

THE PHONE BOOTH MURDER

by Phoebe Atwood Taylor

Chapter 14

Madame Can't Drive

FOR the safety of the general public, Asey decided, it would be best to pull her off the road entirely.

He blew the horn urgently and started alongside.

At once, Mrs. Clutterfield steered sharply to the left.

Asey braked, muttered things under his breath, and started to cut past her on the right.

Mrs. Clutterfield steered sharply to the right.

Asey tried again to pass on the left, with very nearly disastrous results.

"By golly," Asey said, "I'll force you over!"

He abandoned that plan when it became apparent that the only person who was going to suffer was himself. Hanson's light car couldn't stand up against that heavy, long wheel-based thing.

As far as nifty blocking was concerned, he thought, Mrs. Clutterfield might have spent three years in Stanford's basketball gym.

"Okay," Asey said with resignation. "Okay, Sister Jane, I'll follow you."

He did, cautiously, and with growing admiration for her hair-breath escapes.

Her turn off the main road reminded Asey of an old-fashioned movie comedy in which the cross-eyed comedian's car would swing up a crowded avenue, weaving in and out of a conglomeration of streetcars, fire engines, trucks, baby carriages, and pedestrians.

He followed her up a rutted lane. Sometimes the sedan's two front wheels canted over the ruts to the right, sometimes they canted to the left. In general, Mrs. Clutterfield's progress resembled that of a mortally sick earthworm.

Finally, at an angle which completely blocked his way, the sedan came to rest with its front wheels sloping gently toward a ditch. Something about it reminded Asey irresistibly of a dog playing dead.

He swung open the car door and got out, and was halfway to the sedan when the fat figure of Alfred appeared from the bushes to his left.

"Inspector!" Alfred said breathlessly. "Inspector! Hey, Inspector!"

Asey turned around.

"Inspector," Alfred went on, "let me explain all this to you, Inspector. Here."

Asey stared down at the heap of bills, clearly visible in the glow of the headlights, in Alfred's outstretched hand.

"I know your lights," Alfred said. "I know the fog lights on your car. Here, Inspector. You take this and let me explain. I was afraid this'd happen. I tried to stop her, but she got away from me. Let me explain, Inspector, will you?"

"Go on," Asey said.

"The trouble is," Alfred lowered his voice confidentially, "the madam can't drive, see? She can't get a license. She's been turned down for a license about ten thousand times, see? But she's crazy to drive. Can't keep her hands off a wheel, see? And just now when my back was turned, off she went, see?"

"You mean, you left her alone in the car? What did you get out for?" Asey demanded.

Odd Corpses

ALFRED said in hurt tones that he'd just stepped out of the car for a moment, that was all, and when he came back, the car was steaming up the lane.

"The madam's all right, you understand, Inspector!" he added. "There's nothing the matter with her only she just can't drive, and she's crazy to—uh—what'd she hit?"

"Plenty," Asey said gravely.

Alfred's hand dug into his pocket.

"Listen, Inspector, let's you and me settle this, huh, shall we? My name's Moriarty, by the way. Most likely you know my brother, Captain Moriarty, Station Forty, up in Boston? Anyway you know my brother in the registry. Everybody knows Pat. Say, maybe we can settle everything, huh?"

"Meanin'?" Asey said, "that if we can't settle it now, I'll get settled anyway?"

"Oh, I wouldn't say that!" Alfred said hurriedly. "You got me all wrong, Inspector! Only there's more than one of your boys around here that's maybe going to get into trouble if we do. There's more than one of your boys wearing hundred-dollar suits of clothes because of the madam's little weakness. Yes, sir!"

"Set?" Asey, who knew intimately most of Hanson's troopers in the vicinity, was pretty sure that Alfred was lying.

"And if you don't mind my saying so," Alfred observed, "you could do with a hundred-dollar suit yourself, Inspector. Maybe a couple of 'em, huh?"

"Alfred!" Mrs. Clutterfield called out plaintively. "Alfred! Alfred! Where are you, Alfred! I can't work the door!"

"Oh, God, she's stuck again!" Alfred scurried off.

Asey watched while Alfred jiggled the sedan's door handle and extricated Mrs. Clutterfield from the front seat. Gripping her firmly by the elbow, he put her in the back seat, said something to her, and pointedly closed the door.

To be continued

On the Radio Chains

STATIONS:
Chain affiliation and where they are on the dial:
KX (NBC-Blue) 1330, Portland;
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KGA (NBC-Blue & MBS) 1510, Spokane;
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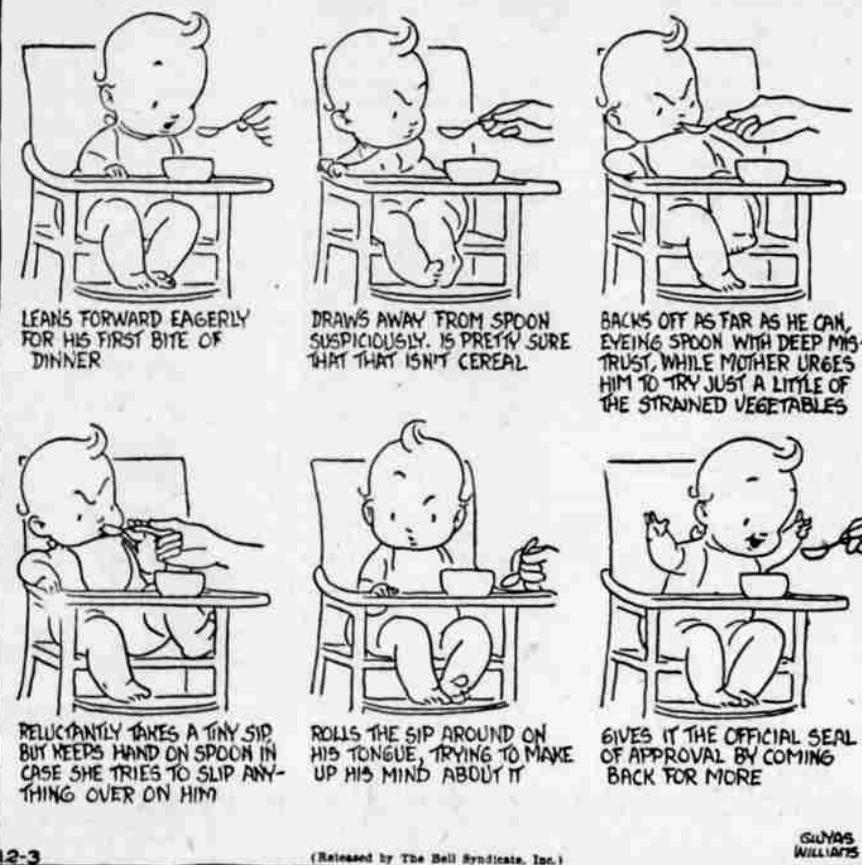
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Wednesday
5:00 p. m.—Adventure Stories, KGO, KEX, KJR, Big Town, KSL; Ken Stevens, KOIN; Jane Arden, KOMO; Stars of Today, KGW; Don Winslow of the Navy, KPO.
5:30 p. m.—Dr. Christian, KX; News of the World, KGO, KJR, KEX; Cocktail Hour, KGO; Bill Henry, KX; Scattergood Baines, KOIN; Waiter Rhythm, KPO.
6:00 p. m.—Fred Allen, KSL; Fred Waring's Orch., KPO, KGW, KOMO; Secret City, KGO, KJR, KEX; Scandinavian Reporter, KJR; Tonight's Best Buys, KX, KOIN.
6:30 p. m.—Penthouse Party, KGO, KJR, KEX; Concert by Kalash, KGO; Big Town, KX, KOIN; Highlight Hour, KOMO.
7:00 p. m.—Glenn Miller's Orch.

Thursday
5:00 p. m.—Adventure Stories, KGO, KEX, KJR, Death Valley Days, KSL; Jane Arden, KOMO; Stars of Today, KGW; Don Winslow of the Navy, KPO.
5:30 p. m.—Quiz Kids, KGO, KEX, KJR; Amos 'n' Andy, KX, KOIN, KSL; Point Sublime, KPO, KGW, KOMO.
6:00 p. m.—Lanny Ross, KX, KSL, KOIN.
6:30 p. m.—Plantation Party, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Dr. Christian, KX; KOIN; Manhattan at Midnight, KGO, KJR, KEX; News, KSL.
7:00 p. m.—Time To Smile, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Easy Aces, KGO, KEX, KJR; Fred Allen, KX; Hymn Service, KSL.
7:30 p. m.—Mr. District Attorney, KGO, KOMO, KGW; Basin Street Chamber Music, KGO, News, KJR, KSL; Moonlight Sonata, KEX.
8:00 p. m.—Paul Whiteman's Orch., KGO, KEX; Reporter News, KPO, KGW, KOMO; News, KX, KOIN; Masterworks of Music, KSL; Serenade, KJR.
8:30 p. m.—Stanley Kenton's Orch., KJR; John Sullivan's Orch., KSL; Music for Listening, KGW; Broadway Bandwagon, KEX; Bill Clifford's Orch., KGO; Public Affairs, KX; The World Today, KOIN; Concert Hall, KPO.
11:00 p. m.—Dancing with Clancy, KPO, KGW; Wilbur Hatch's Orch.

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GOVERNMENT SPENDS \$3 FOR EACH \$1 INCOME
Washington, Dec. 3.—(AP)—The treasury revealed today on the eve of a new tax legislative program that it took in only about \$1 for every \$3 it spent in the first five months of the fiscal year ending with November.

Kangaroo rats of the American Southwest can live for months without water.

The Australian bird, kookaburra, is popularly called "the laughing jack-ass."

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS

by JOHN HLX



By AL CAPP



By HAL FORREST



By SOL HESS



King of Racketeers And Aides Must Die

New York, Dec. 3.—(AP)—Louis (Lepke) Buchalter, one-time king-pin industrial racketeer, and two co-defendants, Emanuel (Wendy) Weiss and Louis Capone, today were sentenced to die in the electric chair the week of January 4, 1942, for the slaying of Joseph Rosen, a Brooklyn storekeeper.

The three were convicted of slaying Rosen by a jury early Sunday morning.

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