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The Man Who Wasn't Himself

By Leslie Cargill

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CHAPTER XX

Under The Eye Of The Police
Do you mind if I smoke?" said Harkness to the inspector. He felt the need of a smoke, and still more the need of time to reflect.

Inspector Tyrrell took a pipe from his pocket, remarking amiably: "Pleased to join you. Helps to create a more friendly atmosphere; though mind you, when I have certain duties to perform social touches are out of place."

The significance of the remark was obvious, but clearly for the time being he regarded the interview as entirely friendly.

"Shakes you, sir, to think of someone you know being murdered," he resumed.

"Indeed, it does."

"Even an innocent man is inclined to be queasy when questioned about the matter. Imagine the effect on a guilty one."

"I hate to think of it."

Knocks even me at times, sir, though you might not credit it. Policemen are human like the rest."

Tyrrell puffed out a wavering smoke ring that dissipated in the blue haze. "Of course we've had to check up on your movements," he intimated.

"What, as a suspect?"

"That's rather too leading a question, sir. And, anyhow, at the inquest, nothing came out about foul play."

"Am I entitled to ask what fresh evidence has accumulated?"

"No, but I'll be generous. Thomas was dead when the lorry ran over him. It took a second post-mortem and specialist opinion to establish the fact. If you crack a skull with some blunt instrument and then run over the victim, one more injury more or less can be overlooked. Nowadays we have research departments that find things scientifically. In this case a rod of about three-quarters of an inch diameter had been employed, leaving an indented mark of impact. Part of a car striking a man could inflict a similar injury. Theoretically, a wheel might afterwards have passed over the body."

"Then your theory of murder is not thoroughly established?"

"There are other factors. Rigor mortis had already set in when the vehicle came into the picture."

"Is that conclusive?"

"Almost. Strongly circumstantial, anyway. On the night in question rain was falling. Now, you'd conclude that anybody walking in the country would have his boots saturated."

Thomas were nicely muddled on the soles. Very carefully muddled indeed. They were very particular about that. Modern criminals read detective stories. Clean footwear on a wet day is such an obvious give-away. Do you know there is a difference the way the dirt clings when you're walking or when it is applied deliberately?"

"No, though I will accept your word."

"Not mine, sir. The laboratories. Smart chaps with microscopes and ingenious apparatus. When they submit a report it is a revelation. Soles and heels and uppers. State of trousers and the dust in the turn-ups."

"All this," Richard said, "is most interesting, but..."

"But," Tyrrell echoed, "Every day I run up against ifs and buts."

"Who would want to murder Thomas?"

"Nobody ever wants to commit murder. They drift, or are driven to it. Motive? Plenty of motives. Even you had cause to wish Thomas out of the way."

"You mean to insinuate..."

"A wink as good as a nod."

"This places me in a dreadful quandary."

"Doesn't it!" the inspector agreed cheerfully.

"Whatever I say may weigh against me."

"Murder is the gravest of crimes, sir. It stands to reason. I can hold out no promise of favour, but any co-operation should-er-mitigate other lapses."

"Am I being officially cautioned?"

The inspector tapped his pipe. "Wouldn't be sitting here smoking were I doing that," he said. "I'm trying to find out why Felix Thomas was killed, and by whom?"

"I don't know. I didn't do it."

"Unshakable alibi, h'm? Nothing comes in more handy."

"Wrong, inspector! To save my life I couldn't say where I was."

"It's rather a joke that I should be able to save your life, sir. Almost it amounts to that." The police officer consulted a slip of paper and recited the movements of Harkness on the night of the murder.

"Good lord!" Harkness ejaculated. "Spent a long time in the company of Mr. Fawley. Dear me! Trencham's stores twinkles in and out of the story. Nice place!"

"Is it?"

Inspector Tyrrell's eyes glinted. Inwardly he was amused.

All his other queries were connected more directly with Thomas, those associated with him, and generalities which Richard did his best to answer. "Much obliged," the officer concluded.

"Sorry not to be able to do better."

"You've helped, sir. Definitely. Don't take it into your head to do anything silly through my calling."

"Another wink to a blind horse?"

"Not so blind, sir."

He left a friendly impression. Yet Harkness could not hide from himself the certainty that Chetwood's career was on the eve of being exposed. Whether Tyrrell had probed also in the affairs of Richard Harkness was not so clear. There had been openings for wholesome confession which he had ignored. Settling with Mr. Cooper still seemed to be a separate venture.

Jack Murrey had never been mentioned. Anyone so well briefed as the inspector must know his position in the case.

Being under police surveillance was going to cramp his style. That he had been watched without his knowledge made him wonder how much he had, unconsciously, given away.

Secretiveness was foreign to his nature. In emergencies he was impelled to seek support. Joyce Barlow, catching him on the rebound, auto-

matically served the purpose of a prop. There was no chiding, no recrimination only a sympathetic understanding that encouraged him to hold nothing back.

"So you see," he concluded, "how it has all got into a monstrous tangle. It was the very dickens of a mess at the time we last talked about it. Since then it's been twisted into a maddening ravel."

"Couldn't you tell the inspector? He shakes trustworthily."

"I'm too dubious about Cooper and the money I was accused of stealing."

"He'd look after that complication as well, wouldn't he?"

"Perhaps. Oh, I'm not so sure. Tyrrell is out to catch a murderer. Clearing up a false charge isn't his line."

"As I see it they are bits in one jigsaw puzzle."

"Not necessarily. Coincidence, if you like."

"You ask my opinion, Dick. I say go to the police openly."

It was the first time she had called him Dick. He was thrilled.

"They'll believe you now," Joyce added. "This inspector would, for sure. Leave him to do the rest of the detective work. It seems he has stacks of information already. More than he told you of."

Richard still hesitated. "Both Chetwood and Harkness have black marks against them," he protested.

"Yes, but don't you see that Chetwood is the worst character, and you are not improving it by working with Jack Murrey, however half-heartedly."

"Merely for convenience."

"You cannot possibly go on co-operating with him."

"I don't intend to."

"But you are doing, in his meat racket," Joyce persisted. "He's a beastly murderer, too."

"Not proven."

"I trust my intuition."

"I'm sorry," Richard interrupted, "is Sunday."

"Meaning—"

"I expect Tyrrell has a day off. Wait a minute—I'm not going off at a tangent. Come and meet my friend Tom Fawley, and we can hold a council of war."

"Are you trying to put off the evil day, Richard?"

"Nothing of the sort. He's a level-headed lad."

"So am I, level-headed. You're the one who isn't. You realize we shall probably be followed?"

"I've long since given up trying to dodge my shadow."

"What is he like?"

"Can't say, never having seen him. After the inspector told me I tried hard to pick him out. From my experience the police are jolly clever at following people without being spotted. They know about Fawley, so what are the odds?"

"I'll come," she promised.

CHAPTER XXI

Is It Too Late?

Accumulating allies was a strengthening process. Already Richard Harkness had Joyce, Tom, and—well, definitely—Inspector Tyrrell, on his side. Richard Harkness was gaining confidence. As the need for subterfuge diminished, he lost the feeling of living in a dream. The future was not yet assured, but the outlook was brighter. Now he had plenty of incentive, and a driving zeal to avenge Thomas.

"Thomas was a pitiful creature," he explained at the gathering of his friends. "An object lesson, too. Murrey wanted to get me under his thumb just as completely."

"A nasty specimen," Fawley pronounced.

Joyce, from a longer experience, corroborated. "Always a bad influence," she said. "Especially on weak men. Perry Chetwood went to pieces through him."

Joyce caught Richard's look and smiled. "The real Chetwood did," she added. "But you've grown right out of the character. Don't you think so, Mr. Fawley?"

"Never having set eyes on Chetwood, I don't rightly know. But I'm prepared to say that Richard's no longer a stranger. Mighty glad of it."

"There's a decided improvement," she said slyly.

"Never mind studying my variations," Richard hastened to interrupt. "I'm at the cross roads. Which way do I go?"

"Miss Barlow gave the only possible direction. Put it before the police superintendent."

"Inspector?"

"The inspector, then. You agree he's uncommonly shrewd."

"He's darned clever. But he won't be interested in Cooper."

"Sure he will."

"I had thought of getting into his place again, taking away the incriminating machine and cards, and clearing myself that way."

"Not half good enough. He's got to be nabbed with the stuff in his possession. Strike a bargain. In return for rounding up the Murrey mob insist on the other matter being settled."

"Officialdom doesn't bargain."

"That's where you're mistaken."

"Well, I hope I'm not being misled."

"You're going to do it, Richard?" Joyce asked earnestly.

"For good or ill, I am."

There was a man hanging about outside Fawley's house. With little traffic and few pedestrians he was not able to merge into the background.

"Sunday is visibility day for guardian angels," Harkness murmured.

"I'm going to stagger him."

As he crossed the road the detective began to edge away until halted by a brisk call.

"Sir?" he exclaimed.

"Did inspector Tyrrell send you here?"

"I beg your pardon, I don't know what you're talking about, sir."

"You're a plain-clothes detective."

"That's my business!"

"Exactly."

"You've no right to interfere with me like this, sir."

"Probably it is somewhat unusual. Can you tell me whether the inspector is on duty to-day?"

"Not on a Sunday."

"Ah! Thanks for the admission."

"Seeing you know me, Mr. Chetwood, I'd rather you didn't mention this talk to my superior."

"You'll not get into any trouble, rest assured. I've something rather important to discuss with Mr. Tyrrell."

"Any statement may be given at your own discretion, sir. It will be reported by me in the proper way."

"So you wouldn't mind publicizing this encounter, if I made a nice, juicy confession?"

"That would be different," the detective grinned.

"Only to the inspector."

"Unfortunately, it can't be done."

"I'll be calling on him in the morning bright and early."

"I hope, sir, it won't be too late," was the reply.

(To Be Continued.)

Ontario Testing Marvellous Killer of Insect life

Department of Lands and Forest Testing Out DDT

Montreal—One of the largest tests to date of DDT, the war born insecticide, is scheduled to commence this month, in the Lake Nipigon area north of Fort William in an attempt to check the spread of the spruce budworm which is threatening to destroy valuable stands of timber. Aeroplanes of the R. C. A. F., especially fitted out for the task, will undertake to spray the section of about 100 square miles.

This experiment which follows the recent test in Algonquin Park is being conducted by the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, and actually is a joint effort on the part of American and Canadian agricultural authorities. Observers from the United States Department of Agriculture and from the corresponding department at Ottawa will be following the results of the tests from headquarters which are being set up at Fort William.

Continuing demand for lumber and pulp on Canada in large quantities is growing to such an extent that forest conservation experts have decided to study every means possible to prevent the destruction by insects of timber which is vitally necessary to meet mounting military requirements, as well as to provide an essential building material in the reconstruction of devastated cities and towns overseas.

It was DDT which was rushed to Naples in the spring of 1943 where typhus threatened to reach the proportions of an epidemic. Then military authorities on typhus control took over and daily some 20,000 persons, rich and poor alike, were being dusted with DDT. Over two million people were so treated, and soon the decline in the incidence of this louse-borne scourge was as abrupt as its rise had been steep. For the first time in history, a typhus plague had been arrested in mid-winter.

And in South Pacific areas where Allied troops were waging a grisly war with the Japs, not the least of the killers turned out to be malaria. Here the story of DDT was equally dramatic and equally effective. When Allied troops had to fight their way from island to island, with supplies of quinine at a very low ebb, the spraying of DDT proved fatal to all the mosquito types transmitting this dangerous disease.

DDT is a chemical compound which was discovered in the 1870's, and like many other products of scientific research, remained nothing more than an idle curiosity until 1939, when the first news of its successful application arrived out of Switzerland in the form of a one per cent dusting powder. It had saved the Swiss potato crop from destruction by the Colorado beetle.

The reports of DDT thereafter read like fairy tales. DDT—or diphenyl dichloroethane, to give it its full name—proves relatively harmless to man and animal, but is a tested killer of many household insects, many of the innumerable varieties of insects which prey upon crops, and of many types of blood-sucking insects responsible for the spread of disease in animals and man. Its fatal action is said to be equally certain whether the insect ate the drug or simply touched it. As a film on surfaces, it is reported to be effective for weeks at a time.

DDT is effective in solution, or when used in a dusting powder. Readily soluble in many solvents, it is possible to disseminate clouds and sprays from the air as well as from the ground. On interior walls, DDT has been shown to retain the lethal effect for as long as 300 days. As a spray in solution, it not only kills the insects on immediate application, but continues to kill for months. Applied in solid form, it readily kills body insects.

Only recently has DDT begun to come on the market for general purpose use, and even yet is being restricted by the Director of Pesticides for Canada this year to stable spraying,

food packaging establishments, for hospitals, etc. None is yet available to the ordinary householder for fly sprays. When it does become accessible to the general consumer, it will be put up in suitable form only by regular insecticide manufacturers and released through the usual trade outlets. The day when it will be freely used on agricultural crops is still a little uncertain. Farmers will welcome its arrival for application as a dust on crops, as a spray for livestock in which it is a guaranteed de-louser and killer of flies, as a solution for application on interior walls of stables and barns. The householder will welcome its protection against the common fly and the hungry mosquito, as well as the destructive moth.

Production has been commenced by the Naugatuck Chemicals division of the Dominion Rubber Company at Elmira, Ont., who are the only manufacturers in Canada.

The investigation of all the possibilities and limitations of DDT has not yet been completed. Its claims as an insecticide have been only too well substantiated; unfortunately, it is as deadly to some good insects as it is to undesirable ones. It will kill beneficial lady beetles, it will under certain conditions kill the valuable honey bees. A recent test in the Algonquin Park in which DDT was sprayed from an autogyro in an attempt to combat an infestation of the spruce budworm brought these results: all the budworm moths were killed, as well as the budworms; and so were many other insects; and some frogs and snakes. But alive and healthy were the birds, the chipmunks, the mice, the beaver and deer in the park.

The findings of a seven-man committee which has been studying the effects of DDT over the past year indicate that this miracle insecticide is a valuable weapon against insect outbreaks in the forest.

Conservative Candidate in South Renfrew Riding

Hosts of friends in the North Land where he spent several years in the earlier days of this country will be interested to know that the Progressive Conservative candidate for the provincial elections on June 4th in the riding of South Renfrew is Mr. James Dempsey. Unless he has changed since the days when he was a popular figure in this North he will prove a handsome and hustling and successful candidate. It goes without saying that he will put up a bonnie fight, a fair one, a strong one. This is not Mr. Dempsey's first entry into public life, as he has been reeve of the town of Renfrew for the past three years, and thus also serving on the County council. Many in the north remember not only Jim Dempsey, but his gallant father, the late Sam J. Dempsey, of Cochrane, and Renfrew. In this North the late S. J. Dempsey was known far and wide as a stalwart fighter for the North and its development. He took active part in board of trade work and in other public and semi-public capacities. The late S. J. Dempsey

took notable part in many a political battle in South Renfrew, and was himself a candidate in one provincial election some years ago. His daughter, Miss Dempsey, served several years as a member of the Cochrane town council and did effective and valuable work in that office. The electors of South Renfrew will make no mistake in electing one of the Dempsey family to represent them in the provincial parliament, for they will be sure that they can always depend on the fairness and honesty and the ability of the Dempseys.

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