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This is an exclusive Illustrated Feature Section feature provided for your entertainment. Look forward each week to "Baffling Murders."

THE CARLISLE MURDER CASE

By BROWNING STREAT

SYNOPSIS

BEGIN READING HERE

Spending my vacation at a place called Eagle Nest, in the Shenandoah Valley, I became acquainted with two very interesting men—Raiph Miles, a feature writer for a syndicate of Negro newspapers, and Hubert Holcomb, former crack member of the Chicago Police Department. Naturally, since crime detection is much more interesting than the selling game, or feature writing, our conversations would always drift around to criminals and crime.

Mr. Miles and I began to meet on the north veranda evenings, a seldom used part of the little hotel, there to listen to Holcomb's versions of the Carlisle Murder Case, the Simmons Murder Case, the Mitchell Murder Case, the Collins Murder Case, and the Griffin Murder Case—all of which I shall in due time record for you in these columns.

Briefly, the first part of Holcomb's experience with the Carlisles was thus: One cold January morning some years ago, Mrs. Jasper Carlisle, wealthy, about forty-nine years old, the wife of one of the wealthiest Negroes in and about South Parkway at the time, called at headquarters and sought out the Missing Persons Bureau—where she suddenly broke into tears and stated that her husband had disappeared. He was last seen by their chauffeur when he put him on the sidewalk in the downtown section about four o'clock the preceding evening.

Hubert Holcomb was given this case. As a first step he decided to call on Mrs. Carlisle and arrived at her luxurious apartment about two hours after her dismissal at headquarters.

He found her dead—sprawled on her own living-room floor in a pool of blood; a gash at her temple, and a heavy metal book end on the floor beside her, bloody!

NOW FINISH THE STORY

LAST INSTALMENT

After telling Miles and me about the body he had found sprawled on the floor, Holcomb had lapsed into a dramatic silence. But now he stirred, discarded his pipe, and plunged into the narration again. I say "plunged" because I commenced to see . . .

Holcomb suddenly lifted his eyes from the lifeless body of the woman and swung around toward the door. He had become aware of a faint movement. Automatic in hand, he listened and was drawn toward what appeared to be a coat closet. As he neared it, the movement grew more distinct, and the door itself began to open slowly—then suddenly it swung entirely open!

Holcomb stopped and frowned. A man—a little brown-skinned man—stood half stooped, with his hands caressing his forehead and terror in his reddened eyes.

"Who are you?" Holcomb spat the words.

The man seemed to suddenly jerk himself from out of a trance. Without uttering a word, he immediately passed the detective into the living room and fell heavily upon the woman's body, weeping and pounding the floor madly. "The dog!" he groaned. "The dirty dog! Oh, Annie—Oh! God, Annie—If you'd only stayed away a little longer!"

And then he collapsed. For a minute Holcomb just stood there and pined the poor devil. He had to. He then started a series of questions—and it was one sorry story!

Mr. Carlisle—and it was he—pulled himself to his feet, then half stumbled, half fell into a convenient chair, as wretched a figure as one would ever see. His hands covered his face; his body slumped forward. "I'm the victim of the rottenest deal imaginable," he told Holcomb between convulsions, "—kidnapped—held prisoner all night—and now this!"

For a split second his eyes focus-

ed upon his wife. Holcomb waited in silence.

"I left my club about ten o'clock," he started afresh, "and was standing on Indiana Avenue waiting for a taxi—our chauffeur goes off around eight—when suddenly a car dived swiftly up and stopped directly in front of me. As quick as a flash, a tall man, his hat pulled low over his eyes, his hands stuffed into his overcoat pockets, got to the sidewalk and whispered gruffly, 'You're covered, see? Get into the car. Squawk an' I'll drill you. Move!'"

"I got into the car to save my life. As soon as the door slammed, it shot forward and at least three men proceeded to blind and gag me, cursing and threatening me all the while."

"Where did they take you?" Holcomb questioned impatiently. "Which direction did they take?"

"I don't know," Carlisle said, "—I'll never know, because the dogs chloroformed me! The next thing I remember I was sitting in a poorly-furnished, ugly room, bound to a squeaky chair, with the three cutthroats pacing the floor in front of me, whispering among themselves, smoking cigarettes, and cutting at me with malicious glances three brown-skinned men, they were, with the mark of the underworld upon their faces."

The bereaved man's words sud-

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Hubert Holcomb unearths the gruesome solution of the Carlisle murder

denly ceased. His body drooped even further forward; his feet twitched nervously upon the carpet; his fingers stiffened and relaxed like a man itching for blood. Inaudible curses escaped his lips.

Holcomb compressed his lips; took to pacing to and fro. Carlisle suddenly sat upright and glared at him, insanity in his eyes thundered in his voice. "Stop it!" he rasped. "I say stop it! That's the way that dog hounded me—stand still!" And then he beat his fists upon the arms of the chair, lurched forward again and groaned.

The detective caressed his chin and frowned, yet his response was sympathetic enough. "I can appreciate your feelings, Mr. Carlisle," he said, standing over the man; "but

try, if you can, to let me have the rest of the story."

Carlisle remained silent for a minute, then went on ironically: "One of the dogs," he said, "—apparently the leader, made their position clear. They wanted money—lots of it—at least five thousand. When I refused, he cursed me, threatened, vowed to stuff my body into a gunny sack and toss it into the lake. And I believe he would have."

Carlisle suddenly staggered to his feet and, avoiding the body on the floor, crossed the room to the massive library table. From a drawer he took something, then recrossed the room and handed it to Holcomb. "If I could have gotten to it!" he said grimly.

It was a little Colt automatic. Hol-

comb examined it, then folded his arms. Carlisle sank dejectedly into (Continued on page 7)



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