

MURDER AT MOCKING HOUSE

BY WALTER C. BROWN

SYNOPSIS: Sergeant Harper's theory that Pierre Dufresne or his wife is guilty of the murder of two men in the Dufresne house is blown sky high by the suicide of Joseph Donaghy, their chauffeur. Donaghy has left a note confessing the crime, and explained the murderer's mysterious escape from the house. Harper has not been able to check Donaghy's movements because he had told the other servants he was to leave the night off.

Chapter 49

NEW THEORY

"THANK YOU, Andrews," Harper acknowledged the patent sincerity of the old butler's words. "That will be all for the present," he told them, in dismissal. The servants fled out silently, with O'Connell bringing up the rear.

Sergeant Harper leaned back wearily. His face was drawn and tired, his eyes looking dully through the window at a winter landscape he did not see. Lafferty gave him a keen look. "What's the matter, old man? You look as if you'd been up all night."

The detective thumped the skin of rope on the table with sudden fury. "Another life gone and I feel I'm partly responsible. I should have figured out that rope trick sooner. Now that youngster is out of the way and the whole damned business is to do over again!"

"What do you mean, Steve?" Lafferty gasped. "In plain words, Donaghy's suicide is a 'fake,' a 'plant.' He was murdered, just like the others. Out there is the same mysterious mark in the snow, only this time it's between the pergola and the garage!"

"Holy Moses!" murmured the lanky detective, weakly. "Not only that," Harper went on, "I found two more of those spikes. One driven into the end of the pergola and one beside the pent roof over the garage door. You see where this leaves us?"

"But good God, man, where is it going to end?" "I don't know, but I do know that Donaghy never went to any gambling house and lost his 'roll.' You remember that it snowed again from seven to eleven o'clock last night. I waited here until midnight to see him. How did he get back into the garage after that without leaving his own footprints in the snow?"

Lafferty shrugged. "I BELIEVE," Harper continued, "that Donaghy left this house and went directly to his room and stayed there. At that time it wasn't snowing. But if he did that, he couldn't have lost his money gambling and that would make that much of the letter a lie. Yet the loss of that money is given as a major reason for the suicide."

"Hmm. What about Donaghy's alibi for the night of the murders? It looked all right to me." "Yes, and it looked all right to me. It was the average sort of account that is genuine in ninety-nine times in a hundred. It's not the too-foxy kind that can account for every minute, because the need for that was borne in mind."

Harper turned the signet ring idly in his fingers. "I can't quite swallow 'Harry Dorsey,'" he said. "The bare name suggests nothing, explains nothing. Why did this H.D. buy a disguise in order to look like Dufresne? We've got the right answer as to how the escape was pulled off and perhaps the name of the murdered man, but along with these two answers we get about a dozen new questions to wrestle with."

Lafferty said, "You told me that the wound was in typical suicide form—with the gun muzzle pressed firmly against the head. I suppose you realize that a murderer rarely gets a chance to hold the gun that way, unless he catches his victim asleep or unconscious?"

"Asleep, or unconscious, or—" "Or what?" Lafferty pressed. "You just gave me an idea," Harper answered guardedly, "but it's still too hazy to discuss. Here's what I want you to do, Jack. Take O'Connell and go back to the garage. Give it a good ripping out, especially for anything that might have a bearing on the suicide-murder question."

After Lafferty had gone Harper paced the length of the room restlessly, fitting this new design into the jumbled mosaic formed by all the known angles of the case. "A very pretty theory," he growled to himself, "but how to prove it? How to prove it?"

WHAT was that mark where the light gleamed across the polished wood of the table? The detective

pressed his finger over the spot, but it would not move nor rub off. Harper leaned closer. It was a thin scratch, now first revealed by a trick of the reflected light. There was another—a little nest of scratches.

Curious that he had not seen them before. He brought the magnifying lens from the work-table and held it over the marks. There was a design mingled through these marks, much plainer now—a double design. He leaned closer and closer, experimenting with the lens height to increase the magnification.

Impatient, he pulled the heavy table nearer to the light of the window to nullify that gleaming reflection which made it so hard to see those small marks clearly. And there, against this improved background,

He saw, and like a thunderclap the truth burst upon him in one flash. A hand, a clenched hand, had pounded on that table, pounded in anger, and on one of the fingers had been a ring, most certainly a ring with two stones set in it, two gems set diagonally to each other!

"Good God! Althea Croymen!" Harper could never tell afterwards whether he had cried that name aloud in the shock of discovery or whether that accusing shout existed only within his brain, but instinct pulled his head around sharply in the direction of the door.

There was now an open space where the door had been closed and in that space stood—Althea Croymen. A tiny black hat sat modishly on her shining hair, but her face was tragic, with a desperate purpose visible in the fixity of her gaze.

Without a word she stepped into the room and on the hand that held her gloves gleamed that telltale ring. But the right hand was hidden in the fold of her coat, and looking into her eyes, Sergeant Harper read many things, not the least of which was the knowledge of what she held in that concealed hand.

She reached behind her and locked the door.

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Harper hears, tomorrow, Mrs. Croymen's story.

Donaghy's confession is not signed.

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1000 MOTORISTS LOSE LICENSE ON LAW VIOLATIONS

SALEM, June 28.—(AP)—More than 1,000 motorists of Oregon are now on the list of those whose driver's licenses have either been revoked or suspended, it was announced here today by the state department. This is the largest list yet issued for distribution to law enforcement officers each month.

During the month of May a total of 81 suspensions and revocations were listed, also setting a new record for one month. Of these 55 were revoked for driving while intoxicated and none can apply for new licenses until after one year. One was revoked for involuntary manslaughter. Of the suspensions nine were for reckless driving.

William Hammond, in charge of the operators' division, announced that police and circuit courts over the state were now cooperating to the fullest extent with the state department in reporting all automobile accidents, and during the past month 755 abstracts of court records have been received.

Hammond explained that every court having jurisdiction over offenses committed under the motor vehicle regulations or municipal traffic ordinances is required by law to report convictions for violations thereof to the secretary of state.

He said further that an Oregon motorist convicted of driving while intoxicated in New York would upon returning to this state find that his

driving license had been revoked. This he said would be the case of convictions in any having a driver's license law similar to that in Oregon.

Hammond stated that during the past year 800 motorists have been refused licenses upon examination, either for physical defects or inability to drive automobiles.

here July 10 and 11, Arthur S. Benson, clerk of the supreme court announced. The tests will be conducted by the state board of bar examiners.

We wish to express our thanks to our many friends for their kindness and sympathy during our recent bereavement. Mrs. R. A. Morrison and family.

Why lose affairs by weevil. Turn loose into profit. Turkeys exterminate bugs and worms. Narragansett eggs 10c. Cheap start for next year. See Honner, Farmer Bureau Bldg.

130 YOUNG LAWYERS WILL TAKE BAR EXAM

SALEM, June 28.—(AP)—Approximately 130 persons will take the state bar examinations to be held

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GIVE IT A WHIRL

BUT DEARIE, IF THAT WAS A GHOST TOWN WE JUST DROVE THROUGH HOW COME WE DIDN'T HEAR ANY STRANGE NOISES OR KNOCKS?

YOU HEAR NO KNOCKS DARLING—BECAUSE I'VE GOTTA TANKFUL OF STANDARD GASOLINE WITH TETRAETHYL UNSURPASSED!

TELLS WIFE HE'LL SET THE TABLE FOR HER WHILE SHE'S GETTING SUPPER

STROLLS INTO KITCHEN TO ASK SHALL HE USE THE BIG FORKS OR THE LITTLE ONES

A FEW MINUTES LATER APPEARS WITH SEVERAL CLEAN TABLE CLOTHS TO ASK WHICH HE SHALL USE

WAITS WHILE WIFE RE-FOLDS THEM AND TELLS HIM WHERE TO FIND OLD TABLE CLOTH

COMES OUT PRESENTLY FOR DUST PAN AND BRUSH EXPLAINING THE SALTCELLAR SLIPPED OUT OF HIS HAND

SWEEPS UP AND RETURNS ASKING HAS SHE SEEN ANY SPOONS OUT HERE, HE MUST HAVE SET THEM DOWN SOMEWHERE

FINDS SPOONS ON A CHAIR, AND CALLS WILL SHE COME SHOW HIM WHERE THE NAPKINS ARE

HALF HOUR LATER WIFE HAS SUPPER READY, BUT TABLE IS STILL UNSET BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN TRYING TO FIX LEG OF TABLE

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S'MATTER POP—

HERE ARE SIX PENNIES. DIVIDE THEM WITH YOUR BROTHER

HEY! DON'T COUNT WITH YOUR FINGERS USE YOUR HEAD!

YOW-YOW-YOW-YOW!! HE ONLY GAVE ME ONE!

HOW COME?

TA MADE ME COUNT WITH MY HEAD! I'VE ONLY GOT ONE HEAD!

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TAILSPIN TOMMY—A Disagreement!

BUT YOU CAN'T QUIT—YOUR CONTRACT!

MY CONTRACT! MY REPUTATION MEANS MORE TO ME THAN ALL THE CONTRACTS IN THE WORLD— I EITHER SHOOT THIS PICTURE ON THE LEVEL—OR NOT AT ALL!

OKAY, BILL! OKAY! WE SPENT TOO MUCH MONEY ALREADY ON THIS FLYING BIRD OF WAR FILLUM— BUT IF YOU ASK IT TO BE NATURAL INSTEAD OF MINIATURE—OKAY!

NOW THAT THAT'S SETTLED WE'LL LAY OUT OUR LOCATIONS— I'VE DECIDED TO PLACE THE ZEP HANGARS FIVE MILES OUT ON THE DESERT AS A SAFEGUARD!

YOU'RE GOING TO DROP LIVE EGGS, THEN—?

YOU SAID IT, PAUL! EVERY ONE OF THOSE HANGARS ARE GOING TO BE BUSTED WIDE OPEN BY REAL INCENDIARY BOMBS DROPPED FROM REAL PLANES

!!!!!! — HE THINKS I'VE GOT MONEY TO BURN!

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BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Word From Dave

SAY, BEN, IS DAVE GOIN' TO STAY DOWN THERE 'TILL DARK? WHAT'S HE SAY NOW?

HE SAYS HE'LL HAVE A LOT TO TELL US WHEN HE COMES UP.

YOU SAY YOU'RE COMING UP NOW, DAVE? ALL RIGHT, TAKE IT EASY—

WE'VE GOT YOU—

DEED WE HAS/AN' WE AIN'T GWINE LET LOOSEN YO', NEITHER!

YES, DAVE?

WHEW! I FEEL BETTER WITH THAT THING OFF—WELL, FOLKS THE STEAMER YUCATAN IS RIGHT UNDERNEATH US—I LANDED SMACK ON TOP OF HER!

GET OUT!

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THE NEBBS—A Fool There Was ...

LISTEN, I'VE GOT A HOT GIE FOR YOU. DO YOU REMEMBER CONNIE, THE GAL WHO TOOK YOUR COUSIN AMBROSE FOR A BIG DIAMOND RING AND A FLOCK OF DOUGH?

SURE, I REMEMBER HER—WHAT ABOUT HER?

WELL, SHE WROTE HIM THAT SHE'S VERY SICK AND HE'S MAKING A RESERVATION HERE AND IS SENDING HER MONEY TO COME DOWN HERE.

YOU'RE NOT JOKING WITH ME, ARE YOU?

I WAS NEVER MORE SERIOUS IN MY LIFE—I SAW THE LETTER AND I KNOW HE SENT HER MONEY, TOO!

HE'S A PRETTY SMART MAN IN EVERYTHING BUT HIS AFFAIRS WITH WOMEN AND WHEN A WISE MAN GOES FOOLISH HE DOES IT IN A WHOLESALE MANNER

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BRINGING UP FATHER

THAT SON OF MINE AIN'T BEEN HOME ONE NIGHT THIS WEEK BEFORE TWO IN THE MORNIN'! I'M GONNA SIT UP TONIGHT AN' GIVE HIM A TALKIN' TO WHEN HE COMES IN—

WELL, IT'S ONLY TEN O'CLOCK—AN' HE'S COMIN' IN?

WELL, YOU'RE IN EARLY FER A CHANGE?

YEAH—BUT I'VE GOT TO GO OUT AGAIN—DAD.

AND SPEAKING OF CHANGE—THAT'S WHAT I CAME BACK TO SEE YOU ABOUT. CAN YOU LET ME HAVE ABOUT TWENTY DOLLARS?

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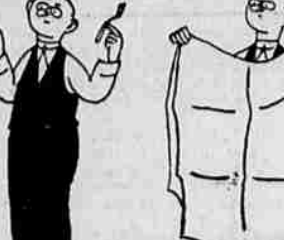
THE FAMILY ALBUM—SETTING THE TABLE

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

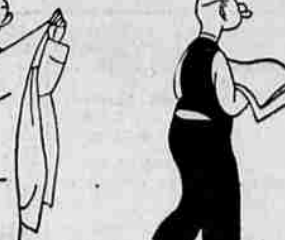
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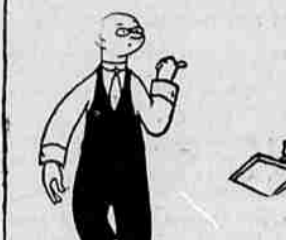
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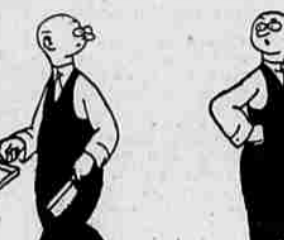
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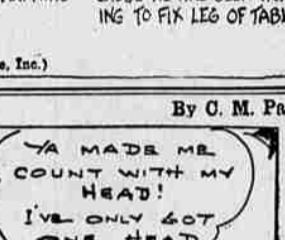
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COMBINATION FISH RAIL AND FEDERAL FOUND AT SEASIDE PAY TO INCREASE

ASTORIA, Ore., June 28.—(AP)—An unusual specimen of sea life, discovered on seashore beach by Miss Vera Van Cleve, was on exhibit here today. Resembling both a squid and a starfish, the creature is red above and yellow on the underside, and has 18 arms, each of which is about four inches long and bears "suckers" on the underside.

The animal eats clams and other shellfish, is fairly active and its suction cups have such a grip that one of the arms apparently could be pulled off before an object would be released.

It is the first specimen of its type known to have been discovered here.

Phone 642. Will haul away four pounds. City Sanitary Office.

WASHINGTON, June 28.—(AP)—

Railroad workers throughout the country will receive an increase in basic wages next Sunday when the agreement signed last April between the railroad managers and employees become effective.

Two years ago railroad labor agreed to a ten per cent deduction from pay checks as a means of assisting the railroads over the depression. On July 1 one-fourth of the cut will be restored and another fourth on January 1. The entire deduction will be restored April 1, 1935.

Government employees also are due for restoration July 1 of another 5 per cent of their 15 per cent pay cut. The first per cent given back was retroactive to February 1.

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