

MURDER ON THE BLUFF

SYNOPSIS: First it is the mysterious shooting of death of attractive Jude Blinnahop which makes us all jittery on this wild, stormy weekend at Farrington Bluff, home of Michael's aunts. Then a series of strange attacks occur. Present are: Mike, the Skipper, his tall, tuxedoed younger aunt; Aunt Martha, stout and prudish; Gay Palmer, Mike's red-headed sweetheart; myself and the four servants. It is a relief to find the body of Michael's insane father, supposedly long since dead, below the bluff; it explains so much that has happened.

Chapter 27

'The Danger's Not Over'

WHAT'S the matter, Higgins? He was still white.

"I'd like to talk to you a minute, sir. Somewhere where we can't be heard."

I stared at him. "What about? There's no one to hear us, Higgins. What's on your mind?"

"Would you come into the living room, sir?"

Reflecting that the poor old boy probably wanted to relieve his mind by telling me his version of the story I followed him into the living room.

"Well, what a it Higgins?"

"Mr. Jimmie, the Farringtons have always been almost like my own family, as you might say. The old gentleman was very good to me when I was just a boy, sir, and alone in this country, if you see what I mean."

I smiled at him reassuringly. "I see what you mean. They've been pretty good to me, too. What the deuce ailed him? If he trusted me enough to tell me the story, why all the preliminaries?"

"This affair has been most unfortunate, sir."

My patience was getting a bit thin. I had many things to say to Michael, and I wanted to say them before he had soaked himself into a complete stupor. I frowned.

I said sharply, "What's on your mind?"

"Mr. Jimmie," he stepped closer to me and spoke in a hoarse whisper. "The danger's not over. There's—"

He stopped suddenly, and an amazing thing happened. His eyes, fixed on the window behind me, seemed about to pop from his head and under my very nose the man seemed to shrivel up. I wheeled toward that window.

There was no one there, and my patience snapped.

"Higgins, what the devil are you looking at? What are you talking about?"

He passed a trembling hand over his eyes. "I—I don't know. Possibly, sir, I—I have been imagining things. Please forget it, sir. With a certain dignity, I stepped back to my chair."

Exasperated beyond all endurance, I fairly roared at him to speak his piece.

"Nothing, sir. I have been forgetting myself. Please excuse me."

I made a wild lunge, but he got to the door before I did. Crossing to the window, I leaned against it, staring out at the dismal lawn, my brain in an uproar.

Footprint On The Tile

"THE danger's not over!" What did the deuce he mean to do with the depressing story of Farrington Bluff? What—? My eyes had fallen to the tiling on the porch floor just outside the window. There, clearly defined in rapidly hardening mud, was the imprint of a rubber boot Higgins had seen someone at that window—

someone who might or might not have heard what he was starting to say! The wild thought crossed my mind that maybe he was right—that there was more trouble to come, but I rejected it impatiently. What a hair-trigger state we had all gotten into!

I went off in search of Michael.

He was not in his room. A disorderly confusion of clothes, books, and papers gave mute testimony to his state of mind, and a nearly empty decanter of brandy told me that the Skipper's fears for him were justified. I thought first of the bootprint outside the living room window and then of Norman Farrington lying half-way down the bluff. Farrington Bluff was no place for a drunken man—particularly a drunken man in Michael's frame of mind.

In a vain hope of finding him, I rushed through the bathroom into my own room. He wasn't there. And I was reasonably certain that he wasn't downstairs. There were only two possibilities. Either he must be in talking to the Skipper or he must be outside. I rushed into the hall and raced with all my might to the Skipper's door. Without waiting to knock, I flung it open. The Skipper's oldkins lay on the bed and her boots on the floor beside them, but there was no one in the room. I had barely time to realize that fact, when a deafening report of a gun shook the entire house.

For a second I was too petrified to move. The sound had seemed to come from the direction of the next room—M. Farrington's. I dove through the

joining bathroom and pulled up with a bang.

M. Farrington lay face downward on the floor beside the dressing table, one arm thrown out at her side. As I dazedly knelt to turn her over, the hall door flew open to disclose Michael, his eyes red and bleary, blinking of me in amazement. We stared at each other.

"She's hurt. Get some water!" I managed finally through stiff lips.

His hesitancy, and I sensed more distrust in that pause than I could see on his sallow face. His eyes fell and he moved unsteadily toward the bathroom. I wrenched my attention from my own appalling predicament to the old lady.

She was alive. A bullet had torn through her left shoulder. Mechanically I noted that she had been shot from the rear at close range. There were powder marks on the back of her leopards robe, and the profuse bleeding in front seemed to indicate that the bullet had torn straight through. So Higgins had been right. We were still in danger!

Climbly Mike deposited a basin of water beside me. He seemed hypnotized, incapable of speech. And I was glad of it.

"Find the Skipper!" I said hoarsely, starting to bathe the wound with my handkerchief. "Hurry, Mike! Her heart's bad and—"

The Skipper was there beside me before he could seem to move. Her face was grim and set.

"Give me that, Jim," she said sternly, kneeling beside me. "There's a first-aid kit in the bathroom. Get it, please."

Higgins At The Keyhole

I GOT up with difficulty. I couldn't seem to get my mind away from the fact that I would be suspected of this shooting. It took me at least three minutes to find the first-aid kit in the cabinet over the basin. While I was fumbling around in the process, I could hear Gay's high excited voice.

The Skipper worked quickly and carefully. Between us, we lifted M. Farrington to the bed and stood waiting while the Skipper applied restoratives. Slowly, in a series of unpleasant groans, the old lady came out of it and was immediately acutely ill.

I made for the door as fast as I could go, only to bump smack into Higgins. He was standing in front of an obnoxious keyhole attitude in the hall.

"What has happened, sir?" he said without a trace of embarrassment.

I closed the door behind me with a jerk. "What are you doing, Higgins?" I countered.

"Miss Barbara was giving me some instructions in the lower hall. We heard what sounded like a shot and I hurried up here. I stayed in the hall at her request to keep the servants out of the way, sir."

"Very pat, Higgins." Glaring at him, I noticed suddenly that he was holding something in his hand—something wrapped up in a handkerchief. And he saw my look.

"I was in this on the stairs here just now. I thought perhaps you had better take care of it until the police arrive."

Deliberately he unwrapped from the handkerchief his own revolver, to my knowledge the only one on the bluff. I reached for it involuntarily and to this day I don't know what stopped me. Perhaps it was the sudden realization that even as he offered it to me, Higgins was carefully avoiding direct contact with the gun. I managed to take it, handkerchief and all, without touching the metal. Furiouly I hurried questions at him. No results that meant anything.

Cook was in the kitchen. He was sure of it because she had been there when he answered Miss Barbara's ring and both William and Annie were certain that she had not come up the back stairs. They had just left him. They claimed to have been in their rooms when they heard the shot, and he believed that they were because they had not been in the kitchen when the Skipper rang. They appeared immediately after the shot was heard. It was all very upsetting, just when we had been sure that the trouble was all over. He would very much like to know what had happened.

"Someone shot and painfully wounded Miss Farrington," I said bluntly.

"He staggered back against the wall. Painfully wounded," he repeated in a thin whisper. "Painfully!"

"A thought was dawning in my mind. 'Merely a flesh wound,' I said deliberately, with my eyes on his face. 'She's quite conscious and there's no danger.'"

It didn't work. His eyes were on the floor, his face expressionless.

"We realize that the killer is still at large in the house, tomorrow."

Scout picnic at Jackson Hot Springs Wednesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dunlap of Klamath Falls visited Sunday at his brother Howard's home here. They were accompanied home by Edna Dunlap for a week's visit.

The Gold Hill Grange served a hot chicken dinner Tuesday evening at the Grange hall to about 125 persons. Those from here who attended were Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Plenn, Mr. and Mrs. P. L. Wait, Mrs. Olga Croft and daughter Sylvia.

Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Dusenberry entertained at Sunday dinner Mr. and Mrs. Robert Sutherland of Portland, Mrs. H. H. Elhart and son Billy of Ashland, and Mr. and Mrs. P. L. Wait. After dinner the party visited the Hook Point and Sams Valley cemeteries and in the evening motored to Grants to visit Mr. and Mrs. Rob Dusenberry and children.

New Congressional Row. WASHINGTON, June 5.—(AP)—Difference between senate and house proposals to apply TVA principles nationally aroused expectations today of a congressional dispute that may extend into the 1938 session.

Be Correctly Dressed in AN ARTIST MODEL by ANTHONY B. HOFFMANN.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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

LESTER BRIANT—Wymore, Neb., HAS A BROTHER-IN-LAW NAMED LESTER, HIS WIFE AND SISTER ARE BOTH NAMED MAY, HE AND HIS WIFE BOTH HAD AUNTS NAMED CLARA AND BOTH AUNTS HAD SONS NAMED WILBUR AND ASA...

MOON STARRERS AND NO MORE STARS ARE BOTH ANAGRAMS OF ASTRONOMERS

JOSH DEVORE—New York, N. Y., STOLE 4 BASES IN A SINGLE INNING...—JUNE 20, 1912—

THE CAPITAL OF TEXAS HAS BEEN CHANGED 15 TIMES— AND HAS BEEN UNDER 6 DIFFERENT FLAGS!

Standing unique among her sister states as the only state in the Union to have once been an independent republic, Texas has had a colorful history.

First explored by shipwrecked Cabeza de Vaca in 1528, the territory was claimed for Spain by right of discovery. France protested the Spanish claim when La Salle founded a French colony at Matagorda Bay in 1685, but the settlement was soon abandoned. The Spanish were suitably awakened by the French threat, however, to start settling and fortifying the vast land, dotting it with presidios, missions and pueblos.

In 1777, it was formed into a royal Spanish province and named Tejas or Texas, after the confederacy of Tejas Indians.

A new flag was hoisted up over Texas in 1827 when the Mexican was

for independence from Spain was brought to a successful ending. Texas was joined to Coahuila to form a state of the Mexican federation. Again it changed governments when the Texas army defeated the forces of Santa Ana and declared Texas an independent republic in 1836. Nine years later, the United States admitted Texas into the Union. The state seceded during the Civil war and flew the Stars and Bars of the Confederacy until the conflict's finish. During its varied history, the seat of the government of Texas has been changed 15 times. Under early Spanish rule, it was governed from Mexico City. From 1720 to 1722 it was ruled by a Spanish governor in Los Adaes, now Robeline, La. Next was San Antonio, which remained the capital for over a century. Saltillo served as a provisional capital from 1824 to 1833 when Monclova was made the capital of Texas-Coahuila. It

was moved to San Felipe de Austin in 1835. Washington—on the Brazos served as the first seat of the Texas republic and was followed by Harrisburg, Galveston, Velasco, Columbia-on-the-Brazos, Houston, Austin, Houston-on-the-Brazos, and Washington-on-the-Brazos again. These movements, made between 1836 and 1842, were caused, through fear of Mexican attacks. In 1845 the capital was re-established in Austin where it has remained ever since.

Name Coincidences. None of Lester Briant's blood relations are related by blood to his wife's relatives. In addition to the name similarities cited in the cartoon, he had two uncles named Wilbur Thomas, one on his mother's side and the other on his father's, and has two aunts named Alice Harris.

Monday: Human Jumping Jack. MANILA, P. I., June 5.—(AP)—Word of a shipwreck in which 39 people were drowned was brought to Abing Cagayan province today by the master of the sailing ship Castro Hermance.

Track Stall Fatal. EUGENE, June 5.—(AP)—Because his motorcycle, stalled on the railway track, W. R. Steinhilber, 26, of Kerby Steinhilber, riding with him on the machine, escaped uninjured following the accident he died at 8 p. m. in a local hospital.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—A Secret Conference!

SKEETER... AND THE FEDERAL AGENT LANDED IN DEACON GRIMES' PASTURE... AND 'PHONED TOMMY TO WAIT FOR THEM... THEN SKEETS BORROWED A RIG FROM THE DEACON... AND DROVE THE GOVERNMENT MAN OUT TO TOMMY'S HOME...

2829

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—The Flatterer

HOWDY, MRS. HIGGING, RECKON CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER FOR THE SMARTEST LITTLE YOUNG LADY IN HILLSIDE AIN'T THEY?

WHY, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, MR. HOOKER.

AW, NOW, JUST AS MODEST AS USUAL, AREN'T YOU, BUT YOU CAN'T FOOL AN OLD-TIMER LIKE ME—I OUGHTA TURN YOU OVER MY KNEE AND SPANK YOU!

I'VE HEARD WHAT YOU'VE DONE FOR THIS STORE—EVERYBODY IN TOWN'S TALKIN' ABOUT YOU, MRS. HIGGING—PULLED THIS PLACE OUTA THE MUD BY ITS BOOTSTRAPS—

OH, MR. HOOKER, THEM'S BEN WEBSTER'S DOINGS—

I WON'T ARGUE YOU LITTLE WONDER-WORKER! HMMMMM, MIGHTY SHY O' STOCK, AIN'T YOU? HOW ABOUT A BILL O' GOODS?

WELL, ER, ER, MEBBE—

THE NEBBS—Just Financial Grief

EMMA WASN'T HER HEART IN HER WORK SINCE LUTHER GIVED HER OUT OF HER HORSE-RACE BET.

HEY, WHAT'S THAT BURNING? AND THE GUESTS ARE COMPLAINING THAT THE SERVICE IS BAD AND THE FOOD IS WORSE THAN THE SERVICE!

NOW, IF YOUR MANY LOVE AFFAIRS AND YOUR NIGHT LIFE ARE INTERFERING WITH YOUR WORK YOU'D BETTER RETIRE OR TAKE A VACATION—GIVE YOUR MONEY TO SOME CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION AND THEN IF ANYBODY ASKS YOU TO SQUANDER HIM—IT'S ON THE SQUARE.

IT AIN'T NO LOVE AFFAIR—IT'S \$2 I GAVE LUTHER TO SET ON GOLD-MINE AND I WOU OVER \$500 AND HE NEVER PAID ME.

WELL, IF YOU'RE PLAYING THE HORSES DON'T DO IT ON MY TIME—RETIRE AND GIVE YOUR SHARE AND GET VERY RICH—IT'S EASY—EVERYBODY KNOWS WHO PLAYS THE RACES GETS RICH.

WOMENFOLK

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

COMES IN FROM PLAY, SISTER REMINDING HIM NOT TO LEAVE HIS BAT ON HALL TABLE

THROWS SISTER A DIRTY LOOK AND PICKS BAT UP FROM TABLE

SETS IT DOWN IN CORNER, GRANDMA, PASSING BY, REMARKING HE ISN'T GOING TO LEAVE IT THERE, IS HE, DEAR?

SIGHS, AND CARRIES BAT TO COAT CLOSET

AUNT HATTIE SAYS PLEASE DON'T PUT IT IN THERE, IT'S ALWAYS FALLING OVER WHEN SHE GOES TO GET HER COAT OUT

MUTTERING, CARRIES IT UP TO HIS BEDROOM

MOTHER DISCOVERS HE PUT IT ON THE BED, Picking MUD ON BEDSPREAD AND ORDERS HIM TO SET IT OUT ON PORCH

OBEYS UNDER COMPELSSION, HOPING EARNESTLY THAT SOME MEMBER OF FAMILY WILL TRIP ON IT

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S MATTER POP

By C. M. PAYNE

AND DON'T DO ANYTHING AROUND HERE UNLESS YOU ASK ME!

YESSIE

OOMP

UH-UH, POP, MAY I CRY, PLEASE?

YESS-SS

TSAW

AWK!

PAVING NO ATTENTION

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By HAL FORREST

TOM, I MUST SEE YOU... IN PRIVATE!

WALT! THIS IS A BIG SURPRISE!

WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE HE WANTS WITH TOMMY, SKEETER?

DUMNO, MISSUS TOMKINS, BUT TOM SEEMS TO KNOW 'IM REAL WELL....

DID YOU EVER SEE THIS CHAP BEFORE, TOMMY?

N-NO... BUT, GREAT GUNS! HE LOOKS ENOUGH... LIKE ME... TO BE ME!...

By EDWIN ALGER

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Sardine Creek

SARDINE CREEK, June 5.—(SP)—Mr. and Mrs. Robert Sutherland of Portland motored down Saturday to spend the Memorial holidays here visiting friends and relatives, returning home Monday.

Miss Louise Barnish of Medford spent the week-end here visiting her friend and former schoolmate, Sylvia Croft. The girls attended the carnival in Grants Pass Saturday evening.

Mrs. H. H. Elhart and son Billy of Ashland spent Memorial day and Monday visiting relatives here.

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Dunlap and daughter Vivian visited Monday evening at the B. A. Dusenberry home.

Jean Smith, Marie and Hazel Kendall and Delores Drennan are employed at the Del Rio orchard thinning fruit.

En Shipley spent Sunday and Monday visiting friends in his old home, Sams Valley.

George and Ivan Smith made a summer trip to a mine in the Applegate country last week.

Mrs. Pauline Pygott, Mrs. Eva Smith and children attended the Girl