

TODAY'S MYSTERY STORY
By PHILIP FRANCIS NOWLAN

most men have acquaintances. There was no way of telling which of the hundreds had done it; whether it was the same man who had shot him or not. The murderer had jabbed a piece of wire, probably a hatpin, through his eye and into the brain as he lay on his cot. He had died without a sound.

patients. He might have been killed by one of the patients in the same ward, or by some one from outside the ward, for there was a door opening on another corridor from that in which the nurses sat, and anybody using that door might with luck get to almost any point in the hospital without being seen.

But the murderer must have been somebody inside the building, for there was but one unbarred entrance, the front door, and a watchman was on duty there.

"What's got my goat," remarked Brannigan, "is how anybody could see to run a wire in his eye. The nurses themselves were sitting in the dark. The light was way at the other end of the corridor. It was just completely, testotally black in the ward. You know we sat there for twenty minutes ourselves tonight, and couldn't see a thing. You couldn't see at all when you went in to the bed, could you?"

It three inches from my eyes," replied Anselm. "I'll admit, chief, my brain's just as dark now as my hand was then. We know somebody in that hospital killed him, and that's all we do know. There are just 342 persons in that building altogether."

get's an idea on it he'll be willing to come across." Anselm granted disapproval of the plan, but Brannigan was in charge, so they called upon the criminologist. Hunt heard their story through, but it was an effort toward the end. When they finished he could hold in no longer, but laughed until the tears rolled down his cheeks. "It's absolutely the simplest case I heard of for years," he said finally. "I'll give you a description of the murderer you can't go wrong on. There isn't one chance in a million that it would apply to two persons."

Yesterday's Mystery Solution

IN THE case of "The Aspleyton Murders" eleven persons, including two entire families, had been wiped out by a number of murders committed in rapid succession, and for which, apparently there was no evidence of robbery.

had been murdered, it could almost be said in plain sight of three nurses. Had there been a light in the ward the nurses must have seen the crime committed, for the cot of the victim was in a direct line with the door. Right opposite this door was the bench on which the nurses had been sitting. They weren't frivolous young nurses. They were women of efficient middle age, thoroughly responsible not only in their work, but in every other respect. To doubt their statements that they all had been sitting there at the time, and that there was not even a flash of light in the ward was out of the question.

Yet "Don" Osterman had been murdered right in front of their eyes. Osterman was an underworld character, the head of a "dope" ring, though the authorities had never been able to get evidence enough to convict him. He was in the hospital because he had been shot and wounded by some unknown enemy. He had more of these than

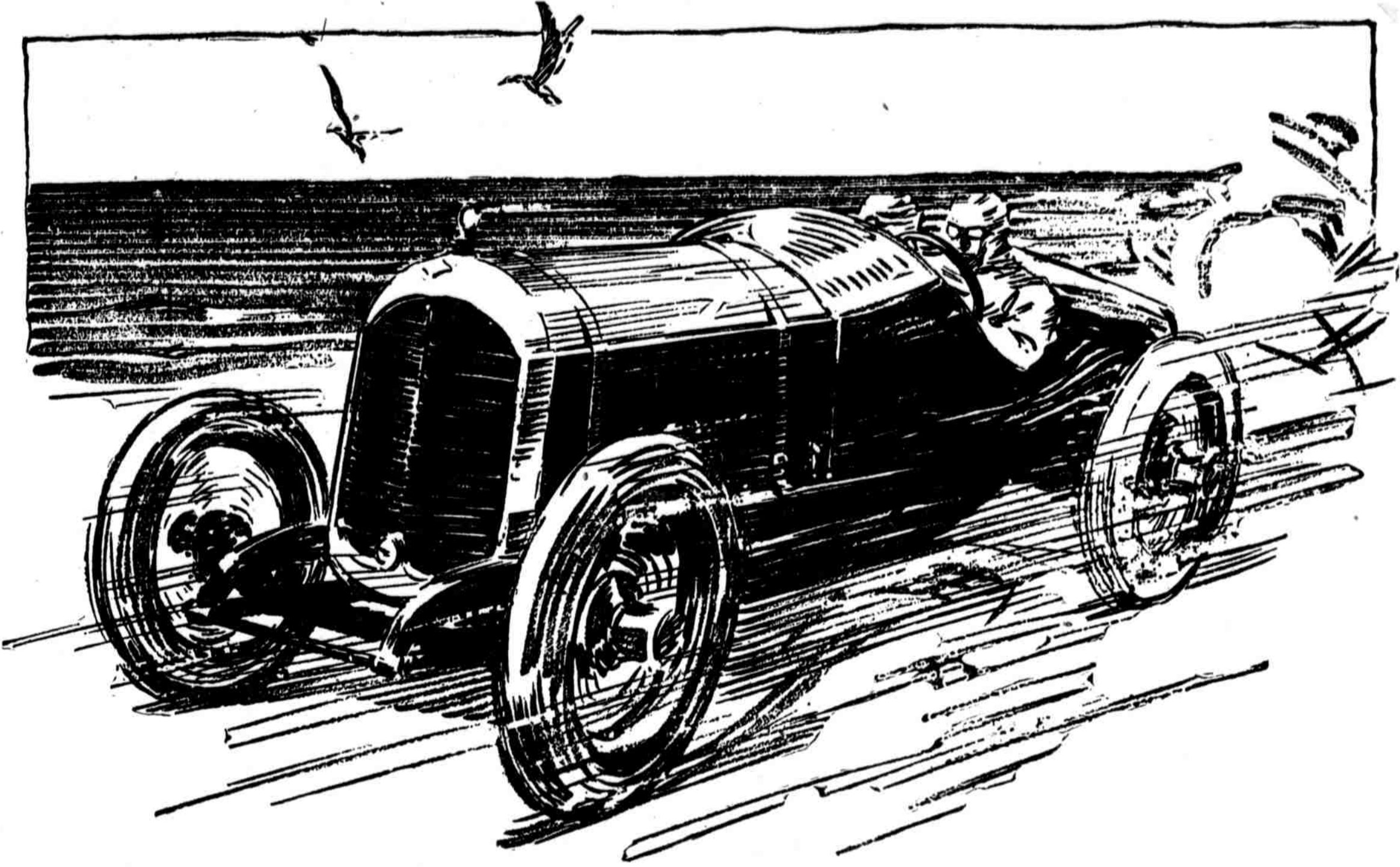
From the first two of these points Hunt drew the conclusion that the murders had been committed by the same person, and that the peculiarly heartless killing of children and women was due to some devilish ingenuity in covering the motive and the identity of the murderer. What other means could be drawn from it? From the fact he deduced that the banker probably knew more about the case than he admitted. Unarmed people had been struck down, but no attempt had been made on the life of the single person who claimed to have been warned.

Working on this theory, Hunt finally uncovered Di Giovanni's secret. In his capacity of confidential financial adviser he knew these men had money. He killed them to get that money, but first he killed the members of their families so that none would be alive to testify there had been any money or that the banker knew anything of it.

Di Giovanni was mentally unbalanced. He planned his crimes with diabolical ingenuity, but his weakness, as is the case in so many unbalanced mentalities, was an obsession that his own life was being sought, an obsession tangled up somehow in the warped processes of his mind with the very crimes he was committing against others. He had, of course, "faked" the letters and sent them to himself.



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