

# Murder at MOCKING HOUSE

BY WALTER C. BROWN

**SYNOPSIS:** The evidence points to the fact that the two men found shot dead in Pierre Dufresne's breakfast room killed each other. Sergeant Harper does not believe that, however, although the only fact that supports his theory so far seems to implicate Mrs. Dufresne herself. The sergeant begins a reconstruction of the crime.

## Chapter 20 RECONSTRUCTION

"ALL right, let's try to reconstruct the whole thing," said Harper. "We've got certain basic facts to serve as foundations and we'll fit them in as we go along. We'll take eight o'clock last night as our starting point. Hamill had just made his report from the call-box. It was snowing heavily, there was a cold, high wind.

"Hamill walked along on his beat for three blocks. That would bring it to say, ten minutes past eight. He crossed the street above here but halfway over he changed his mind and came down Powhatan Terrace instead. What made him do that? Obviously, something he saw or something he heard.

"From the spot where Hamill turned off it is doubtful that he could have heard any sound from inside this house, even a shot or a scream. If there had been a noise loud enough for him to hear, certainly some of the neighbors would have been up and investigating. We'll have to make inquiries about that." Harper jotted down a memorandum, adding other pertinent questions from time to time as he pursued the course of the mystery.

"It is much more likely," he continued, "that Hamill saw something. What could it have been? A light in the house? The electric switch had been turned off at the source. The curtains of this one lighted room were drawn close. That fireplace—here's an idea, Jack. Suppose that man stirred up the fire, poked the logs. You know hearth fires don't burn so well on a rainy or snowy night, for a damp chimney chokes off the normal draught.

"A shower of sparks would shoot out the top of the chimney. I've often seen it on winter nights. There would be something to draw Hamill's attention. This is assuming that Hamill knew the house was unoccupied. The whole idea hinges on that. We've got to find out whether he knew the Dufresnes were staying elsewhere."

"That's a neat piece of deduction," Lafferty advised, "but you've overlooked an important point. What Hamill heard was the front door banging about in the wind. That was the sound that led Connally and Hillary here so quickly. "I doubt that," was Harper's rejoinder. "I've not overlooked that banging door. The idea that a heavy door like this one could go on booming from a quarter past eight to nearly ten o'clock without arousing the other residents of Powhatan Terrace is nearly impossible. But there again is something we can inquire about.

"However, be that as it may, we have Officer Hamill coming up the walk. We're safe in assuming that his suspicions were aroused. Now, did he find the door shut and locked or open and banging? It should have been shut and locked. If Hamill found it that way, he knocked or rang the bell.

"Wrong again, Steve," Lafferty objected. "If he were suspicious he'd go first and have a quiet look around the outside of the house. But the footprints in the snow prove that he didn't, he walked straight up to the front door without any detours."

HARPER thought that over. "You're right about that, Jack. We're not clear about that door. Assuming that it was locked, from the mere fact that Hamill entered some one must necessarily have opened to him. Here, then, we have our unknown man taking the policeman. That would have been the logical place for any shooting if the fellow had been a homicidal maniac, for instance.

"Instead, they go into the breakfast-room, through an enligned hall. Why, in Heaven's name! Surely Hamill would have been suspicious and kept his gun in his hand. Our mystery man then sits down in that chair, lights a cigarette, whips out his gun and shoots Hamill in cold blood!

"On the other hand, assuming that the door was unlocked, and possibly banging, as Hamill's direct approach might indicate, then he'd probably step inside and try to turn on the lights. That resulting in nothing, he'd probably call or whistle to attract attention. Perhaps he noticed the light shining under the breakfast-room door. He would open it and look inside.

# REVIVED DOG NOW LIKE A HALF-WIT

KELEY, Calif., May 24.—(UP)—Lazarus IV, the mongrel terrier, who was put to death on April 13 and brought back to life after his heart had been still for four minutes, is regaining his strength and making a valiant effort to shake off mental lethargy.

After 38 days of his second life, Lazarus IV cannot yet stand unaided. But he eats greedily, recognizes certain voices and signals, barks and reveals affection.

Dr. Robert Cornish, 28-year-old graduate of the University of California, apyathized the dog, revived him with powerful stimulants, kept his blood from clotting with heparin and prevented exhaustion of the heart by slowing its action with gum arabic.

# RUSSIAN AIR TRAIN COVERS 808 MILES

KOKTEBEL, Crimea, May 24.—(AP)—Soviet Russia's air train completed the first long distance flight of such a conveyance in the history of world aviation today, landing here at noon. Koktebel is 808 miles from Moscow, where the flight started.

The plane and its three gliders made a perfect descent. The gliders were detached from the piloting machine in the air and landed separately.

# CHINESE CLAIM JAP AIR BOMB OUTRAGE

SHANGHAI, May 24.—(Thursday)—(AP)—Chinese reports from Peking today allege a Japanese air squadron bombed a wide area around Chinchow in southeast Manchuria yesterday (Wednesday) killing 1000 Manchurian farmers and destroying 20 villages.

These dispatches said the onslaught followed the farmers' refusal to comply with the Japanese army demands that the Chinese give up their arms.

**Idea to Foll Abductors**  
FORT WORTH, Tex.—(UP)—The Texas Children's Home and Aid society has taken precautions so that none of its children can be kidnaped without the abductor leaving his mark of identification. Any visitor whatsoever to the upstairs wards must leave his coat and hat in the reception room before ascending the stairs.



# THE FAMILY ALBUM—OCCUPIED CHAIRS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



# MATTER POP—



# TAILSPIN TOMMY—Out Of Range



# WILKINS AND HIS WAR PAL, DOUGLAS, ARE DOING A LONE DOG FIGHT FOR AN EPISODE IN THE FILM, 'MIDNIGHT PATROL'—BUT SOMETHING HAS GONE WRONG—DOUG IS SHOOTING REAL BULLETS INSTEAD OF BLANKS---



# BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Alonzo's Fright!



# PULLED THE WOOL OVER THE YOUNG SWAB'S EYE, DIDN'T I, SHAIPT? BIG AS SAUCERS THEY WAS, AN' THE 'MAGGIE' FLYIN' ALL HER CANVAS, COULDN'T BE SAILED THROUGH HIS MOUTH, IT WAS THAT WIDE OPEN!



# HELLO, ALONZO—HOW'S—



# THE NEBBS—The Idlers



# Town of Shevlin Moved Ten Miles

BEND, Ore., May 24.—(UP)—Today the entire town of Shevlin was 10 miles from its scene of operations of last Saturday. The town, including a lighting plant, postoffice, school, community hall, store and homes, was loaded on railroad cars with its 300 population and taken to a more central location for logging operations, after six years at its old stand.

# World Drought Curtails Wheat

WASHINGTON, May 24.—(AP)—American farmers suffering from drought had word today that other parts of the world are affected in similar fashion and, as a result, world wheat prices may be higher during the coming marketing season.

# BIRTHS

Mr. and Mrs. Frank McKittick of Central Point are the parents of a daughter, weighing 8 1/2 pounds, born Tuesday, May 22. Mother and daughter were reported getting along nicely today.

# DALLAS, May 24.—(AP)—William A. Barton, 11, was drowned late Tuesday when he fell from a log while fishing on the Valsets mill pond. His body was recovered shortly afterward.

A redish weighing nearly eight pounds was grown recently near Mount Dora, Fla.

# BRINGING UP FATHER

