

The Lost Special

MAN IN BLACK: ... The producer of "Suspense" asks you to ALMOST believe that the following is true. Very well. Standing beside me, surrounded by two guards, is a man who in a few short hours is to be put to death in the electric chair. His last request to the warden was that he be allowed to speak on this program and reveal what he calls some "startling" information. The warden naturally turned to us and we at once complied, anxious at all times to do anything -- however strange -- that will hold our listeners in ...

MUSIC: ACCENT

MAN IN BLACK: ... suspense!

MUSIC: CONTINUES FOR AN INTRODUCTION, THEN OUT

ASSISTANT: All right, all right. Go ahead.

DE LERNAC: (CLEARS THROAT, GRANDLY) Ladies and gentlemen-- (SUDDENLY UNSURE, TO SOMEONE NEAR) I'm speaking correctly?

ASSISTANT: Yes, right here, sir.

DE LERNAC: Thank you. (GRANDLY) Ladies and gentlemen, this broadcast will never be completed. I'm going to tell you a story. The story involves a number of famous and influential people here as well as abroad. These people have received warning from me and I am sure all of them are making it a point to listen to me now. I shall not name these great, these rich, these influential gentlemen until my story's over. They will recognize the story. They will remember me. They will take the necessary steps for my reprieve. I shall expect a full pardon and safe conduct to a neutral country. These are my terms. I shall expect word of this to be brought to this studio during this broadcast. But, as I have warned you, this broadcast will never be finished. You will never hear those names. It is certain my price will be paid.

I am presently under sentence of death for my activities in the matter of refueling German submarines in the Caribbean. My full confession has been reproduced in the popular press. You have read it and you know the details. It is the least ingenious of my exploits and my first failure. So much for it. The story I shall tell you tonight occurred many years ago but concerns, as I have said, many now living. It will interest you, I hope. ... I know it will interest them.

Very well, then.

On the 3rd of June, 1925, in Liverpool, a man, who gave his name as Monsieur Louis Caratal, asked to see Mr. James Bland, the superintendent of the London and West Coast Railway. He was a small man, this character, middle-aged, dark, and with a stoop so pronounced that it suggested some deformity of the spine. He was accompanied by a friend, a man of imposing physique, who from his swarthy complexion, was probably either a Spaniard or a South American. Turned out later that his name was Gomez.

MUSIC: IN AND UNDER

DE LERNAC: One peculiarity was observed in him. He carried in his left hand, fastened to his wrist by a strap, a small leather dispatch case. No importance was attached to this fact at the time, but later events endowed it with much significance. Monsieur Caratal was shown to Mr. Bland's office, while his companion remained outside.

MUSIC: AN ACCENT, A BRIEF BRIDGE, THEN OUT

SOUND: DOOR SHUTS ... FOOTSTEPS

CARATAL: How do you do, Monsieur? My name is Louis Caratal.

BLAND: Yes, sir? What can I do for you?

CARATAL: I have just arrived from Central America this afternoon. It is extremely urgent that I reach Paris without a moment's delay.

BLAND: Paris, eh? Hm, that's too bad. You just missed the London express.

CARATAL: I am not interested in the London express. Could you provide me with a special train?

BLAND: (RELUCTANT) Yes, I think that could be arranged.

CARATAL: Oh?

BLAND: It's quite an expensive proposition.

CARATAL: Ah, money is of a small importance, Monsieur. Time is everything. If you can arrange a special for me in a hurry, you may make your own terms.

BLAND: Very well. Mr. Hood, will you step over here a moment please?

HOOD: Yes, Mr. Bland.

SOUND: HOOD'S FOOTSTEPS

BLAND: Ah, Mr. Hood here's our traffic manager, Mr. Caratal.

HOOD: Mm.

BLAND: Hood, I want you to arrange a special for him. He's going to Paris. How's the line? Can you fix him up in a hurry?

HOOD: Why, yes, I believe so, Mr. Bland. The line is clear through Manchester. And Engine Two-Forty-Seven, the Rochdale, is on the tracks now. It could be ready, say, in fifteen minutes.

BLAND: Good. Who's available for the trip?

HOOD: Uh, engineer? Smith, sir. And I can put James McPherson on as conductor.

BLAND: Well, there you are, Mr. Caratal. Simple as that. Attend to everything right away, will you, Hood?

HOOD: Yes, sir.

SOUND: HOOD'S FOOTSTEPS TO DOOR ... DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES

CARATAL: Er, these men -- er, Monsieur Smith and er, er, ah--

BLAND: McPherson?

CARATAL: McPherson. Are they trustworthy?

BLAND: Oh, yes. Of course. McPherson's been with the company for years and I'm sure Smith, although new, is an expert engineer.

CARATAL: Bien. Thank you, Monsieur. I am deeply indebted. You have been most considerate.

MUSIC: AN ACCENT, THEN FADES OUT DURING FOLLOWING

DE LERNAC: At four thirty-one exactly by the station clock the special train, with Caratal and Gomez, steamed out of the Liverpool station. The line at that time was clear, and there should have been no stoppage before Manchester. At a quarter after six considerable surprise and some consternation was caused among the officials at Liverpool by the receipt of a wire from Manchester to say that the special had not yet arrived. An inquiry directed at once to St. Helens, which is a third of the way between the two cities, elicited the following reply--

SOUND: TELEGRAPH KEY CLICKS

MUSIC: IN BG

VOICE 1: "To James Bland, Superintendent, Liverpool.--Special passed here at 4:52, well up to time.--Dowster, St. Helens."

SOUND: TELEGRAPH KEY CLICKS

DE LERNAC: The wire was received at six-forty. At six-fifty a second message was received from Manchester--

SOUND: TELEGRAPH KEY CLICKS

VOICE 2: "No sign of special as advised by you."

DE LERNAC: And then ten minutes later a third, more bewildering--

SOUND: TELEGRAPH KEY CLICKS

VOICE 2: "Presume some mistake as to proposed running of special. Local train from St. Helens timed to follow it has just arrived and has seen nothing of it. Kindly wire advices.--Manchester."

MUSIC: OUT

DE LERNAC: The matter was assuming a most amazing aspect, although in some respects the last telegram was a relief to the authorities at Liverpool. If an accident had occurred to the special, it seemed hardly possible that the local train could have passed down the same line without observing it. And yet, what was the alternative? Where could the train be? A telegram was dispatched to

each of the stations between St. Helens and Manchester, and the superintendent and his traffic manager waited in the utmost suspense at the instrument for the series of replies. The answers came back in the order of questions, which was the order of the stations beginning at St. Helens--

SOUND: TELEGRAPH KEY CLICKS CONTINUOUSLY IN BG

MUSIC: IN BG, UP A NOTCH WITH EACH MESSAGE

VOICE 3: "Special passed here five o'clock.--Collins Green."

VOICE 4: "Special passed here six past five.--Earlstown."

VOICE 5: "Special passed here 5:10.--Newton."

VOICE 6: "Special passed here 5:20.--Kenyon Junction."

VOICE 7: (SLIGHT PAUSE) "No special train has passed here.--Barton Moss."

MUSIC: AN ACCENT, THEN OUT

BLAND: Hood, this is unique in my thirty years of experience.

HOOD: I can't understand it, Mr. Bland. The special has gone wrong between Kenyon Junction and Barton Moss.

BLAND: And yet there's no siding between the two stations. The special must have run off the rails. Jumped the track.

HOOD: But how could the four-fifty parliamentary pass over the same line without seeing it?

BLAND: There's no alternative, Hood. Absolutely must be so. Possibly the local may have observed something which may throw some light on the matter. We'll wire to Manchester for more information, and to Kenyon Junction with instructions that the line be examined intently as far as Barton Moss.

MUSIC: AN ACCENT

DE LERNAC: The answer from Manchester came within a few minutes.

SOUND: TELEGRAPH KEY CLICKS

VOICE 2: "No news of missing special. Driver and guard of local train positive no accident between Kenyon Junction and Barton Moss. Line quite clear, and no sign of anything unusual.--Manchester."

MUSIC: AN ACCENT, THEN OUT

BLAND: This is lunacy, Hood. Does a train vanish into thin air in England in broad daylight? The thing's preposterous. An engine, a tender, car, five human beings--and all lost on a straight line of railway! It's impossible!

MUSIC: AN ACCENT, THEN OUT

DE LERNAC: A month elapsed, during which both the police and the company prosecuted their inquiries without the slightest success. Mr. Bland, at the

end of this period, offered his resignation. It was accepted. The affair remained unsolved. A reward was offered and a pardon promised in case of crime, but they were both unclaimed. Every day the public opened their papers with the conviction that so grotesque a mystery would at last be solved, but week after week passed by, and a solution remained as far off as ever.

Then a new and most unexpected incident occurred. This was nothing less than the receipt by Mrs. McPherson of a letter from her husband, James McPherson, who had been conductor of the missing train. The letter, which was dated July 5th, 1925, was posted from Mozambique, Portuguese East Africa and came to hand upon July 14th.

MUSIC: IN BG

MCPHERSON: "My dear wife, I've been thinkin' a great deal, and I find it very hard to give ye up. I try to fight against it, for it will always come back to me. I send ye some money which will change into twenty English pounds. This should be enough to bring ye here. Things are very difficult with me at present, and I'm not very happy, finding it so hard to give ye up. So no more at present. From your lovin' husband, James McPherson."

MUSIC: AN ACCENT, THEN OUT

DE LERNAC: For a time it was confidently anticipated that the letter would lead to the clearing up of the whole incident. As directed, Mrs. McPherson sailed to Portuguese East Africa. She stayed in Mozambique for some time but heard nothing from the missing man. Finally, she returned to Liverpool, and so the matter stood. And has continued to stand right up to the present moment.

Incredible as it may seem, nothing has transpired during those eighteen years which has shed the least light upon the extraordinary disappearance of the special train which contained Monsieur Caratal and his companion, Mr. Gomez -- and McPherson the conductor, Smith the engineer, the fireman named Slater.

And now, after all this time ... I shall clear up the entire affair. And unless I hear from those so highly respectable gentlemen -- who were my employers, and who are completely implicated in the crime -- unless I hear from them before I'm finished, their names will be revealed on this broadcast. Take final warning, gentlemen. You know I mean what I say. If you are smart, you are at this moment arranging my reprieve. I must remind you, time is short. You have just, er, sixteen minutes.

(CHUCKLES) Now, for the interest of my other listeners, I shall resume the story of "The Lost Special." In a word, there was a famous trial in Paris in the year 1925 -- perhaps you recall it -- in connection with a monstrous scandal, a scandal in politics and finance. How monstrous that scandal was can never be known except by such confidential agents as myself. At stake were the honor and careers of many of the chief men of Europe and the United States.

A secret committee was formed to manage the business. Some subscribed to the committee who hardly understood what were its objects. But others understood very well, and they can rely upon it that I have not forgotten their names. Do you think I could forget your names, gentlemen? You pillars of the community -- great rich, respected, honorable men? Hm? Do you remember that day in May, 1925? The fashionable country club, remember? And the golf game that was played there that spring morning?

Ladies and gentlemen, that was the strangest golf game ever played in the history of this world. (FADES)

SOUND: FADE IN WHISTLING BIRDS ... A GOLF CLUB SWINGS AND WHACKS A BALL ... (MUCH OVERLAPPING DIALOGUE IN THIS SCENE)

SENATOR: Oh, drat. Look at that drive. I've been playing badly all morning.

DE LERNAC: (APPROACHES, LAUGHS) You topped it, Senator. Perhaps you're a little nervous?

SENATOR: I beg your pardon?

DE LERNAC: May I join your game?

SENATOR: (UNCOMFORTABLE) Well, I'm not sure that we--

DE LERNAC: Not sure of what? Of me? (CHUCKLES) I promise you, gentlemen, you can be very sure of me. I'm the man you're supposed to meet. The distinguished Congressman here can vouch for me.

CONGRESSMAN: Yeah, he's the one all right. This is de Lernac.

DE LERNAC: Yes.

CONGRESSMAN: Ah, Mr. de Lernac, may I present--?

DE LERNAC: Er, my name is not really de Lernac, gentlemen. But I am sure that bothers you no less than it does me. Besides, there is no need for introductions. I know everyone present by sight and, er, by reputation. (CLEARS THROAT GENTLY, BENDS DOWN TO TEE UP GOLF BALL) My drive, I believe? (RISES) Thank you.

SOUND: A GOLF CLUB SWINGS AND WHACKS A BALL

DE LERNAC: Not so good. Two hundred and a -- what? -- about fifty yards. Heh. I hope I am not going to continue in this way!

CONGRESSMAN: You're - you're sure we can talk safely here, Frank? How do we know that--?

DE LERNAC: Ah, please set your mind at ease. We shan't be overheard in the middle of a golf course.

CONGRESSMAN: (UNCONVINCED EXHALATION)

DE LERNAC: There is no convenient hiding place here for Dictaphones, even in the rough, where I notice you're playing a great part of your game, Senator. You must be nervous this morning.

SENATOR: I know but I don't like it. I don't like it at all.

DE LERNAC: Here, here. It's not the superlative course you are accustomed to on your own enormous California estate, sir, but it's going to have to serve our particular purpose. Oh, by the way, let me compliment you on the way you've had your syndicate of newspapers handle the recent strike situation and the editorial which appeared under your own signature this morning. It's well-

calculated to stir up trouble with the labor--

SENATOR: Please, please, let's get on with our business.

FRANK: Yes, I, er, Mr. de Lernac--

DE LERNAC: At your service, sir. And may I suggest we continue our game? I know the absence of caddies is an inconvenience--

FRANK: Er, Mr. de Lernac--?

DE LERNAC: Certainly.

FRANK: In June, a month from now in Paris, there will be a most important trial.

DE LERNAC: Ah, yes.

FRANK: During it's progress--

DE LERNAC: Pardon me, are you referring to the Sarinsky trial?

SENATOR: (EXHALES IN DISBELIEF)

FRANK: Yes. You know about it, then?

DE LERNAC: Well, certain interesting details I know something of. It's my business, after all, to keep myself informed about these matters. It is not for nothing that I am known as the most [?] provocateur [in the West.]

FRANK: Then let me continue, please. This trial-- I'm speaking in the utmost confidence, you understand. Er, this trial could -- if certain evidence were introduced -- could have a very serious effect upon the prestige and standing of some most important men.

DE LERNAC: (LAUGHS) I'm sure of it.

FRANK: In fact, it could even--

DE LERNAC: You're shivering, Senator. You find it cold out here?

SENATOR: No. No, no. Get on with it, Frank. Get to the point. For heaven's sake, please.

FRANK: The evidence which one man could bring to the trial could ruin these men. Without it, the trial will collapse for want of facts.

DE LERNAC: Mm hm.

FRANK: But if this one man arrives in Paris, I--

DE LERNAC: Quite evidently, you do not wish him to arrive in Paris.

FRANK: No.

DE LERNAC: Gentlemen, you have come to the man-- This sounds indeed like the sort of thing which no one in the world can manage with such skill and success

as myself. I must admit, however, that my services come rather high.

MAGNATE: Well, the--

DE LERNAC: It's only natural since there is only one--

MAGNATE: The money makes no difference. We have formed a group, a committee, and we have the command of an unlimited amount of money -- absolutely unlimited, you hear?

DE LERNAC: Ah, good. Then, you will name people and places now. Who is the gentlemen whose appearance in Paris would cause such regrettable embarrassment?

FRANK: His name is Caratal, Louis Caratal.

DE LERNAC: Caratal.

FRANK: He knows everything! He has paper documents, all the evidence--!

DE LERNAC: Yes, yes, I understand. Where is this Monsieur Caratal at present?

FRANK: Well, he's sailing from somewhere in Central America.

DE LERNAC: Central America.

FRANK: Within the next few days. Er, that much we know.

DE LERNAC: Good, good. Central America, I have an excellent man down there in Central America. This Caratal, you know anything about him? His personal habits?

CONGRESSMAN: Well, we know very little. He's a small man, dark.

DE LERNAC: Ah, yes.

CONGRESSMAN: He has a bodyguard, a great big bruiser named, uh, Lopez or Gomez or something.

DE LERNAC: Let me see, from Central America, that would be the Americano, Tropicana, or the Ritz--

MAGNATE: Oh, but those are MY ships you've just--!

DE LERNAC: All commence at Liverpool, I believe. That's where the ships dock. And our famous trial is to begin in three weeks, eh? That would mean that Monsieur Caratal would go directly to London. And I imagine that once there he will be heavily guarded since it can be no surprise to him that you gentlemen are not without, er, "connections" in the British capital?

SENATOR: (IMPRESSED) Ha! That's good clean thinking! (CHUCKLES)

DE LERNAC: You see, this is not so simple as some of my other exploits. A simple assassination--

SENATOR: (ASTONISHED) Eh?

DE LERNAC: There's your ball, sir. You're playing a Dunlop thirty-eight, aren't you?

SENATOR: (FLUSTERED) What? Oh. Oh. Yes. Yes, to be sure. Yes.

DE LERNAC: Quite. As I said, a simple assassination, the usual clumsy job, will not do here. The documents might, after all, be found; the bodyguard might survive somehow, and then-- we'll have accomplished nothing, that's so?

OTHERS: (MURMUR AGREEMENT) Yes. Right. Of course.

DE LERNAC: Now, are you going to play?

SENATOR: Yes. Yes, of course, of course.

SOUND: A GOLF CLUB SWINGS AND WHACKS A BALL

DE LERNAC: Topped it again, I'm afraid. Shall we proceed? I already have two plans in my head, gentlemen. I have a plan for nailing him at the Central American port from which he embarks. I have a plan for his disposal aboard the ship. But, in each of these cases, I, de Lernac, will be unable to be present, so there is the chance of failure. I will think of a third plan, gentlemen. I shall sail immediately to Liverpool. On my way there, sitting on the deck in the May sunshine, I shall conceive my third plan. It must be something special. Something very special. Ha ha! There I am! Is this your famous water hazard? Well, I think a Number Seven Iron will do it. (FADES)

MUSIC: AN ACCENT, A BRIEF BRIDGE, THEN OUT

DE LERNAC: And thus I undertook to bring about the complete destruction of Monsieur Caratal, his bodyguard companion Gomez, and his documents. Plan One was already out the window, as I found out the next day.

SOUND: TELEGRAPH KEY CLICKS

RUSSIAN MALE: "De Lernac, White Sulfur Springs, Virginia. Baby Lou unable sleep last few nights; have sent him to visit Aunt Henriette. Will rejoin him on twenty-first. Love, Jenny."

SOUND: TELEGRAPH KEY CLICKS OUT

DE LERNAC: This telegram from Matagalpa conveyed to me the information that Caratal, possibly sensing danger, had moved from his hotel and gone to stay with friends until his ship sailed. So it was impossible to carry out the idea of the fire in the hotel. His ship leaving on the twenty-first was the Henriette. On my fourth day at sea, I heard from her.

SOUND: RADIO MORSE CODE BEEPS

AMERICAN: "De Lernac, Berengaria. Ship-to-ship communication from Henriette, Tropicana line. Presented Grace your box of chocolates. Louise has given up candy for Lent. Grace still wants us all together for twenty-ninth birthday party. Will be really special. Ref."

SOUND: RADIO MORSE CODE BEEPS OUT

DE LERNAC: This meant that poison had been given to Gomez the bodyguard in an

effort to get him, at least, out of the way. He had been unable to succumb to it. He'd thrown off the effects, as was evidenced by the report that we would all be together on the twenty-ninth. Now, Caratal had refused to eat the food containing the poison. So much for Plan Two, which was not worthy of me anyway, since there was always the possibility of the bodies being found in the ocean.

The man Gomez was carrying the documents in a dispatch case strapped to his wrist. (AMUSED) And - I must tell you something now. I was glad -- glad, mind you -- that we had failed so far. For the plan I had conceived on the night I arrived in Liverpool was so magnificent, so absolutely unprecedented in the annals of crime, that I owed it to myself, to my employers, and to history, to carry it through.

The inspiration came from the words in the code telegram which indicated that Caratal would arrive in Liverpool and hire a special train there to convey him to London. My British agent Mr. Moore and I contrived to buy over several officials of the railway. Now, here begins the story:

First, the division head who helped us employ James McPherson, whom we contrived to be the conductor of any special train we designated. Then, further, at a sum that would make them independent for life, we bought over an engine-driver named Oswal Smith and the fireman John Slater. These men, we arranged with the division head, would be assigned to whatever special train was hired by Caratal.

On the afternoon of June 3rd, as I was sitting in my room at the inn at Barton Moss, the call I had been awaiting came through. It was McPherson reporting.

MCPHERSON: (FILTER) Hello, Mr. de Lernac. We should be leavin' in a few minutes.

DE LERNAC: Mm.

MCPHERSON: (FILTER) He's hired a special.

DE LERNAC: Good.

MCPHERSON: (FILTER) Smith will be engine-driver and Slater, fireman. And, of course, I'll be in charge.

DE LERNAC: What about Moore? Will he be aboard?

MCPHERSON: (FILTER) Afraid not, sir. He even tried the story about havin' to reach his sick wife and all. But Caratal would have none of it. He said, though, sir, that it didn't matter.

DE LERNAC: It does not matter. What time will you pass Kenyon Junction?

MCPHERSON: (FILTER) Mm, let me see, sir. If we leave the next few minutes, we should be there at five-ten.

DE LERNAC: Five-ten.

MCPHERSON: (FILTER) It's a forty-nine minute run, sir.

DE LERNAC: Forty-nine minutes. I can make it but delay all you can before you

start.

McPHERSON: (FILTER) Yes, sir. I guess it's all up to you from now on. Best of luck, sir. (LOWERS VOICE) Oh, uh, here they come, sir. Goodbye.

MUSIC: A BRIDGE, THEN OUT

DE LERNAC: And now I went to work. Everything had been prepared for days before, and only the finishing touches were needed. The side track, just before Barton Moss, leading to the abandoned Heartsease mine, had once joined the main line, but it had been disconnected when the mine had been worked out some years before. We had only to replace a few rails to connect it once more. With my small but competent band of workers, we had everything ready well before the special arrived. When it did arrive, it ran off upon the small side line so easily that the jolting of the switch points appears to have been entirely unnoticed by the two travelers.

So now I had our special train upon the small line, which leads, or rather used to lead, to the abandoned mine. You will ask how it is that no one saw the train upon this unused line. I answer that along its entire length it runs through a deep cutting, and that, unless someone had been on the edge of that cutting, he could not have seen it. There WAS someone on the edge of that cutting. I was there. And now I will tell you what I saw.

MUSIC: IN BG, IN AGREEMENT WITH FOLLOWING

SOUND: FADE IN TRAIN NOISE, IN AGREEMENT WITH FOLLOWING

DE LERNAC: The moment the train was fairly on the side line, Smith slowed down the engine, and then, having turned it on full speed ahead, he and McPherson, with Slater the fireman, sprang off before it was too late. It may be that it was this slowing-down which first attracted the attention of the travelers, but the train was running at top speed before their heads appeared at the open window. It makes me smile to think how bewildered they must have been. What a catch must have come to their breath as it flashed upon them that it was not Manchester that was awaiting them -- but Death.

SOUND: WHEELS CLACKING AND SCREECHING LOUDLY IN BG

DE LERNAC: The train was now running at frantic speed, rolling and rocking over the rotten, rusty line, while the wheels made a frightful screaming sound upon the corroded surface. I was close to them, and could see their faces. Caratal was praying, I think -- there was something like a rosary dangling out of his hand. The other, Gomez, roared like a bull but was drowned out by the incredible noise of the train. He saw me standing on the bank and when he realized he couldn't be heard, he beckoned to me like a madman, tearing at his wrist and hurling the dispatch-box out of the window in my direction. Of course, his meaning was obvious. Here was the evidence that they would promise to be silent if their lives were spared. It would have been very agreeable if it could have been done so, but business is business. Besides, the train was now as much beyond our control as it was theirs.

SOUND: TRAIN RATTLES PAST LOUDLY

DE LERNAC: He ceased his howling and gesturing when the train rattled around the curve and they saw the black mouth of the mine yawning before them. They were struck silent by what they saw. And yet they could not withdraw their

heads. The sight seemed to have paralyzed them.

I had wondered how the train running at a great speed would take the pit, and I was much interested in watching it. One of my colleagues, who had joined me there, thought it actually would jump it, and indeed it was not very far from doing so.

SOUND: TRAIN NOISE ABRUPTLY OUT

MUSIC: SUSTAINED, TO MATCH THE AIRBORNE TRAIN

DE LERNAC: It leaped into the air and seemed to hang suspended for a moment. The funnel flew off into the air, and then the van, the car and the engine were all smashed up into one jumble, which choked the mouth of the great pit; then something gave way in the middle, and the whole mass of iron, coal, fittings, wheels, wood-work, and cushions crumbled together - and crashed into the mine!

SOUND: TRAIN CRASH! IN A MINE TUNNEL! FULL OF WATER!

MUSIC: BIG ACCENT, THEN IN BG

DE LERNAC: It was perfect. The deep muddy water standing in the bottom of the pit two hundred feet below responded to the intense heat of the engine boilers.

SOUND: LOUD HISSING STEAM

DE LERNAC: It hissed loudly and blew great bubbles of black mire into the air. At the same time, the walls of the pit, loosened by the impact of the train as it struck the opposite side ...

MUSIC: OUT

SOUND: AVALANCHE OF ROCK AND DIRT FALLS ON WRECKED TRAIN

DE LERNAC: ... gave way, and a mighty avalanche of rock and dirt thundered down upon the wreckage of the train as it settled with a low hissing sigh. And was covered forever by the mud and mire. The vapor hanging in the air shredded off into thin, small wisps.

SOUND: SUBSIDES TO SILENCE

DE LERNAC: And all was quiet again in the Heartsease mine. Heh.

And now, having carried out our plans so successfully, it remained only to leave no trace behind us. Our little band of workers at the other end had already ripped up the rails and disconnected the side line, replacing everything as it had been before. We were equally busy at the mine. The lines which led to it were torn up and taken away. Then, without flurry, but without delay, we all made our way out of the country, most of us to Paris, my English agent to Manchester, and McPherson to East Africa.

A word in passing about McPherson, who was foolish enough to write to his wife and tell her to meet him in Mozambique. Naturally, we took steps to insure that this meeting would never come about. I have sometimes thought it would be a kindness to write to Mrs. McPherson and to assure her that there is no

impediment to her marrying again.

But of the "Lost Special," let the English papers of that date tell how thoroughly we had done our work, and how completely we had thrown the cleverest of their detectives off our track. You will remember that Gomez threw his bag of papers out of the window, and I need not say that I secured that bag and brought them to my employers.

It may interest my employers now, however, to learn that out of that bag I took one or two little papers as a souvenir of that occasion. I had no wish to read the information obtained by these papers; but it is now-- Oh, it's less than a minute before my broadcast is over. (CLEARS THROAT NERVOUSLY) And I - have received no word.

It is the final hour.

I see, at the other end of the studio, the engineer - waving his hands at me that my time is almost up.

(PHILOSOPHICAL) Well.

I gave you warning.

You had your chance, gentlemen.

Very well. Now I reveal your names.

And the first name I reveal is that of Charles Foster--

SOUND: DOOR OPENS ... FOOTSTEPS A STRUGGLE, A SCUFFLE, CONTINUES IN BG

VOICES: (OVER A CHAOTIC WALLA) Stop that man! What is it? Stop him! He's got a gun!

DE LERNAC: (PANICS) Ladies and gentlemen! Ladies and gentlemen, they're trying murder! I want you to hear these names quickly! I know you will avenge me! The names are--!

SOUND: GUNSHOT

DE LERNAC: (HOARSE WHISPER) ... names ... (COUGHS, DYING)

SOUND: BODY COLLAPSES TO FLOOR ... MANY RUNNING FOOTSTEPS IN BG

VOICES: (OVER WALLA) He shot him! After him! There he goes!

ASSISTANT: De Lernac?! De Lernac?! Can you hear me? Are you, all right? Hey, Bill! Play something quick, will ya? Theme, curtain music, anything!

MUSIC: CURTAIN MUSIC ... FOR A BIG FINISH

MAN IN BLACK: And so closes "The Lost Special" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, starring Orson Welles -- tonight's tale of ...

MUSIC: SUSPENSE ACCENT

MAN IN BLACK: ... "Suspense!"

MUSIC: SUSPENSE THEME

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