

# MURDER ON THE BLUFF

**SYNOPSIS:** First, the mysterious shooting of death of attractive Jude Blinshop makes us all jittery on this wild, stormy weekend at Farrington Bluff, home of Michael's aunt. A series of strange attacks is apparently explained when we find below the bluff the body of Michael's insane father, supposedly long since dead. But our relief is short-lived; Aunt Martha is shot in the shoulder by an unseen hand. Who held the gun? Mike, the Skipper, his tall, tuxedoed younger aunt, Gay Palmer, his red-headed sweetheart, Higgins, the old butler; William, the chauffeur; Cook; Annie, the maid; myself?

## Chapter 28

### The Case Against Me

WHEN Higgins finally spoke, his voice was cool and collected. "This is horrible, Mr. Jimmie."

"Yes," My plan crystallized. "Wait here, Higgins."

I went into the Skipper's room and, after considerable rummaging, located a box of bath powder. Holding the gun by the tip of the barrel with my fingers carefully wrapped in the handkerchief, I dusted the thing liberally with powder and then blew.

A faint white film remained on the shiny metal, but it was an even film. There were no fingerprints on the revolver. And Higgins, who had possessed the presence of mind to wrap his own hand in a handkerchief before touching it, had just attempted to thrust the thing into my outstretched bare hand.

"Until the police arrive," he said.

That second shooting was one of the most sinister episodes of those days and nights of terror. In broad daylight with everyone up and about we had hitherto considered ourselves safe. It was puzzling, too, for it seemed to represent an inexcusable slip in the killer's otherwise wrapped in the workable plans. He had managed to convince the entire household of the guilt of Norman Farrington who would never be able to disprove the charge. Why had he ruined all his work and why, of all people, would he shoot M. Farrington?

Martha herself had little evidence to offer. She had just gotten out of bed, she explained, with the intention of dressing for lunch. As she sat down at the dressing table, someone knocked at the door. Thinking that it was the Skipper, she called out, "Come in," without looking up. And that was all she remembered. She thought she caught a glimpse of a man's coat sleeve reflected in her mirror, but she wasn't sure.

We could get nothing more out of her. She was panic-stricken and hysterical. There was no side-stepping the fact that my presence in the room was singular, to put it mildly. The gun which Higgins had found was undoubtedly the weapon used. One bullet had been fired from it. And anyone could see that it would have been a simple thing for me to have fired from the door, deposit the revolver on the stand in the hall, and be the first person on the scene of the accident.

### It Looks Bad For Me

WE SAT in the living room, waiting for the Skipper's report on the effect of the sleeping powder which she had administered to her sister. Higgins had been ordered to tell the other servants that the revolver had gone off while I was cleaning it, and that no one had been hurt. As Gay pointed out, we might at least have some decent meals for the next few hours. We were apt to need them.

Gay and Michael sat close together. I think she was telling him the Skipper's story. In any case, he was listening intently, although his eyes strayed to me from time to time, clouded with something that puzzled me.

I had plenty of time to review the facts and to appreciate the overwhelming extent of my danger. In the first place, I had once been in love with Jude Blinshop. In the second place, no one had seen me on Friday night from the time the Skipper left me until Michael roused me at something after 11 o'clock. True, I had been in full sight of everybody when Cook had screamed from the kitchen.

at it seemed evident that Mike's father had been responsible for that mélé in the kitchen. Certainly it would explain his reentry into the house.

I had been in the living room alone when Gay and Mike heard prowling footsteps in the hall. William had clearly suspected me of hitting him over the head and dumping him down the back stairs. My own experience at that time could be explained all too easily by a clever prosecutor. There would always be Norman Farrington for him to fall back upon whenever his logic hit a snag.

I had been the first upon the scene of the latest crime, found there by several witnesses. No one but myself could account for my actions after I left Higgins downstairs. Good Lord! That conversation with Higgins! A first-year student of law could make considerable out of that! Murderer, warned that suspicion still exists, becomes desperate, etc. My head was buzzing with it. Over and over again I reviewed that ghastly moment with Higgins in the upper hall, when by the fraction of a second I had escaped putting the final, damning link in the chain of evidence—my own fingerprints on the fatal weapon.

### A Faustian Mephisto

HIGGINS announced lunch rather early, explaining that Miss Farrington was not yet asleep and that Miss Barbara had ordered him to serve at once. But the Skipper's plan failed utterly. Far from creating

diversion, lunch was an even more depressing experience than doing nothing in the living room. Without either the Skipper or M. Farrington to keep us going, we picked at food in uncomfortable silence. I could not bear to look at Higgins. Had he offered me to kick deliberately, knowing that I had already been wiped clean of the murderer's fingerprints? Would he have denied the entire episode in court?

I thought that he would. In my imagination the frail old man was beginning to take on the proportions of a Faustian Mephisto. What had he intended to tell me before he changed his mind? Anything? He might have been building up that chain of circumstantial evidence deliberately.

Higgins was the owner of the gun which had in all probability killed Jude Blinshop and wounded M. Farrington. Our searches had disclosed no other weapon in the house. Whoever used that gun on Jude must have cleaned and reloaded it before it was handed to Michael on Friday night. And who had as good an opportunity for doing that as Higgins?

Our search had been with the rest of us when the episode in the kitchen transpired, and in the room with all the others when William and I met our fate. But in both those cases the active presence of the lunatic was not only possible, but distinctly probable. The noiseless tread that had always seemed pleasant to me before suddenly became threatening and sinister. I jumped every time the man came near me with food.

There was no longer any sense in dodging the fact that the murderer must be a recognized inmate of the house. The possibility of a second unknown wandering the Bluff in darkness was absurd. It was obvious that the person who shot M. Farrington had known just where to find her, just where to dispose of his or her gun, just where to conceal himself or herself after the shot had been fired.

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Tomorrow, I check Norman Farrington's sinister activities.

said river, and driving tourists and sportsmen from the river, menacing the public health and safety, and is causing irreparable damage.

A Curry county planning board in session the same day, directed a committee to draw up a similar resolution and place it where it would be the most effective, according to the Curry County Reporter, Gold Beach newspaper.

## CURRY COUNTY TO FILE ROGUE MINE MUD ACTION SOON

## MULTNOMAH DEMS HIT BY HARMONY

GRANTS PASS, June 7.—(AP)—The Curry county court carried out its announced intention and directed the district attorney at Gold Beach Wednesday to "institute appropriate proceedings to abate said nuisance" in a resolution charging great damage to Rogue river and adjoining territory by mining, according to a report from Gold Beach.

The resolution stated: "The continued dumping of tailings and mining debris into the said Rogue river and its tributaries, has and now is rapidly destroying the recreational value of said stream, depreciating values of real and personal property in the county, impeding navigation, making the waters unfit for use for irrigating and domestic purposes, interfering with fish propagation preventing fishing on health and safety of the public."

LAKEVIEW, June 7.—(AP)—The lumber and sawmill workers union assumed a delegation today to go to Willow Ranch, Calif. to protest the closing of a mill on June 1.

## STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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

**"CURVE OF FORGETTING"**  
THE AVERAGE PERSON FORGETS MORE OF WHAT HE LEARNS IN THE FIRST HOUR AFTER LEARNING IT THAN HE FORGETS IN THE NEXT THIRTY DAYS!

**THE HUMAN JUMPING JACK!**  
A. SOUTHWORTH, Utica, N.Y., CAN KICK AS HIGH AS HIS HEAD WITH HIS ANKLES TIED TOGETHER!

**THE REVERGING BOX—WHICH END IS OPEN?**

**A "THUG" WAS ORIGINALLY A MEMBER OF A RELIGIOUS FRATERNITY IN INDIA—THE SECT PRACTISED MURDER AS A MEANS OF WORSHIP.**

## BOURBON PICNIC SQUABBLE RAGES

PORTLAND, June 7.—(AP)—Management of the forthcoming annual Democratic picnic reverted to the Willamette Democratic society when O. V. Badley, its president, was elected chairman of the committee in charge of the affair.

The election, at a meeting attended by delegates from the various democratic organizations, was the latest development in a controversy which began when John J. Beckman, chairman of the Multnomah county central committee, appointed a committee to arrange for the picnic.

Objections from members of the Willamette valley society, which had staged the picnic in past years, and others in the party resulted in the meeting.

Beckman suggested that an executive committee of seven be elected, the members to pick a chairman.

## SOCIAL SECURITY RETURNS PUZZLE

PORTLAND, June 7.—(AP)—Employers neglecting to make proper social security tax returns face penalties ranging from five to 25 percent of the tax due monthly. J. W. Maloney, collector of internal revenue, said today.

Explaining that while title IX of the act dealing with the unemployment compensation tax applies to employers of eight or more persons, title VIII, having to do with old age benefits, applies to all employers of one or more not specifically exempt under the act.

"Too many employers are confusing the provisions of title VIII and IX and think that because they do not employ as many as eight persons they are exempt from paying this tax," Maloney said.

The law makes the employer liable for the employer's share of the tax whether he collects it or not, the collector explained.

## TAILSPIN TOMMY—A Dangerous Proposal!

**THE FEDERAL AGENT SHOWED TOMMY THE PILOT LICENSE OF THE SLAIN SPY, WHO AMAZINGLY RESEMBLED THE THREE-POINT FLYER... THEN OUTLINED A STARTLING AND MOST DANGEROUS PROPOSAL...**

**THAT WAS ANTHONY LACEY. I'D LIKE YOU TO IMPERSONATE HIM AND HELP THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE NAB HIS GANG...**

**LACEY WAS ONE OF THE PILOT MEMBERS OF A LARGE INTERNATIONAL SYNDICATE, DEALING IN ESPIONAGE FOR A RADICAL COUNTRY.**

## BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Oswald Clicks!

**WHAT'D YOU GOND HERB HOOKEM HOTFOOTIN' IT TO HIGGING FER?**

**LISSEN, MUSHHEAD, DONT YOU G'POSE MY UPSTAIRS CLICKS ONCE IN A WHILE?**

**THE GOONER OLD HETTY AN' THE WEBSTER SPROUT GIT OVER A BARREL IN MONEY MATTERS, THE GOONER US AN' UNCLE CALES MOVE IN— THAT'S WHY, AND MEBBE HERB HOOKEM WONT TAKE THE OLD GIRL T'TOWN—**

## THE NEBBS—Gyping Will Out

**SAY, I SAW YOU SNEAK IN THAT ALLEY WHEN YOU SEED ME SO I RUN AROUND THE BLOCK TO KETCH YOU. DONT SAY YOU DONT SEE ME!**

**I DONT SEE YOU, HONEY-FACE... I ALLUS GO THROUGH THE ALLEY FOR A SHORT CUT.**

**YES? WHO YOU GOT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS ALLEY TO SELL EGGS TO, GYPER?**

**I FOUND OUT THAT YOU NEVER BET WITH THE HORSE BETTOR, MR. JACKSON— WHAT YOU GOT TO SAY ABOUT THAT HONEY-TALKER?**

**YOU'RE RIGHT— I DONT THINK GOLD- ME HAD A CHANCE TO WIN THAT RACE SO I DONT WANT TO SQUANDER YOUR \$2... BUT I'LL PAY YOU EVERY CENT, CHUBBY GIRL!**

## DIFFICULT DECISIONS

**TRYING TO GET UP COURAGE TO CALL THE WHOLE TRANSACTION OFF WHEN, AFTER YOUR PURCHASE HAS BEEN WRAPPED UP, YOU DISCOVER THAT THE SHIRT YOU SELECTED BELONGED IN THE EXPENSIVE PILE AND NOT WITH THE MARK-DOWNS**

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## S'MATTER POP

**AND MY POP IS THE NICEST MAN IN THE WORLD!**

**OH, YEA?**

**MY POP IS THA NICEST MAN IN THE WORLD! HOW DO YA LIKE THAT?**

**POP, I'M VERY SORRY, YOU'RE SECOND NICEST MAN IN THA WORLD!**

**OH-H, YEAH?**

**YEAH!**

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## By HAL FORREST

**IF YOU'LL DO AS I ASK, I'LL PERSONALLY CLEAR UP YOUR RECORD... AND HAVE YOUR LICENSE BACK IN QUICK TIME...**

**I'LL DO IT!**

**PAPERS FOUND ON LACEY LINK A CERTAIN NIGHT CLUB PROPRIETOR IN METROPOLIS CITY, AS CONTACT MAN, THROUGH HIM WE HOPE TO GRAB THE "HIGHER-UPS."**

**BUT I'VE BEEN "GROUNDED"**

## By EDWIN ALGER

**OSWALD PILLINGS, YOU HAVE GOT A BRAIN OR TWO!**

**HE'LL LOAD HER UP WITH 60 MUCH JULK SHE'LL NEVER FINISH PAYIN' FER IT—**

**NOW, WHO IN THE WORLD IS THAT BIRD? HE'S NOT ONE OF OUR CUSTOMERS—**

**TAXI! TAXI! BOY, FETCH ME A CAB!**

**YES, SUH, BOSS!**

## By SOL HESS

**YOU'RE RIGHT— I DONT THINK GOLD- ME HAD A CHANCE TO WIN THAT RACE SO I DONT WANT TO SQUANDER YOUR \$2... BUT I'LL PAY YOU EVERY CENT, CHUBBY GIRL!**