

The HOUSE on LILAC STREET

by FRED BAYARD

AP Newfeatures

(Chapter 20) Lieutenant Fletcher looked up as Sergeant Mulvaney entered the office.

"Mr. Metcalfe is here now." "O.K. Ask him to come in," Fletcher said.

Earlier in the day he had received a telephone call from this man, who was the assistant editor of one of the New York dailies, asking for an appointment, and he was curious to know what his visitor had to tell him.

"Have a chair," he invited Metcalfe as the latter was shown in. "I'm frankly wondering what this is all about."

"The other regarded him thoughtfully. Then he spoke. "I want to tell you about something that happened last night that set a train of thought going back to the years when I was a cub reporter in St. Louis. You'll have to decide for yourself if it's got any significance."

Fletcher nodded. "All right—let's have it."

"Last night I was sitting in my office, going over various odds and ends. Sometime during the afternoon someone had left me a stack of photos of a club singer."

"He paused significantly. "For about half an hour it bothered me. I kept picking up the picture and looking at it, and putting it down again. Then, all at once, I knew what it was. I went down to the morgue and got out the old files from around 1930 to 1933 and finally found what I wanted. Then, just to check my facts, I put in a long distance call to St. Louis."

He took a bunch of clippings out of his pocket and threw them on the desk. "Take a look at those," he said to Fletcher.

"Back in 1932, I'd got my first job as a police reporter. This girl, Cheryl Lynn, was in the chorus of a burlesque show, the De Milo, in St. Louis. She was a blonde then—that's what threw me off first—and she went by a different name."

"The star of the show was a red-head named Yvette. Her real name was Mona Cox, and she and this Lynn girl were thick as thieves. Now it wasn't generally known—that came out only later at the hearing—that Mona was married. She and her husband didn't get along together too well. He had a good job, and didn't like to see her in this place. He hated the show and everything connected with it. But most of all he hated the Lynn girl—blamed her for keeping Mona in the show. Crazy, of course, because Mona was the star and Cheryl was only a chorus girl, but he couldn't see it any other way. And then something happened which really got him gunning for Cheryl; and this is what I think is important."

He paused to emphasize his words. "What happened?" Fletcher asked.

"Mona was going to have a baby. That was going to interfere with her career. Somewhere she found a doctor who was willing to perform an illegal operation. Whether or not she took Cheryl Lynn into her confidence isn't clear. There was nothing to show that Cheryl had given her the name of the doctor, but the fact remains that Mona died, and Cheryl was with her when she died. The doctor beat it. Of course there was an investigation. Mona's husband tried to prove Cheryl was an accessory, especially as Cheryl refused to divulge the name of the doctor. She maintained she knew nothing about it, that she had happened to call at Mona's home to find her in a dying condition. She stuck to that story, and the jury believed her. It's anybody's guess as to what really happened."

"That night, Cheryl left town. It was just another case to me, and I forgot all about it—until something about that old photo jogged my memory."

"After the other finished speaking, Fletcher sat thoughtfully. "It's certainly food for thought," he finally said. "You've been a lot of help. It would have taken us a long time to back-track this girl to St. Louis. What happened to Mona's husband? Did he ever try to find Cheryl?"

"That's something I can't tell you. They kept him at the jail until he cooled down a bit. Then he paid a fine and they released him. He didn't stay around town long after that."

"Do you think Cheryl told the truth about what happened—that she really didn't know the doctor?"

"Personally, I figure she did. Otherwise I can't understand why, if she really was such a great friend of Mona's, she'd protect him."

Fletcher shook his head doubtfully. "It may be quite a job to try to get any sort of a line on the husband after all this time. He could be anywhere in the forty-eight states. However, it certainly gives us a new lead to work with."

"It may be possible to give us a possible motive for Cheryl's death. Sometimes things break and pushed it off the front pages."

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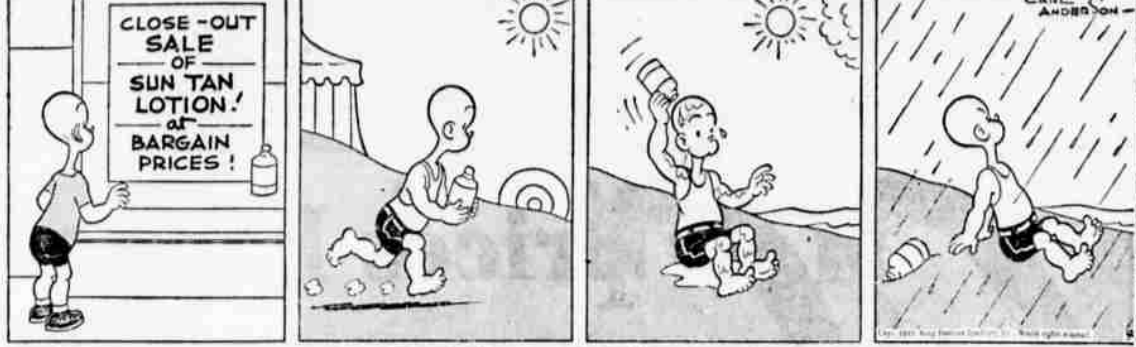
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RADIO PROGRAMS table with columns for station, time, and program name.

TUESDAY—6 A.M. TO 4:45 P.M. table with columns for station, time, and program name.

DIAL LISTINGS: KEX and KOAC listings for various radio programs.

Too Much Lip Ends in Too Little Lip: Detroit (UPI)—Frank Moody, 49, lost more than a checker game to Albert Giddings, 36. Giddings bit off Moody's lower lip in a dispute over the game, police said.

Crossword Puzzle grid and clues.

Room and Board advertisement for a place to stay.

AWF-F-FLUB-B-BLUBB advertisement featuring a character and a product.

Wrigley's Spearmint Chewing Gum advertisement featuring a character and product.