

# **PAT NOVAK FOR HIRE**

## **"THE AGNES BOLTON CASE"**

*ORIGINALLY BROADCAST JUNE 4, 1949*

Transcribed by The Indefensible Craig Gustafson for "Those Thrilling Days of Yesteryear" old time radio recreations.  
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### **CAST:**

Max Hunter  
Announcer  
Inspector Hellman  
Jocko Madigan  
Joan Hayward  
Francine Kane  
Pat Novak  
The Little Guy

### **ANNOUNCER**

*(Quietly)* Ladies and gentlemen. The American Broadcasting Company brings to its entire network one of radio's most unusual programs. Pat Novak. For Hire.

***(SFX: FOGHORN, LAPPING WAVES, SHIP BELLS, THEN FOOTSTEPS SLOWLY MOVING TOWARD US)***

### **NOVAK**

*(World-weary)* Sure. I'm Pat Novak. For hire.

***(SFX: FOG HORN BLAST! THEME MUSIC COMES CRASHING IN! ESTABLISH FOR EIGHT BARS, THEN UNDER)***

### **NOVAK** *(cont'd)*

That's what the sign out in front of my office says. "Pat Novak for hire." It's about the only way to make a living down on the waterfront in San Francisco, because around here a set of morals won't cause any more stir than Mother's Day in an orphanage. Maybe that's not good, but that's the way it is. And it wouldn't do any good to build a church down here; because some guy'd muscle in and start cutting the wine with wood alcohol. All you can do is try to make the books balance, and the easiest way to do that is keep one hand on your billfold and the other hand on somebody else's.

Oh, I rent boats, and do anything else that'll buy a warm winter. Works out all right. Saves the government a lot of money. But if anything goes wrong, your trouble comes *hard*, and it doesn't do any good to sing the blues because down here, you're just another guy in the chorus.

***(MUSIC & SFX FADE OUT)***

I found that out Wednesday afternoon. It started to rain up by Pier 19 and I knew there was a storm on the way. The bay looked flat and smoothed over; but you can say that for a lot of quarrels. So I closed the office and walked down to the barber shop for a shave. The barber lathered me up so I couldn't answer back, and started to tell me how Dean Atcheson ought to

handle things. About five minutes later, somebody walked into the shop and started tappin' my foot.

*(SFX: SHOE BEING TAPPED)*

NOVAK *(cont'd)*

He got tired of that and moved up to my chest.

*(SFX: CHEST BEING THUMPED)*

MAX/JACKIE

*(Gruff, gravelly voice)* Hey. You listenin'? Hey.

NOVAK

Stop pushin'. That's my chest, not a buzzer.

MAX/JACKIE

Are you listenin'?

NOVAK

Yeah. What's on your mind?

MAX/JACKIE

I... wanna talk to you alone.

NOVAK

He's a barber. He won't listen.

MAX/JACKIE

Let's go alone.

NOVAK

All right, let's go. I'll be back in a minute.

*(SFX: NOVAK GETTING OUT OF CHAIR)*

BARBER

*(Grumbling)* How do you like-a that? I got-a fourteen customers wait, he says-a... *(Fade out)*

MAX/JACKIE

I wanna hire you tonight. Will you do something for me?

NOVAK

Not for friendship.

MAX/JACKIE

I'll give you two hundred dollars to follow a woman.

NOVAK

I've done it for less.

**MAX/JACKIE**

Not this kind. Her name is Agnes Bolton. You'll find her at seven o'clock tonight down at this bowling alley. Here's the card.

**NOVAK**

Um hmm.

**MAX/JACKIE**

Address is there.

**NOVAK**

How do I spot her? Read it off an ankle bracelet?

**MAX/JACKIE**

You won't have any trouble. She's a large woman, about fifty years old with a reddish face.

**NOVAK**

That's no help. For fifty she sounds normal.

**MAX/JACKIE**

Not Agnes. She couldn't pass for ninety. She'll be playing in the last alley with a woman's team called the Play Mores.

**NOVAK**

Yeah?

**MAX/JACKIE**

You'll follow her out of the bowling alley. Somewhere along the line she'll pick up a green leather bag. After that I need your help.

**NOVAK**

It doesn't sound like love.

**MAX/JACKIE**

She'll go to the Yacht Harber, get aboard a boat called Seventh Heaven. I want you to have your boat ready and follow her into the bay. She'll leave that bag aboard some ship. I want to know the name of it.

**NOVAK**

Now is that two hundred dollars worth?

**MAX/JACKIE**

Yes. I'll wait for you in your office. Contact me there; and be careful.

**NOVAK**

Is she that tough?

**MAX/JACKIE**

No, but her friends are.

**NOVAK**

With a figure like that, how come she's got any?

**MAX/JACKIE**

They're holdovers. So just be careful.

**NOVAK**

Yeah. Well, it sounds easy at these prices.

**MAX/JACKIE**

That depends on your luck, Mr. Novak. If it turns bad... you've been cheated.

*(MUSIC BRIDGE)*

**NOVAK**

He stood at the door for a minute and his eyes swept the shop like a ten dollar broom; then he turned around and walked off. Well, you couldn't tell anything from his face, and his smile was as smooth as a pound of liver in a bucket of glycerine.

After I finished, I went down to Pier 19 and I took the boat up to the Yacht Harbor. I tied up near the Seventh Heaven and I started downtown to that bowling alley. It was ladies' night. And I stood against the back rail and watched the women bowl. Most of 'em were wearing slacks, and if I ever get a few bucks ahead, I know the right business. At least the *demand* is there.

About ten minutes after I got there, Agnes Bolton showed up and I knew right away Max Hunter'd overrated her. She was at least fifty, because you can't get that ugly without years of practice. She was wearing a green woolen dress and her figure wasn't any worse than a bale of cotton somebody's cut the wire on. The fat hung down from her arms and there was so much of it, you knew even her bones were plump. And Max was right about her complexion. It was red and scratchy as if she used a bag of sand for cold cream.

I must have stood there about ten minutes, watching them bowl, when the other girl came up. I didn't see her, but I felt her as she brushed up against me from behind. She leaned on the railing close to me, and when she started to talk it was like grafting a hot iron onto your spine.

**JOAN**

You look sad, Mr. Novak. Is it the view?

**NOVAK**

What are you, the repair squad?

**JOAN**

No. I want you to do me a favor.

**NOVAK**

You do me one.

**JOAN**

Hmm?

**NOVAK**

Slide over. I bruise easy.

**JOAN**

Ohhhh.

**NOVAK**

Now, what's on your mind?

**JOAN**

I want you to do me a favor. *Don't follow Agnes Bolton.*

**NOVAK**

You're pretty, but I've got Max Hunter's dough.

**JOAN**

I'll help you spend it. Don't let Agnes Bolton get to that boat.

**NOVAK**

Look, angel, go warm up an armory. I got a deal.

**JOAN**

Suppose I tell Agnes Bolton you're following her.

**NOVAK**

You'd tell her first, without tagging by here. If you've got something on your mind, lay it on the line or relax.

**JOAN**

I want her worse than Max Hunter does. When she gets that green bag, I want you to bring her to me.

**NOVAK**

I couldn't move her that far. You better rent a derrick.

**JOAN**

Please, Mr. Novak. It's important to me. I want to talk to Agnes Bolton. I can give you more money than Max Hunter.

**NOVAK**

You haven't got enough to cover, lady. You're talking about kidnapping and that's a federal rap. The answer's no.

**JOAN**

You're sure?

**NOVAK**

Unless you want to change the offer.

**JOAN**

I hope you make it, darling.

**NOVAK**

I may.

**JOAN**

Don't bet your two hundred dollars. It's bad to die broke.

**NOVAK**

Is anybody that tough?

**JOAN**

Now it's my turn to brush *you* off. Go ahead and follow her, Mr. Novak. But I'll bet you have to roll her the last couple of miles.

**NOVAK**

Hmm?

**JOAN**

And unless you can prove it's an election bet, the police'll cause you trouble!

*(MUSIC BRIDGE)*

**NOVAK**

Well, I watched her as she turned her back and walked out of there. She looked real good. She was wearing a tight jersey dress that gave you the idea that she either thought the weather was warm or she wasn't much on details.

I turned around and looked for Agnes Bolton. The game was breaking up and she started into the dressing room. A few minutes later she came out and started down Market Street. It was no trouble following her. You could see her in the crowd; she rolled from side to side as she walked and when she bumped into anybody they looked back at her as if they'd been hit in the chest with a sack of jelly. She crossed the street at Stockton, went into a little coin shop. She came out about five minutes later with a green leather bag. She strapped it over her shoulder and she held onto her purse with the other hand.

At Powell Street, she got on the cable car, up near the front. I moved up there to be safe; she looked heavy enough to be able to tip a cable car uphill. In that light, she didn't look any better. Part of her hair had come undone and hung down in her face like the branches on a dead tree. I

**NOVAK** *(cont'd)*

noticed her eyes for the first time. They were small, and so close together they could have saved time and put 'em in one socket. She got off the cable car at Geary and walked into a hotel. I followed her and watched her squeeze into a telephone booth on the other side of the lobby. The way she fit, a sardine oughta be happy. She took some money out of her purse and started to dial. A couple of people moved in front of her and I didn't get a look at her for about five minutes, and when they moved away she was still talking to somebody. I looked up about ten minutes later and I knew something was wrong. Her head was pressed against the phone; she'd run out of conversation. I walked across the lobby and opened the door to get to the phone booth.

*(SFX: FOOTSTEPS CROSSING A CROWDED LOBBY)*

**NOVAK** (cont'd)

She fell out as old as she'd ever get.

*(SFX: AN ENORMOUS BODY SLIDING OUT OF A PHONE BOOTH. BYSTANDERS GASP AND EMOTE.)*

**NOVAK** (cont'd)

There! Hey! Help me get her over to the couch, will you?

**LITTLE GUY**

Yes sir.

*(SFX: LIFTING THE BODY AND WALKING)*

**LITTLE GUY**

Was she your wife?

**NOVAK**

If she was, this is the way I'd want her.

**LITTLE GUY**

Her purse is spilled all over the floor. Sure is a mess.

**NOVAK**

Yeah.

**LITTLE GUY**

She's some relative, huh?

**NOVAK**

Look, mister, stop tryin' to pair us up. I was around when she tumbled out; that's all.

**LITTLE GUY**

Yeah. Well, what's she die from?

**NOVAK**

I don't know.

**LITTLE GUY**

I just figured you might know what she died from...

**NOVAK**

No, I don't...

**LITTLE GUY**

It's a simple question to answer when you know what she died from...

**COP** (background, fading in)

Let me through here. Come on. All right, stand back. Give her air.

**NOVAK**

She can't use any more, copper.

**COP**

Heh?

**NOVAK**

She quit about five minutes ago.

**COP**

Who are you?

**NOVAK**

I'm not dead, she is.

**COP**

And who's she?

**NOVAK**

You better check on her stuff. And don't forget that green bag.

**COP**

Yeah...what bag?

**NOVAK**

The green bag over there on the flo-- Well, it was over there a minute ago.

**COP**

Same one the little guy had?

**NOVAK**

What little guy?

**COP**

The one that was talking to *you*. He just walked out of here carryin' a green bag.

***(MUSIC BRIDGE)***

**NOVAK**

Well, I got out on the street and the little man had just crossed Geary. He turned and looked back once, and I saw him melt into the crowd and disappear quick, like the wake of a ship on a dark night. When I got back into the lobby, the cop was making noises in the back of his throat as if he was trying to eat a pound of cellophane. The manager of the hotel was wringing his hands and making little steps like a ballet dancer with a hot foot. The cop took my name and put in a call to Homicide.

A few minutes later, I got into that phone booth. There was a number on the pad and I took it down. It was Graystone 4-2961. Well, it didn't prove much; but Agnes Bolton wasn't out to prove much tonight. I began going through the phone book, but there was no Max Hunter listed, and when I called the office, nobody answered. I knew there was as much chance of him showing up as a second piece of butter on a fifty-cent lunch. I ran down that Graystone number and found out it was an address out on Post Street. I walked through the lobby and out the side door. Some of the people were out of the dining room, and they looked mad because Agnes Bolton had died during the roast beef instead of later.

I walked down to Geary to the Union Square garage and gave the guy my ticket. He started down the ramp for the car and I stood there waiting. I must have looked lonely. Because Hellman from Homicide shoved up near the cash register and started over. He made his way through the cars and as he squeezed by the last one he looked like a sea lion.

*(SFX: FOOTSTEPS)*

**HELLMAN**

Hello, Novak. We identified her.

**NOVAK**

You had lots to work with, Hellman.

**HELLMAN**

Where *you* goin'?

**NOVAK**

Out on Post Street.

**HELLMAN**

I'll go with you. Her name was Agnes Bolton.

*(SFX: BACKGROUND TRAFFIC)*

**NOVAK**

You read it somewhere?

**HELLMAN**

She was a government agent.

**NOVAK**

They got their money's worth.

**HELLMAN**

Coroner says she died of quick poison.

**NOVAK**

How quick?

**HELLMAN**

Five minutes.

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**NOVAK**

You're workin' him too hard, Hellman.

**HELLMAN**

He's got a license, he says five minutes.

**NOVAK**

She was in that phone booth ten minutes. Nobody got to her.

**HELLMAN**

She looked dead to me, Novak, I don't believe you.

**NOVAK**

Well, I'm hurt...

**HELLMAN**

I don't believe a thing you say.

**NOVAK**

That's up to you! I'm not starting a religion, Hellman. I watched her for ten minutes. Nobody got to her. You better check on that little guy.

**HELLMAN**

Yeah?

**NOVAK**

She was carrying a green bag. The little guy walked out of there with it.

**HELLMAN**

He sounds hard to find. You don't.

**GARAGE ATTENDANT**

Hey, mister, is this *your* ticket?

**NOVAK**

Yeah. It's a blue Nash.

**GARAGE ATTENDANT**

Well, you better come down and drive it up.

**NOVAK**

Why?

**GARAGE ATTENDANT**

I can't get to the wheel. The guy in there won't move.

**NOVAK**

Huh?

**GARAGE ATTENDANT**

I don't blame him, either. When you're dead, you got a right to rest.

***(MUSIC BRIDGE) (SFX: TRAFFIC BACKGROUND OUT)***

**NOVAK**

Hellman stood there a minute wiping his teeth with his tongue and it began to sound like someone beating a bathtub with a piece of steak. When he finished making noises, we walked down the ramp to the car. It was the little guy who had taken the green bag. He was hunched over and he was grabbing the wheel as if he'd just married it. Hellman lifted his head up and laid him across the seat. The light was bad, but you could see a little of his face. There was watering around his forehead and the damp hair was plastered down under his hat brim. The perspiration had broken up and started to run down his forehead like tears, and you got the idea he cried out of his hairline instead of his eyes. He didn't look surprised or pained. He just stared with a puzzled look as if he'd missed part of the conversation. Hellman stood there, trying to wipe some egg off his coat and turning to look at the guy to make sure he didn't leave.

**HELLMAN**

So what happened, Novak?

**NOVAK**

So he had an automobile accident, Hellman. I don't know.

**HELLMAN**

He's your passenger.

**NOVAK**

He bummed the ride himself. When I saw him he was on his way with that green bag.

**HELLMAN**

Where is it?

**NOVAK**

He got talked out of it. You better check on a guy named Max Hunter.

**HELLMAN**

Now whose cousin is *he*?

**NOVAK**

He gave me two hundred bucks to tail Agnes Bolton. I got another offer, too.

**HELLMAN**

Yeah?

**NOVAK**

A blonde biscuit and she said everything on the beat.

**HELLMAN**

For a total stranger, you sure *met* a lot of people.

**NOVAK**

You better meet a lot of 'em too, Hellman. One of them got to Agnes Bolton.

**HELLMAN**

How about Junior here? Did he crawl down the ramp and die on your seat covers?

**NOVAK**

I don't know he got here.

**HELLMAN**

Maybe you left him here and forgot.

**NOVAK**

No, he wouldn't slip my mind. I haven't murdered anybody in the *front* seat.

**HELLMAN**

I'll bet it's likely, though. You better get a story, Novak.

**NOVAK**

You already got mine, Hellman.

**HELLMAN**

You won't like the ending.

**NOVAK**

No, but I'll bet you do.

**HELLMAN**

I like it fine, Novak. You're the only lead on Agnes Bolton. I'll shop around and get a lead until I've got enough to *pin you down*.

**NOVAK**

You couldn't pin down a dead butterfly, Hellman. You better look up Max Hunter and check on a boat called the *Seventh Heaven*.

**HELLMAN**

I'll will; and I'll put a tail on *you*, Novak. He'll follow you all over San Francisco. He'll go *anyplace*.

**NOVAK**

That's fine, cause I have a suggestion.

***(MUSIC BRIDGE)***

**NOVAK** *(cont'd)*

As soon as Hellman left, I took a cab out to that address on Post Street, but it was a waste of time; I might as well have been peddling tip sheets in a monastery. There was a brown house on the corner and there was a big, curved window that stuck out from the rest of the house like a wart on the back of your neck. A toothy old man answered the door and said he didn't know Agnes Bolton. I was pretty sure he was on the level. Just kept nodding his head and rubbing the wrinkles on his face. There were enough of them there to bundle up and sell as a canal.

I left to go downtown. On the way I went by the Yacht Harbor. The *Seventh Heaven* had moved out into the stream. Well, it was raining harder now and the docks looked shiny, as if someone had given them a coat of egg-white.

I had a couple of places to hit, so I looked up an ex-doctor and boozier by the name of Jocko Madigan. He's a good guy who never learned that if you keep your foot on a bar rail for twenty years it'll do more good for your arches than it will for your brain. I finally found him in the Hunt Room of the Bellevue Hotel.

*(SFX: HOTEL BAR BACKGROUND)*

**JOCKO**

*(fading up)* Ah, Patsy! A drink for Mr. Novak; something to take off the chill.

**NOVAK**

No, I don't want a drink, Jocko, and you've had enough, too.

**JOCKO**

I refuse to shiver to death, Patsy. I'd look terrible with a blue face.

**NOVAK**

Will you stop drinking, Jocko?

**JOCKO**

I hate to be pushy, Patsy, but I'm drinking tonight with a purpose. I made a deal with Charlie the bartender to buy every eighth drink and I've got him on the run. By the morning I'll have him in bankruptcy court.

**NOVAK**

Look, Jocko, I'm in trouble...!

**JOCKO**

I always know when I've had enough to drink, Patsy. When I tilt the glass up, the rim rubs against the bridge of my nose. It's a sort of safeguard; so that when my nose begins to break out in blisters, I know I've had enough for the night.

**NOVAK**

Will you listen...?

**JOCKO**

Patsy, you sound like a young girl, coming home from boarding school. You'll never be on the right side of things. You'll always be in trouble, because you're a bad citizen. You're a shabby half-step in the march of progress...

**NOVAK**

All right, Jocko...!

**JOCKO**

You don't know the difference between good and evil. For you, all of human endeavor is a big blur in high heels. And your vocabulary is a few gutter terms sandwiched in between "yes" and "no." You'll never be any good, Patsy...

**NOVAK**

Yeah, yeah...

**JOCKO**

You might as well try to recapture melancholy or ventilate a swamp. You haven't a chance, Patsy; you'll *never* be any good.

**NOVAK**

*(beat)* Are you all through, Jocko?

**JOCKO**

Yes, if you're going to be *touchy*.

**NOVAK**

Hellman wants me on a murder rap.

**JOCKO**

Yes?

**NOVAK**

Some tubby woman died in a hotel lobby.

**JOCKO**

Sounds like his mother.

**NOVAK**

She was a government agent. I followed her in there.

**JOCKO**

Patsy, you've got to start *trusting* the government.

**NOVAK**

I was *paid* to follow her. But she swallowed some poison somewhere along the line.

**JOCKO**

Ah, that's the trouble with *food*.

**NOVAK**

I got hired by a guy named Max Hunter.

**JOCKO**

Look him up and resign, that's the best way out of this thing.

**NOVAK**

I don't know where to find him. And I think that Max Hunter's a phony. Oh, you gotta help me.

**JOCKO**

Yeah?

**NOVAK**

Guy gave me this card. His prints must be on it. Check it down at headquarters, will you? Find out if he's got a record and then tag by my place.

**JOCKO**

Yes. I'd better have a drink first. There's an ugly taste in my mouth. I, uh, I think it's saliva.

**NOVAK**

Will you hurry up, Jocko? All you *do* is drink!

**JOCKO**

That's all I have left, Patsy. I'm too young to die and too old to do almost anything else...

**NOVAK**

Yeah, sure...

**JOCKO**

It's true, Patsy. When you get to be my age, most of the quiet pleasures are fattening and most of the active ones would kill me; good night, lover!

***(MUSIC BRIDGE) (SFX: BAR BACKGROUND OUT)***

**NOVAK**

When I left Jocko, I dropped by the Chronicle morgue to look up Max Hunter. There was nothing under "Hunter" and I looked under every "Max" from Baer back to Beerbohm. I couldn't find a thing. Well, it was close to eleven when I rode down to the office for a final check. It wasn't raining hard anymore; it was a nice, easy drizzle, and you could hear it playing across the sheds along Pier 19. It sounded quiet; almost private... like the sound a woman makes when she's running her fingernail up and down her stocking. It got on your nerves at first. And then you began to enjoy it.

The minute I got to the door I knew something was wrong. There wasn't any reason, but I got the feeling, the same way you know sometimes you're gonna get the busy signal on the phone. I could see her lying there on the floor before I turned on the light. You took one look at her and you knew she was the sort of girl whose name oughta be Pearl or Myrtle. Somebody'd sapped her, and she was lying with one hand stretched out and the other under her hair. It wasn't really hair; it looked more like a pelt or a raccoon just after a shampoo. It was fuzzed up on the sides and on top it was combed back so tight it was about to go under the scalp.

***(SFX: BODY STIRRING; FRANCINE MOANING)***

**NOVAK** *(cont'd)*

She began to move a little, and when I bent over her she started to mumble.

**FRANCINE**

*(Groggy)* What do you want?!

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**NOVAK**

The rent, if you're going to stay long. Here, put your head up.

*(SFX: FRANCINE SITTING UP)*

**FRANCINE**

You Mr. Novak?

**NOVAK**

It's too late to change.

**FRANCINE**

Where's Agnes Bolton? Where'd she go, Mr. Novak?

**NOVAK**

I don't know where she went. Was she a good girl?

**FRANCINE**

Something's happened to her... !

**NOVAK**

Don't worry, it won't happen again. Who sent you here? Max Hunter?

**FRANCINE**

Yeah. Please help me up.

*(SFX: FRANCINE GETTING TO HER FEET)*

**NOVAK**

All right, come on.

**FRANCINE**

I'm Francine Kane. I came to find out about Agnes Bolton.

**NOVAK**

You're a deep sleeper. What happened?

**FRANCINE**

You wouldn't know her...

**NOVAK**

I would if she's a tall blond on the make for that green bag. Who is she?

**FRANCINE**

Joan Hayward. You can find her at the Geary Theater.

**NOVAK**

She an actress?

**FRANCINE**

Not exactly.

**NOVAK**

Yeah?

**FRANCINE**

Her stray talents, Mr. Novak, are dimensional rather than dramatic. If you're smart, you'll stay away from her.

**MAX/JACKIE**

Don't tell him any more, Fran. He's paid up.

*(SFX: HUNTER'S FOOTSTEPS MOVING CLOSER)*

**NOVAK**

Hello, Hunter. You oversold me.

**MAX/JACKIE**

So give me back the two hundred.

**NOVAK**

I'm gonna give you *lots* for your money!

**MAX/JACKIE**

Don't include Agnes Bolton. I don't know anything about her.

**NOVAK**

Is that a lie?

**MAX/JACKIE**

*(beat)* Might be. Where's the green bag?

**NOVAK**

Joan Hayward has it.

**MAX/JACKIE**

Is that a lie?

**NOVAK**

The little guy didn't think so. She left him dead in my car.

**MAX/JACKIE**

*(beat)* Let's go, Fran.

**NOVAK**

You're in a hurry, Max.

**MAX/JACKIE**

You're not. I hope you like your office, Novak.

**NOVAK**

Huh?

**MAX/JACKIE**

Cause this is where you're gonna spend the night! (*Grunts as he throws a punch*)

**(SFX: PUNCH CONNECTING, BODY FALLING)**

**NOVAK**

Don't let him feel bad, lady. It must have been his turn.

**(MUSIC BRIDGE)**

**NOVAK** (*cont'd*)

When I left, he was crumpled up against the desk and she was staring down at him as if she'd forgot to water the plants. When I got to the Geary Theater it was dark, so I looked up Joan Hayward's address. When I got out to her place, I knew I'd made a mistake. The landlady clutched her bathrobe like a bar of solid gold and told me Joan Hayward had left the house ten minutes ago. There was a cabbie at the corner and he said he had dropped her at the Gold Bar Club a few minutes before. I got there about one o'clock and Hellman was wandering around, stopping every few feet as if he expected to hear something. The bar was dark except for a light over on one side, and over by the jukebox, Joan Hayward was stretched out as dead as a deer on a fender.

At first, Hellman didn't pay any attention when I walked in. I stood there for a while and looked at Joan Hayward. She still looked pretty. Except in the dim light her skin was coarse, and reminded you of a piece of felt that was almost worn out. But the rest was all right. Then Hellman came over for another look.

**HELLMAN**

What did *you* forget, Novak?

**NOVAK**

My black tie. How'd it happen?

**HELLMAN**

The bar was closed. Where were you?

**NOVAK**

Crawling out from under your thumb.

**HELLMAN**

Yeah. We're gonna keep that coroner. It *was* quick poison.

**NOVAK**

Yeah?

**HELLMAN**

We found a needle in her coin purse. She didn't know about it. Ran into trouble when she started to call up.

**NOVAK**

You better find this guy Max Hunter.

**HELLMAN**

That's gonna be hard.

**NOVAK**

Yeah?

**HELLMAN**

There is no Max Hunter.

**NOVAK**

Does *she* believe that?

**HELLMAN**

Your shirker friend came in with a card. We went over the fingerprints. They belong to Jackie Wren. He's wanted for espionage.

**NOVAK**

For more than that now, Hellman.

**HELLMAN**

Maybe! Where have you been?!

**NOVAK**

Look, Hellman, stop needling me! I won't go on the block for her!

**HELLMAN**

Don'tcha like her?

**NOVAK**

I've got an alibi you can't break. I've been all over town. Ask your tail. Ask your tail where I've been!

**HELLMAN**

That won't get it.

**NOVAK**

Huh?

**HELLMAN**

He reported in at eleven thirty. You've got the wrong idea, Novak! You don't rate overtime!

*(MUSIC BRIDGE)*

**NOVAK**

When I left there I knew it was all downhill. Hellman could stick me for everything but Dan McGrew. My only out was to find Jackie Wren; but you can't ring that many doorbells in one night. I went through the book, but there was no Jackie Wren *or* Max Hunter listed. I went home to get some sleep; and if they turned Gabriel loose tonight, that was all right with me. Jocko called up about nine and said there was still no trace of Wren. Well, some mornings you can't trust yourself with a razor, so I got dressed and went down to a Greek's on Geary Street for breakfast. The murder was all over page one, but there were so many pictures of Hellman, you couldn't tell who was dead.

I was about halfway through breakfast when I noticed the story down in the corner. A girl named Toni Prichard had been found dead out in the Marina. The story said everybody liked her, the police didn't have a lead and they couldn't find a reason. Seemed kind of funny. When I got to the last paragraph, I began to wonder. It said she was employed by the Musi-Tone Company and worked the late shift as a switchboard operator. I wasn't sure, but you can't pass the dice when you only got a buck left, so I jumped down to see Frank Lupo. He said the Musi-Tone Company owned the jukebox in the Gold Bar Club, and that it worked like all the rest. People use a little microphone in front of the box, they call into a main switchboard for songs. I grabbed Jocko and we got up to the Musi-Tone Company. The guy in charge said sure, they recorded some of the talk just to check on the girls, and sometimes the girls did it just for laughs. We started through the recordings, and about a half hour later, Jocko rolled a seven.

**JOCKO**

No, Patsy, they're all old ones. Try this.

**NOVAK**

Yeah. Put it down. *I'll* handle the needle.

**JOCKO**

There.

*(SFX: DICTAPHONE GEARING UP)*

**FRANCINE** *(filtered)*

You're crazy, Jackie, she'll *know* something's wrong!

**MAX/JACKIE** *(filtered)*

Let me handle it, Fran.

**FRANCINE** *(filtered)*

You'll just get into trouble. I don't want you to get into trouble, Jackie!

**MAX/JACKIE** *(filtered)*

Will you let me worry? You get back to the hotel, I'll meet you at the Kenwood right after.

**FRANCINE** *(filtered)*

It's too late. She's coming now!

**JOAN** *(filtered)*

I could tell as soon as you called, Jackie.

**MAX/JACKIE** (*filtered*)

You made a mistake, Joan. This is one time you shouldn't have hurried!

*(SFX: THREE FILTERED GUNSHOTS)*

**NOVAK**

That's enough, Jocko.

*(DICTAPHONE EFFECT OUT)*

**NOVAK** (*cont'd*)

Let's get up to the Kenwood.

**JOCKO**

Why don't we think it over a while?

**NOVAK**

Put the record down and come on, they're at the Kenwood! You heard the shots!

**JOCKO**

That's what I'm worried about. If that fellow's any kind of a mechanic, he's had time to reload.

*(MUSIC BRIDGE)*

**NOVAK**

I got down to headquarters and told Hellman why that girl Toni Prichard lost her vote. We rode out to the Kenwood and Hellman started through the register. There was no Jackie Wren listed and we didn't have any better luck with the girl. I briefed the desk clerk and he said he *thought* there were two people who looked like that in the hotel but he didn't know their names. Well, all we could do was wait for them to show, so Hellman and I walked down the street and slid into the car. Must've been about three o'clock, and for the next four hours we sat in there.

About seven o'clock it started to rain harder. It wasn't easy to see the front of the Kenwood. I got out to wipe the windshield and *that* was a mistake because just then the door of the hotel swung open. The girl came out first and then Jackie Wren, and he saw me right away and the two of them jumped over to the curb and got into a car. Riding with Hellman's just about as safe as eating an arsenic sandwich. When we got to the corner, they turned east and started down Bush. It wasn't easy to stay behind 'em; the rain was hitting the windshield and it was like tryin' to see through a mint julep. When we got past Jones, Hellman began to close in. It must have scared Wren too much because at Stockton he...

*(SFX: CAR SCREECHING IN A TURN - STARTS HERE AND BUILDS)*

**NOVAK** (*cont'd*)

...swung the car around with Hellman a few feet behind him and it was a dead end both ways.

*(SFX: (CONT'D) CAR SCREECHES TO A HALT)*  
*(SFX: RAIN BACKGROUND)*

**HELLMAN**

He can't get out now, open the door.

**NOVAK**

Yeah... there he is, over by the wall. Over here, Hellman, he'll go down the embankment on the other side.

**HELLMAN**

He can't. It's too steep. Stay on this side. Can you see him?

**NOVAK**

No.

*(SFX: THREE GUNSHOTS)*

**NOVAK** *(cont'd)*

... but he's around, I think.

**HELLMAN**

You got a chance now, Wren, *come on out!!!*

**MAX/JACKIE**

*(shouting, away from mike)* I don't like *you* that well, mister!

*(SFX: TWO GUNSHOTS)*

**HELLMAN**

He's over there by the embankment. Can you see the girl?

**NOVAK**

She's with him.

**HELLMAN**

Over to one side! Move up in front!

**NOVAK**

You're *confused*, Hellman. *I* pay the taxes.

**HELLMAN**

It's gonna *hurt* from now on, Wren! I'm comin' over!

**MAX/JACKIE**

I hope you make it, copper!

*(SFX: TWO GUNSHOTS, THE SECOND OVERLAPPED BY TWO SHOTS FROM A BIGGER GUN)*

**MAX/JACKIE** (*cont'd*)

(*a gasp; he's hit; then:*) All right, copper. Unless you want a medal, I'm through.

**HELLMAN**

You don't need the gun, then. Get rid of it!

(*SFX: HELLMAN'S FOOTSTEPS MOVING SLOWLY TO WREN*)

**HELLMAN** (*cont'd*)

Just toss it over there!

**MAX/JACKIE**

I can't even lift my arm...

**HELLMAN**

Throw it down, mister!

**FRANCINE**

Jackie, Jackie, *please*...!

**MAX/JACKIE**

I'll throw it right *at* you, copper!

(*SFX: THREE GUNSHOTS FROM HELLMAN*)

**MAX/JACKIE** (*cont'd*)

Francine, ya crazy *woman*, you cracked... you let him kill me!

**HELLMAN**

He's going over that embankment!!!

**MAX/JACKIE**

You let him kill me right in front of yo--- AAAAAARRRGGGHHH!!! (*Scream fades as he falls*)

**FRANCINE**

(*a beat; crying*) No. No, please, Jackie, I tried to stop you; I tried to *stop* you, Jackie!

**HELLMAN**

Grab her, Novak, *she's* goin' over!

**FRANCINE**

*Leave me alone!!!* I want him! Jackie, I want youuuu!!!

**HELLMAN**

*Grab her!*

**FRANCINE**

I want you, Jackie! At least they can let me have *this!* Jackie!!! (A scream:) NOOOOOOOOO!!!  
(scream fades as she falls)

**(SFX: A LONG BEAT; WE LISTEN TO  
THE RAIN, WHICH HASN'T STOPPED)**

**HELLMAN**

A long way down.

**NOVAK**

Yeah. Too bad her name wasn't Jill.

**(SFX: RAIN OUT)  
(STORY ENDING MUSIC BRIDGE)  
(SFX: LAPPING WATER, FOGHORN)**

**NOVAK**

The last I saw Francine, she was lying down at the bottom in the rain. Her head was over to one side and you knew with a little push it would roll around as easy as a ball bearing on a plate. Her face was clean, but the rain was beginning to wash the dirt down and... when I left she wasn't pretty anymore.

Jackie Wren outlasted her by a few hours and Hellman used 'em all. Agnes Bolton was carrying government papers, bound for China. The four people were split into teams: Jackie Wren and Francine were trying to outbid Joan Hayward and the little guy. The way Jackie had it figured, they'd find out what ship they were going out on and pick it up from there. Joan Hayward knew he was dealing with me, so she followed me after I left that barber shop.

She saw me park the car in that garage and tailed me down to the bowling alley. She planted the needle in Agnes Bolton's purse, and the little guy tagged along behind waiting for something to happen.

Just to be on the safe side, in case anything went wrong, Joan doubled by the office and gave Francine a headache. When the little guy got the green bag, he took it to Joan. It was too good to split, so she killed him and left him in my car.

Then she made a mistake. When Jackie called her up and asked her to come down to the Gold Bar Club, she bought the story. Well... it would have worked out fine for Jackie if he hadn't talked in front of that microphone. But a nosy girl heard it and tried to put the screws on him.

Well... Hellman asked only one question. About that conversation between Jackie and the girl: Why would a person say anything *that* private in front of a microphone? I don't know. But I told him about a couple of others Jocko and I heard. He didn't say anything; but I'll bet he gets ahold of those records and plays them every night before he goes to sleep.

**(MUSIC: MYSTERIOSO CLOSING THEME.  
ESTABLISH, THEN MUSIC UNDER)**

**ANNOUNCER**

The American Broadcasting Company has just brought you the sixteenth of a new series, *Pat Novak for Hire* starring Jack Webb. *Pat Novak* is produced and directed by William P. Russo,

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and written by Dick Breen. Jocko Madigan is played by Tudor Owen. Inspector Hellman is played by Raymond Burr. Music was composed and conducted by Basil Adlum. Join us again next week, when over most of these same ABC stations, we'll bring you... *Pat Novak. For Hire.* This program came to you transcribed, from Hollywood.

*(MUSIC UP)*

**THE END**