

• SERIAL STORY

CARIBBEAN CRISIS

BY EATON K. GOLDTHWAITE

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THE STORY—Bill Talcott is about to return to New York after six years on a Dutch West Indies island as branch manager for an American chemical firm, to face charges of shortage in his accounts, brought by an auditor, Bill to return with Halsey, who is to succeed him as branch manager. Halsey is a private detective, June Paterson, cousin of Bill's former roommate, and two referees, Martha Swenson and Prof. Constantine, who have been landed on the island by a villainous smuggler named Jackson. Bill faces the auditor, who remains in charge, with the assurance that later charges are a frameup, engineered by higher-ups.

BILL MAKES UP HIS MIND

CHAPTER XI

AS abruptly as it had begun the conference was over. Struthers, who seemed to have a little use for food as he had for sleep, departed for the office again taking Halsey with him, and thus Bill Talcott was left alone with MacDowell.

The detective was shaky, off-balance and very near collapse.

"You ain't such a bad guy," MacDowell muttered as Bill Talcott directed his arm into a sleeve. "I guess you had to hit me—Say, d'you suppose I could have a drink?"

Talcott nodded, summoned the boy and when the drink was brought MacDowell was clothed.

"You ain't such a bad guy," MacDowell said again. Suddenly he put the glass down and tipped to the window, looked out and all around; tipped back to the door and searched the hall beyond. Apparently satisfied, he returned to the center of the room, inclined his head and in a hoarse whisper said, "Ya know some'n? I don't like that guy Struthers."

Talcott covered his surprise. "No? I thought you fellows were buddies."

"Me, a buddy to him? I'd like to kick him in the pants—MacDowell, get up! Do yer duty!" Talcott swallowed a smile.

"Strange, wasn't it, how he avoided all that trouble at the dock?"

"Yeah. Listen, I been watchin' you, an' the more I watch the more satisfied I am some'n stinks besides the fertilizer around here." MacDowell paused. "Listen, can you keep your mouth shut?"

"I can." MacDowell bent forward further and in his eagerness his eyes were distended until he stared from their tops; his voice was sunk lower still. "Private or public, I'm still a cop, see? I'm gettin' paid to do a job, and so far as anybody knows I'm gonna do it. But I ain't such a bad guy myself. Maybe I framed a few guys for divorce proceedings, but it was because the guys themselves wanted to get framed, see? I never been a party to framing a guy for the pen, and I'm too old to start now."

Bill Talcott could no longer control his surprise. "Do you mean you have evidence that Struthers is trying to frame me?" MacDowell moved his hands hastily. "Listen, I didn't say that. I only said I don't like how this thing smells. So I'm gonna help you if you'll keep your mouth shut."

WAS this a trap? MacDowell was in Struthers' employ; he had come to Abas with Struthers and Halsey. He was hand in glove with the auditor, and if a plot was cooking, he would be an ingredient. But Mr. MacDowell had taken a few nasty raps that weren't in the cards. Was this just a new twist to the old confidence game, or was the man fed up and sincere? Talcott eyed him speculatively and decided to gamble.

"All right," Talcott said. "What's your proposition?" MacDowell inhaled sharply. "This is a Dutch island, ain't it?" "Yes." "Okay. What happens if you refuse to be extradited?" Talcott stared. "You mean—" "If you don't want to go back to New York with me, I ain't got the power to make you. You can tie this thing up in the courts with a writ of habeas corpus. Legally, they can't touch you until you been extradited, and that sometimes takes a long while. From what you said to Struthers, I figure you want to stick around so's to see he don't put any clenchers on you. That way you could do it, see?"

Talcott searched the other's face in amazement. Sure indeed was help from an unexpected quarter. Abas being a Dutch island some 600 air miles distant from the seat of government, he could stand on his rights; could dispatch a letter for legal counsel and wait calmly while lawyers and judges argued the matter. He could remain on the island, a thorn in Struthers' side, watching, tabulating and compiling evidence in his own defense. He could squat on his haunches while the little auditor yapped like a terrier. It would be satisfaction in a large measure for what he had suffered.

That way he would get satisfaction. But would satisfaction solve the problem? Revenge was like getting drunk; you hurt somebody else because they had hurt you and all the while the more important things were going on without you. You stood and gazed over your antagonist who, in the last analysis, might be merely an agent sacrificed to prevent you from reaching the end.

THERE was something else; deeper, more psychologically significant. Already, in the eyes of the men, Halsey was boss. The new man had proved himself while Bill Talcott had lost face. How would they interpret his continued inactive presence? What would Sebastian and black Tomas and all the others think of him

If he were to remain, vindictive but ineffectual, an impotent vegetable ripening to rottenness in the sun? He could face accusations, could fight words and tricks and legal proceedings, but he could never hear to see the light of respect and affection in the eyes of his men change to darkness, bitter and hard with disappointment.

No, the locus of the thing lay in New York; perhaps in the cluttered offices of Federal Chemical itself. No matter what the manifestations, his task was clear: he must avoid and overcome the lesser obstacles thrust as bait in his path. His object was the end. Slowly he turned, "I appreciate your offer, MacDowell. I fully appreciate what it cost you to make it. The advice you have given me is valuable, but I'm not going to take it."

MacDowell's mouth gaped. "What? You mean you're gonna let them go ahead an' smear you? You're gonna take it layin' down?"

"I mean I'm returning to New York with you on the Blue Petrel. A man can't run away from his troubles. My trouble is in New York. Maybe I'm wrong but that's the way I'm built. I've got to face Winters for a showdown."

"But while you're outa here, he can—" "He may do anything he likes. He has taken a stand. So have I. I much prefer mine."

MacDowell started to sputter something in protest when a new voice from the doorway caused him to whirl about.

June Paterson was there, calmly eyeing them. "A very pretty speech," she smiled. "How such a virtuous creature as you seem to be can get yourself in so much trouble, I don't understand. So you're going on the Blue Petrel

tool? My, won't that be a jolly party?" A slow, angry flush stole through Talcott's cheeks. Some day, he promised himself, this upstart cousin of Lowell Byrd's would find herself across his knee. (To Be Continued)

From government sources comes the estimate that the services of something like 1,700,000 men and women will be needed to build the 125,000 planes called for by President Roosevelt in the 1943 schedule.

The manufacture of rubber from certain kinds of weeds which grow in American deserts, is being considered by chemists in far western states.

In the early days of motoring when tires were not so durable as they are today, some motorists used strips of leather over the outside casings.

FRIENDLY CREDIT
ON ALL PURCHASES OF MEN'S WEAR

- No Interest
- No Carrying Charge
- No Red Tape

OREGON WOOLEN STORE
8TH AND MAIN

THIS CURIOUS WORLD By William Ferguson



KWIK-KOPPER

CAPE COD TOMSTONE
READS:
"DOLLY BLODGETT, CHILDREN SHE HAD TWENTY-FOUR, PRAISE THE LORD THERE BE NO MORE."

OTTAWA, CAPITAL OF CANADA, IS ABOUT THE SIZE OF CLEVELAND, DENVER, MILWAUKEE, SALT LAKE CITY.

ANSWER: Salt Lake City. . . . Approximately 150,000.

NEXT: Do Buffaloes have humped backs?

SOUTH AMERICAN PRESIDENT

HORIZONTAL

- 1 Depicted South American president.
- 13 Mister (Sp.).
- 14 Attack.
- 15 South Carolina (abbr.).
- 17 Morsel.
- 18 Fish trap.
- 19 Upward.
- 20 Greek letter.
- 22 Meadow.
- 24 By.
- 25 Measure of area (pl.).
- 26 Hostelry.
- 28 Weapon.
- 30 Parchment for book covers.
- 32 Light tap.
- 34 Inactivity.
- 35 Girl's name.
- 38 Scythral chests.
- 37 The Hinden.
- 39 Official acts.
- 40 Indolence.
- 42 Tasmania (abbr.).

Answer to Previous Puzzle

VERTICAL

- 1 Vindicators.
- 2 Like.
- 3 Pen point.
- 4 Shrub.
- 5 Perceives.
- 6 Transpose (abbr.).
- 7 Negative.
- 8 Farther in.
- 9 Norwegian river.
- 10 Soak flux.
- 11 That thing.
- 12 Eats supper.
- 16 Orthodox.
- 19 Chaldean city.
- 21 Disquietudes.
- 23 Dismays.
- 24 Official documents conferring rights to a person.
- 27 Syriac cursive script.
- 29 Babylonian deity.
- 31 Lieutenants (abbr.).
- 33 Light knock.
- 38 Daughter of Inachus (myth.).
- 40 Foolish.
- 41 Chartered.
- 43 Secular.
- 45 Weary.
- 47 Bone.
- 48 Consider.
- 50 Greek letter.
- 52 Tree.
- 54 Centiliter (abbr.).
- 55 Cloth measure.
- 56 Symbol for thallium.
- 57 Of (suffix).

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