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A Casebook Story

BY JACK SWORD

Statement of Mitchell Curzon

TOM HURLEY, the feature editor of our local paper, called me into his office a couple of months ago.

"Mitch," he said to me, "remember the Forbes case at Pebble Beach last year?"

"Sure I remember it," I said. Who wouldn't? It was the biggest sensation on the peninsula in years.

"Weren't you the reporter who covered it?" asked Hurley.

"Yes, I did."

"It happened just about a year ago," said Hurley thoughtfully. "I want you to write a feature on it. And don't hash over the same old stuff again."

"For something different," I suggested, "I can track down the people who knew Mayne, find out what kind of a home he came from, things like that. Only I'd have to interview a lot of people who are scattered all over the country."



Dead Soldier

Mayne was a machine — a machine with only one purpose in life. The police had to stop him before it was too late . . .

Hurley leaned back in his swivel chair and stared at the wall. "You've got something," he said. "Get everything about Mayne you can find. Write it up from that angle."

Back at my desk I tried to figure out where to begin. Nobody knew much about Mayne. The newspaper files only covered his brief, but spectacular, stay at Pebble Beach. I recalled that a man who claimed to be his father had come here from San Francisco shortly after the case was closed. I decided that was the best place to start.

During the next eight weeks I covered a lot of ground and talked to a great many people. When I came back to Monterey I had several interviews plus photostatic copies of documents I had located in Washington and Chicago. All I needed to complete my story was a look at the files in the Sheriff's office here, and I didn't have any trouble doing that.

I sorted it all out and took it to Hurley. It started with an interview of Mayne's father.

Interview with Edward Mayne

Yes, I'm Robert's father. So you want to know something about him when he was a kid? I'll make it short.

Bob's mother died when he was two. We were in Indo-China then. I guess that you could call me a — oh, I don't know — call it a soldier-of-fortune, if you want to. I don't

like the word, but it describes what I did as well as anything I can think of. At the time Mary died I was engaged in a very delicate and slightly illegal business transaction, so I wasn't able to take Bob to his mother's relatives in the States. When I could see my way clear to leaving Saigon, I decided to keep him with me.

For the next twenty years we travelled through the Orient together. I sent Bob to school when I had the chance and, when we were in places where there were no schools, I taught him what I knew. By the time he was sixteen, he had picked up a lot of miscellaneous knowledge the average boy never learns.

A fellow hiding out in the Malay States who claimed he was from Arizona took a liking to Bob and showed him a number of different tricks with a gun — fast draw, snap shooting from the hip, firing while he was sprawled on his back, things like that. In the Molucca Islands Bob learned how to use a knife, and while we were in north-eastern Afghanistan he picked up the best way to strangle a man with a scarf or a piece of wire. He finished up by taking lessons from a Thailer on how to fight with his hands and feet.

Bob never had any close friends. We didn't stay in one place long enough. Because of the nature of my business, I never trusted anyone completely and I instilled the same idea into him. By the time he was

23, he was as much my partner as my son. He was the ideal companion, tight-mouthed, efficient, absolutely trustworthy, but completely ruthless if crossed.

We were in Sumatra when the Japs hit Pearl Harbor. We got out of there fast. Several months later we arrived in the States via South Africa and Brazil. It was the first time Bob had been in America since he was a baby. To him it was as strange as the Orient would be to the average American.

We visited his mother's relatives in Pennsylvania, but that didn't turn out too well. One day Bob was in the woods practicing with his knife when one of the cousins saw him. It didn't take long for word of this to spread through the little rural community, and the people began to treat Bob like he was a freak. Something they humored because they were afraid.

Bob wasn't handsome, but he had the sort of rugged-looking face that attracts women like flies around honey. I saw there would be an explosion if we stayed much longer. Sooner or later one of the local yokels would resent Bob and take a crack at the "foreigner" and get hurt bad — so Bob and I pulled out for San Francisco. By that time the war was going full blast, so Bob enlisted.

Extract from records of Adjutant General, Department of the Army

Robert Mayne, enlisted from San

Francisco, California. 5' 11", 180 lbs, black hair, grey eyes. Assigned as follows:

Basic training, Camp Rogers
16th Ranger Battalion, Camp Kettner
9th Ranger Battalion, England
747th Special Group, Germany
23rd Special Group, Birmingham, Alabama
98th Special Ranger Battalion, Korea

Interview with James Novak

I was Mayne's First Sergeant in the 16th Rangers. He joined us while we were still training in the States. When he reported in I knew we had a good soldier. He had that air of confidence which marks a man of action.

He never did say much. He carried out his training assignments better than anyone in the battalion, but he didn't fit in off-duty. I never saw him take a drink, pick up a girl, or get into any kind of trouble the way a high-strung bunch will do occasionally. At first the boys tried to make friends with him, but when he didn't respond to their overtures they left him alone.

One night 'Swede' Sanson, a big, rough and rugged character from the lumber country up in Washington, said something to Mayne that started a first class brawl. Sanson outweighed Mayne by forty pounds but, if the boys hadn't broken it up,

Mayne would have killed him. After Mayne worked over a few more of the tougher element, the rest of the men began to treat him with a respect that had quite a bit of fear mixed into it. Mayne never took advantage of their attitude. He just went his own way. He seemed to say, "Leave me alone and I won't bother you."

We were shipped to Italy, and that's when we began to put our training to use. We spent most of our time on hit and run raids that kept the Germans off-balance. Mayne was tops in the business. He worked right along with the rest of the squad, but he still kept to himself. I tried to talk to him once or twice, but although he was polite and respectful, I had a feeling like I was hammering against a wall. I don't think he ever trusted anybody. He reminded me of a robot — except he had a brilliant mind and used it.

Finally we made one raid too many. We ran into trouble and some of us, including Mayne and myself, were captured. The Germans sent us to a PW camp and eventually we ended up in a city called Straubing in South-Eastern Germany, working on the railroad as forced laborers.

We had been in the PW camp about six months, when one evening, as we were going back to camp from work, Mayne slipped behind our guard and strangled him with a piece of wire. Then he grabbed me

and we took off — just like that. You'd think that without food, no clothing, no map, nothing, that we wouldn't get far, but we did. We made little raids for food as we worked westward. Even though I outranked him, I took my orders from Mayne. It was obvious that if we made it at all, we were going to make it with him in command.

We only moved at night, and every time we met somebody, that person would die. Mayne didn't want anyone telling the German authorities about our possible whereabouts. Me, I figured we were marking our trail by the bodies we left behind, but I knew if we were ever recaptured we'd be shot, so I played along.

When we got into France we managed to contact the underground, and we were taken to Gibraltar and turned over to the English. I tried to thank Mayne, but he told me in so many words that he brought me along because he didn't think he could make it alone, and I was the only prisoner who could have stayed with him. I wanted to be grateful, but how can you warm up to a guy who acts like you were another piece of necessary equipment, like the wire he used to kill the guard, or the big knife he picked up on the way through Germany.

We were shipped to England, and because we were escaped PWs, we didn't have to go back to a combat unit. I was glad to get out with a

whole skin, so I transferred to a desk job. Mayne asked to be sent to another Ranger outfit, and the last I heard of him he was operating with the 9th in France shortly after D-Day.

Interview with Charles Lawson

The 747th Special Group was formed shortly after VE day. We handled a variety of assignments — all of those necessary jobs that must be done for a government which is unofficially at war with another. We were strictly on our own. If one of our men got into trouble we denied his existence. It was hard, dirty work, but the excitement and the opportunity to act without being restricted by laws and regulations which govern the conduct of the average person appealed to the type of men we used.

I have no idea how Mayne heard about us. Our organization was highly classified in those days. At all events he joined us. I asked him how he heard of the SG, but he never answered. He did volunteer the information that his Ranger Battalion had been deactivated and we were the nearest thing to the same type of work.

He turned into one of the best operatives we had. He was quiet and competent. No matter what kind of a job he had to do, he did it and did it well. He seemed to thrive on excitement, although I never

saw him come out of his shell. The other men respected him, but they didn't like him. You can't like something you don't know. Most of our men spent their free time with their mistresses, or carousing in cafes. Mayne never did. If he ever had anything to do with a woman it was an overnight attachment and nothing more. The man was the nearest thing I ever saw to a machine.

In late '49 he was sent to one of our units in Birmingham, Alabama, on a special project.

Interview with George Grayson

I don't know much about Robert Mayne. I don't think anyone was ever really close to him except my daughter Frances, and of course she can't tell you anything about him now.

Mayne met Frances accidentally. It was the winter of '49 and Frances was stalled on the highway between Birmingham and Montgomery. It was late at night and there weren't many cars on the road. Mayne stopped and fixed the car — it just required some minor adjustment. Evidently he took her license plate number and traced it down, because a few days later he showed up at the house.

I didn't care for him when we first met. He was polite enough, but he just ignored me — acted as if I didn't matter one way or the other.

At that, maybe I didn't, but at least he could have shown some interest. He talked with Frances for a while and then left. He kept coming to see her and they began to go out together a great deal. I still didn't like it. Mayne's attitude was "you're her father, so I'll notice you, but you don't interest me." I tried to tell Frances that he was the wrong kind of man for her, but she said that I was prejudiced. By this time she was completely infatuated with him.

A couple of months later Mayne came to me and asked for permission to marry Frances. Even though they had been seeing each other almost every day, he caught me by surprise. I pointed out that Frances was of age, and if she wanted to marry, I couldn't stop her. Mayne agreed, but said that he would rather have my permission, as it would make Frances happy. I wanted to refuse, but since I knew they would go ahead and get married anyway I gave my reluctant blessing.

After they came back from their honeymoon I noticed a change in Mayne. He started to become a human being. He would relax when I came to visit them and sometimes he broke down enough to tell me some of his adventures with his father in little known corners of the world. This change kept increasing as time went on, and I imagine that if nothing had interrupted it, he would have turned into a normal citizen in a few years.

When Frances told him she was going to have a baby, he waited on her hand and foot and did all the idiotic things a man will do in the first blush of enthusiasm.

He started to take an interest in the kids in the neighborhood. He was always pretty handy with his hands and he began to fix up the toys the kids broke. It wasn't long before every mother in the neighborhood would head for Mayne's house if little Johnnie didn't show up for supper, and nine times out of ten she would find her kid there. Next thing Mayne did was to join a class that taught expectant fathers how to act and what to do when the baby arrived. I strolled into their home one evening and caught Mayne practicing how to change diapers. He was using a big doll he had borrowed from somebody in the neighborhood. Man! Marriage will certainly do strange things to some people.

About that time the Korean "police action" started. Mayne was told that he was going to be shipped to Korea to join a newly formed Ranger outfit there. He tried to pull strings to stay in Birmingham, but they needed men like him too badly. When he left he asked Frances to name the baby George Edward after the two grandfathers.

Interview with Isaac Levin

I was glad to see Mayne when he

joined the 98th in Korea. I knew him from the old 9th Rangers in Europe. He was a sort of legend after his escape from Germany.

I was surprised at the change in him. He wasn't stand-offish anymore. He had turned into one swell guy. The change hadn't taken away any of his old ability, though. When Bob was part of a squad going on a raid, everybody had a comfortable feeling because he was along. But off duty was when he really showed the change. He bent my ear by the hour about his wife back in Alabama. And when the kid arrived — it was a boy — I had to admire a new picture with every letter he got from home. I didn't mind, though. He was my buddy and if listening to him about his family and his plans for them when he got back to the States made him any happier, I was glad to oblige.

Along sometime in '52, we got in a big hassle with the gooks up in the Wonjon area. We were running raids into their territory after the Navy had landed us on the coast behind their lines. Finally some Korean who was supposedly working for us decided to change sides and we were nailed. The gooks didn't torture us too much and we ended up in a PW cage near Pyong-yang.

Somehow we lived through it, in spite of the bad food, overwork, and ill-treatment by the guards. One day Bob told me that he thought it might be possible to escape, but he

didn't want to take the chance. He was willing to sit it out until he could go back to his wife in one piece.

When we finally got exchanged at the end of the war, Bob insisted on going straight home without stopping over in a hospital to rest up and get his strength back. He promised to write and keep in touch with me, but I never heard from him again.

Interview with Marlin Grayson

I'm Frances' uncle. In 1952 Frances decided to take a trip to Minnesota and show off the baby to our relatives there. I went along to help drive.

We got to Chicago late one evening. We were going north on Michigan Avenue when a car came whipping down the wrong side of the street at a tremendous rate of speed. Frances tried to pull in to the curb, but there was a terrific crash as the other car hit us, and I blacked out.

When I regained consciousness, I was in the hospital. Frances and George Edward were dead. I told the authorities to notify my brother George and he arrived a couple of days later. We took Frances and her child back home for burial and notified the Red Cross, asking them to get in touch with Bob. When we got to Birmingham there was a telegram from the army waiting

for Frances. It said that Bob was missing in action.

*Extract from The Daily World,
Chicago Newspaper*

Paul Forbes, age 24, of Pebble Beach, California, was tried yesterday for an accident which occurred on Michigan Avenue in which two people were killed and one injured. Originally the charge had been manslaughter, drunken driving and speeding. The charge was reduced to reckless driving by Assistant City Attorney Luther Kapsa to "further the interests of justice". Judge Maystreet agreed and Forbes was fined \$500 and given a one year suspended sentence.

*Interview with
Police Lieutenant James Clancy*

Yeah, I remember this fellow Mayne. He got in to see me and wanted to know why Forbes was let off so easy. I couldn't tell him that Maystreet and Kapsa were a couple of crooked snakes. Everybody in the police department knew that Forbes' old man had come from California and waved a lot of dough in the Judge's face and the boy got off with a slap on the wrist.

Like I said, though, at the time I couldn't tell Mayne that. Maystreet and Kapsa were still going strong, and it wasn't until later

that we were able to get the goods on them and put them away for a long stretch.

When Mayne saw he couldn't get any satisfaction from me he clammed up. His face went blank. I saw him die right in front of me. His eyes were the only thing alive, and they had the most terrible look of hate in them that I've ever seen. At the time I thought the look was for me, and since I knew what the fellow was going through, I tried to shrug it off as just something that a cop has to take and live with.

*Extract from Log of Sheriff's Office,
Monterey County, California*

At 10:53 A.M. a call was received from the home of John Forbes at Pebble Beach. The speaker, identifying himself as Manuel Segura, the gardener, said that Forbes was sprawled in a rose bush in the garden, dead. Deputies and an ambulance were immediately dispatched to the scene.

Extract from report of Deputy Parl

On arrival at the Forbes home in Pebble Beach, I was taken to the garden by Manuel Segura. I found John Forbes entangled in a rose bush. He had been stabbed through the heart. The knife had entered with considerable force. It had gone cleanly between the ribs and into

the chest cavity without touching the bone.

Questioning of members of the household (see attached statements) pointed to the probability that the crime had been committed by one of the servants. This opinion is expressed because all of the people involved were emphatic in saying that John Forbes invariably worked in his garden between the hours of 10 and 11 every morning, and that he was not to be disturbed during this time under any circumstances. This knowledge was confined to the household and a few intimate friends.

All of the suspects were cautioned to remain in the area.

Extract from report of Deputy Kingsman

Two days after the murder of John Forbes, his son Paul came to this office in a very perturbed state of mind. He showed me a letter he had received through the mail that morning. The message had been made up by cutting out words from a newspaper and pasting them on a sheet of stationary. The message:

Your father supplied the money to get you off from a murder charge. He has paid for his part. You are next. While you wait you can sweat, never knowing where it is coming from, or who will give it to you or how.

The letter was tested for finger-

prints, but only those of Paul Forbes were found. The paper had been wiped clean before mailing.

Under prolonged questioning Forbes told me the story of his traffic accident in Chicago. He was assigned Deputy Baker as a guard and told to return to his home.

Telegram to Chicago Police Department

What is the name and address of the woman who was killed in a crash on Michigan Avenue in August 1952? Driver of the vehicle which caused her death named Paul Forbes.

Sheriff's Office, Monterey

Telegram to Sheriff's Office, Monterey

Mrs. Robert Mayne, 1743 Raiment Street, Birmingham, Alabama.
Leary, Lt.

Telegram to Birmingham, Alabama, Police

Can you inform us of present whereabouts of Robert Mayne, 1743 Raiment Street?

Sheriff's Office, Monterey

Telegram to Sheriff's Office, Monterey

Present whereabouts of Mayne

unknown. According to father-in-law Grayson, Mayne disappeared after returning from Korea and finding out about death of his wife.

Clayton, Capt.

*Telegram to Adjutant General,
Department of the Army*

Where is Robert Mayne currently stationed? He is a soldier recently returned from Korea. Home address is 1743 Raiment Street, Birmingham, Alabama.

Sheriff's Office, Monterey

Telegram to Sheriff's Office, Monterey

Robert Mayne was discharged from army on return from Korea. No other address available.

Farkins, Lt. Col.

Extract from report of Deputy Baker

Deputy Kingsman assigned me to guard Paul Forbes.

"From what I can gather, after listening to Forbes' story about the Chicago incident," Kingsman told me, "I feel that we are dealing with a homicidal maniac who is bent on revenge. This man most probably doesn't care what happens to him, as long as he gets Forbes."

As soon as we arrived at his home at Pebble Beach, Forbes headed for

the whiskey bottle. By evening he was in a stupor.

This routine went on for the balance of the week, and then Forbes started to snap out of it. He decided to work on his racing car in the garage.

He and Mike Dooley, the chauffeur, started to work. I watched them for a while and then went to the kitchen for a drink of water. I was filling the glass from the tap when I heard Forbes scream. I barrelled out of the kitchen and across the lawn towards the garage. I could see Forbes on his knees, his hands clasped in an attitude of prayer, with Dooley standing over him, holding a knife lightly in his fingers.

I pulled out my gun. "Drop it, Dooley," I called.

Dooley looked over his shoulder. "The name is Mayne, Robert Mayne," he yelled, and then barked a short laugh.

Then he threw the knife — hard. It buried itself in Forbes' throat. I took a shot at him. He staggered against the garage door and then recovered. Before I had time to fire again he had slipped around the corner and was heading for the beach at a run. I followed and I saw him swim slowly towards a point of land about half a mile down the beach. As I watched, a giant wave smashed into him and up-ended him in a tangle of arms and legs. He disappeared.

The body has not been recovered.

