

# Death goes by bus

by Leslie Cargill

YOU CAN START THE STORY HERE  
Only two instalments of this thrilling serial have been printed. Here is a synopsis of the chapters already given:

**Synopsis**  
Travelling from Colborough to Netherton, a country bus develops engine trouble and back-fires several times. Under cover of one of these explosions, a male passenger is shot dead.

**CARTER**, the driver, and **WITHERS** the conductor, take the situation in hand, assisted by a rather dreamy little man named **MORRISON SHARPE**, whose chief interest in life is solving puzzles—chess problems, cross-words and the like.

Sharpe suggests that the first thing is to account for all who were in the bus when the shot was fired.

Withers makes the number eleven, including the dead man, the driver and the conductor.

But Sharpe, although uncertain on the point seems vaguely to recall a twelfth.

A police car, conveying Sergeant **MATTHEWS**, who is on traffic duty, comes along, and Matthews takes the case in hand.

The sergeant, who is not too familiar with this branch of police work, interrogates the passengers and does not rebuff Morrison Sharpe, who has already grasped the essentials of the problem.

The first to be questioned is Jerry Tuckley, a schoolboy, whose recollection of the people in the bus is not too clear.

(NOW READ ON)  
**CHAPTER IV.**  
**A MATTER OF MOTIVE**

Up to this stage only the schoolboy had been definitely eliminated from the list of those who might have committed the crime.

Because of his confessed reputation, John Smith could not be ruled out. Sergeant Matthews was satisfied about Morrison Sharpe, for whom he was acquiring a slightly envious regard. This queer stranger had quietly taken charge of the investigations without any ostensible intervention.

"Come and listen-in, sir," he invited, suddenly making up his mind to avail himself to the full of the presence of this quick witted little man.

"Rather irregular, isn't it?"  
"So's the whole confounded business. It strikes me you've got the instincts of a detective, and I appreciate the way you've managed to set me working on the right track."

"Rather early to say that. But I'll be glad to stand by. Suppose you deal with the easiest witnesses first. That old couple, for instance, might be disposed of in a few seconds."

"Mr. and Mrs. Wylie, you mean. I know them by sight. They've a small holding by Little Borringham."

Another win for Mr. Sharpe, who had set them down as small farmers. They had nothing to reveal that could be regarded as helpful.

Nor had the middle-aged woman Her name, it transpired, was Edith Maude Hanson, unmarried, of South London. She was taking an unconventional holiday, sometimes by train and sometimes by motor bus as the whim took her. The happenings had upset her too much to notice anything particular. When it was found that the man was dead, she had promptly fainted. No, it was not a habit of hers.

Then came the foreigner, neither French nor Spanish, but a Levantine. His passport, quite in order, identified him as Gregor Gardopoulos, importer. "I live in Ilford and I come here to sell my so good dates, figs and currants, the best that Corinth can supply," he announced.

"Ever seen the dead man before?"  
"Nevaire. I know nothings about these business."

Harry Carter came out of his cab to add his testimony. Trouble had developed with the engine soon after leaving Colborough and it had grown steadily worse, especially at the hill part of the road.

"What appeared to be the matter?"  
"Ignition, I should say."

"Why didn't you stop to attend to it?"  
"Well, I'd thought of that, but as we could get along more or less, I decided to wait until a staff mechanic could put it right. We drivers are only supposed to be competent to deal with running repairs. Anything serious has to be reported to the garage."

"I see. Then this was a big matter you couldn't handle properly yourself?"  
"May be! May be not! As I haven't looked thoroughly, I couldn't rightly say. My job was to get the bus to Netherton as close on schedule as possible."

Morrison Sharpe had only one question to ask. "You were trying to do the best you could without actually stopping?"

"Naturally sir—fiddling with the magnet control nearly all the way. Made it worse, if anything. The exhaust was poppin' like a maxim."

Withers, the conductor, agreed. "When the window was opened you could fair see the passengers jump every time it went off."

"Now think carefully! How many people were aboard at the time of the tragedy?"

"Mr. Nine I suppose."

"You suppose? Aren't you sure?"  
"All I can say is there were ten of us, including Carter and myself, when I counted by the roadside. And the dead man was extra."

"Haven't you any check?"  
"Not rightly sir. We don't run to inspectors on this service. They counts up in the office and books according."

"But you'd know the number of tickets issued?"  
"Yes, on the journey. But that doesn't keep tally, because of the continued comings and goings."

"Quite so. It suggests your employ-

ers have implicit trust in your honesty?"  
Withers looked as if he was about to make an angry retort. Controlling his rising indignation, he muttered a disgruntled, "Yes, why not?"

"No reflection on your good name, conductor. I'm just trying to make certain that nobody slipping away in the excitement. That would be possible I suppose?"

"Perhaps! Often I counts up, but I was thinking things out this morning and didn't notice as I sometimes do. Folks was getting on and getting off and the backfires were a bit of a nuisance."

"And that kept your mind occupied?"  
"With other things. Poor folks like me have plenty to worry about, I can tell you!"

"Some domestic affair?"  
"Yes, sir, nothing to interest you, I'm sure."

Morrison Sharpe had been listening. Also he had watched the last of the witnesses, a plumpish man with a ruddy complexion who had managed to keep himself well in the background. Only by a little twitching of the lips did he betray some measure of anxiety.

Matthews turned to deal with him. "Let's hear what you have to say," he invited.

The man spoke well choosing his words with care, almost as if he had been rehearsing them in readiness. "My name is Huntley Young," he recited crisply. "I am a commercial traveller and last night I stayed at the 'Golden Lion' at Colborough. No doubt you have heard of Messrs Sillingway and Marlowe, whom I represent."

"Who hasn't? What about your home address?"  
"Mostly I live in hotels. You see I have to cover a large territory on behalf of my firm."

Matthews pressed for fuller information. Almost regretfully, Young admitted that he was a married man whose wife lived near Eastbourne. "I don't see her very often because my work takes me so far away."

"Quite so! We can verify your story if necessary. Now about the murder."

"The first I knew about it was when the man appeared to be taken ill. Only when he was taken outside did we suspect foul play. Besides, it might be suicide."

**A SECRET JOKE**

Matthews scowled. "With a bullet hole right through his outer garments and no weapon to be found?"

"I didn't know that. It was just a suggestion."

"Tell me—you were well to the rear of the bus."

"Fairly. Most of the others were well in front. My seat was about two rows from that gentleman." He pointed to John Smith as he spoke.

"On his right hand?"  
"Yes."

"And behind you?"  
"I—I'm not sure."

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The sergeant raised his hands in a motion of hopeless resignation. "Heaven above," he exclaimed, "It is possible there was a spook on this beastly bus—or the invisible man himself? What in the name of wonder kept everybody forward? There's a smoking compartment which was apparently deserted unless this spook occupied it. Doesn't anybody smoke?"

"Nobody bothers on this bus," Morrison Sharpe explained. "They're not particular when and where you light up."

"Are you quite sure that nobody wearing an overcoat sat behind you or in the vicinity?" Matthews asked the traveller.

"I rather think there was somebody."

"Think! Think! That's what they all say. I want facts, not figments of the imagination. An overcoat at any rate ought to have been noticed."

"An overcoat?"  
"That's what I said and that's what I keep hearing, and that's as far as we get."

"But I was wearing one myself."

"What? Hang it man, why didn't you say so before?"

"You never asked me. I've had a summer cold and put it on to make sure. These vehicles are very draughty sometimes."

"Then where is it now? I've been searching for it for a quarter of an hour."

"Probably outside. We put it down on the grass to make a blanket for the victim."

"What do you think of that?"  
Sergeant Matthews was appealing to high heaven in general and Morrison Sharpe in particular. But that individual was smiling as at a secret joke. He had already worked this move out for himself three minutes before the statement was made.

**FROM A DEAD MAN'S POCKETS**

"I've had about enough of this," Matthews complained bitterly. "Road-rolling is more my mark."

"Meaning you want to hand it over to the detective department," quizzed Mr. Sharpe. "I thought you were progressing very nicely."

"All it amounts to is that I've learned that a commercial traveller did the Good Samaritan act with the overcoat."

"Highly important, sergeant. Doesn't it rather confirm the fact that another individual is concerned?"

"If I happened to be a spiritualistic medium there might be a chance of finding him."

"Common sense is good enough. We'll accept an entity because there must be one to explain the general impression. Knowing that Mr. Young wore an overcoat tends to confirm it."

"I don't quite see . . ."

"Yes you do. That means another elimination. Subtract myself, the schoolboy, the spinster lady, Mr. and Mrs. Wylie, that er-gentleman with the police record, the Greek, the driver, conductor and commercial traveller. What does that leave?"

"Only a corpse."

"And 'X' an unknown quantity. You must take 'X' into account to arrive at the correct answer. What about the dead man? Can he give any assistance?"

"Not much good trying to question him," retorted the sergeant grimly.

"There you go again. Perhaps he could tell quite a lot. Try his pockets."

Matthews hesitated. "If I'm not careful there's going to be a howl over the way I've acted up to now. Identification is a matter for headquarters."

"By which time anything may happen. Why not be hanged for a sheep instead of a lamb?"

"All right! Let's carry on with the good work."

Going through the dead man's pockets was a gruesome interlude. As each article was removed it was entered on a list in the sergeant's notebook. Mr. Sharpe also found pencil and paper for an inventory of his own. In some ways it differed from the official form by reason of one or two personal remarks jotted alongside.

**Back Trouser**

One crumpled ten shilling Treasury note, seven shillings in small silver and five pennies.

**Left side Trouser**  
A piece of string about a foot long, one unreceipted bill for a tie, two pennies, and a safety pin.

**Right side Trouser**  
Three pennies and a half-penny, half a dozen rubber bands for slipping round papers, postal-order counterfoil for five shillings, and a bunch of keys.

(Rather careless in his habits. Not the orderly disposal of property such as a business man would ensure).

**Top right Waistcoat**

Fountain pen on clip, two soft lead pencils, and a worn indiarubber. Also a watch.

(Unusual place to carry the latter. Type of timepiece not ordinary. Rather valuable, with heavy gold case. Most men carry pen on left side).

**Top left Waistcoat**  
Fob attached to massive gold chain passing across to watch. Faded photograph of girl in leather case with mica protecting panel. (Sort of thing a sentimental colonial would favour).

**Bottom right Waistcoat**  
Three foreign coins of low denomination.

(U.S. "dime" German five pfennig, Chinese piece. Tourists often retain little souvenirs. Might be an American. Looks like it).

**Bottom left Waistcoat**  
Boothace part packet of safety-razor blades of standard make. (Note lace-of old-fashioned porpoise hide).

**Outside Breast**  
White handkerchief only.

**Inside Breast**  
Miscellaneous letters addressed to Caleb Wainwright, 379 Ladnis Grove, Warby. A pocket book containing £27 10 0, cards bearing the same name and address as the letters, and another "dime" among a wad of tailor's fluff in the bottom. (Confirms American origin, or that he was recently in U.S.).

**Ticket Pocket**  
Three pennies and bus ticket to Netherton.

**Bottom Right**  
Tobacco pipe, pouch, matches, lighter and snuff box. (An interesting collection of smoker's requisites).

**Bottom Left**  
Cigarettes, two soiled toffees in paper.

(Must be a Virginian to support the tobacco industry so thoroughly. Sweets rather significant).

"That," announced the sergeant, drawing himself upright and stretching his cramped back, "is the lot."

"Some men affect money belts or secret pockets," suggested Mr. Sharpe.

"He hasn't a belt. Hullo, what's this?" He drew attention to a hard lump at the side. Carefully unfastening the waistcoat it became obvious that something was hidden in the lining. A pocket knife soon ripped up the thin cloth, revealing a flat case about the size of a popular packing for tins of fifty cigarettes. Pressing the spring catch the officer gave a little gasp of surprise, echoed immediately by Morrison Sharpe. "Whew!" he exclaimed, "what a treasure!"

In the clear morning light a diamond necklet winked like icedrops in the

sunshine. Neither of the men doubted their genuine value. Not even the cleverest limitation could capture that blue tinge or simulate the unyielding coldness of the glitter.

"Ha!" breathed Matthews softly, "if we are looking for a motive here it is for sure."

"You really think so?"  
"Of course. Plenty of crooks would murder their own mother for this collection of jewels."

"On a motor bus! Dear, dear, I should have thought them capable of better planning than that. Why kill under conditions where completing the robbery is almost impossible?"

"I hadn't thought of that. You're always in front of me, sir."

"You flatter me, sergeant. But I didn't dismiss your exuberant theory as lightly as you may imagine."

"Get me guessing again!"  
"Do you know of seven letters meaning 'in return'?" asked Mr. Sharpe cryptically.

Sergeant Matthews snorted. "Curse your confounded riddles."

"You really should take up cross-words as well as chess," advised the aggravating little man. "They're invaluable as a mental exercise."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

**Ansonville Places Raided by the Police**

**Three Men to Face Charges of Having Beer Illegally.**

Iroquois Falls, Ont., Feb. 8th, 1937. (Special to The Advance)—As the result of raids on several places in Ansonville suspected of bootlegging, recently conducted by Provincial Constable Allan Stringer, Chief A. Giroux, Ansonville and District Constable Ed Olavson, Iroquois Falls chief, three men, E. McDonald, L. Robert and a Mr. Johnston will appear before Magistrate E. R. Tucker here Thursday charged with having beer illegally.

The trio were arrested coming out of Grenier's hotel, now owned by a Mr. St. Hilaire. Both McDonald and Robert, it is alleged, had cases of beer which, they stated, they had purchased elsewhere and had taken with them into the beer parlor. The trio were released on bail raised by the hotel proprietor and later the same evening were again arrested at the Allies Cafe.

It is understood a report will be forwarded to the authorities at Toronto recommending cancellation of the hotel's beer selling license. It is not known at present whether charges will be laid against the proprietors of the Allies Cafe.

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Another Whist Drive and Dance by the Pipe Band

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**Somewhere in This Town**

Somewhere in this town, we feel sure, there is a little girl or little boy we don't know, who has crossed eyes.

For the sake of this single child, we print this message to the parents: Crossed eyes do not straighten themselves. Your child will not "out-grow" this sad affliction.

For it is a sad affliction. Not only from the standpoint of appearance, but also because of its effect on the child's character and personality. Supposing you saw the faces of loved ones in a blurred, distorted fashion!

If you are the parents of the little boy or little girl with crossed eyes, please come in and see us, and let us talk over what can be done for your child. Do not let the thought of cost keep you away; that can be arranged.

While we have the skill and knowledge to liberate a child from this handicap and make his entire life more pleasant and more successful, we do not want any child within our reach to suffer all his life because his eyes are crossed.