

MURDER ON THE BLUFF

SYNOPSIS: A mysterious shot kills Judd Blinnup, my old flame, at the start of our stormy weekend at Farrington Bluff, home of Michael's aunts. Strange attacks follow; then we find the body of Michael's mad father below the bluff. Stout, Victorian Aunt Martha is shot in the shoulder and nearly finished with sleeping powder. The Skipper, Mike's tall, tuxedoed younger aunt, disappears; we find her six hours later, bound in the loft, all but dead. Higgins, the old butler, is shot to death, apparently by suicide. Then I notice the gun is in his right hand. And Higgins was left-handed.

Chapter 49

I Set My Trap

I CHECKED them off on my fingers. Gay, Michael, M. Farrington, William, Annie and—yes, and Cook, III as she was, Cook could have crossed that hall, fired, pushed the old man over on the bed, placed the gun in his hand and beat a hasty retreat. Any one of them could. And all my efforts at cross-examination only led to lies and defiance. They were shielding either themselves or someone else—every one of them.

I wanted a trap—a trap that no alibi could spring. And I wanted it before they all collected for breakfast and the murderer had a chance to suspect that his plan had not worked.

There was only one question on which any trap could hinge—the reason for the presence of the revolver in Higgins' right hand. It could have been put there because the murderer was ignorant of the fact that it should have been in the left hand, because the murderer forgot in his excitement, or because the murderer desired to throw suspicion on someone else. They all seemed good possibilities. The choice depended entirely upon the identity of the culprit.

All of the people in the house, Gay was the only person who could have done it out of ignorance. She was also the one person in the house against whom there had been not one shred of evidence at any time. She was impulsive and hot-headed. The murderer might or might not be either.

The murderer certainly was cold, logical and capable of swift action. In a crisis Gay was all of those things. It was possible that her rows with Michael had been a safety valve for more nerve strain than we had realized. Yes, Gay was capable of those murders, but I could not even remotely guess at a reason behind them.

Michael, on the other hand, certainly knew all of Higgins' characteristics. If Michael had placed that gun in the butler's right hand, had done it because he lost his head, and Michael in such a situation would be quite apt to lose his head.

His aunt, on the contrary, would be very cool. And M. Farrington did not like Gay. I could not help feeling that if M. Farrington were ever aroused, to the point of committing a murder, she would not hesitate to cast suspicion on any luckless soul who had incurred her dislike.

It seemed as though both Cook and Annie would head off the murderer in such a situation. But William would be cool as ice. But, without exception, every one of them knew that Higgins was left-handed.

I sought a trap that would hinge around those characteristics as I saw them and around the peculiar circumstances in which the body was found. The sight of the body was not much help. I covered it.

Then I started methodically and worked my way from the bed around the room, under the rug, under the bed, through the pitifully few possessions in the dresser and wardrobe. Not many spoils to show for 70-odd years of hard work. For my purpose, nothing to show at all.

It was a quarter of seven. At any time now the round-up for breakfast was apt to start and something told me that I must question the suspects individually or give up the whole attempt. Hopelessly I stared at that room, trying to find a retreat from it. A trap I must spring a trap—from. And my mind was a blank.

I stared down at the figure on the bed and the idea came. Three strides took me into the hall. Conclusive proof or otherwise, I knew what I was going to do.

Panic Seizes Gay

ALL the way to Gay's door I was thinking of only one possibility. What if she wasn't there? But she must be!

"Come in!" called a cheerful voice. "Oh—hello, Jim. I was just going to start down. Why—what's the matter?"

I put a finger to my lips. "Shhhh!" I said hoarsely. "Don't let the others hear you. Come quickly!"

She gave me one awful look and the brush in her hand fell clattering

to the floor. "Jimmie, what is it? Oh—"

But I clapped a hand over her mouth before she could speak fairly started.

"Quiet!" I hissed. "I've just discovered something they'll all have to see. You'll have to show me how to break it to them."

I had not underestimated Gay Palmer. She was suddenly as calm as if I had merely come to escort her to breakfast. When the panic was completely gone from her eyes I removed my hand.

"Is it Mike?" she demanded levelly. "Don't fool with me, Jim. Is he all right?"

"He's all right," I said, leading her into the hall. That short silent walk to Higgins' room was ghastly. I was obliged to concentrate on all the worst features of the crimes before I could force myself to push open his door. Gay walked in without a sign of alarm, and I followed her, closing the door and putting my back against it. Swiftly her eyes swept the room from the bed to the far wall and back to my face.

"Why—what is it?" she said blankly.

There was a dead, heavy weight in my chest. Whatever she had done, this was the girl that Michael wanted to marry. Violently I wished that my slow wits had been able to devise something quick and conclusive in place of my slow, questionable scheme.

I was banking desperately on the Skipper's evidence. Briefly, I had reasoned that if one of the servants was the culprit, the Skipper's evidence added to the circumstantial chain which I had built up against the murderer would be all that was necessary. However, if a member of the Skipper's family or a person who might shortly become a member of it was guilty, the Skipper would lie and it would be necessary for someone else to prove their guilt.

Going back over the scene of the finding of Higgins' body, I had realized that not Michael, Gay or M. Farrington could possibly have seen the body as it lay on the bed. Annie and William had been standing in the doorway, completely blocking off their view. Consequently, if any one of them knew in what position both the body and the gun had been found, that person was the murderer.

I intended to ask each one in turn to help me prove that Higgins was a suicide. The murderer had had plenty of time to ponder over his or her blunders. Therefore, if any one of them would be all that was necessary for himself. Defeated, he again unsuccessfully ran for the post on the Democratic ticket in 1924 and 1926.

In 1924, Fernald served as delegate at large for the Democratic national convention and in 1928 was a member of the Democratic national committee, as proxy, at the Houston, Texas, convention. In 1931 a switch in politics elected Fernald as a Republican to the Maine state house of representatives and in 1932 he served as a delegate to the Republican national convention at Chicago.

In 1933 he was re-elected state representative as a Republican and won a state senatorship in 1935 on the same ticket.

Death on the Race Track Owned by Mrs. J. Bosley, Maryland sportswoman, Chase Me was ridden in his first race by D. Bellizzi, ill-fated jockey, who was killed by a fall in a race at Jamaica, L. I., on May 17, 1934. Chase Me came in a winner in his first race and followed it up with a string of six more victories.

At Belmont Park, May 19, 1934, Chase Me ran in the Metropolitan handicap against the cream of the horse world, rounding the stretch

and big cigar, may break up the comedy team of Wheeler and Woolsey for a year at least.

Woolsey is at his Malibu beach home—dubbed the "house that jokes built"—suffering from what physicians diagnose as a "physical breakdown."

Starting date of their new picture, "The Kangaroos," has been moved forward from July 1 to August 15 owing to Woolsey's illness and there

is a strong possibility it may have to be postponed indefinitely.

Whether he'll make the picture or not depends on the decision of physicians, but even if they permit him to go through with this one, Woolsey has been advised to retire from the screen for a year on his completion.

Timing time for Too Late to Classify Ads is 1:30 p. m.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



UNITED IN DEATH!
CHASE ME, FAMOUS RACE HORSE,
BROKE HIS LEG AND WAS KILLED ON THE SAME DAY THAT THE FIRST JOCKEY EVER TO RIDE HIM WAS BEING BURIED! May 19, 1934

POLITICAL HODGEPODGE—
ROY L. FERNALD,
of Wintertport, Maine,
WAS A CANDIDATE FOR THE
STATE LEGISLATURE BEFORE
HE WAS OLD ENOUGH TO VOTE!

3 TIMES A DEFEATED
DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE,
HE WAS ELECTED 3 TIMES AS A
REPUBLICAN AND IN 1932
WAS A DELEGATE TO THE REPUBLICAN
NATIONAL CONVENTION AFTER BEING A
DELEGATE TO THE DEMOCRATIC
CONVENTION OF 1928...



Political Hodgepodge

Only 20, in 1922, when he first ran as a Democratic candidate for the Maine house of representatives, Roy Fernald found himself in the odd position of being too young to vote for himself. Defeated, he again unsuccessfully ran for the post on the Democratic ticket in 1924 and 1926.

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turn, Chase Me stumbled, fell and broke his leg. He was destroyed. On the same day his first jockey, Bellizzi was buried.

Black Walnut Stomata Quite complicated in their structure, the minute, mouth-like openings on leaves known as stomata serve as a plant's breathing organs. Different species of plants have different numbers of stomata. The mistletoe leaf has only about 200 to the square inch on both the upper and lower surfaces. The black walnut leaf has in the neighborhood of 300,000 stomata to the square inch on its upper side.

Tomorrow: Trains in Crime!

COMEDIAN MUST TAKE LONG REST

HOLLYWOOD, July 1.—(UP)—Illness of Bob Woolsey, the long, thin comedian with the rubber-tipped glasses

and big cigar, may break up the comedy team of Wheeler and Woolsey for a year at least.

Woolsey is at his Malibu beach home—dubbed the "house that jokes built"—suffering from what physicians diagnose as a "physical breakdown."

Starting date of their new picture, "The Kangaroos," has been moved forward from July 1 to August 15 owing to Woolsey's illness and there

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TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Sealed Letter!

OBEYING ROBLE'S INSTRUCTIONS, TOM PROCEEDED TO NO. 12 K STREET, TO DELIVER THE SEALED LETTER TO JOSEF ORT, A MEMBER OF THE ESPIONAGE GANG, WHICH TOMMY HOPES TO TURN OVER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE... BUT AFTER HE ENTERED THE HOUSE...



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—"Tuttington Bread"



THE NEBBS—A Man Has Come to Court



MADERA SANITARIUM OFFICES DESTROYED



KNICKERBOCKER PRESS TO CURTAIL EDITIONS

ALBANY, N. Y., July 1.—(UP)—The Knickerbocker Press, owned by Frank E. Gannett and among the east's oldest morning newspapers, announced today it would discontinue morning and Sunday editions as of June 30.

The announcement also disclosed that the Evening Times-Union, owned by William Randolph Hearst, would discontinue its evening editions after the same day and would be published mornings and Sundays.

The Evening News, the announcement said, has purchased the evening circulation of the Press-Union and will serve those lists.

Repeat Marriage

SALEM, Ore., July 1.—(UP)—Fred Hu Hetsmanpeyer and his wife Beatrice, liked their first marriage 23 years ago so well that, despite their never having been separated or divorced, they went today to County Judge Delano and had themselves remarried. "If people would be remarried occasionally, many divorces would be avoided," Hetsmanpeyer said.

Closing time for Too Late to Classify Ads is 1:30 p. m.

FRAUD CONVICT SAYS SHE IS KIN OF LORD

MONTREAL, July 1.—(UP)—Helen P. Wood, 39, who claims to be a relative of Lord Halifax, was convicted on two charges of fraud today involving \$3,800.

Judge Gustave Perreault sentenced her to "time in jail" on the understanding that she was to be kept in custody until Saturday when she will be placed on board the Canadian Pacific liner Montreal sailing for Liverpool.

A charge of attempted suicide was not pressed by the crown.

MADERA SANITARIUM OFFICES DESTROYED

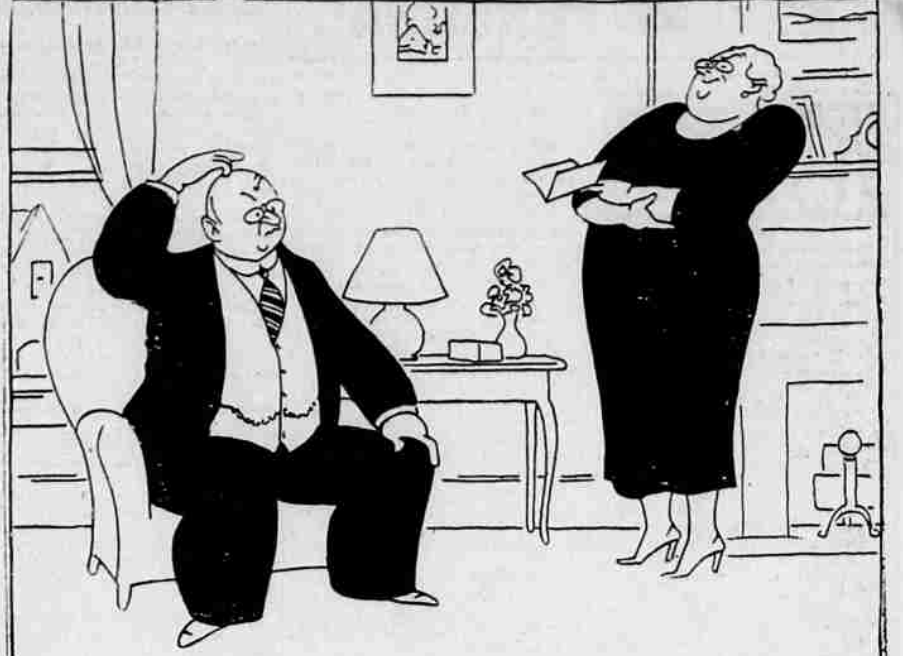
MADERA, Cal., July 1.—(UP)—Fire of unknown origin destroyed the administration building of the tri-county tuberculosis sanitarium last night. No patients were in the building and patients in other buildings were removed to safety. No injuries were reported during the fire.

A fire truck from Coarswold on its way to fight the blaze overturned and Robert Casatong, 18, suffered bruises and Loris Howland, 20, a broken leg.

Use Mail Tribune want ads.

DIFFICULT DECISIONS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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8 MATTER POF

By C. M. PAYNE



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By HAL KORRER

By EDWIN ALGF

By SOL HESS