FINAL INSTALLMENT

SYNOPSIS: A card game is in session in Elmer Henderson's penthouse atop a New York skyscraper. The players are: Henderson, Police Inspector Flaherty, Martin Frazier, Archie Doane, Max Michaelis, and his friend, Williams, a stockbroker.

They are waiting for Stephen Fitzgerald. When he fails to appear, a telephone call brings the information that he is out with a girl. Fitzgerald and Henderson are both romantically interested in Lydia Lane, the famous actress, but Archie Doane reveals that she is engaged to marry him.

Doane leaves the party early when Fitzgerald fails to appear. A short time later he telephone Inspector Flaherty with the frantic news that he has found Fitzgerald and Miss Lane dead in Lydia Lane's penthouse apartment.

When Flaherty and the medical examiner reach the apartment they find that Miss Lane is still alive. She is rushed to a hospital where blood transfusions and care promise to restore her.

All circumstantial evidence points to Archie Doane as the murderer, especially when the murder gun is found carefully planted in the chimney clean out in the basement.

Miss Lane's French maid Adele Marceau has been overheard threatening to shoot Fitzgerald if he did not stop annoying her. The janitor reports that Mademoiselle Lane was in a night club with Doane the day of the murder.

Mr. Michaelis, a friend of Lydia Lane's, has been giving evidence before the Coroner's jury.

"Such a pity," he says, "that Miss Lane should be the victim of the same man she has been entertaining and whom she has been trying to help."

Henderson glanced at his wrist watch. "I shall be glad to check you up, if you have gone wrong in any of your deductions, for about an other half hour, he said. "Afterwards who can tell? Again, Mr. Michaelis, I bow to your superior intuition and reasoning powers. I confess I am curious to learn how your suspicions were first directed in my direction."

He shrugged his shoulders expressively, with a courteous smile.

"What's all this about?" demanded Inspector Flaherty impatiently. "Henderson, did you kill Fitzgerald?"

"Not only that," said Max Michaelis, "but he administered to himself a dose of slow-acting poison—hypodermically, I presume, Henderson? which gives him another half hour of consciousness before he lapses into the sleep from which there is no awakening. Am I right, Henderson?"

"Suicide?" exclaimed Martin Frazier, as Henderson nodded in confirmation of Michaelis' statement. "We can't allow that."

"Suicide, I understand, is not a crime," Henderson suggested. "It is much preferable to death by electricity."

"No, but attempted suicide is a crime, and connivance at suicide is also a crime," said Frazier. "We would all be guilty. I shall telephone at once for a physician."

"As you please," Henderson assented. "It will be useless, I assure you. The deed is already done. It is as irrevocable—as irrevocable as Stephen Fitzgerald's death. There is no antidote known to science for the virus which is already coursing thru my veins. However, if it will satisfy the law to send for a doctor, I have no objection. You will find the telephone in the foyer, Frazier."

The Assistant District Attorney hurried to the telephone, while Dan Flaherty looked at the unperturbed countenance of Elmer Henderson with an expression in which amazement was mingled with admiration.

"I owe you an apology, Henderson," he said, after a moment's steady scrutiny. "Last night I said you were a great poker player and a good winner, but that I thought you'd show a yellow streak if the game went against you. I take that all back. You're a rat, but you're a game little rat, at that."

"Thank you, Inspector," replied Henderson, politely. "I am a soldier of fortune—a gambler with life if you like—and when I lose I play without grumbling."

"There'll be an ambulance from Bellevue here in a few minutes," reported Frazier, returning from the telephone.

"I'll make my recital brief, then," said Michaelis. "Martin, am I right in the belief that it was Henderson who suggested to you the idea that the revolver might be found at the bottom of the chimney?"

"Yes; that was a suggestion casually dropped by him when I called him up last night and reported that Miss Lane was still alive," agreed Frazier. "We naturally talked about all the details, so far as we knew them at that time. I told him, I remember, that the weapon had not been found, but that we had not looked outside the apartment for it as yet. He said something to the effect that it might easily have been thrown off the roof into the street, down the chimney or into the elevator shaft. I attached no special significance to what he said then. I merely following out my own of thought."

"But it was said with a purpose,"

Henderson all playing poker right here at the time, Flaherty objected.

Max Michaelis smiled. "The purpose was to put the crime into accessible on Archie Doane, which the discovery of the gun in the chimney would have done, had the evidence of the snow not proved that he could not have put it there.

"The snow ruined your plot, Henderson," he went on. "It was obvious after the first minutes, gentlemen to me at least, that both Miss Lane and Fitz had been shot before the snow fell. Regardless of what the Medical Examiner said as to the time Fitz could have lived with a bullet thru his heart, I was convinced that he had lived for three hours, possibly longer, after being shot. A vague memory of a similar case stirred in my mind. While we were hunting for the clues and discussing those we had found, the memory came clear.

"It was a case which was widely reported in the newspapers, of a man, shot thru the heart, who had been kept alive for several hours thereafter by the prompt administration of a hypodermic injection of adrenalin, the drug extracted from the supra-renal glands, which control the pressure of blood in the arteries.

"As soon as I remembered that, I asked the medical examiner to look for any abrasion of the skin on Fitzgerald's body. You know what he reported—a puncture that could have been made by a hypodermic needle.

"That did not connect anyone specifically with the crime, but the finding of that revolver at the bottom of the chimney did.

"It was the ideal weapon for the crime. Access to it could be attributed to Doane. And it was equipped with a silencer.

"Only five persons concerned, so far as we know, had an opportunity to abstract that particular weapon from the Highart Studio. Those five persons were Fitz himself, Miss Lane, Adele Marceau, Archie Doane and Elmer Henderson.

"The circumstances eliminated both Fitz and Miss Lane. They also eliminated Doane, because of the absence of any way in which he could have thrown the pistol down the chimney without leaving tracks in the snow. We did not know then whether the maid was involved or not, but I dropped her from consideration for the time being, after hearing the janitor's story.

"I decided to concentrate first on Henderson, and the more I reviewed the situation, the more clearly it all pointed to him. Yet there was nothing conclusive.

"If my theory was right, then Miss Lane did not telephone to Archie Doane. She was lying there, unconscious, with Fitz's dead body on the floor. Who did telephone Daone then? And why?

"Miss Lane had been making voice tests in Henderson's studio—recording her voice on film by his new method. Archie Doane confirmed my suspicion that the words he heard over the phone were the exact words from a part she had been taking in a sound picture. What would have been easier than for Henderson to have called up Doane's rooms, switched on the film in his soundproof laboratory here, and let Archie hear the frantic call for help in his fiancee's own voice?"

"But we were all playing poker right here, at the time," Dan Flaherty objected.

"A perfect alibi," Michaelis admitted, "except that you may recall that at just about eleven o'clock Henderson called attention to the time and went into the other room on the pretext of hunting for the whiskey, saying his man had ..

"Still that was only a possibility Unless I could connect Henderson with sufficient knowledge of drugs to warrant the assumption that he had administered something to Miss Lane which had caused unconsciousness, and something to Fitz, after the shooting, to keep the semblance of life in him for hours, with a bullet thru the heart, I had nothing tangible to go on.

"After I left you gentlemen and had got Archie bedded down for the night I called up a private detective agency and had them station four men to watch this building and Henderson I hoped that his suspicions would not be aroused before we were ready to act, and I did not want to plant a suspicion of him in your mind, Dan, until I had more information. That would have possibly been doing him a tremendous injustice, but I felt responsible if he should attempt flight.

"Then I telephoned to my friend Joe Everett, the lawyer in Pasadena of whom you heard me speak to Henderson last night, and I asked him to get a full report by wire at the earliest possible moment.

"Then I called two eminent medical men out of their comfortable beds, greatly to their disgust. One of them assured me that I was correct in my recollection of the efficacy of adrenalin in a case of gunshot wound in the heart; a strong hypodermic injection of it had been known to keep a man alive for five hours. The other eminent medico told me that any one of several drugs, including hyoscin, could be administered hypodermically, or by the mouth to produce a state bordering on hypnotism, in which the patient would be to all intents and purposes unconscious, but would suffer no permanent harm and have no recollection afterwards of what had occurred.

"I formed no conclusion then as to how or when a drug had been administered to Miss Lane, as we did not know then about the pin which, as she supposed, had punctured her leg. And it was only guesswork that Fitz had been given a hypodermic of adrenalin.

"Adele Marceau's story about the pin, the medical examiner's report of finding the mark of the needle in Fitz's leg, the telephone company's report of no calls from that phone until Archie called you, Dan, all tended to confirm my suspicions. Then came this telegram from Joe Everett. I won't bother to read it all—it's unnecessary, now—but he reports, in brief, that Elmer Henderson formerly practiced medicine there, specializing in diseases of women and particularly in the use of the so-called 'twilight sleep' in childbirth. He was convicted of criminal malpractice, served a year in prison, and his license to practice was revoked. Then he turned to electrical invention and produced a new method of recording sound on films.

"I knew, even before we heard Miss Lane's story in the hospital just now, that Henderson was the murderer. I felt that I had enough evidence on which to convict him. I am neither a policeman or a prosecutor, but there was no way to extricate my client, Archie Doane, from the suspicion, if not the direct accusation of murder, unless I could prove that some one else did this crime.

"I had hoped to confront Henderson here with the evidence I had accumulated and to see him arrested and punished for his deed, but he had forestalled us. He was keen enough to note the presence of my private detectives, too, and to guess what they meant. So he chose the gambler's way out. He had lost, and he paid.

"Am I right, Henderson?"

The man across the table was sagging in his chair, his head drooping, as Michaelis finished. He roused himself and turned his face toward the lawyer. "Absolutely right in every detail," he said, in a voice which had lost its resonance and tone.

"May I ask one question, then?" Henderson nodded assent.

"Mere curiosity, but did you lure Fitz to Miss Lane's by the same device that later called Doane?

Again the nod of assent.

"You placed a pin in her shoe in the taxi, to account to her for the prick of the hypodermic needle? You knew she would be unconscious within a few minutes after you had left her at her rooms? You returned to your own rooms and called Fitzgerald to her apartment with her filmed voice, over your own telephone? You then hurried back to Miss Lane's apartment, met Fitzgerald there, perhaps pretended that you too had received the same summons? And then shot him while he was about to call on you for help for the unconscious girl? And then you shot Miss Lane, thus giving an attempted double murder? Then you threw the gun down the chimney?"

The sagging head nodded again.

"You planned it from the beginning, to lure Archie Doane to the apartment and let him be discovered there, with no other explanation of the crime than that he had done it. You wanted Lydia Lane yourself, and you thought to get your two rivals out of the way by having one executed for the murder of the other. You made sure that he had reached his rooms by ringing up and asking for a fictitious person."

The drooping figure across the table raised his head again.

"And a keener mind than mine frustrated a perfect crime," said Elmer Henderson, as his chin dropped on his chest and his body seemed to relax and slip downward.

"Say the omniscient mind of God, rather," said Max Michaelis, as the others eased the lifeless body to the floor just as the ambulance surgeon's ring sounded at the doorway. "But for the evidence of the snow it would have been a perfect crime—the evidence supplied from above which proved that Archie Doaane could not have done it.

"A perfect crime. Not a detail overlooked—except the snow.

"I was brought up, gentlemen, to believe in a just and avenging Deity. The events we have just witnessed confirm my belief that the hand of God does sometimes intervene to save the innocent and punish the guilty."

"The end of a game little crook," said Dan Flaherty, not without an inflection of pity in his voice, as the ambulance surgeon rose from his examination of what had been Elmer Henderson, and shook his head.

"If he had not suggested the chimney, we might never have looked there," said Martin Frazier.

"That would have made no difference to his plans," said Max Michaelis.

"Sooner or later the weapon would have been found. Meantime Archie would have been under suspicion, and the finding of the gun would have sent him to the chair—except for the snow."

He glanced at the two documents they had witnessed.

"Brief, but complete," he said as he passed one of them to Inspector Flaherty. "This confession belongs in your records, Dan."

He cast his eyes over the other paper.

"Equally brief and equally complete," he said. "Henderson's will leaves everything to Lydia Lane. He was a game one."

"How did you know he was going to confess?" asked the Inspector, as he turned toward the telephone to summon the medical examiner.

"I didn't, until he held us at the door. I suspected then that he was administering poison to himself; I was sure of it when he mentioned the men I had posted around the building. It was the way a gambler like Henderson would take -- the action when the game was up."

THE END

Farm Bureau to Hold Wheat Meeting

The Allegany county Farm Bureau has arranged for a wheat meeting to be held at several hall, Fri... on Friday, Sept. 2nd at ... p. m.

C. Fl. Wickham, State crop insurance specialist, will explain how Allegany county wheat growers can have wheat to sell every year, bother heir crop fails or not.

Wheat growers who are confused regarding the 1939 agricultural conservation wheat program should plan to attend this meeting. Question relative to the wheat program will be answered.

"What a pretty name your maid has."

"Yes; of course it's not her real name. We call her Dawn because she's always breaking."

Births

Aug. 22.—To Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Guild of Cuba, a daughter.

Aug. 25.—To Mr. and Mrs. Dan Sibble, Trapping Brook, a son.

Aug. 26.—To Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Weinman, Wellsville, a daughter.

Aug. 27.—To Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Closser, Fillmore, a son.

Aug. 29.—To Mr. and Mrs. Loren Clemens, Wellsville, a son.

Aug. 29.—To Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Grimes, Belmont, a son.

Marriages

Aug. 18.—Miss Elma M. Williams of Belfast to John G. Halloran of Whitney Point.

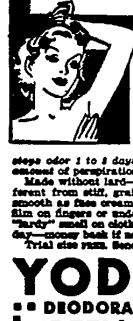
Aug. 22.—Miss Pauline Cole of Wellsville, to Lawrence W. Stannard of Portsmouth, N. H.

DEATHS

Harmon Damon, 60, Fillmore, August 24, from injuries sustained when he fell from a load of hay. Besides his wife he is survived by two sons and a daughter. Services were held Saturday.

Mrs. Mary M. Ingham, lifelong resident of Fillmore, August 18. She leaves one daughter. Funeral services were held Monday at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic church. Burial in Holy Cross cemetery, Fillmore.

The worst BODY ODOR is P.O.



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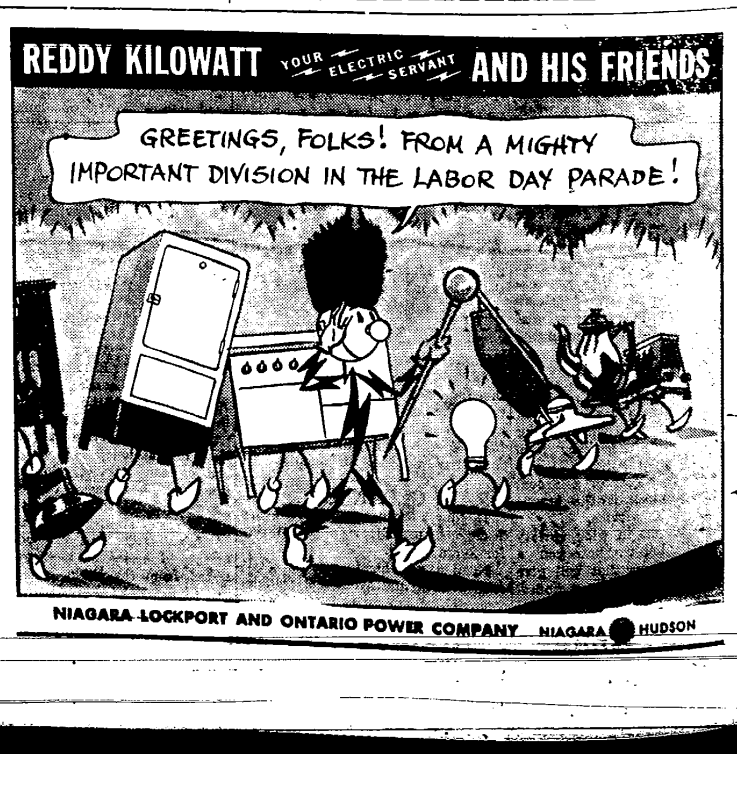
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