



*John
Nesbitt's*
**PASSING
PARADE**

PEOPLE ON PAPER

One of the most amazing of the “now-it-can-be-told” stories of World War II is the tale of how a Nazi plot to assassinate General Eisenhower was foiled, and of the part played by American comic strips in the debacle. For it was the inability of a Nazi, dressed in the uniform of an American soldier, to answer such questions as “Who is Pruneface?” that led to the capture of the assassins.

It was during the winter offensive of 1944 that it was learned that enemy agents disguised as American soldiers had infiltrated the lines. Under the conditions, ordinary passwords were useless, so the Americans resorted to an unorthodox trick. Roadblock guards would thrust their tommyguns into automobiles and ask questions that required an up-to-the-minute knowledge of American comic-strips. Because one of these agents was unable to answer the questions that any American would know, he was captured and our intelligence officers learned of the plot to kidnap and assassinate Eisenhower.

The selection of questions about comic strips as an infallible method of identifying real Americans is indicative of the tremendous popularity of this medium of entertainment. Between fifty and seventy million grown-ups and children read the comics daily, and are as familiar with the activities of Blondie, Dick Tracy, Terry, Mutt and Jeff and all the rest of the characters, as they are with their own neighbors.

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