

The Law Office

By W. E. Hill

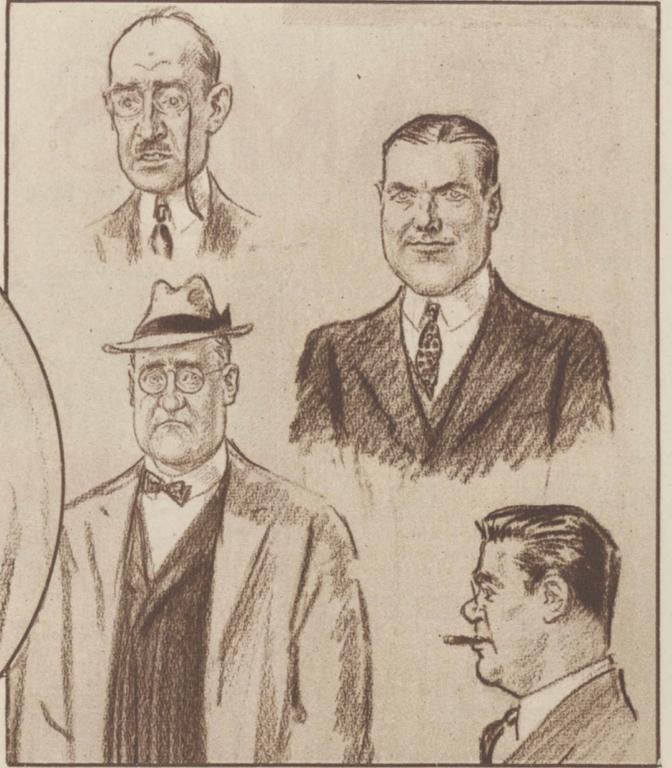
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This is Jennie, private secretary to a pair of busy law partners. Jennie is wonderful at remembering phone messages from the wife, and also where wills, torts and writs of replevin have been tucked away. At the moment Jennie is telling a couple of clients who want a habeas corpus proceeding sent up on approval that the boss can't see them today because he is detained at court. (This is the same as saying "He's in conference," in a mercantile concern, and means the boss has left early for the golf links.)



You probably imagine that criminal lawyers lie wide awake at night thinking troubled thoughts having to do with defamation of character, confessions under duress, incriminating evidence and other cares of the day. Not so with most of them. This one is putting himself to sleep by going through an imaginary game of midget golf, play by play.



Four leading factors in the law firm of Gubbins, Cringe & Quinsky. The two barristers on the left are criminal lawyers. They are subject to indigestion and acidity of the alimentary canal, brought on by years of battling with the state's prosecuting attorneys. In the upper right hand corner is the youngest member of the law force. When one of the older members of the firm is stuck on a legal point he sends for this younger pillar of the law and right off the bat the latter can tell whether or no in the state of New Jersey a Holstein calf is taxable under the inheritance tax rating of said state. Goes to court every day. The brunette in the lower right corner is used principally in settling involved estates involving enraged relatives and charitable bequests.



The heir to a trust fund calling on his legal adviser just to see if there isn't some means by which the principal can be turned into ready cash. There isn't, he finds.



Lawyer Benjamin Franklin Goldstein guiding Mrs. Mabel Magee McSmirch through the tortuous process of unearthing evidence for her absolute decree. "Try and remember," he urges, "some dastardly bit of cruelty on the part of your husband. Was any crockery thrown at any time?" "Yes," recalls Mrs. McSmirch, "there was. One day when Irwin was in one of his bestial sulks I hit him with a Wedgwood plate—a wedding gift."



Some gay boy's ex-honey out after heart balm to the merry tune of fifty grand. She has one letter which reads: "My own sweet treasure girlie. Only one hour since I left my sweetie pie at the corner, and I do not think I can live till afternoon if I do not get a phone call from my little weensy teensy . . . Just as soon as your old kiddie boy gets better of his arterio-sclerosis and neuritis, he will buy you a big diamond cluster ring and we will get married and your lambkin will be the happiest boy in the world."



These are the papers that have to be signed, showing the signees trying to look crafty and keen while the lawyer explains the legal phrasing. It's all Chinese to them, but they aren't going to let on about it. Whenever the lawyer pauses, they nod assent as if convinced.



Monday a. m. in the anteroom of a swell law office, showing four very special clients who have had all day Sunday to mull over their troubles and think up new evidence. In the center of the group is a charming divorcee chaperoned largely by her ma, who is out for back alimony and the custody of Wee Wee, the Skye terrier. The determined gentleman to the right is a part-time playwright all set to sue someone in the theatrical business for plagiarism, having discovered that his unproduced play entitled "Love's Labor Lost and Found," written in 1908, is similar to "Abie's Irish Rose." At the left of the table, on which are several back issues of popular magazines, sits a fourth cousin to a large estate that is being settled without his participation, and maybe he isn't going to contest said estate.