

MURDER AT MOCKING HOUSE

BY WALTER C. BROWN

As you know, the stranger and the police found dead in Pierre Dufresne's house were murdered and did not shoot each other. But the motive of the crime, the identity of the stranger, and the means of escape used by the murderer still are a mystery. Harper has discovered, however, the print of Dufresne's butler's thumb on one of a set of threatening letters received by Dufresne, Andrews, frightened, denies all knowledge of the letters.

ANGER

ANDREWS, fingerprints do not lie.

"These must, I tell you, I know nothing about it. Besides, I was at the Austerlitz last night. You know that."

"Sure, I know it. You're not an ironclad alibi. Quite true, but there was more than one in this plot."

"When I got to the Austerlitz, why were you so nervous, Andrews? I hadn't yet told my news, but you were already upset, jumpy. Why were you so agitated when I insisted on rousing your master? Why all this, if you knew nothing about what had happened?"

Once again the man exhibited all the signs of an intense inward struggle to repress an emotional strain. By sheer force of will Andrews pulled himself together. "I had strict orders not to disturb Mr. Dufresne on any account." He faltered on, "You see, sir, I knew he was intoxicated and didn't want a stranger to see him in that condition."

"You're lying, Andrews. There's something else. Mr. Dufresne was more than half drunk when I left him the first time."

Sergeant Harper spoke out of the certitude of his conviction. The butler's words were plausible, yes, but there was that indefinable something in his tone that convinced the detective that Andrews was uneasy at mention of the Austerlitz surprise visit.

"Furthermore," Harper continued, "some one spied on us while we were searching up the cellar this morning. The result was the hiding of the gun that had been in Mr. Dufresne's room. Those are overt acts and some one is going to answer for them."

Andrews' eyes glinted as he squared his shoulders and faced the detective squarely. "If you think I am guilty, I'd prefer that you repeat those charges before Mr. Dufresne," he challenged.

"That's not a bad idea," Harper snapped, and strode over to the bell. Dufresne made a prompt appearance.

The detective repeated the account of his discovery and placed both letter and goblet before the dapper man, silent and attentive until Harper had finished.

Then Dufresne pushed the exhibits aside without a glance. "I'm not surprised that you've come to some such idiotic conclusion," he said. "There is no question as to Andrews' loyalty. I would as soon accuse myself. He put his hand on the old man's shoulder with a gesture of affection."

Harper's anger mounted, too. "This mutual loyalty is very touching but it still doesn't explain how Andrews' thumb print came to be on this letter. That certainly calls for an explanation."

Dufresne turned to his servant. "Have my stationery like that to the house?"

"No, sir. We've never used lined papers of any kind."

"It's strange that every letter is a different color," Dufresne commented thoughtfully. "Stationery is not sold that way. It suggests sample specimens."

Andrews started up. "I remember now," he cried excitedly, "these are sample sheets. They were sent here by some printing concern soliciting business. Mrs. Whitmore turned them over to me a long time ago and I stuck them away in a desk. Last autumn I cleared out the desk and threw them into the waste-basket. That's how my finger mark got on the sheet."

"There you are, Harper," Dufresne announced triumphantly. "This time Harper believed the butler's explanation, for his tone had the spontaneity of simple truth."

"If we accept Andrews' explanation," he said, "then any one could have taken them from the cellar. But it establishes a strong point, Mr. Dufresne—those letters originated in this house! And now, if you'll excuse me, I have other matters to go over with Andrews."

Dufresne accepted the invitation to withdraw but went away with a slow step and a puckered frown between his brows, as if absorbed by some weighty problem. When he had gone and the door was closed again, "I have a test to propose, Andrews,"

Lumberman Strangled Cougar
LONGVIEW, Wash. (UP)—Clyde A. Cornman, assistant logging superintendent of the Weyerhaeuser Timber company here, grappled with a wounded cougar and strangled it to death. Two years ago he bulldozed a buck deer and killed it.

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NORTH BEND LISTS HEAVIEST LOSS BY FIRE DURING YEAR

SALEM, Ore.—(UP)—North Bend suffered the heaviest per capita fire loss during 1933, \$18.85, of any Oregon municipality, State Fire Marshal A. H. Averill announced today.

The Coos county city also suffered the second heaviest fire loss of the year, \$76,614. Portland damages, totaling \$662,340, were highest. The North Bend total was high principally because of a fire last summer which destroyed several large buildings along the waterfront.

Hillsboro per capita fire losses were second highest, \$13.21. Albany third, \$11.84. Many smaller towns reported no losses for the year. In most cases the 1933 fire damage was less than that for 1932.

Per capita losses in various cities for 1932 and 1933 were:

City	1932	1933
Albany	\$11.45	\$11.84
Ashland	.78	.11
Astoria	8.17	.11
Bandon	2.48	3.17
Bend	1.92	.80
Burns	6.42	6.39
Canby	.21	.05
Coquille	2.76	.05
Corvallis	4.07	.60
Costa Grove	.10	.10
Creswell	11.67	.07
Eugene	.98	1.17
Klamath Falls	4.27	4.47
Marshfield	2.00	2.93
Medford	2.41	.00
Medford	8.24	1.48

ALL-DAY SUCKER IS CAUSE CHILD'S DEATH

KANSAS CITY, Mo., June 14.—(UP)—Ward Basdall, 19 months old, persuaded his mother to give him an all-day sucker, went out on the sidewalk to play. He stumbled and fell, the ball of hard candy lodged in his throat. He died before it could be removed.

Fifty-two per cent of the graduates of the University of California are engaged in professional or semi-professional pursuits, a survey disclosed.

GIVE IT A WHIRL



DIFFICULT DECISIONS



S'MATTER POP—



TAILSPIN TOMMY—Confessions—To Save Betty!



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—What Cap'n Ike Saw!



THE NEBBS—Oh—Happy Day



BRINGING UP FATHER



QUALITY GUM
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