

SERIAL STORY

MURDER IN CONVOY

BY A. W. O'BRIEN

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YESTERDAY: Ties in buried at sea the day after the murder. Later, Lieutenant Miles questioned Rollins further as to whether he was alone when he saw Ties just before the murder. That night, Rollins looks out of his porthole, sees a light. As he prepares to investigate he hears a rifle shot, followed immediately by the lifeboat alarm.

STRUGGLE IN THE PASSAGE

CHAPTER VII

AUTOMATICALLY, Lieutenant Rollins shifted mental gears as the emergency gong sounded. Army discipline went to work. He had an official post to assume at Lifeboat Station 15, and everything else became secondary. Regretfully he shoved the revolver back into his pocket, but the thought flashed through his mind that it didn't matter much because whoever had flashed the light would be swallowed up in the men flooding the decks.

Hurriedly he slipped into his trousers, donned a balaclava, slung on his shoulder bag and gas mask, and dashed into the corridor. Except for a puffing sentry, he was alone; but within a few seconds other officers were pouring from their cabins, and Rollins marveled at the general coolness. One would think that a lifeboat alarm in the dead of night aboard a troopship riding angry waves was an everyday occurrence in the lives of these men.

Outside it was pitchblack, and cold spray filled the night. Murky figures bumped one another as they passed. Rollins walked quickly with both hands outstretched to prevent himself from crashing headlong into others before he reached Lifeboat Station 15.

His sergeant was only seconds behind and breathing heavily from the run upstairs with heavy equipment.

"What's up, Sir?" he gasped.

"I didn't feel any explosion and the ship's whistle isn't blowing the regulation blasts."

Rollins had been thinking along the same lines. "Perhaps it's only a drill, Sergeant. Don't have the men climb into the boat yet. It's a bit dangerous with the ship heaving around and the planking wet. Wait until there is further cause for alarm."

"Very well, Sir!"

Within two minutes more, the full complement of men for Lifeboat Station 15 was on hand and standing in position, ready to hop into the boat on order. Members of the ship's crew stood by the lowering apparatus.

After the first wave of excitement, the men standing in the black-shrouded night began to grumble in approved soldier fashion.

THEY stood there for a full half hour before the adjutant, heavily clothed, came around. "Dismiss your station, Lieutenant!" he ordered. "The captain doesn't wish to sound the regular dismissal signal on the ship's whistle because it might alarm the other ships."

He turned to the men and shrugged in the darkness. "You heard him, my buddies—on your way and pleasant dreams!" He smiled as he heard them shuffling off muttering complaints about drill-crazy O. C.'s and the army system in general. They had really enjoyed the bit of excitement but didn't want to show it.

There was no talk about rifle shots. Rollins didn't stop to chat but went directly into the cabin. From the folds of the sweater in the cupboard drawer he extracted the bottle and poured himself a stiff shot of brandy. It sent a glow of warmth through him.

As he lighted a cigaret, Greg noticed on his wrist watch that it was a few minutes after 1 o'clock.

They had been on deck for about half an hour... a few minutes previously he had seen the light on the deck... that would make it about 12:30. There was something familiar about that time... things seemed to happen regularly at 12:30 or thereabouts.

Tonight—the unexplained lifeboat alarm.

Last night—the murder of Ties.

The night before—Rollins frowned—he had seen the light on the deck and found Joan there.

Rollins jumped to his feet and paced the cabin floor. A startling thought had hit him. Could Ties have seen somebody flashing a light on deck and been murdered when he attempted to grapple with that person?

Again, Rollins' brow clouded—the girl always entered the puzzle. She had admitted being responsible for the light on the first night. Rather, at least, she had admitted smoking on deck. There could possibly have been, Rollins conceded, another person on the deck flashing the light seen by the sentry and reported to him. When he rushed up he had found the girl. She was not flashing any light. In fact, she wasn't even carrying a lighted cigaret.

Still, the fact remained that about the same time every night, something extraordinary seemed to happen around the same section "A" deck.

At long last, he had come upon a plan that might give him a chance to solve the mystery and lay his hands upon the killer. It all depended on one detail, and he intended to put himself straight on that detail without delay.

Throwing on his bathrobe, Rollins stepped out into the corridor again and walked to the first cross-passage. He turned into it and made his way towards the far side of the ship where Lieutenant Miles' cabin was situated. As he turned along the corridor running parallel to his own, some slight movement in the curtain shelter-

ing a deck exit caught his eye.

Quick as a flash, Rollins stooped, apparently to adjust his shoe lace, meanwhile studying the curtain tensely. It hung about two inches off the floor and even in the darkness he could see two shoes standing motionless!

Rollins waited until the ship swayed downwards. Lethely, he straightened a bit before diving headlong at the spot in the curtain where he judged the knees belonging to those feet should be.

It was a tackle that would have warned the cockles of any rugby coach's heart. His arms scissored around a pair of strong legs, and with a heave of his shoulder he bowled over his opponent, the curtain coming down with a ripping sound over the struggling figures.

Rollins heaved again and rolled

on top. With a single deft move, he grabbed a struggling arm through the folds of the curtain and twisted it upwards.

"Easy—you'll break it!" a voice groaned.

Rollins released his hold—it was Harry Miles!

(To Be Continued)

Anchors of '77



Dr. Carroll H. Francis, naval historian, displays two anchors brought up from Delaware river at Philadelphia believed to be from British frigate, Merlin, sunk in Revolutionary War battle in 1777. Ship reputedly carried a million dollars in gold.

★ POOLE'S

222 S. 7th

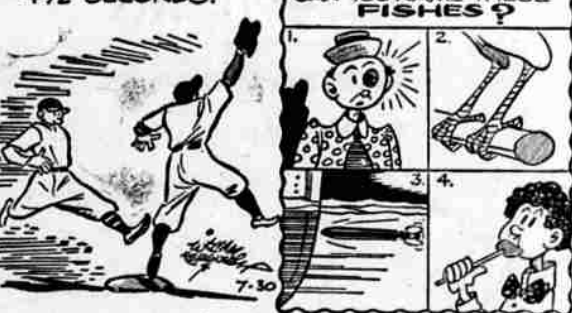
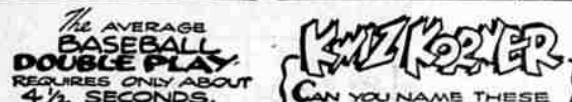
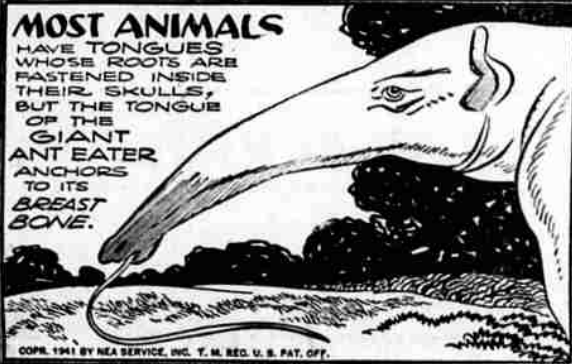
Headquarters for
BICYCLES

\$5 Down

- Baby Walkers
- Wagons
- Tricycles

Lawn Mowers
Sharpened, \$1

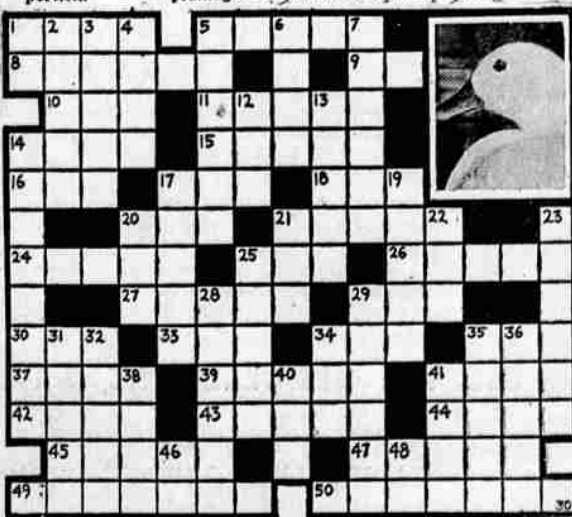
★ THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William
Ferguson

ANSWER: 1, shiner; 2, perch; 3, torpedo; 4, sucker.

SWIMMING BIRD

- HORIZONTAL**
- Swimming fowl.
 - It has legs and a broad bill.
 - Not ripe.
 - Half an em.
 - Child.
 - To analyze.
 - Melodies.
 - To care for medically.
 - Born.
 - Encountered.
 - The tip.
 - Butter lump.
 - To earn.
 - Eagle's claw.
 - Sedan.
 - Nocturnal animal.
 - Type of English architecture.
 - Corded fabric.
 - Marriage portion.
- Answer to Previous Puzzle**
- CRAG WOOD GOLF TENSE MARITIME AVAL DENES EAPT METAL SIRM E DOLT OF SA CRAIG WOOD CORREL SPAP MADE ASARS AION BATON OUTRIGGER WINNER C OLEST**
- VERTICAL**
- 1 Dutch (abbr.).
 - 2 To loosen.
 - 3 Ten million.
 - 4 Knapsacks.
 - 5 Set of seven.
 - 6 Monster.
 - 7 To seaway.
 - 12 Work of skill.
 - 13 Wiser.
 - 14 It belongs to the family.
 - 17 Wild cat.
 - 19 Victrola.
 - 20 Cooking utensil.
 - 21 To disfigure.
 - 22 Spigot.
 - 23 Male ducks.
 - 25 To fawn.
 - 28 Gentle.
 - 29 Grayish-green.
 - 31 To make, differ.
 - 32 A speech.
 - 32 Earth.
 - 34 However.
 - 35 Tiny wing.
 - 36 More certain.
 - 38 To slash.
 - 40 Part of a week.
 - 41 Cotton pod.
 - 46 Exclamation.
 - 48 Mulberry dye.



OUT OUR WAY

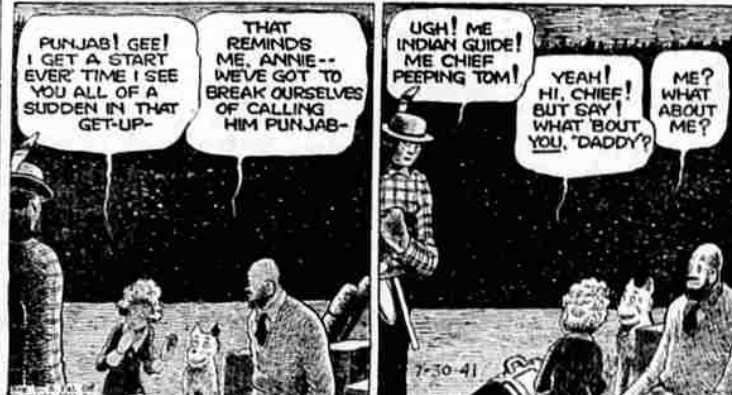
By J. R. Williams



RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE, with Major Hoople



By V. T. Hamlin