

# THE RUBIROSA MURDER CASE

# Confidential

UNCENSORED AND OFF THE RECORD

July 25¢



**MAGGIE TRUMAN'S PROBLEM**

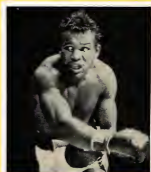
... Pop Wants Grandchildren, NOT Grand Opera!



**The Skeletons in  
Red Skelton's Closet**



**Why the Mob Protects  
Bobo Rockefeller**



**When Sugar Ray Faced  
a Madman with a .45!**

# Confidentially speaking....

## RUBIROSA AND MURDER

New York's police blotter also bears the Rubirosa name, so familiar to the headlines. Our Jay Williams dug deep in the secret files for the shocking details told, for the first time, in "The Rubirosa Murder Case."

## IS MAGGIE GIVING LOVE A "FAIR DEAL?"

Daisies supposedly won't tell, but Truxton Deatur spills plenty in his gossipy account of "Maggie Truman's Problem: Pop Wants Grandchildren, Not Grand Opera." Far from the least of Mag's quandaries is the fact that the fellows who once proposed to her are no longer around, while the one she'd like to mare down the aisle just won't ask that question!

## FLAT SWEATERS? CALL A DOCTOR

A girl doesn't have to hang her upholstery in a closet any more, not if she has from \$500 on up to buy the curves nature forgot to give her. In her clinic's close-up of "Operation Hollywood: Custom-Tailored Bosoms," Audrey Minor not only tells about bosom build-ups but which young and not-so-young stars buy 'em.

## THE CRIME NO ONE DARES COMMIT

It's time to sit up and take notice when the nation's crime overlords join any program to prevent crime! But they've turned as vigilant as the FBI in a case unofficially titled "Why The Mob Protects Bobo Rockefeller." Jim Doherty's startling report tells some things even Bobo never knew till now.

## WHEN F.D.R. MUZZLED GOV. EARLE

Earle had the lowdown on how the Russians planned to double-cross us when World War II was over, but for trying to sound the alarm, he found himself banished to the Far Pacific. Alan Courtney and crack political expert Howard Rushmore serve up the Red-hot facts in "When Roosevelt Exiled Gov. Earle to Samoa."

## THE "PARTY" SOCIETY TRIES TO FORGET

The Duchess of Windsor may think Woolworth heir Jimmy Donahue's quite a card but he was just another wild duce to the D.A. He wanted to know what went on at an all-boy frolic which ended with one guest in the hospital, under treatment for unmentionable abuses. What Jimmy and his gay chums got out of telling a grand jury is told, exactly as it happened, in Hewitt Van Horn's sizzler, "Jimmy Donahue's Hush-Hush Secret."

## HAS THAT B-A-A-D BOY GONE TOO FAR?

That "California dew" isn't half the menace to Hollywood traffic that Red Skelton creates when he projects spicy movies out his window onto garage walls. That's only one of "The Skeletons in Red Skelton's Closet," as recounted by Alfred Garvey, suggesting Red's taking his "Guzzler's Gin" routine just a little too far.

—THE EDITORS

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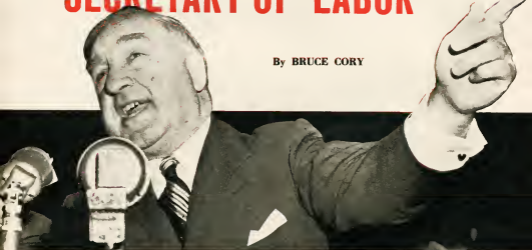
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Over Two Beers and a Pretzel...

# PETRILLO NAMED PEGLER SECRETARY OF LABOR

By BRUCE CORY



On a historic day in Chicago, the Dictator of Blue, High and Bad notes dreamed he'd be President of the United States. Actually, he's already more powerful than the man in the White House!

**T**WO OF THE BOYS were whooping it up at the elbow-polished bar of New York's Waldorf-Astoria, while the world drifted by outside on Park Avenue, unaware that history was being made that night.

One of the lads quaffing the pilsner — the word beer is considered vulgar in Waldorf circles — was the man with savage eyebrows and an acid-proof typewriter who goes by the name of Westbrook Pegler. The other, a foot shorter than Pegler, was James Caesar Petrillo, the guy that put the Lost Chord on a union scale and double pay for overtime.

The proposition that had just been made to Pegler on that night back in 1940 was that the noted syndicated columnist be made Secretary of Labor.

Now Pegler, under any kind of administration in the White House, has about as much chance of becoming Secretary of Labor as Polly Adler has of being elected national chairman of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. But the "Little Caesar" who made the proposal was only half-kidding. "Now when I get to be President of the United States," he was saying . . .

Petrillo's new sense of power didn't come from the malt

—but from the membership. The membership, that is, of the American Federation of Musicians which a few weeks before had elected him their national president. Petrillo was already marching up glory road. That march has been made during the past 14 years to the tune of high notes, blue notes and quite a few C-notes. "Little Caesar" still isn't President of the United States, but he has a lot more power than Eisenhower; and Pegler maintains that Petrillo has a lot more money.

#### Petrillo Isn't Worried about His Enemies

The curious friendship that led Pegler to join Petrillo in quaffing some of the latter's favorite pilsner also has ended. A few months ago Pegler called "Little Caesar" a "blatant, vulgar tyrant of the union rackets," thereby losing any possible chance of becoming Secretary of Labor in a Petrillo cabinet.

But Petrillo isn't worried about his enemies. The pudgy, pugnacious, owl-faced czar of American and Canadian musicians has made it clear as a high note on a piccolo that dictators *can happen here*. As of today, he has the world



Columnist Westbrook Pegler was unflattered by offer of top cabinet post "when and if" Petrillo became President, later termed music czar "vulgar, blatant tyrant."

of music in a strait jacket and his drive for power is newly equipped with jet engines.

This dictator from Chicago's west-side slums is the highest paid labor leader in the world, the most expensively and flashily dressed — and probably the most illiterate. He isn't impressed that he controls the greatest artists of music. Petrillo's approach to culture resembles the last walk of the over-age horse to the glue factory.

"Since when," he once said, "is there any difference between Heifetz playing a fiddle and the fiddler in a bar and grill?" In one sense there isn't — both owe their pork chop money to Petrillo.

He has taken on single-handed the biggest names in music, in show business, radio, TV, and, so far, he has licked them all. He has forced Air Force bands to retire from the scene and has replaced them at patriotic rallies with his toot-for-pay union musicians. For years he had recording moguls screaming in their shellac.

One of "Little Caesar's" actions that really socked the

In 1948 an order from Czar Petrillo halted all recording activities, affecting stars like Tibbett, Pearce,

country was his annihilation of the American Guild of Musical Artists, led by the noted singer, Lawrence Tibbett. The AGMA was formed in 1936 and by the time Petrillo was bossing the American Federation of Musicians, Tibbett's select group had enrolled 1,800 members, including such artists as Heifetz, Lily Pons, Gladys Swarthout, Ezio Pinza, Jose Iturbi, Efram Zimbalist and Mischa Elman. Said Petrillo: "They're musicians and they belong to me."

Tibbett asked help from the courts to stand off Petrillo's raiding. But they didn't move fast enough. Before they could get a restraining order, Petrillo had swallowed up the entire AGMA membership by threatening cancellation of all engagements where union musicians were employed.

"Little Caesar's" gall is divided into three parts. He swats the mechanical music makers, the live ones and his own membership. He can suspend or amend, at his discretion, the constitution of his union. This same constitution has a clause that permits Petrillo to revoke membership at will and levy fines up to \$5,000. And if you're expelled from the union, brother, you'd better look for a job as a track-walker. You just ain't blowing a born no more.

#### Will He Be the Czar of All Showbusiness?

Petrillo currently is casting covetous eyes at another union, the American Guild of Variety Artists, which boasts such headline names as Bob Hope and Jimmy Durante. This AFL union has some 20,000 singers, dancers and other performers in the variety field.

Petrillo, sensing that the public might be incensed if he dealt low blows to their TV favorites, is staging this campaign subtly with his own type of guerrilla warfare. His musicians simply refuse to play along with AGVA talent.

"Petrillo is not only trying to destroy our union," says Jackie Bright, AGVA president, "he is trying to set himself up as the over-all czar of the entertainment industry."

The only setback that Petrillo has received during his 14 years in office came from Congress, which apparently has only a minority of musicians. Back in 1946, the Lea Act — commonly known as the Anti-Petrillo Bill — was passed; it is the only national legislation ever put on the books with a single labor leader in mind.

The law forbids Petrillo to halt public performances of high school bands and similar musical organizations. It also brought an end to Petrillo's insistence on the employment of "stand-by" orchestras of professional musicians when amateurs appear (Continued on page 60)

Swarthout and Kirsten, shown in mass recording session heralding the end of Petrillo's 11-month restriction.



If all this suggests that Mele was making slow progress with Brenda, that was precisely the case. Ever since her glamorous \$25,000 "coming out" party, Brenda has been one of the few cafe society beauties with a reputation for being mighty tough to know intimately. She has picked up a nickname, the "Tomorrow Kid," and thoroughly justifies its implications. A patient and unrewarded lover once explained that this way: "Every time you take her out, you think tomorrow night she's yours for sure, but tomorrow never comes."

### The Jealousy Routine

Having tried alcohol, his knuckles and other gambits, Mele then turned to an older and usually more trustworthy dodge to make Brenda pay more attention to him. He reviewed the situation carefully with a cousin Count Dado Raspoli (a character recently absent from these shores because of his long-as-your-arm record for dope addiction). Dado recommended Mele taunt his beloved by seeming to adopt another lady and offered to loan one of his own hot numbers for this deception, Monique Van Vooren, a sleek charmer who dazzled male eyes in the Broadway hit musical "Almanac."

Monique was not only curvaceous and spicy but could also do tricks. One of her odd accomplishments, which always enlivened parties, was eating Martini glasses (all except the stems, of course).

Either this sizzling competition or Mele's "treat-'em-rough" type of behavior did something to Brenda's glands, for late in 1953 Pietro moved into her apartment and settled down to a happy, if brief, idyll. The rupture that dissolved their romance was spectacular to say the least.

According to cafe society friends, Brenda had grown increasingly annoyed over Pietro's habit of peering over candle-lit dinner tables at other lovelies. Her anger reached the blow-off point one evening last November and she let Pietro know—as a Kelly was chauffeuring them home—that he wasn't getting in the house that night.

### That Poor Old Roman Nose

Mele was genuinely stung by this apparent indication that love was flying out the window and even more grieved when he was told he wouldn't be allowed upstairs to pick up his duds. He later claimed that all but one of his suits were hanging in Brenda's closets on the night of his eviction. He even offered circumstantial proof in later weeks by constantly turning up in El Morocco wearing the same old two-button gray flannel, night after night.

Mele didn't need a wardrobe immediately after that night, because he staged such a bitter farewell scene it took three Manhattan cops to get him out of Brenda's flat. Pietro sent one of the bluecoats to the hospital with a kick in the groin that kept the cop there for seven days. Pietro,

in turn, got such a working over that his fine Roman nose has never been the same.

When Brenda later astounded even her nut-cake companions with that secret visit to Mele's hospital room, there were rumors she and Pietro might patch it up. They did, in fact, show up at their old haunts for dinner and a few bouts of inspired drinking, but it was soon bicker, bicker, bicker all over again.

### She Wouldn't Testify

Brenda also didn't the last possible chance for a reconciliation, when Pietro came to trial for cop kicking. Not only did she refuse to testify in his behalf but sent a note—by way of a psychiatrist whom she's been seeing for some time—saying that having to describe even one of her nights with Mele might drive her off her rocker.

Shortly afterwards, Brenda did, indeed, crack up and checked into a hospital. Her friends said it was to recover from Mele and, since then, no one has even remotely suggested that they'll ever patch things up.

Before her collapse, Brenda was seen quite often with good old "Shipwreck," the husband she put on temporary retirement. Our gin-mill Madonna coyly refused to confirm or deny rumors that they might try housekeeping once more. To her friends, she did murmur what might be an encouraging hint.

"I grant you 'Ship' is dull," she sighed, "but, my God, he's so restful!"



## PETRILLO NAMED PEGLER SEC'Y OF LABOR

Continued from page 37

on radio programs.

Even the lonely platter turner on all-night radio programs comes under Petrillo's jurisdiction. He shackled expansion of FM radio programs and deprived listeners of many recordings of new musical productions for years. Because of him, the cost of all musical entertainment has been greatly inflated.

But Petrillo doesn't mind money and usually has plenty of it. Pegler once pointed out that the musicians in Chicago presented their union boss with a "furnished house, complete with bar, of an estimated value of \$50,000." "The Internal Revenue," wrote Pegler, "held this to be taxable

income and claimed \$26,000 as tax, interest and penalty."

One record, non-musical, which Petrillo has forgotten, sums up the early background of "Little Caesar." It is in the file of the Chicago Board of Education which shows that James Caesar Petrillo attended Dante Elementary school for nine years and never got beyond the fourth grade.

"They bounced me around," Petrillo once complained. "One year I would be in the fourth grade and the next year in the third."

"They drove me nuts. After nine years I give it up."

But the kid from the West Side had other talents. He organized a four-

piece band (non-union) and played drums in tough taverns all over Chicago. Later he joined a musicians' union, was soon elected president, and then kicked out of office. He then organized a rival union and became its head.

During the twenties, Local 10 of the American Federation of Musicians was rocked by more than hot jazz. There were bombings and shootings and Petrillo usually had five gorillas as bodyguards. Someone tossed dynamite at his home in 1924. But he breezed through it all in comparative safety.

### Dreams of a World Union

His power grew and so did his hold on Chicago politics. In 1939 Petrillo celebrated the reelection of Mayor Ed Kelly, his close friend, by renting Cbi-cago Stadium. Among the bands that showed up — at their own expense — to take part in the celebration at Petrillo's request were Paul Whiteman, Kay Kyser, Fred Waring, Tommy Dorsey, Fletcher Henderson and a dozen others. The local orchestras of

(Continued on page 62)

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Columbia, Mutual and NBC also were on hand.

But Petrillo's attack on music nationwide didn't come until next year when he became head of the American Federation of Musicians. Then he started to roll. There is talk in labor circles that Petrillo isn't satisfied with the conquest of North America. He is now eyeing Europe and has grandiose dreams of a World Federation of Musicians.

He may never become President of the United States. He doesn't need the job. When Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren writes Petrillo a fond note as a "brother musician" and the major entertainment industries grovel at his feet, he can laugh at the job in the White House.

The other Caesar had his legions. "Them Roman bums," says Petrillo scornfully, "weren't even organized."



## GREGG SHERWOOD'S SHIFTLESS DODGE

Continued from page 43

trouble, both as a showgirl and a model for girly magazines. She had yet, however, to acquire the fastidiousness demanded of a future bride for Horace Elvin Dodge, Jr. A photographer, who remembers her disrobing for photos that would appear in certain girly books, remarked after learning that she would spend considerable time in Palm Beach with Dodge, "Hell, that won't be bad. She'll have a chance to get near some water." Regardless of that, though, she was one of the most sought-after-girls in New York.

### Arrears in Hubby's Accounts

The man who finally persuaded the dazzling blonde to try marriage for a second time was Walter Sherwin, who earned \$90 a week selling tickets for the New York Yankees baseball team. Perhaps he did not realize that the Wisconsin beauty had acquired expensive tastes, but he was not long in learning-it. He strove so mightily and illegally to help her satisfy these tastes that one morning the Yankee auditors awoke to discover arrears in Sherwin's accounts to the extent of \$43,687.

The proceedings that resulted from this disclosure were sordid in their details. It was palpably apparent that Sherwin, who is now less than friendly with his former wife, had disbursed most of the funds to her and her family. Their divorce was not among the more amiable ones within recent memory. It may be noted, too, that public opinion was strongly on Sherwin's side. Tabloid readers took the reasonable attitude that his major fault was in having fallen hopelessly in love with a girl whose prime concerns were herself and her family.

An ill wind and so forth. In this instance, it may be said that if men who read about the case did not approve of Gregg's (a name, incidentally, she had been inspired to adopt from her memory of the shorthand system) conduct, they could discover nothing inadequate about her sex appeal. She rapidly became one of the most popular girls in the city and she was constantly in the company, not only of affluent older men, but also of the young cafe society crowd to be seen in Armando's, the Little Club, and El Borracho.

Often she was in parties that included a pudgy and stunted adolescent named Minot Jelke, whom the public was afterwards to know more chummily as Mickey. By now, of course, everybody knew her only as Gregg Sherwood and nobody, seeing her dancing in the swank El Morocco, in the arms of some South American wastrel, would think of saying, "There's Dora Fjelstad."

### Quarreled over Drinking

Then an alcohol-drenched man who frequently employed the services of a male nurse began to be seen with her. The janitor's stepdaughter appeared to be making progress with Horace Dodge, who, drunk or sober, always had money. Miss Wisconsin may not have done so well at the Atlantic City Beauty Pageant, but she seemed to be doing pretty well with the holder of one of the most respected names in the automotive industry.

Finally the two of them went abroad—after, naturally, some heated quarrels over his drinking—and one night in Cannes' plush Palm Beach Casino he gave a party for 50 guests whom he had flown in from all over