

NUGGETS OF BOULDER COLOR

By Elton Garrett

CHEAP DRUNK, ON THE JOB

For the sake of making this yarn somewhat picturesque, and of narrative form, let's just pretend there was a man on the job in the canyon who made it his business to look after the other fellow's business primarily. Not a walker, for a walker has plenty of responsibility of his own; and not a runner, for a shovel runner doesn't go snooping around much.

Aha, we'll make him a water carrier—one who neither walks nor runs, but who snoops, and carries other things besides water.

In other words, the narrative part of this piece of fiction is totally untrue, exaggerated withal, though it has its foundation amid at least a glimmering of actual fact.

Now Mister Cary Snooper (we'll call him that), once took a correspondence course in detectivery. And when he saw an opportunity to cooperate with reservation police (without their invitation), to help quell crime, he got into immediate action.

Cary stood with eyes bulging, watching the behavior of part of a crew of men at work with paint brushes atop the arch jumbo near

the lower end of diversion tunnel one. He watched one of the men coming down the 40 foot steel ladder, coming down in rather unsteady fashion. Cary watched some more. He became convinced at least. Aha, TWO of 'em!

Mister Snooper walked fast, to the nearest telephone. "Ring me the police station, quick." He talked. Then, smiling serenely, he hung up the receiver and went about his work.

Cary timed his travels so as to be back in lower tunnel one, near the jumbo, in about 20 minutes.

Yes, sure enough, here came the police car! Aha!

It was nearing 2 o'clock in the afternoon when the officers walked up to the great arch jumbo that towered there inside the 50 foot diversion tunnel, spreading its convex surface there a bare three feet below the tunnel "ceiling."

An apparently dazed pair sat on the rail under the jumbo, giving the appearance of a pair of inebriates the morning after.

Two other men were descending the ladder. The lower one was doing well, but the last descender weaved slightly. Both reached the bottom, and promptly sat them-

selves down, to avoid moving unsteadily about on their feet.

"What's the matter? Are you boys a little drunk?"

"Well, yes, and no. Dunno's you'd call it exactly DRUNK. We jus' . . ."

"Oh, you 'jest had one or two drinks', I suppose. Not drunk at all. How do you expect to sober up?"

"Well, you see, we've been . . ."

"You just come down that ladder. Anyone else up there on that jumbo now? THEY drunk too?"

"Well, yes, one feller's up there finishin' up in the corner. Be down pretty soon. Seven of us altogether."

"Well, what did you get drunk on?"

"Alcohol. Wanna know where we got it? Well, out of the ozone! Y'see it's like this, officer, we worked up there a little longer than usual to get through—worked right through the noon hour, an' there's only three feet there, so the fumes from the form oil paint that we paint the jumbo with before pouring the concrete can't escape. There's alcohol in the oil, and it gets into our systems after awhile and gets us on a cheap drunk. Not bad, though, soon be over it. Usually take short shifts. Little stiffer than usual this time."