, the only way, except for some special-favour guys sent down from the Mayor's office. And then even more than that, Johnny Friendly had a better than nodding acquaintance with Tom McGovern, a man whose power was so great that his name was only a whisper on the waterfront. Mr Big they called him in the press and in the bars, some fearing libel from his battery of Wall Street lawyers, others simply fearing for their lives and limbs. Mr Big, Big Tom to his remarkable spectrum of friends, was a dear friend of the Mayor's, not just the joker pushed into the Bohegan City Hall by the Johnny Friendly votes, the Hudson-American and Inter-State (McGovern) Stevedore Company, but the Mayor of the big town itself, alongside which Hoboken, Weehawken, Bohegan, Port Newark and the rest of them were like the rich little mines around the Mother Lode. Tom McGovern was a big, self-made, self-full man, and while Johnny Friendly had these Bohegan piers in his pocket and was frequently described as doing very lovely, Tom McGovern had a whole brace of Johnny Friendlys from Brooklyn to Bohegan, north of Hoboken on the Jersey shore.

Johnny Friendly had the build of a two-hundred-year-old

oak cut off a few inches short of six feet. He was big in the shoulders and he had strong arms and legs from his longshoremen days. He was what they call a black Irishman, with eyes like black marbles ten for a nickel, thinning hair that he worried about losing, a jaw that could shove forward at you when he wanted to bull you down. He had the kind of build the tough ones have when they've made a bundle or two and like their Heineken beers and the five-dollar steaks garnished with fat fried onions and the oversized baked potatoes fondly embracing those little lakes of butter. There was a coating of fat over Johnny's muscles that didn't conceal their existence or the potential violence they represented.

Johnny Friendly was never alone, except when he slept. He moved with his boys and they were as much a part of him as the hundred legs of a centipede. The men around him – 'on the muscle for Johnny Friendly' is the way they were usually described – were picked for three qualities; that is, they had to have two of the three. 'I want 'em rough or brainy plus loyal.' Actually Johnny Friendly, whose Christian name was Matthew J. Skelly, combined these three qualities and three more in addition: ruthlessness, ambition and benevolence. This last had a streak of softness, almost of effeminacy about it. No one dared voice it, dared even notice it in fact, but Johnny Friendly had a way of squeezing and patting your shoulder while he talked to you, if he liked you. And he took very strong, sudden, and, from his point of view, perceptive likes and dislikes. He wasn't merely good to his mother, though he did try to take that bewildered lady to church every Sunday. A fed-up

longshoreman's wife could come to John Friendly with the familiar story of her old man's drinking up the week's pay on his way home from the docks and there I am with the five kids and nothing in the icebox. Then Johnny would see to it that the money went right from the company pay office into the house. A king in pre-constitutional days never had more power than Johnny Friendly, McGovern's fief, had along the docks and deep into Bohegan. And many a king written up in the history books had less feeling for his subjects. Johnny Friendly would go way out for them, way out. Not just Christmas baskets, though he did that too, usually through the Cleveland Democratic Club on Dock Street that he controlled. He was always good for fifties and C-notes peeled off the fat roll, and a pat on the back, and a gravelly voiced, 'Aah, tha's all right, I understan', ferget it!' A real big man around Bohegan, Johnny Friendly. A hundred per cent when he's for you. Zero when he's not.

Right now Johnny Friendly's emotional state was pushing zero. His patience, of which he liked to think he had a great store, was all used up. That Doyle kid. That fresh-nosed little son-of-a-bitchin' Doyle kid. Troublemaker. It seemed to run in the family. The uncle, Eddie, used to go around with petitions and stuff like that way back when the local was just getting started. Johnny had been a kid himself then. They had fixed Eddie Doyle's wagon and roughed up Joey's old man a little bit. Old man Doyle's leg always stiffened up in the wintertime from where the bullet was. At least he seemed to have learnt his lesson.

For years now he had gone along with the set-up, content to pick up his two-three days and his forty-fifty

dollars a week. Always ready with a buck for the collection which went in (and quickly out of) 447's welfare fund. Once in a while when some crumb forced a meeting of the local, Pop Doyle had the good sense to stay away. Pop was all right. Johnny Friendly didn't mind him. But this wet-behind-the-ears pink-faced kid of his. Two years in the Navy and he comes out a regular sea lawyer: the constitution of the local calls for bimonthly meetings. How do you like that, in the small print he finds bimonthly. The kid has the nerve to actually go read the constitution. That's the kind we can do without around here. Very nicely. Give me the guys who can't read anything but a racing form and go get their load on after work. Peaceable citizens, that's what we want around here. Well, we gave them their meeting. We called it on twenty-four hours' notice after posting it on the bulletin board here in the office. Sure the notice was on a scrap of paper one inch high but the constitution doesn't say what kind of notice; it just says adequate notice must be given. I gave them their adequate. Only about fifty showed up. Fifty out of a possible fifteen hundred. And half of them was ours. You know, especially loyal members of 447. We all got elected for four more years. This Joey Doyle put up a squawk and Truck whose neck is as wide as some men's shoulders, Truck had to take him outside and quiet him down. He's a tough monkey, Joey Doyle. Doesn't look it, but he's there with the moxie and this trade-union bug has got him bad. Like his Uncle Eddie before him he's hard to discourage. And then comes the clincher. The Governor's got a bunch of stiffs he calls the State Crime Commission. A bunch of stuffed-shirt hypocrites who probably sponged it

up good when they needed it. Now they get headlines about investigating waterfront crime. The Governor did plenty favours for Tom McGovern in his time, but it's an election year and the Governor wants to score. First that clown Kefauver and then these jokers want to get in on the act. Well, of course, it's for laughs. Who's going to go blabbing to that bunch of striped-pants bums? Only we start hearing things about Joey Doyle. He's been seen going in and out of the Court House where they sit around jacking off or whatever they do. I'm patient. On the District Council, ask anyone they'll tell you I'm one of the saner heads. I don't go off half-cocked like my old pal Cockeye Hearn, God've mercy on his soul. You don't see me going around giving it to them in broad daylight just because I don't like the part in their hair. Cockeye down there in the Village had his good points and his partner Wally (Slicker) McGhee is still as quick a trick as you ever want to meet, but you have to be pretty stupid to blow somebody off the waterfront and wind up on the wrong end of the switch. Anyway, before I move Joey out of my way with muscle I look to con him out of my way with some soft soap. For that I've got Charley Malloy. Charley ain't called the Gent for nothing. He's got a lot better education than the rest of us got. He did two years in Fordham, believe it or not. And the reason he was bounced wasn't because he wasn't smart enough. He was a little too smart. Charley's got brains to burn. He got caught selling examination answers, that's all. Charley was always smart. Would've been a helluva lawyer. He can talk up a breeze like *That matter to which you have reference to which* and stuff like that. So I sent my troubleshooter to

my troublemaker. Charley talks sense. He says he likes Joey and wants to help him, which he does. There might even be a place in the set-up for a bright kid like Joey. We don't hold grudges. I've taken in plenty guys who started in bucking me. It shows they got spirit. I can use spirit. But when Charley wastes his best arguments and comes back with no dice and the scuttlebutt has the Doyle punk blowing his nose for the Crime Commission, which no respectable longshoreman would be caught dead in their company, what am I supposed to do, hang a medal on him? I worked too hard for what I got to frig around with a cheese-eater. Know what I mean?

So Johnny and Charley, a waterfront idea of suavity and culture, worked up a little plan. Its virtue lay in its simplicity. No telltale firearms, not even the usual splash in the river. In the office on the creaky floating dock on the river's edge, Johnny went over the plans with Charley and Sonny and Specs, who were providing the muscle. Johnny wasn't like a lot of the Irish mob, hit 'em first and think afterwards. He had been raised with a lot of Italians and he liked to do his jobs a little more in the Sicilian manner. A certain finesse. If you didn't think there was an art to these things look at his friend Danny D who lived in the big house on the Jersey heights. Danny D had tradition behind him, generations of disciplined viciousness. It was in his heritage to be secretive and thorough and merciless and never to go back on his word. Johnny admired Danny D.

'OK, Matooze,' he said to Charley, 'go get the kid brother, put 'im to work.' Matooze was Johnny's name for anybody he liked. Nobody knew where it came from or

what it meant. All you had to know was you were in pretty good shape if he called you Matooze. But if he called you Shlagoom, then you better look out. Then you ship out or go to Baltimore or something. Charley had seen many a bum turn sickly white at the sound of that dark invention of a word *shlagoom*. Johnny followed Charley up the gangplank to the shore with his arm on his shoulder.

‘You got enough padding in there for a football team,’ he said to Charley approvingly. Charley was a very natty dresser. He had his overcoats made to order. He wore a camel’s hair that was really a beaut. It looked like it must have come off a very upper-class camel. And it fitted Charley a lot better than it ever fitted the camel. Johnny Friendly, he’d buy a hundred-and-fifty-dollar tailor-made suit and after twenty minutes it’d start to hang baggy on him like it was ready made. It had something to do with the bulk of his figure. Charley was on his way to a round belly too, from too much sitting around and the big bills he ran up at Cavanagh’s and Shor’s, and he was softer than Johnny, having always lived off his wits while Johnny started up the hard way and smartened up as he went along. But Charley’s clothes hung creased and neat on him, another reason for having picked up the affectionate billing Charley the Gent.

‘OK, Matooze,’ Johnny said again. ‘I’ll be over at the joint.’ That was the Friendly Bar, a little farther up River Street. Johnny’s brother-in-law Leo ran it for him. There was as much business done there as in the union office itself. The horse play and the numbers and a lot of the kickback and of course the loan sharking, that all went on in the bar. The back room was Johnny’s second home. He kept

an apartment, but he only went there to sleep or jump a broad. He wasn't much for home. He saw his mother had a nice home and he helped his two sisters get places of their own, put their husbands on as dues collectors and shylocks so they could make an easy living. But Johnny was raised in the streets and in the bars, and that's where he felt at home even if he wasn't much of a drinking man. Labatt's Pale India Ale was his pleasure. He wanted to stay in this business and he had seen a lot of tough monkeys drink themselves down the drain.

Charley the Gent, in that dry, quiet way he had, said see ya Johnny, and then turned toward the row of tenements one block in from the river. It was a cool autumn evening and Charley liked the way the odds and ends of laundry fluttered on the lines. There was a maze of coloured shirts and long underwear and panties and diapers and kids' stuff. The poverty of the waterfront hung out for all to see, denims that had been washed hundreds of times, and pyjamas scarred with darning patches and the dresses of little girls that had long since washed out their colours. The poverty of the waterfront hung out for all to see. But poverty comes in bright colours too, here and there a yellow towel, a red wool shirt, a pair of green-checked socks, the life of the poor, respectable, drunken, hard-working, lazy, cocky, defeated, well-connected, forsaken waterfront poor hung row on row across the steep canyons between the tenements. Charley looked up at the crowded clothes lines and thought of all those wives doing all that washing, every day clothes piling up full of sweat and coffee dust and the sweepings of children with dirty streets for playgrounds

and the soilings of infants, dirty clothes to soap and soak and rinse and hang out and pull in and iron and fold so they'd be ready to be dirtied again.

Suckers, Charley thought, for that was the form of his social thinking, suckers to take it day in and day out, but that's the way it had to be, or at least the way it was. At the top of the heap the real bigs like Tom McGovern, in the middle guys like mayors and DAs and judges and Willie Givens, the International president who sneezed every time Tom McGovern stood in a draught. A step below them the local movers like Johnny F, then the lieutenants such as himself, then the goons and the sharks, the small operators, below them the body of regulars, the longshoremen and checkers and truckers who played ball, who helped to work the pilferage trick, and finally on the bottom below the bottom, the men who shaped up without an *in*, who took their chances, kicked back when they got too hungry to hold out any longer, lived mostly on loan-shark money they had to pay back at ten per cent a week and got a piece of that \$2.34 an hour only when a ship was calling for fifteen gangs and everybody was thumbed in to work except the worst of the bottle babies, the deadbeats and the rebels.

Charley reached the entrance to the tenement he was headed for, a narrow, four-storey building that had been thrown up sixty years earlier in a hasty effort to accommodate the influx when the new (now archaic) piers were built and big-time shipping came to Bohegan. It was growing darker but a lot of kids were hollering up a stickball game in the street. On the stoop some of the older ones were idly watching. Old man Doyle was there, with

a can of beer in his hand, more tired from the heavy work of the day than he'd admit, and with him, almost like a human appendage, was Runty Nolan, a jockey-sized little gnome of a man barely five feet tall, with a face that had been hammered out of its original cast for thirty years of talking back. Not a young, up-to-date, Navy-wise, modern-trade-union-minded oppositionist like Joey Doyle but an incorrigible gadfly, a born needler, a party of one who fought Johnny Friendly in his own thick Irish way, by laughing at him, stinging him with humorous darts that were sharply defiant without quite provoking retaliation. Runty Nolan was like an old Navy man, perennially a seaman third, who knew by the book exactly how far he could push his chief without risking court martial. A charter member of 447, in the days when Tom McGovern and Willie Givens were young dockwallopers working in the same gang, Runty in 1955 was exactly where he had been in 1915, a kind of self-appointed court jester of the docks, but too proud to serve a king, who accepted his beatings as part of a great joke he was playing on McGovern and Givens. 'Those bums I knew 'em when they was glad to steal a chop off'n a meat truck,' he'd laugh, reading in the papers that McGovern had been appointed chairman of some kind of new port committee, or that Givens had just been voted twenty-five thousand a year for life plus expenses. 'I wouldn't pay the bum twenty-five cents,' he'd make a point of telling a Johnny Friendly supernumerary, knowing how the stooge would growl back at him for abusing the exalted president of the International Longshoremen's Union.

Runty as usual had a comfortable load on, and Pop

Doyle was enjoying his beer quietly, also as usual, a man whose gentle face was lined and hardened with the hard years, slightly stooped in the shoulders and back from thirty years of bending over the coffee bags and the heavy boxes, dreaming a long time ago of a better deal for the men on the docks, talking now and then on the third or fourth beer of Gompers and the stillborn hope of an honest-to-God union in the port, but tired now, his sweet wife under the ground and something of his manhood and nerve buried with her, content to sit on the stoop and let the beer make a cool river in his throat and chuckle at Runty Nolan's sly barbs and jokes.

'Well, if it ain't Brother Malloy,' Runty spoke up with the irrepressible laugh in his voice that years of heavy blows had failed to silence. Runty always made a point of calling every one of the Friendly boys 'Brother' and it never failed to raise a laugh or a smile from the men, Runty Nolan's own, ingenuous way of making clear for all to hear just what he thought of Friendly's type of union brotherhood.

'Hello, boys,' Charley said affably. He couldn't stand Runty Nolan, a soused-up wiseacre always looking for trouble and getting by with murder because he was small and somewhat comical. And Charley wasn't made any happier at the sight of Pop. There was a quiet passive resistance to Pop that could be a little unnerving if you were a sensitive man. The trouble with me, Charley was thinking, I let this stuff get me. Eight years I'm with Johnny now and I still let it get me. I should be over in City Hall where I could get the loot with a lot less of the dirty work. Just go around kissing babies, of various ages, and pocketing mine. Some day.

Some day, maybe he'd make Commissioner. Maybe even Police Commissioner. Like Friendly's old chauffeur from the bootleg days, Donnelly. Donnelly was Commissioner of Public Safety now and doing very lovely. That was the way it went in Bohegan. Across the river in the big town it was a lot more complicated. A DA might enjoy the hospitality of Tom McGovern and go easy on the waterfront but he wasn't an out and out goniff like Donnelly. Over here in Bohegan you had a chance. Charley looked at the old man, Doyle, whose son was the job Charley had been assigned to. Pop Doyle, Charley thought, how much hard work and grief was indelibly written into that sad Irish kisser. And now more grief. And Charley the Gent, a soft sensitive type except for an ineradicable stain of larceny in his heart, had to be its messenger.

A second-storey window opened suddenly and a massive woman placed her formidable, fat arms on the window sill. Her loud, slightly nasal voice was not to be denied, even by the high-pitched babel of the street. Not even the screeching whistle of a ferry sweeping into the Bohegan slip could prevail over Mrs McLaverty. 'Michael, Michael, next time I call you it's gonna be with a strap!'

A kid in the street turned his freckles, coated in stickball sweat, toward the offending window. 'Aw Ma, the game ain't over. Gimme ten more minutes.'

Careful not to let his resplendent camel's hair coat touch the dirty door or the walls of the tenement hallway, Charley entered the dim entrance to the railroad flats. It was one of those buildings that makes a local mockery of the city pretensions of modernity. Only some back-of-the-hand

understanding between the landlord and a legman for the housing commissioner could have saved this building from condemnation fifteen years earlier. The walls along the stairway were cracked and stained and scribbled with the random observations, protests and greetings of a long succession of occupants, forming a sort of archeological strata of primitive tenement communication. The preparation of at least half a dozen different meals in this four-storey beehive created a warm, sweet and sour hallway aroma that Charley was always to associate with the life he had hustled his way out of. And the confusion of sounds, the bedlam, always a baby crying, and some bigger kid clobbering a smaller one, fighting back and bawling at the same time, and the distracted mother threatening to smack 'em both and a married couple hollering at each other in a loud, continuous debate of inconclusive affirmatives and negatives, the staccato gunfire of a radio melodrama and the Murphys who got on like lovers in their middle age of all things invariably laughing together and someone playing Frankie Laine at the top of his and the loudspeaker's voice, *'This cheating heart . . . depends on youhoo . . .'*

It was raucous and unprivate and unsanitary and un a lot of things, but one thing you had to say for it, it was living. It was no insignificant part of the mystery of from what power and to what purpose the human community endures.

Charley Malloy tried to keep his mind from wandering off into one of the dark chambers of this mystery. With somewhat the detached manner of an insurance agent checking up on an injured client, he heavily climbed the

stairs, pausing on the third landing, a little annoyed with himself for being so out of breath. He ought to pick up his handball again. This was no shape for a man of thirty-five. Maybe it was time to go on a diet. The doctor said he was twenty-five pounds overweight. This whole country is overweight. They got it too good. Except for deadbeats like Pop Doyle. There wasn't an extra half-pound of flesh on Pop Doyle. The best part of Pop Doyle had run off in sweat and soaked through into the floor of the hatch. Like an insurance agent, Charley Malloy plodded up the last stairway to the roof. Only in this case the accident hadn't happened yet.