

THE PHONE BOOTH MURDER

by Phoebe Atwood Taylor

Chapter 25

Elissa

"BRAM REID," Assey said. "I seem to connect that name with something. Wasn't he in the movies once?"

"Yes. He was one of the strong silent men around the Pearl White era. Now, d'you get the picture? Horace knows Ann is good, he's doing his best to give her the breaks, and Elissa's jealous as hell. She's always been jealous of his interest in Ann, which is pure professional, and she's always been jealous of Ann's success. She doesn't understand why Ann should get on and get ahead."

"What you mean," Assey said, "is that Mrs. Hingham has plenty of motive for killin' the girl, but while killin' the girl might ease her jealous feelin', it'd hurt her pocketbook maybe more."

"Something like that," Rankin said. "Of course, Elissa is impulsive. There's no reason or logic behind a lot she does. The only person Elissa thinks of is Elissa—and that's just another reason why it doesn't seem that she would harm Ann. She might have wanted to, but she'd have been held back by the thought of the consequences—Mayo, when was Ann killed?"

"Looks," Assey said, "like she was shot in the phone booth just before six."

"I'm sure she wasn't killed before five-thirty," Rankin said. "That was when I left with Judge Houghton, and Lady Boop and I were there in the living room all afternoon. Mayo, where is Miss Olive?"

"That's a problem. I've been lookin' into," Assey said, "without success. Can you think of any reason why Ann Joyce should be dressed up in her clothes?"

"I can't think of any reason for any of this," Rankin said, "and that's all of it, of course."

"Of course what?" Assey prompted.

"Well, Miss Olive goes pretty much her own way," Rankin said. "Week after next, when the place gets going, you'll find it full of Lady Hoops. Elissa is definitely not a Whale Inn type. She adds glamour to the place, she and Horace, and I think that's why Mrs. D. likes them to stay here. They make the Boops of the world feel worldly. Miss Olive isn't a Whale Inn type, but she doesn't have much to do either with the Boops, or Elissa. She never had much to do with Ann last summer. I mean, they just missed and said hello to each other. But—this probably isn't worth telling you."

Assey shook his head. "Those questions," he said, "been haunting me for what seems like years. Rankin, you wouldn't know about any play where there might be a Miss Olive sort of character, do you?"

"I don't know anything about the Theater's plans," Rankin said. "They don't stick to their schedule. Where are you going?"

"I'm going," Assey said, "to see if I can't get started, like, an' put my finger on somethin'. I don't want to waste time. To quote Doc Cummings, 'I'm speakin' with too much speculation.'"

"Want me to stay here in seclusion?" Rankin asked.

"Wa-el," Assey said with a grin. "I don't think you're the peeper we want unless you was peepin' around here a little after six."

"I wasn't! I was with Judge Houghton," Rankin told him. "He was his housekeeper's night off. So he and I broiled a steak, and we were just settling down for an evening of the Houghton family tree when he got a call from some distressed client up the Coast. I don't know what time I came back—but you were here then, weren't you? Have you tried to locate Miss Olive?"

"I've scoured around everywhere," Assey said, "but I don't know where she is! I'm torn right now between the desire to track her down, an' to get hold of the Hinghams an' pump them. Only trouble is, until I find out where the real Miss Olive went, an' what she did, it's kind of aimless tryin' to pump anybody. You ain't sure which you seen an' give nickels to, an' I ain't sure which Jennie an' I seen at the four corners. There ain't really any place where you can focus your mind an' start from."

Stymied

RANKIN said that all he'd tried to do, personally, was to focus his mind on motives.

"And look at the state of confusion I'm in! But certainly Hanson's men can find fingerprints and things like that!"

Assey smiled. "A phone booth," he said, "is sort of a lair for assorted fingerprints, when you stop an' think of it. Or, at least, it would be if Mrs. Doane hadn't been kind enough to clean it out so nice after she moved the body. Just her movin' it from the booth to the porch ain't been any aid, exactly, either. An' if there'd happened to of been prints on that gun, Mrs. Doane probably wiped 'em off. Wa-el, I'll be seerin' you."

The door at the end of the hall was ajar, and Assey listened to the act of pushing it open to the voice of Jennie soaring high in argument with Hanson, in the living room beyond. Then Mrs. Doane and Fred chimed in, and then the bass voice of one of Hanson's troopers.

Assey stood for a moment and listened, mentally noting that if he answered half the questions they professed to have waiting for him on the tip of their tongues he would be talking for the rest of the night.

With a weary sigh, he turned back up the hall. He didn't feel like being pounced on, and he didn't want any more problems broached than the ones which were already besetting him.

He tiptoed past Rankin in the smoking room, quietly opened a window at the end of the hall, reared the window screen, and slid over the sill outdoors.

The rain had turned to a drizzle and he was driving around hunting Miss Olive, and now the drizzle had turned to a thick, wet, slummy fog that cut the light from the street lamps down to a small, bulging glow.

Assey walked over to a bench near a birdbath, and sat down. It had been hard enough trying to find Miss Olive in a light rain, and now, with this fog, it seemed a little senseless to go driving from one road to another when you couldn't see any more of cars than the blur of their headlights. He could always round up the Hinghams and ask them questions. Horace of the elusive last name ought to be able to tell whether Ann Joyce was costuming herself for some prospective play, or whether she was dressing up for fun.

And even if it were for some play, and Horace knew about it, Assey thought that didn't advance things very much. Then you'd only have to delve around and find out how many other people might have known too, and if the person who shot Ann Joyce in Miss Olive's clothes had known she was masquerading and was counting on that fact to confuse everyone, they would hardly admit the fact. And if only Horace knew, then you were right back where you started, and someone was shooting Ann Joyce instead of Miss Olive, and thinking it was the latter.

Assey put his feet up on the bench and pulled out his pipe.

To be continued

No Suspicion

"GO ON," Assey said. "Right now I'm eager for crumbs."

"Well, since Miss Olive's been here this year, I've noticed her chatting often with Ann. One day—I don't remember if it was Wednesday or Thursday—Ann picked up Miss Olive's coat from a chair arm and tried it on. Miss Olive looked annoyed, and told her to take it off at once, and said something about mockery that I didn't hear. Now, when the doctor told me it was Ann dressed up in Miss Olive's clothes, I just took it for granted she must have done it for something at the Theater. But then I remembered that scene, and I wonder, Mayo, d'you suppose Ann just had the impulse to dress up like her and see if she could fool anyone? Bram Reid's been teaching her a lot about make-up. Maybe, just for the hell of it, she wanted to see if she could get away with being Miss Olive for an afternoon."

"Did you have any suspicions about her when you give her the two nickels for her dime?" Assey asked.

"Not then. Now it occurs to me that she seemed a little excited and breathless. And I never knew her to ask for change before. She's the sort who always has two nickels for your dime. It doesn't seem possible that Ann could fool me, but I find myself wondering if she did! And, Mayo, that brings up something else. Suppose Ann did dress up to see if she could get away with being Miss Olive. If she was keeping it a secret, and no one knew what she intended doing, then someone killed her thinking she was Miss Olive!"

"Uh-huh."

"Well, my God!" Rankin said. "That's fantastic, too, as I told Hanson out there on the porch! D'you think someone meant to kill Miss Olive? And why?"

SPANISH SHIP AND CREW DETAINED IN NEW YORK

New York, Dec. 16.—(P)—The Spanish steamship Isla De Tenerife, its master, Capt. Jose Albert, and his wireless operator, Eduardo Fernandez, were detained today by the combined action of the coast guard, naval intelligence and customs agents.

The 5,115-ton vessel, scheduled to sail late Saturday, was detained, officials said, when it was discovered that it had loaded as ship's stores numerous parts of radio transmission and receiving sets, 100 50-gallon drums of lubricating oil and \$36,000 worth of silk.

Minneapolis, Min. (UP)—Mrs. W. B. McCallum, of St. Paul, would like to find the man who bought her \$65 coat for 40 cents at a rummage sale. Mrs. McCallum was one of the volunteer workers at the sale. She hung her coat too near a counter. Another worker pinned a price tag on it.

Bellefonte, Ill. (UP)—One Saturday a fire damaged the garage at the rear of the home of Herman E. Lorenz. The next day his car, parked in front of the house, was struck by another machine. The following Saturday a hit and run driver struck his car again as it was parked in the same spot.

On the Radio Chains

STATIONS:
Chain affiliation and where they are on the dial:
KALE (NBC) 1330, Portland.
KEX (NBC-Blue) 1190, Portland.
KGA (NBC-Blue & CBS) 1310, Spokane.
KGO (NBC-Blue) 810, San Francisco.
KGW (NBC-Red) 620, Portland.
KJR (NBC-Blue) 1060, Seattle.
KLB (NBC-Blue) 1070, Los Angeles.
KOA (NBC-Red) 820, Denver.
KON (CBS) 970, Portland.
KOMO (NBC-Red) 990, Seattle.
KOP (NBC-Red) 680, San Francisco.
KSL (CBS) 1150, Salt Lake City.

Time shown is PST

Tuesday

5:00 p. m.—Adventure Stories, KGO, KJR; Are You a Missing Heir, KSL; Jane Arden, KOMO; News, KOIN; Adventure in Toyland, KEX; Stars of Today, KGW; Don Winslow of the Navy, KPO.

5:30 p. m.—News of the World, KGO, KJR, KEX; The Arkansas Traveler, KSL; Horace Helt's Treasure Chest, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Today's Best Buys, KXN; Eyes of the World, KOIN.

6:00 p. m.—Burns and Allen, KPO, KGW, KOMO; We, the People, KSL; Ken Stevens and Erwin Yo, KOIN; Cinnamon Bear, KEX; Scandinavian Reporter, KJR; Second Husband, KXN.

6:30 p. m.—Symphony Concert.

KGO, KEX, KJR: Who, What, Where and Why, KXN, KOIN; Fibber McGee, KPO, KOMO, KOW.

7:00 p. m.—Bob Hope Variety Show, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Glenn Miller's Orch., KXN, KSL, KOIN.

7:30 p. m.—Red Skelton, KPO, KGO, KOMO; Treasury Hour, KGO, KEX, KJR; Leon F. Drews, KOIN; Second Husband, KSL.

8:00 p. m.—Amos 'n' Andy, KXN, KSL, KOIN; Fred Warting, KPO, KGW, KOMO.

8:15 p. m.—Lum and Abner, KPO, KOW, KOMO; Lanny Ross, KXN, KSL, KOIN.

8:30 p. m.—Johnny Presents, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Information Please, KGO, KEX, KJR; Are You a Missing Heir, KXN, KOIN; News, KSL.

9:00 p. m.—We, the People, KXN, KOIN; Easy Aces, KGO, KJR, KEX; Adventures of the Thin Man, KPO, KOMO, KGW, Sports, KSL.

9:30 a. m.—Battle of the Sexes, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Arkansas Traveler, KXN, KOIN; Mai Hallett, KGO, News, KJR, KSL; Moonlight Sonata, KEX.

10:00 p. m.—Henry Busse's Orch., KGO, KEX, KJR; Reporter News, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Masterworks of Music, KSL; News, KXN; Five Star Final, KOIN.

10:30 p. m.—Tiny Hill's Orch., KSL; Charles Dant's Orch., KGW; Stanley Kenton's Orch., KGO, KJR; Broadway Bandwagon, KEX; Masterworks of Music, KXN; The World Today, KOIN; Concert Hall, KPO.

11:00 p. m.—Chuck Wagon Days, KPO, KGW; This Moving World, KEX, KJR; Anita Carol, KSL, KOIN; News, KXN, KGO; Reveries, KOMO.

Music, KXN; The World Today, KOIN; Concert Hall, KPO.

11:00 p. m.—Chuck Wagon Days, KPO, KGW; This Moving World, KEX, KJR; Anita Carol, KSL, KOIN; News, KXN, KGO; Reveries, KOMO.

Wednesday

5:00 p. m.—Adventure Stories, KGO, KJR; Big Town, KSL; Ken Stevens, KOIN; Jane Arden, KOMO; 9:00 p. m.—Time to Smile, KGO, KGW, KOMO; Easy Aces, KGO, KEX, KJR; Fred Allen, KOIN, KXN; Hymn Service, KSL.

9:30 p. m.—Mr. District Attorney, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Basin Street Chamber Music, KGO, News, KJR, KSL; Moonlight Sonata, KEX.

10:00 p. m.—Paul Whiteman's Point Sublime, KPO, KOW, KOMO.

8:15 p. m.—Lanny Ross, KXN, KSL, KOIN.

8:30 p. m.—Plantation Party, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Dr. Christian, KXN, KOIN; Manhattan at Midnight, KGO, KJR, KEX; News, KSL.

9:00 p. m.—Time to Smile, KGO, KGW, KOMO; Easy Aces, KGO, KEX, KJR; Fred Allen, KOIN, KXN; Hymn Service, KSL.

9:30 p. m.—Mr. District Attorney, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Basin Street Chamber Music, KGO, News, KJR, KSL; Moonlight Sonata, KEX.

10:00 p. m.—John Sullivan's Orch., KSL; Music for Listening, KGW; Broadway Bandwagon, KEX; Peterson, KJR; Public Affairs, KXN; The World Today, KOIN; Christmas Fund, KOMO; Concert Hall, KPO.

11:00 p. m.—Dancing with Clancy, KPO, KGW; Wilbur Hatch's Orch., KOIN, KSL; This Moving World, KJR, KEX; News, KXN, KGO; Evening Reveries, KOMO.

SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



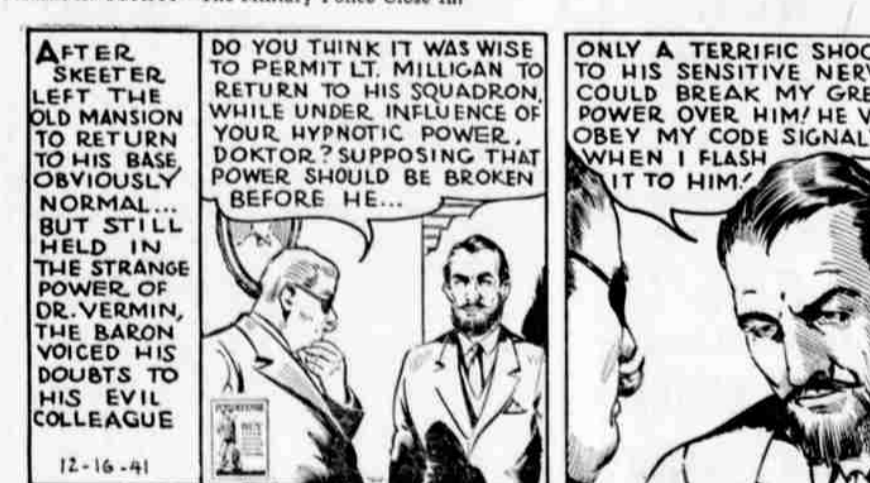
CHRISTMAS GOT OFF TO A BAD START FOR THE PERLEYS WHEN FRED, AFTER STANDING IN LINE FOR 20 MINUTES AT THE POST OFFICE, WAS TOLD HIS PACKAGE WAS NOT SECURELY ENOUGH WRAPPED FOR MAILING, STORMED OUT OF THE NORTH STREET ENTRANCE IN A RAGE AND NOT SEEING THE CAR ASSUMED HIS WIFE HAD GOT TIRED OF WAITING, HE TRUDGED HOME, MUTTERING, AND IT WAS A GOOD HALF HOUR BEFORE HE REMEMBERED HE HAD LEFT HER WAITING AT THE WEST STREET ENTRANCE

(Released by The Hill Syndicate, Inc.)

LIL' ABNER—Nothing But the Truth!



TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Military Police Close In!



THE NEBBS—Revenge



KJR: Amos 'n' Andy, KXN, KOIN; Point Sublime, KPO, KOW, KOMO.

8:15 p. m.—Lanny Ross, KXN, KSL, KOIN.

8:30 p. m.—Plantation Party, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Dr. Christian, KXN, KOIN; Manhattan at Midnight, KGO, KJR, KEX; News, KSL.

9:00 p. m.—Time to Smile, KGO, KGW, KOMO; Easy Aces, KGO, KEX, KJR; Fred Allen, KOIN, KXN; Hymn Service, KSL.

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11:00 p. m.—Dancing with Clancy, KPO, KGW; Wilbur Hatch's Orch., KOIN, KSL; This Moving World, KJR, KEX; News, KXN, KGO; Evening Reveries, KOMO.

SALEM AIRPORT MADE READY FOR EMERGENCY

Salem, Dec. 16.—(P)—A crew of 100 men began work on the Salem airport today to prepare it for use as an emergency army field in case the army airbase in Portland is put out of commission. Army authorities said the airport would not be used on a permanent basis.

Classified Ads 3 a. m.—Too Late to Classify 12:30 p. m.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS

by JOHN HIX



THE WOLFFIA IS THE SMALLEST KNOWN FLOWERING PLANT... IT WOULD NOT COVER A PIN HEAD! Found floating on ponds...

THE SHREW—A HARMLESS LITTLE ANIMAL—WAS ONCE THOUGHT CAPABLE OF PARALYZING HORSES BY MERELY TOUCHING THEM! England...

EUGENE CRIQUI FIGHTS 15 ROUNDS WITH HIS JAW BROKEN ON BOTH SIDES! (vs Johnny Dundee, N.Y., 1923—Dundee won a decision) CRIQUI'S JAW HAD BEEN SHOT AWAY DURING THE WAR—AND RESULT...

IN 1887 PRESIDENT GROVER CLEVELAND SAID HE HOPED FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT WOULD NEVER BE PRESIDENT!

RIFLE'S LIFE

Although a rifle may serve its owner for a lifetime, the actual life of the gun itself is shorter than the time it would ordinarily take to load, aim and fire it once! Using, as an example, a model 70 Winchester chambered for the 30-08 cartridge, giving a muzzle velocity of 2,700 F. S. in a 24-inch barrel, the average accurate life of the piece is estimated to be 3,000 shots. The actual time in which the bullet is passing through the barrel for these 3,000 shots would be 2.222 seconds!

Tomorrow: Visible Speech!

By AL CAPP



By HAL FORREST



By SOL HESS



Thrill him!
With a Christmas Gift from
Barkercs
Store for Men