

Detective Harry Raymond rode down the elevator of the Civic Center Building in downtown Los Angeles and crossed to the east side of Broadway. Five feet six and one-half inches, he was powerfully built, with hazel eyes and brown hair that the years had thinned, leaving him partially bald. Now in his late fifties, he walked with a cane, limping slightly, his leg still sore from a break sustained in an automobile accident two years before.

It had been a warm winter's day, the kind that made the retired farmers idling on the benches in Pershing Square gloat over their good fortune in escaping the Midwestern cold. Now the night was turning cool, with a gentle breeze drifting in from the ocean. A storm was advancing from the northwest and the first clouds already shrouded a nearly full moon. The diffused moonlight, together with street lamps and storefront neon signs, bathed the city with a soft glow.

Raymond's new Chrysler Royal was parked in a large outdoor lot in the center of the block where a few years before the old Los Angeles City Hall stood. He scanned the lot for suspicious characters and then made his way carefully to the car. The parking attendant kept an eye on it for him but Raymond still took a few seconds to check for signs of tampering before he unlocked the door. Tossing his cane before him, he climbed into the driver's seat, turned the switch key, and pressed the starter button. The engine hummed into life.

His home was only a few miles to the east but he took his time getting there. After entering Broadway from the parking lot, he turned left on Second Street and drove through the tunnel before heading south on Figueroa. For a few minutes, he meandered through the downtown streets while studying the headlights in his mirror. Several times, he swung down a side street, pulled to the curb, cut his lights and watched to see if a car stopped behind him.

He reached his house at 955 Orme Avenue, a two-bedroom bungalow he had rented for three years, shortly before eleven. His driveway was the Hollywood or ribbon type, a pair of concrete strips divided by grass that sloped to a small garage seventy feet from the street. Leaving the motor idling, he unlocked the padlock on the twin barn-style doors and drove the car in slowly, stopping just before the front bumper touched the garage's rear wall. The big Chrysler's passenger side fit snugly against a wooden shelf, where a rolled up bag and some old clothes were piled. Raymond switched off the engine, climbed from the car, and locked the automobile. After closing the garage doors, he locked them with the padlock.

His wife Beulah was asleep in the rear bedroom. For a while, he sat up, smoking and listening to the news on the radio. We can guess what the radio reported that night from the newspapers that day and the next.

A US Navy minesweeper had found the wreckage of the Pan American Samoan Clipper off Pago Pago in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Famous Los Angeles criminal lawyer Jerry Giesler was defending an airport executive who awakened from a drunken sleep in his bedroom, observed his wife fellating his best friend on a piano bench in the front room, and killed them both. The Senate just confirmed President Roosevelt's nomination of Joseph Kennedy as Ambassador to Great Britain. Los Angeles' Superior Court judges were squabbling over the selection of the new grand jury.

After the news, Raymond put out his cigarette and retired to his bedroom in the front of the house to sleep.