

Number Eight

part 1

1 I was doing about eighty, but the long, flat road made it feel only half that fast.
The redheaded kid's eyes were bright and a little wild as he listened to the car radio.
When the news bulletin was over, he turned down the volume.
He wiped the side of his mouth with his hand. "So far they found seven of his victims."
5 I nodded. "I was listening." I took one hand off the wheel and rubbed the back of my
neck, trying to work out some of the tightness.
He watched me and his grin was half-sly. "You nervous about something?" My eyes
flicked in his direction. "No. Why should I be?"
The kid kept smiling. "The police got all the roads blocked for fifty miles around
Edmonton."
10 "I heard that, too."
The kid almost giggled. "He's too smart for them."
I glanced at the zipper bag he held on his lap. "Going far?"
He shrugged. "I don't know".
The kid was a little shorter than average and he had a slight build. He looked about
seventeen,
15 but he was the baby-face type and could have been five years older.
He rubbed his palm on his slacks. "Did you ever wonder what made him do it?"
I kept my eyes on the road. "No".
He licked his lips. "Maybe he got pushed too far. All his life somebody always pushed
him. Somebody was always there to tell him what to do and what not to do. He got pushed
once too often."
20 The kid stared ahead. "He exploded. A guy can take just so much. Then something's
got to give."
I eased my foot on the accelerator.
He looked at me. "What are you slowing down for?"
"Low on gas," I said. "The station ahead is the first I've seen in the last forty miles. It
might be
25 another forty before I see another."

