

Everyone thought the figure in the coat and hat was a tramp, but it was a disguised Chako eluding the trap set for him by the police!

WAS IT THE GORILLA?



THE police-car pulled up with a flourish outside the little general store and Post-Office at Herndon, not many miles from the boundary of Spring City, Pennsylvania, and Lieutenant Dick Staunton, of the city police, jumped out hurriedly. He was accompanied by several men, one of whom was burdened with a lot of photographic apparatus.

On the other side of the road had gathered half the population of the settlement. It was not often such excitement came to Herndon.

Staunton hurried through the door which had been opened by Paul Terhune. At the moment he looked rather grey and weary.

"Well, Terhune, here we are again! You don't mean to tell me the same thing's happened?" grunted the American detective.

Lieutenant Staunton looked at the tired face of the man before him and saw the other nod towards the inner office, which was the postal section of the establishment.

In there was the telephone instrument board, and at it sat a thin man of around forty, going slightly bald, wearing a shopkeeper's apron.

He had ear-phones over his head, but the terrible fact was that he was almost looking down his own back. His head had been twisted round on his shoulders.

Staunton muttered under his breath as he went closer. There was no need for a formal inspection. The man was dead,

his eyes were glazed and his mouth was open.

"Cyril Falkirk, the Postmaster," explained Terhune. "He was a member of the jury which condemned Carr in 1959."

"What!" Staunton recoiled as though stung. His eyes took in the green-painted official safe, with its sides pushed in until they nearly touched, and the heavy office ruler which had been snapped in two.

Again there was this evidence of terrific strength. "How did it happen?"

Terhune sat on the edge of the desk.

"When you were busy at

your conference I looked up the names of all those who had been on that fatal jury and decided to look them up.

"The nearest was Falkirk, and I arranged to come out to see him. He told me an unknown caller had rung him up asking if he had served on the Grand Jury in 1959.

"I felt that meant he was in danger, and was here when someone tried to lure him to a lonely spot to pick up a mythical package that was supposed to be addressed to him. I took his place and hoped to meet the killer.

"Unfortunately, someone else came along and scared the killer away before I got a glimpse of him," went on Terhune.

"I returned here, went into that inner room to change into my own clothes, and told Falkirk to put through a call to you. When I came out, not

ten minutes later, he was like that."

Staunton mopped his brow. The room seemed to have become very hot. He looked towards the group in the doorway; the photographic expert, the doctor, and the fingerprint specialist.

"Get to work!" he said wearily. "And let's get some air in the garden, Terhune. This case is getting on my nerves. The gorilla is still at large, and—"

"The person who kept the tryst with me when I was impersonating Falkirk was no gorilla," interrupted Terhune.

"I looked in the bushes and found the marks of size 10 boots. He was a very human killer, and I found no traces of the gorilla."

"But—but the whole idea is fantastic!" groaned Staunton. "Carr has been dead seven years, and now someone or something sets out to murder everyone connected with his trial.

"There are ten other men who were on the jury. Do you mean to say—"

Terhune nodded.

"I believe they're in danger if they're anywhere in this vicinity," he said. "I suggest you look them up and give

FOR NEW READERS.

Paul Terhune, the famous English detective, had been studying American police methods in Spring City, Pennsylvania, when he had been invited by Lieutenant Staunton to join him in the twisted-neck murders case.

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

The judge, district attorney and the foreman of the jury in Brogan's trial had all had their necks broken.

Gorilla hairs had been found at the scenes of the murders. Chako, the educated gorilla at the Red Star Circus, had been free at the times of the murders. At the circus, Jules Cyrano, the owner, had been knifed, and Chako had disappeared, helped by its trainer, Ellis Uttley.

Terhune had traced Cyril Falkirk, a member of the Brogan trial jury, to the nearby town of Herndon. After setting an unsuccessful trap for the killer, Terhune discovered Falkirk with a broken neck.