



WELL of GOLD
By Bentley Ridge

CHAPTER XVI (Continued)

WELL KNOW TO-MORROW

As soon as the dust had subsided, Julian went forward again; and now the work proceeded very cautiously. He made careful examination of the wrecked side of the well before he allowed the men to remove the tumbled rocks. There was nothing to be seen but stones, and rubble. Slowly the work of lifting the heavy stone blocks went ahead; when this was done the afternoon was wearing on towards evening; and there remained the other three sides of the well, the stones chipped and scarred by the unshifted explosion.

So far, nothing had been found; and Julian, having seen the damage done by the gelignite to the wall on which he had used it, decided that the rest of the stonework must be demolished by systematically prizing and levering the blocks out.

They began this work; they worked on until the sun that had seen the ancient stones lying in their places for over three thousand years, sank down behind the sandhills; a veil of dust crept over the scattered wreckage.

After the men had stopped work Julian went on in the last vestiges of light, shifting small pieces of stone, poking about in the crevices between the stones. It was quite dark when finally he gave this up, and came into the tent where Lynne was lying on the camp-bed, her face tense and pale in the candlelight.

Julian, too, was pale and looked exhausted; his hand shook as he lighted a cigarette but his eyes were bright and sleepless.

"Well, we'll know to-morrow!" said Lynne.

Julian stared out at the dark through the flap of the tent, and said: "Damn this night!"

The sun was rising again over the dry land, and the llyats were stirring about Phillip Guthrie's camp at Kel-el-abir when a dejected looking stranger on a donkey rode in across the flats. He was a stout, yellow-faced European, with a bandage around his head, and one eye half closed with a bruise.

He announced that he wanted to speak to Dr. Guthrie; and when Guthrie appeared, he introduced himself as Demetrio Haffi.

"I have come from Memshi to-day, all way to speak with you, sir. I am sick—you see how I am injured. But I have much to say that you would like to hear; much to tell that you would do well to listen to!"

"Don't I see you with the Ormonds, the other day?" said Guthrie. "You're working for Ormond, aren't you?"

"I am not working for him any more! He did me the injuries you see, he attacked me in a manner most brutal; such behaviour would not surprise in a savage, but in an Englishman is most shameful, yes! I was left for dead, sir! It is his belief that I am dead now. I do not doubt it! But I am alive after all—yes, in spite of his kicks when I lie helpless on the ground!"

Haffi's voice rose shrill with feeling. He sniffed, and feigning his eye tenderly, whined in a quieter tone:

"There is much I wish to tell you, sir, and a quiet place would be best. You will benefit, yes, from what I can tell you! I ask you to listen to me."

Guthrie looked at him dubiously, and disliked him. But there was every reason to hear what the man had to say, and he led the way into the mess tent. Haffi sat down gingerly on a chair at the table, and leaned his head on his hand. Guthrie called Cartwright in, and they both listened to Haffi's complaints.

"This man Ormond told me nothing of his plans," said Haffi. "He was very secret, you understand; I know I am not to know anything, but I could guess a lot. Oh, yes! He is a bad fellow, sir, a very bad fellow! I can tell that! He is up to no good!"

This did not seem very helpful to Guthrie. He could have told Haffi the same himself.

"Well?" he said. "He is looking for gold, yes, the treasure of the Cups of Alexander? You can guess that, eh? But there is more in it! He knows something—knows where they are—these gold cups. I am sure of that, sir! And he believes he will find them soon; to-day, to-morrow, in three days' time!"

HAFFI'S REVENGE

Guthrie and Cartwright looked at the excited man incredulously.

"Why do you think that?" said Guthrie.

"Because he has fixed up with the head man at Memshi for a camel convoy to take some goods down to Kashan—perhaps to-day, perhaps to-morrow! Perhaps, he tell the head man, not at all! But if at all, then very soon!"

Guthrie was puzzled but doubtful, and Cartwright asked Haffi:

"What makes you think it will be the cups that he will send?"

"What else has he to send?"

"You know nothing more definite?" asked Guthrie.

"No; but sir, what else would he take on that route? His way back would be by the way he came, by Tehran. Why should he want a caravan to Kashan?"

Guthrie was not satisfied. He was interested by the possibility. But how on earth could Julian Ormond hope to find the cups, when Guthrie's own people were at work at Praemnon still looking for the well in which the cups were hidden.

Hitherto he had been convinced that Professor Shaley's find on the day of his death had been the ruins at the junction of the water-course; and that concealment of this find had been the extent of Julian's deception of himself and Cartwright. Now he recollected Julian's puzzling deprecation of the seals on the pillars at Praemnon. He had often wondered what this meant, and it now occurred to him that Haffi had perhaps seen the seals when he was with Julian.

"Did you see the carvings on those pillars at the ruined fort in the river bed?"

"You mean the marks that were on the stones? Yes; I see them. I help him to break and destroy them off the stones. With a pick I did it. And the work was very hard and after we had worked hours and hours, I say to Ormond, I say to him: 'What about a drink of water and a rest. This sun burns me. I am ready to faint.' But he says to me 'No! Do not stop. Go on. I fire you if you stop!' And so I am compelled to go on, though I burn with thirst, and my blood is near to being dried in my veins—"

"Do you remember what the marks were? Can you tell me what they looked like?" said Guthrie, cutting short Haffi's flood of aggrieved reminiscences.

"I do not know—yes, I think so. They was the same on both the stones. It was a dog."

"A dog?"

"Yes, a dog tied up in the middle. 'Could you draw it?'"

"I will try," said Haffi, and while Cartwright found a piece of paper and a pencil, he explained: "I am not the artist, no. When I was in Paris, I was a model in the schools. They say to me 'Haffi, you have the wonderful figure of a man,' and I stood for a model to the students many times. But that was when I was more slender. I shall not draw this very well, so you must not expect much."

Painstaking, and none the better for only being able to see out of one eye, Haffi drew the device that he had seen on the pillars at the ruined fort. The pains he had been at to chip the mark-

ings off the stone had fixed them indelibly in his memory.

Slowly the simple design took shape on the paper. There was a circle, and within the circle was an animal of sorts, a line round its middle connecting it with the upper rim of the circle.

"Had the dog in the carving no ears?" asked Guthrie.

"No; it was a plain dog without ears," Haffi insisted.

"It's a lion, probably," said Guthrie. "Hanging in a circle," Cartwright remarked.

"What about a tail?" asked Guthrie. "Yes, I forgot that—now I remember! It had a tail with two ends." Haffi drew the tail, with two lines radiating from the tip.

"It's a lion all right," said Guthrie. "A hanged, or hanging lion." He stopped transfixed by the tremendous discovery.

"The Hanged Lion!" he cried. "Diala was the place of the Hanged Lion! Good God, Cartwright! Come here!"

"What?"

Guthrie led him out of the tent, beyond Haffi's hearing; and explained. Cartwright's mouth fell open, his eyes filled with chagrin that was almost pathetic.

"Then the well—the well we've been using for months—is the well where the cups will be, if they're there at all?"

"Exactly!" said Guthrie, and as Cartwright's face lit up again, he added grimly: "And you may be perfectly certain that Ormond is there—looking for them. We're too late, Cartwright! They didn't ruin our drinking water and get us out of that camp for nothing!"

"But surely—"

Guthrie cut him short.

"Do you remember that explosion we heard yesterday evening in the distance, and wondered what it could be?"

"Yes?"

"It means that they've started searching. They were blowing up the well."

"I'M GOING TO SETTLE WITH HIM"

They went back into the tent, Guthrie grim and alert as he asked Haffi a few more questions.

But there seemed to be nothing further to be learned from him. Guthrie went outside and stood in the morning sunshine, while he collected his thoughts, and considered the position. He realized now the extent of the trick which Julian Ormond had played on him, and the motive behind Julian's successful drive to get him to leave the well at Praemnon. He was angry. And his anger went very far towards destroying the kindness, though perhaps not the force of the feelings which he had felt towards Lynne.

His jaw set in lines of grim determination, and a cold anger made his eyes hard as he said to Cartwright when the young man came outside to join him:

"Well, my lad! They're not going to get away with this!"

"We must get over there," began Cartwright. "We'll have to stop Ormond. He's making use of information he got from Shaley, that Shaley must have meant for you, and for this expedition. Besides—he can't do it—if he's going to take away the cups down to Kashan—it means—"

"Quite. But if he's excavating the well, we can't butt in. It's his job. He's got there first. There's nothing we can do about it, and I have no intention of going over there and making an ineffectual row! No, my boy. We must wait!"

"Wait? Let him get the cups?"

"Let him get the cups, if they're there. And afterwards—!"

"What?"

"I'm going to settle with him!"

He went back into the tent and asked Haffi:

"I suppose you must know the llyats who are working for Ormond. Is there anyone among them, who would be willing to keep you informed of what goes on in Ormond's camp?"

"There are several," said Haffi. "But none that would do it without a little payment."

"Very well. I'll arrange for that. Pick whatever man you think would be best for the job. How would you get in touch with him?"

"I do not know where Ormond is now!" said Haffi. "He left Memshi at sunrise this morning, and at Memshi he told no one where he was going."

"He will be at Diala," Guthrie said. "At the place where I was encamped until two days ago. There is not enough water there except for drinking purposes." He paused for a moment, as he grimly reflected that with the well demolished there would now be none, and the Ormonds would be dependent on water basins.

"As I say," Guthrie resumed, "there is no water there for the camels, and the men will be taking them down to the pool two miles away at Shasti, as

we used to do. You could wait at Shasti and talk to them when they come."

Haffi agreed.

Guthrie went away for a moment, and returned with two five-pound notes. He put them on the table, and told Haffi: "There is twice that amount waiting for you when the affair is concluded if the information you get is correct. And remember, what I want to know is this: If Ormond has found, or the llyats believe him to have found, anything in the well at Diala. Also, every detail of this proposed caravan to Kashan, and how these goods he is sending are carried, and exactly what they are packed in. Can you remember that?"

Haffi said he could, and the light of greed which came into his eye, when he took up the notes, illuminated his bruised and discoloured face with a look of purpose.

Guthrie, wondering whether he would ever see the beast again, lent him a camel instead of his decrepit donkey and saw him set off for the pool of foul water at Shasti.

"And now," Guthrie said to Cartwright, "you and I are going to make a detour, so as to come up behind the north ridge above the old camp. I would like to see, without being seen, if Ormond is excavating that well. And I'll lay you a hundred to one that he is."

Newspaper Reporters Have Their Own Troubles

The following is from "Mainly for Women," a bright column in The Sudbury Star:

"Newspaper reporting has its ups and downs . . . we read of a would-be reporter on a New York newspaper who couldn't seem to get his descriptions straight whether he was writing of horse races or weddings. He wrote one time of an 'equine horse' . . . for which he was chastened. But the masterpiece came a bit later and cost him his job, when he wrote a lengthy description of a fashionable bride who came down the aisle to the strains of Mendel and Son."

Brampton Conservator:—"Drive carefully, you may meet a fool!" This was a sign posted on an American highway several years ago. The advice is still needed in this country. There are more fools in possession of cars in 1937 than at any former period.



Worked Fifty Years Without Accident

Slim Nova Scotian Says He Has Had a Number of Escapes.

Fifty years in Dominion Coal No. 4 Mine at Glace Bay without as much as a scratch is the proud record of 65-year-old Joseph McIntyre, who boasts he can still cut and load more coal than either of his two sons.

McIntyre is the slim, gaarled 135-pound Scotsman clad in kilts in the Nova Scotia exhibit at the C.N.E. The Dominion Coal Company sent him to Toronto with its provincial exhibit this year.

Always by some lucky freak has he escaped serious injury or death during his fifty years in coal mines. In 1899, eleven men were killed in an explosion. The blast occurred while the night shift was on duty. McIntyre had been transferred to days twenty-four hours before.

He was one of the first of the volunteer rescue party to enter the gas-filled pit. He broke through a wall of fallen rock and coal into a chamber. In one corner sat one of his boyhood chums, chin cupped in hand, as if resting.

Overjoyed at finding one victim alive, McIntyre went over to fling his arms around his friend. Suddenly he stopped abruptly, looked hard and called his friend's name. There was no response. He was stone dead.

Deadly fumes, the after-effect of gas explosions, seeped through to the haven, killing the miner as he rested. The remaining ten victims were found later, mangled beyond recognition.

When he started cutting fifty years ago, McIntyre worked with a hand pick and broke the coal up with a five-foot bore. Ten tons a day was the limit for two men.

With modern equipment, McIntyre and his 64-year-old partner, Dave Phillips, load 24 tons some days, never less than 22. And he says his 41-year-old son can only take out 18 tons.

For relaxation, he plays the bagpipes and tends stock on his farm. Why doesn't he retire to the comparative safety of farming? For fifty years he's worked all summer. But in the winter he's either unemployed or on part time. He still can't afford to quit and enjoy it, he says.

Former Liberal Leader in Province is Retiring

(London Free Press)

W. E. N. Sinclair, former Liberal Ontario leader and member of South Ontario, has announced that he is dropping out of politics. Out of sympathy with the Hepburn Government and yet too loyal a Liberal to break with his party, he took little part in the debates during the past four years and has evidently decided to retire to his law practise in Oshawa.

Mr. Sinclair was first elected to the Legislature in 1911, was defeated in

1913, but was re-elected in 1919. He has held to an unusual degree the confidence of his riding and has been returned continuously ever since. He was chosen party leader in 1923 and unfortunately had to carry the Liberal standard when fortunes were low and Hon. Howard Ferguson was at the height of his power. It was an impossible task. In addition while he was a man of unusual ability and sterling integrity, he lacked those qualities of "a hall fellow" which in these days seem to be necessary for a successful political leader. Mr. Sinclair has always had the respect of both friend and foe and the Legislature will be a loser by his decision to drop out of politics.

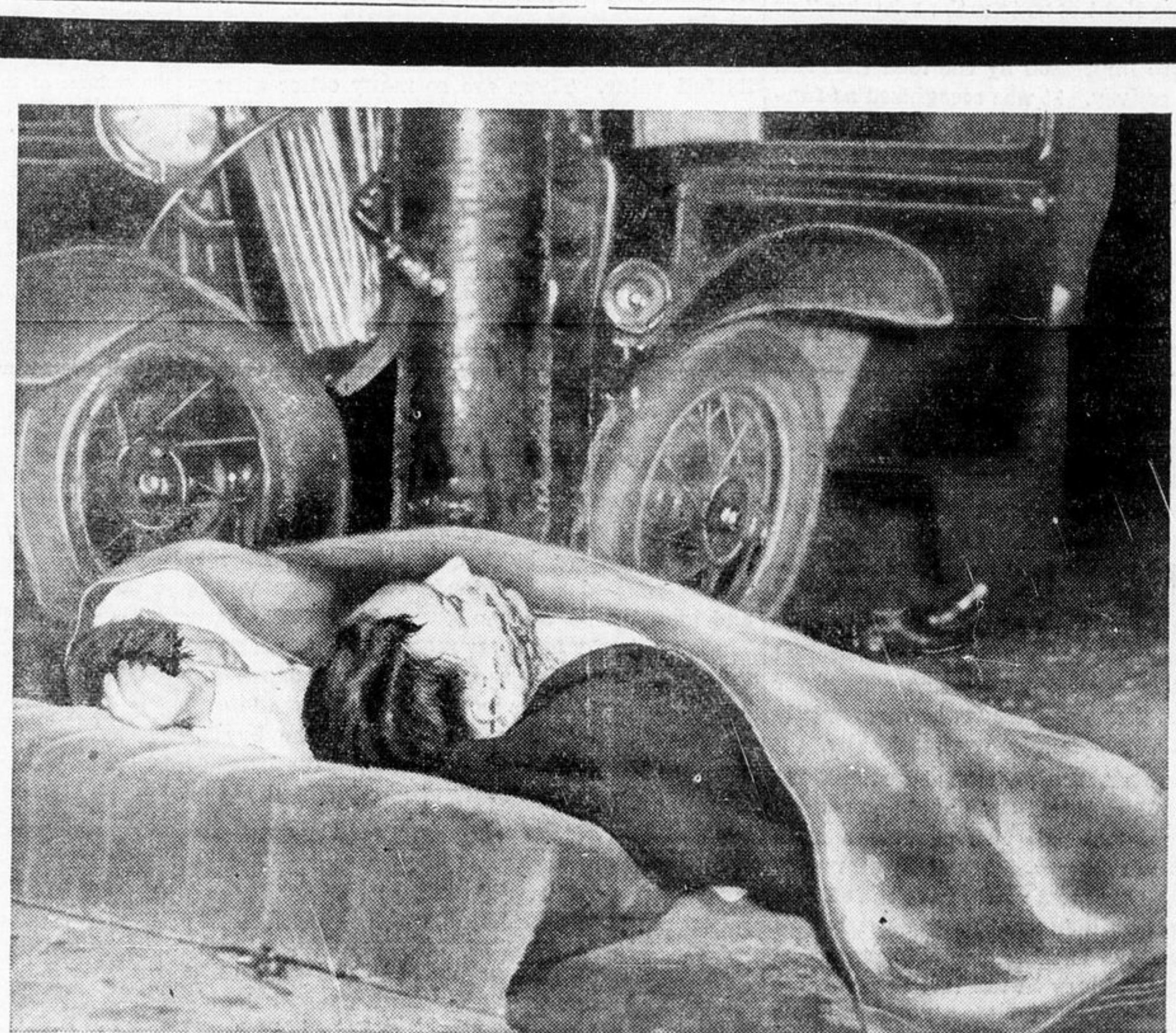


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