

# I did not kill Osborne

By VICTOR BRIDGES

**SYNOPSIS:** Nicholas French has been acquitted of the murder of John Osborne, has almost been murdered himself, and has joined forces with a perfectly strange girl named Betty Osborne, all within 18 hours. For it develops that Osborne had stolen a formula worth millions, and that it belongs to Molly, and that the men who set upon Nicholas also went to find the formula. Now Nicholas' friend, Jerry Mordant, has arrived and seen presented to Molly.

## Chapter 15 NICK'S STORY

WITH that delightful half grave, half mischievous smile of her, Molly rose from her chair. "I am glad to meet you," she said simply. "I know you must be very nice or Nick wouldn't be so fond of you."

Jerry achieved a highly creditable bow, and then straightening himself, looked at her admiringly. "You'll forgive my being a bit dashed," he remarked, "but you see I wasn't exactly expecting a party."

"Molly's not a party," I explained; "she's more in the nature of an accident." I pulled up a chair. "Sit down, Jerry," I added. "You're going to listen to the most amazing yarn you've ever heard, but that's no reason why you shouldn't be comfortable."

"The difficulty," I added, looking from one to the other of them, "is that I'm hanged if I know where to begin."

"I want to hear as much as I can," Jerry thrust his hands into his pockets and stretched out his long legs. "At present all I know is what I saw in the papers last night and this morning. I've read the Judge's summing up, but outside of that I'm absolutely in the dark about the whole business. You start right at the beginning and tell me everything."

"I reflected for a moment. The beginning," I said, "was when I ran into Osborne in Villiers Street. It was late one night, about a week after you'd gone away, and I'd been dining with a pal of mine at the Savage Club. On my way to Chart a bit of arguing we closed the deal at three twenty-five."

"I'd just got out the money to pay him—we were in the local pub at the time splitting a half-bottle—when the door opened and the police walked in and arrested me. I was so staggered I never even drank my fizzy."

"It must have been a bit of a shock," said Jerry. "Still there's no excuse for such carelessness as that." He began rummaging in his side pocket for a pipe.

"How had they got on to you so quick?" "It all came out at the trial," I explained. "Osborne found my name and address on Osborn's blotting pad; that note he'd sent me must have been the last thing he'd written, and then the taxi man who'd picked me up came forward at once and identified me by my photograph."

"Of course, they'd no real evidence against me up till then; what did the trick was these infernal notes. Osborne had drawn them out of the bank that morning, and there I was with the whole packet actually in my hand."

"But hang it all, you'd a perfectly good explanation!" "It didn't seem to cut any ice with the magistrate or the coroner's jury," I observed bitterly. "Old Cresswell did his best but he couldn't even get me out on bail. I was flung into a dungeon cell for three weeks, and then hauled out last Monday and charged with being a bloody-minded assassin."

Jerry began to laugh. "Sorry to appear unsympathetic, but somehow or other the whole thing seems so deucedly funny. Why, one's only got to look at you to see that you're the most good-natured chump in Europe."

"Thank you, Jerry," I said. "Unfortunately the British law isn't run on those sound psychological lines. As a matter of fact, they put up quite a good case against me. Suggested that my story was all bunk—that I'd had a row with Osborne, bashed him on the head, and then pinched the money out of his safe. I tell you, it was tough and go at one time. If Barrett hadn't made such a corking fine speech I believe the idiots would have hanged me."

"Then at last he came to the point. He told me that he was anxious to buy a boat, and as I knew a little about sailing, he thought that per-

## MANY PROBES BY SENATE, HOUSE IN NEXT CONGRESS

### 'Smelling Committees' Gallore On Capitol Hill These Days—Munitions Query Tops Present Interest

By HERBERT PLUMMER  
WASHINGTON.—(AP)—"Smelling committees"—the term applied to congressional investigations in the post-world war years—are being outdone in numbers on Capitol Hill these days.

Probably at no time in the nation's history has the government shown such curiosity about so many different things as it is showing at present. No fewer than 11 separate investigations are either now being conducted or authorized by the senate alone. And the house has its share as well.

Topping the list at the moment in point of interest is the investigation of the munitions industry being conducted by a committee headed by Senator Nye of North Dakota. This inquiry may be prolonged indefinitely. Nye is prepared to go before the senate in the coming congress and request more money to continue the investigation.

Mail Contracts Scanned. Airmail and ocean mail contracts have been scanned thoroughly by the senate, and further probing of the latter is to be held. In addition the postoffice department is looking into its own mail contracts, which may result in either cancellations or modifications, and the interstate commerce commission is endeavoring to find out whether existing airmail contract rates are fair and reasonable.

The senate's investigation of crime and criminal practices is to be resumed shortly. Bankruptcy and receivership practices are due for an airing. Senator Byrnes of South Carolina shortly will lead the members of his special committee into an investigation of senatorial campaign expenditures in Tennessee, New Mexico and possibly Pennsylvania.

The Philippine islands are also due for a periodic scrutiny by the senate. There may be more. A senate investigation of FERA, as a result of charges by Senator Borah of Idaho, appears certain.

The house is as busy with its investigations as the senate. A committee is busy at work inquiring into un-American practices in this country. Profiteering in war department contracts are being investigated as well as veterans' guardianship practices, the tin industry, real estate and alleged abuses in real estate and bondholders' reorganizations.

A sub-committee of the house ways and means committee has been at work for months in an attempt to find a way to get more money for the treasury without slowing up recovery. These are only a few. The president has his own agencies at work investigating and seeking information for him. Various departments of the government are doing the same thing.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent. Prospects are that the coming congress will increase the number of investigations.

## SAFFLOWER, NEW CROP FOR MONTANA, YIELDS SUBSTANCE FOR PAINT

SIDNEY, Mont.—(UP)—From the steaming, tepid fields of the tropics has come Montana's newest crop—safflower.

Because the safflower yields an oil valued highly in manufacture of paints and varnishes, and because it appears to thrive in soil and climatic conditions of the northwest wheat belt, agricultural experts predict a bright future for it.

Alfred Rehbein, a painstaking farmer near Lambert, pioneered development of safflower growing in the United States and this year shipped four carloads of the seeds to a Milwaukee paint company.

Safflower oil has proved unusually satisfactory in drying oils, has many characteristics of linseed oil, and is superior to the latter in many respects. The U. S. bureau of plant industry has been studying Rehbein's experiment with interest and now proposes to encourage safflower growing wherever feasible in this country, it is reported.

Cash value of the crop depends upon prices paid for paints and varnishes, and for safflower cake, which, it is believed, will make a satisfactory cattle feed.

Substantial production of safflower may fill the gap between present production and consumption of linseed oil and would not compete with U. S. flax production, inasmuch as about half of the latter oil used in this country is imported.

## BETWEEN MEALS

IS TOLD IT'S NO USE ASKING FOR SOMETHING TO EAT, HE'S BEEN UNDER THE WEATHER AND HE MUSTN'T EAT BETWEEN MEALS

SINKS GLOOMILY DOWN ON BACK STOOP, WONDERING HOW MUCH LONGER IT IS UNTIL SUPPER

MOVES OFF, FINDING THE AROMA OF BAKING PIES MORE THAN HE CAN BEAR

MEETS THE PRATTY CHILD MUNCHING COOKIES, WATCHES HER WITH PAINED LOOK, THEN HURRIES OFF

GOES OVER TO EDDIE SELZER'S BUT FINDS HIM HELPING HIS MOTHER MAKE DOUGHNUTS. LEAVES ABRUPTLY

RUNS INTO THE LITTLE BEMIS BOY, NOISILY EATING A LARGE RED APPLE

URNS FOR HOME, REFLECTING HE'S NEVER SMELLED SO MANY TEMPTING ODORS STEALING FROM KITCHEN WINDOWS

FLINGS HIMSELF ON BED AND HAS A FAIRLY GOOD TIME THINKING WHAT HE WILL DO TO SUPPER WHEN THE TIME DOES COME

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## TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Persistent Pilot!

A STRANGE PLANE HAS BEEN FOLLOWING BETTY EVER SINCE SHE LEFT PUERTO DEL REY—SHE THOUGHT THAT SHE HAD OUTDISTANCED THE OTHER PILOT BUT—

HE CERTAINLY SEEMS PERSISTENT ENOUGH—WONDER WHO HE IS?

WELL, WHOEVER HE IS—HE KNOWS HIS BUSINESS—THAT FORWARD SLIP IS PERFECT!

HE'S LANDED!—AND HE'S COMING TOWARD ME—!

By Hal Forrest

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## BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—All About Willie

WILLIE PUTTY WAS THE CUTEST BABY YOU EVER LAID EYES ON, BEN! BUT HE WAS SHAVIN' REGULARLY BY THE TIME HE WAS SIX YEARS OLD—

OH, ARCHIE, YOU'RE KIDDING ME—

'PON MY HONOR, I'M NOT, GONN! YOU HEAR, ME OUT ON THIS—PEGGY PUTTY WAS A DOTIN' MOTHER, IF EVER THERE WAS ONE, BUT ONE NIGHT, WHEN THE INSECTS AND THE SKETEERS WAS MAKIN' WILLIE FRETFUL—

—SHE UPS AND STARTS TO RUB HIM WITH WHAT SHE THOUGHT WAS MEDICATED OIL—HE WAS A LITTLE TOT OF THREE THEN—WELL, THE NEXT MORNIN' THERE WAS A CURTAIN O' FUZZ ALL OVER LITTLE WILLIE!

PEGGY SCREAMED AND LOOKED AT THE BOTTLE—SHE'D GOT THE WRONG ONE—SHE'D GOT PETER PUTTY'S BALD-HEADED MEDICINE, AND THE DEED WAS DONE—BEN WEBSTER, I'M TELLIN' YOU THE TRUTH!

By EDWIN ALGER

## THE NEBBS—Cawn't Be Bothered

YOU HAVEN'T CALLED MRS. HEIT YET—DON'T YOU THINK YOU OUGHT TO? SHE'S VISITING HERE

I KNOW I SHOULD BUT IT'S AN ORDEAL I DREAD—I'LL GIVE HER A RING RIGHT AWAY

HELLO, MRS. HEIT, THIS IS FANNY NEBB—I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU— WONT YOU JOIN US FOR DINNER?

OH, HELLO, IT'S NICE OF YOU TO CALL BUT DON'T RUSH ME—I'M NOT FEELING WELL—I SHAWNT LEAVE MY ROOM FOR A FEW DAYS—THANKS FOR CALLING

SHE CAWNT BE RUSHED— SHE'S GOING TO BE IN HER ROOM FOR A FEW DAYS... AND THERE WAS FROST ON THE RECEIVER WHEN I HUNG UP AND I HAD TO PUT AN ICE BAG ON MY EAR TO WARM IT UP

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## MURDER, SUICIDE MOTIVE SOUGHT

NEW YORK, Dec. 13.—(AP)—The deaths of Dr. Harmon Smith, 62 throat specialist, and his wife, were investigated today to determine a motive for what police called murder and suicide.

The bodies were found in the library of their 42nd street home where Dr. Smith had a collection of hunting knives and other weapons. Mrs. Smith's throat had been slashed by an eight-inch hunting knife. Her husband was found with a dagger in his bare breast. No notes were found, but the police said it was evident Dr. Smith had killed his wife and then himself.

Dr. Smith was surgeon-director of the Manhattan eye and ear hospital, and was a former president of the American Laryngological association. Mrs. Smith was the doctor's second wife. She was the former Janet Williams of San Diego, Cal.

Captain William Sidney Fitchett, 70-year-old tugboat master of Norfolk Va., has docked more than 60,000 ships of all nationalities during his long service, his employers say.

## MEAL WORM DIET MIGHT HELP MAN

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13.—(AP)—A diet of meal worms might help cure human ailments. At least they ought to be good for humans, for they're reared many a sickly animal in the National Zoological park here, to health, says Ernest P. Walker, assistant director.

He suggests dieticians might learn a good deal about what's good for humans by studying the diets found good for zoo animals. Although the meal worms aren't found on human menu cards, they seem to contain something of considerable value as nourishment, for animals thrive on them.

Meal worms are the larvae of a beetle that sometimes infests meal and flour. They don't look any more repulsive than many other foods which many humans eat with relish, Walker says.

Traffic Judge B. Fox fined Attorney Frederick Dubovsky \$2 each on six parking violation tags and gave him a suspended sentence on 23 others in Oakland, Cal. One tag was for double parking and the other 26 for overtime parking.

## BRINGING UP FATHER

FROM MAGGIE'S BROTHER! WELL, THE WHY AH—ILL—WHAT! THIS IS ABOUT THE LIMIT—A BELIEVE IT OR NOT FER NERVE!!!

WILL YOU STOP HOLLERING? DO YOU WANT TO FRIGHTEN LITTLE DAPHNE?

## BRINGING UP FATHER

ALL RIGHT! BUT I JUST GOT A LETTER FROM YOUR BROTHER AN' HE TOOK MY BEST COAT AN' RAN AWAY WHEN HE WENT AWAY.

WELL, HE DIDNT STEAL THEM— YOU SEE HE HAS THEM—HE PROBABLY TOOK THEM BY MISTAKE?

MISTAKE?

HE ADMITS HE'S GOT 'EM, AN' HE HAS THE NERVE TO ASK ME TO SEND HIM THE VEST!

By George Horne

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