

BANANA OIL SPECIALIST—May 9, 1928; 11a. We rock aboard the SS *Karlsruhe* of the North German Lloyd, anchored temporarily in Commonwealth Pier in Boston. The last American Pagan, Vitantas Alphonse Paulekas, or simply VITO, as he will come to be known to the world, is a secondary school dropout condemned to work for nearly a year as a Western Union bicycle courier. Vito lives in a small brownstone at Pacific House, 71 Oak St., in Somerville, MA, with his father, Jonas, a manufacturing operative, his sister, Albena, 4, and a handful of familial immigrant transplants from Lithuania; Mama Rose wrangles the rejects. Vito was born under the Taurus' charge on May 20, 1913. At the age of four, Vito learned wood carving from his grandfather, a master craftsman and sculptor in the Paulekas' homeland of Lithuania. At the age of six, Vito entered grammar school and learned to speak English, having previously spoken only Russian with his family and Sicilian with his neighborhood gangs. The Boston Red Scare and the 1920 trial of Sacco and Vanzetti made a profound impression on the seven-year-old. That same year, Father Jonas's brother, Julius Paulekas, moved his wife and three-year-old daughter, Eva *Bobo* Paulekas, back to Lithuania, where he bought a farm for \$3,000. But, when the Cabinet of Lithuania required age-eligible male citizens to patrol their neighborhood streets at nighttime in the name of national security, Julius paid the \$50 fine, sold the farm at a \$1,000 loss, and booked the family back to the US, settling down in Noblestown, PA, 590 miles southwest of Boston. At age 12, Vito fell in with a rough crowd, leading to his enrollment at the Massachusetts Reformatory in Concord, MA. He *attended* the school for a year and a half before returning to Cambridge to enroll at Rindge Technical High School. By September 1927, the 14-year-old had crested his personal limit for restructuring, reforming, or correcting of any sort, exhibiting little authorship. Vito is heading for the

same fate as the doomed Italian duo whom he so admired. He has been called cunning; the kid's a natural, and he knows it, realizing at the exact right moment that his major asset is his mouth. With an emotional governance over intellect, Vito drops out of school, opting for street-level adventures more akin to those had by Huck Finn than those of Alex Bell, filling his days by exploring Bean Town backstreets as a Western Union *trotter*—learning to navigate the dingy urban grid with ease.

But, today, aboard the *SS Karlsruhe* tethered in Boston's Commonwealth Pier, Vito is 15 years old; his pudgy, inescapably Baltic frame snakes down maritime corridors like a tiny hungry shrew, working his way from one cabin to the next, methodically rummaging, quickly inventorying items in the rooms to pocket. This felt-tip marking pen, which Vito has only heard of, will have to do, and it fits nicely into the slip between his pomaded hair and messenger's cap. He carries on in the same fashion to the next cabin, and then the next cabin, moving through steel arches, working his way down into the hull. It is hard to make out, but Vito ignores the final checks and last calls just before a brutal jolt as the enormous turbines erupt to life, pushing the ship from harbor to sea.

Tomorrow, on May 10, 1928, this hull-jacking stowaway makes page one of the *Boston Globe* morning edition:

MESSENGER NEARLY GOT A FREE TRIP TO EUROPE—BOY, AN OCEAN LINER FOR FIRST TIME, DID NOT THINK ABOUT THE SAILING HOUR—Vito Paulekas, 15-year-old Western Union messenger boy, just missed getting a nice, long, free ride to Europe yesterday afternoon, it became known this morning. Instead, he got a lecture from his "boss" when he showed up to go to work today. It seems that yesterday forenoon at 11, the steamship *Karisruhe* of the North German Lloyd was scheduled to sail from Commonwealth Pier. The office of the line, at 65 State st, had a last-minute message to send to the purser of the steamer, and they called for a messenger. Vito was the boy

they got. Vito went aboard the liner. He didn't know where to find the purser. He had never been on a big steamer before; in fact, he had never been in anything bigger than a rowboat. He went "downstairs," looked around a bit, found the purser, and delivered the message. Then he let his interest wander a bit. He roamed over the steamer into the smoking rooms, through the corridors, and everywhere. After a time, he came "upstairs" again and hit the deck. He looked around, and lo and behold, the pier had vanished. Vito hadn't known the line had started, so smooth was the motion, and there he was.

"PRETTY TOSSY OUT THERE"—"How did you feel then?" he was asked this morning. "I got a thrill," he answered. He knew, in a general way, that the ship was going to Europe, but he didn't know where exactly. He was a bit flabbergasted, but before he had time to think about it very much, an officer found him and escorted him to Capt Filsinger. The skipper, thinking he was a stowaway, let loose upon him a torrent of harsh language. It was mostly wasted, because it was all in German, and Vito didn't understand a word of it. Finally, the skipper made him understand, "What are you doing here?" Vito managed to explain, and the skipper's ire abated at once. Just then, the pilot boat Liberty was getting ready to take off the pilot from the Karlsruhe. The pilot went over the side, and then they fastened a rope around Vito's middle and lowered him into a small boat. "It was pretty tossy out there," Vito says. Once aboard the Liberty, Vito was royally entertained. The crew gave him a big feed and gave him the run of the craft. "Then I began to get groggy, sea-sick," continues Vito's story. "When I'd feel sick, I'd go up on deck, where it was cold, and then I'd go downstairs again."

OFF BOSTON LIGHT ALL AFTERNOON—The pilot boat loitered around off Boston Light all afternoon, and no opportunity offered to put the passenger ashore. Meanwhile, the Western Union people were having a nervous fit, to put it mildly. They sent radiograms to the Kardshue, and they communicated with Vito's mother, Mrs. John Paulekas of 381 Portman St., Cambridge. They were all hot and bothered. "Where is he?" they all wondered. Then, along about 5 in the afternoon, a fishing schooner came along, inbound. Vito was transferred to it in another small boat and

came into Commercial Wharf. He reported to the company's office at 6:30 pm. That was all until this morning, when Vito reported at the North German Lloyd office. "I delivered your message, sir," he said, and presented the receipt, signed by the purser of the Karlsruhe. And then Vito's own supervisor, the Big Boss, sent for him and gave him a lecture. It doesn't appear that it was anybody's fault, particularly that Vito got a ride on a liner, but probably the worry he caused had to be unloaded somewhere. Anyway, his spirits do not seem at all lowered today. He likes his job, for it keeps him out in the open air and provides plenty of exercise. He went to Rindge Technical High in Cambridge until about nine months ago. He has been wearing his yachtman's cap and uniform ever since leaving school. He is of Lithuanian descent.

Vito's not just all hold-ups and sticky fingers, though. An insatiable interest in art, music, performance, social politics, and scheming has festered in him ever since he cracked his lupine eyes open to the third dimension. In fact, during the summer of 1928, Vito toured with a traveling amateur vaudeville troupe, performing in Somerville, Lowell, Medford, Fitchburg, and several other cities that kiss Greater Boston's borders.

---

---

**BOVRIL**  
**IS A GOOD**  
**DEFENCE**  
**AGAINST**  
**INFLUENZA**

---

---

•

•

TO THE SHITMEN GO THE SPOILS—May 16, 1929, Fontana, CA. A cargo train pulling a string of gondolas grinds to a stop near Fontana Farms, its massive cars spilling over with slop intended to be shoveled into a dugout that stretches 30 yards of ballast. Ten-foot-wide mud trenches lead down to an enormous pen lined with troughs, where farmhands sift through the dumped riches, separating the inedible materials from the *food*. A pile of discarded silverware accumulates at one hand's feet. A fella can certainly bring home the bacon peddling this crap to fools to melt into knick-knacks and tchotchkes for tourists and dreamers. Fox Movietone News and Paramount News Service film crews are on site to document the world's largest hog ranch, home to 2,000 low-squealers until it isn't. In the most prominent building, the one with—P R O C E S S I N G—painted in giant black block letters across a pale blue corrugated roof; that's where the swine are slaughtered. By the time their pink and fleshy squeals reach the film crews, they have morphed into the tensile waves of an orchestra tuning—*SEE WHAT ALL THE SQUEALING IS ABOUT THIS SEPTEMBER, ONLY ON THE BIG SCREEN!*—It can be stated with certainty that this will not be the last time that swine take over the talkies. When the cargo train makes its return run one hour east to Los Angeles tonight, the free world's favorite hypokrites of the day soirée in the Blossom Room of the Roosevelt Hotel, gathering for the first Academy Awards ceremony. Take a look-see at these faces—some from this esteemed bunch will go home with a golden trinket, a metal homunculus; the Academy Award of Merit, manifested by the world-famous George Maitland Stanley, nicknamed by him simply as *Oscar*. Stanley makes no guarantee that his Oscar isn't comprised of semi-precious pignoslop.

• •

Christmastime, 1929—The Paulekas tribe moves to 381 Portland St. in Cambridge on the very block where 53 years earlier, Alexander Graham Bell made the first-ever telephone call via a two-mile wire woven precariously through these streets two miles to Thomas Watson in Boston proper. But, Vito will not come to give two shits about this fact, and perhaps neither should you. Vito has gained siblings and ditched immigrant family members since we last checked in with the household count. Vito's older sister, Albena, is now 20, and his brothers, Bronsilo, is 14, and John, 9. Americans don't know it just yet, but the Great Depression looms over the horizon. 16-year-old Vito works as a dishwasher and busboy at a Cambridge hotel that has become a favorite meeting spot for organized crime goons; for example, crime boss and owner of Messina & Co. grocers, Gaspare Messina—who recently moved his family less than one mile east of the Paulekas's—occasionally employs Vito and other trotters to perform small-time fencing gigs in exchange for mad money. Vito's father, Jonas, is a sausage linker for The Boston Sausage & Provisions Company at 168 Blackstone St. in Boston; his fingers flat and broad, perfectly shaped for this line of work, but Vito needs fingers for fighting & fucking, not stuffing sausages. In the evening, Vito performs with a local theatre troupe in an unheated theatre.

1930. New Year's Day. Two and a half miles west of Vito's home, officers graze Daniel Callahan's ransacked Cambridge apartment at 1423 Cambridge St. Callahan discovers that thirty dollars in cash is missing from his telephone table. A detective announces to everyone in the hallway that a set of wax keys had been jammed into the locks to gain entry. Maggie With A Limp from across the hall, is interviewed by detectives and describes a short, hatted young man entering the unit

quietly and quickly.

Midget Golf has swept the nation. Over the last decade, 25,000 courses have been installed across the country, constructed from secondhand materials, waste, anything people could get their impoverished mitts on. Movie theatre owners are pulling all kinds of stunts to drive asses off those janky links and into their *comfortable* seats. Cleo Short has bet against the theatres and found course-building in Maine to be a lucrative business. He leveled his sights on making it big in Boston and relocated his wife, Phoebe, and their four young daughters, Elizabeth, Nony, Joan, and Muriel, 107 miles south from Portland to Boston at 49 Evans St.

• •

January 11, 1930. After one year of public service, the anticipated thoroughfare, Beverly Avenue, is christened Beverly Boulevard, cutting commuters between downtown and Beverly Hills. The Greater Beverly Boulevard Association celebrates that their *most optimistic anticipations* were exceeded. Cars and cars and people and more cars and more people, all day; every day chugging past the pastel stucco box that eats up the corner. The three opposing corner lots at the quadrant of Beverly and Laurel are cleared and posted for sale.

*The Los Angeles Times.* BEAUTY parlor, good location. See Dentist, Beverly Blvd. at Laruel, or DRUG store for rent, new. 8051 Beverly Blvd., cor. Laurel. See Dentist

Over the next two months, Smith's suite 203 tenant at 8053 Beverly Blvd.—dentist Dr. DeMonoco—sets in LA's three major newspaper outlets a springtime honey trap to collect specimens for an *experimental psychological study group ... for dentists.*

DIFFERENT—INTERESTING—HELPFUL. Dr. De Monoco's System of Experimental Psychology. Phone or write for details. 8053 Beverly Blvd. 203, OX-6200.

INTENSELY INTERESTING EXCLUSIVE—My lectures or instruction in EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY will appeal strongly to women of individualistic tendencies, refinement, and good intellectual and educational backgrounds. In other words, I wish unusual women attend not because the study is most fascinating but because a good mentality is a necessary prelude for the student to gain the full measure of benefits. No matter what the extent of your knowledge and experience. I believe you will contact here something different. Bearing these qualifications in mind, for details, call in person or write Room 203, 8053 Beverly Blvd., at Laurel Av.

BUSINESS PERSONALS—EVERYBODY Even YOU like to meet the REAL thing. You, Miss or Mrs. Intelligent Woman, are invited to call. Will you? Instruction in EXPERIMENTAL Psychology (Personal and Lectures) Benefit yourself. Suite 203, 8053 Beverly Blvd.

Intensely Interesting—Lectures and individual instructions for intelligent women based on the natural laws of Experimental Psychology. You will find that this unique system will give you a new confidence in yourself and your potentialities and an aim to strive for in your life, no matter in what field you may be interested in. Call in person or write for details. Room 203, 8053 Beverly Blvd. A STUDY GROUP for Doctors and Dentists is being organized.

2 YOUNG or mid. aged women to introduce Dr. De Monoco's System of Experimental Psychology. New, different, interesting. Excellent earnings possible. All or part time. Call 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Suite 203, 8053 Beverly Blvd.

CLASS in Experimental Psychology now forming. Limited number. Interesting, helpful & different. Write immediately for details, Suite 203, 8053 Beverly Blvd.

2 YOUNG ladies for refined, dignified, interesting work, pertaining to appointments relative to Experimental Psychology. Room 203, 8053 Beverly Blvd., at Laurel.

PURSE lost, lady's green leather, cont' letter addressed to England. Reward. 8053 Beverly Blvd., Rm. 203.

• •

TIMED MACHINES—As the stroke of midnight nears in the Midwest, eleven couples are left swaying on the dance floor, after relying on a comatose partner's support for the last 130 hours (14 days) of pushing their mental and physical endurance to its breaking point. The risks may be high, but 500 big ones are on the line. A talking machine is unceremoniously rolled onto the stage to let the orchestra take five. A lanky dancer smashes to the boards, bringing down along with him his somnambulist partner—OUT!

At 1:45a, ten couples remain. The promoter switches OFF the music machine to announce that the marathon committee is in the red and cannot afford to complete the event, let alone pay the winners, but thanks for coming. The big brooms emerge and sweep the stick-it-out kids and tired housewives through the doors. At the 2:00a buzzer, the arena has been cleared, the double doors chained, and the public barred. Endurance challenges of all kinds fall out of fashion across the states as the newspapers marginalize US citizens, calling them *insane* for wanting to participate in, or worse, view these public displays of destitution distraction. Vito trades his scuffed oxfords for a nickel barrel and pharmacy-grade domino mask before seeking out Fantömas to momentarily take control of the harbor streets by knocking over a string of retailers, nabbing autos, and robbing outdoor lovers.

June 21—*The Boston Globe*, YOUTH HOLDS UP DORCHESTER STORE—Vincent White was closing his drugstore at 798 Washington st, Dorchester, at 10 o'clock last night when an 18-year-old boy walked in and demanded the contents of the cash register. To emphasize his demand, he pointed a long-barreled pistol at White's head. "Let me have the money right away, or I will shoot," the boy announced. White argued for a moment, but he did not like the look of determination in the boy's eyes, so he turned over to him five \$1 bills, all that was in the cash register. Then, the boy

insisted on being taken to a rear door through which he disappeared. The boy was about 5 feet 5 inches tall, White told the police, wore a gray cap and a gray mixed suit, and has a flesh-colored mole on the left side of his nose.

Vito is 18 years old and 5 feet 4 inches tall. Then, three weeks later, only a mile and a half south:

July 10—*The Boston Globe*, YOUTH HOLDS UP STORE MANAGER—Escaped With \$73.17 After Holdup in Ashmont—John Featherstone, manager of the First National Store at 1668 Dorchester av. Ashmont was robbed of \$73.17 this afternoon by a young man who entered the store while he was alone. The youth disappeared in an automobile parked just below the store. Featherstone told the police that the man accosted him at the counter and asked for a package of cigarettes. When he faced his “customer” with the package, he said, he was staring into the muzzle of a revolver and was met with a demand for the money in the cash register. His only alternative was to comply with the request, he told the police. He said the man was about 5 feet tall, weighed about 160 pounds, and wore a soft gray hat and gray suit. The description of the man was teletyped to all the police stations.

Cleo Short’s once-thriving miniature golf course building business has turned a hole-in-one and forced him to rotate through a series of remedial jobs. When spring 1930 arrives, time is up for a personal loan payment. The summer of 1930 was spent dodging debt collectors and knee-breakers until a piecrust promise caught up with him in the fall. Phoebe, scared and outraged that the family is in the crosshairs, demands that Cleo concoct a solution quickly. Cleo will fake his death and disappear, and Phoebe will collect on his life insurance policy. Soon after, the knee-breakers return to New England with news of being forever unable to collect, and so forth, the dominoes falling accordingly. Then, Cleo will shuffle the family to the sunny West Coast, where they will, of course, all live happily ever after. The parents work out the details, settling on suicide by drowning; Cleo leaping to his death from

the Washington Street Bridge that stretches over the Charles River. It's an awful way to go, and perfect.

On October 12, 1930, at 11:30p, Cleo positions his sedan just right on a bank of the Charles River. If he stands on tiptoes to gaze to the southwest, away from the Charles River N. Washington Street bank, Cleo could likely spy the Paulekas house. Reading the note one last time before placing it on the front seat, Cleo has trouble keeping his lips pulled down over that big 'ol toothy Flatbush cemetery grin as the plan falls easily into place.

Oct. 15—*The Boston Globe*, TWO YOUTHS HOLD UP HARVARD STUDENT, GET \$4—Two youths, one carrying a revolver, late last evening held up Herbere Olds, a Harvard student residing in James Smith Hall, on Dunster st, Cambridge, relieving him of \$4 and his wallet. Olds told the police that the holdup pair were only about 18 years old. In the past week, two youths answering a similar description were successful in three other holdups.

In Boston, a school bus carrying Vito's 15-year-old brother Benjamin collides with a large delivery truck. Benjamin walks away unscathed, but several students are injured. One child dies.

Dec. 27—*The Boston Globe*, DANCE CONTEST—Danny Duggan, former champion ballroom dancer of the United States, will conduct an inter-city dance contest at the Bowdoin Square Theatre next week. Contestants are requested to hand in their names and addresses at the box office of the theatre this week. The preliminary contests will be held nightly at 9 o'clock, with the final contest on Saturday night. Any kind of dancing is included, including Highland fling, Irish jig, the Blackbottom, waltz, ballet, and eccentric dances. The prize includes three engraved silver trophies, and the winner of the first prize will be given a week's engagement at the Bowdoin Square Theatre.

Vito is gonna win this if it kills him.