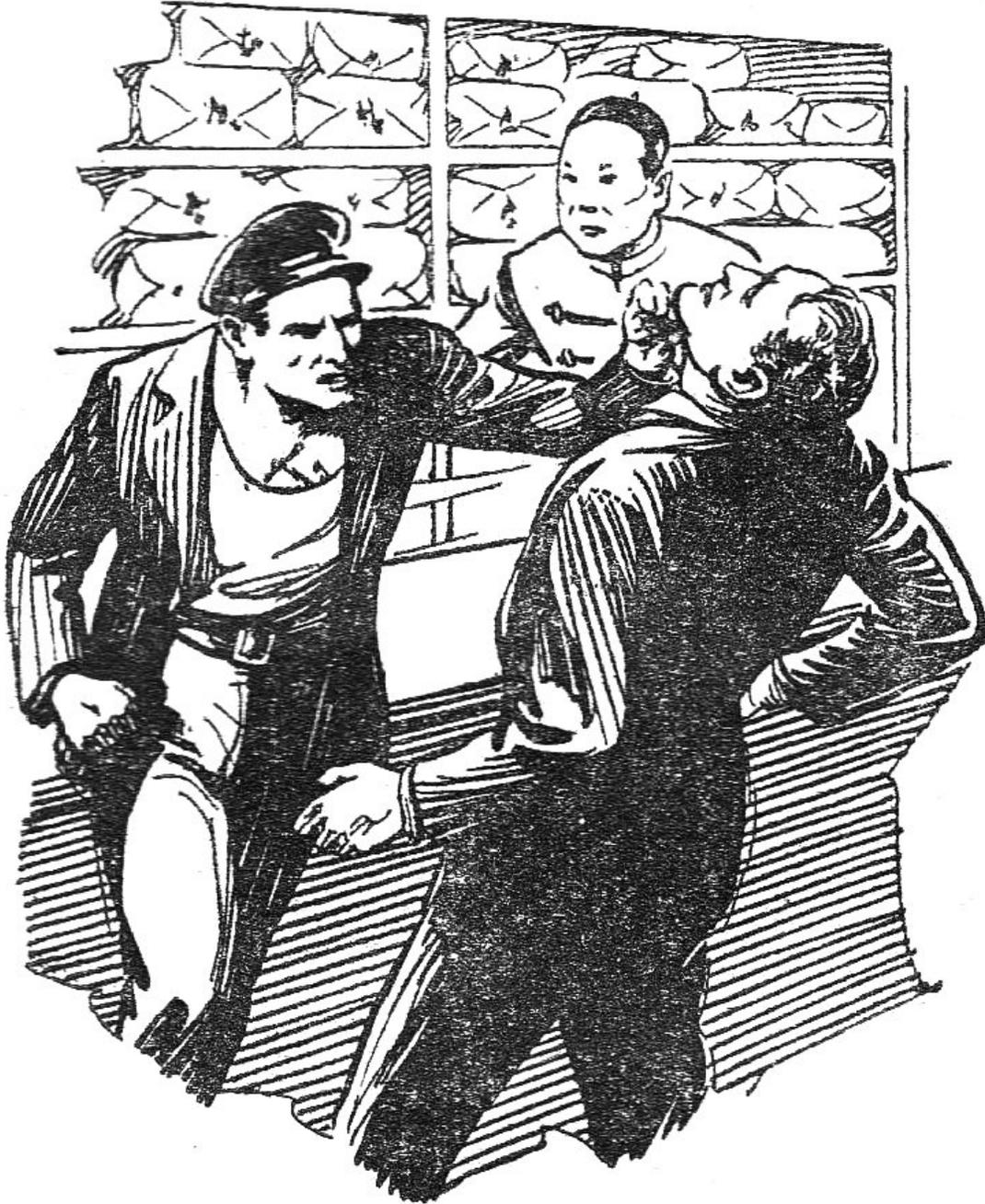


G-Men, April, 1936

Red Evidence

by Charlton L. Edholm



Red Grady's fist shot out and connected

CHAN MOCK picked out the shirt that Red Grady flung on the counter in a lot of soiled garments.

“No can washee clean this week,” he said with a bland grin that showed all his yellow fangs. “Heap washee to make *him* white.”

Red Grady hiccupped drunkenly, “Oh hell, that’s just a little wine—red wine—you savvy, John.” He crooked his elbow as if tossing off a drink.

“Him no wine stain. Him red like blood. Wassa malla, you maybe kill somebody? You makee chop-chop with hatchet?”

“Don’t crack wise with me, you yellow scum,” snarled Grady. He reached for a package of smokes, pulling out a fat roll of currency from the same pocket, which he hastily replaced. He lighted a cigarette to kill the heavy, sickening odor of the Chinese laundry and pulled the cap over his greenish eyes, glaring savagely from under the visor. With his reddish stubbled beard, his sunburned chest tattooed with an anchor, and his huge hairy fists, Grady looked as though he had just left his ship, and headed for Chinatown with his shirts and underwear.

“Allee light,” said Chan Mock. “You come Slatterday for this.” He indicated the other garments on the counter. “Next week you come for shirt.”

With his ink brush, Chan Mock traced a scrawl on a scrap of paper. Then a second scrap of paper. A laundry ticket for each call.

“You no lose tickee,” he singsonged. “No tickee—no washee.”

“No tickee—no washee. I get you, John,” laughed Red Grady. “Mind you have that shirt clean next week, or I’ll take you apart.”

Grady lurched out into the street

and filled his lungs with fresh air, clean and sweet from San Francisco Bay. He breathed deeply to clear his nostrils of the nauseating odor of the laundry, a mixture of steam, soiled clothes, and another clinging sweetish scent that he recognized.

Chan Mock threw the sailor’s laundry into a tub to soak, but first set aside the red-stained shirt which would require special cleansing. It was splashed and spotted as though Grady had been in a brawl with knives, and the yellow man, with his sharp, almond eyes narrowing greedily, wondered whether it was the evidence of a murder.

In that case, there might be big money in leaving it with the telltale spots. There might be a reward offered for the apprehension of the murderer. Or the sailor might be willing to buy it back at a stiff price if he realized that it was evidence that could be used to hang him.

Chan Mock examined the shirt while his mind was busied with the thoughts of gold and more gold. He set it away presently with a sigh of satisfaction. The red stain was blood. Of that there was no doubt. The absurd story of spilled wine was another evidence of guilt. Why should the sailor lie about it, if his conscience was clear?

Chan Mock went out into the narrow alleys near Stockton Street and came to a brick wall of a grimy building plastered over with great red posters, sheets covered with Chinese characters which carried announcements of the tongs, or secret societies, and bulletins of news of the quarter. A crowd hung about them at all hours of the day and night. It was a place where one could always pick up gossip and rumors. Chan Mock’s avaricious heart beat faster as he learned from a crony, Wong Lee, that his surmise

was correct. There had been a waterfront murder the night before. A man had been stabbed to death and robbed, and the killer was still at large.

CHAN MOCK went to the detective agency run by Jess Mawson, a white man who took nothing but Chinatown cases, and asked his advice on getting the goods on the sailor and squeezing him for a good round sum in exchange for that damning evidence.

“Hang on to that shirt, my friend,” said Mawson. “When the sailor calls for it, stall him off and send a messenger for me. I’ll be along with a fake warrant and a gat and shake him down for all he’s got.”

Saturday came and Chan Mock anxiously waited for the sailor to call for his laundry, but Red Grady did not come. The laundryman was so nervous that he kept peering through the grimy window constantly, watching for the husky figure with the rolling gait. But not until the middle of the following week, did Red Grady barge into the laundry.

As he entered, a yellow lad darted away to notify Jess Mawson and Chan Mock accepted a laundry ticket in his long yellow fingers and took plenty of time to find the bundle. Grady opened it.

“Where’s the rest of the wash? The shirt I spilled wine on?” he demanded.

“Him in other bundle. You got tickee?”

“No can find, John. But come across anyhow. You know me.”

“No tickee, no washee,” said Chan Mock stubbornly.

“Say, listen, you monkey. Don’t stall. I want that shirt. See?” Red Grady’s temper was up.

“No can find,” said Chan Mock, pretending to search in a high stack of bundles. “You lose tickee?”

“Sure I lost it. But I’m goin’ to find that shirt.” Grady leaped over the counter. Chan Mock backed away, fury and fear in his yellow face.

“No tickee, no washee,” he yelped, trying to push Grady away.

Red made a dive for the laundry bundles and the Chinaman reached for the pocket where he carried a gun—then thought better of it. Footsteps were hurrying along the sidewalk.

“Help, help! *P’leece!*” screeched the Chinaman.

Grady was pulling out bundles from the shelves as Jess Mawson’s burly figure crashed into the laundry.

“What’s goin’ on here?” Jess bellowed. “Get from behind that counter.”

“I’ll come out when I find my shirt. An’ who the hell are you?” demanded Red.

The detective flashed a badge on his big chest.

He barked, “I’m Jess Mawson of the Mawson Detective Agency. I take care of all of Chan Mock’s business affairs.”

“That’s all I wanted to know,” said Red Grady. He jerked out package after package of laundry from the lower part of the shelves and ripped off the papers. As the contents flew out, Chan Mock yelled in terror, his saffron face turning ashen, his black eyes starting from their sockets.

“You no can do!” he screamed. “You no can touch!”

“Oh, yeah?”

“Do as he tells you,” snarled Mawson. “Keep your dirty paws off those bundles, sailor, or I’ll open you up.”

Mawson’s gun hand reached for his arm pit but Red Grady’s fist shot out with a Joe Louis wallop and connected with Mawson’s jaw. The private dick staggered back, gun sagging in his fist, and, with a fast kick, Grady sent it

spinning clear across the floor.

“Come in, boys,” he shouted through the half open door, and as three husky aides in civilian clothes, rushed in, he ordered:

“Put the bracelets on Chan Mock and Jess Mawson. Mock has been peddling dope for a long time—too long.”

He shook out an opened laundry bundle and a small flat can of opium fell from the folds of the garments. “There’s the secret of his cache,” said Red Grady. “He kept the dope stored in dummy laundry packages and made his sales to customers who took it away with their shirts and collars. Pretty slick! No one would suspect a Chinese laundry of peddling the stuff, until the G-men noticed that a lot of Chan Mock’s customers looked a little too much like addicts.”

“Take that hardware off me,”

rasped Jess Mawson. His swollen jaw made talking difficult. “You ain’t got a thing on me, you lousy Fed.”

“We’ve got your admission that you handle Chan Mock’s affairs,” said Grady with a grin. “And with that lead to go on, we’ll land you and the Chinaman in Leavenworth. We didn’t have enough evidence to get out a search warrant. But looking for my own shirt was perfectly legal, wasn’t it?” He grinned amiably.

“You can’t do that! I tell you I’m a detective. Head of a licensed agency. Here’s my card.”

“Thanks. We’ll get a search warrant and comb the agency records. I’ll bet dollars to plugged nickels that there’s enough evidence there to get you twenty years.” The G-man laughed. “And the bait you fell for, bright boy, was blood on my old shirt—chicken blood!”