

OVERNIGHT GUEST

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

THE STORY THUS FAR: Adam Bruce, FBI operator, on a trip to his old home, ran into his previous boss, Inspector Tope and Mrs. Tope. Tope found a man murdered at auto camp operated by Bee Dewain. Mrs. Tope said the man was Mr. Ledforge, head of New England utilities, Holdom, friend of Ledforge, was found unconscious in hospital. His employee, Kell, had disappeared. Tope believed Mrs. Kell's body would be found in bottom of quarry in Holdom's car. Ledforge was said by his office to be in New York. Priddy, who worked at the camp, came running in and said that there was a man in the cottage—Tope and Bruce found Kell looking where the murdered man was found.

CHAPTER VIII

The big man looked from one to the other. "Why—yes, sir," he said miserably at last. "My name's Kell."

"That's much better," Tope commented. "Where's the Holdom limousine?"

But Kell responded with a counter question, his cheek suddenly purple, his whole body shaking with a sort of passion.

"Where's my wife?" he cried. "Where's Mrs. Kell? Where is she? What have you done with her?"

Tope said simply: "We haven't seen her, Kell. Was that why you came here? To look for her?"

"She's gone!" Kell cried desperately. "She's gone! I heard in the village that there was some one dead here. I thought it might be her—"

The Inspector looked at Kell's feet; and he demanded:

"Let me see your shoes—the bottoms of them."

Kell, after a moment, lifted one foot, standing on the other; and Tope turned the lifted foot with his hand to look at the sole. Kell toppled and almost fell; and Tope released his ankle, caught his arm, steadied him. Then the old man asked:

"Do you ever wear heel-plates?"

Kell's eyes flickered. "No sir!"

"Sure?"

"Why—I've got an old pair of shoes with plates on them."

"Worn them lately?"

"No sir."

Tope nodded; and he said: "Kell, there were some things in the pockets of those overalls this dead man wore. A valve-clearance gauge, and a knife with a steel handle marked in a scale, inches and centimeters. Did you ever see a knife like that?"

Kell shook his head stubbornly.

"Well, that's funny," Tope protested. "That's queer! You work for Holdom; you're his chauffeur. You live over his garage. Well, this dog blanket came from his garage; and the overalls and sweater came out of the machine shop behind the garage, where you keep your work clothes. I think they are yours. They're big enough to fit you. You're an Englishman. That knife came from England. I never saw one like it in this country."

"I heard that the coupe came here," Kell muttered. "And she was in it. She drove it away from the house."

"Well," said Tope, "I don't know where she is, but I can tell you where the car is. It's in the quarry hole, up in the mountains above the Holdom place. We're lifting it out tomorrow."

Kell uttered a low, startled ejaculation; and Tope stopped, expecting the man to speak. When Kell did not, the Inspector demanded:

"Know anything about that?"

"No sir." The answer was prompt.

"I suppose you didn't put it there?"

Kell cried harshly, on the verge of breaking: "No!"

"All right," Tope said sharply, pressing his advantage. "Why didn't you bring Holdom and Ledforge up here to their homes last Friday?"

And, quickly: "Now, don't lie! We know you left New York, with them in the car; and we know you got home alone. What did you do with Ledforge and Holdom on the way?"

After a moment Kell answered: "Why—I had engine-trouble, sir. It looked like a long job to fix it; so they hailed a car and got a ride to Springfield, told me they'd come home by train. I got the car fixed quicker than I expected, and came on, and met the train at Middleford, but they weren't on it."

"Hah!" said Tope scornfully. "Took you long enough to think of that! Where have you been since then?"

"Looking for Mrs. Kell—places I thought she might be."

"Where?"

"Well, one was in Boston, and one in Worcester. Then Mr. Ledforge had a lodge back in the hills where he sometimes went for a rest. I thought she might be there."

"Why?" Tope demanded; and Kell hesitated, did not answer. Tope cried: "Well, was she?"

"No sir," said Kell, and Tope demanded sharply:

"But you found some one there?"

"Mr. Eberly was there. But he hadn't seen her."

"Eberly?" Tope looked at Adam.

"He's there now?"

"Yes sir. He and Mr. Ledforge sometimes went there together."

Tope frowned, startled and disturbed. "Did Mr. Eberly know Mrs. Kell?"

"Oh, no sir, but he said no one had been there!"

And Tope suddenly was calm. "Kell," he said, "I'm sorry about your wife. Don't think me—impertinent, unkind. But—had she any faults? Were you jealous of her?"

"She was all right, sir," Kell protested. He added: "But I couldn't help being jealous of her. She'd go away, week-ends when I'd be at home, and when I couldn't go with her, with Mr. Holdom keeping me busy all the time."

"Where would she go?"

"She always told me where she was going, but—I tried to telephone her, sometimes, and she wasn't where she'd started for." He wiped his brow heavily. "It made me crazy, sir," he confessed.

Adam realized—and his hair prickled at the thought—that Kell spoke of Mrs. Kell in the past tense, as though she were dead!

Tope asked: "Where were you last week-end? Ten days ago? Up here or in New York?"

"In New York, sir. Mr. Holdom couldn't get away."

"Mr. Ledforge in New York?"

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

"I don't know, sir."

tant consideration for this harried man, and something like sympathy.

He said straightforwardly: "Sorry, Kell! But I'm acting for the law in this matter; and Mr. Bruce here represents the Federal Government, Department of Justice. I suppose you know that you're involved in a serious affair. Kidnaping is serious, Kell. And so is—murder. I won't press you; but if you told us a little more, it might help in straightening things out, and—in finding your wife!"

Kell stood grimly silent, twitching and shaking.

"Some one," Tope urged, "telephoned the Ridgcomb police that the coupe had been stolen—telephoned from New York. You didn't do that, did you? You weren't in New York Saturday morning, were you?"

"No sir," said Kell.

Then they all heard a car on the drive, and Tope spoke to Adam. "That may be Mat," he said; and to Kell, while Bruce turned toward the door: "This is Mr. Cumberland, the District Attorney, Kell. I'm afraid he'll lock you up." He added: "If we get any trace of Mrs. Kell, I'll let you know."

Then Cumberland came in, Mrs. Tope beside him. Adam admitted them both, shut the door.

Tope made explanations—summed up Kell's statements—and silences. Mrs. Tope spoke quickly.

"Inspector," she suggested, "Kell would know Mr. Ledforge if he saw him."

Tope's eyes quickened. "That's right," he agreed. He chuckled. "Ma'am, I never thought of that. Of course he would." He spoke to Cumberland, eagerly. "Let's get up there—let Kell see him, see if he knows him."

A moment later they were all in Cumberland's car, and soon they turned into the byway that led to Amasa Dewain's farm. The ambulance of Will Banion, the undertaker, was backed up to the kitchen door; a laden stretcher was just being wheeled out of the kitchen as they arrived. Amasa Dewain, heavy, ponderous, silent, stood in the lighted doorway.

They approached the stretcher; and Cumberland said to the undertaker: "Will, let this man see him!"

A sheet was turned back; an electric torch threw its beam on the dead man's white face. Tope and Adam thrust Kell forward.

"Look at him, Kell," Tope directed.

And Kell—though they could feel the muscles in his arms contract—looked steadily enough upon the dead man.

"That Mr. Ledforge?" Tope demanded.

Kell shook his head. In the waiting silence his hoarse tones were clear.

"No sir," he said sullenly. . . .

When Will Banion heard Tope speak Ledforge's name, he pressed nearer, incredulous, astonished. He cried:

"Ledforge? The Utilities man?"

Mat Cumberland started to speak; but Tope interrupted him. "You're Will Banion?" he asked crisply.

"Yes."

"Well, I want you to forget what you've heard," Tope sternly directed. "This isn't Ledforge. You heard Kell say so. Now get along to town. Doctor Medford here?"

"He's gone ahead, going to meet me at my place," Banion said meekly, and turned to his task. When the ambulance was gone, Tope spoke to Cumberland. "Heard from young Dane?" he asked.

"Yes, he telephoned awhile ago that Holdom can make the trip tomorrow. They'll be here by noon."

Tope nodded, and he spoke to Cumberland. "You'll want to lock Kell up, of course. Drop Mrs. Tope and me at the Mill, and then you can take him along to town."

Back at the Mill, they found Ned Quill talking at the door with Bee Dewain. The trooper reported to Tope: "Well, sir, I've been up at the quarry. Got some wreckers on the job. They say they can get the car out of there tomorrow morning."

Tope nodded, and he said: "Quill, this man is Kell, Holdom's chauffeur."

"Sure, I know him," Ned agreed. "We caught him in Faraway awhile ago," Tope explained. "He probably came in the limousine, left it around near here somewhere. See if you can find it."

"O.K.!" Quill assented.

The District Attorney suggested, almost regretfully: "You know, Tope, if this had been Ledforge, we could find plenty of people around that might have had a grudge against him. Most of us put money into his securities. Amasa Dewain, for one."

"Whoever killed this man, it wasn't anyone around here, Mat," Tope said shortly.

"How do you know?"

"Because some one from outside is checking up on it. I told you there were two men here Monday night trying to trace the car—Whitlock and Beal. They slipped away early. I'd like to talk to them; but there's no telling where they are now!"

Bee Dewain said triumphantly: "Oh, yes, there is, Inspector! They're here—came back a few minutes ago. Priddy's giving them supper right now!"

"Oh, yes, there is, Inspector! They're here—came back a few minutes ago. Priddy's giving them supper right now!"

"Oh, yes, there is, Inspector! They're here—came back a few minutes ago. Priddy's giving them supper right now!"

"Oh, yes, there is, Inspector! They're here—came back a few minutes ago. Priddy's giving them supper right now!"

"Oh, yes, there is, Inspector! They're here—came back a few minutes ago. Priddy's giving them supper right now!"

"Oh, yes, there is, Inspector! They're here—came back a few minutes ago. Priddy's giving them supper right now!"

"Oh, yes, there is, Inspector! They're here—came back a few minutes ago. Priddy's giving them supper right now!"

"Oh, yes, there is, Inspector! They're here—came back a few minutes ago. Priddy's giving them supper right now!"

ASK ME ANOTHER?

A General Quiz

The Questions

1. Has the definition "light" or "heavy" cruiser anything to do with its size or tonnage?
2. A person at the North pole is how many miles nearer the center of the earth than if he were at the equator?
3. How many men were involved in the six years of war in Europe?
4. What island is called the Pearl of the Antilles?
5. Is it cole slaw or cold slaw?
6. For how long are federal judges appointed?
7. Anahuac is an ancient name for what country?

The Answers

1. No. It refers to the size of its main guns.
2. Thirteen miles nearer.
3. Twenty-seven million of which 16 million were Allies.
4. Cuba.
5. Cole slaw.
6. For life.
7. Mexico.

Mighty Good Eating!

"The Grains Are Great Foods"
K.A. Kellogg

Kellogg's Corn Flakes bring you nearly all the protective food elements of the whole grain declared essential to human nutrition.



Kellogg's CORN FLAKES

FOR QUICK RELIEF FROM

STIFF JOINTS and BRUISES

Muscular Aches and Pains · Sprains · Strains

What you NEED is

SLOAN'S LINIMENT



It Is Wise to Read the Advertisements In This Newspaper Before Going Shopping

WARNING!

DON'T TAKE CHANGES ON SMOOTH TIRES WHILE WAITING FOR NEW ONES

BRING 'EM IN LIKE THIS!

TAKE 'EM OUT LIKE THIS!

GET SKID INSURANCE WITH

Firestone

FACTORY-METHOD RECAPPING

700

6.00 - 16

Other Sizes Proportionately Low

Only Firestone Recapping gives your tires the famous DeLuxe Champion Gear-Grip Tread, the tread with extra depth for extra safety, extra traction and longer mileage. Only the best quality tread rubber available is used in Firestone recaps, the same grade rubber as that used in new tires. The workmanship is the finest . . . factory-trained experts do the job. Materials and workmanship guaranteed.

More Cars Roll on Firestone Recaps Than Any Other Kind

Firestone Quality Is the Reason!



1. ORIGINAL INSPECTION
Actual experience has dictated our inspection standards. They are designed to select only those tires that justify additional labor and material.
2. BUFFING
Firestone's Dyna-Balance buffing equipment assures finished treaded tires which conform to the highest balance requirements.
3. REPAIRING
Rayon repair patches, together with special repair methods, combine to produce the highest quality of repair work.
4. TREAD RUBBER
Highest grade rubber available used exclusively in our process, the same rubber as that used in new tires. You get longer mileage.
5. CURING
Firestone's treading cures are governed by strict specifications and controlled with precision equipment.
6. FINAL INSPECTION
Only those tires which conform to Firestone's high standards of quality are permitted to pass the strict final inspection.

See Your Nearby Firestone Dealer Store or Firestone Store

For the best in music, listen to the "Voice of Firestone" every Monday evening over NBC network.

(TO BE CONTINUED)