



GUNMAN'S BLUFF

By *Edgar Wallace*

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Margaret Leferre, engaged to be married to Luke Maddison, is with him when he encounters Gunner Haynes, an American crook, in a London hotel lobby. Danton Morell, a friend of Margaret's brother, Rex, is watching them, and wonders if Gunner recognizes him after seven years. That night Rex is found dead and by his side a note addressed to his sister saying that he had been ruined by taking Luke Maddison's advice. Morell tells Maddison later that Rex had cashed a check for \$18,000 signed by Maddison.

Now go on with the story.

"My name was forged to it. I did not give a check to Rex for that sum. I have been making inquiries. I find that he was heavily involved in a derelict West African gold mining syndicate, lost on the shares of which you bought for a song less than a year ago. He has been buying these shares on margin and they have been dropping in value. On the day he paid you eighteen thousand five hundred pounds there came another demand for a larger amount.

Danty's heart sank though he gave no visible evidence of his perturbation. This man knew more than he had dreamed could be known. Here was a crisis in Morell's affairs which might easily lead his to ruin and undo all those fine schemes of his.

"I do not know exactly what you are suggesting," he said. "My interest in the company is a very slight one, and I was horrified when I learned that Rex had been gambling in the shares. I give you the fullest permission to make any investigation you wish."

Luke opened the drawer of his desk and took out a check. From where he sat Danty thought the signature was a tolerably good forgery. He had thought so when Rex had brought the check to him. It is the simplest thing in the world to forge a name, and so far as he had been able to judge there were no flaws in Rex Leferre's essay in that dangerous game.

"You realize what is wrong with this check," asked Luke.

The other shook his head.

"Are you suggesting that I knew the check was forged?"

Before he could reply there was a tap at the door and Luke looked up angrily.

"Come in," he said. It was the manager.

"I am sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Maddison, but will you see Mr. Bird of Scotland Yard?"

In spite of his self possession Danty half rose from his seat. The Sparrow was the last man in the world he wanted to meet that morning.

Luke thought for a moment. "Just a moment."

He rose and opened the door leading to the corridor.

"I shall want to see you again about this check, Morell," he said.

"Why not now?"

It was a challenge, but Luke Maddison could sense its insincerity.

"Mr. Bird has come to see me on quite another matter," he said. "In due course we will interview him together."

He closed the door on his visitor as the Sparrow was shown in through the other door. Mr. Bird came heavily into the room and favored every corner with a long scrutiny.

"Havin' a visitor, Mr. Maddison? I thought I saw somebody come in whilst I was waiting in the street outside."

Luke nodded curtly.

"Mr. Danton Morell. Do you know him?"

The Sparrow smiled.

"As one knows the Lord Mayor from a distance, I'm humble. You never find me barguin' in on society. I've had one dress suit in seventeen years and wear it twice a year—once for the Police Dinner and once to give the moths a cold."

"Do you know anything about him?" The Sparrow's wide smile grew wider.

"His name and address—an' that's as much as any policeman wants to know about anybody. Bad business this young Leferre case, Mr. Maddison. You don't want to appear in it, I suppose?"

Luke looked at him, startled.

Mr. Bird coughed.

"Well, you do and you don't," I happened to search the body and the room. I found three loose checks on the Northern & Southern Bank—that's where you keep your private account, ain't it? And this—"

Very leisurely he took out a fat and worn leather case from his pocket, laid it flat on the desk and rummaged in the inside. After a while he found what he was looking for—two folded sheets of paper, evidently torn from a school exercise book. He smoothed these flat and Luke saw a succession of

of signatures, one under the other,

Luke Maddison—Luke Maddison.

"Looks almost as though you'd been scribblin' absent mindedly." The detective's shrewd eyes were on the young banker. "But at the same time I couldn't imagine a business man like you doin' anything so silly! If you'll excuse the liberty, I called at the Northern & Southern Bank yesterday afternoon, but they were reticent—an' referred me to you. But by an 'underhand an' despicable trick I found that young Mr. Leferre cashed a check the other day for eighteen thousand."

"Yes—I gave him my check for that amount."

The Sparrow was frankly skeptical. "Did you now? Maybe you'd like to show me the counterfoil of that check?"

For a second Luke was taken aback.

"If there were any reason for doing so, I could, but I see no reason."

Mr. Bird was not abashed; he leaned his huge arms on the table, and when he spoke his voice was serious.

"I've no right to ask—I'm not the sort of man who would attempt to pull a bluff on a gentleman like you. I'll put my cards on the table. That check was met in notes and I want to know where those notes went. There's a bird in London I want to catch. I've got one of the best cages for him that ever was built, and while it's empty so is my heart. If that check was a forgery it might get the deceased a bad name, but it would make it very easy for me to pull in a certain man for uttering."

"I'll tell you the truth, Mr. Maddison; I want that man's finger prints so much that I wonder I don't knock him down in the street and take 'em. Luke's eyes were averted; he gave no sign until the detective had finished.

"I'm sorry I can't help you. That check was drawn by me and signed by me."

"You're too kind to the criminal classes, Mr. Maddison. No wonder Gunner Haynes thinks you're a good feller—six months he got yesterday for being a suspected person. What a man! When I tried to pump him about your friend he wouldn't let on that he knew his even."

"Morell?" Luke was thrown off his guard, as he saw by the Sparrow's grin.

"That's the name. What's the use of talking at cross purposes? He's the—"

"I know nothing about Morell," Luke was emphatic. "He was a friend of Mr. Leferre's. I'd rather not discuss him."

The Sparrow sighed again, gathered up the papers of which the unfortunate Rex had practised the name of Maddison, and stuffed them back in his pocket book.

"Nobody helps the police. All are against the natural guardians of the children of the poor. I'll be getting along."

He offered a limp hand and went heavily out of the room. The door had hardly closed upon him before the telephone bell rang, and for the first time since the tragedy he heard the voice of the woman he loved.

"Will you see me tomorrow, Luke?" Her voice was very low.

"Now, if I may—darling, let me come to you now!"

But her level voice denied him.

"Tomorrow—after this shabby business. Luke, did I owe you any money?"

The unexpectedness of the question threw him off his balance, and when Luke Maddison was flurried he was invariably incoherent, for the same reason that others are incoherent in the circumstances—the thought too office.

quickly for speech. "Yes—but it isn't worth discussing. He was heavily insured, you know, and I don't think the policy is invalidated."

He heard the quick breath and he grew panic stricken.

"I was thinking of you—that there was no need to worry about his affairs. He owes me practically nothing."

"Will you see me tomorrow?" Before he could reply he heard the click of the hook being depressed.

TO BE CONTINUED

SERVICE STATION TEAM WINS BOWLING FROM WENDLING GROUP

The Casey's Service Station bowling club became victors in a three game bowling series Tuesday evening when they piled up a lead of 186 pins over their opponents, the Wendling team on the Wendling alleys.

Two previous matches were rolled, one on the Springfield alleys and the other on the alleys at Wendling.

The bowlers and their scores for the series were as follows:

Casey's Service Station:	Game 1st	2nd	3rd	Tot'l
Endicott	174	166	180	520
Lepley	166	177	144	487
Bryan	159	190	175	524
Black	148	125	151	424
Carson	166	136	179	481

Totals 823 794 829 2446

Wendling team:

Game 1st	2nd	3rd	Tot'l	
Bowers E.	149	121	179	445
Warfel	151	111	132	394
Hall	184	154	140	478
Cook	138	163	163	464
Waterhouse	169	165	145	479

Totals 791 714 755 2260

MRS. POLLARD HOSTESS TO MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Members of the United Missionary Society were entertained at the home of Mrs. N. L. Pollard on Friday evening. Mrs. Elmer Boyer, who has recently returned from the mission fields of Africa, was the principal speaker. Mrs. Bailey, Eugene, president of the Women's Missionary society of the Christian church, was also a guest of the meeting. Mrs. Nettleton, led the devotionals for the meeting.

Those present were Mrs. E. E. Pyne, Mrs. Jordan, her mother, Mrs. E. E. Morrison, Mrs. F. A. Taylor, Mrs. Cliff Abrams, Mrs. Alvin Severson, Mrs. Lynn Lansbery and the guests and hostess.

A delicious lunch was served at the close of the evening meeting.

FARM CENSUS TAKERS WILL BE NAMED SOON

The appointment of farm census takers will be made soon according to J. H. Koke, district supervisor. Forty-four enumerators will be assigned for the farm and population census of Lane county.

Lee Meyer, assistant supervisor, is now making appointments for enumerators in Josephine and Jackson counties.

The manufacturers and distribution census is now being completed in all parts of Lane county, excepting the city of Eugene. A special enumerator will be sent to take the census there.

Injures Hand With Axe

Mr. E. O. Stratton, employee of the Booth-Kelly mill here, injured his hand last Saturday when he struck the back of it with an axe. The injury was dressed at a local doctor's office.

MRS. A. B. VAN VALZAH APPOINTED TO DIRECT BETTER HOMES WORK

Mrs. Bernice Van Valzah has been appointed to head the Better Homes committee work in Springfield by James Ford, executive director of the national organization known as Better Homes in America.

A county meeting of all chairmen was held in Eugene last week and others will be held in the near future to outline plans for the carrying on of an improvement campaign in this and in other cities of Lane County.

The purpose of the organization is to point out to the American public the many ways in which their homes may be improved, both inside and out for very little money, and to show how these improvements do actually help the living conditions of many families without additional expense.

President Herbert Hoover was formerly president of the organization, but resigned upon becoming elected to office and is now the honorary chairman of the board of directors. It is the purpose of the leaders in this movement to appoint a chairman in each district and let her appoint a group of assistants who will endeavor to carry out some project to improve living conditions in each community.

Much work has been done by the Better Homes organization in other parts of the United States. This is especially true in Santa Barbara county, California, where several model homes were built and furnished at a very modest cost, and in the south much educational work among the negro people has resulted in greatly improving housing conditions.

CIVIC CLUB TO TALK GARDENS ON TUESDAY

The annual garden meeting of the Civic club will be held next Tuesday evening at the home of Mrs. A. B. Van Valzah, with a special program on Better Homes and Gardens, planned for the evening.

Clayton Kirkland will deliver an address on Harmony Colors and Flower Groupings, etc., and each member is asked to bring a plant or some seeds to exchange with the other members.

Mrs. L. K. Page will be assistant hostess with Mrs. Van Valzah at the meeting on Tuesday.

MUCH INTEREST GIVEN IN ALLEN ORGAN CONCERT

Music lovers are very much interested in the forthcoming appearance of Warren D. Allen, distinguished organist, in a concert at the Music auditorium in Eugene on the evening of April 1. His concert is being sponsored by the members of Phi Beta, national professional women's fraternity of music and drama.

Mr. Allen is recognized as one of the leading organists in the United States. He has spent two seasons

abroad studying piano composition under Rudolph Gunz and Von Fellitz. He has been a faculty member of the College of the Pacific for several years and is now on the faculty at Stanford university.

Guests Invited for Dinner

Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Tyson, and daughters, Muriel and Winifred, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Rivett, of Lincoln, Nebraska, house guests at the Tyson home, were dinner guests of Mrs. Mary A. McPherson and Lula McPherson at the home of the former last Sunday.



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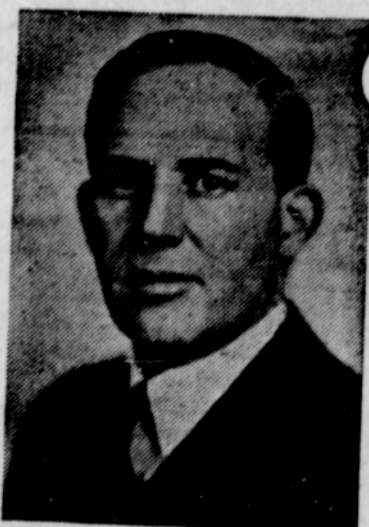
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