

I did not kill Osborne

By VICTOR BRIDGES

Chapter 42
A CLUE
"THIS is something anyhow," said Jerry. "I expected to find you scattered all over the landscape."

"We should be, if it wasn't for Jimmy," I answered.
"How did it happen? Were you monkeying around with the powder or what?"

I took him by the arm and drew him towards the bushes. "Better sit down for a minute and get your wind," I said. "You keep a look out, Molly, while I do the explaining."

Making our way back we regained the shelter of the gorse, where Jimmy, who had remained behind, greeted us with a welcoming grin. Wiping his forehead with his sleeve, Jerry seated himself upon a convenient log.

"Cut it as short as you can," he said curtly. "We've a job ahead of us that won't wait."
His voice had a grim note of urgency, which made me wonder what fresh revelations were in store.

Something of interest had evidently been happening in other places besides the factory, but since one of the two stories had to be told first, the sooner I got mine over the better.

Such being the case, I plumped myself down beside him and set about the business. With the exception of what had passed between Molly and myself I told him everything.

I described the way we'd been trapped; I repeated, as well as I could remember it, every word that Orloff had said to us, and finally I gave him a brief, but vivid account of how Jimmy had come to our rescue, and the amazing escape we had all had from being killed by the flying masonry.

"We got down under the bank and crawled along here," I finished, "because it seemed to be the safest thing to do. There was just the off chance that Jimmy had got ashore without being seen, and that if we could lie up somewhere until you came back, Orloff would take it for granted that he'd wiped us off his list."

I laughed a trifle mirthlessly and pulling out a crumpled packet of cigarettes, stuck one between my lips. "We can rule that out now," I added.
For a moment or two Jerry sat nursing his knees and staring broodingly in front of him. "So it was their boat after all! I'd gone along yesterday as I meant to..."

"You probably wouldn't be here now," I interrupted. "Those devils have been watching us the whole time—just waiting for their chance. They've bungled the business pretty badly, thanks to Jimmy, but we're not likely to get the same luck twice running."

I glanced across the narrow strip of water to where the Seagull was lying. "We must clear out while we've got the chance," I continued. "Orloff..."

"But we can't, I haven't told you yet." He jumped up abruptly. "That woman—Mrs. Gowland—she knows the truth."

WITH a little startled cry Molly swung round towards us. "Jerry," she gasped, "what do you mean?"

"I found her in the garden in front of the farm. She was kneeling beside Gowland's body. You remember that shot we heard just after we'd landed? Well, you were wrong about its being a rabbit. He'd gone outside with his gun and blown half his head off."

There was a dead silence, broken by a sudden exclamation from Jimmy. "Crikey!" he whispered.
"I had an idea at first that she'd done it herself. She was so queer—no hysterical or anything of that sort—just helpless and half dazed like someone who'd had a knock on the head. It wasn't until I'd carried him inside and put him on the sofa that I could get any sense out of her."

"What did she say?" Molly was leaning forward with clenched hands, her eyes fixed on Jerry's face.

"Just a jumble of words to start with—a lot of incoherent stuff about Gowland being drunk and threatening to take his life. He'd something on his mind, she kept on repeating, something that was driving him mad. It was while I was trying to quiet her down that I heard the explosion."

"And you guessed..."
"Not for a minute or so, I thought it was one of the Chatham cruizers blowing up a mine or something; they often practise off here, especially at this time of year."
"Then, I don't know why, but quite suddenly I remembered what Avon had told Nick about the powder. It put the wind up with a crash."
"I didn't stop to question her any further. I told her to wait where she was until I came back, and I was out of that door and half-way across the yard almost before I knew what I was doing."

I scrambled to my feet. "Why do you say she knows, Jerry?" I demanded. "What makes you so certain about it?"
"I can't explain exactly. I just felt it inside me. It was something in the way she spoke and looked. If we hadn't been interrupted..."
"I feel it too," Molly was beside us, her blue eyes shining with excitement. "We must see her, Nick; we must go there at once. I'm sure she can tell us the truth."
"Yes, but you can't come!" I exclaimed. "Why, think what it means! If Orloff knows we've escaped..."
"What are you going to do with me?" she asked calmly.

hands, her eyes fixed on Jerry's face. "Just a jumble of words to start with—a lot of incoherent stuff about Gowland being drunk and threatening to take his life. He'd something on his mind, she kept on repeating, something that was driving him mad. It was while I was trying to quiet her down that I heard the explosion."

"And you guessed..."
"Not for a minute or so, I thought it was one of the Chatham cruizers blowing up a mine or something; they often practise off here, especially at this time of year."

"Then, I don't know why, but quite suddenly I remembered what Avon had told Nick about the powder. It put the wind up with a crash."

"I didn't stop to question her any further. I told her to wait where she was until I came back, and I was out of that door and half-way across the yard almost before I knew what I was doing."

I scrambled to my feet. "Why do you say she knows, Jerry?" I demanded. "What makes you so certain about it?"

"I can't explain exactly. I just felt it inside me. It was something in the way she spoke and looked. If we hadn't been interrupted..."

"I feel it too," Molly was beside us, her blue eyes shining with excitement. "We must see her, Nick; we must go there at once. I'm sure she can tell us the truth."

"Yes, but you can't come!" I exclaimed. "Why, think what it means! If Orloff knows we've escaped..."

"What are you going to do with me?" she asked calmly.

I LOOKED round with a kind of desperate helplessness. "She's right," said Jerry quietly. "It's neck or nothing now. Unless we chuck the whole thing and make a bolt for it, we may as well stick together. I've got a gun anyhow, and..."

"Beg pardon, sir," interrupted Jimmy, "but if it would be any help, sir, I don't mind stopping 'ere and looking after the boat. I ain't afraid of them swine, sir."

"By gad, you're a sportsman!" Jerry stepped forward and clapped him on the shoulder. "You can't hang around like that though; you'll be frozen stiff. Here, take my mac."

He stripped off his waterproof and thrust it into Jimmy's arms. "Know how to row?" he asked.

"Just a bit, sir. Been out once or twice on the Serpentine."

"Well, keep your eyes skinned, and if you see anyone coming, hop in and shove her off."

He turned to us, pulling out the revolver from his coat pocket. "Come on, you two. No good messing about if we're all agreed. You stick close behind me, Molly, and for heaven's sake look out where you put your feet."

With a mind torn by conflicting emotions, I followed them up the slope, and pushing through the gorse dropped down on to the narrow path.

If Jerry were right—and his belief had certainly infected me as well as Molly—it was obviously vital that we should see Mrs. Gowland at once. Whatever the hidden thing might be which had driven her husband to his death, we were far more likely to get the truth out of her in her present state than when she had had time to pull herself together.

On the other hand, in the face of what we already knew, this venture of ours was surely next door to madness. Our escape from the factory was no longer a secret, and now that their original plans had miscarried, Orloff and the foul crew that he had doubtless brought along with him would be more recklessly determined than ever that none of us should leave the place alive.

Had Jerry and I been alone the matter would have been different, but...

IRRIGATION LOANS NEAR COMPLETION

WASHINGTON, Jan. 16.—(Sp.)—Senator Steiwer is informed by the Reconstruction Finance corporation that four irrigation district refinancing loans in Oregon are approaching completion.

Medford is ready for closing except for a minor detail. Ochooa awaits correction of a small discrepancy. Hood River lacks certain data which is expected soon, and Gold Hill is subject to confirmation of completion of its release of bonds.

CCC Boys to Hear Son of Pioneers On Early History

CAMP HUMBURG MOUNTAIN, Jan. 16.—(Sp.)—Illinois boys of CCC Co. 611, stationed at Camp Humburg Mountain, situated in a region rich in pioneer history, will have an opportunity to hear the story of the exploration and settlement of this section from a living member of the Illinois family linked closest to its early settlement when Frank Tichenor lectures in the camp at 8 p. m. on Thursday.

Mr. Tichenor is a grandson of Captain William Tichenor, who first landed an organized company near the present site of Port Orford. Captain Wm. Tichenor's wife's name was England. The Englands and Tichenors originally lived in Illinois, the captain having been a friend of Abraham Lincoln.

J'VILLE HIGH TO STAGE OPERETTA

An operetta entitled "The Teresona," by Otis M. Carrington will be presented at Jacksonville during the latter part of February by members of the girls' and boys' glee clubs of the Jacksonville high school.

Tryouts were held last week and the cast is being trained extensively in two groups so that if illness prevents the participation of some of the players trained substitutes will be ready to take their parts. These in charge say the operetta has caused more enthusiasm among the students than any of Jacksonville high school's undertakings.

The cast includes the following: Paul Hess, Frank Nee, Wayne Martin, Bud Mitchell, Henry Head, Alice Watson, Shirley Cantrell, Madeline Metzger and June Wilkinson.

Maxine Hill is the accompanist.

DEATH CAR OWNER DECLARED GUILTY

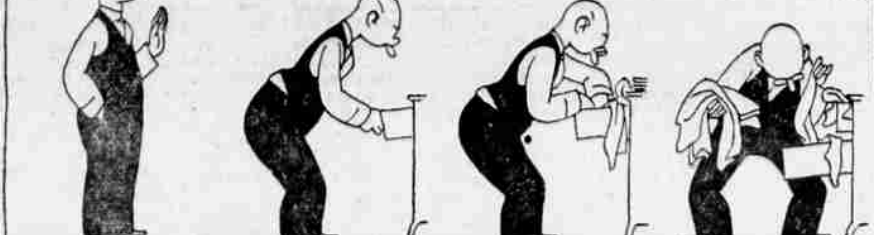
McMINNVILLE, Ore., Jan. 16.—(AP.)—Although he was only a passenger in the death-dealing automobile which he owned, Lawrence J. Malloy of Portland was convicted of involuntary manslaughter here today in connection with the death of Mrs. Fay Miller of Newberg, who was killed the night of November 12 when the car crushed her against a bridge rail.

The case was regarded as a precedent in Oregon law as it was the first on record in which an owner of a car, although not driving, has been convicted of manslaughter. Attorneys for Malloy indicated they will appeal.

The trial of Ole J. Olson of Portland, reputed driver of the automobile, on involuntary manslaughter, will follow. Three other passengers in the car have been charged with disorderly conduct.

THE FAMILY ALBUM—SAVING TROUBLE

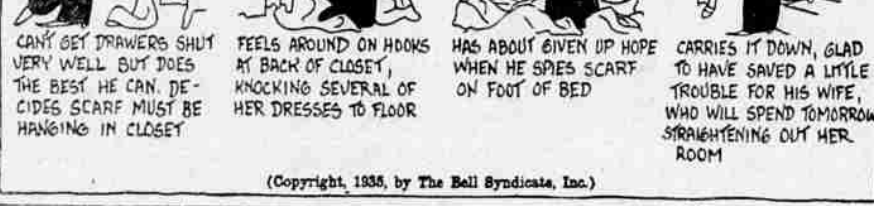
By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



TELLS WIFE TO SIT STILL AND REST. HE'LL GET HER SCARF FOR HER.



RUNS UPSTAIRS AND BRISKLY PULLS OPEN A BUREAU DRAWER.



RANSACKS DRAWER.



TRIES OTHER DRAWERS.



CANNOT GET DRAWERS SHUT VERY WELL BUT DOES THE BEST HE CAN. DECIDES SCARF MUST BE HANGING IN CLOSET.



FEELS AROUND ON HOOKS AT BACK OF CLOSET, KNOCKING SEVERAL OF HER DRESSES TO FLOOR.



HAS ABOUT GIVEN UP HOPE WHEN HE SPES SCARF ON FOOT OF BED.



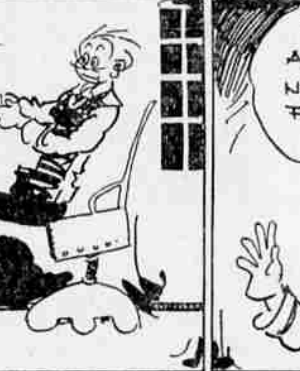
CARRIES IT DOWN, GLAD TO HAVE SAVED A LITTLE TROUBLE FOR HIS WIFE, WHO WILL SPEND TOMORROW STRAIGHTENING OUT HER ROOM.

(Copyright, 1935, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.)

SMATTER POP



WELL SIR, YOU'VE BEEN BAD! SO, I'LL HAVE TO DO SOME PADDLING.



BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU I'M NOT DOING THIS FOR MY OWN PLEASURE.



THEN, WHOSE PLEASURE ARE YOU DOIN' IT FOR?



SMATTER POP?



THE YOUNG ONE HAS JUST RAISED A QUESTION.



NO ONE CAN ACCUSE FELIPE MIGUEL ROSAS Y GARADA, THE GREAT PATRIOT OF NAZIL OF DISHONESTY. I SHALL BORROW YOUR AIRPLANE, AN' YOU, MY FRIEND, YOU SHALL FLY IT FOR ME!

TAILSPIN TOMMY—El Liberator "Borrows" the Boys' Plane!



WE'RE HERE TO MAKE AN AERIAL SURVEY FOR AN OIL COMPANY—YOU KNOW—MAPS AND THINGS—LIKE THAT.



AN NO WARS.



YOU SHALL MAKE THE MAP LATER—WE HAVE MUCH NEED FOR YOUR AIRPLANE!



YOU—MEAN— YOU'RE GOING TO CONFISCATE IT?



WELL, I'LL BE HOG-TIED! I KNEW THIS JASPAR WAS A CROOK ALL ALONG, TOM!



OH, SENSORS, I WOULD NOT CONFISCATE THE PLANE— THAT WOULD BE STEALING.

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Real Danger!



BRIAR! BRIAR! MR CHIEF!



OH, BRIAR! IT'S YOU THIS TIME, AIN'T IT, BEN?



YES, WILLIE, I'M BEN—BUT WHERE'S ARCHIE AND MR WALLOPER? INSIDE?



NO, THEY AIN'T— THEY WENT TO SNEVIL'S FORD TO ARRANGE FOR THE NEXT SHOW AND--



--THEY WONT BE BACK TILL TONIGHT-- WILLIE, COME AND HELP ME PUSH OFF! WE HAVEN'T A MINUTE TO SPARE!

THE NEBBS—The Sweet Violet



WELL, BETSY'S MAMA-IN-LAW'S GONE—HER HUSBAND'S CULTURED POLITICAL PROFESSOR SMOKED HER OUT.



SHE CAME HERE TO LORD IT OVER—WELL, SHE HAD THE SAME EXPERIENCE. NAPOLEON HAD AT WATERLOO.



SHE GOT REAL CHUMMY WITH ME— SHE SAID THE NEXT TIME YOU VISIT BETSY I'LL GIVE A TEA FOR YOU AND YOU CAN INVITE MRS. TOWNSEND NOISE— SHE SHOULD LIVE THAT LONG! IF SHE EVER CLIMBS INTO SOCIETY LITTLE FANNY WONT BE HER LADDER.



SHE COULD BE A QUEEN OVER IN THAT GASHOUSE DISTRICT WHERE SHE WAS BORN BUT NO, SHE LORDS IT OVER THOSE PEOPLE AND CAN'T MAKE THE GRADE WITH ANYONE ELSE SO SHE'S LONESOME AND ALONE.



SHE'S A KINDLY, GOOD-NATURED SOUL IF SHE OWNED ALL THE KIND WORDS IN THE WORLD SHE WOULDN'T LOAN YOU ONE OF THEM.

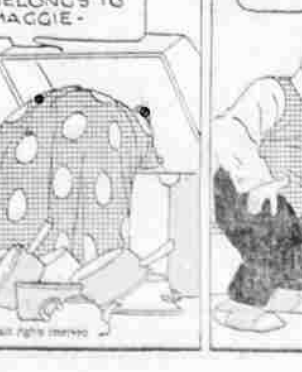
BRINGING UP FATHER



BY GOLLY! THAT SISTER OF MAGGIE'S IS STILL UNPACKIN' HER TRUNKS. AN' WHAT A LOT OF JUNK SHE HAS.



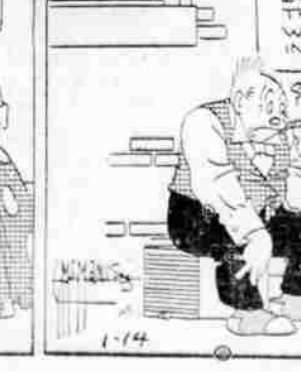
NOW WHAT ARE YOU LOOKIN' FER—A STOVE?



NO, I'VE GOT SOMETHING HERE THAT BELONGS TO MAGGIE.



WHEN ME BROTHER WUZ HERE HE PUT THIS IN ME TRUNK BY MISTAKE AN' TOLD ME TO FETCH IT BACK, SO HERE IT IS.



I'LL SEE TO IT THAT IT'LL DO NO MORE DAMAGE AROUND THIS HOUSE—I WONDER WHO INVENTED THEM THINGS!!!

APPLEGATE RESIDENTS LUCKY WHEN CAR SKIDS

BIG APPLGATE, Jan. 16.—(Sp.)—The Applegate's first snowfall Saturday resulted in a harrowing but harmless accident on that day when the Ford sedan in which Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Munsell, Applegate residents, were riding, skidded from the road and overturned, landing atop a wire fence. The accident occurred at a fill north of the Sunnyside service station at Rush, where a wire fence runs below the road level.

Mrs. Munsell had the presence of mind to turn off the ignition switch when she saw the car leave the road. With the exception of the loss of \$50 for the market, no damage resulted, and when the car was extricated, the couple proceeded on their journey to Medford.

A A WEAR BETTER CLOTHES Suits and Overalls to measure. \$21.50 up. Klein the Tailor, Uptaire.

Watkins Rancher's Thumb Amputated

BIG APPLGATE, Jan. 16.—(Sp.)—Fred Dorn, well-known rancher of the Watkins district, 14 in the Sacred Heart hospital at Medford, having had a thumb amputated Sunday afternoon.

Mr. Dorn was splitting wood at his home that day, when the handle of his axe became entangled in the jumper he wore, causing a severe laceration of the thumb. He was taken first to Dr. Harold Gillis, physician at Camp Applegate, who said that amputation at the second joint from the nail would be necessary.

MATRIMONIAL AD CAUSE OF BLIND MAN'S DEATH

PORT CHESTER, N. Y., Jan. 15.—(UPI)—A matrimonial advertisement proved fatal for Elmer Bertram, 36, blind for 14 years. His ad was answered by Mrs. Mary Edmonds, 51, who invited him to the Mayfair club at Rye, N. Y. He fell down the stairs, contracted lobar pneumonia, and died.