

SERIAL STORY

MURDER INCOGNITO

BY NORMAN KAHL

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YESTERDAY, Ballistics tests show it was not Riggs' gun that killed Saylor. O'Leary releases the suspect, holds Riggs in jail, then calls on Hazel Leighton. She writes a letter. . . .

CHAPTER IX

As long as Lieutenant O'Leary said nothing, but just sat there quietly watching the surge of conflicting emotions playing upon Hazel Leighton's face, he realized there was a chance she would tell him what he wanted to know—that that letter was all about.

"Who's Jed—the man you were writing to?" O'Leary asked. "I'm going to marry him some day, I hope. He's in Los Angeles now . . . waiting. You see, we were going to nick old man Saylor for a neat little piece of change. We figured on a nice, juicy breach of promise suit or a settlement a few months after marriage.

"Neither plan worked out. Saylor got wind of the scheme. I found a letter from Jed . . . just like you did. He planned to down with it on a day and I got sore. I told him what I thought of him and what I was going to do. "After I was through talking, he just laughed at me. He told me he had left his dictaphone running and that everything I had said was recorded. I would have killed him then, but I didn't have a gun. When I left him he said he would be happy to give me \$5000 for the year's trouble I had taken."

O'Leary had risen and was picking up his hat. "Thank you, Miss Leighton. The sergeant and I will be running along now. I'd advise you to find some other way to make money in the future . . . and don't leave town just yet."

WINSLOW MARDELL was just leaving his hotel when the two detectives entered. He smiled a greeting and led them to a corner of the deserted lobby.

"Just going out to lunch. Will you gentlemen join me?" "Thanks," said O'Leary. "We'll just keep you a second. We want to know how you happened to lose \$35,000 to Martin Saylor."

"Oh, just one of those things," MardeLL said airily. "A little poker game. Saylor often rounded up a few cronies for a friendly session. Luck was against me for a few nights, and I was running a little short of ready cash, so I just wrote some I. O. U.'s. Hope you're not worried about them?"

"No," said O'Leary, "but I guess you were. You had no way of meeting them and Saylor wanted his money, didn't he?" "I've got money. I could have drawn some from the bank, but I figured I'd let the I. O. U.'s ride for a while and see if I couldn't win some of that dough back."

The lieutenant faced the man bluntly. "Look, MardeLL. We know better. Saylor wanted that money, and you didn't have it. That's why you were over at his place the other night. He wanted to collect. I've had you checked pretty carefully. You're broke. Even your hotel bill is overdue."

MardeLL snarled, "I wasn't going to wench . . . I never have yet." "You never dared. If you can't gamble, you don't eat. And Saylor was going to fix it so no joint in town would ever let you in again. He was going to let it get around that you were a wench. Isn't that right?"

MardeLL's lips twisted slightly at the corners. "Maybe," he admitted. "But it's too late now. Mr. Saylor won't do any talking anywhere now."

GEORGE BARBOUR was sitting in his shirt sleeves on the flagstone terrace before his commodious Georgian house when the officers swung their car into the driveway. His shabby cheeks looked ruddier and his graying hair had a silvery hue. He appeared much more at ease than he had in the Saylor drawing room the night before.

He rose to greet O'Leary and Carroll as they slid out of the car. "Good day, gentlemen," he said pleasantly. "And what can I do for you?"

O'Leary accepted the extended hand. "Just a few more details about that business last night, Mr. Barbour."

The pudgy man shook his head sadly. "Ah, yes. Poor Riggs. I never suspected. I frequently warned Martin about taking convicts into his home. Come inside, please. I'll get you a drink."

He motioned Carroll ahead, and just as the sergeant was about to grasp the handle of the screen door, the portal swung open. Sergeant Carroll leaped back instinctively. "What the—?" Barbour chuckled. "Just a little device I rigged up, Sergeant. You'll find lots of mysterious things happening around here. A hobby of mine."

Carroll looked quizzical. "But how—?" "Very simple. Photo-electric cells, often called electric eyes. The light comes from that little glass disc you see set into the pillar here. The light ray is aimed at the cell on the other side—you can see it in that other pillar. When you crossed the invisible line, Sergeant, you just broke the connection and set a little electric motor in action. That opened the door."

Two more doors responded similarly inside the house, but Carroll refused to lead the way. "When they were finally settled in a masculinely appointed living room and three tall, cool-looking drinks had been set before them, O'Leary and Carroll settled back in their chairs.

"We found some papers in Saylor's safe last night, Mr. Barbour—some papers about you."

Beads of perspiration settled on Barbour's face, and he said quietly. "So you found them?" "Yes. Didn't you expect us to?" "I suppose I did. You know all about it then? About the audit?"

"Yes," O'Leary acknowledged. "Why did you take money out of the partnership? You did, didn't you?"

"Yes, I took it," Barbour said bitterly. "I deserved it. Martin was getting wads of cash from his dirty business. I never got a cent of that . . . wouldn't have wanted it. But meanwhile he wasn't handling any of the legitimate practice. I was doing all of it, but he was still getting his half of the profits, according to our partnership agreement. So I finally decided to take justice into my own hands."

O'Leary nodded sympathetically. "And Saylor suspected, so he called in the auditors."

"That's right. He was going to expose me, have me jailed and disbarred unless I got out and promised never to practice law in this city again. He had me both ways. It would have ruined me completely. He wanted a definite answer last night."

Carroll looked intensely interested. "Did he get it?" "He did—I promised to quit. Get out completely."

THE police car ground to a furious stop before the gilt doorway of the Hanford Arms Apartments. The doorman nodded cordially as the officers passed. O'Leary walked to the desk and

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



FARM MAN—Successor to Henry A. Wallace in the cabinet, as secretary of agriculture, is Claude R. Wickard (above), 47, Indiana-born farm leader. He has been active in the affairs of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



VENERABLE WRITER

Word puzzle section with 'HORIZONTAL' and 'VERTICAL' clues and a crossword grid.

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbers in the starting squares.



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



WASH TUBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY



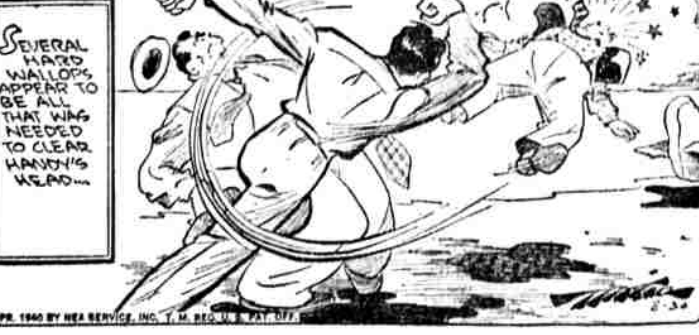
BY CRANE



BY BLOSSER



BY MARTIN



BY V. T. HAMLIN

