

I did not kill Osborne

By VICTOR BRIDGES

SYNOPSIS: Nicholas French goes home, after being acquitted of the charge that he murdered his former school-fellow, John Osborne, only to find a mysterious letter from the chemical engineer, Sir William Aves, asking an appointment. Then two strangers arrive, threaten his life and demand a paper he is supposed to have stolen from Osborne. The men are frightened by the tone of Molly O'Brien, pretending to call the police. Molly tells Nicholas she had come for the same paper, and that the paper is a formula for a new metal Osborne stole from her father, who had died.

Chapter 11 LONG SEARCH

"When things were settled up," my visitor went on, "I found that I should have quite a lot of money—enough to travel where I liked and pay for any help or information I wanted to get.

"I felt almost sure that Osborne would go to England. I knew, of course, that it would be a terribly difficult business to find him, but I had got just one tiny little clue which gave me a certain amount of hope. Twice, when he had been at our house, I had heard him mention a place called Aubrey's. He said both times that it was the best and cheeriest restaurant in London, and I guessed that if he ever found himself back home, he would be certain to look in there if only for the sake of old times.

"Well, I came over as soon as I could get away, and I took a bedroom at a small private hotel which was almost next door to this place. Every day I used to lunch and dine there on the chance of seeing him, and at last—at last one evening I did.

"He came in with someone else—a tall, good-looking man with white hair. They sat at a table in the other end of the room, and although I kept my back to them so that he shouldn't recognize me, I was able to watch them in a looking-glass. They seemed to be talking very seriously as if they were discussing business.

"When they got up to leave I followed them out. The tall man had a car waiting for him and went off in it, then I saw Osborne call a taxi and give some address which I couldn't hear. I got into another and told the man to stick as close to the one in front as he could, and when it pulled up to drive on slowly past it.

"I didn't know London at all well, and I had no idea where we were until we came to Osborne's house. My man put me down at the next corner. Then I walked back and made a note of the number and the road."

"I looked at her admiringly. 'Women are wonderful,' I remarked. 'I've always thought they'd make much better detectives than men.'

"That part was easy enough; the difficult thing to decide was what I should do next. I had no actual proof that Osborne had taken the paper, and although the police at home had tried to help me, I didn't believe for a moment that they would go so far as to ask for his extradition.

"Besides, it was the formula I wanted, and I knew that directly he thought he was in any real danger his first idea would be to hide it or destroy it. I spent all the next day thinking things over.

"At last I decided that there was only one plan which would be any good at all. I should have to get somebody to help me. I should have to find some man whom I could trust, and who at the same time would have enough pluck to take the law into his own hands.

"If, between us, we couldn't force Osborne to give it up... She broke off with a queer mirthless little laugh. 'When I opened my newspaper in the morning I found that he had been murdered.'

"AND as soon as they arrested me you quite naturally jumped to the conclusion that I'd got your formula?"

"She nodded. 'What else could I believe? I thought that he'd probably taken you into his confidence, and that you'd killed him in order to steal it. It was only when I went to the trial that I began to have my doubts. In the first place you didn't look a bit like a murderer.'

"Thanks," I said gratefully. 'I was under that impression myself, but it's nice to have it confirmed.'

"Then there was the way you gave your evidence. I don't know whether I am really a good judge of people, but it seemed to me all along as

though you were speaking the truth. I couldn't make up my mind at first whether I oughtn't to come forward and tell them my story. I knew if I did it would be bad for you, because then they'd be able to suggest that you had a much stronger reason for killing him."

"I should have been hanged for a certainty," I said. "The weakness of the motive was what saved me. After all, a fairly successful sculptor doesn't go about battering out people's brains for a few hundred pounds."

"That's what I felt and so I kept quiet. You see, whether you'd done it or not, I wanted you to be left off. If you had, it only served Osborne right, and besides, in that case, there was still a chance that I might be able to get back the formula. If you hadn't—" she paused—"well, I had an idea that you were exactly the sort of man who might be ready to help me."

"I threw away the cigaret I had been smoking, and sat down on the sofa. 'Tell me,' I said, 'how did you get in here, and what did you intend to do if those chaps hadn't turned up?'

"I meant to find out the truth one way or the other. I was determined to see you as soon as the trial was over, and I thought that the best chance would be to wait for you at your own studio. I knew where it was because there had been such a lot about you in the newspapers, so one morning, a few days ago, I came along to have a look at it.

"Then I discovered that the place next door was to let. I went to the agents straight away, and as I had a good reference from my bank in New Orleans, they didn't make the least difficulty about giving me a lease. I took it for a year and paid them six months in advance."

"YOU certainly do things pretty thoroughly while you're about them," I said. "But I still don't understand how you came to be in my bedroom."

"It was just a bit of good luck. As it happens the same key fits the front door of both studios. I found that out directly I got here."

"Go on," I said encouragingly. "I'm learning all sorts of interesting things tonight."

"I wasn't the only time I've been inside. I've searched the whole place thoroughly twice. I didn't find anything, of course, but I still thought it possible that you might have hidden the paper under a loose board or somewhere like that, and if you had I felt sure that the first thing you would do would be to go and look for it. That was the reason why I hid myself in there."

"There's a crack in the upper panel just wide enough to see through, and..."

"But supposing you had been right," I interrupted. "Supposing you'd found yourself boxed up here alone with a distinctly irritated murderer?"

"I'd got this," she slipped her hand down inside her dress and pulled out a miniature revolver. "It doesn't look very dangerous," she added, "but it would kill a man all right at close range."

"That's comforting news, anyhow," I observed. "If our visitors happen to call again we shall be able to give it a good test."

"She restored the little ivory-handled weapon to its former hiding place. "When you came in as you did," she continued, "and started to read your letters, I felt more certain than ever that you hadn't really done it. I was just going to open the door when those two men rang the bell."

"Rather an unpleasant surprise!" "It was," she said quietly. "You see, I recognized one of them at once."

"You recognized one of them!" I repeated stupidly. "Which?"

"The clean-shaven one in the soft hat. His name's Dimitri and he comes from New Orleans."

"There was a long pause. "And who and what," I inquired, "is Mr. Dimitri when he happens to be at home?"

"She shook her head. 'I don't know exactly. I can only tell you that he has a very bad name out there. He is mixed up with all the worst people in the place—men who run gambling saloons and that kind of thing.'

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Tomorrow, Nicholas and Molly form a "syndicate."

FOUR BILLION MAY BE ASKED IN NEW RECOVERY EFFORT

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8. — (AP) — Notice was given anew today by President Roosevelt that no announcement of legislative plans, including the proposed work relief program, would be made until congress meets on January 3.

The president made this known at his press conference after discussing the general relief and public works problems at a luncheon with Senator LaFollette of Wisconsin, and his brother, Philip LaFollette, governor-elect of that state.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8. — (AP) — President Roosevelt, glowing with good health after his sojourn in the south, worked today on a unified recovery effort for which, informed sources say, he may ask congress to appropriate at least \$4,000,000,000.

1. It would aim to provide work for millions now drawing direct relief funds.

2. The government would seek to co-ordinate its spending into one broad program in which the money spent would serve not only to relieve present needs, but also to Mr. Roosevelt's long-term plans for a more abundant life.

Some advisers foresaw a central fund, with a minimum of \$4,000,000,000, from which money would be shared out to carefully chosen projects. A proposal to put one central agency in charge of the fund has

SPEED UP COURTS SHERIFFS' ADVICE

PORTLAND, Ore., Dec. 7. — (AP) — A plea for more speed in the administration of justice was made here today at the convention of the Oregon Sheriffs' association by B. F. Irvine, editor of the Oregon Journal.

"Legal processes are altogether too slow," he said, "by getting together you can probably do something to speed up justice."

Other speakers were C. C. Spears, head of the federal bureau of justice here; Circuit Judge Fred Wilson of The Dalles, who told of advancement made in the past 30 years in law enforcement and in presentation of scientific evidence; Harry Niles, new chief of police, and former Chief L. V. Jenkins.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8. — (AP) — Army orders issued by the war department today included: Major William J. Tack, instructor, Oregon National Guard, Portland, assigned to duty in the Philippines.

OREGON CITY, Dec. 8. — (AP) — Charles H. Gault, 81, native of Clackamas county and one of the founders of the Bank of Oregon City, died here last night. He served as city commissioner for several years and was a school teacher for 17 years.

TO ISLAND DUTY. — (AP) — Army orders issued by the war department today included: Major William J. Tack, instructor, Oregon National Guard, Portland, assigned to duty in the Philippines.

CCC NIGHT SCHOOL WILL GIVE YOUTHS BUSINESS COURSE

That Medford and Jackson county are co-operating with the Civilian Conservation Corps, which has district headquarters in Medford, was evidenced Friday with announcement that the Medford school district was offering the commercial facilities at the senior high school each Wednesday night, for the Medford headquarters detachment school.

Dr. D. E. Wiedman, educational coordinator for the CCC district, will teach the classes, which will include several branches of commercial work. The typewriters, typing books, and other equipment used in the commercial work will be available for the CCC men.

A letter of appreciation was Friday forwarded the Medford school board by Major Clare H. Armstrong, thanking it for the co-operation with the detachment's educational program.

For class rooms, and a recreation hall, the Jackson county fair board has turned over the use of the dance hall at the fairgrounds for the men at headquarters detachment. It was made known Friday. Negotiations were made by headquarters officers with M. G. Fowler, a member of the fair board.

Through the leadership of Dr. Wiedman, an extensive educational system is being operated this winter in the CCC camps of the Medford district. Educational advisers are assigned to the camps throughout the district.

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

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S'MATTER POP—

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TAILSPIN TOMMY—Just an Old Spanish Custom!

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BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Telling Archie

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THE WILD BOY OF BORNEO?

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NO TIME TO EXPLAIN

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THE NEBBIS—The Naked Truth

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YOU DON'T MEAN TO SAY THAT YOU'D MISS A VISIT FROM YOUR DAUGHTER'S CHARMING MOTHER-IN-LAW DO YOU?

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THIS IS A FINE TIME TO VISIT BETSY WHILE THAT OLD BUZZARD IS DOWN HERE—LITTLE FANNY IS GOING AWAY AND THAT'S SETTLED BEYOND ALL ARGUMENT

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ALL RIGHT, AND IF SHE ASKS FOR YOU I'LL TELL HER YOU COULDN'T STAND FOR A VISIT FROM HER—HERE'S ONE TIME THE TRUTH WILL BE AS NAKED AS GODNA

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BRINGING UP FATHER

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DID YOU NOTICE MY BROTHER IN THE NEXT ROOM? HE'S SO INTERESTED IN LITERATURE—HE BEEN READING ALL MORNING—

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I SEEN HIM BY THE WAY—DID YOU READ THIS? THERE'S A POLICE CONVENTION HERE—OFFICERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE IN TOWN—

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GREAT HEAVENS! MY BROTHER JUMPED OUT THE WINDOW?

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I GUESS HE HEARD WHAT I WUZ READING—

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BANDIT'S WIDOW SENT TO PRISON

MADISON, Wis., Dec. 8. — (AP) — Helen Gillis, 33, widow of George ("Baby Face") Nelson and mother of the slain gangster's two children, stood silent in federal court today and heard Judge Patrick T. Stone commit her to Alderson, W. Va., prison for one year and a day.

PAIR OF FORGERS GIVEN CLEMENCY

ROSEBURG, Ore., Dec. 8. — (AP) — Gerald Abbott and Louis Champion, both of Portland, arrested here last July on a charge of forgery, were today given suspended sentences of two years each in the state penitentiary. When arraigned August 3 in the circuit court they admitted an endeavor to cash a bank draft in the sum of \$6,000 found by them at Portland. They endeavored to use the draft in the purchase of an automobile. The endorsement, they admitted, was forged.

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