

**"THE BLACK GANG"**

(Continued from Page Three)

use it; never before had he fought an unarmed man with a weapon—and as far as he could tell this man was unarmed. But it had to be done and done quickly. With all his force he stabbed sideways at the man's left arm. He heard a snarl of pain, and one of the hands around his throat relaxed. And now the one urgent thing was to prevent him shouting for help. Like a flash Drummond was on him, one hand on his mouth and the other gripping his throat with the grip he had learned from Osaka the Jap in days gone by, and had never forgotten. And because he was fighting to kill now he wasted no time. The grip tightened; there was a dreadful worrying noise as the man bit into his thumb—then it was over. The man slipped downward onto the floor, and Drummond stood drawing in great mouthfuls of air.

But he knew there was no time to lose. Though they had fought in silence, and he could still hear the monotonous thud and beat of the engine, at any moment some one might come upstairs. And to be found with a dead man at one's feet in a strange house is not the best way of securing a hospitable welcome. What to do with the body—that was the first insistent point. There was no time for intricate schemes; it was a question of taking risks and chancing it. So for a moment or two he listened at the door of a room, then he gently opened it. It was a bedroom and empty, and without further hesitation he dragged his late opponent in, and left him lying on the floor. By the dim light from the uncurtained window, he could see that the man was almost deformed, so enormous was the length of his arms. They must have been six inches longer than those of an average man, and were almost as powerful as his own. And as he saw the snarling, ferocious face upturned to his, he uttered a little prayer of thanksgiving for the presence of his clasp-knife. It had been altogether too near a thing for his liking.

He closed the door and stepped across the passage, and the next moment Phyllis was in his arms. "I thought you were never coming, old man," she whispered. "I was afraid the brutes had caught you."

"I had a slight difference of opinion with a warrior outside your door," said Hugh, grinning. "Quite like old times."

Then he grew serious. "No time for hot air now, old thing; let's have a look at this jolly old chain effect of yours. Once we're out of here, you shall tell me everything and I'll eat several pounds of mud for having been such an unmitigated idiot as to let these swine get hold of you."

He was examining the steel chain as he spoke, and gradually his face grew grave. The chain, which was about six feet long, was fastened at one end to a big staple in the wall and at the other to a bracelet which encircled his wife's wrist. And the bracelet could only be opened with a key. Any idea of breaking the chain or pulling out the staple was preposterous as not to be worth even a moment's thought; so everything depended on the bracelet. And when he came to examine it more carefully he found that it had a Yale lock.

He sat down on the edge of the bed, and she watched him anxiously. "Can't you get it undone, boy?" she whispered.

"Not if I stopped here until next Christmas, darling," he answered heavily.

"Well, get out of the window and go for the police," she implored. "My dear," he said, still more heavily. "I had, as I told you, a little difference of opinion with the gentleman outside the door—and he's very dead." She caught her breath sharply.

ly. "A nasty man with long arms who attacked me. It might be all right, of course—but I somehow feel that this matter is beyond the local constable, even if I could find him. You see, I don't even know where we are." He checked the exclamation of surprise that rose to her lips. "I'll explain after, darling; let's think of this now. If only I could get the key; if only I knew where it was, even."

"A foreigner came in about an hour ago," answered his wife. "He had it then. And he said he'd come again tonight."

"He did, did he?" said Hugh slowly. "I wonder if it's my friend the Italian. Anyway, kid, it's the only chance."

"Say something; get him into the room and then leave him to me. And if for any reason he doesn't come I'll have to leave you here and raise the gang."

He rose and paced softly up and down the room trying to think what was the best thing to do. It was a maddening circle whichever way he looked at it, and his fists clenched and unclenched as he tried to make up his mind. To go or to wait; to go at once or to stop in the hope that one man would come up and have the key on him. Commonsense prompted the latter. He could not and would not leave Phyllis alone. And so he decided on a compromise. If when daylight came no one had been up to the room, he would go; but he would wait until then.

And he was just going to tell Phyllis what he had decided, when he heard a sound that killed the words on his lips. A door had opened below, and men's voices came floating up the stairs.

"Lie down, darling," he breathed in her ear, "and pretend to be asleep." Without a word she did as he told her, while Hugh tiptoed over toward the door. There were steps coming up the stairs, and he flattened himself against the wall—waiting. The period of indecision was passed; unless he was very much mistaken the time of action had arrived. How it would pan out—whether luck would be in, or whether luck would fall on the lap of the gods.

The steps paused outside the door, and he heard a muttered ejaculation in Italian. Apparently he was concerned over something, and it suddenly dawned on Drummond that it was the absence from duty of the long-armed bird that was causing the surprise. In the excitement of the moment he had forgotten all about him, and for one awful second his heart stood still. Suppose the Italian discovered the body before he entered the room, then the game was up with a vengeance. Once the alarm was given he'd have to run the gauntlet of the whole crowd over ground he didn't know.

But his fears were groundless: the non-discovery of the watcher by the door took the Italian the other way. His first thought was to make sure that the girl was safe, and he flung open the door and came in. He gave a grunt of satisfaction as he saw her lying on the bed; then like a spitting cat he swung round as he felt Drummond's hand on his shoulder.

With every ounce of weight in his body behind the blow, Hugh hit the Italian on the point of the jaw. Without a sound the man crumpled up and pitched on his face.

And now there was not a moment to be lost. At any moment one of his pals might come upstairs, and everything depended on speed and finding the key. Hugh shut the door and locked it; then feverishly he started to search through the Italian's pockets. Everything up to date had panned out so wonderfully that he refused to believe that luck was going to fail him now, and sure enough, he discovered the bunch. Phyllis was free, and he heard her give a little sob of pure excitement.

He heaved the Italian onto the bed, and snapped the steel bracelet onto his arm. Then he slipped the keys into his own pocket, and crossed to the window. The engine was still humming gently; the thudding noise

was still going on; nothing seemed in any way different. No light came from the room below them, everything had worked better than he had dared to hope. He had only to lower Phyllis out of the window, and let her drop onto the flower bed and then follow himself. After that it was easy.

"Come along, darling," he said urgently. "I'm going to lower you out first—then I'll follow. And once we're down, you've got to trace up your skirts and run like a stag across the lawn till we're under cover of those bushes. We aren't quite out of the woods yet."

They were not, indeed. It was just as Phyllis let go, and he saw her pick herself up and dart across the lawn, that he heard a terrific uproar in the house below, and several men came pounding up the stairs. He vaulted over the window sill himself, and lowered himself to the full extent of his arms. Then he, too, let go and dropped onto the flower bed below. And it was as he was picking himself up, preparatory to following Phyllis—whom he could see faintly across the lawn waiting for him, that he heard someone in the house shout in a hoarse voice.

"Switch on the power at once, you d-d fool; switch it on at once!"

(To Be Continued.)

George Swaggart, former resident of Heppner, was over from his Pendleton home and spent Monday in this city.

**NOTICE.**

The Willing Workers are prepared to do plain sewing, tack comforts, sew carpet bags, etc., at reasonable prices. See Mrs. Jeff Jones for further information.

**NOTICE.**

All persons holding notes or accounts against Matt T. Hughes, please mail statement of their claim to J. B. Perry, Box 498, Pendleton, Oregon.

**EXTRA SPECIAL!** I have contracted for a limited amount of No 1 Inspected Netted Gem Seed Potatoes. I will be able to sell these at 4c per pound f. o. b. the store. Phone or write your order as they are going fast at this low price.

**NOTICE OF SALE OF ANIMAL.**

Notice is hereby given that by virtue of the laws of the State of Oregon the undersigned has taken up the hereinafter described animal, found running at large on his premises in Morrow County, State of Oregon, and that he will on Saturday, March 13, 1926, at the hour of 10 o'clock a. m., of said day, at my place on Eight Mile, Morrow County, Oregon, sell to the highest bidder for cash in hand, said animal. Said animal is described as follows:

One gray horse, age 5 years, weight about 1100, branded FL on left shoulder; unless the same shall have been redeemed by the owner or owners thereof.

ED McDAID, Lexington, Ore.

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One roan mare with colt; bearing no visible marks or brands; unless the said animal shall have been redeemed by the owner or owners thereof.

GUY HUSTON, Eight Mile, Or.

**NOTICE OF SALE OF ANIMALS.**

Notice is hereby given that by virtue of the laws of the State of Oregon the undersigned has taken up the following described animals, found running at large on his premises in Morrow County, State of Oregon, and that he will on Saturday, the 20th day of March, 1926, at the hour of 10 o'clock a. m., of said day, at the Wm. Hendrix place on Heppner Flat, four miles southwest of Heppner, sell the said animals to the highest bidder for cash in hand. Said animals are described as follows:

One span of iron gray horse mules, 4 year olds, with no visible marks or brands; unless the said animals shall have been redeemed by the owner or owners thereof.

A. B. FLETCHER, Heppner, Ore.

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The story of a dog who trails his quarry through the North Woods.  
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And third episode of "THE FAST EXPRESS."

**SATURDAY, MARCH 6:**  
BUCK JONES in  
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Based on the thrilling story "The Outlaw" by Jackson Gregory.  
Action—and the clash of spurs!  
Romance—and the union of hearts!  
A pulse stirring western drama of a bold buckaroo whose chivalry won him a lady's love.  
Also "DANGEROUS CURVES," two-reel comedy.

**SUNDAY and MONDAY, MARCH 7 and 8**  
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Wives, bring out your husbands. Husbands, bring your wives and see this comedy of a husband who would not get jealous. It bubbles, it seethes, it startles!  
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Matinee 2:15, Evening 8:00. Admission 25c and 60c.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10:**  
HELENE CHADWICK, CLIVE BROOK and JOHN HARRON in  
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Also two-reel comedy "THE SLEEPWALKER."  
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Matinee 2:15      Evening 8:00  
Children 25c      Adults 60c

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**Morrow County Creamery Co.**  
W. C. COX, Manager.

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This bank is a service institution organized to meet financial necessities of its depositors. The amount of its service to its depositors often depends on the bank balances they maintain.

This bank must carefully protect the funds deposited here by its depositors. Money can be loaned only when we feel sure that it will be safe. When a depositor maintains a reasonably large, steady balance, it is an indication to us that he knows how to use money successfully. It gives us a reason to believe that loans to him will be safe. That is one reason why depositors who maintain large balances get better service from their bank. They are entitled to it.

And even more than that, a large balance provides the depositor with sufficient funds to take care of emergencies and business opportunities that may arise.

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