

them all police protection. I was unable to trace them all."

Staunton groaned again. He was getting out of his depth.

"If it's not the gorilla, where has the darned thing gone, and why does it act the way it does?" he demanded.

Paul Terhune left that question unanswered. He had no reply that fitted the case. The gorilla intrigued him more than anything he had encountered for a long time.

It was abnormally intelligent and human in its ways, and it seemed to have the knack of vanishing whenever it wished.

Furthermore, he knew there was some kind of understanding between it and Ellis Uttley, its keeper. He knew Uttley had once hidden it whilst they were seeking it, and he still wondered why.

The man seemed genuinely fond of it, and treated it almost as though it were a brother.

The various experts soon came out from the tiny Post Office. The doctor reported instantaneous death caused by sudden gripping of the head from behind and abrupt turning to the right. The neck had been completely dislocated.

The fingerprint expert said that his instruments had revealed only the fingerprints of the deceased. The photographer had made a record of everything.

Two policemen were now on guard at front and back of the building. Little more could be done.

Vengeance appeared to have reached out from the grave to Cyril Falkirk, of Herndon.

It was almost as though the dead murderer who had gone to the electric-chair in Pittsburgh had snatched the Postmaster to himself.

"Yes, there are ten others in danger unless some of them have died in the meantime," said Terhune. "You must do all you can to prevent any more of this, Staunton."

His tone was grim, and his American colleague nodded.

"I'll phone to headquarters now," he muttered, and entered the office where the body still kept its former pose. "They can take that away if they wish."

Terhune saw him take down the phone and hold it to his ear, then the American suddenly removed it and peered at the mouthpiece into which

he had been about to speak.

He removed something and held it up to the light. His eyes were questioning as he held his find towards Paul Terhune.

Two greyish-brown hairs had been adhering to the damp mouthpiece. They were about two inches long, and very coarse.

Paul Terhune carefully took them and placed them on a paper. From his pocket came a powerful magnifying glass, and there was complete silence as he peered at his find.

"Yes, the same—gorilla hairs!" he muttered. "The same that we found at two of

Yet how could a gorilla have walked through a small village like Herndon and entered the Post Office without being seen by idlers?

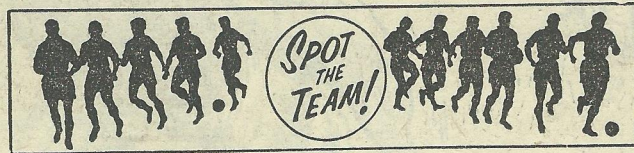
"We've missed something! I'm sure we've missed something!" Terhune muttered.

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Chako Beats The Cordon

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STAUNTON got through to police headquarters at last and received a piece of information that caused him to shout excitedly for the British detective.

"The gorilla's been seen!" he cried.



The thousands of entries for "The Hornet" Spot The Team Competition are now being judged.

The full list of prize-winners' names will be announced as soon as possible.

the other scenes of murder.

"Gorillas don't use telephones!" he added.

The American replaced the receiver.

"Then how did these things come to be on here? Falkirk was the last one who used the instrument—unless his murderer did so. Gorilla hairs couldn't come drifting in on the wind."

"I know!" Terhune groaned. "It's impossible. You'd better put through that call about the other jurists. The sooner they are protected the better. Find out if any of them live near Spring City. If so, concentrate on them."

Staunton got to work, and Terhune studied the two hairs once more. Always there were clues which brought their thoughts back to the gorilla.

"Where?" The colour returned to Terhune's face as he swung about on his chair.

Staunton still held the receiver.

"Not six miles from here, at a place called Brockleton. It was seen at the edge of some woods. A state trooper has phoned in the news."

Terhune's lips parted. It sounded as though they were getting somewhere at last.

"Put over the order about the jurists having police protection, and we'll run over and look into this," he suggested.

This was done. Fifteen minutes later they turned their backs on Herndon, and followed the narrow, bumpy road across country to Brockleton.

Neither of them knew much about the speed of gorillas, but it seemed to them highly

feasible that a beast of that type could cover six miles at a rapid pace.

There were trees most of the way, and the countryside was very sparsely populated.

As they approached the scene of excitement, they saw countrymen and others with shot-guns and rifles forming a cordon across the fields.

Cars were pulled up by the roadside, and there must have been two hundred people present.

Half a dozen police were in charge, and when they recognised Staunton they willingly handed over to him. Apparently it was believed the gorilla was hidden in the woods, which covered about five acres.

A countryman had seen him whilst driving past in a lorry, and had told the village policeman.

Terhune and Staunton followed the tracks of the gorilla towards the trees. The watchers reported they had seen and heard nothing. If the gorilla was in there, which seemed highly probable, it had not revealed itself.

"Keep back, and take no risks," Staunton told them. "If you shoot, make sure you kill it, for a wounded gorilla is more dangerous than an unhurt one."

Bushes had been snapped off, and footprints were frequent. They had little difficulty in tracing the path of the great beast which had gone to cover.

In one place some bark had been torn from a tree-trunk and chewed before being thrown away. The marks of the huge teeth on it were illuminating.

They kept on right through the woods, every moment expecting to have to lift their rifles and fire. They eyed particularly the dark shadows, and the trees with outspreading branches, but they did not catch a glimpse of anything that looked like a gorilla.

They were almost on the farther edge of the woods when Paul Terhune hissed and raised his rifle. He had heard a movement. He felt sure it must be the hunted animal.

The movements continued, and a battered felt hat came in sight, and a faded brown coat across broad shoulders. The man had his back to them, and was making for the open, walking with the rolling gait of a mariner.