

The Wrong Murderer

By HUGH CLEVELY

SYNOPSIS: Terence Mahony only last night rescued Eliza Little, the film star, and Alvin Krazer from a mobster's desperate gang of kidnapers. Although he is not sure, Terence thinks he may be accused of the murder of Eliza's uncle; nevertheless, when he meets Lawson near his house and Lawson suggests that Terence accompany him to the Little house, Terence agrees. But he dislikes Lawson's smug confidence that no suspicion can attach to him.

Chapter 14 BETRAYAL

WHEN they had driven a short distance in the direction of the Little house Lawson tapped on the glass in front of him and signalled to the driver to stop.

"You must excuse me for a moment," he said, "I want some cigarettes."

The taxi stopped, and Lawson got out and entered a small tobacconist's. Mahony noticed outside the shop a sign which said: Public Telephone. He frowned. Lawson, he knew, smoked Balkan Sobranies. It was unlikely that he would be able to get them at that small, shabby shop. In that case he had probably entered the shop in order to use the telephone.

But what for? What the devil was Lawson up to now, he wondered. Was he planning to have the taxi intercepted before it reached the Little house? He slipped his hand into his pocket; his fingers closed on the butt of his automatic. The feel of it comforted him. If Lawson was planning to put over a fast one he was ready for it. He felt fine.

But nothing happened to interfere with the taxi. It drew up safely outside the Little house and Lawson paid the driver and rang the front door-bell. A trim maid admitted them and showed them into a drawing room where Eliza, a short, fair man, and a tall, dark-haired man of thirty-three or -four were sitting. The dark man was Inspector Kennedy.

"Good morning, Eliza," said Lawson. "I've brought Mr. Mahony along to see you. Well, Kennedy, how are you?"

"Where did you meet Mr. Lawson?" asked Eliza.

Her lovely face was pale and her eyes showed signs of recent weeping. As she asked Mahony that simple question there was an air of suppressed but intense excitement about her that was not easy to account for. It affected the others in the room; both Lawson and Kennedy were listening in attitudes of expectant attention.

"I met him at the end of Dulverton Street, near his house," Mahony answered.

Now both Kennedy and Lawson were looking at Eliza. And Eliza was looking at Mahony. On her face was an expression of the most utter horror and dislike. He might have been some sort of big, white, poisonous slug, the way she looked at him. She spoke slowly and clearly:

"I recognize this man's voice. He was the man who was with me in the study last night," she said.

HER words struck Mahony with all the force of an unexpected blow between the eyes. He had thought it in the last degree improbable that Eliza would remember his voice. And he objected strongly to her thinking that he had killed her uncle. The horror and contempt in her eyes stung him. The gleam of satisfaction in Lawson's eyes infuriated him. For a second he was moved to indignant protest.

"It wasn't I who murdered your uncle," he said hotly.

At that Inspector Kennedy leaned forward slightly with the eager air of a tiger about to grip its prey.

"So you know Mr. Little has been murdered," he said keenly. "Will you explain how you know that? The news has not been published in any of the newspapers yet."

He paused.

"I have to warn you that I am a police officer, and that anything you say may be used as evidence," he added. "You are not obliged to answer my questions now."

It was obvious to Mahony that he had made a bad slip. The knowledge jerked him into a realization that he had to keep his wits about him.

"How do you think I know he's been murdered?" he asked bluntly. "Lawson told me on the way here."

"What's that?" exclaimed Lawson. For a moment he showed his white teeth in a smile. He would have smiled in the same way at an opponent who had made a good shot at tennis, particularly if the shot was not quite good enough to win the point.

"I didn't mention the murder to you on the way here," he said.

Mahony stared at him with an expression of utter amazement on his face. He appeared to think that Lawson had suddenly gone quite mad.

"You didn't mention it!" he exclaimed.

claimed. "Why, good heavens, man, you hardly talked of anything else. Don't you remember asking me not to stay too long, because Miss Little was very upset?"

He really seemed to believe what he said. For a moment he paused. Then he scowled and went on suspiciously:

"What's the idea? Why are you trying to pretend that you didn't mention the murder?"

He seemed to suspect Lawson of dark deeds and sinister intentions. Lawson retailed by merely looking superior. He shrugged his shoulders with a nonchalant air.

"The man who came running out of the house when the constable and I arrived, shortly after the murder, hit me and the constable very hard with his fist," he observed dispassionately.

He made a slight gesture towards Mahony's right hand.

"How did you get that graze on your knuckles?" he asked.

Mahony glanced down at his knuckles. He had grazed them when knocking out one of Mulgrave's teeth.

"I fell over and scraped my hand on the pavement," he answered.

ALL his indignation had gone; he felt quite cool and collected now. In a way, he was rather enjoying himself. He recognized that his position was very awkward, but it was not necessarily disastrous.

Eliza claimed to have recognized him by his voice as the man who had killed her uncle, but that recognition alone, especially considering the dazed state she had been in after her uncle's murder, was not sufficient to convict him in a court of law without a good deal of corroborative evidence. It was up to him to see that no such evidence was forthcoming.

"Can you give me an account of your movements after ten o'clock last night?" asked Inspector Kennedy.

Mahony shrugged his shoulders.

"Very roughly," he answered. "I've been away for about four years, you know, and last night I simply wandered alone about London seeing the sights. I walked along Oxford Street, the Strand, and back by the Houses of Parliament, Ebury Street, Sloane Street and Hyde Park. I stayed in the Park for some time listening to one of the stump speakers. I don't know what time I got home, but it must have been pretty late because everybody was asleep."

"I suppose you didn't meet anybody you know during your wanderings?" asked the Inspector.

"No. But it's not likely that I should. I hardly know anybody in London," explained Mahony.

There was a pause. The Inspector's next question came very suddenly and curtly.

"I understand that you have recently returned from a four years' stay in China. Did you know anybody out there engaged in the dope traffic—exporting drugs, I mean?"

Mahony hesitated for a moment. Then he decided to be quite truthful.

"Yes," he replied. "I met a man out there who talked to me about that sort of thing. He was a Russian named Vladimir Kosoff. I believe I broke his jaw."

"You seem to be a somewhat violent person," observed Inspector Kennedy. "I take it that the thought of engaging in that trade yourself has never occurred to you?"

"No," answered Mahony. "Do you disapprove of it?" asked the Inspector.

"I think it's a filthy traffic," said Mahony.

But he wondered, a little anxiously, what the Inspector was getting at. "A most creditable sentiment," said the Inspector blandly. "And when you returned to England you went at once to stay with your friend Mr. Ross?"

"Yes," agreed Mahony. "He is a particular friend of yours. I take it?" persisted the Inspector.

"Yes," agreed Mahony again. "We were at school together."

"Has it ever been suggested to you that Mr. Ross is a dope addict?" asked the Inspector.

Mahony had been waiting for something like that. He was ready for it.

"Billy Ross a dope addict! Don't be silly," he said contemptuously.

The Inspector had not said: "Ross is a dope addict," in the manner of one stating a fact; he had said, "Has it been suggested to you that Ross is a dope addict," in the manner of one seeking for information or admissions. Someone, quite evidently, had put this dope idea into the Inspector's mind, and he was merely engaged on exploring its possibilities.

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The last person Terence expects to see arrive, tomorrow.

"My wife, four children and I were asleep when suddenly, with a terrific jolt, we found ourselves in the open air," related one 72-year old farmer sitting beside a soldier's campfire.

"One of our children was caught in the ruins but we got her out with our bare hands."

Going Too Far

PORTLAND, Oct. 19.—(AP)—City officials took steps today to keep parking lots off city sidewalks. John T. Shannon, building inspector, receiving complaints that automobiles were parked in some instances so they interfered with pedestrians, recommended the lots be fenced in.

WINDOW GLASS—We sell window glass that will replace your broken windows reasonably. Trouwering Lumber Works.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

THE KIWI, flightless bird of New Zealand, HAS A FLEXIBLE BILL WITH NOSTRILS ON THE TIP.

ONLY 2 MEN RAN FOR PRESIDENT IN 1820— JAMES MONROE AND JOHN QUINCY ADAMS. BOTH WERE REPUBLICANS AND BOTH ULTIMATELY BECAME PRESIDENTS.

THE GOLDEN MOSQUE, of Delhi, India, IS ON SILVER STREET.

A GOITLY FOOT CAUSED MADRID TO BECOME THE CAPITAL OF SPAIN!
CHARLES II ESTABLISHED HIS COURT THERE WHEN HE FOUND THE CLIMATE RELIEVED HIS SUFFERING... —16th century—

WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT THE PERFECT GUM STEADIES THE NERVES

TAILSPIN TOMMY—A Personal Call!

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—The Bounce!

THE FAMILY ALBUM—TELEPHONE CALL

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

COMES HOME, WIFE REMARKING A MAN CALLED HIM UP ABOUT HALF AN HOUR AGO, AND HE DID NOT LEAVE HIS NAME.

FOLLOWS HER OUT TO KITCHEN TO GET PARCHMENT. FINDS IT WAS MILDRED ANSWERING THE PHONE.

WONDERS WAS IT ED DIMMICK? OR MAYBE IT WAS BILL WIMPLE GETTING UP A BRIDGE GAME? OR SAM BERRY?

CALLS TO MILDRED DIDN'T HE LEAVE ANY MESSAGE? COULDN'T SHE TELL WHO IT WAS? JUST WHAT DID THE MAN SAY?

SHE'S DOWN WITH PAPER BUT IS MUCH TOO BUSY WONDERING WHO IT WAS THAT CALLED, TO READ IT.

SHOUTS TO MILDRED WAS THE MAN'S VOICE DEEP? COULD IT HAVE BEEN MR. MILLER NEXT DOOR? DID HE SAY HE'D CALL LATER?

CAN'T STAND THE UNCERTAIN AND CALLS UP ALL HIS FRIENDS TO ASK IF THEY CALLED HIM, DRAWING BLANKS.

SPENDS REST OF EVENING BROODING OVER THAT PHONE CALL, MAKING HIMSELF AND HIS FAMILY MISERABLE.

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S MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE

YOUR EGG IS BOILED. GO TO THE TABLE!

LEMME TASTE THAT!

WHY?

I MIGHT LIKE IT!

IT'S EGG-SOUP, AIN'T IT?

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20 DIE AS QUAKE HITS NORTH ITALY

GENOVA VI SACILE, Italy, Oct. 19.—(AP)—Terrified residents of northern Italy camped in open fields today in fear of recurring earthquakes which killed 20 persons and injured 30 others.

The majority of the casualties came from tumbling walls in sharp earth shocks which started at dawn yesterday.

A dozen houses in this region were destroyed while 300 others were damaged so seriously engineers ordered them abandoned.

Principal sufferers from the tragedy were farmers living in small houses throughout this rich vineyard area.

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GO AHEAD, PAUL SMITH... DO YOU ACCEPT MY CHALLENGE... OR ARE YOU AFRAID?

YOU KNOW THAT'S A LIE OTHER PLANES MAY FOLLOW ME... AND INTERFERE... LISTEN... I HAVE A PLAN

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MRS. TUMMY, I'M GORRY TO DISOBLIGE YOU, BUT WHEN PERCY PETTY TALKS WITH ANYONE WITHIN THE CONFINES OF HIS RUMBLE HOME THAT'S HIS BUSINESS!

WELL, I UPHELD ME MANHOOD, BUT LOGT ME JOB, AN' JOBS IS AS SCARCE AS HENS' TEETH!

PERCY! I THINK I'VE JUST LEARNED SOMETHING!

I HAVE, TOO, LAD—I'VE LEARNED HOW IT FEELS TO GET THE GACK AT THE AGE O' SIXTY-ONE!

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I'M GOING TO TAKE A LONG CRUISE... I GURE DON'T WANT TO SEE HER ANYMORE... I TALKED IT OVER WITH MYSELF ALL LAST NIGHT

I'LL CALL UP VINCE LANNIGAN AND ASK HIM TO ARRANGE THIS TRIP FOR ME... I DONT CARE WHERE IT IS TO JUST SO IM NOT HERE WHEN SHE GETS BACK

SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE ABOUT THIS!! I NEED REST AND CANT SLEEP... I NEED NOURISHMENT AND CANT EAT... I'VE BEEN TALKING TO MYSELF EVER SINCE I CAME HOME AND I'LL BE DARNED IF I CAN SAY A WORD OF COMFORT AND ABSORB IT!

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