

MURDER ON THE BLUFF

SYNOPSIS: Our wild, stormy weekend at Farrington Bluff, home of Michael's aunt, opens with the mysterious shooting of death of attractive Jude Blinnhop. A series of strange attacks is apparently explained when we find below the bluff the body of Michael's mad father, supposedly long since dead. Then Aunt Martha is shot in the shoulder by an unseen hand, and the Skipper, Mike's tall and tweedy younger aunt, disappears. I leave Mike with Gay Palmer, his fiancée, and go with William, the chauffeur, to search the stable and garage for the Skipper.

Chapter 22

'Find Those Powders!'

"I needed no flashlight to tell me that the room was empty—empty and exactly as we had left it. Walking to the wardrobe door, William swung it open. The cap and trousers still hung where we had found them. Picking up the former, William turned toward me, a puzzled expression on his face. "What's this?" he said heavily, pointing to the bullet hole in its crown. "Like a flash of lightning another brainstrom struck me. I had fired Higgins' gun in the garage yesterday morning. The Skipper had fired it in the library yesterday afternoon. But only one bullet had been fired from the revolver which Higgins claimed to have found in the hall. Unless someone had cleaned the bullet's gun at least twice, there must be another revolver on Farrington Bluff, and that revolver must be in the possession of the murderer!"

My stare was making William uneasy. "That's a bullet hole," he said. "I'm sorry, William. I did that yesterday morning. Miss Barbara and I thought we heard someone in that closet and were weren't taking any chances. I'll get you another cap." He didn't believe it. I wondered what sort of evidence he could be piecing together in his stubborn mind around a bullet hole in a discarded old cap.

"Come along," I said briskly. "It's still light enough to take a quick look around outside, if we hurry." We hurried, clumping down the stairs, we raced into the open air. This time it in no way ruffled me. I felt as if a tremendous weight suspended over my head was being lowered by a slow, inevitable pulley. It was much darker than it had been for our search the day before, but the clearness of the air made it possible to see farther with less difficulty.

It took but a fraction of a minute to ascertain that the rocks on which the buildings stood and the beach below them were deserted. I was already sure that there was nothing between the bluff and the house, for I had stood staring in that direction when I first stepped outdoors. I figured that by following the driveway we could get a pretty good view of the entire northern lawn.

Accordingly, down the drive we went, William watching to the right and I to the left. There was nothing unusual. Only numerous sticks and limbs blown down by the storm. In one place half of a huge elm had been snapped off and hung suspended on a few retentive fibers, waiting for a breath of wind to send it hurtling to the ground. At the foot of the drive, water still seethed through the narrow gut separating us from the main-land.

From this point, where the bridge usually stood, the driveway of the Bluff sweeps off in a rough circle—one section going toward the garage, the other toward the house. We followed the latter, and at the house we branched off to the path which runs from the west terrace to the tennis courts and beyond them to the boat-house. Even less of the pier was standing now. A few piles still held their ground, but they were shaking prophetically in the boiling water. The boat-house was still completely inundated. Slowly with difficulty we climbed the rocks, scene of Michael's downfall. No one and no trace of anyone.

I Look Over The Bluff

"WELL, William," I said, "we may as well go back to the house." He made no reply. I puffed down the rocks, nursing my stiff fingers and treading gingerly on numb feet. The weather was getting colder by the minute and our raincoats were not exactly adequate. The storm, decidedly, was over.

William had nothing to say throughout the walk back to the house. I fancied him busy with his own thoughts in which he was no doubt hanging me with the last bit of evidence. My own thoughts were dismal. I was thinking that the things happening during the Skipper's first disappearance weren't exactly calculated to cheer us up about this second one. Where the devil could he be? She had been left taking care of M. Farrington before lunch, and no one had seen her since but Higgins, when he received her orders for an early lunch. That was three or four hours ago.

Avoiding the game room door, we sweated along the rear terrace in the direction of the kitchen. As we did so,

I was struck by an appalling thought. My eyes swept toward the bluff. "We forgot one place, William." He got what I meant and showed it plainly. We crossed that strip of lawn like two old men who have indulged in a skating spree and have difficulty with their underpinnings. I forced myself to look over the edge of the bluff. There was nothing but sand, water, and dead scrub grass. The tide was well out.

If there had been anything there a few hours ago, it had long since washed away, and the chances of its ever being found again on Farrington Bluff were slight. The sight of Norman Farrington's body there that morning had been pretty bad, but the mental picture of the Skipper floating for days in that churning, half-frozen water was worse. We turned dumbly back toward the house.

We let ourselves in at the main door. An unearthly silence seemed to settle down upon us in the house, enveloping you like a blanket. It was dark—much darker than it had been outside and more terrifying. I didn't want to face Michael just then, and the idea of my own company was insupportable. I followed William into the kitchen.

They were waiting for us at the kitchen table, riggins with a dilapidated old pipe in his hand and Annie trying furiously to extinguish her cigarette. Cook's face was red, her eyes bleary, and her breath strongly alcoholic.

"Did you find her?" burst out Annie. Under drawn brows, Cook was regarding us oddly. "No," I said. "Which one of you fed the dogs last?" There was dead silence. Then Cook rumbled, "They ain't been fed. I forgot 'em, and so did Miss Barbara. The meat's there in the ice box like always."

"Who fed them Friday?" I demanded. "Cook's voice, if anything, was a little thicker. "Miss Barbara fed 'em of course. They ain't been fed since." "Are you sure?" I snapped. "Sure I'm sure. I handle that ice box."

"Feed them now, will you, William?" I said. Since Higgins had obviously told me of the story, there seemed little use in keeping them in the dark. The results might be disastrous when the police arrived.

"We can't find Miss Barbara," I told them. "There seems to be some danger of her having fallen over the cliff. Did any of you see her this afternoon?" There was no answer. They were all staring at me, turned to Higgins.

"When did she give you the order for an early lunch?" His reply was prompt. "At 11:30. When I heard the bell, I glanced at the clock to be sure I had not failed to start things at the usual hour." "Where did she get from?" "She rang me on the house phone and gave me her orders then."

"You mean that you didn't actually see her at 11:30?" "No, sir." "More complications. "How many rooms are connected on the house phone?" "All of them, Mr. James. You may overhear a conversation from any room in the house, but the buzzers are independent for each room. You push the one you want."

Then the Skipper might have come from any room in the house—or someone else might have called for her. Had the early lunch been part of the plan? For the life of me I couldn't say why. I turned wearily to the door.

Ipecac!

I PAUSED for a second outside of M. Farrington's door to get my breath before I went in. Gay and Michael were both leaning over the bed, and the faces they raised to mine were drawn. I shook my head.

"Not a trace of her." Gay's breath came sharply, and Mike turned away from us. My eyes fell to M. Farrington's pillow. Her face was colorless. Even in that silent room her breathing was imperceptible. "Look at her, Jim." There was a catch in Michael's voice. "She looks—queer."

Queer was hardly the word for it. Her mouth was drawn and tight, her throat working spasmodically. Groping for her pulse, I found her hand to be like ice. If her pulse was stirring at all, it was stirring very feebly. I stared up into Michael's smouldering eyes.

"Find those damned powders!" I ordered. "Gay, see if any of the servants know anything about this stuff. Hurry!" I was trying to remember what I had ever heard about poisoning, and I couldn't remember a single thing. One used a stomach pump, I supposed, but where the devil were we to get a stomach pump? "White of egg? They had given me that dose once when a kid I had amused myself by eating leadstools. But was that of any use to me after the poison had been taken? The memory of a very poor collegiate practical joke flashed across my mind. Ipecac! There might be ipecac in the house."

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Mike and I frantically search the cellar for the Skipper, Monday.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



ANIMAL MONEY—
COINS OF THE IRISH FREE STATE
FEATURE BIRDS, BEASTS AND FISH...

Solution to yesterday's puzzle—
CROSSING THE 10 MATCHES
IN 5 MOVES, MOVING ONE
MATCH AND JUMPING 2
EACH TIME.

TOMMY BURNS
WORLD'S
SMALLEST
HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING
CHAMPION, WAS ONLY
5 FEET 7 INCHES TALL
AND WEIGHED 160 LB.
HE WAS A FOOT
SHORTER AND 100 LB.
LIGHTER THAN
PRIMO CARNERA!

Northwest Passage
For centuries navigators and explorers sought the Northwest passage, a waterway north of the equator over which a ship could sail westward from the Atlantic to the Pacific and onward to the Orient. Century after century they missed their goal—until Roald Amundsen finally hit it in his sloop, the "Gjøa"—only seven and a half years before man constructed a "Northwest Passage" with the Panama Canal. Strange as it seems, the centuries of search had gone for naught. No other voyages have been made through the watery trail which Amundsen blazed in 1906, for its treacherous ice makes it of no practical use to commercial shipping. The Panama Canal, completed in 1914, did away with any necessity for nature's long-sought Northwest Passage.

Search for this passage began not long after Columbus first voyage, for it was soon discovered that he had not found India, but a continent, in between. Explorers firmly believed that by sailing northward and westward they would discover a waterway to the Orient. First trips made with this definite purpose in mind began with the voyages of the Cabots in 1497 and were continued from time to time by English expeditions until 1847 with the ill-fated Franklin expedition. Many discoveries were made by these explorers, but never the Northwest Passage. In 1903 to 1906, Amundsen made the trip by way of

To Return Suspect
SALLEM, June 11.—(AP)—Pennsylvania officers are expected here tomorrow to return William Meyers, murder suspect, to that state, Salem police said today.

ML Hood Lodge to Open
PORTLAND, June 11.—(AP)—Visitors at Portland's annual Rose festival will get a look at the timberline lodge on Mount Hood Sunday when the new government-owned hostelry is opened.

Portland, June 11.—(AP)—Steve McPherson, Portland matchmaker, received weather faded letters today taken from the wreckage of the airplane in the mountains of Utah.

Bar Wreck Reports
PORTLAND, June 11.—(AP)—Accepting the new state statute, the Portland police department said today traffic accident records will no longer be available for public inspection.

Phone 642 We'll rain away your refuse City Sanitary Service.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Tommy's Mother Is Puzzled!

ANTHONY LACEY, PILOT FOR A GREAT ESPIONAGE GANG, PLOTTING AGAINST THIS COUNTRY, WAS SLAIN BY SECRET SERVICE MEN. THE STARTLING RESEMBLANCE OF THE DEAD FLYER TO TOMMY WAS NOTED BY THE CHIEF OF THE FEDERAL AGENTS, WHO HAS PERSUADED TOM TO IMPERSONATE LACEY AND UNMASK THE SPY LEADERS...

MOTHER!...I'M NOT GOING TO PUERTO LUZON AFTER ALL...I'M GOING...ERR...I'M... YES?

MOTHER, WHATEVER I'VE SAID PLEASE FORGET IT. I AM GOING TO PUERTO LUZON, AND I'VE GOT TO LEAVE RIGHT NOW!

AS YOU THINK BEST, SON... BUT...

BUT, TOMMY! YOUR HAT! ...AND YOUR SUITCASE!

ERR...YES, OF COURSE, I'LL NEED MY HAT...

WELL, I DO DECLARE! I NEVER SAW TOMMY ACT SO STRANGE BEFORE...

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Surprise Coming?

WORRYING, BEN?

NOPE, HAVEN'T GOT TIME FOR IT—BUT I'M TRYING TO THINK THIS THING OUT—

YOU KNOW, THE PUBLIC'S PRETTY SQUARE—IF YOU TREAT FOLKS DECENTLY AND GIVE THEM FAIR PRICES, THEY'LL TRADE WITH YOU—THE BIG THING IS TO GET MORE AND MORE OF THEM TO KNOW ABOUT YOU

IF ALL THE FOLKS IN TOWN WERE TALKING FRIENDLY-LIKE ABOUT HIGGINS' STORE, WE'D GO PLACES! WE'VE GOT TO DO SOME BRAND NEW STUNTS AND—

WAIT! I'LL BE BACK IN A JIFFY!

BY JOVE, THIS IS WHAT I WANT! MY OLD GUTAWAY COAT AND PIN-STRIPED TROUSERS—I'LL DO MY PART TO MAKE FOLKS TALK ABOUT HIGGINS!

THE NEBBS—Making Up

HELLO, MADDY CAT

REMEMBER, MISS GRUNTLEY, THIS IS A BANK AND YOU'RE NOT HERE IN YOUR SOCIAL CAPACITY

WELL, I WAS THINKIN' PERHAPS BECAUSE WERE HAVIN' POT ROAST AND NOODLES AND CRISPY POTATO PANCAKES, WERE YOU'D LIKE TO COME OVER FOR DINNER TONIGHT?

OH, WELL—LET'S SEE—HAVE I GOT AN ENGAGEMENT?

NO, I DON'T THINK I HAVE—I'LL GET THERE AT SIX O'CLOCK—GON' TO HAVE SOUP?

YES, PEA SOUP—ON ACCOUNT OF WERE HAVIN' NOODLES WITH THE ROAST—I DIDN'T HAVE NOODLE SOUP—I THOUGHT OVERNOODLE AND GET NOGESTION

HERE COMES A VOTE FOR LUTHER FROM BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA, FROM ONE WHO SIGNS HER NAME 'PLAYFUL'

YEAR IN JAIL TO BEATER OF BABE

ROSEBURG, Ore., June 11.—(AP)—Leonard Hopkins, Canyonville barber, and his 22-year-old wife, Cordella, entered today upon a long separation, as the woman left for Salem to begin a sentence of 12 years for involuntary manslaughter, and her husband was placed in a cell in the Douglas county jail to which he was sentenced today for a term of one year. Thus the state closed a chapter in a child beating case which aroused more widespread sentiment in Douglas county than any criminal action to be heard here in recent years.

WINDOW GLASS—We sell window glass and will replace your broken windows reasonably. Trowbridge Coolet Works.

MAHONEY INVITES NORRIS TO VISIT

WASHINGTON, June 11.—(AP)—Willis E. Mahoney, former mayor of Klamath Falls and frequently mentioned as a senate candidate against Senator Frederick Steiwer, invited Senator George W. Norris of Nebraska today to visit Oregon and speak on his power program.

Norris said he would attempt to arrange the trip west after congress adjourns. The senator said he was interested in carrying his message for a Columbia river authority to the people most directly affected by the legislation.

The Klamath Falls visitor left for Oregon last night after discussing the Oregon senatorial election with Postmaster James Farley, chairman of the democratic party.

LAST CALLS
By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

KISSES SMALL DAUGHTER GOOD-NIGHT AND CLOSSES DOOR, THANKFUL THAT THE DAY IS OVER

HALFWAY DOWNSTAIRS HEARS A CALL THAT SHE HASN'T GOT HER DOLL WHO ALWAYS SLEEPS BESIDE HER

GOES BACK, TUCKS THE DOLL INTO BED WITH HER AND CLOSSES DOOR AGAIN

STARTS DOWN, BUT HEARS A SHOUT MAY SHE HAVE A DRINK OF WATER?

CARRIES A GLASS OF WATER IN TO HER, AND SAYS GOOD-NIGHT ALL OVER AGAIN

IS STOPPED HALFWAY DOWN BY A CRY THAT SHE DIDN'T KISS HER GOOD-NIGHT

REMINDS HER SHE MISSED HER BEFORE, DAUGHTER ARGUING SHE DIDN'T THIS LAST TIME AFTER THE GLASS OF WATER

SIGHS, GOES BACK AND KISSES HER, AND FLEES, HEARING A LAST FAINT "MOTHER!" AS SHE PASSES OUT OF EAR-SHOT

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S'MATTER POP
By C. M. PAYNE

HEY! SMATTER?

WOW! BAW!

WHAT'S THE RIOT?

HONEST, POP, I WAS ONLY TRYIN' TO HELP HIM!

I DON'T NEED ANY HELP! I KIN DO THIS MYSELF!

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By HAL FORREST

By EDWIN ALGER

By SOL HESB