

MURDER By An ARISTOCRAT

Mignon G. Eberhart

"It's always that way," said Dr. Boulligny. "That is the danger of veronal. It is, in a manner of speaking, a perfectly harmless drug. But taken over a period of time it does not induce tolerance on the part of the patient, as, for instance, morphine does. At the same time veronal tends to lose something of its effect when taken habitually. Thus the patient is apt to increase the dose, and since his system has not grown tolerant any heavy increase is usually fatal. That is why we hear of so many deaths from veronal." He was talking nervously, rubbing his heavy chin with his hand and watching Adela.

Hilary cleared his throat. "It's a peaceful death, isn't it, Dan?"

"Why, yes, Hilary," said Dr. Boulligny with a sigh. "Dave didn't suffer. Don't worry about that."

"Peaceful," said Hilary slowly. "That is why it is so often used for suicide."

It was the first time the word had been spoken. Janice started to her feet, dreadfully white and horrified, and then sank slowly back again, her wide dark eyes on Dr. Boulligny; Evelyn put out her brown hands as if in reproach and denial, and Adela in her chair stiffened. Slowly her body became firm and erect. She lifted her face. It was no longer flabby and sunken and old; it was granite again, set with resolve. From that moment on to the last it was as if Adela were consumed with a white fever of energy and resolve; as if she could not rest, could not wait, could not even permit herself sorrow until she had cleared Dave's memory of the dreadful imputation. That was the thing that kept her from collapse; that was the purpose that animated her every move. That was, of course, the driving reason for her insistence in continuing that extraordinary inquiry which Dave's death had so unexpectedly and terribly interrupted. For she did just that, incredible though it is.

Now she turned her blue eyes upon Hilary and said rather hoarsely:

"Suicide. Did you say suicide? What do you mean?"

Hilary shrugged helplessly. "I meant suicide, Adela."

"Do you dare sit there before my very eyes and say that your own brother is a suicide?"

Hilary looked too unhappy to be further disconcerted by Adela's scathing tone. He said:

"Suicide has been a confession of guilt before now. I heard Janice catch her breath as if it hurt her. Adela's face did not alter."

"I knew that was in your mind," said Adela with relentless scorn. "I knew when you said suicide exactly what you meant. You want us to believe, all of us, that Dave killed Bayard and then killed himself to escape the consequences. That's what you want us to believe." She leaned forward, terribly still, talking in a broken, cold way. "It is an easy way out for you. For all of us. But we are not going to take that way. Hilary, Hilary, how can you! And Dave—only just dead."

"I'm sorry, Adela," said Hilary. He was gradually reassuming the slightly pompous air that was natural with him, although he still looked shaken; his fat hands were unsteady, and his eyes had a tendency to dart about the room and avoid directly meeting other eyes. "I'm sorry. But I don't see any other thing to believe. It is painfully evident. We have all known how Dave has brooded lately; espe-

cially since Bayard's death. How depressed he has been. Why, we have scarcely seen him; he's done nothing but sit in his study there and brood. I don't want to think that he killed Bayard and then committed suicide. You may not think it, Adela, but I—I loved Dave, too. But I can't escape the fact. I can't close my eyes to it from sentiment. To me it is as good as proved. Dave killed Bayard."

Dr. Boulligny, anxious eyes on Adela's cold face, moved restlessly.

"That depression of Dave's meant nothing, Hilary," he said. "It is one of the symptoms of his condition. Veronal addicts are subject to periods of extreme mental depression. His depression was no sign that he was brooding over Bayard's death. All those things we talked of were symptoms. I must have been blind not to see it. But it came very gradually."

"It dated," said Adela cruelly, "from his last illness. When you, Daniel, gave him things to make him sleep."

Dr. Boulligny's large fingers rubbed his chin worriedly.

"Adela," he said, "you don't mean that. I would never do a thing like that. I—"

"Forgive me," said Adela more gently. "No, I didn't mean that you contributed to this dreadful habit of Dave's. To Dave's death. No, I did not mean that, Daniel. Dave has always been weak. Has always needed help. And I failed him. I failed him, but I'll prove he did not murder. I'll prove— Her eyes fell on me, and perhaps it was then that she remembered what Dave's death had interrupted, and resolved to continue that inquiry. Only now there was a more pressing reason to prove her family's innocence."

"You can't prove that, Adela," said Hilary wearily. "It is best to leave things as they are. We'll bury Dave, and we'll remember the things we loved him for. We'll remember him as he was before his— Hilary paused and then said rather sadly and kindly— "his illness. I'll telephone to Frank Whiting now. We'd better say—what shall we say, Dan?"

"You'll have to tell the truth," said Dr. Boulligny. "The truth," repeated Adela quickly. "You mean that Dave died of an overdose of veronal? That he died right in the next room while we were all here talking? But people will say what Hilary says! Everyone will say he murdered Bayard and then killed himself. That it was a confession of his guilt. Can't you say something else? Anything?"

"No, Adela. I'm sorry. That is all I can say."

"But wasn't it heart failure in the end? Couldn't you say that?"

Dr. Boulligny smiled sadly. "All deaths are heart failure in the end, Adela," he said gently. "But I can say with honesty that it was a culmination of a long period of illness. Everyone knows that he has not been well in a long time. I'll do what I can, I promise you."

It struck me that Hilary was a little eager to shift the blame onto Dave's defenseless shoulders and to close the matter of Bayard's murder once and for all. Impulsively, and thereby, I have no doubt, incurring Hilary's undying hatred, I said:

"If you left Bayard alive at 10 minutes after 4 the afternoon of his death and your wife found him dead not more than 10 minutes later at the most, it could not have been Dave who killed him. For Dave and Mr. Carick were together at that time."

The shock of Dave's death

had apparently driven from Hilary's thoughts the moments immediately preceding its discovery. I could almost see him grope about in his memory, while his face hardened suspiciously. He darted a swift look toward Evelyn.

"Bayard was alive when I left him," he said stubbornly. "I don't care what you have taken it in your head to say, Evelyn, he was alive when I left him."

"Evelyn," said Adela slowly, "why did you say what you did? Why did you say Bayard was alive when you left him? Did you really find him dead? There in the study?"

Evelyn's dark blue eyes went from her husband's worried, frightened face to Allen's. I don't know what she found there, some source of strength, I suppose, for she said bluntly:

"I didn't tell the truth, Adela. You see, I knew that Hilary had just left Bayard, you all know that, so it wasn't such a shock to find him dead as it might have been. Oh, it was terrible, of course, to find him like that, but it wasn't as if it had been someone I loved. The dreadful part of it, to me, was the fact that Hilary, if he had kept his appointment with me, as I soon found he had, must have just left the house. I was afraid they had quarreled. I was afraid— She stopped, looking in some anxiety at Hilary.

"Oh, go on," said Hilary bitterly. "You are as good as accusing me of murder. Don't stop on my account."

Evelyn's blue eyes looked troubled. But she was always impervious to even the broadest irony. To Evelyn people said what they meant. She continued at once and rather sensibly:

"What else was there for me to think, Hilary? Oh, I know now that you didn't kill him. But then I was afraid. I thought of everything. Of the boys. Of you. I knew how Bayard goaded you. Even a word or a look or a smile from Bayard could always enrage Hilary—"

"Evelyn, for God's sake, stop," groaned Hilary. "Stop her, Allen. Can't you see what she is doing—"

"So I thought," continued Evelyn inexorably, "that I'd better not tell that I found Bayard dead when I came here to meet Hilary. And Hilary agreed with me about it. He said there were times when a lie is—"

Hilary was on his feet. "Evelyn, will you stop talking! Will you—"

"Evelyn," said Allen, crisply breaking through Hilary's frenzied protest, "you say you know now that Hilary didn't kill Bayard. How do you know it? Don't be frightened."

"I'm not frightened," said Evelyn calmly, and I'm sure she spoke the truth. "I know Hilary didn't kill Bayard because he told me he didn't."

"Because I told—Oh, my God, Evelyn, are you trying to make things worse than they are already?"

"Why, no, Hilary," said Evelyn. "I'm just telling the truth. I never felt right about that lie, but I told it after I'd promised you I would. I could see why it was so necessary, but now the truth is out we may as well make the best—"

I stepped forward. My uniform rustled in the sudden silence. I suppose they saw something in my face, for no one spoke, and I was conscious of their combined gaze.

"Did you close Bayard's eyes?" I asked Evelyn.

"No," she said. "No. His eyes were closed when I found him. I was glad of that. His eyes were closed."

"His eyes were closed," I repeated slowly. Dr. Boulligny started to speak and checked himself.

"The eyes of those who die a violent death do not close voluntarily." I turned squarely to Hilary.

"Did you close Bayard's eyes?"

CHAPTER XV

Hilary was, I really believe an excellent and level-headed man of business. It was only owing to the fact that Bayard's murder so nearly concerned him that he found it so difficult to keep his head. Found it, in fact, impossible to behave with the assurance and foresight with which, in all likelihood, he would have advised his bank's client. Perhaps, too, as Evelyn had hinted, he had become supersensitive to Bayard or anything connected with Bayard; I myself had seen how easily and swiftly Bayard's smiling, edged remarks could penetrate Hilary's complacency.

Besides that, his own feelings were deeply involved; everything he had worked for, everything he held dear was threatened. He had been under a protracted nervous strain, he was harassed on all sides by worries, and Dave's death was the final blow.

My question was patently unwelcome. But then, almost anything I might have said would be unwelcome to Hilary.

He gave me a harassed, quick look, fumbled for a cigarette, selected one with jerky fingers, and said:

"No. No, I didn't close his eyes. How could I? Bayard was alive, I tell you, when I came here that afternoon. I'm going to telephone to Frank Whiting right now, Adela. It won't do to wait."

He started for the study. Almost at the door he stopped suddenly, as if he couldn't bear to see Dave's body again, turned abruptly, and went to the hall.

"That's right," said Dr. Boulligny. "Frank will have to be told sooner or later, and it's better sooner."

It was so quiet in the long shadowed room that we could hear Hilary's voice from the telephone in Adela's morning room, and his footsteps back along the hall. He was wiping his face with his handkerchief when he entered the room again.

"This is going to be bad," he said. "Frank Whiting—well, he didn't say much, but I could feel what he thought. God, it's such a mess!" He dropped heavily into a chair and sat there, staring at the rug.

"Is he coming right away?" asked Dr. Boulligny.

"Soon. He couldn't come immediately."

I am never one to put my hand to the plow and look back. And I did not like Hilary's evasion.

"Someone," I said, "closed Bayard's eyes. And if Bayard was alive when you left the house that afternoon, Mr. Thatcher, and dead when your wife came so soon after and no one entered the house in that interval—how did Bayard die?"

"What do you mean by that?" cried Hilary. "Are you accusing me of murder? What business is it of yours?"

"Hilary, I asked Miss Keate to do exactly what she is doing." It was Adela, of course, stiff and cold and straight and marvelously composed.

"I think you would do well to answer the nurse," said Allen dryly. "It is a reasonable question. You see, Hilary, you don't seem to realize that you are in a rather questionable position. You appear to be the last one known to have been with Bayard before his death. You say you didn't kill him, and we are only too ready to believe you. But Miss Keate, quite reasonably, wants further proof."

There was a short silence. It was so quiet I could hear Pansy, withdrawn to a corner and forgotten, panting asthmatically. Hilary continued to stare with narrowed eyes at the rug. Finally he said sulkily:

"I don't know who killed Bayard. I hate to seem cowardly, but I think Dave did it. But I don't know how it happened."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

TALES OF REAL DOGS - By Albert P. Terhune

Ballerat: The Dog Which Won His Fare Home
Ballerat was a rough sheepdog, owned by an Australian rancher, named Far-ldin; and trained to herd his master's cattle and sheep. In addition to this, he was his master's companion everywhere the ranchman happened to travel.

Every week, Hardin had to leave his ranch and make a business trip to a town some miles distant. Between the ranch and the town was a broad and deep and swift river.

This river was crossed by means of a ferryboat which piled back and forth every hour. The fare was one penny (two cents in American money). A hundred times Ballerat had seen his master take a penny from his pocket and pay it to the ferryman. But the dog had given no sign of noticing the transaction. Nobody would have guessed that Ballerat had the reasoning power to connect this payment with the right to board the ferryboat. But he had, as you shall see.

Now, what follows might have been less remarkable—though it would have been worth the telling—if Ballerat had been one of the many trained dogs that are taught to carry a coin to a shop or to a newstand, and to receive a parcel or a paper in exchange for it.

But he had had no such training or experience. He was simply a sheepdog and his owner's pal. Anything he knew beyond that, was learned by him without human teaching.

Once, on a trip to town, Hardin and Ballerat became separated in the market-day crowds. After hunting in vain for his dog, the rancher went back home; to leave there the goods he had bought.

He intended to come back the same afternoon to renew his search for his canine chum. But he was detained by ranch business and decided to postpone the trip until the next day.

Meanwhile, Ballerat had been searching quite as eagerly for Hardin as Hardin had searched for him. Through the jostling crowd, sniffing and peering in every direction, then he made a round of the places which Hardin was in the habit of visiting on his trips to town. But he drew blank. There was no sign of Hardin. The dog realized at last that his master had gone; and, presumably, had gone home as usual. So he trotted homeward along the road that was so familiar to him.

As it was long before the days when recklessly-driven motorcars made road travel such a murderous risk for dogs, Ballerat made the journey with safety, until he came to the river which chanced to be swollen by a long season of rain.

There, the dog stopped. The surging stretch of water lay between him and the ranch. Ordinarily he would have had no great difficulty in swimming the stream, wide as it was. But today it was a torrent.

Nevertheless, his master was somewhere beyond the far side of the river, so was his home. Into the flood leaped Ballerat, and struck out gallantly for the opposite bank. Big as he was and strong as he was, he could make no progress. Again and again the current sucked him under and then flung him against the bank.

Half-drowned and wholly exhausted, Ballerat realized at length that the river was impassable for even the gamiest and strongest swimmer. Panting and weary, he crawled up the bank to dry land, and lay down to rest.

But it was his tired body and not his alert brain that did the resting. His brain was working swiftly, and wisely, over this problem of getting home. As soon as he was strong enough to get on his feet again, he went into action.

Downstream he trotted to the ferry. There, he waited patiently until the boat came into the slip. The ferryman had had a tough crossing, by reason of the flood, and he was not in the best of tempers.

Then, when a hulking big sheepdog, dripping wet, tried to board the boat, the man thrust him back. Three times Ballerat ran aboard the ferryboat, slipping past passengers and trying to dodge behind them so that the ferryman might not see him.

But everytime he was discovered and dragged ashore. There he waited while the boat made its regular trip. On its return to the slip, he made still another frantic effort to board it, but again he met the same rebuff from the ferryman. Then it was that Ballerat did the thing which makes this story different from most animal yarns. He stood despondently for a few minutes, then wheeled about and cantered back to the town. There, the dog cast about until he found a dear friend of Hardin's, a tradesman who was on his way home from business when Ballerat dashed excitedly up to him.

The dog tugged at the man's coat and then ran forward a little way and back again. Over and over he did this, enacting in pantomime the well-known canine strategy for inducing a human to follow him. The tradesman was alarmed lest some misfortune had befallen his friend, Hardin, and became certain the faithful dog was trying to lead him to the rancher. So he followed.

Still running back at every few hundred feet and tugging at the man's coat, Ballerat led him out of the town and along the road to the ferry. There, he led the mystified tradesman straight up to the ferry, and stood between them wagging his tail appealingly and glancing from one to the other of the two men.

It was the ferryman who first

caught the idea which Ballerat was trying so hard to convey. He recognized the dog as the same one that had tried so often to "crash the gate" and get aboard the boat. He told of these efforts.

The tradesman knew where Hardin lived and guessed that Ballerat was not only seeking frantically to get back home to him, but that he had brought along this friend of his master's to pay the fare.

Winking at the ferryman, he drew a penny from his pocket. Ballerat went wild with delight at the action. There could be no possible doubt on either onlooker's mind that this was what he had been striving for. He knew a penny must be had before passengers could get onto the boat.

Humans had pennies. So he had sought out a human of his acquaintance and had brought him hither to make that payment.

The ferryman accepted the coin. As he did so Ballerat ran eagerly aboard the boat. There was none of his former furtiveness nor unhappiness as he boarded the craft. He went with a proud certainty that he would be ferried across and with a keen happiness at the knowledge that he had broken down the last barrier which separated him from his anxiously waiting master.

U. S. CHANGES AIRMEN TESTS

Washington —(UP)— Ability to recover from plane stalls and to prevent spins from stalled altitudes has been substituted in place of effecting intentional spins and recoveries as a requisite for persons seeking licenses as private pilots, according to Col. Clarence M. Young, assistant secretary for aviation.

The amended regulations require 50 hours of accredited solo flying time as a pre-requisite for the private grade, instead of the former 10 hours. Col. Young continued "and specify that the flight test for the private grade shall be the same as that given commercial pilots except that no cross-country flight is required."

Col. Young went on to say that persons who now hold private pilot licenses, but formerly were licensed in a higher grade, and who had reduced their ranking voluntarily for reasons of their own, will be classified in the new private grade without further flight tests.

Bones of 2,000 hippopotami killed by prehistoric hunters were found in a single cave in Sicily.

Good Backing



Her back is putting up a good front in the Perfect Back contest to be held in connection with the California Health Show in Los Angeles. The charming owner of the back and the reflection is Judith Allen, prominent member of the movie colony.

lion you and is composed largely of ex-soldiers, who are armed with artillery and machine guns and accompanied by armored airplanes.

The expedition will be divided into three groups when it reaches the gold fields and will establish base headquarters at the village of Chamusca. It is understood the first explorations will be made along the River Wutung, a tributary of the Singari.

Tourists are estimated to have spent \$7,900,000 in Chile last winter.

Zoo Head Advocates

Animal Birth Control

San Francisco —(UP)— George Bistany, superintendent of the Fleishacker zoo, has decided the time has come to disseminate birth control literature among the animals of the rapidly growing zoo.

"Apparently word got around the cages we were going to stage a baby show," Bistany explained as he filled a handcar with bottles of warm milk. "Anyway, practi-

cally every parent in the place has prepared an entry."

During the 90 days, births included five coyotes, an African jackal, two black panthers, two Sumatra tigers and four African lions.

Bicyclist Returning Home After Crossing U. S.

Wichita, Kan. —(UP)— Robert Patton, his 10-gallon hat and his bicycle, were "somewhere west of Wichita," en route to the 18-year-old boy's home in Portland, Ore. Police found Patton, under the

large headpiece, slowly rolling down a street, and after questioning, gave him lodging for the night.

The boy said he had ridden his "bike" from Portland to New York, and that he was on his way home.

Students to Explore Old Pueblo Ruins

Lubbock, Tex. —(UP)— Texas Technological college students will explore the Arrowhead pueblo ruin at Giorietta Pass, New Mexico, as

members of the annual field expedition conducted by Dr. W. C. Holder of the history department.

The ruins are of the early pueblo type, built of stone, covering an area smaller than a city block and situated on a pine-covered knoll about 7,500 feet above sea level overlooking the Pecos valley and commanding a view of the Sangre de Christo mountains.

The boys will pay around \$40 each for "grubstake" and transportation and will number 30 or fewer. They will have a log cabin for mess hall.