

I got the natives started and was just about to climb into my flivver when a marine came over. "The sergeant wants you to have Mr. Carras sign these. And get them back to him right away if that ship is going to leave."

"Why didn't he have him sign them earlier?" I yelled. "I got work to do."

"So have I. The sergeant forgot them. You know him, corporal."

I stuffed the papers into my pocket and went over to the hotel. I didn't bother calling, I figured he'd be upstairs taking a bath and changing his clothes. On the way up, I passed the bar and then stopped. Peeper John was there, his huge bulk against the mahogany.

"Hey," I said. "Did your sister find you?"

"My sister?" His face was expressionless. "She's in Europe someplace." He glared at me. "What is this, Carmody, another one of your tricks?" He pushed his face close to mine and pointed to his blackened eye. "Where did you go last night after I left Soledad's?"

I evaded the question. "I'm not kidding," I said. "The girl came in on a tramper. I sent her to Soledad's to look for you."

"Thanks." He turned on his heel and went out.

I tossed a few silent curses at him and hurried upstairs. My job was to take care of those natives.

There was no response to my rapping. Figuring he was in the tub, with maybe the water running, I tried the door. It opened easily.

Carras was stretched out, face

down, on the floor. He was wearing only his dressing gown and had apparently been trying to reach his pants when the bullet went into his head. His hand was stretched toward the trousers. There was a gun in his pocket. The money belt I had seen him use the night before was on a chair. Each compartment was opened. The desk showed that someone had gone through it.

But who? Certainly not Peeper. He wouldn't kill a guy and then hang around a bar in the same building. Besides, he would have taken the money.

Suddenly, I remembered! The packet Monita had given him! There must have been something mighty important in it. Something important enough to commit murder for! And that something hadn't been money or the killer would have taken the belt too!

I bent down, rolled Carras over. My eye fell on a tiny piece of paper, sticking to his dressing gown. I looked it over and then put it into my pocket. Right then and there I had an idea of talking to Peeper's sister!

Because what I picked up was a canceled customs stamp. And her candid camera had been covered with them! Add also to that the little piece of information she had requested: the way to the Nacional!

I picked up the phone, told the desk clerk to send for the local police and Sergeant Wilson. The latter, under provisions of the treaty between Haiti and the United States supervised the constabulary.

Then I hurried downstairs. And right before my eyes, sitting grace-