

The station wagon climbed the ramp, joined the trickle of traffic moving northward on the expressway.

Missus Chadbourne said suddenly: "You know so goddamn much about it, what's the use of my trying to tell you the truth?"

"Might be a novel experience. Might try it . . . just for kicks. And maybe to save your own skin."

"Go to hell." She sulked, refusing to say another syllable.

The storm grew worse. Rain lashed against the windshield. The highway became a sheet of glare ice. Whitecaps showed against the dark mirror of the Hudson. At the parkway toll gates by Spuyten Duyvil the policeman stepped out of his booth, came close to the car on her side.

*Is he checking on that alarm Dimmock must have sent out? Man with prematurely white hair, a white mustache, a banged-up face?*

But the cop said only: "Take it easy, folks. Road's slippery as greased glass."

Don leaned across her to pay the toll. "We'll watch it, officer."

Later she said: "I could have turned you in then."

"Not without turning yourself in, too."

The clock on the dash said eight, eight-fifteen, eight-thirty. There was no more conversation. Don was glad of the stinging rain, the bitter cold; it kept him awake . . . and the sucking of the tires on the wet ice was making him unutterably sleepy.

For just a moment, after they had crossed the Connecticut line, he dozed off.

Awoke to the sickening sensation of a skid.

The station wagon was slipping sidewise down a long hill with a curve at the bottom, a white culvert.

He had a split-second picture of Missus Chadbourne, with clenched teeth and contorted face, fighting the wheel.

Then a spinning, a shock which slammed him headfirst into the windshield, pain dissolving in a blinding flash of light.