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Author: Laurence Donovan

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The Pin-Up Girl Murders

by

Laurence Donovan

LIEUTENANT DON KEMP stood with his hands clenched in cold fury. His rooms, including the blueprint draughting office, appeared to be in perfect order. But Don Kemp's precise, orderly mind and eye told him that his quarters had been thoroughly ransacked, although every article apparently had been restored to its place.

From habit Don Kemp's slate gray eyes went to the unusual "pin-up girl" on the wall above his drawing table. His eyes became colder and he uttered an oath through clenched teeth.

Now the pin-up girl certainly was not such as to arouse the anger of a red blooded lieutenant of army engineers. The scanty sarong of the pin-up picture proved that she had everything the most discriminating male might demand, from her massed golden hair to slender ankles and tiny feet.

"Smile, blast you, smile!" exploded Kemp audibly. "So my shy, little Tina will be far from the old home town tonight. Yeah! In person! To show off her pin-up charms to all the other boys of the steenth engineer corps! An' I placed you special, before I found out half the wolves in the company had the same picture!"

In the meantime, my dear Tina, besides bringing sweet dreams to a whole pack of wolves, you've been faithfully guarding the plans which may alter the whole outcome of the war and shorten its time.

The lieutenant engineer spoke with confidence. For it appeared obvious that the recent prowler had been seeking other valuables, or, if the tank prints was the objective, it had been missed. Otherwise two rooms overlooking the white beach and the Atlantic would not have been so thoroughly searched.

"My beloved Tina!" he muttered again through set teeth, as he touched the apparently immovable and pasted black cardboard and

it slid to one side. "Tina who has become the pet of the engineers, and who--"

The come-on eyes of the golden-haired girl still seemed to be watching him as the black background slid to one side. Her fixed smile was unchanged even as Kemp bit off his words, jerked a hand to the wall, and then started swearing low and steadily.

"Gone?" His gasped exclamation was a question, as if he could not believe it "Gone! They've got the tank plans!"

THE wall safe he himself had installed behind the cardboard of the pin-up girl had a sliding door. He saw that its combination had been

solved by an expert. The blueprints vital to all of the tests now being carried on by the—th corps were in alien hands.

Don Kemp slipped the pin-up girl back into place instinctively as he heard footsteps outside his door. Ragged nerves sent his hand

fumbling at his revolver holster. The thieving spy would scarcely be returning, but Kemp's brain was seething that such a theft could have been accomplished.

He was compelled to recall that there were civilian employees about the big beach hotel given over to the engineering unit. Of course, all had been checked and double-checked for loyalty. But this war had developed some strange and dangerous enemies, even among

those who could prove American birth.

When the steps halted and there was a quick rap at the door, Don Kemp said, "Come in!"

Red-headed, round-faced "Legs" McCarthy, the corps photographer,

Red-headed, round-faced "Legs" McCarthy, the corps photographer, pushed his good-natured countenance into the crack of the door. Don Kemp was still standing under the replaced pin-up girl, his lean face darkened by his scowl of suspicion and rage.

McCarthy was the only man in the outfit who came from Kemp's small home town of Centerville. The cameraman's face cracked into a

"Holy gosh, Don!" exclaimed McCarthy, neglecting any formal salute.
"You still burnin' up over Tina winnin' that big pin-up girl contest an'
gettin' her picture in the papers an' pinned up all over the place?
Jeeminee! An' with Captain Morgan's girl all out for you! I'd think
you'd know that most of the gals that promised to wait have been

broad grin as he saw Kemp's position and the storm of anger in his

"Shut up, Legs!" exclaimed Kemp with an intensity of anger that rubbed off McCarthy's smile. "You been upstairs long? An' if so, did you see anyone-?"

Don Kemp checked his own raging speech. It had come to him that

the first report of the tank plans theft must be made to the C. O. Just as quickly it dawned upon him that he did not intend to make that report at once. Not until he had done some investigating on his own, while the spy and thief might still be unaware that the theft had been discovered.

McCarthy slowly recovered his grin.

"Sure. I saw someone who might have come calling with the proper

spreading that same hooey around to--"

eyes.

tonight. And I happen to know she asked Captain Morgan if she could see Lieutenant Don Kemp. That's why I'm here. Tina—"
"Tina?" grated Kemp. "I'm not seeing her. And I'm not seeing the show either."

escort, Don," he said with a little laugh in his voice. "You missed seeing her then? She's here already for the big show downstairs

"Tina?" grated Kemp. "I'm not seeing her. And I'm not seeing the show either."

"Look, Don," reasoned McCarthy. "I'm the only guy in the outfit that knows the now famous pin-up girl, Tina Layton, is also your sweetheart. I know you were to be married, and that you mailed back her letters unopened after this pin-up publicity came out a month ago. Show some sense, Don."

DON KEMP glanced at the red glow from the sun going down over the Everglades. Dusk and darkness would settle within a few short minutes over Biscavne Bay and Miami Beach.

Legs McCarthy stood there uncertainly. It was like this. Tina Layton. small towner from Centerville, the girl he had intended to marry since high school days, had become a Big Town celebrity. All because of shapely legs and other proper proportions.

Tina Layton had gone to Chicago. She had come out first in a radio "pin-up girl" contest. Don Kemp's memory of her was of a shy, sweet little blonde who had kissed him ardently and promised she would be waiting.

There was a newspaper column clipping in his wallet. One of the latest. It read-----BOBBY LANE, PLAYBOY,

ALL OUT FOR PIN-UPPER Bobby Lane, of the tungsten millions, is being seen around with Tina, the BYT radio pin-up winner. One more matrimonial splurge seems to be in the offing. Tina, the pin-up girl, will make a tour of the camps where her saronged person has become well known by photos colored to life. Bobby will trail along.

Lieutenant Don Kemp responded to Legs McCarthy's advice. In the movie-vaudeville entertainment tonight. Tina Layton was to be featured in person. Kemp did not desire to see Tina in person. He had compelled his surface emotions to believe that was over.

In showing some sense, Kemp said, "Get out, Legs, I've work to do. I'm afraid I'll be too busy to be present in person at tonight's blowout. Have a good time, and if Tina talks to you, give her my best wishes."

That was cold and McCarthy's smile slowly died. Kemp's tone had a razor edge. He was fighting back tearing emotions that insisted upon trying to choke his voice.

There was the theft of the tank blueprints. Kemp had learned that the notorious Bobby Lane was accompanying the show. Kemp could take it on the chin, he believed. But he was not making a public effort at proving it.

"Okay, pal." grunted Legs McCarthy, and closed the door.

Kemp debated briefly. He gave the rooms the quick once-over. He was tempted to pull down the pin-up girl's picture and tear it into bits. But he had to show the C. O., Captain Morgan, exactly how the spy robbery had been committed.

Fast semi-tropical darkness was closing in on the dimmed-out beach and Collins Avenue. Kemp switched on lights and checked the rooms.

rooms.

"That's queer," he said musingly. "The only other thing missing is the Spanish dagger."

He had used the sharp, thin-bladed dagger as a tool for point marking on the blueprint desk. The dagger had a duplicate.

Don Kemp passed perhaps ten minutes in self debate. Regulations

called for an immediate report of the loss of the blueprints. He was convinced he was being watched.

"The thief would know when I reported to Captain Morgan," he reasoned aloud. "But if I don't report and appear unconcerned, the

spy may think I have not yet found out about the robbery."

A thought hammered in the back of his mind. He alone had planned that wall safe behind the picture of the pin-up girl. No other member of the engineer corps, including Legs McCarthy, knew of its

existence.

But when it was being contrived, and while Tina Layton was still the

small town girl waiting for him, he had confided in her. That had been

Kemp had been given no furlough since that time. The tank traction plan was considered too important. It was a hard, a mean and a sickening thought that now pounded at his brain.

DETERMINED to avoid the patriotic entertainment for the engineers

in the hotel ballroom, Don Kemp knew he must appear as usual. The

on one of his brief furloughs back in Centerville.

elevator dropped him ten floors. The civilian operator was a colored man who grinned at him.

Kemp decided he must not ask questions. He strolled from the elevator through the lobby. He met Mary Morgan, as if she had been

waiting for him to appear. She smiled and her dark eyes looked up at him.

"What gives, Don?" said Captain Morgan's vivacious girl child. "The show's starting soon, and it isn't the direction you're taking. Of

course, I wasn't asked, but I thought I'd like to have a look-see at this pin-up girl. I hear they've planned a stunt opening the show that is copied after the very artistic setting little Miss Pin-up has in your room."

Her oval face was uplifted. Her curved mouth was a smiling

challenge. The depths of her dark eyes nevertheless conveyed a hint of jealous observation. There was a bit of it in her voice.

Don Kemp liked Mary Morgan. But at this moment he wondered what she would think if she really knew what was pounding inside his mind. He had a job to do. Somewhere about the swanky beach hotel he was convinced the blueprint thief and spy must be lingering. He could not get his thoughts off the remembrance that only Tina had been told

about the concealed wall safe.

It was true, a thorough enemy agent might have accidently tested that pin-up picture. That was something he had to know. His idea of not attending the ballroom show was changed.

Kemp had not known of his own background for the pin-up girl being copied. He had intended to rid himself of the captain's attractive daughter. On an impulse he gave her his arm.

"We have a date to see the show together," he said gruffly.

"Maybe it's the Miami moon makes grouchy bears out of some men," chattered Mary Morgan. "Lost something, Don?"

"Naw, c'mon," he grunted, his breath pulling in at the nearness of her

random retort.

He was determined to excuse himself quickly. Mary Morgan laughed musically.

"You know, Don, at times I've wanted to see these pin-up girls in person," she said. "Especially this Tina Layton. And there's that Bobby Lane, too."

Bobby Lane, too."

Don Kemp saw a partly bald, baggy-eyed man in youthful clothes not far from the ballroom doorway. Bobby Lane was rising from a chair

as they entered.

Because of the sudden outcry from the stage, Kemp did not see
Bobby Lane suddenly disappear through a side door. And the
excitement was confined to those nearest the stage.

Kemp had heard of the show manager, the civilian agent who was making the tour of the camps. And he saw him now. A tall and black-haired man strode quickly to the middle of the stage and he was signaling with both hands.

His name was Lonny Walsh, according to publicity. Now his tone was sharp and hard. Mary Morgan gripped Kemp's arm. Apparently she had seen the same thing he had.

"Ring it down, boys!" came the show manager's voice.

IT was not funny. There was an artist's life-size drawing of Tina, the famous pin-up girl. Her shapely person was seemingly vital and living

"Don, that isn't funny!" cried out Mary.

as it stood out against the black background on which the artist had painted his picture.

From golden hair to slender ankles, the figure was one to bring forth an approving applause of the engineers that just as suddenly died out. That was why Lonny Walsh, the camp show manager, was ringing down the curtain. He ordered all stage lights off.

For the green jade haft of a knife showed distinctly where the blade had been driven into the pin-up picture, just where the heart would have been in the living person of Tina Layton. "What the devil?" exploded Kemp, freeing himself from Mary Morgan, "Why, it's my dagger--!"

The exclamation had been shocked from him. He cut it off as Mary's dark eyes widened. But Kemp did not wait He left Mary staring after him as he wedged his way to the side of the ballroom, and the narrow corridor leading backstage.

The shouting in the ballroom had died out. There were angry murmurs coming from the men, frightened cries from the WACS and nurses who had come to see the show.

The corridor was darkened. A shadowy figure brushed by Kemp. Instinctively he struck out with a quick, short left punch. A man grunted and fell down. Kemp kept on going. He had identified Legs McCarthy as he had fallen.

An electrician and some other stage employees were collected in the stage wings. Kemp bore down upon them.

"Where's Miss Layton's dressing room?" he inquired.

business--?"

But Don Kemp was not answering questions. He was asking just now.

"That way," pointed a stage hand. "Who're you---what the devil

He saw a door the hotel management had decorated with a gilt star. He tried the knob and the door was locked. He backed off and drove at it with one hard shoulder. Metal snapped. The room was all dark.

Kemp cupped his cigarette lighter looking for the button. He kept the light cupped in his hands.

Tina Layton, the pin-up girl, was there. She was alone. As alone as anyone could be with a green-hafted knife driven into her heart. "Her

anyone could be with a green-narted knife driven into her heart. "Her blue eyes were open, unseeing, but they seemed to Kemp to be asking a question--"Why, Don? Why?"

One moment Kemp was down beside the pin-up girl. All she had been wearing was the skimpy sarong. Her body was still beautiful. Her face and her sightless blue eyes were ghastly.

Yet Don Kemp held her in his arms for a few seconds. He scarcely considered the green-handled dagger. He kissed the cold lips, in farewell to the past.

AHAMMERING came at the door he had slammed shut. Kemp snapped to his feet. He moved to one side among a hanging collection of garments. The lights flashed on.

Lonny Walsh, the swarthy stage manager was in the doorway.

"For the love of heaven, look!" Lonny Walsh's voice trembled. "It wasn't just a show stunt. It's true."

Kemp edged slowly toward two big wardrobe trunks.

"The same kind of green inde dagger!" evelaimes

backed up by others.

"The same kind of green jade dagger!" exclaimed Lonny Walsh.

Don Kemp crouched, considering his next move. The twin Spanish daggers, of Chinese origin probably, had been the gift of an uncle. Don had been in a laughing mood the night he had put a stone upon Tina's finger and one of the twin daggers in her hand.

He had said then, "Here's my heart, Tina. You can bind it to you or use the knife."

"Someone on this stage--no--Tina had that kind of a stabber! What

does it mean?"

She had been unwilling to accept the twin dagger. She had been shy, clinging to him.

He had said, "Every time you see the dagger, you will know its mate is on my desk. You will think of me. It's a swell letter opener."

Far away and long ago that seemed.

Lonny Walsh stood with clenched fists. Beside him was the fussy, elegant dresser, Carlos Carnes, civilian assistant manager of the hotel who had remained as a director of other than army activities.

Carnes was rubbing his hand along a thin nose. His light hair appeared to bristle and his mouth quivered.

appeared to bristle and his mouth quivered.

Several others of the traveling entertainers were crowding into the room. Lonny Walsh waved them back with a soulful oath. Legs

McCarthy, one eye swollen, forced his way through the crowd to the inside.

Lonny Walsh was bending down, looking at the death dagger.

Lonny Walsh was bending down, looking at the death dagger.

"Not a chance of fingerprints," he said. "The jade haft's all carved into little figures."

Carlos Carnes rubbed the back of a hand across his mouth. He seemed to have all the natural instincts of a hotel man, even if the

"Can't the army keep this from being smeared all over?" said Carnes. "It'll be remembered when the hotel's turned back."

Carnes' interest in the dead girl, her body still warm and lovely, was

"Look!" said an entertainer. "Wasn't there a little light like a match or

Bobby Lane's eyes were bagged and his thick lips were too loose. But he appeared to have genuine grief.

army was in possession.

purely business, it appeared.

That had been Don Kemp's cigarette lighter.

some-thing beside the body when we came in?"

"Sure thing, and the shock almost made me forget it," said Lonny Walsh. "Tina was killed in the past few minutes. It must have been the killer."

"If it was," said Carlos Carnes, "he could be mixing up right now with the crowd. There was a small light and a man's figure. Seeing the girl and that same dagger that was on the stage a few minutes ago made me forget it."

Baldish Bobby Lane thrust others aside and came in.

He cried out with an oath, then he was on the floor, one arm around the dead girl's shoulders.

"Who's the killer--?" then Bobby Lane barely touched the tip of the dagger haft. "That stabber!" he cried out "Tina had one like it. She said it was a twin to a dagger owned by some engineer named

Bobby Lane's voice broke convincingly.

"-the only girl I've ever really loved."

Kemp, Lieutenant Don Kemp, Ithink. She's--"

considerable other newspaper notice of woman troubles.

A pair of tough M.P.s used their clubs to get through the room.

"Get away from her, buddy!" rapped one at Bobby Lane. "Nobody's to touch anything. What's that about the dagger belonging to

DON KEMP swore silently, holding to his hiding place behind the trunks. He knew that Bobby Lane had already had four wives and

to touch anything. What's that about the dagger belonging to Lieutenant Don Kemp?"

"Yeah, Tina had one of a pair Kemp had given her," repeated Bobby Lane vindictively. "I demand Kemp's immediate arrest."

"But, Bobby," countered Tony Walsh. "It's the same as the dagger someone stabbed into the heart of our life-size pin-up picture.

Perhaps a search of the room-"
"You'll leave that to the regular cops, mister!" ordered one M.P. "This is the part of the above."

isn't a part of the show. It's murder and in the city of Miami Beach!"

Apparently it had not occurred to anyone that the man seen with the light could still be hidden in the room. Kemp's eyes strayed to the dressing table close beside his hideout trunks. A gold, beaded handbag lay there. He noticed that its clasp was open as if the

Or it could have been left that way as Tina made up for the show.

Kemp decided he had to take a chance. If he could reach out and snatch the handbag without being detected, there was a possibility that it might contain some hint of a motive for killing the pin-up girl.

murderer might already have explored its contents.

it since."

An overalled stage hand spoke up then from the back of the crowd.

"Heard you say that knife was the same as was in that pin-up picture on the stage," he said. "Maybe it's the same one. Anyway while the lights was out that knife was grabbed by somebody an' we ain't seen

"When the city cops get here, we'll pay a visit to Don Kemp's quarters," said one M.P.

Legs McCarthy spoke almost viciously.

"Kemp isn't there! That's where I got this eye!"

"What the devil--!" he exploded. "Why-that's my dagger!"
"I met him in the stage corridor an' he slammed me one!"

"And what were you doing back here?"

Tony Walsh's black eyes glittered and he was quick.

"Why--well, you see Tina Layton comes from my home town," said McCarthy, the corps cameraman. "I was back here, yes, but her door was locked and she didn't answer. I was going back out front when Lieutenant Kemp rushed me and slammed me one."

All interest was for seconds centered upon Legs McCarthy. Kemp

saw his chance. He possessed the beaded handbag with cat-like quickness.

Homicide men of the city police were coming in.

"Thomas McCarthy, --th U. S. Army Engineers, Per Government Island,

New York City:"

Kemp had no opportunity to open a letter. But the situation was clear enough. Postmarks showed that Legs McCarthy had been writing regularly to Tina Layton, all letters addressed to Chicago.

"Of all the double-crossing heels--" Kemp whispered it.

Then he stopped. What might Tina have written to McCarthy? Evidently she had been wildly ambitious. Perhaps she was only Kemp wondered how many war bond purchases might have gone into choosing the winner of the pinup contest?

A SEARGEANT REARDON was in charge of the city homicide

playing Bobby Lane for a sucker.

squad. Getting a quick review from the M.P.s, Reardon demanded, "Find this Lieutenant Don Kemp. Don't waste time!"

A musical. angry voice came from the doorway. Kemp risked being

seen and had a glimpse of pretty, dark-eyed Mary Morgan.

"Lieutenant Kemp was with me outside when this--this pin-up girl was

Receipt was with the outside when this—this phrup yill was killed!" she announced. "How about asking Bobby Lane some questions? I saw him go toward the stage just before the curtain went up on that dagger in the pin-up picture."

Bobby Lane turned toward her his mouth twisting.

"That's a blasted lie!" he mouthed. "I was outside when the curtain went up, and went into the hotel lobby to make a phone call."

"We'll check with the switchboard operator," said Sergeant Reardon.

"I used the public dial phone in a booth and didn't contact the operator," hastily supplied Bobby Lane. "Why would I want to kill the girl lintended to marry?"

girl I intended to marry?"

"On the records you drop 'em fast!" snapped hardboiled Sergeant Reardon. "Maybe she had somethin' on you. Lane. One of you take

over her things. Where's her handbag? A dame like her always has enough in one to fill a trunk."

Two minutes later the searchers announced that the murderer must

have taken the handbag.

Kemp thought, if Legs McCarthy happened to be the man, he would

Kemp thought, if Legs McCarthy happened to be the man, he would have taken his letters at least. Mary Morgan was still in the doorway. Kemp heard the C.O.'s lowvoiced command to the girl. "Go home-don't make a fool of yourself over Kemp--we've been in

Then, holding them in his hand. Kemp noticed a few words written across an envelope in Tina's scrawly hand. As he was reading the

brief sentence in amazement. Captain Morgan came in.

his rooms--that dagger he always used on the draughting table is not there--" Kemp was still digesting Tina's scrawled writing.

"If anything happens to me, it's because I talked too much to Bobby and Tony about how I would surprise them with what my pin-up picture is hiding in Don Kemp's-"

That was all. The girl might have been interrupted in her scribbling. But clearly she must have had a hunch that she was in danger. She could only have told Bobby Lane and Tony Walsh about the safe behind her pin-up picture, thought Kemp. And that stunt of the dagger thrust into the life-size pin-up drawing on

the stage? Kemp squinted to study the face and small, beady eyes of

Tony Walsh. What a throw-off alibi, virtually spoiling his show, that stabbing of a pin-up picture might have been!

This Sergeant Reardon was tops at picking out what might turn out to be his meat. He rasped an order. "Clear the room, boys! You, Walsh, Carnes, Bobby Lane, and this girl

with Don Kemp's alibi, stick here! Don't any of the rest of you leave The room was being cleared, except for those the police sergeant

the hotel!"

The police medical examiner was doing his stuff. The fingerprint boys were completely balked. The dagger haft was too rough to retain impressions. Virtually everything else in the dressing room might have been touched by any number of persons.

The C.O., Captain Morgan, started to exercise his right. Murder was

had named. Kemp was surprised that Legs McCarthy had not been

included with the others told to stick.

under civil law. But this hotel was military reservation.

"My daughter will go to her room and be on call, Sergeant Reardon," declared Captain Morgan. "She isn't mixed up in this, except by the

accidental meeting with Lieutenant Kemp."

Kemp's whole attention was drawn to the girl's flashing eyes and the quality of her sudden defiance.

quality of her sudden defiance.

"I'm staying right here, father," she declared. "They ore trying to put something onto Don Kemp. It's my place beside him, if he is found. You see. this is all foolishness. I'm sorry for Tina Layton, but Don had

given her up weeks ago. Don and I expect to announce our engagement."

KEMP really saw Mary Morgan then for the first time. Slim and straight, lovely and daring, she faced her father. Kemp uttered an inward groan. He knew now that this girl had been growing upon him, in spite of his bitterness over Tina's sudden selfish ambition that had made her another person-a pin-up girl.

inward groan. He knew now that this girl had been growing upon him, in spite of his bitterness over Tina's sudden selfish ambition that had made her another person--a pin-up girl.

"Okay, miss!" growled Reardon. "Clear 'em out! You stay, if you insist. Captain Morgan, the circumstances fit Lieutenant Kemp fairly straight. We'll have to hold him when he is brought in."

The room was clearing. The murdered Tina's scrawled words took on

The room was clearing. The murdered Tina's scrawled words took on sudden, vital importance. Kemp realized that any one of four persons still in this room, although Legs McCarthy was trailing out slowly behind the others, might be the killer.

plans from his room.

Tony Walsh and Bobby Lane evidently had been told too much by
Tina about his hidden safe.

And one or a pair or more could be involved in the theft of the tank

Legs McCarthy had been secretly corresponding with Tina. Had he made that double-crossing play for the girl, or for what he believed she might know?

Kemp's position could not be maintained much longer. It had been sheer audacity that had kept him behind the big trunks. He must get out, be free to put a finger upon the killer and the thief who had stolen the tank plans.

As the space cleared about the dead girl, the idea came. Kemp looked at the small, brass square around the light button only eight or ten feet away.

"It's one chance and a long one," he whispered.

Then he fixed the position of everyone in the room.

He slid his army .45 into his hand. Always a crack shot, he had no doubt what he could do to that light button and the wires connected with it.

Legs McCarthy was just going through the door, slowly, as if there was something here that he wanted. It could be those letters.

Bobby Lane was standing beside Tony Walsh, his apparently mournful eyes upon Tina's body. Black-eyed Tony Walsh seemed to be studying everyone who went through the doorway. Carlos Carnes, the civilian manager, was rubbing at his nose in a worried way.

Captain Morgan and Mary were to one side. The

lifted the army gun slowly. The explosion of the .45 was like a crack of thunder in that small room. There was a blue flash from the wall. Then there was almost instant and impenetrable darkness.

Kemp dropped, crawling a few feet, coming up and diving as Sergeant Reardon roared out an oath. "Dumbheads! Get him! The

C.O. was red-faced with anger and talking in a low tone to the livid girl. She was shaking her head with firm determination. Don Kemp

killer's been here all the time!" Reardon's own Police Positive must have cracked and Captain Morgan called out. "Stop that! Someone will be killed! Block the door!" Don Kemp made a long dive to where Legs McCarthy was just departing. His hooked arm brought the cameraman of the corps crashing down.

But there was a concerted rush for the door. As McCarthy fell, cursing

that of an animal.

Sergeant Reardon blazed a flashlight across the room. Kemp let go of McCarthy and rolled. He saw Bobby Lane on the floor with blood pumping from his ripped throat. The millionaire playboy was

wildly, a man screamed hoarsely. His death agony was almost like

Tall Tony Walsh had half fallen over the dying man. Kemp's smashing bullet had torn the wiring and blown a fuse. The outside corridor was all in darkness.

speechless now and would be dead in seconds.

Kemp let go of McCarthy and came up. He smashed a left to Tony Walsh's chin. But as Walsh fell, Kemp saw the pudgy white hand that thrust the jade--hafted dagger into Walsh's pocket The dagger had been snatched from the pin-up girl's heart.

Kemp smacked the barrel of his gun across the teeth of Carlos Carnes, the civilian manager. As the man went down, Kemp whirled, talking, with Reardon and three other coppers covering him with their guns.

Bobby Lane, possibly because he was afraid he would talk. Before I'm under arrest, I would suggest Carnes' rooms and all of the baggage of Bobby Lane and Tony Walsh be searched."

BEFORE he submitted the scribbled words of Tina, the pin-up girl, Don Kemp separated the envelope from the other letters of Legs McCarthy. McCarthy stared at Kemp as the lieutenant made a swift pass of the letters to him, and then reversed his gun and handed it to Sergeant Reardon.

A little later, Tony Walsh cleared himself. The tank plans were

"Lieutenant Kemp reporting, sir!" he snapped at Captain Morgan.
"Plans two-four-three were stolen by one of these three men this
afternoon! The blood on Carlos Carnes' hand shows who knifed

"Tina told us about a hidden safe behind her pinup picture," explained Tony Walsh. "I tried to stop her. Bobby Lane's reputed fortune has dwindled to nothing. But he had been getting regular remittances.

unearthed from under a rug in Carlos Carnes' office.

"Bobby Lane was being paid as an Axis agent. I knew he was already acquainted with Carlos Carnes, here at the hotel. As soon as that stage stabbing stunt and the murder loomed up, I was convinced either Bobby Lane or Carnes was the killer. I kept quiet for the time, waiting to see how the frame-up might be pinned upon Lieutenant Kemp.

"I congratulate you, lieutenant, on being smarter and quicker than these Axis stooges. I've an idea Carnes killed Bobby Lane and Tina. He would figure that Kemp would know or guess where the information had come from about his hidden safe. No doubt Carnes was planning to take quick leave of this place."

"You're all technically under arrest," announced Sergeant Reardon a little later. "However, we have checked with the F.B.I., and they are fairly certain Carnes is one of the Axis agents who slipped out of their

trap up in Detroit nearly a year ago."

Don Kemp faced the C.O. a short time after that.

"I should have you up and drummed out for keeping priceless information to yourself," grunted Captain Morgan. Then his rugged face cracked into a grin.

"However, if what Mary says is true, I'll guarantee you'll never again hide anything behind the picture of a pin-up girl," added the C.O. "By the way, Mary is waiting up for you. After what she had been through, I ordered her to get to bed. So she's waiting up. My boy, Mary doesn't take orders and I've never known her to miss what she goes after."

Don Kemp smiled a little. He snapped a salute and stepped out into the room where Mary was waiting, her dark eyes lifted to meet him.

Don Kemp heard Captain Morgan mutter, faintly, "An' may the good gods have mercy on your soul."

THE END



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