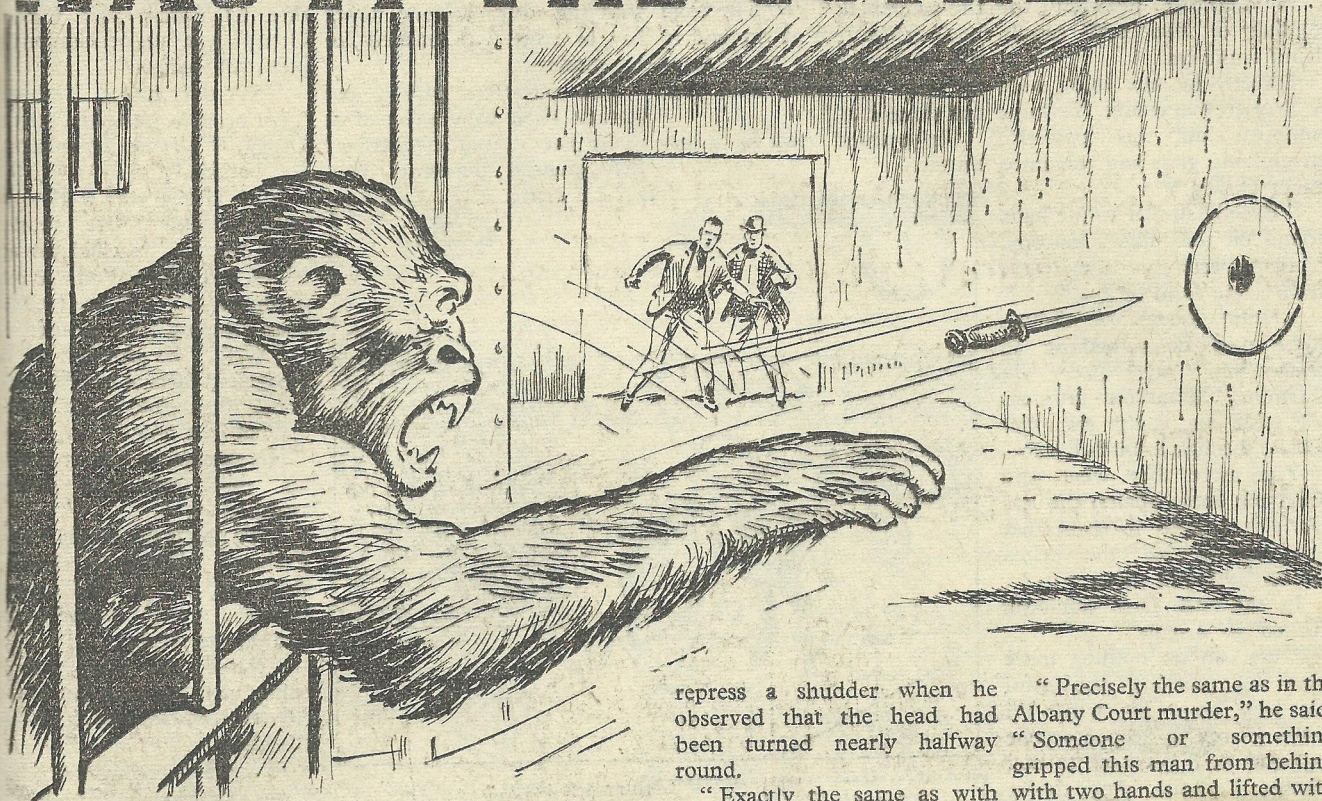


Only an expert knife-thrower could have committed the latest murder in the circus — and Terhune discovers that the gorilla is an expert knife-thrower!

# WAS IT THE GORILLA?



FOR the second time within twelve hours Paul Terhune raced through the streets of Spring City in a police car beside Lieutenant Staunton.

Alongside sped the motor cyclist who had brought them the startling news that a second man had been found murdered.

Uniformed men turned from a small garage as the police car pulled up alongside a villa in West 19th Street.

"Who found the body?" asked Staunton.

"Patrolman Winslow, sir. He had to deliver a summons to Layton regarding some unpaid taxes, and came here to the house to find him.

"Apparently the maid and the rest of the family are away on holiday and Osbert Layton has been living here alone for the past few days.

"There was no answer at the door. Winslow walked round the back, saw the car projecting from the garage, and looked inside. That was when he first saw the corpse huddled over the steering wheel."

"I'll see Winslow presently," muttered Staunton, and made straight for the garage, Terhune at his heels.

The first thing the British detective noticed was that the front nearside door had been literally torn from its hinges. It leaned drunkenly against a

corner of the seat.

The other door on that side remained in place, but the handle had been twisted off and lay on the ground.

On the farther side of the saloon it was the rear door which had been ripped away. Yet in neither case was there any scratch or sign of impact on these doors. Hands, and not collision, had wrought this damage.

The dead man, a heavy, red-faced fellow, wearing the usual dark grey suit favoured by Pennsylvanian business men, was slumped forward against the wheel, which propped up his body.

Although the body faced forward, Terhune could not

repress a shudder when he observed that the head had been turned nearly halfway round.

"Exactly the same as with the judge!" muttered Staunton, carefully getting in at the rear of the car and leaning over the dead man.

"This is fantastic. It looks as though a homicidal maniac is at large. Your gorilla theory won't hold water now, Terhune."

Terhune pursed his lips. "I'm not so sure. We don't yet know when this man died. The judge was killed between two and three, and that gorilla might have been loose then.

"You saw for yourself how it could pick an attendant's pocket and use the key to let itself in or out. I'm not giving up my theory yet—not until a better one comes along."

Yet another car arrived a few moments later with the police doctor, the photographer, and the finger-print experts.

The doctor made an examination and looked up in awe when he realised the nature of the injuries.

"Precisely the same as in the Albany Court murder," he said. "Someone or something gripped this man from behind with two hands and lifted with a quick turning movement at the head. The neck is completely dislocated."

"And how long do you think he's been dead, Doc?" asked the lieutenant.

Dr Mortimer made one or two tests, then pronounced,

"Between six and eight hours. I could not say more exactly than that."

Paul Terhune glanced at his watch. It was ten o'clock.

"Seven hours back gives us three o'clock," he said. "Judge Hahn died between two and three. The murderer committed both crimes in the same hour."

Indoors the detectives found the sort of home one would have expected to belong to a prosperous dealer in refrigerators, for that was Layton's business.

A glance through the papers in and on his desk gave no clue to his probable killer. Terhune vainly tried to link in his mind a Criminal Court judge and a dealer in refrigerators. He just could not see the connection.

The two men had moved in different worlds, and as far as could be ascertained had never met. Why had the killer selected these two victims?

## FOR NEW READERS.

Paul Terhune, the famous English detective, was studying American police methods in Spring City, Pennsylvania, when Judge Hahn, a retired Criminal Court judge, was found murdered.

Lieutenant Staunton, of the Spring City police, invited Terhune to see his squad at work. The murdered man's neck had been broken by someone of exceptional strength, and the victim's flat had been wrecked.

Hairs found on the fire-escape outside the flat corresponded to fur on Chako, a circus gorilla, which had been free at the time of the murder. Ellis Uttley, the gorilla's keeper, declared the beast was harmless.

At the circus, Terhune and the police were informed that a second man, Osbert Layton, had been found murdered on the other side of town. Layton's neck had been broken by the same twisting action as Judge Hahn's.