

DR. WESCOTT SOLVES

The Case Of

Aloha Murder

BY WILBORNE HARRELL

A CHOWAN HERALD FICTION STORY



We were nearing Honolulu and the plane was letting down for a landing. Dr. Wescott and I had fastened our seat-belts and sat watching the fast approaching incredible beauty of the Hawaiian Island of Oahu, with its rolling beaches, its palm trees and green hills and valleys. Far below us Diamond Head stretched its finger into the sea, and famed Waikiki Beach slipped beneath us. I recognized these points of interest from picture postcards sent to me by friends who were visiting the Islands.

To the casual observer, Dr. Wescott, noted detective, and I, Jimmy Maguire, newsman, were just a couple of malahinis (I got that word, too, from my card-writing friend. The word means "newcomer"); but although he hadn't confided in me, I knew Dr. Wescott was on a mission for the FBI. For him to have been so reticent, I knew it must have been extremely important. But I had held my council, for I knew I would be informed all in good time. Otherwise he would not have brought me along on the trip.

On the flight from the States, Dr. Wescott had made friends

among many definitions, means, Hello! So—I was saying hello to the Hawaiian Islands, but little did I dream that I was also saying hello to murder. But I was.

At the insistence of Bill Kaloa, Dr. Wescott had taken rooms at the Mauna Loa Hotel, which also housed Bill and his troupe of musicians.

It was the night of the luau, and Dr. Wescott and I were dressing for the affair. Draped across a chair were two extravagantly floral leis, which Bill had given us and said we were to wear. I looked askance at the wreaths, for I knew I would feel foolish with one of them around my neck.

Dr. Wescott gave a final pat to his tie and ran his hand down the crease of his trousers. He glanced at his watch. "We were to pick up Bill. We haven't much time, so let's be going, Jimmy."

Bill Kaloa's room was just down the hall, and Bill's voice bid us enter when Dr. Wescott tapped on the door.

Stepping inside, Dr. Wescott said, "Aloha, Bill," and grinned at his use of the Hawaiian greeting.

"Aloha, yourself," returned Bill, also grinning. "You and Jimmy come on in. I broke a string on my guitar today and I've got to put a new one on." He tinkered with the string and finally had it adjusted to his satisfaction. He tuned the instrument and turning to Dr. Wescott, said, "Here, Doctor, try it—play Song Of The Islands for me."

Bill sat back and closed his eyes and gave all his attention to Dr. Wescott's rendition of the famous Hawaiian song. At the final note, Bill said, "Sure you don't want a job with me, Doctor? I could use a steel guitarist like you."

A smile creased Dr. Wescott's eyes. "No, Bill. I'll stick to detecting." He laid the round plastic playing bar down on the table, but as he did so, I noticed a puzzled frown on his face, but I did not attach any special significance to it at the time.

Bill Kaloa was saying, "Luke's room is next door; see if he is

ready, Jimmy." Luke was the ukulele player of the band and his real name was Lucian, but everybody called him Luke the Uke. And how he could play a ukulele.

The two rooms had a connecting door and I made my way to do Bill's bidding. I knocked on the door, but getting no answer, I pushed the door open and entered.

"Luke!" I moved further into the room and looked around. Then I saw him, Luke was lying on the floor, but I'd seen enough dead men to know that he was dead.

I backed hastily out of the room.

"Dr. Wescott." I tried to keep my voice under control, but he saw instantly that something was wrong. He strode quickly to my side.

"What is it, Jimmy?"

I pointed to the still figure lying on the floor.

Dr. Wescott stepped into the room and leaned over the body of Luke the Uke. After a cursory examination, he stood up. "From the marks on his neck he was strangled—presumably

by a cord. This is a matter for the police," he said. "Where's your phone, Bill?"

Bill had joined me at the door and we were both looking, sorta numb-like, at Luke the Uke lying dead.

It was some time later, Lieutenant Combs, of the Honolulu Homicide Squad had arrived and taken charge. The Lieutenant recognized Dr. Wescott; they shook hands warmly and the Lieutenant invited Dr. Wescott to assist in the investigation.

The photographers and the fingerprint boys and the medical examiner had done their stuff and departed, and the Lieutenant was winding up his preliminary interrogations. We all stood around more or less at ease, but Dr. Wescott's tall, lanky figure dominated the scene.

He stepped forward. "Lieutenant, if you will indulge me for a few minutes, I would like to tell a story and at the same time throw some light on what has transpired here."

Lieutenant Combs nodded his assent and Dr. Wescott resumed.

As he spoke, his eyes roamed over the room and touched each occupant lightly. Bill Kaloa sat slumped in a chair, Eddie and Joe, also members of Kaloa's band stood together. Luana stood alone, her eyes on Bill Kaloa. She seemed to be on the verge of tears. Lieutenant Combs sat at a desk and I stood by the door, leaning against the wall. Dr. Wescott had that enigmatic look on his face I had seen many times, and I knew he knew something the rest of us didn't know. That look always spelled the discovery of the murderer and the end of the case.

"Once upon a time," Dr. Wescott was saying, "there was a young musician. He was in love with a beautiful girl, and they wanted to marry. But he was not earning enough with his music to justify that step. So—the opportunity for more and easy money presented itself. All he had to do was smuggle a little dope—heroin—into the Islands on his trips back and forth between Hawaii and the mainland—"

Bill Kaloa started to speak.

but Dr. Wescott imperatively raised his hand for silence. Bill subsided.

"—but someone else found out about this musician's dope smuggling."

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WAIKIKI BEACH

and TV program. I had seen and heard Kaloa on TV and liked him, but I liked him still better in person.

Kaloa and Dr. Wescott hit it off from the start, and I came in for a tremendous surprise. I knew Dr. Wescott was versatile and could do many things well, but I never before knew he could play a steel guitar. But he handled Kaloa's round plastic playing bar on the strings like a professional. Kaloa was so delighted with Dr. Wescott's performance he then and there attached himself to the doctor, and promised that he would help us do Honolulu up right when we landed. We were also to be Kaloa's guests of honor at a luau, a sort of glorified Hawaiian barbecue feast.

As the plane struck her gliding groove and eased in for the touchdown, I thought of the Hawaiian word, Aloha, which

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