

# L. RON HUBBARD



## *Killer's Law*

GALAXY  
P R E S E N T S

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WHEN Kyle stepped off the Capitol Limited and into the confused fury of Washington, a headline caught his glance:

## SENATOR MORRAN BEGINS COPPER QUIZ

A few hours from now, his own name would be blazing there, black as the ink in which it would be printed. Kyle knew nothing of prophecy; his interest was in getting through this stampede of people and completing his mission. Already he was creating a mild sensation. Palo Alto hat, silver thong, scarlet kerchief, high-heeled boots and his six feet three of gawky, bony height commanded attention.

He stood for a moment in the crowded, clanging dusk, looking toward the lighted dome of the Capitol, trying without much success to savor the scene and feel patriotic. A redcap, eyeing his huge bag now that Kyle had dragged it all the way through the station from the train, swooped down with confidence born of the stranger's obvious confusion. The action met abruptly explosive resistance.

Kyle said, "Hands off."

The redcap retained his hold as a legal right to a tip. Kyle

gave the handle a twist which sent him reeling. A few people paused to watch.

A cop said, "What's the matter here? Keep moving, you."

Kyle said testily, "Move along, hell. I'm Sheriff Kyle of Deadeye, Nevada, and I got an appointment to meet Senator Morran—"

"Yeah?" the cop said.

"Could I be of assistance?" said a smooth-faced gentleman. "Your name, I think, is Kyle. Senator Morran sent me down to meet you." He laughed good-naturedly and nodded to the cop. "That's all right, Officer."

The cop was satisfied. The redcap departed without tip.

"My name is Johnson, Sheriff," the smooth-faced man said. "John Johnson. Just call me Johnny." He laughed. "And now we'll see about getting you to the senator."

"Hold it," Kyle said. "How do I know who you are?" He had to bend over to look at Johnson. He did so and said, "Why don't you just run along and tell the senator I'll be with him soon. I'm taking a cab."

"Well—" Johnson turned toward a waiting limousine and Kyle's glance collided with the chauffeur's. He moved away while Johnson still hesitated, and hailed a cab.

"Soreham Hotel," he told the driver.

The Soreham Hotel was lighted in every window, its walks aglitter with dinner gowns, its lobby thick with political cigar smoke and the aura of martinis. Kyle asked the desk clerk for the senator's room number and a house phone.

The phone didn't answer. He went up.

Senator Morran's room was 310. Its door, open to darkness,

surprised Kyle. The faint hall light reached poorly into the room, but showed a dark, irregular streak, running jaggedly along the floor.

Kyle was in the act of stepping backward when the room exploded into Roman candle brilliance. The pain came fractionally later, just as the lights careened out again. His last conscious impression was of himself, trying to push the floor away with his hands.

They shook him into light and sound and cuffed him into attention, and though it took seven of them, they held him in the chair.

The room was a flood of sound, a maelstrom of confusion. Reporters were surging against a police cordon at the door. Politicians, bloodhounding newsprint, were issuing statements. Flashbulbs were bursting. And the center of attention, Kyle noted, as he had always been in life, was the senator.

The silver mane which had thrilled women voters for two decades was in noble repose, except at the ends where it was darkly matted. The strength, the nobility of pose were gone, and the hands, which in their youth had bulldogged many a steer and later had been lifted in appeal to many a constituent, were motionless, expressionless—their mute story told by a heavy candlestick lying beside them.

In the upper abdomen a knife hilt was visible.

Kyle's feelings shut out the sounds about him. He had known Senator Morran well. The old man, as much as anything, had won him his job. He had always regarded Morran as a staunch, friendly and fearless warrior for the things he himself

believed in. He had come too far to be welcomed by this, and suddenly Kyle felt alone and sick.

He realized the desk clerk was pointing him out and a flashbulb battered at him. Somebody asked, “Why did you kill him, mister?” and he awoke to the fact that this question had been thudding into him for five full minutes. The realization choked him.

“His knife, all right,” somebody said. “See? Matches the empty sheath. Five-inch blade. Five-inch hole. Fits.”

“Why did you kill Senator Morran?”

“Damn you,” Kyle said. “Get the hell away from me. I didn’t kill him!”

“Why did you kill Senator Morran?”

He tried to get up but they thrust him roughly back. “Here. Here, look in my pockets. He wired—”

“We looked.” They waited then.

Kyle said, “I’m Sheriff Kyle from Deadeye. He wired me, had me bring him some documents. I brought my bag straight to—” He stopped, stared around the room. “Where’s my bag?” he howled at them.

It took three of them to get him back into the chair. “We’ll find the bag,” said the detective. “First we want to know why you killed Senator Morran.”

Rage was beginning to rise in him, but he held it in check. He sat still until they stopped asking him. He watched a reporter, hat uptilted, cigarette dangling, who had an illusion about solving murders himself, get told off.

“Get out of here, Mike!” snarled a detective.

“So you got a monopoly on questions, Haggerty,” said the

reporter, and wandered over and stared down at the corpse. He was making sympathetic noises with his tongue when the late senator's secretary arrived.

Mike said, "Hey, Cronin! If you're through playing with this stiff, cover it up. Can't you see we got ladies present?"

Somebody draped a sheet over the senator, leaving one matted lock of gray hair, one gray hand showing.

"What was the senator doing today to cause all this, miss?" Mike asked.

The woman moaned something and Kyle stared at her. He knew most of the senator's employees in a vague way, for they had accompanied him West from time to time. But he did not know this girl.

"Just his regular work," she sobbed.

"How about the copper investigation?" said Mike. "I understand he was starting on that tomorrow?"

"Yes—but he had nothing on anyone really."

"I heard," said Mike, "that he sent West for some records."

"Who—oh, I don't think so."

"This puncher here claims he was bringing records East to the senator. What do you know?"

"Oh, no. I don't think so. I never saw this man before in my life. But—someone threatened Senator Morran yesterday."

Mike said, "How did he do this?"

"By telephone. He said he was going to 'get' the senator. I heard the whole conversation on my own phone."

Mike grinned. "There you are, Haggerty. Open and shut. Threat, murder. Let the sheriff speak, so she can identify the voice. What's your name, miss?"