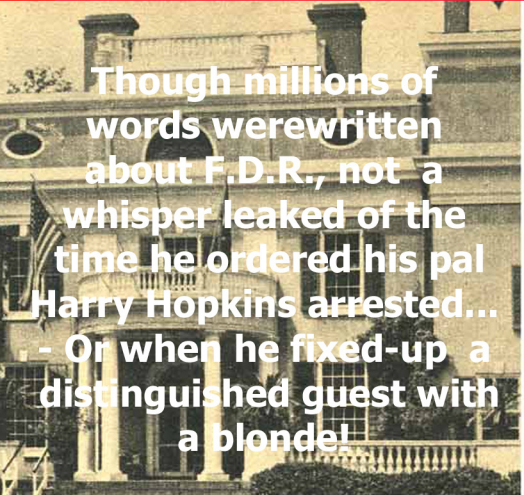


# Confidential

TELLS THE FACTS AND NAMES THE NAMES

MARCH, 1954: volume 2, no. 1 \* p. 20



Though millions of words were written about F.D.R., not a whisper leaked of the time he ordered his pal Harry Hopkins arrested... - Or when he fixed-up a distinguished guest with a blonde!

## Inside Hyde Park with **FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT!**

By **LOWELL AMES NORRIS**

**G**IT BACK or I'll shoot!" . . . The man in uniform halted before the twin barrels of a shotgun thrust without warning through the slatted bars of the closed and padlocked farm gate. Behind cocked triggers peered a grim and determined face.

"I'm a-tellin' yer to git away," the farmer repeated and took deliberate aim — gun leveled straight at the heart of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, President of the United States, seated in an automobile a few feet distant.

Colonel Ed H. Starling, head of the White House Secret Service Detail, sat unable to help. He glanced towards the nonplussed Sergeant Edward J. Dougherty of the New York State Police. Alone with the President in a desolate and unfrequented part of New York State in Dutchess County, they were in a tough spot.

Dougherty's hand slipped slowly down to the loaded .45 at his belt. . . .

This and many other stories regarding President Roosevelt hitherto untold, will soon be disclosed in the forthcoming book, "Prisoner at Hyde Park," on which it was my recent privilege to collaborate with Dougherty. For 12 years, this able police officer, who rose to the rank of Inspector and for a time assumed the post of Chief Investigator for the Emergency Crime Committee of the Chicago City Council, was in charge of the special New York Police Security Detail responsible for the safety of President Roosevelt whenever he was in residence at the nation's summer capitol on his family estate overlooking the Hudson River.

Most of his trips were duly publicized, but on the occasion when a nervous trigger finger might have changed the course of global history, Dougherty was forewarned by Starling that "this could be one trip, pardner, we might want to forget." A bank had just taken over a lonely farm adjoining the Hyde Park estate; the President was interested, thinking he might add it to his already extensive acreage.

Saying nothing to his associates or the ever-present newsmen, Roosevelt, in company with Dougherty, Starling and his personal aide, Gus Gennerich, slipped away for a personal inspection of the premises. After much driving over back roads, they finally reached the farm only to find the entrance gate closed and padlocked.

"I can't understand it," the President commented. "I was told at the bank it was still occupied."

Dougherty slipped from the car to investigate. Before he could reach the gate, an elderly man, unkempt and unshaven, stepped into view and ordered them away from

[OldMagazineArticles.com](http://OldMagazineArticles.com)



the property. It was then the red-faced security officers suddenly found themselves under the twin barrels of the business-like shotgun—with Roosevelt the target.

### **Presidential Party Beat a Hasty Retreat**

Instinctively, Dougherty's hand slipped down towards his holstered service revolver. The movement, slight as it was, brought an instant warning that any further move would provoke a discharge from both barrels. Stalling for time, Dougherty sought to divert his attention by asking if he recognized FDR.

"Don't know him and what's more, don't care to know him," was the laconic response. "You ain't comin' on this land an' it's time ter git moving."

Checkmated, Dougherty turned to Starling; he appeared equally stymied. Gus Gennerich, a former New York City cop, was poker-faced. As for FDR, he had not changed position and his expression remained unaltered. If he was disconcerted, he did not show it.

"My trigger finger's getting tired," the farmer observed. "You'd better git!"

**And the Presidential party did.**

Out of gun range, Dougherty slackened speed to ask the President if there was anything he wanted done.

"Nothing," snapped Roosevelt. "Just forget it."

Back at the Summer Capital, nobody did any talking and although Westbrook Pegler did get an inkling regarding the President's interest in the farm, he never did learn what actually happened. Later Dougherty was told FDR had let the matter drop, fearful of political repercussions from the strong local Republican machine. Apparently, there was one man who could point a gun at the President of the United States and get away with it.

### **The "Strong" Man and the "Weak" Blonde**

Other episodes equally revealing give an intimate glimpse into the life of Roosevelt, one of the most beloved and also one of the most hated of those who have occupied the White House. According to Dougherty, the world's most important and colorful personages were guests at Hyde Park during his 12 years as security officer; it is said that more outstanding personalities passed through the two large entrance gates fronting the Roosevelt estate during this period than through any other gates in the world. Among them were Winston Churchill with his shorts; Madame Chiang Kai-shek and her traffic tangles; His Majesty, Peter II, teen-aged King of Yugoslavia, who "borrowed" a trooper's motorbike for a joy ride; Ibn Saud of Saudi-Arabia, and the late King and Queen of England, as well as many, many others who came under Dougherty's sharp paternal eye.

Christmas was always observed at Hyde Park with great pomp and ceremony and with plenty of mistletoe and holly. The President always came home when it was possible and there were presents for everyone. At one of these parties, Elliott brought Faye Emerson, his new bride. Everybody was impressed not only by her charm and friendliness but also by the informal way she let down her hair and later left some of it—those attractive back curls—on the piano.

Other visitors "let down their hair" in different ways. During December, 1942, Dougherty was asked not only to supervise security precautions but also to arrange for the entertainment of Cuba's "strong man," Major General Fulgencio Batista, then and now president of the Republic. Dougherty asked him how he would like to spend his time while in New York.

"Enjoying your night clubs with a pretty blonde," was Batista's frank reply.

Dougherty made sure he got what he asked for, but later came in for more than his share of kidding regarding the "strong" man and the "weak" blonde.

As part of his job, Dougherty always participated in the many Hyde Park picnics for which FDR was famous, including the annual farewell picnic which marked the end of each summer season. It was usually held at the Val-Kill cottage near the swimming pool, and the President generally invited the press, the secretarial staff, secret service and state police details, as well as any dignitaries or guests visiting Hyde Park at the time. Although the keynote was planned informality, one iron-clad rule was rigidly enforced:

There would be no lone wolf fraternizing and no getting off in corners for private conferences. Everybody was supposed and in fact ordered, regardless of rank, to get out and mix with the picnickers.



**FDR Was Suspicious of Private Confabs**

Many reasons have been advanced for this Presidential directive. Some maintained it was in the interests of democracy; others have insinuated that President Roosevelt, because of his crippled condition, was always irked and suspicious of any official family conference in which he was not asked to participate. State police had specific orders to break up any such private gatherings. It was during one of those farewell picnics that Roosevelt summoned Dougherty to his side.

"Doc," he said, "I want you to arrest those men!" He pointed as he spoke to where the two in question stood talking in the shadow of the huge outdoor fireplace. Dougherty glanced over and hesitated. "I'm serious, Doc," the President said sharply. "They're acting in direct disobedience to my orders. Tell them to break it up. And if they won't obey you, put them under arrest."

It was with mixed emotions that the Sergeant reluctantly set out to enforce the Presidential edict, for the two men were none other than Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury, and Harry L. Hopkins, the "fix-it" boy and first Secretary of Defense, (Continued on page 50)

The late Col. Edward Starling, Secret Service chief, left, and Gus Gennerich, F.D.R.'s personal bodyguard, were caught with pistols down by irate Hyde Park farmer.



who was later to confer with Premier Stalin in the hope of promoting better international relations. Hopkins took the message in stride, but Morgenthau was furious at what he probably considered an affront to his dignity.

"I've no time for fooling," he said curtly and turned his back to resume his conversation.

"I'm not 'fooling', Mr. Secretary," the unhappy Dougherty persisted, "I have orders from the President to inform you if you choose to disregard this message, I must put you under arrest."

Morgenthau flushed an angry red, but an engaging smile flashed across the thin, sallow features of Harry Hopkins as he ran his fingers through his rumpled, thinning hair. "I guess we're it, Henry," he stated. "Let's be getting on."

Roosevelt greeted them pleasantly enough as they approached but it was evident he was chagrined. "What were you two doing behind the fireplace?" he demanded.

"Just talking," smiled Hopkins.

"Nuts," returned the President, again in good humor. "Get out with the crowd and have some fun."

Hopkins gracefully acquiesced. Morgenthau was resentful and shot Dougherty a venomous glare before he, too, mixed with the crowd. Roosevelt, once more the good fellow, moved in to join an impromptu barber shop quartet and the Sergeant retreated to the shady nook where Gus Gennerich was presiding over beer kegs.

"Give me a couple of quick ones," he ordered, wiping the sweat from his brow as he reached for a clean mug. "Just think of what that man Morgenthau could do to my income tax sheet!"



## INSIDE HYDE PARK

P. 4



**ONLY A MAN** as close to the late President as was Sergeant Edward J. Dougherty, of the New York State Police, could reveal the behind-the-scenes intrigue at F.D.R.'s Hyde Park estate.

[OldMagazineArticles.com](http://OldMagazineArticles.com)