

# \*Ye Olde Plum News\*

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## CROOKS OF DIFFERENT KINDS

### CORRUPT POLICE OFFICER

Mr Patrick McEachern was a corrupt policeman in New York who had made a fortune by graft. He helped gangsters to get away with stolen goods, let evidence disappear, appointed acquaintances to positions in the police force, took bribes from petty crooks. He left the force and moved to Britain with his fortune. There he told that he had made his fortune by speculations on Wall Street. He was established as a respectable citizen of the upper classes. (The Gem Collector, 1909)

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### CRACKSMAN

James "Jimmy" Pitt was a cracksman and jewel thief in New York when he inherited a baronet title with a fortune from an uncle in England. *When I left the lawyer's office, I made up my mind that I would draw a line across my life. I swore I would never crack another crib.* He left New York, to live the life of a gentleman in England. Married Molly, daughter of Patrick McEachern. (The Gem Collector, 1909)

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### BURGLAR

Ulysses "Red Spike" Mullins was a professional thief and burglar in New York. Used to do some work for James Pitt. He fled from the American justice to London where he once more met James Pitt and worked for him again, but now as his valet. His inclination for criminality made it hard for him to accept Pitt's reform to an honest life. So he returned to New York to enter politics. (The Gem Collector, 1909)

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### NEW YORK GANGSTER

*Bat Jarvis was the leader of the famous Groome Street Gang, the most noted of all New York's collections of apaches. More, he was the founder and originator of it... It is true that, as his detractors pointed out, he had killed no one – a defect which he had subsequently corrected... Small thieves, pickpockets and the like, flocked to Mr*

*Jarvis as their tribal leader and protector and he protected them. For he, with his followers, were of use to the politicians... So politicians passed the word to the police, and the police left the Groome Street Gang unmolested and they waxed fat and flourished. He gave valuable support to Psmith against Stewart Waring and his people. (Psmith Journalist, 1915)*

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### REAL ESTATE TYCOON

*Stewart Waring is running for City Alderman... He's one of the bosses. He used to be Commissioner of Buildings for the City ... Shut his eyes and held out his hands when they ran up rotten buildings that strong breeze would have knocked down.*

He owned Pleasant Street tenements and demanded high rents without maintaining the building. He collaborated with the Three Points gang to collect rents and throw out those who dared to protest against the conditions. Psmith, with help from Bat Jarvis' gang and a newspaper campaign forced him to maintain the tenements. (Psmith Journalist, 1915)

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### LONDON GANGSTER

*Horace Appleby was the head of the Appleby gang, well known and respected in criminal circles ... In his long and prosperous career Horace had always had to depend very much on those who worked for him – Basher Evans, for instance, expert at opening safes, and Ferdie the Fly, who, while definitely not of the intelligentsia, had the invaluable gift of being able to climb up the side of any house you placed before him, using only his toes, fingers and personal magnetism. Horace himself played the role of a General in time of war, planning campaigns at the base and leaving his troops to carry them out. (Do Butlers Burgle Banks? 1968)*

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### KIDNAPPER

Buck MacGinnis and his American bunch planned to kidnap Ogden "The Little Nugget" Ford whose rich father had placed him in Sanstead House School

in England. Buck's gang tried an armed frontal attack, but failed.

"Smooth Sam" Fisher was a competitor to MacGinnis. He tried another approach. Under false name he entered a position as butler at the school. He put a drug in the coffee for the staff and while they were asleep, he tried to kidnap Ogden. His plan failed because one teacher didn't take coffee that evening.

Buck MacGinnis and Sam Fisher joined forces, made a new armed attack and Ogden turned himself in to them. Sam however double-crossed Buck, collected a ransom from Ogden's parents and was employed to be a safeguard for the boy, to prevent future kidnappings. (The Little Nugget, 1913)

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### CARD SHARPER

*Eddie Cootes had been by profession a card sharper on the Atlantic liners... For three years and more he had worked in perfect harmony with the lady who, though she adopted a variety of names for purposes of travel, was known to her immediate circle as Smooth Lizzie. He had been the practitioner, she the decoy. Lizzie and Eddie were imposters at Blandings. Their effort to steal Lady Constance's diamond necklace was a failure. (Leave it to Psmith, 1923)*

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### PICK POCKET AND CON TRICK

*Dora Molloy – Fainting Dolly to her friends – was unquestionably an artist in her particular branch of industry. It was her practice to swoon in the arms of rich-looking strangers in the public street and pick their pockets as they bent to render her assistance. (Sam the Sudden, 1925)*

She was married to Thomas G "Soapy" Molloy. Mr. Molloy's resemblance to an American senator of the better sort inspired in those he met a confidence which was of the greatest help to him in his life-work of selling stock in non-existing oil wells. (Pearls, Girls and Monty Bodkin, 1972)

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