



Whistling cheerfully, Gus Wilson was busy at the bench when his partner arrived early the next morning.

GUS Gives Special Service

By MARTIN BUNN

DR. MARVIN'S good-humored voice came over the wire. "A patient gave me tickets—nice seats . . ."

Gus Wilson laughed. "I'd enjoy going with you, Doc. Eight o'clock? Fine!" He put down the phone and turned to Joe Clark. "Doc Marvin wants me to—"

The telephone jingled again. Gus snapped an impatient "Hello" into the mouthpiece and listened. "All right," he finally yelled. "I'll be there in ten minutes. . . . Car gone dead up the highway," he fumed. "Almost closing time and I have a date with Doc."

It was just getting dark, the bleakest quarter hour of a late winter afternoon. Gus grouchyly drove the wrecker up the highway and a little way out of town. As he topped a sharp rise in the road, he sighted a red sedan. A man whose head was scroched into the fur collar of a long black overcoat motioned him to a stop.

"I'm Baermann," he shouted.

Gus nodded, continued a little way down the hill and off the pavement, and walked back. "What's the matter with your bus?"

Baermann withdrew a pair of pudgy hands from his pocket and made a helpless gesture. "You're asking *me*? I ain't no mechanic. We're driving along, and all of a

sudden—glug—she stops. I'm in a hurry!"

"So am I," Gus grunted. He opened the driver's door. Two men were sitting in the back of the car. Even on the three-passenger seat, they were pressed together and their shoulders were wedged against the sides. One of them was so tall that his hat scraped the roof; his face was ornamented by a handlebar mustache. The other man, who was a full head shorter, held a battered and bulging briefcase on his knees with a pair of ham-sized hands. They stared silently.

Gus pressed the starter. The engine turned over but didn't take hold. He found the gas supply was low, but the tank wasn't empty. Unlatching the hood, he disconnected the line from the fuel pump to the carburetor, and pressed the starter relay. No gas pulsed out. "Trouble seems to be in the fuel line or pump," he said.

Evening traffic from the city began to fill the road. Hidden from sight in one direction by the top of the hill, the car was in a dangerous spot for extended parking.

"Can't work out here," Gus decided. "I'll back it down into that clearing."

Baermann was fidgeting nearby. "Okay, but I don't want my friends to catch cold sitting there. Wait a minute." He stuck his head in the door and mumbled something. The two passengers eased themselves out.

"Pals," Baermann told Gus confidentially, his manner that of a fond parent. "But when they clash—" Instead of finishing, he rolled his eyes until only the whites showed.

Gus rolled the car to safety at the foot of the hill, got out, and again lifted the hood. "Get down by the gas tank," he instructed Baermann, "and listen." He detached the line to the fuel pump and blew into it.

"It's bubbling," Baermann yelled.

On a hunch, Gus replaced the fuel line and pressed the starter relay. The engine caught and began purring smoothly.

"It's fixed." Baermann scampered back.

"It's working, but I don't know why." The temperature had gone down with the sun, and Gus's hands were so cold he could hardly tighten the coupling nut. "I can't fix it here. Drive it to the garage."

Baermann looked at him slyly and seemed to be thinking. "Fine," he agreed.

"I'll turn around and you can follow me back." Gus started for the wrecker, noticing that the two huge passengers quickly resumed their places. Before he reached the wrecker the sedan's engine was whirring, and the car made a dark streak up the hill.

CUSTOMERS trying to beat him out of his fee usually made Gus mad, but tonight he felt almost amused by it. Now he'd be able to keep his appointment with Doc without rushing. He made a wide U turn in the wrecker and started back. Halfway up the hill he broke into a broad grin. The red sedan was stalled in the same spot as before, and Baermann stood alongside it, flagging him down frantically.

"Having trouble?" Gus paused alongside.

"It stopped again. You'll have to tow us."

"Oh, will I? After your trying to run out on me?"

Baermann plucked his cigar out of his mouth, his eyes popped open. "Run out on you? You told me to drive to the garage!"

Gus looked dubious. The fur-coated man could be telling the truth. Baermann clutched his arm, threw him a confidential, sidelong look, and nodded solemnly. "I'll take a chance," he said. "You've heard of the U. N.?"

"You mean United Nations?"

Pointing the mangled cigar end at the two men who were bulging out of the red sedan, Baermann murmured: "Ivan Poloutsoff and Pecci Benazet. You don't know them? Soon you will! In that briefcase,

Benazet—but see how tight he holds it! And Poloutsoff never takes his eyes off it! If they agree—okay for One World! They go into secret session tonight. Mister, you got to help me get 'em there on time!"

"That's a pretty fishy story." Gus looked at Baermann suspiciously. "But I'll take a long chance on its being true." He hitched the wrecker's towline to the stalled sedan, and ten minutes later maneuvered the two machines into his shop.

WHEN the three riders had stepped out, Gus once more tried the starter. Again the motor caught and kept running.

"How about it?" Baermann peered over his shoulder impatiently.

From the gigantic pair came a rumble of talk. Benazet unbuckled the bulging briefcase. It slipped from his fingers, and its contents spilled over the floor. Gus caught a momentary glimpse of something vivid green and scarlet; then it was hidden by two huge bodies. When they straightened up, Benazet had the briefcase clamped under his arm, and Poloutsoff was stripping the paper off a brown parcel. He handed Benazet a sandwich and began to munch another.

"All day they worked and worked," Baermann whispered. "No time to eat, even."

Gus was far from convinced, but having gone this far he figured he might as well go all the way. The finger of doubt pointed straight at the fuel pump. Gus changed it.

"That's all I can do right now," he said.

Baermann hastily piled his friends into the car and jumped behind the wheel. "Thanks, mister," he shouted. "Maybe the world will owe you a lot!"

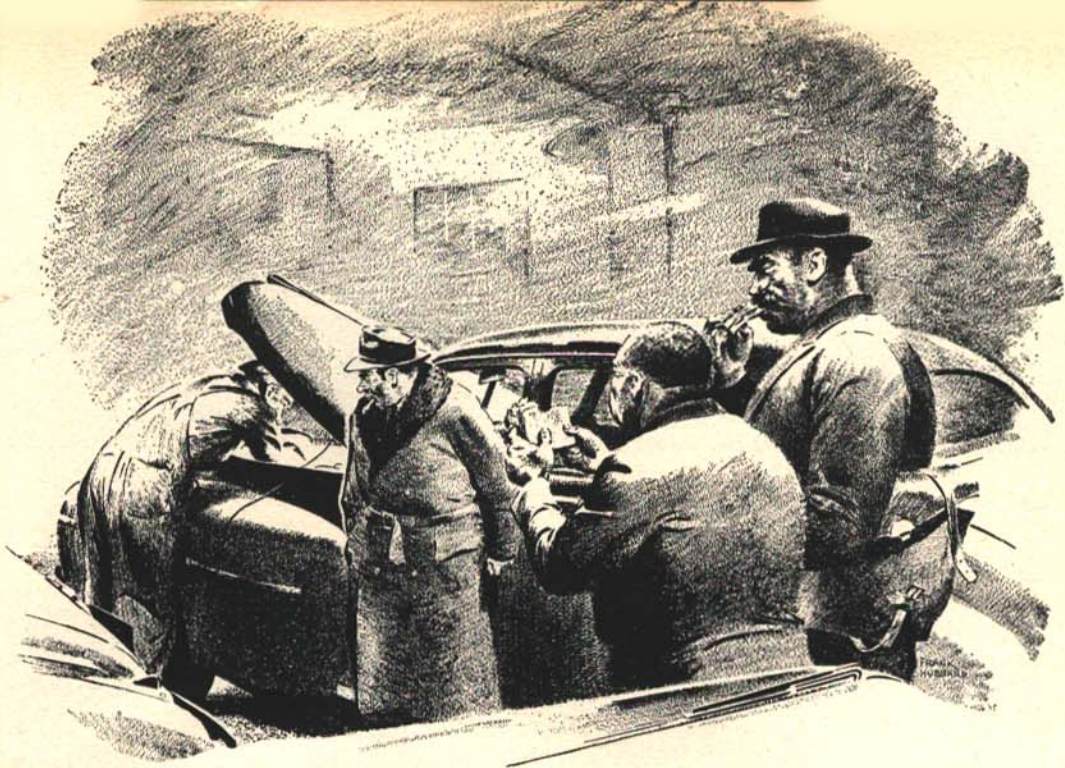
"Never mind what the world will owe me," Gus replied. "You owe me—let's see—"

"The U.N. will pay. Send the bill to the Treasurer General." The red sedan pulled away.

DR. MARVIN and Gus stumbled into their tenth-row seats at the Coliseum as the announcer started introducing the combatants in the wind-up bout. "In this kornar, wearin' green trunks, weighin' 291 pounds—Pecci Benazet, th' Basque Bomb! Wearin' red trunks, at 312 pounds, Ivan Poloutsoff, th' Roarin' Rooshin!"

"Obese types," Dr. Marvin observed professionally. "It would be interesting to examine them—"

"Examine me, Doc!" Gus groaned. "I'm a sucker!"



The spectator in front turned around. "And how, brother! All of us rasslin' fans are suckers! Grudge match, they say! That double-crossin' crook Baermann got both them tramps workin' fer him. . . ."

Action fast and furious erupted under the lights. Poloutsoff, bellowing like an enraged bull, charged across the ring, seized Benazet around his ample middle, twirled him over his head a few times, then flung him to the mat and trampled over him with both feet. Benazet retaliated by sinking his gleaming teeth into the bulging calf muscles of Ivan's leg. He gnawed with seeming relish while the Roarin' Rooshin roared.

CLOSE by the ring, Baermann was waving his arms excitedly, apparently trying to shout some message to one or both of the struggling men. His bobbing arm stopped suddenly in midair, clamped in a traplike hand. Startled, the promoter turned.

"The Treasurer General wouldn't pay up," Gus said.

"Huh?" Baermann's face paled. "Oh—I was just kidding, mister. Anything for a laugh. . . . How much?"

WHISTLING cheerily, Gus was busy at the bench when his partner came in next morning.

"Make the bouts last night?" Joe asked.

"Yup. Almost missed 'em though." Gus

indicated the fuel pump lying at his elbow.

Idly, Joe picked it up, reached under the housing, and pressed the rocker arm. Holding a finger over the outlet port, he heard and felt the air push by. "Seems all right to me," he said.

"Not bad," Gus admitted, "but you can't tell with pumps. Even when the diaphragm is cracked, you can often feel the pumping action. If you put that in another car it might run for weeks."

"Then what made it give out last night?"

"As near as I can figure, a combination of things. The motor starved out on a hill when it needed extra gas the pump didn't give."

"Doesn't it usually provide more gas than is used?"

"Yes, but the slope of the hill put the gas tank several inches below where it normally is in relation to the pump. That meant that still more suction was needed. Then a couple of heavyweights depressed the back of the car another four inches or so. What with the low level of gas in the tank, it all added up."

"Guess it did." Joe turned back toward the office. "Got the slip on the job?"

Gus grinned and handed his partner the shop slip and twenty-five dollars in bills.

"What?" yelled Joe. "Twenty-five bucks for that job?"

"Nope," said Gus, "six bucks for the job and nineteen for special collection service."