

CASE-STORIES IN AMERICAN POLITICS,
The American Foundation for Political Education



The case of **THE
HANDCUFFED
SHERIFF**

Political Patronage

case-story no. 2

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CASE-STORIES IN AMERICAN POLITICS

The case of
THE HANDCUFFED SHERIFF

by Edward C. Banfield

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AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR POLITICAL EDUCATION

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PREFACE. The case-story presents a new approach to the study of American politics. It combines the traditional case-history method with the short story. The case-story acquaints the reader with the facts and the political issues of an important national problem in the form of a dramatic situation drawn from real experience. It raises, for the reader, the political choices which face men and women in public life and which, in one way or another, face most adults.

This case-story is one of a series prepared by the American Foundation for Political Education. It is fiction in the sense that it describes a hypothetical situation, with imaginary characters. Any resemblances to actual persons, living or dead, is coincidental. But the persons in this case-story deal with a very real problem. As concerned and responsible public officials, they necessarily possess opinions and convictions which they express as forcefully and persuasively as they can. We ask the reader not to ascribe any of these opinions and convictions to the authors or to this Foundation.

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As with all other reading materials prepared by the Foundation, the purpose of these case-stories is to provide the basis for discussion groups organized by the Foundation and its associated sponsors. Primarily, therefore, this case-story, and others to follow, will be used in discussion groups. But since it may receive wide distribution among individual readers, we urge all persons interested in forming discussion groups in their communities to correspond with the American Foundation for Political Education, 19 South LaSalle Street, Chicago 3, Illinois.

about the author: Edward C. Banfield is an associate professor of political science at the University of Chicago. He is the author of *Government Project, Politics, Planning and the Public Interest* (with Martin Meyerson) and *Housing Policy and the Government of Metropolitan Areas* (forthcoming, with Morton Grodzins).

"This ought to cheer you up," Mrs. Lane said to her husband as she handed him the newspaper. "The lead editorial is all about you. They call you 'the County's pride.'"

Thomas Lane accepted the paper. "What makes you so sure I need cheering up?" he asked, but he started reading without waiting for her answer.

SHERIFF LANE — THE COUNTY'S PRIDE

When Thomas Lane ran for Sheriff last fall as a reformer, but on the regular Party ticket, there were some who said the Party was using him for window dressing. We called these people cynics. It was not that we had faith in the machine, but we did have faith in Lane himself. The next few weeks will prove just how right we were.

So far Lane has done a good job of law enforcement in the County, but we are the first to admit that his performance to date has not been spectacular. This, we feel, is due primarily to lack of opportunity to show his political stuff. But now Lane's big chance is here. Within the next several weeks, Lane has to make more than two hundred job appointments. These jobs have always been patronage jobs. How will Lane fill them? The gang that hangs around the County Building says that Boss Ryan can "talk sense" to Lane and put enough pressure on him to forego any "foolish" ideas about hiring on the basis of the merit system. There is a lot at stake for Ryan and the other members of the machine's Central Committee, because they depend on these patronage jobs to keep their Party workers active and loyal. But Lane will refuse to play along. He intends to give the voting public its money's worth. This is the first step in freeing the County from the grip of the machine.

This County has a long history of political pay-offs, but we are about to experience something new — a pay-off for John Q. Public.

The County has good reason to be proud of our Sheriff — and of ourselves for electing him.

"Now that's what I call a dirty trick!" Lane exploded, slapping the paper down in his lap.

"Why, Tom, what are you talking about? It's perfectly complimentary, every word of it. They're for *you*."

"Don't you see, Mabel, it's just their way of putting their

own pressure on me. They talk as if I've made up my mind and told them what I'm going to do. Suppose I don't do exactly what they say here? Can you imagine the tone of the next editorial? 'Tom Lane — The County's Shame.' "

"Oh, Tom, you're twisting this all around. Why worry about things that aren't going to happen? You're not a patronage politician. THE TIMES is just assuming you'll do the right thing. Everbody knows you don't take orders from——"

"Mabel, please, it's a little more complicated than that. First of all, nobody's been giving me orders—except maybe THE TIMES, in its subtle way. Furthermore, of course I'll do the right thing, once I know what it is. But it's a complicated problem and I don't like THE TIMES trying to do my thinking for me."

The telephone rang and Mrs. Lane went to answer it. In a moment she was back. "Speak of the devil," she said. "It's Joe Ryan."

Lane formed his lips for a retort, then moved to the phone.

"Hello . . . Oh, hello, Joe, just fine, thanks . . . Yes, Joe. Yes, I read it just a few minutes ago . . . Of course, Joe . . . Certainly, Joe . . . That would be fine, please do . . . Sure. See you then. Goodbye."

Mabel, at the door to the sun porch, leaned with arms folded. "Well. What THE TIMES couldn't do with a tape recording of that conversation!"

"They'd be quite welcome to it, as far as I'm concerned," Lane replied. "Ryan just asked if I'd seen the editorial. Then he reminded me that he had promised not to interfere in my administration of the Sheriff's office and asked me if that promise had been kept to date. Of course, I said it had. Then he said he wasn't pressuring me now, but if I wanted his opinion of the effect of putting those jobs under the merit system, he'd be glad to tell me."

"Isn't that pressure?" Mabel asked.

"Not so far. We'll see what he has to say when he gets here later."

"Here? When?"

"He asked if he might drop by tonight, and I said sure. We have nothing on."

"Oh, dear, what a mess. I didn't get around to telling you

before. Sam Winton is coming. Oh, this is neat."

Lane's face brightened. "It is rather neat, now that you mention it. The head of the Party—the head of the Citizen's Reform League. A very neat combination. I wonder what we ought to talk about?"

"Be serious, Tom," Mabel said. "Sam's an old friend. Do you think this is fair to him?"

"Why not? He's a grown man. They know each other's views. After all, they worked together on my campaign. I can't imagine anything more instructive for me than to hear them argue this problem out."

Mrs. Lane, obviously upset, went to the kitchen. Lane picked up the newspaper again and slowly worked his way through the pages.

Finally the doorbell rang. Mrs. Lane came out to answer it. She greeted Ryan, hung up his coat, and disappeared into the kitchen again.

Ryan entered the living room, settled in a chair, and lit a cigar.

"I'm going to put it right to you, Tom," he began. "Like you said a while ago on the phone, nobody's told you how to run the sheriff's office. But that editorial today has put us both on the spot. Since the paper came out this afternoon, my phone's been bouncing off my desk. The boys are worried you're going to do something drastic. Those jobs are patronage jobs. They feel if you cut them out, you cut out the heart of the organization. Some of them served notice—I have to tell you this, Tom—that if you take those jobs away from them, they won't have you on the ticket again, no matter what. They mean it, Tom. Frankly, that's not the main thing I'm worried about. I'm worried there'll be a rebellion, that some of my best men will go over to the other side and try to bring back old times. I wonder if you've thought through what that means."

"Let's get our subject straight, Joe," Lane replied. "Are we talking about what's good for the County or what's good for the organization? As you well know, I've made serious promises to the people of the County and absolutely none to the organization. I still stand there, Joe."

"Somehow," Ryan said, "I got to show you that those two are not as different as you think. Sure, I'm worried about the

organization. But I tell you, whatever you do to hurt the organization, hurts this County."

Lane laughed. "Well, I'd hate to argue that point on television. I don't think it would go over so good."

"Sure," Ryan replied, "but there are plenty of things you wouldn't argue on television that you know are true. Okay, so you campaigned for reform. There are things you want to get done. I got nothing against that. But if you really want to get them done, let's lay out on the table here just what you——"

Again the doorbell.

"By the way," Lane said, watching Ryan's face, "Mabel told Sam Winton he could drop by. It was before you called and I didn't know about it. So I thought we might discuss the problem together. I see no reason why anyone should hold back any punches. Maybe one of us will learn something."

Ryan's expression did not change. "Sure, sure, Tom. Perfectly all right."

"Well!" exclaimed Winton jovially, on seeing Ryan. "This is an interesting surprise." They shook hands.

Sam Winton had been the first to suggest that Lane run for Sheriff. At first, the idea was a joke to Lane, but he learned

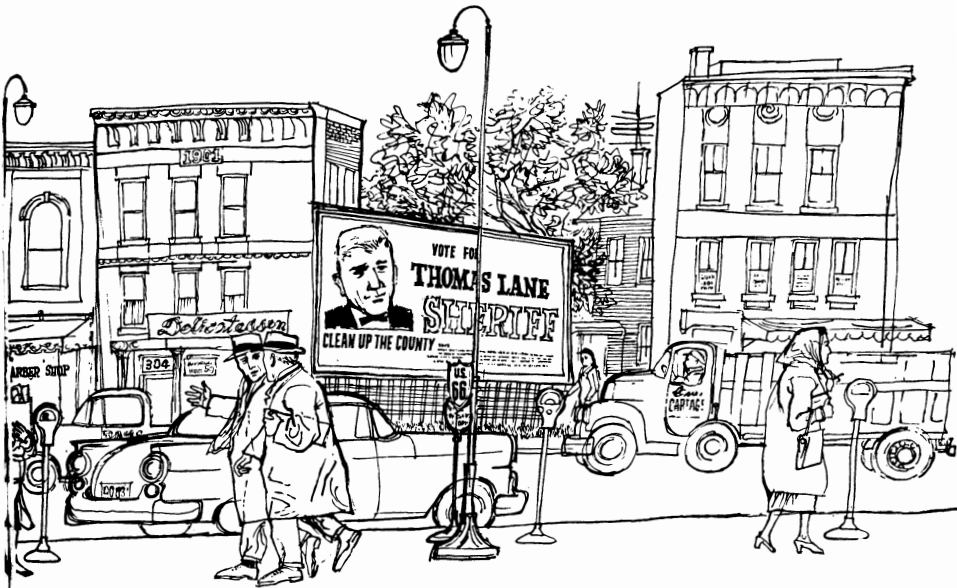


quickly not to sell Winton short as a politician. As head of the Citizen's Reform League, Winton quietly proceeded to persuade one group after another to back Lane's candidacy, and finally—to the amazement of everyone—he persuaded Ryan to put him on the regular Party ticket. They co-operated in Lane's campaign splendidly, on a combination of mutual admiration and mistrust.

"Joe has just finished telling me," the Sheriff said, by way of orienting Winton, "that if I fill those jobs on the merit system it will hurt the organization, and what's bad for the Party is bad for the people. Sam, what do you think?"

Winton looked from one to the other to gauge the situation.

"I believe," he said, "the best thing to do is to put all your jobs under the merit system right away. Announce the openings, announce competitive tests to fill them, and publicize them widely. I think you should call upon other officials to follow suit. You'll be telling all the people who voted for you that they were right in doing so. You'll restore their faith that good candidates lead to good government, even when they run on the Party ticket with machine support. This is your big chance, Tom. And Ryan, I would suggest to you that this is your big chance



too. I wish I could make you see that.”

“It’s a big chance, all right,” Ryan replied. “It’s the biggest chance I’ve seen in twenty-three years in the organization to wreck the Party, your reform candidate, your whole reform movement, the whole kit and caboodle. Who’s going to nominate Lane next election if the Party won’t—the League of Women Voters? If he’s not nominated, what’s he going to reform? The organization will never put a man on the ticket again who might turn on them. I tell you that’s the way they’re talking. And Winton, my worry is that if my organization gets stripped away it won’t matter who we nominate, because without workers we lose. Is that going to be an improvement?”

“What do you mean, Joe, by ‘turn on them?’” Lane demanded. “If anything, they’re turning on me. To get me to run, they promised me a free hand. I ran and I won for them. I led the ticket—you might remind them of that. So who’s breaking an agreement?”

“I’m not trying to tell you what to do,” Ryan said firmly. “I’m trying to describe a situation and give you what I consider good advice. I can’t dictate to you and I don’t want to try. But you have to understand that I have just so much control over the organization and no more. I’m trying to point out some facts of life about party politics that, frankly, I don’t think you appreciate. I think you’re getting confused between the way you’d like to have it and the way things are.”

“There’s another side to that same point, Ryan,” said Winton. “I believe I’m practical enough to understand the ‘facts of life,’ and even the frequent difference between what one wants and what one can get. But let’s look at the specific case here.

- 6) “Lane promised reform. The people elected him. Now the machine suddenly finds that reform—which sounded so good when it was winning votes—means some changes, loss of a few jobs. Granted, these political workers are important. They can help elect a reform candidate when it serves their own purposes. Neither Tom Lane nor I want to see them kicked in the face. But Lane’s choice is perfectly clear. He either kicks *them* in the face—since they choose to see it that way—or he delivers a kick in the face to the whole electorate who responded to his promises

and put him in office with the biggest margin on your whole ticket.

"The facts of life, Ryan, are that you gave the voters, for the first time in years, a chance to vote for a candidate who stood for modern government. The people didn't have to elect him, but they did. If he turns on *them*, their confidence in all reform candidates will be ripped to shreds and, Ryan, so will their confidence in you and your Party. You and the machine boys took an action when you nominated Lane—because you had to—and now these are consequences *you* have to face."

"You're an educated man, Winton," Ryan replied, "and you see things in these broad, social terms. I respect that. But the fact is, the average precinct captain and ward leader doesn't think that way. Lane has got to live with these guys, work with them. If he doesn't they can handcuff him, make a monkey out of him. They can make him into the most absolutely helpless sheriff the County ever had. Is that going to help him or you? Is that going to inspire people in favor of more reformers? They'll say, 'those do-gooders sound fine, but they can't get the job done.'"

"Don't forget the kind of public support that put Lane in office," Winton said. "Lane is more than a type of candidate or a type of campaign promise. His election is the product of a new kind of voter. If the machine tries to block him, his electorate will stand up and fight for him against the machine. He has real public support. I'm surprised, Ryan, that you don't sense that. It's a new trend. This is the time to look for more Lanes who can build a stronger, broader party on the basis of public support than patronage and courthouse hacks ever could."

"Winton, let's remember I'm the one that sold Lane to the Party. I know what value he's got—and what value he hasn't got. Let's not get carried away——"

"And why did you sell Lane to the party?" Winton interrupted. "Because you counted up your sure votes and you counted up the opposition's sure votes, and they were too close for comfort. So you needed a special appeal to win, somebody in tune with the times, and Lane produced the big margin of victory. The people weren't voting for a machine. They voted for Lane."

"Almost exactly right," Ryan said. "But take another look at

your own words. In a county like this, especially when it's dominated by a big city, the great mass of voters are party voters. Their votes can be counted before the candidates are even named. Remember that. In most of the wards, we didn't need Lane, and that's why I had to fight those ward leaders to put him over. Only in wards like this, where people are well-off and educated—the boys call them the 'newspaper wards'—people read the editorials, worry about issues and candidates, these are the wards neither party can count on for sure. So when the 'sure' wards are close, right, we shoot for the independent vote with a man who'll look good in the editorials. That's fine. I wish we could do it all the time. But just remember, the people who voted for Lane the man are a small, small minority. Sure he led the ticket. The difference between his vote and the average ticket vote tells you how many people voted for Lane the man. The rest? That's the organization vote. Without what you call the machine, he not only couldn't get into office, he probably couldn't even get his name on the ballot."

"Well, I agree on that last point," Winton said. "Machine professionals have too tight a grip on the whole electoral process. Even elected officials, by the way you describe it, are picked by patronage. If Lane can help break this grip by weakening the machine, I say, do it. If we can't appoint employees on merit, we'll never be free to elect candidates on merit."

"Winton, of all the reformer types I know," Ryan said, softening his tone, "you have the most political savvy. You know politics is hard work, routine, dull, endless, that you get votes by climbing staircases. But still you're a reformer and your whole breed shares one trait. You want to form people all over again, you want to make people into something they aren't. You make up your mind what they ought to be like and what they ought to want, and then you insist that's what they *are* like and that's what they *do* want. What it comes down to is that most reformers are upper-class types and what you want is for everybody to be just like you.

"But let me tell you, most people are not like you. I don't think you realize what a tiny minority you are. In a ward like this, people worry about garbage collection, about quiet streets with lights, about keeping out the gambling joints and bawdy

houses. When an administration does these things and keeps taxes down, too, this ward's in heaven. That's the good government you're always talking about.

"But in ten other wards, you couldn't win ten votes for collecting garbage. They put the garbage in the alley and they're done with it. The people are so used to seeing it lay out there, they don't see it. I'm not saying that's good. I'm just talking about whether you're going to get votes on a garbage-collecting ticket. When you talk about more cops in those wards, I know you've never been a precinct captain down there. When those people see a cop, it means trouble—for them. And why should they get excited over lower taxes? They don't own anything. Except they own a vote just as big as yours. And I got to get that vote, just like yours.

"I don't mean anything personal now, understand. But when guys like you want a good time you go to a country club or a convention out of town. Down there, they can't afford that, so they let a few cents ride on a policy ticket. On pay day, they live it up big and put two bucks on a horse. It's recreation, like one of your conventions. Just let me ask you this. Can a sheriff win this ward if he campaigns to outlaw golf and to shut down the library? Yet you want to outlaw policy and practically shut down the racing form—their recreation—and you want them to vote for you. If you guys want to take charge, you need some education about who you're taking charge of and what they want. Otherwise, you don't stay in charge. That's your public for you. You've got to start with the people the way they are."

"Just a minute there, Joe," Lane interposed. "The gist of that argument is that my job is to protect the people's recreational facilities, as you see them, namely, policy, hand-booking, crap games. Suppose they want dope? Do I just help them get whatever they want, against the law or not? Is that why I left my business to go into politics?"

"Well put," said Winton, and he leaned back.

"No, that's not what I'm saying," Ryan said. "I'm saying you guys who want to save the world ought to take a look first at the world you want to save. A long, slow look at what the people in these wards *do* want. Mostly, they want to be left alone—except when they're in trouble. Then they want someone they

know and trust to get them out of it. They want sympathetic help, not someone to talk about government efficiency and impartial law enforcement."

"Right," put in Winton, gathering new steam. "There's a tremendous education job to be done to make people aware of the real issues. But, Ryan, it has to start somewhere. And not with words, but with action, with demonstration. It's easy to go slow that you don't bother anybody. It's easier to stop altogether. Especially when you can pat yourself on the back because you put a good man in office. Then you can enjoy the illusion that even though he's handcuffed, electing him was progress. Real progress, like any vehicle in motion, is potentially dangerous. But if it's handled properly, it eventually gets you where you want to go.

"The fundamental quarrel I have with a political machine is that, really, it's unpolitical. It doesn't stand for anything except keeping its own power. An honest machine leader like you will talk, as you have, of making things better through machine politics, but basically any machine depends on voter apathy and ignorance. You want the voters to be loyal to the machine, not to issues. A machine can control votes more surely with favors than with arguments, so you have a stake in suppressing the issues, Ryan. The way to an intelligent electorate and efficient government is not through the machine; it's by breaking the machine.

"Tom, this is what's at stake with those jobs you have to fill. You can't decide how to fill them without committing yourself, to either machine government or popular government."

"Popular government," Ryan repeated quietly, as though trying to get the taste of the words. "For the life of me, I'd like to know what you guys mean by that. When one of my precinct captains visits a voter, you know where he talks to him? Not at the door, not even in the parlor. He's in the kitchen over a cup of coffee. You think they talk about government economy and efficiency and letting out contracts? They talk about Uncle Joe in the hospital. They talk like old friends—because they are. With guys like you in control, Winton, the government would always be 'them'—some bunch way off on a cloud. With party workers like I got, the government is both 'them' and 'us'—it's close to the ground, part of the neighborhood. They can trust

us, they can talk to us, they can ask for a favor. This is what the organization is built on. And if that isn't popular government, then I don't know what the word means."

"As you know, Ryan," Winton countered, "I'm not entirely without experience in those wards you're talking about. I recall a campaign when you and I were on opposing sides. When the Reform League started a campaign for voting machines—and, incidentally won it—I spent many a night myself canvassing those wards. I'm afraid I didn't find great evidence of any deep popular trust of the ward politicians. In fact, the people were convinced that their votes were being stolen. And even though this was a supposedly remote issue of honest government, those people were aroused. Do I have to remind you of the way we carried those wards? It proved that if we go out with a clear issue for improvement, we amateurs—in the best sense of the word—can beat you professionals at your own game."

"I'm glad you said 'amateur' and not me," Ryan said. "It's funny, today the world is specialized right down to the square inch. We know so much about machinery and medicine and people, that a man has to stake out one tiny part of it all and devote his life to it. Yet you want to take on the most difficult job of all—holding a sprawling, motley city together—and turn it over to amateurs. This only convinces me you don't know what you're dealing with. Do you think politics is a hobby, like a do-it-yourself kit? You can't run a city two nights a week and Sunday afternoons. When your enthusiasm gives out right after election, my job starts: taking care of favors, finding jobs, raising money."

"If you fellows ever took control, do you think you'd hold it without an organization? Do you think you can organize without money? Are you going to turn away people who ask for some kind of help? You'll do what we do or you'll fall on your face. And once you organize to do these things, you know what you got? A machine. Maybe your machine will have more chrome on it, but it will be a machine."

"Call it a machine if you like," said Winton, "but at least we won't buy people's loyalty by selling jobs and favors. Our goal won't be power for its own sake, nor private profit for our own sake——"

"Are you saying," Ryan interrupted, glaring forcefully at Winton now, "that I have profited personally from the organization?"

"No, Ryan, pardon me," Winton said quickly. "If there's any politician in town with a clean record, it's you. Otherwise, I wouldn't be talking to you like this. And I think that's because you're incorruptible personally, and also because you realize it's better practical politics today to be honest in government. Government is such big business today, no one has to steal to get what he wants. You can deliver one hundred cents on the dollar, but you still have to let out contracts to get the work done. In return, they help you for throwing the business their way. The basic fact doesn't change: the motive of the machine is still power and profit, not the motive of helping the most people live the best kinds of lives."

"So we run government as cheaply and honestly as anyone else could," Ryan said. "Lane, can you run your business without favors and personalities?"

Lane grinned, knowing he was about to stick a pin in his friend, Winton. "No, I'm afraid I've learned I can't. I put a man named Harze on the sales force because his uncle is in a position to get a better price from one of my suppliers. Harze never has held up his end on sales, but he doesn't need to. Not as long as his uncle is where he is. I can't afford to be without Harze, that is, unless I want to cut my standard of living a little. I never thought of it that way until this minute, but I guess there's patronage in business, too."

12) "That isn't all," Ryan added, "I'd say there's patronage in everything. I don't think I ever saw such cut-throat politics—and patronage—as I see every time I visit the University. Those professors are masters at trading favors and playing favorites. So I divide people according to political parties; they deal in 'schools of thought.' It's still patronage. Winton, this is the way human beings are. This is the way *everything* is done."

"Now wait just a minute, you two," Winton said, "there's a big difference between what you're talking about and what I'm talking about. You might have a Harze or two, Tom, but the County has hundreds and thousands of Party workers on the County payroll. You couldn't run a business that way!"

"He couldn't run his business, or any business, any other way,"

Ryan said. "Nobody can. To get things done, you have to do favors for people. Patronage is just favors for people who do favors for you. A man does a lot of hard, unpleasant work for us. Why shouldn't we see to it that he gets a job? We have to buy lots of goods and services and there are plenty of people who want to sell. Should we buy from our friends or from strangers? We've got to appoint a judge and there are lots of qualified men. Should we appoint a man who has helped us or somebody who has worked against us? So sure we play favorites, but we don't sell favors, at least not since my time. What's wrong with it? Those jobs have to be filled anyhow, that money spent anyhow, so nobody gets cheated.

"That's the way the world is. It all started with the Garden of Eden, and as long as there are apples around, that's the way the world will be. You want men to be angels? You want to make heaven on earth? If I thought you could do it, I'd put you on the ticket and we'd run a helluva campaign! But it's going to take a while to change the whole world. Meanwhile, I got to deal with real people in the real world."

Winton smiled in spite of himself. "I'm not talking about Paradise. I don't mean perfection. But we can do better. I know people aren't angels, but that's the very reason your system is so dangerous. It exposes small men to big temptations. There's no corruption while you watch them, but you can't watch them all the time, and you won't always be around. The system is no good because as long as favors are the main commodity, there will be people willing to buy them and others willing to sell them. Your way is too dangerous."

"So my system is too dangerous?" Ryan asked. "Let's see who's the more dangerous politician, you or me. You want to rouse the people about issues. Tell me, Winton, what issues do you want to rouse them about?"

Winton thought for a moment. "I'm concerned with fundamental problems that really affect how good or bad our daily lives are. They require thought and planning, and nobody in power now is giving them either. Reform of the tax structure, for example, so local governments can provide necessary services for growing populations. We need a long-range, sensible housing program. City boundaries need adjusting, so that the city



and suburbs—which are, after all, one political organism—can live together in some sensible, coordinated way. There's a growing strain in race relations from the large influx of Negroes into the city. Crime, schools, hospitals. Those are some of the real issues."

14)

"Fine," said Ryan. "Tax reform, city boundaries—the driest, dullest issues I can think of. I'm not saying they're not important. I just mean they'll never win any votes. They'll just put the voters to sleep.

"But race relations. There I agree. You could get the public pretty excited about that, you certainly could. Let me tell you about Bill Halloran, a good organization man. Been a precinct captain for twenty years and he's a bailiff in Judge Rosen's court. Bill owns a little house and everybody in his precinct trusts him.



... leadership that knows the people down in the wards—that knows how to talk to them, how to move them, and stays loyal to the organization, whatever the issue.

A few months ago, Negroes started moving into the neighborhood, the hottest issue in this town and a dozen other cities today. So you want to rouse the people about that? Before you ever get to ringing one doorbell, people would be tearing each other to pieces in the streets. I say, thank God for the man who depends on politics for a living for ducking that issue—for standing between the sleepy voters and the fanatics who'd be stirring them up."

Sheriff Lane protested, "I don't think that follows at all."

"Wait a minute," Ryan persisted. "Let me finish telling you about Bill Halloran. So when the colored moved in, there was a little meeting of the neighborhood improvement association. You know what that means. First thing, a few punks are talking pretty tough. There was going to be trouble, I could tell that three wards away. But I had a good man down there.

I picked up the phone and said, 'Bill,' I says, 'I know you got a home and you're in this and I think I know how you feel. But I'm telling you, you got to stop. Understand? Cut it out.' After that, Bill pulled out of the association. When he did that, the steam leaked out of it. Now it's quiet again. Maybe you think it's too bad Halloran wasn't more devoted to his principles than to where his bread was getting buttered. Personally, I think people trying to make a buck aren't half as dangerous as people who are trying to change the world."

"That was good work," said Winton. "That could have developed into an ugly situation."

"Do you get the point?" Ryan inquired. "I didn't appeal to Halloran's principles. I was interested in results. I could control Halloran because his interest in keeping his courthouse job and his place in the organization is stronger than his interest in keeping Negroes out of the neighborhood. That's what did the job. The same system that wins the elections helps run the County smoothly. I was able to stop a race riot because I had a loyal man on the spot. To win elections, I got to keep leadership that knows the people down in the wards—that knows how to talk to them, how to move them, and stays loyal to the organization, whatever the issue.

"Tom, why don't you tell Winton here about those last two appointments you made?"

Lane hesitated. "I really can't discuss that fully, so perhaps I better not at all," he said finally.

"Oh?" said Winton, looking from Lane to Ryan.

"Tell him," said Ryan. "Maybe it'll be educational. He'll keep it to himself."

16) "I appointed two ex-convicts to my staff a couple weeks ago," Lane began.

Winton's eyes widened and he waited.

"Dope pushers. I got their names from . . . they were recommended to me. I'm told they've gone straight. I have to believe it. I also had to offer them steady, permanent jobs in exchange for what I want from them. There's dope circulating near the South End High School again. These men can track down the source because they were once in the business themselves. All normal means had already failed. I had to take this

course."

Ryan watched Winton and Winton looked down, silently.

"It's ironic," the Sheriff continued. "Can you imagine a merit board interviewing applicants for this detail?"

"No, I can't," Winton allowed. "Nor can I imagine that my children are being protected from crime by criminals. What do you mean, all normal means had already failed?"

"Simply that my regular police haven't been able to locate the source. I could have brought in a team of narcotics experts, but men who don't know the town might have had to search for weeks or months. There's the cost and the time. I couldn't afford either."

"How do you know your new appointees will do the job?" Winton asked.

"We expect to make the arrests Sunday morning. Needless to say, don't mention this to anyone, not even your wife."

"I'm deeply impressed. Not only with the success of their mission, but with the fact that now we have two hoodlums on the payroll. There's no law to stop it. It shows what expediency can do."

"Yes," said Lane. "It does. They're about to bring in the peddler."

"This brings out my point exactly," put in Ryan. "You've got to know what you're dealing with. This is a tough town and you have to be tough to keep things under control. And you have to be flexible, too."

"That's just fine," Winton said. "Why not build a whole sheriff's force of dope peddlers and pimps and stickup artists? Every man a specialist. Then throw out Tom Lane and put a good man in—the head of the syndicate himself!"

"Look, Winton," Ryan said, his control cracking, too. "Are you for law and order as a principle or do you want results?"

Quietly, Winton said, "I insist on both."

"Then you're insisting," retorted Ryan, "on something that never was and never can be. If Tom Lane wants to get elected chief saint of the county, he can stand on principle and ignore the consequences. But if he has a public responsibility, he has to choose: your so-called principle or getting his job done. How many of those kids' lives at the high school have to be twisted

before it becomes moral to hire a pusher to catch a pusher? How many, Sam?"

"I don't know," Winton said wearily. "Arithmetic has never been my field."

Ryan abruptly stood up and squashed out his cigar.

"I got to go to a ward meeting," he announced.

"Can you wait a minute more, if I promise to prove to you that you are the impractical one?" Winton asked.

Ryan smiled and sat down. "Go ahead," he said.

"Look at the examples you two gave me," Winton began. "Each of them is an unorthodox way of dealing with an emergency. Each worked, but what did you accomplish? The race problem is as bad as ever and the dope problem is as bad as ever. That's the kind of solution the machine can produce, but it can't do better. It can't do anything towards a fundamental improvement in race relations. It wouldn't know how to start a study of the fundamental causes of juvenile dope addiction. Those are real problems that affect our every day lives, but the machine doesn't offer any practical hope of results. The machine can achieve only superficial success.

"Those issues I listed before are like sleeping dogs to a politician, and why should a politician kick a sleeping dog? These problems are around all the time, but nobody notices them while they hibernate. There's no popular demand to do anything. All of a sudden the thing wakes up and it's a monster! Then the emergency call goes out and all you can do is take emergency steps to try to preserve some measure of peace and order.

18) "The only practical way to handle these problems with some hope of good results, is to have courageous, far-sighted, public-spirited men in office, who will take the trouble to inform and arouse the public about these problems before they are full-grown and while something fundamental can still be done. Men of wisdom, honesty, nobility, and real devotion to the welfare of the people of this County—men who have the nerve to kick sleeping dogs—that's our only hope.

"Tom, you're in the County Building every day. You know these political professionals, what they look like, what they talk about, the level they think on. Are they the ones to rule our County? Are they the best we can find to lead us?"

*Men of wisdom, honesty, nobility . . .
men who have the nerve to kick sleeping
dogs—that's our only hope.*



Lane, silent, looked to Ryan.

"You know, Winton," the political leader said softly, "I'm on your side, really. Sometimes I dream about the same city you dream about. I got an office way up on the nineteenth floor and I look down on the shapes of the buildings, the neat layout of the bus and trolley lines. I see the factory smoke drifting peacefully away from the houses, miles and miles of quiet and order. I get the whole picture, except for one thing. It's too high to see the people. Up there, the dream looks true. What a wonderful, godly city this would be if we didn't have any people. But we have. And once you remember the people as they are, you have to agree to settle for less than the ideal. The Party organization provides the best system, given the real situation. Winton, if you're ever in my place, you're intelligent enough so in no time you'd be operating things so close to what we have now, it would be pretty damn hard to tell the difference."

"Then why do you oppose better men coming into the system?" Winton asked.

"Because intelligence isn't all that's required. You have to be tough, too. I'm afraid the people you have in mind aren't tough enough to do what has to be done. You think I got the whole say in this town? There are some wards where the committeeman can thumb his nose at me or anybody else. You know why? Because they don't get patronage from the Party. They don't need it. They got better jobs at better pay elsewhere and they got a better organization than I got. They get jobs from the mob—the syndicate. I can't push them around like Bill Halloran. In fact, they can push me around, because they got the votes. They turn in a big block of votes, solid."

20) Ryan pressed his forefinger against Winton's shirt-front, like a revolver.

"Let me tell you something," he said. "If you really want to see this town cleaned up you'll be in favor of me having more patronage, not less. Ten times more in fact. You know why? Because that would give me enough power to really run the organization. Trouble is, you got this picture in your head that every politician is a crook. Well, let me tell you every time a hired mobster is doing a political job, it's because I haven't got the dough to pay an honest man to do it."

"That's the monster *I* have nightmares about. Those racketeers are just waiting for a chance to get control of this County. Then we'll have organized gambling, shakedown, vice, and corruption that will make a decent man afraid to rear his family here. While the reformers go around with their heads full of long-range plans, it's the hack politician—ringing doorbells and stuffing literature in the mailboxes and going to five meetings a night—that's saving you from organized crime.

"Tom Lane, if you love this County the way I do, you'll stick with the organization. Learn the craft of politicking. Work with us. Your kind of class will rub off on the rest of us. You'll raise the tone of the whole Party. Help us, don't wreck us. If we go down, it won't be the Reform League that will take over, it will be the syndicate."

No one spoke for a moment and the silence was in dramatic contrast to the urgent tones in which Ryan had been speaking.

Then Winton said, "That's the most discouraging thing I've ever heard, I think, but at least it helps me understand something about you that always puzzled me until now. I think I see it now, Ryan. You speak so much of the people and giving them what they want. But, Ryan, you're afraid of the people. That's your secret, you're afraid of the people. You have no faith in democracy. You don't trust the people to govern themselves. You talk about my being upper-class, but you're the damned aristocrat!"

"I wouldn't put it that way," Ryan replied. "I'm not afraid of the people. I'm afraid of what we all know can be done to the people. You talk about discussing the issues. Think of all the different kinds of people who live in this city, all the religions, races, nationalities, economic interests, and so on. Now, why assume that when a campaign is based on issues that they will be legitimate issues? Have you never heard of demagogues, who prey on the ignorance and fear and prejudices of the people? I just shudder to think what would happen if all these groups began to be aroused against each other. It would be mass murder—but it won't happen as long as the organization is in control.

"I'm a politician, and, as you said before, politicians don't kick sleeping dogs. You dream about the Golden Age to come, but I'm happy that so far we've kept the subways running, the dope

peddlers are caught regularly, the schools are open, the fires get put out, and if you look hard there's still some grass to be found in the parks. It isn't easy to do these modest things, and I must say that if we had left these jobs to the Reform League, we might be worse off.

"And that's my last word. I really have to go to that ward meeting now."

After his guests had departed, Thomas Lane sat for a long time, thinking. He thought of what had been said that evening and of what else might have been said. He thought back to the time of the campaign and why he had decided to run for office. And then, slowly, reluctantly, he directed his thoughts to the present. What was he going to do about those jobs he had to fill?

If *you* were in Thomas Lane's place,
What would you do?



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