

MURDER WILL NOT OUT//

by WHITMAN CHAMBERS

CHAPTER IX

ALL FELLOW stepped down from the plane. He bent down and looked at the man who was lying on the ground. "Get on your feet, you fool!"

He got up. His neck was stiff. He couldn't seem to keep his head from wobbling around. "Right where you are, you fool!"

"Watch yourself!" Harry Smith cautioned, and Johnnie felt the muzzle of a gun prod his forehead.

"Mr. Ramage and his pilot are leaving for Los Angeles," Johnnie announced.

"O. K. Mr. De Voe," one of the officers said. "Have you plenty of gas and oil sir?"

"Yes."

"O. K. sir."

They all walked over to the blue Petrel, the fourth ship in a line of seven at the edge of the field. "Ramage" opened the door of the cabin, tossed in his suitcase and stood back, watchful. Smith climbed in. The starter whirled, the motor caught. Smith gunned it a few times and then left it ticking over. Lowering a window forward of the door, he poked his head out, said:

"Guess we're set."

He spoke to "Ramage" but his eyes were on Johnnie and Red and the two officers. Without a word the tall crook swung up through the door.

At that instant a little man came running from the direction of the hotel. He shouted breathlessly:

"Mr. Ramage! Wait! Wait!"

The tall crook swore briefly. Harry Smith said in an undertone: "Might as well take him along." And then to Hawks: "Climb in, Monk."

The ex-jockey gained the door in a flying leap and scrambled into the cabin. The door slammed. The men on the ground heard whispered instructions, while Harry Smith still hung out the window watching them. Then his head ducked in, the motor roared and the big blue Petrel started to roll.

"It wasn't my beef and part of the dough in that wallet—" Mogo Finelli began.

Red Munson cursed, his voice shrill with impotent rage.

The two men in uniform stared, mouths agape.

And then Joe Soares and three officers, all with drawn guns, were

of grveled path which ran through the lush tropical gardens to the airport.

As they emerged onto the field which lay white in the moonlight, two men in blue uniforms came out of the shadows.

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abruptly on the scene.

Johnnie De Voe screamed. "Don't shoot, Joe! Don't shoot! Somebody might hear—"

He broke off, balanced an instant on his toes. As the Petrel gathered speed and moved away he leaped for the leading edge of the elevator. He caught it as it flew past, got a good grip, swung himself up and onto the narrow tail of the fuselage. There he clung, while the ship gathered speed and roared off in a cloud of alkali dust.

At thirty miles an hour the pilot eased his stick forward to bring up the tail. It did not come up; the ship had not been designed to lift 190 pounds on its tail.

The motor roared faster, louder. At 40 miles an hour the pilot eased his stick forward again. The tail would not come up. He opened the throttle wide and, with less than a hundred yards separating him from the low trees at the far side of the field, made one last desperate effort. Johnnie held his breath and methodically kicked his feet through the fabric of the elevator. The tail refused to rise from the ground. At better than fifty miles an hour the big ship shot straight toward the trees, and the deep arroyo beyond them. Then it started to swing in a wide circle to the right.

A head and an arm and one shoulder emerged from the cabin window. A spurt of flame broke from the end of the arm. Then another and another, the sounds of the shots drowned by the roar of the big Hornet.

Johnnie put his head down, held on, made himself as flat as possible against the fuselage. He felt the ship's circle growing tighter, felt the plane tilt slightly as green-black trees rushed past so close he could almost have touched them.

The tall skid shrieked on the hard-packed field as it whipped around. Then abruptly the left wheel crumpled. The ship heeled over. The left wing struck the ground with a splintering crash.

The tail shot up as the plane ground-looped. And Johnnie De Voe, on the end of that powerful catapult, hurtled into space.

Johnnie came out of the darkness with the smell of antiseptic burning his nose. He opened his eyes to the bright lights and the white walls of the resort's little emergency hospital, and looked up into the anxious face of Red Munson.

"How's it, boss?" Red asked.

"Terrible." Johnnie moved an arm, groaned.

"That's how you look. But the

nurse says you're not hurt—much. Those thick cedars at the edge of the field broke your fall, even if they did tear off most of your skin."

Johnnie groaned again, turned his head away from the light and looked into the lugubrious face of Mogo Finelli.

"My wallet burned up in the fire," Finelli said sadly.

"Huh?" Johnnie sat up abruptly, forgetting his aching back. "What fire?"

Red shrugged. "The plane caught fire."

"And those three crooks?" Johnnie blurted.

"Fried," said Mogo Finelli. Johnnie eased back on the bed. "How much are we out?"

"Just the ten G's that Finelli won. His wallet went up in the smoke—with the guy who called himself Ramage."

"How about the money Hawks and the two dames won?"

"Harry Smith had it all. He fell out of the plane when it rolled into the arroyo on the other side of that border of trees. He was covered with burning gasoline. Must have lived five or ten minutes after we dragged him away. But the dough was only scorched."

Johnnie suddenly set up again. "Look. How much of this will get in to the papers? You know, I've

told you time and again—"

"I know, I know," Red interrupted. "A press agent's job is two-fold. He not only has to get good publicity into the papers, but he has to keep bad publicity out of the papers."

"There aren't any smart reporters," Munson cracked. "They all got jobs as press agents."


"This is no time for comedy, Red. The reputation of Fuente Fria is at stake."

"Now look, boss. The blue Petrel rolled off into that arroyo, which is a good two hundred feet deep. Apparently only one tank busted, and that couldn't have had much gas in it. Enough—you know what I meant—but we got the blaze out with the chemical cart before the other tanks caught. At this time of night all our guests are either asleep or in the Casino. Nobody except half a dozen employes saw the blaze. And I've got a gang at work already clearing up the wreckage. Outside of our own men, not a soul knows what's happened here—except Mogo Finelli."

"And Mogo Finelli," said that gentleman unhappily, "is pulling out of here tomorrow—busted."

Johnnie lay back on the bed, closed his eyes. "Ten thousand dol-

Injured in Fall



Dean of the American theatre, Daniel Frohman, 89, was taken to a New York hospital after he slipped and fell in his hotel residence, fracturing his right hip.

"Cheap at twice the price. Fuente Fria wheels it good name . . . no phony wheels at Fuente . . . no rough stuff . . . no crooks. . . Safest place in the world—if you mind your own business."

"If you mind your own business," Mogo Finelli echoed sadly.

"I think," said Johnnie De Voe. "I'd like a glass of milk."

(The End)

IT PAYS TO READ THE ADS

Christmas Seals Aid Children In Local Schools

Tuberculosis seals are now being sold by students in all the Waynesville district schools, according to Mrs. Frank Ferguson, chairman of the committee from the Woman's Club, sponsoring organization of the sale.

Last year \$160 was realized locally from the sale of these seals; the proceeds from which are used throughout the land to fight the inroads of the "great white plague."

Of the money derived from the sale, 75 per cent is kept locally, 20 per cent is sent to the state for work among tubercular patients and 5 per cent goes to national headquarters for administrative upkeep.

Each school in the district keeps 75 cents out of every dollar's worth of seals sold by them. The money is used each year to furnish food and milk to undernourished children and tubercular suspects.

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