

THE LITTLE HOUSE

The little house has windows small And not a great expansive roof...

LOGIC

At 8 o'clock on the morning of September 5, Eric Lambert, senior partner of the brokerage firm of Lambert, Hope & Maitland, finished a hasty breakfast in a suite of a midtown New York hotel.

Nina Hope dropped the morning paper in her lap and countered with the lash of her own anger. "Nothing I've ever done or ever will do, can equal your carrying on with half a dozen women I know."

Eric Lambert, head of a brokerage outfit, well known, just found dead in library of his home. Lives at 5 West 69th street. Head crushed by blows from heavy weight.

Malcolm Maitland, young broker, found lying in apartment. Knife still sticking in his chest near heart when found. Lives in Sulgrave Terrace.

John Hope, New York Stock Exchange man, found dead on lawn of his place at Beach Point. Shot in throat.

Relative serenity descended upon the new rooms by noon of the same day, but not upon the brow of Joseph Phelps, city editor of the Morning Star.

Phelps smiled obliquely. "And you scooped the World," Cosgrove shrugged. "He's still unconscious."

"Well, he hasn't got anything on a few police reporters," Phelps shook the sheet in his hand. "Looks at that. Not a picture. Nothing but a few shots showing 'X' marks the spot. And not a damn thing to show what the victims looked like before they lay on the 'X'."

"Logical?" Phelps' voice rose again. "Listen to me, young fellow. If you want to work on this paper, don't ever say 'logical' to me again."

Later that afternoon Cosgrove took telephone reports from a dozen sources and wrote the first edition story on the three cases. At 7 o'clock, he pocketed an extra set of carbons on his story and went to dinner.

A tailor's helper had hurried to police with the report that Lambert and a woman had been in Room 611 of the Hotel Boheme when he hung a freshly pressed suit in the service closet of the door the morning before the murder.

He knew the man was Lambert because the name was stitched inside the coat. Lambert, who called the woman Alla, had said his wife was threatening him and "this is the end." The woman had become angry and said she would kill him if he dropped her.

On Long Island, other detectives had talked to the Hopes' maid and learned of the breakfast quarrel over the attentions of Tommy Ovelyn. A .32 caliber revolver with one exploded shell had been found lying behind a potted evergreen on the tile floor of the porch directly beneath Mrs. Hope's window and only a few feet from where the body had been discovered.

No arrests had been made at that point, but both had been subjected to intensive questioning and were under close surveillance.

Maitland had regained consciousness in the hospital but was too weak to talk and physicians held little hope for his recovery.

The night man was the last person to see Maitland before he was stabbed.

He said Maitland had called on the house phone about 7:30 in the evening and asked him to get some aromatic spirits of ammonia. When he returned with the medicine, he found Maitland lying on a couch, very ill.

The broker told him Wilton had disappeared and, while alone, he had suffered a severe heart attack. He fixed a dose of the ammonia, the night man said, and assisted Mr. Maitland to his bedroom.

Cosgrove rifled the pages abstractedly for a moment. His eye caught the first sentence of the concluding paragraph:

"While police believe all three cases are cleared up by the information at hand, and the matter of indictments will be taken before the County Grand Juries immediately, nothing has been presented to explain the mysterious attacks upon all three members of the well-known investment firm."

"He made me add that, the big stiff," he muttered, "but it's not coincidence—it's just not logical."

Cosgrove caught himself guiltily on the forbidden word and smiled grimly: "It's just not common sense."

That night, before he went to bed, Cosgrove laid out a sheet of drawing paper and divided it into three equal divisions with heavy penciled lines.

In the first section he wrote "Lambert" and, beneath, "Barron" and "Mrs. L." The second he headed "Hope," followed by "Mrs. H." and "Ovelyn."

In the third he wrote "Maitland," and in turn "Wilton," "Halbooy" and "Maid."

Finished with that he eyed the blank grayness of the ceiling and chewed at the stub of pencil.

"If the cops are wrong," he said, "I've got to prove that nobody they suspect is guilty before I can find out who is."

He reversed the moist pencil and added a set of questions beneath each of the victim's names. When he could be answered each question, so that the finished product read thus:

"Lambert Weapon—Brown elephant paperweight. No fingerprints. "Hope Weapon—32-caliber revolver. Fingerprints.

"Maitland Weapon—Spanish dirk, four-inch blade. One thumbprint. Beneath each name he added the query, "Time attacked?" But hazarded no guess. That was one of the major problems.

At nine the next morning he was at the Lambert home with his police card in his hat and a tape measure and reading glass in his pocket.

The Assistant District Attorney in charge of the case was impounding the death weapon and various other items germane to the case for evidence. Fortunately Cosgrove knew him.

"How big is that elephant and how much does it weigh?" he asked. The legal investigator shook his head. "I don't know yet."

drawing pad and concentrated on the ceiling. The elephant weighed fourteen pounds and was six inches wide at the point where the killer had gripped it. It had rested usually on the right center of the desk at which Lambert was sitting when he was killed.

It had been found lying on the left side of the chair which held the body. The wound, far back on the left side of the head, showed that Lambert had been leaning forward or had bent to rise when he was struck. Obviously the blow had been a sweeping side-arm swing, delivered as a tennis player delivers a fore-hand drive.

Cosgrove muddled that over for a space. Lambert had been facing his killer and that killer had leaned across a corner of the desk to deliver the blow.

"She couldn't have picked up a fourteen-pound elephant at a place where the cast is six inches wide and swung it clear across that arc," he told the ceiling.

For five days, while the world of the news offices swirled around the axis of the murders; while the Grand Juries met solemnly to take testimony and to vote true bills naming Ella Barron and Nina Hope; and police, holding Wilton, waited grimly for Maitland to die, James Cuyler Cosgrove banged a typewriter at a rewrite desk from 11 to 7, putting into articulate form the themes and theories of others.

What he did the rest of the way around the clock no one seemed to know, except that he slept little or not at all. He was seen at Sulgrave Terrace at the Lambert home, at the Lambert garage, at Beach Point, at the hospital where Maitland clung to a thread of life. And he was closeted several times with the young Assistant District Attorney, with a man from homicide squad and with the county authorities at Nassau.

This for five days. On the sixth he disappeared.

Phelps discovered it. At 11:15 he saw the dusty cover still atop Cosgrove's typewriter and grew inwardly sarcastic. At 11:45 he had an idea by telephone Cosgrove's rooms. At 12:30 he was furious. And then he remembered this was the sixth day—that the week of grace was up.

"The kid must have taken me seriously," he muttered. "He thinks he's fired."

For the moment Phelps ceased to be a city editor and became human. He questioned members of the staff. "Seen anything of Cosgrove?" No one had.

At or about the same time, Jim Cosgrove was unfolding the sheet of drawing paper and spreading it out on the creaky table of a cheap hotel room in Philadelphia.

Beside the sheet lay an opened package. It was a pillbox which had held proprietary medicine and hence bore no druggist's label. The wrapper was addressed to "Max Mendlesohn," in care of the hotel. It had been insured and marked "Hold." In the upper left-hand corner was the name of the sender.

It read: "M. Mendlesohn, 57 West 48th street, N. Y. C."

Inside the box, nested on a pad of wool, were three black pearl dress studs.

Cosgrove turned to the postal inspector at his elbow. "There's the answer," he said wearily. "The person who mailed those studs Maitland."

The echoing question was tinged with caustic. "Why?" Cosgrove scowled.

"Use your head. They're Maitland's studs—that's certain. Somebody sent them here from a phony address in New York—a vacant lot. The same person wired this smelly hotel a reservation for the following night. But they never showed up."

He sat upright and stabbed at the rows of notes. "Why?" Because they can't come. Whoever it is either is dead, in jail, in the hospital or under police guard and doesn't dare.

The inspector grinned. "Which narrows it down to about ten persons." Cosgrove snatched at the challenge.

"To one person—because Maitland knows who stuck that knife in him." This time the inspector's grin was less sarcastic.

"Why?" he said again. The reporter stood up and forced the postal man into the chair. With his right hand he ran down the lengthening list of deductions under the Maitland heading.

After the question, "Time of Attack," was the notation, "Unknown—Maitland says he was asleep." Cosgrove shook his head.

"That's wrong. He wasn't asleep. He wasn't even in bed when he was stabbed." "I think," Cosgrove insisted, "that Maitland knows who stabbed him."

"And?" "Am I at least one of the killings." The inspector licked his lips. "It might have been in the dark. There might have been two of them—maybe three in the dark there—a woman."

He eyed the other hieroglyphs on the chart. "How about this Hope thing?" he asked suddenly.

"She didn't do it—kill her husband, I mean," Cosgrove spoke sharply. "She's not the type. She's cool, calculating, a social climber. She'd never have killed him on her front lawn. Or killed him somewhere else—and had the body left there."

"Long distance," he said into the transmitter; and a moment later, "Gimme District Attorney Frascatti, Canal 8-5700, New York."

The crackle of static broke and a voice sounded over the wire. "Frascatti," he half whispered, "this is Cosgrove. Meet the 9 o'clock Pennsylvania train from Philly. Don't tell anybody. And be alone. I've got something."

The second edition of the Star had gone to press and the "feeding-time" lull had settled down upon the hive-like city room. It was 11:10. Phelps was lunching earnestly upon a pork-chop sandwich when a gaunt and grim-faced figure caromed off the swing doors from the corridor and veaned unsteadily between the two platoons of desks. In its wake moved District Attorney Frascatti and two grim-faced strangers.

Phelps placed his sandwich on the desk with precise hand and eye. "Well, Mr. Cosgrove," he said, and the fire in his voice lost some of its searing quality for the fact that a sizable chunk of pork chop made an incongruous bulge upon his cheek.

The figure waved an impatient smudge of fingers. "I've got a confession," it croaked. "Well, make it and get out."

The figure stiffened. "Listen, I've got the confession, fella. Your damned murder mystery solved." Cosgrove scrubbed bony knuckles across his temples and pushed his hat far back on his head.

He indicated the three men. "This is Frascatti, of the D. A.'s office; Paul Inspector Day and Detective Lyons of the homicide squad."

He winked at Phelps. "They've solved the case, see, but I was able to help 'em a little, so they won't break it for thirty minutes. We've got a half-hour bust on the world."

He swung around and bawled "Boy!" Then he turned back to Phelps. "Take 'em in the studio and get some nice exclusive pictures while I write my lead."

Phelps's eyes traveled the arc of the four faces. "Is this on the level?" he demanded.

Three heads nodded. Cosgrove sighed. From a coat pocket he withdrew a fistful of crumpled manilla sheets and envelopes, covered with hieroglyphics, names, addresses, words. From the midst of the heap he selected a folded letterhead, distinguished principally by its comparative cleanliness.

"Here's the confession," he said. Phelps skimmed through the written line to the lower left-hand corner—the fraction of a second. Then it snapped shut.

"Here," he said, "copy this quick. I want to rush into the art room for a layout."

Cosgrove waved a limp hand. "I know it by heart."

He turned his back on the other four and shuffled to his desk. The copy boy handed him a sheaf of carbon paper "books" and he spun one into his typewriter. Then he pulled the machine toward him until it rested almost on his vest.

"Get me a quart of black coffee," he ordered and began to write:

By JAMES COSGROVE  
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"That's all we can make for this run. Bite it off somewhere. We'll replace it in another column in half an hour."

Phelps watched the last sheet on its way to the copy desk and pulled a chair beside Cosgrove's.

"How did you break it?" The reporter's lips curled. His voice spat.

"Logic," he said. "Tell me about it. I didn't take time to read the story."

From his coat pocket Cosgrove pulled out again his jumble of papers. The square of drawing paper was still there. It had been folded and refolded so many times that it was split in segments of stained and ruffled edges. Pencil markings had smeared and coated it with a rich gloss.

"If you can read that junk it'll save a lot of breath." He indicated the series of facts.

"A man killed Lambert. Hope didn't die on his own lawn. Now, the Lambert house is old fashioned. It's one of the few left in New York with a side drive and a porte cochere. No one was home—even the chauffeur was in Westchester. Lambert drove the big car down and parked it in the shadow of the porte cochere. It was there at dusk and it was there at 2 o'clock when the block watchman came in to find out why the lights were on in the library and saw Lambert's body."

"But there were seven gallons less gas in the tank than there had been at 4 o'clock when Lambert filled it at the garage on the corner and there were some particles of red slate on the brake and clutch pedals."

"There's no red slate on 67th street. There isn't any at Lambert's place in Westchester. There is a red slate drive at Hope's house on Long Island, but neither he nor Lambert had driven that car out to Beach Point in months, according to Mrs. Hope."

"What's that mean? I doped it this way. Lambert and Hope were both killed in Lambert's house and Hope's body was driven to Beach Point and heaved onto the lawn. Then the killer drove the car back and left it where he got it."

"I couldn't tell whether that happened before or after Maitland was stabbed. There was no way to figure which of the three got his first. But between Lambert and Hope it was easy."

Hope's arm back until the gulf was at the throat and the trigger fell. "It's dark under the porte cochere. It would have been a cinch for him to have wrapped Hope's body in a raincoat or something and a quiet street and Beach Point deserted after midnight."

"Get it?" Cosgrove lit a cigarette and exhaled slowly. Phelps nodded. "Two down and one to go."

"Yes," Cosgrove said shortly, "the tough one." He smiled. "Applied logic worked like a charm on the first two. I couldn't get to first base with it on Maitland. But I had an ace in the hole—human nature."

Phelps looked his surprise. "The guilty guy had it all doped out—he framed a perfect alibi. But it turned around and bit him."

Phelps looked quizzical. "Bit him?" Cosgrove assured him, "And when it flopped it broke his nerve and he confessed."

Phelps picked up the original copy of the confession and read it through: "Knowing that I am facing death and wishing above all to see justice done three innocent persons, I wish to confess of my own free will that I killed Eric Lambert and John Hope to save myself from imprisonment for theft of money belonging to clients of the firm."

It was signed in a wavering scrawl: "Malcolm Maitland."

The city editor scowled. "I don't get it yet. The stabbing—you said it was fate in your story. That's all I saw."

"I can tell you in two minutes. The morning of the killings Maitland accused his man of stealing his studs. He did it where the maid could overhear. He'd planned to call the cops about 7 o'clock and have Wilton pinched. While the cops were there he was going to have his 'heart attack' and let them put him to bed. That set up with the law if they suspected him afterward."

"But he muffed it. He scared Wilton so much the guy didn't come back. That put him on a limb and he had to throw the fit alone and then call the haliboy."

"You know what happened then. At 8:30 he dressed, sneaked out while the boy was upstairs in the elevator and headed for Lambert's. He knew he was up against it. He didn't want to kill them, but he was afraid he'd have to. Before he left he took along that knife. It's a curio and he kept it on a wall bracket above his bed."

"What happened at Lambert's you know. He killed them both, dumped Hope's body on the lawn at Beach Point and dropped the gun near it. He got the car back in the 69th street drive. The tarpaulin went into East River."

"So far he was O. K. and had all the breaks. He had to get back home. He made that, too, by stalling until the night boy answered an elevator call."

"First he changed clothes and washed his shoes. He put on pajamas, dressing gown and slipper. All he had to do to finish the job was to put back the knife. To do that he had to stand on the radiator and reach up."

Cosgrove laughed. "Did I say it was Fate that got him? Listen to this. Just as he reached Wilton rang the buzzer. Maitland jumped. His foot slipped and fell, half turning. He had the knife in his right fist and he fell with that under him. The blade went between his ribs and he rolled just once."

"How did you get all that?" "He told us tonight. He spilled everything when we sprang the alibi on him."

Phelps was relapsing. "And who solved that mystery, Mr. Cosgrove?" "Mr. Cosgrove's smile was sardonic."

"Do you remember bawling hell out of a dumb reporter for going to the hospital after Maitland that night this all happened? Well, that dumb kluck got there just as they were checking over the junk in the pockets of Maitland's dressing gown. One little piece of paper fell on the floor and the poor chump put his foot over it and it went into his pocket instead of into the inventory."

"It wasn't much of a piece of paper, you understand, or else the dumb Mr. Cosgrove's foot wouldn't have covered it. It was only the postal insurance receipt for three black pearl studs which Mr. Maitland had mailed to himself in Philadelphia under the name Max Mendlesohn."

His sardonic smile became sardonic. "And now, Mr. Phelps, shall I write that column for the replate?" Phelps snorted. "Write two," he said shortly. With a flick of the fingers he tossed a folded oblong of paper on Cosgrove's desk.

"Put your foot on that," he said, and wheeled back to his throne. Cosgrove inspected the paper. It was an order on the cashier for \$100. In the space labeled "charged to—" was written "bonus."

He sighed deeply and propped his eyes open with stained fingers. The office boy had come back and was fidgeting in front of him.

Cosgrove looked up. "Where's the coffee?" "You didn't give me no dough," Cosgrove contemplated him owlishly for a space. Then he slipped a fresh "book" into the machine.

"Get the dough from Phelps," he said softly, and began to write.—Odgers T. Gurnee.

MARRIAGE LICENSES

Kenneth L. Brungart, of Smulltown, and Irene H. Stover, of Aaronsburg. Harvey H. Brown and Irene C. Peters, both of Lock Haven. Clair S. Keefer, of Altoona, and Pauline Mildred Eves, of Warriorsburg. George Russell Gibboney, of Belleville, and Vertie Burwis Crawford, of Millheim.

FARM NOTES

—If a hotbed is available a number of perennials can be started now so they will bloom next summer. Some of those that can be seeded now are columbine, shasta daisy, larkspur and single hollyhocks.

—Extra cash, to start your spring farm work, can be earned in the woodlot this winter. Fireplace wood cut to length is always in demand. Find out the need and cut to order. Satisfied customers will buy again.

—Vegetable seeds germinate best in a warm temperature of 70 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit in either light or darkness. As soon as germination begins full light is required and the temperature should be reduced to keep the young seedlings short and stocky. Cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, and onion seedlings are satisfied with 60 to 70 degrees day and 45 to 55 at night. For tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants add 10 degrees to day and night temperatures.

—To develop a high producing pullet flock select good strong chicks from birds known to lay a large number of eggs, large in size and of good quality. Such birds should be true to type and free from disease.

—Early seeding of orchard cover crops results in larger growth and lower costs, a State College experiment has shown.

—Where the alfalfa field is to be left for a long time, it is recommended by State College agronomists that one-third to one-half of the seed sown be of hardy strains and the rest be common seed from Kansas or farther north.

—Now is the time to order asparagus roots for early spring planting. Asparagus is a perennial, good for 10 or more years under proper care and management. While it is not found in many home gardens its popularity is increasing rapidly.

It is one of the first green crops available in the spring and it can be cut day after day until July 1.

Washington, a comparatively new rust-resistant variety, is planted universally by commercial growers and home gardeners. The most popular strain is Mary Washington. Where only a small area is to be planted, well-grown 1-year old roots should be used. About 75 roots are sufficient for a family of five.

Asparagus thrives best in a deep, fertile, loamy soil, well drained and free from stones. A good place is along side of the garden and far enough from the fence to make cultivation easy.

The asparagus bed should be worked deeply each spring, incorporating with the soil the much of manure applied in the fall. The mature asparagus bed should be fertilized each spring with a high-grade complete fertilizer supplemented with manure. Some growers fertilize in the spring and again at the close of the cutting season about July 1. Frequent cultivation throughout the entire season is important, because weeds are one of the worst handicaps to a good yield.

—Packers complain of an unusually high percentage of soft pork from hogs now coming to market. This pork is not desirable. Scientists down in Illinois have discovered the chief cause of so many soft hogs coming to market. These men blame the condition to the feeding of soybeans in the natural state. They say that no hay has yet been found for using these beans in their natural state in the ration of fattening swine without producing soft pork. They make no qualification. So until a safe way to feed this product to fattening swine is found, farmers can well afford to leave it out of the ration.—Michigan Farmer.

—A good preservative for a concrete stove silo, is a wash consisting of cement and water mixed to about the thickness of cream. Apply the wash with a stiff whitewash brush. The brush may be made more effective by cutting the hair off so that it is quite stubby. Common paraffine is also used in painting the interior of silos. This will not remain very long, but it is cheap and easily put on. A very good way to apply a brush to the interior of silo is as it is being filled.—Indiana Farmer's Guide.

—Iowa is the leading producer of popcorn in the United States, says the United States Department of Agriculture. Sac county, Iowa, raises more popcorn than any other county in the country.

—The rapidity with which sweet clover is gaining favor among farmers of the western States is well illustrated in the last report of the Kansas state board of agriculture which gives figures for sweet clover grown for hay in Kansas during the years 1929 and 1930. In 1929 the acreage was 195,931, while in 1930 the acreage had increased to 236,660. The drought-resistant qualities of sweet clover will no doubt cause a further rapid increase in acreage of this excellent honey plant during the next few years.

—Farm machinery on 40 farms in Greene and Medina counties, Ohio, has been found to have an average length of life of 14 years, according to J. F. Dowler, rural economist at Ohio State university, who has records of machinery costs on farms in these two counties. The useful life of machinery, Dowler believes, can be increased by proper winter storage, timely repairs the right kind of lubrication, and better care while being used.—Exchange.

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