

# How Sidewalk Sirens Decoy Men Into New "Badger Traps"

One Incident Uncovered the Organized Racket Behind the Girl With a Smile Who Waits for Susceptible Pick-ups



This Exquisite Pearl-Handled, Gold-plated Revolver, Just Made to Fit a Lady's Hand, Was Found in the Pocketbook of One of the Feminine Members of the New York "Badger" Gang.



THEY FACE THE LAW

Study the Faces of These Eight Members of a Gang of Alleged Badger Game Racketeers as They Appeared When Photographed in Newark, N. J., Police Headquarters. You Will Find on Them Fear, Defiance of Indifference. From Left to Right They Are Margaret Hains, William Blackburn, Theodore Peterman, Ray Duke, Edward Pelevich, George Hamko, Albert Guglielmo and Mary Rich. The Two Girls Were Said by Police to Have Acted as Decoys to Lure Unwary Motorists, Such as is Suggested in the Drawing in the Upper Left-Hand Corner.

A SHINING new automobile moved along the Avenue. At the wheel was a well-dressed young man. Glancing toward the curb he saw a pretty girl who seemed to be waiting for a taxicab or something. He looked at her and smiled and she smiled back. He drew up to the curb and she accepted his invitation for "a lift."

What this man did not realize was that he was about to become just another victim of the old badger game, in a modernized and more sinister form, which is now sweeping the country.

For a little later, after bringing the young woman to her destination, he suddenly found himself confronted by a man with a gun, who proceeded to take away all the money and jewelry in his possession.

This is called the "siren-lure holdup racket," the dangerous extent of which was recently revealed in the simultaneous capture of two big gangs. One

was operating in New York and the other in the neighboring cities of New Jersey. For weeks they had added scores of victims to their list.

But what has aroused authorities is the information that there are such gangs operating in nearly every large city of the United States. They depend upon pretty sidewalk decoys to lure unwary motorists to apartments or deserted highways. This sounds very much like the old badger game. But there is one important and serious difference. Under the old system the alleged husband, finding his "wife" with the victim, would demand a cash consideration to keep silent. But now he adds gunplay and thuggery to the traditional technique if necessary to obtain his ends.

Under both systems the crook depends upon the same human fear of becoming publicly involved in an embarrassing situation. That is why the victim usually hesitates to complain to the police.

IN THE NET  
These Three Girls Were Arrested in a Raid on a New York Gang of Love-lure Pirates. At the Left is Blanche Rogers, The Girl in the Middle, Marian Mewes, Looks Like a School Teacher—"Just a Gag," Say the Police. At Right is Mrs. Betty Thompson, Wife of the Alleged Gang Leader.

It was the courage of one man, however, that brought about the arrest of the so-called Newark siren-lure holdup gang after its members had victimized scores of motorists. Throughout New Jersey police made frantic efforts to detect them. Residents of several cities and towns had suffered in fear and silence.

In each instance the same plan was carried out, with slight variations. A pretty girl would "allow" a man in a car to speak to her. They would go

motoring and she would give him her address and invite him into her apartment. Once inside the unfortunate motorist would find himself confronted by one or more men—armed. But they did not merely demand money for silence. They would go through their victim's pockets and perhaps even hold him while one of the gang went to his home and robbed it.

One day this gang had the misfortune of coming in contact with Jacob Landau, a druggist of East Orange, N. J. Landau had been driving through Newark and stopped his car when a girl smiled at him. He graciously asked if he could give her "a lift" and she directed him to a point in the neighboring town of Elizabeth.

The spot he reached was a secluded one. Landau became suspicious but before he could do anything a gun was poked into his ribs. He turned to see a group of men, and a car beyond. He was ordered to turn over all the money he had on him, which he did. It amounted to about \$30. Then the gangsters drove away with the girl.

Although warned not to follow, Landau started in pursuit. Coming into Newark he picked up a couple of traffic policemen and gained on the car of the gang. It turned down a side street, up against an embankment and was wrecked. The members of the gang—nine in number, including two girls, were taken to the hospital and later to Newark Police Headquarters. There they are said to have admitted to a long series of similar holdups. In their "headquarters" police found a remarkable collection of revolvers and burglars' tools.

A more ingenious roundup of love-lure pirates was that of a gang working along New York's exclusive Riverside Drive. This gang might still be operating but for the fact that the mother-in-law of the leader decided to pay him a visit.

Four girls played the part of love-lures in this racket. They had been flirting with men in motor cars along the drive and had been enticing them to the apartment of Hugh Thompson, in West 89th Street. There the victims were held up and robbed. One day Thompson's mother-in-law arrived and it was necessary to make a hasty

quickly dropped it, however, when ordered to do so by the detectives. Then his wife, Betty, said by police to have been Thompson's first lieutenant, came into the room. Police found in her pocketbook a fine automatic of expensive, delicate design. Betty admitted, police said, the revolver was a "present" from her husband.

It was about this time that Betty's mother arrived on the scene, and realized, too late, what a terrible situation her daughter was involved in. Betty was arrested, together with the others, nine in all, including two other girls found in an adjoining room.

A search of the apartment proved enlightening. Police found blackjacks, handcuffs, fake detective badges, rubber gloves, wire cutters and brass knuckles. Evidently the gang was prepared for extortion, robbery, slugging, and almost everything else in the category of crime.

Proof of the extensive depredations of the outfit was given by several persons, who came forward and identified some of the members. They told of having been lured to places and relieved of jewelry and cash. One man said that after being robbed he was beaten up. An unnamed doctor said he had been lured to the Thompson apartment. There he was robbed of his jewelry and money, and, while he was a prisoner, the keys to his apartment were used to loot his room.

The capture of the New York and the Newark gangs convinced police that great vigilance must be kept throughout the large cities continually. This is realized by authorities to such an extent that Chief Inspector John J. Sullivan, of the New York police, has issued a warning to men and youths that is summed up in this sentence:

"Don't pick 'em up if you value your reputations and lives."  
The lesson of the two siren bandit gangs, he says, should be learned well by every male motorist. Among the dangers he lists are these perilous results of "picking up" strange young women:

1. It may mean even death to you.
2. The girl who flags you on the road may be a plant by some attorney or detective retained by your wife.
3. Don't forget that if the girl is injured in an accident while she is riding with you, she can sue you for damages.
4. You're likely to get a little bit more reckless and invite accident.
5. Police have records that show unwed, expectant mothers have invited a lift and later held the motorist into court to support a child.
6. You're an easy mark for blackmail the moment you pick up a strange young woman.
7. That's not a marker to the really clever extortion sometimes practiced. The clever young lady notes your license number, and then, if she finds out you have a family, she makes more dates with you, and finally you come to pay day.

## HUMAN MECHANICS

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A WART is a small abnormal outgrowth of the skin or mucous membrane. Warts are apt to appear in numbers rather suddenly. After a while they may disappear with the same suddenness that they arrived. This explains the supposed value of charms and superstitious practices. The tendency to have crops of warts may be hereditary, passing from generation to generation. Sometimes, after the general eruption has passed, one or two warts may remain and persist for a period of years.

Warts are often seen on the hands of children and young people. The usual type is the common flat variety. When a wart appears for the first time in an adult, it is chiefly brought about by a constant irritation of the part. The irritation does not have to be very prominent. As a matter of fact, it may be very slight but often repeated. For instance, warts can form on the inner side of the right middle finger from the constant rubbing of a pen when writing.

Men working in slaughter-houses and butcher shops sometimes develop warts on the knuckles, wrists, and folds between the fingers. The underlying cause can often be traced to infection by tuberculosis from the meat that is handled. Although the meat is dead, the germs of tuberculosis remain alive

and can cause an infection wherever there is a break in the skin. Chimney-sweeps and workers in coal-tar products seem to be particularly susceptible to warts. They may be of the ordinary variety, causing no inconvenience other than their conspicuousness. All too often, however, these warts do not remain stationary but continue to grow, developing into tumors or cancer. The local irritation caused by tar has long been used in the experimental development of cancer in animals for research purposes.

Warts which make their appearance singly in later life are to be looked at with suspicion. They may be the forerunners of cancer and should be investigated and removed. This does not mean the application of acids or home remedies but the complete destruction of the growth by electrical cauterization. "Picking" a wart off may be the very factor which will stimulate its growth to even greater proportions. A wart consists essentially of a delicate framework of small blood vessels supported by a rather tough tissue. When the wart is newly formed the surface is rounded but as it gets older it becomes ridged by the irritation of objects that come into contact with it. Although many warts are naturally dark, the dirt which becomes ingrained into its folds has much to do with making the wart even darker or perhaps black.

The wart is an outgrowth of blood vessels from the surface of the body. If the blood vessels lie in a group parallel to each other, then the wart has a broad base, but if the blood ves-

What Causes Warts and the Dangers of Infecting Them



The Above Drawing Shows an Extensive Distribution of Warts Over the Entire Upper Surface of the Hand. This Condition Usually Affects Young People and Occurs Rather Frequently.

sels come from a single branch, the wart is long and hangs by a stem.

It is little wonder that a wart grows back after being shaved or picked off. The vessels are merely cut down to the level of the skin but the structure beneath is not destroyed. The force of the blood stream causes new small blood vessels to form and project beyond the surface of the skin. The result is the formation of another wart.