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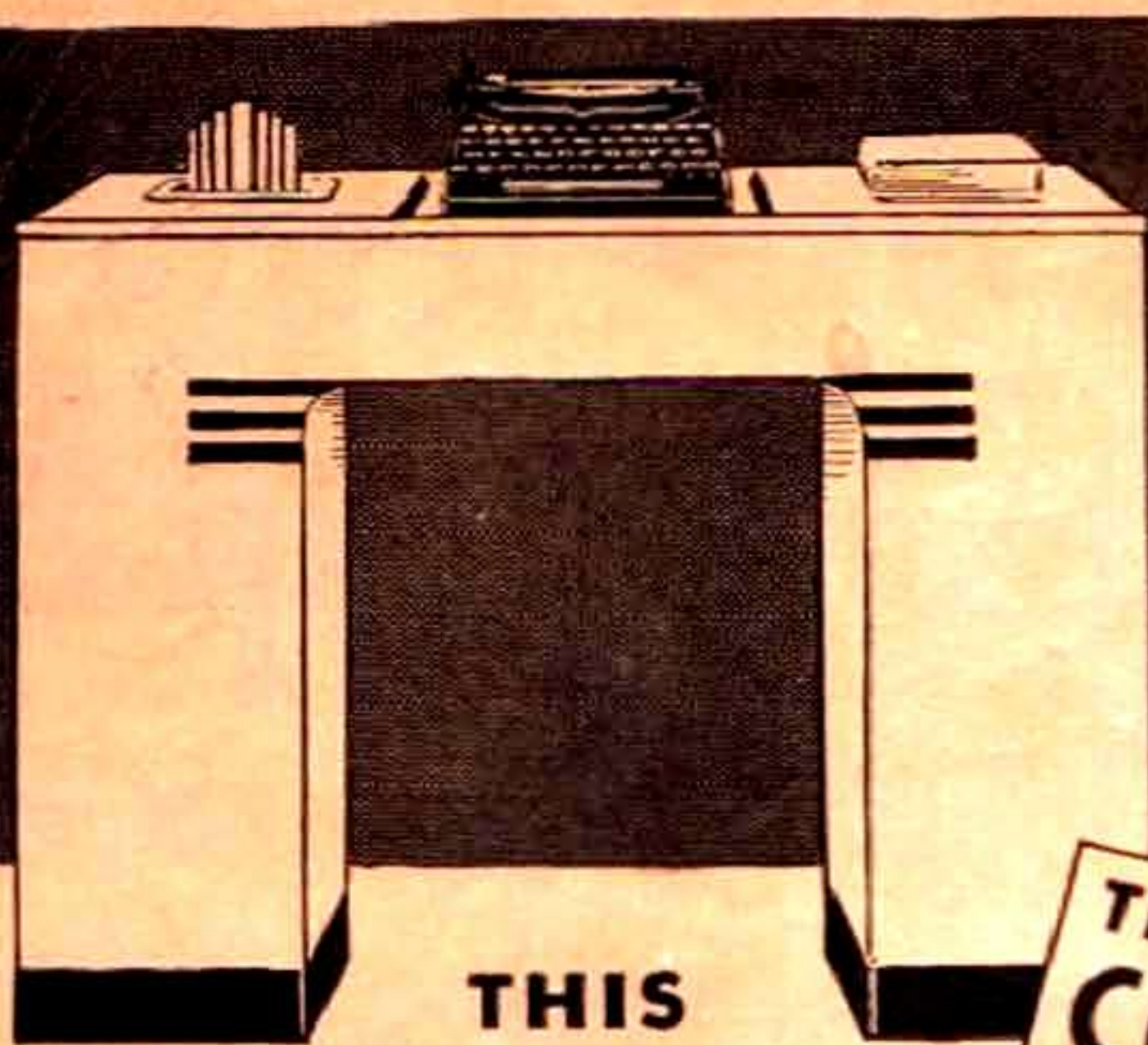
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# IF I FAILED...WE WERE ALL DEAD MEN



LASHED TO SHROUDS  
OF SINKING,  
BURNING SCHOONER,  
SAILORS SEE HOPE  
OF RESCUE FADE

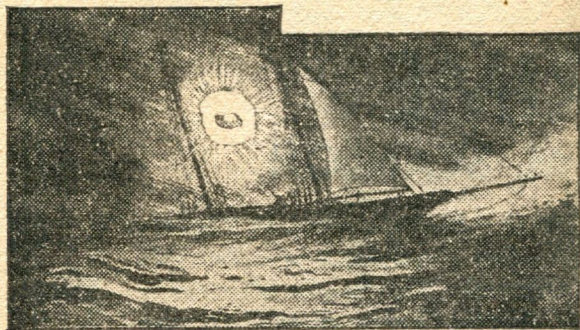
① "The dream of my life, for which I had saved since I first went to sea at twelve, had come true!" writes Capt. Hans Milton of 610 West 111th St., New York City. "I was making my first voyage as master and owner of my own vessel, the two-masted topsail schooner 'Pioneer,' when the hurricane of last September caught us 400 miles off Nantucket.



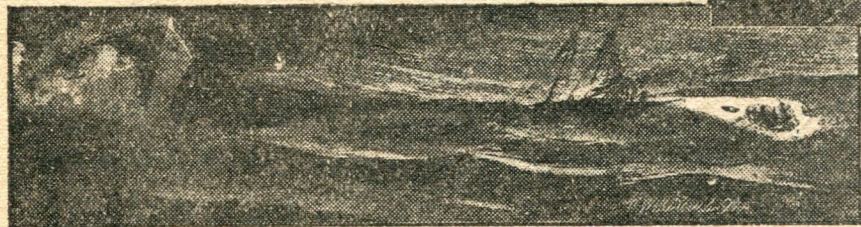
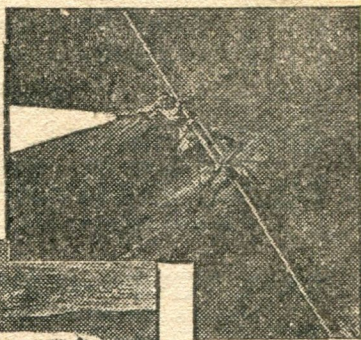
② "We were pumping to keep afloat when we passed into the windless vortex of the storm where the waves were leaping and jumping crazily and where they crashed in our companion ways and filled the ship beyond hope of saving her.

The five of us and the cat scrambled aloft for our lives. Our deck-load of lumber kept us afloat and without fresh water and with almost no food we lived, lashed to the rigging, for three endless days and nights.

③ "Once a steamer hove in sight—but failing to see our distress signals, went her way. At 3 a.m. on the fourth morning steamer lights showed momentarily over the wild sea. We rigged a huge ball of sails and blankets, soaked it with gasoline, touched it off and hoisted it aloft.



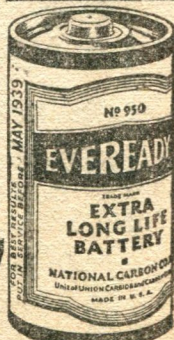
④ "But the steamer did not change her course. She thought we were fishing. The wind blew burning fragments back on the ship setting her afire in various places. I could see the stern light of the steamer going away from us. *If I couldn't stop her, we were all dead men!* I climbed to the fore-top and in desperation pulled my flashlight from my back pocket and in Morse code signalled 'Sinking... SOS... Help!'



⑤ "Slowly, I saw the ship turn! In her last hour afloat, all of us and the cat were saved from the sinking, burning 'Pioneer' by those fine seamen of the United States Liner 'American Banker' and by the power of two tiny 'Eveready' fresh DATED batteries that stood by us in the blackest hour of our lives!

(Signed) *Captain Hans Milton*

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# G-MEN

Vol. XIV, No. 3

MARCH, 1939

Price 10c

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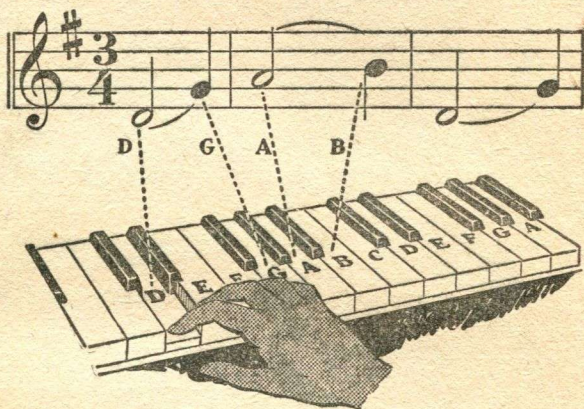


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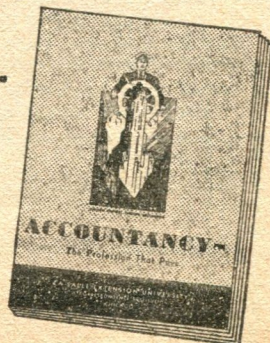
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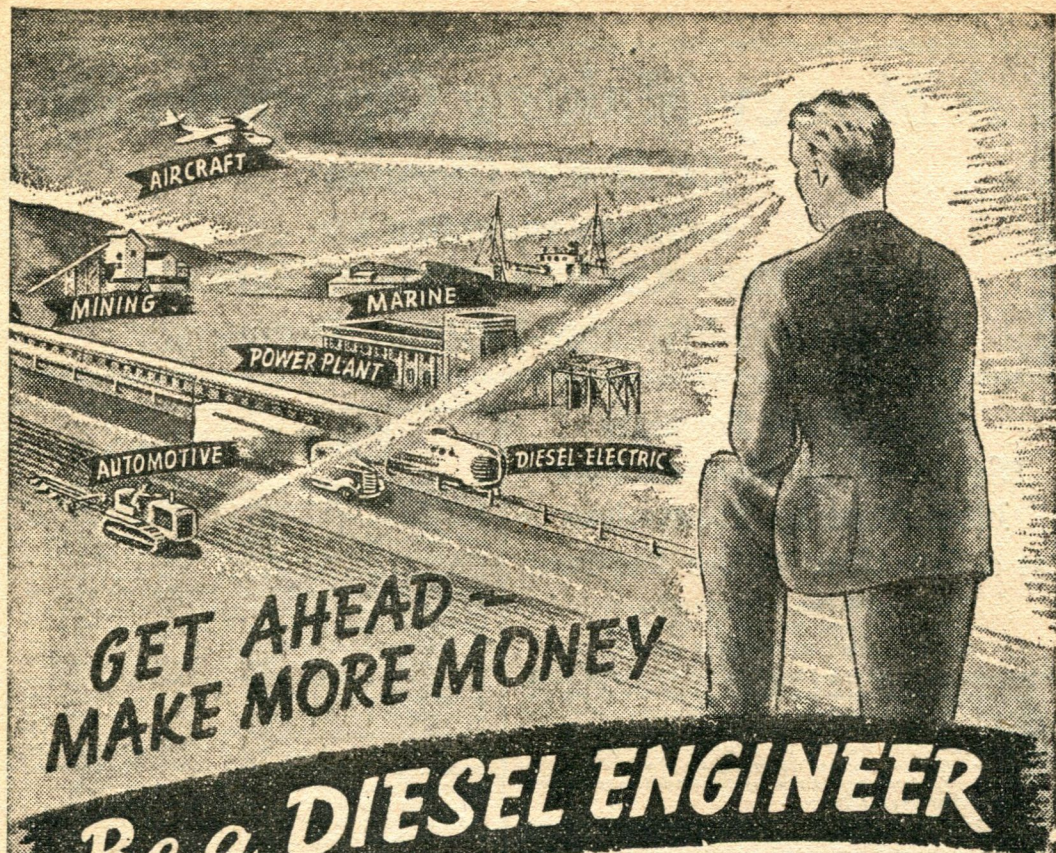
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Now another change is taking place. An old established industry—an integral and important part of the nation's structure—in which millions of dollars change hands every year—is in thousands of cases being replaced by a truly astonishing, simple invention, which does the work better—more reliably—AND AT A COST OFTEN AS LOW AS 2% OF WHAT IS ORDINARILY PAID! It has not required very long for men who have taken over the rights to this valuable invention to do a remarkable business, and show earnings which in these times are almost unheard of for the average man.

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**but a valuable, proved device which  
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You walk into an office and put down before your prospect a letter from a sales organization showing that they did work in their own office for \$11 which formerly could have cost them over \$200. A building supply corporation pays our man \$70, whereas the bill could have been for \$1,600! An automobile dealer pays our representative \$15, whereas the expense could have been over \$1,000. A department store has expense of \$88.60, possible cost if done outside the business being well over \$2,000. And so on. We could not possibly list all cases here. There are just a few of the many actual cases which we place in your hands to work with. Practically every line of business and every section of the country is represented by these field reports which hammer across dazzling, convincing money-saving opportunities which hardly any business man can fail to understand.

**Profits Typical of  
the Young, Growing Industry**

Going into this business is not like selling something offered in every grocery, drug or department store. For instance, when you take a \$7.50 order, \$5.83 can be your share. On \$1,500 worth of business, your share can be \$1,167.00. The very least you get as your part of every dollar's worth of business you do is 67 cents—on ten dollars' worth \$6.70, on a hundred dollars' worth \$67.00—in other words two thirds of every order you get is yours. Not only on the first order—but on repeat orders—and you have the opportunity of earning an even larger percentage.

**This Business Has  
Nothing to Do With  
House to House Canvassing**

Nor do you have to know anything about high-pressure selling. "Selling" is unnecessary in the ordinary sense of the word. Instead of hammering away at the customer and trying to "force" a sale, you make a dignified, business-like call, leave the installation—whatever size the customer says he will accept—at our risk, let the customer sell himself after the device is in and working. This is done away with the need for pressure on the customer—it eliminates the handicap of trying to get the money before the customer has really convinced himself 100%. You simply tell what you offer, showing proof of success in that customer's particular line of business. Then leave the invention without a dollar down. It starts working at once. In a few short days, the installation should actually produce enough cash money to pay for the deal, with profits above the investment coming in at the same time. You then call back, collect your money. Nothing is so convincing as our offer to let results speak for themselves without risk to the customer! While others fail to get even a hearing, our men are making sales running into the hundreds. They have received the attention of the largest firms in the country, and sold to the smallest businesses by the thousands.

## EARNINGS

One man in California earned over \$1,600 per month for three months—close to \$5,000 in 90 days' time. Another writes from Delaware—"Since I have been operating (just a little less than a month of actual selling) and not the full day at that, because I have been getting organized and had to spend at least half the day in the office; counting what I have sold outright and on trial, I have made just a little in excess of one thousand dollars profit for one month." A Connecticut man writes he has made \$55.00 in a single day's time. Texas man nets over \$300 in less than a week's time. Space does not permit mentioning here more than these few random cases. However, they are sufficient to indicate that the worthwhile future in this business is coupled with immediate earnings for the right kind of man. One man with us has already made over a thousand sales on which his earnings ran from \$5 to \$60 per sale and more. A great deal of this business was repeat business. Yet he had never done anything like this before coming with us. That is the kind of opportunity this business offers. The fact that this business has attracted to it such business men as former bankers, executives of businesses—men who demand only the highest type of opportunity and income—gives a fairly good picture of the kind of business this is. Our door is open, however, to the young man looking for the right field in which to make his start and develop his future.

**No Money Need Be Risked**

In trying this business out, you can measure the possibilities and not be out a dollar. If you are looking for a business that is not overworked—a business that is just coming into its own—on the upgrade, instead of the downgrade—a business that offers the buyer relief from a burdensome, but unavoidable expense—a business that has a prospect practically in every office, store, or factory into which you can set foot—regardless of size—that is a necessity but does not have any price cutting to contend with as other necessities do—that because you control the sales in exclusive territory is your own business—that pays more on some individual sales than many men make in a week and sometimes in a month's time—if such a business looks as if it is worth investigating, get in touch with us at once for the rights in your territory—don't delay—because the chances are that if you do wait, someone else will have written to us in the meantime—and if it turns out that you were the better man—we'd both be sorry. So for convenience, use the coupon below—but send it right away—or wire if you wish. But do it now. Address

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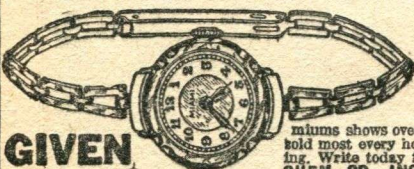


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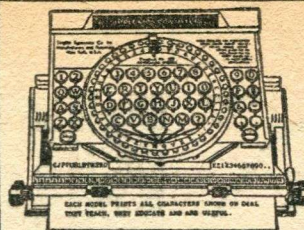
Headlight; Horn; Tool Box; Coast-erbrake. Yes, fully equipped. Chromium plated parts. What a Bike! A brand new sporty bike for ambitious boys and girls! **25¢**

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SEND NO MONEY  
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Everybody gets a premium or Cash Commission. **25¢ BIKES** or other expensive Premiums **YOURS** for **SIMPLY GIVING AWAY FREE** big colored pictures with our famous **WHITE CLOVERINE** **IND SALVE** for **CHAPS, CUTS, BURNS, SORES,** etc., which you easily sell to friends at 25¢ a box (with picture **FREE**) and remitting as explained in catalog sent with goods. **SPECIAL:**—Catalog shows 20 Premiums for returning only \$3 collected. Constant users—please write. Millions pleased. Pictures pep sales. Salve sold most calls. **BE FIRST.** Mail coupon Now! **Wilson Chem. Co., Inc., Dept. TG-31-A, Tyrone, Pa.**



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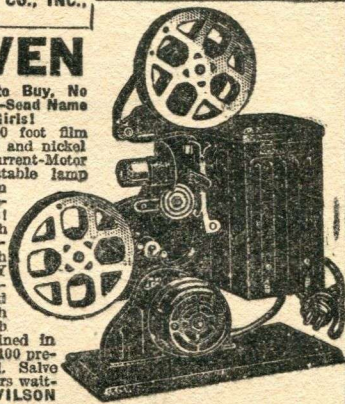
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Or Big Cash Commission—Send No Money—Send Name and Address. Nothing to Buy!

Every letter in the alphabet and the numerals from 1 to 10. Any child can write on it after two hours practice and older people will grasp the idea at once. Full directions, extra supply of best quality copying ink. **Clever! Practical! Given** for simply giving away free beautifully colored art pictures with our famous **WHITE CLOVERINE SALVE** used for chaps, burns, etc., which you easily sell to your friends and relatives at 25¢ a box (with picture free) and paying as explained in catalog. Be first. Customers waiting. Write quick. Mail coupon now. **WILSON CHEMICAL CO., INC., DEPT. TG-31-B, TYRONE, PA.**

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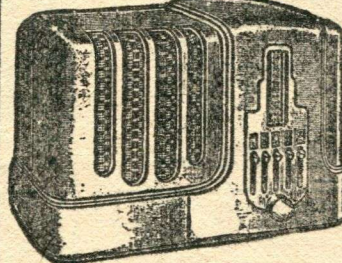
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## GIVEN 5 Tube RADIO

OR BIG CASH COMMISSION  
SEND NO MONEY

NOTHING TO BUY! NO RISK — NO CASH

Send Name and Address

Automatic tuning—Super-heterodyne—AC-DC—Short Wave—Amateurs, police, and airplane calls. Standard broadcast band. 5 position tuner plus regular tuning knob. Amazing! Yours for **SIMPLY GIVING AWAY FREE** beautifully colored art pictures with our **WHITE CLOVERINE SALVE** used for burns, cuts, chaps, sores, etc., which you sell to friends and neighbors at 25¢ a box (giving picture **FREE**) and remitting as explained in premium catalog. **SPECIAL—Choice of 20 premiums for returning only \$3 collected. BE FIRST. SEND TODAY—WE TRUST YOU. MAIL COUPON NOW!—WILSON CHEM. CO., INC. DEPT. TG-31-F, TYRONE, PENNA.**

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Dept. 31, Tyrone, Pa. Date.....

Gentlemen: Please send me 12 beautiful art pictures with 12 boxes **WHITE CLOVERINE SALVE** to sell at 25¢ a box (giving picture **FREE**). I will remit within 30 days, select a premium or keep cash commission as per new premium plan catalog sent with order, postage paid.

Name .....

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Print Your Last Name Only in Space Below.

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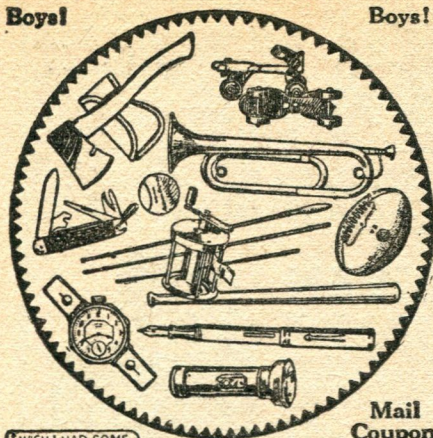
WRITE, or PASTE COUPON on a POSTAL CARD or MAIL COUPON in an envelope TODAY!



Boys!

Boys!

# BIG PRIZES



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HERE'S MY  
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BRING A  
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NOW I HAVE  
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HOW proud you'll be to own this swift new bike or any of our 300 other big prizes. You'll **MAKE MONEY** while you earn them, too. It's easy to start. Need not interfere with school. Just deliver our popular magazines to people whom you secure as customers in your neighborhood. Some boys earn a prize such as a model airplane or a compo-pearl knife the first day. Perhaps you can, too. Hurry! Mail the coupon NOW.

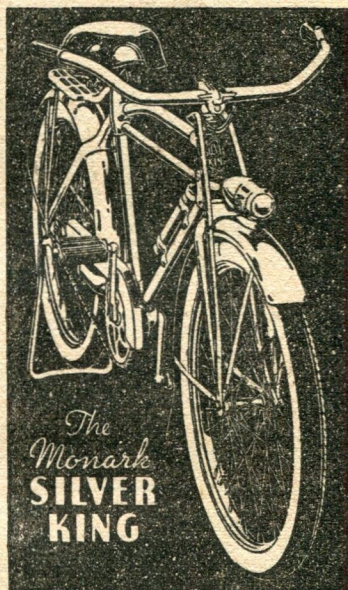
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The Crowell Publishing Co., Springfield, Ohio

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Many Finish in 2 Years

Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work — prepares you for entrance to college. Standard H. S. texts supplied — Diploma, Credit for H. S. subjects already completed. Single subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement in business and industry and socially. Don't be handicapped all your life. Be a High School graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation. American School, Dept. H-350, Drexel, at 58th, Chicago

YES, BOB, MOUNTING BIRDS AND ANIMALS IS A GRAND HOBBY! I'VE DOUBLED MY FUN FROM HUNTING—AND AVERAGE \$14 PER WEEK, SPARE TIME, MOUNTING FOR HUNTERS—WHY DON'T YOU WRITE TO THE N.W. SCHOOL FOR THEIR FREE BOOK?

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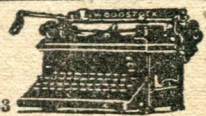
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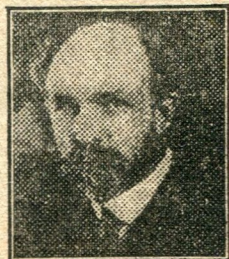
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A command of effective English gives you added advantages and better opportunities. Poor English handicaps you more than you will ever realize. If you are ever embarrassed by mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or pronunciation, this new free book

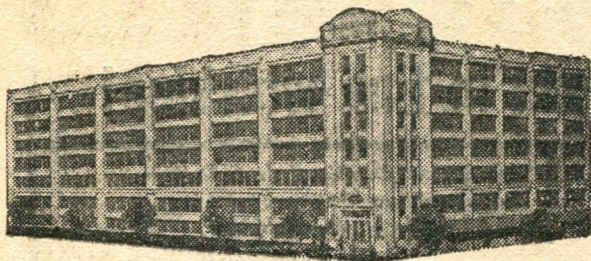
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# A Million Dollar Company WANTS MEN



*for* **COFFEE ROUTES**

**Making Regular Weekly Calls Pays  
Up To \$60<sup>00</sup> In a Week**

Over 350 more men will be given the opportunity at once—by this million dollar, old established company—to run their own fine-paying Coffee Routes right in their home localities. No experience required. Excellent chance to make good money at once—up to \$60 in a week for full time and up to \$6.50 in a day just for part time.

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You simply run a Coffee Route in your locality. Everybody uses Coffee, Teas, Spices, Flavoring Extracts, other foods and home necessities almost every day. Make regular calls on your customers, keep them supplied with the things they need—all nationally famous high quality products. You handle all the money and pocket a big part of every dollar you take in. You don't divide up with anyone.

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Look in the box at the right. See the big money reported by others. These exceptional earnings show *your* big possibilities. I have an even better proposition

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## FORD CARS GIVEN AS A BONUS

To encourage giving regular service to their customers, I give brand-new Ford Cars as a bonus to producers over and above their own cash earnings. Not a contest or raffle, but an extra reward for producing. Car is not needed at the start, but is a great help as business grows.

## POSITIVE PROOF OF BIG EARNING POSSIBILITIES

Can you make money with a Coffee Route? Yes! If space permitted I could print scores of sworn reports of exceptionally fine earnings. Here are just a few:

Earnings Reported for One Week	
F. J. Mosher, Wyo. ....	\$ 60.00
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These sworn reports of exceptional earnings show your wonderful possibilities! Why not give yourself the chance? **FIND OUT! Get the FREE FACTS.**

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Without placing me under any obligation, please send me **FREE** your Coffee Route Plan, showing how I can make up to \$60.00 in a week. Also tell me about your bonus offer of brand-new Ford Cars.

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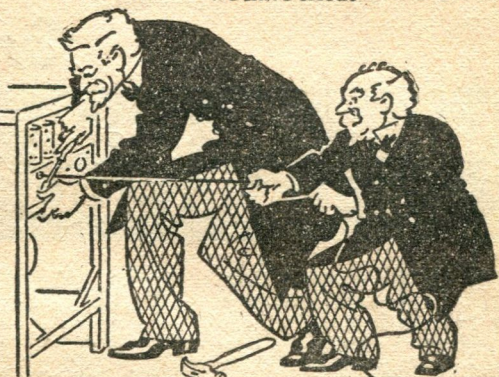


# Mr. Mattingly & Mr. Moore tune in on a bargain in fine whiskies!

"Oh, Mr. Mattingly,  
Oh, Mr. Mattingly,  
Have you noticed how  
our whiskey's specified?"



"Ask the people what their choice is—  
And the answer that they voice is:  
'M & M—the grandest whiskey  
we have tried!'"



"Yes, Mr. Moore,  
Yes, Mr. Moore,  
Folks on land and sea are  
raising gladsome cries..."



"When for whiskey people call,  
'M & M!' shout one and all,  
It is slow-distilled and mellow ...  
its low price is a surprise!"



A LITTLE skill in bargain hunt-  
ing will lead you straight to  
Mattingly & Moore...a real whis-  
key value if there ever was one!

M & M is ALL whiskey—every  
drop slow-distilled the good, old-  
fashioned way! What's more,  
M & M is a blend of straight whis-

kies—and that's the kind of whis-  
key we think is best of all.

Ask for M & M—today—at your  
favorite bar or package store.  
You'll find that its mellow flavor  
just hits the spot—while its low  
price is really in tune with your  
pocket-book!

## Mattingly & Moore

**Long on Quality—Short on Price!**

*A blend of straight whiskies—90 proof—every drop is whiskey.  
Frankfort Distilleries, Incorporated, Louisville and Baltimore.*



## CROSSROADS OF CRIME



*As Turk dove, the roar of the gun flamed in his face (Chapter III)*

**Dan Fowler, Special Agent of the F. B. I., Battles a Diabolic Menace Threatening the People of Hawaii!**

**By C. K. M. SCANLON**

*Author of "Crown Prince of Doom," "The Insurance Murders," etc.*

### CHAPTER I

#### *Menace Unknown*

#### **H**ELL IN HAWAII!

The three words screamed in giant print across the flickering screen of the narrow Waipahu movie house, to an accompaniment of

dramatic musical effects which would have been more gripping if projected from less outmoded sound equipment.

For that matter, the newsreel film wasn't exactly hot off the griddle, either. This event about to be flashed before the plantation-town customers had been the mainland and Honolulu first-run scoop of two weeks previous.

## A FULL BOOK-LENGTH G-MEN NOVEL



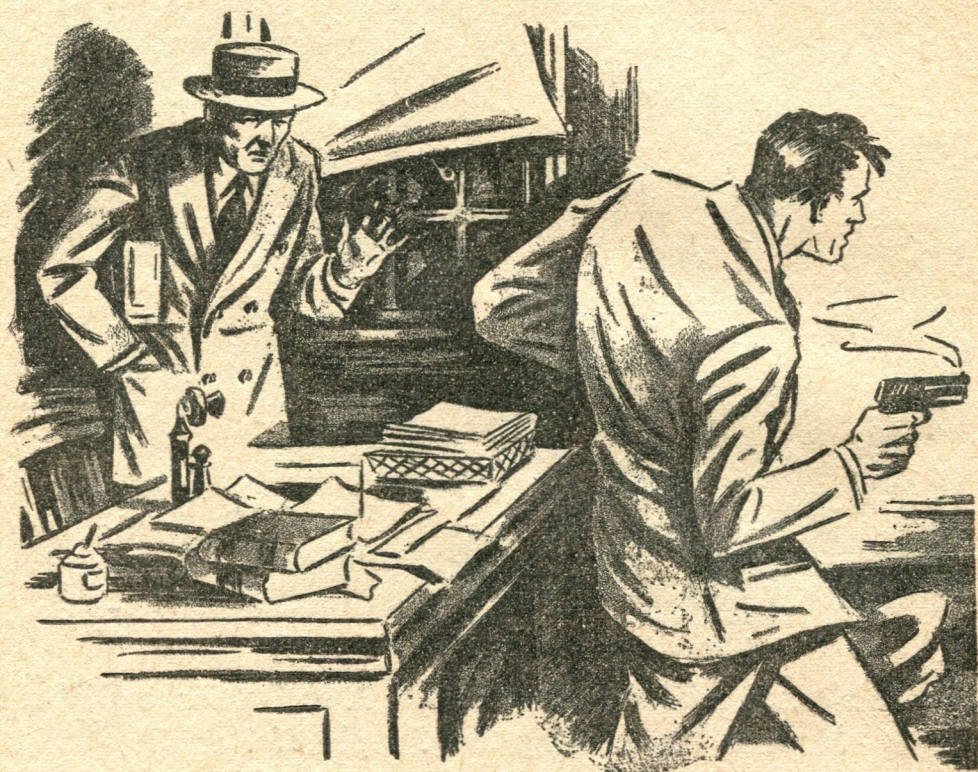
## Reviled and Hunted, Fowler Carries on in

What brought the present eager audience forward onto the rims of their chairs, and held them there, was the foreknowledge that sensational scenes of home would now be flashed on the screen. Several individuals seated along the shadowy rows had witnessed this disaster personally; or, at least, had got themselves up-shore in time to watch the flaming oil scattered over the water as the powder barges sank.

On the screen, an expanse of night-

Disaster directs the eyes of the world toward this minute reef off the coast of Oahu, most important of the Hawaiian Islands. Here, the United States Army has let contracts to a local building concern for the construction of the largest explosives plant and storage dump yet undertaken in the Pacific area.

Closeups of the buildings followed the general view. The structures were small, mostly, for in the handling of powder and dynamite as few men as



darkened water had appeared, to glint elusively under a tropical moon. The camera's lens swung in quickly, to discover a low-lying reef stretched across the water only a few hundred yards off-shore.

Squat, square buildings juttied up from it like warts on some slumbering sea monster's hide. Occasional lights showed among them. The sound track picked up the crackling voice of a news-reel commentator:

possible are concentrated in any one area. The traditional "bear cages"—thick earthen embankments thrown up about danger points to lessen unavoidable peril—loomed in the darkness like monsters. Since these were night shots, the open stretches between buildings were deserted. The narrator went on.

Since its very beginning, this large-scale undertaking—deemed vitally necessary as an assured and speedy source of munitions

## The Danger of a Horrible Holocaust Hovers



## the Cause of Justice Despite Opposition!

for America's considerable fortifications at the Crossroads of the Pacific—has seemed doomed to misfortune. Old-time Hawaiians mutter that a ghost is at work.

Labor troubles have delayed the contracting firm of Wong & Selby in construction operations. Sharks have invaded the inlet for the first time in history, killing three workmen. Reports of "kahunas" and angered gods have terrorized superstitious native workmen. The reef had already been christened a jinx, before the latest and most tragic chapter was written.

Now Trans-Terra Pix once again scores a news beat by bringing you actual scenes

*Fowler fired—the reporter's body stiffened, then crumpled suddenly*  
(Chapter XIII)



of the sinking of the dynamite ship "Pago-Pago!"

The audience was stilled to an electric tension of anticipation. As the closest towns to the reef, that grim maritime explosion had brought Wai-pahu and nearby Ewa their hour in the limelight.

Once more, night waves rolled across the screen. The camera lifted from

them, straight along the path of the moon, until it picked out the distant shape of a freighter nosing in toward land from the trackless wastes of south-westerly ocean.

At this hour and distance they were invisible; yet not a soul in the theatre lacked spine-chilling knowledge of certain low humps strung out behind the *Pago-Pago*—dynamite barges, towed in a perilous line.

"Fourteen men killed!" muttered one

spectator in that hushed darkness. "Hundreds of thousands of dollars sunk! And I was here beforehand. I should have been able to stop it! It shouldn't have happened!"

Nobody heard him. The crowd was watching the screen, morbidly breathless. Any second now! The ship hadn't lain much further in when that narrow streak of flame had showed.

Now would come that first warning

## Over a Gigantic Mid-Pacific Munitions Plant!



roar; the violent blasts which slammed those cracking barges up against the night sky; the towering blaze; the bodies catapulting like inch-high dolls; the mammoth holocaust as the *Pago-Pago's* oil tank went up. . . .

**TURK BAILEY**, young special agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, left the little Hawaiian plantation's movie theatre in a lot more hurry than he had gone into it.

The heat and noise, the chatter of tremendous Filipino families arriving in units of eight to fourteen, the flickering title shots of an ancient Tom Mix feature, vanished behind him. Hot, fresh air and mid-afternoon's liquid Pacific sunlight lay ahead. He strode into them with the speed of a man who has a devil by the tail.

"Tomorrow, thank God, Dan Fowler's boat pulls into Honolulu—" he was thinking.

The settlement of Waipahu strung out along its main thoroughfare. Houses of the more prosperous plantation people occupied one side of it; stores—mostly Japanese—the other. At its upper end, in the good part of the town, stood the old Kauluoa place, where Lurton and his assistant, Stock, were boarding.

In the daylight, Turk glanced once more at the still-new gold wrist-watch his sister had given him for a Christmas present. He had read it aright in the darkness. He was late for his appointment with Lurton—Jedtham Crabbe's sworn enemy.

Tomorrow, when he reported to his newly arriving superior in the Department, he wanted things as shipshape as possible; this being his first solo assignment, and he having failed to prevent that *Pago-Pago* tragedy. Maybe today's talk with Lurton—

"Mist! Mist!"

Turk Bailey's tall frame twisted, a ragged little Japanese urchin brought up alongside him. The boy had darted from one of the narrow native shops along the way. His yellow hand, small as a puppet's, tugged at the startled young special agent's sleeve.

"Mist' Bailey, please?"

"Yeh, I'm Turk Bailey."

"Is tel'phone inside of store, waiting.

Man say kindly call you, plenty fast."

Turk was inside the musty slice of a shop the boy had indicated, striding toward the unscreened instrument protruding like an ugly growth from the rear wall, before his brain really functioned. The several peculiarities of this situation caught up with him all at once. But by this time he had the receiver at the end of the swaying cord gripped in one big hand.

"Bailey speaking."

"Hello." The voice at the far end was low, distorted. The speaker, the way the listening young mainlander figured things, was deliberately disguising it. Yet somehow he sounded like a *haole*—a white man.

"You got an appointment with Mr. Lurton, at the Kauluoa place, for ten minutes from now?" said the voice.

"That's right." Turk supposed this was some hireling of Crabbe's, checking up on him. Crabbe was smart. Smart enough to be the brains behind the whole macabre million-dollar setup Bailey had been sent out to the Islands to investigate!

"I'm calling for Lurton, see?" There was something furtive about the voice on the telephone; something underscored, for all its softness, with unspeakable evil. "He ain't at Mrs. Kauluoa's. He wants you to meet him at Kioki Weed's. It's urgent."

**THE** voice dead-stopped. Then: "He says to tell you '*Popoki*'."

*Popoki!* Late yesterday, Roger Lurton had written down that word on the back of an old envelope, at Turk Bailey's dictation. It was Hawaiian for "cat." Nobody but the museum official himself would have used those syllables for a password!

"Listen — if Lurton's there, why doesn't he—"

A metallic click sliced across Turk's swift, suspicious question. The messenger with the phony whisper had hung up. . . .

Plunging into the rancid shadows of the back alley onto which faced the battered portals of Kioki Weed's unsavory bagnio, Turk's keen eyes shot left and right. Every nerve in his fit, muscular body was a-jangle. Something about this rendezvous smelled bad. Very bad.



That call could never have come from Lurton.

Who could have known the exact moment at which he would emerge from the movie house—except some lurker on the main street itself, who actually had seen him? That intercepting message must have been put in from one of the shops he had already passed, not from Weed's.

Yet a quick phone checkup with the Kauluoa residence had revealed that his clean-cut new friend, from Honolulu's Preacher Institute Museum, actually had left the house a good half hour earlier. In considerable of a hurry, too, according to the liquid, lazy drawl of young David Kauluoa.

Something plenty important must have come up, to cause Lurton to switch their appointment. Prowling slowly forward among the alley's shadows, Turk Bailey wondered what it could have been? Surely, Lurton was as anxious for that talk as was the special agent.

Lurton, the museum's field chief, and Stock, his helper had arrived in Waipahu a week past to investigate the possibilities of some recently revived legends concerning the burial cave of the first Kauluoa—a celebrated prince, or chief of some sort in the conquering army of Hawaii's native Napoleon, Kamehameha the Great.

The relics, buried with that dead warrior, a century and more ago, would be a considerable addition to the Honolulu Institute's Hawaiian collection; or so Turk understood.

On the trail of a cunningly elusive criminal whose campaign of violence in the guise of "natural" disasters had reached grim tentacles halfway around the world to Washington, Turk had come to Waipahu in the character of a young geological student interested in native lava formations. Naturally enough, in this small plantation community, the mutual interests of two such isolated "scientists" would have brought them together.

Conscious always that the crafty eyes of unrecognized enemies might be upon him, Turk Bailey had been at pains to keep in character. It had been he who took the initiative and searched Lurton out. And after their first evening's talk

over tall, cool glasses, he had sincerely liked and admired the museum official.

What had really anchored his attention, however, was a chance remark of Roger Lurton's. A remark to the effect that Jedtham Crabbe was also in Waipahu; to Lurton's disgust, since he and the other man were old-time enemies with a personal grudge.

Jedtham Crabbe! Already that name was full of evil significance for Turk Bailey.

**C**RABBE was one of the quintet who owned the *other* parcel of land; those flat, swampy acres on the outskirts of Honolulu, which finally had been rejected as a powder-base site by last summer's Government commission.

The official decision in favor of the off-coast reef near Waipahu, where the new Federal munitions depot was now nearing completion, within a scant month of the time limit set by the government's iron-bound contracts, must have been close to a financial death blow for those five speculators who controlled the swamp.

They had maneuvered desperately, unscrupulously, to sell it at a handsome profit. But, alas for them, their intended "sucker" was a Government commission just a little too smart for such tricks.

One of those five disappointed land manipulators, as Turk Bailey had it doped out, must be behind that series of "natural" disasters on the reef. The mysterious influx of sharks, which didn't *have* to be seen through a flat-bottomed aquarium boat; but how else account for their "sudden" presence in shallow water? The ghostly apparitions, which had scared off better than half of the native workers. And finally the murderous marine explosion, popularly attributed to "some war mine that's drifted into Hawaiian waters," which had destroyed that munitions convoy while still off-shore.

One of the five speculators must be behind it all, interfering with Government work in the desperate hope of forcing the munitions plant back to the rejected acreage.

If Wong & Selby failed to complete construction promptly, causing thereby a breach of contract, a new deal would



be in order. A new commission might arrive at a different decision, after the reef's history of accidents and delays.

Already, so important was the time element that powder workers had moved onto the completed portions of the reef and gone to work. Explosives were needed at Fort Shafter, on the island of Hawaii, and at Schofield Barracks, on Oahu. Prevent the contractors from turning over a finished plant to the Government, at the time agreed upon, and the *hui* might well be in the saddle again. One of the five! *But which one?*

Turk choked off further speculation, reining in his eager brain from what practically amounted to a full gallop. His keen eyes, for all these eager thoughts, had never once left the shadowy doorway ahead; the doorway behind which Lurton was supposed to be awaiting their talk about—

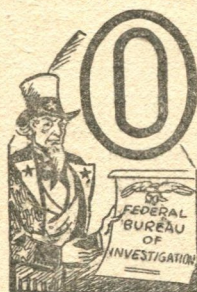
Turk Bailey could make out mold-ered lettering above the opening, now.

THE PELE HALE

K. WEED, PROP.

## CHAPTER II

### Frameup!



VER the foul, narrow entrance, that faded sign might almost as well have read "Danger This Way." Another ten seconds and Bailey was passing under it, out of the murky alley and into a room which stank of stale sweat, smoke, cheap liquor and food

past its prime.

The man behind the bar, pot-belly encased in a soiled expanse of calico apron, was a one-eyed *hapa-haole* with a face hard enough to strike matches on. He wiped square, greasy hands across his breadbasket as Turk Bailey hove into view.

"What you want, Mister?"

"I'm looking for a man named Lurton."

"Lurton?" The echo wasn't exactly necessary, and Weed bawled it a trifle

too loud. It was as if he wanted every alley rat in the room to hear. "Sure. He's upstairs in the back room. Acts kind of funny, too. Scared, or drunk, like. Your name Bailey?"

"That's right. Which way?"

Weed lumbered out from behind the scarred *ohia* slab, pushed open a battered door in the flanking wall, stood aside. Turk shouldered past him.

Ahead, a dim passageway with its wall-paper hanging in ribbons ended in the steep upward lift of unpainted stairs. He took them three at a time. Whatever was going on in Weed's dive, he wanted to know about it.

The stairs dead-ended before a second door. The room beyond lay in a stillness that seemed oddly sinister as the special agent a scant month out of Washington flattened his ear to the scuffed panel. There was an empty feel to that dead silence. Yet *not* empty.

Turk's hand, groping, found the knob. It twisted without effort. But something seemed to be impeding the door when he shoved it backward. Something that scraped sickeningly across the bare floor for an instant, and then toppled inward.

Over the threshold the young mainlander ducked with a speed which carried him well into the room. He had believed he was prepared for anything. But the actual sight that met his eyes made them bulge like bloated oysters. A cold chill raked his flesh.

Sprawled on the uncarpeted planks, arms and legs crumpled, lay a man—a man who had been propped against the door until Turk Bailey opened it. From his chest, an inch above his heart, the carved handle of a fancy cane knife protruded at a sharp chinward angle.

That knife, Turk Bailey himself had purchased in a Waipahu curio shop less than ten days before. The dead man was Roger Lurton!

**S**TARING down into those sightless eyes, which never again would gleam with honest, scholarly interest in their job of resurrecting and preserving the historical heritage of this island Eden, Turk felt that chill wave of horror sweep over him again. Rookie or no, he had seen stiff before; plenty of them. But—*Lurton!*



He bent swiftly, tugging at the knife handle. It gave a little, blood bubbling up around it. But the buried blade had sunk too deep for easy withdrawal. One outflung hand of the corpse, brushing that of the crouching special agent, was cool but not yet cold.

Then Turk straightened, recoiling. As his shocked senses steadied and that first impact of outrage and pity faded, there had come to him something sharper than horror. He understood in one searing flash exactly what the set-up meant.

Somebody had fixed things so that he, Turk Bailey, was going to face a murder rap!

Everything tied in. That mystery call. Weed's lifted voice downstairs. This isolated room. The knife, which an impartial shopkeeper could easily identify; and which had been stolen, Bailey knew not when, from its box in the closet of his hotel bedroom.

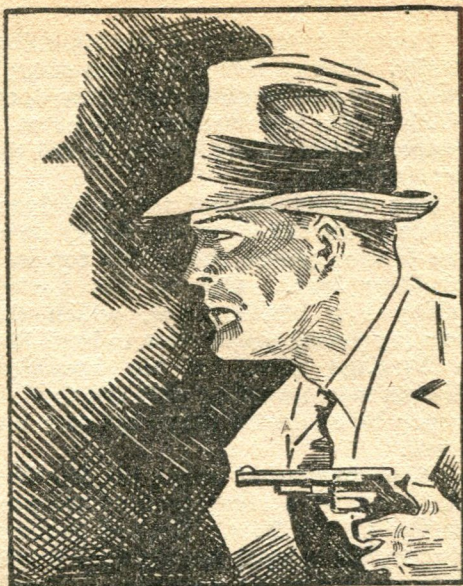
Down on one knee he knelt again. The dead man's white coat had flopped open on the right-hand side. It was no trick at all to draw the protruding wallet from its nest in the inside pocket, open the worn leather folder.

A search of its contents took only a second. Money had not been touched. Letters were all in order. The only thing that should have been there, and wasn't, was that old envelope on which poor Lurton had scribbled "*Popoki*"—and a few simple directions.

The killer, then, knew already of the surprise discovery that had been the basis for this intended interview. He knew that yesterday, quite by accident and while covertly observing the construction work on that threatened powder reef at a point five hundred yards from shore, Turk Bailey had stumbled on a secret entrance to the long-lost burial cave of Prince Kauluoa!

In the upstairs back room at Kioki Weed's place, the young special agent swore softly. That envelop might have been left anywhere, of course, by its owner's free will. But the idea of the museum man parting with a revealing clue to the whereabouts of the Kauluoa prize didn't make sense.

Anyhow, that ghoulish voice on the telephone had used the word for "cat" as a definite bait. Somebody had lured



Dan Fowler

Lurton to this shabby room; doubtless on the same pretext which had been used to fetch the young G-man. That same somebody had stolen the brief but definite directions as to the cave's location, and had stolen Turk's knife from his quarters. And now—

The special agent jerked back on his heels, straightened swiftly. The approach of running footsteps in the hall below had thundered up to him. Some four men or more were heading toward the stairs.

Weed's hoarse bellow preceded them. "—damn queer. He looked kind of sore, too. Maybe he ain't to be trusted alone, talkin' with this Lurton guy."

**T**URK'S glance whipped over the squalid chamber like lightning. It was windowless, and no extra doors showed in the dingy walls. What illumination there was seeped through a dirty skylight in the ceiling; the skylight through which whoever had propped Lurton's body against the door must have made his escape.

Two articles out of the room's meager furnishings seemed important. A broken bed. A bare center table, significantly set under the skylight.

Turk's tall frame lunged for the iron cot as boots thudded on the risers of the first steps below. An outflung arm poked the sagging entrance panel shut



as he passed it.

The bedstead stood on casters, rolled easily. One violent shove was enough to slide it into position across the door. With swift, toe-numbing drives of a desperate foot, Turk Bailey kicked the casters loose.

Just before the first tattoo of hammering fists rained on the flimsy door, the G-man gained the table's top in a vaulting leap. Out of his pocket whipped a handkerchief, which the panting young mainlander twisted like a bandage about his big knuckles. Shouts were mingling with the thud of angry blows as he drove his arm upward.

Glass descended about his hunched shoulders in a sharp-toothed shower, tinkled to the floor. He had guessed that trying to open the skylight would only waste precious seconds. Lurton's slayer wouldn't have left any easy exit from this room unlatched.

The door was giving under those blows from outside, the bed moving under the barrage of shoulders.

"What goes on in there? Open up, or—"

Gripping the edges of the broken skylight, Turk Bailey hoisted his long body upward. Up, up, and—out!

The door crashed in the same instant that his heels thudded down on the ramshackle building's roof. A revolver shot lined after him.

Turk was crouching for the leap that would carry him over a five-foot chasm and onto the roof of the slightly lower building adjacent to Weed's, when he remembered. His fingerprints were on the handle of that knife! And on Lurton's wallet! The circumstantial web that had entangled him was letter perfect. What human spider had spun it?

Who in this cheerless little Hawaiian plantation town was the man who knew that Inspector Dan Fowler, famous ace investigator for the F. B. I., was due in Honolulu tomorrow morning to personally take charge of checkmating the serious menace which hung over the Government's powder reef?

And why was this arch-criminal so determined to keep Fowler's subordinate from making a report on his preliminary progress in the case, that even murder was no object. . . .

Only two men—Lurton and his ferret-faced assistant, Stock—knew that Turk Bailey had stumbled onto Prince Kauluoa's burial cave. And Kioki Weed wasn't likely to have been in the confidence of either. A rat like that, obviously only the tool of someone higher up, was much more likely to be in the pay of—Jedtham Crabbe.

His body tense against the brick wall behind Waipahu's single commercial hotel, which Crabbe owned, Turk pondered this problem in the deepening twilight. Lurton's murderer had known about the envelope; had used the enlightening word "*popoki*" to lure the Federal agent to Weed's. On the surface, that cleared Crabbe, who couldn't have known about the matter. Yet did it?

**H**ARRY STOCK was Lurton's logical successor in command at the Preacher Museum. Bailey had caught an underlying jealousy and dislike in the man's attitude toward his superior. If Stock had sold his news to Crabbe, seeking to undermine Lurton's prestige by helping his traditional enemy to beat him to those legendary relics—

Yes, that was the likely way out of it. Crabbe was the man he must see first, Turk Bailey realized. Waiting in his cramped, crouched position, the G-man watched two shadowy figures which he knew were *kanaka* policemen, consulting at the end of the alley.

It had taken him an hour of ducking and dodging to reach the hotel by a roundabout route. Waipahu was swarming with khaki-clad lawmen.

The word had gone out. "Pick up student geologist. Name, Bailey. Height, six feet. Hair, black. Eyes, green. Wanted for murder."

A devilish frameup! But how likely was it that the Waipahu police could be convinced of that? Before Dan Fowler's arrival, at least? Turk Bailey meant to find out—before the information on that envelope could be utilized to complicate matters any further—which of his two suspects, Crabbe or Stockton, had driven a stolen knife into the museum chief's breast!

That uniformed pair at the passageway's opening were separating now. One headed east, the other west. They



had been gone from sight a scant ten seconds when a lithe body lifted from the shadows, caught onto the lowest rung of a wooden fire-ladder scaling the old hotel, and swung upward like a monkey climbing a cocoanut tree.

### CHAPTER III

#### G-man Bait



**T**URK BAILEY stepped through a third-story window without sound, thrusting aside the sleazy curtains. It was his first step on the creaky floor that caused the big man hunched above a desk to twist around. "What the—"

Slowly, gaze steady on the stock manipulator's deadly little orbs, Turk walked forward. He knew the other man had recognized and was afraid of him. That unexpected appearance at the window had caused Crabbe's hand to make a frantic zigzag of ink down the page he had been writing.

"I came up to hear you talk, Crabbe."  
"Talk?"

"About Roger Lurton. Did you knife him yourself, or did Kioki Weed do it for you?"

Crabbe backed away slowly.

"You're off your nut—whoever you

are. I never heard of anyone named Lurton. I don't know anything about any knife. I'm a respectable business man, and if the police—"

Turk's grin was relentless. "Talk, Crabbe, or I'll smash your face in. Lurton's dead. I'm on the spot for it. Where did you put that paper you lifted from his wallet?"

"I don't know anything about any paper. Who are you? A maniac?"

"You know who I am, all right. Hand over that envelope."

Turk started prowling forward once more, his eyes for one triumphant instant on that left pocket. The instant was fatal. Before he could divine his opponent's true purpose, before a preventive leap could be completed, Crabbe's right hand had streaked upward. A tiny automatic glittered against its palm, hefted with lethal calmness. The old trick had worked!

"Now, you—reach for the ceiling!"

Light from the one standing lamp near the desk glinted coldly along the miniature ribs of the weapon. In the fat man's fist, it shot forward to nose into Turk's unguarded belly. Crabbe's flabby mouth twisted as the younger man's arms lifted.

"I don't know what paper you're after—if any. But I can tell you the one you'll get. An arrest warrant for breaking into a respectable citizen's rooms! This hotel's full of policemen, my friend. They've been combing every

[Turn Page]

## Troubled by Constipation?

Get relief this simple, pleasant way!

### 1. TAKE ONE

or two tablets of Ex-Lax before retiring. It tastes just like delicious chocolate. No spoons, no bottles! No fuss, no bother! Ex-Lax is easy to use and pleasant to take!



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through the night... *undisturbed!* No stomach upsets. No nausea or cramps. No occasion to get up! Ex-Lax is a gentle laxative. It acts overnight—without over-action.



### 3. THE NEXT

morning you have a thorough bowel movement. Ex-Lax works easily, without strain or discomfort. You feel fine after taking it, ready and fit for a full day's work!



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**EX-LAX** The Original Chocolate Laxative



rooming place in town since somebody—you, probably—stabbed some museum official at a local dive called *The Pele Hale*."

Crabbe reached out, jabbed a push-bell set into the doorframe. It was an emergency call. His thick left thumb stayed on the buzzer.

"That'll bring 'em. Meanwhile—don't move, stranger. I guess I'm nervous about being alone in the same room with a lunatic murderer—"

**S**UDDENLY, without once letting his eyes mirror his desperate intention, Turk Bailey dived. His arms swept about Crabbe's knees, tightened, jerked.

The roar of his surprised captor's gun flamed in the special agent's face. Then, jarred loose, the weapon leaped free of its owner's clawing fingers. Before the man above could clamp down and grip with his wildly flailing arms, Turk's broad shoulders hoisted.

It was a football tackle, from Agent Bailey's reasonably recent college days, and it lofted his heavy opponent clear over his bent back. Crabbe landed clear, hard and full on his head. Turk jerked deftly on a scatter rug inches beyond the fallen behemoth's foot, and over toppled the standing lamp.

Darkness crashed down upon the room like a physical blow as the cornered Government man sprang back toward his window. He dived through it, into the night, to the accompaniment of running feet in the hall outside.

Racing down the wooden fire-ladder like a dropped anchor, he reached the second-story window directly below Crabbe's. His feet drove straight through the plate glass, all his weight behind them. Miraculously escaping decapitation on the rim of jagged splinters, his hurtling body landed flat on the littered floor of the downstairs room.

Its startled feminine occupant was struggling erect in her bed as the G-man hoisted to his feet again. Out the door he sprinted, through a narrow passageway to a joining corridor. He was hammering down the hotel's back stairs to the street level before an hysterical outburst of screaming raised a fresh alarm behind him.

At about that same moment, two muscular figures lounged speculatively at the rail of the giant liner *Pacifica*, westbound on its fourth evening out of San Francisco. Last call to dinner had sounded along the decks a few minutes earlier; but the pair were finishing smokes before they went below for two of the chef's fancy beefsteaks.

"Tomorrow, Dan—Hawaii!" mused Special Agent Larry Kendal, staring down at the ripples of liquid blackness which swept back from the ship's high white nose.

The man to whom the words had been addressed nodded seriously. He was lean as a wolfhound. Every superfluous ounce had been whittled from the muscle which rimmed the wide shoulders, the strong back, the spread legs. Balanced easily to counteract the long roll of the deck, he felt oddly enough that in reality he was nodding an answer to words spoken a week earlier from behind a certain desk in Washington.

"Fowler," the Director of the F. B. I. had intoned solemnly, "there's more to this series of munition plant 'disasters', 'mishaps' and 'bad breaks' than a new, relatively inexperienced man like Bailey can uncover. You persuaded me to give him a chance at it. But now—"

"Yes, sir?" Dan was not so quick as his superior to decide the job was too complex for any rookie to handle alone. He liked young Turk Bailey, had confidence in him.

**S**TILL, twenty-two fruitless days had passed since the coded message reporting Turk's arrival in that faraway island paradise, which was also Uncle Sam's greatest military stronghold of the entire Pacific. It had been since Turk Bailey's arrival, in fact, that the dynamite convoy had exploded offshore and killed all officers and men aboard.

"I'm to relieve Bailey, sir? That's it?"

"You'll be in complete charge, Fowler, as usual." The Chief's keen eyes had held his, until the silence following that remark became significant. "No need to tell you I expect results."

"Of course, sir."

"This is big, Fowler. That plant's



successful completion and operation is essential to our army's plans, in these uncertain times. We can't sit by and watch Wong and Selby fail, forcing us into new contracts, new bids, starting from scratch on a new site. Whoever's sabotaging construction on that reef, for whatever reason — *must be stopped.*"

"Yes, sir."

"You'll leave for Hawaii at once. Take anyone you need. Good luck, Fowler!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Turk Bailey was sobbing for breath, three-quarters of a dangerous hour later. His knees sagging a trifle with the weariness of eluding pursuit, he sprinted around a hedge of tawny croton, darted across a clipped lawn that was shadowed by feathery *kiawe* trees, and pounded up onto the veranda of the dignified Kauluoa residence.

A lazy figure, whom Turk at first mistook for no-good young David Kauluoa, lifted out of the comfortable hammock. But it wasn't David, as he realized when the man voiced a question which died instantly on startled lips. Turk was looking into the eyes of Harry Stock, Lurton's former aide. And slowly, implacably, those eyes were narrowing with hatred.

Panting, the fugitive G-man stood face to face with the subordinate who had been ambitious for Lurton's museum job. Like two wildcats meeting in a jungle, they took each other's measure in hard-eyed silence.

"Damn you, Bailey!" Stock rasped the words at last—low, harsh. "You murderer!"

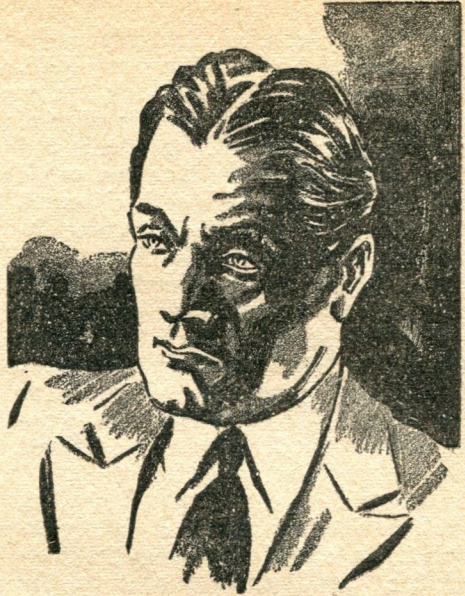
"Give me that envelope you stole from Lurton's wallet." Turk's demand came in a voice a shade less loud, a shade more dangerous.

"You cheap, ratty saloon killer!" There was no expression but hatred on Stock's narrow, crafty face. "I'd break you in two, Bailey—if you were worth it!"

"Maybe." The G-man's jaw tightened. "I want that envelope, Stock."

"What envelope?" But, guilty or innocent, that was the question the thick-set field expert would ask.

"You know what I mean—the one you stole. You knew Lurton had it in



Worthen

his wallet. You knew it showed the location of the cave I found yesterday."

Stock lashed forward abruptly, fists flaying. "What are we wasting time for, rat? You knifed Roger! You struck him down at Weed's place before he had a chance to defend himself!"

The man had a punch like a sledgehammer. His first blow caught Turk Bailey flush on the shoulder, slammed him backward into the bougainvillea which clambered over the quiet *lanai*. Scarlet spots that weren't flowers jogged before the desperate special agent's eyes.

**T**URK ducked as Stock rushed in. But Lurton's erstwhile lieutenant knew how to fight. He swung with a bellow and drove a ramrod fist straight for its target's chin. From inside the house came suddenly the commotion of a woman's frightened outcry. Mrs. Kauluoa, grandmother of the last descendant of the buried Prince Kauluoa, was obviously howling into a telephone.

"The police! Get me the police!"

Young Bailey sidestepped desperately, bringing up his knee into the charging museum employee's belly. Retching from the hard blow, Stock recoiled. Before he could unbuckle, a shoulder that had smashed through many a determined football line locked



with his own.

The impact carried Lurton's assistant backward like a rolling snowball. A hoarse yell exploded from his lips as his helpless body shot over the edge of the *lanai* and dropped. Stock landed flat in a bed of prize Kauluoa torch ginger, every atom of breath slammed out of him. Well over his head, a vaulting shape shot like a cannonball.

From the big house behind, as Turk Bailey raced down the lawn, the screams and howls of the noble native woman who had been Roger Lurton's landlady kept pace with him. Those cries wouldn't be far ahead of the police, either. And by now the hunted young G-man was winded.

Through a gap in the croton hedge, he half fell into the street. A light plantation truck, bound west along the thoroughfare, was bumping past in the darkness as the bushes closed behind him. Turk Bailey crouched, leaped desperately for its departing rear.

The tailboard hung horizontally on its chains. Had it been up, he realized, his remaining pittance of strength might have failed to make the grade. But the barrier was down. Crawling forward on his belly into the swaying vehicle's interior, the special agent panted a soft prayer of gratitude.

Behind, the sounds of renewed pursuit grew fainter. Ahead lay—what? Both of his two dangerous interviews, those face to face encounters with his suspects which he had hoped might yield at least one definite clue to Lurton's murder, had been wasted motion. Neither had supplied the slightest hint as to which had stolen the scribbled envelope.

That envelope! Turk Bailey shook his head as if to clear it of weariness. Whoever had those directions, had stolen them from Lurton's wallet. Whoever had stolen them was Lurton's murderer. And whoever had murdered Lurton had done so deliberately to involve the young G-man with the law, thus hampering the investigation of those sinister happenings on the powder reef. That was the man Turk Bailey—and now Dan Fowler—had been despatched to Hawaii to find!

There still was one way to force the issue. One way to prove beyond a doubt

the identity of the killer. But it meant setting a desperate trap. A trap with Turk himself as the bait!

It was worth a try. This unsuspecting truckster would serve to smuggle him up the Waianae coast to the neighborhood of the reef. And then—

## CHAPTER IV

### *Hell—and Tropic Heaven*



OR three weeks Tomi had stored the battered flivver in which this harmlessly loco *haole* had hunted his bits of lava rock. He knew Mist' Bailey well. All he didn't know—since he lived far from town and owned no radio—was that police were seeking

his garage tenant. So the little Japanese farmer on the shore road nodded vigorously to show he understood what was expected of him.

Just now, Mist' Bailey had endeared himself by handing over a considerable sum of money. These dollars concluded the sale of two small black kittens, part of an unwanted litter scrambling in the dust of Tomi's kitchen yard. And all he had to do now was transport these presents to Waipahu. Tomi bobbed violently.

"Sure understan', very good. I go Waipahu. Deliver one basket Mist' Jedtham Crabbe, Paradise Hotel. One basket Mist Harry Stock, residence of Kauluoa family. Leave aforesaid destinations *wikiwiki*, very fast. Answer no questions."

"Right." The young white man, who had just reclaimed his vehicle and started its motor chugging, nodded grimly. "And the note with each." There were two notes, bearing duplicate single sentences.

After tonight it will be too late.

"I deliver." The little Jap bobbed again as the flivver bounced off toward Waianae. The inky kitten in one basket mewed fitfully. Its recent and unregretful owner about-faced toward town,



picked up his burdens, and broke into a tireless jog trot—

Turk Bailey followed the jouncing line of his headlights along the crude shore road. His foot was down on the gas as far as it would go. At what seemed like sixty and was closer to thirty-five miles an hour, the lone driver bounced forward.

Considerable time passed before the particular jagged bit of coastline he was waiting for swept into view. The treacherous white road, a snaking ribbon of mashed coral and sand, seemed to stretch endlessly before him. But the journey gave him time to think.

To one of the recipients of his feline gifts, cat and cryptic note would mean nothing but a puzzle and a headache. The other one—the one who had knifed Lurton and stolen the envelope—was the only man who could read aright the warning of the live *popoki*.

Whichever recipient that was, as Turk Bailey now saw it, could be depended on to hot-foot it out to the burial cave sometime before sunup. One of them would come. And the G-man intended to be waiting when he arrived!

Back a good two miles from the sea, night - blackened mountains jutted sharp as the slivers of that broken skylight at Weed's shabby bagnio. The flat plane between continued, mile after mile of it; a pitchy wilderness of thick, matted *lantana*, its thorns and pepper-and-salt clusters of spicy orange, brown and purple flowers alike invisible in the starless night.

Mile after mile went by. Then, abruptly, the grove of scraggly ironwood sparsely fringing the road took on a formation which had special significance for the man at the flivver's wheel. His hands jerked. The machine bucked off the road, beachward, until it was hidden by the gnarled, bent ironwoods. The rest of the way, Bailey walked.

It wasn't far. Down the sand a quarter mile, well beyond the beach cabbage and the occasional tufts of rank grass, black rocks jutted harshly against the bleak sky. Atop the tallest projection, poised above the restless, lashing water, a long black stone stretched like a ten-foot sleeping cat.

Unknotting the laces of his shoes,



Rosino

Turk Bailey glanced out across the onyx waves. Directly opposite the bit of shore, so that a real cat would have stared full upon it, lay the powder reef. Lights showed low above its rugged outline, and black blobs which were new powder buildings jutted against the dull sky. Someone over there was playing a radio. Hot swing beat in across the darkness.

"Flat foot floogey with the Floy-floy—"

**T**URK BAILEY kicked off his second shoe, started undoing his belt buckle, and remembered yesterday morning at this very spot. That lucky dive had been one of a series made by the young G-man in an effort to discover if underwater wires, capable of detonating dynamite, had been laid across this channel by the party so determined to bring disaster to the reef.

He had hardly believed his astonished eyes when, under water, he had spotted the maw to the submerged tunnels.

If someone back in Waipahu had his way, Turk Bailey was going to answer to a hangman's noose for that plunge—or a bullet! Poising naked on the *popoki* rock's slippery shoulder, the special agent filled his lungs with air. Then his knees bent, straightened.



Down the face of the cliff he hurtled, into tossing white foam.

His shoulders scraped rock as they eeled into that submerged cavern. He still felt a tingle of yesterday's exploratory thrill, although he knew now where the crevice would lead.

Up, up, up, again. His head popped out of water suddenly. Pitch black, worn smooth by the white-hot lava that had created it back before the dawn of time, the tunnel led upward like a big hollow tube. On hands and knees, Turk worked forward.

The roof above him lifted abruptly. He stood up. Out of the oilskin pouch bound to one shoulder, he slid a dry flashlight, pencil size. Its beam, clicking on, fingered the stark walls of a huge subterranean chamber. Before him, as it had yesterday, lay the lost tomb of a half-forgotten Hawaiian prince.

In the wandering beam, the relics which had been buried a dusty long ago with the old-time warrior took shape and substance. But it wasn't the contents of the cave, so vital to Lurton—no, not even that skeleton itself, much further in—that aroused the excitement of the young Federal officer.

Turk had studied geology in college; hence his background for the rôle he had assumed here at Waipahu. He knew considerable about how such earth hollows as this had been created. Hot rivers of lava had flowed seaward down these Hawaiian mountains, centuries ago. As lava met water, its outer surfaces had cooled and solidified. But the hot, molten innards of the lava flows had continued on their way, leaving empty shells behind. A dozen such must dot the shoreline of Oahu.

A secret, forgotten cave this near the reef! Stock's interest in it—if Stock were guilty of the murder—would be archeological. But *anyone else* who had gained possession of that envelope would see this as a heaven-sent spot for further machinations against the powder depot's construction. A hiding place, a storage base for supplies—there was no end to its uses. Was somebody else, somewhere not too distant, considering those uses at this very moment?

In Turk's hand the flashlight snapped

off. He dropped to the floor, his back to the cave's smooth wall and his face turned full on the narrow entrance. From the oilskin pouch, a small-calibre automatic slid into his free right hand and nested there. He might have hours to wait.

**S**UDDENLY the G-man sat rigid. Out of the darkness, a little way down the tunnel, a scraping noise had communicated itself to him. Listening breathlessly, he could hear it again in the enveloping blackness. Someone was crawling up the lava run on hands and knees—nearer, nearer, nearer—

The torch in the special agent's left hand shot a sudden beam across the grim old cavern. Full in its glare, just emerging from the rocky tube, a white face worked in deadly hatred. A hoarse voice gasped his name, with the vicious swiftness of a whirring rattlesnake.

At last Turk Bailey knew beyond all doubt who had murdered Roger Lurton in that back room at Kioki Weed's! Knew, therefore, who had engineered that sudden manifestation of sharks, those "ghost" horrors, that final mass killing aboard the *Pago-Pago*, which had made of the Government's new powder reef a tomb of fear and terror!

\* \* \* \* \*

Dawn struck suddenly across the waves, drawing the *Pacifica's* proud white walls into a golden net. Light, slanting over the tropically blue expanse of water, shattered against a wild, green mass of mountains rising savagely out of the sea. The island of Oahu's distant skyline spread before them—the end of the five-day voyage.

"Gosh!" breathed Larry Kendal.

Inspector Dan Fowler nodded without speaking. He had often heard travelers comment on the barbaric majesty of this first glimpse of Hawaii. But even their glowing yarns hadn't prepared him for such a sight as this. Leaning against the ship's rail, he forgot for a moment what lay ahead for him in this Pacific paradise—murder, crime, evil-doing, which it was his grim duty to hunt out and check.

Green velvet seemed to cover those towering masses of rock and earth: all the shades of green existent. Blue-green of pineapple fields, silver-green of *kui-*



*kui* groves, yellowish-green of sugar cane, all interlined with copper threads which were red lava-dust roads. Dan heard some native Honolulu near by at the rail pointing it all out to a gaping tourist friend. But he thought Larry had done a better job of describing the scene with that one awestricken monosyllable.

The *Pacifica*, haughty and unhurried, slipped closer through the sapphire water as the sun climbed heavenward. Honolulu spread like a gilded spider up the forested valleys which forked between its mountains.

The shaggy old crater of Diamond Head jutted against a sky almost too blue. The blistering white of the Moana and the gaudy pink of the Royal Hawaiian—those two show-place hotels of the famous Waikiki beach—stood out from their back grounds of greenery, in vivid perfection. And then the *Pacifica* had entered the harbor, was nosing lazily toward a long covered dock at the foot of the arrogant Aloha Tower.

**A** SWARM of Hawaii's world-renowned diving boys swam out to meet the liner as she slipped shoreward. Passengers at all the rails pitched coins to the babbling welcomers thrashing the water. Watching the downward glint of a quarter his thumb had flicked out into space, the tall special agent remembered with a sudden jolt that there were people living in this paradise.

Criminals, too! Killers who, for their own bloody reasons, recently had blown to atoms one boat approaching their shore—instead of greeting it with shouts and music.

Faces on the long dock came clearer, as the *Pacifica* sidled into her resting place at last. Faces, Dan Fowler reflected, arising from a veritable flower garden, a melting pot of all the gaudy, brilliant colors and shades in creation. Chinese girls in vivid pajamas; lounging Filipinos in screaming cerise, yellow, orange and pink shirts; Japanese women in colorful kimonos and bright *obi* sashes; and white men and women, in cool tropical linens almost equally picturesque.

Music lifted, liquid and gay, over the crowded scene of greeting. The pungent, heady fragrance of thousands of

flowers lifted to the railing. Everywhere were laughter, songs, smiles and shouts of greeting in a dozen languages and dialects.

"The gent that first christened Honolulu the 'Crossroads of the Pacific,'" observed Larry admiringly, "sure knew what he was talking about!"

"Here's hoping we nail that dynamiter before he turns it into the 'Crossroads of Crime', too."

"With any luck, we—hey, Dan! Look there, down yonder! That blond girl. I'd swear it was—"

But Special Agent Dan Fowler had already picked out the blond's lifted, lovely face from the crowd below on the dock. His gray eyes widened with amazement and he caught onto the railing with big hands which clenched convulsively.

If he was going to start out his grim work in this island Eden by seeing ghosts — for she simply couldn't be here! It was impossible!

## CHAPTER V

### *Trouble in Paradise*



HAPPY cry: "Aloha!"

A lei of sweet-scented carnations settled over Dan's wide shoulders as the liquid, familiar voice laughed that traditional Hawaiian greeting up at him, Sally Vane's mischievous eyes, bluer than the tropical

heavens reflected by the harbor waters, flickered an instant's mocking challenge up at him. Then, before he could voice the thunderstruck question boiling in his mind, she had turned toward his assistant.

"Aloha, Larry! Welcome to our city!" And a second garland, this one of ivory-petaled flowers the newcomers later came to know as *plumeria*, slipped across Larry Kendal's equally startled head.

Sally hooked her arms through one of Dan's and one of Larry's, guided them briskly through the polyglot crowd. Music—"The Song of the Is-



lands," plaintively played—faded behind them as they came out under the palms of the square on which the Aloha Tower faced.

A bobbing, grinning little Japanese boy, who had stood ready at Sally's side, was taking care of their baggage worries. Not until they were ensconced in an inexpensive but shinningly new open phaeton, with Sally at the wheel, and were rolling across the city by way of wide avenues bordered with emerald lawns and lavishly banked blossoms, did the blond girl Dan Fowler loved—the girl who should have been at her Department of Justice desk back home in Washington—deign to explain her presence in Honolulu.

"After you two left for the Coast, I got to thinking. I hadn't had a vacation since I was a kid in pigtails. And here were the two young men I like best in the world, headed straight for hula moons and dancing native maidens and seductive music. And who could tell what *other* serious dangers?"

Sally's laugh was a mellow ripple of sound. "So I said this and that to the Chief, with my prettiest smile; and the Chief said this and that to me. And I caught the next plane west after yours, and made wonderful connections with the *China Clipper* out of Alameda. Here I've been for the last four days, visiting Turk Bailey's sister Mary Lou at the little bungalow she's rented out near Waikiki. I'm practically a *kama-aina* by now—a 'native of Hawaii', to you greenhorns who don't speak our language!"

As always, Dan Fowler thrilled to the nearness of this vivid, beautiful girl at his side. Yet he understood, without words, that no such frivolous motive as vacationing had prompted her to follow them. That wasn't why she had flown post-haste to this languorous group of islands, halfway around the world from the handsome new Department of Justice offices overlooking Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D. C.

Sally Vane had known that Dan and Larry were heading into the dangers of combat with a criminal so cold-blooded, he had not hesitated to destroy an entire shipload of human beings in order to achieve his ends. Sally had wangled things with the Chief so that she could

share those dangers; although, supposedly, her work with the F.B.I. was purely secretarial.

Dan faced her solemnly. "You've been in contact with Turk, then? What's the news on his progress? Has the kid gotten hold of anything?"

"Bad news, I'm afraid." For the first time since the *Pacifica* had docked, Sally's blue eyes became serious. "It's in this morning's paper, Dan. The police have been combing Waipahu—a little sugar town out near the navy base at Pearl Harbor—for Turk, since yesterday afternoon. He's wanted for the murder of Roger Lurton, a big man in the local Preacher Museum."

**D**AN FOWLER'S jaw fell. "Murder? Turk? Say, what is all this?"

"Exactly what I'd like to know, my lad." Sally gripped the wheel grimly, but her small hands trembled. "Mary Lou has been frantic. There's been no words from Turk himself. He's been eluding the law since the killing—"

"Because he's done such a good job of establishing his geologist character that now nobody'd believe him," Dan finished grimly.

Sally nodded. "Somebody's trying to frame the boy, Dan."

"And that somebody must be the wholesale butcher and wrecker we're all after!" An ugly glint, boding ill for that somebody, illumined the G-man's gray eyes. "Head for Police Headquarters, Sally. The first thing to do is to get Turk in the clear—before something happens to him!"

Doubling back toward the business section of the city, Sally went into more detail as to the happenings of the past four days. She had a copy of the morning *Blade* tucked in the phaeton's leather side pocket, and produced it for the benefit of the two arrivals. Its headlines were sensational.

#### POLICE SEEK YOUNG SCIENTIST IN KNIFE SLAYING AS ALLEGED KILLER ELUDES ISLAND MANHUNT

Dan Fowler read the reports of that fruitless all-night search in silence. He looked up then with stormy eyes.



"Turk must have ferreted out plenty, to make it worth somebody's while to try this on him. I knew the youngster had stuff! Has he talked to you or his sister, Sally?"

"To me, a little, because I'm in the Department. He's kept his mouth shut around Mary Lou. Dan, the boy's been hot on the trail of five men here in town. Men once banded together into a land *hui*."

"What's that?"

"A sort of corporation, bent on getting some monopoly or other. These five were after land. They'd bought up a swamp, figuring the Government would okay it for the powder works. Then, when the reef was selected, they were left holding the bag."

"I see." Dan's head had furrowed in concentration. "Turk's idea is that the quintet figure on moving the works, even this late? That maybe, they're sabotaging and killing—under cover of 'natural causes'—to drive business back their way, after they've voided Wong and Selby's contracts on the time clause and proved the reef location is a jinx?"

"Something like that." Sally veered the phaeton around a corner, and her passengers glimpsed the exotic name of the avenue they were leaving—Kapiolani Boulevard—on a neat intersection sign. "Only, as Turk dopes it out, it couldn't be all five."

"Why not?"

"According to his information, the *hui* split up over personal squabbles of some sort. They still own the land in equal shares; but they couldn't possibly work together to sell it."

"Squabbles?" One word, in the special agent's low voice, was a mile-long question.

"One partner, Worthen, protested the business ethics of the others. Rosino tried to chisel from Delman in some deal. Crabbe sold Ambrew some dud stocks. I don't know what-all. But Turk's been getting it all straight, to report to you."

Dan nodded slowly, ignoring the scenery to concentrate on those names.

"So Turk knows these operators? And all about 'em?"

"That's common knowledge in Honolulu. There was nothing *sub rosa*,

either, about the partnership or the breakup." Sally rounded another corner, skillfully.

SALLY VANE continued. "Crabbe—Jedtham Crabbe—is a shrewd stock salesman. He hates Ambrew and Rosino, is indifferent to Worthen; but despite some old-time rivalry between them, Delman and Crabbe are still friendly. Delman is Milton Delman, and he heads the Preacher Museum here."

"What about the others?"

"Well, Ford Ambrew is publisher and owner of the daily *Blade*, Pasquez Rosino is an oily little Portuguese who's boss of a bottling works. Reform administrations from time to time try to pin vice ring raps on him. But, so far, Ambrew's newspaper has defended his 'innocence' every time."

"Check," Dan Fowler nodded. "Ambrew and Rosino are pals. Delman and Crabbe are buddies. But, I take it, the two teams won't have anything to do with each other. What about this Worthen guy? Where does he fit in? A lone wolf, or somebody's silent partner?"

Sally considered. "Turk doesn't seem to think so. I mean, doesn't think he was working in cahoots with any of the others. But that's just it. He isn't working at all, so far as the *hui* is concerned. Alfred Worthen is vice-president of one of the city's big banks. In charge of loans, I believe."

The car slowed to a curb as Sally's explanation continued.

"He's fussy about business ethics. I hear that when the others tried to force their swamp on the Government, by bribing a member of the survey commission, Worthen walked out. One rumor even has it that he's sold his personal share of the *hui*'s holdings to some outside party on the mainland."

"Which, if true, would give him a pretty clean bill of health in this sabotage business." Dan slid out of his seat and strode through the doorway of the building before which Sally had stopped—the doorway of Honolulu's Police Headquarters.

Ten minutes later, the ace G-man was back at the curb again. Both pairs of eyes which lifted at his approach



knew his rugged features well enough to discern that something was wrong—dreadfully wrong. Beneath his deep tan, their leader had paled. His gaze had gone hard and bleak as gray stone.

"What is it, Dan?" Sally whispered.

"The police have found Turk."

"But—but couldn't you explain who he was, clear him of this stupid Lurton charge, and—"

"It's too late for explanations," Dan Fowler intoned wearily. "Turk's been found dead. Murdered."

## CHAPTER VI

### *Down to Cases*



WHEN they had dropped Sally at the Waikiki bungalow to break the tragic news to Mary Lou Bailey, Dan Fowler and Larry Kendal borrowed the phaeton and headed for Waipahu.

The plantation town was a good distance beyond city limits, as distances are reckoned on a small island; but they had Sally's terse, specific directions as to how to get there. Kalakua Avenue to South King Street. Then left and across the city. The twisting street car line led them eventually to open country.

It was then a mere matter of following their noses; past Tripler Hospital, past the Moanalua Gardens, past Aiea, past Pearl City and Ewa Junction. When the spur tracks of the cane railway to Wahiawa crossed the highroad, they were at Waipahu. . . .

There lay Turk, stretched out on a bare cot in the little shanty bedroom to which a deputy sheriff's men had brought him. Dan Fowler stood alongside the improvised bier and looked down into the still countenance of the lad he had bet would one day become an ace among the able men who made up the Department of Justice.

Death hadn't played any mean tricks on Turk Bailey. His young face was still clean-cut, virile, honest. The motionless body showed strength in every

long, smooth line. The big hands, folded so quietly on his chest, could have grasped a gun or the hand of a friend with equal strength and purpose. A hot mist blinded Dan Fowler's eyes, when he turned away at last.

By now, Honolulu authorities had transmitted word of the dead man's true identity. The local lawmen, flustered and abashed, were entirely willing to inform the mainlanders of details of the body's discovery. And what details!

They seemed impossible, incredible; yet those khaki-clad police were solemnly positive.

Two members of the searching party had come upon a parked flivver on the Waianae coast, just after sunup. There, at the wheel of his car and fully clad, had slumped the object of their night-long search—the young *malahini* everybody'd taken for a geologist. Everybody but one! Dan Fowler amended firmly, and to himself.

Turk Bailey had been dead for hours when they found him. The body was stone cold. They'd brought it and the flivver—which, it was later discovered, Bailey had kept at the truck farm of a Japanese named Tomi—back to Waipahu for a doctor's report. The verdict hadn't been long delayed. Bailey's death was beyond question or dispute the result of drowning.

Drowning! At the wheel of a car at least a hundred yards above the beach, fully clad in clothes which, despite the complications of their owner's flight from the police, still retained their press and had not been near the water.

Why, it made no sense at all; but it did mean murder. Murder, cold and heartless and perfect. That strange, fantastic fact of drowning lodged unshakably in Dan Fowler's brain when he left the little shack at last. And along with it, a twin focus for the fragmentary theories and ideas which pinwheeled in his head, was one more fact which to him was extra-significant.

That flivver, according to the police, had been found at a certain spot on the Waianae coast. A spot directly opposite the Government's powder reef; in actual sight of it, according to official survey maps. That meant that Turk was red-hot when the killer finished



him. It wasn't an accident or coincidence, any more than that a man should be found drowned in clothes which hadn't been near the water.

**O**UTSIDE once more in Sally's phaeton, Dan spoke quietly—too quietly—to the broad-shouldered figure beside him.

"Larry, we're going to work."

His assistant cursed bitterly. "I'll say we are! If we have to comb the topsoil off these islands—" Emotion choked Larry's voice.

Dan Fowler shook his head. "We're on the killer's ground, Larry. We could never beat him from cover. No, he's going to come to us—that's certain. And we'll be waiting for him. Oh boy, but we'll be waiting! On the reef."

"Eh?"

"As powder workers, Larry. We've read up enough on this business coming over. We can fake experience, and get taken on."

"But while we're cooped up on the reef—"

"We'll get jobs on alternate shifts, so one will always be free. It's the only way to keep an eye on that reef—which is what our friend doesn't want. He'll discover we're fakes, somehow, like he discovered Turk. He'll make a move to remove us. And then—"

"And then!" echoed Larry Kendal grimly. The muscles on his jaws stood out like iron ridges. And the light in Dan Fowler's eyes was harsh and cruel.

\* \* \* \* \*

The afternoon sunlight slanted bright across Flappers' Acre—that crowded sector of rented bungalows near Wai-kiki—when Dan Fowler turned the phaeton's nose into the narrow street where Sally Vane was visiting. At the curb before the Bailey cottage, a two-by-four frame shoebox just off Kalia Road, he braked the vehicle, slid from beneath its wheel and strode up the brief walk.

Sally met him in the living room. As he pressed the car's keys into her hand, the mainland investigator saw that purple smudges of weariness underlined her stricken eyes. But she managed a smile for him.

"I've been helping Mary Lou to pack. She—she wants to take Turk home to



"All right, wise guy, you're getting out of here"  
(Chapter VII)



Ohio. The *Pacifica* sails back again tomorrow."

From the unspoken hint in her voice, Dan gathered that his dead friend's sister was still too stunned to receive the sympathy of others. He made no gesture toward the closed bedroom door. Instead, he led Sally outside where their voices could not carry.

Almost at their elbows, the vivid life of Flappers' Acre went on—overcrowded carloads of swimmers racing to and from the beach, radios blating, lean beach boys wandering in pairs with drowsy speculation in their eyes. Yet as far as conversation was concerned, Dan and Sally were alone.

"You—saw him?" Sally whispered.

Dan Fowler nodded, explaining swiftly. "Drowned. But someone dressed him *afterward*. And put him at the wheel of his car."

"That doesn't make sense!" the girl cried. "Why mark it as murder, if it could have passed as an accident? Drowning—"

"I don't know, either," her tall companion admitted. "But we're on our way to finding out. We went over to the reef from Waipahu. Wong and Selby's foreman was glad to sign us on as powder-liners. We'll alternate over there and in Honolulu. Larry's lugging dynamite now."

Sally's blue eyes shot him a queer look, which he only half understood. Actually, it betrayed her realization that long association with Agent Daniel Fowler had taught her a lesson. Whatever the dangers of dynamite, Dan had chosen to take this first Honolulu shift for his own because he believed some danger here was greater!

**H**ER voice was soft. "And you?" she asked quietly.

"I'm starting out now to check up on the names in that land *hui*, that swamp corporation. Somebody doesn't want that reef project to be successful."

"A secret agent, Dan?"

"It could be some foreign spy. The Intelligence branch is finishing their checkup on that angle along about now. Or it could be someone who had it in for Wong, Selby and Company; someone who wanted to see them lose their contract, which would break 'em.

But, somehow, those five gents with swampland for sale appeal to me."

Sally hesitated. "Dan—go slow, if you can. I've been here in Honolulu longer than you. Long enough to understand the setup, at least a little. It's not the mainland here. These islands are part of the United States, but also they're an isolated little world in themselves."

"Well?"

"You know what I mean. It's like a small town, Dan. They don't want to obstruct justice. But until there's proof positive of a criminal's guilt—well, if that man is island born, then you'll be only an outsider, a *malihini*, interfering."

Dan Fowler grinned tightly, patting her hand. "I know I'm in enemy territory, honey. I'll tread lightly. Matter of fact, I'm in no position to do anything else yet. I haven't any definite suspect to work on. I'm just an old hunting dog sniffing the wind."

## CHAPTER VII

### *On the Trail*



NIFFING was the word, so far as Pasquez Rosino was concerned.

"An oily little Portuguese who's boss of a bottling works," Sally had characterized the man. "Reform administrations from time to time try to pin vice ring raps on him." On the face of it, that smelled like a good beginning.

Dan Fowler, who by now had rented himself a modest coupé from the garage which had supplied Sally's phaeton, located the bottling works, well out on the fringe of the city's respectable business area. Over near Aola Park, and off North Queen Street.

A long blank, brick wall, pitted with a row of grimy windows, all of them well above the eye-level of passing traffic, flanked the narrow side street. Over a still narrower alley, arching its evil-appearing maw, a wooden sign bore the



succinct legend:

### P. ROSINO, BOTTLING.

Some hundred feet in from the street, a narrow door stood closed beneath the jutting finger of a smaller sign reading simply: Office. Parking his hired car opposite the alley's entrance, Dan climbed out.

He already had made discreet inquiries, elsewhere, about this bottling works and its owner. Rosino's chief income came from real estate speculation, the grapevine had it. His plant, built as a scheme for local bottling of pineapple juice for mainland consumption, still operated. But the mark of failure and neglect lay drab upon it.

Into the sinister dampness of the alley, the special agent plunged. He neared the office door with quick, long strides, passing two windows on his way. These were lower than the row directly on the street, and blanked by twin green shades drawn almost to their bottom sills. On the dingy panel, Dan rapped sharply.

An instant's silence followed, and then inside a chair scraped protestingly. The door opened an inch, and from the crack beady eyes regarded him.

"I don't want to buy nothing," a voice whined guardedly.

"I'm not selling anything," Dan Fowler met the shrewd gaze steadily. "I'm Inspector Daniel Fowler, Department of Justice. I want to see Mr. Rosino."

As if against its will, the door opened. A small, untidy, rat-faced individual, straggle-toothed and topped by a mop of greasy black hair, stood on the threshold.

"I'm Rosino. What you want?"

The tall mainlander shouldered past him, into the dingy office.

"I'm investigating a murder, Mr. Rosino. The murder of Special Agent Bailey, at Waipahu."

"Bailey?" Rosino leered. "That's the *kane* they been hunting for the Lurton killing. You can't kid me, mister. He's a killer, Bailey is, not a corpse. Unless the cops—"

"You'll read about it in this evening's papers. Someone murdered Bailey, too." Dan Fowler watched his man closely.

No, those beady eyes had shown no surprise at news of Turk's death. They glittered like something hard and wet and black; something craftily watchful.

**R**OSINO sank slowly into the desk chair he had vacated, and his dirty hands slid aimlessly along the margins of a film of papers which littered the surface before him. He smiled.

"Bailey dead, eh? Then the cops caught up with him. Why see me about it, Mister—Fowler?"

Dan Fowler let him have part of the truth in a straight thrust.

"Because Bailey was investigating a matter concerned with a land *hui* to which I am told you belong."

"Me?"

"Don't you own a fifth interest in certain swampland, Mr. Rosino? Land you expected to reap a fantastic profit from, until the Government selected an offshore reef for the site of their powder base and let building contracts to Wong, Selby and Company?"

Something happened in Rosino's  
[Turn Page]

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AND KEEP  
THE CHANGE!



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eyes, as if a dull veil had been dropped over their metallic brilliance.

"This investigation — you mean, somehow it threatened one of the *hui*? That maybe we wanted it stopped bad enough to bump off Bailey?"

"I didn't say that."

The smile on the lips of the bottling works boss flickered.

"But I ain't dumb. You *thought* it. Look here, my friend. Why didn't you heckle Worthen, if you wanted to get dope on that land deal?"

"Worthen? Why Worthen?"

"Alf was treasurer of our setup. The logical one to know about its finances, and the one who was in a jam—if anybody." Rosino paused. "Myself, I'm taking my loss and getting out. The *hui*'s back-number news, anyway. You can't do business with some guys. Turn your back on 'em and — *mukumuku!* They cut you to pieces."

Meaning, Dan Fowler inferred, Crabbe or Delman, with whom Rosino was reputed to have split. The G-man was about to change the tack of his questioning, to drive home another prod, when he realized it was unnecessary.

Rosino's hands had slid beneath that tumble of papers on the desk. Up out of the rustling welter something gray nosed abruptly; and the special agent found himself staring into the business end of a large-calibre revolver.

Rosino stood up slowly, lofting the weapon before him.

"All right, you wise guy. I don't *sabe* what your racket is. If it's a blackmail frame, I'm not the guy to pull it on. Everybody on Oahu knows Bailey's a killer, hiding out from the law. And you're no G-man. You don't fool *me*, see?"

"Listen—" Dan Fowler began, as if earnestly protesting.

"You're doing the listening now! Pasquez Rosino isn't the guy to try to clip for threat money. I run a legitimate business, and I run it in the clear. You're getting out of my office. You're backing through that door and—*keep your hands up!*"

With a simulated start, Dan Fowler checked a gesture toward his shoulder which he never had intended to complete. Scowling darkly, he backed

across the office threshold and out into the alley.

The door slammed hard, and behind it a bolt clicked into place. Dan made as much noise as he logically could, tramping streetward. But an instant later he had ducked under the arch again and was crawling toward the nearer of those two curtained windows. Inside, as he pressed close to the glass, a low voice was saying something.

"—brew. And hurry, see? It's Rosino."

**T**HE mainlander grinned with grim satisfaction as he edged once more up the alley and across the shadowed side street to his waiting coupé. For all his show of courage, Rosino was scared. And his indignation—that was phony, too. He was calling his pal, Ford Ambrew, the owner of the *Blade*, according to Sally's dope.

If either of that pair had killed Turk Bailey, there'd be a move soon to tip their hand. They knew the F.B.I. was on their trail. Dan Fowler was counting heavily on the truth of an old saying from no less a source than the Bible.

"*The evil flee when no man pursueth.*" Dan smiled grimly at the thought.

Alfred Worthen, on whom Rosino had cast suspicion, was obviously the next man to see. But he had left the Inter-Island Trust Company's offices by the time the G-man's coupé slid into a parking space near the impressive pink marble building on Beretania Street.

It was likely, a suave clerk informed the caller, that Mr. Worthen could be reached at his home — if Mr. Fowler considered it important. Mr. Fowler did.

Following the meticulous directions, he prodded the rented vehicle across Honolulu once more and up the green gorge of Makiki. He noticed with interest the way the famous island city spread inland from the waterfront, separating it into valleys — Waialae, Palolo, Manoa, Makiki, Pauoa, Nuuanu, Maliki—like seven spread fingers of some freak hand, with wild mountains thrusting between.

Tough terrain for a chase, if you didn't know which valley your quarry



had selected! But this disadvantage was countered by the fact that no criminal could leave the island except by boat or clipper plane, both easily checked on.

In a territory one could drive around in a few hours, such a hunt could have but one eventual ending. The Worthen house stood on a private road off Tantalus Drive. A conservatively handsome dwelling, it spread the typical Hawaiian profusion of verandas, or *lanais*, about it.

A pretty woman—thirty, perhaps—was climbing the sloping lawn as Dan's coupé nosed between the gateposts. She had plucked a gardenia from the hedge behind her, and was weaving it into her auburn hair as the visitor applied his brakes.

"I beg pardon. Is Mr. Worthen at home?"

"I'm his sister." She had a nice smile. "He's playing golf. Is it something about the bank?"

Briefly, Dan Fowler explained sufficient of his business to win him the whereabouts of the game. Then he was off down the valley again. Counting a few natural wrong turnings, coming and going, it was a good two hours after he had first left Beretania Street that he rolled the coupé into the grounds of the Waialae Golf Club.

Alfred Worthen was located by a Chinese caddy, just coming up the green with his foursome. He sent the others on with a nod, after the special agent had identified himself.

The wide sea vista and majestic Koko Head made a clear background for the bank official, as Dan Fowler studied him. Thirty-five, probably, but looking younger. Deeply tanned. Trying to keep down his weight, thus far successfully. Ruddy, neat hair. Gray eyes. One by one, the details were checked off.

Fowler smiled slightly. "Department of Justice business, Mr. Worthen. I'm told you were—are treasurer of a group of five men holding certain swampland rejected by the Government for its powder-base site."

"That's right." Worthen's cool eyes were expressionless.

"A Government agent was murdered last night, near Waipahu. He was in-

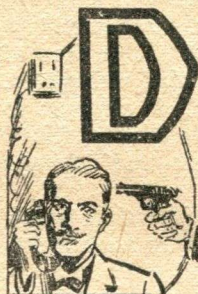
vestigating your *hui* when he died."

The statement was blunt, but calmly spoken. Dan Fowler's gaze searched the face before him. But the gray eyes did not mask themselves, as the Portuguese's black ones had done.

"Great Scott!" Worthen cried. "Then of course you'll want to know all the details I can give you. Let's find somewhere to sit down, Mr. Fowler."

## CHAPTER VIII

### The "Third Degree"



DAN FOWLER and the banker sat looking out over Waialae's championship course, jewel-green under the late afternoon sunlight. Worthen had explained, as if to talk trivialities until his shocked brain

steadied, that sections of the golf layout were patterned after a variety of famous golfing spots the world over—St. Andrews, Prestwick, North Berwick, Piping Rock, Biarritz. Now, abruptly, he came back to the point.

"Murdered! I can scarcely believe it. Of course, I'd read of Bailey, in yesterday's papers. But somehow I'd gathered the impression that—well, no matter. What can I tell you, Mr. Fowler?"

"Is you *hui* behind these 'natural' disasters aimed to force abandonment of the reef? Are you five men bent on voiding Wong and Selby's contracts?" Fowler shot out questions no guilty man could answer honestly.

Worthen shrugged. "There is no *hui*; at least, not anybody capable of unified action. The rejected acreage is still owned on shares, yes. But we five—well, we didn't see things eye to eye."

"What caused your split?" Dan demanded.

"A variety of factors. I myself withdrew because I disliked a certain proposal, made by one member and favored by others, to bribe the survey commission into selecting our land." The executive's tanned face was po-



lately regretful.

"Perhaps I was overethical," he continued. "I sincerely believe our property would have been better for the Government's purposes. But I don't like bribes."

Dan Fowler jerked forward. "Which man proposed the bribery, Mr. Worthen?"

He saw the deliberate movement of the other's head, knew what was coming before the words were spoken.

"I can't tell you that. Our meetings were confidential. The discussions which took place at them—"

"This is murder, Mr. Worthen!"

"I know, Mr. Fowler." The face of the *hui's* treasurer clouded unhappily. "But a doctor, a lawyer, is allowed to protect the secrets of his clients. Until I'm on a witness stand—and perhaps even then—"

Useless to batter against that quiet-spoken stubbornness. Dan took a different tack.

"How much do you, as one shareholder, stand to make if that deal should come your way even now? If the construction contracts aren't fulfilled, and the Government decides to shift locations for a second try?"

"Nothing. Not a penny."

Worthen spoke sincerely, then amplified his answer. "You see, I sold out my share before the final decision. A woman in Santa Barbara, California, a rich widow for whom the Inter-Island Trust handles considerable investments, decided she wanted to buy in on our scheme. I warned her, before sale, that the land was a gamble."

"But—"

"She decided to take it. And I, having withdrawn over the matter of bribery, was quite willing to sell my personal interest."

"You're entirely out of the deal, then?" the special agent queried.

"No. I'm still in charge of the funds, as vice-president of the Trust Company." Worthen tried then solemnly to make his position clear.

"My involvement, as you might put it, also includes Wong, Selby and Company—because I advised the acceptance of their loan application to finance this reef construction. I'm even interested in Bailey's most unfortunate murder—

because your report says he was last seen alive on the Kauluoa property, at Waipahu, on which my bank holds two mortgages. A banker, Mr. Fowler, has a finger in a good many pies without being able to profit personally if plums are pulled out of them!"

**T**HE G-Man nodded comprehendingly. "I'm in luck, Worthen. If you're out-of-it-yet-in-it, you'll be able to help me a lot. Provided you will, of course."

"Anything I can do." And the banker's voice rang with sincerity. "Except—of course, certain matters—"

"I'll try to respect those confidences, Mr. Worthen. Well, it's late now. Suppose I stop in at your office tomorrow, to finish this angle of the case."

The banker nodded, and they shook hands and parted. Dan Fowler drove straight out toward Waipahu. His hours on duty at the powder line were rapidly approaching. He wanted to relieve Larry promptly. For there was plenty for his assistant to do in Honolulu.

The coupé was halfway across town before its driver realized he was being followed.

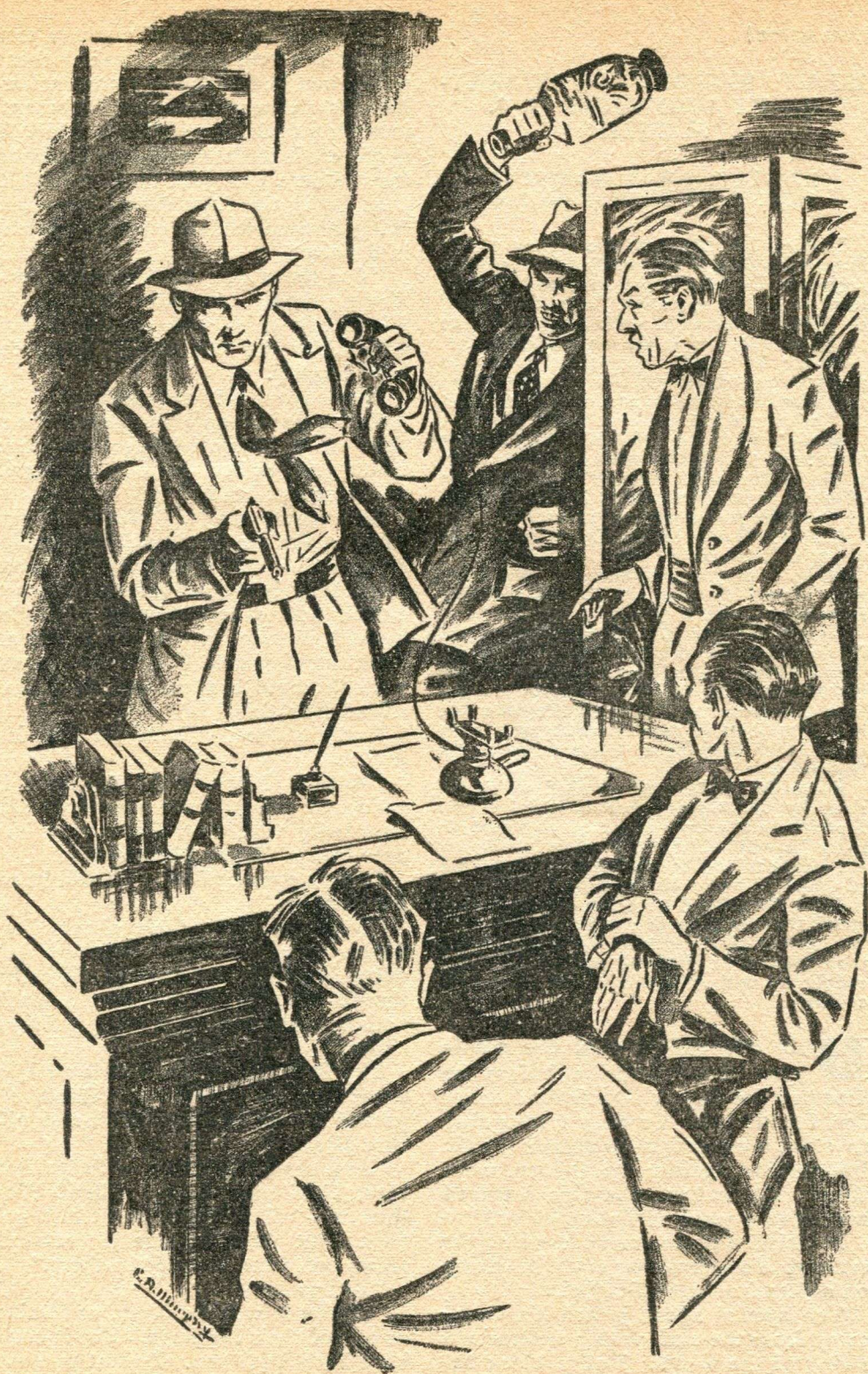
A modest black sedan had swung in behind him on Waialae Avenue, looming from one of the numbered side streets. When the special agent swerved at the juncture of Kapiolau Boulevard, the sedan's blank headlights followed. At Ward Avenue, he took a sharp right, by way of a test, and passed the famous Old Plantation. His shadow kept after him.

To prove his hunch beyond question, Dan slowed to the curb before a newsstand in the crowded business district. Half a block behind, the other car, its curtains drawn, also pulled to the curb.

Rosino? Ambrew? Worthen? Dan Fowler could not tell whether the vehicle had followed him to the golf club, or only away from it. He climbed out, purchased a copy of the evening's *Blade* to allay suspicion, and resumed his seat at the wheel. In the very act of reaching for the gear shift, he stiffened with a grunt. The headlines of Ford Ambrew's paper stared up at him.

Screaming black letters bannered his





*As Fowler reached for the phone the cloisonne vase crashed across his skull (Chapter XII)*



own name!

# ISLAND RESIDENT BROWBEATEN BY UNINVITED U. S. "SLEUTH"

## FWLER, G-MAN, SUBJECTS ROSINO TO THIRD DEGREE

Pushing his way into the offices of the Rosino Bottling Works early this afternoon, Inspector Daniel Fowler, mainland Department of Justice operative, "turned the heat" on Pasquez Rosino in a third degree said to be without parallel in the island's history.

Before he could comprehend what the angry G-man was about, Rosino was accused pointblank of being an accessory to a "murder" which he had not even heard about.

Bewildered to the point of terror, Rosino was unable to defend himself as Fowler overwhelmed him with "official" charges in an effort to force his victim to confess a crime of which he was utterly in ignorance.

After the G-man had finally left, unable to wring a "confession" from his unfortunate "suspect," Rosino summoned a physician, who immediately put him to bed, suffering from severe mental shock.

Despite inquiries throughout the city, the *Blade* was unable to locate Inspector Fowler, who apparently was in no eagerness to have his whereabouts disclosed. Fowler arrived here this morning aboard the *Pacifica*, but had disembarked before newspaper men could reach him for a statement as to his "official visit."

No further light could be shed on his arrival by Honolulu police officials, either. However, one official who requested that his name be withheld commented pointedly on the fact that Fowler had not enlisted the aid of island police in his "mission."

As to the third degree, the official further stated that the practice was resorted to only "in extreme cases" even on the mainland, but that apparently Federal agents had not caught up with progress within their own country.

**D**AN FOWLER read the whole yarn through twice before he dropped the paper. Controlled anger had set his jaw. So they were going to start a campaign to arouse public indignation against the G-Men, were they? Or rather, was this inspired account the work of Turk's killer?"

It looked like Ambrew's hand, on the surface. Yet—Ambrew could be acting on orders from somebody else!

The special agent jerked his coupé away from the curb with a determined swing of the wheel. Half a block behind, another car crawled to life and began to roll after him.

The evening shift of workers went out to the reef in the same flatboats which had ferried the day crew ashore. Dan Fowler managed a brief moment's interview with Larry Kendal while the small craft were loading and unloading. There was just time enough to pass Larry the keys to the coupé, and bring him up to date on developments in the city.

"You mean this monkey Ambrew is libeling you? Actually figuring his *Blade* can drive you out of Hawaii, with filthy lies like that?" Larry colored angrily.

"Not drive me out, perhaps. But build up public opinion against me so that every native islander—brown or white, good or bad—will be looking for me to sprout horns."

Dan swore softly. "Get it, Larry? They make us out butchers, bullies, roughnecks—and what happens? Every man's hand is against us. Every honest citizen tries subconsciously to hinder, instead of help. Even the police are loath to coöperate. That's the one way a crook could beat us out, on a small island like this."

Larry nodded. "Then our man is—Ambrew?"

"Maybe. Maybe not. He could be acting on orders from somebody else. Somebody with a strong enough hold over him to dictate his moves."

Larry's eyes kindled. "That'll be my job tonight!"

"Find out as much about Ford Ambrew as you can. Whether he's deep in debt to anyone. Whether there's anything in his past a black-mailer could use as a whip. *Everything!*"

The F. B. I. ace had drawn a slip of paper from his pocket as he talked. He passed it over to Larry with a significant glance.

"And send this cable to Santa Barbara, California, Larry. Alfred Worthen was all coöperation at the golf club. But somebody in a curtained sedan tailed me away from there."

"You mean—"

"Maybe it was Ambrew, or Rosino, or one of their hirelings. But it could have been Worthen. I want to know if he really did sell out his *hui* holdings to a rich widow. Is he actually in the



clear, so far as standing to make a profit if the Government moved their site is concerned?"

The flatboats were loaded by now. The two men separated, and Dan Fowler raced down the rocky beach to climb aboard the last boat shoving off.

As it nosed out into the green-blue water, he could see the fleet of workers' cars parked along the shoreline as they began to back and turn. Groups of laborers were starting home for Ewa and Waipahu and Honolulu. Larry, in the coupé, would be among them.

For a moment longer, the special agent watched the shoreline contemplatively. Jagged black lava rock and gnawed ironwood trees, tall grass and crushed coral beach. One high point was surmounted by a stone formation so strikingly like a huge, recumbent cat that, after an instant, Dan actually caught himself trying to recollect whether lions roamed wild in Hawaii.

**N**O wonder they said these islands did things to the imagination! He turned his attention to the reef on which the sinister happenings he had come from Washington to investigate were so unmistakably centered.

The ragged spine of lava, spewed down the distant mountains and into the sea by some prehistoric volcano, drew nearer. Dan could make out details of the buildings already erected by Wong, Selby and Company, as the flatboat nosed down-current in the recently shark-infested inlet. The low walls had significant spaces between them the distance of city blocks—safe-guards in case of an explosion.

Why, wondered the G-man suddenly, hadn't the sinister power behind these disasters ever tried direct dynamiting of the reef itself—surely the most effective means possible for wholesale sabotage?

Or was that final horror still to come?



## CHAPTER IX

### *Sabotage!*



IG Jim Selby's foreman broke into Dan's reflective thoughts.

"Everybody ashore!" he bellowed.

Dan Fowler joined the men as they scrambled up the rocky shore, to line up at a cut in the high barbed-wire fence which protected the reef from trespassers. Each worker, before being passed through, was searched for matches and other ignitable or friction-producing materials. Shoes soled with nails were replaced by rubber sneakers, and checked with the gate-man.

Then they were filing into the reserve itself—a motley, muscular crew of whites, Filipinos, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, and cross-breeds. Dan, tramping among them, studied the layout with speculative eyes.

The buildings housing dynamite, powder or the machinery used in its manufacture were protected by the usual "bear cages." These were thick earthen embankments, more than twelve feet through at their bases and high as the second story of an average house. Emergency exits honeycombed their blank walls, mute reminders of the deadly peril behind them.

Intensive study of methods of explosives manufacture had familiarized the special agent with the reasons for much of what he saw. He knew, too, that as few workers as possible were assigned to each process, each unit in the plant. If a "big noise" came, the mortality list would be kept as low as possible.

His own assignment was to Number Six, one of the small mixing houses. Their noontime claim of previous experience—in the Dupont works on Puget Sound—had got himself and Larry past the usual rookie period as maintenance men. This admitted them directly to danger spots. Where the reef's menace, if it struck here at all, could most effectively be anticipated and forestalled!



With him in the dusty powder room there was to be only one other worker—a talkative kid, part-white and part-Hawaiian, who never had left the island of Oahu in all his twenty years. He had a friendly grin and muscles like a young panther. Dan Fowler liked him from the first moment they were paired off together.

"My name Kimo Waite," Dan was informed. "You are *malikini*, new-comer to the islands, no? Kimo here means same as 'Jim'. Like Mister Big Jim Selby, who owns construction company since old Charlie Wong die three years back."

"My name's Dan," Fowler responded, and remembered the alias under which he had enrolled on Wong, Selby and Company's payroll. "Danny Fenno."

"Hello, Danny." The young *hapa-haole* held out a friendly hand. They shook solemnly. Men about to face death together, that simple ceremony said, were better off as friends.

The whistle signaling "*go below*" had not yet sounded. The pair were standing ready at their embankment's outer rim, idly watching laborers trundle small powder cars along the narrow-gauge railroad which spider-webbed among the scattered buildings.

No engines here! Engines meant fire, fire meant sparks; and in this dusty atmosphere, with high explosives all over the place, one spark could mean oblivion.

Abruptly, Kimo pointed. "There Big Jim Selby now. Walking away from our cage, see, with Mr. Jedtham Crabbe of Honolulu? Ha, ha! Boys say Crabbe here since six o'clock, trying to sell stocks to Big Jim. But Big Jim too smart to buy."

Admiration for the boss of the construction company quivered in the lad's throaty voice. But the mainlander's startled interest found another focus, in that pair of backs departing from the vicinity.

**J**EDTHAM CRABBE must be the bulky, semi-bald one, who lumbered like an elephant, yet gave an oddly contradictory impression of co-ordination and power. So one of the precious quintet was here on the reef!

A shrill, quavering blast of sound

shivered over the reef in that instant. Kimo turned toward the nearest entrance piercing their embankment, with a last glance at the fading light which made a purple carpet of the water.

"Time we go work now."

"Down to our bear cage," Dan Fowler agreed grimly, remembering Crabbe.

The lad's perfect teeth flashed white. "Hell cage! Devils live there! But we get along fine, Kimo and the *malikini*. We mix best powder boss Big Jim ever build storehouse for, eh, Danny Fenno? You gonna like it here."

Hawaiian hospitality, even in the face of danger!

The mixing house, consisting of one square room, was equipped with wheelbarrows to transport the blended powder; with two doors; with two safety windows, arranged to open on impact if a hurtling human form sought an emergency exit.

Directly in the center stood the circular vat, with its pivoted cross-beam supported by a center post. Huge wheels at either end of the beam circled around the vat's interior, when in action, to blend its contents. The motor supplying power was nowhere to be seen. Safety, Dan Fowler surmised, had dictated its placement elsewhere than in close proximity to the powder.

Tonight, their job was the mixing of blasting powder. Its ingredients were gunpowder, a filler and liquid nitroglycerin. A pretty mixture for one of those tropical "devils" Kimo had mentioned!

They went through the motions of filling the vat with its first batch, in tense silence. Then Kimo pulled the switch. Sighing into motion, the giant wheels began to revolve, to dip into the perilous brew, to stir the various components of the blasting dynamite into one mass.

"She move smooth like water, eh?" For the first time, the Hawaiian permitted his infectious grin to return.

Dan Fowler nodded, watching the wheels stir in their trackless circles pressing the powder downward before they gouged it clear of the vat's smooth ribs.

"Kimo, what you said about 'devils' living here—before we came down?



Was that meant for a warning?"

Kimo's strong shoulders shrugged. "Maybe yes, maybe no. Ignorant people are scared by ghosts that walk this reef by moonlight. The old men say: Prince Kauluoa, long time dead, returns to avenge desecration of his grave by Wong and Selby munitions buildings."

"This reef is where some old-time chief is buried, eh?"

"Near here. Exact spot, nobody living knows. But men see giant shape in feather cloak, four-five times since night work here starts. Foolish *kanakas* now afraid to work here, lest they anger the gods."

"What about you?" Dan ventured. "Do you believe it?"

"Me?" Kimo's young lips split in a genial twist of derision. "Ha!"

**B**UT a moment later, the disguised Federal agent noticed the youth was glancing nervously over one shoulder. A superstitious shadow of dread darkened his eyes. Whoever was "haunting" this reef had a viciously powerful weapon in that deep-rooted island credulity. . . .

They had been in the cage better than an hour—talking a little, but mostly laboring in silence—when the thing happened. The thing Dan Fowler had come here expecting—yet had not counted on meeting so soon.

A circling wheel had just rotated past along the vat wall before him, dipping deep into the mixture and then rising out of it with slow deliberateness, when he felt a cold wind brush the back of his neck. Dan Fowler spun like a man struck by a bullet, although nothing but that thread of air had touched him.

One of the house's two doors stood directly behind the spot he had occupied a second earlier. The panel had opened perhaps a foot, although no presence was visible in the blackness of the narrow aperture!

Kimo, attracted by his fellow laborer's sharp intake of breath, also straightened from observation of the working explosives. He was almost in line with Dan's startled vision, when he let out a single, sudden gurgle of abject terror.

But the man from Washington

needed no warning. He, too, had seen the hand which flashed suddenly out of that narrow strip of shadow at the door. Something which glittered evilly—a small, open-necked glass jar, such as might contain grocery store jam—hurtled between them, straight into the half-filled vat. But the flickering orange contents of that uncorked receptacle resembled no jelly or preserves edible by man.

It was live fire! The vivid, hungry, blaze of oil-soaked rags, protected by glass walls from extinction during its short flight!

## CHAPTER X

### *The "Big Noise!"*



**ORRIFYING** things happened in those ten seconds, as fast as if they all were evil kindred of the inevitable explosion.

The door slammed violently, and up the brief runway beyond it feet pounded a frantic tattoo of escape. Kimo,

blanched beneath his coppery skin, dived screaming for one of the chamber's emergency exits. But not before Dan Fowler, trained muscles reacting by instinct to the hideous crisis, had hurled himself toward the second.

He felt the barrier give before the urgency of his battering ram charge, and his long body catapulted through the safety window into cold air that indicated a ramp. Up this incline he lunged, leaping into the open area inside the bear cage—just as the top blew off of hell behind him!

The roar with which the doomed vat split and skyrocketed tore at the G-man's eardrums. Its repercussions seized him like a relentless monster hand and hurled him flat on the ground, with the wind knocked out of him. Then fire swept over his head in a white-hot sheet, billowing skyward like some violently unfurled flag.

Staggering drunkenly, sick from the shock of that impact with hard coral



rock, Dan Fowler gained his feet again. They felt as if someone had tied giant anchors to them; yet by a miracle he forced them to carry him forward. He realized, without even knowing how, that his ruined clothing was burning off him as he tottered wildly through an exit tunnel and out of the bear cage.

He lunged forward blindly, deafened by the unearthly shriek of hungry flames at his back. His charred shoe toe caught, with a wrench, in something hard—one rail of the narrow-gauge track, he dimly realized—and spilled him wickedly.

But even the bleeding torment of this second fall was meaningless now. He struggled erect once more, yelling something—words—he didn't know what—

Answering shouts reached the G-man. They sounded faraway, although he could see dark figures pounding nearer in wild excitement—figures outlined as if high noon by the murderous pillar of flame which clawed the night behind him.

"Big noise!" That, he remembered, was the powder workers' phrase for a major explosion. "*Big noise at Number Six!*"

The babble of their onrushing excitement seemed all but inaudible beyond the savage roaring in Dan's ears. Maybe that blow had really deafened him. But no—what was that?

A single voice, behind him, screamed in a frenzy of torture beyond human endurance. Kimo Waite!

Dan Fowler spun, with the blankness of his first shock falling from him like something the flames had licked away. Slapping wildly but to effective purpose at the shreds of red fire still worrying his blackened garments, the G-man started back at a dead run in the direction of the bear cage.

Beyond the split shield of the embankment, torn asunder by the violence with which the mixing chamber had blown, a livid inferno was belching hot destruction as if from some obscene maw. The loads of loose powder, ready for mixing, had caught and exploded like the devil's own artillery.

Mixed nitroglycerin added to the savage holocaust. Fangs of flame had spit hundreds of feet into the night

when the enclosed sections went up.

AND somewhere back of the embankment—between the bear cage and the volcano which had been Number Six—the young Hawaiian was trapped in unspeakable death! Evidently the explosion had caught him too far from any of the tunnels leading out of the enclosure. Before he could reach them, the racing blaze must have blocked his escape.

"Waite!" Dan Fowler heard his own voice screeching, battling above the gusty billow of the flames themselves. "Kimo! Where are you? This way—this way—"

He knew almost at once that the trapped powder-monkey had heard him. Human sounds, too ghastly to be classed as words, babbled insanely from behind the earthen wall. The Federal agent had stumbled by now along the embankment to the tunnel from which he had made his own miraculous exit.

"Follow my voice, Waite!"

Plowing maniacally among the wheelbarrows inside, staggering, beating in terror against the walls which would not let a man through, Dan Fowler could hear frantic footfalls forging nearer. He plunged into the mouth of the tunnel desperately, still shouting to show the passageway's position.

"Waite! This way!" Withering, blasting heat slammed into his face as he swung still further into the tunnel. Then someone grabbed him from behind, dragging him free again and into the safety of the livid night. Dan struggled against the unseen arms that held him. He fought to return to the tunnel, kept up his ceaseless shouting to Waite as he battled.

Suddenly, out of the embankment, an object like a six-foot torch burst in reeling blindness. For one terrible instant, the blazing thing with its hideous, blackened face rocked there, screaming.

Then even the features were ablaze, crumbling as the doomed frame under them had crumbled. Sick with pain and horror, Dan Fowler closed his eyes and dropped deep into bottomless darkness.

\* \* \* \* \*

"You look," Alfred Worthen in-



formed him frankly, the following afternoon, "like a moth in a cocoon! Not that I consider what happened last night as any laughing matter, Mr. Fowler. But if a man doesn't force himself to joke about it—the alternative might be madness."

Dan Fowler moved a bandaged head impatiently, staring across the wide mahogany desk of the Inter-Island Trust Company official's personal sanctum with eyes still haunted by the death of Kimo Waite.

He had seen men die before, plenty of them—men mowed down by bullets, stabbed, garroted, hanged, destroyed in the electric chair. But the savage, merciless burning of that friendly, lithe-bodied young native laborer—this was horrible!

"I won't go crazy, Worthen. But somehow I doubt that I'll ever see any humor in this situation, either."

The banker ears reddened slowly. "Sorry, Mr. Fowler. I guess—maybe if I'd been there, instead of you— Well, I *meant* well!" he blurted out.

Late afternoon sunlight puddled on the luxurious carpeting of the office, two stories above Beretania Street. It was well past the bank's closing time. Now they were together, however, the interview could be brief. There were only a few items the Federal agent had to clear up here.

"You mentioned yesterday that your bank had some connection with the spot where Bailey was last seen. Exactly—how, Worthen?"

**W**ORTHEN tilted back in his swivel-chair. "That's the Kauluoas property, out at Waipahu. The Kauluoas are one of our oldest families of native nobility—but flat broke, now, like so many others. The blood stock's degenerated. Young David, the present heir, is what you call on the mainland a drug store cowboy. A worthless young loafer. But pleasant enough."

"How," Dan Fowler asked softly, "could Bailey tie in with anyone like that?"

After a moment's consideration, the Inter-Island official answered slowly.

"Probably not at all. I've heard—second-hand, to be sure—that he got friendly with Roger Lurton, who was

boarding there with his assistant, Harry Stock. Lurton and Stock were Preacher Museum men. The night of Lurton's murder, Bailey turned up there and punched Stock in the jaw."

"Indicating he had something hot on Stock!"

"I don't think so." Worthen shrugged. "Old Grandma Kauluoas heard their talk from inside, and her testimony was all in the papers. She gathered Bailey merely *thought* Stock might be involved, and tried to punch a confession out of him. Grandma telephoned for the police. So Bailey had to make a getaway."

A grim line cut at each corner of Dan Fowler's mouth. "Another case of official dragons from the mainland invading these fair islands to manhandle the innocent citizenry, eh?"

His host understood perfectly to what he was referring. "Ambrew is pretty insular in his reactions. If he thought Rosino really *had* been roughed up, during an investigation—Not that I, personally, took stock in last evening's *Blade* headlines. But Honolulu's rank-and-file get pretty upset by stories like that. I'd tread softly, Mr. Fowler, if I were you."

"It would seem," the bandaged mainland counter, "that my treading so far has been pretty much on *somebody's* toes. But I'd give plenty to be able to prove *whose*! Before I go, Worthen—is there anything else you can tell me about the Waipahu-Bailey-Kauluoas-museum setup? I keep coming back to that last day of his, as the vital factor to work on."

After a moment's reflection, the vice-president shook his head.

"Nothing. Unless—wait a second! There's one little coincidence, that's probably entirely unimportant. The Kauluoas family also own that shoreline stretch where Bailey's body was discovered. Their original estate stretched quite a distance up the Waianae coast. We have a mortgage on that, too."

"On a stretch of bare lava rock with no farming or commercial value? As I remember it, that shore opposite the munitions reef—"

"Is worthless, as you say." Worthen smiled wryly, as he followed his caller's



lead in rising to his feet.

"Then why—"

"Occasionally a bank in such a relatively isolated city as ours must concede a point in order to accommodate one of the old, established families. Another bane of island life, Mr. Fowler, like the *Blade's* reaction to mainland 'interference.' If I can be of any further help, don't hesitate to come to me."

Still smiling over the import of those parting sentences, Dan Fowler emerged on the warm street a few minutes later.

A Filipino newsboy was passing the Inter-Island Trust's majestic pink facade at the moment. The evening's headlines flapped across the lad's skinny arm; mammoth black letters which plunged the G-Man's hand into his pocket, in a swift search for coppers.

**A**MBREW had proclaimed another Roman holiday. This time with a boxed front-page story, bearing the by-line of one Watson Howard, as well as a picture of the Federal agent himself.

## TRAGIC EXPLOSION ON REEF IS LAID TO F. B. I. INCOMPETENCE

WITNESSES OF DISASTER PLACE BLAME ON MAINLAND OPERATIVE FOR POSING AS POWDER WORKER

BY WATSON HOWARD,  
BLADE STAFF WRITER

Today the charred remains of Kimo Waite, 20, part-Hawaiian powder worker on the Government's new munitions reef here, repose in the morgue awaiting claim by relatives. Witnesses of the blast in which Waite was killed last night describe the youth's death as one of unprintable horror.

It has been established by *Blade* investigation that Waite's only companion in the underground powder unit, which was destroyed by a sudden explosion less than two hours after the two men entered it together, was a new worker registered as "Danny Fenno." In reality, "Fenno" was an alias adopted by Inspector Daniel Fowler, Federal agent newly arrived from the mainland.

Fowler falsified his name and record in order to secure himself employment on the reef, according to construction officials.

Fowler's first official act in Honolulu was yesterday's third-degree Rosino affair. The second case of interference still more vividly reveals the attitude of this outsider in regard to innocent island residents, persons unhappy enough to fall in the path of his al-

leged "investigations," a police official pointed out. If a man totally inexperienced in powder handling had not wormed his way into a position of trust, company officials said, there is little question but what Waite would be alive today, let alone the explosion.

"The body in the morgue is an object lesson in G-man methods which no thinking Islander can overlook," one of the officials told your correspondent.

"There isn't any reason why the people of Hawaii have to tolerate such outrages."

There was no mention made of that hand at the opening door, of course, or of that bottle filled with flaming rags. Fowler's gray eyes narrowed in surging anger as they ran down the boxed double-column a second time.

Ford Ambrew was clever. There could be no kick-back on such a story. The explosion and the details of Waite's tragic death were minutely correct, with that one exception. And the unsupported word of Daniel Fowler was the only evidence that anyone had ever stood behind the door to that powder chamber and thrown a deadly torch into the fatal brew.

Abruptly, the tall mainlander became aware that the young Filipino newsboy had not moved on with his armful of *Blades*.

Glancing up sharply, Dan was in time to catch the bright glance of those black eyes studying him.

"Say!" the boy piped excitedly. "Your face—that picture! You Mist' Fowla, huh? Fella beat 'em up, blow 'em up, kill 'em?"

"Listen—" Dan began in exasperation.

But the youngster's piping comment—which might have been identifying a three-headed sea monster for the note of pleasurable horror in it—had sounded shrilly in the golden air. Passersby on busy Beretania Street had been halted by it.

The man from Washington became aware of tightening lips, eyes glazing with resentment, backs stiffening distastefully.

As he turned to stride away, one voice rose clear from the dubious mutterings which followed him.

"—ought to be lynched! These mainlanders who think they can—"

Apparently, the *Blade* had an effective circulation in Honolulu.



## CHAPTER XI

*Golden Dragon Bait*

OLDEN twilight was settling lightly over Flappers' Acre and nearby Waikiki, when Dan Fowler rang the doorbell of Mary Lou Bailey's bungalow. Sally Vane answered it herself, to report that she had been able to secure Turk's sister

emergency accommodations, and that the *Pacifica* had already sailed, with Turk's body aboard.

The special agent caught the startled widening of Sally's blue eyes as they fell on his bandages; but until he himself explained, she asked no questions. That was one of the things about Sally Vane. She knew there was a right and a wrong time for everything.

Dan covered the highlights of the reef disaster swiftly. There were other things on his mind, too.

"I couldn't contact Larry when shifts changed. The doctor was still making a mummy of me. Did you see him last night?"

Sally shook her head. "But he phoned before breakfast. He hadn't found anything on Ambrew that was definitely incriminating; although information from various sources indicated the publisher had been ringleader in the *hui's* move to offer the Government commission a bribe for recommending their swamp as a powder plant site. And that reminds me!"

"Yes?"

"Larry said he'd sent a cable to Santa Barbara for some information you wanted, with instructions to deliver the answer here." She fumbled in the pocket of her smartly simple green linen frock, and drew forth a yellow envelope.

"Here you are, Chief. It came about an hour ago."

The report from California was succinct but revealing.

MRS. LOLA GREGORY RESIDENT  
SANTA BARBARA HOLDER OF ONE-  
FIFTH STOCK IN YOUR HONOLULU

REALTY COMBINE. PURCHASE MADE THROUGH INTER-ISLAND TRUST HONOLULU. MRS. GREGORY IS WIDOW. AT PRESENT TRAVELING ABROAD. WEALTHY. PROMINENT. GOOD SOCIAL STANDING. DECEASED HUSBAND FORMERLY SUCCESSFUL SUGAR INVESTOR THROUGH INTER-ISLAND. WHICH EXPLAINS AGENCY AND WIDOW'S INTEREST IN ISLAND INVESTMENTS. GLAD TO COOPERATE ANY FURTHER INQUIRIES.

"So that's that." Dan Fowler folded the message absently. "Worthen told me the truth about his holdings. He no longer stands to make a direct profit from moving the munitions outfit off the reef. If I could establish that fact about three others of that outfit—"

"Before the fourth one succeeds in establishing something solid like a tombstone for you." The blonde girl nodded solemnly. "I don't like it, Dan. That explosion almost got you out of the way. And last night's Rosino story in the *Blade*—that was no love tap, either."

"Not a patch on tonight's! Wait till you read about Fowler, the ogre who burns young Hawaiians alive for the fun of it." The special agent was not smiling, despite the manner of his words.

"I just can't wait." Sally frowned of a sudden. "By the way, a reporter from the *Blade* called here today. A little man with two gold teeth in front, who gave his name as Watson Howard. I don't know how he tied me up with you, but he was hot after your secrets."

"There isn't much our friends don't know." Dan Fowler was remembering the car that had followed him from Worthen's golf club. "They get around, whoever they are. And so far—"

The sharp note of the telephone buzzer interrupted Dan's remark. Sally answered, but passed the receiver over to him with a bewildered gesture.

"It's for you."

Dan understood the question in her eyes. After all, he had been at the bungalow a scant ten minutes! Somebody was wasting no time.

"Fowler speaking." He had accepted the proffered black instrument.

THERE was a slight sound, as of a body shifting position, at the far



end of the wire. Then a voice so guttural that it was difficult to understand—a voice obviously disguised—rumbled through.

"I see by the *Blade* how the boys have slipped another one over on you, G-man."

Teeth set, temper boiling at the insolence of the taunt, Dan Fowler said nothing. He had learned how to wait, in his long career in the service. Presently, as he had anticipated, the voice continued:

"That's one of Ambrew's habits, pal. He done it to me, too—ten grand worth. I hate mainlanders, but I hate that heel worse. Do you care to know where he's got some papers he took off the body of Turk Bailey, out near the reef?"

"I'm listening," Fowler answered shortly.

"If you got what it takes, go to seventeen sixty Ahukini Street tonight. In the back bedroom, top of the stairs, there's a wall safe—behind the dresser mirror."

A short *click* told the tall special agent he was disconnected. No use attempting to trace the call. Mysterious voices like that one always used a pay booth. So somebody wanted him to go to 1760 Ahukini Street, eh?

Maybe it really was a squealer. More likely, however, it was a trap—all neatly baited for the "dragon" which Ford Ambrew's headlines had created out of whole cloth in twenty-four hours. But that off-chance that things were on the level was something Dan couldn't overlook.

As he strode toward the bungalow's door, scooping up his hat enroute, Sally followed him wistfully.

"More work, Dan? I'd hoped after last night, you could rest up. Maybe take a little drive with me?"

"Nope. The romantic sight I'm taking in tonight," Dan Fowler answered gently, "is a house on Ahukini Street. Some other time, Sally."

The street car Dan caught in town, after making the necessary inquiries, clanged to a stop well along its second mile of outlying residential areas. Beneath a dull overhead lamp the street sign at an intersection glowed dimly.

"Ahukini," read the label at the in-

tersecting roadway. Fowler swung down from the rear platform, saluted a fat native conductor who peered at his bandages unblinkingly, and hunched off into the night.

Ahukini Street was badly paved and worse off as to lights. Puddles from a swift, heavy shower early in the afternoon still glutted gaps in the brickwork.

The top step of the first building, siding on the wider avenue up which the street car had rattled, showed the number 1726. The next one read 1728. He was headed right, then, and on the right side of the street.

**D**AN had to tramp three blocks to 1760. The place looked like a carbon of its neighbors, as the man from the Department of Justice swung abreast of it. A thin slice of a house, fattened somewhat by the inevitable *lanais* which surrounded it. The high front and the blind, blank windows seemed somehow forbidding. The place looked deserted. Yet the lawn was clipped, the hedge of poinsettia tended.

Mouth a grim line, the G-man shoved in through an unpainted gate, one bandaged hand plunged deep inside the pocket of his open coat. Fingers gripping the butt of a service automatic, hat shoved back to give his wary gray eyes full play on the building ahead, he advanced cautiously. His slow, noiseless tread carried him through the twisted moon-shadows of the mango trees which overhung 1760's sliver of yard.

There was no movement at any of the black windows above. No slightest flicker indicative of watchful human presence marred their opaque darkness. Since they were uncurtained, it was obvious that no inner lights were burning. Was the place empty? Or—did someone lurk there, waiting, in the dark?

Up the steep steps Dan advanced, taking them cat-quiet and one at a time. His gray eyes were everywhere at once, ready for anything. But nothing happened—

*Something was wrong!* The warning pounded in Dan Fowler's brain, pricked the roots of his singed scalp,



tingled along his spine, as he tiptoed across the moon-drenched veranda. Every trained instinct in him, every subconscious warning his hunch-machinery could give out, screamed danger. But—nothing happened.

He tried the door, but it held—locked. On the panel, a neat card in the common type of brass holder bore the printed name of Mrs. Leonido Rosino. Rosino! The card looked old, weathered; and was, therefore, no new plant. Bending still further, Dan found the buzzer button.

One second later, he was on his knees and crouching against the dingy panel. His gun was out, ready for action. For inside the house, in the instant after he had pressed that doorbell, a deafening roar had sounded! And now, mingled with its echoes, came the icy tinkle of shattering glass!

**T**HE heat of the place seemed unnatural, even considering the contrast to the cool moonlight outside. His back to the door's edge, the special agent sniffed. An acrid smell of smoke had drifted to his nostrils.

Foot by foot, he wormed his way along the hall's side wall, which apparently stretched back to bisect the building. Inky stillness had engulfed the dwelling once more. But the heat, and the dry, choking smell, increased as he eased forward.

One groping arm guided him along the wall. The other, lifted to hip level, held the automatic ready for instant action. When his hand pressed to what felt like a papered surface and contacted a light switch, its forefinger jabbed expertly in the dark. Out of the blackness, the hall leaped like a pouncing jungle cat. Outmoded and flamboyant framed chromos, a coat-

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#### NEXT MONTH'S NOVEL

DAN FOWLER, ACE G-MAN, FIGHTS AGAINST  
A SINISTER MENACE OF REGIMENTED CRIME

IN

## CRIMSON CRUSADE

A Complete Book-Length Novel

By C. K. M. SCANLON

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Before the abrupt commotion inside had silenced, Dan Fowler was on his feet again. All his weight behind the thrust of one shoulder, he flung himself against the dwelling's locked front door. It groaned, but held.

Up swept the automatic in his hand. It was level with the lock, his trigger finger was tensing, when the glint of steel alongside his toe arrested him. A key lay on the shadow-dappled doorsill, as if for the use of some absent member of the family!

Dan bent swiftly. A split second afterward, metal clinked on metal. The dingy barrier creaked inward before him. The G-man lurched into Mrs. Leonido Rosino's front hall.

rack and a bamboo telephone table were the chief items revealed by the dingy overhead glow from a stained-glass shade. Steep stairs led upward. But the F.B.I. man's first attention was riveted on none of these.

A second closed door dead-ended the hall. Beneath its badly fitted bottom, a curl of white smoke was puffing upward like a mushroom. Already the air was hazy, and it was getting hotter by the second. Dan Fowler sprinted forward.

The inner door opened before his onslaught with no effort whatever. But the threshold was as far as his lightning advance continued. Flame struck out at him like a prize-fight-



er's left jab. He leaped backward, slamming the panel shut to break the draught. Mrs. Rosino's kitchen was ablaze!

That fire was already no job for one man, however; and Dan Fowler had come to Ahukini Street on an errand of his own. Now he had only minutes left, perhaps, in which to complete it.

Ducking back along the sombre hall, he dived for the telephone. An operator miles across the city was scarcely able to chirp her "Number, please," before he started talking. When he slammed the receiver back onto its cradle, the operator knew all she had to know.

Upstairs Dan lunged, the muzzle of his automatic playing on the darkness above him. He was ready for the slugs that might rip downward at any instant. Yet now he was inwardly certain that they would not come.

At the head of the stairs, as the voice had promised, a back bedroom lay in the half-glow cast from outside the bare windows. It was easy to locate a second light switch and throw it.

In one dive, the muscular special agent was at the dresser mirror. His free left-handed fingers clutched over the chipped gilt rim and tore the mirror from its nail. Dan grunted, in confirmation of the fact that he had by now definitely anticipated.

The wall was blank, its papered surface unbroken by any safe. The square habitually covered by the glass stood out from the rest of its faded strip with a distinctness that betokened years of concealment.

Dan Fowler whirled. This room must stand directly above the blazing kitchen. Already the floor was hot underfoot. Smoke seeped up between the boards.

He started out, moving fast. But as he began a leaping descent of the steep front stairs, a wave of excited, chattering humanity burst into the hall below. Neighbors, in various stages of undress, were crowding into the passageway. They stared up at the G-man as he bounded to meet them.

Above their incoherent babble, the

distant shriek of sirens rose luridly.

## CHAPTER XII

### *Double Backfire*



SMALLISH, flashily dressed man in a roadster marked "Press" had arrived before the Rosino residence on the heels of the city's fire department. While streams of water hissed past, directed through windows and doors

of the flaming building, the new arrival did his best to put Dan Fowler on another kind of fire.

"I'm Howard, of the *Blade*, friend," He accented that last word unpleasantly, with a flash of the gold front teeth Sally had identified. "I've been talking around to folks who saw you coming down the staircase. What's the story?"

"You ought to know." Fowler's gray eyes were rock hard. "The *Blade* probably has it in type already."

"Tough, eh?" Howard met that cold look mockingly. "So I'm supposed to believe somebody else set off that blaze, just the minute you came in. And then took a powder, eh?"

"That's how it happened—if your paper wants the truth. Which of course it doesn't."

The star reporter leered. "Yeah? The back of the house was locked up tighter than a drum. You yourself admit to being at the front, so nobody could have skipped out that way."

"If there'd been anyone to skip. Which there wasn't." By an effort, Dan Fowler controlled his impulse to punch that knowing face.

"The doorbell had been wired ahead of time, Watson. Wired so that my finger on it touched off a cap fixed to a fuse and set into a buzzer, back in the kitchen. There was plenty of gasoline placed to catch the spark and spread it fast."

"Oh, yeah?"

"Yeah—because the explosion was



right; because it synchronized with my pushing the bell; because it's an old stunt that's been pulled before; and because I smelled the gasoline," Dan Fowler enumerated. "But your paper won't print any of that, you little weasel."

Watson Howard didn't like that. His nasty smile deepened as if a knife had cut down into new layers of flesh about his mouth. His eyes snapped venomously.

"The *Blade* prints only the truth, brother. And the truth of this looks to me— Well, Fowler, you've already tried to sink your claws on old lady Rosino's son. All Honolulu knows that."

So this place belonged to the mother of the bottle works' boss! The relationship between Pasquez Rosino and the Mrs. Leonido Rosino of the card had been bothering the G-man.

"Meaning I fired this house out of personal spite? Are you crazy, Howard? But no—you're just a flea-bitten little rat."

If looks could kill, Dan Fowler would have died that second.

"Watch who you're talking to, G-man!" Howard snarled. "I'll take care of you in short order! Burning out a poor old dame to pay off her boy! It's sure lucky she's visiting Pasquez's sister, over at Kahuhu, or she might have cooked along with her place. But that wouldn't feaze you, Fowler!"

Bent on escaping the inevitable questions of the fire and police officials, Dan didn't answer that crack as he hungered to answer it. Howard's jaw could wait for his hard knuckles—but not much longer! Shoving past the fringe of gaping spectators at the poinsetta hedge, the G-man started off along Ahukini Street toward the car line.

All the way back to the business section—and the antiquated trolley took several rattling lifetimes to cover the distance—the F.B.I. ace's big frame slumped thoughtfully in a seat near the back platform. At an intersection close to the heart of the city, he dropped off. Almost at once, a clamor of young, shrill voices arrested him.

**N**EWSSBOYS were hawking an extra. Their shouts were spreading along the lighted streets like a vocal spider web.

"Read all about it! Federal man fires home of victim's aged mother in vengeance plot! Third Fowler outrage electrifies Honolulu! Buy your *Blade* here!"

On the illuminated curb, the special agent stiffened. So his bitter remark to Watson Howard had been more than idle sarcasm! A scant forty-five minutes after the fire engines had arrived at the Rosino house, Ambrew's rag was on the sidewalk with all the details! Hm-m—*coincidence?*

Dan snatched a paper from a passing urchin, tossed a dime, ignoring the change. A cruising cab brought up at his signal and he climbed into it with the crisp direction:

"You know where Ford Ambrew's residence is, buddy? Yeah? Then take me there!"

On his way across the town, he read the paper. The story told how the fiend protected by a Federal badge had climaxed a series of atrocities by burning the home of a poor, harmless old lady. How else could this vandalism be construed—except as blood-thirsty revenge on her innocent son, who had dared tell the facts of a previous persecution to truth-seeking representatives of the *Blade*?

The *Blade's* star actor devoured this fiction in tight-lipped silence, line by line, while the taxi hurtled him nearer to the exclusive section in which Ambrew lived. This visit would be one move of "Hawaii's New One-man Inquisition" which the publisher—or whoever he was taking orders from—had not arranged in advance.

High time the journalistic exhaust pipe through which insidious gases were seeping into the public mind should begin to backfire a little!

"But Mr. Ambrew, he please *not* at home, sir!"

Dan Fowler's jaw squared purposefully as he stared into the shifty eyes of the white-jacketed Jap houseboy who was seeking to obstruct his entrance.

"You said that once before. And I



said that I'd seen him in the library as I came up the drive."

"If you wait here—"

"If I wait here, he won't be home and no fooling!" The special agent's powerful arm reached out. It brushed the yellow, expressionless little servant aside like chaff. Before the house-boy could recover, Dan was across the wide hall.

A door opening to the left located the library Dan Fowler had spotted from the driveway's darkness. It crashed back before his stiffened arm. Midway of the new room, outlined against the handsome Chinese screen which blocked off one corner, a slender man with graying hair stood staring at the intruder; a man with eyes like pale oysters.

"You're Ambrew?"

"That's my name, yes." Ford Ambrew's voice reminded the hearer of a cold wind blowing off a glacier.

"My name's Fowler, Ambrew—as you doubtless know. I came here to hear you talk. About those recent happenings out on the Government powder reef, Ambrew. You seem to know even more about them than I do."

**T**HE publisher ran a nervous tongue along slack lips. "Fowler, the G-man, I presume? It is my duty to cooperate with a representative of the Department of Justice, of course. But I must say, Mr. Fowler, your tone—"

"Isn't," Dan clipped coldly, "a patch on what it should be. Three times, now, you've used your front page to knife me. That's three times too many. I want to know why."

"Eh?"

"What's your reason for shielding Rosino? Are you his tool? Or are you the big boss that's been hampering work out on the reef at every turn?"

Ambrew's pale eyes, still curiously lifeless, blinked slowly.

"You're out of your mind, Fowler. I know Rosino very slightly, except as a fellow investor in certain real estate. I seldom gave him a thought, until your hounding of him made it my duty as a good citizen of Hawaii

to—"

"Quit stalling. I'm in a hurry, Ambrew." Many a criminal now behind the bars of Federal prisons could have read the danger sign in that measured calmness. "Right now, a lot of your readers want my hide. I intend to give them a signed statement from you, instead. You've done all the talking so far; I'm going to let you do a little more."

"A statement?" nervously.

"That this campaign to cut my throat is a deliberate attempt to stop investigation on the Turk Bailey murder! Which means, Ambrew, a Federal investigation of those unnatural 'natural' disasters which threaten to drive Wong, Selby and Company into bankruptcy at any cost, and move the powder works onto Oahu proper."

Ambrew's fishy gaze examined the special agent's heavy fists, his steel-lean footage, his hard jaw. Then it wandered to the big curtained windows at Dan Fowler's back. Something flickered in that gaze, as if the oysters had hiccupped.

"Poor Rosino is only an innocent business man, Fowler. In my opinion, the *Blade's* clear duty—"

"In my opinion, Ambrew, you're a cheap little heel. You're not even a respectable menace. Now, for some reason it must be dangerous for me to be left to my own devices in Honolulu. That must mean you are concealing the thing I'm here to dig up. You're implicated in those reef disasters, Ambrew—implicated up to your ears! Bailey knew it. Now I know it!"

The publisher snarled. "How dare you intimidate—"

"I'm asking the questions," the Government agent snapped. "What about your paper's being on the press with the fire story at the same time it was happening? You overplayed your hand that time, in your hurry to blacken me. So—I'll trouble you for that statement, Ambrew. Unless you want me to demonstrate what a 'monster' I really am."

The *Blade's* dapper mentor shrugged and moved as if to comply toward his great carved teak desk.



That shift out of line with his caller's body was seemingly natural. Yet Dan Fowler's hunch-machine had warned him again.

As he dropped to one knee, quick as a cat, a gun barked viciously from behind the heavy window draperies. Lining past the F.B.I. man's ear with a waspish drone, a whining slug splintered into the panel beside him.

Out of his loose coat pocket, Dan Fowler's own service weapon sprang like a thing alive. It was nosing upward even before the G-man's catapulting body had reached the protection of the big desk. Ambrew saw him coming, and clawed for the contents of an open drawer.

**I**N the same split second that the special agent twitched his trained trigger finger, he made a sideward hook of a muscular left arm which swept about the publisher's knees like a cutting scythe. The need for double action had spoiled Dan Fowler's aim. But as his bullet plowed harmlessly through swaying damask, a foot too high, Ambrew came crashing down beside him.

The bellow the startled publisher let out blasted louder than either shot.

"Rosino! Howard! Ito! He's got me!"

On cue, the white-jacketed houseboy popped through the library's open doorway. There was a businesslike little .32 in his oddly dainty hand, held as if the man behind it knew what guns were for. At the same instant, the curtains whipped back.

*Crack!*

The explosion came from Dan Fowler's glittering automatic. Its spouting flame fanned close to the slackened jaw of the *Blade's* felled owner. Hauling Ambrew's struggling body before him, planting a subduing kick in the writhing publisher's ribs, Dan had fired from behind a living shield.

Ito, the houseboy, howled in anguish. Out of his sinewy fingers the leveled 32 did a forward flip, like a diver leaving a springboard. A spurt of liquid red streaked after it.

The agile sniper in the window was Watson Howard, gold teeth and all!

Those teeth showed now in the cunning snarl which accompanied the reporter's forward lunge. So Ambrew's hireling knew about revolvers, as well as extra editions and by-lines!

But he wasn't going to get to use that sinister specimen in his hand again. Dan Fowler had him covered now. The muzzle of the special agent's weapon held steady, ready for trouble from window or door, as he hauled the rumped publisher erect.

Ambrew howled frightenedly. But Ito was doubled above his damaged hand, and Watson Howard's baffled



glare evidenced that he had no intention of risking a slug. Dan groped left-handedly for the desk telephone.

"Looks like I won't need any statement, Ambrew. I'll just get the local police over here to clean up for me. This little party is proof aplenty that you and Rosino—"

Rosino! Too late, the man from Washington recalled that at his first move, that name had been called, along with Ito's and Howard's! As if to a person present in the library! Dan made one swift sideward move. A move that never was completed.

Across his skull a heavy cloisonne vase crashed with a force which jarred the bludgeon loose from the grip of its wielder. As Dan reeled, moaning, he tottered about in a dizzy semicircle. The big Chinese screen in the corner had been moved aside. It blurred in the background, jiggled closer, blurred again.

Even the nearer face—the swarthy, leering face of Pasquez Rosino himself—blurred into nothingness. Blackness like a chalk eraser wiped them out. Dan Fowler crumpled into oblivion.



## CHAPTER XIII

*Midnight Mixup*

OLD night air, hitting hard against his throbbing forehead, brought Dan Fowler to. Lights joggled in front of him, dimmed, joggled clear. Clearer than before, at least.

A swaying movement of the cold, slippery surface against which he was jouncing began to make sense. He was in a car, going somewhere at a clip that defied traffic laws. There was a break in the car's leather upholstery. A rough edge was scratching his cheek.

Dan opened his eyes, slowly. Their lids felt as heavy as battened hatches. Will-power alone forced them upward. The lights were street lamps, he knew. Their infrequency spelled a poor section of the city. Before his throbbing brain had settled, before his thoughts began to line up in any cogent sequence, the special agent's memory rang an automatic warning. Slums—Aola Park—Rosino. They were nearing the derelict bottling works!

Dan Fowler struggled upward involuntarily, dragging a body that was one dull ache. Instantly the nose of a gun which had been disfigured by a silencer bit into his side. It found a spot between two ribs, prodded, held steady. Behind it, a low voice spoke warningly.

"Take it easy, G-man."

Dan's head pivoted slowly. In the swaying shadows just beyond his left shoulder, Pasquez Rosino grinned coldly. That grimace stretching the features of the snaggle-toothed Portuguese was a look any crime expert could recognize—a killer smile. Such a smile could be jovial to customers, bland to inquiring authorities, or—the way it was now.

"Sure, Fowler. You're right. We're headin' for my plant." For the first time, the battered F.B.I. ace realized he must have grunted aloud in the

shock of his recognition. "Didn't think we'd leave you behind, after the way you acted up back to Ambrew's, did you?"

Dan Fowler saved his breath. He needed it for other things than fruitless conversation.

Up ahead, the twin outlines of Ito and Watson Howard obscured the view. The reporter had the wheel. At his own right elbow, harsh breathing and a smell of expensive tobacco spelled Ambrew's presence. Four against one!

"Swell night for ridin'!" Rosino kept on grinning. "Too bad you won't be takin' the trip back with us, huh, *malihini*? We'll be stoppin' off at the *Blade* with a swell new story, too. The last chapter."

Dan Fowler's jaw set. But that silencer, nudging deeper between his ribs, held him motionless. Whatever they intended to make his obituary read, it wasn't going to be dated any sooner than was necessary!

The sedan swerved to a deserted curb, made a careening halt. Ito and Howard bailed out, and the yellow houseboy opened the rear door. Rosino's gun urged the prisoner through it. Dan passed under the now familiar arch, and down the alleyway, flanked by its window-pocked brick wall, to the office entrance of the bottling works.

"Move, G-man!"

**S**OMEBODY snapped a light switch just as the door to the alley closed. Squinting in the new brilliance, which filled his throbbing head with pinpoints of pain, Dan saw the small, familiar office blaze into view.

Pasquez Rosino held the hog-snouted weapon steady, tilting it up a little into direct line with his taller target's heart. He nodded craftily toward Ambrew's ill-assorted pair of hirelings nearer the door.

Ito took the left window, Howard the right. The green shades had blacked out their twin expanses of glass in a single instant. Ito scooped up a skeleton key from the littered desk and passed it over to its owner.

"All right, boys." The Portuguese grinned again—that wolfish twist of



the lips. "You get goin' on the safe now, huh?"

It became obvious that at some time in his career the little Japanese had been an expert at "handling the soup." He and the reporter had gone into a huddle before an old-fashioned safe set against the bleak wall in one corner.

On its door, this metal mammoth bore the legend "*P. Rosino, Mfr.*" in ornate gilt letters. Dan Fowler's gray eyes narrowed. Why were they going to blow their own safe?

He got the idea a second before Rosino began to explain it. Very simple, it was, but clever. Hellishly clever! There was nothing in that safe worth stealing. But when Dan's corpse was found here, the place would be ruined. And the *Blade's* story would be obvious.

In a new and vicious effort to incriminate his innocent, hounded victim, the fiendish Daniel Fowler would have attempted illegal search of the plant's papers! Somehow—details to be supplied by Ambrew—a bullet would have stopped his "outrageous career of official persecution of respectable citizens!"

Rosino chuckled. "My night watchman, name of Charlie Pokai, is old-time Hawaiian and very honest. The police know that. His word goes plenty far at Headquarters." The cold, lethal smirk continued. "When he comes to investigate this explosion, he will of course fire at any small noise in the dark."

"If I follow you, there won't be such a noise." Dan was sparring for time, while his brain was racing.

Rosino chuckled nastily. "My friend Ambrew has brought with him a shoe box, in which sits a live rat. There's plenty loose papers on my desk for a rat to rustle. And you, smart guy, you're gonna lie here dead already, like you figured. Of a bullet from the same type gun as Pokai carries."

Near the door, a shoe box nestling under one arm, Ambrew spoke softly.

"And that skeleton key, marked by Rosino's lock, will be in your pocket."

Expressionless, Dan Fowler's flinty eyes wandered over the walls of the

ugly office. Only the dull flush mottling his cheekbones would have betrayed emotion, even to Sally Vane or Larry Kendal. Yet inside him, desperation seethed.

"Too bad a smart fella like you had to snoop at Ambrew's place, G-man," Rosino slobbered. "Too bad you got so keen on molestin' harmless, innocent guys like me. We didn't want to rub you out. A couple more jobs like that fire at Ma's old place, you'd been recalled to where you come from. But you wasn't satisfied. You had to—"

**T**OO late, a greasy finger squeezed on the silenced weapon's trigger. Before the muted *twang* of an explosion could sound, the metal snout from which it issued had been knocked upward by the prisoner's desperate jerk!

Dan Fowler had gone into action in the instant he realized his guard's conceited gloating had lulled him to the point of allowing a split-second reprieve.

Grunting, Rosino forced down the weapon's nose again. But as Dan Fowler's wedged left arm gave before the pressure of the killer's weight, his right fist flashed upward.

Rock-ribbed knuckles landed flush on the swarthy chin abreast of the special agent's own. The hand that held the silenced gun wobbled crazily as Rosino's dark head snapped back.

Ito and Watson Howard were spinning from the safe with hoarse yells as the G-man's fingers clamped onto the wrist that had been ready to burn him down.

The gun twisted easily in the bottle maker's clawing fingers, and escaped from them before they could clamp tight again. The sledgehammer right of the F.B.I. ace zoomed upward again, moving in the wake of his first blow like the tail to a fast comet.

As Rosino staggered backward, knees crumpling, the silencer swung on the pair before the safe. Not quite in time, however. Watson Howard had whipped a small-calibre automatic from his jacket pocket, and he held it leveled. It spat flame as Dan Fowler dived.

The bullet creased the cheek of the spinning man from Washington, flicking a hot streak of blood like an eel's



track in its trail. Growling, Dan twitched his trigger-finger. Pain had momentarily blinded him. But his hand held steady.

With a shriek too shrill and terrified to be part of the silenced *twang* of the weapon, the *Blade* reporter stiffened.

For one brief instant, as his jaw slacked, the overhead bulb reflected dots of light from those two gold fangs. The dapper body slammed back against the safe door; then, as if in belated reaction to the shove of some invisible attacker, it lost its starch. It crumpled suddenly. There was a neat hole drilled between those staring eyes.

Ito had begun a tentative reach to the hip with his uninjured left paw. But before the suddenly dangerous Government official who faced him could do anything about it, both the houseboy's arms shot upward in surrender. Ito was not stupid. He knew when the ghosts of his ancestors had frowned upon him.

The bandaged right hand of the small yellow figure, waving like a white flag, was elevated toward the rafters when Dan Fowler turned his attention to Rosino once more. Ambrew—dangerous, but only as a coward was dangerous—was harmless for the moment. Whimpering, incredulous terror bulging his oyster eyes, he cringed against the wall.

From Ito to the fallen Portuguese, therefore, the silenced muzzle swept. But its journey was still incomplete when desperate, driving arms swept from the floor about Dan Fowler's shins. Rosino had him on the floor before he knew what was happening. And as he fell the bottle maker's knee drove upward in a short, sharp, vicious jab.

The quick, strong thrust caught the special agent hard in the pit of his flat belly. As he gagged under the impact, Rosino snarled like a jackal.

"Ambrew! Ito! Finish him!"

**S**TARS joggled crazily before Dan Fowler's eyes. But his face, marked by a telltale streak of red where it had struck bare planking, came up from that smashing contact with the floor before the man atop him could follow through.

And Fowler still held the gun! He had it jammed into Rosino's abdomen, was rising with the bottle maker's body

between him and Ito's swift rush to get into the scramble, when the alley door opened. A blank Hawaiian face thrust in. A wrinkled yet strongly molded copper mask was behind the weapon which, police had been expected to believe, had catapulted that certain bullet which now would never be fired.

Dan Fowler grinned painfully, flicking a badge into the light as he shoved Rosino from him.

"Government agent on duty, Charlie. We want your boss on suspicion of murder. Call Honolulu Police Headquarters for me. Tell 'em Special Agent Fowler needs an escort for some new guests at the local jail."

Watching Rosino's arms gain altitude, Dan Fowler's blood-smeared smile deepened. Still muttering liquid island syllables of consternation, Charlie Pokai was at the office telephone. His gun, far more decisive than the blank look on his face, was covering Ito as he repeated the G-man's message into the mouthpiece.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dan Fowler telephoned Sally Vane from Headquarters, after first making the charges on which the three survivors of his cleanup at the bottling works were booked, and answering the necessary official questions on Watson Howard's death.

Sally's voice was heavy with sleep as it came to Dan over the wire. But when she rolled her rented phaeton up to the curb before the police building's brown facade, twenty minutes later, her blue eyes were clear and her yellow hair lying smooth. The waiting figure dropped into the seat beside her, and murmured a sentence of instruction which started the vehicle into motion again.

As the phaeton wheeled swiftly through streets deserted at this early morning hour, Dan put the girl beside him in touch with the night's happenings.

A flat line of bandage had covered the bullet furrow on his cheek. Added to the previous bandages from twenty-four hours earlier, it gave him a look which Sally—smiling unsteadily to cover emotions it was dangerous for any employee of the demanding Department of Justice to feel—described



"like Boris Karloff in '*Frankenstein*'."

For the most part, she kept her eyes set ahead. "So Ambrew and Rosino are your villains? You're taking them back to Washington?"

"I doubt it," Dan answered slowly.

"No—I don't think so."

"But after that battle tonight—"

"Oh, they're in the business up to their ears. But—somehow, neither of 'em fits the guy who's the real boss of that outfit."

He scowled meditatively. "Rosino's scheme to rub me out was too full of holes. Counting on attracting Charlie Pokai's fire, for instance, by having a rat rustle papers. Our man doesn't leave that wide a margin for failure in his plans, however elaborate."

"Ambrew, then?"

Dan shook his head. "Nope. Ambrew is a coward, under his veneer of ice. Which the brain back of that reef horror certainly *isn't!*"

"He and that Portuguese are no innocents!" the trim blonde persisted.

**D**AN smiled wryly. "They must be acting on orders from higher up—either for profit, or because of fear. The distorted genius who's really responsible for all this hasn't shown his hand yet. Or, rather, *only* his hand—at the door of that powder mixing room in the reef."

The phaeton, still guided by the special agent's instructions, had left Honolulu behind by now. It was wheeling through the velvety luminescence which preceded dawn, along the Waipahu road; past the Moanalua Gardens and Red Hill and Aiea.

Birds were beginning to chirp drowsily in trees along the way. Sally identified them, from her longer knowledge of Hawaii, as *mynaka* and Japanese thrushes.

"You'll never keep Ambrew and Rosino in jail, unless you extradite them," Sally warned presently. "They'll have the best lawyers in the Territory down there before breakfast, with writs."

"Let 'em." Dan Fowler had already recognized the probability. "I've got what I want. That little scene at the bottling works is on the police blotter, with witnesses. The *Blade's* ad-

mitted campaign to hamstring me is what these natives call *pau*—all washed up. And that's going to drive our Brain into new attempts to stop me. Attempts that will unmask him, if we work right."

"With Ambrew and Rosino out as the leaders—"

"We still have foreign spies, enemies of the construction company, and Worthen, Delman and Crabbe." The special agent counted them off on his fingers.

"That's why we're headed for Waipahu, Sally. We haven't given Crabbe or Delman much attention yet. I've just remembered that one of them was registered at a Waipahu hotel the night Turk and Lurton died. And *that same man* was present on the munitions reef, an hour before the 'Big Noise' came!"

## CHAPTER XIV

### *The Other Side*



N the third-rate hotel where, according to newspaper accounts, Turk Bailey had kicked up a disturbance involving Crabbe on the night before the G-man's death, Dan Fowler learned from an unshaven night clerk that the stock ma-

nipulator was still registered.

He left Sally parked at the curb, with instructions to wait for him. Reentering the hotel, he passed the banjo-eyed clerk again, and climbed two flights of dingy stairs which were still barely lighted by graying windows on the landings. Before the door the roster had identified as belonging to this fourth member of that oddly assorted land *hui*, Dan paused for an instant to consider the case incriminating Jedtham Crabbe.

The man had been visited by Turk; unpleasantly, since the police had been summoned and Bailey had departed via a lady's bedroom. Waipahu was no profitable locality for a broker of securities; yet for some reason of



his own Crabbe had spent a week here. He had been in the vicinity, then, at the time of the explosion.

In short—at every time a big turning point in the case had developed, Crabbe had been in some way connected!

The special agent moved forward again. His cautious hand was already on the knob of the stock broker's door when a new sound arrested him. His big frame straightened noiselessly.

Inside the bedroom, at this queer hour of the morning, someone was talking!

"—remember your part in our arrangement. Orders are orders. I tell you, this is straight from the top." The voice was flat, pedantic, yet oddly stirred by a note of urgency.

The silence which followed—a listening silence, although no faintest whisper came from within—indicated to the G-man that the speaker was using a telephone. Presently, his disagreeable voice rose again.

"That's the trouble with you *Ali*—you're all too damned easy-going. No, 'pretty soon' *won't* do! This is emergency. Get a wiggle on you *now*! Are you crazy? Ambrew and Rosino almost got killed tonight. They're in jail now. They—"

The words broke off abruptly, then continued in quite another vein.

"So I'll see you first thing after breakfast, Mr. Smith, on that oil share matter. Sorry to have troubled you so late. Good morning, Mr. Smith."

Dan Fowler had stepped across the threshold quietly before the elephantine figure the dead Kimo Waite had indicated as Jedtham Crabbe could finish cradling his receiver. The *hui* member stared up at the G-man unblinkingly, out of small eyes rimmed in folds of flesh.

"What the devil—"

"You know who I am, Crabbe. Or you can guess." Dan leaned against the door he had closed behind him. "Very interesting, that phone talk. Who was at the other end?"

"A—a customer," Crabbe answered, almost blandly. "He plans to go spear-fishing over the week-end, with some of the native boys. I had to catch him before he left, to report on

a purchase of shares he wanted."

Dan's steady glance met the little peering eyes of the fat man. Neither looked away.

"And what is Mr. Smith's other name, Crabbe? The name I might have known him by?"

"None of your business," snapped Jedtham Crabbe. Here, the special agent recognized, was a personality which fitted much closer to the qualifications of his Mr. X!

**T**HOUGH he realized he had not sensed an enemy at his door in time, Jedtham Crabbe was not even mildly embarrassed. Caught in a lie, he could brazen it out with no slightest flicker of those crocodile eyelids of his.

"You and I," said the special agent softly, "are going to have a nice long talk. Incidentally, I wouldn't advise reaching for that shoulder holster, my friend."

The "nice long talk," however, was every bit as uphill as Dan Fowler had anticipated. Crabbe made no further movement suggestive of armed resistance. But he was no customer to be bulldozed.

Those evil, sleepy eyes of his were an index to his character—hard, unafraid, without nerves or conscience. For perhaps twenty minutes, while Crabbe kept his seat, the G-man fired leading questions against the stone wall of the man's opaque personality.

The answers Crabbe gave were just the answers a cherub mixed up with businessmen would give! Crabbe admitted what was already known. As for the rest—he was bored by it. And he answered in shrugs and monotones.

But after a quarter of an hour, Dan Fowler had the satisfaction of seeing his man had begun to cast furtive glances toward the room's one window. Presently, as if the atmosphere were beginning to choke him, Crabbe went so far as to heave himself erect and begin to prowls the floor—pausing now and again to stare out the window, as if he longed to be through it and away.

That, however, Dan knew was a move his man would not make. Crabbe was far from a fool. And no man's



body, especially one of Crabbe's left, could have got out of that window and down the fire-escape without collecting bullets from behind.

Pounding away at any advantage that restlessness betrayed, the special agent kept up his relentless verbal attack.

"Once more, Crabbe, who is 'Mr. Smith?' No point in stalling. I can have your call traced from the hotel desk."

The big man was panting a little. "Why don't you?"

More to carry through his bluff than with any hope the other party in that little talk could actually be located, this long afterward, Dan Fowler lifted the telephone's receiver in his left hand. The service automatic still nested neatly in his right.

The sullen voice of the desk clerk answered presently, and, as had seemed likely, reported no record of the call. When the special agent set down the stubby instrument, Crabbe was smiling. That smile was creased with satisfaction deep and deadly—a smile entirely too pleased and malicious for such an obvious and minor triumph.

"No luck, eh, snoop?"

"Did you expect I would have?" Dan watched him closely. That new expression on the fat face was all wrong. "The telephone company can give me the dope when I need it. Now, about you and—"

"No," Crabbe breathed softly. "About you, Mr. Fowler!"

**H**E moved his massive bulk away from the window, chuckling.

"I have been waiting—impatiently, to be true—for something that's just happened down yonder in the alley. 'Mr. Smith' has been a long time getting here. But now that he has, as we used to say of our Marines, the situation is well in hand."

Wary of a trap, the F. B. I. ace eased his powerful frame forward. He was at the window, his automatic jammed up under Crabbe's belly, where it could blast a most effective hole at the slightest break. Dan's own gray eyes took in the scene below—and the full import of his prisoner's

sudden insolence—in one swift glance.

"You see?" Crabbe smiled.

Dan Fowler saw. Under the window and flanking its rickety emergency stairs, the alley between the hotel and the next building stretched like a black scar, still deep in shadow, yet light enough for objects to have identity within it.

In contrast to that murk, the curb beyond lay in a golden pool spilled by recent sunrise. There sat Sally Vane, bareheaded and lovely, at the wheel of her waiting phaeton. And just within the cover of the narrow alley's maw behind her, a second cautious figure had come to rest.

The special agent watched grimly. That figure, although muffled beyond recognition by slouch hat and shapeless linen duster, was obviously male. The man held a rifle trained on Sally's car—at a point just a little above and back of the wheel itself. Like someone awaiting a signal, he had frozen where he crouched.

"You understand?" Crabbe chuckled. "One unfortunate sound from up here, and your pretty companion's head will resemble confetti. A rifle,—at such close range— But of course you'd know about that."

Feeling his lips go tight, Dan Fowler stared back at the *hui* member. However the trick had been worked, it was perfect. Devilishly smooth.

"All right Crabbe. What do you want?"

Crabbe's heavy lids drooped unhurriedly. "The night clerk is my friend, Mr. Fowler. I find it wise to pay well for information concerning any inquiries about me. As soon as you'd left the lobby that first time, to go out to your car, I was told I had a caller."

**D**AN frowned. "Then—that phone conversation—"

"I think that all the important points had been covered before you reached my door; the instructions to arrange this simple little *coup*. As for the rest—well, you had to hear enough to keep you questioning me until the arrangements were complete."

Crabbe moved back a little from the nose of the service automatic, like a



sly hippopotamus.

"Hand me your gun, Fowler. Quietly. Remember—if I were so much as to smash my fist through one window pane, 'Mr. Smith' would hear from below and pull his trigger."

The thought of Sally Vane, down there and waiting for him in total ignorance of the death which lurked almost at her shoulders, closed like icy fingers over the special agent's heart. He passed over the weapon silently, and found himself gazing into its round black snout. Crabbe held the gun as though he were at home with them.

"Now, Fowler, the window. Open it. Step through it quietly and onto the fire-escape. Start downward, without looking back. If you make one foolish move, if you disturb one hotel guest in the lower rooms—neither you nor Gorgeous in the phaeton will live to hear about it."

In the silence of helplessness, Dan Fowler obeyed. He could hear the creak of the stair supports under Crabbe's weight directly behind him, as they swung groundward. Ahead, in plain sight, yet so perilously unaware of what was happening, Sally sat at her wheel and waited. And that squatting figure in the duster waited, too.

The special agent was only two steps from bare earth when a muffled *swish* sounded above him. He ducked instinctively—but too late. The butt of his own clubbed automatic crashed pitilessly onto his skull, behind one ear, and he pitched forward into blackness. . . .

The blackout was neither complete nor long-lived, due to Dan's lucky sideward move before it landed, which took some of the curse out of the blow. But for the purposes of the man who had dealt the blow, its results were ample.

Dimly, as if through a Limehouse fog, the special agent sensed that half a dozen vague figures had swept about him. The alley's mysterious back regions, where they obviously had waited, became alive with them. Ruthless arms picked him up and carried him back, away from the blurred sliver of light which was the street where Sally waited.

One figure wore a duster and pulled down hat, and hefted some object that could be a rifle— Well, anyway, at least Sally was safe!

Moaning, but too groggy to resist, Dan Fowler felt his arms jerked behind him and the bite of rope being knotted tight about powerless wrists. Then he was being lifted again. The cautious drone of a motor, coming to life, beat through the swaying mists to his consciousness; then faded again to blackness.

The next thing he realized was that he lay on the floor of an open car which was moving at a rapid speed. He was trussed like an unbranded steer, and boots rested unsympathetically on his chest and stomach. Whoever occupied the seat above—the vehicle's rear seat, of course—seemed to find the G-man entirely satisfactory as a footstool!

**T**HEN, as the car pitched down onto the far slope, the whole majestic panorama swept into view for the barest instant—green slopes, sheer cliffs, rolling misty plains and the distant curve of sapphire ocean. This was it—the Park! They were taking him somewhere on the far side of those mountains which walled Honolulu from the island's eastern coast!

The descent on the Kailua side was crooked and tortuous. Around the breakneck curves, the car's unseen driver swung as if bent on suicide; yet the car never once left all four tires.

One of the invisible pair whose feet rested on Dan's helpless body grunted suddenly.

"Fed's awake."

"That," came the other voice, "won't do him any good. Not with what the boss got planned."

Neither voice was familiar. Dan Fowler struggled to identify them, and failed; just as he would have failed to recognize again any of the groggily glimpsed faces back in that black alley.

On and on and on, the car careened. They turned off the main road after the pitch had leveled out. Once, after that, they stopped altogether and waited while someone climbed out and



opened a gate in their path. From there on, the road beneath seemed softer. Lava dust or crushed coral, probably.

Long before they stopped for a second time, the special agent had become aware of a tang of salt in the wind. He sniffed it speculatively. They were nearing the ocean. That might mean—

Abruptly, a dirty burlap sack fell over Dan's face and was twisted roughly to form a hood which blinded him. He heard brakes squeal as a boot-toe kicked his ribs.

"Last stop, snoop! All out!" a thick voice growled. The feet atop him lifted; hands replaced them, and Dan was dragged from the car. They let his body drop with a callous disregard of the pain. Dan Fowler knew it was beach sand he had fallen on.

## CHAPTER XV

### *Strange Bedfellows*



**N**IGHT fell black as a crow's wing across the bare seascape which—except for a frugal strip of sand and the jut of a mile-distant headland—was the only view Dan Fowler's window afforded.

The G-man lay on a bunk, numb arms still trussed behind him, staring curiously through the barred rectangle in the direction of that distant point of land. The vista had become as familiar as his own features, first by daylight and then by the bright tropical moon-glow which flooded the beach. But now, just recently, a new feature had been added to the panorama.

There it came again. Two dots of light blinked out of the murk surrounding the headland, spacing quick flashes with a rhythm which could scarcely be accidental. The special agent's guess was that they were a pair of automobile headlamps, being switched on and off. If the performance was a signal, it was intended for someone or something well out at sea.

Like an echo of his own unspoken thoughts, a drift of conversation reached the G-man. That pair of shiftless *kanakas* whom Crabbe had left behind as guards, when he and his driver had departed hours earlier, were chatting again.

"Look like sampan fleet ready for happy bubbles," one voice observed. "Signal busy on Mokapu."

"Benny Yen Foo gang," guessed the answerer, lazy and drawing. "That Benny pretty soon cut throats of everybody else in opium business. Plenty smart, that China-boy."

A minute's silence followed, before a rejoinder crossed the night.

"Maybe Benny, maybe old Herrick. *Haole* no let China-boy steal business in good season. Tonight, *Yamada Maru* is coming from Japan. Big shipment. Worth fight."

Stretched out motionless in the dark, Dan interpreted those remarks correctly. Although narcotics were outside the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice, few veterans of the F. B. I. could fail to pick up, even in odd places, some knowledge of a racket so picturesque as Hawaii's traffic in drugs.

Lying so conveniently on the main shipping lane from Orient to Occident, these islands were an ideal dumping ground for Asiatic dope. Once it was safely ashore on Oahu, the busy port of Honolulu made it simple to reship on American boats which received no customs inspection at mainland ports. Narcotics, eh? Dan frowned thoughtfully.

**K**ANAKA voices interrupted his reflections. "Wonder," the more curious of the pair outside had just grunted, "when the boss come back?"

"Damn pretty soon now," came the answer. "There ain't no trouble to kidnap any girl. And that blond *wahine* he go after, she live all alone in bungalow at Flapper's Acre."

Dan strained against his bonds with a start of horror. God—they were going after Sally, too!

"Why he not grab her this morning? Waipahu good place for disappearing."

"Too dangerous in broad daylight,



in town's main street. Boss smart fella, takes no chances with losing real fish while spearing for minnow."

"But now, he want *wahine*, too?"

"Bring her here, kill her, keep her from raising big fuss over what happens to her G-man friend."

After that, Dan Fowler scarcely bothered to listen to them. Their guesses were no good to him; the one fact they knew was that in Honolulu, Jedtham Crabbe was pushing arrangements to kidnap Sally Vane. With Larry working elsewhere on the case—Lord help the girl!

Dan cursed hotly under his breath. Now he *had* to get out of this place—back to Sally! In the moonlight, he raked the four walls of his prison with frantic scrutiny.

This beach house was more than a mere shack, by considerable. The G-man could remember the feel of heavy-piled rugs as they marched him in here, still blindfolded, before noon. The bunk where he lay now had been designed for comfort. This was a rich man's playhouse. Dan Fowler felt certain he knew the answer—Milton Delman!

A person like the Preacher Museum mentor would have the taste and money for such an establishment. Common gossip attributed friendship with Delman as one of Jedtham Crabbe's assets. And those bars on the windows and vacant spaces in the room? The readiest explanation possible was that, ordinarily, this room housed a private collection of Hawaiian *curiosa*, which the bars protected; that, in order to diminish the prisoner's chance of tying up such a collection to the *hui* member most likely to own it, as many as possible of the larger items had been carted elsewhere before the sack had been taken from the G-man's head.

Not another minute to lose. Moving as carefully as the numbed control he still held over his muscles would permit, the special agent rolled to the edge of the bunk where they had stretched him. By inching and squirming, using the outermost foot-board pole as a lever, he worked himself noiselessly to a sitting position. Then his feet touched the floor, and

his body slid after them—like a bundle of sugar cane descending a flume.

**O**VER and over he rolled, crossing the big room in an awkward progress which bruised and skinned him but made no sound. He brought up several panting moments later, at the foot of the opposite wall and in almost the exact position he had hoped to reach. Above him, its downward-pointing tip four feet above the baseboard, an early Hawaiian fishing spear hung on wooden pins.

Inch by painful inch, bracing his shoulders to the wall, the F.B.I. investigator worked his body erect. Sweat stung in his eyes long before he was standing upright, but he blinked it aside and kept on with his task.

At long last, he had maneuvered so that his trussed wrists lay against the sharp stone flank of the spearhead. He began to move the rope's edge back and forth across the cutting surface, feeling the hot wetness of his own blood as the spear wobbled on its supports.

Dan Fowler set his teeth and worked on. Twenty minutes after he had first learned that Sally was in danger, he stood in the center of the moonlit room, unfettered—his bloody hands chafing paralyzed biceps to restore the circulation. One hurdle was out of the way now. But the toughest two still lay ahead!

A good ten minutes had passed before the special agent felt certain enough of his muscular reactions to proceed with the plan he had laid out for himself.

One of the other museum objects which had not been removed from the room—if his "Delman collection" hunch was sound—was a handsome *koa* calabash. This great wooden bowl stood on a table near the door.

Dan Fowler picked it up, felt of its weight, tested the diameter of its open end, and smiled contentedly. Here, too, his idle advance figuring had been proved correct! His heart was doing a double tattoo as he edged across to the seaward window.

He had to force his brain back to the task at hand. It was too easy to



remember how the little lanes off Kalia Road became more and more emptied of casual strollers as the first after-midnight hours advanced.

At two in the morning, a scream from one of those salt-box bungalows in Honolulu might reach no waking ears at all. Alone in Mary Lou Bailey's place, a girl as slight and unsuspecting as Sally—

Dan Fowler braked his imagination savagely. His big body flattened in against the wall alongside the front window, to peer between the bars of this unglassed aperture.

Out on the beach, darkly discernible in the moonlight, the two shapes who were his guards squatted on their heels. Dan waited patiently.

After a while: "You keep keys, Joe. I go take swim. Be back soon," one of the guards said.

**D**AN FOWLER watched the superbly built native swing down to the water's edge, step out of the dungarees which were his only garment, and plunge graceful as a bird into the curling surf. Dan waited until the swimmer was out of sight, before he let the first moan split his lips.

Almost at once his single remaining jailer looked up. The special agent could see uncertainty twist that crouching figure on the sand. He let out another groan, more ghastly than the first.

"Oh-h-h!"

Curiosity and anxiety overcame the natural caution of his one-man audience at last. He saw the kanaka rise and start up the sand at a dog-trot. A moment later, footfalls padded across the rustic *lanai*.

Outside the window, peering in, a worried face appeared. Without a moment's loss the G-man thrust his arms through two of the openings. One wrist turned, pivoting the calabash from edgewise to upside-down position.

Like a too-large hat, the heavy bowl settled over the ears and eyes of the startled native. Grunting wildly, he clawed to remove it—instead of toward any weapon he might have carried. Dan Fowler's big hands fas-

tened hard on the luckless devil's wind-pipe. When they constricted, it was with a force which meant business.

"Don't yell, *kanaka*. Pass in that key—there's a wise lad."

Metal changed hands. "Now I'm going to choke you a little longer, like this. Then I'll tap you on the jaw and put you to sleep—like *this*. Your buddy'll come back soon, and find you. . . ."

A mile's trot up the sand, in the direction of dark Mokapu Point, where that signal of headlights had flickered, left the G-man with only a tingling sense of well-being. The special agent's splendid physique responded to the exercise as to a tonic, after the painful numbness of those hours of confinement.

For some time before he veered down to the water's edge, he was aware that the waiting sampan fleet still lay at no great distance off-shore. Further out, like an open jewel box against the night, the myriad lights of a passing ocean liner glittered in slow-moving majesty. The *Yamada Maru* in-bound for Honolulu, if his *kanaka* pals had been right in their chatter.

The "fishing" craft of the smugglers lay lower in the water, tattered sails furled, awaiting the tide. They dotted the black waves off Mokapu Point like a flock of sleeping waterfowl. Dan grinned mirthlessly as he watched them.

Then he was stripping, with swift, unflinching hands. Off came coat, his shirt, his shoes. He left them on the beach, behind a mass of lava boulders which might serve to conceal them until they could be retrieved.

Clad only in the trousers which would be essential once he reached Honolulu—if, indeed, he ever got there—he returned to the water's edge. A wide leap carried him well into swimming depth, and black waves closed over him.

It seemed an hour, at least, that he pulled his weight against that of a sea which bit more coldly as its depth increased. When the hulk of one of the smugglers' sampans loomed dead ahead of him at last, it seemed like a



blessed haven. Strange word, Dan Fowler realized grimly, for any lawman to use in connection with an opium runner!

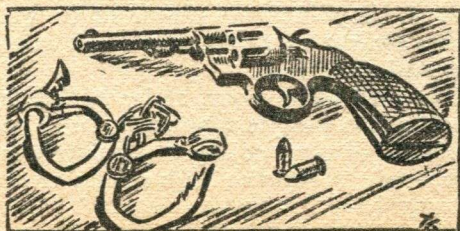
The sampan was moving slowly, up the swell. He waited, treading water, until the lofty crag of the prow had slipped past him. The boat tapered back from that impressive frontage, like most of its kind, to a stern which was almost as low above the water as a lifeboat.

Just as the silent shape had all but passed him altogether, the special agent forced his stiff body to one last exertion. He drove through the water with a desperate effort, slippery fingers clawing for that stern. Somehow, they hooked onto a spray-slimy edge. Somehow, they dragged his dripping body up out of the congealing waves. Clamping down on the edgeboard of that low stern deck, clutching wet wood like a drowning man, Dan eeled himself across it.

When his eyes rose above deck level at last, a paean of thanksgiving all but burst from his blue, twitching lips. As he had prayed might be the case, the craft's small crew—five figures that he could count—were all huddled at the seaward rail, and forward. He had come just in time. They were hauling in their "catch." Opium dropped from the in-bound *Yamada Maru* in hollow glass spheres!

A pile of loose sail on the shoreward deck yielded Dan his hiding place. Crawling under the dirty canvas, which smelled of sea and salt and fish, he wondered grimly how long it would take the sampan to make home port again.

That bungalow in Flappers' Acre—In Dan Fowler's anxious mind, Crabbe's sinister hirelings seemed to be creeping closer, minute by minute, to the unsuspecting Sally Vane.



## CHAPTER XVI

### *Tombs of the Dead*



FAINTLY across the east, a nacreous glow like the inside of a seashell was spreading as the battered blue sampan slid up to its berth at Kewalo Basin.

Dan Fowler waited until sounds ashore came clearly to him, until the bumping movements of the deck on which he lay had ceased altogether. Then, shoving aside the load of sailcloth, he stood erect.

The dock lay directly alongside. He made it in one long leap, just before sputters of astonishment burst from the lips of two popeyed coolies laboring over the ropes. As he straightened, running almost before his heels had struck a solid footing, a nastily little Oriental dirk whizzed past his ear.

It clattered harmlessly on the cobblestones, a yard ahead of his racing legs. The special agent never even looked back to see who had flipped that hail-and-farewell messenger after him.

In a reeking little tobacco shop facing the sea wall, he found a telephone. Emotions of suspense all but choked him, as he gave Sally's number and heard the chirping voice of a faraway operator repeat it. Then came a lifetime of silence, while a buzzer rang and rang somewhere across the city.

A minute passed. Two minutes. Dan juggled the receiver, gave the number again to insure against error, heard the determinedly cheerful assurance.

"Yes, sir. I'm ringing that party for you."

The clamor of that distant buzzer could have roused the dead, in such a paper-walled bungalow as the one off Kalia Road. Yet no answer came. Sally—who at this hour should certainly have been home asleep—wasn't there!

The G-man burst from the tele-



phone booth at last with the glint of battle dangerous in his gray eyes. He had left instructions with the startled operator to continue ringing the bungalow, and to report to Police Headquarters in the event of an answer. Now he half-ran the short blocks away from the waterfront.

At long last, on Cooke Street, he found a milk truck which a flash of his badge commandeered as a taxi to Headquarters.

His long legs had clipped him across the sidewalk and into the brown building which housed Honolulu's law, almost before the milkman could realize he no longer had a passenger. By the time the little Filippino's drooping jaw had closed, the special agent was facing the desk of a blinking Hawaiian night sergeant and rapping out the first details of his emergency.

"I'm Fowler, Department of Justice. Last night, I happen to know, plans were afoot to kidnap Miss Sally Vane from her residence in Flappers' Acre. Jedtham Crabbe, a stock manipulator who twenty-four hours ago was registered at a hotel in Waipahu—"

"Dan!"

The special agent wheeled incredulously, at the choked sound of that glad cry from the doorway behind him. Before he could take in the fact that she was actually here, Sally's warm hands had closed over his own in a pressure of unspoken, grateful relief. Shining blue eyes were studying his face with a tremulous scrutiny.

"Not even a new bandage to show for your day!" she murmured at last, struggling back to normal. "And here I've been half out of my mind about you!"

Dan Fowler's reply was hoarse with relaxing tension. "Me, too."

"What's happened? Didn't Crabbe's strongarm squad get to you?"

"To me?" She looked surprised.

"They came back to Honolulu to 'remove' you, after they got me settled at some beach house across the island. Knowing that you weren't prepared, that you'd probably only figured I was on some hot trail and couldn't get back to you at the hotel this morning—"

SALLY smiled. "Brother, that's where you are wrong. I knew when you started down that fire-escape, with Crabbe *behind* you, that something was plenty wrong. Then I spotted the sniper in the linen duster, and figured out how they'd gotten you to go quietly. By the time Crabbe blackjacked you—"

"Listen!" Dan protested. "You can't know all that! I saw you myself—the back of your head, at least—there in the phaeton. You were sitting peaceful and calm as a lamb. Everything went on directly at your back."

"Sure. And what is that little mirror over every driver's wheel put there for?" Sally's pert nose wrinkled. "You and our playmates both forgot that. I saw everything, Dan. But I figured I might be more use to you if that rifle didn't go off than if it did."

"So—you knew!"

"I waited till they were well on the way out of town with you, and then followed. But only part-way to the Pali, because I was too conspicuous at that hour. They might have gotten nervous and killed you."

Dan Fowler grunted in mock disgust. "Women!"

"Women, indeed! If Crabbe's boys called by for me tonight, they found an empty bungalow. I've been down here since midnight, in the next room, trying to tie up rogue's gallery pictures with faces I'd seen in that alley."

"Any luck?" he queried.

"Two. A Filippino, and a half-Hawaiian, half-sailor. Both of 'em have minor records; and both have worked for Milton Delman at one time or another—if that means anything to you."

Sally's lovely lips straightened firmly. "And now, Mr. Whizz of F.B.I., we'd better telephone to Larry at Waipahu that you're back alive. He's out there stirring up a three-ring circus at the hotel. After that, you're going to a hotel yourself. You need some sleep. . . ."

Four hours in a clean bed did wonders for the exhausted special agent's physical well-being; just as that first glimpse of Sally's sweet face had unknotted the strain of anxious hours



from his usually steady nerves.

He had left a call for nine o'clock. At ten, freshly bathed, shaved, clothed—and bandaged, he was climbing the wide steps of one of the handsomest buildings in Honolulu. A building whose very reasons for existence denied such violent practices as kidnapping, sabotage, arson and murder.

Behind austere white walls which faced one of the city's foremost business blocks with simple dignity, the Preacher Institute Museum stretched cool, dim, lofty corridors in apparently endless succession.

A bespectacled receptionist, after informing Dan that Mr. Delman never arrived at his office before noon, answered the G-man's next question more satisfactorily.

Mr. Harry Stock? Yes, he had temporarily assumed poor Mr. Lurton's duties. First turn to the right, then left, and Mr. Fowler would find him—among the war canoes. What? Yes, of course, the visitor could inspect the museum's exhibits first. But he didn't. . . .

**H**ARRY STOCK was a mean, crafty customer, if the special agent had ever seen one. His narrow face, his too-deep eyes, his slack lips, all seemed shifty and sly.

In the gallery which housed the exhibit of primitive Hawaiian boats, Roger Lurton's former assistant had been talking angrily with a foppish young native—a youth clad in white linen, white shoes, white panama bedecked with a blood-red *lei* of parrot feathers—who made Stock's rumpled alpaca coat appear almost *gauche*.

Turning at Dan's first words, the museum employee peered into the Department of Justice representative's gray eyes as if with acute distaste. He looked, for one instant, as though he might dart off among the shadowy hulks which filled the vaultlike room.

That rabbit impression was all the more odd because Stock was neither a small man nor, apparently, timid about most things in life. He had been bawling out his dandified companion readily enough as Dan approached.

"Mr. —Fowler? Something I can

do for you?"

"There is." The special agent let him have it straight. "I'm from the F.B.I. I want to know why the police record shows that Turk Bailey knocked you into a bed of torch ginger in Waipahu, only a few hours before authorities found him murdered?"

"Bailey?" Stock's echo was vague.

"You knew him." Dan stared at an object directly above his hedging victim's head, with steely concentration. The object happening to be the nearest was a canoe's typewritten identification card; but that was unimportant. The G-man wanted to break this underling's obviously jittering nerve.

"Don't lie about it. I'm a busy man, Stock."

"I—well, yes, certainly I knew Turk Bailey. Only slightly, though. I mean, not what you'd really call *knowing* him."

"Quit stalling!" The card just over Stock's left ear read:

WOA, ONCE THE FLAGSHIP OF PRINCE LAUPAHOEHOE; RECOVERED 1902. EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF WAR CRAFT OF THE ALII (NOBILITY) PRIOR TO THE REIGN OF KAMEHAMEHA III.

"Stock, you knew Bailey well," Dan snapped.

"I never—"

"Well enough to have him knock you down. Well enough, maybe, to murder him. Shall we talk here, in front of your friend, or somewhere else?"

The hushed, musty air seemed to be shattered, for ten seconds, by Stock's loud breathing. Then he spoke quietly.

"This is David Kauluoa, descendant of the famous Prince Kauluoa. Mr. Fowler, a Federal officer, David. I'm not afraid to have my connection with Bailey discussed in public, Fowler."

"Then talk," the special agent suggested shortly.

"Very well. Bailey came around to David's grandmother's house—we were boarding there—a couple of days after Roger Lurton and I got to Waipahu, on a special mission for the museum. He—Bailey, I mean—was



posing as a geologist from the mainland. We all got friendly; at least, he and Roger did. I didn't like the man. He seemed somehow—well, not what he pretended."

It sounded like complete candor. Yet Stock was hiding something. Of that, Dan was certain.

"By accident, or so he said, Bailey stumbled on the very thing we'd come to Waipahu to investigate. That was the night before Roger was murdered. Bailey telephoned, asked Roger if he had something handy to take down directions on. Roger answered he had an old envelope in his pocket, and a pencil. So he took the directions. Bailey was to call at the house, later, for a more detailed talk."

**D**AN FOWLER interrupted quietly. "A special mission. Directions. What had Bailey found, Stock?"

"That's a museum secret." Stock hesitated for the barest instant. "But I guess there's no harm in telling, since it all turned out to be a hoax. We'd heard a new folk story about Prince Kauluoa, Fowler, the ancestor of David here. A rumor we were checking had it that his lost burial cave was located underwater on the Wianae coast near Waipahu."

"Your museum has a fondness for caves?"

"Those where the old-time *Alii* are buried, certainly." Stock explained as to a child. "They're like the pyramids of Egypt. Knowledge of each tomb's location was handed down from first son to first son, and taboos protect the secret. All our knowledge of South Sea history, except for legends embodied in old *hulas*, comes from recovering objects buried with those noble dead."

Dan's eyes had narrowed. "What sorts of objects? Gold? Jewels?"

"Early Hawaii had no metals or gems. This *waa* is an instance. It was recovered by Preacher field workers from the burial cave of Prince Laupahoehe, on the island of Maui." The former field assistant scowled. "But, Fowler, we were speaking of Bailey. He falsely claimed to have discovered this long-missing Kauluoa

cave. The story lured poor Roger to a cheap dive run by a man named Weed, for a further interview. He was murdered there."

For a moment silence fell in the canoe gallery. Yet neither man's eyes left the other's. Fowler was the first to resume.

"As the papers had it, Turk's knife killed Lurton. Nothing was reported stolen from the body. You made the checkup, however. And a few hours later, according to what Grandma Kauluoa told the police, Turk showed up on your front porch and accused you of the murder. What was really missing from Lurton's wallet?" the G-man snapped.

The shot told; sank deeper, in fact, than the special agent had anticipated. Stock's narrow face went ghastly green; and he recoiled, with a sort of sickly sob, as if a brutal fist had caught him in the midriff. He stared at his tormentor with haunted eyes.

"N-nothing! Nothing was missing!"

"You're lying, Stock!" Dan Fowler stepped closer. "If you won't talk, then listen. The envelope you yourself admitted your superior had in his pocket, and on which he wrote such directions as Bailey gave over the telephone—that envelope was missing. It never turned up elsewhere, did it? And once those directions were on it, Lurton never would have treated it like any other envelope. He'd have put it carefully in his wallet for safe-keeping!"

"You—" Stock had stumbled another step backward. "It's a lie! You can't prove I ever even knew—"

"Your own story proves you knew what Lurton had written! In the first place, you described details of the telephone talk. In the second place, you called Bailey's report of discovery a hoax. To know that, either you or someone else would have to follow the directions and discover no cave there. Lurton died before he could make that checkup."

Stock's nerve had cracked wide open before the deadly onslaught of that cold logic.

"You're trying to say I knifed Roger! It's a lie, a lie! I never set



foot inside Kioki Weed's! I won't take a murder rap for—for—"

Too late, the hysterical voice faltered. But Dan Fowler's triggerquick brain had already clicked ahead to new conclusions. An underwater cave, near the spot where Turk had been found! Yes, that would explain why the young agent had removed his clothing in the first place—to dive to that submerged entrance.

**S**OMEONE—the killer—must have met him underwater, in the cave. A struggle, a knockout, the drowning of a defenseless man, because drowning left no trace, like bullets or a knife—it all figured out!

"Which one?" Dan Fowler demanded softly. "Which one of the five men in that land *hui* opposing the munitions reef did you give Lurton's envelope to? Delman, to get in good here at the museum? Or one of the others—for cash?"

"None of them!" Stock panted. "None of them!"

"Crabbe!" His shrewd guess was right, the special agent could tell, from the sick flicker of fear in Harry Stock's eyes. "Crabbe, of course. He was in Waipahu. Bailey saw him, too, that night. You sold Lurton out to Crabbe, so Crabbe could murder Bailey!"

"I didn't know about any murder!" screamed Stock, collapsing utterly before that final thrust. His staring eyes seemed to be fixed upon something more terrifying than any hangman's noose.

"I swear—Fowler, I swear I didn't know Crabbe would kill him! Roger trusted me. He'd left the envelope in my keeping, before going to a tough hangout like Weed's. I—I knew Crabbe; knew he'd be interested in buying in on the relics, if any, because despite his friendship with Delman, there's always been jealousy between them."

"So as soon as Lurton left for his interview, you contacted Crabbe?"

"Yes, yes—but *not* for murder! I sold him the envelope in good faith. If he could get some of the stuff out of the cave before Lurton catalogued it, he'd make a tasty profit off Delman

by selling it back to the Preacher."

"He bought them?"

"Crabbe was willing to pay well, to hoax Delman profitably." Stock's mean face twisted. "I'm on a salary here! A measly, miserly salary! It was the only way I stood to make anything for myself!"

The Federal agent had been staring absently at that placard on the old war canoe, as the sordid recital concluded. With the suddenness of a thunderclap, one word on that placard struck home. A word he had heard once before, without realizing its meaning.

He swung sharply. But the space just behind him was empty. He and Stock stood alone in the shadow of the woa. Exactly when the dapper figure of David Kauluoa had faded from the room, he could not have told.

## CHAPTER XVII

### *The Skeleton's Throne*



**U**NDER the hot blurred sunlight of high noon, Sally's phaeton burned along the road to Waipahu once again. A telephone call to the hotel there had warned Larry Kendal to be waiting.

Relaxed against the cushion of the seat adjoining the driver's, Dan Fowler betrayed only by the keen brightness of his eyes that excitement was seething inside him.

"That word *Alii* just jumped out at me, Sally," he was saying. There stood—or rather, there he *had* stood. One of the last scions of the old nobility left alive in these islands! David, descendant of the great Kauluoa himself!"

"David's no treat," Sally sniffed. "I've seen him surf-boarding at the beach. He's a graceful animal, but shiftless, no-good, lazy. Nothing but a beach boy, princely blood or no."

"Young Kauluoa may be a weak reed," the special agent conceded. "But an awful lot of this reef busi-



ness leans on him pretty heavily. He's been there under my nose all along. And I never so much as thought of him—not even when Crabbe made that crack about 'you *Alii* being too easy-going,' just before he realized I might be getting within earshot."

"You mean, you think *David* is our 'Mr. Smith' of the linen duster?"

"I'm positive of it," the big man declared. "What other nobility lives near this sector? Not that he's Mr. X, of course, for that's a different kettle of fish altogether. But he knows who X is, I'll bet you!"

Dan lapsed into thoughtful silence then? He did not speak for some time.

Sally glanced at him finally.

"What are you thinking about, Dan Fowler?"

"I'm thinking that Harry Stock unwittingly furnished me with some amazing information. He said that knowledge of the locations of these relic-filled caves is traditionally handed down among families of the *Alii* from oldest son to oldest son. Does it occur to you that *David Kauluoa* is the last male of his line?"

"*David!*" She stared at him aghast. "Oh, no, Dan! Big-scale plotting isn't in the makeup of a lazy young animal like him!"

"I've already said *David* isn't our Mr. X."

"All right, smarty!" Sally knew better than to insist. "Tell me this, then. You're not running a museum. Why do you think that old cave is so important, anyway, aside from Turk's having been found near where it may be?"

"Has it crossed your mind," countered the special agent quietly, "that someone had to get onto the reef *unobserved* every time one of these 'natural' tragedies was made to happen? Caves are also passageways."

"Then—"

"I'm going to find out where this one lies, and whether it *does* run out to the reef. I'm also going to find out which member of the *hui* young *Kauluoa* has sold his inherited secret to. He's broke, remember. Worthen's bank has mortgaged every plot the family owns, so there's no more

money to be gotten that way. What other assets but his secret does *David* have to sell?"

**T**HEY joined forces with Larry Kendal in the run-down lobby of the Paradise Hotel, where employees Larry had grilled in the hope of a clue to Dan Fowler's kidnapers still stared at him with sullen uneasiness. They decided on lunch, before attempting to round up young *Kauluoa*; and ate the meal at the hotel's greasy, uninviting restaurant.

Larry had little to report, except that Crabbe had not returned to his room since Dan's escape from the Kailua beach house. And that the night clerk who had been in his pay was reported to have left town with incredible swiftness, "to visit a sick aunt on the island of Molokai."

The hands of Sally's trim little wrist-watch stood at five minutes after one when they left their table. All three in the phaeton's front seat, they cruised up the main street of the plantation town; past the stores and on toward the few better residences.

Because of its previous connections with Turk Bailey, each of them knew the *Kauluoa* house by sight. A roadster—flashy in make and color scheme, but venerable as to model—stood empty at the curb as they slid up to it.

The tawny croton hedge, the trim roll of lawns canopied in plumed *kiawe* fronds, the famous bed of torch ginger, all drowsed lethargically beneath a high, bright sun. But the shadowy *lanai* looked cool as spring water as Dan Fowler strode up the steps.

His big knuckles rapped a smart tattoo on the screen door, and echoes of the summons seemed to roll back along a dimly visible hallway into infinity before they faded. The silence which wrapped the ugly old house was peaceful and majestic. Even when a vast figure appeared out of the shadows at last, it was with a slow march as of fate advancing.

Grandma *Kauluoa* was one of Hawaii's last great ladies. A figure which must have been lovely half a century earlier had long ago increased to a mountain of fat; yet she moved with



all the natural rhythmic grace of these islands which had produced the *hula*. She wore a long, sweeping native *holoku*, with a considerable train and with black jet beads patterning its ample bosom. Her hair, still surprisingly dark, was piled above her forehead in a flawless pompadour.

Great, tragic black eyes studied the visitor; eyes which seemed to light the old lady's entire face.

"*Aloha*," she greeted gravely.

"*Aloha*." The special agent returned the island salutation. "Madam Kaulua? I am looking for your grandson, David. My name is Fowler."

"David will welcome you." Grandma threw open the screen door with a courtly gesture of hospitality. Then, turning back into the hallway, she lifted her musical voice to a deep-timbered roar.

"*Da-vid! Company!*"

Somewhere in the big house a distant door slammed. Silence swallowed the shivering echo, while Dan Fowler and his hostess waited. At last the old woman trumpeted that summons up the stairwell a second time.

"David Kaulua! You come here *wikiwiki!* When a guest waits—"

A sudden blare from the horn of Sally's phaeton interrupted. Turning on the threshold, Dan too glimpsed that flash of white linen as David's lithe figure leaped through a gap in the croton hedge. Before the startled special agent could clear the *lanai*, the young descendant of princes was at the wheel of his parked roadster.

**D**OWN the lawn the F. B. I. investigator's long legs sped, while behind at the doorway Grandma's stricken "*Ai! Auwe, auwe!*" shivered mournfully. Sally had the phaeton moving before Dan passed through the croton. He leaped for the running board; scrambled overside into the rear seat as the rented vehicle screamed in pursuit of that careening car ahead.

David Kaulua's roadster headed back along the road to Honolulu, urging more speed from its ancient cylinders than Dan Fowler would have believed possible. Young Kaulua

drove well, but with a reckless abandon which spelled sheer panic. He was hiding something, then!

The scant mile to Ewa Junction, they covered with tires shrieking and motors roaring.

Larry Kendal had produced his service automatic and leveled it purposefully upon the spinning left rear tire of the fugitive. But his superior in the Department motioned the weapon aside. A blowout was too dangerous at this speed. He wanted to take no risks with David. The Hawaiian playboy might be his one chance to prove the amazing theory his deductions had developed.

Ahead a triangle of scarlet sprang into view, like an arrowhead bisecting the road. It was the familiar bed of canna lilies which marked the Junction. Scanning the right fork which led on toward Aiea and the city, the roadster swerved left and was off with a roar on the cross-island turnpike to Wahiawa. Sally clamped down on her wheel, and the phaeton skidded after it.

A silent guard of ironwood trees stood along the new road, at either side; proud shapes which blurred to a mere picket fence as the two machines rocketed past. Soon the hills cut by Kipapa Gulch swung into view, jagged monsters which humped like malformed, crouching giants against the turquoise sky.

On past silver-green fields of sugar cane they hurtled. Despite its driver's reckless determination, the old roadster was not the equal of the vehicle which pursued it. The distance between them had been closing steadily with every mile.

At last Dan Fowler could glimpse the reflection of David's eyes, in the Hawaiian's mirror up ahead. The young prince looked terrified, frantic.

"Now!" the special agent breathed suddenly, rising in his seat.

Sally nodded comprehendingly. An instant later, with an extra burst of speed, the phaeton swerved out and thundered abreast of young Kaulua's fugitive antique. The two fenders were all but touching.

Dan Fowler contracted the steel muscles of his arms and legs, to leap



the distance between the two racing vehicles. For an instant, as he hurtled forward, the landscape was a sick, dizzy blank. Then, teetering for a footing, he was on David's running board!

One big hand gripped for a support along the rim of the low door. In the other, an automatic glittered authoritatively.

"Slow down, sonny!"

The two cars slid to a simultaneous stop in the sunlit road. David looked across the gun and into the G-man's face, his own features a white, crumpled mask of abject terror.

"I—I didn't know you wanted me. I was just going riding. Just—riding."

DAN smiled grimly.

"Ride's over," the special agent clipped. "Sally, take the roadster back to Grandma Kauluoa's and wait for us there. Larry, David and I are going for another little jaunt in the phaeton."

The rearranged cavalcade of two G-men backed and turned, and headed back toward Waipahu. Once more, the roadster went first. The phaeton—with David wedged trembling between Dan Fowler's shoulder and that of Larry at the wheel—brought up the rear.

"We're going out to that strip of coast opposite the powder reef, Kauluoa." An edge of ice had hardened the voice of the F.B.I. ace. "We'll park right where Turk Bailey's body was found. And then—you're going to show us the cave where he was killed."

David's anguished eyes glittered. "Cave? I don't know about any—"

The G-man turned and gave him a cold look. "These secrets, according to your pal Stock who told them to me, just about when you were disappearing, are handed down to the oldest son of the family. That's you, in the case of the Kauluoas! There is such a cave. And if you're smart, you'll show us where."

"*Tabu!*" David whispered mystically, his foppishly clad young body writhing. "The Gods would destroy

me, if I showed a *haole* where my ancestor lies!"

"They didn't destroy you," came back a grim rejoinder, "when you sold that same secret to one other white man. You'll probably survive this 'betrayal', too."

"I never—"

"Save your lies about it! We'll discuss later who your customer was." Dan Fowler stiffened slightly as a first glint of water brightened the view ahead. "Right now—I want to see the place where Bailey died."

"No!" the Hawaiian rasped in sheer fright.

"If you don't want to shame your ancestors by being hanged for Bailey's murder yourself, David, don't try any tricks."

Near that curiously formed promontory which looked like a cat, they stopped the phaeton at young Kauluoa's now docile direction. That threat of arrest for murder had pounded the last spark of rebellion out of their prisoner. From time to time, he even fumbled awkwardly with his collar, as if he could feel an invisible hemp noose choking him.

Crossing the desolate stretch of beach to the rock's black flank, the two Government men could make out details of the menaced reef with surprising clarity.

The powder buildings, the so-called bear cages, the miniature railway where the day-shift laborers pushed their wheeled carts from point to point—the routine of the munitions depot continued as it had before the *Blade* headlines, which had uncovered the presence of the Federal agents and brought an end to that branch of their activity.

One blackened hole, where men swarmed to clear up the wreckage, seemed especially noticeable to Dan Fowler. That was where Kimo Waite had died so horribly. The G-man's fists clenched at the recollection.

"Come on, David," he said after a bit, his voice sharp. "Time's short. What now?"

For answer, the young Hawaiian unwillingly began to remove his elegant white linen coat and trousers—his shoes, his socks, his fine silk shirt.



The two G-men, comprehending grimly that only a few nights ago Turk Bailey must have stood on exactly this spot and stripped for his last dive, followed suit. Naked, David poised for an instant on the lava rock's rim.

"Bring the car's flashlight, *haole*. We meet below. Then you put your hand on my shoulder. Mr. Kendal put *his* hand on *your* shoulder."

**L**EGS tense, belly flat, muscles rippling like waves under the coppery skin of his back, the young Hawaiian arched out over the water and was gone.

The pair from Washington dived after him, Dan Fowler holding the electric torch and Larry clamping the phaeton's key in his mouth, at his superior's suggestion. Black waves at the base of the stretched-out lava beast received them, icy until their heads split the surface.

"This way," a voice muttered sullenly.

Dan's hand, groping out, contacted slippery flesh and closed in a firm grip on David's shoulder. He felt Larry's fingers attaching themselves to him, just as the body of the young Hawaiian prince began to submerge.

David swam like a fish, apparently entirely at home under water. Long before their downward plunge had ended, Dan Fowler begun to worry as to whether his own lungs would hold out. But the figure which guided him moved as if it could breathe with gills.

Abruptly, the special agent realized they were no longer in open water. Kauluoa had eeled through a black crevice in the rock's base, pulling his companions after him. Now they were rising, swimming upward along some sort of rock-walled tube.

Their heads broke water, just as the stinging torment in Dan's chest had become unendurable. He lifted the free hand which still clutched the flashlight, and tentatively snapped the switch.

The batteries had survived. A needle of light shot ahead of them, along a dry continuation of the hollow tube they had ascended.

David crawled first up that smooth

incline, the other two close behind him. Presently the space overhead increased so that a man could stand. The electric beam flickered on again, playing about the walls of a roomy chamber somewhere beneath the cat-rock's base.

Larry whistled softly. They stood in the tomb of that long-ago warrior, unmistakably. All the trappings of his illustrious, vanished royalty loomed weird and impressive about them. The *koa* canoes—eight of them, great wooden war *waa*—lay further back in the burial cave. Nearer Dan's spread feet were massed the lesser relics. *Poi* pounders of grey stone. Imperial *kahilis*, standards like feather dusters on long sticks. Polished calabashes, the bowls in which Kauluoa's feast foods were once steamed.

The finger of light slid further. Drinking gourds, grotesquely curved and ornamented, became visible. *Lauhala* mats, finely woven for a princely household. Jewelry of ornately arranged shark teeth and gleaming *ku-kui*.

"Whew!" Larry's exclamation was solemn. "What a field day this old junk could mean to a collector like Delman! Say, Dan, do you suppose—"

"No," Fowler answered slowly. "No, it wasn't Delman who bought the secret of this tomb's location from its occupant's last heir. Or was it, David?"

## CHAPTER XVIII

### *Feast of Fear*



**W**HISPERING silence swallowed the echo of that quiet question, which died to a sigh beneath the vaulted roof of Prince Kauluoa's burial place.

At long last, David, crouching back against the wall which flanked the tunnel's maw, seemed to pull himself together by a superhuman effort of



his weak will.

He stretched out one dripping arm, in a gesture which pointed well back into the gloomy bowels of the cavern, and spoke in a voice which somehow was impressive despite its cheap theatricalism.

"Yonder sits my ancestor! Let him say who first defiled his sacred sleep!"

Involuntarily, Dan Fowler directed his light beam in a line with the young Hawaiian's pointed finger. It probed back, back, back, even past the prows of the noble waa, to reflect at last on something stark and white at the end of the long corridor of blackness. Larry grunted hoarsely.

"A skeleton!"

The F.B.I. veteran followed his more impulsive assistant across the smooth rock floor of the cavern, playing his torch on the grim figure ahead as he advanced. Against the jagged lava wall which formed the rear of the cave, the royal reason for this long-forgotten funeral splendor stood staring from sightless sockets upon the white invaders of his dark domain.

Old Kauluoa's grinning skeleton still crouched upright at the exact center of a square marked off by *kapu* sticks—those ball-ended markers, of which Dan Fowler had seen several in the Preacher museum collection, and which Hawaii's ancients had used for setting apart from violation all territories *tabu*.

A crumbling bonnet of feathers topped the white skull. A cape of the same description, thousands upon thousands of little yellow plumes hand-stitched with infinite care to a pliable background, drooped moldering from the bony shoulders like a barbaric shroud.

Dan Fowler stood silent, staring down with speculative eyes—eyes in which an odd gleam of triumph might have been noted, could they have been seen in the dark—upon that grisly reminder of vanished pomp and circumstance. It was Larry's sharp cry which brought him back to other realities, in this unreal cavern.

"Dan, look! A flashlight! See, on the floor near this marker gadget?"

The F. B. I. ace saw. The bright modern battery torch, revealed by the

beam from his own, had lain there almost at the skeleton's foot; a pencil-slim cylinder of chrome, odd contrast among the relics of another century and civilization. On the flank of the compact instrument two initials showed. T. B.!

"Turk was here, all right." Larry was testing the flashlight's switch. "And the light works. So he wouldn't have left without it. Dan—this is where it happened!"

Dan Fowler nodded slowly. "This is it, all right. He must have been standing here when whoever it was—and I think I know the man—came up the tunnel. What's been bothering me till a minute ago is how he got Turk. But I think I see now."

"Eh?" Larry looked blank.

"This flash. Turk dropped it, so something must have made him drop it. Yet he was armed. That means whatever the other party did had to compete in speed with the drawing of a gun. Any suggestions?"

"Well—no."

DAN scowled. "It could have been tear gas. And that's what I believe it was. Remember, there were no marks of struggle on Turk's body—no cuts, no bruises, no knife or bullet wounds. If that man didn't drop a gas bomb in here, knock Turk out and drag him back down the tunnel to drown him, how else *could it* happen?"

"Look!" his assistant gasped abruptly, in place of attempting an answer where there was none to give. "David! He's gone!"

Dan Fowler's gray eyes held an ironic glint as they swept back toward the empty maw of the tunnel, down which the young Hawaiian had fled while they were preoccupied with the skeleton.

"I didn't mean him to skip out quite so soon, without trying out a few questions about his sale of information. But I wanted to get rid of him sometime while we're here. We have some exploring to do, Larry. This can't be all there is to old Kauluoa's tomb—or else how would those ghostly phantoms have appeared and disappeared so neatly out on the



reef?"

It took them half an hour of minute examination of the tomb's smooth walls to find the spot where, centuries before, cooling masses spewed from the gut of some volcano had solidified too rapidly.

The fissure was scarcely wide enough for a man of Dan Fowler's size to squeeze through. Yet ten seconds after their probing flashlights had found it—both of them were searching, Larry using Turk's fallen torch—the F. B. I.'s star investigator felt certain this was what they had been looking for.

Fresh air poured through that crack, a light but steady draught of it. The excellent ventilation of the burial cave had, in fact, been one of the factors which had spurred the G-man in his hunt. There *had* to be another exit than that one sealed by water!

The fissure widened a little after Dan and Larry had edged into it. But though its height was ample to permit the passage of a tall man standing erect, at no place did it broaden out sufficiently for them to walk facing ahead.

Their sideward passage continued for so long that it became interminable—hundreds of yards, surely. And still the black cleft in the lava foundation continued.

"I think she's slanting up a little," came Larry's whisper from the darkness at last.

And indeed the floor of their crevice had begun to rise. Almost imperceptibly, the very faintest hint of light had lessened the inky impenetrability of the atmosphere. And that incoming current of air had taken on a salty tang, which both of them could sniff. Just before the crevice ended, it widened out to become a woodshed-sized hollow beneath loosely fitting rocks.

That hollow offered ample reward, within its narrow confines, for all the discomforts of their inching, edging journey. For it held the simple secret of the phantomlike manifestations which had so unnerved Wong & Selby's laborers; and thereby held up work on those buildings, against the completion of which contracts pro-

vided such rigid time limits!

Larry held up that secret—a long rubber cape and the elongated, cotton-stuffed bathing cap for his superior in the Department to examine. Both garments were smeared with a phosphorescent paste, which looked like mustard stains when studied in the splinters of daylight seeping between the overhead boulders. Yet the effect of such an outfit at midnight, when worn by a stalking figure which seemed to appear and disappear with equal ease, was easy to calculate. It would wield tremendous power over superstitious, untutored minds!

"And all the spook would have to do to 'vanish,'" Larry breathed, almost admiringly, "would be to turn these duds inside out. No wonder the *kanakas* were scared right out of their jobs!"

**H**IS superior fixed an eye to one of the crannies between overhead rocks, and was able to get a fairly inclusive closeup of the afternoon's construction work going forward under Big Jim Selby's anxious direction.

The last doubt was dispelled. Their narrow passageway from the burial cave actually had led under the floor of the inlet, and out to the reef itself—a means of access quite independent of boats, or swimming or other visible means of approach.

"Then it doesn't *have* to be Crabbe, just because he was the only one known to have been here when that hand tossed the fire bottle into your powder mix, on the reef!" Larry cried. "It could be any of 'em! Dan, what's your guess?"

"We haven't time for guesses." Dan Fowler had stood staring at the rubber cloak, scowling and batting some private problem about his brain. Now he sprang for the crevice again, working backward into it at top speed.

"I've missed one bet, Larry! We've got to get hold of young David again!"

"You mean—" Larry was panting after him. "—so he can tell us who else knows about the burial cave?"

"I mean so that we can keep the young fool from cashing in on a pos-



sibility which, by now, must have occurred to a mind as interested as his is. In other words, save him from committing unintentional suicide."

"What—"

"He'll go to the man who's already paid him for the location of the cave! Oh, why didn't I see that before? Of course, the young fool'll go—figuring the customer will pay him more now to keep that first damning transaction secret. But our Mr. X is too smart to trust David's dubious capacity for secrets. He'll know a better way to insure the necessary silence!"

Their drive back to Waipahu, once they had retraced the tortuous labyrinth in the belly of the lava, and dressed again in the shelter of the catlike rock, ashore, was completed in the swift silence of extreme urgency.

All too well the pair from Washington understood on what a thin thread David Kauluoa's life would hang—if Dan Fowler's analysis of his probable movements had been correct.

From Sally, at the Kauluoa family's aloof old residence, they learned that the young Hawaiian had not returned home for his roadster.

Dan Fowler put through an emergency call to the chief of police at Honolulu, requesting a search for the boy, and that he be taken into custody for his own protection. Then Dan, Larry and Sally set out in the phaeton to comb the neighborhood of Waipahu.

Evening shadows had settled purple over Honolulu Harbor before the phaeton wheeled up before Police Headquarters, to disgorge a worried and discouraged trio.

At Dan Fowler's heels, Larry and Sally crowded through the door and up to the desk of the now-familiar *kanaka* night sergeant, who was just coming on duty. There had been no apprehension of David Kauluoa, the police blotter showed. Honolulu authorities had drawn as much of a blank as the Federal investigators at Waipahu.

**R**ECALLING his presentiment that this many-valleyed island would be an almost impossible terrain for a manhunt, Dan Fowler scowled

dejectedly at the news. If David tried contacting his previous customer, with blackmail in mind—

"One report on Kauluoa," the obliging sergeant offered presently, having studied his list of the day's happenings in more detail.

"What?" the trio demanded in one breath.

"Joe Upolu, traffic cop on Beretania Street, phoned in when radio alarm was broadcast. He say David go to Inter-Island Trust and draw all his money out, one hour before the alarm. Teller at the bank verifies this happened, says David seemed nervous, afraid of something."

Sally's slim figure stiffened. "Drew all his—Dan! The *Samoa Clipper* was due to take off at five!"

"And there's that Jap boat—the *Yamada Maru*," Larry added. "She sails again for 'Frisco, at eight to-night!"

"Kauluoa was not aboard the *Clipper*," the sergeant intoned placidly. "Our men watched every passenger board her. They are also at gangplank of *Yamada Maru*. He cannot pass them."

"But it sure looks as if he was pulling up stakes, drawing that dough," Larry argued. "Wouldn't it fit in with the plans of our Mr. X just as well, Dan, to deport Kauluoa? Why commit murder?"

"Since when has this brain balked at murder?" the veteran special agent countered dryly. "What about the *Pago-Pago*? Or the sharks? No, the only sure way to silence—"

He was interrupted by the nerve-roiling jangle of the sergeant's telephone. The coppery man in uniform picked it up, grunted twice while increasing surprise widened his lustrous black eyes, and cradled the receiver in the same move which brought his fleshy body out of its chair.

"They have found Kauluoa," he reported, making for the door with that easy swing which characterizes all Hawaiian movements. "Police informer has spotted him at big *luau* on Black Point Road. We go out there now, bring him in."

"*Luau*?" Dan Fowler echoed, strid-



ing up the corridor at his native friend's side. "What's that?"

"The *luau* is the great Hawaiian feast—like Firemen's Picnic on mainland. Our first kings gave *luaus*. You wait, you see. We use police car, eh? Siren makes trip shorter."

Screaming across the city toward Black Point, which turned out to be a district of handsome houses almost in the shadow of shaggy old Diamond Head, Dan Fowler voiced the objection which had been nagging at him.

"Look here, Sergeant—if David is lying doggo, he wouldn't casually show up at a party."

"*Kanakas* are big fools for parties," the coppery police official answered blandly. "David sings, *haole* hostesses pay well. Besides, he doesn't know we hunt after him, eh?"

They had no difficulty in locating the *luau*. A white woman, apparently a local society leader, was giving the affair. The grove at the foot of her garden, which sloped to meet the beach, was vivid with flickering light and alive with conversation, laughter and music.

AS Dan Fowler followed his police companion across the dark lawn, Sally and Larry trailing behind, he felt that suddenly he had stepped into another civilization, another world, another century. He tapped the khaki sleeve alongside his own to halt, and the sergeant complied by pausing with him in the dense shadow an ancient *hao* tree had gathered about itself.

Ahead lay the grove. Before a long table decked with fruits and flowers, the feasters squatted on *lauhala* mats in double rows which stretched several hundred feet through the darkness. Heaps of breadfruits, of mangoes, of pineapples, mountain apples and cocoanuts, made an edible centerpiece; and over it all, the ruddy glare from *kukui* torches, thrust upright into the earth, flickered and danced.

The guests, most of them white, wore smart European evening togs, and chatted in witty, sophisticated American idiom; yet so completely pagan was this scene of feasting, beneath the patterned stars, that the watching special agent whistled soft-

ly. He would not have been surprised if a procession of the old-time *Alii*, clad in their cloaks and towering caps of feathers, had suddenly appeared in the grove.

One by one, the obliging police sergeant identified for him the exotic dishes which were being passed up and down the low table by white-jacketed servants. *Opihi* paste. Honey-sweet yams. Red salt. *Poi*. Leaf-wrapped salmon *lulau*. Banana baked with coconut. Devilfish soup. Big calabashes of chicken, boiled in sauces which only the ancient Hawaiians could have concocted.

Tense as he was, the odors which mingled with the scent of flowers in this garden reminded the special agent that he had skipped dinner tonight.

A lithe native girl was entering the final verse of a *hula* as the four uninited guests arrived. A *lei* of red carnations, half hidden by cascading black hair, encircled her copper shoulders. Anklets and wristlets of flowers added an extra pagan touch to her smooth, gleaming arms and legs.

Torchlight played elusively on the sinuous curves of her swaying body. Firm hips swished their skirt of shredded *ti* leaves, while her supple hands wove the patterns of the *hula's* story into the wavering shadows. Rhythm had caught up the very beat of her blood; and, as the guitar and drum which accompanied her increased their tempo, she writhed like flame come alive. Her lustrous black eyes glistened.

It was a spell-binding dance. Yet after one glance at the girl, the F.B.I. investigator's gray gaze had moved on. It was the rows of guests that he was studying. With an imperceptible narrowing, his eyes found Jedtham Crabbe's fleshy face among the spectators. Not far from him sat Alfred Worthen; and, across the table, Ford Ambrew and Pasquez Rosino, looking uneasy, sat side by side.

"Sergeant," murmured Dan Fowler, "I don't know Milton Delman by sight. Is he here tonight?"

For answer, the *kanaka* official pointed out a stately gray-bearded man a few seats to the host's left. The



G-man examined the last face among the *hui* members to be made known to him, and then looked back at the others. None of them seemed to be deriving much pleasure from the dancer's gyrations.

Rosino's little eyes suggested a fear deeper than mere awkwardness at a social function. Ambrew was the color of paper. Worthen was gnawing his underlip. And, most important—all five of them were present!

**T**HE *hula* had reached its climax now. For a moment or two, while the dancer retired, general conversation and applause brought the exotic grove to vibrant life. The applause faded. And then, above the babble of talk, stilling conversation to a murmur, one tenuous chord from a native guitar quavered across the darkness.

In the shadow of the *hāo* tree, Dan Fowler's powerful body tensed. By the path from the beach, the lone figure with the guitar had come strolling into the grove with studied carelessness. Davil Kauluoa wore white trousers, a silk shirt open at the throat. His red sash was bound about a waist as slender as a girl's.

Low and haunting, like the guitar's sobbing, his really excellent voice was pouring forth a plaintive melody; a love song, the sergeant's whisper explained, which had been written by Liliuo-kalani herself, Hawaii's last royal queen.

"Mai poena oe au  
I kau mili ili a nei  
Mauhu mau mau ka ikena  
I kau mili ili a loko. . ."

The young, rich, lazy voice sounded steady enough. But Dan Fowler caught, or thought he caught, a gleam of something like stark terror in David's dark eyes. They seemed to be searching for one particular face among the rows of guests; searching with dread and yet with a pathetic sort of bravado.

So the young Hawaiian actually *had* interviewed his proposed blackmail victim! And the "victim" had turned the tables by refusing to pay and by threatening jail or worse to the stu-

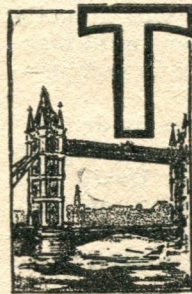
pid native!

Yes, only a panicky impulse to escape the island—an impulse motivated by someone's threatening promise of punishment—would have prompted David to close out his bank account. But now he had decided to stand his ground, still afraid though he was. Dan Fowler started forward, tense and alert.

But not in time! The sharp whine of a revolver bit across the husky laughter and talk at the long table, distorted and scarcely recognizable above a hundred other sounds. Like a child's rag doll, David Kauluoa crumpled face foremost among the garlands of *ilima* and ginger. He lay where he had fallen, terribly silent and entirely motionless.

## CHAPTER XIX

### The Killer Strikes



**T**EARS trembled in Sally Vane's voice. "You're—Dan, you're crazy! You're insane to try it! He'll kill you!"

"Maybe." Flint seemed to spark, back of the special agent's eyes. "But I don't think so."

And what's more, I think my plot's going to work. I think he's bound to come out to the reef, to try and get me."

They were rolling out the now-familiar Waipahu road to the reef coast, with Larry in the back seat of the phaeton, listening in on the blonde girl's final plea. Two crowded hours had slipped away from them, since tragedy had broken in upon the gaiety of the Black Point *luau*. The tropic moon had risen well above Diamond Head, to cast a silver sheen over palm fronds and rooftops and sea.

Dan Fowler spoke carefully. "We'll never nail him unless we can provoke him to another attack. This man's clever, too clever to leave trails. The only way to trip him up is to crowd him into so much fast action, he won't have time to think."



Sally's answer was disconsolate. "Yes? He was crowded to the limit back at the *luau*, wasn't he? There stood David, ready to spill everything he knew. And there you came, set to arrest the boy and listen. If that isn't a spot, your killer will never be on one!"

Point by point, she covered the happenings which had followed David's sudden, shocking murder.

"The sergeant searched every guest in the grove. No weapons! And then somebody discovered that twenty-two submerged in a bowl of chicken gravy, with all the prints wiped clean. None of your *hui* members had been sitting near that bowl, either."

"True enough. But that wasn't as tough as it seemed." Dan's words were reflective. "The shooting—well, that crowd was pretty well pepped up from rounds of what the firewater island natives call *okolehao*. David was singing. There was general laughter and talk. Provided no one was actually looking his way, a sniper could manage one undercover shot in comparative safety."

"But getting rid of the evidence?"

"Easier yet. Everyone sprang up and rushed forward after David fell. All eyes—even mine—were on him. Who'd notice one splash in a bowl of gravy, as half a dozen people rushed past it?"

Larry muttered from the rear seat. "Still, killing that kid right out in the open took plenty of nerve and quick brainwork."

"Nobody ever claimed our man didn't have brains and nerve," Dan Fowler rejoined. "He'll use both of them again tonight, too—on me. Or I miss my guess. That idle chatter of mine to the sergeant carried to plenty of ears, before we left the grove."

"I know what I hope!" Sally stormed rebelliously, still concentrating on the special agent's personal safety. "I hope Mr. X is smart enough to understand that every word you spoke was just bait in a trap! I hope he'll stay miles away from the reef!"

"He'll understand, all right," the veteran investigator nodded grimly. "There's not much that guy doesn't

understand. Yes, he'll know perfectly well why I told the sergeant that I was leaving for the reef to do a solo stretch in one of the powder cages. He'll know that my real reason isn't the one I gave—that nonsense about my wanting to 'clear' myself of the *Blade's* charge that I was incompetent as a powder worker, and so was guilty of young Kimo's death."

"Then why should he—"

DAN shook his head. "He'll understand all that. He'll know that what I really have in mind is luring him to the reef to expose himself. And that, when he arrives, I'll have an ambush party of the sergeant's men there to greet him." Dan Fowler spoke with conviction. "But, knowing all that, I'm betting that he'll *still* risk coming out to the reef to kill me tonight."

"If he does," Sally breathed softly, "he's a madman!"

"No. It's the only thing he can do. David's told him about our knowledge of the cave. I've been crowding him to the limit, escaping from two kidnappings and one direct murder attempt. He knows that I'm closing in. It's a case of kill me tonight, or stand to loose the objective he's fought so long and fiendishly to attain—the removal of the powder works from the reef."

The special agent kept his eyes fixed forward. "Look at it this way, Sally. Tonight, in front of a lot of people milling around young Kau-lua's murder scene, I made plenty of loud boasts that I proposed to handle a mixing vat all alone on tonight's powder shift—to prove I was competent. Our killer knows that's just a stall. But other people don't!"

"Well?"

"If that vat explodes tonight—if I go up with it—that only proves to those innocent bystanders that the *Blade* was right. It's a clear accident, brought on by my own inefficiency, and there'd be no need for embarrassing official probes. It's the man's one safe chance to get rid of me."

They had passed through sleeping Waipahu, by now. Ahead, the desolate sweep of the Waianae coast



stretched its cheerless miles in lonely darkness. Soon the reef and the sleeping cat would appear in the moonlight, to the left of the mashed coral ribbon which was the road.

"I still don't believe he'd dare come," Sally ventured hopefully. "Oh, Dan, all those explosives make it so much more dangerous than—than if he were just a man with a knife or a gun!"

"It's his knowledge of those explosives that will bring him," Dan Fowler contradicted. "I'm banking on that; plus the likelihood that logic has persuaded him that my guards will be posted to watch for someone approaching the reef by water."

"I don't understand."

"He'll think he's safe, using the tunnel over from the burial cave. What David couldn't tell him, because David never knew, was that Larry and I didn't leave off after merely discovering Prince Kauluoa's skeleton."

\* \* \* \* \*

Midnight passed, with the silence of unimperiled safety folded restfully about the powder reef.

Down in the bowels of the small mixing chamber he had persuaded Big Jim Selby to let him take over, the man from Washington glanced at his wrist-watch anxiously. His forehead furrowed as he observed how far the luminous hands had crawled since he had shut the door to the bear cage.

The conviction that his man would come eventually, however, had not lessened in the big special agent's breast. The setup was too perfect a scene for a clueless kill. And David's death was somber proof that the criminal the F.B.I. had to deal with was becoming desperate.

Dan had started the wheels in motion around the vat, because he was uncertain of the exact location of the controlling motors, and realized that if his killer was in any position to observe that the wheels were not in action, the G-man's whole scheme would fall through. A cage where mixing is suspended does not tend to explode so easily.

**N**OW there was nothing to do but mark time. And to wonder how

the inevitable peril would manifest itself. . . .

As Dan Fowler stood there at the empty vat's rim, waiting for something to happen, the faces of the five *hui* members kept jiggling past him like an evil chorus; like a life-sized portrait group, with other faces such as Turk's and Stock's and David's and Ito's and Watson Howard's framing them.

A precious quintet! Fat, heavy-lidded Jedtham Crabbe, for instance. Crabbe, who had kidnaped the F.B.I. ace. Crabbe, whom Turk had visited, to whom Harry Stock had sold knowledge of the burial cave's discovery. Jedtham Crabbe was a crook from rock bottom. Even had the man already known of the cave from David, it might have been worth his while to pay Stock for the same knowledge. A character like Crabbe was always requiring elaborate alibis.

Milton Delman, bearded and distinguished, had sat at that *luau* like some benevolent patriarch. Yet he paid his employees such miserly salaries that Stock had been driven to stealing a certain envelope. And Delman maintained an isolated beach house with barred windows, locked doors and able-bodied—but not able-brained—guards.

Alfred Worthen, although his sense of "ethics" had prompted his retirement from the *hui*, was no philanthropist. No one without a healthy regard for money ever went into the banking business, did they? And what manner of man was it who could make jokes, the morning afterward, about a disaster in which a young native had been horribly burned alive?

Pasquez Rosino was slime, pure and simple. Everything about him smacked of the underworld; his greasy face, his shifty eyes, the cold glee with which he had set about a murder attempt in his own off-color office. Yes, even his public history, which Ambrew's *Blade* was always whitewashing, had a nasty smell.

As for sly, dapper, vicious Ford Ambrew himself—Ambrew, who thought nothing of maliciously effective publicity campaigns, of lies and back-stabbing attacks meant to



blacken honest law-preservers in the decent pursuit of their duties—

*Whoooo! Whoooo!*

Dan Fowler jumped at the owlish sound, before his taut nerves coincided with rational thought to tell him it was someone whistling from above, into the mixing chamber's speaking tube. He returned the signal, almost disappointedly. The voice which came back was recognizedly that of one of the natives on the powder line; a youth who pushed loaded carts hither and yon, along the narrow-gauge railway system, throughout the night shift.

"Powder, Mist' Fowler. Car of raw powder you order."

"I didn't or—" the special agent began. Then his tongue checked, as if scissors had snipped off the words. "Pua, who sent the powder?"

"Not know," came the good-natured young voice from above. "I find powder drum loaded on car at switch south of this cage. Slip is attached, marked 'Car for Cage Two—Fowler—Rush.' I rush. That all I know."

Dan Fowler's eyes had contracted to gray pinpoints of excitement.

"All right, Pua. Fetch the drum down. I'm quite ready for it—I think."

**A**LMOST instantly, the boy's weighted steps could be heard stumbling down the ramp beyond the exits. The special agent opened the door for him, and waited impatiently until the drum of black dust had been deposited alongside the vat. Waited until Pua's carefree footfalls had faded once more, in the direction of the tracks above. Then Dan was at the powder, sifting it through his fingers gingerly.

It seemed all right. One of his big hands jerked the switch, and the great wheels slowed to a standstill within their empty trough. Moving with infinite care, the F.B.I. investigator hoisted the drum and permitted a thin black stream of dust to trickle down the vat's smooth side. Gradually, watching it with hawklike eagerness, he allowed the stream to increase.

The drum was half empty before the first pebble rattled out of it and

down into the puddle of powder already rising in the vat. With a tiny, sharp dissonance, a second particle of gravel slithered into the mix; a third and fourth and fifth. Dan finished emptying the drum with triumphant deliberateness.

Any one of those pebbles, unnoticed in the mix, would eventually have caught under the tightly grinding wheels; would have caused friction there, produced sparks, and ignited the mass!

Leaving the switch off, Dan Fowler climbed the ramp to the bear cage in no great hurry. It was only when he reached the nearest emergency exit that he broke into a sprint, shouting as he ran, so that when he burst out into the open night, any listening pair of ears could detect his feverish excitement.

"Larry! Get the boys moving! Search the reef! Someone's tried to blow me up, with gravel in the mix!"

But that hoarse bellowing, that seemingly wild lack of preparation, were only part of the prearranged act. Larry and three of the police sergeant's crack men had been warned to remain in concealment near the hidden exit from that fissure which led under the inlet, no matter what kind of fireworks broke loose in the vicinity of Cage Two.

The rest of the reef, unwarned, burst into instant excitement, sufficient to alarm any lurking evil-doer whose desire was to remain unidentified. Powder monkeys came running from all directions. Electric flares on the roof of Big Jim's office shack sprang to life and began to claw their light in all four directions at once.

Construction workers, deserting their jobs on the far side of the plant, poured like ants across the lava-dust area which separated them from the units already in operation.

Scattered patrolmen, whom the sergeant had assigned to various semi-distant posts, shilled frantically on whistles. Somewhere, a too-excited special sentry was emptying his machine gun at a shadow or a bird well out across the water.

Amid the tumult, Dan Fowler kept up his shouting for appearances' sake.



But all the while, his anxious gray eyes were striving to split the darkness which obscured that pile of loose rock over on the shoreward side. His ears were straining for the first sound of—yes, there it came!

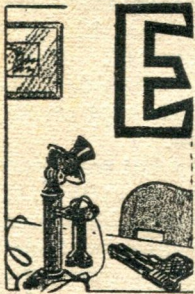
A baffled, distant shout, first. And then the frantic tattoo of racing feet, doubling back across the reef, with other feet pounding in hot pursuit close behind.

**A** SPRINTING shape appeared out of the darkness, struggling toward the second tunnel which pierced the embankment protecting Cage Two. Hard behind it, the figures of Larry's uniformed *kanakas* were closing in. Like a cornered fox, the muffled fugitive streaked for that tunnel and disappeared into it.

Now, at last, Dan Fowler went into action!

## CHAPTER XX

*Aloha!*



**E**YES agleam with excitement, the ace investigator of the F. B. I. raced down the ramp to the mixing chamber, a scant ten feet ahead of a pair of the puffing *kanaka* patrolmen, yet sufficiently behind that figure in the lead so that it was

only a blurred and desperate outline against deeper darkness.

Then the door Dan himself had left open behind him slammed shut. As the special agent brought up before it, a bolt slid into place on the far side of the panel. In the chamber, swift footfalls carried to the second door.

But by now Larry and the third patrolman would be closing in from that direction. Yes, the fugitive inside had heard them coming! For, instead of hinges creaking, there came the sound of a second bolt clicking into place. The chamber's occupant had locked himself in! Dan Fowler knocked a brisk summons on the barrier ahead of him.

"All right, in there! We've got you cornered, so you might as well open up."

A mocking laugh floated out to him; a laugh akin to the snarl of a trapped animal.

"What do you take me for, G-man? The doors are both bolted. The emergency exits open *out*, but not *in*. You couldn't get to me if you tried till your beard grew white!"

"Don't fool yourself, my friend." Dan Fowler's voice was cold with distaste. "There is plenty left we can do, and you know it. What about tear gas down the speaking tube? You used tear gas to stun a man once yourself, didn't you?"

The gasp of sheer surprise from inside was wordless acknowledgment that Dan's deduction had been correct. But that gasp was no indication of weakness or surrender.

"You won't try tear gas, Fowler. Because the instant you do, I swear I'll pull this switch and start the mixing wheels moving. When my gravel makes a spark, we'll *all* be blown to atoms! I mean that, G-man!"

And the special agent could well believe that his cornered killer did. Dan Fowler's gray eyes were bleak as they stared at that blank barrier, behind which one of the most unscrupulous butchers of his long experience had found temporary sanctuary. Deliberately, the man from Washington ironed the loathing out of his voice, made it level and impersonal.

"You haven't forgotten, have you, that Cage Two is the nearest powder unit to Prince Kauluo's cave?" he said matter-of-factly.

"You realize," Dan went on, "that an explosion here might split open that fissure under the inlet, and flood the cave, don't you? But of course you do! That's been the one reason you've killed and terrorized and schemed. To get this explosives depot moved anywhere on earth except right here. Not because you wanted to sell some swampland; but because one unlucky 'big noise' might mean the end of millions of dollars for you."

"You devil!" croaked the voice on the far side of the barred door, furiously.



"I spent a very profitable half hour in the Preacher Museum, you see," Dan Fowler continued evenly. "I saw that feather cloak, in its glass case, with the card reading: '*Purchased from the estate of Princess Leahi, for one million dollars. One of three such specimens extant.*' That cloak on old Kauluoa's bony shoulders is worth a mint at almost any museum, isn't it? It's in better condition than the Leahi specimen."

The man between the barred doors snarled in rage, but Dan Fowler ignored the outburst.

"And then," he went on, "there are those *koa* war canoes. Little bowls of really old *koa* bring handsome prices from mainland institutions and antique dealers. What would eight huge *waa* net you? Or those other old things, unearthed maybe twice a century, that public and private collections would battle for. What about those?"

**A** VENGEFUL roar burst from the throat of Dan's invisible listener. "They're *mine*! I paid for the secret!" You're right about my trying to protect the cave from flooding! One explosion like that at Cage Three, on the seaward side of the reef—one such blow on the landward side, close enough to the fissure—and those priceless relics would be gone forever! But—how could you know?"

"For plenty of reasons," the special agent answered, steel in his words. "I'll explain them to you inside the mixing chamber. Right now, I'm going to shoot away the bolt that's protecting you. Stand back from the door—*Alfred Worthen!*"

A bedlam of echoes split the confines of the ramp as the service weapon in Dan Fowler's steady grip blasted away. Trained on the spot beyond which the bolt must be holding, the steel maw spit spurt after spurt of flame until the clip was emptied.

Not even pausing to reload, the special agent accepted a proffered gun from one of the *kanaka* patrolmen who had caught up moments before. He was blazing a fresh stream of slugs into the shattering panel before his own relinquished butt had struck the

floor.

The bolt gave at last, screaming as it tore away from the wood where it had been embedded!

Like part of that same wrenching sound came the thud of Dan Fowler's broad shoulder against the door. The panel crashed inward; and through the opening, the Federal agent's body hurtled in a direct line toward the armed, desperate figure who crouched alongside the vat, awaiting his coming.

The revolver in Worthen's hand snarled once as the Federal officer's big shape cleared the threshold. Dan Fowler felt a tornado of pain slam through his left shoulder, dragging his body backward. But the straight line of his advance continued unbroken, despite that searing lead. And as he advanced, his own borrowed weapon was barking.

Out of Worthen's broken hand, the revolver spun crazily. Each flash of gunfire in these cramped, dusty confines was a deliberate challenge to wholesale destruction. Understanding that peril, Dan tossed aside his own gun in the instant that his cornered killer's fell floorward. Barehanded, his splintered shoulder already crimson, the G-man kept on toward his livid objective.

Worthen understood what was coming. Mouthing a curse as callous as his own past career of crime, he leaped for the switch which would set those grinding wheels in motion above the gravel-impregnated powder in the vat.

His fingers were already clamped on the rod, when Dan Fowler's driving right arm smashed a hard fist into the banker's jaw. The man jerked backward, half stunned. Dan leaped forward, cocked that right fist of his and let it go like a pile-driver into Worthen's solar plexus. The banker doubled up with a grunt of agony, and sagged, retching sickeningly, to the floor.

"That," Dan Fowler muttered harshly, "was for Kimo Waite. . . ."

Two *kanaka* patrolmen led the gasping, snarling prisoner back up the ramp again. Worthen was jerked along none too gently. One of those uni-



formed figures had been a cousin of Kimo Waite's.

Venom beaded the Inter-Island Trust Company official's eyes as they glared into Dan Fowler's face in the open moonlight. The construction-gang doctor was adding a left shoulder to the special agent's list of bandaged anatomy, before the prisoner's egotistic curiosity overcame his rage to the point of permitting coherent words.

"It was my voice, G-man! You recognized my voice, down there! That's the only way you *could* have known, before—before you saw me. I left no tracks!"

**T**HE special agent's lips drew back from pain-set teeth in a grimace which might have been a smile.

"I had my first hunch before I ever set eyes on you, Worthen. Before that first interview, on the golf course, I mean."

"Impossible!"

"It was when my assistant, Miss Vane, was describing the break-up of your *hui* to me. You were, as she put it then, 'in charge of loans' at your bank. That meant you had money to play with. It also meant you had a finger on other men's money, other men's losses, other men's financial troubles. Since money-greed was so clearly the motivating factor with all of you—I said to myself, 'Watch Worthen'."

The prisoner leered. "A sheer guess!"

"At that time, yes. Although it was no 'guess' that, after the loss those other four men had taken in the deal you so shrewdly backed out of, a banker was in a good position to crack the whip over them. It wasn't long before I had more to go on."

"For instance?" Worthen sneered.

Dan looked at him almost pityingly. "Rosino started the ball rolling. He was so obviously eager that I investigate you, although there was no special feud between you two at least on public record. That eagerness indicated—*fear*. You'd been squeezing him. Making him play your game."

Dan Fowler rolled down his blood-stained sleeve, as the doctor finished.

"Then came our own two interviews. You told me all about mortgaging the Kauluoa land opposite the reef—you had to admit that, because I stood such a good chance of stumbling on the fact elsewhere. Yet, as you yourself pointed out, the land was worthless."

"A client's good will—"

"Is no reason for a sound bank to accept inadequate security. What, I asked myself, could make a shrewd, successful loan officer regard that desolate beach as valuable? And why was it the same land on which Turk Bailey's drowned body was found?"

"That's no proof!" Worthen glared. "Words, words, just words!"

"But words to the point. That land must have had some value, and you must have known about it—otherwise, no mortgage. If you knew, it stood to reason it was because David Kauluoa had revealed that special value to you to secure his loan."

"Pipe dreams!"

"What could David know, that no one else knew, about this waste beach property? Harry Stock answered that question for me. Although, like most old customs, such inherited secrets had died out in Hawaii, still, oldest sons of the *Alii* had traditionally possessed knowledge of their ancestral tombs. So perhaps David knew. Perhaps you were, in reality, mortgaging a treasure cave."

A greedy glint of memory shone in Worthen's eyes at the disclosure, lighting his whole tense face with a hungry craving for vast wealth which was in itself a confession. Then the glow faded. The banker's countenance became a sneering, insolent mask again.

"It seemed to me from the first," Dan Fowler continued, "that the stake behind such an elaborate and cold-blooded campaign would have to be greater, and more certain, than a mere *chance* of the swamp's being sold to the Government *if* the reef were abandoned. If it wasn't to get the powder plant onto some other parcel of land, then our criminal's object was to get it away from this particular site on which construction was proceeding."



DAN paused a moment for emphasis. "Of the five men in that swampland corporation, no one but you knew of the cave, at first, and that it was dangerous to have explosives on this reef. Crabbe knew eventually, buying his tip from Stock, but by then the disasters which threatened the reef were already under investigation. So Crabbe was in the clear on that score. It came back to—you."

"Why not the others?" Worthen mouthed. "Why pick on me? Delman—he's in the business of collecting relics—"

"But it couldn't be Delman. He couldn't know about the cave. Having sold out his employer to Crabbe, Stock wouldn't then have revealed to Delman that any treasure had been discovered. Neither Ambrew nor Rosino were acquainted with Stock or David; so they couldn't be after the cave's contents. Once again, it came back to you."

Dan Fowler's voice was harsh. "You had granted that Kauluoa loan, Worthen. And the relics were the only real security the land contained. Like so many half-civilized pagans, young David found superstition battling with modern money-lust in his veins. He'd never arouse his ancestor's ghostly ire by *selling* those trophies. But he wasn't above *pawning* them, so long as they remained in the tomb."

Between his watchful *kanaka* guards, Worthen jerked forward beligerently, snarling.

"And in those very words, you've broken up your own case, Fowler! What good did knowing about the relics do me? They weren't mine. I couldn't sell them. If they were missing from the cave, David would have called me a thief all over Oahu."

"True," the special agent nodded. "That puzzled me, at first. So long as that stretch of shore belonged to David, you couldn't profit by your knowledge; despite the mortgage. *But* if you could foreclose, and then personally buy in the 'worthless' land from your own bank for a song—what a fortune you stood to make! All rights to the relics would be yours."

"If you have any regard for facts,"

Worthen sneered, "you can easily check on the fact that we *didn't* foreclose!"

"But you would have, when the legal time arrived. David could never have met that mortgage." Dan Fowler's gray eyes were unswerving. "The legal delay in your taking over the property was the very reason for all that has happened on this reef. You had millions, so to speak, on ice. And you had to protect them from the danger of destruction by accidental explosion. If the reef blew up before the mortgage could be foreclosed, the treasure in the cave would be wiped out. Therefore, you had to stop construction on the reef. Not that you got away with it!" Dan Fowler smiled, but there was no humor in it.

"Now, then—when the reef became the survey commission's inevitable choice, you sold out your shares in the swamp—so that your own disinterestedness in whatever happened afterward might be clearly established. Then you began to create trouble on the reef, and to implicate the other swampland stockholders."

"Remember, you were a banker, holding the whip over four men who had just taken a crushing financial loss. With offers of the bank's support to see them through, you could drive them as you liked, make them slander, fight, kidnap, even kill. Or you could turn on the heat, with threats concerning their various existing debts. Rosino's fear of you was only one indication. That campaign you forced Ambrew to stage against me was another. For who but your bank could control the policies of a newspaper publisher?"

"You're mad, insane!" the banker snarled. "If you think all this will convince a jury—"

"All I expect the jury to believe," Dan Fowler smiled grimly, "is what you yourself have admitted in front of Federal Agent Kendal and two police witnesses. Think back over what we've both said, Worthen. You'll see what I mean."

THE proud white steamer *Hawaiiana*, sister ship of the *Pacifica*, slipped slowly down the sunlit



harbor.

Behind her, where the gray Aloha Tower thrust up against the vivid sky, the Royal Hawaiian band could still be faintly heard, like some orchestra in a fading dream. The friendly faces of the polyglot crowd on the pier had reduced to brown buttons. The good-bys, the laughter, the well wishes of the hospitable island had dwindled in the ship's wake.

To the garland-decked voyagers, all leaning on the shoreward side, the last strands of song drifted nostalgically, as tenuous as the sound of a bird's flying.

"*Aloha oe*—farewell to thee—until we meet again—"

Sally Vane's voice was almost a sigh. "So it's over," she murmured. "Case closed."

"Case closed," Dan Fowler nodded, his freshly bandaged figure tall and distinguished at the rail beside her.

"There's one thing, though, that I still can't understand." Sally's blue eyes were watching the green, receding line of the mountains; but Dan Fowler knew her mind was somewhere else. "That's about Turk Bailey. Why did Worthen kill him *that* way—and then arrange the body so that everyone'd know that it was murder?"

"To implicate Crabbe," the special agent explained quietly. "Of course, David knew of Turk's discovery and, we may assume, of Grandma Kauluoa's second lodger's defection in the matter of the envelope. David, upset, would go to Worthen, naturally, afraid the relics would be moved, and innocently believing that Worthen would protect them because they were his bank's security."

"I still don't—"

"Worthen's first move, after removing Roger Lurton, in order to bury the museum man's knowledge of the cave and its treasures, would be to hotfoot it to the cave with his tear gas, ready to take on whoever threatened the treasure. That gas was another strand in his noose, by the way. Banks keep those gas grenades on hand, as a precaution against stickups. But newspapers, museums, factoties and brokerage offices don't. Worthen

was the only man with instant access to a tear gas bomb."

Sally nodded. "And once he reached the cave?"

"He met Turk, gassed him before Turk could fight back, and then committed murder. Drowning was the easiest way at hand, and it had the extra advantage of leaving no bullets or knife wounds that might prove their source. By removing the possibility of an accident, through dressing the body and placing it where it was found, he then *established* the death as murder. So the police had to start hunting a killer."

"What good did that do Worthen?" the blond girl puzzled. "Most killers try to cover up—"

"But Worthen wasn't the man they'd tie Turk up with! That would implicate Stock and Crabbe. The killing put Crabbe in a tough spot. A spot which kept him away from the cave, despite his knowledge of it."

"So *that* was it!"

Dan nodded.

"Caught hanging around there, Jedtham Crabbe would have been pinched for sure. And he knew it. He was so jittery, he even kidnaped me, to keep from having his knowledge of the reef's existence made public. What Crabbe bought from Stock was—plenty of white elephant. Or a bear by the tail." The special agent looked moodily out to sea. . . .

Sally straightened, fingering the many strands of fragrant blossoms about her neck.

"So it's good-by to Hawaii, Dan. Five days to Los Angeles. And then home. Washington. Pennsylvania Avenue."

"Glad," Dan Fowler queried, "or sorry?"

**S**ALLY'S eyes held a faraway look. "A little of both. These islands would be a wonderful place to spend a honey—I mean, to just visit in." Her cheeks flushed scarlet.

"Dan, there's an old superstition that you must throw all your *leis* overboard as your ship passes Diamond Head. Then, if they float ashore, that's a sign you'll come back to Hawaii some day."



"We can always try out one more superstition," Dan Fowler agreed, with a little quirk to his smile. Overboard went the *leis*.

But, Inspector Dan Fowler well knew, there was work to be done before he and Sally Vane would see Ha-

waii again. More criminal Caesars would rear their ugly heads, defying the F. B. I. to chop them off. But when that certain challenge was again raised, Uncle Sam's platoons of law and order would be first on the scene to halt the march of crime.



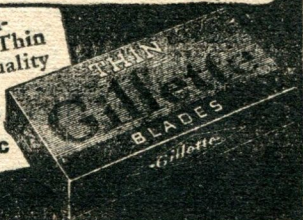
DAN FOWLER, Fighting Man-Hunter of the F. B. I., Tackles a  
Gigantic Crime Conspiracy in CRIMSON CRUSADE,  
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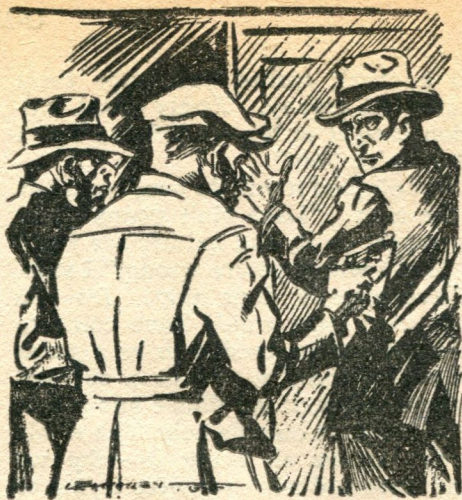


**Genuine THIN GILLETTE BLADES**



# OFFICIAL REPORT

They Called Him "Gabby"—  
and He Sure Could  
Talk Turkey!



*He sticks an automatic into my back, hard*

By **JOHN BENTON**

*Author of "Duane of the F.B.I.," "The Killer's Boomerang," etc.*

I'M standing just outside of the hotel room like I was listening to what's going on inside when these two guys sneak up on me. One of them sticks an automatic into my back hard as I turn and look at them.

"All right, wise guy," he says. "We figured there was a G-man snooping around and we was doing some good guessin'."

I just stand there for a moment, so close to the door and I can smell the fresh paint on it. They had caught me all right, but there was one thing they didn't know, and that was that I'd been inside the room and seen the dead man sprawled out on the bed. The corpse was what had been my partner on this case, Steve Lake, and I was sure the guys who had killed him hadn't left anything that would tie them up with the murder.

They say that I'm a pretty good F. B. I. man, the only trouble being that I talk too much, and lots of times what I say don't make much sense. That's why I'm called "Gabby" Gibson. All the same, I've found times when my chatter helps me out plenty.

"Won't you walk a little faster, said the whiting to the snail," I says as I look at the two hard guys who have me covered. "Baa, baa, black sheep!"

"The guy's nuts," says my little playmate with the automatic jammed against my back.

All of a sudden I grab the door and

start to slam it back towards us, as it opens outwardly. Both of those lugs reach out and give the door a push with their hands—so that it closes fast.

I'm not standing there counting sheep. I sock the guy with the automatic with a hard right and send him flying across the corridor so fast that he drops his gun. The other guy makes a dive for the automatic at the same time that I do, and he gets my knee in his face. Then I get the automatic. I'm covering the guy I just kneed when the other one grabs me by the ankle—and pulls me down. As I drop my head hits the floor of the corridor and I go out cold.

**W**HEN I come out of it I find that I'm on the back seat of a sedan and there is a guy on either side of me, and two more up front. It's still night and we're heading toward a lonely spot out in the country. Not being dumb I figure there are only going to be four guys that will come back from that little joy ride, and I won't be one of them.

"But what I don't see," I says talking fast, "is why you guys didn't just bump me right there at the hotel like you did Steve Lake. Of course you killed him because he was wise to you passing the hot money through that little hotel. We knew that the night clerk was working with you, and whenever any of the guests got change, or



had a check cashed you gave them counterfeit money. Pretty good imitation cash it is too—but Steve and I got wise to you.”

“Lot of good it will do you,” said one of the men. “Lake ain’t gonna make any report on it, and neither are you.”

“That’s where you’re wrong,” I says. “We’ve already done that. Do you think that Lake would have come to the hotel and pretended to be a guest last night, and I would have checked in there today, if we didn’t know that we would have outside help. The whole Bureau knows all about it—why we went there and what we were trying to do.” I laughed. “That crazy talk I pulled when you caught me outside the door of Steve Lake’s room was code. I’d been inside and took the phone off the hook—the operator had me connected with the New York F. B. I. office.”

“Think he might be telling the truth, Barton?” asked the guy on my left nervous-like. “We didn’t look inside the room you know—that phone might have been off the hook and he was talking loud.”

“What’s the difference,” says Barton, who appears to be the leader of the gang. “The G-Men will never catch up with us, and this guy won’t talk. They haven’t a thing on us.”

“Except your fingerprints,” I says. “What do you think I tried to open that door for? So you guys would grab it like you did—the paint on it was still sticky enough to get some nice clear fingerprints!”

“He’s right!” snaps Barton. “We did leave our fingerprints on that door—and after all the trouble we went to wearing gloves when we bumped Lake!”

“You’ve been followed ever since you left the city,” I says calmly, as I catch the reflection of the headlights of a car behind us. “My men are coming now.”

**T**HE car behind came closer—and suddenly a siren starts wailing. The driver of the sedan curses and

steps hard on the gas, the car behind us really starts moving then. One of the guys in the sedan grabs up a submachine-gun and starts firing at the coupe behind us. That was the mistake of his life, the guys in the coupe start letting bullets fly thick and fast. They hit the rear tires of the sedan. The car goes flying off the road and crashes into a tree.

The driver is killed, and the rest of us banged up pretty bad, but I can still move around—and before the three guys with me get a chance to think I grab the submachine gun, make a leap out of the car and stand there covering them with it.

“What the hell is all this about,” demands two uniformed state patrolmen as they come running up with their guns in their hands and holler:

“Who are you and the rest of these guys?”

I tell them fast and show them my badge. They believe me and in a few minutes we have the three murdering counterfeiters handcuffed and ready to be taken in.

The leader Barton, proves yellow—and tells where the printing press and the counterfeit cash is hidden—which is in the basement of an old store near the hotel.

So you see, Chief, that’s how the whole thing worked out. I was just bluffing, stalling for time when I made that crack about those guys being followed.

I just seen the lights of a car behind us—and kept talking.

The state police car just blew the siren because they wanted to pass the sedan. They didn’t intend to stop it or anything like that until those dumb lugs got excited and started making trouble.

Sure I know that I was bluffing, but the fingerprints are on that hotel door and you might have been able to get the gang after they bumped me. So that’s my report, Chief—and even if they do call me Gabby I’m glad I talked myself out of that one!

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See FEDERAL FLASHES, Page 112, for Important  
Announcements Regarding Next Month's Issue

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# J. EDGAR HOOVER

DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

## Says: SAVE YOUTH— PREVENT CRIME!\*

**T**HE solution of the crime problem is comparatively simple of statement and, in the same breath, the most difficult of all human problems in execution. It consists in the rearing of law-abiding youth. The functioning of youth movements has an inestimably beneficial effect upon the welfare of the juvenile members of our communities, and any work which improves the moral outlook and character of the younger members of society justifies itself in the dividends which posterity will receive.

Our youthful delinquency is a problem which strikes into practically every home in America. Every parent should give the deepest consideration to this problem, because the responsibility for youth in crime today rests on the door-step of the home. We have youth in crime because of the lessening of parental responsibility and family discipline. It is due to a tendency to evade responsibility that parents in many instances allow their children to stray.

In straying, they commit crimes which send so many of our boys and girls into penitentiaries and reformatories, which in reality are "criminal colleges," where they are either educated into further criminality by hardened recidivists or pampered by crime-coddlers into the belief that they can commit new infractions with impunity.

### Splendid Work

None of those interested in law and order can afford to overlook the splendid work which is being done in the field of crime prevention. The bringing of opportunities to young boys for supervised recreation, affording them possibilities of developing athletic skill in all kinds of sports, bringing them



*J. Edgar Hoover*

together for rational, decent social diversions, permitting them to acquire a balanced, sane outlook upon life by reason of their association with adults whom they admire and who can directly by example or otherwise instill the highest moral principles and ideals—all of these movements are worthy.

### Influence of Home Life

Apprehending criminals and punishing them is only a part of the solution to the problem of crime. Producing honest citizens is the major objective in which we are all interested. This can only be done if the home life is of an uplifting character and if those men and women who have the interests of their country at heart devote some time, thought, and attention to the discharge of this most important duty.

Law and order present to the citizens of this country a problem in Americanism, and particularly is this true today. It behooves us to retain that spirit of Americanism that was handed down to us by the founding fathers. We have in this country a treasure which we must preserve, protect, and defend. Subversive alien theories and isms are not only a drastic contrast to American ways of thinking, feeling, and acting, but they stand for a complete overthrow of established ideals of American life and the philosophy of government to which America is dedicated. This encroachment must be met, countered and overcome. We must hold fast to those original ideals of democracy which were promulgated at the birth of the nation and which have promoted its growth and development throughout the years.

\* Taken from a recent address of J. Edgar Hoover, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, before the Economic Club at Detroit, Michigan.



# Public Enemies

By  
Clayton  
Maxwell

"LITTLE"  
JOE HANLEY

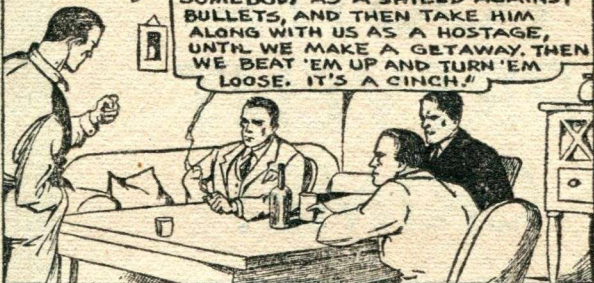
A Regular G-Men Feature

JOSEPH HANLEY, KNOWN AMONG HIS CRONIES AS "LITTLE JOE," WAS A YOUNG SIOUX CITY, IOWA, THUG WITH A LONG POLICE RECORD OF PETTY CRIMES. SICK OF SMALL-TIME THIEVERY, HANLEY EVOLVED A DARING METHOD OF ROBBERY WHICH INVOLVED KIDNAPING AS A MEANS OF A SUCCESSFUL GETAWAY.

AT LEAST A DOZEN TIMES HIS METHOD WAS SUCCESSFUL, AND EACH TIME HE VIOLATED THE FEDERAL LINDBERGH LAW, DRAGGING HIS BRUISED AND BLEEDING VICTIMS ACROSS STATE LINES, UNTIL THE G'MEN TOOK UP HIS TRAIL. HANLEY WENT INTO HIDING, BUT FOR THREE YEARS THE G-MEN KEPT UP THEIR SEARCH, UNTIL THEY CAPTURED HIM AT LARAMIE, WYOMING, AND BROUGHT AN END TO HIS CRIMINAL CAREER.

HANLEY'S GANG WAS COMPOSED OF YOUNG THUGS; CHARLIE KNIGHT, MILO JENSEN, EARL EGAN AND "BUD" HOOVER. HE ALWAYS DISCUSSED HIS PLANS IN DETAIL.

SEE? I KNOW IOWA -- I'VE CASED A NUMBER OF JOBS, BUT WE MAKE MINNEAPOLIS OUR HEAD-QUARTERS. THIS THROWS THE COPS OFF OUR TRAIL. WE ALWAYS KIDNAP SOMEBODY AS A SHIELD AGAINST BULLETS, AND THEN TAKE HIM ALONG WITH US AS A HOSTAGE, UNTIL WE MAKE A GETAWAY. THEN WE BEAT 'EM UP AND TURN 'EM LOOSE. IT'S A CINCH.



HAVING CASED THE LIVE STOCK NATIONAL BANK IN SIOUX CITY, HANLEY AND HIS DESPERADOES JUMPED ERNEST NEWMAN, A MESSENGER, CARRYING \$1,500 INTO THE BANK. NEWMAN FIRED AND MISSED, THE THUGS KNOCKED HIM DOWN.

HIT HIM AGAIN!

GRAB HIS SATCHEL! THAT'S WHERE THE DOUGH IS!



DRAG HIM OUT TO OUR CAR.

THAT NIGHT, BRUISED AND BLOODSTAINED, NEWMAN STAGGERED INTO FORT SNELLING, MINNESOTA. HE IMMEDIATELY GOT IN TOUCH WITH THE G-MEN IN MINNEAPOLIS. IT'S A CLEAR CASE OF KIDNAPING! WE'LL HANDLE IT. CAN YOU IDENTIFY YOUR ABDUCTORS?

I MET THEM AGAIN. BUT NONE OF THESE PICTURES LOOKS ANYTHING LIKE THEM. I OVERHEARD THEM WHISPER ABOUT MINNEAPOLIS. THEY MUST LIVE HERE!



G-MEN COMBED MINNEAPOLIS FOR MONTHS, BUT COULD FIND NO TRACE OF NEWMAN'S ABDUCTORS. IN THE MEANTIME, HANLEY AND HIS CRONIES HAD ROBBED BANKS, STORES AND GAS STATIONS THROUGHOUT IOWA, ALWAYS ABDUCTING AN EMPLOYEE AS HOSTAGE. FINALLY LOCAL OFFICERS RAIDED A SIOUX CITY APARTMENT. IN IT THEY FOUND A LETTER FROM EARL EGAN, OF MINNEAPOLIS, BOASTING OF ONE OF THE JOBS. G-MEN ENTERED EGAN'S APARTMENT AND ARRESTED HIM.

PUT THEM UP, EGAN. WE'RE FEDERAL OFFICERS!



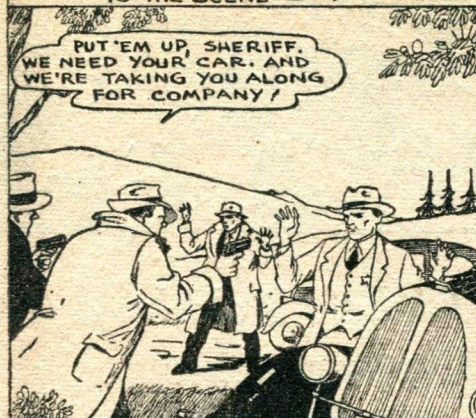
EGAN IMPLICATED KNIGHT, JENSEN AND "BUD" HOOVER. G-MEN PICKED THEM UP IN VARIOUS CITIES. FINALLY THEY CONFESSED EVERYTHING, NAMING HANLEY THE LEADER.

GET THIS JOE HANLEY! I'VE JUST RECEIVED REPORTS THAT A MAN ANSWERING HIS DESCRIPTION IS STAGING RAIDS, WITH THE AID OF A NEW COMPANION, IN IOWA AND MISSOURI. HE IS ONE OF THE TWO OR THREE MOST WANTED MEN ON OUR LIST. SEND OUT PICTURES OF HIM, ALL OVER THE COUNTRY!





IN ONE OF HIS GETAWAYS, HANLEY'S CAR BOGGED DOWN IN A BACKROAD NEAR NISHNABOTNA, MISSOURI. A FARMER REPORTED THE INCIDENT, AND SHERIFF BREDENSTEINER AND HIS DEPUTY HURRIED TO THE SCENE



PUT 'EM UP, SHERIFF. WE NEED YOUR CAR. AND WE'RE TAKING YOU ALONG FOR COMPANY!

THE SHERIFF AND HIS DEPUTY WERE RELEASED IN NEBRASKA. A MONTH LATER, THE PROPRIETOR OF A TOURIST CAMP IN TEXAS NOTICED A RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN ONE OF HIS GUESTS, IN THE COMPANY OF ANOTHER MAN AND TWO GIRLS, AND AN F.B.I. "WANTED" POSTER OF HANLEY. HE CALLED THE POLICE



PUT 'EM UP, HANLEY!

SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOUR PARTY!

HANLEY MADE HIS ESCAPE FROM THE JAIL AT SIOUX CITY, WHERE HE WAS AWAITING TRIAL, BY GRABBING HIS JAILER'S NECK THROUGH THE BARS, AND FORCING HIM TO UNLOCK HIS CELL. HE THEN BEAT THE JAILER OVER THE HEAD WITH THE KEYS UNTIL HE WAS UNCONSCIOUS



THERE! THAT'LL HOLD YOU FOR AWHILE, I GUESS!

AFTER HIS ESCAPE, G-MEN WATCHED A STEAMSHIP AND AIRPLANE DEPARTURE, CERTAIN THAT HANLEY WOULD TRY TO LEAVE THE UNITED STATES, BUT HE NEVER APPEARED. FOR THREE YEARS, G-MEN WERE CONSTANTLY ON THE WATCH FOR HIM. FINALLY, A FELLOW WORKER NEAR LARAMIE, WYOMING, NOTICED A MARKED RESEMBLANCE



SAY, THIS WANTED JOSEPH HANLEY LOOKS LIKE BILL PAXTON WHO WORKS WITH ME ON THIS JOB!

THE WORKER NOTIFIED THE G-MEN. THEY CONVERGED ON LARAMIE. AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF UNDERCOVER WORK, THEY WERE CONVINCED THAT BILL PAXTON WAS JOE HANLEY. ON MARCH 30, 1938, THEY ARRESTED HANLEY ON HIS WAY TO WORK.



DON'T TRY TO RESIST US, HANLEY. WE'RE FEDERAL OFFICERS.

OKAY, YOU G-MEN HAVE GOT ME AT LAST!

HANLEY'S GANG WERE ALL GIVEN LONG PRISON TERMS. HANLEY WAS FOUND GUILTY OF TWO KIDNAPINGS, AND SENTENCED FOR FIFTEEN YEARS AND TWENTY-FIVE YEARS; THE SENTENCES TO RUN CONSECUTIVELY, MAKING A TOTAL OF FORTY YEARS. SO WITH HANLEY'S FORTY-YEAR SENTENCE TO LEAVENWORTH, THE G-MEN ONCE AGAIN BROKE UP A DESPERATE GANG OF MID-WEST ROBBERS AND KIDNAPERS.



IN THE NEXT ISSUE --- ANOTHER THRILLING G-MEN ADVENTURE IN PICTURES





## How to Solve Secret Ciphers Told by a World-Famous Cryptographer

By **M. K. DIRIGO**

**H**ERE are the tip-offs to last month's crypts.

No. 140 had the one-letter word "a" which made an easy problem to start with. The word "the" used three times, supported by the fact that the end-letter "e" was the most frequent letter used, made the problem really one for beginners.

No. 141 offered the "ING" ending in "imitating" and "counterfeiting." The letter "e" was in its usual high-frequency class, and the first word "there" fell before that popular pattern 35. The letter "o" was easily recognized in the 23 pattern of the word "good." As we have pointed out many times, the repeated letter of a four-letter word, index 23, is usually "o."

No. 142 offered the most frequent three-letter word in the language "the," twice, and once as part of the word "they." Here also the letter "o" could be seen in "poor."

In No. 143 the "e" is recognized through

its frequency. A very fine clue in this problem was the three-letter word "and." We repeat here, that any time you see a three-letter word used between two longer words, you have stumbled on the word "and." With "and" established, giving you now the "a" and the "e," the word "are" should have been easy, followed also by "all." Notice that the letter "s" showed up here pretty well in its usual position.

You might have had a little trouble with No. 144 if you decided that the first word "KEEP" had "o" for its repeated letter. But when the frequency count showed that this letter appeared here not only with the greatest frequency, but that it made up about 20% of the entire text, then the choice should have been "E." This would then have given a further clue to the word "EYES."

In all of these problems you need only two or three clues which will in most cases lead you to a finished solution.

### SIX-LETTER PATTERN WORDS

*Index 24 (Continued)*

lAnAry, lAnAte, lAvAbo, lAvAge, lEg-Ent, lIkIng, lImIng, lIvIng, lOhOck, lUxUry.

mAlAdy, mAlAte, mAnAge, mArAud, mAzArd, mErEly, mEtEor, mIkIng, mIlleu, mInIfy, mIrIng, mIxIng, mOdOcs, mOhOck, mOlOch, mOnOdy, mOpOke, mOrOne, mOrOse, mOtOrs, mOtOry, mUtUal, mUtUle.

nAiAds, nAtAIs, nErEid, nObOdy, nOdOse.

oArAge, oEdEma.

pAlAce, pAlAte, pAnAry, pArAde, pArAge, pArAmo, pAvAne, pEsEta, pEtErs, pIlIng, pInIte, pItIed, pItIes, pOlOny, pOrOus.

rAbAte, rAtAny, rAvAge, rEbEls, rEcEnt, rEGEnt, rEhEal, rErEat, rEjEct, rElEnt, rElEtS, rEmEdy, rEnEws, rEpEal,

rEpEat, rEpEls, rEpEnt, rEsEat, rEsEau, rEsEda, rEsEnd, rEsEnt, rEvEal, rEvEls, rEvEst, rEvEtS, rIdIng, rIlIng, rImIng, rIpIng, rIsIng, rIvIng.

sAfAri, sAlAry, sAvAge, sAvAnt, sAvAte, sEcErn, sEdEnt, sElEct, sEnEga, sErEin, sIdIng, sIlIca, sImIal, sImIan, sImIle, sIpIng, sIrIng, sIzIng, sOdOmy, sOlOng, sTAteD, sTAter, sTAtic, sTAue, sTiTch, sTiThy, sTyThe, sUtUre.

tAbArd, tAJacu, tEdEum, tElEdu, tElEsm, tEpEfy, tErEdo, tIbIal, tICIng, tIdIes, tIdIly, tIdIng, tIlIng, tImIng, tIrIng, tOrOse, tOrOus, tUbUle.

uAkAri, uGIte, uNkNit, uNkNot, vAcAnt, vAcAte, vAgAry, vEnEry, vIkIng, vIlIly, vIrIle, vIsIon, vIzIer, wAhAbi, wIlIng, wIpIng, wIrIng, zErEba.



# TRY TO SOLVE THESE CIPHERS—AND SEND IN YOUR SOLUTIONS

## 145. For the Beginner

ABCDCEFG F HIJKL MFNH IO PCKA  
EBI GFQN ABFA GBC PKCE EBFA QA RCFKA  
EBCK RCK FGPCN BCD AI NQKC  
LFSC BCD TITPAFQMG FKN EQKC  
GBC PKCE EBFA QA RCFKA-UJA GBC ECKA!

### Clues:

1. The popular one-letter word.
2. Frequency and various positions in different words will disclose the "E."
3. The common five-letter pattern of the

first word.

4. The well-known four-letter pattern of "ABFA."
5. REMINDER TO YOU EXPERTS—NO PENCIL AND PAPER ON THIS ONE.

## 146. Is it not so, Mr. J. Edgar Hoover?

ABCDCECD FBCDC GDC HCHJC ABI  
CKCDLMNC GOFBIDMFP FBCDC GDC IFBCDN  
ABI DCNMNF MF.

## 147. An epigram from the pen of Oscar Wilde.

AKJLMNNBG BLM CPE BNNPIMQ DC EOM  
FBEDRBC GDCRM EOM HPHM'G IBNSDCT  
GEDRS JALGE BCEP JNPPK.

## 148. Maybe not—but it is still good advice.

HIJKL MN OHP IQP HIJKL MN JRTH  
IQP LNS VRKK QNM WHHM IQL  
XJNWRQHQM

XHNXXH.

## 149. He should be seen, not heard.

FGHIJ KLMN IJOPQ FL JLPQ JOR FLSTMG—  
JG UOPP PGHNS VHRF GSLMTJ FL RWGHX.

## PARTIAL LIST OF CORRECT SOLVERS OF CRYPTOGRAMS

No. 125, 126, 127, 128, 129

K. Satterlee, Glen Ellyn, Illinois; Ah Tin Du, Saint Paul, Minnesota; P. S. MacArthur, Cleveland, Ohio; Z. Zyz, San Antonio, Texas; Roy L. Rogers, Hillsboro, Texas; Mr. Ker, Saginaw, Michigan; Al Walters, El Paso, Texas; Mr. Remdin, San Antonio, Texas; Isabelle M. Murdock, Chicago, Illinois; Kenneth Quinn, Troy, New York.

No. 130, 131, 132, 133, 134

Milton Van Dyke Portales, New Mexico; Woodrow Young, Allentown, Pennsylvania; Yor Sregor, Hillsboro, Texas; P. S. MacArthur, Cleveland, Ohio; Frank Schreiner, New York City, New York; Al Walters, El

Paso, Texas.

No. 135, 136, 137, 138, 139

A. De Benedetto, Brooklyn, New York; Mr. Ker, Saginaw, Michigan; Donald B. Marsh, Tucson, Arizona; Woody Young, Allentown Pennsylvania; Roy L. Rogers, Hillsboro, Texas; Wayne Barker, Fort Amador, Canal Zone; Mr. Remdin, San Antonio, Texas; Al Walters, El Paso, Texas; Charlotte F. Dailey, Providence, Rhode Island; J. N. Sheahan, Denver, Colorado; John Q. Boyer, Baltimore, Maryland; Henry E. Langen, Maple Shade, New Jersey; Gene Gifford, Memphis, Tennessee.

## ANSWERS TO CRYPTOGRAMS IN FEBRUARY ISSUE

- 140 The reverend Henry Ward Beecher  
Called a hen a most elegant creature  
The hen, pleased with that,  
Laid an egg in his hat,  
And thus did the hen reward Beecher!
- 141 There is much difference between imitating a good man and counterfeiting him.

- 142 Watch over the children of the poor for they will bring forth science.
- 143 Meekness and humility are great virtues; they are better than all sacrifices.
- 144 Keep your eyes wide open before marriage—half shut afterwards.

Turn to Next Page for Special Guest Article



# Criminals and Ciphers

A BLACK CHAMBER Guest Article

By **DON L. KOOKEN**

*Supervising Lieutenant, Indiana State Police*

**M**OST criminal investigators are of the belief that cryptograms are rarely encountered in the ordinary criminal investigation and they conclude, therefore, that the subject is not of sufficient consequence to warrant a study of crypt-analysis. Experience has taught us, however, that this belief is unfounded. Criminals do make use of ciphers and codes much more frequently than one would imagine, but often their ciphers are not recognized by the investigator as such.

The complex operations of criminals today necessitates keeping of records and of communication by messenger, mail, and telegraph. To protect these records and communications from disclosing pertinent information, should they fall into the hands of the police, ciphers and codes are resorted to.

The criminal usually employs a simple cipher or a very elemental code, because for practical purposes, he requires a method of enciphering that can be easily memorized, frequently changed, and one that is not so involved as to make its use inexpedient.

## Time-Table Code

Occasionally, however, elaborate codes or ciphers are disclosed, requiring written keys and code books, but the hazard of these code books and keys falling into the hands of the police usually precludes their extensive use.

Many very clever methods of disguising the crypts making them appear as innocent communications have been found.

The route and padded ciphers, therefore, are very popular. An example of the above application was found during the investigation of the operations of John Dillinger and his gang of bank robbers. When the members of the gang were widely separated and a meeting was desired, Railroad Time-tables were dispatched by mail or messenger to those concerned.

The time-tables were checked as to date, time, and place of meeting. To the casual observer, the check marks were of no particular interest. But to the recipient, they were as definite as a written message would have been. In other communication, Dillinger frequently used a modified form of the cipher described by Ared White in "The Spy Net."

The most frequent use of cipher by criminals is in recording telephone numbers and many interesting methods have been encountered. When Ted Newberry, a noted Chicago gangster, was killed near Chesterton, Indiana, in 1932, a small note book was found on his person, the contents of which were in cipher. Cipher experts of the Chicago Police Department deciphered the writings and found them to be a complete telephone directory of the Newberry criminal band.

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## INTRODUCING DON L. KOOKEN

Don L. Kooken, the author of this month's BLACK CHAMBER guest article, is one of the most notable figures in the world of cryptography.

He is the supervising lieutenant of the Indiana State Police and director of their criminological laboratory.

The author of "Cryptography in Criminal Investigations," which appeared in the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, he has had a varied career. From 1909 until 1911 he was with the U. S. Coast Artillery; from then on to 1917, he cruised the Canadian Northwest. After that, in 1917, he was a first lieutenant of infantry, and from 1925 to 1930 he was associated with the Intelligence Unit of the U. S. Treasury.

From 1930 to 1933 he was assistant director of Chicago's Secret Six. Then he became Superintendent of Public Welfare of Omaha, Neb., and since 1934 has been with the Indiana State Police.

He is a special lecturer in police training at Indiana University, and a recognized experienced authority on the subject he discusses in this article.

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## Substitution System

Newberry's system was one of substitution combined with a simple transposition. Letters were substituted for the digits of the telephone number and then the order of digits was reversed. Newberry departed from the popular method of using a ten letter key word for his substitution by using an incoherent key instead. However, his selection of letters was interesting in that the letters did resemble in form the numbers to be represented. His key was as follows:

I V E Y P G Z H B O  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The letter I is identical with the numeral 1, which it was used to represent. The lower case v resembles in form the figure 2. Reversing the letter E, forms the digit 3. The lower case y is similar to the figure 4, and the contour of the upper case P inverted, conforms to the figure 5. The letter G resembles the digit 6, while Z with the lower bar removed, becomes the numeral 7. Closing the top and bottom of the upper case H makes a figure 8, inverting the lower case b, gives us the digit 9, and the letter O is identical with zero.

Of course, all enciphered documents found on a suspected criminal may not have a pertinent bearing upon the case at hand, and the investigator may find that the hours he spends in decipherment have gone for naught. However, it is safe to assume in the beginning that anything of sufficient importance to be enciphered is likewise of sufficient importance to require decipherment.

An amusing illustration of the above is recalled in connection with an investigation made several years ago by the writer. One of the culprits in the case, when arrested, had in his possession a voluminous note book all in cipher. All other leads were temporarily put aside and the combined efforts of all engaged on the case were concentrated upon deciphering the note book. After several hours, a solution was reached and the plain text began to unfold but imagine our chagrin when we found the subject matter to be a rather intimate description of the several "affairs of the heart" of the culprit.

Usually, however, the investigator will be amply rewarded for the time spent in deciphering the criminal's cryptic records. Very often their solution will be the correlating factor in what otherwise would be a most disappointing collection of apparently disassociated facts.

## Numberless Variations

Cipher experts will, I believe, agree that while the basic or fundamental principals of encipherment are few and, in the main, trace their origin to early ages, yet variations or modifications are without number. Usually though when the non-expert sets out to create a method of encipherment, and it is to be remembered that in most instances the criminal is the non-expert, he is very apt to use a system that was devised during the reign of Julius Caesar.

The modification of the basic principal though is apt to be influenced by the vocation, or experience of its inventor; therefore, the analyst must always be receptive to information regarding the circumstances surrounding the use of the cipher, and he should be amenable to suggestions of other investigators, even though they are novices at crypt-analysis.

While investigating a group of persons engaged in disposing of stolen securities several years ago, evidence was amassed relating to the criminal violations of several of the less important individuals but nothing could be adduced from the findings that would definitely connect these individuals with the higher ups, whom we were quite certain were engineering the activities.

## Numerical Cipher

It was finally disclosed that all communications between the leaders and lesser fry were carried on by wire or messenger and the communications were enciphered by a numerical system. A few of the cipher messages were intercepted and with their solution the case was successfully concluded. The important point, however, in this case was that in the analysis of the cipher, one investigator who was entirely uninformed on ciphers and their analysis, furnished the suggestion that led to the solution. It is believed that the readers might be interested in a more detailed account of the cipher method and its solution. The following is the body of one of the intercepted cipher messages.

### THE MESSAGE

59196	29783	94519	26973	98419
52349	67895	19623	94129	73491
92834	91293	41592	93649	19723
98456	97859	12693	74985	91697
29895	67983	49159	62789	34129
56793	84195	23941	69729	89349
15239	41926	97349	12389	41923
49195	23941	92349	16729	85693
41923	97941	98569	72999	

This message was signed by one of the suspected leaders and was delivered to one of the lesser important individuals. It consisted of forty-four groups of five digits each or a total of 220 numerals. The absence of the use of zero immediately eliminated the possibility of it being a dictionary code. The total number of figures suggested groupings of two, four, or five digits, to represent each letter; accordingly, the message was divided into two, four, and five digit groupings and the recurrence of the various groups noted. It was found that there were 37 different pairs with no one pair used more than six times.

Grouping by fours yielded forty-five different combinations and only three repeated, and scanning the five digit groups only one (41923) was found repeated. However, it was noted that the digits 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, 6, 7, 8, ran in regular sequence, while the remaining digit 9 was indiscriminately distributed throughout the message.



This fact seemed to indicate that three distinct elements entered into the representation of each character. After several hours of attempting to apply the three element principal, it had proven fruitless.

An investigator, who had only been passively interested, suggested that in the Army system of visual signalling, commonly called "wig wag," three positions of the flag were used to represent the dots, dashes, and spaces between letters of the Continental Code. Acting on this suggestion, a dot was placed under each of the first series of digits 1 to 4, a dash under each of the second series 5 to 8, and a diagonal line under each digit 9. The first few groups revealed that the assumption was correct. Continuing the procedure, gave the following:

5 9 1 9 6	2 9 7 8 3	9 4 5 1 9	2 6 9 7 3
- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -
9 2 4 1 9	5 2 3 4 9	6 7 8 9 5	1 9 6 2 3
- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -
9 4 1 2 9	7 3 4 9 1	9 2 8 3 4	0 1 2 9 3
- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -
4 1 5 9 2	9 3 6 4 9	1 9 7 2 3	9 8 4 5 6
- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -
9 7 8 5 9	1 2 6 0 2	7 4 9 8 5	9 1 6 9 7
- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -
2 9 8 9 5	6 7 9 8 3	4 9 1 5 9	6 2 7 8 9
- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -
3 4 1 2 9	5 6 7 9 3	8 4 1 9 5	2 3 9 4 1
- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -
6 9 7 2 9	8 9 3 4 9	1 5 2 3 9	4 1 9 2 6
- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -
9 7 3 4 9	1 2 3 8 9	4 1 9 2 3	4 9 1 9 5
- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -
2 3 9 4 1	9 2 3 4 9	1 6 7 2 9	8 5 6 9 3
- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -
4 1 9 3 3	9 7 9 4 1	9 8 5 6 9	7 2 9 9 9
- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -	- / - / -

Translating the combinations of dots and dashes, according to the Continental Code, yielded the following:

## TEN GRAND BONDS DELIVERED YOUR MAN TODAY HOLD UNTIL I ADVISE DISPOSITION

I believe if the criminal investigator will interest himself in ciphers and spend a few hours of his spare time in a study of their solution, he will find a new and valuable tool available for his use. The knowledge of what may be cleverly hidden in the note books and documents of the criminal will stimulate the examiner to a more careful scrutiny of the material that has in the past been discarded by him as seemingly of no value to the case.

## A Wealth of Information

The meaningless numerals enscribed in the memorandum book of the thief may prove to be the names and addresses of the fences who receive the loot. An unintelligible scrawl on the back of an envelope taken from the arrested bank robber may, when deciphered, lead to the apprehension of the other members of the gang. A wealth of information is there for him if the investigator will seek it and be able to recognize it when found.

It is true that to become expert in the solution of the complicated military ciphers and codes requires an especial aptitude and years of diligent study, however, any one possessed of ordinary intelligence, who is interested in his work, and has a persistence that will not brook defeat, can with a minimum amount of study become sufficiently adept to enable him to decipher the types of cipher systems commonly used by the criminal and he will find that he will be well repaid for the little time spent in study.

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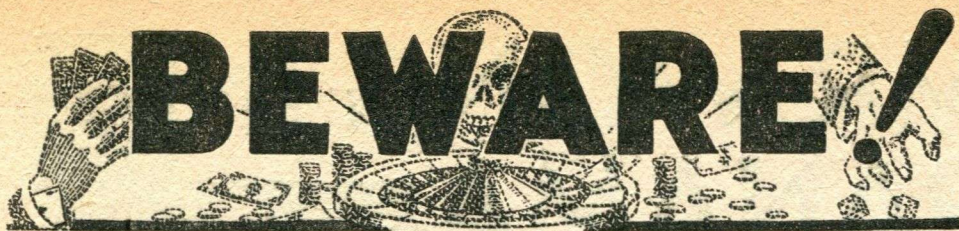
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## EXPOSING THE LATEST CUSTOMS RACKET

This One Is a Pipe for Clever Crooks—  
Watch Out for It!

**D**UE to the current disturbances in Europe, Samuel Alexander, in common with thousands of other people in the United States, received a request from a distant relative in Germany for papers to aid in the securing of a visa from the American Consulate in Berlin. After talking over the matter with his wife, and other members of his family, he decided to aid the refugee.

Several weeks later, while Mr. Alexander was at work, a man in a blue uniform, coat and cap with official-looking insignia rang the bell of the Alexander apartment on West End Avenue. Mrs. Alexander answered the ring, and the "official" said:

"Is this the home of the Samuel Alexander that guaranteed the papers of Herman Goetz of Lubeck, Germany?"

"Yes," replied the birdlike Mrs. Alexander. "Is anything wrong?"

The man smiled a disarming smile, shook his head and said:

**Nothing Wrong, but—**

"Oh, no. There's nothing wrong. It's just that Mr. Goetz has sent some things over from Germany, his baggage, you know. It's down at the Customs warehouse now, and someone will have to claim it, or it will be sold at auction."

Mrs. Alexander, having often read of periodic auctions at the Customs House, at the General Post Office, and other Government buildings, was immediately curious about the procedure to be followed in order to release Mr. Goetz's property. She called her husband on the telephone, and the latter, unable to give the matter too much consideration, because of business demands, advised her to take care of the situation.

The dutiful wife donned her hat and coat, went with the Inspector, and was driven to a warehouse on West Street. There she was shown a crate, marked up in German script, addressed to her husband, and indicating that it had, in fact, come from Herman Goetz of Lubeck, Germany.

"The duties on this shipment amount to \$45," the inspector informed her. "They must be paid before the shipment can be cleared."

Mrs. Alexander was taken aback at this information, but since her husband had advised her to attend to this without too much trouble, she managed to dig up the money, and turned it over to the officer, receiving a receipt.

### Disillusion

The crate was taken out, loaded on a taxicab and driven uptown. When the Alexander family got together that evening, Mr. Alexander was a bit disturbed at the fact that his kindly gesture to his remote cousin, Goetz, had cost him \$45 in hard cash. He was even more disturbed several weeks later when Herman Goetz himself arrived in New York, accompanied by all of his baggage, and disclaimed any connection with the crate. The shipment, when opened, contained old clothes that might have been bought from a rag-picker for a dollar or two.

Upon inquiry, Mr. Alexander discovered that he was not the only one bilked. Hundreds of others had come under this same racketeer's spell. In some cases, where the victim was dubious about claiming the shipment, the racketeer went so far as to take him down to the Custom House, leave the victim seated on a bench in the corridor, while he went into a "private office" which proved to be a washroom upon investigation.

### The Correct Procedure

If you are approached by any such "Customs Officer" as called upon Mrs. Alexander and cheated her of her \$45, before paying any money, get in touch immediately with your local Collector of Customs. His phone number will be listed in the telephone directory. Give him the name and identification number of the supposed Customs Officer, and if he is a phony, you will discover it immediately, and will be able to take necessary punitive steps. At least you will not be out your hard-earned money.

Be sure to tell your friends that you were warned about this new Customs Racket by **BEWARE!** which appears exclusively in **G-MEN** every month.



# MR. WONG IN PANAMA



*The bottle left the bar and described a wide arc before the man could fling it*

**Secret Service Man Richard Wong Stirs Up a Hornets' Nest,  
in the Canal Zone**

## **A Chinese G-Man Story By LEE FREDERICKS**

*Author of "Chinese Puzzle," "The Blue Lotus," etc.*

**T**HE high, persistent screech of the whistle had in it a quality like the screeching of a woman demented, but to Richard Wong, Chinese Secret Service agent in the employ of the United States, it merely meant that the little tin pot South American steamer was at last warping in to the pier at Panama. Which, in turn, meant that stern duty lay ahead.

Wong reached into the patch pocket of his ultra-modern tweed suit, brought out the ornate gold and silver cigarette

case that had been given him for special service with the Department, extracted a highly perfumed oriental cigarette, lit it, left his stateroom, and went up on deck. As he ascended, he donned a pair of tortoise shell glasses and swung a candid-camera.

For an instant his sharp almond eyes, glittering from beneath half closed lids, scanned the waiting throng on the concrete pier. Then he disembarked, and delaying only long enough to satisfy himself that no one seemed to



be interested in following him, set out for his rendezvous at the Coconut Grove in Panama City. He walked briskly, his camera slapping against his side.

It was siesta time when he reached the Coconut Grove Cafe. The tables were fairly well taken up by uniformed officers of both the Army and Navy. Wong, however, had no business with the men in uniform, nor was he interested in a drink. He took a quick look around to get his bearings, then threaded his way among the tables to where a set of stairs in the back of the place ran to a dining balcony above.

The booths on the floor above were closed in so that the occupants couldn't be seen by the prying eyes of the citizenry. Wong counted the doors until he came to number five, then rapped softly in a series of three repeated knocks.

There was no "Come in" from the other side. Instead the door merely swung open just far enough for Wong to edge his body through. Inside, he took a seat at the table.

The door closed. His chief, Durbano, sat down beside him.

"Followed?" Durbano asked tersely.

Wong smiled. "I think not."

Durbano looked relieved. "The agents that are working against us here usually cover every boat from the United States thoroughly," he said quietly. "That's why I asked."

Wong extracted another cigarette from his case and lit it from the butt of the first.

"In the proverbs of my forefathers it is written that it is far wiser not to give scent to the tiger at all than to give scent and then hide cleverly. For the tiger, if unaware of the presence, is content with his belly as it is.

"I counted on them keeping a sharp eye on arrivals from the United States. That is the reason I took a plane to Venezuela and then came through to here on a Venezuelan steamer."

Durbano chewed his stogie furiously. He reached into his inside coat pocket and brought out a bundle of documents that were held together with a rubber band. He snapped the band from them and spread them on the table for Wong to see.

**T**HEY were photostats, Wong saw at a glance, and written in Japanese characters. He picked them up and examined them closely. His breath exhaled sharply and he whistled in a very unoriental tone of surprise as he read the first few paragraphs of the papers before him. One line in particular struck him:

"Our hornets will blow the gates of the canal to bits before the defense can even imagine what has happened," the line read.

Farther down on the page were references to American first line ships that were ready to defend the canal, and other findings of spies regarding the military defenses of the canal.

Then, outlined for the benefit of the reader, for whom the dispatch was intended, was a complete method for an effective air attack.

Durbano waited until Wong had examined the papers thoroughly.

"We have checked all the sentries at the gates," he said heavily. "There is no leak there. Beside that, we have had divers go below at each gate to see if any explosives have been planted. Nothing there. As to secret airfields with enough planes to make a mass attack and blow up the locks before we could defend them, there are no such things. Besides, we have detectors that would put us on guard before planes got within ten miles of the military zone, let alone the canal. All in all, we're in a very good position to beat off any enemy—"

"Except the enemy that eats your rice as your friend," Wong cut in crisply. "I am afraid that our agents have looked too far afield—"

He stopped abruptly, rose to his feet.

"The fishing fleet that operates from the Canal Zone is almost entirely in Japanese hands, is it not?" he asked.

Durbano snorted. "We aren't going on any more fishing expeditions!" he exclaimed. "The fishing boats that call at the port have been examined time and again in the belief that something might be found that would incriminate the owners and connect them with an espionage ring. I'm convinced that that line of investigation is a waste of time."

Wong shook his head. "The men



who investigated this matter before were those of the white race. It has been said that 'the fox suspects all scents but those of his own kind.' He turned toward the door. "That's where I come in," he said softly. "So long."

Richard Wong wasted no time in the saloon downstairs. Before he had left Washington he had been over all the reports that the canal unit of the Military Intelligence had turned in. A number of places he knew to be under suspicion by the Military Unit, but the thing that struck him more than anything else was that the places all centered somewhere in the neighborhood of the general fishing wharf and the fish market where the boats came in.

That would be natural in one way because most of the fishing boats were of Japanese ownership, and the crews of the boats were also Japanese—but there were a few things that Wong wanted to clear up in his own mind.

One was the shirt shop that apparently rarely sold a shirt, and the other was the barber shop that had kept open for more than a year though it rarely had a customer.

**T**HE whole neighborhood was padlocked tightly as Wong strolled around the streets near the fish wharf. The natives of Panama take their siesta seriously, and from the hours of eleven in the morning until two in the afternoon business shops are locked, and the whole population either goes home to lunch or else congregates in a barroom. The street, as Wong expected, was deserted.

First he looked over the barber shop and the shirt shop. Both of them stood side by side on a narrow street that had known the tramp of Henry Morgan's men. Both buildings had stout hardwood doors on which fool proof brass locks glistened, even though their neighbors in business were content with old-fashioned padlocks.

The places from the outside looked impregnable to anything but a cannon. Wong spotted a building on the side of the street opposite the barber shop where a large balcony extended over the sidewalk, and a little beyond, over the street proper.

Under the balcony was a deep set,

old-fashioned Spanish doorway where the masonry was at least two feet thick. Wong proceeded to conceal himself in the doorway. He would see what he would see.

He didn't have long to wait. A man came along the street and paused at the barber shop. Wong watched him as he took a key from his pocket, looked carefully up and down the street and then inserted the key in the lock and opened the door. He was surprised on looking up to see the shutter on the house on his own side of the street open slightly and then close again as though a lookout was above and wanted to observe the visitor.

The first visitor to the barber shop was succeeded by another, and then another, until six men of apparently varying walks of life had entered the place. One appeared to be a ragged fisherman, yet another a prosperous business man, who wouldn't under ordinary circumstances, talk to the type who had entered before him. Each time, as the men entered the shop, the shutter above opened slightly and then closed again.

Promptly at two o'clock the barber who operated the shop came down the street, and threw the doors open for business. Wong set out from where he was concealed, and keeping close to the walls of the houses so that he couldn't be seen from above, strolled down the street past the shop. It was as he expected; though none of the six men who came to the shop had left, the place was empty.

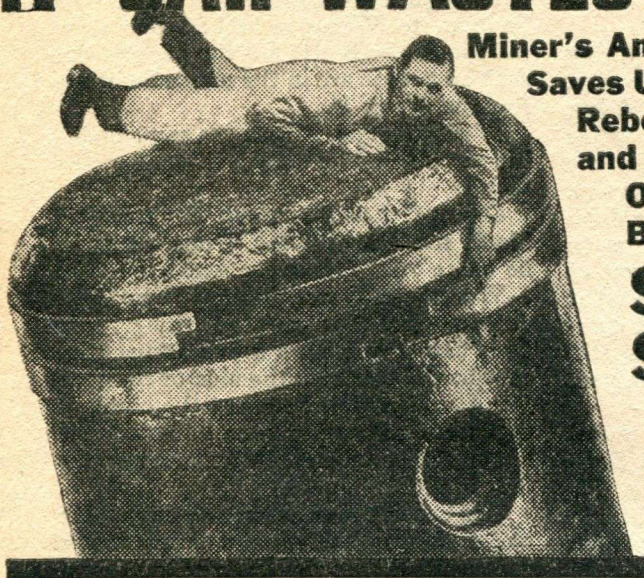
Wong's sharp eyes took in the interior of the place as much as possible without exciting suspicion, and then walked on. The barber shop was a one room affair like many of the business houses in the old section of the city. With the exception of the three barber chairs, and the mirrors that ran from the ceiling to the floor, the place was solid masonry that had been built in the old days to withstand heavy fire.

As he turned the corner he took one surreptitious look back. Instantly, he galvanized into action. The shutter of the house opposite was now not only wide open, but the almond eyes of a woman were staring at him vindictively. He would be known now to at

*(Continued on Page 102)*



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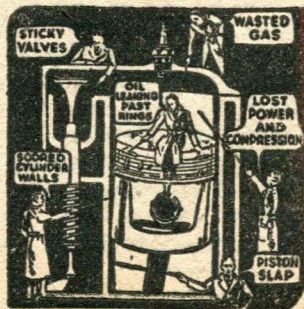
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(Continued from Page 100)

least one member of the band, and before nightfall they would be hunting him out for quick death for being too close.

**A** CANTINA, a common drinking place for the riff raff of the city, caught his eye in the next block. Wong entered quickly, knowing the place would have a telephone. He gave the place a quick but all-embracing survey. Three laborers who seemed to be dock workers were lined at the bar with glasses of cheap white rum in front of them. In one corner he spotted what he was looking for, the public telephone. It was not enclosed in a booth, but open. That could not be helped. He would keep his voice low.

In his excitement he gave his number to the astonished operator in English, then rapidly remembering his whereabouts, corrected himself in Spanish. With the regular Spanish inefficiency he had to wait nearly a minute before the sleepy voice on the other end answered.

The responding clerk at military headquarters was not as slow as the public telephone operator and he was connected with the party he wanted at once. In a terse voice he described his findings.

"I am going to keep watch from the corner until you send reinforcements," he told the astounded Durbano. "If I am not to be found, wait until nightfall and arrest all who come from the barber shop. Incidentally, I might warn you about the house across the street. It is—"

He stopped abruptly as a shadow fell over the telephone. He dropped the receiver and turned to face the menace.

In a flash he saw that he had unwittingly walked into a plant that had been set up to protect the neighborhood's nefarious activities. Two of the three men who had been standing at the bar were now blocking his path so that he couldn't leave the place, while the third of the group went out the door to the street. There were no words spoken. All seemed to act as though each knew his duties.

Wong's eyes narrowed as he watched

the men posed waiting for him to make the first move. One of the men reached toward the bar where his fingers closed around the neck of a rum bottle.

Though it took less than a second to happen, to Wong it looked like slow motion as the bottle left the bar and described a wide arc in the man's hand before he flung it.

Wong ducked. With the same dodging movement he closed in on the two men.

One of them, a giant Panamanian black, made a dive for Wong's legs as he came on. The move was a mistake—Wong's jiu jitsu training was an ideal defense for that sort of thing. His knee came up with a quick thrust that caught the black on the side of the jaw. With satisfaction he heard the crack of the jaw bone coming in contact with his knee. The man went down and out, his jaw broken.

The second man wasn't so easy. He had evidently had some training in the rudiments of self defense, and kept himself well out of Wong's grip while he tried to heave one blow after another at Wong's midriff.

Not a single blow landed, and finally the man tried an incautious haymaker for Wong's chin. It was what the Secret Service man had been waiting for. With the rapidity of a striking serpent his gripping hand came out and caught the other's wrist. A side step and Wong brought his other arm up under the man's elbow in the deadly devil's handshake grip.

**T**HE strain was more than flesh and bone could stand. The arm broke at the elbow like brittle matchwood. A swift blow to the neck with his open palm put the man out of combat entirely.

But the blow was too late for Wong to effect his escape. Even as his antagonist toppled to the floor, two squat oriental seamen entered the place led by the man who had slipped out the door. Wong didn't even have breathing time between the last man and this new attack.

His heart sank like a lead plummet as the two men closed in. Here were no ordinary fighters who could be disposed



of with jiu jitsu. Their weaving approach told him immediately that they also were well versed in the oriental art of self defense.

Wong was entirely on the defensive as the men took positions to cut him off from backing to the wall. He retreated as rapidly as he dared without leaving himself open for a quick concentrated attack. As his back came in contact with the wall he crouched and waited for the spring of the two men—it came with the suddenness of a tropical hurricane.

Groping fingers cut through his defense as he covered himself, fingers that were calloused by practice at just this type of fighting. Wong fought gamely. If only Durbano had traced the call when he cut off abruptly, he stood a chance of holding out until a car would come to his rescue from the G2 Army Intelligence Division, only a few short city blocks away.

Wong reached back and grabbed the  
(Continued on Page 104)



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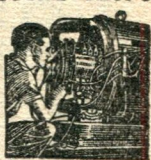
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(Continued from Page 103)

wall telephone for support while he lashed out with his feet. One of the men went down in the first onslaught and Wong had the temporary satisfaction of seeing the other attacker back away from him so that he wouldn't be in range of his vicious pointed shoes.

But the satisfaction was short lived. The man backed only as far as the first table, then grabbing a chair and using it both as a lance and shield he advanced again. This time there was no escape. As the Japanese came in with the chair Wong caught the gleam of steel in the hands of the men who had sneaked out of the bar. There was a flash as the knife was loosed and pinged with a thud into the wall where Wong's head had been but a split second before.

That dodge, though saving his life, cost him the battle. The Japanese closed in on Wong while he was still off balance. Something crashed on Wong's head, there was a singing noise, a brilliant flash of light, and Wong was out of the picture.

For a moment, on coming to, he didn't know where he was. His back was damp through his coat where he was propped up against a dank wall, and a bright light burned on his face. He blinked his eyes to clear the buzzing from his head and looked up at the figure that was standing over him. One glance and his head cleared in a flash.

It was the woman who had looked at him vindictively from the shuttered house.

There was something familiar about her face now that she was at close range, something intangible as though he had seen her somewhere before, though at the moment he couldn't place her.

**I**F the face and dress puzzled him, the voice didn't. Wong jumped inwardly as the woman spoke.

"We meet again," she said, and Wong knew that he was dealing with no woman.

Wong knew he was facing the brains of Japanese espionage in the United States, Count Tagashi Kushawa, a man who had been supposedly dead for more



than a year, but who was alive and masquerading in the skirts of a woman.

Wong smiled ruefully, "I could have hoped for better conditions," he said softly.

Kushawa smiled. "There are chances of making conditions more comfortable for you," he said significantly.

"Meaning of course, that I am alive only because you seek information. Is that correct?"

Kushawa shrugged, "Blunt, but correct."

"And of course you know that I will refuse, and will resort to other recourses. Correct again, am I not?"

"In a sense. But I have no intention of torturing you. Torture to your kind is only meat for resistance. If you don't care to speak voluntarily I am afraid that I will have to subject you to a hypnotic drug."

Kushawa paused. "You know of course that such a drug is dangerous and may do things to the mind that it

(Continued on Page 106)

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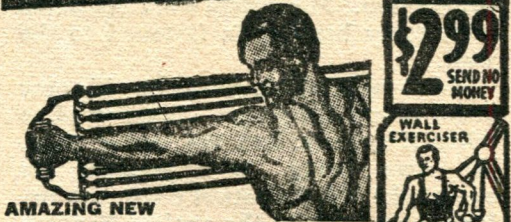
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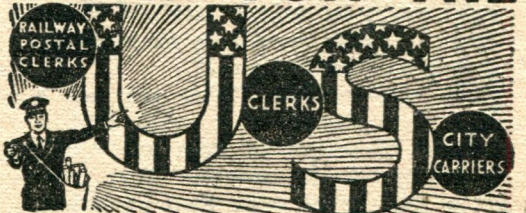
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*(Continued from Page 105)*  
will be impossible to repair."

While the other man spoke Wong secretly tested the bonds on his hands behind him. His wrists were manacled with rusty hand cuffs fastened to the wall.

He considered his situation. He now knew where the people disappeared to when they went into the barber shop. He was being held prisoner in one of the old, forgotten dungeons below ground where the ancient Spanish explorers and conquistadores had once stored gold, and held political prisoners. He was in the very center of the Panama spy headquarters.

If only there were some way of getting clear. He thrilled with the thought and at the same time discovered that the manacles were loose on his wrists, intended for wrists much larger than his own.

If only he could hold Kushawa in conversation while he worked the cuffs off, Kushawa might be in for a considerable surprise.

"You of course base your threat on the fact that my religion tells me that my ancestors will not accept me as a madman," Wong said as calmly as he could, while he quietly strained at the bonds. "There would be no hope for my release, would there?"

The spy smiled. "You are not a child, you know very well that a promise of that sort from me would be empty. I do promise that your death will be of your own choosing, however."

"That is considerate," Wong said ironically. Triumph coursed through him as the first manacle slipped off his wrist after the continued bending of his thumb back over his palm.

Concealing his elation, he shrugged. "There is no helping myself I suppose."

The resignation in his captive's tone surprised Kushawa. He bent forward eagerly. "Tell me then, where is the leak that allowed the United States forces to get hold of our plans on the Canal?"

**T**HE bending forward was just what Wong had hoped for. He decided to risk all in one desperate chance. His

feet lashed out, catching the man off balance. There was no chance of outcry. The surprise was complete. The man tumbled on top of Wong heavily.

Quickly Wong brought the edge of his stiffened hand down on the back of Kushawa's neck. There was a snap. Kushawa jumped convulsively twice and then was still, his neck broken at the medulla oblongata, where a man's neck breaks when he is hanged. As Wong pushed the body over, something metallic caught his eye—a set of keys, and among them an old fashioned large key that evidently was intended for the lock on the manacles. He grabbed the key with his free hand and tried it in the lock. The thing swung open instantly and Wong was free.

Quickly he rose to his feet and stepped over the prostrate body of the master spy. A turn in the niche-like corridor where he was detained led him into a broad underground tunnel. Ahead he could see light where the underground passage came out under the old fish dock. With freedom in front of him he decided to investigate the place before leading a raiding party back from Intelligence Headquarters.

A turn from the route to the water met his eyes. Wong listened attentively before he turned into the tunnel. He didn't want to walk into a trap that might be at the other end, and yet he was curious as to what the place might hold.

But even Wong wasn't prepared for what he saw when he entered a low vaulted spacious room. The place looked like a motor sales room, or the storage place for the boats for a gay regatta. There, row on row, trim and streamlined, were the motor shrouded forms of three-point suspension boats that were whirlwinds for speed on the water!

One look at the bow of the first boat told Wong the grim purpose for which they were intended. A torpedo that had been implanted in the bow and fastened securely, told only too accurately the tale of the deadly work these boats were intended for. They were suicide speedboats!

At a speed of eighty miles an hour



or over they would catapult from under the old fish dock once they were slid into the water by the rollers that lay in the corner of the place, and before the defense of the canal would even know what was happening, the boats would hurtle against the locks of the canal, blowing boat, driver and canal-locks to destruction!

Wong was amazed at the thoroughness of the thinking of these men. With one fell swoop they could, by this means, take away more than fifty per cent of the effectiveness of the American Navy and stand the enemy a good chance of winning a war, at least as far as sea power was concerned!

How the suicide boats got there was now no mystery at all to Wong. They had been transhipped at sea for the fishing boats to smuggle in. Lax investigation of the boats helped the Japs to deliver the things right into the heart of the Canal Zone without detection. There would be no lack of pilots for the work—they would also be furnished at the proper moment by the very crews that manned the fishing boats.

This, Wong thought elatedly, was an amazing discovery. He dashed back along the passage to the tunnel that led out to the water.

**H**E got less than a hundred feet along the original pathway when he stopped stone dead. The way out from under the fish wharf was closed to him. He heard voices coming from that direction. Quickly, he sped back along the tunnel, past his former cell to what he knew would be a cul de sac. His only hope of avoiding the spies was in their not coming back and discovering the body.

The hope was quickly blasted. Wong heard excited voices and then feet running in every direction. The jarring clang of heavy metal told him that the place evidently had steel doors that were being shut off to effectively block his escape. He was trapped!

Desperately he thought of going back and giving battle. He dismissed the thought immediately. The odds would be overwhelmingly against him. Instead, he retreated until a blank wall

(Continued on Page 108)

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(Continued from Page 107)

told him that he was at the end of the passage.

He crouched against the wall waiting for the inevitable outcome. A warm blast of fresh air brushed across him. He straightened as though electrified. An air passage of course! If the place was shut off by steel they must get fresh air from somewhere.

Anxiously he wet his forefinger in his mouth and held it in the air to see if he could locate from which direction the breeze came. It seemed to come from directly overhead, though there was no patch of light.

He surveyed the wall inch by inch until he found the reason for the darkness. A hole went off at a tangent, probably under the foundations of buildings, before it led upward. His heart leaped as he saw the lead-in would accommodate his body in comfort. He leaped, caught the edge, and scrambled up until his shoulder and torso were in the hole. The rest was difficult but possible.

Slowly he inched his way along, sweat oozing from every pore when the passage narrowed so that his body was a tight fit.

It seemed to Wong that he had traveled for miles before he saw the welcome patch of light ahead. He drank in the fresh air in grateful gasps as the exertion of pulling himself along wore out his body.

At last he reached the turn where the vent went upward. For an anxious moment he feared he couldn't twist his body into shape to make it. Sweat pored copiously from his forehead as he got his head and the beginning of his shoulders through and felt himself sticking. With a heave that took every ounce of his strength he both pushed and pulled his way until he felt the cloth of his coat ripping. He had made it!

The rest of the way up was comparatively easy. The passage had widened to a square hole. The rough bricks gave him an easy foothold. In a very few minutes he emerged and found himself on a flat, brick paved, hurricane roof.

Wong's feet stuck to heavy tar as he

# BEST FUN, FICTION AND FOTOS IN



raced across the roof to look down into the street. He breathed an inward prayer that Durbano had heard him right when he was on the telephone. If he had, there would be men loitering below, waiting.

**A**S he reached the edge of the roof he saw there had been no mistake. Four men slouched in each corner at the ends of the block. Two others stood on the opposite side of the street in a position where they could look into the barber shop.

Wong opened his mouth to call—then, without uttering a sound, dropped flat on the roof. The rifle that had been suddenly shoved from the open shuttered house across the way spat viciously. The bullet pinged harmlessly over Wong's head.

Down below on the street bedlam broke loose. There was no need for a cry of warning now. Wong poked his head up to see the shutter disintegrate as machine gun bullets tore it apart.

Wong cursed to himself futilely. Now, if there were only some way of getting the men out from below. The G2 Division could capture the spies without the danger of losing any of its own men. His hands dropped to his sides.

If only he had the camera that had been taken away from him in the fight. He could fire the celluloid that was in the film after rubbing it in the tar on the roof and jam his coat in the air passage. The smoke would be enough to make the spies uncomfortable, and the lack of air would eventually bring them out.

Even as he thought, a grin widened across his face. The spare roll of film in his pocket! He had forgotten about it, but now he remembered. An anxious groping of his pockets proved that the box of film was still there.

Feverishly, he ripped the film from the roll and tore the celluloid part from the paper. He rubbed it in the tar, glancing about the roof as he did so. His eyes lighted with satisfaction upon a half barrel of tar that had been left on the roof by the workmen who had been repairing it.

(Continued on Page 110)



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(Continued from Page 109)

That was all he needed. He rolled the barrel over to the shaft. He ignited the highly inflammable celluloid. He flung it into the shaft and poured the sticky tar down after it. The result was an inferno of smoke and flame as the tar caught from the burning celluloid.

When the fire was going well he jammed the barrel tightly into the hole so that the smoke would be forced down through the shaft and into the tunnel. He then raced back to the edge of the roof, and shouted to the men below to guard both the barber shop and fish dock to see that no one got away.

Durbano had done a good job. At the first sound of actual hostilities, army reserves that had been planted rushed out of their places of concealment. The streets were well patrolled.

Now that Wong was sure the situation was in hand, he raced to the side of the building where a flight of rickety stairs led to the street. He almost flew into Durbano's arms coming up the stairs. "They'll be out in a minute," Wong assured him panting. "No human life can stand what I did to them."

Wong raced into the barber shop, Durbano at his heels. The barber was already in custody, guarded by two soldiers.

"You better train guns on those mirrors," Wong ordered. "They may come out fighting."

**T**HE soldiers looked at Wong as though he had taken leave of his senses, but used to commands, the guns were ready in an instant. The army men were not a moment too soon. The center mirror suddenly swung out into the room like a door, and five choking men stumbled out, a dense voluminous cloud of smoke in their wake. Even the captors choked as they gathered the men in and hastily marched them out of the place.

Durbano boiled with questions as he climbed into the car with Wong. As they swung the corner Wong gave a brief outline of his adventure and his findings below. Quickly he sketched in the death of the Japanese spy that was the head of the gang and his ex-

# BEST FUN, FICTION AND FOTOS IN



plorations and findings concerning the speed boats. While he talked Durbano chewed on his cigar furiously, his eyes centered on the traffic ahead.

Wong smiled as he looked at the ruined clothing he wore on his back. He reached in his pocket, pulled another of his oriental cigarettes out, and puffed thoughtfully for a few moments. "This case was a little violent," he said casually, "though the solution was simple once I was on the right track. Knowing the oriental mind, I couldn't conceive of their calling airplanes hornets, because a hornet is an insect that stays comparatively close to the ground, though I must admit I didn't know exactly what I would find when I went in search of the spies."

Durbano grinned. "I suppose it was your knowledge of the Oriental that made you apply the smoke method so that we got them out without the loss of a man also, eh?"

Wong smiled, "Hardly," he said nonchalantly, "It seems to me that it was a Yankee, and not an Oriental, who said, 'The way to get rid of hornets is to smoke them out.'"

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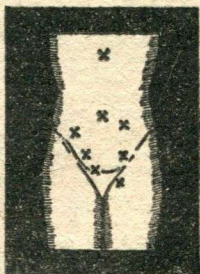
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Many members of the club have formed the habit of writing to us regularly. That's a swell idea! We welcome letters from all readers. Do your bit to help us improve the magazine by sending in all your comments, opinions and suggestions.

Here are some excerpts from just a few typical letters out of the hundreds recently received:

My hobby is photography. I have been a reader of your magazine since the first issue. It is one of the best obtainable. I especially like the true features for people who want to stamp out lawlessness. I have been 12 years a constable and 5 years an honorary deputy sheriff. Keep up the good articles and I will be a reader for life.—Edgar Norman, Pedro, Ohio.

Your magazine is very interesting and instructive.—Tom G. Wight, Phoenix, Arizona.

I can hardly wait for each succeeding issue of **G-MEN**.—Peter H. Eugeheiber, Yonkers, N. Y.

I am a regular reader of **G-MEN** and proud of it. Long live Dan Fowler!—Basil Pearse, Suffolk, England.

I have been an ardent reader of **G-MEN** for some time and have never been disappointed in any of the stories. I also think you are doing a wonderful job with your club.—Don Moe, Oakland, California.

Thanks to you all! See you next month.  
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20x4.40-14	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-13	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-12	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-11	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-10	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-9	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-8	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-7	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-6	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-5	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-4	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-3	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-2	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-1	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45

#### TRUCK BALLOON TIRES

Size	Rim	Tires	Size	Tires	Size	Tires	Size	Tires
20x4.40-21	\$2.15	\$1.05	20x2.25	\$2.25	\$0.95	28x4.40	\$3.45	\$1.45
20x4.40-20	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-19	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-18	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-17	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-16	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-15	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-14	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-13	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-12	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-11	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-10	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-9	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-8	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-7	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-6	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-5	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-4	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-3	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-2	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45
20x4.40-1	2.35	1.05	20x2.25	2.35	1.35	28x4.40	3.45	1.45

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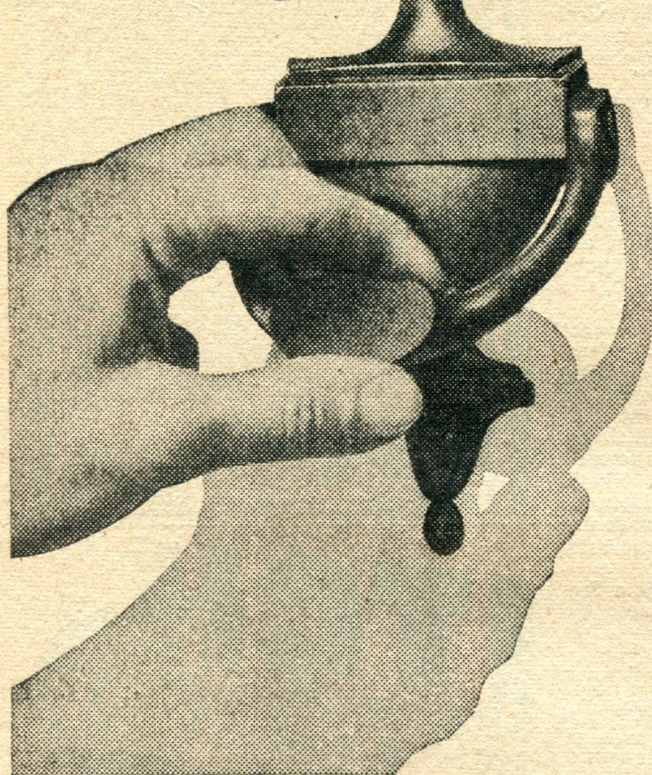
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