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The Thorpe Affair

By Phillip Lealy

Terry smiled. "At first it looked like a sure thing that Stanton did it. But I remembered that Thorpe was shot in the back, below the heart and to the right from about six feet away. That meant that whoever shot him was probably right-handed and, unless he held the gun very low, was short. Well, after I'd met Stanton, I saw that he was very tall, and he blew his nose and held his gun in his left hand. It wasn't proof he didn't do it, but it could be enough to get him off in court."

"Yeah," one of the policemen put in, "That's right. This guy Stanton was picked up an hour ago. His alibi holds."
"Then why did he shoot at you?" Kay asked, still perplexed.
"Because I asked him if Thorpe had been blackmailing him. On the face of it, his shooting me for that would indicate that he'd shot Thorpe because he was being blackmailed, and he wanted to get away with the murder. But he was really protecting the secret that Thorpe had used to get the blackmail. Ten years ago Thorpe got Stanton off on a murder charge. Ever since then Thorpe was blackmailing him. That indicates that Thorpe had something on Stanton that would send him to the chair for the murder. What Stanton was afraid of was that somebody would find him out that he was guilty. When I asked if he was being blackmailed he thought that if he said "Yes," I'd wonder why he was being blackmailed that I'd find out about that murder when I investigated. It's all tangled up, but that's the situation."

Kay's puzzlement was turning to amazement as Terry revealed the answers to all the questions that had been bothering her. "Why suspect Mills?"
"Because he admitted Thorpe was blackmailing him. But there were a lot of others in the same situation. When I found out that there were some vouchers with Thorpe's signature made out for money that wasn't accounted for, I thought that that might be a motive for Mills. He's a legal forger for the county and can sign the name of almost all the big officials almost exactly as they do themselves. I figured that Mills could have signed Thorpe's name to the vouchers to get the money and then killed Thorpe so he couldn't say he hadn't signed them. With Thorpe dead and the money missing, it would be concluded that the transaction had been just another crooked deal of Thorpe's. Or possibly, Thorpe had found out about it and was blackmailing Mills for that."

Mills, who had stood in sullen silence during these explanations, now spoke. His voice was defiant as he said:
"Yes, I killed him, and it was the finest thing I ever did. He was blackmailing me because I was with a woman one night in one of the places when I was drunk. I couldn't tell my wife about it because the woman was determined to frame me. And I didn't know what really did happen because I was stiff. Thorpe, the crawling louse, knew that and bled me for it. I couldn't stand it any longer, so I went up and killed him. I can't say I'm sorry, I'd do it again... Only, I wanted to keep it from my wife. When she finds out I killed Thorpe, and why, I won't want to live any more. I tried to get away with it... but I guess it just wasn't in the cards."
He showed no emotion but hatred for Thorpe as he spoke. His eyes were sad, but his thin face was set in resolution to stand up under whatever happened. As he watched him, Terry felt a touch of admiration for the little man.

"So," said Terry, "while Thorpe was putting over all those deals, it turned out to be a simple blackmailing of the supposed weakling that finally caught up with him. Let's get away from this place. I've seen enough of the sordid to last me a while."
He took Kay's arm and led her out of the club and into the car. He drove out north along the river. The reflection of the moon on the balmy breezes that swept about him, the peaceful quiet of the night lent enchantment to their company. After several hectic days and the excitement just passed, they were content for a few minutes to sit in silence and relax.
To be continued

Periodically some national publication with head office in Upper Canada sends an envoy to the Island to write a story about its inhabitants, its institutions, its manner of life. Not all of these write-ups have been flattering, and some have attempted to picture us as being a fair target for ridicule. No writer from the Upper Provinces, in recent years at least, seems to have been able to give his Canada wide reading public a reasonably accurate portrayal of the Island scene.
The latest effort, which appeared in a semi-monthly magazine is not unkind or deliberately distorted, but as a description of Charlottetown life, it falls short of hitting the right note. Not everybody in Charlottetown lives for "laughs" as is inferred by the writer, nor do our public men make light of their public responsibilities. There was more than a hint of condescension in the story, softened with overtones of gallantry, but with implications that we were not to be taken too seriously. Altogether, our readers were given the impression that we are a funny people, living an existence apart from the rest of Canada. It might be well if some of the writers who are given assignments to interpret Charlottetown, or the Island to other Canadians, would live here long enough to absorb the Island atmosphere, and so fit themselves to depict us as we are, and not as the ill-informed are prone to picture us.

One of the druggers working out of Souris recently, was able to spend only a few hours on the fishing grounds because of rough weather. In that short time she landed eight thousand pounds of haddock. Our offshore fishermen in their small boats would be a long time catching this amount of haddock. It is worthy of mention that druggers from Mulgrave, N.S. are fishing in the same waters. Seemingly if Island druggers don't move in on what has been described as one of the best haddock fishing grounds in this part of the world, others will monopolize it.

Chalk it up to the credit of the Islanders hockey team that they are responsible for raising the standard of hockey in the Maritimes.
When the Charlottetown club from a standing start, beat the long organized clubs in St. John, Moncton and Halifax last year the hockey followers in these mainland towns demanded action. They are

Island Odds And Ends

After a much needed rest, Col. "Dan" MacKinnon is making a gradual re-entry into the busy routine he has followed for many years. At present he is putting in an appearance at his office every afternoon and gathering up the threads of his many activities. He has long been linked with the business life of the City and has been an outstanding figure in horse racing circles, a generous supporter of rifle-shooting competitions, a keen follower of hockey, and a subscriber to many civic and charitable projects. So large a part has he played in the varied aspects of community life that even his brief absence has been felt keenly. It is good to be able to report the report that the Colonel is back at the old stand, refreshed, looking well, and in excellent spirits.

Much of the credit for the thriving condition of the Summerside branch of the Canadian Legion is being given to Mr. Earl G. Cannon, who for several years has been a very energetic member of the branch executive, and is presently its competent president. To match more than a fair share of energy, Mr. Cannon has outstanding executive ability, speaks with facility from the platform, has a razor-sharp sense of humor and knows how to make friends and influence people. With these attributes and the support of Summerside veterans, it is not surprising that the branch has a fine new headquarters and an enthusiastic and growing membership. By way of reward for his very great contribution to the Legion organization "Earl" was recently appointed Dominion representative of the Provincial command. The many Island veterans who know him agree that the appointment could not have been given to any more fitting man.

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getting it, and thus we see all our hockey foes with the possible exception of Sydney, housecleaning their rosters and lining up almost completely new teams. Never in the history of the game in Eastern Canada has there been such a scramble for hockey talent. The Islanders are standing pat to some extent on last year's winners, but even they have taken into the fold some very promising new hands. The Islanders were certainly a bomb-shell in Maritime hockey in 1950. The opposition is now striving to rebuild the devastation Charlottetown wrought one year ago.

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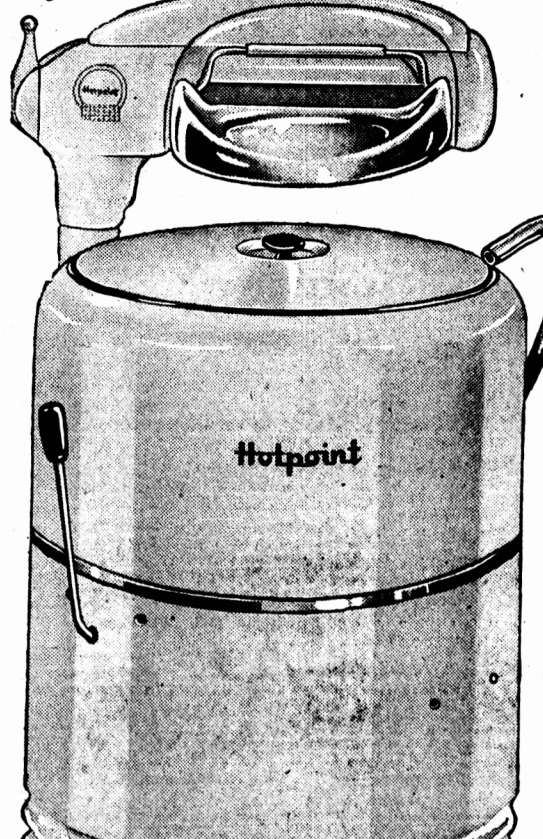


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