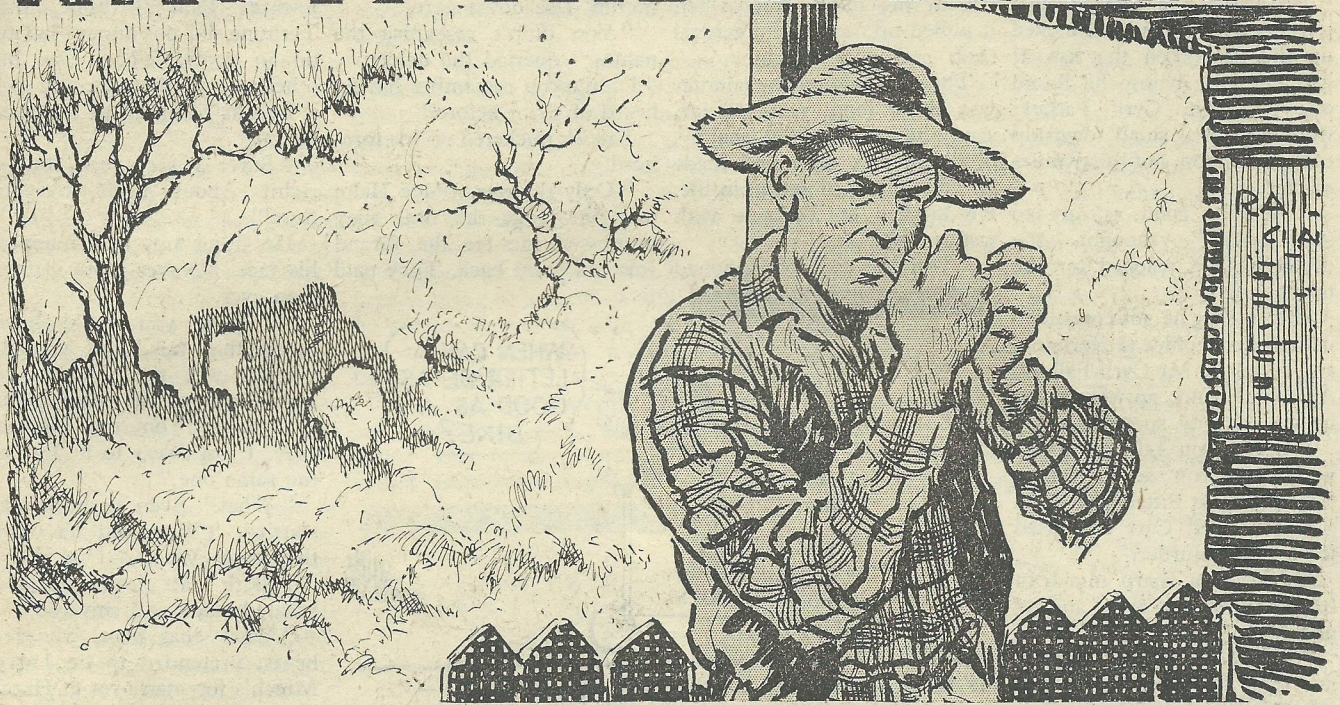


Paul Terhune sets up a trap for the murderer — and the bait he uses is himself!

WAS IT THE GORILLA?



ONCE again death had struck in the Spring City district of Pennsylvania, and in the same fantastic fashion. John Woodward had been found dead in a lane near his house in the middle of the night with his neck dislocated and his head twisted round until he was looking down his own back.

There was evidence of tremendous strength having been used. A nearby tree had been uprooted, and some iron railings had been twisted and displaced.

"You are definitely sure this Brogan Carr was executed and buried?" Terhune asked.

Staunton guessed what he meant, and nodded vigorously.

"Quite sure, I've seen the coroner's certificate. He was sent to the electric chair and afterwards buried within the boundary of the Pittsburgh prison."

Leaving the experts to go over the routine work of searching the locality of the latest crime, Staunton and Terhune drove to the Red Star Circus.

The ground was practically in darkness and the two detectives made their way to the big caravan where Cyrano had died. It was now occupied by his son, Louis Cyrano, who had only arrived from New York the previous evening.

They could hear him talking with Colson, the acting-manager, when they entered.

"The circus will be ruined," he said. "What with the closing down for several days, and the extra expense about the gorilla, we shall be unable to pay any wages this week."

"Tough luck!" grunted

Staunton, rather unsympathetically. "But at least you have your head the right way on your shoulders. Some folk haven't."

"Another victim got treated the same way a few hours ago, an' we're still looking for the gorilla. You're sure it's not slipped back and hidden itself near its old quarters?"

"Dead sure, or Uttley would have told me. You'd better look for yourselves," growled Cyrano with a sigh of resignation.

So not for the first time they picked their way over guy ropes and other obstacles in the darkness, and came to the menagerie tent, where a dim light burned.

A short, immensely broad man rose from amongst some straw just inside the open doorway. It was Ellis Uttley, the head of those who looked after the menagerie.

"The lieutenant wants to know if Chako has returned," said Louis Cyrano.

Another lantern was fetched, and they went inside. The big cage that had formerly contained Chako was now empty.

Terhune's gaze went to the lion's cage. There was a separate sleeping compartment at one end of this, but the lion was not in it.

"Let's have a look inside that bed space!" he said with a tone of authority.

Even Lieutenant Staunton looked surprised, whilst Terhune saw the hard muscles of the keeper bunch beneath the fabric of his old tweed jacket.

"What for?" demanded Ellis Uttley.

"Just for curiosity. Open the door a moment," com-

manded Terhune, and his hand slid under his coat to a hidden automatic.

Uttley grunted, then stepped over and pulled the bolts. The heavy door swung outwards, and Staunton raised his lantern.

The characteristic stench of animals of the cat tribe came from the enclosed compartment but except for some straw there was nothing to be seen.

"Well, satisfied?" asked Uttley, and Terhune found it hard to keep the disappointment from his face.

Having arranged for Cyrano to phone them directly any word came of Chako's whereabouts, they left.

The Mysterious Phone Call

EARLY that morning, Staunton was summoned to a conference at the office of the District Attorney.

Paul Terhune had no occasion to be present at such a conference, and found himself left to his own devices.

He had kept the previous night the list of the jury who had tried and found Brogan Carr guilty six years before. It had been obtained from Pittsburgh records by the police. Now he read it down carefully.

"If I were Staunton, I'd

FOR NEW READERS.

Paul Terhune, the famous English detective, was studying police methods in Spring City, Pennsylvania. Lieutenant Staunton invited Terhune to investigate the twisted neck murders.

Seven years before, Brogan Carr, a murderer, had sworn to come back from the grave and avenge himself on all who convicted him and sent him to the electric chair.

The judge, district attorney and now John Woodward, the foreman of the jury in Brogan's trial, had all had their necks broken. At the time of the murders, Chako, the gorilla at the Red Star circus, had been free—and gorilla hairs had been found at each murder site.

A police hunt failed to find the animal and Terhune discovered that Ellis Uttley, the gorilla's handler, had been hiding it in the sleeping quarters of a lion's cage. Terhune waited to see Uttley's next move before revealing the gorilla's hiding place.

A further complication in the case was the murder of Jules Cyrano, the circus owner, who had been killed by a thrown knife when he was about to tell Terhune of the gorilla's past.

Staunton and Terhune examined the scene at Woodward's murder.