

Borrowing the plot of a familiar melodrama, Peter staked a fake foreclosure in a Roseland lawyer's office, and when his father and mother tearfully confessed that they could not meet the payment, he dashed in, tossed a fat wallet on the table, and demanded the mortgage.

His father, however, supplied the real comedy touch to the scene.

"Peter," he demanded, "where you gotta da mon? You no robba de bank, son?"

It's qualities like this, in drivers like Jimmy Murphy and Peter De Paolo that maintain my faith in human nature!

Like his uncle, Peter is a heady driver. In addition to that he is a born engineer. They used to say of him that he could sense trouble coming in a racing rig even before it began to develop.

De Paolo would leave the tearing down and building up of his cars to capable mechanics, but such things as gear changes and carburetor adjustments, as well as reinstallation of front axle and steering shaft he handled himself, closely examining the latter two parts under high-powered microscopes after each race.

De Paolo today has no financial worries, for from his initial contest he rolled his route into the big money, and remained there as long as he was an active participant on the speedways. His winnings in 1925 alone totaled more than \$80,000.

Peter had just doffed his Army uniform in December, 1918, redonned the white coveralls of the mechanic when he fell in love with a beautiful and charming young girl. They were married only a few weeks before De Paolo was granted his driver's certificate.

As his initial mount was pushed onto the track of

the Los Angeles Speedway the day he made his debut, it carried on its instrument board, centered between the oil and air-pressure gauges, a tiny framed picture of his bride. A year later a second photo was added—that of the infant Tommy De Paolo.

Peter, like all his ilk, is a superstitious soul, and to him that pair of pictures, constantly before his eyes as he took the straightaways and hit the turns, were his good-luck charms.

Before young Tommy De Paolo was a year old, a third talisman was added to his Dad's speed-wagon—the first pair of shoes that ever graced the wee feet of Tommy. Peter carried these fastened, one to each front spring.

"Believe it or not," De Paolo told me in all seriousness, "those pictures and those shoes carried me through safely, for my only two brushes with Death came at times when I did not have them with me!"

There was that afternoon in May, 1926, when Peter, driving his mount from the Duesenberg factory in Indianapolis, out to the speedway, and hurrying to reach the latter place before sundown, deadline for the time trials for the Decoration Day meet, missed a collision with a passenger train only by twisting his steering wheel, and nose-diving his vehicle into a ditch. His radiator came within inches of the onrushing train before he discovered its approach.

Peter pulled himself out of that one with a few minor bruises, while his rig was undamaged.

He had the photos and Tommy's shoes in his locker at the speedway!

The other time—June 16, 1934—that Peter rode minus his charms the Fates were far more cruel, and for weeks he hovered on the brink of the grave in a