

Fawcett DISTRIBUTOR



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MACFADDEN'S SON-IN-LAW TRAPPED IN SPY PLOT



Here's the spy. He's Joseph P. Wieggers, of the Macfadden "publicity department."



This was the hidden microphone used to steal trade secrets from Fawcett's.

BULLETIN!

Just as the DISTRIBUTOR goes to press we are informed by telephone that Joseph P. Wieggers, son-in-law of Bernarr Macfadden, was indicted today, Dec. 5, by a Louisville, Ky., grand jury on a charge of criminal conspiracy.

AN EMPLOYEE of Macfadden Publications, operating like a character in a grade-B movie, was caught red-handed trying to steal Fawcett trade secrets at a recent meeting of the Fawcett Distributing Corp. Field Force in Louisville, Ky.

[Continued on page 2]



In his haste to flee, Joseph P. Wiegels abandoned the personal belongings shown in the top picture. Note laundry mark on shirt. At left above is the hotel register signed "J. P. Wiegels, 5 East 34th Street, New York." At right is Wiegels "town house" at that address—Altman's department store!

No less a character than the son-in-law of the one-time publisher, Bernarr Macfadden, was the gent who planted a dictograph in the room where the Fawcett Field Force was holding its meeting.

The super-curious Macfadden employee evidently does not read his own detective magazines, because his gumshoe job was thoroughly bungled from beginning to end. The dictograph was discovered in short order by a Fawcett man, and it required only a little elementary sleuthing to establish beyond doubt the identity of the snooper.

Just so there won't be any mistake, allow us to make the identity of the amateur Hawkshaw clear and complete. He is Joseph P. Wiegels, of 89 Colonial Avenue, Larchmont, New York. In addition to being Bernarr Macfadden's son-in-law, he is also publicity chief of the "new management."

If Mr. Wiegels cares to deny that he was caught skulking in a Louisville hotel trying to steal information from Fawcett Distributing Corp., we invite him to make something out of this accusation. Perhaps a glance at the photographs on these pages will persuade him to try and forget the whole thing.

It is hard to decide whether this bit of skulduggery is contemptible or merely comical. It is certainly contemptible when an employee of a major publishing house is reduced to the shabby expedient of sneaking and spying to meet the challenge of a competitor. But it is also decidedly comical when the means employed are so childishly melodramatic and so stupidly mismanaged.

The deep, dark plot to filch information from Fawcett's worked like this:

EXTRA! "NEW MANAGEMENT" AT MACFADDEN'S ASKS FOR SOFT PEDAL ON FACTS OF SPY PLOT

Since a Macfadden employee was discovered eavesdropping on a Fawcett Field Force convention, Fawcett Distributing Corp. has been approached by an official of the "new management" of the Macfadden Publications, with an earnest plea that no publicity be given to the incident.

Fawcett Distributing Corp. demurred at this suggestion and insisted upon their right and duty to publish the facts of the unethical performance of J. P. Wieggers. Then the representa-

tive of the "new management" retaliated with a charge that the eavesdropper reported hearing "unethical" matters being discussed at the Louisville meeting by executives of Fawcett Distributing Corp.

Fawcett denies this charge and is not ashamed of anything that was said at this meeting. In this respect we urge the new management of Macfadden to carefully inspect again the transcript of the stolen information.



Here's additional evidence. The slip at upper left is for a long distance call made from "Wriegel's" room to Larchmont 2-4001. This, as the phone book shows, is the home telephone number of Joseph P. Wieggers. The zipper bag initialed "J. P. W.," above, was also left behind by the spy who got caught.

Junior G-Man J. P. Wieggers checked into the Louisville hotel the day before the Fawcett meeting. With diabolical cunning he signed himself "J. P. Wriegel," thus disguising his name beyond all possibility of recognition—he hoped.

Before the meeting, someone entered the Fawcett meeting room and managed to install the microphone. Attached to the mike were wires running to a listening device in Wieggers' room three flights above. The scenario called for Wieggers to sit breathless and expectant in his room while he listened-in on everything that was said by the Fawcett men in the room below.

The operations did not develop according to plan. A Fawcett roadman, endeavoring to open a window in the meeting room, discovered a microphone attached to the window drapes. The mike was clumsily installed with safety pin, and we suggest that Wieggers prepare for his next little game of I-spy by learning how to handle mechanical gadgets, MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED, 10 cents at all newsstands, or HANDY MAN'S HOME MANUAL, 50 cents, (adv.) might be helpful.

The Fawcett man's exclamation of surprise at finding the mike tipped off Wieggers that the "jig was up," as we say in the Fawcett comics books. Passing only to cut the wires and grab the other end of his dictograph, he "lanmed," as we say in the Fawcett detective magazines. So hasty was the flight of Joseph P. Wieggers that he left behind him a whole assortment of personal possessions including shirts, a zipper bag, various papers, bills, and his favorite reading matter—a book of non-Macfadden mystery stories, which had evidently gone to his head.

Wieggers' room was quickly spotted because it was the only one on that side of the hotel from which the window screen was raised. A couple of muscular Fawcett circulation men entered his room with permission of a hotel employee, prepared to have an intimate session of ring-around-the-rosy with the amateur Dick Tracy, but fortunately for him he was already on his way with coat tails flying.

Establishing his exact identity, in spite of his clumsy efforts to conceal his true name, was a simple matter because he had disguised his tracks with all the cleverness of a rabbit running across snow. He had made a telephone call to his home in Larchmont, which was a give-away. Laundry marks on his shirts were another. So were the initials on his bag. In addition, a nationally famous handwriting expert has identified the false signature "J. P. Wriegel" on the hotel register as being in the handwriting of Joseph P. Wieggers.

As an added low comedy touch, Wieggers had given his home address on the hotel register as 5 E. 34th Street, New York, which happens to be Altman's department store!

Another interesting item abandoned in flight by Wrong Way Wieggers was a pamphlet issued by the U. S. Immigration Border Patrol. Perhaps he was planning to flee across the border in case of detection, the way they do it in story books.

Leaving the comical and ethical aspects of this incident aside, it is flattering to the Fawcett Distributing Corp. to know that the employee of a major competitor has been reduced to a point where such devices as eavesdropping with hidden microphones are resorted to.