

SERIAL STORY

MURDER IN FERRY COMMAND

BY A. W. O'BRIEN

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THIS STORY: Clyde Dawson, Canadian intelligence agent, is on the trail of spies operating against the U. S. F. Bomber Ferry Command...

A CLEVER TRAP

IT all seemed like a chapter out of "Dracula"—or a cheap horror movie. But the awful thing lying in the box was undeniably the right hand chopped off Lemoy Stalter's body...

Using a towel, Dawson picked the hand out of the box and turned it around slowly. There was something odd in its shape that suggested...

Just what purpose lay behind this ghoully act? Why had the hand been hacked off Stalter's body in the first place? It must have been done within the last 36 hours because Dawson, after ordering Stalter's body kept in refrigeration pending further investigation, had finally released it for burial only two mornings ago.

THE captain inspected his credentials and Dawson explained what he wanted, without mentioning the hand episode. In two minutes the purser had brought the long sheets in on which are compiled all data on the passengers.

"As I understand it, sir," the purser repeated, "you are seeking a man who came from St. John's on the same train. There are many, of course, but you want to try weeding them down to the most likely prospects. That should be fairly easy because there are only 123 passengers aboard, and 42 are Canadian or American military, naval and air force men. Each section has one officer in charge who can tell about his men."

"Go on," exclaimed Dawson. "Let's start from there!"

One by one the officers were asked to report and each vouched for his men personally. That cut the number of prospects to 81.

Bit by bit, they eliminated many others.

"That brings us down to 15," calculated Dawson. "Now I have reason to suspect that the party I seek would, like Garbo, want to be alone because of certain items of baggage and odd jobs he may want to do aboard. How many of the 15 have separate cabins?"

The purser checked over the list carefully. "Only four—and here they are, sir."

"That's swell," he said at length. "Now we'll have to exercise caution in the morning because false arrest is still a serious offense in Canada. Mr. Purser, you will do the Intelligence Department a great favor if you ask one trusted room steward to inspect all four cabins with utmost care in the morning as soon as their occupants leave to pass immigration at North Sydney, and report anything they see or find, no matter how slight, to me. For instance, I am particularly interested in any pieces of brown wrapping paper or cord. Meanwhile, I'll have the immigration officials hold up the men under some pretext. And you realize, of course, the need for utmost secrecy?"

Both captain and purser nodded. It was almost 5 a. m. before Dawson returned to his cabin. But he didn't sleep. Switching off the lights and slipping his revolver into a bathrobe pocket, he climbed into an upper bunk.

DAWSON must have dozed because some noise awakened him, followed by the cabin lights being turned on. Automatically his hand closed on his revolver, but he laughed outright as his room steward entered with a cup of steaming coffee, looking in frank amazement at the unoccupied lower bunks and the cabin's lone occupant lying dressed in an upper one.

"Don't get the wrong idea, steward," he said, climbing down to the floor. "I didn't have one too many last night and I'm not eccentric. . . I just find it healthier to sleep in upper times."

Dawson was in the captain's cabin when the Canadian immigration men came aboard at the Cape Breton Island port in Nova Scotia. He knew both and gave them the names of the four men he wanted delayed under "any pretext." They agreed.

The purser entered with a steward and who was carrying several towels, badly smeared with what looked like black ink.

"Here's the only curious item we have found. Mr. Dawson—in Cabin 14 on A Deck the passenger seemed to have had an unusual amount of trouble with his fountain pen. Either that or he spilled a full bottle of very thick ink. His name is Paul Dexel with address . . ."

The investigator hit the table with his fist: "Never mind, I know all that. . . you've solved a riddle for me." Tossing a bill on the table he hurried down to the cabin and reopened the parcel containing Lemoy Stalter's hand. Turning it palm up he studiously inspected the fingertips under the glare of a small searchlight.

"That's it!" he muttered in satisfied manner. "Every fingertip has minute traces of ink. The hand was taken off to secure Stalter's fingerprints for some identification purpose. The man who entered the cemetery vault found that the hands were too rigid to be clenched to get good prints. So rather than risk detection he simply chopped off one hand and took it with him to straighten out the fingers."

A steward entered with a note from one of the immigration men: "Dawson—you had better get going on whatever you plan. One of the four you asked to be delayed is raising hell and I can't lie much longer. His name is Paul Dexel."

Dawson found his man in the lounge loudly berating the immigration official. Dexel was about 5 feet 11 inches, athletic in build and blond. He appeared to be in his mid-thirties.

"Pardon me, Mr. Dexel," Dawson interrupted. "I'm a Dominion Government intelligence officer and the delay is my fault. A slight irregularity has been noted in your passport and I must bring you up to our local bureau for questioning."

Dexel was already wearing his hat and coat. The two walked down the gangplank, through the shed and out to the street.

Dawson turned into a narrow path through the snow. He could hear Dexel's steps behind him as they turned around the back of a building which was obscured from the street by a billboard.

Suddenly Dawson's straining ears noted a change in the rhythm of the steps behind. Wheeling away like a flash, he pivoted on his right foot and grabbed Dexel's right wrist in his own right hand—a knife glistened in the sun. Swinging around, weight balanced on right, Dawson took advantage of the attacker's forward lurch and threw him by bringing down his own left arm on Dexel's right shoulder. Switching quickly he slashed with his right fist, squarely on the other's downturned jaw. Dexel rolled over on one side into the snow as Dawson's handcuffs clicked.

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"That's elementary jiu-jitsu, friend," panted Dawson. "Now, if you don't mind, Mr. Ghoul Dexel, I'll toss you in clink and have you investigated by another agent while I buzz off to Chicago. Somehow, I've got a hunch you don't want me to go there!"

(To Be Continued)

STERLING CHARACTER

KANSAS CITY (AP) — Gust Portias, a restaurant employe, said the dog bit him. But character witnesses said the pet just wasn't that kind of a dog.

Louis, Ramirez, the animal's owner, asked his neighbors for support against Portias' \$500 damage suit.

Judge Paul A. Buzard held a parade of witnesses describe the pet's character as gentle, and returned a decision for the defendant.

HAVE YOUR RADIO REPAIRED NOW! Repair parts are still available in limited quantities, but future manufacture has been curtailed. WE SERVICE ALL MODELS UHLIG'S 1026 Main

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

YOU'LL DESPISE THE AXIS MORE THAN EVER WHEN THE WAR-TIME NIGHTGOWN TAKES THE PLACE OF MEN'S PAJAMAS... A MEASURE TO CONSERVE MATERIAL, IT WILL BE A CROSS BETWEEN AN ARTIST'S SMOCK AND AN OLD FASHIONED NIGHTGOWN. Do you write letters to anyone in the service?

IN LEADVILLE, COLORADO, WHEN WATER MAINS WERE PUT IN, SOLDER WAS SCARCE, SO MOLTEN SILVER WAS USED TO SEAL PIPE JOINTS. ANSWER: Even if you don't have a relative in the service, you have friends there. Write them today.

SCENIC WONDER

Answer to Previous Puzzle. HORIZONTAL: 1 Pictured scenic wonder, 10 Possessing flavor, 12 Fish eggs, 13 Puff up, 16 Greedy, 17 Four (comb. form), 18 Epos, 19 Rigid, 21 Dutch measure, 23 East Indian timber tree, 24 Before, 25 Classes, 27 Body of water, 29 Sloth, 30 Size of shot, 33 Like, 34 Worm, 35 Senior (abbr.), 36 Either, 37 Symbol for selenium, 38 Caterpillar hair, 40 American black snake. VERTICAL: 1 Lynn, 2 Erub, 3 Leases, 4 Wish, 5 Item, 6 Roof, 7 Eat, 8 Eat, 9 Eat, 10 Eat, 11 Eat, 12 Eat, 13 Eat, 14 Eat, 15 Eat, 16 Eat, 17 Eat, 18 Eat, 19 Eat, 20 Eat, 21 Eat, 22 Eat, 23 Eat, 24 Eat, 25 Eat, 26 Eat, 27 Eat, 28 Eat, 29 Eat, 30 Eat, 31 Eat, 32 Eat, 33 Eat, 34 Eat, 35 Eat, 36 Eat, 37 Eat, 38 Eat, 39 Eat, 40 Eat, 41 Eat, 42 Eat, 43 Eat, 44 Eat, 45 Eat.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-45.

NO, THERE'S NOTHING ON HERE THAT LOOKS LIKE IT CAME OFF THE WASHER! I'LL GO AND GET THE LAWN MOWER! DON'T BE RIDICULOUS! DO YOU THINK FOR ONE MINUTE THAT HE'D EVER FIX A LAWN MOWER? GO OUT AND SEE IF HE'S BUILDING ANYTHING IN THE GARAGE!

WHY MOTHERS GET GRAY Out Our Way By J. R. Williams. I'M JUST AS ANXIOUS AS YOU ARE TO KETCH THOSE BANK ROBBERS WHO SHOT LITTLE BEAVER, RED, BUT... YOU CAN'T FIND 'EM WARMIN' THAT CHAIR, SHERIFF!

Red Ryder. LISTEN, JED, YOU OLD FOOL—ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME THAT KID, ANNIE, ACTUALLY GOT IN AND SOLD MRS. SLEET WAR BONDS? WELL, JUDGE—I DON'T RIGHTLY KNOW JUST WHAT DID HAPPEN—I TOOK ANNIE IN TO SEE THEM PARTING OFF OLD ZEBADIAH, CAPT. JOHN, AN' TH' REST—ANNIE LIKED 'EM FINE—I FIGGERED TH' OLD LADY WAS NAPPIN'—BUT SHE SNEAKED UP AND KETCHED US IN TH' PARLOR—SURE RAN ME OUT QUICK—BUT SHE TOOK A SHINE TO ANNIE—THEY GABBED FER QUITE A SPELL—BUT AS ANNIE WAS LEAVIN' SHE SPILLED HER BONDS ON TH' FLOOR—WOW! DID TH' OLD LADY GIT MAD—FIGGERED SHE'D BEEN TRICKED—HEH! HEH! BUT ANNIE ADMITS SHE CAME TO SELL BONDS, BUT SAYS AFTER SEEN' HOW MUCH MRS. SLEET HAS GIVE TO OUR COUNTRY AN' HOW PROUD SHE IS OF IT—WAL, ANNIE SAYS IT MAKES HER FEEL SORTA ASHAMED—THEN TH' OLD LADY HOLLERS FER ME—WELL, I'LL BE A—

Little Orphan Annie. WHAT DO WE DO IN OUR LUNCH PERIOD, CHUM? GOBBLE LUNCH, AND COLLECT A LITTLE TAN ON THE BEACH! I WONDER IF JEAN SPENDS HER TIME ON THE BEACH AT NOON? AND I WONDER IF SHE REALLY DISUKES MALES? SHE SAID SHE WASN'T INTERESTED IN BOYS, AND LOOK! SURROUNDED BY SUN-TANNED JERKS! YOU'RE GONNA HAVE COMPETITION, PAL! I DREAM OF JEANIE WITH THE LIGHT BROWN HAREM—TAIN'T FUNNY, MCGOOSEY!

Freckles and His Friends. NOW, ABOUT THE INFORMATION I HAVE SECURED—SINCE CORREGIDOR FELL, ONLY ONE FIGHTER, THREE OBSERVATION PLANES, AND FIVE MITSUBISHI LIGHT BOMBERS REMAIN, USUALLY THERE ARE TWO SUBMARINE PATROLS DAILY... 5:50 IN THE MORNING AND AT 2:50 IN THE AFTERNOON. AH, HA! EVEN NOW A PLAN IS FORMING. IF ONLY I CAN GET ONTO THE FIELD AT THE PROPER TIME, I'LL HAVE A CHANCE TO GRAB A PLANE READY TO GO. BUT THEY DO NOT FLY EVERY DAY.

Wash Tubbs. AH, THOSE ARE NO DOUBT THE F.B.I. BOYS—EASY NOW. BEFORE YOU GO—HOW DID YOU KNOW WE WERE HERE? HOW DID YOU GET HERE SO QUICKLY? WE LEFT YOU AT THE TRACK ONLY A SHORT TIME AGO.

Boots and Her Buddies. LISSEN, OOP, TO ALL THAT FUSS—WHATCHA RECKON THEY'RE HOLLERIN' AT US? I DUNNO, BUT PRETTY QUICK THEY'RE GONNA FIND OUT WE AIN'T FRIENDS... BUT DON'T RUSH THINGS BY GANGING AROUND OUR DECK GUN. HEY, LOOK! BOOM'S CHANGIN' OUR COURSE—HE'S HEADIN' AROUND AT TH' JAPPO...

I TELL YOU IT'S ASTOUNDING! DREADNAUGHT COVERING A HALF-MILE IN HIS WITHOUT EVEN DISPLAYING A BEAD OF SWEAT! EGAD! WHY SHOULDN'T I REMAIN HERE FOR THE COUNTY FAIR AND ANNEX SOME JUICY PURSES WITH MY CINDER-ELLA HORSE? HM! I WOULD NEED ABOUT— MY GUARD'S UP, SO DON'T TRY TO FEINT ME AGAINST THE ROPE'S FOR A JAB AT THE BANKROLL! ALL I'VE GOT IN THE OLD SOCK IS SAND! I'VE HAD A HUNCH THIS PICNIC WOULD BE RAINED OUT! IF YOU STAY HERE WITH THE BEETLE, HOW DO WE GO HOME—ON POGO STICKS?

THEY OUTMAN-EUVERED HIM—7-7. YOU'RE STILL DEPUTIZED? YOU KETCH 'EM! SURE, WE CAN GIVE YOU THE SERIAL NUMBERS ON THE STOLEN MONEY! AND I AIM TO DO JUST THAT—AND I'VE GOT BUSINESS WITH THE BANK! TELL ME! GOOD! LET'S HAVE 'EM, FRONTO!

By Harold Gray. SHE SAID SHE WASN'T INTERESTED IN BOYS, AND LOOK! SURROUNDED BY SUN-TANNED JERKS! YOU'RE GONNA HAVE COMPETITION, PAL! I DREAM OF JEANIE WITH THE LIGHT BROWN HAREM—TAIN'T FUNNY, MCGOOSEY!

By Blosser. HMM! THAT'S BAD. YES, THE MORE I'VE LEARNED, THE MORE DANGEROUS IT APPEARS FOR YOU TO ATTEMPT STEALING A PLANE, THE JAPS ARE AFRAID OF SABOTAGE, AND SINCE OUR ATTACKS, THEY ARE MORE VIGILANT THAN EVER.

By Crane. NICE WORK, MR. HIGH! OH, NO! I LEFT YOU AT THE TRACK! YOU FORGET, MY GOOD BARON—WHEN THE STAKES ARE HIGH, I'VE MADE IT A PRACTICE TO THINK FASTER AND BETTER THAN CHUMPS LIKE YOU! CHEERIO!

By Martin. NOW THOSE NIPS SURE WILL GET SUSPICIOUS! THEN FOR ACTION WE'D BEST PREPARE, THEY'LL GIVE US A LOOK-OVER NOW, FOR FAIR. ALL RIGHT, GUYS... LET'S GIVE 'EM TH' WORKS NOW!

Alley Oop. LISSEN, OOP, TO ALL THAT FUSS—WHATCHA RECKON THEY'RE HOLLERIN' AT US? I DUNNO, BUT PRETTY QUICK THEY'RE GONNA FIND OUT WE AIN'T FRIENDS... BUT DON'T RUSH THINGS BY GANGING AROUND OUR DECK GUN. HEY, LOOK! BOOM'S CHANGIN' OUR COURSE—HE'S HEADIN' AROUND AT TH' JAPPO...