

was done after the killing," ventured Terhune. "The judge was dead a few seconds after the man entered the room."

He was frowning as he looked about him, sometimes darting with amazing speed to some small object or point that had attracted his attention.

It was one of the minor detectives who brought in a small tuft of some reddish-grey hair which he had found caught on the sharp edge of the fire-escape rail.

"Looks as though it came from a coarse doormat," he said, handing it to Staunton.

Staunton glanced at it and put it carefully on a piece of white paper. Paul Terhune touched it with his finger and examined it through a pocket magnifying glass.

"No, it's not from a mat, but from some living animal, possibly a prowling cat. You'd better get it properly examined and classified. It might have nothing to do with the case, but you can never tell."

It was sealed in an envelope, and they descended the iron fire-escape as far as the courtyard below, asking at each flat en route if anyone had been seen climbing there during the past hour.

Several people declared they had been near their windows between two and three o'clock, and were prepared to swear no one had passed up or down the fire-escape.

The mystery was deepening.

That fire-escape was the only way the murderer could have got to the window of the judge's room.

How could he have climbed five flights of iron steps in broad daylight without being seen?

Questioning elsewhere revealed that the judge had received no visitors to the knowledge of the staff since lunch.

Terhune surprised Staunton by asking if he could collect and read all the pages of the manuscript. He was readily given permission, and the room looked much tidier when he had gathered the two hundred-odd pages together and arranged them in numbered order.

The apartment was sealed and a guard set over it. The body had been taken away, and while Staunton was being

pestered by a group of Press-men outside the building Terhune took the opportunity to slip away.

Waving aside a taxi which offered itself, he walked briskly along the pavements, turning over this remarkable business in his mind as he went.

Fortunately, the streets thereabouts were quiet. It was the outskirts of the city, and there were many vacant building lots.

On one side of these, larger than the rest, an array of tents, marquees, stalls, and canvas sheets had been erected.

Terhune idly noted that the Red Star Circus was going to open there that night.

He was not particularly interested, and was thinking of turning back in order to find somewhere quiet enough to

read the judge's manuscript when sudden shouting and uproar from the circus ground made him look back.

Terhune saw the centre of interest was a big wheeled cage, on the top of which sat a gigantic ape.

He went nearer. Someone was calling it by name.

"Chako! Come down at once, Chako! Come down!"

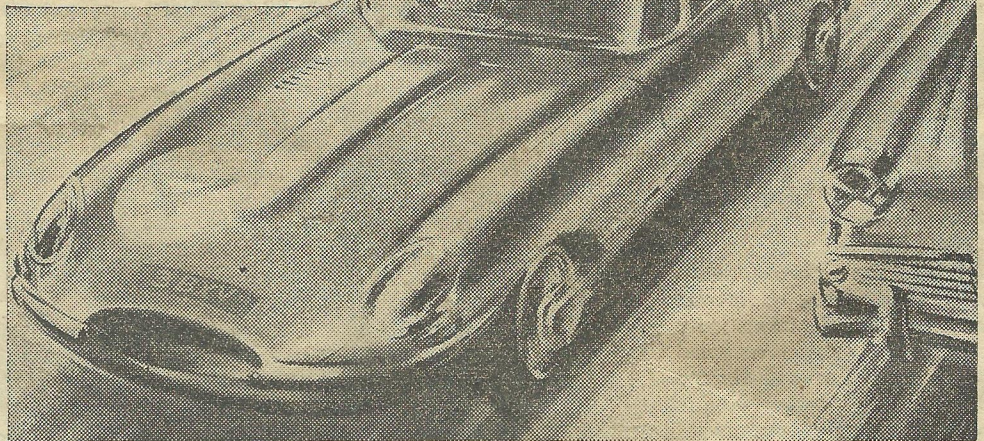
It then shrugged its shoulders and turned its back on those who were appealing to it.

Terhune bored farther into the crowd. It was an unusual animal, and he wanted to see more of it. A reddish-grey in colour, with black patches and black head, it seemed to have a supreme contempt for the humans below.

As Terhune reached a vantage

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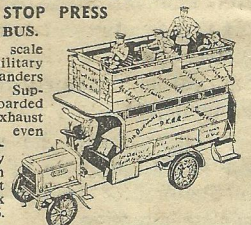
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