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WATERWAY DEATH

The Welland Canal Looks Like an Easy Target when Saboteurs Plan Their Evil Work!

By **ARTHUR W. PHILLIPS**

*Author of "Dead Man's Shoes,"
"Flaming Payoff," etc.*

CLINT DURBAR slipped a sheaf of confidential reports into an envelope addressed to himself at the Intelligence Department in Ottawa, sealed and thrust it in an inside pocket to be mailed on his way to the depot. The telephone's shrill jangle brought a slight frown to his narrow, high cheek-boned face. He was due on the Montreal train in thirty minutes.

"Long distance," the operator intoned. "Mr. Kellam, St. Catherines, calling Mr. Clint Durbar. Will you take it, please?"

The annoyance in Durbar's gray eyes changed to a gleam of pleasure. Larry had been his best operative until a serious accident retired him



"Do I finish him, professor?" a hoarse voice croaked

eight months ago, and in addition was Durbar's best friend.

"Clint Durbar speaking," he said quickly. "Yes, I'll take it."

Kellam's deep voice came over the wire. Durbar caught an undercurrent of excitement in it. Greetings exchanged, he inquired curiously: "What are you doing in St. Catherines, Larry?"

"Came down yesterday to look around for a fruit farm," Kellam said hurriedly. "I've big news for you, Clint. Saw Getz a few hours ago!"

Durbar's tanned fingers clamped tight around the black tube. "You're sure it was Getz?" he lipped thinly. The blood was suddenly pounding in his veins. An electric tingling raced along his nerves.

"It was Getz, all right," Kellam snapped. "He was with a couple of tough-looking thugs. I had rotten luck, Clint. He managed to slip away before I could get on his trail. I phoned the department right away, learned after a lot of delay that you were staying at the Maitland in Toronto."

"Nice work, Larry." There was a grim note in Durbar's voice. "I'll rent a car and leave at once." He checked his watch. Eight o'clock. Seventy miles by road. "Where are you staying?"

"Lincoln Hotel."

"Expect me at ten."

"Like old times, eh, Clint!" The wistfulness in Kellam's voice didn't escape Durbar. "I'll do a little prowling, meanwhile. Might pick up the trail."

Durbar said sharply: "Leave that for me. I'll arrive at ten." He hung up.

Hurriedly unstrapping his bag, he donned his shoulder harness and checked the gun. He thrust spare ammunition in his pocket, swift thoughts buzzing through his brain. Getz—internationally nick-named Professor Death—was a plump little man who wore thick-lensed glasses and an innocuous smile: mild and harmless to look at, but inside a deadly, bloodless, scientific machine with a knowledge of chemicals surpassed by few living men.

His presence anywhere presaged trouble!

DURBAR went out, a sardonic grin twisting his lips. Involuntarily he touched his chest, rubbed the scar hidden there. A memento of his last meeting with Getz two years before. Half an inch lower and the bullet would have ended Durbar's career—permanently.

A cold-blooded, ruthless master of espionage, Professor Death had been an accredited agent of Germany, dealing in sabotage and promoting labor unrest among workers in Canada and the United States until a year ago. Then, publicly denounced as a traitor, he was now supposedly a fugitive from the Gestapo.

The Canadian Intelligence agent had never believed this last. A cunning ruse, Durbar suspected, designed solely to place Getz among the vast army of "Undercover Agents" working surreptitiously in every country hostile to Germany's plans of aggression and conquest.

Darkness had fallen when Durbar raced the car through Hamilton, turned east along Highway 8 and sped toward St. Catherines, gray eyes somber despite an inward feeling of exhilaration at the prospect of coming to grips with Getz again.

In view of the forthcoming Royal visit, the Canadian government was taking extraordinary precautions to prevent any happening that might disturb the country before or during their Majesties' friendship tour of the Dominion.

Several weeks ago, a friendly tip from a reliable source across the border had hinted that certain "dictator powers" in Europe were planning a gigantic coup that would jeopardize the eagerly-awaited event. The information had sent Durbar on a quick tour, checking personally with operatives as far west as Winnipeg. Now he thought it imperative to interrupt his regular schedule—Kellam's tip was hot.

Hunched over the wheel, the agent glimpsed the lights of St. Catherines drawing rapidly nearer. The presence of Getz in the little town—the rumor

of some gigantic coup—these things were not coincidental.

But—what was the nature of the coup? Labor trouble stirred up by fascist *agentes provocateurs*? St. Catherines and Welland each employed a large number of men in important key industries!

Or was it sabotage of another kind? Durbar felt an ugly chill trickle along his spine. The Welland Ship Canal! The great twenty-five mile waterway that provided passage for deep-sea freighters as far inland as Duluth, Fort William and Port Arthur.

Durbar's eyes grew bleak at the thought. Even the task of demolishing that mighty structure was not beyond the ambitious dreams of Professor Death's warped brain.

He rolled the car into town, braked in front of the Lincoln Hotel with eight minutes still to go before ten o'clock. An inquiry for Kellam met with the request for his own name. On hearing it, the desk clerk, a courteous, freckle-faced young chap, smiled in friendly fashion. He handed over a letter and room key.

"Mr. Kellam said for you to go up and wait, sir. Room 305."

DURBAR rode up to the third floor, unlocked the door to 305 and stepped inside. He switched on the light, tore open the envelope and hurriedly scanned the few lines in Larry's familiar spidery writing.

Wait here until I return or phone. Got a lead on the two fellows I saw with Getz. Larry.

Eyes worried, Durbar paced the room restlessly. Crippled as a result of his accident, Larry was in no condition to be trailing Professor Death or his accomplices!

When the phone rang a moment later, Durbar jumped at it. A quick scoop jerked the handset to his ears. He felt a wave of relief, hearing Larry's vibrant: "That you, Clint?" "Yes, damn it. You had me worried."

"Never mind that. We're in luck," Larry's voice was eager. "I've found 'em. Get over here, quick! I'm at Joe's Service Station, south end of the

town"—he rattled off hurried instructions for finding the place—"I've learned plenty, Clint. They—" His voice dropped to a whisper. "Someone coming in the office. Hang on while I get rid of him."

Durbar's keen ears caught a faint buzz of voices for a few seconds, then a deep silence that grew suddenly ominous. He kept the receiver to his ear, uneasy doubts swiftly turning to cold fear as the empty seconds ticked by with maddening slowness. Then, abruptly, Larry's voice, gasping and shot with fear, trickled over the wire:

"Clint . . . knifed me . . . Steiman . . . Maltese Cross . . . two o'clock . . . seven . . . and safety . . . Clint . . . I . . . I'm going . . ."

There was death in the stillness that followed! Beads of sweat glistened on Durbar's upper lip.

JOE'S SERVICE STATION was a small place located on a road branching south out of the town. It looked deserted when Durbar slammed screaming brakes home in front of the tiny office. He flung out of the car, crossed the concrete apron in leaping strides. He stopped dead in the doorway, his gray eyes like dull slate, his mouth a bitter streak. Taut lines drew his lean face into a hard, flat mask.

Larry Kellam was just inside, slumped face downward in a welter of blood at the foot of a high stool. His right hand, outflung in the shadows, looked a dirty brown where blood had dried on it. The telephone receiver was still off the prongs, lying on the flat top of a worn desk. And the desk's edge was streaked brown where Larry's bloodstained fingers had clawed desperately while he had gasped out his dying message.

Durbar bent and made a hurried examination. The knife had been thrust under Larry's left shoulder blade, then withdrawn. Only a superhuman effort could have kept him alive long enough to pull himself upright for those three or four seconds.

A sudden thought straightened the Intelligence agent. He darted outside, raced past the two gas pumps glistening in the big arc light and swerved

into the workshop adjoining the office.

A nerve twitched under his left eye, pulled the corner of his mouth in a crooked grimace. The dim glow from a greasy bulb above a littered work bench showed a pair of heels and the lower portion of overalled legs sticking out between two cars.

The attendant, a wiry, middle-aged man with sandy hair, had taken the knife in the back, the same as Larry. Same knife, too, Durbar thought grimly.

He went back to the office, stood a moment staring down at Larry's body, the harsh lines in his face deep furrows. His tight lips moved.

"I'll get them, Larry," he promised silently.

Using a handkerchief, he replaced the telephone receiver carefully, shook his head sadly. The dead men would have to remain until they were discovered by someone else. As an Intelligence man, he couldn't afford to become involved, not until at least he had found Getz!

He went over Larry's message again, his trained mind seeking an answer to the cryptic words. The first, Steiman, was obviously a man's name. But the reference to a Maltese Cross baffled him. The time, two o'clock and seven would mean something big due to happen during those five hours.

Larry had said he'd learned plenty. Durbar groaned. Whatever it was, beyond those few words, he had taken it with him when he died!

A telephone directory hung at the side of the desk. Durbar jerked it loose, bleak eyes scanning the S column. It contained one Steiman, listed as STEIMAN DYEING WORKS. He noted the address, strode outside without glancing again at Larry, climbed into his car.

He drove swiftly to the Lincoln. From Larry's room, he put in a call for a Toronto number, snapped brief instructions to the agent answering a few minutes later.

The return call came through in fast time, although to Durbar, waiting impatiently, it seemed hours. He listened intently to a brisk report:

"Nothing known regarding Stei-

man before he purchased the plant six months ago, Chief. Business apparently solvent. Does work for several of the big textile companies. Anything else, sir?"

"Stand by for an emergency call," Durbar lipped thinly. "Notify Mor-daunt and Blake. That's all."

He replaced the receiver, a thoughtful frown puckering his brow. Six months. Skilfully plotting his moves ahead, Professor Death might easily allow that period to elapse while his plans, whatever they were, matured!

The dash clock registered eleven when Durbar swung the car off the Charleston Road just outside the town and drove slowly along a side road with lights out. A few minutes later, his keen eyes spotted the blurred outlines of squat buildings in the distance, dark patches against the sky's blue-blackness.

He backed the car into the sheltering gloom of a small coppice. He climbed out, regained the road, long legs carrying him swiftly toward the Steiman plant, a dim, shapeless shadow.

Set back a distance from the road, the buildings were enclosed by a six-foot board fence. Durbar paused to try the big gates. They were locked, as was also the smaller entrance at the side. A hundred feet farther on, he stopped again. He reached up, grabbed the top of the fence.

Seconds later, he stood inside the enclosure, his narrowed eyes probing the darkness without finding a light showing in any of the buildings out front. Then he saw the two cars just inside the grounds. A sedan and a coupé.

The muscle in Durbar's left cheek quivered. The presence of the cars indicated that someone was still inside the plant.

His lithe figure moved forward noiselessly until he was crouched in the shadow of the first building, a long wooden shed. He peered through one of the low windows, grunted. It was darker in there than where he stood.

Satisfied it was empty, he worked stealthily toward the end of the shed,

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treading down long grass. Almost there, the slight creak of a door opening hit his ears. He dropped like a stone, hidden in the grass. He waited a second, then wormed noiselessly over the few remaining feet, not daring to breathe.

He risked a peep over the top of the grass, silently emptied his lungs. Three men stood outlined in the open door of a concrete building beyond the shed.

The two with their backs to him each carried a large handbag. They hid most of the third man. Words came to Durbar's straining ears faintly. The voice, Professor Death's softly thick voice, sent electric thrills chasing through him!

"... take the sedan, and remember, there must be no slip-up! Wasser will be waiting at the house where the road forks outside Thorold. He will give you final instructions. Drive easy, take no chances of anything holding you up. That's all."

"Wait!" one of the two men said uneasily. "You're sure about the stuff in these bags? If we hit a bump—"

GETZ' low laugh held scorn. He grabbed the bag from the man's hand, bounced it on the ground, repeated the performance with the other bag. "Does that satisfy you?" he purred.

"Yeah." The fellow laughed sheepishly. "Just being careful."

Getz said curtly: "I'll walk to the gates, fasten them after you."

Durbar's head ducked low, his brain working fast while they strode past where he lay. He decided to wait for Getz' return and let the two men go. They could be picked up later at the house on the forked road. But Getz—Professor Death—was the brains directing whatever mischief was in the wind!

He didn't move until the shadowy forms were swallowed up in the gloom; then, tall figure bent low, he streaked across the intervening space and slipped through the half open door. He stared around the room, a sardonic smile on his lean face.

Two powerful bulbs cast a brilliant light over an elaborately equipped laboratory, a laboratory equipped to serve a dozen plants the size of this one. A cheap, flat desk stood at the far end of a long, metal-topped table centering the floor.

Durbar's lips flattened, recalling how one of Getz' experiments had furnished Germany with the world's highest powered explosive ten years ago. He thought of the bags carried away by the two men, shook his head doubtfully. The gesture supplementing the anxious look in his eyes.

Outside, the soft hum of a motor broke the stillness. Durbar ducked behind the door, a solid affair nearly a foot thick and steel-faced. The gun in his hand felt warm and damp, and his muscles were keyed to catgut tautness, but his brain was cool, alert.

Two, maybe three, minutes dragged by before a short, plump man bustled into the room without bothering to close the door. Durbar let him take three paces, then stepped from cover.

"Stand fast, Getz!" he clipped, and jabbed the gun-muzzle hard against the man's spine. "Now, raise your hands slowly and turn!"

Getz stopped short, hands lifting. "So, my old friend, Durbar," he murmured softly. The gun's stubby nose left a furrow in his coat as he turned. Behind bulging lenses, eyes tinted a curious greenish-white gleamed malignantly for a fleeting second. Then, a guileless smile on his thick, protruding lips, he added: "A long time since we last met."

Durbar nodded grimly, left hand patting the other over for a weapon. He found none and relaxed slightly. "You killed Larry Kellam!" he said, tensely.

"Then I was right!" Getz' round face beamed. "I named Kellam when I heard Loeb's description—ah, yes, Loeb, my assistant, saw someone leaving the yard, feared he might have overheard something of importance. He caught up with him at the garage and—" The plump shoulders shrugged. "So you were the party at the other end of the phone. How fortunate you decided to come here."

"Not for you!" Durbar's dark face twisted in anger. "You rat! I should kill you right now!"

"Too late, my friend," Professor Death said sadly.

A sharp point pressed into the nape of Durbar's neck. A huge hand snaked from behind him, seized his gun wrist in a steely grip, deflected the blunt muzzle floorwards.

"Do I finish him, Professor?" a hoarse voice croaked.

Getz' mild eyes rolled in surprise. "The knife for an old friend like Durbar!" He smiled blandly. "Decidedly not. Tie his wrists, Loeb. He's clever and slippery."

He took the gun gently from Durbar's helpless fingers, covered the agent while Loeb roughly pulled his wrists behind his back.

Durbar felt thin rope bite deep into his flesh and cursed himself softly for missing the significant fact that Getz had left open the door when he walked in. Even worse, his capture ensured the success of whatever fiendish plan Professor Death was engaged upon!

Loeb moved silently to Durbar's side, palmed the gun handed to him by Getz. A massive brute, Loeb topped the Intelligence agent's lean six feet by three inches. The top of his skull was flat and completely bald. Small reddish-brown eyes set close in the square face held a vicious glint. He stared unblinkingly into Durbar's bleak face, his ugly line of mouth twisted in a snarl.

Larry's killer! The thought flamed Durbar's brain, but his gray eyes met the malignant glare with cold hate.

Getz wheeled, walked over to the desk and dialed a number on the telephone there. A short pause followed, then:

"Getz speaking," he said. "This is the final check-up, Wasser. Schmidt and Hoffman left five minutes ago with the bags. At one-thirty sharp, mix the compounds, fill the four globes and deposit one each at the North and South Gates as arranged. Drive quickly to the Guard Gate and Safety Weir, dispose of the other two bombs there according to plan." He chuckled softly. "Meanwhile, I shall

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be taking care of the twin flight locks. At two o'clock, the Welland Ship Canal will cease to exist. That's all. Waste no time getting away. We shall meet in Detroit."

Durbar's blood was suddenly ice water. He fought to keep the nauseating horror that chilled him from showing in his eyes, on his drawn face. Getz' words had disclosed the nature of the vile plot; a horrible catastrophe that would shock the North American continent, paralyze world-wide shipping, and wreck the work of years, besides bringing death and destruction to hundreds of innocent people.

Larry's cryptic message was clear now, all except the reference to a Maltese Cross. Durbar shivered. With Lock Seven, the Guard Gate and Safety Weir destroyed, a sixteen mile stretch of water from Port Colbourne would be released to sweep down over the countryside and cascade through four, five, and six, the huge flight locks also due to be demolished at two o'clock if Getz spoke the truth. And Durbar didn't doubt that he did.

GETZ came briskly back, studied Durbar benevolently for a few seconds, then nodded to Loeb.

"You will dispose of our friend, here," he said pleasantly. "Use the sulphuric acid tank in room three!" He smiled at Durbar. "I shall always regret not seeing your finish, but more important business claims my immediate attention."

He bent and placed two bags on the table similar to those taken by Schmidt and Hoffman.

Behind grim lips, Durbar's teeth were clamped tight. Despite the horrible death proposed for him by the plump, smiling devil, he still had hopes.

He glanced at Loeb. Lips cracked by an evil grimace, the huge thug was watching him closely.

Getz said: "Wait!" He beckoned Durbar to approach the table, opened wide the two bags. The agent stared bleakly at their contents. One held a pasty substance like damp loam. The other contained a fine brown powder

resembling coffee. And each bag held at the ends two metal balls about six inches in diameter.

"Harmless looking, aren't they?" Getz purred, smiling. His voice took on a note of vanity. "And so they are, now. But together, they form an explosive that will make all others seem like Chinese crackers. Enough of it in these two bags to blow St. Catherines completely out of existence."

He fingered one of the metal balls. "This, filled with the compound, will have a quarter mile effective range."

"You handle it carelessly enough," Durbar said thinly.

Getz showed white teeth in a smile. "Why not! There is no danger until they come together. And even then a certain time elapses—regulated as required from fifteen minutes to an hour—during which certain chemical changes take place before—" He waved plump hands expressively. "The four bombs you see here, when loaded, will destroy the most important section of your great canal."

Durbar shivered involuntarily. "Don't worry," Getz chuckled. "You will not be alive to witness it. Once this test proves its value, I am donating the formula toward peace—German peace! Take him away, Loeb. I must leave now to be in Port Weller by midnight. And you, don't fail to have the car waiting at the St. David's Road bridge!"

Loeb grunted, gave Durbar a powerful thrust toward the door. Behind them, still smiling, Professor Death closed the bags, gripped one in each hand and prepared to follow outside.

The menacing gun at his back, Durbar walked toward a building at the rear of the laboratory under growled directions from Loeb. They passed through a door into a cavern of blackness. The massive killer touched a light switch, illuminated a single bulb overhanging one of several large tanks.

The light bit weakly into the gloom, throwing ghostly shadows over the concrete floor. A pulley block used to hoist the big carboys to the rim of the vats draped from a running rail.

BEHIND his back, Durbar's bound hands fumbled awkwardly under his coat. He smiled grimly, locating a slit in his broad belt, there for an emergency like this.

A six-inch piece of thin, flexible steel, half an inch wide, and one edge razor keen, reposed inside the slit. It was no easy task extracting the blade with fingers wet and slippery from perspiration and wrists pinioned. And speed was an essential factor.

Durbar had the steel half out when Loeb propelled him violently under the pulley. Grinning hugely, the killer grabbed the clamping hooks, slipped them under the Intelligence agent's belt on either side. He moved away, pulled on the slack chain until the hooks tightened.

"A quick swing, then—*plop!*" he gloated. "You'll squeal plenty when that acid starts biting."

Durbar made no answer. He had the blade loose now, was working it gently, swiftly, in between his bound hands. A few seconds and the keen edge would find the cord holding his wrists. And in a few seconds, Loeb would be hauling him high, swinging him over the tank, and—

Durbar's whole body was bathed in sweat. The big thug gave the chain a preliminary shake, then commenced to pull.

Unconscious of gashed fingers, Durbar drove the blade frantically up and down. He rose a foot from the ground, two, three, then the rope parted. But he still had to free himself from the hooks. Feet level now with Loeb's wide shoulders, he swung in dizzy circles, the knife's heavy drag against the stout leather seemingly making no headway.

Abruptly his upward flight ceased. He heard Loeb chuckle as he kicked home the ratchet preparatory to swinging him over the vat. He made a last desperate effort, felt himself falling. Falling clear of the tank.

The jar when his feet hit the concrete floor shook every bone in Durbar's sinewy body, but he hardly felt it. The steel blade still clutched in his hand, he leaped for the killer's bulky figure.

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Yelling a startled curse, Loeb whirled, lunged to meet the attack, his thick neck outthrust, fingers groping for the gun in his pocket. Durbar's right arm flashed in a long, side sweep, slashed the blade through flesh and gristle!

Loeb's sudden agonized scream changed to a choking gurgle, and blood jettied from his gaping throat. He dropped to the floor, writhing, clawing hands around his severed neck!

His face a hard mask, Durbar watched him die without any pity. He had kept his promise to Larry! But he had another more pressing duty to perform.

Collecting his gun, Durbar left hurriedly, his brain feverishly seeking an answer to something that puzzled him. If, as he claimed, Getz intended blowing up Locks Four, Five, and Six, why had he gone to Port Weller, five miles north of the locks, and with three other locks intervening? And somewhere, the Intelligence agent believed, the mysterious Maltese Cross played a big part in Professor Death's nefarious plans!

UNLOCKING the outside gates, he shook his head angrily. The deadline, one-thirty, when the compounds would be mixed, left zero hour two o'clock!

Long strides carried Durbar to his car. He sat a moment undecided behind the wheel, then reached a decision. Three of Getz' men waited for the deadline in a house at forked roads, less than three miles away. Eyes hard and grim, Durbar trod the starter, pushed the car toward Charleston Road.

Somehow, he had to capture those men, force them to talk. And he had to do it quickly.

Ten minutes later, car parked a distance along the road, Durbar slipped into the shadows of a lonely house. Two dirt roads branched here and the faint lights of Thorold twinkled half a mile away.

Gun gripped tight, Durbar crept along the side of the house, grinned bleakly when he spotted the sedan in

the yard at the back. It took only a few seconds to jerk loose the wires under the hood, then, a fast-moving blur in the darkness, he streaked for the back door.

It opened on squeaking hinges a second before he reached it and one of the two men he had seen at the Dye Works stepped out. Durbar skidded to a stop, breath caught in his throat.

The fellow saw him then, opened his mouth to yell. Durbar's gun connected with bone. A dull thud, and the man dropped.

Leaving him there, Durbar slipped inside. Faint gray light seeped through an open door across the kitchen. He crossed the room swiftly, found himself in a narrow passage. The light came from another open door halfway along the hall. Durbar heard the murmur of voices in the room. A confident gleam in his eyes, he crept noiselessly forward, gun held ready.

Behind him, crashing hollowly with appalling abruptness, heavy feet stumbled across the kitchen. A hoarse voice yelled: "Look out! There's a fella in the house!"

A gun cracked in the same instant. Durbar felt stinging pain burn a furrow along his left shoulder as he whirled. He fired at the man outlined in the kitchen doorway, grinned bleakly when the fellow folded and crashed to the floor.

But the element of surprise was gone. Guns blazed in the other door while Durbar was turning again. He dropped flat, fired at a pock-marked face stuck around the jamb. A heavy body pitched forward, twitched spasmodically, then lay still. The other gun fell silent, and a second later blanketing darkness followed a soft click.

Durbar swore softly, inched forward until he touched the man lying across the hall, then beyond him the doorjamb. Nothing moved inside the room, but Durbar caught the faint rasp of hurried breathing, placed it on the left near the far wall.

He aimed low, fired in that direction, then rolled. A sharp cry of pain followed and a gun flamed three

times. He heard the bullets *plunk* home in the still figure beside him. He waited a couple of seconds, then rose swiftly, eased inside the room, a furious thought pounding at his brain. Two of the men probably dead, the third must be taken alive!

A FAINT rustle told him the man was moving. But which way? He resisted the temptation to use his pencil flash, moved slowly to the right. His leg touched a chair. It scraped loudly. Instantly gun thunder filled the room. A bullet chunked in the wall beside Durbar's ear. Another seared his left arm. He ducked, fired twice to the right of the orange flashes. He heard a soft thud, followed by a queer shuffling.

He risked a quick spray from his flash, erupted an oath.

The thin stream of light picked out a short, swarthy man slowly slipping down the wall. Durbar knew he was dead. One of the two holes in the man's coat was plumb over his heart!

Durbar climbed into his car ten minutes later, lean face worried. True, he had saved Lock Seven and the Guard Gate from destruction, but a hasty examination of the three dead men had revealed nothing to indicate Getz' plans for destroying the flight locks. He had brought along one of the two bags containing the explosive compounds, but that told him nothing that he didn't know before.

The car turned, he drove to the main highway, cut into the road alongside the canal. Speeding swiftly north, eyes somber, bitter despondent thoughts crowded his brain. With no clue to guide him, the task of finding Getz in time among the vast structures of the flight locks seemed impossible.

Reluctantly he considered confiding in the engineer in charge, organizing an immediate search. But not for a minute did he believe it would save the locks. Once aware they were hunting him, Professor Death would coolly prepare his deadly mixture, plant the bombs ahead of time and depart!

His mind came back to the Maltese
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Cross. If he could fathom what part that played—

He jerked up straight, a hot light in his eyes, the answer flashing through his brain. His foot ground hard on the accelerator, coaxed more speed out of the engine.

Minutes later, the car roared past Lock Six, then the towering walls of Five. At Lock Four, brakes screaming like a wounded beast, he streaked out of the car before it stopped rocking, raced across the concrete and burst into the North Control House.

The men sitting at a desk leaped up, startled eyes on his disheveled bloodstained clothes. Before they could speak, he snapped, "What steamer is due here around two?"

"The *Maltese Cross* will arrive at one-forty-five," one of the men muttered. "She's about due in Lock Three now. What's it all about—"

But Durbar had whirled, was racing back to his car. The whole set-up was clear now. Either by stealth or using some pretext, Getz had boarded the freighter at Port Wellar. His plan was to remain concealed until one-thirty, then the compound mixed, he would plant the bombs in various parts of the ship. This done and while the *Maltese Cross* steamed toward the flight locks, he would slip quietly overboard and swim to shore.

LIPS flattened against his teeth, Durbar glanced at the clock. One-twenty! Ten minutes to the deadline! He sent the car hurtling north over the remaining mile in a desperate race against time.

He made it in fifty-five seconds.

He released a hot breath, staring at the large steamer in the basin. A few men were scattered over the deck waiting for the huge gates to lock behind them and inpouring water to lift the vessel to level.

On the lock quay, a man in overalls snubbed a thick hawser rope thrown from the vessel below about a capstan. He glanced casually at Durbar, said:

"Keep away from that rope, Mister," then his eyes widened. He gulped, "Say, you're hurt—"

Durbar brushed past him while he was speaking. His brown hands gripped the rope, then, lithe body swaying over the dark water below, he swung rapidly down the hanging rope, hand over hand, followed by curses from the man above.

SECONDS later, Durbar's feet found the deck. A burly, square-jawed man in officer's uniform brushed through the four or five men surrounding the Intelligence agent. "What's the idea, Mister?" he barked.

"Your captain, I must see him, quick!" Durbar clipped. "Vitaly important!" A glance at his watch brought cold beads of sweat streaming down his tight face. Eight minutes to the deadline! Not even that if Getz had witnessed his descent on the ship!

"It'd better be important." The officer laughed grimly. "The cap'n's on the bridge. I'll hear your story first, Mister. I'm first mate, Johnston."

Durbar nodded. He drew the man away from the sailors. "I'm looking for a short chap wearing glasses who came on board at Port Wellington."

"That's Hagen's friend—the mate said. He brought some stuff for Hagen—he's second mate—and asked permission to go along as far as Port Colbourne. But—"

"Where is he now?" Durbar said sharply.

"In Hagen's cabin, I guess. Look here—"

"Don't argue. Take me there!"

"Blast your eyes, Mister, I give orders, not—"

"Do as I say!" There was steel in Durbar's voice. The mate glanced at the gun abruptly in the agent's hand, nodded, and walked aft. Over his shoulder, he growled:

"What's it all about, Mister?"

"I'm a government agent," Durbar said softly. "The man I'm after is a dangerous criminal. I can't tell you more. You can check my credentials after we get him. Do I still need to keep the gun on you?"

Johnston laughed. "I'm taking your word, Mister."

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(Concluded from page 111)

They descended a companionway, followed a passage that led to another, narrower one. Johnson stopped in front of one of several doors there, nodded silently. "Call Hagen to the door," Dunbar whispered.

The first mate grinned, rapped horny knuckles on the panel. A thick voice growled. "What d'you want?"

"Johnston speaking. Little matter I want to see you over."

A key turned in the lock and the door opened a few inches. A dark, scowling face appeared in the opening. "This ain't my watch, an' I gotta friend here."

Durbar's shoulder crashed the door open wide. He lunged in, relief flooding his gray eyes. Getz, his round face black with rage, whirled about from a little table under the porthole. Seeing Durbar, his thick lips snarled a curse. Behind him, unopened yet, the two bags stood on the table, a pair of black rubber gloves beside them.

"Just in time." Durbar's gun covered the plump Professor Death. "The game's up," he said softly. "Loeb's dead, so are the other three."

"What the hell's this mean?" Hagen started to bluster. "You can't—"

"Quiet! You're under arrest for aiding and abetting an enemy of the government, Hagen!"

"So you win this time, Durbar!" Getz' round face was suddenly bland again, his smile guileless. His right hand nervously twisted a button on his vest. "The fortunes of war—or is it peace?" The button came loose in his hand. He stared at it a moment, then his hand flashed to his mouth, slipped the button behind his teeth.

A second too late Durbar leaped forward. Already the professor's curious eyes were glazing, but his smile remained unchanged. "I prefer my way of dying," he murmured. . . .

He gave a little jerk, and slowly toppled sideways.

"Just what did you want him for, Mister?" Johnston asked curiously.

Durbar glanced at the two bags. He grinned bleakly. "Something he hadn't done yet," he said. "Good riddance—Professor Death. . . ."