

**Murder in Plain Sight**  
by GERALD BROWN  
W.N.U. FEATURES

Duke McCale, private detective, is investigating the murder of Curt Vallaincourt, who was about to marry Veronica Bigelow, worth to thirty million dollars. She is the principal suspect. McCale learns of a deep plot to keep control of the great fortune in the family through a deal with Vallaincourt. Shari Lynn, Vallaincourt's former wife, is shot to death. Someone fires at McCale, wounding him in the shoulder. McCale hurries to the Bigelow mansion where Sybil, Veronica's mother, has been slugged. She was searching in an old trunk. McCale finds a large black silk handkerchief in the trunk that puzzles him. Miss Adelaide Bigelow is not able to place it, either.

**CHAPTER XVI**

He fingered it, feeling the coarse pull of the silk. A signal seemed to flow from the material in his hand along his arm, into his brain. His thoughts clouded, then grew bright, as they played hide-and-seek with the infinitesimal shadow of an idea. He sat on his haunches, rooted to the spot, unwilling to let the flickering image go.

Suddenly, revelation poured over his mind like a searchlight. He jumped up. Placing a firm hand on Miss Bigelow's arm, he guided her, surprised and bewildered, to the stairway.

"We must go down immediately," he said. "Is everyone at home? You said Christopher Storm was here."

"Yes. They are all here somewhere. Must you see them all?" "Not yet."

He strode ahead of her on the third floor hall. He reached the door of the second floor drawing room before she was halfway down the second stairway.

As he went in, Karen stopped playing. She sat cold and austere at the piano, letting her long fingers rest quickly on the keyboard. She turned toward him as he quickly crossed the room to her side.

"You drew \$800 at your bank this morning." "Why?"

A sullen smile turned up one corner of her mouth. She shrugged. He waved a hand in exasperation. "Very well. You don't talk. You do know why the murderer did not kill Sybil this afternoon?" He was aware that she drew away from him. "That was a mistake, wasn't it, not finishing the job?"

She set her mouth in a hard line. He looked her exasperation. He shrugged then and turned to the door, where stood a startled Miss Bigelow.

In the library once more, McCale called his own number.

"Hullo, boss."

"Did you get those pictures? A list? Read them off."

"Okay, coming through. A couple of football players; some guys in a canoe; a petty officer; a jockey (no horse); a marine, kind of dejected-looking; an army lieutenant; and whoops, an acrobat!"

"Uh uh. Just what I thought. Okay. Hop on over here."

"Where are you?"

"Oh, I forgot to tell you. The Bigelows. Make it snappy. This is the kill."

He dialed headquarters, asked for Donlevy.

"Donlevy, I'm at the Bigelows'. Can you get over here on the double quick? I've solved the Vallaincourt-Lynn business. Proof? Of course I've got proof. Yeah. In twenty minutes—sooner if you can. Good-bye."

**Involved Motives Are Unravelling**

It came—as he held the receiver a moment too long at his ear. He heard Donlevy put down his instrument. Then, so nearly after it that the sound was almost simultaneous, came another soft click, as someone else carefully cradled a receiver.

McCale and Miss Bigelow were in the library. He leaned against the mantle and spoke in a soft, ruthless voice.

"This is the end, Miss Bigelow. It will be all over in a few minutes. The police are on their way."

"Strange," he said. "Both you and I saw the murderer the afternoon of Curt Vallaincourt's death. Besides that, all the clues have pointed in the same direction. I, at least, should have remembered the complete picture of that afternoon."

"Clues? Pointing to—?" She shook her head.

"Yes—a figure in the dark outside the house that afternoon. Sybil bathed in sherry in order to drown out what she saw. A visit by Karen to the Abbey Club the night before. A picture missing from the collection of Shari Lynn's admirers. A revolver in a family, where, to everyone's knowledge, a revolver had never been owned, and last, but not least, not at all the least—this."

He drew the black silk handkerchief from his pocket. Her brow wrinkled.

"But—but I still don't understand."

He went on, softly, inexorably. "The trouble in solving this crime lies in the fact that in the failure of the original plot, everyone had a motive. You are aware by now of the plan to gain control of the Bigelow millions through Curt Vallaincourt. Stephen met Curt in Chicago, through Victoria or vice versa. Curt and Victoria had an af-

fair, even though he was married to Shari Lynn at the time. He and Shari probably had some sort of arrangement, for the only business Vallaincourt practiced was preying on wealthy women."

Miss Bigelow's chin came up. She seemed to be steeling herself for what she knew was to come.

"Vallaincourt probably intended to marry Victoria until he found that the Bigelow fortune was controlled by you, to be passed on to Veronica at her marriage."

"To Veronica's husband, Mr. McCale."

"Yes, yes." He held up his hand. "How he obtained that information is theory, but not illogical theory. In view of the nonchalance of his character at that time and the open, too worldly outlook of both Victoria and Stephen, it is not wrong to assume that, in a moment of rillery, they told him. Possibly they mentioned that he was barking up the wrong tree—that while you allowed Vicky and Stephen generous allowances, the real gold bags were Veronica's, with your and Sybil's approval, of course. Yes, the whole thing must have been hatched before Victoria and Stephen came home to prepare the way, for in the meantime Vallaincourt had to di-

"No. She did not shoot him. She was not near enough. She saw who did and tried to blackmail afterward, to her sorrow."

"Then it must have been the other one—the other woman—the one in the raincoat."

"That was Sybil. She saw the murder, but in her confusion did not recognize the murderer—then. Think, Miss Bigelow. When we looked out of the window two or three times in those few minutes before the shot—think. Wasn't there someone else there? Someone already waiting?"

He picked up the black kerchief and dropped it in her lap. She stared at it blankly for a long horrible moment. Then she understood.

"Yes—yes," she said, finally. "Awful—for Sybil. Oh, God!" She buried her face in quivering hands.

In the silence that followed, McCale heard a soft footfall outside the door. Someone was tiptoeing quickly, furtively, toward the service stairs.

In a flash it came to McCale that during the time he had spent in preparing Miss Bigelow for the coming arrest, his lengthy explanation, his gift of gab—had given someone the needed few minutes to plan escape. For a moment he felt panic, not knowing what to do next, where to turn. Excitement raised the hair on the back of his hands. He controlled himself with a titanic effort of will.

Not stopping to explain to the old lady who sat motionless, he raced out into the hall, threw open the front door. He was in a frenzy. He ran down the front steps into blinding sleet.

For a moment, he was utterly befuddled. Anger mounted in him like a flame—anger at himself. He had lost. He turned to retrace his steps when he heard a sound near him. He looked into the dark wetness and saw a form materialize out of nothing and walk toward the curb. He recognized the snug-fitting pants, pea jacket and round hat of a sailor.

He stepped up to him quickly, fumbling for a cigarette, and said, "Got a light, buddy?"

A match flared suddenly and McCale looked up over the flame to stare into the dangerously narrowed blue eyes of Stephen Bigelow.

The man gave a growl, making a quick gesture with his right hand.

"I wouldn't do that," McCale said, his voice harsh. "This block is lousy with police. You'd better come quietly. Every one of them has a gun. They've got a bead on you right now. They'll shoot—to kill."

Then Bigelow said, "Not before I get you, they don't." He fumbled in his coat and laughed hysterically.

"I Should Have Noticed That Sailor"

In that instant, McCale's knee came up with all the force he could muster. Bigelow gave a sharp cry of agony and doubled up on the sidewalk, tripping McCale as he went down. It was not until that moment that Rocky loomed up out of the fog.

"Gosh!" McCale heard Rocky say as he gripped the fallen man under the shoulders, bringing him upright. "The Navy! You sure this is the guy, Duke?"

"No less." McCale gingerly felt the wounded arm on which he had fallen. "Mr. Stephen Bigelow in the uniform of Uncle Sam. He joined the navy once—remember? He must have saved his suit. Oh, yes, and his pistol. By the way, see if his black kerchief is missing." It was.

Bigelow mounted the steps between Rocky and the officer. All the fight was gone from him.

A squad car slid up to the curbstone as McCale turned to follow the trio. He walked over to it and opened the door with a flourish.

"Welcome!" He bowed as Donlevy stepped out. "Late as usual, Lieutenant."

Hard bunches showed against McCale's jawline and his face looked relentless in the shadows.

"The next afternoon, Curt Vallaincourt was shot on your doorstep."

Miss Bigelow sat up straight, shaking herself out of her reverie.

"We—we saw the murderer?" she whispered.

"Yes," he answered slowly. "Think back. What was it we saw?"

"Why," she faltered, "there was a woman with red hair. Veronica!"

"No," he said. "Not Veronica. That was Shari Lynn—in a red wig."

She gave a cry of surprise. "Then—"

"No. She did not shoot him. She was not near enough. She saw who did and tried to blackmail afterward, to her sorrow."

"Then it must have been the other one—the other woman—the one in the raincoat."

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**HOUSEHOLD MEMOS...** by Lynn Chambers



**Glorify Vegetables to Whet Appetites**  
(See recipes below)

**Vegetable Trickery**

It seems only yesterday that winter vegetables were allowed to lie in storage almost indefinitely, and when served, it was done with an apology. Yet these winter members of the vegetable kingdom have not only good nourishment but excellent appetite appeal to offer.

Carrots and sweet potatoes are rich sources of vitamin A which we need for building resistance to colds. Rutabaga is also rich in this vitamin. For vitamin B2 you can concentrate on such things as turnip greens, beet greens, green lima beans and dried peas. Green peppers, which are easily available as well as brussels sprouts, are good sources of vitamin C. Green beans, broccoli and cabbage supply calcium, phosphorus and iron.

Fortunately for advances made in cooking techniques, none of the winter vegetables need wear a humidrum air when they come to the dinner table. Dress them up and give them a bit of seasoning and glamor and the family will relish them.

**\*Carrot Loaf.**  
(Serves 6)

- 1 cup milk
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Dash of pepper
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon salad oil
- 1/2 cups grated raw carrots
- 1/2 cup dry bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts
- 1 cup cooked rice

Add milk to well beaten eggs; add salt, pepper, sugar and salad oil. Mix carrots, bread crumbs, nuts and rice; fold into first mixture. Turn into a greased loaf pan and bake in a moderate oven (350 degrees) for 45 minutes. Serve with a cream sauce to which hard-cooked eggs or peas have been added.

**Fried Carrots and Apples**  
(Serves 6)

- 6 medium-sized carrots
- 6 small apples
- 3 tablespoons drippings
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1/2 cup dark corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon salt

Wash and drain carrots; cut into thin pieces lengthwise. Wash, peel and core apples; cut into eighths lengthwise. Melt drippings in skillet and add sugar and syrup. Arrange carrots and apples in alternate layers in pan, sprinkling each layer with salt. Cover and cook over low flame for 1 1/2 hours. Turn onto hot platter and serve at once.

Puffs are a very popular way of dressing up vegetables. Here are two vegetables treated in this way:

**Corn Puff.**  
(Serves 4 to 6)

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Dash of white pepper
- 1 cup milk

**LYNN SAYS:**  
**Remove Food Stains From Your Linens**  
After the holidays, you're certain to find a lot of your linens stained by various foods you have served. Before you throw them in the laundry in the hopes they will come out clean, sort them out and give them much needed attention so you won't have permanent stains left on the linens.  
Powdered pepsin which is sold at pharmacies may be used for removing chocolate ice cream stains.

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IF YOU BAKE AT HOME—Here's the new fresh compressed yeast that gives you super-speedy action and finer results at a new low cost. New Fleischmann's Household Yeast is extra-fast, uniform, ideal for all kinds of rolls, breads, desserts. Depend on it always for more delicious flavor, finer texture in everything you bake.

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