

*The New York World*  
April 28, 1889

*Shadowed by a Detective*

*Nellie Bly Makes a Test of the Private Spy Nuisance*

*After Dogging Her Steps for Three Days the Hound Triumphantly Submits a Report to Her  
Supposed Husband—Keeping His Victim Always in Sight—How Evidence is Secured for  
Divorce Suits*

Do the “shadows” employed by detective agencies to dog the footsteps and observe the behavior of suspected persons invariably make truthful reports? Can a “shadow,” no matter how expert, honest or industrious, be depended upon to conceal his or her purpose, and continue on the trail without making a mistake or losing the scent?

THE WORLD answers both these questions today and tells a good deal about “shadow-tag” that is decidedly interesting. It gives the result of an actual experience, in which presumably clever detectives were fooled with the greatest ease and not only deceived for three days in succession, but actually “shadowed” themselves without any knowledge that every movement they made was watched. To follow, observe and report the actions of a suspected man or woman forms the bulk of the business done by every agency in the city of New York, with one exception. There are at least a score of these agencies, with reputations varying from “very bad” to “first class.” Evidence on which to base a suit for divorce is probably the most sought after, and so long as a customer is willing to pay just so long will reports be furnished. With the purely disreputable concern there is no attempt to make a truthful return. Let the seeker after information display a keep anxiety for criminating evidence, and it is furnished until the fires of jealousy and hate burn with a fierceness that does not abate until the empty purse shut off further information. Then follows, perhaps, a tragedy, a scandal or the hiding of the manufactured skeleton in a closet.

There was just one way to know positively what these private detectives were capable of doing and that way I adopted. I was to live at a hotel for several days and a detective should be employed to shadow me. I was to be out as much as possible, so as to give the man a chance to earn his money. I was to keep a faithful account of everything I did during the time, so that our statements might be compared. I have done so and this is the result of my work.

WAITING FOR THE “SHADOW”

On April 22, at 5.50, I tucked myself and satchel into a hansom-cab and told the driver to take me to the Broadway entrance of the Morton Home. Fifth avenue was crowded, and the driver having a fancy for weaving in and about the other vehicles, after the fashion of a darning-needle in the hands of an old darner, consumed more than the ordinary time to reach my destination. My room at the hotel had been engaged in advance, so I merely handed a card—not

my card—to the hall boy and asked him to get the key of my room. While he was gone I watched the driver, who was still at the entrance. I knew that a detective, furnished with a description of me, was already waiting for my first appearance. I was afraid that he would see me arrive and by questioning the driver learn that I came from the New York Central Station instead of from Jersey city, as he had been led to suppose. I felt greatly relieved when I saw the hansom cab and the driver, who charged me double fare, disappear unmolested up Broadway.

As he became lost to view, a porter with the key took my baggage and went in advance to my room.

“What time is it?” I asked the porter as he set my satchel on the dressing-case, and as he looked out of the door he replied:

“About half-past 6. Is there anything you wish?”

I had but one wish, and that was to immediately join the gentleman who was to assist me in giving the detectives a chase. We had set the hour for 6.30, at which time a WORLD man, acting the part of employer to the detective, was to be waiting near the hotel, so as to point me out.

Giving my key to the hall boy, I was soon on Broadway.

Almost the first thing I noticed was the detective’s employer trying to dodge around a pole which Mayor Grant’s little hatchet had missed on the corner of Broadway and Fourteenth street. I had intended to walk east, but then I changed my mind and deliberately passed the pole, so as to give the detective a good chance to know me. I quickly crossed the square to the east side and walked rapidly along, looking straight ahead, and darted up the stairs to Ricadonna’s restaurant.

I naturally concluded that everything had gone right and the detective was after me, but up to that moment I had not seen him. I walked along the hall and, entering the restaurant near the rear end, joined the gentleman according to previous arrangement. Suppose I call him Mr. X for brevity’s sake? He was looking over the evening newspapers while he awaited my arrival. Of course, remembering the watchful eyes of the detective, I greeted him as if I had not seen him a few hours before.

While eating our dinner we watched every one and tried to single out the detective. In this we failed until a man with a dark mustache and a slight droop of the shoulders walked through, and then—as if unable to find an empty table—out again. He did not look clean nor happy, so we decided he was the man who intended to shadow our footsteps for that evening.

## AN UNHAPPY DETECTIVE

My first sensation was one of enjoyment. I hardly knew whether to prolong my dinner and keep the man on the outside in the agony of waiting indefinitely or to rush my dinner so as to have more time to give him a merry chase. At last I decided to dine at leisure and allow the after events to take care of themselves. It takes the flavor out of life, just as it does out of cooking, to rush things, you know.

About 8.30 o’clock we left Ricadonna’s and walked across Broadway. We did not look around and failed to discover anyone “shadowing” us. After peering in a window for a few moments we crossed Broadway and went along Twenty-second street to Fifth avenue. Still we didn’t see any one. Going up Fifth avenue we stopped in a doorway to decide where to spend the evening. The detective had not yet been seen and I began to think that after all he hadn’t the shrewdness that I had credited him with.

We made up our minds to go to the Eden House, and as we went down Twenty-third street we saw a man who was walking in advance glancing over his shoulder. The action was so perfectly performed that it identified him as our "shadow." He went on past the Musee and we went in. Mr. X went to the office door and spoke to Mr. Gerkins, who came out and opened the door for us and followed us in.

We saw the shadow as he rushed hastily in after us, and then after seeing us standing so quietly, looking at "Lee's Surrender," he assumed an air of indifference that we were highly amused.

Walking further on, we stood examining a group of figures near a stairway which led to the Chamber of Horrors. The detective slowly moved about, and, when we saw his back towards us, we merely stepped down the stairway and into the basement, which is filled with noiseless tortures and tragedies.

We waited at the foot of the stairs, and I know by the haste with which the shadow rushed down that he thought he had lost us. After he found we had not melted away he walked about looking at the different figures and pictures. I asked such questions concerning them as I thought likely a country woman was likely to ask. The detective was not going to lose sight of us again, so he kept very close to our heels. At one time Mr. X excused himself and walked away. He wanted to know whether the detective would speak to me if the chance came and offer to sell out the other side but he did not, he merely waited back of me and never moved until we started upstairs again.

We went up to the gallery, the detective behind us. We sat down; after the microscopic views had been shown we went into the Turkish smoking-room, and sat down on a corner divan. Evidently the detective expected to see us come out the other door, and when we did not he thought we had found some new stairway, for he came rushing in, and when he saw us sitting in the corner he turned and fled.

## HANGING TO AN "L" TRAIN GATE

But he did not fly far. He waited close by outside, where he could command a view of both doors, and when we went out he was after us. After speaking to the man at the door, we went out into Twenty-third street. The detective, to give us the lead, went towards Sixth avenue, carelessly lighting a cigar.

"Let us see if we can get away from him," I suggested, and accordingly we started in his direction and quickly ran up the stairs leading to the Sixth avenue elevated. It was very amusing to see him try to look as if it were nothing extraordinary that he should rush after us.

A Harlem train came along. We made a move as if to get on it; so did the shadow. We stepped off again; so did he. Still he tried to look as if it were nothing unusual for everyday mortals to mimic each other's movements.

The next train was bound for Fifty-eighth street. We waited until everybody was aboard and then got on. The detective got on, too, and we were no better off than before. We were on the second car and had the two seats directly by the rear door. The detective was on the front platform of the same car watching us through the window. We could see him and the guard very plainly and he could see us just as well.

The first stop was Twenty-eighth street. Several passengers got on the train and came into our car. We sat very still until we heard the gate on the rear car close and the conductor near us

get the signal. That instant we jumped up and stepped off. The guard slammed the gate after us, pulled the bell-rope, and the train started and with our detective on board.

But he had seen us get off when too late to help himself, and frantic at being thus foiled, he sprang for the bell-rope. The bell rang and the train stopped. Everybody in the cars rushed forward to see what accident had happened. The guard grappled with the struggling shadow and the train started again, and as it moved off from the station the detective managed to swing himself half way over the gate. Thus he was hanging when that part of the train passed the platform. There was a terrible scream and the train stopped for a second time. I ran up to the end of the platform fearing the poor fellow had dropped to the street below, and was just in time to see him grabbed by several guards and given a terrible blow in the eye, which persuaded him to rid on to the next station.

All the people who were on the platform of the station were curious to know the cause of the trouble, but, as usual, the employees knew absolutely nothing. It is needless to add that we offered no explanation.

As the detective had been effectually given the slip for that evening anyway, there was nothing for me to do but go back to the Morton House and feel satisfied that so far I had decidedly the best of it.

After lying awake for four hours the next morning in fear the clerk would let me sleep too late, the porter called me at 9 o'clock. Half an hour later I had breakfast in the small restaurant which adjoins the reception room. When breakfast was over I walked across to the Third avenue Elevated and rode down to City Hall station. Then I boarded another train and rode out to East Eighty-second street. No detective was after me, so I decided to return to the Morton House and give them a chance to do something.

## THE SECOND DAY'S WORK

I sat a while in the reception room reading. I had little desire to walk about in order to furnish employment for a stupid man, but I knew as long as I sat in the hotel he would not be earning his bread, so, about 2 o'clock, I started out.

I never could dawdle along and waste time. When I start out on the street I have always some objective point and generally get there in the shortest possible time.

Immediately I crossed the street a thin young man, about 5 feet 5 inches in height, with light hair and artificially blackened mustache, followed me. He was not the man who had done the shadowing the previous evening. I went into Brentano's and asked about the price of tickets for the Centennial parade. I walked down Fourteenth street and stopped in a little store, but, making no purchase, I left again in a few moments. I then went into Macy's and directly up to the restaurant. It was well filled with women, so the detective stood outside the door by which I entered watching me.

I ate my cream and strawberries leisurely, and while doing so I decided to make the man who was doing such unskillful dogging meet me face to face. There are two glass doors which open into this restaurant. One leads to the china department, where there is a stairway. The other leads to the millinery department. As the detective was in the millinery part, I went out the opposite door and deliberately stepped aside and waited. He came rushing, he looked at me, then began to lazily study the different things about him. I loved around to several different quarters and then retraced my steps through the restaurant.

I rather liked to hurry the fellow so I skipped down the stairs, rushed into a young man who was going the wrong way. We both:

“I beg your pardon?”

“I beg your pardon?”

And I rushed on.

I stopped long enough downstairs to ask the soda-check girl if she sold bromo-caffeine, and as she did not I went out, rushing headlong into a woman who was trying to handle four swinging doors, a baby carriage with a crying baby in it and one of those old-fangled, newly revived parasols. Which looks like a plate when a juggler balances it on a straw. If there is one event which prompts one to leave New York for a better sphere it is to encounter one of these women who takes her whole blessed family of ten, with nondescript dolls, a pug and a baby carriage thrown in, out shopping with her.

### FOILED ONCE MORE

After I escaped the woman I stood for awhile on the corner of Sixth avenue, then walked over and took a Broadway car. I saw the detective follow, and I decided to give him a cheap airing. I made no move to get off, and when the car was near its last stopping place, Fifty-ninth street, the detective jumped off and walked as if going to the Park. I smiled and sat still. The car started on its downtown journey, and the detective, seeing that I was coming back, came running after. He caught the car and he looked very warm and sheepish, but I did not even take the satisfaction of smiling.

At Thirty-third street a large crowd had collected to see the last of a pole which the workmen had stripped of usefulness. I got off to watch it fall, and when it was down a balky horse decided to take a rest in the center of the street. This caused a blockade and the cars were unable to pass. I hired a hansom cab and started down Broadway. Just then the balky horse thought about his dinner and kindly made way so the horse-cars could move. The detective was in the first car, so I ordered the “cabby” to drive across town, so as to compel the detective to hire a cab also, but he didn’t do it.

At 6.30 I gave the hall boy my key and started out. The shadow who had missed me for two hours was patiently waiting on the corner was on the Broadway car almost as soon as I was. I rode up to Twenty-fifth street, where I got off and went into the drug store on the corner. I asked the clerk for some bromo-caffeine, and, after drinking it, I sat down to wait the coming of Mr. X. I began to get very hungry, the result of my unusual exercise, and wished I had named an earlier hour for dinner.

When Mr. X came he wanted to know where I wished to dine. There was one thing to be avoided, and that was to go where it was at all possible that we would meet someone who knew us. We walked down Broadway as we tried to decide, and then along Twenty-third street. By the time we reached Sixth avenue we had decided on O’Neill’s.

We went in the Twenty-second street entrance and selected a table back in the hallway, or arm, which connects the two main restaurants.

While we were eating the headwaiter walked to and fro along this hall. As he passed us I heard him talking angrily to himself. I also noticed that the waiters glanced at him apprehensively every time he neared one of them.

“That man is either insane or has an attack of delirium tremens,” I whispered to Mr. X, but he did not seem to think it worthy any attention.

Just as we had finished dinner there was a scream, followed by a great scuffling in that part of the restaurant facing on Twenty-second street. Mr. X went front and returned to report that the head waiter had suddenly become frantic from the mental view of snakes he was having and that three waiters had put him out into the street so that he would have more room to tussle with his wriggling visions.

### AND THE SHADOW WAS LEFT

The scuffle collected a large crowd around the entrance. I felt positive the waiting detective would be among them and would forget—if had sense enough to know—that there were two more entrances to O'Neill's restaurant besides the one by which we had entered. We decided to go, as we had finished, and I relied on two things to help us to elude our persevering but indiscreet sleuth. He would doubtless be so interested in the fight among the waiters that he would forget his mission long enough for us to escape unnoticed, or he would watch the door we had gone in and never think to watch the others for us to come out.

So we came out of the entrance furthest from that by which we had entered. We walked across Sixth avenue, and taking the downtown Elevated, rode to Eighteenth street. Before we got on we noticed what people were on the platform, and when we got off at the next station we looked to see if any of the same people would get off. They did not, so we were sure that for the second time we had eluded our shadow.

We walked across town to Third avenue, and down Third avenue across Thirteenth street to Broadway. In order to avoid being followed home Mr. X left me at the corner, he going back to Third avenue, and from there over a circuitous route to his home, and I, mingling with the people just coming from the Star Theatre, was in a moment safe within the Morton House.

The next morning I took a about and at 1 o'clock, finding myself still free from a "shadower," I came home, and so ended my three day's experience in being watched and followed by men who are credited with being able to outwit ordinary people—and certainly to keep track of a woman.

NELLIE BLY

### The Detectives' Side of the Story

There is a marked discrepancy between the real story of the three day's adventures and the story as told by the shadows themselves—sufficient perhaps to make valueless the result of the work, had an important issue thereon depended. How ingeniously does the shadow explain away his failures! How punctilious he is as to minutes, and how lacking when it comes to producing tangible proof that would stand a legal test!

On Tuesday afternoon last a reporter of THE WORLD went to the Morton House and made the following entry upon the register:

"Mrs. V. L. Cooppee, Philadelphia." The clerk was informed that Mrs. Cooppee would arrive before 6 o'clock and would remain as a guest for probably two or three days. The customer rate was paid and "Mrs. Cooppee" was assigned to room No. 135 on the second floor. Immediately after leaving the hotel the reporter, first announcing that he intended to return to Philadelphia, crossed the street and entered the office of Fuller's Detective Bureau, No. 841 Broadway, where he was received by a young gentleman with a worried expression of countenance.

“I want a woman watched,” said the visitor. “I want to know every movement from the moment she leaves the hotel where she is now staying until she returns to it—every movement, remember, written out in full. What will that service cost?”

“Seven dollars and a half a day and expenses,” was the reply. “Where is the lady and how can she be identified?”

There was no questioning either as to relationships, or as to what the visitor desired to establish. He was not even asked his name. Mr. Fuller’s representative made out a receipt, and then touching an electric bell summoned a “shadow.” This was a man about thirty years of age, of swarthy complexion, and with a pair of keen dark eyes, and a manner that bespoke the sleuth in every gesture, every look, “This man will meet you at Fourteenth street and Broadway at any hour you name, and you can then point out the lady to him,” said the detective’s secretary after having first obtained a description and written it on a piece of paper. The shadow was instructed to be at the rendezvous at 6 o’clock. He appeared according to promise, and strolled down Fourteenth street with the reporter. The pair returned to their post about 6.15 o’clock, and fifteen minutes later Mrs. Coopee emerged from the hotel and started across Union Square. In an instant the “shadow” was in close pursuit, and so thoroughly intent on his purpose that his manner attracted attention from at least half a dozen persons. The reporter watched “Mrs. Coopee” until she entered Riccadonna’s restaurant, and then, knowing that she would remain there for at least an hour, went into Worth’s Museum, looked at the freaks for a while and then spent a half hour in Theiss’s listening to a mournful strain from the big organ.

The rest of the evening was spent in “shadowing” the shadow and in speculating as to how that enthusiastic but misguided specter would account for his time. At 11 o’clock the reportorial shadow took a trip downtown, and to avoid being watched or followed made several detours before reaching THE WORLD office at midnight.

### THE FIRST REPORT

On Wednesday about noon a call was made to receive the detective’s report and following is a copy of the “shadow’s” description of his work, *verbatim et literatim*.

April 23, 1889

*Mr. Coopee, City:*

DEAR SIR; We respectfully submit the following as our report in your matter for the 23d inst.:

Operator went on post in the vicinity of Morton House at 6.15 P.M. and at 6.35 P.M. a lady left the hotel who answered the description given in every particular. Operator then motioned to Mr. C., requesting to know if that was the party, and Mr. C. signified yes by motion of his head.

Operator then followed the lady, who walked to Fourth avenue and entered Riccadonna’s restaurant, No. 42 Union Square. She remained there until 8.15 P.M., when she came out with a young gentleman of the following description: Age, about thirty years, 5 feet, 8 inches tall, slim build, sallow complexion, wore a high silk hat, light drab overcoat, dark pants and carried a cane.

After leaving the restaurant they walked to Broadway, up Broadway to Twenty-second street, through Twenty-second street to Fifth avenue, stopped under the shadow of the Cumberland Building, corner of Twenty-second street and Fifth avenue. They remained there fifteen minutes, and then started up Fifth avenue to Twenty-third street, and through Twenty-

third street to the Eden Musee. The gentleman left the lady standing on the stoop, and he entered the Musee. He came out in a few minutes with another gentleman, and then they all three entered the Musee.

Operator followed them in, and they entered the smoking room on the upper floor, over the music stand.

After they had entered the smoking room they both sat on a sofa pretty close together. The gentleman ordered refreshments. They remained there until 11 P.M. then came out, the lady having the gentleman's arm. They walked to the I station at Twenty-third street, and as they acted very suspiciously, operator did not follow them too close. They mounted the stairs leading to the uptown track and operator followed. When he reached the platform of the station they had just boarded a train. Operator endeavored to board the train but the gateman shut the gate and would not permit operator to enter, so he was compelled to discontinue. Yours very respectfully,  
J.M. FULLER

C.F. COSTA, Superintendent.

As the putative husband finished reading this report the "shadow" came in. He was rather a disconsolate looking "shadow." His right eye was blackened and bruised, and the skin was broken. "I tried to get on an Elevated train at Twenty-third street," he explained, "but the guard shut the gate and punched me in the eye."

"We'll have to attend to that fellow's case," remarked Mr. Fuller, with some severity of manner.

"Well," said the reporter, "this is not at all satisfactory. Your man made a miss of it just at the wrong time."

"It's very unfortunate," replied Mr. Fuller, "but it couldn't be helped."

"Give me another man for today," demanded the visitor, assuming a tone of annoyance. "I must have this information."

"Very well," answered Mr. Fuller, and tapping his bell he called for "Fred."

"This," said Mr. Fuller, "is one of the best 'shadows' in New York. He has been in the business a number of years, and is really one of the cleverest men in the business."

"All right," was the reporter's reply. "Put him on the case and see what he can do. Now, understand, I want everything—everything!"

Then a further payment of \$7.50 was made, together with 80 cents additional for the expenses of the 'shadow,' who received the smash in the eye, and operator No. 2 started on his hunt a little after 2 o'clock. Again the reporter kept track of the "shadow," who went about his work without attracting the same attention as his predecessor; but it wasn't long before he discovered himself to "Mrs. Cooppee," and then his usefulness was ended.

### WORK OF A GREAT "SHADOW"

Mr. Fuller was inclined to deprecate the efforts of his employees when called upon for a report on Thursday. "I don't think you will be satisfied with this," he said. "But my man did the best he could. Here is the report," and he handed the following statement as the work of "one of the best shadows in New York":

APRIL 24, 1889



*Mr. Cooppee, city:*

DEAR SIR: We respectfully submit the following as our report in your matter versus lady for the above date:

Operator was on post at the Morton House at 2.15 P.M., and almost immediately the lady left the hotel and went to Brentano's book store, on Union Square, came out in a few minutes and went to Allen's corset store, 2 West Fourteenth street; remained ten minutes, came out and went to R.H. Macy's and entered the restaurant and had something to eat, remaining there twenty minutes; came out and left the building and walked through Fourteenth street to Broadway, and boarded a Broadway car and rode to Fifty-ninth street. At the end of the route she did not leave the car, but rode back to Thirty-second street and there alighted and stood watching some men who were removing a telegraph pole.

She then entered a hansom cab and was driven to the Morton House, time, 4.15 P.M.

At 6.30 P.M. she again left the Morton House and, boarding a Broadway car, rode to Twenty-fifth street and entered Caswell's drug store on the northwest corner of Twenty-fifth street and Broadway, remained there fifteen minutes and came out with a gentleman of the following description.

Five feet eight inches tall, dark complexion, thirty or thirty-two years of age, of medium build, light brown mustache, and dressed in dark clothes and silk hat.

They walked down Broadway to Twenty-third street, then to Sixth avenue to then to Twenty-second street and entered O'Neill's oyster house on the northeast corner of Twenty-second street and Sixth Avenue, time, 7.05 P.M.

Operator covered the place until 1 A.M., when the oyster house was closed, but did not see the lady or gentleman leave. Operator is positive they did not leave the place by the main entrance.

There are four entrances to this restaurant, three on Sixth avenue and one on Twenty-second street, about fifty feet from the corner, and it is simply impossible for one man to cover all of those entrances. At 1 A.M. operator discontinued. Yours very respectfully,.

J.M. FULLER

Per. C. F. CoSTA, Superintendent

"Now," said Mr. Fuller, when the reporter had expressed his utter and complete dissatisfaction. "I have a proposition to make to you. I will put two men on this case instead of one. Two men can certainly 'hold' her. If they do not I will not make any charge for the extra man. But if they get what you want then you pay \$12.50 instead of \$7.50. Yesterday's expenses amounted to \$1.

The proposition was accepted and Mr. Fuller was impressed with the importance of keeping on "Mrs. Cooppee's" track and not losing sight of her for an instant. The result of this attempt was the most dismal failure of all. This is the report that Mr. Fuller made on Friday:

APRIL 25, 1889

*Mr. Victor Cooppee:*

DEAR SIR: We would submit the following as our report in your matter for the 25<sup>th</sup> inst., Operatives G. and L. went on post at the Morton House at 1 P.M. and remained until 6.10 P.M., up to which time the lady had not put in an appearances. Supt. Costa then called at the Morton House, wrote a name on a card and requested the clerk to forward it to room 135, Mrs.

Cooppee. The clerk then informed Costa that Mrs. Cooppee had paid her bill and had left the hotel that morning.

Costa then returned to the agency and reported the above to J.M. Fuller, who thereupon instructed Costa to detain Operative Moor at Messrs. Caswell & Massay's drug store, corner of Twenty-fifth street and Broadway, and to detail Operator Lopez at Riccadonna's restaurant, in Union Square, to see if the lady would put in an appearance at either of the above places.

Both of the operatives remained on post in their respective places until 9 P.M. and, not seeing the lady, discontinued. Yours respectfully,

J.M. FULLER, per F.M.

The alleged jealous husband thought he had enough. He said so, and asked Mr. Fuller if the bargain made the day before held good. "The understanding," said Mr. Fuller blandly, "was that we could 'hold' the lady, but as the operators did not see her, they could not 'hold' her. So..."

"Then I owe—"

"Five dollars," replied the detective, and for this amount he gave a receipt marked "in full to date." Half an hour afterwards, Mr. Victor Cooppee had resumed his own name and personality, and the quick-witted and swift-footed Mrs. Victor Cooppee became Nellie Bly.