

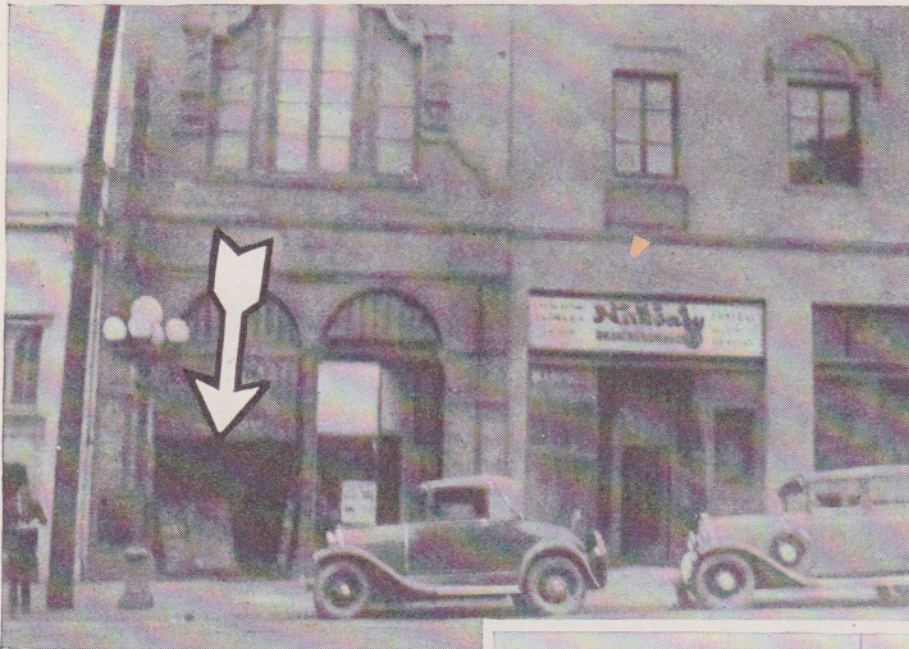
The LONESOME CLUB

By

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As told to
ALBERTA
LIVINGSTON



The dance hall at 926½ West Seventh Street, Los Angeles, California, where the Lonesome Club held its social affairs. Arrow points to the doorway leading to the clubrooms upstairs

“HAND ME THE BAG!”

The voice was cultured and calm—but determined—the voice of one who would tolerate no temporizing. Killing would mean nothing to the man behind the mask.

Terrified, Mrs. Melvin Hatch screamed as she handed over the bag containing more than five hundred dollars. The scream attracted her son, who was walking to a friend's car parked at the curb. He made a flying leap toward the house.

“Oh, Earl, don't come! He has a gun!” his mother called out. But Earl kept on coming.

When Mrs. Hatch realized the terrible thing that might happen, every scintilla of fear left her. Her son was in jeopardy! If she could wrest the gun from the intruder before Earl reached the porch! She grappled with him.

Out of the darkness came a flash of fire—the report of a pistol—the thud of a falling body. Young Hatch lay for a moment, then tried to get up.

“You lie there!”

The tone was not harsh nor high-pitched, but it left no doubt in the mind of the wounded man that the bandit meant business. As he finished speaking, the gunman dashed down the steps, ran diagonally across the lawn and leaped into a waiting automobile.

Silence! Then a yard filled with talking, excited, frenzied neighbors. Some one had the presence of mind to call the police. A siren soon wailed in the distance. The noise became a veritable scream, then slowly died away as the police ambulance skidded into the curb in front of the Hatch home.

Just as it came to a sighing halt, a white-clad figure swung out of the rear and with practiced ease hooked back the doors and trundled out the wheeled frame into which the stretcher fitted. The wounded man was lifted to the stretcher and ten minutes later lay on the operating table at the Receiving Hospital.



The Hatch residence at 2149 Echo Park Avenue, scene of a tragedy that startled Los Angeles, and initiated a mystery that was to take three years to solve

“Gunshot wound of the abdomen—profound shock—possibly fatal.” The nurse at his elbow had completed filling in the chart almost before Doctor Sebastian finished speaking.

Two hours later the patient was transferred to the Osteopathic Hospital where he died at 11 o'clock the following morning. And, with his dying, the Los Angeles Police Department faced an apparently clueless murder—a death that eventually precipitated one of the bitterest battles ever fought in a Los Angeles courtroom.

The victim, Melvin Earl Hatch, Jr., was the son of Doctor and Mrs. Melvin Hatch. The Doctor and his wife owned and operated the Lonesome Club. This club met twice each week at Horn's Dance Hall, 926½ West Seventh Street. These meetings were really public dances, any one being admitted who paid the admission charge.

Doctor Hatch, being well advanced in years and in poor health, spent only about two hours each evening at the club. Around 10 o'clock Earl Hatch, Jr., would drive over to the