

Ghost STORIES

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VENGEANCE

Millions were gone
from the
public treasury—and
Dan Moran,
highway commissioner,
lay dead
with a bullet through
his brain.
Did guilt drive him
to suicide?
—or was he
the innocent victim of
a crooked
political ring?
It took a ghost to
reveal the truth!



The distorted lips
formed words—but
no sound issued

HEY, Hugh, hold up on that story! Hell's broken loose—"

The order, in a rasping bellow which echoed above the bedlam in the local room of the *Morning Record*, came from Bruce, the city editor, who sat hunched over his desk, clutching a telephone.

Startled—for the command was directed at me—I dropped my hands from the typewriter keys upon which I had been pounding for more than an hour, and looked toward my superior. The twitching muscles of his face indicated his excitement as he bent close to the mouthpiece and held the receiver jammed against his ear.

I tried to catch what he was saying. But he had lowered his voice and I could hear nothing above the tumult around me. Pushing back my chair, I rose and moved around to Bruce's desk. Everyone else kept right on working. That is, everyone except James Rooney, the night editor—whose final word was law on the *Record*. He was the highest type of editor, absolutely honest in his conduct of the news, and an indefatigable fighter for any cause he espoused. For a long time he had directed the campaign which the *Record* was waging against the corrupt political ring which for years had plundered the County.

Knowing that I had been writing the lead story for next day—a sensational account of the ring and its theft of more than \$5,000,000 of the taxpayers' money through crooked street-paving contracts—Rooney understood the significance of Bruce's shouted order. Tossing aside the proofs he had

been examining, he, too, moved over to the city editor's desk.

"Stick right where you are—and don't miss anything. I'll send Hugh Wallace right over," were the words we caught as Bruce clapped up the receiver and turned toward us.

"That was Marley, our West Side man," he continued. "He's over at the Holbrook railroad yards—"

"Right in the heart of Tim Servoss' bailiwick, eh?" interrupted Rooney. "What's the Boss been doing now?"

"I don't know that he's done anything—directly," said Bruce. "But, indirectly, he's caused the death of Dan Moran, his Highway Commissioner."

"Good God, Chief! You don't mean that—that Dan's dead?" I gasped. For Moran had been my pal since our school days.

"Marley reports that Dan is dead—a suicide."

"I—I CAN'T believe it," I said. "He just couldn't do such a thing. Why, he's the only honest man in the entire Servoss outfit. I know they've been trying to pin this graft on him, but—"

"All right," said Bruce gruffly. "Then it's up to you to prove it. But here's what Marley reported. A half hour ago a watchman at the yards heard a pistol shot. Investigating, he found a man's body huddled behind a freight shed.

of the DEAD

By HUGH WALLACE

The Boss was paralyzed with fear



ordering him to have them back by tomorrow or face arrest. Servoss didn't say so, but he let it be inferred that Dan was in so deep that suicide was his only way out."

"I'm off!" I replied. "But if you ever get the truth, you'll find out that those contracts were taken to help frame Dan, and weren't stolen by him."

"Listen, Hugh," said Rooney, keeping pace with me as I put on my coat and hat and headed for the door. "You know why they got Moran—he knew too much. So look out for yourself. The gang doesn't like you because of the way you've been riding them. Don't let them bump you off."

"Thanks, Jim, I'll keep my eyes open. But if those rats did sew Dan up so that he lost his nerve and killed himself, I hope he'll come back from the grave and drive them batty!"

On my way across town in a taxi—a journey which consumed half an hour—I tried to think coherently, though the shock of Dan's death seemed to have numbed my brain. The fact that he had been in the railroad yards caused me no surprise. Everyone living in that section used them as a short cut from the main trolley terminal. But that he had gone there to kill himself—I

He was dead, with a bullet-hole in his head. An automatic with one chamber empty was beside him. The body has been identified as Moran's."

"Dan never owned a gun," I blurted out. "He——"

Bruce cut me short with a gesture. "A policeman named Henley happened along and sent the watchman for help. The place where the body was found was not far from the Crescent Hotel where Servoss and his lieutenants have been making their headquarters. Someone tipped the Boss off, and he and some of his cronies arrived as soon as the precinct detectives and the district reporters. Servoss didn't seem particularly cut up because of Moran's violent death."

"He wouldn't be!" I muttered.

"Well, go over and get the story. But here's something else. The Boss told the detectives and the reporters that some of the alleged altered paving contracts had disappeared from the files and that he'd accused Moran of the theft,

simply wasn't going to believe it until I had to.

The taxi came to a sudden, jolting halt. I had reached my destination—one of the gates from which a stairway led to the wide railroad yards below the street level. I kicked at the gate. It was jerked wide instantly and I found myself facing Steve Henley, a policeman Dan and I had known since boyhood, and one who had no use for the Boss or his kind. Recognizing me, he drew me inside and slammed the gate.

"Listen, Steve," and I clutched his arm, "was Dan dead when you reached him?"

"Yes," he replied, speaking in a guarded tone.

"Did—did Dan kill himself?"

"I don't know. Boss Servoss says he did, and the precinct detectives have taken their tip from him and are saying the same thing. The Medical Examiner hasn't arrived yet. But, as Servoss appointed him, he'll probably side with

the others. I didn't have time to look around much before—"

"Did you hear the Boss say that Dan had taken some papers from the borough offices?"

"Yes, but the detectives found no papers on him. Now listen carefully and then get along. I can't afford to be seen talking to you. The bullet entered the back of Moran's head. The gun found near the body was an old thirty-eight caliber automatic. Now—get this! The gun was old—but the cartridges were new and shiny. I knew you'd be the one the *Record* would send to handle the story, so when I found the empty shell I pocketed it for you. No one knows I found it. Maybe you can make some use of it—"

Plunging down the steps, I hurried toward a lighted freight shed before which the figures of several men were silhouetted. As I came close Marley, our district man recognized me and called my name. Instantly, from a group who had been talking with heads close together, the hulking figure of the Boss detached itself and came toward me, followed by Sam Kaplan, head of the precinct's detective squad.

MARLEY moved aside with a significant gesture toward a dark mass, covered with a blanket, lying close against the wall of the shed. I realized it was my friend's body and turned to face Servoss, determined to get at the truth.

"I'm mighty sorry Moran took this way out," began the Boss, halting before me, "and I appreciate your feelings because of your friendship for him. Of course he was in bad, but if he'd only come clean I'd have done my best to save him from jail."

"Never mind that," I replied. "It's too late now. What were the papers you said Dan took from the borough offices?"

"I can't go into details, Wallace. That matter will have to go to the District Attorney. All that I'll say is that they were paving contracts and had to do with the jobs you and the *Record* say were crooked." His mouth twisted into a sneer.

"Why do you think Dan took them?"

"I don't think—I know! I've been over those contracts several times lately and had them all together in one file case. Tonight Moran went to the offices after everyone else had gone home, took those contracts and was seen examining them."

"How do you know?" I asked.

"A watchman saw him and telephoned me at the Crescent Hotel where I was holding a conference."

"You went to City Hall to investigate, of course?"

"Yes, and alone. I wanted to learn what Moran was doing—without anyone being along who might leak to the newspapers." This was said viciously.

"Did you see him?"

"No, he was gone. I examined the file and found the papers missing. I went back to the Crescent, intending to send the boys away and then locate Moran at his home. But I hadn't much more than arrived at the hotel when word reached there of his suicide."

I was so angry I could have struck him down. My guess was that, on learning Dan had taken the contracts—documents which, in some way, could have been used to fasten the graft upon Servoss and his ring—the Boss had sent one of his gunmen to recover the papers and "get" Moran.

"Has—Dan's body been searched?" I resumed.

"Yes, by Detective Kaplan. And," with a leer, "several persons, including myself, watched him do it. The missing contracts are gone. Moran destroyed them before killing himself."

"That's only a guess," I blurted out; I couldn't help it.

"It will be evidence—soon. Moran had no other papers upon him, not even an envelope. That's the story." He turned away.

"Do you want to see Moran's body?" asked Kaplan, taking a flashlight from his pocket. I nodded and fol-

lowed him to where the black mass lay. As the detective pulled aside the blanket, I couldn't suppress a cry. Dan, my pal, lay there upon his back, his face ghastly in the light which played over him.

With every sense on the alert I bent closer. At once I noted a significant fact: the front of the clothing showed smudges of dirt. He had fallen face down.

"You turned the body over," I said.

"Sure. We had to search him."

I turned away to hide any betrayal of feeling. The documents had undoubtedly been taken immediately following the murder, but the Boss and Kaplan had searched the body to make certain Moran carried no weapon. Had one been discovered on him later, it would have wrecked their suicide story.

At that point there was a commotion from the steps and the district Medical Examiner and an assistant came into the light. The former shook hands with Servoss, and listened to the Boss' version of the "suicide."

The medical men turned Dan's body over and examined the wound by flashlight. I bent over with them and noted that the bullet had entered close behind the right ear.

"Yes, the pistol was held close," said the Examiner, "though in this black hair you can't see powder marks. The bullet went from right to left and is lodged above the left ear. It's suicide all right."

I smothered an oath as he spoke, for, in a flash, something occurred to me—something which would have turned the Boss cold.

Dan had been left-handed! Had he killed himself he would not have held the revolver in his right hand—and in no other way could he have inflicted the wound described by the Examiner.

My suspicion that he had been murdered now became a conviction. And the killer had been so near he had held the revolver almost against Dan's head. My deduction was that the slayer was a person known to Moran, one who came upon him openly and talked with him until he was off his guard. Then he did the job and left the gun to make the murder look like a suicide.

My reverie was interrupted by Kaplan's voice, "Here's the gun if you want to see it."

I took the weapon, broke it and noted that the shells of the four remaining cartridges were new and shiny, like the one Henley had given me.

"We haven't found the empty shell," said the detective. "I suppose it's been trampled into the dirt."

INODDED and handed back the automatic. But not before I had noted several rust spots on the barrel, the kind which frequently appear upon weapons kept in the vicinity of salt water. Yet the town was a considerable distance inland. Did the person who had used the pistol come from some point near the sea—where, perhaps, he lived? It seemed a clue worth looking into. . . .

"Listen, Wallace." It was the Boss addressing me again.

"The Medical Examiner has given permission to have Moran's body removed to his home. But it would be a crime to send it over like this; it would give his wife too great a shock. I'll have an undertaker look after it and send it over the first thing in the morning. Why don't you go there now and see her? You're intimately acquainted with the family. Tell Mrs. Moran if she wants anything to call upon me and I'll see her through."

"I'll go to her—as soon as I send in the story," I replied, then hastened across the yards to an all night drug store to telephone my office. I was certain now, that I possessed sufficient facts to warrant me in directing the *Record* to print the story of Dan's murder at the instance of the ring.

But I had not gone far before my anger cooled and reason began asserting itself. With my friend gone forever, the really big task which lay before me was to remove all stigma of disgrace from his name. To announce that

Moran had been murdered and give my reasons for believing so would probably convince most persons that he had met with foul play. But that would not get at the root of the crime—the ring.

No, the better method would be to keep my trump card under cover for the present. That would give me time to work toward my objective without being under constant surveillance. My one regret was that Dan's family must, for a while, rest under a shadow. But I could see no other way out. . . .

Consequently, the story I telephoned the *Record* did not differ greatly from those which appeared in the other city newspapers next morning.

After I had finished my call I hastened in the direction of the Moran home, not only to console Dan's widow, Agnes, but in the hope that there I might obtain some additional light on the tragedy.

When I entered I found several neighbors doing their best to comfort the little household. Agnes sat rocking one of the babies. Her lids were lowered and there were wide circles around her eyes, but she was not weeping.

For a moment or two I remained in the doorway, my throat swelling until it hurt, my eyes swimming. Then some one noted me and bent and whispered to Agnes. She looked up, and when our eyes met, she uttered a great sob and stretched forth a trembling hand. However, before I could reach her she arose, placed the baby in the arms of another woman and, with a murmured word, motioned me to take her upstairs.

In her own room, she grasped my hands and tried to speak. But words failed her, and she slumped into a chair and began to cry hysterically. Finally, however, I drew a chair close beside her and urged her to control herself.

With a suddenness which startled me she straightened up, wiped away her tears and looked me full in the eyes.

"I am strong again, Hugh—and I want the truth. You've seen—Dan's body?"

I nodded.

"Tell me, Hugh, do you believe he—took his own life?"

Of course I intended to tell her what I believed and why. But I hesitated to speak.

"I knew it," she said hoarsely. "I knew it! Dan didn't do what they say. He couldn't. They killed him, those terrible men, because they feared—" She paused, one hand closing over her heart, her eyes blazing fury, then she went on:

"Oh, why didn't he listen to my warning?"

"What do you mean—warning of what?"

FOR a long time I've known the truth, that Servoss and the others were trying to make Dan the scapegoat. I begged him to give up his job. But he wouldn't; said he couldn't quit under fire. Then, tonight, he told me they were getting ready to frame him and he'd have to do something drastic to protect himself.

"He told me that Servoss and the others were going to hold a meeting at the Crescent Hotel and that he'd be able to get what he wanted from the City Hall without being interfered with. His intention was to take from the file the paving contracts Servoss had kept there for months—contracts which Dan said had been altered since they were first awarded—and compare them with duplicates of the originals which he kept here in the house.

"Don't interrupt now, for I want to tell you of a strange experience I had while he was explaining his plan. You must believe me! Suddenly I seemed to sense a third presence in the room—a presence which I could neither see nor define, but which I felt. Then—this is the truth, Hugh!—

a voice whispered in my ear warning me that if Dan carried out his intention he would meet with disaster. Frightened, I looked about—for the voice was that of my dead mother!"

"What are you saying Agnes?" I gasped.

"Don't make me repeat, Hugh, I can't! I'm telling you—everything, for I must depend upon you to clear Dan's name. I begged him not to go, pleaded with him, for the mysterious warning had filled me with dread. But he wouldn't listen; he took his contracts, and now—" She paused with a gesture more eloquent than words, then covered her eyes and wept softly.

I looked away from her, the better to think clearly. Now I had another clue—Dan's purpose in going to the City Hall that night. To me that explained the reason for the killing.

SOMEONE had seen him comparing the crooked contracts with the papers he had brought from home—probably one of the Boss' private detectives posing as a watchman. The instant he had notified Servoss, the latter had guessed the truth and been plunged into a panic of fear. He had to get hold of those originals. Whether Dan had taken the altered documents, as the Boss had alleged, was a question still.

The point was that Servoss had acted quickly; sent some one to do away with Moran before he could reach his home. And the murderer had done his work thoroughly, removing every scrap of paper from the dead man's clothing.

"What are you thinking about, Hugh? Why don't you tell me what I want to know?"

"Just a moment, Agnes, and I will. Did Dan carry a revolver tonight?"

"No, he never owned or used one." Her reply came clearly, without hesitation.

"Now a more intimate question. Is the family bank account very large?"

"I know why you ask," she said, tears again filling her eyes. "You're thinking about the graft matter. You

haven't been here much lately or you'd know how things are with us. Actually, we have only a few hundred dollars saved. And even though Dan wanted us to have the things other people had, he wouldn't take a dishonest dollar."

She choked up and made a gesture signifying she had reached the end of her endurance, then closed her eyes, waiting for me to tell my story. This I did fully, explaining all I had learned, the clues I possessed and what I hoped to prove.

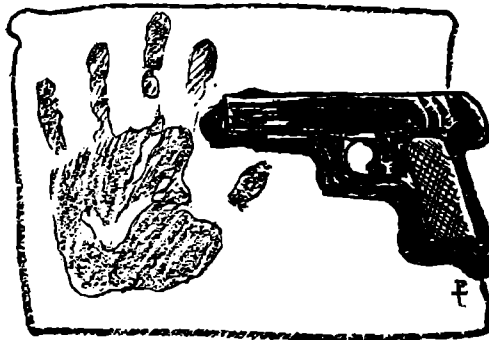
When I had finished she rose and rested her hands upon my shoulders.

"God bless you, Hugh. I know you'll do your best. And—I shall ask the spirits of my mother—and Dan—to help us."

Next morning I telephoned to Rooney and told him I had gained some information concerning Moran which I desired to discuss with him in private. His reply was to come to his home immediately. I was prepared to tell him every fact I knew.

Rooney listened, with few interruptions, until I had concluded my recital, then sat for some moments in deepest thought.

"Hugh," he said finally, "I agree absolutely with your deductions. However, while we may feel certain that Moran was killed and robbed by one of the Boss' hirelings, it probably will be a mighty hard thing to prove. Still, you have my permission to go ahead and I'll back you to the limit. Work slowly and under cover so they



don't suspect your game. In time something may leak out which will put you on the right track. And, until something definite breaks, the things you have told me better remain a secret between us."

My first move to gain a position where I could be in close touch with the ring leaders most of the time was to have myself assigned to City Hall. In time I managed to make friends with all the officials—except Servoss. He and I went out of our ways to avoid each other.

However, from others I learned much about him. The information was surprising. Formerly he had softened his iron rule with a show of joviality and much loud laughter. But, almost from the time Dan was found dead, his manner had changed. He grew irritable, morose; he seldom smiled and almost entirely abandoned his custom of spending his evenings at the Crescent Hotel or at some of the political clubs. I kept track of this change in his behavior with ever increasing interest, wondering just how much of it was attributable to his share in Moran's death.

But nearly two months passed in which I made practically no progress. I retained hope, however, for a rather unusual reason. Almost nightly, just before I went sound asleep, I seemed to feel Dan's presence near me and seemed to hear him utter words of encouragement, though what was said I never could recall. I figured that while these experiences were only half dreams they somehow were meant as good omens for my ultimate success. Had I been able to foresee the future, I would have given them far more serious thought.

THE break in my weeks of marking time came one morning when I reported at the City Hall. It began with the amazing news that Servoss had suddenly been taken very ill and, leaving his family behind, had gone to his seaside home at Northpoint, to recover. Some persons argued that he had simply gone away to prepare for the election due in the fall. But I doubted this, for he had taken with him his physician, James Anderson, whom I long had known. The latter fact argued that the Boss was really quite ill.

It was then that a recollection came to me which set me to trembling and suggested a possibility of which I had never even dreamed. I remembered that the barrel of the gun with which Dan had been killed had showed rust spots such as are caused by continued exposure to salt water dampness. Had that gun come from Servoss' shore home? Had he brought it to the city and turned it over to one of his gunmen? Or—

Was Servoss the murderer of Dan Moran?

If the latter were true—and the more I thought about the suggestion the more it impressed me—it would account for the astounding change which had taken place in the once jocular and ruthless Boss.

Several days passed in which I debated my new suspicion and matured a plan to take advantage of the situation. What I fixed upon was to leave my work in the city, get as close to the Servoss place as possible and trust to circumstances to enable me to follow my hunch.

I obtained an indefinite leave of absence from Rooney, and headed for Northpoint, arriving there at night and establishing myself in a hotel within less than a mile of the Servoss estate.

Although I had made no definite plans, something which occurred next day—a happening which I could not have anticipated—determined my course for me. I arose early, ate breakfast, then started for a walk with the intention of familiarizing myself with the locality.

As I neared the Post Office I was surprised to see Anderson, Servoss' doctor, emerge carrying considerable mail, and head for an automobile parked at the curb. Involuntarily I called his name and hurried forward when he paused and looked around. He shook hands, but his greeting was forced and his appearance amazed me. His face was drawn, his skin sallow and he seemed to have aged

greatly since I had last seen him just a few weeks before.

"What are you doing here?" The words were uttered with a gasp.

"Nothing in particular. Been working hard, needed a vacation and decided to rest up out here."

For a moment he studied me with eyes which fairly burned. Then,

"I don't believe you, Hugh. You're here to learn about Servoss. What have you heard concerning his condition?"

Anderson's query told me that something was amiss at the Servoss place. And, judging by his appearance, it was serious—something which I ought to know. However, before I could question him, he insisted that I get into the car and ride with him. For a long time he drove without speaking but finally he turned off into a side road and halted the machine.

"Hugh," he began, his voice trembling, "never in my life have I needed a confidant as I do now. Something has happened down here which I must discuss with someone. But before I tell my story—the most fantastic one you ever listened to—you must promise not to betray me, for that would mean my ruin."

"I'll keep your confidence," I replied warily, "if there's nothing criminal involved."

He hesitated briefly, then: "I've got to talk to you no matter what you decide to do. But first I want a truthful answer to this—are you an utter disbeliever in the supernatural?"

His query, so unexpected in the circumstances, held me silent for a moment. But before I could reply he grasped my arm with a crushing grip.

"You hesitate," he whispered hoarsely. "You are not a disbeliever. Thank God! Now I can speak freely—"

"Go ahead, Doctor. I'm with you." I assured him.

"Then listen, and understand that everything I say is the absolute truth—the truth, from one who used to laugh at ghosts as myths. But I know better now, for I have seen one."

"You—have seen—a ghost?" I asked in amazement.

"Yes. But you must let me tell my story in order."

It would take too long to repeat all the things he said, his frequent pleas that I believe him and my interruptions when I began to realize the amazing significance of his statements. But, very briefly, this was the purport of his confidence.

He had been the Servoss family physician for three years, though the Boss had never required his services until after Moran's death. Then the big fellow's nerves appeared to give way and he was able to continue his tasks only by a great effort of will, assisted by powerful drugs. Finally he could keep up no longer. So, accompanied by Anderson, he had removed to his shore home—where he frequently spent week ends—to recuperate. With him he brought many packages of documents, which he placed in the desk in the living room adjoining his bed chamber.

SERVOSS grew steadily worse instead of better. Such sleep as he obtained was in the daytime. For at night he insisted upon sitting up, fully dressed, in his room with all the lights burning. He would not permit Anderson to remain with him, so the doctor usually retired early to his chamber adjoining the living room.

Then came the amazing revelation. Each night, around twelve o'clock, Anderson was aroused by cries from the Boss. At first, when he rushed into the next room to investigate, his employer insisted he had dozed and dreamed. Later he admitted he thought he had seen someone in the room, though the windows were always fastened and the inner blinds covering them barred.

"I figured he was the victim of hallucinations," Anderson went on, "but yesterday matters reached a crisis which convinced me otherwise. He paced his room most of the day and in the evening asked if I had brought along a

revolver. When I replied in the affirmative, he borrowed it without explanation. Determined to learn the reason for my patient's wild behavior, I left my door open a little that night and remained awake, watching through the crack. Now I wish to God I hadn't! But get this next point—Just as I heard one of the house clocks striking twelve, a phantom entered the room through one of the barred windows—” He paused and wiped his parched lips with trembling fingers.

“Did—did you recognize it?” I gasped, my intuition warning me of what was coming.

“Yes. It—it was the counterpart of Dan Moran.”

“Are you positive—certain?” I was shaking him in the frenzy of my excitement.

“I might have thought differently afterward—though I knew Dan intimately—if it hadn't been that Servoss shouted his name, coupled with an oath, and raised the revolver. But at that instant the specter vanished.”

“HE must have seen Dan's spirit before, possibly even back in the city. That's probably the reason why his eyes gave way—”

“That's what I believe,” Anderson interrupted. “But now I must get at the bottom of this matter or I'll think I'm as badly off as Servoss. Only—I haven't the nerve to do it alone. You must stand by me; that is, unless you're afraid.”

“I'm not afraid of Dan's spirit,” I said, though my heart was not in my reply.

“I'll count on you, Hugh, to share the watch with me tonight. If you say you won't, I'll quit now and return to the city by the next train. I couldn't face another night in that house alone.”

It was some time before he became sufficiently quiet to tell me what I was to do after dark. And when he set me down and drove away he presented such a pitiable appearance that I wasn't certain he'd keep his part of the bargain.

Returning to my room, I spent the remainder of the day in a fever of uncertainty. For, though I am no coward in ordinary circumstances, I dreaded this ordeal with the supernatural. Only the thought that something might occur which would help me to clear Dan's name kept me from hopping a train back to town.

It was about eleven o'clock when, in a cold sweat and trembling, I reached the Servoss estate and slunk into the shrubbery near a side door, the hiding place Anderson had designated. And there I crouched without daring to move lest I make some noise which would defeat my purpose. Finally, when it seemed as if I could stand the inaction no longer, a shadow appeared from the direction of the house and Anderson grasped both my hands, babbling his thanks that I had kept my promise.

“Come,” he said at last, dragging me along with him. “It is almost midnight. I had to wait until Servoss dozed before I dared to leave the house.”

What happened within the next half hour I find hard to recall entirely, for never had so many whirling incidents been crowded into so brief a space of my life. As I remembered it later, we crept softly up the stairway and entered the doctor's room. In absolute silence we sat in the darkness, waiting. The first stroke of twelve from a nearby clock set my pulses to pounding, but my companion grasped me roughly and pushed me before him toward a shaft of light coming through the partially open door to the Boss' quarters.

Peering through, I saw Servoss crouched in a chair beneath a cluster of blazing lights. He was wide awake and held a revolver thrust before him, while he watched the windows he faced with wide, staring eyes. Before I recovered from the shock of his altered appearance stark horror overcame me. While the sound of the gong striking midnight still rang through the house, the inner barred shutters of a window were hurled back, and on a gust of

damp air, an unearthly, shadowy figure swept into the room.

To my dying day, I'll never forget that figure. For it was Dan Moran! The eyes of the specter blazed with fury—and the distorted lips formed words—but no sound issued. The Boss was paralyzed with fear.

Suddenly, to my amazement, the phantom turned its head and looked directly toward the opening in which I crouched. I tried to cry aloud, to speak his name. But I could not. However, Dan's spirit seemed to understand. For it nodded, turned, then placed its hands upon the great desk near the Boss as if to open it. Almost I thought I caught the words, “Murderer, thief!”

The next second a cry of rage echoed through the room as Servoss regained control of himself, leaped to his feet and emptied his weapon in the direction of the ghostly visitor. A weird laugh followed the final shot and the phantom moved in the direction of the shrieking wretch. But it never reached him. For Servoss, after hurling the weapon at his shadowy tormentor, raced across the room and leaped through the open window. As the death cry of the man who had hurled himself upon the rocks below reached my ears, the specter was snuffed out. Then I fainted.

When I recovered consciousness, Anderson was bending over me, slapping my cheeks and hands.

“I've been outside,” he said dully. “Servoss is dead. We must telephone the authorities.”

For some reason—probably because I realized the Boss had paid the full penalty for his crime—a strange calm came over me and I was again able to think coherently.

“Go ahead and call them,” I replied. “But first we must decide upon what we will tell. We can't repeat what we actually saw, for practically no one would believe us.”

“I have it!” he said. “We'll say that Servoss suffered a nervous breakdown and came here to recover. Instead, he grew worse and tonight, after emptying his revolver at an imaginary intruder, committed suicide by leaping from the window.”

“That will do,” I agreed. “Now, for another matter which is of vital importance to me. For a long time I've been convinced that Servoss killed Moran. Probably you think the same thing, after what you have seen. I'm going to search this place in the hope of discovering something which will clinch my belief. And if I do, I'm going to print the facts pointing to Servoss' guilt, for I am pledged to clear Dan's name.”

He nodded, then turned away to telephone the police. I immediately hurried to the great desk, for now I recalled that Dan's specter had moved as though to open it, and in doing so had driven Servoss into the mad fury which had terminated in his death.

MY hunch proved correct. In no time I had uncovered all the evidence I thought was necessary to prove my case and make others share my belief that Servoss was Dan's murderer. In one of the desk's many compartments I found a packet containing Moran's copies of the original paving contracts as well as those which had been fraudulently altered and which Dan had been accused of stealing. In a drawer I located a box of new cartridges from which five had been removed—no doubt those Servoss had used to load the murder weapon. Comparing the unused shells with the empty one Henley had given me, I found them to be identical.

Previous to Servoss' funeral, the *Record* printed only an account of his breakdown and suicide. But, on the day following the services, we published every fact I had learned—backed by photographs of the documents I had taken from the desk—everything except the appearance of Dan's phantom. And not only did the story reestablish Moran's good name and remove the shadow of shame from his family, but it resulted in the downfall of the ring in the election which was held that fall.